(2)
Notebook of Sir Hubert Llewellyn Smith (1864–1945), one of Charles Booth's assistants in the compilation of Labour and life of the people ed. by C.B. see Vol. II (1891), p. 17.

Shipwrights' Provident Union of the Port of London.

Extracts from Minute Book. 1884.

Notes from Articles &c of Carmen's Friendly Society.

1890 – (further on in notebook)

1824.

1st General Meeting at St. Helena Tavern. Aug 16/1824.
At this meeting the Union in its present form was founded.

Resolution 2. That this meeting consisting of the Operative Shipwrights employed on the Rivers Thames feel great satisfaction in having been the Principle in succouring their Brethren in the North by Administering very liberally to their Pecuniary means whereby they was Enable to bring their Struggle to a successfull Issue.

R. 4. That the Committee for conducting the Business in the North, do recommend to the consideration of this Meeting the heavy Expences of our Brethren in the North in consequence of the long law contentions & the Imprisonment of their Committee. That it would be expedient to advance to them a Further Sum of fifty Pounds

R. 5. That this meeting having seen the good effects of unanimity; so powerfully Exemplified in the example of our brethren in the North contrasted with the discussion still existing among

ourselves, fell a conviction that nothing but Uniting ourselves into one great body, & Concentrating our various Interests into one focus, can ameliorate our conditions & eventually rais us to our former prosperity

7. That as many of the Operative Shipwrights that now worke on the River Thames, who value Society, and know how to appreciate their own worth, & who is desirous to see a lasting Union and a general Good established in the River Thames. Do from the Date hereof form themselves into a Society to be caled by The Name of the Shipwrights Provident Union Society. For the mutual support of each other, and the upholding the Respectability of their Trade, by adhering to the rights of seven years Indenture.

8. That the better Harmonizing the State of Society amongst us, & prevent a spirit of Bickering, & Individual recrimination among the members, a Uniform system be adopted, whereby every member

shall be in possession of the necessary instructions, for his rule and conduct in every department of work he may be ~~called~~ called to perform.

9 That from the very great differences of Prices given for work in the several yards, No two being alike and the invariable maxim too generally adopted by every Master, setting up and insisting upon his own Rate of Working. Which in many instances is at variance with the Good of other Masters, & very inimical to the Great body of Working Shipwrights

10. That a Book of Prices be drawn up containing every species of work of Shipwrighting, that is done on the River Thames; Wherein each Article shall carry with it its own Value. And that every Possible means shall be taken to collect from the long practised prices known to have been given on the Thames for work, so that the Book may form a just and Equitable System founded upon a reciprocity of interest between Masters & men.

11. That in consequence of the business for which the Committee was appointed being now settled as to matters of Importance, they can no longer be considered as having any further Power to Act; Therefore it is expedient that the several Yards do appoint a fresh Committee with full powers to carry into effect the Resolutions of this meeting, seven of which shall ~~form~~ be a Quorum Likewise to receive the weekly Contributions and the said Committee have power to call to their assistance any Person whome they may think competent to give them any information on the several subjects that may come under their consideration.

12 That for the purpose of providing the necessary Funds for carrying into Effect the good intentions of this General Meeting and forming a Capital for future contingencies. Every Member on the Book shall Contribute sixpence a week for every week he works, for the first twelve months from the date of this Resolution .....

14. That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Joseph Hume Esq MP for his zealous & indefatigable Exertions in the House of Commons on behalf of the working Mechanic and Labouring Classes. Whose efforts has been crown'd with success in obtaining their Emancipation, and braking the shackels which has so long kept them in Servitude

16 [Gast made secretary].

Committee Meeting. Sept 2.

Mr Lomax moved that the subscription be a penny a day for each day worked. Seconded by Mr Purdy. Unanimously.

Sept. 16. Resolved Unanimously that Mr John Gast be allowed ~~as~~ twenty Pounds as his sallary for the present year, but should the Secretary be caled upon to Execute or do business for the Society that will occation his lost of time, to be paid the same.....

Sept 23. Mr Purdy communicated a conversation which passed between himself, Mr Greves and

the Committee of Caulkers relative to a Union of the parties, & then moved that a Copy of a letter be Rekd to the Committee, that was sent to the Caulkers Committee stating the rise progress and finish of the business of the North, relative to the Shipwrights of that place.

The Committee understanding that two of the Committee of Caulkers was in attendence, requested Mr Purdy and Greenes to wait on them to know if they had any Official Communications from their body. Mr. P & G. returned stated they had no particular communication to make further than to inform the Committee the whole Body are desierous to put themselves under the same mode of conduct as the Shipwrights & that they are very willing to conform to our Measures.

General Meeting. (St. Helena Tavern). Oct 4/1824

Resolution 1.* That whenever an individual or a Company (+) of people (+) is offered a Job in any Yard, and the parties

* Note the terms marked thus (+)

to whome the Job is offered, do give in a fair Price according to the custom of the River, that Job is exclusively the right of the party who first had the offer; and as it is too much the practice of Builders, to vent their spleen on the first parties, by not agreeing to their proposals, by way of Punishment they will in some instances, offer more to others then what they were first asked on purpose of dividing and governing the People. Therefore it is requested that no persons will be induced by any fallacious promises to interfere between the first parties and the Builders.

2. That it is too generally the practice in yards, where there is a Job of running worke, to offer the same as a lump Job, with a view of baffling the Judgment of the workemen, & deprive them of the advantage of such running work. Therefore we do agree that in future all running worke shall be don on the old Rivers price, untill the New Regulations come out.

cf "Reasons in favour of a Bill &c" (1691)

3 That the mode of apprenticeship as now adopted on the River Thames, is very injurious to the Journeymen, and equally injurious to the Apprentice, inasmuch that being left without that necessary check, and having considerable pecuniary means in his Power, he forgets the relative duty he has to perform towards the People as well as his master, and from the hopes of Pecuniary rewards, and by the mercenary views of his master, he is thereby made the instrument to rob the men of their rights, which is the only party by whome he learns his trade. And which he will feel the effects of when out of his time.

4, 5 [Apprenticeship rules]

6 That any member of the Union who has a son, that is desirous of being brought up to the Trade, shall bind his son to himself, and at all times when the Father cannot find Employ for his son, that an application be made to the large Companys of People who are requested to employ such apprentice by which Act the Union will become consolidated.

7. (Provides for rotation of work)

8. (Rate for building ships 2-300 tons is 45s a ton) "untill the Society's Price Book comes out".

10. That every member of this Union will not engross a greater share of work than what he can accomplish by working regular hours, viz. not before six in the morning, nor later than six in the Summer evening; and that no Candle worke be performed after the people on the out side have left worke, so that every Opportunity may be given to those out of employ.

11. It is requested that no Member of the Union do Encourage any Person who is not a member of the said Union and that we will avoid as far as lay in our power working with all such persons.

Committee Oct 7. 1824] Mr. Daniels made report of some Old men working for Long & Co for guinea per week, some doubts arose

whether the People should worke on Ship where such Old men work, it being understood that the Old men are constantly Employed in that yard; it was thought it ought to be no object, it was unanimously agreed that the Old men should continue as usual.

Oct 14/24 Mr Lulham moved that any Person or Persons holding Premises on any canal will not be ~~able~~ considered as legal Persons to worke for and to constitute a Proper Person to worke for & within the Meaning of the Articles he must have waterside Premises and of sufficient magnitude to do his workenpon in the Shiping line.

Seconded by Mr Roper. (Unanimously).

In consequence of several Reports from Caulkers about some petty Rights claimed on their side & some on the side of the Shipwrights, Mr Purdy moved that from the date hereof no Shipwright is to open or shut any of the Dodgates at any yard on the River Thames, and that no Caulker is to assist in the Docking of any Ship or nail of old Sheathing on the Bottom of any Ship whatever. (Unan)

Oct 29/24 In consequence of the Resistance of Mr Fearnell to the request of his people, & the Steps taken by Mr F. Clerk, & Mr Buggy Seventeen Shipwrights had arived in the River to go to worke for Mr Fearnell in the Union Yards viz. 14 men & 3 lads. The chairman having fallen in with the said people reported that they was in a place of safety, where the Committee resolved that they remain untill further orders.

Nov 4/1824 Mr Purdy moved that the building of a Barge did not constitute the Right of a Regular Shipwright, & therefore Mr Brookelbank was not a Legal Person to worke for in is own Person. Unanimously.

Mr Grieves being present reported his reception at Whitby & the probable progress of effecting a Union.

Some discussion took place respecting a motto for the Cards of the Union Society when the one proposed by Mr J. Gast was unanimously adopted viz. The Union of Sentiment is the Strength of Society.

Nov. 25. / Mr. East made Report of his mission to
1824 / Chatham and Bristol. Read over three resolutions passed at Bristol. Signed by the Committee, which was all well received.

Dec 9. Mr Pundy moved & Mr ~~East~~ Mallet seconded:-
That every Foreman has a right to let a Job to whome he may think proper, & likewise to state the Number of Hands necessary for the accomplishing of the said Job, but it is the Right of the parties who have taken the Job to employ the number of hands that may be further necessary, & the persons so employed should be ~~Union~~ members of the Union, giving always the preference to such members who have been longest out of employ.

Dec. 23. Mr Southern reported that Messrs Hunt & Lowson had been a Carding contrary to the Union, the parties justify themselves on account of Long practice & being out of work, the Chairman admonish them not to do the like again.

Dec. 16 1824

..... Mr. S. Explained that the Society of Caulkers was keep much in obeyance in consequence of ∴— of two who is not Society men, but that he Mr. S. would Explain to their Committee our wish, and if they was unable to bring these men to ✱ we would try the virtue of Shipwrights mode.

Dec. 30. Mr. Groves moved, seconded by Mr. Sulham that whenever was known that warrants was actually taken out, all the people to leave worke. ⊗

Dec. 30/ Mr Stacbury attended to explain the Caulkers opinion respecting the nailing of old sheathing; they consider it their Right from usage & time immemorial handed to them by their Fathers

Jan 6. 1825 Mr. Marks & Mallett repeated their survey of the premises of Mr. Hurstable, said not more than 38 feet in no proportion fit to do work on excepting very small indeed, fell in with a Mr Fisher a Boat-Builder

when some conversation ensued about the Union, Mr F. said as long as we suffer other Boat Builders to do shipwrights worke he should do the same.

[Much discussion as to right to work for Owners]

Jan 27/ Mr Clark the Chairman & Mr Purdy reported
1825/ that they had been to town with the Book of
prices for Printing and after trying Sundry
persons who all admired the worke yet considered
it of that nature they could not engage, was
recommended to a Mr Wilson who Informid
them he could do it but it would be very
expensive 100 Copys would cost £50.0.0

General Meeting Jan 31/1825

" Mr Purdy rose to state to the meeting what Progress the Select Committee had made in the Price Book, he began by pointing out the various Ideas which floated on his mind as to the most precise and accurate mode of proceeding & found that after a number of plans which was submited to the Committee and which was by them minutely canvassed over, that there was still something wanting to make it more plain & explicit; so powerfull was his mind imprest with the Object that its Opperations on the Rational was not inactive when in the silent retreat of Sleep, but immediately the long wish for visitor knocked, the door of the mind was opened, & the Messenger most cordially ~~welcomed~~ Received, and with enthusiastic eagerness presented to his fellow Labourers, who equally felt the Cheering effects of the communication. from this point they started and found that it was the only Just and Equitable mode of proceeding which from the various trials they made on different parts of the work proved it to a certainty ...."

"Mr Grieves then rose to read the Report he had drawn up of the several causes which finally ended in bringing about the Union, which in all cases of People uniting together, the spring proceeds from the oppression of those who govern them, he then stated that the several fluctuations of prices for new work at Blackwall yard ~~had been the~~ was the cause of their forming a Society which he considered the first spring of the union, a Deputation arriving from the North gave additional stimulus to the Society but no general action." ~~to then~~

(General Meeting Jan 31/1825

"The Secretary ..... went back to 1811 to shew that at that ~~time~~ period there was men who had the desire at heart to do the very thing which he was so happy to congratulate his brother workmen on, was done & more is doing at the present time, altho' the efforts of a few was not crowned with success yet the seeds was sown, & nothing but time & the distressful experience so ably set forth by Mr Lomax could have roused the dormant particles into action.

(Genl Meeting ditto)

~~HB. First origin of dispute w~~

Mr. Lomax moved that a Deputation of 2 Shipwrights wait on the Boat Builders to inform them that they cannot be admitted as shipwrights, & consequently we hope they will not worke on ship~~wrights~~ worke, if they do Shipwrights will go a boat-building.

(Committee. Feb 3 (1825)

(Feb 10/1825. Report that Mr Gas had written an account of events that led to the Union.
? where is a copy?)

Feb 24. "Mr. Groves repeated that the proceedings of some of the People was in direct violation of the Union, that some of them had been doing work by the lump &c" . . .

do. Mr. Lomax made a report of his Journey to Ipswich Harwich and Yarmouth with Sundry other places he had not cald at before, some little division between Ipswich & Harwich respecting which should be the centrel position, & which to retain their funds, & whether each member of the Union ought not to pay to the Funds of that Place were

he is at worke, Harwich considered that from the nature of her situation she was the most likely to be caled upon to aid and assist any distress members of the Union, therefore she ought to hold her own funds for that purpos ..... (all amicably arranged)

He likewise reported that the Masters at Yarmouth had taken off half their allowance of beer to the People; the People had left work and requested an advance of 6d per day. .....

At Lynn the People was more fortunate, ~~A~~ another person having ~~set up~~ opened a yard ~~set up~~ shipbuilding had given the men 4/6 per day. Worke in general was very plentyfull in every part of the Country. People could find Employ, every man seems perfectly agreeable to the Union, all entertain the same views & feeling the same interest.

Mr. Southern reported that..... the Builders had met and formed Resolutions which they intend to give to the People on Monday following.

Feb 28. 1825.

"He Fletcher" (a master builder) still adhering to his old plan of Despotism, said he would not give up that point for People to agree for their work beforehand nor should they draw on account of any Job, he would shut his yard up first." x

[The Committee men from each Yard reported to this meeting, the attitude of the masters ~~was~~ with reference to the resolutions of the Masters' meeting & the Price Book. The following is a summary]

Committee man.	Builder	
Lulham	~~Lewis~~ Evans.	Refused to sign Builder's Circular "& when informed the Builders "talk of shutting their yards up the Reply was: well it will give us a better opportunity together work done." Lewis the Masters' Secretary had visited Mr. Evans & said "Why Sir you appear to be a out-cast"
Southern	Fletcher	See above x
Kent.	Skelter	had heard nothing about it
Westbrook	?	The master read them the Resolutions. agreed that People

should settle price with Foreman, but refused to look over tabide by Price Book "informd the People he would find plenty of work for them if they would Brake off from the Union, to which the People objected".

Papworth. ? Paper was read, "but it took no effect". Master said "he have no more going to Committee after this". "He'd shut it up".

Clarkson. "Mr Carr came read over the Resolutions Questions being put how far he knew the tenour of our articles was not able to answer, held his deficiency, exclaimed here take the paper & do as you like".

Nesbitt "called up into the Counting House & there arranged in Martial order", & after after some few solom grimances & a very long speech of half an hour" ~~the~~ paper read, questions, no answer "but "strongly recommend breaking up the Union, but could give no ~~other~~ reason further than said it was unfair to impose restrictions on our masters

	and if the People would leave the Union and work for him, that in case they should consider themselves in danger in consequence thereof he would get plenty of Police Officers to protect them & yet that would not do a Regiment of Soldiers.
Mr Colvin.	Master & men laughed at the whole thing "he was well satisfied with the people & the people said they was well satisfied with the master".
Taylor.	Mr King read paper, would not go into it "wished people to decline the Union it would do them no good".
Mr Coomber	Mr Young read paper & demanded an answer by Wednesday
Mr Roper.	Master had heard nothing of it & thought "a ~~deal~~ of Builders was premature".
Mr Babbs.	Mr Rothenbury read resolution, & asked if they wished to remain in Union. ~~Babbs~~ called answered "yes he would as long as he had hands that he could pick up stones with". Master acknowledged that he was not at the meeting & would not have signed the paper

news. Mr ~~Bd~~ Green. Quite friendly. would probably abide by Price book. "Had no wish to make up the Union nor did he care who belonged to it".

~~Bdly~~ Mr Pitcher "did not like Combinations of any kind & if he and any of his people should disagree he would not send round to other Builders not to [illegible] or the"

list

Box "B"

3 Note Books

Shipwrights

Section 4

TF638.

The Angus automatic train control system.

Ry. Gazette. Nov. 30. 192[illegible]

p.300 f[illegible]

Grieves. Mr ~~B~~ Green. Quite friendly. Would probably abide by Price book. "Had no wish to take up the Union nor did he care who belonged to it".

Hill ~~Bdy~~ Mr Pitcher "did not like Combinations of any kind & if he and any of his people should disagree he would not send round to other Builders not to employ him or them".

Blacklist

~~Bdy~~

for fols. 23 ... see further on

Caulkers

Notes from "Articles, Rules & Orders of the Friendly Society of United River of Thames Caulkers,
held at the White Horse, Lower Queen Street, Rotherhithe in the County of Surrey, & at the Ship Tavern, Stepney, in the County of Middlesex." (April 6 1810)

Note from Preamble, "Whereas a friendly society called the Friendly Society of Caulkers was instituted the tenth day of October, which was in the year (in words) of our Lord 1794 for the purpose of providing for the decent interment of the members, & raising a fund to allow certain relief to superannuated members, & annuities to the widows of members," and Articles Rules & Orders were made, & were revised in 1796 pursuant to the Act "For the relief & encouragement of Friendly Societies"; and again needed revision, they are hereby repealed & the following substituted.

Notes from Rules.

VIII "That this Society being instituted for the raising of a fund to make provision for old & decayed members & widows, therefore no political question shall on any account be introduced for debate into the Society

Notes from Articles.

1. .... Each member on his admission shall produce his indenture & pay one shilling per month afterwards

2 Society to meet once a month; two meeting places, one

3. on each side of the River. A chairman to be elected by each side.

4 Every member to pay 4d besides the 6 a month "which 4d shall be spent; any member sending his money & not coming himself shall send two pence with the same, one penny to go to the landlord, & one penny to the stock" .....

7. " That a Committee be chosen of thirteen members on each side the River Thames, who shall act as a court of assistants to the chairman of the Society, six of whom shall go out of office at the end of three months, the remaining seven to act with the next six, who shall be chosen in rotation on the call book, for three months longer, and so to continue taking six and seven alternately .....

9 Stewards or Wardens to be appointed - their Duty

That for the better regulation of this Society, wardens shall be appointed on each side the River Thames

who are to act as stewards, & shall be chosen in rotation as they stand on the call-book," (act as treasurers)

11. "That a Clerk being appointed by the majority of the Society, shall continue in office during their pleasure" .....

Box to have five keys & locks, each warden to keep one key & the Landlord the other.

Benefits.

After stock = £500, free members incapable through Age or infirmity to be placed on annuitants' book & take turn for annuity of £6. No. of Annuitants not to > 10

After stock = 1500. annuity to rise to £10; never to rise above £20.

Every superannuated member to receive £10 for funeral

Widows not having an apprentice to take turn for annuity of £4 to rise to £8 when stock = £1500: never to exceed £10. not more than 10 widows. Forfeited if she marry.

A widow may take her son apprentice

Any person having served a legal apprenticeship of seven years, under an indenture, to a regular caulker, in any of his Majesty's dock yards, and not being a member of this Society, prior to the sixth day of April, in the present year 1810, & wishing to be come a member hereof, shall produce his indenture, & pay the sum of ten pounds, as an admission fine, proving at the same time a lawful discharge therefrom, to the satisfaction of the Society but should he fail in this respect, he shall forfeit all claim on the Society as a member thereof.

✓ Rules about apprentices: servants time not to be sold – not to be an out door apprentice – Indenture to be registered.

On death of any free member wife or nominee to receive £15, on death of wife he to receive £10

Any member may also be a member of a benefit Society; objects of present Society, = protect old & decayed members & widows, & "if Providence prospers their endeavours, to erect alms houses for the reception of such &c"

21. That should any member of this Society leave his work in a clandestine manner, or through a collusion with any workman or foreman, so as to hinder any other man from obtaining work thereby, the same being clearly proved, he shall be fined as the majority of the Society shall see fit: any member of this Society behaving ~~insolently~~ insolent to the master, he shall meet with no encouragement from the Society.

22. That no member of this Society shall, during the whole course of his natural life, take more than one apprentice (excepting a son) application to be made at the binding of such apprentice a son, as mentioned in the 18th Article

25. Levy of 6d. for accident (breakage of limb) if not result of fighting, play &c.

26. That it appears there are fifty yards & ways or upwards, on the margin of the River Thames, for the purpose of building or repairing ships, & at each of the said yards or ways

there is a foreman caulker appointed to superintend the work done by the journeymen caulkers, which foremen as their places fall vacant are supplied from time to time, from the body of journeymen caulkers, and it is reasonable that every such foreman should be allowed an apprentice constantly while he remains in his office of foreman;" ..... (therefore each foreman ~~the~~ is entitled to <u>one</u> or <u>two</u> apprentices according to size & character of the yard)

27 Rule against foremen persisting in employing each others' servants (apprentices) in preference to journeymen: if he persist after remonstrance he ~~shall~~ if a member of this Society shall be fined one pound one shilling for each day he continues such unfeeling & distressing proceedings.

28. A reporter to be "chosen from time to time by the people who are journeymen caulkers belonging to such respective yards, docks, or ways, who shall report to the chairman, as they may occur, all matters that do any ways concern the interest of the Society." ..