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CRAFT UNIONISM AND INDUSTRIAL CHANGE:
A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF VEHICLE BUILDERS UNTIL 1939.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME TWO.

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CHAPTER 7. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE IN THE NUVB.

PART 1. THE 1920s - THE NUVB AND THE SEMI-SKILLED.

Chapters 5 and 6 have analysed the increasing division of labour and the technical changes that affected substantial sections of the vehicle building trade. Part 1 of this chapter focusses on the NUVB's attempts in the 1920s to cater for the growing numbers of semi-skilled workers, mainly in the car industry.

A. SEMI-SKILLED MEMBERSHIP AND THE UNION'S RULE BOOK.

While in practice there was a wide definition of "skill" when it came to eligibility for membership, it was not until 1907 that this was partially recognised in the rules of the United Kingdom Society of Coachmakers. In that year "Painters who are not duly qualified liners, but who are satisfactory and competent workmen from the ground colour upwards" were allowed in under certain conditions.

This was a recognition of the increasing division of labour in painting whereby not all coach painters got the opportunity to do lining work. In 1913 this was extended to include brush hands, under the same conditions. As explained in chapter 2, outside of London, brush hands were "broken painters", while in London, painters were made from brush hands who proved themselves competent as liners and finishers. This concession did not extend any further at the time, and was possibly an acknowledgement by the

union of the increasing use of brush hands in the trade, particularly in the expanding motor industry. Brush hands were obviously technically skilled men, there was some movement of personnel between painters and brush hands, and local practice on demarcation varied.

It was not a particularly revolutionary move. No special contribution tables were devised, and brush hands had the same benefits as other members. Where the dividing line between the skilled man and his "assistant" was clearer - ie between the smith and his hammerman - there was no change. Calls at the 1913 Delegate Meeting for the admission of hammermen came to nothing.

Only one of the unions amalgamating in 1919 to form the NUVB, the tiny London Federal Union, recruited non-skilled workers. But, in the wake of the first world war, there was a lot of support for opening the union up to semi-skilled workers. The London branches of the UKSC wanted it open to "all trade societies catering for skilled and semi-skilled workmen" in the vehicle industries. Coventry branch wanted membership to include "semi-skilled workers, and boys entering the industry". Motherwell, Glasgow, and Springburn also wanted the new union to recruit semi-skilled workers, and the latter two branches included females in that category.¹ But, in general, references to the semi-skilled in resolutions for debate tended only to embrace those who had traditionally worked in the trade.

The Rules were altered in 1919 to read "All skilled and semi-skilled workers employed as", and the EC resolved that a notice be put in the Quarterly Report "that semi-skilled are now eligible to join us".² The

Wakefield branch had already interpreted the rule book to mean admitting hammermen and painters' labourers.³ A few months later, however, the EC was advising the London Central branch (the former main branch of the LPCTU) "to exercise care in the type of new members admitted".⁴ The admission book for this branch makes interesting reading as they recruited some obvious labourers.⁵ By the end of 1920, the EC decided that Head Office would return all entrance forms of labourers to the branches involved "with the notification that Rules do not provide for such".⁶

They added that "Rule 1, section 1 should be rigidly observed [labourers] should be of such standing in the trade as to be regularly employed as Smiths' Hammermen, or Painters' Labourers, who if competent in such employment come within the sphere of semi-skilled. It was not intended or desired by our Delegate Meeting that we should open up our ranks to the ordinary shop labourer who may not have a continuous position or standing in the trade."⁷ However, when Coventry branch asked whether they were allowed to recruit painters' labourers who were not eligible as brush hands, the executive further confused the issue by ruling that "when a Labourer is put to use a Brush he becomes a Brush Hand". They emphasised that it was not intended to accept labourers, semi-skilled painters being brush hands.⁸

The union leadership had already signalled its general attitude toward the organisation of non-skilled workers soon after a national overtime ban had been instituted early in 1920. Despite a national ballot backing the ban, the executive argued that "to check the influx of semi and other skilled men in our shops", it was far wiser to meet the demand for labour

by allowing overtime by their members, than to allow other workers to get established in the trade and have difficulty in removing them in the future.⁹

Soon afterwards, with the economic slump of the winter of 1920-21, the Journal reported that "the wisdom, or otherwise, of extending membership to the semi and unskilled sections of the trade" was being tested financially. "These grades in the trade are the earliest thrown out of employment" and were difficult to place elsewhere as they were used to sectional or repetition work. "In many cases [these semi-skilled men] may never find employment again in the trade." While the EC agreed that "for complete organisation in the shops we should make provision for every unit possible", the union had to consider its liabilities "and give consideration to the standard of efficiency before enrolment".¹⁰

As one of the traditional bases of craft unionism was support for members by unemployment benefit when necessary, some guarantee had always been needed that all members were competent to take any work available in their branch of the trade. If not, then a section of the membership would become a financial drag on the rest. This had been one of the arguments against admitting railway coachmakers in the nineteenth century.

During the early 1920s the possibility of a special membership section not eligible for unemployment benefit does not appear to have been considered. The executive's reaction to unemployment among semi-skilled members was to suggest a tightening up of membership requirements. The experience of the Workers' Union, which effectively bankrupted itself by

paying out unemployment benefit to all and sundry in the slump of 1920-21, was no doubt in their minds.¹¹ It was not until ten years later, in the context of an acute financial crisis, that a sufficient number of delegates were prepared to change the union's rules to create a special category of membership with no right to unemployment benefit. This later move (explored in part 2 of this chapter) failed to attract many of the semi-skilled workers for whom it was ostensibly designed. Unemployment benefits were attractive to men without a trade, and gave them a good reason to join a union. But, in the absence of such financial benefits, craft unions held little interest for the semi-skilled.

Nevertheless, the executive were unable to enforce a monolithic line. While Paisley branch, for example, turned down applications for membership by men who had no experience of the work, the same men were admitted by the neighbouring Glasgow branch, whose secretary argued "Glasgow members thought if men were employed, they should be in the union".¹² The General Secretary wrote to the Glasgow branch in 1923, suggesting that the union would have to seriously consider the possibility of stopping organising the semi-skilled, as the semi-skilled section had been a severe drain on resources. The general opinion of the Scottish District Council remained, however, in favour of organising such workers.¹³

By contrast, when the General Secretary visited Lincoln at the end of 1922, the local branch officials agreed they had "a large number of members who were a drag and should never have been admitted into membership".¹⁴ As part of the tightening-up process, the EC ruled in 1923 that they would not accept any semi-skilled workers in LGOC garages unless they obtained the

district rate of wages.¹⁵ And, a couple of years later, they refused the South West Area permission to recruit garage hands "unless they have proven experience as Fitters or Vicemen".¹⁵

It is difficult to establish how many "semi-skilled" workers were actually recruited into the union during the 1920s. There are a number of problems with union statistics. Annual lists of branch membership did not always include semi-skilled tables, and until mid-1926, quarterly reports of new members tabulated them only according to age. There were two categories of semi-skilled membership - those joining under 35 had to participate in the superannuation scheme, while those over 35, like members in Tables B, C, and D, could not. It is not clear whether the figures published in the 1920s included all semi-skilled, or only those over 35, though figures for the 1930s suggest the latter.

The numbers were fairly low, averaging perhaps about 600 throughout the decade (see table 7:1 at the end of this section). The increase from 1925 to 1926 probably reflects the accession of the Wheelwrights' membership. Otherwise there is no easily discernible pattern to semi-skilled membership. Comparison of annual branch lists shows regular changes in numbers, suggesting that the semi-skilled were a volatile group, either passing through the organisation and out again, and/or transferring to other benefit tables as their level of "skill" increased.¹⁷

Incredibly, Coventry branch, with its large car factory membership, did not have any semi-skilled table membership through the whole of the inter-war period. The first semi-skilled table members came in 1940 when members

were transferred from the Lowestoft branch.¹³ As the branch had a number of brush hands and possibly other semi-skilled members, then the policy must have been to recruit them into the skilled tables. This would have been consistent with the attitude of the branch secretary throughout that period (see chapter 8), and is further testament to the wide local variation in how national rules were interpreted.

The whole question of the eligibility of semi-skilled workers for NUVB membership took on an added importance once a national ballot in 1920 had accepted grading of workers in the engineering industry, and it to this subject that attention will next be devoted.

Table 7:1 Total semi-skilled (over 35?) membership, 1921-1931

January each year.	1921	-	686
	1922-24	-	no figure given
	1925	-	383
	1926	-	602
	1927	-	463
	1928	-	605
	1929	-	806
	1930	-	729
	1931	-	706

B. GRADING OF LABOUR IN THE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY.

The unions that merged to form the NUVB in 1919 had never countenanced any degrading of the work of their woodworkers (bodymakers and finishers after the advent of the motor car) or trimmers. Once mass production of motor cars started, then sectionalisation of labour was only a matter of time (and has been discussed in chapter 5). Sunbeam of Wolverhampton used jigs extensively even before 1914, and Wolseley immediately after the war had sectionalised bodymaking to some extent; but in both these cases NUVB officials claimed that only skilled labour was employed.¹⁹

However, in mid-1919 the union came up against the sectionalisation of work, using semi-skilled labour, at the Austin factory. The company claimed that they had used some semi-skilled workers before the war, and cited 8 men who had been used on the assembling of seats, and fixing of floorboards. But the issue went much deeper than an argument about pre-war practice. The union wanted the semi-skilled men removed as it claimed that all processes in bodybuilding were fully skilled, even though it acknowledged that the use of jigs dispensed with "a certain proportion of the initiative and skill".

At a local conference the employers' chairman told NUVB Midland organiser Bowen that the expansion of the trade made it necessary to introduce semi-skilled men, as there would not be the number of skilled men available. No one could necessarily have predicted, at that time, how quickly the motor industry would expand, nor how sustained that expansion

would be, given the low levels of production before the first world war; and Bowen pointed out that there were about 4,000 union members still serving with the forces who were potentially available to the industry. The union had faced the problem of labour shortage in the past, but it had invariably been a temporary phenomenon.

On this occasion, with the recent practice of dilution in munitions in the first war fresh in his mind, Bowen made a very important suggestion concerning the labour shortage. While the union would try to find skilled men, and was also prepared to discuss the question of apprentices coming into the industry, "should occasion require that semi-skilled men should be introduced into the establishment because of our failure to supply the skilled men....we should be prepared to face that reasonably providing we can get satisfaction with regard to the method of introduction, [and] the rate of wages to be paid, in order to safeguard the interests of the fully skilled men."²⁰

In the absence of a specific agreement dealing with the issue, the union could not stop Austin going ahead with its plans. The issue was a national one, and the engineering employers wanted to resolve it nationally. This was to happen within the next year, with the National Woodworkers Agreement of May 1920.

The National Woodworkers' Agreement

Five of the unions represented on the Joint Industrial Council for the Vehicle Building Industry had already approached the engineering employers

in February 1919 to request a conference to discuss wages and conditions for vehicle building workers employed in federated establishments.²¹ After two preliminary conferences, a further six took place in a ten week period at the end of the year, where the employers put forward their proposals, followed by another three which finalised an agreement.²²

The employers first raised the issue of grading of labour in October 1919,²³ proposing 3 grades for the coach and motor side of the industry.²⁴ A number of arguments arose concerning particular trades, but the main point of contention was that, apart from skilled labour, there should be a second grade which contained "body hands" and "trimming hands", as well as the undisputed brush hands, and a third grade for painters' labourers.²⁵

This introduction of grading into bodymaking and trimming was the main innovation. The NUVB negotiators eventually partly conceded this, and Assistant General Secretary, AESmith, asked the employers in January 1920 to insert the following clause in the road vehicle building section of the proposed agreement: "To meet the expansion of the industry it is agreed that semi-skilled men may be employed on repetition and jig work in the following grades for a period of 2 years following the date of this agreement or for such other period as may be mutually agreed upon in view of the state of employment and the demands of the trade".²⁶

Smith saw this concession as a temporary one, on a par with war-time dilution. The employers did not agree, and the union was forced to concede in conference that it was prepared to accept a Grade 2 on the motor side, but not on railway carriage work.²⁷ During the last three conferences,

there was some movement by the employers which tidied up the proposals from the union's point of view. The final agreement only had 2 grades; the top one, being deemed "skilled" at the union's insistence, comprised body builders, trimmers, body finishers, coach smiths and painters all on the same rate, along with mounters and coach fitters at one penny per hour less, in a Grade 1 (b). The second grade (designated "semi-skilled") contained mounters and vice hands who could be transferred to Grade 1(b); "men" engaged on certain body work and trimming; brush hands who were ½d per hour below the others, and painters' labourers even lower.²⁰

Much negotiation went on regarding the exact form of words specifying the work of each occupation. For several occupations in the top grade the employers had proposed in December that they had to be "capable of and required to do all" work in their trade. This was amended to "capable of and *may be* required to do all", although the union wanted the word "all" to be substituted by "any", to stop employers from not paying the skilled rate where the job had been sectionalised.

Women's labour was also a contentious issue. While this will be dealt with fully in the next section, it is worth noting that when the term "hands" was dropped for body and trim work, union negotiators insisted that the word "men" was used as a replacement. They succeeded in winning the word they wanted, but this did not commit the employers to only employing men on these operations as the union had hoped.

While negotiations were continuing, NUVB and Wheelwrights' members were balloted in May 1920, the ballot paper containing the following

interesting comment: "The pronounced shortage of skilled labour in all branches of our trade has led to a demand for a Grade 2 in several districts; these men are actually now at work, and we are bound to put before you our frank view that with the increase of sectionalised work, standardisation, and repetition assembly of parts, particularly in the Motor and Transport Vehicle Building sections, there is grave reason to suppose that were we at once to withdraw all labour from the establishments affected there would be no difficulty in adapting partly trained male and female labour on to certain parts of our work and eventually seriously undermine our standard conditions."²⁹

Despite this, the NUVB membership initially returned a negative vote.³⁰ However, while the ballot was being held, the employers made a number of important concessions, and the revised agreement was later ratified by ballot of NUVB members alone.³¹ The union executive had been in a stronger bargaining position than it realised, for, unbeknown to them, the Coventry engineering employers had contacted the EEF in April asking for an agreement to be ratified as soon as possible. There was considerable unrest among Coventry vehicle builders, and the employers were concerned that output could be seriously affected as there was no definite agreement to hold the men.³² But, while the union were undoubtedly in a strong position in the key Coventry district, the general expansion of the industry across the country meant the leadership did not feel strong enough nationally to resist a semi-skilled grade. From their point of view, the damage was limited by agreement on various qualifications.

Grade 2(a) workers would start at 4d per hour below the district skilled rate, and advance at ½d per hour every six months until reaching 2d below the rate. Once any man had reached a certain rate, that rate could not be reduced in the event of the man being transferred on to a lower class of work. The union had the right to raise "at any time" the question of the number of men employed on the second grade, and this would be dealt with through the normal disputes procedure. Regarding railway carriage, tramcar and bus building, while the same rates applied for this work, notice had to be given by the employers of the introduction of any semi-skilled men and the union could then challenge this in procedure.³³

During the negotiations, some of the union's officials were alive to the importance of not taking a negative attitude toward those semi-skilled workers coming into the industry. London organiser MacKay argued that if members recruited them, then the apparent weakness of officially recognising their place in the industry could ironically strengthen the union's position.³⁴ Midland organiser Bowen argued that "A careful investigation and a bold attempt at solution will be better than refusing to face the issue, and afterwards find that we are unable either to fight or control."³⁵ With the ratification of the agreement, Bowen was also quick to point out "unless these men are taken into our Branches we are laying up a legacy of future trouble, and that not so much with the employers, as possibly other Unions."³⁶ Very prophetic words.

The woodworkers' agreement, of course, only applied to federated engineering firms, and the semi-skilled grade applied particularly to the motor manufacturing firms, the most important of which were Austin and

Wolseley in Birmingham, and Daimler, Standard, Rover, Armstrong-Siddeley, Humber and Hillman in Coventry.³⁷ Vauxhall withdrew from the EEF in 1921,³⁸ and neither Ford nor the Morris works at Cowley were federated.

The 1920 agreement was further revised in 1922. Problems with the payment of workers building aircraft had led to a special aircraft section being incorporated in the National Woodworkers Agreement in 1922, and the parties agreeing to bring the rest of the agreement up to date. In the process, the NUVB negotiated some important improvements. The clause saying that skilled men may be required to do "all work" was changed to "any work" in line with the union's earlier demand. Further, a semi-skilled worker, having reached the top rate of Grade 2, could be promoted to Grade 1 by mutual agreement. And, finally, once someone had reached a particular rate, they would carry that rate "wherever employed".³⁹ The local Coventry association reacted bitterly over this last point, complaining that they had not been represented, and that this clause "introduces an entirely new principle by fixing a man's rate, as it were, for all time, irrespective of his ability or the work upon which he is employed".⁴⁰

Despite these apparent paper victories, the union's position was still vulnerable, shown by two examples, both in 1922. The union complained that Vickers' Crayford factory employed women on painting, spraying, finishing, and other work, while an unlimited number of boys had been introduced on assembling bodies. But at a local conference the employers had said that there was no breach of the agreement "if it is found that boys and girls or females are employed in this industry". This was undoubtedly true, as the agreement only dealt with men's wages, but did not specify that only men

could be employed. The union had already come up against this the previous year when the EC eventually "resolved that we notify branches that the employment of women in engineering shops was contrary to anything we ever agreed and must in all cases be firmly resisted."⁴¹

The other issue was at Wolseley in Birmingham, where the firm's Adderley Park works still employed only skilled men, while the Ward End works was using mainly semi-skilled. When unemployed NUVB members had applied at Ward End, they had been only offered work at the semi-skilled rate. The union took the opportunity under the agreement to raise the issue locally of the numbers of Grade 2 men, but could not stop Wolseley offering work at the semi-skilled rate if it so wished. One of the employers cogently argued that "the class of man who should be employed upon a particular class of work should, as far as I can see, be determined not by the fact of whether he is skilled or semi-skilled, but by whether the class of work to be performed is skilled or semi-skilled."⁴²

But as late as mid-1923, the union claimed that only Austin and Wolseley had so far really taken advantage of the semi-skilled grade, excepting its use for brush hands and by those firms which had already employed semi-skilled labour before the 1920 agreement.⁴³ At the end of 1920, Wolseley had changed its methods in the trimming department and replaced skilled labour with semi-skilled workers, each assisted by a boy. These workers had joined the National Union of General Workers, which subsequently agreed with the company in 1923 to accept 15% reductions on jobs where boys helped adult trimmers. Later that year, the NUVB started to get a reasonable number of members at the company's Ward End works, following a threatened

strike in support of four "youths" in the trim shop who had been dismissed in a dispute over piecework prices. The NUGW members in the trim shop eventually joined the NUVB which repudiated the 1923 agreement.⁴⁴

At the other main user of semi-skilled labour, Austin, there was a short strike concerning the agreement early in 1924. Because the firm could not get skilled labour immediately it was needed, it introduced semi-skilled labour on a section of the body work that had previously been done by skilled NUVB members. Despite the procedure agreement, all the bodymakers stopped work one afternoon; when the company refused to see a deputation, they did not go back the next morning. The company then relented, saw a deputation and a satisfactory return to work was negotiated. Austin agreed not to use semi-skilled men beyond previously agreed limits, and that if the union could supply 12 skilled men, there would be no further use of semi-skilled on certain sections. Finally, they pledged that any future rearrangement in sectional work would only be adopted after consultation and working agreement with the shop committee.⁴⁵

Problems were also developing elsewhere. At the Soho, Birmingham, works of Morris Commercial Cars a works conference in 1925 dealt with the proportions of semi-skilled to skilled workers on the assembly of truck bodies. The Birmingham engineering employers suggested that the firm should put 2 or 3 semi-skilled men to 1 skilled man in each gang, but the NUVB did not want such an agreement, which left the firm free to use semi-skilled men as it saw fit.⁴⁶

The union was more successful at the smaller firms of Belsize Motors in Manchester and Leyland Motors. At the former, following its effective closure in 1923, there was an attempt to introduce semi-skilled labour on its re-opening in early 1924. A six-hour strike was sufficient to get the management to withdraw this innovation, the Manchester organiser commenting, "they only wanted to get the thin end of the wedge in, and it would have developed". This victory, however, was short-lived as the firm closed down a year later.⁴⁷

Leyland were paying trimmers less than the skilled rate for cushion work on buses. The NUVB took this all the way to a central conference in 1924, claiming that the national agreement "grades the workmen and not the work". They failed to convince the employers on this occasion but were more successful with the coach painters. The company wanted to sectionalise the painting operations, to deal with a shortage of fully skilled labour. They claimed they had done this in every other shop in the works, but the union argued that it "would have eventually meant de-grading, and introduction of semi-skilled labour". Consequently, the whole NUVB membership in the factory came out on strike for just over a week in January 1925, before the company agreed to a compromise, which maintained the skilled painter's rate for all coach painting operations.⁴⁸

The union had already approached the EEF in 1923 about changing the national agreement. High on the list of changes was the abolition of the semi-skilled grade for bodymakers and trimmers. The NUVB argued that this grade had been introduced to deal with an acute shortage of skilled labour, and alleged that some firms were dismissing fully qualified men and offering

them re-employment on grade 2 wages on work identical to what they did on grade 1. As they claimed necessary skilled labour was now available, the union wanted to change the agreement to stop this abuse.⁴⁹ After two conferences the employers still refused to concede the issue. As a result, the union changed its tactic at the next conference in October, asking for an automatic progression of grade 2 labour at six monthly intervals right through to the grade 1 rate, thus abolishing the 2d per hour differential for those with 4 years experience in the industry.⁵⁰

The federation's management board had met, meanwhile, and Colonel Cole of Humber had argued the case for some concession. He estimated that nationally there were some 5,000 NUVB members employed under the national woodworkers' agreement (probably an overestimate), while the union was some 25,000 strong and could finance a strike. In Coventry there were some 1,100 coachmakers working for federated firms, and another 900 for non-federated (both probably underestimates). If the 1,100 were locked out, Cole felt certain they could be absorbed elsewhere as there was a distinct shortage of skilled coachmakers. One managing director in Coventry had told him, "if these men are locked out he would never see them again even if the dispute were settled".

Cole maintained that as a fight with the union had to be avoided "at all costs", a concession was necessary. He suggested increasing the maximum grade 2 rate for bodymakers and trimmers by 1d, thus bringing it up to only 1d below the skilled rate. This would not be very costly as there were a limited number in the second grade. He was not, however, suggesting an automatic progression all the way to the skilled rate, as some men would

not be capable of the work. The employers' chairman was in basic agreement arguing "The grading system ought to be preserved at all costs. It may be we shall have to pay something for maintaining that principle."⁵¹

At the fourth conference with the union in January 1925 the employers put forward their idea of meeting the union half-way. Assistant General Secretary A.E. Smith was not displeased, but still argued that the rate of progression should be maintained and that a man with 4 years experience in the trade should receive the full rate; and it was intimated that the employers' new grading proposals could not be recommended to the membership.⁵² At another conference in May the employers reminded the union that they were still awaiting a reply to the offer.⁵³ Because of the very complicated situation surrounding the national negotiations on wages the union did not reply on the grading issue, and the 2d per hour skilled differential over the semi-skilled still remained in the early 1950s.

Background to the 1924/25 negotiations

The negotiations over grading were dominated by a number of other issues, which probably account for the lack of progress. One of the union's claims was for a national wage advance, but the employers were not prepared to concede this as they were already in negotiations with other engineering unions over wages.⁵⁴ NUVB officials warned the employers that continued delay would make it impossible "to restrain the men in taking direct action", and finally NUVB members at Brush in Loughborough became "completely fed up", and in August 1924 started a strike for higher wage rates. In view of the circumstances, the union executive decided to

recognise the dispute, and even paid an extra five shillings per week benefit. The Coventry employers called it "guerilla warfare", and, in early October, the Federation threatened a lock-out of all NUVB members unless there was an immediate return to work. At a meeting with an EEF committee, the NUVB executive agreed, on condition that there was an immediate works Conference at Brush over piecework prices, and a resumption of negotiations on the national agreement, along with an undertaking that the unions could raise any question on this at the next conference.⁵⁵

After conferences in October and January over the national agreement, the NUVB attended a further conference with the employers in March over three main issues. One was the fact that in February there had been a mass meeting during working hours of all NUVB members working in Coventry. Coventry branch had demanded in January that the EC gave notice to terminate the national agreement from February unless there was progress on the wages application. When the EC refused this, the branch held a mass meeting which urged the EC to press ahead with some action if the next national conference was unsatisfactory (see chapter 8).

At the same time, the union was also involved in an embargo on work done by a federated firm, Vickers of Crayford, for a non-federated firm, Harper Bean of Dudley, with which it was in dispute. The EEF insisted that until the embargo of the alleged black work at Crayford was called off, they could not resume negotiations on a new agreement, whereupon the NUVB representatives intimated that they would be better off without any agreement with the Federation.⁵⁶ The next day the union's executive wrote officially to say that they were going to withdraw from the agreement.⁵⁷

The third issue came to the boil a few days later, when NUVB members at the Gloucester Railway Carriage & Wagon Company went on strike demanding the same basic rates paid to their counterparts in Birmingham. Again the employers intimated that unless union officials got the men back to work, action would be taken against the union; support for this line was not unanimous, and Daimler contacted the Federation, saying that the Crayford and Gloucester disputes should not lead to a general lock-out.⁵⁹ The Federation then met the three main employers' associations in vehicle building and made an arrangement whereby each organisation agreed not to take men employed by other organisations in the event of trouble arising from the union's demands against the various employers' organisations.⁶⁰

The union, taking advantage of the Gloucester strike, as a bargaining tactic, again paid extra dispute benefit to sustain the stoppage; and then admitted to the employers that their notice of termination of agreement was more in the form of a protest, and they hoped that negotiations would resume if they settled the Gloucester issue.⁶⁰ However, by the time the Gloucester dispute was settled in late March, the union had already agreed to impose a national embargo on overtime from the end of the month. This lasted a week before it was lifted on the understanding the employers resumed negotiations.⁶¹ But the union's continuing failure to make any headway on a separate wage agreement, appears to have led to an abandonment of their grading claims.

Postscript

After these negotiations in the mid-1920s, there were no further discussions on the agreement at national level until the early 1950s when the employers unsuccessfully attempted to revise it.⁶² By the mid-1930s, however, much of the labour required on the body side of the mass production shops was semi-skilled. Francis claimed that at Wolseley, the whole of car body production was done by semi-skilled labour, except for some trimming and finishing, and that similar practices prevailed at Rover and Standard in Coventry.⁶³ Despite this, certainly in Coventry, the union continued pushing for the skilled rate for as many of its members as possible (see chapter 8).

Austin, operating on a very large scale, was less enamoured of the agreement, and in 1932, the NUVB experienced problems with the firm not adhering to it in a number of respects. The company's position was that less skill was required, and that if the union stuck to a rigid interpretation of the agreement, that would force the firm to further intensify their skill-saving processes. The union did press on this occasion, but about 1935 Austin stopped observing the conditions of the agreement.⁶⁴

Outside of the engineering industry, the employers grouped under the UKJVB (coach trade) agreement unsuccessfully tried in both 1929 and 1930 to get the union to accept a specific semi-skilled grade other than that for brush hands, hammermen, and vicemen. The employers in the NFVT claimed that a substantial number of their member firms used semi-skilled labour on

assembling but there was no agreed rate for them. (The NEAVB, however, claimed they were not affected by this.) The union, chastened by its experience with the engineering employers, was determined not to concede on this issue, for fear of wider introduction of semi-skilled labour; while the employers, because of differences in the class of work, were not sufficiently united to push it any further at the time.

After accepting a 1d wage cut in the 1931-32 agreement, followed by 2 years without a national agreement, the union were forced into accepting a modified form of grading in 1934, under threat of negotiations breaking down again. This divided the existing grades into two groups, one of "Men engaged in the manufacture of Private Bodywork of the highest class", and the other "Men engaged in the manufacture of individual Private Bodywork (second grade) and on batch production; and in the manufacture and repair of Buses, coaches, and other Vehicles licensed to carry passengers", with skilled workers in the first group having a 1d per hour differential.

With still no specific rate for semi-skilled workers, the employers were free to carry on as before. When, later in 1934, the NUVB insisted that men at Duples working on seat-making and floor-fixing should get the skilled rate, the manager said he would discharge these men and put boys in their place, whereupon the union backed down.⁶⁵ It was not until after 1945, with an agreement on metal bodies, that the union conceded, on this work, the principle of grading of labour (see chapter 6).

C. FEMALE LABOUR.

Through the national woodworkers' agreement, the NUVB had in the early 1920s grudgingly recognised the presence of semi-skilled male workers in part of their trade, but there was greater hostility towards the gradually increasing numbers of female workers. Circumstances eventually persuaded a narrow majority at the 1931 rules revision to agree to admit women, a full eleven years before the AEU,⁶⁶ though the numbers involved were comparatively tiny.

Earlier, during the first world war, women had been employed extensively on aircraft production. But the bodywork of lorries and cars, and most trimming work were "not considered suitable for women" by employers. The work on lorry bodies was considered too heavy, and coachmaking "to require so much skill that in general it would not pay to employ women on this class of work".

There was a place for women, as even pre-war they had been used for some trimming work for railway carriages (see below), and they could be trained in a matter of weeks to do acetylene or electric welding. But, even though women presented an available pool of cheaper labour, employers in vehicle building areas were generally reluctant to exploit this. Austin, for example, although he had employed some 6,000 women at one point in the first war, was not happy. He "had set his face against any women being employed in his factory" before the first war, and while he thought the women had done the job well during the war "was frankly looking forward to

the employment of men in the factory after the war, and to its not being necessary to employ women".

Austin's motives were to some extent ideological, as "he thought it was a man's duty to do the hard work in an engineer's shop, and that there was other work for a woman to do for which she was more suited".⁶⁷ Whatever the true reasons were, there was very little employment of women in the vehicle building industries at the start of the inter-war period. Women were effectively confined to the trim shops, but even that involved union members throughout the 1920s, in a desperate, and partly successful attempt, to limit their spread. Women had worked on sewing machine work for a long time in the coachbuilding industry, and there are no recorded protests against this practice. The issue for the NUVB generally, and its male trimmers specifically, was that women should not go beyond work on sewing machines.

Women already worked extensively on preparing upholstery for trimmers to use for seats and cushions in the railway workshops by the first world war, and probably a lot earlier. Women were so engaged at Doncaster, Kilmarnock, Cowlaire, Swindon, and Stratford, for example.⁶⁸ At Wolverton, about 50 women and girls were doing this work in 1897, increasing to about 70 by 1914.⁶⁹ In this latter year, some 12 women were employed on sewing machines at Dukinfield.⁷⁰ About 150 women in total were also employed at Derby in 1898, and 80 at Newton Heath in 1900,⁷¹ though these two figures included women employed on polishing and linen work. During the first world war there was even a threatened strike by UKSC trimmers over the introduction of women into the carriage trimming department at Newton Heath.⁷²

Interestingly, when proposals for the first NUVB rule book were being debated in 1918-19, some branches pressed for the inclusion of women. Glasgow and Springburn branches wanted "all skilled and semi-skilled workers, male or female", while Saltley (which had stopped the introduction of women on trimming at Wolseley in 1912), Handsworth, and Wolverhampton proposed "that females should be admitted as members of the Society as machinists only".⁷³ Nothing came of this, as the majority probably saw the war-time dilution as a very temporary state of affairs.

Coventry

The union, though, soon faced the problem of female encroachment on to traditional male trimming jobs after the war in the motor car industry. Early in 1919 the Coventry NUVB branch contacted two firms about their use of female labour, and in July a meeting of 55 trimmers from 8 shops was held. The problem companies were seen to be Standard and Rover, and the meeting called for the "full re-establishment of pre-war conditions".⁷⁴ A local conference was held with the Coventry engineering employers in July, at which the union claimed that all trimming operations were fully skilled, except for machine stitching, which was accepted as women's work.

The employers argued that they had not departed from pre-war practice, as both Standard and Rover managers claimed women had done more than stitching in their companies before the war. At Standard it was claimed that women had been employed in about 1907 on cutting out, while at Rover women had been doing work on doors, and making leathers and fastening them on foot pedals. The NUVB official was prepared to admit that Rover was an

exception, arguing that all firms which had introduced women on to trim work during the war had since discharged them, apart from Standard.

The employers' position that a shortage of skilled trimmers necessitated the use of women led the union to retort that there were still about 1,000 trimmers serving with the forces, whom they were trying to get demobbed.⁷⁵ Standard, however, agreed not to proceed any further with females on trimming until they could prove a shortage of labour, and they would then hold a conference to consider the situation.⁷⁶ At this time the company were employing some 39 women at Leamington, mainly on doping (on aeroplanes) and stitching work which went to Canley.⁷⁷

Such a conference was held a few weeks later in Leamington, as a result of which it was believed that Standard would not introduce further female labour in trimming on any process other than that done pre-war, pending a national conference on the issue. But the company then wrote to the union that they wanted to transfer women from aeroplane work to the manufacture of cape cart hoods, stuffing cushions, and other upholstery work. Male trimmers at Canley struck on a Saturday morning, returning on the Monday to await the NUVB executive's support. The EC instructed members not to touch work done by females "as no practical coach trimmer would care to touch work which has been started by others", and gave permission to withdraw all members working at Standard, if necessary. Another local conference in Coventry was hastily arranged, where Standard agreed to only let women at Leamington do the work which women did at Canley before the war. Once again, of course, there was disagreement over exactly what this constituted, but, for the time being, further conflict was avoided.⁷⁸

Some two years later, in late 1921, women were reported on cutting out operations at Swift, the union finding some 18 women worked there, including 4 on cutting out work;⁷⁹ the latter were not removed, but the issue did not flare up again until 1926 (see below). No further problems were reported in Coventry until 1924 when it was discovered at Singers that as well as 65 male trimmers and 14 youths, there were 16 women on sewing machines, and 4 on pockets and flaps. The manager guaranteed not to place women on any other work, but the branch still requested they be removed from this work, probably without success. However, a few months later, at coachbuilders Cross & Ellis, after a general dispute, the firm agreed to remove a woman working on doors and pocket flaps.⁸⁰

In the early 1920s, the local branch experienced little trouble over the female labour issue in the federated Coventry firms. But the local engineering employers' association noted in 1923 that the number of women employed in coachbuilding was increasing considerably, particularly in trimming; and repeatedly encouraged member firms to go further along this path.⁸¹ The situation came to a head again in late 1925. Standard had dismissed a number of skilled trimmers, and sub-contracted the work to a local firm using only female labour (which reputedly employed as many as 200 women). They contended they had been giving out this work for 12 months, but the branch was dissatisfied with the prices being paid.⁸² At a local conference in January 1926, the union raised two points - first, that women should be confined to sewing machine work in federated firms; and, secondly, that this should also apply to sub-contractors, in order to stop the employers conceding the first point, and then evading it by sub-contracting work.

It was hardly surprising that no headway was made on the second point, but the employers also resisted the first point, citing the union's own admission that women had worked on certain trimming operations as early as 1912 at Rover.⁸³ A special meeting of all Coventry branch trimmers, held in February 1926, with about 200 attending, recommended that all members, and not just the trimmers, should be withdrawn from the affected firms. A special meeting was then called of all coachmakers working at the three affected firms - Standard, Rover, and Swift.⁸⁴ Over 200 attended this, voting by 130-79 to withdraw all labour,⁸⁵ and the EC agreed to support the branch in any action taken.⁸⁶

Interviews took place with the three firms. It was made clear to Standard that the only quarrel with them was their use of sub-contractors, as they were not then directly employing females to the detriment of skilled trimmers. Swift, however, were currently employing 7 female machinists, 8 on the cutting out of hoods and side curtains, and one junior on beading work, and the Midland organiser asked them to stand off the eight women on cutting out work; but the firm argued they had employed women on this since the Armistice. The biggest problem was Rover, where branch secretary Buckle suggested that all married women be removed from trimming and be replaced with skilled men. The branch currently had 7 unemployed trimmers, and he could guarantee getting more from the rest of the country. Rover was also asked to stop teaching women the work, and to gradually replace them by men as the opportunity arose. The management replied that there had been an acute shortage of male trimmers every year since the war, and only recently Armstrong-Siddeley had approached them for assistance in finding trimmers.⁸⁷

Rather than pursue the matter to a national conference, the branch decided to continue local negotiations. Subsequently, while the local employers' association were not prepared to advise taking the women off the contested operations, the organiser believed the employers' attitude suggested there would be no further trouble.²²

Because of the wider significance of the issue, the EEF called a meeting of its interested National Technical Committees in March 1926, which ruled that they could not uphold any claim that confined women to sewing machines. They also decided to survey the extent of female working in federated firms.²³ This inquiry showed that, as of January 1926, about 500 women were employed in the general trimming area by federated firms, including railway carriage, bus, tram, and aeroplane builders, as well as motor companies, though the majority of these women were sewing machinists. In Coventry, 5 of the federated firms employed about 110 - Rover 40, Humber 32, Standard 19, Swift 17, Triumph Cycles 3; while among the non-federated, Carbodies employed 5, Cross & Ellis 5, and Hancock & Warman 7. Rover was the area of greatest encroachment, as women trimmed all doors, finished off cushions, covered foot rests, and did some cutting out. This firm had employed 60 women in early 1914, and a few years later, at the time of the 1930 Bedaux strike, was employing 148 (see section D below); so the 1926 figure of 40 (and 43 in 1924) must have reflected Rover's policy of contracting out much of its bodywork at the time.

Elsewhere, Austin, which had informed the EEF it would accept no limitation on women in trimming except where the effort was too heavy, or the skill too great, was, with 144, the largest single employer of women in

coachbuilding areas. Their work included fitting up instrument boards, preparing and finishing side curtains, finishing silk blinds, preparing pockets and flaps, as well as jobs like French polishing.³⁰

Admission of women into the union

Despite these small-scale skirmishes in Coventry, there was some pressure building up to admit women into the union. Following a request in late 1924 from the Cardiff branch for the admission and organisation of women, the EC instructed the General Secretary to obtain information about women in the trade.³¹ Several months later Reading branch also requested the admission of women.³² But the EC's enquiry seemed to produce little interest, the Manchester District Council not deciding, for example, until September 1925 to ask all branch secretaries in the area to find out the numbers of women employed.³³

While the EC were waiting for replies to their enquiry, events were overtaking them. In Coventry, a small firm doing sub-contract trimming for Morris Bodies was approached by the union over its pay rates, with an eventual decision, in September 1925, to withdraw the NUVB members. "To our surprise 16 females [working on cushions] came out with our men, and ultimately we promised to give some financial support to the females." (After the dispute the branch committee agreed to pay the women 10s each from the branch incidental fund). After 4 working days out, the men settled for the same prices prevailing at Morris Bodies, and an increase was then negotiated for the women by the union.³⁴

This produced quite a jolt inside the union, but the EC at its next meeting deferred the issue of female membership, pending further information. At the next Scottish District Council meeting in December, EC member Milne argued that the question of admitting women was reaching a crisis, and organiser Symington was supported in his suggestion of opening a correspondence in the Journal on the subject. Even the Liverpool and Manchester District Councils, at a joint meeting, with delegates from 29 branches, declared in favour of organising all women in the industry into the union, and recommended the executive to explore this and submit its findings to the next rules revision meeting.⁹⁵

However, the enthusiasm for female membership appeared to be temporary, and was not aired again until the 1928 Delegate Meeting. Meanwhile, in Coventry, after the events of 1925-26, the employers were more circumspect. Varley, the local employers' secretary, advised the "undesirability" of member firms pressing the use of female labour in trimming, unless they were prepared to open a completely separate department, distinct from the male trimmers. Anticipating further problems, the Coventry employers' association asked the EEF in April 1927 to clarify the national policy on women on trimming work, and were told that the matter had apparently been allowed to go to sleep.⁹⁶ Later in the year the issue resurfaced, when women were taken on for cutting out work on Triumph cars, following their practice on side-cars. The Coventry association asked for a Management Board ruling, and wanted to know if the Federation would back them in the local practice of women working on trimming. The Management Board believed that the matter should develop, and if the union raised the issue, to allow a local conference. But despite local NUVB concern, the issue died.⁹⁷

When the Coventry branch came to consider rules revision in 1928, a sub-committee of nine proposed that in rule 1, section 1, defining the groups eligible for membership, after the term "trimmers" should be inserted in parentheses "including women on stitching and sewing machine operations". A badly attended branch meeting carried this by 13 votes to 6.⁹⁹ In the light of their experience, this was the minimum position the Coventry branch could adopt. The sub-committee did consider at one stage the question of accepting women on cellulose polishing, but this was dropped, possibly as the result of a failed attempt to get Singer in Birmingham to take young women off flatting and polishing.⁹⁹

The female issue remained contentious, and figured in a branch inquiry investigating complaints by the area's EC officer and former branch president against the two full-time branch officers. Concerning the charge against him of fixing prices for female labour at Carr & Co in 1925, branch secretary Buckle retorted "I refused to be a party to cheap female labour". EC officer Jaynes thought otherwise.¹⁰⁰ Women were not accepted into the union at the 1928 Delegate Meeting, but the recruitment by the TGWU of female trim shop workers at Rover in 1930 made the issue inescapable, and will be explored in the next section.

D. THE SEARCH FOR AN ORGANISING POLICY IN THE CAR INDUSTRY, 1926-1930.

"You might as well attempt to sweep up the sea with a broom as to push back mass production in the Motor Industry now."¹⁰¹ So spoke General Secretary Nicholson in 1925. But the union was ill-equipped to deal with its effects, failing to make progress over semi-skilled grading in federated engineering companies, and having no clear policy on the growing numbers of mass production workers in the car industry. This last section looks at how the union leadership grappled with the issue in the late 1920s, culminating in the events at Rover, where another trade union took advantage of the NUVB's failure to open up its membership.

Mass production workers

When Scottish organiser Symington visited one of the Coventry car factories early in 1926, he wrote "the development of what is applying in Coventry calls for new conceptions in the methods and basis of our organisation if we mean to retain our controlling interest in the industry. Even if it means the scrapping of hide-bound traditions, it must be done."¹⁰² The full executive were similarly moved when they visited the Austin factory in October - "That we will have to open our ranks to the metal and possibly engineering side is apparent if we are to be the factor for guidance and control in the trade..... *The developments in the metal body and cellulose painting have played havoc in two of the most traditional branches of our craft, and it is up to us to give thought to these changes.*"¹⁰³

Roughly at the time of the Austin visit, a new NUVB branch was set up at Crayford, where mass production methods were operating at the Vickers bodybuilding factory.¹⁰⁴ The union's leadership at last appeared galvanised into taking some action. EC member Milne told the Scottish District Council that "unless these people are organised in the immediate future, the effect on our organisation will be serious". The Council unanimously agreed that he should prepare a scheme to submit to the EC.¹⁰⁵ The Yorks & North East DC also came out in favour of organising mass production workers.¹⁰⁶ A joint meeting of Manchester and Liverpool DC's produced a more ambiguous formulation, asking the EC to submit recommendations to a ballot vote "for safeguarding our members against the evils attendant on the new phase of production."¹⁰⁷

The March 1927 executive meeting decided that it was difficult to ascertain the demarcation line between skilled and semi-skilled in some Midlands engineering shops, but agreed that only a low scale of contributions could be hoped for from the labour prevailing in factories such as Austin. The discussion apparently favoured the formation of an auxiliary section to be organised for trade purposes only, unemployment benefit being optional with a higher scale of contributions.¹⁰⁸

The same EC meeting agreed to a Coventry branch request for the assistance of all officials that could be spared for an organising campaign that had started in October 1926.¹⁰⁹ The executive took credit for this by reporting in the Journal that they had discussed increasing the union's membership in the mass production shops: "as a beginning, we have resolved to make a special organising effort amongst the Coventry workers, Mr. Floyd

and Mr. Francis taking alternate weeks with Mr. Bowen in a month's concentrated campaign in the Mecca of the Motor Trade."¹¹⁰

But admissions of weakness in Coventry shifted the focus away from the real blackspots. Midland organiser Bowen had reported that "We have discovered that there are a large number of men in the town who are declaring that they are members of other branches, but when Mr. Buckle [Coventry branch secretary] has written through to the branch secretary to make inquiries, he has found that some have not paid for a considerable period."¹¹¹ Taking this type of report back to Scotland, Milne complained of the "lamentable" state of organisation in Coventry.¹¹² More significantly, the Liverpool DC used it to deflect attention away from any major change in the union's rules. They demanded that the executive set up a special committee to enquire into the position of unskilled and semi-skilled in the industry in the various centres, and those districts most affected by the developments should have special attention paid to them.¹¹³

The EC continued its deliberations, deciding in September 1927 that it was impossible to improve upon the existing semi-skilled scales. The majority of the executive were against any scheme for trade purposes only, maintaining it would "fail to attract this class of labour who after about a fortnight in modern factories, consider themselves highly skilled, which as a matter of fact they are, on their own specialised operation."¹¹⁴

But the executive agreed to ballot the membership on whether to hold a Delegate Meeting, the first since May 1924, "in order that we may review, amend, or introduce new conditions of membership, that will bring us up to

date, and better equipped to advance the best interests of the workers throughout the industry".¹¹⁵ While the Scottish DC wanted such a meeting as soon as possible,¹¹⁶ a joint meeting of the Liverpool and Manchester DC's did not believe one was necessary at all. They defeated a branch motion favouring a special semi-skilled section for trade purposes only, and resolved that the EC should call a special meeting of the Midlands branches affected "with a view to giving such branches a lead and instruction on the organisation of the semi-skilled in the industry, as provided for in our present rules."¹¹⁷

The Midlands exposure to the main issues facing the union led to John Francis, a former Wheelwrights' official and by now Midlands organiser, constantly using the Journal, and his attendance at Area Council meetings, to propagandise for rule changes: for example, "no sane person would attempt to prevent" modern industrial developments, the problem was one of "control".¹¹⁸ He talked of "the menace of mass production to the craftsman" and "its attendant evil of degrading labour", but also insisted "the problem would have to be faced of how best to effectually organise this class of labour".¹¹⁹ Francis's position was very close to that of Scottish organiser, Symington, and Scottish EC officer, Milne. They all wanted to preserve the standing of the craftsman, but they were not prepared to see unorganised semi-skilled labour. Francis's ideas "did not fall on barren ground" at the South West Area Council,¹²⁰ but in the old strongholds of the coachmakers in the north west, ranks were being closed. The Manchester DC decided to "instruct" their area's rules revision delegates,¹²¹ while the Liverpool DC recommended three of their number in the election of delegates, to ensure the "right" view would be represented.¹²²

The 1928 rules revision meeting divided into three committees, dealing with "(1) EC, Branch, and District Management questions; (2) Finance, Contributions and Benefits; (3) Organisation, with special reference to Mass Production centres on Motor Work." But it was the second subject which was seen to be "undoubtedly" dealing with "the greatest questions involved". Regarding semi-skilled membership, the Journal reported that "The semi-skilled man has undoubtedly become a great factor in the Mass Production Shops, but we have already proved that he cannot be induced wholesale to membership on a cheap contribution". Consequently the semi-skilled contribution (and unemployment benefit) was *increased* substantially, in the "hope that the better section of these men, whom we are desirous to draw, would prefer something like a substantial recognition of membership, rather than that which belongs to the cheap contributing Organisations, only covering recognition in disputes".¹²³

With this decision, the meeting seems to have turned its back on any genuine effort to deal with the third issue. It decided not to admit women, the Coventry proposal to include women on stitching and sewing machine operations being lost by 20 votes to 9. The conference then adjourned early one day to allow the full-time organisers to discuss the women's question. After they had introduced this to the delegates, it was decided "That EC call to Manchester a representative of each EC area to discuss and formulate proposals and if necessary place before the members for ballot. It was also decided to ask Area Councils to elect a member out of their own area to attend."

All other resolutions concerning membership were ruled to be covered by a composite which added to the existing list of trades in the rule book, the clause "and all others engaged upon operations covering the construction and finish of such sections of the industry as mentioned above." This was carried by 30-2, but fudged the issue.

Ilford had proposed including all female labour, but this must have been considered as fallen once the Coventry resolution was defeated. Liverpool and Bradford had wanted to include panel beaters and woodcutting machinists, but these were separate skilled trades, and could not have been intentionally included in the new membership rule. Wolverhampton wanted cellulose sprayers in, but no doubt the delegates' wish to win cellulose spraying for their own painters at the skilled rate dictated the decision not to draw attention to them as a separate class of painters.

The meeting also decided that the amended Rule 1 covered the points of the Crayford resolution - "That a separate self-supporting section of the union be formed for members working in mass production shops, who are not fully qualified Bodymakers, Smiths, Painters, Trimmers, or Finishers, and that members at present in the Union not capable of taking a job through be transferred, subject to discretion of branch committee." But no separate section was formed. Similarly, a Glasgow resolution calling for an industrial section for trade protection only, with safeguards to stop members on higher tables joining it, was likewise left aside.¹²⁴

Francis was the only organiser afterwards expressing any critical comment in the Journal, "[I] did what I could to focus the attention of

delegates on what I considered to be the most important item on the agenda - mass production."¹²⁵ The attention of the union's active members was, however, now switched to the impending special conference on women. The Liverpool, Manchester, and Yorks & North East Area Councils all came out against accepting women. The South West took a "philosophic view of the matter", declaring in favour, and the Scottish DC gave their elected delegate "instructions" to vote to accept women.¹²⁶

The special conference in early 1929 was told that branch investigations revealed about 2,000 women in the industry, of which about 1,400 were in the Midlands, including 450 specifically in Coventry (though the majority of these in Coventry, at least, were not directly employed by motor car or coachbuilding firms). The delegates voted 13-8 to continue to exclude women,¹²⁷ and while there is no voting record, it is likely that the delegates voting in favour came from the West Midlands, South Midlands, South West, and Scotland - the first two areas because they were the most affected by it, the last two because they were "forward-looking".

Reporting back to the South West AC, Tutt said "Safety first will not take us very far on any question."¹²⁸ At the Scottish DC, Milne argued that the decision against a ballot vote on the issue was "fatally wrong", and the Scottish Council decided that as the numbers of women in the industry were increasing, "we ought to take action for their removal or alternatively to organise". The special conference had done neither. The Council expressed its regret at the "ostrich-like" attitude of the conference and demanded a ballot vote in line with the 1928 Rules Revision decision.¹²⁹

General Secretary Nicholson sent a sensitive reply. "It is not generally felt that it would be wise to take a ballot at this period on the question. The better course would undoubtedly be to raise it again for special consideration at a later period, and I believe those who are most enthusiastic on this question will take that opportunity at another period, as there is a great danger that a ballot vote of the whole membership might turn the whole question down, in which case there could be no further appeal, and personally I feel it would be far better to gradually educate a sure majority on this question than have it defeated in the early stages of an agitation for such reform."¹³⁰

The Scottish District Council, however, continued its support for opening up the union and called on branches in June 1929 for further proposals. The Edinburgh branch, for example, sent in a resolution for "the extending of our organisation to the fullest possible extent provided by rule, viz - organisation of all persons working in the industry, on the basis of the operation and not of sex." At the December meeting various schemes were put forward, the most radical being the organiser's, Symington. "My view is that we get rid of the craft superiority complex involved in the continuance of a semi-skilled section, evolve a table of contributions within the reach of all and benefits in accordance. Two scales for adults should be quite enough."¹³¹

Events in Coventry

It was events in Coventry, rather than resolutions, that "educated" the majority (albeit a very slim one) in favour of accepting women when they

were given the chance to decide in late 1931. The main event was the recruitment of female trim shop workers at Rover, and their subsequent representation, by the TGWU, caused by their disquiet over the proposed introduction of the Bedaux system in 1930, which led to a strike involving NUVB members.

Before this occurred, an earlier dispute involving women had already taken place in Coventry in 1929. The appointment of a new works manager at Holbrook Bodies and his treatment of a deputation led to a strike of the whole of the workforce, including women, for his removal. The strike lasted 2½ days, 15 or 20 women came out with the NUVB, and it galled organiser Francis that "the Workers' Union promptly endeavoured to enrol them as members".¹³² This merely foreshadowed the Rover situation.

Early in 1930, the Rover Company tried to bring in the Bedaux system of payment in the female trimming section. According to the NUVB EC report in the Journal, "the whole of the women employed in the Department reported the matter to our Coventry officers..... Our rules would not allow us to take the women into membership, but we had to recognise that a development of this in the Department where women were employed would eventually lead to our own members employed in the Department..... Our Coventry Officers and Committee therefore lent to them all the assistance possible, and the [Transport and General] Workers' Union took the women into membership."¹³³

The women downed tools on three occasions before the company agreed to negotiate. NUVB branch president and South Midlands executive officer, Bramley, met the company along with Alice Arnold of the TGWU and a

deputation of the women.¹³⁴ A joint union meeting was then held one evening in late March, organised by the NUVB branch and the TGWU Coventry Women's Section for all members and non-members in the Coach Department. About 100 women and 200 men attended, and turned down the company's suggestion. Those present also agreed to stop work should a time fixer appear in any department, and to ask the two unions' executives to give full recognition should a strike be necessary.¹³⁵

The engineering employers agreed that the NUVB should attend future negotiations on the issue, and in fairly quick succession, a works conference and local conference were held with the object of persuading both unions to accept a joint investigation into how the Bedaux system worked in other factories.¹³⁶ Finally, at a central conference in May, the NUVB, represented by Nicholson and an EC officer, and the TGWU, by Dalglish (a national officer) and Geobey, agreed.¹³⁷ The investigation took place, and contact continued with the Rover Company over the next few months.¹³⁸ Although NUVB members were not yet directly affected by Bedaux, they union was reputedly adamant against the scheme, while the TGWU were more amenable. Eventually, in late July Dalglish met Rover and told them in front of local TGWU officials, Arnold and Morris, that he was satisfied with how the Bedaux system operated elsewhere. But the women in the department would not budge. Local engineering employers' association secretary Varley then reported to the federation that Rover did not want any more "mucking about" and were going ahead.¹³⁹

On July 31 the company posted a notice to the effect that when the works reopened on Monday 18 August, the female trimming department would be under

the new system as discussed with the trade unions.¹⁴⁰ A meeting of about 70 TGWU female members then took place at the NUVB offices on August 12 and decided that if the firm tried to force in the new system they would stop work. The NUVB branch committee agreed to instruct their trimmers not to touch any work the women normally did.¹⁴¹

When the day came, the company postponed the restart due to slackness of work.¹⁴² But on August 21 they summoned 8 female trimmers to start work that morning. When told they would be starting under Bedaux the women refused and left.¹⁴³ Two days later, the NUVB executive backed the Coventry branch committee decision, and all the trimmers were summoned to a special meeting on the evening of Thursday August 28 and informed of this. The next morning, when they were offered certain jobs on cushions and roofs which had formerly been done by the women, they refused to do them. Two or three were then told they would be dismissed if they did not do the work, whereupon the whole of the 34 male trimmers struck work.¹⁴⁴

The company was not slow in trying to recruit alternative labour. When the eight women refused to work, the Labour Exchange was contacted the same day for replacements, but due to picketing of neighbouring streets only 1 or 2 got through. The company then started contacting the rest of their regular female trim shop workers offering them work and telling them any that refused would have their name passed to the Labour Exchange to have their unemployment benefit stopped.¹⁴⁵ In fact, the Court of Referees decided in early September that only the first eight were not entitled to unemployment benefit, and that, much to the company's and engineering

employers' annoyance, the other 140 had been offered work while a trade dispute was in progress, and would not be disqualified.¹⁴⁵

The efforts of Rover management to secure alternative female labour fared little better. By August 26 they claimed 6 women had started, and hoped another 6 would be starting within the next day. But no other figures are recorded, though it was later admitted that the women who had been taken on during the strike were inexperienced and needed training.¹⁴⁷ The company was more successful recruiting male trimmers. By September 1, 4 men had been started, and within 2 days the total had reached 20. They were "not of the highest class of workmen", but this development was sufficient to rattle the Coventry NUVB branch secretary. He intimated he would let his men go back, and do work previously done by the women on strike, if they did not have to touch work from the women engaged to replace them. Rover would not accept these conditions.¹⁴⁸

Possibly because of this development, the remaining NUVB membership at the plant, bodymakers and finishers, also came out on strike on Tuesday September 9, after a well attended branch meeting the night before had agreed this.¹⁴⁹ It is difficult to judge what effect this had on the original dispute, as Captain Wilks of Rover was by now already having informal discussions with Dalgleish of the TGWU.¹⁵⁰ Bevin was then also involved,¹⁵¹ and a settlement was reached with the TGWU on Saturday morning, September 13. The system was to run for a trial period of 6 months, only in the female trimming areas, but with a high guaranteed weekly rate.¹⁵² In fact, the system was never introduced, probably because work started picking up, and with the motor show looming, the company did

not have time to set it up properly; they were reported as still operating a straight piecework system in February 1931, and must have by then abandoned the idea of introducing Bedaux.¹⁵³

The NUVB leadership's attitude toward the strike of its non-trimmer members was revealing. Once all NUVB members at Rover struck, the EEF put a lot of pressure on General Secretary Nicholson who recognised his members were out of procedure. He sent a strong message to the Coventry branch ordering them back, and when this was ignored because "it was very difficult to prove to the men that they were not blacklegging the girls", Nicholson told the EEF that, failing a very quick settlement, he would call a meeting of the full executive to force a return to work.¹⁵⁴ In correspondence later, Nicholson referred to "this period of Women butting into most things", suggesting that he was more concerned about keeping his negotiating relationship with the EEF than with supporting the women.¹⁵⁵

The most important consequence of the whole dispute for the NUVB was that the TGWU became involved. While the General Secretary's initial report in the Journal emphasised that the engineering employers allowed the NUVB to be involved in the negotiations, "we were the people legislating for the industry" as he put it, John Francis, the Midland organiser, saw it differently. "A result of our Rules, together with special conference decision forbidding us to enrol women in the industry as our members, has been that the [Transport and General] Workers' Union have organised the girls and been party to all the proceedings.... Thus the result, foreseen by those who were in favour of female membership, of the decision against, has

come about, and another union has now the right to enter into negotiations on behalf of workers in our trade."¹⁵⁶

Nationally the union leadership recognised that if the Bedaux system went through, it would mean a development of women's work in the Midlands' mass production shops. If that happened, the EC "will not hesitate to call again a special Conference of the areas concerned to deal with the problem".¹⁵⁷ The EC were relieved of this necessity, though in October the Coventry branch unsuccessfully called on them to convene a conference "to reconsider the question of female workers in the industry with the object of including them in our membership".¹⁵⁸

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the union, the whole Bedaux saga was reawakening interest in the issue. The Yorks & North East DC asked the EC to consider the position of women in the industry, their EC officer raising it at the July executive, but the EC postponed it first to its August meeting, and then to November.¹⁵⁹ The Yorks & North East DC also circularised other area councils. The Scottish DC, unanimously endorsing their position, urged the EC "to take immediate steps to eliminate the possibility of a recurrence of sharing the right with other unions to organise or negotiate conditions for the Vehicle Building Industry". A letter they wrote shows where they thought the responsibility lay: "we do not blame EC but the delegates to Revision of Rules meeting who hadn't sufficient foresight to realise the changes that are coming over our industry". The Liverpool DC passed the same resolution with a very different slant - "That we strongly resent the introduction of women workers into our industry, and ask EC that steps be taken to eliminate women labour which is only introduced to lower our

standard of living, the only possible exception being women employed on sewing machines".¹⁶⁰

The November 1930 EC meeting, confronted with several branch resolutions, threw the ball back into the area councils' court as they were reluctant to call a further national meeting unless there was a demand from the districts.¹⁶¹ The Scottish Council, unanimously reaffirming their support for organising women, also recommended to the Glasgow branch that if NAFTA sought further assistance in trying to organise the female french polishers at the bus-builders Cowiesons, they should be informed that the NUVB was now seriously considering the question of organising female labour, and could not help them for the time being.¹⁶²

But, once again, the female labour question temporarily disappeared from the minutes of the EC and Area Councils, this time being overtaken by the financial crisis that hit the union from the middle of 1930 onward. A new industrial section to recruit both women and semi-skilled men was created in the midst of, and partly as a response to, the union's financial crisis, and will be dealt with in the second part of this chapter.

PART 2. THE 1930s - FINANCIAL CRISIS AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE.

INTRODUCTION

The NUVB experienced a severe financial crisis in the early 1930s. This without doubt accelerated the decision which led to the introduction of the Industrial Section in late 1931. The financial crisis was a result of two main factors. The first was the union's heavy involvement in the General Strike of 1926, which turned round the union's overall financial situation in literally a matter of nine days. The second was the persistence of heavy unemployment from mid-1930 onwards, which led to a succession of levies, raised contributions, and continual cutting of benefits - especially unemployment and superannuation. The combined results of profound industrial depression, and more expensive membership led to a substantial leakage in numbers, which, in turn, further worsened the union's financial situation.

One of the solutions - the establishment of an Industrial Section without any right to unemployment benefit - made little material difference in the 1930s because of the slow take-up of membership. As long as the "skilled rate" remained the prime organising strategy of the union at the local level, then the main source of recruitment would be those eligible for Table A membership, with its obligation to pay superannuation benefit.

A. FINANCIAL CRISIS.

The financial legacy of the General Strike

The General Strike, compounded by the immediately ensuing unemployment in certain sectors of the industry, totally transformed the union's financial position. The "worth" of the union (excluding the Superannuation Reserve Fund) was approximately £77,000 in April 1926; in July it was down to £41,000, in October £35,000, bottoming out at £30,000 in January 1927.* From having a healthy positive bank balance, the national union now had a substantial overdraft. (The branches had to hold a certain amount of cash in hand, and other money was tied up in investments.)

The total dispute benefit paid out in the second quarter of the year, which included the General Strike, was just over £36,000, almost exactly the amount by which the union's "worth" fell in that period. While Phillips has written that the aggregate funds of unions recovered fairly quickly after the General Strike¹⁵³, this does not take into account the differential financial impact of that strike. Those unions that were most heavily involved suffered a huge financial loss which inevitably affected their behaviour over the following years. The NUR and ASLEF, for example, paid out massive sums in benefit and, according to Bagwell, their "financial difficulties....after May 1926 were bound to limit their bargaining strength"¹⁵⁴. The TGWU spent almost £600,000 on the strike and its aftermath - "a financial set-back from which it took years to

* The large number of figures used in Part 2 of this chapter are from various issues of the NUVB Journal, unless otherwise referenced.

recover".¹⁶⁵ The Typographical Association was practically bankrupted, "and remained so until the end of the depression in the early thirties. It was in no condition, therefore, to enforce any of its demands on the employers".¹⁶⁶

For the Workers' Union, the greatly increased spending on benefits in 1926 was "almost the union's death-blow"¹⁶⁷. The NUVB was also badly hit, but in its case there was a delayed reaction. When very heavy unemployment hit their membership in the early 1930s the union had no reserves to fall back on, and the different packages of increased contributions and reduced benefits they were forced to operate, had a devastating impact on their numerical strength.

One immediate measure open to the NUVB executive in the aftermath of the General Strike was to activate Rule 19 section 7 of the 1925 Rule Book, which gave them power to ballot the membership on a levy when the total amount of General Funds fell below £2 per member. A 10s levy was proposed, and accepted by 6,093 - 4,312, with most railway branches voting against, some very heavily. Another measure adopted was the suspension for one year of the monthly publication of the Journal.¹⁶⁸ It had gone monthly at the beginning of 1923, and now returned to quarterly, at which frequency it would remain until the union's demise.

The levy raised much-needed cash, though not enough to stop the union's "worth" continuing to fall. However, some nine and a half thousand pounds were raised by the levy within a year, and payments continued to dribble in for years afterward. A higher than normal call on unemployment benefit was

mainly responsible for the improvement in the union's finances being so slow. From a total of £19,851 given out between January 1925 and January 1926, about £5,000 per quarter, the amount spent on unemployment benefit shot up in the last half of 1926 as follows:

Table 7:2 NUVB Unemployment Benefit Payments, Jan. 1926 - Jul. 1927.

Quarter ended:	April	1926:	£ 6,725- 2- 1
	July	1926:	£ 6,451- 6- 7
	October	1926:	£13,544-15- 4
	January	1927:	£14,384- 6- 1
	April	1927:	£ 7,499-18- 9
	July	1927:	£ 3,330-13- 4

According to the executive, considerable orders, particularly in the contract shops, on railway carriage and bus work, were awaiting the free availability of coal. The start to the new season's production of motor cars was also delayed.¹⁶⁹ As these were temporary problems, the union's finances started climbing again in 1927. The overdraft remained, however.

The Unemployment Benefit Crisis

From just under 8% of total membership unemployed on March 1st 1930, the union entered an appallingly difficult period. There was a rapid jump to 18% by July 1930, and apart from temporary drops to about 17% in June 1931 and June 1932, unemployment remained above this figure until the summer of 1933 when the crisis started to subside. In six quarters during this period, unemployment reached over 20% - the worst absolute total being in August 1931 when 5,980 members were unemployed (23.58% of the membership);

while the worst percentage total was 23.98% in March 1933 when 4,803 were out, the sixth highest absolute quarterly figure (see table 7:3 at the end of this section) The discrepancy between these figures shows the scale of membership loss. From July 1930 till April/May 1933, there were probably over 4,000 members unemployed at any one time, which imposed a massive strain on the union, both financially and organisationally.

There was no inkling of a crisis on this scale when the union's 1928 Delegate Meeting instituted a Reserve Fund. Set at 1d per week, to be paid by all working members, it came into force in February 1929. The need for this increase in subscriptions was shown all too quickly. The first quarter of 1930 was described in the NUVB Journal as "exceptional", being the time of year when the finances should have shown "substantial gains". But with the heavy strain of unemployment, there was only a balance of income over expenditure for the quarter of £803, which would have been a deficit but for the Reserve Fund Contributions which that quarter amounted to £1,240.¹⁷⁰

The second quarter just saw the books balanced, but after its end on July 7th, the Journal reported that "unemployment has developed like a terror upon us". In the following six weeks, state unemployment payments were up nearly four times on the same period of the previous year, with a corresponding increase in union unemployment benefits. The executive, meeting in late August, decided to ballot the membership on an increased contribution of 2d per week for all members qualifying for, or in receipt of, unemployment benefit. They argued that they had the power to lay down a levy immediately, but preferred the membership themselves to vote "to

endorse the determination to increase our income rather than the unfortunate section of our membership should suffer reduction of benefit at the period when most desired".¹⁷¹

But before the vote had even been taken, the executive were summoned to a special meeting where the General Secretary intimated that the proposed measure was already inadequate. They therefore called for a vote for an extra 1d per day contribution from employed members, to operate for 6 months in the first instance. This was accepted 9,487 - 1,452, but even this approximate 50% increase in contributions did not match the crisis. With the failure of trade to pick up after the autumn 1930 Motor Show, and "unprecedented" discharges in the railway shops, the EC was forced into even more drastic action. The bank was limiting the size of the union's overdraft, and, in order to maintain benefits, the EC imposed an immediate £1 per head levy on all members in late November. Current unemployed members were to receive only 50% of the benefit due to them from 29th November, until their £1 was paid off, while new claimants after January 1st 1931 were to have all their benefit withheld until the £1 was paid. By this means some £20,000 would be either saved or paid into funds by April 1931.¹⁷²

In January 1931 the EC decided to call a delegate conference for February 1932. But they came under pressure to bring this forward - Glasgow branch issued a circular calling for a delegate meeting by the end of August 1931, and Coventry branch, among others, supported them. The executive relented a little and brought the meeting forward to November

(though only by a narrow majority). But they would not call it any sooner, in order to allow for the normal constitutional procedure to operate.¹⁷³

Meanwhile, by April 1931 the £1 levy and the 1d per working day levy had raised £21,942 "and, but for an increase, rather than a lessening of claims upon Funds, would have close upon replaced our overdraft account". (For the consequences of the £1 levy, see section D below.) Consequently further measures were deemed necessary. In mid-March the executive drew up proposals to be balloted on April quarter night, offering a choice to replace the 1d per day levy - either a 100% increase in contributions, to maintain benefits at their current levels, or a compromise, involving raised contributions and cuts in benefits.

The membership voted 5,035 - 2,651 against a 100% increase in contributions, and by 4,846 - 3,329 in favour of an increase in Reserve Fund contributions from 1d to 3d per week, along with a 50% cut in unemployment benefits (and no second claim for a new period of full unemployment benefit to be allowed until 39 weeks contributions had again been paid). The 3d per week Reserve Fund contribution was to be paid by all members, including unemployed, except the superannuated and apprentices other than final year. These measures came into effect early in May 1931 and lasted until the delegate meeting.¹⁷⁴

Later that year, commenting on the "continuous strain" on the union's finances caused by unemployment, the executive argued that it "must raise in our minds again the question of re-establishing the 1d [levy] per working day." They also noted, ominously, that superannuation payments were

increasing faster than they would normally have expected, and put this down to older members deciding they had little chance of working again once they had been suspended, and to the railway companies now enforcing retirement at age 65.¹⁷⁵

The 1931 Delegate Meeting made only slight reductions in the overall amounts of unemployment benefit payable, and consolidated the 3d Reserve Fund contribution into the weekly subscription. It also clarified the division of contributions, there being three separate components - industrial (dispute, victimisation, legal, funeral); unemployment; and superannuation. Previously the industrial and unemployment components had been lumped together in the General Fund.¹⁷⁶ The new weekly subscriptions read as follows:

Industrial - 7d for all tables (including the new Industrial Section)

Unemployment - 6d Tables A, B, C.
5d Table D.
3d Semi-skilled

Superannuation - 5d Table A and Semi-skilled under 35.

Further cuts

Meanwhile, the first quarter of 1932 saw the union's expenditure still higher than its income. Discharges by the LCC and LGOC in London, as well as the closure of the LMS works at Newton Heath, forced further economy measures. The CWS Bank demanded a reduction in the union's overdraft, and

the executive, meeting in early June, decided at last to cut superannuation benefits by 1s per week, starting from October 1932, and to cut administrative expenses slightly by only paying branch secretaries their 5d per member salary for those members who actually paid contributions.

A special executive had to be called a week later where the General Secretary revealed that discussions with the bank manager showed that the proposed reductions were not sufficient, and tougher measures were adopted. Superannuation benefit was to be cut by 2s per week starting in July, while Funeral benefit was reduced by £1. Administrative charges were to be reduced by branch committee attendance allowance being cut from 1s6d to 1s; the 5d fee per member per week for administering state unemployment benefit was to be redivided from 4d branch/1d head office to 3d/2d; the printing involved in Journals was to be cut considerably; and area councils were recommended to meet 6-monthly instead of quarterly (which many of them did not do). Finally the executive agreed to ballot members on a ¼d per working day levy, which was agreed by 3,520 - 2,560.

The cut in superannuation benefit was to apply for a year and then be reviewed. The executive argued that "this condition will appear drastic, but...while nearly every organisation has had to make deep cuts into benefits, we have saved any infliction of such on our superannuated members, but necessity is a hard master..."¹⁷⁷

Before these latest measures could take effect, the second quarter's accounts again revealed an excess of expenditure over income, and, with increasing unemployment, the bank refused any further increase on the

union's overdraft. A year previously the General Secretary had arranged with the Mental Hospital and Institutional Workers Union for a banking transaction of £5,000 to be used if necessary. This was kept quiet by the EC at the time. Now, in September 1932, they needed to use it. But they also decided on a 50% reduction on all benefits at Rule Book rates, except for Funeral benefit. These new cuts were to apply for only 6 months "to assure our bankers that you are prepared to meet the position and re-establish our finances during the unprecedented crisis in the trade".¹⁷⁹

This September meeting of the EC came in for a lot of caustic comment by Milne, the Scottish EC officer. It was the first meeting for 13 weeks, and he commented "This attempt at economy is doomed to failure, EC sitting till late on Saturday evening and continuing on Sunday, had to defer items of more or less importance to a future meeting". The General Secretary's suggestions were discussed, along with branch and district council resolutions, for ten hours. The majority of these resolutions demanded reductions in the salaries of full-time officers and a reduction in their numbers. As Milne observed, "There seems to be an obsession that low wages is the only cure. EC are divided on this point, some of them favouring both the foregoing proposals."¹⁷⁹

The EC finally agreed on a 10% reduction in full time officer salaries, noting that the demand to cut numbers was neither wise nor advisable, "the interests of the trade require more watchful guarding than at more normal times, and we are convinced that without the particular officer in the district to deal with the changing conditions, the present standard of our trade would be completely lost".¹⁸⁰

Within a few weeks the Coventry branch, at a badly attended meeting, had narrowly voted to ask the executive to dispense with the services of three organisers - London, Manchester, and Birmingham. They argued that there were enough full-time officers in London and Manchester, and that there were plenty of experienced branch officers in the Birmingham district. The reasoning behind such a reduction was "the vast amount of money it took to keep these positions going".¹⁸¹ While this particular resolution was twice deferred, and eventually failed to find a seconder, there was, according to Milne, such a general demand at the November executive for a reduction in staff that "probably someone will have to be sacrificed". The issue was deferred to a later meeting and is not specifically minuted after that.¹⁸² At the same time the question of reducing the number of EC areas from 11 to 7, to save expense, was deferred several times and eventually left to the next delegate meeting.¹⁸³

The demand for reductions in the number of full time officers was not an unfamiliar one. When London-based Assistant General Secretary, A.E. Smith, died in 1926, there was opposition to another new official's position being created, and in fact a second London-based official was not elected until 1930.¹⁸⁴ And when Nicholson, the General Secretary, retired in 1935 there were demands to redistribute the work so that a new official was not needed.¹⁸⁵ This apparent opposition to full-time officials had many roots. Probably most prominent was the feeling of many local branch officials that the full-time regional organisers had usurped some of their earlier authority. These organisers had a regular salary and did not have the constant accountability faced by branch officers, nor their fluctuating commission.

The executive complained of branches objecting to the new ½d per working day levy - "we required a penny most badly, and it would have saved some of the drastic cuts in benefits".¹⁸⁶ But, in retrospect, this period marked the turning point in the union's financial fortunes. The quarter ending in October 1932, after 2 months of the levy, and despite higher unemployment benefit payments due to railway and contract shop discharges, saw a small surplus,¹⁸⁷ followed by a net gain of £2,000 in the following quarter. The bank overdraft was lowered from £26,833 to £16,525 - of which over £6,000 came from redeemed War Stock and the remaining £4,000 from economies.¹⁸⁸

When the six month period of reduced benefit was over, in March 1933, the executive decided to continue the economies for a further 3 months and then review the position. The ½d levy lasted till the end of September; while sick benefit was restored to its full rate, and unemployment benefit increased slightly. The question of superannuation benefit went to a sub-committee, which recommended a small increase, and the superannuation contribution from Table A members was also increased from 5d to 6d, with the superannuated members' own contribution up from 3d to 6d per week.¹⁸⁹

Not until June 1934 did the executive restore the 1931 Rule Book rates of unemployment benefit (and these were substantially below the rate prevailing throughout the 1920s). This was to operate from August, as was also the restoration of full-time officers' salaries, while branch secretaries' state unemployment expenses were returned to normal from July.¹⁹⁰ Funeral benefit was restored from the beginning of 1935, and superannuation went up in January 1935 and January 1936, though it was still below the 1931 Rule Book rates.¹⁹¹

Table 7:3 NUVB Unemployment in the early 1930s.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Numbers unemployed</u>	<u>Percentage of members</u>
12-11-30	4606	18.01
March 1931	no figure	above 18%
3- 6-31	4315	17.01
12- 8-31	5980	23.58
2-12-31	5563	22.56
27- 2-32	4910	est. 20 %
1- 6-32	4243	17.21
end Aug. 1932	5347	21.69
23-11-32	4817	22.84
8- 3-33	4803	23.98
17- 5-33	3196	15.96
16- 8-33	3805	18.99
22-11-33	2930	15.39
21- 2-34	2273	11.9
30- 5-34	1514	7.95
22- 8-34	2502	13.14
21-11-34	1993	10.47

B. THE INDUSTRIAL SECTION.

The 1931 Delegate Meeting

The Delegate Meeting of December 1931 took place against the background of the financial crisis described above. While the executive thought it necessary to "adapt our Rules to meet the altered conditions of the Industry as we may understand them to apply"¹⁹², they saw this, as in 1928, more in terms of altering the financial rather than the organisational rules. While there was a genuine debate inside the union in the late 1920s over the organisation of semi-skilled labour, it should be clear that the overriding imperative for change was financial, however pressing the organisational reasons may have been at the time, and in retrospect.

The north west branches of the union were perhaps the keenest to scotch any radical organisational changes, and when the Southport branch forwarded a resolution for the Delegate Meeting that only financial rules concerning benefits and contributions should be discussed, it was unanimously supported by the Liverpool Area Council; and 5 branches from the area put forward amendments supporting the Southport resolution. The justification was on grounds of economy, a position which the executive made clear it generally endorsed.¹⁹³ But with possible financial and organisational changes inextricably interlinked, the Delegate Meeting could not avoid discussing the latter. The crucial decision of the meeting was whether or not a new section of membership be created, and whether this should include women.

The main composite motion debated was that "a Trade Section be formed on a contributory basis which those wishing to take up other benefits can have contributions built upon. This section to include women." It was moved by the Saltley branch secretary and seconded by the Bristol secretary - both also being EC members. An amendment to leave out women was proposed by the Stoke Newington branch secretary, but lost by 14 to 16. The original motion was then carried by 17 to 15, with all delegates voting, except one from the East Midlands who was absent.¹⁹⁴ An "Industrial Section" was established, but its members, despite the above resolution, were not entitled to contribute to, or claim, unemployment or superannuation benefit.

The closeness of the vote showed that at this level, union opinion was fairly evenly split. The split was not simply between those areas where the industry was still entirely craft-based, and those where mass production had radically altered the nature of the work of sections of the membership. The manuscript record of the meeting gives very little detail, but on the basis of declared support for the opposing positions, in the form of resolutions, amendments, and area council recommendations, it is possible to make a fairly accurate guess of the voting pattern.

The West Midlands, South Midlands, South-West, Scotland, and 5 of the 6 London (and the South) delegates, probably made up the 17 pro votes; while Manchester, Liverpool, the East Midlands, Yorkshire & the North-East, Ireland, and one London delegate comprised the 15 anti votes. That delegates from the car industry areas of Birmingham and Coventry should vote in this way, was not surprising; and the London region also contained

a number of mass production coachbuilders. The South West, with Bristol a centre of aircraft manufacture, and Swindon a railway centre, was probably influenced to some extent by John Francis the organiser for the Midlands and South-West. The Bristol Aeroplane Company had a large number of females working on trimming and in other woodworking departments¹⁹⁵, while Swindon felt the local competition of the NUR for membership.

Scotland with its vehicle building employment still overwhelmingly craft-based, provided the votes that tipped the balance. As explained earlier in this chapter, the key Scottish characters, organiser Symington and EC officer Milne, had for many years taken the position that if semi-skilled labour, including women, could not be removed from the mass production sections of the industry, then it was necessary to organise it. This was consistent with their position of upholding the craft status of their work in Scotland, and, for example, trying to maintain a strict demarcation line between their painter and brush hand members.¹⁹⁶

The opposition, concentrated in Ireland and the northern parts of England, did not take their defeat lightly and organised against the new section for several years. Their campaign will be looked at, but first it is necessary to analyse the composition of the new Industrial Section.

Industrial Section membership

The EC greeted the formation of the Industrial Section by arguing "we have to recognise that our trade on the manufacturing side is moving rapidly to the mass production centres, with its semi-skilled processes,

and if we are to maintain our influence in the industry we must open our ranks, and likewise cut out an evil competition that has grown up in the cheap unskilled organisations in the principal Motor, Railway Shops and Corporation centres of our trade." They continued, "The admittance of women is not anticipated will develop beyond the motor car centres The development of female labour in the production of the motor car has grown beyond our power to erase; hence this *drastic* and well-intentioned enterprise."¹⁹⁷ The reality was to be somewhat different.

Industrial Section membership showed a slow uptake in the first year, followed by an increase of nearly 3,000 in the next three years, and then stagnation (table 7:4 below - column A). Comparing available Industrial Section membership figures with the number of new members joining that section, two facts stand out. Firstly, the leakage of members from the new section appears to have been very low in the first few years, gradually increasing from 1935 onward (columns B and C). Secondly, the number of new members joining the Industrial Section declined sharply around 1936 (columns C and D).

Table 7:4 Industrial Section membership, 1932-1938.

<u>Period</u>	(A) <u>Number I.S. at end of period</u>	(B) <u>Net increase I.S. during period</u>	(C) <u>New I.S. members in period</u>	(D) <u>Average no. new I.S. each quarter</u>
Jan. 1932-Jan. 1933	423	423	596	149
Jan. 1933-Jan. 1935	2,349	1,926	2,473	309
Jan. 1935-Apr. 1936	3,247	898	1,701	340
Apr. 1936-Jan. 1938	3,303	56	1,320	193

There are, therefore, at least two important questions to ask - why was there such a low turnover in the first few years, when the overall membership of the union was falling significantly, and why did new membership of the section tail off after 1936?

Answering the first, there is substantial evidence to suggest that a number of existing members transferred into the Industrial Section from other tables, and would not therefore have shown up in the figures for new members. These transfers appear to have been legitimate, certainly at the beginning, for when, early in 1932, the EC faced requests from a number of branches about the right of members to transfer from Table A, or other tables, into the Industrial Section, they "had to rule most definitely in accordance with Delegate Meeting intentions that to join the Industrial Section must mean a forfeiture of previous membership in every way".¹⁹⁹

The terms of these transfers were somewhat confused. The above ruling came about as a result of members wanting to take their Sick Fund membership and their funeral benefit qualification with them. In February 1932 the EC ruled that IS members were not allowed to pay into the Sick Fund, as it was intended for "trade purposes only"; the rule alteration stating that only those holding a "Trade membership card" were eligible. The EC reaffirmed this decision in April, though not unanimously.¹⁹⁹ Despite this, the issue resurfaced two years later, when this time the EC was unanimous that any IS member who had paid contributions into the Sick Fund should have their payments refunded.²⁰⁰ Within weeks of the Industrial Section being started, a number of unemployed members from Bolton, Lincoln, and London Central branches had applied to transfer, but the EC ruled that

they could not be accepted until they had secured employment.²⁰¹ How many such transfers then took place unofficially would be impossible to calculate.

One important source of internal transfers appears to have been the old semi-skilled tables. From October 1931 to January 1935 there was a drop in the union's semi-skilled membership tables from 569 to 305, a total of 264. About three quarters of this decline occurred in 12 branches (see table 7:10 at the end of this section), which also saw substantial numbers joining the Industrial Section. In some instances, this transfer was probably organised - eg Glasgow, which lost all its 55 semi-skilled members and gained 76 in the Industrial Section. Four of the branches were old wheelwright branches - Battersea, Southwark, Stoke Newington, and Liverpool 2 - which were less attached to NUVB benefit tables.

Transfers also appeared to operate in the opposite direction in the later period. Between April 1936 and January 1938, there was an increase in the "semi-skilled over 35" membership of 229. Yet only 127 new members are recorded as having joined that section in that period, suggesting that at least 100 Industrial Section members transferred over. Also after 1936, Industrial Section members had the right to transfer to Table A or Table B if they were eligible. Both of these factors would exaggerate the actual number of lapsed members from that section from 1936.

The second question, regarding the decline in numbers joining the Industrial Section after 1936, can be answered quite simply. Until the 1936 Delegate Meeting ruled otherwise, any new member could join the Industrial

Section; afterwards, any applicant eligible for one of the other benefit tables had to join that. Although after the 1936 Delegate Meeting, the executive claimed that "It was never the intention of the 1931 Delegate Meeting that craftsmen should be allowed into this section"²⁰², this is contradicted by their statement at the time, when they merely expressed the hope that "the skilled man in the trade will have the old pride of their craft and link up to maintain a full membership under Table A".²⁰³

While there might be some doubt as to the official position regarding potential Table A membership, which will be analysed below, there can be no doubt about the leadership's attitude on recruitment into the other tables. While nothing seems to have been officially written down, there was a block on recruitment into Tables C and D, and the semi-skilled tables. The January 1932 Journal, publishing the new contribution rates, gives those for C, D, and the semi-skilled as being for "present members". From the 1931 Delegate Meeting until the last quarter of 1936, not one person joined the semi-skilled tables.

During three quarterly periods in 1932-33, a total of 27 people joined Tables C (age on joining, 45-54) and D (age on joining, 55 and over). In April 1934, the executive finally ruled that all new members over 45 years old must join the Industrial Section. In November the EC reconsidered, but failed to decide whether recruitment could take place into Tables C and D, but a month later agreed that where branch committees submitted applicants for these tables, they would receive consideration.²⁰⁴ Despite this vacillation, no one joined these two tables throughout 1934-35, though recruitment started again early in 1936 before the Delegate Meeting ruling.

As the Industrial Section recruits would have "no liability on the Society for Unemployment Benefits",²⁰⁵ the unofficial policy was obviously to push all recruits except those eligible for Table A and Table B, into the Industrial Section, to cut down the expenditure on unemployment benefit. Until October 1937, the Industrial Section recruitment figures were given in two categories - under 35 and over 35 - and it can be seen that when recruitment into Tables C and D, and then into the semi-skilled tables, restarted, Industrial Section recruitment of the over-35's fell, especially given that members eligible for other benefit tables had to join those after the 1936 Delegate Meeting:

Table 7:5 Recruitment of over-35 year olds into different contribution tables, Oct. 1935 - Oct. 1937.

<u>Qtr ending</u>	<u>C & D</u>	<u>s/sk>35</u>	<u>IS>35</u>	<u>Total >35 *</u>
Jan. 1936	-	-	142	142
Apr. 1936	51	-	140	191
Jul. 1936	58	-	180	238
Oct. 1936	77	-	122	199
Jan. 1937	46	13	54	113
Apr. 1937	99	37	36	172
Jul. 1937	110	39	87	236
Oct. 1937	77	22	51	150

* This excludes recruits into Table B (35-45years), which was relatively little affected, giving the same level of unemployment benefit as Table A, but without any superannuation contribution.

As well as taking older recruits who might have joined other tables, the Industrial Section also took on board lapsed members of the union. For

example, in Glasgow during 1932 and 1933 at the Coplawhill Corporation works 7 former members re-entered in the Industrial Section, while only one rejoined in Table A.²⁰⁶

Analysis of the relationship between Table A and the Industrial Section requires consultation of table 7:11 at the end of this section. It can be seen that only a handful of members had been joining the "semi-skilled under 35" table, prior to the introduction of the Industrial Section. The new Industrial Section members in this age group must therefore have been either genuine unskilled/semi-skilled recruits or potential Table A or apprentice members (who subsequently joined Table A). It is probable few apprentices joined the Industrial Section; final year apprentices only paid 1d per week more than Industrial Section members, and were entitled to unemployment benefit in their own right if they had been members for long enough, while other apprentices paid a much lower contribution. Possibly confirming this is the evidence that when the emergency executive dealt with the entrance form of an apprentice wishing to join the Industrial Section, they felt obliged to refer it to the full EC (which agreed to it).²⁰⁷ One measure of the "success" of Industrial Section membership in tapping the reservoir of mass production operatives, must be the extent to which it did not merely substitute for the dominant Table A membership.

Table 7:11 shows that while under-35-year-old recruits to the Industrial Section outnumbered Table A recruits in five of the first six quarters after the 1931 Delegate Meeting, by the end of 1933 quarterly recruitment into Table A had surged ahead and was to remain much higher right through the rest of the decade. The surges in Table A and apprentice recruits in

the quarters ending April 1934 and January 1936 were mirrored in big jumps in Industrial Section recruits, suggesting that at this time, there was a general increase in "skilled" membership, some of which went into the Industrial Section. This is demonstrated by the aftermath of the 1936 Delegate Meeting when those eligible to join other benefit tables had to do so, and there was a very big drop in Industrial Section recruitment, which was only partly accounted for by the numbers joining the semi-skilled section. A comparison of the 1937 quarterly recruitment figures for all Industrial Section recruits and total recruits to all tables confirms this:

Table 7:6 Industrial Section and total recruits, 1937.

<u>Qtr ending</u>	<u>Total I.S. recruits</u>	<u>Total all recruits</u>
Apr. 1937	139	1,231
Jul. 1937	164	1,273
Oct. 1937	90	971
Jan. 1938	92	1,115

While, organisationally, the Industrial Section was justified as a means of recruiting non-craftsmen in those parts of the industry where the craft basis of production had been eroded, it had a very different meaning in practice. Although Milne could report the result of one EC discussion that "the Industrial Section is the method for recruiting in the mass production areas for which it was intended",²⁰⁸ there can be no doubt, whatever the official pronouncements may have been, that in the short run at least, the Industrial Section was used very much as a means of reducing the liability to unemployment benefit payments. Consequently it meant no meaningful change in the union's organising strategy.

Geographical Distribution of Industrial Section Membership

The above point can be further demonstrated by an analysis of the geographical location of Industrial Section members. Figures are available for 1935, 1936, and 1938, and show a marked degree of concentration into only a few areas. In each of the three years, London had the largest single bloc of Industrial Section members, followed by Birmingham. The London I.S. membership was spread fairly evenly among the various branches, though some had significantly more than others. The Birmingham figures below are from just 4 branches - Birmingham No.1, Birmingham No.2, Handsworth, and Saltley. Elsewhere, there were significant pockets of Industrial Section membership (for example, in Edinburgh and Glasgow - see table 7:10). The number of other branches having 10, 20, or 30 Industrial Section members increased through the decade. The large Manchester and Liverpool EC districts were, apart from about four branches, barely touched, having only 83 Industrial Section members between them in 1935, and 111 three years later.

Table 7:7 Geographical Location of Industrial Section Membership, 1935-38.

	<u>Jan. 1935</u>	<u>Apr. 1936</u>	<u>Jan. 1938</u>
London	1127	1306	1179
Birmingham	542	1001	940
Elsewhere	670	940	1184
Total	2349	3247	3303

While there was some mass production of cars in the London area (outside of Dagenham) in the 1930s, it was on a much smaller scale than in the

Midlands. The recruitment into the Industrial Section in London appears to have been mainly from skilled workers. (The union's quarterly funeral circular, which gave details of late members' trades, usually gave the Industrial Section members as having a trade - for example, painter, rather than brush hand or labourer.)

In Birmingham, however, there was a somewhat different situation. The Handsworth branch was based around the Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Company works, where a substantial number of semi-skilled workers were employed. It increased its Industrial Section membership from 168 in 1935 to 418 fifteen months later. A policy decision by the Birmingham District Committee in 1935 to recruit the growing class of semi-skilled metal bus and railway carriage assemblers, was followed by recruitment of coach fitters and pipe fitters on the railway side, and then by brush hands and painters' labourers.²⁰⁹ A similar development explains the Saltley branch Industrial Section membership's large, but not so dramatic, increase from 217 in 1935 to 389 in 1936, Saltley branch being responsible for the two main works of the Metropolitan Railway Carriage & Wagon Company.

But the existence of significant numbers of Industrial Section members already in the four Birmingham branches at the beginning of 1935 can only be explained by transference of members from other tables as well as recruitment of skilled members directly into the Industrial Section. Certainly, Birmingham No.1 and No.2 branches together recruited less new members between January 1932 and January 1935 than they had members in the Industrial Section at the latter date.²¹⁰ The Handsworth branch had experienced a particularly prolonged period of heavy unemployment in the

early 1930s, eventually prompting the branch, backed by the Birmingham District Committee, to request in late 1933 to be allowed to transfer members from one table to another. While the EC ruled that this should be left to the next Delegate Meeting,²¹¹ it is clear that the branch, along with others in Birmingham, must have taken the law into their own hands. In this case, Table A members, having exhausted all their unemployment benefit entitlement, would be having to pay superannuation contributions to remain on the union's books; by transferring them to the Industrial Section, they could avoid this payment.

Even the penetration of the Industrial Section into recognised groups of semi-skilled workers in the Birmingham railway carriage shops seems likely, therefore, to have been only a post-1934 phenomenon; and the Birmingham district in the early 1930s appears to have taken a similar line to most London branches by encouraging transfers of members from other tables, and recruiting potential Table A members direct into the Industrial Section. Birmingham No.2 branch were in fact accused early in 1932 of accepting members into the Industrial Section who were still on the books of Saltley branch; a few months later they got EC approval to accept an apprentice directly into the section.²¹²

It is clear that, whatever the officially declared intentions, Industrial Section membership in the mass production car factories made very little headway. In Coventry, there were only 9 members in the section by October 1933, and these may well have been all women, who were not eligible for any other benefit table. This figure jumped during the next quarter, and in early 1935 increased from 60 to 190 in one single quarter

(due to a strike at Carbodies), falling back below 100 within 6 months, at which point it stayed until late 1940.²¹³

Industrial Section membership for selected branches in car industry areas is given below. While Oxford branch membership was largely based at the local car factories, Luton's was probably not, and figures for Dagenham are not possible to collate because of the dispersed London membership. Apart from slight inroads in Coventry, and, after 1936, Northfield (based around the Austin factory at Longbridge), the recruitment of carworkers into the Industrial Section in the 1930s was effectively non-existent.

Table 7:8 Industrial Section Membership in selected car industry 1935-1938.

	<u>Jan. 1935</u>	<u>Apr. 1936</u>	<u>Jan. 1938</u>
Coventry	60	93	54
Luton	2	2	3
Northfield	1	2	78
Oxford	-	6	10

Reaction to the Industrial Section

Although motivated primarily by financial considerations, the creation of the Industrial Section did open up organising possibilities if union officers, lay and full-time, were prepared to use them. It also evoked great antagonism from those sections of the membership that had opposed it. Not surprisingly, John Francis, Midlands organiser, was delighted. "Those of us who have advocated this step have been under no illusion as to the

difficulties. Our advocacy was not based upon the belief that we shall be inundated with applications for membership by the semi-skilled, but upon the desire that our organisation shall be of that shape and kind as will offer the open door to that great number of operatives in the trade who are there through industrial developments."²¹⁴

The Southport branch, which had been in the forefront of the campaign to limit the scope of the 1931 Delegate Meeting, sent a very bitter letter to the Journal complaining that for a union with practically a quarter of its membership unemployed, the decision to start an Industrial Section was "fatal". "By organising this 'Sweated Labour' we encourage it, and aid the employers in their desire for cheap labour.....To the Branches responsible for this Amendment (Bristol, Coventry and Salford), and their organisers, we ask: 'In what direction have you devoted your past activities, seeing that you have let this class of labour creep in to such an extent that you favour organising it?'"

This sentiment epitomised the gulf of understanding between some of the areas where skilled labour was the norm, and the realities of the large-scale factories of the Midlands in particular. Yet the Ford factory at Trafford Park in Manchester, in the midst of the most craft-conscious areas, had predated these developments by many years, and pure and simple craft unionism had been unable to make any headway there.

The Southport letter continued with some vehement accusations: "Probably this class of labour is the chief reason for such a large number of our members being unemployed. So this decision not only stabs our unemployed

members in the back, but will also result in throwing a larger number of our members on to the streets.....Under Rule 1, the employers now have full power to displace our skilled members, and flood the factories with a class of labour detrimental to their interests."

As the vote to create the Industrial Section had only been won by a narrow majority, the branch appealed to the membership to urge the EC to call a ballot vote.²¹⁵ This was taken up by the Liverpool District Council in March 1932, who noted that up to that date, not a single application form for female membership had been received at Head Office. Three months later the Council unanimously repeated their request for a ballot,²¹⁶ and in December were joined by Manchester area delegates when their annual joint meeting also called for a ballot vote. "It was clearly shown by reports from the branches that this rule was working to the detriment of the society" and the female section "had certainly not justified its existence."²¹⁷

Openly supporting the new section, however, were the South and West Midlands Area Council;²¹⁸ and the Southern Area Council, which consciously saw it "as the only means of solving our present financial problems", later demanding that the EC "support the Industrial Section on the lines laid down at the Rules Revision conference."²¹⁹ But it was the north west which continued to be the most vociferous on the issue.

The various resolutions for a ballot vote were continually deferred by the EC. Although the Manchester district again demanded a ballot vote in September 1933,²²⁰ the EC by then appear to have ridden the storm and the

issue died for a time. At the December 1934 annual joint meeting of the Liverpool and Manchester councils, the executive members' report of a much more stable financial position nationally led the joint councils to demand that a Rules Revision Conference be held in 1935.²²¹ As well as this, a further new tactic emerged. The EC received resolutions from Manchester 1 and 2 branches, and Openshaw, citing Rule 12 section 3: "Should any branch consider (at a special meeting called for the purpose) a rule to be working to the injury of the society, or think a new rule necessary, they shall submit a new proposal to alter, amend, or rescind any rule, or propose a new one to the EC, with their reasons for doing so." Such a move would require a majority vote of the branch. "Should a majority vote in favour of the proposal, EC shall submit the same (with any advice or amendment they think fit) to the country...."

These resolutions were "noted" by the executive, who enquired as to whether the voting had been carried out as per rule. Although satisfied, they deferred the question at their next meeting, and finally in June 1935 they further deferred it to the next Delegate Meeting, with 3 voting against.²²² The Manchester district protested repeatedly, until the December 1935 joint meeting of the Liverpool and Manchester districts agreed to wait for the Delegate Meeting.²²³ Only the South-West Area Council are recorded as objecting to these attempts to turn the clock back, but they were probably speaking for several areas when they resolved "That this Council strongly deprecates the continuous efforts of certain Northern branches to abolish the Industrial Section, this council being of the opinion that the section rather than being detrimental to the best interests of the Society, is of considerable gain."²²⁴

The 1936 Delegate Meeting

In the run up to the 1936 Delegate Meeting, the proposed amendments to the rules once again saw the north west branches taking the harder line positions. Manchester No.2 branch wanted the Industrial Section abolished altogether. Manchester No.1 did agree to keep an unskilled section, but for men only, and no journeyman to be allowed to join it. Bolton also wanted women excluded, no journeyman to join the Industrial Section unless over 55 years old, and no journeyman to be allowed to transfer from existing tables.

Dukinfield not only wanted women excluded, but also to change the rule which allowed membership of someone "earning the ordinary wages of the shop, being a competent workman and of worthy character". By wanting to delete the term "of worthy character" and substitute "and must have served four years apprenticeship (this to be the minimum) at the trade", Dukinfield were attempting to turn the clock back to the nineteenth century.

Elsewhere, a number of branches wanted to tighten up on membership of the Industrial Section but were not opposed to women. Glasgow, for example, wanted no worker eligible to join other sections to be allowed to join the Industrial Section. No doubt this was a reaction to a developing situation which had prompted Scottish organiser Symington to declare in the Journal, some 2 years before, that the 1931 Delegate Meeting decision, unless rectified "must inevitably spell the doom of superannuation benefit".

Derby merely wanted craftsmen eligible for Tables A and B "not to be encouraged to join the Industrial Section". London West wanted to exclude from the Industrial Section those in receipt of the top wage rates, while Ealing branch suggested that only skilled applicants under 25 should be excluded from the Industrial Section. An interesting compromise from London Central, which partly reflected the practice up to 1936, was to make new entrants in receipt of the minimum craftsman's rate to enter Table A or B, depending on age; while all craftsmen over 45 plus all semi-skilled and unskilled workers would join the Industrial Section.

Coventry branch, by contrast, wanted a relaxation of Table A membership. Rather than force Table A members into the Industrial Section if they did not want to contribute towards superannuation benefit, they wanted them to be allowed to join Table B and be eligible for all benefits except superannuation. Ealing proposed that Industrial Section members actually be allowed to transfer to Table A or B, depending on their age.²²⁵

It was, however, the Glasgow resolution that prevailed. The EC report of the Delegate Meeting recounted that "The Industrial Section was created to enable us to organise a new type of labour which, within recent years, has been introduced into the Motor Industry. It was never the intention of the 1931 Delegate Meeting that craftsmen should be allowed into this section. The 1936 Delegate Meeting has now decided that applicants who are eligible to join one of the other benefit sections, cannot be allowed membership in the Industrial Section."²²⁶

Three things need to be noted here. First, if the Industrial Section was aimed at organising motor industry labour, it had been singularly unsuccessful. Secondly, regarding craftsmen's right to join the Industrial Section, the EC had never made this interpretation compulsory in their previous rulings, and had only a few months earlier stressed that the union should not relax its "efforts to persuade new eligible members into Table A".²²⁷ Thirdly, the concern with the future of superannuation benefit was undoubtedly the major factor behind this tightening up of recruitment procedure. This is shown by the carrying of the amendment from Ealing, allowing IS members to transfer to Table A or B. As this could only apply to those eligible for these tables, it was a means of wooing back those who had joined the IS when the union was under pressure to reduce its unemployment benefit liability.

However, within 3 months the EC reported that the new Delegate Meeting ruling that all craftsmen must join a benefit table "has not been taken too favourably in some districts." The EC then insisted that, before branches forwarded application forms to Head Office, "care is taken to define carefully the grade of the applicant;"²²⁸ and, in March 1937, instructed the General Secretary to bring all forms to the executive where there was any difference of opinion as to which table they should belong.²²⁹ Later the next year the emergency executive demanded further particulars before accepting a batch of applications for membership into the Industrial Section from Birmingham No.1, one of the branches with substantial numbers in this section.²³⁰

The Swindon Amendment

As detailed earlier, the new interpretation and practical implementation of the 1936 rules led to a significant drop in enrolment into the Industrial Section. This had a differential impact across the country, and one branch considering itself particularly badly affected was Swindon. Its members voted 408-13 by ballot in favour of a national ballot, to change the rule which denied applicants eligible for other tables admission to the Industrial Section. What Swindon proposed in its place was that applicants under 35 eligible for Table A could not join the Industrial Section, but everybody else could.

The branch, cooperating with the local federation of trade unions for 100% membership at the Great Western Railway workshops, had "experienced the cheap and competitive basis of other unions with that section who only desire trade protection". The branch officers and shop stewards claimed they had come into contact with many non-unionists who would not associate with an industrial union, but preferred a craft organisation to protect their trade; and a number of these accepted the cheaper contributions of the Industrial Section as a means to that end. Swindon branch officers believed that these Industrial Section members constituted a comparatively negligible financial liability compared to the income they contributed to the General Fund. They also argued that the EC's desire for larger and improved railway shop organisation was only possible if the union could recruit on an equitable basis of contributions with other unions. About one third of the branch membership was in the Industrial Section.²³¹

Table 7:9 Swindon branch Industrial Section membership, 1935-1938.

<u>Quarter ending</u>	<u>I.S. members</u>	<u>Total members*</u>
Jan. 1935	80	449
Apr. 1936	190	581
Jan. 1938	174	587

* excluding superannuated, widows, and Rule 21.

The South West Area Council unanimously supported the Swindon proposed rule change.²³² The executive agreed to put the suggestion to national ballot, on the July 1938 branch quarterly night, but without any amendment or comment²³³ - in strict contrast to its temporising attitude to the 1935 attempts by Manchester branches to get a national ballot to abolish the Industrial Section. The most vocal opposition to the Swindon amendment came from the Liverpool District Council who, taking a leaf out of the executive's book, suggested unsuccessfully that the result of the ballot vote be submitted for consideration at the next Rules Revision. They meanwhile advised their constituent branches to vote against the proposed change, and, in the event of the Swindon amendment being carried, to oppose the enrolment of skilled men into the Industrial Section.²³⁴

The ballot vote was a decisive 2-1 in favour of the Swindon proposal - 4,328 to 2,278. While the EC had supported Swindon's right to go for a rule change by national ballot, they drew the minimum amount of attention to the result.²³⁵ They had shown clearly that they wanted the Industrial Section to stay, and they did not want to further undermine Table A membership if they could avoid it; but neither were they prepared to discourage other new

members from joining the traditional benefit-tables (and therefore paying higher subscriptions) now that the unemployment crisis had subsided.

An analysis of the voting shows that 88 branches voted in favour, 27 against, one had a tied vote, and 25 did not participate. Not surprisingly, most of the railway centres, which all faced similar problems with the NUR, voted in favour. Wolverton, which had opposed the admission of women in 1931, and Eastleigh, voted against. Branches with significant Industrial Section membership - Saltley, Birmingham No.1, and Coventry - voted in favour, while in the union's blackspots in the car industry, the voting was unusual: Oxford was 57-5 in favour, while Northfield was 5-25 against and Luton 3-15.

In the first real national test of opinion on the Industrial Section, the southern area, on the whole, voted in favour, against the surprising advice of their Area Council.²³⁶ And the Liverpool area also rebuffed their Council, with the branches split evenly on the issue. While the area recorded a majority of votes against, these were concentrated in three branches - Southport, who had led the original opposition in 1932, voting 2-87, while Blackburn recorded 9-62 and Wigan 0-175.

It was ironic that it was in a railway centre in the late 1930s that the local members took a stand for cheaper union membership, some 25 years after the formation of the NUR had given vehicle builders in railway workshops a cheaper rival union to join.

Table 7:10 Semi-skilled and Industrial Section membership of particular branches, 1931-1935.

	<u>Oct. 1931</u>	<u>Jan. 1935</u>	
	<u>s/sk.</u>	<u>s/sk.</u>	<u>I.S.</u>
Battersea	14	2	18
Ealing	22	3	66
Edinburgh	17	4	30 (Edinburgh 1)
		1	25 (Edinburgh 2)
Greenwich	23	7	67
Glasgow	55	-	76
Liverpool 1	24	7	6
Liverpool 2	11	-	21
London South	18	9	25
Saltley	18	5	217
Southwark	15	5	108
Stoke Newington	22	-	86
Total	239	43	745

Table 7:11 Quarterly recruitment of under-35 year olds, 1930-1937.

<u>Qtr ended</u>	<u>Apps.</u>	<u>Table A</u>	<u>s/sk<35</u>	<u>IS<35</u>
Jul. 1930	152	101	14	-
Oct. 1930	225	196	11	-
Jan. 1931	167	113	10	-
Apr. 1931	169	73	6	-
Jul. 1931	79	42	9	-
Oct. 1931	131	94	25	-
Jan. 1932	69	52	8	-
Apr. 1932	68	69	-	93
Jul. 1932	60	49	-	33
Oct. 1932	48	31	-	51
Jan. 1933	58	23	-	49
Apr. 1933	51	63	-	72
Jul. 1933	47	54	-	142
Oct. 1933	90	108	-	105
Jan. 1934	84	166	-	133
Apr. 1934	195	335	-	284
Jul. 1934	119	296	-	144
Oct. 1934	134	340	-	133
Jan. 1935	181	331	-	183
Apr. 1935	231	354	-	184
Jul. 1935	158	287	-	170
Oct. 1935	119	223	-	155
Jan. 1936	273	376	-	277
Apr. 1936	298	440	-	224
Jul. 1936	239	412	-	237
Oct. 1936	206	356	-	166
Jan. 1937	204	290	20	76
Apr. 1937	277	457	78	103
Jul. 1937	287	485	68	77
Oct. 1937	268	333	58	39

C. SUPERANNUATION BENEFIT.

A major factor limiting the NUVB's seriousness in promoting the cheaper unionism of the Industrial Section was that it exacerbated the growing crisis in the funding of Superannuation Benefit. Throughout the 1920s, about two thirds of the membership had a vested interest in this benefit - those paying it (Table A, and semi-skilled under 35); those who would start paying it (apprentices); and those in receipt of it (the superannuated). This proportion increased to nearly three-quarters in the dramatic membership contraction of the early 1930s. At the same time the visible evidence of superannuated members themselves grew significantly. From 328 in January 1921 it steadily rose to 727 in January 1931, accelerating to 839 only nine months later.

While the Industrial Section helped in the early 1930s to reduce the union's liability for unemployment benefit, when that was the main drain on the union's resources, it had damaging side-effects. Many potential Table A recruits joined the Industrial Section, and the already decreasing flow of funds into the Superannuation Account was further reduced. Even Scottish organiser Symington, who had strongly supported the setting up of an Industrial Section, felt moved to declare that unless craftsmen joined Table A, it would "inevitably spell the doom of superannuation benefit".²³⁷

This new crisis, though less visible to the ordinary member initially, eventually necessitated cuts in superannuation benefit (outlined in section A), which, combined with levies and increased subscriptions, added a

further twist to the spiral of membership decline (see section D below). The resolution of this problem was necessarily interlinked with the fate of the Industrial Section in the 1930s, and, with any attempt to move away from the confines of craft unionism at some future date.

In retrospect, what stands out regarding the administration of superannuation benefit throughout the 1920s is the complacency of the majority of the union leadership, with one notable exception. In the early 1920s, however, the situation looked relatively rosy. The amalgamation terms agreed with the Wheelwrights in July 1923 even included an extra category of claimant - those with 25 years membership at age 60.²³⁹ In 1924 the Superannuation Fund stood at over £52,000. At the executive's suggestion, that year's Delegate Meeting agreed that as the rule stated that only £20,000 should be set aside and invested for superannuation purposes, the extra £32,000 should be transferred to the General Fund.²³⁹ Until the next rules revision, in 1928, the Superannuation Reserve Fund accumulated interest, plus one fifth of the annual gain from the balance of superannuation benefits over contributions. It was then decided, with the fund standing at £23,582-19s-4d, that 4% interest per annum should be added in lieu of the interest on investments.²⁴⁰

As long as superannuation contributions exceeded benefits, the financial arrangements concerning the benefit posed no problems. Throughout the 1920s, superannuation income remained roughly constant; the expansion of membership, through the merger with the Wheelwrights in 1925, temporarily counteracting the effect of a reduction in weekly superannuation contribution from 5d to 4d in 1924. But expenditure was on an upward trend

which accelerated in the late 1920s and early 1930s, overtaking income in the second quarter of 1930, coincidentally the same time that the union's unemployment benefit payments rapidly increased.

While superannuation benefit remained in operation, the union was, in many ways, still committed to the nineteenth century craft union method of what the Webbs called "mutual insurance".²⁴¹ At least one person recognised many of the potential problems, and that was Halliwell. While London organiser in the mid-1920s, he wrote a very far-sighted piece, which is worth looking at in some detail.

Referring to the Conservative Government's plans to extend various national insurance benefits, especially old age pensions, he asked: "What effect will this extension have upon the Trade Union movement? Will it undermine the rock upon which many Trade Unions have built their sheet-anchor? Have the Government realised that the men who have remained loyal to their organisations in the most difficult times have been those *who had vested interests in the shape of superannuation benefits?*"

The sums of national insurance to be paid weekly by workers "will make it increasingly difficult to organise men in some fields of industry who are not too well paid, and upon *our basis of organisation.*" And "this will, again, be intensified by the competition of *the big cheap unions*". But "it is no use *sneering* at the big cheap union; circumstances are changing - circumstances *over which we have little control.* Compulsory National Insurance has come to stay.....We must recognise these changing conditions, and *not bury our heads, ostrich-like, in the sand.*"

He continued, "This is a very delicate subject, one that may be 'taboo' for an official", and concluded "I am *not* here advocating the stopping of superannuation benefit; far from it; *but* the recognition of the fact that this section of the pioneer work of the Trade Union movement has now been taken over by the Government and that *our work lies in organising men in industry, irrespective of whether they desire or can even afford to further insure against old age and infirmity.*"²⁴²

Halliwell's appears to have been a lone voice and even he significantly toned down his opinions a few years later. By then he was an Assistant General Secretary, with a good chance of succeeding the General Secretary within a few years. In this position he could not afford to alienate the superannuation benefit-paying majority in the union, in particular the local branch officers, who would hold great sway over which way their members voted in any election. More charitably, it might be that he realised the union was stuck on the horns of a dilemma. If it stopped superannuation benefit and contributions it might lose its "sheet-anchor", and have problems in surviving a difficult period. Whereas the only way the NUVB could afford to honour its future commitments to its superannuation paying members was to recruit an ever-increasing number of them.

Whatever the reason, Halliwell became much more cautious. Writing in the period before the 1931 Delegate Meeting, he argued that "modification must be made, new ideas and rules will have to be introduced to deal with the new phases of production", but at the same time "the value of our table A membership has been fully demonstrated during these difficult times; too much interference in this direction will certainly shake us seriously."²⁴³

Elsewhere in the union's hierarchy there seemed little outward sign of concern. The executive had reported in 1923 that "superannuation and contributing members may be assured that this Fund is substantially safe and secure for another generation."²⁴⁴ Four years later, anticipating the effect of the new Pensions Act, operative from January 1928, the executive noted that "some prophets are confident that the Act will mean an increased liability on the [Superannuation] Fund, as men will be encouraged to retire at an earlier period". But "we may be assured we can meet any such contingency if the young men of the coming years fulfil the obligations that past and present generations have ensured to their aged fellow-members".²⁴⁵

Motions tabled for the 1931 Delegate Meeting, however, show the split among the branches on the growing crisis in superannuation finances. Most of those submitting motions wanted to strengthen the existing benefit. Bolton, Swindon, Bristol and Shepherds Bush all wanted the Superannuation fund to be totally separate from the General Fund, and inviolate. Several branches wanted to raise contributions - Bolton, Coventry and Lincoln wanted 5d per week, Bristol 4/6 per quarter, as against 4d pw (ie 4/4 per quarter). London Central wanted Table A contribution up to 2s pw with benefits accordingly increased.

Glasgow and Springburn wanted to keep the contributions at 4d pw but to reduce the benefits, Glasgow arguing that the only alternative to reducing the benefit was a 25% increase in contributions - ie to 5d pw. While they admitted this was likely to be ultimately necessary as well, they also pointed out that the contribution should never have been reduced from 5d

(in 1924) in the first place, though obviously felt that the membership would not stand for increased contributions.

Glasgow also wanted Table A membership to extend to all joining before the age of 45 (optional to the semi-skilled) and introduce a new, lower, minimum qualification of 20 years before claiming superannuation benefit. London branch also wanted to extend the benefit, by making all members joining the union under the age of 35 pay Superannuation contributions. Saltley branch, in contrast, wanted members when they reached 35 to be able to transfer to Table B, without loss of previous membership; and Birmingham No.1 branch wanted members of over 10 years standing to be given the opportunity to stop paying into the fund, and be eligible for a lump sum, at age 60, of an amount less than they had paid in.²⁴⁵

Neither the Birmingham nor Saltley proposals met with any favour, and the Delegate Meeting merely decided on an increase to 5d per week, without reduction in benefit.²⁴⁷ Halliwell later noted that while there was a feeling that the benefit was on too high a scale owing to the increasing demands upon the fund, there was a "sympathetic feeling towards those who had built up the organisation".²⁴⁸ When circumstances forced substantial cuts, eventually to half benefit, in 1932, Halliwell pointed out that while the *individual* member might complain, there could be no complaint in the aggregate, as the amount paid out in July 1932 was over double that of only 8 years earlier. Unemployment had forced members on to the fund much earlier, and the average period for which a member drew the benefit had greatly increased.²⁴⁹

Once again, Halliwell used the Journal to flag up another proposal. Arguing that the effect of the new Industrial Section upon the Superannuation Fund needed consideration, he concluded, "It is my opinion that it may be necessary, at some time or other, to consider, like many other organisations have been compelled to do: a limited period of years for which benefit can be paid".²⁵⁰ His idea was not taken up.

The initial cut in superannuation benefit produced a very hostile reaction from some sections of the active membership. The South West Area Council found it the most objectionable of all the cuts,²⁵¹ while the Scottish district thought it unfair to cut this benefit when unemployment benefit was the chief drain on funds and it was not being cut, and when if the Superannuation's Funds resources had been properly safeguarded, such a cut would not have been necessary.²⁵² The problem with this approach was that it tended to ignore the chief function of the union. If superannuation benefit was its overriding concern, then £32,000 would not have been transferred into the General Fund in 1924; the union would then have had difficulty paying out dispute benefit for the General Strike, unemployment benefit liabilities would have hit it much earlier, and so on.

However, it was a popular line to take, with the Manchester district arguing there should have been a 1d per working day levy rather than a cut in the benefit.²⁵³ And the Liverpool district regretted that the superannuation section had not been reviewed "with a view to making such a substantial pension scheme". This could be done by increased superannuation contributions.²⁵⁴

The 50% reductions in all Rule Book benefits later that year received little organised protest, as many of the Area Councils did not meet in September, in line with the executive recommendation for 6-monthly meetings. But even two years later, an Oldham branch resolution, supported by the Manchester District Council and Coventry branch among others, was demanding that the superannuation fund be used only for that purpose, and not used to subsidise any other fund without the express permission of the superannuation paying members.²⁵⁵ This approach was years too late, however, and flew in the face of the reality of the new situation.

The impact of the membership decline was such that the superannuation income for the last quarter of 1931, when the superannuation contribution was 4d per week, was £3,680; while a year later, after the contribution had risen to 5d, the income had fallen to £2,626. With such a drastic fall in income, Milne could observe in June 1933 that the superannuation fund stood quite favourably "only as long as 50% benefits were being paid".²⁵⁶

In fact, during the whole period of the 1930s, quarterly superannuation income generally exceeded expenditure only during 1933 and 1934 (and then only by a small amount). In 1933 the benefit stood at half the rule book rate; while in 1934, after a slight increase in benefit, the superannuation allocation from the contribution had been increased from 5d to 6d. In 1936, with the benefit back to near its 1931 level, the executive noted that it could only be maintained by "a continual influx of more and more members into this section". Despite this warning, they felt confident enough to argue that "New recruits into Table A membership is helping to solve our

difficulties. The fund once again promises a return to stability such as will inspire confidence in its security."²⁵⁷

The EC at this time believed they had reached a temporary peak in the numbers drawing the benefit.²⁵⁸ Consequently their strategy of steering new members into Table A made short-term sense. However, they also alerted the membership to the fact that, with a minimum qualification for the benefit of only 25 years membership at age 60, they were on the verge of "the largest reservoir of members eligible for benefit".²⁵⁹

Unless there was a radical reconsideration of the benefit, as had been adopted by a number of other unions, then the NUVB had no alternative but to continue to steer new members into Table A, even though this was in competition with the cheaper mass unionism that the Industrial Section theoretically promised. Traditional craft unionism could only survive if the already notional commitment to industrial unionism weakened.

Addendum: The wider union experience

The NUVB was not the only union that experienced difficulties with the increasing burden of superannuation payments in the inter-war period. While the union's various financial manoeuvres managed to restore the benefit to near its pre-1932 figure within three and a half years, they did not resolve the fundamental problems. These were put off until well into the post-war period; and the union's leadership, almost to a man, seemed uninterested in learning from the experiences of other unions. While a

general review of union superannuation schemes is beyond the bounds of this thesis, a brief look at the experience of three unions in the same size range, and one (the Boilermakers) twice as large, highlights similar problems and different solutions.

The Shipwrights limited their benefit in 1927 to a period of 5 years, but even then were forced to suspend it totally in 1931; only reintroducing a nominal payment in 1938.²⁵⁰ The Boilermakers had over £300,000 in their Superannuation Fund in the early 1920s, but by the end of 1932 the fund was in deficit. From late 1929, only members with at least 40 years membership could apply for the benefit. A reduction in the benefit in 1931 was followed the next year by further reductions, and the decision to limit the period of benefit to 5 years.²⁵¹

The Foundry Workers were first forced to cut superannuation in 1927 to enable them to continue paying their own unemployment benefit as a precondition for continuing to administer state unemployment benefit. During the next year a Rules Revision Conference limited the benefit to those with 35 or more years' membership. With unemployment among their membership exceeding 20% in late 1930, they were in quick succession forced into two packages of cuts, which both included further decreases in superannuation benefit. A thorough review of the union's finances took place during 1933-34 by the union's National Council, which declared that superannuation benefit was both "ill-conceived and actuarially unsound from its inception", it being "an insufferable barrier to any possibility of financial recovery". The resulting scheme, which proposed limiting a member's superannuation benefit to a period of six years, roughly in line

with payments into the fund, was, however, narrowly thrown out in a national ballot. But, eventually, in 1936, a similar proposal was accepted.²⁶²

Superannuation problems were not confined to craft unions in the engineering and related industries. Even in the well-paid printing trade, the same problems of actuarial unsoundness arose. The Typographical Association dealt with the growing numbers on its superannuation benefit in the inter-war period by increasing subscriptions on a piecemeal basis. While their EC drew up a number of alternative schemes in the late 1920s to put the Superannuation Fund on a sound basis, these were thrown out by a Delegate Meeting in 1930, which incredibly adopted the one proposal - for a new grade after twenty year's membership at age 60 - which further increased expenditure. Musson has written that, regarding superannuation, successive T.A. delegate meetings "closed their eyes and hoped for the best". The increasing cost of subscriptions through the 1930s and wartime, coupled with the extension of state old age pension benefits after the war, eventually led even this union to agree in a ballot to wind up the fund at the end of 1947.²⁶³ The T.A. had, by a very different route, reached the same conclusion that the Foundry Workers had, when, in mid-1946, the latter agreed to continue paying the already limited benefit only to existing superannuated members, and not to allow any more claims.²⁶⁴

The NUVB, however, having weathered the financial storm of the 1930s, avoided taking any resolute action, and merely stored up problems for a much later period.

D. MEMBERSHIP LOSS.

Accompanying the heavy unemployment afflicting the union's members from the middle of 1930 was a massive drop in membership. This further exacerbated the union's problem of balancing the books, and also severely hit the superannuation account, with results described in the previous section. Major changes had occurred in vehicle building; technical changes and mass production techniques were undermining the craft basis of car body production. At the same time, the early 1930s witnessed the continuing shake-out of marginal car firms. But a detailed analysis reveals that, while there was some permanent contraction of NUVB employment opportunities in certain car industry and coachbuilding areas, the membership decline was not generally a result of unemployed members leaving the union in droves.

The union had reached its peak inter-war quarterly membership figure in July 1926, just after the General Strike. A year later it had lost more than two and a half thousand members, just over 8%. Membership then fluctuated within a few hundred either side of 29,500 for the next 3½ years, until early 1931, when it fell dramatically.

Membership fell for 15 consecutive quarters, between April 1930 and January 1934. Most of this decline was concentrated in the 2½ year period January 1931 to July 1933, which saw a one third membership drop, and particularly the 21 months to October 1932 when over one quarter of the membership was lost.

Table 7:12 NUVB membership decline, 1930-1934.

<u>Membership</u>		<u>Period</u>	<u>Absolute loss</u>	<u>%age loss</u>
<u>Jan. 1931</u>	<u>Oct. 1932</u>			
29,167	21,716	1.75yrs	7,451	25.5%
<u>Jan. 1931</u>	<u>Jul. 1933</u>			
29,167	19,473	2.50yrs	9,694	33.2%
<u>Apr. 1930</u>	<u>Jan. 1934</u>			
29,555	19,190	3.75yrs	10,365	35.1%

During the period of drastic membership decline, one section of the "membership" was actually growing - and that was the superannuated, widows (who were entitled to funeral benefit) and Rule 20/21 members (ie overseas members; those who were employers; and those working at a diferent trade). As a result the relative decline in working-age membership was worse than the aggregate figures show.

Taking the period January 1931 to January 1933, for which the appropriate figures are available, while total membership fell 27.9%, the drop in members working at the trade or unemployed was even greater at 30.2%. With the very high levels of unemployment at the time, the union's actual presence in the workplace was even more reduced. Using figures available for the beginning of 1933 we find:

(a) Members working at the trade or unemployed:	19,437
(b) Members unemployed	c. 4,800
(c) Members actually working (a -b)	c.14,600
(d) Number of "apprentices"	1,161
(e) Adult members working (c - d)	c.13,500

This last figure was approximately half the working adult membership at the union's inter-war peak in 1926.

Two questions need to be asked. Where did this loss take place, and why? An answer to the first question might, by highlighting regional or industrial variations, help us with the second, more important, question.

From the end of 1930 to the end of 1933, when total membership dropped by 9,977 or 34.2%, about one quarter of the total national membership loss was concentrated in 7 Midlands branches, which collectively lost over half their membership. These branches had members overwhelmingly concentrated in the car industry &/or the railway carriage/bus/tram contract shops.

Table 7:13 Membership loss in selected Midlands branches, 1930-1933

<u>Branch</u>	<u>end 1930</u>	<u>end 1933</u>	<u>Loss</u>
Birmingham No.1	425	219	206
Coventry	2312	1032	1280
Handsworth	413	265	148
Loughborough	333	218	115
Saltley	954	469	485
Wolverhampton No.1	292	147	145
Wolverhampton No.2	280	140	140
<u>Total</u>	<u>5009</u>	<u>2490</u>	<u>2519</u>

The other single most identifiable area of loss were those branches with railway company workshops in their area. It is difficult to be precise, but about another 2,500 members were lost in these branches, most of whom would have been employed at the workshops. The biggest falls were from 6 of the largest branches, losing, in total, over half their membership.

Table 7:14 Membership loss in selected railway town branches, 1930-1933

<u>Branch</u>	<u>end 1930</u>	<u>end 1933</u>	<u>Loss</u>
Derby	250	129	121
Eastleigh	262	127	135
Newton Heath	554	245	309
Stratford	352	214	138
Swindon	1032	510	522
Wolverton	728	338	390
<u>Total</u>	<u>3178</u>	<u>1563</u>	<u>1615</u>

Outside of the big Midland, especially West Midland, branches and the railway communities, the membership losses were generally less spectacular. In London, because of the general geographical basis of the branches (though some grew up based around particularly large workplaces), it is futile to pick out individual branches. After allowing for those branches more associated with railway membership, London branches lost about 1,750 members.

This leaves about 3,250 members unaccounted for. Ireland, with 200 lost (a 15% drop) and Scotland with 300 (a 10% drop), were relatively unaffected. The north-west of England saw some big losses, with 4 branches

- Liverpool No.1, Liverpool No.2, Preston, and Leyland - alone losing over 450 (a 34% drop, in line with the national average); while the Manchester area (Manchester No.1, Manchester No.2, Oldham, Salford, Stockport), the Manchester railway branches of Openshaw and Dukinfield (but excluding Newton Heath), and the nearby towns of Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, and Wigan, only saw a drop of just over 400, or around 14-15%.

The eastern side of England, however, saw some significant absolute drops, though the percentages varied widely - Newcastle 97 (25%), Sheffield No.1 104 (38%), Lincoln 99 (20%), and Lowestoft 110 (63%). Lowestoft seems to have been hit by a temporary rundown of work locally, and later rapidly grew to over 500 members in 1937. In the northern Home Counties, however, the losses were permanent, with the effective ending of the old coachbuilding industry. Biggleswade branch was closed in 1932, Bedford and Huntingdon branches the following year,²⁵⁵ while Leighton Buzzard lost most of its members, finally closing in 1936/37. Along with a small drop in Newport Pagnell, these branches lost some 300 in total. The remainder of the loss, about 1,000 - 1,500, was fairly evenly distributed among the remaining English and Welsh branches.

Why did the membership drop? Where there were factory or workshop closures, particular branches saw big drops and a few were even closed down, as at Biggleswade. Some of the previous membership would find work elsewhere, eventually move, and possibly transfer to another branch; others who remained based in the area, might well remain on the branch's books if unemployed or nearing superannuation age. Some would leave the industry altogether, and their membership would lapse in time.

But while there were a number of closures in the period, they would only account for a small percentage of the total membership loss. Except where the trade had totally disappeared from an area, and members wished to remain in that area, there was every reason to remain on the union's books. The branch administered state as well as union unemployment benefit; superannuation contributions needed to be kept up by those eligible; in some areas, such as Glasgow, non-union members would find it difficult to get work in most workplaces;²⁶⁶ and, generally, many branches and district offices fulfilled several of the functions of a labour exchange in the local area. In addition, there was the social function of the branch helping members keep in touch with each other, through meetings, the collection of benefit and payment of subscriptions, signing the unemployed book, and so on; as well as various local disbursements to those in extreme hardship. For the long-term unemployed, there was also extended union benefit, which was paid from early 1928 till the end of 1931.

The Unemployment Insurance Act of 1927 had created an obligation on the part of those "associations of insured persons" administering state unemployment benefit that, from April 1928 when it came into force, they would pay a benefit from the union's own funds at the rate of 6d per day (1e 3s per week) to members who had exhausted their normal union benefit, but were still drawing state unemployment benefit.²⁶⁷

The 1927 Act continued the practice of "extended [state] benefit" for those who had exhausted their insurance rights to standard benefit. This enabled an unemployed person to continue to draw a "transitional" benefit if they had eight insurance contributions in two years, or thirty at any

time. Subject to certain conditions, "transitional" benefit could be drawn indefinitely.²⁶⁸ Effectively, all unemployed NUVB members, while unemployed, were guaranteed state benefit, plus some benefit from their union. There was, therefore, no conceivable reason why any unemployed member should wish to leave the union before the end of 1931. For those out of union benefit, their 3s per week would more than cover their weekly contribution into the Superannuation and/or Sick fund, if relevant. (It is not clear whether at this time whether those members out of benefit continued to pay a token 3d per week into the General Fund which those on normal union benefit paid).

The legal requirement to pay the 3s per week benefit was later removed by the 1930 Unemployment Insurance Act. The Manchester No.1 branch requested that, as the original ruling had been enforced upon the union, and was now in the rule book, that there should be a ballot on whether to continue the 3s payment; while the Liverpool District Council openly declared that the clause should be rescinded.²⁶⁹ Eventually the same question went to a ballot vote, which came out decisively in favour of its continuation, by 7,513 - 3,109. Most branches were in favour (Coventry by the large margin of 448 - 39), but, interestingly, a number of the large railway branches recorded significant votes against (Swindon 245 - 217; Wolverton 151 - 103; Newton Heath 76 - 66), with Dukinfield having a clear majority against (62 - 130), reflecting their presumed relative security of employment.²⁷⁰

The 3s union benefit continued in operation until the end of 1931, and must be the main supporting evidence for the proposition that unemployed

members had no financial reason before that date to leave the union while they remained unemployed. The fact that normal union unemployment benefit had been halved in May 1931 in no way invalidates this proposition. Nor does the collection of the £1 levy from unemployed members in late 1930 and early 1931; those already on the 3s benefit would presumably pay half of that sum every week until the debt was discharged. The situation, however, changed drastically at the end of 1931. An "Order in Council", operative from mid-November, limited the period of right to statutory unemployment benefit to 26 weeks in a benefit year; all those not entitled had to apply for "transitional payments", which were now subject to a Means Test.²⁷¹ Those NUVB members who found themselves on transitional payments, had their 3s per week union benefit counted as part of their income when they were means-tested. The NUVB Delegate Meeting in December was therefore forced to repeal the 3s per week clause,²⁷² and sever one of the life-lines connecting the union with its longer-term unemployed members.

The corollary of the proposition that it was not the unemployed members who first left the union, is that it was the employed who did. The main initial erosion of membership seemed to occur because of the increased contributions necessary, and the reduced benefits these increased contributions paid for. From October 1931 this was compounded by an increase of 3d per week toward the state unemployment insurance scheme.²⁷³

When the £1 levy was imposed, in late November 1930, it caused a storm of protest, and the organisers initially had their work cut out visiting branches to explain the need for it. Floyd reported that it led to "very strong resolutions" from some branches, but once the situation was

explained, the meetings were nearly unanimous in support. Symington addressed a number of branch meetings in Scotland where members complained that there had been no ballot on the levy. Glasgow branch even refused to impose the levy, and continued to pay full unemployment benefit, until they were compelled to fall into line.

Francis likewise had to win support for the measure.²⁷⁴ At Coventry, the branch committee were initially hostile and demanded to know by what authority the EC had imposed a levy without due notice.²⁷⁵ The Coventry branch membership declined from 2,312 in January 1931 to 1,692 a year later. By October 1931, only £1,689-15-6d had been collected, with no more coming in during the next 6 months. While there was a definite temporary decline in available employment in Coventry vehicle building in the early 1930s, which, in turn, allowed some employers to take a harder line against the union (which will be explored in chapter 8), it seems highly probable that the £1 levy, and subsequent contribution increases, had a major impact; one branch member, for example, stressed in October 1932 the effect that increased contributions and reduced benefits was having on the existing membership.²⁷⁶ The continuing erosion of members in Coventry led the branch to formally write to the union journal suggesting means of cutting overheads, because "by keeping benefits low and no lowering of contributions, we are losing a vast amount of members".²⁷⁷

There are, however, only a few, often oblique (and usually written years afterwards), references in union sources to the impact of the union's austerity measures. One, written in 1950, referred to "the falling off of membership as a result of the £1 levy".²⁷⁸ The Coventry branch in 1938

referred to the early 1930s as a period when levies and benefit cuts led to "our membership [being] greatly reduced by such levies etc".²⁷⁹ At Wolverton, men with 20 and 25 years membership reputedly left when superannuation benefit was cut.²⁸⁰ In 1935, organiser Penn found ex-members, who had left because of the levies, employed in the Hants and Dorset Bus Company and the nearby tram works.²⁸¹ Fortunately for the union, not all those who refused to pay either left or were excluded, as in 1938 the shop secretary at the Acton Works of the London Underground reported that some of the members in arrears persisted in saying they would not pay the £1 levy - "they are otherwise clear".²⁸²

However, some remarks by Halliwell nearer the time help to confirm this general proposition. Referring to the union's financial position in early 1932, he noted "Perhaps the most alarming feature is the effect of the increased contributions upon the membership - there can be no question that many members have jibbed against them. The anticipated revenue has not come in. Had members who were on the books at the time of delegate meeting met their responsibility, this quarter would have shown a balance of income." And commenting on the end of the ½d per working day levy, in operation from August 1932 to September 1933, Halliwell wrote "The imposition of a small levy has proved to be far more dangerous to the stability of the organisation than has the cut in benefits".²⁸³

The EC complained soon after the imposition of the ½d levy that "a greater portion of the criticism comes from Municipal Employment centres". Organiser Floyd had earlier reported particular trouble over the £1 levy at Corporation Tramcar works in Rotherham, Derby and Stockport. With the ½d

per day levy, arrears and lapsed membership reached "crisis proportions" at the Manchester Corporation Car Works early in 1933. Later that year, Floyd himself noted that arrears and lapsing in his area was more a problem of municipal employment, where men were in fairly regular work, and "the excuse that the Society cannot meet all the Benefits is often used". Even in Scotland, Symington reported in 1933 that the number of "desertions" at the Edinburgh Corporation's Shrubhill works had reached alarming proportions, and he had had to spend two days persuading the majority of them back into the union.²⁹⁴

It does appear that many of the members in relatively secure employment in the railway workshops and the various municipal transport undertakings, which usually also provided a pension, saw little point in remaining in the union because of the increased cost involved. This is possibly what happened in Swindon when the branch had a net loss of 222 members in the first quarter of 1931 alone (though there was also poaching by the NUR²⁹⁵). Swindon had had by far the largest absolute vote against the 1d per day levy - some 143, although 371 voted in favour. And only £226 was credited to Swindon for payment of the £1 levy; and unless the big majority of the branch had spells of unemployment in early 1931 long enough for the levy to be deducted, then quite possibly large numbers were in arrears for some period. The evidence suggests that a large number left over the levy. Substantial numbers were also lost to both Swindon and Wolverton, in late 1932 and early 1933, coinciding with the ½d per day levy.

This was not a universal experience, but was fairly widespread. Some areas, or individual workplaces, held out against this through the strength

of tradition and local organisation. Scotland was clearly one such area, despite the district as a whole experiencing the longest sustained period of unemployment among their members of any district in the union. Apart from a brief drop in the summer of 1932, the quarterly unemployment figures from November 1931 to February 1934 consistently show more than one quarter of the membership unemployed - there being between 600 and 750 out at any one time. While the Springburn branch, covering the railway workshops at St. Rollox and Cowlairs, experienced a higher membership fall than the Scottish average, at about 18% it was still only just over half the union average. The large Glasgow branch, with 964 members in 1931, had no net loss of members that year, and less than 9% over the next two years. The only breakdown of branch unemployment in Scotland is for December 1932, when one quarter of the Glasgow membership were out of work; while, at the same time, Motherwell branch, which actually gained a few members in the early 1930s, had 50% unemployment.²⁹⁶ (Footnotes 196 and 266 give accounts of the organisation in Glasgow.)

Local factors were very important in understanding the variety of reactions among the union membership to the circumstances facing them in the early 1930s. The experience of Liverpool No.1 branch helps to underline this. Much of this branch's membership loss in the early 1930s took place in the second quarter of 1932 (when membership fell from 456 to 375), at a time of very high local unemployment and weakened union influence. The branch's losses were later explained as follows - "The blizzard of unemployment blighted only a few persons whose confidence in our Union left them while they were sheltered under the cover of regular employment".²⁹⁷

In fact, the circumstances were extreme. Firstly, an eight and a half month strike involving 47 men in Liverpool (and 68 in Manchester) finished in the middle of May 1932. This was against 12 local member firms (6 in each town) of the National Federation of Vehicle Trades, who were trying to end the 2½d per hour paid locally above the national minimum rate. These firms were in a very depressed state of trade even before the strike, and when an agreement was finally reached on a 1d reduction, there were no members taken back into the shops to enforce the new rates. Some 4 months later 38 of the Liverpool strikers were still unemployed.²⁹⁹

While the strike was on, the union had been able to forestall cuts by various employers who followed the national agreement. But, locally, it might have been seen by many members as a Pyrrhic victory, and it had cost the union and themselves a lot of money (even though it helped keep wages up). Over £5,000 was paid out to the Liverpool and Manchester strikers in official strike pay, overriding the 13 week rule on dispute benefit. Local collections to supplement strike pay included over £1,400 from Liverpool No.1's working members.²⁹⁹ A 5s weekly levy was initially collected from every working member in the branch, starting two weeks before the strike.²⁹⁰ Without figures for unemployment in the branch, it is not possible to assess how successful this was, but at this weekly rate, an average of over 200 members paid the levy during the first fourteen weeks of the strike.²⁹¹ And these sums were on top of the national levies earlier that year.

To make matters worse, early in 1932, about 120 bodymakers were suspended from Liverpool Corporation Tramways; and it was not until about a

year later that members started being taken back, the branch ensuring that this was done in strict order of length of service. By mid-1933 the majority had returned, with the rest joining them over the next year.²⁹² Mid-1932 therefore saw the Liverpool No.1 branch at its nadir, and an exodus of employed members, many of whom may have been in arrears with various levies, was perhaps not surprising.

However, all this is not to suggest that unemployment did not play some direct role. The very high levels of unemployment in the union's West Midlands area, especially from mid-1931 to mid-1932, mainly caused by lack of work in the railway contract shops, led to major problems of arrears and lapsing of membership. The Saltley and Handsworth branches made a lot of efforts to counter this in the early 1930s, but could only be properly effective when men started back in the contract shops. A shop meeting at the Washwood Heath [Midland] works of the Metropolitan company in the summer of 1932 got the necessary men to rejoin; a year later, with another batch of fresh employees at the same works, many "laggards and strayers ... had to be induced to come up to scratch", while a few months later a mass meeting was followed by a card inspection. Only one refused to rejoin, but paid up after everyone else had struck for 3 hours. The Gloucester branch, dependent on their local contract shop, faced a similar situation. Organiser Francis wrote of "the appalling unemployment which has prevailed in these shops and which is largely responsible for the falling away of members".²⁹³

Because of local variations, therefore, any attempt at a single general explanation for the factors behind the one third drop in membership would

be wrong. Table 7:15 summarises the relevant national information for the two and a half year period from January 1931:

Table 7:15 Membership Loss, Unemployment, Contributions, and Benefits.
Jan. 1931-Jul. 1933.

<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Net loss of members</u>	<u>Unemployed at end qtr.</u>	<u>Table A weekly contribution</u>	<u>Cuts in benefits</u>
Jan-Apr. 31	807	>4000	1s9d + £1 levy	Levy from unemp ben
Apr-Jul. 31	1135	4315	1s9d till May 1s5d from May	unemp ben ½.
Jul-Oct. 31	966	5980	1s5d	
Oct. 31-Jan. 32	936	5563	1s5d	
Jan-Apr. 32	697	4910	1s6d	
Apr-Jul. 32	1720	4243	1s6d	super ben cut Jul. 32
Jul-Oct. 32	1190	5347	1s9d from Aug.	all bens cut ½ in Aug. 32
Oct. 32-Jan. 33	699	4817	1s9d	
Jan-Apr. 33	574	4803	1s9d	
Apr-Jul. 33	970	3196	1s9d	

Interpreting this table, the membership loss in 1931 was a reaction to the 1d per working day levy operating from October 1930 to April 1931, combined with the £1 levy instituted in November 1930. This was compounded by cutting unemployment benefit in half from May 1931, even though the 1d

per working day levy was stopped at that time, and replaced by a 2d per week increase. The members who left during 1931 mainly did so as a reaction to these various financial changes, which made union membership more expensive. Any delay in paying these extra charges would lead to rapidly increasing arrears, thus compounding the problem.

The 1931 Delegate Meeting further increased the weekly contribution by one penny, and unemployment benefit was confirmed at its current half rate. There were no further changes until the summer of 1932 when, initially, superannuation benefit was cut; but this was followed in the next month by a 50% cut in the rule book rate of all benefits (bringing unemployment benefit down to one quarter of its early 1931 rate - meaning in practice 3s per week [see below]). These cuts were accompanied by a ½d per working day levy, and remained without any change until September 1933.

The 1,190 leaving in the third quarter of 1932 would include many leaving due to this combination of higher contributions; the prospect of very low superannuation benefit; and an unemployment benefit reduced so much that after the first ten weeks, there would be either 13 or 16 weeks at 3s per week, minus 3d toward that unemployment benefit, 5d for superannuation and 4d for the Sick Fund, if eligible for these last two. Further, after May 1931, no member could receive more than 26 weeks benefit in a 65 week period; and to qualify for a second period of benefit, a member must have actually worked, as well as paying full subscriptions, for at least 39 weeks since the last unemployment. 294

For those experiencing regular periods of unemployment, this last factor might have put even the greatly reduced union unemployment benefit, as well as the statutory state benefit, out of their reach, and persuaded them that there was little point in paying the necessary subscriptions, either in or out of work. (Even the future prospect of superannuation benefit may have lost its former attraction with the advent of old age pensions.) Manchester District Council drew attention to the problem of members, having exhausted both union and state unemployment benefit, being presented with a quarterly bill for 9s9d for superannuation and sick payments. They suggested membership should be suspended once union benefit was exhausted.²⁹⁵ In this way, members could avoid facing "crippling arrears" when they eventually found work (and were then technically allowed only three months to clear arrears). To prevent men in this situation feeling forced to leave, Dukinfield branch, through "various voluntary efforts", raised funds to clear the card of any man out a full quarter; and they could boast in 1933 that they had not lost the contributions of one unemployed member to the Sick and Superannuation Funds.²⁹⁶ When the EC removed the ½d per day working levy in October 1933, they reported that there had been "considerable pressure" from the branches to do so, because of its effect on those who had been out of work a long time, and who were immediately taxed when they found work, at a time when they needed every penny.²⁹⁷

The peak figure of 1,720 leaving in the second quarter of 1932, during which the number of unemployed members actually fell, and during which there had been no changes in contributions or benefits can possibly be explained by many members who had become unemployed in the latter half of 1931 having exhausted their benefit entitlement, and lapsing. Similarly,

the increase in members leaving in the second quarter of 1933, during which numbers of unemployed members fell by one third, could be explained by those who became unemployed in the last half of 1932 (when there was a big jump in unemployment) having exhausted their benefit. Additionally, following the argument of the previous paragraph, unemployed members returning to work in these periods might have decided that they could not afford to pay their arrears and/or high subscriptions.

It is difficult, in the absence of available evidence, to speculate on the extent of unemployed members leaving the NUVB. The union did publish one set of revealing figures. On March 8th 1933, there were 4,803 members unemployed; of these, just over half, 2,558 were on state benefit (ie had been unemployed for less than 6 months within the previous year), 1,506 were on transitional benefit (ie unemployed for over six months within the previous year), and a further 739 had had their claims for (transitional) benefit disallowed (eg through the operation of the means test) or were non-claimants (possibly on short-time).²⁹⁹

From these figures, somewhere between 35 and 45 per cent of the union's unemployed members had been out of work for more than six months. There was, of course, a pronounced seasonal pattern to much of the vehicle building industry²⁹⁹ - car production peaking in the spring and depressed in the summer; railway carriage building depressed in the winter; the coach industry very busy in the first few months of the year and depressed the rest of the time; and the maintenance side of the passenger transport industries very busy during the spring and summer months - which militated against prolonged periods of unemployment for the big majority of members.

Consequently, at any one time there would be a limited number of members likely to be on transitional benefit, outside of certain pockets of localised long-term unemployment.

Even after 1931, with the ending of union extended benefit, there were a number of factors binding unemployed members to their union. Apart from those mentioned earlier, three, in particular, played a role. When the 1931 Delegate Meeting made official the half rates of unemployment benefit, the Ministry of Labour informed the union that they contravened the legislation. A trade union paying state unemployment through its branches had to provide in its rules for a minimum payment of its own benefit of 3s per week and an aggregate of 75s in any one year. Tables C and D, the semi-skilled, and the apprentices' tables did not meet these criteria. The EC, faced with the choice of amending the rules, or letting these members make their own claims at the Labour Exchanges, chose the former, mainly because the cost was not great.³⁰⁰ With a further 50% cut in the union benefit in 1932, this same ruling limited how far the union could go, and thus maintained the minimum position of 3s per week for 25 weeks for those eligible.

Secondly, those members who had run out of union benefit by the end of 1931, and who were not superannuation or sick fund contributors, still had a reason for maintaining their membership. In 1933, Birmingham No.1 branch sought a ruling from the EC concerning "quite a few cases" of members in Tables B, C, and D, who had exhausted all their benefits and remained "unemployed for a number of years", but "paying no contribution under the last delegate Meeting rule, are still able to press a claim for Funeral

Benefit". In this case, the EC ruled that where members had been unemployed for over a year they should be charged Funeral Benefit contribution. (1s6d per quarter if single, 3s if married.)³⁰¹

Finally, there was the experience of unemployed members at Lincoln, where, once again, the involvement of the trade union in labour exchange activities helped keep members. In the early 1930s in Lincoln there was little chance of employment in vehicle building, and a number of members took jobs in the beet sugar factories. 1934 was their third season in such employment, and the Court of Referees decided they had become seasonal workers, and were not entitled to benefit during the off season. They appealed successfully, the organiser commenting: "The fact that the members had retained their membership of their craft union during this long period was a deciding point had their own work been available, the Lincoln branch was the recognised placing agency, and it was not necessary for any members to have to make daily calls in order to prove effort to obtain work ...".³⁰²

The evidence presented in this section points to the membership loss being overwhelmingly a phenomenon of members in work, not of those out of work. Given the loss of bargaining power in the workplace brought about by depressed demand and its accompaniment, an end to the shortage of skilled labour, the "union" was often very weak. Faced with the general unemployment-caused crisis of increased membership costs and declining potential benefits, thousands of members left the NUVB, thus exacerbating the union's spiral of decline. The union's own internal measures could never be sufficient to halt this vicious circle, and only the easing of

unemployment in vehicle building (slightly from mid-1933, gathering pace in 1934, and then reaching "manageable" proportions from 1935 onward) could bring relief.

In conclusion, the NUVB's financial crisis and loss of membership were inextricably linked. Unemployment fuelled the financial pressures, which caused members to leave, making the problems even worse. As a result, the union tried to get itself off the hook of unemployment benefit by creating the Industrial Section. Whatever the objective need for it in the mass production car industry, the Industrial Section was directed mainly at the union's traditional recruiting territory. Its relative success in this limited aim accelerated the growing crisis of funding of superannuation benefit, and led to a renewed emphasis on the craft basis of the union.

The union's predicament in the early 1930s bore many similarities with the Coachmakers' situation fifty years before. An external crisis leading the union to financially pressure its members to sustain the organisation, with the result that large numbers were not prepared to pay the price. But, with a significant level of employer recognition in the 1930s, the setback was relatively temporary.

CHAPTER 8. THE NUVB IN THE CAR FACTORIES

INTRODUCTION

The standard view of trade union organisation in the interwar car industry rightly highlights "the low degree of penetration it achieved" among mass production operatives. Skilled men, "many" of whom were union members, "were only retained on production in the quality car factories, where fine workmanship was required".¹ While technically correct, this type of account tends to make certain assumptions about the actual structure of the industry. In doing so, it ignores the fact that, while the big firms produced most of the industry's output, because of their much greater productivity they did not have the same dominance in employment terms.

Until the early 1930s, while car output was dominated by Morris and Austin (and, for some of the time, Ford), the bulk of motor industry employment was in the small to medium-sized producers. Chapter 4 has demonstrated that by the first world war the UKSC and the LPCTU were established in most car factories of any size. After the war and into the early 1920s, this situation continued, with the NUVB able to exploit the demand for vehicle building skills. Only the ASW posed any serious threat to their monopoly of the necessary skills, and that affected just the body shops; in general, the Woodworkers' refusal to touch piecework systems saw them flushed out of most car factory production departments

in times. In the paint, trim and finishing shops the NUVB need seriously fear no other union at this time.

Most car firms recognised trade unions, which gave the NUVB, along with other interested unions, the chance to organise. Ford, after 1913, was an exception, as was the Morris factory at Cowley; but Morris Bodies, in Coventry, and the later acquisitions of Morris Commercial and Wolseley, in Birmingham, all dealt with unions, including the NUVB. As will be shown in this chapter, while Vauxhall broke away from the EEF in the early 1920s the Luton NUVB branch retained a respectable core of membership until the winter of 1926-27 when a long-term decline started. With Vauxhall a minor producer, and a relatively small employer, in the 1920s, this was not a major setback at the time.

Apart from Ford, the main blackspots in the 1920s were the giant factories of Morris at Cowley and Austin at Longbridge. In Oxford the local branch had over 100 members during 1924-26, mainly at the Morris factory, along with a significant number of members from other branches, but no organisation. The Northfield NUVB branch in Birmingham managed a better level of membership at Austin, and had the advantage of recognition. However, in both cases, NUVB membership, along with that of other unions, was a drop in the ocean, given the size of the plants. The ability to organise mass production operatives was not something the NUVB was peculiarly deficient in; all interested unions suffered the same problem. The NUVB's failure at Austin, where unions were recognised, and Morris and Ford, where they were not, was in keeping with other unions.

The NUVB had high levels of membership throughout the 1920s in most of the car factories in Coventry, Wolverhampton, Manchester and Scotland, as well as most coachbuilders. Therefore, during the 1920s, probably the majority of workers building, trimming and finishing (but not painting) car bodies (in car manufacturers and coachbuilders combined) were in the NUVB. This changed in the 1930s, as a number of smaller producers were squeezed out, the steel body producers grew in size, the coachbuilt market declined, and the NUVB suffered its own difficulties.

This chapter looks in detail at NUVB organisation in the numerous Coventry factories in part 1, and at the two Oxford factories and (in less detail) the other members of the "Big Six" and Briggs in part 2. Appendix 6 gives some information on several of the minor producers, which are otherwise left out of this chapter. Appendix 7 presents detailed membership figures for four of the union's branches studied in this chapter. Appendix 8 catalogues industrial action by the NUVB in Coventry in the 1920s and is referred to several times in part 1, section A. Finally, Appendix 9 gives more detailed information on the crucial 1934 strike at Pressed Steel, for use with part 2, section B.

PART 1. COVENTRY

A. COVENTRY IN THE 1920s

(1) NUVB membership in the 1920s

During the 1920s, Coventry was the home of a large number of car manufacturers and coachbuilding firms. There was, therefore, a large number of possible places of employment for men with coachbuilding skills,² and the NUVB organised most of this labour. Two sets of figures are available to estimate the scale of coachbuilding employment - adult males employed in federated establishments in May 1924, and the numbers employed by federated and non-federated firms (along with the numbers attending a mass NUVB meeting during working hours) in February 1925.³ The February 1925 figures would almost definitely include youths and boys, women (just over 100 in the federated firms) and possibly also woodcutting machinists (about 200 in the federated firms), french polishers, and labourers.⁴

The figures are given in tables 8:1 and 8:2 overleaf. The presumed NUVB membership of 1,205 from federated and 932 from non-federated firms is an underestimate. As well as not including members at Hillman and Midland Light Bodies, a number of small specialist coachbuilders and trim shops are also missing (the largest of which was Charlesworth). Further, one large motor manufacturer, Singer (with perhaps between 100 and 200 members), and the body shop of Riley, the Midland Motor Body Company, are missing from the list.⁵

Table 8:1 Coventry federated firms' coachbuilding employment, 1924-1925.

<u>Firm</u>	<u>Adult males</u>	<u>Total employed</u>	<u>Number absent</u>
	<u>May 1924</u>	<u>Feb. 1925</u>	<u>at NUVB meeting</u>
Standard	394	595	239
Daimler §	358	435	350
Humber §	344	502	245
Armstrong-Siddeley	344	464	229
Rover	121	202	32
Hillman	72	111	-
Triumph	43	63	6
Swift	*	140	104

§ In October 1924, Daimler had 387 and Humber 383 adult males.⁶

* Swift applied to join the EEF early in 1925.⁷

Table 8:2 Coventry non-federated firms' coachbuilding employment, 1925

<u>Firm</u>	<u>Total employed</u>	<u>Number absent</u>
	<u>February 1925</u>	<u>at NUVB meeting</u>
Hollick & Pratt ⁸	1000	650
Midland Light Bodies	400	nil
Carbodies	200	100
Cross & Ellis ⁹	200	72
Holbrook Bodies	200	40
Hancock & Warman	160	63
F. T. Robinson	80	6
Calso Hood Co.	60	1

Appendix 7 shows Coventry branch membership during the period of mid-1924 to mid-1925 as around 2,000. There were, though, significantly more

NUVB members working in the Coventry factories at this time. When the February 1925 meeting was organised, some 3,000 cards were printed for circulation.¹⁰ As will be discussed below, there were an estimated 700 "travelling" members at the end of 1925, a figure which fell after the shop organisation campaign of 1926-27. Consequently, it can safely be assumed that the NUVB membership in Coventry in the mid-1920s was somewhere between 2,500 and 3,000. Subtracting approximately 200 young members (see below), the adult male membership would have been around the 2,500 mark, representing the overwhelming majority of "skilled" coachbuilding labour in the local factories. There were a number of "semi-skilled" men in the body and trim shops, as well as a sizeable number in the paint shops; apart from recognised brush hands, those who were not seen as "skilled" would not have been allowed to join.¹¹ Some figures for grade 2 labour are given below in Table 8:3.

An organising campaign in 1926-27 led to "a slightly increased membership", but Bowen reported "there are not large numbers of non-unionists in Coventry"; while Francis argued "non-unionism in our trade in Coventry does not obtain in anything like the degree sometimes imagined", the Coventry and other branch members constituting "overwhelmingly the bulk of the men in our branches of the trade", though it was admitted that boy labour was mostly unorganised.¹²

(ii) Labour shortage

The most important factor affecting trade unionism in the coachwork side of the Coventry car industry in the 1920s was the shortage of labour. In

May 1920, the branch could claim "we have no members out of work". One result was that the branch was able to control overtime working, forcing a number of employers to apply for it in writing. Towards the end of the year, the Coventry engineering employers even had to use the local NUVB branch to supply labour. In October 1920 a three month agreement gave guaranteed work to all NUVB members coming into Coventry. 300 were needed immediately over a five week period, and then the employers provided a weekly list. The branch secretary was in contact with most major centres of the union to obtain the labour. While this arrangement collapsed with the trade depression, it was not long before labour shortage re-appeared.¹³

One consequence was competition for labour between the local employers. The local members of the EEF, when starting new labour, already sent out enquiry forms asking the previous employer the reason why the man left that job. A local agreement in March 1922 extended this to the larger non-federated employers of vehicle building labour. Within a few months, the engineering employers thought that Singer were not giving their "whole-hearted support" to the system.¹⁴ A more serious breakdown occurred in 1923 when Hollick & Pratt disagreed with Standard over the engagement of some coach trimmers, resulting in the former refusing to recognise the enquiry form regarding Standard, and threatening to take as many workers as possible from that company. This was, however, quickly patched up. While there were further difficulties with non-federated companies, employer solidarity usually won out among the federated firms. When the NUVB complained at a local conference in 1922 that men leaving one federated firm could not get employment in others, they were told that if they had left their previous employment properly, they had nothing to fear.¹⁵

One reaction of the employers to the skilled labour shortage was to increase the numbers of "second grade labour". In late 1921, their Association executive agreed this should be proceeded with "in view of the scarcity of labour even in normal times in the various vehicle building departments".¹⁶ But little headway was made in the early 1920s, apart from Standard, as the figures for 1924 in table 8:3 below show:

Table 8:3 Coventry federated firms' grading of adult male labour, 1924.

<u>Firm</u>	<u>Grade 1</u>	<u>Grade 2</u>	<u>Grade 3 *</u>	<u>Total</u>
Standard	291	103	-	394
Daimlers	343	15	-	358
Humbers	280	61	3	344
Armstrong-Siddeley	275	69	-	344
Rover	94	17	10	121
Hillman	38	34	-	72
Triumph	18	13	12	43

* Grade 3 did not exist on the coachbuilding side, and was probably meant by some employers to encompass painters' labourers who were bottom of grade 2.

S In October 1924, Daimler had 369 Grade 1 and 18 Grade 2, while Humber had 321 Grade 1 and 62 Grade 2.¹⁷

Grade 2 adult labour was initially viewed to some extent as one of the means, not of supplanting, but of actually supplying skilled labour. In October 1924, the vehicle building sub-committee of the Coventry engineering employers recommended that bodymakers and trimmers on the grade 2 top rate should be periodically reviewed by the employer to see which were qualified to be made up to grade 1, and which were qualified to

receive a merit rate of up to 1d per hour above the top grade 2 rate.¹⁸ There were, according to Colonel Cole of Humber (see chapter 7) "not enough skilled coachmakers to fill the workshops".¹⁹ A year later, in November 1925, the Coventry employers' secretary was bemoaning the "shortage" of skilled coachbuilding and woodworking labour.²⁰

Some of the Grade 2 labour came from "trainees" (usually ex-servicemen) who spent time at special Government Instructional Factories before being placed in firms. Their presence in trim shops at Swift, Armstrong-Siddeley, Daimler, and Humber, caused much consternation among NUVB members in late 1921. While the branch voted against further men being trained, it was prepared to accept existing trainees into the shops, and, after 3 years, into membership of the union.²¹ Towards the end of the decade, some ex-miners started to come into the industry after training, being noted at Standard in particular.²² By 1929 the shortage situation seemed to have been resolved, and the Coventry employers then saw grade 2 labour in a different light. Because of "the development in the way of sectionising etc in the coachbuilding and woodworking sections of the motor car industry", their earlier support for an "intermediate grade" above grade 2 was dropped.²³

The main threat to skilled labour in the 1920s came not from semi-skilled adult male labour, but from the increasing use of boy and female labour. The Coventry federated employers had recommended member firms in 1919 not to increase the proportion of indentured apprentices above 3 boys to 10 men, while unindentured boy labour could be employed in an "unlimited number".²⁴ The NUVB suggested a proportion of 1 boy to 7 journeymen at a

conference in December 1922, but the employers refused to enter into any negotiations on this, and a few months later it was claimed that "the employers' position is being consolidated in the matter of boy labour in their Coachbuilding departments the longer the question is left".²⁵

However, at the end of 1923 it was reported that there was a general shortage of boy labour in Coventry; in addition, practically all single women were also employed. The local Association thus made it known it had no objection to firms taking on married women.²⁶ Women and girls were confined to the trim shops in coachbuilding departments, and chapter 7 has dealt with the union's relatively successful efforts to confine women to sewing machine work in the 1920s. The employers were not to know, at this juncture, the future extent of female labour in their own firms, and early in 1924 encouraged member firms to use every endeavour to dilute skilled coachbuilding labour by indentured apprentices, boy, and female labour - "as it was felt by such action being taken that the position would in time be met".²⁷ After the NUVB had tried in early 1926 to fight the use of female labour by some federated firms in Coventry, the local employers became more circumspect. It is also clear that most Coventry firms hardly used indentured apprentices, and there were very few of them in the whole of the Coventry motor industry, including the coachbuilding side, right throughout the interwar years.²⁸

Unindentured boy labour was, in practice, the main mechanism for diluting the strength of the skilled coachbuilders, and the union contested this periodically when different employers went too far. Midland Motor Body generally, the Standard body shop, and Armstrong-Siddeley trimmers and

finishers were among the shops causing greatest concern in the early 1920s.²⁹ As explained in chapter 5, boy and youth labour tended to be used on jig work in the body shops, and on various small operations in trimming; while on mounting, which some employers argued was a semi-skilled job, gangs would be diluted with boys.³⁰ There was, however, a limit to how far the employers could go with boy labour while many of the jobs retained a substantial skilled element; but they would use it, where possible, because of its cheapness and its substitutability.

The union were not against the use of boy labour per se, but the conditions under which it was employed. Most of the Coventry branch's proposals on apprentice and boy labour were taken up by the NUVB nationally when negotiating a revision of the EEF woodworkers' agreement in 1924. They argued that boys should not be left on repetition work, nor spend longer than six months on any section or operation. They should work with fully competent men, and not in gangs composed just of boys. The union was interested in securing a supply of skilled labour for the future, arguing that any boy learning the trade should be called an apprentice. In order to preserve the existing area of work for their own members, they also proposed a limit of one boy/apprentice for every five skilled men in a department.³¹

Only two serious disputes occurred over boy labour in the 1920s. The first, at Hollick & Pratt (ie Morris Bodies) has already been touched on in chapter 5. Over 40 boys and youths were transferred into the jig-body shop in the summer of 1924 to work as a separate group, at the same time as 150 men were discharged, and not given the opportunity to work on jig-work.

Later in the year a special meeting of Hollick & Pratt members supported a call for a reduction in the number of boys to give a ratio of 1 to every 5 men. In the wake of a successful strike over another issue by trimmers at the same firm, negotiations led to an agreement that there would be no further recruitment of boys or youths until the ratio fell below 1:5; and all youths with five years' experience would be "regarded in every respect as men".³² The Coventry engineering employers were furious, seeing this concession as "exceedingly unfortunate and dangerous".³³

The NUVB "victory" at Morris Bodies was not total, as some two years later, boys' work had encroached "considerably" into men's work in the trimming department, and some piecework prices were also fixed directly with boys.³⁴ The second dispute was at Hancock & Warman where boys and youths outnumbered men in the body shop. Two unsuccessful interviews were held with the firm in March 1927, before a strike vote forced the necessary concessions, including that men would be employed on many jobs currently done by boys, and no more boys would be recruited until there were sufficient men again in the shop (see Appendix 8). Elsewhere, at Singer in 1928, the union extracted a guarantee that there would not be more than one boy to 5 men on saloon bodies, but they were refused any reduction in boys on open bodies.³⁵

During the early 1920s, the Coventry NUVB branch had gradually increased the number of its members paying on the apprentice scale. This reached 200 during 1925 and stayed between 200 and 300 until the end of 1930. Yet this was only a partial success, as it was admitted after the organising campaign of 1926-27 that "boy labour is for the most part unorganised", and

that members had "to make every effort to enrol boys and youth".³⁶ As long as boys were not responsible for fixing piecework prices, their non-unionism was not a threat to adult male earnings; and while the scale and diversity of production favoured the employment of skilled male labour, there was a limit to how far the employers could go.

(iii) Piecework

As discussed in chapter 7, the NUVB started negotiating an agreement with the EEF in 1919, but took a year to reach a settlement. While the ASE and a number of other unions had signed the National Piecework Agreement in April 1919, the NUVB, and its predecessors, were not among them.³⁷ In the meantime, federated firms had to come to some understanding with the union regarding wage rates and minimum piecework earnings. A mass meeting of the Coventry joint coachmaking trades in July 1919 voted to strike if the national application for a two shilling flat rate was not settled by August 11th.³⁸ But while a national NUVB vote to abolish piecework had a 3-1 majority in favour (with Coventry evenly split on the issue) only one-third of the total membership had voted in this way, which was not considered sufficient to "wipe out such old-established conditions in our industry". Consequently, the EC refused to support the Coventry strike vote.³⁹

Early in September, Standard and Daimler informed their bodymakers that the prevailing piecework minimum of 50% above the time rate would be ended. The branch committee called a meeting of all shop secretaries, shop stewards, and shop committees, which was followed by a mass meeting of all coachmakers and woodcutting machinists in Coventry. This took place on a

Friday afternoon during working hours, and voted to strike in ten days time if this grievance was not corrected. General Secretary Nicholson immediately met managers from Daimler and Standard, and a local conference was set up. The union negotiators reported to an evening mass meeting before reaching agreement with the employers that the 50% would continue for a trial period of 6 weeks.⁴⁰

The 50%, however, continued in force for some time. But organisation was still needed to obtain high piecework earnings. At Standard a lack of organisation led to problems - "There was a certain amount of indiscretion on the part of those members who took on the job without consultation with the other parties who had refused the job". But this was rectified and body shop workers were represented at an interview with the management which soon afterwards thwarted the company's attempt to set a low price on a new job.⁴¹ The same company then wanted to enforce a 25% reduction in piecework prices to lower the selling price of a car; the branch committee recommended the members not to accept any reduction.⁴²

The slump of 1921 temporarily reduced the bargaining strength of the union's members.⁴³ With a large number of members unemployed, there were reports of piecework price reductions in a number of shops. At Swift this led to a strike (see Appendix 8) after which the company agreed to observe the engineering agreement. A town NUVB shop stewards meeting was then called during working hours (see Appendix 8), at which eight firms were represented, and agreed that where no reduction had taken place, the men could negotiate a slight reduction, pending national negotiations; but no further reduction where one had already occurred.⁴⁴ However, almost

immediately afterwards, Armstrong-Siddeley refused to guarantee the 50% on a new job, and bodymakers were suspended for refusing to work the jobs in dispute (see Appendix 8).

Nationally, wage reductions were agreed on basic rates, piecework awards, and special war awards, taking place in July and August 1921, then again in November and December 1921 and January 1922, and finally, after the 1922 lock-out, in July, August, and September 1922.⁴⁵ The large non-federated firms in Coventry tended to follow the national agreements, but were free to negotiate or impose their own reductions.

At Swift, for example, another strike broke out in November 1921 over a new basis for piecework earnings, again being settled on an assurance that the company would follow the engineering agreement (see Appendix 8), though this did not stop men then being discharged and restarted on much lower earnings.⁴⁶ Negotiations had also taken place in May 1921 with the non-federated Singer Company, on a sliding scale of wage reductions linked to price falls. This was to operate until October and then be revised every three months, though if a national settlement produced more favourable terms, the company agreed to abide by them. The members, however, unanimously rejected this, but within a few weeks, bodymakers there had accepted a 10s reduction.⁴⁷ An agreement was finally reached with Singer in November, which, while accepting the new national rate and national awards, consolidated these to produce the rate on which minimum piecework earnings of 33% would be based - essentially this was equivalent to a piecework minimum of more than 50% above the federated firms' basic rate.⁴⁸

Among the federated firms, Standard forced the pace locally, and, in the wake of an unsuccessful strike against the dismissal of a shop steward (see below), the NUVB were informed in October 1921 that the company was going to terminate all local agreements and arrangements, and work strictly according to the 1920 national agreement with the union. This stipulated minimum piecework earnings of 33% above the basic rate. Within days the company was refusing to negotiate on a new piecework price, and the bodymakers, after initial resistance, complied.⁴⁹

But there was great difficulty in establishing a united front among the employers. Humber had complained in August 1921 that unemployed skilled coachbuilders were declining to take on work at the district rate laid down in the national agreement, as they could get much higher rates elsewhere. At three meetings of the Coventry engineering employers' vehicle building sub-committee, Humber had argued it was willing to act in conformity with other firms on this issue, but "certain members" were not agreeable. They had therefore concluded their own agreement for a 6 month period expiring in June 1922 that new piecework prices would be based on 75% of a 54s basic rate. The vehicle building sub-committee then agreed that (Humber excepted) from that date, in February 1922, all new piecework prices and premium bonus basis times should be based on the national agreement rate of 50s and a bonus of not more than 50%.⁵⁰

A meeting of the larger non-federated firms with the vehicle building sub-committee agreed this basis, which was confirmed at a further meeting of non-federated companies.⁵¹ A few months later, in the wake of the 1922 lock-out, the employers reiterated the need to stick to the 50% maximum

bonus, as well as asking member firms to give special attention, when engaging new men, to establishing the national agreement rates "as majority rates in their various shops"; and, finally, requesting employers to keep the number of men in vehicle building departments in receipt of a "merit rate" as low as possible.⁵² But while, in September 1922, the local employers' secretary had got authorisation from the EEF for members to secure reductions in cases of "abnormal" piecework prices; in October, despite the national background of reductions in the war awards, the vehicle building sub-committee was unanimous that "the present is not an opportune time" to abandon the 50% maximum bonus in favour of the national 33%.⁵³

The employers did, however, gradually consolidate their position,⁵⁴ though not without setbacks. When Daimler lost a number of bodymakers to other Coventry firms early in 1923, they modified their premium bonus system to provide higher earnings to the better men in the shop, in an effort to keep them. In a few exceptional instances, this could amount to £2 per week extra. One result was that men in other shops started demanding a £2 increase. Colonel Cole of Humber thought it "extremely unfortunate" that in spite of three years striving for "reasonable" piecework prices in local coachbuilding shops, Daimler had increased theirs without consultation. They had jeopardised a position "which had only recently been reached after strenuous fighting by the federated firms".⁵⁵

Daimler again broke ranks when it not only engaged a painter's finisher from Armstrong-Siddeley, but took him on at 1½d above the national rate, despite the agreement among the employers not to pay new starters above

this rate. Having initially refused to reaffirm this position (advocating that an enhanced rate should be allowed for certain specified classes of skilled workmen), Daimler eventually agreed to fall in line in the future. They agreed to try to bring the rates of all coachbuilding journeymen, including their 13 painter's finishers, into line with the national agreement as opportunity arose. The employers then all agreed that no rate in excess of the national rate would be paid to any journeyman in the first three months of employment with any firm.⁵⁶

The employers continued their policy of gradually whittling away at piecework earnings. Rover discharged its painters one day, and then restarted them the next on reduced rates. Some had been on a rate of 1s8½d and were now reduced to the national rate of 1s0½d plus 10s war bonus; there was also a general reduction of 12½% in piecework prices.⁵⁷ When Hillman raised the problem of the "big money" earned by their four finishers, the other vehicle building employers promised their support if Hillman tried to reduce these.⁵⁸ A wider attack came in the summer of 1924, when disputes occurred at three non-federated firms, Cross & Ellis, Singer, and Hollick & Pratt. In all three cases, the NUVB was successful in resisting the reduction (see Appendix 8). Midland organiser Bowen reported that "It seems a uniform policy in the area that as work drops off, the men in the various departments should be approached with a suggestion of reductions in piece-prices. In all cases that have been reported to the branch committee, we have succeeded in maintaining the old prices".⁵⁹

The union was less successful at Standard, where 25% reductions were accepted in July 1924. As no union members had complained at the time, the

branch's attempt to secure a works conference was refused. Instead, a local conference was granted in August, where the union conceded that the reduction had been "mutually" agreed, and that they would follow the procedure in future.⁵⁰ The union's failure here obviously had much to do with their admission that they were "not so well organised at the Standard Works as they were in the other coachbuilding shops in the town".⁵¹

The NUVB organisation at Standard was better prepared a few months later when it did secure a works conference on reduced prices. Although it was proved that all prices, except in the trim shop, had been "mutually" agreed, the company was this time prepared to refer them back for negotiations. The difference was that the branch had organised the men, and a strike was threatened (see Appendix 8). As will be noted from Appendix 8, the main issue leading to industrial action, or the serious threat of it, during the rest of the 1920s in Coventry, was the reduction of piecework prices. Interestingly, after the General Strike, these disputes were concentrated almost entirely in the non-federated firms.

Union members were not always on the defensive, for where the shop organisation was strong enough, unofficial earnings limits would be imposed. Two instances were noted by the employers in 1921, leading their secretary to claim that the NUVB were operating an earnings limit. At Humber, the NUVB members demanded the dismissal of someone who had broken the shop limit. The company's refusal led to a short stay-in strike until the man left of his own accord. At almost the same time, Standard members threatened to strike if a similar offender was not dismissed. This was then changed to a fine, which the man paid. The union nationally disowned such

activity, arguing that these two incidents were "apparently due to shop committee adjudication and decision, and such action is entirely unauthorised by our General Rules" (see Appendix 8).

This disavowal did not stop a repeat in 1924 when bodymakers struck at Armstrong-Siddeley for two days to force the dismissal of two men for working beyond the shop limit. The action here was not backed by the Coventry branch secretary when he addressed a mass meeting of the strikers, and so they returned unsuccessfully (see Appendix 8). Later in the year, the case of two men earning over a shop limit at that factory was then raised through the branch.⁵² Two years later, the finishers at the factory still had an earnings limit, which included precise figures for each age group between 18 and 21.⁵³ The Rover trimmers also agreed a 2s6d hourly limit in 1928,⁵⁴ but it is difficult to speculate how widespread the practice was. One important factor would have been the level of unionisation in any particular shop. The earnings limit was broken in the Singer body shop in 1925 by members, but there were also non-members in the shop.⁵⁵ A dispute over prices in the body shop of Morris Bodies in December 1926 led to the men demanding that the only way to sort out the unequal share of work was to fix a limit on earnings. It transpired that the firm was prepared to impose a limit themselves if the price in question was accepted, which it eventually was (see Appendix 8).

By attempting to control earnings, NUVB members were acting no differently from many examples of restriction of output noted by an observer of American unorganised workers in the 1920s.⁵⁶ The main difference was that, ultimately, the NUVB members were sometimes prepared

to take some collective industrial action to get the employer to punish those who did not follow the informal shop rules; while unorganised workers could only rely on actions directly against the individual or individuals concerned. The alternative sanction was to use the shop or branch organisation to fine those stepping out of line, but this was a powerful sanction only if levied by the union in a situation where the union totally controlled the labour supply to local employers.⁶⁷

A major obstacle to effective earnings limits in the shops was the attitude of many members. At an organising meeting of the Daimler body shop, it was pointed out that "one half of the men were making big money and didn't care how the other half went on".⁶⁸ This sentiment found an echo at Armstrong-Siddeley, where at one meeting it was stated that "many men come to Coventry from the outside with the intention to obtain as much money as they could, regardless of any shop arrangements, with the results that the efforts of the shop committee were nullified in many ways".⁶⁹ Organiser Francis was also well aware of "the practice of some of our members to rush jobs through as quickly as possible, and thus to secure big wages while the opportunity presents itself".⁷⁰ This, of course, undermined those attempts at setting earnings limits, to both keep up piecework prices and maintain an acceptable pace of work.

(iv) Shop organisation

Prior to the national woodworkers' agreement of May 1920, which reproduced the shop stewards' agreements already operated by other engineering unions, NUVB members relied on their own shop committee

structure. It is not clear when, or even if, such committees established de facto negotiating rights. But we do know that at Swift, a shop committee of three was elected in 1913 by all the workers to prevent the foremen settling prices with individuals on their own;⁷¹ while at Humber, although the bodymakers had always had a rate fixing committee to fix piecework prices, a shop committee was not a permanent feature. A meeting of bodymakers and finishers agreed in March 1915 to "revive the shop committee", though by August it was necessary to elect one again.⁷²

Shop secretaries (like shop committees, provided for in the union's rule book) were in evidence in Coventry before the first world war, most factories probably having one for the whole works, while the large Daimler and Humber factories seemed to have had one each for the four or five distinct coachbuilding shops in their factories. They were used individually as a means of communication to and from the branch, but they appear to have all met together only once in the five years before the first world war, and twice during it.⁷³

After the war, Rover had its shop committee recognised during the summer of 1919.⁷⁴ And early in 1920, for example, shop committees of Humber bodymakers and Armstrong-Siddeley bodymakers were reported as negotiating with their respective managements. But later in the year Humber refused to recognise the paint shop committee, and the branch then applied for recognition of shop stewards in all departments at Humber under the May 1920 agreement.⁷⁵

The situation remained flexible in the non-federated companies,⁷⁶ but the federated employers insisted on issues being raised through procedure, resisting the attempts of local union officials to request works conferences directly. The first stage of engineering procedure required the worker or workers directly concerned to raise an issue with their foreman, and the shop steward would only be brought in failing a settlement. This was a standing bone of contention, the unions claiming that it intimidated the individual or individuals concerned, who were afraid of being marked out.⁷⁷ Thus a number of piecework price reductions went through unchallenged because they were "mutually" agreed by the men on the floor.

Where a shop committee was functioning, and there was a well-advertised shop policy on the prices of different jobs, workers would be less afraid to raise those cases where the proposed price was out of line. The situation was not greatly different at non-federated firms. But shop representatives (however temporary) in non-federated companies were just as vulnerable as officially recognised shop stewards in federated firms. Any company so wishing, could relatively easily divest itself of "troublesome" union activists through the cloak of lay-offs. Not only was there wide-scale unemployment in Coventry in 1921, but even during the more prosperous ensuing years of the 1920s, there were regular lay-offs, especially during the summer months when old models stopped being produced, and firms waited to see the success of their latest offerings at the autumn Motor Show.⁷⁸

In addition, there was management hostility. The Standard Motor Company took a noticeably antagonistic stance towards the union's representatives, dismissing two bodymaker shop stewards in June 1919.⁷⁹ Much worse was to

come in 1921, when the paint shop foreman announced that he was not going to be dictated to by any shop stewards, and two or three were suspended indefinitely. One took up a claim for victimisation, but after the branch committee interviewed the firm, the case was left in abeyance, and another shop steward was elected.⁸⁰ This man was himself discharged in September, over alleged bad work, provoking a strike, which was called off eventually, when the union realised the company would not budge (see Appendix 8). A few weeks later, a meeting of Standard bodymakers asked the branch secretary to write to the firm asking if they were prepared to recognise shop stewards, "in view of the fact that the whole of the stewards had been dismissed".⁸¹ A meeting of Standard members in December 1921 did, however, elect three shop secretaries and eight shop stewards.⁸² But where stewards or other shop representatives were periodically dismissed, organisation, and even membership, would be difficult to sustain, as was the case at Standard in the next few years (see above and below).⁸³

In the immediate post-war years, the branch committee held a number of meetings at which shop representatives from all the local factories were present - shop stewards, shop secretaries, and sometimes also shop committees. At least seven of these meetings can be traced for the two year period mid-1919 to mid-1921, either to discuss a national issue, or purely to hear shop reports.⁸⁴ Further, representatives were brought together in anticipation of an engineering lock-out in 1921, and a "Central Dispute Committee", representing the seven federated companies involved, functioned throughout the one month the NUVB were locked out in 1922 (see Appendix 8). Before the return to work in 1922, this committee decided that all shops should hold summoned meetings to elect shop stewards and shop committees.⁸⁵

Shop committees were on a number of occasions elected at meetings of employees held with the branch committee or officers to discuss major issues in dispute in the shop. In September 1923, committees were thus elected for the whole Standard works and the Rover paint shop; and for the Singer trim shop, and the Cross & Ellis works in February and June 1924, respectively.⁶⁶ The latter two cases reveal something about organisation in non-federated establishments. At Singer, the branch secretary, along with 5 shop representatives, had interviewed the manager, before a shop secretary and a shop committee of 3 were elected. Cross & Ellis members had met during working hours, with the branch secretary present, and elected a deputation of one from each department to accompany the secretary to meet the management. Once the dispute had been settled (see Appendix 8), a works committee was elected, and was functioning a few weeks later.⁶⁷

In the bulk of the Coventry factories, where NUVB members were employed, there was some form of shop organisation in the first half of the 1920s,⁶⁸ even if it required branch officer involvement to resuscitate it periodically. However, in mid-1925, and again in the winter of 1926-27, specific organising campaigns were carried out by the branch committee, assisted some of the time by organisers.

(v) The Organising Campaign

The Morris Bodies works committee requested a meeting with the Coventry branch committee in June 1925, and organiser Bowen was invited to attend. The meeting discussed the state of organisation generally in Coventry, and Bowen was told of a number of firms where the NUVB was not 100%, mainly

through lack of shop organisation such as shop secretaries. Bowen agreed to start rectifying this almost immediately, and within a fortnight he claimed that both Morris Bodies and Armstrong-Siddeley were 100%, and he was turning his attention to Humber and Standard, though at Standard he gave up hope.⁸⁹ The factory holidays, followed by Bowen's own holiday, then brought this work to a halt. The organiser subsequently became involved in negotiating at Carr & Co. (a trim shop doing work for Morris), which eventually led to a strike (see Appendix 8 and chapter 7).

In October that year, full-time branch secretary Buckle noted the continuing loss of shop secretaries in various shops and its impact on union contributions, and argued for assistance "as the branch was getting too large for him to do all the work". A decision to elect a full-time assistant secretary was eventually taken, the successful candidate taking office the next May.⁹⁰ Meanwhile the winter of 1925-26 was dominated by the issue of female labour in the trim shops at Standard, Swift and Rover (see chapter 7) and the Rover paint shop (see chapter 6). Then the General Strike was followed by substantial local unemployment over the summer,⁹¹ so it was not until the autumn of 1926 that an organisation drive started up again.

It followed attempts to find a shop secretary for the Daimler body shop, where three meetings were held before two shop secretaries could be found.⁹² The branch committee decided to print cards for such organising meetings in the future. In the 6 months following the Daimler meetings, there were minuted some 36 specific organising meetings (arranged by the branch) of 14 different factories, not including numbers of other minuted

shop meetings dealing with workplace issues as they arose.⁹³ Towards the end of this period, in March 1927, the Coventry branch requested extra organisers to help temporarily (see chapter 7), which led to an increase in activity. While members in the smaller workplaces were usually dealt with altogether, the bigger factories would have separate departmental meetings. In those instances where only a few members attended, then further meetings were arranged - whether some of these subsequently took place is often not clear. Armstrong-Siddeley seemed to have received the greatest attention,⁹⁴ yet even here, despite the relative success, there were still problems about the functioning of one of the two body shop committees.⁹⁵

Holding meetings was made very difficult by the federated employers' effective ban on shop meetings. Faced with firms receiving requests from trade union representatives and shop stewards for the use of premises, including canteens and club rooms, in order to hold meetings, the local engineering employers executive in 1936 unanimously deprecated in principle the loan of any premises of a firm to any trade union representatives.⁹⁶ Two years later, the local employers were also resisting the establishment of trade union notice boards. It was claimed that Daimler and some of the shadow factories had them, and the employers' executive contacted them to restate their policy of no such facilities.⁹⁷ While in the late 1930s the local employers were trying to stem the growing tide of trade unionism in their factories, this only underlined the difficulties faced by unions earlier in the inter-war years.

In the mid-1920s, some of the organising meetings, for example most of those for Armstrong-Siddeley, took place at venues very near the factory

immediately after work. The Armstrong-Siddeley bodymakers even managed an open air dinner time meeting "for the purpose of developing further interest in the Society's affairs".⁹⁹ Some of the other meetings were held in the union's premises at 8pm at night.⁹⁹ The problem of a suitable time and place had always plagued the branch, officials claiming that whenever evening meetings were called, the employers put the men on overtime.¹⁰⁰ To get round this, branch officers sometimes met the men at dinner time.¹⁰¹ There appears to have only been one attempt to actually hold a meeting during works time, at 11.30. one morning by the bodymakers at non-federated Morris Bodies (see Appendix 8).

Maintaining the newly revived shop organisation was not easy. When the Daimler bodymakers reconvened in April 1927, well after the stipulated three month term of office of shop secretaries, the 30 attending could not muster any volunteers to replace the retiring shop secretaries. A fortnight later, a specially summoned meeting was held, at which 55 of the 98 in the shop attended. No one was prepared to act alone, and "great difficulty was experienced in securing names". A shop meeting was held the next day and a committee and secretaries elected.¹⁰² While the Humber trimmers were able to form a committee at their first meeting, the bodymakers at the same factory only managed a "moderate" attendance, and decided they needed to "arouse more enthusiasm amongst the members" first.¹⁰³

At Standard, where there were about 50 members and 100 non-members, "one member voiced the fear of victimisation and quoted Mr. Budge [works manager] as saying that no official of the union would be guaranteed a life job". Organiser Francis combatted this attitude by arguing "how necessary it was

for fear to be put aside" and pointed out that in the finishing shop, one member challenged all newcomers about their union membership.¹²⁴ When Francis compiled a special report outlining the six weeks he spent in Coventry he highlighted the fear of victimisation as the greatest obstacle to securing stable shop organisation. "Time after time, in the meetings of shop representatives, and in the meetings held for the purpose of appointing shop committees, this fear was expressed, and several times great difficulty was experienced in securing the desired result".¹²⁵

Another problem was the existence of a large number of NUVB members belonging to branches outside of Coventry. In the mid-1920s, it was believed that most shops employed members from at least five branches in the surrounding districts - for example, Leamington, Birmingham, Handsworth, Wolverhampton, and Wolverton, and especially from Saltley, which even had its own shop secretaries in a number of Coventry factories. A major reason was apparently the shortage of housing in Coventry which meant that an estimated 50% of the members working in Coventry did not live there. Those living in towns such as Leamington, Warwick, Nuneaton and Rugby, would be in the Coventry branch apart from a number in the Leamington branch (which was finally closed in 1934); but those commuting from the Birmingham and Wolverhampton area, or from other large towns, such as Northampton, would be reluctant to transfer as it was easier and cheaper to sign the unemployment book, when necessary, in their home locality than in Coventry.

One consequence of the diverse branch membership was the poor response achieved when the Coventry branch committee summoned shop meetings. This

was first tackled late in 1924 when the union's South & West Midlands Area Council gave the Coventry committee the power to call a meeting of all members working at Hollick & Pratt's (which the Saltley branch secretary and the Birmingham branch president attended). Another consequence was that because they did not inform the Coventry branch of their presence, a number of the outside branch members lapsed.¹⁰⁶ Bowen noted "We have discovered that there are a large number of men in the Town who have been declaring they are members of other Branches, but when Mr. Buckle has written through to the Branch Secretary to make inquiries, he has found that some have not paid for a considerable period. The shop organisation then gets to work and a stop is put to that little game".¹⁰⁷ At the end of 1925 it was suggested there were 700 "travelling" members compared to a Coventry membership of about 2,300.¹⁰⁸ Eighteen months later a figure of 200 was mooted, against 2,450 Coventry members.¹⁰⁹ The two figures are consistent, if substantial transfers of membership took place during the 1926-27 organising campaign. But despite the Coventry branch secretary's complaint that it was contrary to the rule book for members not to transfer to the branch of the town in which they were working, the practice still continued.¹¹⁰

Towards the end of the 1926-27 organising campaign, and just after it, there were three meetings of all shop representatives;¹¹¹ but these were the last recorded for the interwar period, even though shop organisation still usually needed branch involvement to stop it lapsing. Consequently, when particular shops met with branch officers, to discuss pressing issues or to require their assistance during a dispute, the opportunity would be taken to elect shop committees and shop secretaries. This happened in early 1928 with the Daimler body shop, the Rover trim shop, and the Holbrooks

Bodies finishers.¹¹² More significantly, a large meeting of Singer employees, called to discuss comparisons with the new Birmingham factory, elected shop committees for body, paint, trim, and finishing shops, as well as a sub-committee to meet a sub-committee from the Birmingham factory.¹¹³

Early in 1929, a strike meeting of the Singer Coventry factories was used to recast the whole union organisation. Five shop committees and secretaries (including two for the trim areas) were elected, along with a works committee of 6 - one from each shop committee, and one from the Woodcutting Machinists in the sawmill (see Appendix 8). At a strike meeting of Holbrooks Bodies trimmers soon afterwards, the shop committee, which, along with the organiser, had interviewed the firm, agreed to stay in office, while a new shop secretary was elected (see Appendix 8).

But keeping shop organisation up to scratch was a continuing process. As early after the 1926-27 campaign as October 1927, the branch secretary was again bemoaning the lack of shop secretaries and its consequent impact on the collection of contributions. Until the 1931 Delegate Meeting, if members were not clear at the end of a quarter, they were suspended from benefit and allowed a "Grace Month" in which to settle. For at least nine consecutive years from the end of 1922 (for which period figures are available), between 20 and 25% of the branch membership had not settled at the end of the October quarter, for example.¹¹⁴ Early in 1929, at a time when it was reported "Our trade in Coventry has been excellent during the past quarter", the branch committee again requested a full organising campaign be held, with extra organisers brought in temporarily. Nothing came of this, despite Francis's report, at the time, that disputes at Rover

and Cross & Ellis would have been more successful "if shop organisation had been good when the trouble arose. Scratch committees are hardly effective. Moral for all members, keep your shop committees always in being".¹¹⁵ .

(vi) Non-federated firms

Apart from continual weakness at Standard, NUVB organisation in the federated shops in the 1920s was sufficient to maintain membership and a degree of control over events. It was assisted by the existence of the national agreement, which laid down wage rates, overtime rates (a minimum of time and a half until 1931), guaranteed time rates under piecework, no debit balances beyond recognised period of settlement, and some notional protection (which would have to be backed by organisation) against the reduction of piecework prices. It was different in many of the non-federated shops. While these latter companies were competing for the same labour, their wages had to be comparable to the high earnings in the federated establishments. But they were less restrained over conditions of employment.

The Coventry engineering employers were anxious to get those car manufacturers outside their Association to join the EEF fully. Swift had non-federated membership from 1922 to 1925 when, faced with an ultimatum, it agreed to federate fully.¹¹⁶ Singer, however, although enjoying non-federated membership in 1924, refused to federate in 1925, and, while approached at least twice in the interim, stayed aloof until 1936. It then tried to federate fully, but bringing its pay and conditions into line with the EEF proved a stumbling block and it resumed "non-federated" membership

for the next few years.¹¹⁷ Riley also briefly had non-federated membership in the mid-1930s.¹¹⁸

Regarding the pure coachbuilders, the Coventry engineering employers had agreed early in 1924 that they could join for a year as non-federated members. Only Cross & Ellis and Hancock & Warman took this up at the time. Later in the year, the Coventry engineering employers, mindful of the small proportion of NUVB and Woodcutting Machinists' members employed nationally by EEF firms, wanted a bigger proportion of these unions' membership "brought under discipline". To this end they proposed a local coachbuilders' association which could be linked with the Coventry engineering employers. Eventually, following the February 1925 NUVB mass meeting, eight coachbuilding firms (out of seventeen invited) met the CDEEA vehicle building sub-committee, but were unanimously against the idea of a separate association. Instead, "non-federated" membership at a special rate was agreed, and Morris Bodies, Carbodies, Holbrook Bodies joined along with Cross & Ellis and Hancock & Warman.¹¹⁹ This arrangement was renewed every year. Hancock & Warman, Holbrook Bodies, and Cross & Ellis withdrew in the early 1930s,¹²⁰ but Morris Bodies and Carbodies remained in.

Non-federated membership did not bring many burdens on the companies using it, but allowed them to make use of various facilities including informal works conferences arranged through the Coventry engineering employers. It did not mean that firms had to conform exactly to the terms and conditions of the engineering woodworkers' agreements. However, there was some attempt to bring these firms into line. Already in 1922, Swift, Singer, Carbodies, Charlesworth, and Cross & Ellis, had agreed to pay the

national rate plus no more than 50% for piecework. In 1926 there was another attempt to get a uniform practice, and the "non-federated" coachbuilders agreed an inclusive hourly base rate and overtime rates.¹²¹

But many Coventry coachbuilders, whether non-federated members or not, were periodically found paying below established conditions in the 1920s. Overtime allowance was allegedly not paid at different times at Carbodies, Hancock & Warman, Midland Light Bodies, and Charlesworth.¹²² The debt system was found at Cross & Ellis and Holbrook Bodies;¹²³ while low rates and no guaranteed rates were complained of at Hancock & Warman and Cross & Ellis,¹²⁴ the latter firm also being accused at one stage of operating the piece-boss system.¹²⁵ Other conditions caused grievances - in particular the working of overtime. At Holbrook Bodies, men would not be told in advance of the need for overtime working; while at Charlesworth the union got a member reinstated who had been dismissed for refusing to work excessive overtime.¹²⁶

These problems did not disappear in the 1930s, though some of the firms in question did. Carbodies continued their notorious practices, and their increasing use of the engineering employers in the 1930s made this more public (see section B). Swallow's arrival in Coventry in the late 1920s saw the NUVB attempting to secure overtime rates and guaranteed rates on piecework, as well as being involved in piecework price negotiation. The CDEEA also approached Swallow in 1930, but made no progress.¹²⁷

Conclusion

The above account, in conjunction with Appendix 8, is an important departure from the accepted view of Coventry car factory trade unionism in the 1920s. Friedman's comments on the lack of strike activity in Coventry have already been noted in the Introduction to this thesis. Since Hyman's account of the collapse of the Workers' Union in Coventry due to unemployment in the early 1920s,¹²⁸ Carr's thesis has also shown the massive decline of the AEU in Coventry following the 1922 lock-out.

The Coventry AEU District Committee took a very hard line against the large number of members who returned to work in the days just before the dispute officially ended. Their policy of fines, in conjunction with the generally poor state of trade and employers' victimisation of shop stewards, was a disaster. Workshop organisation fell apart, fines were unpaid, members excluded, while others drifted out. By early 1925 there were only 3,000 AEU members in the district compared to around 11,000 before the lock-out; and they were employed in general engineering as well as the motor industry. Carr, however, noted that while the AEU collapsed, the Patternmakers, the Sheet Metal Workers, and the Vehicle Builders maintained effective workshop organisation, and NUVB membership in Coventry actually increased in the mid-1920s.¹²⁹

But subsequent writers have not generally looked further than the experience of the AEU and the Workers' Union. Zeitlin, for example, argued "After the defeat of the various engineering unions in the 1922

lockout, employers in the car factories acquired substantial freedom of action; only in isolated craft occupations such as sheet metal work did the unions retain a real foothold.¹²⁰ And Cronin has more recently written of the "utter catastrophe" experienced by trade unions in 1920s' Coventry.¹²¹ While partially true, such accounts hide from history the richness of the NUVB's experience.

The main engineering based unions were undoubtedly shattered, but the reason why has to be understood. The Workers' Union was broken by unemployment, while the enormity of the AEU disaster was largely because the policy of the District Committee "turned defeat into a rout".¹²² After the unemployment of the early 1920s and the lock-out, it was possible for unionism to survive in the car factories and the NUVB experience proves this. Their relative success was mainly based around a shortage of the necessary vehicle building skills, but given the general climate in the factories and the high wages, the NUVB branch still had to, and did, work at building and sustaining workshop organisation.

NUVB branch membership, and shop organisation, did not start to collapse until 1931. Coventry in the 1920s was, in retrospect, the high point of NUVB unionism in the interwar British car industry.

B. COVENTRY IN THE 1930s.

(1) The crisis of the early 1930s

The early 1930s were a traumatic period for the Coventry NUVB branch. During a period of very heavy unemployment its membership slumped and its influence disappeared from many car and coachbuilding factories, sometimes for several years. The statistical details are summarised in table 8:4 below.

As must be clear from previous chapters, the unemployment suffered by NUVB members in this period was not caused directly by technical changes. There was a temporary increase in unemployment nationally in the industry during the period 1930-32,¹³³ due to depressed trading conditions, and this had its counterpart in Coventry. There were also a number of more permanent changes, the decline of certain coachbuilders, and the relocation of some body production to Pressed Steel in Oxford, which exacerbated the situation.

The permanent changes included Swift's demise in 1931,¹³⁴ though this firm had probably been declining for some time; the coachbuilder Hancock & Warman did not reopen after a fire in 1930 (see chapter 5); Singer was gradually transferring production to its Birmingham factory;¹³⁵ and Rover had its main body shell built, painted and trimmed at Pressed Steel from 1930 (see chapter 6). There were also the changes in body production by Hillman, with first the Wizard and then the Minx, which appear to have been

built at Pressed Steel (see chapter 6); these might have cut employment at Hillman, though did not affect Humber bodies. Finally, Rover's decision in 1929 to stop using its major body supplier, Midland Light Bodies (see chapter 5), probably caused a crisis at this firm.¹³⁶

There were many important temporary factors. Daimler closed its coachwork department in the winter of 1929-30 (see chapter 5 and below) and was totally reliant for a number of years on outside coachbuilders. Some firms were harder hit by the recession; thus, Morris experienced a big drop from 58,000 cars in 1930 to 43,000 in 1931 (see chapter 5), and this, combined with its use of Pressed Steel, must have affected employment at Morris Bodies. While Rover's output in the 1931 season was much higher than in the late 1920s, it slumped again the next season, and even further the next.¹³⁷ On a smaller scale, both Carbodies and Cross & Ellis suffered a particular slump in work for Alvis in 1929 and 1930 compared to the years 1926-28.¹³⁸

Counterbalancing factors included SS Cars coming on to the market in 1931-32¹³⁹ (though it is not clear whether this compensated for the rundown in Swallow bodywork). More importantly, Standard was expanding production fairly rapidly at the beginning of the 1930s; but as the organiser noted at the beginning of 1933: "At this factory the steel body predominates, with the consequent large bulking of semi-skilled labour".¹⁴⁰ But it was not until during 1933 that the car market picked up, and unemployment in the Coventry car industry started to fall.

Table 8:4 Coventry NUVB membership loss and unemployment, 1930-1934.

<u>Qtr.</u> <u>ending</u>	<u>Branch</u> <u>membership</u>	<u>New</u> <u>members</u> <u>that qtr.</u>	<u>Net decline</u> <u>in membership</u> <u>that qtr.*</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>unemployment</u> <u>that qtr.</u>	
				(A)	(B)
Jan. 1930	2346	-	-	-	-
Apr. 1930		73	(2)	105	-
Jul. 1930		n.f.	9	248	-
Oct. 1930		93	(29)	763	c.1,000
Jan. 1931	2312	47	54	397	412
Apr. 1931		11	102	373	n.f.
Jul. 1931		5	240	428	501
Oct. 1931		13	117	637	784 #
Jan. 1932	1692	20	155	274	283
Apr. 1932		n.f.	87	192	235
Jul. 1932		6	98	-	279
Oct. 1932		2	95	-	399
Jan. 1933	1293	2	119	-	140
Apr. 1933		6	153	-	219
Jul. 1933		2	51	-	127
Oct. 1933		81	82	-	360
Jan. 1934	1032	20	(25)	-	97

* Figures in brackets represent net increase that quarter.

n.f. = no figure available.

(A) Estimate based on state unemployment benefit payments during the quarter. Assumes all received benefit, and also that all received adult rate of benefit. Therefore a probable underestimate of the average daily unemployment figure during the quarter.

(B) Estimate based on South Midlands NUVB area unemployment figures at a specific date, usually about midway during the quarter. Assumes Coventry branch accounted for 90% of area total. Benefit payments suggest the percentage usually higher, therefore the figures are probably a very slight underestimate.

Down to 350 on 27-9-31. '41

The unemployment trends shown in table 8:4 do not follow exactly the national ones analysed in table 7:15, mainly because there was in Coventry a pronounced seasonal peak in unemployment in the July to October quarter each year. Branch membership held up in 1930 (and recruitment continued), despite the record branch unemployment that summer and autumn. This was followed by the very large loss in 1931 of over 600 members (nearly half of the whole branch loss during the early 1930s) even though unemployment eased slightly. And this corroborates the suggested national picture, that the 1931 membership loss was a reaction to the levies of late 1930 and early 1931, compounded by the cut in unemployment benefit in May 1931.

The extra large membership loss during the winter of 1932-33, while not reflected nationally, could have been a further reaction to the increase in subscriptions and extra cut in union unemployment benefit in August 1932. The only direct evidence on this point comes from a member who told the branch in October 1932 that there were 50 men working in his shop, but only 12 were in the union and some of them were about to leave; he saw this as a direct result of the union's financial policies.¹⁴² Coventry traditionally had a higher proportion of members in arrears, who would therefore find themselves with even higher debts to clear. Certainly, the evidence already presented in chapter 7 suggests that the combination of reduced benefits and increased subscriptions and levies was a fatal mixture for the Coventry branch.

Analysing the membership loss, a number of features stand out. First of all, given the normal membership turnover, the branch's recruitment slowed up greatly in 1931 and effectively stopped during 1932 and the first half

of 1933. Secondly, the number of "apprentice" members declined inexorably from 271 in January 1930 to 32 in April and July 1933 and 30 in October 1933, before it started picking up again. As at the low point most were reaching 20 or 21,¹⁴³ this suggests effectively zero recruitment for a few years in this area. The lack of general recruitment of boys and adults must account for some few hundred of the overall membership decline. In other words, the membership loss was not just people leaving or lapsing, but also people no longer joining.

Did this lack of new members reflect a breakdown of shop organisation in 1931 or, more prosaically, the temporary lack of employment opportunities for newcomers into the industry? Probably a bit of both. The latter was obviously a factor, but must be seen as secondary. The experience at Armstrong-Siddeley, explored below, suggests that membership fell away where the shop organisation was too weak to hold on to it. This occurred in many shops as a reaction to the union's regime of levies and increased contributions, and reduced unemployment benefit. Once numbers had left or lapsed, others followed suit, as there seemed little point to many in continuing to pay subscriptions when the union could no longer count on the overwhelming majority in the shop. Workers must also have been aware of their generally weakened bargaining position given the prevailing unemployment. Further, employers were able to take advantage of the situation in that those "members who had been active in the shops", whose "services [had been] discharged at the first signs of slackness" could, given the depressed labour market, be "kept out of work".¹⁴⁴

As described in section A, shop organisation was a tender flower that needed constant nurturing, even in the relatively favourable climate of the 1920s. With the adverse local labour market of the early 1930s, it was more than ever vulnerable. Only solid organisation could withstand the internal financial crisis of the NUVB, and this was lacking in most Coventry shops. While employers, as noted above, did take more than their usual advantage of lay-offs to get rid of more active members, there is only one clear case of them actively breaking shop organisation in this period. (Though, the absence of sufficient documentation makes it impossible to know whether it was repeated elsewhere.)

Armstrong-Siddeley

The employers' attack took place at Armstrong-Siddeley in 1932 after the shop organisation had held firm in the autumn of 1931, at which time, despite the decline in the branch, they were still 100% strong, and reckoned themselves to be "one of the finest organised shops in the country".¹⁴⁵ In fact, the Armstrong-Siddeley members even went on strike in September 1931 against the company's proposals to follow the June 1931 national agreement with the engineering unions which altered, among other things, the basis for calculating minimum piecework earnings from 33.33% to 25%.¹⁴⁶

Armstrong-Siddeley requested a special meeting of the CDEEA vehicle building sub-committee on this in late July, and wanted the Association's support. The sub-committee recommended implementing the new agreement in coachbuilding and woodworking departments; but before a local conference on

the issue early in September, the sub-committee modified its position, by arguing for the agreement's terms only on new models, while accepting the best compromise possible on revised models. The NUVB, however, contended that the agreement should be applied on a pro-rata basis, ie that piecework earnings above the base rate should be reduced in the proportion 33.33:25; this had, in fact, happened at Austin where the 75% balance had been reduced to 56.25%. At Armstrong-Siddeley the men's bonus was about 80%.¹⁴⁷

Following an unsuccessful local conference on Friday 2nd September, a meeting of the men was held on the Monday evening, which decided to send a deputation to the firm the next morning and, failing satisfaction, "they would down tools, which would be unofficial".¹⁴⁸ The strike, in breach of procedure, started, with half an hour's notice, at 11.15.am on the Tuesday, with 252 men coming out, practically all the employees in the coachbuilding departments apart from 1 or 2 leading hands.¹⁴⁹ Local employers' secretary, Varley, claimed that the men were "quite out of hand, and would not listen to the local officials". But organiser Francis met the men on the Thursday morning, and, with a number of the strikers informally met Varley on the Friday. Varley promised them a works conference if they would return on the Monday, which was agreed at a mass meeting that evening.¹⁵⁰ Francis claimed that the strike "was sufficient to cause the firm to moderate their attitude, and, receiving information of this, we again opened up negotiations, when, on our receiving certain assurances, the men decided to resume".¹⁵¹

The works conference took up most of the Monday, with the NUVB officials still arguing for a pro rata reduction on the previous year's prices, while

the company argued it would operate the new agreement, but, as in previous years, would negotiate "on a not ungenerous basis". The men met again on the Monday night, and Varley thought it likely they would come out again. However, according to Francis, some formula was eventually reached, the men stayed at work, and were generally satisfied.¹⁵²

The strike had wide-reaching implications. The immediate one was, as Francis noted - "this affair had a steadying effect upon other employers in Coventry, it being undoubtedly the intention to operate the 25% minimum all round".¹⁵³ It also revealed that where workshop organisation was kept up to scratch, the employers could not do as they pleased. Of course, the strike occurred just as the firm would have been gearing up for the new season's production, and had most likely been unexpected. However, the company had ample opportunity to get their own back, and did so with a vengeance.

There were complaints already in November that the company were engaging men from out of town, rather than taking on local unemployed members.¹⁵⁴ Then, when some 100 discharges took place in May the next year, they included 5 members who had been active in the September strike, and who all had 8-12 years service with the firm. The coachbuilding works committee met the branch committee and the organiser early in June 1932, and intimated that the shop organisation was still carrying on, but did not think a mass meeting to improve the organisation would be opportune. However, when a meeting did take place in mid-August, after further discharges, the situation had deteriorated. The discharges were seen not to have been caused through bad trade, and very few prominent strikers were still working at the firm. Only one member in the trim shop was present, the

others having refused to come, while no more than one in four were still members in the finishing shop. One member asked Francis "Suppose you can organise the men again, will the Armstrong-Siddeley stand them?", and received the reply "We cannot say, but the more organisation we have the better, we are making an attempt and we are asking you all to do what you can".¹⁵⁵

The tide turns

The first half of 1933 appears to have been the low point in the Coventry branch's fortunes, with the situation improving after this. This reflected an improvement in trading conditions, but still had to be worked for. During the summer months, the Coventry Trades Council (whose chairman at the time was an NUVB branch member) laid plans for a recruiting week later in the year. Arising from their involvement in this, the NUVB branch held a special organising meeting at the end of August 1933, and postcards were sent to all current and lapsed members. Francis noted that "the attendance was not at all bad", and hoped that branch officers would not solely depend on the forthcoming Trades Council campaign - "surely it is not impossible to secure that a few at least of our members will serve as rallying centres in the various shops where they are employed".¹⁵⁶

During the Trades Council recruitment campaign, the NUVB were involved in 15 noon-hour meetings at factory gates, as well as evening indoor meetings and a mass meeting on a Sunday night. While a few members were probably secured by these methods, the significant breakthroughs occurred during the winter months at Riley and Daimler, when joint organising

meetings were held with the AEU around problems that had arisen. At Riley, it appears that the NUVB had by Christmas recruited over 50 (mainly lapsed members) and a shop committee was elected; while, according to Carr, the AEU made its breakthrough there in February 1934, electing 11 shop stewards. Meetings at Daimler in December and January also brought the NUVB a number of members.¹⁵⁷

The pattern for the rest of the 1930s was that the NUVB built up its membership in particular shops when issues arose. Whether these members then stuck depended on the state of shop organisation and the employers' attitude. The remainder of this section mainly looks at their efforts around different shops, sometimes successful, and sometimes not. However, the intensive organising activity of the mid-1920s was not repeated. There was a special meeting for all members and non-members in the trade in February 1936, at which about 300 were present;¹⁵⁸ but the branch was generally powerless in the situation where, despite generally good recruitment figures from 1934 onwards (see Appendix 7), "we still keep having a lot run out".¹⁵⁹ One index of the union's strength is the amount of industrial action. The Rover strike in 1930 (see chapter 7) and the Armstrong-Siddeley 1931 strike were very much the tail-end of the industrial action of the 1920s (see Appendix 8). The rest of the 1930s saw NUVB members involved in strikes at Carbodies, Humber and Daimler (all discussed below), but this was a very different experience to the increasing number of strikes in the Coventry engineering industry generally.¹⁶⁰

(ii) The NUVB and the Sheet Metal Workers

One of the factors causing the NUVB to organise in Coventry in the 1930s was its competition with the Sheet Metal Workers' unions. Late in 1935, representatives of the Singer company went round the Standard works, and seeing that some sheet metal work on body panels, which was done by skilled labour in the Singer works, was done by semi-skilled and boys at Standard, the Singer management introduced this practice into their own works. While the Sheet Metal Workers complained at Singer, there were much more important repercussions at Standard. Here the Sheet Metal Workers demanded a works conference, though the company maintained that the practice was now well established. However, the Sheet Metal Workers, who were 100% organised, then started claiming other work as theirs. A few weeks later four non-union workers were discharged through their work being claimed by the Sheet Metal Workers. These workers, part of a group termed plumbers, filers, and torch solderers, were willing to join the Sheet Metal Workers but had been refused membership.

NUVB members in the Standard body shop, concerned at these developments, got the branch officers to call a meeting of the body shop one Saturday morning. Here the officers stressed that the only way to stop the Sheet Metal Workers encroaching further was to get organised. The majority in the shop were not in the NUVB but promised to enter or re-enter, a large number paying entrance fees on the spot. A shop committee of 17, representing 8 different sections, was also elected. Within the next week, branch officers interviewed the company, made it clear that the NUVB would resist

any further encroachments by the Sheet Metal Workers, and informed them they had recruited ten filers, whose work was threatened, and hoped the company would keep them on. The company replied that they would not take any work off NUVB members without calling the branch officers in. A week after the first body shop meeting, only 2 or 3 were still not in the NUVB, and it was agreed that further action would be taken if they had not joined by lunch time on the next working day. They did join, and that meant 117 new and re-entered members had joined. It was later claimed that 130 had been recruited.¹⁶²

The situation temporarily stabilised at Standard, but the Sheet Metal Workers were becoming increasingly confident. They struck at Humber in March 1936, following that company's refusal to remove 4 men, employees of Pressed Steel, who were engaged on rectification of car bodies delivered to Humber. Pressed Steel had instructed these men not to join either of the Sheet Metal Workers' unions, on pain of dismissal. The engineering employers demanded a local conference with the Sheet Metal Workers' unions, and secured a resumption of work, but pressure was put on Pressed Steel to remove its embargo on union membership. A few months later, their members struck again at Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft because one of the members of the National Union was in arrears with his subscriptions.¹⁶³

In September 1936 the Sheet Metal Workers' unions and the Coppersmiths attended a works conference at Standard, claiming that their members only should be employed on assembling "all metal" bodies in jigs and all the ancillary operations connected with it. The company refused to budge, and the next day the Sheet Metal Workers stood still in the shop, and the

company cleared them out, about 40 in number, giving them their cards. They then re-engaged several NUVB members. The Sheet Metal Workers resumed two days later on the same conditions pertaining before the strike, except for 6 for whom no work was available.¹⁶⁴ While the NUVB, aided by the company, had withstood the Sheet Metal Workers' attack in that company, a much more serious problem for the union was developing at the Rover body shop. Earlier in 1936 it was reported that there were about 50 NUVB members out of 200 members in the shop, the rest being non-unionists.¹⁶⁵

In September 2 NUVB members and 1 non-member were recruited by the Sheet Metal Workers, who issued some 50 entrance forms to the Rover bodymakers. The Birmingham & Midland Society insisted on a local conference, at which they complained of Rover's refusal to allow them a works conference over, among other things, the claim of the Sheet Metal Workers' unions to do the assembling, lead-loading and cleaning off of all bodies which they considered to be of the "all-metal" type. They also claimed the sheet metal workers' rate for their newly-recruited members.¹⁶⁶

The NUVB told the engineering employers that the issue was not one of the work itself, but the union to which workers belonged. The employers, in turn, were clear at the subsequent Rover works conference that the issue was one of demarcation between the Sheet Metal Workers and the NUVB, and the firm refused to have anything to do with it. After the conference the Rover management met NUVB officers who agreed to send details of the case to the union's Head Office for them to submit to the TUC Disputes Committee. Meanwhile the NUVB held a meeting of workers in the Rover body

shop, and the NUVB members who had joined the Sheet Metal Workers, there being at least three by then, agreed to return.¹⁶⁷

The engineering employers then called a meeting of interested member firms for early October, and representatives from Armstrong-Siddeley, Daimler, Rover, Triumph, Standard, and Carbodies resolved "That members cannot allow further encroachment on the work in connection with the assembly of motor car bodies by the Sheet Metal Workers, and that they should maintain a firm attitude in regard to retaining the right to employ such class of labour as each member thought fit on the different operations."¹⁶⁸

Regarding the NUVB's proposed application to the TUC, there was a major difference of opinion on this between the national leadership and the Coventry branch officers. Halliwell contended that so long as NUVB members did the work, the union had nothing to lose. If they went to the TUC there was the possibility that the Engineers as well as the Sheet Metal Workers would be against them. Technically, anyway, it was the Sheet Metal Workers who should submit the case, and it would have to be discussed between the respective ECs before the TUC would look at it.¹⁶⁹

In mid-November 1936 organiser Francis informed Varley of the union's official position, and the latter was astonished by the fact the union had done nothing. Rover had refrained from even considering allowing Sheet Metal Workers on NUVB work, pending an NUVB approach to the TUC, and Varley could only threaten that the employers association would now advise Rover to deal with the situation as it thought fit, unless the union did

something very quickly.¹⁷⁰ Not surprisingly, Buckle was extremely perturbed, arguing that the local branch did not know where it stood. The Sheet Metal Workers were pushing for a local conference on the issue, and "there is no doubt some of the firms here are afraid of the Sheet Metal Workers Union, they seem so strong in most shops".¹⁷¹ The NUVB's South Midlands EC member attended a Coventry branch committee meeting to explain the national position. Buckle then wrote to Head Office claiming "This matter is more serious than Mr. J. Francis or the EC evidently consider it to be".¹⁷² Francis was then sent to speak to the branch committee, who were still not satisfied, but conceded that it was too late to do anything nationally.¹⁷³

Coventry was one of many NUVB areas experiencing problems with the Sheet Metal Workers, the worst being Glasgow, Dublin and London. For the union to take the issue to the TUC on the Coventry question only "we think would not be good tactics". The union's position was: "We are instructing everywhere that our men adapt themselves to the new material that is being used in the construction of a coach and claim it as their work".¹⁷⁴ But, given the local strength of the Sheet Metal Workers in Coventry, the Coventry NUVB did not feel confident to take them on, and wanted outside help. At the beginning of December 1936, a local conference took place to consider the Sheet Metal Workers' case. While the employers saw no reason to recommend any alteration at Rover, they agreed to a works conference at Standard, where Sheet Metal Workers' officials claimed there was "seething discontent" among their members. In fact, the next day a deputation of Sheet Metal Workers at the firm interviewed the management requesting that NUVB members should not use files or shears.

The local NUVB branch officers felt betrayed, and that the efforts to make the body shops 100% NUVB at both Standard and Rover had been a waste of time - "no hope for us and let the Sheet Metal Workers Union carry on and secure the work and members". However, the works conference at Standard found no evidence of unrest there, and the matter temporarily died down. The employers were not deceived by the apparent quiescence at Standard and felt that "the general question underlying the Sheet Metal Worker Societies' demand would have to be dealt with sooner or later."

As a result, meetings of the employers' vehicle building sub-committee recommended that firms should not depart from their current practice regarding the labour employed on "all-metal" bodies, without referring the matter to the employers' association.¹⁷⁵ The issue did not arise again until the autumn of 1937, at Triumph, but in the meantime the Sheet Metal Workers had demonstrated their strength at both Humber and Daimler.¹⁷⁶ Triumph had quite a lot of its bodies built by outside firms, and those bodies it did build were not panelled in its own works. Ash frameworks were assembled at its Clay Lane works, dispatched to a sheet metal contractor where the panels were beaten and fitted, before being pinned on by sheet metal workers. In 1935 the company considered having the panels pinned on in their own works by coachbuilders, but Varley told the engineering employers "this question had always been a difficult one in Coventry" and, fearing trouble at the time, arranged an informal meeting between Triumph and the Sheet Metal Workers, as a result of which Triumph decided to continue their existing practice.¹⁷⁷

Two years later, it appears that the firm decided to do certain panelling work. The Sheet Metal Workers claimed this, along with a few other operations previously done by NUVB members, including fixing and soldering the water drain pipe from the roof. According to Buckle, the Sheet Metal Workers threatened to strike unless they were given this work. Triumph insisted on employing the labour they thought most suitable. Two works conferences were held, with the NUVB members eventually accepting that they had lost some work, though they requested to be invited to discuss any future demarcation issues before the company settled them.¹⁷⁰

The NUVB bodymakers seem however to have held their own against the Sheet Metal Workers until the second world war. There was a brief scare in late 1938 at Rover where about 20 Sheet Metal Workers worked alongside NUVB members, and one young NUVB member who had been taught all he knew about sheet metal working by NUVB members was recruited into the Birmingham & Midland Society. This issue rumbled on for a couple of months, but while the EC decided it was a case of poaching, and should go to the TUC, nothing seems to have been done about it, and it appears to have been an isolated instance.¹⁷⁹

The final episode in the attempt by the Sheet Metal Workers to claim a monopoly on metal bodywork unravelled at the new Fisher & Ludlow factory at Tile Hill in 1938. Early on an arrangement was made with the Sheet Metal Worker societies that the Coventry factory be recognised as a branch of the Birmingham works. Consequently all workers employed on sheet metal work of any description would be classified as skilled, and therefore paid the skilled sheet metal workers' rate. When two workers were engaged from

Standard - one a torch solderer, the other a loader - they were given the full rate. All this was against the Coventry employers' association policy, and was initially unknown to them. When it was discovered, Varley interviewed the firm who claimed that company officials had made a mistake, and that Coventry conditions should apply. The Sheet Metal Workers had also demanded that welders be paid the sheet metal workers' rate, but Varley convinced the management that welding was not classified as a skilled job in Coventry. 180

In November 1938 a works conference was held at Fisher & Ludlow to discuss the Sheet Metal Workers' demand that they, and not NUVB members, should pin on panels. A few weeks later, Sheet Metal Workers claimed certain work and threatened to strike. Local union officials intervened and got the company to promise the work. Varley then had a discussion with the management where the latter spelt out that they were prepared to keep to the existing practice if, in the event of a strike, they got full support from the Federation and the Coventry association, and got compensation for any losses sustained through cancelled contracts. The last point was not possible, although the engineering employers did operate an Indemnity Fund.

Fisher & Ludlow agreed to take no action that would prejudice established practice. But early in January 1939 they told the NUVB shop committee that they were considering taking some part of the doorhanging work off them, as the Sheet Metal Workers claimed their members did this work at Humber. The NUVB counter-claimed that it was definitely doorhangers' work and their members did it at Standard and Rover. Following this the engineering employers had a long discussion on what to do. More

than one speaker thought that the NUVB was to some extent responsible as they had failed to take a sufficiently strong stand (a sentiment also expressed at an earlier employers' meeting). However, Varley pointed out the impossibility of arranging discussions between the unions because of the "attitude" of the Sheet Metal Workers.

Eventually it was unanimously agreed that the employers would seek to persuade NUVB representatives to concede the small areas of work (numbering six in total) that Fisher & Ludlow had promised to the Sheet Metal Workers, on the understanding that the NUVB kept the major area of pinning on panels. If agreeable to the NUVB, this would then be communicated to the Sheet Metal Workers. In the absence of any information to the contrary this appears to have been what happened. '31

(iii) Progress at Rover and Daimler

Rover

Following the success in organising the Standard body shop at the end of 1935 (see above), a special meeting, open to all members and non-members in the district, was convened in February 1936 to hear reports from all firms in Coventry. Some 300 were present and, arising from this, a meeting of Rover bodymakers was held one evening after work. Out of an estimated 200 workers in the shop, only about 50 were in the NUVB. The main issue was the number of men not on the full skilled rate of 1/0^d per hour. It appeared that some of the lower rated men wanted to remain on their current rate as they felt less likely to be dismissed when discharges took place, the

season lasting only about 6 months; by the same token, the higher rated men felt more vulnerable, and wanted everyone on the top rate.¹⁹²

The branch decided to demand the higher rate. Arguing that there were very few apprentices in the trade, they claimed that the boys who entered straight from school became, because of the development of mass production, "skilled sectional workers". As existing skilled workers were also forced to become sectional workers, and still earned the full rate, there were two types of worker doing the same work, yet paid differently. Rover agreed to consider this, and before the end of March had raised about 25 men on to the skilled rate.¹⁹³ Then in the autumn, Rover agreed to pay all men over 23 the full rate, and those under 23 on as high a rate as possible. It is not clear why the company needed to make this concession. There are two possible, even probable, contributory factors. One is that the agitation among the Rover body shop seems to have paid off in terms of recruitment. While the branch was experiencing a lot of "run-out" members, about 100 joined at successive quarterly meetings in April and July 1936, and another 60 in October, many of whom were quite likely Rover bodyshop workers; and later in the year Buckle talked of the attempts to make Rover 100%.¹⁹⁴

The other factor is the attempts by the Sheet Metal Workers to poach NUVB members and get them on to their higher rate. The company made its final concession to the NUVB just after the initial poaching by the Sheet Metal Workers, and after it had agreed to resist the latter's efforts to claim NUVB work. It was more than likely prepared to pay the 1/0th rate to placate the NUVB members rather than risk an exodus of those NUVB members on metal operations to the Sheet Metal Workers' Unions, and claims for the

higher sheet metal workers' rate, as well as extended influence of the powerful Sheet Metal Workers in their shops (see above).

In April the next year, 1937, the branch got an ex-service man removed from the Rover trim shop, and this led to a meeting of the department in an effort to get 100% organisation. This was quite likely a much smaller department as at the time of the Bedaux dispute there were only 34 male trimmers, compared to 148 females (see chapter 7). The body shop by now was obviously nearly 100%, as requests came through to the branch soon afterwards for help to force non-unionists into the union. Later in the year, a new shop committee was elected, and it was agreed that former members starting at Rover should get their entrance forms from members in the shop, and not from the branch office.¹⁹⁵

A year later in August 1938, the body shop committee called one meeting, fining non-attenders 2/6 to go into the shop committee's funds. This caused some controversy, and at the next shop meeting in September with about 200 present, the issue of fines was sorted out, and a new shop committee and chief steward elected. At the March 1939 shop committee elections, 190 members were reported in the shop, and in June some 230 members.¹⁹⁶

Daimler

Little is recorded about NUVB activities at Daimler in the 1930s. This is partly due to the coachwork section being closed down at the beginning of the decade,¹⁹⁷ but it is not clear how long it was shut for, and whether it just affected body building (as the body shop is not mentioned at all in

NUVB records for the 1930s). There was, however, a fair amount of activity in the latter years of the decade, following the company's decision to produce some coachwork (see chapter 5). Some recruitment had taken place in the winter of 1933-34 (see above) and in 1935 the NUVB branch tried to take up a grievance over piecework prices, only for the company and the engineering employers to insist it was a matter that could be settled directly between the firm and the men concerned. The men had a meeting on a nearby recreation ground one lunch time to elect a deputation, but only by threatening to strike did the men secure an interview.¹⁹⁹

Toward the end of 1937, the various shops at the Daimler started to get organised. A meeting of finishers elected a shop secretary and shop committee, and "agreed all to come back in the Society". Within a fortnight another meeting of finishers and trimmers elected a deputation to see the rate fixer and foreman to remove certain grievances. When the rate fixer refused to see the deputation, Buckle contacted the firm himself. A few days later, a meeting of the paint and spraying department complained that the rate fixer was applying a "take it or leave it" attitude, and the members present promised to make the shop 100% for the union. This time Varley fixed up a meeting between Daimler and the union.²⁰⁰

Following this conference, a combined meeting of Daimler employees elected one shop steward for each of the following departments - paint, trim, finishing, mounting. The situation was still unsettled, and further shop meetings took place in January 1938, at one of which the chief shop steward for the factory (an AEU member) was present.²⁰⁰ One Saturday morning in February 1938, the finishers and trimmers left work to have a

meeting in the branch office. Arriving at the office at 11.30. they met until 1.15.pm when a deputation arrived back from Daimler having been discussing proposed piecework price reductions. The meeting agreed to resume work on the Monday, and that the deputation should interview the firm again and report back to a meeting in the evening. The result of this was that a compromise was reached over the suggested reductions. The finishers and trimmers were also involved in a longer stoppage later that year, lasting a few days either side of Christmas 1938.¹²¹

(iv) Rise of the TGWU at Humber

The Humber and Hillman factories which became increasingly integrated under the ownership of Rootes in the 1930s became a black spot for the NUVB. This was exemplified by the non-union nature of the 1934 strike and by the progress made by the TGWU later in the decade.¹²²

A big unofficial strike took place in May 1934, when the company, reorganising the works for the next year's production, started using a stopwatch to time operations in the body and trim shops. Some 330 male and 80 female trim shop workers seem to have come out on the afternoon of the 10th, while 145 body shop workers came out in sympathy the next morning. Nicholson thought that at least 50% of the men out were non-unionist; the EEF suggested that the TGWU had 20 women involved, and the NUVB 60-70 women. But the latter figure seems unlikely.

Both the Coventry engineering employers and the EEF contacted Nicholson for him to put pressure on the strikers to go back, as the strike was

unconstitutional, but the latter did not want anything to do with union officials. Nicholson pointed out "when men were in this temper it was very difficult for a trade union official to make any headway at all". All that could be done was to wait for a suitable opportunity to tell them they would sooner or later have to obey their union executive, but the large number of non-unionists "made the situation more difficult to handle".

On Saturday the 12th the Woodcutting Machinists and the Sheet Metal Workers passed resolutions in favour of striking on support, but were persuaded by their officials not to do so. However, at lunchtime on Monday the 14th 173 sheet metal workers and 13 acetylene welders did come out, but resumed work the next morning on the instruction of their local officials. As no progress was being made by the main strike, the workers voted to go back, returning on the 16th. Immediately the engineering employers brought the issue on to an official basis "in view of the impossible attitude adopted by the workers", and a works conference was held the day after. Francis and the NUVB only participated once the strikers' committee had agreed to their being present. The conference agreed that the works manager would investigate the methods of the time study expert in the coachbuilding department, and if, after one month, the workers were still not satisfied, a further conference would be held. A meeting of the workers involved accepted these proposals that evening.¹⁹³

It appears that NUVB members had already started organising in the works prior to the strike, though they obviously had only limited influence during it. However, Francis claimed that over 100 members were recruited during the period of the dispute and its immediate aftermath.¹⁹⁴ Perhaps

more significant was that the TGWU also recruited a number following the strike.¹⁹⁵ Some NUVB activity continued in the next few months, with deputations from the body shop attending the branch committee, and branch officers attending a good shop meeting.¹⁹⁶ But shop organisation probably suffered the next spring when due to model changes, the firm discharged some 60 bodymakers; though the shop was still having meetings at the end of 1936.¹⁹⁷

The only issue the NUVB appeared to be involved in at Humber during the next few years was when in early 1936 the company took the work of making jigs away from coach smiths and bodymakers and gave it to millwrights and carpenters. At a works conference the union secured an undertaking that any woodwork on the jigs requiring accuracy and skill would be given to bodymakers, while any rough work would be done by carpenters.¹⁹⁸ The NUVB's lack of headway at Humber was symbolised by the shop secretary for the finishers and trimmers being discharged along with several others in the spring of 1938, and leaving town with over £33 of union subscriptions in his pocket.¹⁹⁹ While the NUVB were doing badly at Humber, the TGWU made substantial inroads into "traditional" NUVB territory in the last few years before the war.

The TGWU were very active in the paint shop, and in December 1937 a works conference was held over their demands for an improvement in basic rates, and for a closed shop with the right to interview new workers. Not surprisingly the firm refused, but the next day the whole of the shop, some 200 in number, had a "stay-in" strike in the morning in support of their demands. It was not until December of the following year that the TGWU

succeeded at a works conference in getting some semi-skilled groups in the shop, including rubbers down, an increase on their 35/6 pw rate. While they wanted 40/-, they settled for 37/6.²⁰⁰ When two paint shop workers were dismissed for alleged bad workmanship in May 1939, the shop's complement of 160 came out for 4 days, and only agreed to resume work on the basis of a company investigation into the matter.²⁰¹

The decline of the NUVB at Humber became an important issue in the developing battle between Coventry branch secretary Buckle and Midlands organiser Francis. A Saltley branch member who worked at Humber made allegations in June 1939 about the state of organisation at Humber, possibly stung into it by the above mentioned TGWU strike. Buckle disputed the facts and wrote in the branch minutes and to General Secretary Halliwell that a meeting of inspectors and members from various sections claimed that the report was inaccurate.²⁰²

The Saltley member claimed that 95% of the paint shop were in the TGWU (which was possibly true); that while about 20% of the total were skilled painters, most were on semi-skilled operations, and only 1 or 2 were in the NUVB. He claimed that of about 40 inspectors, 11 were in the NUVB and 29-30 in the TGWU; as at a meeting in September 11 NUVB and 21 TGWU were present, this was probably roughly right, and it was the TGWU who obtained a works conference over the issue of wage rates and bonus for the coach inspectors. Only in the trim shop did the NUVB have a large membership, while overall, about 60% of the skilled employees in the body, paint, trim and finish shops, were in the TGWU.²⁰³ While it is impossible to check this last figure, it is clear that after the second war the trim areas were the main

NUVB stronghold at the Humber plant in Humber Road, as in 1948, of 10 NUVB male shop stewards in the plant, 6 were in the trim shops or on the trim tracks, 2 on the finishing tracks, one in the body shop, and one in the body paint shop, while there were also 2 female shop stewards on trim sub-assembly.²⁰⁴

Organiser Francis contacted Buckle before he reported the Saltley member's statement to the EC, and then wrote to Buckle informing him that he would be telling the General Secretary what Buckle had said - that is that Buckle was "not prepared to take any steps to deal with the statements quoted" and was "of the opinion that if the men wanted to join the TGWU, it was because they wanted a cheaper union and they were welcome to go to that union if they wanted".²⁰⁵ The EC were extremely concerned about the report, and sent Francis and the Leicester-based South Midlands EC officer along to a specially convened Coventry branch committee. Eventually Buckle agreed to call a meeting of Humber members to look into the allegations. Meanwhile Halliwell wrote to Buckle expressing the EC's deep concern, and commenting "there has been a disposition in some quarters to treat the people coming into the industry under the new method of production as outsiders, but the policy of the Executive is to include all who are working in the trade within the ambit of our organisation."²⁰⁶

(v) Failure at Carbodies

Finally, the last firm to be investigated is Carbodies, where eventually the branch secretary's attitudes came further into conflict with the NUVB's national policy. Carbodies was a poorly organised shop throughout the

interwar period; while there were a number of disputes here in the 1930s, the NUVB were unable to build up any permanent organisation.

Even the Sheet Metal Workers were not significantly more successful. A strike by them in November 1929 claiming the work of "pinning" on panels, which the NUVB were doing, was settled with the company claiming it had given the work to boy labour.²⁰⁷ In 1932 it was disclosed that panel beaters there had for a long time been remunerated purely by piecework earnings, without any guaranteed day rate, and were currently not even earning their day rate; the Coventry engineering employers could not support the firm if it did this.²⁰⁸ Soon afterwards the panel beaters struck over the firm employing a man not in the Sheet Metal Workers union on panel pinning, but this was seen by Varley as a ploy by the union to force Carbodies to pay a guaranteed day rate.

While the panel beaters were still out, an informal works conference was held with all the interested trade unions present, and Varley stated in front of them that Carbodies should pay the guaranteed day rate, but not retrospectively. The firm agreed to this. At a subsequent informal local conference the company agreed to make a small retrospective payment to 3 panel beaters.²⁰⁹ Ironically the same firm had, for some time past, been paying much higher base rates than the district rate to skilled men in the wood mill, and were only just getting them down.²¹⁰ However, by the end of 1933 the Woodcutting Machinists were complaining that Carbodies did not negotiate piecework prices at all, or provide any facility for discussion if the workers were dissatisfied with them. Once again Varley had to advise the firm to conform or the employers' association would not be able to back

them. A strike took place in December over the issue, and the firm agreed to fall into line with the district practice of "mutual" discussion of piecework prices.²¹¹

In February 1934 trim shop workers struck for 3 days over piecework prices; the NUVB branch only had 2 members involved, but secured a settlement and 15 new members joined up. A well attended shop organising meeting was then held one evening after work.²¹² In October the Woodcutting Machinists came out on strike for over a week, as a result of which the firm again promised to follow the EEF's national woodworkers' agreement.²¹³ It was not until December 1934 that the NUVB started organising properly at Carbodies. The branch called a meeting of all coachbuilding employees to take place one evening straight after work, at which about 70 workers were present and various complaints about the level of earnings were expressed. Not only were earnings often low, but there was arbitrary fixing of piecework prices, lack of an overtime rate but a good deal of overtime worked; the firm were beginning to grade employees, and, once again, there was the problem of no guaranteed hourly rate. The trim shop, however, was by now relatively well organised and had the least complaints. The meeting decided to ask the firm to conform to the national coach trade agreement rather than the engineering one. Following the meeting, at least one ex-member attempted to rejoin the union.²¹⁴

At an informal works conference later that month, the owner Bobby Jones refused the union's request; this was reported back to a meeting of members that night. Early in January a body shop meeting agreed to approach two non-members to join, and to insist in future that all workers starting in

the body shop should be members. The shop committee elected requested 4 or 6 union application forms for their shop, and another 20 for the finishing shop. In mid-January, at another informal works conference Jones declared he would come under the engineering agreement and pay the overtime rates specified in it straight away. In fact, the local engineering employers had made it plain that Carbodies could not apply the coach trade agreement and remain non-federated members of their association, but neither could they also refuse to follow the EEF agreement.²¹⁵

A two hour meeting of coachbuilding workers rejected the engineering agreement and decided to continue pushing for coach trade conditions, and when this was again refused, a further meeting voted to stop work. All of the coachbuilding staff came out, numbering about 200. After a week, the strikers voted by 84 to 44 or 45 to accept an agreement in line with the engineering one. When Varley tried to secure a staggered return to work, this was objected to, and a common re-start arranged.²¹⁶

Organiser Francis hoped "that the shop organisation which was built up, will be fully maintained. Only by this can the full success of the effort be secured." But this did not happen, and the Carbodies dispute became something of a cause celebre for branch secretary Buckle. He claimed that organiser Francis had told all the Carbodies workers not in the union to fill up entrance forms and they would receive dispute benefit. There were allegedly 129 entrance forms, but by the end of the quarter only 39 were paying money to the union, "and these did not last very long".²¹⁷

Membership sheets showing Carbodies members in January 1935 give a total of 130, of whom 99 were in the Industrial Section. It is significant that most joined the Industrial Section, obviously because it was cheaper; though most new members seem to have taken their dispute benefit, and not paid anything into the union. There were obviously some longer standing members there, such as those organised in the trim shop the year before. Two bodymakers, whose union membership dated back to the LPCTU, had worked at Carbodies for 8 years when, immediately after the strike, they were transferred from jig making and experimental work to lower paid production work, so they left the firm.²¹⁰

One strike committee member had been in the union from 1915 until he went into arrears and was crossed off the books while working at Hollick & Pratt in 1921-22, when a national levy was imposed. He and his "working mate" spent the next 13 years at Carbodies. He rejoined the union around the time of, or just before, the dispute; was entered into Table B, but, not paying his contribution, was placed into the Industrial Section. He and his mate were discharged by Carbodies at the beginning of May; they were told the work they were doing was not needed, although within a couple of hours, other workers had been put on to it. At the time, other discharges were taking place, as Carbodies were finishing a contract for Humber, and the Works Committee were afraid to take up the issue of victimisation.²¹¹

In September, 16 trimmers met the branch officers claiming that three members of a deputation to Bobby Jones had been victimised. The branch committee decided that the remaining shop committee member should resign, and that all the members in the shop should form the shop committee and

meet every Saturday dinner time.²²⁰ Organisation at the firm obviously went downhill rapidly. There are no further references to the firm in the Coventry branch's records until the beginning of 1940, when the TGWU took the initiative.

This latter union called a meeting one evening after work in December 1939 of all Carbodies workers. The new Coventry TGWU district official, Jack Jones, reported on negotiations with the firm over an application for waiting time, a guaranteed hourly rate, and overtime rates. It appeared that workers at the firm had recently again been on straight piecework, without any definite basic rates; that there had been no consultation on piecework prices, and the debt system was widespread; and in many sections there was no overtime pay - similar complaints to a few years earlier.

The meeting agreed that the TGWU should continue with its negotiations, and that a works committee representing all unions should be formed in an effort to get 100% membership. Soon afterwards the Coventry NUVB branch refused to take into the Industrial Section some bodymakers now getting the district rate at Carbodies, and Midland organiser Francis secured them membership through Birmingham No.1 branch. Coventry branch secretary Buckle's attitude, coloured to some extent by the 1935 experience at Carbodies and subsequent membership turnover elsewhere, was that if workers applying for membership were not prepared to join Table A, if eligible, but joined the IS instead, they were none other than "Birds of Passage" and would not last long.²²¹

While the national rule after the Swindon amendment in 1938 was that those eligible to join Table A, ie under 35 and in receipt of a craftsman's wages, could not join the Industrial Section, this policy was inoperable in the case of an unorganised shop like Carbodies where another union was recruiting. Some 14 finishers in receipt of craftsmen's wages, joined the TGWU early in 1940; this appeared to contradict the agreements with the TGWU that that union would not recruit craftsmen eligible for the NUVB. Deakin, however, claimed that if these 14 men could not stay in their union, then they would not join any other union, and would become non-unionists again, but he instructed Jack Jones in Coventry not to extend membership among the craft grades. Halliwell was not totally satisfied with this, but there was little he could do.²²²

The EC became very concerned at the failure of the NUVB in the face of the TGWU in Coventry, and summoned branch secretary Buckle to attend a meeting. This he refused to do, requesting particulars of the case to be sent. There then ensued a long correspondence between Buckle and Halliwell, during which the latter claimed: "Reports have reached EC, both written and oral in regard to the methods and prospects of developing our organisation in Coventry. EC are of opinion that much greater development is possible, and that the best use is not made of the facilities provided by the Organisation in the district for the purpose."²²³ Buckle, having earlier requested branch committee representation at any executive meeting he attended (which had been granted), then demanded copies of the reports alluded to by Halliwell. Halliwell replied that the EC had the right to summons him, and said he was being charged with the following - "no steps were taken by you to prevent the TGWU taking into membership craftsmen who

ought rightly to belong to the NUVB". Buckle retaliated by asking under which rule he was being summoned; and then said the branch was too busy for him to go to Manchester.²²⁴

Conclusion

The dispute between Buckle, on the one hand, and Francis and the national leadership, on the other, epitomised the battle between the union's past and its future. Where vehicle builders were paid the skilled rate, Buckle insisted they should be considered craftsmen (even if they obviously were not), and accordingly join one of the craftsmen's benefit tables. Francis, however, was more flexible, being an early supporter of the Industrial Section.

The Industrial Section was technically available for such workers, along with those on semi-skilled rates. However, as chapter 7 has shown, the section was not used in this way: irrespective of the vagueness surrounding it from 1932 to 1936, no one earning the skilled rate could join the Industrial Section between 1936 and 1938, and only those over 35 on skilled wages could join it from 1938 onward. As long as the union had such rules, then Buckle in Coventry and branch officers elsewhere could legitimately insist on "skilled" workers joining a skilled benefit section (and, for the majority, that meant Table A and superannuation contributions). In doing so, the Coventry NUVB branch effectively put a "constitutional" barrier in the way of mending the damage caused by the union's financial crisis of the early 1930s.

2. THE MASS PRODUCERS.

A. MORRIS MOTORS IN THE 1920s.

Morris started building cars in Oxford in 1913. A local coachbuilder, Raworth, built the bodies for the "Oxford" model. Hollick & Pratt of Coventry were used for the "Cowley" which went into production in September 1915. With the end of the war, Hollick & Pratt continued as the main supplier, with Raworth building any special bodies. But it was soon evident that the Coventry factory would not be able to meet Morris's demand, as well as satisfying their other customers. Morris therefore, in 1919, built his own body shop at his new Cowley factory, putting Pratt in charge of it, along with his Coventry responsibilities.²²⁵

With this development on the body side, and the increasing expansion of the Morris factory, the NUVB set up a branch in Oxford in January 1920, after several years without one in the town,²²⁶ and by the end of the year there were 85 members. But the branch was always plagued by the mobility of its members, evidenced by two factors. There was a tremendous turnover of branch officers, and secondly, large numbers, possibly the majority, of NUVB members working at Morris Motors did not transfer to the Oxford branch, thus never coming under its jurisdiction.

From the beginning, the branch required outside assistance. London organiser MacKay was present at the inaugural meeting, and attended another 5 more in the next 18 months.²²⁷ In August 1921 all the officers resigned,

but agreed to stay on temporarily.²²⁸ Assistant General Secretary Compton investigated the branch, and the London-based A.E. Smith came to the October meeting, declaring that if the branch was closed, members would have to transfer either to the Reading or Swindon branch. Despite complaints from those present of the apathy of members, and lack of support from the officials, enough members agreed to keep the branch going, and at its next meeting elected new officers²²⁹ - namely, their fifth secretary, and their sixth president, in less than two years. Smith returned early in 1922,²³⁰ but the gap in the branch minute book from February to October 1922 illustrates the problem had not been solved. The early branch officers were either leaving the area, or were reluctant to do the job and resigned. While there is no easily available information on lay-offs at Morris in the early 1920s, monthly output fluctuated significantly (see table 8:5 at the end of this section). Members could be drawn to the factory from outside the area when production was booming, only for them to leave when it started to falter.

The branch did, however, go through the motions of establishing shop organisation. Shop stewards were elected for body, paint, and trim shops, and once, in 1920, for the mounting shop. The main duty of these stewards seemed to be as shop collectors, and the terms were used interchangeably. The question of proposed piecework exercised the branch's attention in July and August 1920, but nothing more was recorded on this apart from a comment in the union journal in 1921 to the effect that men from Coventry had forced in piecework and been working it for a month before shop stewards even knew about it.²³¹ Stewards also approached the management in October 1920 to get the dinner hour changed, but the outcome was not reported.²³²

From the end of 1922, production at the factory increased extremely rapidly; 1923 saw a trebling of production over 1922, and in 1924 a further 60% expansion meant that Morris overtook Ford as the biggest producer of motor vehicles in Britain.²³³ The need to seriously organise the factory therefore became more pressing. The new London organiser, Halliwell, fresh from working in the Coventry car factories, spent several days in October 1922 getting the branch functioning again, and then attended a specially called branch meeting in February 1923 which agreed to call a special meeting near Cowley with regard to organising Morris's, and "to obtain all members it was possible to get".²³⁴ The meeting, however, did not appear to have taken place. The April quarterly meeting was a summoned one; but "owing to pressure of work at Cowley, where most of our members are working, there was not a large attendance". Despite this, it was once again decided to hold a summoned meeting near the works in May, but again no meeting took place. Similarly, the May branch meeting attendance was also low because of overtime, and the whole matter dropped over the summer.²³⁵

But there was still a desire to do something, and in October a specially convened branch committee requested an organiser to attend a general meeting the next week and stay over the next day to help organise the factory. "We feel, that owing to so small a percentage of members of this branch working at the Morris Cowley Works no useful action could be taken unless fully organised by some other means."²³⁶ Halliwell came up from London, and the branch agreed to call another meeting at Cowley, but, almost inevitably, this seems not to have transpired.²³⁷ The next few months saw a succession of badly attended branch meetings, with overtime the chief culprit. The branch remained inactive until November 1924 when

another special branch committee meeting asked Halliwell to attend a summoned branch meeting later that month. While Halliwell spoke about organising the Morris works, the only concrete development was that a couple of months later the branch "club house" was moved from the centre of Oxford to one nearer the Cowley works, though still some two or three miles away.²³⁸ Later in 1925 the branch committee deliberated several times on the possibility of a social evening but decided no good would result because of the "uncertainty" at the factory.²³⁹

In September 1925, for the third successive autumn, another special meeting was held with the organiser in attendance. Several members spoke of the difficulty of approaching men to join the union. An open meeting was then held a month later, but only two non-members attended. Halliwell spoke of "the semi-skilled labour employed in the works and the possibility of their coming to stay in the trade", provoking one member into declaring the "undesirability and dangers" of having "all and sundry belonging to the Society".²⁴⁰ An all-ticket meeting was then arranged for three weeks later, the committee informing Halliwell that it was inadvisable to hold meetings at the works, and that it was unnecessary to distribute handbills there as the meeting was for members only. At the meeting Halliwell was accompanied by Smith, who, referring to the introduction of semi-skilled and unskilled men into the trade, said that the "Society must of necessity organise all workers engaged in the industry in order to safeguard our interests and present a united front to the employers".²⁴¹

Following this, Smith attended an open meeting a fortnight later, but again only two non-members were present. He suggested forming a shop

committee, and this was later proposed but failed to find a seconder. One member asked what was the point if people were not prepared to take an active part, and the meeting eventually decided on a social event to get men to join, and organised a dinner. The branch then decided to try to arrange a social event monthly.²⁴² When the General Strike came, Oxford was, not surprisingly, an NUVB blackspot. Members must have been afraid to expose themselves openly to management, and only three members came out in Oxford, probably all at Raworth.²⁴³

Until then, the initiative for organising seems to have come from the branch membership who hoped that officials would be able to work some kind of miracle. From 1927 the national union took the lead. Following on from the organising campaign in Coventry, the Head Office wrote to the branch in July 1927 suggesting that full-time officials do a week's organising in Oxford. The members locally decided to let the matter lie owing to the state of trade at the Morris works,²⁴⁴ but Compton attended a branch committee meeting in August and pursued the Head Office suggestion. At that time the branch President worked for the local bus company, while the secretary and all five committee members worked at Morris. One of them stated "all kinds of tradesmen and unskilled men were working there assembling bodies etc, ... who seemed to lack any of the principles of trade union spirit". Three of the others said they had been stood off for a month without being given their insurance cards; they had not asked for them as they were afraid it would prejudice their chances of restarting when the works reopened. The secretary, however, pointed out that the body shop had been offered their cards and there was no suggestion of members losing favour through accepting them.

Compton "quite understood that any action being taken by the small number of members would in course of time be responsible for their dismissal". He suggested an organiser coming for a week and holding meetings outside the works at noon; if things were hopeful, he would himself come down for two days. The officers argued that with the works not yet back to full strength it was an unfavourable time, but Compton suggested they reconsider. They duly did so, writing to Head Office of "the futility of any attempt at organisation in this district".²⁴⁵ When, in July 1928, the Coventry branch contacted the Oxford branch about the trimmers' strike at Morris Bodies in Coventry (see Appendix 8 for details), the Oxford secretary was told to reply that they "regretted they were unable to take any part in it".²⁴⁶ And three months later, when a branch committee member outlined to the branch the conditions regarding the bonus at Morris, the members decided no action could be taken.²⁴⁷

This was hardly the best omen for a visit by Halliwell a few days later, explaining that the executive had had the question of organisation of the Morris works under consideration for some time, and had suggested that Halliwell and Francis go there for a few days. It was agreed that literature should be distributed outside the works and a meeting held.²⁴⁸ Three weeks later, both organisers attended a special branch meeting and agreed they should advertise a meeting for December 4th in the Oxford Times. Despite all the publicity, the attendance at the December meeting was much smaller than Halliwell had expected. A Wolverton branch member suggested giving bills out in the shops to advertise yet another meeting; and while it was agreed to hold a dinner hour meeting outside the works the next week, and give out bills to the men as they went into work, there is

no record of any such meeting.²⁴⁹ When, in June 1929, the Oxford branch decided to propose to the union's Southern Area Council that there was no need for an extra official in London - because of the union's financial position - it was obvious that branch members by then thought that officials were incapable of doing anything for them.²⁵⁰

Meanwhile, in October 1928, the Oxford Trades Council had circularised local trade union branches about making joint moves to organise the district. But the NUVB branch let a Trades Council letter, concerning organisation at Morris, lie on the table in April 1929.²⁵¹ Later, that year, when the Trades Council proposed an organising campaign, the Oxford NUVB branch initially deferred any reply until they had contacted Head Office. The new London organiser Penn was asked to take part by Head Office, but had no more success than his predecessors. "The Trade Union Campaign on the day of my visit was literally and physically a washout - the rain falling in torrents, noon and evening. Up to the time of my visit the efforts of the Oxford Trades Council closely resembled the game of 'Carting Coal to Newcastle', the meeting audiences, so I was informed, consisting of trade union organisers and officials."²⁵²

Penn also attempted to follow up a trainee ex-miner in Morris Motors who had shown interest in joining the NUVB. Francis, Bramley and Cripwell were instructed by the EC to arrange a meeting in November 1929; it appears one took place, and further correspondence was received at Head Office. But Penn had to report later that "our would-be helper had been discharged along with a number of others, who were possibly also similarly interested,

and had departed for his native woods and fields, not to say colliery refuse tips, in South Wales."²⁵³

The problem of organising at Morris was not helped by not knowing how many members the union had in the factory and who they were. Halliwell drew attention to this in 1923 - "We have many members in these works belonging to other branches. Could we but persuade these members to transfer their cards to the Oxford branch, and pull their weight with the officials of the branch, much could be done to organise this body of about 600 men."²⁵⁴ Early in 1925 the branch secretary was instructed to get a list of all "out-of-town" members and apply for their transfer. But this probably had little effect. At specially summoned meetings in September and November, and an "open NUVB meeting" in October, all of which Halliwell attended, appeals were made to get members to transfer.²⁵⁵ This had some effect, as branch membership increased from 119 in October 1925 to its highest point, 136, in January 1926 - an increase of 17. As only 6 new members had joined, there must have been a net transfer of 11 into the branch during that quarter. But the problem was constantly recurring. The winter of 1925-26 was very busy in the factory. "The influx of men from all parts of the kingdom during the busy season is great, and it has come as a surprise to many of our members that those who have been looked upon as possible non-Society men, have on question been able to prove good membership of another branch." Two months later, it was reported that "every effort is being made by our branch officers to get thoroughly in touch with the many scores of members constantly being recruited from all over the country by the Morris Company."²⁵⁶

Within a month of that last report, the Journal recorded "the slackness now prevailing at the Morris Works at Oxford, where, again, many dismissals have taken place, as well as universal short time having to be worked." Further lay-offs in the summer led to a number of members leaving the district.²⁵⁷ By the end of 1926 Oxford branch membership had fallen to 69, a 50% drop in the course of the year. In December the secretary was instructed to write to the General Secretary demanding that transfers from other branches be strictly enforced. And a month later he wrote to the Swindon and Wolverton branches on the same matter, receiving a favourable reply from the latter and nothing from the former, but the problem still remained.²⁵⁸

Branch membership continued to fall very slowly through 1927. At the end of 1928, when the official branch membership was down to 61, Halliwell and Francis attended a special branch meeting, and asked why members of outside branches did not transfer. Halliwell later reported: "Investigation proved that we have at least 200 members from various parts of the country working there (viz Morris and Pressed Steel). I have been able to touch more than 100 of these on two occasions by letter, but, unfortunately, not more than 50 could be prevailed upon to attend our meetings."²⁵⁹

It is difficult to assess the potential membership at Morris Motors. Late in 1923, Halliwell talked in terms of 600 men, while the above report quoted 659 mounters and finishers working on the line, 400 men in the paint shop, and a large number of bodymakers and trimmers.²⁶⁰ Of course, a large number of workers at Cowley were engaged on chassis assembly for all Morris models, and a large percentage of bodies in this period were also produced

outside. The only figure available on this last point shows that the Morris Bodies factory in Coventry produced bodies for over half of all Morris cars produced in 1925 (28,618 out of 54,151).²⁶¹ This was quite likely the peak year for Coventry production, but a conservative estimate would suggest that in the mid to late 1920s there were at least 2,000 people working in the area of NUVB jurisdiction in the Cowley factory. While this number included many tradesmen, some holding the cards of other unions, the NUVB, as a craft union, would have found it difficult, especially in the absence of any agreements defining grades of labour, to have actively recruited among the large numbers of semi-skilled workers, in particular the boys and youths.

Other unions were in a similar situation. The ASW had the added problem of not allowing its members to work on any payment by results system. The General Secretary contacted a national organiser in mid-1922 to get him to again interview the firm in an effort to persuade them to put ASW members on time rate. This appears to have been unsuccessful, and the executive, considering "what steps to take in the best interests of our organisation", advised the organiser to stay his hand for the time being.²⁶² The issue was raised again in late 1924 when the General Secretary wrote "were an instruction given to withdraw these members from the employment which they are in the response would not be a good one, and as there are a number of aged members employed who appear to work comfortably the EC feel that it is not a place which should be closed to our members if it is at all possible to steer clear of the difficulty raised in respect of what is termed 'a bonus'."²⁶³

The General Secretary of the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers made one attempt to organise the factory, and held a meeting outside the gates, but got no response, even though there were some 50-60 skilled sheet metal workers employed in the experimental department. Some members of the union had jobs there for short periods rectifying work from the presses. The Birmingham Society did not get as far as holding a meeting, and merely had individual members passing through.²⁶⁴

The major factor affecting membership, of course, was lack of employer recognition - the Morris management at Cowley having nothing to do with trade unions in the inter-war period. Morris is reputed to have paid above the union rate for Vehicle Builders and Foundry Workers, and below the AEU district rate, to help discourage union membership.²⁶⁵ Whether this was part of a conscious strategy or not, as a piecework factory, most people were concerned with the weekly earnings, not their notional hourly rate. Because of the high wages in the busy season, and the sheer scale of employment, the Morris factory, like many other large car factories, attracted workers like a magnet. The job was insecure, and many people were therefore not necessarily committed to staying in the area during the bad times. For NUVB members laid off from the railway carriage works at Swindon and Wolverton, or those seeking work from farther afield, their time in the factory was often seen as temporary, and any attempt at union organising would have lost them their job. Not surprisingly they kept their heads down.

With the Morris factory in Oxford employing an extensive division of labour, the management did not have the problem of skilled labour

shortages, which helped the NUVB in the Coventry car factories through the 1920s. And as the Coventry branch had a very large membership at the Morris Bodies factory in Coventry, the NUVB national leadership, at least in the early 1920s, was probably not too dispirited about the situation. After all, the Ford factory at Trafford Park had been non-union since 1914, and that was hardly a stone's throw from the NUVB Head Office in Manchester.

Table 8:5 Morris Motors chassis monthly production figures, 1920-1922.²⁶⁶

	<u>1920</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1922</u>
January	65	68	263
February	78	244	508
March	77	377	802
April	125	376	216
May	192	359	234
June	160	341	323
July	308	243	801
August	163	197	871
September	244	239	521
October	288	191	332
November	131	234	887
December	102	208	1179

B. THE PRESSED STEEL COMPANY

As explained in chapter 6, the Pressed Steel Company was established in 1926 next door to Morris Motors. The establishment of this factory was to have profound implications for the future of the NUVB for two main reasons. First of all, in time a large amount of bodymaking was transferred from car factories where the NUVB had some presence and contracted to Pressed Steel; and, secondly, the Transport & General Workers Union firmly established themselves as a car industry union as a result of the 1934 strike there.

When the factory started production it had little impact, however, on the local NUVB branch. This was hardly surprising, as the work there seemed to be totally metal and engineering based. A tool room worked on dies and metal jigs and fixtures; the press shop produced pressings which had to be finished off by the use of trip hammers and disc grinders; body assembly was based on spot-welding which was a new process; and the factory also built chassis frames, which the union did not claim as their work. There was, though, cellulose spray painting, and a trimming department, which could be seen as areas of potential recruitment. But as the factory started with a relatively unskilled labour force, paint shop personnel would have been trained in the necessary techniques for the cellulose process. Even the trimming was different from conventional practice, as is shown by this description of the Morris Oxford:

"upholstery was held in place by drive screws and steel clips instead of being tacked onto a wooden framework. The rear seat back was simply held in

place by two clips on the rear sill. The roof was made as a separate unit and completely trimmed and upholstered before being attached to the steel body by means of screws through the peak panel, door roof header, rear quarter header, and the use of panel pins around the back of the rear quarter and across the top of the rear panel".²⁶⁷

The factory did later on produce composite bodies to meet a necessary demand from potential customers, and in 1936 was employing some 300 on the composite assembly section,²⁶⁸ but initially it appears that the trim shop was the main area of employment for NUVB members. Midland organiser Francis reported in 1929 about "several of our Trimmer members who had thrown up the sponge at the Press Steel Co, Oxford, owing to low piece-prices, making it impossible to earn the rate."²⁶⁹ And about the same time a trimmer from the Edinburgh branch was reported by his branch as having his appeal for benefit heard by a Court of Referees in Inverness after he had left the factory.²⁷⁰

When Halliwell visited Oxford late in 1928, he reported "we found a large number of men from the Welsh coal-fields. It can easily be seen to organise Oxford effectively will be a difficult task".²⁷¹ Nationally the union were aware of the firm and in October 1927 the EC requested the General Secretary to write to the Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades on the question of organising men at the factory.²⁷² Prior to November 1930, however, there was only one reference to the factory in the Oxford NUVB branch minute book. That was in January 1928 when the branch delegate to the Southern Area Council reported back about

an organising campaign at the factory by the AEU.²⁷³ This union also ran a campaign among skilled engineering workers in Oxford during 1930-31.²⁷⁴

Other unions were also interested. In 1928 Alf Cooper was sent by the Birmingham Sheet Metal Workers Society into the Pressed Steel works to try to organise it. It was difficult to get members to stay there, so the Society paid them ten shillings per week on top of their wages. Apparently they did get a shop of 30 to 40 members at one time with a shop organisation, but were swamped with unskilled men. The management would place 5 or 6 unskilled men on the same bench as a skilled man and tell them to watch what he did and copy him. As soon as trade picked up in the Midlands, the members drifted back home.²⁷⁵ There were also a few members of the National Union of Sheet Metal Workers there, as well as some Coppersmith members working on panel work and wing making in the late 1920s, but no attempt appears to have been made at organisation.²⁷⁶

It was not until the end of 1930 that the NUVB branch appeared to have tried organising Pressed Steel. London organiser Penn made two visits, the first seemingly abortive; at the second, a meeting was held for all members employed at Pressed Steel. The branch minutes specifically mention "outside members".²⁷⁷ As the local branch membership had further declined that summer (less than ten members had been recruited to the Oxford branch in the preceding three years), it is quite possible there were no Oxford branch members working there. A letter from the Coventry branch secretary about a complaint by a Wolverton member regarding a Coventry member at the factory seemed to symbolise the totally marginal role the Oxford branch had for the small NUVB membership working at the factory.²⁷⁸

Despite this handicap, a shop committee was formed, with 2 members from each section, though these were unspecified.²⁷⁹ As the Rule Book required 12 or more members in a shop to form such a committee, there were possibly at least 20 members there, and maybe many more. However many there were, shop organisation at Pressed Steel appeared to be as ineffective as it had been at Morris Motors, and nothing more was heard of this shop committee. The NUVB's efforts at organisation were impotent in the face of big anti-union employers like Morris and Pressed Steel. The Oxford branch appear to have recruited no new members from the end of 1930 (when the 2 recruits reported²⁸⁰ could possibly have resulted from the organising meeting for Pressed Steel) until the end of 1934. Branch membership slid down to a low point of 36.

"Outside" members remained a major problem locally. In January 1932 the secretary was requested to write to Head Office about "the number of members working here from other branches such as Swindon, Wolverton, and Coventry etc, and strongly urging that they should be transferred to the town where they are working and that it should be strictly enforced by EC."²⁸¹ While it was certainly in the national union's interest to coordinate its Oxford membership, now scattered in two large factories instead of one, this ran up against a number of problems. From outside, there was the branch secretaries' commission, which depended on the number on their own books, which was even more important when the secretary was full-time. Locally, there was the problem of fluctuating employment at Cowley, which experienced large lay-offs every summer from 1930 onward for several years,²⁸² which made "outside" members view their employment in

Oxford very much as temporary, and made it fairly pointless in their own eyes to transfer their branch.

The 1934 Strike

"The strike descended upon Oxford like a thunderbolt" wrote a Daily Worker correspondent afterwards.²⁸³ But, despite the enormous importance of the 1934 Pressed Steel recognition dispute, it had very little impact on the local NUVB. All the branch minute book records is that just after the strike had finished, a "letter was read from Oxford Council of Action re Steel Press who were out on strike appealing for funds. Owing to the small attendance it was agreed that it should lie on the table." The Oxford branch secretary could not even get the name of the company right.²⁸⁴

It is necessary to analyse the events of the strike closely in order to understand why the NUVB was totally marginal to the strike, and how ill-equipped it was at the time to deal with a mass recruitment situation despite its rule book changes. Similarly, it is necessary to know why the TGWU was so successful.

The Transport and General Workers' Union, and its predecessor the Workers' Union, had not previously fared any better than the NUVB in recruiting at the Pressed Steel works, though, like the NUVB, there was evidence of some early activity. Thus, a TGWU member, claiming victimisation from the factory in 1931, told the Oxford Trades Council that he had been employed at Pressed Steel since 1928 and had joined the union during a trade union week.²⁸⁵ The union distributed a leaflet at the

factory gates during a lunch-hour in October 1932,²⁸⁶ and TGWU officials began to visit Morris Motors and Pressed Steel during 1932-33.²⁸⁷

TGWU organiser George Geobey claimed at the time of the strike that his union had started an organising campaign some months before, concentrating on Pressed Steel.²⁸⁸ This had apparently started by October 1933 and had resulted in some members by March 1934.²⁸⁹ The Daily Worker also claimed that Communist Party members of the Oxford Solidarity Committee had, through contacts in the works, been able to obtain 20 members for the TGWU before the strike.²⁹⁰ However, to all intents and purposes, despite there possibly being individual TGWU members when the strike started, there was no organisation in the factory.

While the strike raises many issues,²⁹¹ the most important point is that a particularly unique combination of circumstances led to its success and the entrenchment of the TGWU in the factory. While there were a number of much bigger strikes in the inter-war period - for example, Austin in 1929, and Ford and Briggs in 1933 - the Pressed Steel strike was the only one that was successful, and the only one that fairly quickly led to permanent mass unionisation. The firm joined the EEF as a result and became a party to its agreements with trade unions; the entitlement to shop steward recognition being eagerly embraced by the workforce.

As a detailed chronology of the development of the strike can be found in Appendix 9, it is sufficient at this point simply to draw out its most important features. To start with, not only was the firm uniquely vulnerable to industrial action, being a supplier of bodies and/or panels

to many major car producers, it was even more vulnerable at a time when, just before a new season, work could be taken away from it. (In fact, Austin, Morris, Riley, Ford, and Vauxhall are all alleged to have put pressure on the company.²⁹²) Partly offsetting this, there were only limited alternative facilities, Pressed Steel being in a near monopoly situation. In the short run at least, therefore, the company could allow wage costs to rise as it could afford to some extent to dictate its prices to customers.

It did not follow, though, that the favourable situation the strikers found themselves in would be exploited to the full. Here the key was the involvement of the local Communist Party, and in particular Abe Lazarus who arrived early in the strike from London where he had acquired the nickname "Bill Firestone" for his role in the Firestone strike earlier that year.²⁹³ The Communist Party obviously pushed the strike committee on a number of issues and helped them organise, Lazarus quickly becoming their spokesman. His involvement with the TGWU, and the Communist Party's awareness of the importance of unionising the strikers, were important factors in the growth of that union at Cowley.

While the strike committee did not want union officials involved, the Communist Party eventually won the argument that any settlement had to involve union officials.²⁹⁴ Of course, the TGWU itself capitalised on the situation with its organisers arriving very quickly, and later on paying out at least £300 in strike pay.²⁹⁵ At the time of the new union branch's first meeting in early August it claimed over 1,200 members, though an official union report at about the same time only suggests 600.²⁹⁶

The NUVB was totally marginalised by these events. One explanatory factor was that there appeared to be a large number of workers laid off before the strike began, and possibly during it.²⁹⁷ The Oxford Mail, which gave fairly sympathetic coverage to the events, never mentioned more than 1,200 strikers,²⁹⁸ and suggested that less than 1,000 were on strike when the factory was shut down.²⁹⁹ Yet there were reputedly 2,800 staff including some 200 white collar workers.³⁰⁰ Not only were the paint shop, the trim shop, and the trim lines never mentioned in any reporting of the strike, but the numbers of workers involved from the body assembly areas seemed much lower than might be expected, if the factory had been in full production.

On the day the strike actually started some 25-30% of all Oxford carworkers were unemployed, and it is almost certain that a fair proportion of Pressed Steel's workforce were laid off at the time. They would have worked in precisely the areas where the NUVB might have had membership in the factory, and where it would be most interested in future membership and organisation. The NUVB's behaviour can only make sense in the light of this assessment. Croucher wrongly claims that the NUVB declared the strike unconstitutional,³⁰¹ and also argues that it only paid out strike benefit some two years after the end of the dispute.³⁰² In fact this latter claim is based on poor handwriting in the Oxford branch minute book, where reference to a dispute on July 1 1936 looks like 1934; but, in any case, the date of July 1 proves it could not be referring to the 1934 dispute which only started in mid-July. As there is no evidence that any NUVB members were directly involved in the 1934 strike, the union cannot be criticised on this score.

The Aftermath of the 1934 Strike

London NUVB organiser, Penn, had, along with the Assistant Secretary of the Patternmakers, offered to accompany the strike committee on a deputation to the firm, but had been turned down. He later noted that "The Transport & General Workers' Union were successful in making quite a number of members; I hope they stick."³⁰³ These words no doubt stuck in some organisers' throats when the full impact of the strike had sunk in. The NUVB leadership soon realised that the TGWU was encroaching on areas they had considered to be their own territory. In November that year a special meeting of the executive, at which the full-time organisers were present, noted that the TGWU "had already taken in members who should belong to our union". It was decided to immediately get in contact with the TGWU "with a view to organising shops in the Mass Production Centres".³⁰⁴

A conference eventually took place with the TGWU in Birmingham in February 1935. While the account in the Journal, and Nicholson's report to the executive differ somewhat, common to both was that the TGWU had agreed that someone who had served their apprenticeship in the trade would not be claimed by the TGWU. The main bone of contention between the two unions was over the semi-skilled and unskilled, where both unions claimed organising rights.³⁰⁵

As Nicholson recounted, "much of the discussion centred around the 'Steel Press' at Oxford, and the travelling chain method of working, and what is called the trim line; in those shops work is sectionalised to the highest degree, and while men may develop to an expert stage on certain

sections, would be of little or no value outside such method of working. It is only a few shops where such can be employed, and this it was recognised raised many difficulties ... They did put the point to us that they felt that any man employed upon semi-skilled or unskilled labour in the trade should be open to them. This of course we challenged at once, as you are well aware in the mass production shops the greater proportion of labour is in semi-skilled sections".³⁰⁶ Each union delegation agreed to report back to their executives and meet again, but no further meeting took place until events at Pressed Steel necessitated it in 1939 (see below), and then again at Carbodies in Coventry in 1940 (see Part 1 above). In the interim each union went their own way. At Pressed Steel the NUVB was forced to accept that it had failed to halt the TGWU tide.

Incredibly, the NUVB do not actually appear to have recruited anyone even during the immediate aftermath of the strike. It was not until early 1935 that they made any progress. In January an organising meeting was held with "a good attendance"; "each section of the coach trade was represented" and "several that attended the meeting promised to join the union". Some 33 new members were claimed by the Oxford branch that quarter, and at a further meeting in February, Halliwell gave a rough outline of the union to "about 30 men" who attended "at the hut near the Pressed Steel Company". Halliwell reported of his visits that "we hope it is the beginning of a big drive for membership".³⁰⁷

But the branch only recruited another 5 new members in the area during the next nine months. At the February organising meeting a shop collector had been elected, but no shop steward. The likelihood is that there was not

sufficient concentration of membership in any one area to justify a steward. Penn met the manager of the coachbuilding section and discussed rates for bodymakers on composite bodies, which suggests there was some membership in this section. Later in the year some members were out on strike in a dispute initiated by TGWU members, while another two members were locked out as a result.³⁰⁹

At the time of this dispute a branch meeting requested the delegate to the Southern Area Council to raise the question of closer collaboration with the TGWU at Pressed Steel, which suggests that this was already causing problems. The delegate was also asked to raise the question of female labour in the factory, the minute of the Area Council referring to "the menace of female labour".³⁰⁹ But this concern about female labour reflected the union's membership situation in the factory. The branch seemed unable to make any headway generally, and turned to the female trimmers as one area in which they might be able to gain some influence. One leading member told the branch in November 1935 that he had been discussing with the "girls" in the trim shop the question of their joining the union. It was agreed to go ahead with a special organising meeting, which took place a fortnight later. Halliwell came up from London, but "owing to the wretched weather experienced that day none of the girls turned up".³¹⁰

There was a tiny trickle of new recruits in late 1935 and early 1936, and by April 1936 there were 6 members of the Industrial Section in the branch.³¹¹ It is almost certain that these were all women. During this period the branch proposed an amendment to rule for the 1936 Delegate

Meeting that women should pay lower Industrial Section contributions, and be exempt from the entrance fee of 2s6d.³¹² The branch had become very concerned about how to attract women into membership, as little progress was made among the men at Pressed Steel. A study of the increase in branch membership figures alone would not reveal that the 24 new members in the first quarter of 1936 included quite a number recruited at an organising meeting at the Club Room of the City of Oxford Motor Bus Company in March 1936. The TGWU had already gained recognition from the firm, and the NUVB followed on afterwards, winning recognition of, and 100% membership in, the vehicle building section.³¹³ Similarly, in the first quarter of 1937, 23 of the 33 new recruits into the branch were made at the Royal Army Ordnance Depot at Didcot.³¹⁴

In July 1936, 32 or 33 Oxford branch members were locked out for one day due to one of the TGWU disputes occurring at the time. (This might have been the total membership in the factory at the time.) Meanwhile the TGWU, which claimed 1,200 members at the factory in October 1935,³¹⁵ recruited 800 new members during and after a strike at the factory in early 1937.³¹⁶ The NUVB benefitted from this upsurge in unionism, and 20 new members were admitted at the May branch meeting. The Pressed Steel NUVB shop collector was congratulated "for his keenness in getting new members", so presumably they were mainly, if not all, from the factory. This strike also secured the right for the NUVB to have a seat on the Works committee.³¹⁷

The Oxford NUVB membership did grow relatively fast during 1937 and 1938. After the accretion of Didcot members in early 1937, the overall branch membership grew from 133 to 173 by the end of the year, and to 235

by the end of 1938. An open meeting was held in November 1937 to try to organise trimmers at Morris Motors, and "quite a few entrance forms were filled in", but apart from this most of the branch's effort in this period was concentrated around Pressed Steel.³¹⁸

By 1938 the NUVB was probably effectively confined to the trim shops; it is not clear how many women were actually recruited, but, in January 1938 there were still only 10 Industrial Section members in the branch. The trim assembly shop was seen as a blackspot by the TGWU because there were two unions operating there, and in March 1938 the Pressed Steel TGWU branch met the Oxford NUVB branch to discuss this, along with charges of NUVB poaching of TGWU members. As this was in the days before the TUC Bridlington rules, a local agreement was reached between the two unions that any member of either union wishing to transfer would have to be clear on the books of their initial union.³¹⁹

Soon after this, NUVB members in the trim shop elected extra collectors,³²⁰ suggesting an increased membership there (the branch having recruited 51 new members in the first quarter of 1938). By October the management estimated that the NUVB had 100-150 members in the trim shop, and referred to "numerous instances" of TGWU members resigning to join the NUVB.³²¹ (The total branch membership had stabilised at around 210 between April and October 1938, before jumping to 235 by the end of the last quarter.) Early in 1939 the TGWU nationally raised the issue of NUVB poaching of their members at the Pressed Steel works, and a national conference was held between the two unions in March. This meeting recognised that the problem was confined to this one factory, but both

sides hoped to get some agreement of national applicability. But, as in 1935, both sides claimed organising rights for semi-skilled workers in the industry, and pending the NUVB furnishing a list of grades to which the term "craftsman" could be attached, the TGWU suggested that neither union should accept each other's members without prior consultation and consent.³²² It is not clear that anything definite came of this, it being a fundamentally intractable problem.

The issue of recruiting women members was one that continued to exercise the Oxford branch. It has already been mentioned that the branch proposed a reduced contribution and free entrance fee for women at the union's 1936 Delegate Meeting. Following their failure then, they did not give up, and London organiser, Penn, acting on their behalf, wrote to the executive in late 1937, asking for a free entrance fee for women.³²³ The branch then raised the issue again at a number of Area Council meetings in 1938-39 seeking support for their position.³²⁴

The branch, with probably over 50% of its membership concentrated in the Pressed Steel trim shop, and fighting for its life against the TGWU, was becoming increasingly aggressive. In December 1938 members at Pressed Steel asked the branch for some propaganda, as they had been granted permission by the management to use "Show Cases" in the works.³²⁵ Two months later, the branch committee recommended that "no fines should be imposed on members owing to non-attendance at quarterly meetings, owing to our desire to increase the membership of the branch".³²⁶ An open meeting was then held in March 1939, with handbills distributed at Pressed Steel, though due to very bad weather (once again!), this was poorly attended.³²⁷ Interestingly,

the branch wanted it known elsewhere that any NUVB members applying to Pressed Steel should point out to management that they were members, as the management were reputedly giving preference to NUVB members.³²⁸ It is possible, therefore, that the company was using the union to try to further weaken the dominant TGWU branch. Some TGWU members had already defected to the AEU, following discontent with the official TGWU reaction to the management's dismissal of their chief shop steward, Tom Harris, in late 1938.³²⁹

The NUVB was, in some areas, to learn the lesson of their failure and the TGWU's success at Pressed Steel, when it confronted the problem of organising large numbers of semi-skilled workers in the post-war car industry. However, while the 1934 strike firmly established the TGWU in the motor industry, that union's "open" character gave it a massive advantage over the NUVB during the war years and enabled it to establish organisation in a number of different factories. The Pressed Steel experience was, however, symbolic of the NUVB's problems. Coming in the centenary year of its alleged foundation date, it was the first indication to the union that the issue of mass unionism, which it had failed to come to terms with in the railway workshops, was now on the agenda in the car industry.

C. AUSTIN, VAUXHALL AND FORD.

(1) Austin

The Austin factory at Longbridge was a number of miles out from the centre of Birmingham, and although production had started in 1905, a Northfield NUVB branch was not formed until 1922, members previously being mainly in the Birmingham branch. The Northfield branch had a membership of over 100 until early 1927, though no doubt there were some members working there who belonged to other NUVB local branches.³³⁰

In the early 1920s the union seems to have been in a relatively healthy position at Longbridge, as unlike Morris, Austin, the other consistently big manufacturer of the interwar period, recognised unions. In late 1923 the union forced the company to accept the principle of mutuality on the fixing of piecework prices, an incident which "added considerably to our prestige". Bowen argued that it would "help us to get back to the strength we had prior to the engineering lockout". In fact, he claimed at the time that only the NUVB and the Woodcutting Machinists "have any real organisation".³³¹

There had been a strike of sheet metal workers in February 1921 in opposition to the firm employing semi-skilled labour on the assembly of wings and dashes; but this was probably unsuccessful, as was the Birmingham Sheet Metal Workers' Society request to Austin in 1925 to allow their secretary the opportunity of organising the sheet metal shop.³³² As

mentioned in chapter 7, there was, though, a successful one-day strike by NUVB bodymakers in 1924 over the firm's intention to bring in semi-skilled labour on a job previously done by skilled men.³³³

The NUVB branch membership increased in 1924 probably as a result of the above incidents. Membership declined in 1925 but picked up significantly in the first half of 1926 rising from 108 in October 1925 to 208 in July 1926, including the recruitment of 48 trimmers in one month. Of course, these figures have to be put into perspective as the Austin labour force was expanding throughout this period. NUVB members came out at Austin in the General Strike. Exact figures are not available, but the dispute benefit paid out tallies with the number of "free" members, who would have been entitled to benefit, being out for the whole duration. The organiser's report is worth quoting: "The only real difficulty we had [in Birmingham] was at the Austin Works, where there is practically no Organisation except ours, and it is all the more credit to those of our members who came out and remained out to the end, that in the face of tremendous odds they should be true to their principles".³³⁴ As well as the NUVB, AEU toolmakers are also reputed to have struck,³³⁵ though Austin himself later claimed that his "workpeople did not go out".³³⁶

However, following the General Strike, membership dropped significantly, reaching a low point of 65 at the end of 1928. In this period the union came up against the introduction of cellulose painting with its attendant problems (see chapter 6) and the firm became increasingly determined to ignore the national woodworkers agreement in relation to the basic rates, there being little the union could do.³³⁷

The events of 1929 temporarily raised the union's fortunes. There appears to have been intense negotiation in February of that year leading to an agreement with the unions on the grading of operations, with consequences for piecework earnings, on February 20th. There is some suggestion that there was a stay-in strike at the factory from 16th to 19th February, though there are no further details of this and the NUVB Journal, for one, does not mention it in an otherwise full report. But something obviously happened that led to the firm modifying its attitude, and the union gaining "close on 150 new members".³³⁹ Church, in his study of Austin, mistakenly attributes this accession of new members to the March/April strike, but this is not the case. Recruits were made mainly during the negotiations surrounding the February agreement, when the unions were speaking on behalf of the workforce (and "many" mass meetings took place), unlike the later strike when non-unionists made the running.³³⁹

There was discontent about the firm's application of the agreement as, although the new average weekly wage was relatively high at about £4, there had been a wage reduction for most employees. Consequently, on Monday 25 March men came to work but "did not start work but walked about, smoked, played cards, idled and made no attempt to begin work, and ... then verbally announced that they were on strike".³⁴⁰ Not only was there dissatisfaction with the grading system, but there was also a request for the dismissal of a safety superintendent. Workers clocked in and out, but did not work, many remaining in the shops all day, "idling and loafing about the sections". One estimate suggested that about 5,000 were taking part in the strike. The management posted a notice to the effect that if work was not resumed on Wednesday March 27 then the whole works would be

closed until the following Wednesday April 3; this move did not succeed and the factory was closed that evening.³⁴¹

At that stage the men were refusing all assistance from trade union officials. According to NUVB organiser Francis, those sections which had been worst hit by the new grading scheme downed tools first, and their declaration not to allow union officials to get involved was then taken up by the non-unionist majority.³⁴² However, the local employers' association got in touch with union officials, and before the works reopened, an advertisement appeared in the local press for two days, signed by 8 union officials - 2 from the AEU, Geobey and Packwood from the Workers' Union, Francis from the NUVB, plus officials from the Foundry Workers, the Brass & Metal Mechanics, and the Patternmakers. This insisted that no negotiations could take place while the stoppage continued, and that work should be resumed.³⁴³

Of the unions with members at Austin, only the Brass & Metal Mechanics members seem to have met and agreed to obey the union instruction to return.³⁴⁴ But when the workforce clocked in on the Wednesday morning, once again the majority refused to work. A mass meeting was held which demanded that the management meet the strike committee. This was refused until work was resumed, whereupon another meeting in the afternoon voted to continue the stoppage. The management reacted by stating that from the next morning only those employees supplied with a card by their superintendent or foreman would be allowed to start work; these cards could be obtained by application, but anyone without a card would be considered as having discharged themselves.³⁴⁵

A decision was then taken, possibly by the strike committee, to abandon the stay-in method and to refuse to go in, but picket the works instead the next morning.³⁴⁶ The picketing was thwarted, however, by a strong police presence and the Times could report that the strike "collapsed ... in the face of the firm's threat". They claimed that the whole night shift went in on the Wednesday evening, while according to the EEF, by 8.15. the next morning some 5,000 had applied for permits and started work. This seriously weakened the morale of the main body of strikers, and, during the morning, large numbers of others also applied. According to the strike leader, Bowen, "many who at the strike meetings had cheered most vociferously were crawling back to work".

A meeting was then held of the 1,500 men and women remaining out, and a deputation of these guaranteed to the management that the remaining strikers would work on the understanding that there was no victimisation on either side and that "a properly appointed deputation from all sections concerned" would meet the management, together with the union officials, the next morning. Works Manager Engelbach agreed no victimisation provided the remaining strikers returned, and by 11 am they had started work.³⁴⁷

Eventually a committee of 4 workers and 4 union organisers, including Francis, was agreed upon to negotiate with Austin. According to Francis, these negotiations apparently led the firm to withdraw its new grading system. This is not entirely clear, but several hundred workers did have their base rates increased. The company also agreed to recognise the national agreement on shop stewards with the proviso that "the interests of non-union labour must be protected", and a room was set aside where the

shop stewards committee could meet each week. Francis attended a number of these steward meetings in the immediate aftermath of the strike.³⁴⁹ However, it appears that a number of AEU shop stewards were dismissed in 1930, and by 1932 the shop stewards committee had ceased to function.³⁴⁹ Etheridge has suggested that the failure of the 1929 strike "had more or less broken up the organisation which had built up after the First World War".³⁵⁰ But, arguably, it temporarily reversed the situation described by one Austin manager in 1928 that "we have no representation anywhere from the workers' side. No shop stewards, or shop committees, or anyone wanting to interfere with management".³⁵¹

The strike and its aftermath make an interesting comparison with the Pressed Steel experience a few years later. In both cases the strike committees were hostile to union involvement. While at Pressed Steel, the local Communist Party, and in particular Abe Lazarus argued against this, and were instrumental in involving the TGWU and helping them make substantial recruitment, the Austin experience was very different. 1929 was the start of the "class-against-class" period of the British Communist Party. Although the local party branch and local Minority Movement were subsequently criticised for calling on the strikers to join unions instead of forming an "all-in factory committee", the party's generally sectarian attitude at the time obviously limited its influence.³⁵²

While union recognition became a central aspect of the Pressed Steel strike, Austin already recognised unions, though operating an open shop. At Austin, many workers perceived the unions' February agreement as the problem, while at Pressed Steel the problem was the lack of any agreements,

whether through unions or otherwise. While stewards were appointed in the wake of both strikes, they made little impact at Austin, while at Pressed Steel the factory became increasingly well-organised.

A major part of the difference has to be that at Pressed Steel the workforce, while large, was, in 1934, only about a quarter of the size of the giant Austin factory in 1929; the workforce was much more physically concentrated, and the work not nearly so heterogeneous, as at Austin (which produced most major components and assembled them together). The Pressed Steel strike also produced a sizeable minority union membership; the bulk of this membership was in one union, and not dissipated among several; and the newly-recruited Communist Party stewards played a major role in organising the factory over the next four years, while the Communist Party appeared to have no influence at all at Austin for many years after the 1929 strike.

As noted above, the NUVB recruited a substantial number in the period before the 1929 strike. Once this membership had been digested, it showed an increase from 57 members in October 1928 to 247 in July 1929. This was, however, a very temporary gain, and 12 months later, the branch was below 100 again. After this, recruitment nearly dried up and the membership slowly declined; between October 1931 and January 1935 only 3 new members were recorded in the branch, by which time the membership was at its lowest point ever - 39. As at Cowley, there were attempts to recruit from outside; for example, in the summer of 1932, a projected recruiting meeting in a side road had to be abandoned, because the police had banned all meetings there, due to obstruction caused earlier by Communist Party meetings. 353

Serious recruitment did not take place until the strike of November 1936, when 58 workers on steel bodies struck for about four days against cuts in piecework prices, and over 5,000 others in the West Works were affected. A non-union strike committee was once again formed, initiated by the Communist Party. The TGWU recruited some 60 trimmers, and the NUVB even more. Organiser Francis blamed "uncoordinated recruiting efforts during and since" the strike as being responsible for letting the TGWU in, but all of these trimmer recruits subsequently signed a declaration that they wished to join the NUVB, and this appears to have been allowed. Even the General & Municipal Workers are alleged to have gained members.³⁵⁴ (Unlike the 1929 strike, the unions were this time accused of being too preoccupied with recruitment.)

As a result, branch membership jumped from 52 in October 1936 to 237 in July 1937. Although the figure was over 200 for most of 1937, it dropped back again early in 1938, though not as dramatically as in the earlier peaks of 1926 and 1929; and the main base of the union, as at Pressed Steel, was now in the trim shop area. Meanwhile the TGWU claimed over 1,000 members at Austin by 1938;³⁵⁵ many of these may well have been at the Austin Aero shadow factory, while others were the result of the action of two members - a woman in the North Works, and a man in the South Works - who, individually, both appear to have recruited several hundred women members during the 1930s.³⁵⁶ Etheridge's figure of 2,000 trade unionists out of an 18,000 workforce just before the war seems about right on the available evidence. His comment that "it used to be said Austins couldn't be organised" no doubt summed up the feelings of the local NUVB members after twenty years of peacetime.³⁵⁷

(11) Vauxhall

Vauxhall in Luton was a minor producer throughout the 1920s. Union membership on the coachmaking side was in evidence from 1915 until the early 1920s, when it appeared to fall away; from 1926 there was no mention of the firm in national union records until 1933. Despite the rapid expansion of the company in the early to mid-1930s, union membership remained extremely low.

The LPCTU appeared to get established in the Luton factory before the UKSC, recruiting early in 1915 to claim 22 of the 25 bodymakers then working there, and appointing a town secretary. This small union was then involved in an arbitration case with Vauxhall and substantial correspondence with the Chief Industrial Commissioner to get the award fully implemented. The UKSC set up their own branch at the beginning of 1916, and both unions increased their membership, culminating in a strike in the summer of 1918. Two issues were at stake - a non-union trimmer had been put in charge of the finishing department, and the shop stewards were treated "with contempt". According to UKSC organiser MacKay, "the clever capitalists who run the Vauxhall Motors never dreamt that Engineers and Tool-makers etc would 'come out' in support of Coachmakers, but lo! and behold, the shop women and men quietly walked away It was short and sharp, the Shop Stewards were recognised, and the trimmer dealt with satisfactorily ...".³⁵³

Vauxhall were members of the EEF until mid-1921, and in the few years immediately after the first war experienced a number of industrial

relations difficulties. There seems to have been an overtime ban and a stay-in strike sometime during 1920, and then a toolmakers' strike probably early in 1921. Also in 1921 AEU members working on a guaranteed 25% bonus had this removed when production slumped from about 30 cars a week to practically none. The firm put everyone on to the district rate, including the charge-hands, who were told that if they wanted to keep their old rate they would have to leave the AEU. A strike of smiths then took place in July that year to enforce the removal of a man from their shop, but the company insisted that the men had discharged themselves, and the issue never went beyond local conference as the firm left the employers' federation.³⁵⁹

While in the EEF, Vauxhall was thus briefly subject to the national woodworkers' agreement. The issue of getting the firm to pay Grade I wages to skilled men exercised union officials in late 1922 and early 1923. It was reported that union organisation had completely fallen away, and that Grade II men were being introduced. Unfortunately for the union, skilled NUVB members from outside were among those who accepted Grade II rates. The revision of the woodworkers agreement in December 1922 graded Luton 2/- higher, but the company legitimately refused to pay the Grade I men in the body shop the increase. They also refused to pay the Grade I rate to another 8 men, who were then withdrawn by the union.³⁶⁰

Halliwell held several more local meetings, and the branch managed to recruit out of these. Out of the 200-300 men in the coach section, by the end of 1923 the local branch had 89 members, but this was a post-1921 peak which was not bettered until 1939, by which time the branch had membership

elsewhere locally and the Vauxhall workforce was much larger. Further meetings were held in cooperation with the AEU and the Workers' Union in late 1924, but there was little tangible result, as "After one of our visits a few men in one section - veritable Oliver Twists - asked for more; were hauled before the beadle and are now looking for another job".³⁶¹

Information on Vauxhall in the General Strike is not readily available, but it is interesting to note that the dispute benefit paid to the Luton branch was equivalent to the whole branch being out most of the time, or most of the branch being out all of the time. This show of strength probably had unfortunate consequences. One interviewee told Holden that "At the time of the General Strike in 1926, people who had trade union membership, came out on strike out of loyalty, in support, many of them were dismissed after the General Strike was over."³⁶² Certainly NUVB branch membership, around the 80 mark for the previous two years, slumped to 44 in October 1926, thereafter declining to a "low" of 11 in late 1933.

When employment expanded rapidly at Vauxhall in the early 1930s, many of the problems that had plagued the Oxford branch, were also in evidence here. Early in 1933 Halliwell reported that "many members from all parts have migrated to this firm", and that he hoped to contact all members from outside branches, and call "a large gathering". Little came of this, but Penn was more successful in early 1934 when further organising meetings led to 10 new members joining the Luton branch, and with others transferring, membership jumped from 12 to 28.³⁶³ But the problem of "outside" members continued to plague the branch. In two NUVB Journals, the following notice was inserted: "Special Notice to all Branch Secretaries - It is earnestly

requested that all Branch Secretaries having members who are working in this district, also knowing of any who are starting here (Vauxhall or Commer Cars), to please communicate with the Local Secretary, as the facilities to approach these men in the shops are very difficult".³⁶⁴

The union's East Midlands District Council registered a number of complaints at the non-attendance of a delegate from Luton through 1934 and into 1935, and in an effort to create "some enthusiasm" held the June 1935 District Council meeting there, but "unfortunately the branch did not rise to the occasion". In fact, the union's traditional method of functioning was quite inappropriate for the Vauxhall situation. The London-based officials, who were responsible for Luton, still went through the motions however. Penn reported in 1936 that an organising campaign was to be held there, and in 1937 a trade union demonstration in Luton "was again marred by continuous rain".³⁶⁵

The local branch's slow accretion of membership in the late 1930s seemed to be related to its efforts at the Luton Corporation Bus Works and the Percival Aircraft factory, and even when the total shot past the 100 mark in 1939, there was no mention of recruitment at Vauxhall. In fact, after the branch secretary's notice in the April 1936 Journal there was no specific mention of the firm until January 1942 when Penn reported "Organising meetings have been held in Luton. The Vauxhall Works, situated here, employ thousands of men working on vehicles of every description, but trade union membership is not up to the standard that we should like to see".³⁶⁶ That was a slight understatement.

In 1942, however, Vauxhall signed a recognition agreement exclusively with the AEU and the NUVB.³⁶⁷ But, without the competition of the TGWU to spur them on, the NUVB were very slow to take advantage of the clear run that this gave them in the Luton factory.

(iii) Ford

Given the Coachmakers' experience at Ford's Trafford Park factory before the first world war, when the first mass production car factory in Britain went non-union in the Manchester stronghold of the union, the NUVB could be excused for having low expectations about its chances when Ford moved to Dagenham.

With the American-owned Briggs Bodies also building a factory at Dagenham, the NUVB, along with other interested unions, had a major challenge on their hands. Edsel Ford cut the first sod on the site in May 1929, and token production started in October 1931, but it was not until the end of the summer of 1932 that the Ford factory was in full swing. By the end of that year Ford Dagenham employed a total of 7,024, some 2,000 men and officials having been brought in from the Manchester and Ireland plants.³⁶⁸

The NUVB was in contact with other unions in 1931 and involved in setting up an organising committee. However, London organiser Penn was "surprised" at the number of non-unionists coming to work at Dagenham from elsewhere. By the autumn of 1932, organising meetings were being held about every fortnight by the local joint trades committee. Because of the

distance travelled to work by most of the workers, the only chance of contacting them was during the dinner hour, and consequently progress was "very slow". One minor victory was claimed by the NUVB in late 1932 when a Kilburn branch member was dismissed by Briggs at 3.30 pm one afternoon and had to wait until 6.30 pm for his wages. Penn interviewed the manager and got the member pay for the three hours he had to wait around. ³⁵³

The strikes of 1933 at Ford and Briggs showed the workers prepared to resist but were not translated into membership and organisation, unlike the events at Pressed Steel a year later. The Ford strike against wage cuts lasted 3 days, during which time the Briggs workers were locked out. On their recall the 3,000 Briggs workers refused to go back until they had improved their own wages and conditions. Like Pressed Steel, Briggs was a dangerous place to work, and Penn commented: "accidents are too numerous to mention: they look upon a person losing two or three fingers as a small detail". The Briggs strike lasted 10 days and some minor concessions were won. The NUVB had only 15 members involved in the Ford strike, but 60 at Briggs, including the chairman of the strike committee, George Hall, who the company refused to take back after the strike. One NUVB member was also expelled for continuing to work after being ordered to strike.

In the early 1930s the AEU apparently only had about 30 members in the Dagenham site. However, an AEU member claimed that hundreds joined the union after the Ford strike. Whether or not this was true, any increase in union membership was probably only temporary. The NUVB executive discussed at great length a proposal to open a branch at Dagenham, but deferred it, partly on grounds of economy. Milne believed that the union was missing its

opportunity, but in practice little difference would have been made, given the union's Oxford experience.³⁷⁰

There are no references in the NUVB Journal to independent initiatives by the union in the next few years. The Patternmakers contacted the NUVB for assistance in organising Briggs in 1934,³⁷¹ and the union was involved in some of the trade union organising campaigns attempted around Dagenham in the later 1930s.³⁷² According to Claydon,³⁷³ the AEU made some headway at Briggs in the later 1930s. The NUVB, however, probably made none.

Despite the (very different) recognition agreements at Briggs and Ford in 1944,³⁷⁴ there was still no attempt to start a Dagenham NUVB branch. However, with peacetime and the return to car production, the nearby Ilford branch's membership increase was obviously based on increasing activity around Dagenham. The Ilford branch's growth of about 450 members in the three years from the end of 1945 formed the basis of the establishment of a Dagenham branch in 1949, which finished the year with 383 members.

The NUVB's growth at Longbridge, Luton, and Dagenham, was, in common with other unions, essentially a post-1945 development. These factories, in the interwar years, were generally very hostile places for trade unionism of whatever variety; and there is no reason to suspect that a less craft-oriented attitude by NUVB members and officers would have made any significant difference.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion will be separated into two sections, the first being a summary of the two parts of the thesis, and the second a consideration of a number of wider questions raised in the Introduction.

A. SUMMARY

Part I

Most, if not all, industries have undergone profound, sometimes revolutionary, changes since their beginnings. Many pre-industrial handicrafts have been adapted to these changes, and craft unions, most of which dated back to at least the mid-nineteenth century, attempted to impose some kind of control over the changing industrial environment in which their members worked. While many old skills have disappeared, others have also been created, drawing on the existing reservoir of skilled workers. Wherever possible, existing craft unions endeavoured to bring these new trades under their control, though in some instances, eg boilermaking and patternmaking, the trades were sufficiently different for separate craft unions to be eventually established.

The UKSC was unusual, not in being a multi-craft union, but in recruiting in such otherwise diverse trades - woodworking, metalworking, painting, and trimming (upholstery) - that had their own separate unions in other industries. It was therefore an industrial union for

coachmaking crafts, which can partly be explained by the origins of the coachmaking trade. But a major factor must be that, outside of London, all the branches of coachmaking were usually carried on in the same premises by the early nineteenth century; that these workplaces usually employed a relatively small number of each trade; and that these tradesmen were usually only recruited from those who had served an apprenticeship in these specialised branches of otherwise more common trades. There was no significant, if any, mobility of craftsmen between coachmaking and other cognate trades.

Union records suggest that it was not until the turn of the twentieth century, with the beginning of the new industries of electric tramcar building and repair, and motor car manufacture, that other unions started to claim work the coachmakers saw as theirs. But by then this industrial-craft union was sufficiently entrenched to generally repel such moves, and only experienced major problems with other skilled unions much later when its mainly woodworking-based bodymaker members embraced more and more metalworking tasks.

The UKSC's broad base of membership ensured its survival when some coachmaking crafts became redundant in the new railway carriage and motor car body industries. The building of railway carriages required many traditional "private" coachbuilding skills (bodymaking, trimming, and painting), but adapted them to a very different vehicle. The use of woodworking machinery in railway carriage body shops took away an important part of conventional bodymaking handwork skill; but this same skill survived in private coachbuilding due to its almost total lack of

product standardisation. As early as the 1860s, the UKSC grappled with the growing problem of an underclass of membership; those who had served an apprenticeship exclusively in railway shops were not generally capable of holding down a job in a "private" shop. However, the railway membership became a vital section of the union, and their exclusion would have severely weakened it, as well as causing problems due to the mobility of many coachmakers between different parts of the trade.

The union's strength was highly regionalised, being concentrated in Lancashire, especially, and Yorkshire. Elsewhere it was generally weak, particularly in London, which remained the centre of the industry throughout the nineteenth century. The weakness in London stemmed originally from the dissolution of the Benevolent Society of Coachmakers in 1819 under the Combination Acts. Because some sections of the trade were carried on in London in separate firms, a number of sectional societies developed, making the task of a unified organisation like the UKSC that much harder. Finally, London coachbuilding was based on the piecemaster system, which further divided the workforce.

The 1879 dispute with northern employers effectively bankrupted the UKSC; but, even worse, the regime of levies and raised contributions led to the loss in the next few years of nearly half the membership, mainly in areas outside the immediate dispute. With the depression in trade of the early 1880s, the union not only lost most of its local working rules, but also removed most reference to trade policy in its rule book. With improvement in trade later in the century, large numbers of ex-members were debarred from rejoining because of their age. What finally

wrenched the union out of its stagnation was the increased demand for those coachmaking skills required to produce motor car bodies. The increased union membership (both UKSC and LPCTU) and activity in London, combined with the inclusion of vehicle building in the new national insurance scheme just before the first world war, hastened the end of the piecemaster system, and reestablished coachmaking unionism in the capital after nearly one hundred years.

Thus, the motor car, far from killing off coachmaking trade unionism, gave it a new lease of life. The railways had already brought about cores of UKSC membership in new areas such as Swindon, Wolverton, and Eastleigh, as well as consolidating it in Manchester. The motor industry then massively expanded the UKSC in Coventry and Wolverhampton, and transformed the union's situation in the London coachbuilding sector. The union's development in Birmingham before the first world war reflected both the growth of the local motor industry and increasing activity in the railway contract shops. Elsewhere, as earlier with the railways, pockets of membership, and sometimes UKSC branches, sprang up as the motor industry was established in other parts of the country.

Part II

The Introduction posed a number of questions concerning the actual developments in the interwar period, in particular their cumulative impact on the NUVB in the early 1930s. The next few pages answer these questions while summarising the main findings of Part II of the thesis. Firstly, the actual state of the car industry in the early 1930s is

assessed, then the major technical developments of the interwar years. This is followed by an analysis of the unemployment and membership loss suffered in the early 1930s, the union's attitude to semi-skilled workers and the formation of the Industrial Section in 1931, and, finally, the union's organisation in the car factories.

1. The car industry in the early 1930s

(1) Mass producers, small producers, and coachbuilders

The 1920s ushered in the era of mass production in the British car industry. The firms that survived either made the breakthrough to very large scale production, or found a specialist niche in the changing market. While the early 1930s, especially 1931, did see a shake-out of the more marginal car firms, this was nothing new; firms had disappeared from the industry right through the 1920s. Morris, and then Austin, dominated the 1920s, coming closest to "duopoly" in 1930, according to Rhys; but I have argued that duopoly characterised the market even in 1932, before 1933-35 marked the permanent breakthrough of the other members of the later "Big Six". In 1931, these other four companies were still relatively small producers of cars (though Ford and Vauxhall were large producers of commercial vehicles); even Standard's wholesale conveyerisation in the summer of 1931 did not at the time threaten anything too startling. Clyno had already produced many more cars than Standard before going bankrupt in 1929, while Singer was in decline from its own extremely high 1929 output.

There were still a significant number of other small to medium-sized producers at the beginning of the 1930s. While the extinction of the Scottish and the Wolverhampton car industry was on the horizon, several Coventry firms, apart from Swift, were still in business. Between them the smaller firms produced an important part of the industry's total output, their share of production not dropping substantially until 1935. The smaller producers also employed proportionately more workers than the bigger firms, their share of employment being much greater than their share of output.

Another factor which further diminished the impact of the mass production revolution was that "to cater for every whim of their middle-class customers" some manufacturers produced a "proliferation" of models, with short and small-scale production runs, especially in the years 1928-34. Morris and Austin, in particular, while producing some models in large numbers over several years, also had "a limited production of a wide variety of other types".

Coachbuilding firms were still an important section of the industry in the early 1930s. Their decline only really started when the steel body became the main body of the biggest producers, But this did not happen until the mid-1930s, when the Morris Eight, the all-steel Hillman Minx, the Flying Standard range, the Vauxhall D-types, and the Austin 10 and 12 were all in production. The final nail in the coachbuilders' coffin was the introduction of integral construction (whereby a separate chassis was no longer produced), which made its first appearance just before the war.

(ii) Assembly lines

While the interwar period saw the widespread introduction of flow production techniques into the motor industry, it is easy to exaggerate their significance. Assembly line processes were not applicable to a number of bodymaking and trimming tasks; and some of those that were done on assembly lines necessitated long work cycles. Mechanised assembly lines for bodymaking, trimming, and finishing were still uncommon at the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s. The main change that mass production had wrought by this time was an extensive division of labour, which was not dependent on assembly line production.

The advent of mechanised lines in different factories, while cheapening production through the reduction in material handling costs, did not alter the fact that the scale of the division of labour depended on the level of output of any particular model or component. Finally, most writers have not appreciated the significance of the fact that, apart from Ford, all British car factories at this time operated some form of payment by results system. Fridenson's comment that on the moving assembly line "subordination is increased, because the worker is paced by the line" does not seem to have taken this into account.² And Whipp & Clark seemed almost surprised when describing the new moving assembly line at Rover's Solihull factory in 1946 as being "very slow and ... a simple linking mechanism rather than a mode for the increasing pace of work and increasing managerial control".³

2. Technical changes

(1) Cellulose

The cellulose spray, coming into Britain in 1925, was totally established in car body production by the end of the 1920s, but did not lead to technological unemployment of NUVB members in the industry. The expansion of car production in the early 1920s had already been accompanied by the use of paint spraying machines in the larger factories, which had limited the growth of employment in the final stages of the painting process where NUVB members were concentrated.

While cellulose took this further by eliminating the varnishing stage, NUVB painters were not squeezed out of the industry. Their main problem was their basic rate. Where they had already operated paint sprays, they could transfer over, either keeping the semi-skilled rate, or, as at Humber, dropping from the skilled to the semi-skilled rate; at Austin some facers and flatters were dismissed and then re-employed on a lower rate to do the same job on cellulosed bodies that they had done on painted and varnished ones. At the non-union Ford and Morris Motors factories, even this was irrelevant as any NUVB painters who wished to work there had to accept the work and the rate they were offered. With high piecework earnings in most car factories, NUVB paint shop members could usually stomach semi-skilled rates.

Similar developments occurred in the specialist car body coachbuilding firms; while there had probably been little use of the

paint spray in this sector before the development of cellulose, often members took on the new work, and many "skilled" brush painters no doubt found themselves doing what had traditionally been viewed as "brush hand" work. Those who found themselves "surplus to requirements", could usually find work in other sections of vehicle building where brush painting remained the norm. There were some local unemployment problems, as in Scotland, but the expansion of car output in the late 1920s generally would have eased any temporary dislocations. By 1930, cellulose was established in the industry, and nothing worse could happen. In fact, the demise of fabric bodies in the early 1930s would have increased the employment opportunities for paint shop workers.

(11) The all-steel body

Austin produced some early versions of the all-steel car body alongside traditional wood-framed bodies in the mid-1920s, before introducing the technology for pressed steel bodies. But Vauxhall's Luton factory was the only other motor car manufacturer to follow suit in the 1930s. All other firms contracted the work out to new firms (usually Pressed Steel, though Ford and some others used Briggs). The all-steel body was therefore not directly built in the big majority of car factories in the 1930s. Total body shop employment may, however, have suffered in those companies to which Pressed Steel or Briggs supplied complete bodies (though that depended on how many bodies these companies continued to produce themselves).

The steel body revolution was slow in comparison to cellulose. Until 1930, Morris and its subsidiary Wolseley were the only firms supplied with complete bodies by Pressed Steel. And in the early 1930s many car firms purchased only sets of panels from Pressed Steel or Fisher & Ludlow, and built steel-panelled composite bodies themselves. The increasing use of metal and the decreasing use of wood, however, obviously affected the balance between metalworking and woodworking skills in the body shops of these firms, but NUVB members were not generally displaced in these situations. In Coventry, in the latter half of the 1930s, the NUVB were organising many metalworkers. Bodymakers had already been working with metal panels on car bodies since well before the first world war; and even among high-class coachbuilders there was some substitution of wooden structural members by metal parts in the 1920s. The replacement of wood by metal in car body construction was generally therefore not an overnight development in most car factories.

The motor car was also not the only vehicle moving toward all-metal construction. All-metal railway carriages were standard on London tube railways before 1914, and railway contract shops built all-metal carriages for British and foreign railways in the 1920s. As early as 1914 the UKSC executive had agreed that bodymakers should build all-metal coaches when the issue temporarily arose at Newton Heath, even though railway workshops did not permanently change to all-metal construction until at least the late 1930s (while still repairing all-wooden and composite stock decades later). The all-metal bus also appeared in the late 1920s, with steel-framed ones being built from 1929.

3. Unemployment and Membership Loss

In the early 1930s the union suffered prolonged heavy unemployment among its members and lost one third of its total membership. The thesis has argued that this was not a result of developments in the motor industry. There was significantly higher unemployment than normal in the motor industry at this time; but it was not permanent, and mainly consisted of longer and deeper periods of seasonal unemployment, reflecting the depressed market conditions. All the other vehicle building industries were also affected. Short time and discharges were common in the railway workshops, including the rundown and closure of Newton Heath. Railway and tram contract shops were starved of work for several years, and the growing coach and bus building industry had a very short season of full production.

The membership loss occurred in all sections of the union. But it was not generally caused by unemployment, as until the end of 1931 unemployed NUVB members had a financial incentive for staying in the union, and after that there were still advantages in remaining on the union's books. The membership loss was largely an indirect result of unemployment, as the massive increase in union benefit payments led to a regime of levies, increased contributions, and reduced benefits. Many employed members, often those in relatively secure jobs, reacted negatively to this shift in the balance of costs and benefits of union membership, at a time when the labour market weakened the union's bargaining power nationally and in the workplace. Nationally, the weakness was shown by the failure to negotiate a collective agreement in

coachbuilding from 1932 to 1934; while, in the workplace, employers could take more than usual advantage of the depressed labour market to dismiss or refuse to hire known activists. The members who left the union were spread across all the industries the union organised; the NUVB's decline was not a result of "technological unemployment".

4. Semi-skilled and the Industrial Section

Before the advent of mass production in the motor industry, the only "semi-skilled" workers in coachbuilding were in the paint shop - the brush hands and painters' labourers. Brush hands, however, often had most of the skills of the painter, and were belatedly allowed in the UKSC in 1913, subject to their ability. No special benefit and contribution table was created for them, and they were expected to join the existing skilled tables. When the NUVB was formed in 1919, new semi-skilled tables were created, but those joining under the age of 35 still had to contribute to superannuation benefit, the assumption being that they would stay in the trade.

The semi-skilled expanded beyond the paint shops in the motor industry after 1918, and the union reluctantly recognised this by agreeing pay rates for them with the EEF in 1920. But in the 1920s, apart from the big mass production factories of Ford and Morris (both non-union) and Austin (where unions were recognised but weak), there were not large numbers of semi-skilled workers outside of the paint shops. Those recruited into the semi-skilled tables were generally not motor industry workers, but ancillary workers elsewhere. In Coventry,

grade 2 labour was even seen by many employers as a mechanism to increase the existing short supply of skilled labour, by promoting workers to grade 1 status when they were sufficiently competent.

The NUVB's experience in Coventry, Wolverhampton, Manchester and Scotland shows that the union was established in most car factories before the first world war, and organised the large majority of their mainly skilled workforces throughout the 1920s. The NUVB's only real car industry blackspots in the 1920s were at Ford (which had been de-unionised in 1913), Morris (where several hundred members had worked in the 1920s, but where the regular efforts to organise their members were thwarted by the company's non-recognition of unions), and Austin (where the union managed briefly to exploit the company's need for skilled workers in the early 1920s). On balance, though, with their membership in the other car factories and in the important car body coachbuilding firms, the NUVB leadership had every reason to feel satisfied with their motor industry penetration in the 1920s.

But there was an awareness that the growing tendency to mass production work would bring in its wake increasing numbers of male and female semi-skilled workers, and the union's leading bodies grappled with this question throughout the 1920s. The EC majority in 1927 came out against an auxiliary section as did the 1928 Delegate Meeting, believing that the low recruitment into the existing semi-skilled tables proved that the union would not attract recruits on the basis of low contributions. The 1928 Delegate Meeting also voted by 2-1 against admitting women, as did the special conference on women in 1929. The

close NUVB involvement in the Bedaux dispute at Rover in 1930, and the TGWU's recruitment of the female trim shop workers there had sufficient impact that when the issue was next voted upon, at the 1931 Delegate Meeting, the admission of women was narrowly favoured. Their inclusion necessitated a new benefit section, and the 1931 meeting voted, again narrowly, for an Industrial Section for men and women with lower contributions and fewer benefits.

However, these decisions did not signal any change in organising strategy, either towards women trim shop workers or male mass production operatives. While there had been pressure from some areas, in the wake of the Bedaux dispute, to reconsider the admission of women to the union, the main motive behind the executive's decision to call a Delegate Meeting was the financial crisis caused by unemployment. Without this crisis, there might not have been a Delegate Meeting for a few more years.

This is not to argue that the NUVB would not otherwise have introduced an Industrial Section in the 1930s. A decision to admit women was, after the Rover experience, only a matter of time. To admit men on the basis of low contributions went against the perceived wisdom in the union, but was also inevitable. The TGWU's incursion, via its Workers' Union heritage, into the motor industry at Rover in 1930 was only the forerunner of the much more significant development at Pressed Steel in 1934. The competition of "cheap unskilled organisations",⁴ which had been felt for years in the railway workshops, became a permanent reality

in the motor industry from 1934. The NUVB would have felt compelled to respond to it sooner or later.

Thus, the circumstances in which the Industrial Section was introduced were those of acute financial crisis, along with the threat from another union, rather than a panic reaction to the technical developments in the industry. This is demonstrated by the way the Industrial Section was used in the 1930s. For several years the unofficial policy was to take advantage of the Industrial Section table to reduce the number of new (and existing) members who could claim union unemployment benefit. With the improvement in employment, and subsequently in the union's finances, the use of the new section was tightened up, especially as any success it had further threatened the long-term viability of the superannuation fund.

5. Car factory organisation

Until the collapse of membership from 1931, the NUVB were relatively well organised in most car factories, apart from Morris, Austin and Ford. There was still a material basis for craft union membership in most car body shops, and the general shortage of most vehicle building skills allowed the NUVB to exploit this. While local NUVB branches were concerned that members should be on the skilled rate, where applicable, the main function of shop organisation was to gain some control over piecework bargaining. With a number of different bodies produced in most factories, along with regular (often annual) changes, there was plenty of such bargaining. NUVB shop committees would try to monitor the

prices, get members to resist reductions in prices, and also impose shop earnings limits. These activities did not necessarily require a craft union, but where employers were prepared, as in Coventry, to often concede the skilled rate even to non-skilled workers in certain shops, NUVB shop committees and stewards tended to restrict their recruitment to these workers.

There was usually a close link between the local branch committee and shop organisation, though in the case of Coventry with its large number of factories, the branch officers and the Midlands organiser had to make extra efforts to keep shop organisation up to scratch. The membership loss in Coventry, at a time of generally depressed trade, fundamentally weakened shop organisation; and a major concern of the branch in the 1930s was to recruit the ex-members, rather than looking beyond them to the increasing numbers of semi-skilled workers at the expanding firms of Standard and Rootes. The half-hearted manner in which the Industrial Section had been launched, and the limited steps toward mass production techniques in the majority of Coventry firms, seemed to confirm the Coventry branch committee in their general reluctance to recruit into the new section.

Outside of Coventry, by the mid-1930s the industry was increasingly concentrated in Oxford, Dagenham and Luton (in all of which, apart from the TGWU's breakthrough at Pressed Steel, all unions were unsuccessful and were forced to try to organise from the outside), and Birmingham (where unions were recognised but remained very weak).

B. WIDER QUESTIONS

The main question discussed in this thesis is the impact of industrial and technical changes on skilled work and craft union organisation. A more general discussion of this is necessary. However, given the space devoted to the issue in the thesis and in Section A of the Conclusion, this will be relatively brief, allowing more discussion on three other issues: state support for trade unionism, union finance, and, finally, a short note on interwar strikes.

1. Skill and Technical Change

Important sections of the thesis dealt with changes in the vehicle building industries, brought about by new products, changes in the materials of construction, and an increasing division of labour. Starting with a discussion on "skill", this sub-section then analyses technical change, before assessing the impact of technical change on skill and, finally, the consequence of such changes for craft unions.

(1) Skill

In recent years, the concepts of "skill" and "deskilling" have come in for searching analysis. One writer, More, has distinguished between what he calls "genuine skill" (defined as "some combination of manual skill and knowledge, not necessarily very considerable, which is useful to industry") and "socially constructed skill", a view he associates

mainly with Turner.⁵ This thesis would agree with his conclusion that in those industries in the nineteenth century where apprenticeship survived, it was "a route to genuine and considerable skill".⁶

Braverman, however, romanticised traditional handicrafts and a number of writers pointed to what Elger called his "idealised conception of craft skills".⁷ Until the Industrial Revolution, according to Braverman, "In each craft, the worker was presumed to be the master of a body of traditional knowledge, and methods and procedures were left to his or her discretion".⁸ And in the nineteenth century, "Apprenticeship commonly included training in mathematics, in the properties and provenance of the materials common to the craft, in the physical sciences, and in mechanical drawing".⁹

This thesis has shown that, even in the traditional "private" coachbuilding sector, overwhelmingly a handicraft trade in the nineteenth century, there were very wide variations in skill, especially in bodymaking. Drawing skills, a necessary attribute for an all-round bodymaker, were often missing. A number of factors were cited for this, one of which (though by no means the only one nor even a universal experience), was the use of sub-contracting. Littler has brought together the work of many authors to show the widespread nature and varied forms of sub-contracting.¹⁰ In those coachmaking trades where only a limited division of labour was possible (eg bodymaking), then fellow craftsmen were employed by the sub-contractor; but where more division was possible (only in painting) then the sub-contractor or piecemaster monopolised the best (and most skilled) part of the work,

confining his underhands to the less skilled work, and denying them the chance to achieve skilled status.

(ii) Technical change

Several points of wider import concerning technical change can be discerned from a study of the vehicle building industries. Given their inter-relation, it is perhaps easier to state them in two separate, though also related, propositions. The first is that in any one industry, there may well be a number of technical changes, affecting different sections of the production process, occurring at different times historically, and taking varying amounts of time before they are fully implemented. The other is a point, already noted by Lee, that within an industry, some [mechanised] sectors may grow, without necessarily destroying other skill-intensive sectors.' These points have been clearly illustrated in the analysis of the various changes in the different vehicle building sectors. They do have wider application, as shown by the following example of the printing industry.

Between roughly 1850 and 1914, two separate aspects of printing were mechanised at different times. Printing machinery replaced the traditional printing "press" and mechanical composition replaced the hand variety. The introduction of printing machinery occurred from about the middle of the nineteenth century. It was uneven, with the biggest circulation newspapers able to take advantage of increasingly larger and faster machines, while smaller newspapers continued to use older, smaller machines; the jobbing and book side of the trade were even

slower to mechanise, with some offices still using hand-presses into the twentieth century. Overall, Musson concluded that "mechanisation was a gradual process", and that it "provided a vastly increased amount of work for hand compositors".¹²

Mechanical composition made its appearance in Britain in the late 1860s, but it was not until after 1890 that composition was mechanised to any considerable extent. While in the mid-1890s, there was unemployment among hand compositors directly caused by mechanisation, these men were generally absorbed in the otherwise expanding industry. Musson notes that the "industrial revolution" in printing can be exaggerated, and that by the first world war, not only was hand composition still prevalent in jobbing and book houses, but "the great majority of T.A. members were still hand compositors".¹³ However, the industrial revolution in printing continued throughout the interwar years, and census returns for the English provinces and Wales show the ratio of hand to machine compositors declining from over 8 to 1 in 1911 to rough parity in 1931 as Monotype machines conquered the book trade.¹⁴

Lee's argument that skill-intensive sectors may survive finds elaboration in More's comment that mass production techniques were not economically viable for certain products. Either the product, though using simple technology, was constantly changing and required all-round workers; or there was only a limited market for the product, "making the adoption of skill-maximising and capital-minimising techniques the only sensible course".¹⁵ This was the case in a number of vehicle building sectors. In the railway company and municipal transport workshops, there

was the added factor that the main activity was repair; while this was sub-divided to some extent, it still required all-round skills.

While not claiming any universal validity for the two propositions stated above, they suggest a significantly more complex process of technical change, especially in heterogeneous industries, than is often assumed. They also shift the focus away from the aggregate level of an industry to its various sub-sectors.

(iii) Technical Change and Deskilling

Once having established that technical change is not always as straightforward as it might appear, it is necessary to investigate its impact on skilled workers. Where technical change takes place such that it is technically possible to use non-skilled workers, their use depends to a certain extent on whether the change takes place inside existing factories, with an existing skilled labour force, or whether new factories are set up, with a new labour force. Penn has argued this point against Braverman's notion that technological development produces decreased skill in a unilinear fashion.¹⁶

The only examples in the thesis of new factories with a new labour force are the steel car body producers of Pressed Steel and Briggs. Changes in bodymaking in existing car factories were usually more evolutionary, and often took place alongside existing techniques. The more protracted the change, the more likely that any skilled workers retained that designation. Where the change revolutionised techniques

and replaced older methods almost overnight, as cellulose did in all car factories, then the work was "deskilled" and any skilled workers on the new process invariably had to accept semi-skilled rates.

Penn has also argued that skilled labour may be used even where alternatives are feasible, because of a local labour market where a number of employers are competing for an existing skilled labour supply.¹⁷ The establishment of Fisher & Ludlow in Coventry in 1938-39 shows support for this, as the factory was recruiting in the tight Coventry labour market, where workers were either genuinely skilled or were paid the skilled rate for certain types of work.

Further, while deskilling is not always appropriate for all sectors of an industry, it can also be inappropriate for particular jobs in an otherwise deskilled sector. While an individual trade might be broken down through mass production techniques, not all parts of it might be capable of minute sub-division. Thus, certain aspects of bodymaking - eg door-hanging - required a much higher level of expertise than, say, jig assembly work; even more obviously, seat-making required a genuine level of skill unlike many basic trimming jobs. Similarly, the change from woodworking to metalworking did not necessarily deskill the work as a number of metalworking jobs required their own specialist skills.

The level of skill did, however, generally decline over time in all sectors of the vehicle building industry. Machine woodworking, introduced into the railway carriage industry in the second half of the nineteenth century meant that a bodymaker apprenticed in this sector had

a highly skilled section of his work taken away; the extent of this varied according to the scale of investment in woodworking machinery. However, the next major change in construction techniques did not occur until the 1920s in many workshops when flow production subdivided the bodywork. But the need for an all-round workforce capable of dealing with repairs on all types of railway carriage sustained apprenticeship in this sector. While the level of skill had declined, it was by then in advance of the private passenger transport side of the industry, reversing the earlier position.

(iv) Craft unions and technical change

The situation facing the NUVB was a complicated one. The industrial sectors in which it organised went through a number of profound but varying changes. Industrial change in the shape of motor cars replacing horse-drawn carriages signalled the rapid decline and eventual demise of the UKSC trades of carriagemaking and wheeling early in the century. Workers in these trades were encouraged to transfer into bodymaking. In the interwar period, the wheelwrights faced a similar fate as commercial transport changed its means of traction. Smiths and fitters, from passenger and then commercial vehicles, were also in long-term decline, though a number could find work in the motor vehicle side of the industry. These trades, significant sections of the UKSC and the bulk of the Wheelwrights & Smiths, gradually disappeared.

In the interwar years, the craft basis of motor car body production in both car and coachbuilding factories was undermined in a number of

different ways. The painters' trade was revolutionised by cellulose, though many preparatory painting tasks were not fundamentally changed. Trimming and bodymaking were subject to an increased division of labour, though this varied between factories and between jobs within the same factory. In the non-mass production sectors of bus and railway carriage work, as with car bodies, wood was being replaced by metal, again unevenly between different workplaces. But painting, trimming and finishing were, in the 1930s, little affected in the bus and railway sectors. In short, the situation faced by union members varied greatly, depending on several factors - the sector of industry they worked in, the particular workplace within that sector, their own trade, and, of course, the date. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising there was a varied response by groups of members, and some difficulty experienced by the union leadership in formulating common policies.

Essentially two distinct developments can be identified in the interwar period, both of which came to fruition in the postwar years. One was the undermining of vehicle building craft unionism in the car industry as a result of both mass production and technical changes. The other was that while the material basis for craft unionism survived in vehicle building outside of the car industry, the bodymaker here changed from being mainly a woodworker to being mainly a metalworker. These two changes required different solutions. The first led to the opening out of the union in the car industry to attract new non-skilled members, while the second led to a policy decision that affected existing skilled members.

The Introduction earlier quoted Turner's comments that technical change was "the most obvious cause" in opening out a closed union. But he noted that "Whether the union will then modify itself depends largely on the pace of the technical revolution with which it is confronted".¹⁸ The NUVB's situation does not neatly fit Turner's illustration. The union did not totally "open" up, being an example of what Hughes has called "intermediate patterns of union response, in which unions may be 'open' in certain directions of recruitment interest, but 'closed' in others".¹⁹ And, despite the "violent" nature of the technical revolution in the car industry, the establishment of the Industrial Section made effectively no difference to the union's long-term survival until after 1945, when all unions began to recruit more freely in the car industry.

In the NUVB's case, Turner's analysis is, ironically, more useful when discussing slower change: "members may be indifferent to a prospect of decline which is sufficiently long-term: but if the union has full-time officials it will possess a separate drive to institutional self-preservation".²⁰ Of course, those members may not fall in line. Slichter, for example, noted in the U.S.A. that union members were not "necessarily irrational in supporting a policy which will eventually fail and which may destroy their organisation. Unions are composed of men who have a limited time to live and who are primarily interested, therefore, not in perpetuating their organisation".²¹

NUVB members, in fact, often responded by resisting change - refusing to do the new jobs while some of their traditional work was still available - and thus potentially undermined the union's long-term

survival. It is clear that those working in declining woodworking trades had to be encouraged to transfer to bodymaking earlier in the century; there was a lot of resistance from sections of painters to taking up the cellulose spray in the late 1920s; and from the early 1930s through to at least 1950, NUVB officials regularly complained of groups of members being extremely reluctant to claim the increasing number of metalworking operations on buses (which found its extreme expression in Southern Ireland, where strict demarcation with other trades meant that bodymakers would not do welding operations).

Further, one cannot necessarily presume an identity of interests among a union's full-time officials. As with members, age was an obvious factor; if their job as full-time official "would last their time", why should they encourage change. Again, there were ideological differences among officials underpinning their support for, or hostility to, a wider basis of unionism. Finally, no discussion of union response can ignore the role of branch officers, especially branch secretaries, for applications for membership passed through their hands, giving them some power in refusing those that did not fit their particular conception of an NUVB member.

If it can be accepted that technical changes are often complex, uneven, and long-term processes, and that they do not have a unilinear impact on skilled work, then it is easier to acknowledge the multi-faceted problems facing craft unions and their members. The NUVB, as a multi-craft union operating in very different sectors of industry, provides a good, if slightly extreme, illustration of this proposition.

2. State support for trade unionism

This sub-section takes up issues raised in the thesis concerning how the NUVB received important support from the state. The role of unemployment insurance and fair wages clauses are investigated, with a brief note on Labour councils.

(1) Unemployment insurance

Clegg has consistently argued against the Webbs' claim that the 1911 National Insurance Act "led to a dramatic expansion of Trade Union membership".²² The main thrust of his argument is that trade union membership growth in 1912 was lower than both 1911 and 1913, and that trade union approved societies' membership was less than half the total union membership. While generally agreeing with him, his argument, and the Webbs', only concerned Part I of the Act and the Approved Societies which administered health insurance, and which came into operation in July 1912.²³

However, he has not looked in detail at unemployment insurance (Part II of the Act), the main feature of which was the administration of state unemployment benefit in a small number of "insured trades" (covering approximately 2.25 million workers) by those unions paying out their own unemployment benefit. The branches of these unions did not just pay out their own benefit on top of state benefit, but also administered the signing process, and often (as before the 1911 Act)

functioned as a labour exchange. While insurance contributions started in July 1912, benefit was not payable until January 1913.²⁴ Any increase in membership from non-unionists in the insured trades deciding to join a union administering state benefit were unlikely to show up before this date. "Construction of vehicles" was one of the insured trades, and the UKSC, which already had its own unemployment benefit, thus administered state benefit.

UKSC membership increased markedly in both 1912 and 1913, from approximately 7,500 at the end of 1911 to 10,000 in 1912 and 12,500 in 1913. As described in chapters 3 and 4, some of this was in the centres of motor and railway membership; elsewhere a number of the big provincial branches grew, with Scotland experiencing a great surge of recruitment. While the membership growth related to the general improvement in trade, it could not have been unaffected by the establishment of state unemployment insurance. Whether related or not, it is interesting to note that in 1936, an analysis of the existing membership in five year cohorts revealed that, apart from those members joining in 1931-35, the largest group dated their membership back to 1911-15.²⁵

An analysis of recruitment in those unions that administered the newly formed state unemployment insurance scheme just before the first world war might indicate similar upsurges, which would otherwise be hidden by aggregate union membership figures. But, irrespective of this, it is clear that the NUVB's continued administration of the scheme played an important role in their holding on to unemployed members in

the early 1930s. Whether this conclusion could be generalised to other unions administering the scheme and experiencing heavy unemployment can only be resolved by further research. But there is no doubt in the NUVB's case that their collapse in the early 1930s would have been greater without this state-created prop for trade unionism.

(ii) Fair wages.

This thesis has found that in the interwar period the NUVB was particularly reliant on the operation of fair wages clauses by various public contractors. Apart from the Fair Wages Resolutions first passed by national government in 1891, local authorities usually operated them. In fact, the latter predated national action, with the London County Council first agreeing theirs in 1889. By 1894, some 150 local authorities had adopted similar measures, though they had to be carefully monitored, often by local trades councils.²⁶

As Kahn-Freund pointed out, "the real sanction" in enforcing fair wages clauses "is not legal at all, but administrative: it is the threat to be taken off the list of ... contractors".²⁷ Local authorities were important purchasers of various vehicles, for cleansing departments, for example, as well as their more obvious transport (ie trams and buses) needs. Consequently, the NUVB used the threat of trying to stop the contracts of supplier firms not respecting collective agreements. How far they had to go depended on circumstances, ranging from raising the possibility of reporting to the customer (which was sometimes sufficient) to actively lobbying the customer (sometimes through their

own local councillor members or, in the case of government departments, their Assistant General Secretary Joe Compton M.P.).

A number of comments have been made about Fair Wages Resolutions. Kahn-Freund reputedly called them "one of the cornerstones of British labour law" in 1948.²⁸ And nearly thirty years later he argued that there "seems to be general consent [that] no governmental measure has over the last three quarters of a century done more to spread the habit of observing collective agreements than ... Fair Wages resolutions".²⁹ The student of the Fair Wages Resolutions has, however, called them "a last resort for workers unable to obtain fair wages through their own efforts", which Wedderburn sees as "a more sceptical assessment".³⁰ He himself argued that they were "a prop for the British structure of collective bargaining. Without it the structure is weaker, as workers soon discovered", referring to the impact of the government's 1982 decision to rescind the Resolution (effective from September 1983) and their advice to local authorities to do likewise.³¹

Certainly, the NUVB's use of fair wages clauses in the interwar years was generally to use them as part of the collective bargaining process, not as an alternative to it. In this sense, they were indeed a "prop" to collective bargaining, and in consequence, also to trade unionism (though this was not specifically included in the Fair Wages Resolution until 1946), as they allowed the union to demonstrate its ability to force employers to respect collective agreements.

Historically, the demand for fair wages clauses in public contracts was often associated with the demand for similar wages for council employees. With the municipalisation of tramways, local Labour councillors were important in pushing for trade union wages and conditions on tramway committees; so much so, that Cole could report in 1918 that there had been increasing endeavours to keep Labour members off committees concerned with the conditions of municipal employment.³²

As noted in a footnote to chapter 7, the NUVB Scottish organiser successfully stood as a councillor in Glasgow, following the non-reinstatement of over 60 municipal tramway members after the General Strike. Similarly, following the discharge of 120 bodymakers by Liverpool Corporation Tramways in 1932, Liverpool No.1 branch successfully put up a branch officer to obtain representation on the council.³³ In both cases, all members were eventually reinstated. At least two other full time officials were also councillors at different times, plus an unknown number of branch officers; in many cases their prime responsibility was looking after the conditions of members employed by the council and members working in firms contracted to build vehicles for the council.

3. Union Finance

Another finding of this thesis is the importance of a union's finances to its everyday functioning. Twice in just over 50 years, major crises, requiring a prolonged outflow of funds to sustain a disadvantaged section of the membership, led to a massive erosion of the

remaining employed membership. This, in turn, undoubtedly weakened the union's position in large numbers of workplaces. Such situations raise many questions about the nature of workers' commitment to trade union organisation. One question, often asked, is why workers join unions,³⁴ but a related question, why do workers leave unions, is usually neglected.

One important reason, historically, for joining craft unions was their friendly benefit provision. As the Webbs pointed out, "The benefit club side serves, in the first place, as a potent attraction to hesitating recruits. To the young man just 'out of his time' the prospect of securing support in sickness or unemployment is a greater inducement to join the union, and regularly keep up his contributions, than the less obvious advantages to be gained by the trade combination".³⁵ The literature is full of nautical analogies bearing witness to this. Thus, Howell argued "Probably the provident benefits in the better class of Unions have helped to steady the organisation, to ballast the ship in the trough of the sea. It is a singular and significant fact that no Trade Union has ever foundered as a result of excessive overweight in the matter of benefits; it is equally significant that the coast-line is dotted with records of wrecks in consequence of the lack of such benefits".³⁶

Hyman found this "instrumental attraction to membership" even in the Workers' Union, and argued that the union's "subsidiary" functions were "crucial" in assisting its survival until 1910.³⁷ One of its early leaders even argued "each Benefit operates like an anchor and holds the

membership more firmly and staunchly to the Union".³⁹ The printing unions carried this policy the furthest, and it was noted in the late 1930s that "each worker in the printing industry has so large a stake in his Union that his loyalty is certain. Once a person is elected he does not lapse his membership, as often happens in bad times with Unions which do not make service to their members a cardinal point in their programme".³⁹

In particular, superannuation benefit was believed to exercise a greater hold on members than most benefits. Cole has written that it was, "for those Unions which can afford it, a highly valued benefit; and one of its effects is to induce a high stability of membership, as those who hope to receive it keep up their contributions even in bad times".⁴⁰ This was recognised by NUVB officials, and Halliwell has already been quoted in chapter 7 arguing in the late 1920s that "the men who have remained loyal to their organisations in the most difficult times have been those who had vested interests in the shape of superannuation benefits"; and these members were "the rock upon which many Trade Unions have built their sheet-anchor".

While the above points explain an often important reason for joining and remaining in craft unions, they do not help us understand why people leave. The major losses of UKSC/NUVB membership occurred during periods of extremely depressed trade. According to the Webbs, again, at a time of trade depression, just when the individual member is probably poorest, "he is invariably required to pay extra levies to meet the heavy Out of Work liabilities, on pain of being automatically excluded,

and thus forfeiting all his insurance".⁴¹ This is what happened to UKSC/NUVB members, but the UKSC's membership fell by a massive 45% in three years (1878-1881) and the NUVB lost 35% in the early 1930s.

How do we explain this lack of commitment to unionism of large numbers of UKSC members, despite the inducement of friendly benefits, especially superannuation? The presence or absence of a tradition of union membership seems to have been important. Taking the railway members of the UKSC, it is probable that their trade union membership brought them limited advantages in the workshop. But where a tradition of membership had been established from a very early date, as in Manchester, membership held up despite the levies. Their proximity to the 1879 dispute would have further reinforced the union's value in their eyes. Elsewhere, where the roots were newer, as in Derby and Wolverton, they were also more fragile, and the levies of 1879 supported a dispute some distance away. Here, the financial burden of membership appeared too great in terms of the eventual financial reward, and the "instrumental" attitude to membership worked in the opposite direction.

While Hyman has noted that "the tradition of union membership, once established, is normally self-perpetuating - even if the organisation itself is temporarily broken under adverse circumstances",⁴² there was an institutional barrier to the re-establishment of UKSC membership where it had declined. Once members had left in the nineteenth century, they were either debarred from rejoining if they were over 50, or they might be too old to work for enough years to claim superannuation

benefit themselves. This was the case in Derby and the Birmingham contract shops in the early 1890s.

Swindon branch's relative stability in the crisis, despite its recent establishment, seems to have been associated with a vigorous shop organisation, which was probably missing in the other centres. More than likely there were key individuals responsible for sustaining such shop organisation. Whether these were motivated by socialist ideas, as Hyman found among many early Workers' Union branch activists,⁴³ cannot be known without further research.

The NUVB's losses in the early 1930s took place in a rather different climate. By then the state provided some basic benefits, in particular unemployment and old age pensions; and union benefits generally provided a very useful supplement to these state benefits, instead of being the sole income as formerly. In a number of centres of employment, such as municipal transport and railway work, pension schemes were also in operation. While still vulnerable, many members felt less in need of the union's benefits; especially with the increased cost of membership through the levies, followed by the halving of unemployment benefit in May 1931, and again in August 1932 (the latter also accompanied by the halving of superannuation benefit). These same members often benefitted from being tied to another section's collective agreement (as the municipal members generally were to the coach trade agreement) or being part of a wider bargaining structure (as in the railway workshops). Many other members who left seemed to have done so where shop organisation

was broken up (as in Coventry); where shop organisation was sustained by strong district control (as in Glasgow) losses were minimal.

Superannuation

The importance of superannuation benefit in the NUVB's history cannot be underestimated, and a more detailed look at this benefit is necessary. George Howell described it in 1891 as "the one benefit in the social economy of the Unions which is the most open to criticism on purely actuarial grounds". He noted that "The additional and accelerated demands made by this benefit on the funds, grows with fearful and fatal certainty year by year, ending only in the one final payment, funeral allowance, at death."⁴⁴ More than 60 years later Cole acknowledged that it was "a costly benefit, which can usually be borne only where there is a steady inflow of young members to help meet the cost. Where a Union which pays this benefit loses members Superannuation benefit is apt to become a severe drain on the funds".⁴⁵

The NUVB suffered a crisis in the funding of this benefit in the 1930s, which was only finally resolved by an improvement in trade and by directing as many new recruits as possible into the superannuation-paying section of the union. This policy, in turn, hampered any serious attempt to recruit into the Industrial Section. The continued commitment to the friendly benefit side of craft unionism did not sit well with the 1931 decision to open out the union. This has been dealt with in chapter 7, but this was not the end of the matter. Another crisis emerged in the 1950s, which, while outside the period covered by this thesis, was so

important for its consequences that it must be discussed in this section on trade union finance.⁴⁶

After the second world war, an increasing proportion of new recruits did go into the Industrial Section, and superannuation contributions did not keep pace with the rapidly rising payments of the early 1950s. The annual superannuation account went into the red in 1953, and stayed there. At that time there was a cushion of nearly £90,000 in the fund, which would last for a number of years before it was totally eroded.

Despite the argument in the 1930s that the fund's stability rested on bringing as many members into Table A as possible, it was now recognised that it was necessary to reduce them as any further increase would merely worsen the situation in the future. In 1956 the EC argued that the fund should be closed to new members, which was agreed at the 1957 Rules Conference. Such a measure, of itself, would, by slowly reducing the income, without any reduction in expenditure, bring forward slightly the day the fund went permanently into the red (thus draining other funds of the union), but would reduce the union's long-term liability.

However, the 1957 Rules Conference also gave existing members the right to stop paying for the benefit, and gave a "guarantee" of benefits to all those who continued paying (along with a 4d per week increase in the superannuation contribution). Within a year, so many had left the fund that the date was rapidly brought forward when the fund would be in deficit. From 27,000 superannuation paying members in mid-1957, there were 11,000 by December 1958, 9,700 a year later, and 8,650 at the end

of 1960. Instead of an annual shortfall of a few thousand pounds a year as before 1957, there were deficits of around £30,000 in 1959 and 1960. And in 1961 the union's General Fund supported superannuation payments to the tune of £35,000.

The situation continued to deteriorate; while the annual superannuation expenditure was in the region of £54,000-55,000 from 1959 to 1968, income fell from about £24,000 to £5,000 as more members exercised their right to stop paying for the benefit. Consequently the annual subsidy from the union's General Fund gradually increased to £50,000. But this immediate crisis had been man-made. As one delegate complained at the 1959 Annual Delegate Conference - "The theme song from the platform at the Rules Revision [1957] had been 'Let us drive as many members out of the fund as we can'". This had caused the growing shortfall in income; yet the executive made it clear at the 1960 Conference that they would argue at the next Rules Conference that the guarantee to continue paying the benefit would still stand.

But the burden of payments was so large that something had to be done, and in 1967 newly retired members were given the option of receiving the benefit or a lump sum payment equivalent to 5 years benefit (still more than their total contributions had paid for, but less than the average superannuated member would receive). While further reducing the union's long-term liability, it again significantly increased the immediate outgoings connected with superannuation. By the time of the union's merger with the TGWU in 1972, over half a million pounds had been transferred from the NUVB's General Fund to finance

superannuation commitments. This sum was roughly equivalent to the union's total worth at the time of its merger. By then, the overall finances were such that the cost of the nine week Ford parity strike in 1971 necessitated a levy being raised, which itself met with a lot of resistance. Latta has described the NUVB as having been in "a declining financial position".⁴⁷ There can be no doubt that the policies on superannuation played a major role in this.

As discussed in chapter 7, other craft unions had also experienced problems with the actuarial unsoundness of union superannuation schemes, but in some the necessary ruthlessness had been displayed by a section of the national leadership to wind the schemes up. With the coming of the Welfare State in the late 1940s, the traditional "friendly society" benefits of craft unions became even less necessary. The NUVB had partly recognised this by making unemployment benefit voluntary in 1957 and then abolishing it in 1962. But, with superannuation, the sentiment argued by Assistant General Secretary Alf Roberts in 1960 held sway - the union had to "carry out their commitments to their old members, who carried the Union through in the dismal years, the 20's and 30's, and kept it going by paying levies". He was a prisoner of the union's past. He believed, in the words of George Howell many years before, "The men who become entitled to this benefit are the flower of the trade to which they belong. Through evil and good report they have stood by the Union".⁴⁸

Discussion of trade union contribution and benefit structures has, in recent years, usually been considered to smack of an out-dated

"institutional" approach to industrial relations. These brief comments, if nothing else, suggest that this might well be a short-sighted judgement.

4. Strikes

Apart from challenging the argument put forward by Friedman about strike activity in Coventry, the thesis questions the more general view, found again in a recent study, that the motor vehicle industry "lacked a pre-war history of strike activity".⁴⁹ While true in comparison with certain other industries, a significant amount of industrial action did occur in the interwar motor industry, mostly unrecorded in the official statistics. Appendix 8 details industrial action by NUVB members in Coventry in the 1920s; and the thesis also reveals strikes by other unions, for example, at Vauxhall in the early 1920s, in Coventry in the 1930s, and by the NUVB at most of the lesser producers in the 1920s. The under-reporting of industrial action in the 1970s, referred to in the Introduction, was undoubtedly not a new phenomenon. Turner, Clack & Roberts's study in the 1960s, which used official statistics, admitted that the number of stoppages in the motor industry then were "grossly understated, on account both of official definition and lack of knowledge", these stoppages including "a large number of very small incidents".⁵⁰

There is every reason to believe that where and when carworkers were organised in unions, and where the labour market was in a favourable situation, they engaged in the short small strikes before the war that

were seen as the hallmark of most of the post-1945 period; and these strikes were generally more likely where piecework bargaining was very decentralised. One example of such a short small strike was on Friday January 18th 1935, when 69 sheet metal workers at Daracq went on strike because a foreman had that morning removed a gas ring which, contrary to orders, had been attached to a gas nozzle for the purpose of boiling water for tea. The men went back on the Monday.⁵¹

While not wishing to exaggerate the strength of union members in interwar car factories, further research would undoubtedly unearth more examples and provide a useful corrective to the currently accepted picture. It might also refine Clegg's recent comment that "Both in 1910 and 1933 the majority of strikes were, as they always had been, plant strikes Most ... were brief affairs, ventilating a grievance which was quickly settled or dropped".⁵² The experience in the motor industry was that most strikes were sub-plant, ie sectional, affairs.

Conclusion

This study of the NUVB has attempted a number of things. The thesis is a historical study of a significant, but generally neglected, union. Such a study needed to be written, for, despite recent advances, the history of trade unionism in the motor industry still suffers far too many gaps. But the study has encompassed more than just the motor industry, demonstrating the complexity of technical change in this and other vehicle building sectors. The multi-craft nature of the union, and

its main predecessor the UKSC, has given the study a wider importance than would have been possible with a single craft.

However, Turner has noted that "conclusions drawn from even a quite wide sector of experience may mislead if untested against related experience outside that sector".⁵³ While some comparisons have been made, there has been no attempt to claim any universal validity for the findings. Instead, probably the most important contribution of the thesis has been in the realm of method.

This has favoured detailed local studies, not merely as a corrective to the traditional head office-based union histories, but as an essential component of understanding the national picture. Where possible, the focus has been on individual workplaces, which are usually lost in national studies; for example, Clegg's recent volume on British trade union history only specifically devotes a dozen pages to workplace industrial relations in the 1920s.⁵⁴ Such an approach has re-emphasised the paramount importance of primary material, from preferably as many sources as possible; while being aware of the Webbs' finding that many important issues are often not documented at all.

Trade union historians have also, all too often, taken industrial history as given, or non-problematic. But the concerns of economic or business histories are not necessarily the priorities of the historians of work, workers, and trade unions. Consequently, a substantial amount of material, not otherwise found in the academic literature, concerning

the industries in which NUVB members worked, has been gathered from a wide variety of sources and presented in the thesis.

Turning to the subject of work, while Braverman has been rightly criticised for many deficiencies in his analysis, he was, in my opinion, correct in his stricture that "sociologists, with few exceptions, deem it proper to write about occupations, work, skills, etc. without even bare familiarity".⁵⁵ By contrast, this study has given a lot of detail on the work of the vehicle builder and its changing nature. It therefore stands in a very different tradition to that identified as "labour history without the labour process".⁵⁶ The centrality of work and the workplace has been the necessary foundation on which this study of the NUVB has been erected.

Finally, the thesis has tried to do justice to Carr's observation that "History cannot be written unless the historian can achieve some kind of contact with the mind of those about whom he is writing".⁵⁷ Among other matters, this has meant understanding that the common possession of the same union card concealed very different experiences. The richness, complexity and diversity of these experiences formed the bedrock from which the union's (national, local and workplace) policies were derived. In turn, union activists, while attempting (sometimes very positively) to shape the workplace situation, had to adapt policies to the diversity of each individual shop. This thesis, if it has done nothing else, has highlighted that diversity.

APPENDIX 1: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY RAILWAY COMPANY WORKSHOPS.

This appendix charts the development of carriage workshops in three of the largest railways companies and in four geographical areas.

1. London & North Western Railway

The LNWR was set up in 1846, the main amalgamating companies being the Liverpool & Manchester, the London & Birmingham, the Grand Junction, and the Manchester & Birmingham. The first of these opened in 1830,¹ setting up locomotive works at Edge Hill in Liverpool in the early 1830s. By the early 1840s 50 men were employed at Edge Hill, another 90 on locomotives and wagons at the Crown Street depot in Liverpool, and a further 120 on locomotives at Salford.² The L&M's coach shops (probably in Liverpool) were building new coaches in 1833, but at times could only just keep up with the repair work of the growing fleet, and new coaches had to be purchased outside. For example, six first-class coach bodies were bought in 1836 and the frames and other equipment added in the L&M's own shops. However, L&M coach construction greatly influenced the development of railway passenger coaches in Britain in the 1830s, with some railway companies modelling their coaches on the L&M, others being allowed to use their plans and sections, while private coachbuilders in Lancashire used their designs when supplying other railways.³

The first part of the London & Birmingham Railway opened in 1837, and, in April 1838, trains ran from Euston to one mile beyond Bletchley, whence

passengers were transported by road coach to Rugby, continuing by train to Birmingham. In September that year the line was fully open.⁴ The bodies of the original carriages were built by a West End coachbuilder and carted from his works to Euston where underframes were built. The Euston works were soon capable of building the complete carriage, and in the early 1840s employed some 110 men building, repairing and painting carriages; while at Camden, 112 were engaged in coach repairing and another 40 in construction.⁵ The L&B established its locomotive works in 1838 at Wolverton, the half way point between the two cities served by the company, and for a number of years all trains stopped here to change engines. By 1840 some 400 were employed there.⁶

The third partner, the Grand Junction Railway, opened between Warrington and Birmingham in July 1837. With the company's absorption of the tiny Warrington & Newton Railway, which fed into the L&M at Newton, there was immediate rail access from Birmingham to both Manchester and Liverpool. Mail could therefore be dispatched from London by road coach to Birmingham, and then by train to the north west. A "Travelling Post Office" was built, first running between Birmingham and Liverpool in January 1838. With the opening of the full L&B route later that year, mail could go directly from London to the north west by train.⁷

The City of Manchester was dissatisfied with its railway route to London, with its 15 mile westward run on L&M lines, and a Manchester & Birmingham Railway Company was incorporated in 1837. But by 1839 it had been agreed that the GJR would carry the M&B's passengers to Birmingham. As a consequence, the route of the M&B was shortened, joining up with the GJR

at Crewe, and fully opening in 1842, the year it established works at Longsight in Manchester.⁸

The GJR had set up a locomotive works in 1839 at Edge Hill in Liverpool, next door to the L&M shops, but two years later started to build locomotive and carriage works at Crewe. When these became fully operational in 1843, Edge Hill was closed, and 800 men, women and children were transferred. Crewe was roughly the mid-point between Manchester and Birmingham, but unlike Wolverton it had several lines converging on it. As well as links to Birmingham (and thence London), Manchester and Liverpool, it also had rail links to Chester, and from there to Birkenhead. The Crewe works initially employed 161 men, but this had increased to 600 by 1846.⁹

In 1845 the GJR took over the L&M before amalgamating with the L&B and M&B in 1846 to form the LNWR.¹⁰ The LNWR's locomotive department was based at three sites - Wolverton dealing with the southern division, Crewe the northern, and Longsight the small north-eastern division.¹¹ Wagons, built at the L&M shops in Crown Street, Liverpool, and the GJR shops at Crewe, seem to have been concentrated at Ordsall Lane, Manchester,¹² before its transfer in the mid 1850s to large new workshops at Earlestown, near Newton-le-Willows.¹³

For the carriage department, Crewe works covered the northern end of the railway, while a works at Saltley were leased from Joseph Wright to deal with the south.¹⁴ Saltley also made wagons, and presumably absorbed work from the old L&B wagon shops at Camden, which were still in operation in 1851.¹⁵ Crewe works rapidly became a very large employer, and was probably

the largest railway workshop in Britain in the late 1840s. In late 1848 the locomotive department alone employed 1,600, while the coach department had another 260.¹⁶ Wolverton was also growing, but not nearly so fast. In March 1851 there were 571 "mechanics" and apprentices, and 119 labourers employed there.¹⁷

Inevitably, rationalisation took place. In the late 1850s the Longsight locomotive works were closed and equipment transferred to Crewe.¹⁸ In 1859 new carriage construction at Crewe was transferred to Saltley;¹⁹ and in the following year it was decided to bring the carriage department into one large works, Wolverton being selected. A locomotive works until 1865, Wolverton became a mixed works during the transition from 1865 to 1877. Saltley's work was transferred from 1865, the site apparently closing in 1870, while Wolverton's locomotive work was gradually transferred to Crewe.²⁰ By 1877 the LNWR had three large separate specialised manufacturing sites - Crewe for locomotives, Wolverton for carriages, and Earlestown for wagons, though both Euston and Crewe kept a small carriage repair facility.

2. Great Western Railway

The GWR terminus at Paddington opened in 1838, three years before the London to Bristol line was completed.²¹ For a number of years the only GWR carriage workshop was at Paddington, and this concentrated on repairs, though some new rolling stock was built there.²² In 1854 when the GWR took over the narrow gauge lines of the Shrewsbury & Birmingham Railway and the Shrewsbury & Chester Railway, they acquired their workshops at

Wolverhampton and Saltney (near Chester) respectively. A rationalisation took place, with Wolverhampton concentrating on locomotives, and Saltney on carriages and wagons.²³

Nine years later, the GWR took over the West Midland Railway, itself the product of several amalgamations, bringing with it workshops at Worcester and Shrewsbury, and the South Wales Railway and its workshops. As well as now having a series of far-flung carriage and wagon plants, the GWR had inherited an "amazing collection of carriages of all sorts, shapes, and sizes".²⁴ By the early 1860s, the site of the carriage works at Paddington was needed for the widening of the line made necessary by the new Hammersmith & City traffic. The scatter of acquired workshops was obviously uneconomical, and with a GWR board decision to build a larger proportion of their own coaching stock, the most practical solution was to build a large-scale plant at a strategically located centre.²⁵

The company's broad-gauge locomotive workshops had been opened at Swindon in 1843. The initial labour force was 300, and while the works were extended to employ up to 2,000 men, there were only 600 in 1851, rising to over 1,000 by 1855. Although no carriage bodywork was undertaken there at this time, after 1853 the works produced iron underframes for carriages and wagons assembled at other workshops.²⁶ Swindon had been chosen as the locomotive workshop because "it was near the point at which the character of the railway changed. Eastwards the line very gently inclines; westwards there was a steep descent to Bath. The kind of locomotive required on these two sections of the line would be different".²⁷ By the early 1860s, because of the GWR's acquisition of numerous narrow (or standard) gauge lines,

Swindon was considered unsuitable to service the whole of the railway. The directors looked around for an alternative site.

Reading had no suitable site, while the only site at Abingdon was too far from the town, and would need raising by seven feet. Didcot was considered a wilderness where skilled mechanics would not live. Oxford, however, had a central location available (Port Meadow), and had both broad and narrow gauge tracks. Despite an agreement between the GWR and Oxford City Corporation to go ahead, there was an outcry by the University against the fear of the town being flooded with "mere mechanics". The proposed works were abandoned.²⁹ Oxford had to wait another fifty years before the car industry started to transform the town; while the next chairman of the GWR decided to build the carriage works at Swindon after all.

The first shops in the new carriage works were opened in 1868, and work started in 1869. In the next two years further shops were added, the first complete Swindon-built carriages being finished in 1871. By then, Swindon already employed 800 men on carriages and wagons, with another 300 making the necessary iron work including wheels.²⁹ There was also a flurry of building activity at the other workshops. The Worcester shops, burnt down in 1864, were rebuilt, producing wagons from 1867 to 1874, and a substantial number of carriages between 1868 and 1872; while Saltney built carriages between 1868 and 1874, as well as some wagons. However, after 1874, all carriage construction was concentrated at Swindon, and in 1877 the Paddington shops were finally closed.³⁰

Among other companies taken over by the GWR in the 1870s were the Bristol & Exeter, which had a carriage and wagon works at Bridgwater, dating from 1848,³¹ and the South Devon Railway, with its Newton Abbott repair shops; the latter having reached the important junction of Newton Abbott in 1846, the workshops being established soon afterwards.³²

3. The Midland Railway

When the North Midland Railway Company decided to build workshops at Derby, the site had to be raised eight feet, and was ready for occupation by late 1839. Two other railways, the Birmingham & Derby Junction and the Midland Counties also arranged for workshops nearby, though not on the same scale. The Midland Counties already had carriage and wagon shops at Leicester, but decided in 1842 that all work should be concentrated at Derby. When the three railways merged in 1844 to form the Midland Railway, it had the largest route mileage in the country at 179 miles.

While the Leicester workshops continued repairing vehicles for only a short time after the merger, the Bromsgrove workshops, acquired in 1846 with the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, were kept open in a repair capacity.³³ The carriage works at Derby, however, remained a tiny appendage to the locomotive works for another 30 years. It was almost exclusively restricted to the routine repair and repainting of stock. Very, very few carriages were built there, coming overwhelmingly from contract shops. One result of the lack of a central carriage department was that a significant proportion of the stock was built to out-of-date designs.

When a new Carriage and Wagon Superintendent was started at Derby in 1873, among his tasks were the rationalisation of the existing carriage stock, the building of modern stock, and the erection of a new carriage and wagon establishment at Derby, as well as satellite centres. The foundations of the massive new works at Derby took a year to complete, but from the spring of 1877 the new works were operational, being described at the time as "by far the largest establishment of the kind in England".³⁴

To further complicate matters, the Midland Railway decided to abolish second-class travel from New Year's Day 1875. This meant upgrading the better second-class carriages, and downgrading the rest, as well as improving existing third-class accommodation. In November 1874 alone, 1,490 second-class compartments were altered to thirds, while 2,875 third-class partitions were extended to the roof. As well as this work, a substantial amount of mechanical improvement and standardisation was also taking place. The volume of repairs in 1875 in particular was so great that, in the absence of sizeable, covered capacity, much of the work had to be done in the open air. By the mid 1870s about 2,000 people worked at the Derby carriage and wagon works. The Bromsgrove workshops were reorganised and expanded until they employed some 600 men, and new repair shops were built at Kentish Town in London.³⁵ Kentish Town also dealt with locomotives, and had its own locomotive paint shop, as did other leading Midland Railway locomotive depots, such as Bristol, Leeds and Manchester.³⁶

4. London and the South

London was not only the major area of "private" coachmaking, but was a major employer of railway coachmaking labour in the nineteenth century. Apart from the early shops at Euston and Paddington, several other railways had workshops located in the capital. Workshops for the London & South Western Railway (initially known as the London & Southampton) were completed in 1839 alongside the line's original London terminus at Nine Elms, Battersea. The carriage and wagon works were relocated to Eastleigh, near Southampton, in 1890, employing 1,150 there two years later. Despite this, Nine Elms became too small for the increasing stock of locomotives, and as further expansion was impossible, a new locomotive works was built also at Eastleigh, the plant being transferred in 1909.²⁷

The London & Brighton Railway (opened in 1841) joined with the London & Croydon (1839) in 1846 to form the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway. Repair shops at New Cross were kept on, though the new railway's main works were at Brighton. In 1873 the Brighton locomotive, carriage and wagon shops employed about 1,100 in total, doubling in the next thirty years. New carriage and wagon shops were built at Lancing in 1910, excluding painting, trimming, and finishing, which remained at Brighton.²⁸

The third major southern railway was the South Eastern & Chatham, formed in 1899 from a merger of the South Eastern and the London, Chatham & Dover. The former's early locomotive workshops at New Cross Gate were removed to Ashford in Kent by late 1847, Ashford being chosen as a central station for the railway. A carriage and wagon works was established there in 1850,

employing about 600 workers in 1851, rising to 800 in 1858, and 950 in 1861.³⁹ The London, Chatham & Dover Railway's line to Dover was completed in 1861. Repair work, initially done at Dover, was transferred to new workshops built at Longhedge in Battersea in 1862. Longhedge built its first locomotive in 1869, and in 1886 was reported to have built all of the railway's carriages and most of its wagons "for many years past". While the combined shops employed 668 in 1886, there were about 270 in the carriage and wagon section in 1893. The 1899 merger led to the Longhedge works being closed in 1911, and the machinery transferred to Ashford.⁴⁰

As well as the three main railways operating south and south east of London, the other major London-based railway was the Great Eastern. This brought together several local railways in 1862, the most important of which was the Eastern Counties. The Eastern Counties' Stratford workshops started off as a small repair depot in 1839, becoming the main workshops when all work was transferred from Romford in 1847-48. In the latter year, Stratford employed about 1,000, increasing to nearly 4,000 by 1886, of which 843 were employed in the carriage works. Another 363 were employed in the wagon department, which was transferred about 1½ miles away to Temple Mills in 1897.⁴¹ Finally, the small North London railway, only 12 miles long, set up workshops at Bow in 1853, and later on started building locomotives, carriages, and wagons.⁴²

Workshops located in London had a number of disadvantages. They were generally located at one extremity of a railway company's network; the sites were expensive; and there was little scope for expansion.⁴³ Hence the general exodus of railway employment out of London.

5. Manchester

While the LNWR was only involved in Manchester for a brief period, there were two other railways with substantial workshops based there. The Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway was so named after an amalgamation in 1846 of the Manchester & Leeds Railway, with its works at Miles Platting in Manchester, and the Manchester & Bolton Railway with workshops at Salford, which were merged into Miles Platting in 1849. A serious fire in 1873 destroyed the Miles Platting carriage shops, and the opportunity was taken to build a new carriage and wagon works at Newton Heath, two miles out of the Manchester Victoria terminus. These new works produced their first carriage in 1877, and employed over 2,500 by 1900. Although the Miles Platting locomotive works could now spread into the old carriage and wagon shops, space was still at a premium here. When these works had been built the district was largely open spaces, but by the 1870s was packed with houses and other buildings, and physical expansion of the works was impossible. A site was acquired at Horwich near Bolton, and the old works closed in 1887.⁴⁴

The other Manchester-based railway was the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire, better known as the Great Central, which name it took in 1897. The main basis of this railway was the Sheffield, Ashton-under-Lyne & Manchester, which started operating in 1841, building modest repair shops and stores at Newton; the initial establishment for running the railway included one carriage bodymaker at 5s6d per day. Carriages were sometimes purchased on condition that the builder kept them in good repair for 12 months after delivery. It was decided in 1845 to look for land for a

"permanent locomotive and carriage depot", and Gorton was selected as it was sufficiently far out of Manchester "to be clear of the heavy local taxes with which all such establishments in large towns are burdened".

Gorton was completed in 1848 and the workshops transferred from Newton in 1849.⁴⁵ By the early twentieth century Gorton was not big enough to deal with the up-keep of the rolling stock, and new carriage and wagon works were built at Dukinfield, 6 miles east of Manchester. In 1907, work started being transferred there, and the buildings were finally complete two years later, leaving Gorton as a locomotive works. By the first world war, Dukinfield was employing about 1,400 men.⁴⁶

6. The North and North-East

The Great Northern Railway consisted essentially of a main line from London to York via Doncaster, later known as the "towns" line, and a "loop" line through Lincolnshire. The Lincolnshire lines opened in 1848, and Boston, established as the main workshops in 1847, dealt with all repairs. In 1850 the complete "loop" line from London to York was opened, followed two years later by the "towns" line, which was thirty miles shorter. While as late as May 1851 the railway's directors voted for moving the workshops to Peterborough, the expected choice, the decision was reversed in favour of Doncaster. Workshops were set up there in 1853 with some 900 of its initial workforce of 950 being transferred from Boston, which later became a sleeper factory. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the whole of the Doncaster locomotive, carriage and wagon works, known locally as "the Plant", employed over 4,500.⁴⁷

The other main railway in the region, the North Eastern, was formed in 1854, the three main constituent companies having workshops in Gateshead, York, and Leeds (closed in the early 1880's). Further acquisitions brought in workshops at Darlington and Shildon in 1863 (the latter's locomotive works closing in 1871, after which it became a centre for wagon building and repair), Stockton in 1865 (closed in 1878), and Percy Main in 1874.⁴⁹ Gateshead was the main locomotive centre in the 1870s, but its geographical location precluded further expansion, and early in the twentieth century the Darlington works expanded, with Gateshead ceasing new construction in 1910, and the smaller York locomotive works closing in 1905.⁴⁹ Information on carriage works is very sparse, but it is known that Percy Main did build some new stock, as well as York. In the latter town, a locomotive works seems to have opened in 1842, and carriage repairs started in 1849; the Queen Street carriage works were replaced by the new Holgate works in 1884, employing nearly 2,000 people around the turn of the century, with a further 300 at a new carriage and wagon repair shop at Heaton (in Newcastle).⁵⁰

7. Scotland

Railways in Scotland date from the very beginning of the railway age, and illustrate the relatively primitive character of many early small railways. The Edinburgh & Dalkeith Railway, running a distance of only 10½ miles, opened in 1831, initially only for freight use. By the early 1840s the railway had 34 passenger carriages, all built in its own workshops. However, until the line was taken over by the NBR in 1845 it was horse-operated, stationary engines being used to haul the traffic up inclines.⁵¹

The Dundee & Newtyle Railway began a passenger service in December 1831. The line was 11 miles long, and included 3 sharp inclines with level stretches in between. Stationary engines hauled the trains up inclines, while on the level stretches horse traction was exclusively used until September 1833 when the first two locomotives arrived. Until 1841, portions of the line were worked by a combination of horse- and wind-power, a tarpaulin being lashed to the passenger carriage to catch the wind, the horse following as a back-up. In the early 1840s its carriages were described as resembling "an ordinary stage-coach, with the addition of an entirely open compartment both before and behind".⁵²

The two most important railways in Scotland in the latter part of the nineteenth century were the North British and the Caledonian. The NBR's chief workshops were built at St. Margarets in Edinburgh in 1844, but when they amalgamated with the Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway in 1865, the latter's shops at Cowairs in north-east Glasgow, built in 1841, became the central workshops as there was more room for expansion at this location.⁵³ By 1869, the company's other workshops at Coatbridge, Stirling, Haymarket, Hawick, Berwick, Carlisle, and Burntisland were carrying out only designated running repairs. The last named had been taken over by the NBR with the Edinburgh & Northern railway in 1862, and the others probably had similar origins. In that year Cowairs works employed 800 in its locomotive shops and 400-500 in the carriage and wagon works. By 1878 there were at least 1,500 altogether at Cowairs, and a further 350 at St. Margarets.⁵⁴

When the Caledonian Railway was formed in 1846, it took over the Greenock workshops of the Glasgow, Paisley & Greenock Railway. The

increasingly cramped conditions at Greenock led to new workshops being built at St.Rollox in Glasgow in the mid-1850s, most of Greenock's work being transferred there. The Scottish North Eastern Railway's amalgamation with the Caledonian in 1866, led to the closure of its Arbroath workshops. The Scottish Central Railway was taken over about the same time, and although new locomotive building was stopped at its Perth workshops, repairs continued, and Perth, which had been in operation since 1851, was used in later years as a wagon repair shop.⁵⁵ In addition to St.Rollox and Perth, the Caledonian had smaller shops at Southside Station, Glasgow, and at Greenock, Motherwell, Gartsherrie, Carstairs, Stirling, Edinburgh, and Carlisle. The St.Rollox locomotive, carriage and wagon works, employed 700 in 1856, rising to at least 1,600 in 1878, by which time Perth employed about 600.⁵⁶

By the late 1860s, the three other important Scottish railways were the Glasgow & South-Western, the Great North of Scotland, and the Highland. The first, established in 1850, opened its chief workshops at Kilmarnock in 1856 when its Cook Street works in Glasgow, dating from 1839, proved too small to cope with the increasing number of locomotives to maintain, and expansion was impossible in the "closely confined area". The Great North of Scotland had works at Kittybrewster in Aberdeen, which had been started about 1853, but were very cramped. Finally, the Highland Railway, formed in 1865 after a series of amalgamations, had works at Lochgorm, Inverness.⁵⁷

APPENDIX 2: RAILWAY WORKSHOP UNION MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS'

Table A2:1 GRWU membership in coachmaking areas at York, March 1913.

Coach painter	- 112
Apprentice coach painter	- 1
(Brush hand	- 23)
(Rubber	- 9)
(Painters' Labourer	- 45)
(Painter	- 88)
(Wagon Painter	- 2)
Carriage builder	- 42
Carriage maker	- 2
Coach builder	- 1
Carriage Repairer	- 48
Coach repairer	- 3
Carriage joiner	- 3
Coach trimmer	- 11
Carriage trimmer	- 2
Trimmer	- 32

The table includes all who might be construed as coming with the UKSC's scope of membership, plus others in painting areas who would have been eligible for the UKSC later in 1913, or the NUVB. There are problems of terminology here, though. The term "painter" could be an overall term, including some "coach painters"; alternatively, it could refer only to "inside" painters. Similarly, a "carriage" maker/repairer may refer to someone working on the underframe or the "coach" body. The probability is that workers on underframes were designated differently.

Table A2:2 GRWU membership in coachmaking areas in selected workshops, March 1913.

The following lists give membership in the main painting, coachbuilding and finishing categories (subject to the reservations in table 3:3). It ignores small numbers of trimmers, glaziers, etc.

Ashford - 23 coach painters, 2 painters and grainers, 14 painters; 61 coachmakers, 7 coachbuilders; 8 finisher joiners.

Brighton - 6 coach painters, 2 car painters, 2 painters; 19 coachmakers, 1 bodymaker, 1 coachbuilder, 1 car maker; 2 coach finishers.

Derby - 18 coach painters, 12 painters; 46 coachbuilders; 25 coach finishers.

Wolverton - 4 coach painters, 1 writer, 7 painters; 14 bodymakers, 4 coachmakers, 2 carriage makers; 3 coach finishers.

Gorton - 33 coach painters; 9 coach bodymakers, 2 coachmakers; 15 coach finishers.

Newton Heath - 1 paint mixer, 1 colour man, 74 painters; 15 bodymakers, 7 carriage makers; 1 coach finisher.

Table A2:3 GRWU/NUR selected workshop branch membership, 1910-1919.

<u>NUR Branch No.</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1912</u>	<u>1913</u>	<u>1914</u>	<u>1915</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>1917</u>	<u>1918</u>	<u>1919</u>
Ashford 2	6	645	455	1426	1017	1245	1646	1724	1724	1622
Brighton 3	166	143	213	646	677	1039	1271	1368	1425	1473
Derby 3	35	736	332	1098	1139	2475	3006	3309	3191	2972*
Doncaster 3	133	160	133	980	756	1148	1923	2311	2100	2420*
Dukinfield	-	-	154	148	172	265	406	169	196	210
Eastleigh 2	241	211	173	843	481	511	579	648	540	518
Eastleigh 3	-	-	-	-	619	778	794	859	822	675
Newton Heath 3	255	618	541	613	639	764	1117	933	915	654*
Stratford 2	13	82	90	587	666	1353	1762	2182	2240	2690
Swindon 2	21	137	91	241	265	1285	2302	2695	2183	2216
Wolverton 2	149	800	278	450	1035	1805	2095	2189	2170	2029
Worcester 2	-	86	98	-	300	348	366	435	427	450
York 3	268	2316	1709	2161	1950	2004	2007	2053	2067	2450
York 4	-	-	-	-	305	360	331	330	342	367

* = plus new workshop branches formed that year.

Note: end-year membership figures.

The branches chosen above are those covering all the important railway carriage shops (though they would usually also cover wagon works, and, sometimes locomotive works), with the exception of St. Rollox and Cowlairs in Scotland, and with the inclusion of the Worcester repair shop. Table A2:4 overleaf gives figures for the relevant UKSC/NUVB branches.

Table A2:4 UKSC/NUVB branch membership in railway towns, 1910-1919.

	<u>1910</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1912</u>	<u>1913</u>	<u>1914</u>	<u>1915</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>1917</u>	<u>1918</u>	<u>1919</u>
Ashford	4	4	4	8	-	-	-	-	-	46
Brighton	25	26	17	14	18	15	15	44	72	168
Derby	76	74	78	85	100	92	96	142	219	330
Doncaster	47	44	43	47	39	40	41	51	98	123
Dukinfield	-	-	-	211	193	181	189	193	189	239
Eastleigh	48	41	36	44	58	83	78	108	150	289
Newton Heath	296	264	312	340	324	366	414	446	462	407
Stratford	153	116	103	115	105	98	106	125	174	364
Swindon	206	224	261	274	270	364	396	533	580	900
Wolverton	140	128	135	219	256	309	384	610	698	900
Worcester	17	15	17	23	25	21	21	22	22	41
York	48	42	38	50	43	44	44	44	45	70

Note: end-year membership figures.

Not all the UKSC branches cited above were purely railway branches. Swindon and Wolverton were the closest to that, while Eastleigh and Dukinfield were probably also nearly 100% railway members. A number of the others would have had other local employment. Fluctuations in these figures can almost certainly, however, be attributed to the railway works; and while the GRWU/NUR had a much wider recruitment area, its massive growth, compared to the UKSC/NUVB illustrates how quickly the latter's appeal in the railway workshops was confined to its traditional craft areas.

APPENDIX 3: CENSUS RETURNS, 1921/1931.

Occupational census returns provide some information on numbers working in vehicle building. While subject to a number of qualifications, the returns allow us a general idea of the numbers employed in the industry, and shifts over time. Unfortunately there was no census between 1931 and 1951, and the important changes in the 1930s cannot be estimated from this source.

The returns for 1921 and 1931 show, in both years, somewhere around 64,000-65,000 as being the potential maximum area of employment for vehicle builders. These figures include "own account" workers, and boys, but exclude foremen. Between the two dates there was a major shift in the internal composition, as the number of wheelwrights declined by about 9,000 (mirroring a similar decline in the overall numbers employed in making carts, vans, lorry bodies, and general wheelwrights' work, and a decline in smiths' work), with a corresponding increase in the other groups.

The skill composition is very difficult to measure, and an attempt is made to gauge the number of "unskilled" in the car industry, but this is far from satisfactory. As noted in the Introduction to Part II of the thesis, the returns do, however, demonstrate the continuing importance of vehicle building outside of the car industry, while also showing the growing proportion of vehicle building done inside the car industry, which increased further during the 1930s.

Table A3:1 1921 Census - England and Wales - Males - All ages.

	(B)	(W)	(T)	(P)	(P/D)	(PL)
A. Motors & Cycles	4,160	314	1,643	2,785	633	535
B. Carriage, car bodies	7,922	1,314	1,905	5,092	417	492
C. Cart, lorry bodies	206	10,080		407	184	58
Railway Co. workshops	4,186	486	767	2,024	598	333
Contract shops	1,268	280		831	464	
Local authority trams	529			196		
Tramway Companies	98			36		
Omnibus Companies	492			163		
<i>Sub-totals</i>	<i>18,869</i>	<i>12,511</i>	<i>4,494</i>	<i>11,539</i>	<i>2,599#</i>	<i>1,586</i>
Steam locomotives	267	93	50	439		254
Aeroplanes	99			71	93	
Other vehicles	320	54	62	297	103	
Agricultural engineering		400		60		56
Other rail/bus/tram	1,070	323		1,150		151
Miscellaneous S	504	2,922		1,069		
<i>Above total</i>	<i>21,029</i>	<i>16,303</i>	<i>4,606</i>	<i>14,625</i>		
Census total	21,947	18,919	*	15,709	*	*

Notes to Table A3:1 -

§ = This sub-total is greater than the sum of the figures above, as it includes minor categories which are not separately detailed.

= includes 237 signwriters.

S = Garages; Haulage; Local Authorities; Army; Building, contracting; Saw mills; Jobbing; Beer, breweries; Coal mines; Farming; Stores; Coal dealers; Gas, electricity.

* = Census totals for these include much wider groups than just vehicles.

A. = Manufacture of self-propelled vehicles (not steam) and cycles, excluding those made in government factories, railway companies' works, and omnibus companies' repair depots - ie basically motor vehicles and cycles.

B. = Manufacture of carriages, coach and motor car bodies.

C. = Building of carts and vans, motor lorry bodies and wheelwrights' work.

(B) = coach/body builder/finisher/mounter/fitter.

(W) = wheelwright, wheeler, cartwright.

(T) = coach trimmer/upholsterer.

(P) = painter (vehicles), including brush hands and flatters.

(P/D) = general painters (ie unclassified).

(PL) = painters' labourers and rubbers down.

"Smiths and skilled forge workers" figures are only meaningful for "B", "C" and Coach iron-work, giving a figure of 3,607, which would constitute a minimum figure. Other groups of "smiths and skilled forge workers" would overwhelmingly consist of engineering smiths, but would contain some coach smiths.

Table A3:2 1931 Census - England & Wales - Males - All ages

	<u>(B)</u>	<u>(W)</u>	<u>(T)</u>	<u>(P)</u>	<u>(S)</u>
A. Self-propelled	6,973	133	2,978	4,669	
B. Car etc body	10,477	5,926	2,941	6,719	1,793
C. Railway/Tramway	5,073	288	1,066	4,291	
Tramway Service	626			835	
Steam locos				891	
Aeroplanes				225	
Other vehicles	280			274	
Agric eng				427	
Sub-total	23,429§	6,345§	6,985	18,331	1,793
Total in census	26,751	9,883	*	*	*

Notes to Table A3:2 -

§ these sub-totals do not include 2,209 cartwrights and wheelwrights, who are subsumed under these two categories, working in Motor Garages (213); Cartage & Haulage Contracting (686); Malting, Brewing & Distilling (111); Saw-mills & Joinery Works (87); Other Woodworking (71); Building & Decorating (523); Railways (528).

* As for 1921, census totals for these occupations include much wider groups than just vehicles.

A. = Manufacture of Self-propelled Vehicles and Cycles, but unlike the 1921 figures, includes a total of 185 working in railway companies, and 3,374 in omnibus companies. As 2,874 of the latter were in Greater London, most, if not all, must have been at the Chiswick works of the LGOC, where half the workforce were coachbuilding employees. The figure for motor cars must therefore be correspondingly reduced.

B. = Building of Carriages, Motor Car and Lorry Bodies, Carts and Vans, and Wheelwrights' Work.

C. = Building and Repairing of Rolling Stock for Railways and Tramways - almost all railway company and contract shops.

(B), (V), and (T) are basically the same as in 1921.

(P), however, appears to include all categories of painters.

(S), as for 1921, only includes definite coach smith figures, and the total is very much a minimum figure.

Unskilled male workers

The above tables ignore the number of unskilled workers in the vehicle industry, most of whom would have worked in the motor car industry. Many would be included in the 1931 total for painters, but there is no further breakdown available of skill levels for this group. Regarding other unskilled workers in the car industry, there is some information, which is given in table A3:3 overleaf. "Unskilled workers" were classified separately from "labourers", and therefore, presumably, refer to production operatives.

Table A3:3 1921 Census returns of unskilled male car and cycle workers

Metal workers: "other" [ie other than "other skilled"]	4,879
Electrical workers: "unskilled"	162
Wood workers: "unskilled"	400
Other vehicles (not returned as wood or metal): "unskilled"	366
Total	5,807

The total of 5,807 compares to a single figure for "unskilled" of 7,976 in 1931, and shows an expansion, but not a dramatic one, of unskilled in the industry. Many must therefore be hidden in the figures for particular trades.

Female workers

The census returns also give some limited information on the number of women in vehicle building. The figures below in table A3:4 are very much minima as separate figures are not available for some of the sub-industrial categories. While less than half the 1921 figure were actually car industry workers, almost all the 1931 figure were.

Table A3:4 Women in vehicle building 1921 and 1931

	<u>1921</u>	<u>1931</u>
Sewers and sewing machinists	232	326
Upholsterers and coach trimmers	289	410
Painters	77	89
Total	598	825

APPENDIX 4: COACHBUILDING EMPLOYER ORGANISATIONS AND NATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The National Federation of Vehicle Trades was formed in 1915. By the end of that year it had 83 paying member firms; 195 by 1919, peaking in 1922 with 211. By 1930 it had declined to 105, and by 1939 to 74. A number of the firms left through liquidation, others resigned because of disagreements or because they could follow the agreement without having to pay subscriptions. The NFVT's subscription books provide a complete list of members and the more notable member firms are divided into three categories in table A4:1 overleaf (excluding some who joined only briefly). By the end of the interwar period the more prominent members were on the commercial [usually passenger vehicle] side of the industry.

Interestingly, some car firms were briefly members - Austin [1915-19], Wolseley [1916-20], Standard [1916-19], Belsize [1915-20], and Vulcan [1915-20]. The L.G.O.C., followed by the London Passenger Transport Board, were also involved for most of the period from the early 1920's onward, though they appear to have made donations, rather than been full members.

Table A4:1 - Prominent N.E.V.T. member firms 1915-1943*

A. London [private] coachbuilders

Barker	1916-37
Connaught	1919-30
Cunard	1915-25
Grosvenor	1915-24
Gill	1917-24
Hooper	1925-
H. J. Mulliner	1915-25, then 1942-
Offord	1915-
Park Ward	1930-
Thrupp & Maberley	1915-32
Van den Plas	1935-
Windover	1921-26
Young	1915-23

B. London [commercial] coachbuilders

Beadle	1915-43
Birch Bros	1917-
Bonnallack	1918-
Duple	1921-
Dodson	1917-33
Hall Lewis/Park Royal	1929-
Liversedge	1915-24
London Improved	1915-25
Strachans	1934-
Thomas Tilling	1917-33
Weymann	1934-

C. Provincial coachbuilders

Wm. Arnold [Manchester]	1915-
Blake [Liverpool]	1915-33, 1939-
Burlingham [Blackpool]	1931-36,
Brush [Loughborough]	1939-
Cockshoot [Manchester]	1915-
East Lancs Coachbuilders [Blackburn]	1941-
Eastern Coachworks [Lowestoft]	1937-
Hamshaw [Leicester]	1915-29
Knibbs [Manchester]	1915-
Lawton [Liverpool]	1918-33
Mann Egerton [Norwich]	1915-
Arthur Mulliner [Northampton]	1918-38
Maythorn [Biggleswade]	1919-30
Massey Bros [Wigan]	1937-
Penman [Dumfries]	1915-
Rippon [Huddersfield]	1915-
Chas H. Roe [Leeds]	1937-
Tuke & Bell [Lichfield]	1919-
Vincent's [Reading]	1915-
Willowbrook [Loughborough]	1936-
Weathershields [Birmingham]	1929-

* 1943 is chosen as an end-date rather than 1939, as it allows the inclusion of two fairly important firms.

A Joint Industrial Council covering the vehicle building industry was one of many set up in 1918-19, a conference of employers' organisations deciding their representation in April 1918. An agreement was reached with

the unions in January 1919, which, contrary to practice in the engineering industry, consolidated the various war awards into the hourly rate.¹

The JIC broke down some time during the winter of 1919-1920, and separate agreements were made early in 1920 by the NUVB, along with the Woodcutting Machinists, and the Wheelwrights & Smiths, with the NFVT and the NEAVB (National Employers' Association of Vehicle Builders - a former master wheelwrights association based in Leeds and mainly covering northern England).² A division of opinion between these 2 associations had occurred, the latter favouring fusion with the EEF. Discussions took place, but the heavy payments needed to the EEF's Subsidy Fund proved the major stumbling block. While a ballot of NFVT member firms did vote in favour, it was less than the two-thirds needed for dissolution.³

In September 1920, strikes took place in several towns to force a 2d per hour wage increase from the NFVT and the Glasgow-based Scottish Vehicle Builders' Association. With a substantial national vote for a withdrawal of labour, many towns conceded, and it was only necessary to strike mainly the biggest centres - London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow District and Edinburgh. Northampton required a three days stoppage, while the Edinburgh employers conceded on the first day. However, Manchester and Liverpool took nearly five weeks, London a few days longer, and Glasgow won in the seventh week.

A few days prior to the agreement covering NFVT member firms in Lancashire, Cheshire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire, the Leeds-based NEAVB had already conceded the increase. In the Glasgow District, over

1,000 NUVB members came out from SVBA member firms and non-associated firms. By the time of the settlement, 400 were back at work on the increased rate from about 40 firms, of whom only 3 were SVBA members, leaving 550 still out at about 40 SVBA firms (another 100 members having left the trade or the district).

One big problem for the employers was the general shortage of skilled coachbuilding labour at the time. By placing strikers in other jobs, the union not only eased its own financial problems during the strike, but also threatened to denude the affected employers of a portion of their workforce. This factor was thought to weigh particularly heavily in bringing the north-west employers to the negotiating table. The earlier failure of the NFVT to fuse with the EEF highlighted the problem of employer solidarity. While the NFVT circulated a list of men on strike to some EEF member firms, the EEF's Management Board declined to issue any instructions to its member firms not to take on these men.⁴

In the spring of 1921, with a very changed market situation, the NEAVB enforced a wage reduction after a three week strike of NUVB and Wheelwright members (though affected Birmingham members were out for six weeks - there being 24 NEAVB firms in Birmingham to 1 NFVT at the time), followed by a similar reduction negotiated with the NFVT.⁵ Early in 1922, the employers managed to sink their differences and set up the UKJWB (the United Kingdom Joint Wages Board for the Vehicle Building Industry), with representation from the NFVT, NEAVB, SVBA, and two smaller associations - the North Staffordshire & District Master Wheelwrights and Motor Body Builders Association, and the Welsh National and Monmouthshire Employers'

Association of Vehicle Builders. An agreement was reached in May.⁶ During 1923, the SVBA (which originally covered only Glasgow and the West of Scotland) linked up with the organised employers in Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh, and, with the exception of the Dumfries district (which remained in the NFVT) broke away from the UKJWB, and made their own separate agreement with the NUVB.⁷

While the Scottish agreement covered directly or indirectly the bulk of Scottish vehicle builders, England and Wales were not so well served. In London, it was noted that the union had "far more members outside federated firms, whose wages and conditions follow the National Agreement, than we have inside". The wage reductions that were accepted in 1931 reflected the "poverty" of the federated firms, although many of the non-federated could afford to maintain existing wages. Halliwell even argued that "Rates of pay under the National Agreement have now reached a point where, if further attack is made upon them, the value of such Agreement is doubtful".⁸ As explained in chapter 7, there was no national agreement from 1932-34, as the union refused to concede further reductions. The Lancashire and Cheshire section of the NFVT, which had caused a long strike in 1931-32 (also see chapter 7) did maintain an agreement, while in the rest of England and Wales "the minimum rates remain intact, in practice, as an unsigned Agreement".⁹

There appeared to be a split in the union as to the advisability of having no national agreement. The Manchester area and the Southern area (which included the large London district) were against an agreement on anything like the employers' proposals, while the Liverpool and Yorks &

North-East areas felt some agreement was essential to prevent a piecemeal erosion of standards. The main basis of the division seemed to relate to the relative importance of the employers' organisations in the respective areas, and the local state of trade.¹⁰

The NFVT were under some pressure to reach agreement, 'because as most of their members did work for public bodies, they were subject to fair wage clauses. The NEAVB, however, were not so affected, but needed an agreement to keep their association in being. But they noted early in 1934 that while an agreement had advantages, "no hardships had resulted from not having one and in many cases, our members have been able to cut out overtime rates".¹¹ The NEAVB also withdrew from the 1936 agreement (which was thus only signed by the NFVT) rather than concede any increase, but the union maintained that this association represented "a very small proportion of the employers in the industry, and employers who have a comparatively small number of men on their books". The union were, however, well aware of the importance of the NFVT settlement - "The New Agreement sets the standards for the industry; it is the only Agreement and the one that will decide whether or not firms working for Government Departments, Municipalities, Co-operative Societies and similar bodies are complying with the Fair Wages Clause".¹² It was also usually followed by municipal transport undertakings for their own workforces.

APPENDIX 5: BIG SIX CAR PRODUCTION, 1929-1939.

The table below, also presented in chapter 5 as table 5:2, is an estimate based partly on Rhys's table,¹ but subject to the reservations expressed below and in the notes. The result permits a more accurate, though not definitive, picture than the one conventionally presented.

Table A5:1 Estimated Big Six car production, 1929-1939.

	<u>Austin</u>	<u>Morris</u>	<u>Ford</u>	<u>Vauxhall</u>	<u>Rootes</u>	<u>Standard</u>
1929	46,029	63,522	n/a	1,668	5,500	6,000
1930	39,251	58,436	n/a	1,277	8,100	7,500
1931	39,676	43,582	n/a	3,492	7,600	11,900
1932	43,802	50,337	11,900	2,136	11,000	17,400
1933	57,741	44,049	36,400	9,949	14,100	13,750
1934	68,291	58,248	34,500	20,227	17,200	17,000
1935	73,562	96,512	48,500	22,118	24,300	22,800
1936	71,855	100,200	74,900	17,640	31,600	32,700
1937	89,175	95,900	77,800	30,616	33,000	33,750
1938	60,224	80,500	59,900	32,224	34,800	33,750
1939	57,367	73,800	48,000	34,367	29,900	35,100

Generally, car output statistics are a quagmire for the unwary. Some refer to actual calendar years, while others mean the model year - ie September to August. While this discrepancy will affect the exact figures, if each series takes a consistent basis, then trends and relative positions should not be significantly affected. All SMMT figures for total output at this time were estimates. Their figure of 28,000 units for the smallest of the Big 6 in 1937 is therefore probably consistent with the above figures.²

Notes on individual producers

Austin: figures from Wyatt.³ These figures, based on the annual production records for each model, differ substantially from Rhys's adaptation of the percentage figures used by Maxcy & Silberston, being greater in some years and less in others, with consequences described in the conclusion to this appendix. Wyatt's figures are also an overestimate of car output to the extent that they include van production. About 12,000 vans were produced on Austin 7 chassis from 1928 to 1935, where detailed figures exist, but were introduced earlier,⁴ and probably continued during 1936 and 1937 while the Austin 7 was produced.

Morris: figures from Andrews & Brunner⁵ for up to 1935 inclusive, which tally with Rhys's; later figures are estimates based on Rhys's table. The 1937 figure can be checked against the 112,000 recorded by the SMMT for the largest producer in 1937 (Nuffield)⁶ - Wolseley produced a minimum of 10-11,000, and MG a minimum of 2,500-3,000, totalling about 110,000 for the Nuffield Group, which is near to the 112,000.⁷

Ford: figures provided by Rhys from Ford Motor Company. Wilkins & Hill give confirmatory figure of 78,000 for 1937,⁸ and SMMT gives rounded figure of 60,000 for 1938.⁹ For the earlier years, between the ending of the Model T and the move to Dagenham, Sedgwick states that only 14,516 cars were made at Trafford Park from 1928 to 1931.¹⁰ Model T production was ended in America in May 1927 and run down elsewhere, but the Model A did not appear in America until December that year, and there was a slow change-over in Manchester, with the lowest British Ford sales, in 1928, since 1913. While total Ford production of cars and trucks in 1929-31 was around 25,000 a year, there is reason to believe car sales were very low. Ford sold more trucks than cars in Britain from the mid-1920s for several years. (From 1928 to 1931, Ford produced 35,000 1½ ton trucks alone.) By the time of the move to Dagenham in late 1931, European sales of the Models A and AF were very low. A new small car, the Model Y, went into serious production in the second half of 1932, and 8,260 were built by the end of the year, compared to Rhys's total figure of 11,900 cars for the whole year. Similarly 32,958 Model Y's were built in 1933 out of a total car output of 36,400.¹¹ For a

variety of reasons, therefore, the British Ford operation was not a large car producer in the late 1920s and early 1930s, only regaining its earlier prominence in 1933.

Vauxhall: figures from company's own publication.¹² The figures for 1930-32 inclusive are much lower than those used by Maxcy & Silberston (see chapter 5); the origin of the latter remains obscure, though their 1930 figure corresponds roughly with the figures for production and sales of cars and trucks for that year.¹³

Rootes and Standard figures are estimates based on Rhys's table - with a slight revision for 1934 where his figure of 23.7% for Morris should read 22.7%, thus affecting all the other figures for that year.

Rootes: there are very few figures available to check the accuracy. However, one other source gives 23,000 for 1935,¹⁴ which is very close. And SMMT estimates for 1938 give 32,700, about 1,000 less than the above figure.¹⁵ We are also told that 100,000 Hillman Minxes were produced from spring 1932 to July 1937,¹⁶ which would leave about 20,000 other Rootes models (Humbers and big Hillmans) being produced at around 4,000 per annum, which is in line with their likely market. Maxcy estimates that the combined output of the companies forming Rootes could hardly have been more than 5-6,000 before 1932.¹⁷

Standard: there are a lot more published figures available, allowing the following alternative sequence to be established:

1929	4-6,000 (a)	6,000 (b)	
1930	6,000 (a)	7,000 (c)	
1933-35	21-25,000 (a)		
1933	21,000 (c)		
1935	23,000 (d)		
1936	34,000 (a)		
1937	34,000 (c)		
1938	31,000 (e)	30,700 (f)	
1939	c.50,000 (a)	50,700 (c)	50,755 (g)

(a) - see n.18; (b) - n.19; (c) - n.20; (d) - n.21; (e) - n.22; (f) - n.23; (g) - n.24.

There are also Standard's own figures. In the 1931/32 season, a total of 18,700 chassis were built, which included 775 for SS Cars, leaving just under 18,000.²⁵ This is also in line with the company's own admission that they had sanctioned over 18,000 vehicles by the end of May 1932, and started the next year's programme in July.²⁶ For 1932/33, 20,800 chassis minus 1,325 for SS Cars, gives 19,475,²⁷ but this is out of line with the Rhys estimate. As much of the next season's sanctions seem to have been carried forward into 1934/35, it is difficult to disentangle them; but the total of 32,500 Standard bodies [plus probably about another 1,000 non-SS chassis]²⁸ for the two seasons, added to the 1932/33 figure, produces an aggregate for the three seasons 1932/33 - 1934/35 of around 52-53,000. This is in line with the Rhys aggregate estimates for these three seasons. 1935/36 saw 34,625 Standard chassis produced, and the next season 31,500 bodies plus probably another 1,000 non-SS chassis,²⁹ both roughly in line with Rhys's figures. However, the company claimed much higher production in 1939 than the Rhys figures would show (see note 24).

Conclusion

The table used by Rhys not only exaggerates the rise of Vauxhall (and possibly also Ford) at the beginning of the 1930s, it is also misleading about changes in the aggregate position of Morris and Austin. Rhys's percentages allow him to claim that Morris and Austin were a "duopoly" in 1930 with 66.6% of total production, which fell to 40.1% in 1933.³⁰ In fact, the two firms had 57.6% in 1930, falling to 46.1% in 1933 (having been 55.0% in 1932), a much smaller proportional fall, which further suggests that the other members of the "Big Six" did not make such great inroads into the duopoly in the early 1930s, and, anyway, not until 1933.

APPENDIX 6: THE SMALLER CAR PRODUCERS.

While there were a number of smaller car producers in the interwar years, this appendix looks at some of the more significant ones, concentrating on those in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Manchester, and Scotland, and follows on to some extent from chapter 4, section C. While the Birmingham factories surveyed here survived the interwar years, the NUVB were for long periods fairly weak in them; the others generally did not survive, but in their periods of prosperity these other factories were often NUVB strongholds.

Birmingham

In Birmingham, Wolseley's use of semi-skilled labour in the early 1920s has already been noted in chapter 7. When the company went into receivership in 1926, its employment was down to 1,200. The following year it was taken over by Morris, and production concentrated on the Ward End site. Although employment had increased to 6,000 by 1934, it was not basically until the late 1930s that Wolseley was fully re-established in the car market.¹ Singer, however, did not open its Birmingham factory until 1927, where it immediately included "a considerable proportion" of boys and youths. Attempts by the NUVB to take up issues there were thwarted by large scale dismissals in early 1931 and late 1932.² Grievances in the Singer wood body shop in 1935 led to shop organisation being set up. Successful negotiations over shop conditions and earnings further led to this shop becoming 100% unionised.³ Similarly, at Wolseley in 1936, organising

meetings were held following discontent, and large numbers joined the union and shop stewards and collectors were elected. Further recruitment brought the total of new members to about 150 in the space of a few months.⁴

Morris Commercial was set up in 1924 when Morris took over a works in Soho, Birmingham. Within a few years, the expansion of the business necessitated also using the former Adderley Park factory of Wolseley, the Soho works closing in 1932.⁵ For bodywork, as well as the Soho works (see chapter 7), Taylor & Co. of West Bromwich and Smethwick were extensively used. Organisation at this firm was appalling, with no overtime rate, and trainees on low rates. As much of the work was for Post Office and Army vehicles, the new NUVB organiser in 1928, Francis, contacted the relevant Government departments under the Fair Wage Clause, and the firm immediately agreed to respect the coach trade agreement.⁶ Soon afterwards, Morris Commercial took over the firm, and the NUVB experienced further problems over rates, as the parent company were an EEF affiliate. A temporary ban on members starting there forced the company into negotiations, and a shop committee was elected late in 1929.⁷ Bodywork appears to have then been concentrated at a new body shop in the Adderley Park works in 1930. Organisation here was weak, and the union was forced to rely once again on the Fair Wage Clause to raise the piecework prices of men building Army vehicles in 1934.⁸ But, as with Singer and Wolseley, a "considerable" number of members were recruited in 1936.⁹

Wolverhampton

The Wolverhampton car and vehicle makers were not affiliated to the EEF, which gave the NUVB some leeway in negotiations with them. Early in 1920, at a time when the NUVB claimed there were less than half a dozen non-unionists in the trade there, some 400 members came out on strike for 6 days to secure a wage increase.¹⁰ Again in May 1923 a 2 day strike in the district was sufficient to win another increase at Sunbeam, and Star.¹¹ A five week strike at Guy in the summer of 1924 stopped the company from unilaterally imposing piecework reductions.¹²

During the General Strike, the Wolverhampton car industry was seriously hit, thanks to the NUVB. As Barnsby makes clear: "As in the rest of the west Midlands, there were differences of opinion as to whether car workers were included under transport and therefore among those called on to strike. In Wolverhampton this matter was settled when the Vehicle Builders received definite instructions to withdraw their labour. The other unions involved then acted on the principle laid down by the TUC, that where one section of labour was called out in a given factory all should strike. Thus the important car industry was closed down."¹³

The Sunbeam works, and Star were both at a standstill, while at Guy some 500-600 workers were out and 200 in.¹⁴ Sunbeam, which had previously afforded the NUVB "complete recognition", adopted "a stiff attitude" afterwards.¹⁵ Guy "was a particularly active employer in attempting to break the strike" and wanted returning strikers to sign a document.¹⁶ This became a condition for all new starters as well, and, according to an NUVB

organiser, was "calculated to ensure such delay in reaching finality on any question as is likely to result in the matter dying a slow death".¹⁷ Guys, which had stopped producing cars in 1925 to concentrate on commercial vehicles, became a difficult employer to deal with, and on at least three occasions in the 1930s, the fair wage clause was used to enforce union agreements when the firm was working on public contracts.¹⁸

At Sunbeam, a shop committee was re-established in 1928, and while many meetings with members and management occurred in the next few years,¹⁹ the firm was in dire straits in the early 1930s, with "unwillingness" on the part of the individual worker "to agree to his specific case being mentioned" by an official.²⁰ The receiver was called in during 1935, Rootes bought the company but sold the factory. That was the effective death of the Wolverhampton car industry, as Star, which had been purchased by Guy in 1926, had already stopped producing cars in 1932;²¹ and Clyno, which did not produce its own bodies, had gone bankrupt in 1929 (see chapter 5).

Manchester

In Manchester, at one stage in the early 1920s the NUVB had 200 members at Belsize, but with the firm's collapse this fell to about a dozen by the autumn of 1923. On its restarting production a few months later, the NUVB successfully fought off attempts to introduce semi-skilled labour (see chapter 7), but the firm was unable to survive and finally closed in the winter of 1924-25.²² Crossley built a variety of vehicles, including cars, throughout the interwar period. When they changed from aircraft to vehicle building after the first war, there were problems regarding joiners being

employed, but by the end of 1922 the NUVB organiser claimed the union had "a good hold" on the shop.²³ A few months later the union was claiming 100 members there, and warning that any member in arrears applying for a job there would have to clear his card or "he is soon out".²⁴ Later in 1923 a short strike took place over piecework prices, being settled by the men returning to work on day rates until piecework prices had been satisfactorily adjusted.²⁵ Again, in 1924, 175 NUVB members stopped work at 11.30. one morning in protest at the firm holding up their piecework balance money. A return at 3.30. led to an immediate settlement, the men being paid at 5.30. While no further strikes are reported at this firm, the union was, for example, strong enough to get joiners removed from bodywork in 1925, and stopped the firm employing other than NUVB labour on trimming work in 1928.²⁶ Crossley stopped producing cars in 1937, though still built other vehicles.²⁷

Willys Overland, a firm linked to Crossley, built cars until 1933. It was the scene of a very long dispute in 1922, over the introduction of the premium bonus system. All the trades in the factory accepted it, apart from the Sheet Metal Workers, who wanted a straight piecework system, and the Woodworkers, who would not work any system of payment by results. The NUVB, with about 50 members in the factory, were prepared to work the new system, and claimed that as the work was vehicle building, they would allow their members to take the place of the striking Woodworkers, also about 50 in number. The F.E.S.T. asked all affiliated unions not to touch any work performed by the labour imported to take the place of the Woodworkers and Sheet Metal Workers. Under their pressure, the NUVB General Secretary met the members working at Willys Overland, but when they refused to stop work,

the EC agreed to take no further action. The Sheet Metal Workers went back in October, but the ASW had been permanently displaced, and the NUVB could then claim to be "well organised in all departments".²⁰ After this, the only incident worthy of note was a one day strike in 1929 by about 50 NUVB members, which delayed the introduction of a shift system.²¹

Scotland

Two firms produced cars in this period in Scotland - Beardmore and Arrol Johnston. The former made over 6,000 taxis and a few hundred cars at the old Arrol Johnston works in Paisley from 1919 to 1928. Car production then ceased, and taxi work was transferred to London by 1932.²⁰ Beardmore were reported to be in full swing, with attractive working conditions, early in 1920, but later that year, the slump caused them to discharge about 50% of their men, including some 40 NUVB members.²¹ Early in 1922 the Glasgow branch committee recommended that a shop committee be formed, with a convener.²² These were reported functioning efficiently in 1923, and later that year the company agreed not to employ non-unionists while NUVB labour was available. Despite periodic suspensions and dismissals over the next few years, with, for example, in 1925 the bodymakers working "week about" for several months, union organisation appeared to be maintained. In 1926, the NUVB helped the AEU make the shop 100% for that union, while lapsed NUVB members were still prevented from getting work there while there were unemployed members available.²³

At the end of 1927 the whole of the workforce were laid off. The company was restructured, and there was great pressure on piece-work prices in late

1928 and early 1929. Despite these problems, the union was strong enough to win a strike to remove an "interloper". This strike, which must have been unusual in starting at mid-day on Christmas Day 1929, lasted 3½ days, with the wood-cutting machinists striking in support.³⁴

Arrol Johnston started after the war "on the mass production stunt", and early in 1920 asked the Scottish NUVB organiser to supply about 40 bodymakers and 30 trimmers.³⁵ But the firm did not produce in large quantities, and in 1922 used the engineering lock-out in an effort to rid themselves of unions. Although not members of the EEF they locked out AEU members, thus provoking a sympathetic strike by the other craft unions. About 50 NUVB members came out. The firm reacted by putting themselves on an open shop basis and declared that in future they would not employ trade unionists, as they had attempted in 1913.

The strike lasted 14 weeks, and those few who worked black there were marked men in Scotland, with heavy fines being imposed on those wishing to re-enter the union, or being forced to in order to gain employment in other Scottish factories. Instances of such cases can be found up to six years later.³⁶ In the factory, however, all new employees still had to sign a form, in 1925, stating they were not members of a trade union. Despite this and the problem of heavy dismissals, the NUVB maintained a foothold in the works. With the merger with the Aster Engineering Company in 1927, attempts were made to organise the factory from the outside by a local joint union movement, but these were frustrated by heavy suspensions in late 1928, and soon afterwards the liquidation of the Arrol-Aster Company.³⁷

Employment

Finally, a few figures on the number of employees in different firms will illustrate the importance of some of the lesser producers in employment terms. Sunbeam employed over 3,000 in 1924, over 4,000 in 1927, and some 3,000 at the end of 1928;³⁸ and Crossley about 2,500 in 1926.³⁹ Singer's six Coventry factories provided work for 2,600 in 1927, and with the Birmingham factory, collectively employed about 8,000 at the beginning of the 1930s.⁴⁰ Wolseley, with 1,200 employees when it went into receivership in 1926, had expanded to 6,000 by 1934;⁴¹ while Morris Commercial employed 2,200 as early as 1928.⁴²

These compared favourably in size for much of the period with many of the factories which still survive today. Vauxhall only employed between 1,000 and 2,000 right through the 1920s, growing to 3,500 in mid-1933, and 6,000 by the end of 1934.⁴³ Pressed Steel's initial 500 in 1926 had grown to only about 2,000 in 1931-32, and 2,800 in mid-1934, before reaching 5,000 by 1938.⁴⁴ Morris Motors at Cowley, confining itself mainly to assembly employed 3,000-4,000 in the late 1920s, and probably about 5,000 for most of the 1930s.⁴⁵ Morris, with its separate body and engine factories in Coventry, was not geographically concentrated on one site like Austin, which was far and away the biggest car factory during the interwar years, with some 5,000 employees in 1924 growing, with some hiccoughs, to about 20,000 in 1936.⁴⁶

APPENDIX 7: NUVB CAR BRANCH MEMBERSHIP, 1919-1939.

A = number of new or re-entered members recruited in the past quarter.

B = number of members at date shown.

[Sometimes an increase in members in one quarter is not reflected in that quarter's total membership, but in the quarter after. Also, membership could increase through transfers of existing members from other branches.]

n.f. = no figure given.

n.r. = no branch return submitted for that quarter.

- = none.

As explained in chapter 8, both Oxford and Luton contained numbers of non-car factory members. Northfield was probably based exclusively around the Austin factory at Longbridge; in the quarter July to October 1922, when the Northfield branch was formed, the Birmingham branch membership fell by 147.

Table A7:1 NUVB selected car branch membership, 1919-1939.

Date	Coventry		Oxford		Northfield		Luton	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Jul. 1919	139	1053	-	-	-	-	12	80
Oct. 1919	86	1336	-	-	-	-	17	106
Jan. 1920	86	1393	-	-	-	-	22	119
Apr. 1920	n.f.	1476	n.f.	61	-	-	n.f.	132
Jul. 1920	134	1612	22	89	-	-	38	150
Oct. 1920	129	1792	6	110	-	-	33	198
Jan. 1921	n.f.	1866	n.f.	85	-	-	n.f.	151
Apr. 1921	70	1873	n.r.	85	-	-	-	145
Jul. 1921	28	1755	n.r.	85	-	-	-	119
Oct. 1921	41	1700	n.f.	85	-	-	-	86
Jan. 1922	59	1710	18	85	-	-	-	76
Apr. 1922	39	1776	5	85	-	-	22	79
Jul. 1922	n.f.	1783	n.f.	51	-	-	1	93

	<u>Coventry</u>		<u>Oxford</u>		<u>Northfield</u>		<u>Luton</u>	
Oct. 1922	131	1697	4	50	10	133	-	85
Jan. 1923	71	1661	4	77	1	140	25	72
Apr. 1923	116	1674	4	77	2	136	16	95
Jul. 1923	106	1771	4	77	4	144	16	102
Oct. 1923	33	1758	7	84	2	118	4	94
Jan. 1924	116	1806	11	92	9	106	1	89
Apr. 1924	13	1921	7	100	68	128	4	81
Jul. 1924	74	2003	9	108	31	171	-	77
Oct. 1924	68	1968	7	102	2	154	5	75
Jan. 1925	143	2023	9	114	2	143	6	81
Apr. 1925	142	2132	1	124	11	143	7	76
Jul. 1925	75	2207	5	125	9	119	4	82
Oct. 1925	60	2161	6	119	8	108	2	81
Jan. 1926	170	2286	6	136	47	120	4	78
Apr. 1926	136	2405	-	110	16	184	8	81
Jul. 1926	172	2551	3	112	35	208	-	72
Oct. 1926	1	2480	-	86	-	128	-	44
Jan. 1927	n. f.	2454	n. f.	69	n. f.	106	n. f.	53
Apr. 1927	140	2435	3	67	1	106	-	46
Jul. 1927	66	2400	-	70	1	82	-	44
Oct. 1927	41	2523	-	61	-	73	-	39
Jan. 1928	49	2272	-	60	3	71	-	37
Apr. 1928	63	2224	-	56	-	67	-	35
Jul. 1928	54	2231	3	58	1	57	-	34
Oct. 1928	52	2187	1	58	3	57	-	33
Jan. 1929	125	2214	2	61	85	65	-	31
Apr. 1929	139	2339	1	60	105	176	1	30
Jul. 1929	50	2399	1	64	3	247	-	30
Oct. 1929	58	2314	1	61	-	222	-	31
Jan. 1930	57	2346	-	63	7	120	-	29
Apr. 1930	73	2348	1	62	4	100	1	29
Jul. 1930	n. f.	2337	1	63	5	94	1	30
Oct. 1930	93	2366	-	56	2	94	-	30
Jan. 1931	47	2312	2	56	1	94	-	30
Apr. 1931	11	2204	-	53	1	90	-	29

	<u>Coventry</u>		<u>Oxford</u>		<u>Northfield</u>		<u>Luton</u>	
Jul. 1931	5	1964	-	52	1	88	-	28
Oct. 1931	13	1847	-	50	3	86	3	28
Jan. 1932	20	1692	-	47	-	80	-	24
Apr. 1932	n. f.	1605	n. f.	47	n. f.	74	n. f.	23
Jul. 1932	6	1507	-	46	-	69	-	21
Oct. 1932	2	1412	-	45	2	60	-	21
Jan. 1933	2	1293	-	45	-	56	-	13
Apr. 1933	6	1140	-	42	1	50	-	13
Jul. 1933	2	1089	-	40	-	50	-	12
Oct. 1933	81	1007	-	41	-	47	-	11
Jan. 1934	20	1032	-	38	-	42	-	12
Apr. 1934	115	1071	-	36	-	42	10	28
Jul. 1934	37	1151	3	35	-	43	1	28
Oct. 1934	63	1167	-	39	-	39	1	23
Jan. 1935	191	1173	33	36	-	39	1	22
Apr. 1935	101	1377	3	69	1	39	1	25
Jul. 1935	35	1375	1	72	2	39	-	26
Oct. 1935	25	1278	1	72	2	40	-	28
Jan. 1936	182	1298	10	79	6	42	-	29
Apr. 1936	105	1383	24	104	7	47	1	30
Jul. 1936	41	1383	6	110	6	50	-	31
Oct. 1936	105	1282	5	106	7	52	1	32
Jan. 1937	55	1359	1	108	67	116	-	38
Apr. 1937	130	1408	33	133	106	218	-	36
Jul. 1937	34	1458	29	151	20	237	5	38
Oct. 1937	187	1539	27	141	10	214	3	43
Jan. 1938	336	1832	33	173	4	204	5	46
Apr. 1938	116	1907	51	206	3	129	1	44
Jul. 1938	28	1732	15	212	4	116	6	47
Oct. 1938	40	1604	7	213	9	118	1	46
Jan. 1939	41	1588	31	235	9	129	20	45
Apr. 1939	77	1643	11	241	7	131	25	86
Jul. 1939	73	1667	7	222	37	145	17	103
Oct. 1939	78	1636	2	199	16	151	29	112

APPENDIX 8: NUVB INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN COVENTRY, 1919-1929

This appendix lists over 40 incidents of industrial action in an 11 year period for which some information is available. Many of these are referred to in chapter 8, part 1, and some in chapters 6 and 7.

1919:

* Standard trimmers came out on Saturday morning 16th August. Went back Monday morning 18th August. Female labour question. Dispute benefit granted.¹

* City-wide mass meeting Friday 12th September 2pm-4pm. Over lack of district agreement on piecework prices. More than 1,000 attended. Meeting (with 3 against) threatened to down tools if not sorted out within 10 days.²

1920:

* Armstrong-Siddeley bodymakers given permission by foreman to hold meeting in shop on Saturday morning April 17th over piecework negotiations going on. While taking place the owner came in and ordered the men back to work, or off the premises. Went out and finished the meeting at NUVB office.³

1921:

* Triumph Cycle. AEU had called stoppage of all unions over firm's reduction of day work additions on Tuesday February 8th. Firm discharged them all, saying could restart at new rate on Tuesday February 15th. Branch

committee initially instructed members to resume, but then seemed to agree to AEU request to keep members out. Meeting of NUVB members on Monday February 21st voted not to stay out.⁴

* Branch secretary notified EC that 300 out on piece price question. No further information.⁵

* Swift. 94 members came out for 3 days beginning of April. Firm cutting piecework prices on all work. All members came out. Dispute benefit granted. Firm (non-federated) later agreed to observe engineering agreement.⁶

* Shop stewards meeting held Monday 18th April 2pm-6.30pm. Eight firms represented, most sections. Discussion on piecework price reductions and shop organisation. Shops to pay expenses.⁷

* Armstrong-Siddeley bodymakers decided not to take any more jobs until sorted out new piecework prices with the company. Firm refused to guarantee the 50% bonus, and men on the jobs in dispute were told to stand off from Thursday 21st April lunchtime until Saturday morning. Meeting of shop held 2pm-4pm at NUVB office Thursday, and agreed return to work on Friday and do jobs under protest pending a settlement.⁸

* Stay-in strike at Humber over man who earned over shop limit. Probably started on afternoon of Friday May 27th, and finished sometime on Saturday morning when man asked for his cards. A similar situation at Standard, also

in late May, led initially to a strike being threatened if the man was not dismissed; this was later changed to a shop fine.⁹

* Standard paint shop steward dismissed for bad work and not allowed to finish off job or re-varnish it, like other men. Not clear who struck or for how long. Strike in progress on September 27th. At works conference October 5th, NUVB accepted the company would not reinstate him and they had no case.¹⁰

* Swift - dispute in trim shop over piecework prices. Trimmers stopped work on Monday November 21st, had several meetings, interviewed firm, made no progress, so the rest of the shop gave their support and all came out later in day. 112 men and 3 apprentices were out. Trimmers effected settlement on afternoon of Tuesday November 29th, and all resumed work on Wednesday morning. EC asked, and Coventry branch committee supported, that claim for dispute benefit be withdrawn. Swift employees objected, wanting full 8 days benefit, but only granted 2 as a concession.¹¹

1922:

* Engineering lock-out: When a national engineering lock-out was feared in 1921, a mass meeting of the branch elected a lock-out committee of representatives from the 6 federated and 7 largest non-federated firms present. This committee then met the branch committee a week later, but was not needed as no lock-out came that year.¹² But 1922 did need such an organisation. Two meetings of shop stewards and shop secretaries were held in March in anticipation of the union's involvement.¹³ At the end of April a further meeting of shop stewards made the necessary arrangements. The

"Central Dispute Committee" of 17 members from the 7 affected federated firms was then confirmed at a mass meeting. Picket rotas were started, with any man failing to do picket duty losing his day's lock-out pay. Four pickets were elected to liaise between the central committee and the works' pickets (at one stage this group was referred to as "Flying Pickets").

The lock-out started on Tuesday May 2nd, and almost everyone came out immediately. Initially anyone not on the clock, such as foremen and some charge hands, were allowed to remain in, but after a week it was decided to withdraw them. Trainees also caused some confusion, the union trying to keep them out where possible, but after two weeks it was decided to ask them all to come out. Members of the Central Dispute Committee were all involved in picketing the trainees one Saturday morning, and the question of financial help for them was discussed. After the first few days, few days, there were still 2, 3 or 4 men in most of the affected factories - french polishers, leather workers, even some carpenters and joiners - and the pickets tried to get them out. The NUVB was also in contact with the Workers' Union regarding female labour, but no information is available on the outcome.

The central dispute committee had 18 minuted meetings over a 31 day period while the NUVB were locked out, and two more in the days after it to get reports on the situation in the shops when the men returned. The non-federated shops were not neglected either. A mass meeting was held on a Sunday, a week into the lock-out, with members present from twelve non-federated firms, at least two of which were doing work for local federated

firms. Eventually this work was completely blacked, with members instructed not to touch it, and pickets assigned to these factories.

After two weeks it was decided to send a collection sheet to each non-federated shop for a weekly minimum contribution of one shilling per head for a distress fund, which was used to augment the benefit of men with large families. There was next to no blacklegging by NUVB members, only 10 being fined afterwards - and that might have been for slowness coming out, or haste going back; and might have included foremen, who were in an awkward position, and members on federated work at the non-federated shops.

Nationally, most unions (including the NUVB, but excluding the AEU, who had been locked out on March 11th) accepted the employers' terms on June 2nd. The Coventry NUVB seem to have returned to work on Monday June 5th or Tuesday June 6th.¹⁴

* Humber bodymakers being discharged mid-September owing to no settlement on piecework prices. Firm said would get work done outside. Two members who had been discharged secured work at Standard but were not allowed to start as dispute on at Humber.¹⁵

1923:

none

1924:

* Armstrong-Siddeley bodymakers struck on Wednesday February 13th afternoon, wanting 2 men dismissed immediately as they were working beyond

the shop limit. Branch secretary refused support to them at mass meeting, and they restarted on Friday February 15th afternoon.¹⁶

* Branch requested members not to work Saturday before Easter Sunday unless time + half paid in federated shops. No details.¹⁷

* Branch endeavoured to persuade men not to work on Saturday before Whit holiday unless time + half paid in federated shops. Certain sections at Rover declined to work, as did painters, mounters and finishers at Humber. Meeting of Humber members and some Rover members then called, but matter not pursued after this.¹⁸

* Meetings of Cross & Ellis employees at 11am and 3.30pm on Monday June 16th over 10% price reduction. Men refused to accept, though agreed to work on Tuesday. Firm withdrew the reduction on Wednesday.¹⁹

* Hollick & Pratt trimmers met on Saturday September 6th morning over piecework prices. Firm had told them accept their price or clear out. Branch officers plus shop committee met firm at 10.30am on Monday morning September 8th, then reported back to trimmers at NUVB office. Deputation went back to firm who then agreed to pay price wanted by members.²⁰

* Report of piecework price reductions at Singer in July. EC then informed that a dispute there had led to work being sent to Vickers at Crayford. Singers bodymakers met at NUVB office Monday September 8th at 9.30am over piecework prices. Branch secretary plus deputation attended firm at 10.15am but they refused to discuss it. Deputation reported back to

members who refused to go back. Branch committee on Monday evening decided to meet firm again on Tuesday morning at 9.30., then report back to members at 10.30. Failing a satisfactory settlement, the committee agreed to withdraw all members, about 30, working on special Motor Show work. The next reference is on Tuesday September 16th when it was reported that Singer bodymakers were coming out as they finish up work, and that the NUVB should meet the firm on Wednesday afternoon, and then meet the members at the NUVB office on Thursday morning. The strike was eventually settled (not known when) by the company agreeing to the bodymakers' price.²¹

* Substantial piecework price reductions occurred at Standard in July. In the autumn, further reductions were attempted. A works conference was held on October 27th over paint shop price reductions among others. The EC agreed to ask the EEF to use their influence with the Coventry employers, to try to arrange a local conference. The General Secretary sent a telegram in mid-November advising the branch to keep the men at work. At a meeting of Standard members on November 17th, branch officers instructed them to ban overtime until a settlement was reached. On Tuesday evening, November 18th, the branch committee agreed that unless something definite was forthcoming from the General Secretary's interview with EEF officials, they would instruct the Standard members to go to work on Thursday morning, give 2 hours' notice, and then leave.

On the Wednesday the General Secretary telegraphed the branch secretary to ring him, and was informed of a local conference set for November 27th. The committee agreed that failing satisfaction at this conference, they would advise members to operate their previous decision and withdraw their

labour. This conference reported that in the coachbuilding department, all prices, except in the trimming area, had been mutually agreed, but the firm was prepared to discuss any of them again; while in the trim department the conference was satisfied that the men had been instructed not to negotiate the prices, but the firm was prepared to refer them back for negotiations. It was agreed that the men should go to work on these terms.²²

1925:

* City-wide mass meeting February 4th 2.15 pm. Called during working hours to discuss attitude to negotiations with the EEF. Minimum of 2,100 absent from work.²³

* Singer bodymakers in dispute over piecework prices, told by Bullock take it or leave it, so left - probably Thursday March 19th. Firm interviewed Friday morning. Agreed pay price required until jobs finished, then introduce new system.²⁴

* National overtime ban in federated shops. Resolved stop after Thursday night March 26th. All work to cease for Harper Bean also. On Monday March 30th decided work for Harper Bean could be done; Midland Motor Bodies to be informed. Head Office telegram lifting overtime embargo noted April 7th.²⁵

* Attempt to stop members working Saturday before Whit holiday unless paid premium time rates of time and a half. Branch secretary sent instructions to shop secretaries at Humber, Rover paint shop, and Hollick & Pratt. Engineering employers reported only Humber affected, where certain sections refused to work.²⁶

* Buckle and Bowen interviewed Carr & Co, trim shop on Holyhead Road on Wednesday September 23rd re female labour and wage rates. Failing satisfaction, members withdrawn, and 16 women came out as well. Returned on Tuesday September 29th, with men getting same rates as Hollick & Pratt, and women an increase.²⁷

* Members (plus probably patternmakers) at Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft stopped work 4.30 pm Tuesday October 13th when 2 men discharged for refusing to work on a piecework price, as had been earlier agreed not accept new piecework prices until after works conference. On Wednesday, firm agreed restart the 2 men. All resumed on Thursday morning October 15th.²⁸

* Men in one of coachbuilding sections at Hillman put forward criticisms of a foreman and ceased work during greater proportion of the day. Firm refused their demand, and men restarted. Date either late October or early November.²⁹

* Hancock & Warman bodymakers ceased work without notice on Thursday October 29th over piecework prices. All departments came out in sympathy, 72 men and 16 boys in total. Resumed on Saturday November 7th, with only one reduction agreed. Dispute benefit granted.³⁰

1926:

* Rover painters came out on strike at 10 am on Monday February 8th. Resumed work on Wednesday February 10th, after promise that females be removed from cellulose polishing within fortnight. Dispute benefit paid.³¹

* Threatened strike over females in trimming at Standard, Swift, and Rover. Special meeting of all trimmers in branch on February 3rd, and then special meeting of all members at the three firms on February 10th voted to withdraw all members at these 3 firms. EC meeting on February 13th agreed to support Coventry in any action they might take on issue. No strike resulted. (For details and references see chapter 7)

* General Strike: The NUVB came out at the beginning and stayed out throughout, in line with national instructions. There are almost no details of the strike in Coventry in NUVB records. A sole reference to a foreman on cycle work, who was allowed to carry on as long as he did not use the tools of the trade, suggests there was no problem of blacklegging.⁹²

* Morris Bodies bodymakers held meeting Monday night November 8th, about 50 present. Decided to hold ballot vote on whether to hold a day-time meeting. This meeting was held Wednesday November 10th from 11.30.am to 1.00.pm. and discussed piecework prices.⁹³

* Morris Bodies bodymakers meeting at NUVB office on Saturday December 11th at 11.00.-12.30. over piecework prices, which decided call further meeting after interview with firm. 91 members were present. Further meeting on Monday December 13th from 12.00.-1.30. at NUVB office when about 150 present. Decided return to work at 2.00.pm, and immediately the shop committee fix up a further interview, the men to stand by their benches. Management told men not to stand about in the shop, and to go outside if they wanted to. Went to NUVB office, and held report-back meeting at

3.30.p.m. Sent deputation back to try for further advance. Men remained out.
Final meeting held 5.45.-6.50.p.m when decided accept latest price.³⁴

1927:

No recorded strikes, but one very near one -
* Hancock & Warman bodymakers had too many boys in the shop, and some men on very low rates. At a meeting of employees on Monday night March 14th, all departments pledged themselves to support the bodymakers in dispute if necessary. At further meeting on Friday night March 18th, unanimous resolution to withdraw all members, including foremen and charge hands, from 12.30.p.m on Saturday. General Secretary had already phoned endorsing such action. Strike committee of 4 elected, and pickets fixed for Monday, with further meeting of all on Monday afternoon. Eventually a settlement was reached one hour before the men were due to strike. No more boys were to be employed until the ratio better. Rates for young men improved, and piecework prices to be mutually fixed.³⁵

1928:

* Strike of Morris Bodies trimmers. Branch committee estimated 67 men, plus a number of youths; some of these non-union. Two gangs of youths who did not come out with the others were advised to do so. Journal estimated "some 80 men and youths". Appear to have come out on Tuesday June 26th over reductions. While reported still out on Wednesday July 4th, the organiser says negotiations lasted 8 days. Much reduced cuts finally agreed.³⁶

* Morris Bodies bodymakers decided to have afternoon off on Monday August 27th to discuss piecework prices, and problem of metal panelling being done

by semi-skilled. Interviewed manager unsatisfactorily, though agreed to go back on Tuesday morning. Appear to have come out again that day. Men resumed work on Tuesday September 4th. 180 were out. Four members who went back were fined 10s each. Some 7 finishers were censured for having done work which bodymakers left unfinished when they went out, and which the finishers been instructed not to touch. Issue of semi-skilled lost, as men had allowed this practice to become firmly established in the past, and men resumed work on terms obtaining prior to the strike. Dispute benefit granted, but not to non-union members.³⁷

1929:

* Meeting of employees took place in Rover canteen on Wednesday January 2nd regarding a 10% reduction all round. No further details, though organiser mentions dispute at Rover.³⁸

* Singer bodymakers downed tools on morning of Tuesday January 15th. Came to NUVB office at 10.00.am. Deputation interviewed firm at 10.45. and reported back to meeting at 11.45. Meeting voted not to accept firm's offer. Further interview at 4.00.pm. At 5.00.pm "scouts were sent to various works to invite trimmers and painters to meet for 6pm." Deputation reported to whole meeting at 6pm. Decided to stand together, so painters and trimmers were now out as well. Sawmill had decided to come out on Wednesday as well. At 10.45.am next day, Wednesday, deputation met firm, then reported back to meeting 11.30.-12.45. which agreed to accept and restart work. Raglan St. staff back at 2pm that day, Read St and others at 8am on Thursday. Man discharged to be reinstated, and the alterations which were the cause of the dispute were to be paid for.³⁹

* Trimmers at Holbrook Bodies came out on strike on Saturday February 16th, over unsatisfactory piecework prices, and two men dismissed. Had meeting in NUVB office 11.00.-12.10., arranged pickets for Monday. Officers and shop committee to interview management on Monday and report back at 3pm. Meeting agreed to accept the new offer, and the discharged men reinstated. Returned to work on Tuesday morning at 8am.⁴⁰

* All Holbrook Bodies workers, including 15-20 women, on strike for 2½ days in March for removal of new works manager. While manager not removed, strike showed determination of workers, and ended by vote at mass meeting.⁴¹

* Midland Light Bodies trimmers had meeting at NUVB office at 2pm on Monday April 15th over piecework reductions. Branch president and men's representatives interviewed firm, and men accepted compromise terms.⁴²

* Organiser interviewed Cross & Ellis about trimmers on September 24th. Company dismissed several members, and Francis had meeting with them on Saturday October 19th at noon. On Tuesday November 12th the branch committee decided that the overtime ban there should be removed. Francis reported meetings of trimmers and bodymakers on piecework prices and methods of issuing jobs. Interviews with the firm on three occasions, and "a stoppage of work narrowly avoided."⁴³

APPENDIX 9: THE 1934 PRESSED STEEL STRIKE.

The strike had its origins on Friday the 13th July, which was unlucky for the Pressed Steel management, though not the workers. Press shop workers found their pay packets short. They downed tools, and elected a deputation to be seen the next morning. The deputation was not seen and they resolved to strike on Monday night.¹ The strike therefore properly started in the press shop on the night shift of Monday July 16. When the men came out, about 100 in total, some of them turned to the local Communist Party and arrived at 10.30 pm while a meeting was in progress. The CP suggested that the deputation should form a provisional strike committee, and helped them produce a leaflet for the next day.²

The day shift in the press shop agreed to come out, and a demonstration of strikers went into various departments led by young women. Work stopped, but then restarted. A lunch time meeting was attended by about 500, but all except the press shop went back to work. In all, 150 men and 30 women were now out, 4 of the women being elected on to the strike committee.³ According to most sources, the original intention was that the strikers should try to join the AEU as that union had some membership in the toolroom, but that union rejected them despite its supposed commitment to industrial unionism.⁴ As a result the local Communist Party contacted the TGWU in London, who responded very quickly.⁵

On Tuesday night the night-shift of the shears department came out, and on Wednesday morning their day shift counterparts joined them, making 100

out from that department. Apparently they had effectively run out of work but decided to come out in sympathy. About 30 workers struck in the refrigeration department, and at lunchtime workers from the fender department, a number from the machine shop, and the whole of the assembly floor joined the strike, making a total of 600 or 700. George Geobey and F. Packwood of the TGWU addressed a meeting of about 200 of the strikers and handed out membership forms. By now the strikers' demands were centred on higher rates, the abolition of piecework, premium pay for overtime, and reinstatement of all strikers.

That night at a special Trades Council meeting, a local CP member suggested that the Trades Council take action to get the engineers and electricians out.⁷ The same person managed to address the machine shop the next morning, and 150 came out, followed after lunch by about 100 more including slingers and crane drivers. Again, in the latter's case there was no work left for them to do. The AEU District Committee apparently ordered the AEU members back as the strike was unconstitutional and the men were getting over the district rate, but this was ignored. The factory was closed by the management on the Thursday night, though the 40 patternmakers went in on Friday morning led by their union official. However they came out at lunchtime, followed later by the electricians.⁸ By Thursday the demand for 100% trade unionism and trade union recognition had surfaced.⁹

The strike committee met the management on Saturday June 21 and stated their demands. The only movement made by the management was on the question of overtime pay, and when it issued a notice on the Monday, this stated that the factory would be opened on certain conditions, which included "The

factory will continue to be an open shop as formerly. In principle the management has no objection to the election of shop committees." Anyone returning under these conditions on the Wednesday morning would be reinstated "without prejudice to their participation in the present dispute".

This was read out to a mass meeting of about 1,200 strikers and was unanimously rejected.¹⁰ The management opened the factory on Wednesday morning. Prior to this the Oxford Mail reported that two of the largest car companies had asked for the return of jigs and dies so that bodies could be made elsewhere, and the company was quoted as saying this would mean there would be no work for some 200 to 300 men for the next 12 months.¹¹ But the Daily Worker had already reported that Austin and Ford had applied for the return of their dies and jigs so they could transfer the work to Fisher & Ludlow and Briggs respectively, and that the Pressed Steel strike committee had called on workers in these factories not to touch any "black" work.¹²

Mass pickets were held at the factory the next three mornings. The company claimed that about 200 workers had gone in on the Wednesday, and over 600 on both Thursday and Friday. The strike committee contended that less than 200 had reported on Friday and that all the key personnel were still out. What is certain is that the terms for a settlement were reached in London on Friday afternoon, put to the strike committee, and then ratified at a mass meeting on Saturday afternoon July 28. Many of the strikers' demands were granted, including overtime rates and the payment of waiting time, and on the next afternoon another mass meeting elected shop stewards and a works committee.¹³

NOTES AND REFERENCES

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO INTRODUCTION

1. "Job territory", a term used by Perlman, has been defined as "that area of the labour market where a union aims to recruit and retain membership" - Undy, Ellis, McCarthy & Halmos, 1981, p.21.
2. Turner, 1962, pp.251-252.
3. Allen, 1935, p.193.
4. Pelling, 1976, p.295.
5. S.M.M.T., 1936, p.40.
6. Thompson, 1968, p.262.
7. G.D.H.Cole, "Some Notes on British Trade Unionism in the Third Quarter of the Nineteenth Century", International Review for Social History, 1937 - reprinted in Carus-Wilson (ed), 1962, p.205.
8. Lyddon, 1979, pp.11-13.
9. Adams, 1837, p.188.
Thompson, 1968, p.262, cites Adams from Hobsbawm's quote in E.J.Hobsbawm, "Custom, Wages and Work-load in Nineteenth Century Industry" in Briggs & Saville (eds), 1967, p.116.
10. Burnett, 1977, p.252.
11. NUVB, 1934.
12. Kinggate, 1919.
13. Phillips, 1976, pp.215,242.
14. NUVB EC 3-5-26.
15. Turner, Clack & Roberts, 1967, ch.7. The associated monograph by Clack is exclusively concerned with the post-war period, apart from the mention of a strike in 1938 - Clack, 1967, p.26.
Friedman, 1977, p.290 n.24, only acknowledges the NUVB's existence in a footnote, while Zeitlin, 1980, does not mention it at all.
16. Whiting, 1983, p.51.
17. Ibid, p.99.
18. Thoms & Donnelly, 1985, p.108.
19. For example, Maxcy & Silberston, 1959, and Rhys, 1972.
20. For example, Andrews & Brunner, 1959, p.127.
21. Whiting, 1983, pp.47,51.
22. Friedman, 1977, p.204.

23. Whiting, 1983, pp.96-98.
24. Brown (ed), 1981, pp.97-100.
25. Friedman, 1977, p.204.
26. S.Tolliday, "Government, employers and shop floor organisation in the British motor industry, 1939-69" in Tolliday & Zeitlin (eds), 1985, pp.120-121.
27. The next few paragraphs are based on S.Tolliday, "The Failure of Mass Production Unionism in the Motor Industry, 1914-39" in Wrigley (ed), 1986, pp.314-315,318.
28. Lyddon, 1983, p.133.
29. Tolliday, 1983, p.48.
30. NUVB J Nov.1924, Jan., Apr., May 1925. NUVB EC 19-11-24, 7-12-24, 16-12-24, 10-1-25, 21-3-25, 29-3-25, 13-2-26.
31. Carr, 1967, p.28.
32. "Writing Trade Union History" in Musson, 1974, p.8.
33. "Labour History and Ideology". [1974] in Hobsbawm, 1984, p.5.
34. Hobsbawm, 1964, p.31.
35. Price, 1980, pp.1-2.
36. Introduction to Samuel (ed), 1975, pp.xiii,xv.
37. Musson, 1974, p.7.
38. Hobsbawm, 1964, pp.31-33. Jefferys, 1946.
39. Hinton, 1973. Croucher, 1982.
40. For example, Samuel (ed), 1975, and Samuel (ed), 1977.
41. Francis & Smith, 1980, p.xvi.
42. S.Tolliday, "High Tide and After: Coventry's Engineering Workers and Shopfloor Bargaining, 1945-80", in Lancaster & Mason (eds), 1986, pp.204-243.
43. 1897 Preface to Webb & Webb, 1926 edn, p.xxv.
44. Carr, 1967, p.16.
45. Webb & Webb, 1926, p.149.
46. Hyman, 1972, p.58.
47. Webb & Webb, 1932, pp.230,218-220.
48. Friedlander, 1975.
49. Bain, 1972, p.9.
50. Pelling, 1968, p.51.
51. Hyman, 1975, p.66.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER 1

1. Whittock, 1842, p.150.
2. Reid, 1933, pp.95-99.
3. Thrupp, 1877, p.95.
4. The figures for 1864 and 1874 include vehicles formerly taxed under Postmasters' and Stage duties, amounting to 25,000 in 1864 - *ibid.*
5. The figures for 1814-64 include tax-carts, while 1874 includes basket and other 4-wheeled traps under 4cwt - *ibid.*
6. These totals should be compared with a set taken from the Commissioners' Report on the Carriage Tax cited in Reid, 1933, p.99:
1814 - 69,200; 1840 - 106,000; 1845 - 98,000; 1849 - 95,000;
1863 - 364,000; 1869 - 422,580; 1877 - 458,119; 1884 - 470,285;
1885 - 477,388. The discrepancies occur in the 1860s, and are presumably due to extra categories of vehicles being included in this period.
7. Thrupp, 1877, p.86.
8. Census returns include railway carriage and wagon makers in the 1861 returns, but not in 1871. They also include employers. Table 1:2 includes all males aged 20 and over.
9. In 1851, there were 915 employers in England and Wales, and 38 in the principal towns of Scotland. In 1871, a total of 1,151 included 90 in Scotland and 74 in Ireland. 280 in London in 1851 had declined to 217 by 1871 - Factory and Workshops Act Commission, 1876, Vol.1, Appx. B. Coach Builders Art Journal, 1881, pp.82-83.
10. UKSC 66, Mar.1865.
11. P.P. 1886, Vol.XXII, Second Report of the Royal Commission to Inquire into the Depression of Trade and Industry, Appendix D, pp.36,38.
12. Industrial Great Britain: Part 1: Birmingham, 1891, pp.204,166. P.P. 1892, Vol.XXXVI, Part IV, Replies from employers (Group C), p.412. Industries of Birmingham, 1888, pp.91,121,98.
13. "Valuations and Historical Interpretation" in Allen, 1971, p.29.
14. *Ibid.*, p.28.
15. Hobsbawm, 1964, p.32.
16. Though see Rule 1981 and 1986, and Dobson, 1980.

17. Postgate, 1923, pp.10-11.
18. Webb & Webb, 1920, p.46n.
19. Quoted in Nockolds, 1977, p.40.
20. Quoted in *ibid*, p.112. "Great" means the same as "piece".
21. *Ibid*, pp.67-68.
22. Scott, 1961, p.21.
23. Dobson, 1980, Appendix, pp.154-170.
24. Scott, 1884, pp.51-55, 25.
25. Dobson, 1980, Appendix, pp.154-170.
26. Scott, 1884, p.55.
27. *Ibid*, p.22. Bennett, 1970, pp.52-55.
28. A recent challenge to the Webbs' position is in Leeson, 1979, ch.16. According to the Board of Trade, the London Society of Coach Wheelwrights had been established in 1790; but in written evidence to the 1867 Royal Commission, the Society gave a date of "about 1750". Although they claimed then that they had "never taken part in a strike or lock-out", it seems likely that this Society was a direct descendent of the original 1714 club - UKSC 204, Aug.1899. P.P. 1868-69, Vol. XXXI, Appx.D, p.70. Board of Trade (Labour Department) Reports.
29. 1832 Rules, p.3.
30. 1808 Rules, article 2; 1832 Rules, introduction. While the 1808 rules allowed entry between the ages of 18 and 45, this had been reduced to 18-40 by 1832. The 1808 rules also allowed labourers to join if they had four years' service with the company. The cost to a member in 1832 was an entry fee graduated according to age from, 5s to 25s; a 6d levy for each death; and a quarterly fee of 1s6d, rising to 2s for those who took work elsewhere. The Society changed its name in 1831.
31. Cork coachmakers' minute book. The earliest date recorded in the minutes is 12 Oct. 1812, and the minute book contains entries up to 1817.
32. P.P. 1824, Vol.V, Fourth Report of Minutes of Evidence of the Select Committee on Artizans and Machinery, pp.294-295; P.P. 1825, Vol.IV, Report from the Select Committee on Combination Laws, Minutes of Evidence, pp.10-11.
33. P.P. 1825, *op cit*, pp.8-10. At least two other strikes took place at

- Dublin coachmaking firms between September 1824 and April 1825 - *ibid*, p.17.
34. This account is based on Webb Collection, Section A, Vol.45, Folios 325-328, quoting from the Times of 25-6-1819 and 10-7-1819; Webbs, 1920, p.80; NUVB Journal July 1959.
 35. P.P. 1825, *op cit*, Appendix 19.
An undated card of the "Bristol Coachmakers General Union" at the T.U.C. Library is further evidence of early coachmakers' organisation in Bristol.
 36. EC state that Geo. Kitchenman was the first to establish the Society in Leicester in 1823 - UKSC 36, Aug.1857, quoted in Kinggate, 1919, p.3. And "Matthew Holland of Lincoln positively asserts that he was one of those who formed the Coachmakers Society in Nottingham in 1823" - UKSC 74, Mar. 1867.
 37. 1822 - James Ball - UKSC 59, Jun.1863; 1821 - John Evans, a paying member for 47 years - Oswestry branch appeal, 29-9-1868; 1820 - Joseph Jones - UKSC 44, Sep.1859; 1815 - member for 40 years - UKSC 29, Nov.1855, cited in Kinggate, 1919, p.3)
 38. UKSC 34, Mar.1857.
 39. Kinggate, 1919, pp.16-17.
 40. Webb Collection, *op cit*, Folio 396ff.
 41. *Ibid*, Folio 387.
 42. UKSC 74, Mar.1867. A card of the "Nottingham Coach Makers Union" can be found in the T.U.C. Library.
 43. The full list of towns is:- Nottingham, Leicester, Newark, Retford, Derby, Louth, Birmingham, Oswestry, Dudley, Newcastle-under-Line, Leamington & Warwick, Windsor, Northampton, Chester, Macclesfield, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Twickenham, Gloucester, Reading, Lincoln, Wellingborough, Spalding, Devizes, Huntingdon, Chesterfield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Coventry, Hereford.
 44. Webb Collection, *op cit*, Folio 356ff.
 45. P.P. 1892, Vol.XXXVI Pt.II, Group C, p.367.
 46. Webb Collection, *op cit*, Folio 396; questionnaire to W.Medwell of Manchester.
 47. UKSC 224, Aug.1904.
 48. UKSC 40, Aug.1858, cited in Kinggate, 1919, p.4.

49. UKSC 41, Nov.1858, cited in *ibid*.
50. UKSC 70, Mar.1866.
51. UKSC 72, Sep.1866.
52. UKSC 74, Mar.1867; 75, Jun.1867.
53. Webb Collection, *op cit*, Folio 396.
54. Cole, 1953, pp.101-104.
55. Kinggate, 1919, pp.10-12. The nine towns contributing over £100 were Manchester £982, London £692, Liverpool £462, Birmingham £135, Dublin £130, Lancaster £127, Bristol £124, Preston £116, Sheffield £115.
56. Oswestry branch appeal, 29-9-1868; UKSC 59, Jun.1863.
57. Kinggate, 1919, pp.21-22. Both these strikes appear to have lasted several months. One of the Exeter strike circulars referred to strikes that had occurred in several towns in England, and one in Dublin.
58. Webb Collection, *op cit*, contains information on the 1840-47 Rules.
59. *Ibid*, Folio 387 refers to the document "General Rules of Nottingham District of UKS Coachmakers, agreed to at a Delegate Meeting held Newark, October 31 1842".
60. UKSC 59, Jun.1863.
61. The 1840-47 national rules state: "Each member to pay 1s6d per month to the funds of the Society; if not sufficient to defray the expense, such towns to make an extra levy to make up the demands". Entries in the Hull UKSC branch minute book read as follows:
 - 26 Jan.1846 - Contributions 4d pw; relief 1s6d + bed.
 - 29 Apr.1846 - Relief 2s + bed.
 - 16 Nov.1846 - Contribution to be 3d from next quarter night.
 - 25 Jan.1847 - Above resolution rescinded.
 - 26 Jul.1847 - Contribution 6d for next 3 months.
 - 30 Aug.1847 - Relief 1s6d + bed; Sunday 1s2d +bed.
 - 25 Oct.1847 - Contribution 5d + 1d for District Fund [just begun].
 - 29 Nov.1847 - Levy 1s per member "toward liquidating the debt".
 - 27 Dec.1847 - "Resolved that in order to meet the deficiency of £5-19-9 due to Mrs.Loft, the contributions continue at 6d per week, and the Relief be closed until the debt be paid".
 - 27 Mar.1848 - Relief re-opened, 1s + bed.
62. Hull UKSC, 1-7-1847; Kinggate, 1919, pp.14-16.

63. Kinggate, 1919, p.13 gives the date. It was held at the Old George Inn, Briggate, Leeds. The 1848 Rule Book says "Re-established".
64. Published 5-6-1848.
65. "Notice" at end of 1848 Rules.
66. UKSC 1, Sep.1848. The number of tramps relieved by certain branches included Manchester - 343; Birmingham - 249; York - 236; Nottingham - 230; Crewe - 197; Wolverhampton - 193.
67. Footnote to UKSC circular "To the Coachmakers of the Three Kingdoms", 5-6-1848.
68. Kinggate, 1919, p.24.
69. UKSC 1, Sep.1848.
70. Kinggate, 1919, pp.24-25; UKSC 23, Jun.1854.
71. UKSC 4, Aug.1849.
72. Kinggate, 1919, pp.24-25.
73. UKSC 2, early 1849, quoted in UKSC 230, Feb.1906.
74. UKSC 4, Aug.1849. In the same issue, it was reported that £1-10s was sent to Huddersfield in part settlement of a £15 debt as the landlord was refusing to advance any more money, and threatening not to allow any more beds for tramps.
75. Hull UKSC 4-2-1850.
76. UKSC 12, Aug.1851.
77. UKSC miscellaneous correspondence 9-1-1852.
78. Ibid 15-4-1852; Rule 67 - "That certificates be abolished altogether".
79. No society existed in connection with the UKSC in Edinburgh between 1845 and 1848. An independent society was formed, but broke up during the heavy unemployment of 1848. Some of its members joined the UKSC, which claimed 47 members in the first quarter after its 1848 reorganisation, but this fell to 3 only 9 months later. By 1852 there were no members, and the EC, wanting to open the town for tramp relief, sent a member there and paid him until he secured employment. A local Edinburgh bodymakers' society was noted several times in the 1860s and 1870s. A local society also existed in Glasgow in the 1870s - UKSC 59, Jun.1863; 84, Sep.1869; 94, Mar.1872; 111, Jun.1876; 115, May 1877. A "Scottish Operative Coachmakers Association" was formed in 1891 with 52 members, but dissolved with 26 members in 1895. A Glasgow Cartwrights Society

- also existed from 1870 till about 1912, with around 100 members in the 1890s and 1900s - Board of Trade (Labour Department) Reports.
80. UKSC 74, Mar.1867; 177, Dec.1892; 89, Dec.1870.
 81. NUVB, 1934, p.68. Board of Trade (Labour Department) Reports.
 82. UKSC 116, Oct.1877.
 83. Kinggate, 1919, p.12. United Kingdom First Annual Trades' Union Directory 1861. UKSC 177, Dec.1892 records two painter members who had joined the Sovereign Society in 1862, and later transferred to the UKSC, which they were allowed to do under certain circumstances. Booth MS, Group A, Vol.8, Section 18, Folios 8-9. UKSC 185, Dec.1894.
 84. U.K. 1861, op cit. P.P. 1868-69, Vol.XXXI, Appendix p.318. Beehive, 25-3-1871, 6-5-1871. UKSC 124/125, Dec.1879. Cole & Postgate, 1961, p.170.
Further references to the two societies are in the MS Minute Book of the General Council of the First International, 11-12-1866, 5-2-1867, 26-2-1867, 19-3-1867, 9-4-1867, 23-4-1867, 30-7-1867, 21-4-1868.
 85. Board of Trade (Labour Department) Reports. UKSC 241, Dec.1908.
 86. Kinggate, 1919, p.12. U.K. 1861, op cit. Logsdon, 1871, pp.15-16. UKSC 110, Feb.1876. Board of Trade (Labour Department) Reports. London coachsmiths also gave money during the Preston textile workers' strike of 1853-54 - Dutton & King, 1981, p.70.
 87. UKSC 183, May 1894; 184, Aug.1894.
 88. UKSC 85, Dec.1869; 91, Jun.1871; 110, Feb.1876.
 89. Ibid, 231, May 1906. Superannuation claims in later NUVB Journals show a number of LCTU members joining at places such as Bradford, Doncaster, Wakefield, Huddersfield, Liverpool as well as Brighton, Reading and other southern towns, in the 1890s and early 1900s. NUVB, 1934, p.69.
 90. Carriage Builders and Harness Makers Art Journal, 1859-60, pp.43, 60-62, 88, 111, 157.
MS Minute book of the General Council of the First International, 8-1-1867, 15-1-1867, 5-2-1867.
 91. UKSC 48, Sep.1860.
 92. Ibid, 72, Sep.1866.

93. Ibid, 88, Sep.1870
94. Webb & Webb, 1926, p.178.
95. UKSC 94, Mar.1872; 99, Jun.1873; 111, Jun.1876. Edinburgh reported some 225 non-UKSC coachmakers in 1869 when their own membership was about 65; while Bristol had 125 non-society compared to about 50 UKSC members - ibid, 84, Sep.1869.
96. Ibid, 73, Dec.1866; 74, Mar.1867; 75, Jun.1867.
97. Saddlers', Harness-Makers', and Carriage Builders' Gazette, Vol.2, No.13, May 1st 1872, p.77; Vol.2, No.14, June 1st 1872, p.89; Vol.2, No.15, July 1st 1872, p.110; Vol.2, No.17, Sep. 1st 1872, p.148. UKSC 95, Jun.1872.
98. UKSC 101, Dec.1873.
99. Webb & Webb, 1920, pp.345-349.
100. UKSC 122/123, Aug.1879.
101. Ibid, 134, Mar.1882; 150, Mar.1886.
102. Webb Collection, op cit, folios 396ff.
103. Coach Builders' Art Journal, 1881, p.90.
104. Ibid, 1902, p.151.
105. Webb Collection, op cit, folios 396ff.
106. UKSC 44, Sep.1859; 85, Dec.1869; 97, Dec.1872.
107. Ibid, 74, Mar.1867.
108. Ibid, 82, Mar.1869; 83, Jun.1869.
109. Howell, 1890, p.241, based on 1878 edition.
110. UKSC 56, Sep.1862; 57, Dec.1862; 77, Dec.1867.
111. P.P. 1886, Vol.XXII, Appx D, Part II, pp.34-40.
112. P.P. 1892, Vol.XXXVI, Part II, Group C, pp.369,367.
113. Booth, 1892-97, pp.246-247.
114. Price, 1980, pp.71,64.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Adams, 1837, pp.42-43. Thrupp, 1877, p.30.
2. Gilbey, 1903, p.19.
3. Thrupp, 1877, pp.41-42.
4. Campbell, 1747, p.229.
5. While bodymaking was separate from carriagemaking in the nineteenth century some 5 men joining the LCTU claimed to be both bodymaker and carriagemaker - dates 1846, 1850, 1852, 1875, 1876.
6. Bremner, 1869, p.109. However, the first person to start a private carriage in Glasgow was a joiner and timber merchant, and he had it made by his own joiners in 1752 - Cleland, 1832, p.158.
7. "Budget-trimmer" was the normal term ("budget" being synonymous with "boot" as the area where luggage was carried - The London Encyclopaedia, Vol.VI, 1829, p.72), though Bremner used the term "black-trimmer" - Bremner, 1869, p.113.
8. George cites an apprentice being bound to a coach carver in London in 1797. The coach carver had to be "pretty expert in representing naked boys, festoons of fruit, flowers and other ornaments" - George, 1976, pp.422,163. By the time Adams was writing. their work was much less ostentatious - Adams, 1837, pp.177-178. One source, contemporary with Adams, stated that carving was sometimes done by specialist workmen, but "frequently" by the bodymakers and carriagemakers themselves - Edinburgh Encyclopaedia, 1830, Vol.6, p.696. However, they must have been common earlier as even Exeter boasted a coach carver in 1803 - Hoskins (ed), 1972.
9. In Coventry, apprentices were bound in 1794 and 1801 to a Thomas Soare, described as a "coach, sign and house painter" in 1794, with the addition "and stainer" in 1801 - Lane, 1983.
10. George, 1976, p.163.
11. Thrupp, 1877, p.45.
12. Victoria County History, 1911, p.194.
13. Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.4, 1855-56, p.39.
14. Adams, 1837, pp.106,18.
15. Parkes, 1925, p.72.

16. Campbell, 1747, p.232. A General Description of All Trades, 1747, p.22.
17. Adams, 1837, p.179.
18. Ibid, p.174.
19. UKSC 268, Oct.1915.
20. UKSC Register List of Members, 1860. The percentages do not add up to 100 due to a number of blank returns.
21. P.P. 1920, Vol.XX., Report of the Departmental Committee appointed to Investigate the danger attendant on the use of Lead Compound in Painting: Vol.II, Report on use of Lead Compounds in Painting, Enamelling, and Varnishing of Coaches and Carriages. Evidence of Charles Kinggate, Q.4,440.
22. P.P. 1887, Vol.LXXXIX, "Returns of Wages Published between 1830 and 1886", pp.327-328.
23. Adams, 1837, p.81.
24. Edinburgh Encyclopaedia, 1830, Vol.6, p.697.
25. Adams, 1837, pp.81n,107,182-183. George, 1976, pp.202-203. Victoria County History, 1967, p.161.
26. Adams, 1837, pp.109-110. Victoria County History, 1905, p.415.
27. Industries of Birmingham, 1888, p.90. Victoria County History, 1976, p.37.
28. Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.21, 1872-73, p.710.
29. Adams, 1837, p.175. Dodd, 1843, p.437. The Art-Journal, Vol.XII, 1850, pp.378,380. In both cases eight forges were in use, though Holmes used two more for heating the iron tires of wheels, while the London firm bought its wheels from outside.
30. Adams, 1837, pp.117,121,122,183. Cattle, 1978-79, pp.25,27-28.
31. Adams, 1837, pp.132-134.
32. Ibid, pp.183,178.
33. Webb Collection, Section A, Vol.45, folio 333.
34. UKSC 112, Sep.1876. By the 1850s there was the beginning of a division in private coachmaking between vicemen "who chisel and file the ironwork made by the smiths" and fitters "who fit and suspend bodies on the underworks" and "apply the various parts furnished by special manufacturers, such as lamps, handles etc" - Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.4, 1855-56, p.31. In the Holmes factory at this

- time, they were all referred to as fitters - The Art-Journal, Vol. XII, 1850, p.378.
35. Wage returns for Belfast in the 1850's mention "filers" rather than "vicemen", and this is an apt description of much of their work. In Edinburgh in the 1860s the lowest paid vicemen were on a par with labourers, and the highest paid equivalent to a smith's striker or hammerman - PP 1887, op cit, pp.326-335.
 36. J. Philipson, "The Art and Craft of Coachbuilding", 1897, quoted in Thompson, 1980, p.66.
 37. "Hammermen and Strikers did the same work; but the name 'hammerman' was more common in shipyard and railshop and in Scotland until later years when it began to fall into disuse" - Tuckett, 1974, p.150n.
 38. Adams, 1837, pp.178-179. Some hammermen may have been qualified smiths in their own right, as until 1857 the UKSC rulebook stated "no hammer-man be allowed to join the Society unless he has served an apprenticeship as a coach-smith, and can produce an indenture to that effect". But this situation was probably exceptional.
 39. Tuckett, 1974, pp.145-146.
 40. Adams, 1837, p.176. Philipson, 1897, in Thompson, 1980, pp.19,31. Samuel, 1977, p.38.
 41. Adams, 1837, pp.177,154-155. Philipson, 1897, in Thompson, 1980, p.23.
 42. Dodd, 1843, pp.442-445. Adams, 1837, pp.94-97.
 43. Samuel, 1977, pp.52-57.
 44. Adams, 1837, pp.172-173.
 45. Thrupp, 1877, pp.111-112. S.C.L.Fuller, "Machinery in the Carriage Manufactory", Papers Read before the Institute of British Carriage Manufacturers, 1883-1901, p.361 - cited in Samuel, 1977, p.57.
 46. Adams, 1837, p.173.
 47. The mail coach designed by John Bessant was adopted by the Post Office as standard in 1787: Bessant entered into partnership with Vidler, and after the former's death in 1791, Vidler's Mail-coach Manufactory in Millbank in London had a monopoly of supply to the Post Office until 1835 when competitive tenders were eventually invited. The contractors for the various mail routes hired the coaches from Vidler, whose men were responsible for cleaning and

greasing the coaches at Millbank each day.

By 1835 there were some 700 of these coaches in operation. It was claimed that the coach trade generally benefitted from the experience of a standardised product, as anything faulty in timber, iron, steel, or paint was soon discovered - Austen, 1981, p.29.

Robinson, 1948, pp.230-231. Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.25, 1876-77, p.156.

48. Adams, 1837, pp.145,98-99. G.Dodd, Dictionary of Manufactures, 1869, - quoted in Berg (ed), 1979, p.40.
49. Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.4, 1855-56, p.30.
50. The Art-Journal, Vol.XII, 1850, pp.379-380.
51. Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.4, 1855-56, pp.38,40. Regarding the application of steam power to wood-turning, Samuel has noted that it "enabled a man to produce double the quantity of work in the same time as when the lathe had been turned by hand, but it was still the turner who guided the lathe rather than vice-versa" - Samuel, 1977, p.37.
52. Thrupp, 1877, pp.134-135.
53. Royal Album of Arts and Industries of Great Britain, 1887, p.146.
54. Industrial Great Britain: Part 1: Birmingham, 1891, pp.168,164.
55. P.P. 1892, Vol.XXXVI Part II, Group C, Q.20,304.
56. Engineering, Vol.2, 21-12-1866, p.472.
57. The Illustrated Midland News, Vol.1, 1869, p.23.
58. Bremner, 1869, p.101.
59. P.I.M.E., 1898, pp.466-467.
60. Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.4, 1855-56, p.31; Vol.21, 1872-73, p.710. Coachbuilders Art Journal, 1881, p.14. Samuel, 1977, pp.35-36.
61. Adams, 1837, p.iv. J.Simmons, Introduction to Adams, 1971, p.xii.
62. Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.4, 1855-56, p.31.
63. Coachbuilders Art Journal, 1883, pp.1-2.
64. Mattison, 1888.
65. As footnote 63.
66. More, 1980, pp.152-153.
67. P.P. 1886, Vol. XXII, Second Report of the Royal Commission to Inquire into the Depression of Trade and Industry, Appendix D, Part

- II, pp.36-37.
68. More, 1980, pp.84,80,108.
 69. UKSC 21, Nov.1853.
 70. Coachbuilders Art Journal, 1885, p.98.
 71. Booth (ed), 1892-97, pp.240-241,233. Jones, 1984, p.137.
 72. Booth, op cit, p.241.
 73. Coachbuilders Art Journal, 1885, p.98.
 74. Whittock, 1841, pp.150-151.
 75. Dodd, 1843, pp.438-439. Art-Journal, Vol.XII, "1850," p.378.
 76. Coachbuilders Art Journal, 1881, p.52.
 77. Philipson, op cit, quoted in Thompson, 1980, pp.55-56.
 78. Butler, 1910, in Thompson, 1980, p.12.
 79. English Mechanic, Vol.32, 1881, p.485.
 80. Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.38, 1889-90, p.348.
 81. G.N.Hooper acted as carriage building examiner until the early 1880s. He was also chairman of a technical and drawing class of some 40-50 every year from the mid-1870s to at least the mid-1880s. At the end of the 1880s, classes were held one evening a week for 1½ hours from the beginning of October to the end of April, at Regent Street Polytechnic, and also in Westminster, with an average weekly attendance of 60 between them - Ibid, Vol.63, 1914-15, p.186; Vol.30, 1881-82, p.795; Vol.33, 1884-85, p.633; Vol.38, 1889-90, p.471. G.N.Hooper, "Modern Carriages", in Beaufort, 1889, p.393.
 82. Second Report of the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction, 1884, Vol.1, p.412. Initially some 73 students were enrolled, though by Christmas 1881 attendance was 34.
 83. Ibid, Vol.5, Appx.33, pp.168-169. Coachbuilders Art Journal, 1880, p.80; 1882, p.15.
 84. Coachbuilders Art Journal, 1900, p.93. Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.42, 1893-94, p.176.
 85. This account is based on The Art-Journal, Vol.XII, 1850, p.380 (a description of the Holmes factory at Derby); The English Mechanic & World of Science, Vol.12, 1871, pp.579-580; Railway Magazine, Vol.1, 1897, p.450 (a description of the LNWR carriage works at Wolverton); and P.P., 1920, op cit, Evidence of Bernard Daly, brush hand, paras, 4781-4804.

86. R. Campbell, 1747, p.333. A General Description of All Trades, 1747, pp.156-157.
87. Boag, 1890, p.206. The Book of English Trades and Library of the Useful Arts, 1821, p.87; Whittock, 1842, p.151; Edinburgh Encyclopaedia, Vol.6, 1830, p.696.
88. The Art-Journal, *ibid*, pp.378, 380. Of course, there were only ever a small number of such specialists. The 1851 Census of Ireland gives probably the only figures available. In that year, while there were 470 coach and car painters of all ages, there were only 14 heraldry painters.
89. Head, 1849, p.51. Railway Engineer, 1896, p.10.
90. Railway Magazine, Vol.XI, 1902, p.496.
91. Apprenticeship and Skilled Employment Association, "Trades for London Boys", 1912, p.99.
92. The Book of English Trades, *op cit*, p.87; Edinburgh Encyclopaedia, *op cit*, p.696. Body painters were also distinguished from carriage painters in a number of later wage returns - eg P.P. 1887, *op cit*, p.327 for Manchester 1859, and Liverpool 1877, p.330 for Dublin 1858-60, p.332 for Dublin 1867-68.
93. The Art-Journal, *op cit*, p.380; P.P. 1920, *op cit*, Evidence of Bernard Daly, para 4804.
94. Boag, 1890, p.217.
95. Adams, 1837, p.212.
96. The English Mechanic, Vol.35, 1882, p.252.
97. *Ibid*. Adams, 1837, p.181; Dodd, 1846, p.453.
98. The English Mechanic and World of Science, *op cit*, p.580. Engineering Mechanic, Vol.28, 1878, p.368.
99. It is not clear when the term "painters' labourer" came into general use. It is found in Liverpool wage returns for 1877 - P.P. 1887, *op cit*, p.327.
100. Bishop, 1868, p.155, referring to John Stephenson's Car Manufactory in New York.
101. In June 1893, in the London, Chatham & Dover Railway carriage and wagon works there were 29 painters, 2 painters' mates, 1 apprentice painter, and 27 painters' labourers - Booth MS, Group A, Vol.8, Section 18, Folios 48-57.

102. Booth MS, op cit, Folios 8-9, letter from G.Short, 8-11-1893.
103. P.P. 1920, op cit, Evidence of Bernard Daly, paras. 4768-4854.
104. The English Mechanic and World of Science, op cit, p.580.
105. Ministry Of Labour, Report of an Enquiry into Apprenticeship and Training for the Skilled Occupations in Great Britain and Northern Ireland 1925-26, 1927, Vol.VI, pp.97-98.
106. P.P. 1920, op cit, Evidence of Bernard Daly, paras. 4841-4842.
107. UKSC 228, Aug.1905.
108. UKSC General Secretary [Kinggate] to Derrick [London West branch secretary], 28-3-12.
109. Apprenticeship and Skilled Employment Association, "Trades for London Boys", 1912, pp.98-99.
110. UKSC General Secretary [Kinggate] to Awcock, [secretary, London District Committeel], 5-3-12.
111. UKSC 228, Aug.1905.
112. The Art-Journal, op cit, p.380.
113. Boag, 1890, pp.206-208,91.
114. Sturt, 1923, p.84.
115. Boag, 1890, pp.216,210,206.
116. Adams, 1837, p.181.
117. P.P. 1843, Vol.XV, Children's Employment Commission - Appendix to the Second Report of the Commissioners, Trades and Manufacturers, Part II, 1 42.
118. Thackrah, 1832.
119. Thus a London coach painter told a meeting in 1883, "In the club to which he belonged it was not at all unusual to find that about 25 per cent were out of work just as the season was over", and "if anyone wanted to find a job in London he could not go at a better time than just after Christmas" - Bath Operative Coachmakers Association, 1883, pp.15,9.

The Booth enquiry found that "Painters have more short time and more overtime than any other branch, for the work of smartening carriages up comes mostly in spring and summer" - Booth, op cit, p.240.

Both the UKSC and employers confirmed that the numbers of painters (and trimmers) fluctuated much more than the other trades, with

- overtime usual in the summer - P.P. 1893-94, Vol.LXXXII, Report on Agencies and Methods for Dealing with the Unemployed, pp.85-87. P.P. 1892, Vol.XXXVI, Part IV, Group C, p.523.
120. Saddlers, Harness-Makers, and Carriage Builders Gazette, Vol.1, No.4, Aug.1871, p.5.
 121. Booth MS, op cit, Folios 8-9.
 122. Railway Magazine, Vol.7, 1900, pp.5-6.
 123. Coach Builders Art Journal, 1880, p.22.
 124. Annual Report, Chief Inspector of Factories, 1910, pp.3,44.
 125. UKSC 251, May 1911.
 126. Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.4, 1855-56, p.40.
 127. P.P. 1920, op cit, Evidence of R.J.Cornett, para 12,806.
 128. Annual Report, Chief Inspector of Factories, 1909, p.196.
 129. P.P. 1920, op cit, Appx.XIII, p.15.
 130. Annual Report, Chief Inspector of Factories, 1909, p.48; 1910, p.169.
 131. Ibid, 1911, p.52; 1912, p.10.
 132. Ibid, 1914, p.105; 1912, p.41.
 133. Ibid, 1909, p.196; 1914, p.105.
 134. Ibid, 1909, p.204.
 135. P.P. 1920, op cit, evidence of Thomas Jordan, chief foreman painter, Midland Railway, Derby, paras 1279, 1281-1283. +
 136. Ibid, paras 4,796; 5,591; 5,849; 12,410.
 137. Annual Report, Chief Inspector of Factories, 1913, pp.130, 132.
 138. P.P. 1920, op cit, Appx.XIV. For example, R.J.Cornett of Bolton, a future NUVB president, started coach painting in 1876, but gave up some time before 1911 because of the effect of lead, and obtained employment in a textile machine works - ibid, Evidence of R.J.Cornett, paras 12,750, 12,760-761.
 139. Annual Report, Chief Inspector of Factories, 1908, p.185; 1912, p.198; 1913, p.125; 1914, p.127.
 140. Cole, 1918, p.32.
 141. Schloss, 1898, pp.147,168,172,181,175-176.
 142. The 1907 UKSC Rule Book, for example, uses the term "piecemaster" in one section, and "pieceman" in another, but the terms meant the same.

143. Adams, 1837, p.174.
144. The Art- Journal, op cit, p.378.
145. Adams, 1837, p.144.
146. NUVB J. Jun.1925.
147. Booth (ed), op cit, pp.238-239.
148. Journal of the Society of the Arts, Vol.4, 1855-56, p.31.
149. Carriage Builders & Harness Makers Art Journal, 1859-60, pp.139,96.
150. UKSC General Secretary [Waldron] to Hull branch, 29-9-1875.
Evidence of Messrs James Walmsley & Co. - P.P. 1892 Vol.XXXVI, Part IV, Group C, pp.694-698.
151. Webb & Webb, 1926, p.287.
152. UKSC 236, Aug.1907.
153. Jefferys & Jefferys, 1947, p.42. P.P. 1888, Vol.XXI, Second Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Sweating System, Qs.17310-17313.
154. UKSC 103, May 1874.
155. UKSC 175, Jun.1892; Webb Collection, op cit, Folios 388-389. UKSC 184, Aug.1894; 185, Nov.1894.
156. Webb Collection, ibid.
157. Carriage Builders & Harness Makers Art Journal, 1859-60, pp.111,88.
158. UKSC 185, Nov.1894; 186, Feb.1895.
159. UKSC 235, May.1907.
160. Quoted in UKSC 183, May.1894.
161. UKSC 236, Aug.1907.
162. P.P. 1892, Vol.XXXVI, Part V, Group C, p.199; Part IV, Group C, p.303.
163. Ibid, Part IV, Group C, p.53.
164. UKSC 235, May 1907.
165. UKSC 236, Aug.1907.
166. Ibid.
167. P.P. 1892, Vol.XXXVI, Part 2, Group C, evidence of John G. Waldron, Qs 20,344-345.
168. Coach Builders Art Journal, 1902, p.150.
169. P.P. 1892, op cit, evidence of John G. Waldron, Q. 20,205.
170. Coach Builders Art Journal, 1902, p.176.

171. UKSC 236, Aug. 1907.
172. Coach Builders Art Journal, 1902, p.152.
173. P.P. 1892, Vol. XXXVI, Part IV, Group C, p.140.
174. UKSC 228, Aug. 1905.
175. UKSC General Secretary [Kinggate] to Awcock, 5-3-1912; to Derrick, 28-3-1912.
176. Booth (ed), op cit, pp.235,238,239.
177. P.P. 1892, op cit, p.408.
178. Booth MS., Group A, Vol.8, Section 18, Folio 13.
179. P.P. 1892, op cit, p.409.
180. Ibid, pp.408-415. P.P. 1886, op cit, pp.34-40.
181. Jefferys & Jefferys, 1947, pp.40-41, 44 n.4.
182. Ibid, p.41.
183. G.W.R. Magazine, 1935, p.93.
184. Williams, 1915, pp.282-283. Railway Express, 11-12-1890, 25-12-1890.
185. Radford, 1971, pp.24-25. Round the Works of Our Great Railways, 1893, p.52. Webb Collection, op cit, folio 394.
186. P.P. 1886; op cit, p.40. Hudson, 1970, p.49.
187. Engineering, Vol.2, 21-12-1866, p.472.
188. UKSC 107, May 1875; 108, Aug.1875.
189. UKSC 228, Aug.1905.
190. Gloucester Railway Carriage & Wagon Company, 1960, p.42.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER 3

1. Railway Magazine, Vol.19, 1906, p.133.
2. Ellis, 1965, p.14.
3. Simmons, 1981, p.20.
4. Railway Magazine, Vol.105, 1959, p.795.
5. Ibid, Vol.9, 1901, pp.195-196.
6. Ellis, 1965, p.14.
7. Railway Magazine, Vol.9, 1901, p.195.
8. Ellis, 1965, p.16.
9. Bagwell, 1974, p.140. Kidner, 1946, p.82.
10. Ellis, 1965, pp.42-43,14,22.
11. Ibid, p.21.
12. Marshall, 1969, p.47.
13. Whishaw, 1842, p.244.
14. Ellis, 1965, p.20. The Manchester & Bolton Railway's original "seconds", in 1838, also had no divisions, with seats arranged along the sides and ends and down the centre - Marshall, 1969, p.30.
15. Ellis, 1965, pp.21-22.
16. Stretton, 1901, p.341. The Great Northern Railway, though, still used some early carriages with luggage rails covered by tarpaulins until about 1880 - Brown, 1961, p.18.
17. Ellis, 1965, pp.16-17.
18. Head, 1849, p.107.
19. Ellis, 1965, pp.29-30. Simmons, 1968, p.142.
20. Bagwell, 1974, p.108.
21. Simmons, 1968, p.143.
22. Bagwell, 1974, p.108. Ellis, 1965, pp.34-35.
23. Ellis, 1965, pp.18,36.
24. Dow, 1959, p.108.
25. Ellis, 1965, pp.35-36,40-41.
26. Ibid, p.38.
27. Bagwell, 1974, pp.109,111.
28. Barnes, 1969, pp.36-37. Dow, 1975, p.116.
29. Stretton, 1901, p.252.

30. For example, the Liverpool & Manchester Railway Company obtained its first-class carriages from a Liverpool coachbuilder, before it started building its own in 1833 - Railway Magazine, Vol.105, 1959, p.795. Cooper of Bradshawgate in Bolton built all 22 2nd-class, and some of the 15 1st-class carriages for the opening of the Manchester & Bolton Railway in May 1838 - Marshall, 1969, p.30. Whishaw noted in 1842 that Cooper had also built 6 carriages for the Bolton & Leigh Railway; the Arbroath & Forfar Railway had carriages built by Thompson of Stirling; the Durham & Sunderland Railway had carriages by Usher of Newcastle; while the Hull & Selby Railway had 36 carriages built by Hustwick & Bean of Hull - Whishaw, 1842, pp.41-42,5,77,165.

The Sheffield, Ashton-under-Lyne and Manchester Railway became operational in November 1841, starting with 14 carriages: 3 "firsts", 2 "seconds" and 3 "thirds" built by Jonathan Dunn of Lancaster; 3 "seconds" by Allcard & Co. of Warrington; and 3 "thirds" by William Bradley & Co. of Sheffield - Dow, 1959, p.107.

31. The London & Greenwich Railway were initially supplied in 1834 with carriage bodies from Beeston & Melling of Manchester, as well as Robert Jeffrey of City Road, London - Thomas, 1972, p.195.
32. Ellis, 1965, p.27.
33. Ibid, pp.27,49,50,54,23. LMS Railway Magazine, 1925, p.240.
34. Railway Magazine, Vol.12, 1903, pp.122-125. Whishaw, 1842, pp.47-48,357.
35. Railway Magazine, Vol.9, 1901, p.195. Whishaw, 1842, pp.365,267. Head, 1849, p.51.
36. Dow, 1959, pp.108-109.
37. For example, the Stockton & Darlington Railway initially contracted out the upkeep of its rolling-stock - Pollard, 1968, p.60. Joseph Wright won a tender in 1838 to supply and repair coaches on the London & Greenwich Railway, and it is suggested his firm also repaired most of the stock on the London & Birmingham Railway - Thomas, 1972, p.202. Wright, after his move to Saltley, also launched out in 1849-50 into contracting for the whole operation and maintenance of small systems, eg the North Staffs Railway, and the Midland Railway between Derby and Birmingham - Simmons, 1986,

- p.126. Finally, during their big reorganisation in the mid-1870's, the Midland contracted out the repair of a number of carriages - Barnes, 1969, p.107.
38. Adams, 1837, p.290.
 39. Ellis, 1965, pp.52-54. J.Simmons, pp.xii-xv, Introduction to 1971 reprint of Adams, 1837.
 40. Timmins (ed), 1866, p.669.
 41. Lord Aberconway, 1927, p.331.
 42. Timmins (ed), 1866, p.670.
 43. Price, 1982, pp.5-6.
 44. Ibid, p.11.
 45. Ibid, pp.32,34. Barnes, 1969, p.37.
 46. Price, 1982, p.48. Christiansen, 1983, p.252.
 47. Price, 1982, pp.15-16. The Illustrated Midland News, Vol.1, 1869, p.23.
 48. Price, 1982, pp.19,22.
 49. Ibid, p.23. Holt, 1978, p.224.
 50. Price, 1982, p.54. Gloucester Railway Carriage & Wagon Company, 1960, pp.6,9[illus],23.
 51. Price, 1982, pp.35-36. Railway Magazine, Vol.11, 1902, p.492. P.I.M.E., 1908, p.741.
 52. Price, 1982, p.52. Railway Gazette, 1922, p.58.
 53. Price, 1982, pp.36-37. Locomotive, Railway Carriage & Wagon Review, 15-1-1924, p.37.
 54. Price, 1977, pp.3-4. Railway Magazine, Vol.34, 1914, p.11.
 55. Price, 1976, pp.7,23-25.
 56. Timmins (ed), 1866, p.670. Victoria County History, Warwickshire, Vol.2, 1908, p.197.
 57. All the 1892 figures come from P.P., 1892, Vol.XXXVI, Part IV, Replies from Employers (Group C), pp.411,413.
- Other figures are:
- Ashbury - Engineering, Vol.2, 21-12-1866, p.472; Gordon, 1890, p.153; Railway Magazine, Vol.2, 1898, p.79; Price, 1982, p.19.
- Oldbury: The Illustrated Midland News, Vol.1, 1869, p.23;
- "Industrial Great Britain: Part 1 - Birmingham", 1891, p.155.
- Gloucester: Gloucester Railway Carriage & Wagon Company, 1960, p.3.

- Bristol: P.I.M.E., 1908, p.741.
- Metropolitan: Wallace, 1945, p.2; P.I.M.E., 1910, p.1346.
58. References generally the same as footnote 57:
- Oldbury: op cit, 1869.
- Ashbury: op cit, 1866; op cit, 1890, p.156.
- Bristol: Railway Magazine, Vol.11, 1902, p.493; op cit, 1908.
59. Price, 1982, pp.27,18.
60. Ibid, pp.26,28-29,13,25. Roberts, 1977, p.308.
61. Bagwell, 1974, pp.92,95. Barker & Savage, 1974, pp.69,85,102.
- Dyos & Aldcroft, 1974, p.155.
62. Bagwell, 1974, p.112. Carter, 1959, p.202. Dyos & Aldcroft, p.167.
63. "The Delegates of the United Kingdom Society of Coachmakers,
Assembled at Leeds, To the Coachmakers of the 'Three Kingdoms',
1848.
64. Bagwell, 1963, plate opposite p.128.
65. UKSC 48, Sep.1860.
66. UKSC 34, Mar.1857.
67. UKSC 39, Jun.1858; UKSC 44, Sep.1859.
68. UKSC 59, Jun.1863.
69. UKSC EC Circular, 10-7-1863.
70. UKSC 73, Dec.1866; UKSC 74, Mar.1867.
71. UKSC 44, Sep.1859; UKSC 85, Dec.1869; UKSC 57, Dec.1862.
72. See chapter 1.
73. Webb Collection, Section A, Vol.45, Folio 394.
74. Barnes, 1969, pp.108-109.
75. Webb Collection, op cit, Folio 394.
76. UKSC 66, Mar.1865.
77. UKSC 96, Sep.1872.
78. Saddlers', Harness-Makers' and Carriage Builders' Gazette, Vol.2,
No.14, June 1st 1872, p.94; ibid, Vol.2, No.15, July 1st 1872,
p.114.
79. Ibid, Vol.2, No.18, Oct. 1st 1872, p.172; Vol.2, No.19, Nov. 1st
1872, p.198.
80. Webb Collection, op cit, Folios 385,393.
81. UKSC 88, Sep.1870.
82. Separate figures for the two works suggest that Gorton had the

bigger share; while Ashbury's had at least 37 members in 1876, and 27 two years later, the Gorton works boasted at least 70 members in 1878 - UKSC 112, Sep.1876; UKSC 121, Nov.1878.

83. UKSC 121, Nov.1878.
84. UKSC 175, Jun.1892.
85. Turton, 1969, p.113.
86. P.P., 1868-69, Vol.XXXI, Appendix pp.284-290.
87. UKSC 82, Mar.1869; UKSC 97, Dec.1872.
88. UKSC 190, Feb.1896. Swindon UKSC 7-2-84, 7-8-84, 5-2-85, 8-5-90, 4-5-93. Williams, 1915, p.38.
89. UKSC 69, Dec.1865.
90. UKSC 150, Mar.1886.
91. UKSC 14, Feb.1852.
92. UKSC 225, Nov.1904.
93. UKSC 205, Nov.1899; UKSC 206, Feb.1900.
94. UKSC 119, May 1878; UKSC 120, Aug.1878.
95. UKSC EC 22-2-13.
96. Bagwell, 1963, pp.310,132.
97. Clegg, Fox & Thompson, 1964, p.234. Bagwell, 1963, p.132. Gupta, 1966, p.133, table 1.
98. Alcock, 1922, p.256. Clegg, Fox & Thompson, 1964, pp.235,238,339. GRWU Balance Sheets.
99. Railway Express [Organ of the GRWU], 4-12-90 [Newton Abbot letter]; 18-12-90 [Ipswich letter]; 19-3-91 [Crewe meeting]; 11-6-91 [Bow]; 11-6-91, 29-10-91, 12-11-91 [Derby]; 9-7-91, 16-7-91 [Bromsgrove meeting - 140 join]; 16-7-91 [Kensal Green].
100. Ibid, 23-10-90, 19-2-91, 19-3-91. Swindon UKSC 16-8-90, 20-8-90, 18-9-90.
101. Railway Express, 18-6-91.
102. Bagwell, 1963, pp.310,320.
103. P.P., 1893-94, Vol.XXXIII, Group B: Vol.3, Evidence of Andrew Clarke, GRWU General Secretary, Q.23,799.
104. Bagwell, 1963, p.320.
105. Ibid, pp.312,313,321.
106. "Proposed Federation of Railway Trade Unions: Official Report of Conferences held at Manchester, October 5th & 19th, 1907",

- pp.95-96.
107. "Report of Conference" on Amalgamation, Dec. 12th & 13th 1909, p.9.
 108. Ibid, p.6. Bagwell, 1963, p.323, claims mistakenly that these figures relate to December 1907, and gives the figure for "traffic men", not "shopmen", also by mistake.
 109. "Report of Conference", op cit, pp.5,8,9. Bagwell, 1963, pp.323-324.
 110. Bagwell, 1963, pp.328,331-333,335.
 111. "Industrial Council: Inquiry into Industrial Agreements", Minutes of Evidence, 1913, Cd 6953 - GRWU, 10-12-1912, Q's. 14,393; 14,397; 14,434; 14,574; 14,576; 14,786; 14,810.
 112. GRWU Balance Sheets.
 113. Bagwell, 1963, pp.359-361.
 114. York UKSC 4-8-04; 8-2-06; 8-5-07; 8-3-10. Railway Review, 17-9-15.
 115. Dobbie subsequently became NUR President for two 3-year periods - 1925-27, which included the General Strike, and 1931-33, during which J.H.Thomas joined the National Government. He became M.P. for Rotherham in 1933, was still serving in 1946, and died in 1950 - York UKSC 19-7-12. GRWU, Progress since formation, 1911. Railway Review, 17-9-15. NUR EC Apr.,Jun.,Dec.1-7 1913. Bagwell, 1963, pp.696,535,601. NUR Membership Book gives death as 31-1-50.
 116. NUR Membership Registers.
 117. York UKSC 6-3-12.
 118. Kinggate [UKSC General Secretary] to Brighton UKSC, 8-10-12.
 119. In particular at Eastleigh, Wolverton, Derby, Stratford, and Swindon - Railway Review, 4-2-16, 20-10-16, 27-10-16, 3-11-16, 10-11-16, 17-11-16.
 120. In Derby the Workers' Union started recruiting shopmen in 1905, and had a branch of nearly 100 locomotive shop members by the end of 1907. The branch secretary was victimised, but reasonable organisation was maintained right through the 1920s. The union's growth in Swindon was spectacular: 2,500 members near the end of the war had increased to 4,000 by 1920. Even in 1929 there were still 800-900 members, while the TGWU held an organising campaign in February 1930, with 7 organisers present. Elsewhere the W.U. recruited Glasgow shopmen in 1912-13, maintained a stable

membership at Gorton and the Neasden underground railway shops in the 1920s, and were represented on a works committee at Dukinfield. Hyman, 1968, pp.249,55,182,144,216,106,143,144,182,216,217n,145. Hyman, 1971, p.66. F.E.S.T. to NUR, 25-4-27.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER 4

1. L.A.Legros, "Development of Road Locomotion in Recent Years", P.I.M.E., 1910, pp.1532-1533,1546.
2. Wyatt, 1917, pp.5-6,18.
3. C.P.Schwartz, "The Design of Automobile Frames", Automobile Engineer, 14 May 1914, p.130.
4. Oliver, 1962, p.23.
5. Beattie, 1977, p.14.
6. Bird, 1973, p.42.
7. Williamson, 1966, p.149, citing Autocar, 1903, p.577. Cooper's Vehicle Journal, 1912, p.205.
8. Oliver, 1962, p.27.
9. Coach Builders Art Journal, 1899, p.168.
10. Ibid, May 1902, p.115, cited in Freeman, 1972, pp.288-289.
11. Oliver, 1962, pp.27,55.
12. Ibid, p.88.
13. Bird and Hutton-Stott, 1965, pp.64-65.
14. Discussion in M.O'Gorman, "The Weight of Motor Cars and Motor Car Parts", P.I.A.E., Vol.3, 1908-09, pp.133,139.
15. Ibid, pp.140,137.
16. D.J.Smith, "The Repair of Motor Vehicles", P.I.A.E., Vol.6, 1911-12, p.193.
17. Cooper's Vehicle Journal, Sep.1911, special supplement, p.28.
18. Wolseley Motor Company, 1914, p.22.
19. P.I.M.E., 1897, p.419. Autocar 26 June 1897, cited in Victoria County History, 1969, p.177. Smith, 1972, pp.12,14.
20. Automobile Engineer, Aug.1910, pp.79,81,83.
21. Foreman-Peck, 1983, pp.186-188. Thoms and Donnelly, 1985, pp.24,49. Cooper's Vehicle Journal, Jun.1912, p.107.
22. Vauxhall Motors, 1980, p.6. Automobile and Carriage Builders' Journal, May 1905, p.118.
23. D.H.Noble and G.M.Junner, "Vital to the Life of the Nation", 1946, p.22, quoted in Cook, 1958, p.361. Automobile and Carriage Builders' Journal, Sep.1904, p.55.

24. Automobile and Carriage Builders' Journal, Sep.1904, p.54.
25. Bird, 1973, p.41.
26. P.I.A.E., Vol.6, 1911-12, p.150.
27. Saul, 1962, pp.43,25.
28. Vauxhall - Vauxhall Motors, 1983, p.1:4. Rover - Victoria County History, 1969, pp.180-181. Austin - Wyatt, 1981, p.285. The Austin figures for 1913 differ from those given by Saul.
29. UKSC 230, Feb.1906; 215, May 1902.
30. EEF W(8)9, Conference 31-12-19.
31. Adams, 1837, p.184. Edinburgh Encyclopaedia, 1830, p.696. Coach joiners are also mentioned by G.N.Hooper in Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol.4, 1855-56, p.31, but not in nineteenth century wage returns.
32. P.P. 1887, Vol.LXXXIX, Returns of Wages Published between 1830 and 1886, p.335.
33. Board of Trade, Earnings and Hours Enquiry 1906, Vol.6, 1911, pp.xxxvii,129-30.
34. Swindon UKSC 4-8-92.
35. UKSC 234, Feb.1907.
36. UKSC 212, Aug.1901.
37. UKSC 240, Sep.1908.
38. Automobile and Carriage Builders' Journal, June 1906, pp.149-150. Between 1909 and 1914, the LPCTU recruited 23 coach joiners in London, including 10 at Barkers and 4 at Hoopers - LPCTU Proposal Books.
39. Coventry figures cited in EEF Conference on National Woodworkers' Agreement of 1920/22, 21-11-51; also see ibid 6-2-51, 19-3-52.
40. Nicholson, 1971, pp.137,154.
41. Harding, 1980, p.267.
42. Automobile Engineer, Jul.1915, p.201.
43. EEF W(8)8, conference 11-12-19.
Between 1908 and 1914, the LPCTU recruited 15 mounters and 1 "moulder and finisher" in London - LPCTU Proposal Books.
44. P.I.M.E., 1910, p.1382. Cooper's Vehicle Journal, 1912, Motor Supplement, pp.71-73,107. Wolseley Motor Company, 1914, p.16.
45. "Report of the Conference representing all the Unions in the

- Coachmaking Industry in London", published 25-1-12.
46. Coventry UKSC 2-2-15. Coventry Joint Committee 14-12-14, 12-1-15, 13-4-15, 22-4-15.
 47. Yates, 1950, p.53. While accidents were not normally recorded in union records, two examples will suffice: one LPCTU member lost four fingers of his left hand, while another lost a little finger and part of his third finger, both using planing machines - LPCTU EC 28-11-11, 2-1-12.
 48. UKSC 228, Aug.1905.
 49. WUVB J Apr.1923.
 50. UKSC General Secretary [Kinggate] correspondence, 20-2-12, 26-2-12, 6-3-12.
 51. Ibid, n.d. - c. April 1914. The Wheelwrights' Society had itself, in 1910, voted to accept motor body makers into membership - AWSKTU EC, 16-7-10; though, when one of their members started work as one in a Manchester firm, the UKSC members present decided not to work with him, and he was discharged - ibid, 5-8-11.
 52. UKSC 230, Feb.1906.
 53. UKSC 254, Mar.1912.
 54. UKSC 212, Aug.1901.
 55. UKSC 215, May 1902.
 56. UKSC 216, Aug.1902; 218, Feb.1903.
 57. UKSC 223, May 1904; 222, Feb.1904.
 58. UKSC 224, Aug.1904.
 59. UKSC 225, Nov.1904.
 60. UKSC 227, May 1905.
 61. Board of Trade, Earnings and Hours Enquiry 1906, Vol.4, 1910, pp. ix, 170.
 62. UKSC 225, Nov.1904.
 63. UKSC 230, Feb.1906; 252, Sep.1911; 253, Dec.1911.
 64. UKSC 262, Apr.1914; 257, Jan.1913.
 65. Automobile Engineer, Aug.1915, p.238.
 66. Engineer, Vol.95, 1903, p.465.
 67. Ibid, Vol.101, 1906, p.448. P.I.M.E., 1910, p.1363. Cooper's Vehicle Journal, 1912, Motor Supplement, p.72.
 68. Cooper's Vehicle Journal, 1912, p.173.

69. Bird, 1967, p.142.
70. Engineering, Vol.80, 1905, p.833.
71. P.I.A.E., Vol.5, 1910-11, pp.368,377.
72. Coach Builders Art Journal, 1903, p.167. Cooper's Vehicle Journal, 1907, p.121; 1912, p.205.
73. Cooper's Vehicle Journal, 1912, Motor Supplement, p.72.
74. Ibid, 1913, p.248.
75. Ibid, 1912, p.223.
76. Automobile Engineer, Oct.1915, p.291.
77. EEF W(8)2 Conference 8-7-19.
78. P.I.A.E., Vol.6, 1911-12, p.504.
79. Daimler - Cooper's Vehicle Journal, 1912, Motor Supplement, p.72. Austin - ibid, Sep.1911, special supplement, p.27. Rover - ibid, 1912, Motor Supplement, p.107. Wolseley - Automobile Engineer, 10-9-14, p.268; Engineering, Vol.97, 1914, p.118; and Wolseley Motor Company, 1914, p.17.
80. Coventry UKSC 10-6-13; n.d. [July 1914].
81. Cited in EEF Conference on National Woodworkers' Agreement of 1920/22, 21-11-51.
82. Automobile Engineer, Dec.1910, p.197. For Daimler, see P.I.M.E., 1910, p.1363, and Cooper's Vehicle Journal, 1912, Motor Supplement, p.72. Also see Coventry UKSC 24-2-13, 22-6-14, 14-7-15.
83. P.I.A.E., Vol.5, 1910-11, p.368.
84. UKSC 220, Aug.1903; 221, Nov.1903.
85. Glasgow NUVB 14-10-20, 26-10-20, 18-1-21.
86. Cited in Richardson, 1977, pp.48-50.
87. Glasgow branch (organising over 90% of the eligible vehicle builders in the district) had in 1927 - 415 woodworkers and 31 apprentices; 7 woodcutting machinists; 194 painters, 29 apprentices, and 26 brush hands; 54 trimmers and 12 apprentices; 63 smiths and 3 apprentices, 14 fitters and vicemen, and 36 hammermen - NUVB Scottish District Council survey, June 1927.
88. For some work, horse-drawn vehicles were used well into the post-second world war period. Thus Tuckett, 1967, p.433 notes that in 1964 some 300 members of the Scottish Horse and Motormen's Association were still delivering milk in Edinburgh by horse and

cart.

89. For example, Manchester branch's 330 members at the end of 1905 included 114 painters and 82 bodymakers, with 134 in other trades - UKSC 230, Feb. 1906.
The Edinburgh branch in 1913 had 101 painters, 67 bodymakers, 10 carriagemakers, 14 wheelers, 26 trimmers, 20 smiths, and 25 vicemen - Edinburgh UKSC n.d. [between 17-4-13 and 16-5-13].
90. UKSC EC various dates between 25-11-07 and 9-1-08. Kinggate to Cripwell [Saltley UKSC] 28-8-12. LPCTU EC 28-2-11, 23-5-11. LPCTU Annual Report 1914.
91. Hyman, 1971, pp.52-55. Saltley branch, covering the Metropolitan railway carriage works among other factories, increased its membership by 131 during 1913, while the separate Handsworth branch, covering the Birmingham Railway Carriage & Wagon Company, nearly doubled in size, from 73 to 133.
92. Victoria County History, 1969, pp.177-180.
93. UKSC 220, Aug. 1903, 221, Nov. 1903 [Singer]; 225, Nov. 1904 [Premier]; 250, Mar. 1911 [Triumph, Hewers, Sparkbrook, Tooker]. Coventry UKSC 9-2-09, 18-3-09, 7-7-13 [Rudge]; 8-12-09 [Calcott]; 17-1-13 [Bramble]; 15-6-14 [Dunlop]; 6-10-13, 28-10-13, 9-11-14 [Coventry Ordnance, for which also see UKSC EC 12-3-08].
94. UKSC 222, Feb. 1904; 225, Nov. 1904; 226, Feb. 1905.
95. Ibid, 228, Aug. 1905.
96. The Sheet Metal Workers refused to work the premium bonus system when Daimler first introduced it. The firm tried again in 1907 when they opened a shop mainly for panel work and recruited coppersmiths to work alongside sheet metal workers. A national conference of all unions with members in this shop voted not to allow their members to work it; but the London & Provincial Society of Coppersmiths went against this, as did some rank and file sheet metal workers, who were expelled. Everyone else was withdrawn in October 1907. A "Progressive Society" was formed by the sheet metal workers at Daimler, and it was not until January 1917 that the dispute was resolved, with the premium bonus being withdrawn in the shop, and members of the "Progressive society" allowed to rejoin their respective societies under certain conditions - Kidd, 1949,

- pp.209-211.
97. Victoria County History, 1969, pp.177-178.
 98. UKSC 222, Feb.1904; 223, May 1904; 224, Aug.1904; 226, Feb.1905.
 99. EEF E(1)12, ASE to EEF 4-11-05.
 100. Ibid, Notts DEEA to EEF, 7-12-05, 8-12-05, 14-12-05.
 101. Ibid, Nottingham Daily Express 11-12-05; Humber managing director to Nottingham ASE & SEM, 20-3-06. UKSC 230, Feb.1906.
 102. UKSC 231, May 1906.
 103. EEF E(1)14, notice from T.C.Pullinger, Humber Beeston manager, 23-1-07.
 104. EEF E(1)14.
 105. UKSC EC 11-11-07, 5-12-07, 9-12-07, 12-12-07, 23-12-07.
 106. Victoria County History, 1969, p.179.
 107. UKSC 224, Aug.1904; 229, Nov.1905; 232, Aug.1906.
 108. Ibid, 230, Feb.1906; 232, Aug.1906.
 109. Ibid, 235, May 1907.
 110. UKSC EC 17-10-08.
 111. Ibid, 27-3-09.
 112. Hyman, 1971, p.61. The Coventry UKSC decided that UKSC coachsmiths, who normally had W.U. strikers, should not blackleg - Coventry UKSC 6-5-13, 7-5-13.
 113. 20 were reported in October 1913; and 30 in July 1914 compared to only 12 UKSC - Coventry UKSC 20-10-13. Coventry Joint Committee 2-7-14.
 114. Coventry UKSC 10-6-13.
 115. Ibid, 10-3-14.
 116. Ibid, 14-5-13, 19-5-13.
 117. Ibid, 17-6-13, 17-7-13, 30-7-13, 10-9-13. Coventry Joint Committee 23-6-13 [including copy of letter to the employers], 7-7-13, 12-8-13, 4-9-13. UKSC 260, Oct.1913.
 118. Coventry UKSC 12-3-12, 30-9-13, 28-10-13. UKSC EC 8-10-13, 12-11-13.
 119. Coventry UKSC 6-11-13, 18-12-13. UKSC EC 12-11-13, 6-12-13. The LPCTU's shop secretary at Daimler, S.Bramley, who became that union's Coventry branch secretary when it set up provincial branches in 1914, later joined Buckle as a full-time Coventry NUVB

- branch officer in 1926 - LPCTU EC 24-3-14, 31-3-14; and see chapter 8.
120. UKSC EC 19-3-12, 6-4-12, 6-7-12. LPCTU EC 28-11-11, 2-1-12, 23-1-12, 27-2-12, 6-3-12, 26-3-12.
 121. LPCTU EC 4-12-13, 23-12-13. UKSC EC 3-2-08, 10-2-08, 17-2-08.
 122. UKSC EC 13-2-08, 17-2-08. UKSC 238, Feb. 1908; 240, Sep. 1908.
 123. UKSC 254, Mar. 1912. UKSC EC 4-3-12, 6-4-12, 6-7-12. Kinggate to Wolverhampton UKSC 4-7-12. LPCTU EC 5-7-12.
 124. "Memorandum of Agreement", n.d. LPCTU EC 12-2-14.
 125. LPCTU EC 3-3-14, 7-5-14, 12-5-14. LPCTU Annual Report 1914.
 126. Glasgow UKSC 26-6-06, 19-3-07, 4-5-07, 27-4-08. LPCTU EC 13-2-11, 28-2-11. Macdonald & Browning, 1960-61, p.324.
 127. UKSC 235, May 1907. Glasgow UKSC 2-2-07, 5-2-07, 13-3-07.
 128. UKSC EC 7-12-12, 16-12-12. LPCTU EC 28-11-12, 11-12-12.
 129. UKSC EC 7-4-13, 16-4-13, 28-4-13.
 130. Macdonald & Browning, 1960-61, p.324. UKSC 258, Apr. 1913. UKSC EC 22-2-13, 31-3-13, 23-9-13, 27-9-13.
 131. UKSC 258, Apr. 1913.
 132. Wilkins & Hill, 1964, pp.47,468 n.22. Kinggate to Rochdale UKSC 27-11-12. UKSC EC 16-12-12. UKSC 259, Jul. 1913.
 133. Wilkins & Hill, 1964, p.49. The UKSC noted a dispute by the joiners in February 1913 - UKSC EC 22-2-13. Henry Ford himself claimed that when he took over the body plant [in July 1913], union officers representing "carpenters" were refused an interview with management, whereupon the carpenters were called out on strike. The latter apparently refused, and were expelled - Ford, 1924, pp.262-263.
 134. Kinggate to Salford UKSC 8-5-13. UKSC EC 28-4-13, 7-5-13.
 135. LPCTU EC 10-9-13, 23-9-13. UKSC 259, Jul. 1913.
 136. UKSC 260, Oct. 1913; 261, Jan. 1914. LPCTU EC 4-12-13. Mosses, 1922, p.245.
 137. UKSC 261, Jan. 1914. LPCTU Annual Report, 1913. LPCTU EC 23-9-13, 31-10-13.
 138. UKSC EC 24-11-13, 2-12-13, 6-12-13, 5-1-14, 8-1-14.
 139. Ibid, 4-2-14, 7-2-14, 7-3-14. UKSC 261, Jan. 1914. LPCTU EC 28-9-15.
 140. Wilkins & Hill, 1964, pp.49-50.

141. UKSC 239, May 1908; 241, Dec.1908. UKSC EC 16-4-08, 18-4-08, 27-4-08, 11-7-08.
142. UKSC 260, Oct.1913; 261, Jan.1914; 262; Apr.1914; 263, Jul.1914; 264, Oct.1914. UKSC EC 4-2-14, 15-6-14, 15-8-14, 26-8-14. LPCTU EC 3-2-14, 6-2-14, 12-2-14, 7-5-14, 26-5-14, 3-6-14, 9-6-14.
143. LPCTU EC 28-3-11, 25-4-11.
144. Ibid 3-7-14, 7-7-14.
145. Ibid 28-7-14, 25-8-14.
146. Ibid 24-4-15, 27-7-15.
147. Ibid 27-8-12, 13-11-12, 3-12-12. Richardson, 1977, p.46.
148. UKSC EC 27-9-13.
149. LPCTU EC 22-4-13, 27-5-13.
150. Ibid 30-9-15.
151. Ibid 27-1-14, 3-2-14, 19-2-14.
152. Ibid 25-11-13, 8-12-13.
153. Ibid 3-11-14, 10-11-14.
154. Ibid 21-8-15, 25-1-16, 8-2-16, 29-4-16.
155. Ibid 3-10-11.
156. Ibid 26-8-13, 28-8-13, 29-8-13, 30-9-13.
157. Ibid 27-5-13, 3-6-13, 24-6-13.
158. Ibid 14-9-15, 28-9-15.
159. LPCTU Proposal Books - n.d.[Apr.-Jun.1908], 15-3-10, 19-3-12, 21-10-13.
160. LPCTU EC 28-7-14.
161. Rules of the London Coachmakers' and Wheelwrights' Alliance.
162. 18-1-12 meeting, recorded in "Report of the Conference representing all the Unions in the Coachmaking Industry in London", published 25-1-12.
163. LPCTU Annual Report, 1914.
164. LPCTU EC 24-11-13, 4-12-13.
165. Ibid 26-5-14, 3-6-14, 9-6-14.
166. LPCTU Annual Report, 1914. UKSC 265, Jan.1915.
167. LPCTU EC 23-12-13, 30-12-13, 3-2-14, 6-2-14, 12-2-14, 6-3-14, 24-3-14, 7-7-14.
168. UKSC 265, Jan.1915. LPCTU EC 9-3-15.
169. LPCTU EC 30-8-15.

170. Ibid 30-9-15, 12-10-15.
171. NFVT London District Committee 19-1-17, 26-1-17, 14-2-17, 16-2-17;
UKSC 273, Jan. 1917.
172. LPCTU EC 4-2-13, 5-4-13. Coventry UKSC 4-2-13.
173. UKSC 260, Oct. 1913.
174. Coventry Joint Committee 8-10-13, 6-7-14.
175. Coventry UKSC 1-12-13, 11-2-14, 12-2-14.
176. Ibid 21-5-14. Coventry Joint Committee 2-7-14.
177. Coventry Joint Committee 28-7-14.
178. Ibid, 17-3-15.
179. Ibid, 4-5-15. And see chapter 5.
180. The New Survey of London Life and Labour, Vol. II, London
Industries I, 1931, p.236.
181. NUVB London District Committee 10-1-21, 28-2-21, 25-7-21.
182. Ibid, 22-5-22, 12-6-22, 10-7-22, 24-7-22.
183. NUVB J Nov. 1923.
184. NUVB London District Shop Stewards Conference 15-4-24, 20-5-24.
185. Ibid, 20-1-25, 18-8-25, 11-11-25.
186. NUVB J Nov. 1925.
187. NUVB EC 10-3-28; NUVB J Apr., Jul. 1928.
188. Coventry NUVB 25-2-26, 3-4-28.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO INTRODUCTION TO PART II

1. The LPCTU was accredited with 1,603 members at the end of 1917, and 1,898 in July 1919.
It had branches in Coventry, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Luton, Bristol, Huntingdon, Biggleswade, Bournemouth, Norwich, and Southport, though over half of its membership was in London, forming the London Central branch of the NUVB, which had 1,157 members at the end of 1919 - UKSC 282, Apr. 1919; NUVB J Jul. 1919. Amalgamation Proposals between UKSC and the LPCTU, February 1918.
2. The London Coachsmiths and Vicemens Trade Society had 70 members, and the Operative Coachmakers and Wheelwrights Federal Union 95 in mid-1918. The latter had grown to 132 by July 1919 - UKSC EC 19-6-18. NUVB J Jul. 1919
3. About 4 of the Wheelwrights and Smiths' membership was in London, another 200 in Bristol and South Wales, and the rest in the north of England between Birmingham and Newcastle - NUVB J Apr. 1925.
4. The WCOU had 1,130 members in April 1946 - NUVB J Jan., Jul. 1947.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Saul, 1962, p.24 [1913 figure]. Allen, 1935, p.177, and Wyatt, 1981, p.283 [1919-1922 figures]. S.M.M.T., various dates, for post-1922.
2. Clyno made 36,000 cars in seven seasons, finishing in May 1929 - Sedgwick, 1980, p.65. It made 3,000 in its second year - Nicholson, 1966; sold 11,000 of one model in 1926 - Richardson, 1977, p.111; and a total of 9,000 in 1927 - Wyatt, 1981, p.118. Another source suggests 50,000 were produced - Montagu, 1966, p.174.
Singer was producing at the rate of 10,000 per annum early in 1927 - Automotive Industries 28-5-27, cited in Victoria County History, 1969, p.183; and reputedly produced 11,000 that year - Wyatt, 1981, p.118. Early in 1928, it was producing 100 cars per day - Nicholson, 1966, p.308; and in 1929 produced 28,000 cars - G.Maxcy, "The Motor Industry", in Cook, 1958, p.367.
3. Wyatt, 1981, p.283 [Morris and Austin: Wyatt's figures for 1919 and, especially, 1925, differ from those provided by Andrews & Brunner, 1959, pp. 112,185.]. Victoria County History, 1969, p.183; Robson, 1981, pp.90-91 [Rover]. Vauxhall Motors, 1983, p.1:4 [Vauxhall].
4. Maxcy & Silberston, 1959, p.107, Table 2. Rhys, 1976, p.246, Table 1.
5. Information from Census of Production for 1924, 1930, 1935, 1948. The S.M.M.T. figures for 1930 and 1934 are proportionately lower, probably due to the non-inclusion of Government-owned vehicles, which were not registered for taxation figures - P.E.P., 1950, pp.9-10.
6. Robson, 1979, p.79.
7. Ibid, pp.67,80.
8. Wyatt, 1982, p.177.
9. Ibid, pp.57,177.
10. Ibid, pp.68,113,177.
11. Ibid, pp.55-57,60,177.
12. Ibid, pp.68-69,80.
13. Ibid, pp.69,79,118.
14. Ibid, pp.79,177.
15. Ibid, pp.113-114.
16. Ibid, pp.105,177.

17. Ibid, pp.132,177,145.
18. There are few figures available. In 1922, of 12,165 Austin 12's, 51 were supplied in chassis form. Saloons were produced on the "12" chassis by both Mulliner and Gordon in the mid to late 1920s. But the numbers of outside coachbuilt versions on these chassis remained small. Over 9,500 of the new "12/6" were built in 1931, but only 12 chassis were delivered to coachbuilders; in 1932 there were 21, plus a further 19 bodies by Gordon. Over 8,500 of the new "10" were produced in 1932, of which 368 chassis went outside, plus a further 19 bodies were built by Gordon. Many Gordon models were still offered for the 1934 season. see Wyatt, 1981, pp.287,76,101,113,136,181,178. Austin Board Meeting, 15-9-26, 24-8-27, 26-7-33.
19. Wyatt, 1981, p.124. Sedgwick, 1970, p.259.
20. Georgano, 1985, pp.19-20. Deliveries to London for 1930-37 give:
1930 - 271; 1931 - 400; 1932 - 309; 1933 - 834; 1934 - 1,111;
1935 - 1,178; 1936 - 875; 1937 - 659; - Warren & Linskey, 1976, p.67.
21. Georgano, 1985, pp.24,29.
22. Austin Board Meeting, 28-8-29, 2-9-32.
23. Edwards, 1983, pp.9,83. Nicholson, 1966, p.303. Autocar
Aug. 30th 1929, p.401.
24. Edwards, 1983, pp.66,83,109-110,142,170-172,182-183,202. Sedgwick,
1970, p.259.
25. Sedgwick, 1970, p.259.
26. McComb, 1972, pp.22,30,42,52,89. Robson, 1980, pp.26-27,30,32.
Edwards, 1983, p.276.
27. Coventry Engineering Society Journal, Jan.1924, p.5. Coventry NUVB
28-4-27, 13-2-28.
28. Coventry NUVB 31-8-20, 8-11-21, 15-5-22.
29. Mulliners' Directors' Meeting, 12-3-35, 17-12-35, 23-7-36, 16-4-37,
12-12-38 - on the last date, mention is made of the last order by
Humber having been for 250 bodies, subject to their right to take over
the manufacture of this type themselves. Sedgwick, 1970, p.310.
30. Coventry NUVB 7-5-22, 15-5-22.
31. Standard Board Meeting, 15-2-24, 29-2-24, 20-6-24.
32. Ibid, 25-8-25, 4-1-26.
33. Ibid, 26-7-27, 21-3-28, 14-9-28. Nicholson, 1966, p.310.

34. Standard Board Meeting, 11-7-32.
35. Ibid, 3-7-33.
36. Ibid, 3-9-36, 5-10-36, 19-11-36. Sedgwick, 1970, p.320.
37. Mulliners' Directors' Meeting, 30-4-34, 12-3-35, 29-9-38, 12-12-38.
38. Vauxhall Motors, 1980, p.29.
39. Ibid, pp.38,41-42.
40. Ibid, p.42. Automobile Engineer, Jan.1938, p.7.
41. Robson, 1979, p.79. Vauxhall Motors, 1980, pp.44,52-55. Sedgwick, 1970, p.259.
42. Wilkins & Hill, 1964, p.50.
43. Montagu, 1966, pp.165,174-178. During 1930-31, AJS itself produced an AJS 9 based on the Clyno 9 - ibid, p.179.
44. Foreman-Peck, 1981, pp.197-198, 206 n.43. Oliver, 1971, p.97. Rover were also using another Coventry firm in the early 1920s - Coventry NUVB 7-5-22.
45. Oliver, 1971, p.96. Autocar, Aug. 28th 1931, pp.355-356.
46. Oliver, 1971, pp.104,123. Taylor, 1983, pp.21,25-26.
47. Birmingham, 1965, pp.41,106. Automobile Engineer, Sep.1932, p.405.
48. Birmingham, 1965, pp.64,67,69,76.
49. Ibid, pp.183,224,217.
50. EEF W(8)31 Central Conference 11-5-23. Coventry NUVB 2-2-27, 28-4-27. Local History of Coventry, Tapes 79 & 80, 1970. Mulliners' Directors' Meeting, 12-12-38.
51. Day, 1981, pp.309,333.
52. Ibid, p.55.
53. Ibid, pp.40,43,54-55.
54. Ibid, pp.110-111.
55. Price, 1978, pp.36,39,84.
56. Nicholson, 1966, p.369.
57. Bentley, 1964, pp.59,63,148,73. Smith, 1979, pp.40-41.
58. Oliver, 1981, p.107.
59. Lloyd, 1978, p.133.
60. Nicholson, 1966, p.368.
61. Sedgwick, 1970, p.360. Nicholson, 1966, p.365. Smith, 1972, pp.43,51.
62. Robson, 1979, pp.104,112,212.
63. Smith, 1972, p.122. Lloyd, 1978, pp.135-136.

64. Mulliners' Directors' Meeting, 13-3-33, 24-7-33.
65. Ibid, 30-4-34, 1-6-34.
66. Ibid, 12-12-34, 12-3-35.
67. Ibid, 3-3-36.
68. Ibid, 16-4-37, 17-12-37.
69. Ibid, 26-1-38, 29-9-38, 12-12-38.
70. Sward, 1948, p.37.
71. Autocar, Nov. 4th 1927, p.976; Mar 22nd 1929, p.576. Automobile Engineer, Nov.1931, p.516.
72. Autocar, May 10th 1929, p.948. According to Bert Edwards, the trim lines were stationary in late 1926 when he worked there - Interviews 1981.
73. Autocar, Feb.19th 1926, p.300. Machinery, Vol.36, 1930, p.258.
74. Automobile Engineer, Jul.1915, p.188.
75. Ibid, Mar.1921, pp.102,104.
76. Ibid, Oct.1925, p.341.
77. P.I.P.E., Vol.1, 1921-22, p.372. Automobile Engineer, Jul.1929, p.242. Motor Sport, Aug.1960, p.649.
78. Automobile Engineer, Jun 11th 1913, p.379; Jan.1926, pp.27,30.
79. Ibid, Apr.1926, p.137.
80. Ibid, Feb.1926, pp.49,56. Autocar, Feb.14th 1930, p.304.
81. E.W.Hancock, "A Lifetime in Automobile Production", Automobile Engineer, Jun.1960, p.234.
82. Ibid, Sep.1932, p.405.
83. Rover's chassis output was split between Coventry and a plant in Tyseley, Birmingham - ibid, May 1931, p.167. Apparently, Rover brought in moving tracks in the "assembly shop" in Helen Street, Coventry, in the mid-1930's - Foreman-Peck, 1981, p.202 - and it has to be assumed that this meant on chassis assembly. Alvis (which had no body shops) did not even group machines according to flow production principles - Automobile Engineer, Jan.1931, p.13. A description of the Armstrong-Siddeley works made no mention of progressive assembly - P.I.M.E., 1927, p.693.
84. Andrews & Brunner, 1959, p.88. P.I.P.E., Vol.IV, 1924-25, p.162; Engineering, Vol.122, 13-8-26, p.206.
85. Automobile Engineer, Jun.1929, p.223; Oct.1934, pp.359,361. Andrews &

- Brunner, 1959, p.197. Motor, Jul. 3rd 1934, p.956.
86. P.Fridenson, "The Coming of the Assembly Line to Europe", in Krohn, Layton & Weingart (eds), 1978, p.163, citing Lambert & Wyatt, 1968, p.142. Their exact words were "To increase efficiency, and speed up production, conveyor and assembly tracks had been installed wherever possible."
 87. C.R.F.Engelbach, "Some Notes on Re-organising a Works to Increase Production" (Jan.1928), P.I.A.E. Vol.XXII, 1927-28, pp.498,501,503, 505-506.
 88. Automobile Engineer, Sep.1925, p.305. Engelbach, op cit, pp.499,508. Times, British Motor Number, 12-3-29, p.xv. Automobile Engineer, Aug. 1931, p.298. Machinery, Vol.44, Jun.1934, p.286.
 89. Singer's main Coventry works was "hemmed in by artisan dwellings, which, under present housing conditions, precludes adequate extensions to the factory" - Automobile Engineer, Mar.1926, p.89.
 90. NUVB J Apr.1928. Automobile Engineer, May 1930, p.167.
 91. P.I.M.E., 1927, p.715.
 92. Standard Car Review, Oct.1931, pp.12-14; Jul.1932, p.79; Automobile Engineer, Feb.1933, p.45. Standard Car Review, Jul. 22nd 1935; Jan. 14th 1936.
 93. Automobile Engineer, Aug.1930, p.289. Vauxhall Motors, 1983, p.1:4.
 94. Davison, 1931, p.105.
 95. There was some uncertainty as to what level of production justified this move. Austin Works Manager, Engelbach, suggested that an output of 50 cars per week "does not represent much money to spare for putting the machines in line processes" - Engelbach, op cit, p.538. A Coventry engineer estimated that "it is possible to lay out a shop economically and produce cars on the 'line' system in such small quantities as 130 for a 47 hour week - Coventry Engineering Society Journal, Feb.1930, p.30.
 96. Automobile Engineer, Dec.1930, p.498.
 97. Journal of the Institute of Transport, Vol.17, 1935-36, p.519.
 98. Fridenson, op cit, p.170, citing Jefferys, 1946, p.212.
 99. EEF M(15)36 Local Conference 21-8-19.
 100. Automobile Engineer, Jul.1915, p.189; Oct.1915, pp.289-292.
 101. Local History of Coventry, Tapes 79 & 80, 1970.

102. Coventry Evening Telegraph 29-5-85, Official Souvenir, "Cars: The First 100 Years", p.6
103. Robertson, 1928, pp.65-68.
104. Automobile Engineer, Oct.1934, p.390.
105. Ibid, Apr.1930, p.149.
106. Ibid, Apr.1928, p.121 [Vickers]; Apr.1930, p.148 [Hoyall].
107. P.I.P.E., Vol.1, 1921-22, p.253 [Arrol-Johnston]. Automobile Engineer, Jul.1923, p.212 [Belsize]; Jun.1923, pp.174,177 [A.C.]; Feb.1926, p.56 [Crossley].
108. Ibid, Nov.1929, p.456.
109. Ibid, Feb.1930, p.61.
110. Autocar, Feb. 14th 1930, p.306.
111. Automobile Engineer, Apr.1930, p.149 [Hoyall]; Apr.1928, p.121 [Vickers].
112. Local History of Coventry, Tapes 79 & 80, 1970.
113. Automobile Engineer, Feb.1923, p.51.
114. Ibid, Feb.1926, p.56.
115. Ibid, Aug.1934, p.312.
116. Coventry NUVB 6-12-21.
117. Ibid, 16-7-24.
118. Local History of Coventry, Tapes 79 & 80, 1970.
119. Whyte, 1980, p.47. Skilleter, 1980, pp.24-25. Autocar, Feb. 13th 1931, p.282.
120. Buckle to Nicholson, 1-3-35.
121. CDEEA, 16-3-36.
122. Jarman & Barraclough, 1976, p.94, & Automobile Engineer, Jun.1929, p.255 [Morris, Cowley]. Coventry NUVB 16-7-24 [Morris Bodies, Coventry]. EEF M(15)36 Local Conference 21-8-19, & Automobile Engineer, Sep.1925, p.306 [Austin]. Ibid, Mar.1926, p.92 [Singer].
123. Coventry NUVB 10-9-19. Automobile Engineer, Mar.1928, p.87; Feb.1937, pp.72,74.
124. Illustration in Ware, 1976.
125. Andrews & Brunner, 1959, p.194. Overy, 1976, p.134, Table 6. Automobile Engineer, Jun.1929, p.225.
126. Automobile Engineer, Sep.1933, p.319. Vauxhall Motors, 1980, pp.38,41.
127. The Daracq body plant in London was unusual in having a primitive

- assembly line of the push type for assembling body frames from the various jig-built units. It was arranged in two parallel lines, with a turntable to facilitate change of direction: "The skeleton reaches completion in the hands of a series of workmen during its progress along an assembly line" - Automobile Engineer, Aug.1934, pp.312-313.
128. Standard Car Review, Aug.1931, pp.5,7,9,10; Oct.1931, pp.12-13; Jan. 1932, p.16. Local History of Coventry, Tapes 79 & 80, 1970.
 129. Automobile Engineer, Jan.1934, pp.15-17.
 130. Ibid, Oct.1934, p.361. Motor, Jul. 3rd 1934, p.956.
 131. Automobile Engineer, Apr.1939, p.141.
 132. Popular Motoring, Sep.1932, p.9; Oct.1935, p.20; Jan.1938, p.29; Oct. 1938, p.25; Jun.1939, pp.32-33.
 133. Automobile Engineer, Feb.1937, p.72. Machinery, Vol.48, 1936, pp.337, 348.
 134. Automobile Engineer, Nov.1930, p.443-444.
 135. Autocar, Jun. 14th 1929, p.1180.
 136. Television History Workshop, 1985, p.18. Andrews & Brunner, 1959, p.197.
 137. Automobile Engineer, Jan.1938, pp.7,9,14.
 138. Ibid, Mar.1939, p.76.
 139. John W. Anderson, "How I Became Part of the Labor Movement", in Lynd & Lynd (eds), 1981, p.53.
 140. For example, Vauxhall and Jowett. See Automobile Engineer, Aug.1930, p.290; Feb.1930, p.61.
 141. Wyatt, 1981, p.182. Austin Board Meeting 28-10-31.
 142. Automobile Engineer, Oct.1934, pp.361,365.
 143. Standard Car Review, Jul. 22nd 1935.
 144. Automobile Engineer, Feb.1937, p.74. Machinery, Vol.48, 1936, pp.337, 348.
 145. Railway Magazine, Vol.35, 1914, p.429. G.V.R. Magazine, 1914, p.295.
 146. Great Eastern Railway Magazine, 1913, p.73.
 147. Railway Magazine, Vol.1, 1897, p.450; Vol.35, 1914, p.259.
 148. Automobile Engineer, Oct.1915, p.290. Vickers bodybuilding plant could cut out 30 or more thicknesses at once - ibid, Apr.1928, p.124. Up to four inches thickness could be cut at Daracq - ibid, Aug.1934, p.314.
 149. Cooper's Vehicle Journal, 1912, Motor Supplement, p.73.

150. Automobile Engineer, Oct.1915, p.290. Arnold & Faurote, 1919, pp.371, 373.
151. Wolseley Motor Company, 1914, p.21. Engineer, Vol.122, 1916, p.52. Cooper's Vehicle Journal, June 1912, Motor supplement, p.107. P.I.P.E., Vol.1, 1921-22, pp.256-257.
152. Butler, 1932, p.249.
153. Vickers - EEF W(8)41, May 1924 survey. Rover - EEF F(6)42 - Jan.1926 survey.
154. Interviews with Stan Wyatt, various dates. A description of trimming changes at Morris Motors shows that buttons were dispensed with in the early 1920s. First of all, leather was only kept on the more expensive models, while leathercloth was used on the cheaper. "Next, the upholstery was no longer buttoned on the doors and body sides. Then the seat bottoms and backs had only one row of buttons each instead of two, until, for the 1925 season, the buttons gave way to pleated detachable upholstery" - Jarman & Barraclough, 1976, p.94.
155. Arnold & Faurote, 1919, p.371.
156. Automobile Engineer, Oct.1915, p.290.
157. Local History of Coventry, Tapes 79 & 80, 1970.
158. Interviews with Bert Edwards, 1981.
159. Local History of Coventry, Tapes 79 & 80, 1970.
160. Arnold & Faurote, 1919, pp.365,368-370.
161. Local History of Coventry, Tapes 79 & 80, 1970.
162. Terry, 1921, p.316. Butler, 1932, p.259.
163. Interviews with Stan Wyatt, various dates. Television History Workshop, 1985, p.12.
164. Autocar, Feb. 7th 1930, p.242. Interviews with Bert Edwards, 1981.
165. Interviews with Stan Wyatt, various dates.
166. Edwards, 1983, pp.62-63.
167. Automobile Engineer, Nov.1939, pp.400-401.
168. For Morris Bodies - interviews with Stan Wyatt, various dates; and statement of trim shop foreman, 16-10-46, to National Arbitration Tribunal, 29-10-46. For Morris, Cowley, transcript of interview of D.Croft by Roger Sealey.
169. Popular Motoring, Jan.1939, p.25; Jul.1939, p.8.
170. Automobile Engineer, Mar.1933, pp.112-113; Jul.1932, p.348.

171. Popular Motoring, Jul.1939, p.9, referring to the seats for the Roadster model.
172. D.Croft interview.
173. Interviews with Stan Wyatt, various dates. Kath Smith in Transport & General Workers' Union, 1980, p.7.
174. For example, Vauxhall - Interviews with Bert Edwards, 1981; and Morris Motors, Cowley - D.Croft interview.
175. See, for example, Automobile Engineer, Jan.1938, p.14.
176. Automobile Engineer, Oct.1915, p.290.
177. P.I.P.E., Vol.1, 1921-22, pp.254-255.
178. Automobile Engineer, Sep.1925, p.306 [Austin]. Television History Workshop, 1985, pp.12,126 [Morris]..
179. Machinery, Vol.44, Jun.1934, p.269. Automobile Engineer, Oct.1935, pp.369,373.
180. Automobile Engineer, Oct.1934, p.390-391.
181. Ibid, Sep.1926, p.323; Jun.1929, p.225; Oct.1934, p.365. Television History Workshop, 1985, p.46. Andrews & Brunner, 1959, p.197. Times: British Motor Number, 12-3-29, p.xxi.
182. Engelbach, op cit, p.508. Times: British Motor Number, 12-3-29, p.xv. Machinery, Vol.44, Jun.1934, p.286.
183. Standard Car Review, Oct.1931, pp.12-13; Jan.1932, pp.16-17; Feb.1932, p.16. Automobile Engineer, Feb.1933, p.45.
184. Standard Car Review, Jan. 18th 1937, pp.290,292.
185. See footnote 144.
186. Popular Motoring, Jan. 1938, pp.29,31-32,33 [including pictures] shows that at this stage the paint spraying did not take place on conveyors, and that body mounting and final trimming and finishing took place away from any line. For details of the new conveyors, see *ibid*, Oct.1938, p.25; Jan.1939, p.25; Jun.1939, p.33; Jul.1939, p.8.
187. Automobile Engineer, Jan.1927, p.14.
188. P.I.P.E., Vol.IV, 1924-25, p.162. Television History Workshop, 1985, pp.12,126. Automobile Engineer, Jun.1929, p.225.
189. Engelbach, op cit, p.523.
190. Standard Car Review, Oct.1931, p.13; Jan.1932, p.18.
191. Automobile Engineer, May 1930, p.167. Davison, 1931, p.43.
192. Automobile Engineer, Apr.1930, p.149.

193. Ibid, Oct.1934, pp.389-390.
194. Dyos & Aldcroft, 1974, pp.315,318-319.
195. Channon, 1981, p.202.
196. G.W.R. Magazine 1928, pp.225-226. Ibid, 1940, p.49. Lowe, 1975, p.83. Barrie, 1980, p.265. NUVB J Oct.1920.
197. NUVB J Nov.1925. Railway Gazette, Vol.55, 14-8-31, p.207. Engineer, 14-3-30, p.299; 18-7-30, p.433.
198. Lemon, 1930, p.425.
199. Ibid, p.421-422.
200. Ibid, p.421. Journal of the Institute of Transport, Vol.11, 1929-30, p.486.
201. Engineer 31-12-26, p.715.
202. Johnson & Long, 1981, p.504. NUVB J Jul.1931.
203. NUVB J Jul.1932.
204. Engineer 13-5-32, p.529; 3-6-32, p.613.
205. NUVB J Jul., Oct.1932.
206. Harris, 1973, pp.21,24.
207. NUVB J Dec.1923, Jun., Aug., Oct., Dec.1924, Jul.1925. Bagwell, 1963, p.490.
208. NUVB J Apr., Jul.1928. Bagwell, 1963, p.510.
209. NUVB J Jan., Apr., Jul., Oct.1930, Jan.1931.
210. NUVB Railway Shopmen's Conference, 27-9-30, with delegates from 22 branches, voted 26-5 in favour of short time rather than dismissals - see report in EC minute book. For NUR position, see Bagwell, 1963, pp.510-511; NUVB J Oct.1930.
211. Engineer 15-8-1930, p.173.
212. NUVB J Jul.1932, Jan., Apr., Oct.1933, Jan., Apr.1934.
213. See ibid Oct.1931 for Crewe loco paint shop.
214. See ibid Apr.1926 for members at Clapham Junction & Wimbledon.
215. See ibid Apr.1920 [Warrington]; Mar.1924 [Birkenhead]; Apr.1920, NUVB EC 14-9-29 [Melton Constable].
216. Price, 1982, pp.36-37.
217. Ibid, p.39.
218. Ibid, pp.22,17,38,39.
219. Ibid, pp.18,42.
220. NUVB J Mar.1923.

221. Ibid, May, Jul. 1923.
222. NUVB Railway Group meetings - LMS at Derby, 29-9-23; LNER at Doncaster, 6-10-23; SR at Eastleigh, 13-10-23; GWR at Swindon, 20-10-23. Typed reports by Assistant General Secretary Compton, loose in NUVB EC minute book.
223. NUVB J Dec. 1923.
224. Ibid, Sep. 1923.
225. Ibid, Apr. 1925, Mar., Oct. 1926, Jan., Jul., Oct. 1927.
226. Ibid, Feb., Apr. 1925.
227. Ibid, May, Jul. 1926, Jan., Oct. 1927.
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240. Acworth, 1900, p. 292 - describing the situation as at 1888 (p. xii).
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248. See footnote 246..

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250. Lemon, 1930, p.422.
251. L.N.E.R. Magazine, 1928, pp.293-296, 352-354.
252. Ibid, 1931, pp.332-334, 388-390.
253. P.I.M.E., 1929, p.753.
254. Semmens, 1985, pp.69-72. Apparently, the lay-out of the Swindon locomotive erecting shop made the introduction of the Crewe "belt system" difficult - Daily Worker, 16-8-34. This may have also been a contributory factor in the carriage building shops.
While the "belt system" had been introduced in the locomotive erecting and repair shops at the Crewe LMS works during 1925-27, this was not duplicated at the company's Derby locomotive shops, despite the advanced methods in carriage building - Nock, 1982, pp.72-76.
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pp.353-355.
270. Townsin, 1979, pp.9,13.
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Yearsley, 1962, p.158.
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294. Klapper, 1978, p.116. W.H.Pine - "Maintaining the Midland Red Fleet",
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301. Ibid, Jan., Jul., Oct.1932, Jan.1933.
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312. Ibid, p. 222. Scanlan, 1979, p. 30. Engineering, 3-2-22, p. 146. Railway Gazette, Vol. 36, 3-2-22, p. 180. NUVB J Oct. 1937.
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314. The early models had a wooden-framed very deep and heavy spring-filled seat, a double chair weighing about 60 pounds. In about 1933 a tubular metal chair was designed, with rubber filling, enabling the upholstery to be fitted and removed in one piece; this weighed almost half its predecessor - Railway Gazette, Vol. 69, 1-7-38, pp. 11-12.
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333. Barker & Robbins, 1974, pp. 295-297. NUVB J Jul. 1935.
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338. Barker & Robbins, 1974, p.237.
339. NUVB J Apr.1928, Oct.1929.
340. Ibid, Apr.1931. Barker & Robbins, 1974, p.238.
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349. Journal of the Institute of Transport, Vol.11, 1929-30, p.498.
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351. Yearsley, 1962, p.158.
352. Klapper, 1961, p.90. For details of Liverpool lay-offs, see chapter 7.
353. Klapper, 1961, pp.221-223. Bett & Gillham, 1962, p.140.
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355. Rush, 1976, p.3. Klapper, 1961, pp.200-201.
356. For example, 40 tramcars constructed in 1900 by Milnes of Birkenhead for Blackburn Corporation were all still in service when the system closed in 1949 and were "virtually as good as new", though all but 8 had had top covers fitted on at a later stage - Rush, 1976.
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358. Yearsley, 1962, pp.26,30.
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360. Ibid, pp.190,234,299,302.

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5. P.P. 1920, op cit, Evidence of John I.Steinitz, para 1,345.
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85. Starkey, op cit, Discussion, p.519.
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91. EEF W(8)53, Questionnaire, July 1929. CDEEA 6-5-29, citing report of vehicle building sub-committee 22-4-29.
92. Coventry NUVB 26-2-29, 12-3-29, 26-3-29, 9-4-29; NUVB J Jul.1929.
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94. See footnote 53. Recommendations also reproduced in EEF W(8)48. Prior to this meeting, the Coventry Association had written to the EEF on 7-6-26, stating the need for a "national policy" on cellulose - see EEF W(8)48. Coventry employers were told that it would not be considered to be infringing the newly-decided national policy if skilled labour were employed (presumably on spraying) during the experimental stage - CDEEA 26-7-26.
95. EEF W(8)48 - Smith (NUVB) to Daracq 31-5-26; Daracq to London Association 1-6-26; Works Conference 4-6-26.
96. EEF W(8)48 - Birmingham Association to EEF 14-7-26; Local Conference 21-7-26. NUVB J Oct.1926.
97. EEF W(8)51, Agreement with men's representatives, 1-9-27.
98. Ibid, Communication 24-7-29.
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101. Coventry NUVB 12-4-27.
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103. The only available figures are for January 1926, when cellulose was still being introduced. Austin employed 12 women in the paint shop, Wolseley 2, Rover 5, and Daracq 2. Interestingly, the Midland Railway Carriage & Wagon Company, though not using cellulose, claimed they had 33 women in their paint shop. EEF F(6)42, Coach Trimming Work Survey.
104. NUVB J Mar.1927.
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106. NUVB EC 29-1-27; NUVB J Apr.1927, Jul.1927; UKJWB Wages Conference 9-3-27.
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- Carriage & Wagon Company 3-7-29. EEF Joint Meeting of 4 National Technical Committees 3-7-29. NUVB EC 11-4-29. NUVB J Jul.1929.
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 128. Yorks & North East District Council 22-6-35, in NUVB J Oct.1935. NUVB EC 27-7-35.
 129. NFVT EC 18-5-36.
 130. NUVB EC 11-1-36. NUVB J Apr., Jul.1936.
 131. NUVB EC 9-1-37. NUVB J Apr., Jul.1937.
 132. NUVB EC 15-1-38. NUVB J Apr., Oct.1938.
 133. NUVB EC 8-12-44. NUVB J Jan.1945.
 134. Addenda to Memoranda of Agreement, UKJWB & SNVBA / NUVB & ASWM, 20-7-49. The principle behind this demarcation on spraying had been accepted ten years earlier by the union at a policy conference held just before the war - Report of Policy Conference 1/2-9-39 to Scottish District Council 23-9-39.
 135. Local Conference, CDEEA / NUVB & TGWU, 15-8-46. NUVB J Oct.1946.
 136. NUVB J Jan.1947.
 137. NUVB EC 18-1-47. Coventry NUVB 20-1-47. The NUVB had already reached an agreement with the TGWU in 1938 whereby the latter union agreed

- that in the repair and maintenance side of the road passenger transport industry, the NUVB should organise all craftsmen, including painters; that men engaged as brush hands (ie commencing with the first coat of lead colour or paint) and on following operations should also be in the NUVB; while those engaged prior to the brush hand's work should be in the TGWU. Where people were "inadvertently" in the wrong trade union they would be transferred - NUVB J Apr.1938.
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 140. Ibid 8-11-48. Report of Annual Delegate Meeting, May 31st to June 3rd 1949.
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 148. Scanlan, 1979, p.52; a picture of this process taken in February 1933 is shown on p.70.
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 239. Popular Motoring, Jun. 1933, pp.32-33. Culshaw, 1959, p.122.
 240. Automobile Engineer, Feb. 1939, p.42. S.M.M.T., 1974, p.10.
 241. Autocar, Oct. 22nd 1926, pp.695-696. Daimler had already developed an independent body sub-frame to counter the effect of chassis distortion upon coachwork - Automobile Engineer Jun.1935, p.228
 242. Autocar, Oct. 22nd 1926, p.696.
 243. Automobile Engineer, Jan. 1937, p.33.
 244. Mclellan, 1975, p.133. Dickinson, n.d., p.76 suggests Fisher & Ludlow were firmly established as producers of motor pressings by the end of the 1920s.
 245. Machinery, Vol.36, 1930, pp.649-650.
 246. Autocar, Jun. 14th 1929, p.1180.
 247. Automobile Engineer, Jan.1934, pp.15,17.
 248. Ibid, Apr. 1939, p.141. Rootes Gazette, Vol.7, No.1, Jan. 1950.

249. Whyte, 1980, p.106.
250. Oliver, 1962, p.183.
251. Automobile Engineer, Jan. 1937, p.34.
252. Ibid, p.33.
253. Ibid, p.34.
254. NUVB J Jul.1936.
255. Lloyd, 1978, p.133.
256. Ibid, pp.134-135.
257. Robotham, 1970, pp.197-200.
258. P.I.M.E., 1950, pp.301-302.
259. Automobile Engineer, Jun. 1960, p.214. G.Maxcy, "The Motor Industry",
in Cook, 1958, p.375.
260. NUVB J Jan.1937, Apr.1939.
261. Report of NUVB Annual Delegate Meeting 1950.
262. Automobile Engineer, Mar. 1939, p.101.
263. Ibid, Sep. 1934, p.353; Sep. 1937, p.351.
264. NUVB J Oct.1932.
265. Townsin, 1979, pp.16,14.
266. Townsin, 1980, p.7
267. Automobile Engineer, Apr. 1937, p.149.
268. Ibid, Aug. 1933, p.313; Aug. 1937, pp.313-315; Sep. 1937, pp. 351-352.
269. Townsin, 1980, pp.16,15.
270. Marshall, 1979, p.102. Townsin, 1980, p.171.
271. Ogden, 1976, pp.8,10.
272. Townsin, 1980, pp.13-14, 170.
273. Transport World, Vol.XCIX, 9 May 1946, p.398. Automobile Engineer
Mar.1939, pp.101-102. UKJWB National Conference 3-9-46.
274. The British Commercial Vehicle Industry, 1957, pp.132-133.
275. NUVB J Jan.1934.
276. EEF D(1)138, Survey October 1935 - Firm 'E'.
277. Automobile Engineer, Apr. 1937, pp.149-152.
278. EEF D(1)138, Survey October 1935.
279. EEF D(1)138, Works Conference 25-9-35; Memo of interview with
secretary of Leicester Association, 30-9-35.
280. see footnote 278.
281. Ibid.

282. NUVB EC 11-1-36. NUVB J Apr.1936. UKJWB Board Meeting 5-2-36.
283. UKJWB National Conference 1-8-46.
284. EEF D(1)192, Telephone information 27-9-37. Also see EEF S(9)13 on the 1937 Brush strike. When Brush were moving towards all-metal buses, they attempted in 1933 to introduce semi-skilled labour on some NUVB work. Taking advantage of a long suspension of most of their NUVB workforce, and a need to only restart a few, they gave formal notice, as required by the National Woodworkers' Agreement, of their intention to start a class of labour other than skilled. They argued that semi-skilled labour was used elsewhere, and they were facing intense competition. Eventually they agreed to confine this, for the time being, to juvenile labour, and consequently a disproportionate number of these were restarted - NUVB J Apr., Jul.1933, Jan., Apr.1934. Crossley contacted the EEF about demarcation on new all-metal buses in 1933, but no details have been kept - EEF Case Register 33/10C.
285. Price, 1982, pp.34-35. NUVB J Jul.1932. EEF D(1)138, phone memo 18-10-35. EEF D(1)192, telephone information 27-9-37.
286. NUVB J Jul., Oct.1935, Jul.1936.
287. Ibid, Jul.1938.
288. NUVB J Jul.1933, Jul.1934; Leyland branch letter in NUVB J Jul.1934; Manchester & Liverpool Joint District Council 15-12-34 in NUVB J Apr.1935; NUVB EC 7-4-34, 9-6-34, 26-1-35, 16-2-35, 9-3-35. EEF W(9)2 appx.14 - June 1950 survey.
289. NUVB J Jul.1932.
290. Ibid, Jul.1935, Apr.1936; NUVB EC 6-4-35, 1-6-35.
291. NUVB J Apr., Oct.1937, Jan.1938.
292. Ibid, Apr.1945.
293. Glasgow NUVB 9-2-15, 20-2-15, 3-3-15.
294. Ibid, 7-9-26, 14-9-26, 4-10-26; NUVB J Oct.1926.
295. Glasgow NUVB 11-11-26; NUVB J Jan.1927.
296. In 1927 the tinsmiths' foreman was put over the 4 NUVB coach fitters; despite intense opposition, nothing could be done about this - Glasgow NUVB 2-8-27, 16-8-27, 23-8-27; NUVB J Oct.1927. The next year, an ex-AEU engineering fitter was started as a coach fitter at Cowiesons, and the branch reluctantly eventually admitted him into membership - Glasgow NUVB 27-3-28, 8-5-28, 22-5-28, 12-6-28. A few months later,

- when an AEU smith was started, strong NUVB branch opposition forced his dismissal - *Ibid*, 16-10-28, 17-10-28, 23-10-28; NUVB EC 15-10-28. Soon after this the company threatened to take on engineering fitters if they could not get the right class of coach fitters. But the AEU refused to be drawn into this, and after a blacksmith fitter had been discharged for slowness, the manager promised only to employ NUVB labour in the future, and would seek the union's permission if he wanted to start a member of any other union - *Glasgow NUVB* 13-11-28, 20-11-28; *NUVB J* Jan. 1929.
297. *Glasgow NUVB* 4-12-28, 11-12-28, 18-12-28. A year later, the Glasgow branch committee were trying to arrange another meeting with the tinsmiths' union over the work they were doing there - *ibid*, 17-12-29.
298. *Scottish District Council* 28-12-29; *NUVB J* Apr. 1930.
299. *Glasgow NUVB* 11-2-30; *Scottish District Council* 29-3-30.
300. "Precis of questionnaire re methods applying on Sheet Metal Work", report by G. Symington 17-5-30; *Scottish District Council* 28-6-30; *NUVB J* Jul. 1930.
301. *Glasgow NUVB* 17-6-30; *NUVB J* Jan. 1931.
302. *Glasgow NUVB* 6-9-32; *NUVB J* Oct. 1932.
303. *Glasgow NUVB* 13-9-32. Midway through the Cowlesons' dispute, the question of organisation of sheet metal workers at the Edinburgh Corporation Shrubhill Car Works had arisen. Unorganised for at least six years, these workers were hostile to the Sheet Metal union, and more willing to join the NUVB. Against the advice of the Scottish organiser, the Scottish District Council voted in favour of organising them - *Scottish District Council* 24-12-32.
304. *Ibid*, 20-9-32, 27-9-32, 4-10-32, 18-10-32.
305. *Ibid* 20-9-32, 4-10-32, 25-10-32.
306. *Ibid* 11-10-32, 18-10-32, 15-11-32, 6-12-32, 13-12-32; *NUVB J* Jan. 1933.
307. *Glasgow NUVB* 10-11-32, 29-11-32.
308. *Ibid* 18-12-32, 20-12-32.
309. *Ibid* 14-2-33, 21-2-33, 28-2-33.
310. *Ibid* 14-3-33, 21-3-33.
311. *Ibid* 26-3-33, 28-3-33, 4-4-33, 11-4-33.
312. *Ibid* 18-4-33; *NUVB J* Jul. 1933.
313. *NUVB J* Apr., Jul. 1935, Jan. 1936; *NUVB EC* 6-4-35, 13-4-35, 1-6-35,

7-9-35.

314. NUVB J Jan., Apr., Oct.1935; NUVB EC 16-2-35, 9-3-35.
315. NUVB J Oct.1934, Jan., Apr., Jul.1935.
- 316 Ibid Oct.1935, Jan.1936.
317. Ibid Jan., Oct.1936, Jan.1937; NUVB EC 11-7-36. Early in 1938, when the management at the Corporation's Coplawhill works had no alternative but to strictly apply the S.T.U.C. award and employ a coachsmith, the Associated Blacksmiths struck for over a fortnight before reaching an understanding with the NUVB - NUVB J Apr.1938.
318. NUVB J Jan.1937.
319. The Joint Working Agreement was signed by both unions in March 1936, each union giving an undertaking to the S.T.U.C. that there would be joint consultations before either party could approach employers on questions affecting demarcation, wages, or working conditions. The NUVB also accused the Sheet Metal Workers of approaching the S.N.V.B.A. for an agreement to cover the wages and working conditions of sheet metal workers, despite earlier intimations they would do this jointly - ibid Apr., Jul., Oct.1937, Jan.1938.
320. Ibid Jul., Oct.1938, Oct.1939.
321. Ibid Jan.1943.
322. Ibid Oct.1941, Jan.1942.
323. In 1941 at the Central S.M.T. Company works in Motherwell, and in 1945 at the Croft Motor Body Building Company - ibid Jan.1942, Apr.1945.
324. Ibid Jul., Oct.1942.
325. For example, all-metal single-deck tramcars, built by both Dick Kerr and Brush for the LCC Kingsway tram subway after 1905, were 20% more expensive than wooden ones - Price, 1976, p.24.
326. Essery, Rowland & Steel, 1970, pp.25-26.
327. G.W.R. Magazine, 1936, p.213.
328. Harris, 1966, p.20.
329. J.I.L.E., 1934, p.649.
330. Price, 1976, p.24.
331. Price, 1977, pp.25-26.
332. Railway Magazine, Vol.34, 1914, p.169.
333. see Bruce, 1979.
334. Marshall, 1970, p.165.

335. Ibid, pp.175-176.
336. J.I.L.E., Vol.47, 1957, p.340.
337. G.W.R. Magazine, 1936, pp.478-479.
338. Ibid, 1924, p.415.
339. Ibid, 1936, p.479.
340. Ibid, 1924, p.415.
341. Ibid, 1936, p.479. Harris, 1966, p.39.
342. Railway Magazine, Vol.40, 1917, p.87.
343. G.W.R. Magazine, 1914, p.215; ibid, 1924, p.415.
344. Ibid, 1936, p.479. Harris, 1966, p.23.
345. Harris, 1966, p.31. Victoria County History, 1959, p.218.
346. Paper by J.W.Innes to Swindon Junior Engineering Society in 1939, cited in Harris, 1966, p.20.
347. Machinery, Vol.28, 30-6-26, pp.351-352. Engineer, Vol.141, 1926, p.478. Railway Gazette, 23-4-26, pp.582-583.
348. Essery & Jenkinson, 1977, p.23.
349. NUVB J Apr.1939.
350. Welding, Vol.15, 1947, p.107.
351. Harris, 1973, pp.82,78.
352. Kitchenside, 1980, pp.33,35-36. J.I.L.E., 1948, pp.205-206.
353. There were possibly thousands of wood screws fixing the panelling on the outside of a railway carriage, some large panels having a double row about two inches apart. All screws had to be dipped in "tallow" before being replaced - Gibbs, 1986, p.19.
354. Swindon - EEF V(9)2 appx.14, extract from conference 29-8-22.
Wolverton - EEF V(9)2 appx.16.
355. UKSC EC 6-7-14, 8-7-14, 2-2-15.
356. P.I.M.E., 1927, p.682.
357. Price, 1982, p.39. Machinery, Vol.28, 30-6-26, p.354.
358. NUVB EC 16-4-38, 26-11-38, 7-1-39. NUVB J Apr.1939 - EC report and letter from Derby branch secretary.
359. NUVB EC 19-8-39, 31-8-39.
360. NUVB J Apr.1939.
361. York NUVB 3-4-39, 5-7-39, 3-8-39.
362. NUVB EC 17-11-39, 2-12-39. NUVB J Jul.1946.
363. NUVB EC 16-4-39, 10-6-39. NUVB J Jul.1939. Scottish District Council,

- 24-6-39.
364. Delegate Meeting Report in NUVB EC minute book. NUVB J Oct.1939.
365. Scottish District Council 25-3-39. Coventry NUVB 28-3-39. District Council reports, especially Southern, South-West, Manchester, Irish, March/April 1939 in NUVB J Jul.1939.
366. Liverpool District Council 24-6-39 in NUVB J Oct.1939. Manchester District Council 23-9-39 in NUVB J Jan.1940.
367. NUVB J Jul.,Oct.1939, Jan.1940, Jul.1941.
368. Ibid, Oct.1939.
369. Ibid, Jul.1940.
370. NUVB EC 19-10-40, 7-9-41.
371. Proposals submitted to NUVB Annual Delegate Meeting, 1945.
372. Report of NUVB Annual Delegate Meeting 1946, p.8.
373. NUVB EC 6-1-45, 13-4-45, 2-6-45, 24-11-45.
374. UKJWB National Conference 1-8-46.
375. Ibid, 3-9-46.
376. NUVB J Oct.1946. NUVB EC 31-8-46.
377. NUVB J Jan.1947. NUVB EC 1-11-46, 17-1-47.
378. Report of NUVB Annual Delegate Meeting 1948, pp.55-56.
379. NUVB J Jan.1950.
380. Ibid, Apr.1950.
381. York NUVB n.d. [early 1944].
382. Kitchenside, 1980, pp.41-42.
383. Harris, 1973, pp.25,84,85,88.
384. Ibid, p.79. Kitchenside, 1980, pp.44,47.
385. NUVB J Jan.1951. J.I.L.E., 1948, pp.217-218.
386. NUVB J Apr.,Jul.,Oct.1946. NUVB EC 19-1-46, 26-5-46, 29-6-46, 27-7-46. T.U.C. Annual Report, 1946, p.36.
387. NUVB J Jan.1948.
388. Wolverton Agreement in EEF W(9)2 Appx.16.
389. Ibid, Oct.1949.
390. Information from EEF W(9)2 Appx.16 - Birmingham Local Conference, 21-8-51. NUVB J Jan.1951.
391. NUVB J Jan.,Jul.1952.
392. Ibid, Apr.1952.
393. Ibid, Oct.1949, Jan.,Apr.,Jul.1950.

394. Ibid, Jul., Oct. 1952.
395. Ibid, Oct. 1950.
396. EEF W(9)2 appx.16 - Woodworkers' Ad Hoc Committee 29-8-51: report of 22-6-50 meeting.
397. NUVB J Apr. 1951.
398. EEF W(9)2 appx.16 - Metro-Cammell to Birmingham Association 20-8-51; Local Conference 21-8-51; EEF to Pressed Steel Linwood 24-8-51. NUVB J Jul. 1951.
399. EEF W(9)2 appx.16 - Woodworkers Ad Hoc Committee Report 30-8-51.
400. NUVB J Jan., Apr. 1952.
401. Ibid, Jul., Oct. 1952. EEF W(9)2 appx.16 - Notes 9-5-52, 12-5-52.
402. EEF W(9)2 appx.19 - Birmingham Association to EEF, 18-11-52. NUVB J Jan. 1953.
403. NUVB J Jan., Jul. 1953.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER 7

1. UKSC 280, Oct.1918.
2. NUVB EC 22-11-19.
3. Wakefield NUVB 9-10-19.
4. NUVB EC 5-6-20.
5. During 1919, 2 labourers, 1 moulder's labourer, and 3 packers joined - LPCTU Proposal Books.
6. NUVB EC 28-11-20.
7. NUVB J Oct.1920.
8. Coventry NUVB 10-8-20, 17-8-20, 7-9-20; NUVB EC 29-8-20.
9. NUVB J Jan., Apr., Jul.1920.
10. Ibid Apr., Jul.1921.
11. Hyman, 1971, p.130-132.
12. Scottish District Council, 24-12-21.
13. Ibid 24-3-23.
14. NUVB EC 1-1-23.
15. Ibid 27-10-23.
16. Ibid 19-7-25.
17. For example, when Saltley branch asked permission for a semi-skilled table member to transfer to Table A, the EC agreed "if man is vouched for as competent and branch agrees" - NUVB EC 7-4-24.
18. Coventry NUVB Branch Cash Book Jan.1926 - Dec.1950.
19. EEF M(15)36, Local Conference 21-8-19.
20. Ibid.
21. EEF W(8)16, A.E.Smith (Joint secretary of J.I.C.) to EEF 21-2-19.
22. The conference dates were as follows: 23-5-19; 8-7-19; 22-10-19; 31-10-19; 18-11-19; 3-12-19; 11-12-19; 31-12-19; 19-2-20; 29-4-20 [Woodcutting machinists only]; 13-5-20.
23. EEF W(8)5, Conference 31-10-19.
24. EEF W(8)6, Conference 18-11-19.
25. EEF W(8)8, Conference 11-12-19.
26. NUVB EC 24-1-20. EEF W(8)10, A.E.Smith(NUVB) to EEF 30-1-20.
27. EEF W(8)10, Conference 19-2-20.
28. "Memorandum of Agreement between the Engineering and the National

Employers' Federations, and the National Union of Vehicle Builders, and Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists". Operative from "the first full pay following 21st June 1920". Reproduced in NUVB J Jul.1920.

29. EEF W(8)16, copy of ballot paper sent by NUVB to EEF, 21-4-20.
30. Ibid, NUVB to EEF 7-6-20. NUVB J Apr.1920. The vote was 3,888 - 4,243.
31. EEF W(8)16, NUVB to EEF 23-6-20. NUVB EC 5/6-6-20. NUVB J Jul.1920. The vote was 6,441 - 4,426, though the engineering centres of the Midlands voted solidly against: Birmingham, 57-201; Coventry, 135-524; Wolverhampton, 93-206.
32. EEF W(8)16, Coventry Association to EEF, 13-4-20.
33. See footnote 28.
34. NUVB J Jan.1920.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid, Jul.1920.
37. For federated motor firms see, eg, EEF M(15)101 and F(6)42.
38. EEF Case Register, 21/582, July 1921.
39. EEF W(8)25, EEF to Local Associations 9-9-22. W(8)26, Conference 5-12-22. Memorandum of Agreement of 6-12-22 reproduced in NUVB J Mar.1923.
40. EEF W(8)26, Coventry Association to EEF, 19-4-23, 24-4-23, 16-5-23. CDEEA 23-4-23, 16-7-23.
41. EEF W(8)43, A.E.Smith (NUVB) to Vickers 15-7-22; Local Conference 28-8-22. W(8)26, Conference 5-12-22. NUVB EC 13-9-21, 1-10-21.
42. EEF W(8)29, Local Conference 28-11-22.
43. EEF W(8)31, Central Conference 11-5-23.
44. BEEA 27-4-23, minute 1677; 14-5-23, minute 1681; 8-10-23, minute 1802; 21-6-27, minute 3057. NUVB J Oct.1923.
45. Ibid, Mar.1924.
46. BEEA 27-10-25, minute 2301; 10-11-25, minute 2313.
47. Ibid, Mar., Jun.1924, Apr.1925.
48. EEF Central Conference, 14-11-24. EEF W(8)44, Leyland Motors to Preston Association 11-12-24; Works Conference 22-12-24; Floyd (NUVB) to Preston Association 5-1-25; Works Conference 9-1-25.
49. NUVB EC 1-3-24. EEF W(8)41, NUVB to EEF 3-3-24. W(8)40, Conferences 23-5-24, 22-7-24.

50. EEF W(8)41, EEF to NUVB 7-8-24; EEF to Local Associations 24-10-24. W(8)40, Conference 23-10-24.
51. CDEEA 3-11-24 - report of Vehicle Building sub-committee 28-10-24. EEF W(8)41, Management Board Meeting 30-10-24.
52. EEF W(8)40, Conference 15-1-25. EEF Special Negotiating Committee & Woodworkers' Committee, 15-1-25.
53. Ibid, Conference 1-5-25.
54. Ibid, Conference 23-5-24.
55. EEF Special Negotiating Committee & Special Woodworkers' Committee, 11-9-24, 6-10-24. CDEEA 1-9-24, 6-10-24, 3-11-24. NUVB J Oct., Nov. 1924. NUVB EC 26-8-24, 20-9-24, 26-9-24, 6-10-24.
56. NUVB EC 14-2-25. EEF W(8)40, Conference 4-3-25. EEF Special Negotiating Committee & Woodworkers' Committee 4-3-25.
57. NUVB to EEF 5-3-25, cited in EEF Special Negotiating Committee & Woodworkers' Committee 18-3-25.
58. EEF Special Negotiating Committee & Woodworkers' Committee 18-3-25. The Gloucester strike started 10-3-25. EEF B(2)5, Daimler to EEF, 17-3-25; EEF to Daimler, 18-3-25.
59. Report of meeting of EAENF, NFVT, NEAVB, & SNVB 20-3-25.
60. NUVB EC 21-3-25. EEF Special Negotiating Committee & Woodworkers' Committee 25-3-25.
61. NUVB EC 21-3-25, 29-3-25. EEF Special Negotiating Committee & Woodworkers' Committee 31-3-25, 1-5-25.
62. EEF Conferences 6-2-51, 21-11-51, 19-3-52.
63. NUVB J Apr. 1935.
64. Ibid, Jul. 1932. EEF W(9)2 appx. 14, Austin to EEF 18-2-52.
65. UKJWB Wages Board 30-1-29, 19-2-30. UKJWB Wages Conference 13-2-29, 19-2-30. NUVB J Jul. 1931, Jul. 1934. NFVT EC 8-11-34.
It should be pointed out that Scottish NUVB members were covered by a separate agreement with the SNVBA, which did not introduce any grading.
66. Jefferys, 1946, p.260.
67. P.I.M.E. 1918, pp.258,261,264,266,267-268.
68. Railway Magazine, Vol.32, 1913, p.371, p.31. Bremner, 1869, p.102. P.I.M.E. 1908, p.782; 1900, p.482.
69. Railway Magazine, Vol.1, 1897, p.450; Vol.35, 1914, p.259.
70. Ibid, Vol.35, 1914, p.427.

71. P.I.M.E. 1898, p.468. Railway Magazine, Vol.7, 1900, p.488.
72. Correspondence: Nicholson (UKSC) to Ministry of Munitions, 30-11-15; Askwith (Chief Industrial Commissioner) to Nicholson, 10-12-15, 14-12-15, 3-1-16; Nicholson to Askwith, 22-12-15. Nicholson to Newton Heath UKSC, 10-1-16. UKSC EC 16-11-15, 21-12-15, 4-1-16, 12-1-16. UKSC 269, Jan.1916.
73. UKSC 280, Oct.1918. Kinggate to Cripwell (Saltley UKSC), 28-8-12. UKSC EC 28-8-12, 14-9-12.
74. Coventry NUVB 4-2-19, 1-4-19, 14-7-19.
75. EEF W(8)3, Local Conference 30-7-19.
76. Coventry NUVB 11-8-19.
77. EEF W(8)3, Local Conference 30-7-19.
78. EEF F(6)33, Local Conference 25-8-19.
79. Coventry NUVB 20-12-21, 28-2-22, 7-3-22.
80. Ibid 11-2-24, 14-2-24; 23-6-24.
81. CDEEA 20-8-23, 29-10-23, 18-2-24.
82. Coventry NUVB 15-12-25, 29-12-25, 5-1-26. NUVB EC 9-1-26.
83. EEF F(6)42, Local Conference 22-1-26.
84. Coventry NUVB 3-2-26.
85. Ibid 10-2-26.
86. NUVB EC 13-2-26.
87. EEF F(6)42, NUVB interviews with firms 15-2-26, 16-2-26, 17-2-26. CDEEA 1-3-26.
88. NUVB J Mar., Apr.1926. CDEEA 22-3-26, 12-4-26.
89. EEF F(6)42, National Technical Committees 2-3-26.
90. EEF F(6)42, Coach Trimming Work Survey, 1926. EEF P(20)5, phone memo, Varley to EEF, 6-9-30. Figures for May 1924 show, subject to the rider in chapter 8, footnote 2: Rover - 43; Standard - 29; Humber 19 [trim shop females in all three]; Armstrong-Siddeley - 8 trim shop, and 6 paint shop - EEF W(8)41.
91. NUVB EC 8/9-11-24.
92. Ibid 19-7-25.
93. Manchester District Council 19-9-25 in NUVB J Nov.1925.
94. Coventry NUVB 25-8-25, 2-9-25, 22-9-25, 29-9-25; NUVB J Jan.1926.
95. Joint meeting of Liverpool & Manchester District Councils, 19-12-25 in NUVB J Feb.1926.

96. CDEEA 20-9-26, 10-5-27; EEF F(6)42, Coventry Association to EEF 9-4-27; EEF to Coventry Association 13-4-27.
97. Coventry NUVB 27-9-27, 11-10-27, 22-11-27, 29-11-27. EEF F(6)42, Coventry Association to EEF 7-12-27; phone memo Coventry Association & EEF 12-12-27; EEF to Coventry Association 16-12-27.
98. Coventry NUVB 30-5-28; special rules sub-committee 17-1-28, 23-1-28, 28-2-28.
99. Coventry NUVB - meetings of Singer workers 9-2-28, 6-3-28; special rules sub-committee 23-1-28.
100. Coventry NUVB 4-4-28, 4-7-28.
101. EEF W(8)40, Conference 1-5-25.
102. NUVB J Feb.1926.
103. Ibid, Jan.1927.
104. Ibid.
105. Scottish District Council, 25-12-26.
106. Yorks & North East District Council 5-3-27, in NUVB J Apr.1927.
107. Joint Meeting of Manchester & Liverpool District Councils, 22-1-27, in NUVB J Apr.1927.
108. Milne report of 12-3-27 EC meeting to Scottish District Council, 26-3-27.
109. Coventry NUVB 9-3-27. NUVB EC 11-3-27.
110. NUVB J Apr.1927.
111. Ibid, Jan.1927.
112. See footnote 108.
113. Liverpool District Council 25-6-27, in NUVB J Oct.1927.
114. NUVB EC 23-7-27, 10-9-27. Milne report of 10-9-27 EC to Scottish District Council 24-12-27.
115. NUVB EC 10-9-27. NUVB J Oct.1927.
116. Scottish District Council 24-12-27.
117. Annual Joint meeting of Manchester & Liverpool District Councils, 17-12-27, in NUVB J Apr.1928. The EC (28-1-28) "duly noted" this proposal.
118. NUVB J Oct.1928.
119. South West Area Council 23-6-28, in NUVB J Oct.1928.
120. South West Area Council 22-9-28, in NUVB J Jan.1929.
121. Manchester District Council 15-9-28, in NUVB J Jan.1929.

122. Liverpool District Council 23-6-28, in NUVB J Oct.1928.
123. Delegate Meeting report in NUVB J Jan.1929.
124. 1928 Conference Report in NUVB Rules Conference Notes 1924-1946 (manuscript). Resolutions in NUVB J Jul.1928. NUVB General Secretary letter to branches, 10-12-28.
125. NUVB J Jan.1929.
126. Joint Meeting of Manchester & Liverpool District Councils, 17-12-28; Yorks & North East District Council, 15-12-28; South West Area Council 29-12-28 - all in NUVB J Apr.1929. Scottish District Council 29-12-28.
127. Coventry NUVB 19-2-29, 3-4-29. NUVB EC 2-3-29. NUVB J Apr.1929.
128. South West Area Council, 30-3-29, in NUVB J Jul.1929.
129. Scottish District Council, 23-3-29, in NUVB J Jul.1929; Milne report to Scottish District Council, 23-3-29.
130. NUVB General Secretary to Symington, 18-6-29.
131. Scottish District Council, 28-12-29.
132. Coventry NUVB 3-4-29 gives first figure; NUVB J Jul.1929 gives second figure.
133. NUVB J Jul.1930. It was claimed that over 100 women joined the TGWU - Milne report of 3-5-30 EC meeting to Scottish District Council 28-6-30.
134. Ibid; Coventry NUVB 25-2-30, 21-3-30.
135. Coventry NUVB 21-3-30, 25-3-30; Buckle (Coventry NUVB) to NUVB General Secretary, 29-3-30.
136. EEF P(20)5, Report of Bedaux strike for Ministry of Labour, compiled 24-9-30, records 7-4-30 meeting of Wilks (Rover) and Varley (Coventry Association) with EEF where it was agreed NUVB should attend future meetings; Local Conference 14-4-30. Coventry NUVB 9-4-30, 15-4-30.
137. EEF P(20)5, Central conference 9-5-30.
138. Coventry NUVB 17-6-30, 23-6-30, 8-7-30.
139. CDEEA 23-6-30, 7-7-30. EEF P(20)5, phone memo Varley to EEF, 23-7-30.
140. Ibid, Coventry Association to EEF, 19-8-30.
141. Coventry NUVB 12-8-30.
142. See footnote 140.
143. EEF P(20)5, Coventry Association to EEF, 22-8-30.
144. NUVB EC 23-8-30. Coventry NUVB 28-8-30, 29-8-30. EEF P(20)5, Varley to EEF, 29-8-30.

145. EEF P(20)5, Coventry Association to EEF, 22-8-30; phone memo, Varley to EEF, 25-8-30.
146. Ibid, phone memo, Varley to EEF, 6-9-30; phone memo, EEF to Varley, 8-9-30.
147. Ibid, phone memo Varley to EEF, 26-8-30; phone memo, Varley to EEF, 4-9-30.
148. Ibid, Varley to EEF, 1-9-30; phone memo, Varley to EEF, 3-9-30; phone memo, Varley to EEF, 4-9-30. CDEEA 8-9-30.
149. Ibid, phone memo, Varley to EEF, 9-9-30. Coventry NUVB 8-9-30.
150. Ibid, phone memo, Varley to EEF, 6-9-30; phone memo, Dalglish to EEF, 6-9-30.
151. Ibid, phone memo, Wilks (ringing from Bevin's office) to EEF, 10-9-30. CDEEA 15-9-30.
152. Ibid, Coventry Association to EEF, 12-9-30. CDEEA 15-9-30.
153. Ibid, Nicholson (NUVB) to EEF, 22-9-30; phone memo, Dalglish to EEF, 15-10-30; Regional Counties Committee, 24-2-31.
Nicholson to Symington (Scottish NUVB organiser) 20-12-30.
154. Ibid, phone memos, Nicholson to EEF, 10-9-30 (twice), 11-9-30.
155. Ibid, EEF to Nicholson, 19-9-30; Nicholson to EEF, 22-9-30.
156. NUVB J Jul.1930.
157. Ibid.
158. Coventry NUVB 8-10-30.
159. Yorks & North East District Council, 14-6-30, in NUVB J Oct.1930. NUVB EC 19-7-30, 23-8-30, 22-11-30.
160. Scottish District Council, 4-10-30 in NUVB J Jan.1931. Scottish District Council to EC 8-10-30. Liverpool District Council, 4-10-30 in NUVB J Jan.1931.
161. NUVB EC 22-11-30; Milne EC report to Scottish District Council, 27-12-30.
162. Scottish District Council, 27-12-30.
163. Phillips, 1976, p.286.
164. The NUR paid out £935,000 in strike benefit alone (equivalent to approximately half its total assets at the time), and a further £1½m in unemployment benefit by April 1927; and ASLEF was proportionately even harder hit. Bagwell, 1963, pp.495-496.
165. Bullock, 1960, p.353.

166. Musson, 1954, pp.362-363.
167. Hyman, 1971, p.136. Phillips concedes the financial consequences of the General Strike on the Workers' Union - Phillips, 1976, p.285.
168. NUVB J Oct.1926. NUVB EC 3-7-26, 7-8-26.
169. NUVB J Oct.1926.
170. NUVB J Jul.1930.
171. Ibid, Oct.1930. NUVB EC 23-8-30.
172. NUVB J Jan.1931. NUVB EC 27-9-30, 23-11-30.
173. NUVB J Apr.1931. NUVB EC 17-1-31. Milne report of 14/15-3-31 EC meeting to Scottish District Council 28-3-31.
174. NUVB J Jul.1931. NUVB EC 15-3-31.
175. NUVB J Oct.1931.
176. Ibid, Jan.1932. NUVB - "Partial Alteration of Rules, Adopted at a Delegate Meeting at Manchester, December 1931."
177. NUVB J Jul., Oct.1932. NUVB EC 4-6-32, 11-6-32.
178. NUVB J Oct.1932. NUVB EC 19-9-31, 10-9-32. Reporting on the latter meeting to the Scottish District Council on 24-9-32, Milne is minuted as follows: "the CWS Bank is still calling the tune, and have notified us that the efforts made to placate them were not drastic enough, and unless an immediate and substantial reduction on Bank overdraft is forthcoming, payment would be stopped."
The role of the CWS Bank in trade union finances during this period would merit further investigation. During a financial crisis faced by the similarly sized Shipwrights in 1931, the Newcastle CWS Bank manager wrote to them: "you should either take immediate steps to increase the contributions of your members or suspend or drastically reduce your benefits until the financial condition of your Society is once more on a satisfactory basis". Dougan, 1975, p.249.
179. Milne report of 10/11-9-32 EC meeting to Scottish District Council 24-9-32.
180. NUVB J Oct.1932. NUVB EC 10-9-32.
181. Coventry NUVB 4-10-32. NUVB J Jul.1933.
182. Milne report of 26/27-11-32 EC to Scottish District Council 24-12-32.
183. NUVB EC 27-11-32, 11-3-33, 27-5-33.
184. NUVB J Jan.1927. Manchester No.1 Branch resolution 7-1-27 in NUVB J Apr.1927. Manchester & Liverpool District Councils joint meeting

22-1-27 in NUVB J Apr.1927. NUVB J Oct.1927, Oct.1929.

However, Milne's report of the 2-3-29 EC meeting to the Scottish District Council of 25-3-29, mentioned that the London District Committee were demanding the services of an organiser pending a new appointment, and recorded that "This is a vexed question at practically every meeting."

185. Liverpool District Council 23-3-35 in NUVB J Jul.1935.
186. NUVB J Oct.1932.
187. Ibid, Jan.1933.
188. Ibid, Apr.1933.
189. NUVB J Apr., Jul., Oct.1933. NUVB EC 11-3-33, 27-5-33, 26-8-33, 9-9-33.
190. NUVB J Jul.1934. NUVB EC 9-6-34.
191. NUVB J Jan.1935, Jan.1936. NUVB EC 1-12-34, 7-12-35.
192. NUVB J Apr.1931.
193. Ibid, Oct.1931. Liverpool District Council, June 1931, in *ibid*.
194. 1931 Conference Report in NUVB Rules Conference Notes 1924-1946 (manuscript).
195. EEF F(6)42, Coach Trimming Work Survey 1926. 60 women were recorded as working on trimming, and 65 more in "any other woodworking department", making it the second largest user of female labour in coachbuilding work after Austin.
196. For example, the Glasgow branch resolution "That believing the excessive number of brush hands constitute a serious menace to the skilled painters' standard, so far as possible the entrance of brush hands into our society and shops be discouraged", which was agreed at the District Council - Glasgow NUVB 20-3-28; Scottish District Council 24-3-28. Prior to this, the Glasgow branch had refused membership to a brush hand seeking to join, and when the same man started work at Cowiesons, the organiser got him discharged - Glasgow NUVB 24-1-28, 31-1-28. At the same time as trying to protect the painters' status, the branch still believed in the organisation of brush hands. When, the previous year, Cowiesons had started a non-union brush hand, the branch got him discharged, as there were NUVB brush hands unemployed - *ibid* 16-8-27, 23-8-27. The branch was very strict over refusing admission to brush hands when they had unemployed members available -

- ibid 20-4-26, 10-5-27.
197. NUVB J Jan.1932.
 198. Ibid, Apr.1932.
 199. NUVB EC 27-2-32, 2-4-32.
 200. Ibid, 3-3-34.
 201. Ibid, 27-2-32.
 202. NUVB J Jan.1937.
 203. Ibid, Jan.1932.
 204. NUVB EC 7-4-34, 3-11-34, 2-12-34.
 205. NUVB J Jan.1932.
 206. Glasgow NUVB 10-11-32, 9-2-33, 4-5-33, 15-8-33. Though the branch prevailed upon an existing Coplawhill member not to transfer to the Industrial Section - ibid 21-2-33. During the dispute with the Sheet Metal workers at Cowiesons, Glasgow branch insisted on two members of the Coppersmiths joining the NUVB Industrial Section - ibid 4-10-32, 18-10-32. The branch also recruited 6 brush hands and a hammerman from the Glasgow Corporation Cleansing department into the Industrial Section - ibid 1-3-32, 19-4-32.
 207. NUVB EC 19-9-32, 22-10-32.
 208. Milne report of 27-5-33 EC meeting to Scottish District Council, 24-6-33, in NUVB J Oct.1933.
 209. NUVB J Jul., Oct.1935, Jul.1936. Also see chapter 6.
 210. Birmingham No.1 branch 66 I.S. members compared to 70 recruits; Birmingham No.2 branch 91 I.S. members compared to 73 recruits.
 211. NUVB EC 21-10-33. NUVB J Oct.1933.
 212. NUVB EC 2-4-32, 19-9-32, 22-10-32.
 213. Coventry NUVB Cash Book, Jan.1926 - Dec.1950. Coventry NUVB 26-9-33, 3-10-33.
 214. NUVB J Jan.1932.
 215. Ibid, Apr.1932.
 216. Liverpool District Council 19-3-32 in NUVB J Jul.1932; 25-6-32 in NUVB J Oct.1932.
 217. Annual Joint Meeting of Liverpool and Manchester District Councils, 17-12-32 in NUVB J Apr.1933.
 218. NUVB EC 26-8-33.
 219. Southern District Council 17-9-32 in NUVB J Jan.1933; 17-12-32 in

- NUVB J Apr.1933.
220. Manchester District Council 25-3-33 in NUVB J Jul.1933; 23-9-33 in NUVB J Jan.1934.
 221. Annual Joint Meeting of Liverpool & Manchester District Councils, 15-12-34, in NUVB J Apr.1935.
 222. NUVB EC 9-3-35, 13-4-35, 1-6-35.
 223. Ibid, 27-7-35. Manchester District Council 28-9-35 in NUVB J Jan.1936. Annual Joint meeting of Liverpool & Manchester District Councils 21-12-35 in NUVB J Apr.1936.
 224. South West Area Council 22-6-35 in NUVB J Oct.1935.
 225. NUVB J Apr.1936.
 226. Ibid, Jan.1937.
 227. Ibid, Jul.1936.
 228. Ibid, Apr.1937.
 229. NUVB EC 6-3-37.
 230. Ibid, 8-6-38.
 231. Swindon NUVB to General Secretary, 18-2-38, in NUVB J Apr.1938.
 232. South West Area Council 26-3-38 in NUVB J Jul.1938.
 233. NUVB J Apr.1938.
 234. Liverpool District Council 25-6-38 in NUVB J Oct.1938.
 235. NUVB J Oct.1938.
 236. Southern District Council 25-6-38 in NUVB J Oct.1938.
 237. NUVB J Oct.1934.
 238. Ibid, Sep.1923.
 239. Letter from H.Cook, Northampton, NUVB J Oct.1937.
 240. NUVB Rules adopted by Delegate Meeting, November 1928, Rule 35, section 5.
 241. Webb & Webb, 1926, Part II, ch.I, pp.152-172 - "The Method of Mutual Insurance".
 242. NUVB J Nov.1925.
 243. Ibid, Apr.1931.
 244. Ibid, Apr.1923.
 245. Ibid, Oct.1927
 246. Ibid, Jul.1931.
 247. Ibid, Jan.1932.
 248. Ibid, Jul.1932.

249. Ibid, Jan., Apr.1933.
250. Ibid, Jan.1933.
251. South West Area Council 18-6-32, in NUVB J Oct.1932.
252. Scottish District Council 25-6-32, in NUVB J Oct.1932.
253. Manchester District Council 18-6-32, in NUVB J Oct.1932.
254. Liverpool District Council 25-6-32, in NUVB J Oct.1932.
255. Manchester District Council 22-9-34, in NUVB J Jan.1935. Coventry NUVB 3-10-34.
256. Scottish District Council, 24-6-33, in NUVB J Oct.1933.
257. NUVB J Oct.1936.
258. Ibid, Jul.1936.
259. An analysis in NUVB J Oct.1936 of the lengths of membership of present and future superannuated members gave the following:
 - > 45 years - 498; 40-45 years - 540; 35-40 years - 550;
 - 30-35 years - 810; 25-30 years - 1,540; 20-25 years - 2,010;
 - 15-20 years - 1,211; 10-15 years - 1,450; 5-10 years - 1,650;
 - < 5 years - 4,945.
260. Dougan, 1975, pp.220-221, 248-249, 256-257.
261. Mortimer, 1982, pp.202, 214, 224.
262. Fyrth & Collins, 1959, pp.198, 199-200, 214-215, 216-217.
263. Musson, 1954, pp.400-401, 462-465.
264. Fyrth & Collins, 1959, p.257n.
265. Eight branches, including Bedford and Biggleswade, closed down at the end of 1932 and beginning of 1933, after an EC decision, on grounds of economy, to close all branches with less than 20 members, where it was feasible to transfer them to another branch - NUVB EC 11-9-32. NUVB J Jan.1933.

Maythorn's of Biggleswade went into liquidation in 1931 after months of depressed trading. Branch membership plummeted from 133 in January 1931 to 13 in October 1932, after which it was closed. Halliwell noted when the factory shut down that it "leaves a large number of our members stranded in a district where there is no possibility of employment again in our line." NUVB J Jan.1932.
266. Reports prepared in June 1927 showed that in the Glasgow district there were 809 skilled and semi-skilled members and 75 apprentice members. The estimated number of non-unionists (which was considered a

"generous" figure) was 70 adults and 25 apprentices. Of these, about 20 had been lost since the General Strike at the Glasgow Corporation Tramcar works at Coplawhill, another 12 worked in a non-union shop, while the rest worked in very small shops etc. - *Scottish District Council 25-6-27*. At Coplawhill, over 60 members had not been reinstated following the General Strike. Scottish organiser Symington stood as a Labour candidate soon afterwards "because I thought it was my duty to do so in the interest of our victimised Tramway members"; Labour took control of the council, and by the spring of 1928, only 3 members were still out, the branch insisting that other members were not allowed to seek employment there until all were reinstated, and several attempts to start non-members there were frustrated - *NUVB J Jun. 1926, Jan., Apr., Jul. 1927, Apr. 1928*. Late in 1926, the branch had decided to supply employers asking for men, by sending them the first on the rota of unemployed - "if these not accepted, no others to be supplied" - *Glasgow NUVB 30-11-26*. How successfully this was operated is not known, but other examples prove local strength. Throughout 1927, 1928, and 1929, the Glasgow branch minutes show the local bus-builder, Cowiesons, applying to the branch for overtime working, which would often be allowed only under certain conditions. In 1930, when the branch was experiencing problems placing painters, it refused the firm overtime in the paint shop; Cowiesons retaliated by threatening to shut the works, claiming that other firms did not have to write for permission. When this was disproved, the firm backed down and started more painters, while the branch allowed them selective overtime - *Glasgow NUVB 10-6-30, 12-6-30, 17-6-30*. After the dispute with the Sheet Metal Workers at Cowiesons in 1932-33 (see chapter 6) the branch got the management to remove four apprentices from the body shop, claiming there were too many there - *ibid 18-4-33*. When the small firm of Holland Coachworks decided to dispense with blackleg labour and start union men in 1932, only one of its former bodymakers was available, and the branch committee chose the other two needed from those members on transitional benefit - *ibid 18-11-32*. Finally, at the end of 1931 it was agreed that quarterly meetings of shop stewards (or their deputies) should be started; at one meeting, in April 1932, 19 shops were represented - *ibid 11-4-32*. Also see footnote 196 above for

- Glasgow's control over the recruitment of brush hands into the branch.
267. Beveridge, 1930, pp.277, 281n. NUVB J Apr.1927.
 268. Beveridge, 1930, pp.275, 281.
 269. NUVB J Apr., Jul.1930. Liverpool District Council 29-3-30 in NUVB J Jul.1930. NUVB EC 3-5-30, 31-5-30.
 270. NUVB J Jan.1931.
 271. Hannington, 1940, pp.36-37.
 272. NUVB J Jan.1932.
 273. Hannington, 1940, pp.36-37.
 274. NUVB J Jan., Apr.1932.
 275. Coventry NUVB 25-11-30.
 276. Ibid, 4-10-32.
 277. NUVB J Jul.1933.
 278. Ibid, Oct.1950.
 279. Ibid, Apr.1938. While the rule book at the time stated that "all fines and levies shall immediately become arrears", and that if arrears were not cleared by a certain time, members would be excluded, this would vary in practice. In the case of the £1 levy, Assistant General Secretary Rothwell told a Warrington delegate in June 1931 that "in any case where this had not been paid, such should be a first charge on defaulters when claiming Society Benefits" - Liverpool District Council, June 1931 in NUVB J Oct.1931.
 280. Ibid, Oct.1937.
 281. Ibid, Jul.1935.
 282. Ibid, Oct.1938.
 283. Ibid, Jul.1932, Oct.1933.
 284. Ibid, Oct.1932; Apr.,Oct.1931, Apr.,Oct.1933; Jul.1933.
 285. NUVB EC 2-5-31, 13-6-31, 21-11-31, 27-2-32.
 286. In week ending 21-12-32, there were 207 unemployed members in Glasgow branch, and 132 in Motherwell - Statement of the employment bureau, in Scottish District Council archives. "Rock bottom" was reached in the week 20-1-32, when 875 (about 32%) members were unemployed. Motherwell was recorded at least twice as over 50% unemployed - NUVB J Apr.1932, Apr.1933.
 287. NUVB J Jan.1936.
 288. Ibid, Oct.1931, Jan., Jul., Oct.1932. NUVB EC 4-6-32.

289. NUVB EC 21-11-31, 16-1-32, 2-4-32. Regarding the level of expenditure on the dispute, Halliwell wrote "we should not complain - it should be the first function of a Trade Union to defend its wage standards", - NUVB J Jul.1932. NUVB J Jan., Apr., Jul.1932.
290. Liverpool Dispute: Report and Financial Statement in NUVB J Jan.1932. The branch president (later secretary) had advocated in December 1930 that in the event of a dispute over the coach trade agreement, branches should be organised to collect, and engineering, railway, and municipal shops organised to give, a 5s per week levy - *ibid*, Jan.1931.
The status of the levy actually collected is not totally clear, but it may have been collected in the spirit of a Glasgow voluntary levy of 9d per week to help unemployed members in 1921: that those who did not give to the levy would not receive anything if they found themselves in the same predicament - Glasgow NUVB 4-11-21.
291. £802 was subscribed by Liverpool No.1 members till 5-12-31 - NUVB J Jan.1932.
292. NUVB J Apr., Oct.1932, Oct.1933. Letters by Liverpool No.1 branch secretary in NUVB J Jan.1936, Oct.1937.
293. NUVB J Jan., Apr., Oct.1932, Jan., Oct.1933, Jan.1934.
294. NUVB EC 15-3-31.
295. Manchester District Council 19-3-32 in NUVB J Jul.1932.
296. NUVB J Apr.1933.
297. *Ibid*, Oct.1933.
298. *Ibid*, Apr.1933.
299. Apart from evidence produced elsewhere in this thesis, see Saunders, 1936, pp.54-56, 77-78, 99n, Appx.III.
300. NUVB J Apr.1932.
301. NUVB EC 27-5-33. NUVB J Jul.1933.
302. NUVB J Jul.1934.

NOTES AND REFERENCES TO CHAPTER 8

1. Turner, Clack & Roberts, 1967, pp.192-193.
2. Arthur Ince, for example, arrived in Coventry in the winter of 1923/24, and worked successively at Armstrong-Siddeley, Charlesworth, Hancock & Warman, Cross & Ellis, and Midland Light Bodies, before getting a job at Standard in 1929. Another member worked in the 1920s in the following firms: Daimler, Armstrong-Siddeley, Holbrook Bodies, Singer, and then Humber - Local History of Coventry, Tapes 79/80, 1970.
3. EEF W(8)41 for 1924 - while the firms were not individually identified in this survey, sufficient information was given to be fairly confident of the identity of each of the Coventry firms.
EEF M(15)101 for 1925.
4. 99 women were recorded in the trim shops of the federated firms, excluding Swift, and 6 in the Armstrong-Siddeley paint shop in May 1924 - EEF W(8)41. In January 1926 some 110 were noted, including Swift but excluding Armstrong-Siddeley - see chapter 7, part 1, section C, including footnote 90.
In EEF W(8)41, a total of 195 woodcutting machinists of all grades were recorded in May 1924 for the seven federated firms. Subject to the same rider as in footnote 2, the break down was: Standard 58, Humber 44, Armstrong-Siddeley 33, Daimler 29, Hillman 12, Rover 6, Triumph 3.
5. Also missing, for obvious reasons, were Coventry Corporation Trams, and Coventry Cooperative Society, both employing NUVB members.
6. EEF W(8)41 Management Board meeting 30-10-24.
7. CDEEA 16-2-25.
8. Hollick & Pratt probably had the largest number of NUVB members in Coventry throughout the 1920s. For a meeting called in 1924, some 500 cards were printed - Coventry NUVB 30-9-24; while about 150 members are recorded attending a body shop meeting in 1926 - *ibid*, 13-12-26.
9. Some 220 workers and staff were employed here in about 1927 - City of Coventry Official Guide, n.d. [1927].
10. Coventry NUVB 22-1-25.
11. As noted in chapter 7, there were no Coventry members paying into the semi-skilled contribution tables in the inter-war period. The branch

did recruit brush hands, but into the skilled contribution tables, as would have been the case before the first world war. Following the UKSC rule change and the Coventry local agreement, both of 1913, brush hands had to get the brush hand rate before they were admitted to membership - Coventry UKSC 16-10-13, 13-11-13. Where members were bordering on a painter's skill, they could be accepted as a brush hand, with a view to upgrading as a painter - *ibid*, 22-7-14.

The branch were careful to maintain the demarcation line and took Rover to a works conference in 1923, complaining that the firm were paying 1d below the skilled rate (and 1d above the brush hand rate) to a number of men. The 1922 national agreement specified the skilled rate to "painters who are capable of doing all jobs and may be required to do any job in their trade", and the brush hand's rate to "brush hands who are capable of and required to do with ordinary supervision all work up to and including ground colour".

Rover agreed to pay the rate where a painter was fully skilled within the terms of the national agreement. In every case the men in question qualified. At the same time, Armstrong-Siddeley were concerned about the rate they should pay to "flatters", claiming that "certain firms" paid the skilled rate. The engineering employers argued that a flatter was really a painters' labourer, and this would undermine the union's argument that all work beyond ground colour (which would include flattening the varnish) should command the skilled rate - CDEEA, 1-10-23, 29-10-23, citing vehicle building sub-committee 10-10-23, 23-10-23. At issue was a variant of the conundrum of whether it was the work or the man that was graded.

12. NUVB J Jul.1927.
13. See for example Coventry NUVB 20-7-20 [Pass (predecessor to Carbodies)], 17-8-20 [Charlesworth], 23-11-20 [Standard]; *ibid*, 18-10-20, 30-11-20.
14. CDEEA 20-3-22, 24-7-22. Even the small coachbuilder, Hancock & Warman, agreed to telephone the Coventry engineering employers before engaging labour, though it was not thought necessary to apply the enquiry form here - *ibid*, 29-10-23. Charlesworth, which had agreed to use the form in 1922, ignored it when they became busy in 1924 and engaged men already working at Armstrong-Siddeley - *ibid*, 7-4-24.

15. Ibid, 23-4-23, 7-5-23; 18-12-22, citing local conference 11-12-22.
16. Ibid, 28-11-21.
17. See footnote 5.
18. CDEEA 3-11-24, citing vehicle building sub-committee 28-10-24.
19. EEF W(8)41, Management Board 30-10-24.
20. CDEEA 16-11-25.
21. Coventry NUVB 23-8-21, 30-8-21, 13-9-21, 13-12-21, 4-1-22.
22. 2 ex-miners were reported in the Hillman trim shop, 4 in the Standard trim shop, and 8 in the Standard body shop - *ibid*, 19-2-29. A year later, an ex-miner trainee applied for union membership - *ibid*, 1-1-30.
23. CDEEA 6-5-29, citing vehicle building sub-committee 22-4-29.
24. Conference 4-6-19, cited in CDEEA 18-12-22. *Ibid*, 8-12-24.
25. *Ibid*, 4-12-22, 18-12-22, 23-4-23, 7-5-23.
26. *Ibid*, 17-12-23.
27. *Ibid*, 18-2-24, citing vehicle building sub-committee 11-2-24.
28. The town's apprentice registers show about 400 indentured during the interwar years, of which about 100 were on the coachbuilding side. While Daimler claimed some 20 in 1923 (CDEEA 20-8-23, citing vehicle building sub-committee 1-8-23), this does not tally with these registers, which show that the motor companies took on only 18 coachbuilding apprentices in the 1920s, of whom only 10 finished. Humber, with 8 finished and 2 unfinished had the bulk.

The 1930s were similar, with only 17 starting apprenticeships. Among the purely coachbuilding firms, there were hardly any apart from Carbodies, which started 31 between 1923 and 1929 (all but 5 finishing) and another 21 in the 1930s. This firm also took on 29 apprentices in sheet metal working or panel beating from 1929 to 1942 - City of Coventry Apprentice Register and City of Coventry Freemen's Register.
29. Coventry NUVB 26-10-20, 19-4-21 (Midland Motor Body); *ibid*, 21-10-21, 6-12-21; NUVB EC 8-12-21 (Standard); Coventry NUVB 2-11-21, 17-1-22 (Armstrong-Siddeley).
30. For mounting, eg Standard's claim it was semi-skilled - Works Conference 27-8-23, cited in CDEEA 17-9-23. Also see Hillman - footnote 192 below.
31. EEF W(8)40, conference 23-5-24. NUVB J Feb., May 1924.
32. Coventry NUVB 16-7-24, 30-9-24, 13-10-24. NUVB J Nov. 1924. Stan Wyatt

started at 14 in the Morris Bodies trim shop at the end of the 1920s, and went on to man's work and the man's rate at 19 - Interview.

33. CDEEA 8-12-24.
34. Coventry NUVB 20-12-26.
35. Ibid, 6-3-28.
36. Annual branch membership analyses in NUVB Journals. Coventry NUVB Cash Book Jan.1926 - Dec.1950. NUVB J Jul.1927.
37. See Amalgamated Engineering Union, 1966, p.37.
38. Coventry NUVB 10-7-19.
39. NUVB J Jul.1919. Coventry NUVB 15-5-19, 26-8-19.
40. EEF P(5)43, Local Conference 17/18-9-19. Coventry NUVB 9-9-19, 10-9-19, 12-9-19, 17-9-19, 18-9-19. Memorandum of Agreement dated 18-9-19 in Coventry NUVB minute book.
41. Coventry NUVB 27-4-20, 2-6-20, 15-6-20.
42. Ibid, 3-12-20. Buckle to all members at Standard, Canley, 4-12-20.
43. Daimler, for example, which had employed 3,700 in July 1920 were down to 2,200 by August 1921, and they had been on a 30 hour week all of 1921 - "Working Hours - Report of Joint Investigation Committee 4-7-22, appointed by the E.&N.E.F., the S.E.F., and the Unions' Negotiating Committee", p.90. Also, see Hyman, 1971, p.145.
44. NUVB J Apr.1921. Coventry NUVB 18-4-21.
45. Amalgamated Engineering Union, 1966, p.32.
46. Coventry NUVB 3-1-22, 17-1-22.
47. Ibid, 3-5-21, 10-5-21, 19-5-21, 27-6-21.
48. Ibid, 21-11-21, 23-11-21. Buckle to Singer 26-11-21.
49. Coventry NUVB 11-10-21, 21-10-21. CDEEA 14-11-21.
50. CDEEA 13-2-22; 27-2-22, citing vehicle building sub-committee 20-2-22.
51. The agreement on the use of enquiry forms was reached at the same time - ibid, 20-3-22, citing vehicle building sub-committee 1-3-22, and non-federated coachbuilders' meeting 10-3-22.
52. Ibid, 3-7-22, citing vehicle building sub-committee 22-6-22.
53. Ibid, 4-9-22; 13-11-22, citing vehicle building sub-committee 24-10-22.
54. When Humber started modifying existing piecework prices in the summer of 1922, contrary to clauses in the national agreement, an unofficial conference convinced the NUVB that the issue should be dealt with by the men in the shop - ibid, 24-7-22.

55. Ibid, 7-5-23.
56. Ibid, 2-7-23, 16-7-23, 20-8-23, including citing of vehicle building sub-committee 10-7-23, 1-8-23.
57. Coventry NUVB 11-9-23.
58. CDEEA 18-2-24, citing vehicle building sub-committee 11-2-24.
59. NUVB J Aug.1924.
60. EEF W(8)44, Coventry Association to EEF 31-7-24, 8-8-24. CDEEA 28-7-24, 18-8-24. NUVB EC 24-7-24. Coventry NUVB 24-6-24, 1-7-24, 8-7-24, 15-7-24, 12-8-24.
61. EEF W(8)44, admission at local conference 1-8-24, reported in letter Coventry Association to EEF 8-8-24.
62. Coventry NUVB 11-11-24, 18-11-24.
63. Ibid, 9-12-26.
64. Ibid, 16-4-28.
65. Ibid, 9-6-25.
66. See Mathewson, 1931.
67. The Coventry branch had passed a resolution in May 1921 to allow no non-union members to start work locally - Coventry NUVB 5-5-21. But this was beyond their power to control.
68. Coventry NUVB 26-4-27.
69. Ibid, 3-5-27.
70. NUVB J Jul.1927.
71. Coventry UKSC 4-2-13.
72. Ibid, 25-8-15. Coventry Joint Coachmaking Committee n.d. [17-3-15].
73. Coventry UKSC 10-6-13, 27-4-16, 30-8-16.
74. Coventry NUVB 10-9-19.
75. Ibid, 17-4-20 [Armstrong-Siddeley]; 3-2-20, 27-7-20, 18-10-20 [Humber].
76. At Swift, in February 1921, branch committee delegates met the firm along with 3 shop stewards. But in April, during a 3 day strike, the manager refused to see 2 shop delegates, but would meet branch delegates. During another strike in November, "four delegates were elected and the secretary introduced them to management and then left them. The President, Mr. Bowen [the organiser] and Secretary waited outside till a settlement was arrived at" - ibid, 1-2-21, 5-4-21, 29-11-21.

At Singer, branch officers and 6 shop representatives met the company

- when discussing possible wage reductions in May 1921 - *ibid*, 10-5-21.
77. For example, Armstrong-Siddeley refused a works conference in 1923 because no worker had raised a question - EEF W(8)44, Armstrong-Siddeley [Burlington Works] Works Committee to Armstrong-Siddeley, 8-5-23; Buckle to Armstrong-Siddeley, 9-5-23; Armstrong-Siddeley to Secretary of Armstrong-Siddeley Works Committee, 10-5-23. CDEEA 28-5-23.
 78. Saunders, 1936, pp.54-55.
 79. Coventry UKSC 11-6-19, 12-6-19.
 80. Coventry NUVB 19-7-21, 21-7-21, 26-7-21.
 81. *Ibid*, 21-10-21.
 82. Shop secretaries for body shop, trim shop, paint and finishing shops. Two shop stewards each for body, paint, trim, and finishing and mounting shops - *ibid*, 12-12-21.
 83. Apart from Standard, there appears to be only one minuted instance of victimisation - a shop secretary at Armstrong-Siddeley - *ibid*, 20-7-26, 10-8-26, 17-8-26. But there were numbers of contested dismissals, and especially instances of employers putting a bar against the employment of particular men by other Coventry firms - see, eg, *ibid*, 10-2-25, 21-10-30.
 84. *Ibid*, 10-9-19, 29-9-19, 12-11-19, 1-6-20, 13-9-20, 18-4-21, 3-5-21.
 85. It is not known if this happened, but there are records of organising activity soon afterwards at both Humber and Hillman - *ibid*, 12-6-22, 13-6-22, 26-6-22, 4-7-22. During the lock-out a meeting of Carbodies members was held, the branch finding no shop organisation, which was temporarily put to rights - *ibid*, 24-5-22.
 86. *Ibid*, 11-9-23 [Standard, and Rover]; 14-2-24 [Singer]; 18-6-24 [Cross & Ellis].
 87. *Ibid*, 8-7-24.
 88. For example, shop committees were also noted in Coventry branch records during 1923 and 1924 at Daimler, Armstrong-Siddeley, Holbrook Bodies, and the body and trim shops at Hollick & Pratt. In the last case, a non-federated firm, the branch president and trim shop committee interviewed the management - *ibid*, 20-2-23 [Daimler]; 24-6-24 [Holbrook Bodies]; 16-7-24 [Hollick & Pratt body shop]; 6/8-9-24 [Hollick & Pratt trim shop]. At Armstrong-Siddeley, a works committee existed -

- ibid, 29-5-23, 4-3-24, 10-3-24; also see footnote 77 above.
89. Ibid, 9-6-25, 16-6-25, 23-6-25, 30-6-25, 21-7-25. NUVB J Jul.1925.
 90. Coventry NUVB 7-10-25, 9-12-25, 17-3-26, 5-5-26.
 91. Cited in NUVB J Oct.1927. A large amount of unemployment benefit was paid out to Coventry branch members in the July to October quarter -
ibid, Jan.1927.
 92. Coventry NUVB 28-9-25, 14-10-25, 19-10-25, 3-11-25.
 93. Only the Swift and Charlesworth factories are not mentioned during this period.
 94. 5 body shop meetings, 2 trim shop meetings, and 1 finishing shop meeting. There were also other meetings: one of the finishers dealing with piecework prices; a special meeting of the various shop committees in the works to consolidate them; and 2 meetings of the shop committees with their opposite numbers at Holbrooks Bodies to coordinate prices [as this firm was doing a lot of Armstrong-Siddeley bodywork].
 95. Ibid, 11-4-27.
 96. CDEEA 18-5-36.
 97. Ibid, 20-6-38.
 98. Coventry NUVB 5-5-27.
 99. There are no details of times and venues for more than half of the meetings.
 100. EEF W(8)40, special conference 4-3-25.
 101. For example, at Cross & Ellis to sort out problems between the men - Coventry NUVB 23-6-25; and at Triumph, before a meeting with the management - ibid, 20-10-25. Similarly, Hancock & Warman members met at dinner-time, two days prior to the February 1925 mass meeting - ibid, 10-2-25.
 102. Ibid, 12-4-27, 26-4-27, 27-4-27.
 103. Ibid, 30-3-27, 4-4-27.
 104. Ibid, 4-5-27.
 105. NUVB J Jul.1927.
 106. NUVB J Nov.1924, Feb.1925. Coventry NUVB 30-9-24, 13-10-24; Buckle to Nicholson 11-2-25. EEF M(15)101 Nicholson to EEF 7-2-25. EEF W(8)40, special conference 4-3-25. The Northampton branch secretary had to resign his position because he was unable to carry out his duties, through working in Coventry - NUVB J Mar.1926. Few figures are

- available but illustrate the problem - Daimler body shop meeting: 34
Coventry, 25 non-Coventry present (Coventry NUVB 17-11-26); Armstrong-
Siddeley body shop: 32, 12 (ibid, 15-12-26); Morris trimmers: 31, 7
(ibid, 20-12-26))
107. NUVB J Jan. 1927
 108. Ibid, Jan. 1926
 109. Ibid, Jul. 1927
 110. One example was at the Armstrong-Siddeley works. Here, when the first
100 discharges took place in the spring of 1932, about one quarter of
them were "out of town" members (from Saltley and Birmingham No.1
branches). Four or five of these had been active in the 1931 strike
there, and claimed victimisation, as they each had between 8 and 12
years service with the firm. In November the Saltley branch secretary
was still complaining of the non-re-engagement of some of his members
- Coventry NUVB 10-5-32, 19-5-32, 15-11-32. It appeared that the
company had used Birmingham-based members to fill the shop soon after
the war; and despite an appeal from the Coventry branch secretary in
September 1931 to engage local members because of heavy unemployment,
the company had again engaged men from Birmingham in late 1931 and
early 1932 before that year's discharges took place - Coventry NUVB
10-11-31, 19-5-32.
 111. Coventry NUVB 22-3-27, 5-4-27, 31-5-27.
 112. Ibid, 27-2-28 [Daimler]; 16-4-28 [Rover]; 21-2-28 [Holbrook].
 113. Ibid, 9-2-28.
 114. Ibid, 18-10-27. Figures from annual branch membership analyses in NUVB
Journals give: Jan. 1923 - 569; Jan. 1924 - 462; Jan. 1925 - 499;
Jan. 1926 - 728; Jan. 1927 - 690; Jan. 1928 - 625; Jan. 1929 - 354;
Jan. 1930 - 497; Jan. 1931 - 426; Oct. 1931 - 489. The 1924-1928 figures
represent a quarter or more of the national arrears problem, from a
branch with less than 10% of the national membership.
 115. Coventry NUVB 3-4-29, 9-4-29. NUVB J Apr. 1929.
 116. CDEEA 21-8-22, 7-1-24, 5-1-25, 16-2-25.
 117. Ibid, 21-1-24, 5-1-25, 22-2-32, 28-5-34, 7-9-36, 16-11-36, 14-12-36
1-3-37, 21-3-38, 30-1-39.
 118. Ibid, 19-2-34, 20-1-36, 15-6-36, 1-3-37.
 119. Ibid, 7-1-24, 4-2-24, 18-2-24, 7-4-24, 17-11-24, 8-12-24 [citing

- vehicle building sub-committee 20-11-24], 5-1-25, 16-2-25 [citing vehicle building sub-committee 6-2-25], 2-3-25, 16-3-25, 6-4-25.
120. Ibid, 17-3-30, 2-3-31, 6-2-33.
121. Ibid, 20-3-22 [citing vehicle building sub-committee 1-3-22, and non-federated meeting 10-3-22], 20-9-26 [citing vehicle building sub-committee 29-7-26].
122. Coventry NUVB 24-5-22, 2-11-26 [Carbodies]; 24-6-24, 2-7-24 [Hancock & Warman]; 24-2-25, 8-12-25, 12-4-27 [Midland Light Bodies]; 1-8-33 [Charlesworth].
123. Ibid, 8-7-24, 7-7-25 [Cross & Ellis]; 13-2-28, 21-2-28, NUVB J Apr. 1930 [Holbrook].
124. Coventry NUVB 2-5-23, 8-5-23, 3-3-27 [Hancock & Warman]; 23-6-25, 17-11-26 [Cross & Ellis].
125. Ibid, 25-2-26.
126. Ibid, 13-2-28, 21-2-28 [Holbrook]; NUVB J Jan. 1931 [Charlesworth].
127. Coventry NUVB 12-3-29, 18-11-30. NUVB J Jan. 1929, Jan. 1931. CDEEA 3-2-30.
128. Hyman, 1971, pp.145-146,149.
129. Carr, 1978, pp.198,226-228,247.
130. Zeitlin, 1980, p.122; though he subsequently accepted "the continued buoyancy of NUVB membership" in Coventry after the lockout - Zeitlin, 1983, p.132.
131. Cronin, 1984, p.105.
132. F.Carr, "Municipal Socialism: Labour's Rise to Power", in Lancaster & Mason (eds), 1986, p.191.
133. SMMT, 1936, p.40. See Saunders, 1936, p.58, Chart 1 for monthly production variations 1930-33.
134. Rhys, 1976, p.247.
135. NUVB J Apr.1935.
136. Ibid, Jan.1931 is the last reference to this firm.
137. See table 5:1 and Robson, 1979, p.211.
138. Day, 1981, pp.309,333.
139. Robson, 1979, p.211.
140. NUVB J Jan.1933.
141. Cited in Coventry NUVB 19-5-32.
142. Ibid, 4-10-32.

143. Coventry NUVB Cash Book 1926-1950. Coventry NUVB 12-9-33.
144. Coventry NUVB 29-8-33.
145. Ibid, 16-8-32, referring to 12 months earlier.
146. AEU, 1966, p.32.
147. CDEEA 27-7-31, 7-9-31, citing vehicle building sub-committees 21-7-31, 2-9-31. NUVB J Oct.1931. EEF S(5)11, Coventry Association to EEF, 9-9-31.
148. Coventry NUVB 8-9-31.
149. 127 bodymakers, 55 trimmers, 24 finishers, 13 painters, 18 rubbers down and brush hands, 10 coach fitters, and 5 mounters came out. EEF S(5)11, Varley phone call to EEF, 9-9-31; Varley to Francis, 8-9-31; Coventry Association to EEF, 9-9-31; list of strikers.
150. EEF S(5)11, Varley phone calls to EEF 10-9-31, 11-9-31.
151. NUVB J Jan.1932.
152. EEF S(5)11, Varley phone call to EEF, 14-9-31; Coventry Association to EEF, 14-9-31, 15-9-31; EEF to Coventry Association, 16-9-31. CDEEA 21-9-31. A week later some 30-40 men in the Armstrong-Siddeley wood mill came out for two days on the same issue, having apparently also struck for a few days in August - EEF S(5)11, Coventry Association to EEF 25-9-31, 7-10-31. CDEEA 19-10-31.
153. NUVB J Jan.1932.
154. Coventry NUVB 10-11-31.
155. Ibid, 10-5-32, 19-5-32, 7-6-32, 16-8-32.
156. Ibid 13-6-33, 4-7-33, 1-8-33, 29-8-33. NUVB J Jul.,Oct.1933.
157. Coventry NUVB 19-12-33, 2-1-34, 30-1-34, NUVB J Jan.,Apr.1934. Carr, 1978, p.461.
158. Coventry NUVB 25-2-36.
159. Ibid, 8-7-36.
160. Carr, 1978, p.488.
161. CDEEA 14-10-35. Coventry NUVB 23-11-35. Buckle to Standard 26-11-35.
162. Coventry NUVB 25-11-35, 27-11-35, 28-11-35, 30-11-35, 2-12-35. Buckle to Standard 28-11-35. Standard to Buckle 30-11-35. Buckle to Halliwell 11-1-36.
163. CDEEA 20-4-36, 20-7-36.
164. Buckle to Standard 11-9-36. Varley to Buckle 14-9-36. Buckle to Halliwell 26-9-36. Coventry NUVB 22-9-36. CDEEA 5-10-36.

165. Coventry NUVB 3-3-36.
166. Ibid, 15-9-36, 17-9-36. CDEEA 5-10-36. Buckle to Rover 11-9-36. Buckle to Halliwell 11-9-36.
167. Buckle to Varley 11-9-36. Francis to Halliwell 18-9-36. Buckle to Halliwell 26-9-36. CDEEA 5-10-36. NUVB J Jan.1937.
168. CDEEA 26-10-36.
169. Halliwell to Buckle 19-10-36, 9-11-36. Halliwell to Francis 9-11-36.
170. Francis to Varley 10-11-36. Varley to Francis 11-11-36. Varley to Buckle 11-11-36. CDEEA 16-11-36.
171. Buckle to Halliwell 14-11-36.
172. Coventry NUVB 17-11-36. Buckle to Halliwell 18-11-36.
173. Halliwell to Buckle 18-11-36, 24-11-36. Buckle to Halliwell 2-12-36. Coventry NUVB 1-12-36.
174. NUVB EC 5-12-36. Halliwell to Buckle 10-12-36.
175. Buckle to Halliwell 4-12-36. NUVB EC 4-12-36. CDEEA 14-12-36, 1-3-37.
176. On one occasion at Humber, a number of Sheet Metal Workers were told that due to shortage of materials they would not be needed for a day or two; 6 members in the same section, who were required to come in, did not, and were deemed to have been on strike. At Daimler, Sheet Metal Workers struck over the fitting of certain types of bonnets being taken from them and given to AEU fitters; the management then agreed to give the work back, pending perfection of the jiggig arrangements - CDEEA 22-3-37, 30-8-37.
177. Robson & Langworth, 1979, p.59. CDEEA 1-7-35.
178. Robson & Langworth, 1979, p.115. Buckle handwritten note 15-9-37 in Coventry NUVB correspondence. Buckle to Triumph 10-9-37, 30-9-37, 6-10-37, 12-10-37. Buckle to Varley 10-9-37. Varley to Buckle 16-9-37. Coventry NUVB 5-10-37. CDEEA 18-10-37.
179. Buckle to Halliwell 5-11-38, 26-11-38. Halliwell to Buckle 15-11-38, 9-1-39. Brett [Birmingham & Midland SMW Society] to Francis 22-11-38. Brett to Halliwell 15-12-38, 7-1-39. Halliwell to Brett 16-12-38. Coventry NUVB 15-11-38. NUVB EC 7-1-39.
180. CDEEA 5-9-38, 19-9-38.
181. Ibid, 5-12-38, 9-1-39. A.Horsley [NUVB shop steward] to Buckle 3-1-39. Buckle to Halliwell 7-1-39. NUVB J Apr.1939.
182. Buckle to Halliwell 11-1-36. Coventry NUVB 19-2-36, 25-2-36, 3-3-36.

183. Buckle to Rover 4-3-36, 18-3-36. Rover to Buckle 10-3-36, 20-3-36. Coventry NUVB 24-3-36.
184. Buckle to Halliwell 26-9-36. Coventry NUVB 8-4-36, 8-7-36, 7-10-36. Buckle to Halliwell & EC 4-12-36.
185. Coventry NUVB 27-4-36, 15-6-36, 31-8-36, 28-9-37.
186. Ibid, 30-8-38, 4-10-38, 14-3-39. G.W.Bott (Rover shop steward) to Halliwell 23-10-39. Buckle to Halliwell 4-11-39.
187. CDEEA 6-1-30.
188. CDEEA 15-4-35. T.Best (Daimler NUVB) to Buckle 8-4-35. Correspondence between Buckle and Daimler, April 1935.
189. Coventry NUVB 19-8-37, 1-9-37, 8-9-37. Buckle to Daimler 2-9-37, 9-9-37. Buckle to Varley 11-9-37. Varley to Buckle 16-9-37.
190. Coventry NUVB 27-9-37, 11-1-38, 18-1-38. Buckle to Daimler 28-9-37.
191. Coventry NUVB 5-2-38, 7-2-38. Buckle to Daimler 28-12-38.
192. The only minuted involvement by the NUVB in the early 1930s concerned a complaint by the Hillman body mounting gang that they were not making their time and a quarter on piecework earnings. When output was reduced significantly in August 1931, the gang size was reduced, the men agreeing to the company's suggestion to discharge the boys providing the men would work temporarily at the prices paid to the boys. An extra payment was eventually agreed in January 1932, by which time the company had started to "unobtrusively" reintroduce boys into the gang - Coventry NUVB 21-1-32. CDEEA 25-1-32.
193. EEF S(5)13 - various documents, including lists of strikers. CDEEA, 28-5-34. Coventry NUVB 15-5-34. NUVB EC 15-5-34. NUVB J Jul.1934. Bill Warman in Leeson, 1973, p.202. The Daily Worker suggests that the sheet metal workers' meeting at Saturday lunchtime unanimously agreed a stay-in strike starting on Monday at 8.00.am, and a deputation to meet the management demanding the withdrawal of ratefixers from all bodybuilding sections, the full demands of the strikers to be conceded, and no victimisation. Failing this, they would leave the works at dinner time and join the strike. What exactly happened is not clear, but a report sent to the Daily Worker later that day, referred to the Sheet Metal Workers' union officials quoting "sectarian inter-union squabbles" as the reason why the coachmakers should not be supported - Daily Worker, 14-5-34, 17-5-34.

194. Coventry NUVB 15-5-34. NUVB J Jul.1934.
195. Claydon, 1981, pp.512-513, using TGWU sources.
196. Coventry NUVB 26-6-34, 2-10-34, 3-12-34, 1-1-35. NUVB J Jan.1935.
197. Coventry NUVB 14-5-35, 5-1-37.
198. Ibid, 25-2-36, 3-3-36, 24-3-36. CDEEA 16-3-36. Buckle to Varley, 26-2-36. Varley to Buckle, 5-3-36.
199. Coventry NUVB 6-4-38.
200. CDEEA 13-12-37, 19-12-38.
201. Ibid, 22-5-39.
202. Coventry NUVB 18-7-39. Buckle to Halliwell, 21-7-39.
203. Statement made on 2-6-39 by Saltley NUVB member regarding conditions at Humber - Coventry NUVB correspondence. Coventry NUVB 5-9-39. CDEEA 31-7-39.
204. J.S.Peers [Humber NUVB chief steward] to Workman 11-2-48. Workman to Humber Works Manager 13-2-48, 16-2-48.
205. Francis to Buckle 6-6-39.
206. NUVB EC 10-6-39. Coventry NUVB 15-6-39, 4-7-39. Halliwell to Buckle, 23-6-39.
207. CDEEA 18-11-29.
208. Ibid, 22-2-32.
209. Ibid, 21-3-32, 18-4-32.
210. Ibid, 25-7-32.
211. Ibid, 20-11-33, 18-12-33.
212. Ibid, 19-2-34. Coventry NUVB 5-3-34, 26-3-34. NUVB J Apr.1934.
213. CDEEA 19-11-34.
214. Coventry NUVB branch leaflet to all bodymakers, finishers, trimmers, and painters at Carbodies, no date. Coventry NUVB 10-12-34. NUVB J Apr.1935. Buckle to ex-NUVB member Baston 11-12-34.
215. Report of Carbodies body shop meeting 4-1-35. CDEEA 21-1-35. NUVB J Apr.1935. Coventry NUVB 1-1-35, 14-1-35.
216. Coventry NUVB - various entries between 14-1-35 and 4-2-35. Buckle to Carbodies 24-1-35. NUVB EC 26-1-35. Carbodies Agreement, 6-2-35, in Coventry NUVB correspondence. NUVB J Apr.1935. CDEEA 4-3-35.
217. Buckle to Halliwell 26-1-40.
218. Carbodies membership sheets in Coventry NUVB correspondence. Coventry NUVB 26-2-35. Buckle to Nicholson 1-3-35.

219. Coventry NUVB 14-5-35. Baston to Nicholson 28-5-35. Buckle to Nicholson 31-5-35.
220. Coventry NUVB 3-9-35.
221. Ibid, 2-1-40. Halliwell to Buckle 25-1-40. Buckle to Halliwell 26-1-40. Deakin to Halliwell 30-4-40.
222. Halliwell to Buckle 30-1-40, 29-2-40. Buckle to Halliwell 13-2-40. Halliwell to Deakin 10-4-40, 23-4-40. Deakin to Halliwell 17-4-40, 30-4-40. NUVB EC 13-4-40, 1-5-40.
223. Halliwell to Buckle 23-4-40, 7-5-40, 12-6-40, 25-6-40. Buckle to Halliwell 24-4-40, 4-5-40.
224. Buckle to Halliwell 3-7-40, 9-7-40, 24-7-40. Halliwell to Buckle 4-7-40, 10-7-40, 16-7-40. NUVB EC 31-5-40, 13-7-40.
225. Andrews & Brunner, 1959, pp.62,92.
226. NUVB J Jan.1920. Oxford NUVB 2-1-20.
227. Oxford NUVB 2-1-20, 5-2-20, 5-5-20, 24-11-20, 22-12-20, 11-5-21.
228. Ibid, 31-8-21.
229. Ibid, 6-10-21, 21-10-21.
230. Ibid, 4-1-22.
231. Ibid, 21-7-20, 11-8-20, 25-8-20. NUVB J Jul.1921.
232. Oxford NUVB 27-10-20.
233. Andrews & Brunner, 1959, p.112. Wilkins & Hill, 1964, p.144.
234. NUVB J Oct.1922. Oxford NUVB 11-10-22, 13-2-23.
235. Oxford NUVB 14-4-23, 5-5-23.
236. Ibid, 17-10-23.
237. Ibid, 22-10-23. NUVB J Dec.1923.
238. Oxford NUVB 7-11-24, 19-11-24, 3-12-24, 1-1-25.
239. Ibid, 3-6-25.
240. Ibid, 9-9-25, 23-9-25, 21-10-25.
241. Ibid, 2-11-25, 4-11-25, 11-11-25.
242. NUVB J Nov.1925, Jan.1926. Oxford NUVB 25-11-25, 6-1-26.
243. Oxford NUVB 5-5-26, 6-5-26 (2 meetings), 7-5-26, 8-5-26, 10-5-26, 14-5-26, 16-6-26. NUVB J Jul.1926.
244. Oxford NUVB 7-7-27.
245. Ibid, date unclear (August 1927), 7-9-27.
246. Ibid, 4-7-28.
247. Ibid, 3-10-28.

248. NUVB EC 6-10-28. Oxford NUVB 15-10-28. NUVB J Jan.1929.
249. Oxford NUVB 8-11-28.
250. Ibid, 5-6-29.
251. NUVB J Jan.1929. Oxford NUVB 3-4-29.
252. Oxford NUVB 2-10-29, 6-11-29, 4-12-29. NUVB J Jan.1930.
253. NUVB EC 2-11-29, 30-11-29. Coventry NUVB 12-11-29, 26-11-29. NUVB J Jan.1930.
254. NUVB J Dec.1923.
255. Oxford NUVB 7-1-25, 23-9-25, 11-11-25, 21-10-25.
256. NUVB J Jan., Mar.1926.
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263. Ibid, General Secretary to National Organiser, 12-12-24.
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267. Edwards, 1983, pp.62-63.
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271. NUVB J Jan.1929.
272. NUVB EC 29-10-27.
273. Oxford NUVB 4-1-28.
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275. Brake, 1985, pp.370,380.
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279. See footnote 277.

280. Oxford NUVB 3-12-30, 14-1-31.
281. Ibid, 13-1-32.
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283. Daily Worker, 9-8-34.
284. Oxford NUVB 1-8-34.
285. Oxford Trades Council 29-4-31. The Trades Council also agreed to organise a propaganda week at Cowley for July 1933, but this was postponed to September, and then postponed again - Oxford Trades Council 25-5-33, 27-7-33, 29-9-33. Oxford NUVB 7-6-33, 5-7-33, 3-8-33.
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306. Nicholson to NUVB EC 11-2-35, enclosed in Nicholson to Buckle 11-2-35.
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314. Oxford NUVB 3-3-37. Southern Area Council 20-3-37 in NUVB J Jul.1937.
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317. Oxford NUVB 5-5-37. NUVB J Jul.1937.
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322. NUVB EC 18-2-39, 4-3-39, 15-4-39. Record of NUVB/TGWU meeting 31-3-39.
323. NUVB EC 10-10-37. Southern Area Council 18-12-37, 19-3-38, in NUVB J Apr., Jul.1938.
324. Southern Area Council 17-9-38, Dec.1938, 18-3-39 in NUVB J Jan., Apr., Jul.1939. Oxford NUVB 5-7-39.
325. Oxford NUVB 4-12-38, 13-12-38.
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327. Ibid, 8-3-39.
328. Ibid, 7-6-39.
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331. NUVB J Nov.1923.
332. Town Crier, 4-3-21, cited in Church, 1979, p.147. BEEA 8-3-21, minute 1,040; 27-10-25, minute 2,297.
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 341. EEF S(5)9, Birmingham Association to EEF 28-3-29. Times 27-3-29.
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 343. EEF S(5)9, Birmingham Association to EEF 3-4-29, including copy of advertisement. Times 1-4-29.
 344. Times 3-4-29.
 345. EEF S(5)9, Birmingham Association to EEF 3-4-29; Austin Motor Company notice 3-4-29.
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363. NUVB J Oct.1933, Jan.,Apr.1934.
364. Ibid, Oct.1935, Apr.1936.
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21. Slichter, 1941, p.216.
22. Webb & Webb, 1920, p.498.
23. Clegg, 1964, pp.67-68. Clegg, 1985, pp.101-105.
24. Beveridge, 1930, pp.266-267,269,270.
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- 1986, p.347.
31. Wedderburn, 1986, pp.348-349.
 32. Cole, 1918a, p.92.
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 35. Webb & Webb, 1926, p.158.
 36. Howell, 1891, p.121.
 37. Hyman, 1971, pp.194,34.
 38. Quoted in *ibid*, p.15.
 39. H.S.Temple, "Trade Unionism in the Printing Industry", in Cole, 1939, p.370.
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 44. Howell, 1891, pp.104-105.
 45. Cole, 1953a, p.157.
 46. References to the NUVB in the rest of this section are not cited separately, and come from various NUVB Journals, Annual Conference Reports, and Financial Statements.
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 52. Clegg, 1985, p.551.
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2. Lowe, 1975, p.385. Whishaw, 1842, pp.203,195,202.
3. Donaghy, 1972, pp.61-63.
4. Carter, 1959, p.45.
5. Railway Magazine, Vol.19, 1906, p.133. Whishaw, 1842, pp.247,248,251. Whishaw stated there were 440 employed altogether in March 1840, but this presumably included those working on wagons.
6. Bagwell, 1974, p.131. Victoria County History, Buckinghamshire, Vol.2, 1908, pp.126-127.
7. Carter, 1959, p.44.
8. Ibid, pp.72-73. Lowe, 1975, p.439.
9. Lowe, 1975, p.205. Bagwell, 1974, p.130. Carter, 1959, pp.75-76. Railway Magazine, Vol.32, 1913, p.266.
10. Carter, 1959, pp.44-45.
11. Lowe, 1975, pp.205,439.
12. Railway Magazine, Vol.9, 1901, p.483. Head, 1849, p.106, refers to the "Waggon Department" at Manchester, constructing and maintaining wagons for the whole area north of Birmingham; while Camden dealt with luggage-trucks and goods-carriages for the area south of Birmingham, some 129 men being noted in its construction shop - *ibid*, p.77.
13. Railway Magazine, Vol.9, 1901, p.483; Vol.32, 1913, p.267. Holt, 1978, pp.94-95.
14. Head, 1849, p.106. The Saltley site was leased in 1853, according to Wallace, 1945, p.2; while Christiansen, 1983, p.250, less plausibly, suggests 1846.
15. Christiansen, 1983, p.250. The Camden wagon department had room for building or repairing 100 wagons in 1851 - Sidney, 1851, p.22.
16. Head, 1849, pp.100-101,106-108.
17. Sidney, 1851, p.56. While Wolverton was laid out only for locomotive construction and repair, a few experimental carriages were built - *ibid*, p.54.

18. Lowe, 1975, p.439.
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21. Carter, 1959, p.51.
22. MacDermot, 1927, p.10. Sherrington, 1934, p.187.
23. Lowe, 1975, p.287. Christiansen, 1983, p.98.
24. Carter, 1959, p.97. Barnes, 1969, p.35.
25. MacDermot, 1927, p. 10. Turton, 1969, p.114.
26. Turton, 1969, p.109. Simmons, 1986, p.176.
27. Simmons, 1986, p.175.
28. MacDermot, 1927, pp.16,19.
29. G.W.R. Magazine, 1914, p.153.
30. MacDermot, 1927, pp.16,303,305. Railway Magazine, Vol.40, 1917, p.81. Victoria County History, 1959, p.214.
31. MacDermot, 1927, pp.81-83. At the time of the merger, nearly all the Bristol & Exeter's 263 broad-gauge vehicles had been built at Bridgwater - *ibid*, p.301.
32. Nock, 1964, p.25. Carter, 1959, pp.84,168,252. Lowe, 1975, pp.350, 589.
33. Radford, 1971, pp.14-15,20,23. Lowe, 1975, p.65.
34. Barnes, 1969, pp.34-36,103-105. Williams, 1878, p.663.
35. Barnes, 1969, pp.36-37,106-108.
36. Dow, 1975, p.77.
37. Carter, 1959, pp.49-50. Lowe, 1975, pp.423,429. P.I.M.E., 1928, p.597. P.I.M.E., 1892, p.391.
38. Carter, 1959, pp.78,123-125. Lowe, 1975, p.391. Engineer, Vol.35, 1873, p.7. Railway Magazine, Vol.12, 1903, pp.272-274; *ibid*, Vol.32, 1913, p.474. Railway Gazette, Vol.55, 14-8-1931, p.207.
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46. G.C.R. Journal, Vol.1, 1905-6, p.155. P.I.M.E., 1929, pp.715,752.
47. Carter, 1959, pp.127,218,232. Lowe, 1975, pp.229-230. Railway
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p.212. Brown, 1961, p.17. Simmons, 1986, pp.182-183. P.I.M.E.,
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NOTES AND REFERENCES TO APPENDIX 4.

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2. First agreement with NFVT dated 5-3-20 - NUVB J Jan.1920.
3. NFVT AGM 20-1-20. NFVT EC 21-4-20, 6-5-20. E.A.Fuller (solicitor) to NFVT 1-9-20. EEF W(8)16, NFVT to London District DEEA 5-3-20; EEF to NFVT 8-4-20, 27-4-20, 10-5-20; NFVT to EEF 24-4-20, 6-5-20; EEF memo of meeting with NFVT 13-5-20. EEF MM X Appx.8, NFVT to EEF 12-10-20.
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3. Wyatt, 1981, p.283.
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5. Andrews & Brunner, 1959, p.185.
6. Ministry of Supply, 1947, p.8.
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9. PEP, 1950, pp.26,29.
10. Sedgwick, 1970, p.279.
11. Wilkins & Hill, 1964, pp.157-161,436,144,241,246. Rhys, 1972, p.342.
12. Vauxhall Motors, 1983, section 1:4.
13. See sales figures in pages after Sloan, 1967, p.468.
14. Wyatt, 1981, p.201.
15. PEP, 1950, p.26.
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25. Standard Board Meeting 11-7-32.
26. Standard Car Review, Vol.2 No.3, Jul.1932, p.79.
27. Standard Board Meeting 3-7-33.
28. Ibid, 25-7-34, 1-7-35.
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3. Ibid, Jul.1935.
4. Ibid, Jul.,Oct.1936.
5. Andrews & Brunner, 1959, pp.147-149.
6. NUVB J Jul.1928.
7. Ibid, Oct.1928; Oct.1929.
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 41. Jackson, 1964, pp.114-115.
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1922: 1,200 - Ibid, Jun.1960, pp.231-232.
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 45. 1926: 3,100 - Engineering, Vol.122, 13-8-26, p.206.
1927: 3,300 - Overy, 1976, p.130, citing Motor Trader.
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1932: 6,000 - Overy, 1976, p.130, citing Morris Owner.
1934: 5,000 - Ibid, citing Motor.

1939: 4,670 - Whiting, 1983, p.9.

The 1932 figure seems high in relation to total Oxford car employment (including Morris Radiators and Pressed Steel) of 6,124 in 1931 - Bourdillon (ed), 1938, p.309.

46. Church, 1979, p.149. Other figures in my possession further fill out Church's fairly comprehensive set. Though, it is clear from Austin's own reports that there were sometimes heavy discharges, and that employment often rose substantially at the height of the season - eg Austin Motor Co., Ordinary General meetings, 11-6-29, 9-10-33, 14-10-35.

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3. Coventry NUVB 17-4-20.
4. Ibid, 8-2-21, 14-2-21, 15-2-21, 21-2-21.
5. NUVB EC 1-3-21.
6. Coventry NUVB 5-4-21, 7-4-21, 12-4-21. NUVB EC 6-4-21. NUVB J Apr. 1921.
7. Coventry NUVB 13-4-21, 18-4-21.
8. Ibid, 21-4-21.
9. EEF V(1)6 various correspondence.
10. Ibid, 27-9-21, 4-10-21, 11-10-21. CDEEA 10-10-21. EEF Case Register 21/695.
11. Coventry NUVB 22-11-21, 28-11-21, 29-11-21, 6-12-21, 13-12-21, 20-12-21. NUVB EC 26-11-21, 30-11-21, 8-12-21.
12. Coventry NUVB 15-6-21, 21-6-21.
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35. Ibid, 3-3-27, 14-3-27, 18-3-27, 19-3-27. NUVB J Apr., Jul. 1927.
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