

*The tradesman at his work is the equal of the most learned doctor...
The ends of Providence, I have said, are being served by every man and woman who follows an honourable calling, and who thereby ministers to the happiness and progress of mankind...*

To that end they have contributed more largely by their indirect than by their direct influence, for there is hardly a department of human industry and activity which has not been stimulated by commercial enterprise.⁴³

The Liverpool biographies celebrated such mercantile heroism. Thomas Ismay possessed Herculean strength and 'displayed an activity which would have been beyond the physical powers of most men. Early and late he was watching things shape themselves to his purpose...generally acting as the guiding spirit of every branch of enterprise.'⁴⁴ Despite his personal capacity for work, he was

no self-assertive business tyrant intent upon grinding the last limit of service out of those under his control...It was as the practical man of business that he inspired confidence and esteem and won distinction; and it was his practical knowledge of the affairs of life that enabled him to do so much good apart from the enterprise in which he was more directly concerned.⁴⁵

Alexander Balfour's business was conducted 'on principles of the highest integrity and honour'. Lundie recorded that Balfour once cancelled a written agreement because 'an uncomfortable conviction crept into his mind that it was too much to the advantage of his own firm.'⁴⁶ William Rathbone 'trusted no prosperity that was not the outcome of continuous and laborious work.'⁴⁷

The notion of greatness being attainable by hard work found repeated expression in civic hagiography. Not all could aspire to the achievements of exceptional figures but hagiography

⁴³ J. Samuelson, Footsteps in Human Progress, London, 1898, pp.7, 8 and 22.

⁴⁴ Founder of the White Star Line

⁴⁵ ibid.

⁴⁶ Lundie, Alexander Balfour, pp. 42 and 43.

⁴⁷ Rathbone, William Rathbone, p.115.

applauded application more often than it proclaimed genius. J. Allanson Picton, far from being blinded by filial devotion, proposed that his father's biography was an

*object lesson for young men beginning life. From it they may learn that 'steady application in any pursuit or study, combined with integrity and a fair amount of intelligence, are almost sure to succeed in the long run'; that drudgery and exactitude are a very serviceable substitute for genius.*⁴⁸

Thomas Ismay's life was 'full of incident, but it was business incident, not incident of the class out of which romance are made or from which stories of adventure are built up...a punctual man of great method.'⁴⁹ Eleanor Rathbone quoted from fragments of her father's dictated memoranda-

*The men who reap an immediate and material reward for their work are not these great discoverers and men of genius, but rather these ordinary men whose quick, careful observation, common sense and industry just place them a few days, months or years in advance of what is becoming the general knowledge or sentiment... I think if more people realised how considerable and widespread are the results which are often attainable by the use of these qualities...they would be inspired with faith and energy to attempt public work which they now believe to require much rarer qualities, and therefore modestly consider to be beyond their power. In short, if I were to venture to express what seems to me to be the lesson of my own life by an adapted proverb, I should say 'Great are the uses of mediocrity!'*⁵⁰

One of William Rathbone's other daughters, Winifred, was the author of the biography of Kitty Wilkinson, the working class Irishwoman whose pioneering efforts in public health were a striking instance of what ordinariness could achieve. John Dobie has investigated this civic myth and has identified the element of working class self-help as 'an essential ingredient of the myth'.⁵¹ Kitty's humble background was no bar to civic service. 'Kitty always remained

⁴⁸ Picton, Sir James A. Picton, London, 1891, p.9.

⁴⁹ Founder of the White Star Line

⁵⁰ Rathbone, William Rathbone, pp. 492 and 493.

⁵¹ J. Dobie, Kitty Wilkinson- A Civic Myth?, typewritten manuscript in Liverpool Central Library, p.68.

poor herself, but she gave so much of her time and strength to the service of others that she did far more good than a rich woman could have done by gifts of money alone.⁵²

Although civic service did not demand living in the midst of slums as Kitty Wilkinson had done, a degree of residential loyalty to the city was an important aspect of citizenship. Balfour did move to Denbighshire in old age, but, according to Lundie 'a struggle arose in his mind. Was he justified in so far leaving Liverpool? It seemed to him for a time like "deserting his post"'.⁵³ Lundie reported the words of one of Balfour's friends, Mr. Fair

I shall never forget...the serious almost solemn way in which he...[said] that were there any chance from his having selected this beautiful place for his home, of its drawing him away from Liverpool, and the work in which he was engaged on behalf of the city, he would part with it at once without a pang.

It was, with him, a constant subject of regret, not to say indignation, sometimes expressed in language more plain than pleasant, that many who made their fortunes in Liverpool spent them elsewhere, retiring to a distance and doing perhaps little or nothing for the community to which they owed so much.⁵⁴

The 'desertion' of the city was plainly an issue on which righteous indignation could be forgiven. In Philip Rathbone, Lund discerned something of

the old Hebrew's fiercely tender devotion to Jerusalem...It has been largely the fashion for men to regard this great commercial centre merely as a happy hunting ground, in which to make a fortune; then to carry it away to sunnier climes and spend it there. The result must always be a comparative slackening of interest in the city.⁵⁵

Sir James Picton resisted the allure of London and 'the railway system, which threatens to reduce all British towns to mere suburbs of London, never disturbed his local patriotism'.⁵⁶

⁵² W. Rathbone, Kitty Wilkinson, p.20.

⁵³ Lundie, Alexander Balfour, p.168.

⁵⁴ ibid., p.166.

⁵⁵ Lund, The Ideal Citizen, p.7.

⁵⁶ Picton, Sir James A. Picton, p.279.

His biography reproduced the speech which the Earl of Derby had made in his honour at the opening of the Picton Reading Room in 1879. The Earl 'made some pregnant remarks on the tendency of imperial interests to impoverish municipal life'.

You cannot attach too much importance to having your local affairs in the hands of men who wish to be really thinking what they can do for the town, not what the town can do for them...

It is the city, the borough, the parish, which supplies the great majority of us with a possible and useful sphere of action...there are thousands who may reflect, without self illusion and without vanity, that the condition of their immediate neighbourhood would have been widely different if they had not existed.⁵⁷

William Roscoe and William Rathbone had both represented the city at Westminster, although the civic spirit of neither wavered. Roscoe 'threw himself with ardour into every scheme which promised to make Liverpool and England more like Florence and Italy.⁵⁸'; Rathbone 'was a Liverpool man in almost every sense which it is possible for a man to belong to a city- born a freeman within the city bounds, educated there, apprenticed there, representing as a merchant and shipowner her two principal industries.⁵⁹

Charles Reilly, the Professor of Architecture at the University, noted that residence was an important measure of civic patriotism, if not of moral calibre. 'I remember how disgraceful it was thought when Edward Gonner (later Sir Edward) the economist, moved out to Hoylake. He was the first [of the academic staff] to do anything so unpatriotic and, needless to say, he belonged to the wrong party in university politics.⁶⁰

The themes of the enlightened merchant, the self-made man, the achievement of greatness through application and the loyalty owed to Liverpool constituted the didactic element of

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 351 and 352.

⁵⁸ Muir, *William Roscoe*, p.9.

⁵⁹ Rathbone, *William Rathbone*, p.219.

⁶⁰ C.H. Reilly, *Scaffolding in the Sky*, London, 1938, p.75.

hagiography; yet civic hagiography cast a mystical aura around its subjects, too. A woman who visited Balfour shortly before his death recalled 'there was a grandeur, even a glory about Mr. Balfour in his utter self-forgetfulness. I really felt that in his presence I understood the nature of our Saviour as I had never done before.'⁶¹

Another incident from Balfour's life had clear Biblical overtones. Christ-like, he devised a parable on the duties of wealth which echoed the parable of the sower and the Sermon on the Mount.

*When friends visited Mr. Balfour, he sometimes invited them to examine one field in which he took great delight. He had found it sour and sullen, producing nothing but rushes and coarse grass. He thoroughly drained it, and made it one of the most fertile of all his fields. As we stood with other friends among its teeming furrows, we have heard him take up his parable concerning it with an earnestness which left its impress on all hearers. 'The water' he would say 'which is held in the miserly soil brings a curse and not a blessing. But if, when it falls from heaven, it is made to pass on to enrich other places, it leaves the brightest fertility behind. Just so it is with riches. Hoarded wealth, like hoarded water, sours and sickens the narrow soul that hoards it. But if wealth, when it flows in, is distributed through useful channels, it is blessed in the having and blessed in the giving.'*⁶²

If Balfour manifested Christ's powers as a teacher, Philip Rathbone underwent a change akin to the Transfiguration. Lund related how he had watched Rathbone reading the lesson

*as I looked at the shrunken form of the small man, already touched by the finger of Azrael, and withering towards its wintry change, he seemed to grow positively majestic, while his voice thrilled with triumphant feeling and it was a relief when he lay down the book.*⁶³

⁶¹ Lundie, Alexander Balfour, p.307.

⁶² ibid., pp. 174 and 175.

⁶³ Lund, The Ideal Citizen, pp. 14 and 15.

Philip Rathbone himself had been aware of that the lives of civic figures could teach the precepts of citizenship. In an obituary of Rathbone in the Liverpool University magazine, The Sphinx, Principal Rendall wrote of Rathbone's conviction that

*it is the business of corporate bodies...by statues, emblems and memorials of noble deeds and worthy men to inculcate on every member of the body 'that great citizens form a necessary integral part of great communities, without which the latter cannot exist.'*⁶⁴

Rathbone's brother, William, was one of the great citizens whose statue was erected in St. John's Garden at the rear of St. George's Hall. His likeness stands alongside those of Gladstone, Alexander Balfour, Arthur Forwood, Canon Major Lester and Monsignor Nugent, facing the Regimental Monument commemorating the South African War. The statues were all erected between 1889 and 1905; the site was laid out as terraced gardens by the City Surveyor and opened to the public in 1904.⁶⁵ The remodelling of the site, formerly St. John's Churchyard, as Liverpool's 'al fresco Valhalla'⁶⁶ was a further indication of the rise of the cult of the heroic citizen.

Women were unrepresented in St. John's Garden, but religion and civic patriotism entwined elsewhere in the city to provide other settings for iconic representation. When the Lady chapel of the Anglican Cathedral was completed in 1910, it was considered 'fitting that the ruling idea of the Chapel decorations should be the honouring of noble women, and that its windows should be used to chronicle their good deeds.'⁶⁷Not all were Liverpool women, but Kitty Wilkinson took her place next to such luminaries as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Juliana of

⁶⁴ In a newspaper cuttings scrap book in Rathbone Papers, University of Liverpool, Special Collections.

⁶⁵ Liverpool Heritage Bureau, Buildings of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1978, pp.54 and 55.

⁶⁶ Liverpool Review, 11 March 1899.

⁶⁷ W. McNeill, The Noble Women of the Staircase, Liverpool 1915, p.11.

Norwich, Catherine Gladstone and Queen Victoria. William McNeill delivered a series of occasional sermons in which he elaborated on the virtues of each of the women.

The moral of Kitty Wilkinson's story was that

opportunities of service are to be fond of those who seek them, that the humblest and most insignificant person may accomplish much, trusting in God and self...it shows to us how much can be accomplished in practical Christian service by those who, having only one talent, consecrate it wholly to the Master. You cannot say now that you can do little, that you have no talent for Christian service, no field of Christian labour; for if you do, this life of the poor woman in Denison Street will put you to shame.⁶⁸

Kitty Wilkinson's particular value as a civic and religious exemplar was her poor background. Her 'picture hung in every school', not least because she was a model citizen with whom the masses could identify.

Biographies and monuments elevated particular individuals as worthy models of civic patriotism. The directories of civic worthies which proliferated during the period were a more comprehensive attempt to chronicle citizenship. The most extensive of these was Liverpool's Legion of Honour. The author, B. Guinness Orchard, noting that the city's glory had been enhanced by the promotion of its mayor to a Lord Mayor, explained his intention to collate 'a reliable account of those families, firms and individuals whose intelligence, activity and wealth have had a chief share in winning for the city a right to this distinction.'⁶⁹

The work opened with a quotation from Disraeli's Coningsby.

'Where will you find your natural aristocracy?' asked Coningsby

⁶⁸ ibid., pp. 19, 24 and 25.

⁶⁹ Orchard, Liverpool's Legion of Honour, p.vii.

'Among those men' replied Mr. Millbank, 'whom a nation recognises as the most eminent for virtues, talents and property, and, if you please, birth and standing in the land. They guide opinions and, therefore, they govern.'

Orchard's book was to be a celebration of the 'natural aristocrats' of Liverpool, but he set out additional qualifications for inclusion, preferring those 'whose connection with the locality is intimate and likely to be permanent.'⁷⁰ Liverpool's Legion of Honour was a catalogue of good citizenship which presented an extensive series of images of civic patriotism. Orchard confessed that he had aspired to write a panegyric to commercial virtues.

Liverpool...is one of the most interesting places in the world to a thoughtful observer, especially if, as in my case, he honours and loves commerce, regards a merchant as a benefactor to humanity, and believes that, on the whole, no occupation is more beneficial than trade in stimulating the mental powers, bracing conscience and producing content. Commercial biographies charmed my boyhood. When later on, I strove to produce poetry, my ambition was to write an epic in which the progress of commerce would be commemorated.⁷¹

Once more, civic hagiography asserted the moral value of commerce in emotive language.

On the banks of the Mersey he who really has wide acquaintance with the various classes engaged in trade must admit that sound principles and noble aspirations are as much the rule as the exception...I will go further and say that there are some among these money seeking bargain makers who, if the need arose, would become zealous missionaries or cheerful martyrs.⁷²

Furthermore, Orchard's work was aggressively local in ethos. As a general rule, he limited his survey to those who lived 'within a circle of ten miles around the Liverpool Exchange.'⁷³ Moreover, he reflected on the comparative merits of Manchester, London and Liverpool society, much in Liverpool's favour.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. viii.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, pp. ix and x.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. x.

⁷³ His choice of the Exchange and not the Town Hall as the centre of his circle is significant. *ibid.*, p. xvii.

Liverpool people have no need to come to London in the search for that social distinction which opens the way to county life...In Manchester there may be as much wealth, and certainly there is not less capacity to understand great intellectual questions and to acquire varied accomplishments, yet the old contrast of Manchester Men with Liverpool Gentlemen is no shallow envious sneer...Society is more prepared to accept the new comer from the Mersey than from the Irwell... London has much more than any one person can partake of; Liverpool has enough to satisfy any reasonable appetite- at any rate that of any reasonable Liverpool man or woman- and that is the real point for me.⁷⁴

The main body of Orchard's book comprised the biographies of Liverpool's 'notable individuals.' There were 1400 references to people's professions which are summarised in *Table 2*. Some individuals occur under more than one heading, but the table contributes to the construction of an occupational pattern of Orchard's 'notable citizens'.

Orchard's own definition of "notable" has only local application, indicating a person, who, by whatever means, exercises a perceptible influence on an unusually large number of fellow citizens; or whose name is often mentioned by those who do not know him personally.⁷⁵ Under this broad definition, Orchard found room to list 223 women. Although some of the women merited inclusion as the widows of prominent men or as the surviving representatives of celebrated Liverpool families, Orchard's selection was guided by a desire to recognise civic service. Of the women recorded, 137 were involved in charity work of various descriptions; forty more were members of the Needlework Guild (which helped to provide clothes for poor children) and a further fourteen patronised the Liverpool School of Cookery (which sought to instruct working-class women in domestic science).

Orchard made scant concession to gallantry when he believed women were neglecting the duties which civic patriotism demanded. He rounded on a Mrs. Duranty, for instance, who lived on the Wirral, observing 'West Kirby is somewhat distant from Liverpool and West Kirby affords but little occupation for a sensible lady desirous to effect much good in a short

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 31 and 33.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. xvi.

Table 2- Occupational Pattern of Liverpool's Legion of Honour

This table sets out the fifteen largest occupational categories in Liverpool's Legion of Honour in rank order.

Occupation or reason for inclusion	No. of entries	% of entries
Women	223	15.9
Merchants and shipping	141	10.1
Clergy and religious institutions	113	8.1
Finance	86	6.1
Law	80	5.7
Cotton merchants	58	4.1
Local govt. and politics (excl. M.P.s)	50	3.6
Medicine and dentistry	46	3.3
Freemasons and secret orders	39	2.8
Education and academics	35	2.5
Famous families or landowners	34	2.4
Insurance	28	2.0
Armed forces	27	1.9
General brokers	24	1.7
Oil, chemicals, soap and paint	22	1.6

time. Gentlefolk live there for their own convenience, not that of others.¹⁷⁶ In contrast, Lady Gertrude Molyneux was praised for her involvement in the Needlework Guild which proved 'that she really feels some warm neighbouring interest in the charitable work of the great community whose labour furnishes most of his income to Lord Sefton. O si sic omnia.'¹⁷⁷ The Legion of Honour did not just acclaim Liverpool's elite; it was underpinned by a wish to stimulate citizenship.

An ethos of service coloured the biographies. Allan Bright, 'a younger member of the commercial family of that name' was cited as an example of

*one to whom thoughtful persons look as fitted, on behalf of his family, to come forward in public affairs, and take the part in local government which is too often abandoned to inferior men by those who, having wealth, culture, and social prestige, ignore their moral responsibility to society and stand apart from where they might be and should be, public spirited useful citizens.*⁷⁸

Colonel Gamble was depicted as

*a perfect specimen of the 'City Father' or ideal citizen, continuing to reside where his business lies, although he could if he preferred live in London or Italy; spending a considerable percentage of his large income for the welfare and happiness of those around him, without parsimonious measurement of the legal or even moral claims on his bounty.*⁷⁹

Orchard did not shrink from questioning the civic patriotism of Liverpool men of the front rank, as his account of the life of Sir William Brown attests. Brown's philanthropy had founded the Central Library which bore his name, but Orchard was adamant that financial liberality did not entirely encompass civic duty. Orchard used Brown's career to vaunt the

⁷⁶ ibid., p.287.

⁷⁷ ibid., p.506.

⁷⁸ ibid., p.201.

⁷⁹ ibid., p.314.

moral advantages which a self-made fortune and a commercial background usually conferred, but also to indicate that philanthropy was worthless without altruistic intentions.

He was...undeniably one of those who have made their own fortunes. No rich ancestor left him a princely patrimony to develop. No patron gave him a commencing impetus. No accident, as with the first Rothschild, furnished a huge capital for the preliminary operation...

I cannot say that, apart from the acquisitive faculties, he had much intellect; though in a great merchant there is no small element of imagination, fancy, humour and sympathy- far more than is supposed by those literary men who have concentrated theirs on other objects...

When a potential baronetcy loomed before him he gave a valuable building to the town where he had grown rich; but he gave it under pressure, after much judicious handling, grudgingly- somewhat like the famous cow which first yielded milk, but afterwards kicked over the pail. Dozens of local merchants with not a tenth of his means contributed more to charities.⁸⁰

From Bede's time, hagiography had not merely recorded 'good things of good men' but had recorded 'evil of wicked men'⁸¹, and an added touch painted Brown's failings more darkly. Orchard wrote that Brown's will 'though doubtless just and justifiable was universally considered worthy of him who was rumoured to have discharged a footman for giving a plate of broken victuals to a beggar.'⁸² Civic hagiography's villains, as well as its heroes, were writ large.

Gladstone received unflattering treatment, too. Orchard's barely disguised contempt for the Irish councillors and his approval of Liberals who 'cling rather to principles than to leaders'⁸³, suggest that he was a Liberal Unionist. Orchard claimed that Gladstone 'cares next to nothing about his native place...[he] is so rarely in Liverpool that he can scarcely be called a Liverpool citizen...He is nevertheless, if only pro forma, our most notable citizen.'⁸⁴

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, pp.211-214.

⁸¹ Bede, *History of the English Church*, p.33.

⁸² Orchard, *Liverpool's Legion of Honour*, p.214.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p.159.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 327 and 330.

Liverpool's Legion of Honour constructed a similar image of civic patriotism to those enshrined in the biographies which have already been examined. However, the impact of an image depends on its communication, as well as its construction. Within six years of Balfour's death, Lundie's biography had run to six editions. Eleanor Rathbone had been moved to write her father's biography when it became clear after his death that 'among his fellow citizens in Liverpool, his former constituents in Wales, and his fellow-workers and friends everywhere, there were many who would value a record of his life.'⁸⁵ Eleanor Rathbone's statement hints at one of the shortcomings of civic hagiography in reaching a mass audience. Sermons and biographies would tend to preach to the converted and even men of letters might remain unaware of civic hagiography or find it faintly ridiculous.

Walter Raleigh, the Professor of Literature at the University, took a letter from Orchard which requested his details for publication in Liverpool's Legion of Honour as a practical joke by a friend. He informed his wife 'It is all too ravishingly like Jim Pinkerton'⁸⁶. When Orchard continued to press for a reply, Raleigh was delighted and enthused 'the correspondence promises too well to let drop.'⁸⁷ Raleigh replied,

*I am not rich, I never dabbled in philanthropy...I live in the cheapest kind of jerry built house...I have taken out no patents, gained no medals and saved no lives. From the depths of this obscurity you propose to raise me by conferring on me the Order of the Legion of Honour. I assure you sir, I am unworthy. I have no claim to be named in any list of the citizens of Liverpool more exclusive than the Census.'*⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Rathbone, William Rathbone, preface.

⁸⁶ Walter Raleigh to Lucy Raleigh, 20 July 1892 in The Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh (ed. Lady Raleigh), London, 1926, p. 168.

⁸⁷ ibid., Walter Raleigh to Lucy Raleigh, 23 July 1892, p.168.

⁸⁸ ibid., p.168.

It is a testament to the seriousness of purpose with which Orchard set about his work that the sarcastic note of self-deprecation was missed and the reply was included in Orchard's opus verbatim.

The appeal of Liverpool's Legion of Honour may have bypassed Raleigh, but there was a growing market for such directories of worthies. Liverpool was provided for by Lancashire Leaders: Social and Political (1895), Men of the Period- Lancashire (1897), Liverpool's Men of Mark (1907) and Liverpool and Birkenhead in the Twentieth Century (1911). Nor was Liverpool especially favoured in this regard for there were similar works for other cities⁸⁹. Men of the Period- Lancashire was published in London by a company called The Biographical Publishing Company which produced volumes covering other areas.

These directories were of varying quality. Lancashire Leaders: Social and Political borrowed heavily from Liverpool's Legion of Honour for its character sketches of such figures as Sir Arthur Forwood, Sir David Radcliffe and Robert Holt, although the debt was acknowledged.⁹⁰ The selection criteria for Men of the Period- Lancashire were more doubtful. The preface boldly proclaimed 'men make history; and a full knowledge of these men is indispensable to him who would understand it. The ancients realised this, and neglected nothing which might throw light on the personality of their heroes.' Echoing Orchard, it continued by arguing that civic recognition should be bestowed on a wide range of people and decried

the weakness of honouring none but warriors, statesmen and philosophers and leaving in the shade citizens who took no part in the stirring events which they delight to chronicle, but nevertheless contributed their share to the advancement of humanity...the peaceful and honourable men who have, by their marked industry,

⁸⁹ J. Maclehouse, Memoirs and Portraits of One Hundred Glasgow Men, Glasgow, 1886; W. Tracy and W. Pike, Manchester and Salford at the close of the Nineteenth Century, Brighton, 1901; J. Potter Briscoe, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire at the opening of the Twentieth Century, Nottingham, 1901 and J. Tweed, Who's Who in Glasgow 1909, Glasgow, 1909 are amongst other examples.

⁹⁰ Lancashire Leaders: Social and Political, Exeter, 1895, p.2.

*their skill and perseverance, laid the indisputable basis of a great nation in wealth and commercial prosperity.*⁹¹

However, the volume was filled with sketches of figures and companies which had not been covered by Orchard. Short entries on civic leaders such as Sir Arthur Forwood and Robert Holt gave the book a veneer of exclusivity, but it was little more than a commercial directory. Where Forwood had merited half a page, Professor J.W. Ralf (whose qualifications were left unexplained) was worthy of a full page which noted the wonderful secret method which he brought to conversational language teaching. Threadbare biographical information was provided about Richard Ansdell, save that he was an insurer 'in a position to effect insurances of every example' and had a 'well merited reputation for courtesy and straightforwardness.'⁹² Telegraphic addresses concluded many of the entries.

That this was considered a viable commercial format and a valuable advertising medium suggests there was a market for civic hagiography amongst the middle classes which remained unsated. For some, pride in being bracketed with Liverpool's civic leaders would have sharpened the appeal of such works.

Civic pride and personal vanity were interconnected. The image of the commercial grandeur of Liverpool not only celebrated the city's merchants, it added to the lustre of all who could be associated with the city. As the occupational background to Orchard's entries illustrates (*Table 2*), by no means all of the putative elite were merchants, so the hegemony of civic images of commercial power and commercial virtue might seem perplexing. Such imagery could earn broader commitment amongst the elite because it advanced Liverpool's claims to distinction; in turn greater glory for the city could be shared by its foremost citizens. Civic pride could tie individual and municipal ambitions and aspirations together.

⁹¹ Men of the Period- Lancashire, London, 1897, preface.

⁹² ibid., p.129.

Liverpool and Birkenhead in the Twentieth Century extolled the name of Liverpool and insisted on 'the difficulty of conveying in words any adequate idea of its boundless resources and amenities.'

*From time to time writers have essayed to meet this difficulty by comparing this great maritime gateway of international commerce with ancient cities of renown, like Tyre, Carthage, Imperial Rome, Venice and Athens: but all such comparisons are utterly futile. Liverpool in fact stands in a position so unique that all such comparisons are meaningless to the general reader. Indisputably the premier ocean port in the British Empire, it is the most famous and the most frequented emporium for cosmopolitan traffic the world has known in ancient or modern times.*⁹³

Trade and commerce were portrayed as a source of pride for all Liverpudlians, not least since they entrusted the city with an Imperial mission. An excerpt from a speech made by Sir Wilfred Laurier, the Canadian Prime Minister, at the close of the Imperial Conference of Prime Ministers of the British Dominions in 1911, was included which stated: 'trade is, after all, the great bond between nations and the highest expression of the world's civilisation. In this matter, Liverpool can justly claim a leading position in the very front rank.'⁹⁴

Trade and commerce also accounted for many of the photographs which enlivened the book. Subjects included Atlantic liners, the Landing Stage, the Customs House, the Liver Buildings, Princes Dock and the Exchange Flags. The inclusion of a picture of Roscoe's birthplace is noteworthy. Indeed, Liverpool's fame was attributed to its citizens because

*the destiny of a city, like that of an empire, depends mainly on the genius and character of the men and women who direct its government...the fortunes of nations and communities are shaped by human agency...
the average standard of education and intelligence among the toilers of Liverpool is probably higher today than in any other town in England.*⁹⁵

⁹³ W.T. Pike (ed.), Liverpool and Birkenhead in the Twentieth Century, Brighton, 1911, pp.11 and 12.

⁹⁴ ibid., p.35.

⁹⁵ ibid., pp.13, 14 and 36.

Civic hagiography was a powerful form of image which expressed the values which founded civic patriotism. Civic patriotism was not a monolithic concept, particularly since there were implied moral judgements behind the recognition of civic virtue. There were, notwithstanding, common themes such as the cult of the merchant, the greatness of mediocrity wedded to application and the duty and love which should be owed to Liverpool as the source of individual wealth.

Nonconformity encouraged images of civic patriotism which combined religion and public service, yet religion was not the sole formative influence on civic hagiography. The Victorian and Edwardian propensity to construe historical events in terms of individual agency encouraged a similar approach to civic image. Whether animated by a vision of civic patriotism as a form of Christian service or by the commercial Imperial mission of Liverpool, civic hagiography was intentionally didactic and teleological. A glorious civic image and a panoply of civic patriots offer insights into the ideologies of civic pride.

Chapter Five- Civic Blame

Just behind the Walker Art Gallery, lies that acme of all British slums, the internationally famous Scotland Road. Midway in this thoroughfare stands Paddy's Market, also internationally known, where the refuse of the Empire is bought and sold...

Just across from Paddy's Market stands Richmond Row, where, in its squalid shacks- sleeping sometimes ten in a single room for threepence a night- live most of these transient women hawkers. The majority of these young women, after peddling their wares in or outside the Market, sally forth at night toward Lime Street, there to barter anew- this time with their bodies...After such nocturnal forays they meander homeward, get drunk on methylated spirits, engage in internecine warfare, and usually end the night in that stumpy little structure up the road, the Rose Hill lock up.¹

Thus did Pat O'Mara describe the Liverpool of 1910 where he spent his boyhood. The city was wracked by severe social problems, not least in health and housing, which constituted the most serious threat to Liverpool's image of commercial grandeur and progressive municipal administration. The death rate had fallen from an annual toll of 27 per 1,000 inhabitants to 20.2 between 1882 and 1906, yet the figure for the latter date was exceeded amongst British towns only by Middlesbrough and Dublin. As late as 1913, there were 2,771 houses which the Corporation classed as insanitary, although this was a marked improvement from 22,000 in 1864.²

In order to evaluate Liverpool's record in health and housing, commentators were drawn into the reconstruction of the city's past. This involved apportioning blame and responsibility for the city's current problems. Hence, there was competition between different readings of the past. As W. Hamish Fraser has suggested of Glasgow,

the view that the size and the condition of the city would reflect its inhabitants and that it mattered to be 'the second city of the empire' was an immensely powerful driving force for urban change...much of what was done was overtly concerned with 'image' rather than reality...partly this was driven by fear, partly by shame that the

¹ P. O'Mara, The Autobiography of a Liverpool Irish Slummy, (London, 1934) pp.4 and 5.

² B.D. White, The Corporation of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1951, p.137.

*image of the city was being tarnished by regular revelations that its slums were the worst in Europe.*³

The construction and communication of images of Liverpool was a matter of considerable political significance. Civic blame was the counterpoint to civic virtue; and if one group could be labelled as having compromised the city's reputation, other rival groups would be empowered. Issues of health, housing and social purity presented many such opportunities for public accusations and denial.

The image of the Corporation's achievements in health and housing was endowed with greater strategic significance because of Arthur Forwood's espousal of Tory Democracy after 1882. For Conservatives, suggests Philip Waller, there was 'no possibility other than to define democracy passively-that popular involvement in government should occur only at elections...because an active democracy threatened Conservatism.'⁴ As the leader of the Conservatives on the City Council and chairman of the Insanitary Property Committee, Forwood was in a position to apply the Disraelian maxim: 'sanitas, sanitatum, omnia sanitas'. If progress in public health were attributed to Conservative rule, electoral advantages might follow for the party.

Forwood harnessed Christian social duty and civic patriotism to his vision of Tory Democracy and seized upon the housing question as a suitable arena for it to be displayed. In November 1883 he read his paper The Dwellings of the Industrial Classes at the Liverpool Diocesan Conference. He reasoned that

If the well-to-do minority of the community will devote some of their time and some of their energy to thoughts of others and not be content to live in the quiet leisurely enjoyment of their own lives...they will not only perform one of the highest services

³ W.H. Fraser, 'Let Glasgow Flourish' in Glasgow Vol.II 1830 to 1912, W.H. Fraser and I. Maver (eds.), Manchester, 1996, pp.2, 4 and 6.

⁴ P.J. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism: A Social and Political History of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1981, p.45.

*they can render to the Christianity they profess, but they will be doing an act of great patriotism.*⁵

Forwood was advancing an image of civic virtue in which citizenship concerned itself with social problems. The ideological roots of this citizenship were embedded in the Tory tenets of loyalty and duty to Church and State. Forwood's thesis was that if this spirit could be instilled in the wealthy minority, then enlightened municipal leadership would be rewarded by responsible civic behaviour from the majority. Class divisions would disappear and the status quo would be upheld. Forwood offered a cogent definition of the passive democracy which informed the logic of Tory Democracy.

*If the majority see that the minority of their fellow countrymen thus use their riches and their position, they will lose that bitterness which neglect and callousness engender, class distinctions will be forgotten, and the great democracy will acquiesce in that healthful influence which those with education, leisure and means now happily exercise on the legislation of the country.*⁶

The authors of Seems So! identified the 'irony of Anatole France...good citizens carry within them a proper respect for the law...the duty of the poor is to defend the good things belonging to the rich and this is how the union betwixt citizens is maintained.'⁷The social contract advocated by Forwood had its essence in such an ideal of duty, yet Tory Democracy recognised the need to encourage duty by example. Forwood insisted 'it is our bounden duty to afford to...our fellow creatures...an opportunity of feeling the ennobling and civilising influences of an English Home Life.'⁸To this end he proposed that the Corporation should aim 'to accommodate the industrial classes **at a Rental of One Shilling per Week per Room.**'⁹

⁵ A.B. Forwood, The Dwellings of the Industrial Classes in the Diocese of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1883, p.6.

⁶ ibid., p.6.

⁷ S. Reynolds and B. and T. Woolley, Seems So!, London, 1911, p.281.

⁸ Forwood, The Dwellings of the Industrial Classes, p.3.

⁹ ibid., p.28.

Forwood's credentials as a social reformer were not allowed to rest unchallenged. Thomas Stephens, a Liberal councillor who had served on the Health Committee since 1881, took up the attack before the month was out. At a meeting held in the Junior Reform Club he maintained that his Tory opponent was 'attempting to make local political capital by taking credit for himself and his party for a policy of sanitary reform.' In Stephens' view,

that credit did not belong to them; it was the outcome of an agitation with which Mr. Forwood had had little sympathy in the past...During the time Mr. Forwood was the chairman of the Health Committee nothing had been done to remedy the defects of the Sanitary Act of 1864¹⁰, to deal with the insanitary condition of the homes of the poor, so as to make them comfortable and healthy without demolition.¹¹

Stephens pressed the case for more sweeping action to replace the gradual strategy of rehousing which the Tories pursued. The Liverpool Courier, the city's most widely read Conservative paper, met calls for more radical municipal intervention with the rejoinder that

Humanitarian impulse in the past impelled the Health Committee into sundry enterprises which involved themselves and others in great expense, while the advantages achieved have proved very doubtful...The Health Committee have adopted a systematic plan of attacking in detail the insanitary features of the city. There is nothing sensational about it, but it promises to accomplish very desirable results in an economic way, and with the minimum of inconvenience to tenants and hardship to property owners.¹²

Municipal housing became a widely discussed topic. As Forwood observed at a People's Concert in the Free Public Library, 'the dwellings of the people were much talked about...in the newspapers and hardly a public man opened his lips but something was said about the homes of Liverpool.'¹³

¹⁰ The Local Improvement Act of 1864 had pioneered compulsory purchase. However, the system had proved expensive and new powers were not acquired until 1882.

¹¹ Liverpool Courier, 22 November 1883.

¹² ibid., 28 September 1883.

¹³ ibid., 26 November 1883.

When both Stephens and Forwood gave evidence before the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes in summer 1884, the debate about public health in Liverpool was extended to a national forum. Stephens had collaborated with the journalist Hugh Farrie in writing a series of articles entitled Squalid Liverpool which examined the Corporation's record on public health. Farrie had informed the Royal Commission that 'the sanitary movement in Liverpool only dates back as far as the beginning of the year. Mr. Forwood has only taken it up in the last nine months at the outside.' Farrie suggested that the Tories had shown little enthusiasm for tackling insanitary property over the last two decades and had ignored the recommendations of the former medical officer, Dr. Trench, who was 'an ardent sanitary reformer'.¹⁴ Stephens concurred and professed to be 'sorry to say I do not think there has been sufficient zeal shown, having regard to the powers which the Corporation possess.'¹⁵

Farrie had conceded that a change of policy had taken place and named Forwood as 'the mainspring of all municipal work in Liverpool'¹⁶. The Conservative leader was swift to point out that the Liverpool Corporation had faced additional challenges precisely because of its progressive ethos.

Like all pioneers, we had a great deal to learn and we could only learn by experience what was the best course to take. The Corporation, after 1864, acting under the advice of the then medical officer of health in improving the courts¹⁷, were engaged in a terrible proceeding, and only time would show what was the best line to adopt.¹⁸

¹⁴ Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes P.P., Vol. XXX (1884/5), p.501.

¹⁵ ibid., p.501.

¹⁶ ibid., p.501.

¹⁷ The courts, complexes of tenements typical of Liverpool, were notorious for their insanitary conditions.

¹⁸ Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, p.508.

A commissioner asked Forwood about the courts

*Were not a good many of them built in 1846, at the time of the great influx of Irish labourers?- At that time and also because there was an agitation then on foot for bringing in building regulations, and the builders, in order to anticipate these regulations made a rush to provide houses of the old fashioned and bad type.*¹⁹

This attempt to divert blame for the city's social problems onto builders, many of whom were Welsh, did not go uncontested. The programme of compulsory purchase and demolition pursued by the Insanitary Property Committee was bitterly opposed by the Liverpool Land and Home Owners Association, a body which B. Guinness Orchard noted 'will not be still or silent'.²⁰ As speculative builders and landlords found their civic virtue impeached, the Association conducted a campaign of correspondence to advance a more heroic role for them in the great population surge of the 1840s. The secretary, John Murphy, applauded property developers as

*in some degree, benefactors of the working classes...who anticipated the necessity of housing an increased population, and accordingly provided suitable dwellings...But they could not by anticipation provide against the serious dilapidation and consequent depreciation of their properties [by] the dirty, drunken, pugnacious and debased habits of consequently degraded and wretched tenants.*²¹

As well as attacks on tenants, the housing question sparked criticism of the predominance of the mercantile interest on the Council; Forwood himself was a shipowner and a director of an insurance company. The treasurer of the Association, Owen Williams, complained in the Liverpool press: 'I cannot find that our merchant princes- those who make the most noise

¹⁹ ibid., p.494.

²⁰ B. Guinness Orchard, Liverpool's Legion of Honour, Birkenhead, 1893, p.712.

²¹ Liverpool Land and Home Owners Association- Letters on Insanitary Dwellings and the Housing of the Poor, Liverpool, 1884, p.41.

about insanitary property- uplift so much as a little finger to provide better houses for the working classes than those in existence.¹²²

He advised that

*merchants and shipowners should stick to matters they understand better than housebuilding...if they feel more for the condition of the working man than present builders do, why do they not turn to and build better houses out of their own means and not out of the corporate funds which means increased local taxation and which again is contributed for the most part by owners of property and not by the merchant class?*²³

Furthermore, he accused Forwood of charging

the present owners of property with the condition of our narrow roads and courts, which for the most part...were brought into existence about a century ago by the 'greed' as he calls it of our merchant princes; certainly before a 'Welsh jerrybuilder' was ever known...

*From the treatment builders often meet with from the authorities it might be a crime to build new houses; as if they should give up their prosperity for the benefit of the public without payment. Do the commercial classes give up their ships and other property without payment?*²⁴

The housing question thus occasioned suggestions that Liverpool's municipal government placed commerce above other interests. Forwood had explained to the Royal Commission that the Council's building programmes were guided by the need to house the labouring population as close to the docks as possible. Lord Salisbury noted that the dock employers would 'get their labour easier, cheaper and more conveniently by reason of the expenditure on the improvement' and suggested that 'a portion of the expense might be borne by those, whether they are dock trustees or merchants, who employ dock labour.'²⁵

²² ibid., p.16.

²³ ibid., p.21.

²⁴ ibid., p.21.

²⁵ Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, p.510.

An evasive reply was given by Forwood,

*if a street is made for the benefit of the community, and that street also improves the adjoining property, the adjoining property would only be called upon to pay so much of the betterment as was proved the property was benefited by, and the balance would fall upon the community at large, and therefore would become a charge upon the mercantile community who enjoyed the benefit of the labour being nearer their work.*²⁶

The distinction between the 'community at large' and the 'mercantile community' was apparently unimportant. Campaigners such as Owen Williams doubted the confluence of these interests and consequently challenged the right of commercial magnates to direct municipal affairs. Williams assessed the financial contribution of the merchants to municipal government. The burden of local taxation was borne by property, rather than by personality; consequently some merchants paid lower rates than landlords who could not match their income. William Rathbone, although a merchant, had indicated the inequity of the system in an article in The Nineteenth Century. He recognised that 'personal property which does not pay rates has enormously increased, and its wealthiest possessors...do not pay their fair share of local taxation.'²⁷ He estimated the contribution in local rates and taxes by merchants and shipowners to stand at 1.5- 2%, in contrast to a figure in the 5- 12% range for retail tradesmen. These vagaries of taxation were exploited by Williams to emphasise that merchants were failing in their civic duty. To score his point more tellingly, he outlined an image of a new Liverpool which could not be achieved under the current system.

*In my opinion, every court house, all narrow streets- indeed, nearly all old Liverpool- should pass into history, which might easily be done if personalty were brought into contribution for that purpose...[Liverpool could be] laid out again according to modern sanitary notions, very much in the same way that Paris was dealt with by the late Emperor.*²⁸

²⁶ ibid., p.510.

²⁷ E. Rathbone, William Rathbone- A Memoir, London, 1905, p.237.

²⁸ Liverpool Land and Home Owners Association- Letters, pp.27 and 30.

The ability to don the mantle of good citizenship was essential for those hoping to acquire, exercise and preserve influence in the city. Many landlords perceived the Corporation encroaching on their rights to profit from speculative property development and understood the danger of their being portrayed as civic villains. Their opposition was articulated by challenging the supposed civic virtue of commerce and by promoting builders and landlords as moral guardians who should be entrusted with greater powers.

Williams recommended the serving of

all sanitary notices on tenants in the first instance, so as to give owners and agents more power to deal with the sanitary notices when presented to them by tenants. If not the tenants should be punished and ejected from the houses. The lower class of tenants are much worse and dirtier than 40 years ago, when owners had more control...

Landlords would thus obtain a much needed control over their property for its more efficient management, not only for their own interest, but for the advantage of the tenants and an improvement in the sanitary condition of their dwellings.²⁹

Others had recourse to the strategy of civic blame in attacking the municipal establishment. Civic image, with its connections to civic and personal pride, was an area in which the municipal administration was vulnerable. Attacks couched in terms of the shame brought upon the city were easily grasped and had an emotional intensity which added to their strength. Moreover, the active and demanding citizenship which some proposed as a remedy was a threat to the Tory Democrat model of a passive and grateful democracy.

The Presbyterian minister R.H. Lundie drew attention to the threat which public houses posed to residential areas in his pamphlet The Dark Side of Liverpool in 1880. Lundie appealed 'for a candid investigation...to the compassion of my fellow citizens, on behalf of thousands of brothers and sisters who are too weak and sunken effectively to protect themselves.'³⁰

²⁹ ibid., pp.19 and 43.

³⁰ R.H. Lundie, The Dark Side of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1880, p.4.

Richard Acland Armstrong, a Unitarian minister, published his indictment of the Tory administration a decade later under the instructive title The Deadly Shame of Liverpool. Armstrong's approach was to expose the prosperous image of Liverpool as a sham and to identify the drink interest and its allies on the Watch Committee and on the Licensing Bench as responsible for besmirching Liverpool's name.

Armstrong remembered that on his arrival in the city 'it seemed to me that this was a city in which one might be proud to be a citizen.' However, he quickly discovered the underside to Liverpool's grandeur.

I had seen wealth. I had seen poverty. But never before had I seen the two so jammed together. Never before had I seen streets, loaded with all that wealth can buy, lined with the haunts of hopeless penury...For a moment I was appalled...But soon the first vivid impressions began to fade...The gay equipages rolling down Bold Street, the brilliant shop fronts ceased to set me thinking of painful contrasts. Custom deadens all emotions. I was getting used to Liverpool. I accepted Liverpool as I found it and went about my business.³¹

The image of commercial success was alluring, yet Armstrong sought to demonstrate the emptiness of this vision. He argued that Liverpool outstripped all other cities in shame.

*I can no longer accept Liverpool as I find it...I and every other citizen of Liverpool have business to do that will brook no waiting...an evil as horrible, as subtle, as complex as American slavery itself is at our doors in Liverpool and all round about our homes...
I perceive now...that pitiful poverty...and much of that gorgeous wealth besides- are closely intertwined with a moral and social evil that no city of an Empire...can present a parallel. This evil is **the knitting together of the wholesale liquor trade, of drunkenness and of prostitution on an enormous scale, in one vast compact interest, and the power which that interest has obtained within the governing bodies of Liverpool.**³²*

³¹ R.A. Armstrong, The Deadly Shame of Liverpool, pp.3-5.

³² ibid., p.5.

Damning as Armstrong's condemnation was, it acquired still greater force from his comparisons with Glasgow, Sheffield, Manchester and Birmingham. Civic rivalry provided much of the drive behind civic shame. Armstrong contended that in all these towns prostitution, drunkenness and breaches of licensing regulations were vigorously dealt with by magistrates, police and the councils. In Liverpool, Alderman John Hughes sat on the Licensing Bench and chaired the Watch Committee despite being the legal adviser to the city's two major public house owners, Sir Andrew Walker and Robert Cain.

Neither Hughes nor the City Council was to blame for this dereliction of civic duty according to Armstrong, since

*their power is but the creation of their fellow citizens; and by their fellow citizens may be taken away even as it has been given. The ultimate responsibility rests with **you and me and every man amongst us who has voice or vote**. It is we, the citizens of Liverpool, who have permitted the Deadly Shame of Liverpool to grow up and flourish in our midst. It is we the citizens of Liverpool, who, if we will, can destroy that shame and set our goodly city on the fair path of progress and reform.³³*

Tories countered Armstrong's accusations by attempting to regain the initiative over civic image. Philip Waller has argued that 'force remained in the ploy of blackening opponents as civic traitors.' A.M. Jackson, Conservative councillor for St. Paul's ward, denounced Radicals who called Liverpool 'an immoral town.'³⁴ Although Waller argues that temperance was not the decisive issue in the municipal elections of 1890, he demonstrates that Armstrong's campaign was not without impact. The Head Constable was directed against brothels and Hughes was replaced as the chairman of the Watch Committee.³⁵ When Armstrong looked back on his earlier pamphlet in his work of 1892, Two Years Ago and Now, he admitted 'I cannot complain that it was left unnoticed.'³⁶

³³ *ibid.*, p.19.

³⁴ Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, p.106.

³⁵ *ibid.*, pp.112-115.

³⁶ R.A. Armstrong, Two Years Ago and Now, London, 1892, p.3.

Nowhere was the emotive force of civic shame more evident than where the welfare of children was concerned. Farrie and Stephens' survey Squalid Liverpool contained a chapter on 'Squalid Children', for 'heartrending in the extreme were the evidences of misery and neglect in the cases of hundreds of helpless little children whom we saw.'³⁷ Images of suffering children were intended as a spur to action, as in the instance of a girl found looking after a baby:

*the little nurse with sisterly tenderness gave the baby all she had- the old crust, besmeared with filthy grease...Alas for these young lives when winter comes! Squalid Liverpool then yields its crop of squalid victims and the little ones before us may well be among the first in the sacrifice.*³⁸

The Liverpool Land and Home Owners Association was aware that such imagery could be employed to attack builders and landlords, and it questioned the veracity some of the episodes recounted in Squalid Liverpool. The Association compared the survey's findings with the annual reports of the medical officer of health for 1881 and 1882.

*The death-bed scene in North-street, so graphically described, must really be read by the reader- the description is really very sad. This street seems to have been the point of the whole pamphlet...still no death in it is recorded for the 2 years above named of fever, scarlatina or diarrhoea.*³⁹

The medical officer only enumerated deaths in a street once they exceeded a given number, so the Association could not disprove the incident conclusively.

³⁷ Squalid Liverpool, Liverpool, 1883, p.16.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.12.

³⁹ Liverpool Land and Home Owners Association- Letters, p.53.

The Corporation shared the Association's concern to combat the emotional force of children in distress, and parades of happy, healthy children became a feature at royal visits from the 1880s onwards. Liverpool's commercial magnates indulged in grand, ritual philanthropic gestures, too. The summer camps for the city's children were 'largely supported and managed by gentlemen in the Cotton Market.'⁴⁰ Every year

*when the first bale of cotton for the season arrives in Liverpool it is put up by auction for the benefit of a philanthropic society connected with the trade. It sells for far more than its actual value and is usually purchased by Messrs. Zeneca and Co., who again offer it by auction and give one half of the proceeds to the Boys Camp at Meols and the other to the Girls Camp at Wallasey.*⁴¹

Children had always been linked to civic image. As James Samuelson commented in The Children of Our Slums, 'from time immemorial a conspicuous form of charity has been the provision of food for our indigent children.'⁴² The municipality began to assume more duties in child welfare, not least in an effort to define certain modes of behaviour as appropriate for its citizens. After 1895, the Corporation acted with the police to clothe destitute children. A series of three inspections were to check the homes and family circumstances of the children before such aid was given. The summer camps aimed to improve the habits of poor children, with the added objective of using the children as channels to effect sanitary improvement in their families. Samuelson expressed his pride that many children 'not only acquired a liking for order and decency but have compared their life at the camp to their poor homes when they have returned to them, and so have inculcated better habits in their parents and other relatives.'

In Images of Youth, Hendrick has discerned the importance of the period of adolescence in the social thought of the time; education with a skilled hand at this stage could shape children

⁴⁰ J. Samuelson, The Children of Our Slums, Liverpool, 1911, p.101.

⁴¹ ibid., p.101.

⁴² ibid., p.40.

into citizens and ennoble the race.⁴³ Urwick's Studies of Boy Life, published in 1904, concerned itself with the working-class youth in the belief that 'it is in this class that the comfort, the security, the possible efficiency of all others lie.'⁴⁴ There was a growing number of means for the Corporation to propagate a vision of the domestic lives which good citizens ought to lead. National legislation, such as the Children's Act of 1908, extended the realm of municipal government to include domestic matters which previously had been a private preserve. As the Corporation took up powers of supervision and inspection, it became more apparent that the behaviour of the individual citizen was subject to municipal scrutiny. The concept of civic blame had encroached into the home.

Hygiene became an important facet of citizenship and ill health was attributed to slovenly and immoral behaviour. The 'separate spheres' ideology which characterised Victorian gender relations had identified the home as the female preserve, and the increasing significance of the domestic sphere in upholding the image of a healthy city brought a corresponding degree of empowerment for women. Health was a field in which women could express themselves as citizens and as domestic affairs began to appear on the agenda of municipal politics, the separation of the public and private spheres became ever more indistinct. Patricia Hollis has commented,

*ethics and economics, instinctive compassion and social audit, all pointed to an expanded role for local government: and to an emphasis on issues, such as infant mortality and housing, where women believed they had a particularly womanly contribution to make.*⁴⁵

⁴³ H. Hendrick, Images of Youth, Oxford, 1990, p.250.

⁴⁴ E.J. Urwick (ed.), Studies of Boy Life, London, 1904, p.viii.

⁴⁵ P. Hollis, Ladies Elect, Oxford, 1987, p.396.

Municipal health policy came to be informed by a belief that citizenship could be taught: and women's domestic expertise clearly identified them as the most suitable teachers. House-to-house visitation by the Corporation's female sanitary staff was intended to inculcate 'the poorest and the lowest classes in the city' with a better understanding of 'the requirements of the Health Committee as to cleanliness.'⁴⁶ As health visitors, women provided immediate contact between the civic authorities and Liverpudlians; as wives and mothers they were responsible for the reform of home life which would nurture a physically and morally improved citizenry. A good housewife would bring up healthy and orderly children as the citizens of tomorrow, and would create an attractive domestic environment to counter the allure of the alehouse.

In the 1860s, Hugh Shimmin, the renowned Liverpool journalist, had suggested women could either be the pillars of respectable working-class families or could push their husbands to the public house and their children onto the streets by slatternly and disorganised conduct.⁴⁷ In the best-seller *Her Benny*, written by Silas Hocking⁴⁸, a minister of the United Methodist Free Church, a similarly dualistic image of women was presented. Benny, the hero of the novel, suffers at the hands of a brutal, drunken father, yet Hocking identified Benny's step-mother as the real villain of the piece.

He [Benny's father] loved his first wife dearly...while she lived he was tolerably steady, and was never unkind to her. He even went with her to the house of prayer and listened to her while she read the Bible aloud during the winter evenings. Those were happy days, but when she died this all changed; he tried to forget his trouble in drink, and in the companionship of the most degraded men and women. Then he married again, a coarse drunken woman who had ever since led him a wretched life, and every year he had become more drunken and vicious.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Liverpool City Council Proceedings 1898/99, p.1157.

⁴⁷ J.K. Walton and A. Wilcox (eds.), Low Life and Moral Improvement in Victorian England, Leicester, 1991, p.7.

⁴⁸ Hocking's writings are examined in I. Sellers, Nineteenth Century Liverpool and the Novelists, Padgate, 1979.

⁴⁹ S. Hocking, Her Benny, Liverpool, (first edition 1879) reprinted 1968, p.21.

It was to assist women in meeting their domestic and civic duties that the Liverpool School of Cookery was founded in 1875. The National School of Cookery had been founded in London the year before. The fifty-eight general committee members of the Liverpool body were 'women drawn from well known Liverpool families'⁵⁰ and the Countesses of Derby and Sefton were enlisted as patronesses.

In its annual report for 1876/77, the School estimated

*the good that may be done is incalculable if the wives and daughters of working men can but be taught that good and nourishing food may be made out of much that is now wasted and that a well cooked dinner is the best antidote to intemperance.*⁵¹

The technical classes offered by the School multiplied to include cookery, first aid and home nursing, starching, home dressmaking and home millinery. By 1896, 1852 girls in Liverpool were attending practical lessons in cookery.

Domestic education was elevated to the status of an academic discipline. In 1889, the moving spirit of the School, Fanny Calder, read a paper on Domestic Education in Elementary Schools to the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society. She set domestic education against the backdrop of the challenges to British Imperial supremacy. In view of 'the rapid increase of population and the prophesied decline of wages', Calder suggested that 'the more thrifty use in England generally of foods which in other countries are made the most of' would add to 'the wealth of the nation.'⁵² She cited Lord Meath's article in the January 1889 issue of The Nineteenth Century in which he had deplored the 'tendency of the present line of

⁵⁰ M. Scott, History of F.L. Calder College of Domestic Science 1875-1965, Liverpool, 1967, p.16.

⁵¹ ibid., p.18.

⁵² F.L. Calder, 'Domestic Education in Elementary Schools' in Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society Proceedings, Vol. 43, (1888/89), p.109.

education...to give the idea that domestic work has no connection with intellectual acquirements.⁵³ In Calder's vision, homemaking was the foundation of artistic and cultural achievement.

It is objected that education is meant to give high and noble ideas and raise the tastes of the people. True, but to make home the most comfortable and attractive of all spots is one of the noblest ideas a housewife can conceive. And as to the tastes of the people, nothing hinders intellectual culture more than the drunkenness which there is every reason to hope this superior domestic management will largely tend to cure.⁵⁴

The School earned civic recognition. The Princess of Wales visited it in 1906, and in 1913 Calder was awarded an honorary M.A. by Liverpool University.

Such institutions accepted domestic management as a female responsibility and simultaneously furthered women's involvement in municipal affairs. As Margaret Simey discerned, female contributions to social work 'stood for a refusal to accept their exclusion from the responsibilities of full citizenship.'⁵⁵ Margaret Beavan, for instance, won widespread popularity for her work with sick children after she helped to found the Invalid Children's Association in Liverpool in 1907. The work afforded her an entry to civic life in a career which saw her become a councillor in 1920 and the first female Lord Mayor of Liverpool in 1927.⁵⁶

In 1909, Eleanor Rathbone was elected as the first woman City Councillor in Liverpool. Her biographer, Mary Stocks, noted that 'from the first, her main interest in local government

⁵³ *ibid.*, p.111.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p.118.

⁵⁵ M. Simey, *Charity Rediscovered*, Liverpool, 1992, p.viii.

⁵⁶ *A Golden Treasury of Fifty Years Service*, Liverpool, 1957, pp.2 and 5. The fullest account of Margaret Beavan's life is I.A. Ireland, *Margaret Beavan of Liverpool*, Liverpool, 1938.

centred on housing.⁵⁷ Rathbone's election campaign had insisted on the feminine qualities which were becoming increasingly valuable in municipal administration. In a letter to the Liverpool Courier one of the campaign workers, Evelyn Deakin, argued 'there are many departments of municipal ability in which a woman of such ability can be of greater service than a man.' She suggested that education, public health, the inspection of lodging houses, school meals and the administration of the Unemployed Workmen's Act were amongst such areas.⁵⁸ At a rally the following day Rathbone stated 'when they came to think of it, the work of a City Councillor was very much like that of a housewife on a gigantic scale (hear, hear).'⁵⁹ The Courier was convinced and a leader column ruminated that

It is in this sphere, perhaps, rather than in the larger one of national politics, that woman may find the arena in which she can serve most directly the interests that affect her sex. At all events, work on a municipal council touches the home in a very intimate sense and the presence of women on these bodies will introduce a new element of understanding and sympathy.⁶⁰

The candidate herself had asked 'what greater sphere for women's work could there be than in the direction of helping the work of the female sanitary inspectors and those who looked after the sterilised milk department of infants (hear, hear).'⁶¹

The continued employment of the language of separate spheres is noteworthy, yet it is equally remarkable that women's undisputed talent for of domestic management and reserves of humanity and sensitivity could effectively open avenues to power in the public sphere. Working with the Liverpool Women's Industrial Council, Eleanor Rathbone was able to progress to tackling wider issues of political economy.

⁵⁷ M.D. Stocks, Eleanor Rathbone, London, 1949, p.68.

⁵⁸ Liverpool Courier, 4 October 1909.

⁵⁹ Liverpool Daily Post, 5 October 1909.

⁶⁰ Liverpool Courier, 5 October 1909.

⁶¹ Liverpool Daily Post, 5 October 1909.

In 1910, she co-authored a report which examined the provision of 'instruction intended to promote the industrial efficiency of women workers...[and] to increase the domestic efficiency of women of the poorer sections of the working classes.'⁶² The following year, she was the co-author of a report on the payment of seamen. The enquiry had originated when the Liverpool Women's Industrial Council had 'had their attention called to the many cases of hardship incurred by the wives and children of seafaring men during the absence of the husband and father at sea.'⁶³

At the same time as civic ideology began to encroach into the home and to break down the public/private distinction, social policy was acquiring an enhanced status in high politics. Jose Harris has traced this transition.

*Even among politicians whose primary concerns were defence, order and expansion of the empire, social policy came to be seen not as separate from but complementary to those functions. Among those whose main interest was in social questions, social policy was increasingly viewed as central to the effectiveness, the stability and even the legitimacy of the state.*⁶⁴

The greater weight attached to a sober, ordered and cleanly lifestyle as a test of citizenship gave attributions of blame a renewed cutting edge. Working-class men and women, and those of Irish extraction in particular, found their domestic arrangements and personal mores subjected to intense scrutiny. Gareth Stedman Jones has written that the East End of London conjured up 'a nursery of destitute poverty and thriftless demoralised pauperism, in a community cast adrift from the salutary presence and leadership of men of wealth and

⁶² E. Rathbone and E. McCrindell, Report to the Liverpool Women's Industrial Council on the Technical Education of Women and Girls in Liverpool, Liverpool, 1910, p.1.

⁶³ E. Mahler and E. Rathbone, Payment of Seamen- The Present System, Liverpool, 1911, p.1.

⁶⁴ J. Harris, 'The Transition to High Politics in English Social Policy 1880-1914' in M. Bentley and J. Stevenson (eds.), High and Low Politics in Modern Britain, Oxford, 1983, p.59.

culture...a political threat to the riches and civilization of London and the Empire.⁶⁵The encroachment of citizenship into the home brought a new dimension to civic blame.

Working class shortcomings in morals and hygiene could provide a convenient excuse for public health administrators and landlords who sought to absolve themselves of blame for social problems. In 1887, Dr. Hope, the medical officer of health, conceded that 'it was certainly a most extraordinary thing that they had in Liverpool such an enormous amount of typhus after it had been stamped out in almost every other town,' but pleaded that the city had 'an immense poor labouring population...their mode of life...something beyond description.'⁶⁶

Support for Hope's analysis could be found in the Liverpool press. The Liverpool Courier argued that 'a crusade against bad habits among the people should be conducted along with the projected new attack on unsanitary houses.'⁶⁷ An individual's character could be gauged from the state of his home. The Courier alleged

*it is not always poverty which impels people to dwell amid dirt and squalor in an atmosphere of pollution. As in London, so in Liverpool and other large towns, people earning good wages live from choice in these localities because they have more money to spend in sensual indulgence and there is less restraint in regard to keeping up appearances.*⁶⁸

The belief that there was a symbiotic relationship between depravity and deprivation underpinned the work of doctors such as J. Alden Owles in Liverpool's slums. Owles explained

⁶⁵ Quoted in W.J. Fishman, East End 1888, London, 1988, p.2.

⁶⁶ E.H. Hope, 'Localised outbreak of typhus fever and infantile diarrhoea' in Transactions of the Sanitary Institute of Great Britain, Vol. IX, (1887), p.6.

⁶⁷ Liverpool Courier, 9 September 1883.

⁶⁸ ibid., 29 December 1883.

the healing of the sick accompanied the preaching of the Gospel during our Lord's ministry on earth...it is most easy, after speaking of matters relating to bodily health, to continue the conversation by seeking to ascertain their spiritual state...in our home towns and cities the best medical advice is easily procured by the poorest inhabitants, and the most able evangelists can be heard by any who desire 'the joyful sound', so that it is only the blending of these together that is likely to reach the masses who resist other agencies designed for their welfare...

Consider the class of people thus addressed, both collectively and individually, day by day, comprising very many who at no other time are likely to hear the truth, such as Roman Catholics, infidels, habitual drunkards, criminals etc.⁶⁹

The Liverpool Review held the slum dwellers in similarly low estimation, for 'in tens of instances there is no reason for them to be badly off and to make the neighbourhoods they inhabit nurseries of epidemics...Reforming the people then, must go along with reforming their homes.'⁷⁰ The Council Proceedings of 1883/84 had recognised that,

With the sanitary reformer there should be the social reformer...every local outbreak is the result of 'poverty, dirt and improvidence'. There is a large and growing class...who almost appear to be beyond the pale of enlightenment- they are left to themselves and forgotten; but disease fostered by their habits is apt to break through the boundaries of the unhealthy districts and spread its lethal shadow far and wide.⁷¹

Any note of censure for a lack of concern with the conditions of the labouring masses was to be offset by the assertion that their lax habits fostered disease. Writing in the Liverpool University magazine, Dr. Hope took pains to reassure his readers that neither he nor they had failed in their civic duty.

The poorest and most squalid do not themselves evince the slightest inclination to alter or improve their condition...Most of the existing courts have of late years been structurally improved in various directions...The better class of workmen have long removed from these miserable abodes, and their present occupants are as a class squalid, poverty stricken, helpless and wretched. Yet they seem to be quite contented and satisfied, and knowing no better make no effort to improve their condition or keep

⁶⁹ J. Allden Owles, Recollections of Medical Missionary Work, Glasgow 1909, pp.10-15 and 36.

⁷⁰ Liverpool Review, 8 March 1884.

⁷¹ 'Causes of fever and other zymotic diseases in the city' in Council Proceedings, 1883/84, p.4.

*their houses and their children in decency- a truly pitiable and distressing circumstance.*⁷²

The poor were complicit in any social injustice because they had accepted their circumstances. J.B. Russell, Glasgow's medical officer of health between 1872 and 1892, lamented a similar Glaswegian lack of ambition for there were 'scores of thousands of persons in this great city who have been so brought up that they literally do not know, and literally cannot feel, the value of house-room...[they] cannot even rise to the idea of the most limited kind of domestic comfort.'⁷³ Both officials apparently displayed little sympathy for the conditions of life for many citizens. Only many years later did Hope concede that the port and 'the unskilled labour called for, attracted thousands of labourers and their families who were satisfied with any lodgings in which shelter could be found.'

The drive to improve the health of the city brought the underside of Liverpool life to public notice. Dr. Taylor, Edward Hope's predecessor as M.O.H., had advised 'the public should bear in mind that "as the strength of a chain is its weakest link, so the health of the community is that of its weakest member" and as long as unhealthy areas are allowed to continue so long will the public health suffer.'⁷⁴ The death rates for different districts within the city varied widely. In 1898/99, Dr. Hope recorded the lowest death rates 'in the incorporated districts of Toxteth and Walton, which are 9.9 and 12.6 respectively, and the highest being in Exchange and Scotland districts where they are 36.9 and 36.4 respectively.'⁷⁵

⁷² E.H. Hope, 'The homes of the poorer classes' in University College Magazine, Vol.2 Part II, (1887), pp.74 and 79.

⁷³ 'The Social Problems of the City' in W.H. Fraser and I. Maver (eds.), Glasgow Volume II 1830 to 1912, Manchester, 1996, p.370.

⁷⁴ 'Causes of Fever' in Council Proceedings 1883/84, p.4.

⁷⁵ E.W. Hope, 'Report on the Health of the City of Liverpool' in Council Proceedings 1898/99, p.1059.

According to Thomas Bickerton, who worked as a doctor in Liverpool over several decades before the publication of his Medical History of Liverpool,

It was becoming increasingly obvious to many who came into contact with the less fortunate members of the community that the preservation of the 'Social Problem Group' from the law of 'survival of the fittest' was not in the best interests of the nation, for many of those citizens whose characteristics were an asset to the state were compelled to limit their families in order to provide for those who neither in themselves or their families could further the common weal.⁷⁶

Notions of civic and national patriotism could combine with the principles of eugenics and the ideology of the English Commonwealth to unite good health and good citizenship as moral tests. A belief that good citizenship was inherited was implicit in the attitude which Bickerton reported.

Hence, civic blame grew out of civic patriotism. Liverpool's progressive reputation and the practice of good citizenship which was central to the maintenance of this image spurred recriminations against the undesirable lifestyles of those who crowded into the slums. Disease and immorality became closely intertwined and outsiders were ready to ascribe base motives to rational strategies for survival. As late as 1914, Dr. Hope condemned 'unnecessary crowding' with whole families sleeping in one room without considering that such an arrangement was warmer and cheaper. Corporation advice could be trite. In a free lecture in 1884, women were advised to 'give your husbands food cooked well, warm and tasty, and then they are far less likely to seek refreshment elsewhere.'⁷⁷ The lecturer turned to the problem of sanitation and suggested that people should not live where the water closet did not have a window opening to the outer air- a solution as simple as it was unrealistic.

⁷⁶ T.H. Bickerton, A Medical History of Liverpool from the earliest days to the year 1920, London, 1936, p.233.

⁷⁷ C.S. Pain, 'Light, Pure Air and Water' in Liverpool Corporation Free Lectures 1884, Liverpool, 1884, p.7.

Nor was such a lack of understanding confined to municipal officials. The Liverpool Review ran a series of weekly articles entitled 'Liverpool slum life' over four months in 1899. The series opened, "'One half of the world does not know how the other half lives" is an old proverb which unfortunately is still well worthy of consideration, and it is our intense conviction of its truth that is responsible for the series of articles.'⁷⁸ The articles revealed a Liverpool whose language and rituals, morality and values were reprehensible as well as alien to the authors.

In a vignette typical of the investigation, the courting rituals of slum Liverpool were related. For the Liverpool Review, the Scouse patois was a mysterious dialect which was represented phonetically:

*'Now whater yez doin'? blind yez!' screamed Mary Ellen with that strange final sibilation peculiar to lower class Liverpool, 'whater yez doin'? Or e Tom yer arful.' 'Well blind yez Tom Connelly fer yer cheek! An d'yez think I'd have the like av yew annyhow? Lave yez dirty hands off av me, or I'll smash yer hard clock fer yez.' ...the ratio of slum love is gauged by the male vehemence exhibited- the punching, the kissing and pulling about ceremony.'*⁷⁹

That the mores of fellow Liverpudlians could be observed with the amused superiority of the Victorian anthropologist was an indication of the gulf which separated the ideals of citizenship from the experience of the city slums. This gap was the terrain in which civic blame flourished, and nowhere was it wider than where the Liverpool Irish were concerned.

The wake was an incomprehensible custom to many in Liverpool. Here sanitary science clashed with religion and custom. In the 1860s, the M.O.H. Dr. Trench recounted an incident in which a man had died of cholera.

The family refused to listen to our counsels, and elected to keep the body until Tuesday, in order that it might be waked during the night watches of Monday. It was

⁷⁸ Liverpool Review, 1 July 1899.

⁷⁹ ibid., 28 October 1899.

*laid on a board on the floor...and in this room, where men and women ate, drank and slept, the orgies of the coronach, embracing the co-operation of scores of people were maintained, amidst drunken and profane ribaldry, during the day and the night...Before the end of July, forty eight persons had died of cholera within a radius of 150 yards from the court.*⁸⁰

The Liverpool Review series on slum life included a similar account of a wake. A widow bought four gallons of ale, two pints of whisky and a bottle of port for the wake. She

*was not able to buy any crepe, which is after all but the outward semblance of grief, and so long as her friends were happy and content she did not care...she was going to do her best to make them spend a thoroughly happy and enjoyable time. This is the ethics of a great many slum funerals.*⁸¹

Once the corpse had been admired, the friends began drinking and telling stories about the dead man before there were comic songs 'with irritating but unnoticed disregard for pronouns' and 'meaningless impromptu tuneless dances.' The deceased's children 'went out into the court with a proud feeling of proprietorship which was rendered more acute by the palpable homage paid to them by the rest of the children.'⁸² The Review failed to appreciate that this was but one indication of a wake's importance in affirming participation and identity in the Irish community. Such rituals reinforced the tendency to blame poor health on Irish barbarism.

Health problems were traced to the wave of Irish immigration which followed the famine of the 1840s. Bickerton's Medical History of Liverpool claimed that the cholera epidemic of 1849 had originated with an Irish family who brought the disease from Dumfries. The typhus outbreaks of the later 1840s were commonly known as 'Irish Famine Fever'.⁸³ Dr. Hope

⁸⁰ Quoted in E.W. Hope, Evolution of Sanitation: Liverpool 1844/1894, Liverpool, 1896, p.15.

⁸¹ Liverpool Review, 23 September 1899.

⁸² ibid.

⁸³ Bickerton, Medical History of Liverpool, pp.175 and 177.

estimated the efforts of William Duncan, the M.O.H. for Liverpool at the time, as 'but a drop in the bucket so long as the Irish influx continued.' Hope submitted that 'the only measure at all adequate to the contingency was one which the law did not sanction, viz., an embargo on the landing of Irish immigrants.'⁸⁴

The Irish were frequently blamed for creating the problems from which they suffered. J. Alden Owles portrayed the Scotland Road as poisoning Liverpool. It was

*unrivalled in this town and surpassed in few, if any others, for poverty, vice and crime. Like a filthy fountain it sends forth its polluting streams to all parts of Liverpool, filling our streets with beggars, our workhouses with paupers, and our prisons with criminals.*⁸⁵

The ghetto of poverty and disease which surrounded Scotland Road was a symptom of Liverpool's malaise, not the cause; but the Irish became scapegoats. The belief that the Irish had brought disease to the city justified their exclusion from the rights of citizenship. Frederic D'Aeth of the Liverpool Council of Social Service identified the Irish as

*the roughest and lowest element of the people...gay, irresponsible, idle and quarrelsome, they seem by nature unfitted for the controlled life of a large town which tends only to accentuate their failings. It seems impossible for them to accept the restraints, the responsibilities and the sense of corporate citizenship which should be essential characteristics of the town dweller. They contribute abnormally to the work of the police court and fill in the workhouses and charitable institutions. They are the despair of the social reformer while they win his heart with their frolicsome humour.*⁸⁶

The experience of the Irish in Liverpool was mirrored across many British towns, for 'British ratepayers resented the heavy burden of Irish paupers on their poor rates, and further feared

⁸⁴ E.W. Hope, Health at the Gateway, Cambridge, 1931, p.47.

⁸⁵ J. Alden Owles, Medical Missionary Work, p.43.

⁸⁶ F. D'Aeth, 'Liverpool' in H. Bosanquet (ed.), Social Conditions in Provincial Towns, London, 1912, p.38.

them as disease carriers.⁸⁷ Politicians preyed on these prejudices and anxieties. Arthur Forwood had extolled the virtues of an **English** home life and repeated Dr. Trench's findings that the Irish kept pigs in cellars and garrets.⁸⁸ As Forwood's Orange leanings became more pronounced, so his attacks on the Catholic and Nationalist Irish became more virulent.

In common with other migrants and foreigners, the Irish could be accused of bringing problems which were not inherent to Liverpool and for which, consequently, the civic authorities could not be held responsible. A speech of 1893 exemplified Forwood's objections to the Liverpool Irish who

*were certainly foreign in many of their ways to the ideas and principles of his hearers. (Applause). The influx of the Irish into Liverpool brought poverty, disease, dirt and misery, drunkenness and crime, in addition to a disturbance in the labour market and the cost to the ratepayers of an enormous sum of money. ('Hear,hear', and a voice- 'What about the Polish Jews?')*⁸⁹

By charging such groups with the creation of problems which tarnished Liverpool's image, their civic patriotism (and Imperial commitment) was questioned. The groups' rights to participate in civic life and their claims to Liverpool citizenship would thus be weakened. In turn these more marginalised groups grew even more vulnerable to civic blame.

In such a climate, it was difficult for the Irish to take up duties and responsibilities as citizens. An editorial in the Liverpool Review entitled 'Are the Irish Dirty?' recounted the obstacles which an Irish woman, Miss Shaw, had confronted when she applied to work as a nurse in the Liverpool workhouse. The superintendent had refused to consider her for a post, explaining 'On your former visit I noticed that you had a button off our jacket. The worst thing I have against you Irish girls is that they (sic) are so frightfully dirty and untidy.' The editorial mused

⁸⁷ M.A.G. O' Tuathaigh, 'The Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain' in R. Swift and S. Gilley (eds.), The Irish in the Victorian City, London, 1985, p.21.

⁸⁸ Forwood, The Dwellings of the Industrial Classes, p.10.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, p.141.

'is this very interesting accusation against the Irish as a race...entirely undeserved? It is a dreadful thing to tread on the toes of the Irish- they have such a vigorous way of resenting remarks they don't care for.'

The Review told the story of one of its contributors who had stayed in some apartments in Dublin where he found the room to be dusty, the mirror to be dirty and the maids to be slow in service and 'typically sluttish' in appearance. On the basis of this evidence, the piece concluded

It is best to speak from personal experience, and that is our testimony to Irish cleanliness. It is well, however to say that in the apartments engaged by us in Belfast we found everything exceptionally sweet and pleasant- but in Belfast, as all commercial folk are aware, the Irish are not Irish at all, but Scotch.⁹⁰

A distinction between Protestant and Catholic Irish could be upheld by such ethnographic devices.

Xenophobia and recrimination were not new features of the relationship between respectable urban society and the slum dwellers; nor was disdain for the lifestyle of the lower orders novel. Nonetheless, civic blame did bring a new dimension to such antagonisms. Those who damaged the city's reputation could be accused of lacking civic patriotism and adjudged unworthy of the status and privileges of citizenship. In Liverpool, health was central to the city's image and to aspirations to the accolade of the Second City of the Empire. Civic blame, as a result, featured prominently in the debates which attended the municipality's health record.

The barrister James Samuelson claimed that 'Liverpool enjoys the unenviable reputation of possessing the worst slums of any English city, although Glasgow and the East End of

⁹⁰ Liverpool Review, 21 October 1899.

London run it pretty close.⁹¹ He suggested that the maintenance of Liverpool's civic image was demanded not just by local pride but by Imperial duty as well. Samuelson argued that the attempts to strengthen bonds with the colonies, which marked the opening decade of the twentieth century, encouraged foreigners to scrutinise the state of British urban society more closely. He quoted a letter to the Liverpool Daily Post from the anonymous Canadian author of John Bull's Land Through a Telescope.

*If the Canadian once gets it into his head that the average Britain is greatly his inferior, such will prove the greatest of barriers to the strengthening of imperial ties. Speaking for myself, always an ardent Imperialist, my Imperialism received a terrible shock when in your own cities I saw the vast hordes of semi-degenerated humanity. I felt that if the Canadians realized this, Imperial Federation would receive its death blow so far as Canada is concerned.*⁹²

Samuelson reasoned that a reputation as a healthy city must be cultivated so that 'the effect of such evils...on the mind of the foreigner, or indeed, upon the future of the whole nation' might be avoided.

The moral force of attributions of blame, even for ministers such as Richard Acland Armstrong, derived more from a sense of civic pride than of Christian duty. The allegation that a group had brought shame on the city could be a very damaging one. As public health achievements became important proofs of Liverpool's progressive credentials, personal and civic hygiene became tests of civic patriotism and citizenship.

The identification of public health as a civic responsibility impacted on the status and power of different sections and interests of Liverpool society. For some women this opened opportunities to participate more fully in municipal administration. Meanwhile, for disadvantaged groups, such as the slum-dwellers and the Irish, Corporation intervention

⁹¹ J. Samuelson, The Children of Our Slums, Liverpool, 1911, p.v.

⁹² Liverpool Daily Post, 20 May 1910.

established a canon of acceptable behaviour which found their cultural norms alien and unwholesome. As the health of the city was brought more fully under the municipal aegis, the span of citizenship extended. The benediction of good citizenship sanctioned those who aligned their image with Liverpool's reputation; obloquy was turned on those accused of besmirching the city.

Chapter Six- Medical Officers of Health and the doctoring of civic image

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the image of the city of Liverpool's public health record was a confused one. Some pilloried the city as 'The Black Spot on the Mersey', others were swifter to recognise Liverpool's pioneering achievements in public health administration. That Liverpool was the first British municipality to appoint a Medical Officer of Health (M.O.H.) in 1847, yet bore the highest death rate of any city except Dublin some sixty years later is an indication of the disparate facets of its civic image.

For the M.O.H., the responsibilities of portraying Corporation policies favourably and of drawing public attention to the need for improvements in sanitary affairs brought conflicting duties which sharpened the contrast. The M.O.H. was to rely on strategies of image management increasingly and since images are, by their nature, projected into the public domain this was no simple task. Moreover, by the turn of the century, the advance of professional officials in municipal government and the growth of specialised institutions and journals and conferences exposed cities' public health records to more frequent and more thorough analysis¹.

The careers of J. Stopford Taylor (M.O.H. for Liverpool for 1878-93) and his assistant and successor Edward Hope (M.O.H. 1894-1924) saw them performing a number of functions which were not always complementary. During Taylor's tenure, Liverpool achieved metropolitan status and began to aspire to the title of 'The Second City of the Empire'. The heavy death toll from outbreaks of typhus, scarlet fever and smallpox in the early 1880s was an affront to Liverpool's progressive credentials and a threat to the port on which her

¹ P.J. Waller, Town, City and Nation: England 1850-1914, Oxford 1983, p.288. identifies this burgeoning professionalisation.

livelihood and ambition were centred. It was Taylor's lot to maintain the city's reputation unsullied whilst being seen to act to combat disease. Without a clear strategy of image management, and hampered by poor relations with Liverpool's doctors and press, Taylor presided over a damaging period for the city's public health reputation.

Dr. Hope was far more energetic and resourceful in constructing and maintaining a favourable image for the city. As assistant M.O.H. under Taylor he had learned from his predecessor's failures. Hope played down Liverpool's high death rate, sometimes by rather dubious statistical techniques; he firmly placed the blame for current problems on past failings, and he ingeniously argued that the city's difficulties furnished additional proof of its commercial success and efficient government.

Appointed as the first M.O.H. in 1847, Dr. Duncan found that his post entailed 'the detection, the promulgation, and as far as may be practicable, the removal and prevention of the common localising causes of disease.'² From the earliest days, M.O.H.s found the promulgation of insanitary conditions to be a delicate task. In 1851, the Local Board of Health at Darlington recognised the damage that such publicity caused. The minutes of the Board stated, 'the indiscriminate publication at length of the report from time to time of the Officer of Health having been considered by the Board, it is resolved that indiscriminate publication is calculated to be injurious to the town.'³

Duncan's term as M.O.H. had seen him swift to protect Liverpool's name, too. When Dr. E.H. Greenhow (the Lecturer in Public Health at St. Thomas' Hospital, London) discredited the sanitary condition of Liverpool in a report to the General Board of Health in 1858, Duncan entered into a controversy with him which lasted for three years. Writing to a friend on the General Board, Duncan insisted

² F. Brockington, Public Health in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1965, p.141.

³ ibid., p.159.

Liverpool has been unjustly treated. Whatever cause may be there seems to be an understanding among the London men to snub Liverpool whenever an opportunity offers...the cavillers...carp and cavil and object and try to make it appear that we have done nothing...I must remain satisfied with...the knowledge that we have done our duty in our generation.⁴

It was necessary to publicise problems if ratepayers were to be convinced of the importance of expenditure on public health. Yet, in raising awareness of health problems and in educating the public to accept progressive sanitary science, the M.O.H. had to keep Liverpool's shortcomings and achievements in a finely- judged balance. As Duncan and his successors became aware, the role of M.O.H. in a city whose aspirations demanded an image worthy of the 'Second City', required convincing performances both as doctor and spin-doctor.

When Liverpool appointed Dr. Duncan, it was the first such appointment in the country. It was an elected full-time post but there was not a rapid turnover of M.O.H.'s. Only four doctors held the post between its inauguration and 1924. The Public Health Act of 1875 made the provision of M.O.H.'s compulsory and extended a degree of government protection to them; but the appointment was not necessarily full-time and boroughs could decide not to apply for government grants-in-aid. Consequently, the relationship between the M.O.H. and the Council was a complex one.

In 1884, the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes questioned the Conservative leader of the Council, Arthur Forwood, about the autonomy of the Liverpool M.O.H.. Councillor Thomas Stephens, a member of the Health Committee which Forwood chaired, had already suggested that the M.O.H.'s freedom of action had been curtailed in the past. When asked about the operation of the Sanitary Amendment Act of 1864 in Liverpool,

⁴ W.M. Frazer, Duncan of Liverpool, Preston, 1997, pp.99-102.

Stephens had alleged that the efforts of Dr. Trench to fulfil his duties relating to insanitary housing had been 'held in check by the authorities of the day'⁵. In response to this accusation, Forwood disingenuously commented that the office of M.O.H. was 'a piece of patronage, and, of course...members have different men who they wish to see appointed, and they have different views as to their qualifications; but I do not know that that has had any influence upon his independent action afterwards.'⁶

Trench's served as M.O.H. from 1863 until 1877 and therefore largely outside of the security afforded by the 1875 Public Health Act. Yet, his successor, Dr. Taylor, also found his independence doubted by the local Liberal press which was eager to condemn the Conservative municipal administration.⁷ Dr. Taylor's position was made no easier because he was formerly a Conservative councillor. The Liverpool Daily Post, whose circulation topped 428000 copies per week, observed

*It is not only in the columns of this journal that attention is being directed to the ill conditions of the city. The subject is talked about wherever one goes, and it forms a prominent topic of discussion in the British Medical Journal, perhaps the most important organ of medical opinion in the country, and the medium resorted to by Dr. Taylor to publicise his views. The doctor does not appear on the scene to push forward the purification of the town, but to palliate and defend the conduct of the corporation.*⁸

It was concluded that 'the doctor is beyond question much embarrassed between his duty to the ratepayers and personal consideration for members of the council but he must not play the part of Mr. Facing-both-ways.'⁹

⁵ Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes 1884/85, Vol. XXX, p.503.

⁶ ibid., p.511.

⁷ The curious incidence of a predominantly Liberal Press in a city where Conservative rule was the norm was a further obstacle to the creation of images which boosted the credentials of the Corporation. Papers of a Liberal alignment, such as the Liverpool Daily Post and the Liverpool Echo far outstripped the sales of Tory counterparts such as the Liverpool Courier.

⁸ Liverpool Daily Post, 2 November 1883.

⁹ ibid.

Another Liberal organ, the Liverpool Review, shared in the criticism of Conservative rule. It contrasted the exercise of formal and informal power, and denied the Health Committee any credit for reforms while questioning the accountability of municipal officials.

Whatever large measures of sanitary reform have been effected in Liverpool have not owed their initiation or management to the Health Committee but have been carried out in spite of its opposition...(municipal officials) are very well matched with the members of the committee, to whom they stand in the relation less of servants than of equals, if not masters. They act under the official sanction of the committee, but as they have not the slightest fear of that sanction being withheld, they do things, or leave them undone, very much at their own will and pleasure. The committee is a constantly changing body while they are permanent...The real chairman of the committee is Dr. Taylor...The Medical Officer and his subordinates are backed up by the nominal chairman and his mechanical Tory majority.¹⁰

The M.O.H.'s involvement in the development and implementation of policy ensured that efforts to present Liverpool's public health achievements in a favourable light were inevitably motivated in part by professional self interest. Dr. Hope was connected with Liverpool's municipal public health policy, as an assistant or as M.O.H. in his own right, for forty years before his move to Cambridge University to become Professor of Public Health. In these circumstances, the discovery and publication of unresolved problems contained an element of self-indictment. The relationship between the M.O.H. and the council may not have been clear, but loyalty to the Corporation and occupational pride would both invite the exercise of presentational skills.

Such concerns were reinforced in the face of multiplying attacks from within and without the municipal boundaries. In 1880, Rev. R.H. Lundie's letter on The Dark Side of Liverpool had appeared in a number of Liverpool newspapers and was later published in pamphlet form. Lundie diagnosed poor housing and permissive licensing administration as the principal causes of Liverpool's social malaise and prescribed increased civic vigilance as a remedy. He appealed for a 'candid investigation of still stronger facts to the compassion of my fellow

¹⁰ Liverpool Review, 2 May 1885.

citizens, on behalf of thousands of brothers and sisters who are too weak and sunken effectively to protect themselves."¹¹

The note of moral outrage was amplified when the city's social circumstances were investigated in the series Squalid Liverpool which appeared in the Liverpool Daily Post during 1883. Councillor Thomas Stephens and the journalist Hugh Farrie roundly condemned Dr. Taylor and the Health Committee. Farrie's colourful style delivered a blow to the image of prosperous Liverpool and implicated the M.O.H. and the Health Committee in vignettes of squalor which were grim yet masterly in their realisation. The articles, which were also collated and published in pamphlet form, echoed the tone of the exposure of life in the capital which The Bitter Cry of Outcast London had sounded in the same year. Moreover, they drew on a tradition of investigative Liverpoolian journalism which had reached its apogee in the work of Hugh Shimmin in the 1860s.¹²

Squalid Liverpool revealed the poverty and degradation which lay close to the very heart of the city in areas such as that around Fontenay Street:

*as dirty, as tumble down and as unhealthy as any portion of squalid Liverpool, and it lies within a stone's throw of prosperous money making Liverpool- the Liverpool of clubs, of cafes, of banks, of commercial palaces...walk a few paces from this bright and cheering scene and you will find gathered upon the very edges of it a deep fringe of suffering.*¹³

Lest the smear on Liverpool's honour had been missed, the investigation considered North Street. This thoroughfare joined Dale Street, on which the Town Hall and the Exchange Flags were situated.

¹¹ R.H. Lundie, The Dark Side of Liverpool, Liverpool 1880, p.4.

¹² see J.K. Walton and A. Wilcox (eds.), Low Life and Moral Improvement in Mid-Victorian England, Leicester 1991.

¹³ Squalid Liverpool, Liverpool 1883, p.35.

*Here under the very shadow of wealthy Liverpool, surely no squalor will be found? Close by the law is administered, municipal affairs are transacted, political wires are pulled, and huge fortunes won and lost. Is it too much to expect that the curse of abject poverty shall have been lifted from the lives of those who live here? Yes; far too much.*¹⁴

The M.O.H. and the Corporation were not spared. Farrie insisted

*We do not for an instant profess that the Health Committee and the medical officer of health take no steps to cope with dirt and disease. On the contrary, they are as energetic and enthusiastic as a child who sets itself to work to ladle out the Mersey with a tin bucket... evils have been permitted to exist which a little faithful effort would have removed. The misery is obvious and its causes are plain, and have been plain for a quarter of a century. The committee is busying itself round the fringe of the subject. It has never honestly and manfully grappled with it.*¹⁵

The Liverpool Daily Post explored the unflattering contrasts of Liverpool life elsewhere, accepting that the council

*has built magnificent halls and offices, has afforded increased facilities for the traffic passing along the thoroughfares, by widening old streets and making new ones, and has done all in its power for what may be termed the embellishment of the city; but so far as relates to its inner life, and especially the condition of the labouring population and their habitations, the case is reversed and the procedure of the council has been marked by unpardonable disregard of its duty.*¹⁶

The juxtaposition of such images lent weight to criticisms of Liverpool's health record. Squalid Liverpool's influence is attested by Farrie's and Stephens's appearances before the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes the following year. An exposition of Liverpool's shortcomings which gave them such a high profile, demanded that the city's

¹⁴ ibid., p.45.

¹⁵ ibid., pp. 12 and 33.

¹⁶ Liverpool Daily Post, 10 October 1883.

name must be salvaged. Faced with the implacable logic of high death-rates, civic representatives were embarrassed, as Arthur Forwood's exchanges with the commissioners illustrate

Is the mortality of Liverpool very high?- Yes, it is 27.6 per 1000 in the parish and 23 per 1000 in the out townships.

27.6 per 1000 is now a very high mortality is it not?- It is a very high mortality.

Is not your rate of mortality the highest of the very large towns?- If you take ten years past, ours is the highest; but it is right to say that the mortality during the past ten years has materially decreased as compared with the mortality of the previous ten years...

In a Liverpool newspaper a few days ago I saw the following statement- that in one of the squalid districts the death rate reached 82 in 1000 of the population; have you seen that statement?- I have not seen it, but it would not, I think be applicable for any lengthened period...these are only exceptional cases.¹⁷

The availability of death-rate statistics allowed comparisons to be made which could be particularly damaging- not least since they could be easily understood. Forwood hoped to point to improvements over time, chronicling a story of sanitary progress. However, when temporal and geographic comparisons were combined, as by the Liverpool Daily Post in 1883, the rebuke to the civic authorities was redoubled.

The Daily Post outlined its methodology and results in a leading article:

*Let us...take an ample range of time, ascertain the mean rate of mortality in Liverpool during the last forty years and contrast it- not with all the towns of England, as that might be asking too much- but with six of the largest and worst, where every social evil existing in our city has equally prevailed...Liverpool has throughout stood, as she stands today, supreme in the black-list-
by merit raised to that bad eminence.*

The mean death rate per thousand of Liverpool and these other towns for the whole period is as follows:-

<i>London.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Liverpool.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Birmingham.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Manchester.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Leeds.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Sheffield.....</i>	<i>27</i>

¹⁷ Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, p. 494.

Bristol.....28¹⁸

The statistics were used to rebut suggestions that Liverpool's high death rate was caused by its exceptional position as a port or that the headline rate was no measure of recent improvements. The Daily Post continued,

Bristol is a seaport, subject to every trouble affecting us, Manchester's social difficulties outweigh ours. Yet here is Liverpool, head and shoulders taller in dishonour than either of these places...

Select the five years ending 1881, the year of the last census, and compare them with the preceding five years, keeping in mind that during the later quinquennial the efforts made in many places to reduce the death rate have been very successful. Liverpool is again to the bad- desperately to the bad. The decrease in the death rate in Liverpool and other towns, the measure of the work done, may be contrasted in the following table, which gives the rate per 100 of improvement in the death rate...

*Liverpool.....2 in the 100
Manchester...7 " " "
Birmingham..9 " " "
Sheffield.....11 " " "
Bradford.....15 " " "
Leeds.....16 " " ¹⁹*

In the city's defence, it should be noted that the contention that Bristol and Liverpool were comparable as ports was hardly supportable and the six cities which were used for comparisons were not constant.

Dr. Taylor conspicuously failed to offer an alternative reading of Liverpool's achievements in public health. The early 1880s had witnessed clashes between Liverpool's medical profession and the Health Committee, ostensibly over the question of compulsory notification of infectious diseases. The Liberal Review suggested a more personal reason for these strained relations, reporting that the doctors' opposition 'is said to be inspired by the objection to Dr. Taylor as Medical Officer of Health.'²⁰ Antipathy between the medical profession and the Corporation added to the difficulties of presenting Liverpool's public health policy in a

¹⁸ Liverpool Daily Post, 2 November 1883.

¹⁹ ibid.

²⁰ Liberal Review, 21 October 1882.

favourable light. The bad feeling was clearly visible at the British Medical Association Conference in 1883.

Delivering a paper on the sanitary condition of Liverpool in his capacity as the president of the Sanitary Section of the Association, E.R. Bickersteth of Liverpool unleashed a diatribe against the Corporation. He was aggrieved by the Council's plans to construct tram lines along Rodney Street- the parade of Georgian townhouses where Gladstone was born and where many of Liverpool's doctors had established their surgeries, and their homes. He confessed,

altogether Liverpool is not a pleasant or desirable place to live in, and life is not made more comfortable by the recent action of the City Council...Even Rodney Street, the street occupied above all others by the profession on account of its convenient position and its quietness, is to be invaded and laid with square sets 'from curb to curb' as we are told by the relentless and merciless party that is dominant on our City Council...our homes rendered untenable...Quietness is essential to the sick...Do the City Council suppose that by paving as they are doing they are making life more comfortable and bearable, more healthy and happy? Certainly not...[they are building the tramways for] themselves who having secured sufficient wealth to enable them to reside in suburban retreats, may be more comfortably conveyed to their business offices.²¹

The attack was embarrassing in itself, especially since Bickersteth was at pains to point out that many of the councillors lived in the suburbs at a time when residence in the city was an important measure of civic patriotism.²² That the outburst had come at the annual conference of the British Medical Association accentuated Liverpudlian discomfort.

Nor was this an isolated incident. Four years later, at a conference under the auspices of the Sanitary Institute of Great Britain, Dr. Hope read a paper on localised outbreaks of typhus and infantile diarrhoea. During the discussion which followed, Dr. Tatham of Salford expressed

²¹ Liverpool Daily Post, 2 August 1883.

²² See the chapter on civic hagiography.

his belief that 'Liverpool ought to be congratulated on the fact that it had an assistant medical officer of health with a remarkably good temper.' He added that the resistance of Liverpool's doctors to compulsory notification²³ would have drawn his ire.

*The health committee of the city had not been supported as they ought to have been in their effort to provide for the compulsory notification of infectious disease... It appeared to him that Liverpool acted as a fever manufactory for the whole of Lancashire. They in Salford had frequently cases of typhus fever imported from Liverpool, and they were undoubtedly prejudiced by the fact that Liverpool did not possess powers for the compulsory notification of infectious disease... Dr. Hope's paper was a serious indictment against the state of things at present existing in Liverpool.*²⁴

Doubtless Tatham hoped to attribute Salford's health problems to an external cause, but Hope showed a greater awareness of the imperatives of image management than Taylor had done and he accepted the congratulations tactfully. He conceded that Liverpool suffered from an 'enormous amount of this disease after it had been stamped out in almost every other town', but was careful not to implicate the City Council or Liverpool's medical men in any wrongdoing. Instead, Hope pointed out that the city had 'an immense poor labouring population...their mode of life something beyond description.'

Furthermore, he suggested that compulsory notification might have been more difficult to win in Liverpool because of the pioneering ethos of the municipal health policy which incurred experience costs. 'It might have been that the matter was prematurely brought forward, and that evidence was lacking to show the absolute necessity of it previously.' He concluded 'it was gratifying to find that the cases were dwindling down from thousands to hundreds owing to the great sanitary operations carried out in the city.'²⁵

²³ Liverpool's doctors were not alone in resisting compulsory notification schemes: similar reluctance was met in Glasgow.

²⁴ E.W. Hope, 'Localised outbreaks of Typhus Fever and Infantile Diarrhoea' in Transactions of the Sanitary Institute of Great Britain, Vol. IX, (1887).

²⁵ ibid.

Although Hope accepted that the slums were a grave problem in Liverpool, he argued this was

*by reason of the greater magnitude of its inherited burden- a burden which arose from the circumstance that trade prosperity in the earlier part of last century led to phenomenally rapid growth at a time when no laws existed to regulate or control building and sanitation was wholly neglected or forgotten.*²⁶

These past errors, which could not be blamed on the living, had created Liverpool's problems and 'the evils of the worst parts of the town, repeated unchecked, entailed on subsequent generations the punishment of enduring as well as the cost of rectifying them.'²⁷

It was Hope's contention that these conditions at least had the virtue of encouraging citizenship and civic feeling, and that Liverpool's insanitary state was something of a blessing.

*The dismal pre-eminence resulting partly from the long neglect to regulate developments under the changing conditions of population, and partly to happenings altogether beyond local control, did appeal with convincing force to many of the civic rulers and stimulated the foresight and beneficence of private citizens; combined voluntary and municipal effort resulted in measures which proved to be of far more than local importance, and beneficial far beyond their place of origin.*²⁸

Nonetheless, Liverpool's death rate, perennially one of the highest in the country, posed a serious challenge to the city's image; particularly since it enabled quantifiable comparisons with other cities which could be marked by a lay audience. At the annual congress of the

²⁶ E.W. Hope, 'The Housing Problem in Liverpool' in Diocese of Liverpool Review, Vol.I No.1 (April 1926), p.12.

²⁷ E.W. Hope, Health at the Gateway, Cambridge, 1931, p.31.

²⁸ ibid., pp.ix and x.

Royal Institute of Public Health which was held in Dublin in 1898, Sir Charles Cameron commented in his presidential address,

Gratifying as it is to find the gap between the urban and country death rates narrowing, it is unsatisfactory to observe that the rate of mortality should be so much greater in some towns than in others. In 1897 the rate in Eastbourne was 8.2, in Bournemouth 10.1, Croydon 13.62 and even in the manufacturing town of Darlington 15, whilst in Liverpool it was 26.76 and in Salford 26.88.²⁹

Dr. Hope recognised that death rate statistics encouraged such damaging comparisons and he worked vigorously to limit their impact.

In 1895, Hope read a paper on the impact of death returns to the Congress of Medical Officers of Health in Liverpool. He explained that the death rate did not take age distribution, sex distribution or population density into account; hence, the returns were misleading. He chose the case of Liverpool to illustrate his argument.

Our own city is an example, and, as far as I know, almost the sole example of a purely urban municipality, without even the statistics of its own suburbs to modify the influence inseparable from labour and toil... This purely urban municipality must not be compared with those towns and cities which partake largely of suburban and rural advantages, but it is extremely difficult to make these facts appreciated by the public, and even prominent municipal rulers are astonished at the contrast, say, between the City of Liverpool and the Borough of Hastings or Eastbourne, and regard the contrast as appalling and disheartening, and seem to feel that the sanitarian has not left one solitary footprint upon the sands of our Stygian shore.³⁰

The Royal Commission on the Housing of The Working Classes had remarked on these problems in 1884: 'it will be useful to explain at the outset that the published death rates of particular localities are frequently deceptive and valueless, especially when an average is struck over a large district.' The course of Liverpool's death rates between 1882 and 1906

²⁹ London Vol.VII (1898), p.549.

³⁰ E,W. Hope, 'The Impact of Death returns' in Journal of the Sanitary Institute Vol. XVI (1895), p.9.

(Table 1) offered further support for Hope's claim. In his evidence to a committee investigating the public health of Dublin, he argued that the extension of municipal boundaries to include suburban areas was a moral question as well as a statistical moot point:

*the well-to-do people have gone away from the city, whose benefits they enjoyed, and to the existence of which they owed everything--they have gone away from it, and, so to speak, absolved themselves from the obligation of looking after their weaker brethren who are left behind. I think a city requires the help and co-operation of its outgrowths and is entitled to it.*³¹

However, the incorporation of Wavertree, Walton, Toxteth Park and West Derby to form 'Greater Liverpool' in 1895 did not still Hope's reservations about the equity of comparing death returns. He helped to orchestrate a campaign for more frequent censuses, for he believed that the Registrar General's population estimates were wayward.

In his annual report on the health of the city for 1898/99, he complained that

*streets have been opened up, cottages and artizans' dwellings of the most approved style have been erected, and yet, year by year, thanks to the gross errors in the estimate of the population by the Registrar General's method, the rate of mortality appears to be steadily going up.*³²

Hope was incensed that this provided ammunition for those who maintained that 'what is being done has resulted in no amelioration, that the money has been expended in vain and the work has resulted in increasing disease and mortality.' He was adamant that 'there are no means at present available to enable a comparison to be made between different cities.'³³

³¹ Report of the Committee to inquire into the Public Health of the City of Dublin, P.P. Vol. XXXIX (1900), p.144.

³² Council Proceedings 1898/99, p.1069.

³³ ibid.

Table 1- Death Rates for the City of Liverpool between 1891 and 1906

Year	Death rate	Comments
1891	26.8	
1892	24.4	
1893	26.7	
1894	23.1	
1895	24.8	City extended
1896	21.4	
1897	22.8	
1898	22.2	
1899	24.1	
1900	23.1	
1901	21.6	
1902	21.6	City extended
1903	19.8	
1904	21.9	
1905	19.2	
1906	20.2	City extended

Source: Council Proceedings 1906/7.

The death rate expresses the number of people who died in Liverpool each year for each 1000 inhabitants.

Professional and civic pride motivated suspicions about the accuracy of the Registrar General's estimates. Dr. Hope had written to other M.O.H.s of whom twenty-one had agreed that the estimates for their towns were wholly unreliable and another three had confessed themselves very doubtful of their accuracy. The British Medical Association passed a resolution calling for a quinquennial census at its Edinburgh conference of 1898.

Although Hope was not the only medical officer to quibble about the death rates, he felt justified in adjusting Liverpool's death rates for comparative purposes without extending this privilege to other cities. He argued that Liverpool's death rate was inflated by patients who came from a much wider catchment area and who were eager to use the municipality's superior facilities. Hope considered it unjust that 'the death of every stranger to the city which occurs in any one of these institutions is included amongst the deaths of citizens and increases the apparent rate of mortality in the city.'³⁴ Comparing Liverpool with other towns in 1906, Hope explained 'the deaths in public institutions of 744 non residents, equal to 1.0 per 1000 have been eliminated from the total deaths.'³⁵ Such statistical juggling gave Liverpool a rate of 20.2, thus leaving Middlesbrough to the unwanted distinction of being the English town with the highest death rate.³⁶ The report continued, using the adjusted figure of 20.2 as the 'official' rate for Liverpool.

Hope was anxious to counter statistical attacks on Liverpool's health record, but not all observers couched their criticism in quantifiable terms. When the renowned trade unionist John Burns visited the city in 1897, he contrasted Liverpool's slums unfavourably with those of the capital. The pages of London, later to become the Municipal Journal, carried news of this censure to municipal officials and authorities nation-wide.

³⁴ ibid.

³⁵ Council Proceedings 1906/7, p.1793.

³⁶ Only Dublin exceeded this figure with a rate of 22.4.

Liverpool Mr. Burns describes as a City of Darkness, and nothing that he has seen outside Chicago- 'the city of poverty and plutocrats'- can equal the dirt and squalor of some of its slums...

Mr. Burns was asked whether he thought the slums and misery he had seen were worse than in the East End of London.

*'Infinitely worse...There is hope among the East End people. Now your Liverpool slum-dwellers are as a people without hope. No city I have visited appears to me so callous in the estrangement between the well-to-do and the badly off.'*³⁷

The contention that Liverpool's civic grandeur concealed immense social problems was a recurrent theme in the history of the city's image. J.L. Haigh, an evangelical minister and novelist had explained this gulf in Sir Galahad of the Slums which was published in 1907. The novel centred on the moral struggles which slum life engendered and portrayed Liverpool's municipal administration in a very poor light.

The city fathers sleep easily in Sefton Park after a delicious bath and splendid dinner, perfectly arrogant, even in their dreams of the state of affairs in the North End. And these men are responsible. 'Public decency' they preach and know nothing about the unspeakable horrors of the 'inconveniences' at the entrances of the courts...

*Thousands of pounds for a public square and a stone couch for the labourer! The 'ocean palaces' sailed off and left paupers behind...Liverpool was a city of dreadful dullness, with empty pot-house hilarity as its only possible recreation- a heavy carcass with no soul in it, only hollow murmurings and inane blasphemings.'*³⁸

The suggestion that Liverpool's image of commercial prosperity was rotten encouraged political and moral conclusions which threatened the civic elite. Haigh emphasised that by residing in the suburbs the city fathers demonstrated a lack of civic commitment. Burns too had warned 'until Liverpool...makes up its mind that slum owners, publicans, brewers and their agents shall not sit in the Town Council or on the magisterial bench, righteousness will not be secured.'³⁹

Hope's position as the Council's medical officer demanded that he should refute such allegations of dereliction of duty. Moreover, personal pride was at stake because Hope was

³⁷ London Vol.VI (1897), p.707.

³⁸ J.L. Haigh, Sir Galahad of the Slums, Liverpool, 1907, pp. 274, 399 and 400.

³⁹ London Vol.VI (1897), p.707.

implicated in such criticisms. In 1904, T.M. Shallcross authored a comprehensive indictment of Liverpool's public health policy entitled Municipal Shortcomings- The Example of Liverpool. The pamphlet was reviewed by a national and provincial papers, including The Times, Oxford Times, Whitehall Review, Newcastle Daily Chronicle, Yorkshire Chronicle, The Surveyor, Catholic Times, Housing Journal and the Glasgow Herald. The last publication, based in a city which was one of Liverpool's greatest rivals for municipal plaudits, noted that the work 'dealt in a gently satirical style with the black spots of all sorts which still disfigure the city on the Mersey.'⁴⁰

The Lancet considered Shallcross's accusations at length in a leading article under the heading 'Municipalities and their duties'. The crux of Shallcross's argument was that 'the death rate of Liverpool is unusually high...and as the municipal authorities are the powers by whom insanitary conditions should be rectified, the high death rate must a priori be directly traceable to their sins of omission or commission.'

*He has shown that the municipality of one of the chief provincial cities quietly accepts an abnormal death rate, many of the causes of which are well known and even conspicuous, and he considers that nothing more than half measures have been employed for dealing with them. Mr. Shallcross places the responsibility for these unnecessary deaths upon the municipality, and it is difficult to see in what respect his argument is defective, or why it should not be applied to other places and to other municipalities.'*⁴¹

A more proactive approach was urged by Shallcross, who dismissed the suggestion that

legislation in advance of public opinion is apt to be treated as a dead letter;...if such should be the explanation offered by the Corporation for their apathy, then it would seem necessary for the Corporation to take prompt steps, as custodians of the public health, to sufficiently educate public opinion...they would by every means which are

⁴⁰ T.M. Shallcross, Municipal Shortcomings- The Example of Liverpool, London, 1904, p.7.

⁴¹ The Lancet, 13 August 1904.

*available for so powerful a body as the Liverpool Corporation is, or should be, strive to remove from the city the reproach of spreading 'a preventible disease.'*⁴²

Civic pride was a motif of Shallcross's work: the city's notorious image in public health demanded that all should take up the duties of citizenship.

*Whether from its geographical position, or some inherent characteristics of its inhabitants, Liverpool seems to have earned an unenviable reputation as being, for its size, and considering its claims to commercial intellectuality, one of the most unprogressive cities in the United Kingdom.*⁴³

Convinced that selfish interests prospered on the Council, Shallcross hoped that 'the citizen will early ask himself- to whom does Liverpool belong- to the Individual, or to the Community?' He advocated the formation of Citizens' Associations which might 'state the conditions of life in Liverpool, and devise remedies, with greater freedom than seems possible for the Corporation officials, the City Councillors, or private individuals, who all appear to be somewhat tongue-tied by considerations of personal expediency.'⁴⁴

The M.O.H. had insisted that the pace of sanitary reform could not outstrip public opinion and that, consequently, the municipality's freedom of action was curtailed. In his annual report for 1898/99, Hope explained that 'in dealing with a subject...in which requirements increase as knowledge grows...all the improvements desired are not to be gained in a day. Like every other good movement, time is necessary to attain the object in view.'⁴⁵ Later, in his book Health at the Gateway (1931) he attached great importance to the education of the public in sanitary science because this 'will lessen the controversy and loss of time resulting from the criticism of well intentioned but ill informed persons.'⁴⁶

⁴² Shallcross, Municipal Shortcomings, p.18.

⁴³ ibid., p.48.

⁴⁴ ibid., pp.66 and 67.

⁴⁵ Council Proceedings 1898/99, p.1189.

⁴⁶ Hope, Health at the Gateway, p.xi.

A belief in the need for sanitary education was shared by Hope and Shallcross. Similarly, both professed to a conviction that money was better spent on preventative, rather than curative, measures. Hope drew attention to the 'comparative readiness with which money is given or voted for the relief or treatment of suffering, rather than for the provision of measures which would have prevented that suffering.'⁴⁷ Shallcross had been in broad agreement but, unlike Hope, he found fault with the municipal administration and not the electorate. 'The Corporation seem to show themselves so much more willing to sanction magnificently costly schemes in hopes of remedying the effects which have arisen than in adopting and enforcing inexpensive methods to deal, at first hand, with the causes of those effects.'⁴⁸

In spite of some congruence of opinions, the two men were divided by their respective attitudes in relation to civic image. For Shallcross, civic pride was to be mobilised by arguing that Liverpool's record was shameful. Hope defended the Corporation's achievements since he had to act as the municipality's apologist. The M.O.H.'s responsibilities had come to encompass the propagation of a progressive reputation- a task which could not be reconciled easily with the 'promulgation of the causes of disease'.

To some extent, a concern with image set priorities in combating particular diseases. Hope admitted that

*those forms of zymotic diseases which interfere or are likely to interfere with commercial or business pursuits, or even with social intercourse, have received more attention than those which, equally destructive to life, have not these peculiarities... Whenever and wherever a community can be educated to understand that sanitary progress promotes commercial progress, the path of sanitation is made easy-comparatively easy.*⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.xi.

⁴⁸ Shallcross, *Municipal Shortcomings*, p.25.

⁴⁹ E.W. Hope, *The Influence of Education on the Advancement of Public Hygiene*, Liverpool, 1912, p.5.

Liverpool's health problems, in Hope's opinion, were a further proof of commercial greatness since 'the risks which ports incur must correspond with the scope of their commercial ramifications.'⁵⁰ The interests of the port threw up a potential obstacle to sanitary progress, not least since an unhealthy image could be disastrous for a commercial centre. After 1874, the Corporation of Liverpool had also constituted the Port Sanitary Authority. In 1883, as chairman of the Health Committee, Arthur Forwood resisted calls for house-to-house visitation in areas where typhus, typhoid, cholera, smallpox and diphtheria flourished. He believed 'it would lead to a most undesirable collision between the local sanitary authorities and the public...The areas would have to be published in the London Gazette and would seriously interfere with the general commerce of Liverpool and the emigration from the port.'⁵¹

A commissioned report on sanitation in Liverpool carried out by Professor Burdon-Sanderson and Dr. Parkes in 1871 had also alluded to the difficulty of reconciling public health and commercial activity. They had stated

*the introduction of typhus, cholera, smallpox and relapsing fever is always attended with epidemic outbursts if the diseases prevail in places with which it [Liverpool] is in frequent communication as a seaport. It is not possible to alter this without surrendering the commercial supremacy of Liverpool, but some precautionary measures may be taken.*⁵²

The foundation of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine in 1898 went some way to confronting this problem. The institution embodied Liverpool's imperial and commercial ambitions and was a symbol of the breadth of the civic vision. In 1907, The Lancet

⁵⁰ Hope, Health at the Gateway, p.1.

⁵¹ Liverpool Courier, 2 March 1883.

⁵² Quoted in Hope, Health at the Gateway, p.95.

congratulated Liverpool on 'the leading part which this great city of empire has taken in promoting the growth of tropical medicine in all parts of our realms.'⁵³

However, such initiatives conformed more closely with the ideological vision of the 'Second City of the Empire' than with the needs of the city. Shallcross conceded

*the idea of a School of Tropical Diseases is striking to the imagination...yet there is much hygiene work still to be done in this country for our own kith and kin, and it should not be forgotten that there are, annually, thousands dying from preventable diseases, the causes of which have already been discovered and which need only the simple application of knowledge gained, instead of elaborate investigation, to combat them.*⁵⁴

The Council's activities sometimes appeared inadequate, but it was argued that this was an impression created by the gradual extension of municipal powers and the nature of scientific discovery. Hope claimed that 'the difficulties of the problems which it was desired to solve was more fully revealed when the Corporation was clothed with authority to deal with them; supplementary legislation became necessary and important additions were from time to time made to their powers.'⁵⁵ Thomas Bickerton agreed and argued that such measures as the medical inspection of school children created the need for further powers to ensure that the prescribed treatment was carried out.⁵⁶

Hope was quick to take advantage of opportunities to laud the city's achievements. Giving evidence to the Report on the Public Health of Dublin in 1900, he asserted

the City of Liverpool is a conspicuous example of the reduction of the death rate following upon sanitary work. The rate of mortality for the decade ending 1870 was

⁵³ The Lancet, 23 November 1907.

⁵⁴ Shallcross, Municipal Shortcomings, p.17.

⁵⁵ Hope, Health at the Gateway, pp.199 and 200.

⁵⁶ Bickerton, A Medical History of Liverpool, p.237.

32 per 1000, in the decade ending 1880 it was 28, for the decade ending 1890 it was 26, then up to 1895 it was 24.8.⁵⁷

When the annual Public Health Congress was held in Liverpool in 1903, Hope edited the handbook. It was lavishly illustrated with sections detailing Liverpool's history, civic achievements, and accounts of the work of the various branches of municipal administration. The reviewer of the work for The Lancet suggested

*This handbook...is really a record of the public undertakings carried out by the city of Liverpool. The local executive committee desired that the handbook, which it has been customary to issue upon the occasion of the visit of the Institute, should be so amplified as to give an account of the establishments and undertakings of the corporation...The work is...probably the most elaborate and complete publication of the kind that has ever been issued.*⁵⁸

In 1931, Hope's greatest work Health at the Gateway was published. In the preface, Hope explained that it related 'the story of the measures which have transformed the most unwholesome of sea-ports into the foremost place in sanitary administration.'⁵⁹ The account was a celebration of his career and a re-statement of Liverpool's public health achievements.

Throughout his time as M.O.H., Hope attempted to defend Liverpool's image in this important sphere. The M.O.H. had to invest time and energy in deflecting criticism of the Corporation as well as in uncovering disease. Hope held the post at a time when civic rivalry made attacks more barbed and when the proliferation of conferences and specialist journals and periodicals increased their regularity.

Liverpool's renown as 'the Black Spot on the Mersey' had entwined civic image and public health to an unusual degree, but in other cities too M.O.H.s assumed more than purely

⁵⁷ Report on the Public Health of Dublin, p.143.

⁵⁸ The Lancet, 12 September 1903.

⁵⁹ Hope, Health at the Gateway, p.xii.

medical responsibilities. Indeed, on the basis of his experience in Manchester, E.D. Simon questioned whether an M.O.H. should be a doctor at all. He reasoned that not many of the M.O.H.'s decisions depended on medical knowledge and that there were assistants who could advise on such matters. In appointing a medical officer the committee 'tend to pay too much attention to his purely medical qualifications, which in fact will be almost irrelevant to his success in conducting the business of the committee.'⁶⁰

Simon argued that officials were required who would ask themselves

*How can I wipe out the slums of my city and ensure a decent house for every citizen? How can I get the kind of local loyalty and enthusiasm among the citizens that prevailed in Athens in the days of Pericles? How can I make my city a model to the whole world in local government?*⁶¹

E.W. Hope was such an official, concerned as much with upholding the reputation of Liverpool (and, thus, his professional standing) and inspiring civic pride and citizenship as with sanitary science itself. His career demonstrates that for those who adopted such a programme, the claims of civic image and of scientific objectivity were not always complementary.

⁶⁰ E.D. Simon, A City Council from within, London, 1926, p.134.

⁶¹ ibid., p.137.

Chapter Seven- Carthage, Venice and the Liverpool School of Painters

It is for us, with our vast population, our enormous wealth (as a town) but without either politics or philosophy, that the world will care to preserve, to decide whether we will take advantage of our almost unequalled opportunities for the cultivation of Art, or whether we shall be content to rot away, as Carthage, Antioch and Tyre have rotted away, leaving not a trace to show where a population of more than half a million souls once lived, loved, felt and thought. Surely the home of Roscoe is worthy of a better fate?

-Philip Rathbone 1875¹

During the 1870s, as shadows began to fall over the boundless confidence of the mid-Victorian era, Britain's cultural standing was discussed with renewed urgency. The fascination with imperial decline which marked the later years of Victoria's reign encouraged a reassessment of how Liverpool's cultural legacy could sit with the images of commercial grandeur. The Liberal councillor and self-proclaimed aesthete Philip Rathbone envisioned the arts as a means of preventing the moral and spiritual shortcomings which were believed to have presaged the demise of classical powers. Liverpool, as a great port and commercial centre, was presented with the challenge of assuming the roles played by Venice and Florence in an earlier renaissance. Alarmed by the possibility that Liverpool might be proving unequal to its cultural responsibilities, Rathbone, along with others such as the Conservatives Edward Samuelson and B.H. Grindley, believed municipal intervention was essential to the creation of a civic image of artistic excellence.

¹ P.H. Rathbone, The Political Value of Art to Municipal Life, Liverpool, 1875, p.45.

After the institution of the annual Autumn Exhibition in 1871 and the construction of the Walker Art Gallery in 1873, a municipal art policy developed with the central tenet that Liverpool should display the 'best art' as an example to stir artistic imagination and artisan crafts. However, this interest in the arts was not universally welcomed and local artists did not always agree to such an extension of municipal responsibility. The definition of a 'Liverpool School of Painters' was one element of this opposition

Thinking about art in Liverpool was rooted in the career and ideas of William Roscoe², who had set out a vision of how art and commerce should be linked in a modern seaport. The Roscoenian tradition offered a powerful model. Giving his inaugural lecture in the new chair of Modern History at the University in 1906, Ramsay Muir chose to talk about Roscoe as 'one who is not only the greatest of Liverpool historians, but in some respects the greatest of Liverpool citizens.'

According to Muir, Roscoe

*saw his birthplace develop from a busy and prosperous town into a vast, wealthy and hideous city. He saw it almost win the commercial leadership of the world, but he saw little sign of commerce bringing civilisation or beauty in its train. He saw wealth and luxury increasing at an amazing rate, but he also saw misery increasing side by side with it and still more rapidly.*³

² William Roscoe (1753-1831) was a merchant banker who was also a renowned poet, antiquarian, painter, abolitionist and biographer.

³ R. Muir, William Roscoe- an Inaugural Lecture, Liverpool, 1906, p.7

The suggestion that commercial success brought with it moral challenges, which were best addressed by means of aesthetic projects and concerns was a significant motif, not least because it did not meet with universal agreement.

For those who wished to link Liverpool's commerce with a philosophy which advanced aesthetic solutions to contemporary moral problems, Roscoe's perspective could be supported by the more recent works of William Morris and John Ruskin. Furthermore, the basis of the city's wealth in trade, rather than in manufacture, encouraged powerful comparisons with Renaissance Italy. Muir commented that Roscoe 'threw himself with ardour into every scheme which promised to make Liverpool and England more like Florence and Italy.'⁴ Indeed, Roscoe's national celebrity had been assured by his acclaimed *Life of Lorenzo de Medici*. Muir speculated,

What had made Lorenzo Roscoe's hero and, I may add, his model, was the fact that, being a great magnate of commerce and a statesman immersed in public affairs...he yet contrived, without neglecting those duties, to cultivate to the highest point his own intelligence, to keep his mind open to the best thought and the noblest art of his day, and to be the most generous patron of artists, scholars and philosophers because he recognised that their contribution to the welfare and progress of man was of more moment than all his own vast commercial enterprises.⁵

The example of William Roscoe was an influential one for Philip Rathbone. Rathbone wrote a number of papers on art and its social, moral and political functions which owe much to the Roscoe tradition. In The Political Value of Art to the Municipal Life of a Nation for example (a paper in which he made a plea for 'a statue of Roscoe in a public place') he held that 'a people

⁴ Muir, *ibid.*, p.9

⁵ Muir, *ibid.*, p.18

cannot have their vague longings after beauty enshrined in marble or perpetuated on canvas, unless commerce or other forms of industry furnish the means.’⁶ An important strand of his thought was the conviction that there was a latent demand for art amongst the working classes, which it was the duty of monied men to encourage and satisfy. Liverpool's importance as ‘an early centre of support for the Pre-Raphaelites’⁷ was seen by Rathbone, who was responsible for the purchase of Dante's Dream by Rossetti, as a

*stage of development in the hope of hereafter attaining to the grandeur of Michael Angelo and the fullness and richness of Venetian Art...We must now divert attention to the Italian renaissance...The first influence came, as it always must, from above. The people can but accept or reject, it requires a happy combination of the men of genius, with those of leisure, culture and wealth to initiate the intellectual and artistic life of a nation.*⁸

Rathbone was at pains to ‘point out how much more permanent the influence of Greek Art has been because it was the work of a whole people i.e. it was contributed to by men who saw life from different sides, and whose keen criticism was tempered by the feeling that they were members of one body, of which they were proud.’⁹ When the first Autumn Exhibition was set up by the Corporation in 1871, Rathbone was one of the moving spirits behind the enterprise along with two fellow councillors Edward Samuelson and James Picton. They felt the main object of the exhibition to be ‘exciting a widespread interest in Art amongst the masses of general population’ with special reference to the tastes of ‘the working man’.¹⁰

⁶ Rathbone, The Political Value of Art, pp. 3 and 4

⁷ J. Treuherz, Victorian Painting, London, 1993, p.83.

⁸ Rathbone, Political Value of Art, pp. 21 and 22.

⁹ Rathbone, ibid., p.10.

¹⁰ J. Willett, Art in a City, London, 1967, p.41.

The Liberal Review argued

Liverpool is a moderately rich old town...it is happy in the possession of meek and docile ratepayers, who will cheerfully bear any burden that their representatives choose to put upon them. This is a fortunate circumstance for some people. It must be especially gratifying to those ingenious gentlemen who have conceived the noble idea that it is their glorious mission to be art patrons at the public expense. We are afraid to say how much money Liverpool is at present spending in the furtherance of the sacred cause of Art as it is interpreted by the Prophets Samuelson and Rathbone...we believe that some money comes to the Prophets of Art from the surplus fund, some from the library rate, and some from the 'profits' of the Corporation's Autumn Exhibition.¹¹

There is some truth in the *Review's* allegations of councillors acting as patrons at the public expense.

E.K. Muspratt noted that

as Chairman of the Arts and Exhibitions Sub-Committee, Rathbone visited most of the artists' studios in London every year, with a view to inducing them to send some of their works to the annual Autumn Exhibition in Liverpool. On these occasions he made friends among literary and artistic people, becoming a member of the Savage Club where he was always welcomed on account of his originality and good stories.¹²

Muspratt supported his friend's visits and called him 'the man who did most in the way of encouraging a love of art in Liverpool'¹³, but it is easy to understand why others chose to criticise such journeys.

¹¹ Liberal Review, 6 April 1878.

¹² E.K. Muspratt, My Life and Work, London, 1917, p.258.

¹³ Muspratt, ibid., p.252.

The central question was whether it was a municipal responsibility to provide art exhibitions. In 1873, the Walker Art Gallery was paid for at the personal cost of the Conservative mayor, Sir Andrew Barclay Walker, as a gift to the town. The Liberal Review observed that in spite of this, 'ratepayers may complain that art galleries, even when they are given, cost in maintenance a considerable sum and are expensive luxuries. We do not argue with ratepayers of this sort.'¹⁴ One of the main planks of municipal Liberalism was the drive to keep rates low in accordance with the holy trinity of 'Peace, Re-renchment and Reform'.

Consequently, the Review attacked

the advocates of economy who had gone to the Council pledged to reduce the rates by fifty per cent at least; the champions of Liberalism who had bound themselves under heavy penalties to abolish Tory supremacy or perish in the attempt; and the kid glove Liberals who cultivated a reputation for decided aesthetic leanings- were all united on one point, and that was their submission to Mr. Alderman¹⁵ when pictures were in question.¹⁶

Councillors who prided themselves on being 'Liverpool gentlemen' could not afford to leave their own credentials as cultured individuals open to doubt by opposing the acknowledged experts on the Council. The charge of philistinism would wound deeply.

However, critics of municipal expenditure did not command the fiscal high ground as an exclusive stronghold. Attacks could be met on the grounds of political economy by marshalling the ideas of William Morris and John Ruskin. For thinkers like Rathbone, art was the starting

¹⁴ Liberal Review, 4 May 1878.

¹⁵ Alderman Edward Samuelson.

¹⁶ ibid.

point for a holistic approach to society which could revolutionise and revitalise social, economic and political spheres alike. At the Social Science Congress in Birmingham in 1884, Rathbone presented a paper entitled The Place of Art in the Industrial Progress of the Nation. He portrayed Britain's past economic dominance as having sprung from access to the cheapest labour in the world, but voiced fears that, with the greater resources of coal and steam, the United States would soon overtake Britain.

If therefore, we are to maintain our manufacturing position in the world, we must, in future, learn to manufacture the best and most tasteful fabrics rather than the cheapest...A few years ago, Mr. Morris devoted himself to introducing sound art into wall papers, and the general world gently smiled at the aesthetic craze. But what is the practical result? Why that as a direct effort of his action a large export trade (so I am told) in wall papers is growing up which did not before exist.¹⁷

Even granted that Rathbone's argument of a need for quality might make sense, the question would still remain as to whether an increased concern with industrial design would require a municipal art gallery.

He was adamant that

it is not, however, only necessary that our workmen should be artistically trained: they must live in an artistic atmosphere, among a public ready and able to appreciate and criticise their work...Art thoroughly acquired in theory and in practice, trains the powers of observation, of discrimination, and selection, trains the eye to accuracy, the hand to prompt efficiency and gives command over materials.¹⁸

¹⁷ P.H. Rathbone, The Place of Art in the Future Industrial Progress of the Nation, Liverpool, 1884, p.6.

¹⁸ ibid., p.10.

Besides, Rathbone was swift to underscore other potential social benefits when he addressed the issue of drink.

Raise our workmen from the rank of machines and animals into that of thinking, reasoning life-enjoying men. They have as much right to the enjoyment of life as we...At present the means of enjoyment most freely offered them is drink. Can you blame them altogether if they avail themselves of it too freely? But it is said you cannot force these things upon our working population; certainly not, but let them be offered the option. If it be refused- and I believe it would not- then, and not till then, you may accuse our fellow countrymen of innate sensual instincts.¹⁹

Returning to his earlier economic arguments, Rathbone concluded that it was necessary to

cultivate the taste of our population by art galleries and museums, by concerts and theatres, and they will not only patronise the latter, but they will crave to possess as their own such forms of art to decorate their houses as may be within their means...Day by day will elevate and purify their taste, till it creates a demand for artistic work that will overflow the limits of the country, and create an export trade which may do much to counteract the loss of that supremacy in mere cheapness.²⁰

Hence, an increased municipal investment in the arts would both encourage a qualitative improvement in supply and provoke a greater volume of demand. This was an ambitious and attractive vision, especially in a city which relied so heavily on trade as Liverpool did.

In a lecture of 1875, B.H. Grindley, an art dealer as well as a Conservative councillor had also recognised the potential of connecting art and manufacture more closely. He asserted that

the advantages of art knowledge and the opportunities of art culture in several cities have led to the promotion of art manufacture. Paris, not fitted by locality and resources as a field for art manufacture has been made so by the artistic education of its artisans...Liverpool itself once had business of this kind, and had it been as artistically

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.14.

²⁰ *ibid.*, pp.15 and 16.

*alive as it has been commercially, the home of the highest style of pottery would have been in this town, which in former years possessed two or three noted potteries.*²¹

Grindley was aware that 'there are those who object to any effort being made by municipal authorities to bring within the reach and view of the people the works of the greatest of our living artists...they object to such exhibitions being held, unless the result of private enterprise.' His counter-attack was that provincial exhibitions were not a luxury provided for the rich since they could 'visit the Royal Academy and the other metropolitan exhibitions, and as it is fashionable to do so, they rarely miss the opportunity.' On the contrary, he insisted that 'provincial exhibitions are the greatest blessings to the cultural and artistic classes who are not over-much blessed with this world's goods and to students and artisans.'²² Grindley's assumption that the Royal Academy represented 'the greatest of our living artists' should be noted.

He backed up his arguments with a quotation from Ruskin's Political Economy of Art, 'the whole nation is, in fact, bound together as men are by ropes off a glacier- if one falls, the rest must either lift him or drag him along with them as dead weight, not without much increase of danger to themselves.' From this standpoint, Grindley concluded 'There is the whole subject relating to the duty of corporations in all matters that really affect the elevation of the masses- we can't clear them! We must raise them!'²³ He was convinced of the Corporation's obligation

²¹ B.H. Grindley, Exhibitions of Pictures and Municipal Management, Liverpool, 1875, pp. 6 and 17.

²² ibid., p.6.

²³ ibid., p.6.

to intervene in the arts. Moreover, this duty did not merely involve the provision of exhibitions and galleries; the moral and didactic agenda upon which this ideology rested would be founded on a municipal policy which did not shy from making aesthetic judgements.

He conceded that 'it may be argued...why the necessity for corporations to interfere in the matter? Have not Exhibitions of Art been held- successfully held in many places- under other and efficient management?'²⁴ However he noted that 'in Liverpool we have had in the past good exhibitions; but the vicissitudes of our local Academy of Art we had the honour of reverting to in a previous lecture, and so now simply point out that after holding upwards of forty exhibitions, it was compelled in the absence of adequate support to abandon the work.'²⁵ In consequence he advanced that

*the basis of corporation management would appear the most likely to succeed. It has, in the primary place, a responsibility to the people...It possesses too an influence that gives weight to its invitations to artists and guarantees that impartiality shall be strictly maintained in selecting the works to be hung. More it acts on behalf of the town, and so associates not a clique or set, or even an isolated body, but the whole town in its effort to promote really good exhibitions.*²⁶

Grindley's argument was that the Corporation could claim to express the aesthetic preferences of the city disinterestedly. This putative independence would justify municipal intervention. However, it was wrong to assume that policy-making was a process in which the whole Council participated. Sets and cliques could dominate in the formulation of policy, as has been demonstrated above.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.7.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.8.

²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 8 and 9.

In Grindley's writing two functions of a municipal art gallery can be discerned. It should act as a showcase for new talent, and should have a didactic element, directed at 'the people'- i.e. the working classes. As will be demonstrated, his view of these as the proper aims of a gallery was not unchallenged. Local artists, in particular, jealously protected their right to the authoritative voice where aesthetic judgements were concerned.

Grindley remained scornful of the objection

*suggested by artists and artistic bodies. They suggest that the holding of annual exhibitions is their prerogative...Whether true or not, a general impression obtains in the laic mind that prejudice and cliquism rules over the artist mind in a peculiarly potential way; and, at all events, there is an absence of confidence felt by the purchasers and people in prominent exhibitions conducted by artists alone.*²⁷

An obituary for Philip Rathbone echoed this view, assigning 'incalculable value' to his knowledge of Italian art and his connections with the capital, 'because it is of course, essential that if art in Liverpool is to be worth anything it should be superior to narrow provincial aims.'²⁸

The clash between the Corporation and local artists thus centred on the question of how artistic quality might be judged, by whom and by what authority.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.11.

²⁸ Newspaper cuttings scrapbook held with the Rathbone Papers, Special Collections, University of Liverpool.

Artists rounded on municipal interference as a damaging influence. The Sport of Civic Life or Art and the Municipality was an attack on municipal art policy launched in 1909. Its editor, Charles Sharpe explained that

*briefly this booklet is an endeavour on the part of a section of the artists of Liverpool to place before those interested a first hand statement of the disadvantage in which they are placed by the art administration of the city. It is a protest against the marked injustice accorded them with regard to representation in the local gallery...the whole question cannot but provide disquieting food for thought for those who advocate the municipalization of the arts.*²⁹

The booklet argued for the recognition of artists as a profession, whose livelihood should be considered and whose advice was indispensable in artistic matters. One of the grievances aired was that the frescoes commissioned from the proceeds of the 1907 Pageant had not been given to Liverpool artists, but to students from London.

Sharpe wrote:

this, then, may be taken as the key-note of our agitation. We want fair play for the independent worker and reasonable chance of recognition for local ability; and while obtaining better conditions for ourselves, we aim at placing our art upon a basis more creditable to our city. The time has arrived when any real or fancied obligation to the R.A. or any other society may be set aside, and we wish what is so essentially an expert control. It is as ridiculous in our view that the destiny of Liverpool art should be at the mercy of 'the butcher, the baker and candlestick maker', as it would be to place in the hands of an artist the control of the tramway system.

Will Rothenstein's article in the booklet was just as scathing. He chose to concentrate on the functions which a municipal art gallery should fulfil and asserted that

to furnish a gallery entirely with 'permanent' pictures chosen by men ill-equipped for the task of selecting just those examples of pictorial art which will serve as a basis for the advancement of a promising local school- pictures few of which will educate either

²⁹ C.W. Sharpe (ed.), The Sport of Civic Life or Art In the Municipality, Liverpool, 1909, p.3

*artists or laymen- is to miss the whole meaning of the ideal of the museum. I hold it to be more important that such culture as is native in any city should be tended, developed and ultimately employed, than that a hundred masterpieces adorn the walls of the public gallery.*³⁰

In 1904, H.C. Marillier had sought to define such native culture with ‘an account of the Liverpool Academy from 1810 to 1867, with memoirs of the principal artists’, which he entitled The Liverpool School of Painters. His reasoning was that ‘a review was called for by the neglect which local apathy has allowed to obscure and almost obliterate the memory of a truly remarkable group of local artists.’³¹ His thesis was that

one cause of the final decline of the Academy was the awakening of a municipal spirit of art in Liverpool, and the starting of annual exhibitions by the corporation which overshadowed all other efforts. But these exhibitions never treated local work generously and the purchases made annually for the permanent collection have in many cases shown a devotion to clap-trap art and an ignorance of real merit which characterises bumbledom in search of the beautiful. This policy has been as great a misfortune for Liverpool as it was for the artists who starved under its administration, and it accounts to some extent for the obscurity in which the Liverpool school of painters has been allowed to remain.

As has been indicated, the Autumn Exhibition was linked to the London art world by the visits which Rathbone and Samuelson made to the capital. In his autobiography, William Bower Forwood wrote,

*upon Mr. Rathbone's death, Mr. John Lea became his successor and he has done yeoman service for our Autumn Exhibition. For many years he gave an annual dinner to the artists in London and he was honoured by the presence of the leading members of the Royal Academy and their wives. The dinners took place at the Grand Hotel and were extremely well done. They greatly assisted us in our work of collecting the best pictures of the year.*³²

³⁰ W. Rothenstein, ‘Art and the Municipality’ in The Sport of Civic Life

³¹ H.C. Marillier, The Liverpool School of Painters, London, 1904, p.viii

³² W.B. Forwood, Recollections of a Busy Life, London, 1910, p.123.

Marillier was not alone in disagreeing with Forwood's assumption that the best pictures to be found were associated with London and with the Royal Academy.

In a review of the history of the Walker Art Gallery published in 1951, the curator, Frank Lambert, opined, 'the elected representatives of the people, out of touch with any artistic body other than the Royal Academy, limited the exhibits to academic and conventional work, and then, honestly thinking that they were buying the best of contemporary painting, acquired just those works that the people themselves would have chosen, if they had voted for their choice.'³³

In view of the objections from some quarters to the cost to ratepayers, the Royal Academy's name could be used to convince Liverpool's citizens of the quality (and value for money) of the purchases that their rates funded.

Lambert did admit that 'thanks to the energetic advocacy of Philip Henry Rathbone, Chairman of the Gallery from 1886 to 1896, three important works...were purchased, chiefly by subscription: Millais' Lorenzo and Isabella, Rossetti's Dante's Dream and Holman Hunt's Triumph of the Innocents.' Nevertheless, he levelled the charge that 'local artists, highly regarded elsewhere, were scorned if they showed unconventional tendencies. Wilson Steer, for instance, who was born over the water in Birkenhead and Augustus John...Consequently, after fifty years of accumulations the bulk of the collection consisted of large, anecdotal and photographic paintings of the late nineteenth century.'

³³ F.Lambert, 'The Walker Art Gallery- Growth of a Policy' in Liverpool Libraries, Museums and Arts Committee Bulletin, October 1951.

This assessment of the municipal collection coincided with H.C. Marillier's analysis. He maintained that the Liverpool School had been handicapped by the Council's art policy, commenting

*that the National Gallery should not know these men is easily explained. Official art does not so much inform as follow public judgement. What does seem remarkable is the fact, already pointed out, that the city which has vast reason to take a pride in the work of its own sons should remain comparatively callous to its existence. Very few representative pictures by the local men are to be seen in the great Art Gallery of the Liverpool Corporation, which has made no effort to secure them on such occasions as they have come into the market.*³⁴

Grindley strongly refuted such allegations. He knew that 'it was thought that Corporation Exhibitions would injure local artists; that either they would be utterly ignored or that they would be so favoured by virtue of their being town's exhibitions and they citizens, that the poorest trash by local names would find places to the degradation of true art.' From his point of view, these fears were unfounded. Unlike Marillier, Grindley attributed the credit for a revival in local artistic interest to the development of the Autumn Exhibition. He boasted that 'these prognostications have not been realised, on the contrary it has been discovered that nearly two hundred persons claim to work as local artists, and that at the last exhibition, one hundred positively found places on the walls; and yet few can say that in a representative exhibition such as it was, most of them did not well deserve the places they had obtained.'³⁵

³⁴ Marillier, Liverpool School of Painters, p.39.

³⁵ Grindley, Exhibitions of Pictures, p.15.

Grindley's reading of the story of the Liverpool Academy was very different from Marillier's. Grindley observed that 'local art was thought a few years ago to be concentrated in the seven members of the local Academy, but since these exhibitions have opened, the Academy itself has found upwards of twenty deserving a place on its roll.' He was confident that

*by these exhibitions an impetus has been given to the artistically inclined to such an extent that exhibitions abound;...a local Water Colour Society has been inaugurated...the students at our Government Schools of Art have increased in number...lectures on art have been popular; and to crown all a local Art Club has been opened.*³⁶

Undoubtedly, the Corporation faced a dilemma in its treatment of local artists. The municipality should nurture native talent, yet both the didactic function of art and the need for the municipal collection to inspire civic pride by its quality, tended to direct attention towards the capital.

In connection with the local painter William Davis, Marillier complained that 'the Corporation of Liverpool, which can afford to buy modern pictures (many of them rubbish) at high prices, has never had a penny piece to spare for works by this really fine artist.'³⁷ The Liberal Review insisted at the 1878 Autumn Exhibition that

*Art exhibitions should not be used to show off the daubs of young ladies and gentlemen who have gone from the nursery to a fine art school, and fancy that they have become artists because they can paint a geranium or produce a portrait of a gigantic plum...People do not go to exhibitions to see how the learners are getting on. They rather want to gaze at the grand works of the masters of the noble art.*³⁸

³⁶ ibid., p.16.

³⁷ Marillier, Liverpool School of Painters, p.113.

³⁸ Liberal Review, 14 September 1878.

Did the 'Liverpool School' produce artists who were able enough to be ranked with 'the masters'? Marillier was the chief advocate for the School and was very concerned to stress the high quality of the work associated with its artists. He conjectured that

poverty was a common feature with many of them, and 'pot-boiling' pictures, sold for a few pounds, or even shillings to keep body and soul together could not have been altogether unknown in their precarious lives. It is difficult otherwise to account for the occasional inferiority into which some of them lapsed; yet even 'pot boilers' in that age of strenuous effort were meritorious compared with the paltry works which now so often qualify for the name.³⁹

Such a defence allowed the blame for any works of a poor standard to be placed squarely with the municipal authorities for their lack of support, rather than to raise the possibility of shortcomings in the artists.

A second, highly ingenious defence of the School was as a 'school of colour'. Artists such as Henry Dawson, W.L. Windus, William Huggins, William Davis, W.J.J.C. Bond and Robert Tonge

agreed in having eyes for the wealth of colour in nature, and painted from a full palette, not in classical browns or greys. It is thus as a school of colour before everything that the Liverpool men deserve notice. Thus, they were quick to seize upon the new ideas offered by Turner...and when the 'Pre Raphaelite' outbreak occurred they were the sole body of artists in England prepared by previous training and experience to appreciate its significance. Headed by Windus, they welcomed it with enthusiasm.⁴⁰

³⁹ Marillier, Liverpool School of Painters, p.46.

⁴⁰ ibid, p.34.

He quoted Ford Madox Brown, who found 'a host of good pictures by Liverpool artists- Davis, Tonge and Windus chiefly'⁴¹ on a visit to the town.⁴²

Having established that bright colours were an integral element of these Liverpool works, Marillier speculated

*the only reason that can be assigned for them not having made a greater impression at the time they were painted is that they were designed to tone, and were probably crude and over brilliant in colour when fresh. Huggins when remonstrated with for painting a purple donkey remarked that it was not meant to be looked at for twenty years and today that donkey appears to be the perfective of glossy colour...Time and varnish according to Millais were the real old masters, and time has been an important factor in making the Liverpool pictures what they are today, models of sound, vigorous painting and rich colour. It is not the least part of their merit that, at the sacrifice of immediate reward, they were painted so as to ripen slowly under the eyes of another generation.*⁴³

Marillier's suggestion that the Liverpool painters produced 'pot boilers' to survive does not fit with his assertion that they painted for the benefit of unborn generations 'at the sacrifice of immediate reward.' More significantly, he tempered his insistence on the merits of their work, which should have been obvious to contemporaries. This was a body of work which had become ripe for a sympathetic reappraisal. Marillier could hardly justify his attack on the Council. Sections of the press and of the Council were willing to criticise purchasing decisions on the grounds of taste and cost. In such circumstances, pictures of bright purple donkeys, which

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.43.

⁴² Ford Madox Brown was visiting John Miller at the time. Miller's role as an important patron is examined later on in this paper.

⁴³ Marillier, *Liverpool School of Painters*, pp.47 and 48.

should not be looked at for twenty years, would represent a foolhardy and controversial investment.

The attempt to create a 'Liverpool School' proved problematic for Marillier. He believed that

*the fact was that these men learnt to use their eyes and to draw, and having no studio training or traditions to warp them, they took, like Lord Bacon, all nature for their province. This was the binding link between them, coupled with a loose camaraderie, which did not include all however, and which depended more on the chance of residence than on community of tastes. They had no common style of painting, though an interchange of influence can be traced here and there.*⁴⁴

A more promising approach was through the 'patron most intimately associated with the school as a whole'- John Miller, a Liverpool tobacco merchant. Miller had apparently taken 'a considerable interest in the 'Pre Raphaelite' artists and their career apart from Liverpool. Thus he did yeoman service in collecting and lending pictures for the exhibition of their works at Russell Place in 1858...He was also, together with Windus, Bond, Davis and others, an original member of the old Hogarth Club, which was formed to advance their principles.'⁴⁵

'Mr. Miller's house,' wrote Marillier, 'was a rendezvous for Saturday evening gatherings...at which any of the artists who lived sufficiently near were accustomed to meet and discuss each other's work. Pictures were brought and handed round for approval, technical questions were debated, and in fact these reunions offered opportunity for such general interchange of ideas as

⁴⁴ *ibid*, p.34.

⁴⁵ *ibid*, p.42.

is required in order to form anything like a regular school of painting.’⁴⁶ The patronage of John Miller and the circle of artists which he gathered around him as a result provides a reminder that the cultural milieu of the town was shaped by influences other than the official municipal line. Miller shared the interest of these Liverpool artists in the work of the pre-Raphaelites, and as Marillier indicated, he provided a focal point for meetings and discussions.

Marillier mentioned other local collectors who had bought works by the artists of the ‘Liverpool School’, including George Rae, and William Hope. He advised that ‘seekers after the characteristic art of Liverpool...must apply to private collectors...their search will reveal to them a record of fine work which they will be surprised never to have heard of before.’⁴⁷

It was Marillier's claim that

*there existed even before the time of the ‘pre-Raphaelites’ and lasting well into the ‘seventies’ a group of provincial men who adopted these principles from instinct, and carried them out in practice as a matter of everyday work, with a very high degree of perfection. The Liverpool school of painters is a school in virtue of the same qualities exactly which characterise the British school as a whole...It was in a sense a prophetic epitome of the best modern British art both as regards naturalness of subject and individuality of method. It is from this point of view that we regard the Liverpool school as being more interesting, more original and on these grounds more worthy of recognition than the earlier school of Norwich which was based closely upon Dutch tradition and limited methods of expression.*⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.45.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.113.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p.29.

The crux of his argument lay in the essentially British nature of the work of the Liverpool artists. He set them in a tradition which developed from Turner and produced 'good, honest, forthright work, such as one associates with the best British masters of an old school.'

The significance of Marillier's work lay in its identification of a local school of some quality which had been concealed by a conservative municipal arts policy. This would represent a severe blow to Corporation interference. Marillier's criticisms would undermine the axis on which municipal aesthetic authority was based: a concern to promote the image of Liverpool as a city of culture and a claim to call upon a superior aesthetic judgement as a basis for doing so.

Recognition of the need for a distinctive, British contribution to the arts can also be traced in the writings of Rathbone and Grindley and was related to the spectre of Imperial decline. Grindley asked

*do we refer with the pride of mankind to the glories of ancient peoples, cities and nations?- it is not to their deeds of valour, great though they were; not to their festivals and state pageants; not to their commercial greatness, their ships, their mines, their silver and gold; but to their Art, their grand temples, their monuments, their sculptured marbles and their pictures. The other elements of their greatness at the period of their power are all forgotten or passed away, but their Art lives on, lives now and will live forever...How important then that each municipality should promote to its utmost the cultivation of Art.*⁴⁹

Rathbone subscribed to this viewpoint as well;

Liverpool with her half million inhabitants cannot expect to hold the same place in the world's eye or to have the same effect on the world's destinies as Venice or Bruges of old with their two hundred thousand. They were not only great and rich but did not

⁴⁹ Grindley, Exhibitions of Pictures, p.7.

*disdain to assert their dignity by the stateliness of their monuments and the graceful courtliness of their civic ceremonies.*⁵⁰

However, he did believe that ‘we have one great advantage over former civilisations: the correct prosecution of Science, and if we can work up our spare energies by a sincere devotion to Literature, Science and the Arts, we may stave off the decline by which we are otherwise threatened.’⁵¹

His niece, Eleanor was aware of this connection between art and citizenship as the cornerstone of his thought. She commented ‘he believed in strengthening corporate life and in quickening civic patriotism...making the visible city a place to be proud of’. Eleanor summed up his work

*in a sentence occurring in an address which he gave to the Art Congress at Birmingham, ‘Let us not be shamed to cultivate what I venture to call corporate egotism: to strive that the feelings, passions, affections and aspirations of a generation shall be recorded for future ages in the creation of a truly national art.’*⁵²

Principal Rendall, in an obituary for the University of Liverpool magazine, concurred with this assessment, suggesting that for Philip Rathbone ‘the promotion of art was part of the functions of government, municipal and national...it is the business of corporate bodies to raise public edifices and galleries worthy of the larger life they represent.’

The didactic, moralistic conceptions of art which were favoured by Rathbone and Grindley, led them to press for greater municipal intervention in the arts to earn Liverpool a reputation as a

⁵⁰ P.H. Rathbone, Realism, Idealism and the Grotesque, Liverpool, 1877, p.5.

⁵¹ ibid, p.6.

⁵² E. Rathbone, William Rathbone- A Memoir, London, 1905, pp. 460 and 461.

new Venice. Acknowledged aesthetes could exert a disproportionate influence on Corporation policy. A growing sense of the temporary nature of empires, in comparison to the eternal worth of the cultural artefacts which they left behind, intensified their eagerness. However, at the same time, movements such as Aestheticism were attaching greater value to the independence of the artist. The closing decades of the nineteenth century had witnessed artists such as Whistler prescribing 'Art for Art's sake.' They were seeking wider creative freedom by challenging the dominance of bodies such as the Royal Academy. Such metropolitan institutions had long been the guides for the Council in determining the quality of contemporary art and so conflict was assured.

Efforts to encourage corporate egotism and national character sat uneasily with an artistic profession which was coming to demand greater freedom. Rathbone and Grindley believed that social, moral, cultural and economic life could be regenerated through the inspiration of the best contemporary art. However, their definition of the acme of contemporary art as the output of the Royal Academy was unacceptable to provincial artists striving to break from what they perceived as its stifling constraints. There were two main areas for conflict over Liverpool's municipal art policy:

- i) the dispute over whether art should be harnessed to economic or political programmes
- ii) the rejection of the artistic canon which these programmes turned to for inspiration.

Marillier's determination to champion the existence and the quality of a Liverpool school of painters should be viewed in the context of this struggle between artistic freedom and municipal enterprise. If he could demonstrate that the Liverpool school could have provided a distinctive,

British cultural legacy but had been stifled by municipal interference, there would be undoubted implications for the relationship between artists and government, both local and central. Whether Marillier did prove his case is less certain.

Artists suggested that municipal intervention to create an attractive civic image ran counter to the promotion of civic patriotism. A pride in Liverpool was best fostered by a recognition of local art. Thus, the arguments about a municipal art policy for Liverpool were constructed, in part, around concepts of civic image, civic pride and participation. Liverpool's cultural duties were all the more onerous because of the historic contribution of ports and merchant cities to the arts. A municipal arts policy should aim to project an image of Liverpool as a new Venice. The challenge of discovering (or inventing) a distinctive British artistic legacy to match Imperial pretensions had posed fundamental questions concerning aesthetic authority. The expanding scope of Victorian urban government and competition with other cities (and other civilizations) had brought artistic output under the municipal aegis. Where the municipality sought to subjugate the arts to civic image-building, as in Liverpool, such intervention might find artists ready to appeal to the inherent freedom of genius and to protect autonomous expression by calling on local pride.

Chapter Eight- Images, Perceptions and Participation: The failure to incorporate Bootle

In 1947, G.D.H. Cole suggested that the 1888 Local Government Act 'created a structure...quite extraordinarily resistant to major changes, however desirable they might come to be in the light of alterations in the distribution of population, in the scope of locally administered services, and in the technical condition of administrative efficiency.'¹ Between the autumn of 1902 and the summer of 1903, the City of Liverpool and the Borough of Bootle were engaged in fierce conflict as Liverpool attempted to incorporate its northern neighbour. There was keen national, as well as local, interest in the proceedings since a precedent would be established for other instances of cities hoping to extend their boundaries. The Municipal Year Book for 1903 identified a notable tendency 'towards the creation of larger areas for the purposes of municipal administration' and singled out the 'proposal made by Liverpool for the absorption of Bootle'² as an illustration. The Municipal Journal agreed that 'the fight is exceedingly interesting, and it is in its way of very great importance. Amalgamation and absorption seem to be the order of the day'³.

The struggle between the two municipalities had important consequences for their images. During their attempts to persuade firstly the Local Government Board and subsequently the Select Committee to favour their proposals for the future of Bootle, the Corporations undertook a thorough examination of the ways in which both viewed and governed their communities. The substance behind civic rhetoric and imagery, the nature of the community, the representation of the interest groups within it and the ideological underpinnings of the system of local government were of paramount significance in the debates which took place.

¹ G.D.H. Cole, Local and Regional Government, London, 1947, p.12.

² See the section entitled "Municipal Developments in 1902" in The Municipal Year Book for 1903.

³ Municipal Journal, 16 Jan 1903, p.52.

By retracing the events of 1902 and 1903 these central themes will be explored to show how the fight for the right to govern Bootle encouraged thought about the relationships between image, identity and community and how differences in conceptual and theoretical approaches to communal life and the institutions for its administration were thrown into sharper relief.

The analytical foundations of this paper result in an account of the attempted extension of Liverpool which emphasises factors which have not been adequately explored in previous studies. The first section of the paper will outline these areas. The second section uses, as far as possible, a chronologically ordered narrative informed by a methodology which considers the dynamics of image, community and identity in greater detail.

The limits of economic analysis

In his account of the Corporation of Liverpool, Brian White noted that, 'by 1914...the city of Liverpool was only one part of a much larger urban and suburban area on both sides of the river which economically and even socially formed the single community or conurbation of Merseyside.'⁴ The failure of the city of Liverpool to 'expand sufficiently to contain within its boundaries as citizens anything like the whole number of those who gained their livelihood from the port of Liverpool' accordingly required explanation. On an economic basis, Bootle's survival on the boundaries of Liverpool would seem to be a curious anomaly. Yet the reasoning behind White's understanding of the 'problem' was practically the same as that which informed the actions of the Liverpool Corporation- a view of community which was

⁴ B. White, A History of the Corporation of Liverpool 1835-1914, Liverpool University Press 1951, p.167.

inherently flawed because of its emphasis on commercial and economic ties as being indisputably at the centre of communal life. The development of a concept of community which did not rely on commercial independence from the port of Liverpool⁵ for its validity was one prong of a Bootleian strategy centring on civic image. The other was to undermine the grandeur of the city of Liverpool's image to reveal a sham.

White appeared perplexed that 'a strong and independent municipal spirit had come to exist in Bootle in spite of its lack of a separate economic life and the artificial character of its municipal origin.'⁶ Whilst Bootle did not have a separate economic life, he remained convinced that the strength of opposition within the borough to Liverpool's aggrandisement must have sprung from economic self-interest. He suggested that 'the suburban population wished to avoid paying its share towards the inevitably high cost of the social services in an area with so much poverty as Liverpool, and that the exodus to the suburbs was in fact a flight from social responsibility.'⁷

The 'problem' of Bootle's continuing separate identity arose from the model of community based on economic relations which White⁸, as a Marxist, adopted. Civic image offers a different perspective for understanding identity. The existence of Bootle as a separate municipality was a question with wide implications in terms of social, ceremonial and political affairs in the region. Bootle's argument came to centre on principles such as the vitality of civic life and the need to foster local patriotism. Meanwhile, Liverpool pointed to

⁵ This distinction between the port of Liverpool and the city of Liverpool is a key one with regard to the political economy of the Mersey region. Since 1857, the Liverpool docks (which included important dock frontage in Bootle) had been under the independent control of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, having passed out of the hands of the Corporation of Liverpool.

⁶ White, History of Corporation of Liverpool, p.175.

⁷ ibid. p.176.

⁸ Margaret Simey explained to me in a conversation in May 1997 that White, probably her late husband Lord Simey's most outstanding student, was a Marxist.

the glory which would result from being part of the second city of the Empire. The Local Government Board and Select Committee inquiries were exercises in presenting an image to outside groups so the arena of images was of fundamental strategic importance and was correspondingly fiercely contested.

The intensity of feeling which the proposed incorporation aroused cannot be understood unless adequate explanatory power is accorded to the competing images involved. Economic autonomy was not a necessary condition for the development of a robust civic image and image, identity and community merit closer analysis in an account of Liverpool's unsuccessful northern extension.

A narrative of the attempted incorporation of Bootle

Hampson, the Parliamentary Committee and the 'official' vision

On 9 September 1902, the Conservative councillor R.A. Hampson led a deputation to wait on the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. From the first the principal line of attack against Bootle was to be that of the commercial benefits which amalgamation would bring. Hampson commented, 'the Corporation have always understood that a very strong feeling has existed in commercial circles in Liverpool as well as in the general community in favour of Bootle being included in Liverpool.'⁹

The question had been raised because Bootle was planning a representation to the Local Government Board to include the townships of Litherland and Orrell. Hampson reminded the Docks and Harbour Board that the docks accounted for £200,000 of Bootle's total rateable value of £500,000 and argued that the municipal improvements which Bootle was offering to attract the two townships would mean increased expense for the Board. In addition, he highlighted the fact that the Board was assessed at £200,000 on £4,000,000 capital expenditure in Bootle, in contrast to just £178,000 on £16,000,000 in Liverpool. Should amalgamation be brought to a successful conclusion, he suggested that he would be prepared to devise 'some comprehensive scheme for dealing with the whole question of the rating of the docks along the river frontage.'¹⁰

The Bootle municipal elections of November 1902 encouraged a hardening of opinion against Liverpool which would later ensure a strong, united line from the Bootle Corporation. The Bootle Times advised its readers, 'one point should be kept in view by voters in the forthcoming November elections, and it is the question of the absorption of Bootle by Liverpool.'¹¹ The Liberal candidate B.S. Johnson drew attention to 'the great apathy of the people in connection with municipal contests' in 'the huge area of Liverpool'.¹² At a meeting of Liberal candidates, Johnson outlined his ideas at greater length.

'Freedom is the rock upon which the British Empire must be built...the loyalty and devotion of our self-governing colonies...the priceless boon of local self-government for our Municipal Institutions upon which our safety, comfort and prosperity depend.' After this paean which connected freedom, self-government and municipal independence, Johnson continued that

⁹ A Shorthand Note of the Deputation to the Dock Board, 9 September 1902, pp.1 and 2.

¹⁰ ibid., p.5.

¹¹ Bootle Times, 18 October 1902.

¹² Bootle Times, 25 October 1902.

citizens should be able to influence 'the policy and conduct of the governing body. In a huge city like Liverpool, owing to the extent of its area and the vastness of its population, such a consciousness of citizenship seems to the average ratepayer impossible of realisation.'

Johnson insisted that 'a citizen should be a living force not a mere unit'. In order to see that this was not so in Liverpool, one only had to observe 'the lack of political interest, municipal patriotism and of social solidarity in the huge districts of the north end of the city...the great working class district- similar in every respect to Bootle, except its form of government- has been left to grow up a vast wilderness of bricks and mortar.' The Liverpool Corporation was to find its municipal record in the districts of Walton and Kirkdale, on the boundaries of Bootle, sternly tested over the next nine months. The Bootle Council hoped to find the city's image wanting on questions of efficiency and economy, as well as on political participation.

Johnson argued that 'to be a Liberal in Liverpool is to be for ever debarred from attaining the honourable position of Chief Magistrate and to be excluded from the higher honours and greater responsibilities of corporate life.' The Liberals were in a majority in Bootle and feared that their path to municipal honours might be barred in Conservative Liverpool. Nevertheless, doubts about the practical worth of a voice on the City Council cut across party lines. W.H. Clemmey believed 'if they were included in Liverpool the small number of members they would send would be but a drop in the bucket, and things would not be kept up to the mark as in their own government.'¹³ Clemmey's example as mayor-elect of Bootle, despite being in the Conservative minority, further reinforced Johnson's case.

Following the municipal elections, both Bootle and Liverpool prepared applications to the Local Government Board with the intention of absorbing Litherland and Orrell. If Bootle managed to add these areas, any future attempt at amalgamation with Liverpool would be much less likely to succeed. Conversely if Liverpool extended to include the townships,

¹³ Bootle Times, 1 November 1902.

Bootle would be practically encircled and the borough's prospects of remaining autonomous would be put in jeopardy.

The Bootle memorial indicated that the population of Bootle rose from 27,734 in 1881 to 58,556 in 1901 and rateable value increased from £143,704 to £509,311 over the same period. Pains were taken to point out that 'the recent growth of Bootle is due not to any works of the Liverpool Corporation but mainly to the development of trade in connection with the Port'¹⁴ In addition, the memorial struck at one of the weak points of Liverpool's civic image- sanitary matters. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Liverpool had been tarnished as the 'Black Spot of the Mersey' for its high death rate. The city had since acquired a more progressive reputation but the memorial did not miss the chance of comparing the death rates of the two municipalities. Bootle's gross death rate of 18 per 1000 inhabitants was contrasted with Liverpool's figure of 21.6.

It was proposed that the city's apparently progressive image in issues such as sanitary administration and housing was really a consequence of the existence of unparalleled distress which had necessitated the development of powers which were not required in Bootle. Therefore, according to Bootle, the programmes for slum clearance and the construction of municipal housing which the Liverpool Corporation had increasingly undertaken since the 1890s provided evidence of degrading conditions in the city rather than proof of a visionary City Council.

The Liverpool Daily Post recognised that in Bootle's manoeuvres to win over the townships 'something like a challenge was thrown down to Liverpool, and the Parliamentary Committee has without any display of tact hastened to take it up.'¹⁵ The Daily Post was the city's most widely read Liberal newspaper and maintained that the internal politics of the Conservative

¹⁴ Bootle Memorial in Bootle Times, 22 November 1902.

¹⁵ Liverpool Daily Post, 29 November 1902.

party were responsible for the belligerent approach which the Liverpool Corporation as a whole came to take regarding the northern extension. The Daily Post noted the resignation of the Conservative Alderman Bartlett from the Liverpool Parliamentary Committee and denounced the 'precipitation with which the aggressive section of the Conservative party is hurrying the matter on.'¹⁶

Councillor McGuffie was excluded from the Parliamentary Committee and a correspondent in the Daily Post insisted that 'Councillor Hampson, until recently the leader of the Conservative party in the Council lent his voice, his influence and his vote to the exclusion from the Parliamentary Committee.'¹⁷ McGuffie had 'inspired the incorporation of Garston into Liverpool, believing that this district had 'immense industrial possibilities.'¹⁸ Throughout the contest with Bootle, McGuffie remained unconvinced of the need for expansion. He argued that Garston, which had been absorbed by the city in 1902, provided plenty of scope for municipal enterprise and was concerned that the addition of Bootle would lead to the southern areas of the city being neglected by investors. Bartlett and McGuffie had also questioned the appeasement of Liverpool's Protestants which Tories like Hampson had advocated.

Hampson could not afford to have dissent with the aggressive line against Bootle represented on the Parliamentary Committee. This Committee took the lead in devising the strategy of the struggle and Hampson derived his power from his dominance on it. The secrecy surrounding negotiations and the practical autonomy of the Committee, which he secured by insisting on the need to present a common front within the Council to the outside world, enabled him to override any opposition as the campaign unfolded. The incorporation of Bootle was an important part of the policy of 'civic patriotism' which Hampson had outlined in an article in the Liverpool Review in 1901.

¹⁶ ibid.

¹⁷ Liverpool Daily Post, 1 December 1902.

¹⁸ Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, pp.195 and 196.

He argued that the landscape of municipal politics in Liverpool had been altered by the boundary extensions of 1895.

When the Unionist Party came into power in 1895 upon the incorporation of 'Greater Liverpool', a new state of things was created, and it was evident that the future progress and prosperity of the City of Liverpool in a large measure depended upon the manner in which that party would discharge the trust committed to them. The programme which the party placed before itself was to get the broadest possible view of the interests of the city. It was seen that upon the work of the new Council...depended to a large extent the maintenance of the trade and commerce of Liverpool. Acting upon these lines, the leaders of the party set themselves to work out what I may describe as the realisation of a policy of 'Civic Patriotism'.¹⁹

He indicated that the municipalisation of the tramways, the improvement of the approaches to the Landing Stage, the remodelling of the Pier Head and the campaign against insanitary property were all aspects of this policy. Trade and commerce were recognised as the dominant interests of the city, and municipal expansion would serve those interests. Hampson's article concluded

We approach the First of November²⁰ with unshaken resolutions and faith in continued successes, and in the extended progress and prosperity of a still 'Greater Liverpool', which will now include Garston, and front the banks of the estuary of the Mersey for many miles.²¹

Greater Liverpool was the key to this policy of civic patriotism. Municipal expansion, trade and commerce were inter-connected in Hampson's vision of Liverpool. He chose to portray the question of expansion as an all-or-nothing scenario to enforce agreement on the City Council, insisting that it would 'affect the prosperity and progress of the community of Liverpool for all time.'²²

¹⁹ Liverpool Review, 26 October 1901.

²⁰ The date of the municipal elections.

²¹ Liverpool Review, 26 October 1901.

²² A Shorthand note of the Special Meeting of the Liverpool City Council, 29 November 1902, p.9.

Alderman Burgess, the deputy chairman of the Parliamentary Committee thought that Bootle had achieved municipal status 'because...our predecessors...were not...as much alive to the interests of Liverpool as we might have hoped they would have been.'²³ Thus the issue of the expansion of the city was elevated to one on which there could be no opposition to the policy of aggression. Any dissent could be portrayed as treasonable, damaging the prospects of the city and displaying a lack of a sense of civic duty in the same way as the Liverpool Corporation had in 1868.

The anxieties of Clemmey and Johnson appear to have been vindicated. By constructing an image of Liverpool in which expansion was both destiny and a fundamental test of civic virtue, Hampson and the Parliamentary Committee were able to confirm their powerful position. Along with this image came the connected ideological perspective of commerce as the *raison d'etre* of the community. Burgess was of the opinion that Bootle 'is as much a part of Liverpool as Toxteth Park, or as Everton, or as Kirkdale...I may almost say it is more so, because it contains some of the most important of our docks.'²⁴ He added 'if the affairs of Bootle were administered by a common authority, certainly in the interests of the community it would be very much better administered as part of this great City of Liverpool.'²⁵

The interests of the community and the interests of business had become identical in this model, since commercial ties performed the dual function of stimulating the development of a community and of proving its existence. Hampson advanced that 'this was recognised in 1895 upon the incorporation of greater Liverpool, when the outer districts were brought in, and it has been recently recognised in the case of Garston, which only this last year has been made part of Liverpool.'²⁶

²³ *ibid.*, p.4.

²⁴ Special Meeting of Liverpool City Council, 29 November 1902, p.3.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.5.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p.12.

Although it was true that commercial links had been invaluable to Liverpool's success in the addition of Toxteth Park, West Derby, Walton and Wavertree to the city in 1895, and in the incorporation of Garston seven years later, the question of consent had been a vital one. An 1890 Extension Bill had foundered in 1890 at a cost of £20,000 because of a lack of consent. In 1902 Garston's elected body, unlike that of Bootle, had been split into two equal factions over the issue. Dr. Permewan insisted that coercion could only reflect badly on Liverpool's name, being 'a most undignified position for a great city like Liverpool, and a very unfair position to take against a small municipality like Bootle.'

The concerns raised in the Liverpool Council were largely confined to the style but not the substance of the policy of annexation. The English notion of 'fair play' made some reluctant to resort to outright coercion and also formed a central plank in the rhetoric of the Bootle case as the Borough tried to mobilise support. Captain Turner, an opponent of the Liverpool incorporation of Garston who now represented the district on the City Council, agreed that it would be 'a very undignified position if they rushed at Bootle, took her by the throat, and said "You must become part and parcel of Liverpool"'.²⁷ He contended that the recent extensions of 1895 and 1902 provided enough scope and expense for municipal energies 'during the next 25 years'. Turner's inability to defend what he saw as Garston's interests in the City Council provided further support for Bootle's arguments.

Since the case for annexation was challenged on the grounds of the need to represent different interests and to give consent its due importance, a defence against these charges was required. Burgess widened the issue and insisted that it was undesirable that 'in developing the port of Liverpool containing 700,000 people, they should be dependent on the whim of a Corporation representing 60,000 to say how the development should be carried out.'²⁸ This analysis had the

²⁷ Liverpool Courier, 1 December 1902.

²⁸ ibid.

benefit of blurring the clarity of Bootle's emotive appeal to the authority of the voice of the people, through an extension of the constituency in question. The conflict between Bootle and Liverpool revolved around the former insisting on its autonomy as a community and the latter asserting its hegemony as the community to which Bootle (as an individual) must defer.

The parties' criteria for the existence of a community were not congruent. James Webster, who had previously been an alderman in Bootle but who supported the expansion scheme, illustrated this in an interview with the Liverpool Courier. He split the interests at stake into social and commercial categories, explaining that 'he felt inclined rather to sacrifice the social interest for what he considered the more important, viz. the commercial.' However, he conceded 'one could not ignore the strong feeling with regard to the social work carried on in connection with the Bootle Town Hall...the people of Bootle would even sacrifice the commercial interests and the possibility of foreign competition in favour of Town Hall influence.' In conclusion, he recommended 'under no circumstances should the health and sanitary matters and the police court be allowed to pass away...as Liverpool was becoming...too unwieldy.'²⁹ The Representation to the Local Government Board by the Liverpool Corporation contradicted Webster to suggest that 'the increase in the number of the Council' enabled 'the individual members thereof, to devote more time and attention to the business under their control.'

The advantage of Bootle's position was that there was strong identification with the image of the community as a social entity among the people of the municipality. Bootle's defence emphasised these social and spiritual aspects of municipal life; it sought to test how firmly the ratepayers of the city supported the Liverpool Corporation and participated in the image of the community adumbrated by Hampson and his commercial allies. Mr. Geraghty claimed

²⁹ ibid.

Liverpool was 'on the brink of bankruptcy' and postulated that expansion would be 'at the expense of the already too heavily burdened people in Liverpool.'³⁰

Geraghty maintained that the City's wealthy image disguised severe financial problems and he posed the question as to whether the municipal policy of glorious aggrandizement was worth paying for. This point was to become ever more crucial as Bootle's stern defence of its independence tested the commercially orientated concept of community propagated by Hampson.

Bootle Corporation and the concept of community

The meeting of the Bootle Town Council on 3 December 1902 found the councillors determined to resist Liverpool. Dr. Wild, a former mayor of Bootle, believed that the Town Council 'looked after the interests of the borough and district in a way which could not have been done by a body which is so remote from our town, and so remote from considering the interests and property of such a district as this as is the City Council of Liverpool.'

Liverpool had claimed that there was a community of interest between the two Corporations in municipal ventures such as water and gas. The city did little to nurture this 'community of interest' by the aggressive, high-handed style in which the question of extension was approached. Tactically the community of interest represented a quandary. Mutual concerns were to be cited to underline that the two municipalities were practically one and the same and should be united. Paradoxically, the Local Government Board would be persuaded to approve the extension if Liverpool were able to prove that Bootle was acting **against** the interests of the city and the surrounding area.

³⁰ Liverpool Courier, 2 December 1902.

Those who were fighting for Bootle depicted the community of interest as a fiction and presented Liverpool as a greedy and aggressive Corporation. The struggle was made all the fiercer because of the development of what might justly be called a siege mentality. Captain Oversby, a Bootle councillor, compared the affair to the siege of Ladysmith and derided Liverpool as the school bully.³¹ The imagery which was used in connection with Liverpool played a part in articulating and fuelling the sense of injustice at the proposed extension, allowing opposition to be emotionally mobilised.

Dr. Wild imagined Liverpool as an unscrupulous squire seeking to win over a maiden whom he had ignored for years because now she has developed to womanhood.³² By such imagery a municipal conflict was to be invested with all of the moral certainty and sense of adventure of a medieval quest. Two poems in the Bootle Times were couched in similarly emotive terms. One described Liverpool

*Like an octopus spreading its suckers afar
She sucks dry her victims, in peace and in war;
Thou'lt never more know the sweet freedom once thine
Till the sun fails to rise and the stars cease to shine.*³³

The other set the struggle for Bootle's independence in the traditions of the English Commonwealth, admonishing readers that

*Cromwell, Pym and Hampden
Have fought for such as this;
Defeat would never damp them
Their object never miss...*

*Then here's a health to Bootle town,
The lighthouse, shield and crest,
What care we for the Liver's frown,*

³¹ Bootle Town Council Meeting, 3 December 1902.

³² Shorthand note of Bootle Town's Meeting, 30 December 1902, p.7.

³³ Bootle Times, 6 December 1902.

**THE COAT OF ARMS OF
BOOTLE**

The Bootle coat of arms were created and adopted in 1869, the year of the Borough's Incorporation.

The three gold stag's heads on the blue chevron were taken from the arms of the Earls of Derby;

The three blue fleur-de-lys on their silver background were taken from the arms of the Linacre family from Yorkshire; and the three mural crowns were adopted from the arms of the Bootle family.

The crest is surmounted by a rock lighthouse, which is rare and indicates the Borough's position at the mouth of the river Mersey.

The motto 'Respice, Aspice, Prospice', means 'Reflect on the past, consider the present and provide for the future'.



Figure 1- The 'lighthouse, shield and crest' of Foulkes' poem.
Source: P. Woolley, Bootle in Picture Postcards.



A MYSTERY GIRL

Harry Dowden, the official Photographer for the Borough, took this photograph in c. 1905. The young girl's dress appears to have been made from 'Bootle Times' newspapers. On her right shoulder can be seen the word 'Times' and a picture of a lady.

The front of the dress must have been beautifully designed because it had copied the Borough coat of arms.

Part of the Latin motto ('Res' of Respice) is just visible bottom left and her head-dress is made up of the castle and lighthouse from the coat of arms.

Who was this girl?

Figure 2- A personification of Bootle as the helpless maiden.
Source: Woolley, op.cit.

*The bird that fouls its nest.*³⁴

Bootle's coat of arms, 'the lighthouse, shield and crest' featured on a number of picture postcards (see *figures 1 and 2*) produced at this time which would have encouraged support for the borough's identity.³⁵ While Bootle's insignia were celebrated, Liverpool's health record was ridiculed with the undignified image of the Liver fouling its nest. The attack on Liverpool's image which such speeches contained, encouraged Bootleians to identify more closely with their town and to become more aware of their existence as a community which defined itself against the tyranny and disease of the city.

Fertile ground for attacks on Liverpool was provided by the issue of how representative the Corporation was. Oversby was shocked that

*Hundreds of men within a stone's throw of the Liverpool Town Hall who are very large ratepayers, and have been all their lives...have never hobnobbed with the current jelly section, and never received an invitation to the Town Hall in their existence, whereas in Bootle there is hardly a ratepayer of any importance at all who does not at some time or other participate in the hospitality of this Town Hall (Hear, hear).*³⁶

Civic functions were occasions on which ratepayers could come to feel that they participated in the municipality in a real sense. As well as fostering identification with the Bootle Corporation, civic ceremonial supported the hierarchies of local society, by indicating the importance of particular citizens. This was considered to be the legitimate function of civic hospitality. As such, it was to be distinguished from the wasteful 'hobnobbing' which saw an oligarchy of Liverpool men abuse the system. Consequently the removal of Bootle's

³⁴ Bootle Times, 14 February 1903.

³⁵ Peter Woolley's book Bootle in Picture Postcards provides two examples.

³⁶ Bootle Town Council Meeting, 3 December 1902, p.14.

independent municipal social events was to be resisted, since this would remove a stimulant to civic pride and an important prop from the local elite.

By the first few days of December, the areas on which the contest would be fought had emerged. On 12 December, a conference was held between the Parliamentary Committees of the two municipalities but it failed to make progress. The Bootle Times had been suspicious of the Conference and believed that 'it is our social life, our public advantages and our chances of still further development and not the mere fact of a few pence in rates, which makes us staunch to our Charter, our Corporation and our town.'³⁷

Since Bootle was not a geographically distinct entity, and shared the city of Liverpool's dependence on the port in commercial terms, the borough's identity as a separate municipality had to be constructed on the basis of the ideal of local self- government as embodied in the 1868 Charter of Incorporation and on the importance of municipal independence to the social life of the town. Hence, a combination of strategic concerns and the hopes and fears of Bootleians led to the elevation of what the Liverpool Courier labelled 'sentimental and social considerations'³⁸ to become the crux of the borough's opposition. Many in Bootle were anxious about their ability to participate in the municipal life of a greater city.

Liverpool's image was not one which was widely identified with. Speaking at the annual dinner of the Liverpool Press Club, the Lord Mayor of Liverpool pontificated that 'if they could all sink their differences, if they could make different parts of the city, which time had welded together, into one, they could work to raise the prestige of Liverpool and make it the second city of the Empire.'³⁹ For many Bootleians the 'second city' appeared to be a hollow boast. Amalgamation with Liverpool was not seen in terms of a greater glory on the Imperial

³⁷ Bootle Times, 13 December 1902.

³⁸ Liverpool Courier, 15 December 1902.

³⁹ Bootle Times, 13 December 1902.

stage, as it was by many in the Liverpool Corporation, but as an event which would bring about the loss of a social centre, a political voice and a sense of identity rooted in pride in the English system of local government. The Bootle Times⁴⁰ wondered how Liverpool could have come to the conference, dangling the city's

*greatness before their eyes as if it were the be all and end all of life...The vital principle is absolute self government, independence of action, freedom to act as may be expedient...Life is not all work and no play, and social existence should be cherished and not stamped out so that a place may become the Second City of Empire.*⁴¹

Whilst the negotiations were dismissed on the Bootle side for not offering anything, in Liverpool fears began to arise that the Parliamentary Committee may be offering too much. Herbert Rathbone⁴² was anxious because the proposals were being kept secret, thus giving Hampson and the Committee a free hand. In a letter published in the Courier, Rathbone argued that the costs for Liverpool ratepayers could be high.⁴³ There had been no attempt to convince the ratepayers of the city of the wisdom of the extension, beyond the rhetoric of the need to outstrip Glasgow and be the second city. The leader column of the Liverpool Daily Post on New Year's Day conceded that 'Liverpool contests with Glasgow for the honour of being the second city in the Empire' and that the extension would put Liverpool ahead in trade and in population, but questioned whether the glory to be won from expansion was accompanied by any other practical reward.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ It is important to recognise that the Bootle Times had clear economic motives for encouraging the intensity of Bootle feeling. By the start of 1903 its headlines proclaimed it proudly the 'Only newspaper printed in Bootle'.

⁴¹ Bootle Times, 27 December 1902.

⁴² The Rathbone family were amongst the most prominent of Liverpool's merchant families.

⁴³ Liverpool Courier, 17 December 1902.

⁴⁴ Liverpool Daily Post, 1 January 1903.

Hampson and the Parliamentary Committee could not explain how the city as a whole would gain from the project. The commercial reasoning which informed the actions of the City Council was geared to appeal to business interests. A re-examination of the way in which the rates were assessed appealed to institutions such as the Dock Board, but held out little to win over the residents of the districts of Liverpool who might face increased rates to meet the shortfall. The need to be the second city of the Empire was blindly insisted upon as a self-evident truth; the development of an image of the expanded city, which many Liverpool interest groups could have a stake in and could identify with, was neglected.

The Town's Meeting held in Bootle Town Hall on 30 December was a chance to underline the extent to which the ratepayers of Bootle opposed annexation. Liverpool's proposals to maintain social events at Bootle Town Hall met with forthright rejection. An unpalatable scenario was sketched by Mr. J.W. Hall- 'They will give us social functions. The way that will be worked will be that there will be a grand ball at Liverpool on the Monday, and a second rate ball in Bootle on the Tuesday. We shall be sent all the scraps, all the small beer, and we shall only get gooseberry, no good fizz.'⁴⁵

The fear of Bootle becoming overlooked as part of Liverpool was felt by other speakers. Mr. J. Bruce praised the splendour of Liverpool's Town Hall and St. George's Hall but continued, 'when you come to the outskirts you have a negation, an absolute negation of anything that will uplift the masses of the people.'⁴⁶ Bruce was drawing attention to the gap between the civic image propagated by the splendour of the public buildings in the centre of the city, and the social problems to be found in districts like Everton, Kirkdale and Walton. Liverpool's reputation as a city was to be judged on the welfare of the whole community and not just on the public facade of the municipal buildings.

⁴⁵ Bootle Town's Meeting, p.15.

⁴⁶ ibid., p.21.

B.S. Johnson developed this attack on Liverpool, and linked it to the city's claims that Bootle's rates were too high. He retorted that

Liverpool seemed to forget that something more was expected of a municipal authority than the mere elementary duties...He was in favour of money being expended freely in promoting not only the physical, but the moral and intellectual and social life of the community at large (Loud applause). He contended that in Bootle the humblest burgess had an opportunity of proving himself useful in municipal matters.⁴⁷

Strategically, there were three principal elements to this analysis. Firstly, there was the attempt to drive a wedge between the ruling elite of the city and the masses, by stressing their different experiences of Liverpool life, to undermine the model of a community of interest. Secondly, the primacy of social and spiritual concerns in shaping identity and community was asserted. Finally, Johnson was trying to prove the necessity of an independent Bootle in providing an arena for the activities of individual citizens. The yardstick of the efficiency of municipal government was not to be the level of the rates, but rather the extent to which it enabled the individual to participate in civic affairs and the social good that might result from the greater public expenditure which higher rates funded. The contention was that Liverpool was a city which was run by an oligarchy and that it was too large to allow such participation.

In addressing the Town's Meeting, Geraghty adopted a similar approach, tying in the scope for individual activity in Bootle with the charter of incorporation. His passionate speech did not

deal with...the financial aspects of the question, because they were trivial when compared with their right to hold within their hand their own charter, and the right of power to shape their own destiny (Hear, hear)...They were fighting for freedom, and for that men had sacrificed everything. The saint had prayed for it, the patriot fought for it, and the martyr died for it.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Liverpool Courier, 31 December 1902.

⁴⁸ ibid.

The employment of a discourse which emphasised themes such as rights, destiny and freedom served to deny the worth of commercial arguments. Furthermore, this emotive language sought to mobilise affective support for Bootle and to advance the concept of freedom and the symbol of the charter as rallying points for the cause. These ideals had the great advantage of allowing a wide identification with an image of the community of Bootle which was not based upon sectional economic interests. Consequently, whereas Liverpool's support for the annexation could be splintered by exploiting class issues and the differing conditions of various districts, Bootle could present a more united front and keep consent as a major obstacle to the project.

The Bootle Times reminded its readership that

We are fighting for a principle, the right of a free people to retain their Charter...a priceless heritage...which secures for us the precious gift of local independent government...From the time that King John⁴⁹ unwillingly granted Magna Carta the Englishman's home has been his castle and the locality in which he lived worked and enjoyed himself has been his pride...Of what interest is it to the people of Bootle that Liverpool should be the first city in the Empire. Will that fact teach the ignorant, feed the hungry or give work to the idle?⁵⁰

The references to the 'Englishman's home' reinforced the importance of a vision of the community in which commercial connections were secondary. The Bootle Times explained loyalty was owed to the home and not the workplace (which for many was Liverpool). This pride in the place of residence was invaluable to the conduct of municipal government. 'Local self government calls into play knowledge of one's fellow man...We observe men clearly in small communities...A small town...is human.'⁵¹ The criticism aimed at the Liverpool City Council was that so few of its members lived in (or in some instances even near) the wards

⁴⁹ King John was especially significant in local affairs because he had granted Liverpool's own Charter in 1207.

⁵⁰ Bootle Times, 3 January 1903.

⁵¹ ibid.

which they represented. Another check to the ruling body was removed by relaxing its accountability to its constituents. In 1907, of 137 members of Liverpool City council, 25 lived in the wards they represented, 50 lived outside the city limits and 44 lived in the six richest residential wards. It is still more revealing that of 80 aldermen and councillors representing working-class wards, only eight lived in the wards they represented and 53 lived in the six richest residential wards⁵². Hampson himself was a councillor for St. Domingo ward in Everton, but lived in prosperous Aigburth. Bootle felt justified in making the stock comparison between a vital, smaller community and a vast soulless city.

It would not be true to say however, that all of Bootle society had united around its Corporation. It was actually the support of some of the most important commercial interests in the borough for annexation that had encouraged the development of a defence of the charter which insisted on its popular credentials. More than half of Bootle's rateable value was drawn from the docks, railways and businesses of the borough, and, although the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board remained neutral until the Local Government Board inquiry, there were powerful voices in the commercial community who aligned themselves with Liverpool. Charles Lancaster from the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce (which included Bootle businessmen) noted in the Liverpool Daily Post, 'It is said that a large majority of the inhabitants of Bootle do not want to be incorporated with Liverpool. This may or may not be so, but the people who pay the bulk of the rates do desire to join Liverpool...ratepayers of the magnitude of the Grain Storage Company and the White Star Line are in favour.'⁵³

Since there was a sizeable amount of commercial rateable value which was in support of Liverpool, the Bootle tactics necessitated the development of a distinction between residential and commercial ratepayers. The Bootle Corporation tried to mobilise mass ratepayer support by elaborating a concept of community which was attractive to a wide base, enshrining local

⁵² A.L. Lowell, The Government of England, London, 1908, p.156.

⁵³ Liverpool Daily Post, 7 January 1903.

self-government and freedom rather than the dictates of commerce at its centre. Therefore, the significance of residential ratepayers and of popular participation in the image of the community was enhanced at the expense of local business interests. In order to exploit the need for consent as effectively as possible, the Bootle Corporation came to portray its mandate as based on numerical support rather than on its ability to represent the wishes of those with the largest stakes in the town in terms of property.

A mass meeting of protest was held on 10 January with all trades and labour organisations invited to take part in the proceedings.⁵⁴ The Corporation also organised a vote amongst burgesses, ratepayers and householders on the 'independence' issue.⁵⁵ The result was that 95% of those who replied supported the position of the Bootle Corporation, providing evidence of a lack of consent to Liverpool's plans which could be pointed to when the Local Government Board Inquiry opened on 14 January.

The Local Government Board Inquiry and the Select Committee's decision

The inquiry was presided over by Mr. H.H. Law, who had supervised the inquiry into Garston's future the year before.⁵⁶ The major difficulty confronting Liverpool was the matter of consent, and it appears that the Parliamentary Committee, operating through the Town Clerk had created and funded 'mushroom' organizations to engineer some semblance of

⁵⁴ Liverpool Daily Post, 9 January 1903.

⁵⁵ ibid.

⁵⁶ The account of the proceedings of the Inquiry is taken from the daily report in the Liverpool Daily Post between 15 and 19 January 1903.

support for the city's proposals to impress Mr. Law. These organizations were swiftly exposed under cross-examination. Their chairmen showed themselves to be ignorant of when they had been founded, of how many members they had and, most damagingly of all, of what their precise titles were!⁵⁷

Despite these setbacks Liverpool pulled off a coup on the last day of the inquiry. The Dock Board withdrew their opposition to the Liverpool application. At a conference the previous day, the Corporation had agreed to freeze the rates on the whole dock estate for the next fifteen years if the provisional order for incorporation were granted.⁵⁸ As the Liverpool Council spent more and more in attempting to secure the extension, it was becoming less obvious what the concrete benefits for the city might be. In the words of a Bootle surveyor, Thomas Taylor Wainwright, 'I have not considered the matter from the point of view of Liverpool, but I cannot see in my own mind where the advantage would come in, save in the name of 'Liverpool'. It would enable them to say, possibly, that it is the second city of the Empire (laughter).'⁵⁹

The Bootle Times pondered at the end of the inquiry 'how long the ratepayers of the city of Liverpool, who seem to be no more considered than puppets in a show, will submit in silence to having their burdens increased for the honour and glory of a few leaders of the city council?'⁶⁰ The Liverpool Parliamentary Committee could justifiably be accused of having acted beyond its powers during the inquiry. However, Hampson's deal with the Dock Board, struck without consulting the City Council, seemed vindicated when Mr. Law ruled in favour of Liverpool. Bootle's next step was to emphasise that the case would establish a precedent. An appeal to tradition could bolster its case and could widen the issues involved in order to

⁵⁷ Liverpool Daily Post, 16 January 1903.

⁵⁸ Liverpool Daily Post, 19 January 1903.

⁵⁹ ibid.

⁶⁰ Bootle Times, 24 January 1903.

attract support from other threatened municipalities in contesting the provisional order in Parliament.

Local support continued to be canvassed for the next stage of the struggle. Councillor A.W. Short wrote an article for the Bootle Times suggesting that 'the working men of Bootle feel that now they are directly represented and are in touch with, and taking a part in civic administration and that they are free to have hopes and ideals for the future which they may reasonably hope to see realized.' He indicated 'The futility of almost every effort to secure direct labour representation in Liverpool.'⁶¹ Short warned 'little will it benefit the workingman to be able to boast that he belongs to the second largest city in the Empire. The bigger it is the less he counts.'

He took the essentials of Bootle's opposition- the lack of municipal institutions, the unrepresentative nature of the City Council and its lack of accountability and the impossibility of sustaining a vibrant municipal political life- and cast them in a new form which turned class consciousness against Liverpool. Local patriotism was to be understood as indispensable to the ambitions of the labour movement. As well as involving such attractive principles as freedom and self-government around which the whole community could rally, the question of the independence of Bootle had a class resonance. It would protect the material benefits which were of special significance to working men and provide a forum for their opinions and aspirations. The annexation of Bootle, it was inferred, would have the effect of removing working-class representation in civic affairs.

Just as the part played by the labour movement in Liverpool was placed under scrutiny, so was the city's attitude to its Irish population. At a Town Council meeting, Mr. P. Regan demanded enquired

⁶¹ Bootle Times, 14 February 1903.

What had Liverpool ever done for the Irish people living in it? Nothing, they were to be found in the slums in Liverpool, whereas in Bootle they had never been so badly treated as they were in the greater city. What had the Irish population of Liverpool to be proud of? Nothing. The Town Council of Liverpool had never done anything for the Irish people.⁶²

While Bootle's spokesmen were trying to damage Liverpool's image and to break up identification with the city by activating categories such as ethnicity and class, efforts were underway to cement community feeling within the borough. The Bootle Times reported on a series of civic 'At Homes' held by the Mayor for the ratepayers of Bootle. Speaking at the Bootle Workingmen's Conservative Association, Councillor Oversby transmitted a request from the Mayor for its members to attend the events 'in force with their wives or sisters, and thereby assist him in making the series very successful.'⁶³ Consequently, when the Bootle Times reproached the Liverpool citizens for 'living in a fool's paradise...worshipping at the shrine of Hampson and Co., making sacrifices which will keep them groaning for years', it could announce in the same issue that 'The Mayor and Mayoress...have brought to a conclusion a series of Civic At Homes by which means every ratepayer or resident in the various wards of the borough has had an opportunity of enjoying Town Hall hospitality.'⁶⁴

In May the paper noted that the promise made to the Dock Board at the inquiry had become a source of controversy. It jeered 'it seems that Liverpool has promised to do something which they cannot perform and if they attempt to secure a clause giving them that power the Toxteth Board of Guardians, the Liverpool Select Vestry and the West Derby Guardians will oppose them might and main.'⁶⁵ The latter bodies had complained that the promise to the Dock Board could not be held to include the poor rate, as this was their responsibility.

⁶² Bootle Times, 7 February 1903.

⁶³ Bootle Times, 21 February 1903.

⁶⁴ ibid.

⁶⁵ Bootle Times, 16 May 1903.

Attempting to accentuate class divisions, it mused

*it is all very well for the local magnates, who live in beautiful rural surroundings miles from the City, to waive the question of rates and remit thousands to a body well able to pay them, but where is the consideration for the toilers who cannot, even by means of cheap tramways get beyond the city boundaries?*⁶⁶

The charge against the City Council was that they did not share in the experiences of other ratepayers because of their geographical separation by residence and their distinct social and economic status.

This perspective, with its damaging perceived image of civic pride, jarred with the intended image of municipal government in Liverpool. The Bootle Times maintained

*Liverpool has nothing but pride to boast about...Freedom of discussion is impossible in the Council. By an intimate knowledge of an intricate set of standing orders, by an ingenious use of technicalities, and by party tricks and dodges, anything can be defeated and anything passed which is desired by the few who rule the board.*⁶⁷

A City Council meeting in June did little to dispel such allegations. During the meeting, the question of the terms which Liverpool was offering to Bootle's northern neighbour Waterloo were discussed. Waterloo had initially remained neutral on the question of amalgamation but had been persuaded to agree to join Liverpool. This was a significant victory for the City Council, since it strengthened its hand in applying for the annexation of Bootle which lay in between the city and the Waterloo. However, the meeting highlighted differences in the Council concerning the terms which were offered.

Hampson hoped to silence any dissent by arguing that the Parliamentary Committee had been given the freedom to negotiate a settlement. 'Now that the matter came before them for

⁶⁶ ibid.

⁶⁷ ibid.

confirmation he asked that they would say 'When Liverpool's prestige is concerned we must do our best to give the Committee this authority.'⁶⁸ Dr. Permewan lamented that

the Council were being in a way dragooned into not opposing this proposal so bitterly as they would have done otherwise, because they were told that they would prejudice the cause of Liverpool before the House of Commons...It was an extravagance which could not be prolonged for very long without resulting in something like financial disaster to the city (Hear, hear).⁶⁹

The Select Committee (chaired by Colonel Welby) represented the final step towards a settlement. It commenced its investigation on 23 June, and Liverpool's case continued to emphasise the commercial arguments which H.H. Law had been swayed by. However, the chief problem in proving the commercial case was to find concrete evidence of obstruction by Bootle, rather than simply to repeat the opinion that the two municipalities would be better governed as one. Charles Lancaster, for instance, spoke of his support for the movement 'of the Corporation to include Bootle. There is no feeling in it, it is one simply of a pure business character.' However he could submit no example to the Committee of how Bootle had constituted a commercial obstacle.⁷⁰

The Select Committee assigned a far greater importance to consent in coming to a decision. On 7 July, Welby overturned the amalgamation. The Committee stated that the principle of mutual consent could 'only be overridden in the case of unsatisfactory administration or if it were proved that separate municipal existence were opposed to the interests of "the community at large."' Neither of these conditions had been met in this instance.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Bootle Times, 13 June 1903.

⁶⁹ ibid.

⁷⁰ City Extension (Bootle). Select Committee Proceedings. Parliamentary Proceedings and Local Government Order and Bill.,pp. 43 and 45.

⁷¹ Liverpool City Council Proceedings 1902/03, p.1758.

The Aftermath

Bootle has won! And at the words the pulse of the borough throbbed fiercely as the pent up feelings of the populace found vent in frenzied cheers...The decoration of private residences and shops was meanwhile entered into with zeal by the occupants, and even in the poorer quarters of the borough, flags, banners and patriotic devices were freely displayed...One of the most comical devices was that adorning the front of a house in Oriel road, it consisting of a Liver trimmed with crepe and bearing above its head the following inscription:- 'No flowers by request'. The Corporation steam roller which was at work in this road was quickly decorated with flags.⁷²

Addressing an excited crowd, the mayor, W.H. Clemmey, reminded Bootleians that 'they owed that due allegiance to the great God of Battles, who had decreed in days past, and was still with them that day, in their hour of distress, and had seen them, through his Divine Providence, successfully through the trying ordeal (Cheers).⁷³ Homemade postcards celebrated Bootle's victory (see *figure 3*). Unless attention is paid to the images which were developed and deployed, much of the depth of feeling which would cause bunting to be strewn over a steam roller or a mayor to invoke the avenging God of the Old Testament cannot be understood.

The Bootle Times gave its opinion on the reasons for the borough's success noting that 'Bootle took a plebiscite of its people' whereas the Liverpool Council 'dared not to submit their iniquitous proposals to its (Liverpool's) people and simply allowed the fame of the City to be dragged into the mire in order to please a few ambitious men.'⁷⁴ The struggle had

⁷² Bootle Times, 11 July 1903.

⁷³ ibid.

⁷⁴ ibid.

Awful Calamity.
A Liver (*Rara avis*) was found on the border
of Bootle swollen to an enormous size having
swallowed a tramway route.
Although large doses of community of
interest were administered, the bird
died on Tuesday the 1st of July 1903.
Funeral procession to night at 6.30,
headed by the Mayor & corporation of Bootle

'AN AWFUL CALAMITY', c. 1903

The sad story about the death of a Liver found on the border of Bootle and Liverpool.

The homemade comic postcard was produced by photographing the chalked details that had been written on a blackboard.

Does anybody know the origin of this story?

Figure 3- A home-made postcard of Bootle's triumph. One of the sources of contention during the dispute was Liverpool's intention to build a tramway along Balliol Road in a residential area of Bootle.

Source: Woolley, op. cit..

encouraged a view of the borough in which the popular will was afforded a central place ahead of commercial interests. The social life and municipal spirit of Bootle had been boosted by the need to propagate an image of the community with which many could identify, so that the numerical superiority of ratepayers against amalgamation could help to offset the weight of rateable value in favour of the scheme.

In Liverpool there was a backlash against the amalgamation. The Daily Post suggested 'it would have added to the greatness of Liverpool, and perhaps placed it on an equality in point of population with Glasgow, but at a very high, and to existing ratepayers scarcely a fair, price.'⁷⁵ The question of the substance of the civic image of the city had been raised. A vital consideration in this sphere was the degree of accountability which the City Council had to the ratepayers. Now freed from the need to uphold a common front and doubtless hoping to distance themselves from a failed enterprise which had cost £12,404 8s 4d, more and more councillors expressed their disagreement with the policy of expansion.

The Select Committee's decision had national implications. In their survey of local government in England, published in 1903, Redlich and Hirst noted that 'all attempts of larger corporations to absorb smaller ones against their will have been unsuccessful'. They added, 'the case of Liverpool and Bootle is very much in point.'⁷⁶ The Municipal Journal argued that the refusal to allow the extension revealed a conflict between the central institutions responsible for municipal incorporation and amalgamation.

The decision of the committee is important, and if the grounds upon which it was given are generally followed, a serious obstacle will be placed in the way of what is known as the amalgamation movement...The committee's grounds of refusal are not those upon which is founded the policy of the Local Government Board in regard to these matters. All proposals for borough extensions are opposed for some reason or other, and non-consent is not considered a conclusive factor against annexation. The Local Government Board approved the change for (1) geographical reasons and (2)

⁷⁵ Liverpool Daily Post, 8 July 1903.

⁷⁶ J. Redlich and F. Hirst, Local Government in England, London, 1903.

*because it considered that there was a community of interest between the two boroughs.*⁷⁷

As Jose Harris has suggested, British society at this time was fiercely variegated and local and 'the preservation of local autonomy and custom was seen as a quintessential feature of British national character and culture...local communities were represented by local authorities that were seen as something more than convenient administrative subdivisions of a centralised state.'⁷⁸

In Liverpool, the northern extension scheme had shown how the image of the city could be used to bolster the power of a particular faction within the Council. In this instance Hampson and the Parliamentary Committee had attempted to impose unity by insisting on the need for concerted action if Liverpool was to outstrip Glasgow as the 'second city of the Empire.' The elections of November 1903 saw Hampson lose his seat on the Council, after a campaign in which his opponent drew attention to how costly the failure to incorporate Bootle had been.⁷⁹

The desire for aggrandisement was not unique to Liverpool. In 1926, E.D. Simon suggested that 'if Salford and Stretford, which are entirely dependent on Manchester, were absorbed, Manchester would have a population of over a million and take her rightful place as the second city of Empire.'⁸⁰ Simon claimed that such a distinction might enhance the quality of the city's administration, for 'Manchester would be a very great city...it is to be hoped that civic pride would be stimulated among the whole body of citizens and that the very best men

⁷⁷ Municipal Journal, Vol. 2, 10 July 1903, p.640.

⁷⁸ J. Harris, Private Lives, Public Spirit, Oxford, 1993, p. 14 -18.

⁷⁹ Hampson was promptly raised to the Lord Mayoralty by the Conservatives and was subsequently knighted when Edward VII visited the city to lay the foundation stone of the Anglican Cathedral.

⁸⁰ E.D.Simon, A City Council from within, London, 1926, p.201.

would consider it an honour to serve as members of the governing body of the second city of the Empire.⁸¹

However, Manchester had been careful not to mirror the Liverpool approach in absorbing Withington in 1904. The city established a Withington Committee with powers to administer services connected with public health. Simon explained, 'it was hoped that, in this way, while securing certain benefits by becoming citizens of Manchester, they would still to some extent preserve their local independence.'⁸² Manchester had doubtless learned from Liverpool's experience, but the central position which Hampson accorded to 'Greater Liverpool' in Conservative municipal policy had made such an arrangement unlikely between Liverpool and Bootle.

In Glasgow, however, the municipal authorities had emphasised the positive aspects of the city's expansion, so that 'civic patriotism and national patriotism were seen to be mutually reinforcing.'As the nineteenth century came to a close, Glasgow had found itself encircled by a ring of nine burghs, such as Partick and East Pollockshields. A 'propaganda onslaught' had emanated from the Glasgow Council Chambers as part of the campaign for 'Greater Glasgow'. The Town Clerk, J.D. Marwick had painstakingly collated evidence in favour of expansion and authored a Statement of Municipal Expansion in 1879. The need to 'articulate the positive dimensions of Glasgow's civic government played no small part in shaping perceptions of the "model municipality" which were to be such an integral feature of the city's public image by the turn of the century.'⁸³

⁸¹ ibid., p.220.

⁸² ibid., p.214.

⁸³ W.H. Fraser and I. Maver (eds.), Glasgow Vol. II 1830 to 1912, Manchester, 1996, p.465.