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**The German Community in Manchester, Middle-Class Culture and the
Development of Mountaineering in Britain, c.1850-1914**

The German commercial community was the most significant cosmopolitan element in the bourgeoisie of Manchester up to the First World War. It transformed the cultural and intellectual life of the city. German industrialists and merchants brought with them the aspirations of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, the educated middle class of the German states, and they became key players in the formation of middle-class cultural institutions in the industrial city. They connected Manchester and industrial Lancashire into a European mainstream and were central in the creation of much of the city's cultural capital. In so doing, they created a distinctive regional middle-class culture. Astute commentators have noted that in Victorian Britain power was decentralised and that consequently the study of provincial elites holds the key to our understanding of the middle classes more generally.¹ Such regional elites were not homologous with national elites. Among the provincial middle-classes a sense of national identity proved compatible with a strong sense of regional identity. In industrial Manchester, this sense of regional distinctiveness was reinforced by the presence of the cosmopolitan German bourgeoisie. The Liberal and Nonconformist middle classes of Manchester warmed to German culture and sympathised with the struggles of liberals, reformers and progressives in Germany. The provincial elite of Manchester saw in those struggles a mirror

of their own struggle for regional autonomy against an over-centralising state. If the defining characteristic of their sense of Englishness was a love of liberty, this was not, they believed, an exclusively national attribute, but one which the regional middle class felt they shared with a larger Teutonic family of nations. They aspired to emulate the high levels of German cultural capital as they understood it: they read, debated, struggled with and cherished German ideas, language and literature. They adopted and adapted German institutional models.

As the local and the international bourgeoisie hybridized in Manchester, a distinctive regional outlook developed, incorporating cosmopolitan and supra-national elements. As the German community in Manchester grew in number and in prosperity, it contributed substantially to the development of bourgeois public culture in the city. Voluntary associations – clubs and societies for the middle classes – proliferated, exemplifying the common bourgeois values of polite conviviality and rational recreation. Both the presence of German members in middle-class clubs and the existence of German clubs open to non-German members did much to change public culture in Manchester. These clubs did much to facilitate the free exchange of ideas across cultural boundaries. The German concept of *Verein* was

reflected in the creation of public spaces in which culture and recreation were seen as entirely compatible, in which both sport and self-improvement could flourish. The early attempts to establish gymnastics at the Manchester Mechanics' Institution and the establishment of the Manchester *Turnverein* are indicative here. German ideas about physical well-being offered an alternative model to that of the English sporting club and offered an implicit criticism of the English predilection for team-sports. They suggested the possibility of a compatibility between mind and body which was to become increasingly important in the debates of the 1890s over racial degeneration, social cohesion and the 'crises of modernity'. The Germans also brought with them an historical tradition that saw gymnastics not just as an indoor activity but rather saw it as intimately linked to rambling and the outdoor movement. This was a significant but overlooked factor in the larger development of the outdoor movement in the North of England. Most strikingly, European ideas about physical culture were taken up by innovators in the sport of mountaineering in the 1880s and 1890s at a critical time when those who went rock climbing mostly in Britain were trying to differentiate themselves from those who went mountaineering in the Alps. In part this was a class-based assault on the gentlemanly codes of the upper-middle classes that governed mountaineering. But it was also an assertion

by both middle-class mountaineers and rock-climbers that something regionally distinctive was emerging; a recreational and sporting culture with cross-class appeal that linked the industrial cities of northern England with their mountainous hinterlands.

Education was another part of bourgeois public culture in Manchester where German influence made a strong impact. In the tertiary and technical sectors, at Owens College and at the Manchester Mechanics' Institution, German educational exemplars were emulated. At the level of primary education, the kindergarten movement took off in Manchester. The ideas of German educational reformers who emphasised the need to educate the whole child were widely discussed in Manchester progressive circles. Physical recreation, not least outdoor recreation, strongly advocated by social theorists and reformers, became embedded in the curriculae of progressive schools. It is not surprising that mountaineers of note were educated in these schools, absorbing their values. The current historiography of British mountaineering has tended to focus on the attitudes of the British upper-middle classes and in particular their contribution to the development of Alpine mountaineering. In the study that follows, the regional middle-class sporting experience of northern England offers a

salutary corrective to this dominant interpretation and provides a richer and more nuanced interpretive framework in which to seek answers to the difficult questions ‘Why did people go climbing and mountaineering in Britain?’ and ‘What values and meaning did climbers and mountaineers ascribe to their sport?’

In his study of *The Public culture of the Victorian middle class* in England Simon Gunn has stressed that ‘the middle class of the industrial cities did not stand outside the mainstream of European bourgeois culture; it had close connections with that culture and shared many of its social and organisational forms’. Gunn makes the point that in many ways the characteristic expressions of English bourgeois culture were very similar to those to be found on the continent, especially Germany. ‘On the one side there was the cult of the home, indulged by both men and women.....On the other side, there was the construction of a burgeoning network of voluntary associations, fostering sociability and cultural improvement’. Thus the civic culture of the English middle class ‘should be viewed as part of a larger, international bourgeois culture by the mid-nineteenth century.’²

The existence of a shared international culture meant that many German middle-class immigrants in Manchester came with shared cultural assumptions. They readily joined existing voluntary associations in the city. They also replicated specifically German institutions. In these public gatherings, ideas and values from both English and German cultures could be exchanged. The domestic life of the family was also a sphere where German culture could be sustained, shared with neighbours, and passed down the generations, gradually embedding itself in the wider host community. Initially German immigrants tended to marry other German émigrés. Over time they often became naturalised citizens and over the generations they became increasingly acculturated and intermarried. Yet through their trading interests they retained their connections with Germany. Vacations were often spent there with members of their extended families. Consequently they continued to be influenced by German culture, both in the way that they lived at home and in their public activities.

Nonconformist circles in the industrial cities of the North were often predisposed to welcome German emigrants. A striking characteristic of mid-nineteenth century Manchester was the considerable number of manufacturing, mercantile and professional families who were Baptists,

Congregationalists, Unitarians and Quakers.³ Within that Nonconformist culture, Unitarians were especially influential.⁴ The Unitarian commitment to ‘practical rationalist ethics and to a secular public sphere’ saw them instrumental, as Kidd has shown, in the creation of all kinds of ‘public spaces for rational discourse’, whether voluntary, commercial or philanthropic.⁵ The Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society (founded in 1781) met in Cross Street Unitarian Chapel until 1799. The *Manchester Guardian* (1821), the Royal Manchester Institution (1823), the Manchester Mechanics Institution (1824); the Manchester Statistical Society, the District Provident Society (1833), the Manchester Athenaeum (1836) and Owens College (1851) were all evidence of this public commitment.⁶ As Kidd has pointed out, ‘Although none of these institutions was entirely dominated by Unitarians, their intellectual influence was significant. A remarkable characteristic of these Unitarian “intellectuals” was their participation in local cultural and social leadership and in national political life out of all proportion to the size of their congregations’⁷ Moreover ‘Because of its practice of toleration, the Unitarian community was attractive to dissenting newcomers’.⁸ Without fixed doctrines, Unitarianism ‘could be held as a temporary resting-place or a halfway house between all kinds of positions. It could, and did, shelter from the

evangelical storm all kinds of Deists, infidels, rationalists and heretics from other denominations.’⁹ It is therefore not surprising that a constant stream of German émigrés found themselves at home in Manchester Unitarian circles. Because of its anti-Trinitarian theology, Unitarianism was particularly attractive to Jewish converts. Seed has noted that it was not unusual for prominent German-Jewish merchants to become Unitarians in Manchester in the 1830s and 1840s.¹⁰ Socially and culturally dominant, Unitarian chapels offered German immigrants direct access to a small but influential mercantile and manufacturing élite prominent in the government and public life of Manchester. As German immigration increased after 1850, a German-Unitarian nexus was to be crucial in the educational, intellectual and cultural life of the city. Indeed the infusion of Germans revived a Unitarian community that from the mid-century was being eroded by the attractions of conformity to the established Church of England and by migration to the suburbs.

It is important to remember that in England and Wales as a whole the German community was the largest foreign minority in the country up until 1891. In 1861 a third of all foreign born residents were Germans; even after 1891, when Russians and Poles became the largest alien group, Germans

remained the second largest up until 1914.¹¹ The 1861 Census enumerated 28,644 German immigrants in England and Wales. By 1901 there were 50,599, by 1911 56,000.¹² Almost half the German immigrants lived in London.¹³ But the next most significant concentration was in north-west England with 5,529 individuals enumerated in 1891.¹⁴ The German-born population of Manchester was about 1,000 in 1851, 1,321 in 1891, and remained fairly stable until the outbreak of the First World War.¹⁵ These figures, of course, represent only those born in Germany. Beyond the German-born population there were the second and third generations who, as we shall see, continued to share a sense of being nationally, culturally and intellectually 'German'. The numbers of Germans in Britain were also swelled by a shifting population of German-born migrants who spent only a few years in England while trying to move to the United States of America, Canada or Australia. And there were also businessmen and refugees who stayed in England for some time but had no intention of becoming permanent residents.

The origins of Manchester's German community are to be found in the 1790s with the movement of a small community of Jewish merchants and shopkeepers from Liverpool to take advantage of retail opportunities in

Manchester. This group of English-, Polish- and German-born Jews was soon augmented by German-Jewish traders, the most notable being Nathan Meyer Rothschild.¹⁶ Rothschild came to England in 1798 to represent his father's Frankfurt-based textile firm. He set up an agency in Manchester in 1800 to purchase local textiles. Stimulated by his success, other German firms followed.¹⁷ German-Jewish immigration increased after 1815. 'The typical immigrants of the post-war years were merchants' and of the sixty merchants who arrived in Manchester and set up residence 1815-1825, forty six were German, twelve of whom were German-Jewish.¹⁸ In the 1840s there was an influx of Jews from East Prussia and the Russian Pale of Settlement. By the 1850s there was an established Ashkenazi community in Manchester. 'In addition, non-Jewish Germans also entered Manchester between 1815 and 1914 and developed a lively German community' that was flourishing by mid-century.¹⁹ 'There were over a hundred German export firms in Manchester by 1851',²⁰ and by 'the late nineteenth century approximately ten per cent of merchants in Manchester were German immigrants or their descendents in the second or third generation, a total of 154 in 1870'.²¹ The German community in Manchester grew as the industrial city grew. They were a distinct presence in the Manchester

bourgeoisie, central to the development of cosmopolitan Manchester, 'the most bourgeois of all Victorian great cities'.²²

What attracted German immigrants to Manchester was the pre-eminence of cotton and its ancillary industries, drawing 'representatives of branches of wealthy European families "such as the Behrens, Schunks and Souchays" into Manchester'.²³ By the 1830s Manchester's international trade and role as a financial centre had eclipsed cotton production as the city's economic mainstay.²⁴ The demands of trade often required a period of residence abroad in order to manage an overseas branch of an international business. Temporary migration frequently led to permanent migration, not least when political developments in Germany made returning seem unattractive. Friedrich Engels, for example, worked in Manchester for a while in 1842 in the branch of his family firm, Ermen and Engels, but he returned to Manchester in 1849 because he feared that he would be arrested in Germany for his revolutionary activities.

German immigrants faced a challenge. How far should they Anglicise, how far should they remain German? And what did being 'German' consist of? Was it chiefly a matter of race, nationality, religion, class, language or

culture? Many first generation immigrants never bothered to seek naturalisation, gradually assimilating over time, and content to live between two worlds. Over the years the ties that bound them to Britain grew stronger. Meanwhile the Germany they left behind had been transformed by the process of German union. Especially after the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and the establishment of the North German Union, many Liberals from the industrial heartlands along the Rhine, as well as many Catholics from southern Germany, felt profoundly uneasy about the Prussian nature of the German state under Bismark, with its authoritarian, expansionist and anti-Catholic tendencies. German nationalism increasingly sought to identify the German nation in linguistic, religious and above all racial terms. The Polish and Jewish minorities in the new German Empire were increasingly excluded from this new vision of Germany.

German-born Jewish immigrants to Manchester could not ignore the question of their religious and racial identity. Williams has highlighted the struggles to retain orthodox Judaism in Manchester and the tensions between an older Anglicised elite which controlled the synagogue and the recently arrived German-Jewish families who were open to the Reform movement emanating from German Judaism. Large numbers of German-born Jews

simply ceased to be observant or converted to Christianity. By 1838 there was a 'substantial body of fully assimilated Jews, chiefly in overseas commerce' in Manchester.²⁵ While Jews, including observant Jews, could participate fully in the political, social and cultural life of the city, many, especially the more ambitious, found it difficult to square religious observance and social advancement. In the second half of the nineteenth century the arrival of poor Prussian-Polish and Russian Jews fleeing pogroms heightened anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic tensions. Overt anti-Semitic writings flourished in the Manchester popular press in the 1890s and anti-Semitic talk in élite social clubs such as the Union Club were apparent in the years before the First World War.²⁶

Many Jews responded to such undercurrents of anti-Semitism by strengthening their links with the German community in Manchester, choosing to identify themselves with a wider German culture. The emergence of Reform Judaism in Manchester in the 1850s was itself an 'expression within the Jewish milieu of the growing national consciousness and social solidarity of German immigrants'.²⁷ Thus many Jews sought to assimilate into a supra-national German culture that was itself struggling with issues of what it meant to be German, their sense of identity shaped by

political developments in Germany. A sense of a German community in exile welded together by wider political and philosophical ideals began to emerge. Shared Enlightenment values expressed through German language and culture served to diminish sectarianism. Business links and bourgeois self-interest linked German immigrants of different faiths. German merchants, most of them non-Jewish, but including some Jews, founded the Manchester Society for the Relief of Distressed Foreigners in December 1847.²⁸ The question of what to do about poorer recent immigrants from the German states, Prussian-Poland and the Russian Pale of settlement was a real issue for established middle-class immigrant communities, who shared an interest in averting an anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic backlash by the native population. But it was events in Germany that contributed most to the sense of identity of Manchester's German community, bringing together both Jews and Christians. Two hundred met at the Manchester Athenaeum on the 30th March 1848 to vote an address of sympathy to the fledgling democratic efforts of the Frankfurt Assembly. It was read, in German, by Tobias Theodores, the chief proponent of Reform Judaism in Manchester. It ended with the words 'The German fatherland for ever! Liberty for ever! Order for ever!' with the *Liedertafel* leading the assembly in a rendition of "Deutsche Vaterland".²⁹

Such sentiments struck a chord in Manchester among the Liberal and reform-minded elite. They identified with European Liberalism and responded to the failed European revolutions of 1848 with great sympathy. Economic and political reform in England was a shared concern of the commercial middle classes, both German and English. Since foreign merchants relied on free trade, it should be no surprise that two of the city's German-Jewish merchants were founder members of the Anti-Corn Law League.³⁰ But the political revolutions in Germany tapped a deeper vein in Liberal Manchester. They highlighted the threat to individual liberty and regional autonomy from the over-centralised state. As Clark has pointed out, this potent blend of 'provincial patriotism, the defence of "liberty" and resistance to the expansion of state power' was a hallmark both of English and German regional elites in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³¹ Historical self-conceptions in provincial England and Germany began to coalesce. Moderate liberal historians such as Ranke saw Britain as the antithesis of the centralising state, its 'sturdy tradition of local government' the bulwark against revolution, its 'power rooted in the Teutonic heritage of folk custom common to both Germans and Englishmen.'³² As Manchester began to assert its municipal autonomy after the battle for incorporation, the

presence of German émigrés and refugees in Manchester only served to heighten the perceived threat from the central state as intolerant of regional diversity and inimical to individual liberty. In *North and South*, published between 1854-5, Mrs. Gaskell had her northern mill owner declare ‘We are Teutonic up here in Darkshire...We hate to have laws made for us at a distance. We wish people would allow us to right ourselves, instead of continuously meddling, with their imperfect legislation. We stand up for self-government, and oppose centralization.’³³

Liberal Manchester thus drew on a powerful historical self-conception that was bourgeois and supra-national. Just as the Anglo-Saxons were lovers of freedom and had resisted the Norman Yoke, true Germans were resisting political repression and defending customary liberties. Distant racial affinities would out in shared characteristics, not least the love of Liberty. This proto-Teutonic foundation myth worked best when it was ill-defined and un-examined. But it has several important implications here. Reinforced by the overwhelming prestige of German cultural capital in bourgeois Manchester, German-ness became something to aspire to. In Manchester, Englishness came to be seen as rooted in a fiercely autonomous regional identity that felt itself somehow to be part of a larger Germanic

family. This reinforced Manchester's sense of exceptionalism, of itself as a Renaissance city state dealing directly with the world and slightly at odds with the national culture of the country of which it was part.³⁴ The presence of the German émigré community in Manchester and its interest in developments in Germany highlighted the tensions between the *necesitas* of the state and the *libertas* of the individual, between the centralised state and regional autonomy. But Liberal reform and constitutionalism in Germany developed hand-in-hand with a growing German nationalism and desire for a Greater Germany. To the growing disillusionment of German Liberals and reformers, German Union was delivered by the centralising, authoritarian, bureaucratising Prussian state which used German nationalism to its own ends. Rankean conceptions of individual liberty within a regional context were bulldozed out of the way by an 'unprecedented discursive escalation around the idea of the state' and its historical mission. Hegel's quasi-religious conception of the state, 'the highest expression of the ethical substance of a people, the unfolding of a transcendent and rational order, the "actualization of freedom"' subjugated the individual and regional autonomies to the will of the state.³⁵ The Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and the crowning of King William I of Prussia as the German Emperor at Versailles led to bitter disappointment amongst Manchester Germanophiles.

Sir Alfred Hopkinson recalled the mood in Manchester before the war began. France was seen as the aggressor, jealous of German union. At the outbreak of the war Hopkinson attended a concert by the German Choral Society which ‘sang a number of songs including “Was blasen die Trompeten?”’: he recalled ‘the wild enthusiasm with which the singing of “Die Wacht am Rhein” was received by the English in the audience as well as by those of German extraction. Every victory of the Germans was welcomed – I am speaking of the North of England.’³⁶

This evaporated with the harsh terms meted out to the French. For diaspora Germans in Manchester, the hopes of 1848 seem to have been shattered. The issue of self-identity became more nuanced. If the German nation and ‘Germanness’ itself could be hijacked by an authoritarian state, was it the best vehicle for Liberal and reformist ideas? With the discrediting of specifically German political and national identities, competing claims emerged, not least those of class. Perhaps, some wondered, ‘Germanness’ was portable, replicable through its literature, culture and music, adaptable and extensible within the international bourgeoisie. ‘Culture’, as Neville Cardus was to remark with reference to the German influence upon the musical life of Manchester, ‘blows wherever it listeth, like a seed in the

wind’.³⁷ German culture may thus have taken on an increased significance to the Manchester German community, ironically at a time when assimilation may have been more attractive. And that may in part explain why its contribution to the bourgeois public culture of Manchester would be so considerable.

On the eve of the First World War German influence in Manchester was extensive. By 1900 there were three German churches and several German language synagogues in Manchester. For a brief period between 1910 and 1912 there was even a German language newspaper, the *Manchester Nachrichten*, the only such paper to be published outside London.³⁸ German influence was increasingly marked in the new world of bourgeois leisure that had opened up in the 1860s and 1870s, ‘encompassing public exhibitions and concerts, gentlemen’s clubs, restaurants and department stores. In the process it largely displaced an older culture mixing “polite learning and utility” with select conviviality’.³⁹ Much of the German cultural and social activity in Manchester focused on middle-class clubs.⁴⁰ Shared bourgeois cultural assumptions meant that German émigrés could join existing clubs. They also founded specifically German clubs that were nevertheless open to all. The regular social contact these clubs provided, their intimate and

convivial spaces, part public, part private, combined with overlapping circles of membership, meant they were important places where men from different cultural backgrounds could mix socially and exchange ideas.

The Royal Manchester Institution for the Promotion of Literature, Science and the Arts, founded in 1823, and the Manchester Athenaeum Club for the Advancement and Diffusion of Knowledge, founded in 1835, were both important middle-class institutions where the international bourgeoisie of Manchester had the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas. They represented attempts by the *grande bourgeoisie* of Manchester to enshrine liberal tastes, mixing culture, learning and leisure. The Royal Manchester Institution was not only a social club but incorporated an art gallery, lecture theatre and museum.⁴¹ The Athenaeum aimed to educate the sons of the middle classes, to be a ‘university in itself, of art, science and literature, and of every rational recreation’.⁴² Gradually their social functions came to dominate these clubs, their billiard rooms and restaurants proving the bigger draw than culture. That conceded, they nonetheless represent a century-long effort within Manchester to mix leisure with learning. Such a programme of rational recreation was replicated by clubs catering specifically to the German émigré community.

Evidence of cultural activities aimed at the needs of the immigrant middle classes in Manchester began to emerge in the 1830s. A successful Foreign Library was begun by Manchester Germans and Italians in 1830. In 1835 informal lectures on Schiller were being provided in a German-owned hotel on Bridge Street.⁴³ In 1841 German gentlemen resident in Manchester had begun to meet to form a *Liedertafel*, holding open concerts once a year in the ‘Music Saloon of the Albion Hotel in Piccadilly’. A Manchester Kegel Club (a German skittles game) was established in 1845. German restaurants appeared, like the Eureka on Market Street, where the *Allgemeine Zeitung* could be read in its public coffee rooms. Indeed, the *Manchester Guardian* was advertising German publications, in German, in the 1840s.⁴⁴ These piecemeal efforts to sustain German culture in Manchester were boosted in 1842 by the establishment of the Albert Club by a group of young Germans. Engels would serve on its committee throughout the 1860s. Like the Royal Manchester Institution and the Athenaeum, the club mixed the cultural with the convivial, containing a library and a newsroom, dining rooms and committee rooms.⁴⁵ In honouring the Prince Consort, the club drew attention to the simultaneous identity of its members as both German and British. But the membership of the Albert Club was not restricted to

Germans resident in England. With a select membership of 120 by 1869, about half the members were English, the rest foreign born.⁴⁶

The Schiller Anstalt, perhaps the most famous German club in Britain, grew out of similar expressions of national pride, in this case the celebrations in 1859 to mark the centenary of Schiller's birth. Established in 1860, by 1866 it had 300 members, with a library of 4,000 volumes and a reading room with fifty-five newspapers and periodicals. It supported a regular programme of lectures, music recitals and choral singing and Richard Strauss made his first Manchester appearance in the club's concert hall.⁴⁷ It was heavily involved in relief efforts for poor immigrants and victims of the Franco-Prussian War, and famously celebrated the Kaiser's birthday every year. Its members were not just most of the prominent Germans in Manchester – Engels served as chairman between 1864 and 1868 – but also Dutch, Danish and English.⁴⁸ These middle-class clubs formed a series of interlocking institutions in Manchester, in which men from different national backgrounds could meet and exchange ideas. Manchester's middle-class clubs fostered the creation of a bourgeois and cosmopolitan culture, in which and through which German immigrants could become Anglicised and

celebrate their Germanness, while Manchester's middle classes could be exposed to German ideas and German cultural capital.

Beyond the clubs, Germans were conspicuous in every aspect of the cultural and philanthropic life of the city. There were many more informal voluntary associations in which the social, cultural, commercial and educational leaders of Manchester met. Industrial and academic chemists, many from Germany, met at Owens College and (on Saturdays) at the Thatched House Tavern, where they were presided over by the communist Carl Schorlemmer, lecturer in chemistry at Owens College, resident in Manchester from 1859 until his death in 1892. Elizabeth Gaskell's house in Plymouth Grove was a social centre for German and German-Jewish families, particularly those such as the Schwabes linked to her husband's Cross Street Unitarian Chapel.⁴⁹ This tradition of the cultural salon was maintained by Mrs Gaskell's daughters, *salonnières* 'who kept open house for generations of *Guardian* men'.⁵⁰ The *Manchester Guardian* reporters similarly mixed socially with the academics at Owens College. Oliver Elton, who lectured at Owens from 1890 to 1900 recalled 'There were groups that bicycled, walked, talked, dined, smoked, laughed, and disputed together.'⁵¹ And *Manchester Guardian* reporters such as Neville Cardus

recalled hearing the carriages waiting outside a Hallé concert commanded in German. The carriage owners, - Schills, Seebohms, Mandelbergs, Spielbergs, Hertz, Hirschbergs - were heading back to the elite suburb of Victoria Park, renowned as the home of wealthy German Jews in the city.⁵² Cardus's entrée into the world of Victoria Park was provided by his close friends, the Russian émigré Dr. Adolf Brodsky and his son Prof. Max Brodsky. Resident in Victoria Park, the Brodsky's introduced Cardus to their wealthy neighbours, enabling him to leave us with invaluable sketches of the private world of the German-Jewish haute-bourgeoisie in Manchester c.1900.

Nothing could better illustrate the nature of culture as an international 'bourgeois currency' than the presence of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester.⁵³ Panayi has characterised the Hallé as 'fundamentally German, not just because of the origins of its players but also because of its founder, Sir Charles Hallé, and its financial backing'. Hallé came to Britain in 1848 after the revolution in Paris, moved to Manchester and founded the Hallé Concerts in 1858, conducting until his death in 1895. Hallé helped found the Royal Manchester College of Music of which Brodsky was the principal. He was succeeded at the Hallé by Hans Richter in 1899, who had

left his position as the ‘principal conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra to take up the post’.⁵⁴ According to Neville Cardus, the Germans ‘came to Manchester for trade and brought their music with them’, giving Manchester its ‘solid culture’. Cardus often wondered if anyone read the *Manchester Guardian* ‘except the Jews and the Germans and the self-educated denizens of the hinterland of Lancashire’.⁵⁵

Cultural commentators such as the *Manchester Guardian* journalist James Agate similarly described Manchester as ‘a city of liberal culture, awareness and gaiety, which it owed almost entirely to the large infusion of German-Jewish brains and taste’.⁵⁶ As A. N. Wilson has pointed out, it is almost impossible for us today, separated by two World Wars, to understand the sense of German cousinage felt by most of the British intellectual and social elite in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ It was embodied at the top of society by the Royal family. In Manchester this sense of cousinage was reinforced by close ties of kinship as the German commercial community married into the regional middle class.

It was perhaps in the domestic sphere, in the homes of German émigrés who married English men and women in Manchester, and within the extended

family network in Germany and England, that ideas and values could be exchanged most effectively. In *Manchester Made Them*, Katherine Chorley described many of her neighbours and relatives in and around the elite suburb of Alderley Edge in Cheshire as ‘ex-Germans’. Her pen-portrait of the Rothsteins, who helped found the Hallé, sketches a German-Jewish family in the process of becoming English by intermarriage and acculturation.⁵⁸ Katherine Chorley’s own family, the Hopkinsons, were all Germanophiles, with family members marrying German émigrés and second generation immigrants. Her uncle, Sir Alfred Hopkinson was principal of Owens College from 1898, and the first vice-chancellor of the Victoria University of Manchester. His memoirs of his student days at Owens College in the 1860s attest to the strong pro-German feeling in Manchester at the time. In 1871 he went on a long walking tour through Germany and Austria and fell in love with the Tyrol and its people. By the time he came to write his memoirs in 1930, he was still indignant about the fate of the South Tyroleans and wistful for a counter-factual German-speaking Fatherland harking back to the Holy Roman Empire but based on Vienna rather than Berlin.⁵⁹ Another of her uncles, John Hopkinson, was an electrical engineer, and by 1890 was professor of electrical engineering at King’s College, London, and head of the Siemens laboratory there, his eldest

son marrying into the Siemens family. John Hopkinson married into the Lancashire 'ex-German' community. His wife, Evelyn Oldenburg, had a Yorkshire mother but a father from Bavaria who had been naturalised in Lancashire, and she maintained close contact with her German relatives. Though Chorley's aunt Evelyn was born in Britain of British and German parentage, and only visited Germany, Chorley was in no doubt that it was the 'Germanness' of her disposition that set Evelyn Hopkinson apart, steeped as she was in 'the environment of South German culture' which 'infused in her outlook the richness and the freedom which raised her mentally a head and shoulders above almost all the women I knew when I was young'.⁶⁰

All this raises larger questions about how a sense of German identity was maintained within the home. How far did German émigrés and Mancunians differ in the ways in which they brought up children? What did the German governess and nanny, a familiar phenomenon in many upper-middle class homes, and not only those of German émigrés, contribute?⁶¹ What was the place of mountains in German folklore, and how was this represented in the culture of the nursery, in fairy stories, nursery rhyme and song? Did bilingualism give naturalised and Anglo-German families access to a

different oral and literary tradition about mountains? Were continental mountains less foreign than familiar to those who learned about them in the nursery and then saw them on trips to Germany to see relatives? Unfortunately these questions lie outside the scope of this study. Here we shall concentrate on the German influence on the development of a distinctive regional mountaineering culture in northern England, an influence stemming from education, and particularly from ‘progressive’ ideas about the role that physical education and play should have within the school curriculum.

H. B. Charlton recalled that soon after he arrived at the Victoria University of Manchester in 1912 as assistant lecturer in English Literature he was invited to an informal dinner to introduce ‘the elder statesmen’ of the university to newcomers: ‘I found myself next to an eminent scientist. During soup, his first remark to me was “Had I ever climbed in the Andes?” I muttered “No”. Well, he had.’⁶² The eminent scientist in question was almost certainly Sir Arthur Schuster [formerly Franz Arthur Friedrich Schuster], the central figure in the establishment of physics at the Victoria University of Manchester. Though Schuster had retired from his chair in 1907 and handed over to Ernest Rutherford, he was resident in Manchester

until 1913. Schuster's career, and that of his brother Felix Otto, perfectly exemplify the international bourgeoisie, culturally at home in Germany and England, making a life for themselves in Manchester. They had been born in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1851 and 1854 respectively, sons of a textile merchant and banker who converted from Judaism to Christianity in the 1850s. The family textile business had already transferred to Manchester in 1811. After the annexation of Hesse by Prussia in 1866, Schuster obtained Swiss citizenship for his sons so that they would avoid service in the Prussian army. After studying at the Frankfurt Gymnasium, Arthur and Felix attended the Geneva Academy. The whole family then moved to Manchester in 1869. Both Schusters attended Owens College in Manchester. Arthur attended Henry Roscoe's evening classes in chemistry and began full-time studies in 1871. He went back to Germany to gain his Ph.D. at the University of Heidelberg but returned to Owens as a demonstrator in Physics. He undertook research in Göttingen and Berlin but was back lecturing at Owens in 1875. After working with James Clerk Maxwell at the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge, he became Professor of Applied Mathematics at Owens in 1881 and Professor of Physics in 1888. When Owens College became the Victoria University of Manchester in 1903, Schuster became the Dean of the Faculty of Science.

Both Arthur and Felix took up mountaineering while studying in Geneva. In Britain, Felix became an officer of the Alpine Club. At Owens College, Arthur was on the faculty with other eminent mountaineers such as Sir Alfred Hopkinson (1851-1939), the Vice-Chancellor, and Sir Arthur Milnes Marshall (1852-1893), Professor of Zoology. Their second cousin Claud, subsequently Baron, Schuster (1869-1956), who was born in Manchester, was also a keen Alpinist, and was the first person to serve as president of both the Ski Club of Great Britain (1932-34) and the Alpine Club (1938-40).⁶³

In many ways the Schusters can be seen as representative of this new social formation, the international bourgeoisie, 'mobile and disparate,' commercial, technocratic, progressive and free thinking.⁶⁴ Mountaineering was part of the international bourgeois cultural capital they dealt in. The craze for Alpinism which they acquired in Switzerland was in large part a product of the British upper-middle classes vacationing in Switzerland. But the presence of German immigrants within the British mountaineering community raises the possibility that specifically German cultural assumptions about mountains entered the host community. German ideas

and individuals were hugely important to the development of physical education and the kindergarten movement in the city and both were to have profound effects on the development of rock climbing and mountaineering in north-west England.

Owens College was notable for the number of German and Jewish staff it employed. In part this was due to the prestige German tertiary education commanded. German educational pre-eminence in areas as diverse as theology, philology, history, engineering, chemistry and mining exerted a strong pull in the nineteenth century. German advances in analytical chemistry, for instance, made a German education a necessity for ambitious chemists. Industrial and national competition increased the need to replicate German successes, both for economic and strategic reasons. Students eager for an education and staff seeking employment passed back and forth between Germany and Britain. Edward Frankland, the first Professor of Chemistry at Owens College, Manchester, had studied at Marburg under Robert Bunsen.⁶⁵ Frankland was succeeded in 1857 by Henry Roscoe, who had also studied under Bunsen, but at Heidelberg. Roscoe realised that German dominance in the chemical industry would force Owens College to remodel itself according to German educational principles, with research

conducted along experimental lines and linked to the needs of industry. Roscoe revised the chemical curriculum and 'built a solid reputation for chemical teaching and training for research. Over a period of twenty-five years, Roscoe convinced industrialists of the necessity of chemical training at Owens'.⁶⁶ He found particular success amongst German industrialists resident in Manchester such as Charles Beyer (1813-1876), the founder of the engineering firm Beyer, Peacock and Co., who had also supported the Manchester Mechanics' Institution and founded the chair of Engineering at Owens in 1868.⁶⁷ H. B. Charlton in his *Portrait of a University* noted that German industrialists in Manchester had been⁶⁸

as if instinctively, sympathetic supporters of the social and cultural ideas for which the college and then the University had stood. They were intellectually like minded with the broadly liberal social outlook of the University. Even more they displayed amongst us a range of interest and of aesthetic sensitiveness which hitherto had been much more a casual than a regular item in the life of our successful men of commerce and industry. On the Continent, music and the pictorial arts were traditionally a part of the

culture, and of the leisured occupations, of the bourgeois industrial and commercial leaders.....In this manner, they were bringing to the Manchester climate of opinion a stream of spiritual values which gradually incorporated themselves with the already established moral culture of the native Mancunian, and so provided an intellectual atmosphere invaluable to the progress of the academic idea.

This 'stream of spiritual values' plugged Manchester into the European intellectual mainstream. It linked Manchester with 'Germany's civic and academic culture'.⁶⁹ It offered Manchester a new educational paradigm for the industrial age. At the same time it distanced Manchester from a reliance on Oxford and Cambridge. James Heywood, a trustee of Owens (1845-1860) and MP for North Lancashire (1847-1857), made reform of the ancient English universities his life's work, campaigning for removal of religious tests that penalised Dissenters. He saw into print Frank Newman's translation of Huber's *English Universities* and commissioned Walter C. Perry of the University of Göttingen to write *German University Education* which emphasised the role of the state in university reform.⁷⁰ Such looking

abroad for educational inspiration and provision was a central historical experience of Nonconformity in Lancashire. The requirement to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles at Oxford and Cambridge had made eighteenth-century English Dissenters seek their university education in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Leiden. Though the tests on matriculation and graduation were removed at Oxford and Cambridge in the mid-1850s, Nonconformists were still excluded from fellowships. The example of Sir Alfred's brother, John Hopkinson, was used by Nonconformist campaigners to push for the final removal of religious tests in 1872. Winning a scholarship to Trinity, Cambridge, in 1867, he graduated in 1871 as Senior Wrangler and First Smith's Prizeman: at the time of his graduation the religious test would have precluded him from being elected a fellow of Trinity had it not been revoked. In these ways legal disabilities had done much to weaken the links between the region and national educational institutions. This reinforced a general suspicion that an Oxford or Cambridge education did not meet the needs of young men intended for business. Alfred Hopkinson, recalling the 1860s and 1870s in Manchester, noted that 'very few Nonconformists and few sons of business people in the North of England went to either of the older Universities.' 'It was thought that even at Cambridge young men would be rendered quite unfit for business and

their principles unsettled and that Oxford was worse.’⁷¹ The Nonconformists experience of exclusion had fundamentally reoriented their allegiances. In the free market of educational ideas, Manchester aligned itself with progressive educational ideals emanating from Germany.

Affinities for German educational models can also be seen in the Manchester Mechanics’ Institution, opened on Cooper Street in 1827.⁷² Benjamin Heywood, its founder and president between 1825 and 1840, looked to the French, Swiss and German models of vocational and technical education. Heywood was an early exponent of physical as well as intellectual education. He wanted the Mechanics’ Institution to have a sports ground and a swimming bath, but these hopes were never realised. He succeeded in providing a very popular gymnasium, equipped at his own expense in 1830-1831. The directors petitioned to convert the gymnasium into a reading room in 1834, despite there being ‘several members of the class whose health was said to have been “materially improved by the exercises” and some who were “most accomplished gymnasts.”’⁷³ ‘While Heywood spoke of maintaining bodily health and mental vigour and referred to the “manly games of our ancestors” the directors, to justify the acquisition of the gymnasium, were arguing the prior claim of “intellectual education” over a

“mere animal or physical one.”⁷⁴ Heywood’s visionary commitment to physical education amongst the working classes seems almost anachronistic in the laissez-faire Manchester of the 1830s, far ahead of the gymnastics boom in the mid-nineteenth century. It was not until 1859 that Edward Thring at Uppingham installed the first gymnasium in an English public school, together with a German gymnastics instructor.⁷⁵ It seems probable that the inspiration behind Heywood’s ideas was contemporary innovation in Switzerland. Henry Brougham, the pioneer of working-class education and Mechanics’ Institutions, had visited Switzerland in 1817 with Robert Southey in order to examine the progressive educational systems of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Philip Emmanuel von Fellenberg and their findings were much discussed in the *Edinburgh Review*.⁷⁶ Heywood apart, such ideas found little purchase in the Manchester of the 1830s, but in the 1850s the ideas of progressive educationalists from Europe informed efforts amongst Unitarians and German émigrés to reintroduced Gymnastics into the Mechanics’ Institution in the 1850s 1860s and to embed the kindergarten movement in Manchester.

By mid century the Manchester Mechanics’ Institution had largely failed as an institution dedicated to inculcating practical science amongst the working

classes. In a trend that was mirrored in the upper-middle class clubs like Athenaeum, its functions became increasingly social. Businessmen and the more prosperous members of the commercial community in Manchester used the facilities of the Athenaeum. The shopkeeper, his assistants, along with mechanics and artisans, patronised the Mechanics' Institution.⁷⁷ The Manchester Mechanics' Institution was re-housed in a new building in 1856 on David Street (subsequently Princess Street). To pay off the debt, the domed lecture hall was rented out for shows, social gatherings, parties, dances and organ recitals. It was also home to 'Assaults of Arms' by the gymnastic club.⁷⁸ New rules for the Institution in 1862 made explicit the shift in focus to social intercourse and conviviality. The Mechanics' Institution became the home of a variety of clubs. 'As well as the gymnastics club (which included a fencing school), there was a chess club and a billiard room. A coffee room, equipped with carpet and fire, provided a comfortable meeting place.'⁷⁹ There was a successful library and newsroom.

It is clear that the Mechanics' Institution was growing more and more like an Athenaeum for the 'humbler class' in the 1850s and 1860s, a social club mixing learning, sociability and recreation. The Institution had also re-

instituted a commitment to physical recreation and re-invested in a gymnasium. One old boy of the Commercial and Scientific Day School that shared the Institution's building, recalling the school of the 1860s, fondly remembered "the old gymnasium in the cellar" where he had trained for the local amateur gymnastic championships.'⁸⁰ Gymnastics formed part of that recreational milieu in the Mechanics' Institution because an interest in physical culture in Manchester had been reinvigorated by the growth of the German immigrant population in the city. Physical education and gymnastics formed part of the German club culture in Manchester. The Schiller Anstalt hosted gymnastics but the main focus was the Manchester *Turnverein*, founded in 1860.⁸¹ It was established to give its members an 'opportunity to participate in German gymnastics and to develop the social life of the members through excursions, parties and gatherings'.⁸² It held gymnastic evenings twice a week and its membership had grown to 103 by 1913. What is distinctive about these *Vereine* is that they combined social, cultural, educational, sporting and recreational activities. It was more than just a sporting club, or union, and had wider cultural ambitions. The *Deutscher Turnverein* in London had gymnastics four nights a week, including women's gymnastics, fencing and boxing. It had its library, wine cellar, restaurant; dances, concerts and dramatic recitations. Leopold

Katscher, commenting on the *Deutscher Turnverein* in London in 1887, noted that only 300 of its members were Germans, the rest were English, ‘so that the non-German element in the first instance had the numerical superiority – a ratio which best answers to the chief object of the association, “to introduce and encourage German gymnastics in England, and by closer intercourse to bring about a better mutual understanding between the two ancestrally related nations.”’⁸³ It is not clear if the Manchester *Turnverein* had its own premises, indeed circumstantial evidence seems to suggest that the Manchester *Turnverein* met at the Mechanics’ Institution. To its English members it was the gymnastics club, to its German members the *Turnverein*. If this were the case, then the Mechanics’ Institution would have played a crucial part in the embedding of German cultural and educational ideas in the sporting culture of lower-middle and working-class Mancunians.

That these *Vereine* were much more than just sporting clubs is important. They demonstrated that athleticism could be linked with culture and recreation, education and improvement. Implicit in the combination of libraries, music and gymnasia was a belief in the compatibility of the mind and the body. While that conviction had motivated Benjamin Heywood in the 1820 and 1830s, it took the arrival of German immigrants, bringing with

them European ideas about physical culture and its role in education and national identity, to reconstitute and invigorate gymnastics in both Manchester and the cities of industrial Lancashire. Ernst Georg Ravenstein founded the *Deutscher Turnverein* in London in 1860, with its premises in King's Cross and the word *Turnhalle* emblazoned over its St. Pancras Road entrance.⁸⁴ Ravenstein found kindred spirits in Charles Melly and John Hulley of Liverpool. Hulley was the founder of the Liverpool Gymnasium, and along with Melly, founded the Liverpool Athletic Club and the Liverpool Olympic Games of 1862. Together with Dr. W. P. Brookes, Hulley and Ravenstein founded the British National Olympian Association in 1865 and Hulley and Ravenstein collaborated on two books on gymnastics in 1867, *The Gymnasium and its Fittings* and *A Handbook of Gymnastics and Athletics*.⁸⁵

This surge of interest in the 1860s in German models of physical culture was to have profound effects on what should be seen as the Nonconformist culture of athleticism in north-west England. The German *Turner* movement contained within it a powerful critique of the dominant British team-sports model.⁸⁶ This resonated with British Nonconformists, already disinclined to trust the chief exponents of the team-sports model, the British public schools

and the universities. The *Verein* model offered an alternative model to the British middle-class sporting clubs which were mainly ‘single-pursuit entities’, reluctant to bond together for other activities.⁸⁷ At the heart of this rational recreational culture was the pursuit of the harmonious balance between the physical and the intellectual. Eighteenth century proponents of gymnastics in Germany such as Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths (1759-1839) had stressed the importance of developing a balance between the mind and the body, ‘turning for inspiration to models from Greek Antiquity’.⁸⁸ J. A. Mangan has pointed out that German Classicism inherited this idea of *Kalokagathia* (the harmony of soul and body) from the Enlightenment. In the nineteenth century it informed a growing interest in physical and intellectual reformation.⁸⁹ The idea of the harmonious balance between mind and body had certainly become rooted in the emerging gymnastic and athletic traditions in north-west England in the mid-nineteenth century. David Young has traced the first application of Juvenal’s phrase *mens sana in corpore sano* in a sporting context to a speech by the athletics and gymnastics pioneer John Hulley on 4 December 1861 and it became the official motto of the Liverpool Athletic Club.⁹⁰ How to achieve the best balance between the development of the mind and the body was, of course, exactly the problem Dr. Arnold had addressed at Rugby in

his attempt to amalgamate the athletic instincts of the aristocracy with the moral rigour of the middle classes. But for many cultural commentators looking at the British public school in the latter part of the nineteenth century, this had degenerated into athletic fetishism, anti-intellectualism and a boorish gospel of team sports. For many progressive educators and social theorists, the idea of the harmonious balance between mind and body was an ideal against which the public schools could be tested and found wanting.

One other important aspect of the *Turnverein* tradition was that rational recreation was not confined indoors but incorporated both rambling and tours and visits for cultural and recreational purposes. Eisenberg has drawn our attention to the proselytising nature of the early *Turner* movement in Germany under Jahn, linking gymnastics with ‘long walks through the countryside in order to disseminate *Turnen*’.⁹¹ The Manchester Y. M. C. A. certainly shows strong affinities with the *verein* model. A Rambling Club was begun in 1874 with walks in the countryside but also visits to institutions and places led by guides who would ensure recreation was complimented by instruction. Moving into new premises in the former Manchester Museum in 1875 the Manchester Y. M. C. A. equipped the building with a gymnasium and Thomas Renshaw was appointed

gymnasium director that year. It proved hugely popular. 'Renshaw and his assistants supervised the classes, and instruction in the use of horizontal and parallel bars, rings, trapeze, vaulting horse, dumbbells and Indian clubs was given...Many pupils went on to conduct gymnastics classes in Lads' Clubs and ragged schools, and Renshaw helped to form gymnasia at other Y. M. C. As. and ragged schools in the district.'⁹² The number of Y. M. C. A. sporting clubs grew over the next decade. A football club and the Manchester Y. M. C. A. Cycle Club were both founded in 1880, the Harriers' Club in 1882. Social events throughout the year brought Y. M. C. A. members together and in 'January 1877 the Association held the first of what were to become annual events, a New Year's soiree and conversazione in the Association hall. Music, singing, a short address, a collection of works of art, and a display of skill and expertise given by the members of the gymnasium constituted the entertainment'.⁹³

It seem certain that the German gymnastic ideal, rooted in a culture of rational recreation, including rambling, influenced and merged with the British outdoor movement which was developing in Manchester from the 1860s onwards. By the 1890s the leaders of emerging British institutions which saw the outdoors as an indispensable component of education and

rational recreation were explicit about their debt to German cultural and social models. Social reformers such as the Congregationalist minister J. B. Paton looked to the German churches and cultural institutions for his inspiration. He had worked in Manchester in the early 1860s and went on to found the National Home Reading Union in 1889. His student T. A. Leonard founded the Co-operative Holidays Association in Colne, Lancashire in 1891.⁹⁴ Both organisations promoted rational recreation, becoming hugely important in fostering cheap and improving rambling holidays, and the organization maintained strong links with Germany through its treasurer, John Lewis Paton, who was from 1903 to 1924 high master of Manchester Grammar School.⁹⁵

The current historiography of climbing in Britain tends to suggest that the application of training principles from gymnastics and related physical regimes such as Swedish Exercises only really began in the 1890s. At that time rock climbing as a sport was increasingly being seen as differentiated from mountaineering and consequently attracting a following from the solid-middle classes and the lower- middle class. Moreover, the gentlemanly code of amateurism that permeated upper-middle class mountaineering was beginning to be eroded. The existence of the Manchester and London

Turnverein suggests the possibility of ideas from gymnastics being appropriated as early as the 1860s and 1870s. I would suggest that methods of physical cultivation began to be appropriated and applied by climbers in those decades. For instance, the *Penny Illustrated* of the 6th August 1870 notes the inaugural meeting of the Preston Gymnastic Club, stating that ‘Mr. H. Woolley, A. G. C., Manchester’ swept the medals board at the event.⁹⁶ Whilst it cannot be proved conclusively, it seems highly likely that this was the climber Herman Woolley. Woolley climbed extensively with the Hopkinsons in the Lake District in the 1880s and became an eminent pioneer of climbing in the Caucasus. His family owned a pharmaceutical and photographic chemical business in Manchester. His background in ‘trade’ nearly saw him blackballed from the Alpine Club ‘until the Hopkinsons rose up in fraternal wrath and threatened to resign *en masse*.’⁹⁷ It is intriguing to surmise that the ‘sniffiness’ on the part of the Alpine Club was engendered as much by his commitment to physical cultivation and gymnastic training as it was by his commercial background.

Certainly by the 1880s we can begin to see big changes emerging in mountaineering with the application of training principles from the gymnastics and physical fitness movements. In his history of bouldering,

John Gill gives pride of place to Oscar Eckenstein for bridging the gap between the physical cultures of gymnastics and climbing.⁹⁸ Eckenstein was born in London in 1859. His Jewish and socialist father had fled Bonn in 1848. Eckenstein was educated at University College School and then studied chemistry in London and Bonn. A keen Alpinist in the 1880s, he was responsible for many technical innovations in climbing equipment, including a shortened ice axe and modified crampons, both of which enabled users to tackle harder routes in the Alps. Aleister Crowley, Eckenstein's intimate friend for many years, credited him with inventing bouldering as a training discipline to develop his climbing skills. Bouldering is, in essence, the application of gymnastics to climbing short, but technically demanding, boulders. It was undertaken solo, without ropes and represents the antithesis of Alpine mountaineering, with its emphasis on collaborative endeavour and on reaching the summit of a mountain. Crowley also claimed that Eckenstein pioneered balance climbing, a more gymnastic and athletic approach to the sport that enabled climbers to move out from gullies and chimneys and tackle more exposed open rock faces. Eckenstein was also a proponent of developing psychological training for climbing, Crowley indicating that Eckenstein used mental visualization techniques in preparation for climbing. We know from biographical fragments collected

about Eckenstein that he had done gymnastics as a boy in London.⁹⁹ This was almost certainly at the *Deutscher Turnverein* on Old St. Pancras Road, King's Cross. It seems likely that Eckenstein's father was involved in the fundraising of the new gymnasium there, the *Times* citing 'Messrs. Rohrweger, Eckenstein, Berndes, and Grüning, all of whom had shown a special interest in the undertaking'.¹⁰⁰

In May, 1900 Eckenstein published an article entitled 'Hints to Young Climbers' in Eugen Sandow's *Magazine of Physical Culture*, detailing the mental visualisation techniques which Aleister Crowley had so admired in Eckenstein.¹⁰¹ This, along with his advocacy of bouldering, balance climbing as well as his advocacy of solo, unroped climbing, would have placed him in the climbing *avant-garde* of the time. Eugen Sandow (1867-1925) was himself German, resident in England, an East Prussian and refugee from national service, a product of the *Turnhalle* and a physical education campaigner and body builder. In 1897 he opened his first institute of physical culture in Piccadilly, ending up with five centres in London and one in Manchester. He franchised his method via correspondence courses. He wrote the hugely popular training manual

Strength and How to Obtain It in 1897 and his magazine ran from 1898 to 1907.¹⁰²

Sandow and Eckenstein are direct evidence of a link between gymnastic traditions and the emerging sport of rock climbing, and, more intriguingly still, of a specifically German intellectual and social contribution to innovations within the sport of climbing in Britain. Eckenstein, who must have begun his gymnastics in the 1870s, began mountaineering in the 1880s, suggesting that training regimes drawing on gymnastics were being applied to the training of climbers in Britain somewhat earlier than has previously been thought. The late Victorian boom in gymnastics and physical fitness has been characterised by Lowerson as a privatised form of athleticism for the lower-middle classes, an ‘illusion of athleticism’. ‘Whether using Sandow’s or Eustace Mile’s system, the clerk tended to do it alone.’¹⁰³ The evidence from the emerging sport of rock climbing suggests this judgement is too harsh. Far from experiencing simply the ‘illusion of athleticism’, the new breed of rock climber in the 1890s had fully taken on board the lessons of gymnastics. O. G. Jones, perhaps the best rock climber in Britain between 1888 and his death on the Dent Blanche in 1899, exemplified the trend. From a lower-middle class London background, he put noses out of

joint in mountaineering circles by being a self-publicist and showman but at the same time by climbing harder than anyone had thought possible. He was at the cutting edge of a new trend that saw rock climbing on the crags of Great Britain as an end in itself, not merely training for the Alps. The new breed of climbers sought out technically challenging rock faces, moving out from the gullies and onto steeper and more exposed rock faces where balance, technique and strength were at a premium. The upper-middle class mountaineering establishment, exemplified by the Alpine Club, ‘regarded Lake District rock climbing with contempt’ well into the 1880s and 1890s, ‘dismissing its enthusiasts as “chimney sweeps” and “rock gymnasts”.’¹⁰⁴ Jones revelled in being a gymnast and playfully took every opportunity to demonstrate his superior skills, whether on the Barn Door Traverse at the Wasdale Head Hotel, or climbing the outside of public buildings in London. He used Indian clubs as training aids and confirmed that his success in Walker’s Gully on Pillar in the Lake District in 1898 was due to ‘the previous three month’s monotonous training with heavy dumbbells’.¹⁰⁵ Far from being the solitary preserve of weedy clerks swinging clubs, gymnastics and the physical fitness movement enabled a new class of rock climbers to mount a full frontal assault on the unspoken gentlemanly codes that had till then governed the sport of mountaineering.

The kindergarten movement was the other strand of progressive German pedagogy that was to have a far reaching impact on the development of the outdoor movement in later nineteenth-century Manchester and Lancashire. With its emphasis on play and physical development, often in an outdoor context, and its concern for the intellectual development of the individual through a process of ‘learning by doing’, it contributed to a distinctive Nonconformist culture of athleticism within the outdoor movement in Lancashire.

The kindergarten movement took root in Britain in the 1850s among a group of German émigrés, and its ideas were quickly embraced in Unitarian and progressive circles. The Unitarian minister W. H. Herford had visited von Fellenberg’s Froebel school at Hofwyl near Berne, Switzerland in 1847, and had founded a Froebel school in Lancaster in 1850. In London, Johannes Ronge began promoting the kindergarten movement in Hampstead in 1851 at a time when the Prussian government had prohibited the schools. With his wife, Ronge wrote *A Practical Guide to the English Kinder Garten* in 1855 ‘which stressed organized play as “a means of culture and a useful labour for a child”. Space was important, as was physical exercise’.¹⁰⁶ In

Manchester, Baroness Malwida von Meysenbug became a leading advocate of Froebel's ideas on education. She was trained by Froebel's son Karl in Hamburg in 1850, eventually fleeing to London in 1852 as the political climate became intolerable. She was well connected with émigré life in London, eventually finding a patron for her ideas in Julia Salis-Schwabe, the wife of the wealthy Manchester industrialist and philanthropist, Salis Schwabe.¹⁰⁷

Salis and Julia were both German-born and Jewish, Salis having been naturalised by act of parliament in 1835. The Schwabes exemplified the international bourgeoisie. Salis had moved to Manchester in 1832 and he became one of the biggest employers in and around the Manchester region. He took great pride in being the owner of the tallest factory chimney in the north of England.¹⁰⁸ Salis and Julia owned mansions in Crumpsall and North Wales and were great patrons of music and the arts. Salis had earlier converted to Unitarianism in Glasgow: in Manchester he attended the Unitarian Upper Brook Street Chapel. The Schwabes also became closely associated with the tight-knit Unitarian social circle at the Cross Street Chapel, centred on William and Elizabeth Gaskell, with Julia Salis-Schwabe and Elizabeth Gaskell becoming close friends.¹⁰⁹ Malwida von Meysenbug

found Julia Salis-Schwabe receptive to Froebel's ideas on education. As we should expect from the international bourgeoisie, Julia Salis-Schwabe's philanthropic endeavours were not confined to Manchester but were national and international in outlook. She founded and funded kindergartens, mixed elementary schools and training colleges in Naples in 1887. She also generously supported the Froebel Educational Institute in West Kensington; 'its training college was opened by her friend the Empress Frederick in 1895'.¹¹⁰

With this kind of powerful patronage, these ideas began to take root and propagate in Manchester. William Gaskell's successor at Cross Street, Samuel Steinthal, from an established German-Unitarian family in Bradford, was a pioneer of the kindergarten in Manchester, as was the industrialist William Mather, who opened a 'Free Kindergarten in Salford in 1872'.¹¹¹ A kindergarten education became a feature of progressive middle-class education in Manchester, though it was not always remembered with affection. Sir Alfred Hopkinson, who attended 'a very well-conducted kindergarten' in Manchester c.1859 when he was eight years old, thought the system suffered from too much pedagogical rigidity:¹¹²

I have not even now forgotten the sense of degradation at having to go through the regulated games and the routine production of useless articles according to affixed timetable. Hearing, as I passed a school in Zurich forty years later, the old tune to which the children used to sing, “Would you know how does the peasant?” I felt a return of the old nausea.

Slavish adherence to systems inevitably tended to subvert the very ideas Froebel and von Fellenberg were promoting. But other pioneers were perhaps more successful in interpreting, adapting and hybridizing these systems. W. H. Herford, from an established Manchester Unitarian family, spent his life promoting Froebel’s ideas. In his retirement he wrote two books that were to become hugely influential: *The School: an Essay towards Humane Education* (1889) and *The Student’s Froebel* (1893), ‘adapted from *Die Menschenerziehung* of F. Froebel’ and the best ‘English account of the educational doctrine which it summarized and expounded’.¹¹³ Rambling and physical activity were distinctive features of the schools W. H. Herford founded. Recalling his time as headmaster of Castle Howell school in Lancaster between 1850 and 1861, W. H. Herford noted that ‘We sought

every natural and wholesome bodily recreation; play, country walks and gymnastics, skating and bathing (in their seasons); carpentering and drilling'. Herford imported from Hofwyl the concept of the outdoor excursion, with the students putting in long training walks beforehand. Every May the students would spend three days in the Lake District where 'the climbs and walks, boating on the lake, learning to love Nature by examining flowers and observing birds, the comradeship between teacher and pupil, did foster growth and unfolding of body, mind and soul'.¹¹⁴ Rudolph Davies, noting in 1888 'Some Changes in the School since 1862' recalled the equipment in the playground that showed a debt to the *Turnplatz* and the kindergarten. There was a 'ladder, used as a seat as much as for gymnastics', 'the sea-saw and the giant-stride', with at various times rope and pole climbing being part of the daily routine after breakfast.¹¹⁵ Castle Howell School produced one mountaineer of note in the person of Arthur Milnes Marshall. Marshall entered the school in 1863, and was subsequently Professor of Zoology at Owen's College, Manchester. He was to die in a fall on Scafell on 31 December, 1893.¹¹⁶ His near contemporary at Castle Howell was C. H. Herford (entered 1862), the father of the eminent pre-War rock climber, Siegfried Wedgewood Herford, who we will encounter in due course.

After leaving Lancaster in 1861, W.H. Herford was a private tutor in Zurich, then a minister of the Free Church in Manchester from 1863 to 1869 where he gained a reputation for supporting women's education, both at the Ladies' College in Victoria Park and at Brook House School in Knutsford. In 1872 he founded the Manchester Kindergarten Association, and in April 1873 he opened, with Louisa Carbutt, a co-educational school in Fallowfield that was soon to move to Lady Barn House in Withington.¹¹⁷ Lady Barn School was a Rousseauian 'commonwealth' where how a child learnt was more important than what they learnt and where intellectual activity was 'offset by regular physical activity, by plenty of fresh air, supplemented by a routine of exploratory play designed to enhance a child's sense of being in the world and not outside it'¹¹⁸. It was heavily supported by the German-Jewish and Unitarian communities in Manchester. 'Of the 111 pupils who entered the school during the first ten years of its existence [1873-1882], no less than 42 bore German names'.¹¹⁹

In Manchester in the 1870s and 1880s two important pedagogical traditions, with roots in distinct national experiences of the Enlightenment, began to cohere. W. H. Herford made this point explicitly when talking about the

educational tradition within his own family. His mother, Sarah, had run a 'prosperous girls' school in Altrincham' until her death in 1831.¹²⁰ W. H. Herford was of the opinion that her educational principles, rooted in the ideas of mid-Eighteenth-century Protestant Dissenters, exemplified by the Warrington Academy, shared the same intellectual heritage and goals as Pestalozzi and Froebel:¹²¹

She venerated Aikin, Barbauld, and Edgeworth, British pupils of Rousseau's *Emile*, but possibly knew not Pestalozzi and Fröbel, even by name. From all that I remember of her, she would have sympathised with these Apostles of Education: her aims would have coincided with F. Fröbel's 'Harmonious Development', and her methods with his 'Learn by doing'; as with Pestalozzi's fundamental thought, which was, to bring young senses and minds into closest contact with objects and with facts in place of mere words.

W. H. Herford's Lady Barn School, with its commitment to play, physical activity and the outdoors was a key element in the educational fashioning of

perhaps the greatest British rock climber of the immediate pre-war era, Siegfried Wedgewood Herford. Geoffrey Winthrop Young, the doyen of British climbing in the late-Victorian and Edwardian period, certainly thought Herford was the outstanding climber of his generation, his pre-eminence cemented by his ascent, in April 1914, of the Central Buttress on Scafell, representing ‘probably the biggest single breakthrough in standard in the history of Lakeland climbing’.¹²² Siegfried Herford had grown up in Manchester and attended Lady Barn from 1899 to 1903. His mother, born Marie Catherine Betge, was German, from a bourgeois family in Bremen. Having radical ideas ‘about the nature of society’ and ‘the aims of education’, she escaped Bremen and took a teaching post in Manchester.¹²³ His father, Charles H. Herford, was from an old Manchester Unitarian family, linked to the Cross Street Chapel and on intimate terms with the Gaskells.¹²⁴ From 1901 C. H. Herford was professor of English at the Victoria University in Manchester: he had been a student at his uncle’s Castle Howell School in Lancaster.

An energetic and impulsive boy, Siegfried Herford increasingly struggled at Lady Barn, a school, it should be noted, which was packed with his relatives on the teaching staff. His parents, in desperation, tried an alternative

approach and sent him to a classic Arnoldian preparatory school, Boxgrove House School, on the Surrey Downs near Guildford between 1903 and 1906. From 1906 to 1908 he attended Manchester Grammar School under the high master John Lewis Paton. Paton had spent part of his education in Germany, at the Halle Gymnasium. Paton introduced outdoor education to Manchester Grammar: camping at Alderly Edge and the Lake District, and school treks to the Alps, Norway and especially Germany.¹²⁵ Between 1908 and 1909, Siegfried Herford finished his secondary education at the Herman Lietz Schule at Bieberstein near Fulda, Germany. Situated in the Röhn Mountains of the Hesse spa country, it was a school where rock climbing was on the curriculum.¹²⁶ Herman Leitz's educational theories were subsequently to have a huge influence on Kurt Hahn. Leitz's student Eric Meissner took over Hahn's school at Salem, eventually following Hahn to Gordonstoun and contributing to the creation of the Outward Bound movement in Britain.¹²⁷

Siegfried Herford's very name expressed his mixed German and Unitarian heritage. The Wedgewood middle name recalled his kinship with Josiah Wedgewood. His first name, Siegfried, sprang from the Germanic folklore revival and had entered progressive consciousness in England via the

‘Teutomania’ of Carlyle, Matthew Arnold and William Morris. As Siegfried Herford grew up in Manchester, the cult of Wagner came to dominate the Germanophile musical culture of the city. Neville Cardus attested to the fact that ‘no composer since has meant so much to the imagination as Wagner meant to those of us who in 1910 had just come of age and were listening to the Hallé orchestra, under Richter, beginning the *Meistersinger* overture’.¹²⁸ Herford completed his secondary education at the Herman Leitz Schule in the summer of 1909 with a trip to the homeland of the gods, a school expedition to climb Hekla in Iceland.

Thus in his own family, in his education and in the wider civic culture, ideas about mountains from the German folkloric tradition were reiterated and reinterpreted. Rooted in a *völkisch* past, Wagner’s Siegfried was a representative of modernity, the slayer of the old gods, ‘the Man of the Future, the man we wish, the man we will, but cannot make, and the man who must create himself’. In Act Three of *Siegfried*, it is only Siegfried who can approach Brünnhilde, guarded by flames, on an inaccessible mountain top.¹²⁹ Heady stuff; and it is impossible for us to say for certain how this swirling current of myth and modernity influenced Herford’s own *Bildung*. To his friends, he seemed the very embodiment of the legend, his friend and

mentor the *Manchester Guardian* leader writer C.E. Montague recalling that ‘He was a sort of Norse giant, hugely tall and strong, blond, with tranquil blue eyes in which one could not imagine any expression of fear or despair as possible’.¹³⁰ He certainly chose to identify himself with expressions of modernity that in art and literature at the time are most often associated with idealism’s teleological optimism and the existential desire for transcendence. Not only was he a mountaineer, in 1909 he enrolled on the aeronautical engineering course at Victoria University of Manchester under Professor J. E. Petavel, a course he shared with the young Ludwig Wittgenstein.¹³¹

That the iconic figure of pre-war British rock climbing was half German seems not to have excited much attention among historians or contemporaries. It perhaps says something about how contemporaries understood Britishness and Englishness: it was less about race than about behaviour and self-identity. And it underscores just how cosmopolitan Manchester bourgeois culture was. As Wolfgang Kaschuba has noted, bourgeois culture ‘developed not on the basis of its own inner continuity and exclusivity, but exhibited its greatest vitality in its dialogue with other group cultures and in the constant change and exchange that this involved. In this context, the term “bourgeois” had less to do with social origins than with the

development of a specific cultural praxis at least partly independent of any single group or class.’¹³² In Manchester it was possible to be both German and British and to exhibit a ‘specific cultural praxis’ somewhere in between, though it became more difficult after the Boer War and impossible after 1914. Forced to choose, mountaineers such as Herford made the ultimate assertion of their Britishness and died for it on the Western Front. By then, overt acts of allegiance and assimilation had become essential. The Great War killed off for ever any sense of German cousinage. ‘British intellectual life was ethnically cleansed and the debt of Victorian culture to Germany was erased from memory, or ridiculed.’¹³³ The Great War destroyed Manchester’s German community and rendered Germanness anathema.

Yet the ‘specific cultural praxis’ that dominated bourgeois Manchester’s intellectual and cultural life c.1850 to 1914 deserves attention. The cosmopolitan nature of haute-bourgeois culture in Manchester at this time was part and parcel of a strong sense of regional pride and self-identity. In the minds of many Manchester men their ‘Cottonopolis’ was a city-state, bypassing national institutions and dealing directly with the rest of the world. Open, technocratic and free-thinking, the civic culture this regional-international nexus nurtured was distinctive and owed much to specifically

German cultural and intellectual sources. German culture, ideas and institutions contributed powerfully to the development of progressive education in Manchester and Lancashire. With its emphasis on the balance between mind and body, on physical and outdoor education and on the role of play, it challenged the then dominant educational paradigm. Charles Montague did much to synthesise these ideas and promote them in his leader articles in the *Manchester Guardian*, contributing to the construction of a distinctive regional middle-class sporting culture in the 1890s and 1900s.¹³⁴ It is the very distinctiveness of this regional *Weltanschauung* that should make us re-evaluate the current orthodoxy on the origins of mountaineering and climbing in the British Isles.

Peter Hansen has noted how ‘mountaineering was invented at the intersection of contemporary definitions of middle-class gentility and status, gender, and national identity’.¹³⁵ Hansen is clear that revolutions in transport, increased leisure time and greater disposable income were not in themselves enough to explain the emergence of mountaineering as a sport. He is clear that it required the development of the ‘bourgeoisie - which was methodical and took its sports seriously’.¹³⁶ The mountaineering explosion in the Alps in the mid-nineteenth century was largely, but not entirely, the

product of British middle-class tourists. Motivated by contemporary ideas about manliness and athleticism, charged with a sense of imperial expansiveness and the exploratory and frontier qualities that it entailed, mountaineering as a sport was an expression of that exploratory *imperium*. 'By adopting the discourse of discovery from explorers in the rest of the world, the members of the Alpine Club represented the Alps as *terra incognita* to be explored and conquered'.¹³⁷ In Hansen's opinion, 'British mountaineers represented themselves as agents of progressive modernity, in which their imperial masculinity conquered the space that indigenous superstition had left undisturbed for centuries'. The idea that the British 'conquered the Alps' was therefore a product of this aggressive imperialism, one that has remained largely unquestioned until recently in the largely monoglot histories of mountaineering that have been written in Britain. The national-mountaineeing aspirations of the nations of the Alps were largely ignored. Turning the Alps into a 'playground', in Leslie Stephen's terms, required a form of mental imparkment, where the indigenous population underwent a form of clearance, written out of history and relegated in these narratives to the role of mere guides.

All this is true, up to a point. But Hansen himself has pointed out that the boundaries of Britain were porous and diasporic, extending beyond the British Isles. The process of constructing identities was reciprocal. The periphery of Empire could and did exert a strong hold over the imaginative life of the core. The mountaineering tourist, acting out fantasies of imperial exploration while on a one-month holiday in the Alps, is evidence of this reciprocal process at work. But as Hansen himself concludes, this 'inside/outside relationship should be recognised as a more powerful, more complex, and more contested element in the historical, social, and cultural memory' of British 'modernity' than is often recognized'.¹³⁸ In a sense, much of Hansen's argument requires that we should see the culture of British mountaineers as overwhelmingly a national and imperial construction, driven by the dominant cultural discourses: chivalric, manly, athletic, exploratory. The purpose of this paper has been to shift the focus from the 'British' to the 'international' aspects of bourgeois culture. Leaving aside the question of how much it contributed nationally, the cosmopolitan culture of late nineteenth-century Manchester explored in this paper certainly had profound effects on mountaineering and the emergence of rock climbing as a distinctive sport in the north-west of England in the 1880s and 1890s. In Manchester, modernity was represented by the

‘inside/outside’ relationship that existed between a distinctive regional culture connected to an international German diaspora. In many ways this regional/international nexus cut across the grain of dominant national/imperial cultural discourses. Nationalist objectives mattered less when allegiance was perhaps dual and ill-defined. Mountains were approached from different cultural and literary traditions and placed in the context of progressive social theories that envisaged them as educational as well as athletic spaces. Climbing mountains to engage in inner exploration has been largely overlooked in contemporary explanations of the sport. In Noel Annan’s memorable phrase, the German Awakening scattered like atomic particles ideas about the nature of man throughout Europe:¹³⁹

the need for man to find his identity and having found it to express himself, the interpretations of freedom, the heart-rending concern about the nature of man’s will, the awareness of ineluctable conflicts between equally valuable principles such as the Dionysian and the Apollonian, between the *naïv* and the *sentimentalisch*, between reason and understanding, between the will to power and the ideals of renunciation and self-annihilation.

European idealism, with its transcendental longings and teleological drive found in mountains the metaphor for this inner struggle, where ideas about individual and collective identity could be worked out. Progressive educationalists embraced mountains as an extension of the classroom and as laboratories of the reformed individual. To climb and ramble in the fells was to engage in a dialectical process with them, the educational goals of which were ultimately the idealist and Platonist goals of approaching nearer to the 'true' and the 'good'. If, as Patrick Joyce has noted, 'the integrity of the provincial might be the way in which a sense of Englishness or Britishness was achieved that united the country as a whole',¹⁴⁰ then we have to ask just how British was that regional culture? And how much did it have in common with a national culture that was aggressively imperialist and convinced of the merits of Britishness and Englishness? Paul Readman, in writing about 'The Place of the Past in English Culture', has noted that English identity c.1890-1914 'was dominated by a distinctive, largely inward-looking, and importantly localized sense of Englishness. It can plausibly be inferred that wider ideas of Britishness-not least those founded upon empire and imperialism-found less purchase' than regional and localised identities.¹⁴¹ It suggests that the answer to the question 'Why did

people begin to climb mountains?’ requires more thought. Ultimately it suggests that developing an understanding of regional middle-class sporting identities will be essential if we are to understand the development of the sport of mountaineering and rock climbing in the British Isles as a whole. Finally, and more broadly, it suggests that in discussing late Victorian and Edwardian notions of Britishness and Englishness our focus on imperial and national discourses need to be moderated by a better historical understanding of the international and cosmopolitan values and culture to be found in later nineteenth-century Manchester.

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¹²⁹ Richard Wagner, Letter to August Roeckel, 1854. URL <http://www.music-with-ease.com/siegfried-wagner.html> [Accessed 23 August 2005].

¹³⁰ Elton, *C. E. Montague*, 127.

¹³¹ Treacher, *Siegfried Herford*, 58.

¹³² Gunn, *Public Culture*, 27.

¹³³ Nicholas Boyle, 'Introduction' to *J. W. von Goethe: selected works* (1999), xxxi.

¹³⁴ Jonathan H. Westaway, 'Mountaineering and the re-enchantment of modernity: C. E. Montague and the promotion of the outdoor movement in the *Manchester Guardian* 1890-1925' forthcoming in the *Historical Journal*.

¹³⁵ Peter H. Hansen, 'Albert Smith, the Alpine Club, and the Invention of Mountaineering in Mid-Victorian Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, xxxiv (July 1995), 300-324, at 301.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 302.

¹³⁷ Peter H. Hansen, 'Modern Mountains: The performative consciousness of modernity in Britain 1870-1940', in *Meaning and Modernity: Britain in the Age of Imperialism and World Wars*, M. J. Daunton and B. Rieger (eds), (Oxford, 2001), 185-202, at 187.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 186.

¹³⁹ Annan, *Leslie Stephen: The Godless Victorian*, 165-166.

¹⁴⁰ Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: industrial England and the question of class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), 315.

¹⁴¹ Paul Readman, 'The Place of the Past in English Culture c.1890-1914, *Past and Present*, clxxxvi, February 2005, 147-199, at 149-150.