

THE GENERAL STRIKE IN CHESTERFIELD

By BARRY JOHNSON

North East Derbyshire in 1926 undoubtedly experienced great social, economic and political tremors as its largest industry, coal mining, shut down for six months. It seems strange, therefore, that so little has been written about the period. J.E. Williams has done something of value in portraying the North Derbyshire coalfield during those momentous days and it would serve little useful purpose to repeat that account.¹ This paper is an attempt to examine just nine days of that year, mainly in Chesterfield but going beyond those bounds where relevant. The General Strike was declared from midnight on Monday 3rd May and was terminated by the TUC on Wednesday 12th May. During those nine days Chesterfield and its adjacent areas were brought to an effective standstill.

An important source is the *Derbyshire Times*. Williams was apparently unaware, that Wilfred Hawksley Edmunds, the editor and, with his brother joint owner, of the *Derbyshire Times*,² was also the Chairman of the Chesterfield Volunteer Service Committee (V.S.C.). The problem is to use the evidence of the *Derbyshire Times* in such a way as to take into account not only what Williams described as ‘a provincial Conservative newspaper,’³ but the active part played by its editor *cum* owner as local coordinator of the quasi-secret shadow establishment, covering the North of the County, set up under the 1920 Emergency Powers Act. Edmunds had writs served for ‘libellous and threatening statements’ against thirteen local trade unionists, because, ‘a pamphlet headed “Derbyshire Chronicle Strike Bulletin”” dated 10th May 1926 printed and published on behalf of the Chesterfield Trades Council by A.V. (Vin) Williams⁴ described the *Derbyshire Times* as a scab newspaper (which it was) and recommended workers not to buy the paper. Williams had earlier written, ‘the offices and printing work of the “Derbyshire Times” are by order of the proprietor a non-union shop; the moral for all good, sound trade unionists is obvious,’⁵ but this statement seems to have gone unnoticed.

I

The day, on which Ramsay MacDonald formed the first Labour Government, 22nd January 1924, also saw the appointment by the Civil Commissioner’s Department of Edmunds as Chairman of the Chesterfield Area V.S.C. His copy of the *Memorandum of Instructions to Chairmen of Volunteer Service Committees* was to be kept under lock and key.⁶ On the basis of J.C.C. Davidson’s statement that work on the creation of an effective emergency organisation ‘continued unremittingly until the fall of the Government in 1923’ Farman implies that such activity ceased at the end of 1923.⁷ The appointment of Edmunds clearly indicates that the work of organisation continued while Ralph Desmarais shows that advice was sought by the MacDonald Government from the staff of the Supply and Transport Committee when it was faced with the possibility of public transport and dock strikes in February and March of 1924. In fact a cabinet

sub-committee consisting of J.H. Thomas (Colonial Office), Stephen Walsh (War Office), Viscount Chelmsford (Admiralty) and chaired by Home Secretary Arthur Henderson was set up on the 12th February with Sidney Webb (President of the Board of Trade), and J.C. Wedgewood, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, added the following day. Wedgewood was appointed Chief Civil Commissioner. The committee staff was predominantly made up of the same people as had been with the STC at its inception in 1919.⁸

It was on 30th July 1925, 'Red Friday,' that the Baldwin Government backed away from a confrontation with the trade unions over the threatened lockout of miners by offering to subsidise the industry for nine months. At the same time the government began to clear the decks for a determined attack on the miners when the subsidy ran out. From October the local emergency organisations began to coalesce in readiness for the confrontation. Edmunds along with other chairmen secretly met the North Midlands District Civil Commissioner, Captain H. Douglas King M.P. on the 8th October.⁹ By the end of November the District Headquarters had been established on Regent Street in Nottingham with W. Trevor Turton and C.S. Petheram as Chief Assistant and Deputy Chief Assistant respectively. From then on the rate of correspondence between Chesterfield and the Regent Street headquarters steadily increased through to May 1926, while a final secret briefing was held on 23rd April.

At this meeting Edmunds confirmed that all arrangements could 'be ready in 24 hours of the receipt of the "Action" telegram.'¹⁰ On the 22nd all the relevant papers including secret codewords were handed over to the Town Clerk, George Parker Morris, in readiness for 'Action.' Four months earlier Turton had advised against 'approaching the Clerks to the local authorities except Chesterfield,' even though the 'need for complete secrecy has to some extent disappeared.'¹¹ The Chesterfield Area included, as well as the Borough itself: Buxton; the Urban Districts of Bakewell, Baslow, Bolsover, Brampton and Walton, Clay Cross, and Dronfield; and the Rural Districts of Bakewell, Blackwell, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Chesterfield, Clowne, and Norton.

On 30th April the Area Officer for the Civil Commissioner advised Edmunds of his presence in Chesterfield. On Sunday 2nd May King's private secretary wrote urging a state of readiness but warning 'it is of course unnecessary to remind you that overt action must not be taken until you receive the "Action" telegram.' Two days earlier, in Leicester, the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies (O.M.S.) had jumped the gun with posters calling for volunteers.¹² At the same time Turton sent a curt note asking confirmation of the address and telephone number of the V.S.C. office as soon as established.

At midnight on 3rd May the General Strike began. The 'Action' telegram did not arrive in Chesterfield!¹³

II

But what of the preparations on the workers' side? On 30th April the T.U.C. had circularised its *Proposals for Co-ordinated Action of Trade Unions*. R. Page Arnot wrote, 'During the last weeks of April there had been some discussion in committees leading to the aforementioned formulation of broad instructions. Apart from this eleventh hour and extremely anticipatory discussion, there had been no preparation on the workers'

side.¹⁴ Using different language Scotland Yard made a similar assessment: 'Nor were the extremists on the General Council of the Trades Union Congress prepared for the strike. They had used it as a threat, but without any concrete ideas as to procedure in the event of their bluff being called . . .'¹⁵

Nationally there had been neither effective organisation nor even a lead for the localities. It seems unlikely that the situation could have been otherwise at local levels, with but few possible exceptions. The Northumberland and Durham Joint Strike Committee, for example, did not meet until that evening, the end of which would see the deadline crossed. Yet this was probably the most highly organised area in the country.¹⁶

In the Chesterfield Area there is little evidence of preparation. Williams shows none on the part of the Derbyshire Miners' Association (DMA). The minutes of the Chesterfield and Staveley Trades Councils and of trade union branches have not been traced. We do have the recollections of some of those who were active in the movement at the time, and they offer no evidence of prior preparation in Chesterfield. We know that the Staveley Midland Branch of A.S.L.E.F. met on Sunday and that a meeting of the D.M.A. agreed, on the first day of the strike, that district joint committees should be set up with branches of other trade unions.¹⁷

The labour movement in Chesterfield had already suffered some setbacks in that year. Alderman Harry Varley 'seceded' from the Labour Party because, he asserted, ' . . . the Labour Party is dominated and controlled by the Derbyshire Miners' Association.' Then claiming to speak for the Mayor, Alderman Harry Cropper, as well as himself, 'both of us refuse to — and this very emphatically — to take orders from the Derbyshire Miners' Association.'¹⁸ (The *Derbyshire Times* obituary for Varley overlooked this 'secession' in describing Varley as 'an ardent supporter of the Labour cause all his life.'¹⁹) On his own behalf, Cropper claimed 'to have just discovered unofficially that officially I have not been considered a member of the Labour Party for a considerable period . . . I had failed to pay my subscription.' He complained that the Labour Party was 'dominated almost entirely by the purely I.L.P.* section of the party with their rigid adherence to the doctrinaire opinion of Karl Marx . . . my opinions were neither rabid nor orthodox so I was considered not to be a Labour man . . .' Then with ominous portent, 'It is an unwritten law in Chesterfield that the Mayor . . . shall take no part in party politics, and it is my intention to observe that truce.'²⁰ So two of the men who might otherwise have been expected to play some part in the forthcoming struggle had, at best, contracted out or in Cropper's case at least, actively gone over to the other side, thereby earning Edmunds's editorial accolade in the *Derbyshire Times* after the strike.²¹ In March a Hasland Ward councillor, David Knight, who was a deputy at Grassmoor pit, stated that he had severed connections with the Labour Party 'some time ago.' He explained that in February 1925 he had received a letter that drew his attention to a resolution of the Executive Committee of the Divisional Labour party that, ' . . . the members of the labour group shall dissociate themselves with the group of Town Councillors known as the "Progressive" Group or from any similar body which may be existing in their locality.'²²

Denis Webster tells us that with the exception of Alice Whilde of the Shop Assistants' Union, the Executive of the Chesterfield Trades Council played virtually no part in the strike organisation.²³ If true this attitude seems even less than the innocuous role which the T.U.C.'s General Council had determined for the Trades Councils, and, together

with Edmunds's writ, could have been a factor for the demise of the Trades Council later in the year. On the other hand the anonymous contributor to a questionnaire on the conduct of the strike stated that the '... strike committee never received executive powers. Trades and Labour Council met nightly and were supreme body.'²⁴

The Strike Committee apparently consisted of nominated representatives from the affected unions with others, like Ann Astwood of the clerical workers' union, being co-opted. The Strike Committee met in the recently opened Miners' Welfare.

Denis Webster represented the Society of Lithographic Artists on the Committee though his participation had been doubtful at first. Working for Robinsons, the management had argued that being manufacturers of surgical dressings they should be exempted from any sanctions and apparently gained some support from the litho workers, a delegation travelling — in a Robinsons' car — to the union's Manchester headquarters to argue along these lines. Their plea was rejected and the seven-member chapel stayed out.²⁵

III

Parallel to the Strike Committee the transport unions had formed a Transport Committee with its headquarters in the Marquis of Hartington public house on Soresby Street, the normal N.U.R. meeting place.

Transport was recognised by both sides as being critical in the struggle. On 8th May R. E. Ewing wrote to the Town Clerk, 'I am authorised by the Transport Committee of the Trade Union Council that we are desirous of informing you that such a committee has been set up with a view to co-operating with the Local Transport Officer appointed by the Town Council and are desirous of interviewing you on the subject.'²⁶ A deputation headed by Cllr. Hutton of the General Workers' Union, with Cllr. Philpott, General Workers' Union; Mr Tomlinson, Railway Clerks' Association; and Mr Smithson, Transport Workers, having met Cropper and the Town Clerk had 'their offer,' in the words of the latter, '... courteously declined and they were informed that no permits were necessary nor were they desirable.'²⁷ Parker Morris in his role as Local Food Emergency Officer had received, a couple of days earlier, an instruction from his Divisional superior, W.O. McArthur, in which it was pointed out that, '... it is the policy of His Majesty's Government in every case . . . that no offer whatsoever from those who are organising the Strike or from pickets of strikers to allow goods to pass on their permit must for one moment be entertained.'²⁸ More realistically McArthur admitted that private traders were operating under such permits and that Food and Haulage Committees were powerless to alter this state of affairs.²⁹

Permits to pass and 'Food Only' notices became a sore point with the local establishment. Cropper is reported to have told the deputation that, 'they were under a misapprehension which was common amongst the strikers. All transport,' he continued, 'was entitled to pass along the highway, and no interference must be allowed by anyone.'³⁰ An opinion he was subsequently to uphold, as will be seen, with disregard of 'apparent justice'. We find Edmunds complaining after the strike, that 'The exhibition of food labels saying "Food Only" has only induced the Strikers to assume that vehicles not carrying food could be stopped.' He proposed 'a continuous motor Police patrol . . . outside the towns . . . In the country areas where the Police are scattered the necessity for

a continuous patrol has been felt, especially in those areas containing colliery villages with fairly big populations.³¹ On the last full day of the Strike Edmunds was admitting that, 'Motorists are still being warned by strikers on the Chesterfield-Mansfield Road that they must not pass along that road.'³²

In one incident at Engine Hollow on Newbold Road a group of strikers had stopped two horse drawn drays carrying coal when a lorry, carrying slack for Robinsons, came into view. The driver said that '... the men, waving sticks and their arms, came towards him to stop him, but he blew his horn, waved his hand to clear the road and drove on.' As he passed the windscreen was shattered on both sides. At quarter past two the following morning, 11th May, George Whitehouse was fetched from his bed by the police and arrested. He was charged later that day, under the Emergency Regulations with 'acting in a manner likely to impede, delay, or restrict the measures taken for the maintaining the means for supplying fuel.' Whitehouse denied smashing the windscreen though acknowledging his presence as a picket, and called in his defence a number of witnesses on his behalf. These were immediately threatened, by the prosecuting Deputy Town Clerk and by Cropper, as mayor *ex-officio* Chairman of the Bench, that by giving evidence they would themselves become liable for prosecution under the same regulations. Two of the men, William Hardy and Fred Markham would not be coerced and gave evidence on behalf of their comrade. As they were doing so the police prepared warrants for their arrest. '... With looks of surprise on their faces they were led out of the courtroom, and after hearing the warrants read, were brought back and placed in the dock and proceeded against under the same regulations as Whitehouse.' The *Derbyshire Times* records that 'They did not seem to have recovered from their surprise when the Mayor announced after a brief private consultation with his fellow magistrates that each defendant would be sentenced to a month's imprisonment with hard labour.'³³

While the transport of inessentials was controlled to some extent, the local bus situation was more volatile. The Corporation transport system was disorganised from the start with only eight buses and one tram running on the Tuesday driven by some inspectors and 'volunteers.' As the vehicles returned to the depot they were jeered in by 'a large mass of strikers.' The following morning, Wednesday, most of the bus stops were decorated with chalked slogans such as 'Please do not ride on the buses. Blackleg labour. Thank you,' or 'Do not ride with blackleg labour.'³⁴ One of the 'blacklegs' on that first day was Councillor P.M. Robinson a director of Robinsons. He agreed not to repeat the exercise after being visited by a deputation.³⁵ Joe Lynch, Secretary of the Miners' Welfare and D.M.A. Executive Committee member, complained in a letter to the *Derbyshire Times* of one volunteer who had only ever had one driving lesson under instruction, and that in a car. He wondered what 'our Labour members of the Council will have to say about this matter.'³⁶ In June the Tramways Committee resolved: 'That as a mark of our appreciation of their loyalty to this Committee, this Committee award an additional three days holiday to all employees of the Department who remained at work though instructed by their Unions to withdraw their labour during the recent emergency.'³⁷ Joe Lynch got his answer — no reference back was moved. Strikebreakers notwithstanding the Corporation transport only carried 11% of its normal passenger load (Fig. 1) and a third of that was on the day the Strike was called off and the service returned to normal.

Underwoods was a private bus company (the firm later became a constituent of the East Midlands Company), with a militantly anti-union management: '... it was just

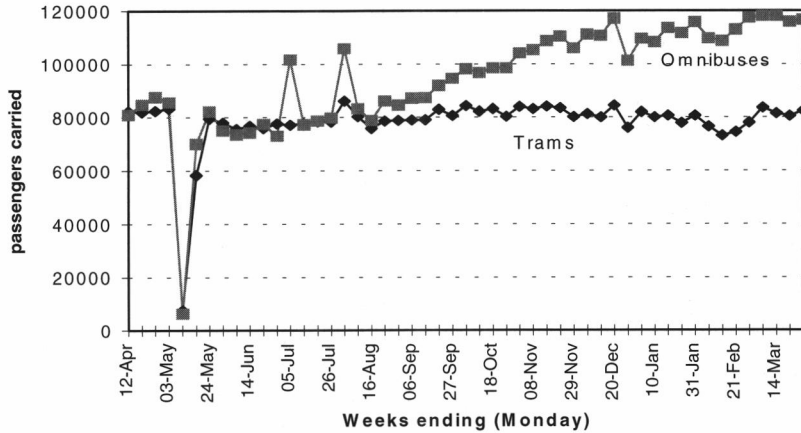


Fig. 1: Chesterfield Transport passengers carried 1926–27.

slave labour at Underwoods,' C.S. Hollis tells us.³⁸ Having heard of the working conditions at Underwoods some N.U.R. strikers turned up at 5 o'clock one morning at the company's Pond Street depot to picket the place, '... about five of us turned up down at Underwoods. We thought the best thing to do was to link hands and stand stretched across the road so that when the first bus came out, he'd see us there and he'd stop. Well, anyway he'd got other ideas, he put his foot down and came through the gates, and of course we put our feet down and got to the other side of the road — so he got through. So we found out that there was no question of peaceful picketing . . .'³⁹

'Slave Labour' or otherwise, Underwoods quickly felt the anger of their workforce. Non-unionists to the start of the strike, '...the whole of the men employed by Underwood's Motor Bus Services decided to join the Transport Workers' Union this afternoon and to come out on strike,' reported the *Sheffield Forward* published by the Sheffield Strike Committee.⁴⁰ There was no paper membership and the battle with Underwoods became intense and bitter throughout their area of operation. On 3rd May Underwoods stated that 'they will make every effort to maintain their essential bus services,'⁴¹ but the running of a skeleton service caused strong feeling amongst 'the drivers who have come out in sympathy with the miners.' On Thursday morning at the main depot in Clowne, 'there were exciting scenes when one or two buses were brought out and dispatched on their respective routes. Stones were thrown at the vehicles and the Barlborough Road was bestrewn with glass . . .' and then, going some way to confirming the *Sheffield Forward* report, 'All the conductresses are out.' That afternoon the services operating from Clowne were 'entirely suspended.'⁴²

By Saturday Underwoods were again trying to get buses out, this time with police protection. About 500 turned out on picket. Thomas Newstead and James Hewitt were arrested for impeding 'certain measures taken for maintaining means of transit of a bus plying for hire' by placing iron land harrows across the road with the points uppermost. A miner, William Rhodes, was arrested and later sentenced to one month's hard labour for throwing stones and so 'causing injury to a bus contrary to the Emergency Regulations.' Another group was intercepted while pulling a telegraph pole across the Barlborough Road, stopping a bus and throwing stones at it. Another bus was stopped

by concrete blocks placed in the road, surrounded by a crowd and pushed into a ditch 'causing very much damage . . . the windows broken, the panels split and the back axle sprained.'⁴³

At one stage the Pleasley N.U.R. branch was demanding to know what the Chesterfield Strike Committee was doing to stop a bus operating between Chesterfield and Glapwell. In Pleasley the tram rails from Mansfield and points had been interfered with,⁴⁴ otherwise it was like a 'general holiday.'

Another incident involving Underwoods smacks of the piratical. A party of bus crews had chartered three lorries in Clowne with the alleged purpose of attending a union meeting in Chesterfield. On their way along Brimington Road they met a bus heading towards Staveley which they made turn back to Chesterfield. Further on they stopped another bus making some twenty passengers disembark, and three of the women strikers allegedly assaulted the conductress. This took place immediately outside the County Court as Chief Inspector Parkin, of the Chesterfield police, 'who happened to be outside the County Police Court saw what was taking place, and with the assistance of county police promptly arrested three men and two women, and took charge of the motor vehicle.'⁴⁵ According to the police evidence the convoy carried a Union Jack and a Red Flag.⁴⁶ As the ambush closed in was the Union Jack hauled down and the Red Flag hoist in its stead? Three of the men were sentenced to three months' hard labour while three of their women compatriots were bound over.⁴⁷

IV

The T.U.C. Intelligence Committee reported that, 'during the first two or three days of the strike there did not appear to have been many arrests, but by the weekend arrests began to take place.'⁴⁸ This seems to have been the pattern in Chesterfield. The Town's Chief Constable, Major F.S. James, appointed nine extra constables at the beginning of the Strike, but at no time did he call on his 290 reserves.⁴⁹ Outside of the Borough the County Police Force was augmented by as many as 544 additional police, many brought in from other forces.⁵⁰ According to the County's Chief Constable's confidential report they were hardly needed.⁵¹

The most notable arrest in Chesterfield was that of A.V. (Vin) Williams for 'committing an act calculated to cause mutiny, sedition or disaffection among members of the civilian population by printing and publishing . . . a local strike bulletin. Williams, from Mosborough, had been a miner, and at the time of his arrest was a temporary full-time lecturer for the National Council of Labour Colleges and the organiser for the North East Derbyshire Labour Party. In this last role he had been organising for a gala in Chesterfield planned for the 31st July in which the 'most notable feature will be a pageant with over 2,000 performers which will present the history of labour.'⁵² The offending passage in the Bulletin read,

The whole life of London, the hubbub (*sic*) of British Capitalism, is gradually being brought to a standstill. Troops stationed in Hyde Park refused to act against the workers. The Welsh Guard likewise took up the same course of action . . . Blood is thicker than water, as the trite saying goes. The ruling class can don our class in soldiers' clothes but the working class heart pulsates beneath.⁵³

Could any statement 'be more likely to cause disaffection?' asked the Deputy Town Clerk, alleging that Williams held 'strong communist views . . . whose avowed intention [was] of creating strike disturbances in what had hitherto been a peaceful area.' While it was felt necessary to call on the area military intelligence officer, Major Little, to refute the story,⁵⁴ this was not so in a similar case in Sheffield. There, George Fletcher, Harry Webb and others were similarly charged for publishing the same story in the Sheffield Communist Party's Strike Bulletin, and the court was advised that it was not necessary to prove the statements to be untrue but merely to prove 'that they were likely to create disaffection by the tone!'⁵⁵

At the Chesterfield hearing Edward Parkin, recently promoted to Chief Inspector,⁵⁶ told how he had raided the room in which the Strike Committee produced the Bulletin, taking possession of further copies of the Bulletin and other documents.⁵⁷ What he did not know was that the police approach had been seen and Denis Webster and a colleague were in the back yard burning other material in a couple of dustbins,⁵⁸ while Ann Astwood had concealed the Committee's minute book down her bosom.⁵⁹ Parkin also suggested that another passage in the Bulletin was equally likely to cause disaffection: 'We shall gradually increase our stranglehold as the duration of the Strike extends. We have not as yet exercised all our power and in the next few days if the Government do not yield they will have to meet the consequences . . . be of good cheer, peaceful and orderly.' For such sedition Vin Williams, subsequently described by the Chief Constable as a 'communist imported from Mosborough by the Trades Council,' was sentenced to two months with hard labour and fined £5.⁶⁰

In his first editorial Williams spelt out his aspirations for the bulletin,

In issuing our first edition of the 'Derbyshire Chronicle' Strike Bulletin we hope that it will be the means for the permanent establishment of a weekly organ, definitely labour, expressing the viewpoint of the working class movement, circulating in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. That there is a need for such no one can deny. These bulletins will be issued three times per week, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays while the general strike lasts. We wish to make an earnest appeal for peace; spies are in our midst, endeavouring to incite our people to violence so that some excuse can be found for the operation of the machine guns, armoured cars and tanks, that have been inactive since 1918. We are in the greatest fight in the history of the British Working Class movement; let us not fail, but emerge victorious, sure in the knowledge that our cause is just and right.⁶¹

With its driving force in gaol the *Derbyshire Chronicle* expired after its third issue.

His release from gaol was celebrated at a public meeting on the evening of 18th July at which the speakers included Charlie Brown (later to become M.P. for Mansfield), B. Howells, C. Fletcher and G.A. Cassells and at which an International Class War Prisoners Association medal 'for services rendered in the class war [was] presented to Comrade Williams.'⁶² He was immediately back in action organising street collections for the miners' wives and children as part of the mass rally of miners organised for 29th July.⁶³ Held at Tipton Hall the *Derbyshire Times* estimated the audience as 30,000 with contingents from south Yorkshire, Mansfield and Sutton in Ashfield.⁶⁴

V

On the morning that the Strike was called off the T.U.C. Intelligence Committee stated that, 'the reports to hand from local strike committees and independent observers

indicate no real breach in the solidarity of the strike.⁶⁵ In Chesterfield there was no sign of weakening. A year later Denis Webster cryptically noted:

At the Chesterfield Strike Committee Rooms the news received about 2p.m. Wednesday that the strike had been called off was taken as being 'bluff' and couriers from Nottingham and Mansfield were questioned. Even when they vouched for its accuracy it was not accepted, except for a few who thought that the government had capitulated. Position practically 100% at end. Very little sign of weakening.⁶⁶

But called off it had been. Jimmy Thomas and the right wing had been looking for a way out from the beginning and Denis Webster clearly had Thomas and Bevin in mind when he wrote, 'the position and outlook of these leaders causes them to support the ruling class in vital struggles or at most to take an "impartial" attitude which is negation of the struggle.'⁶⁷ Maybe he also had in mind the erstwhile Labour Mayor of Chesterfield, Cropper, who claiming to be impartial became a key figure for the establishment in Chesterfield.

The railwaymen had played a key part in the struggle, and they determined to return to work showing the same discipline as they had exercised throughout the Strike. They formed up outside their headquarters, The Marquis of Hartington, and marched back behind their banners only to find themselves locked out. They were out for two more days, by which time Thomas had further undermined the cause by accepting the railway companies' terms for a return to work. So the railwaymen of Staveley, Barrow Hill, Hasland and the three Chesterfield stations found that their return to work was in the hands of the local railway management. The printers found themselves on day-to-day contracts. Underwoods and their successor, East Midlands, remained notoriously anti-union until the Second World War. Meanwhile the miners were left to battle on alone.

A study of the General Strike in Chesterfield does not reveal the level of confrontations that occurred in some other parts of the country. What it does show is the organisational capacity of the working class. 'This was the feature of the whole thing. The enthusiasm that there was, people coming and volunteering to do things. Instead of having to coerce people to do things, people were coming and asking what they could do.'⁶⁸

NOTES AND REFERENCES

* The Independent Labour Party, the Fabian Society, the Social Democratic Federation and some trade unions were the original constituents of the Labour Party. Individual membership was introduced after the 1918 Conference.

¹ J.E. Williams, *The Derbyshire Miners: A Study in Industrial and Social History*, London, 1962, pp 642–672.

² *Derbyshire Times*, obituary, 20th November 1942.

³ Williams, *Derbyshire Miners*, p. 689.

⁴ *Derbyshire Times*, 15th May 1926.

⁵ *Derbyshire Chronicle*, duplicated strike bulletin of the Chesterfield Trades Council, 7th May 1926. International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, Postgate papers Box 7.

⁶ Chesterfield Borough Council GP/109/3. Edmunds copy of Letter of Appointment to V.S.C. Chairmanship, 22nd January 1924.

⁷ Christopher Farman, *The General Strike: May 1926*, London, 1975, p. 58.

⁸ R.H. Desmarais, 'Strikebreaking and the Labour Government of 1924,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1973, pp. 165–175.

- ⁹ CBC GP/109/10 *Letter from the Chief Assistant to the Civil Commissioner to Edmunds*, 3rd October 1925.
- ¹⁰ CBC GP/109/10 Minutes of the North Midlands V.S.C. Chairmen, 23rd April 1926.
- ¹¹ CBC GP/109/3 Civil Commissioner's Department to V.S.C. Chairmen, 22nd December 1925.
- ¹² Ned Newitt drew my attention to this reference in the *Leicester Mercury*, 1st May 1926.
- ¹³ CBC GP/109/3 Edmunds to Assistant Chief Civil Commissioner, 3rd May 1926.
- ¹⁴ *Labour Monthly* June 1926.
- ¹⁵ DRO D3376/Box 21/3, New Scotland Yard, *Aspects of the General Strike* (hereafter NSY), June 1926 (typescript), Part I: Communism and the Strike p. 11.
- ¹⁶ See A. Mason, *The General Strike in the North East*, Hull, 1970.
- ¹⁷ *Derbyshire Times* 8th May 1926.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.* 24th February 1926
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.* 8th October 1948.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.* 24th February 1926.
- ²¹ *Ibid.* 15th May 1926.
- ²² *Ibid.* 6th March 1926.
- ²³ Interview with Denis Webster 26th January 1976.
- ²⁴ Postgate papers, box 5.
- ²⁵ Webster interview.
- ²⁶ CBC GP/109/5 TUC Local Transport Committee to Town Clerk, 8th May 1926.
- ²⁷ CBC GP/109/20 Local Food Officer's Daily Report, 11th May 1926.
- ²⁸ CBC GP/109/1 Circular Letter to Local Food Officers No 3, 7th May 1926.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ CBC GP/109/10 Parker Morris, Suggestions for Consideration of Civil Commissioner, 18th May 1926.
- ³¹ CBC GP/109/10 W. Hawksley Edmunds, Suggestions for consideration of Civil Commissioner, 18th May 1926.
- ³² CBC GP/109/14 W. Hawksley Edmunds, Daily Report for 24 hours ending 2p.m. May 11th 1926.
- ³³ *Derbyshire Times*, 15th May 1926.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.* 8th May 1926.
- ³⁵ *Yorkshire Telegraph and Star*, 4th May 1926.
- ³⁶ *Derbyshire Times* 8th May 1926.
- ³⁷ Chesterfield B.C. minutes, 23rd June 1926, minute 2486.
- ³⁸ C.S. Hollis interviewed by G.J. Bratley-Kendall.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *Sheffield Forward — Strike Issue No 2*, 6th May 1926.
- ⁴¹ *Sheffield Mail* 3rd May 1926.
- ⁴² *Derbyshire Times* 8th May 1926.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.* 22nd May 1926.
- ⁴⁴ *Sheffield Mail*, 14th May 1926.
- ⁴⁵ *Worksop Guardian*, 14th May 1926.
- ⁴⁶ *Derbyshire Times*, 15th May 1926.
- ⁴⁷ NSY Part II: Summaries of Information regarding the Strike furnished by Chief Constables for England, Scotland and Wales.
- ⁴⁸ Quoted in Farman, p. 245.
- ⁴⁹ Borough of Chesterfield: Chief Constable's Annual Report for the year ending 31st December 1926.
- ⁵⁰ Derbyshire County Council: Report of Standing Joint Committee, 22nd December 1926, minute 950.

- ⁵¹ NSY Part II: Summaries of Information regarding the Strike furnished by Chief Constables of England, Scotland and Wales.
- ⁵² *Sunday Worker* 18th April 1926.
- ⁵³ *Derbyshire Chronicle*, 10th May 1926, Postgate Papers box 7.
- ⁵⁴ *Derbyshire Times*, 15th May 1926.
- ⁵⁵ *Sheffield Mail*, 22nd May 1926.
- ⁵⁶ *Derbyshire Times*, 24th April 1926.
- ⁵⁷ *Derbyshire Times*, 15th May 1926.
- ⁵⁸ Interview with Denis Webster.
- ⁵⁹ Ann Astwood interviewed by G.J. Bratley-Kendall.
- ⁶⁰ NSY Part II: Summaries of information regarding the Strike by Chief Constables in England Scotland and Wales.
- ⁶¹ *Derbyshire Chronicle*, 7th May 1926.
- ⁶² *Sunday Worker*, 18th July 1926.
- ⁶³ DRO D3376 Derbyshire Constabulary, General Order book, Chief Constable to the Superintendent, Renishaw, 1920–1926.
- ⁶⁴ 7th August 1926.
- ⁶⁵ TUC Library, University of North London, general strike papers box 132 (microfilm), T.U.C. Intelligence Committee, General Survey of the Strike Position, Wednesday Morning 12th May 1926.
- ⁶⁶ Denis Webster's marginal note in his copy of Postgate et al, *A Worker's History of the Great Strike*, 1927 p. 51.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 103.
- ⁶⁸ Interview with Denis Webster.