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**The Wills Family: An Insight into Victorian
Business Ethics, 1850-1910**

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The Wills Family: An Insight into Late Victorian Business Ethics,
1850-1910

Introduction

Primarily due to its geographical location, Bristol had, by the end of the 18th Century, established itself as one of the principal destinations for the import of American tobacco in the country.¹ It was in this context that Henry Overton Wills I first came to Bristol in 1786, where he entered the trade by forming a partnership with a local tobacconist in the name of Wills, Watkins & co.² Over the following two centuries the business grew in both wealth and prestige to dominate not only the national market but also to become an international force in the industry, following the inception of the Imperial Tobacco Company in 1901. The vast expansion of the company in the latter half of the 19th century coincided with a rise of morality in the public conscious, indeed, in his recent work on the Victorian political economy Angus Hawkins notes that, during this time, “the search for greater moral certainty informed the whole spectrum of political opinion and sentiment”.³ Contemporary scholars had also become aware of the heightened importance of ‘morality’ - The Victorian thinker, John Seeley noted in 1888 that an “unusual moral earnestness” was the era’s “special characteristic”.⁴ This injection of moral conscious into Victorian society had a particular potency in the realm of industrial relations. The adoption of laissez-faire economics and the consequent absence of state intervention meant that, by the mid-nineteenth century, many industrial capitalists had become the primary actors in dictating the lives of the ordinary people.⁵ Whilst this was predominantly in relation to their workforce, it also extended to their customers and, more generally, the people in their locality.

This essay seeks to use the Wills family as the basis for an in depth analysis into late Victorian business ethics, assessing the role of the family’s own morality in their paternalistic relations with their employees and the people of Bristol. It will be employing qualitative data, predominantly in the form of letters, but not exclusively so. Other company documents such as social club reports, company notices, factory rule books and the minutes of workman meetings will be used to try to ascertain, not simply the Wills’ views of themselves, but also how their workforce and others perceived them. There are certainly some limitations with this method: First of all, whilst there were plenty of opportunities to offer more substantial context, this has been sacrificed, to a certain extent, to allow for a much more comprehensive analysis of the sources. In an attempt to emulate early empiricists such as Leopold von

¹ C.M. Macinnes, *The Early English Tobacco Trade*, (London: 1926) p.70-83

² B.W.E. Alford, *W.D and H.O. Wills and the Development of the UK tobacco Industry, 1786-1965*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973) p.3.

³ A. Hawkins, *The Victorian Political Culture: ‘habits of Heart and Mind’* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2015) p.368.

⁴ J.R. Sealey, ‘Ethics and Religion’, *Ethics and religion*, (eds.) The Society of Ethical Propagandists (London, 1900) p.6.

⁵ P. Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: The Culture of the Victorian Factory in Later Victorian England* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980) p.152.

Ranke, this investigation has been heavily primary source led and delves extensively into the language and meaning of the various documents in an attempt to gauge the true character of the family. The letters, themselves, are taken from a selection of letter books (records of correspondence) kept by various members of the family and senior directors of the firm, mainly from around 1888-1910. The first Book, however, covers the years 1855-1860, and allows for a strong starting point to assess how the Wills family cultivated their business overtime. Although the company continued to expand beyond 1910 the role of the Wills family within the company was greatly diminished following the deaths of prominent members in the 1909, 1910 and two in 1911. This study will therefore concern itself with the lives and methods of four generations and, whilst this is potentially problematic for an examination of the family's overarching mode of business, thanks to the multitude of family members involved, it does allow us to assess any change over time or, in this instance, the continuity of its business ethos. What becomes apparent is that, certainly for the first few generations, the Wills' business affairs were conditioned by their political and religious affiliations, namely as liberals and non-conformists. What followed was a legacy of strict but fair management which was present throughout the time period studied, and can be said to have greatly endeared the Wills family to their workforce and the people of Bristol.

Historiography

Modern perceptions of the family have been somewhat less favourable. There have in recent years been a spate of articles written in the local and national press questioning the morality of the family. One, written in 2014 in the University of Bristol student newspaper, *The Epigram*, claimed that the university, through its connection with the Wills family, was, subsequently, "guilty of hiding its own connections with the slave trade".⁶ A more recent article in the same paper went further and, in its analysis of one of the company's senior directors, Henry Overton Wills III, sought to emphasise the grey area between "imperial racist and educational philanthropist".⁷ Finally, in March this year *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* reported about an online petition, put forward by current students of the university, to rename the Wills Memorial building after someone "that we, as an institution and city, can be proud of".⁸ These allegations give an added impetus for a comprehensive study of the family and ask important questions about our perception of the past.

⁶ J. Manning, *Trading Places: Bristol built on slavery* in *The Epigram*, 24th March 2014.

<http://epigram.org.uk/features/2014/03/trading-places-bristol-built-on-slavery>

⁷ S. Hunter, *It's time Bristol came to terms with its dark history of tobacco, slavery and Henry Wills* in *The Epigram* 12th February 2016. <http://epigram.org.uk/features/2016/02/its-time-bristol-came-to-terms-with-its-dark-history-of-tobacco-slavery-and-henry-wills>

⁸ *The Guardian*, *Can Bristol University's Wills Memorial building escape its Legacy of Slavery*, 29th March 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/shortcuts/2017/mar/29/bristol-university-wills-memorial-building-escape-legacy-of-slavery>

Although The Wills family have been largely absent from the historiography of Victorian labour and industry, there have been two works of note on the family in their own right. The first of which, '*W.D. Wills & H.O. Wills and the development of UK Tobacco Industry 1786-1965*', was written by the economic historian Bernard Alford. Given that "the general framework of my [Alford's] study has been drawn from economic theory" it concentrates on the firm's production, marketing strategies etc. that allowed Wills to become the largest producer of tobacco in the the UK.⁹ The second, '*Furnished with ability The lives and Times of the Wills Family*' by S.J. Watson is of less academic value and covers the achievements of all members of the family up until the point of writing in 1991, moving well beyond their years in control of the firm and looking more into the later 'Wills Legacy'.¹⁰ Although this did leave the text prone to rather sweeping generalisations on the character of the family as a whole, it does provide a running commentary of socio-political changes occurring simultaneously to the family's growth "so that they [The Wills family] may be seen in the historical context of the events which influenced their outlook and moulded their traditions".¹¹ This method is especially helpful when trying to assert a moral judgement on the past.

Although useful, one must take great care when using these books for a more purposeful study. Indeed, both their commissioners had vested interests in their content. Alford was appointed by the Imperial Tobacco Company itself, whilst Watson was commissioned by the Dulverton Trust (Lord Dulverton himself being the head of one branch of the Wills family). Despite Alford claiming his work "to be an objective study" in which "the firm's shortcomings and failures should be treated as openly and fully as its successes", it is probable that it gives a favourable account of the firm's history.¹² Watson's work is likely to be even more sycophantic as it notes "it was published for members of the Wills family".¹³ Alford did, also, selectively make use of the letter books, but the sheer volume of records did not make it difficult to find original material. Furthermore, neither of them have considered the family's character and their socio-economic contribution to Bristolian society as a whole.

The history of industrial relations has been dominated by concepts of class and ideology. The à la mode view of historical thinking in the first half of the century, enforced by the likes of J.H. Clapham, was that British standards of living improved as a consequence of the industrial revolution.¹⁴ Marxist

⁹ Alford, *W.D & H.O. Wills*, xiii.

¹⁰ S.J. Watson, *Furnished with Ability: The lives and times of the Wills families* (Sailsbury: Michael Russel, 1991).

¹¹ Watson, *Furnished with Ability*, vii.

¹² Alford, *W.D & H.O Wills*, xii.

¹³ Watson, *Furnished with Ability*, vi.

¹⁴ J.H Clapham, *An Economic History of Great Britain: The Early Railway Age, 1820-1850* (Cambridge: University Press, 1938).

historians such as Eric Hobsbawm have since entered the fray on this ideological battleground and have persuasively argued that industrialisation was a catastrophe for the working class man.¹⁵ More often than not this discourse has led to the demonization of the employer class, or bourgeoisie, by a multitude of different historians. Whilst the metanarrative nature of Marxist historiography could be said to have led to generalisations about British industry, social historians and followers of E.P Thompson's concept of a "History from Below" have, espousing a similar rhetoric, provided the detailed examples of industrial relations in action.¹⁶ However, their choice of geographical and temporal location has often centred on the industrial north in the first half of the century and, consequently, the negatives of employer paternalism. The cotton mills and textile factories of Lancashire and Yorkshire have been given ample attention, and David Roberts's thorough research into paternalism only concerns events prior to 1850.¹⁷ Historians have focused on these periods and places largely due to the notoriously poor working conditions and the exploitation of the child and female labour force but, in doing this, they largely ignore the more harmonious instances of corporate paternalism.

Patrick Joyce makes note of this "imbalance" in the literature and offers perhaps the fairest account of employer paternalism – he states that "so often it is the moments of conflict only that are culled from the life of the people".¹⁸ He brings to mind the possibility of an emotional identification between the workforce and their employer, or what he refers to as a feeling of 'deference' to employers, as opposed to workers solely being 'dependent' on them.¹⁹ Yet, even amongst revisionists, there has been very little written on what Joyce calls the 'the new model employers'.²⁰ These men such as George Cadbury, Jesse Boots, Joseph Roundtree have, like Wills, been acknowledged biographically, but very rarely as a collective group. This is all the more surprising when one considers that they were all in fact very similar; they all came from middleclass backgrounds, where they valued non-conformist religious beliefs, and their political affiliations were liberal. Furthermore, they all showed how a harmonious and symbiotic relationship with their employees could enforce a form of paternalism which was just as beneficial to their workforce as it was for themselves. Yet, these men have not held positions of sufficient importance to be considered in any great detail by political historians, and their upper class status meant that they have also been ignored by many social historians, who have looked only at the experience of the workers, and not the employers. Although they will not feature as a collective in this study, their many similar traits offer an opportunity for relevant academic research, (just as there has been such a focus on the northern mill owners collectively). This essay will, to a certain extent, look to

¹⁵ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of labour* (London: Lowe & Brydone, 1964) p.64.

¹⁶ E. P. Thompson, "History from Below", *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 April 1966.

¹⁷ D. Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England*, (London: Croom Helm, 1979).

¹⁸ Joyce, *Work, Society and politics*, xiv.

¹⁹ Joyce, *Work, society and Politics*, pp.123-126.

²⁰ Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics*, p. 71.

compare the Wills family with all types of industrial capitalists and, in so doing, it will contest the labour theories first put forward by Marxists and later by many social historians. Through a practical and human study of the Wills tobacco firm, the essay will put forward the argument that the respect between employer and employee was in fact very genuine, and that this relationship can be defined more by 'deference' than 'dependence'.

The Suppliers

First, one must confront the issue of slavery. Although, this study will focus primarily on the family's relations with its workforce and, to some extent, its customers, it is also appropriate to acknowledge their relationship with their suppliers. To enable the growth of their business the Wills family needed an ample supply of tobacco, and this was supplemented by American plantation owners who, up until the emancipation act of 1863, were using slaves to grow their product. The problem, here, is that there is a genuine scarcity of evidence to ascertain how involved the family were with the production of their tobacco and even to what degree they gave due consideration to it. The first piece of evidence to evaluate from the Wills catalogue at the Bristol Record Office is a letter, dated 25th November 1759, from George Washington (at this time a well known Virginian plantation owner) concerning the sale of '50 hogsheads' of tobacco.²¹ This correspondence highlights that there was perhaps a closer connection between American supplier and Bristol manufacturer than was previously thought. However, the first Wills to enter the trade was Henry Overton Wills I who was not born until 1761 and, as previously mentioned, did not join the trade until 1786. The letter was, in fact, addressed to 'Robert Cary Esqre and Company' who would probably have been a partner with Watkins prior to Wills joining. The letter's existence is no doubt evidence of a relinquished knowledge of the origins of the firm's tobacco, and it would be foolish to suggest that Wills was completely ignorant of its method of production. The truth is it is unlikely that the immorality of such methods would have been apparent to him, or indeed many of his contemporaries, and it is thus important to contextualise: A report on the nature of certain industries in 1747 stated that "a tobacconist in the common acceptance is looked upon as a reputable, extensive and profitable... business, some also importing their own goods".²²

The actual action of importing goods is also a key consideration, as this would indicate a far closer connection with the slave owning plantation owners. From what limited evidence there is, though, it appears unlikely that this was the case for the Wills firm. There were only a few mentions of shipments in the letter book, 1855-1860. The first was in a letter to another manufacturer in 1859 and enquired

²¹ Bristol, Bristol Record Office [hereafter BRO]: 38169/C/2/1, George Washington to Robert Carey, 12th June 1759.

²² T. Waller, *A general description of all trades*, (1747) p.32.

into the possibility of sharing the burden of shipment “for the saving of time and trouble”, but this was only to access tobacco markets domestically in Liverpool and London.²³ The other mentions concerned the export of the firm’s manufactured product to Australia, but in these cases it was sold to Liverpool merchants for “cash upon receipt of invoice”.²⁴ Through this it becomes clear that the Wills business actually had very little international heft at this stage of its development and that all its dealings were in fact exclusively conducted within Britain. The most likely state of affairs is that, during the years of slave ownership in America, and when the company was just a small manufacturer with one shop on castle street, their tobacco would have been purchased wholesale at the docks, along with hundreds of other tobacconists at the time in Bristol, Liverpool and London.

This lack of evidence does not necessarily clear the family of a complicit involvement in slavery but, if you delve deeper into the actions and attitudes of these first generations outside of the immediate environs of the business, their moral standing concerning slavery becomes clearer. The first matter to take into account is that, of the eighty-nine prominent members of Bristol Society who claimed compensation under the 1833 Abolition Act, none of them bore the name Wills.²⁵ What we do know of Henry Overton Wills I is that he was a devout Christian with a liberal outlook; The very same year that he came to Bristol he joined the local the Penn Street Tabernacle, the primary Congregationalist church in Bristol, of which he was later to become one of its trustees.²⁶ Such leanings were also present in his sons and, ultimately, led to them financially supporting the Whig candidate in the 1830 elections who stood, primarily, for the abolition of slavery.²⁷ The Wills’ had more reason than most to oppose such a policy but, in direct conflict with their business interests, they chose to support it. In passing judgement on the past more consideration should be given to how any given person looked to challenge the accepted status quo of the time and sought social progress and change, rather than simply condemning the period as a whole for the immorality of the prevailing perceived norms.

This issue does, however, serve to highlight some of the methodological problems with a historical study into ethics of a family such as this one. Morality and ethics are, by their very nature, contentious topics - not only is a man’s, or in this case a family’s, moral integrity hard to discern, but it is also subject to a rigorous scrutiny, which is largely dependent on one’s own ideological standpoint. Although this essay revolves around the question of ethics, as a historical study, an objective outlook must be taken. Our minds are subconsciously conditioned by our present circumstances and to judge

²³ BRO: 38169/C/1/1, W.D. Wills to Messrs Ford & Canning, 16th May 1859.

²⁴ BRO: 38169/C/1/1, W.D. Wills to Messrs Callender, Caldwell & Co, 27th October 1859.

²⁵ UCL Online Archive for those compensated under the Abolition Act of 1833.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/search/>

²⁶ Private Records of Whitfields Tabernacle, Penn Street, now held at Whitfield Memorial.

²⁷ Watson, *Furnished with ability*, p.26.

the family outside of their historical context would be overtly anachronistic. The British historian, Peter Burke, states that an appreciation of the issue of anachronism is one of the principal concerns for modern history and he implored historians to employ “a sympathetic awareness of different values...in different periods”.²⁸ From the very inception of history as an academic discipline, empiricists have denounced the anachronistic tendencies of those in the present - Leopold Von Ranke believed “that each epoch of history must be understood in terms of its own unique, unrepeatable context”.²⁹ For these men objectivity and a sense historical perspective was to be desired above all else and, in contrast, an employment of present morals and customs on the past was the “historical sin of sins”.³⁰

The First Letter Book

The first piece of extensive qualitative evidence on the Wills family and their business practices is a letter book from the years 1855-1860. Distinct from the later letter books due to its temporal positioning (a full twenty-eight years before the next one), it is not simply the book’s isolation in history from the others that merits its own study. The firm took on a serious transformation in the 1880’s following their acquisition of a monopoly on the cigarette making Bonsack machine, changing from a medium sized firm into a large corporate entity.³¹ This no doubt explains the plethora of letter books after 1888 as the company took on a more professional mode of record taking. However, these letters reflected the company’s new status and differed greatly, in both style and content, with the 1855 book. They tended to be sent to other directors or senior managers in the company and usually gave details of more corporate orientated affairs; reviews of the accounts, reports on various factories, matters concerning human resources etc. The 1855 book, however, is nearly exclusively concerned with letters to private customers. It provides a valuable insight as to how ethical a smaller family run enterprise could be at the time, not least with regard the family’s treatment of women, whilst only making limited profits. What becomes clear is that the ethos of the Wills family’s business was one of firmness, combined with a sense of fairness, from the outset. However, the family’s conspicuous belief in gender roles propagates the ‘central paradigm’ in British historiography of women operating within ‘separate spheres’ in the Victorian era.³²

One of the letter book’s primary concerns was the lack of payment from customers, and the forgiving, but resolute, manner in which such matters were dealt with offers an interesting perspective on the

²⁸ P. Burke, *The Renaissance sense of the past* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969) p.49.

²⁹ H. Ritter, *Dictionary of Concepts in History* (London: Greenwood Press, 1986) p.9.

³⁰ F.E Manuel, ‘the Use and Abuse of Psychology in History’, in F. Gilbert and S.R. Graubard (eds.), *Historical Studies Today*, (New York: Norton, 1972) p.218.

³¹ Alford, W.D & H.O. Wills, pp.139-157.

³² K.D Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women a political society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998) p.3.

nature of the Wills business, if not simply in linguistic terms. One letter dated 6th January 1855 notes that “having written twice to you for payment and not having received a reply to our last we [Wills] think you must admit we have most cause to complain of insult... what conclusion could we come to but the course we have adopted”³³ The language used is courteous, but the underlying message is one of firmness. Clearly, a certain amount of leeway was permitted by the Wills family, but customers are left in no doubt that a failure to comply would lead to serious repercussions. One such customer may have tested their clemency too far when they “paid the money already promised to us [Wills] to another creditor who happened to be more urgent in his demands. We have no wish to act harshly by you or any of our customers but we certainly must protect ourselves.”³⁴ Here the firm’s lenient nature has led to the recipient paying off other debts before settling with them, and he is met with an ominous ultimatum: “We shall at once adopt decisive measures”.

This contradictory dichotomy between being strong businessmen whilst maintaining a sense of personal integrity is perhaps most evident in the manner in which they dealt with two unfortunate circumstances of customers dying whilst having outstanding debts with the firm. Their ‘gentlemanly’ code of business is very apparent in the first letter dated 19th April 1860 when corresponding with a female customer who has recently had to take on the debts of her late father: “the very last thing we should do to urge you to cripple and inconvenience yourselves in order to pay debts which personally you did not contract and you may be quite sure that should such an attempt be made we shall use all our influence on your behalf.”³⁵ On this occasion it is clear that the Wills brothers valued a sense of honour and decency over the needs of the business. Not only do they either cancel the debts for the grieving daughter (or, at the very least, delay their payment - it is unclear), but they also offer their advice and, perhaps more tellingly, their power to intercede on her behalf with other creditors who might wish to press for outstanding payments. Here they are going beyond normal conduct of business to use their power in the city of Bristol to do what they believe is the morally correct thing to do. However, the second letter, sent on 7th April 1856, provides a slightly different tone and, instead, insists that the debt must be “immediately paid”.³⁶ At first, the differences in the Wills approach to these similar issues are striking and somewhat confusing.

One possible reason for this lies in the gender of the recipient, and offers an insight into the role that such matters played in Victorian business. The first of these letters was written to the company ‘The Messrs Prout’, but it was addressed “Dear Madame” and is one of the only letters in the whole book written to someone of the female sex. Thus, the Wills’ were certainly appearing to adopt a rather more

³³ BRO: 38169/C/1/1, W.D & H.O Wills to Messrs. Sharp & Snowden, 6th January 1855.

³⁴ BRO: 38169/C/1/1, W.D & H.O Wills to Mr James Bond, 18th April 1855.

³⁵ BRO: 38169/C/1/1, W.D & H.O Wills to The Messrs Prout, 19th April 1860.

³⁶ BRO: 38169/C/1/1, W.D & H.O Wills to Messrs Dowding & Burne, 7th April 1856.

paternalistic stance in their dealings in this case. Whilst it may show a potentially chauvinistic lack of confidence in the woman's ability to cope for herself, it is undoubtedly a sincere and kind gesture, if a bit patronising, and something they would expect of themselves as Victorian 'gentlemen'. The role of gender is also apparent in the second letter as the Wills brothers state that they would "have no objection meeting the views of the widow", whatever they may be, but refuse to "agree to the proposition" made by the man's business partners. This caring, but somewhat demeaning, attitude towards women was not dissimilar to the type of paternalism employed by George Cadbury at his Bourneville factory – any girls living on site were provided with their own cottages which were routinely guarded by night-watchmen and if they lived in a nearby village they were chaperoned back by a man with a lantern.³⁷

Yet, the most interesting letters and, indeed the ones that are most telling about the character and nature of the company and its owners, are the ones that relate to more irregular business incidents. In these instances, they were forced to act on their own moral judgement, instead of falling back on tried and tested business methods. One such letter again involved Mrs Prout, although it is hard to figure out the precise course of events. This highlights one of the methodological issues with using these letter books. It is only possible to see the outgoing letters from the Wills', never those received prior to their correspondence or, indeed, the replies that they received. These last three letters were all signed by Henry Overton II, as opposed to the usual company signature of H.O & W.D. Wills, which in itself is a conspicuous sign that these were not dealing with day to day affairs. To surmise, it would appear that a printing company by the name of Nichols and Hearne's had, in some way, mislead Mrs Prout, to the extent that it "to some important extent injured the sale of our [The Wills Family's] tobacco".³⁸

The manner in which Henry Overton dealt with Mrs Prout, the 'customer' further highlights the family's perception of gender roles. As part of the main letter to a 'Mr. Rooker', who is likely to have been the Wills' lawyer, Henry Overton states; "We must now request you take Mrs Prout in hand and proceed with her as your judgement may suggest." There is an obvious element of concern for Mrs. Prout exhibited by Wills, but what is most shocking is the perception that Mrs Prout can't act or conduct these serious affairs on her own and that she must be aided by a man. "Her affairs" are first stated to be in "Mr Bridgeman's hands", before Wills thinks that another gentleman, "Mr Gribble" would also like to help and "secure her" and then he finally requests that Mr. Rooker himself takes the matter into his own hands. In a sense, Mrs Prout, although an independent seller, could be seen as a quasi-employee of Wills. It is clear that they certainly felt a paternalistic responsibility for her, yet it is ambiguous whether this is due to their paternal instincts or simply by virtue of her being women.

³⁷ I. Bradley, *Enlightened Entrepreneurs: Business ethics in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2007) p.132.

³⁸ BRO: 38169/C/1/1, H.O. Wills to A. Rooker, 17th February 1857.

Mr Wills' religious beliefs and their relevance to his business *modus operandi* also become apparent as he finishes the letter to Mr Rooker with "it is sad that so many professing Christians carry on their business with so little regard to righteous principle".³⁹ This explicitly shows that his Christian values influenced his style of business and explains where his ethos of hard work, professionalism and strictness comes from. As discussed above, with this firmness came a sense of honour and dignity, which is evident in the final letter to the printing company who caused the issue. Wills states, perhaps with a little spite, that "you must be satisfied that our good name has suffered" but then composes himself and informs him that "we are now satisfied with the moderate course Mr Rooker has suggested" in retaliation⁴⁰. He ultimately acknowledges that this was the "only course open to us as honourable businessmen", serving once again to highlight, if nothing else, how the Wills' saw themselves, not as exploitative capitalists, but as "honourable businessmen".⁴¹

An analysis of these letter books does have clear limitations, especially when only the view of the Wills' is available when apparently contentious issues are being discussed. However, it can certainly be argued that the brothers were moral agents in the uncertain world of Victorian business. They were clearly firm and professional businessmen who were serious about their aspirations for their firm, but they never forgot the religious principles that they based their business on and, where they could, they offered leniency to their business partners. Despite their good intentions, the treatment of female customers by the Wills Brothers highlights the patriarchal nature of Victorian commerce and whilst their sense of morality clearly conditioned their approach to business, what they perceived as gentlemanly conduct could in fact be regarded as a sexist.

Worker's Welfare 1880-1902

From fragments of the company's records it is clear that, by the turn of the century, the firm had started developing a range of Welfare benefits for the employees. Some were more necessary than others, for example the employment of a full time matron and company doctor in 1895.⁴² However, even in terms of health, more attention seems to have been given to women's welfare than men's, with the convalescent home at Clevedon being solely for sick female employees and "the benefit receive for a short stay at the home has enabled each girl to resume to her work immediately".⁴³ Looking at it from the perspective of the modern age this might propagate the image of the Wills' having a slightly chauvinistic attitude, but to them it would have been deemed "gentlemanly". This ultimately shows

³⁹ BRO: 38169/C/1/1, H.O. Wills to A. Rooker, 17th February 1857.

⁴⁰ BRO: 38169/C/1/1, H.O. Wills to Mr Nicholls, 17th February 1857.

⁴¹ BRO: 38169/C/1/1, H.O. Wills to Mr Nicholls, 17th February 1857.

⁴² Alford, *W.D & H.O Wills*, p.288.

⁴³ BRO: 38169/E/11/7/1, Convalescent Home Report, 1894.

that, as regards the Wills family's perception of gender roles, there was a sense of continuity throughout this period. However, there is also a potential dichotomy here between establishing such medical schemes out of a genuine concern for employee welfare, and simply seeking to increase productivity as a result of having an efficient and healthy workforce. Alford remarked that the drastic infrastructural improvements at the new factory built at Ashton gate in 1901 were due to "the partners' understanding of the relationship between working conditions and productivity".⁴⁴ Yet, this assessment, even by a historian solely focused on the Wills family, seems too theoretical and economical and does not consider the natural sensibilities involved. These can be ascertained from the language and sentiment of the many letters available from the Wills family.

Outside of simple health measures, the company also expanded its repertoire by setting up an array of leisure activities for its employees. There are reports of a cricket club in 1894 at Bedminster, which played the other factories in the company, amongst other local teams. However, there are a couple of occasions recorded where the games were called off due to "employees having to work late", which does highlight the extent to which this sort of activity was at the mercy of managers.⁴⁵ In addition to this a company band, as well as singing and sewing classes were established. Again it is clear from the minutes of a meeting held by the foremen, that these pleasures came strictly after business and that the director had the power to take away, as well as grant these liberties; W.M. Wills cancelled an engagement organised for the band as he felt that they should be working, and the foremen consequently implored them "to avoid giving displeasure to their much respected manager".⁴⁶ Evidence once more of generosity but also, authoritarian control. For paternalism to function effectively, even if enacted for what the employers felt was for the good of the people, there was still the necessity for almost total control on behalf of the patron.

There may also have been another reason for these clubs, other than simple leisure time. The religious zeal possessed by many of these non-conformist industrialists prompted a moral responsibility on behalf of the employers to improve their workforce, both from an educational and spiritual standpoint. Men such as George Cadbury and Titus Salt often made their workforces start their working day with a church service.⁴⁷ The idea of a process of betterment was also evident in some of the clubs at Wills. The singing class and band practice reports were not merely focused on ensuring that the participants were enjoying themselves, it also appears crucial that "progress was being made", for they were only of "satisfactory standard" at the time of writing.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Alford, *W.D & H.O. Wills*, p.287.

⁴⁵ BRO: 38169/E/11/7/1, Annual Cricket Report, 1894.

⁴⁶ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, Committee of Foremen Minutes, July 29th 1907.

⁴⁷ Bradley, *Enlightened entrepreneurs*, pp.35-47.

⁴⁸ BRO: 38169/E/11/7/1, Singing Class Report.

Even so, the caring nature behind the implementation of some of these clubs cannot be denied. The ‘Diner club’ was set up sometime in the 1880’s and, by the time a report came out in around 1893 it had “grown into a veritable institution used and valued by all the workforce”.⁴⁹ A letter written in 1904 by William Henry Wills, the chairman of the newly formed Imperial Tobacco Company, provides an illuminating description of how the family valued the club. It was written to a member of the Liverpool tobacco manufacturing Ogden family, who had sold their business to the American J.B. Duke, consequently sparking the ‘Anglo-American Tobacco War’. As part of the sectorial peace treaty reached, British American Tobacco was formed as a joint venture with a focus on the export trade. The head of the Ogden family was made chairman and several Imperial factories were ceded to his control.⁵⁰ In 1904, due to its losses, Ogden decided to close the diner club at the previously Wills controlled factory at Ashton Gate, and it is to him that this letter is addressed.

The value that Wills places on his workers’ welfare is very evident, as well as the responsibility that he feels towards his city; the letter hints at an effective localised patriotism. He starts by stating that he was “very sorry – more so than I can express” at the closure of the club. He acknowledges that there was “a loss in running it”, but his tone and vigour show that this was almost implicitly understood, and he highlights, extensively, the consequences to the workforce of its cessation, reminding Ogden that they “will have no shelter... no place they can get it on reasonable terms in a reasonable distance”. He confirms that it has been the policy of the Wills firm since its inception to think of the workforce before all others, “for four Generations we [the Wills family] have traded successfully... and that success has been mainly due to the care and and consideration we have always shown to our workpeople”. He goes further and states that “the policy and principles of a lifetime” have been discarded “for a small gain”. It is the location of the factory and the paternal and patriotic sentiments he holds for the people of Bristol that upset him the most. He references his representation of Bristol in parliament and the local workforce “whom I am at least still closely associated with” as his motivating factors for writing the letter. Ultimately, he concludes that he has “never felt more strongly upon any matter in my whole business life”. As has been shown, the Wills family were professional businessmen and not prone to melodrama, so the weight that one can put on the sincerity of this letter is substantial. While the business may have been all consuming for many members of the Wills family, they could clearly see that there were, essentially, more important things in life than simply making money.⁵¹

⁴⁹ BRO: 38169/E/11/7/1, Diner Club report.

⁵⁰ H. Cox, ‘The Anglo-American Tobacco War of 1901-02: A Clash of Business Cultures and Strategies’ at Business History Conference, 21st March 2013 (Colombus).

⁵¹ BRO: 38169/C/1/8, W.H. Wills to Mr Ogden, 24th September, 1904.

There were certainly criticisms that could be aimed at the timing of the emergence of a serious welfare programme at the firm during the end of the 19th century. One reason put forward by Joyce was that the monopolisation of certain industries “was releasing them from the bondage of competition” and that, consequently, allowed them to offer greater benefits to their workforce.⁵² Larger companies with commanding market shares have more capital and, consequently, more scope to add to employee benefits. However, there is also a much more practical reason that Joyce fails to note. That is that benefits afforded to employees of smaller companies were less formal than those of larger ones, and have therefore been remembered differently. The Wills family cared about their workforce and valued their relationship highly even when they were just a small tobacconist. In the 1790’s the founder Henry Overton would have four members of his workforce over for lunch on Sunday one week, and the other four the week after.⁵³ There was also a tradition that started in the late 18th century, almost exclusively performed at Wills, which was the commissioning portraits of longstanding employees from the store, and later in the factories.⁵⁴ This can hardly be described as welfare in the modern sense, but it was all that many small business owners could afford to do at this time and explicitly showed a degree of appreciation and recognition that does not need to be over analysed.

The social clubs that appeared at the company during the the late 19th century will be seen by some as a methodical imposition of power by the family, ensuring ever greater dependency on them as work and life became ever closer entwined. However, if we are to employ a practical study, like many social historians, which assesses the employer’s thoughts as opposed to those simply of the workforce, then it becomes clear that these were not the intentions of the family.

The Advent of a Bonus scheme 1889-1899

The Wills families generosity can be seen with no greater transparency than in their creation of a bonus system at the firm in order “to promote their [the employees] comfort, and to show that their good feeling towards us has not inflicted a pecuniary loss upon them”.⁵⁵ There will no doubt have been a dual purpose to this; firstly, a consideration for the workers’ welfare, but as aforementioned, a probable productivity benefit from their own perspective as well. The offering of a bonus based on the company’s success was clearly meant to incentivise the workers to work harder and be more efficient, and this was duly acknowledged in the details. The notice later read that it hoped “that employers and employed will thus be more closely bound together in goodwill, and in efforts to promote their common interest”.⁵⁶ It

⁵² Joyce, *Work Society and Politics*, p.71.

⁵³ R. Till, *Wills of Bristol, 1786-1901* (Bristol, 1954) p.9.

⁵⁴ Alford, *W.D & H.O. Wills*, p.53.

⁵⁵ BRO: 38169/E/3/19, Bonus Notice, 2nd November 1889.

⁵⁶ BRO: 38169/E/3/19, Bonus Notice, 2nd November 1889.

can thus hardly be seen as an underhand method to exploit the labour force. In allowing the workforce to participate in the profits of the business it aligned the interests of management and worker.

However, some modifications of the bonus show the absolute nature of the employers' power. A notice in 1897 sought to reinforce the directors' power over the system and the employees, and clarified that the former had full rights "to exclude from participation any who may be found out in dishonesty, misconduct, or gross neglect of duty". Such power can be seen in a number of other company documents.⁵⁷ The rules of the factory, for one, were similarly strict. One rule stated "no-one was allowed to leave the factory for refreshment or for any other purpose during the day without permission from the head of department".⁵⁸ This was a reminder of some of the draconian rules that could be put in place. Indeed, the survival of several contracts for young women taking apprenticeships at the cigar factory in the late 1880's hint at an imposing and almost dictatorial form of rule. One of the clauses in their indentures stipulated that "she shall not contract matrimony within the said term [five years], nor play at cards or dice tables or other lawful games".⁵⁹ The latter stipulations were certainly a protective measure and, while the former may be analysed as controlling, it should be remembered that the majority of these girls were only fourteen. Factory rules and employee contracts were often overly cautious as a means to protect both employers and employees from potentially negative consequences of unlikely occurrences.

Although this type of paternalism seems relatively authoritarian, there can be no doubt in some instances that the employers acted in the best interests of the workforce. The company could have left the bonus scheme as it was if it was just a tool for motivation, but a notice on 21st June 1899 again acknowledged the bonus system was inaugurated "for the purpose of interesting all employees in the welfare of the company", but this time it added that it was also "in the hope that everyone would thus be afforded an opportunity of making some provision for the future".⁶⁰ It goes on to note the quite substantial profits made over the past decade, and the "ample opportunity for saving" since the scheme's inauguration, yet sadly in their view, the "employees do not appear to have taken advantage of it". What followed was a decision on the part of the directors to pay each employee only two thirds of their bonus directly, and to put the rest into a rudimentary savings system. This might appear slightly despotic but, ultimately, the employee could take their money out if they were leaving the company, in the event of their death, and if they could also prove to the directors that it was necessary for the purchase of a house etc. The idea was to reduce spending and to ensure that the workforce had the means to look after themselves

⁵⁷ BRO: 38169/E/3/19, Minutes of Meeting on Bonus, 19th May 1897.

⁵⁸ BRO: 38169/E/10/1, Factory Rules, 1881.

⁵⁹ BRO: 38169/E/4/2, Apprenticeship Indenture of Francis Heydock, 7th November 1892.

⁶⁰ BRO: 38169/E/3/19, Bonus Notice, 21st June 1899.

following retirement. As a policy it was meant to be helpful and it has echoes of our own government's imposition of 'auto enrolment' with regard to present day pension planning.

The timing of the introduction of this bonus system could also be seen in a more cynical light. It came at a time in labour history when employers were certainly looking to curb the rise of trade unionism and, consequently, some of these schemes have been denigrated as a form of retaliation to this.⁶¹ In the case of the Wills firm this is no more than speculation, and from a practical analysis of the wording in these notices, as well as the references to the bonus in various letter books, it would appear that it was implemented with the dual intention of benefitting the labour force, while also motivating them to improve the company. The high number of unskilled and, more importantly, female labour at Wills meant that it was not very susceptible to early trade unionism anyway.⁶² There should be no doubt that the Wills family's affection for their workforce pre-dated any forced policies of welfare. The lack of any gain for the directors when changing the terms on multiple occasions suggests that it was predominantly a measure adopted out of consideration for their workforce.

The Labour Aristocracy

Social historians have tended to concentrate their studies on the opinions of the working man, and this has led to prominent studies on industrial relations such as those by Bob Morris and Jim Smyth. In their study of paternalism, they use an oral history that was specifically chosen to portray employers negatively. They chose workers from two manufacturers in the area of Fife, who were all working in the 1930's and 1940's, a period when these companies were in decline and consequently resorting to more draconian control measures, or "hegemonistic domination".⁶³ The opinions of workers, though, are difficult to prove and oral histories from the 19th century are now impossible to obtain. A selection of sources that has proven invaluable in studying the relationship between employers and employees, however, are the minutes of the Foremen's meetings at Wills from 1892-1914. These provide a different perspective of the Wills family, one drawn from their subordinates in the firm, even if these men were from, what Marxists such as Hobsbawm saw as, the "labour aristocracy".⁶⁴ The latter concept and the position that such individuals occupied between unskilled labourer and capitalist employer has led to historians arguing about where their loyalty lay. This section will not dispute the existence of a labour aristocracy, but it will illustrate conflict between these so called 'aristocrats' and the labourers is equally as absent as it was between the 'aristocrats' and the management.

⁶¹ Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics*, p.72.

⁶² Alford, *W.D & H.O. Wills*, p.284.

⁶³ B. Morris & J. Smyth, 'Paternalism as an employer strategy, 1800-1960' in *Social Change and Economic Life Initiative*, Working Paper 11 (Economic and Social Research Council: 1989)

⁶⁴ Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men*, pp. 272-302.

In addition to, but separate from the general rules of the factory, there also survives ‘The Duties of the Foreman & Forewoman’ from 1892.⁶⁵ At first these instructions appeal to a view of an allegiance between the foreman and the employers in which the latter could be seen to have “subcontracted exploitation”.⁶⁶ They are largely of a disciplinarian nature and include making sure that workers are where they are meant to be, when they should be. The foremen should “send a list to the manager on every quarter-day of all workpeople who have been late five times or over”.⁶⁷ This idea of “co-exploitation” is shown to be false in the instance of the Wills firm, though, when the rules were reviewed later that year by W.M. Wills.⁶⁸ In what appears to be a move to protect the workers, he states “no fines... are to be imposed on the workpeople without my sanction”.⁶⁹ The implication is that the foremen were abusing their power as part of a “labour aristocracy”, but a closer inspection proves that this was rarely the case. For example, on 11th March 1901 an emergency meeting was called “to consider the advisability of petitioning to E.H.M Gunn esq. [The Grandson of H.O. Wills II] on behalf of Ernest Mathews who was discharged a week ago today”.⁷⁰ This appears to be an attempt by the foremen to intercede with management on behalf of a sacked employee and, as the minutes note the formations of egalitarian notions of brotherhood between both foremen and the ordinary workers; “it would be establishing a precedent. If we do it for one, we must do it for all. Not make fish of one and fowl of the other”.⁷¹ The final letter in which they “beg to appeal to your [Gunn’s] clemency” is clear evidence of the foremen representing the workforce in a responsible and caring manner.⁷² Although the actual details surrounding Mathews’ discharge are never mentioned, Mr. Gunn’s reply and rationale prove that the ideals of firmness, fairness and an enforced sense of morality, that were so evident in the first letter book, were still present over 40 years later; “he told me lies, had he told me the truth I would not have discharged him”.⁷³

Many of the foreman’s duties were in fact focussed on care rather than discipline. One is of particular note. A foreman was obliged “to report to matron or to the manager any cases of distress or poverty arising in a family through the absence of a worker from illness, that may come under their notice”.⁷⁴ Here their role and, by implication the duty of the directors, go beyond the realms of work and beyond simply the welfare of the individual worker, in order to ensure that his or her family are also cared for.

⁶⁵ BRO: 38169/E/10/2, Duties of Foremen and Forewomen, 1st January 1892.

⁶⁶ Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men*, p.298.

⁶⁷ BRO: 38169/E/10/2, Duties Foremen and Forewomen, 1st January 1892.

⁶⁸ Hobsawam, *Labouring Men*, p.299.

⁶⁹ BRO: 38169/E/10/2, Duties Foremen and Forewomen, 16th Spetember, 1892.

⁷⁰ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, minutes of Foremen meeting, 11th March 1907.

⁷¹ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, minutes of Foremen meeting, 11th March 1907.

⁷² BRO: 38169/E/7/1, Mr Bale to E.H.M. Gunn, 11th March 1907.

⁷³ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, E.H.M. Gunn to Mr. Bale, 13th March 1907.

⁷⁴ BRO: 38169/E/10/2, Duties of Foremen and Forewomen, 1st January 1892.

What is perhaps more astonishing is their wish to ensure the safety of post-natal women, “no foreman or forewoman is to take back to work any woman after childbirth without special permission from the manager”.⁷⁵ This was undoubtedly enforced to protect the mother’s health, but there could also have been an underlying moral reason to ensure that the baby was also properly cared for at this early vulnerable stage. Although in this instance the decision was a rational one, other morally motivated entrepreneurs intervened unnecessarily so in family life; George Cadbury’s strong religious zeal meant that he did not employ any married women as he felt their place was at home with the family.⁷⁶ However what is clear is that, these men and women took on the more personal roles of direct management in an era when workers and employers were being pushed further apart. In doing so, they also appeared to have inherited the paternal instincts of their employers and to have put them to use in securing the fair treatment of the entire workforce. So, while there may well have been a “labour aristocracy” at Wills at the beginning of 20th Century, it was effectively just another cog in a harmonious and well-oiled machine.

The mutual respect, as opposed to simple feelings of ‘deference’ on behalf of the worker, that both the employers and employees had for each other is evident in donations of money and tokens of respect given both ways.⁷⁷ This was often in small acts of “thoughtfulness and kindness”, such as a “ten brace of Grouse” being given to a selection of workers, or simply “the unexpected contribution” of covering the cost of the foreman’s annual outing, the appreciation of which was “unanimously and heartily agreed”.^{78 79} Despite their increasing wealth, the Wills family never forgot their workforce; in 1908 the foremen were surprised to see a £100,000 gift (no small amount of money at this time) put into the pension scheme started by the directors three years previously. They felt that they “cannot allow this announcement to pass without expressing our deep sense of gratitude and appreciation for their kindly consideration thus shown for the comfort and happiness of those who reach such a period when retirement from active service is so beneficial.”⁸⁰ Ernest Gunn replied, “the expression of appreciation contained in your letter has given me much pleasure”.⁸¹ Such contributions were to become a regular occurrence with three more instances of an amount of £100,000 being donated to the scheme up to 1914.⁸² Each was met with similar correspondence between the family and the foremen, all written with great care and respect from each side. The gifts were also not unilateral. In a meeting on 29th July 1907

⁷⁵ BRO: 38169/E/10/2, Duties of Foremen and Forewomen, 1st January 1892.

⁷⁶ L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 1997) p.57.

⁷⁷ Pryce, *Work Society and Politics*, p.90.

⁷⁸ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, Mr Bale to H.H. Wills, 6th September 1906.

⁷⁹ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, Mr Bale to W.M Wills, 25th June 1907.

⁸⁰ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, Mr Bale to E.H.M. Gunn, 14th February 1908

⁸¹ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, E.H.M. Gunn to Mr Bale, 15th February 1908.

⁸² BRO: 38169/E/7/1, Minutes of Foremen Meetings.

the foremen decided that they would contribute money towards a portrait being painted in honour of William Wills' elevation to the peerage, despite his nephew pleading that they had "plenty of money".⁸³ These workers clearly wanted to show their appreciation to their employer to the extent that they were willing to give up a small portion of their wages in order to do so, despite the obvious wealth of the family.

Finally, just as the true character of the Wills business could be determined from the letters in the 1855 letter book, so too could the respect that both sides had for each be gauged from the recording of deaths by the foremen in their book. The religious influence on both the managers' and employees' work becomes apparent, as does the fact that their relationship clearly went beyond employer and employee. In a reply to foremen who had offered their condolences for the death of his wife, which itself was full of religious rhetoric, with them noting that she was now in "his [God's] presence where there is fulfilment of joy evermore", Mr Hambly (a director of the firm) replied saying, "I little expected such a beautiful tribute of affection from you and from those whom you represent".⁸⁴ The full letter was very open and detailed, implying a great deal of trust for his workforce. He sent a photo of his wife and exclaimed that "I wish you all to feel that if I can at anytime as the result of crucial discipline soften the pain which will assuredly come to each of us in turn, if the lord first not come for us, I shall be at your disposal so far as possible".⁸⁵ He also apologises to Mr Bale, the writer and head foreman, for placing a more junior employee, Mr Veale, in charge of the factory in his own absence and his reasoning shows the friendship he must have had with Mr Veale, as it was because he himself had performed a "little service for him [Mr Veale] at the graveside when his [Mr Veales's] wife was buried in 1905".⁸⁶ Some of the relationships between worker and director were clearly fairly meaningful, and not just from a professional perspective. The religious references throughout such correspondence between the foremen and directors with regard to deaths also served to further highlight the importance of spiritual matters in their lives and the business.

Finally, Trevor Griffiths, in his analysis of the Lancashire working class actually argues, in a conscious move against popular historiography, that 'class' was not the primary form of identification amongst working men and women during this period.⁸⁷ This can be seen clearly in the plethora of letters between the foremen and the Wills family following the deaths of all four of the partners in the third generation in-between 1909 and 1911. One that again emphasises the fact that, not only did the employees and employers respect each other, but that there was also actual affection and companionship, was sent by

⁸³ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, Minutes of Foreman Meeting, 29th July 1907.

⁸⁴ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, Mr Bale to Mr Hambly, 28th April 1908.

⁸⁵ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, Mr Hambly to Mr Bale, 29th April 1908.

⁸⁶ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, Mr Hambly to Mr Bale, 29th April 1908.

⁸⁷ T. Griffiths, *The Lancashire Working Classes c.1880-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001) p.320.

Gilbert Wills and stated, “I should like to take this opportunity of telling you that during the last few years of my dear father’s life, although ill health prevented him from taking much active part in the affairs of the business, he never failed to take the keenest interest in all that concerned it and more particularly in the lives of those in the factory whom he knew and whom he regarded as his personal friends”.⁸⁸ This section thus highlights that, regardless of class, wealth and standing, the Wills family had much in common with their workforce.

Conclusion

The Victorian’s sense of righteousness and the existence of what they saw as a ‘gentlemanly’ code of conduct clearly had an impact on the Wills family. They were by their very nature aware of their own sense of morality and this was clear in the multiple instances of anxiety exhibited at the poor state of affairs either in the workplace or with customers elsewhere. No doubt their business methods would be critically scrutinised in comparison to modern standards but, from what limited evidence there is, they acknowledged the issues with regard to the supply of their tobacco and attempted to remedy the situation. From as early as 1855 they also seem to have adopted a business ethos that was, somewhat paradoxically, both firm and caring. Although some of their gentlemanly notions, especially with regard to women, would certainly be deemed as outdated in the modern world, this could also be said for the paternal instincts they had for their workers’ families and the general populous of Bristol. They possessed a sort of localised patriotism and deployed an element of nepotism (two more concepts that would potentially be frowned upon) in which they looked to employ boys and girls in the locality who were “known to” members of their workforce – they even found a job for the Templemead’s ticket inspector’s son.⁸⁹ However, if this study seeks to highlight anything, it is to review the actions of the past with an impartiality and understanding of the circumstances these historical actors found themselves in. For the most part, the intentions of this family were good and their contribution to local society was significant, and it is these attributes that they should be remembered for.

This story of the Wills family is ultimately one of continuity, principally in the form of an amicable and respectful relationship with their workforce. Morris’ concluding thoughts on paternalism were that, while it may have “produced a culture of respect and sometimes awe. There was little affection.”⁹⁰ This was clearly not the case at the Wills firm, where one can discern from the language used in many of the letters sent by the Wills family to, or concerning, their employees, as well as in their multiple actions of generosity to them, that they shared a bond with their workforce that went beyond the confines of

⁸⁸ BRO: 38169/E/7/1, G.A.H Wills to Mr Bale, 27th February 1909.

⁸⁹ BRO: 38169/E/2/1, Applications for Clerkship, 1894-1915.

⁹⁰ Morris & Smyth, *Paternalism*, P.33.

business. This dissertation hopes to have shown that industrial relations during the end of the 19th Century should not all be understood solely in terms of ‘conflict’. Ultimately, Despite Marxist historiography, “the human being, the worker”, was not in fact always “regarded in manufacture simply as piece of capital”.⁹¹

⁹¹ F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working-class in England* (Leipzig: 1845) p.54.

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