

From “**TYNESIDE – THE SOCIAL FACTS**” 2nd Edition
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“A tutorial class at Felling on Tyne was most helpful. To its members, Mr George Askew, Miss Evelyn Askew, Mrs Bainbridge, Mr Blair, Mr & Mrs George Hunter, Mrs Jones, Mrs Mary Lindsey, Mr Jack Robson and Miss Juliette Wheatly, I express my gratitude for much assistance.”

The period covered by his social survey is mainly between the two wars – i.e. 1914 - 1939.

“Social Knowledge is hard to come by. To give one clear example – The Royal Commission in Local Government in the Tyneside Area in 1937 made what was intended to be a factual survey of the fourteen Tyneside areas. When we turn to the paragraph on the urban District of Felling, we read, “The main industries are Coal Mining, Agriculture, Quarries and Paintworks, but the district is very largely residential for persons working in Gateshead and Newcastle.” Actually, agriculture & quarrying, far from being among Felling’s main industry can scarcely be found on the list. A considerable number of years ago, Felling had an export of grindstones, or so I gather from local lore. But how this piece of antiquated knowledge became absorbed into the report, I do not know. To my certain knowledge, quarrying in Felling is the merest relic of an industry, employing only a tiny handful of men. The same is true of agriculture which does not appear among Felling’s twelve main industries, and I do not know how far down the list it is. This mistake was important – it was hardly likely that an urban district would be largely agricultural.

“English people have passed through an education system which does not yet equip them to value impartial study of social fact” “By having such facts constantly before their eyes, the conscience of the people, and their vital interest in social welfare, could never be lulled”

Comparison between London area’s industrial towns (4) & 4 on Tyneside in 1938, showing unemployed per 10,000 of population.

| | | | | |
|---|----|-----------|-----|--|
| Dagenham | 82 | Newcastle | 292 | N.B. The lowest Rate on Tyneside Was in Felling With 256 |
| East Ham | 53 | Tynemouth | 281 | |
| West Ham | 81 | Gateshead | 402 | |
| Walthamstow | 45 | Hebburn | 485 | |
| (The poorest London Borough, Shorditch, had 137 per 10,000) | | | | |

On the industrial stretch of the River Tyne, there are 14 local authorities. Four of these are country boroughs – Newcastle, Tynemouth, Gateshead and South Shields. Two are municipal boroughs – Jarrow and Wallsend. The other eight are urban districts – Whitley Bay, Gosforth, Newburn, Ryton, Bladon, Whickham, Felling and Hebburn. These all appear in comparative tables, often with Sunderland as an outsider, yet with similar status and problems, to compare them.

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis Death Rates comparing Tyneside with England and Wales:

| | 1912-13 | 1921-25 | 1935-37 |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|
| England/Wales | 100 | 80 | 52 |
| Newcastle | 100 | 84 | 59 |
| Wallsend | 100 | 108 | 77 |
| Tynemouth | 100 | 80 | 55 |
| Whitley Bay | 100 | 98 | 65 |
| South Shields | 100 | 88 | 63 |
| Jarrow | 100 | 116 | 62 |
| Hebburn | 100 | 82 | 72 |
| Felling | 100 | 90 | 67 |
| Gateshead | 100 | 95 | 66 |
| Whickham | 100 | 102 | 49 |
| Blaydon | 100 | 129 | 82 |
| Newburn | 100 | 112 | 75 |
| Gosforth | 100 | 110 | 44 |
| Ryton | 100 | 80 | 27 |

TB and JM included:

- a) False Prosperity – i.e. More people working, but lower wages, more women employed, more very young people, but much longer hours worked. Less energy and time for domestic cares.
- b) Poor working conditions – Tyneside was a vast munitions factory. Severe effect on workers of chemicals, dusts, heavy metals etc. Lowered bodily resistance, depleted stamina.
- c) Influx of immigrants not resistant to TB or industrial conditions.
- d) Scarcity of good food for mothers and children.
- e) Deaths of fathers and wage earning men folk in war brought great deprivation.
- f) Depression in agriculture and industry followed the Great War.

Infant Mortality – Death Rates under the Age of one year per thousand births:

| | 1911-13 | 1923-25 | 1937 | 1938 |
|---------------|---------|---------|------|------|
| England/Wales | 111 | 73 | 58 | 53 |
| Newcastle | 120 | 96 | 89 | 66 |
| Wallsend | 116 | 93 | 72 | 85 |
| Tynemouth | 126 | 90 | 65 | 62 |
| Whitley Bay | 54 | 57 | 67 | 45 |
| South Shields | 123 | 104 | 82 | 65 |
| Jarrow | 121 | 101 | 97 | 72 |
| Hebburn | 134 | 101 | 84 | 69 |
| Felling | 128 | 102 | 80 | 70 |
| Gateshead | 123 | 100 | 86 | 66 |
| Whickham | 126 | 91 | 65 | 53 |
| Blaydon | 154 | 86 | 87 | 72 |
| Newburn | 116 | 70 | 58 | 53 |
| Gosforth | 93 | 70 | 65 | 32 |
| Ryton | -- | -- | 69 | 58 |
| | | | | |
| Sunderland | 134 | 106 | 83 | 67 |

Tyneside's rate is much higher than neighbouring Whitley Bay because Tynemouth includes the poor riverside area of North Shields. Note how high Blaydon's figure was in 1911-13.

The certain causes with which tuberculosis is linked are given as poverty, overcrowding, under nourishment, dirty slum housing, large families, ignorance of hygiene, and inadequate health care.

In those respects Tyneside was extremely vulnerable. Studies showed that the worst of the above factors was a) too many persons, especially children, sharing one room. B) very poor diet, leading to malnutrition. Low consumption of meat was found in Jarrow and Blaydon.

Other factors – too early marriage led to increased T.B. in Jarrow figures. Unemployment, though very high in Jarrow, did not contribute in itself, to the disease as much as poverty.

Insanitary dwelling, dampness, bad ventilation, cheap rents and other illnesses in a family did not increase risk of T.B. nearly as much as an overcrowded house, even if it was clean, dry and well ventilated.

Sanatorium treatment – long and protracted stays, Though generally successful, many patients were returned to the very conditions which brought about T.B. in the first place.

Archaic local government system meant lack of consideration between authorities, e.g. county and urban – which defeated attempts to cure people. A need for new housing was 1st priority. Larger homes - more bedrooms etc. Also local clinics for regular checks.

Infant Mortality

Tyneside’s record in infant mortality fully bears out its T.B. record. By comparison with the rest of England its progress has been even slower in reducing death of children under 1 year than it was in reducing deaths from T.B.

The 1914-18 war gave Tyneside a big setback in its infant mortality rates. In 1911-13 our region had a better record than many similar towns in England. Newcastle, Tynemouth, South Shields & Gateshead were all below the national average for county boroughs. After 1918, Tyneside I.M. rates moved up while the rest of the country moved down.

1914-18 war conditions which affected growth of death rates from

?
?
?
?

In 1938 there was a striking improvement in the I.M. rates throughout England due mainly to greater Mother & Child welfare provision, more employment and more education in social awareness. 1938 figures of other areas in England compare with Tyneside’s:- (per 1,000) see last column in previous table.

| | | | |
|----------------|----|---------------|----|
| Durham County | 61 | Manchester | 69 |
| Greater London | 57 | Hull | 69 |
| Sheffield | 50 | Bristol | 42 |
| Birmingham | 61 | Lancashire | 55 |
| Leeds | 64 | Derbyshire | 51 |
| Liverpool | 74 | Staffordshire | 57 |

Bristol comes out best in 1938. Felling’s rate of 70 deaths per 1,000 births is very close to Manchester and Hull’s and better than Liverpool’s.

Studies showed:

- a) The position of the child in the family was significant – younger children in larger families were at risk 3 times greater than average.
- b) Bad housing was a very strong factor in high I.M. rates.
- c) Family ignorance and “old wives tales” played a significant part – bad influences on young mothers of older women. Band and careless practices passed on from one generation to the next in larger families.
- d) Lack of anti & post natal medical care for mothers.
- e) Lack of health clinics for babies.

- f) The most overcrowded/industrial urban centres were worse than every rural district in England/Wales.
- g) Respiratory and gastro-enteritis diseases were most frequent causes of infant deaths.

In 1933, one baby in every five in Tynemouth was born into a family living in a one-room apartment. By 1938 only one baby in twenty suffered this fate.

Local authorities were required to set up maternity and child welfare services after 1929. Also school medical services. 1936 brought the Midwife Act – i.e. supervision of mothers & new babies in the home after delivery. Midwives employed by L.A.s. Anti-natal attention received 1st priority but by 1939 post-natal services also improved. Centres called “clinics”. By 1940 2/3 of all babies were brought to clinics.

Consultations, medicines and certain food supplements were free. Sunlight treatment was widely used. Leeds in 1938 had an I.M. rate in general of 64 per 1,000 but only 21 per 1,000 in babies who attended clinics.

Felling

A population of over 26,000 in 1937 was served by one clinic provided by Durham county council. (also Blaydon, Ryton, Whickham and Hebburn).

“Felling on Tyne is an urban district. It provides its own school medical service but the Durham C.C. provides its Maternity & Child welfare services at Felling’s expense. The fact that Felling Council is thus, absurdly, responsible for only half its health provision for children is largely due to historical accident. Felling might, had it wished, have taken necessary powers & set up its own comprehensive services. False economy or lack of enterprise by its U.D.C. prevented this. Felling must therefore must take such welfare services as D.C.C. chooses to give it and to pay according to the county’s precepts.

The district is on a slope averaging 1 in 10 (feet) and involves much climbing in every direction. There ought to be more than one clinic, though the one there now is placed most conveniently near the town centre as it can be, occupying a converted old house. The child welfare clinic was in St. Albans Villa at High Felling opposite Richmond Terrace. Many needy mothers must climb 1 1/3 miles to reach it. From one densely populated area of the town it is uphill walking of over a mile. Not more than 30 % of the population live within 1/2 a mile. But other districts have similar difficulties.”

Durham, though a poor county spent £139 per 1,000 of its population on child welfare services in 1938. The product of a penny rate per 1,000 people in Durham County was £14. In wealthy Middlesex the same rate brought in £39.3s.0d. That county in 1938 spent £126 per 1,000 people on child welfare services. Northumberland, a much richer county than Durham, with a 1d rate yield of “21 per 1,000 people spent only £88 per 1,000 on Child welfare in 1938.

Durham used 10.2 pence of rate, Northumberland used 4.1 pence of rate, Middlesex 3.1 pence of rates.

| Maternal Mortality | 1924-25 | 1937-38 |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Northumberland | 3.42 per 1,000 | 3.58 per 1,000 |
| Durham | 4.58 per 1,000 | 4.22 per 1,000 |

The counties experienced a serious problem in funding because throughout England and Wales, they lost revenue from every county and municipal borough within their boundaries, who ran their own services. This brought imbalance between large town and rural districts (in favour of large towns). Many prosperous southern counties had almost no boroughs and therefore wealth was more evenly distributed.

Post Natal Clinics 1938

Mothers attending as a % of notified birth in each area.

| | | | |
|-------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| England | 11.8% | Felling | 0 |
| Newcastle | 6.0% | Gateshead | 1.0% |
| Wallsend | ----- | Whickham | 0 |
| Tynemouth | 3.0% | Blaydon | 0 |
| Whitley Bay | ----- | Newburn | 0 |
| Jarrow | ----- | Gosforth | ----- |
| Hebburn | 14.0% | Ryton | 0 |

Compare

| | | | |
|------------|-------|----------------|------|
| Sunderland | 6.0% | Northumberland | 4.0% |
| Margate | 30.0% | Durham | 6.0% |
| Birmingham | 20.0% | Stockton | 0 |
| Bedford | 11.0% | | |

Child Welfare Clinics 1938

Babies 0-1 Yr On Books As % Of Total Live Births

| | | | |
|---------------|----------|------------------|----------|
| England | 66.2% | Gosforth | 88.0% + |
| Wallsend | 74.5 % | Ryton | 61.7 % |
| Tynemouth | 62.9 % | Sunderland | 53.0 % |
| Whitely Bay | 43.7 % | Durham County | 68.5 % + |
| South Shields | 94.0 % + | Northumberland | 40.0 % |
| Jarrow | 90.0 % + | Birmingham | 77.2 % + |
| Hebburn | 62.0 % | Leeds | 67.4 % + |
| *Felling | 51.0 % | Stockton on Tees | 63.6 % |
| Gateshead | 80.0 % + | Margate | 68.3 % + |

| | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Whickham | 64.6 % | Guildford | 78.1 % + |
| Blaydon | 70.1 % + | Poole | 65.7 % |
| Newburn | 95.0 % + | Bromley | 69.2 % + |

+ Above National Average

* Felling's low figure is very disappointing

School Medical Services 1938

Included:-

Medical Inspections of Schoolchildren in School.

School Clinics.

School Meals.

School Milk.

Physical Training Apparatus.

Special Schools for defective Children

Play Centres.

Day Nursery Schools.

Every L.E. A. had fully qualified Medical Officer of health & any dentist, nurse or teacher in special education had to be qualified. Only eight of the Tyneside districts supplied figures for this service in 1938. But these are very revealing.

Expenditure per School Child on School Medical Services (Special Services) 1938

| | Av. Children In Attendance | Amount per Head |
|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| England/Wales | 4,526,701 | £1.5s.7d |
| Newcastle C.B. + | 35,671 | £1.8s.10d |
| Wallsend M.B. | 6,247 | 9s.10d |
| Tynemouth C.B. | 8,970 | 18s.3d |
| South Shields | 15,759 | £1.0s.5d |
| Geateshead C.B. | 16,452 | 19s. 0d |
| Jarrow M.B. | 5,491 | 17s. 0d |
| Hebburn U.D. | 3,756 | £1.4s. 10d |
| Felling U.D. | 3,911 | 18s. 0d |

+ Above national average.

The small and poor U.D. of Hebburn came very close to the national average. These figures are amazing in the sheer anomalies they reveal between neighbouring districts! We should not judge services by amount of money spent on them. The tables do not show efficiency or results.

Solid & Milk Meals Provided 1938

| | Total No. Of Meals | No. Of Meals per Child |
|---------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Newcastle | 1,526,197 | 44 |
| Wallsend | 210,779 | 36 |
| Tynemouth | 79,913 | 9 |
| South Shields | 508,107 | 34 |
| Gateshead | 4,581,932 | 287 |
| Jarrow | 343,232 | 67 |
| Hebburn | 726,894 | 205 |
| Felling | 318,790 | 74 |

The smallness or poorness of the L.E.A.s had little to do with provision of food and milk. Jarrow and Hebburn both did much better than Newcastle and Gateshead, far poorer than Newcastle, made a huge effort.

Education

The 1930s saw a national decrease in the number of children attending Elementary School. (Families were getting smaller) Between 1932 and 1938 Tyneside lost 15% of Elementary School Population. London and the S.E. lost 8%.

Educational progress measured by the willingness of L.E.A.s to make provision for children to stay at school after the age of 15 years, showed Tyneside to have a good record in this respect.

% Of Children Leaving School After Age Of 14+ 1938

a)

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| England/Wales | 5.19% |
| London & S.E. | 7.45% |
| Northumberland | 4.18% |
| Durham County | 7.91% |
| Tyneside | 7.79% |

% Of Children Leaving School After Age Of 14+ 1938

b)

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Newcastle | 4.68% |
| Wallsend | 2.28% |
| Tynemouth | 6.61% |
| South Shields | 18.39% |
| Gateshead | 5.76% |
| Jarrow | 16.6% |
| Hebburn | 0.9% |
| Felling | 3.1% |

% Of Elementary School Children In Class Of 40+ 1938

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| England/Wales | 30.69% |
| London & S.E. | 36.67% |
| Lancashire | 33.87% |
| Northumberland | 39.34% |
| Durham County | 34.22% |
| Tyneside | 45.59% |

The figure here for large classes on Tyneside is very much higher.

There are further big differences in the following Tyneside Areas:-

% Of Elementary Schoolchildren In Classes Of 40 + 1938

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Newcastle | 52.57% |
| Wallsend | 44.2% |
| Tynemouth | 53.31% |
| South Shields | 50.24% |
| Gateshead | 38.93% |
| Jarrow | 18.08% - |
| Hebburn | 47.02% |
| Felling | 24.17% |
| Sunderland | 46.21% |

- Below national average. Jarrow & Felling were much superior to a city like Newcastle in having smaller classes.

Teachers - % Of Un-certificated Teachers Employed In 1938

| | |
|---------------|-------|
| Newcastle | 4.7% |
| Wallsend | 12.8% |
| Tynemouth | 1.8% |
| South Shields | 7.6% |
| Gateshead | 7.4% |
| Jarrow | 7.0% |
| Hebburn | 16.0% |
| Felling | 12.4% |

All English County Boroughs 7.6%.

All Urban District Councils 14.0%.

Hebburn's number of unqualified teachers was very high and so was Wallsend's. South Shields equalled the national average.

Secondary Education

Tyneside was close to the national figure for children receiving state education to 18 years of age. By means of selection of 11+ children were able to go onto higher education i.e. University, Teacher training, Technical/Marine Education etc. This 11+ examination was often called “The Scholarship Exam”. Pupils who were selected did not have to pay fees, but some L.E.A.s did apply a means test and well-off parents were asked to contribute. The level of parental income was set high and few children paid fees until after 1944. Some independent/private schools offered annual free places by entrance exam.

Durham City Council was foremost in opening Secondary (later Grammar) Schools from early 20th Century, E.g. Jarrow in 1907. Others at Blaydon, Hookergate, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Stanley, Wolsingham, Bishop Auckland, Sedgfield, Newton Aycliffe, Houghton-le-Spring, Easington, Neasham, Washington etc.

% Of Pupils Entering Secondary Schools 1938

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| England/Wales | 13.4% |
| London & S.E. | 13.41% |
| Lancashire | 13.88% |
| Northumberland | 11.83% |
| Durham County | 12.35% |
| Tyneside | 10.28% |

Proportion Of Secondary School Pupils Who Paid (%)

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| England/Wales | 18.73% |
| London & S.E. | 28.08% |
| Lancashire | 13.09% |
| Northumberland | 18.60% |
| Durham County | 11.91% |
| Tyneside | 18.11% |

Tyneside was very near to the national average.

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Newcastle | 19.34% |
| Tynemouth | 32.36% |
| South Shields | 13.94% |
| Gateshead | 8.36% |
| Sunderland | 12.99% |

Gateshead obviously made a great effort to keep Secondary Education free.

Felling children who went into Secondary/Grammar Schools attended Jarrow and later Jarrow or Washington. Jarrow Borough was the L.E.A. until 1944 when Durham took complete control.

Rates

“The health, happiness and decency of any district depend more upon the local rates than upon anything else.”

“There is an attitude which allows business people to reside in the affluence of Gosforth or Whitley Bay, on profits made out of Felling, or Hebburn or Jarrow, while disowning all responsibility for the barest minimum of decent existence in F.H. or J or any sense of need to repair, restore damage done by business to the social structure of F.H. or J.”

“The Royal Commission of 1937 made some pertinent proposals to redress the balance – a unified region with a uniform rate.”

Population & Rateable Values

Newcastle = 36.5% of population of Tyneside = 49.9% of R.V.

Wallsend = 5.1% of population of Tyneside = 4.1% of R.V.

Gateshead = 14.7% of population of Tyneside = 10.4% of R.V.

Gosforth = 2.5% of Population of Tyneside = 3.5% of R.V.

From property whose R.V. is £20 + per annum:

| |
|-----------------------------|
| Newcastle got 20% of Rates |
| Gosforth got 57.3% of Rates |
| Jarrow got 5.9% of Rates |
| Hebburn got 2.00% of Rates |
| Felling got 4.35% of Rates |

From property valued at £13 + per annum:

| |
|------------------------------|
| Newcastle got 12.8% of Rates |
| Gosforth got 7.7% of Rates |
| Jarrow got 48.5% of Rates |
| Hebburn got 53.9% of Rates |
| Felling got 58.3% of Rates |

Working class families in the districts with lower Rateable Values bore a much larger share of rate-paying than their wealthier neighbours in higher rated areas.

A Newcastle family in 1938 paid rates of £18.1s.4d at 10/8 in the pound.

A Felling family in 1938 paid rates of £15.18s.4d at 20/6 in the pound.

Est. Population In Thousand & Net Product Of A Penny Rate In 1938

| | | |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|
| | Est. Pop (1,000s) | Net Product Of 1d Rate |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|

| | | |
|---------------|-------|--------|
| Newcastle | 290.4 | £2,125 |
| Wallsend | 43.9 | £866 |
| Tynemouth | 66.9 | £1,499 |
| South Shields | 111.0 | £2,083 |
| Gateshead | 117.6 | £2,125 |
| Jarrow | 31.2 | £436 |
| Hebburn | 22.7 | £305 |
| Felling | 26.1 | £344 |
| Whickham | 22.2 | £542 |
| Newburn | 19.3 | £377 |
| Gosforth | 19.8 | £731 |
| Whitley Bay | 27.0 | £1,091 |

Tyneside steadily lost population, the following table showing when the people drifted away:-

| Year | Net Decrease |
|------|--------------|
| 1926 | 9,631 |
| 1927 | 4,604 |
| 1928 | 27,235 |
| 1929 | 5,571 |
| 1930 | 8,827 |
| 1931 | 8,546 |
| 1932 | 5,472 |
| 1933 | 3,399 |
| 1934 | 5,872 |
| 1935 | 1,295 |
| 1936 | 5,859 |
| 1937 | 3,384 |
| 1938 | 2,463 |

Between 1926 and 1938 Tyneside's total population decreased from 870,380 to 842,390, a loss of 27,990. The birth rate did not out-weigh the loss due to migration.

1928 stands out as the worst year ever for emigration from Tyneside. The General Strike of 1926 was a black event in a decade of industrial decline.

Housing

Progress in making Tyneside a better place to live hinged on planning new structures both social and economic (and political). Local Government should be re-organised into fewer and larger boroughs or districts and the disparity between the wealthy areas and the poor areas lessened.

The first priority should be to build well-designed, larger, rented houses with a flexible system of letting and exchange. The L.A.s and Housing Associations should be funded to commence such a program. Other infrastructure should be an integrated part of housing schemes – e.g. schools, roads, shops, community centres, libraries etc.

“Any progress must have its debit side, and the present writer will not be alone in regretting that a district such as Felling shall lose that control of its own civic life which has been a striking development within recent years, and which has been based entirely on the fact that the Felling Urban District Council has changed its district from a filthy, slum-ridden, overcrowded little town into one of the best and most beautiful garden cities in the country”.

Every Tyneside district has not done this; not by any means. But where it has been done, even on a lesser scale than in Felling, it has given real meaning to the phrases “Civic Pride” and “Civic Responsibility”.

“In 1938 the Urban District of Felling was imposing upon itself a housing rate of 2s in the Pound. The neighbouring district of Hebburn had reached a housing rate of 3 1/4d in the Pound. The giant authority of the city of Newcastle upon Tyne had a housing rate of 2 1/2d in the Pound”.

Need more be said!

Joan Hewitt