The University of Newcastle
History Club
Department of History

STUDENT RESEARCH PAPERS IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

No. 6
1981

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PREFACE

This year sees a slight change in the nature and emphasis of the published Student Research Papers. In previous years they have been the product of Second Year students working on topics of their own choice from primary sources. As of 1981, Australian History is a first year subject only, and it was thought initially that the quality of primary research by First Year students would not be up to the standard we had set for the Research Papers in previous years.

However we have, in 1981, gained the opportunity for a new kind of historical training exercise, for the Department has become involved in research and writing for the 1938 volume of the Australian Bicentennial History Project. In particular a Working Party has been organised to carry out an oral history survey of life in Newcastle in 1938 using an interview schedule adapted from the oral research 'headquarters' of the Bicentennial Project.

The Working Party, comprising University and CAE staff, decided that students from both institutions should be invited to assist in order to widen the scope of the enterprise and to provide useful training in research and writing techniques. The exercise would be integrated into existing Australian History courses as part of the students' normal assignment work.

Each institution has proceeded in the manner best suited to its course requirements. We in the University chose some fifteen students from over a hundred in our First Year course and gave each a set of background readings on national and local history for the 1930s and some tuition in interviewing techniques. The students chose their own interviewees, people who were articulate and had good memories of Newcastle in 1938, were at least fifteen years old then and were still living in Newcastle in 1981. Because of competing course demands, each student was required to do only one interview and then to write an interpretative paper on the issues facing men or women in Newcastle in 1938.

This was very much a pilot project and the results reflected the trial and error gropings of the organisers and the students. The narrow interviewing base, the difficulty of saying anything significant about issues from the results of one interview, the lack of good local background publications for 1938 (except newspapers), the variable quality of interviewees, the vagaries of cassette recorders were just some of the difficulties encountered along the way. In the end we did not insist on an in-depth treatment of issues facing men and women but encouraged students to make the best of their interview and readings, stressing the importance of analysis and interpretation.

The best of the results appear in the following pages. The first two have chosen to widen their treatment beyond the experience of their interviewees to deal with general educational and lifestyle issues of the time. The other three have focussed on the patterns of their subjects' lives and tried to set them against a backdrop of Newcastle work and society in 1938. For reasons of confidentiality, the names of interviewees have not been used.

The project requires still a great deal of work to improve the interview schedule, to provide manageable and relevant background readings, to prepare students for their encounters and to train them to knit interviews and research together into historical analysis. These things will be done in the years to come, for our results have encouraged us to think that such an exercise can be, with proper direction, a useful tool in learning an historian's skills. It remains an exercise for First Year students and we are aware that expectations should not be pitched too high. Nonetheless, the information and insights gathered so far will contribute to an accumulating body of research material in local history which will at the same time assist in the writing of the Bicentennial History volumes.

Peter Hempenstall
Sheilah Gray
Noel Rutherford
Margaret Henry

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LIBERAL OR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:

A GULF IN NEWCASTLE IN 1938

by Veronica Lunn

Dr. Lang had prophesised in 1875 that Newcastle would become the principal seat of the manufacturing industry.[1] Inherent in the transition from "coal town to steel city",[2] was a rapid and concentrated expansion in the industrial sector and a population increase which by 1938 registered 115,600 residents.[3] Within twenty years of commencing operations in the area, the workforce of the B.H.P. and associated industries had risen from 1,500 to 5,000 employees.[4] The working class was increasingly becoming an industrial proletariat and the impact on facilities for educational and cultural enrichment was determined by environmental factors and the priorities imposed to foster the industrial centre.

The adult's perception of the world is conditioned by the access to information and the ability to assimilate it. The quality of formal education is an elementary factor in this process, however support for education beyond the primary years was not evident prior to 1940. There was a tendency amongst the working class to distrust the educated man; the universities were deemed "playgrounds of the rich".[5] This anti-intellectualism, which was basically class oriented, was a significant obstacle in the development of secondary and university education. In 1938, only 19.6% of N.S.W. pupils were obtaining post primary education[6] and only 25% of those who sat for the Intermediate Certificate continued their education to obtain a Leaving Certificate.[7] The low priority determined by the Department of Education in 1937, was implicit in the meagre budget provision of 10% of total education expenditure for secondary schooling.[8] There was a general assumption that pupils would leave school at fourteen or fifteen years of age and a prevailing attitude that females, in particular, did not finish their education.[9] Mendelsohn asserts that "education up to 1939 was felt to be wasted on girls",[10] and the general perception of education for the working class was implicit in the Sydney Morning Herald's opposition to "over-educating the rank and file".[11] A move to follow Victoria's lead and substantially increase secondary school fees was only narrowly defeated.[12]

The majority of adults in 1938 would have been subject to a utilitarian school curriculum which favoured a vocational syllabus and engendered specialisation at an early age. School attendance was compulsory between seven and fourteen years and primary school courses diverged into either superior primary schools or secondary education. The regulations of 1911 had divided Superior Public Schools into technical, domestic science and commercial education facilities.[13] By 1937 there were only 160 high schools in N.S.W., yet 487 superior schools.[14] Wickham Superior Public School, for example, had been established in 1878 and from 1913 combined a limited post primary education with domestic and commercial training for girls.[15] A former pupil recalls the restrictions of a stratified curriculum, "There were only two things a girl could do... either a commercial course or domestic studies".[16] Newcastle Central

School had been established with the object of centralising super-primary education in Newcastle,[17] and there was a movement towards comprehensive courses, which culminated in the conversion of many superior schools to high schools.[18] However, the significant point is that the pre-vocational emphasis in the curriculum precluded access to comprehensive and liberal education for students with limited financial support.

Mendelsohn proposes that "technical education was for the scholastically (and socially) inferior, the intellectually able...streamed to selective high schools whose courses were heavily influenced by university requirements".[19] In the same way that class allegiance could be indicated by residence in certain suburbs,[20] pursuit of educational options provided a fairly accurate index of status. Albeit a Labor dominated community, it is perhaps not too surprising to learn, that of a class of thirty students at Newcastle Girls High in 1932, only one Labor supporter could be found.[21] Educators, in particular, recognised the need for revision of a syllabus which had not been altered since 1925.[22] During 1938 branches of the New Education Fellowship were formed in each state and Newcastle hosted a conference in October of that year, designed to draw attention to the severe deficiencies in the education structure.[23]

The distinction between liberal and vocational education became more prominent in the area of tertiary studies. Frank Tate, who was president of the Australian Council for Educational Research in the late 1930s, highlighted the inequities between liberal and technical education. He drew attention to the general view that only a modicum of general education was required by working class children. There was a polarisation between the pure knowledge taught at universities and the applied science and practical skills offered at the Technical Colleges. Most significantly, he perceived industrialisation to be an influence hindering education.[24]

The first technical classes in Newcastle were established and accommodated in the Newcastle School of Arts in 1877. The Wood Street site was occupied in 1896 with the trades school opening in 1919, to cater for over one thousand students within a decade.[25] There had always been a close link between industry and technical education in Newcastle. In 1933 the State Government had appointed a Royal Commission to enquire into the state of technical education and a Newcastle Advisory Committee was inaugurated in 1936.[26] Within the context of the provision of educational opportunities and the priorities asserted for the Newcastle region, it is extremely relevant that the committee was strongly representative of the views of the B.H.P., which was calling for the reform of technical education.[27] The new Technical College to evolve was opened in 1938 by the Chairman of Directors of the B.H.P., Mr. H.G. Darling, who asserted, "If there is one spot in Australia that stands out as suitable for the expansion of technical education, it is Newcastle".[28]

Technical College fees amounted to approximately five shillings per term; however the cost of securing a university degree was prohibitive. Tuition for an Arts degree in 1938 would have cost in the vicinity of eighty pounds and a Medical degree could rise as high as two hundred and sixty pounds, which would have exceeded the average annual income of many workers. There were only two hundred free places at the Sydney University and text book, accommodation and living costs presented further obstacles.[29] The majority of students attended university

because their parents could afford to buy them a career: "Unless you had a scholarship you had no way of getting to university...there were very few scholarships and you had to be brilliant".[30] In 1937, of about three thousand students at Sydney University only six hundred and eighteen were women.[31] The expectation, however, for higher education for females was not high: "There were very few women at university...we took limited opportunity as a matter of course".[32] Operating on a shoe string budget, the university was marked by conservatism and lack of diversity.[33]

Interest had been expressed for the provision of a university in Newcastle in the nineteen thirties. The Rotary Club listed as one of its achievements between 1935 and 1937, the move to set aside one hundred and seven acres at Mayfield West for a university and park.[34] Although Armidale had obtained a rural university, suggestions that Newcastle be similarly endowed lacked general public support. An accusation of parochialism was levelled at proponents by the Registrar of Sydney University.[35] So Newcastle had to wait for a university which, symbolically, came to be housed under the umbrella of the Technical College. Similarly, provision for teacher training was not attained until 1949. Although scholarships of forty pounds were offered for Sydney Teachers' College,[36] the distance, accommodation and living costs implied real sacrifices for families of limited means.[37]

When the Public Instruction Act came into force there were twenty-four evening colleges in N.S.W.,[38] of which Newcastle provided eleven.[39] However, by the nineteen hundreds only the Hamilton Evening College remained, which provided domestic and commercial courses until 1937 and specialised in business studies from 1938.[40] It also offered limited tuition for students to obtain Intermediate and Leaving Certificates. Commercial courses were similarly available from Newcastle Business College, Ell's Business College and the Northern Business College.[41] Continuation schools had been established in Newcastle from 1911, offering an evening version of the superior school syllabus for working students who had achieved the Qualifying Certificate on completion of primary schooling. However, after a boost in the early depression years, they were showing signs of decline by 1934 and were to be discontinued after the war.[42]

That "there were very few places in Newcastle where people could expand themselves mentally"[43] would seem to be a succinct assessment of educational and cultural opportunities available in the pre-war years. A movement whose philosophy implied universal education and the "unition of the two streams of labour and scholarship",[44] might have appeared the panacea. The Workers' Educational Association had been founded in England in 1903 and transferred to Australia through the initiative of David Stewart and Peter Board. Sydney University had been operating an extension facility, but was persuaded to share in the administration and costs of tutorial classes for the movement. The Newcastle Northern District Branch, No. 1, was formed in Newcastle in 1914[45] and by 1938 was operating fourteen tutorial classes.[46] The principal subjects offered were Industrial History, Economics, Political Science and Sociology. A Psychology class was also meeting in Newcastle in 1938, and a student recalls that half of those enrolled were women, primarily married and of comfortable circumstances.[47] Higgins commented on the prevalence of middle class workers connected with the association between the war years. That the passion for education was not evident among the working class, he attributed to the workers' fear of being "seduced from

their responsibilities in the class struggle".[48] Despite the affiliation of the Newcastle Labour Council and nine unions, Mauldon was similarly critical of the paralysis and indifference with which the local movement had to contend.[49] Another associate of the Newcastle group, G.V. Portus, attributed much of the failure to academic snobbery relating to extra mural classes. He lamented that "neither the stalwarts of the W.E.A. or the apostles of so called pure working class education have been able to evoke anything like the interest in education they confidently prophesied".[50] The movement had certainly lost much ground with the working class in the dispute over the pro-conscription attitude of its 1914 Director, Meredith Atkinson.[51] So, despite criticism of disinterest in worker's education, the Trade Union movement remained sceptical of the W.E.A.'s asserted role, as the educational arm of the labour movement.[52]

It was observed in 1939, that "Australia is suffering from cultural emaciation"[53] and it was becoming evident that the industrial and commercial development of Newcastle had not been matched by the provision of cultural amenities. The Headmistress of Newcastle Girls High attributed the dearth of facilities to "the narrow views on education"[54] and a few concerned citizens were beginning to agitate for reform: "We wanted a university, public libraries and an art gallery in the nineteen thirties".[55] Although an Academy of Music had been established and music and choral societies existed, local facilities for music appreciation were limited to the productions of Mrs Hannell, amateur social groups and eisteddfods.[56] Newcastle depended primarily on visiting performances, such as the tenors Tauber and Chostiakoff.[57] The Newcastle Morning Herald had drawn attention in 1936 to the destructive influence of the Hollywood dream factory on live theatre and noted local agitation for a Little Theatre.[58] However it was not until 1939 that the Newcastle Dramatic Art Club was realised.[59] The Rotary Club provided the nucleus of the Cultural Centre Committee[60] and received valuable media support: "If sufficient local interest is enlisted it should be possible for Newcastle to establish an excellent gallery".[61] A plan was provided in August 1936 for a building opposite the Town Hall, to house a free public library, reading rooms, a lecture hall, a theatre and an art gallery, at an estimated cost of fifty-eight thousand pounds.[62] Despite the financial support offered by the Carnegie Corporation, negotiations were prolonged and had to be deferred with the onset of the war.

Cunningham proposes that: "In the search for indices of cultural advancement...the social historian is likely to give weight to the availability and use of books freely available to the public".[63] In an investigation of library services, conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research in 1934, Munn and Pitt reported severe deficiencies. They drew attention to the fact that Australians were better provided with library facilities in the late nineteenth century than they were in the nineteen thirties. They were particularly critical of the provision of services in Newcastle.[64] Limited access to reading material was available through subscription shop libraries and the Sydney Country Lending Library.[65] The Newcastle Business and Professional Women's Club had established the Hazel Ostler children's library in the Town Hall in 1934[66] and a few schools provided library services. Perhaps the best endowed of these would have been Newcastle Girls High School which housed three hundred books per hundred students in 1938.[67]

The Newcastle School of Arts, which had been operating since 1861, was inspected by Munn and Pitt in 1934. They reported a total collection of 265,000 volumes, of which ninety-five percent were ephemeral fiction and "such serious books as are offered are so out of date as to be practically worthless".[68] The control of the institution was vested in a central committee and a subscription of one pound per year was levied. As the facility was reaching only two percent of the population, a rate-supported municipal library using the existing School of Arts as the nucleus was recommended. The librarian felt that "consciousness of the serious need in Newcastle for a free public library had been awakened" and the Free Public Library Movement, which was inaugurated in Newcastle in 1937, embarked upon a vigorous promotion campaign.[69] Addresses to groups such as the Business and Professional Women's Club[70] emphasised the philosophy of the movement and slide publicity in picture theatres and media advertising attempted to enlist general public support.

Newcastle Council appointed a subcommittee to assess the validity of a cultural centre and a free library service in 1938, and it was decided to adopt in principle the establishment of such a service. The enthusiasm of Alderman Griffiths was evident in the conferences held with the Minister for Education and officers of the movement.[71] The Library Act of 1939 was in essence an enabling act, offering local bodies a subsidy on a pound for pound basis on adoption.[72] By 1938 the Newcastle Council had adopted the concept of free library service, the only obstacle being the refusal of the School of Arts Committee to combine assets. The executive council of the Free Public Library Movement in Sydney, depicted Newcastle as a pioneer in the provision of modern public library services in Australia.[73] However, the stimulus for cultural reform in the area came from a vocal minority of middle class orientation, and not from the labour movement.

The media was another pervasive force in the transmission of information. Of twenty large daily newspapers in the nineteen thirties, there were only twelve independent owners[74] and local pride in the Newcastle Morning Herald as a source of impartial and valid information, was evident: "It had a name for having a very fair editorial and was always very well regarded...it had a great deal of local content... it was the most important paper in the house".[75] Similarly, the family life revolved around the wireless as a primary access point of information and entertainment. Cultural amenities were augmented through programmes presented on the infant relay station 2NC, but the community approach, popular music, soap operas and labour links rendered 2HD the most popular station.[76] Thus "that Australians were generally well informed on matters relating to foreign affairs prior to the outbreak of war",[77] would have undoubtedly been due to the influence of the media.

The facility to secure information on matters relating to personal and community health was a vital aspect in the education process. Access to information relating to women's health problems was severely limited. There were few women doctors and male doctors were generally not consulted for complaints of a personal nature. There was a paucity of information exchange relating to sexual functions and problems, which had serious ramifications for the adolescent. Formal sex education in the school curriculum was non-existent, the media tended to depict the romantic image solely, and parents generally exercised censorship over alternate avenues of enlightenment.[78] An insight into the problems of maturing in such an environment:

> There was a great deal of confusion about sex....
> my grandmother said no woman should know anything about
> sex until she was married....People would lie to you....
> I was eighteen and still thought the baby came out of
> the navel. There was no way of knowing anything
> except things you would pick up.[79]

Perceptions of members of the professions were to a large extent conditioned by class oreintation. Doctors were highly regarded socially, yet "there was a tendency to like your own doctor but dislike the profession as a whole".[80] The polarisation and the public impression that "they were too hidebound",[81] was seen in the contention over Elizabeth Kenny's method of treating poliomyelitis victims. There had been five epidemics between 1925 and 1931,[82] and 544 cases were admitted to Newcastle hospital in 1938.[83] Community concern and a pro-Kenny interest, fostered by her visit to Newcastle in June 1938, were manifested in the media. There was a dichotomy between the clinic's "spirit of hope" and the "permanent opposition amongst medical men to any new theory".[84] Elizabeth Kenny reflected, "for nearly thirty years I had endeavoured (but) ...the medical world of Australia tenaciously adhered to traditional theory".[85] The Newcastle Kenny clinic, situated at Coutt's Memorial Home, treated about 75 patients daily in 1938.[86] Community support and press coverage of positive results fostered a resentment against the intransigent elements of the medical profession.

Docherty suggests that limited patronage of the baby health clinics, in their formative years in Newcastle, could be attributed to a working class suspicion of the clinics as centres of middle class values.[87] This factor was similarly evident in their attitude to facilities for higher education and their perception of those who had the means to enjoy it. Deficiencies in cultural stimulation and the emphasis on vocational education were not only imposed to meet the needs of the industrial city, but self-generated by class expectation and perceptions.

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29. O.Y.B.N.S.W. 1939, p.271.
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ISOLATED, POOR, BUT HAPPY:

LIFE IN WEST WALLSEND 1938

by Marjorie White

Newcastle as a coal mining town, and later as an industrial city, had a predominantly working class population. In the late 1930's, as now, thousands of Newcastle women had to cope with having a shift-worker in the home. One theory advanced to explain why the abuse of analgesics is "quite markedly regional" in Newcastle, is that the strain and pressure of having a shift-worker in the family causes many women to resort to minor pain-killing preparations.[1]

Although the shift-worker caused a specific problem to those living in industrial towns, problems of Newcastle women were similar to the problems of other Australian women. Economic background caused a wide variety in the types of these problems. For example, in 1939 Jessie Street could argue: "The shortage of domestic workers brings untold hardship to many homes. It causes overstrain and ill-health to many mothers of families".[2] Obviously she was speaking of a woman who could afford to pay for domestic help. The woman interviewed, however, was, in 1938, so poor that her main problem was the very survival of her family. While acknowledging the wide variety of problems faced by women in the 1930's, this essay will concentrate on poverty and isolation, which were the dominant themes in the interview conducted. It must be kept in mind though, that what the writer might think a problem was not always a problem to the woman being written about.

Attitudes to women in 1938 were generally the same nationwide, and more patriarchal and sexist than they are today. The role of women was clearly defined. Females were expected to care for the home and family.[3] Donald Horne's mother was a typical example; her life was dominated by the family and the boredom of the kitchen sink.[4] Or again, "marriage was the crown and summit of one's expectations and women hoped to, and were expected to, marry";[5] and again, "Not even Miles Franklin and Marjorie Barnard, successful independent women though they were, could afford to be completely honest about their failure to marry".[6] Education and/or training for a career were often considered unnecessary and a waste of money. In 1940, 25.9% of the students at New South Wales's only university were female. Today there are six state universities, and at Sydney University alone 42.7% of the students are female.[7]

Mrs. P., the woman interviewed, was a girl, living in West Wallsend in 1938. West Wallsend had been a mining "boom" town at the beginning of the 20th Century but as the mines closed, had gradually declined. The steam train from Newcastle to West Wallsend was discontinued in 1930. An alternative transport, twice daily to Cockle Creek and then by rail to Newcastle, ceased soon afterwards. In the late thirties

"West Wallsend was very isolated".[8] In 1938 the district had a population of 5,000. Nearly all were miners or ex-miners and their families. Mining communities are known to feel hostility to others in different callings, and the smaller the community, and the more isolated it is, the stronger this feeling becomes.[9] Thus West Wallsend was doubly isolated by attitude and lack of transport. During the depression and afterwards, West Wallsend had one of the highest rates of unemployment in Australia. Joseph Littler, a tailoring manager of West Wallsend said: "At one time we had 670 on relief work" and "years ago, 93% had been unemployed".[10] The poverty of the people, and the isolation of the town, made it difficult to obtain employment. Littler was interested in the Young Citizen Movement which helped unemployed youth. He said, "I have paid the fares of boys and girls to go to Newcastle to interview employers. When they are asked where they live, and they say West Wallsend, the employer decides it is too far to travel, and they skip them over".[11]

Mrs. P.'s father had been unemployed since 1933, except for periodical relief work on the Mount Sugarloaf road. Her elder brother had been unemployed since leaving school six years before. He grew vegetables for the family, and the surplus was bartered with neighbours for other foodstuffs. He also looked after and milked the cow. In the summer he picked blackberries which grew around the abandoned mine shafts and in the bush. By "jumping the rattler" he was able to sell these ("for three pence a pannikin") at Sydney's Paddy's Markets. He had been on one of these trips in 1932 and had gone to see the Harbour Bridge opened. He was thus able to bring back the news of DeGroot's premature dash to cut the ribbon before Premier Lang. Mrs. P's boyfriend worked at the Forestry unemployed relief camp at Bulahdelah. He rode his bicycle sixty miles each Monday, and returned to West Wallsend on Friday.[12] Mrs. P.'s second brother was employed at Stewart & Lloyds at Mayfield. He also rode his bike to work - a distance of about thirteen miles. The hundreds of workers who converged on the industries at shift-time were known as "wheeled spiders".[13] As the only employed male in the family of seven, this brother aged 16, handed his entire pay packet to his mother each week. His exact wage is not remembered; however in 1939, "a metal process worker, assuming he commenced work at 14, would receive 15/6 per week and at 19 he would receive £3-3-6".[14]

The problems of a family living on dole relief and such a meagre wage must have affected the whole family, but especially the mother. She had to do all the domestic work, as well as cope with the severe psychological strain of continual poverty. The domestic work was heavy. A fuel stove, copper, and bath heater made house work unpleasant and inconvenient. Mrs. P.'s family were paying their house off by a weekly rental which was 8/-. Clothes were always "hand-me-downs". The family diet was good, and included home-grown eggs and poultry, milk, butter, and cream, fresh vegetables and home-baked bread. Sausages cost six pence a pound and T-bone steak cost 1/6 per pound. The butcher, who drove a horse and cart, and kept the flies away from the meat with a gum tree switch, called daily.

Mrs. P. had left school when she was 13 years of age; there appeared to have been a negative parental attitude to education.[15] According to Professor Turney, "a problem for isolated schools is the child's low motivation caused in general by lack of parental enthusiasm for education".[16] However there were more enthusiastic attitudes

towards education in other parts of Newcastle. The 1938 magazines of two girls schools speak glowingly of academic honours obtained in examinations by the pupils.[17]

According to records in 1939 there were 100-150 girls out of work in West Wallsend. "It was essential for a girl of 14 to earn her own living, otherwise her people had to keep her".[18] Mrs. P. was fortunate enough to find a job as a nurse-maid. She walked four miles to work arriving at 7 a.m. and leaving at 7 p.m. Eventually she saved enough money (by collecting bottles, and selling six for one penny) to buy a bicycle which gave her some measure of freedom on her rare time off duty. She had Sunday off each week. Her wages were 10/- weekly, which she handed to her mother. Long hours and low wages were common as there were no regulations governing such work. In 1939 Elizabeth Simmons, manageress of a women's employment agency said: "The domestic workers commenced work at 6.45 a.m. and had no approximate finishing time. After dinner they were expected to answer the door or telephone. They had one full day, starting at 10 a.m. off each week, and from Saturday after lunch until Sunday night off once a month". Mrs. Simmons also said "wages were not less than £1 a week".[19]

After working such long hours there was little time or inclination for stimulating intellectual activities. There were no daily papers or magazines in Mrs. P.'s home. She said simply: "we couldn't afford them". Light music and serials were listened to on the "wireless". There seemed to be no awareness of the outside world so that ignorance and isolation were almost complete. This does not mean that Mrs. P. felt deprived. In fact she feels that young people of today lack many advantages which she had when young.[20] The family relationship was warm and close-knit. When children, she and her sister used to play for hours in rather idyllic surroundings, "under wattle trees by a creek". They would dress up in discarded and well-worn finery and make up their faces with cast-off cosmetics from older friends. They entertained aunts and mother with family concerts. "The women in the family particularly loved the Sallies, and we spent all the time we could getting free entertainment at their concerts, harvest festivals, and any special dos."[21]

The Salvation Army had been active in the Newcastle and Coalfields district almost since the first arrival of Salvation Army officers in Australia in 1881. Apparently the Army was not always as favourably received in nearby Minmi as in West Wallsend. A report in the War Cry in the early eighties tells of a larrikin who knocked Captain Jenny Walker from a bridge in Minmi.[22] In 1890 the Sydney Mail had further news of the Army in the Coalfields, and stated, "Evan Williams, a miner from Minmi was forwarded to the Darlinghurst Receiving House this afternoon as a dangerous lunatic. Two months ago he joined the Salvation Army and is now raving mad".[23]

In Mrs. P.'s home her father was "boss", although her mother was obviously the "lynch-pin". There was always enough money for father to enjoy a few beers on Saturday night in one of West Wallsend's six pubs. This was a purely masculine activity. Anzac Day was also exclusively male and considered the second most important day of the year.[24]

Although Mrs. P. felt no sense of identity in West Wallsend, the neighbours' opinions were important to the family. Mrs. P. was deprived of a rare outing (a visit to a circus) because she had stood on the front verandah doing her hair with a fine comb. Her mother was scandalised, in case some passer-by might think she had head lice. Generally there was strict parental control, but the children did not rebel. Sex was never discussed in the home. Mrs. P. was aware that babies were born out of wedlock, and that girls did have abortions, but subjects such as these were taboo. Marriage was considered the goal of every "decent" young woman.

While analysing the problems of a woman such as Mrs. P. it became clear that many problems were caused by isolation and poverty. These caused, or complemented, other problems such as the "village pump mentality", unemployment, a lack of awareness of the outside world and lack of intellectual stimulation. In 1938, when the world was on the brink of a holocaust, it was as if the West Wallsend people considered they were on a different planet. The grim task of survival occupied the thoughts and time of most "Westy" inhabitants, and they were unable to break the vicious circle of poverty-isolation. They knew very little about any other life-style and were moderately content and even happy if they had the basic necessities of a roof over their heads and a full stomach.

A stagnant attitude, and authoritarian conformity to women's traditional roles determined and restricted what any woman could achieve. For Mrs. P., a negative opinion and lack of knowledge about how education could help her obtain a better job really didn't matter. Even if she had been motivated, her extreme poverty meant that control of her future was impossible.

However, to end on this note of gloom would present an unbalanced picture. During the war the conformity about woman's role was relaxed, and Mrs. P. realised what she could achieve. Today she is a successful, self-made woman, respected, attractive, very shrewd and compassionate. Forty-two years later she has been married twice, is a mother and grandmother, and looks back with great affection and nostalgia on her girlhood in West Wallsend.

FOOTNOTES

1. R. Nanra and J.M. Duggan, Analgesic Addiction of a Nation, Canberra, 1971, p.61.
2. The Unemployment of Youth in Industry. Report to Legislative Council, Sydney, p.107.
3. A. Summers, Damned Whores and God's Police, Penguin Books, 1980, pp.31-34.
4. D. Horne, Education of Young Donald, Penguin, 1975, pp.32-33.
5. B. Kingston, My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann, Melbourne, 1975, p.6.
6. ibid., p.118.
7. Bygolt, 'Women in the University of Sydney', Sydney University Gazette, 1980, p.16.
8. Back to Westy, Booklet, Newcastle, 1963.
9. F.R.E. Mauldon, A Study in Social Economics, The Hunter River Valley, N.S.W., Melbourne, 1927, p.195.
10. The Unemployment of Youth in Industry, op.cit., p.190.
11. ibid.
12. Interview.
13. P. Haslam, 'Notes on Newcastle in 1938', Newcastle University Archives.
14. The Unemployment of Youth, op.cit., p.56.
15. Interview.
16. Professor of Dept. of Education in Sydney University Gazette, op.cit., p.6.
17. The Mitre, The Nobbies, School Magazines of Girls Grammar and Girls High Schools, 1938.
18. The Unemployment of Youth in Industry, op.cit., p.107.
19. ibid., p.33.
20. Interview.
21. Interview.
22. B. Bolton, Booth's Drum, Sydney, 1980, p.72.
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WORK AND AMBITION IN NEWCASTLE 1938:

• A MIDDLE CLASS CASE

by John McQualter

A dominant theme in Australian history of the 1920s and 1930s was the adjustment of Australians to secondary industry as a major contributor to the economy. Nowhere is this represented more starkly than in the Newcastle region where the change from a coal town to the centre of Australian heavy industry was definitely complete by the late 1930s. This view of Newcastle society in the late 1930s considers the history of the rise of heavy industry, dominated by B.H.P. and the effect on the male, middle class employee compared with that on the working class employee.

By the mid '30s the B.H.P. Board of Directors had laid the groundwork which ensured the future viability of the company as a vast fully integrated operation. They ensured that the plant was modern and efficient and that technology was kept abreast of world wide developments. In the shutdown of 1922-23 and during the depression, modernisation schemes could be carried out at cheaper cost. A number of steel finishing industries were attracted to Newcastle and became subsidiaries, as did Rylands, Lysaghts and Titans; or associates as did Stewart and Lloyds. During the '20s B.H.P.-owned collieries and a shipping fleet were established. By 1929 tariff protection was beginning to relieve the pressure of competition from overseas steel. In 1935 the B.H.P. gained a monopoly on steel production by taking over A.I.S.

This period of Australian history where secondary industry was gaining strength was one where the working class was increasingly mobilised in unions, especially the new metal trades unions, and the A.L.P.[1] Throughout this period "the ruling class was culturally on the defensive"[2] and the "hegemony of the bourgeoisie"[3] at its most incomplete. The managers of the B.H.P. were defending against a working class onslaught. Connell and Irving see the conservative political attitudes as "loyalty to the Empire and British traditions; strict law and order, including the absolute right of property owners to control those whom they hired, and to fire them if they couldn't; it assumed that property and respectability conveyed a moral right to rule".[4] The first of the above attitudes would have been placed in jeopardy during the '20s when British steel was a major competitor, but the latter attitudes are borne out in labour relations. In 1936 the B.H.P. workforce was only 25% unionised and union officials were accompanied by "works policemen" when discussing grievances with the workers.[5] The Board would not consider any attempt by a union to tell it who it should employ and union delegates engaging in recruitment at the works were dismissed and would find it hard to get another job in heavy industry.[6] In 1922 the decision of the company to shut down the

plant and the resultant widespread unemployment were a prelude to stormy labour relations. The B.H.P. had little respect over this whole period for the arbitration system, which was unsympathetic to the company's claims that wages were too high.

The conservative political attitudes cited above were an extension of "bourgeois social morality" - "maintenance of decorum, respect for property and rank, sexual and social repression".[7] The B.H.P.'s attitudes, expressed in a refusal to be dictated to by arbitration courts and unions, made it an attractive workplace for those with conservative ideals and aspirations, and the company naturally preferred this type of employee. They provided the loyal staff that could man the works during a strike: in return they retained their jobs during the hard times and achieved promotion in the good years. For these men, "To join the B.H.P. was akin to joining the Public Service. It was for the dedicated a job for life...Those who were...'too indolent, lazy or apathetic to keep themselves on in life' were unwanted".[8]

The case of the interviewee dealt with in this paper reinforces this. From a middle class background, and with an above average education, he joined the B.H.P. in the mid '20s. His attitudes to unionism and his bitterness about Jack Lang were shared by the company. By the late '30s he was a chief engineer on B.H.P. ships and looking forward to a shore job.

The depression also illustrates the loyalty of the company to this type of employee. The B.H.P. weathered it better than most businesses due to the cost cutting of the '20s. The interviewee knew he was lucky to be kept in employment. He also states that he did not know personally anyone suffering badly during the depression, although he knew of the distress of the working class. During the depression half the workers at the B.H.P. lost their jobs and production was reduced to one quarter. It is probable that the loyal and ambitious, those with similar attitudes to those of the company were last to be sacked. The depression was harsher for the lower working class and even tended to widen the social gap between the respectable and the unemployed.

Menzies identified the middle class as the "backbone of the nation". They were the backbone of support for his later Liberal Party. He also identified home ownership, the raising of family ("not as leaners but lifters"), and individual enterprise as noble traits of this class.[9] Due to continual employment the interviewee could pay off a house and own it by the late '30s. Newcastle was divided into distinct working and middle class housing areas which have not changed much even today. The interviewee's house was in Hamilton East, which he perceived as a middle class suburb. The price of houses here in the '20s, from £500 to £1100, excluded all but the most affluent of the working class from purchasing them. The broad treelined streets, brick and tile houses, and abundant parks and gardens were obviously appealing to the middle class. (Hamilton East was developed as a "garden suburb", the features of which can be seen today along Stewart, Gordon and Parkway Avenues.) That a "good class of people" (the interviewee's words) lived here was attested to by the high ratio of employers to employees and the wealth of the suburb.[10]

Inside the household, male and female areas of activity were sharply divided. There was lack of any involvement on the part of the interviewee in the woman's domain of meal preparation, shopping or housework; the whole realm of household budgeting was a mystery to the male. The above delineation of sex roles, one suspects, was just as typical in an Australian working class household. The middle class housewife's duties were probably made easier by the employment of domestic "help". Another of Connel and Irving's "Bourgeois morality" strands was the maintenance of decorum. This would be illustrated by the whole middle class family sitting down together at meals, in the dining room, with attention to table manners. The interviewee stressed that attention was paid to the company that his children kept. The leisure time of the middle class spent in some family activities like picnics, trips to "the bush" (to maintain the urbanite's ingrained Australian reverence for the bushman image?) or beach also maintained decorum. Charity concerts, working bees and bazaars were supported by the better off in their leisure; the interviewee was most particular to state that his family helped the needy "at every opportunity".

Leisure time was scarce. His occupation dominated the breadwinner's life. Shift work could upset the normal routine and have disastrous effects on family harmony.[11] "Employees had to meet the B.H.P.'s demands to work overtime or risk loss of job".[12] Of the five days off each month my interviewee enjoyed, up to three could be worked as overtime. For the ambitious, work had to dominate life, like the case of Rudd Sweetapple[13] or that of the interviewee here, who had to study in his time off on board the ship to sit for his first and second engineer's ticket exams.

The issue facing the group dealt with here was prosperity. The employee who stuck with the B.H.P. would be well rewarded. This paper deals with the case of one such man. The expansion of the B.H.P. and its allied heavy industry in Newcastle in the late 1930s preceded for some the long boom in Australia from 1950-1970. The prosperity of the men loyal to the company symbolised the rise and dominance in Australian politics of a party sensitive to their enterprise. For these men, the working class challenge ended and middle class ideas prevailed.

FOOTNOTES

1. R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, Singapore, 1980, p.280.
2. Ibid., p.286.
3. Ibid., p.286.
4. Ibid., p.287.
5. The Worker's Case Against the B.H.P., issued by the T.H.C. in 1936.
6. A. Trengove, "What's Good for Australia....!": The Story of B.H.P., Stanmore 1975, pp.141/2.
7. Connell and Irving, op.cit., p.288.
8. Trengove, op.cit., p.143.
9. Document by R. Menzies in Connell and Irving, op.cit., p.350.
10. J.C. Docherty, "The Second City: Social and urban change in Newcastle, N.S.W. 1900-1929", Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U., 1977, p.208.
11. Docherty, op.cit., p.124.
12. Trengove, op.cit., p.156.
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STEEL THE MASTER:

THE IMPACT OF WORK ON LIFE IN NEWCASTLE IN 1938

by Kevin Cranson

In 1938 the world was approaching the climax of what had thus far proved a very troubled decade. Newcastle had shared the world-wide problems of a shattered economy and the growing threat to world peace. However, Novocastrians also faced problems uniquely their own. It was, and still is, "a city of workers",[1] predominantly industrial workers, struggling to cope with the conditions and demands of labour at a time when management held the upper hand. Many were faced with an inability to make the most of themselves and their life, being denied the opportunities to do so. There were, of course, features which brightened life in Newcastle in 1938, most stemming from a certain Novocastrian spirit which the time produced. These positive and negative aspects of life have a particular association with Newcastle because it was an industrial city, made up almost entirely of industrial workers, with a working class outlook and values. Bill K. was an ironworker at Lysaghts in 1938. As such, his experiences would be typical of many Novocastrians. This paper is based on his reflections, and those of his wife, Dorothy.[2]

Docherty points out that the changing face and great expansion of Newcastle after 1912 was due to "the sharp changeover from mining to heavy industry".[3] The growth of steel and associated industries in Newcastle continued rapidly throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The city's population was boosted by an influx of industrial workers, while many miners moved to the coalfields areas further inland.[4] The brooding presence of the industries was most apparent. The scene is portrayed graphically and accurately by Dymphna Cusack when she describes "the innumerable factory chimneys, [with] towering above them all, sign and seal of Newcastle's existence, the smoke-stacks of the...Broken Hill Proprietary under their perpetual silver-black clouds".[5] Thus by 1938 the economy and appearance of Newcastle were dominated by heavy industry.

The industries held a similar domineering stance over the lives of those who worked within them. Excessively long hours and rostered shift-work, cut deeply into the workers' effective leisure time. Enforced overtime, with no stipulated maximum, was a major grievance of the labour force. An enquiry held into shift-work in Newcastle in 1936 by Justice Browne found that as a result of the "most pernicious" working of systematic overtime the 44 hour week had become "merely a farce". Many B.H.P. workers were being regularly employed for 52 hours per week.[6] The situation worsened towards the end of 1938 due to accelerated production. There was unemployed labour which could have been called upon to meet this increasing demand, but industries found it less costly to limit the number of skilled tradesmen employed, and to offer overtime to men already employed. The problem of the shortage in leisure time was exacerbated by the fact that there was no paid annual leave or public holidays. Some workers enjoyed the luxury of one week's annual leave, without pay.

Not only were the hours long, but the working conditions were "difficult and arduous".[7] The change from mining to heavy industry "made little difference to the kind of work Newcastle offered its people". What was still required was "a plentiful supply of manual labour".[8] Work in the industries was exhausting, the conditions noisy, dirty and excessively hot. There was little in the way of amenities, with the men having to "walk home in their dirty, often wet clothes and eat their meals on the job, sometimes without time for a proper meal break".[9] Bill K. summed up the situation with a reply pertaining to his occupation in the industry, when he stated: "They called me a labourer, but I'll tell you what I was - a slave".[10]

With long hours and bad conditions, accidents and fatalities were all too frequent. In their safety programmes the management put the onus on the men to be more careful, rather than recognise the management's own responsibility to install safety devices. If men escaped direct injury, their general health was still bound to decline. The situation is once again portrayed vividly by Dymphna Cusack in Southern Steel:

> "I saw Bondy Hoare today", Hoppy remarked. "He looked a sick man".
> "Been workin' too hard, the poor bastard. Doin' his best to get full production, with plenty of provocation from the bosses and the new-born militant, and the management doin' their best to make the boys boil over with their talk of peggin' wages and conditions".[11]

The issues of improved working conditions and safety standards were incompatible with the employers' goal of lowered cost structure, and thus the worker suffered.

The industrial worker could not leave his problems behind him at work either. The effects and memory of these come home with him, impairing his family life and whatever social life he may have had. When the worker returned home he had little time for other family members, the main desire being "to get to bed and get some rest".[12] And, says Bill, "In hot weather it would kill you. You wouldn't know where to turn...you'd get under the table, under the bed, lay in the hall...."[13] Similarly, the spectre of work made one "frightened even to go out at night";[14] for fear of missing sleep and making work the next day even more difficult. The psychological effect of this was obviously a huge drawback on life in Newcastle in 1938, and as can be seen, affected not only the worker, but those close to him. This, along with the severe lack of leisure time already highlighted, retarded the ability to really enjoy life.

Similarly, even if there were the leisure time and the inclination to utilise it, there was hardly the means. Industry in Newcastle was struggling to regain its footing after the Depression. Management efforts to keep costs down has been seen in its attitude towards overtime and safety, and this policy was complemented by a tightfisted stance towards wage increases. In 1937 Australian wage rates were still below those of 1929. The fact was that during the 1930s employers held the upper hand in labour relations. The union movement, particularly in the B.H.P., was weak and divided within itself. Also, unemployment outside the industry kept disputes and wage cases to a

minimum. The worker simply lacked the power to stand up for himself, and this weakness was reflected not only in the working conditions but also in living standards. After the purchasing of necessities from the Co-operative Store there was "very little" left over for entertainment or saving.[15] Incomes invariably had to be supplemented by back-yard gardens, the keeping of poultry, and such activities as fishing, rabbitting and blackberrying. Those for whom the going became impossible joined similar unfortunates, as well as the unemployed, in the shanty-towns which grew up around Hexham, Shortland, Carrington and Nobby's. Some of these remained occupied for many years.

Thus, life for shift-workers in Newcastle in 1938 offered little scope for luxuries and basic working-class attitudes hardened. By necessity, vision and thought were restricted to things directly related to the immediate circumstances. Hence people on the whole led an insular life, with little knowledge, experience or interest in places and events outside their own spheres. This affected people in a long-term manner as well as on an immediate basis. Pragmatic issues of day to day existence elbowed aside less tangible concerns such as education and self-improvement. These features of life in 1938 have formed a stigma which Newcastle, fairly or unfairly, still bears today. That is, many people consider that before they can "do anything" worldly or cultural they must first leave Newcastle.

Despite the difficulties and drawbacks of life in Newcastle, a spirit existed within the city which helped form its major positive characteristics. The people recognised that they were Australian citizens and British subjects, but they were also fiercely Novocastrian. There was a seemingly incongruous pride attached to living in Newcastle. Bill K. ascribes this to the fact that most men were "shift workers in industry",[16] and also claims that the hardships, as outlined above, created a special kind of mateship. This also extended to the family of the worker. People banded together and "you always had someone to turn to".[17] People shared and helped out. In the same vein, men and women joined together to make the very most of the leisure time available in relatively inexpensive group-activities such as sport and picnicing. People "made their own fun"[18] in a bid to deny their problems for a while.

This, as one can imagine, was a difficult task. Indeed, if times were bad, future prospects too were "not very bright".[19] Radio contact kept Novocastrians informed on the worsening world situation, and memories of the depression as well as the current state of life, guarded them against being unduly optimistic. These factors were exacerbated by Newcastle's being "a heavily working class city dependent upon a single industry which was very sensitive to economic fluctuations".[20] This was underlined during the Depression, with the steel industry being one of the hardest hit. Clearly the immediate future as well as the existing situation, offered little for Novocastrians.

Thus one can see some of the aspects of the working man's life in Newcastle in 1938. The overriding theme is its restricted and oppressed nature. Many Novocastrians justifiably felt cheated by the inability to savour life fully. Whilst these observations are based on the industrial working class, it is clear that many of the points illustrated would have affected, either directly or indirectly, the remainder of Newcastle's population: the city's almost total dependence on the steel industry demanded this. Although it gave prosperity to the city and people of Newcastle, one cannot help feeling that at times the steel industry produced bars and chains of a non-ferrous kind for its dependents.

FOOTNOTES

1. C.M. Zierer, "Industrial Area of Newcastle, Australia", in R. Auchmuty,. "City Building in Newcastle in the Interwar Years", 1938 Bicentennial History Bulletin, p.45.
2. Interview with Mr. & Mrs. K., conducted by Kevin Cranson, for the Bicentennial History Project 3-8-81.
3. J.C. Docherty, "The second city: social and urban change in Newcastle, New South Wales, 1900-1929", Ph.D. thesis, A.N.U., 1977, p.282.
4. F.R.E. Mauldon, A Study in Social Economics: the Hunter Valley New South Wales, Melbourne, 1927, p.182.
5. D. Cusack, Southern Steel, London, 1953, pp.3-4.
6. N.S.W. Arbitration Reports, 1936, in H. Hughes, The Australian Iron and Steel Industry, 1848-1962, Melbourne, 1964, p.124.
7. ibid., p.96.
8. Docherty, op.cit., p.282.
9. Hughes, op.cit., p.96.
10. Interview, tape count (A)330.
11. Cusack, op.cit., p.114.
12. Interview, tape count (A)190.
13. Interview, tape count (A)304.
14. Interview, tape count (A)209.
15. Interview, tape count (A)350.
16. Interview, tape count (B)069.
17. Interview, tape count (A)076.
18. Interview, tape count (A)324.
19. Interview, tape count (B)688.
20. Docherty, op.cit., p.282.

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1938 Bicentennial History Bulletins - extracts

THE IMPACT OF SHIFT WORK ON FAMILIES IN 1938:

A CASE STUDY

by Gina Barbon

The interview with Mr. D. of Merewether revealed that most of his life in 1938 was strictly governed by his work on the railways, or more particularly by his hours of work. Shift work affected almost all aspects of his life, from family and social life to religious life. Another predominant theme in his recollections was the financial problems with which his family were faced during this period, and their means of coping with them. The very limited education which he was able to attain clearly influenced his later life and it is evident that although Mr. D's work on the railways enabled him to travel and experience other parts of Australia, his outlook and awareness of the outside world remained fairly narrow and restricted.

Shift work was a strong feature in Newcastle industry, for it affected the iron and steel workers as well as men on the railways and tramways. "Shift work [was however] abominated by everyone",[1] and although while a coalminer at Kurri Kurri Mr. D. had struck for 10 months in favour of the abolition of shift work, his transfer to the railways forced him to endure again its hardships. The extensive effects on his way of life were all detrimental and restricting: shift work and the irregular railway roster drastically upset the balance of normal family life, restricted his recreational activities, and also prevented regular church attendance. As one Newcastle shift-worker stated in reply to an inquiry, "I do not go to church. I have not got the time. I go to work".[2]

The limited social life of Mr. D. and his family was due to both the irregularity of his work and the lack of money available for such activities. Shift work prevented the family from making any arrangements for future social outings, and the weary condition in which the father returned home from work meant that many weekends were spent at home. The few clubs of Newcastle at the time, such as the Businessmen's Club and the Tattersall's Club were fairly exclusive, and therefore because of a strict household budget, entertainment was limited to such venues as the local pub, football matches, Friday night shopping and the occasional visit to the pictures. Holidays to Queensland each year were only made possible through his free interstate railway pass, and once there the family spent two weeks in a cheap cottage where fruit cases held up the beds and "rats jumped across the rafters".[3] Thus Mr. D.'s work significantly affected the social activities of his family, but more importantly, it affected family life and the relationships within the family itself.

The interview revealed that shift work and irregular hours put extra stress upon the family as a unit. F.R.E. Mauldon corroborated this when he wrote, "its effects on the home life of the district [were] undeniably bad".[4] Shift work for Mr. D. meant a weakening of his relationship with his two sons, and their common question, "when's Dad coming home?",[5] gives some indication of the minimal time he actually spent at home. Of course shift work was also "a great strain on the shift worker's wife",[6] as Mrs. D.'s contribution to the interview revealed. She was left with the responsibility of rearing her two sons almost totally alone because, as Mr. D. explained, "I was never home to boss my two blokes".[7] During this time Mrs. D. also undertook some charity work for the local Methodist Church in the hope of perhaps reducing the sense of loneliness and isolation that her husband's absences caused.

It is interesting to note that as a child Mr. D. experienced long separations from both his father and mother, and perhaps his experience of this type of life enabled him to accept his own separation from his children as an inevitable and normal part of life. His father was usually away gold digging in West Australia for two to three years at a time, and because his mother was a nurse who acted as a local midwife, she would also have to leave seven children for periods of up to a fortnight. This situation naturally initiated an early sense of independence in Mr. D., and he left school at the age of thirteen and then raised his age to fourteen to enable him to get a job as a coalminer. This, of course, prevented him from gaining the full education which may have stopped the continuation of paternal separation in his own family, by offering him the chance to get a job with regular hours of work. But as a fictitious railway character remarks, "...if you haven't got a trade or an education you've got to take anything you can get".[8]

The humble wage earned by Mr. D. on the railways also significantly affected his family's way of life. Although the family "always got enough to eat",[9] vegetables were grown in the garden and traps were often set for rabbits at Werris Creek in an attempt to ease financial pressures. Unfortunately Mrs. D. was unable to contribute to her husband's earnings through her own employment, as all married women were forbidden from doing so, and therefore she balanced the family budget by sewing her son's clothes, and by managing the money with extreme caution. In her own words they "had to live very meagrely",[10] by living on what was earned with no hope of ever being able to save for the future.

This inability to save for the future forced Mr. D., like most Newcastle people, to ensure some sort of security for his family through a number of funds and schemes. These funds included a doctor's fund, a hospital fund, and an ambulance fund, which were payable weekly in small amounts. The railway workers also collected weekly sums from wages to cover themselves in case of sickness. P. Haslam states that "in 1938 these people had no worries about their health services".11 The railway workers also organised a "Christmas ham" fund that ensured that a leg of ham would be on the dinner table at Christmas, while a suit lottery drawn every fortnight provided the lucky winner with an entire, new suit. There was also a general helpfulness among neighbours and friends that ensured that there would be willing hands in cases of trouble and emergencies. Thus because there was no money in the bank to fall back on, fairly extensive insurance schemes were implemented and the "strong tradition of self-help in Newcastle" continued.

Although Mr. D.'s work on the railways enabled him to gain a much wider experience of people and places, his overall outlook and awareness of the world remained fairly narrow. He did, however, acquire an unusual racial tolerance through his railway experiences which led him to befriend both aboriginals and European migrants. Many of the events of the outside world, however, remained obscure to him, and although he listened to overseas radio stations on his wireless, he most probably did so because of the novelty, and not for any informative objective. Overall his life remained centred around his work which left little time and perhaps little interest for the happenings of distant nations.

Thus, Mr. D.'s own words - "It's a dog's life"[12] - give a clear indication of the immense strain that shift work placed on his life and the life of his family. Shift work, and the persistent working needed to maintain a family, also caused a certain apathy to outside affairs and a narrow and isolated outlook which was reinforced by a limited education.

FOOTNOTES

1. F.R.E. Mauldon, Social Economics: The Hunter Valley, Melbourne, 1927, p.124.
2. ibid., p.125.
3. Interview with Mr. D., tape 1, side A, count 380.
4. Mauldon, op.cit., p.125.
5. Interview, tape 1, side A, count 92.
6. Mauldon, op.cit., p.125.
7. Interview, tape 1, side A, count 102.
8. J. Booth, Only the Tracks Remain, Sydney, 1972, p.7.
9. Interview, tape 1, side A, count 145.
10. Interview, tape 1, side A, count 137.
11. P. Haslam, 'Notes on Life in Newcastle 1938', University of Newcastle Archives, p.2.
12. Interview, tape 1, side A, count 93.

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