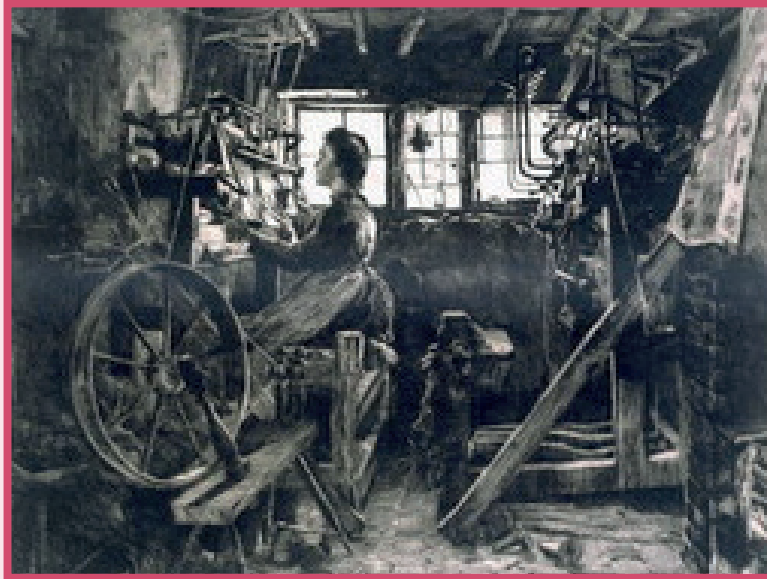




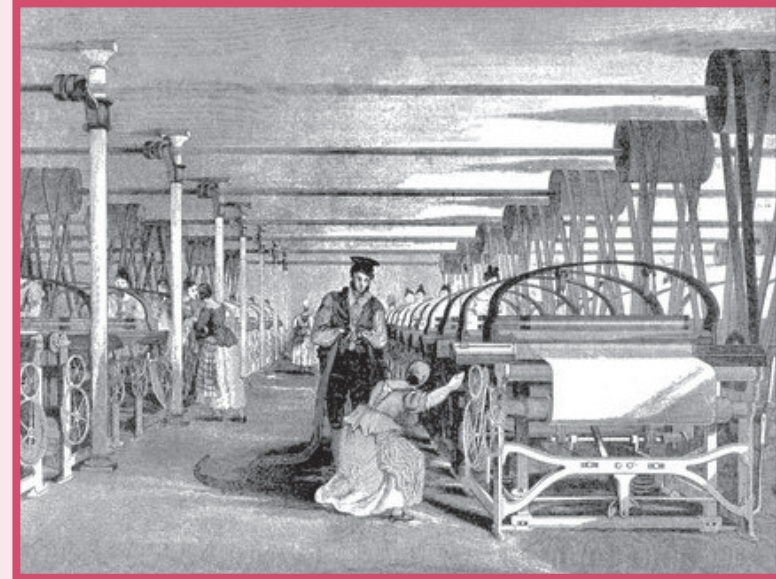
Social Unrest in Sutton in the 1800s: The Chartist movement



Why were people angry?



The framework knitters (or stockings) produced textiles in their homes and made them into garments. There was a particular demand for stockings – fashionable socks. It was the most popular job in Sutton in the early 1800s.



When new machinery was invented which speeded up production, the stockings lost work and many could not afford to feed their families.

More reasons why people were angry

- People could be thrown in jail for no good reason.
- It was illegal for workers to meet and demand an increase in wages or fewer working hours.
- The free press (newspapers which were not controlled by the government) was taxed and large scale meetings were made illegal, so it was difficult to share Radical ideas.
- The price of corn in England was protected (although it was cheaper from abroad) so bread was expensive.
- Beer and sugar – everyday household items – were taxed making the poor even poorer.
- You could go to jail for seven years or be transported to Australia if caught poaching (to feed your family).



Feargus O'Connor

- The Chartists in Nottingham were known as the Nottingham Lambs.
- Feargus O'Connor was one of their main spokespeople.
- Feargus often met with the unhappy knitters in Sutton. He was a powerful public speaker and encouraged people to use physical force to make a change.
- Some people thought that he was a 'big head' and that many of the things he shouted about could not come true. Others saw him as a true friend of the poor.
- He was elected MP for Nottingham in 1847. His career was cut short in 1852 when he was declared insane and he died three years later.



The Free Press

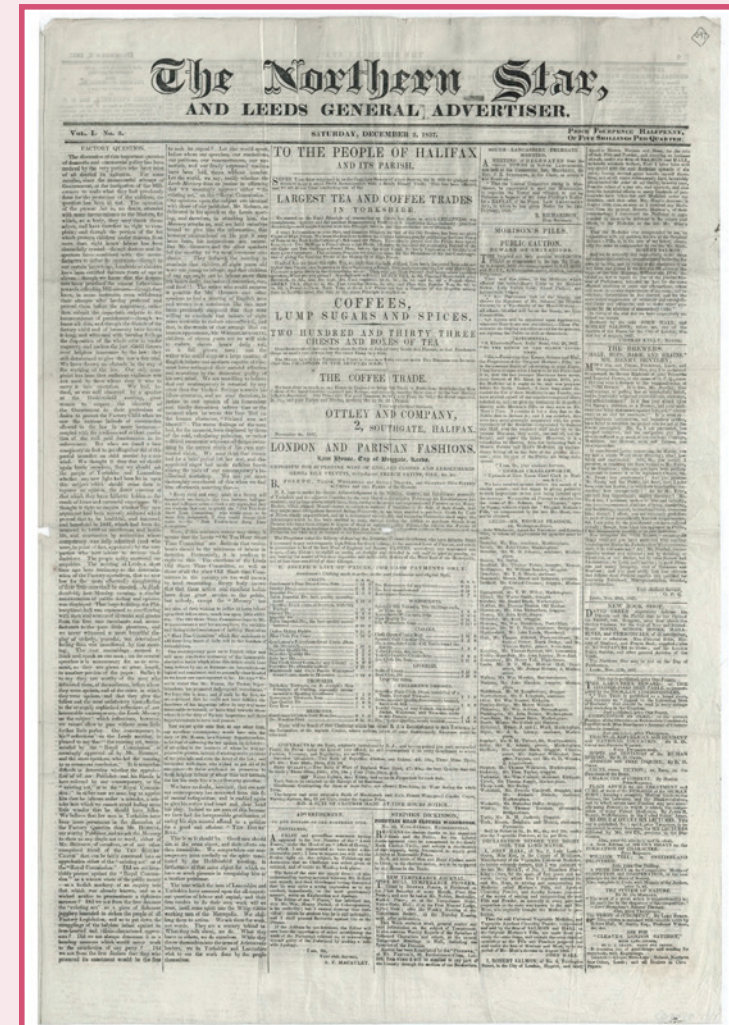
The Free Press grew in the early 1800s with many newspapers questioning the way the country was run and standing up for the working man.

The two that were linked to the Chartist movement were the Northern Star and The Poor Man's Guardian.

Feargus O'Connor established the Northern Star.

By spring 1839 it was selling more than 48,000 copies a week.

By the end of 1839 it had the second largest circulation in the UK.



What did the Chartists achieve?

- Few MPs supported the People's Charter but it did eventually make them see that changes – known as political reform – was necessary.
- Many wealthier people agreed with the aims of the Chartists but were too afraid to publicly admit they also wanted change.
- Although the Chartists did not achieve their aims at the time, they did make a difference. By the 1850s the government accepted that more change was necessary and further Reform Acts were passed in 1867 and 1884.



Edward Unwin, Justice of the Peace

- Edward eventually got caught out for entering a man's house and searching it for weapons without a warrant.
- Joseph Bryon, the framework-knitter who lived there, sued Edward for trespassing and the case was heard in the local courts.
- In the end Edward was fined a farthing damages for trespassing. He was furious and filed for bankruptcy for debts amounting to a total of £30,000 rather than pay the fine.
- Edward died in 1841 and the case was taken to parliament after his death.
- MPs agreed that Unwin had broken the law.
- Many Chartists celebrated Unwin's death. Despite his unpopularity with the working man about 12,000 people went to his funeral to pay their last respects.



Edward Unwin's downfall

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