



*Furnishing a city : The design and production of furniture in nineteenth century Sheffield.*

BANHAM, Julie P.

Available from the Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/19311/>

## A Sheffield Hallam University thesis

This thesis is protected by copyright which belongs to the author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

Please visit <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/19311/> and <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html> for further details about copyright and re-use permissions.



**Author:** BANHAM, J. P

**Title:** FURNISHING A CITY: THE DESIGN AND PRODUCTION OF FURNITURE IN NINETEENTH CENTURY SHEFFIELD

**Degree:** M. PHIL.

**Year:** 1999

I recognise that the copyright in this thesis belongs to the author.

I undertake not to publish either the whole or any part of it, or make a copy of the whole or any substantial part of it, without the consent of the author.

I also undertake not to quote or make use of any information from this thesis without making acknowledgement to the author.

Readers consulting this thesis are required to sign their name below to show they recognise the copyright declaration. They are also required to give their permanent address and date.

[illegible]



ProQuest Number: 10694192

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10694192

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

**FURNISHING A CITY:  
THE DESIGN AND PRODUCTION OF FURNITURE  
IN  
NINETEENTH CENTURY SHEFFIELD.**

**JULIE PATRICIA BANHAM**

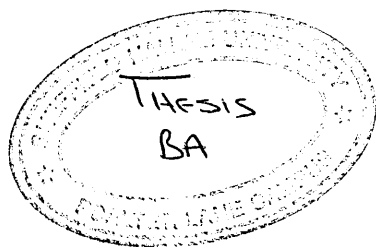
**SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY**

**DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY.**

**JUNE 1999.**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY OF THE DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES  
5708 S. UNIVERSITY AVE. CHICAGO, ILL. 60637

10/10/10 10:10 AM



10/10/10 10:10 AM

10/10/10 10:10 AM

10/10/10 10:10 AM

## ABSTRACT

Throughout the nineteenth century furniture was a means of indirect communication. Its style, setting and quality, the ease and manner with which it was displayed all revealed much about the owner, their background and taste. In this respect, this study seeks to discover how furniture was deployed in Sheffield and how such deployment was viewed by the outside world.

The thesis will examine the form and development of the Sheffield furniture industry during the nineteenth century as it adapted to the needs and demands of a rapidly growing industrial society and the relationship between client and manufacturer in the light of the social, cultural and economic environment in which they functioned. Chapters One and Three outline the principal factors which I consider influenced the development of the Sheffield furniture industry during this period. An important consideration was to see if the perceived pursuit for novelty and variety - The Battle of the Styles - was sustained in Sheffield or whether other criteria determined how homes in an industrialised but provincial and isolated community were furnished.

It will be demonstrated that the Sheffield furniture industry received three consecutive yet overlapping forms of patronage during the nineteenth century which I have labelled Gentlemanly taste, the Sheffield code and Cosmopolitan taste.

Evidence for the nature and strength of the Sheffield code will be provided by examining three case studies which demonstrate the furnishing policies of corporate display and personal aggrandisement. It is intended to demonstrate how the local community applied the circumstances of its heritage to contemporary furnishing schemes as tangible manifestations of success. These chapters illustrate the Sheffield code by looking at the use of furniture as a cultural illustration of interacting group interests. The question of radicalism in the furnishing schemes of nouveaux riches industrialists is also considered.

In the second chapter the form and development of the Sheffield furniture industry is examined in relation to the environment in which it operated. The size, location, lifespan and services of the various Sheffield furniture trades are reviewed. It will be seen that the majority of firms were small, family orientated, flexible in the number and variety of services they offered, sensitive to the needs of their market and willing to secure some form of training. Many appear to have closely followed changes in fashion but deployed them with care aware of the conservative and parochial nature of their clientele. The final chapter examines the history of one of Sheffield's leading furniture manufacturers, Johnson & Appleyards, and its role in replacing the tenets of the Sheffield code with cosmopolitan furnishing tastes.

## Preface

This thesis began as a means by which the writer could learn more about the manner in which furniture was made and acquired and the mechanics of production during the nineteenth century. As a dealer, the gleanings learnt from trade articles, journals, auction catalogues and overheard conversations were frequently misleading and uninformative as the writer lacked a context in which to place them or check their validity. Books and articles concerning nineteenth century furniture, especially the Victorian period, often appeared critical not just of the furniture but also of manufacturers methods of production and consumer taste. This seemed unjust, preferring to condemn by comparison with the tenets of aristocratic taste rather than accounting for the environment in which they operated. More recently, opinion has softened towards the period but has tended to concentrate upon the grand schemes: the furnishing of town halls and other public buildings. Taking a specific, largely nouveaux riches society, it is intended to explore the role of furniture at more modest levels.

The purpose of this study is to examine the structure and development of the Sheffield furniture industry during the nineteenth century in relation to the market it served and the nature of demands placed upon it. It seeks to determine whether the present dismissal of the Sheffield furniture industry as merely parochial is warranted or whether, in terms of stylistic merit or industrial structure, there were occasions or firms whose output gives just cause for reappraisal.

The study will examine Sheffield's social, economic and cultural heritage to establish the origins and nature of the patronage given to its furniture industry. Due to the area's long standing social and geographical isolation the market is closely identified with the character of the town. The Sheffield furniture industry received only spasmodic external patronage until the late nineteenth century. This raises the question of whether there existed a Sheffield taste formulated by local circumstances whose impact upon the industry was heightened due to its isolation.

The role of individuals, the aristocracy, civic and corporate bodies as patrons

of the Sheffield furniture industry during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will be reviewed to establish the part furniture played in local society as a means of advertising wealth, status and sophistication and whether this changed during the course of the century. Did Sheffield furnishing styles subscribe to a radical perspective as occurred in the field of its politics, was there a constant search for innovation, as existed within its principal industries or did furniture play little role in the community beyond the functional? Case studies of the furnishing of the town's leading guild hall, belonging to the Company of Cutlers' in Hallamshire, and the homes of two leading industrialists, Sir John Brown and Mark Firth, are carried out to explore the role furniture played in conveying concepts of wealth, grandeur and prestige.

A central hypothesis is that for the middle years of the nineteenth century in particular the areas outlined above contributed to the formulation of what I have called the Sheffield code. In effect, a series of criteria which ran counter to contemporary marketing strategies and the belief that furnishings of the time were acquired largely on the grounds of novelty, fashion and individuality. Goods which were perceived as fulfilling the code's criteria of durability, comfort, practicality, respectability, cleanliness, propriety and value for money remained popular in Sheffield long after it had been assumed that, stylistically, they had passed into general obsolescence. The instability of the economy with its heavy reliance upon manufacturing, the parochial and homogeneous nature of local society, the lack of a visual architectural heritage all helped foster a culture of caution and conservatism. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that Sheffield accumulated a sufficient number of affluent individuals to fully engage upon the Battle of the Styles.

For the majority, money spent on fashionable goods for the home might be better reserved for sustaining a business or family in times of difficulty, hence many subscribed to the tenets of the Sheffield code. Fashion was thus not of prime concern; more important was the creation of a comfortable, safe haven frequently the antithesis of the workplace. In effect, it will be seen that the code slowed down the demand for new fashions and enabled a wide range of second hand goods to be considered acceptable for the homes of the aspiring nouveaux riches and artisan.



It was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century when the benefit of better communications combined with increasing wealth and a growing regard for the town as a result of its prolific iron and steel works that the Sheffield furniture industry was able to secure patronage beyond the confines and tastes of the area. The study thus examines the nature of the local furniture industry and how it responded to the changing needs and demands of its clients locally and later nationally. It examines the variety of trades which formed the industry, the combinations in which they were offered, their size, location, longevity and flexibility. In terms of stylistic provision it is shown that the industry, as a whole, became quickly attuned to discerning and responding to changes in the volume, wealth, confidence and sophistication of its patrons.

This study hopes to demonstrate that the Sheffield furniture industry was flexible and, in part, able to produce work which satisfied both the conservative industrialist and the cosmopolitan patron. A case study concerning one of the town's principal furniture manufacturers, Johnson & Appleyards, will be used to demonstrate the Sheffield furniture industry's ability to harness the growing wealth of the town in order to break away from its immediate market and establish a national reputation free from the constraints of the Sheffield code.

Problems determining the quality of goods made by the Sheffield furniture industry have been encountered as little nineteenth century furniture remains in situ. Other than labelled items of furniture found in auction rooms the majority of evidence used in this study is indirect in nature. Trade directories, rate books, hand bills, advertisements, newspapers, contemporary accounts, inventories, photographs, sketches, sale catalogues, minute and account books have been used as source material. Requests to the trade and public for photographs, catalogues or any relevant material brought little return. To many it was a constant surprise that Sheffield had a furniture industry at all.

### **Acknowledgements**

My thanks are due to the staff of the Sheffield Libraries for their patience and considerable help. Also to Dr. Nyra Wilson, Julie MacDonald of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire, Martin Olive, Donald Welbourn and John Andrews for their expertise and Alexander Robinson for his help with the graphics. Many thanks are also due for the support given by family and friends and above all, to my husband, for his patience and encouragement.



## **Index of Tables and Illustrations.**

**Figure 1.1. Cabinet by Arthur Hayball.**

Page 28. Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition 1851.  
London 1851.

**Figure 1.2. Cabinet by Henry Hoole.**

Page 28. The Sheffield School of Design and the Great Exhibition,  
1851. John Kirby. Victorian Society Newsletter, Sept. 1979.

**Table 2.1. The Trades of the Sheffield Furniture Industry.**

Page 34.

**Figure 2.1. Graph Showing the Growth in the Number of Firms Belonging to the Sheffield Furniture Industry 1825 - 1899.**

Page 37.

**Figure 2.2. Diagrammatical Representation of the Changing Composition of the Sheffield Furniture Industry 1825 - 1899.**

Page 38 - 40.

**Table 2.2. Table Showing Estimated Average Survival Rates of Businesses in the Sheffield Furniture Industry During the Nineteenth Century.**

Page 41.

**Figure 2.3. Chart Showing the Percentage Variation Between the Number of Firms and Total Services Offered.**

Page 48.

**Table 2.3. Summary of Total Numbers of Workers Employed in Regional Furniture Industries of Sample Towns, 1841. Male & Female.**

Page 49.

## Index of Tables and Illustrations.

**Table 2.4.**      **Table Showing Rank of Provincial Towns as Determined by the Ratio of Furniture Workers: Population.**

Page 50.

**Table 2.5.**      **Table Showing the Use of Steam Power by the Sheffield Furniture Industry 1854.**

Page 54.

**Figure 2.4.**      **Map of Central Sheffield Showing locations of Sheffield Furniture Industry c.1825.**

Page 55.

**Figure 2.5.**      **Map of Central Sheffield Showing locations of Sheffield Furniture Industry c.1860.**

Page 57.

**Figure 2.6.**      **Map of Central Sheffield Showing locations of Sheffield Furniture Industry c.1900.**

Page 59.

**Figure 2.7.**      **Advertisement for Thomas Cockings.**

Page 62.      White's Directory of Sheffield, 1876.

**Figure 2.8.**      **Advertisement for James Dewsnap.**

Page 63.      Kelly's Directory of Sheffield, 1883.

**Figure 2.9.**      **Advertisement for Samuel Laycock & Sons.**

Page 63.      White's Directory of Sheffield, 1876.

## **Index of Tables and Illustrations.**

**Figure 2.10. Two suites by Zachariah Jackson.**

Page 66. Henry Spencer's Sale Catalogue, July 1992.  
John Walsh & Co. Sale Catalogue, January 1999.

**Table 2.6. Table Showing Number of Women Employed in Sheffield Furniture Industry, 1891.**

Page 69.

**Figure 2.11. Changing Size and Composition of the Sheffield Furniture Industry 1879 - 1899.**

Page 72.

**Figure 2.12. Graph Showing Comparison Between Numbers of Cabinet Makers & Furniture Brokers 1825 - 1899.**

Page 73.

**Table 3.1. Chart Showing the number of Subscribers to Sheraton's Publications in Sheffield & Neighbouring Communities.**

Page 89.

**Figure 3.1. James Cawthorne's cypher back chairs.**

Page 92. Daily Telegraph 20 May 1994.

**Figure 3.2 a - Hand bill depicting John Manuel's Public Furnishing and  
c Carpet Warehouse.**

Page 101 - 102. Private Collection.

**Figure 3.3. George H. Hovey, broadsheet.**

Page 102. Sheffield City Libraries. Miscellaneous Papers.

## Index of Tables and Illustrations.

**Figure 4.1 - 2. Side view of the Master's Chair made by George Eadon for the Company of Cutlers'. Detail of carving.**

Page 117. Private collection.

**Figure 4. 3- 4. Side chair made by Edward Eadon and detail of carving.**

Page 119. Private collection.

**Figure 5.1. Portraits of Sir John Brown & Mark Firth.**

Page 127. Sheffield City Libraries.

**Figure 5.2. Endcliffe Hall.**

Page 131. Hunter's Hallamshire, Gatty Edition 1869.

**Figure 5.3. Oakbrook.**

Page 131. Quality of Sheffield. November 1984.

**Figure 5.4. Map showing the westward progress of Sir John Brown & Mark Firth.**

Page 133.

**Figure 5.5. Endcliffe Hall. The Ballroom or Saloon.**

Page 135. Endcliffe Hall Sale Catalogue. Maple & Co. London. 1893.

**Figure 5.6. Endcliffe Hall. The Morning Room.**

Page 135. Endcliffe Hall Sale Catalogue. Maple & Co. London. 1893.

## **Index of Tables and Illustrations.**

- Figure 5.7. Endcliffe Hall. The State Bedroom.**  
Page 137. Endcliffe Hall Sale Catalogue. Maple & Co. London. 1893.
- Figure 5.8. Design for the State Bed, Endcliffe.**  
Page 137. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.
- Figure 5.9. - Designs for the Mantle Piece & Wardrobe, State Bedroom, Endcliffe.**  
Page 138. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.
- Figure 5.11. - Designs for the Dressing Table and Bedroom Suite, State Bedroom, Endcliffe.**  
Page 139. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.
- Figure 5. 13 - Design for a sofa by George Eadon in the Gothic style. Similar design by Richard Charles of Warrington in 1867.**  
Page 143. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65. Thornton, Peter. Authentic Decor 1620 - 1920.
- Figure 5.15. Plan of Endcliffe Hall.**  
Page 147. Endcliffe Hall Sale Catalogue. Maple & Co. London. 1893.
- Figure 5.16. Photograph of the Dining Room, Endcliffe Hall, 1893.**  
Page 148. Endcliffe Hall Sale Catalogue. Maple & Co. London. 1893.
- Figure 5. 17. Design for the mirror - back sofa, Endcliffe Hall.**  
Page 148. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.

## **Index of Tables and Illustrations.**

**Figure 5. 18. Designs for a dining table, Endcliffe Hall.**

Page 149. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.

**Figure 5. 19 a - d. Designs for dining room chairs, Endcliffe Hall.**

Page 151. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.

**Figure 5.20. Photograph of the Drawing Room, Endcliffe Hall, 1893.**

Page 152. Endcliffe Hall Sale Catalogue. Maple & Co. London. 1893.

**Figure 5.21. Plan of the Drawing Room, Endcliffe Hall.**

Page 152. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.

**Figure 5.22 Selection of occasional furniture for the Drawing Room, Endcliffe Hall.**

Page 154. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.

**Figure 5.23 - 24. Elevation of the Drawing Room featuring a sofa and display cabinet, Endcliffe Hall.**

Page 155. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.

**Figure 5.25. Side chairs and centre table for the Drawing Room, Endcliffe Hall.**

Page 157. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.

**Figure 5.26 Design for Sir John Brown's bed, Endcliffe Hall.**

Page 159. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.

## **Index of Tables and Illustrations.**

- Figure 5.27. Design for a half tester bed by Rogers & Dear, London**  
Page 159. Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition 1851.  
London 1851.
- Figure 5. 28. Design for a wardrobe for Sir John Brown, Endcliffe Hall.**  
Page 160. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.
- Figure 5.29. Design for a wardrobe by Messrs. Trollope and exhibited at the Paris Exhibition 1855.**  
Page 160. Yapp, Art Industry 1879.
- Figure 5.30 Design for a wardrobe, Endcliffe Hall.**  
Page 163. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.
- Figure 5.31 Design for a bedroom suite ottoman, Endcliffe Hall.**  
Page 163. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.
- Figure 5.32. Design for a pelmet and curtain arrangement, Endcliffe Hall.**  
Page 164. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.
- Figure 5.33. Design for a double washstand, Endcliffe Hall.**  
Page 164. Sheffield City Libraries, Archive Dept. AP 38 1 - 65.
- Figure 5.34. Oakbrook Estate, Sale Plan 1916.**  
Page 172. Sheffield City Libraries, Local Studies Dept.

## Index of Tables and Illustrations.

- Figure 6.1. View of Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. Rotherham.**  
Page 183. Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ) up - to - Date, 1897.
- Figure 6. 2. View of Johnson & Appleyards premises on Leopold St. Sheffield.**  
Page 183. Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ) up - to - Date, 1897.
- Figure 6. 3. Sketch of the Sydney St. cabinet works.**  
Page 190. Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ) up - to - Date, 1897.
- Figure 6. 4. Section of a show room, Leopold St.**  
Page 190. Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ) up - to - Date, 1897.
- Figure 6. 5. Show room of French style furniture, Leopold St.**  
Page 192. Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ) up - to - Date, 1897.
- Figure 6. 6. Show room of oak drawing and dining room furniture, Leopold St.**  
Page 192. Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ) up - to - Date, 1897.
- Figure 6. 7. Interior of Park Grange.**  
Page 193. Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ) up - to - Date, 1897.
- Figure 6. 8. Paper trade label, black on green, Johnson & Appleyards & J. Appleyard & Sons.**  
Page 193 Private collection.



## Index of Tables and Illustrations.

### **Figure 6.9. Machine floor, Sydney St. Works.**

Page 195. Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ) up - to - Date, 1897.

### **Figure 6.10. Cabinet makers' floor, Sydney St. Works.**

Page 195. Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ) up - to - Date, 1897.

# Contents

Page No.

## Chapter One

<b>Historical Overview.....</b>	<b>1</b>
---------------------------------	----------

## Chapter Two

<b>The Structure of the Sheffield Furniture Industry.....</b>	<b>33</b>
---	-----------

## Chapter Three

<b>The Formative Influences on Domestic Furniture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield.....</b>	<b>76</b>
--	-----------

## Chapter Four

<b>The Furnishing of The Company of Cutlers' in Hallamshire Hall.....</b>	<b>111</b>
---	------------

## Chapter Five

<b>The Furnishing of Endcliffe Hall and Oakbrook - Homes of Sir John Brown and Mark Firth.....</b>	<b>125</b>
--	------------

## Chapter Six

<b>Breaking the Code: The Story of Johnson &amp; Appleyards Ltd.....</b>	<b>178</b>
--	------------

<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>204</b>
------------------------	------------

<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>207</b>
--------------------------	------------

## Chapter One.

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

This chapter will place the development of the Sheffield furniture industry within the more general context of local trends and developments over the last 200 years. It will examine various aspects of Sheffield's infrastructure and enterprise to establish the nature, tone and variety of patronage given to the local furniture industry. By definition some aspects are difficult to quantify and analyse but the purpose is to establish an overall picture of Sheffield's appreciation of the decorative arts. It explores the origins, relevance and importance of such concepts to the community and how, in turn, they influenced the form and development of the local furniture industry. Attention is drawn to certain features which, in themselves, were neither unique or unusual but together contributed to an environment which, I believe, influenced the manner in which Sheffield's middle class homes, corporate and civic buildings were furnished during the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Attention is drawn to Sheffield's parochialism, its physical and social isolation and the reluctance of many of its inhabitants to travel. The composition and regulation of local society are factors which it is considered influenced the way in which furniture was employed both publicly and privately. The patterns of economic organisation are examined as it is felt they had a substantial impact upon the demands placed upon the Sheffield furniture industry and its output insofar as enduring workshop practices modified social competition until the establishment of large, impersonal steelworks in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century. The nature of educational provision in respect of the arts and related fields is also considered to reflect the importance and value such subjects were given within Sheffield society.

Birmingham is used as a means of comparison and contrast with Sheffield in the areas of social and economic diversity and local administration. Much has been written about the two cities which shared many industrial and

---

<sup>1</sup> Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, p. 35 referring to Patrick Geddes, Cities In Evolution, speaks of "at least five elements in economic life which must be taken into account in any comparative study of cities: 1) range of occupations, 2) size of industrial undertakings, 3) character of local industrial relations, 4) the extent of economic mobility, 5) vulnerability of the community to economic fluctuations".

commercial traits<sup>2</sup> yet differed widely in the manner of their social integration and organisation.<sup>3</sup> Birmingham and Sheffield shared similar backgrounds insofar as they were manufacturing centres concentrating upon various aspects of metal production and engineering carried out by skilled workmen in small workshops. However, in time, Birmingham acquired a wider trading base, stronger social and political leadership, a more diverse and cosmopolitan society and a municipal culture which facilitated and encouraged the development and expression of civic pride within the city.

### The Sheffield Code

In respect of the Sheffield furniture industry the features outlined above - topographical, economic, social and cultural - combined to produce what I have called the "Sheffield code" - in effect a set of requirements which furniture had to fulfil and which countered the notion that the nineteenth century was typified by a demand for novelty. Above all, the Sheffield code required furniture to be practical. It also had to be comfortable and durable and fulfil perceptions concerning cleanliness, respectability, propriety and value for money. Such considerations took precedence over changes in fashion and locally diminished demands for specially commissioned designs beyond personalised embellishments.<sup>4</sup> Other than acquiring the occasional trophy item from prestigious exhibitions most furnishing requirements appear to have been met by the work of in - house draughtsmen. Surviving nineteenth century house sale catalogues indicate little involvement with novelty items made in materials such as papier - mache or coal or any great homage towards frivolity or curios acquired from travels abroad.

It will be seen that considerable recycling of furniture via brokers took place and that, in Sheffield at least, there was a strong practice of acquiring second

---

<sup>2</sup> R.J. Morris & Richard Rodger Eds. The Victorian City 1820 - 1914. p.31.

<sup>3</sup> Dennis Smith, Conflict And Compromise. Class formation in English Society 1830 - 1914. 1982. The nature and influences upon both Sheffield and Birmingham are dealt with here in great detail.

<sup>4</sup> "... Adaption rather than innovation was the main characteristic of their design practice." Writing about the firm of furniture manufacturers J. Clarke of High Wycombe between 1939 - 1965 but which equally applied to the Sheffield furniture industry of the nineteenth century. Judy Attfield, 'Give 'em something dark and heavy': The Role of Design in the Material Culture of Popular British Furniture, 1939 - 1965. Journal of Design History Vol. 9 No. 3 1966 p. 198

- hand goods when new furniture may have been too costly. The high number of brokers would suggest second - hand furniture which fulfilled the requirements of the Sheffield code was preferred to new goods of fashionable but inferior quality when compared on a cost basis. Second - hand furniture was often advertised as having been manufactured by reputable local cabinet makers and coming from prestigious homes giving it a status which new goods could not match. The homes<sup>5</sup> of many skilled craftsmen and artisans were enhanced by the acquisition of goods from brokers enabling an element of comfort and cleanliness to be achieved in sharp contrast to their working environment.<sup>6</sup> Little stigma appears to have been attached to acquiring goods from brokers as their premises appeared in the prime shopping areas of the town. Thus, it may be inferred they supplied goods to the middle - classes thereby reducing the demand for new fashions from cabinet makers.

For much of the nineteenth century, Sheffield's middle - class residents appear to have been content to return to comfortable homes equipped with solid, if not fashionable, furniture. Few men aspired to eclectic or sophisticated furnishing schemes preferring the fulfilment of more basic requirements, namely comfort, a sense of well - being and permanence, the antithesis of their working environment.<sup>7</sup> The code enabled homes to be furnished in a variety of styles in a manner which delayed the impetus for acquiring new fashions. The code evolved as a result of caution and conservatism on the part of Sheffield householders and also as a result of living in an architecturally constrained environment. Aggrandisement in terms of building or furnishing activity remained a largely unknown concept in Sheffield. The furniture industry thus adapted the styles and forms of furniture it made to address the requirements of their market.

It was not until the mid - nineteenth century that Sheffield industrialists became sufficiently confident, wealthy and competitive to both want and acquire homes built and furnished in a manner transcending mere homeliness as vehicles for themselves, their businesses and social

---

<sup>5</sup> J.S. Fletcher, *A Picturesque History of Yorkshire*, 1899 concluded Sheffield's prevailing characteristic "... is utility - stern, hard, and practical." David Hey, *A History of Sheffield*. 1998. p.194.

<sup>6</sup> Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire. Design and Society Since 1750*. 1986. p.99ff.

<sup>7</sup> Forty, *ibid.* p.102 - 104.



aspirations. The comfort and familiarity of the Sheffield code were slowly replaced by formality, fashion and conspicuous consumption.<sup>8</sup> As Hey argues:

These [ Brown's, Cammell's, Firth's, Hadfield's, Vickers] Sheffield firms became national names in the middle and late Victorian period. They were amongst the largest companies in the country. The Lower Don Valley was the scene of continuous experiments and intense competition, as firms within walking distance of each other battled to make armour - plate that could not be penetrated by shells, or shells that could effectively tear into the defence provided by armour - plate.<sup>9</sup>

### **Historical Geography**

In the middle of the nineteenth century although acknowledged as a "great seat of cutlery and other hardware and steel manufactures", Sheffield was nevertheless described as a "large and populous market town and borough" whose virtues lay not in itself but in the beauty of the surrounding countryside and its centrality between the recognised major centres of Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham and Leeds.<sup>10</sup>

Moorlands, steep and wooded terrain to the north, west and south of the town, valleys dissected by the fast flowing rivers of the Don, Sheaf, Porter, Rivelin and Loxley and flood plains to the east had provided Sheffield with the means to develop its cutlery industry during the eighteenth century but later hindered the development of its iron and steel industries<sup>11</sup> and made the transportation of people and goods both arduous and costly.<sup>12</sup> Such difficulties were only slowly remedied due to the vested interests of absentee landowners, the lack of foresight, finance and organisation on the part of the townspeople and the outside world seeing little benefit in establishing contact

---

<sup>8</sup> See: Chapter Six - Breaking the Code: The Story of Johnson & Appleyards.

<sup>9</sup> David Hey, A History of Sheffield. 1998. p.155.

<sup>10</sup> White's Directory for Sheffield 1868. p.5.

<sup>11</sup> K. C. Barraclough, Sheffield Steel. 1976. p. 8 - 9

<sup>12</sup> A.W. Goodfellow, Sheffield Turnpikes in the Eighteenth Century. Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society (T.H.A.S.). Vol.V pt.2. pp. 71 - 90.

with a remote and unattractive town.

Throughout the eighteenth century the few roads in and around Sheffield were extremely poor, dissuading all but necessary travel. In 1769, that between Sheffield and Rotherham was described by Arthur Young as "execrably bad, very stony, and excessively full of holes".<sup>13</sup> Internal communications were no better with the town located on several steep slopes, linked by narrow streets, "badly pitched, the channel running down the centre of them, and with few causeways flagged".<sup>14</sup> As late as 1848 there were only five streets within the town over forty feet wide.<sup>15</sup> The main north - south roads were six miles to the east of Sheffield, following the Rother valley from Barnsley to Mansfield.<sup>16</sup> It was not until 1760 that the Leeds to London stage coaches began stopping in Sheffield<sup>17</sup> utilising the turnpike roads which from 1756 began to provide reasonable links with the outside world<sup>18</sup>. They remained the only means of transporting finished goods out of the town until 1819 when the pack - horse journey of twenty miles to the inland port of Bawtry was replaced by a canal enabling barges to travel directly from the Sheffield basin to the sea and continental markets.<sup>19</sup> However, problems remained with the canal until improvements were made in 1889 which finally provided sufficient space for large logs of timber to be handled in the basin. Nevertheless, some of the larger cabinet makers continued to travel to Liverpool docks in order to secure the best and largest logs arriving from the Americas.<sup>20</sup>

After much opposition from the Duke of Norfolk and the canal owning companies railway links were established in 1838 with a line linking Sheffield and Rotherham. This remained the only link between Sheffield and the Midland railway network until 1870 when a main line from London was

---

<sup>13</sup> J. Edward Vickers, A Popular History of Sheffield. 3rd. ed. p.46.

<sup>14</sup> Rev. Alfred Gatty, Past and Present, quoting Samuel Roberts, p. 117 - 118.

<sup>15</sup> Sidney Pollard, A History of Labour in Sheffield. 1959. p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> A.W. Goodfellow, The Development of Communications. Sheffield and its Region. A Scientific & Historical Survey. 1956. p.162

<sup>17</sup> Goodfellow, ibid. p.164.

<sup>18</sup> Barraclough, ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Alan W. Goodfellow, Sheffield's Waterways to the Sea. T.H.A.S., V, 1942, p.p. 246 - 253 .

<sup>20</sup> The late Mr Joseph Appleyard, of Conisborough. The Cabinet Maker & Art Furnisher. August 1st 1890. See: Chapter Six.

completed. Meanwhile, the Sheffield to Manchester line, opened in 1845, provided access to the lucrative American markets, with a link to Lincoln being completed two years later. A second trans - Pennine route was built between 1884 - 1893 enabling Sheffield to largely overcome its geographical isolation<sup>21</sup> although still in need of a comprehensive civic infrastructure to encourage inward investment of people, finance and ideas.

Sheffield's isolation was compounded by an absence of neighbouring communities with which to establish social, economic and cultural links. This created a parochial and homogeneous society reliant upon, and often content with<sup>22</sup> its own limited resources. The extent of Sheffield's isolation may be understood when it is compared with Birmingham, which shared a similar industrial background and rate of growth during the nineteenth century.

Birmingham was at the centre of a regional and, indeed, national network of communications which encouraged the development of a wide range of trades and easy influx of immigrant labour and ideas. Within four miles of Birmingham, and gradually swallowed up by it, were the settlements of Aston, Northfield, Erdington, Moseley, Castle Bromwich, Bordesley, Stetchford and Saltley. Less than ten miles away were the market towns of Solihull, Halesowen and Coleshill and within twenty miles were the towns of Lichfield, Tamworth, Nuneaton, Coventry, Leamington, Warwick, Alcester, Droitwich.

By contrast, apart from Rotherham, five miles to the north - east, there were no other major centres of population or activity within twelve miles of Sheffield. Chesterfield to the south, Barnsley to the north, Doncaster to the north - east and Worksop to the south - east formed a semi-circle of market towns, providing alternative centres for the region's trading activities, more accessible and pleasant than Sheffield's polluted and over - crowded centre. By the 1830s the parish of Sheffield extended over 22,370 acres, consisting of a multitude of small working - class villages and hamlets containing communities of cutlers, grinders, colliers and farmers. Twelve villages and forty seven hamlets were slowly absorbed but none were sufficiently strong or

---

<sup>21</sup> Alan W. Goodfellow, *The Development of Communications*, *ibid.* p.p.161 - 167.

<sup>22</sup> David Hey, *A History of Sheffield*, 1998, p.212 quoting George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, 1937: "... its inhabitants, who want it [Sheffield] to be pre - eminent in everything ..."



distinctive to inject new ideas or values into the town. Arduous and costly transport costs ensured most furnishing needs were met by the local industry whose monopoly remained virtually unchallenged until the mid nineteenth century. Improved communications and growing wealth then encouraged London companies to begin advertising their produce via local newspapers and catalogues.<sup>23</sup>

### The Lack of Aristocratic Involvement

Although much of the land in and around Sheffield was owned by a number of influential aristocrats they played little active part in the life of the town preferring to remove profits from their interests to be deployed elsewhere. There was no resident aristocracy to set the social tone.<sup>24</sup> Unlike most towns and cities Sheffield lacked the networks of aristocracy and sophisticated merchants to inject and inspire a range of tastes, interests and financial capabilities into local society. Traditionally, aristocratic employment of craftsmen and artists of national renown and local skill had assisted in the transmission of new ideas and styles to the middle classes. Sanford and Townsend<sup>25</sup> show Sheffield to have been enmeshed by a wealthy and powerful aristocracy during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but who did not actively involve themselves in the life of the town. To the north east was the seat of the Earl Fitzwilliam at Wentworth Woodhouse, nearby was Lord Wharnccliffe of Wortley Hall whose family was raised to the peerage in 1826. Fourteen miles south west was Chatsworth, home of the Dukes of Devonshire since the late seventeenth century. To the south east, into North Nottinghamshire, was Welbeck Abbey and Clumber Park belonging to the Dukes of Portland and Newcastle. The Duke of Norfolk, whose principle residence had originally been Worksop Manor but from the 1830s was Arundel Castle in Sussex, held 40% of his estates in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

The national influence of these men was immense. F.M.L. Thompson<sup>26</sup> lists

---

<sup>23</sup> Eg: Heal & Son's, Tottenham Court Road.

<sup>24</sup> Caroline Reid, Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield, Unpublished Ph.D. University of Sheffield, 1976, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> J.L. Sanford & M. Townsend, "The Great Governing Families of England" London, 1865.

<sup>26</sup> English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century, Routledge & Keegan Paul, London, 1963.

Norfolk, Fitzwilliam, Devonshire and Newcastle as amongst the eight most politically influential peers in the early 1830s. Although Wharnccliffe was an important Tory organiser in and around Sheffield and Norfolk and Fitzwilliam owned large areas of the city few were personally involved in the life of Sheffield. These three exercised great power nationally, regionally and within Sheffield itself, actively challenging any development in the area which threatened their income. The creation of Sheffield's water and rail links was inhibited by large landowners throughout the eighteenth century whilst redevelopment within the town itself was hindered by the interests of the Dukes of Norfolk acting as Lords of the Manor and the governing authority of Sheffield market until 1899 when the rights were sold to the Council.<sup>27</sup>

The absence of an active aristocracy investing the area with capital, materials, ideas and patronage left the town with little social leadership or focus. During the eighteenth century the distinctions between the classes in Sheffield were more blurred and interchangeable than in the nineteenth century. Lacking the amenities and civilities expected by men of wealth and culture, Sheffield had little that could dissuade successful entrepreneurs from leaving once their wealth had been made or of attracting new blood and investments to the area.<sup>28</sup> During the period 1680 - 1740 successful manufacturers and professionals such as the Rawsons, Staniforths, Fells and Parkers had set the social tone of the area. However, the practice of retiring from the area became so rife that the town's social and intellectual development lagged far behind its industrial progress which became the domain of the little master and his workers.<sup>29</sup>

"The absence of the outward trappings of civic dignity was closely connected with the social structure of the town. There was not yet [as late as 1850] that large gap between merchants and manufacturers on the one hand and workmen on the other which had become common in the textile and coal - mining areas. There were few wealthy manufacturers, and the transition from workman to master was a common occurrence. This homogeneity of Sheffield society marks off

---

<sup>27</sup> G.P. Jones, Civic Administration, Sheffield and its Region, British Association for the Advancement of Science. 1956. p. 182 .

<sup>28</sup> Caroline Reid, ibid. 1976, p.21.

<sup>29</sup> Mary Walton, Sheffield. Its Story and Achievements. 1948. p.103. Reid, ibid.

the developments in Sheffield from those in  
other British industrial areas . . .”<sup>30</sup>

This circularity of circumstance was deeply ingrained and difficult to overcome. In the nineteenth century industrialists donated money for good causes but little action was taken to create long term policies for tackling social problems. Donations were made to many causes but, as most industrialists were self - made men who recognised the deprivations of physical hardship, they were more concerned with saving bodies than pleasing the eye. Gifts to the town were of a practical rather than aesthetic nature. Little thought was given to the style of architecture involved in the building of a school or hospital. Unlike cities such as Manchester and Birmingham, the industrialists of Sheffield made a far weaker impact upon the life of their city.

‘...the range of their gifts was narrow, and...their immediate aims were merely benevolent; they knew little about the aesthetic values which should glorify the practical aim. They would give, for instance, a church or a hospital without knowing anything about architecture or the worth of a good architect. . . . Mark Firth gave a park. . . Sir John Brown gave a church and encouraged educational provision...Thomas Jessop a hospital for women. . . .William Edgar Allen gave a library building to the University. . . .None of these benefactions include services to literature . . .No patron of artists, sculptors or playwrights attracted a group of talented men round him. <sup>31</sup>

Little consideration was given to the provision of facilities which may have made the town more attractive to outsiders or could have persuaded the successful entrepreneur to keep his experience, capital and knowledge in the town. Theatres, museums, galleries, assembly rooms, libraries were all slow to appear and then often housed in utilitarian buildings or rented rooms (q.v.) For much of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries carvers and gilders remained a major means by which the Sheffield public saw artwork as they

---

<sup>30</sup> Sidney Pollard, A History of Labour in Sheffield. 1959. p.3.

<sup>31</sup> Walton, ibid. p.p.225 - 226 .



diversified into print selling<sup>32</sup> occasionally acting as publishers of prints<sup>33</sup> and mounting exhibitions of artists' work. As much of its wealth was removed Sheffield historically did not possess the extremes of capital common to other industrial communities. This curtailed both public and personal commissions to architects, builders and cabinet makers. Consequently, Sheffield did not acquire the architectural variety or sophistication common to other cities. In the commissioning of architects, most of Sheffield's principle Victorian buildings were designed by one of two local firms, Hadfields and Flocktons. It was rare for public buildings to be designed by London architects although a competition to choose a design for the new town hall in 1891 was won by E.W. Mountford from London.<sup>34</sup> There remained few opportunities for fresh ideas or styles to be introduced into Sheffield's architectural vocabulary.

### **Civic Culture and Development**

Many pre - industrial forms of society were adapted to forms of life centred upon the county and local neighbourhood being controlled by a body of local dignitaries from the aristocracy, professional classes and petite bourgeoisie.

As industrialisation and urbanisation spread there arose a substantial number of merchants and manufacturers in the rapidly growing communities who were disassociated from the aristocratic protocol of county networks. Tensions and conflicts developed as the various old and new bodies sought ways of asserting and maintaining influence over communities requiring new forms of management. Social, political and economic control became divided between varying combinations of:

“ . . . groups of industrialists, aristocrats, gentry, Anglican clergy, Dissenting ministers and other professional men together with members of the petty bourgeoisie and artisan communities. The balance of power and forms of solidarity within and amongst these groups varied considerably

---

<sup>32</sup> R. Ramsay, Carver & Gilder, "Capital Collection of Prints" Sheffield Iris 27 July 1798. George Eadon, Carving, Gilding, Cabinet, Upholstery & Plate - Glass Establishment. Announcement concerning " G.E.'s Stock of Paintings, Engravings . . . at his Showrooms . . ." Sheffield Iris 10th April 1832

<sup>33</sup> Robert Ramsay - 1798 published 2 mezzotint portraits of Rev. J. Wilkinson, Vicar of Sheffield and Robert A. Athorpe, engraved by John Raphael Smith. Sheffield Museums Collection.

<sup>34</sup> David Hey, A History Of Sheffield. 1998. p.178.

Such diversity gave the ruling bodies of newly formed industrial societies a breadth of experience, dynamism and networks with which to govern their communities. The checks and balances provided by such diversity were not present in Sheffield's early Councils leaving it more vulnerable to the influence of a small but powerful land - owning aristocracy and the machinations of weak and divided leadership. As already indicated, exacerbated by the town's isolation Sheffield's limited social and economic diversity restricted administrative strength and vision.

Unlike Sheffield, governance in Birmingham was exercised by co - operating, formal associations both for the pursuit of reform and for the protection of the status quo. Civic organisation in Birmingham was much more highly developed amongst all classes creating a means of unifying society whereas throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Sheffield's civic bodies lacked such co - ordination and authority. They failed to provide the amenities and civilities a rapidly expanding and industrialised population required<sup>36</sup> or the trappings of municipal dignity and civility common to other communities. Authority was vested in several independent bodies, each with responsibility for a particular area of civic life and none willing to relinquish power. Improvement schemes were hindered by a lack of co - operation between frequently antagonistic bodies<sup>37</sup> and hostility from rate payers who feared an increase in taxation more than the appalling and dull conditions in which many lived and worked.<sup>38</sup>

Whereas Birmingham developed a strong council able to tackle the problems

---

<sup>35</sup> Dennis Smith, Conflict and Compromise: Class formation in English Society 1830 - 1914. 1982 pp. 10.

<sup>36</sup> "The apparatus for the government of Sheffield, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in part traditional and in part recent, was neither adequate in extent nor sufficiently co - ordinated to meet the problems arising from the growth of population and increasing industrialisation". G.P. Jones, Civic Administration, p. 181, Sheffield and its Region. 1956. Walton, ibid. p.167

<sup>37</sup> Members of the town and church burgesses, the master and warden of the Cutlers' Company, all held property in trust for the benefit of the town and also sat as Improvement Commissioners on bodies concerned with "cleansing, lighting, watching, and otherwise bettering it" The Builder. Sept. 21st, 1861, p. 641 .

<sup>38</sup> Pollard, ibid. p.10

of rapid growth and industrialisation, largely supported by the various factions within its society, Sheffield's council remained weak, ineffective and divisive, lacking in "civic drive".<sup>39</sup> Birmingham had a strong council which consisted of formalised, cross - class and cross - cultural committees which provided a means for the middle classes and gentry to meet and exchange views. An analysis of the first Sheffield Council of 1843 shows that its members largely consisted of 'new' and inexperienced men:

'Only two are described simply as 'gentlemen'. The retailers had four representatives, the doctors two and there was an architect, an insurance agent, an auctioneer and an optician; two farmers, two millers, a nurseryman and a maltster represented the rural outposts. All the rest were engaged in some kind of manufacture or wholesale trade; and while the leathersmiths, the brewers and the plumbers had two each, there were fifteen engaged in the heavy trades, eight in the cutlery, two in silver and two in coal. The control of affairs was passing to the industrial magnates.'<sup>40</sup>

There were no aristocrats and too few gentry or professional classes to provide an alternative or more cultured perspective to civic development. From its inception, the Council was in conflict with older authorities such as the Town Trustees and the private utility companies for the control of water, power, light, highway administration and transport.<sup>41</sup> Council members were collectively weak and failed to give civic organisation and planning a high priority. They were reluctant to agree any improvement to the town's infrastructure which might entail an increase in rates. Sheffield does not appear to have considered itself "poor" and unable to afford such improvements but the concept of tangible representations of civic pride and progress seem simply not to have been considered worthwhile. It appears to have wholeheartedly embraced the nineteenth century agenda of civic parsimony. Casualness, informality and amateurism persisted in Sheffield's civic organisations<sup>42</sup> long after other communities of similar size had replaced

---

<sup>39</sup> Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1990. p. 72. Dennis Smith, ibid. p. 10

<sup>40</sup> Walton, ibid. p. 177.

<sup>41</sup> Walton, ibid. p. 202.

<sup>42</sup> Brian Barber, Sheffield Borough Council 1843 - 1893, The History of the City of Sheffield - Politics p. 25 quoting Alderman Webster's description of the Council's powers in 1864.



them with professionalism and formality:

The population of Sheffield is, for so large a town, unique in its character, in fact it more closely resembles that of a village than a town, for over wide areas each person appears acquainted with every other, and to be interested with that other's concern.<sup>43</sup>

Criticism from within the town and ridicule from without <sup>44</sup> had little effect in spurring Sheffield to undertake building schemes or duties to either improve the well - being of the community or aesthetically enhance the environment. The shortfall in the Council's public - spiritedness<sup>45</sup> denied the town any leadership or example in the establishment of a civic architectural vocabulary enhanced by appropriate furnishing schemes. As late as 1897 the Council occupied an ad hoc collection of rented rooms scattered about the town as the old town hall was too small and plans to replace them with prestigious purpose built premises were vigorously objected to by many councillors as a waste of time and money. Following such a lead few local institutions felt it necessary to improve the quality of their own buildings. When it was finally agreed to build a new hall: <sup>46</sup>

Expenditure on the aesthetic aspects of the building was grudging - marble (at a cost of £2,335) was only used on the grand staircase after the personal intervention of Sir Frederick Mappin.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Local Government Board, Report on the Small - Pox Epidemic of 1887 - 8. 1889. Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities. 1990. p.72

<sup>44</sup> " . . . Everything is mean, petty and narrow in the extreme. What a contrast to Leeds! Sheffield would do well to spend half a million on improvements." A.J. Mundella , Liberal M.P. for Brightside, Sheffield, writing to Robert Leader, proprietor and editor of the Sheffield Independent Oct 1871. Barber, *ibid.* p.51.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Moore, Mayor of Sheffield 1871 criticising the Council for abandoning plans to purchase the local water company. Sheffield Independent 14 April 1870. William Leng, editor of the Sheffield Daily Telegraph supported Moore's unsuccessful attempt 'to lift the wheel of the car of municipal progress out of the miserable rut in which it is' Sheffield Daily Telegraph 19 April 1870. Barber, *ibid.* p.50

<sup>46</sup> The furniture was designed and manufactured by Johnson & Appleyard Sheffield and Rotherham (Illustrated). Up -to-date. p.147 f.f.

<sup>47</sup> Helen Mathers, The City of Sheffield 1893 - 1926. The History of the City of Sheffield - Politics p.54.

As late as 1861, the pollution and invidious condition of the town's roads, rivers, buildings and sanitation were such that they inspired little concern or appreciation of the arts when day to day existence had to be endured in often appalling conditions - even when the hyperbole of lurid description is diluted:

“We have surveyed Birmingham, Stafford, Wolverhampton, Newcastle - upon - Tyne, Hull, Shrewsbury, and other towns; but Sheffield, in all matters relating to sanitary appliances, is behind them all. The three rivers sluggishly flowing through the town are made the conduit of all imaginable filth.... These rivers.... are polluted with dirt, dust, dung, and carrion; the embankments are ragged and ruined; here and there overhung with privies; and often the site of ash and offal heaps..... A plank bridge over the Sheaf here shows dead dogs and cats floating on the slimy waters.... The ponds themselves are lakes of slush. Here a heterogeneous mass of scabby looking cottages, isolated dung heaps and isolated privies, and detached and semi - detached petty factories.... lie and jostle against each other in this stagnant valley of ponds. In the streets channels are cut in the pavements to convey the fluid wash from *every house* across the footways into the flowing gutters”...<sup>48</sup>

It was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century that Sheffield began to undertake the necessary improvements to bring its civic infrastructure in line with its industrial development.<sup>49</sup> The failure of civic and corporate bodies to provide elegant, well designed public buildings denied the town's furniture industry the opportunity to fulfil prestigious commissions to be the subject of public scrutiny, education and emulation.

“... Sheffield was last among the great towns of England to seriously take in hand the improvement of its streets and their architecture... Ten years ago [1885] Sheffield bore the reputation of a very dirty town, and conspicuous more than anything else for its narrow, crooked and inconvenient streets, and the shabbiness of its

---

<sup>48</sup> The Builder, Sept. 21st, 1861.

<sup>49</sup> A.J. Hunt, The Morphology and Growth of Sheffield, Sheffield and its Region, 1956. p.228.



### The Persistence of Workshop Practices and the Homogeneity of Local Society

Whilst poverty remained widespread in Sheffield<sup>51</sup> and the town lacked direct contact with the aristocracy there was less distinction between the working and middle classes than usually occurred in such large communities. In 1843, G.C. Holland observed of Sheffield:

‘The middle classes are a greater proportion of the population than in these towns [Manchester, Leeds, Stockport]. The merchants and manufacturers among us are not men of large capital, exercising immense influence. They are very far from treading on the heels of the aristocracy....The town has little to boast in the cultivation of science, or in the encouragement given to the fine arts: we fear that to exhibit a taste for either, rather deteriorates than improves the position of an individual in the estimation of the public. The acquisition of wealth is accompanied with little solicitude to exalt the intellectual character.’<sup>52</sup>

Gatty noted a considerable shortage of:

“. . . the merchant, [and] the substantial burgher, such as was to be found at Doncaster and York, and in many other English towns now far below Sheffield in commercial importance.” <sup>53</sup>

Masters with the desire and entrepreneurial skills to expand their businesses were severely hampered by the restrictions set down by the Company of Cutlers of Hallamshire. The activities of the cutlery and blade industries were

---

<sup>50</sup> Sheffield and its Streets. Special Supplement to the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent. 8th December, 1895.

<sup>51</sup> Gatty, Hallamshire. p.148: A survey taken in 1615 described Sheffield's population of 2207 “as very poor with barely ten people owning sufficient grounds that would keep a cow and 725 being classed as beggars.”

<sup>52</sup> G.C. Holland, The Vital Statistics of Sheffield. 1843. p.p. 9 -13, 33.

<sup>53</sup> Gatty, ibid.

controlled by the Company<sup>54</sup> which, in trying to protect the industry and maintain standards, considerably inhibited its growth. The constraints it exercised meant there was little to distinguish between master and labourer. The transition from one to the other required little capital outlay and the cultural and material distinctions between the two remained slight as they shared the same workshops, tools and aspirations.

...there is not that marked line of difference  
between the rich man and the poor man which  
is becoming annually more observable in other  
places. The middle ranks are nearer both to the  
upper and lower.<sup>55</sup>

The mechanisation of production and the introduction of large - scale factory practices eluded many Sheffield firms due to the wide range of goods produced, the practice of sub - contracting to a broad network of highly specialised smaller firms and a general lack of investment capital.<sup>56</sup> The intense specialisation within each industry, each with its own trade unions, rates of pay, conditions and traditions was further sub - divided by the vast array of goods and standards produced by small, independent enterprises.<sup>57</sup> Even when factories were created working practices persisted along workshop lines, maintaining familiarity between master and worker, until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup>

Whilst evident tensions and conflicts arose between workers and owners, particularly during periods of economic uncertainty, the close and inter -

---

<sup>54</sup> Their rules forbade working the month between August and September, or from Christmas to January 23rd of each year. No one could be employed who had not served a seven year apprenticeship or been trained by his father for the same period. A master could only have one apprentice at any time and no - one could be given work if he had not trained there unless he paid heavy premium. Further limitations dealt with the selling of completed items which again severely hindered growth Gatty, *ibid.* p.150. This situation prevailed until the Company's authority was curtailed by Act of Parliament in 1814. G.I.H. Lloyd, *The Cutlery Trades - An Historical Essay in the Economics of Small - Scale Production.* 1913. p.p110,147. Gatty, *Sheffield Past & Present.* 1873, p.112.

<sup>55</sup> John Parker, *A Statement of the Population Etc. of the Town of Sheffield.* 1830. p.18.

<sup>56</sup> Sidney Pollard, *A History of Labour in Sheffield.* 1959. pp. 51 ff.

<sup>57</sup> See for example: David Hey, *A History of Sheffield.* 1998.pp.159 - 160 listing the variety of light industry trades undertaken by independent little mesters in Crookes village - 1851 Census.

<sup>58</sup> Reid, *ibid.* p. 43.

related networks of workshops and enterprises maintained a degree of social uniformity and conformity in Sheffield. Aspects of the homogeneous nature of Sheffield society, socially, economically and culturally persisted throughout the nineteenth century. In 1843, Jelinger Symond noted in a Royal Commission Report that:

“It is scarcely possible to conceive a state in which the relations of industry to capital are more anomalous or disjointed . . . it is not easy to draw the line in Sheffield between men and masters.”<sup>59</sup>

Again, in 1860, it was observed that:

“. . . the line of demarcation separating the two classes from each other is easily overstepped and indeed can scarcely be accurately drawn. . . Master and men, in consequence, do not hold aloof from one another to the same extent as is the case in most places.”<sup>60</sup>

As the relationship between master and workman remained fluid for much of the century, although the former had more status, they continued to share the same background, the same minimal education and to be shaped by the same cultural experiences.<sup>61</sup>

### **The Living Conditions of Master and Man.**

In terms of living conditions, Sheffield was a town of contradictions. Externally it presented a hostile, dirty, squalid and paltry exterior but the homes of its workers were frequently of a higher standard than those found in other industrialised communities.<sup>62</sup> To his general comments that many Sheffield homes were “comfortless and even unwholesome, ill - furnished and ill - kept, betraying a lamentable want of self - respect in their inmates” G.R. Porter further commented that the town was “ill - built and dirty beyond the usual condition of English towns”. However, he continued that in the homes of its

---

<sup>59</sup> Jelinger Symonds, Report on the Trades of Sheffield and the Moral and Physical Conditions of the Young Persons Employed in Them. 1842, p.3.

<sup>60</sup> Frank H. Hill, An Account of Some Trade Combinations in Sheffield. National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences, Special Volume, Trades' Societies and Strikes. 1860. p.534.

<sup>61</sup> Reid, ibid. p. 56.

<sup>62</sup> David Hey, A History of Sheffield. 1998. p.198.



working - class and skilled artisans:

“ . . . it is the custom for each family among the labouring population to occupy a separate dwelling, the rooms in which are furnished in a very comfortable manner: the floors are carpeted, and the tables are usually of mahogany: chests of drawers of the same material are commonly seen, and so in most cases is a clock also, the possession of which article of furniture has often been pointed out as the certain indication of prosperity and of personal respectability on the part of the working man.”<sup>63</sup>

During a visit to the town in 1862 Lord Palmerston commented on the cleanliness and neatness of many of the workers' homes he passed and that most of them had a sofa.<sup>64</sup> “Edgar’s” prize essay - a description of the improving conditions of Sheffield’s working class - showed that by the mid - 1860’s well paid and prudent artisans were able to paper and carpet their homes and furnish them with tables, a clock, well - stuffed sofas and chairs, and possibly a piano and ornaments.<sup>65</sup> Whilst the living conditions of the artisan were of such comparative standing there was little to distinguish them from the homes of masters and employers. The relative high earnings and standard of comfort the Sheffield artisan experienced, except in periods of recession, meant they remained less interested in large schemes of municipal reform for most of the nineteenth century.<sup>66</sup> This further enforced the homogeneity of the local society and diluted the function of furniture as a means of social distinction between the working and lower middle classes.

### **Wealth Accumulation and Capital Distribution.**

In the eighteenth century local wealth had accumulated from a narrow range of manufacturing activities, principally, the production of iron, cutlery and

<sup>63</sup> John Burnett, A Social History of Housing 1815 - 1985. C.U.P 1986. p. 89 quoting G.R. Porter, The Progress of the Nation. 1847 p. 533. See: footnote 6 Johnson & Appleyards quoting, The Cabinet Maker and Art Furnisher, August 1st 1890, “The late Mr Joseph Appleyard, of Conisborough”

<sup>64</sup> Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group, Local History Section. They Lived in Sharrow and Nether Edge. Sir John Brown at Shirle Hill. 1988. p.31.

<sup>65</sup> “Edgar’s” Prize winning essay. Sheffield Independent, 6 Feb. 1866.

<sup>66</sup> Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities. 1990 Reprint. p.37.

allied trades, coal mining, farming and some textile and tanning concerns.<sup>67</sup> The creation of substantial fortunes was limited due to the fact that much of the land dedicated to various forms of enclosure was owned by an absentee aristocracy. This restricted the scope of many commercial ventures throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, profits generated by many of the local furnaces, forges and grinding wheels were lost to the town as they too were withdrawn by an absentee aristocracy.

Sheffield cutlers appear to have been reluctant to leave the area preferring to rely upon London merchants or casual chapmen to purchase their goods. Thus, those who could have most benefited from broadened horizons - encountering new designs, markets and investors - failed to do so and few possessing such qualities were disposed to visit the town.

None [cutlers] presumed to extend this traffic beyond the bounds of this island, and most were content to wait the coming of a casual trader, or to carry their goods with great labour and expense to an uncertain market.....<sup>69</sup>

Consequently, by Sheffield standards, it was not difficult to be considered wealthy.<sup>70</sup> The Rev. John Pye, minister of Nether Chapel from 1748 - 73, was one of the wealthier members of the town at that time able to save money and own a horse on around £70 - £80 p.a. of which between only 2gns. - 4gns. a month was required for household expenses. Between 1755 - 1760, Samuel Walker, forgemaster, of Grenoside was considered rich on a salary of £140.<sup>71</sup>

However, it was possible for craftsmen and skilled artisans to command relatively high wages and achieve a standard of living above their counterparts in other industrial communities.<sup>72</sup> Leader, quoting the Rev.

<sup>67</sup> David Hey, The Making of South Yorkshire, 1979. p. p. 118 - 130.

<sup>68</sup> M. Jones, Sheffield's Woodland Heritage, revised edition p. p. 14 - 18. Gatty, Hunter's Hallamshire, 2nd. edition, p.149.

<sup>69</sup> Goodwin, Vicar of Attercliffe, in Sketchley's Directory 1774, p.19.

<sup>70</sup> R.E. Leader, Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century, 1901. p. 6. "If there were many poor, there were few really wealthy. A very modest competence enabled man to pass for rich in those days."

<sup>71</sup> R. E. Leader, Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century, 2nd ed. 1905. p.7 - 8.

<sup>72</sup> John Parker M.P., Evidence to the Select Committee on Public Walks, 1833, A. 899 in Pollard, History of Labour in Sheffield, p.17

Goodwin, claimed that in 1764 a journeyman cutler could earn between 12/- and 20/- a week.<sup>73</sup> Careful saving meant some workmen could exceed their masters in wealth. In 1843 the collapse of Parker Shore's bank in Sheffield prompted the loan of £300 from a grinder to his master. It was possible through skill and hard work for an artisan to become Master Cutler and conversely, for a Master Cutler to become in need of corporate charity.<sup>74</sup> Compared with other large communities the wealth accrued by Sheffield industrialists was never excessive.<sup>75</sup>

### The Perpetuation of a Working - Class Ethos.

Throughout much of the century the overall cultural life of the town was predisposed to the informal tastes of the working - classes whose preferences for casual and bucolic activities held back the creation of more sophisticated pursuits. High earnings in periods of prosperity enabled workers to take regular unofficial holidays such as St. Monday and Natty Tuesday<sup>76</sup> and indulge in boisterous and often cruel sports and tavern customs.<sup>77</sup> Sheffield's prevalent working - class ethos meant facilities likely to attract those of more cosmopolitan and sophisticated tastes were poorly catered for. As will be shown in Chapter Three, libraries, assembly rooms, theatres and galleries were either late to materialise or amateurishly provided for.

“The want of a due mixture of persons well -  
educated and of a superior situation in life,  
rendered Sheffield at this period [early eighteenth  
century ] less distinguished by the elegancies and  
refinements of social life than by feelings of

<sup>73</sup> R. E. Leader, Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century. 2nd ed. 1905 p.5, quoting the Rev. E. Goodwin

<sup>74</sup> Caroline Reid, ibid. p. 42.

<sup>75</sup> A brief list of the sums left by some of Sheffield's principle manufacturers :

**William Butcher**, d. 1870, c. £100,000.

**Samuel Osborne**, d. 1891, £100,098.

**George Wostenholm**, d. 1876, £250,000.

**John Brown**, d. 1896, £27,221.

**Mark Firth**, d. 1880, £600,000.

**Thomas Edward Vickers**, d. 1915, £117,347.

**Thomas Jessop**, d. 1887. £656,450.

**Albert Vickers**, d. 1919. £774,686.

**Robert Hadfield**, d. 1888, £199,510.

**Robert Abbot Hadfield**, d. 1940, £420,690.

Sources: Odom, Hallamshire Worthies. Geoffrey Tweedale, Men of Steel.

<sup>76</sup> Reid, ibid. p. 23

<sup>77</sup> Gatty, Sheffield: Past and Present, 1873. p. 114. R. E. Leader, Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century. 2nd ed. 1905, p. 39, 42 - 45. Walton, ibid. p. 108.



independence and rugged honesty... There were no assemblies. There was no theatre... A very small number of books kept in the vestry of the parish church was the only library. In the public buildings - the town - hall, the boys' charity - school, and the Dissenters' chapel... there was not the least attention paid to architectural decoration.”<sup>78</sup>

As late as the mid - nineteenth century many of the town's embryonic steel works had evolved through ingenuity, trial and error rather than scientific advancement or external investment. Whilst this made it possible for an artisan to become a steel magnate Sheffield had no complimentary facilities to provide him with the cultural education and experience required of a potential national figure. Sir John Brown and Mark Firth highlight this dilemma and, as shall be seen in Chapter Five, were highly dependent upon advice from local cabinet makers to remove parochialism and homeliness from their homes and replace them with formality and elegance.

“... A clever, hard - working, risk - taking mechanic . . .[could] make his fortune, however humble his beginnings. The trade was easy to enter . . .and nearly all the capital that was invested came from local sources.”<sup>79</sup>

The transition from man to master involved little capital outlay and no change in culture. In the first half of the nineteenth century Master Cutlers and Town Trustees were chosen from men who began life as apprentices and artisans.

“That small makers can succeed in Sheffield is singularly proved by the fact that nearly all the manufacturers at present doing the largest amount of trade . . . commenced originally as small masters and have gradually, to their honour and credit, arisen to be merchant princes.”<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Rev. Alfred Gatty, Hallamshire, pp.153 - 154.

<sup>79</sup> David Hey, The Making of South Yorkshire, 1979. p.120.

<sup>80</sup> G.L. Saunders, Town and Country. Being a Brief Sanitary Investigation into Cause of the Difference of the Death Rate in Urban and Rural Districts. Also an Inquiry into the Health of Sheffield, Sheffield 1860. p.25.

Their tastes had been defined upon the workshop floor which gave those who were absorbed in the development of their businesses little time, opportunity or inclination to pursue any interest in the decorative arts. Thus man and master:

“ . . . had the same homely habits, the same vernacular, the same difficulties with penmanship and spelling and grammar. They spent their days in aprons, with their sleeves tucked up.”<sup>81</sup>

Whilst masters and men remained interchangeable, often living and working cheek by jowl, they offered little incentive to the local furniture industry to produce goods beyond the functional and conventional. The industry was unlikely to receive prestigious commissions for sophisticated and costly furniture as a means of social distinction from a community<sup>82</sup> as yet unused to social differentiation or elitist symbolism. Furthermore, it is possible that the social nuances and workshop etiquette which sustained the town's tight - knit commercial networks deterred many from aspiring to acquire middle class trappings for fear such ostentation might lead to ostracism and damage to working relationships.

Two factors eventually contributed to the decline in the influence of the workshop culture. The development of the steelworks which required large tracts of flat land close to communication links on the east of the town led to a polarisation of the population from the mid - nineteenth century as much of the working - class community followed their work to the new districts of Pitsmoor, Grimesthorpe, Brightside and Burngreave. Many skilled workers and artisans whose work remained in the centre of town moved to the north - west of Sheffield around Crookes and Walkley whilst the middle classes headed towards the new western suburbs. The growth of large works employing thousands of men contributed to the demise of familiarity between worker and employer with direct contact being replaced by formalised and hierarchical structures. The solidification of class lines and the creation of distinct residential communities combined with a growing affluence to generate a demand for furniture at all levels through which the individual could assert his

---

<sup>81</sup> Reid, *ibid.* p. 42 and quoting Leader p.13.

<sup>82</sup> - or on behalf of a community. See: Chapter Four - The Furnishing of The Cutlers' Hall.



wealth, status and individuality. Whilst the working classes were more dependent upon the goods provided by brokers and limited to those establishments which sold furniture on hire purchase schemes the nouveaux riches were more able to specify furnishings they felt represented their newly acquired status.

### Educational Provision

Sheffield's educational provision did little to inspire an appreciation of the decorative arts amongst the general population. The syllabuses of schools which extended their curriculum beyond the 3R's were dominated by subjects beneficial to a life in commerce such as accountancy, maths, English and languages. All other occupations in Sheffield were subservient to this aim and art and literary appreciation were relegated to mere pastimes<sup>83</sup>.

As late as the 1860s educational provision in Sheffield remained arbitrary and unco-ordinated supplied by a mixture of charitable, religious and private establishments. In 1870, the newly formed School Board found that of the 40,000 children in need of elementary education only 28,000 could be found places.<sup>84</sup> The socialist Edward Carpenter described the people of Sheffield as:

"Rough in the extreme, twenty or thirty years in  
date behind other towns, and very  
uneducated..."<sup>85</sup>

Employers were generally unwilling to support educational facilities beyond the basic provision supplied by the elementary and higher grade schools.<sup>86</sup> Their philanthropy expected a good return on their investment and saw little need to teach subjects which they felt was of no practical use to their businesses. In 1831, Dr. Arnold, headmaster of Rugby, wrote several articles for the Sheffield Courant. In one he commented:

". . . A man sets up a factory and **wants hands**; . . .

---

<sup>83</sup> Dennis Smith. ibid.

<sup>84</sup> White's Directory 1868. W.H.G. Armytage. Education in Sheffield 1603 - 1955. Sheffield and its Region 1956. p.205.

<sup>85</sup> Edward Carpenter, My Days and Dreams. 1921. p.92

<sup>86</sup> Bingham Report 1949. pp. 310 - 313

of **their heads and hearts** he thinks nothing.”<sup>87</sup>

Institutions catering for the middle classes stressed their proficiency in business subjects and those which offered a purely commercial training fared far better than those claiming to provide a classical education. Middle class parents were not prepared to pay for a second rate education which did not supply the skills considered necessary to a life of trade. Those who wanted a more rounded and uplifting education for their children sent them away to boarding schools. A perverse pride was taken by the people of Sheffield in their hard lives, astute commercial sense and lack of any pretensions.

“...there are advantages in abundant leisure and in the absence of the cares of business, but along with such advantages there are disadvantages...our self - made merchant princes will be leaders in the cause of progress - leaders more effective than any England has hitherto followed. They are no theorists, nor dreamers of dreams.”<sup>88</sup>

No intellectuals bequeathed books to boost local libraries which remained poorly stocked and managed:

“ . . . the Reference Library has never been developed to any degree which at all corresponds to the growth of similar institutions, for example in Lancashire . . . ” <sup>89</sup>

The Mechanics Institute, founded in 1832, “stood for the diffusion of knowledge among all classes, particularly among the skilled artisans”<sup>90</sup> but in Sheffield its potential was crippled by extravagant building expenses and a committee which refused to purchase the books its members wanted for fear they would rise above their station.<sup>91</sup> The most successful attempt at

---

<sup>87</sup> Armytage, op. cit. p.204.

<sup>88</sup> Endcliffe Hall. The Public Advantages of Personal Munificence. The Sheffield Daily Telegraph, May 24th 1865.

<sup>89</sup> Edward Edwards, 1869 quoted by Walton, op. cit. p. 226.

<sup>90</sup> Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1990. p. 47.

<sup>91</sup> Walton, op. cit. p. 133, 164. Armytage, op. cit. p. 205 .

providing a liberal education for working men was the People's College, founded by The Rev. R.S. Bayley in 1842 and which was later emulated in Nottingham, Leicester and London. It survived until 1879, the year when Mark Firth founded his College, which absorbed the Mechanics Institute forming the basis of Sheffield University in 1897.

Whereas the Mechanics Institute stood for the education of all classes, the Literary and Philosophical Societies were proud of their role as serving the local cultural elite.<sup>92</sup> The presence or absence of these societies was of considerable cultural and civic importance to middle - class communities during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their aim was to provide townspeople with 'opportunities for intellectual improvement which they could not individually command' and contribute to 'the diffusion of liberal knowledge among all classes. The societies exercised considerable influence - the more so the longer a town had benefited from their activities. Sheffield's Society was not formed until 1822, forty one years after its formation in Manchester, twenty nine after Newcastle's, ten years after Liverpool's and three after Leeds in 1819. The Sheffield branch was very popular amongst the rising nouveaux riches who monopolised meetings, using the Society as a form of exclusive club. Papers were given, in poor surroundings, on a wide and varied range of subjects by the members but the standard rarely rose above the level of amateurish entertainment.<sup>93</sup> Such casualness brought criticism from those who saw the Sheffield branch as failing to achieve its full potential:

It is much to be deplored that the literary gentlemen of Sheffield do not strive to emulate those of Leeds and other towns, and by purchasing or erecting a suitable Philosophical Hall, rescue this society from its present cramped and cheerless abode, and establish it on such a footing as to become a really valuable and extensively useful institution.'<sup>94</sup>

Although many Sheffield firms secured markets in America, Europe and later Australia, the industrialists and agents who travelled there rarely introduced

---

<sup>92</sup> Briggs, *ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Walton, *ibid.* p.165

<sup>94</sup> White's *Directory of Sheffield 1868.* p.18.



elements of these cultures into their own environment.<sup>95</sup> Travel was for a purpose: the concept of the Grand Tour - travelling as a means of education, as a pursuit in its own right - was not a feature of Sheffield life. Local industrialists did not donate international artifacts to museums or bequeath pictures to galleries. They did not return from abroad to commission craftsmen or artists to imitate works they had seen on their travels: in this respect their horizons remained firmly bounded by their work.

### The Sheffield School of Art.

It was left to the Government School of Design founded in Sheffield in 1841, and later to become the Sheffield School of Art, to provide the town with facilities for the formal study of art and design. It offered general art education and produced a number of students with a high degree of competence if not originality, some of whom were members of the local furniture manufacturing community. For example, in 1857 John Manuel jnr., whose father had a successful cabinet making business in Sheffield, was awarded the prize in Linear Perspective and in 1862 and 1863 Edith Hayball, daughter of the woodcarver Arthur Hayball, won departmental prizes for Ornaments Shaded from the Crest and from the Flat. John Manuel and George Eadon contributed to the School of Art's Building Fund, as did local architects Flockton & Son and Weightman, Hadfield & Goldie. In 1859/1860 the industrialist John Brown appeared on the list of School Council members and remained there until 1866/1867. In 1860, his Atlas Works donated £15 gns. to the Building Fund and from 1863 there was an annual Atlas Works Prize of £5 gns. John Brown and George Eadon & Son were also subscribers to the School from 1856.<sup>96</sup> For a brief period between 1850 - 1852, under the influence of Alfred Stevens, the School achieved national recognition as one of the best in the country.<sup>97</sup> Arthur Hayball, a wood carver and part - time lecturer at the School, and Henry Hoole, a part - time student, both produced furniture influenced by Stevens in the Italian Renaissance style which won gold medals at the Great

---

<sup>95</sup> An exception was George Wostenholm who, having frequently visited Boston, returned to Sheffield to develop the large residential estate of Kenwood in imitation of housing he had seen in America.

<sup>96</sup> Annual Reports of the Sheffield School of Art, Sheffield Hallam University.

<sup>97</sup> Ralph Wornum, Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition 1851.

Exhibition of 1851 (Figures 1. 1 - 2 ).<sup>98</sup> Hoole worked part time at Messrs. Hoole, Robson & Hoole, stove grate manufacturers, where Stevens was briefly employed to produce new designs in readiness for the Great Exhibition. After Stevens departure, in 1852, the School lost some of its impetus in respect of creating innovative and highly competent designers. Thus:

“ ...what should have been the national home of  
industrial art became just another competent  
art school.”<sup>99</sup>

Whilst Hoole's and other manufacturers in the Sheffield light industries commissioned leading designers<sup>100</sup> to produce designs to help them in a highly competitive market this does not appear to have been a practice taken up by the local furniture industry despite the practice being developed in other provincial markets.<sup>101</sup> It appears Sheffield firms preferred to rely upon familiar designs or in - house draughtsmen to fulfil specific commissions.

### Ruskin in Sheffield.

In 1875, John Ruskin attempted to improve “the liberal education of the artisan” in Sheffield by providing a museum of examples from art and architecture. The museum attracted large numbers of visitors and was one of the first facilities in Sheffield to enable the public to study and enjoy art. Ruskin had chosen Sheffield due to its location - surrounded by beautiful countryside and in Yorkshire, which he considered a reservoir of Old English attitudes. He was also a strong admirer of the manual skills of the town's cutlers and metalworkers.<sup>102</sup> Henry Swan, a former pupil whom Ruskin had

---

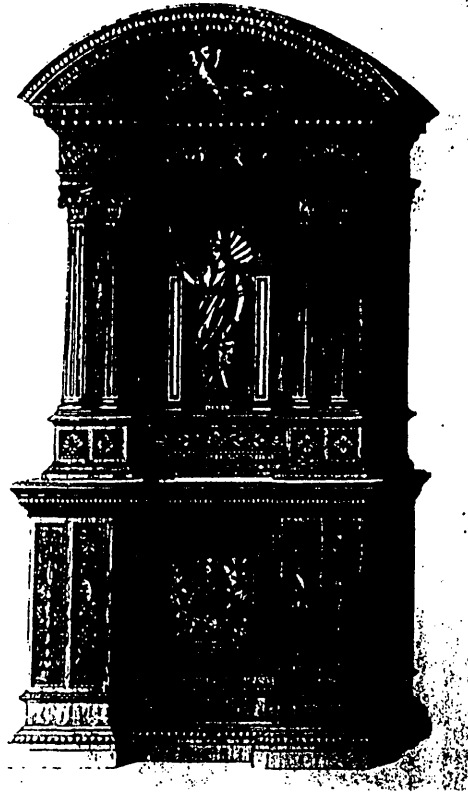
<sup>98</sup>John Kirby, Useful & Celebrated. The Sheffield School of Art 1843 - 1940. 1987, p. 11 f.f.

<sup>99</sup> Walton, ibid. p.232.

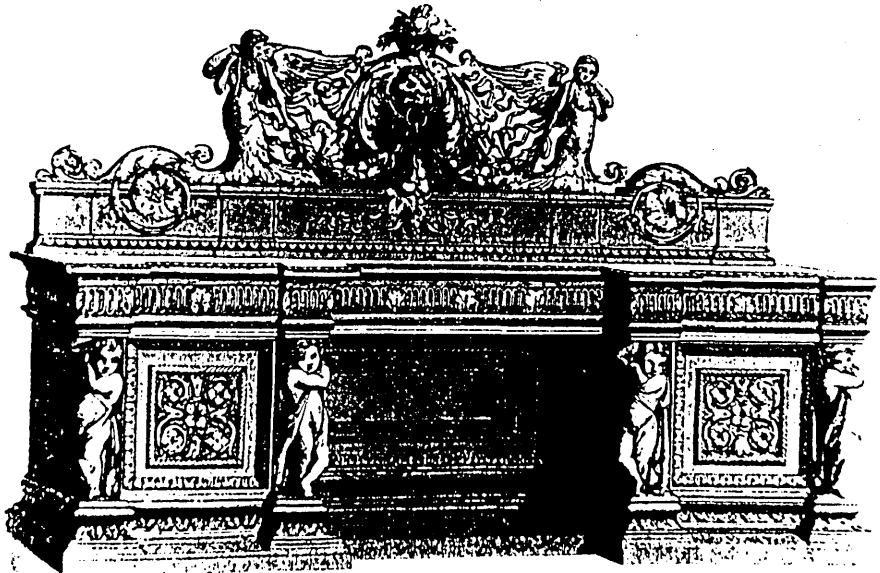
<sup>100</sup> Steel & Garland bought Gothic designs from Bruce Talbert. Messrs. Hoole, Robson & Hoole of Green Lane Foundry and later Joseph Bradbury employed the sculptor Alfred Stevens and the firm of Joseph Rodgers commissioned work from Christopher Dresser. Sally MacDonald, Gothic Forms Applied to Furniture: The early work of Bruce James Talbert. Furniture History, Vol. XXIII p.52. Alfred Stevens and His Work. Ex. Cat. S.C.L.

<sup>101</sup> L.O. Boynton. “High Victorian Furniture: The Example of Marsh and Jones of Leeds” Furniture History Society, III1967. p.p. 55 - 65. The firm of Marsh and Jones of Leeds had a London branch and commissioned pieces from prominent designers and architects such as Bruce Talbert, W.R. Lethaby and Sir Edward Lutyens. The Gothic furniture made for Titus Salt jnr. was designed by Charles Bevan.

<sup>102</sup> John Ruskin, “General Statement explaining the Nature and Purposes of St. George's Guild.” 1882. Vol. 30 p.p.51 - 52



1.1 - 2. The 1851 Great Exhibition medal winning cabinets made by Arthur Hayball (above) and Henry Hoole (below) whilst students at the Sheffield School of Art. Both are in walnut and their Italianate style shows Alfred Steven's influence. Hayball was later to move to the Gothic style receiving commissions for many Catholic churches from Goldie the architect.



taught at the London Working Men's College, and who now lived in Sheffield as a plate engraver, became the museum's curator which initially occupied a single cramped 13' square room.<sup>103</sup>

Through the creation of The Guild of St George Ruskin also tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to spread his beliefs on social ownership and co-operation.<sup>104</sup> At first, Sheffield's strong radical tradition appeared to share mutual ground with Ruskin's views concerning the common ownership of goods and the local museum was visited by many interested in his views on social reform as well as art and architecture.<sup>105</sup> However, during a rare visit to Sheffield in 1876 Ruskin reaffirmed his beliefs in the broad principles of Communism but advocated a strictly hierarchical society. He termed himself a communist of the old school in order to distance himself from the forms the movement was taking in Europe and which were influencing some attitudes in Sheffield at the time.<sup>106</sup>

Although the museum was well received, it failed to convey to the people of Sheffield Ruskin's views concerning the nature of decoration he believed appropriate to the home. He strongly supported the Gothic style of architecture and rejected the use of machinery and mass production techniques, believing such processes demeaned the work force and made goods which were both ugly and useless. Ruskin believed craftsmen should enjoy using hand skills to produce honest and simple work, ideas which were taken up by designers such as William Morris and which were to form the basis of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

In Sheffield, the Arts and Crafts movement, which exemplified many of Ruskin's teachings, failed to have much impact upon the contemporary domestic furnishing schemes of those who might have embraced his social and political views. Much was due to the costs involved in acquiring hand-made goods and the style became a part of middle-class chic rather than an

---

<sup>103</sup> Robert Hewison, Guild of St George Lecture 1979, p.p. 10 - 11

<sup>104</sup> Janet Barnes, Ruskin in Sheffield, 1985. Ex. Cat. S.C. L.

<sup>105</sup> Including William Morris who visited Sheffield in 1885 to speak to the town's newly formed Socialist Society. Barnes ibid p. 17.

<sup>106</sup> Fors Clavigera, 27.121 Art and Society. Ruskin in Sheffield 1876. Robert Hewison, ibid, p.p. 13 - 14.



exemplification of socialist principles. Furthermore, the fashions parodied by Holman Hunt in his work The Awakening Conscience and savaged by Ruskin<sup>107</sup> - bright colours, high polish and exuberant forms of decoration<sup>108</sup> - remained the choice of many successful artisans and aspiring nouveaux riches as such schemes were in sharp contrast to their work environment and were attainable through the patronage of furniture brokers. In time, ideas from the Arts and Crafts movement were incorporated into the mass market whilst the use of machinery made them cheaper to produce. By 1907 a variety of the style was portrayed by some Sheffield manufacturers as ideal "cottage furniture".<sup>109</sup>

Whilst popular as a venue, Ruskin's museum failed to substantially influence the tastes of Sheffield people or forge closer links between art and industry. In part, this was due to the persistently vague and often contradictory and impractical notions which Ruskin advocated through his writings, designed as much to instigate debate than provide rules for a socialist form of existence guided by his ideas on art and architecture. His own, apparently ambivalent views on furniture, did little to give his philosophies tangible form.<sup>110</sup> Although an extension to the Walkley museum was furnished in the gothic style<sup>111</sup> any popularity it gained in Sheffield appears to have been driven by fashion not philosophy. In 1890 the museum was taken over by Sheffield Council who moved it to larger, more accessible premises where it attracted some 60,000 visitors a year.<sup>112</sup>

Ruskin's philosophy, like that of William Morris and others who favoured hand skills, failed to accommodate the practical necessities of the working man who lacked the resources to support such views. His target in Sheffield was the the

---

<sup>107</sup> In 1854, Ruskin had written a criticism in The Times of William Holman Hunt's, The Awakening Conscience in which the artist had displayed all that the Pre - Raphaelite's believed wrong with contemporary design.

<sup>108</sup> The use of unreal naturalistic representations on wallpapers and carpets was considered decadent and false. Banham, MacDonald & Porter, Victorian Interior Design. 1991, p.72.

<sup>109</sup> Official Illustrated Catalogue of the Yorkshire and North Midlands Model Cottage Exhibition. Aug. -Oct. 1907. S.C.L. Illustrations include: T.B. & W. Cockayne, Designers & Manufacturers of Artistic Furniture and T.& J. Roberts, Furnishing Experts, Sheffield.

<sup>110</sup> Simon Jervis, Ruskin and Furniture, Furniture History Vol. IX 1973 pp. 97 - 109.

<sup>111</sup> It is believed the furniture and fittings were made by Arthur Hayball, the Sheffield woodcarver.

<sup>112</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph 14th April 1890.



manual labourer who, amongst all members of the town's society, was least able to influence the products made by local furniture makers. Although Sheffield's radical history and traditional reliance upon hand skills made it appear a fertile ground for Ruskin's philosophies no evidence has appeared to show that the town's political inclinations had any substantial bearing upon its perception of the value of such styles over more traditional forms. There does not appear to have been any marked preference amongst the town's socialists to exemplify their philosophies in tangible forms via the furnishings of their homes. Whilst providing a welcome repository of artifacts never before seen by the working man of Sheffield Ruskin exhibited:

- a reluctance to recognise that the welfare of art generally depends on the existence of a cultivated aristocracy.<sup>113</sup>

Whilst the middle classes of many industrialised communities acted as the fusion point at which working - class philosophies were replaced by, or blended with, ideas which had filtered into the community via aristocratic, trade and cultural links, this was not a widespread practice in Sheffield. Lack of social diversity, tightly bound and inter - dependent production networks, the ease of transition between labourer and master and the high risk of transition from master back to labourer together with the absence in all but a few firms of hierarchical management structures failed to establish a separate code of social and cultural practices between masters and men. Furthermore, to many it was not a matter of concern. Insofar as their requirements for domestic furniture were concerned the middle classes of Sheffield, whilst wishing to appear successful, respectable and affluent often persisted in adhering to the practical necessities born from living in an economically insecure and parochial environment. After a brief period of urbane and affluent patronage during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it was not until the later nineteenth century that the iron and steel magnates achieved the wealth or sophistication for them "to tread on the heels of the aristocracy".<sup>114</sup>

The presence of numerous "little mesters" who acted as owners,

---

<sup>113</sup> Walton, *ibid.* p.225.

<sup>114</sup> G.C. Holland, *The Vital Statistics of Sheffield*. 1843. p.p. 9 -13, 33.

administrators and labourers meant that many successful entrepreneurs continued to embrace the philosophies of the artisan. The homogeneous nature of Sheffield society, whose beliefs and aspirations were largely based upon the ethics of the working - class, contributed to the lack of vision and self - esteem demonstrated by the Council and local corporate bodies. It will be seen in Chapters Three and Four that neither the Council or the Company of Cutlers' in Hallamshire readily acknowledged the value of prestigious building and furnishing schemes as a means of generating civic pride or external investment.

Against this backcloth, the following chapter examines the form and structure of the Sheffield furniture industry in terms of its services, size, location, work force, longevity and flexibility. It will be seen that the majority of firms were small, family orientated and bound by the nature of the market in which they operated. This may be contrasted with the final chapter, the case study of Johnson & Appleyards, Sheffield's leading cabinet makers of the late nineteenth century. Johnson & Appleyards were able to harness Sheffield's growing affluence to enable them to break free from the local market and establish a national clientele whose tastes were the antithesis of parochialism and informality. In turn, they played a significant role in introducing these notions into the Sheffield furnishing scene.

## CHAPTER TWO.

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE

### SHEFFIELD FURNITURE INDUSTRY

This chapter seeks to outline the nature of the Sheffield furniture industry during the nineteenth century and describe some of the changes it underwent as it responded to the needs of a rapidly growing, industrialised society. It will outline the basic structure of the industry by listing the various trades which made up the Sheffield furniture industry, how they changed and the conditions in which they operated. The size, longevity and location of the various trades will be noted and their diversification into other activities. The domination of the industry by small, family businesses and their response to change will also be explored. Finally, a brief look at the role of women in the Sheffield furniture industry will also be undertaken.

The Sheffield furniture industry of the nineteenth century shared many similarities with London's East End trade insofar as both were dominated by small businesses specialising in a single trade working long hours in poor conditions. The working unit was often family based utilising informally acquired skills for irregular pay and occupying cheap, rented accommodation in closely bound enclaves.<sup>1</sup> As it shall be seen few businesses survived more than ten years.<sup>2</sup>

#### Range of Trades.

Trade directory evidence shows that two main groups of trades formed the Sheffield furniture industry - those primarily concerned with the manufacture of furniture or its parts and those concerned with finishing, supplying or

---

<sup>1</sup> Pat Kirkham, Rodney Mace and Julia Porter, "Furnishing the World. The East London Furniture Trade 1830 - 1980". p.3. Pat Kirkham, The London Furniture Trade 1700 - 1870. 1988 p.44.

Henry Mayhew, "The Morning Chronicle Survey of Labour and the Poor: The Metropolitan Districts". Volume 11 1850. In 1850, a full set of tools cost between £30 and £40 (Mayhew, Letter LXIII ) and a bench could be made from ends of timber at virtually no cost. The downstairs room or rooms of a house were frequently the initial workshop and family members were a source of free and reliable labour (Mayhew, Letter LXV ). Firms which consisted of a proprietor only or just one or two workers tended to specialise in order to minimise overheads and loss of earning capacity changing from one job to another. These firms generally eked out a precarious existence needing the proceeds of one week's work to pay for the materials for the next.

<sup>2</sup> Trade Directory evidence suggests of the 234 upholstery firms which were set up in Sheffield during the nineteenth century 72.2% failed within their first ten years.

manufacturing related goods. Much contemporary evidence on the roles and conditions of those involved in the furniture industry was noted by Henry Mayhew (1812 -1887) in The Morning Chronicle Survey of Labour and the Poor, the Metropolitan Districts. Vol. 1: Of the Furniture Workers Letters XXXII, LIX, LXII, LXV. Many similarities exist between Mayhew's account of the trades in London and their activities in Sheffield. The trades present within the Sheffield furniture industry included:

**Table 2.1**

**The Trades of the Sheffield Furniture Industry.**

**Principle Trades**

Cabinet making  
Cabinet case making (fancy goods)  
Upholstery  
Chair making  
Wood turners  
Wood carvers  
Carvers & Gilders

**Secondary Trades**

French Polishing  
Japanner & Bronzers  
Clock and instrument makers  
Timber merchants  
Feather merchants  
Frame makers  
Looking glass Manufacturers  
Hair seating Manufacturers<sup>3</sup>

**Brief Definitions of the Principle Trades.**

1) **Cabinet makers** were the principle manufacturers of furniture following to a greater or lesser extent popular styles available via designers or trade journals and contemporary publications. Large firms might have their own draughtsmen whilst a few commissioned freelance designers for prestigious contracts. It was usual for an entire piece to be made and finished by a single firm though increasingly as the century progressed only the larger firms could support the various crafts with small businesses buying in mouldings, carvings, turnings cutting and finishing services.

---

<sup>3</sup> Infrequent references to other furniture crafts such as chair bottomers ( 1871 Census and work by Darnall W.E.A., 1976 ) which were not categorised by contemporary trade directories are acknowledged but eliminated for the purposes of this study as lacking sufficient data to analyse.



2) Cabinet case (or fancy good) makers made a wide range of boxes for writing, travelling, dressing razor, cutlery and jewellery cases. The trade could be sub-divided into those who made the cases and those who lined the interiors according to their requirements. The latter could be further divided into those who made the interiors for dressing - cases, 'fitte -ups" and those who made the interiors for ladies' work boxes - "pine-workers".<sup>4</sup> Cases would be fitted out with relevant equipment such as perfume and cosmetic bottles, brushes, nail files and scissors whilst the liners would cover the interiors with decorative materials according to the quality of the case. They were made from wood often inlaid with brass, mother of pearl, tortoise shell or covered in leather.

3) Upholsterers covered seating frames with a variety of materials and could also make matching soft furnishings such as curtains, cushions and bed drapes.

4) Chair making and wood turning were often undertaken by the same firm as both required a lathe ideally powered by steam or, towards the end of the century, gas turbines in the larger manufacturers. As well as chair legs and rails, handles, shafts, knobs, spindles, finials, curtain poles and rings were made and turning in ivory, brass, bone, jet, ebony and box was undertaken by some firms.

5) Wood carvers made component or full items of furniture or fixtures from oak, box, mahogany, fruitwoods and walnut which could be waxed or polished. Carvers and gilders undertook finer work in lime, beech and pine<sup>5</sup> on frames for mirrors, pictures and pier glasses as well as making console tables, brackets and candelabras.

---

<sup>4</sup> Mayhew, Morning Chronicle. 1850. Letter LXIV. In 1833, a Sheffield auction of lining materials "of interest to cabinet case makers" advertised: "coloured paper, Foolsap and Post Cypress, varnished, foolscap moss, French marble,... Large Post ungrained Morocco, Medium Purple morocco, ... Damask,... and a variety of stationery and materials for Ladies' work - boxes". The Sheffield Mercury. March 2nd., 1833.

<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Beard, Craftsmen and Interior Decoration in England 1660 - 1820. (1981) p. 66.

6) French polishers, japanners and bronzers were concerned with polishing or decorating completed items using various materials and techniques.

Although on a much smaller scale, the Sheffield furniture industry exhibited a range of trades similar to those found in the London furniture industry<sup>6</sup> except in the fields of marquetry and inlay for which no specialised Sheffield firm has yet been traced.<sup>7</sup> However, it is known the skills required to cut mother of pearl, bone, brass and ivory were present to serve the needs of the cutlery trade whilst the output of some of the larger cabinet case and cabinet makers testifies to the presence of skilled marquetry workers.<sup>8</sup>

Furniture brokers are included in several aspects of this and other chapters as their presence indicated the recycling of used goods. Whilst they did not contribute directly to any aspect of furniture production they had an effect upon the variety of furnishing styles and quality available to a large sector of society who could not afford new goods of comparable standard. Inclusion in this survey helps determine whether the population of Sheffield displayed a preference for staid, sturdy furniture or preferred to acquire fashionable yet possibly less substantial goods.

The prevalence of particular trades within the Sheffield furniture industry changed during the century as shifts in market demand,<sup>9</sup> fashion and technology affected their viability. At the start of the nineteenth century the Sheffield furniture industry was dominated by cabinet makers who formed 42.6% of the industry followed by upholsterers and chair makers each with 19.1%, cabinet case makers and carvers and gilders each with 6.4% with furniture brokers, wood turners and wood carvers sharing 2.1%. By 1865,

---

<sup>6</sup> Pat Kirkham, *The London Furniture Trade. 1700 - 1870.* 1988.

<sup>7</sup> A William Leivesley of 78, Solly St. advertised in the 1833 White's Trade Directory of Sheffield as a Carver and Gilder of pearl, ivory and shell.

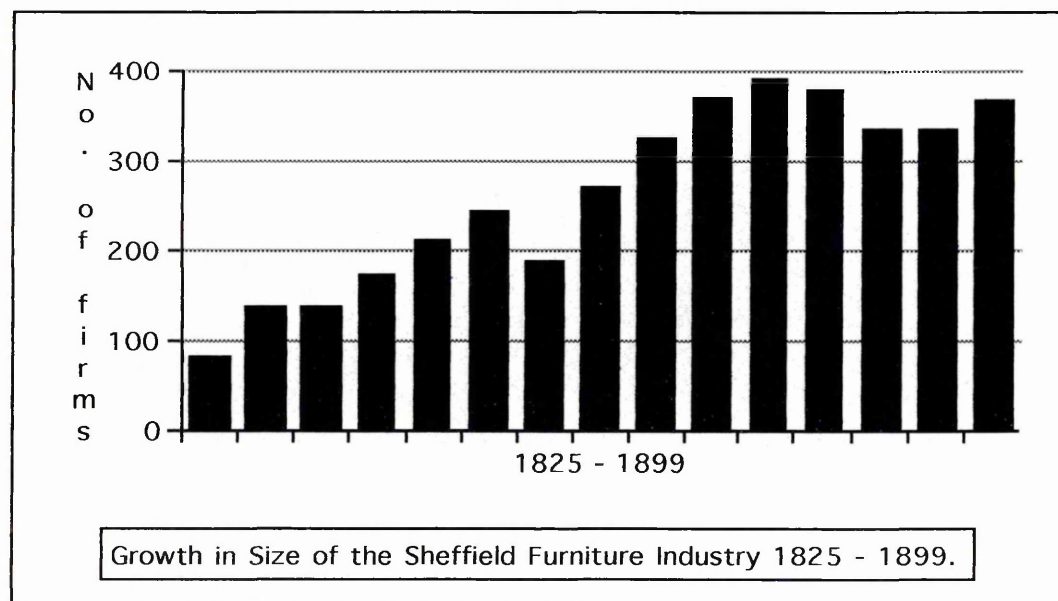
<sup>8</sup> Pawson & Brailsford, Illustrated Guide to Sheffield and Neighbourhood 1862, 1971 Reprint. Advertisement for James Dewsnap, cabinet case maker "... Mother - o- Pearl, Tortoise Shell, all kinds of Fancy Wood. ..." Inlaid pedestal table designed by John Manuel for Sir John Brown at Endcliffe Hall, A.P. 38 - 26,38 - 40 Sheffield Archive Library.

<sup>9</sup> For example: "... the passing of the Reform Bill ..." said a tradesman... "depressed wood - carving to a great degree, as many members of the aristocracy became alarmed, and put a check on their accustomed patronage of art." Mayhew, ibid. Letter LXIV, p.166.

cabinet makers had fallen to 23.9% and remained relatively constant around this figure for the rest of the century although the actual number of firms rose from 63 to 81. Similar declines occurred across the craft trades as the century progressed. Some, such as carving and gilding, declined due to technological advances rendering hand crafts obsolete whilst others decreased as a result of competition from furniture brokers<sup>10</sup> and the rise of the larger department store which could buy goods at bulk rates and offer hire purchase schemes. By the end of the nineteenth century brokers made up 30.7% of the industry in terms of business numbers. The following diagrams show the overall growth in the size of the Sheffield furniture industry between 1825 - 1899 and the changes in the make - up of the industry during the same period together with the prevalence of the various trades. The vague and often contradictory listings in trade directories of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have concentrated attention on the period 1825 onwards.

**Figure 2.1**

**A Graph Showing the Growth in the Number of Firms  
Belonging to the Sheffield Furniture Industry  
1825 - 1899.**



<sup>10</sup> Who originally sold second hand goods but increasingly bought in new, mass - produced items from wholesalers.



The dominance of brokers throughout the period 1825 - 1899 would suggest the acceptance by Sheffield society of goods not of the latest fashion but with the merits of practicality and serviceability. It also suggests second hand furniture found favour with a broad sector of society with brokers being cited in the main retail sectors of the town as well as in working - class suburbs. The two occasions when the number of cabinet manufacturers outnumbered furniture brokers coincide with the decades of greatest population increase in the town. Between 1821 - 1831 and 1851 - 1861 Sheffield's population grew by 40.47% and 36.85% respectively.<sup>11</sup> This would suggest that market demand outstripped the supply of recyclable furniture via brokers requiring new items to be produced in considerable quantities.

The following charts represent the changing composition of the Sheffield furniture industry during the nineteenth century. It will be seen that the proportion of cabinet makers remains relatively constant throughout the period growing in number to match Sheffield's rapidly increasing population. Some trades, such as bronzers and wood carvers occur intermittently being more prone to changes in fashion and fluctuations in the economic climate.

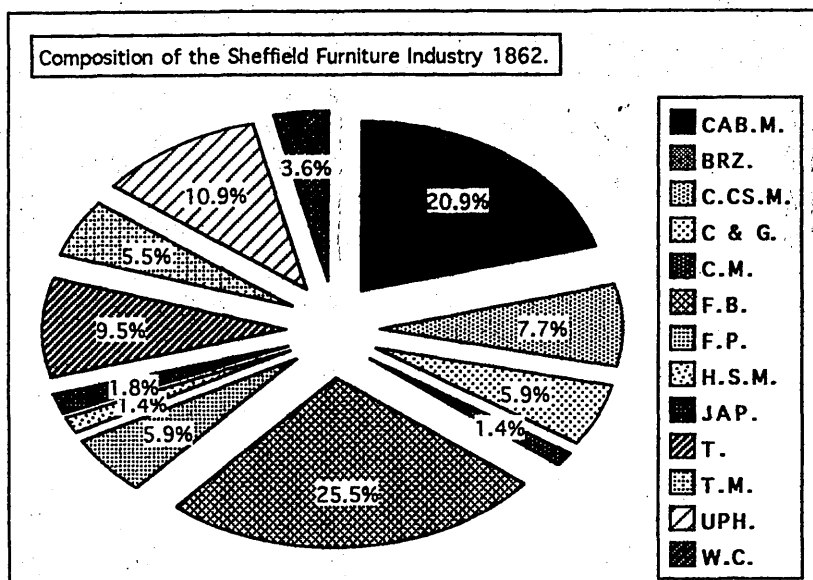
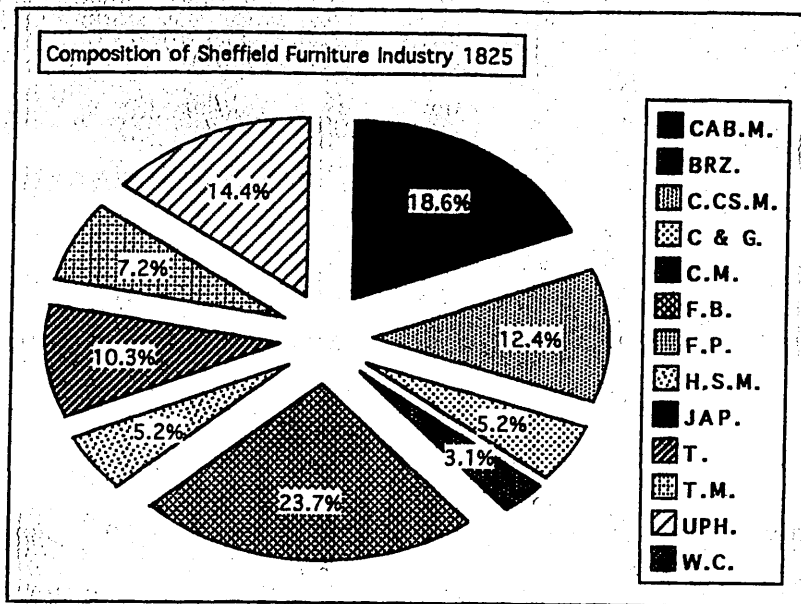
### **Figure 2.2.**

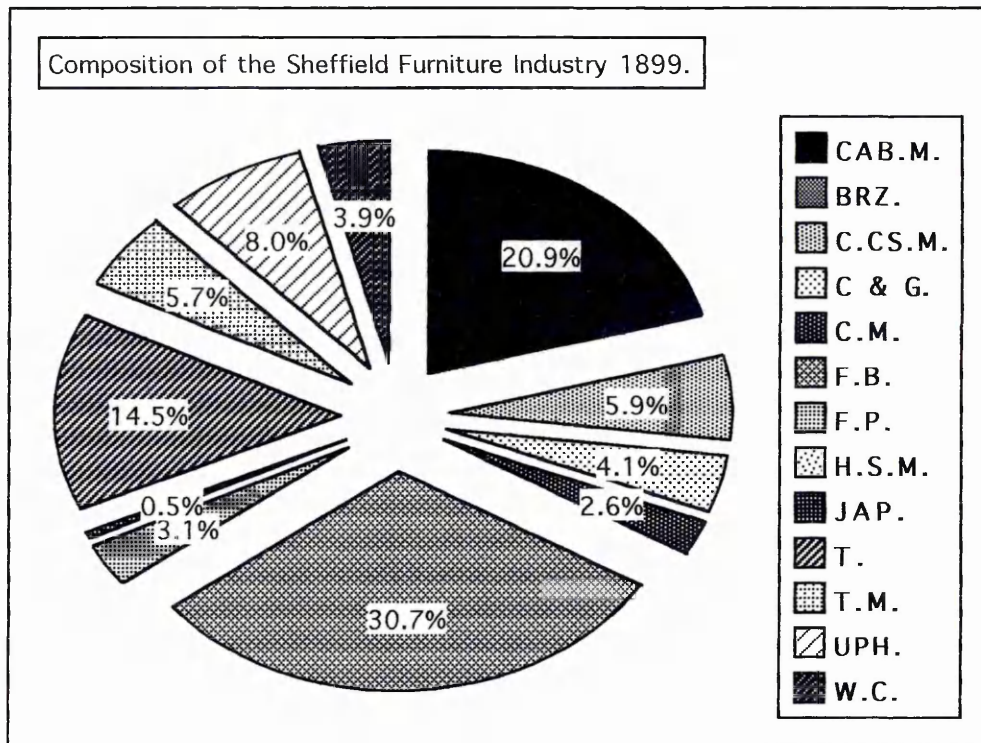
#### **Diagrammatical Representations of the Changing Composition of the Sheffield Furniture Industry 1825 - 1899**

##### **Key:**

<b>Cab. M.</b> = Cabinet Makers	<b>Brz.</b> = bronzers
<b>C.CS.M.</b> = Cabinet Case Makers	<b>C &amp; G.</b> = Carvers & Gilders
<b>C.M.</b> = Chair Makers	<b>F.B.</b> = Furniture Brokers
<b>F.P.</b> = French Polishers	<b>H.S.M.</b> = Hair Seating Manufacturers
<b>JAP.</b> = japanners	<b>T.</b> = Wood Turners
<b>T.M.</b> = Timber Merchants	<b>UPH.</b> = Upholsterers
<b>W.C.</b> = Wood Carvers.	

<sup>11</sup> Caroline Reid, Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield. Unpublished Ph.D. University of Sheffield, 1976, p.15.





### Trade Combinations & Survival Rates.

Many businesses were founded around a single trade usually the stock practice of the proprietor. In cases where a range of services were offered production tended to be centred upon the craft of the owner<sup>12</sup> with family members, employees or occasionally partners supplying additional skills or services. An enterprise could pursue a single skill, such as cabinet making or upholstery, or offer a combination of related skills, one of the most popular being carving and gilding.<sup>13</sup>

According to trade directory evidence<sup>14</sup> most single trade businesses in

<sup>12</sup> Pat Kirkham, The London Furniture Trade 1700 - 1870, F.H.S. 1988, p. 57.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> Such evidence provides a fairly reliable overview but specific examples maybe contradicted from other sources: e.g. Edward Howlden began business as a japanner and bronzer at 4, Solly St. around the year 1833. By 1838 he had moved to 125, Solly St. from where, according to the directories, he worked until 1868. As his advertised working life spanned some 35 years it was reasonable to assume he had now ceased trading. However, the rate books for 1878 recorded Edward Howlden owning 125, Solly St. - a house and workshop with a ratable value of £21 10/- and letting the house next door, which he also owned and rented out in order to earn extra income Sheffield Rate Books, 1876 - 1879. The presence of a workshop still in his name and not rented out suggests it was still used by him.

Sheffield appear to have had a lifespan of between 10 - 12 years. Firms which were able to offer a second compatible service increased their survival rates. Popular combinations were carving, gilding and picture frame making, wood turning and chair making and cabinet making and upholstery.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 2.2.**

**Table Showing Estimated Average Survival Rates  
of Businesses in the Sheffield Furniture Industry During  
the Nineteenth Century**

<b><u>Trade</u></b>	<b><u>Years</u></b>	<b><u>No. of firms in survey</u></b>
<b>Furniture Brokers.....</b>	<b>9.23</b>	<b>553</b>
<b>Carvers &amp; Gilders.....</b>	<b>10.24</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Wood Carvers.....</b>	<b>10.88</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Chair Makers.....</b>	<b>10.96</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Cabinet Makers &amp; Brokers.....</b>	<b>11.00</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Upholsterers.....</b>	<b>12.01</b>	<b>293</b>
<b>French Polishers.....</b>	<b>12.23</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Cabinet makers.....</b>	<b>13.60</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>Cabinet Case Makers.....</b>	<b>13.88</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>Wood Turners.....</b>	<b>15.14</b>	<b>173</b>
<b>Cabinet Makers &amp; Upholsterers.....</b>	<b>17.13</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Chair Makers &amp; Turners.....</b>	<b>18.75</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Carvers &amp; Turners.....</b>	<b>27.00</b>	<b>5</b>

**Period of survey: 1825 - 1899.**

Whilst wood turners enjoyed above average survival rates compared with other single trades the addition of chair making or wood carving to their businesses further enhanced survival rates.<sup>16</sup> This was probably a result of being able to manufacture and sell complete products, i.e chairs and stools, component parts - handles, shafts etc. as well as provide parts for the construction industry such as stair parts, barge boards and finials. The overall success of turners was possibly higher in Sheffield than elsewhere due to the widespread demand for their goods from the town's cutlery and light trades for

<sup>15</sup> Of those firms who combined cabinet making with upholstery survival rates improved dramatically with only 50.6% failing within ten years during the period 1825 - 1899.

<sup>16</sup> It is acknowledged the survey sample in both these cases is small and further evidence may distort these findings.



shafts, handles and knobs. Those businesses with the shortest average lifespan fell into two groups. Either they possessed little, if any, skills and had little control over the nature of their stock i.e. furniture brokers, or were highly skilled and therefore at the luxury end of the market and more prone to the effects of recession i.e. wood carvers and carvers and gilders.

Compatibility of secondary services was an important factor in business survival especially those associated with wood carving, carving and gilding being at the upper end of the skills market<sup>17</sup> and particularly prone to economic fluctuations.<sup>18</sup> Carvers and gilders had a choice of direction when adding services to their core activity. Some added the sale of artists' materials, developing this line to become agents for artists, selling, exhibiting and sometimes commissioning paintings and prints to sell alongside their own goods. Partnerships were also an option to assist businesses through difficult periods though due to the difficulties raised by disagreement or death they were not a long standing or popular feature of the Sheffield furniture industry. Nevertheless, the recession of the late 1830's to early 1840's<sup>19</sup> persuaded the hitherto independent carver and gilders Marples & Hibbert to briefly enter into partnership as Carvers, Gilders, Print Sellers and Artists Repository at various premises in Fargate Sheffield between c.1837 - 1841. They advertised themselves as:

. . . Manufacturers of Picture Frames, Looking Glasses, Cornices, Pier Tables, Brackets and every description of Gilt and Ornamental Fancy Furniture.  
- Ornamental Models in Wood, Wax, Clay or Plaster; Composition Ornaments for Architectural or other purposes, to any design. Old Glasses Re-silvered, Oil Paintings, Prints, Drawings and Maps cleaned, lined, repaired and varnished.  
Gentleman's Houses attended to repair or re-gild any article in the above line. Cabinet - Makers' and Upholsterers, orders well and promptly executed.  
Materials for Painting in Oil or Water - Colours.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Kirkham, The London Furniture Trade. 1700 - 1870. 1988. p.29.

<sup>18</sup> Of 95 firms 55.8% lasted less than 5 years and a further 25.3% lasted 5 - 10 years. Only 8 firms lasted more than 25 years.

<sup>19</sup> Caroline Reid, Middle Class Values & Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Sheffield. p. 46, 49.

<sup>20</sup> White's Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire. 1837.



As independent carvers and gilders, Hibberts ultimately relinquished their core services to concentrate upon artists materials and paintings, becoming a leading supplier in Sheffield until 1998 when they relocated their business to Bakewell. In 1851 George Marples' carving and gilding business employed 6 men and enabled he and his family to employ a servant. However, his death in 1859 caused the business to be sold although the 1851 Census had recorded a nephew living in and apprenticed to the firm.

George Eadon, carver, gilder and looking glass manufacturer began business in Sheffield in 1818 and, like Marples & Hibberts, initially sold artists materials but then diversified into cabinet making and upholstery. He quickly became one of the town's foremost manufacturers of quality furniture with known work including the design for the Master's chair for the Company of Cutlers' in Hallamshire, much of the furniture for Sir John Brown at Endcliffe Hall ( q.v.) and furniture for the XIV Duke Of Norfolk at his Sheffield residence, The Farm.<sup>21</sup> In 1851, Eadon employed 31 men and by 1861, two years before his death, he was described as a master carver and gilder, living at Tapton House in the fashionable West End of Sheffield with his wife, daughter, nephew and two servants. After his death the business was continued by his son, Edward, until around 1880.

Occasionally, seemingly incompatible services offered by a single firm proved to be successful when they supplied the needs of a niche market and were possibly sustained by the ebullience and individuality of the proprietor. Joshua Fox, carver and gilder ran his business from c.1837 - c.1862 supplying the additional services of dealing:

"in oil and water colours, sable, fitch and camel hair  
brushes &c. Fishing Rod Manufacturer, and dealer  
in Every Description of Fishing Tackle, Artificial  
Flies &c. By the Most Experienced London and  
Sheffield Makers"<sup>22</sup>.

Thomas Bowling, chair maker and turner from c.1828 - 1843 also became a

---

<sup>21</sup> The Ducal Residence, The Sheffield Independent, August 6th 1859. Mesters to Masters. A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire. Eds: Clyde Binfield & David Hey, 1997. Susan Graves & Julie Goddard: Paintings, Sculptures and Furniture in the Cutlers' Hall, p.p. 162 - 177.

<sup>22</sup> Rodger's Directory of Sheffield 1841.

beerhouse owner to supplement his income during the severe economic depression of the late 1830s.<sup>23</sup> With less success William Mackenzie combined the activities of music - seller and silver - smith with furniture brokering and upholstery between 1817 - 1822 before being declared bankrupt in 1824.<sup>24</sup>

A few firms became large enough to offer the full range of cabinet making skills using their own craftsmen and selling direct to the public from their own shops. They extended their range of services to include manufacturing and / or selling furniture, upholstery, lights, carpets, curtains and chinaware. Some offered to design "furniture to correspond with architectural features in the house and in reproducing furniture"<sup>25</sup> indicating some element of relevant training.<sup>26</sup> Services provided by these firms further extended into subsidiary activities such as decorating, undertaking, feather merchants, furniture removal and warehousing.<sup>27</sup> Others diversified into becoming the forerunners of the modern department store selling cabinet furniture, fenders, looking glasses and bedsteads alongside mattresses, drapery, flooring materials, haberdashery, clothes and bed linen displayed in large shop windows.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Caroline Reid, *ibid.* p. 49. Robson's Directory of Sheffield, 1839. White's Trade Directory 1841. Bernard D. Cotton, The English Regional Chair. 1990, p. 472.

<sup>24</sup> Brighton Gazette, 25 March 1824 - Dictionary of English Furniture Makers. Eds. Beard & Gilbert.

<sup>25</sup> The Manuel Galleries of High Class Furniture, 1901 p.3. Local Pamphlet, Vol. 261, No.10 S.C.L.

<sup>26</sup> John Manuel won a prize for Perspective at the Sheffield School of Art in 1855 and a National Prize for Linear Perspective in 1857; John Manuel's and George Eadon & Son, cabinet makers, carvers and gilders, were regular subscribers to the School of Art - R.E. Leader, Reports of the Sheffield School of Art 1857 - 1867; both Manuels and Appleyards sent sons to train with large cabinet manufacturers and retailers in London.

<sup>27</sup> John Manuel & Son, loose leaflets, no date. Pawson & Brailsford, Illustrated Guide to Sheffield & Neighbourhood 1862. 1971 reprint - advertisements for J. Jones & Son, William Johnson, Thomas Cocking and Woollen & Fordham, Johnson & Allatt, White's Directory of Sheffield, 1852.

<sup>28</sup> After fire destroyed their original premises George H. Hovey, Manufacturers and General Warehousemen, opened prestigious new premises in 1882 whose stock of drapery, silks, costume, millinery, carpets, curtains, furniture and bedsteads etc. were to be "Illuminated at dusk by Arc & Incandescent Electric Lamps" S.C.L. Miscellaneous Papers 778 - 9M No. 34751, Sheffield Illustrated. c.1885 p.65.

## Responses to Changing Circumstances.

The domination of the Sheffield furniture industry by small, family based firms gave it the potential flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances if not the necessary foresight and resolution to do so. Family orientated businesses helped offset some of the more volatile circumstances of Victorian commerce providing a pool of resources otherwise difficult to secure. Families provided low - cost, long - term capital; trustworthy, flexible and hard - working staff and often a network of family associated businesses from which to gain advice, expertise, status and reliable service.<sup>29</sup> In the early years of their development such benefits outweighed the inhibitive tendencies of such businesses to be cautious, paternalistic and conservative - resulting in a reluctance to expand beyond the immediate confines of family control. Whilst the majority of family firms were "born small and remained small"<sup>30</sup> this did not remove the fact they still had to adjust to changing markets and economic climates in order to survive at all. To this end the small businesses which formed the Sheffield furniture industry displayed an ability to vary the number and range of services they offered beyond their traditional activities to accommodate periods of economic expansion and recession.

As the work force often consisted of more or less permanently employed family members expansion and contraction were usually achieved by moving to larger or smaller rented premises ( q.v.) and by modifying the range of services beyond the core activity or service of the business. For the purposes of this study 'core activity / service' is defined as the service or services with which a firm is most closely associated and which is the focal point of its advertising in trade directories, newspapers and hand - bills.

For example, Robert Cocking, who established his firm in 1817, described himself as a cabinet maker and upholsterer. The firm was taken over by his son, Thomas, who maintained these core services but supplemented others to increase his market potential. In 1876, as well as cabinet making and upholstery, Thomas advertised a further range of services and activities which included undertaking, manufacturing and repairing Venetian blinds,

---

<sup>29</sup> Stana Nenadic, The Small Family Firm. Business History Vol. 35 October 1993 No. 4. pp. 104ff.

<sup>30</sup> ibid. p.91.



shopfitting, showcase manufacturing, joinery and valuer. He also advertised a large stock of ready made furniture for sale from his shop. Thus a single enterprise increased its services/activities from 2 to 9 in order to broaden its appeal. Similarly, the carver and gilder George Eadon extended his services to include cabinet and picture frame making, upholstery, relining and restoration of paintings and the ability to provide carpets, room papers and floor cloths to order.<sup>31</sup> Occasionally, as in the case of Eadon, there is a fundamental change in the core activity of a business. Starting as a carver and gilder, Eadon soon began to move into the more reliable and lucrative trades of cabinet making and upholstery although he continued to advertise his original services alongside them.

In most cases supplementary services complimented and built upon a firm's existing expertise and reputation but sometimes existing facilities were used to help commence a new venture entirely. Samuel Foote and Francis Adams both established businesses during the recession of the 1830's, Foote as a cabinet maker, upholsterer and furniture broker Adams as a chair maker. Both were also landlords of beerhouses which they used as premises for their activities. In time, both relinquished their beerhouses to concentrate on furniture production, Foote discarding furniture brokering to concentrate on cabinet making and upholstery and Adams on chair making.<sup>32</sup>

Diversity could increase the earnings potential of a business but also had its risks. Lack of efficiency in less familiar fields meant specialists could undercut prices whilst key workers were diverted away from more profitable projects. Additional outgoings on raw materials and equipment, workspace, labour costs and administration could also make the offering of supplementary services a high risk venture in itself.<sup>33</sup> However, faced with stagnation or decline it was a risk many small businesses were prepared to take. Alternatively, expansion could be achieved by a family member starting a new business in the same or a related field taking advantage of family experience and a burgeoning market whilst limiting the risk to the principle business

---

<sup>31</sup> Advertisements, White's Directory of Sheffield 1849 and 1876.

<sup>32</sup> Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660 - 1840. Eds. G. Beard & C. Gilbert. 1986 Furniture History Society.

<sup>33</sup> The furniture making businesses of both Foote and Adams were short - lived lasting less than 10 years each and it is possible they returned to the more familiar inn - keeping.

which continued to provide a stable income.<sup>34</sup>

The following diagram, Figure 2.3, shows the percentage variation between the number of firms in the Sheffield furniture industry and the number of services they collectively offered during the period 1825 - 1899. Throughout the nineteenth century the number of services offered by the Sheffield furniture industry varied greatly in relation to the number of firms providing them. It will be seen that mild recessions caused firms to increase the number of services offered to offset the decline in their core activities. When conditions improved, for example, in the late 1850s and 60s, the number of services decreased in relation to the number of firms as they returned to their core and most profitable activities. The recessions of the latter part of the nineteenth century were at first met by another increase in the number of services offered by the industry as a whole. However, continuing recession forced firms to cut back on all expenditure in order to survive thus they withdrew from secondary, less cost efficient services.<sup>35</sup> By the end of the century, almost all the firms which had survived or had recently started in business concentrated on just one or two core activities. The days of the generalist had passed.

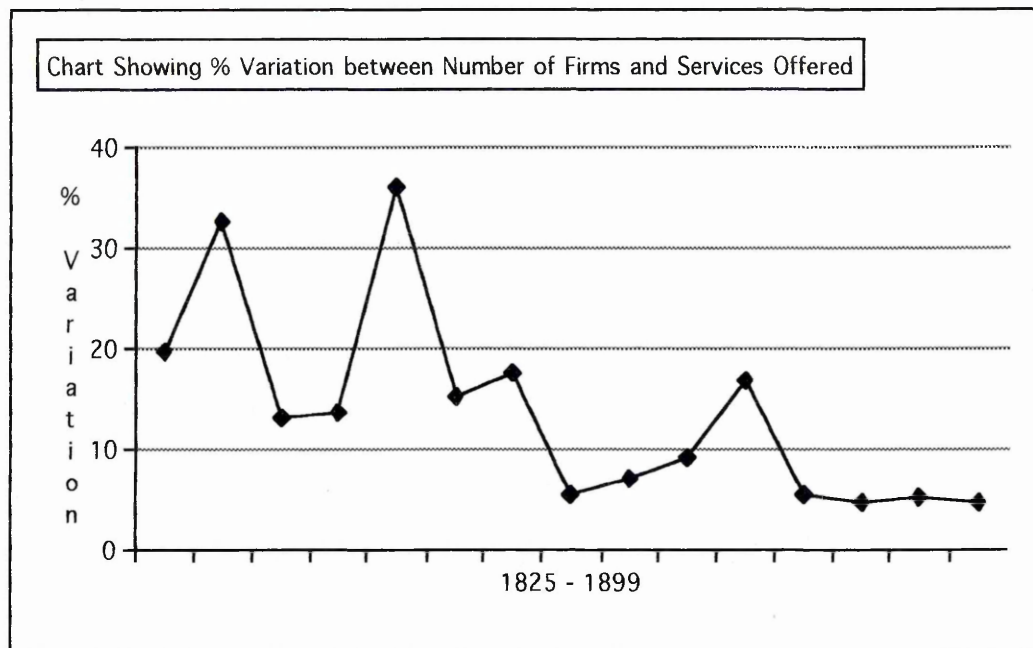
---

<sup>34</sup> Nenadic, *ibid.* p.104.

<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, this was the time when Joseph Appleyard & Sons of Rotherham chose to enter the Sheffield market by taking over the ailing firm of William Johnson & Sons as a means of gaining access into a perceived lucrative market. (See: Chapter Six.) Profits for many firms involved in the Sheffield trades continued to grow, albeit erratically, until the late 1880's. Roger Lloyd - Jones & Myrddin J. Lewis, *Personal Capitalism and British Industrial Decline*, in *Business History Review* Vol. 68 Autumn 1994, p.381.



**Figure 2.3.**



### **Numbers Employed in the Sheffield Furniture Industry.**

As shall be seen in Table 2.3., comparisons with the numbers employed in recognised contemporary furniture manufacturing centres such as High Wycombe or Shoreditch and Bethnal Green in the East End of London and with other industrialised neighbouring communities such as Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham, show the Sheffield furniture industry of the early nineteenth century to have been relatively small.

In 1871, with a population of 240,000, the number of workers in the Sheffield furniture industry had more than doubled to 2688 and by 1891 they had increased to 4192 serving a population of 324,000.<sup>36</sup> Furniture production in Sheffield never developed to the extent whereby it became classified as a principle local industry but this has to been seen in the context of competition from the dominant regional sources of employment namely the iron and steel

<sup>36</sup> B.R. Mitchell, British Historical Statistics, C.U.P. 1988 p.p.26 - 29

trades and coal mining.<sup>37</sup>

**Table 2. 3**

**Summary of total numbers of workers employed in regional furniture industries of sample towns, 1841.**

**Male & Female**<sup>3 8</sup>

<b><u>Town</u></b>	<b><u>No. Of Workers</u></b>	<b><u>Total Population</u></b>
Wakefield.....	209.....	23000
Huddersfield.....	298.....	25000
Hull.....	850.....	85000
Sheffield.....	1179.....	111000
York.....	1657.....	29000
Leeds.....	1799.....	152000
Manchester.....	3683.....	235000
Birmingham.....	4167.....	183000
Liverpool.....	5995.....	286000

By the time of the 1871 Census, the numbers employed in the Sheffield furniture industry were equal to, or greater than, those employed in some recognised centres of production such as Bradford, Leeds, Aston and Hackney. Expansion had become necessary in order to supply the needs of a rapidly growing town whose population was also experiencing improving standards of living.<sup>39</sup>

A comparative study of the numbers involved in cabinet making within a range of communities has provided an indication of the demand for new goods in each town. It is assumed the greater the proportion of cabinet makers within a

---

<sup>37</sup> In 1851, of the 55,427 men and women in Sheffield, excluding domestic servants, who worked for their living, 44.96% were occupied in the manufacture of steel, cutlery, tools or the working of gold and silver Pollard, *ibid.* p.6 Census Report 1871, Table 108 Appendix A to the Report- Sheffield was a regional centre for File, saw - smith, tool, engine and machine making and coal mining.

<sup>38</sup> See also: Furniture Made In Yorkshire 1750 - 1900. Temple Newsam Exhibition Catalogue, 1974, p.xiv. for other comparisons.

<sup>39</sup> Pollard, *ibid.* pp. 23 ff. 108 - 109, 180 -181, Tables 13b, 15b, Diagram 1b.

community the greater its wealth and demand for new furniture. Census records for 1841 show Sheffield to have had a population of 111,000 with 269 individuals or 0.24% of the population listed as cabinet makers. Compared with a sample of a further eight neighbouring communities this gave Sheffield a rank of 7/9 for the size of its furniture industry in relation to the size of its population.

**Table 2.4**

Table Showing Rank of Provincial Towns as Determined by the Ratio of Furniture Workers: Population.									
Year	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1700 - 1800 <sup>E</sup>	York	Liverpool	Hull	Wakefield	Manchester	Leeds	Birmingham	Sheffield	Huddersfield
1801 - 1840 <sup>E</sup>	Liverpool	York	Hull	Manchester	Birmingham	Huddersfield	Wakefield	Leeds	Sheffield
1841	York	Hull	Liverpool	Birmingham	Manchester	Leeds	Sheffield	Wakefield	Huddersfield
1851	York	Manchester	Birmingham	Hull	Liverpool	Leeds	Wakefield	Sheffield	Huddersfield
1871	Manchester	Birmingham	York	Hull	Liverpool	Wakefield	Leeds	Sheffield	Huddersfield
1891	Hull	Birmingham	Manchester	York	Sheffield	Leeds	Liverpool	Huddersfield	*
E = Estimated figure									
*No information collected as population below 50,000									

In the early part of the nineteenth century wealthy and long established communities, such as Liverpool and York, exchanged first and second places within the table indicating a comparatively high demand for new furniture. Sheffield's economy, stifled by depressions resulting from conflicts in Europe and America, generated little demand for new goods and so it remained at the bottom of the table. By 1891 Liverpool's influence as a port had declined whilst York's lack of industrialisation inhibited nouveau riches expansion causing their ranks to fall to 7th and 4th respectively. Despite the recessions of the 1870's and 1880's and high unemployment in the early 1890's<sup>40</sup> Sheffield's rank slowly improved moving from 8th to 5th during the period 1871 - 1891. This would indicate that those sectors of society interested in acquiring new furniture were resilient to the economic swings of the period and were now sufficiently established in Sheffield to sustain a variety of activities within the local furniture industry.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Pollard, *ibid.* p.110 f.f.

<sup>41</sup> The combined trades of cabinet making, upholstery, French polishing and furniture broker employed the following numbers ( Male & female) in Sheffield: 1841- 281, 1851 - 780, 1871 - 780, 1891 - 1684. 1851 Census Vol. 8 p.p. 505 - 509, Vol. 9 p.p. 648, 725. 1871 Census Vol. 18, 1891 Vol. 23 Industrial Class V.

## Size of Firms.

A comparison between Census figures for the numbers employed in a particular furniture trade and the number of firms listed in directories for that trade has provided a working estimate of average business size. An overall picture of caution and conservatism appears with most firms preferring to maintain stability of income during periods of prosperity rather than risk capital expenditure through expansion and additional employment with no guarantee of increased profits. Owners were often highly cautious about ploughing back profits preferring a modest living with minimal risk to higher overheads high risk expansion. In a period of low business ethics and considerable instability<sup>42</sup> any capital created beyond that required to support the business and its dependents was often diverted into safer investments such as property to provide a supplementary income less susceptible to economic downturns or dishonesty. It was also a feature of family businesses that even when a single firm was capable of supporting more than one household a son would establish his own business in order to minimise family losses should one firm fail.<sup>43</sup> Frequently the new business was in the same or a related field drawing on the expertise of the parental business. In 1825, three members of the Clayton family, William Henry, John and Philip all began businesses as furniture brokers within half a mile of each other with another Clayton, Alfred, starting a fourth business in the same area c.1849.

The Dewsnap family of cabinet case makers spawned several firms of varying sizes and success all operating in the same field. James Dewsnap established his firm in 1841 and became the most successful of the family with showrooms in London and large premises in Sheffield, which he partly sub-let for additional income.<sup>44</sup> He lived alongside Arthur Hayball and John Manuel Jnr. in Wilkinson St. to the west of the town. Thomas Dewsnap started his firm around 1833 and continued in business for over 40 years. In the Census of 1871 he was described as 61 years old, a master cabinet case maker employing 2 men, 3 boys and 4 girls, two of whom were probably his own daughters, Fanny aged 23 and Mary aged 18, both of whom were

---

<sup>42</sup> Nenadic, *ibid.*p.88.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* p.97

<sup>44</sup> Kelly's Directory of Sheffield 1883.



described as cabinet case finishers. His home, in Lydgate Lane, was in the affluent artisan suburbs to the west of the town whilst his works were centrally located in Devonshire St. The 1878 Sheffield Rate Book listed his works as a warehouse, works and premises with a rateable value of £32. Around 1849, a Joseph Dewsnap began a similar business in Tudor Place whilst a John Dewsnap, briefly in partnership as Dewsnap & Cooper, began his business around 1876 and which flourished for some 20 years. During the nineteenth century this pattern of fractional family businesses was repeated throughout the Sheffield furniture industry. Although reliant upon each other in terms of experience, contacts and possibly some shared costs, families persisted in maintaining small independent operations as a means of damage limitation. Fear of bankruptcy was a greater concern than reducing costs via rationalisation or consolidating investments and expertise into large, joint owned, or hierarchical businesses, hence the persistence of small enterprises deemed better suited to survive economic turbulence.

The practice of many owners preferring to limit the size of their businesses meant that growth was achieved extensively rather than intensively. Whilst the size of the Sheffield furniture industry grew during the boom years of the mid nineteenth century this was mainly achieved by an increase in the number of small firms within each trade rather than existing firms increasing either their range of services or number of employees.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, whilst the overall number of workers in the Sheffield furniture trades rose during the nineteenth century the average size of firms remained virtually unchanged. In the period 1841 - 1871 the average size of cabinet making and upholstery firms increased from 7.27 to 7.47 individuals. The size of wood turning and chair manufacturing firms also remained fairly static rising from 3.09 to 3.95. Carving and gilding establishments saw a substantial decrease in size due to advances in manufacturing techniques with the average number of employees falling from 7 in 1841 to 2.8 in 1871. During the same period the number of firms involved with cabinet making grew from 37 to 80, in upholstery from 17 to 28 and in chair making from 8 to 13.

Some family firms were managed in order to achieve growth, creating firms

---

<sup>45</sup> Nanedic, ibid. p.89



which could be handed onto the next generation. For example, in 1851 George Eadon employed 31 men, John Manuel 22 men and Ann Jessop 18 men. John Manuel's son, John, took over his father's cabinet and upholstery firm and in 1871 he employed 45 men, 10 women and 5 boys. Similarly, in 1861 William Johnson cabinet maker, employed 27 men, 4 women and 7 boys and in 1871 his widow, Hannah employed 40 men, 6 women and 6 boys.

### **Business Locations.**

The absence of large scale mass production techniques during the nineteenth century ensured that the furniture industry remained a highly customer orientated industry with most firms maintaining close physical links with their clients.<sup>46</sup> By the mid nineteenth century time saving devices such as planing, sawing and moulding machinery were available to larger concerns<sup>47</sup> but were used more to assist than replace hand skills which were still of high commercial value in a highly diverse trade.<sup>48</sup>

With the exception of those requiring water or steam power many businesses located themselves in streets close to their markets forming closely bound networks of trades and interests.<sup>49</sup> Those who utilised water power, namely wood turners, cutters and timber merchants rented space at wheels, usually to the east of the town centre. In 1854 a survey of the use of steam power in Sheffield showed widespread usage by several furniture trades who used it as a means of powering various cutting, planing, turning and moulding machinery.

---

<sup>46</sup> John Oliver, The Development and Structure of the Furniture Industry, 1966. p. 23, p.p. 144 - 145.

<sup>47</sup> G.W. Yapp, Art Industry, Furniture, Upholstery and House - Decoration. London, 1972 reprint. p.8 - 22.

<sup>48</sup> Pat Kirkham, London Furniture Trade. p.110.

<sup>49</sup> Oliver, ibid. p.1. "An industry is recognised as an association of allied trades with some degree of localisation"

**Table 2.5.**

**Table Showing the Use of Steam Power by the  
Sheffield Furniture Industry 1854.**

	<b>No. of engines.</b>	<b>Horse power.</b>
<b>Hair seating</b>	2	5
<b>Saw Mill</b>	2	22
<b>Sawing Wood</b>	1	25
<b>Timber Merchant</b> <sup>50</sup>	3	52
<b>Wood Cutting</b>	1	30
<b>Wood Turner</b>	7	48

Source: Sheffield Independent 15th. April 1854.

During the nineteenth century the enclaves of the Sheffield furniture industry slowly moved westwards keeping close to the main retailing areas<sup>51</sup> as heavy industry moved to the east of the town and the nouveaux riches built their homes in the west. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the main centres of furniture making were found amongst the mixed residential and light industrial areas located on the low lying westward slopes of the town rising away from the Sheaf and Don rivers. Popular sites included The Haymarket, George St., High St., Church St., Gibraltar St., and West Bar (Figure 2. 4 ). Around 1736, one of the earliest attempts at providing elegant, purpose - built town residences for the new middle classes was started with the building of Paradise Square by Thomas Broadbent.<sup>52</sup> Trade directory evidence shows that the furniture trades soon moved into the area, occupying the ground floors of several premises for manufacturing and / or retailing with

---

<sup>50</sup> During the 1830's, George Tummon of Coulston Croft, rented power from the Soho Grinding Wheel which he used to cut timbers and veneers. The general introduction of steam - powered veneer cutting machinery reduced the cost of materials and made veneers more widely available (Kirkham, p.16). Most Sheffield cabinet firms were too small to have facilities beyond hand saws for cutting wood and were dependent upon the facilities provided by timber merchants. The Newark - on -Trent Saw Mill Company established an agent in Sheffield in 1841 to sell their timber and veneers to the Sheffield furniture trades.

<sup>51</sup> G. Timmins, Made in Lancashire: A History of Regional Industrialisation. M.U.P. 1998. p.108 states the producers of furniture tended to establish themselves wherever sufficient concentrations of consumer arose.

<sup>52</sup> See R.E. Leader, Reminiscences of Old Sheffield. p.3 & Gatty, Hallamshire. p.177 for differences in the establishment of Paradise Square.

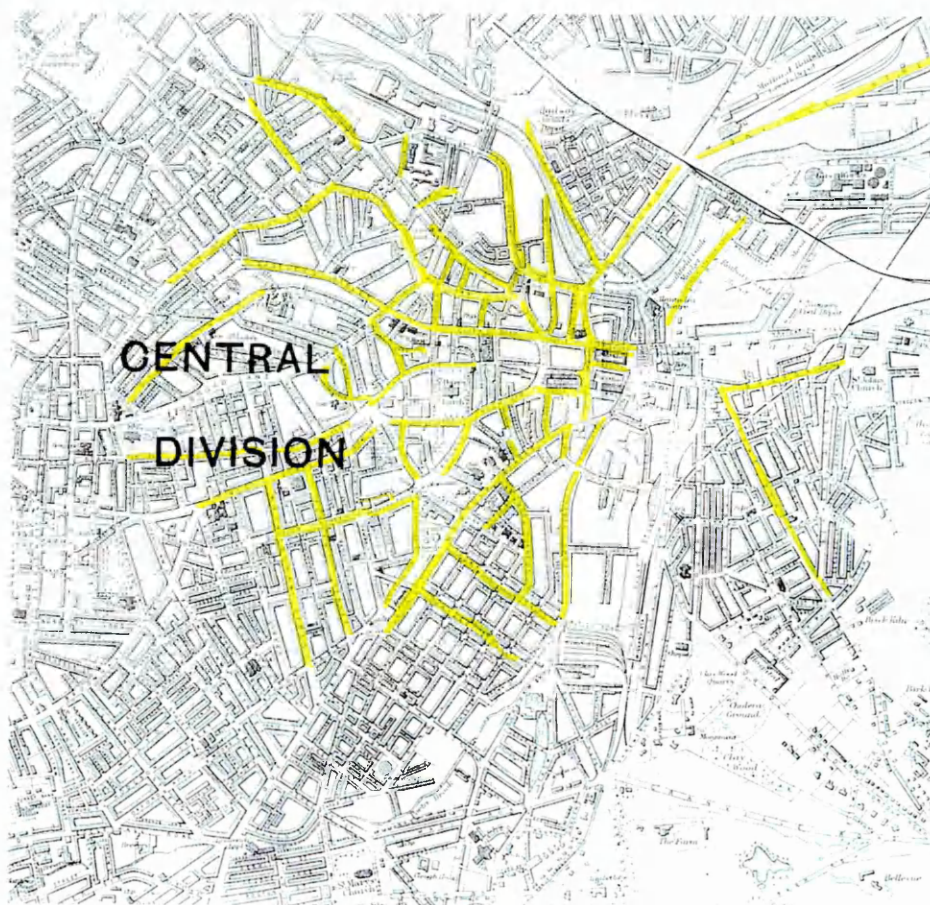


Figure 2.4. Map of Central Sheffield Showing Some of the Principal Streets Frequented by Firms Involved in the Furniture Industry, c.1825.



living accommodation above. Three types of furniture business have been located within the square, cabinet makers, upholsterers and furniture brokers. The earliest recorded presence was of John Jenkinson, cabinet maker, upholsterer and joiner in 1777 at 23, Paradise Square.<sup>53</sup> By 1860 of the 12 businesses recorded in the square 11 had moved with only a brief occupancy by a chair maker during the latter part of the 1890s as the area was slowly given over to legal and office space. As in other parts of the town the same premises were frequently re - occupied by similar trades e.g. 26, Paradise Square was occupied by:

- 1) John Clayton jun., furniture broker between 1839 - 49
- 2) James Nield, furniture broker in 1856
- 3) Arthur Banbery, chair maker between 1898 - 99.

As the furniture industry began to move westwards<sup>54</sup> in order to keep close to its middle class market<sup>55</sup> long term repetitive occupancy of premises in popular locations continued. Fargate became one of Sheffield's principle shopping arteries with adjoining streets offering a variety of premises used as workshops (Figure 2. 5). 92 Fargate was variously occupied by:

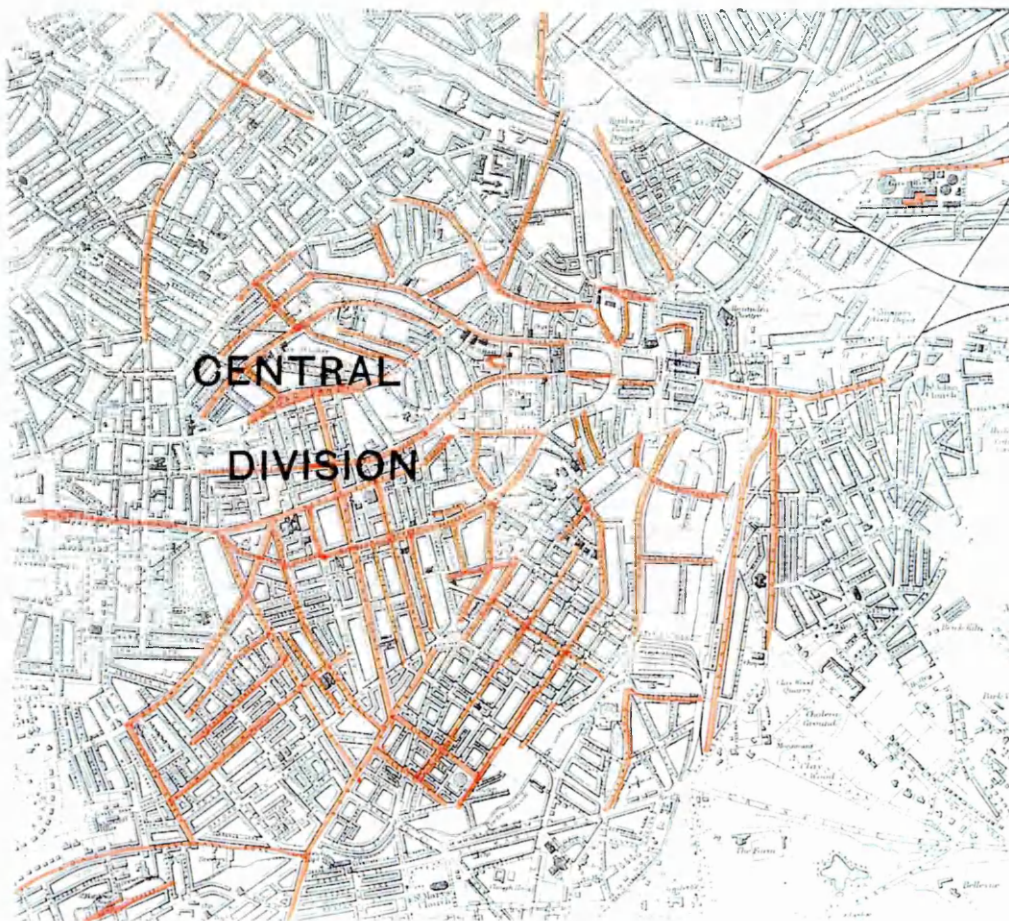
- 1) 1814 - 1820 Edward Bardwell, cabinet maker.
- 2) 1849 George Lamb, furniture broker.
- 3) 1856 John Hopkinson, furniture broker.
- 4) 1871 Samuel Barnsley, carver, gilder and picture - framer.
- 5) 1876 William Johnson & Son, cabinet makers & upholsterers.
- 6) 1879 - 1887 Johnson & Appleyards, cabinet makers & upholsterers.
- 7) 1888 - 1898 W. Peace & Sons, cabinet maker & upholsterers.

---

<sup>53</sup> Dictionary of English Furniture Makers - In 1777 he was insured for £200, £70 of which for utensils & stock. Jenkinson subscribed to Sheraton's Drawing Book.

<sup>54</sup> John Shepherd established his cabinet making business at 14, Haymarket in 1745 where his descendants continued and developed the business variously as general house furnishers, iron mongers, timber merchants, chair makers, paper stockists and hangers, upholsterers and iron and steel warehousemen. ( The Sheffield Iris 13 April 1824 ) Around 1860 the business was sold to Woollen & Fordham who rented the same premises ( a three storey house and saleshop with an R.V. of £165 in 1879) from Malin Shepherd but which were now in an unfashionable part of the town. Sheffield Trade Directories. From Rate Book evidence the Shepherds appear to have moved into property letting as a more successful means of income.

<sup>55</sup> John Nelson Tarn, Sheffield. Middle Class Housing in Britain. Ed. by Simpson & Lloyd, 1977. p.p. 172 - 174.



**Figure 2.5.** Map of Central Sheffield Showing Some of the Principal Streets Frequented by Firms Involved in the Furniture Industry, c.1860 and indicating the move westwards.



During the nineteenth century some 92 firms involved in the furniture industry had premises in Fargate. Their activities included cabinet making, upholstery, carving and gilding sometimes with picture framing, cabinet case making, japanning, turning, wood carving and furniture brokering. The presence of some twenty furniture brokers having premises in one of the town's principle retail areas over a broad period of time would suggest that in Sheffield little, if any, stigma was attached to the acquisition of second hand goods by a large proportion of the population.

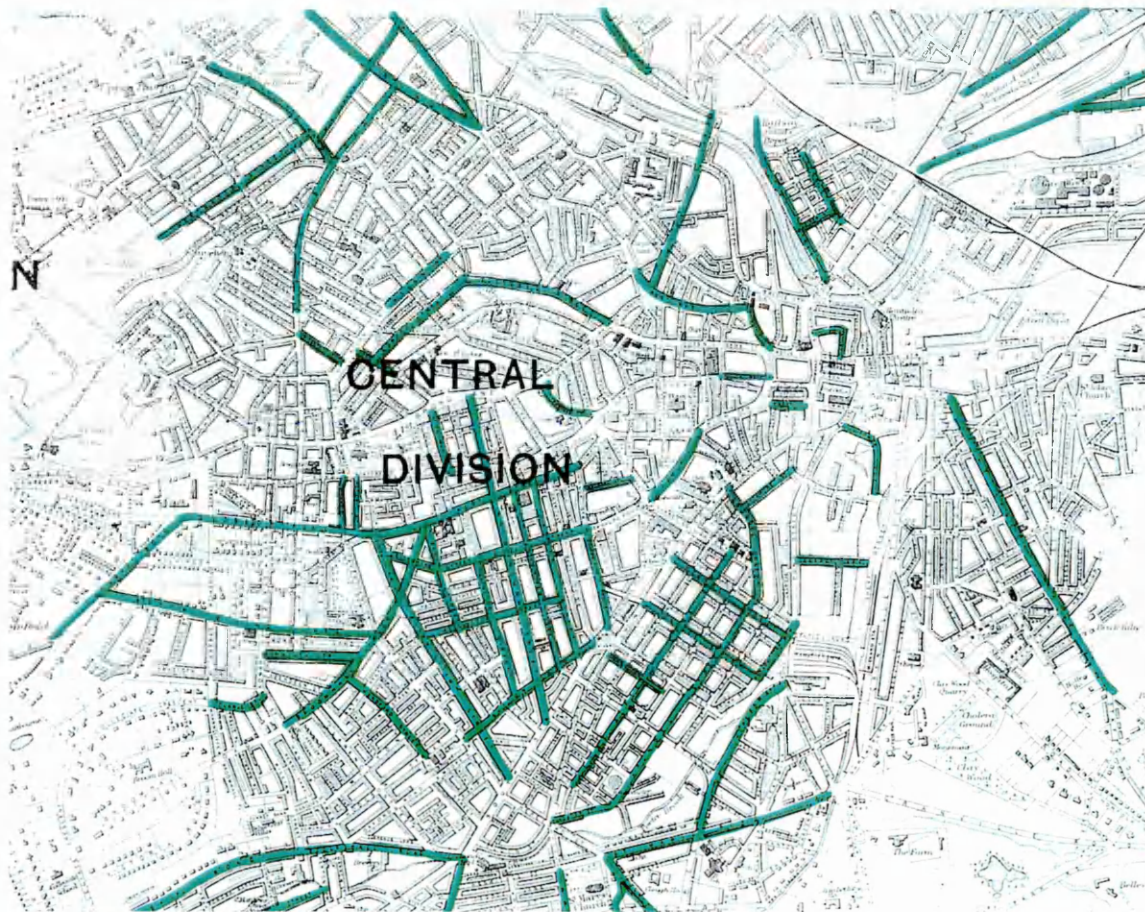
During the last quarter of the nineteenth century premises adjoining Fargate were still sought after by the furniture trades despite small and cramped conditions. During the period 1875 - 1900, Exchange Gateway, a narrow alley running from Fargate to the back of the Cutlers' Hall housed 16 businesses undertaking services including French polishing, turning, cabinet case making, japanning, wood carving and cabinet making. Many of the premises had ratable values of less than £10<sup>56</sup> indicating the micro economies of the firms concerned. One of the most densely occupied streets was Rockingham Street which first attracted the presence of the furniture trades as early as 1825.<sup>57</sup> From the mid nineteenth century its popularity rapidly increased and some 52 different furniture related firms including japanning, bronzing, cabinet case making wood turning, cabinet making, upholstery, French polishing and furniture brokering located there.

Probably as a result of lack of space the furniture trades again moved further north and west to an area centred upon Rockingham Street, Carver Street, Division Street, Devonshire Street, Scotland Street and West St. Premises included a variety of small shops along the main public thoroughfares, workshops in the adjoining courts and alleyways and larger manufacturers occupying adjacent sites where the rates and rents were cheaper. Many other small furniture related firms began to follow their customers into the suburbs (Figure 2. 6) establishing themselves on the main roads passing through Abbeydale, Attercliffe, Eccleshall and Hillsborough. The preservation of a close proximity to their customers throughout the nineteenth century suggests

---

<sup>56</sup> Sheffield Rate Books 1878 - 79.

<sup>57</sup> 1825, Short & Barker, Wood Turners, 34, Rockingham St. Gell's Directory of Sheffield, 1825.



**Figure 2.6.** Map of Central Sheffield Showing Some of the Principal Streets Frequented by Firms Involved in the Furniture Industry, c.1900. Here the pursuit of cheaper, larger sites away from the town centre may be discerned and a move by some manufacturers to the suburbs to keep close to their respective markets.



the widespread adoption of machinery was slow to be accepted in Sheffield and that there survived an extensive bespoke tradition almost to the end of the century.<sup>58</sup>

### Business Moves

Premises occupied by the furniture trades were often small with directories recording small businesses frequently moving to sustain a manageable balance between income and overheads. Such movements were often connected to the period's persistent cycles of economic expansion and contraction. As the majority of properties were rented it was both prudent and relatively easy to acquire larger or smaller premises depending on the workload available. In 1839, Vienna Humberstone, a wood turner, worked from 32, Cadman St. In 1849, briefly in partnership as Humberstone & France, he was at 4, Norfolk Lane. By 1856 he had moved to Castle Mills and was finally recorded at Pond Wheel on Forge Lane between c.1861 - 65 when his son, Alfred, took over the business. Furniture brokers appear to have made frequent moves partially to keep close to their clientele and partly as a result of low set up costs / low profits scenario entailing frequent adjustments to overheads such as rents. John Clayton was a typical, though relatively long lived, example:

1825 .....	Paradise St.
1833.....	11, Paradise Square
1839.....	26, Paradise Square
1841.....	60, West Bar Green
1849.....	26, Paradise Square

Many firms, such as Claytons, operated from rooms attached to domestic premises thus work and lodgings had to be changed in times of recession.

---

<sup>58</sup> Standardisation through mechanisation was thought to have entered the furniture industry around 1870 (Pat Kirkham, London Furniture Trade, p.109) yet recent research suggests that this development was, in fact, much later with mass production techniques not becoming firmly established until the second decade of the twentieth century (Clive D. Edwards, Victorian Furniture. Technology and Design, 1993. p.p. 183 - 184). Mechanisation of an industry initiated a move away from centres of population to areas providing large premises with cheap rates and good national communications (John Oliver, The Development and Structure of the Furniture Industry, 1966. p.p. 23, 140, 147); viz the eastwards move of the iron and steel industry in Sheffield, during the nineteenth century, away from the town centre towards cheap, flat, extensive sites near railway and canal communications.

Successful small businessmen took pride in advertising their work premises independently from their residences. In 1865, William Adsetts a wood turner worked in Burgess St. in the town centre but lived in the suburbs some five miles south west in Victoria Road, Heeley.<sup>59</sup> In 1876, Thomas Cocking, cabinet maker, joiner, undertaker and Venetian blind manufacturer worked in the family business at 13 - 17, Watson Walk which had been established in 1817 ( Figure 2.7 ). He listed his home address as 99, Upper Hanover St. less than two miles from the city centre in an area which had initially been built as a middle class suburb.<sup>60</sup> After several early changes of business address Cockings' settled in Watson Walk from c.1833 -1876 when they moved to Barker's Pool following the migration westwards of the town's nouveaux riches.

Successful businesses appear to have found a good location early in their firm's life and stayed there, introducing changes such as expansion, sub - letting<sup>61</sup> or new plant with minimum disruption. James Dewsnap, cabinet case maker, established his business in Newcastle St. Sheffield in 1841. As his business grew he acquired premises in the adjoining street and by the end of the century had an outlet in London and occupied substantial Sheffield premises known as The Morocco and Cabinet Works, 10, St. Thomas' St. which covered the land between Newcastle St., St. Thomas St. and St. Thomas Lane ( Figure 2.8 ). Similarly the nearby hair seating manufacturers Samuel Laycock & Sons had established their firm at Millsands in 1771 but released from a dependency on water power acquired premises in Portobello around 1849 where they stayed for the remainder of the century, despite fire destroying the buildings in 1855 ( Figure 2.9. ).<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Kelly's Directory of Sheffield.1865.

<sup>60</sup> Pollard, *ibid.* p. 6. White's Directory of Sheffield. 1876.

<sup>61</sup> Wm. Chas. Davis Bradforth, cabinet maker & upholsterer, briefly rented premises in 9, Fitzwilliam St. & Dewsnap's Yard around 1893 as did William James Bannister a wood carver c. 1883 - 1888. Kelly's Directories of Sheffield. In 1849 Robert Cocking, cabinet maker, sub - let part of his premises at 11, Watson Walk to the cabinet and chair making partnership of Crampton and Moore (Trade Directories). Conditions must have been cramped as the ratable value of Cocking's entire premises at 13 - 17, Watson Walk amounted to a total of only £65.00. in 1878. The arrangement was short - lived.

<sup>62</sup> The same year William Laycock acquired Stumperlowe Grange a substantial private residence in the western suburbs. William was initially a carpet weaver at Millsands - where he worked alongside John Crossley who later moved to Halifax to set up his own business. He became mayor of Sheffield in 1865 and the business became a limited company in 1889. J. H. Stainton, The Making Of Sheffield 1865 - 1914. p. 300.



ESTABLISHED 1817.



**THOMAS COCKING,**  
**CABINET MAKER,**  
**UPHOLSTERER & UNDERTAKER,**

Nos. 15 AND 17, WATSON'S WALK, SHEFFIELD.

Every description of Walnut, Mahogany, and Painted Furniture  
 kept in Stock, or made to Order.

MANUFACTURER AND REPAIRER OF VENETIAN SUN BLINDS.

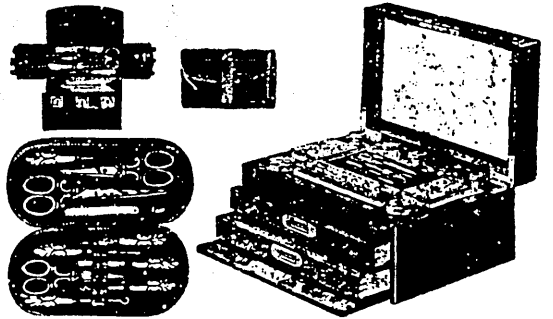
*SHOPS FITTED UP, AND ALL KINDS OF SHOW CASES MADE.*

MANUFACTORY: FLEUR DE LIS YARD, ANGEL STREET.

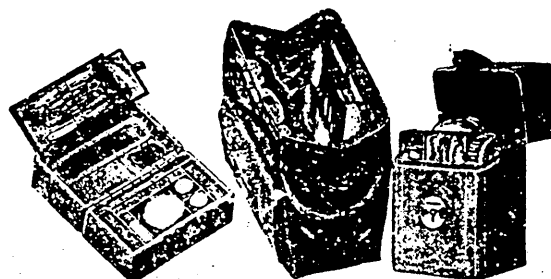
2.7. Thomas Cocking - details of his services and a view of his main premises in Watson's Walk. The manufactory has been relocated to nearby Angel St. allowing more room for selling space with less disruption to either activity.

14 SHEFFIELD ADVERTISEMENTS. [1883.]  
 LONDON, 1881. ESTABLISHED 1841. LONDON, 1881.

**JAMES DEWSNAP,**  
 MANUFACTURER OF  
**LADIES' & GENTLEMEN'S DRESSING CASES & BAGS,**  
 Writing and Despatch Cases, in both Wood and Leather, Liqueur Cases,  
 Work Boxes, Stationery Cases.



CIGAR CABINETS & CASES, JEWELLERY CASES, STUCCO CASES, TOURISTS' CASES,  
 TOILET CASES, PURSES, POCKET BOOKS,  
 DRAM FLASKS, RAZOR STROPS AND CASES, BILL CASES, FOLIOS, &c., &c.



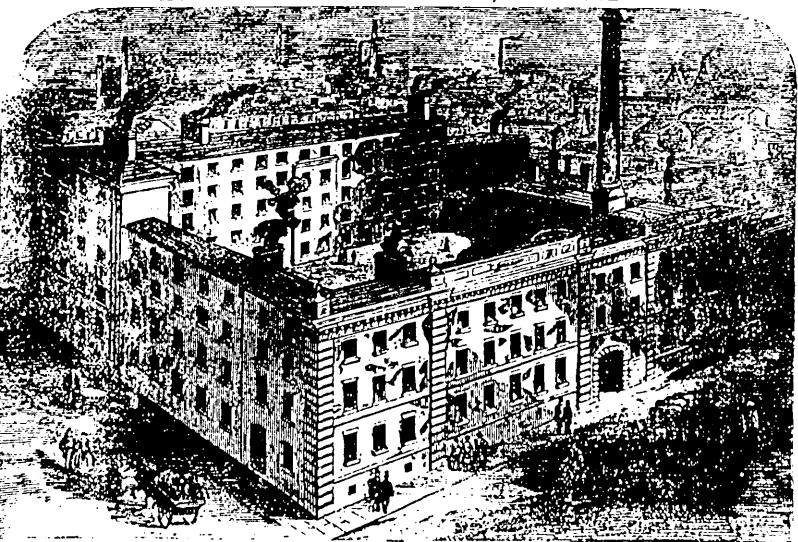
Cabinet and Morocco Works, 10, Saint Thomas Street,  
**SHEFFIELD.**

London Show Rooms:—35, ELY PLACE, HOLBORN.

2.8. Advertisement for James Dewsnap. Despite his large premises attention was directed towards his produce and the fact he had show rooms in London.

ALSO AT MILLSANDS WORKS, SHEFFIELD.

**SAMUEL LAYCOCK & SONS,**  
 AND MANUFACTURERS OF  
 HAIR SEATING, CURLED HAIR,  
 Crinoline Hair Cloth, &c., &c.



PORTOBELLO PLACE & MILLSANDS WORKS, SHEFFIELD.

PORTOBELLO PLACE, SHEFFIELD.

2.9. The premises of Samuel Laycock & Sons, hair seating manufacturers, at Portobello. Emphasis is given to the building as the produce has little to speak of in terms of appearance.

### Nature of Premises.

Many businesses appear to have encountered difficulties expanding due to a lack of appropriate accommodation. Whilst willing to improve their businesses few had the resources of James Dewsnap, the Laycocks or Johnson & Appleyards ( q.v.) to build customised premises on prime sites. Most had to make do with an ad hoc collection of buildings whilst small firms rarely had the opportunity to acquire purpose built premises. Consequently, a variety of premises were used by the furniture industry including shops, workshops, garrets, low shops, houses, chambers, sheds, stables, warehouses, yards, offices, coach houses and cellars. Of 116 firms examined in the 1878 /9 Rate Books only 12 had a ratable value in excess of £100, five of which were timber merchants who required large yards for the storage of logs and machinery. The remaining seven all offered cabinet making combined with upholstery as their core services but subsequently expanded into general house furnishing.

Forty businesses in the survey occupied premises with a ratable value of £10 or less and only one was recorded as being owned rather than rented by the occupier.<sup>63</sup> Of these 40 businesses:

**20 were furniture brokers,  
6 cabinet makers  
4 wood turners  
3 French polishers  
2 cabinet makers and upholsterers  
1 cabinet case maker  
1 japanner  
1 cabinet maker and furniture broker  
1 wood carver  
1 upholsterer**

However, further research has shown that determining physical size is not a reliable indicator of success in terms of quality of output. Whilst most firms were short lived and unremarkable others survived many years in small premises where they produced work of considerable quality. Two examples

---

<sup>63</sup> Samuel Holleley, wood turner at 22 1/2, Pinstone St. where he owned a workshop and was landlord of four other premises. Sheffield Rate Books 1878 /9.

are noteworthy:

After leaving 160, Devonshire St. which he had occupied for some 5 - 10 years Zachariah Jackson, cabinet maker and upholsterer took the house, saleshop and workshop at 136 - 138, Devonshire Street for around a further 15 - 20 years c.1876 - 1893. As the combined ratable value of 136 - 138, Devonshire St. was only £42 his business may have been overlooked despite its longevity but Jackson labelled his work and two nine - piece walnut salon suites are known both of which bear a paper label stating: "Manufactured by Z. Jackson, 160, Devonshire Street, Sheffield".<sup>64</sup> Both are of high quality and whilst initially very similar in appearance one has the roundness of the High Victorian era whilst the second is more angular showing a swift acknowledgement of changes brought about by the Aesthetic Movement of the 1870's - 1880's. The latter was auctioned in 1992 with an estimate of £2500 - 3500, the former in 1999 when, despite the upholstery being in poor order, it surpassed a conservative estimate of £1500 - £2500 to realise a hammer price of £6400 ( Figure 2. 10. ).<sup>65</sup>

Arthur Hayball ( 1822 - 1887) the son of a Sheffield builder and joiner was a wood carver who supplemented his income as a portrait photographer and teacher.<sup>66</sup> In 1856 he lived and worked at 50, Hanover St. but in 1862 he moved to larger premises at 9 - 13, Cavendish St. built by his father and which served as both home and business premises with workshops and a steam saw in the garden. In 1878 the Ratable value for his home, warehouse and workshops amounted to just £58 but in the Census of 1881 he was listed as the employer of eight men, two boys and his daughters, one of whom, Clara, became a skilled carver. Hayball trained and later taught at the Sheffield School of Art where he was influenced by Alfred Stevens and Godfrey Sykes and later John Ruskin. In 1851 he won a gold medal at the Great Exhibition in 1851 for a highly acclaimed walnut cabinet in the Italian style.<sup>67</sup> He worked for several architects principally Weightman & Hadfield,

---

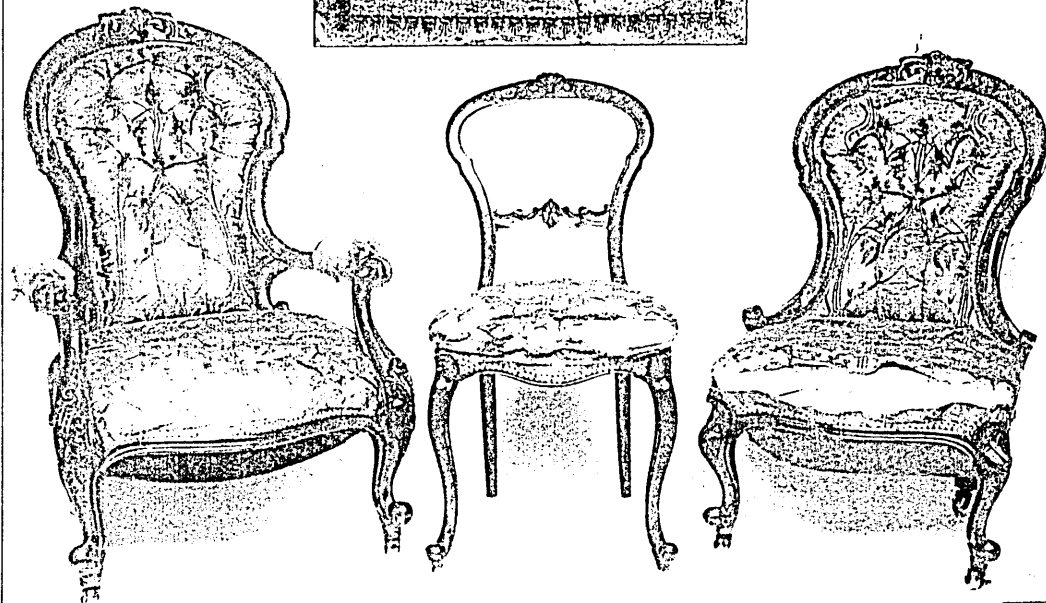
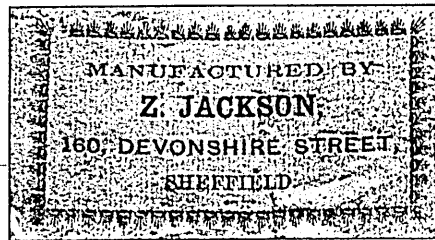
<sup>64</sup> Estimated ratable value £22 10/-.

<sup>65</sup> Spencer's, Retford Salerooms, Sale Catalogue 6 July 1992, Lot 125. John Walsh & Co. Wakefield Sale Catalogue 28 January 1999, Lot 204.

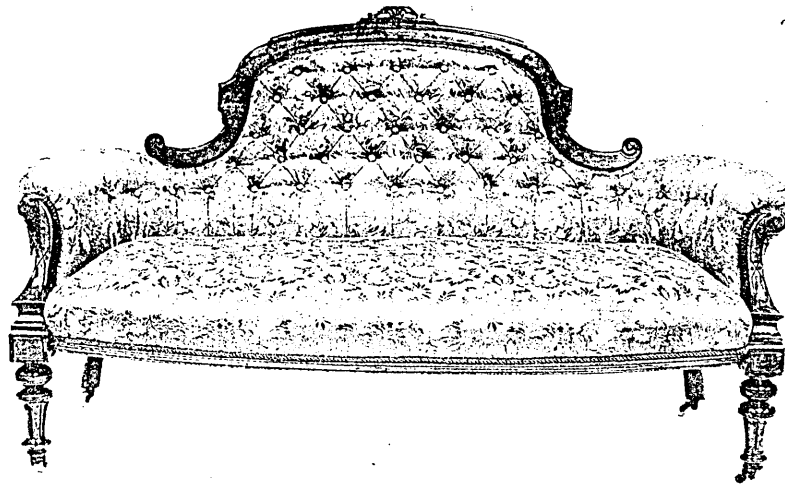
<sup>66</sup> A. E. Beet, Arthur Hayball - A Dreamer in Wood. Transactions of The Hunter's Archaeological Society, Vol. 7 p.p. 252 - 255, 1951 - 1957.

<sup>67</sup> Ralph Wornum, Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition 1851.

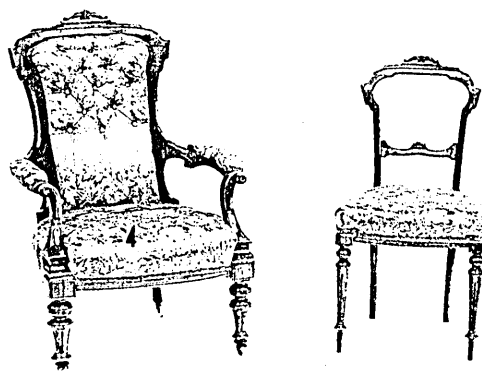




2.10. The two suites of Zachariah Jackson showing a move from the roundness of High Victorian styles to the squarer forms of the Aesthetic Movement.



Lot 125



George Goldie ( through whom he was commissioned to produce fittings for the Duke of Norfolk's Chapel at Arundel - later destroyed q.v.), J.B. Mitchell Withers and William White and received many commissions to execute work in churches in England, Ireland and Spain<sup>68</sup> as well as carrying out much local work including cabinet work and the production of elaborately carved mantelpieces.

### Origins of Workforce

"Between 1841 - 1851 Sheffield registered a net growth of nearly 9,000 souls by migration."<sup>69</sup> As well as workers for the staple Sheffield industries many of these immigrants appear to have been journeymen seeking work in the various furniture trades. However, where Pollard indicates the majority of immigrants seeking employment in the staple industries were unskilled<sup>70</sup> those in the furniture trades appear to have arrived possessing skills or were joining specific businesses as apprentices. Often, the immigrant owners of established firms would recruit from their native towns. George Marples a Master carver and gilder from Baslow, Derbyshire employed 6 men at premises in Church St. Sheffield in 1851. His apprentice Robert Froggatt came from Bakewell the next community to Baslow. In 1871, Robert Atkinson a cabinet maker from Lincolnshire worked in Carver St. Sheffield where he and his wife had a lodger, John Smith a cabinet maker from Gainsborough.

Of a survey of 65 Census Records of individuals known to have worked in the Sheffield furniture industry between 1851 - 1881, 30 had moved to Sheffield from other areas. Only three had come from outlying villages with Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire<sup>71</sup> and Birmingham being the most common sources of migrant workers. Others came from much further afield such as Darlington, London, Ireland and Surrey. Census records also indicate the itinerancy required to survive as a cabinet maker moving from town to

---

<sup>68</sup> Stephen Welsh, A Brief History of the Firm of Architects founded in Sheffield by John Gray Weightman and Matthew Ellison Hadfield Including Biographical Notes on the Principals and Lists of their Principal Works from 1838 - 1938. The Death of Mr. Arthur Hayball, Sheffield Daily Telegraph 30 June 1887.

<sup>69</sup> Pollard, ibid p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> ibid, p. 7.

<sup>71</sup> Reid, ibid, p.62.

town in search of work. The Census of 1851 recorded Michael Buckley aged 42, a cabinet maker living and working in Exchange Gateway, Fargate. He had been born in Ireland, his wife in London and their two children in Lincoln and Leeds.

London workers were highly sought after<sup>72</sup> and, as with the Sheffield plate industry,<sup>73</sup> they were known to be deliberately recruited in order to bring new skills and knowledge to a trade. In 1852, Johnson & Allatt announced that:

“They have also engaged a *practical upholsterer from London*, who possesses a thorough Knowledge of Designing, Cutting, and Fixing all kinds of Curtains, Draperies, &c.”

Henry Bennehan, a French polisher worked from premises in Fargate for some 17 years, advertising his background as “from Broadwood’s, London”.<sup>74</sup>

Others came from yet further afield to escape conflict in Europe. Sheffield received a number of French and Italian carvers and instrument makers during the latter half of the reign of George III<sup>75</sup> although few appear to have settled in the area during the nineteenth century. This may help explain the relative lateness at which French polishing appears to have become established as an independent trade in Sheffield. This form of wood finishing is generally considered to have arrived in England around 1820, after the end of the Napoleonic Wars,<sup>76</sup> though Kirkham cites a reference claiming it was being practised in London, probably by French immigrants, as early as

---

<sup>72</sup> Furniture Made In Yorkshire 1750 - 1900. Temple Newsam Exhibition Catalogue, 1974, p. i, v.

<sup>73</sup> Frederick Bradbury, History of Old Sheffield Plate. 1912. Reprinted 1983. p. 31.

<sup>74</sup> White's Directory of Sheffield 1852 & 1862.

<sup>75</sup> e.g. Bellatti & Son of Newark, Bregazzi from Derby and D. Gugeri of Boston (relative of Charles Guggiari of Sheffield?) all barometer and thermometer makers. Spencer's Sale Catalogue, Retford, June 15th 1994. Furniture Made In Yorkshire 1750 - 1900, Temple Newsam Exhibition Catalogue, 1974, No. 9: Mahogany Stick Barometer c.1828 Case made by Charles Guggiari, Church St. Sheffield, Instrument by A. Albert, Sheffield. Torn paper label “... Wheel, Barometer, Thermometer, Hydrometer, Looking Glass and Picture Frame Manufacturer.”

<sup>76</sup> Stan Learoyd, English Furniture Construction and Decoration 1500 - 1910. 1981. p.99. Macquoid & Edwards, The Dictionary of English Furniture. revised Edwards. 1990. Vol. 3, p. 36.

1808.<sup>77</sup> However, it was not until 1841 that a listing for French Polishing can be traced in any Sheffield Directory although it is possible larger cabinet makers employed workers with such skills prior to this.

### **Women in Employment**

Census records provide a guide to the numbers of women employed in the Sheffield furniture industry although figures for 1891 merge several trades together adding French polishers and furniture brokers to the categories of cabinet makers and upholsterers. Women do not appear to have played a large part in the Sheffield furniture industry until the last quarter of the nineteenth century when their numbers, partly for the above reasons, increased considerably. In 1841, from a total workforce of 269 cabinet makers and upholsterers, only 24 were women. Little change took place during the following 10 years but by 1871 the number of women had risen both in numbers and in relation to the size of the industry. By 1891, they formed 38% of those working as cabinet makers, upholsterers, French polishers or furniture brokers.

**Table 2. 6**

**Table showing numbers of women employed in  
Sheffield as cabinet makers, upholsterers,  
French polishers and Furniture Brokers 1841 - 1891.**

	Male	Female	Total	% of Female
	Workers	Workers	Workers	Workers
1841	245	28	273	10.26
1851	356	39	395	9.87
1871	503	180	683	26.35
1891	1042	642	1684	38.12

Women often entered the furniture industry as French polishers, upholsteresses or furniture brokers and usually becoming employed in one of two ways. Firstly, as young girls who were employed by their family or an

<sup>77</sup> Pat Kirkham, The London Furniture Trade, 1700 - 1870, 1988 p. 34.



independent firm. In 1851, Census records showed Jane and Elizabeth Bense, aged 17 and 11, the daughters of a tailor in Fargate, employed as French Polishers. In 1871, Caroline and Clara Barnes, aged 18 and 16, daughters of a knife maker in Rockingham Lane, were also French polishers. Both families lived in an area populated by many cabinet making firms. French Polishing was considered suitable for women requiring skill rather than strength. It was also recognised that women could be highly competent in this field (Verbal interviews, retired French Polisher). Upholstery was another area where women could gain employment and one where they could respectfully operate as self employed. Miss Elizabeth Bardwell lived and worked in various premises as an upholsteress under her own name for almost 40 years from c.1862 until c.1898.<sup>78</sup> Arthur Hayball sent 3 of his daughters to the Sheffield School of Art and further trained them to be wood carvers of sufficient competence to work on the ceiling of the panelled chapel at Arundel and, after his death, for Clara to complete work on the alter and reredos at Bradfield Church.<sup>79</sup>

The second way in which women usually entered the trade was by carrying on a business after the death of a husband. Many small craft based industries which were otherwise sound commercial ventures were prone to failure as the result of the death of the principal around whose skills the business had been formed.<sup>80</sup>

If possible, widows would maintain a business until a son was old enough to take over or, if able to rely upon skilled employees, continue in an administrative capacity. Mrs. Catherine Bradbury took over the well established French polishing business which her husband, Thomas, had founded around 1879 for some five years after his death until c.1893. Mrs. Jane Jay took over her husband's 30 year old French polishing business in Exchange Gateway, Fargate and ran it for a further ten years until 1893. As with Hayball's daughters both these women possessed the technical skills

---

<sup>78</sup> Sheffield Trade Directories.

<sup>79</sup> Hayball Acc. 4 p. 49. Letters between Clara and Thomas Hayball and the Rev. R.A. Gatty 16 - 23 October 1887, Sheffield City Archive Library. Arthur E. Beet, T.H.A.S. ibid. Vol. 7 1951 - 57, p.254

<sup>80</sup> Geoffrey Jones and Mary B. Rose, Family Capitalism in Business History, Vol. 35. October 1993. No.4 p.12.

required to sustain their businesses.

After the loss of 3 husbands, Ann Jessop (1782 - 1864) decided to continue their successful cabinet making firm enabling her, at the age of 68, to employ 18 men. In 1833 she was one of nine local cabinet makers approached by The Company of Cutlers' in Hallamshire to tender designs and prices for the manufacture of 250 mahogany dining chairs and 3 large mahogany dining tables. Whilst unsuccessful in this commission it may be inferred she was recognised as one of the foremost cabinet makers in the town and that ability overrode any prejudices against women holding commercial responsibilities.<sup>81</sup> She maintained her business in Fargate as a cabinet maker, upholsterer, carver and gilder, probably in an administrative capacity, until the age of 71 when she handed it over to her nephew retiring with her niece and a servant to the western suburbs of Sheffield.<sup>82</sup>

Alternatively, it was not uncommon for spinster sisters or widows and daughters to work together as upholsteresses in order to support themselves after the loss of a husband or father. Mrs. E. and Miss. S. Bardwell were upholsteresses in Fitzwilliam St. Sheffield in 1871 whilst the Misses Steel were furniture brokers in West Bar in 1856.<sup>83</sup>

Where women ran multiple service businesses, most commonly in this context cabinet making and upholstery, it was usually because they had inherited a sufficient number of skilled employees who were able to compensate for the loss of production through the death of the owner. Such businesses were generally well established and had evolved some form of division of labour. Thus a woman would not always be involved in the physical production of goods or services but could concentrate on administrative matters or simply act as a figurehead for the firm. The 1871 Census described Martha Hibbert, a widow aged 61, as head of her household and a Carver and Gilder Mistress, employing 10 men and 2 boys. The 1851 Census described Ann Jessop as aged 68, widow of James, and

---

<sup>81</sup> Liber Minut Socieat Cutler in Hallamshire in Com: Ebor. 27 February - 11 March 1833. F 7 / 4 / 8, C9 / 4.

<sup>82</sup> Ann Jessop forthcoming New National Dictionary of Biography. Oxford University Press

<sup>83</sup> White's Directory of Sheffield 1865 & 1871.

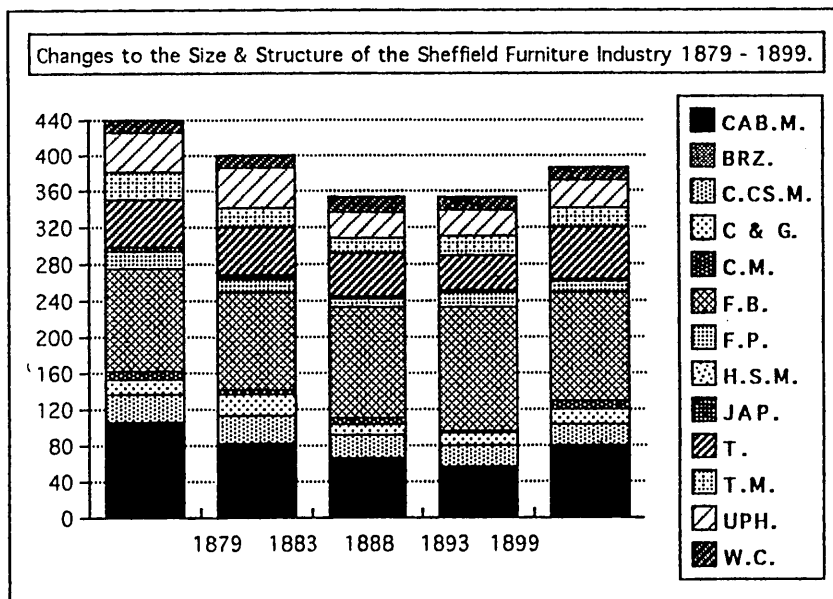
head of her household, an "Upholsteress, cabinet maker, carver and gilder, employing 18 men". Elizabeth Allinson, upholsterer and employer of 4 men, in the Census of 1881, maintained the cabinet and upholstery firm which her late husband George had established in 1832, until its future could be determined by their three sons.

### Conclusions

The severe economic upheavals encountered by Sheffield's staple industries during the last quarter of the nineteenth century were reflected by the Sheffield furniture industry suffering the loss of almost 100 firms. Figure 2. 11 shows the effect of the recessions of the late nineteenth century upon the Sheffield furniture industry and signs of its recovery in the latter part of the 1890s. It shows that losses occurred across the industry with perhaps wood turners and chair makers suffering the greatest short term losses. As both crafts had access to lathes it may be assumed they undertook, formally or informally, turning for handles and shafts for the various cutlery trades. During a prolonged recession they would have suffered the loss of trade clients who made up a large proportion of their market.

Figure 2.11.

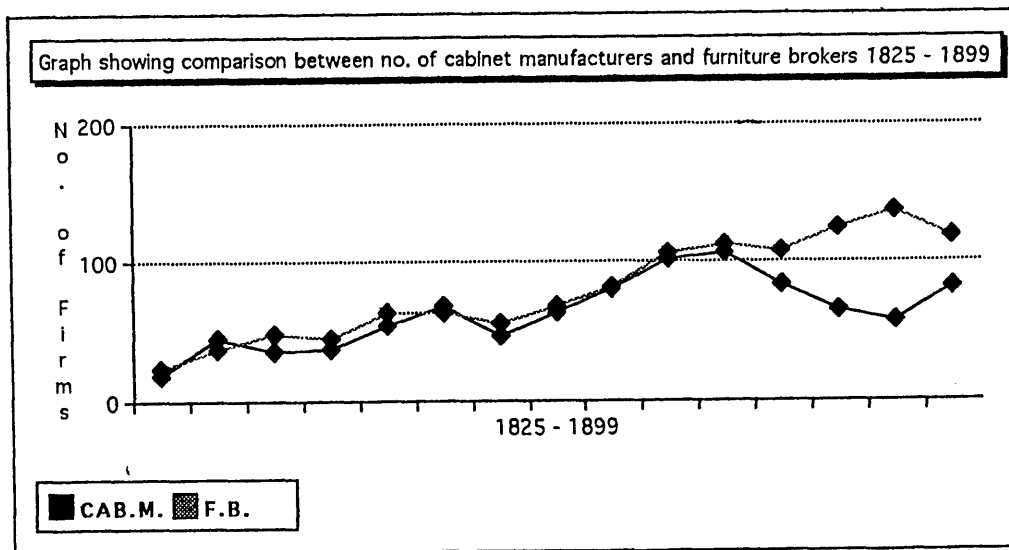
#### The Changing Size and Structure of the Sheffield Furniture Industry 1879 - 1899.



By the end of the century there were signs of positive growth as cabinet makers actually increased in numbers from a low of 57 firms in 1893 to 81 in 1899, having peaked at the start of the recession with 106 in 1879. Most other craft trades began to grow in numbers albeit slowly. Those servicing the lower end of the market suffered most whilst those supplying the middle - upper price range of goods survived. By the end of the century some Sheffield firms had escaped the taint of provincialism to become nationally recognised manufacturers who survived well into the twentieth century. Brokers fell in number from 137 in 1893 and continued to do so for the rest of the century. This suggests cabinet makers beginning to compete with brokers in terms of price and, as the popularity of the Sheffield code waned, people preferring to buy new, modern goods rather than the second hand and unfashionable.

Figure 2.12. shows how the number of cabinet makers and brokers increased at similar rates during the nineteenth century until the onset of the recessions of the 1870s onwards. Furniture brokers increased in number whilst cabinet makers rapidly decreased. However, by the end of the century the positions began to reverse as new goods became cheaper to buy and confidence returned to the town.

**Figure 2.12.**





By the end of the century improved communications and a skilled workforce familiar with contemporary designs and manufacturing techniques enabled some Sheffield firms to gain national reputations securing commissions throughout the country for both commercial and domestic furnishings. Many craftsmen in the Sheffield furniture industry, often from small, family firms, were aware of the need to develop their skills in order to remain competitive and, as seen in Chapter One, had been prepared to do so by acquiring additional training from the Sheffield School of Art.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, the influx of skilled immigrant workers during the mid nineteenth century would have helped invigorate the industry via the introduction of competition and new skills.

Firms which served the cheaper, more parochial and financially volatile sectors of the market encountered difficulties in adapting output and practices to changing markets. Living themselves a more hand to mouth existence, often as sole traders, such firms could not divert time away from manufacturing for training or administration and found difficulty in competing against businesses which could cut costs either by the use of machinery or buying wholesale cheap, mass - produced goods. An inability to delegate members away from production to develop supportive administrative structures curbed the ability of many to foresee market changes and plan accordingly. Whilst flexible in structure with individuals willing and able to perform a variety of productive tasks, small businesses were often highly conservative in nature and unwilling or unable to embrace new practices or seek out new markets - a characteristic shared in Sheffield with many in the cutlery trades.

The dominance of family based enterprises within the industry and the use of family members to support, formally or informally, the business structure provided a ready, reliable, resilient and adaptable workforce within the Sheffield furniture industry. Families were also a frequent source of start - up or contingency capital repayable at low interest over long, flexible periods although such a practice had its own drawbacks when money was recalled or

---

<sup>84</sup> Sheffield School of Art. Prizewinners c. 1840 - 1880. List compiled by S. Graves, Sheffield City Art Galleries. My thanks for the viewing of this document.

not returned.<sup>85</sup> Tenacity and determination to survive was assured although not always guaranteed as such characteristics in themselves caused weaknesses.

Fear of business failure caused many owners to divert profits away from their core activity into other income sources reducing, sometimes deliberately, their ability to re - invest or expand. Similarly it was not uncommon for members of the same family to pursue similar trades in close proximity to each other but as independent businesses.<sup>86</sup> Whilst this approach may have succeeded as a means of damage limitation, the necessary outlay to maintain two or more establishments, the loss of investment capital and ability to expand ensured businesses remained small. Stability, security and minimum exposure to market forces appear to have been the goal of many small, family orientated firms which enabled them to flourish in periods of economic buoyancy. By these criteria many firms within the spectrum of the Sheffield furniture industry were highly successful, achieving their goals of providing a comfortable living for the founder and an established business to hand over to offspring.<sup>87</sup>

Chapter Three will examine the formative influences upon the Sheffield furniture industry during the nineteenth century. It will analyse the types of patronage it received - civic, aristocratic, corporate and personal - and their impact upon the industry. The three forms of stylistic patronage - Gentlemanly Taste, the Sheffield Code and Cosmopolitan Taste will be considered and explored to establish how and when they came into being and how the furniture industry adapted itself to them.

---

<sup>85</sup> Stana Nenadic, The Small Family Firm, in *Business History* Vol. 35 October 1993. No. 4. pp.100, 103 ff.

<sup>86</sup> ibid. p.96.

<sup>87</sup> ibid. p.97.

# Chapter Three.

## The Formative Influences on Domestic Furniture

### in Nineteenth Century Sheffield

This chapter seeks to review the cultural inheritance of nineteenth century Sheffield in terms of the town's visual library of architecture and furniture. It will examine personal, civic, corporate and aristocratic contributions to these areas during two periods, namely, the second half of the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century.

Due to the factors outlined in Chapter One such contributions are believed to have had a greater impact upon the output of the Sheffield furniture industry than occurred in other communities. Such influences varied over time and determined whether national or regional trends in furnishing styles were followed. It will be argued that the period c.1750 - 1900 exhibited three phases of influence upon the output of the Sheffield furniture industry.

The first and last phases shared similarities with national trends and received patronage from both old and new money alike. The middle phase, I believe, was peculiar to Sheffield insofar as there appears to have been a slowing down in the popularity and prevalence of new furnishing styles. Evidence suggests a contentment with furniture considered out of date elsewhere but which, in Sheffield, fulfilled the needs of a locally held set of values. I have called this the "Sheffield code". The three phases are briefly outlined below prior to an examination of their formative causes. The periods are not absolute: examples may be found throughout the century which conflict with the argument. However, I believe there is a sufficient body of evidence to present the debate that for the middle years of the nineteenth century Sheffield subscribed to a set of values which were at odds with the view that novelty and fashion were the prerequisites of furnishing schemes.

### Gentlemanly Taste

The period extending from c.1750 - 1825, when Sheffield plate and the related light trades produced much of the town's income, helped establish a small body of professionals, gentry and cutlers whose furnishing tastes and



incomes encouraged local cabinet makers to produce quality work in the latest designs. Much of the evidence for this period is documentary but it reveals skilled and competent cabinet makers influenced by the designs of Adam and Sheraton with some firms receiving commissions from the neighbouring aristocracy including the Duke of Devonshire and Lord Rockingham. Advertisements for the designs of Hepplewhite appeared in the local press and several cabinet makers subscribed to one or other of Sheraton's publications indicating a market for modern and fashionable furniture. The range of incomes which supported the furniture industry at this time were varied encompassing a diversity of trades and professions.

### **The "Sheffield Code".**

From around 1825 onwards support for "Gentlemanly" taste began to decline. In 1840, the discovery of electro - plating considerably altered the form of the silver - plate industry and its influence in Sheffield started to be eclipsed by the rapid expansion of the iron and steel industry. Wealth creation shifted from those concerned with aesthetic developments to those more concerned with technology. The preponderance of Sheffield's commercial activity based upon the iron and steel industries meant recession in these areas effected large sectors of the community.<sup>1</sup> Money spent on fashionable goods for the home might be better reserved for supporting a business or family in times of difficulty thus many subscribed to the tenets of the "Sheffield code". Hence the enduring popularity of goods which fulfilled the code's criteria of durability, comfort, practicality, respectability, cleanliness, propriety and value for money. Fashion was not of prime concern; more important was the creation of a comfortable environment which was the antithesis of the workplace.

The presence of such a code may be attributed to the historical background of Sheffield as outlined in chapter one and the recognition that the local furniture industry now addressed the needs of a largely nouveaux riches society much of whose wealth was linked to the growing but unstable fortunes of the town's iron and steelworks. Furthermore, few had access to "high

---

<sup>1</sup> In 1851, of the 55,427 men and women, excluding domestic servants, who worked for their living, 44.96% were occupied in the manufacture of steel, cutlery, tools or the working of gold and silver. Pollard, *ibid.* p.6.



culture” other than the limited and haphazard examples provided by their immediate environment. As the century progressed this became further constrained as many who had supported “Gentlemanly taste” left the area as their homes were overrun by steelworks and suburbs.

Much has been written about the decline of taste and quality in the furniture industry during the nineteenth century and it is not the purpose of this thesis to enter that debate. The rapid and often volatile changes in social, economic and political life had brought to an end aristocratic influence over furniture design and introduced a nouveaux riches society eager to demonstrate wealth and success via the nature of their possessions. In this, Sheffield was no different from many other industrial communities of the nineteenth century.

The turbulence of Sheffield’s social and economic life was also similar to that in other industrial communities. However, whilst the homogeneous nature of the the town’s population may have reduced some of the attendant tensions it also failed to stimulate variety and diversity within the Sheffield furniture industry. It is possible to identify support for some furniture styles in Sheffield long after they had become outmoded elsewhere ( q.v.).

As fashion was not a prime consideration much furniture was recycled via brokers. Their presence in both middle and working class sectors of the town suggested both popularity and a lack of stigma to their use. In terms of business numbers they continued to dominate the Sheffield furniture industry until the last decade of the nineteenth century when improvements in manufacturing techniques began to reduce the cost of new furniture vis -a - vis second hand items and Sheffield taste began to imitate national trends.

### **Cosmopolitan Taste**

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a third influence became evident upon the output of some manufacturers in the Sheffield furniture industry encouraging an acceptance of national rather than regional trends. The success of some industrialists caused them to move away from the confines of Sheffield society and embrace a more cosmopolitan lifestyle. As manufacturing in Sheffield, especially armaments, increasingly attracted

national attention it became necessary for leading industrialists to replace their comfortable and unsophisticated furnishings as their homes became venues of formal entertaining. Whilst some, such as the Vickers, moved away from Sheffield altogether others remained furnishing their homes in contemporary styles and fashions. The support from this group enabled Sheffield firms such as John Manuel & Son and Johnson & Appleyards Ltd., to produce furniture which attracted the patronage of a national as well as local clientele.

The following section outlines the events which I consider helped formulate the Sheffield code and why it appears to have been widely embraced by much of the local community during the middle years of the nineteenth century.

### **Aristocratic Activity**

The absence of an aristocracy providing a spectrum of wealth, patronage and involvement in the social, political and economic fabric of Sheffield during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries restricted the development of the local furniture industry. This contrasted sharply with the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when the presence of a wealthy and expansionist aristocracy in and around Sheffield generated considerable building and furnishing activity establishing a local body of innovative and highly skilled workers in wood, plaster, stone and needlework.<sup>2</sup>

Much activity centred around the aggrandising ambitions of Bess of Hardwick who built mansions at Hardwick, Chatsworth, Worksop, Oldcoates and Bolsover.<sup>3</sup> In 1591, the building of the new Hardwick Hall was begun whilst Bess's husband, George Talbot, the VI Earl of Shrewsbury, built Worksop Manor and a small mansion at Han[d]sworth. In 1553, Talbot was granted Bolsover Castle which Sir Charles Cavendish, Bess's son, later leased and

---

<sup>2</sup> David Bostwick, Decorative Plasterwork of the Yorkshire Region, 1570 - 1670. Unpublished Ph.d. University of Sheffield. 1993 pp. 152 - 263. Gatty, Hunter's Hallamshire, 2nd edition, p. 93. Through their patronage, there grew an acknowledged local school of design whose products display particular localised motifs - John Andrews, British Antique Furniture. Antique Collectors Club, 3rd edition p. 113, Victor Chinnery, Oak Furniture. The British Tradition. fig. 3.48. The Late Rev. Reginald Gatty's Collection of Ancient Local Furniture, Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society, Vol. 1 p.p.94 - 101.

<sup>3</sup> J. Edward Vickers, A Popular History of Sheffield. 3rd. Edition. p. 21.

began rebuilding in 1612. Sir Charles inherited Welbeck Abbey and his son, the first Duke of Newcastle, made additions there between 1623 - 1625. At the same time George Sitwell built Renishaw Hall whilst around 1630, to the north east of Sheffield, Sir Thomas Wentworth, later Earl of Strafford, began building Wentworth Woodhouse. Wentworth Castle was probably established around the time of the Dissolution with alterations in the latter half of the seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup>

This activity was noted by the local gentry who started upgrading their own timber framed manors. Presiding over a wide spectrum of wealth acquired through mining, farming and leasing their lands<sup>5</sup> this often inter - related group of families embarked upon their own competitive and aggrandising schemes. They employed the same craftsmen to extend and improve their homes in imitation of styles seen in the new mansions and castles.

‘.....Clear evidence of pattern sources utilised in the  
Cavendish / Shrewsbury households finding their  
way via the craftsmen into the homes of less  
illustrious patrons.’<sup>6</sup>

In 1616, direct aristocratic involvement in Sheffield began to diminish when the Talbot estates were passed by marriage to the absentee Dukes of Norfolk whose estate revenues were removed from the area. In 1648 the destruction of Sheffield Castle took away another focal point of aristocratic patronage of local craftsmen. The town further suffered from the absence of an established manufacturing and professional community to take over the aristocracy's role of building and development.

“...why we find not among its population the  
merchant, the substantial burgher, such as was to  
be found at Doncaster and York, and in many other  
English towns now far below Sheffield in  
commercial importance”.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Gatty, Hunter, p.93, Pevsner, Derbyshire, second edition, p.p. 94, 302. Pevsner, Nottinghamshire, first edition p. 196. Pevsner, Yorkshire West Riding, second edition p. 547.

<sup>5</sup> David Hey, The Making of South Yorkshire, 1979. p. 114.

<sup>6</sup> David Bostwick, ibid pp.152 -263.

<sup>7</sup> Gatty, Hallamshire, p.148.



In the meantime, as has been shown in Chapter One, such aristocrats who maintained strong economic interests in the area took little interest in the governing of the town or in contributing to its cultural life. In terms of commissioning furniture families, such as the Norfolks and Devonshires, easily transcended the constraints of local markets to commission works from the foremost manufacturers of the day whose designs reflected their own, increasingly continental, tastes.<sup>8</sup> The Dukes of Devonshire at Chatsworth commissioned work from London cabinet makers such as Kent, Hallett, Herve, Gerrit Jensen, Ince & Mayhew and Vile & Cobb. John Spencer of Cannon Hall used Pierre Langlois, Hallett, Planta, Snowden, Vile & Cobb and Chippendale snr. Furniture by Chippendale was also commissioned by the Duke of Kingston at Thoresby Park and probably by the Sitwells at Renishaw.<sup>9</sup> The majority of subscribers to Chippendale's publications were patrons who then commissioned local manufacturers to reproduce his designs. Despite work in several major houses around Sheffield Chippendale's designs do not appear to have been taken up either by local patrons or manufacturers. No known subscribers to his works can be traced to the area suggesting at the time his styles were considered too expensive or complex to produce.

During the mid eighteenth century Sheffield, as a centre of furniture manufacture, failed to benefit from some of the keenest connoisseurs and patrons of the fine and decorative arts in the north of England. Less than ten miles north of Sheffield, Wentworth Woodhouse had 365 rooms whose interiors were of "quite exceptional value".<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the owners of Wentworth continued to generate commissions for appropriate furnishings over several generations. A large amount of exceptionally finely constructed furniture closely following the designs of Thomas Chippendale's *Directors* of 1754 and 1762 in unusual and exotic timbers<sup>11</sup> was commissioned between 1749 and 1784 from the Wakefield firm of Richard Wright and Edward Elwick.

---

<sup>8</sup> Charlotte Gere, *Nineteenth Century Decoration*, 1989. p p. 34 - 37.

<sup>9</sup> Beard & Gilbert, Eds. *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers, 1660 - 1840*. 1986. Christopher Gilbert, *The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale*. 2 vols, London, 1978, Appendix H. *Chippendale's Patrons in the North*. Sheffield City Library, Archives Dept. *Spencer - Stanhope Manuscripts*. 60633 - 19/JS [3] .

<sup>10</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Yorkshire: The West Riding*. 1959. p.536.

<sup>11</sup> Christie's, *Wentworth Sale Catalogue*, 8 July 1998. p.p. 110 - 122, 168 - 185.



In the early nineteenth century the fourth Earl Fitzwilliam commissioned furniture from Gillows including a giltwood suite of twelve William IV armchairs, pole screens and table in "the florid 'French' style"<sup>12</sup> and various items of mahogany bedroom furniture. Other, nineteenth century, cabinet makers included Edwards and Roberts and Miles and Edwards of London.

The presence of the prestigious firm of Wright and Elwick in Wakefield (fl. 1745 - 1816 ) "only sixteen miles away from Wentworth Woodhouse so communications would have been easy"<sup>13</sup> attracted commissions which might have encouraged the development of the Sheffield furniture industry only ten miles away. Wright and Elwick became recognised as:

". . . the pre - eminent firm of cabinet makers and upholsterers in Yorkshire during the second half of the eighteenth century, enjoying a dominance almost comparable to that achieved by Gillows in Lancashire."<sup>14</sup>

Their reputation won them work from most of the major houses in the area almost to the exclusion of other local firms. Recommendations came from those familiar with their work giving patrons confidence to commission them. The York architect John Carr (1723 - 1807) was intermittently employed at Wentworth Woodhouse from the 1760s throughout the remainder of his career which included working for John Spencer at Cannon Hall. Gilbert <sup>15</sup> states that Carr encouraged Spencer to visit and probably order work from the workshops of Thomas Chippendale as well as from Wright and Elwick. Wright and Elwick also supplied Viscount Irwin at Temple Newsam House, the Duke of Norfolk at Worksop Manor, John Battie at Cusworth Hall, Sir Rowland Winn at Nostell Priory, John and Thomas Grimston of Kilnwick Hall, William Constable of Burton Constable, the Rockingham family at Wentworth Castle and Godfrey Wentworth at Woolley Hall.

---

<sup>12</sup> Wentworth Sale Catalogue Christie's, Wednesday 8 July 1998. p.p. 200 - 215. "The likely source for this is the furniture introduced by the architect Sir Jeffry Wyattville into Windsor Castle in the 1820's" p. 200.

<sup>13</sup> ibid. p.110

<sup>14</sup> Beard & Gilbert, Dictionary of English Furniture Makers, 1660 - 1840. 1986. p. 1006.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Gilbert, The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale. 2 vols, London 1978. p. 236. Dictionary of English Furniture Makers, 1660 - 1840. Spencer - Stanhope Manuscripts. 60633 - 19/JS [3] ,Sheffield City Library, Archives Dept. .

Regular patronage from such quarters would have helped improve the skills pool, stylistic repertoire, esteem and capital reserves of the Sheffield furniture industry. Its reliance upon local manufacturers meant that although Sheffield's wealth was slowly growing it was not yet sufficiently strong enough or consistent to provide local cabinet makers with the confidence to break into the aristocratic market.

A few firms did win orders from the local aristocracy but such patronage remained haphazard. In the mid 1770s the Sheffield cabinet - makers and upholsterers William and Thomas Brailsford (fl. 1774 - 1839) received commissions from the fifth Duke of Devonshire to undertake architectural carvings in the Adamesque style at Chatsworth and to supply furniture and carpets to the value of some £2000.<sup>16</sup> They also supplied carpet to Lord Rockingham at Wentworth Woodhouse in 1781, brass frames for the Great Ballroom at Buxton Assembly Rooms and window curtains to Hardwick Hall in 1783. William Brailsford subscribed to Sheraton's Drawing Book in 1793 and their work was of sufficient quality for an unscrupulous dealer to have tried to pass it off as that made by the London cabinet maker John Linnell (1729 - 1796) and charge the latter's prices.<sup>17</sup>

However, despite their ability the Brailsfords only received occasional commissions from outside the area and had to depend upon local clients who were of more modest means than the aristocracy and whose tastes were thus more conservative and constrained. It is also possible that the Brailsfords, like many of Sheffield's cutlers, were reluctant to travel far in order to find work for themselves.<sup>18</sup> The lack of continuous aristocratic support, possibly deflected from the town by the pre - eminence of Wright & Elwick, may have caused Sheffield cabinet makers to neglect embracing new styles especially the increasingly popular and expensive continental designs which might have

---

<sup>16</sup> Ivan Hall, *A Neoclassical episode at Chatsworth*. *Burlington Magazine*. 1980. p. 403 f.f.

<sup>17</sup> Reference to the standard of their work approaching that of the Linnells is made in *Furniture History*. Vol. III, *William & John Linnell* by Christopher Gilbert - Burgon, an unscrupulous dealer, sold some chairs that were probably made by John Linnell to Mr & Mrs Sitwell [of Renishaw]. Burgon then sold a Mr. Walker goods he had bought from Mr Brailsford, an upholsterer in Sheffield, claiming they were made by Linnell and charged Linnell prices.

<sup>18</sup> See: Chapter One - Wealth Accumulation and Capital Distribution.

attracted them. The Brailsfords endured recurring financial difficulties possibly caused by over dependence upon a limited market and over stocking of costly items in the hope of attracting new customers. Between 1774 - 1797 they made several changes of address between Market St, George St, Norfolk St, and High St, but on 28 March 1804 William was declared bankrupt<sup>19</sup>. His extensive stock in trade included:

. . . .mahogany and other chests of Drawers; . .  
.Washstands; dressing Tables, pier and swing  
glasses . . .two sets of mahogany dining tables. .  
.Beautiful sets of mahogany chairs, with hair seats  
and brass nails, also inlet - seats; mahogany  
Bedsteads, and bed Pillows; a large quantity of hair  
- seating, of different widths; . . . . night Tables, card  
Table, fire Screens; painted, stained and fancy  
Chairs, looking glasses of various patterns; several  
thousand yards of new fashioned paper Hangings  
with rich borders to correspond; six Sofas of  
various patterns; work Benches; Counters; counting  
house Desk and various other Articles . . .<sup>20</sup>

Evidence suggests that those wanting to become skilled cabinet makers did not regard Sheffield as a flourishing or lucrative market. In 1794, Joseph Baskett, aged 14 from Wentworth, was taken as an apprentice by Robert Blak(e)sl(e)y a carver and gilder from York ( fl.1770 - 1787 ) who was often employed by John Carr for ornamental carving and composition work.<sup>21</sup> Carr's involvement at Wentworth Woodhouse was probably instrumental in connecting the two but he chose a distant firm with whom he was familiar rather than recommending one in nearby Sheffield which he assumedly either did not know or considered inferior. Yet, as will be seen, Sheffield possessed several carvers whose skills were sufficient to ensure several of their apprentices achieved acclaim.

---

<sup>19</sup> Sheffield Iris, April 4th 1804. A cabinet maker and upholsterer named Joseph Hill Brailsford appears in the local directories between 1817 and 1833 working from George St. and by 1833 living away from his work at Endcliffe Cottage indicates other members of the family continued trading after William's bankruptcy. Thomas Brailsford continued to trade and was listed as a cabinet maker at 3, George St. in 1814.

<sup>20</sup> Sheffield Iris April 12, 1804.

<sup>21</sup> Beard & Gilbert, Eds. Dictionary of English Furniture Makers, pp. 48, 79.



There remains little tangible evidence of the standard of furniture produced in the town during the eighteenth century. Although it will be seen in Chapter Four that the Cutlers' Hall has preserved some items and records of furniture many homes and documents were lost during the expansion of the iron and steel works in the nineteenth century<sup>22</sup>. Furthermore, most manufacturers left few written accounts, diaries or letters concerning their domestic arrangements:

"Unfortunately they were less skilled in the use of the pen than of the hammer, and in the absence of diaries the glimpses we have of their lives and labours are shadowy and difficult to focus."<sup>23</sup>

However, secondary evidence via contemporary newspapers, directories and historians shows that during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there was a small body of skilled craftsmen supplying local professionals, administrators and gentry with fashionable furnishings of good quality.

### Local Patronage of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries.

The void left by the withdrawal of aristocratic patronage was slowly filled by those whose wealth initially stemmed from involvement with various aspects of estate management on behalf of the absentee Dukes of Norfolk. Such families included the Parkers of Woodthorpe, stewards of the Manor of Sheffield, the Fells of New Hall, lessees of the oldest forge belonging to the manor and the Bright family owners of Greystones, Whirlow Hall, Banner Cross Hall and Carbrook Hall. Other sources of wealth came from farming, mining, legal, and medical practices: Edward Pegge, gentleman, built Beauchief Hall in 1671. Nicholas Shiercliffe (1650 - 1685 ) physician owned Whiteley Hall. John Rawson ( 1749 - 1819) of West Don House, was a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons whilst John Rimmington (1760 - 1820), "of Hillsborough and Sheffield", was an attorney - at - law and banker whose marriage to Mary Wilson made their son heir to Broomhead Hall<sup>24</sup>. The wealth of these families was not vast but considerably greater than that possessed by

---

<sup>22</sup> The Builder, Oct. 5th, 1861. p. 675. "Modern commerce has swept nearly every ancient building out of Sheffield except the perpendicular parish church".

<sup>23</sup> Frederick Bradbury, History of Old Sheffield Plate, 1912. p. 51.

<sup>24</sup> Gatty, Past and Present, p.181. Gatty, Hunter, p. 345, 446, 476.



manufacturers of the time as seen by the comparative size and grandeur of their homes.<sup>25</sup> Their influence diminished as their homes were overrun by the building of the iron and steel works after which they left the area altogether.

The origin of the second group's wealth stemmed from Thomas Boulsover's fusing together of copper, alloyed with zinc and lead, and silver, alloyed with copper, to form Sheffield plate in 1743. With the development of double plating metal the range of goods which could be made rapidly increased and the industry flourished.<sup>26</sup> As such activity was entirely new to Sheffield skilled workers had to be attracted from London, Birmingham, Newcastle, and York who introduced the new designs vital to the industry's survival.<sup>27</sup> Competition for market survival ensured successful companies took a keen interest in changes in architecture and furniture design so they could produce cutlery, plate and hollow ware in complimentary styles.

Chippendale's rococo designs were widely utilised amongst the Sheffield trades though the claim he carved some of the dies used by local manufacturers remains fanciful.<sup>28</sup> The designs of London silversmiths such as Paul Lamerie were copied during the 1760s and later reference was made to Adam, Flaxman and the classical motifs found in Sir William Hamilton's work on *Antique Classical Figures*. These and the designs of Josiah Wedgwood ( a friend of Samuel Roberts, one of Sheffield's leading platers ) were stylistic sources for the Sheffield trades. Rococo, having given way to a strict classical form in the latter part of the eighteenth century, was re - introduced by the Sheffield industry in a more exuberant form at the start of the nineteenth century and for a brief period the town took the lead in fashionable style by introducing highly ornate embellishments of animalistic and naturalistic forms which London silversmiths had considerable difficulty in equalling in terms of clarity of detail.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> "The opulence necessary for the occupation of any of the houses we have named, had not come from any employment in the ordinary trade of Sheffield". Gatty, *Past & Present*, p. 181.

<sup>26</sup> Frederick Bradbury, *History of Old Sheffield Plate*. 1912. Reprinted 1983. p. v .

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* p.p. 31, 184. Bradbury claimed that "no originality in design was introduced until the year 1760, from which date until 1770 a vast number of candlesticks were fashioned, inspiration being derived mainly from the five orders of architecture".

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.* p. 191 Bradbury claims the firm of T. Bradbury & Sons still possessed dies the original of which have been attributed to Chippendale himself.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.* p.45, 194.

Families concerned in the manufacture of cutlery and the associated light trades such as the Laws, Roberts, Winters, Cadmans, Mortons, Tudors, Leaders and Sherburns<sup>30</sup> made enough wealth to help support a small quality cabinet industry during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Other trades such as brewing, snuff and button manufacture, lead mining, silk and cotton weaving established families whose wealth enabled them to commission furniture of high quality from local manufacturers.

The latter half of the eighteenth century saw an overall improvement in the fabric and wealth of the town,<sup>31</sup> particularly in the area of domestic building, where evidence for a diverse and active furniture industry becomes stronger. The silver and plate industries incorporated many of Adam's designs into their goods which were produced in small workshops operating in and around the town centre. In such a property in Orchard Lane the Sheffield Independent of 6 September 1926 related the discovery of a "beautifully carved" Adam fireplace in one of the town's oldest properties. Its presence amongst the homes and workshops of the little mesters suggests the transference of design knowledge and possibly co - use of skills across trades from cutlers to cabinet makers and joiners.<sup>32</sup>

Whilst little discourse on the decorative arts appeared in the local newspapers of the late eighteenth century, a growing number of advertisements concerning the publication of architectural and furniture plans confirmed a growing interest in the decorative arts. I. & J. Taylor, at the Architectural Library, Holborn, advertised the publication of John Soane's various "Plans, Elevations and Sections of Buildings" in the Sheffield Register of February 11th 1791, together with other architectural designs and building and joinery manuals for both private and public buildings. Taylors also printed and advertised the posthumous work of George Hepplewhite, "The Cabinet - Maker and Upholsterer's Guide" published by his wife, Ann, in 1788 and advertised in the Sheffield Register in 1791 and 1792<sup>33</sup>.

---

<sup>30</sup> Gatty, Past and Present, p.141. Pollard, ibid. p.50

<sup>31</sup> Gatty, Hallamshire, p 157 f.f.

<sup>32</sup> Bradbury, ibid. p. 192. Newspaper Cuttings Relating to Sheffield, Vol. 50. p. 59.

<sup>33</sup> Sheffield Register, February 11th 1791, March 2nd 1792.

Much of this activity was directly related to the arrival of middle class housing schemes which quickly began to draw Sheffield's nouveaux riches society into socially competitive suburbs west of the town centre. By 1801, Sheffield had a population of 46,000 and was able to support eight known cabinet makers with the necessary skills and clientele to enable them to subscribe to one or other of Thomas Sheraton's publications<sup>34</sup>. Unlike Chippendale's works, Sheraton's were meant more for manufacturers than patrons. Eighty per cent of the 717 subscribers to the 1793 edition of his Drawing - Book were directly engaged in the trades with which the book dealt, i.e. cabinet - makers, chair makers, mahogany merchants, decorative painters, gilders and upholsterers. All the Sheffield subscribers were involved in cabinet making, upholstery or both and were located in a close - knit part - residential part - commercial area near the town centre.

Unlike the grand designs of Chippendale, Sheraton's works were directed towards a more middle - class clientele. He presented them with furniture which possessed some of the style of Adam but which was smaller, lighter, portable, flexible and more elegant - ideally suited to the town house and suburb. Consequently, Sheffield's lack of aristocratic involvement did not effect the appreciation of such a style and represents an indigenous body of patrons with the wealth and sophistication to commission his designs.

The evidence of trade directories, census records and rate books is valuable in assessing the size of a particular furniture industry but does not provide any indication of the standards of manufacture. This is best achieved by the study of pieces known to have been made by cabinet makers serving that community. For reasons already indicated this is difficult to achieve in Sheffield and is compounded by the fact few manufacturers labelled their work. In order to determine some form of qualitative assessment of the Sheffield furniture at the start of the nineteenth century a survey of neighbouring and industrial communities was undertaken to establish the

---

<sup>34</sup> John Bings, cab. mkr. Paradise Sq. (Drawing Book = D.B.), Thomas Brailsford, cab. mkr. uph. High St. (D.B.), Joseph Hobson, cab. mkr. Cooper St. (D.B.), John Jenkinson, cab. mkr, uph and Joiner, Paradise Square ( D.B.), William Brailsford, cab. mkr., uph. Market St. & George St. (D.B.), John Yates, cab. mkr. Sheffield, ( D.B.), John Smith, Shalesmoor, (D.B.), George Mills, cab. mkr. Paradise Square (S.D.)



number of subscribers to Sheraton's works in each town. The following chart shows how Sheffield compared with these communities. It suggests that by the turn of the nineteenth century the town was acquiring a sophisticated, middle - class clientele who willing and able to embrace the latest styles in furnishings. The apparent popularity of Sheraton's designs in Sheffield should also be related to the confidence generated by the concurrent rapid growth of the town and the expansion of its middle class housing stock.

**Chart showing the population of Sheffield and neighbouring communities in 1801 and the number of subscribers to Sheraton's publications.<sup>35</sup>**

TOWN	POPULATION	SUBSCRIBER
Huddersfield	7000	0
Wakefield	11000	4
York	17000	5
Hull	30000	9
<b>Sheffield</b>	<b>46000</b>	<b>8</b>
Leeds	53000	10
Birmingham	71000	0
Manchester	75000	2
Liverpool	82000	10

**Sheffield Furniture Makers of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries.**

Sustained by the wealth and tastes of its cutlers, silver and plate manufacturers the period between c.1775 - c.1825 saw the formation of a small but diverse and competent furniture industry in Sheffield with some manufacturers achieving high standards of production and responsible, directly or indirectly, for work of national acclaim. In terms of patronage, this era of Gentlemanly taste may be aligned to the latter part of the nineteenth century when Sheffield again produced sufficient wealth, stability and

<sup>35</sup> T. Sheraton, The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer's Drawing Book, 1793. Wilfred P. Cole & Charles F. Montgomery eds. 1970 Praeger Edition. p. VIII. B.R. Mitchell, British Historical Statistics. C.U.P. pp.26 - 29. Dictionary of English Furniture Makers.



continuity to enable some of its furniture manufacturers to achieve national acclaim.<sup>36</sup>

The work of the Brailsfords and their success in winning commissions from some of the leading houses in the area has already been outlined. Four members of the family appear to have worked in Sheffield between 1774 and 1837 sometimes together at other times independently from separate properties usually located in the centre of the town. In 1792 occupying premises in High St. Thomas took out a Sun Insurance policy for £400, of which £300 accounted for utensils and stock. In 1774, Thomas and William Brailsford supplied goods to Chatsworth which included two wainscott four - poster beds with hangings and bedding, Wilton and other carpets, chests of drawers, tables, backstools, mahogany swing - frame looking - glasses, servant's furniture and bedding, wallpaper - 'verditer blue furniture paper & border for Chintz Bed Chamber' and '32 pieces of Rich pea green furniture paper'. The following year they fitted out the 'Dining Room with Turkey and Persia carpets, festoon window curtains, 4 open cut and moulded cornices covered with superfine green morine at a cost of £4. 36 Dining Room Chairs with Curved Backs, moulded feet and compass seats stuffed over the rails with curly hair in two liners well quilted down to secure to seats afterwards covered with hair seating tyed down with a double row of best burnished nails'. £56 14s. A mahogany 'Slab Frame' ornamented with a 'festoon of husks elegantly carved, 4 Girandoles in white richly carved with double branches to each and best Silvered Glass Plates, £13, and a 'Mahogany Oval cistern hooped with brass and made to fit into the marble cistern'.<sup>37</sup> Despite the setback of William's bankruptcy in 1804 furniture made by the Brailsfords continued to be held in high esteem with house sales containing goods made by them being widely advertised in the local press.<sup>38</sup>

Thomas Cawthorne, a Sheffield upholsterer, was successful enough to send his son James (1719 - 1761 ) first to the Sheffield Grammar School and then on to complete his studies at Kirkby Lonsdale. Matriculating at Clare Hall,

---

<sup>36</sup> See: Chapter Six - Breaking the Code: The Story of Johnson & Appleyards.

<sup>37</sup> Dictionary Of English Furniture Makers, p. 101.

<sup>38</sup> Sales by Mr. T.N. Bardwell. "All the neat, modern and genuine Household Furniture of Mr John Gray of Norton Lees, near Sheffield. ... a very superior Mahogany Secretary Desk and Bookcase by Brailsford... Sheffield Mercury, 23 January, 1819.

Cambridge, he became assistant teacher at the Rotherham Grammar School in 1736. In 1743, James became ordained and was elected master of Tonbridge Grammar School<sup>39</sup> where, in 1755, he commissioned a set of 'cypher back' chairs of considerable quality for his study.

"Cawthorne came from a furniture - making family in Sheffield and this expert background probably accounts for the high quality of the [cypher back] chairs"<sup>40</sup>.

The splats of the chairs are carved with his cipher - the initials J C - and embellished with ribbons and foliage ( Figure 3.1). Such chairs are extremely rare enjoying a brief popularity during the 1750s and 60s. Sotheby's claim the chairs are similar to those made by the London cabinet makers William and John Linnell, in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The Sheffield carver and gilder Robert Ramsey, occupying premises in Back Lane, and later High St. ( fl. c.1787 - 1808 ), took Francis Chantry (1781 - 1841) as an apprentice in 1797. It was with Ramsey that Chantry learnt the rudiments of his skills as a sculptor and where he came into contact with the mezzotint engraver and painter J. Raphael Smith. Smith encouraged his work and Ramsay went on to become a member of the Royal Academy in 1818. Advertising in the trade directories as a carver and gilder, Ramsay took out an annual advertisement in the local newspaper to list his other activities which included selling girandoles, pier and chimney glasses, and a wide range of prints and transfers. As well as carving in wood and stone he resilvered mirrors, repaired and framed paintings and embroidery. The stucco ceiling in the ballroom of Renishaw Hall, which displays the Prince of Wales' feathers motif, is attributed to Ramsay and Chantry. A lion which appeared above the door of the old Sheffield Assay Office in Fargate was carved by a man called Moz[s]ley<sup>41</sup> also a former apprentice of Ramsay's. Another of his apprentices, and contemporary of Chantry's, was John Hill who established himself as a carver and gilder in York St. and who, in turn, took George Eadon as an

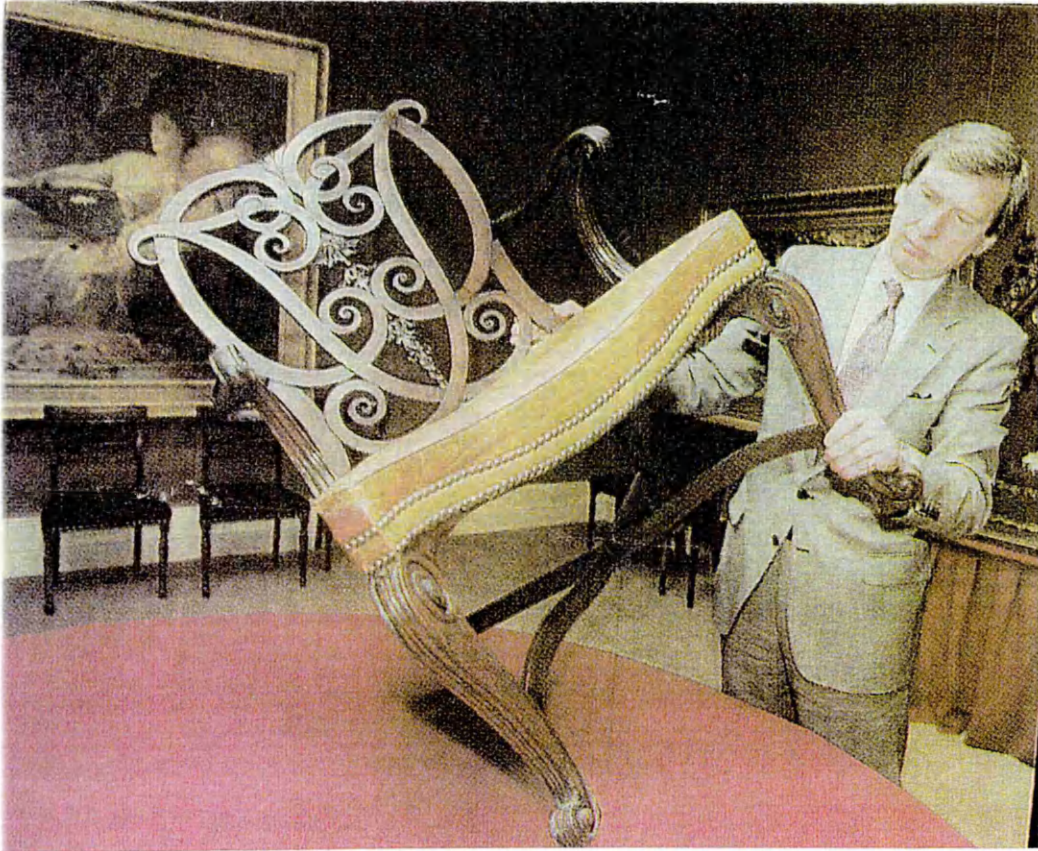
---

<sup>39</sup> Gatty, *Hallamshire* p. 311. Odom, *ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, May 20th, 1994.

<sup>41</sup> *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers* - Robert Mosley 24, Penston Lane, Carver and Gilder, 1797





3.1. One of the cypher back chairs commissioned by James Cawthorne of Sheffield for his Study at Tonbridge Grammar School.

apprentice. Eadon established himself around 1822 first as a carver, gilder and looking glass manufacturer in Flat St. before moving next door to his master some three years later. Eadon went onto become one of the town's foremost cabinet makers, manufacturing much of the furniture for the Duke of Norfolk at The Farm and for Sir John Brown at Endcliffe Hall in the early 1860s.<sup>42</sup> Ramsay's son, James, moved to London where he became an established portrait painter.<sup>43</sup> Through his apprentices Ramsay helped establish several proficient carvers and gilders in Sheffield at the turn of the nineteenth century. However, this also generated competition and with the limited patronage available many, including Ramsay and Moz(s)eley, became bankrupt.

The majority of furniture made in Sheffield at this time was for domestic rather than civic or corporate use. The lack of prestigious building activity in Sheffield during the eighteenth century was matched by an evident disregard for the quality of furnishings for public use. Chapter Four examines the building and furnishing of the Cutlers' Halls which is used to demonstrate this aspect of Sheffield life. Patronage of the town's furniture industry in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was provided by individuals not institutions. When the individuals left they took with them the town's cultural heritage leaving buildings lacking in style and content.

By 1733, assemblies had become part of the Sheffield social scene but it was not until 1762 that they moved from hired rooms to purpose - built premises in Norfolk Street.<sup>44</sup> Theatrical activities too were held in rented accommodation until the erection of "The Theatre" in 1763<sup>45</sup>. In 1861, The Builder reported

<sup>42</sup> Susan Graves & Julie Goddard, *Paintings, Sculptures and Furniture in the Cutlers' Hall*, p.170, Mesters to Masters. Eds. Binfield & Hey, O.U.P. 1997.

<sup>43</sup> Dictionary of English Furniture Makers. J.E. Tyler, M.A. Sheffield and the Fine Arts, p.214 in Sheffield and its Region; Chambers Biographical Dictionary. Nikolaus Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Derbyshire, 1978. p.302. Sheffield Register, July 20th 1792. R.E. Leader, Reminiscences of Old Sheffield. 1875. p. 266, p. 69.

<sup>44</sup> Their lack of architectural distinction may be contrasted with Assembly Rooms found in the communities surrounding Sheffield which were often built and furnished by public subscription in strong architectural styles. Those in Lincoln were Palladian in style, at Buxton neo - classical (supplied with brass frames by J.W. & William Brailsford, cabinet makers and upholsterers of Sheffield in 1784 Burlington Magazine, June 1980, p. 413 whilst Adam designed those at Newark and Derby. The main Room at York was in the Egyptian manner whilst Doncaster's were Palladian - cum - rococo Mark Girouard, The English Town. 1990. p.128 f.f.

<sup>45</sup> Walton, ibid. p. 104, 131 - 133.



one could look from the “severe” Assembly Rooms across to the “blank featureless theatre at their side”.<sup>46</sup> No effort was made to employ buildings or furniture as monuments to success or prestige as was common in other industrial communities.

From this fragmented background of patronage there evolved Sheffield's nineteenth century furniture industry. The industry principally depended upon, and was formed by, local wealth with little in the way of capital or innovative patronage from sources outside Sheffield to nurture it. Over the course of the eighteenth century there grew a small body of merchants, gentry and professionals who appreciated and cultivated the manufacture of fashionable furniture albeit on a small and irregular footing. The nineteenth century heralded the demise of these patrons who were replaced by the iron and steel barons and a Council ill - equipped to provide the local furniture industry with commissions reflecting the town's growing size or prestige. The lack of continuity between the two groups disrupted the development of the Sheffield furniture industry which had to readjust its output to a clientele as yet unfamiliar with wealth and “high culture” and lacking an environment in which to learn from past experience.

### Civic Patronage

As indicated in Chapter One, towns and cities often used aggrandising building and furnishing projects as opportunities to advertise their confidence, wealth and prestige.<sup>47</sup> They provided furniture industries with challenging commissions which advertised their skills to a large and knowledgeable clientele who, in turn, applied similar schemes in their own homes<sup>48</sup>. In Sheffield the scale and form of such activity, and therefore complementary

---

<sup>46</sup> The Builder, Oct. 5th, 1861.

<sup>47</sup> The destruction by fire of much of Liverpool's Town Hall in 1795 spurred its council to replace it with a building designed by the architect James Wyatt and furniture designed by one of his former pupil's, Joseph Gandy, known to have been in partnership with George Bullock. The enterprise was supported by wealthy mercantile councillors who, “are likely to have had few qualms about entering into such a commitment.. [as] Money was in plentiful supply and a Town Hall, equipped in a manner which reflected the increasing prosperity of the port, would have been regarded as a necessary status symbol”. June Dean, The Regency Furniture in Liverpool Town Hall, Furniture History, 1989. p.p.127 - 134.

<sup>48</sup> David Bostwick, *ibid* p.p.152 -263 p. 177. John Andrews, British Antique Furniture, Antique Collectors Club, 3rd edition p. 113: Victor Chinnery, Oak Furniture. The British Tradition, fig. 3.48.

furniture design, was negligible<sup>49</sup>. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries weak and discordant civic bodies<sup>50</sup> resisted development. Surrounded by a growing network of industrial and technological concerns the town centre remained constrained by a mediaeval infrastructure.<sup>51</sup>

Facilities in Sheffield remained rudimentary for much of the nineteenth century deterring all but the commercially compelled to visit or relocate there.<sup>52</sup> A lack of civic pride and persistently weak and divisive<sup>53</sup> governance ensured facilities remained basic, buildings utilitarian and that opportunities for improvement were squandered.<sup>54</sup> In 1847, the Royal Agricultural Society asked to hold their show in Sheffield, bringing with it much needed publicity and trade. The Council declined the offer citing the lack of suitable accommodation available in the town as their reason.<sup>55</sup> Few institutions felt it necessary to improve the quality of their own buildings or their contents.<sup>56</sup> It was not until 1897 that the Council itself left an ad hoc collection of buildings to occupy a new Renaissance style Town Hall.<sup>57</sup>

As shown in Chapter One, The Literary and Philosophical Society was not

---

<sup>49</sup> Mary Walton, Sheffield and its Achievements, p. 143 - 144.

<sup>50</sup> "The apparatus for the government of Sheffield, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in part traditional and in part recent, was neither adequate in extent nor sufficiently co-ordinated to meet the problems arising from the growth of population and increasing industrialisation". G.P. Jones, Civic Administration, p.181, Sheffield and its Region, A Scientific and Historical Survey, 1956.

<sup>51</sup> A.J. Hunt, The Morphology and Growth of Sheffield, in Sheffield and its Region. A Scientific and Historical Survey, 1956 p. 228. John Nelson Tarn, Sheffield in Middle Class Housing in Britain. Ed. by M.A. Simpson & T.H. Lloyd. David & Charles, 1977, p. 170.

<sup>52</sup> A.W. Goodfellow, The Development of Communications in Sheffield and its Region, A Scientific & Historical Survey, 1956. p. 161 - 162.

<sup>53</sup> Members of the town and church burgesses, the master and warden of the Cutlers' Company, all held property in trust for the benefit of the town and also sat as Improvement Commissioners on bodies concerned with "cleansing, lighting, watching, and otherwise bettering it" The Builder, Sept. 21st 1861. p. 641.

<sup>54</sup> Throughout the 1840s proposals put to the Council for improvements such as a public weighing machine, public conveniences, a request to establish a museum, build a lunatic asylum, drain a churchyard were all rejected on grounds of expense or referred to other bodies on the grounds the matter was outside their jurisdiction. Walton, ibid. p.184.

<sup>55</sup> Walton, ibid. p.188.

<sup>56</sup> Susan Graves & Julie Goddard: ibid. p.p. 162 - 177.

<sup>57</sup> As a result of an architectural competition the designs were by the London firm of E.W. Mountford - unusual for Sheffield which tended to patronise local architects. Ruth Harman & Roger Harper, The Architecture of Sheffield, The History of the City of Sheffield. The furnishings were designed and made by the Sheffield firm of Johnson & Appleyard.

only late to form in Sheffield but failed to stimulate its patrons either intellectually or into providing a well designed and furnished Hall of any note. Perhaps more damning was the observation in 1843 by G. C. Holland, M.D. on the apathy of Sheffield merchants to the tenets of the Society itself:

...When the extent of the population of the town and neighbourhood is considered, - the variety of manufactures carried on, - and the importance of a knowledge of the arts to the successful prosecution of them, .... it would be imagined that a society of this kind would meet with very warm encouragement. Painful, however, it is to confess, that the manufacturers and the merchants generally, show little solicitude either for their own improvement or that of their families....<sup>58</sup>

Sheffield's industrialists made less impact upon their community than those benefactors in other towns and when they did little, if any, attention was given to the architectural merit of their gifts<sup>59</sup>.

Everything is mean, petty and narrow in the extreme. What a contrast to Leeds! Sheffield would do well to spend half a million pounds in improvements. A better town hall might be followed by better Town Councillors and a more public spirit . . . I wish you would preach the duty of the wealthy intellects of Sheffield taking their share in the elevation of the town."<sup>60</sup>

Criticism from those who recognised the limitations of Sheffield's infrastructure remained unheeded. Samuel Roberts ( 1763 - 1848 ),<sup>61</sup> a prominent Sheffield silver plate manufacturer and social reformer, decried the state of the town in the eighteenth century yet his criticisms were still valid a hundred years later when the dignified buildings, wealthy shops and well - laid streets indicative of ostentatious mercantile or industrial wealth were still

---

<sup>58</sup> G. Calvert Holland, M.D. The Vital Statistics of Sheffield. London, 1843, p. 239.

<sup>59</sup> Rev. Alfred Gatty, Hunter's Hallamshire, 1869. p.p. 153 - 154. Walton, ibid. p.p. 225 - 226.

<sup>60</sup> Letter from A. J. Mundella M.P. to Robert Leader, editor of the Sheffield Independent, 15 October 1871. S.C.L. Mundella mss. quoted in Caroline Reid, Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield. p. 33.

<sup>61</sup> Gatty, Past and Present, 1873, quoting Samuel Roberts, p. 117 - 118.



absent.<sup>62</sup>

Whilst many within the town remained content with or unaware of such utilitarianism the lack of concern given to the quality and design of public buildings was heavily criticised by others. In 1861, The Builder <sup>63</sup> published a damning expose of the town's pollution and lack of basic amenities but reforms remained slow to materialise, despite some attempts at more imaginative building schemes.<sup>64</sup> Improvements remained slow but the progress made by the end of the century was cautiously welcomed by the local press:

“... Sheffield was last among the great towns of England to seriously take in hand the improvement of its streets and their architecture... Ten years ago Sheffield bore the reputation of a very dirty town, and conspicuous more than anything else for its narrow, crooked and inconvenient streets, and the shabbiness of its building premises.”<sup>65</sup>

Even so, more cosmopolitan eyes still viewed the city with dismay. In 1897 a journalist from The Builder was again sent to Sheffield to write about the architecture of the newly created city. Walton<sup>66</sup> remarks that he failed to find a single satisfactory building - either good design was spoiled by poor locality or good detail ruined by tasteless design. The 1900 edition of The Court Guide & County Blue Book of the West Riding of Yorkshire dismissed Sheffield as “... the blackest, dirtiest, and most smoky town in Yorkshire,... The public buildings in the town are comparatively few, and of little interest...”<sup>67</sup> .

---

<sup>62</sup> Sidney Pollard A History of Labour in Sheffield, 1959 , p. 1. David Hey, A History of Sheffield, 1998 p. 177.

<sup>63</sup> The Builder, Sept. 21st, 1861.

<sup>64</sup> Gatty, Hallamshire, p. 231 - 232.

<sup>65</sup> Sheffield and its Streets. Special Supplement to the Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, 8th December, 1895.

<sup>66</sup> Walton, ibid. p. 225.

<sup>67</sup> The Court Guide & County Blue Book of the West Riding of Yorkshire 1900, p.50.



## Commercial Patronage

In the business sector economic survival took precedence over aesthetically ambitious architecture or furniture design. The demands of the cutlery and related trades which were carried out in small, primitive workshops changed little during the nineteenth century from practices set down two and three hundred years earlier.<sup>68</sup> Occupying a variety of sheds, workshops, hearths, wheels and forges with masters working alongside labourers there was no room for offices or furniture. With the lack of distinction between master and men furniture had no function as a means of indicating prestige or superiority: the same basic benches, forms and stool were used by all. A few of the larger companies who combined all the manufacturing processes under one roof were notable in the erection of large, purpose built works usually in a classical or renaissance style.<sup>69</sup> Here, a labour hierarchy could be more easily advertised by the use of furniture appropriate to the rank of the user.

Major change was demanded from the iron and steel industries which required massive, flat green field sites to establish mills, workshops and sheds. Here the demands upon architects were quite different from those in towns. The needs were for vast, flexible, well - lit, functional buildings with little concern for appearance. The attention which was given to furniture of substance was limited to the boardrooms, foyers and principle offices of the larger works. However, the lack of necessity in one industry and intense demand for capital in the other meant furniture remained of secondary importance as a tool of self - advertisement and prestige until the latter part of the nineteenth century when the international reputation of some of the larger companies demanded commensurate offices and fittings. Some of the larger cabinet makers began to offer shop and office fitting as a service<sup>70</sup> whilst much work in the larger companies would have been undertaken by in - house joiners and fitters. Few written or photographic records of boardrooms survived the devastation of Sheffield's iron and steel industries during the

---

<sup>68</sup> G.P. Jones in Pollard, History of Labour Preface.

<sup>69</sup> Ruth Harnen & Roger Harper, The Architecture of Sheffield in The History of the City of Sheffield, 3. Vols. p.p 39 - 40. Eg: Henry Hoole's Green Lane Works built in 1860 for the manufacture of stove grates which was fronted by a triumphal arch representing art and industry.

<sup>70</sup> Supplying many items from wholesale manufacturers rather than made in - house; compare advertisements for Geo. Allinson & Sons and Eyre & Sons Ltd in The Court Guide & County Blue Book of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1900.

1970s and 1980s. Works were demolished and furnishings auctioned off. Reliance is upon the verbal accounts of boardroom furnishings which were claimed to be of a high standard in accordance with the prestige of the company concerned.

Steelworks with impressively furnished boardrooms were a feature of the second half of the nineteenth century during an era of huge expansion and investment in the iron and steel industries. The need for vast, green field sites and proximity to good communications caused a shift in industrial building activity from the centre to the east of the town. Expansion within the steel works led to the addition of furnaces, rolling mills, tilts and forges. Engineering and casting works grew alongside such activity with employees numbering in the thousands by the end of the century.<sup>71</sup> Centralised management was essential and the architects of such businesses concentrated on providing suitable workspace for manual and administrative functions.

Occasionally, prestigious items were acquired or commissioned. The longcase clock allegedly made by Benjamin Huntsman to demonstrate the use of his new steel as springs was displayed by Hadfields, one of Sheffield's largest steel manufacturers, at their Hecla Works until its demise in the 1980s when it was removed to Lonrho's offices in London. The Sheffield Club, established in 1843, attracted a broader membership from the town's manufacturing and professional community than The Cutlers' Company which may help explain its acquisition of furniture from leading manufacturers such as Gillows and Lamb's of Manchester.<sup>72</sup>

Commercial activity was dominated by variations in the classical style which, if unadventurous, nevertheless helped broaden the town's visual repertoire. Banks and corporate offices such as the Gas Board and Water Company exemplified this style. One of the town's most prestigious commercial buildings were the offices of the Sheffield United Gaslight Company built in

---

<sup>71</sup> Pollard, *ibid.* p.p. 161 - 163. Geoffrey Tweedale, Steel City: Entrepreneurship, Strategy and Technology in Sheffield 1743 - 1993, pp. 103 - 107.

<sup>72</sup> Members included industrialists such as Sir John Brown, George Wolstenholm, Thomas Jessop and Thomas Ellinson but also the 14th and 15th Dukes of Norfolk, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Wharnccliffe, the architect T.J. Flockton and the brewer John Mappin. E.L.R. Sale Catalogue 18 September, 1998, to include The Residual Contents of The Sheffield Club.

1875 in the style of a Venetian palazzo and designed by the Sheffield architects M.E. Hadfield & Son. The latter quarter of the nineteenth century showed a shift away from classical forms towards more Gothic designs such as the Tudor Gothic style Corn Exchange built in 1881.<sup>73</sup>

Retail firms were amongst the first to realise the commercial benefits of self advertisement through building and furnishing schemes. The first and most notable example was Joseph Rodgers & Sons, cutlers to the Royal family by Special Appointment. Their new showrooms, 'very elegantly fitted up and furnished' opened around 1860 in Norfolk Street and were of such novelty that initially the area became blocked with onlookers.<sup>74</sup> Its success as an advertisement for the company meant others, including cabinet makers, house furnishers and upholsterers imitated their lead. The premises of John Manuel & Son, Upholsterers & Cabinet Makers were described as "... one of the finest and handsomest architectural features in the neighbourhood..." ( Figure 3.2) In 1882, George H. Hovey, house furnishers, replaced his fire damaged premises with "the handsomest range of buildings in Sheffield" complete with "... arc and incandescent electric lamps" (Figure 3.3 ). In 1884, the cabinet makers and upholsterers Johnson & Appleyards commissioned a prestigious new building in a prime location in the centre of the town whose large windows and three storeys of dressed Huddersfield stone dominated the area and attracted an affluent clientele (Figure 6. 2) <sup>75</sup>.

### **Patronage of the Late Nineteenth Century:** **Sheffield Code v. Cosmopolitan Taste.**

By the mid - nineteenth century there had evolved three distinct forms of middle class housing developments in Sheffield each requiring appropriate furnishings. The grid - iron Regency streets of Broomhall with their restrained neo - classical, brick facades and which had encouraged the manufacture of Sheraton's designs were followed by the planned villa estates of Sharrow and Broomhill. Kenwood Park exemplified the change in housing styles from

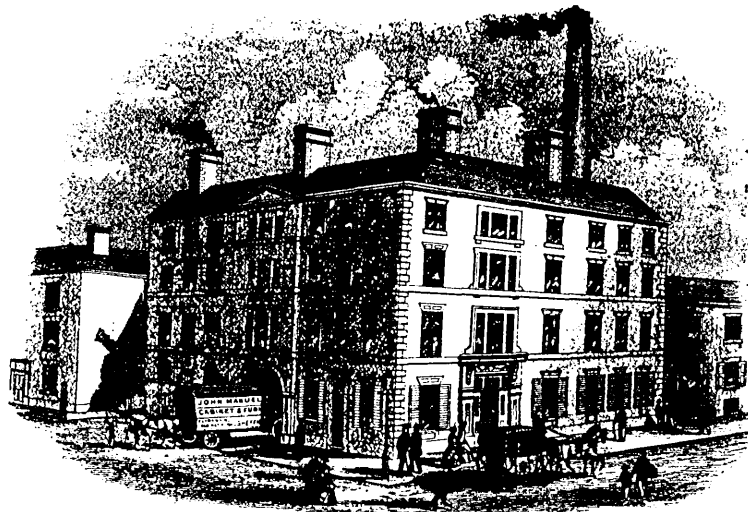
---

<sup>73</sup> David Hey, A History of Sheffield. 1998 p.178ff. Harman & Harper, ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Rev. Alfred Gatty, Sheffield: Past & Present, 1873. p. 210. Pawson & Brailsford, Illustrated Guide to Sheffield and Neighbourhood. 1862. Reprinted 1971. p.138.

<sup>75</sup> S.C.L. Archive Dept. Sheffield: John Manuel & Son, n.d. p.81. S.C.L. Archive Dept. Sheffield: G.H. Hovey & Sons, n.d. p. 65. S.C.L. Misc. Papers, 778.9M, No. 34751. Sheffield Weekly Telegraph, Saturday 22 March 1884.

PUBLIC FURNISHING & CARPET SHOW ROOMS.



3.2. a- c. John Manuel & Son's Public Furnishing and Carpet Showrooms " . . . one of the finest and handsomest architectural features in the neighbourhood". Hand bill also advertising their services and facilities for storage and haulage.



**JOHN MANUEL & SON.**

ARE PREPARED TO REMOVE WITH THEIR FIRST CLASS VANS, BY RAILS OR ROAD, EVERY DESCRIPTION OF FURNITURE, PICTURES, GLASS, AND GOODS, REQUIRING CARE, IN ALL CASES SENDING THOROUGH, EFFICIENT, & EXPERIENCED WORKMEN.

THEY HAVE ALSO ADDED EXTENSIVE PREMISES WHICH THEY HAVE FITTED UP FOR WAREHOUSING FURNITURE, PICTURES, &c.; THE WHOLE BEING EFFECTIVELY HEATED BY MEANS OF HOT WATER PIPES.

**DEVONSHIRE CABINET WORKS**



**DIVISION & CARVER STREETS**

**SHEFFIELD.**



# JOHN MANUEL & SON

## UPHOLSTERERS & CARPET WAREHOUSEMEN

MANUFACTURERS OF

EVERY DESCRIPTION OF CABINET FURNITURE

DEVONSHIRE CABINET WORKS.

35, 37, 39, & 41, DIVISION STREET,

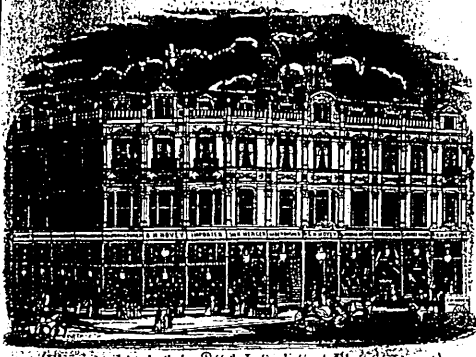
20, 29 & 31, CARVER STREET,

SHEFFIELD.

DESIGNS AND ESTIMATES SUPPLIED FREE FOR COMPLETE HOUSE FURNISHING.

Sheffield City Hall  
No. 12  
Street, Col.

The entire range of **New Buildings** situate at the Corner of  
ANGEL STREET and CASTLE STREET, as represented  
below, WILL BE OPENED (p.v.) for Business  
**ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9th, 1882.**

General Furnishing		House Furnishing
SILKS		CARPETS
MANTELLES		CURTAINS
COSTUMES		FURNITURE
HILLINERY		BEDSTEPS
UNDERCLOTHING		BEDS, &c.

(Illuminated at dusk by Arc & Incandescent Electric Lamps.)

### GEORGE H. HOVEY

Gratefully acknowledges a benificent Providence and the kind  
liberal and growing patronage of the inhabitants of Sheffield and  
its environs during the past thirty years, which have enabled him  
undeviating and almost complete, and  
needed accommodation in his mercantile and  
THE HANDSOMEST RANGE OF BUILDINGS IN SHEFFIELD.

3.3. George H. Hovey. Hand bill advertising the opening of their new premises in 1882. "The handsomest Range of Buildings in Sheffield."

standardised formality to one more flexible, bucolic and romantic. The estate was built on land acquired by the cutlery manufacturer George Wostenholm who wanted to create a suburb similar to those he had seen in Boston, America. His own house Kenwood was designed by William Flockton in the Tudor style and surrounded by a timbered park landscaped by Richard Marnock.<sup>76</sup> It was not until the laying out of such estates where Wostenholm expressly forbade specific trades or industries from being carried out, that Sheffield acquired purely residential areas.<sup>77</sup>

Finally, there were the mansions built specifically for the wealthiest members of the community according to their own tastes and preferences. Architectural styles ranged from Tudor at Kenwood, Italian at Tapton Edge, Italian, treated in the French manner at Endcliffe Hall, and Gothic at Storth Oaks and Banner Cross Hall (designed by Sir Jeffrey Wyattville in 1820) though the latter style was not particularly popular for country houses in West Yorkshire.<sup>78</sup> In such circumstances the cautious, conservative and conformist tenets of the Sheffield code restricted free expression of an individual's wealth and were slowly replaced by the confidence to fully advertise individuality, prestige and success.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the town's furniture industry acquire two forms of market: those whose patronage supported a cosmopolitan approach to house furnishing requiring well made goods in the latest styles and those still content with the tenets of the Sheffield code. Firms concerned only with the latter market produced goods for a local clientele on the grounds of durability, practicality, propriety, comfort, cleanliness, conformity and cost i.e. the "Sheffield code". Such considerations helped create a domestic environment whose familiarity and comfort were the

---

<sup>76</sup> A pupil of William Robinson who had worked on Regent's Park in London Doe, *ibid.* p. 179. Marnock was commissioned to lay out the grounds of Storth Oaks and the Botanical Gardens in Sheffield. Stainton, *ibid.* p.246. *Sheffield Illustrated*, Vol. II. p.14

<sup>77</sup> Despite the formal Regency setting of the Broomhall estate homes there continued to be used as places of employment with outbuildings being converted to workshops or the actual house being put to commercial use. In 1856, the woodcarver Arthur Hayball, lived and worked at 50, Hanover St. later moving home and workshops to larger premises on Cavendish St. Arthur E. Beet, Arthur Hayball, A Dreamer in Wood, *Transactions of the Hallamshire Archaeological Society*, Vol. 7. 1957.

<sup>78</sup> Vanessa S. Doe, *ibid.* p.p. 184 - 185. *Sheffield Illustrated*, Vols. I & II. Nikolaus Pevsner, *West Riding*, 1967, p. 57.

antithesis of the workplace. They dispelled the need for new designs. Alongside the "Sheffield code" the popularity of brokers as a source of quality second - hand furniture may have contributed to some furniture styles persisting in Sheffield long after they had been assumed to have become obsolete. A furniture catalogue of goods manufactured by Wm. Ford & Son of Sheffield dating from the period c.1900 - 1910 depicts several designs which, apart from a few contemporary embellishments, could have been made much earlier in the century. Figure 205 shows a double end sofa, costing £1.5s.6d., with clear references to a style illustrated in Thomas King's *Modern Style of Cabinet Work*, published in 1835.<sup>79</sup> Ford's manufactured goods for the middle to lower end of the market advertising themselves as one of the largest chair manufacturers in the Midlands, "equipped with the latest and most up - to - date machinery" with a "special designer ready at all times to prepare and submit special drawings" according to customers' requirements.<sup>80</sup> Whilst Ford's appeared to be a company embracing new technology and production methods their standard designs indicate a conservative clientele. John Andrews writes that Ford's catalogue demands a reassessment of the chronology of much nineteenth century furniture:

"...It has been clear for some time that furniture of a given design was made throughout the Victorian period, even into the Edwardian, since the British were known for their conservatism in taste, but the idea that it was still being actively promoted after 1895 and possibly up to the First World War prompts some serious thinking about the reproduction furniture trade....<sup>81</sup>

It had been assumed that the Sheffield code evolved as a means by which individuals could create a haven<sup>82</sup> for themselves and their families which contrasted with the unpredictability and insecurity common to most economic activities of the nineteenth century. It was a means of respectably furnishing a

---

<sup>79</sup> John Andrews, "A Catalogue of Common Things, W. Ford & Son of Sheffield", *Antique Collecting*, May 1993. p.p.28 - 33.

<sup>80</sup> I am indebted to John Andrews and Smith and Smith Designs of Driffield for the loan of the Ford catalogue.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire Design and Society Since 1750*, p. 103 "The Victorians frequently described their homes as like heaven . . ."

home in a way which did not necessarily demand ostentation or possession of the latest furnishing fashions. Both new and second hand goods were acceptable. It was a flexible style which could be achieved without great outlay of capital which may be required for other uses such as buttressing a business or sustaining a family during recession. As such the Sheffield code appears to have been widely embraced by the town's *nouveaux riches* and artisan societies for much of the nineteenth century. However, further evidence would suggest the code was also embraced by those whose wealth was more secure than those based upon the Sheffield trades.

The conservative tastes and lack of ostentation noted by Prince Leopold on his visit to Sheffield in 1879<sup>83</sup> were embedded in many whose circumstances meant they were not subject to the inconsistencies of the local economy. The local press exhibited some disenchantment with the quality and status of many residences which it believed could have advertised more positively their owners' status and the town's prestige. For example: despite the interest of the Sheffield brewer John Newton Mappin (1800 - 1884) in art and his bequests of funds and pictures to establish the Mappin Art Gallery, his home Birchlands, proved a disappointment to a journalist from the Sheffield Weekly Telegraph :

'It is a roomy and comfortable house, with no ostentatious architectural features to arrest attention or excite remark. Birchlands was built for the comfort and convenience of its owner, more than as a show house for the multitude'. <sup>84</sup>

Elevation to the peerage in 1826 also failed to persuade the Earls of Wharnccliffe to become, what could have been, valuable patrons of the local furniture industry. Their home, Wortley Hall, was described as:

"... in no way a "show place", after the fashion of Chatsworth House and Welbeck Abbey..... Wortley Hall possessed no State Rooms and was essentially the home of its resident....The absence of ostentation and the air of homeliness (in the best

---

<sup>83</sup> Death of Mr. Mark Firth, Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, November 29th, 1880 .

<sup>84</sup> Newspaper Cuttings Relating to Sheffield, n.d. Sheffield City Libraries.



sense) pervaded the place.'<sup>85</sup>

Despite the relative plainness of such rooms, drawings by Mary Stuart Wortley of the study or schoolroom at Wortley Hall executed between 1802 - 13 show an austere and spartan setting.<sup>86</sup> Economic instability was thus not solely responsible for the "Sheffield code" or the casual approach to architecture and the decorative arts. The structure and composition of Sheffield's social, political and institutional structures had much to do with the absence of civic pride and the absence of aggrandising building and furnishing schemes. The lack of an affluent and dynamic aristocracy directly involved in local affairs or energetic and strong civic leadership meant Sheffield, unlike Birmingham, resembled more a collection of villages than "the best governed city in the world".<sup>87</sup>

Change came as the town's importance as a manufacturing centre, especially in the field of armaments and later engineering, grew to become of national significance. The homes of many industrialists became centres of business and social entertainment with the result that they realised casual homeliness had to be replaced by formality and urbanity.<sup>88</sup> There, the Sheffield code was replaced by a cosmopolitan sophistication centred upon self - promotion and public entertaining. This altered the demands placed upon the local furniture industry with many in the western suburbs depending upon cabinet makers, upholsterers and house - furnishers to supply an aura of established sophistication, success and affluence.

'The new [middle - class] estates [of Sheffield] took the form of great houses in new parks for the men of steel who were no longer either parochial in outlook or pocket; they established themselves with unparalleled grandeur and for a generation or so the palaces at Endcliffe were the scene of splendid occasions, the great of the world were entertained, famous and influential people were received in elegant Italianate drawing - rooms stuffed full with

---

<sup>85</sup> A Visit to Wortley Hall, South Yorkshire Notes and Queries. Vol. 1 1899 - 1900, p.p. 28 - 29. S.C.L.

<sup>86</sup> Plates 3 - 5, Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, Interiors. 1981.

<sup>87</sup> Local Government Board, Report on the Small - Pox Epidemic of 1887 - 8. Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities. 1990. p.72, p. 36.

<sup>88</sup> Vanessa S. Doe, ibid. p.181.

the finest works of art that money could buy.'<sup>89</sup>

Sheffield's evolving status and wealth slowly heralded a return to aristocratic patronage. Neither concerned with or constrained by the Sheffield Code the aristocracy were affluent and cosmopolitan patrons who drove the industry to produce furniture of high quality and sophisticated taste. Their patronage and support of local firms gave them a high profile and considerable esteem and by the end of the century some local furniture manufacturers were winning commissions of national prestige.

### **Aristocratic Patronage in the Nineteenth Century.**

Whilst Sheffield's civic and commercial building activity provided little scope for the furniture industry, the return of aristocratic patronage brought with it greater disposable income, imagination and stylistic awareness. As indicated, patronage from this quarter had been lacking from the area since the early seventeenth century contributing to the lack of Sheffield's decorative arts heritage. However, from the mid - nineteenth century onwards the town's growing importance as a manufacturing centre generated a slow return of such patronage despite the deaths of several prominent members of the local aristocracy.<sup>90</sup> As the wealth and prestige of the town's industrialists grew The Company of Cutlers' Annual Feast increasingly became a meeting ground between equals. Furthermore, the business interests of its members attracted the attention of dignitaries and royalty. In 1863, Sir John Brown opened his new Atlas Works rolling mill in the presence of the Duke of Newcastle, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Clarence Paget, Earl Fitzwilliam, Earl de Grey and Ripon and Lord Wharnccliffe plus the Lords of the Admiralty.<sup>91</sup> In 1875, Mark Firth entertained the Prince and Princess of Wales at his home when they visited Sheffield to open the park he had given to the town (q.v.). Four years later, Prince Leopold was another guest at Oakbrook when he opened a college which Firth had financed. In 1885, the Duke of Clarence attended an Industrial Exhibition in Sheffield promoted by the Cutlers' Company in the

---

<sup>89</sup> John Nelson Tarn. Sheffield. Middle Class Housing in Britain. Eds. Simpson & Lloyd. 1977. p.176.

<sup>90</sup> 'Since 1854, we have lost two Dukes of Norfolk, the Dukes of Portland, Devonshire and Rutland; Earls Fitzwilliam and Manvers, and Lord Wharnccliffe". Death of the Duke of Norfolk. Sheffield & Rotherham Independent. Saturday, December 1st. 1860.

<sup>91</sup> Death of Sir John Brown, Sheffield and Rotherham Independent. Dec. 28th 1896 .

company of W.H. Brittain, a steel and edge tool manufacturer who became Mayor and Master Cutler.<sup>92</sup>

Interaction between the aristocracy and the nouveaux riches gave the latter considerable social prestige. The growing status of Sheffield's industrialists may have contributed to the XIV Duke of Norfolk's decision to spend more time in the town. He ordered substantial refurbishments to his local residence The Farm in 1858 - 59 instructing his agent, Michael Ellison,<sup>93</sup> to employ local craftsmen whenever possible. He commissioned the Sheffield architects Weightman, Hadfield and Goldie to completely redesign The Farm for the Duke's use. George Eadon & Son, an established Sheffield firm of carvers, cabinet makers and upholsterers were employed to manufacture the furniture, much of which was in the Gothic style in accordance with the Duke's Catholic faith.<sup>94</sup>

The same firm of architects, under the style of M.E. Hadfield, were later commissioned by the XIV Duke to draw up plans for the reconstruction of Arundel Castle in Sussex but his premature death in 1860 meant only the private chapel and gateway were started. Upon coming of age in 1868, the XV Duke chose Charles Alban Buckler as his architect and the work started by Hadfield's was demolished.<sup>95</sup> However, the incident provided Arthur Hayball, a Sheffield wood carver, with the opportunity to work at Arundel and come to the attention of the now independent George Goldie. Through him, Hayball secured commissions for work - usually in the Gothic manner - in churches throughout England, Ireland and Spain. George Eadon & Son were later commissioned to provide much of the furniture for Endcliffe Hall by the industrialist Sir John Brown who, like the Duke, insisted on the use of Sheffield craftsmen.

---

<sup>92</sup> Rev. W. Odom, Hallamshire Worthies, 1926. p.160 - 161.

<sup>93</sup> One of the architects, Matthew Ellison Hadfield, was the grandson of Matthew Ellison, agent for the Howard Estates in Glossop, and nephew of Michael Ellison, agent for the Duke of Norfolk in whose office he worked prior to training to be an architect. Stephen Walsh, A Brief History of the firm of Architects founded in Sheffield by John Gray Weightman and Matthew Ellison Hadfield. S.C.L. For the information concerning Weston Park where bedroom suites made by John Manuel & Son have recently been identified, I am indebted to the research of Shirley Snow, part - time curator.

<sup>94</sup> The Ducal Residence, Sheffield Independent, August 6th, 1859

<sup>95</sup> John Martin Robinson, Arundel Castle, W. Sussex - 1. A Seat of the Duke of Norfolk E M. Country Life, May 23rd, 1991. p. 98 f.f.



A small group of Sheffield patrons continued to obtain their furnishings from London cabinet makers rather than perhaps risk the taint of provincialism.<sup>96</sup> In 1871, the auction of the contents of Chatsworth Gardens, Derbyshire, the home of the late Lady Paxton, included furniture made by Gillows, Crace, and Jackson and Graham as well as a collection of carved antique oak. The furniture from Aston Hall nr. Rotherham, county seat of Harry William Verelst, was almost entirely made by Holland & Son.<sup>97</sup> However, Sheffield's furniture industry was gaining in both confidence and stature and evidence shows it was capable of winning prestigious commissions from national figures.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century local patronage was further fortified by the overall increase in the town's wealth, better communications and improved marketing. This enabled Sheffield's leading cabinet manufacturers to break through the remaining constraints and conservatism of their immediate environment to attract clients from a much wider social, economic and geographical background. Some took part in prestigious exhibitions to demonstrate the quality of their products in a highly competitive environment. In 1879, Joseph Appleyard & Sons of Rotherham acquired the ailing Sheffield firm of William Johnson & Son to form Johnson & Appleyards thus securing a foothold in the lucrative Sheffield market. In the same year they won a gold medal at the York Exhibition and later, another at the Paris Exhibition in 1900.<sup>98</sup> They became Cabinet Makers by Special Appointment to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales and by 1900 could list Prince Albert Victor, the Duke of Norfolk and the Archbishop of York as clients.<sup>99</sup> At the same time, John Manuel & Son could list the Dukes of Norfolk and Portland, the Countess of Radnor, the Archbishop of York, the Wharncloffes, Spencer - Stanhopes and Lord Bradford of Weston Park, Staffordshire, as patrons.<sup>100</sup> Such evidence indicates Sheffield's leading cabinet makers were no longer provincial in outlook and were recognised as capable of successfully competing with

---

<sup>96</sup> Rosamond Allwood, *Luxury Furniture Makers of the Victorian Period*. Antique Collecting, Vol. 23, No.2 June 1988, p.p. 4 - 8.

<sup>97</sup> Eadon Sale Catalogues, Vol. 2, No. 13, & Vol. 4 No.11. Sheffield City Library.

<sup>98</sup> Sheffield at the Opening of the Twentieth Century, Addy & Pike, p.179 . See: Chapter Six - Breaking the Code: The Story of Johnson & Appleyards.

<sup>99</sup> Johnson & Appleyards Ltd., Sheffield and Rotherham (Illustrated ) Up - to - Date . c.1900.

<sup>100</sup> The Manuel Galleries of High Class Furniture. S.C.L. Local Studies Dept. c. 1900.



London firms in winning commissions.

The following two chapters will examine in detail the case studies of the furnishing of The Company of Cutlers' Hall in Hallamshire and the way in which two industrialists at the height of their success chose to represent themselves through their possessions. It will be shown that the furniture selected by each and the manner of its display represented different aspects of the Sheffield code.

The furnishing of The Cutlers' Hall shows the code at its most inhibitive: only harsh and sustained criticism persuaded the Cutlers to abandon their tavernesque benches and trestles for contemporary cabinet made suites. The furnishing of the Hall gave no indication as to the Company's importance to the industry it served. Despite the commissioning of new tables and chairs in 1832, the organising committee preparing for the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to the Cutlers' Hall in 1875 decided that the inside of the Cutlers' Hall should be completely cloaked with swathes of silk and appropriate gilt furniture in the French style should be hired for the occasion<sup>110</sup> from the decorators.

The furnishing of the homes of two of Sheffield's foremost industrialists, Sir John Brown's Endcliffe Hall and Mark Firth's Oakbrook, show the implementation of the Sheffield code freed from any constraints of capital and committees. The study will show how Oakbrook a large, comfortable house was first built with family life and the rewards of hard work in mind but then had to be adapted and upgraded to accommodate both royalty and the growing status of Sheffield industrialists. Endcliffe Hall on the other hand, whilst still showing a reliance upon the advice of cabinet makers, was intended from its inception to be an exuberant display of the quality of Sheffield craftsmen and the importance of its "merchant princes".<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> Endcliffe Hall. The Public Advantages of Personal Munificence. Sheffield Daily Telegraph May 24 1865.



5.2. A contemporary engraving of Endcliffe Hall taken from the South West showing, from right - left, the Conservatory, Morning Room with louvres in place, Drawing Room and Dining Room.



5.3. Oakbrook. Sketched from the South West showing the addition of the new Billiard Room, Garden Steps and Morning Room. Above are the bedrooms and dressing rooms used by the Prince and Princes of Wales with the additional Italian Campanile tower.

Chapter Four.  
The Furnishing of The Company of Cutlers'  
in Hallamshire's Hall

In order to assess the nature of commercial patronage given to the Sheffield furniture industry, the furnishing schemes of the Cutlers' Hall during the nineteenth century have been adopted as a case study. This area has been selected for two main reasons. First, establishing the appearance of offices and boardrooms has been difficult as civic building schemes and radical changes in the iron and steel industries have meant many of the city's historical companies no longer exist, and possessions and records have been widely scattered. The Company of Cutlers has occupied three halls on the same site since its Incorporation by Act of Parliament in 1624, and despite many alterations, records of its furnishing activities have survived. Secondly, many of Sheffield's cutlers belonged to the Company which in 1860, further admitted "manufacturers of steel and articles having a cutting edge who had carried on business within the boundaries of Hallamshire for at least one year" <sup>1</sup> in order to restore its flagging fortunes and status. The companies from which Freemen were drawn encompassed small cutlers and large steel manufacturers and embraced the social and economic spectrum of the town. Thus, whilst the Company never possessed the wealth of some of its members and was inhibited from pursuing a progressive furnishing policy by the appointment of Masters on an annual basis,<sup>2</sup> its perception of furniture as a means of displaying status and prestige may be taken as representative of that adopted by both individuals and their companies.

During the nineteenth century Sheffield's industrial economy underwent rapid expansion when developments in steel making technology and improved communications enabled output to grow from around 3,000 to 100,000 tons per annum between 1800 - 1865.<sup>3</sup> The establishment of large steel works,

---

<sup>1</sup> L. du Garde Peach, The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire in the County of York. Sheffield, 1960. p. p. 14 - 15.

<sup>2</sup> "There emerges a mental picture of Senior and Junior Wardens, eagerly anticipating their year of Office as Master, with eyes iconoclastically fixed on this or that architectural feature of the Hall, and hoping that someone else will not think of it first." L. du Garde Peach, ibid. p.18.

<sup>3</sup> K. C. Barraclough, Sheffield Steel. Sheffield, 1976. p. 8.

employing thousands, contrasted with the majority of firms involved in Sheffield's staple trades where technology did not encourage the bringing together of large numbers of workers under one roof. Considerable specialisation and the practice of employing outworkers on a casual basis meant most Sheffield firms remained small.<sup>4</sup> Frequently short lived and under capitalised, these companies operated from small workshops attached to cutlers' homes or rented premises near steam engines. The reputation of these little mesters was founded upon hand skills. They had neither need nor opportunity to use furniture as a means of advertising prestige or success.

Only the largest cutlery companies, such as Joseph Rodgers & Sons, could afford or perceive a need for prestigious showrooms to attract customers. Such shops required a high standard of fitting and remained rare in Sheffield until the mid nineteenth century <sup>5</sup> as many manufacturers preferred to sell their goods via chapmen or wholesalers. Later, large foundries and steel works, employing manual, clerical and managerial staff, developed needs for specific areas dedicated to offices, boardrooms and foyers which had to be both functional and impressive to clients and visitors. Many of the larger steel works had their own joiners to make furnishings and effect repairs but many independent craftsmen from chair makers and turners to cabinet makers and French polishers were sustained by a variety of orders from industry. During the nineteenth century, Sheffield's rapid economic expansion meant the manufacture of shop and office fittings and furniture became a lucrative market. Some of the town's larger cabinet manufacturers including Johnson & Appleyards, George Allinsons & Sons, Taylor Brothers and T. G. Woof <sup>6</sup> offered planning and fitting services to industrial, commercial and ecclesiastical establishments in addition to supplying the domestic market.

The Company of Cutlers' patronage of the Sheffield furniture industry during the nineteenth century may be divided into four areas. The legacy of the first two halls; the commissioning of new furniture for the third hall in 1832 - 1833;

---

<sup>4</sup> Sidney Pollard, A History of Labour in Sheffield, 1959, p. 54 f.f.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Gatty, Sheffield: Past and Present, Sheffield, 1873, p. 210.

<sup>6</sup> See: Sheffield and Rotherham (Illustrated), Up-to-Date, 1897, p. 150, Advertisement. The Court Guide and County Blue Book of the West Riding of Yorkshire 1900, Advertisement, White's Trade Directory of Sheffield 1876, Paper label, c.1898. "Manufacturing Cabinet Makers, Shop, Hotel and Office Fitters, Painters, Decorators and Removal Contractors.



additions to the 1867 extensions and the preparations for the visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1875.

Following a brief period in rented accommodation, the Company moved into its first hall in Church Lane in 1638 which was subsequently demolished and replaced by a larger building on the same site in 1725. The Company still owns a few pieces of furniture which date from the mid eighteenth century<sup>7</sup> but records show that during the occupancy of the first two halls furniture was generally acquired to fulfil basic needs rather than as a means of conveying any notion of the Company's activities or status. Although it has been seen<sup>8</sup> that competent cabinet makers and joiners operated in Sheffield during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries<sup>9</sup> little consideration was given by the Company to acquire furniture which reflected its status or its members' expertise<sup>10</sup>. Items acquired during this period were often second hand, country pieces lacking any expensive embellishments<sup>11</sup>.

It was not until the Hall became the target of public condemnation that its members were forced to acknowledge the poor and inadequate state of its furnishings. A letter to the Sheffield Independent of 1st. September 1827 summarised the town's concerns:

"Its exterior appearance is unworthy of the  
Company to whom it belongs, and its interior  
accommodations are not only bad, but disgraceful

---

<sup>7</sup> Currently in the Mistress Cutlers' Room there is a long giltwood pier glass whose architectural references of a scrolled broken pediment, the confinement of shell and scroll motifs to within the boundaries of the frame and rounded upper corners to the inside edge of the frame, indicate a date between c. 1730 - 1750. Leader's reference to records showing the acquisition of "three large looking glass mirrors costing £19 16/-" around 1754 corresponds with the date of this mirror which would thus be one of the Company's oldest possessions - Robert Eadon Leader, History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire in the County of York. Sheffield, 1905. Vol. 1, p. 186 f.f. An inventory taken in 1820 recorded two pairs of pier glasses, each valued at £4 10/- together with a single mirror valued at £1 5/-. The 1837 inventory shows the same items to have been transferred to the third hall although others were sold. Should further research confirm attribution to a Sheffield maker this would indicate the presence of an established and skilled cabinet industry.

<sup>8</sup> See: Chapter 3 - Patronage and Manufacturers of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries.

<sup>9</sup> See: David Bostwick, Sheffield in Tudor and Stuart Times. Sheffield City Museums, 1985. List of subscribers to Sheraton's Directories.

<sup>10</sup> See: Frederick Bradbury, History of Old Sheffield Plate. Sheffield, 1912.

<sup>11</sup> R.E. Leader, History of the Sheffield Cutlers' Company. Vol. 1. Sheffield 1905. p.179 f.f.

to a body of so much importance. Many distinguished guests attend the annual feast, and they are huddled together in one promiscuous heap of confusion, in a little room, where, like hungry expectants, they wait for dinner, without a seat to sit down on....”

The criticism was justified. Some basic refurbishment of the second hall had been undertaken but 10/- was considered sufficient to buy “a large oval table” and “deals” were deemed good enough for sideboards. Inventories show banqueting furniture of long deal tables, benches covered in green baize, and longsettles with straw matting. In 1807, the Company owned just 18 hair seated chairs, rising to 75, made from elm in 1820. By 1827, the only additions had been 12 cane seated chairs for the Ladies’ Tearoom.<sup>12</sup>

Five years later, the Company decided to demolish the second hall and replace it with a new building. It was resolved to dispose of many of the furnishings and, for the first time, commission specifically designed cabinet furniture. On 22 February 1832, the Building Committee agreed to “sell such part of the furniture and effects belonging to the Cutlers’ Company in and about the present Hall as they shall think proper”.<sup>13</sup> Newspaper advertisements for the sale of “Useful and Substantial Household Furniture, China, Glass & Earthenware etc” show the provincial and utilitarian nature of the Company’s furnishings.<sup>14</sup> The sale included eleven strong oak dining tables, four dozen hair seated elm chairs, eight long painted tables, eleven tables and trestles, three large dressers with cupboards and shelves, twelve cane seated chairs, various gilt and mahogany pier glasses and assorted cupboards, forms, and desks. Many items must have been put into storage until the new hall was completed as subsequent inventories show the continued use of many vernacular items of furniture throughout the building.

Nine local cabinet makers were approached to produce designs for a

---

<sup>12</sup> Leader, *ibid.* p. p. 186 - 221.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Liber Minut Socieat Cutler In Hallamshire In Com: Ebor’. C9/4

<sup>14</sup> *The Sheffield Independent*. Saturday, 25 February 1832.

Master's Chair, dining tables and chairs. The process of providing furniture designs compatible with the hall's architecture must have been complicated by the architect's<sup>15</sup> use of three classical styles of architecture, Corinthian, Doric and Ionic.<sup>16</sup> The Company was content to rely upon the capabilities of local firms and saw no need to commission independent designers to provide distinctive designs. The firms approached consisted of a variety of cabinet makers who offered a range of additional services including upholstery, carving and gilding, chair making and house furnishing and were located within a half mile radius of the Hall.<sup>17</sup> Such combinations were common within the Sheffield furniture industry the variety of which was usually dependent upon the skills of the owner or his ability to employ appropriate craftsman.<sup>18</sup>

Once the Building and Finance Committee had selected the designs, the firms were re - approached to offer tenders. Precise specifications, partly issued by the architects, were given with each order. For example, the approved dining chair was to be:

...with the Cutlery Company's shield on the top rail  
... the front seat rail lowered 3/8 inch, the seating to  
rest on the top of the seat rail. That the form of the  
seating in Chair No. 3 be adopted to be covered  
with hair seating.... The tenders to state that the  
chairs will be made of good sound well seasoned  
Spanish mahogany and the quantity and quality of  
the hair in each chair to be specified.<sup>19</sup>

Nathan Glossop was commissioned to make the chairs upon condition that his work met with the approval of the Committee. He was given a month to

---

<sup>15</sup> Messrs Worth and Taylor of Doncaster.

<sup>16</sup> Leader, ibid. p.192.

<sup>17</sup> The firms approached were: Mr George Eadon of 91 Fargate, Mr George Brown, 21 Stanley St., Messrs Shepherd & Son, Haymarket est'd. 1745. Mrs Anne Jessop, 95 Fargate, W. Nathan Glossop, Pool Place ( fl. c.1825 - 1841 ), Mr Fowler, West St, Mr Fox of Townhead St., Messrs Johnson & Wade (no trace of Johnson & Wade can be found but the 1833 edition of White's Sheffield Directory records the firm of Wade & Jackson, cabinet makers and upholsterers, trading from 40, South St. ) and Mr Outram 20 Market Place. A Regency Trafalgar type chair, similar to that selected by the Company is known marked W. OUTRAM/ MAKER / SHEFF. c.1814 Dictionary of English Furniture Makers

<sup>18</sup> See: Chapter Two - Trade Combinations.

<sup>19</sup> Liber Minut . . . 25 & 27 Feb.1833. F7 / 4 / 8.



complete an initial batch of 36 chairs at a cost of 18/- each. These won the committee's approval and he went on to complete the order of a further 232 chairs.

The style of the dining tables generated considerable debate. The contract was given to Malin Shepherd & Son who had to make three sets of tables, each 52 feet long when linked together. The full contract was awarded only after the first table had been made and approved of, for which Shepherd's were paid £90. The pattern sent in by George Eadon was the model adopted with modifications to the legs so that they were octagonal instead of round. Each table was to be 4 feet wide and 52 feet long consisting of seven tables with intervening leaves held in place by brass clasps. The tables were to be formed of two separate ends of 3 feet by 4 feet each, each end to have four feet with a loose leaf between of the same dimensions, to be supplied on a side rail corresponding with the ends, the whole of the table to be made of the best Honduras mahogany. Further deliberations ensured the side rail was to be solid and not veneered and was to be connected with the two tables on a better principle and the brass clasps to be dovetailed agreeably to the suggestion of Mr Worth, the architect, and each leaf to be divided into two of 2 feet each.<sup>20</sup>

The Master's chair and other unspecified items were made by George Eadon for which he received a total of £34 13 / 4.<sup>21</sup> The Master's chair was made of mahogany to a large scroll arm Trafalgar style design with exaggerated acanthus embellishments to the arms and sides of the top rail and an upholstered seat supported on carved rails with turned and reeded legs (Figure 4. 1 - 2. ). The total cost for building the new hall amounted to £8846. 12s. 11/4d. of which £1,092 3s. 2d. was spent on new furniture. In addition to the £450 spent on tables and chairs the Company records list purchases of marble chimney pieces, stoves, fenders, ironwork, lamps, earthenware and

---

<sup>20</sup> 'Liber Minut' . . . 27 Feb. - 11th March 1833. C9 / 4.

<sup>21</sup> Liber Minut . . . C 9 / 4.





4.1 - 2. Side view of the Masters' Chair made by George Eadon for the Company of Cutlers' in Hallamshire. Made in mahogany and described as scroll arm Trafalgar in style. Detail of carving to the back rail.



kitchen equipment.<sup>22</sup> The Illustrated London News <sup>23</sup> depicted the new furnishings in the Old Banqueting Hall<sup>24</sup> in its report of the Cutlers' Feast of 1853.

These furnishings satisfied the needs of the Company until 1867 when the completion of a new banqueting hall required additional furniture ( Figure 4.3 - 4). During the period 1850 - 1875, Sheffield enjoyed a brief period of architectural aggrandisement with several corporate bodies commissioning classical decorative schemes for their buildings. The Company of Cutlers' commissioned Hugh Stannus,<sup>25</sup> from the Sheffield School of Art, to design the ceiling of their new banqueting hall. Other schemes included those undertaken by The Sheffield Gas Company, The Mechanics' Institute, The Telegraphic Company and the Sheffield Banking Company.<sup>26</sup> However, this brief period of heightened architectural awareness rarely went on to inspire similar developments in commissioning compatible furnishing schemes. On completion of the extensions to the Cutlers' Hall, the Company disregarded the need to harmonise furnishings with architecture and simply ordered duplicates of their existing chairs, designed in 1832 -3, together with knock -

<sup>22</sup> The other principle furnishing contractors and their payments were:

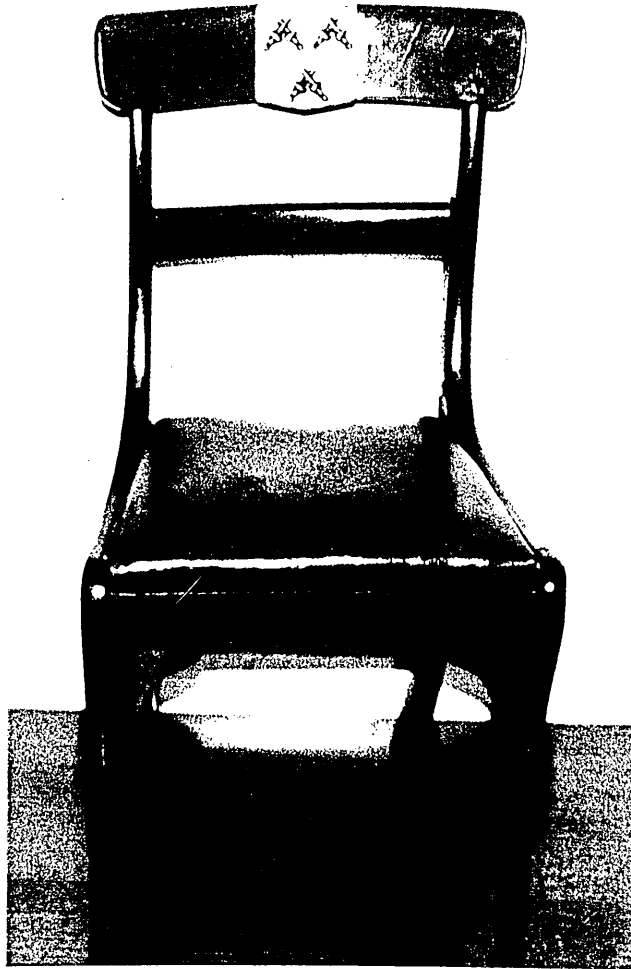
Mr Glossop - chairs.....	£226	3.	0.
Mr Oldfield - chimney piece ( second hand) .....	2	5.	0.
Mr Ruddeforth - 4 chimney pieces.....	105	17.	0.
Messrs Elliss of Hardwick - ironwork .....	26	6.	0.
Messrs Stuart, Smith & Co. - stoves.....	19	10.	0.
Messrs Nicholson & Hoole - fenders.....	21	0.	0.
Messrs Longden & Co. - Kitchen etc. ....	160	0.	0.
Mr Shepherd - tables etc. ....	189	3.	0.
Mr Ridgway - Earthenware .....	98	16.	4.
Messrs Phipsons of Birmingham - lamps.....	183	0.	4.
Mr G. Eadon - chairs etc. ....	34	13	4.

<sup>23</sup> Illustrated London News, September 10th 1853.

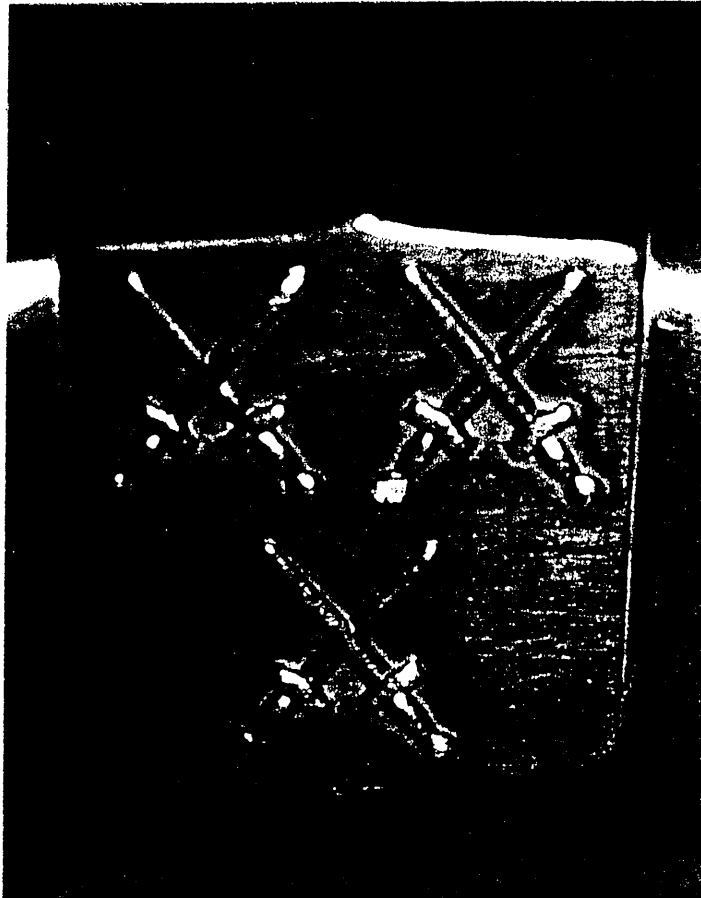
<sup>24</sup> Illustrated London News, Saturday October 24th, 1846 where the octagonal chair legs may be seen.

<sup>25</sup> Hugh Hutton Stannus, A.R.I.B.A. (1840 - 1908 ). After training at the Sheffield School of Art Stannus became articled to H. E. Hoole & Co. where he met Alfred Stevens with whom he worked in producing St. Paul's Wellington Monument.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Diamond, Art & Industry in Sheffield 1850 - 1875. Alfred Stevens and His School. Sheffield City Art Galleries.



4. 3 - 4. One of the few remaining additional chairs made by Edward Eadon in 1867.  
Note the difference in the quality of carving to the back rail.



down deal trestle tables and supplementary seating for the Ladies' Gallery.<sup>27</sup> As with the Mechanic's Institute, lack of finance may well have been a consideration for inexpensive furnishings but the practice appears to have been common amongst other local institutions suggesting, in Sheffield at least, the creation of harmonious architectural and furnishing schemes was rare.

The last major refurbishment of the nineteenth century was temporary in nature and in response to the Hall's use as a banqueting hall during the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1875.<sup>28</sup> The visit had the effect of making Sheffield reappraise its architectural heritage and recognise its shortcomings. Again, the Cutlers' Hall became the target of criticism:

“ . . . Cutlers' Hall . . . which, after all, and despite its external ugliness, is a representative building in Sheffield.”<sup>29</sup>

In their attempt to transform the Hall, the Royal Reception Committee, lead by the Duke of Norfolk, turned away from Sheffield firms. The London cabinet makers, Jackson & Graham of London were approached but rejected on the grounds of cost. The designs presented by Messrs. Tyrer & Co. of Manchester gained approval but the contract to decorate the Cutlers' Hall and much of the town was awarded to Messrs Defries & Sons, Popular Illuminators and Decorators, of London<sup>30</sup> who received £2,400 for their work. The cost for

---

<sup>27</sup> A sub - committee of the Building Committee recommended the immediate acquisition of 100 new chairs, 19 assorted ottomans and the purchase of temporary tables for the next Cutlers' Feast. The Company issued designs to match their existing furnishings stating that the new furniture was to be made from Spanish mahogany, with curled hair seating and crimson damask. The sub - committee was directed to “procure tenders from each cabinet makers as they may think desirable” Box F8 / 1. Committee Meeting, June 27th, 1867. and approached three of the town's principle cabinet makers: Edward Eadon, John Manuel & Son and William Johnson & Son who tendered £164. 0. 0., £165. 0. 0. and £165. 8. 0. respectively. The contract was awarded to Edward Eadon who also supplied seating for the new gallery, “ as per plan submitted and approved by [the architects] Messrs. Flockton & Abbot,” plus 58 forms and 10 deal tables with tressels for the Ground Floor Dining Room. The latter were supplied for the sum of £110. 0. 0. F8 / 1. Committee meeting, September 12th, 1867. An inventory of 1914 describes these as “... 10 rows of 110 mahogany tip - up seats in crimson velvet” F 3 / 1. Inventory of the Contents of The Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield. W.H. & J. A. Eadon. 1914 .

<sup>28</sup> During his year as Lord Mayor, the industrialist and three times former Master Cutler, Mark Firth, donated a park to the town which the Prince and Princess were invited to open.

<sup>29</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph. 12th June, 1875.

<sup>30</sup> ‘The Royal Visit’ Sheffield Daily Telegraph. 12 June, 7 August 1875.



decorating the Cutlers' Hall is not recorded and appears to have been met by Mark Firth and possibly George Wilson, Master Cutler for 1875 <sup>31</sup>. With the aid of painted panelling, damasks, mirrors, flowers, carpets, lace and flags, Defries built a temporary suite of rooms with tented roofs completely masking the Hall's features. The Prince's retiring room was furnished with candelabras, clocks, girandoles and mahogany centre tables. Similar items in gilt together with en suite chairs, pier glasses, ottomans, girandoles and statuary were used for the Princess's rooms. The effect was to transform the supper - room "which is not a pleasant looking room, to whatever purpose it is applied..." and a "not very attractive yard" into "an ordinary ballroom corridor."<sup>32</sup> The ballroom itself was furnished with an impressive reredos, placed behind a dais, upon which were two large, specially made chairs in gold, upholstered in crimson satin.<sup>33</sup> To Sheffield eyes, the result was so marked that, by arrangement with Messrs. Defries, the decorations were kept so those attending a subsequent concert might:

. . . see the magnificent Banqueting Hall of the Cutlers' Company in all the glory with which it was prepared for the Royal ball and luncheon <sup>34</sup>

The temporary arrival of metropolitan style and opulence to Sheffield generated considerable interest but achieved little long term effect. In spite of the highly acclaimed reception given to the Hall's refurbishment, no attempt was made to permanently enhance its spartan character which continued to be dismissed by the town's critics:

. . . The public buildings in . . . [Sheffield] . . . are comparatively few, and of little interest. . . . The Cutlers' Hall, enlarged in 1865 [sic], is a Grecian building of no striking appearance, but containing a few busts and pictures. . <sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> The Cost of the Royal Visit to Sheffield. Sheffield Daily Telegraph. December 13th, 1876.

<sup>32</sup> 'The Royal Visit' Sheffield Daily Telegraph. 12 June, 7 August 1875.

<sup>33</sup> Lord Mayor's Ball at Cutlers' Hall. Sheffield Daily Telegraph. 17th August, 1875.

<sup>34</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph. Saturday, 7th August, 1875.

<sup>35</sup> The Court Guide an County Blue Book of The West Riding of Yorkshire 1900. p.p. 50 - 51.

The failure of the Cutlers' Company to establish impressive or harmonious schemes of architectural and internal furnishings redolent of its status was unusual in a period of capitalistic expansion and civic and corporate pride. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many corporate and municipal building projects were undertaken as status symbols for civic and corporate bodies. The need for furnishings appropriate to the role of such buildings was undisputed with architects frequently providing complete schemes or working closely with cabinet makers.<sup>36</sup> However, the Company maintained an austere public facade, making little attempt to encourage the skills of local craftsmen by commissioning quality furnishings and preferring to hire furniture when occasion demanded. Its failure to perceive the harmful effects its premises had upon its image would suggest such views on the value of corporate presentation were shared by Sheffield's wider business community.

Although local industrialists were aware of good design being vital to commercial success such beliefs appear to have been confined to manufacturing and did not flow easily into the arena of corporate furnishing. The failure of Sheffield's industrialists to use buildings and their contents as ways of advertising commercial success has to be contrasted with their increasing awareness of the need for well designed, fashionable products. Advances in local technology during the latter half of the eighteenth century enabled Sheffield's cutlers to manufacture goods with greater speed and detail<sup>37</sup> than competitors in Birmingham or London. However, sustained commercial success only occurred when reliance upon "local ingenuity and taste"<sup>38</sup> was rejected in favour of embracing styles inspired by leading designers. In the eighteenth century Sheffield cutlers, plate- and silversmiths turned to the designs of Chippendale, Adam and Wedgwood in order to produce fashionable tableware.<sup>39</sup> As has been seen, during the nineteenth

---

<sup>36</sup>See, for example: June Dean, The Regency Furniture in Liverpool Town Hall, Furniture History, 1989, p.p.127 - 134. William & Charles Wilkinson of Ludgate Hill made furniture for the new Goldsmith's Hall in London, (1833 - 34) to the designs of the architect Philip Hardwick in Grecian and Rococo styles and in 1840 tendered for furnishing the Armourers and Brasiers' Company. Dictionary of English Furniture Makers.

<sup>37</sup> Bradbury, ibid. p. p. 9 f. f.

<sup>38</sup> Bradbury, Frederick, ibid p. 52, 60.

<sup>39</sup> Bradbury, ibid. p. 191.

century cutlery and stove grate manufacturers commissioned leading freelance designers<sup>40</sup> to provide innovative and market winning designs. Local industrialists<sup>41</sup> also became supporters of the Sheffield School of Art recognising its ability to provide their companies with educated and talented designers. Through Stevens'<sup>42</sup> brief contact with the School<sup>43</sup> and the vigour of its headmaster, Young Mitchell, there evolved a group of craftsmen designers<sup>44</sup> who achieved considerable success at the Great Exhibition and later secured commissions from local industrialists and corporations<sup>45</sup>. Yet, such interest in the decorative arts rarely extended beyond the boundaries of commercial pragmatism. Few companies considered it necessary to incur, as they saw it, non - productive costs in the form of expensively appointed premises, confident their goods spoke for themselves. For most, furniture remained as utilitarian as their tools.

Consequently, it can be seen that Sheffield industrialists exerted little control or interest over their environment. Criticism of the furniture and appearance of the Cutlers' Hall, the lack of civic infrastructure and buildings of prestige did not perturb them. Whereas Liverpool's merchants willingly gave funds to support building and furnishing a prestigious new Town Hall to advertise the

---

<sup>40</sup> Steel & Garland, Henry Hoole & Co., Joseph Rodgers & Sons. See: Chapter 1, Footnote 100.

<sup>41</sup> Notably: F.T. Mappin, Sir John Brown, H.C. Sorby, Richard Solly, and William Fisher III. The former two were also Master Cutlers in 1855 and 1865 - 66 respectively. See: Canon Odom, Hallamshire Worthies, Sheffield 1926, for their involvement with Sheffield institutions. The classical decorative schemes undertaken by The Company of Cutlers, The Sheffield Gas Company, The Mechanics' Institute, The Telegraphic Company and the Sheffield Banking Company between 1850 - 1875 may be linked to the philanthropic involvement of local industrialists such as Sir John Brown in these institutions and the governing of the School. See: Diamond, *ibid*.

<sup>42</sup> See: Chapter One, The Sheffield School of Art.

<sup>43</sup> Employed as chief designer to H. E. Hoole & Co., stove grate manufacturers during 1850 - 1851 to produce designs for the Great Exhibition.

<sup>44</sup> Sheffield possessed a skilled work force of carvers and cabinet makers who had studied perspective, modelling, drawing, shading and ornamentation at the School of Art. Many, such as Arthur Hayball, Harry Hems, William Biggs, Frederick Hibbert, John Manuel and William Pulford established or joined family businesses involved in cabinet making, woodcarving or picture frame making. Others who followed similar courses, notably Henry Hoyles, Hugh Stannus, Charles Green ( founder of the City of Sheffield Artcrafts Guild in 1894), Godfrey Sykes and William Ellis, produced designs for local stove grate, cutlery and plate manufacturers. Diamond, *ibid*. Thomas Peters, What Part Sheffield Has Played In Art Decorative During The Last Century. 1921. Sheffield Local Studies Library See: List of School of Art Medal Winners in Sue Graves, Art Scene in Sheffield 1843 - 1900. Unpublished M.A. thesis.

<sup>45</sup> Sheffield Independent. 17 February, 1871. Diamond, *ibid*.



port's wealth and success<sup>46</sup> the value of such status symbols largely bypassed Sheffield culture.<sup>47</sup> The enduring parochialism of Sheffield society, the ethos of 'take me as you find me' almost a perverse pride in a rough and ready attitude to life appears to have been strongly embedded in many local industrialists. Those who recognised the limitations of such views were too few in number to persuade their fellows of the long term benefits of investing in quality infrastructures as a means of advertising or bestowing prestige. Thus, whilst Sheffield's status as a manufacturing centre attracted national and world - wide acclaim the industrial community failed to encourage the development of buildings and furniture befitting such a position.

The lack of good building and furnishing schemes ensured many artists and designers were reluctant to work in Sheffield. Those of note who did, such as Sir Francis Chantry, Godfrey Sykes and Alfred Stevens, rarely stayed long unable to secure patronage appropriate to their work which could have enhanced the town's visual heritage and benefited business through the provision of new designs.

The following chapter examines the building and furnishing schemes of two of Sheffield's leading nineteenth century industrialists, Sir John Brown and Mark Firth. It centres on the preparations made to ensure their homes were fit for a royal visit - the highest social accolade of the time. Whilst only one was successful, the furnishing of Endcliffe Hall and Oakbrook show Sheffield taste at its most exuberant. Unencumbered by the financial and organisational constraints of the Cutlers' Hall, they employed local cabinet makers to furnish their homes with the best money could buy. The chapter will examine whether they remained faithful to the Sheffield code or whether wealth and prestige encouraged them to relinquish such values and embrace a style they felt more accurately reflected their status. It looks at the question of whether technocrats from an historically radical tradition would be equally radical and forward looking in their choice of domestic furnishings or adopt a style they felt more appropriately reflected the solemnity of the occasion.

---

<sup>46</sup> See: Chapter 3 Civic Patronage & Footnote 51.

<sup>47</sup> ibid.



## Chapter Five

### The Furnishing of Endcliffe Hall and Oakbrook - Homes of Sir John Brown & Mark Firth.

The dependency of a large body of Sheffield society upon the volatile iron, steel and related light industries meant that in many homes capital was carefully spent upon furnishings which, in turn, were expected to serve them well<sup>1</sup>. The persistent fear of economic hardship, even when adversity itself had passed, remained a strong influence upon Sheffield's domestic furnishing arrangements. However, during the second half of the nineteenth century successful Sheffield industrialists produced goods of world standing in fields such as armaments, railway stock and cutlery, earning them considerable wealth<sup>2</sup> and status. They began to acquire homes in the western foothills of the Pennines away from the pollution and noise of factories and town where they hosted visits from government, the armed forces and royalty. They established expensively furnished, large, architect designed, modern residences in secluded parklands reminiscent of the homes of the aristocracy in which to receive guests and pursue their social and business ambitions. They acquired moorland shoots, farmed estates and filled their homes with every affordable luxury in imitation of how they perceived an aristocratic lifestyle. Such interaction brought about the realisation that their homes had to appear fashionable and sophisticated and no longer tainted with provincialism. In an era when a gentleman could no longer be distinguished by subscribing to a particular furnishing tradition, the wide range of domestic furnishing schemes available via the "Battle of the Styles" advertised an individual's background, wealth, sophistication and status. Throughout the nineteenth century furniture was used as a means of indirect communication: its style, setting and quality; the ease and manner with which it was displayed revealed much about the owner.

Eager to advertise their wealth but not their inexperience, Sheffield's

---

<sup>1</sup> Banham, MacDonald & Porter, *ibid.* p.12.

<sup>2</sup> The 1862 Act of Limited Liability helped increase the profits of larger companies as it reduced the threat of personal bankruptcy and encouraged greater investment. G. P. Jones, *Industrial Evolution* p.157 in *Sheffield and its Region. A Scientific and Historical Survey*, 1956.

nouveaux riches industrialists preferred to patronise local manufacturers who appreciated their concerns and understood their needs. It was this affluent, aggrandising society which encouraged Joseph Appleyard & Sons, cabinet makers of Rotherham, to move into the Sheffield market ( See Chapter Six).

Many of Sheffield's nineteenth century nouveaux riches appear to have exercised a loyalty to local manufacturers beyond the patronage determined by geographical isolation and lack of competition. The close knit nature of the town's middle - class society<sup>3</sup> may have fostered the practice of local patronage as a means of sustaining familial affiliations and wealth and it is possible that the local nouveaux riches believed local manufacturers could best appreciate and fulfil the furnishing requirements set down by the Sheffield code.

The perception of Sheffield as a centre of manufacturing excellence played an important role in the field of patronage. As the town became recognised as a world leader in the production of iron, steel and related goods considerable pride was taken in the quality of Sheffield products to the point where profit potential was occasionally sacrificed to maintain standards of excellence.<sup>4</sup> The town itself was marketed as a centre of excellence so that in the minds of many, Sheffield equalled quality. It is not unreasonable to assume this connotation was extended to other local industries, whether justified or not in a national context, and so local patronage became the norm. It was a policy which both Mark Firth and Sir John Brown adopted when furnishing their homes.

Sir John Brown (1816 - 1896 ) and Mark Firth ( 1819 - 1880 ) were two of Sheffield's leading industrialists and benefactors of the nineteenth century (Figure 5.1). Both were born, educated and lived in Sheffield; both became Mayor and Master Cutler. Both started life as Methodists, to which Firth remained deeply committed whilst Sir John later embraced Anglicanism. Both gave generously to religious, welfare and educational causes. Sir John and his wife were childless and directed their attentions onto the social scene,

---

<sup>3</sup> See: Chapter Six for an example of family connections in Sheffield's commercial life.

<sup>4</sup> R. Lloyd - Jones & M.J. Lewis, Business Structure and Political Economy in Sheffield: The Metal Trades 1880 - 1920's, p.p. 216 - 217, The History of the City of Sheffield 1843 - 1993, 3 vols. Sheffield, 1993.



5.1. Portraits of Sir John Brown and Mark Firth. Sir John's was taken late in life wearing the uniform of the Captain of the Hallamshire Rifles.



using their home as a venue for recitals, parties and concerts as well as entertaining local and national dignitaries. Initially, Firth remained a more private person concerned with his large family and the expansion of his business but in time he too was increasingly the host to national figures.

“... Mark Firth, ‘manly and massive,’ eating in the workshop the meat pie lunch which the wife of a workman cooked for him daily; ... John Brown, all aglow with his vision of the part played in the world by its merchants.”<sup>5</sup>

During the third quarter of the nineteenth century their companies were involved in the capital intensive, high - risk armaments industry with Firth’s concentrating on guns and Brown’s armour plate. Rapid expansion and profits followed<sup>6</sup> as, by the end of the century, Sheffield became the world centre for steel armaments manufacture.<sup>7</sup> In 1856 John Brown employed 200 men. This rose to 2,500 in 1863 and 5,000 in 1872. In 1864 John Brown & Co. was one of the first Sheffield companies to become a limited company with an opening capital of £1,000,000. By 1867, Sir John had invested some £200,000 in armour plate plant and his Atlas works covered over 21 acres generating an annual turnover of around £1,000,000.<sup>8</sup> However, in time, poor investments, disputes with fellow directors and ill - health contributed to a decline in his fortunes. In 1871 fellow directors forced his resignation as orders for armour plate rapidly declined. After the death of his wife in 1881 he increasingly withdrew from public life, spending more time with friends in the south of England. In 1893 Endcliffe Hall and its contents were put into the hands of Maple & Co. to be disposed of at auction. The event was spread over several days attracting widespread newspaper coverage. The contents were sold but not the Hall which remained empty for several years before being acquired as divisional headquarters for the territorial army. Sir John died in relative obscurity in Kent in 1896 but was buried in Sheffield alongside his wife at All

---

<sup>5</sup> Mary Walton, ibid. p.181.

<sup>6</sup> The Naval Defence Act of 1890 enabled profits to rise rapidly. See: Geoffrey Tweedale, Steel City Entrepreneurship, Strategy, and Technology in Sheffield 1743 - 1993. 1995. Table 3.2.

<sup>7</sup> Tweedale, ibid. p. 72.

<sup>8</sup> Walton, ibid. p. 194. Geoffrey Tweedale, Giants of Sheffield Steel. 1986. p. 18.



Saints Parish Church, Eccleshall. His estate was proven at £27,221.<sup>9</sup>

Firth's employees grew from around 20 in 1842 to 500 in 1857 and 2,000 in 1890.<sup>10</sup> From an approximate turnover of £3,727 in their first year by 1871 this had grown to £421,109. In the same year the firm cast the heaviest known gun of the time, the 'Woolwich Infant' at 35 tons. Shortly after, having persuaded the government of the benefits of steel over wrought iron, some £100,000 was invested in machinery for making steel tubes.<sup>11</sup> It was not until after his untimely death in 1880 that Firth's became a limited company. His will was proven at £600,000 excluding the considerable gifts to the town during his lifetime, his estates and some £200,000 in stocks, shares and capital left to his widow and children. In 1902, John Brown & Co. acquired seven - eighths of the ordinary shares of Thomas Firth & Sons and the two companies merged becoming Firth - Brown.<sup>12</sup>

As few commercial or civic bodies had felt it necessary to portray their status via the use of architecture or furniture, the scale of building and furnishing activity in the homes of Sir John and Mark Firth eclipsed the accepted norms of the area and attracted great attention from the public and local press. Endcliffe Hall, built in the early 1860s for Sir John Brown, was an example of Sheffield taste at its most flamboyant and financially liberated (Figure 5.2.). From its inception the role of Endcliffe was to impress Sir John's guests, advertise his success and be ever ready for a royal visit. To this end its design, layout and furnishings precisely reflected the requirements and expectations of contemporary protocol.

The building of Endcliffe Hall encompassed the hopes and ambitions of a "merchant prince" eager to make his home a forum for impressive entertaining on a grand scale and an advertisement for Sheffield goods and craftsmen. The building of Endcliffe Hall between 1863 - 1865 provided a rare opportunity for the Sheffield furniture industry to exercise and advertise its skills on such a large scale. It was claimed £100,000 was spent on the

---

<sup>9</sup> Tweedale, ibid. p. 19. Douglas Hindmarch & Anthony J. Podmore: Endcliffe Hall in the Manor of Hallamshire. Published by The Officers' Mess 4th Battalion Yorkshire Volunteers.

<sup>10</sup> Sidney Pollard, A History of Labour In Sheffield. 1959. p. 162

<sup>11</sup> Tweedale, Steel City. p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> G.P. Jones, Industrial Evolution Sheffield and its Region. p. 158.

building and a further £60,000 in the furnishings of the Hall. A state bedroom was incorporated in the Hall in readiness for a royal visit. Such was the rarity of public, private or corporate building on this scale in Sheffield that, upon completion, Sir John opened the Hall to the public for three days, attracting huge crowds and lengthy eulogies in the local press.

In the eyes of the press Endcliffe was only matched by Mark Firth's home, Oakbrook, but only after it had undergone considerable alterations and refurbishment to upgrade its accommodation in readiness for a visit from the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1875. Although Oakbrook was only 4 years older than Endcliffe it had been built for private use with little regard for the nuances of contemporary building protocol. The building of Oakbrook around 1859 had earned Firth the title "Pioneer of Ranmoor" for being the first industrialist to move so far away from his works and into the countryside. As a large but private family home Oakbrook attracted little interest other than its location and it is assumed its furnishings were not sufficiently exceptional to have attracted attention. It remained a private residence until 1875 when Mark Firth entertained the Prince and Princess of Wales ( Figure 5.3.).

The folklore rivalry which existed between Mark Firth and John Brown<sup>13</sup> had become tangible around 1859 when Firth moved to Ranmoor building Oakbrook in the Italianate style. Other merchants and industrialists had soon followed:

The whole hillside was dotted with mansions surrounded by miniature parks. ... by 1879 he [Firth] was neighboured by John Newton Mappin, Frederick Thorpe Mappin, a bunch of younger Firths, Henry Stephenson, Thomas Jessop, George Wilson, J. Andrew, J.Y. Cowlshaw, and others of their kind.<sup>14</sup>

However, Sir John Brown's building of Endcliffe Hall was to become Sheffield's largest, most ambitious and highly publicised residential project of the nineteenth century.

---

<sup>13</sup> Keith Farnsworth, Mark Firth's Symbol of Success. Quality of Sheffield. November 1984. p.p. 55 - 56.

<sup>14</sup> Mary Walton, ibid. p. 225.

## Sir John Brown and the Building of Endcliffe Hall.

Born in 1816 the son of a Sheffield slater, John Brown became apprenticed to Earl, Horton & Co. where he accepted a partnership with the aid of a £500 loan. In 1844, he started his own steel manufacturing business in Orchard Street gaining considerable success through his invention of conical steel spring buffers for railway carriages. In 1856 he opened his Atlas Works in the Don valley and entered the arms production race manufacturing armour plate from Bessemer steel. Wealth and recognition followed.<sup>15</sup> In 1862 he entertained the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, at his home, Shirle Hill in Sharrow, and in 1863 a reception was held there for the Lords of the Admiralty and 'all the neighbouring nobility' after an inspection of the rolling of armour plate at his works.<sup>16</sup> In local affairs, he held many posts including Mayor, Master Cutler, Deputy Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire, J.P., Council Member of the Sheffield School of Art, Chairman of the Sheffield School Board and Town Trustee.

Like his rival, John Brown moved slowly westwards across the town as his wealth and prestige grew ( Figure 5.4.). From Western Bank he moved to the spacious Shirle Hill which was: 'fitted up with every convenience, and decorated at great cost for the owner's occupation and comfort.' It had seven bedrooms, a conservatory, 'pleasure grounds tastefully laid out and containing the choicest Shrubs and Evergreens', stabling, a Vinery, peach house, pine pits, potting houses and large amount of land.<sup>17</sup>

By Sheffield standards this was an affluent lifestyle but as one of the country's leading industrialists Brown wanted more from his home. Seeing neighbouring businessmen, such as Crossley, Salt and Lister build new homes incorporating the latest fashions and technology<sup>18</sup> Brown decided to leave " the comfortable gentility of Shirle Hill at Sharrow for the magnificent

---

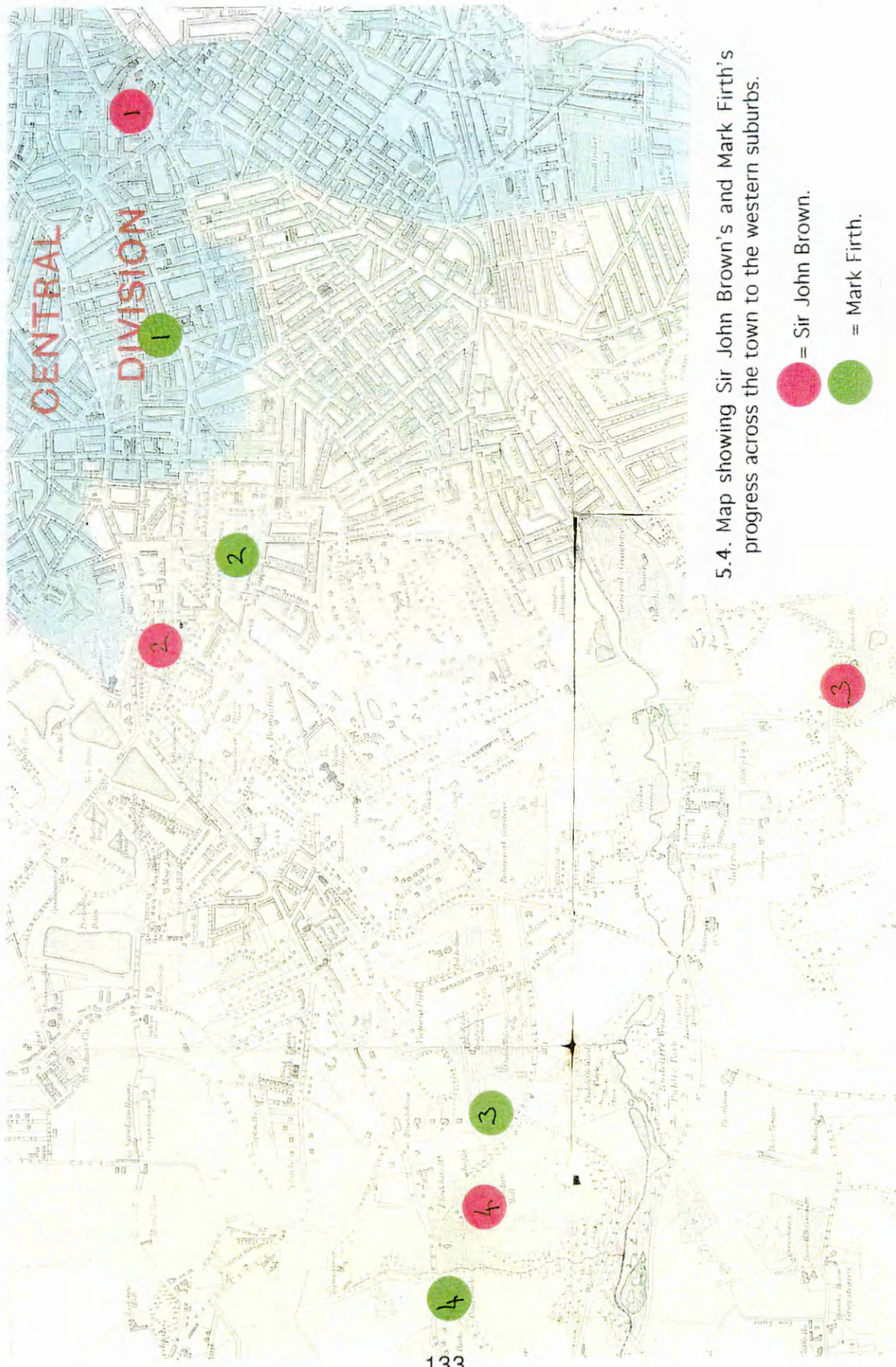
<sup>15</sup> J.H. Stainton, The Making of Sheffield 1865 - 1914, 1924, p.306.

<sup>16</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph, August 11th, 1862. Illustrated London News, 21st November, 1863.

<sup>17</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Saturday 6th May, 1865.

<sup>18</sup> George Sheeran, Brass Castles. West Yorkshire New Rich and their Houses. 1800 - 1914. Ryburn, 1993. p. 81.





5.4. Map showing Sir John Brown's and Mark Firth's progress across the town to the western suburbs.

- = Sir John Brown.
- = Mark Firth.



empty spaces of Endcliffe Hall":<sup>19</sup>

'... specially adapted for dispensing hospitalities on  
a scale worthy of such distinguished visitors.'<sup>20</sup>

Sir John was determined Endcliffe should be the showhouse he clearly believed Sheffield lacked and further determined to employ Sheffield craftsmen whenever possible. The latest trends in fashion and technology were used to confirm Endcliffe as the home of a wealthy and sophisticated technocrat, at ease with industrialists, politicians and the aristocracy.<sup>21</sup> The Hall was designed by the Sheffield architects Flockton and Abbot in the latest French Italian style. The 36 room mansion was situated on the site of a much earlier hall bought and promptly demolished by Brown to create a 40 acre parkland base in the town's increasingly affluent western suburbs. The long driveway was lit by ornamental gaslights which led to a covered plate glass carriage porch flanked by sculptures of the four seasons by E.W. Wyon. On the ground floor there were the residential rooms on the sunny south and east sides with the domestic quarters to the north. The largest room in the house was the Ballroom or Saloon, 60 x 38 1/2ft, designed for entertaining and displaying works of art ( Figure 5.5). The decorations here as throughout the Hall were carried out by John & Joseph Rodgers of King St., Sheffield, winners of a gold medal at the Paris Exhibition of 1862. The modelling for the ornamental ceilings was by Charles Green, the decorative murals by Godfrey Sykes, James Poole and F. Danby. At the end of the Saloon was a 32 stop organ, powered by water, by the Sheffield organ maker James Brindley. The organ casing was designed by Eadon's 'in the Italian style' to correspond with the rest of the Hall's architecture, the water was stored in a large tank in the tower above the billiard room.<sup>22</sup> Other rooms included a conservatory, billiard room, dining room, drawing room and large open court. For more private use there was a library and morning room ( Figure 5.6.). Upstairs, nine bedrooms each had their own bath and dressing rooms the principal rooms also having views over the Italianate gardens and parkland. The "State Bedroom", some

---

<sup>19</sup> Mary Walton, *ibid.* p. 225.

<sup>20</sup> *Sheffield Illustrated. Views and Portraits which have appeared in the Sheffield Weekly Telegraph.* Vol. II. 1885, p.6.

<sup>21</sup> Vanessa S. Doe, *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> New Organ for Endcliffe Hall. *Sheffield Daily Telegraph.* 9th May 1865.



5.5. The Ballroom or Saloon. Crimson, black, blue and green Brussels carpet, furniture in Spanish mahogany with with green velvet upholstery, green velvet curtains.



5.6. The Morning Room. Less formal and more cluttered. Black and floral Brussels carpet, curtains in mauve silk, a mixture of oak and walnut furniture, and a large crimson tablecloth.

22 x 19' in size, was equipped with a substantial four poster bed in walnut and gilt<sup>23</sup> designed by John Manuel & Son. Manuel's also designed a matching suite together with the mantle piece and over mantle mirror complete with clock and gas lights ( Figures 5.7. - 5.12.).

The house was virtually fireproof: iron joists and concrete floors were supplemented by a large cistern in the tower providing water for fire fighting, domestic use and powering the organ. The ground floor windows could be protected against burglary and sunlight by retractable Belgium - made louvred iron shutters. At night, large mirrors, stored in the wall cavities, were drawn out to mask their appearance and throw light back into the rooms. The cooking ranges could use gas or coal whilst all rooms were linked by an electric bell system to the kitchen. Ornamental gaslights lit the driveway which led to a covered porch protected from the weather by large plates of glass. The two large conservatories exemplified the use of modern glass plate and iron as construction materials<sup>24</sup>. Although glass houses had been popular on the estates of the nobility and gentry throughout the eighteenth century it was not until the 1860s that cast iron ribs extending from a masonry base had become common, the method used at Endcliffe.<sup>25</sup>

"The Public Advantages of Personal Munificence" - a highly enthusiastic article describing Endcliffe Hall - appeared in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph of May 24 1865 and took up the theme of technical innovation and skill. The paper also acknowledged the rarity of such work given to local companies and praised the building of Endcliffe as a showcase for Sheffield craftsmanship. The firms employed included:

<b>Flockton &amp; Abbot</b> .....	Architects.
<b>John Jebson Smith</b> .....	Cast iron balustrades for the Grand Staircase. The best stove and

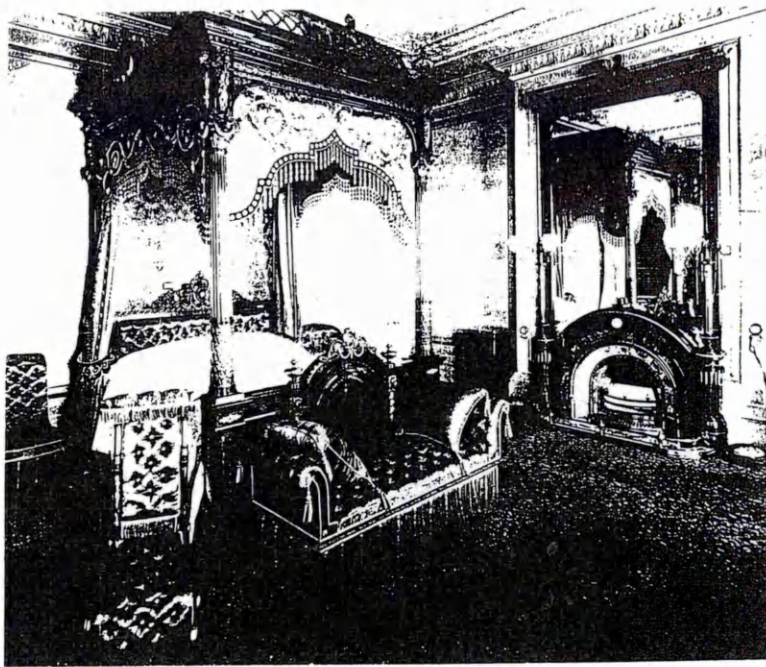
---

<sup>23</sup> By using walnut in the State Bedroom it is evident it was designed with the hope Queen Victoria would one day stay there. Walnut - a feminine wood in Victorian etiquette - has the Latin name *Juglans regia* - from *jovis glans* meaning " the nut of the great god Jove" . Linnaeus added the specific name of *regia* to English, European or Persian walnut meaning "fit for a king" - or queen. Herbert L. Edlin, What Wood Is That? Thames and Hudson, 1969. p. 157.

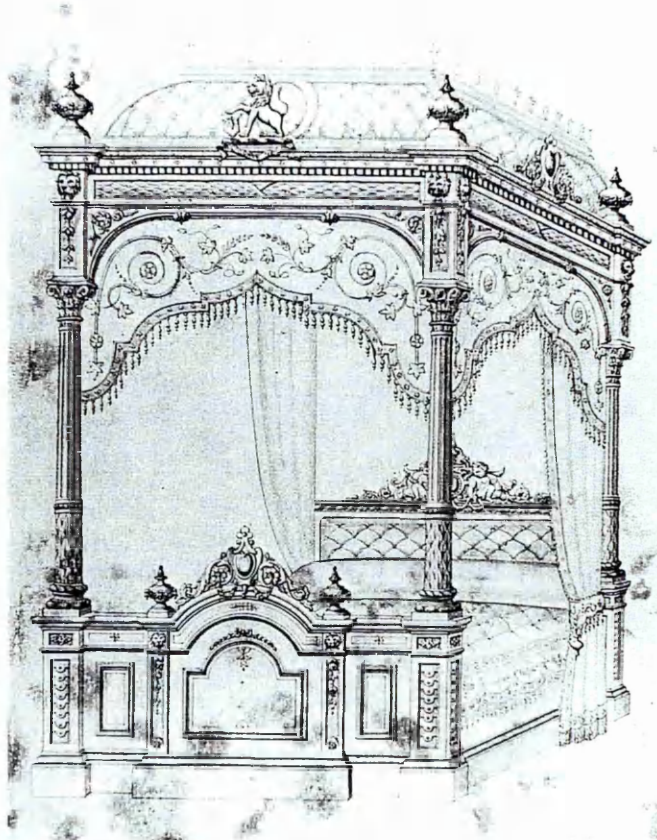
<sup>24</sup> The inspiration for large conservatories was Paxton's Crystal Palace although Brown may have seen his original construction at Chatsworth where Paxton was architect and landscape gardener to the sixth Duke of Devonshire.

<sup>25</sup> Sheeran, ibid. p. 101.

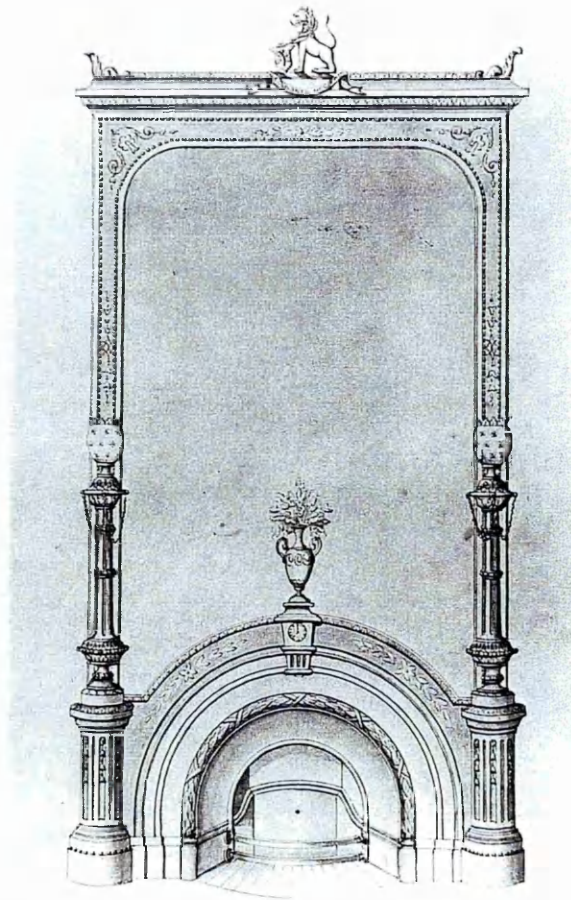




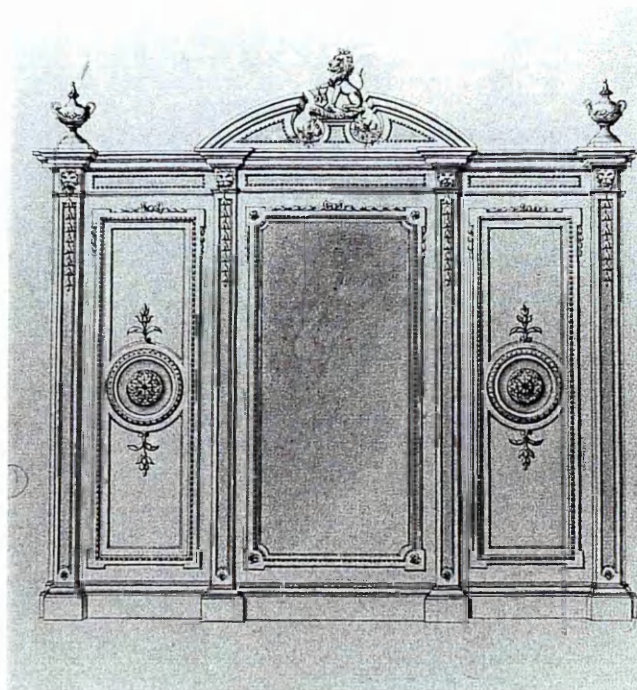
**5.7 - 8.** Photograph of the "State Bedroom" at the time of the sale in 1893, showing the gilt and walnut bed. The matching mantle piece can also be seen and some of the bedroom suite. The bed was upholstered in crimson silk with amber silk lining the curtains and drapes.





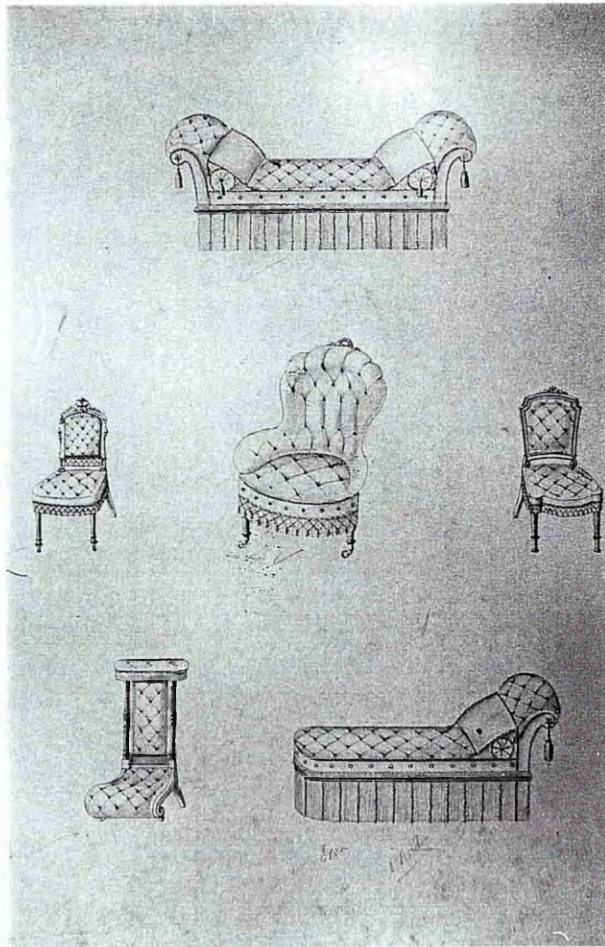


5.9 - 10. The mantle piece and wardrobe both in walnut and showing Sir John Brown's crest.





5.11 - 12. The dressing table with crimson silk footstool and a selection of chairs forming part of the bedroom suite all in walnut and crimson silk upholstery.





chimney pieces.

**Messrs. Longden & Co.** ..... Coal and gas kitchen stoves.  
**Messrs. Robertson & Carr** ..... Stoves and chimney pieces.  
**Mr. Ellis, George St.** ..... "Warming up apparatus." Iron work  
in the Saloon and vineries, etc.

**Joseph Hadfield, Norfolk Lane**

**Marble Works** ..... Chimney pieces made to designs  
supplied by George Eadon and  
John Manuel.

**E. W. Wyon** ..... Carvings of The Four Seasons.

**Messrs. Craven** ..... Carved and moulded plasterwork -  
ceiling designs by Charles Green.  
Masonry and joinery.

**Mr William Gibson, Eccleshall** ..... Carpentry.

**Mr Bissett** ..... External plumbing.

**Mr Pitt** ..... Internal plumbing and glazing.

**John & Joseph Rodgers** ..... Decorating.

**John Manuel & Son** ..... Furniture and furnishings.

**George Eadon** ..... Furniture and furnishings.

**William Johnson** ..... Furniture and furnishings.

The three manufacturers selected to tender for making the furniture at Endcliffe were chosen from amongst the 50 Sheffield firms involved in cabinet making at the time. Most were small concerns based around a family unit but some were well established with a number of employees. Four other firms may have been considered - Woollen & Fordham of Old Haymarket, Frederick Mercer ( nephew of Ann Jessop<sup>26</sup> ) of Fargate, Isaac Turnell of Pinstone St. and Thomas Cocking of Watson Walk<sup>27</sup>. Rejection may have been due to recent changes in ownership to three of them whilst Cocking's and Woollen & Fordham's may have been considered outdated due to being located away from the fashionable retail centre of the town.<sup>28</sup>

Much was made of Endcliffe's style of architecture - French in the Italian style - as it set the tone for furnishing and was a means of assessing Sir John's social status. The use of this latest classical style was calculated to show Sir John as both gentleman and technocrat. It hinted at his technologically orientated industry whilst aligning him with a tradition embraced by the

<sup>26</sup> See: Chapter 2 Women in Employment & Chapter 4. Also, Ann Jessop forthcoming New National Dictionary of Biography. Oxford University Press.

<sup>27</sup> See: Chapter 2 Responses to Changing Circumstances.

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 2 Business Locations.

Very few Gothic houses were built in West Yorkshire during the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries but the Gothic Revival did have an impact. The earliest building in this style was the presbytery at St. Anne's Church, Keighley, designed by Pugin in 1838 followed by Headingley Castle built in 1843 for the corn merchant Thomas England. During the 1840s Gothic Revival styles, especially the Elizabethan, became very popular. The first Italianate houses began to appear during the 1850s and flourished during the following twenty years. Ravensknowle at Huddersfield, built for the textile manufacturer John Beaumont around 1859 was palatial Italian: Longwood Hall, Bingley built in 1867 for the industrialist W.M. Selwyn was rural Italian. The earliest French Italian house in West Yorkshire was Frank Crossley's home, Belle Vue at Halifax, designed by G.H. Stokes, in 1856. It was to prove a popular and enduring variation during the middle years of the nineteenth century.

Whereas Sir John strove to emulate the architectural styles employed by the aristocracy, his furnishing schemes were governed more by the protocol of mid -Victorian society and the caution and conservatism embedded within the "Sheffield code". Whilst modern technology was actively incorporated into the fabric of Endcliffe and Sir John was prepared to use 'new men.....as artists, draughtsmen and statuary'<sup>30</sup> from the local School of Art, essentially he shared the sentiments of many of his fellow industrialists whose:

....personal taste [was] associated with their well - earned wealth<sup>31</sup>

...and the wealth of many had evolved from the factory floor.<sup>32</sup> They were the first generation who could look to furnish their homes as they wished, rather than be governed by the constraints of income and necessity. Whilst happy to

---

<sup>29</sup>Sheeran, *ibid.* p. 101. "...despite the variety, most gentlemen would have chosen to build a classical house, based on the architecture of ancient Greece or Rome".

<sup>30</sup> Endcliffe Hall. The Public Advantages of Personal Munificence. The Sheffield Daily Telegraph. 22 May 1865.

<sup>31</sup> Death of Sir John Brown, Sheffield & Rotherham Independent. 28 December 1896.

<sup>32</sup> David Hey, A History of Sheffield. 1998. p.120. Reid, *ibid.* p. 43.



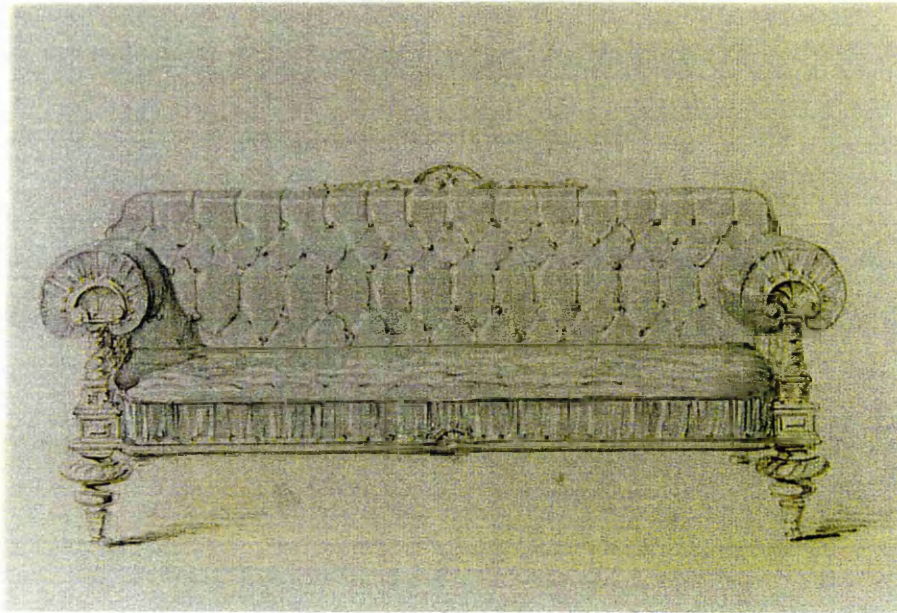
embrace modern technology and having little regard for the past<sup>33</sup> like many of his contemporaries, Sir John was aware that he had little experience of sophisticated and elegant furnishing schemes and was reluctant to be adventurous in this arena.

Endcliffe Hall reveals a conflict between taste and technology: one was rooted in the past and the other in the present. It was acceptable for technology to improve the fabric and function of a building yet it was harder to break away from traditional furnishing conventions. As the designs for Endcliffe's furniture were being drawn, approved and executed, changes in domestic furnishing schemes were coming into force making them immediately outdated. The works of C.L. Eastlake<sup>34</sup> in 1864 and 1868 condemned extravagance of form and excessive ornamentation, paving the way for the plainer designs of the Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic Movements. However, some acknowledgement of new influences may be discerned in the designs for Endcliffe's dining room furniture made by George Eadon. In particular, the overall form of the sofas bear close similarities with designs produced by Richard Charles, a designer from Warrington, who published his Cabinet - Maker's Book of Designs in 1867 (Figures 5.13 - 14). Thornton claims Charles may have been influenced by Bruce Talbot who was working in Lancashire and who published his Gothic Forms applied to Furniture, Metalwork and Decoration for Domestic Purposes in the same year. Eadon's designs of 1863 - 65 indicate a rapid appreciation of changes in fashion and the ability to incorporate them into his work. If substantiated, the designs may, in fact, be some of the earliest to have

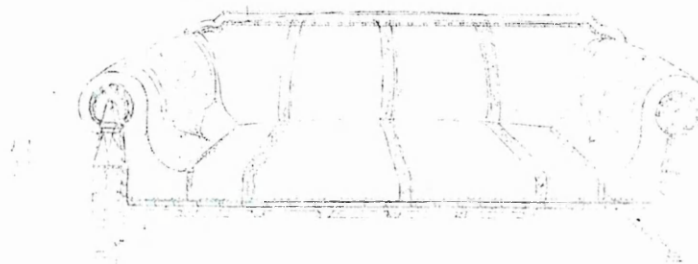
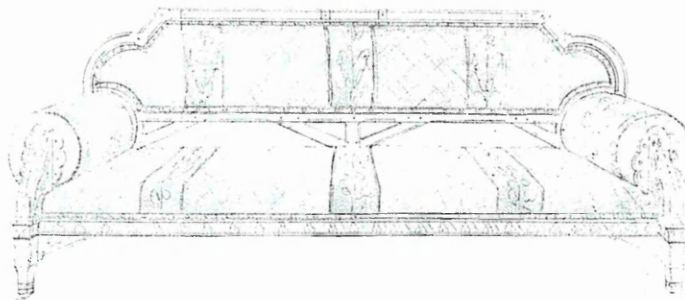
---

<sup>33</sup> John Brown's determination to make a new start was seen in his treatment of the site of his new mansion. Endcliffe estate was first mentioned in 1333 when it was granted by John del Wood del Brome to John de Elcliffe. In 1818 some 50 acres of what was then the Broom Hall Estate were sold to William Hodgson, a merchant, for approximately £6,700. Hodgson built a house which became known as Old Endcliffe Hall and said to possibly incorporate parts of an earlier building from the reign of George II. In August 1863 the current owner, Henry Wilkinson, instructed Eadon's the auctioneers to dispose of the entire contents of the Hall. The following day, 8th August, another advertisement appeared offering for sale 'all the valuable building materials, less the bricks, in Endcliffe Hall on behalf of John Brown, a local industrialist'. Brown, who had been wanting to build a new home since earlier that year, bought the site from Wilkinson together with an additional 25 acres (Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 15 April 1865). The contents disposed of, the building was razed to the ground. When the new Hall was completed in 1865, 'The only relic retained of the late hall, [was] a piece of quaint animal carving now fixed over the fire - place of the principal kitchen.' (The Public Advantages of Personal Munificence, *ibid.*)

<sup>34</sup> An article, The Fashion of Furniture in Cornhill Magazine 1864 followed by his book Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details published in 1868.



5.13 - 14. Above, an early design for a sofa with Gothic overtones by George Eadon made between 1863 - 65. Similarities exist between it and the designs below produced by Richard Charles of Warrington in 1867.



been influenced by Eastlake.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, the plethora of architectural and furnishing styles available caused many to act with caution. In 1871, Robert Kerr could list ten different styles of domestic architecture:- Elizabethan, Palladian, Revived Elizabethan, Rural Italian, Palatial Italian, French Italian, English Renaissance, Mediaeval or Gothic, Cottage Style (inferior Rural Italian) and Scottish Baronial. The choice of any design was a source of much debate and concern as it reflected an individual's status and sophistication:

'.....the client....is expected to make a choice from amongst half a dozen prevailing "styles", all more or less antagonistic to each other, all having their respective adherents and opponents, and all very likely to prove more and more mysterious the more they are examined.'<sup>36</sup>

With such variety and debate upon the subject of style, the furnishing of nineteenth century nouveaux riches homes became the focus of numerous journals and books targeting those who, it was feared, might possess aristocratic wealth but neither their taste or sophistication. It was possible to gain assurance and advice, albeit often conflicting, upon every aspect of home management and furnishing.

The increased use of servants and contemporary protocol - thoroughly explained to the new middle - class housewife by Mrs Beeton - meant rooms became more varied and specialised in both usage and furnishing.<sup>37</sup> To demonstrate the extent to which Sir John chose to follow or disregard contemporary furnishing conventions the form and furnishings of Endcliffe's dining room and drawing room will be compared with advice from some of the most popular publications of the day. The dining room furniture was designed and made by George Eadon. The drawings provided by the firm are well executed and to scale showing some technical merit in draughtsmanship. Some were coloured to suggest decorative schemes for the rooms

---

<sup>35</sup> Peter Thornton, Authentic Decor. The Domestic Interior 1620 - 1920. London 1984.p. 217, plate 286: Reformed sofas, 1867.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Kerr, The Gentleman's House or How to Plan English Residences from the Parsonage to the Palace. 3rd edition, revised 1871, p. 55.

<sup>37</sup> Doe, ibid. p.p. 174 - 175.



concerned. The furniture was robustly made with elaborate turning, carving and considerable deep buttoning. The drawing room was furnished by John Manuel & Son who began trading around 1845 initially as Allott & Manuel<sup>38</sup> but thereafter was listed in trade directories as a sole trader until joined by his son, John jnr.<sup>39</sup>

An article in the Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Paris Exhibition of 1867 claimed:

‘The dining room furniture of England, as distinguished from the furniture suited to a drawing room, should be substantial, massive, handsome, and in colour somewhat sombre rather than gay. The sideboard is the *piece de resistance*, in which these characteristics usually reach a climax...’.

Contemporary protocol also required the dining room to be square or rectangular with windows facing south and west so that the sideboard, ideally in a recess along the north wall, should bask in reflected light. The dining table should be the same shape as the room. A servants entrance to one side of the sideboard would facilitate the flow of courses with minimum disruption to guests. The room should look good in artificial light, being most frequently used at night, and generally its whole appearance should be that of ‘masculine importance’.<sup>40</sup> Loudon recommended that:

‘... the characteristic colouring of a dining room should be warm, rich and substantial.’<sup>41</sup>

Popular colour schemes included extensive use of gold and crimson. The ideal floor covering should be a complementary Turkish carpet, the same shape as the room -although an Axminster or a Brussels square could

---

<sup>38</sup> Janet Ball, John Manuel & Son of Sheffield. Furniture History Society. 1978 pp. 62 - 65.

<sup>39</sup> The Census of 1851 showed John Manuel, of Knapthorpe, near Newark, aged 36, cabinet maker, living at 87, Devonshire St. with his wife, son, two daughters and brother - in - law Samuel Bland, an apprentice cabinet maker. He was then an employer of 22 men. By 1871, like Eadon, he had moved to a house in the fashionable western suburbs and employed 45 men, 5 boys and 10 women. His highly successful business expanded to include cabinet making, upholstery, all forms of house furnishings, removal and storage facilities. The firm continued to trade briefly into the twentieth century in its own name but under the ownership of J.G. Graves after the deaths of John Manuel's son and grandson and the lack of any other heirs.

<sup>40</sup> Kerr, ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Loudon, ibid.



Next to the dining room should be the drawing room, the most important day room in the house. In middle class homes this was the room upon which most money was lavished and in which most time was spent. Used for socialising, guests would gather here before and after dinner to be impressed by the variety and fashion of furnishings, ideally a variation of the curvaceous and opulent looking Louis style. The drawing room was considered a feminine area and was expected to have a lighter, more cheerful appearance than the sombre, masculine dining room.

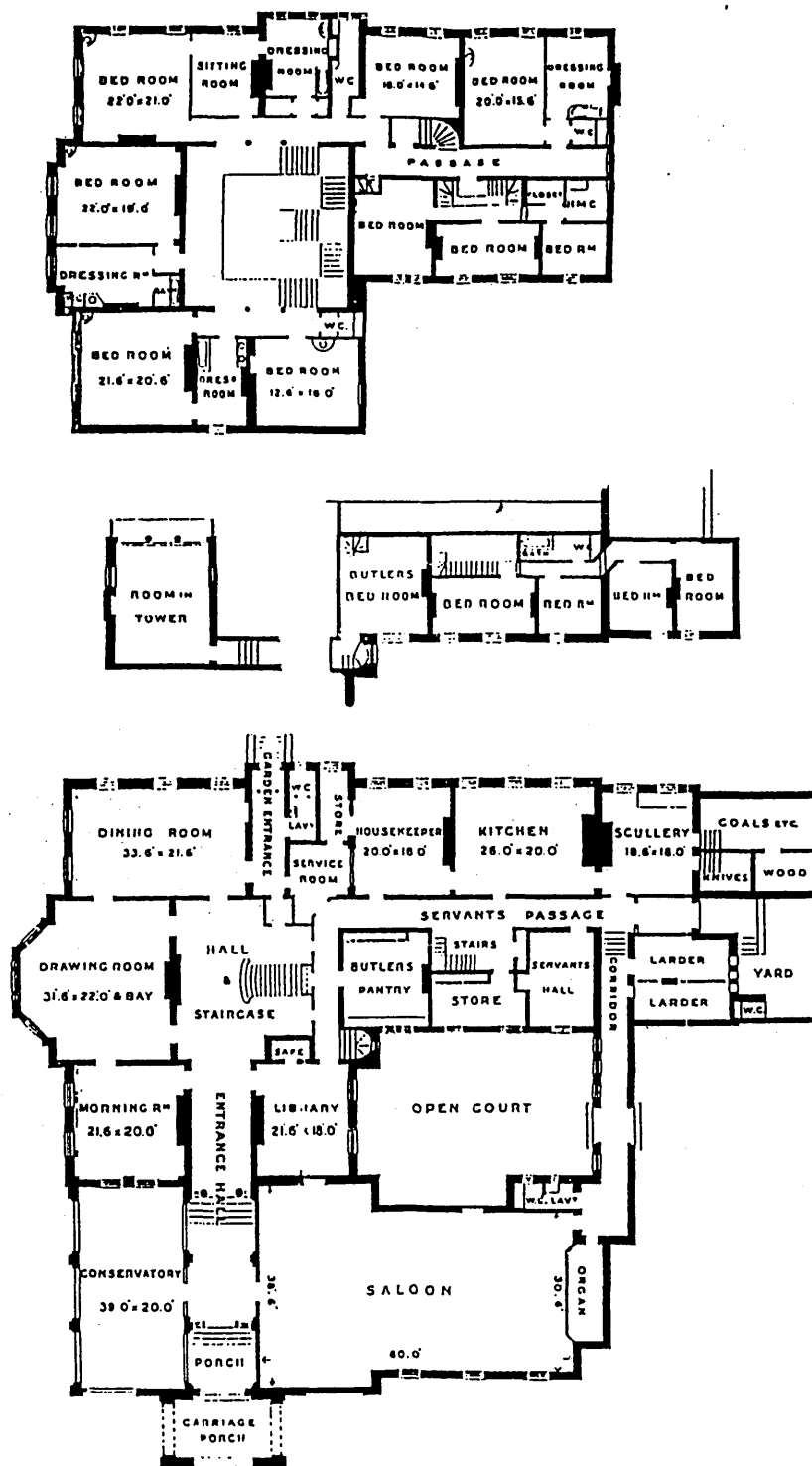
‘Pastels, white and gilding, combined with  
satinwood, walnut or rosewood furniture, were  
recommended as the basis for a feminine colour  
scheme.’<sup>43</sup>

As directed, the principle entertaining rooms at Endcliffe faced south and west to take full advantage of the sun and views across the estate (Figure 5.15). The domestic quarters and service rooms were on the north side and arranged so that the public rooms could be accessed with minimum disruption. The rectangular dining room, 33'6" by 21'6", was located at the rear of the Hall on the south west corner with five windows to take full advantage of the light and view (Figure 5.16). A servants passage linked it to the kitchen and housekeeper's room via a small service room separated from it directly by the garden entrance to minimise the noise of courses being cleared upon conversation. The furniture and doors of the dining room were made from oak with the room dominated by a large mirror back carved and panelled sideboard 9'6" wide and a five foot telescopic dining table which could extend to 22' with the addition of ten extra leaves (Figure 5.17 - 18). Although not in a recess the sideboard was on the north wall to help reflect light and the impression of an alcove was given by a servants' door and a false door flanking the sideboard to maintain symmetry. The colour scheme consisted of crimson cloth curtains, green moroccan leather upholstery, a rectangular, multi - coloured geometric Turkish carpet bordered by a Brussels carpet, a blue and crimson wool table cover with fifteen green wool and

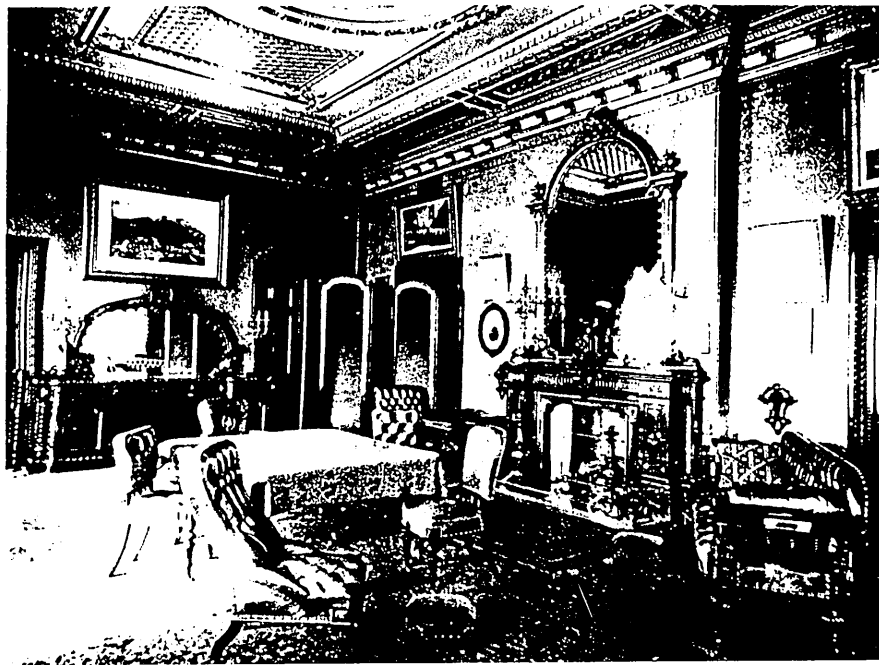
---

<sup>42</sup> James Arrowsmith, The Paper Hanger's and Upholsterer's Guide, 1854.

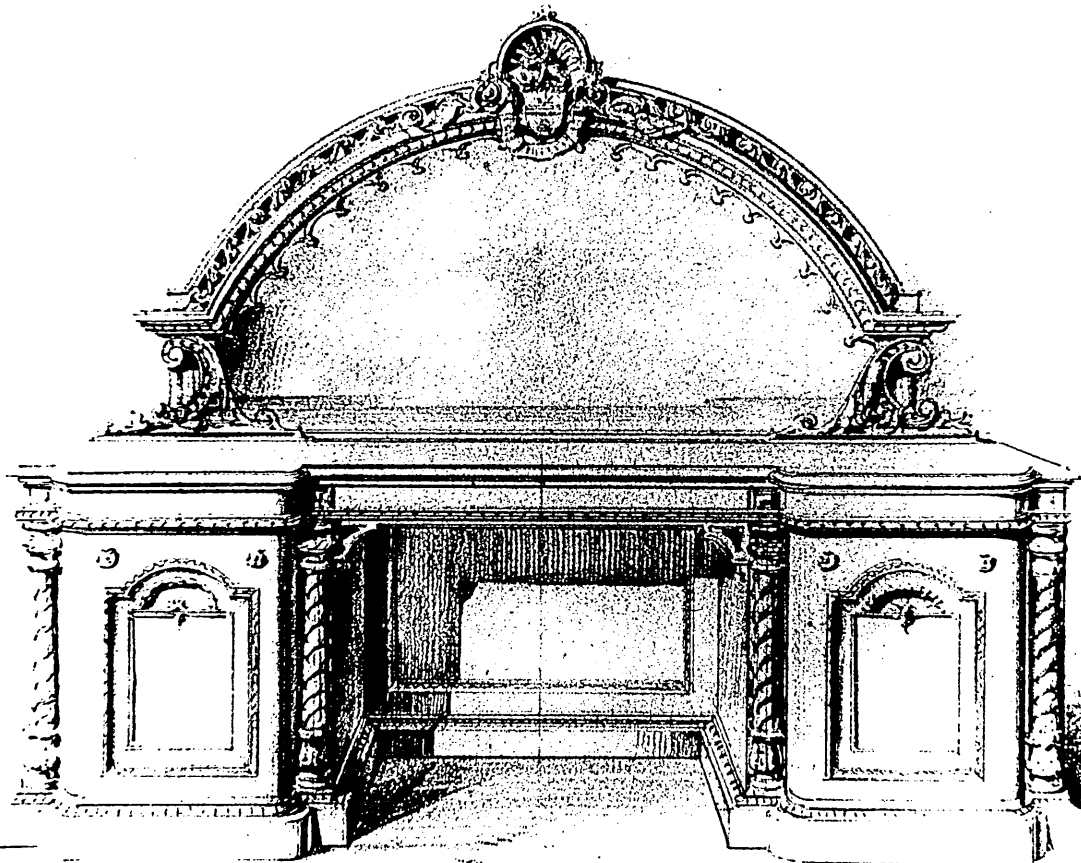
<sup>43</sup> Joanna Banham, Sally MacDonald, Julia Porter, Victorian Interior Design, 1991. p. 38



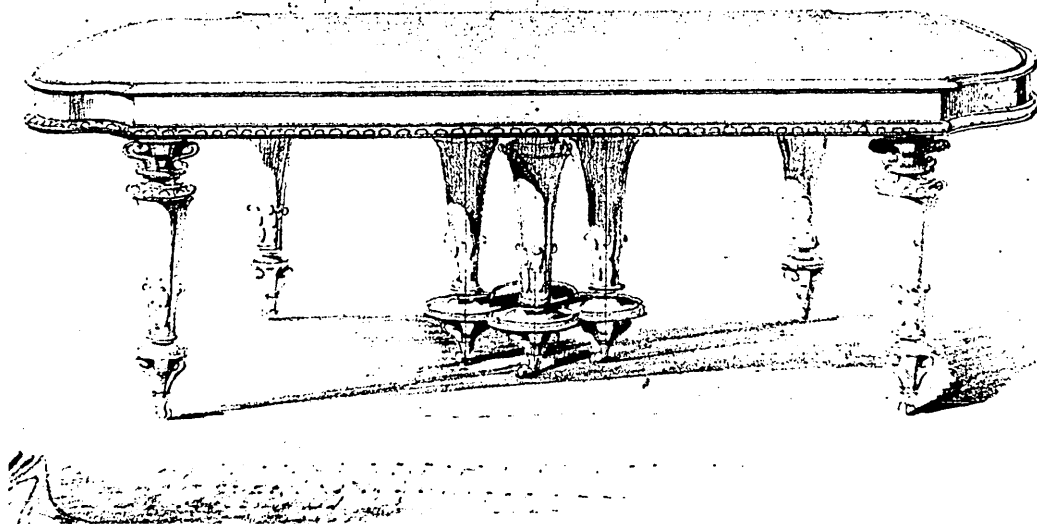
5.15. Plan of Endcliffe Hall showing the principle rooms in their correct order and alignment facing South - West. As the Saloon was primarily for large, evening affairs it was placed on the east. The Library - masculine in nature - is at the centre of the house. The plan also shows the room in the tower and mezzanine floor.



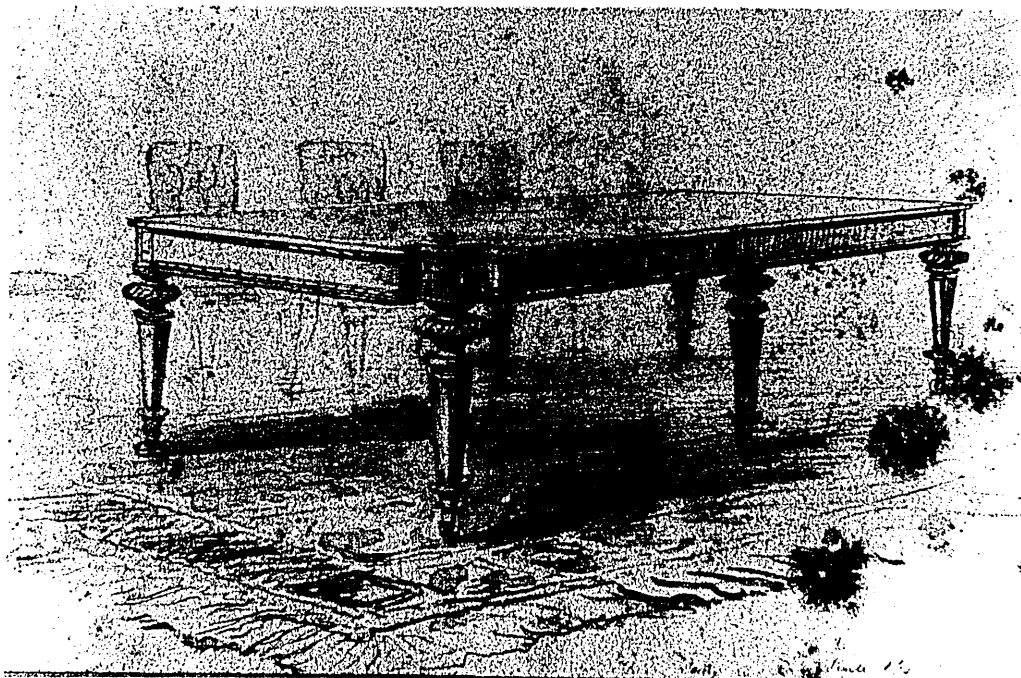
5.16. Photograph of the Dining Room taken in 1893 showing a selection of the furniture designed and made by Eadon. Note the sofa ( Fig. 5.13 ) in the bottom right. Multi - coloured Turkey carpet, oak furniture upholstered in green morocco, crimson silk curtains, blue and crimson tablecloth.



5.17 Design for the mirror - back sideboard in oak by Eadon. Sir John's coat of arms are displayed on the crest. The base is enclosed at the rear but the centre well suggests the presence of a wine cooler.



5.18 Two design for the dining table. Neither the photograph or sale catalogue are clear as to the exact style chosen but states it was able to extend from 5' to 22' by the addition of 10 extra leaves.





figured silk d'oyleys and four crimson table mats. The curtains were worked with silk rep borders and bullion fringe valances. They were held back by heavy gold tassels and were supported on large, ornate gilt poles which allowed them to sweep along the floor, a practice roundly condemned by Eastlake<sup>44</sup> but which remained popular in Sheffield for some considerable time.<sup>45</sup> The room was further decorated by an elaborately moulded and painted ceiling, a carved marble and bronze overmantel with a polished steel stove and tiled hearth over which was a large carved and gilt oval top mirror surmounted by urns and a cartouche. Two other mirrors, one 40" x 19" and another forming part of an 11'6" marble top, wood and gilt pier table reflected light from a pair of 36" French bronze and cut glass gilt candelabra and three companion pairs for the sideboard, console table and walls. Seating was provided by a 30 piece suite which consisted of fourteen gentlemen's dining chairs, a carver chair and fifteen ladies' chairs all with Sir John's coat of arms stamped in gilt upon the back. More informal seating was provided by a pair of open arm elbow easy chairs, a lady's reclining chair and a 7'6" sofa all of which were deep buttoned ( Figure 5.19 a - d).

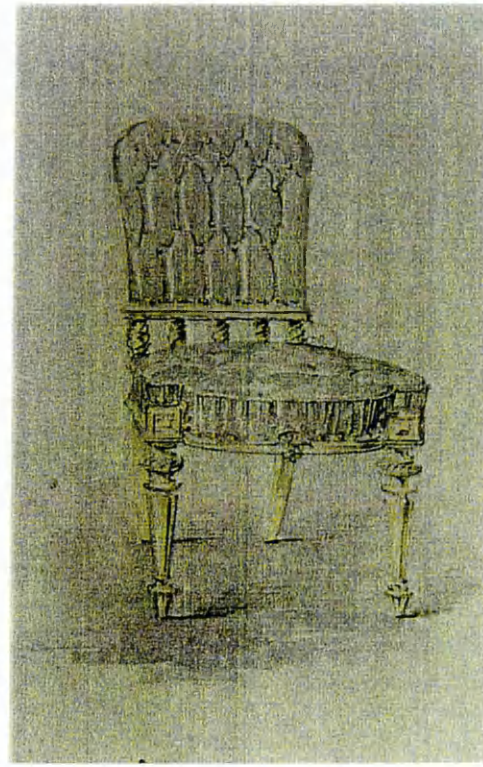
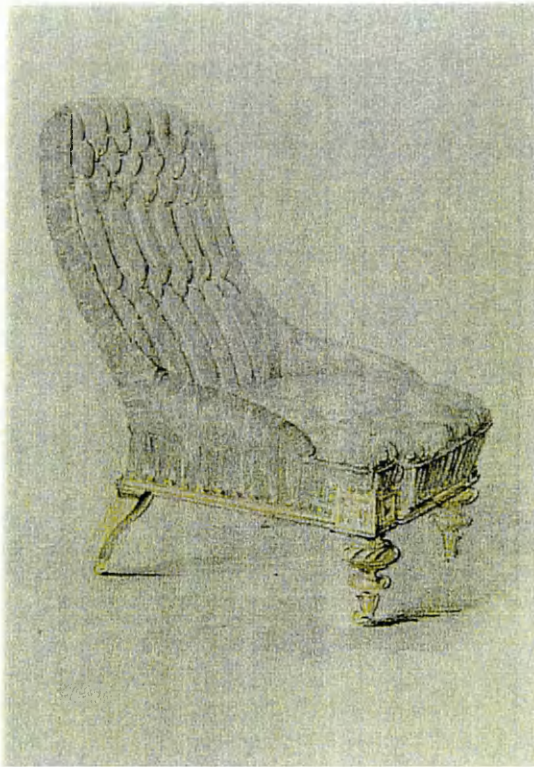
The drawing room, some 31'6" x 22', was located between the dining and morning rooms opposite the grand staircase. Having a large bay window which overlooked the gardens its shape was more rounded requiring furniture of a more feminine appearance, made from walnut, as befitted the character of the room. Photographs from the sale catalogue of 1893 show a room filled with deep buttoned and fringed upholstered chairs, sofas, ottoman and footstools together with stands, firescreens, games, writing, centre and occasional tables, and an elaborate inlaid walnut side cabinet (Figure 5.20). The colour scheme was darker than might have been expected, but practical, with brown ribbed silk upholstery, amber curtains and a crimson floral design Axminster carpet. The furniture in this room was made by John Manuel & Son who also designed and made the curtains, fixtures and fittings.

The plan (Figure 5.21) and designs for the drawing room at Endcliffe shows the shift from formal Georgian seating arrangements to a style favoured by the

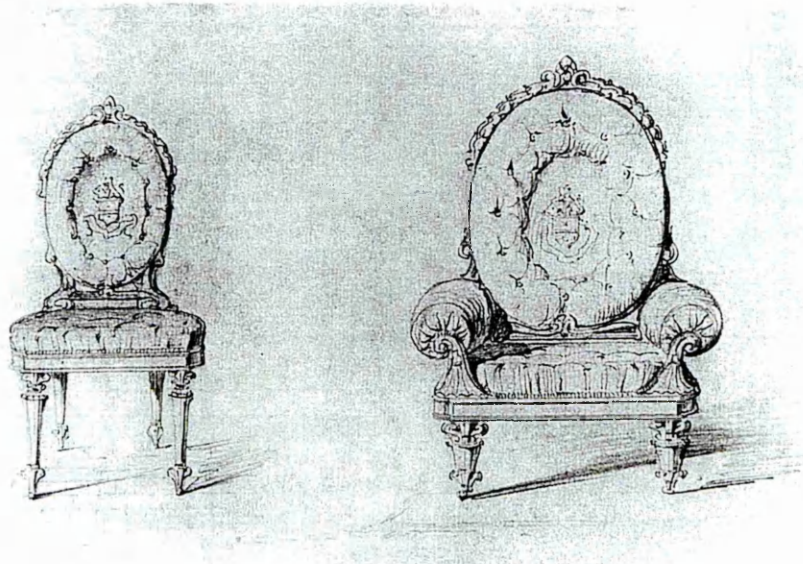
---

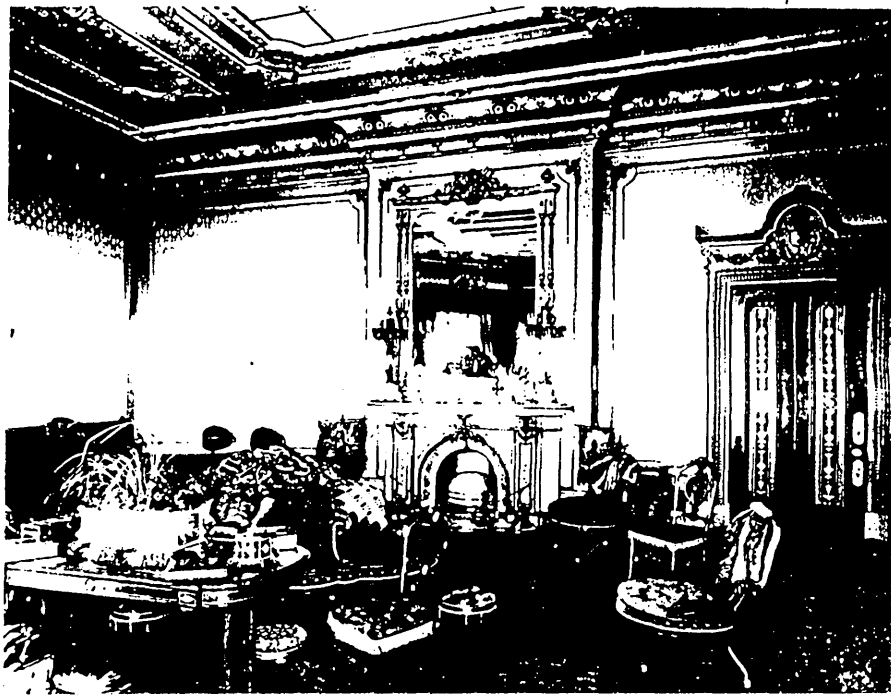
<sup>44</sup> C.L. Eastlake. Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details. 1868.

<sup>45</sup> Eg: Examples were still advertised in the Manual Galleries of High Class Furniture Catalogue, Sheffield. published c. 1900 - 05. Sheffield City Libraries, Local Studies Dept.

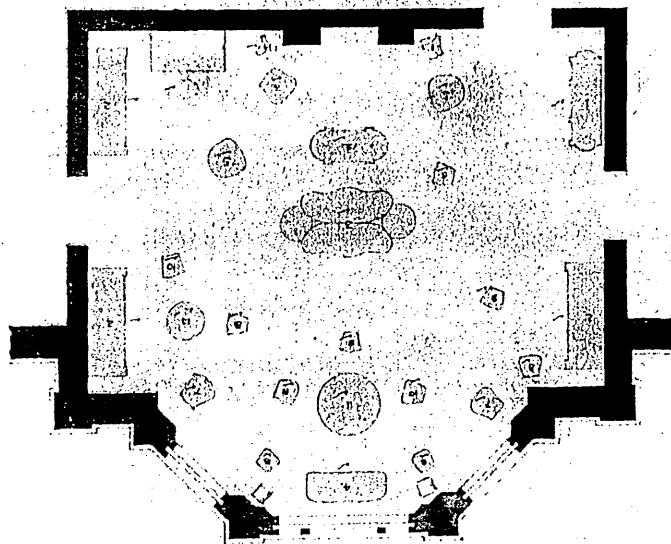


5.19 a- d. Four designs for dining room chairs. The lady's reclining chair and easy chairs ( a +b) which complemented the sofa in Fig. 5.13 are clearly seen in Fig.5.16 The photograph suggests a different dining chair from the designs shown in Fig.5.19 c+d with a less elaborate frame but still with Sir John's coat of arms embossed upon the leather backs.





5.20. Photograph of the Drawing Room. Axminster crimson ground floral carpet, deep buttoned walnut furniture upholstered in brown ribbed silk, amber curtains.



5.21. Room plan provided by John Manuel & Son to indicate appropriate settings for the furniture. Each item is numbered and ticked on the plan if approved by Sir John.



Victorians which was more curvaceous and flexible enabling adaption to different functions. Small, occasional chairs were scattered around the room in a variety of shapes. Shield back and balloon back side chairs with deep buttoned seats, spoon back armchairs and nursing chairs were casually grouped around decorative games and pedestal tables (Figure 5.22). The presence of a nursing chair as part of the suite is noteworthy as the Brown's were childless. Its presence hints at the inflexibility of contemporary etiquette and/or the Brown's inability to override it. The drawing room was the most important day room and was where guests gathered before progressing into dinner. Here the mistress of the house ruled and, according to Mrs. Beeton, was where she had to endure 'the great ordeal' of convivial and uncontroversial small talk from which she would either pass 'with flying colours or lose many of her laurels'.<sup>46</sup> Flanking the doorways to the dining room and morning room at Endcliffe were three walnut, deep buttoned rail back sofas on turned and reeded legs with acanthus carving to the base of the padded arms. On the eastern wall next to the doorway leading into the morning room was an elaborate inlaid Italian walnut display cabinet with painted china plaques surmounted on two doors (Figures 5.23 - 24, Lot 877). On top of the cabinet the sale catalogue indicated that lots 886 - 888 completed the spectacle: a French onyx and ormolu mantel clock surmounted by a group of ormolu figures flanked by 'a pair of 38" ormolu seven - light candelabra, with female figure centres on square onyx bases with ormolu mounts and claw feet and cut gilt sconces'.<sup>47</sup> Such items were encouraged by Mrs. Beeton not for any artistic merit but in order to aid any wife who might be struggling to entertain her husband's business acquaintances. The polite conversation required of the assembled party would be 'much aided by the introduction of any particular new book, curiosity of art, or article of vertu'.<sup>48</sup>

In the centre of the drawing room there was a large four piece Conversation Sofa or Ottoman over eight feet in length and similar to designs featured by Shoolbred and Yapp in the late 1870s<sup>49</sup>. Like the rest of the drawing room

---

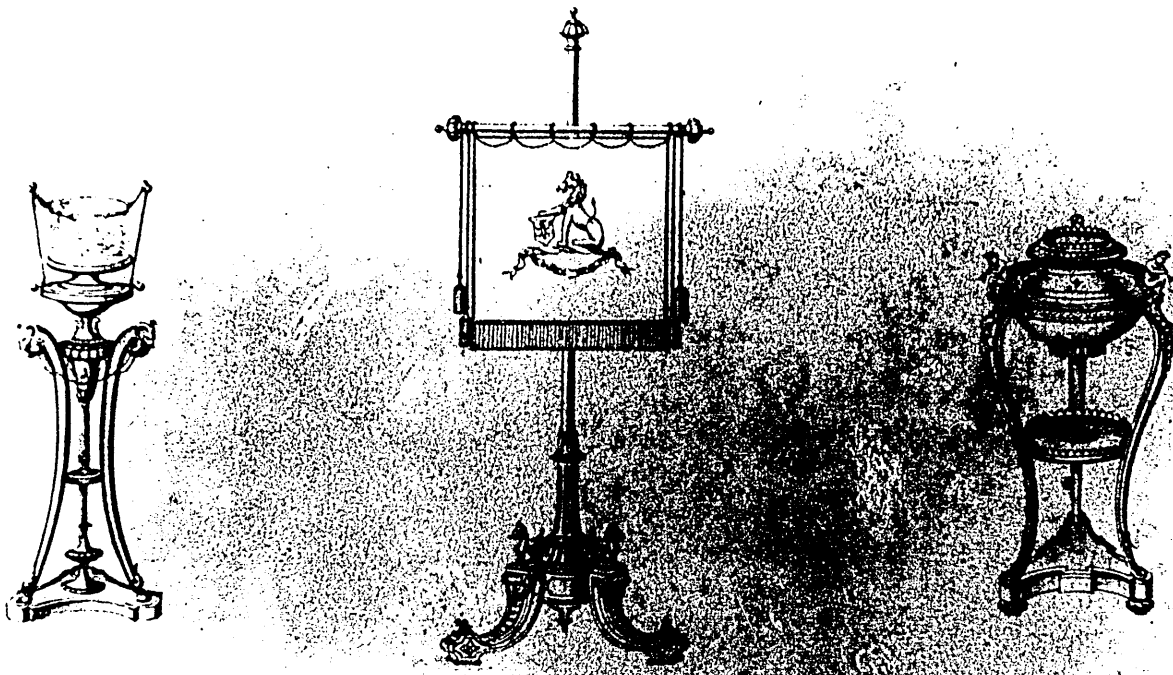
<sup>46</sup> Mrs Beeton, The Book of Household Management, 1859 - 1860. Paragraph 34.

<sup>47</sup> The cabinet cost £175 to be made in 1863 - 65 but only fetched £50 in the 1893 auction.

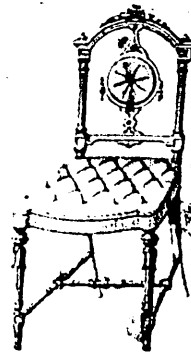
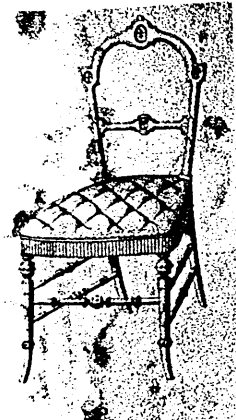
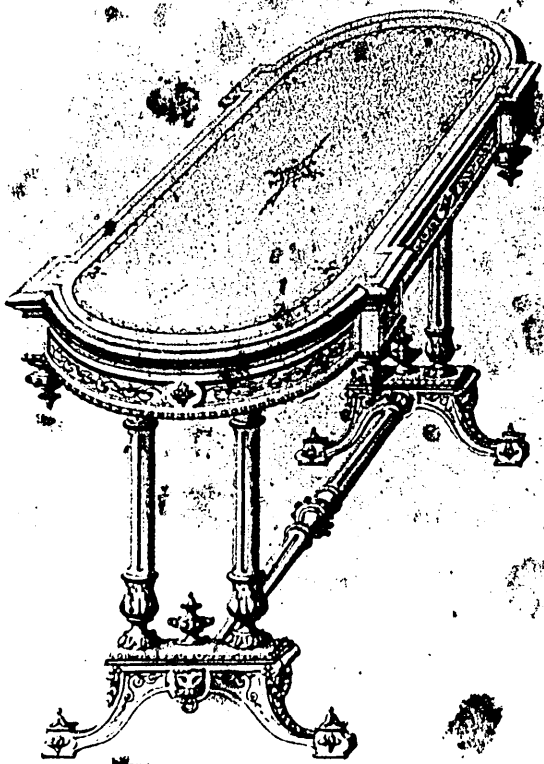
<sup>48</sup> Mrs. Beeton, ibid.

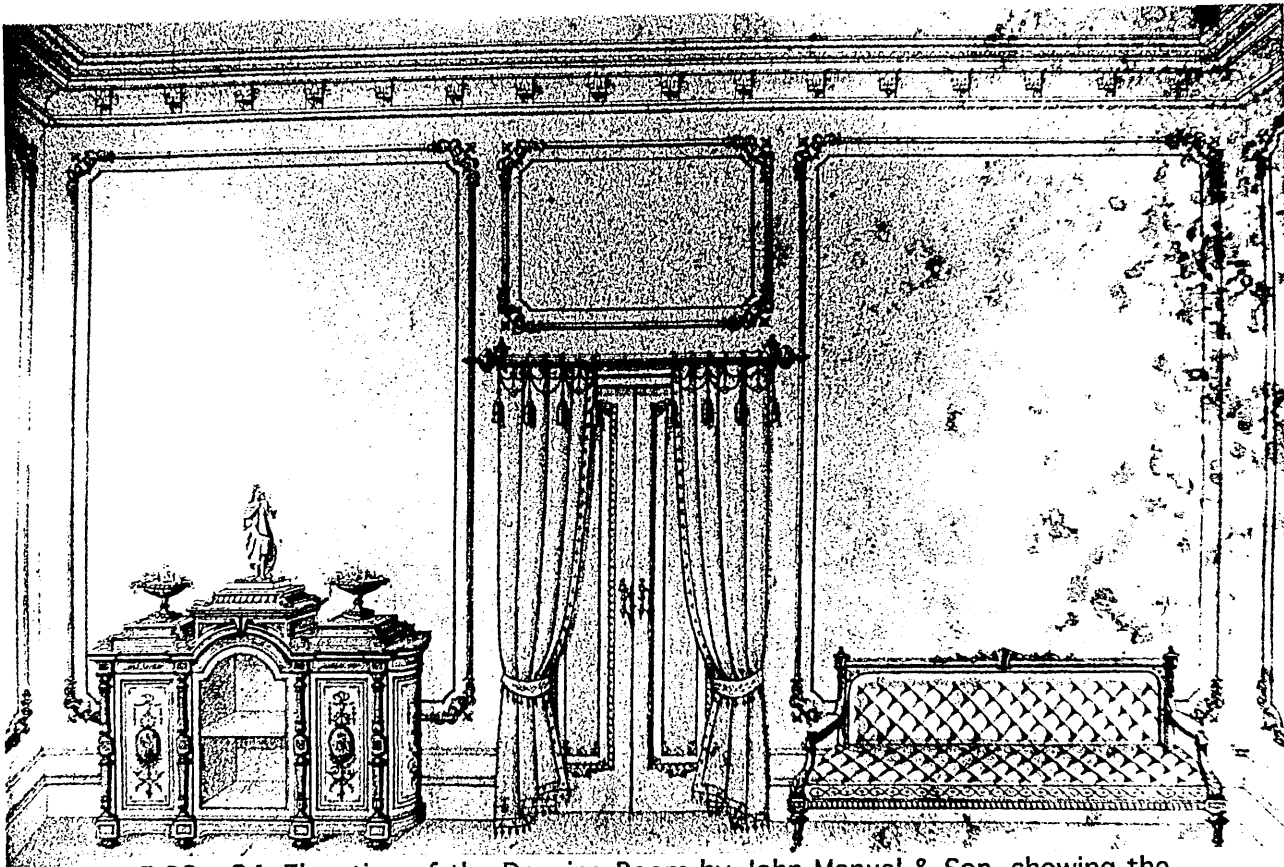
<sup>49</sup> Pictorial Dictionary of British Nineteenth Century Furniture Designs. Antique Collectors' Club Research Project, 1977 p.p. 330 - 331.



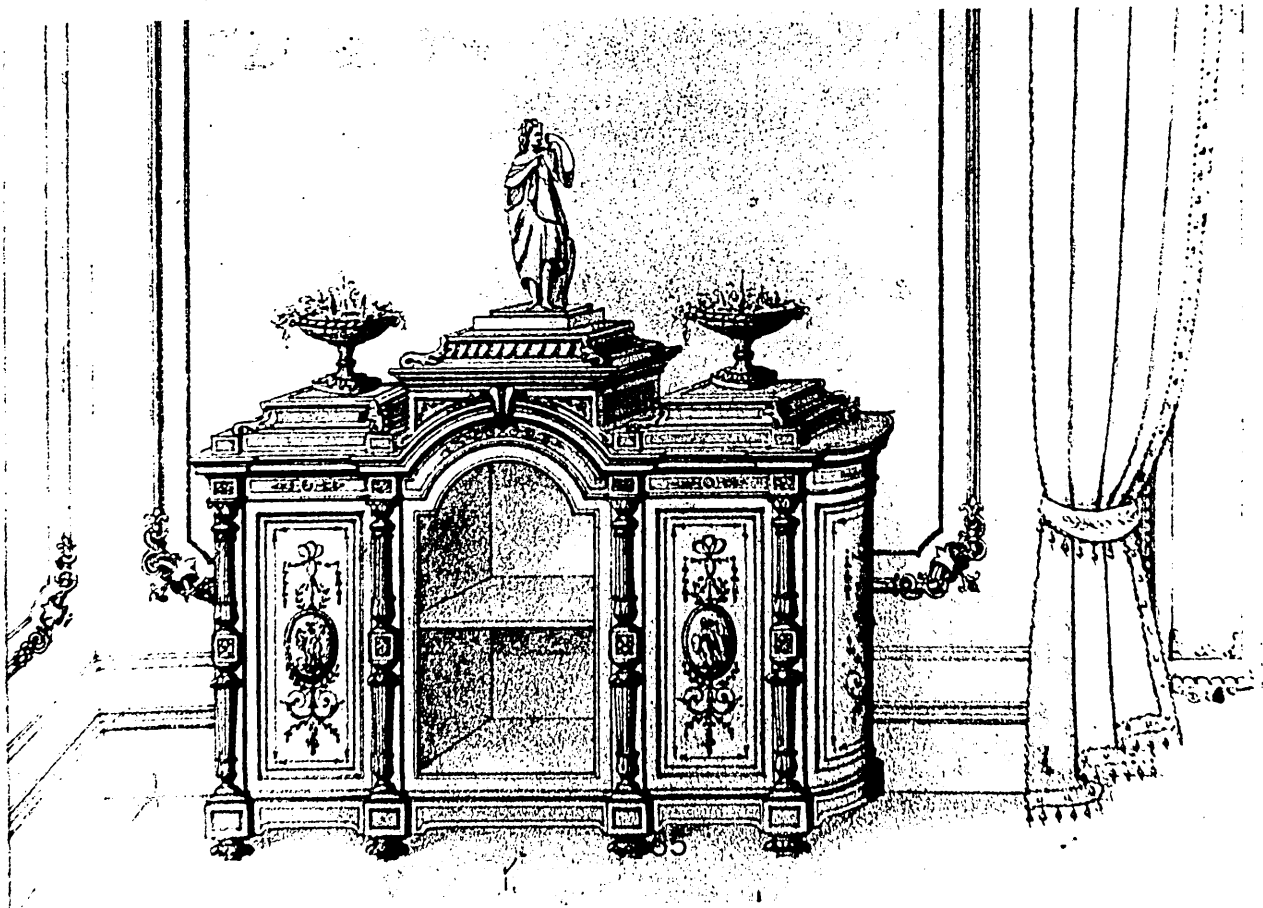


5.22. Selection of occasional furniture intended for the Drawing Room.





5.23 - 24. Elevation of the Drawing Room by John Manuel & Son, showing the doorway leading to the Morning Room. On one side is a deep buttoned sofa ( one of three) and on the other the inlaid walnut display cabinet intende for the "objects of vertu".



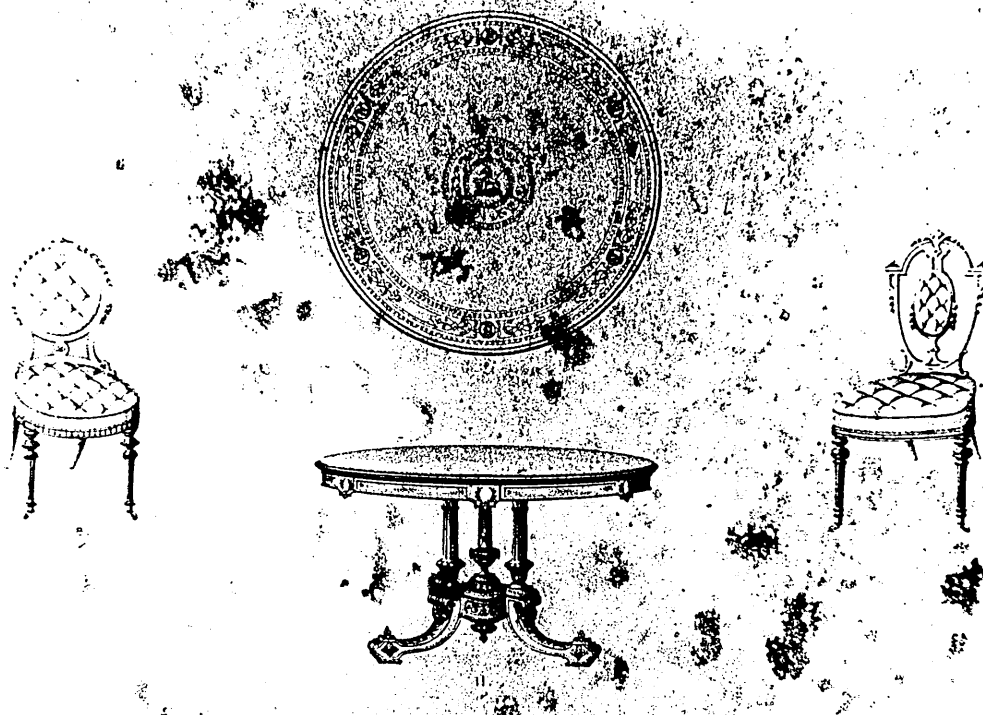
suite the ottoman was made from inlaid burr walnut upholstered in brown ribbed silk and deep buttoned on the seat and on the back. The feet were hidden by a deep fringe. Such drawing room furniture was described by Eastlake in 1864 as 'having no more shape than a feather - bed thrown into a corner' but their popularity lasted until the end of the century. Other items in the room were covered in a flowered satin damask with crimson plush borders. Manuels' provided a ground plan of the drawing room showing the intended location of each piece. Items were numbered, then drawn for inspection and finally ticked if approved on the plan ( Figure 5.21). In the bay window another prestigious piece was surrounded by assorted side and occasional chairs. Lot 857 (Figure 5.25): was a circular walnut centre table, inlaid with ivory and richly coloured woods, on column supports with vase bases, carved pediments and legs, a central motif comprising the crest from Sir John Brown's coat of arms surrounded by an inlaid border. The *de rigueur* style of a drawing room was 'Louis': extravagant, curvaceous and costly. The auction in 1893 gave a somewhat different opinion: the centre table fetched just £8. 10/- , a similar writing table £6.6/-, the ottoman £5.15/- four settees between £8.10/- - £9.10/- each, the Italian cabinet £50 whilst the French clock and the pair of candelabra fetched £42. 2/- and £30 respectively.<sup>50</sup>

Whilst French in the Italian manner was not a style easily translated into furniture design the positioning, construction and form of Endcliffe's furnishings fully complied with contemporary etiquette. It expressed a variety of classical styles commonly used throughout the mid Victorian era and frequently combined together. Italian, Louis XIV, Empire, Louis XVI, Arabian and French were some of the terms used to describe the furniture when Endcliffe's contents were auctioned in 1893. Whatever the style, comfort, propriety, respectability, cleanliness and affluence were over - riding concerns throughout Endcliffe's furnishing schemes. Highly polished, expensive new furniture advertised a successful business, pride in the home, the wealth to employ servants and a well ordered household.

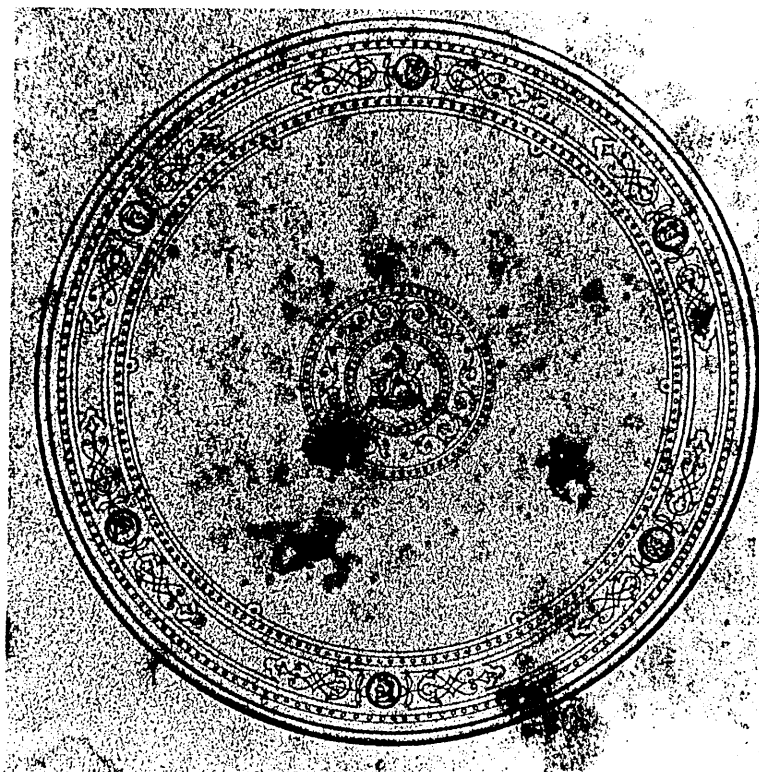
Several items of Endcliffe's furniture possess similarities with pieces shown at the 1851 Great Exhibition and the 1862 Exhibition. Sir John probably

---

<sup>50</sup> The Endcliffe Hall Sale: The Third Day, The Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 20 April, 1893.



5.25. Side and top elevations of the walnut centre table bearing Sir John's crest in the centre plus two further designs for side chairs.





visited the first event and was a leading figure in the second.<sup>51</sup> The half tester bed designed by Manuels for his bedroom bears many similarities to that exhibited by Rogers and Dear of London, the main distinction being Sir John's had his initials worked into the headboard (Figures 5.26 - 27). The winged wardrobe in the State Bedroom also designed by Manuels bears a close resemblance to one made by Messrs. Trollope 'composed of the choicest woods and inlaid, and the whole work executed in the most finished manner'. The cartouche on top of this wardrobe cornice supported by two cherubs and flanked by finials appears to have been closely inspected for some fourteen years later a copy appears on top of Sir John's bed, which nevertheless had its design registered<sup>52</sup> (Figures 5. 28 - 29). In 1862, the Manchester firm of Bird and Hull exhibited a bedroom suite made from sycamore and alder<sup>53</sup> which was closely imitated by Manuel's designs for the furniture in Lady Brown's suite also in sycamore. Possibly to commemorate the winning of a gold medal by his firm at the 1862 Exhibition Sir John purchased a mantle and stove which had been displayed there for his new drawing room.

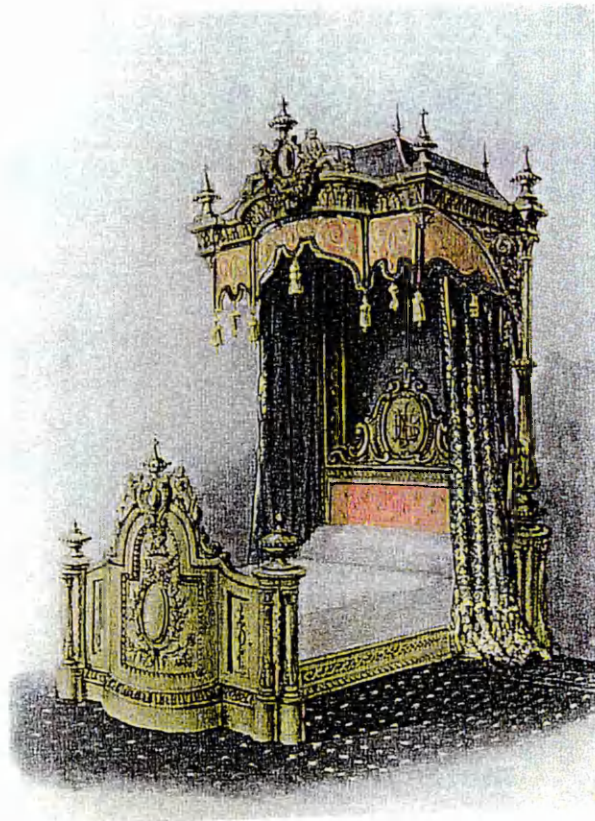
Some of the ideas shown at these exhibitions would have passed into mainstream production but it is possible that Sir John was particularly impressed by what he saw and specifically requested some of the designs to be used at Endcliffe. The choice of designs from ideas which were up to 12 years old suggests that affluence had not yet enabled Sheffield taste to rid itself of a preference, in part at least, for familiar forms.

“...it is important to remember that it [exhibition furniture] was not entirely typical of the furniture trade as a whole. The manufacturers were well aware that novelty and technical skill intrigued the Victorian public above almost everything else and they were at pains that their own exhibits should display those qualities to a greater extent than their competitors. ... the result was that firms tended to

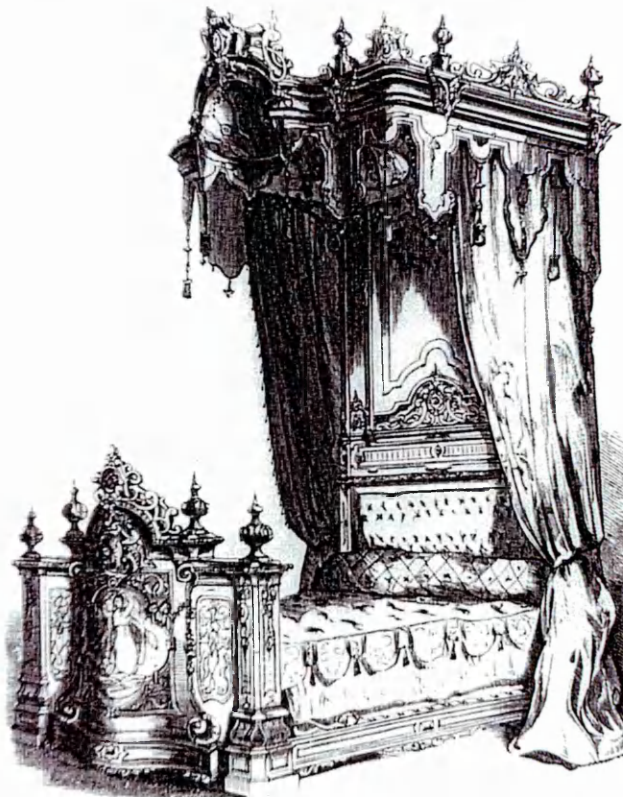
<sup>51</sup> Hindmarch & Podmore: ibid. p.29. Brown attended the 1862 Exhibition as an industrialist at the height of his powers conducting Queen Victoria around the Sheffield Court where his own company won a Gold Medal for armour plate manufacture.

<sup>52</sup> G.W. Yapp, Ed. Art Industry. Furniture, Upholstery and House - Decoration. 1879, Plates LXIII & XXII. The Manuel design for a half tester bed in green, gold and crimson, Drawings for the Furniture of Endcliffe Hall. Sheffield Archive Dept. AP 38, 62.

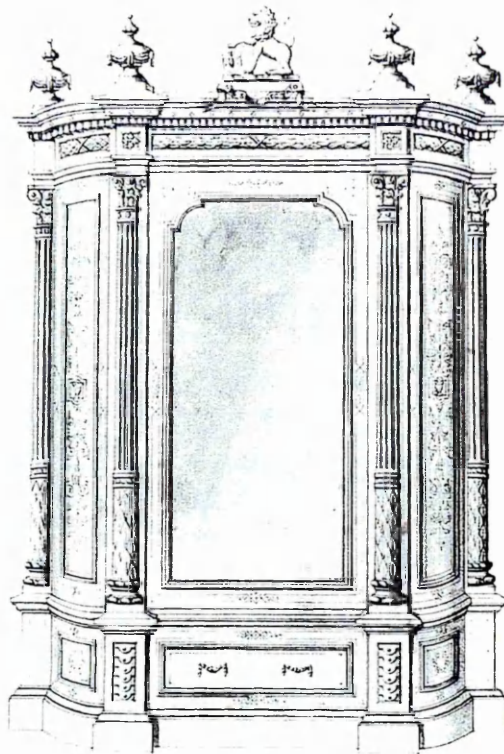
<sup>53</sup> Illustrated Catalogue of the International Exhibition 1862, p. 243.



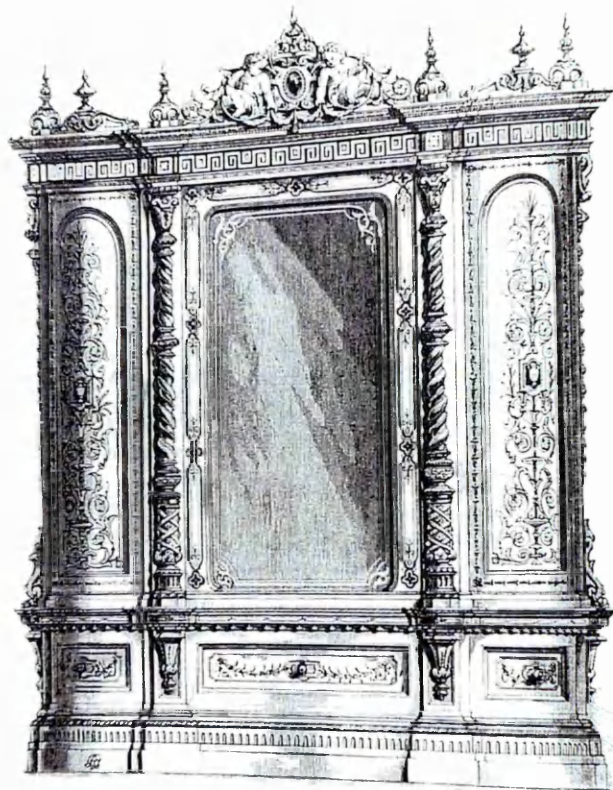
5.26 - 27. The design for Sir John Brown's bed by John Manuel & Son compared with that exhibited by Rogers & Dear of London at the Gret Exhibition of 1851.







5.28 - 29. Sir John Brown's 10' wide carved and inlaid Spanish mahogany wardrobe sharing many similarities with that shown by Messrs. Trollope at the Paris Exhibition in 1855.



display their most costly, most elaborate, most vulgar but least typical pieces. These pieces were designed to attract as purchasers, kings, noblemen, governments, museums and immensely wealthy people and it was not intended that the ordinary middle - class householder should do anything but observe and wonder."<sup>54</sup>

Much of Endcliffe's furniture conformed to a pattern expected of a wealthy and established merchant. The standard of workmanship was high. Most processes were carried out by hand as the items made were one - offs, leading to high unit costs. The materials used were also of high quality. Brown appears to have had a fondness for mahogany and the sale catalogue frequently cites the use of the high quality "Spanish" variety. Oak, walnut and Hungarian ash were employed according to the protocol of the day: oak in the masculine dining room, walnut in the feminine drawing room, mahogany for a man's bedroom, ash for a ladies' boudoir. The greatest token to individuality was the inclusion of Sir John's coat of arms either as a whole or in its various elements of a lion, bee, star and a spring coil or, his motto *Nec Sorte Nec Fato* (Neither by chance nor destiny) on many furnishing and architectural items throughout the Hall.<sup>55</sup> They appeared on designs for the firescreens and inlaid pedestal table of the drawing room, the bed, wardrobe, linen press mantle and curtain pelmet of the State bedroom and Bedroom No. 2, and on the dining chairs and chiffonier. The use of heraldic devices in this manner implied longevity, continuity and stability as well as a degree of self confidence and the desire to be acknowledged as part of the establishment. It is interesting to note that the Endcliffe furniture was manufactured between 1863 and 1865 and incorporated many elements of Sir John's hatchment as decorative devices. However, it was not until 1867 that he received his knighthood which raises a debate concerning foreknowledge versus confidence.

The amount of furniture made for each room was considerable although not excessive by contemporary affluent standards. The following is a brief description of the furnishings for Sir John's bedroom suite and dressing room made by John Manuel & Son in Spanish mahogany (Figures 30 - 33).

---

<sup>54</sup> Symonds & Whineray, *Victorian Furniture*. London 1962, p. 59.

<sup>55</sup> Hindmarch & Podmore, *ibid.*



## **BEDROOM**

Light ground floral Brussels carpet

Circular footstool

Carved gilt chimney glass 60 x 66"

Carved Spanish mahogany Arabian bedstead 6'6" shaped head and footboards mauve silk bed furniture

Winged hanging wardrobe 10' with large centre glass panel

Dressing table 6' with 8 drawers in 2 pedestals, swing cheval glass with footstool under

Pedestal writing table 4'6" in mahogany lined in maple, 9 drawers, 4 sliding trays, writing slope

Cabinet chest 4' with 3 long, 2 short drawers with cupboard over

Pair bowed chamber pedestals

Writing table

Shaving glass on stand

5 rail mahogany towel rail

Stuffed invalid's couch 6'6"

Carved mahogany 3 - fold screen

Mahogany bedsteps

Mahogany ottoman couch 5'6" in violet rep, bullion fringe, gilt cord

Easy chair

Easy chair with rising seat

Prie - dieu chair

6 occasional chairs

Footstool

## **DRESSING ROOM**

Bright steel fire implements

Gentleman's morocco dressing case & handkerchief case

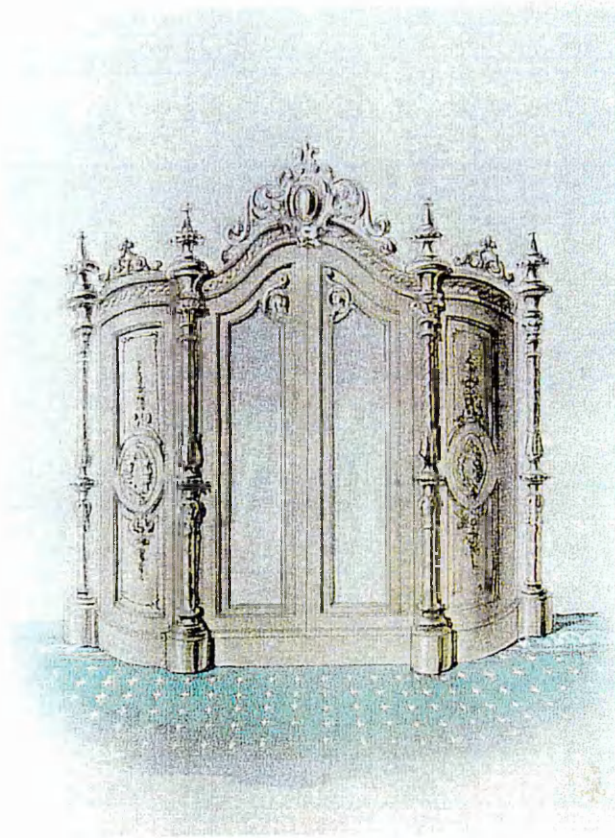
6 chamber revolver in mahogany case

Carved gilt wood chimney glass 66 x 44"

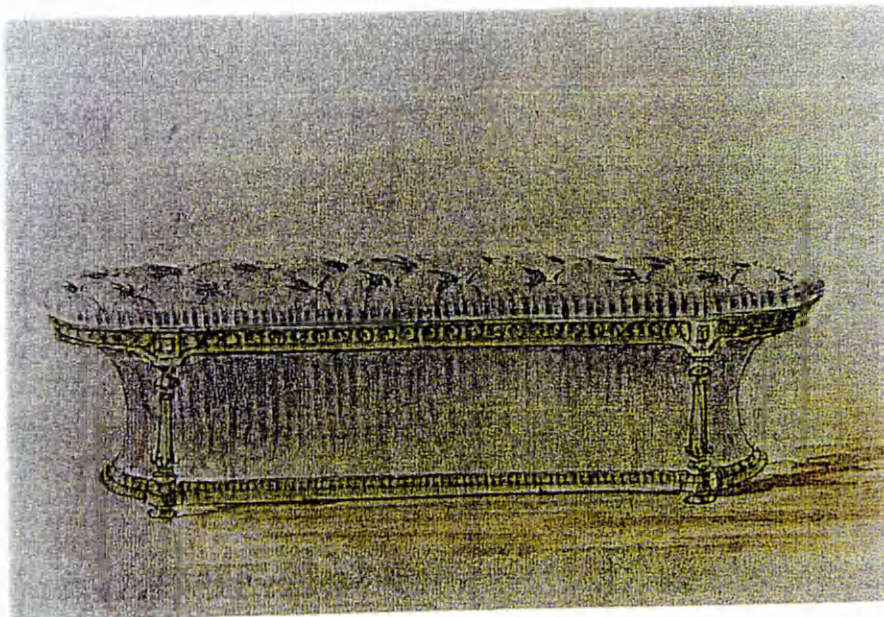
Carved Spanish mahogany winged wardrobe 8'9" with plate glass centre panel

Matching dressing table 5'3"

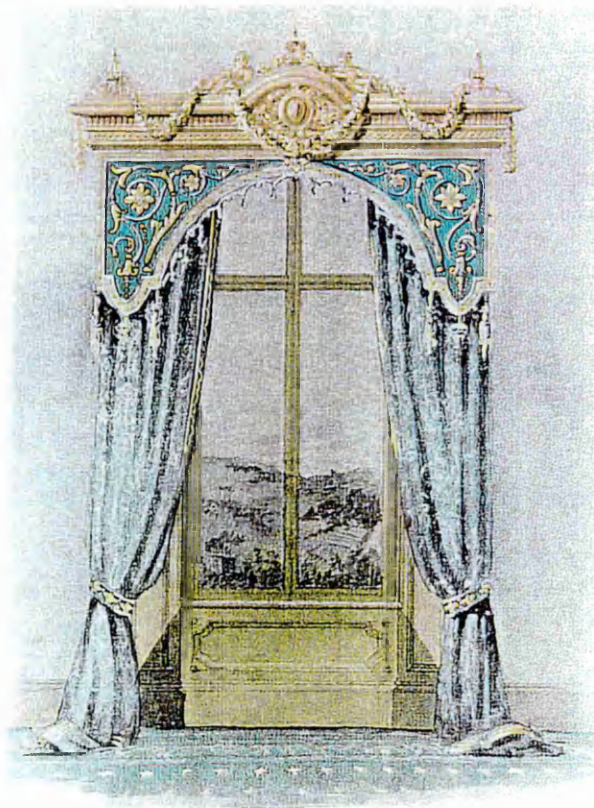
Matching small chest of drawers.



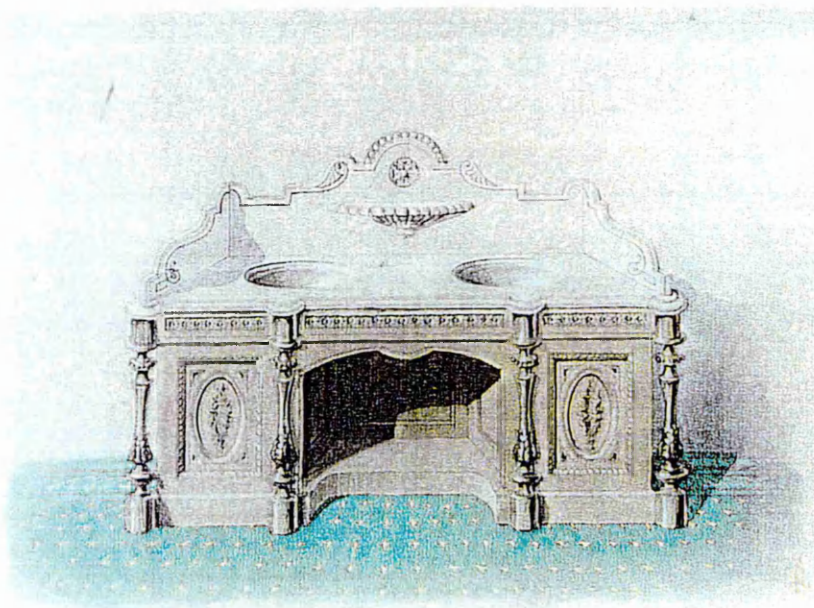
5.30 - 31. Selection of items designed by John Manuel & Son for some of the principal bedrooms. The 9'6" Arabian style wardrobe in Spanish Mahogany raised £42 in 1893. Below, an ottoman from one of the bedroom suites.







5.32 - 33. Pelmet and curtain arrangement. An elaborate washstand with double basin. Other designs show taps.



Three of Sheffield's leading cabinet makers were approached to make furniture for Endcliffe Hall all of whom had to submit designs for approval by Sir John prior to manufacture. John Manuel & Son of Division St., George Eadon & Son of New Church St. and Norfolk St. and William Johnson & Son of Fargate were commissioned to undertake the work, though Johnson's appear to have been used only infrequently and for none of the public rooms. Eadon's and Manuel's involvement in the Sheffield School of Art, of which Sir John was a Council Member from 1859 - 1867, may have encouraged his using them for Endcliffe Hall. In 1857 John Manuel jnr. was awarded the prize in Linear Perspective at the Sheffield School of Art. Both Manuel's and Eadon's contributed to the School of Art's Building Fund, as did the architects Flockton & Son and Weightman, Hadfield & Goldie. Sir John and George Eadon & Son were subscribers to the School from 1856 and in 1860 the Atlas Works donated 15gns. to the Building Fund with an annual Atlas Works Prize of 5gns being awarded from 1863 onwards.

Many of the original sketches and drawings of furniture made by the three firms for Sir John's approval at Endcliffe have survived. From a total of 68 surviving drawings,<sup>56</sup> 30 are by Eadon's although only 3 are countersigned by Sir John, implying approval, whilst 31 of the 34 presented by John Manuel & Son appear to have been accepted on this basis. To ensure his requirements were met Sir John appears to have taken as active a role in the planning of his home and contents as he did the running of his business:

'Mr Brown was not only the architect of his own fortunes, but he was the architect of his own works. He not only planned the buildings as they were needed, but most of the machinery used in the production of plates, forgings, railway bars, steel springs, and railway material generally was either wholly designed or improved by himself.'<sup>57</sup>

The drawings made by Eadon's and Manuel's covered many items of furniture including beds, davenports, dining chairs, occasional and dining tables, gas

---

<sup>56</sup> Sheffield City Library Archive Department. AP 38. 1 - 68.

<sup>57</sup> Death of Sir John Brown. Sheffield & Rotherham Independent, Dec. 28th, 1896.



lights, candelabras, mirrors, overmantels, fire surrounds, sofas, firescreens, a billiard table, piano and organ. Drawings were also made of windows with curtain and pelmet designs, many of the latter being embellished with Sir John's coat of arms. For some rooms designs for doors and wall panelling were also provided as well as plans for placing each item of furniture.

In the possession of the Browns for almost thirty years Endcliffe Hall remained unchanged from its original inception. However, soon after its completion Sir John began to encounter persistent business and health difficulties. His gradual and increasing withdrawal from Sheffield life, especially after the death of his wife, meant Endcliffe was maintained by a skeleton staff until 1893 when house and contents were put up for auction through the London auctioneers Maple and Co.- an occasion which allowed mid -Victorian Sheffield taste to be dispassionately assessed under the hammer. Following national publicity and the production of an illustrated catalogue<sup>58</sup> the sale began on Monday, April 17th 1893 and lasted for five days. The auctioneer, Mr Edward E. Kelsey, stressed that:

The sale was being held solely for the purposes of selling, and not in any way to test the value of any of the articles.<sup>59</sup>

Buyers were attracted from all over the country, especially London, but were highly selective in their purchases. Many locals bought furniture including Alderman Neill from Rotherham and John Manuel & Son who acquired much of the furniture they had made for the Hall. As news of the event spread, prices tended to increase: six dining chairs sold for 36/- each on Monday whereas fifteen identical chairs fetched 63/- each when sold on the Wednesday.

"Has the sale been a good one? It all depends on the point of view." So opened a summary of events in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph.<sup>60</sup> From a financial point of view the auctioneers expressed themselves satisfied with the total of £8870 raised over the five days. The Telegraph estimated this to

---

<sup>58</sup> Endcliffe Hall. Sale Catalogue. Maple & Co. Ltd, London, Auctioneers 1893. Brotherton Library, Leeds.

<sup>59</sup> The Sale at Endcliffe Hall, Sheffield & Rotherham Independent, 18 April 1893.

<sup>60</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 20 April 1893.

be approximately one third of what the contents had cost Sir John when new. However:

This would not apply to the best things, which in some instances did not realise one - sixth. A table which fetched £8 10/- cost nine times that sum; ... for three drawing room settees, which sold at £8 10/-, £9. and £8 10/- Sir John paid £35 each; the dining - room sideboard (Eadon's make) was not put in Endcliffe Hall much under £100; yesterday it sold for 22 guineas. The drawing - room chairs realised £2 each, which is £7 a chair less than each cost.<sup>61</sup>

During the period 1863 - 1867, when most of the furniture was bought, the average cost of living index was 113.76.<sup>62</sup> From the end of the 1870s to the mid -1890s there followed a period of gentle deflation as the general price index fell marginally. By the year 1893 the index had fallen to 99 and in a period of depression was to continue falling until 1896 when it reached a low of 94.9. During the same period the strength of real earnings in Sheffield rose from an average of 76 to 88 suggesting people with money to spare were aware of the bargains to be had. Sir John had bought and furnished Endcliffe at the height of his power during Sheffield's most affluent era. No business supplying a rising star would have failed to make the best of the opportunity. By far the best sums were achieved on the fourth day when the dispersal of the paintings and statuary raised £4000. Most of these items were reputed to have been made by nationally or internationally known artists and were thus free from the dictates of the Sheffield code. This factor had been most rigorously applied to the furniture which attracted the following quote given to a reporter from the Sheffield Daily Telegraph:

"The lesson of Endcliffe Hall" said an expert to me, "is that good furniture is not appreciated at home. Anything common and showy fetched absolutely high prices and stayed at home; the furniture which exhibited refined feeling and delicate treatment, the outcome of artistic design and apt arrangement, invariably went to other towns." One thing is pretty

---

<sup>61</sup> ibid.

<sup>62</sup> The benchmark being the year 1900 to equal 100.

certain - a drayload or two of good work will go to  
London.' <sup>63</sup>

At the end of the sale the Hall was stripped but unsold, remaining so, apart from intermittent use, and just avoiding demolition, until 1913 when it was finally acquired by its present owners the Territorial Army.

### **Mark Firth and the Transformation of Oakbrook.**

The transition made by Sheffield industrialists from comfortable home to formal and public show house may be illustrated by the residences of Mark Firth (1819 - 1880) who, as a highly successful steelman and benefactor,<sup>64</sup> slowly made his way westwards across the town culminating ( Figure 5.4) around 1859, in the building of Oakbrook, a small architect designed mansion set in some 26 acres of parkland. As his wealth grew Firth remained content to stay in Sheffield<sup>65</sup> giving much of his capital to educational and social projects. He was a lifelong member of the New Connexion Methodists giving considerable time and money to its causes. He was elected a member of the Legal Hundred in the Wesleyan Conference, the legal body of the Connexion. He claimed not to actively pursue public office as a means of social or political elevation<sup>66</sup> although in 1875 he became Mayor of Sheffield and held the post of Master Cutler for an unprecedented three years in succession. For many years a Liberal, he became a Conservative in later life but declined the Earl of Wharnccliffe's invitation to stand as an M.P. claiming his main concerns were improving the lot of Sheffield rather than entering the field of national politics.<sup>67</sup>

Little is known about any of Mark Firth's homes until 1875 when the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Sheffield staying as his guests at Oakbrook for

---

<sup>63</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 20 April 1893.

<sup>64</sup> J.F. Stirling, *Pioneers of Engineering. Adventure in Steelmaking. The Striking Career of Mark Firth.* Newspaper Cuttings Relating to Sheffield. Vol. 49 p.p. 105 - 106.

<sup>65</sup> Newspaper Cuttings Relating to Sheffield. ( N.C.R.S.) Vol. 51, p. 125.

<sup>66</sup> Death of Mr Mark Firth, Sheffield and Rotherham Independent. November 29th, 1880.

<sup>67</sup> William Townsend, The Royal Visit of 1875. Collection of newspaper cuttings, Sheffield City Libraries, Local Studies Dept.

two nights<sup>68</sup> in order to officially open a park he had donated to the town.<sup>69</sup> Aware of the volatile nature of Sheffield's economy, Firth had acquired the outward trappings of wealth slowly.<sup>70</sup> Living next to the works was a practice common to many managers and industrialists and one to which Firth and his first wife adhered for some years before beginning their move to the western suburbs. From their first home in Charlotte St. Firth and his wife moved to 41, Wilkinson St. a large, two storey brick built house in a row of predominantly detached houses set well back from the road with long gardens. Moving further west Firth purchased a house in Endcliffe Vale which had belonged to George Ridge, proprietor of the Sheffield Mercury. In 1855, Firth's first wife<sup>71</sup> died leaving him with two daughters. In 1857 he married again this time to the eldest daughter of Alderman Bradley of Nottingham with whom he had a further eight children. Two years later they moved into Oakbrook which was quickly surrounded by a flurry of building activity as rising industrialists sought to create their own rural idylls amongst the town's social elite.<sup>72</sup>

Oakbrook was a large, affluent, private home built simply for the owner and his family. It assumedly followed the conventional forms of furnishing and design used by Firth's peers as prior to the royal visit no reports or advertisements<sup>73</sup> to the contrary have been traced. Sheffield rarely encountered royal visits and for royalty to stay in the home of a nouveau riche industrialist was both a considerable coup for Firth and an acknowledgement of the changing social order.<sup>74</sup> The visit generated considerable activity throughout the town wherever it was thought royalty might alight or cast a glance. It was, perhaps, one of the few occasions when the population of

---

<sup>68</sup> Keith Farnsworth, Mark Firth's Symbol of Success, Quality of Sheffield, November / December, 1984, p.p.55 - 56.

<sup>69</sup> In 1874 Firth had purchased Page Hall and its estate for £25,550 and had the grounds set out as a public park. It was on 16th August, 1875 that the Prince and Princess of Wales visited Sheffield and stayed with Firth in his year as Lord Mayor to officially open the park.

<sup>70</sup> Death of Mr Mark Firth, Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, November 29th, 1880.

<sup>71</sup> In 1841, whilst still at Sanderson Brothers, Firth had married Sarah Bingham, daughter of James Taylor, scissor manufacturer.

<sup>72</sup> Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1990. p. 72. Walton, ibid. p. 225.

<sup>73</sup> E.g. the completion by George Eadon & Son of a prestigious commission for the Duke of Norfolk was reported in an article called: Sideboard for The Farm, Sheffield & Rotherham Independent, November 5th, 1859. See also -150 Years of Architectural Drawings. Hadfield Cawkwell Davidson, Sheffield.1834 - 1984. p.50.

<sup>74</sup> Ralph Dutton, The Victorian Home, 1954. p. 121.



Sheffield studied its environment and found it wanting. The railway station, Cutlers' Hall, steelworks, shops, hotels and streets became festooned with arches, decorations, banners and flags.<sup>75</sup> Under the direction of the Duke of Norfolk the interior of the Cutlers' Hall became totally masked and refurbished by Messrs Defries & Sons, Popular Illuminators and Decorators, of London.<sup>76</sup>

Upon news that the Prince and Princess of Wales were to stay with Firth his home became a focal point of so much interest that a local journalist was permitted to report upon the alterations and new furnishing schemes in detail<sup>77</sup> even though it was claimed they had been put into effect prior to knowledge of the royal visit.<sup>78</sup> Unfortunately, only verbal records of the furnishings exist, no drawings have been preserved or lodged with libraries. The architects Flockton & Abbot<sup>79</sup> were given the task of upgrading Firth's home to the rank of a minor mansion. They altered, modernised, formalised, extended and improved Oakbrook's capacity to host and entertain guests making it a more accurate reflection of Firth's business success and more in line with contemporary protocol.

Oakbrook's original Italianate style was highlighted by the addition of a tower overlooking the gardens "of the order of architecture known as the open Italian Campanile" ( Figure 5.3).<sup>80</sup> A pillared stone carriage porch was added to the front of the house which lead to a spacious entrance hall and stone staircase making arrivals more impressive and less susceptible to the weather. At the top of the driveway a new entrance with iron gates and a lodge provided an impressive barrier between the estate and Fulwood Road.

---

<sup>75</sup> William Townsend, The Royal Visit of 1875, *ibid.* Stainton, *ibid.* p. 252 f.f.

<sup>76</sup> 'The Royal Visit' Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 12 June, 7 August 1875.

<sup>77</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Saturday 14 August 1875.

<sup>78</sup> "It is not correct, as stated in a contemporary, that the extensive alterations at Ranmoor have been made with a special view to the Royal Visit. The additional room provided by the new wing - noticed six weeks ago in the Telegraph - is required for the accommodation of the Mayor's household. The plans were prepared and the additions decided upon quite apart from the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales". Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Saturday, July 17th. 1875.

<sup>79</sup> Flockton & Son had become Flockton & Abbot upon the retirement of William Flockton in 1862 when his son took G.L. Abbot as his partner.

<sup>80</sup> The Royal Visit. The Royal Apartments at Oakbrook, Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Saturday, August 14th. 1875.

In 1916, the Sale Plan<sup>81</sup> of Oakbrook described the property as a:

Valuable freehold mansion....with extensive gardens and grounds comprising formal gardens, shrubberies, park and woodland, kitchen gardens, orchards and ornamental water, handsome conservatories, vineries, peach, melon, tomato and other greenhouses and forcing pits. At a distance from the house are a foreman's cottage, barn, loose box and stable with accommodation for five cows, pigsties, dog kennels etc.

Inside, the family living accommodation had originally consisted of a west facing dining room and drawing room with a morning room and library on the east side. The alterations shifted the aspect of the house from east - west to the sunnier south - west. The ground floor acquired a new billiard room with 'lavatory and appurtenances,' and a new, bigger morning room with a bay window overlooking the grounds - the old room was converted into a cloakroom and lavatory. The existing dining and drawing rooms were enlarged and outside a new garden terrace was created. Upstairs, the new south facing extension provided two large en suite bedrooms with 'baths and every conceivable comfort and luxury that taste can suggest and wealth secure' and whose initial use was set aside for the Prince and Princess (Figure 5.34).<sup>82</sup>

The article, The Royal Visit - The Royal Apartments at Oakbrook,<sup>83</sup> described both existing and new suites of furniture commissioned by Firth from the Sheffield cabinet makers John Manuel & Son of Division Street and William Johnson & Son of Fargate. Most of Oakbrook's furniture was made by William Johnson & Son who, like Firth, were strong Non - Conformists. As well as being a Wesleyan preacher, William's son, Samuel Meggitt Johnson (1839 - 1925), was a notable businessman. He was a director of several public companies and like Firth gave much to the church and local charities.<sup>84</sup> In time, Meggitt Johnson became related to the Appleyard family, who were later to take over his father's cabinet making business as a means of

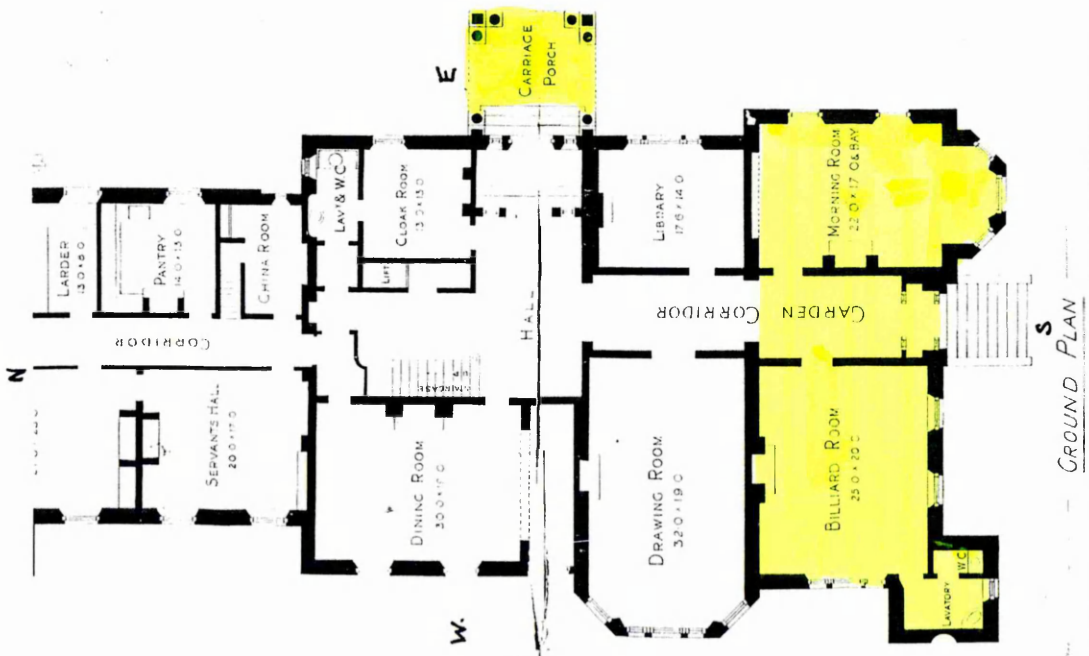
---

<sup>81</sup> Oakbrook Estate. Sale Plan. 11th July, 1916. S.C.L. Local Studies Dept.

<sup>82</sup> The Royal Apartments at Oakbrook, ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Saturday, 14 August 1875.

<sup>84</sup> Mark Girouard, The English Town, 1990. p.223. Addy and Pike, Sheffield at the Opening of the Twentieth Century. p. 186. Odom, ibid. pp. 89 - 90.



5. Plan of Oakbrook drawn up for the sale in 1916. The yellow areas mark the 1875 additions.





expanding into Sheffield, through he and Walter Appleyard marrying daughters of George Bassett.<sup>85</sup> Firth's patronage of local companies for the furnishings and decoration of his home was in direct contrast to the Cutlers' Company's preparations for the Prince and Princess of Wales visit. Although he was on the committee in charge of decorating the Cutlers' Hall its chairman, the Duke of Norfolk, appears to have exerted his influence by rejecting Sheffield furnishers in favour of tenders being sought from suppliers from London and Manchester.<sup>86</sup>

The furniture and decorations at Oakbrook were a blend of high Victorian blues, yellows, crimsons, gold and black mixed with the more subdued Aesthetic tones of cinnamon, grey and buff. Throughout the house carpet squares were replaced by fully fitted Brussels or Axminster carpets of abstract designs. The furniture was made from expensive timbers and largely conformed to the etiquette of the day.<sup>87</sup> The drawing room, feminine in nature, had originally been furnished in walnut and crimson by William Johnson & Son. Whilst retaining this suite the room was extended and redecorated in the more muted and fashionable tones favoured by the Aesthetic Movement. The walls were papered in gold and greys upon which a 'fine collection of water - colours' was hung.

Rooms considered more masculine - the library, dining room and billiard room - were furnished in various forms of oak. The dining room was furnished dramatically in pollard oak and crimson morocco with black, gold and crimson tapestry curtains together with the "experiment" of painting the woodwork gold and black. Large bucolic paintings by contemporary artists and Royal Academicians hung above a black marble and gilt mantelpiece and stove. Overlooking the driveway, the library contained old oak bookcases refitted from Page Hall originally built in 1773 by the Sheffield banker Thomas Broadbent<sup>88</sup>. An Aesthetic motif - dado rails - became a feature of the refurbished Oakbrook and were manufactured by William Johnson & Son.

---

<sup>85</sup> See: Chapter 6 for Meggitt Johnson's familial links with this and other Sheffield firms.

<sup>86</sup> See Chapter 4: The Furnishing of the Company of Cutlers' Hall in Hallamshire.

<sup>87</sup> Banham, MacDonald & Porter, *ibid.* p. 38.

<sup>88</sup> J. Edward Vickers, *The Old and Historical Buildings of Sheffield.* 1968. p.17.



The journalist devoted much space to describing the bedrooms designated for the Prince and Princess of Wales. The furnishings were a mixture of conventional and contemporary fashions together with numerous motifs commemorating the visit. The furniture, draperies and bedding for the bedroom and the Prince's dressing room were designed and made by William Johnson and Son whilst John Manuel and Son furnished the Princess's boudoir. The Prince's dressing room was furnished in dark Spanish mahogany with crimson perry upholstery. The boudoir was furnished in inlaid pollard oak with cinnamon and gold damask upholstery. A large ornate Venetian mirror hung over the mantelpiece and the highlight of the boudoir was an olive wood cabinet inlaid with ebony and Wedgwood plaques.

The style adopted for the bedroom suite was described as Assyrian Greek made from Hungarian ash inlaid with harewood, ebony, sycamore and purple heart. Blue silk, lined and trimmed with lemon silk, was used for the curtains, bed draperies, chairs and couch. The wallpaper was a buff tint covered with gold and chintz flowers. The bedroom suite included a wardrobe, washstand, cabinet, dressing table and bedstead which had a pediment carved with the Prince of Wales feathers on a crimson background. This motif was repeated on the bedhead where it was hand embroidered in silk and on numerous items of linen. 'Royalty blankets' were covered by a white quilt upon which was embroidered the Prince of Wales plume, 'enriched with the rose, shamrock and thistle, and trimmed with the most exquisite Italian point lace, embodying the crests and monograms of the Prince and Princess'. Further heraldic and symbolic devices were to be found upon the pillowcases and on the corners of the sheets. The design for the wardrobe drew particular attention:

Much skill and taste have been shown in the construction of the wardrobe, which is quite original in design, the front and ends being seen all at once - the two fronts forming a right angle. Carved in the corners of the panels are very tasteful enrichments representing the rose, thistle and shamrock, and the oak and olive branch.

Writing in 1878, Lady Barker described a similar wardrobe which she had seen in a London house whose bedroom was decorated in the Queen Anne

style. She described it as 'out of the beaten track' and used a drawing of it to illustrate the frontispiece of her book.<sup>89</sup> This supports the novelty of design claimed by the Sheffield Daily Telegraph on behalf of Johnson's and shows provincial firms keeping abreast of new ideas emanating from the capital. However, Johnsons' furnishing of Oakbrook reflected a mixture of old and new ideas. For example: whilst taking the trouble to produce a fashionable wardrobe they supplied Oakbrook with down and hair - stuffed mattresses rather than the modern and more comfortable sprung bases with down or wool mattresses on top<sup>90</sup> as had been used at Endcliffe Hall ten years earlier.

The use of Hungarian Ash for the bedroom suite shows Firth's resolution to furnish the room to the highest standards and would have incurred considerable expense. In 1868, R. N. Thornton ordered a bedroom suite in Hungarian Ash inlaid with purplewood from Holland and Sons for his home, Knowle Cottage, in Sidmouth, Devon.<sup>91</sup> The cost of his triple wardrobe, with glazed centre door, a pedestal dressing table and chest of drawers was £119. 15/-.<sup>92</sup> During the period 1850 - 1875 when affluent middle class housing and furnishing schemes were at their peak in Sheffield local manufacturers were able to charge premium prices thus the cost of Firth's furniture made by a provincial company might well equate with that made by a London firm some eight years earlier.

Firth's commercial success had earned his firm a world - wide reputation for its contribution to the armaments race. His personal drive and acumen secured contracts in America and throughout Europe. His personal wealth, which by Sheffield standards was considerable,<sup>93</sup> could have enabled him to leave the town for a fashionable home furnished by leading designers and furnishers anywhere in the country or abroad. However, he and many of his family, chose to live and work in Sheffield and patronise many of its commercial activities.

---

<sup>89</sup> Lady Barker, The Bedroom and Boudoir. 1878. p.p.53 - 56 and frontispiece.

<sup>90</sup> Ewart Myer, 'Of all household furniture is there any piece more clothed in emotion than the bed?' Cabinet Maker Supplement, Centenary Edition. Sept. 19th, 1980. p.54. Dutton, ibid. p. 187.

<sup>91</sup> Girouard, ibid. p.282. plate 385. " . . . a " distinctive thatched cottage - ornees' built for Lord le Despencer".

<sup>92</sup> Symonds & Whineray, ibid. p.122, pp.171 - 174,

<sup>93</sup> See: Footnote 79, Chapter 1

Whereas Oakbrook was propelled into the limelight, Endcliffe Hall was built and furnished in the full glare of publicity. Endcliffe Hall had aroused intense public interest as locally it set new standards in the money, effort and attention to detail spent on the home. The alterations and refurbishment of Oakbrook reflected a mixture of traditional ideas, contemporary fashions, expensive materials and the desire to indelibly commemorate a royal visit. Those more familiar with royalty might not have inscribed their homes with quite so many tangible mementos as were used in Oakbrook. The alterations nevertheless reflected Firth's growing status as a national figure and leading industrialist with what was essentially a family home being adapted, expanded and upgraded to cope with the changing roles and status it acquired.

Although Endcliffe Hall had been built with the purpose of a royal visit in mind it was Mark Firth's home Oakbrook which was to receive the accolade.

Endcliffe possessed a grandeur hitherto unknown in Sheffield and its use of local firms was laudable. It was equipped with every modern convenience for public and private life. The thought and preparation which had gone into its planning was far beyond Sheffield norms. Less than ten years separated the building of Endcliffe Hall and Oakbrook but the difference between them was immense. Oakbrook required substantial alterations, extensions and modernisations to bring it up to the standard set by Endcliffe and required by Firth's growing status. In this respect, although Endcliffe never secured a royal visit, it set a standard of aggrandisement far beyond the level so far achieved in any of Sheffield's personal, civic or corporate building schemes.

The personal munificence which was so greatly applauded in the building and furnishing of Endcliffe Hall reflected a vision of Sheffield which few individuals or organisations chose to imitate. Its acknowledged largess failed to encourage patronage of the decorative arts much beyond parochial rivalry.

"There was certainly no place like Edgbaston in Sheffield: the rich Victorian Suburbs at Endcliffe, Ranmoor and Tapton, a hillside dotted with mansions and minature parks, were stately, but scarcely centres of initiative or taste. Radicalism was strong in Sheffield, but it was relatively



The furnishings of Endcliffe and Oakbrook suggest radicalism did not impinge upon Sheffield's furnishing schemes. The latest classical interpretations were used at Endcliffe expressing Sir John's affinity with, not antagonism to, the aristocracy and ruling classes. Furniture was used as a means of social integration. The argument that industrialists were more hostile to and found acceptance into court and county life more difficult than those in the professions and services is not supported in Sheffield.<sup>95</sup> Both Sir John Brown and Mark Firth embraced these institutions and advertised their affinity with them through the architecture and furnishings of their homes.<sup>96</sup> Whilst the description of 'Ranmoor [as] a centre of local fashion, but not of taste'<sup>97</sup> may accurately describe the attempts of many in their initial hurry to acquire a veneer of sophistication and respectability,<sup>98</sup> the furnishing of homes such as Endcliffe and Oakbrook reflect integration with, not opposition to, the social mores of the day.

The final chapter will outline the development of one of Sheffield's leading cabinet makers of the nineteenth century and their role in helping many to break away from the Sheffield code. Joseph Appleyard & Sons of Rotherham saw Sheffield as an affluent and expanding market which would help them to establish a broader market base from which to progress on to the national scene. That they were able to achieve this and influence Sheffield furnishing tastes indicates a dynamic business capable of embracing new technical and management methods as well as being at the forefront of design awareness. It will be seen that the firm was able to deal effectively both with the constraints of the Sheffield code and the demands of contemporary fashion.

---

<sup>94</sup> Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities, p. 36 - 37.

<sup>95</sup> P.J. Cain & A.G. Hopkins, British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688 - 1914, 1993, p. 123.

<sup>96</sup> Cain & Hopkins, ibid. p. 132.

<sup>97</sup> Walton, ibid. p. 225.

<sup>98</sup> G. Calvert Holland M.D. The Vital Statistics of Sheffield, 1843. p.240



## Chapter Six.

### BREAKING THE CODE: THE STORY OF JOHNSON & APPLEYARDS LTD.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw Sheffield growing in wealth, confidence and prestige. It was home to men such as Mark Firth, Edward Vickers, William Jessop, Henry Bessemer and Charles Cammell whose companies and expertise were of world renown. The cabinet making firm of Joseph Appleyard & Sons of Rotherham saw a move into the affluent Sheffield market as a means of establishing a strong, wealthy client base from which they could progress on to a national arena. Able to offer a wide range of furnishing styles and services they could fulfil the demands of both the Sheffield code and cosmopolitan taste. Winning the patronage and confidence of the area's wealthiest inhabitants, the firm became instrumental in breaking the constraints of the Sheffield code as it introduced new fashions and styles with the authority of national patronage. Johnson & Appleyards, as the firm was known in Sheffield, became the embodiment of local tastes succumbing to cosmopolitan style.

This chapter will explore the origins, growth and activities of Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. of Sheffield; Cabinet Makers, Upholsterers, Art Furnishers, Ecclesiastical and Domestic Painters and Decorators, by Special Appointment to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, and its contribution to the nature of Sheffield's domestic furnishing styles during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The firm, which became the town's leading cabinet and upholstery manufacturers and suppliers of the late nineteenth century, was formed as a result of the amalgamation of two family businesses, the declining Sheffield firm of William Johnson & Sons and the rapidly expanding Joseph Appleyard & Sons of Rotherham who saw the takeover as a means of quickly entering the lucrative Sheffield market via an established and reputable business.

#### Family Background

Cabinet making and joinery appear to have been a major source of income for several generations of Appleyards prior to the establishment of the principle firms of Joseph Appleyard & Sons, Rotherham in 1872 and Johnson

& Appleyards in Sheffield in 1879. Family involvement in cabinet making may be traced to Joseph Appleyard (1) (1777 - 1839) of Halifax. Sometime after his marriage to Jane Chester of Gargrave (1792 - 1863) in Clitheroe in 1810, the couple moved to Conisborough where they remained for the rest of their lives. The baptismal registers of St Peter's, Conisborough describe Joseph (1) as a joiner for their first 3 offspring and a cabinet maker from 1819. After spending some of his early life at sea as a result, it is claimed, of being press ganged when buying timber at Hull docks,<sup>1</sup> Joseph (1) combined cabinet making with farming in order to support himself and his family.

Of Joseph and Jane's twelve offspring, six survived. All three sons who reached maturity had some involvement in cabinet making and whose skills, it is assumed, were taught them by their father. The eldest son, George (1) (1814 - 1886 ) spent his life in Conisborough where Census Returns variously described him as a cabinet maker, farmer, draper, grocer, undertaker and furniture remover. Whilst evidently unable to support his wife<sup>2</sup> and subsequent family of five offspring by cabinet making alone he nevertheless achieved an element of financial security. The Census of 1851 shows him to have moved from an earlier residence to one which could accommodate his wife, offspring, a 14 year old female servant and two journeymen. In 1861, he was described as a cabinet maker, employing three men, two of whom lived in, and a farmer of 20 acres employing one man. One of his daughters, who lived at home, was listed as an upholsteress. The next two Census Reports of 1871 and 1881 show him continuing in these activities with joinery supplementing cabinet making and his farming interests of fifty acres being managed by a son. A widower in 1881, he was able to afford two live - in servants, one male one female, and had two men and a boy working for him. By this time, another of his sons, George (2), a third generation Appleyard and also in Conisborough, was described as a Master cabinet maker, employing four men and three apprentices.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph 25. 7. 1930 Obituary of Walter Appleyard. Also: Appendix to BW Memoirs, printed 21/11/95 - Private Correspondence with D.B. Welbourn, of Cambridge, Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering and researcher into the Appleyard family. My considerable thanks are due to Mr Welbourn whose help and information concerning the Appleyards has been immense.

<sup>2</sup> Susannah Brumby, whom he married in Hull in 1837.

William Appleyard, the youngest son of Joseph and Jane may also have been involved in cabinet making according to anecdotal evidence.<sup>3</sup> Shortly after 1854 he emigrated to New Zealand or Australia with his wife Hannah ( nee Wheatley, born 1825 ) where they had five children.

### **Joseph Appleyard, Cabinet Maker, Conisborough.**

The principle firm of J. Appleyard & Sons, Rotherham, was founded by Joseph (1) and Jane's fourth son, Joseph (2) (1819 - 1890) who again, spent all his life in Conisborough. In 1847 he married Ann Tyas (? - 1904), also from Conisborough, with whom he had three sons, all of whom became involved in cabinet making. Upon his death in 1890, Joseph (2) received considerable acknowledgment from the trade in respect of his business aptitude and skills as a craftsman:

“... he commenced his business about 45 years ago, and soon gained for himself the reputation of the best maker of cabinet furniture in that district, including the radius of Sheffield and Doncaster, and, even at that remote period, those towns contained his best customers. Strangers . . . have marvelled when they have been told that such and such examples of art cabinet workmanship were made in Conisborough....”<sup>4</sup>

Whilst undoubtedly eulogistic, the level of competence in both design and execution which Joseph (2) appears to have acquired is noteworthy. His father would assumedly have been a source of training but the transition to producing cabinet work of sufficient quality to attract clients from neighbouring towns whilst apparently spending all his life in Conisborough is unusual.

Initially, Joseph (2) specialised in the manufacture of long case clock cases which he supplied to customers in neighbouring towns, some of whom took

---

<sup>3</sup> About Antiques, by Victor Drake - photocopy, no date or reference - copy supplied by D.B. Welbourn.

<sup>4</sup> Obituary in The Cabinet Maker and Art Furnisher, August 1st 1890, “The late Mr Joseph Appleyard, of Conisborough”

two a week.<sup>5</sup> As eight day longcase clocks were "... considered as essential to the comfort of the newly married couple as a bed, and no residence with any pretensions to respectability was without one"<sup>6</sup> their manufacture appears to have been a successful means of building up business. When finished, the clocks were transported by road using carriers' wagons and horses to clock makers whose practice of inscribing their own names onto the clocks render it difficult to distinguish the independent origins of the cases.<sup>7</sup>

Census Records show a slow, steady business expansion. In 1841, Joseph(2) lived in High St. Conisborough with his widowed mother, brother and two sisters. By 1851, he was a cabinet maker married to Anne Tyas and living at 7, Post Office St. with a son together with a journeyman cabinet maker, Walter Lang aged 25 from Doncaster. In 1861, the family had moved to the bottom of Old Hill. Joseph (2) now a cabinet maker and upholsterer, employing one man. Their three sons, Joseph (3), aged thirteen, Walter, nine and Frank, five were all classed as scholars. The business appears to have flourished during the 1860's, which coincided with Sheffield's middle class housing boom. By 1871, still at the same address, Joseph (2) employed nine men and two boys with his two eldest sons, Joseph (3) now twenty three, and Walter, nineteen, both cabinet makers, and Frank an apprentice. In 1881, aged sixtyone, Joseph (2) and his wife now occupied Brook Cabinet Works, Conisborough, with their two bachelor sons, Walter and Frank both cabinet makers and a fourteen year old domestic servant, Jane Ann Hawksworth.

The death of Joseph (2) in 1890 was marked by an article in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph<sup>8</sup> which summarised many of the necessary criteria needed to run a family business:

---

<sup>5</sup> Regional Furniture, 1993, p. 134. Provincial longcase clock makers supplied goods to clock makers in neighbouring towns in considerable quantities during their working lives. Working between 1810 -41, James Usher of Lincoln supplied cases to clock makers in Lincoln, Grantham, Sleaford, Louth and Boston with cases numbered between 550 and 1728 having been recorded.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* The Cabinet Maker & Art Furnisher, August 1st 1890. The Progress of Sheffield Workmen. Edgar's Prize Essay. Sheffield & Rotherham Independent, 6 & 10 February 1866. Pollard, History, p. 109.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Gilbert, A Labelled Liverpool Clock Case, Regional Furniture, 1991, p.p. 103 - 108.

<sup>8</sup> Sheffield Daily Telegraph 25 June 1890.



“Mr Appleyard was what is usually termed a self - made man. He started business about 40 years ago, and by hard work, indomitable energy and perseverance, coupled with integrity of character, achieved success, and laid the foundation of one of the most important cabinet and upholstery businesses in the provinces . . .”

He died intestate: his gross personal estate was £175 plus “The Leaseholds” of a series of properties divided equally between his three sons. On 11 November 1931, the executors of Joseph (3), sold his share of the properties to The Earls of Yarborough and Powis and Sir Cosmo Gordon Antrobus. In 1910, the balance sheet of Joseph’s (3) estate valued his third of the property at £1333 - 6 - 8 which, for the year ending 10 February 1910, had produced an income of £109 - 15 - 5. The properties consisted of:

“32 messuages situate at Conisborough in the County of York, two of which are known as ‘Peveril’ and ‘The Laurels’, 18 of which are numbered 1 - 18 Wellgate, 7 of which are numbered 1 - 7 Elm Green Lane, and the remaining 5 of which are numbered 1 - 5 Dale Cottages, together with the yards, gardens and outbuildings belonging thereto.”<sup>9</sup>

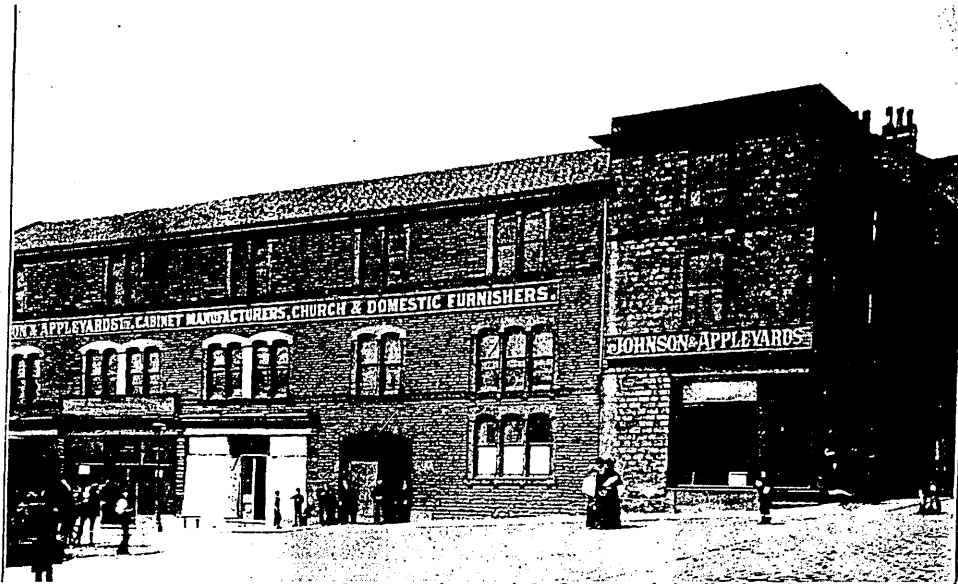
### **J. Appleyard & Sons, Rotherham.**

Clearly, Joseph (2) had enjoyed considerable success as a cabinet maker further investing in property to provide a stable, additional income. In 1872, the financial resources and business ecumen of Joseph (2) enabled him to establish his three sons in business in Rotherham under the style of J. Appleyard & Sons ( Figure 6.1). He “. . . soon gave the reins [of the Rotherham business] entirely into their hands. . .”<sup>10</sup> whilst continuing to maintain his own firm in Conisborough. The stable growth, skills pool, working practices and reputation created by Joseph Appleyard’s (2) long-lived Conisborough business provided a sound resource<sup>11</sup> which enabled his three sons to rapidly expand their own firm and quickly acquire another family

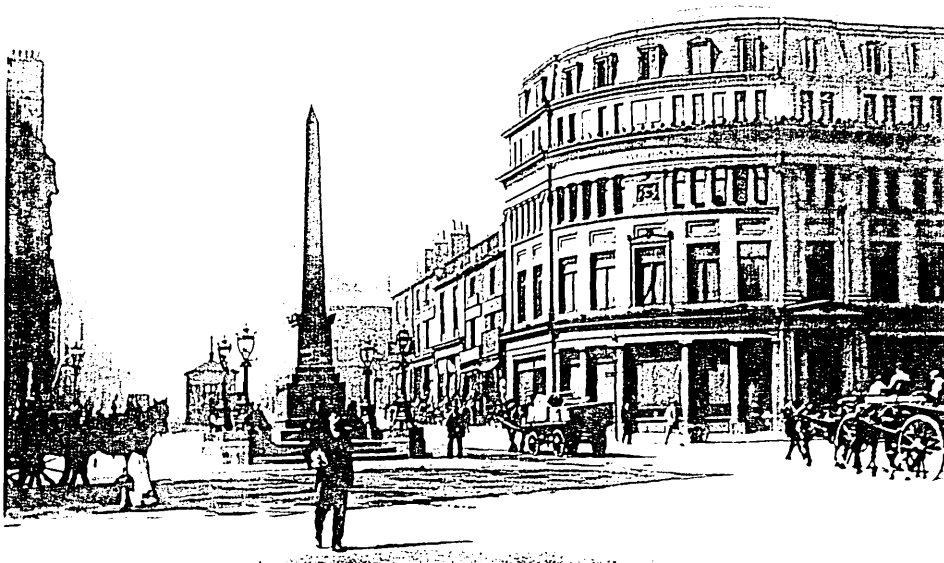
<sup>9</sup> The Estate of the Late Mr Joseph Appleyard, Balance Sheet & Income Account, 10 February 1910.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.* The Cabinet Maker & Art Furnisher, August 1st 1890.

<sup>11</sup> Stana Nenadic, The Small Family Firm in Victorian Britain, Business History, Vol. 35, October 1993, No. 4 p. 86 f.f.



6.1. The Rotherham premises of J. Appleyard & Sons relabelled Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. Some attempt has been made to add display windows to a largely uninspiring building.



6.2. Johnson & Appleyard's premises on Leopold St. Sheffield. The 3 original storeys with the addition of the attic storey and mansard roof added in 1892. The plaque stating By Special Appointment to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales can be seen in the centre of the 3rd floor. Large display windows flanked by Greek columns provide an impressive ground floor appearance. Blinds are drawn to shield stock from the sun.

firm to sustain their expansion from Rotherham to Sheffield.

### Johnson & Appleyards of Sheffield.

The new business rapidly reached its limits in Rotherham and around 1879 Joseph (2)'s three sons took over the "old but decaying business" of William Johnson & Sons of Sheffield. Johnson's was a well respected Sheffield firm of cabinet makers and upholsterers<sup>12</sup> which at the time of the 1871 Census employed forty men, six boys and six women. Established in 1832, William Johnson had begun as a cabinet maker adding upholstery to his services around 1841. He rented several premises in Fargate before settling on 82 - 84 Fargate around 1850.<sup>13</sup> He appears to have briefly entered into partnership with a Mr Allatt<sup>14</sup> who possibly was of financial support as in 1852 they advertised their:

"...extensive alterations . [and] . additional showrooms at their premises in Fargate. . ."

An advertisement of the period shows the firm carried out a range of cabinet making and upholstery activities providing a broad spectrum of furnishings from drawing rooms to servants quarters - as well as supplying a range of bedding, wallpapers and panelling "... on the most REASONABLE TERMS . . . [with] Skilful Workmen . . . sent promptly to any part of the Country . . ."<sup>15</sup>

By 1856, William Johnson had once again become a sole trader, still at the same premises, advertising himself as a cabinet maker, upholsterer, carpet and general furnisher able to completely furnish a home and manufacture goods to special designs. The ability of a single business to fully equip a

---

<sup>12</sup> Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, August 13 1859: "Very superior and elegant modern furniture (recently manufactured by Mr Johnson) . . . Johnson's made much of the furniture for Mark Firth when he refurbished his home, Oakbrook, in preparation for a visit from the Prince and Princess of Wales in 1875 and had tendered for contracts to Sir John Brown when furnishing Endcliffe Hall (q.v.).

<sup>13</sup> Dictionary of English Furniture Makers, GL< Sun MS vol. 269, ref 1343141; Robson's Directory of Sheffield 1839, White's Directories of Sheffield, 1841 - 1862. Fargate was a central retail and light manufacturing area popular throughout the nineteenth century with the furniture industry during which time some 94 related firms occupied premises there - Trade Directories.

<sup>14</sup> Possibly Edward Allatt, a cabinet maker known to have been at 19, Carver St in 1849 - White's Directory of Sheffield 1849. It is also possible this was one Allott who, in 1845, was briefly in partnership with John Manuel, cabinet maker and upholsterer, 87 Division St. Sheffield. Janet Ball, John Manuel & Son of Sheffield. Furniture History, 1978 p.p. 62 - 65.

<sup>15</sup> Johnson & Allatt, Cabinet makers and Upholsterers, full page advertisement, White's Directory of Sheffield 1852.

home was becoming increasingly valuable to maximise the potential of each customer and Johnsons flourished using this device. In 1861 William, then aged fiftyeight, his wife, two sons, five daughters, aged between eight and sixteen and a servant had relocated to the affluent western suburbs of Sheffield. The firm employed twentyseven men, four women and seven boys with William jnr. aged twenty, acting as clerk to the firm whilst his brother, Samuel, was the manager of a wholesale confectioners and a Methodist preacher.<sup>16</sup> By 1871, William jnr. was running the business employing a total of fiftytwo staff and living with his widowed mother and sisters at Tapton Grove, an impressive stone built residence set in substantial grounds. His interest in the business appears to have declined whilst his brother pursued other interests. Appleyards acquired the business, possibly through personal connections (q.v.), as an effective and speedy means of gaining a foothold in the Sheffield market. William jnr., like his father and brother, was a devout Methodist and had little involvement with public affairs outside the chapel. He died, apparently a bachelor, of pneumonia in 1899 at his home in Broomfield, which he shared with his mother and a sister, having retired some 15 years earlier.<sup>17</sup>

In 1878, the commercial premises of William Johnson & Sons at 82 - 84, Fargate comprised a house, saleshop and workshop with a ratable value of £180.00. The Sheffield Rate Book for 1879 shows 82 - 84 Fargate with the name William Johnson & Sons struck out and replaced by Johnson & Appleyards, suggesting the acquisition occurred around 24 May 1879 when the inspection was carried out and possibly with little advance publicity. William Johnson & Sons appear to have acquired another property in Fargate, numbers 90 - 92, which the local trade directories record them as occupying between 1876 and 1879 in addition to numbers 82 - 84. Prior to its acquisition by William Johnson & Son, 90 - 92 Fargate had been occupied by Samuel Barnsley, a carver, gilder and picture framer. The 1878 Rate Book described the premises as a house, house and saleshop with a ratable value of £31 10/-, belonging to J.B. Meggitt & Sons who also owned 82 - 84 Fargate. Meggitt was the middle name of William Johnson jnr.'s brother, Samuel, and it is assumed there was a family connection. Both properties

---

<sup>16</sup> 1861 Census Returns for Sheffield: N537/ 1337, p.1, N537/ 1338, p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, April 26, 1899.



were taken over by Johnson & Appleyard's who maintained an interest in Fargate for some years after the completion of extensive new premises on the corner of Fargate and Leopold St. around 1884.<sup>18</sup>

Appleyard's acquisition of Johnsons was achieved with the financial support of Leonard Simpson Friend, a friend of Joseph (2) who appears to have remained a sleeping business partner.<sup>19</sup> The Sheffield concern was managed by Joseph (3) and Walter Appleyard, the two elder sons of Joseph Appleyard of Conisborough whilst Frank, the youngest son, remained in charge of the Rotherham branch.

### **Johnson & Appleyards Ltd.**

By 1881, Joseph (3) had married and was living in Rotherham with his wife and young family whilst Walter and Frank remained single, living at their parent's home in Conisborough.<sup>20</sup> The Sheffield business grew rapidly so that, by 1891, Joseph and Walter had settled there occupying substantial homes amongst the town's leading industrialists and businessmen.

The three sons had mixed relationships with the firm although all appear to have drawn substantial financial benefits from it. Of Joseph (2)'s three sons, Joseph (3) ( 26 Jan 1848 - 10 February 1910), Walter, (17 April 1851 - 24 July 1930) and Frank (12 June 1855? - 6 August 1928) only Joseph (3) stayed with the firm throughout his life.

Frank's interest in the firm ended around 1903 after the death of his first wife when he sold his shares in the business and retired from further active involvement. His daughter by his second marriage had no active interest in the firm.

---

<sup>18</sup> From c. 1888, 90 - 92 Fargate became occupied by another firm of cabinet makers, W. Peace & Sons, who had previously occupied two sites at 85 - 89 Fargate and 99 - 103 Barker's Pool.

<sup>19</sup> Correspondence with D.B. Welbourn: Rev 20 Nov 1995 happie. wps App 1 to BW Memoirs Printed 21/11/95 HAPPLE. WPS p.2. See also: D.B. Welbourn F.Eng., Portrait of Burkewood Welbourn an Engineer, Pentland Press, 1996. L. S. Friend appears to have been a sleeping partner but his son, , Charles Edward Friend later became a director and secretary of J. & A. Ltd. remaining so until 1941 when it was sold to H. T. Atkinson's of Sheffield.

<sup>20</sup> 1881 Census RGII 4685, Folio 109, p. 37.

Like his two brothers, Walter trained as a cabinet maker and worked in the family business in both Rotherham and Sheffield. He remained a director of Johnson & Appleyards whilst pursuing several other interests and directorships. In 1883, he married Eliza Bassett, daughter of Alderman George Bassett of Sheffield, a wholesale confectioner. Remaining childless, they travelled extensively to Australia, New Zealand and the continent though it is unclear whether this was for business or pleasure. Their home in Endcliffe Crescent became surrounded by family, business and religious connections, emphasising the importance of such links in sustaining and furthering business connections:<sup>21</sup>

“Walter Appleyard . . . Lord Mayor [of Sheffield] in 1916 - 1917, was one of those who turned Endcliffe Crescent, that most secluded of suburban retreats, into a Wesleyan reserve. Appleyard manufactured sweets and furniture but his real interests were ‘the science and philosophy of psychology’ and psychical research . . . His father - in - law, George Bassett, sweet manufacturer and mayor in 1876, . . . also lived on Endcliffe Crescent and so did a third Bassett brother, Samuel Meggitt Johnson. . . . who was chairman of George Bassett & Company. . . . Like the Appleyards and the Bassetts, the Wards of Albion Works, . . . had moved from the Park<sup>22</sup>. . . . Mrs T.W. Ward, Mrs Walter Appleyard and Mrs Meggitt Johnson were first cousins.”<sup>23</sup>

In 1891, Johnson & Appleyards became a limited company. Shortly after, Walter ceased to be actively involved as Director but continued as Chairman. He also joined the board of the Don Confectionery Company owned by his father and brother - in - law. The chairman of the company was Samuel Meggitt Johnson, son<sup>24</sup> of the founder of William Johnson & Son, the cabinet makers acquired by Appleyards. Walter also became a founder and director of the Sheffield Crematorium Company Ltd. and was also a patentee founder

---

<sup>21</sup> Stana Nenadic, *ibid.* p.105.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Appleyard and his family eventually left Park Grange, their substantial home in Norfolk Park, to move to Broombank, a house in the western suburbs less affected by the encroachment of the railway (q.v.) and near the home of Walter.

<sup>23</sup> Clyde Binfield, Religion in Sheffield, *The History of the City of Sheffield* 1843 - 1993 Vol. II. p. 404.

<sup>24</sup> 1861 Census Returns Sheffield N633/3468 p. 17 f.f.

and director of another company named Psychiloid Ltd.

Initially maintaining the family's Wesleyan allegiances Walter's interests turned to psychical research, a subject upon which he frequently wrote and spoke, being a member of the London Psychical Research Society and an acquaintance of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.<sup>25</sup> He was involved in local politics as a liberal, was three times chairman of the Sheffield Reform Club, a councillor from 1906 - 1919 and Lord Mayor of Sheffield from 1916 - 1917. Having virtually retired from all his business interests by the age of 55, the last ten years of his life were devoted to spiritualism. As often occurs with successful family businesses the income and status Walter received as director of Johnson & Appleyards encouraged him to leave the running of the business to others whilst he pursued his interests in other fields.

After the death of Joseph (2) in 1890 the driving force behind Johnson & Appleyards became his eldest son, Joseph (3). Like his father, he concentrated his activities upon the core functions of manufacturing and retailing furniture and appears to have been instrumental in expanding the family's cabinet making activities to secure national and international status. By the end of the nineteenth century the family had progressed from depending upon the small concern of a sole proprietor and manufacturer in a South Yorkshire town to owning one of the largest cabinet manufacturers in the Midlands, winners of gold medals at York (1879) and Paris (1900),<sup>26</sup> Cabinet Makers and Upholsterers by Special Appointment to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, with a clientele including such other luminaries as the Duke of Norfolk and Archbishop of York. In 1885, it was claimed of the firm that:

"We know of no firm of cabinet makers and house  
decorators that have done more within this decade  
to correctly educate the domestic tastes of the  
people."<sup>27</sup>

In 1883, Johnson & Appleyards commissioned a prestigious new cabinet

---

<sup>25</sup> New Lord Mayor 7.11.1916. Death of former Lord Mayor of Sheffield. Mr Walter Appleyard. Sheffield Daily Telegraph 25. 7. 1930.

<sup>26</sup> The Times, 16 th & 21st August, 1900.

<sup>27</sup> The Mercantile Age, October 1885, quoted in The late Mr Joseph Appleyard, of Conisborough. The Cabinet Maker & Art Furnisher August 1st 1890.

works and showrooms to be erected on a prime site in the centre of Sheffield.<sup>28</sup> Constructed of Huddersfield stone in the Grecian style with a "massive frontage of 130' . . . eleven show windows, two entrances and a goods entrance" the building was clearly designed to capture and impress the Sheffield market. Inside, it was carefully organised to make the best use of space and light. In the basement were showrooms for carpets, linoleums and other floor coverings, blankets and bed linen and a warehouse for furniture. On the ground floor were saleshops and showrooms for wallpapers and "other wall decorations" together with a counting house with a yard, stables and van shed at the back. On the first floor were further furniture showrooms with workshops behind for cabinet makers and painters. The second floor had more furniture showrooms with draughtsmen's, artists' and decorators' rooms to the rear. Finally, the third floor contained workshops for gilders, French polishers, upholsterers and upholsteresses [ separate rooms?] as well as rooms for cutting carpets and manufacturing bedding.<sup>29</sup>

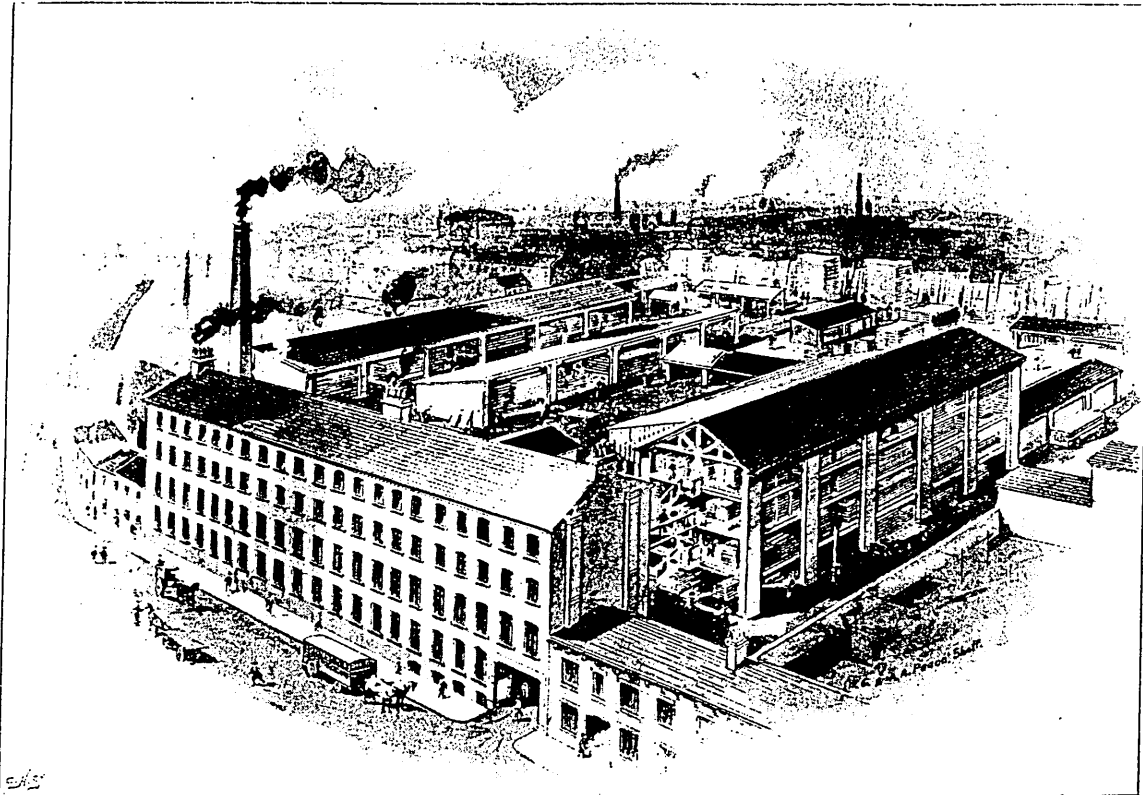
Combining their showrooms under one roof instead of the split sites previously occupied in Fargate was clearly a success as they soon undertook further substantial alterations to the new premises. These included the addition of an attic storey and mansard roof in 1892 ( Figure 6.2. ) and the removal of many of the cabinet making processes to a separate four - storey site a short distance away in Sidney St. ( Figure 6.3. ). In the Diamond Jubilee Edition of Sheffield and Rotherham ( Illustrated) Up - to - Date several pages were devoted to the premises and activities of the firm which was considered amongst the town's leading commercial enterprises. The 1892 Sheffield Rate Books listed the building on Leopold St. as a saleshop, warehouse and workshops with a ratable value of £285. It was owned by Johnson & Appleyards with the three brothers Joseph, Walter and Frank plus Joseph jnr. the son of Joseph (3), listed as occupiers.

The new layout of the premises on Leopold St. and Fargate combined an efficient working environment with impressive showrooms designed to maximise the potential of the services on offer. The basement was used for

<sup>28</sup> The original plans were dated November 1883 and were drawn up by the Sheffield architects, Flockton & Gibb. S. Welsh, William Flockton, Architects. 1963, p.23.

<sup>29</sup> The Sheffield Weekly Telegraph, Saturday March 22, 1884. New Sheffield Illustrated - No.2 New Premises in Fargate and Leopold St.





6.3. Sketch of the cabinet works in Sydney St. showing considerable space devoted to the seasoning of timbers including oak, teak, mahogany and walnut.



6.4. Section of a crowded show room, Leopold St. showing drawing room furniture in a variety of styles.

the storage of carpets and linoleums with light provided by means of reflectors. The ground floor now displayed a variety of "general goods" including glass, china, wallpapers, lamps, linoleums, carpets from England, Scotland, Turkey, Persia and the Continent and furniture in a range of styles including Chippendale, Sheraton, Louis Quatorze and Louis Quinze (Figure 6. 4.). Behind the showrooms were offices for Mr Appleyard, cashiers and clerks. The first floor consisted of extensive showrooms devoted to room settings of dining and drawing room furniture. Contemporary photographs show various room settings, some with ornately moulded ceilings, heavily draped fire surrounds and large, floral carpets provide a dramatic backcloth for gilded, French - style furniture ( Figure 6.5.). Others had plain walls and rugs covering stained floorboards to create a gothic backcloth to heavily carved oak furniture in the "Jacobethan" fashion (Figure 6. 6.). A photograph showing a room setting containing a mixture of late Victorian, Adamesque, Sheraton and Arts and Crafts styles used the drawing room of Joseph Appleyard (3)'s home, Park Grange (Figure 6. 7.) together with much of his own furniture.

The second floor displayed bedroom suites, brass and iron bedsteads many of which, like the drawing and dining room furniture, were specially designed by the firm (Figure 6. 8.). Cheaper goods together with wallpapers, English and Continental decorative materials, were shown on the third floor where there were also upholstery rooms and workshops for polishing all goods prior to delivery. "Rooms devoted to the draughtsmen and designers, a staff of skilled experts being in constant employ in this most important branch"<sup>30</sup> were also on this floor so that they could easily be reached to discuss with clients their particular needs. The top floors were dedicated to carpet and upholstery workshops and feather storage. The floors were connected by lifts, the rooms well lit and ventilated and areas were set aside where staff could prepare their own food.

The cabinet works were now located in nearby premises in Sidney St. which consisted of an extensive yard and four storey building measuring 112' x 30'. The yard contained stables, van sheds and tall, open skeleton - roofed sheds

---

<sup>30</sup> Sheffield and Rotherham (Illustrated) Up - to - Date. Diamond Jubilee Edition, Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. 1897, p. 149.



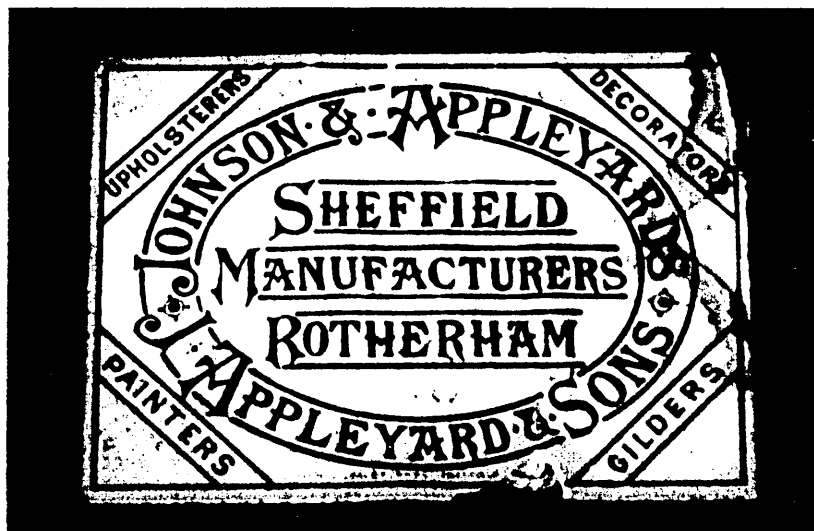
6.5. A drawing room setting featuring gilded furniture in the French style, curtained fire surround and a large brass electrolier.



6.6. Dining and drawing room furniture in the dark, carved oak "Jacobethan" style.



6.7. Interior of Park Grange, Norfolk Park, the home of Joseph Appleyard (3) utilised as a setting to advertise the firm's furniture and decorating.



6.8. Paper label in green and black of Johnson & Appleyards and J. Appleyard & Sons.



where stocks of teak, mahogany, walnut, oak and other timbers were turned and air seasoned. After several months outside, the timbers were cut and sent to a drying room whose environment was controlled by a furnace which would reduce the moisture content of the planks to between 8 - 12%. Great pride was given to the quality and soundness of the timbers used by Johnson & Appleyards, the purchase of which consumed considerable time and capital outlay. Quality assurance of the timber stock was of such importance that both Joseph (2) and Joseph (3) played direct roles in the inspection and procurement of logs.<sup>31</sup>

Further substantial outlay would have been required to equip the works with its "first - class modern plant" run by a 20 horse power gas engine.<sup>32</sup> A Universal Wood Worker was located on the ground floor together with circular and band saws, planing, mortising and tenoning and slotting machines, a spindle - moulder and tool sharpening devices (Figure 6.9). Such equipment helped speed production at the preparatory stages but for assembling, carving, inlaying and polishing reliance still rested with the experience and hand skills of the work force. Areas were set aside for cabinet makers (Figure 6.10), carvers, carpenters, polishers, gilders, a sealed fumigating chamber and offices for the designers and foreman. The success of the firm at this time relied heavily upon specialisation within the workforce co - ordinated by an informed and strong management structure. The experiences gained by the three sons of Joseph (2) as apprentices to their father and later in Rotherham, would have provided them with invaluable knowledge of the planning and manufacturing processes required to run a large organisation. It appears, in part, to have been the loss of such direct knowledge which later contributed to the firm's demise.

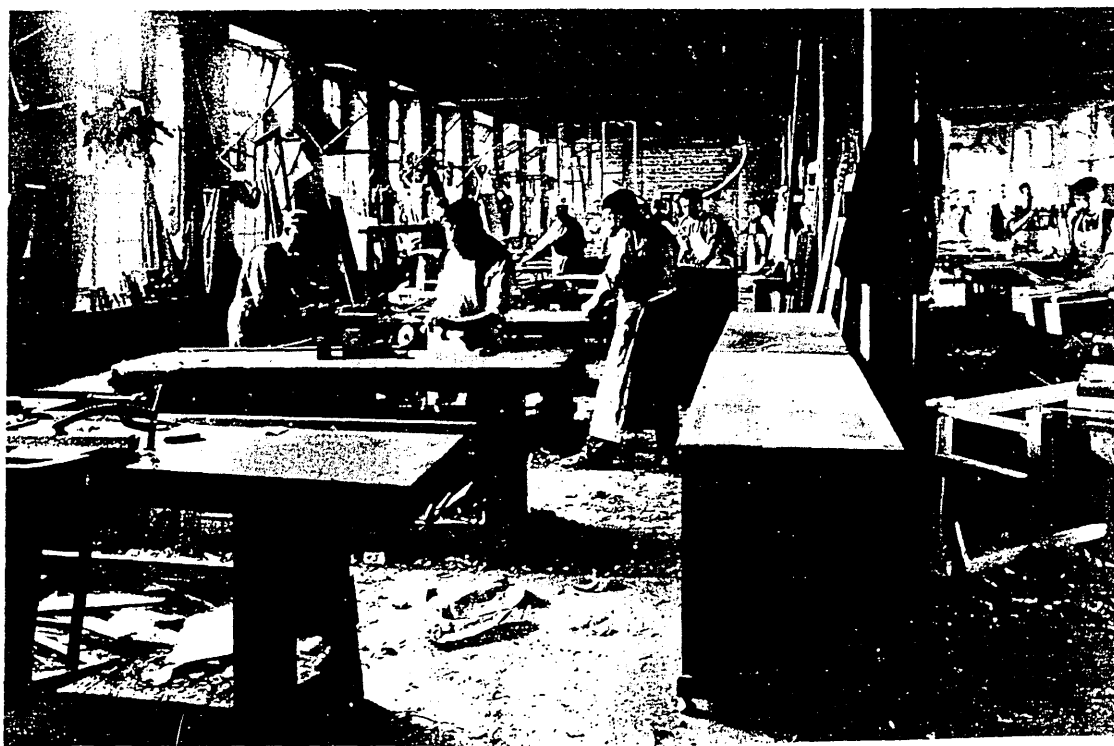
In 1897, when Sheffield and Rotherham Up -to -Date was written, the author was shown several of the projects Johnson & Appleyards had in hand which reflected their diversity and attention to detail. Current projects included designing, manufacturing and supplying the oak furniture, curtains,

<sup>31</sup> The Cabinet Maker & Art Furnisher. August 1st 1890. *ibid.* " Mr. Appleyard will be a missed man . . . not the least at the Liverpool timber sales, which he has attended regularly for many years past." Joseph (3)'s visits to South America may well have been in search of new supplies.

<sup>32</sup> Whilst considerable capital was expended in heavy machinery it was still the custom for each journeyman or cabinet maker to supply his own hand tools.



6.9. Machine floor, Sydney St. A variety of band and circular saws, planing, morticing, tenoning and slotting machines which were powered by a 20 h.p. gas engine.



6. 10. Cabinet makers' floor. Benches are placed under long windows to gain maximum light. Each man would have his own set of tools.

upholstery, fixtures and fittings for the new Sheffield Town Hall, manufacturing an oak reredos for Rotherham Parish Church, manufacturing and installing the internal fittings and furniture for the offices of a new bank in South Wales and "some exceptionally large - sized window frames and massive doors and wainscotting teak for a suburban mansion."<sup>33</sup> In order that the third of a mile of crimson velvet required for the curtains of the new Sheffield Town Hall was not wasted and that absolute accuracy of hanging was achieved, patterns were shown to the author initially made in a cheap material to which any alterations required could be made prior to the designated material being cut. Such attention to detail had become the way in which Johnson & Appleyards had won orders from the Sheffield industrialists and others much further afield.

The article stated that Johnson & Appleyards was the only firm left in Sheffield [in 1897] which could undertake every process of cabinet making from the design to completion of each article. The firm was now in a position to build and equip domestic, commercial and ecclesiastical premises. This intention had been set out in the Memorandum of Association of Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. in February 1891, the year it became a limited company with a nominal share capital of £30,000. Its purposes were: <sup>34</sup>

(a) To acquire and take over as going concerns the various businesses carried on at Sheffield and Rotherham, both in the County of York, and in Melbourne in the Colony of Victoria, Australia, under the respective styles or firms of "JOHNSON AND APPELYARDS," "J. APPELYARD AND SONS," and "THE MIDLAND FURNISHING COMPANY."<sup>35</sup>

(b) To carry on all or any of the businesses of Cabinet Makers, Furniture Manufacturers and Dealers, Upholsterers, Ironmongers, Drapers, Undertakers, Carpenters, Joiners, Decorators,

---

<sup>33</sup> Sheffield and Rotherham ( Illustrated) Up - to Date, p. 151.

<sup>34</sup> Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ), p. 147 f.f. S.O. Addy & W.T. Pike, Sheffield at the Opening of the Twentieth Century. Contemporary Biographies. Pike's New Century Series No. 4, p.p. 179 - 180. 1901.

<sup>35</sup> Certificate and Articles of Association No. 33439 / C.N.L. 32518. Companies House File No. 000333439.

Painters, Paperhangers, Builders, Mechanical  
Engineers, Contractors and Dealers . . .

(c) To carry out business as Auctioneers and  
Valuers, House and Estate Agents, and  
Commissioning Agents

(d) To lay out for building purposes, and to build on,  
improve, let on building leases, advance money to  
persons building, or otherwise develop the  
same . . . <sup>36</sup>

Few firms were able to offer facilities from estate agency, land acquisition and building to manufacturing and supplying furniture, fixtures and fittings whether in England or Australia. To date, nothing is known of The Midland Furnishing Company and its exploits in Melbourne although D. B. Welbourn claims his father considered emigrating to work in his father - in - law's furniture - making business there around 1909 which Joseph (3) had founded around 1888. It is known that Joseph travelled extensively for business purposes:

" . . . having in the year 1872 visited Peru, and in  
the year 1888 made a trip to South Africa,  
Tasmania, South Australia, Victoria, New South  
Wales, Queensland and New Zealand, in order to  
open up business, revisiting the five latter Colonies  
in the following year, and returning by the United  
States of America. . ." <sup>37</sup>

Interest in the Antipodes may have been generated by the presence of relatives there.<sup>38</sup> The trading links arranged via these travels appear to have become of considerable benefit to the company. An advertisement in the Sheffield & Rotherham Independent of 21 June, 1890 announced that considerable additions had been made to the rear of their building to enable the sale of:

" . . . all textile fabrics and drapery appertaining to  
house furnishing.

---

<sup>36</sup> Memorandum of Association of Johnson & Applebards Ltd. Companies Act 1862 to 1890, p. 1 - 2.

<sup>37</sup> S.O. Addy & W. T. Pike, Commercial Biographies, Sheffield at the Opening of the Twentieth Century. 1901, p.179 - 180.

<sup>38</sup> Their father's brother, William who may also have been a cabinet maker, had emigrated to the Antipodes in 1854.



As their wholesale foreign trade enables them to purchase from the manufacturers at the lowest prices and on such favourable terms as are only granted to merchants and shippers . . .”

A wide range of services and competitive pricing were matched with quality of design and production as the firm successfully took part in national and international exhibitions. A 1904 bill head from Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. advertises their “Prize Medal awarded for Superiority of Design and Workmanship, York, 1879” and a “Gold Medal awarded Paris Exhibition 1900.”<sup>39</sup> It describes them as cabinet designers and manufacturers, upholsterers, decorators, undertakers, carpet - warehousemen, Colonial merchants and exporters. Terms were strictly net and credit accounts were charged interest at 5%. The 1904 bill head suggests that goods manufactured by Johnson & Appleyards in England were exported to Australia rather than a manufacturing establishment having been set up there. Another bill head dated 1935 further describes them as “Agents for Liberty & Co., London.”

### **The Withdrawal of Family Involvement.**

In 1910 Joseph Appleyard died in Kobe harbour whilst on a cruise to Japan with his brother Frank causing the firm to lose its prime mover. Unlike Walter, Joseph had concentrated his efforts on the family business. He was a staunch Conservative and had taken no part in civic life although he had been a member of both the King St. and Sheffield Athenaeum Clubs and the Wentworth Lodge of Freemasons. His will and the balance sheet of his estate drawn up a year after his death provides an insight into the condition of the firm at the time. It shows capital sums taken from the business in the form of earnings and dividends which were invested in property and shares to generate additional income. With assets of £31, 059- 4- 11 and liabilities of £15, 111- 2- 7 Joseph (3)'s estate had a net value of £15, 948 - 2- 4. The liabilities consisted mainly of mortgages for £9500 on the freehold property on the corner of Leopold St. and Fargate ( i.e. Johnson & Appleyards Ltd.), and another for £1200 on his home, Broombank. A third was for £700 on the security of his Life Policies. His liability to the London City Midland Bank Ltd.

---

<sup>39</sup> The Times, 16 th & 21st August, 1900: Group 12. Class LXVI, Silver medal, Class LXIX, Gold medal, Class LXXI, Bronze medal,

amounted to £2605 - 1 - 8. His assets included £9870 - 18 - 9 in shares, of which 1506 were 5% were Cumulative Preference Shares in Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. of £10 each ( £8 paid ) and valued at £4 plus 125 Ordinary shares of £10 also valued at £4. His home, Broombank, was valued at £1800 whilst the firm's premises on Leopold St. and Fargate were valued at £12, 853 - 3 - 2 . This had provided Joseph (3) with an annual income of £647 - 10 - 8 who appears to have owned the premises and rented them to the business. He was able to leave his wife an annual income of £500.

His marriage to Sarah Flint Stokes, a governess from March, Lincolnshire, had produced 8 children but little desire, on the part of his offspring, to perpetuate the family business. Only two of his four sons, Joseph (1881 - 1902) and Harry (1876 - 1954 ), entered the firm. Joseph drowned in an accident and Harry remained until shortly after his father's death when possible conflict over the distribution of his father's shares in Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. caused him to leave. Harry had been groomed for a life in the firm from an early age. In November 1897, he was given a coming of age party at the Channing Hall, Sheffield, attended by all the staff of Johnson & Appleyards. He received training with Harrods in London and Maple & Co. in Paris ( where he married against the wishes of his father when exhibiting there with Johnson & Appleyards in 1900).

In 1901, the directors of Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. were the three brothers Joseph, Walter and Frank. By 1905, Frank had left to be replaced by Harry Appleyard and Charles Edward Friend, son of L.S. Friend who had helped the family acquire William Johnson's. Joseph, Harry and C.E. Friend each held 125 Ordinary shares; Joseph's wife had one share as did Walter and his wife between them. Joseph had 1536 Preference shares and Walter had 250. By 1907, Joseph had transferred 12 Preference shares each to Harry and C.E. Friend. In 1908, Harry was signing documents as the Company Secretary<sup>40</sup>. Under the terms of Joseph (3)'s will each of his children, excluding Harry, received 25 Ordinary shares and 37 Preference shares, leaving 1309 Preference shares in the hands of his executors. By the time of the A.G.M. in 1911, Harry had left the company having sold his shares to Joseph Dean Taylor, a new director of the company alongside Walter Appleyard and C.E.

---

<sup>40</sup> Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. Special Resolutions, E.G.M. held on 13.7.1908.

Friend.

After leaving the family firm, Harry appears to have started his own business - a billhead exists stating: "H. APPLEYARD, Furniture, Carpets, Decorations, Electric Fittings, Antiques etc. All goods direct from actual sources of supply at much less than usual shop retail prices".<sup>41</sup> The remaining two brothers joined the services in order to avoid the family business. Family memoirs give the impression that whilst keen for all his children to be well educated, sending them abroad to learn languages and complete their education, Joseph(3) was a difficult man, prone to bouts of violence and beating his sons. His wife took to drink and it appears the sons had little desire to incorporate difficult domestic circumstances into their work lives.

The need to moderate excessive capital withdrawal to sustain individual lifestyles, the absence of a long term strategy to raise and maintain a capital reserve and the reluctance to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances appear to have been areas whose neglect contributed to the demise of Johnson & Appleyards Ltd.<sup>42</sup> as it failed to replace the momentum lost by Joseph(3)'s sudden death. The loss of direct family involvement with the day to day running of the firm meant they continued to expect dividends when the capital would have served better being re - invested to reduce the company overdraft and secure better discounts through bulk buying. The managers employed appear to have been content to rest on past achievements rather than strive to adapt to the radically changing social and economic conditions created by the War or address the family's continued financial drain upon resources. Writing in 1922 from Endcliffe Crescent, the home of Walter Appleyard, Burkewood Welbourn a co - trustee of Joseph (3)'s will and husband to one of his daughter's, wrote:

" . . . . I decided to come to Sheffield to do some Trustee work. There are a good many important points to discuss including that of finding some additional capital for J & A Ltd. They do not seem likely to do anything good until they have more working capital & can take advantage of trade

---

<sup>41</sup> Private Collection - D.B. Welbourn.

<sup>42</sup> Geoffrey Jones & Mary B. Rose, *Family Capitalism in Business History*, Vol. 35, October 1993, No. 4, p.4.



As the firm struggled to adapt to the changing demands and markets which evolved between the two World Wars, the family slowly sold their shares to the firm's directors i.e. J.D. Taylor and Friends father and son. On 20 September 1941 all the shares in the business were sold to another Sheffield family business, H.T. Atkinson who still maintain Johnson & Appleyards Ltd as a non- trading company.

Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. was a family business which flourished under the personal control of active family members but failed to make the transition to a fully managed, autonomous concern. The firm lacked a dynamic and established management structure which could absorb and deal with the sudden loss of a strong director and shareholder or override family demands and disputes. It is conceivable that directors from outside the family were given only limited authority to determine policy and lacked the skills and experience to do so.<sup>44</sup> In its heyday, upto the outbreak of World War I, the firm achieved considerable successes and became recognised as one of the provinces leading cabinet makers. It is not known exactly how many people they employed and estimates vary between 200 - 400 for the Sheffield and Rotherham branches. Either figure shows them to have been a very large concern in their field<sup>45</sup> and one of the town's major employers outside the traditional Sheffield industries. Information has not been found concerning the training of their designers though it may be assumed, like Eadon's and Manuel's before them, they took advantage of the Sheffield School of Art. No references have been discovered to suggest they commissioned freelance designers as occurred in some of the Sheffield light trades and other provincial cabinet makers although it is known they were recognised as key introducers of the latest furniture styles into Sheffield. This aspect may not necessarily be as a result of regional conservatism but due more to many

---

<sup>43</sup> Burkewood Welbourn, 14 November 1922. D.B. Welbourn F.Eng. Portrait of Burkewood Welbourn An Engineer. Pentland Press 1996. p.298

<sup>44</sup> Roger Lloyd - Jones & Myrddin J. Lewis, Personal Capitalism and British Industrial Decline, Business History Review Vol. 68 Autumn 1994 p.379

<sup>45</sup> Judy Attfield, 'Give 'em something dark and heavy': The Role of Design in the Material Culture of Popular British Furniture, 1939 - 1965. Journal of Design History Vol. 9 No. 3 1966 p. 196 quoting 'The story of High Wycombe: survey of the British furniture industry,' Furnishings from Britain, National Trade Press 1953, pp. 143 - 147.



manufacturers resenting “ the intervention of non - trade design professionals, unfamiliar with traditional practice and standard production processes . . . ”

The conservative management structure of Johnson & Appleyard's was not quick to incorporate external views which might be interpreted as threatening their authority or production methods.<sup>46</sup>

Strong leadership with the ability to make decisions quickly was one of the features which enabled Johnson & Appleyard's to flourish during the nineteenth century. From its inception as a single - owner enterprise in Conisborough the firm grew to become a family partnership and later a limited company.<sup>47</sup> From the foundations laid in Rotherham and Sheffield they were able to secure contracts on the basis of their designs and services throughout the country in competition with other firms. Much of the success was due to the vigour and determination of the two Josephs who took the business through its development from sole trader to leading provincial manufacturer in the space of some 35 years. The awareness to promote the firm and encourage the highest standards in workmanship resulted in them entering and winning awards at international exhibitions. In terms of marketing, the awards and their moves from Conisborough to Rotherham, Rotherham to Sheffield and from Sheffield to a national platform, show they were prepared to actively seek out new clients and commissions. Whilst nothing to date is known about their activities in Melbourne, Australia, it may be acknowledged that it was in the light of seeking out new markets that the move was initiated.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century Johnson & Appleyards were instrumental in modernising local tastes and introducing cosmopolitan concepts into Sheffield's domestic furnishing scene.<sup>48</sup> Their involvement with the refurbishment and equipping of The Cutlers' Hall in Sheffield did much to improve sales amongst the town's leading industrialists and curb the practice of some of Sheffield's leading citizens acquiring furniture directly from London manufacturers. Located in the centre of the town their prestigious, purpose - built showrooms assured them a high public profile with large plate

---

<sup>46</sup> Judy Attfield, ibid. p.188.

<sup>47</sup> Nenadic, ibid. p.93.

<sup>48</sup> Further informal evidence claims their displays of British Art Furniture or Art Nouveau was considered “a bit swanky” by much of Sheffield's population - conversation with Mary Walton retired head of Sheffield Local Studies Library & author of Sheffield and its Achievements.

glass windows allowing stock to be clearly advertised. Their comprehensive workshops nearby further ensured quick deliveries of items ordered and the ability to offer a bespoke service well into the twentieth century.<sup>49</sup>

Whilst Sheffield produced other furniture manufacturers whose businesses supported several generations, Johnson & Appleyards was the most successful in terms of size and marketing in addition to achieving considerable reputé in terms of the quality of its products. The cabinet making firm of John Manuel & Son<sup>50</sup> achieved similar success in terms of securing widespread patronage but possibly due to the untimely death of his grandson and successor, the firm did not achieve the same reputation and standing as its rivals.

Unlike the majority of firms within the Sheffield furniture industry Johnson & Appleyards was a large concern, able to plan ahead, acquire modern equipment and techniques and accommodate the cost of attending prestigious exhibitions in order to attract new clients. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century Sheffield had sufficient wealth and standing to support a firm in these ambitions, unlike a hundred years earlier when the Brailsfords<sup>51</sup> had attempted and failed to break away from the pedestrianism and unpredictability of local patronage.

In terms of furniture history the firm of Johnson & Appleyards Ltd. is relatively unknown and lacks the attendant kudos of many West End firms. The taint of Sheffield and provincialism is difficult to eradicate. However, much of their output is appreciated at auction in terms of quality of proportion, technique, materials and manufacture. Their practice of labelling items means it may be possible to trace their output and build up a known body of their work. In time, it may be possible the firm will achieve recognition similar to that given to Marsh, Jones & Cribb of Leeds, Lamb's of Manchester or Christopher Pratt's of Bradford.

---

<sup>49</sup> Attfield, ibid. p.189.

<sup>50</sup> See: Janet Ball, John Manuel & Son of Sheffield. Furniture History Society.1978 pp. 62 - 65. Also footnote 34, Chapter 5.

<sup>51</sup> See: Ivan Hall, A Neoclassical episode at Chatsworth, Burlington Magazine.1980. p. 403 ff. and Chapter 3: Patronage and Manufacturers of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries.

## Conclusion

To date, the evidence for the form and development of the Sheffield furniture industry during the nineteenth century shows an enterprise which increased considerably in size but changed little in structure and whose produce was largely determined by the nature of the parochial and isolated society it served.

Insularity, informality and a lack of social diversity meant the demands placed upon the industry were for the comfort, durability and pragmatism of the Sheffield code. The tenets of the code, and its widespread popularity across local society and its institutions, meant for much of the period manufacturing output could be described as sound but pedestrian. Indeed, as has been seen, a body of evidence supports the view that Sheffield furniture makers continued to produce styles several decades after it was assumed they had become obsolete in order to supply the demands of their immediate market. For much of the century civic and corporate bodies were poor patrons of the furniture industry appearing unaware of the value to the town's prestige of aggrandising building and furnishing schemes.

Cosmopolitan sophistication remained a rarity until Sheffield's status as a manufacturing centre produced industrialists of national standing whose homes had to reflect not only their wealth and success but their entree into the higher echelons of society. Some of Sheffield's leading manufacturers closely monitored stylistic developments and appear to have been able to introduce new forms to their clients. George Eadon's Gothic sofa for Sir John Brown, William Johnson's corner wardrobe for Mark Firth, Arthur Hayball's transition from classical to Gothic forms and the move away from High Victorian to Aesthetic styles by Zachariah Jackson, continue a pattern established at the start of the century by the Sheffield cabinet makers who embraced Sheraton's new styles.

The firms which were most successful appear to have been those who could

cater for the conservatism of the Sheffield code as well as the tastes of a more urbane clientele. By the end of the century, aided by a background support of affluent and aggrandising patronage, the Sheffield furniture industry became able to compete for and win commissions of national repute. Further research may be required to see if firms such as John Manuel & Son and Johnson & Appleyards can be equated with other leading provincial manufacturers through their use of designers such as Lutyens and Talbot to provide original furnishing schemes for their clients.

As indicated, the Sheffield furniture industry grew considerably in size as its immediate market increased but changed little in overall structure. With the exception of those firms already mentioned and a handful of others, businesses remained small, cautious, family concerns operating from rented premises and maintaining close physical links with their immediate market. Several branches of a family could be found in the same trade with each family unit operating independently to minimise risk exposure. Informal co-operation and support appears to have operated between such groups but consolidation was avoided in order to maximise the market potential and prevent the entire family suffering if a firm failed.

Throughout the century a principal feature of Sheffield's furniture industry was its ability to adapt to the prevailing economic climate. The flexibility to move to larger or smaller premises and the ability to increase or decrease the number of services appear to have been key features of many small firms survival. Other firms survived by building up expertise in a particular trade, or combination of trades, whilst some chose diversification, establishing extra income streams through property ownership or engaging in activities remote from their core business. By the end of the century it is noticeable that small, multi-service generalists had had their day. Most firms found greater efficiency by concentrating upon a narrow band of complimentary services offering a strong identity.

The initial assumption that the Sheffield furniture industry was a provincial enterprise during the nineteenth century is not immediately dismissed. Of note is its flexibility to survive economic fluctuations, the ability of some firms to



supply the stylistic needs of conflicting markets and secure national reputations. However, it appears that only at the beginning and end of the century, supported first by the wealth and confidence of the cutlers and latterly iron and steel merchants of renown was it possible for the Sheffield code to be supplanted by cosmopolitan taste.

# **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## **Primary Sources**

### **1) Archive Sources**

**Annual Report of the Sheffield School of Art.** Sheffield Hallam University.

**Bush Collection.**

**Catalogue of Goods Manufactured by W. Ford & Son, Sheffield.** C.1905.

**Christie's Wentworth Sale Catalogue,** London 1998.

**Cutlers' Company.** "Liber Minut Socieat Cutler in Hallamshire in Com: Ebor"

**Drawings for the Furniture of Endcliffe Hall.** AP 38 – 62, Sheffield City Archive Library.

**Eadon, W.H. & J.A.** Inventory of the Contents of the Cutlers' Hall, Sheffield. 1914. F311.

**Eadon, Lockwood & Riddle.** Sales Catalogues.

**Eadon, Lockwood & Riddle Sale Catalogue to Include the Residual Contents of the Sheffield Club -**  
- September 1998.

**Estate of the Late Mr. Joseph Appleyard.** Balance Sheet & Income Account. 10 February 1910.

**Graves, J.J.** Successor to The Manuel Galleries of High Class Furniture. C.1900. Sheffield City Libraries.

**Hayball Papers / ACC.** Sheffield City Archive Library.

**Hovey, G.H. & Sons.** Misc. Papers, loose leaf, n.d. Sheffield City Libraries.

**Johnson & Appleyards Ltd.** Certificate and Articles of Association. No.33439/ C.N.L. 32518.  
Companies House File no. 000333439.

**Manuel, John & Son.** Misc. Papers, loose leaf, n.d. Sheffield City Archive Library.

**Maple & Co. Ltd.** Endcliffe Hall, Sheffield, Yorkshire. Sale Catalogue. London 1893.

**Nowill Collection.**

**Oakbrook Estate, Sale Plan 1916.** Sheffield City Libraries.

**Phillips Sale Catalogues.**

**Sheffield Rate Books.**

**Spencer, Henry & Son.** Sale Catalogues.

**Spencer – Stanhope Manuscripts.** Sheffield City Archive Library

**Townsend, William.** The Royal Visit of 1875. Collection of newspaper cuttings, Sheffield City Libraries.

**Walsh, John.** Sales Catalogues.

Wharnccliffe Muniments Vouchers

## **2) Official Papers**

**Bingham Report 1949.**

**Census of Population.**

**Parker, John.** A Statement of the Population etc. of the Town of Sheffield 1830.

.. .. Evidence to the Select Committee on Public Walks. 1833.

**Symonds, Jelinger.** Report on the Trades of Sheffield and the Moral and Physical Conditions of the Young Persons Employed in Them 1842.

## **Trade Magazines and Journals.**

**Builder, Sheffield.** October 5, 1861.

**Building News.** Old Oak Chimney-piece at Carbrook Hall, Sheffield. 30 March 1883.

**Cabinet Maker & Art Furnisher.** The Late Mr. Joseph Appleyard of Conisborough. August 1890.

**Cornhill Magazine.**

**Gell's Trade Directory of Sheffield.**

**Illustrated Catalogue of the International Exhibition 1862.**

**Illustrated Exhibitor.** Sketches of the Principle Objects in the Great Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations. London 1851.

**Official Illustrated Catalogue of the Yorkshire and North Midlands Model Cottage Exhibition, 1907.**

Sheffield City Libraries.

**Kelly's Trade Directories of Sheffield.**

**Regional Furniture, The Journals of.**

Robson's Trade Directories of Sheffield.

White's Trade Directories of Sheffield.

## **Newspapers.**

Daily Telegraph.

Illustrated London News.

Newspaper Cuttings Relating to Sheffield.

Sheffield Daily Telegraph.

The Public Advantages of Personal Munificence. 22 May 1865.

The Royal Visit. The Royal Apartments at Oakbrook. 14 August 1875.

The Death of Mr Arthur Hayball. 30 June 1887.

The Endcliffe Hall Sale 18 April - 22 April 1893.

Sheffield Illustrated

Sheffield Independent.

The Ducal Residence. 6 August 1859.

Sheffield Iris.

Sheffield Mercury.

Sheffield Register.

Sheffield & Rotherham Independent.

Death of Mr Mark Firth. 29 November 1880.

Death of Sir John Brown. 28 December 1896.

Special Supplement: Sheffield and its Streets. 8 December 1895.

Sheffield Weekly Telegraph.

Times.

## **SECONDARY SOURCES**

### **Pre 1900**

Dresser, Christopher. The Principles of Decorative Design. London 1873.

Eadon, Robert Eadon. Ed. Reminiscences of Old Sheffield, Its Streets and Its People. Sheffield 1875.

Eastlake, C.L. Hints on Household Taste. London 1868.

Gatty, Rev. Alfred. Hallamshire. The History and Topography of the Parish of Sheffield in the County of York – Hunter's Hallamshire - Second Edition revised and enlarged by Rev. Alfred Gatty. London 1869.



Sheffield. Past & Present. Sheffield 1873.

**Goodwin, Vicar of Attercliffe.** in Sketchley's Directory of Sheffield 1774.

**Hill, Frank H.** An Account of Some Trade Combinations in Sheffield. National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences. Special Volume. Trades' Societies and Strikes. 1860.

**Holland, George Calvert.** An Enquiry into the Moral, Social and Intellectual Condition of the Industrial Classes of Sheffield. London 1839.

The Vital Statistics of Sheffield. London 1843.

**Jones, Owen.** The Grammar of Ornament. London 1856.

**Loudon, John Claudius.** Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm & Villa Architecture & Furniture. London 1833.

**Mayhew, Henry.** Letters LXIII, LXIV, LXV. The Morning Chronicle Survey of Labour and the Poor: The Metropolitan Districts. Vol. 11. London 1850.

**Pawson & Brailsford.** Illustrated Guide to Sheffield & Neighbourhood. Sheffield 1862.

**Ruskin, John.** Fors Clavigera. 1875.

General Statement Explaining the Nature & Purpose of St. George's Guild. 1882.

**Sanford, J.L. & Townsend, M.** The Great Governing Families of England. London 1865.

**Sheffield & Rotherham ( Illustrated ) Up –to –Date.** Diamond Jubilee Edition 1897.

**Wornum, Ralph.** Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition 1851. London 1851.

Analysis of Ornament. The Characteristics of Style. London 1856.

## **POST 1900**

**Addy, S.O. & Pike, W.T.** Sheffield at the Opening of the Twentieth Century. Pike's New Century Series. 1901.

**Agius, Pauline.** British Furniture 1880 – 1915. Antique Collectors' Club 1978.

**Allwood, Rosamund.** Luxury Furniture Makers of the Victorian Period. Antique Collecting Vol. 23 No.2.

1988.

**Andrews, John.** A Catalogue of Common Things, W. Ford & Son of Sheffield. Antique Collecting. May

1993.

British Antique Furniture. Antique Collectors' Club. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

**Antique Collectors' Club Research Project.** Pictorial Dictionary of British Nineteenth Century Furniture Design 1977.

**Armstrong, W.G.H.** Education in Sheffield 1603 – 1955. *in* Sheffield & Its Region, A Scientific & Historical Survey. Sheffield 1956.

**Atfield, Judy.** Give 'em Something Dark & Heavy: The Role of Design in the Material Culture of Popular British Furniture, 1939 – 1965. *in* Journal of Design History Vol. 9 No.3 1966.

**Ball, Janet.** John Manuel & Son of Sheffield. *In* Furniture History Society. 1978.

**Barber, Brian.** Sheffield Borough Council 1843 – 18893. *in* The History of the City of Sheffield – Politics. 3 Vols. 1993. Ed. Clyde Binfield.

**Barnes, Janet.** Ruskin in Sheffield. Exhibition Catalogue. Sheffield City Libraries. 1985.

**Barracough, K.C.** Sheffield Steel. Sheffield 1976.

**Banham, Joanna, MacDonald, Sally & Porter, Julia.** Victorian Interior Designs. London 1993.

**Barrett, Helena & Phillips, John.** Suburban Style. The British Home, 1840 – 1960. London 1993.

**Beard, Geoffrey.** Craftsmen & Interior Decoration in England 1660 – 1820. London 1981.

**Beard, Geoffrey & Gilbert, Christopher.** Eds. Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660 – 1840. Furniture History Society 1986.

**Beet, A.E.** Arthur Hayball – A Dreamer in Wood. *in* Transactions of the Hunter's Archaeological Society.

Vol. 7 1951 – 1957.

**Beeton, Mrs. Isabella.** The Book of Household Management. London 1861. Reprint London 1986.

**Binfield, Clyde.** Ed. The History of the City of Sheffield 1843 – 1993. 3 Vols. Sheffield 1993.

**Binfield, Clyde & Hey, David.** Eds. Mesters to Masters. A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire. Oxford University Press 1997.

**Binstead, Herbert.** The Furniture Styles. London 1904.

**Bly, John.** Discovering English Furniture. Shire Publications 1976.

**Bostwick, David.** Sheffield in Tudor and Stuart Times. Sheffield City Museums 1985.

Decorative Plasterwork of the Yorkshire Region 1570 – 1670. Unpublished Ph.d. thesis.

University of Sheffield 1993.

**Boynton, L.O.** High Victorian Furniture. The Examples of Marsh, Jones of Leeds. Furniture History III. 1967.

**Bradbury, Frederick.** History of Old Sheffield Plate. Sheffield 1912.

Provenance of Mantlepiece erected in the Master Cutler's Room, Cutlers' Hall,

Sheffield. Sheffield 1928. Loose paper.

**Briggs, Asa.** Victorian Cities. London 1990.

Victorian Things. London 1988.

**Carpenter, Edward.** My Days and Dreams. London 1921.

**Chinnery, Victor.** Oak Furniture, The British Tradition. Antique Collectors' Club 1979.

**Clegg, Ann P.** The Residential Areas of Sheffield – An Analysis of Their Historical Development and Current Characteristics. Unpublished M.A. Thesis University of Sheffield. 1970.

**Cooper, Jeremy.** Victorian & Edwardian Furniture and Interiors from the Gothic Revival to Art Nouveau. London 1987.

**Cornforth, John.** English Interiors 1790 – 1848: The Quest for Comfort. London 1978.

The Search for a Style. Country Life and Architecture 1897 – 1935. London 1988.

**Cotton, Bernard.** The English Regional Chair. Antique Collectors' Club.

**Court Guide & County Blue Book of the West Riding of Yorkshire.** London 1900.

**Dean, June.** The Regency Furniture in Liverpool Town Hall, Furniture History 1979.

**Devonshire, Duchess of.** Chatsworth. Derbyshire 1996.

**Diamond, Michael.** Art & Industry in Sheffield 1850 – 1875. Alfred Stevens and His School. Exhibition Catalogue. Sheffield City Art Galleries.

**Doe, Vanessa S.** Some Developments in Middle Class Housing *in* Sheffield 1830 – 1875. Essays in the Economic & Social History of South Yorkshire. Eds. Sidney Pollard & Colin Holmes. Sheffield 1976.

**Edwards, Ralph.** Ed. The Dictionary of English Furniture 3 Vols. Antique Collectors' Club 1986.

**Edwards, Clive D.** Victorian Furniture Technology & Design. Manchester 1993.

**Farnsworth, Keith.** Mark Firth's Symbol of Success. Quality of Sheffield. November 1984.

**Forty, Adrain.** Objects of Desire. Design & Society Since 1750. London 1986.

**Garde Peach, L. du.** The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire in the County of York 1906 – 1956. Sheffield 1960.



**Gere, Charlotte.** Nineteenth Century Decoration. The Art of the Interior. London 1989.

**Gilbert, Christopher.** The Life and Works of Thomas Chippendale. 2 Vols. London 1978.

Chippendale's Patrons in the North. Exhibition Catalogue Temple Newsam, Leeds  
1968.

English Vernacular Furniture 1750 – 1900. Yale 1991.

**Girouard, Mark.** The English Town. Yale University Press 1990.

**Goodfellow, Alan W.** The Development of Communications in Sheffield & Its Region, A Scientific & Historical Survey. Sheffield 1956.

Sheffield Turnpikes in the Eighteenth Century. Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society. Vol. 5.

**Gloag, John.** English Furniture. London 1934.

**Graves, Sue.** Sheffield School of Art Prizewinners: Carvings and Related Subjects c. 1840 – 80. Sheffield City Art Galleries. n.d.

**Graves, Sue.** The Art Scene in Sheffield 1843 – 1900. Unpublished M.A. Thesis.

**Graves, Sue & Julie Goddard.** The Paintings, Sculpture and Furniture in the Cutlers' Hall. in Mesters to Masters. A History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire. Eds: Binfield, Clyde & David Hey. Oxford University Press 1997.

**Hadfield, Cawkwell, Davidson.** 150 Years of Architectural Drawings, Sheffield 1834 – 1984. Exhibition Catalogue.

**Harmen, Ruth & Roger Harper.** The Architecture of Sheffield. in The History of the City Of Sheffield 1843 – 1993. Ed. Binfield, Clyde. 3 Vols. Sheffield 1993.

**Hewison, Robert.** Art & Society. Ruskin in Sheffield 1876. Guild of St George, Ruskin Lecture 1979.  
London 1981.

**Hey, David.** The Making of South Yorkshire. Derbyshire 1979.

A History of Sheffield. Lancaster 1998.

**Hobson, Charles.** Walkley, A Fifty Year Old Workingman's Suburb. Town Planning Review II. Liverpool  
1912.

**Holmes, Michael.** The Country House Described. An Index to the Country Houses of Great Britain &  
Ireland. Winchester 1986.

**Hovey, G.H. & Sons.** Sheffield City Libraries. Misc. Papers Loose leaf, n.d.

**Hunt, A.J.** The Morphology and Growth of Sheffield *in* Sheffield & Its Region, A Scientific & Historical  
Survey. Sheffield 1956.

**Industries of Sheffield: Business Review.** British Industrial Publishing Co. Birmingham. c.1900.

**Jones, Geoffrey & Mary B. Rose.** Family Capitalism *in* Business History Vol 35, No. 4. October 1993.

**Jones, G.P.** Industrial Evolution *in* Sheffield & Its Region, A Scientific & Historical Survey. Sheffield  
1956.

**Jones, M.** Sheffield Woodland's Heritage. Sheffield Revised edition 1993.

**Joy, Edward.** English Furniture 1800 – 1851. London 1977.

**Kirkham, Pat, Mace, Rodney & Porter, Julia.** Furnishing the World. The East London Furniture Trade  
1830 – 1980. London 1987.

**Kirkham, Pat.** The London Furniture Trade 1700 – 1870. Furniture History Society 1988.

**Leader, Robert Eadon.** History of the Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire in the County of York. 2Vols.

Sheffield 1905.

Sheffield in the Eighteenth Century. Sheffield 1905 2<sup>nd</sup>. Edition.

A Century of Thrift – An Historical Sketch of the Sheffield Savings Bank 1819 – 1919. Sheffield 1906.

**Learoyd, Stan.** English Furniture Construction & Design 1500 – 1910. London 1981.

**Lloyd, G.I.H.** The Cutlery Trades – An Historical Essay in the Economics of Small – Scale Production. 1913.

**Lloyd – Jones, Roger & Myrddin J. Lewis.** Personal Capitalism and British Industrial Decline *in* Business History Review. Vol. 68. Autumn 1994.

**MacDonald, Sally.** Gothic Forms Applied to Furniture: The Early Work of Bruce James Talbot. Furniture History. Vol. XXIII, 1987.

**Mathers, Helen.** The City of Sheffield 1893 – 1926. *in* The History of the City Of Sheffield 1843 – 1993. Ed. Binfield, Clyde. 3 Vols. Sheffield 1993.

**Mitchell, B.R.** British Historical Statistics. Cambridge University Press.

**Morris, R.J. & Rodger, Richard.** Eds. The Victorian City, A Reader in British Urban History 1820 – 1914. London 1993.

**Myer, Ewart.** Of All Household Furniture Is There Any Piece Clothed More In Emotion Than The Bed? Cabinet Maker Supplement, Centenary Edition. Sept. 1980.

**Nenadic, Stana.** The Small Family Firm in Victorian Britain. *in* Business History. Vol. 35. No. 4. October 1993.

**Nether Edge Neighbourhood Group.** They Lived in Sharrow and Nether Edge. Sheffield 1988.

**Odom, Rev. William.** Hallamshire Worthies. Sheffield 1926.

**Oliver, John.** The Development and Structure of the Furniture Industry. Pergammon Press 1966.

**Peter, Thomas.** What Part Has Sheffield Played in Art Decorative during the Last Century? Sheffield City Libraries. 1921.

**Pevsner, Nikolaus.** The Buildings of England. Nottinghamshire. 1st edition

Yorkshire. The West Riding. London 1959.

Derbyshire. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1978.

**Pollard, Sidney.** A History of Labour in Sheffield. Liverpool 1959.

**Pollard, Sidney.** Real Earnings in Sheffield 1851 – 1914. *in* Yorkshire Bulletin of

Economic & Social Research. n.d.

**Pollard, Sidney & Holmes, Colin. Eds.** Essays in the Economic & Social History of South Yorkshire. Sheffield 1976.

**Reid, Caroline.** Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield.

Unpublished Ph.d. thesis University of Sheffield 1973.

**Robinson, John Martin.** Arundel Castle, W. Sussex – 1. A Seat of the Duke of Norfolk, E.M. Country Life. 23 May 1991.

**Schiffer Herbert F.** The Mirror Book, English, American & European. Pennsylvania 1983.

**Sheeran, George.** Brass Castles. Halifax 1993.

**Sheffield City Libraries** Artisans' Dwellings. A Few Accounts of Life in a Typical Back to Back House



and its Neighbourhood. Pamphlet. n.d.

**Shenstone, Pauline.** Portrait of the Cutlers' Hall. Sheffield 1983.

**Sheraton, Thomas.** The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterers' Drawing Book. 1793. Eds: Cole & Montgomery. 1970 Praeger edition.

**Simpson, M.A. & Lloyd, T.H. Eds.** Middle Class Housing In Britain. London 1977.

**Smith, Dennis.** Conflict and Compromise, Class Formation in English Society 1830 – 1914. London 1982.

**Stainton, J.H.** The Making of Sheffield 1865 – 1914. Sheffield 1924.

**Stevens, Alfred and His Work.** Exhibition Catalogue. Sheffield City Libraries.

**Stirling, J.F.** Pioneers of Engineering. Adventure in Steel Making. The Striking Career of Mark Firth.  
Newspaper Cuttings Relating to Sheffield Vol. 49 p.p. 105 – 106.

**Symonds R.W. & Whineray, B.B.** Victorian Furniture. London 1962.

**Tarn, John.** Sheffield. *In* Middle Class Housing in Britain. Eds. Simpson, M.A. & T.H. Lloyd.

**Temple Newsam Exhibition Catalogue.** Furniture in Yorkshire 1750 – 1900.

1974.

**Thompson, F.M.L.** English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century. London 1963.

**Thornton, Peter.** Authentic Décor. The Domestic Interior 1620 – 1920. London 1985.

**Timmins, G.** Made In Lancashire: A History of Regional Industrialisation. M.U.P. 1998.

**Townend, Harry.** The Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers in Sheffield & Its Region, A Scientific & Historical Survey. Sheffield 1956.

**Tweedale, Geoffrey.** Giants of Sheffield Steel. 1986.

Steel City. Entrepreneurship, Strategy and Technology in Sheffield 1743 – 1993.

Oxford 1995.

**Vickers, J. Edward.** The Old & Historical Buildings of Sheffield. Sheffield 1968.

A Popular History of Sheffield. Sheffield 1992.

**Walsh, Stephen.** A Brief History of the Firm or Architects Founded by John Gray Weightman and Matthew Ellison Hadfield. Unpublished thesis. Sheffield City libraries.

**Walton, Mary.** Sheffield. Its Story and its Achievements. Sheffield 1948.

**Welbourn, D.B. F.Eng.** Portrait of Burkewood Welbourn – An Engineer. Pentland 1996.

**Wills, Geoffrey.** English Looking Glasses. A Study of the Glass, Frames and Makers 1670 – 1820. London 1965.

---- The Late Rev. Reginald Gatty's Collection of Ancient Local Furniture. Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society. Vol. 1