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Kentish Politics and Public Opinion, 1768 - 1852
Peter L. Humphries - Keble College - D.Phil thesis
Hilary Term 1981 r?
This thesis seeks to examine the increasing importance of national issues and popular consciousness in the politics of the county of Kent during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Excise and Jew Bill crises indicate that public opinion and extra-parliamentary protest were by no means dormant under the early Hanove.rians, but without effective leadership either at Westminster or in the provinces, without a coherent ideological basis, and without the encouragement of a well-oiled propaganda machine, reaction to national events tended to be unco-ordinated and short-lived. Not until after 1768, when men like Wilkes, Wyvill and John Reeves began to organise popular agitation, when Burke, Paine and Gartwright gave shape to conservative and radical ideas, and when better transport and the development of the press facilitated the easy diffusion of news and comment, did a new complexion come across the face of English affairs.
Clearly defined issues also appeared on the politidal stage
and quickly cultivated a high level of public debate. Between 1768 and 1783 the Middlesex election dispute and the American War focused the attention of Kent's urban freemen and landed classes on calls for parliamentary and economical reform, and ensured that the county was in the van of those who joined Yorkshire in its campaign of lobbying and petitioning. After 1784 reform was eclipsed, first by the all-embracing struggle among the partisans of Pitt and Fox, and then by the dark menace of Jacobin and Napoleonic France, but in the context of public awareness and participation, the fall of the Coalition and the Regency crisis, together with the formation of Reevite committees, corresponding societies and the Volunteers, gave these turbulent

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decades a lasting significance. The return to peace in 1815 brought fresh problems for Kentish gentlemen and labourers alike and acted as a spur to renewed agitation out-of-doors. When, however, ministers, and the House of Commons proved deaf to the pleas of a distressed nation, and even went so far as to violate the much acclaimed Protestant Ascendancy, constitutional change seemed the only remaining remedy and by 1832 concerted popular enthusiasm had carried the Reform Bill over every obstacle thrown in its path.

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To Sir Lewis liamier and his disciples, inglish politics
during the middle decades of the eighteenth century could be defined and described within a very narrow compass. The party conflict of Anne's reign had, by a series of long-term social and economic trends coupled with the judicious use of patronage, been transformed into the high-summer of Walpolian and Pelhamite stab-ility, and it was within a select company of whig ministers and office-holders th;,t all aspects of foreign and domestic policy were drawn-up and debated. Yet, while the detailed examination of the actions and opinions of a handful of leading statesmen and their jostling bands of parliamentary retainers has added much to our understanding of the period, the Namierite approach is serious-ly limited by the relatively insignificant role in the governmental machine which it ascribes to the nation outside Westminster and the great country houses, and by its apparent reluctance to recog-nise the importance of public opinion. A survey of early-Hano-verian Kent based upon these assumptions has, for example, afforded very predictable results. Drawn from the papers of the first Duke of Jorset and other prominent whig politicians, the study reveals the traditional picture of behind-the-scenes negoti-ations, of widespread treating in county elections, and of a combination of ministerial, aristocratic and gentry influence in the eight borough constituencies. More recent research, and especially that undertaken on the Excise crisis of 1733 and the general election held in the following year, suggests, however, that the tranquil routine of political management could be violent-ly shattered, and that even in the heyday of whig oligarchy the provinces mi^ht speak with a loud and irresistible voice. Only poor leadership, the absence of a permanent rallying cry, and the inadequacies of the communications and propaganda network, ham-

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pered the growth and more frequent expression of popular opposition before 1768, and it is one of the principal objects of the present thesis to discover how extra-parliamentary agitation became better organised, and hence more effective, in subsequent decades.
i'he methodological approach to the analysis of a constantly developing public opinion is necessarily chronological, with each of the thesis' nine chapters addressing itself to the specific problems raised in the course of a well-defined period. Neverthe-less, it is occasionally possible to step aside from the narrative in order to discuss particular aspects of Kentish life, chapters 2 and 7* for instance, both seek to assess the state of the county's landed classes, while in Chapter 5 there is a brief attempt to examine the progress of industrialisation and urban-isation in the north-western hundreds. The Introduction contains a survey of the most important electoral interests in each of the constituencies and of the state of popular articulacy as they had evolved by 1768, and in Chapter & considerable space is devoted to the re-examination of both subjects after the passage of thirty formative years.
I'he period opened quietly enough in 1768 with the last
of the old-style, gentry-dominated, uricontested elections, which passed off without the new Members being called upon to commit themselves beyond a general declaration of independence and good intentions. To those contented squires who allowed John Frederick Sackville and Sir lirook Bridges to walk over the course, the prospect of a change in the hallowed' system of representation must have seemed idle and groundless speculation, yet such was indeed to be the case within just sixty-four years. In seeking to account for so striking an about-turn in the climate of Kentish politics, it becomes increasingly apparent that the conflagration which blazed with all-consuming ferocity after

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1830 was not kindled, upon a greuu -aid unresponsive pyre, end that it was not an infant public consciousness which s^ uearti-/ partook of the strong meat of political controversy. Rather, the mighty ana unquenchable inferno was juilt upon the still smouldering embers of countless smaller fires scattered across the recent decades, while Kenti^L^n li^d lung since been weaned on to a rich and .substantial diet of constitutional theory and polemic, x^rom the midd-.e of the eightee^.^ ot^jury ont^rds? statesmen like the elder Pitt and Charles Fox, and would-be demagogues such as Wilkes and Gartwright, began to appeal with ever mounting conviction beyond the moribund confines of Parliament to a wider and more volatile audience. As a result, Kentish freeholders and freemen acquired a degree of familiarity with the issues and practices of contemporary politics unknown since the reign of Queen Anne, and were moved on numerous occasions to participate in acts of protest on a scale and with a cohesion hardly credible in the days of Bolingbroke and Leicester Souse. The passing of the Reform Bill thus in many respects announced the coming-of-age of a provincial public opinion whose education had been painstakingly accomplished over the previous six decades.
The cultivation of this heightened awareness of national
affairs was begun by John Wilkes, and those radicals and members of the parliamentary Opposition who saw in the Middlesex election a convenient constitutional cudgel with which to belabour the Grafton ministry. Professor Rude,, and a host of biographers have greatly increased our understanding of wilkes 1 character and his appeal among the inhabitants of the metropolis, but the influence of the Jilkite message in other parts of the country is less well documented. Dr. Brewer has shown that the imprisoned champion of liberty attracted expressio^s of support from a wide area, and much is to be learned about the prevailing

state of politics in the shires by an analysis of the reception accorded to Wilkite addresses and celebrations. In addition,
it is clear that in populous boroughs like Canterbury, Kaidstone, Rochester and Dover, the ideas being canvassed by the S.S.B.R. acted as a rallying point and a spur to independent interests in their bid to cast off the shackles of government and aristo-cratic management. By 177^ <> considerable progrens had been made in these constituencies, and even among the freeholders of the county, the lead given by John Sawbridge and Lord Mahon had dispelled for ever the torpor of recent elections.
Investigation of the provincial dimension may also help
to deepen our appreciation of the impact of the American War
on English society. It is possible to discern a close link between public attitudes to the colonial struggle and the fluctuating fortunes of the domestic economy, and it is evident that in Kent a sharp depression in agricultural prices, coupled with the inflated cost of imported commodities, prompted a naturally conservative gentry to espouse the reform proposals
of Christopher Wyvill. The organisation and achievements of
the Yorkshire Association have received extensive attention,
but the response made by other counties still remains to be
fully described. The records of the Kent Committee and the correspondence of its chairman, Lord Mahon, thus go a considerable way towards filling this gap in our knowledge of the 1780-83 campaign, and illuminate the divisions and negotiations which attended the petitioning movement at both a national and a
local level.
Historians have often remarked upon the demise of reform
as a major political issue in the early phase of the younger Pitt's administration, and by examining the temper of electors in the provinces it is quickly possible to isolate the reason for this dramatic and perhaps unexpected occurrence. The

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exploits of Wyvill and the collapse of North's government in 1?82, had raised popular excitement to a new pitch of intensity and had given men an unfamiliar taste of personal involvement on the national stage. However in 1783 and 1784- this enthusi-astic participation was diverted from its original object by the desperate contest which had developed between the King and the Fox-North Goalition. A spirit of party flourished in Kent throughout the 1784- parliament, and on numerous occasions M.P.s and well-known local politicians were reminded of their conduct at the time of the East India Bill and Pitt's controversial dissolution. The Westminster Scrutiny, the Irish resolutions, the Regency crisis and the proposed repeal of the Test and Corporation Act^ all inspired conflict alOxig rigid l?oxite and Pittite lj.nes, e-^d in the epic county election ox' 1790, free-holders were still acrimoniously uaking over the injustices and misconduct of the preceding six years.
The out-break of the French Revolution brought very little diminution in Kentishmens 1 appetites for a share in active politics. After a lapse of thirty-four years, the county was contested in 1790, 1796, 1802 and 1806, and in the larger boroughs the electorate continued to argue the merits of rival domestic and foreign policies. Moreover, the decades of war and the Jacobin peril actually had the effect of acquainting new elements in the county community with contemporary issues and ideas. Loyalist associations and the Volunteers depended
on the participation of men of all social ranks if order and property were to be preserved, while in Kent's north-western hundreds and the Medway Towns, the teachings of the London Corresponding Society and Paine's Rights of Man inspired working men to establish a network of radical clubs:
The return to peace raised many new problems for Kentishmen,
but in so doing, it allowed no slackening in the ideological

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momentum built up in an age of tension and constitutional debate. Agriculturists looked to protection and changes in the system of tithes and poor relief to reduce the distress of the landed interest, and there were others for whom economy and an end to unmerited pensions and sinecures appeared the logical panacea. Petitioning on all these topics became almost commonplace, and hence when Government failed to respond, public resentment in all quarters festered ominously. The parliamentary reform lobby had been steadily gathering strength since 1809, and by 1830
its ranks v/ere swollen by the adherence of many from the traditionally conservative classes who had been angered by changes in the Corn Laws and the grant of Catholic Emancipation. Wellington's refusal to countenance any plan of reform, the example of events in France, and the destruction of property suffered in the protracted rioting of half-starved rural labourers, removed the last vestiges of hope that a tory ministry would institute the urgently needed remedies, and thus Kentishmen turned en masse to Grey and the Whigs.
At every stage in its development between 1768 and the
triumphant passage of the Reform Bill in 1832, English politics had an important provincial dimension. Politicians at Westminster could not and did not act in isolation. An increasingly prosper-ous and sophisticated nation demanded an ever larger voice in decision-making, and as public opinion became better organised
it assumed a status which ministers ignored at their peril. Consequently, the present study of the county of Kent is an attempt both to trace the evolution of a diverse community at
a critical moment in its history, and to broaden our understanding of those extra-parliamentary forces which helped determine the course of national politics.

Abbreviations
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Abbreviations
A.O.

B.I.H.R.

j Jour.
D.N.B.

Econ. Hist. Rev,
Enc. Hist. Rev.
Hasted.

Hist. Jour.
H

i~ "« . i'i. <>«

Lords Jour.
Namier and Brooke

Parl. Deb.
Parl. Hist.

P.R.O.

Sedr-;v/ick,

Archaeologia Qantiana; being the Transactions of the Kent Archaeological Society
Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research
Journals of the House of Commons
Dictionary of National biography
Economic History Review
English Historical Review
E. Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent, ed. A. Everitt 12 vols. (Wakefield, 1972)
Historical Journal
Historical liariuscripts Commission
Journal of the .-House of Lords
Sir L. B. Namier and J. Brooke, fl'he History of Parliament: the ..House of Commons, 1754--179"03 vols (London, 1964)
mT. C. Hansard, Parliamentary Debates
W Cobbett, The Parliamentary History of Zngland from the Earliest Period to the
Year 1803
Public Record Office
R. oedgwick, The History of Parliament;
the House of Commons, 1715-1754- 2 vols.
(London, 1970)
T.R.H.S. Transactions of the Royal Historical Society

Introduction
The influence of public opinion is a factor now only ignored
by historians of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries at their peril. Detailed research has revealed a 'rage of party' in the age of Anne, much ink has been spilled in analysing the extra-parliamentary movements of the reigns of George III and
his sons, while in recent years it has become clear that even the growth of political stability was not accompanied by a total silencing of popular protest. The result has been a shift of emphasis away from the charmed circle of Westminster and the great country houses, and towards the study of ideology and attitudes in the provinces.
The county of Kent emerges from Edward Hasted's late-eight-
s\

eenth-century History and Topographical Survey as a socially, economically, and geographically diverse community apparently quite unsuited to the development of a coherent political aware-ness. Its 1,248,000 acres encompassed the upland areas of the Weald and the North Downs, the fertile Stour and Medway valleys, the populous environs of London and the Hedway Towns, and the flat expanses of- Romney Harsh and the Isles of Sheppey and Thanet. Agriculture was naturally the principal source of wealth and employment, with hops, fruit, grain and livestock being produced for the metropolitan market, but there remained the last vestiges of the Medieval iron and textile industries, as well as brewing, fishing and the whole range of urban, rural, and maritime crafts, Most important of all, Hasted's gentry, while anxious to preserve their political dominance as a check against Commonwealth-style excesses, seem more preoccupied with genealogies, ancient property rights and rustic pleasures, than with the day-to-day policies

iii. Hasted, The History and Topographical Survey of the County
of Kent, ed. A. Everitt (Wakefield, 1972).

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of Jalpole and the Pelhams. Kentish politics under the early Hanoverians certainly did not escape the encroachment of oligarchy yet even a brief survey of the nine constituencies in the period before 1768 indicates the existence of an underlying and potenti-ally explosive consciousness upon which Wilkes and Wyvill were
s\ later able to build.
Government influence was particularly strong in the Cinque
Ports, four of whose number fell within Kent's borders. Dover, Sandwich, Hythe and New Romney, like their Sussex brethren, had risen to prominence on account of their proximity to the nation's continental enemies, and the Norman and Plantagenet kings' desire for security and allies. Exemption from taxation and trading privileges were a small price to pay for men, ships and safe
2 harbours in time of war or civil commotion. After the thirteenth
century, however, the Crown's reliance on the Kentish fleet was rapidly diminished, while the operation of natural forces gradu-ally deprived the Cinque Ports of their commerce and vitality. Romney's precious outlet to the sea was destroyed in 1281 when
a tremendous storm altered the course of the Rother, long-shore currents choked the harbour at Hythe with sand and shingle ,
while the sinking of a papal ship in the entrance of Sandwich's haven probably only hastened the accumulation of silt from the

4. Stour. Desperate attempts were being made well into the nine-
teenth century to check or to circumvent these economic disasters ,

1 For a fuller discussion of early-Hanoverian Kent, see A. N, Newman, 'Elections in Kent and its Parliamentary Represen-
tation, 1715-1754' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil, thesis 1957).
2 For the boroughs in the late Middle Ages, see K. i-i. E_ Murray, The Constitutional History of the Cinque Ports (Manchester,
1935.}* passim.
3 Hasted; viii. 234.
4 Hasted, vii. 159-
5 D. Gardiner, Historic Haven; The Story of Sandwich (Derby, 1954), pp. 195-211.

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but only at Dover was lasting prosperity secured. Hence there existed by the eighteenth century a group of decayed boroughs, peopled by ghosts and haunted by half-forgotten traditions, whose role in national life had long since departed. Only the increased importance of Parliament offered a temporary means of salvation, since the seats which the Ginque Ports possessed had become valuable assets for which would-be patrons and ministers were prepared to bid high.
Within the Cinque Ports, three separate interests had
either to be satisfied or overwhelmed by anyone wishing to exert a dominant influence - the corporation, the general body of freemen end the neighbouring gentry. Control of the local administrative and political functions of the corporations was an essential prerequisite for the establishment of oligarchy. What the Mayors and Jurats demanded in exchange for these powers were such rewards as places, civic honours, and the possibility of advancement in the king's service. Forts, Admiralty instal-lations, victualling yards, hospitals, and the customs-houses furnished Government with a wide range of appetising sinecures and financial allurements, while Sir Edward Bering bolstered-: his position at New Romney by renting out land at below market rates. The Derings were able to enjoy seventy years unchal-lenged supremacy at Romney because they held out to families like the Tookeys the best prospect of cutting a great figure 2
in local affairs , and the same might be said of Sir George Oxenden at Sandwich and the Sackvilles at Hythe. A close

1 J. B. Jones, Annals of Dover including Histories of the Castle, Port, Passage, Religion, the Corporation, Mayors gT"their Times, Corporation, Officers, Representation iE~ Parliament, and Social History(Dover, 1916) _pp. 109-125.
2 For an account of the establishment of the jjerin^ interest at New Romney, see Namier and Brooke, i. 4-4-8-52.

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acquaintance with a notable patron might be beneficial in forwarding private acts of parliament, such as those for res-toring Sandwich's haven, and as a courtier and minister, the long-serving Lord Warden, the Duke of Dorset, could perhaps win favours in Cabinet and Closet. Finally, young men of Dover had before them the example of Philip Yorke who had risen to the

1 dignity of Lord Chancellor , and, on a slightly humbler note,
of John Matson, who progressed from Town Clerk of Sandwich to
p Chief Justice of the Bahamas.
With the corporations rendered docile, the way was open for
the choice of parliamentary candidates and the regulation of electorates. Early-Hanoverian England witnessed a general decline in the numbers of voters, and, in constituencies like the Cinque Ports at least, a reduction in political activity among those
who remained. An increase in the cost of freedom at Sandwich from £5 to £20 between 1714 and 177$ helped to preserve the electorate at about 500, but at New Romney it fell from 50 to between 13 and 28, and, most dramatically, slumped at Dover from 350 to a mere 60 after the disfranchisement of the non-

5 residents. Compared to the stagnant and moribund Cinque Port
economies, government agancies offered employment and security

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to the freemen, and in return only required support at the poll-tables. So long as numbers remained manageable, all who so desired could be satisfactorily accommodated. However, as Dover and Sandwich were to demonstrate, as soon as populations began to grow and industries to diversify, old monopolies were sorely tested.

1 P. C. Yorke, The Life and correspondence of Philip Yorke Earl of Hardwicke, Lord High^Chancellor of Great Britain (Cambridge, 1913), i- chaps-ii-v.
2 C. Matson, 'Town Clerk of Sandwich, 1768-1785', A.J., Ixxiv. (1961), 7^-80. ~ ~
3 For figures see W. A. Speck, Tory and Whi^: The Strurrrele in the Constituencies, 1701-1715 (London, 1970), App. ^
p. 131; and Gedgwick, i. 365-9-

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The principal threat to Government in the early eighteenth century was posed by those local gentlemen who could easily become rival founts of patronage or leaders of discontented minorities. The Duke of Dorset was quick to deal with the tory interest of the Botelers and Bouveries at Hythe, and at Dover places were liberally used to win over the Minets, Papillons and Sectors. Always staunch <j'higs, Thomas Papillon and his sons Philip and David each held offices under Government, and sat as representatives of the borough in Parliament. Less conformable were the Oxendens of Deane Park who held one seat at Sandwich from 1715 to 1754. While a follower of Walpole, Sir George Oxenden merged his very substantial influence with that of Administration, but once in opposition after 1737 he showed his strength by capturing both seats in 1741. Thereafter, however, Oxenden stocks began to fall, and to all intents and purposes Admiralty controlled dealings from 1754 until 1790. A measure of Government's success in this vital third area of Ginque Port politics was that only at New Romney did the gentry maintain their pre-eminence. The Furneses, Fullers, Papillons and Austens regularly entered the lists, and as in 1734 wielded every

1 financial and legal weapon available. Finally it was the Derings rather than the Treasury that made Romney a pocket borough, although fortunately Sir Edward was not unwilling to place his voters at the disposal of the King's ministers. Only in the last decades of the century did gentry groups re-emerge
at Hythe and Sandwich in the cause of independence.
As Lord Warden, the Duke of Dorset was the man most closely involved in managing these many aspects of the government interest

1 Sedgwick, i. 367-8; and F. W. Jessuio, 'A New Romney
Mayoral Dispute', A.C., Ixii. (1950), 1-10.

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Sandwich and New Romney had always stoutly resisted the Garden's claims, while in 1689 his constitutional powers were strictly defined. Under George I and George II, Dover ^nd Hythe were,
1
as Lord Egmont noted in about 1751? 'In "the Government 1 , but by the late 1760s questions were increasingly being asked about the extent of the Warden's personal and ministerial authority. At Hythe, Dorset had augmented local patronage, by the use of his own family and friends as candidates, and seems to ht-.ve been held in high esteem. Neither Lord George Sackville nor subsequent Wardens could achieve the same fruitful blend. Similarly at Dover, Dorset brought together all the resources of Walmer Castle and the other government departments to win some resounding victories, as in--173^. However as Lord North was to discover in 1774 and 1784, these were not lasting insurances against defeat, especially when placed in mutual opposition.
At the accession of George III, Government appeared well established at Rochester and Queenborough which Lord Egmont

2 described as 'In the Admiralty 1. A settlement had existed at
Queenborough on the Isle of Sheppey since Edward Ill's reign, but had not been developed in succeeding centuries. By Defoe's day there remained merely 'a miserable, dirty, decayed, poor,

3 pitiful fishing town 1 $ for in the absence of a deep-water
harbour, Queenborough was better suited to oysters than to men-of-war. The poverty which Defoe observed and an electorate of sixty to eighty, made the borough a prime target for ministerial influence, and as early as Anne's reign the Boards of Admiralty

4 and Ordnance figured strongly in elections. However, as

1 A. N. Newman (ed.), Leicester House Politics, 1730-60, From the Papers of John, Second Viscount Egmont Camden Society
4th Ser. vii. (1968), 162.
2 Ibid., 142.
3 D. Defoe, A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain, ed. P. Rogers ^London, 1971,'» P- 128.
4- R. ,/alcctt, English ioj.ii;ics in the Early ^ip:hteenth Century (Oxford, 1956) p.10.

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Oldfield later noted, it was not until after 1727 that intruders "i

were entirely excluded. The defeats of oir Jeremy Sambrooke in the by-elections of 1728 and 1729 was followed by a decision of the Commons that the creation of new freemen should be reserved

2 to the Mayor and Jurats alone. Thereafter, Capt. Richard Evans
5 managed the interest with the help of subsidies and sinecures.
A French visitor to Rochester in 1697 was no more impressed
with the scene than Defoe had been with the neighbouring constitu-

Zj. ency. He wrote of 'a long, straggling City, dirty and ill-built $
yet as a fellow countryman recorded with some admiration in 1725? the adjoining dockyards at Chatham had the capacity to fit out 'the greatest Fleet that ever any other power was able to keep 1. » The docks, indeed, hold the key to Rochester politics, since
they employed many of the 600 voters who, as Dr. Speck recalls, returned Members friendly to Government at every election in Anne's reign. Hasted has left us with a detailed picture of the constantly expanding wharfs and yards stocked with every commodity
n

required by the navy of a leading European and colonial power. ' Shipwrights, clerks, labourers and half-pay officers thronged
the city, and together with many tradesmen and contractors were kept under the constant eye of the resident Admiralty officials. One M..P. was traditionally an admiral, and for the first half of the eighteenth century at least, men like Ogle, Haddock and Hardy

1 T. H. B. Oldfield, An Entire and Complete^History, Political and Personal, of the Boroughs of Great Britain(London 1792), ii. 173-
2 Sedgwick, i. 267-8.
3 Sedgwick, ii. 18-19; Oldfield, History of the Boroughs, ii. 177-8; and E. and A. G. Porritt, The Unreformed House of Commons: parliamentary representation before 1832 (Cambridge

4-

1903-40,
;/. Brenchley

i- 108 . "
Rye, 'Visits to Rochester and Chatham made by
Royal, Noble and Distinguished Personages, English and French, From the Year 1300 to 1788', A.G., vi. (1866), 77-
5 Ibid., 77-8.
6 W. A. Soeck, 'The General Election of 1715', Eng. Hist. Rev., xc. (1975), 513.
7 Hasted, iv. 197-9-

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were usually accompanied to Westminster by another ministerialist. . However, as at Dover, there were signs by 1768 that a populous borough was fermenting revolt.
Lord Egmont's assessment of Maidstone was that there existed
'a perplexed interest' centred upon the noble families of Aylesford

/i Romney, Fairfax and Darnley. All four aristocratic lines repre-
sented the borough under the early Hanoverians, but it was clear from the outset that a dominant position would only be achieved through an alliance with one of the contending parties among the urban freemen. The strongest of the peers were the Finch, Earls of Aylesford with their prestigious Hanoverian-Tory connections. A long-matured association with Kent and its county town was cemented by the first Earl in his marriage to the daughter of a local-born merchant, Sir John Banks, so that between 172^ and 174-0 one of Maidstone' s seats was constantly filled by a Finch. As invariable opponente of the Whig ministry, the owners of the Friars naturally gravitated towards the tory corporation, and with its support cornered both seats amid the anti-Walpole feeling
of 17^-1.

What prevented Maidstone from following many another eight-
eenth century borough along the path of oligarchy, was the existence of a sizeable popular interest among the tradesmen and dissenters of the town. Situated in the centre of a rich agri-cultural region, Maidstone derived much wealth from brewing and paper-milling, and carried on a flourishing commerce down the Medway to Rochester and the Thames. With prosperity came a desire to participate in borough politics, and to crown a lifetime of labour with civic honours. Such elements crystallised behind William Horsemonden Jurner in his eventually triumphant campaign

1 Newman (ed.), Leicester House Politics, 142.

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to obtain a new charter which favoured the Common Council and
the general'body of freemen. This done, Heneage Finch found himself at the bottom of the poll in 174? behind Robert Fairfax and the heroic Turner. By 1761 the picture had at last attained a sort of balance, although recent changes at Court conspired

1 to confuse the allegiances of the Duke of Newcastle. The Finches

now stood on the side of Bute and Administration, and benefited from whatever influence might be exerted on out-voters in the Medway docks. Rose Fuller drew his votes from the independent Whig interest, to which in the immediate future Lord Romney was to attach the energies of the Hote and its gentry adherents.
Hot until the crisis of the American War was this dichotomy seriously challenged.
The largest of the Kentish boroughs was Canterbury. Slum-bering beneath the towering cathedral, Defoe found the city rather a museum of England's antiquity than a workshop of her

2 industry. Without a navigable passage to the sea, and with a
silk manufacture in general decline, the economy of early-eighteenth-century Canterbury depended heavily upon agriculture, and especially on the six thousand ucres of nearby hop gardens. The electorate of about 1,000 was thus composed primarily of farmers and tradesmen of all descriptions.
Oldfield's assessment of Canterbury politics in 1792 may
equally be applied to an earlier generation. 'This city, 1 he writes, 'is entirely independent in its election of members of parliament, and is neither under the influence or control of

3 any patron or leading man. 1 ^ Some small interests did of course
exist. The corporation could always ni^ke its presence felt through the creation of freemen, but never assumed the importance

1 Sir jj. B. Gamier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III (sec. edn. London, 1957), pp. 113-18.
2 Defoe, Tour, pp. 133-5-
3 Oldfield, History of the Boroughs, ii.

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of its counterparts at Kaidstone and in the Cinque Ports. 1'he Hanoverian archbishops were little knov/n in their see, and whatever assistance they might render the Court party was more than off-set by the tory sympathies of the close. 'The city boasted a long tradition of hospitality to persecuted religious minorities, and had thereby attracted a large and diverse dis-senting community. After 1768 nonconformity marched in the van of reforming movements, and in 1761 was no doubt active in resisting the attempts of Dorset, Newcastle and Sondes to foist /\

a 'stranger' upon the borough. All these groups, however, pale into insignificance beside the dominance exercised by the local gentry. The families of Hardres, Head, Hales, lilies, knight Best, Oxenden and Robinson, though differing in allegiance, were the natural leaders of Canterbury's politics as of its social life, and within their manor-house oligarchy the representation was Jealously guarded.
In August 1767 !uord Sondes wrote to Newcastle:
. . . the weight of Government, which is more considerable in this county, than any other, having so many churches, docks, hospitals,
and custom houses almost in every town from Greenwich to Dover, and Ibelieve no instance
of any body losing the election, that stood
upon the Government interest except in 1734-
which was owing to the Excise.
But how extensive really was ministerial influence in Kent? The north-western hundreds of Bromley and Blackheath and Beckenham with their parishes of Deptford, "Joolwich, Lee, Bltham and Greenwich contained numerous fashionable residential areas increasingly bein~ preferred by courtiers and merchant contrac-tors. Custom houses operated at Dover, itochester, Faversham

1 Namier, Structure of Politics, pp. 99-102.
2 i.amier, Structure of Politics, p. 67: ^ord Sondes to Newcastle, 30 Aug. 1767-

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1 and Sandwich , and together with the docks and military depots
of the Cinque Ports and along the nedway and Thames, provided

p employment for many freeholders. The Post Office was a useful
means of collecting intelligence and distributing government

5 propaganda. Hence, when a tory challenge was feared at the
1760 county by-election, Newcastle told Lord Bessborough to 'give the usual directions, that the several post-masters in
the county of Kent may know that they are to support Sir Wyndham

4. Knatchbull's interest. 1 Finally there was the established
Church v/ith its 408 parishes and dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester. The electoral power of the Archbishop had long since evaporated and in no way resembled that of his brother prelate of Durham , while the Bishop of Rochester's promise of aid to Watson and Fairfax in 1754 was probably given in hope rather than expectation of great success. Parish livings and curacies were frequently in lay hands, and in such circumstances incum-bants tended to share the tory prejudices of their gentry patrons At one election held under Anne, for example, Defoe claimed that

7 of 318 Kentish parsons, 2^0 gave tory plumpers , and the 'Church
in Danger' long remained a popular refrain.
Though not overwhelming, these resources might be put to

1 E. B, Hoon, The Organisation of the English Customs System 1696-1786 (new edn., Newton Abbot, 1968), p._169-
2 J. M. Preston, Industrial Medway: An Historical Survey (Rochester, 1977), pp. 15-28.
3 K. Ellis, The Post. Office in the Eighteenth Century; A Study in Administrative History (London, 1958)* PP» 47-9
and chap. 6.
4 Namier, Structure of Politics, p. 67 n: Newcastle to Lord Bessborough, May 1760.
5 Compare E. Hughes, North-country Life in the Eighteenth Cen-tury: The North-Ea^FT7QQ-1750 (Oxford, 1952), p. 261.
6 Sackville MSB. U269/C149/11:Thomas Courteis to Sackville Bale,-26 Oct. 1753-
7 Speck, Tory and Whig, p.24.

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good account by a capable manager. Kent, however, was not a county of vast estates and bands of loyal retainers and tenants
'i
around which to fashion a decisive interest. On the eve of
the Givil Wars the Earl of Thanet was the sole peer of real
2
stature , and in the early eighteenth century the Earls of Leicester, Romney, Rockingham and Westmorland all failed to achieve lasting influence. Perhaps the only aristocrat of the period to fulfil, even in part, the required managerial function was Lionel

* Granfield Sackville, first Duke of Dorset. Knole near SevenoaJks
was scarcely a Blenheim, a Woburn or a Chatsworth, but a prolonged tenure of household and efficient offices, together with the
pOLuS cf Lord Lieutenant of Keno caid Lor'3. Warden of the Ginque
ij orts, gave Dorset a unique prominence in local affairs. He could interest himself in the careers of talented young men like Geoffrey Amherst and Sir Wyndham Knatchbull, he could make minor appointments and settle parochial disputes, and, as his corres-pondence on the contests of 1734- and 1754 amply illustrates, his acquaintance with Sir Thomas Hales, William Glanville, Sir Charles Farnaby and William James of Ightham kept him and his colleagues

LL informed about the progress of the rival candidates.
The effectiveness of these powers must now be tested. Recent work on the Kent elections of 1713 and 1715 has suggested that Government might indeed determine the outcome of a poll. It appears that the great majority of those freeholders who switched their votes from Tory to Whig in 1715 came from Deptford, Gilling-ham, Chatham, Woolwich, Gravesend and Greenwich, and that similar shifts were only recorded at Dover, Deal, Hythe, Folkestone,

1 See infra, pp. 199-201.
2 A. Everitt, The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion 1640-60 (Leicester, 1973;, P- 35-
3 On Dorset see D.N.B., 1. 92-4.
4 Letters in Sackville liSS. U269/C148 and /C14-9-
5 N. Landau, 'Independence, Deference and Voter Participation: The Behaviour of the Electorate in Early-eighteenth-century Kent', Hist. Jour., xxii. (1979), 561-83-

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Rochester and Queenborough where the ministerial writ ran no

1 less easily. Difficulties begin to arise, hov/ever, when this
evidence is compared with the comprehensive defeat suffered by the official Whigs in 1734, and the subsequent twenty-year tory monopoly of Kent's representation. It may of course be argued that the Excise election was a freak; that Lord Catherlough 1 s defection to Opposition fatally weakened the Whigs even before the dissolution; that the absence of the Earl of 1-iiddlesex alienated many electors; and that the resulting rift between
the Sackvilles and Sir George Oxenden prevented a Whig counter-attack in the next decades. These are all true, but in them-selves they do not constitute a complete explanation of Walpole's celebrated reverse. Clearly other factors took a share in shaping the county's response.
In fact, it was the gentry and substantial yeoman freeholders
who held the balance at election time, and resisted stoutly the allurements of Government, and patrons on the model of Sussex's Duke of Newcastle and Hampshire's Duke of Bolton. Hence, while recognising that in Kent, 'The duke of Dorset possesses the
first individual interest', Oldfield was quick to acknowledge that 'the nobility and gentry are too numerous to suffer it to

2 gain an ascendancy'. These were the well-to-do classes whom
Defoe encountered in such abundance in the environs of luaidstone

5 and Canterbury , and whose houses so constantly diverted four
Cambridgeshire travellers on the fifteen mile journey from

4. Eonbridge to Kent's county town. As justices of the peace and

1 Ibid., 565-6.
2 Oldfield, History of the Boroughs, ii. 144.
3 Defoe, Tour, pp. 13^ and 135-
4 F. Hull~Ted.), 'A Tour through Kent in 1735', in M. Roake and J. Whyman (eds.;, Essays in Kentish ^History (London, 1973;, PP. 177-8.

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Land Tax commissioners, from pulpits and the hustings, and at hunt balls and the Canterbury races, they permeated every aspect of Kentish life and offered a lead which was eagerly followed. No less independent were the sturdy 'yeomen of Kent 1 whose pride and fair-minded determination was immortalised in literature from Chaucer to Sir Walter Scott. Defoe singled out the so-called 'grey coats' of the Weald, since they 'are so considerable, that who ever they vote for is always sure to carry it, and therefore the gentlemen are very careful to preserve their interest among them. |1
In order to understand the preponderance of these groups,
it is necessary to begin by examining the size of the electorate and the character of those who filled its ranks. Norma Landau has estimated that 7»990 freeholders voted in either or both the county polls of 1713 and 17152, and by 1832 the elective body was probably well in excess of 10,000. Thus on even the most conservative calculation, the Kentish total was more than double the 4-,000 which Sir Lewis Namier advanced as the national average

3 in 1760. Likewise, Kent's electorate easily out-stripped those of comparably sized counties in southern England. When set against Kent's 1,250,000 acres, it is found that Sussex and Devon with just over a million acres contained 4-,000 and 5?000 voters respectively, while Devon's 1,oOO,000 acres could muster no more than 3?000. Many reasons might be given for this phenomenon.
The 4-0/- freehold had been greatly devalued since the
fifteenth century; much land had been released on to the market by the Tudors; and the county's proximity to London made it a popular area for the settlement of prestige-hungry merchants.

1 Defoe, Tour, pp. 131-2.
2 Landau, 'Independence, Deference and Voter participation' , 564-3 Gamier, Structure of politics, p.65-

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A further contributory factor seems to have been that 'noble religue of Saxon institution, the gavel-law 1: by which, as Oldfield noted, lands descended to all the sons alike in equal propor-
1
tions. The multiplication of freeholds in this way was no
doubt important, although if the custom had operated unchecked since before the Conquest, its effects on the size of the elec-torate would surely have been much greater than they actually were by the eighteenth century. The discrepancy is explained, however, when it is remembered that Gavelkind was by no means

as extensively practised in Kent as Oldfield and his contemporar- 2 ' ies believed , and that in the post-medieval period its pro-visions were widely annulled or circumvented by the gentry and yeomanry.
In other ways, too, Gavelkind assisted Kent's political development. During the Saxon and Norman eras, two-thirds of the county was composed of the so-called 'socage 1 lands where division of inherited property was required, and only the remaining third was 'allodial 1 land subject to knight service and primogeniture. As a result of this prevalence, the tenure helped foster the Kentishman's legendary independence. The manorial system was always weak in Kent, copyhold never became popular, and above all, the freedom from all feudal obligations granted to persons living under Gavelkind prevented the growth
of a sense of deference to either King or baron. More signifi-cantly still, severe limitations were placed upon the accumu-lation of large estates, and their transmission intact from generation to generation. Not only does this account for Kent's
1 Oldfield, History of the Boroughs, ii.
2 Compare W. Somner, A Treatise of Gavelkind, Both Name and Thing, (London, 1726), T. Robinson, The Common !uaw of Kent, or the
Custom of Gavelkind (Ashford, 1858) and C. Elton, The Tenures
of Kent (London, 1867).
3 i'or disgavelling statutes see Hasted, i. 319-21; and for ways in which farmers by-passed the tenure R. Arnold, A Yeoman of
Kent: An Account of Richard Hayes (1725-1790) and of the Villiye of Gobham in which he Lived and farmed (London, 19^9). pn . ^0-90 .

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lack of over-mighty subjects, but also for the fact th-t, while in 1640 the county's 800 to 1,000 gentlemen ovmed 1,000 of the 1,350 manors, the great majority only possessed one or two such
1
units. Properties and farms thus tended to remain medium-sized, rather than to expand on a scale common in Bedfordshire, bussex or Northamptonshire. Furthermore, since Gavelkind could still force the dismemberment of Thomas Rider's estate at Boughton
p
honchelsea as late as 1793 , it may suggest why Kent did not experience that movement towards oligarchy in the early eighteenth
x

century along the lines observed elsewhere by Sir E. J. Habakkuk. On the contrary, even the briefest survey of Kentish land ownership in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, shows that properties were constantly being built up, divided and sold, and
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that, as B. A. Holderness has found in Lincolnshire , county society was regularly augmented by a stream of wealthy outsiders. County families, often with ancient pedigrees, like the Derings of Surrenden, the Darells of Calehill, the Tuftons, the Twysdens and the Knatchbulls, long constituted the apex of the social and political hierarchy. Beneath them, however, the world was less permanent. Kent offered an ideal residence for politicians, courtiers and officials. The Sackvilles settled at Knole under James I, and in the next century the Stanhopes came to Chevening and the Pitts to Hayes, while a place in the Elizabethan Court
of Common Plea&enabled Robert Filmer to begin his estate at
East button. Merchants eager to purchase respectability were

1 Everitt, op. cit., pp. 33 and 38.
2 P. Hull, Guide to the Kent oounty Archives Office: First Supplement", 1957-1968 (Kent County Council, 19V1J, P» 106.
3 II. J. Habakkuk, 'English Landownership, 1680-1740', Econ. Hist. Rev., 1st Ser. x. (1939-40), 2-13.
4 B. A. Holderness, 'The English .band Karket in the Eighteenth Century: the Case of Lincolnshire', ECon. Hist. Rev., 2nd Ser. xxvii. (1974), 657-76.
5 F. Hull, Guide to the Kent Archives Office (Kent County Council, 1958), p. 147.

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also frequently active in the land market. Among-these may
be mentioned Brook Bridges of Fulham, the oandwich-born contrac-tor, .Henry Furness, James Best of the Chatham brewery, and Jalpole's Suffolk friends, the Harms, who bought Linton Place
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near Iiaidstone in 1724. ;/ith their metropolitan and commercial links, the accession of such men into Kentish life represented
an on-going renewal of the body politic, and did much to keep
the older gentry mindful of its responsibilities.
Finally, we must consider the extent to which Kent's elector-
ate was aware of, and responsive to, national events. Dr. A. N. Newman has concluded from a study of the county under the early Hanoverians that, 'Despite the proximity of London there were
few local reflections of any of the issues disturbing Parliament 1;

2 and that 'Kent and ,/estminster were almost worlds and ages apart. '

However, more recent research argues otherwise. In previous cen-turies, Kentishmen had participated fully in the hurly burly of English politics. Wat Tyler, Jack Cade and Wyatt were household names, while throughout Elizabeth's reign popular discontent simmered Just beneath the surface, and occasionally erupted in

z riot and conspiracy. The Civil '-Jars and the Commonwealth had
divided families and whole communities, and the issues raised

L\. had constantly spilled over into county and borough elections.
The Restoration brought a brief lull, but conflict broke out
once more during the Exclusion Crisis between the newly styled

1 Ibid., pp. 177, 163, 137- Of. Everitt, op. cit., p. 37.
2 Newman, 'Elections in Kent and its Parliamentary Representation, 1715-1754', p. viii.
3 W. E. Flaherty, 'The Great Rebellion in Kent of 1381 illus-trated from the Public Records', A.G., iii. (1860), 65-96;
W. Durrant Cooper, 'John Cade's Followers in Kent', A.G., vii. (1868), 233-71; and P. Clark, 'Popular Protest and Disturbance
in Kent, 1558-1640', Econ. Hist. Rev., 2nd Ser. xxix. (1976) 365-81.

4 For example, l-i. V. Jones, 'Election Issues and the Borough Electorates in l-dd-Seventeenth-Century Kent', A.G. , Ixxxv.
(197D, 19-27-

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./nigs and Tories, with Kent being contested twice in 1679 before
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the former party triumphed in 1681. Reflecting on the political strife of Anne's reign, Dr. V/. A. Speck has commented, '...it extended far beyond the coni'ines of Parliament. It involved not merely the classes which provided the membership of the two Houses, but comprehended the electorate and even to some extent the
2
unenfranchised.' Kent, Canterbury, Maidstone, Rochester and
even the Cinque Ports regularly resorted to the polls, so that
few electors could long have remained oblivious of the critical

3 national questions. Of those championed by the Tories, the most potent was undoubtedly the 'Church in Danger', which came to prominence in 1709-10 with the sermon and trial of that high-Anglican zealot, Dr. Henry Sacheverell. Though his progress did not lead him through Kent, the public response was still vividly

4. remembered in 1753- He inspired a wave of religious fervour
sufficient to sweep Harley and St. John into office, and to
bring their party electoral victories in 1710 and 1713- Finally, as has been seen, 1715 saw the Whigs once more at the helm; yet
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a tory rout was by no means inevitable at the dissolution. In the larger constituencies, at least, voters were probably moved as much by the 'Succession in Danger' and all that a Stuart restoration might imply for Church and Constitution, as by a desire to make a speedy peace with the new regime. After all, the pendulum had swung so often since the Revolution that few could have predicted the future with any certainty.

1 J. R. Jones, The First Whigs; The Politics of the Exclusion Crisis, 1678-1683 (new edn., Oxford, 1970), p. 163.
2 SDeck, Tory and Whig, p. 3-
3 Ibid., App. E. pp. 128 and 131-
4 Sackville MSS. U269/C148/11: Francis Austen to Sackville Bale, 30 Sept. 1733-
5 G. S. Holmes, The Trial of Doctor oacheverell (London, 1973), pp. 233-55-
6 Speck, 'The General Election of 1715', 507-12 and 518.

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That the opening decade of Whig rule, 'Bubble 1 and all,
massed off relatively untroubled, was due more to the absence
of a suitable issue upon which to focus popular hostility, than to the electorate having been secretly slipped some subtle Hanoverian opiate. By the 1730's, however, the Jacobite menace had receded enough to permit Bolingbroke's new non-party Country Opposition to take the offensive. The story of Walpole's ill-

1 starred Excise scheme has been related elsewhere , and emphasises
gust how violently the country could still react. Sir Edward Bering was unopposed at a Kent by-election early in 1733 when

p he declared his aversion to the hated measure , while Rochester
and Canterbury were among a group of towns to instruct their h.P.s against the proposals, in a campaign which has recently been described as, 'among the most massive demonstrations of

% extra-parliamentary opposition in the entire century 1. Though
generally favourable to Government, the Kentish Post carried reports of instructions from Norwich, Reading and Leicester,
and of the decision of London tobacconists to act with the com-

ZL mittee of 'Citizens, Merchants, and Traders' against Walpole.
Having survived his first ordeal in Parliament, the chief minister then watched helplessly as fellow Whigs were ejected from their seats. Canterbury removed its disobedient lumber, Sir Thomas Hales, while in the county Oxenden and the Earl of Middlesex succumbed to Dering and ^ord Vane. What is most striking about the result in Kent is the manner in which the country districts

1 E. R. Turner, 'The Excise Scheme of 1733', Eng. Hiot. Rev. ,, xlii, (1927), 34-57; ^- H. Plumb, Sir Robert Walp'ole; -He King's hinister (London, 1960), pp. 233-83; A. S. Foord,
His Majesty's Opposition:. 1714-1830 (Oxford, 1964), pp. 177-82; and P. Langford, The Excise Crisis: Society and Politics in
the Ap;e of Walpole (Oxford, 1973), passim.
2 Langford, The Excise Crisis, p. 69.
3 Ibid., App. A. and p. 4?.
4 The Kentish Post, or Canterbury News Letter, 6-10 Jan. 1732/33-

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seem to have tipped the scales on the side of Opposition. As in 1?15> Chatham, Dover, Jeptford and most other urban centres rallied to the ministerial cause; but in 1734 their influence was pushed aside by a combination of gentlemen and freeholders who feared
a 'general Excise' and were thoroughly dissatisfied with the
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conduct of Walpole and his crew. When roused to battle, as
in 1640 and 1710, these were the troops who dictated the course of Kentish politics, and until the defeat of Sir Edward Dering in 1754 their renown deterred all challengers.
Only with the improvement of the rural economy and the
careful management of the Pelhams, was this 'country' wrath sufficiently assuaged to permit the election of ministerialists like Watson, Fairfax, Knatchbull and even a Sackville. Yet the mid-century calm was more a truce than a pax Britannica, and was frequently breached. Anti-catholic feeling and suspicion of the Bourbons, coupled with furious propaganda in the press and on the stage, compelled Walpole to declare war on Spain in

2 1739 , and it has been remarked that his colleague Newcastle 'feared unpopularity at home even more than he feared the enemy
*

abroad'. Two years later, unhappiness with war strategy em-broiled ministers in fresh troubles, and probably accounts for Oxenden's victory at Sandwich, Lord Aylesford'S t sweeping gains at i-iaidstone, and Thomas Best's defeat of the unlucky Hales at

4. Canterbury. The Great han par excellence was finally toppled
in 1742 , but for his successors there was no respite. A public

1 Langford, The Excise Crisis, p. 170.
2 ±J. L. Avery and A. H. Scouten, 'The opposition to Sir Robert Walpole, 1737-1739', Eng. List. Rev., Ixxxiii. (1968), 331-36.
3 H. ,v. V. Temperley, 'The Causes of the War of Jenkins' Ear, 1739', T.RH.S., 3rd Ser. iii. (1909), 201.
4 Foord, op. cit., pp. 201-4.
5 h. h. Goldsmith, 'Faction Detected: Ideological Consequences of Robert Walpole's Decline and Fall', History, Ixiv. (1979),
1-19-

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outcry greeted Henry Pelham's Jew Bill in 1753 and with an election

s\ impending, caution counselled its repeal. 3yng's loss of Minorca
prompted an hiatus at Court in which flurries of addresses and gold boxes first ousted the ineffective Newcastle in November 1756. and then in the new year launched Pitt upon his empire-building
2 career. Sensitive national issues also continued to inflame the
passions of the 'inferior sort 1. The metropolitan anti-Irish disturbances of 1736 and the Porteous riots which erupted in Edinburgh a year later, were followed in 1752 by widespread pro-test at changes in the calendar, and then, in 1757? by active re-sistance to the re-organisation of the militia. Finally, like so many before him, Lord Bute fell foul of the City and the London mob, and as a Scot and a favourite, no less than the originator
4. of the wider Tax, incurred the lasting hatred of the provinces.
Thus when in 1768 a Dover crowd hurled execrations in the wake of the departing evil-genius , the message was unmistakably that Kentishmen had not slumbered through" the decades of Whig oligarchy, and that when national leaders and issues again emerged the clarior would not sound in vain.

1 a. A. Cranfield, 'The London Evening Post and the Jew Bill of 1753', Hist. Jour., viii. (1965), 1 6-30;and T. W. Perry, Public Opinion, Propaganda and Politics in Eighteenth-Century

England: A Study of the Jew Bill of 1753 (Cambridge Mass.,
1962), passimT_

2 L. S. Sutherland, 'The City of London and the Devonshire-Pitt Administration, 1756-7% Proceedings of the British Academy, xlvi. (1960), 155; and P. Langford, 'William Pitt and public opinion, 1757', Eng;. Hist, aev., Ixxxviii. (1973), 5^-73-

5 See, for example, G. Rude', 'The London 'Nob 1 of the Eighteenth Century 1, Hist. Jour., ii. (1959), 1-18.

4- J. Brewer, 'The Misfortunes of .Lord Bute: A Case Study in Eighteenth-Century Political Argument and Public Opinion', Hist. Jour., xvi. (1973), 5-10, 11-18, 19-32.

5 Ibid., 6.

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Chapter One
John Wilkes and Popular Movements in the Kentish
Constituencies, 1768 - 1774-In 1768, Kentish as weil as national politics stood upon
the threshold of a transition, which, after sixty-four years, was to culminate in the passing of the Great Reform Bill, i'o contemporaries, the prospect of immediate change must h&ve seemed remote indeed, for, while public opinion and extra-parliamentary agitation had unmistakably revealed their potentialities long before the accession of George III, the tranquillity of the election presided over by the Duke of Grafton bore witness to
the judicious management employed by the Pelhams and their suc-cessors since the fall of Walpole in 174-2. No major issues existed to arouse the passions and prejudices of the electorate, and Opposition groups lacked both the resources and the inclin-ation to mount a countrywide appeal. In short, as John Brooke has rightly observed, '...elections had little to do with politics, and almost nothing with party 1. 1 Yet, if the path to reform appeared uncertain, men were not wanting to point the way. Fore-most among these was John Wilkes, and it is with the response which he and his Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights elicited, fchat this opening chapter will be concerned.
Part of the explanation for the success enjoyed by the
Wilkites was their ability to fill the vacuum created by the late 1760's as a result of a crisis of political ideas and leadership. Throughout the early Hanoverian period it had proved impossible
to harness for day-to-day purposes those popular forces before whose roar Ualpole, Pelham and Newcastle had been compelled to
bow the knee. Pulteney, Garteret and Bolingbroke might agree a marriage of convenience, but the union inspired scant confidence either within or outside the world of Westminster, and an acri-

1 J. Brooke, The Chatham Administration, 1766-1768 (London, 1956;«' p. 338.

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monious separation always seemed likely. Too often the Country Party was divided on policy, and at the critical moment its principal adherents showed themselves more interested in the spoils of office than the nation's wellbeing. Hence no concerted platform could ever be advanced at election-time to rally
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provincial support along 1734- lines. As the county of Algernon Sidney, Kent boasted a distinguished 'commonwealth' tradition, which was continued in 174-7 and 1751 when Sir Francis Dashwood and Philip, second Earl Stanhope publicly associated themselves with the campaign to restore the Constitution to its 1689

2 splendour. The place bills, shorter parliaments and militia

schemes of the 'real' or 'true' Whigs were undoubtedly attractive to an independent-minded gentry whose every sinew mistrusted the 'Cabals of designing Ministers 1; yet their chief advocates were never practical politicians, and even in their heyday only tentative efforts wer° made to cultivate a wide foj-lowino;.
As to the tory interest which had monopolised the Kent county representation in the twenty years after the Excise crisis, a writer in the Kentish Gazette in 177^- described it as 'a race
of beings who have not existed for many years, among the Protes-35

tant people of this kingdom'. In 1698 Sir Thomas Twisden had been prepared to cross the Channel to salute the exiled Stuart, and a Jacobite party probably lingered on to watch with sympathy the plans of Bishop Atterbury of Rochester. However the post-proscription led inevitably to the fragmentation of Robert

1 See, for example, H. T. Dickinson, Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain (London, 1977), pp. 163-92; and A. S. Foord, His Majesty's Opposition, 1714-- 1830 (Oxford, 1964), chap. iv.
2 Quoted in B. Kemp, oir Francis Dashwood: an Eighteenth-Jentury Independent (London, 1967), pp. 144--7, 159-63- On Earl Stan-
hope see A. N. ttewman, The Stanhopes of Ghevening: A Family Biography (London, 1969), chap. 4;and Kentish Gazette,
Mar. 1786.
3 iventish Gazette, 1-5 Oct. 1774.

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Harley's triumphant corps. Some, like Sir Edv/ard ioiatchbull, defected to Walpole, while the members of the so-called 'Loyal Brotherhood 1 were no less eager for a return to power. On the other hand, those, such as the Canterbury I-i.P. ..Thomas May and Sir Edward Bering, who subscribed to the Harley Board after 1727,

^ preferred to stand aloof from factious disputings. In Kent,

toryism posed an election threat in 1754- and 1760, but a shrewd

5 observer like Sir George Oxenden recognised it as a spent force.
Old alignments were shifting rapidly. George III and Lord Bute opened up offices to men of talent, irrespective of party, and
to gentlemen for whom anti-ministerial suspicion was a creed in itself, Rockingham or Chatham offered more hope of fruitful

L\. opposition than the moribund practices of the Cocoa Tree. At
Maidstone, for example, the Earl of Aylesford went over to the Court, but his fellow Tory neighbour^Lord Romney, pinned his desire for future influence .on a non-government stance.
The atmosphere of stagnation and dislocation which pervaded Kentish politics in the 1760's was heightened bj the absence of local leaders. Sir Lewis Namier has demonstrated how the first decade of George Ill's reign was transformed by the death of almost all of the men who had wielded any puwer under the old regime. The same process was at work in Kent. The Earl of Westmorland died in 1761 and was followed to the grave in 1765 by his old sparring partner the first Duke of Dorset. Neither

1 L. Colley, 'The uoyal Brotherhood and the Cocoa Tree: The London Organisation of the Tory Party, 1727-1760', Hist. Jour. xx. (1977), 77-95.
2 Ibid., App. 1B. p. 95-
3 Sir L. B. Namier, The Structure of Politics_at the Accession of George III (sec. edn., ^ondon 1957), P- 67:George Oxenden
to the Earl of Hardwicke, 9 Dec. 1760.
4- Sir -u. B. Namier, 'Country Gentlemen in parliament, 1750-64-', in Crossroads of Power; Essays on Eighteenth-Century England (London, 1962;, p. 4-3.
5 Sir j-,. B. Namier, England in the A^e of the American .evolution (sec. edn., ^ondon, 1961), p. 62.

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were their respective successors any more effective than were Bute, Rockingham or Grafton on the national stage. Dashv/ood, who as Baron Le Despencer inherited rierewoi'tii Castle from his uncle, had deserted his 'independency 1 to serve as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was thus clearly not the man to resurrect the old Pane interest. Similarly, the second and third Dukes
of Dorset were much too wayward in their tastes and habits to
be entrusted with the manipulation of government influence in the county or the Oinque Ports. The eclipse of once prominent gentry families was equally significant. The Derin^s transferred their attention to the calmer waters of Kew Romney, the Twysdens and Twisdens were under a financial cloud, and the death of
oir Wyndham Knatchbull in 1763 sav/ the iiersham baronetcy descend to a relative long resident in Ireland. At a time of acute uncertainty, the disappearance of the most prestigious names in Kentish politics since the Restoration only added to the confusion of the squirearchy.
As a result of these factors, the Kent election of 1768
was typical of the mid-eighteenth-century model so majestically depicted by Namier. No ^reat issue was at stake; the American problem had not yet fully erupted, and the reduction of the Land Tax in 1757 removed a potential source of discontent among the landed classes. Ministers were therefore content, for the lo.st
I
time, to permit the Septennial Act to take its course. The candidates nominated at the county meeting in October 1767 were Sir Brook Bridges, a sitting Member, and John Frederick 6ackville, the nephew and heir of the second Duke of Dorset. Neither man ventured beyond the safe platitudes of contemporary election
1 On the election in general see , Brooke, The Chatham Adminis-tration, pp. 337-50; J. Brooke, History of Parliament; the House of Commons, 1734-1790: Introductory Survey (Oxford, 196-1), ')Q. 97_105; ajid F. O 1 German, The Rise of l-arty in En; ;_l_and_: the Rock-inftham Jhips, 1760-1782 (London, 1975), chap. "9. On ifent see
A. N. Newman, 'Elections in Kent and its parliamentary Represen-tation, 1715-1754 1, (Oxford Univ. D.Phil, thesis 1957;, pp.
156-60.

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literature , and such opposition as did arise sprang from purely personal motives, i'he unpopularity which had dogged the knole connection since the days of the Excise, probably accounts for the stirrings against his nephew noted by ^ord George Sackville. 2 For a while Lord Romney was encouraged in his ambitions to see
a Marsham as Knight of the Shire, and only withdrew to consolidate his claims at Maidstone. 5 Later on, a plan was hatched to put
up Robert Fairfax for his old seat\ but Ramier 1 s 'Parliamentary beggar 1 was not to be tempted back.^ Nevertheless, Sackville had influential friends. He was related to the Duke of Bedford, and as well as receiving government assistance, enjoyed the support of Newcastle. No contest materialised, and the peace of the county was preserved. Not until 1790 would Penenden Heath once more ring with the clamour of warring parties, but long before that date freeholders were given the opportunity to speak

out.

The juggernaut of popular participation was given its initial impetus by John Wilkes. His case is well known and need only
be briefly repeated. Having languished in exile on the Continent and -oiled up debts, the villain of the North Briton and the
Essay on Woman returned home an outlaw in 1768 and was elected for Middlesex. Having surrendered himself to justice, Wilkes
was repeatedly expelled from the Commons, and as often sent back by his constituents, until finally an exasperated House seated in his place Henry Luttrell. The radicals seized their chance, and with the Whig factions shouting from the wings, the .dlkite drama was begun.

1 For example, the return of theziks in Kentish Post, or Canterbury News ^etter, 30 Mar. - 2 Apr. 1768.
2 HMC Stopford-Sackville, i. 124: Lord G. Sackville to
Gen. Irvin, 4 Oct. 1767.
3 Namier and Brooke, iii. 112.
4 Kentish Post, or Canterbury News Letter, 1b-19 Mar. 1768. 5 Namier, Structure of Politics,pp.409-17-
6 HMC Dartmouth, i. 332-3: Mr. Barton Smythe to Dartmouth, 27 Aug. 1767. " ' (

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. /hut precisely was the Wilkite legacy, especially as it affected provincial politics? In the first place, although none of his ideas were original, he was able to use the legal and constitutional implications of his own struggle to emphasise its necessity and to popularise it among a new audience. As has been seen, 'Country 1 remedies had never achieved a wide circulation in Kent, yet the continued strength of independent feeling despite the waning of toryism promised an earner reception in some circles at least. Wilkes benefited too, from the debate wh±oh had been carried on ^n journal3 like jhe ilonitor since the mid-1750's about the independence of M.P.s and the need to en-courage public interest in parliamentary affairs 1, anci by his advocacy of place bills, triennial or annual elections, and an extension of the franchise, ;::.?ofioed from i.iounting fe^rs of the influence of the Grown, r-iever had this latter phenomenon appec:?..d more dangerous than in the months of the Middlesex elections and the massacre of St. George's fields. As one ne^paper corres-

pondent warned: ' .Je have seen in- 1 influence exerted and the dependents of G -t hirin- armed ruffians to overturn the foundation of the constitution, the freedom of election, and to abuse, in the most outrageous manner, the peace officers and harmless freeholders peaceably gathered together to give their Q
votes for a representative. 1 'Jilkes and Liberty 1 was all things to all men, because, for better or for worse, it caught up every strand in recent political thought and .united them in a single refrain.
In .part, Wilkes began a ferment in the sluggish waters of local politics as he and his supporters were shrewd enough to

1 h. Peters, 'The Monitor on the constitution, 1753-1765: new li<;ht on the ideological origin of English radicalism'*
Ens. Hist, Rev., Ixxxvi. (1971;, 711-18. '
2 Kentish Gazette, 1-4 Feb. 1769.

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dispense their new wine in familiar old bottles, in 1774 it was observed that the attributes of a decayed system were that '...all parties and especially their leaders and principals are alike'; that '...all without exception have their Price 1; and that as
a result, 'It is no matter what or whom you oppose or vote for 1, since the question was only really 'what knave or corrupter of the constitution you would wish to see your Representative 1. Although of course a gross exaggeration, there was sufficient substance in the remark to cause alarm. Without issues or parties to guide them, how could electors make a wise decision? One answer employed by the Wilkites was to revive the rhetoric of a former age. John Sawbridge, for instance, declared at a Kent county meeting in August 1774 that 'there are two sets of political prin-ciples in this country - Jhiggism and Toryism 1; and proceeded to define the former as 'a love of civil and religious liberty, and an attachment to equal and legal government'; and the latter as, 'intolerance with respect to religion, passive obedience and non-resistance with respect to civil government, principles the
p
most favourable to despotism' . This was the language of Locke and Sacheverell, but it served its purpose in distinguishing between the hosts of candidates. In addition, the constant harp-ing on the theme of 1689 and its virtues was crucial if present-day abuses were to be highlighted. The strategy was not slow to bear fruit, and in 1774- a perplexed correspondent in the Kentish Gazette was anxious that aspiring politicians should more closely define their commitment to 'revolution principles'.
More novel was the Wilkites' introduction of election pledges.
The need for some form of check on the conduct of u.P.s was

1 Canterbury Journal, 1-8 Nov. 1774.
2 Canterbury Journal, 16-23 Aug. 1774.
3 Kentish Gazette, 1-5 Oct. 1774.
4 I. R. Christie, 'The Wilkites and the General Election of 1774', in Myth and Reality in Late-^i^hteenth Jentury Politics and Other Papers (London, 1970)'. TTP. 296-7.

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discussed at length in the press.

It is without dispute a very great share of power, that we the freeholders of a county, and others the freemen of boroughs of this kingdom, delegate to those whom we depute to represent us in the great council of the nation. At the time we elect our members to assist in their own, and our name
in the management of the great and important affairs of the nation, we make a kind of deposit in their hands of all our most precious rights and privi-leges , and in a great measure it is in their power for a certain time to betray or defend the invalu-able pledges with which we have entrusted them.
Our power, or at least the semblance of power, we reserve in ourselves - the power of instructing
our deputies from time to time, in what manner
according to our apprehension, they may most advan-
tageously consult the true interests and good of
their country.

As will be seen later, the subject of pledges caused great contro-

versy in 177^-5 but in the longer term it was to give voters a

far wider scope for enquiry and active participation.

In the past, organised opposition and movements for reform

had been hampered by poor leadership and inadequate means of

propaganda, - in both these areas the Wilkites made a positive

contribution. In place of the deceased old-guard, the years

1768 to 1774 saw the emergence of John Galcraft, William Gordon,

John Sawbridge, John Srevanion and Lord Mahon as central figures

in county and borough affairs. Of these, undoubtedly the most

influential was Charles, Viscount Kahon, afterwards third Earl

2 Stanhope. Born into the Pitt-Stanhope-Grenville connection,

he spent much of his youth in Geneva, where, as well as absorbing

many of the moral and egalitarian tenets of the city of Oalvin

and Rousseau, he met and talked with John wilkes, and then

returned to England to contest Westminster as his avowed disciple

in 1774. Though never a Kentish M.P., Mahon was at the heart

of the county's politics for the next decade, and never lost the

1 Kentish Gazette, 15-18 Feb. 1769-
2 On Lord Mahon see Newman, otanhopes of Ghevening, chaps. 5 :.nd 6; G. Stanhope and or. P. Gooch, The Life of Charles, Third
Earl otanhope (London, 1914;; and D.N.B., liv. 1-;}.

burning zeal of his V/ilkite apprenticeship.
Professor Thomas has shown how the freedom of the press,
and especially its ability to report the proceedings of Parliament, developed hand-in-glove with the i-iiddlesex election dispute and

1 its aftermath. Wilkes 1 carefully-laid plot which saw Oliver
and Grosby incarcerated in the Tower in 1771, secured to the public a new insight into the workings of government. The newly founded Kentish Gazette and Kentish Jeekly Post/Canter bury Journal quickly responded to the opportunities thereby opened up, and together
2
with Court and metropolitan news, printed accounts of debates. That their readers were impressed with a re-envigorated awareness of their political responsibilities is revealed in the size and high quality of the correspondence columns, and throughout the next half century, the press, more than any other influence, was to stimulate the growth of public opinion.
finally, if Wilkes helped engineer a deepening consciousness
of national and local politics, he was also remarkable as the object of an unparalleled nationwide appeal, which sought to unite hitherto unconnected communities in a campaign of addresses on a single issue of current concern. Until recently, historians have too often neglected this aspect of the ,/ilkite programme, and
only with the publication of Dr. Brewer's enlightening study has

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the omission been partially rectified. Dangers of over-inter-preting the evidence there are here in plenty, yet as the remainder of this chapter will endeavour to argua, Uilkite ideas should
j^ regarded as having been vital to the political life of the

1 See, P. D. G. Thomas, 'The Beginning of Parliamentary Reporting in Newspapers, 1768-1774', ^ng. Hist. Rev., Ixxiv. ^1959),
623-$6; and P. D. G. Thomas, 'John w'ilkes and the Freedom of
the Press (1771;', B.IK.R. , xxxiii. (J9;oO), 86-98.
2 On press see infra, pp. 217-19.
3 J. Brewer, Party ideology and popular politics at the accession nf George III (Cambridge, 1:3767, PP- 171-8- 3 and mav on p. 175.

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provinces as well as to that of the metropolis and St. Stephen's Chapel.
II

The Kent by-election of February 1769 again demonstrates
the gentry's disinclination towards the heat of active politics. Sir John Shaw bluntly refused to oppose bir Charles Farnaby
as he feared 'an interruption of the peace of the County'; his
xl

fellows acquiesced, and settled the matter without further ado. However the press was already alive with the exploits of John Wilkes, and as the year progressed, counties and boroughs came under increasing pressure to address the King for relief and the speedy dissolution of the offending Parliament. As might be expected, there was considerable resistance in Kent among its leading inhabitants. Nevertheless on 27 November 1769 a meeting was requisitioned at i-iaidstone.
Writing in the Kentish Gazette, 'A Friend to Truth 1 related
how the business of the day was opened by John Calcraft, who, in proposing an address, stressed the aosolute necessity of obtaining a fresh Parliament. The eye-witness account then continued:
. . . this motion was backed and agreed by Lr. Sawbridge
and Mr. Gordon, and by a show of hands was declared
by the Chairman to be aarried in favour of the
petition, tho' it is believed by many of the. Free-
holders present that if the Chairman had permitted
a poll to have been taken, that the majority of
them would have been found to have been against it...
But this was refused and a Petition was produced
and read, and by a show of hands was declared to be
approved of.
Signatures were then collected, and on 18 April 1770 Calcraft

5 presented the address to George III. However the testimony of contemporaries makes it plain that he did not do so with the unanimous approbation of his brother electors.

1 kentisn >/eekly Post or Canterbury Journal, 30 Jan. - 6 Feb. 1769. For I-'amaby see ibid., 25-50 Jen. 1?o9-
2 Kentish Gazette, 2-5 Dec. 1?b9-
3 Annual aegister, xiii. 90.

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3?rom what quarter did the opposition spring, and on what grounds

was it sustained? Alexander ,/edderburn told Rockingham: 'The

Kent petition takes very much amongst the freeholders but not
"i

amongst the gentlemen' ; while Caicraft himself informed the

Sari of Chatham:

In spite of every desertion of gentlemen except hr.
Sawbridge, Iir. Gordon and myself, we have carried our petition with great spirit. The spirit of the free-
holders is equal to your Lordship's expectation.
There were at least 400 freeholders & they are signing
away; hitherto every gentleman has kept back. But
those who profess themselves friends to the Consti-
tution must stir to get it sign'd.

The analysis undertaken by Professor Rude tends only to confirm

the impression of a split along social lines. Not a single

knight or baronet signed the address, neither did any clergyman 5
or i'i.P., and only ten justices felt able to affix their names.

Furthermore, the appearance of 168 marks strongly suggests that

in order to justify their protest the Wilkites canvassed those

Kentishmen who, had general opinion been more favouraole, might

4 well have been passed over.

I-iany gentlemen chose to register their protest by simply

absenting themselves from i-iaidstone on 27 November. Their

motives were mixed, but it does not seem from the newspaper reports

that any attempt was made to argue a case on the basis of late

constitutional and political events. While deploring the demand

for a dissolution, Sir Thomas ^ider for one, did not feel com-

pelled to elaborate his views. Admittedly the address had been

carefully drafted, with Chatham's assistance, so as to disarm

many of its likely critics , yet the gentry's silence is another

1 G. Rude, j'ilkes ana ^iberty: A Social 3tudy of 1709-1774 (Oxford, 1962), p. 142 n.7:Alexander ..edderburn to
Rockingham, 9 Dec. 17^9-
2 Rude, w'ilkes and ^iberty, p. 132: Caicraft to Chatham, 27 li 1769-

3 Rude, Wilkes and Liberty, App. 7- P- ^11.
4- Ibid., pp. 142-3.
5 Kentish Gazette, 2-5 Dec. 1769.
6 itor address see x-'.R.C. H 0. 55-3/2 and Kentish Post and Canterbury Journal. 5 Dec. 1769. ~~~~

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illustration of the low level of debate which still existed in provincial politics, .furthermore, the squires of Kent were far more concerned to retain their long-established dominance of county affairs, than to deliberate upon the niceties of the royal prerogative and the freedom of election; and in 1769 this precious asset was under challenge from outside and within. 'Lord Romney', noted Calcraft, 'is against my petition to the King about parliament, and does not choose a fresh election at Maidstone'. w Others, like Sir John Filmer, objected 'that matters of such importance, as the Chairman opened in his speech, ought not to be determined by so inconsiderable a part of the
2 Freeholders as were then present'. 'A Freeholder' estimated
7.

the crowd at a mere 270 , Calcraft spoke of 4uO, and the Annual
4.

Register believed the motion had been passed by 700 to 7«
Whatever the exact figure, and it was clearly not large, the under-standable fear was that Kent's independence would be surrendered to the selfish interests of Chatham, Rockingham or some popular demagogue.
In addition, the Kentish gentry had no desire to unleash
the social anarchy which had beset their ancestors during the Interregnum. W. J. Shelton has shown how Kent had escaped rural disorders in the 1760's because the magistrates had acted to safeguard food supplies, and, by enforcing the display of prices had prevented attacks on middle-men suspected of profiteering. Having reaped the benefits of their paternalism, the county's ruling classes glimpsed in Wilkes the prospect of their neigh-bours and tenants imbibing the doctrines of metropolitan radicalism.

1 W. S. Taylor and J. H. Pringle (eds.), Correspondence_ of William Pitt, tiarl of Chatham (uondon, 1838-9;, iii. $63-5: Calcraft to Chatham, ^5 Nov. 1769.
2 Kentish Gazette, 2-5 Dec. 1769-
5 Kentish Gazette, 28 i<ov. - 2 Dec. 1769-
4- Annual Register, xii. 156.
5 W. J. Shelton, English Hunger and Industrial Disorders: A study of social conflict during the first decade of George Ill's reign (Toronto, 1973), P- 37-

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One reader of the Kentish Gazette was prompted early in 1763 to wonder whether all the religious persecutions of history could have 'engendered more discord, rancour ana malice^than that Enthusiasm which is often inspired by the popular cry 01 Liberty 1; and counselled: 'We ouj;ht to distinguish between these illustri-ous defenders of liberty, and the designing miscreant who prosti-tutes that sacred name ... to sow dissension in the state, who takdsall occasions of spreading sedition among the people, of alienating affection from government and of endeavouring to over-turn the constitution of his country, while he is employing all

1 the wiles of sophistry in pretending to support it.' Incidents
such as the circulation of an 'incendiary paper' near Tenterden in 1?68, which had called on the 'poor people' to assemble in
a 'mob 1 in order 'to force the farmers to sell their wheat to the

p millers or poor people at 101. a load' , thus assumed chilling
proportions when Wilkes was raising the coal-heavers and watermen of London to tumult.
But if the gentry of Kent were hostile to Wilkes almost to
a man, 2,825 of the lesser freeholders were not. 'The freeholders about Dartford grow more inclined', wrote Galcraft just before

75 the Maidstone meeting , and it was to their kind that Wilkes'
case made its appeal. Par from constituting the rabble, these were the substantial, property-owning counterparts of the hiddle-sex electors. Jilkes crystallised their fast emerging political aspirations, and was depicted as the champion of individual liberty struggling against an increasingly oppressive state. Ler-haps for the first time since Anne's reign, a charismatic national figure had presented the Englishman's birthright in an attractive

1 Kentish Gazette, 21-25 Jan. 1?69-
2 Catalogue of Home Office Papers of the ^eign of ueor^e 111 1760- T775* preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office (.London, 1878-99), i. 34-2: Shelburne to the ..jecretary-rt-war, 25 hay
1768.

3 'Taylor and Iringle (eds.;, oo. cit. , iii. 367: Galcr .ft to Chatham, 25 i^ov. 1769-

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and coherent manner, which plucked at some inherited cliord of decency and fair play, of equality before the law, and of representative government. The discussion at haidstone, in the press, and in countless taverns, shops and work-places helped broaden mens' vision of politics beyond the parish, and in addition began the demolition of mid-century inertia within the county.
The voting of an address, however limited, ushered in a new era
of direct protest, and in the decades before 1832, petitioning
was to be resorted to with ever greater regularity.
Ill

When turning to the Kentish boroughs, a similar picture of popular agitation net against a backcloth of steady resistance on the part of well-entrenched interests is discernible. At New Romney, Queenborough and Sandwich, the patronage of the Derings, the Ordnance and the Admiralty remained strong enough in the period 1768-177^- either to discourage opposition altogether, or to ensure the easy ejection of unwelcome Members like Sir Piercy Brett and Viscount Conyngham. In the larger constituencies, however, groups may be isolated among the freemen that were likely to respond enthusiastically to the radical message. Thus for Dover, -vochester, and to some extent Canterbury and i-iaidstone, the importance of ,/ilkes lay in his ability to breathe new vigour and purpose into local campaigns against ministerial and private influence.

Before going on to examine Kent's more populous boroughs,
something must be s id of Hythe, since it well illustrates the difficulties facing politicians of liberal views in an essentially rural community. Under the early Hanoverians, the borough generally followed the wishes of the Duke of Dorset, who had, as Lord George ;3ackville asserted in 1763, 'always been indulged by the jjords of the Treasury in having his recommendations accepted of, for the

- 4-0 -

few offices in that port 1. 1 The old Garden's death left his family and the new master of w'almer Castle to dispute over the true source of his long supremacy, The Sackvilles were eager
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to retain Dorset's powers of nomination , whereas to Lord Holderness, Government rather than Ijiole was the principal object of Hythe's devotion.^ Hence, while William Amherst was chosen as a compromise candidate at the 1766 by-election, it was certain that a trial of strength would take place at the next dissolution. Even before this date, the two parties had become entangled
in the confused vortex of municipal affairs. Having carried the keenly contested mayoral election of 1767, Lord George Sackville commented significantly on his opponents' tactics:
Threats, promises, and money were used in their full
extent. The contest was not fair, as I could pretend
to have neither the means of rewarding or punishing
and had nothing to set against present interest and
future expectation but^personal attachments or grati-
tude for past favour..
Government's warning that office holders would be dismissed if they voted for the opposition had temporarily alienated 'moderate people 1, but having learned his lesson, Holderness undoubtedly held most of the trump cards. No one could hope to live by loyalty alone in a borough the size of Hythe, and this applied equally to the Sackvilles and to a Wilkite. William Evelyn,
the new ministerial nominee, had quickly deserted the interest which had so often returned his father, and in an age where place
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and honours took precedence over party and ideology, Chase Price was able to report that both seats miyht be captured.

1 N. S. J'ucker (ed.j, The Jenkinson Papers, 1760-1766 ^(London, 194-9), p. 156: Lord G. Sackville to Charles Jenkinson, 14-
June 1763-

2 HMC Stopford-Sackville, i. 67-8: Dorset to Grafton, nd. 1767 3 HMC Stopford-Sackville, i. 68: Grafton to Dorset, ,~l'l Jan". 1767; and ibid. , i. 118: Lord G. Sackville to Gen. Irvin, 13 j'eb
1767-

4- EMC Stopford-packville, i. 118: Lord G. Sackville to Gen Irvin, 13 Feb. 1767-
5 Gamier and Lrooke, i. 448: Ch;,,se ijrice to Grafton, nd. 1767.

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Price believed that 'the independent votes are in opposition
to .Lord George 1; and from the correspondence which has survived, it is clear that men such as William Deedes, Sir John Lilmer and Mr. Brockman were willing to support the Lord harden in order to
XI

defeat the would-be patron. As to who should partner Evelyn in this great work, Lord Holderness told ihornas Best in January 1767: 'I thought it right to advise Col. Amherst not to think of offering his services there at the next General Election, as he would have been under the painful Dilemma of being lukewarm in support of
an Administration that favours him, or of opposing the Interest
o

of a family to which he has personal Obligations' . Sir John i'ilmer, rir. Rofey, Sir Edward Knatchbull and la?. Hatton were all spoken
of as possible replacements, but at length the choice fell upon John Sawbridge of Ulantigh near Wye, and together the pair triumphed over Sackville and Sir Charles Earnaby in 1768. However, it was not long before Holderness realised that in striving to swa£ an irritating fly, he had placed a poisonous scorpion in the very bosom of the state.
With property in Middlesex and links with the South Sea Company, Sawbridge, like his sister^Catherine Hacaulay, was inspired by Wilkes. He spoke and acted on ^ilkes 1 behalf in Parliament and
the metropolis, and as has been seen, was among the originators
of the Kentish address. lie was a prominent member of the S.S.B.L., and with Richard Oliver worked hard to establish radical ideas as
a permanent element in national policies. In 177^ he stood for
the City pledged to the full Jilkite creed, and, as we shall see, preached upon the same text at the Lent county meeting.^

G. I/. ./il!:s, The Barons of tin ^inque Ports and the Parliamentary Representation of Hythe (Folkestone, 189^;, pp. "101-2: Deedes
to Evelyn, 5 Dec. 1766; ibid., pp. 102-3: Deedes to Thomas Best, 14 Dec.' 1766; and ibid. , p. 112-4: ijord Holderness to Deedes,
28 Jan. 176?.

2 wilks, op. cit., TO. 106: Lord Holderness to Thomas Best, 17 Jan. 17577""^
3 See infra, pp. 5">-7-

- 4-2 -

Hov/ever, when he simultaneously renewed his candidature at nythe , Sawbridge discovered th^t the gentlemen of the Common Council were not disposed to entertain such doctrines, and was pushed to the foot of the poll. 1
moral of the episode was plain enough. As Oldfield
commented twenty years and two further defeats later: '...while the representation remains in its present debilitated form, such exertions, though they might succeed on .a single occasion, can

2 neither give permanency nor security to the freedom of election 1.

Like the Sackvilles, Sawbridge possessed no patuonage with which to reward faithful allies, and could hold out no prospect of advancement in local society, ^nxious to rid themselves of aristocratic influence, gentry politicians bred in the old school nevertheless continued to look to the Warden, rather than to a

^ reformer, for a lead. And even when the limitations of that ancient office were finally revealed under Lord North, it was none other than William ^velyn who built up his own interest on classic eighteenth-century principles of independence.
i'he constraints placed upon the Wilkites in a small and introspective borough were not so apparent at i-ioddstone and Canterbury, where significant numbers of urban tradesmen and dissenters increasingly rivalled the neighbouring farmers and gentlemen for municipal supremacy:. Local issues retained their pre-eminence of former decades, but there are at least si^ns that within Kent's widest electorates the 'V/ilkes and ^iberty' campaign did not pass unheeded. Possessing little industry, Canterbury's thousand-strong elective body included many agricultural-based craftsmen - millers, maltsters, blacksmiths and the like -

1 On Sawbridge see ,<amic.r and Urooke, iii. 409-10; and u.i.. j., l. 379-80.
2 !'. H. B. Oldfield, An Entire and Gom^lete_jiistQry, lolitical and Personal, of the Boroughs of Great Britain (London, T / n< !,, iii. bi?.
3 inio Stopford-Sackville, i. 135-4: Lord ^. oackvi.'.le to
. Irvin, T/ Uct. T

- 4-3 -

together with the usuc.1 mixture of coopers, carpenters, shoemakers, barbers, bakers, goldsmiths, apothecaries and cordwainers. The poll-books do however record sizeable groups of labourers and weavers, as well as numerous Surrey, Middlesex, ^ssex, Jestminster and City non-residents, and these frequently proved fertile pasture for the radical seed. A survey of aaidstone made under Elizabeth I revealed the existence of 294 houses, four lahding places on
the river, five ships and twenty-two men 'wholly occupied in the
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trade of merchandise'. Subsequently, the borough's position at the heart of the ,/eald and its ease of communication with the Hedway Towns and the Thames, had attracted a rich diversity of trades and manufactures. A potential electorate of 865 in 1768 contained men from all over Kent and the metropolis, while among the residents were numbers of those inn-keepers, paper-millers, brewers and riverside workers who were to form a zealous Jacobin cell after 1792. 2
By the late eighteenth century, Hasted could write of Maid-stone: 'the houses are now computed to be in number fifteen hundred, and the population of it is said to have increased at this time, to upwards of six thousand inhabitants, near one half of which are non-cohformists to the established church, both Presbyterians and Anabaptists, both of whom have their respective

5 meeting houses of worship in the town'. Similarly, Hasted noted in his description of Canterbury: "There are in this city and its suburbs general meeting houses for religious worship for the inhabitants,.who are of different persuasions; such as those
of the Methodists, Anabaptists, ^uakers, and Presbyterians, of all which, the followers, of the first especially, are not a few'.

1 Hasted, iv. 263-
2 oee infra, pp. 137-9 and 281-2.
3 Hasted, iv. 263-
4 Hasted, xi. 102.

Clearly the attitude of dissent was not a factor to be ignored in borough or county politics.
iiany ^uropean Protestants had fled across the Channel to
escape the persecutions of Alva and Louis .iZV, and found refuge and new prosperity in the towns of Kent and the Weald. Their influence gave an added radical twist to the domestic tumult under the eurly Stuarts and the Commonwealth, and after 1660 percolated extensively through Kent's lower and mercantile classes, as families like the Papillons, i-linets and Nouailles set an example of what might be accomplished. Worldly success and allegiance to the Whigs as the guardians of the Revolution Settle-ment, somewhat drew the fangs of nonconformity after 1715* but with the accession of George III, Hasted felt compelled to
lament that at haidstone: 'dissension in matters of religion unhappily extends to politics, and from the heat of parties, destroys much of that social intercourse and harmony which would 1 otherwise unite the inhabitants of this flourishing town'. Dissenters, and particularly those with some continental antecedence, brought to the radical cause a passionate concern for liberty. They were no strangers to political agitation for specific ends, and congregations like those of the Kentish Baptists p had a long tradition of association for mutual strengthening. Most militant of all were the Unitarians, whose identity and principles were being rapidly shaped by the progress of the evangelical revival, haidstone's Baptists split over the Trinity in the 174-0's, and secessions from Presbyterian chapels were common. Por the rump which espoused the more rational tenets, Price and Priestley, along with Blackburne, Lindsey and the Anglican converts, elaborated a revised catechism which plunged

1 Hasted, iv. 263.
2 P. Buffard, Kent and Sussex Baptist Associations (Paversham, 1963;, passim.

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them deep into the political controversies of the American and
I French wars.
Tradesmen and dissenters had spearheaded the campaign for Maidstone's reformed charter in the 1740*s and had been rewarded with the partial crumbling of Lord Aylesford's monopoly. The battle between the interests was not yet over, however, and
this probably explains why the popular party did not emerge
as a separate entity in the borough until after 1780. Nevertheless the bone-of-contention between the Friars and the hote, the Corporation and the freemen at large, was undoubtedly the freedom of election, and as such ran with the current of the times. Lord Romney scored a great victory for the independent party in 1768 when he had his son, Charles Larsham, returned top of the poll,

2 and in 1774 was instrumental in the election of Sir Horace hann.
For the Earl of Aylesford, on the other hand,.the choice of suitable candidates was no easy matter, since, as an aspiring courtier, it was not certain with which faction the future lay.
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Hence in 1768, on the recommendation of Rockingham, he put up
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Robert Gregory , and only dismissed him six years later when

4. Lord North had risen unmistakably to the top of the pile. Yet
even this rather surprising selection of a whig ex-nabob and Kentish landowner may reflect a desire to curry favour among Maidstone's merchants and gentry, and his rejection did not long precede the final collapse of aristocratic influence in the borough.
After the turmoil of the 1761 'No Scotch 1 election in Canterbury, the principal combatants' in 1768 were far more in

1 H. L. Short, in English Presbyteri^nism from Elizabethan Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism (London, 1968), pp. 219-86.
2 Romney MSS. U1300/C4/4:Sir H. Mann to Lord Romney, nd. 1784 3 rinrnier and Brooke, ii. 537: Rockingham to Newcastle, 4 i-iar. 1758.

4 Canterbury Journal, 4-11 Oct. 1774.

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keeping with a constituency where the gentry called the tune. Hi chard Mi lies was the son of a former a. P., Thomas Best had united wealth from his family's Chatham brewery with the social prestige and wide connections of his aristocratic wife, and William Lynch had links with the resident clergy over whom his father had so long presided as dean. iTone of the published addresses ventured into national affaire, so that to personal considerations must be ascribed the victory of nilles and Lynch.'1 However, a rather curious speech by Alderman .uye at the close of the poll, which concluded: 'God and our Country - King George for ever - No Trade Suppressors - No roor Oppressors - Charity 2 and all Free' ; does indicate that popular feeling had been aroused. As early as 1765, Wilkes had told Earl Temple:

I was received at Canterbury and Dover with many marks of regard, and I found the true glory and stability of
our country,^the English sailors, no enemies to Wilkes and Liberty.
Thus it comes as no great surprise to learn that on 29 September 1769 calls were made for an address in support of Middlesex's deposed Knight of t.ie oliire, ~r..d that the requested document was

4 actually left for signature. That it was never presented argues both a lack of widespread interest and opposition among influ-ential citizens. Yet the radical cause had made its first fal-tering steps and could only gain in confidence.
With these tentative stirrings of popular interest in mind,
we may approach the contest of 1774. Hilles and Lynch were again in the field, and were being challenged by William Mayne of 1761 fame. But much had altered since the days of Bute and Grafton.

1 Kentish Post, or Canterbury News Letter, 2-5, 16-19, 19-25
Mar. 1768.

2 Kentish Post, or Canterbury News .better, 19-25 Mar. 1768. 5 W. J. Smith (ftd.), T^_Grenville~Papers: being the corresponded

dence of Hichard Grenville Earl Temple, K.G., and the^ Right lion. George Grenville, their friends and contemporaries (^ondon, 1852-5), ii. 82-5: Wilkes to Earl Temple, 2 Au^. 1765-
4 Hude', Wilkes and ^iberty, p. 151 and n. 4.

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had made voters more aware of the dangers of secret
influence, and placemen had joined loapists and the Scots in the national pantheon of suspicion. As Turin agent and a frequent absentee from Westminster, Lynch had more reason to fear the new climate of politics than his independent-minded colleague, and tumble indeed he did. His fall from grace was assisted, however by Mayne's ability to capture the mood of the freemen. He declared that with 'unabated Ardor 1 he would
exert my most zealous Endeavours, aided by the necessary Assistance of your Judgement and Advice, not only to
support, but to repair every Violation our most
excellent Constitution may have sustained, by being
perverted from its original Principles, the inviolable observance of which alone can secure the Birth-Rights
of the People, and enable us to transmit to Posterity
the sacred j-iberties of ^.n^lishmen.
Although Hayne's conversion did hot last, and may well have been nothing more than rhetoric, it touched a sensitive chord in 1774- and ensured his return.
IV

The impact of Wilkes was even more evident at Dover and Rochester where a keen intensity was given, to long smouldering resentment at ministerial dictation. Government had always been strong in Rochester on account of the Admiralty's instal-lations at Chatham, and it had been customary from an early date for one of the borough's seats to be filled by an admiral or a naval administrator, with the other being reserved for a member of the local gentry. However, for a decade after 1754, this equitable division was carelessly set aside by ministers who succeeded in capturing the whole representation, ouch an encroachment was tolerated in a period of war ana relative political tranquillity; but with the commencement of a new reip,-n, storm clouds quickly began to gather on the horizon.

1 Canterbury Journal, 27 oept. - 4 uct. 1774.

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In reality, of course, Government's influence at Rochester
was not extensive enough to warrant its holding both seats. The electorate was far wider than those at Hythe ana Jover; the economy had not stagnated as at Sandwich and ^ueenborough; and the borough cherished traditions of independent action in the
'i

age of Anne and the Excise Bill. The corporation, though conser-vative and quite ready to honour potential benefactors ±ike the Earls of Berkeley and Sandwich, was not a completely closed oli-garchy scrambling feverishly for any crumb that mi^ht fall from the table of administration. There existed, too, all the elements necessary for the formation of a popular interest. Not every freeman could be employed in the docks, nor every merchant and shopkeeper satisfied with contracts. The farmers and gentlemen of the surrounding parishes had no desire to see their franchises devalued or usurped, while in a sizeable body of non-residents and traders with metropolitan interests, the borough possessed an illuminating window on events at the nation's centre. It comes as little surprise therefore to find that in the midst of the electoral struggle in 1771? John Wilkes was granted the city's freedom and regally feasted by an admiring assembly.
The independent freemen went on to the offensive for the
first time at the 1765 by-election, in which the new ^ockingham ministry put up ^-rey Cooper to replace Admiral Townshend. John Calcraft helped organise the mutiny, and caused such' a stir that several Admiralty officials were sent down to quiet the generally docile dockyard workers. Cooper scraped home by thirty votes in a poll of six hundred, but it was a pyrrhic victory. The popular party had caught the scent of a vulnerable foe, and as the Duke of Newcastle seems to have appreciated, administration's sled.^e-

1 For instructions to h.P.s to vote for a triennial bill in 1734, see F. F. Smith, history oT Rochester (^ondon, 19^-8), pp.444-5.

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XI

hammer tactics had only revealed the coercive face of influence. Consequentiy when the general election came on in 1768 expectations were high, oince Galcraft had accepted office under Chatham
and now stood with Admiral Geary on a government ticket, leader-ship of the malcontents passed to William Gordon, a wine merchant, landowner and son of a former mayor. with such credentials,
Gordon squeezed Geary to the foot of the poll, and trailed

o Calcraft by a mere five votes.

But although the initial breach had been forced, it still
had to be consolidated, and there were even moments when the hard-won spoils appeared thrown away altogether. Galcraft, who had retired into opposition soon after 1768, died in 1772, while eighteen months earlier Gordon had succumbed to the temptation
of a victualling office and vacated his seat. Yet if neither
of the resulting by-elections returned anti-ministerial M.P.s, the period did witness a series of events which were greatly to assist the borough's future development. This was the controversy surrounding the proposal to rebuild parts of Rochester and Strood after a serious fire in December 1768. A petition and a bill
to establish an. improvement commission to supervise the paving and lighting of streets, brought from the corporation the strong-est possible reaction. Objection was made to the cost of the proposed scheme, and delaying stratagems were employed which postponed the royal assent until 1771- Such resistance, though unavailing, left a legacy of social conflict, especially after

7. it was repeated in 1775 when Chatham applied for similar relief. The corporation understandably fe .red the infringement of its
local power and jurisdiction; but to the inhabitants and traders

1 tiamier and Brooke, i. 314: Newcastle to iiockingham, 1 Dec. 176'* 2 Namier and oi-ooke, i. 315; and Canterbury Journal, 4-11 uct. Smith, Q-Q. cit., DP- 424-30. Of. ^om. Jour., xxxii. 153 and 2CK ,

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of the area it must have seemed as if their interests were once more being wantonly disregarded. (Thus, as was to happen so often elsewhere, the paving commission became a key focus of municipal life, acting quite independently of the older and increasingly unresponsive institution.
With memories of these disputes still fresh, Rochester
approached the general election of 1774. A writer in the nentish Gazette caught the mood of at least a section of the electorate.
On Friday night Admiral Pye arrived in this City, in
consequence of a private letter, as it is said, he had
for that purpose received the day before from Lord Sandwich,
and brought us the joyful news of the Parliament's being
dissolved. I say joyful, because notwithstanding the
curious measure of the ministry, it is generally believed
that a Parliament more fatal to the liberties of the
subject than the last, cannot possibly be returned.
Certainly the popular party had no reason to mourn the passing of the 17o8 House of Commons, and freemen were quick to voice theii^ disappointment, when, after a promising and high-sounding speech, the Recorder, Mr. Brooke, nominated the sitting Members, Both men were supporters of Government, and if George Finch Hatton could at least boast a Kentish estate, Admiral Pye, as Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, had no ties whatever with the city.
The reaction was swift and highly instructive.
An honest quaker, freeman of this city and citizen of
London, was moved by the spirit to question the admiral
whether he had not voted for sending his Friend and
brother citizen, the Lord Mayor to the Tower for doing
his duty. The admiral answered in the affirmative and
said that he could (though he did not attempt to) justify
his conduct on that head. Aminidad saw through him and
shaking his head sat down with an inward spiritual groan
of disapprobation.
'Pye had been judged on an unfamiliar and typically SVilkite 1 criterion, in which real political acts counted for much more th^n hazy references to 'revolution principles'. And having found their subject wanting, the admiral's interrogators hud no hesitation in nominating Christopher Polhill as the candidate of the 'friends of

-i 1 the people'.

1 Xentish Gazette, 1-5 Oct. 1774.

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Ill-health prevented Polhill from standing -cue po^l, ana,
as has been seen, he was replaced by Robert Gregory. Gregory's East India background and Rockinfvhainite principles recommended him to a substantial cross-section of Rochester voters, v/hom he represented faithfully for the next ten years, v;ith ^inch Hatton. Philip Stephens 1 verdict on his 1774 triumph w^s that the electors A

of the borough were 'a set of ungrateful rascals' ; but to an observer less wedded to the traditions of eighteenth-century patronage, the defeat of Admiral Pye must appear the logical result of those forces unleashed in the late 1760's.
In a similar way, the period 1768-1774- also witnessed the securing of a partial freedom from ministerial control by the eledtors of Dover. For several decades the Lord harden and the various government departments had carried all before them in electoral terms; but as Lord George Sackville noted in a letter to Newcastle as early as 1756: 'Your Grace knows that we have many voters in that borough who do not depend upon the Government,

2 and who may not be sorry to stir up an opposition'. Careful

management as much as weight of influence had kept Dover's repre-sentatives on the Whig benches, and only when ministers began to neglect the pride and sensitivity of the constituency did it

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release those latent forces of revolt.
That Dover took a course very different to those pursued by Sandwich, Hythe and New Romney was due to many factors, and not least to the continued buoyancy of its economy. Renovation and improvement carried out by John Smeaton and others, saved the borough's harbour from the worst ravages of the sea, and under the skilful management of Sir Henry Oxenden it developed as the

1 Namier and ^rooke, iii. 3^5: Philip Stephens to Il-trdwicke, 7 Liov. 177^.
2 Gamier and ^rooke, i. 445: -^°rd ^- Sackville to Newcastle,

17 ;.i)r. 1756. 3 bee comments in N aiicr, Structure of Politics, pp. 121-4.

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'I

corner-stone of local prosperity. Hence, while inhabitants of the other Cinque Ports scratched a meagre living as inshore fisher-men or minor customs officers, Hasted found uover 'exceeding wealthy 1 and in 'a perpetual hustle and hurry of business 1. 'The banking and commercial quarter served as the meeting pl-.'.ce for
'a great crowd, especially of sea-faring people, as well English
p
as of other countries' ; and offered every opportunity to reap the rewards of enterprise. Peter Fector, for example, joined the Dover firm of Isaac hinet as a humble clerk, but soon after the proprietor's death in 17^5 he became a partner and by 1767
5
owned half the stock. Trade with London and other British ports, as well as with those of France, Hoi-Land and the Baltic, filled the pockets of a rapidly expanding population, and thereby did much to dispel that poverty upon which government and private influence flourished.

Affluence brought with it greater leisure for contemplation
and enquiry, and a willingness to challenge established authority. The diary of Thomas Pattenden, the draper and stocking seller,

4_ reveals a keen interest in national and local affairs , while the

letter-books of Isaac Jyiinet contain numerous expressions of dis-content with government policy, i^inet looked upon the official packet-boats as unfair rivals to his own cross-channel service, and actively conspired with Dover and Canterbury innkeepers to secure passengers. The press-gangs were a daily thorn in the flesh of a maritime community, and in 1736 and 1740 embargoes
on all ships bound for foreign ports further disrupted business.

1 J. B. Jones, Annals of Dover including Histories of the Castle, Port, Passage, Religion, the Corporation, Mayors & their Times, Corporation Officers, Representation in Parliament, and Social History (Dover, T7lo>, pp. 109-25-
2 iiristed, ix. 516.
3 C. hatson, 'Men of Kent. 3: Hinet and Fector of Dover', .A.I!. , Ixxxi. (1967;, 39-^2.
4 ; Macfie, 'The Pattenden Diaries, 1797-1319', A.C., xciv. (1979), 139-47.

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Lord harden v/as made aware of loc;.-.l ill-feeling, and in 1738
an address to the throne embodied all the festering grievances
Xj

of i-iinet and his fellows. A similar climate probably existed during the American war, but by then the borough had an independent H.P. to plead its cause.
- L'he final spurs to concerted political opposition v/ere the
death of the Duke of Dorset and ^ord Hardwicke, whose familiar presence had so often soothed inflamed passions, and the realisation widely shared by the late 1760's, that the borough's representation was beinf.'; exploited to suit the convenience of ministers alone. Anger at the steady stream of lawyers and placemen who arrived
at Dover to undergo the formality of a by-election without any regard to local preference, boiled over in 1768 when Grafton nominated his boon-companion, Viscount Villiers, Hugh hinet led
a revolt at the hustings, and although defeated, set a precedent for others to follow. In this way the initiative passed to the y/ilkite merchant of Austin Friars, John 'Vrevanion, who Was intro-

2 duced to the electors of the town by the celebrated hr. Churchill1. Trevanion did not have to wait long for a chance to test the strength of his party, and late in 1739 he announced:
. . . my utmost abilities shall be employed in the defence
of our excellent constitution,in tie support of civil and
religious liberties,and the universal welfare of my country,
and in promoting the particular prosperity of this 3bwn
and Port of Dover.
IN|"O specific mention was made of the v/ilkes case then bein;:; agitated in the county, and it had probably been judged expedient not to
do so if an appeal was to be made to moderate opinion. Govern-ment, however, had woken up to its peril and selected x'homas Pym Hales, a connection of Dorset's Bekesbourne allies, ^s a Kentish-

1 W Hinet, 'Extracts from the setter .dook of a Dover Merchant, 17 37_4/p, A.G., xxxii. (1917), 253-3.
2 Uamier ahd~^rooke, iii. 562; and Oldfield, History of the Borourhs, iii. 49.
3 Kentish""Post, and Canterbury Journal,

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man, Hales came nearer than many of his predecessors in meeting the requirements of the freemen, and ni^.cle grei'.t play with his votes against general warrants and for the Land Tax reduction of 1767, riven while in opposition with .uord George Sackville. He posed as a typical independent gentleman, and went so far as to pledge himself to 'pay every regard and Attention to any
1

Instructions my Constituents shall favour me with... 1 Trevanion was too recently arrived to counter such advantages, and was beaten off.

Nevertheless the years prior to 177^ were not without profit either to Trevanion or the people of Dover. Government, though still in command, had become more receptive, and three contests in five years no doubt reawakened electors' interest in current politics. Trevanion was able to build up an interest of his own, and it was not long before his house became 'a centre of hospi-tality and political influence 1. He promised to erect a school for the benefit of the freemen's children, and in various other ways made himself a respected and valued member of borough
2 society. Most important of all, the election petitions of 1770 had greatly increased the size of the electorate, since the House of Commons was moved to restore the i'ranchise to the non-residents after fifty years. At the time, the decision was not of Trevanion's making, as he was claiming to be the chosen represen-tative of a majority of Dover's residents. However in the longer term, the expansion of the elective body aided the independent cause, and marked the end of a government monopoly based on
3 patronage.
Trevanion was defeated ^.t another by-eiection in 1773, ^nd
when the time came round for a fresh general election Lord North

/I ^entish Post, and Canterbury Journal, 28 Nov. 1769.
2 7T. B. Jones, Dover (Dover, 1907), ^p. 156-7-
3 Com. Jour., xxxii. 631, -AJ and 779--0.

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initially proposed to put up John Henniker and bir Oh .ries

irtiitworth. However, more experienced men like Sir Joseph Yorke

recognised that Dover was not the pliant beast of a decade earlier,

1 and prudence prevailed. A compromise was thus agreed by which

Trevanion and Henniker were to split the representation. There

is no evidence that a programme of radical reforms was openly

canvassed in the borough, or that Trevanion was bound by a

p
v/ilkite-style pledge. He was content to declare in the press:

My conduct in Parliament will prove the sincerity of
my professions to you; be assured it will be truly independent, that is the best return I can make for your
noble and disinterested support.
___ 4

Ten years later, when the Pox-North coalition had turned old

alignments upside-down, he reflected at greater length on his

achievement.

When I first offered myself to your Notice it was to
give you an Opportunity of rescuing the 'Town and Port
from that ministerial Tyranny to which you had been
very long accustomed.- A Treasury Iwndate always
attended the Candidate whose name you scarcely knew before his Appearance.- You felt the insult and you rejected it. - I was honourably supported, although unsuccessfully.- Time, however, the true test of
every Th:"..ng, crowned your struggle \.itL success.-
emu I have the horm.r to boast o±" being the first representative of your Cinque ^'ort to be elected
without Ministerial Influence.

1774 was thus in every eenee a watershed in the history

of Dover. Beginning in 1778 a series of four Paving Acts trans-

formed the town from a medieval ma^e of unlit courts and dirty

back-streets, into the opulent Channel port of the nineteenth

century.^ Politics, too, assumed a more progressive aspect

quite unkiown before. A Deal correspondent urged his

1 liamier and Brooke, i. 446; and B. Donoughue, British Politics and the Junerican devolution: the path to war, 1773-1773 (London,' 1964), pp. 18^-4.
2 Christie, 'The wilkites and the General Election of 1774',
in Myth and Reality, p. 304-;?.
3 Kentish Gazette, 5-8 Oct. 1774.
4. Canterbury Journal, 23-30 i-.ar. 1784.
.T, -a. Jones. Annals of Dover (sec. edn. , i^over, 1938;.
6!

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unenfranchised brethren in animated language to remember their 'birthright as Englishmen 1 and their 'glorious ancestors' who 'even laid down their lives for posterity'. Pointing to events in Worcester, Newcastle and the City of London, and with an apparent allusion to Rochester, he exclaimed: 'You have begun to loosen your shackles; may you now rise up and hew 'em in pieces'.1

V

The Kent county election of 1774 provided a fitting climax
to the Wilkite period, drawing together as it did, all the major ford.es that had contended so continuously during the preceding
six years. Present at the nomination meeting was the innate and unyielding conservatism which had hampered and striven to smother the address of 1769- By its side, and equally proud and unre-pentant, was the legion of reform, fresh from its triumphs in the larger boroughs. Dr. 0'German has argued that for the nation as a whole, the prevailing temper was one of business as usual;
and in the north-western counties, for example, such public debate 2 as did occur was focused on local issues. in Kent the freeholders were challenged to go further, and despite stiff resistance, a
pair of able advocates ensured that the radical case was heard
3 and understood.
John oawbridge opened the proceedings at haidstone on 14 August
by counselling his audience on the need to think well and wisely before choosing their representatives; and then attempted to illustrate his warnings by defining the stark, if out-dated and superficial, distinctions between Whigs and Pories, of which mention has already been made.'4" Phe single blemish on the ,<hig escutcheon was, to Sawbridge, the Septennial Act, 'that source of corruption, the canker-worm which is destroying the Constitution'. Por its

1 Canterbury Journal, 4-11 Oct.
2 O'Gorrnan, Pise of Party, p. 319; and J. Bonsall, oir James Lowther and Cumberland and ./estmorland Politics, r
^Manchester, I960), pp. 1^b-7.
5 deport in Canterbury Journal, 16-23 Aug. 177^-

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originators it had been a 'political mistake' rather than a
1 crime', but now in the reign of George III it was used by the Tories to bolster their destructive system. Parliament had done nothing to regain the confidence of the people since 1769, but on the contrary had gone so far as to propose the introduction of popery into North America. Faced with such a threat to the public good, Sawbridge thus suggested that men who sought a future seat at Westminster should conform to a fourfold test.
They should be Whigs, and should be committed to shorter parlia-ments, to the expunging of the iliddlesex resolutions from the journals of the House of Commons, and to the repeal of the
^uebec Act.

When compared with the unquestioning mood of 1768, the voicing
of so many contentious questions at a single county assembly
was a significant advance in itself. Unfortunately, the two hopeful candidates showed no inclination to follow suit, and
would certainly have escaped without further trouble had not Lord Iiahon made another effort to examine their beliefs, during his campaign in Westminster, Mahon stood committed to the remedy of
1
the full list of Wilkite grievances , and had already won many friends in Kent. He quite approved of Oharj.es Mar sham whom he knew and respected. As to Jhomas Knight, he had not made his acquaintance, but since he had been spoken of as 'a man of dangerous principles', some specific statement ought to be made. An affronted Knight retorted with some heat that he 'did not come there to be catechised 1; and the day closed with some hollow aopeals to 'revolution principles'.
nevertheless freeholders left Maidstone with a host of ideas fresh in their minds. Lord i.ahon ru.d called for measures 'for strikinr; off the rotten and corrupt itorou ;hs which at present

1 otanhope i£S. U1590/247, and in Canterbury Journal 27 S
4 Oct. 1774-

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return more members to Parliament than all the counties together'; or for 'the admission of two members more for each county, to balance, in some measure, the number returned for those Boroughs'. The debate was carried on in the press over the next two months, and by election day on October 19, many might have been found like
1
Mayor Spice of Rochester who were willing to vote for ^ord Mahon. However expense deterred even a token opposition, and Wilkites
in the county had to be content with what had been achieved earlier, Perhaps for the first time since 173^, national issues had played a substantial part in a Kent election, and if Wilkes had failed
to convince a majority of the gentry of the need for reform, the nation stood upon the brink of a war that would change the heart of many a fearful and penniless squire.

Canterbury Journal, 18-25 Oct. 1774.

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Chapter Two
The American War and the Kentish Landed Glasses
1774'- 1780
The problem of America had been steadily gathering momentum since 1763, when the successful termination of the Seven Years' War freed the colonists from the menace of an ambitious French neighbour. However, throughout the first decade of its history, the search for a solution to the almost unanswerable riddle of sovereignty and sound financial government was generally confined within the narrow bounds of Westminster and Whitehall. George Grenville's Stamp ,ict of 1765, the Rockinghams' Declaratory Act of the following year, and the Townshend duties of 1767? had as much to do with the inter-factional scramble for power as with colonial management, and in the days before 'V/ilkes and Liberty 1 neither was the stuff of which national controversy was made. It was not until 177^-? therefore, that imperial affairs were placed squarely before the provincial electorate, and even then only as part of a far wider programme. Coming from such tenta-tive beginnings, the transformation accomplished during the next parliament was truly remarkable, and was crucial in the develop-ment of public consciousness. Humiliation at defeats on the battlefield, and the awful spectre of a Bourbon fleet poised to invade, combined with economic distress to rekindle the anger
and suspicion of the old Country interest, and prompted a national petitioning movement in which Kent was a leading participant.
I

V/e may commence by examining attitudes towards America as they evolved between 1774- and the crisis of mid-summer 1779- Events had progressed a good distance on the ro-d to rebellion and war when .uord North went to the country in the early autumn of 1774-, and there can be little doubt that he did so in o_uer to forestall criticism, and to secure a majority before the inevitaoie parli.- - mentary tussle began. His calculations were generally rewarded;

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but on the , cuebec Government ^ct he could not escape censure altogether, since it had been maae an essential plank in the tfilkite platform. At the Kent county meeting, John oawbridge heaped execration upon the measure:
by which the jropish religion and a despotic government
are established in part of the ^ritish dominions more . extensive than all the Protestant countries in the world.
To the wilkites, the act was further proof that Parliament had not abandoned those arbitrary tendencies exhibited over the i-iiddlesex election, and for this reason, Lord Mahon pressed Thomas i\night hard for a declaration on its repeal. Yet the resort to anti-catholicism indicates that the radicals were still casting about uncertainly for support, and it was not until they substi-tuted it with the drive against corruption and inefficiency that demands for reform rang out in the constituencies.
Por the majority of ^entishmen in 177^-? however, the proposed administration of Canada was not sufficient grounds on which to depart from allegiance to the King's chosen ministers. Hence, while a writer in the Canterbury Journal could list seventeen 'Queries' on the details of the scheme, his tone was moderate
and conciliatory. He asked:
Whether as these and like apprehensions, reasonings and deductions have so universally possessed and disquieted
the minds of multitudes of the most serious and valuable
parts of the uritish Possessions of this Kingdom, it would
not be doing a much greater service to the public; be a better proof of our loyalty and a more certain demon-stration of the good sense and integrity of our own hearts, to endeavour to silence those objections and calm the
fears of our fellow subjects than to waste our time and
their attention in the defence of ministerial hirelings
or in malignant and reiterated insults, on the character
and conduct ofpincLLviduals whose names are an honour to
the community.
Though naive, it was clearly believed that after a decade and
a half of factious in-fighting and personal innuendo, the moment had arrived to bring an air or sobriety and rational debate to

1 ognterbury Journal* 1£~2 3 "uft. 1774.
2 Canterbury Journal, 25 Oct. - 1 liov.

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the settlement of imperial issues, oince 1770, ^ord ilorth had shown himself to be a capable administrator, and might therefore be expected to respond favourably to popular concerns when presented in a constructive spirit.
During the next two years, the same division of opinion persisted on American problems, with all the Opposition groups swimming desperately against the prevailing current. The Ghathamite and Rockingham ;jhigs had each taken an interest in
the future of the colonies when in office, and long continued
to trumpet loudly the merits of their respective panaceas. Yet the distinction between the revenue-gathering and trade-regulating functions of taxation was scarcely the basis for a workable policy, while the Declaratory Act was simply constitutional hypocrisy
of the first rank; and both only gained credit in the eyes of posterity because they were never put to the test. The blatant assault on property rights implicit in the Boston tea-party made it nearly impossible for Tjhigs or radicals to offer outright opposition to the coercive legislation of 177^ and 1775- And by October 1776, when the rejection of the Olive Branch petition and the Declaration of Independence had finally estranged George III from his erring subjects, the ^arl of Radnor was still labouring to dispel the odious charge of republicanism.
The charge of republicanism was never even attempted
to be made against any but the northern colonies, and
there he believed with .^reat injustice; and the charge
of disobedience was still worse founded; for he
believed, if the history of the colonies was impartially considered and fairly decided on, from their first establishment, it would be found, that no subjects h^a
ever exhibited stronger proofe of duty, attachment,
obedience, and affection for the parent body.
The taint of association with rebels and levellers v/as potentially disastrous for ..adnor and his friends, and it thus became imperative to interpret their actions in terms more acceptable
to conservative electors, hence he went on:
If, indeed, the same spirit '/hich compelled the first-
settlers to fly from the ecclesiastical L-nu civil

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persecution and oppression of a tyrant, was a spirit of republicanism, he trusted that spirit would never be extinct either there or here; for if it should, then despotism would triumph, and nothin ; would be left for the prince on the throne, but to possess him- self of the liberties of the people thus deserted and surrendered.

In spite of this special pleading, however, oir George oavile might have been speaking for the whole of Opposition when he told Rockingham in January 1777- 'We are not only patriots out of place, but patriots 2 out of the opinion of the public'.
xhe fact was, that although not far-sighted, j^ord Jorth' s policies were regarded as well-suited to remedy what was generally expected to he a short-lived crisis. A typical reaction was
that voiced by Sir william hayne in early 1775 during a debate
on the Kew England disturbances, ^ike his Canterbury constituents, he prided himself that his vote was 'free from the smallest tincture of that prejudice which has undoubtedly been inculcated into the minds of the Americans from this side of the water'; and at this period in his career, at least, he may be taken as representing their sentiments. Any Justice of the peace might

have lamented that:

. . . so very violent has been, and still is, the conduct of the Americans, that there is scarce any opening left for British Justice and ^ritish humanity to inter- fere for their relief, or to give protection to those loyal and faithful subjects, of which I trust many are

yet to be found in that continent.
He felt unable to consider the proceedings of the continental Congress without feelings of 'amazement, compassion, and indig-nation; amazement at the act, compassion for the delusion, and indignation at the insult offered to their mother country'. That the colonists should employ the 'immutable laws of nature'

the to set aside 'the principles 01/^1 ;iisu constitution, ^ia the

1 P-rl. Hist. , rviii. 1376. . , . ? - jben-^ie, i-.eiaoirs .o_fj:he j^r^uis of ^oc .m^h'-n and his contemporaries (London, ~l ^/, ii- 305: Saviie to Rockingham, r?"'Jan.

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several charters and compacts', Mayne held to be subversive of,

and destructive to, every fundamental principle which either

constitutes or supports our most excellent constitution 1.

Mayne accepted that the Americans -oossessed 'all the rights,

liberties and immunities of free and natural born subjects of

the realm of England 1; but argued that these should be accom-

panied by obedience. The colonies were thus, in his opinion,

in a state of 'the most flagrant rebellion 1; and he could only

conclude:

. . . I sincerely wish every moderate and constitutional
method to be taken to bring back these unhappy and deluded
people to a sense of their duty. But if, after all,
conciliating measures shall fail, this country has no
alternative left, but to make use of that power they enjoy, under heaven, for the protection of the whole empire; and to show the ,'jnericans that as our ancestors deluged this country with their blood, to gain this
constitution for us, we, like men, in defiance of faction
at home, or rebellion abroad, are determined, in glorious emulation of their example, to transmit it perfect.and
unimpaired to posterity, or perish in the attempt.

But if such an uncompromising attitude held the field in

1775 and 1776, only a very few months were required to bring a

distinct change in the temper of public opinion. The growth of

a new sympathy towards the Americans may be discerned behind

the increased freedom with which Opposition championed their cause.

In March 1778, for example, the Earl of Radnor began a speech

on the American Conciliatory Bill:

this country was wrong in the out-set, and [jaasj hitherto continued obstinately to persevere in impolicy and in-
justice ...V/e had no right to tax unrepresented America.
The idea was no less absurd and unjust, than the event
has hitherto proved disgraceful and unprosperous. ^n^lishmen, as they carried their rights with them, on their first migration, so they retained the spirit,
resolution, and firmness of Englishmen, in bravely
asserting and maintaining those rights. The constitution declared', in so many words, that no Englishman can be
taxed but by his own consent. It has been the lan^ua^e ~
of all ages, since the first foundation of the monarchy.

The old concept may have assumed c fresh relevance for those

' xviii. 244-5 ~nd 2-4-7- , xix. 636.

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over-burdened tax-payers of Kent who still saw their i-I.P.s nominated by aristocratic or government interests, furthermore, the frequent references to shared privileges and consanguinity could not fail to breed some response among gentry families, many of whom had relatives or property in the i^ew World. Oppo-sition thus found ever more encouragement to elaoorate upon the fears of despotism and secret influence voiced by Burke and wilkes in the 1760's, and as a result, it became possible to depict the Americans as partners in a crusade against arbitrary power, rather than as ungrateful traitors.
One explanation of this transformation in the late 1770's
was the defeat of British arms at Saratoga in 1777 and the declaration of war by France in 1778 and dpain in the following year. Humiliated by a militia of colonial farmers, and bereft of allies in Europe, it was easy to attribute all the nation's misfortunes to ministerial incompetence, to correction or to more sinister causes. On 8 March 1779, oir Horace Mann, the independent M.P. for haidstone, announced that he would be voting with Fox on the state of the nation at the outbreak of war with France, because the motion contained 'matter of public notoriety, as well known without this House as within; as well known to all Europe, I am sorry to say it, as to the British Parliament'.
With the critical eye common among back-bench economists since before the Revolution, he went on:
. . . the real subject matter of this debate defends upon
something more than vs^ue -premises cud loose assertion,
made in either jrii.J nc^^ or the other I/hat have been
the sums grainJedV Wh-.t has been the state of ^reparation:
Has our navy been adequate to the services ministers
were bound to provide for? Here lies the true issue;
what ministers have done, not whet they promised; what
thev were bound to perform, not wh,~t they said they would
do.

i-ianri was convinced that .uord i^orth had woefully neglected his

1 Parl. list., xx. 223-

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responsibilities, and especially those respectin,; the navy. If the source of Britain's greatness and commerce was permitted to decline, the country would rapidly lose its consequence in the eyes of Europe, and the only beneficiary would be ar...nce.
3y mid-summer 1779, Sir Horace Mann's prophecy seemed about
to be fulfilled. A combined Bourbon fleet w^s known to be mustering for an attack on southern England, and yet serious doubts surrounded the preparedness of home defences. Recruiting bills had failed to swell the numbers of volunteers, so that Lord North had to rely upon the localities to raise and equip their own companies of militia. Kent was in a particularly vulnerable posi-tion, and the people of jjover not surprisingly led the way by enrolling six troops. Phe Grand Jury was also alive to its responsibilities, and in conformity with the dominant mood of independence and self-help, issued the following resolution at the Assizes on 24 July:
That in this 1'ime of imminent Danger when our Coasts are
daily threatened with invasion from France, and our
Fleets with the attack of the combined Force of the House
of Bourbon, it behoves every true friend and Well-wisher
to this Country (when the Salvation of it is at .otake;
to Unite in the general Cause of its defence and Security; in order therefore to promote this desirable End, We, the Lord Lieutenant, High Sheriff and others, whose names are hereafter written, have subscribed the respective sums after our names set, which it is proposed shall be trans-mitted to the marine oociety to be expended as soon as
may be, for the immediate carrying into Execution the
laudable Proposals, and for the strengthening the principal bulwark of the nation, the Navy of ^reat Britain, a iieasure
which we most earnestly recommend to the serious consider-
ation of every Person of Property in this County, and , cordially wish it may meet with Concurrence and Support.
i'he Kentish gentry had lost none of its old enthusiasm for a 'blue-water policy 1, and can only have been dismayed by the spectacle of a navy beset with political dissension, and a Channel fleet confined to Portsmouth at the critical moment.
l'he besieged county closed ranks in a spirit of patriotic determination. Gentlemen donated generously, enu the press brimmed

1 Kentish Gazette, 21-^5 .or-;. 1779.

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with loyal poetry, une article, in the Kentish Gazette entitled

'Britons united may defeat the Jorld 1 began by recalling the

struggle with Philip II and the rout of the Armada, and went on:

I draw this picture only to show wh^t ^ngiish courage
and unanimity have done, we must hope they will do the
same again.
'Do ensure success, unanimity alone is necessary;
whether the Majority or the Minority are in the right,
my countrymen, at present concerns not us, our business (as Drake told his sailors) is not to enquire who ad-ministers the government of England, but to beat her enemies. And though avarice and ambition may have nearly banished public spirit from amongst the ^reat, yet it remains in many an English breast, and I doubt not that the unjust and cruel design of our base and treacherous enemies will send forward the generous fire till it rises in one great and united flame and over-whelms all that oppresses it.
We began with an unfermented war, disapproved of
by one part of the nation, and unhappily persevered in
by the other. Jut the question is not now about the dependence or independence of America, it is, whether
Great Britain shall exist, whether we are to enjoy our properties, liberties and religions or submit to the
mercies of 1/rench dragoons and Spanish inquisitions.

While all eyes searched the horizon for fehe expected sails,

and men trembled for the safety of their families, political

divisions might be sacrificed to the national interest. However,

the jealousies and rancour alluded to in the above quotation

were never wholly lost sight of, and re-emerged with redoubled

vigour and bitterness as the peril subsided. -.Trade embargoes

and the closure of the Dover packet h^d bred resentment since

the days of Isa c hinet, while the presence of a large body of

militia and regular troops in the county inevitably disrupted the 2
daily life of the community. A dispute also arose in the Cinque

Ports during 1779 which displays both personal hostility to Lord

North and profound distrust of the motives under-pinning his

actions. As one newspaper correspondent put it:

The question at present agitated in the Cinque Ports
seems to lay in a very narrow compass. The Lord ./arden

1 Kentish Gazette. 6-10 July 1779.
2 A- Temple-Patterson, The other Armada; the j'r cue o-Spanish attempt to invade Britain in 1779 (Manchester, 1930), -p. 128.

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has requested their assistance to r-:J.se a certain number of men: for what purpose?; to fulfil a voluntary personal offer he made to the King of raising a regiment; not to fulfil the legal obligation the Cinque Ports may be under of doing it. In consequence their compliance will be a compliment to the Lord V/arden, not a security against future demands. 'Dhe "ooint then to be considered is whether the present ijord V/arden, the ostensible author of all our misfortunes, deserves such an exertion, or whether, if the exertion is necessary, the offer should not be made to the King as the executive power, rather than to the minister of that power, who has so grossly misapplied it. Besides, so long as the oinque Ports adhere to their constitutional mode of raising men, the Lord Warden would not be able to send them beyond the bounds prescribed by the law of the Cinque Ports: in the capacity of volunteers they may be sent anywhere. In
short, if the uinque Ports think it necessary to exert
themselves at this crisis, how much more eligible, how
much more to their honour would it be^to raise real volun
teers independent of the Lord Warden.

When Pitt called for a similar effort in 179^ he was not answered

with a volley of abuse and recrimination.]?or Lord North, however,

1779 set the seal upon the alienation of public confidence

observable since Saratoga, opposition was revitalised, and it

would be surprising if the gentlemen assembled on Coxheath near

Maidstone did not spend part of the summer debating the causes and

remedies of the national malaise.

II

The evident mismanagement of the war in the late 1770's was

the more keenly resented by the gentry and freeholders of Kent,

because they had been required to finance its prosecution at a

time when heavy calls were already, being made upon their purses,

and when the rewards of agriculture could easily be eliminated

by temporary political or commercial uncertainty. It is therefore

impossible to understand the alteration in public attitudes

towards America, or the petitioning movement which resulted from

it, without knowing something of the economic plight of the landed

interest.

A prominent item in the budgets of the upper classes was

that arising from their passionate craze for building end

1 Kentish Grzette, 31 July - 4 Aug. 1779.

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improvement. A Duke of Dorset, an ^arl of Darnley and even a James Best of Chatham, with substantial income from Court and diplomatic posts, an Irish estate, and a lucrative brewing business,, might renovate an entire mansion and adorn it with rich furnish-ings and classical works of art, without much heed to the overall expense. However, for less well endowed gentlemen, the desire
to ape their betters necessitated great sacrifices and sometimes proved fatal. Some idea of the sums involved may be gained
from the example of Sir Edward Knatchbull, whose income averaged £3,000 a year between 1763 and 1789- .although, by no means a poor man, the seventh baronet noted that his outlay in 1766 of oo2,649 13s. 9d. had, 'considerably exceeded what it ought to be, for, considering the great charges I am at in building, I cannot afford to spend more than £2,000 a year, and hardly that, without
1
running into inconvenience 1. When the shell of his new house at Mersham Hatch h.ad been completed in 1765, ^natchbull paid
out £2,908, and then resolved not to spend 21,000 in any single year on decorations. Bills from craftsmen lihe Chippendale continued to be presented throughout the next decade, and by 1779 the final account stood at £20,526. Large by any standards, the figure included £16,525 for the edifice itself, sums of £902 and £595 for furniture, carpets, silks, china and bedding, as well as £560 to the silversmith, and represented at least a third p of the family's annual expenditure over a lengthy period.
No one can read the pages of Jane Austen without becoming acutely aware of the central role played by strict settlements, entails and portions in the lives of the gentry. Widely employed by the aristocracy since the late seventeenth century, these devices h-d been adopted by all men of property as a rn^rk of

1 Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Kentish Family (London, 1960)
p. 122.
2 Ibid., p. 129.

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social prestige. However this gentility We.s only secured by laying heavy burdens on the resources of an estate, and, as the Hiss Dashwoods discover in the opening chapters of Sense and Sensibility, parents were often quite unable to provide adequately for dependent relatives. rj?he already tottering finances of the Twysdens of ^oydon Hall near East reckham were helped further down the slippery slope by the will of the sixth baronet, which bequeathed a jointure of ^500 to his wife, and appointed ao300 as

1 the annual income of his three younger children on coming of age.
Disputes at law were common on matters of inheritance, and in the early nineteenth century, the widowed Lady Honywood even went
into print in the hope of wringing a sufficient jointure from

2 her reluctant son. A strictly settled estate left little ready

money with which to meet unexpected demands, especially after due provision had been rn^de for dowries and portions. with debts of 0^4-0 - jC50,000 in the 1790's, Sir John Honywood contemplated putting his Evington property in trust in order to liquidate some of his
x

assets , while for others there was the desperate remedy of barring the entail.
Pleasures, too, had to be p^id for. Electioneering, even
in the boroughs, was not cheap, and after 1790 the i,natchbul3s, Honywoods and Gearys expended vast sums in a series of county contests. Professor Mingay has observed that in the eighteenth century: 'The most likely cause of a family's downfall was now not a change of government, penal confiscation or burdensome

a, taxation, but extravagance.1^ Nowhere is this reflection better
illustrated than in the decline of the Jwysdens. sir William

1 sir J. it. I'wisden, Jhe j'amily of Jwysden and Lwisden:_ __ History and ^rchi^es (London, 19_39;, p. 309.
2 Ilemorial of the Honourable ^ady Lonywooci written for the use of her refere'es (London, 181^), passim.
3 Ibid., p- 3.
4 See inira, pp. 204--7-

5 G. E. iiinp;ay, English ./ndod Society in the -.! ;hteenth Uenturv (London, 1963;, pp. 4-7-8. '""""

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- Lwysden inherited a well-managed estate in 1751, "but by 1754 he found himself compelled to sell property in London and to raise a mortgage of .312,000. Most of his wife's £8,000 dowry was used "k° pay off his mounting debts, and when an apoplectic fit cut short his prodigality in 1767, the value of his patrimony had been reduced by £16,000. Coming of age in nay 1781, oir Jilliam Jarvis 'I'wye.den waited only until June before barring the entail, and by 1787 the army of creditors had become so clamorous that the young baronet fled abroad, and only returned to England on the understanding that two-thirds of Roydon's precious acres would

1 be disposed of. 1'he ravages of gambling and feasting might be repaired by speculation or an advantageous marriage, but for the p
a'wysdens, the Joodgates of Summerhill Park and many others, no such salvation was at hand.
wT ith so many domestic drains on available funds, any increase
in government or local impositions would be keenly resented, numerous must have been those gentlemen who echoed Peter Pounce's lamentation in Fielding's Joseph Andrews that:
the greatest fault in our constitution is the provision
made for the poor, except that perhaps made for some
others. oir, I have not an estate which doth not
contribute almost as much again to the poor as to the
land-tax, and I do assure you I expect to come myself to
the parish in the end.
The cheese-paring attitude of the landed classes towards the poor has become legendary, and, if open to exaggeration and ridicule, was a widely shared response to a growing social problem. A contemporary Kentish view was set forth in a joint-workhouse agreement between the ^-.rishes of uarenth and Horton x.irby in 1774.

1 Iwisden, op. cit., pp. 2o9-3:37-
2 Jhe family v/as ruined in the collapse of the L'unbridge Janlc
at the close of the Napoleonic Jar. oee -lev. G. and J. i-.. G.
W o o dg at e , A History of the ..cod ;ates of otonewall P^^j^jij
rhi 1 l_"_in j (e n t , and 'th e i r C innections CVh' sbecb , r;iO,> ,
pp. 37 :3-
H. Fielcliiy;, Joseph Andrews, ed. H. ?. ui-is^enden (.London, 1978;,

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whereas it hath been found by long experience that the rates and ch-.r^es for relieving the poor people in the said parishes have for many years past been very much increased, by the great burthen and uneasiness of those who contribute thereto, that the poorer sort of people have been less industrious and careful in providing means of subsisting themselves and their families under the expectation of beinr: maintained by the relief of
the inhabitants of the parishes to which they belong
snd that the children of such poor people are frequently brought up in idleness to the destruction of their morals, from whence many bad things and ill consequences often
proceed and the poor themselves become very insolent to
those who maintain them, all which evils and many other inconveniences are supposed chiefly to arise from the
system of relieving the poor with money which is too
frequently perverted to bad uses...

A whole range of expedients were suggested to combat the worst

effects of rural unemployment when it became acute in the 1790's

2 and after 1815- But to the Kentish gentry in the decides before Gilbert's ^ct and the Speenhamland system, it must have seemed

that in spite of poor rates which varied between six pence and

six shillings in the pound, no solution was in sight.

ilo less inequitable and unpopular v/as the Land Tax, which

had been grossly distorted since its inception under William III.

An anonymous pamphleteer summed U-Q its anomalies thus:

the Land Tax on the foot it now stands is the most unequal
Tax that was ever imposed in any Age upon any Nation.
When it is at four Shillings, a Man perhaps in Kent or
Essex shall pay the full, or sometimes more; in Norfolk
or Lancashire, he shall pay three Shillings; in
Staffordshire or Shropshire two; in Devonshire or
Yorkshire Fiftic^pe-ue; in Cornwall, Cumberland or
//ales Ninepence.";

Is the original assessments had always been adhered to, taxes

were being demanded in the late eighteenth century at levels which

in no way took account of changes in a country's ability to pay.

Kent was no longer a centre of iron and textile manufacture, but

as John Boys and Hasted commented, its inhabitants still con-

tributed a twenty-fourth part of the entire national total.

1 iJ. Melling (ed.), Kgntish Sources IV: The Poor (Kent County Council, 1964), p. 82.
2 See infra, pp. 170-1 and 253-5-
5 Hingay, English Landed Society in the ^i-hteenth Century, p.82. 4- J. Boys, A General View of the Acriculture of .th^jJount^/j:ji" Kent with the Me^ns of its Improvement CLondon, 1796/," o.^f
and Hasted, i.

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The disproportionate character of the Land Tax was particu-
larly apparent in wartime, when its maximum rate of four shillings in the pound coincided with other extraordinary devices for revenue gathering. In 1776 Lord North placed taxes on carriages and stage-coaches, in 1779 he taxed auctions and male servants,
in 1780 legacies and the import and production of alcohol, while in 1781 and 1782 duties were levied on salt -nd sugar. 1 In all cases, the wealthier classes, and especially the landed interest, shouldered the heaviest burden, and this made them the more sensitive to the details of government expenditure. The collection of the -uioid Tax was open to all manner of corruption, and com-plaints were regularly voiced in Parliament about the long

p delays in the transmission of balances to the Treasury. Hence, as walpole and luord North both found to their cost, when military strategy failed to compensate for fiscal stringency, swift retri-bution could be expected from the back-benches and the provinces. The other side of the financial equation was, of course,
the profitability of those types of agriculture from which Kentish gentlemen and freeholders derived their incomes. Undoubt edly the greatest influence on Kentish farming was the proximity of the ever-expanding London market. Since an early date| Kentish farmers had been conscious of the need for efficiency, and had thus generally adopted the practice of enclosure by the end of the sixteenth century. New techniques were eagerly adopted,
and a type of seed-drill was being used long before Tull's pioneering work. The needs of the metropolis also determined the sort of crops that were grov/n. Charles Seymour catalogued many of them in 1776:

1 P. D. G. Thomas, Lord north (^ondon, 1976,, pp. 105-4.
2 i''or example, ^j.rl. ^ist. , xx. 1184-5; and . R. ,.;ard,
x»he ^nglish Land Tax in the ^i;:>iteenth Jenturj (Oxford, 1953;, p. 90 note 1.

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The county abounds in fish cjid foul of all sorts; innumerable herds of cattle, i.nd flodes of sheep feed in Romney and ./elland marshes; it supplies .uondon and its
environs with excellent fruit; the bov/els of the earth
. -.re well stored with fullers' earth; reat plenty of
grain grows in the north and east parts of Kent, and the
Weald produces timber for the royal navy, and wood for
the iron furnaces in abundance.
wheat, oats, barley, peas and beans were grown in the arable .lanu. of Boys' eastern division, while travellers like Defoe were struck by the orchards of apples and cherries about naidstone. In addition, Kent was famed for its hop gardens, which grew steadily in acreage throughout the eighteenth century.
So close a relationship did have its dangers. Pruit, ahd especially hops, required sizeable initial capital outlays and constant attention throughout the growing season, but uhtil the harvest was finally gathered in, there was always the possibility of its being destroyed by pests or the weather. Since the late-seventeenth-century depression in grain, meat and wool prices, cash crops, along with dye-stuffs and millet-seed, had been intensely cultivated to maintain the profitability of essentially arable enterprises. Thus, if they failed, if tastes changed, or if a glut elsewhere flooded the London market, farmers faced temporary distress or perhaps bankruptcy. In general, however, rents and prices in the Home bounties v/ere higher than the national average between 1690 and 1750, and showed few signs of declining in the next decades. Kent was spared the traumas of enclosure in the late eighteenth century, and contemporary descriptions of the yeoman class suggest a life of solid prosperity rather than whole-sale annihilation in the quest for ever larger properties.^

1 G. Seymour, A New Historical, Topographical and oomrnercjLg.] Survey of the. Oi_ti_e_s, Towns and Villages of the County of ~i.ent (GanterburyTl776; , PP xi-xii. ~~
2 D. Defoe, ^ Tour through the whole Island of j-remt Britain,
ed. i". Rogers (London, 1971;, P- 13U.
3 j. A. Baker, 'Agricultural 1-ricec, Production ,..nd .i^.rketing,
\-n th rjnecial reference to the iiop Industry: North-^',.st Kent 1G80-1760 1 (Univ. of Kent x^h.D. thesis 1976), ii. chap.-.;, 9-13;
and P. Ha t hi a s , The_jjr e wing Industry in England 1700 -18 o 0 (Corabridge, I9bc v';, o. "$^5 and table p.~^:35V ' --"--
^ iiingay, ^uglish sanded oociety in the Eighteenth 0_ejr^1;irpv, pp. 50-1 5 Lasted, IT500-1.

The only notable exception to this overall pattern came
during the late 1770's, and perhaps because of its very un-familiarity it was the more severely felt and resented. The diary of Richard Hayes, the well-to-do yeoman of uobhaiii, reveals that from an early date the farming community h~d been aware
of the impact of the .jnerican War on the markets. On 21 September 1776 he wrote:
Dartford harket. I was not there, by having amusement
enough at home, neither does it seemingly (at present)
require my immediate attendance, although I have old
corn to dispose of. /here being: a great demand for
corn abroad, on act of ye nation's Wise Heads (or worse Heads) in irritating ye Americans so that they will not
suffer any of. their plentiful country provisions, corn
etc., to be sent to any of our Plantation islands & if
they would our shipping are so stationed to prevent it,
by making Prizes of them. So th,..t this war may effectively
be called an Unnatural war. Unnatural.
j^y 1 February 1778? Hayes 1 sympathy with the colonists had evidently hardened. He noted:
The i-arliament being soon to meet (this week; to make
enquiry into ye state of ye Nation, relating to this
unnatural war, that has been carried on for some time
against our best allies or friends the Americans.
,ind on 27 February 1778 he recorded:
A general Fast. But we now begin to find we must restore
peace to the Americans. I was not at Church. I do not
like this War.

Fellow feeling with the oppressed farmers of .unerica may well have coloured Hayes 1 attitule, bu. with the entry of ":>8Jice and . 0-0ain into the war, the disruption of commerce probably left
his old corn mouldering in its bo.rns for want of buyers.
Th.-t the plight of the agricultural interest was an unhap-oy
one for a number of reasons is testified by two letters which appeared in the ^entish Gazette early in 1780. The first, from 'A Country Gentleman 1, ran thus:

. Arnold, A Yeoman of Kent; /ji Account of uich.rd Hayes
;/3-1790) and of the Village of Cobham in which he Lived
Farmed (London, 194-9), P-

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The pursuit of this unfortunate i...r, has been, by some people, l~id at the door of the country gentlemen; it
is high time they should convince the world of the falsehood of such insinuations, and by their conduct demonstrate that it h.;.s not been p-tronised by them.
Give me leave to ask a few questions. '/hat has the country gentleman got by this war? At the beginning
of it the lands of England sold for thirty to thirty-three years purchase; fix it at thirty-one; and suppose their annual produce twenty millions - they were then worth
620 millions.,- What are they worth now? sunk to twenty-five years purchase and lower - they are not now worth 500 millions; the difference, 120 millions, added to
the thirty-six millions already expended (making in all 156 millions; is the loss this country has already sustained in five years pursuit of this blessed war. ^re the country gentlemen the better for this;' what are the advantages they have obtained? - an additional price on all necessary foreign commodities, increase of taxes, difficulty in obtaining their present rent, the future
prospect of their tenants breaking around them. Jorn,
within these two years, has fallen thirty, nay forty, per
cent, hay much the same; hops, the great staple com-
modity, of this county, has this year been sold for a
song.

A few weeks later 'A Kentish Yeoman', having outlined the conduct

of the war, observed:

Now, you will ask perhaps, what is all this to us? Why
I'll tell you, a great deal. For had it not been for
these things, hops would never have been sold at 30 to
40s. a hundred, wheat at 71 10s. a load, this year;
nor would you have paid nine pence and ten pence for your sugar - why every load of wheat, barley or malt, every hundred of hope, every b..le of cloth, every ton of lead or tin, every branch of linen, woollen, toy, and hardware manufactury, sent out of this country, is by these means loaded with an additional and heavy tax for want of shipping, and re-taxed again by a heavy insurance which as they raise the price in foreign markets, both lessen the demand for the commodity, and diminish the value of it at home to the loss of the farmer ^nd manufacturer: and every pound of tea, sugar, currants, raisins, rice, and indigo, every ounce of slices, every hundred of deals, and every ton of hemp and iron imported, nay the glass
of wine you may happen to be drinking and the pipe of
tobacco you may now be smokiir over this paper, cost you,
my friend, as well as the nation from 20 to $0, nay, in
some articles, 501. in the hundred, mor| than they would
have done h-d it not been for this war.

Low farm prices, the falling value of land and rent-rolls, the

dislocation of trade, and the inflated cost of the essentials

of .Life, comin ; as they did on top of high rates - nd taxes, could

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. entish Gazette, 19-22 Oen. T/80.
rentish uazette, 2^-2o j'eb. 1780.

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not be ignored in a rural community where the last remnants of iron and textile industries still struggled on. i-, either could
it be longer doubted that Government oore the overwhelming share of responsibility.
Ill

In 1769 the Kentish gentry had not been disposed to believe wilkes 1 tales of secret influence and corruption. Jy 1780, defeat in war and economic distress hc.d taught many of them to think differently, on the opposition benches r>urke .:xnd ohelburne sensed that the change was mirrored right across the nation, and launched their long-meditated offensive for economical reform. The influ-ence of the Jrown was too extensive, both inside Parliament and without. The National i/ebt was too high, ^.nd threatened to bestow on succeeding generations the burdensome legacy of a profligate
A

and designing minority. Contracts and honours, together with exemption from the Land-Tax, were fundamentally altering the balance between the landed and commercial interests. All these were potent arguments in a county such as i^ent where merchants and fund-holders had long been acquiring the estates of stricken

p gentlemen, and where ministerial power was openly exerted at election time. However, the militant upsurge of 1779-oG was not inspired or harnessed by opposition. It was rather the unpred-ictable and confused reflex-action of stunnea and disillusioned men lashing out wildly at half-imagined phantoms, ^nd from the dust tossed up by its wilful independence, the association movement was fashioned.
;tt a Yorkshire county meeting on 30 December 1779, the Kev. Christopher V/yvill and a number of prominent North Riding gentle-1 For the suggestion that the level of government borrowing had a direct bearing upon the value of 1 aid see C. Clay, 'The x-rice of freehold Land in the late Seventeenth and eighteenth Cen-turies', iteon. Hist. Rev., and Sev. xxvii. (1974), 132-5,
185-9.
2 oee table in u. 2. Jard, I'lie finance of a anal Builclinv, in eighteenth-Century .'Jn^lamT G--i'ord, 197-7 ';, p. 1 ZH".

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men secured a petition requesting relief, and then formed them-selves into a committee of correspondence in order to make contact v/ith like-rninded groups, The u~y having been -pointed, other counties followed suit, and with the adherence of Middlesex the full weight of the .vilkite tradition was thrown behind the snow-balling campaign. The York assembly and the text of its address were reDorted in the Canterbury Journal in January 1?801, but for some weeks no positive response was forthcoming. One writer in the Kentish Gazette urged:
At a time when many counties of England intend to apply
to Parliament for an enquiry into the public expenditure,
and for a reduction of the enormous salaries paid to
individuals, it is hoped that you will not be the last
to join in such fair and reasonable requests. It seems
indeed unnatural to suppose that any landed man of what-
ever condition or party, (if uninfluenced by place or
views of preferment) should withold his assent from
proposals so just ard reasonable.
Lord Mahon also seems to have detected a lingering hesitation in his home county, for on 17 January he wrote to Shelburne: 'I wish to know from your Lordship whether I can be of any service in Buckinghamshire where we have an estate; as 1 hope extremely
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that such things will be set on foot there at any rate. >:;
That this reluctance should have persisted in spite of
everything that had recently happened was due to the fears enter-tained about the propriety of associations, and to the activities of the resident friends of Government. The strength of the fo.rmer is indicated by the insertion in the Canterbury Journal of letters to and from Wyvill refuting the charge of illegality and disloyalty, while there is evidence that as Lord Lieutenant the Duke of Dorset used his prestige to dissuade men from a repetition of the York resolutions. He solicited Henry otreatfield 1 s backing for a

1 Canterbury Journal, 4-11 Jan. 1780.
2 Kentish Gazette, 19-22 Jan. 1780.
3 Stanhope MS3, U1590/;; 50: hahon to ohelburne, 17 January 1780. 4- Canterbury Journal 19-23 i-'eb. 1780.

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I moderate petition , :.nd closely questioned Lord i-.ahon as to the intentions of the leading Kentish reformers, .nahon was not to
be over-awed, however, and replied by restating his commitment
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to the fullest possible public debate and participation. In the next days Mahon laboured with energy and boundless enthusiasm to clear away every obstacle, and as a result of his zeal 'A freeholder1 was eventually able to write:
Courage brother Freeholders - Kent will not be dishonoured.
We shall meet in our collective capacity like the rest of
the Counties upon the Coast, and by far the majority of
the inland Counties. It is a measure so dreaded by the
friends of corruption, and national profusion that it is no wonder they throw every possible obstacle in the way of these constitutional assemblies. It is the strongest argument upon earth of their certain efficacy. If however there can be such a monster in reason, as a really inde-
pendent man, and yet an enemy to Reform in the expenditure
of the nation's money, and a rigid and exact economy, let
him come boldly forv/ard at the meeting, and give his
reasons; he will be listened to with candour, and replied
to with temper.
Thus while opposition was determined, popular excitement and involvement had reached a far higher pitch than in 177^ when Mahon last addressed the county.
'The meeting at the ^ourt House in I-L.idstone on 4- i-ioj?ch was
one of the most eventful and dramatic ever held in Kent, and easily

Zj. surpassed anything staged since 1701. Called on the requisition of a respectable body of men, no one doubted that the real object of the day's proceedings was 'to consider of the most probaule means to relieve the country frou ~jhe heavy burden under which
it labours.' Interest was intense, with aristocrats, gentry, clergy and freeholders all present in large numbers, o.nd from the opening dispute over the chair until the final division the contending parties argued, blustered, cheered ..nd complained with great vigour and passion.

1 otreatfield i-itJS. U908/015/1: Dorset to .otreatfield. nd. 1780. 2 Stanhope i.o3. U1590/248: Mahon to Dorset, nd. 1780.
~5 iientisli Gazette., 6-9 jj'eb. 1780.
4 Kentish Gazette, 4-8 n-:.r. 1780.

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Pew can have disagreed with Lord i-iahon, when in ?. few words
he 'shov/ed the right of the subject to assemble and petition parliament under any and every grievance with which they were oppressed 1. However with this Diece of 1689 doctrine alj. unity abruptly ceased, since at least two addresses were to be sub-mitted. 'The first was brought forward by Filmer Eonywood, who asserted the necessity there was for the kingdom at Iar0-e to enquire into the enormous expense of government, retrench the undue influence that prevailed, and abolish those places which are burdensome and useless'. He believed his petition was 'moderate and respectful', and informed his audience that it h ,,d the cheerful acquiescence of his distinguished father, Sir John Honywood. The Earl of itadnor was warm in his applause and appro-bation, and declared 'his motives to be wholly intended to re-trench the enormous abuse of public money'. He said that, 'formerly we had for our money, glory, prosperity and commerce, but now no advantages do we know of but to placemen, pensioners and contractors'; and concluded: 'I know no reason why they should grow fat as we grow thin, and in the same proportions'. This petition having been read aloud, a second was strenu-ously advocated by oir Horace K^nn. haidstone's staunchly inde-pendent rl.P. argued that he rose 'to oppose not petitioning, but to object to Committees, as improper and unjust'. He believed 'debates in Parliament should be held sacred'; and therefore condemned 'any tribunal constituted by dictatorial authority, to censor their proceedings'. Hence, while he was a friend to Burke' s establishment Bill, and quite assured of Iiony wood's integrity, oir Horace warned that 'the consequences of associ-ations might carry him far beyond what he intended.' The alter-native address thus differed from that first proposed, only in omitting all mention of a committee of correspondence formed to a. (r;itate for the desired reforms.

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A number of influential individuals seemed to share bir
Horace Mann's mis.^ivin^s. Jhe Duke of Jorset 'would ever stand
up for the freedom of the subject 1; but informed the meeting that 'he knew of no undue influence 1, and that 'even the xving
did not make use of that influence which was in his power, as
six only out of twelve lords of the jjedch^nber were in Parliament'. Thex.Lord -ieutenant supported the second petition because in his opinion associations were 'extremely dangerous'; and advised 'unity, as the proper and true means for an Lngiishman to assure success', bir Edward iierin~ echoed Dorset's sentiments by counselling: 'Let us not dictate, but unanimously conquer 1. Even the patron of I-iew Romney had to admit some abuses in a system where M.P.s were 'bought and sold like ginger-bread men'. Yet
as a life-long friend of Government, Dering urged the then still plausible belief that j^ord North could be relied upon to check the decline in standards, and suggested that the alarmist cries of the popular purty had been fomented in the hope of making gains at the next election. At heart, however, Bering and Dorset had no sympathy v/ith the reforming aspirations of lionywood or iiann, and it is impossible to escape the conclusion that they had espoused the latter's petition simply because it offered the
best prospect of frustrating the radical campaign in Kent.
In the long-run, such a policy only increased political
divisions, since Lord north's failure to make voluntary concessions and his sledge-hammer destruction of the Roc_d.nghams' programme, spoke volumes upon the untrustworthy character of ministerialists, and pushed the reformers into more extreme paths, wn 4- inarch, however, the choice before the freeholders appeared straight-forward enough, ^ord H-hon made a last bid to quiet the audience's fears:
The important business has been moved and objected to on

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the whole, but nothing objected to in p.~rt; nothing can be objected to. Can men object to the aooiition of sinecures, places, unmerited pensions or exorbitant contracts? Not an objection is made; but another pet-ition^is produced... There is no association proposed, tho 1 Lord Gamden says they are perfectly legal, Hr. Dunning says the same thing, and the Grown lawyers them-selves have declared it also, The King's Attorney General says that associations and committees are perfectly le;3 al.
His interest is otherwise and his principles are hostile
to the cause of freedom; yet he allows it. i3ut it stands
on a still firmer basis; for by the Constitution itself
neither committees nor associations are illegal. But
at present none are proposed.
itecent experience of associations in America and Ireland sounded the alarm in some Kentish breasts. Yet dissenters had frequently combined for their mutual benefit, and the collapse of the 1769 addresses without tangible results argued strongly the case for coordination and planning. Thomas Townshend may finally have tipped the scales on Honywood's side when he declared: 'No corres-pondence or association was intended, but a committee appointed for the purpose of conducting the petition 1. This geHture towards local independence involved a retreat from the Yorkshire and metropolitan position, but for Kent it was essential if economical reform was not to be lost sight of in a jungle of constitutional disputations.
otill unconvinced, Sir Horace hann urged that both petitions should be circulated throughout the county in order to obtain
a fairer expression of opinion than could be gathered at a meeting of only one eighth of the freeholders. '/iscount Dudley thought likewise: '...as to a majority of the present company, 1 he pointed out, 'that cannot be the sense of the county for they are not all
- freeholders, and how can their names be taken?' These were
little more than del^yina: tactics, and provoked great confusion. Sir Edv/ard Dering called on the adherents of the second petition to leave the hall and thereby reveal the true strength of their opponents, ii.; 1. Borritt advised both parties to retire together as a mark of unity, and jilliam Deedes suggested two lists be

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left for signature. All were impracticable ana a series of
votes ensued. The need for a petition of some sort v/as generally agreed, but when Hony wood's formula emerged victorious the day's
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events concluded amid frenzied scenes.

1'he stage had thus been set for ^ent's participation in a
unique experiment in extra-parliamentary protest, however we
must not fall into the trap cunningly laid by the county's anti-reformers, and concentrate on the details of the two petitions, to the neglect of their shared aims. respite all other disagree-ments, Sir Horace Mann was as committed as Lord I-iahon and JB'llmer honywood to the fundamental tenets of the Opposition and Yorkshire campaigns. 'Jhese were expressed to the House of Commons in the followin manner.
bhoueth
ihat your Petitioners cannot view the expensive l;ar,
in which this Country is engaged with the Comoined j.-ov.;ers
of .u'rai.-Co ana 3pain, the rapid decline of the Lritish
- lapire , the great loss of dominion, the decrease of Englist luanuf acturers , the annihilation of a Large Portion of
the National Commerce, the alarming magnitude of the Public i)ebt , the present and undue influence of the Crown, the enormous load of burdensome t ;-.xes yearly increasing, the diminished resources of the Nation, and the distressed state of the Landed Property of this Kingdom, without
calling upon this Honourable House, by every tie of honour, interest, duty, to take the most speedy and effectual
means to avert the ruin of this lately flourishing and
happy country, by a due exertion of those powers which
the Constitution has vested in this Honourable House.

ihe petition then went on to advise 'that an immediate examination be made into the expenditure of public money, into the manner of making all public contracts, and into the mode of keeping and passing all public accounts, furthermore the House was asked to p investigate ways of reducing 'exorbitant emoluments and pensions'. Here at last the pent-up anger and frustration of the late 1770 's hid round full release, and over the next three years Lord Hahon and the Kent Committee were to toil as arduously as ruy other reformers to secure their relief.

1 Quoted in otanhope hbo. u1 590/253: '^e solves of the Committee of the County of Kent', f. 1.
2 Ibid. , ff. 1-3.

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Chapter Three
Kent and the County Association Movement
1780 -

To Professor Christie, the Yorkshire Association v/^s 'the
first effective extension of modern political radicalism, in Great
1
Britain from the metropolitan region into the provinces'. never before had an attempt been mo,de to organise public protest on such a scale, but in 1780 this seemed essential if the impetus gained in the previous year was not to be misdirected and lost. Thus, while the Lent county meeting was a highly significant achieve-ment in itself, the efforts of Lord hahon and a number of like-minded men to superintend the reform cause during the next few years represents an entirely new phase in the development of local public opinion. The surviving evidence on the iventish movement is much less extensive than that available for Yorkshire, yet it is still possible to show how the county participated in, and sometimes even led, Wyvill ' s national campaign.

I

On 4- March, the comity's deliberations had centred upon the rights and wrongs of formal association, and it had been at length agreed to establish nothing more than an independent committee,

2 'effectually to ~oromote the petition'. In conformity with this resolution, a meeting was assembled in the evening at Maidstone ' s Star Inn, where the membership and rules of the new body were determined, and x/ord hahon appointed as its chairman. The records of the Kent Committee's subsequent proceedings shed invaluable light on provincial agitation for economical and parliamentary reform in 1780 and 1782. However before moving on to consider

1 I. d. Christie, 'The Yorkshire Association, 1780-4-: A Study in Political Organisation', in Myth and Reality, p. 261.
2 Kentish Gazette, 4-8 war. 1780; and Stanhope ijSS. U1590/J53: 'resolves of the Committee of the County of Kent', f.

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these events more fully, much may be learned about the compelling forces at work in county politics from an examination of those men nominated to serve on the committee.
It will be recalled that at the height of the 1779 invasion scare, the Grand Jury opened a subscription and published a list /\

of the most distinguished contributors. Among the 32 men present at the Assizes on 24 July were four peers or sons of peers, five knights or baronets and six clergymen, as well as four sitting and two former Kentish ii.P.s. Of the additional 41 names given in the advertisement, eight were peers or sons of peers, three were baronets or knights, eight were clergymen (including the Archbishop and iJean of Canterbury) and there were another three sitting and four former M.P.s. Here, with only a very few excep-tions, we have the principal representatives of Kent's landed wealth and prestige, and it cannot be doubted that their influence and respectability would have ensured them a seat on the committee. Yet we find that only eight of the 73 subscribers (Sir R. Beftenson, Rev. ii. r-iarshall, Rev. A. D. Brockman, J. oav/bridge, A. H. Shove, Lord Romney, J. ;j?oke and i\ Townshdnd) chose to act alongside

2 ±jord Mahon. The conclusion must therefore be that conservatism still predominated in the top-most ranks of the social hierarchy. More than half of the 1779 list absented themselves from tip.idstone on 4 Karen, and 26 of those who did attend failed to join the

5 committee. Scruples about associations may have deterred some, but for the majority the military und financial chaos of recent times had evidently not been sufficient to snap the fetters of Court honours and old allegiance.
Who then were the 100 men who made up the original Kent Com-mittee'; Fourteen of them were peers or their sons, most of whom

1 See infra? App. 1 (a).
2 Jomo. ,"c infra, App. 1 (b;.
3 See lint at end of report in Kentish Gazette, 4-: 1 Mar. 1780.

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had family or property ties with the county. One such was
XI Sackville ALT'ton, eighth Earl of Thanet , whose ancestors had been resident at ^ainharn in the Late Middle Ages and purchased their Liothfield estate in 15z:-2. ^y 1780 Thanet h-,d acquired
a long whig pedigree ...nd electoral interest in Cumberland and Westmorland; but his Kentish connections remained strong especially after his union with the daughter of Lord John Philip Sackville. 'i'he seventeenth Baron Abergavenny possessed an ancient title and lands in Kent as well as at ^ridge, while the second Sari of Radnor and his half-brother William Kenry Bouverie had property near Folkestone. Radnor was a vocal opponent of Lord North, and all the named aristocrats could probably be counted members of the parliamentary Opposition.
I/specially potent seems to have been the influence of the Ghatharnite group. In 1769 the Great Commoner had guided John Calcraft, and in 1780 his non-party dictum, his viev/s on reform, and especially memories of his glorious victories in India, Canada and on 2 the Ahine, continued to give inspiration. Links between Hayes and Chevening had existed throughout the eighteenth century, and were reaffirmed when Lord Hahon married Lady Hester Pitt, Larl Stanhope, his son, and the second Earl of Chatham were all on the Kent Committee, and on 26 April 178u the young William Pitt wrote thanking his brother-in-law for the good opinion expressed over a petition which he had recently drafted.
He then went on:

'Jlie great object o:: the Petition, the i ^u.^^.a0- cf the increased influence of the Crown and the applying of some regulations to the dispersion of public money, which have by degrees brought us to this alarming crisis, is too interesting at ti:is time not to call forth the People, P. null, Guide to the Kent County Archives Office (Kent County Council, 1958) , p. 156; and J. E. Doyle, /he Official on.ronage of England Showing the Succession, Digniti j G ynd Offices of Every Peer from 1066 to 188$ (London, 188oT7 iii 2 Por example, HT Country Gentleman 1 in Kentish Gazette, 19-22

Jan. 1780.

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and every Individual who is entrusted wi'oh a seat in the Legislature.
Both 1-iahon and Pitt found a political mentor in Lord Shelburne, and with so many shared principles and assumptions it was not surprising that in October 1780, the future Prime i-iinister was p co-opted on to the Kent Committee.
At Cambridge, Pitt had been the moving spirit in an under-graduate circle which included Viscount Al thorp, Edward James Eliot and John Jeffreys Pratt , and the same men were active in 5
the reformist Goostree's Club during 1780. Youthful friendship spilled over into daily politics, and each of Pitt ' s fellows was chosen at the Star Inn on 4 March. Al thorp and his father, the first Earl Spencer, were typical whig aristocrats^"; Pratt was the son of Chatham's Lord Chancellor ; and Eliot (who was later to marry one of Pitt ' s sisters) came of a West-country borough-owning family which in 1780 had placed its seats at the disposal

6 of Opposition.- Finally in this group we must mention Thomas
Townshend, a .vhig, who was to hold office under liockingham and Shelburne. In 1783 Townshend' s sister married the second Earl of Chatham, and as Lord Sydney he himself became Pitt ' s Home
n

Secretary. (A close-knit core of this type gave the Kent Com-mittee many advantages which kept it together when others in Wiltshire and Buckinghamshire were falling by the way-side, while the magic of Chatham continued to rally the gentry to renewed struggles.
Among the remaining members were a number of politicians,
such as Jr -,ss Jrosby of Chislehurst, the former jilkite xjord Mayor of London, Thomas Coke of Norfolk, and ..hilip Lonywood, an

1 otanhope uSS. U1590/248: Pitt to nation, 26 Aor. 1780.
2 'Resolves', f. 24.
3 J. Ehrman, The Younger jritt; the Ye..rs of .^cclaim (London, 19-9;, P. 107.
4 uamier and Jrooke, iii. 459-60.
5 namier and Lrooke, iii. 324.
6 Namier and Brooke, ii. 390.
7 Namier and drooke, iii. 5 r 4-6.

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Appleby h.P., v/hose primary interests lay outside the county. Kov/ever the majority of the rank and file was drawn from within the Kentish gentry. Sir John Honywood and oir ^ichard Bete.nson were among the eight recorded baronets or knights, but, as would be expected, it was the lesser, untitled families who figured most prominently. 'The Arnolds of West Court, uillingham, the Cobbs of Ightham l^ctory and the Dalisons of Hamptons, the Pol-hills, the .jokes, the Lilners of Aylesford, the ocotts of Scotts Hall and the norlands of Lamberhurst, were gentlemen of the middling sort, and were just those for whom the war had meant sacrifices. Some could boast generations of landed forbears, but others, like the James family, the Ghapmans and the Streat-fields, had risen more recently from merchant or yeoman stock. They laboured under fewer prejudices than the established county families, were aware of the opportunities for a progressive society, and felt themselves entitled, to a share in political decision-making.
A final group that demands some mention is that formed by
the fourteen clergymen, There existed during the late eighteenth century, a desire among some Cambridge educated clerics to reform the Thirty-Nine Articles in order to avoid the restraints of ritual and to permit the free interpretation of scripture. Dis-satisfaction surfaced in the Confessional of Francis .^lackburne, and in the Feathers' Tavern petition of 1772, and involved men

1 such as Jr. John Jebb and ,;yvill himself. The Kentish clergy h-d long been active in politics, and it seems likely that some of those who participated in the 1780 movement entertained the sympathies of the liberal Anglic~n p^rty. i'he ,iev. Dr. ...ichard

oykes, church and otate in ^n^land in the ^ip^hteenth Cent j.r ondon, 1934-J> i^P- '.oO-r.; and. A. Burgess Barlow, Citizenslil n
and Conscience (Philadelphia, 1962), pp. 14-9-50.

r~J ' d
- cycrcxt, rector of ^enshurst from 1773-1735, entered St.
Gathrine's College, Cambridge, in 17>Z<L and can hardly have
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escaped the influence of Jlackburne or the aev. Thomas ^dwards. The rcev. Samuel Preston took his M.A. at ^ueen's (where ,<;yvill also studied; in 177^, and then served as rector of Chevening
2 until 1805- 'Jhe i-tev. .c'rederick Dodsworth was at Christ's in the
late 1750's, and between 1767 and 1782 was vicar of Galne and chaplain to ohelburne , while his brother Francis, though not a Cambridge man, held a living at uodington near ^aversharn , and
was engaged in the confused exchange between Wyvill and the master of Bowood in 1782. A critical attitude towards the established Church and an acquaintance with petitioning and associations was ideal preparation for would-be reformers, and it may well be that in some parts of Kent the pulpit was effectively employed in spreading the radical gospel.

II

By the time the freeholders of Kent met at I4aidstone , bir
George Savile had already presented the petition of his constitu-ents, and with the national campaign thus far advanced, it was amongst the earliest duties of the newly constituted committee to elect Lord Mahon, Thomas Streatfield and the rcev. id.cho.rd Rycroft 'to Confer with the Deputies from other Committees, at the St.
5 Albans 'Tavern'. Almost from its opening on 13 March, the first
meeting of deputies was torn by disagreement. The Westminster delegation argued that only the economical reforms of the riocking-hams should be demanded, while V/yvill pressed equally vehemently for the inclusion of constitutional changes in the programme, and

1 J. A. Venn, ^lumni Cantabrigiensgs (Cambridge, 1953), v. 393
2 Ibid., v. 189.
3 Ibid., ii. 315.
4 Hull, Guide, p. 173; and .<ev. C. Wyvill, Political rapers, chiefly respecting the attempt of the County of Y.ork, ; nd other considerable districts, commenced in 1779, and continued in several subsequent yearn, to effect a ' _
ment of Great Britain (York, 1794-1806), iv. 33 ;-7
5 'Resolves' , f. 4^

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was supported by deputies from Essex, Kent ana the other metro-politan districts. ,L compromise wc,s eventually patched up, by which the proposed shortening of parliaments was to be shelved, but this really satisfied nobody.
characteristic optimism, .uord Mahon told jyvill that .
in his opinion, the scheme, if properly handled, would:
produce 11 the good Effects th..t could be exaected,
from a general Union of independent Men, and mutu-.l
Confidence. I admire the V/isdom of the Person who
drew up that Clause so unanimously approved of in
our Committee and I find every Hour uore and more
reason, if possible, for being of the opinion, that the Question of Annual Parliaments, or of Shortening the duration of Parliaments, ought to be quite left

out of Sight for the present, and ought not to be mentioned on any account whatever. -If that Question

is Started, & not Stopt by the excellent Letter of
Mr. Wyvill's, We Cause of the People is, for ever,
gone; because Opposition will be absolutely knocked
to pieces. - If it is not St arted at all, I nave rhe
btrongest Reason ... to be thoroughly persuaded that
our great and good Friends will be quite Satisfied. t
Wot for the last time, Mahon had shown himself willing to sacrifice part of the Wilkite inheritance in the pursuit of unity. However, he had misjudged the mood of the radical party, the
. . Lockin^hams , ..nd even his own committee, and as the tussle at Westminster developed, all his hoped-for moderation evaporated. The events of the spring and early summer of 1780 have been often related, and will be touched on here, only where they illuminate the behaviour of the Kent Committee and the county's eighteen ...P.s. On 25 harch, Lord Hahon was requested by his committee to return thanks to Edmund Burke, Sir George Savile, Isa-c Barre-, John Dunning and Philip Jennings Clerke 'for the several notions made, or Bills brought in, by them, to Parliament this Session. 1 Public recognition of notable achievements was designed to emphasise the solidarity among reformers, and on
this occasion > .rticul-'.r mention was made of juorcl Shelburne's supoort for 'the Cause of the People'; and John Crewe ' s proposal 5 to disfranchise revenue officers. Ch-,th. unites and cochin ;h., mi tes

MSS: Hahon to .vyvill, ^1 Har. 1780. 2 'resolves ' , f . 6.
~$ 'resolves', i'f. 5-6.

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were apparently striving tov/ards u. common goal, and there was every indication that Lord North's ejection would not be long delayed.
,vhen the Kent Committee next met, on 22 april, the political climate had radically altered, although not before ministers ku d been given a severe fright. On 6 .ipril, Charles harsham hc.d presented the official Kent petition with its 3,120 signatures, and on the same day Sir Horace nann laid before the House his counter-petition on behalf of a further 1,830 freeholders. Taken together, the two petitions announced that well over half the Kentish electorate was in favour of economical reform, ah el marked a major advance in popular participation since the wilkite address

1 of 1769- They were also significant in a wider context, since their appearance was made at a crucial moment, and helped set
the tone of the ensuing debate. Faced with fresh evidence of the nation's discontent, independent H.P.s deserted the Government
and approved Dunning's celebrated motion that 'the influence of the Grown has increased, is increasing and ought to be diminished'. Opposition was jubilant, but as Fox told the Kent Gomnittee:
... in one of the fullest Houses that we have ever known,
a complete approbation has been given to the Sentiments
of the Petitions, with a promise to attend to their
Prayers. How that Promise will be performed, it is our
duty to watch. If we persevere in our exertions, I think
there is little or no doubt of obtaining our objects- but
if we are lulled into Security by success, it is but too
probable that the Representatives of the People may re- 2-
lapse into their former inattention to their Constituents. Dunning's momentous resolution was the zenith of the reform campaign and won universal acclaim. In reality, however, it was an empty gesture and fostered hope that could never bs fulfilled. When it came to translating their votes into concrete acts, li.P.s hesitated, and. thereby allowed a reprieved ..cLiinistration to strangle each of Opposition's faltering schemes. Pliilip Jennin ;s

1 For petitions see Com. Jour, xxxvii. 7 ~:>1 -2.
2 'Resolves', f. ia.

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Clerke, for example, lamented the loss of his contractors 1 bill

in the Lords:

The House of Peers have done that for the minister which
he was ashamed or afraid to do himself, .and rendered my
feeble endeavours to serve my Jountry ineffectual. A bad
presage of their future intentions, when reforms of
greater Consideration may come before them.
Nothing but a firm Union of the jriends of freedom
and the Constitution can preserve our sinking Liberties;
I trust that will prevail against that Corrupt Influence
which has so long operated to the disgrace & ruin of this Country.

i'ar from donning the mantle of reform, as iSir ijdward De-ring had

once predicted, ±jord North had proved himself inimical to its

very principle and quite deaf to the repeated pleas of numerously

signed and respectable petitions, x-'or the Kent Committee, as

for Wyvill and many others, the immediate course was to adopt

a more radical course.

When Lord Mahon and his fellow deputies made their report

on 23 March it had been declared that a 'General Union' of pet-

itioning counties was 'essentially necessary in the present
2
situation of public affairs' ; while on 22 April the committee

departed still further from the plan of 4 March by adopting the

following resolutions in favour of:

1st. The economical Reform requested by the i-etitions of the People; that plan of strict and rigid frugality now
indispensably necessary in every department of the btate;
that most important Regulation for reducing the unconsti-tutional Influence of the urown.

2nd. ji'he Proposition for obtaining a more equal representation in Parliament, by the addition of at least One Hundred
Members, to be chosen, in a due proportion, by the several Counties of Great Britain.

3rd. The Proposition for Members of the House of Commons to
be elected to serve in Parliament for a term not exceeding
three years.

Gone, for the moment at least, was the spirit of moderation that

had pervaded Kent's county meet in;;; ...no the conference of deputies.

1 'Resolves', f. 10.
2 '^esolves', f. 5-
3 ' _:eso.Lvcs', f.

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L rd Ha-ioi. stood ur et Kaids'co.^ ^i 3 cul^ ^nd 35.lied npon free-holders to endorse tiie vory same clause, which, three and a
half months ejrlier, he had praised Jyvill ::or settin asiae, -j.-n.ci the meeting responded with an overwhelming vote of confidence 'I
in the conduct of its committee.

In spite of this popular enthusiasm, however, reform hed
become a dead-letter in parliamentary terms by the beginning of July. Dismay among Opposition groups at the series of reverses after 6 April, changed, rapidly into an open breach between the more conservative followers of Burke and Rockingham, and those who shared Shelburne and wyvill's desire to pursue electoral modifications as well as the original whig package. Jhis division wi,s widened yet further in early June, when, for almost a week, London was convulsed and terrorised by the Gordon Riots, and tentative negotiations took place between Lord Korth and

2 the Rockinghams. Recognising the danger to the popular cause, John Sawbridge lost no time in using the July county meeting

3 to repair some of the damage. He reminded freeholders straight away that 'your petitions have not been regarded1; and, while acknowledging that 'some late riots might perhaps have thrown
a damp on these measures', asserted vigorously that the destruc-tion was due to 'an indiscriminate body of people... of the very dregs of the people... of no principle, of no religion, who had assembled themselves only to do mischief. Such a distinction, and many soothing words were required ii the concept of associ-ations and the techniques of public protest were to be extracted from the mire into which they had been plunged by the folly and excess of the ±-rotestant Association. The restoration of law and order and the detailed investigation of the tumults gradually

1 Report in Kentish Gazette, 5-6 July 1780.
2 I. R. Christie, 'The harquis of Rockinghnm and .Lord North's

Offer of a Joalition, June-July 1780', in myth and Reality DP. 109-32. **
3 Kentish Gazette, 5-$ July,1780.

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replaced panic v;ith more sober reflections; out an atmosphere
in which men openly canvassed the ri^ht to beo.r arms, was scarcely suited to the revival of a newly radical reform movement.
Ill
The Gordon Riots having brought down the curtain on the
first act of Wyvill's dramatic experiment in national agitation, it was not surprising that ministers should seek to capitalise upon their opponents' disarray. Lews from America was also more encouraging, and thus, with reports of the victory at Charlestown circulating in the press, the King agreed to an autumn dissolu-tion. As in 1774} Opposition was cauaiit slightly unprepared; but, as Professor Christie has written, nation-^! politics still 2
managed to play 'an appreciable part in this general election'. I'iuch may therefore be learned about the awareness of Kentish public opinion by examining in turn the events in each of the county's constituencies.
i'he four boroupiis in which ministerial or private influence
was dominant, may be swiftly dealt with, since 1780 merely con-firmed the status quo. Sir l_,dward Dering was not challenged at New rcomney, neither was the admiral ty-urdnance monopoly at ^/ueen-borough where Sir Charles Frederick and 3ir ,<alter xtawlinson were returned unopposed. Contests did however take place at Sandwich and Hythe. Having gone over to opposition with Admiral Howe in 1779, Charles Brett could not expect to retain his seat at oandwich after the dissolution. Nevertheless in a government stronghold he attracted more than three hundred votes and came within sixty-four votes of his chosen successor ,oir .iiichard Button, . drett had divided alongside Dunning, while ^utton had spoken
out publicly against petitioning-'', so that, in the light of the

1 'Description of Ch>,rlestown' in r.entish Gazette, 1-5 July 1780. 2 1. i*. Christie, I'he -Jnd of north''s him.stry, 1780-1782 Gxmdon 1958;, P. x. '
3 jrarl. Hi si;., xxi. 108.

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borough's past and future anti-ministerial exploits, it seems unlikely that such considerations were wholly ignored. A similar situation may be inferred at Hythe where ^ich -rd James of the Kent Committee -.nd John Stevenson appeared on the interest of alderman oawbridge, but ware beaten off by the sitting Members. The pattern of Dover's representation also remained unaltered from that established in 177^-. In his 'State' of the constituen-cies, John Robinson wrote of the borough:
Mr. vrevanion uniformly and consistently votes against,
and merits an opposition. Whether it will be right to
rdve him one others must o'ucl^e and determine, but no one
deserves it more.
However, when c^ndidotes were put in nomination, only John Henniker was sent down with a Treasury mandate in his pocket to share the spoils with the former Wilkite. The expense of a pitched battle was likely to be excessive, and with corrupt influence a topic
of widespread concern, there was always the possibility that another safe seat ni^-ht be undermined.
The prospect of fresh ministerial defeats became even more
of a reality at Rochester. With his usual disregard of current public feeling, liobinson h-v.d looked forward to the election with confidence.
The interest of Government stands so favouraoly here
that it is hoped with management and attention, and a
sudden declaration at the moment, all being prepared,
that Sir George Rodney might b& carried with Kr. Hatton.
Mr. Gregory is always against.
Other observers, with first-hand experience of the mood among the freemen, knew better, and were not slow to predict electoral 5
difficulties. Rochester was to be alone among the Kentish borough to petition Parliament in the spring of 178$ for the adoption of remedies to re-establish the 'true principles' of the

1 Namier and Brooke, iii. 562.
2 Namier and Brooke, i. 315-
5 Ibid: Sandwich to i-iobinson, 23 Apr. 1780 and Commissioner jfroby to Sandwich, 31 >.u". 1780.

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i Constitution ; and in the autumn of 1780 many of those inhab-
itants who would subscribe to the view that 'the House of Commons does not sufficiently speak the Voice of the People 1, h-.d decided to support Nathaniel omith as well as Robert Gregory. Gregory had long sailed in the ^ockinghamite squadron, but Smith was a reformer cast in a more radical mould. His published address proclaimed:
Should I be so happy as to succeed, you may rely upon my constant Endeavours to shorten the Duration of Parliament,
to obtain a more equal Representation of the Peo^^e and
a reduction of the unnecessary expenditure of Public
Money, at this Eirne so properly demanded.
Smith received 270 votes, and although encouraging, this was
not enough to upset the re-election of Gregory and Finch Katton. Since the early eighteenth century the need for economy had
been a principal issue in the conflict between Maidstone's cor-poration and independent parties. Strict limits had frequently been placed upon the cost of civic celebrations, and had as often been ignored, - especially during the charter interregnum of the 174-0's. tiy 1780, therefore, the borough had accumulated consider-able debts and freemen could hardly fail to see their own plight as symptomatic of a national disease.
.;ittL local feeling running high in favour of reform, neither
the candidate of the ^arl of Aylesford, nor Sir Horace Mann,
could feel safe in their seats. Aylesford was an avid place-seeker, and his brother, Charles Finch, had only narrowly defeated Lord Hahon in a by-election in May 1777- Mann had not gone so far as i'inch and oppossL Dunning' s motion, but his detestation
of associations and dissension from Honywood's popular petition were common knowledge. Even Robinson could not over-look the significance of such contentious views when compilin;; his survey: Sir Horace Mann is canvassed against because on the
popular questions he has qone against, but he is often

1 Com Jour. , yxxix. 281.
2 Canterbury Journal, 29 Au,. - 5 Sept. 1780.

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for, and inclines to support Government and the present constitution.

. thus the time seemed ripe for i-iaidstone' s population of tradesmen

and dissenters to stem aside boldly from the protection of ^ord

- 'iomney and assert their undoubted electoral muscle. Clement

i1 ay lor, a Medway paper-miller, was their champion, and at his

first attempt he destroyed for ever the Finch interest. Hence-

forward, the politics of Kent's county town would be determined,

free from all aristocratic interference, between this increasingly

radical Dcirty and a solidly conservative corporation, oir Horace

Mann survived in 1780, but in 1784 this polarisation helped to

hasten his retirement.

On 5 September 1780 the Canterbury Journal carried the

following paragraph on the Canterbury election:

Known and respected as in?. Robinson and nr. Gipps are
among you for their amiable characters, and long experi-
enced integrity, they i^re certainly more worthy your support than any stranger, but they are doubly worthy
when standing opposed to a stranger who has forfeited every claim to your good opinion, by the barefaced breach of the most solemn promise, who, on the first day on which he sat in the House of Commons, voted in direct opposition to all he had professed on the day of his election; who, raised by your independent support to the honour of representing you, notoriously sola Iiis
own 3cat to a tool of the Minister, and ay b.-?ia.igiii^> I_is brother r'.^.to Parliament procured for IIL. a lucrative Government contract - which he tells you, and .probably T.-;ith truth, he has to share himself. Spurn then with contempt such a candidate, return honest citizens who
have always lived amon;^; you with credit and reputation,
and scorn to r;ive Lord Newhaven another opportunity of
enrichinv himself at the expense of your honour, and
independence. .'/hen you chose him first, it did you credit, because you thought him honest. You now knov; what he is.
If you rechoose him, you share his infamy.

To Baron Hewhaven (the former oir ,/illiam Mayne) it must have

seemed as if the wheel had come fu}.l circle, and that the frenzied

scenes of 1761 were being reenacted with unabated ferocity. On

this occasion his crime was that in the late 1770's he had not

abandoned his abhorrence of the .unerican rebellion, but had thrown

1 gamier and Brooke, iii. 100.
2 Canterbury Journal, 29 -up;. - 5 Sent. 1780.

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in his lot with ^ord North and enjoyed riches at his hands. Nevertheless, Kewhaven resolved to brazen out the accusations daily heaped at his door, and joined with his nephew Sir Henry

s\ Dashwood in order 'to take off the second votes'. .tanged against
him were Charles Robinson, the city's recorder and a prominent member of the Kent Committee, and the local hop merchant, George Gipps; and after an eight hour poll the ministerialists found
2 _ 'the spirit and virtue of the citizens irresistible 1. iiven more
than in 177^- 9 fear and cohtempt for placemen and the whole mechan-ism oi' influence motivated a large body of freemen, ~~nd events
in the late parliament had taught them to select their H.P.s wisely. Robinson and ^ipps were men of proven qualities, and
were to vote for reform until it ceased to be a major issue in

1785.

When attempting to assess Government's prospects in the county
of Kent, John Robinson constantly ran up against the problem of discovering a suitable candidate. At one moment he focused upon
. uewis I'homas Watson, the heir of Lord Sondes, noting: 'He is
not very averse to Government, and it is hoped he will succeed,
x

as he is the most moderate and in time may not be averse'. Later he sounded out j/rivy Seal Dartmouth's son, Lord Lewisham, only to conclude a fruitless search at the end of Au ust by lamenting to Jankinson:

Kent I find every day would do was there but a good man.
. Jut we have no ardour amongst our friends.
reticence on the part of Kentish ministerialists was
not wholly surprising, since when men gathered on 3 July to make nominations, their thoughts still ouzzed with the triumphs and

1 Canterbury Journal, 5-12 Sept. 1780.
2 Ibid.
3 gamier and ojrooke, i. 512-13-
4- Jhristie, 'j.'he End of North's Hiiiisi;ry, 17.^0^/82, p. 75: Robinson to Jenkinson, 21, 22, ;_.o n.u.•;. T/uO.

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betrayals of recent months. jjhe guiding presence of the Kent Committee was also much in evidence, ijord R;.hon took a leading; role, while the day's proceedings were recorded in the 'iiesolves'
"1

and a copy sent to Wyvill. Charles I-iarsham, who had delivered the county's petition, v/as proposed for a second term of office by oir Horace Mann, and 'unanimously received with every mark
of approbation by the freeholders'. His new colleague was to be j'ilmer Honywood, whose n ;.me had been inextricably linked with reform ever since 4- March. To Matthew ^obinson Morris, Honywood's family wealth had 'not arisen from plunder abroad or at home;
but from residence on their own estates with economy'; neither had his father 'danced attendance upon a Court'. These qualities, coupled with practical demonstrations of attachment to sound principles, carried the day, and ensured that when the dissolution came no one would have to venture a contest.
As the nominations closed, the freeholders listened to a heart-felt warning from the Rev. n. D. Brocuman:
. . . the times are critical, and unless the general election
brings an independent Parliament this kingdom is undone.
on the virtue of the people depends the salvation of our
country. For five years there has been no representation
of the peo-ole, if there haci, could Parliament say the
petitions of the people ought to be attended to, yet,
when propositions were offered, deserted every one of
them that could afford the people relief;
To what extent did the overall result in Kent reflect a conscious attempt to rectify this supposed evil". In the vote of 6 April, eleven Kentish K.P.s divided against Dunning and the remaining
p seven with him. All of the former group sought reelection in 1780 and two (Newhaven and D'inch) were defeated; while of the latter, five stood again with only Brett oeing predictably beaten. Thus when the new House assembled., ten Kentishmen Joined the adherents of iuord Korth, and eight ranged themselves on the

1 'Resolves', ff. '19-20. ^or report see Kentish Gazette,
July 1780.
2 iVirl. airro., xxi.

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opposition benches. But if the changes in personnel were not dramatic, it is worth pointing out that three of the four new

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Ii.P.s were members of the Kent Committee, and th~t in seven of the nine constituencies reform was raised as an issue.
IV

No sooner had the hustings been dismantled, than the leaders
of the county movement were seeking to resurrect and modify their plan of reform, ana. to regain the essential acquiescence of the bulk of opposition, curing the next year, however, public affcirs passed through a relatively tranquil phase, ,..nd the 'Friends of the People 1 had to be content with behind-the-scenes negotiations and planning in place of action without-doors. In this period of consolidation, .uord Kahon was an important figure, and, as o. Whale seems to have realised many years ago, there was a very real sense in which the Kent Committee was used to test the acceptability
of new ideas and to encourage others to resume the fight.
On 29 September 1780 Wyvill informed Lord I-Iahon of the
proposed course to be pursued in the forthcoming session.
I am authorised by bir George bavile to assure you, that
he has no objection to take the lead in moving the great
question, for meliorating the Parliamentary Representation, by the addition of one hundred Knights. But at the same time, he desires it may be well understood, he thinks it highly improper to agitate that question in the next Session of Parliament, unless a rational and feasible plan can be first prepared; and unless it shall appear, such
£a] prudent plan will be supported by the bulk of the
minority in Parliament. ahe _'irst condition Sir George
considers as absolutely and indisputably necessary; the
other condition, will admit a less strict and rigorous interpretation.
Jyvill V/.J.S sanguine that these stipulations could be satisfied without retarding the overall programme, x'here was certainly time to put together a 'rational ^nd well considered pi^n', while the '.r candidate^' had been by no means disgr .ced in the late

1 0. V/li le, 'The Influence of the Industrial devolution (1760- 1790) on the uemand for Parliamentary itefor-:! 1, j^i^.Ji..o. ,
4th bc.r. v. (1922), 104.

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elections.

In his reply Mahon declared th-:.t, f l should have a very contemptible Idea of our Negligence, and of the ^uestion itself , if the former condition could not be met; but with characteristic impatience he deprecated delay. 'I most heartily wish P. united support', he asserted, 'but at all events the question shall

2 be started some time this next session. ' »vyvill admitted to Savile that euch a response was 'not quite what I could have

5 wished it to be' ; nevertheless there w.~s no reason to believe that hahon would in any way injure the cause by an impetuous act. On the contrary, while these preliminary discussions were
goin-j ahead, Mahon was labouring in the i^ent Committee to hammer out a coherent policy of reform. A meeting on 19 October expressed its intention to co-operate with Yorkshire and Sir George Savile in 'restoring purity to Parliament'; and went on to recommend Mahon and all other members with a seat at Westminster 'to support to the utmost, ...the motion for adding to Parliament, at least One Hundred embers to be chosen in due proportion by the several Counties of Great .jritain 1 . i.ahon was probably also instrumental in procuring the resolution:
that tae obtaining of a law for taking the ouifrage of
the People in such a mode as to prevent both expense in elections, -.nd the operation of undue Influence therein,
is necessary towards ensuring the Freedom of Parliament;
and that in County ^lections, the taking of the .roll in
the several Hundreds, or in similar districts, would be
highly convenient to the electors, and would tend, in an exceeding great degree to prevent both undue Influence,
and Expense.
In the middle and late 1780's iiahon was to conduct an almost single-handed campaign to secure these alterations, which many radicals felt would increase the effectiveness of new Knights.
In 1780 the scheme was just part of a package for which Lord hp.hon

1 Wyvill, JLJ O 1 itice 1 r a-Q e^s, iii. 2o3-4: <yvill to Hahon, 29 Sept.
1780.

2 Xyvill l-i3S: Mahon to Wyvill, 5 Oct. 1780.
3 wyvill, Political ^ij^irs, iii. 265: .v.yvill to Savile, 14- uct.
1780.

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1 hoped to win the consent of Opposition.
when sending a copy of the Kentish resolutions to Shelburne
on 23 October, hah on stated his belief that when I...LJ.S reassembled, the Yorkshire movement would be supported by well over two hundred of them. Disagreements were to be expected, but he was convinced that 'firmness 1 to the principle of augmenting the county represen-tation was the best way of winning over the hesitant. 1 " Jyvill, for ;_is p-rt, acknowledged that the proposals were 'better adapted
to conciliate and unite all real friends of the j^u-^ic j.n the c^^on cause1; on the grounds, presunaoly, tL_.t they ^chievecL the
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most controversial reforms.^ liov/ever he does not appear to have reciprocated Mahon's confidence in the future allegiance of the Rockinghams. The last few months had taught Wyvill to cherish the independence of his association, and had seen him try unsuc-

Zj. cessfully to exclude all K.P.s from the meeting of deputies. Nevertheless, with public interest apparently on the wane, it was not easy to resist nation's efforts to concentrate upon an all-embracing parliamentary strategy. Opposition might prove fickle,
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yet without their assistance nothing could ever be achieved.
Lut would Burke and like-minded Whigs participate at all.
On 6 July, Mahon forwarded to Shelburne a copy of a letter lately arrived from Wyvill which reported the rumour that '...uord Rocking-ham is on the uoint of Joining us 1 * Hahon was sceptical, although he could not help remarking: '...for the sake of the public I sincerely wish the news of the intended conversion may be true'. Reformers were clearly on the alert for any sign of a reconciliation, and despite the sounding of a i&se alarm on this occasion, employed every possible means of persuasion. In August Mahon suggested that pressure might be put on the Javendishes, either through Sir George 1 'itesolves 1 , ff. a2 - 25.
2 Stanhope i.SS, U1590/250: Kahon to ohelburne, 23 uct. 1780. Gf-ibid: Hahon to ohelburne, 8 Nov. 1780.
3 Wyviil, Political i-~.per_s, iii. 276-7: Wyvill to i.ahon, 27 uct. 4 Wyvill, Political Papers, iii. 17o-9 and 1oO-1: jyvill to 1780
0. J. Fox, 15 tfeb. and jyvill to hahon, 28 ^eb. 1780.
5 otanhope uSS. U1590/250: riahon to Shelburne, G July 17dO.

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Savile, or by forming ^ord John Cavendish's York constituents
"]
into an association. And finally in October he made a direct appeal to the narquis himself.
1 take the liberty of sending your lordship herewith, the Unanimous -Resolutions of the ^omrnittee of the County of
Kent, sincerely hoping and trusting, that the important ob-
jects of Constitutional Ref or mat ion, mentioned in the said Resolutions, will meet with your lordship's approbation,
decided concurrence and support.
Your lordship will, no doub'c, take notice, th-.t the
Committee of the County of Kent have not mentioned, the
final Resolution, the Proposition for shortening the
Duration of Parliaments.

Prom the example of the Kent Committee, _:ockingham would hopefully derive a clearer knowledge of his would-be allies, and after a winter of contemplation give his assent to a union.
Whi}.e -jord rlahon awaited the fruit of his endeavours, the attention of the reformers was switched in March and April 1781 to a second meeting of deputies, huhon was accompanied by the Rev. Edmund Harshall and the iiev. Richard uycroft, and as usual was in the thick of the debate. In many respects the conference was an unqualified disaster, for, having alienated a number of moderate delegations with talk of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, Dr. Jebb and the extreme radicals were themselves incensed by the lukewarmness of the petition finally agreed upon. Probably with an eye on the response of Opposition, it was decided to do nothing more than repeat the 1780 grievances and to remind M.P.s of their 6 April commitment to afford relief. Ihe Kentish party could have no quarrel with such small beer, but the consti-tutional implications of signing the joint address raised many
a complex issue. .».s the three told -jyvill:
As the important question will probably be agitated in the Meeting of Deputies, "Whether the Petition to be presented
to Parliament should be presented by us on behalf of our-

I-iohon to jyvill, 15 ^ug. 1780.
2 .vyvill iiSS: hahon to xtockin ,iiam, 23 Oct. 1780.

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selves, or should be presented by us as ..gents and Jelegates"; we think it necessary to inform you (and
through you the Meeting; that we neither can, hor will
join in any petition to Parliament, presented by us in
the ii^rne of other Electors of Lnglajid.
Mahon and his colleagues felt they h..o. no authority -co act in
any other capacity than as individuals, while in the back of their minds may h.^ve been the fear that an injudicious signature might trigger-off in Kent a renewed outcry against associations and
all their attendant evils. for others, ±ike ,,yvij.l, who had no such local factors to contend with, Dunning's assurances on the legal position, and the need to impress .parliament with at least a suggestion of popular support, were the over-riding consider-

2 ations and thus the petition went ahead.
The need for reformers to join ran^s at a critical moment eventually led Rycroft and i-Ic.rsh.ali to set aside their scruples and sign. However as the Joim/ions' debate on the petition pro-gressed through 8 H~y, j-ord ilahon must have felt justified in
his continued aloofness.]B\ilmer Honywood recalled in his speech, how Kent had sent up two petitions in 1780, but Wo.s at great pains to stress their unity on the demand for economy, rather than to
•7.

emphasise their divergence over committees of correspondence.
Sir Horace Mann, on the other hand, was not nearly so eager to forget the past for the sake of the present. Having refreshed the House's memory as to his late constitutional objections, he turned to the concern of the day.
It was true, indeed, th.-.t the names subscribed to the
petition then before th,e House, were set down simply as
the names of individuals in their own private capacity;
but still every one knew, that however respectable they
were in that capacity, the/ were nevertheless the dele-gates of the counties in which they were freeholders;
and therefore as he could not separate in the present
insta ice the idea of the delegate from th_.t of the ia,..:!.-
vidual, he was determined to oppose the motion made by
the hon. baronet, though he would be ready to second him
in any T)ro"Dosition he should make of himself...

1 Wyvill, -eoliticnl Papers, iv. 139: Rycroft, harshall and Hahon to Kyvill, 16 HO.P. 1781.
2 Wyvill, £oJjLjtic§a^aEers, iv. 140-2: 'Jyvill to hahon, 18 i-.ar. : Hist., xxii. 142-3-

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And concluded:

Every scheme for reformation should originate in that
House, waich contained the only true delegates of the
people. 1'he petition before them came in a very Question-
able shape. He was for reprobating it, and treating it
with the contempt it deserved. He exhorted them to main-
tain the dignity of the House with firmness.
I'he subsequent loss of the motion by 212 votes to 132 boded ill for reform in Parliament, while Sir Horace Mann's unyielding tone gave notice that the Kent Committee could expect fierce opposition when next they assembled the county.
By this juncture also, it was becoming plain that very little was to be expected from the Rockin jham v/higs. Wyvill probably drew this conclusion when a plan to abolish some of the nation's most corrupt boroughs was rejected at a Yorkshire meeting on 9 nay, although both he and Lord Hahon persisted for some months in a belief that a voluntary scheme and the payment of compensation
o

might yet bring about a change of heart. They were not long deceived, however, for a letter from Lord Lffingham of 22 tfuly unmistakably revealed that even opposition peers were loath to part with boroughs which returned men of substance and talent
to Westminster. Lffingham argued that government-dominated constituencies were the real 'dead weight against the people 1; and until these abuses were attended to, it was, to say the least, unlikely that private magnates would vote away their own property? Lord Hahon detected the same intransigent attitude at a national level. On 24 July he told Jyvill:
Lord Rockingham does not yet seem to meet us. He is still
of opinion that the country at large does not care for
those kinds of object. ~~ ~"
Yet, after a ye r of frustration and delay, the pendulum was about to swing back with disconcerting raoidity.

1 P>-rl. Hist. , xxii.
2 Wyvill. Political Papers. iv. 249-300 and 311-12: Wyvill to
.. Cifingham, 13 July and H,~hon to uyvill, 24 July 1781.
3 Wyvill, roli1?ical Papers, iv. 302-3: ^ifingham to jvviii
22 July 1?o1. " ' >
4 Wyvill, Political Papers, iv. 311-12: Hahon to u/yvill, 24 July
1781.

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V
As rumours of Jornwallis 1 surrender at Yorktown swelled Into fact, 'Britannicus' was emboldened to thunder his bitter denunci-ations from the Kentish Gazette.
inhere never was a time as yet recorded in the annals of
history, when this kingdom either laboured under such a multiplicity of misfortunes, or was promised with such
a weight of calamity in future; nor is it possible for
any rational or intelligent being to feel the one and
consider the other, without reflecting on the cause or
dreading the effect.
Thus with 1782 dawned a_.ord North's gravest crisis, and for the reformers a precious second chance to redeem past errors ^.nd to grasp the elusive prizes of 1780.
Some newspaper correspondents in the early months of the year sought to appeal once more to the self-interest of a still de-pressed rural community. 'Foresight 1, for example, bewailed the ruin of England's farmers, and contrasted their plight most un-favourably with what he conceived to be the flourishing state of

2 Irish agriculture. However, by 1782 the emphasis of the reform campaign had unmistakably shifted from economical bo constitutional change, with the result that much greater stress was laid upon political rights and grievances. Vdritannicus' reminded his readers of their liberties of debate, conscience 2nd election, without which ' ^lie possession of life would oe a burthen, the possession
of riches not secure...' But were Britons really free, or had their birthright been cruelly neglected? 'Britannicus 1, for one,, had
no doubts:
At the last general election we had great reason to hope,
from the exertions m,.de by the friends of freedom, that we
should have been able, once more, to recover the dying
embers of liberty, and restore to this kingdom all the
privileges and blessings it formerly possessed. out alasi our hopes proved but ideal, the public money was employed to ruin the public; contracts were given, pensions o.nd sinecures granted, and men perjured ._..nd Britons deceived. ,». majority and a tremendous one is still preserved, our

1 Kentish Gazette, 12-16 Feb. 1782.
2 Canterbury Journal, 29 Jan. - 5 Feb. 1782.

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money expended, our honour as a nation lost, and we are
called upon to grant another supply to carry on a wer
with our fathers, brothers and relatives.
'But, my countrymen, 1 he concluded, 'you may redress these wrongs. In you is the legal power. Heaven p;rant you may use it, and prove to the world BHITONS wTLL 33 vR,^.' 1
iief ore Kentishmen had girded on their armour, however, the county's l-i.P.s had been called upon to act. In the crucial series of votes between 20 February and iious ' motion of no confidence of 15 March, the familiar phalanx of ten ministerialists kept close behind lord Worth, while their eight colleagues as regularly lined
2
up with his foes. The decisive group were , of course, the country gentlemen, and among them Sir Horace Mann's sentiments were now paramount.
. . . from principle he ho,d supported the American War, under
the idea that it was gust and practicable: expense, how-
ever, had convinced him, that the object we had set out
with, was unattainable: his eyes were now open, and he saw
that it would be madness to pursue it any longer: it was
the best thing that could be done, in our present situ-
ation, to put an end to a war, as speedily as possible,
which, if not soon terminated, would put an end to our
political existence.
To the independent Charles Marsham: "The honour of the country had been tarnished in the hands of the present administration,' and this was 'sufficient reason for him to wish to have the present

. . 4. miniso-ers removed.' The House concurred, and at last Lord North's nightmare was over.
Belief mingled with new hope as men acclaimed their deliverance Yes, fellow citizens, I will be bold to affirm, the people
of England had never greater reason to rejoice than they
have at the passin- moment. They may once^more take Dride
honest pride, in the appellation of Briton.-7 " '
And again:
Joy to you, fellow citizens - Thrice heartily do I bid you
joy. A ministry which have involved their country in ruin
and dishonour, have at length given way.
Gazette, 12-16 j'eb. 1782.
2 Christie, The Lnd of i.orth's ranis try, _17Jr^~_lZQ^? "PP ii __ * __ , xxii. 1075. 395 and
^ -'-:ari. 1.1 st. , xxi i. 1181.
5 Kentish Gazette, 13-16 i.ar. 1782.
6 xventish Gazette, 23-27 Mar. 178;?. jf . ibid.. 20-23 nc: r. 1782

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After twelve unhappy years, fresh counsellors were about the iCing,

and it was for the people to aid them in banishing waste and

storming the citadel of influence.

The Kent Jommittee duly reassembled on 17 May after an ad-

journment of eighteen months, and having approved the decisions

of the second meeting of deputies, resolved to summon a county

meeting for the purpose of:

proposing an Address of Thanks to his Majesty for having graciously been pleased to appoint to the administration
of Affairs, such Persons as have the Confidence of the
Ration, and for having, with a Paternal 1'iegard for the
oituation of this Country, recommended those means of
Zconomy in the .article of Public Expenditure. which have
been so strongly requested by the Petition., of this County
to the last House of Commons/

The day appointed was 8 June, and with the guidance of John Saw-

bridge from the chair, the freeholders enshrined their committee's

attitude in the following document:

We entertain the most grateful sense of your Majesty's
benign intentions to alleviate the burdens of your People,
by a Reform your Civil Establishment, and by your recom-mendation to Parliament of an effectual plan of economy
through every branch of the public expenditure; and we feel the most perfect satisfaction, that your Majesty has
no reserves with your People - such a declaration cannot
fail to produce in a loyal people, an emulation to con-
vince your Majesty, that your reliance on their affections
for the true honour of your jrown and government, is not misplaced*

However the great majority of freeholders exhibited no desire

to let ministers rest upon their laurels. On 7 Hay Pitt had only

narrowly failed to obtain a Commons committee to examine the state

of the representation, and it therefore seemed an opportune moment

to petition Parliament on the same subject. It v/as declared:

That your Petitioners, sensible cf the excellency of
that Constitution under which they h_,ve the happiness to
live, most ardently wish to have it maintained upon the
true principles on which it is. founded.
That your Petitioners further show that it is neces-
sary to the welfare of the people, that the commons House
of Parliament should have a common interest with the
Nation; and that in the present state of the represen-
tation of the people in Parliament, the House of Comnons

1 'Resolves', f. $2.
2 For meeting and text of address and petition, see 'Resolves', ff. $2-5, and Kentish Gazette, 8-12 j"une 178^.

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do not sufficiently speak the voice of the people.
Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray this
honourable House to take into their most serious consider-
ation, the present inadequate state of the representation...
and to apply such remedy to this great constitutional IL'vil,
as to this honourable House may seem meet.
The language was moderate, and no specific remedy was mentioned. Nevertheless the petition did not go unchallenged.
AS in 1780, the loudest opposition came from Sir Horace Mann. Although acknowledging that there 'undoubtedly was room for a reform', I-iann had deplored Pitt's motion of 7 May, because in
his opinion 'it was property and other interests, rather than
1
simply people 1, that Parliament was designed to represent.
Measures such as the abolition of rotten boroughs were 'speculative' and 'theoretic 1, and likely to spread dissension throup^h the
state. He was also alarmed that dangerous innovations were
being foisted upon an unwary county by a minority of over-zealous enthusiasts, and voiced his fears at naidstone and subsequently

2 in the press. The availajie evidence certainly does confirm that
the petition was somewhat unexpected, but if iuord hahon and 'An East Kent freeholder' are to be believed, its appearance was due to the 'excellent disposition' of the meeting, rather than to a

5 Ion .--meditated stratagem. Whatever its origins, however, the
petition was adopted, and together with the detailed ^nalysis of the constitution's defects circulated by iiatthew Robinson Morris

L\. in response to r-iann's criticisms , symbolised the coming of age
of reform as an issue in Kentish politics.

VI

The Kent petition and others like it were intended ultimately
to coincide with a second reform motion to be made by Pitt in the following ye-r. In the meantime, the precise nature of the

Hist. xxii.
2 Kentish Gazette, 8-12 June 1782.
5 Compare ,;yvill MbS: Hahon to ;,T yvili, 15 June 1782 and Kentish Gazette, 2^-29 «J~une
Copy in ./yvill, Political ! TH^S, iv. 169-85: Matthew Robinson norris to <yvi.M, 3 July 17c-.

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application had to be determined, and it is interesting to note
how its final character ws.s shaped by a particularly fluid political environment.
After only a few months in office, thr, Rockingham .vhigs had
quite exhausted their meagre store of economical palliatives, and when Burke, Pox and the rest resigned shortly after their leader,1 s death, i-i^hon told wyvill:
I am happy they are gone.,.* Because I am convinced, that ,
by a firm, manly, and at the same time, a cautious conduct,
we shall obtain more now, than we could ever have done
before.
Mahon's reliance upon the convictions of the new Prime minister, j^ord Shelburne, was not alto?:ether shared by his correspondent. Wyvill still hankered after a united ^popular party 1, since in the present situation there was always the danger thut reform would become entangled in the disputes over pe^ice terms, or that George III might recall his former ministers in order to stave off the hated changes. The sole remaining safeguard was thus, in his opinion, 'an immediate declaration 1 on the part of administration, and a widespread agitation in the provinces in favour of the

2 Chancellor of the .Exchequer ' s scheme.
But how ambitious should the reformers be in their demands?
Mahon approved the reduction of new H.P.s to sixty, as being a realistic concession to the feelings of the House. However his belief that politicians were gradually being converted to the idea of reform, led him to counsel against seeking the abolition of thirty corrupt seats. A modest addition to the representation, coupled with his own polling bill, might well prove acceptaole, but would assuredly be jeopardised by the premature introduction 3
of more radical concepts. w'yvill and the Yorkshire Committee

4- chose to disregard the advice- , and on this question of tactics

1 Wyvill HoS: Mahon to Wyvill, 18 Geryfc. 1782.
2 Wyvill iiSS: Wyvill to i.ahon, 2^ ,or;. 1782.
3 Wyvill LSS: Mahon to jyvill, 18 Sept. 178k:.
4 Wyvill i-ioo: Wyvill to i-iahon, 25 Oct.

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the UheveninT-Northallerton axis was fatally dislocated.
T'he Kent petition, from which such great things h ..d been expected, seems to hirve met with a reasonable response in the county. Perhaps because it eschewed concrete proposals, hahon h.id been able to inform Wyvill in October 1782 that: 'Many sign 1
it who were against it before. ' It was presented on 7 1-^.y 1783? and on the same day M:.rsham, Honywood, j-ipps, Robinson, 'irevanion

2 and i'aylor were among the 14-9 l-i.P.s to divide with Pitt.

However 293 other Ii.P.s tramped through the lobbies to quash the motion in a decisive fashion. It was, indeed, a fatal blow for reform as an issue in both local and national politics, although not a wholly unexpected one. As Wyvill had predicted, the question had been up-staged by the negotiations with France and America, and by May 1783 the alliance between Fox and North had already captured the attention of the public. In Kent, Lord Mahon had stepped aside from the main-stream of the Yorkshire movement, and no-one v/as found to replace his energetic leadership. The 'Resolves' record no further meetings of the county's committee after May 1782, and as will be seen later, in 1785 no atteiapt
was made to assist i-itt's final effort.
In terms of legislative enactments, therefore, the associ-
ation movement had entirely failed to secure any alterations in the basic fabric of British politics. However it would be wrong to pass on without mentioning a number of ways in which the events of 1780 to 1783 did very considerably impress themselves on Kentish society. For the first time, Kent h^d participated in an organised national campaign, and had done so through an organ quite inde-pendent of the county's traditional administrative and represen-tative structure. As a result, the task of leadership had fallen uDon a class of men not normally considered for the most

1 Wyvill MSS: i-iahon to .;yvill, 29 Oct. 1782.
2 jyvill, Political nepers, ii. 255-o. For petition see Com. Jour ~ ~~

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prestigious offices. Experience in political decision-m .>i bred a new confidence in the r~nks of the lesser gentry, and thereby helped hasten the retreat from oligarchy begun earlier by Wilkes.
County meetings, petitions and addresses acquainted many freeholders with the issues of current importance, but public opinion could only be mobilised on a wide enough scale and over many months by constant and painstaking attention. lience while policy was still determined within a relatively smell circle, Wyvill and Mahon devoted much thought and effort to propaganda. All resolutions of the Kent Committee, as well as communications to and from distinguished figures, were ordered to be printed, and accounts of the deputies' meetings of 1780 and 1781 were widely circulated. In January 1781 Lord Mahon asked Wyvill for copies of the Yorkshire petition, which he wished 'to send to
the Gentlemen of our County'; and on 5 November he readily accepted an offer of 250 to 300 reproductions of a second address. Extensive use was also made of the press to transmit reports of debates at uaidstone and to answer criticisms at length. I-iahon was keenly aware of the potential of what was still a relatively new phenomenon. He advised Wyvill late in 1781:

unquestionably the viost effectual wry of giving a Piece
°f this particular Nature, the most general & universal circulation amongst those for whon it is principally
calculated, is to get it inserted in 11 the Public Papers,
both in Town and Country, Lorning, Evening, Dayly & Weekly,
as well as in those which come out three times per Week. The number of Papers is considerable in London, & therefore, in point of Expense, not perfectly calculated for a Communication, to the Public, of a less interesting & important nature, than the Present. But, as each Paper
is read by ten or twenty Thousand Persons upon an average^ every day; it is evident, that, in comparison & proportion
to the Public Extent of Circul tion they occasion, the
Expense is very Small, when conp red to my other kind of circulation. a

1 Wyvill i-iBS: Mahon to Wyvill, 29 Jan. and ^ Nov. 1781.
2 w'yvill K3S: Mahon to ,;yvill, 5 Uov.

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i^one of these devices had been utilised with such skill in the days of ,;ilkes, and it was undoubtedly the prolonged awareness of public affairs which they made possible, that fitted Kentish-men to join in the 'rd.r:;e of p..'.rty' of _.itt's e^.rly yer.rs.

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Chapter Pour

Public Q'oi lion no Po-rty Politics i?-g - 179Q
.. he dissolution of 15 i-Iarch 1784 brou ht to a close a pro-
tracted constitutional crisis whose details have been often related. jJhe fall of Lord riorth v/as follov/ed by a series of short-lived ministries, each lad-zing the internal cohesion, the unity of purpose, the inspired leadership and the command of patronage necess-ry to secure the confidence of Parliament and the public, and it was ,not until the King appointed the youthful William Pitt that a firm
hand once more -rasped the tiller of state. However, while
making possible a further period of political stability, the Coalition's dismissal fundamentally altered the structure and at-mosphere of English politics at a national and a local level. Since late 1779;opposition to Government had concentrated upon reform,
be it economical or parliamentary, but ;.fter December 1783 such a strategy was no longer appropriate. Pitt constantly endeavoured
to extend Burke's administrative reforms, while on the question of the representation, he and Pox found themselves in the same lobby. Reform very soon found itself displaced by a fresh set of issues which reflected differing interpretations of recent events and
of the Constitution. Consequently in the years immediately prior to the French Revolution, men thought and acted more in terms of 'party 1 than at any other time between 1714 and the reform Bill of 1832.
I

ihe division of the electorate into JtPoxite and jrlttite parties
v/as well advanced by the time of the 1784 general election, when the majority of voters in the open constituencies shov/ed them-selves far less concerned with reform than with the person,iities of the central protagonists cmd the past and future allegiance of their i-lembern. Any discussion of this shift of interest inevitably raises the much debated role played by public o inion in the

1 J. Cannon, j.'he Pox-iTorth Coalition; Crisis of theConstitut-i rm '1782-4- (uambric;"^1939J; '

election, and thereby provides an excellent opportunity both to assess the expansion 01 political awareness since 1780, and to add new material to what has been a long and fruitful Historical controversy.
Nineteenth-century writers had no doubt that ^itt was swept
home on a tide of popular enthusiasm. Yet for U. -i!. Laprade the notion that 'corruption for once became quite unnecessary 1 was wholly unacceptable, as it rested on the 'illogical view 1 that the outcome 'was decided by a force which... had not been the dominant factor in previous elections and did not become such for
M
a long time afterwards. Pittas failure to go straight to the country ar-jued a degree of uncertainty in the minds of ministers, while the evidence of behind-the-scenes manipulation afforded by

2 John i-iobinson's papers seemed to prove that, ' When Pitt finally
dissolved .carliament... the membership of the new House of Commons

5 was no longer a matter of doubt.' Not -until the former Secretary
to the Treasury's predictions were compared with the results at the polls was Laprd.de ' s error detected, and a more realistic via

4. media attained. The transformation of politics since 1780 natur-
ally meant that Government and private patrons would use their influence to eject unfriendly hembers, but, as recent studies of Yorkshire and some eastern counties have demonstrated, hostility to the Whigs and Korthites could turn upside-down traditional loyalties. In both these respects, Kent was no exception.

1 w. T. Laprade, 'Public Opinion and the General election of 1784', Eng. Kist. Rev. , xxxi. (1916;, 22-.. Jf. 0. E. Fryer, 'The
oeneral Election of 1784', Kistory, New 3er. ix. (1925;, 221-$.
2 iV. T. Laprade, (ed.;, Parliamentary Papers of John Robinson, 1774-1784, Gamden oociety 3rd 3er. xxxiii. (1922).
3 .;. T. !up"orade, 'v/illiam xitt ~nd ,»estminster elections', American .listorical Review, xviii. (1912-13), 257
4 E. George, 'Fox's Martyrs: the General Election of 1784',
T. R. H. S., 4th Ser. xxi. (1939;, 133-68.
5 N. G. Phillips, Yorkshire and English National Politics, 178-;-4 (Univ. of Canterbury J.Z., 1961); ^and P. ^elly, 'iTruico.risrr
i'nd Public Opinion in the General Election of 17o4', 3.I.H.R., xlv. (1972), 73- > ""

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j'e may begin with the four Kentish boroughs classified, as 'Priendly, Close or Under Decisive Influence 1, v/here established interests suggested future adherence to Government, rlobinson noted against Sandwich:
This is a borough of contests. Government h-s a pretty
strong interest there and succeeded, at the last fight,
the opposite party, but there may be another contest.
Hr. Stephens is prob.-bly s-.fe, but Sir Richard Sutton is
not so sure, particularly if he should not be supported
by government. Mr. Brett stood there last.
In December 1783 both sitting Members were described as 'con 1, but Robinson predicted that a fresh election would alter this to 'pro 1 and 'hopeful 1. Philip Stephens was a typical eighteenth-century civil servant, who detested faction, and who could be relied upon to support the King's chosen ministers as a matter of principle. Sutton, on the other hand, who had voted against the peace prelim-inaries and for the East India Bill, remained loyal to North in 1784 and hence did not attempt to contest Sandwich. The way was thus open for Charles Brett to resume his representation of the borough, and his seat at the Admiralty Board under the patronage

of Lord Howe.

Turning to aueenborough, -iobinson wrote that it was: 'Under
2

the arrangement of government to bring in two members'. He was proved quite correct, for, despite service of ten -and thirty years respectively, neither of the Northite Members, Rawlinson and Frederick, felt able to seek re-election. In the contest which did materialise, an Ordnance official and a naval officer were returned top of the poll. The only possible danger to the continuance of Government's monopoly in boroughs such as Queen-borough in 1784 seemed to lie in the operation of Crewe's Act. However the evidence of surviving lists of freemen and poll books suggests that this was not so far-reaching as many contemporaries

1 La-orade (ed.), ^ar 11. amentary ± a;oers, pp. 80-1.
2 Ibid., p. 6?.

- 11? -
believed. From a collection of admittedly rather obscure lists, the .aaeenborough electorate may be estimated at about 153 in 1761, 150 in 1768, 117 in 1774 and 139 on the eve of reform in

1 1780. Although the 1784 poll book is not extent, approximately

100 men appear to have voted, while in 1790, 112 freemen attended

p at the hustings. Clearly the effects of the Jhigs' bill were
only slight and easily by-passed, with the result that v^ueen-borough remained among the safest ministerial seate until the mid-1820's.

Hythe was another of the boroughs where a substantial dis-franchisement of revenue officers had been expected. Nevertheless Robinson was hopeful of two i-ittite conversions. 'With, the support of government the present members will make their election good here again 1, he wrote, 'and they deserve it, for they are

5 very steady and always well inclined to support government. 1
Farnaby and Evelyn were duly rechosen, and, by repelling a re-newed challenge from the now Foxite John Sawbridge, no doubt
gave added satisfaction to jritt. However, the victory was in part attributable to the comin g-of-age of the independent inter-est among the neighbouring gentry, which william Evelyn had been cultivating since the ousting of the Sackvilles. Sawbridge's radicalism was quite unacceptable, but iivelyn was to exhibit his freedom from ministerial influence by opposing jritt on a number of issues before the French Revolution.
No such independence was likely at Kew Romney. 'This borough
is oir oJdwo.rd Dering's 1, noted Robinson, 'He will most likely return himself and i.r. Jackson again, and as things change, Sir

4 Edward is not obstinate. Dering was an unfettered country-

1 .(/ueenborough nSS. ; cb R^ 1.
2 ^uee.iborough i-ISS. Qb R^;n. Of. .^. Kemp, 'Grewe's _ct, 1782'

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3 '.idDr.de (e^ . } , Parliament_^ry ^aiiers, p. 81.
4 Ibid., P. 81.

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member of the old school, who in the debate on the resignation of the HoC'iln-h-Miis on 9 <J~uly 1782, defined his principles thus:
. /hen he took an attachment on.ce, he was not apt to
change it v/ithout good cause; thus having formed a good
opinion of the administration antecedent to that of
Kr. Fox, he still retained a -oredeliction for the members
of it, and he wished to have supported them and kept them
in office. Hay, so zealous a friend was he, that where
he attached himself politically, he could go the length
of supporting ministers at all hazards, of whose talents
and integrity he had a good opinion.
North's coalition must therefore have come as a profound shock to an admirer who h,..cl freely acknov/ledged that 'he never had much liked' Pox's "political conduct . Thus while voting for the ^ India j3il}., Derinrr ' s store of goodwill towards 'the noble .Lord in the blue ribbon ' % was almost used up, and at a by-election in 1784- he rnc-.de available a seat at Lew Romney for the Pittite
India man, Richard Atkins on.
Grants of £2,000 at Sandwich and Hythe, and an unspecified
sum to ;oir Edward Dering, coupled with other means of electoral enducement had evidently not lost their persuasive power. All eight seats so far considered tu.d been filled by Coalitionists before December 1783 , while in the new Parliament seven were among Pitt ' s regular followers. In the remaining Kentish constituencies, however, other factors determined the course of the elections.
As I-irs. George has written of the election, 'On the one hand it was a new administration clearing out the followers of the old ministry from the constituencies under its control, on the other

3 hand it v/^s an appeal to public opinion. '
'ilhe postponement of a dissolution not only allowed the 'Rats'
to scramble for the vacant places, but gave government propagan-dists an opportunity to employ their -oens in an often bitter denunciation of the Coalition ^nd all its works, ^oth Lentish newspapers demonstrated a distinct preference for i-itt, and were

. Hist., xxiii. 187-
2 ibid.
3 George, 'Fox's Martyrs', 138.

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regularly filled with parliamentary debates, details of inroor-tant speeches and meetings, and reproductions of petitions and addresses, as well as columns of correspondence from local partisans, decent events came under close scrutiny as, for example, in a ' POLITIC, ,_ i^TRUoi-^CT of the Conduct of Mr._ gOX. and the ^arl of oHj^j-jBU-iNjj; 1 , which very unfavourably reviewed the former's early career and recalled his votes against wilkes and

1 ^-renville's Act. In the-; same edition, the k'entish Gazette considered j,ast Indian affairs, c.nd having agreed that reform was urgently needed, protested th^t x! 'ox's ill-starred bill had not attempted what was neceasary.
The question of right was scarcely canvassed. Compassion
and pity attached the heart to their interest, but justice
and equity v/ere over-looked ana forgotten. In the further prosecution of this business in the House of Lords, the Secretary's Bill of Reform was found to be a bill of
annihilation, the statement of the Company's affairs was
found to be falsely riK.de; the principle of the bill was
found to be uaconstitutiQnal; it deprived the executive
power of its just right.
Fox's motives were not, of course, wholly bad, but his .bill was undeniably an attempt to make up the Coalition's lack of patronage, and as such was quite unacceptable to gentlemen who not long before had been petitioning against undue influence. There seemed to be a threat to the sovereignty of Parliament, while the violation
of charter rights touched a tender chord in every property owner. i.any of the more ephemeral methods of publicity v/ere also
readily seized upon. Carlo iJaan has become legendary, and Fox
v/as variously portrayed as Cromwell and riilton's oat an. leaders of the Kentish press exhibited a particular liking for poetry, and here too ^ox and berth v/ere the butts for many a political satire. However the Government did not escape entirely unscathed, and it is interesting in the li^ht of recent deb.te, that the

ish Gazette, 7-10 J-^. 1784. 2 Ibid."

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1
figure most frequently singled out for abuse was Earl Temple.

- /hen rumours begsji to circulate that Temple was about to re-enter

the Cabinet as -L,ord Irivy Seal, one Kentish bard wrote:

Good men are agreed it's proper and fit
That the State should be govern'd by Fox and by Mitt
While those who in secret influence deal
Vote Temple the fittest for Lord Privy Seal.
iiOunt then, my good ^ord, an ca,iclignc_a _dernand
Descend the pack stairs privy seal in hand.
An office so proper sure none would dispute ^
For Bute or Ear- Temple, Earl Temple or Bute.

The war of words in the press was accompanied by a campaign

of more than 200 loyal addresses to the King from many counties and

enfranchised boroughs. Dr. Cannon tells us that no such address

was forthcoming from Kent, due to opposition on the Grand Jury,

probably inspired by, or in deference to, the county's Members

5 who were engaged in the 3t. Moan's Tavern mediation. however,

on 14 April,county election business was preceded by the proposal

of an address to the King by ^.ord riahon, which having been seconded

by william Geary, 'was approved of by the meeting with very few

Zj. dissentients'. Its appearance long after i-dtt had triumphed in

the Commons, further indicates that the inter-party negotiations

had been allowed to run their course, and possibly explains why

it never reached St. James's. Its text is worthy of quotation in

full:

We the Sheriff, Gentlemen, Clergy, and j'reeholders of the
County of Kent, beg leave to return our most cordial thanks
to your Majesty, for having dismissed from your Majesty's
Councils, those Ministers, who, by their public conduct,
have justly forfeited the confidence of the People.

1 See the arguments in E. a.. Smith, 'Earl temple's resignation, 22 December 1783', ^i_st_._JjD_ur_._, vi. (1963),'91-7; iV-J. JUPD, 'Earl Temple's x^esi ;natio,i and the Question of a dissolution
in December 1783', Kist. Jour., xv. (1972;, 307-13; P. Kelly, 'The Pitt-Temple Administration: 17-22 December 1783', Hist. Jour., xvii. (1s74), 157-61. "
2 Kentish Gazette, 14-18 i-'eb. 1784.
3 Cannon, o/)_._ _cjLtJL, r>. 187 n 6.
4 otanhope i-JS. U 1590/^53: 'iiesolves of the committee of the County of Kent', f. 36; and Canterbury Journj1, 13-20 Vor 1784.

And we assure your i-ie..jesty, th^t we will support
the present ministers appointed by your i.arjesty, as lona;
as they continue to support the true principles of the Constitution.
Jhese v/ere the sentiments of 'a f.-.r greater number than ever before recorded' of Kent's electorate, and th^ir uncom-oron:isins-hostility to the Coalition was frequently echoed as the open end semi-open constituencies went to the polls.
Compiled in December 1783, Robinson's survey in..de no allow-ances for the popular tumult of the ensuinj months, and has thus caused much confusion. Kis comments on Rochester, for example: 'Probably the same members', was woefully wide of the m.urk, as
<\
was his post-election prediction of 'hopeful' and 'con 1.
Robinson probably expected George i'inch Hatton, v/iio had enjoyed the government interest since 1774-? "to abandon North, .uike Queen-borough's M.P.s, however, he stayed faithful and was consequently defeated by ,oir Charles Middle ton, an admiral and naval adminis-

2 trator, who received ^A ,330 from the Secret Service fund. i-iuch more instructive of the popular mood was the fate of the borough's independent seat, with which the name of Robert Gregory had been intimately connected for a decade. wraxa^l described .-rea-ory as '...a very honourable, incorrupt, independent man, simple, or rather shy and repulsive in his manners, unadorned by any accom-plishment of mind, but laborious, attentive to business, _jid pos-

z sessing very extensive local information on East India concerns. 1

Although on one occasion he warmly denied in the Commons that he 4.

was 'a devoted partisan of the opposition 1 , he was a close friend of Fox, and was named as one of the infamous commissioners by the Jpst India oill. On 1 uecember 1783 he defended the ..all which he felt offered the best remedy yet proposed to the 'oerplexed

1 jjaprade (ed.;, Parliamentary Papers, p. 73-
2 A. Aspinall (ed~./, The Later Correspondence of Geor. e ill (Cambridge, 1970;, i. 116.
3 -rhe Historical and the 1-osthur.ious i-iemoirs of Jia Nabhaniel
i ed - '•'• B - -''hatiey (^ondon, 1684 N,, 'i. 108
. id.

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:..nd involved 1 affairs of the Company, ana assumed the House that 'he acted in this, as lie nad ever o.one in all ^tters of trust,
v/ith the most scrupulous integrity 1. LU~J in t^e prevailing, ctnios-pheie or oo.opj.cion, Gregory could not escape the imputation of self-interest. His Rochester constituents were not impressed by his

_ 2 protestations, and early in April he announced his retirement. The vacancy was filled by Nathaniel ouith, a Pittite, and a leading opponent of Pox's Bill at Last India House.
The election at Dover, no less than binith's return at Rochester, demonstrates the fragility of past service in the face of rampant public opinion. Robinson's rather confused assessment was thus again found wanting:
Although it is the wish of the inhabitants of Dover because
it is so much their interest, and although if a good man
could be found to stand there, he would probably carry it,
yet as Lord North is i.ord Warden there may be some doubts
about it, and^therefore both men are classed as they st-nd
now, against.
The Coalitionist, John Henniker, chose the dissolution to make
a discreet withdrawal, leaving the old Wilkite, John Trevanion, in an unholy alliance v/ith Lord North, against whose malevolent influence so much of his career had been directed. The bizarre spectacle wq.s symptomatic of the times, and can only have aided the new candidates who declared themselves, 'strongly attached to -uing and Constitution, and firm and secure i^'riends to nr. Patt

i L\. Pitt. James Luttrell ho;d remained neutral through the disputes of 1783 until it became clear who held the key to future patron-age , while Robert Preston was a ^ondon merchant and steady opponent of Pox's rJill. Despite North's help (a factor .greatly over-estimated by Robinson) the Pittites were emphatically

. Hist. , xxiii. 1395-6.
2 Canterbury Journal, 30 har. - 6 .jor. 1784.
3 Laprade (ed7), Parliamentary Papers, p. 80.
4 Kentish Gazette,'2?-31 I-i;ir. 1784.
5 He was rewarded with e. place; Aspinall (ed.;, The ^-rtn-p Correspondence of George III, i. 47: Titt to George III 30 i.ar. 1784.

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returned.

_ 'he defeat of Bazeley and arevanion is nu.de the more impres-

sive when one considers their local associations. A certain

John ^azeley h...cL served his country as captain of the .-,a-;le , and

then, during two terms as Dover's mayor in 1?5o and 1761, had
'i

undertaken improvements of the harbour. i'revanion's political

ties were even more recent, and it was no doubt in the hope of

recalling them that he wrote in the Canterbury Journal:

1 have ever served you faithfully and independently. I
have never asked, or received any Place, Pension, Emolu-
ment or favour of any Kind for myself, my j'amily or my
friends, and the only Applications 1 have m^de of that
mature to a iiinister, were those you yourselves directed me to make in Favour of those you recommended - ny votes in parliament have been, I am confident, in general agreeable and satisfactory to you - I have constantly voted for shortening the Duration of j.-o.rliament, and in favour of Parliamentary Aeform. ;.>hen 1 have received your instructions on a particular i-oint, I have paid the utmost
regard to them and given up my own opinion to yours - I
am not t ie follower of a i-iinister and I am the intended
Supporter of that minister only, who shalloprove himself
to be the true friend of our Constitution.

. but QJrevanion, though he had not voted on the East India .

was known to incline towards Aox, and for that stain upon an

otherwise commendable radical escutcheon he was cast off. i'hus

while the 1784 election showed that government still controlled

one seat at Dover, even without help from Walmer Castle, iit confirmed

that the populi.r interest which irevanion had striven to liberate

was prepared and able to eject any l-i.P. who betrayed or offended

it. 5

Canterbury provided no surprises, and for once Robinson's

expectation of 'Both the same members' on a ..-ittite ticket was

Z|_ fulfilled. The sitting members were challenged by James trotter

1 J. B. Jones, The Records of Dover: the Charters, record uooks and P?pers of the corporation, with the ijover Oustomal (Dover
1S^O>, TO. 94. ^ " " ~ '

2 J an t e rbury Jo urn al, 2^-$0 Mar. 1734.
3 i-'or :- Jetter highly critical of .Jravanion' s claims to local support, see Kentish Gazette, 10-14 Apr. 1784.
4 ^aprade (ed.), P r.'' i r n o a u a r; / I? r ~o e r s, p. 73

ana James ,/ynch, but as neither would. swe,,r to the necessary qualification, the .oheriff refused to accept votes on their
X]

behalf. oo meagre an opposition testifies to the unanimity of feeling in a city which conferred its freedom on rltt. Both Gipps and Robinson had voted, in the minority on the second reading of Fox's Jill, and could probably also count on the ;;;reat body of Canterbury's dissenters and reformers. 'Jo the latter
at least their promise to 'promote to the utmost of our power a more equal Representation of the People, a Shortening of the Duration of Parliament, and be ever ready to obey the Instructions

2 of our Constituents... 1 must have raised hope that the new

ministry would not be de .f to its cries. However, when one re-members th_,t Trevanion made precisely the same professions, the conclusion is inescapable that current politics and not reform decided the outcome.
Only at Maidstone arnonr? all the Kentish borouahs was an
avowed Foxite elected regardless of a Ldttite opponent. As a life-Ion;^; independent, Sir Horace Mann had refused to participate in the East India debate, and when the St. .J-ban's Tavern plans came to nothing, he seems to have grasped the expedient of his wife's ill-health to depart for the continent until party spirit

5 had subsided. In addition he possibly wished to avoid the forth-coming wrangles over the parliamentary reform which he so abhorred. His place as the spokesman of the neighbouring gentry was taken by Gerard Edwards, a nephew of Lady Lucy Mann, and, as he made clear in the Com'aons on 20 August 1784, a fervent Pittite. Young

1 a'rotter and Wynch petitioned against the conduct of the oheriff but failed to press their accusations. Jpm.__Jour. , xl. 94-5.

2 Canterbury Journal, 23-30 Mar. 1734. Cf. Kentish Gazette, 7-10 Apr. 1784. ~
3 Komney i-iSo. U1300/C4/4: Sir H. Mann to a^ord Romney, nd. 1784. ^ x-arl. Hist. , xxiv. 1389- Edwards Drobably had the support of the borough corporation which had itself addressed the~Kinp
in favour of , itt, i-'.R.O. HO. 55- 15/34.

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:/illi...m Ge~.ry, who had seconded Lord. nation's address to George III was also in the field, and described himself in the Janteruury Journal as 'Strongly attached to our king and Constitution, a

1 firm and fierce friend to I-ir. Pitt and the present Administration.1 He had not yet, however, attained the experience or the prestige which were to make him a county member in 1796, 1802 and 1512, and was defeated by the radical Foxite, Clement Taylor. For the numerous dissenters and small tradesmen of Maids tone alone,
recent struggles against Lord ^ylesford appear to have carried the day.
Zne most celebrated upsets in 1784- occurred in the English counties. r>yng in Middlesex, Sir Thomas Bunbury in Suffolk and Thomas Coke in Norfolk were all unsuccessful, and in Yorkshire the mighty I'ltzwilliam interest declined a poll. Kent, although returning i-iarsham and Honywood unop.-osed, was by no means immune from the national ferment. Argument raged until the very day
of nomination, while the decisions of 1.4 April were still dividing men at the 1790 election.
natters were already well advanced when 'Stigand 1 wrote to
the Canterbury Journal urging freeholders to follow the example of Yorkshire, ^nd select 'two independent gentlemen 1 in place
of the sitting Members, and informing them that Sir John Honywood and oir Richard Betenson v/ere ready, 'if properly supported 1, to

2 come forward. He then proceeded to expound his reasons 1
For though Mr. f-iarsham and Mr. Honywood may be men of respectable and worthy private characters, yet their
late -oublic conduct has been such as justly to incur
your contempt and resentment; one of them (Jar. K-rsham)
has been the chairman of a disappointed party, unconsti-tutionally assembled at the ot. Alban's Tavern, for the purpose of dictating to his n^jesty the method of fonain a coalition between those two opposite characters i-ir. Pitt and r-ir. Fox, who :fter making resolves upon resolves at last iiL.de an unaccountable resolve to return thanks ' to the two worthy gentlemen Mr. Fox and ^ord North- nd your other member (Mr. Honywood) gave his silent vote

1 Canterbury Journal, 23-30 nar. 1784. 2 Canterbury Journal, 6-13 Apr. 1784.

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to all the late desperate resolutions of the Coalition; therefore as you have now the opportunity, by the election of two independent gentlemen, avowed friends to the Con-stitution and enemies to the Coalition, of redressing yourselves, I trust you will for a moment consider the inevitable dreadful consequences which will of course
follow if iar. j'ox a^ -in gets a majority in the Commons
House of parliament, and not by returnin - your two former members, give your assent to any violent state in our
glorious constitution.
The strands of opinion behind so forthright a letter were
many and complex. Titt ' s support in Kent derived from both family and personal associations. Hot only had Chatham taken up resi-dence at Hayes, but Pitt's earliest actions as a reformer h.;.d been alongside his brother, his brother-in-law Lord riahon, and m^ny local gentlemen on the L'ent Committee of 1780. laike Jyvill's followers in Yorkshire, ivcnti^h reformers seem to Liave rallied
to the new a::-ime Kinister, with both 'Stigand's 1 proposed candi-dates being associates of Hahon's Committee, i-itt w<_,s a man of principle ana consistency, who shared the aspirations of m-:..ny substantial freeholders, whereas aox had entered Judas-like into
a cabal for power. In the Commons on 9 February 17&4-, -^ord Hah on made great play with a p-per, signed by the 'IPriend of the People 1, 1
which roundly condemned North , djad later master-minded the government campaign in Westminster with £9,000 of oecret Service
2
money .
However, if aitt ' s commitment to reform strengthened his popularity, 'Stigand's' letter once more emphasises that it was the spirit of fear and conservatism engendered by the Coalition's attempted constitutional innovations which prompted greatest unrest. Mar sham and Honywood were noted reformers, but had none the less fallen under suspicion by their participation at the bt. Albans ' Tavern. As a leader of the movement to restore political unity, Charles harsh;..m was frequently on his feet in the Commons, and received communications from many "orominent figures. At

1 Parl. hist., xxiv.
2 Aspinall (ed., , The ^ater Correspondence o_f u-eor :e III, i. 11 3 See the notes and letters in xtornney 11.^0"."" JiyT5/CTr." """'"'

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the beginning of 1784- a union of parties offered to the inde-pendents the best prospect of breaking the deadlock, but to Pitt it ~osed something of a dilemma. If he compromised v/ith Portland and Pox, he would, appear to acknowledge the force of their com-plaints; if, hov/ever, he remained aloof, he mi. jit well _ose the back-bench support which he so badly needed. .ahe whittling away of Pox's majority radically altered matters, and by mid-iv^rch most country gentlemen had followed James Luttrell in moving from a belief that both parties were 'too strong for either to govern s\
the kingdom' , to outright support of Pitt. marsham and Eonywood incurred the displeasure of 'Stigand' because they v/ere among a minority which seemed to be inclining to Pox. On 11 Pebrtu.ry narsham had welcomed North's oifer to stand aside as 'noble, upright, patriotic, and disinterested'; and on 5 March he saoke for the adjournment of the Mutiny Bill on the grounds that 'he considered the very existence of the Constitution to be at stake. lionyv/ood, like Clement Taylor, may have continued to regard Pox as the true apostle 01 reform, while both county ^embers were too closely associated v/ith the calls for ritt's resignation to meekly transfer oheir allegiance. Por these reasons they were called upon to resign at a heated and crowded county meeting on April.
Lord Mahon captured the initial mooo. of the freeholders.
He spoke of his opposition to the JUst India Bill, and his con-stant endeavours to retain personal independence. .jhy then did a meeting which voiced its detestation of the Coalition by voting hahon's loyal address, conclude by re-electing the supposed transgressors'. The reason for the swift evaporation of
' Stigand 1 s' opposition appears to lie in Marsham and Honywood's

l. Hist. , xxiv. 4-52.
2 -a-S'. Li so;. , xxiv. 592 and 732.
3 Jan^gerburj Journal, 13-20 Apr. 1784; <.nd 'Resolves', ff. 35-7.

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ability to make satisfactory e:: .l...n...tioiis on both the topics " raised by a.ord I-iahon. In the first place, their general voting record since 1780 was consistent. As a 'Sincere j'riend to my Country 1 noted, in the Kentish Gazette, they had regularly censured North's ruinous administration 1, and had divided v/ith

1

Pitt on Shelburne's peace proposals. Above all, Marsham and Honywood had been in the Commons' minority on the Sast India .o and on 14 April agreed to present the county's address.
Secondly, as Sir Edward Bering was later to recall, neither Member would h.ive been returned, If they had not directly declared three or four times, that they would direct their conduct in

p Parliament, to measures not men 1. Honywood, for example, assured
his listeners that, 'Attached to no man, I have endeavoured to support measures for the good of my country, and such as I con~ ceived to be otherwise, I steadily opposed 1 ; while in his pub-

^ lished thanks he again denied 'connection with any party'. But if
the freeholders were won over, the King wac not. 'i'rom what I had heard of the county of Kent', he wrote to Irltt, 'I had hoped new members would have I been] named at the meeting, for Mr. Marsham is so candid tlu.t, under the letter of the declsration, not the spirit, he will soon find the means of distressing Gov-ernment as a half friend, which would not be the case if he

4 avowed being an enemy'. In the coming years, this pledge was

to be a recurring theme in Kentish politics.
II

Mrs. George concluded her study by observing: 'The 1784 election was remarkable riot for an exceptionally extensive change

1 Kentish Gazette, 20-24 Mar. 1784.
2 iM'amier and Brooke, iii. 112.
3 Canterbury Journal, 15-20 ,jor. 1784.
4 Aspinall (ed.), 1'he Later Oorrespondence of ueor/;e III, i. 54; George III to idtt, 16 ..-or. 1784.

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in the composition of the House, but for the ferment in which it took place, for the character of the Pittite victories and for
the way in which 5'oxites were thrown back on nomination seats and

1 venal boroughs'. ^n analysis of the Kentish results underlines many of these points and indicates the way forward. Six of the nine constituencies were contested, and in every one, the influence-: of government, patron or public opinion was exercised wholly or in part on the basis of allegiance in the late parliamentary struggle. Of the county's eighteen H.P.s at the dissolution, only nine were re-elected. Among the nine who did not reappear for Kentish
seats, five were iiorthites who no longer enjoyed ministerial favour, 2
and a further two fell victim to popular disapprobation. All
the new ilembers were Pittites, so that in the new parliament, administration could generally count 011 fourteen i^entish votes. The only exceptions were Clement I'aylor, .jilliarn ^velyn, and, most controversially, the ^nights of the Shire, all of whom inclined to Opposition. However, the result, although emphatic in terms of seats, should not be allowed to obscure a very real split along 'party 1 lines among the electorate. The representation of naid-stone and Hythe was divided between the two national rivals, while John 1'revanion laboured to restore his interest at iJover and was returned at a by-election in 1789- Moreover, as new issues arose, the fragile peace attained in the county was rudely shattered, thereby forcing freeholders to m^ke a definite choice.
For Pitt and the country the honeymoon was soon over. The sessions of 1785 and 1786 saw a series of defeats for the Prime i-iinister ano. his Government which imparted a distinct 'party 1.

5 flavour to national and local politics. The bitter personal

1 George, 'Pox's Martyrs', 167.
2 The aortiiites were Prederick, Rawlinson, button, Henniker ,..nd Pinch-Patton; Gregory and Trevanion were overwhelmed by public feeling; hann and Jackson retired. Gf. lists in Cannon,
pp>.__c it_._ > 244- 5-
3 pr"j.voJ""y, ' British Parliment-ry rolitics, 1784-1786', Hist. Jour., xvii. (1974), 733-53-

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rivalry of 1733-4- was maintained -n^ perhaps even intensified by Mitt's attempt to dislodge Pox from his de ..rly-v/on seat at ./esi;- minster. TK,j protracted legal wrangling was abruptly terminated by the Commons on 3 u:..rch 1785, but not before it had t alien its toll of public opinion. As ' JUV^NIS 'told readers of the Kentish Gazette, '...what some few persons may consider as a trifle lighter th-n air itself, the j_ej^t minster Scrutiny , has operated upon my young mind with so powerful a weight of argumentative force, that from a rank Tory, it ho,s rendered me a determined \7hig; so that from a w-.rm partisan of Pitt and Pre rotative,
I am become a deadly friend to Mr. Pox and the liberties of my
S\

country. ' Foxites were thus quick to celebrate their victory. Mr. Fox, Mr. Fox,
You're in the right box,
_Jid ,6ir Cecil at length is defeated: Spite of Pitt on his side,
,/ith his strength all opposed.
For \Vestmiiister finally you're seated.^ The Pittite VlilHiX1, however, hit bach with telling blows. Again he reviewed the relationship between Fox, the 'violent Tory 1
*

turned 'flaming Jhig' , and that 'unblushing monster 1 Lord North. The scrutiny was not only justified and legitimate, but it showed Pitt to be sincerely attached to reform, whereas his opponents were either hostile or untrustworthy. Above all, 'YIiTDEX 'pointed to the growing ideological bankruptcy of the Whigs, which in the next months bred division v/ithin the party, and led to the con-stant reiteration of the supposed injustices of 1783-
Throughout the spring and early summer of 1785 the Kentish
press devoted much space to editorial remarks on Pitt ' s ill-fated

4- Irish policy. However, as Dr. Kelly h. s noted, public interest
was never awakened outside the manufacturing districts, and in

1 Kentish Gazette, 26 Feb. - 2 HLT. 1785- Of.
23-26 Feb. 1785: 'A Gmali Country Gentleman'.
2 Kentish Gazette, 1 '-16 i...r. 1785-
5 ^entish Gazette, 2-5 Mir. 1785-
4- For example, Kentish Gazette, 15-19 Jan. and 30 il
5 P. Kelly, 'British und Irish Politics in 1785',
. Jn;> ..ist. Kev., xc . (1 °> 7 5) ,

^entish^ *" ""~ Gazette

. - 2 jVor.
[1785

any case, Kentishmen were far too preoccupied with the storm racing about the ears of the county Members. 1-he controversy was of a type guaranteed to inflame the party passions of the late 1780's, and was commenced on 2 April when 'PILJLICUS' contrasted Marsham's and Honywood's election pledges to assist Pitt unless they believed his policies to be 'destructive of the public jood', with their subsequent record of anti-ministerial votes. oince both ku,d been elected on the basis of these undertakings, some explanation was surely due to the freeholders. 'Jhe Knights in their turn did not lack apologists. VA freeholder' entirely approved their opposition to the Scrutiny and the Irish Resol-

2 utions, and hoped that future measures might be more acceptable.

'.'i Small Country Gentleman' further argued that 'the plain and obvious inference hence deducible is, that the political measures of Mr. Pitt,are not consonant to Mr. Marsham's and Mr. Honywood's ideas of sound and constitutional policy1, and could only lament t ::e defects which had lost the ministry such independent and dis-interested well-wishers. Thereafter, the debate degenerated into the sort of inter-party bickering endemic in ivent since 1783- 'A COUNTRYMAN 1 began his attack on the previous writer with a panegyric on the political creed of the late ^arl of 'jhat-ham, and then proceeded to heap execration on the Coalition as 'an uniting of men...as unnatural, and little to be expected,
as for an union to take place, and perfect amity to be concluded, between those two contradictory elements, fire aid water 1. .'aid so it rumbled on well into the summer recess. Marsham and Hony-wood h,.d been early lost sight of, but there was no doubting the keenness with which national politics Wc,s followed, or the wide-

Gazette, 30 uar. - 2 A'or. 1785- ^epeated in Kentish
Gazette, $0 Apr. - 3 May 1785: ' A. Kentish freeholder 1 "
2 Kentish Gazette, .--6 Apr. 1785-
3 Kentish Gazette, 11-14- Apr. 1785.
4- i.entish Gazette, °1-25 May 1785.
5 jj'or example, Kentish Gazette, 31 May - 3 June, 10-14-, 3-7 June 1785-

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ness of the gulf separating Kent's rival interests.
Pitt emerged chastened from the defeats ana p.,rty strife of
1785, but with his ^re-.sp on power unirn-air^a. Ho h. d been able to c-^rry the House on the majority of its business and learned from his mistakes, while the failure of victory to bring office
1
heightened frustration and dissension in the Opposition. ihe principal casualty of 1785 wasJ however, the cause of parliamentary refom. A.S the exclusive preserve of neither ijittites nor Foxites it was fatally weakened in an atmosphere of party warfare. The Foxite 'Small Country Gentleman' w^s quick to seize upon the handling of the Westminster election as proof of Pitt's bad faith. 'I think I can discern his cjonduct both as a man and a minister
to be so completely at war with his professions,' he wrote, 'as to render it hi ;hly problematical, whether the Honourable gentle-man is really in earnest in wishing well to a measure which he declares it to be his intention boldly and honestly to foring for-

2 ward and to support'. The poor attendance at Wyvill's recent Yorkshire meeting, and the expected apathy in Kent were thus clear signs that 'the people at l^.rge no longer view Mr.Pitt through the same false medium by which he stood presented to them during the fever of the late general election'. uord hahon was accused of having diverted the freeholders from reform in 1784 by means of a gang of dock workers, and 'i^USTICUS' attacked the now Pittite j'ilkes as the 'pretendedly strenuous advocate of civil liberty' who 'was never serious in any one action of his life, except where his pleasures or his interest were materially concerned'.^ 'An Earnest Friend to" our true Constitution' on the other
hand, welcomed Pitt's lead in seeking to remedy a state of affairs which he described as 'exceedingly decayed and disordered'. Pitt he felt was sincere and it was the duty of the peoole to encour ,ge

1 P. Kel.l.y, 'British Parliamentary Politics, 17;''! 1786' 73o-9
2 Kentish Gazette, 23-26 Feb. 1785.
*> Kentish Gazette, 17-21 dune 1785- Cf. Kentish Gazette, '^--^8 . June, 1-5, 19-^2 July 1785- ' ^

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1 him in his endeavours. Yet even when reform did eppe-j? on the
floor of the House there were those prepared to find fault with
it from essentially factious motives. One writer, for example, argued that the effect of both Pitt's proposals and the bribery and election bills of Lord hahon would be to increase the influence of the Grown, and wholly ignored their many advantages to the

p purity of the representations. In the widely reported division
on Pitt's unsuccessful reform motion, twelve Kentish M.P.s voted
*

in the minority , but in the following weeks reformers were as disunited as ever. 'A Small Country Gentleman 1 was critical of rltt and ,iyvill for not pressing shorter parliaments, and could not concur in ! A COUNTRYr-lAN' 5' view that ijitt' s good faith had

Zj_ been vindicated. ^fter 1785 reform disappeared from British

politics in all but a very peripheral manner, so that, as \vraxal 1 noted, when in 1786 Karsham attempted to extend Jrewe's Act to voters employed by the Navy and Ordnance, 'he soon discovered that ministers were no longer favourable to such propositions'. hany reasons may be cited for the rapid demise of the spirit of 1780-
2. Despite the picture of distress painted by 'An Earnest Friend to our true Constitution', the nation's economy was gradually improving, with the result tho.t gentlemen were less easily moved by complaints about high taxation. Nevertheless it still seems fair to conclude that a prime cause of Kent's non-participation in the petitioning campaign of 1785? t:nd the eclipse of reform as a major national issue Ion;.; before the French devolution, was the fragmentation along p-.rty lines of its potential adherents.

1 Kentish Gazette, 15-19 Feb. 1785-
2 Kentish Gazette, 2-6 and 15-20 Apr. 1785.
3 Parl. Hist. , xxv. 4-75-8: Gip-os, Robinson, Udw;.,rds, Jay lor Preston, Luttrell, ;o<gycr, Aldridge, .Si.iith, Middle ton, ^..r
and bony wood. Of. i.entish Gazette, 20-23 A~or. 1785.
4- Kentish Gazette, 31"nay - 3 June and 10-14 June 1785.
5 The Historical and the Posthumous Memoirs of oir Nathanie1 V/i 11 i .: m >'/r ax all, ed. w. B. V/hatley, -iv. 295- "
6 i.ontish GazetfeT 16-19 J'eb. and 21-25 Mny 1785.

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Following the excitement of the 1785 session, British poli tics entered upon a period of relative tranquillity. Government was defeated on 27 i-'ebruc.ry 1786 on the Duke of ..uichmond's dock yard fortification plt,,n, but otherwise there were few alarms. Jne Kentish press, too, was unusually silent on national
ahc i-.peac.im^j.xt of .a rrem Iirsbi_i0 3 ,Uid tne e--.rly ojru^
against tlie o-^vo Tr^dt were n^t the issues to inspire mc.as agitation, and only the Commercial Jreaty v;ith France prompted extended comment in the winter of 1766/7- Printers and corres-pondents turned their attention to social and. philanthropic subjects such as the poor ...nd the Game Laws, while the Canterbury Journal kept up its strong literary tradition through the 'Kentish Muser' to beguile its readers with scenes from county life, rural, domestic and clerical. Hot until the latter part of 1788 did national politics again impress themselves upon Kentishmen, with the result that there w^s an immediate return to the party alignments of jritt' s early years.
An important factor in reawakening public interest and reviving those alternative constitutional interpretations later to be hotly debated during the King's illness and the French Revolution, was the approaching centenary of jilliam Ill's 1688 landing. At first, poetry was widely employed to celebrate the

s\ victories and liberties won by the expulsion of the Stuarts.
'A Speculist 1 in the Iventish Gazette then pointed out to his readers the preparations being made in Yorkshire, Derbyshire
and under Coke in Norfolk to mark 'a day, which shines so con-spicuous in the annals of our country, for having given consum-mation to the plan of the glorious devolution' ; and remembered'" 'the more inestimable rights dud immunities which the men of kent

Kentish Jhronicle, 28 Oct. - 4 Nov. 1788: 'On the la^/GLUTIOE
by King WillJL.ia III, !^th lovembeji? 1688. on hn.ry II, Kentish
Ghr oni c 1 e , 4-11 Nov. T/a-'>; "..nu Iventish Gazette,
1 r/cJ3: 'a'he Glorious devolution'.

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in common with the rest of our countrymen, derive from our admirable form of free government, for the preservation of which we are indebted under God, to the immortal ^illiam uassau, Prince of Orange 1. './as the county which hj.d resisted the Conqueror c^nd mustered against the 'Young pretender' in 174-5, to degrade itself by not commemorating so historic an event?1 Some parts at least were not. Dinners were held at jhatham, Gravesend, and at the
- ^ull Inn, Rochester, attended by the corporation and the borough's k.P.s, and the windows of Quakers were broken for not being
2
illuminated. i'he tone of the Rochester meeting was of 'great mirth and loyalty', with the Clerk of the Cheque at Chatham in attendance, but at naidstone a far more partisan spirit may be
5 discerned.^ 'i'he corporation party and the Whigs under Clement 'laylor met separately, ^nd only a half-hearted move seems to have been made to shelve local differences. A gathering under the chairmanship of the Rev. Edmund Marshall listened to Burnett's account of the Revolution and a eulogy of William's triumphs over i-iouis XIV and James II, as well as to--.sting liberty and 'The Duke of Portland, and every sincere friend to this country throughout the Kingdom'. Reflecting on these festivities, the 'Speculist' regretted that more areas in Kent had not imitated the above examples, and was highly critical of 'iir. ,,-dLtt and his gloomy junto of obsequious followers' for not organising national jubilees or taking a personal share in the rejoicings. However, while opposition groups probably gained most from the propa ;anda war
of late October and early November, news of the King's illness quickly enabled iltt to regain the initiative both at Westminster

and in the country.
tfrom the moment the royal illness became public knowledge during the first half of November T/88, the press was re'-ul^r in

1 i.entish Gazette, 17-21 Oct. 1788.
2 Kentish Gazette", 4~7 Hov. 17u8.
3 Ibid.
Gazette, 18-.-^1 Rov. 1788.

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chronicling the comings .aid goings of ministers and doctors,
and in assessing the possible course of events, ahe prevailing mood of a fresh crop of patriotic verses was quite clearly one of sympathy for the prostrate I^ing and of suspicion about the intentions of the Prince of Wales and his Carlton House cronies. 1
'.The development of the regency Crisis has been traced elsewhere , but its effects upon provincial politics are less well documented. Pitt was the master of Parliament throughout the dark months
of uncertainty, and in the Commons' division of 16 December v/on the support of thirteen of the Kentish M.P.s, with only a'aylor,
p
Iionywood and ^.velyn voting in the minority. Charles Mar sham
was probably speaking for a majority of his constituents, as well as of his fellow Members, when, three days lo/cer, he said 'he thought it necessary for -drrliament to declare, that it was their right and^their duty to provide the means for supplying the defect
7.

in the exercise of the royal authority 1 ; and it was such senti-ments that jJ'ox offended by his over-hasty words. Everywhere .. friends of administration strove to raise sympathetic addresses, and by the time of the King's recovery Canterbury, Dover, Hythe, Maidstone, Queenborough and Sandwich, along with the freeholders of Kent and the commissioners of the Navy at Sheerness, had all

4 responded. Yet, while the 'Man of Kent' could counsel
that nothing would be more injurious to the Prince than to sub-stitute 'the leaders of faction 1 for 'a minister appointed by your father and beloved by the people'-?; few can have doubted th.j.t the establishment of a regency would be accompanied by the

1 J. W. Derry, The Regency Crisis and the Jhigs, 17_88-j39 (Cambridge, 1963;.
2 x^arl^ jii_st_._, xxvii. 778- ,2: Gipps, riobinson, Mar sham, Blo::am, I7i~d'.j7e~ton, .Julivan, Henniker, Preston, Parnaby Ladcliffe, Aldridge, r>owyer, Stephens and jjrett.
5 *-L-£. yi^ti.' xxvii. 817-8.
4 :-.R.0.1[0. 55.19/17, 17/25, 25/34, 20/34 and 30/19, 25/58, 25/33, 25/9, 25/38.
5 setters to a jL-rince from a I Inn of Kent (London, 1789), p. c'A-. A loamphlet highly critical 6*1 the "lAiigs.

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installation of Fox in highest office. i,entish Whigs './ere thus understandably confident, and it v/as one of their number who penned the following lines in the Kentish Gazette;
God save Greai; George our Prince! Lon^ _dve our Noble Prince,
God save the i-rincel
Send he may conquer aitt,
Nor be by i'hurlow bit,
But as Prince Regent.sit!
God So.ve the Prince!

'A Social ,vhig' concluded from his study of the Constitution that the prerogative powers should be held by the sovereign's heir, and on no account usurped by the ..egislature 2, while a week later, 'A Freeholder 1 sought to explain why he had not addressed? He did not wish to insult the Prince, and was steadfastly opposed to i-dtt because of his manner of assuming office, his creation of peers, his attempt to gain popularity by pretending to desire reform, the Scrutiny, the extension of the excise laws, and many other aspects of recent fiscal policy. Finally, as i-ltt's riegency Bill passed slowly through the House of Commons, 'A Friend to the House of Brunswick' welcomed the lead bein given by the men of Hampshire, and hoped that Kent v/ould soon do like-wise by addressing the Prince . jjut, as the whigs built cabinets, promised honours, and perhaps even contemplated a snap dissol-ution, fortune smiled once more upon their rival, un 19 Febru-ary the Lord Chancellor told the Lords that the King h^d entered a phase of convalescence, and the battle was over. A disunited «vhig p-rty had gambled and lost; and in the ensuing months ±dtt and the country set aoout recovering their debts with a ven-

geance.

However, an election was postponed for more than a year
and in the interim one further issue demanded public attention.

1 Kentish Gazette, 2-6 Jan. 1789; and poem in 9-13 Jen. 1789. 2 Kentish Gazette, 2-5 Jan. 1789- Of. 'A 'i'RUL, ,<H1G' in"i,entish Gazejjte, 9-1$ Jan. 1789. '
3 r.cntish Gazette, 9-13 Jan. 1789.
4 Kentish Gazette, 10-13 Feb. 1789.

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The dissenting community h...cl long wished for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and in 1784- h..d generally thrown in its lot wit::. Pitt and the Kin-;, only to be disn^yed in 1787 v/nen the Prime minister publicly rejected its claims. The question was again mooted in Parliament in 1789, and rapidly became a party matter, with Fox proposing a third motion in 1790. 1 Perhaps stimu-lated by the 1588 spirit and the apparent resurgence of liber-tarian ideas in France, a national campaign w_,s mounted in 1789

p
to assist the jhig leader. Kent's substantial population of dissenters might exert considerable electoral pressure in the county and larger boroughs, and this is certainly reflected in the surviving division lists. In both 1787 and 1789 votes for repeal were recorded by Canterbury's Clr-.rj.es itobinson, iaidstone's Clement Toylor and the two ^nights of the .oliire. As usual, the press was a major forum for debate. Reports of protest meetings in other counties were printed, the history and repressive effects of the Restoration statutes were explained in some detail, appeals were made to the new tide ol reform currently ^ae.t,ing ac;?oss Europe, and elector wore advised to scrutinise the conduct of
/1

their representatives.' However, strong opposition was to be expected in a society which woulo. later spearhead the defence of the Protestant Constitution against Catholic Emancipation. 'A True Friend of Liberty of Conscience ^nd Toleration; but for no Dissenters in State Affairs' warned of the dire consequences of repeal; and 'A Plain Englishman' expected stiff resistance from 5 the Anglican clergy. After the 1790 vote, ,j?chdeacon j-,;/nch of

1 C. i-i. Ditchfield, "The parliament ..ry struggle over the repeal of the Test and Corporation ^cts, 1737-1790', "ilVog. Hist. Itev

Ixxxix. (197^), 561. ——"" —————————'
2 A. Goodwin, The Friends of Liberty; The English democratic Movement in the .>.;;e of the arench revolution (London, 1 l)7s)
chap. 3-
3 G. M. Ditchfield, 'Debates on the Test and Corporation ,.cts, 1787-1790: the Evidence of the Division ists 1, B.I.H.ii., l! (1977), 72-^- and V';-6. "——————
^ Kentish Gazette, 7-11 iiov. i hd 6-9 Oct. 1789, and 5-9 nar. 179Q 5 Kentish Gazette, 5-8 Jan. '1790.

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Canterbury's visitations at aittingbourne, Ashfora and. his o'.rn city prompted expressions of 'unanimous thanks' 'to ijitt 'for his warm, learned and manly Support of the eights of the Church of

1 England 1. Hence on yet another issue Kentish opinion was deeply

split. It now remains only to be seen how far the'party 1 quar-rels of 1784-90 were reflected as the county entered upon a fresh round of elections.
Ill

I'he 1790 general election crystallised many of the themes
of recent national and loc-.~l politics, and is of added interest to the historian as being the last for many years in which parties and public opinion could operate without the restraining consciousness of war. There were many imponderables, and skill more spurs to redoubled efforts. Whig complaints about their treatment in 1784 had been intensified rather than quietened by subsequent events, while xj itt, despite a record of achievements, had undergone sufi'icient defeats and alterations of course to render ministerial complacency far too dangerous. Both parties sought to exercise an influence in 'open 1 _nd 'close 1 constitu-encies, and Opposition went some w^.y in creating an organisation. But how would, the electorate react? Would candidates be judged solely on past votes and probable future allegiance'; Had the Regency Crisis, as jj. .7. Hill suggests; 'left Opposition less popular in parliament and in the country than at any time since
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1784'^; or would disgruntled reformers and dissenters tilt the L\.
balance in favour of Fox: All these aspects may be documented

1 Kentinn G-azette, 18-22 June 1790.
2 iJ."1J. "inter (ed. ; , .;lii ; Organisation jn^ I; lie General Election of 1790; Selections from the J.ilair^ Adara 1'ap er s(B.erke 1 ey, 1967) , pp. xi-lvii; and D. ii.' Ginter, ' The financing of the Jliir:
Trrty Organisation, 1783-1793', .-jnerican historical xieview,
Ixxi. (1966;, 421-40.
3 .o. J. Hill, 'Fox and _ju:ake: Jhe '/nig party ano. the question of principles, 1734-1789', Enr. Hist, aev., Ixxxix. (1°74;, 21.
4 ^ijchfield, 'The struggle over the repeal of the aest and Corporation ^cts, 1787-17^0', 575: 'The suoject of repeal was, at best, a very i.iinor electoral isGue. 1

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by a study of the contests in Kent.
T,;ith a poll being resorted to in seven of the nine constitu-encies, there h?.d clearly been no diminution of interest, i'he best reported and most important of these were at Canterbury, oandwich and in the county, but all were of some significance, and, with the natural exception of New _":omney, each affords evidence of party confrontation. /it Kiaidstone, for example, the late 17SO's saw the borough as divided as ever. fhe by-election in July 1788 to repl. ce G-erard Ldw .;rc.s witnessed a tight struggle between the government-supported merchant and Sheriff of London, Matthew Bloxani, and George Lyn^, the son of the j?oxite martyred in Middlesex. Later, at the .{evolution celebrations^ a resolution was carried hoping ttuit' the new Member, Mr. Bloxam [mightj condud himself as honestly and independently in the House of Commons, as 1
his worthy colleague ^r. Taylor 1 ; which stron ;iy implies that the Jhigs and radicals feared he would not. Nevertheless both men v/ere convincingly re-elected in 1790 by their rival Parties. At Queenborou h and at Rochester, Government and its sup-
porters v/ere directly challenged. George Grant and jilliam Loph,.,m v/ere comfortably fended off at the former, but in the
hope of securing Rochester's independent seat, Opposition put up the Marquis of iitch.field, the eldest son of the Duke of Portland, Admiral Sir Richard Bickerton v/as assured of a smooth return in pl~.ce of Middleton, whereas the absence of Nathaniel Smith m_.de necessary the selection of a new spokesman for the popular party. 'Jhe election coincided with a meeting at the assembly Rooms on
3 ii-'.y called 'to consider the most effectual noans to obtain a
p
. tofor:.: in the Government Part of the corporation' ; and it w:.s fro,.! this local discontent with a self-elecuin;;, Com^ion Council j.nd bench of Aj.dernien that the ./iii.^s sou ;ht to benefit.

1 Kentish u-..-.zette, 4~? MOV. 1733.
2 Kentish 1 azette, ^1-7 May 1790.

- .'itchfield 1 s campaign thus hinged on 1'reedom of election and
the still potent fe^.r of corruption. As Gharles Bentinck wrote on his behalf: 'You conceived, Gentlemen, that tnose Aiahts
were trampled upon, were sacrificed to a secret lillegiblej interested Family Compact, you conceived it to be a oert of a Contract with Government to aive you up, and that you v/ere bar-gained away by the Contractors, without any regard to your Rights <"]
as freemen 1. However when the polls closed, these sentiments had not been sufficient. Titchfield's failure to appear in person no doubt counted against him, especially as his opponent w.is George Best of the Chatham brewery, whose local connections were many and excellently suited to the needs of eighteenth-century electioneering.
In 1790 the vfnigs paid considerable attention to the Cinque Ports and commissioned surveys of a number of the boroughs.
J. Jackman recorded hopefully: ' '„ Mr. Jalter... informed me that . Sir Edward Derings influence at niomney was on the go - I give
2
you his own words, and he is a leading man in the corporation'. Jealousy may well have existed among the inhabitants about the distribution of the patron's favours, but was' evidently not considered strong enough to merit an inevitably expensive opoos-ition. Nevertheless, when soliciting a peerage in 1793, Bering claimed that he had refused 'some very advantageous offers'
7,

during the ^egency Crisis^} a disclosure which indicates exten-sive activity on the ..lii^s' part, and that men like Deririg still viewed Pitt as the best source of honours.
Anticipation of .Jiig successes Droved, better founded at
Dover and Hythe, At the height of the political uncertainty in January 1789, the Kentish__G;.zette tu.d noted, 'The present admini-stration is evidently not less popul .r at Dover t'lan in every
1 Ke_nti_sh G.vzette, 18-22 June 1790.
2 Oririter Ceci."j\ j'li Urbanisation in the ^en.erj_l_E:^e_c_tion "

__ _oT
1790 , D. 170: J. JacaiMi to Charles Whiting, l dune ~;IYc 7o.
3 Ibid., "p. 173 n. 9.

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1
other part of the kingdom 1 . Yet in saite of this apparent loyalty, the labours of the government man, Gnaries brn^-il rybus , proved insufficient to prevent John 'Irevsnion from recapturing his seat at a by-election shortly afterv/ards. Personal factors probably explain arevanion's victory, but as the year progressed the ,/higs seem to h-.ve been attracted to his cause by a renewal
o

of local resentment at ministerial interference. William Adam and the Duke of Portland were involved on Trevanion's behalf in negotiations with Lord North, and helped settle questions of expenses and a possible partner for the forthcoming general elec-3
tion.^ Pour candidates eventually took the field in 1790, and
'a very warm contest' ensued, before arevanion and ijybus came home with clear majorities. The result thus restored the pre-1784- balance between Government and opposition.
The state of politics at Hythe came under public gaze during
the Kent election in which one of its principal inhabitants was deeply involved. William Deedes was accused by the IToxite
1 VErilT'VS ' of political inconsistency, since while he was zealous for the Pittite oir Edward ijiatchbuli in the county, at Eythe
'he has, and now does, support two men whose conduct in Parlia-ment (since Mr. Pitt's administration) has been always diametric- i ally opposite to e-.ch other'.-7 Early in 1789 William .^velyn had been promoting an address sympathetic to the ±Jrince of wales,
and in the autumn his interests did not escape the notice of
Lord worth and the whig managers. However in his reply Deedes claimed that he and Evelyn had formerly .greed on politics, and

1 ^GAtish Gazette, 9-13 Jan. 1789.
2 AGntish Gazette, 50 Jan. - 3 Feb. 1790.
3 u-inter (ed.J, \Aiig Organisation in the General lection oi' 1790, PP- 109 and 140-3: Duke of ~I: o inland to Wi
31 Oct. and ,'a2 Dec. 1789.
4- Kentish Gazette, 30 A or. - 4 nay, 1o-2^ June 1790 and 2rJ-June 1790.
5 Kentish Gazette, 30 ..p-- - 4 ^ay 1790.
6 Ginter (ed.), V/hig Or; y-qiiGation in the General .Election of 1790, PP. 80-a: Portland to ft.da,:, 31 Aug. 17JCJ. —————

- 14-3 -

that he had concurred in the somewhat unorthodox juncture of Evelyn and Earnaby itadcliffe as the best means of preventing
1
an unwelcome and costly opposition. In 1790 the stratagem had the desired effect, and Evelyn continued to sit with the Anigs until the rifts of the trench devolution.
I'here is no evidence that Opposition either engineered or
led the defeat which ended government's Ion,-:; electoral monopoly at Sandwich. Nevertheless 1790 v/as an important year in the borough's history and prompted much comment both locally and in the Kentish press. Amon the four candidates nominated at the Guildhall on 21 April, one was _-hilip Stephens, the Ion--serving Secretary to the Admiralty, and another was Lord rarker, the Controller of the Household, who stood pledged to assist the

p projected harbour development. However, as the Kentish Gazette observed at this time, '...of late the power of a ministerial mandate is found at that place to be on the decline', due to
'a want of impartiality in the present liembers towards their constituents, and to an overbearing spirit in some of the Bench, to keep the principal tradesmen and freemen in general out of their share in the representation, to which as men of spirit and
;z

property they are likely no longer to submit.'-' i-he bc~sis thus existed for an independent opposition, which was most fortunate in finding 'as distinguished a character' as Sir Horace iiann
L_
for its figure-head. unce the other non-ministerial candidate, John Dilnot, had withdrawn, the Kentish Gazette believed Mann was secure , but some among its correspondents were less confi-dent. As late as 8 June 'R.^». ' was advisin freemen that they had been exonerated from promises of votes to Stephens by his
1 Kentish Gazette, 4-7 aay 1790.
2 Kentish Gazette, 20-23 A^r. 1790.
5 Ibid.

4 HMG Various Collections v T, 356: .ishop of Llchfield and Coventry to Commodore the Hon. William Jornv/allis, 7 June 1790, 'Sir Horace Iio.nn is a candidate for Sandwich in Ken.-, against Lord Parker. i3oth say they ,,re sure.'
5 Kenlaish Gazette, 20-23 Apr. 1790.

subsequent conduct, furthermore, votes should be v/itheld from the oecretary, whose election was virtually certain, in order 'to prevent the casting off votes to his ^ordship; for every vote given in that way to Lord Parker is a drop of poison in your cup. 1 'Ivy Friends! ' he concluded, 'you have kindled the fire of liberty in your Town; it is with you to fan the cSL\ERuU3 jJV.J:^, and screen it from the BL^S!1 of ^VY.' 1 Despite a letter from 'X' deploring the above sentiments as 'treachery', 2 the Kentish Gazette on 22 June, was able to hail Hann's return as 'a glorious assertion of the rights of Freemen, and of independency of representation', achieved by a party 'much the most opulent in the Town', an.: by 'fair and honourable measures.'^ I'o Lord rarker, 'The Hand of Superior Povjer has been carried against me'^~; while the verdict of the Kentish Gazette was, ' i'he inhabitants of Sandwich, fettered by ministerial despotism, oppressed by the tyranny of their Corporation, obnoxious to the resentment of irritated power, have, notwithstanding, returned to Parliament,
a man, eminently hostile, eminently inimical, to those who thought themselves their masters, because eminently the friend of liberty, the active abettor of the cause which animates us all. 1 ^
Sir Horace iiann was also an important figure in the early preparations for the Canterbury election. In a widely publicised adaress to the city's corporation of 8 September 1789, he reveaiec that in January he had declined an offer to repl.--.ce one of the sitting Members at the next election, while in may he h...d re-solved that 'he should not interfere directly nor indirectly in any contest which may arise, 1 after bein • obliged by a pledge
to George Gipps to refuse an Opposition suggestion of a campaign

1 Kentish Gazette, 4-8 June 1790.
2 Kentish'Gazette, 11-15 June,1790; and ibid, for reply from
3 Kentish Gazette, 18-22 June 1790. |« <
4 Kentish Gazette, 29 June - 2 July 1790.
5 Kentish Gazette'7 22-25 June 1790.

against the ±: ittites. In the light of these declarations of impartiality, 'A iT?J£3MAl. 0? O..J;ii EKBU./:Y 1 seized his pen v/ben in mid October it appeared that Richard Beckford had been sent to

2 contest the borou'-h with bir Horace's blessing. 'li-JrAi-i'i'IAL 1
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leapt to Harm's defence , while a letter clearly designed for the consideration of the .rrince of hales, affords independent proof of the baronet's strict adherence to the terms of his
L\.
recent commitments.

Meanwhile, the rival parties were drcwin~ up their lines.
'A FREEMAi; Ujj1 CAITI'ERBURY 1 w:.rmly recommended Gipps and xiobinson
as local men and tried servants, in complete contrast to Beckford, a stranger, of whom no more was known than 'of Horlando Ooroso, Groom of the .Stole to the Queen of B-.ntarn 1. Beckford was in f.ct a son of the Ghathamite Lord Mayor of London, who, in March 1790, described himself as being 'zealously attached...to the Gause of Liberty and areedom of election; and felt flattered to be in-volved 'in your present Strugsgle against undue Influence and Oppression, to restore your freedom and Independence, and resist every attempt that may then £gain be made by your Corporation, to deprive you of the free exercise of your franchises'. By the time of the Gommon Hall nominations of 5 April he was coupled in

7 this enterprise v/ith Lord Daer, the son of the jjarl of Selkirk' ,

and seems to have derived encouragement from discontented elements, especially among the Iron-residents, -nd from the p^rliamentar Opposition.
A meeting of the city's j^ondon freemen h.-.d resolved on 19
October 1789 that, "Hhe Members of the Corporation of the City of

1 Kentish Gazette, 18-22 Sept. 1789-
2 Kentish" Gazette, 13-16 uct. 1789-
3 Kentish Gazette, 20-23 Oct. 1789-
4 A. As-oinall (ed.),The Correspondence of George, irince of "ales, 1772-1812 (London, 1963), i. 511-12: oir . Mann ~:7o J-"; C. J. .. Payne, 1'; Nov. 1789-
5 Kentish Gazette,13-16 Oct. 1789-
6 Kentish.. Gazette^ 1.,-19 i.ar. 1790.
7 Kentish GazG_t;;_e, 4-7 Hay 1790.

Canterbury, have, for many ye-^rs, assumed an exclusive ri ;ht to nominate candidates to represent the s .ia City in Parliament 1, wliich they felt was 'highly unconstitutional in its principle, insultiiv/ to the whole body of j'reemen, and is a fla .rant violation /i
of the freedom of election.' ' When they again met on 19 April 1790, it v/as to restate their determination to fight ^xid to en-
2
dorse the recent nominations. Beckford and ^ord Daer were also materially assisted in their c,xmpai rm by the Whi--;s. Hwo of the party'.s election agents, George aeid ..nd Ldward Kent, watched over their interests in the capital and in Canterbury, and money from
^

Adam's election fund was used to defray expenses.
Neither v/as the Pittite corporation slow in promoting its candidates. At the oeginning of November 1789 'A Freeman' v/as
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found praisiiv:1 the virtues of the boimgh's i'-i.P.s", end when Charles .-cobinson announced his retirement on 24 narch, a presti-gious replacement was quickly found in Sir John Eonywood. A series of meetings, dinners ...nd speeches allied Gipps and Hony-
£T

wood even more closely with the interests of the i.ayor , and exposed such divisions in the borough that the outcome was un-certain until the very last moment. i! he event which destroyed whatever chances the Whigs may h_.ve had was the last-minute withdraw?.! of Beckford, which the hasty substitution of Lord 3ond.es1 son could not repair. Lord Daer attributed his defeat to this abandonment, although the final figures sug est that he may 7 have been a trifle over-ootir.nsticr

1 Kentish Gazette, 20-23 Oct. 1789-
2 Kentish Gazette, 20-23 Apr. 1790.
3 Ginter, 'The financing of the .dig P_.rty Organisation, 1783- 1793', ^-28-30; and Ginter (ed. y, \/hi Organisation in the G_en-eral election of I'/SQ, pp. 201 m^ 2*^1-2: George xieid to ,c>m, 30 June 1V C X) - nc .uoi-a uaer to .Idam, 3 Oct. 1790.
^ Aentish Gazette, 2-S Nov. 1789-
5 Kent i sh' Gaz e 11 e , 23-26 ana 26-30 h .r. and 2-G ,;mr. 1'/90. Rob-inson retired -ecause he no longer v/ished to spend time in London.

6 Kentish Gazette,, 9-13 and 13-16 ..re. 179J.
7 Kent i rJh. '"Gl • z et t e, 1,:-22 and 15-18 June 17 '0.

- 14-7 -

George Gipps o09
. Jir John Honywood 732
. Lord Daer 578
Thomas Watson ?^2
For the first time since 175^- tne county of i^ent was contested. Specific political issues played relatively little p^rt, either
in initiating the stru^.ale, or in deteriainin^ the outcome. Yet
a campaign lasting nearly four months could not have been !-:ept alive without widespread public interest , and did not pass without incident and controversy. In 1790 the day of judgment for Mar sham and Honywood was at hand. Hauled before the bur of the county they were called upon to account for their stewardship of the freeholders' trust. I'he accusations of 1785 were repeated with fresh vigour, the votes and allegiances of an entire parliament were minutely examined, and a -rittite candidate was brou- ;ht for-ward to redress the balance of interests. The personalities, the private characters and the public principles of each aspirant and many of their closest supporters were praised, condemned and lam-pooned by scores of newspaper correspondents, while money was lavishly expended in canvassing tours, dinners and fetes. Party-labels were freely attributed, oncl the result cle,,rly demonstrates how extensively jin^lish politics and public opinion had been polar-ised - as Charles riarsham found to his cost, failure to espouse either side was the way of defeat.
.uono; before the dissolution, Sir Edward xmatchbull proclaimed
his intention of contesting the county, and began his canvass with 1
a sumptuous banquet at Hatch. The friends of the sitting hembers
were immediately thrown into disarray, and at the Crown and Anchor I'avern in the Strand on 22 February a number of them resolved to request the Hip;h Sheriff to summon a meeiaui- in order to preserve the peace of the county. ..'his the sheriff refused to do , though he

1 oir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, i>.en;jish iyojoil^ (London, 1960;, p. 14-8.

- 14-8 -

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had no objection to a private requisition being n...de. In addition, 'A friend to Equity and a'ruth 1 deplored the 'VT.nY
unfair Canvass 1, and called upon freeholders to show respect for p their K.P.s by not engaging too hastily to vote for An^tchbull. 'A BY-S-^ANDZrc' v/ished to know why ,3ir Edward had appeared so abruptly, thereby 'kindling the destructive fire of opposition... sowing the seeds of aiscord, and fermenting the occasions of prof-usion and debauchery'. Only explicit proof of Eonywood's unfitness
^

as a representative could .-justify such a proceeding , and it was to hear the arguments of the rival parties that between eight

Zj_ and nine thousand people assembled at 1-iaidstone on 8 March.

'j?he first purpose of the meeting was to nominate candidates.
:'jir Horace Mann spoke of Iiarsham's long service, and uilliam Geary claimed that ,-although some of his votes tu.d not been pleasing to every elector, he had always been guided by his original principle; and his own judgment. I'o Mr. Watson, Konywood was 'uncorrupt and uninfluenced 1, while in the opinion of .olr. H. D'Aeth, 'if we wish to preserve our Constitution, we never ce.n be better repres-ented'. Lastly, oir V/ill5 am Jj'agg proposed Knatchbull as 'the Guardian of our civil and religious rights', whose fortune and personal pride would shield him from the temptations of ministers. nevertheless, l/illiam ueedes left no-one in any doubt where the baronet's sympathies lay:
Within these twelve months p.~st we have seen every tor./n
and village through the country ring with rejoicin-s for
the recovery of our beloved .ooverei';n; ^ears of joy v;ere
the only tears that were shed. ./e h...d for some months
been under great apprehension of a change in the Kinistry; theso fears v/ere done av;ay; v/e v/ere then satisfied that those confidential servants would continue in power under whose ausrdces our country had emerged from the depth of despondency to the pinnacle of glory.
i-itt and his friends in administration were the only •oeople he.'.rd of in your convivial meetin s; truth made them ap-olauded, and it is now for you uo reward them by sendin"* proper men to Parliament.
1 Kentish Gazette., 2-5 har. 1790.
2 l_blcl\"
~5 ^c-iru-i^ii vjaiZGttG. 9-12 anr. 1790.
^ ...eport in Kcnti sh Gazette, 5-9 i^i?. ^790.

As to the three nominees; Knatchbull promised independent support for Pitt, Honywood repeated his constant v;ish to advance the interests of Kent, and Karsham professed himself reedy to be guided by the freeholders. ahe sense of the crowd seemed to be in favour of Marsh-.m and Xnatchbull, which led William Geary to propose that since no opposition was offered to the former as the representative of the western division 'he take no part whatever in the present contest with either of the other Candidates'. This was unanimously agreed, but knatchbull's party wished to go even further. Deedes and oir John Dyke suggested that jtionywood should stand aside altogether, only to see their plans negatived amid scenes of great confusion. So matters rested, with all three men undertaking to fiaht on their own interests. However the future was f vp from clear, and the events and issues of 8 Karch provided a.Kiple subject for lob ate in the ne._t ujs^.^.
riuch bad _^eling was p:.u/-ide^ o;y t'">.3 atteap^ to "::clude
Honywood from the contest. John .oawbridge h, .0. denounced it at liaidstonc, and 'A aauUJKKA j'Z^.;,a: a. Hii 1 saw in the use of 'a rabble from the .Jockyards, and a majority of persons who were not iaree-

1 holders' a foretaste of Lnatchbull ' s conduct in a new parliament. The whole scheme was certainly unusual, and Knatchbull's friends had exposed themselves to further suspicion, since in the tumult many had mistakenly voted for Sir Horace Kami's adjournment motion, made in order to protect Honywooa from emb rrassment, only to hold up their hands again a few minutes later when Deedes belatedly tabled his idea, ouch inconsistency was eagerly seized upon to depreciate Pittite strength.
equally liable to misrepresentation was the political
behaviour of //illiam Deedes over the past ten years. We have already seen how ' Va^xIHAo' drew attention to liis apparently

Kentish Gazejrbe, 16-19 ^ r. 1790. Of. ijid. for 'A \,_;
TO SIR /Ji)W..,-L.J ..a^TOH^Uj.,- 1 and 'A FlLiH ' ..L I'D TO OUii aavG.^. ,i,T COIIST1TUTION' .

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<\
contradictory alliances at Hythe and in the county , and in keeping with the atmosphere of the day, Deedes chose to defend himself on a v/ide range of national as well es local issues. Ke had not approved of Honywood's reformist stance in 1780, and hence had not voted for hi: in the election of th ..t year. In 1784 he had welcomed the fall of the Coalition, ana had seconded Hony-wood's nomination because he felt unable to censure his fears of prerogative government, and because he believed him not disagree-able to Pitt. a'he Member's failure to fulfil this latter expec-tation, and not 'private pique 1 had led Deedes to deny any further 2 ' I
assistance in 1790. Replying to this apology, 'oiilPiaPi' considered-it remarkable that 'it is an essential recommendation in favour

5 of a Candidate that he is not objected to by Iir. ^± ut' . The

wheel seemed to have come full circle, with Deedes moving from Lord Horth's camp in 1780, through a brief flirtation with the popular cause in mid-decade, to a renewed ministerial position in the Pittite ranks. and this was the man who so loudly championed Knatchbull.

Phe discussion centred upon .jilliam Deedes indicates that
in 1790 Kentish voters were still preoccupied with the crisis of 1783/4 and the resultant party spll-i: which had been so manifest in 1785 and during the regency Jrisis. This T.:as the dominant theme of numerous letters and poems as the merits and misdenie.:n-ours of Honywood and Knatchbul-- were laid before the public.
L\.
Honywood was unrepentant , but to 'Pro .^ono Publico 1 his crime was deer enough; '...notwithstanding his most solemn and public asour aces to the contrary, Q*3jhas almost invariably opposed the present administration, and thereby forfeited the confidence not only of those who are friends to it, but as a public man of

1 Kentish Gazette, 30 Apr. - 4 Hay 1790.
2 Kenfcish G-azctt.e, 4-7 fcy 1790.
3 ^onbfsTi Gazette, 11-14 Fuy 1790.
4 "Joe .cu resJes in i.ent'.sh Cazette, 2-5 and 5-9 I-'i-.r. 1790.

the world in general'. ri?he wuole story 01 the pledge requested

^ by Lord nahon in 1784 was recapitulated by ' A. FR/^I^LjjLo: 1 , _nd

brought from the pen of 'TRU'fH' a swift response. Honywood h .d

been no stranger to the government lobby^

In those measures which, have principally contributed to
whatever degree of popularity i-.r. _-itt may at present
enjoy, he hc.s zealously supported him; on other questions
of great political :;.nd constitutional importance, he has
as warmly opposed him; and in m<any instances, in con-junction with the most weighty ana independent characters, among those who are most partial to his person and principles., he supported him in his plans for the dimin-ution of the national debt, in most of his t;.xes, .nu in his measures for emancipating Hollan^ from the inilue.-ce
of France. Ee opposed, him in the o^inass of the ..est-
mins j~er Scrutiny, uu the Iriaii Pioposi^loi.^, tlie Jariiiin^
of aa.::es, the aaval Promotion, by which a^iiy valuable
officers were superceded, and the Diiae of Richmond's Fortification Project.

Moreover, he had voted with Pitt against Fox on the Shop a'ax and

the Prince's right to the Regency, and had opposed the settlement

of the Prince's debts without the consent of the King. Certainly

he had made promises in 1784, but once elected he had had to be
x

guided by his own judgment. Other writers noted that ^ord Mahon,
4
now Earl Stanhope, had also r^one into opposition to x-'itt , and

had differed from Honywood only on th Regency.

Speculation about present ana future allegiance necessarily

invited comparisons with Kn-atchbull. oeeking to restore his

family's links with county politics which h.~d been in aoeyance

since 1763, Sir lidv/^rd offered himself as 'a strenuous Supporter

of the Constitution in Church and State'- but i- assessing the auch-

prized independence of both men, ' CGa PI all ALDUS' was convinced

that Knatchbull had made some compact with ministers in order to

1 Kentish Gazette, 2-5 Her. 1790. Of. ibid., 1o-l9 i-,ar. 1790
for 'A WELL-WISHER !i'0 SIR ^DV/-.-LO K-iAa^:...,u. ,L'.
2 Kentish Gazette, 9-12 i-ier. 1790.
3 Kentish Gazette, 12-16 war. 1; /90. Cf. ibid.) 16-19 har. 1790 for renly from 'rRUTH'.
^ For example, 'GOODiVIN 1 in Lentish Gazette, 19-23 and 23-JG Mar. 1790.
5 Kentish Gazette, 2-5 hrr. 1790.

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secure their interest, and asked; 'Shall a respectable end en-lightened county be stun'd by the clamour of such a host, and surrender their rights of election to the disposal of the dock yards?' Honywood on the other hand, was a ;mig and thus 'the laD^P^aJjEaj] CAKDIDAa'E, and most zealous friend of the constitu-
s\
tion. ' Stories went the rounds of chaises hired at Jeptford to convey 'persons of creditable appearance, though no ^reeholuers' to Maidstone, 'to make a show in oir Edward's favour on the day of

2 nomination 1 ' threatened loss of patronage to unfriendly inn-3 4 keepers , and of timely clerical preferments. ihen again, ' /u.'i'I-

was on the baronet's side because he disliked Eonywood's
close ties with the Foxites, whereas 'F^CT' could only heap praises on the man who had spurned government in his faithful adherence to iTox and the .;higs°. Personal deportment and integrity in private life were uppermost in the minds of ',01 Independent East Kent Freeholder' and 'A COi'fSi'ITUTIOUA-L WHIG' . 7 ao the former, Honywood had cut the greatest figure at Maidstone in appearance and mode of address, while to the other it was the height of presumption and ingratitude on the p-_j?t of the wholly inexperi-enced Knatchbull to challenge for the seat of his first wife's uncle. Finally, nonywood's reputation must have been enhanced by his extension of charity to a poor woman and her children who had been forced into the workhouse after her husband h^d been eccused of killing fox-cubs on Knatchbull ' s land and compelled to flee
o

the kingdom.
while this war of words raged in every newspaper, the two principal candidates were hard at work among the freeholders.
LJh. ,r.Les Mar she in on the other hand, remained aloof, relying on

1 Kentish Gazette, 12-16 Mar. 1790.
2 Kentish Gazette,, 30 i-iar. - 2 A or. 1790.
3 Kentish Gazette, 16-20 Anr. 1790.
4 It was also argued that ministers v/ou..d pay Knatchbull ' s ^20,000 expenses: KanjtisliJJ-: \zett_e, 26-30 Mar. 1790.
5 Kentish Gazette, 19- -3 i-:rr. 1 < N 0.
6 Kentish Gazette', 16-19 nar. 1790.
7 Kentish Gr^ette, 16-19 and T>?3 Mer. 1790.
8 Kentish GazuoL-o, 16-20 ..ir. 1790.

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the decision of 8 March and content to watch the antics of the

men of _^ast i^ent. 3ut it was a cui'ious and e dangerous stance, ooon after the naidstone meeting 'A FrL-^ilOL ~u.±_\ ' was wondering on who.t basis Harsh..un had escrpeo. the recriminations raining about
A

the ears of his former colleague , for had he not also erred from his pledge? .dy the middle of ..voril, one of Hollywood's supporters was writing, 'If any miscarriage should happen, it v;iil owe its rise to a want of early zeal and explicitness in a certain
p
quarter 1 ' ; and a month later ' oPjJC jAi'Cii' observed with regard to karsham thrt 'from the strong party features that v;.:-.rk this con-test he may, from the inconsiderate zeal of their [laiatchbull and HonywoodJ friends in pressing for single votes, eventually lose

3 his election 1, ,-iarsharn doubtless realised his plight, and

rumours began to circulate of advances made to Knatchbull. 'Every friend to independence will surely coincide....,1 argued one corres-ondent, ' that it is better to h.-.ve an o^en enemy to opoose than
Z|_ to encounter with the machinations of a fair friend. 1 Hersham strenuously denied the allegations, but they persisted until election day. '...liberal and disinterested Hr. H~.rsham, f ran one report, 'wishes to £pin a momentary seat (in favour of his friend G——y, who is the fixed man to succeed him) in preference to the seven years tenure the friends of constitutional liberty would enjoy in the election of their UPKlGKa1 and feithful servant, Mr. Honywood, and on whose success the freedom of this county entirely depends 1. The likelihood of Harsham being called to the Lords at any moment must have been a prime electoral consideration,
but there is no evidence to substantiate the assertions made by Mr. Breton at Penenden He.rth on 28 June that an , reement had

1 Kentish Gazette, 9-12 liar. 1790.
2 ii^n tls^ u-azette, 13-1^ --pr. 1790.
3 %nti^h'Crazette, 11-14- Hay 1790.
4 Kentish Gazette, 15-18 June 1790.
5 Kentish Gazette, 1; -22 June 1790-

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been made with Knatchbull to split the cost of brin ;in; up the
1 cross votes.
whip; fears were understandaole, since alliance or not, Pitt-ites were more likely to assist the moderate I-L.rshj.rn as the best means of ousting the self-confessed Foxite. Portland wrote to Adam on 30 June, 'I tremble for Kent - Last nights poll brought harsh^m within 55 of Honywood & all Knatchbulls split votes are

2

thrown upon I-larsham. For Knatchbull is 134-2 above Honywood. 1
7.

This is borne out by an analysis of the 205 clergymen who voted. Knatchbull received 157 clerical votes, liarsham 129 and Honywood
54. However the numbers of single votes cast were 53? 4- and 33 respectively, which indicate great interchange between the first two candidates and a strictly party support for the Whig. Despite this, the final return saw Konywood comfortably in second place behind Knatchbull.
Few major issues had managed to impress themselves upon the electors. Some opposition seems to have arisen to uonywood on
4.

account of his vote against the Test and Corporation Acts , and this may explain his poor showing among the clergy. 'FREEHOLDER 1 endeavoured to revive reform to something of its former stature, and advocated local registration and voting, and the payment of ii.P.s. 1-d.tt, he believed, was still sympathetic to the cause, and would be encouraged if men pledged to its support were elected. Neither matter was raised at the hustings, so that together with
the borough elections, the result in the county tends only to
bear out 'Dr. .L. G. ivltchell' s conclusion that, 'The dismissal of
the Coalition on the question of the ^ast India Bill and the amplifi-cation of important constitutional points in the personal duel

1 Kentish Gazette, 25-29 June and 29 June - 2 July 1790.
2 Ginter (ed.), Whip; Organisation in the General Election O.L'_ 17 fj
p. 196: Po-tlancl to Adam, 30 June 1790. """
3 Kentish Chronicle, 15-22 Mar. 1791.
4 iiilit'-sjL lazette, 23-27 ^r. 1790.
5 ivenbisli ^"zeVGe, 7-11 I^y 1790.

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(Jli a__ __. Lenijish oolitic-:, ana the oare\a:a l--y ;lution

1788 - 1802

On 22 _'"'ebru ry 1788 "one Kentish Gazette r.^uideu. tlie depth

1 of the ' Youn;: - Pretender 1, ...nd in retrospect it seems somehow fitting that the l^st vestige of the old Jacobite menace ^uju_d h^ve beer, swept away on the very evs of events wnich were to effect English politics even more dramatically than the flight
of James II and the machinations of his exiled descendants, i-he Jacobin phase of the French devolution inevitably cut short the party strife of the late 1780' s, and redefined the political allegiances of a whole generation. Nevertheless, it may be argued that in some respects at least, it actually assisted the growth of Kentish public opinion. County and borough elections con-tinued on the hi ^h note set in 1790, and on numerous occasions the enfranchised classes met to debate the state of the nation, i-iore important, perhaps, the new ideological ferment encompassed many groups less accustomed to play an active role. i'he Reevite and Volunteer movements demanded the participation of men of all ranks, while Painite ideas inspired working men to associate and to consider their response to local and national affairs. Conse-quently, while there was repression in the 1790' s, iaitt ' s legis-lation and the treason trials m^y be stripped away to reveal some curiously positive long-term results.
I

At the outset, English attitudes to France were considerably influenced by comparison with ,/illiani Ill's Glorious revolution.

2 As has been seen , a number of Kentish towns commemorated its

centenary in November 1788, and as well as giving fresh virour to the Whig-Tory conflict, the celebrations aid not ;oass without references to contemporary happeain ,s on the continent. At

1 Kentish Gazette, 19- -:2 iteb. 1788.
2 See supra, pp. 1

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iiaidstone toasts were drunk to 'a'he cause of liberty all over

the V/orld, and may those be free who deserve to be so 1 ; and more

specifically the assembly decl-.red, 'Hay 1788 be as auspicious
1
to the French patriots, as 1683 was to the British ones'. Later,

when reviewing the jubilee, the ' 3PLG ual J'i" observed in the

Kentish Gazette;

The flood of joy so generally diffused over England in celebration of the centenary return of this glorious
event, will do great honour to the national character
in the eyes of Europe. It will convince the wretched
slaves of France and Spain, that my countrymen retain
too high a sense of that Constitutional Liberty, which
the Devolution of 1688 secured to them, ever to surrender ' it; and it may possibly give a spur to the struggles making at this moment by French patriotism to shake off those shameful shackles of arbitrary power, in which
their Kings pretend to be their legal right to hold their subjects. The commemorative Jubilee of our devolution
in the last, may, it is possible, stimulate our neigh-
bours to emulation of something similar to it in the
present century. May their exertions inpso divine a
cause, be attended with similar success.

when the revolution eventually began in France in 1789 , such

sentiments shaped the responses of Earl .Stanhope and Dr. Price

and of the London Revolution Society and the Society for Goiisti-

5 tutional Inform tion. Both bodies were active in publicising

and explaining the principles of the French people, and maintained
ZL

a regular correspondence across the Channel until early 1792.

If in 1788 it was hoped that j'rancs might attcin the bles-

sings enshrined in the .dill of lights, a year later some English-

men were drawing political inspiration from the progress of

liberty in Paris, rrofessor Goodwin h^.s argued forcibly that the

renewed interest in., the legacy of 1688 'first dissipated the

public a'oathy on the question of parliamentary reform which had

followed the debate on Pitt's proposals in 178x; while to

Gazette, 4-7 Nov. 1788.
2 KentiGh Gazette, 18-21 Nov. 1788.
3 For these societies see ._,. 0. Black, The Ass o c i at i on : British jJxtraparlis.mentary P.pjy ._ti£a3;> .Or. ^an isa t i'qn , 176gj-1_7 93 (c'am^ —— bridge Mass., 1963; •> c^ ns « v r--nc^ ~" ~

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A. Goodv/in, ±'he Frie.ids of liberty : The English uemocraic Movement in the Age of th ., i^rorich Revolution (London,
">D. 106-35- " ———

Ibid., -op. 19-20.

i

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G. 3. Veitch the French devolution acted like 'a touch of flame 1 -i

on the old cause. writing in June 1790, 'SYD^JLY' asserted, '...when we see our i-^rliaments verging towards the insignifi-cance of the late Parlements of France, mere registers of the will of the crown, it becomes our duty to prevent the future necessity of a similar revolution, by securing the independency of our Representatives'. He thus proceeded to c.dvocate checks on expenses, a rate-payer franchise in the counties, and polling in each parish. Prospective candidates stould be supported by ten gentlemen with freeholds of at least ^500 per annum,
the final nomination of four or six men was to be made by a
2
ballot of all the hopefuls and their groups of proposers. ril he tone was moderate and preventative , and quite in keeping with the schei.ie outlined earlier in the year by Eenry Flood. However the preoccupation of Kentishmen with the fierce p^rty warfare banished reform from the ejections of 1?yO as effectively as it had dismissed the issue fron county politics since 1'/3>.^ Parli-v..rnjntary reform h. .d ^iras-.c!./ ce£..G^o- to be the orerrer^ve of gentry-douiinated movements in Kent as elsewhere in Britain, and when
it re-ei.ierged, it was among the francophile working classes of London and the new industrial towns.
Nevertheless, the opening phase of the devolution instilled
in many breasts a sort of hazy optimism, and did not pass without challenging a number of time-honoured practices. In October 1789, for example, the Kentish Gazette carried an address 'To the Freeholders of Great Britain' which ran:
At a time when a nation on the Continent, formerly
despised by us on account of its abject slavery, is
asserting the indefeasible rights of mankind, and about
to establish liberty on the brorcost basis, i i; is too

1 G. 3. Veitch, '^he Genesis of iv?rliament.?ry Reform (reprinted London, 1965;, ~P- iW^
2 Kentish Gr-zette, 22-25 June 1790.
3 For the imp.'..ct of reform during the election, see Goodwin, op. cit. , pp. 121-2; and Veitch, OP. cit., pp.

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dreadful to consider that in this li.nd of hereditary
freedom there should still exist laws as regu "iiant to
common sense and common right, i mean the execrable
Game Laws.

Such statements were acceptable in the months just after the storming of the Pastille, but it was not Ion;,; before they were being viewed with the greatest of suspicion by the leaders of
an essentially rural community. Equally chimerical were the hr,p3;> reflections prompted in 'HAriDEL? 1 by the celebrations of j^ouis XVT and his subjects in the Champ de i.c.rs on 14 July 1?90. 2 Ee welcomed the peace and order of events in France, and noted the 'improving state of happiness'. 'i'he French, he believed, might soon become'the protectors of the rights, and the vindicators
of the injured and oppressed nations of Europe 1; and he w-s
sure that;
. . . the definite hour will come when the great actions,
and glorious patriotism of the Franks will cause us to
emulate every thing which is gust, rational, and friendly
to human nature, in these new plans of G-overnment. ..
When soever this time arrives, may it proceed under the
guidance of reason, moderation and wisdom.. rather may
it arrive gradually and almost imperceptibly.
Reform in Britain might still be far off, but ' H \l-iDEi-: ' S f hope
in the ...evolution was unalloyed. 'I behold nothing but the dawn of greater happiness to mankind. I am neither afraid, that their efforts will be attended by any bad consequences there, or give rise to or produce any dangerous ones here'.
Other observers were less sanguine. As early as July 1789
the Kentish Gazette was counselling caution.
'i'he French are now free I... Let this nation, however, oe
still on its guard, or the present .Liberty of France'may occasion the future thraldom of ^riglandl 1'he contests
of free nations --.re always the most bloody and obstinate?
;/hile in March 1790 'ilOX 1 could marvel that 'having been long •pressed down to the earth 1, France, 'springs up with an elsstic

1 Kentish Gazette, 6- Oct. 1789.
2 kentish Gazette, 27-30 July 1790.
3 kentish Gazette, 7-10 Ju.i.y 1769.

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vigour and energy 1 9 ahe Kentish Gazette had felt compelled to ask at the very commencement of this renaissance, '...wh..t have not her neighbours, her rivals, and her enemies, to dread from jj'ranceV ' ; and with _>ritain at the forefront of his mind, the printer h~d predicted ominously: 'When u-reek meets Greek, then
2
is the tug of .<ar f. ^ year l-.ter, Lnglish fears were becoming more substantial. An address to the radical £arl Stanhope stated: 'liiere cannot be a greater proof of the weakness of the ^ational ^ssembly of France, than their destroying all rank and dignity... an act so contrary to reason and common sense 1. The writer appealed to scripture for the basis of nobility, which he believed was essential if society was to remain active and ordered. 'All rank and dignity being at an end', he went on, 'Prance will very soon be a dull, flat scene of rich misers, and poor miserable

5 paupers'. .uhe tone of the address was still primarily one of

concern for the well-being of the ^rench people, but it was not long before attacks on aristocracy, the Church and the entire fabric of the ancien regime . threatened to oreed anarchy and confusion at home.
In the summer 01 1790, a general apprehension of impending danger had not yet developed. fiiie drench ...evolution was hardly mentioned in the Kent county election, while war, if it was to
i\
come, seemed most likely to be with Spain over Mootka oound. However, in November Udinund Burke published his ..Lef lections on the devolution in France, and thereby not only quickened the dis-integration of the Whig party , but inaugurated a pamphlet

1 Kentish Chronicle, 23-30 Lar. 1790.
2 Kentish Gazette, 7.^0 July 1789-
3 ¥£^&\^zz$t$Q_i 20-2- July 1790.
4- .Jee ~'A" i/cll-Wisher to your Independence ' in lie n t i sh G r z e 1 1 e , 10-22 Juno 1790. ——

5 A>r the state of the whi^; -o..rty in the early 1790' s, see
i-' . 0 ' Gorman , ^ie_J^ii;_ ^dr'^d ..Qfift "ft1-0- .-'.^ench ,devc_luti_on (i_ondon , 1967), o .Gsim; and ...."" . T. i.itcheal, Ghc.r.les' T: -cY^j'ca^ ajad the ^i_sj.n.t_e,;;f tion of the ..hi- 1^-rty, 1782-179^4- C^x'fov-ci, I'^
cha-os. v r..nd vi.

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controversy of profound importance. i'he printer of the ^eja_t_:u3_h. Gazette at once felt, 'Impatient to "ive our readers crn early taste of the extraordinary work hr. burke has sent into the

1 world 1; and proceeded to reproduce many of its central arguments.

By January 1791 one correspondent v/as rejoicing thet 18,000 copies of the book had already been sold, because he conceived it 'to contain sentiments which cannot be too generallv disseminated at

p this critical juncture'. All three Lentish newspapers entered
eagerly into the new spirit of ideological debate, and at the
same time kept the public closely in touch with every event in France and the rest of Europe.
If the continental situation was an increasing source of disquiet, the spread of radicalism in j_,ondon and the provinces gave added credibility to Burke' s wildest fears, meetings were again held in November 1791 among the whig friends of mr. Polhill and i'ilmer Honywood, at Rochester, liaidstone and the Rose Inn,
~z

Sitting-bourne, to celebrate the blessings of 1688. However,
the sands were fast running out even for the party of moderate reform. 1'he appearance of Paine' s flights of Men in 1791 and 1792, coupled with the activities of Hardy's London Corresponding Soci-ety and other kindred bodies, sounded the al..rm at Westminster, and brought, on 21 "may 1792, the royal proclamation against seditious writings and publications. In Kent, the mord Lieutenant

4 and the Grand Jury were "out on the alert , and it was not long

before a requisition was being circulated for a county meeting.
. uocal opposition there was. 'A I'-IAN OI1 ' KH-.T 1 asserted that only
the freedom of Parliament and the press could achieve the repeal of the system of titles and pensions, and warned fellow reformers that those who supported the proclamation simply wished 'to

1 Kentish Gazette, 2-5 Nov. 1790.
2 Kentish Gazette, 4-7 J..n. 1791.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 15 Nov. 1791.
4 Sackville MSS. U26V014-1.

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1
suppress all enquiry into the abuses of Government 1. Neverthe-less, the views of 3ir Edward knatchbull prevailed, _.nd on 2 July the freeholders carried a loyal ...dc.ress to the King v/ith very
p little difficulty. Lord Lewisharn claimed: 'That doctrines of a most seditious tendency, and as novel as they were pernicious, had lately made their appearance, ...required no proof; and that they were circulated with an industry as malicious as that vliich gave them birth, was eoually obvious. 1 Knatchbull concurred, and a letter of approbation from Filmer lionywood was read to the crowd. The propertied classes of kent were closing ranks behind the Constitution, whose 'every corner-stone', Thomas Kni,r:;ht prayed, 'might remain for ever unshaken, and resist the shock
of time to the latest posterity.'

II

Within a very few weeks the apprehensions of the gentry
seemed to have been vindicated. A report from !?. .ris on ^>0 July announced: 'Every thing here has an aspect of tranquillity'^ ;
but it v/as the peace which precedes the hurricane, rather than that which follows in its v/ake. The Juke of Brunswick's manifes-to appeared on 25 July, and v/ith the relentless advance of .ais-trian and Prussian armies, the x>'rench first overthrew their monarchy (10 *.ugust) and then on 21 September proclaimed a Repub-lic, ihe accompanying 'September iiassacres 1 sent a chill across . ^urope, while the lurid tales of fleeing emi•"_TCG_S were listened to v/ith horror and mounting anger.
kentishnen watched the exodus, and no doubt heo.rcl many a
story of bloodshed -n:' cruel persecution. The 103ntish G-• •:e11e noted in mid-._>eptember that 10,000 French priectt,, in a "'truly
- ^' con,- . jica., had fled from their homes and parishes in

7^tJ.^^rjLL,\i2L? 29 June 1792.

" ""'• list. , ::::i^ r. 1 Z!-90; end report in Kentish Gazette, o July 1792. ~————————'

Kentish Gazo^e, 3 Aug. 1792.

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the previous ten days, and believed: 'The apprehension of ..ris-
XI

tocrates continues ar ith the most unremitting vi"\i? -.nee . ' A correspondent from Iiythe c°.lled on :as re.alers to remember the national danger and apparent roy..i tre.-clie-ry which had prompted the recent excesses, and citod Glencoe to emphasise that massacre
o

was not unknown evvn in post--1688 Britain'1'; out he was jaiona
a f ast-dvind] in minority. More representative of the prevailing mood w .3 TEILO d.LT?;d:K10U3' , v/hose'C'bservo.ticrB on ahe late and present Situation of U'rance with some reflections relative to the State of the two Countries and Governments' launched a scath-ing attach upon the absolute and tyrannical repiine which was oppressin^ religion, ill-treating.; the ^in_ , hia fai/iiiy anc.
othar notables, cjid iiiJ.ul_iiv, in execution without tric.i. 'if this is a fair statement of the affairs of franca, 1 he declared, '...if such arc the effects of Jacobin Societies and Repuolican schemes., aiay God in his mercy deliver every u-.tion... from such ideas, such principles, and such rnen. 1 ^
1 jL-iilj.jO J_iI'J.'. i j.."'.iGU3 l w~s also concerned lest similar scenes
of slaughter and rapine should be acted out in England as a re-sult of a reform of Parliament, however moderate end well-inten-tioned it might appear. ahe iJdict of fraternity of 19 November, •jjid the flood of addresses between English radicals and their brethren in the Jacobin ciuos, convinced I: itt that an unconpro-mising stand v/as urgently required. Of those adopted, the for-Lm.tion of John -ieeves' association for timeserving .-iuort"'' and Property c^gainst Republicans ana Levealers, in Loiiu.on on 20 Nov-ember, profoundly influenced the te:iper of nentish societ-/'"
Vj'i th the full backing of ministers, leaves publisliee. c series of loyal resolutions, and during Decemjer, the O^miuereuav

1 kentish Gazette, 14 and 18 Sept. 1/'^2.
2 Kentish Gazette, 2 Oct. 1792.
^ Kentish Gazette, 2 Nov. T/92.
4 ?or the loyalist movement, see : ;i ac k , o p . c .' . t mjt chap . vii- r>id A. i-iitchell, 'The association movement of 'i ._ ' gist Joi 1 '"- " iv. (1S-51,, 5G-77. " ——— : ——— ——'

x] - /i
— I ../-T —

Iiaiastone papers were Tilled with accounts of borough ana parish

meetings summoned in response to his appeal. The inhabitants of

Sandwich were perhaps typical of the majority of Lentishnen. On

14- December they pledged:

our staunch adherence to this our most excellent Consti-
tution, against the attempts of wicaed and designing per-
sons, who v/ould wish to overthrow the same, and by what
nieo.nc confound all order and property, and reduce this
liingdom, happy and flourishing beyond all former periods, to the cost abject stste of misery and distress.

Ana resolved:

That we will use our utmost endeavours to discourage and suppress all such publications as may tend to alienate
the minds of his majesty's subjects from their affection
to the present establishment, ana to detect ana bring to
Justice, .the authors, printers, publishers, and sellers
thereof.

A day earlier, the men of Canterbury had met to p,'.ss reso-

lutions 'for counteracting the evil designs of persons, who by

their seditious writings s.n.':. treasonable practices, are endeavour-

P ing to excite the people to insurrections against the Government1;

while an assembly at Rochester's Guildhall under George Jest re-

affirmed its confidence in the existing • — ' social order.

. . . as in every Government, there must be different ranl:s
end degrees of men, we are convinced, that in such as are
we.ll regulated, this does not tend to the encouragement
of pride .and oppression, but is the occasion of promoting industry, and of providing for the wants of the artificer, the labourer, _.nd the indigent; and that therefore the
adoption of any fancied system of equalisation, v/ould,
while it introduced civil confusion, deprive by its effects
tho lower orders of society, of those means of subsistence'
which they now enjoy.

The principal object of every meeting was to address the i,ina , t — ' /

and thereby to strengthen the hana of his ministers in dealing witl:

the radical threat at home ana abroad. However addresses were alsc

useful in gauging the sentiments of a whole community, and in

1 .u-entish Gazette, 21 Dec. 1792.
2 Ibid.

. 11 so contains reports of meetings at Jartford , ,
tairs, and of parishes of St. John, ot. Peter gji^_ _jirch-
ingtoii in Thanet, and of Presbyterian Jissenters of Deal. Cf. l^enui.'h ... i^ette, 25 Dec. 1792 and 25 Jan. 1793 for ...eetings at i-ieenjorou, _;h, iJ-lbon, .'Jeverio.aks and Arjhford.

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detecting the identity c.nd v/hereabouts of potential mj_ef,..ctsrs. ITo doubt with this in view, tiie magistrates of ^,ast Zent circu- ...;c. lated dr::,ft addresses jo the clergy and cliurchv; .rdens of each parish in their division, c.nci recommended the gathering of si;. mat-

1 urcs from all residents over sixteen. 3ome places decided -co go

even further, and resolved to form committees to correspond with Lxe eves' parent association, ...nd to organise loc^i vigilance. 'at hailstone 3. comaittej *;as empowered to offer rew^.ru.o for the con-
i

viction of offenders^, and lil:e--intentioned bodies mushrocmed at froadstairs and Canterbury. At oaiiawich, majistr.^tes v/ere re-quested to be severe upon those victuallers 'as shall suffer any tumultuous or seditious meetins to be held a:J their respective houses'; ^ncl in IZent ' s eastern division, constables uere iiiotruct-ed to report any riotous gatherings and jo i/c.rn aie-house keepers against the discussion of constitutional topics.^
In seeking to combat radicalism, the loyalist movement made extensive use of the machinery of propaganda. By the end of
17v2> Kent's three newspapers had taken up the ministerial stance, and l.illiam Epps had entirely fsalea to off-set the defection of the Kentish Chronicle from the opposition camp by the printing of a pro-.Tnig hentis... Herald in Janterbury. 1'he press carried col-umns of patriotic aclaresses ana resolutions, advertised forth-coming meetings, and cultivated popul^.r hatred of Paine through verses and letters, fhe county 'jide network of associations enabled .aeeves to distribute O ovoriiaent-i-icpired pamphlets, ;-.nd at the same time allov;ed local men to participate in the critical 4-

v;ar of words 3.nd ideas. one C:aiterbury printer n_jned John Jones produced j.m".s own tr,.cjs, and the mayor of maiustone w.-s employed

ii ... tish Gaze tte, a1 Jec.
2

. /or example, V.Ta.xtman i.Jo. U289/^1 /<-;
lati j.g to i)eoU- in 17

among the papers re-

- 166 -
on similar work. 1'he association for the northern division
of the Lathe of aylesford and the City of Rochester, in which
the .jrdth-Masters family of iieoph.m was closely involve^., circu-lated, on beeves' behalf, handbills ^etailin0 the original Crown and Anchor resolves t..nd suggesting the most effective methods
of forming provincial committees. i3ro-.dsheets such as l] en i-iinutes Caution: .A Plain man to his Fellow Citizens ana une Penny-worth of Truth from Thomas ^ull to >isr Brother John were made available to inhabitants, ._.nd Rochester's printing presses captured the nu.jor national issues in .. Plain a,nd Earnest .'.ddress to ISritons, espL^cj.-^jJ.y J'qriners, on the Interesting State of Public -\ffairs
in Great Britain and France nd L'ffects of the PrirciiDlas of

is _arid. L^y-clljei^^ _/ --Oir, ^Our Ne^glrboursj^^As^ ,a"fc.te_s_t^d by an
2
. Eye- Witness . r:"he p rticular ob.ject of execration v/as , of course, I'ui^hts of I-I:n, the second p rt of v/hich w?s decl red a seditious libel on 18 December. An effigy of P?JLne, whom 'C^-.C 1 had reviled in the previous June as 'the O reat deniasopue of licenti-
7,

ousness'-^, v/c,s drawn through the streets of Dover with his detes-ted book in one hand and a pair of old std.ys in the other, and finally comuiitted to the fl..mes amid choruses of ' 2-od Jave the
4
iviiip ' . The cuiiiuloitive result of these appeals to the intellect and the popul .r love of ritualised protest and parade, was 'one of the first manifestations of conservatism as a conscious , nd

5 force in Un^lish history'-^; whose advocacy of the

values of the British Constitution was, in the lonv-term, to ensure the defeat of the radical menace.
Even so, D. ai. G-inter was undoubtedly correct to arpue th t John lieeves did not by himself accomplish Ijri^icnd's wholesrie

1 Jl.ck, o_ . cit. , p. 24-5; -.nd Litchell, loc. cit. , 71.
2 ^.lith-k ,/.ers . .^. U1127/012, 015-
3 iLcntish Chronicle, 29 June 1792.
4 kenoish Chronicle, 25 Dec. 1792.
5 kitchell, loc. cit., 57-
I;. C?. iJickenson, ^iberty and j-'roporLy; Poj.itical Ideolo". [-Century bri u'ain (^undon, 1977) •> clic.p. ~"""

- 16? -

1 conversion to "Joryism. on 28 l.ovember 17>d upwards 01' one

hundred freeholders celebr^jed the lo^s1 revolution in company with aiimer Eonywooa at the Rose Inn, 3ittia,-jou:;ne^", and a month letter, at the very height of iiei.t'c loyalist fever, Jonn .^urney 01? Canterbury still felt able to plead that persistent criticism of corruption w-~s quite, consistent v/ith support of William Ill's

5 revereo. settlement. In 1799? despite the execution of .LOUIS ^Vl

and the suosequent declaration of war, reform continued to inter-est some newspaper correspondents, ;.nd even penetrated into oimmons and nirkoy's new Loutish .ie^ister and monthly i.iccell-. ny. In the House of CoLmioiis, on 18 j-'ebru-.ry, Cienent aaylor voted with fon against the war, end in the -_jordo, ^c-.-l Gtanhope spoke of
L\.
'this c>- 'L.niity, pre^;n3.nt wi jh ruin to ..Jii 0 l_.iid'. ' in March, an appreciation of the career end principles of John Sawbriage was used as a convenient vehicle for a renewed discussion of moderate c. in

reform , while the Commons division ol 7° ilcy, the young V/hig reformer Gtu-sries Grey was accompanied into olie loboies by f.aylor

6 L Honywood. However, with the sentencing of the Scottish

radicals iauir jjic. P;.l.mer, the disruption of the National Conven-tion in .,jdinbur0 h during ..oveniber, and above ai., the danger of an invasion in the spring of 17S^-? ^he public ceoate abrupt'ly ceased, since it could no longer be doubted that the country's cherished institutions were in de..u-y peril.
Their purpose having been s^bisfacterij_y fulfilled, unny
of the loy 'list associations disappeared in the early months of 1793? while others were transformed into'Church ,,nd King 1 clubs. rfhe -j'rench invasion scare resurrected militant conservatism, and \;i jli the formation of the Volunteers one further element in

1 J. J. ^ii;ter, 'fhe __oyalist Association movement of 1792-99 and ^litish ablic Opinion', Hist. Jour. , ix. (,966} , '179-90.
2 HeritH.h Grzette, 90 Lov. 1792.
3 ..V.J-.L-. : Gr...a-j,a;, 25 Jec. 179-.
- - — - - . ., -r QQ Lila ^dH.

5 ^.jitish^ ./alette, 19 Mar. 1V99-
6 Parl. Hist. , ~x. S25•

~>ritain's 'p^.rty of order 1 was cemented fir../1. x.ent's geo-graphical position m..de her population particularly sensitive to rumours of enemy attack, as had been demonstrate^ in 17^ ^-n(i 1775- Consequently the subject was being ,ni::iously mooted in
2
the press jy ' i-'0 J..IJIJU.o f and others from an early date ; ,:.nc> an eager response was forthcoming at both county ana parish levels to the nation?.! plight. As Lord Lieutenant, the jJuke of 3orset proposed a plan for the county'-s defence, which, having been discussed by some of the principal l,..nd-owiier£ at a private meeting in _jono.on, was laid bofor^ the freeholders on 3 ~pril 1?S4-^ '--he series of resolutions wv.c approved, c-.lling upon gen-tlemen oO raise Volunteer Corps of fifty men, and a subscription 4
was opened jo help defray expenses. A ^istin^uasheci committee was also established, to which all subscribers of 310 or more were to be acL.ed, and meetings were regularly convened through-out the summer to review the state of preparations. By July, 315,000 had been collected, .and among those to enroll their own troops were 3ir Lidvaard Lnatchbull, Lord Jarnley, —ord Jamden, Mliiarn Hollywood, bir John Hollywood, -; ercival Hart, the Hon.
J. J. 'i'ownshend ana U. P. Woodgate, as well a.c the ^une of Jorset.' Although the _'rench j-.vnain^s never came, these corps v/ere useful in quelling aomestic riot at a ti~io when shortage and rural unemployment were breeding discontent. Ine gentry sav; their property protected, .-.nu ...cquired ne-.. prestige and patro:i_.g.e
7
\:ith v/liich to sustain their influence in society' , while as
1 J. R. "j'estern, 'The Volunteer i-.ovement as an Anti-^evolution-2 Kentish Ohronicle, 14 Jan. ig^-i-.
3 -'or comment on manner of the plaxi's formulation, see j^entish Jhronicle, 2£ L'ar. end L\- '.pr. 17v A'-.
4 ":' . .,:•... :c utioi.s i:i II e 111 i s h n c. z e 11 e , 15 Apr. 17S Zl---
5 a'lic ..inute book of .-ur^c ^' d co.."'.i tee is in 3acl:vi..le r..^3.
6 j'or example, ._»ir H. Imatchbull-IIugessen, ...^ntish .j'a 11 y (.L.OJI-don, 19o6;, op, 157-0; 3. ./ingfield 3trat3or. , r.ne i^o - s of
(Job L ., i Hg _! (London, 1959), pp. 31'!~18; snd Hev.~C". ric. ••";., .G. ,;0o"lj;" ^c , '. Lictory of the Woodg:?tes of 3tone'.;cll P;-rL: end o/. .ju.rnmerhill"~'i._n <ent, C.IK. their Gonnectio^s (.. i s,; e c Ti, 1\1.) ,
pp. a5-~ • •
7 See comments by ''j.xU'JIGi;' in Kentish • J• irc; ijc 1 e, 29 Apr.

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mcai'uer:: of an amateur army and. police force, the ;aaeoho~alcrs
.mid fc.rmers of .-cnt v/ere given an active interest in the preser-v tion of order.
Elsewhere, ilentish patriotism was just as strong- I 11 ^i s capacity a*s Lord, 'warden, litt summoned a meeting at Dover Castle on 'd^r April to concert the defences of the Cinque Ports. Infan-try COJ?PS wore to bo formed for the protection of specific towns, and a cavalry was projected for use wherever the need was great-est within the -iberty. The inha jit ants of Dover, Deal and oandwich met to approve these schemes, ana in each case insti-tuted subscriptions, .. .nd committees of gentlemen, merchants and
1 2
clergymen. Canterbury and other places followed suit , mid alongside the regular forces m...imtained a strict vigilancethroughr out the summer. Jhere is no record that Dorset's committee met again after August, for by then, naval victories in the Channel tu.d temporarily dispelled all possibility of a l-'rench crossing. Nevertheless the episode had been a significant one. aC.'mL.Aml-ma31S' had unhesitatingly lin'red the cause of .Jnaland and the Volunteers with that of the Divine Dill and the preservation of the Gospel ar;...inst 'the wild uproar of ariarcliy cjid irreligion 1 ^ ; and such compellinc: viev;s only strengthened the county's com-mitment to a war which h^d engendered much hostile comment in its opening phase, filmer I-Ioiiywoocl. was alone among Kentish H.P.s ii voting for an end to the conflict in the Commons on ^0 i^ay
l\
, -r-d for a time at least, the murjority of his constituents probably subscribed to the fifth resolution of 8 April: 'Tli..t the most speedy and effectual mecuis of obt .iiiing a sale ana honour-able peace, is by a vigorous v/osecution of the war ' .

1 Kentish Ckrc^jj-^l^ , 2 and 9 I my 179^-. The Dandwich report gives derails of e o: •• ^anasation of troops.
2 For Canterbury, see 2"'>\" Kentish " " Chronicle, 20 end _'!- June 179':. H- p j?"! / "^"ist.., xx 'ci. o^c ••'-;.
5 irerffl^h Va^otto, 15 Apr.

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ill
If Kent's political classes had in r -reat measure Fb.pr-u.unco. reform and accented j:_e newu. for the ^overnmsnt' s T/.7 rr strrteay, the p.ttitucie of urban wording men ?nd the rural poor remained p to;oic of p.cute concern, not least during the ye:?.rs of economic hardship between 1794- ^Jid 1796. 1'his was, after ell, the period of the London treason trials, the monster rally at Copenhagen House, -~na the ' fll wo Acts', while fev/ historians would wish to deny that the 1790's as a whole was a deco.de of crucial impor-tance in the development of working-class organisation end ide-ology- --he evidence is scarce, but there are hints that in some sections of Kentish society the doctrines of Paine' s ..-eights of L^n and Age of Reason might expect e warn response.
In general, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period was one
of prosperity for the farming community, and in the decade after 1800 especially, even the agricultural labourers enjoyed a. reasonable standard of living,. //ages were kept up, ,.-.nd the culti-vation of marginal i..ncl meant employment during Liost of the year. However there were occasions in the middle -.nci late 1790's when hi;jh prices c.nd bad h,..rves'<E brought real suffering to the rural poor. Rioting and rick-burning at moments of discontent h..d alv/ays been a feature of life in the countryside, while tithe-glutted persons and the managers of game-p ..rl-:s \'.7 ere the natural tar;;ets upon which to vent -siiger and despair. Yet in _.n atmos-phere of invasion c,nd suspected treason, such proceedings could easily assume a more sinister aspect. Lot surprisingly, there-- fore, every effort was m-de to ameliorate the worst effects of rural distress and thereby to forestall its escalation into
. open social disaffection.
In 1795 bread was expensive ariu. in slio.at supply. At jjecken-
ham the Yestr,y ordered that grcin should be purchased, ground, and sold to the poor at 9d. a lo^f. furthermore, since the rerl

cost of losses rwnged between 1/- and 1/10-g-d. , it was agreed to ^]
establish a fund to defray olie cost. In jlie following ye..r, Kentish J.P.s were still ...ctive in jhe campaign to reduce the consumption of wheat en flour amon._. the v/ealthier classes, and by 1800, attempts were being; made to introduce other food into the p
bread-based diet of the laoourers. I'he late 1790 's aleo wit-nessed the rapid adoption of the Speeiwh,miil,.jid system of poor relief in m miy p~.rts of southern Zngland. In Kent, .."itt's bill to give statutory force to family allowances and w,.,ge subsidies met with stout opposition at c-. meeting of T:.r est Kent justices in IPebruc-ry 1797, on the ground that it 'will prove very difficult if not impracticable in the execution and will greatly increase the amount of the -j- ~ooor rates without improving -t- v — j the condition of
-Z

the poor in ^ny proportion -.bie degree.'^ However as J. A. 3augh has recently demonstrated, such expedients were regularly adopted

1+ in south-east England at times of dearth. In 1799, for example,
Lord George r-.urray suggested a scheme to the nailing justices under which, when the price of bread was o.t a shilling a loaf, a man with a wife and two children would receive an allowance of

13/9c!. who problem was clearly ^reat, but as a result of the remedial measures, together with ohe policing activities of the Volunteers, no serious disorders were recorded.
,','hile the gentry were thus able to retain a pre-eminence in
the countryside, their writ was less rerdily respected in Tent's urban .<rers. By the late eighteenth century, Kent's medieval iron and textile industries had all but di say ecred. 0 However the

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1 R. ,jor.?owman , Beckenh^m Pas c; ?nd Present (Bec.'.:enhu.m, 1910) o. •':- g. helling (ed.;, ...entish Sources I/; -Jhe Poor (^ent County" Council, 195^!-), PP"« 150-1 and 152-^-.
Ibid., p. 155- Jf- PP- 1^1-2 and 154-6.
L). A. Uaugh, f 'L'he Jost of loor belief for ,^outh-East ..iig _ nd, 1790-1334', -' -::Ccon. Hist, ^ev. , 2nd Jer. xxviii. (197p),
5 Lelling (ed.J, Kcnjiiju oources IV; .Jhc ^-oor, p. 153.
6 '.j. i-r.; 11 ing (ed.;, . en.';is>. ?ourcos III; Aspects of ..griculture j.na Inaas^^^^ (xlent Jouni;,/ vouncii, 1>31;, pp. 95-1 •- "'i- -Lid 1
13; ; - De^oe, A I'our throu^] the V/hole_ Is"1 nu. 01" Gre . I Britain, ed. P. Roger:: (London, 197'0, PP- 1.9--3-

growth of metropolitan _.nd Kentish markets stimulated alternative trades, many of which were concentr...ted in the north jncl nnrth-west of the county, :nd down the i-ledway to Laiastone and Tonbria.e Paper-making was carried on rlong the bjrnks of the I-Iedway, and
in its day, James Vh train's Jurkey aiil at 3o::ley was the largest 1
in England. Local hops and malt supplied a thriving brewing

p industry'", ,- nd the rich diversity of agricultural produce and

raw materials of the Weald provided employment for many men in carriage Liicl processing. The .'.mericrn and Trench wars fostered the nianuf ccture of gunpowder for the Ordnance ^, rope and cable

4 making at Gravesend- , and the ouilaiaig, repairing, and fitting-

cut of ships at Deptford, Woolwich, Chatham arid Sheerness.^ The consequent rapid expansion of the population, and easy communi-cation with London by road and river, thus created the most like-ly breeding-ground for radic-,.1 ideas in Kent. Nothing on the scale of societies at Norwich, Sheffield and Manchester was to
be expected", but when John Gale Jones was dispatched thither by the London Jorresponding Society in j'ebru^ry 179S, he found con-7
siderable inter ,st in the cause of reform.
In November 179^ a sm-11 society at Rochester had addressed
the l-'rench Convention deploring Greaville's failure to recognise the new Republic" ; ho\/ever nothing more was he.--rd of the city's reformers until the j..ondon Corresponding .Society received a request for assistance in October 1795-' On his ..raivai , Gcle

1 Me 11 ing (ed.), Kentish Sources III; Aspects of Agriculture and Industry, p^o. 114-19-
2 Ibid. , pp. 1..0-6.
~5 Ibid., -op. 127-54.
4 •j.'hc r.i story of the Incorporated Town and Parishes oi' Gia^ves_- end and Milton in ^^^S^^I^L^^. CC-r^.vesend, 1?9V ; , P . 1 9 •
5 J. I".. Preston, l.uLustri 1 -edia.y: ;ai historical survey (Roch-ester, 1977;, PP- 15-34.
6 Goodwin, o^. eit. , chap. 5-
7 J. Gale Joaes, ^ '..etch of a Political Jour tlirou li -.xo_c heater,

U? eJC ' ^±~^----- -- -J-'-ec JJons on _

"7he ~C o e r 3 n c; .a'L^DQsitc.ns o:: iie luiSLj ' an .s o.f.^
rTac¥s and o~ ':lic ..a'Qp-jress of uhe bocieties anstl ..a". . d for the lur2^SAj_^^3-^J^-inp: ^ Parliamentary :{e..- o..-. t C"--.idon, Tr
To Yeitcii, ov. eit.^p. 329, this was, 'quite a reliable account ' .

8 Goodwin, op. cit., pn. 251-2. 9 Ibid., op. 393-9.

Jones was told ;h^t the "Rochester society had once boasted nine or ten divisions, but that it had recently oeen 'diminished nd disorganised 1 by the apprehensions -:nd timidity of its members. 'r.iile acknowledging that this figure v/as somewhat exaggerated, he too lamented 'th..t in these- de^eneraae d;.ys -GO bo a friond of reform is to subject oneself to persecution and unmerited
1
abuse'. _i.n the wake of Mitt's 'Jwo Acts, therefore, Gale Jones 1 mission v/as to revive flagging spirits and forge links with ^ondon radicals. He adaressecl numerous Oa.oherings, attended the formation of a nsw socioay at Gillingham, _nd on 22 February saw a meeting of the United 3orrespondiii0 Society of Rochester, Chat-2
ham cud 2rompton resolve 'to act in concert 1 with the jj.C.io. Having accomplished a_l this, Gale Jones \/as joui.-neying
back to London when he v/as first diverted to Grave send, .and then, on receiving fresh instructions, returned via Rochester to riaid-stone. The society at Gravesend v/as said to be well-established, and simply in need of advice. Gsle Jones spoke to a jroup of about fifty men, with the encouraging result that sixteen new
—7

members were enrolled.^ He described Maidstone as 'a divided place', where 'p-arty r.;n so high th-.t many of the neighbours \/oulc not traffic v;ith those who were of opposite opinions', and 'the going into a tavern frequented by different parties might subject a man to the hazard of oeing turned out, or at least insuljed'. Three meetings of the borough's reformers were held a« the Castle Inn, and a society for Universal Suffrage ,nd Annual Parliaments was founded under the leadership of Lr. S———, a local paper-nil ler.
If Gale Jones 1 account is to be believed, therefore, refor-
min^ zeal w?s -reat in this p?.rt of Kent. But who exactly were

1 Gale Jones, on. cit., pp. 8 fnd J 7
2 Ibid., pp. 27-8, 31-2, 4-1 wld -PP-
3 Ibid., -pp. 64—5-
^ Ibid. , Dp. 70, nd 83-5-

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e 'i-Ijii of liba?el inds ariu. comprehensive ua >;rrtandin^s ,
whom the missionary was so surprised oo encounter outside London, and why h...d they been converted to reform? 't mridstcne, the N.P. and paper-niller, Clement Taylor, was ...ctive in the cause, and imr. ,o ———— asserted that his workers were all 'citizens ' because 'their wc^es were less, _.nd the price of provisions greater than
2
ever 1. At Jrompton, on the other ii,..rid, (uc.ny millers and farmers from the .-.dj cent districts v/ere beina, attracted to the movement. Gale Jones described one such farmer of Gii 1 ingham, 'possessed of a considerable property', whom he met at the Palstai'f Tavern, as
"7
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'a strong Democrat, and, I doubt, soruethinj more than a Reformer'. Here too, the desperate economic plight of the people v/as at the heart of the discontent. One miller admitted that he had a number

of tenants v/ho were unable oo pay their rents, but, i^s he observed, 'tis to no purpose... for me to distress them: I must wait till better times, for at present tli .y c_n scarcely procure for them-
4
selves the b;.re necessities of life'. Many inhabitants clearly regarded the conduct of ministers ...ncl the harmful effects of the war as the prime causes of their misery , ...nd in such circurnstrn-ces, the attritions of reform were .,lmost irresistible. Nevertheless, Government, its supporters .mid o,rencies, v/ere
not blind to the d^rgors of disaffection amoii;^ the lov/er orders. Gale Jones' mission did not remain secret for loh^, ._jiol on his first nirht in Rochester he was left in no doubt of the depth of local patriotic hostility to radicals r.nc. dissenters. He was quickly recognised by Rochester's post-master, v/ho immediately sou-jht permission to open his letters, end celled on jhe mayor
to suppress all societies. ^ These experiences, together with the evidence afforded by the subsequent tour, demonstrate that profomi 1 '.Luid. , p. 59
pp. 04- -nd 85-
3 I'jia. , p. 35-
':- I jid. , p. 75.
5 ibid. , pp. 5 J-nd 57-
6 I, id., OP. 10-16 Ejid 29-30.

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al and politic c.l tensions had already aiisen which were tu
h...ve far-reaching implications, The establishment of barracks provoked much popular antagonism towamds the resident army offi-cers, while the dishop of Rochester was bumnsd in effigy after having declared in the Lords: ' Ihe People have nothing to do v/ith
- 1
the .u we but to obey them', (The mayor of c-!-rc.vosend had been angered by a petition aa,.minst the Convention laills, and retali-ated by denying one of the si ma Tories the repayment of a £50 debt; ...nd at Chatham, Commissioner .mroby apparently encountered concerted opposition when he tried to promote a corrjratulatory
2
address amon;j the dockyard workers. COhe use of spies, the arrest of r.'.dical leaders, and tho enforcement of LPitt's legislation all helped add a new dimension to Kentish politics which had been largely absent in the d.ays of Wilhes and Uyvill. iOhere v/as still too heavy a reliance on the motivating pov/er of economic distress, but the influence of P ine .nd his disciples in the next pener-at:' -m ensured t'^^-j the tr ads of jhe 1790'^ v/ere carefully consol:'-

dated.
IV-

Jhether or not the developments observable in the Meuway
fowns were reflected elsev/n^ro in Koru , the documentary record-does not disclose, slthou^h it is difficult to believe that Canterbury's siJ 1: weavers and the port workers of Dover, De.-l and Sandv/ich v/erc- v/holly untouched by contemporary ideas. More accessible are the views of the county's political classes, and these mo.y to some extent be gathered from the elections which were bein£ keenly anticipated as Gale Jones made his "oro^resG in the sprinrj of '179^-
v/hile the county constituency was vigorously, ; mid even con-troversially contested, comparisons with the prcceaiu decade and

1 Ibid., pp. 57-c and 81-2.
2 Ijid. , pp. 65 and :A.

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1 two sitting Kombers. Sir Edward iCnatchbu.il was universally
known as an unswerving Pittite, did there could be little doubt of his eventual return. _>'ilner Hollywood, on the other ho,nd, made no secret of his ant i -ministerial sentiments. He lashed out at corruption, and ohe present 'most impolitic war ' which had in-volved the nation in an 'extraordinary ana. extravagant expenditure of the public money'. Solemnly he warned his audience:
. . . we do not know but tho ne:.:t parliament nay break up the constitution - you oujat to be particularly careful what
men you elect to represent you. - 'Jhe constitution has been
shook nearly off its basis - I'ne suspension of tho habeas
corpus act and the two bills j-ately passed were direct"
and open violations of" the Bills of Rights.
This was strong language, and to knc.tchbuil was ! f .r more suitable to the galleries of the French convention th^n to a meeting of British freemen 1 . ^ellov; T /higs like V/anley oawbridge recognised the cLm.gers of adopting too uncompromising a position, ana sought

2 to recall Honywood's independent line on the L'ast inaia .^ill.
However the Opposition hero of 1790 had nailed his colours firmly

3 to the rim..st, ,aid could simply await the verdict of the county.
,;hile the freeholders delibcratod, frantic negotiations were
on foot behind the scenes. Humours of an agreement between iLnatch-bull and Geary were circulating in the press before and after the

L\. nomination meeting , and were substantiated by the investigations

which followed Honywood's petition. Honywood's counsel set out to prove that the compact between the two baronets had been entered into as a means., not only of sharing the heavy expenses
of a poll, but of securing ...dditional votes. '.Jhe first point was 1 Report in ICentish Gazette, 24- Hay 179'S.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid. , for subsequent addresses.
L\- .;/or examole, ' ;' JI Hi D.Ji.-!. H_. fDEJ'J l?-Li-j._0...-j.iR 1 in kentish G'.Li'on
17 and ,27 Oct. 1796. ^
5 hinutes of the .oclect Coniiiiittee Appointed to __r^__an_d iDot

iie Merits of the Petition of John '.iLherst, ^s^.__ang~^tl u __ ~ '~_ Complaining of an Undue Election jici ^^"^rn^for^ _^\~ 'ToiaTi~u , r of
Kent (Jantcmbury, 1797) V ^ Join. t;ou:?. , j.ii. 4u,~5^(j nd' 339.
5 J.L. on expenses, l.inutes , pp. -j'.l- .

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agreed readily enough by sir Horace Mann, who h.^d been a memoer of Mnatchoull's con ittee, with which the scheme originated. However on the- question as to whether ,-natchbull had accepted money in return for .?. promise of his second votes, 3ir Horace replied emphatically, '1 am convinced oir Edward Kn^tchbull never did engage himself from any circumstances relative to this agree-

1 ment, but from general principles of agreement in politics. 1

. ooth John Llarkin and ..iooert Mas call concurred.'" ..'he latter gen-tlemmi related hov/ separate meetings of Geary's and ICnstchbull' s friends held during h,?y hi.d resolved to support the other's can-didate in the forthcoming election, and added: [I remember Mr. Hatton, the ch...irm,m.i, fpf Khatchbull's committee I opposing the political conduct of Mr. Honywood, ...and several other gentlemen gave their opinions to the same effect.' .likewise from Geary's camp, Lord Romney explained how, at an errly stage of the pro-ceedin-'s, his friend h.-d fully realised that his challenge wrs ;?imed entirely at the erring Whig, and h.^d consequently been loath to deprive the county of Knatchbull's valuable services sim-

5 ply on grounds of expense. Admittedly the juncture h,'.d not been

made public on 20 May, and doubts lingered as to the eahics of some of the • c,..nvassin^. Nevertheless, the select committee was sufficiently satisfied that no importcut irregularities had been committed, and thus dismissed the petition.
The question of election expenses had clearly become .? crucirl factor in Kentish politics pnd T,aill be dealt \aith mor.% fully at
i.

p later jtage/ Ii the .:?usont context, however, the 1797 report in significant because it saows how readily the leeding gentry could respcnd to national issues in tharr m?ni~oulation of covnty p--?f-irs. In lihe nr\nner, the nine dr;ys of polling which fol-lowed the GO'^.ty mee':arg of 7 June testify to a high degree of
1 Ii)id., P- 16.
2 laid., pp. 21-5 and 25-9-
-^ T5T3., pp. 29-31-
4- Of. in-:--, i* 206.

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political awareness emong the ireeholaerc, while the fin _L 'defeat of the sitting Whi;r Member after si::tejn years can only be attri-buted to his well-publicised pronouncements _iu. votes on the
1 Prcnch devolution -
In the Cinque Ports the effects of the conservative reaction
were equally unmistakable , thouah less well documented. \;hen
the polls lu.d closed in 1790, three of the ei.-,ht M.x-.s -./ere in opposition to Pitt; jut rfter the 1796 election, only one Lember could be pi .ced in this c^te tj ory, and even he (John lUrevaviion; h~d seemingly abandoned his radical platform for a safer ' continuance 2
of the most decidedly independent conduct 1. Until the last minute it appeared unlikely that Pyous ,..iid jrevanion would be challenged at Dover, and when dol. ;3aily of .^ast . J_adlesex did

5 force a poll, it was he that eventually conceded defeat. _'he

tranquillity of New acnmey was a^ain unbroken, except possibly by the patriotic sona;s of Sir _^dw.vrd jerin^, ' s dinner quests at the
4
Hew Inn , while at Hythe , the Jacobin terror h...u frightened ",/il-liam Evelyn back into the government fold alongside his colleague Sir Charles Parnaby Ii,--dcliffe.
,; similar transf ormation had been wrought in the mind of ,jir Horace Mann, whose steady hostility to ministers had led him into the moderate reform movement of 17^0-85 and won him a seat ^,t Sandwich in 1790. Hoi/ever in the aftermath of the oeptember massacres he tola his constituents; '...it is with the most perfect satisfaction that I do in the most public _.nd ample manner p ,y my tribute of O ratituae end highest approbation to his h .jec-ty ' 3 HinisterG for that unremitted vi^ilanco, those timely con-stitutional exertions to which we are indebted for our internal

trar.qui.lijy. In 1796 he stood as joint-c ..ndidate i/ith tho loyal

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2 Kentish ;.:-/:_aetj;e, ,-1 Lay 179-3.
3 Ken i;ish Jr....-unicle. , 27 i-Iey 1796; end Ken o i sh Gcxe 1 1 e , J1 il. y
4 Mentis h ^azet^te, 31 i.'-y 1796. | ,795. errJish G ^Te.te, 25 Dec. 179^. ————

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ministerialist :\nd office-holder^ Philip Stephens, and encoun-tered no opposition.
In the spring of 1795 Clement Taylor told John Gale Jon^
tn ..t, 'Administration threatened ';o put hii^ to O reat trouble expense at the next election'~; and although as late as 27 II..y the ICentish Chronicle still expected the radical paper-miller
-7

to contest im.i<..stone , this apprehension coupled with the im-pending collapse of his business, led him at length to e.ecline in favour of Christopher Hull. On the Pittite side, Matthew Bloxam w.-S joined by Oliver De Lrncey, a major-general end. b^rracl master at Oh..:.th:em, who in 1791 h. .d been employed by Lundas to

4 investigate disaffection in the army. Both men were returned by

comfortable, if not overwhelming majorities, end De Lancey sur-vived a subsequent petition which protested his ineligioility
as a pi--ce-holder cna a contractor. But, while deprived of its representative, the popular party in the borough had by no means been cowed into submission, for as the Kentish Gazette noted:
'fhe contest, though short, was one of the sharpest ever remem-bered' .'

In the light of the city's soci'.-u rjiel iaeo-Ogical ferment,
it is not surprising th~t 1795 witnessed a h^.rd-fought contest at Itochester. I'he election of George Best together with '.dmiral Bickerton in 1790 had somjwh..t disorganised the borough's popu-lar interest. the return of Uathaniel 3mith in 179- tenporr :ily redressed the former balance, but in 1794- he in his turn was re-pl-.ced by A^jn. "^ir liich-rd leg. Consequently at the dissolution Government was defending both seats. Best arid King were agoin active, but in dd-i.ry a Rochester correspondent observed, 'Cur

1 --er:t::.sh G^grtte., ^
2 "C!- ..e -''' nes, pp^. pijfc^, p. GO.
^ Ker.oish 0_ i ro_nic__, tl l^J 1795-
4 ^—•" -" :~y ' ' • _' icr. • Disaffection and the British Army ^ 1792'V B.I.n.R., xlviii. (1975), ^5 and 25 -6.

1 city is now all alive', as 'a great opposition is expected 1.

Voters were first urged to refrain from any hasty engagement since 'a Gentleman of the County, of known independence and most res-
p
pectable character will assuredly offer himself a Candidate 1 ; and shortly afterwards it was learned that Cli.'.rles burner, an auctioneer, and the Eon. Henry r:ufton, brother of the _,ari of Glhariet, had stepped into the fray. furrier v/as substituted at the last moment by the Accorde:^ John Longley, who, according to Gale
7.

Jones, had written a pro-reform pamphlet , while on the other side Best was moved to retire by the prospect of heavy expenses. Jhis slight hiatus left King mid jufton at the head of the poll, with the former declaring his loyalty to the Hing, ,_nd the latter pleelgirr- 'an unv.lterable attachment to the free constitution of our country'.
The radical ..liig challenge w^s equally strong at Canterbury, where John Baker ?.nd .^aniuel ".-L'lie.s Sawbricge put up agiinst the sitting 1-Iembers^ C-ipps and I'oiiywood. At a Common Hall on 16 ;.. y William Kingsford lamented the tit ate of the Constitution, and as-cribed ':li the evils that are now so loudly complained of in this counjry1, to the war, the interested conduct of the members of the House of Commons, end the iniquitous practices of the Prime minister 1. He therefore asserted the absolute necessity of supporting only those men who would 'strenuously oppose the present \dministr at ion 1 ; Tid it was on this basis that oc?wb ridge and 3,.ker offered o n.: ems elves. 0
As at liaidstone, contcmpor-ry accounts testify to the fero-
city with which freemen entered into the struggle. Cn 31 -ay the Kentish Gazette recorded:
1 Kentish G^ttc-., 24 i-!ny 1796.
2 ^nTTiTTTr^ejtc, 20 hay 1796.
5, .0, • vj vt . P- O.
__ - _
5 173*^^ -uG o Jorm.on Hell in Kentish Chronicle, 17 uay 1796 and mentish J^e te, 10 -lay I'/v ->• oa.iuei ^er^on :.v<~i];-s proposed T~~s,;"":: ^-, '*uj withdro\; when he realised ho h..d no chance.
6 Jor addresses, see ^.^ritish Gazette, 20 hay 1796. Ci:. /en^ish r-T,,; ;: ^, -; ' i'i-y IVx for ., .alley o-wbridge on oehalf o^ ^"i"

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•The election has been more sharply contested than any
within memory; and a greater number of freemen polled
than at any election since 1761; the efforts of the
iriends of the candidates v;ere also continued with un-
abating exertions for the length of four- davs; a longer period than ever known before in this city.
Just sixty-one votes covered the entire field, and it was the Opposition pair who came out on top. 0?he victory was, however, a pyrrhic one, for with the acclamation of the multitude still ringing in their ears, whispers of a petition were rapidly going
2
the rounds. Baker and Sawbridge were accused of bribery, and on 2 March 1797 a select committee upheld the charge. 5
o

Within a very few days the same candidates were bracing them-selves to renew the engagement.'4" At a Common Hall on 7 March a paper was circulated among the freemen which claimed the.t the unseated Members had been rendered ineligible to seek re-election; however in the absence of its principal signatories, the meeting voted it to be a 'libel', and pressed on with preparations for the new contest which was to begin on the 10th. As mi rent be expected, an atmosphere of sober circumspection'prevailed through-out, with not a house open on either side, although on one occasion effigies of the leading petitioners were paraded through the streets. This time oaker and oawbridge won decisively; but again they were not permitted to enjoy their spoils unmolested. On 24- March another petition from John Galloway alleged that the new i'uP.s had disqualified themselves by their former acts, and was in its turn followed by a counter-petition accusing Gipps and Honywood of corruption in Hay 1796- ?he former was upheld, and the two x-ittites were then enabled to take their seats.

1 Kentish Gazette, 31 i-iay 1796.
2 Ibid.

Com. Jour., lii. 20 and 357; and ^entish Chronicle, 3 Mar 1797 Kentish Chronicle, 7 and 10 I-.ar. 17S) 7~'
Com. Jour. , lii. 4-25f-571- r^wo petitions were oresented on
behalf of Baker and Sawbrid-e, but were not proceeded with-
ibid., 609 and 616. * '

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V

The immediate result of the 1796 election, in which just four
of Kent's nine constituencies were contested, was to send back to Westminster five men not unreservedly pledged to support Pitt. Of these, Geary and Trevanion, while as independent men they were prepared to consider modest schemes of reform, were not usually outspoken critics of administration; so that, in fact, only Saw-bridge , Baker and Henry Tufton may be numbered among the regular Opposition, and two of them were ejected from the House in March 1797- But if 1796 represented a low-water-mark for Kentish 'friends of liberty 1, events at Rochester, Maidstone, Canterbury and in the county showed clearly that the electorate was still divided, and that issues such as the economy, reform, retrenchment and the conduct of the war, might again bring down fierce condem-nation upon the heads of the King's ministers. The crisis of early 1797 was therefore quite predictable and required all Pitt's skill and natural confidence to surmount.
At the beginning of 1797. prospects for a speedy and success-
ful end to the war appeared bleak. Newspaper correspondents-watched with interest the Government's first faltering attempts
A

at a negotiated peace , and when these seemed to collapse alto-gether, began to debate gloomily the probability of an invasion. When ' AN TI GALLIC AN' toolt up his pen in February, the Emperor had been defeated in Italy and was about to make a separate peace, while Britain's other ally} Portugal, was in danger from Spain. The French landing in Ireland had been foiled by the dispersal of her fleet in a storm, but the enemy had drawn great comfort from the ease with which she h^d eluded the Royal Navy. Home defences were poorly prepared, and this was especially worrying at a moment when France might soon be able to switch the whole

1 Kentish Chronicle, 3 Jan. 1797-

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of her victorious forces to the Channel front. Even when Pitt
2
did try to increase the militia he provoked riots in the country , and the Whigs were always ready to criticise additional expendi-ture. To fears about national security were added a renewal of economic depression and high prices, with all that they implied for urban and rural harmony. The London Corresponding Society was entering its most extreme radical phase, and the Volunteers were frequently called upon to quell hungry mobs of unemployed labourers and incendiary outrages. The mounting burden of the
7.

National Debt was a source of increasing concern , while the sus-pension of cash payments prompted a run on the country banks which spelled ruin or at least severe inconvenience to many hundreds of

IL tradesmen and the lesser gentry.

In December 1?96> Baker, Tufton and Sawbridge had divided
against Pitt on motions relating to the w$r and the abortive
peace , and on 23 March 1797 the Earls of Guilford and Thanet sup-ported Oxford's motion in the Lords for a negotiated settlement. Discontented elements in the country quickly caught up the refrain, and a series of meetings were held to address the King' for the dismissal of his counsellors. Inspired by William Frend, a group of Canterbury freemen catalogued their grievances in just such an appeal. The principal target of animosity was, of course, the war which had been commenced in the supposed cause of 'liberty and humanity'. Its conduct had been characterised by 'folly and ex-pense 1, and had led only to disarray in Ireland, in India, in the West Indies, and on the Continent^where the Duke of York had just

1 Kentish Chronicle, 10 Feb. 1797-
2 J. R. Western, The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century; The Story of a Political Issue, 1660-1802 (London, 1963). pp. 219-24.
3 See a letter on the subject in Kentish Chronicle, 28 Apr. 1797. 4 At Sandwich, some leading citizens pledged not to demand gold from the local bank, unless absolutely necessary for business; Kentish Chronicle, 10 Mar. 1797-
5 Parl. Hist., xxxii. 1347-8 and 1493-4.
6 Parl. Hist., xxxiii. 179-80.
7 Kentish Chronicle, 11 Apr. 1797-

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been defeated. At home, too, ministerial policy had been equally disastrous. Unconstitutional laws had been passed and credit destroyed. What the nation required was a new Government, an inquiry into past mismanagement, and a 'full, fair, and free representation of the People in Parliament 1.
A county meeting was summoned for the same purpose on 19
1
April. James Roper Head won great applause when in moving the address, he deplored the delay of Malmesburyfe peace mission. The Earl of Thanet believed the entire scheme to be a ministerial ruse designed to secure a fresh subsidy, and had little more faith in Hammondfe embassy to Vienna. Nevertheless opinion was divided.
Sir John Shaw wished for peace, but felt that ministers were sin-

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cere and had not lost the confidence of the people. Lord Sydney thought peace was near, while Sir Edward Knatchbull and Sir Horace Mann justified the continuance of hostilities unless an honourable settlement could be reached. Sir Horace argued that Maibnesbury had been duped by the French into remaining at Paris until the invasion of Ireland was made ready, and then dismissed, empty-handed. Neither he nor Knatchbull nor Sir William Geary saw anything to be gained from a change of administration, es-pecially if its replacement simply confirmed the Vienna mission, and all three deplored Head's address as showing the enemy that Britons were torn by dissent. Thanet and Earl Stanhope pointed with horror to the cost of the war and the high taxes it neces-sitated, but only Mr. Breton went so far as to applaud the system of government then existing in France. Despite Lord Rom-ney's condemnation of such language, the High Sheriff declared that the original address had been approved, (some said by 10 or 30 to 1) and its opponents had to be content with a counter-blast voted after the adjournment, at the Bell Inn.

1 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 21 Apr. 1797-

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An important consequence of this rather heated exchange of
views was a series of newspaper articles (later published in
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pamphlet form) by Lord Rokeby. In the Address his lordship began by analysing 'our National transition from Peace, prosperity and security to war, Bankruptcy and the possibility of a foreign in-

2 vasion' ; and then proceeded to seek some underlying explanation.

In 1688 William of Orange had ended the rule of prerogative, but, Rokeby believed, this had gradually been replaced by 'influence and corruption 1 through 'the powers of the Grown in the Navy, the Army, the Church, the Law, the Customs, the Excise, by Places, pensions, by honours, titles, by loans and contracts and by in-numerable other means. 1 Thus while peace and the removal of Pitt were essential if the present crisis was to be resolved, 'A real representation of the Commons in Parliament ' was the ultimate

3 solution to the nation's ills*^ 'That', he concluded, 'can at a

future time be our only true and effectual remedy for the many mischiefs come upon us in consequence of an undue and corrupt in-fluence. f
By the time Rokeby aat down to compose his Postscript, how-
ever, the atmosphere of politics had dramatically altered. The Emperor had made peace, and Kentishmen could almost hear the tramp of French boots upon their beaches. An ejid to the war was more than ever imperative, and Rokeby set himself to demolish the argu-ments which sustained it. He described as the mere 'jargon of our government 1 the notion that France had been opposed because she had, 'declared war against, all formal order, all regular govern-ment, law and property 1; and claimed, with some justification, that many of Robespierre's excesses had arisen after foreign

1 An Address to the County of Kent on the Petition to the Kinp; for Removing from the Counsels of his Majesty its Present Min-isters and for Adopting Means to Procure a Speedy and an Happy Peace CLondon, 1797);and Postscript (London, 1797).
2 Address, pp. 5-6.
3 Ibid., pp. 7 and 16.

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XI

interference in French affairs. His interpretation of 1789
was more optimistic.
May not this extraordinary and violent revolution of France
be an effort or effect of nature acting in the human or
moral worlds [not) by general or universal, but by infin-
itely wise and benevolent laws, to break the chains of
absolute power and meliorate the condition of mankind?
In the new revolutionary climate, places like Holland and Lombardy might become 1 an addition to human freedom and enjoy the like bles-sings and comforts, as do now the happy and peaceable inhabitants and cantons of Switzerland 1. Thus, the war might in a curious way
p be acting against the 'general Good of Mankind 1.

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National peril had also given reform a more immediate rele-
vance which Rokeby sought to harness and define. On universal . suffrage, regarded by some as 'perfect rectitude 1 he would venture no opinion since it was too far removed from present practice to be attained in anything but the long-term. Instead he praised the plan of a household franchise and the division of counties as an 'excellent one', since it would comprehend all the owners of property in the kingdom and allow Parliament to speak'the true
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and real sense of the nation'. And if even this proved impos-
sible, then there was always Chatham's proposal to augment the number of county seats, coupled with some relaxation of qualifi-

4. cations in the boroughs. Clearly there was no lack of reforming
ideas in 1797> and Rokeby was sure of their eventual triumph. However, even in the midst of economic and military confusion it is doubtful whether they won very wide acceptance among Kentish-men. To demand peace and lower taxes w:*s one thing, but to men-ace Gatton and Old Sarum was still quite another.
This was certainly the experience of Charles Grey, whose
motion for reform was defeated in the Commons on 6 May by 256 votes to 91, with only John Trevanion and Henry Tufton of the

5 Kentish M.P.s in the minority.' Sir William Geary's views were

1 Postscript, p.41. 3 Ibid., pp. 61-2.
2 Ibid., pp. 48 and 49. 4 Ibid., pp. 68-71.
———— 5 ParT.Hist., xxxiii. 734-5.

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probably shared by many of his constituents:

he was at heart a well-wisher to a deform in parliament, but disapproved of the plan now proposed; because it appeared to be too nearly connected with the system of universal suffrage. He did not think thia the very worst
time to bring the question forward, but there were dif-
ficulties as to what plan the friends of reform would
agree to; he did not, however, despair of that difference
being made up, and that at no very distant,,time, and then
he should be happy to give it his support.

Geary was to become something of a radical in later years, and

even in 1797 spoke up for the ballot, checks on expenses, and the

p splitting of counties. However something half undefined, be it

fear or expediency, yet turned him from Grey's lobby. Later in

the year Sir Horace Mann expressed his sentiments with an uncom-

promising vigour which exhibited no softening towards his foes

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at home or abroad.

.,. he was prepared to go as far as any man in the cause of humanity; but when he considered the nature of the enemy
with whom we had to contend, he saw we had no alternative
left but manfully to counteract and defeat the black
designs which that enemy meditated against us. The object
of those designs V/L-.S no less than to destroy our commerce,
to revolutionise the country, to abolish our laws, and to annihilate the constitution. But in these black attempts
they would, he trusted, be baffled and confounded.

Faced with such determination, the relaxation and concensus for

which Lord Rokeby and Geary both hoped, was likely to be long

postponed. But if conservative zeal was increased, radicalism

could also become more violent and extreme.

Probably one of the first instances of republican ideas to

force itself upon the consideration of a wide Kentish audience
Zj.

was the Nore Mutiny of May-June 1797- ^ed by Richard Parker,

the North Sea fleet transformed itself into a 'floating Republic 1,'

and attempted to negotiate with the Privy Council on a whole

range of naval and political issues. I'hare was open fraterni-

1 Parl. Hist., xxxiii. 685-6.
2 Parl. Hist., xxxiii. 686.
3 Parl. Hist., xxxiii. 901-2.
4- G. E. Mam-raring and B. Dobre, The Floating Republic; An Accouit of the hutinies at Spithead and the Nore in 1797 (London,
, pp.121-265-

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sation with the enemy and talk of surrendering p.^rt of Britain's precious 'wooden wall', which provoked great alarm at the very height of the invasion scare. Seditious handbills were also being distributed among the troops at Chatham, Sheerness and Maidstone, no doubt by the mutineers, aided and abetted by the former hosts of John Gale Jones, and the likelihood of disaffection was deemed real enough by the authorities to call forth stern counter-

measures.

Order was eventually restored to the fleet, but Kent had not
heard the last of conspiracy. Early in 1798 Arthur 0'Connor, James Coigley and others were apprehended at Margate on their way to France to concert an Irish rebellion. In May the case for
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high treason was tried at Maidstone and the county was treated to the spectacle of many prominent members of the Opposition pleading

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on behalf of the accused. Coigley was subsequently convicted and executed, and the well-connected 0'Connor was banished; but not before the Earl of Thanet had been party to a bizarre and unsuc-cessful rescue attempt, for which he received a heavy fine and a 2
year in the Tower. The effect of such proceedings could only be to squander whatever appeal and respectability still attached to reform, to further strengthen Pitt's control of Parliament, and to smooth the way for the final suppression of the radical societies by the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800. Yet the nation was not silent for long, and with the new century dawned a fresh clamour for peace.
VI

When George III reviewed more than six thousand Kentish Volunteers in the grounds of Kote Park, Maidstone, on 1 August 1799, he did so amid scenes of opulence and splendour, brim full

1 Kentish Chronicle, 26 May 1797-
2 Goodwin, op. ciTT, pp. 4-30-38, and 44-8-50; and R. Fulford,

** T T.n_ T"! _"U — «TTr*3"™"^ I~)C. ll IQ'IC. A C!-(-TI/-ITT -I -M r>»%»x/-\ «-«-? 4--J f*.Tn /'T^^.J— _ Samuel 1967), WhITbread"~1764-1815: A Study in Opposition (London, P- ' '—————

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i of patriotic fervour. But as the old century ebbed away, this
tide of national unity which had buoyed Pitt up through so many desperate storms was slackening alarmingly. The country was in-creasingly weary of a war she felt she could not win, and longed for an end to high prices and burdensome taxes. In December 1800, Thomas Pattenden, the Dover linen draper, recorded how the cost of soap and candles had lately risen on expectations of a war with Russia, and in March 1801 the price of bread stood at

2 3/7-id-. Governments were changing too. Pitt resigned early in

1801 over the Catholic question, and was succeeded by Speaker Addington, whose overriding task was to make peace. His negoti-ations bore fruit in the Treaty of Amiens, and a nation rejoiced. Having done all that was required of him, and with bread
selling at 1/10d. by October 1801 , Addington understandably sought to consolidate his parliamentary majority by going to the country at the end of June 1802. Without the restraining influ-ence of war, six Kentish constituencies held a poll, but for ministers the results must have come as something of a disappoint-ment. Electors in a number of places celebrated their new free-dom by revenging themselves upon the Pittites, and favouring men from the moderate Opposition.
Nowhere was this more apparent than at Canterbury. George
Gipps had died in 1800, and Sir John Honywood wisely decided that the freemen of Honiton would be more receptive to his wooing than those who had rejected him twice in 1796 and 1797. John Baker again offered himself as an 'Independent Man*, but his former partner S. E. Sawbridge; while acknowledging many promises of sup-port, felt unable to undertake the arduous duties of an
1 Hasted, x. 446-52.
2 A. Macfie, 'The Pattenden Diaries, 17°7-1819', A.C., xliv. (1979), 140-1.
3 See recent comments and references in R.E. Willis, 'William Pitt's Resignation in 1801: Re-examination and Document', B.I.H.R., xliv. (197D, 239-57-
4 £. 2iegler, Addington; A Life of Henry Addington First Viscount Sidmouth (London, 1965), chap. 6.
5 Macfie. loc. cit., 141.

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xi
M.P. 1 The victor of the 1800 by-election, the Hon. George Watson, also sought a renewed mandate. Having been proposed on 5 July by Hichard Milles, he was described by Alderman Hodge as a man above party; 'motive of interest could not bias him - place or pension

P could not purchase him 1. On Watson's own testimony, he had

differed sharply with a group of his constituents over the war, but, as he pleaded, 'conceiving a peace to be necessary and desir-able, he had felt no hesitation in giving his vote in approbation of the terms'. Probably because of the likely expense, no chal-lenge was made to Baker and Watson - a circumstance 'not within the memory of the eldest inhabitant'. The only discordant note came from the radical Joseph Royle:
UNDER the present wicked and corrupt eystem of Represen-
tation, it is of little consequence whom you send to the Commons House; impressed with this opinion, I must beg
leave to decline coming forward as a Candidate at the
ensuing Election, to represent you: and further, as I
have no intention to sell you, I feel no inclination to
purchase a Seat in the ensuing Parliament, being a deci-
ded enemy to the Slave Trade in all its branches.
Nevertheless the existing system had not prevented Canterbury from making fairly considerable changes in the character and attitudes of its Members.
The radical creed fared little better at Rochester, but not
before Sir W. S. Smith had received a severe fright. He had expected to be returned along with the independent local banker James Hulkes, only to be recalled hastily from Dover on 3 July when George Smith and James Roper Head entered the contest. Head had been prominent in the 1797 agitation, while Smith was later to admit that he had been 'amongst the most violent admir-ers of the principles of the French Revolution'. By 1802 his revolutionary ardour had somewhat cooled, but he remained a

1 Kentish Chronicle, 29 June 1802.
2 Nomination meeting in Kentish Chronicle, 6 July 1802.
3 Ibid.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 29 June 1802. Joseph Royle was the defeated candidate in 1800.
5 Kentish Chronicle, 6 July 1802.

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strenuous opponent of ministers: 'I would have gone any lengths to have obtained a perfect and equal representation of the people, supposing that a Parliamentary Reform was the only means

1 of saving the country 1. In the end, however, even the electors

of Rochester proved unready for such ideas, and their champions attracted only 45 and 10 votes respectively.
General De Lancey was compelled to retire at Maidstone some
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days before the commencement of polling. And when the votes had finally been totalled up, it was discovered that Sir Matthew Bloxham had been pushed into second place behind John Hodson Durrand-, who,., as the Kentish Chronicle observed,'comes in on
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the Whig interest 1. In all three boroughs, peace had brought
a return to the status quo of the 1780's, although recent ex-periences continued to cast a shadow on the kind of activities just beginning to re-emerge in Westminster and the City of London. For New Romney and Sandwich, 1802 represented no alteration
of the prevailing balance. At Hythe, however, the election was to be the first in a series of keenly fought contests between the neighbouring gentry and rich carpet-baggers. Initial impetus was given by the death of Sir Charles Farnaby Radcliffe in 1798 and then by the retirement of William Evelyn at the dissolution. After nearly thirty years, new faces had to be found, and in
the absence of a supreme interest, candidates were not lacking. Viscount Marsham, the other sitting Member, was eager for a sec'ond term; Alexander Evelyn was hopeful of replacing his 'near relation 1; and Matthew White and the county's High Sheriff,
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Thomas Godfrey, were nominated to run in harness. According to the Kentish Chronicle, 'much anxiety prevailed 1, and the hall was 'crowded' as the polling began.^ As was generally to be the

1 Kentish Chronicle, 6 Oct. 1812.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 6 July 1802.
3 Kentish Chronicle', 9 July 1802.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 2 July 1802.
5 Kentish Chronicle, 6 July 1802.

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case at Hythe, national issues were strictly subordinate to personality, and on this b^sis the freemen chose Godfrey and White as their new M.P.s.
Dover was no stranger to contests, but that of 1802 was re-markable because it witnessed the defeat of the principal Treas-ury nominee, who on this occasion was none other than the young

1 William Huskisson. On 2 July an anonymous correspondent called

on voters to reserve their judgment, 'as a Gentleman is shortly expected to offer who has eminently distinguished himself in the service of his country, and is now engaged in high important duties which prevent him waiting on you immediately. 1 'The question is, 1 he then proceeded to explain, 'whether the freemen

- - v • shall chuse (sic.) a member, or be under the necessity of chusing
o

(sic.) a person in direct opposition to their inclination.' It may well be that this absent personage was the locally-born Sir W. S. Smith, and that when he selected Rochester as his future constituency, his place was filled by his brother John Spencer Smitji. The gallant admiral was, at any event, active in canvas-

5 sing on behalf of his brother , who, as had been advertised,

stood pledged to uphold 'the rights of free election 1. These principles obviously appealed to the borough, and after a long, though amicable poll, Smith was victorious along with John
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Trevanion.
The most protracted of the 1802 disputes was that for the
county itself, where the epic tussles of 1790 and 1796 had not yet worn out the ambitions or the finances of the warring parties. With no time for extensive canvassing, all eyes were immediately focused on the nomination meeting fixed for 7 July.-7 As was to
1 G. R. Fay, Huskisson and his Age (London, 1951), p. 4-5 and n. ; and Kentish Chronicle, 2 July 1802.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 2 July 1802.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 6 and 9 July 1802.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 13 July 1802.
5 Addresses and nomination meeting in Kentish Chronicle, 2 and 9 July 1802.

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be expected, Knatchbull was proposed as 'the guardian of our truly enviable constitution 1; and Sir William Geary made many professions of his independent attachment to that revered edifice. Filmer Honywood was then nominated in his absence by Sir Nar-borough D'Aeth and Charles Polhill of Chipstead Place, although serious doubts about his state of health were voiced by Richard Milles. Polhill stressed that both the sitting Members had regularly supported Pitt, and 'the late disastrous war - a war which he would admit to a certain period was a war of defence, till afterwards it became a war of aggression, an unhappy war, which had lost this country millions of money, and after the occasion for which it was undertaken, to prevent the opening of the Scheld (sic.), was accomplished, he believed every man would affirm, that there ended the necessity for its prosecution'. No other major issue was raised, despite attempts in the press to

1 stimulate public debate on the slave trade , and the freeholders

closed by giving a show of hands for Geary and Honywood.
When the 'great and arduous contest 1 began on Penenden Heath
on 13 July, county feeling seemed to have switched behind the
two baronets, but as parties of freeholders continued to arrive,

2 fortunes fluctuated hourly. On the second day Honywood was

ahead, and arguments were breaking out among his rivals about canvassing and government influence. By the close on the eighth day Knatchbull was still publicly hopeful of snatching victory, but in the evening he signified that he would not reopen the poll. His defeat was just part of 'the change in the political senti-ments in this country since 1796'; which the Kentish Chronicle was quick to isolate:
The changes which have occurred at Rochester, Dover,
Hythe, Oueenboroujdi, and Maidstone, show the spirit of independence is a;;ain roused; and we have no doubt
Sir William Geary owes his success to the exertions used
1 'A Friend of his Country' in Kentish Chronicle, 2 and 9 July 2 Kentish Chronicle, 16, 20 and 23 July 1d02.|18Q2.

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1 in his favour by the friends of Mr. Honywood.

Hence, while the decade of the French Revolution may have ren-dered reform temporarily unfashionable, and banished 'party' from national politics, it had by no means removed public opinion from its position at the centre of Kentish affairs. On the contrary, it becomes cle^r that the 1?90's actually streng-thened and consolidated those forces which had been growing daily stronger since 1768.

1 Kentish Chronicle, 23 July 1802.

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Chapter Six
Kentish Electioneering, Public Opinion,
and the Crisis of 1806 - 1807
After thirty-six years and seven uncontested elections and by-elections, the electoral peace of the county of Kent was broken at five of the seven general elections between 1790 and 1818.
Had this concentration of activity occurred at any time under the unreformed representative system it would have been remarkable enough; but that it took place during a period of war in Europe and social tension at home, is one further indication that, in spite of the Jacobin menace, the propertied classes of Kent were sufficiently assured of local loyalty and stability to embroil the whole community in their struggles and ambitions. In addition, the great campaigns of 1790, 1796, 1802, 1806 and 1818 afford
an excellent opportunity to examine in some detail the under-lying structure of Kentish politics as it had evolved by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and to evaluate the role played by public opinion. This may be done in three ways; firstly, by studying the county M.P.s and some aspects of electi-oneering; secondly, by analysing those means by which freemen and freeholders were being made aware of national as well as provincial issues; and finally, by focusing on the events of 1806-7, in order to observe the response of voters to the specific problems raised in that confused crisis.
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A comprehensive analysis of the many M.P.s who represented Kentish boroughs between 1768 and 1852 must await the publication < of further volumes of The History of Parliament. We shall there-fore confine ourselves here to some reflections upon the thirteen men who sat for the county constituency during the last sixty-four years of the unreformed House of Commons. It has already been remarked that under the early Hanoverians, families such as the Fanes, the Sidneys, the Watsons and the Sackvilles could exercise

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no decisive influence over county politics, and a strong element of anti-aristocratic hostility may be discerned behind Lord Middlesex's defeat in 1734. Hence it comes as no surprise to dis-cover that only two of the Knights of the Shire under present consideration were heirs to peerages. And even in these instan-ces, John Frederick Sackville, as the nephew of the second Duke
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of Dorset, was not everyone's choice in 1768 , while the Hon. Charles Marsham owed his sixteen years at Westminster more to a close association with the independent, gentry-inspired movements of 1780-84, than to his father's position as second Baron Romney. Thus, as in the days of Walpole and the Pelhams, it was the squirearchy that was enabled to monopolise Kentish affairs. Of the eleven remaining M.P.s, five were baronets - Knatchbull, Knatchbull, Bridges, Geary and Farnaby - Filmer and William Hony-wood were the sons of a baronet, and the four others - Knight, Honywood, Hodges and Rider - were all men of substantial property and good connections.
Two further classifications may serve to emphasise the full extent to which the county seats were the jealously-guarded prizes to be bestowed within a select coterie of distinguished county families. There is, for example, very little evidence that outsiders were successful in penetrating this close-knit circle. As members of a junior branch of their family, the three Honywoods were alone among the thirteen Knights in having their principal residence in another county, while as former M.P.s for East Grinstead and Steyning respectively, Sir Charles Farnaby and Filmer Honywood were the only ones to represent a non-Kentish constituency. More revealing still is the fact that eight of the Knights were chosen from families which had already occupied Kentish seats since 1700. Thomas Knights father had sat for

1 For biographical notes on the Kentish Knights of the Shire, see infra, ^pp. 2.

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Canterbury throughout the 1734- parliament, and he himself had filled one of New Romney's seats before standing for the county in 177^. When elected at Maidstone in 1768, Charles Marsham re-vived an association with the borough begun by his grandfather between 1708 and 1716, while J. F. Sackville was the nephew of both Lord George Sackville, who had served as a baron for Hythe and Dover, and Lord Middlesex, who had at various times been re-jected by the electors of Kent, Rochester and Queenborough. The elder Sir Edward Knatchbull followed quite naturally in the foot-steps of his grandfather, the noted diarist and high-tory convert to Walpolian whiggery, who had twice been Knight of the Shire as well as an M.P. for Rochester, and of his cousin Sir Wyndham, while in 1819 it was almost a matter of course that Ms son should succeed to his seat along with his titles. Sir Brook Bridges was the grandson of Sir Thomas Palmer, a Knight under Queen tone, and the two William Honywoods were returned on five occasions by the same popular interest which had so often championed their kinsman >i

Filmer. Finally, the absolute domination enjoyed by the leading gentry is revealed in the discovery that in the fifty years bet-ween 1780 and 1830, only seven men from just four families contes-ted Kent's representation; that one seat was held by a Honywood in nine of the eleven parliaments during this period; and that the other seat was retained by a Knatchbull from 1790 to 1831, with a single four-year break after 1802.
It was thus the gentry who unmistakably held the balance of
power in Kent at the beginning of the nineteenth century. How-ever, before going on to discuss their electioneering methods, something must be said of the local ministerial and aristocratic

1 Of the remaining four men: Farnaby sat for Hythe between 1774 and 1798; Hodges was connected by bir£h and marriage with
Major John Cartwright and the Twisden family; while both
Filmer Honywood and Thomas Rider were descended from families not unknown in Parliament.

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interests as they had developed since the reign of George II. Government, although possessing influence in Kent, had not been prominent in county elections after Newcastle left the Treasury. In Hampshire, for example, where the Portsea docks and numerous small harbours mirrored similar installations at Chatham and in the Cinque Ports, the 'Talents' were able to eject the Pittites
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in 1806 ; but in Kent no such show of strength was possible, and was never attempted. Allegations of interference were of course frequently made. In March 1790 'CONTINUANDUS' asserted that Honywood had been opposed at the Maidstone nomination meeting by many non-freeholders, and asked: 'Shall a respectable and enlight-ened county be stun'd by the clamour of such a host, and surrender
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rights of election to the disposal of the dock yards? 1 'AMICUS VERITATI', too, believed that chaises had been hired at Deptford 'to convey any person of respectable appearance, though no free-holders, to make a show in Sir Edward's favour on the day of nomi-5 nation'. Knatchbull was accused of having bartered a peerage and a stall at Canterbury for influential support, while in late June 1790 his opponents questioned '...whether this opulent and respectable county is, or is not to become an absolute Treasury borough, and its representatives absolutely dependent on the ministry'. Such charges were the lifeblood of whig and radical propaganda, and it can hardly be doubted that any available assis-tance was readily thrown behind a Pittite like Knatchbull. Yet, despite this advantage, Sir Edward was defeated by a war-weary electorate in 1802, and was then re-elected in 1806 when the Whigs

had control of patronage.

Neither were Kentish aristocrats any more successful in man-ipulating elections on their own behalf. Estates were generally

1 J. R. McQuiston, 'Rose and Canning in Opposition, 1806 - 1807', Hist. Jour., xiv. (1971), 515-18-
2 Kentish "Gazette, 12-16 Mar. 1790.
3 Kentish Gazette, 30 Mar. - 2 Apr. 1790.
4 Kentish Gazette, 16-20 Apr. 1790.

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small, often being no more than summer retreats, or, as was the case with Lords Thanet, Radnor, Cowper and Abergavenny, owned by
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peers whose main property was situated elsewhere. The Marshams of the Mote were perhaps typical of the majority of the county's indigenous aristocracy, and may therefore serve to illustrate a familiar pattern. Robert, second Baron Romney had well-established family links with Kent, he was fairly widely connected with the neighbouring nobility and gentry, and was of good moral character, independent principles, and a philanthropic disposition. He had
a commission in the militia, was a deputy lieutenant, and derived considerable wealth from estates in the 'Jest Indies. In political terms, however, his titular prestige and personal expenditure were insufficient, the patronage obtainable from his lordship of the manor of Maidstone not great enough, and his tenants too few, to sustain anything more than a short-lived borough interest, while in the county he had no claim to special regard. Consequently, Romney's son wholly lacked the resources with which to defend his seat in 1790, and, although created an earl in 1801, and made Lord Lieutenant of Kent between 1797 and 1808, could not bolster hiB own son's electoral aspirations in 1806.
The Dukes of Dorset lived on a much grander scale, but when confronted with so numerous an elective body, were scarcely less impotent. With its fifty-two staircases, 365 rooms, and more than fifty servants, Knole was the resplendent focus of a thousand acre park. The Sackvilles owned two advowsons and the manors of Knole, Sevenoaks, Seal and Kemsing, while the third Duke was but the latest in a long line of diplomats and courtiers. Neverthe-less, Dorset's grandfather had seen his son routed in the anti-

1 F. "ull, Guide to the Kent County Archives Office (Kent County Council, 1958;, pp. 156, 172-3, 14-9; and F. Hull, Guide to
the Kent County Archives Office; First Supplement, 1957-1*9o8
(Kent County Council, 1971), p. 99. Cf. on Radnor, R. K. Hush,
The Radical Lord Radnor; the Public Life of Viscount Folkestone, Third Earl of Radnor, 1779-1869 (Minnesota, 19773, PP. 5-6.

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excise fever of 1734-, while his own meagre contribution to Knatchbull's campaign in 1790 was a series of convivial breakfasts 1
among the Sevenoaks freeholders.
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Unlike Yorkshire and Northamptonshire , Kent saw no aristo-cratic resurgence in the early nineteenth century. The premature death of the young fourth Duke of Dorset in a riding accident, caused the title to pass out of the county and tjie division of the Knole property. The heirs of Lords Darnley, Romney and Cow-per contested various borough seats, and the Earl of V/inchilsea and the fourth Earl Stanhope were regularly heard at public meetings; but it was not until after the Reform Bill that the emergence of the party machine encouraged the nobility once more to engage actively in county elections. Comparisons with prac-tices in Sussex well illustrate the continuing exclusion of the aristocracy, and point the way ahead. When seeking his eldest son's return at a Sussex by-election in 17^-2, the first Duke of Dorset was forced to deal with magnates like the Dukes of New-castle and Richmond; but when electioneering in his own county
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it was the gentry who demanded his whole attention. Likewise in 1820, it was Lords Egremont, Sheffield and Ashburnham who helped shape Sussex politics; whereas in Kent great controversy was aroused, not by the machinations of some ambitious peer, but by the meeting of a group of eminent gentlemen at Canterbury's Fountain Inn,in the hope of finding a suitable candidate to oppose 4.
W. P. Honywood.
How then was Kentish politics carried on by the gentry in

1 Sackville MSS. U269/0146.
2 E. A. Smith, Whig principles and party politics; Earl Fitzwil-liam and the Whip: party, 1748-1833 (Manchester, 1975J, pp.299- 303; and E. G. Forrester, Northamptonshire County Elections
and Electioneering 1693-1832 (Oxford, 1941), chap, vi.
3 Compare Sackville MSS. U269/C150 with U269/C148 and /C149.
4 Compare J. R. McQuiston, 'Sussex aristocrats and the county elections of 1820', Eng. Hist. Rev., Ixxxviii. (1973), 534-
58; with infra? pp.

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the absence of treasury or aristocratic management? Under the early Hanoverians, the hopeful candidates toured the county in order to whip up enthusiasm, and relied heavily upon their friends to arrange treats for the local freeholders at which promises of votes might be secured by a tasty spread and some strong liquor. Similar techniques seem to have been adopted in 1790 and at sub-sequent elections. On 29 June 1802, for instance, Mrs. Woodgate

wrote:

We are afraid we are going to have a contested election. Honywood's people are canvassing and Mr. Polhill was at Tunbridge yesterday and got many votes: and Sir Edward
and Mr. Hussey called here two days ago, and went to Mr. Children's, the Major's, Lord Boyne's and Mr. Benson's, but said he should not canvass till after the nomination
at Maidstone, which is expected very soon. I call his
being here and at those places canvassing, don't you?
Sir William Geary sent word he should call here this week;
I really think it is time they should begin if they mean anything.
In every town and village the same general strategy was adopted, with the candidates' appeal being directed chiefly towards the natural leaders of the community, in the hope that their example would be noted by humbler electors. Knatchbull opened his cam-paign in 1790 with a sumptuous and long-remembered feast at
p Mersham Hatch, and continued to entertain in the grand manner.

In 1802 it was advertised that he would meet his friends at the King's Head, Canterbury, on 10 July, and three days later those who sympathised with Filmer Honywood and resided near the same city, were invited to breakfast with Henry Collard at Hbath Farm.^ The list of venues could be greatly extended, since until well into the Victorian era freeholders persisted doggedly to regard these rustic banquets as essential to the exercise of their fran-chise.

1 Rev. G. and G.M.G. Woodgate, A History of the Woodgates of Stonewall Park and of Summerhill in Kent^nrici their Connections (Wisbech, 1910J, pp. 368-9.
2 Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Kentish Family (London,1960),p.148. 3 Kentish Chronicle, 9 July

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The active assistance of gentlemen of wealth and leisure
was also mobilised in the day-to-day running of a county campaign, although as the following paragraphs will argue, the growth of the electorate, ever mounting expenses, an increasing reliance
on propaganda, and an independent public opinion, were in the long-term to diminish the effective role of the amateur organiser. Little evidence has survived from the earlier period to suggest that county electioneering was in any sense co-ordinated. As business became more complex, however, a network of town and parish committees was gradually established to gather information for a central body, and to arrange finance, dinners and transport in the localities. Another example of this transition towards
a more professional organisation was the employment of attorneys and election agents. The first Duke of Dorset relied heavily upon his circle of informantsj and made special use of the Rev. Francis Austen and the Rev. Thomas Courteis to watch over his

1 interests when he was presiding at Dublin Castle. Politicians

of a later generation were compelled by legal and financial dif-ficulties to retain the services of more skilled men to super-

p intend their affairs. Agents were at work in Canterbury in 1790 on behalf of the Whigs^, and in 1806 Mr. Selby of Town Mailing
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and Mr. Elwyn of Canterbury were acting for the Geary interest. In 1790, 1796 and 1802, Filmer Honywood was assisted by the banking house of Messrs. Clarkson, and in 1814 the sum of £350 was recommended as the appropriate fee for services tendered in
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the latter year. Hence, while the participation of individual

1 For the use of the clergy in this capacity see E. A. Smith,

'The election agent in English politics, 1734-1832', Ens. Hist. . Rev.,lxxxiv. (1969), 13-15- i

2 Ibid., 15-19; and K. Robson, The Attorney in Eighteenth-Cen-tury England (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 96-103.
3 D. E. Ginter, 'The Financing of the Whip; Party Organisation, 1783-1793', American Historical Review, Ixxi. (1966), 428-30.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 31 Oct. 1806.
5 Honywood MSS. U^1/04: From Thomas Ludbry, 13 Oct. 1814.

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squires remained an important factor in Kentish electioneering until the Reform Act, the snapping asunder of parochial and defer-ential bonds, coupled with the rise of allegiance to specific political figures and even to party ideologies, had already begun to erode the influence of the gentry as a class long before that date.

; \ f!he question of election expenses was one which closely de-termined the style of electioneering from 1790 onwards, and thus seems to merit separate attention. Large electorates at Roches-ter, Dover, Sandwich, Maidstone and Canterbury, together with sizeable bodies of non-residents, meant that in the late eight-eenth and early nineteenth centuries, expenses in the Kentish boroughs were by no means negligible. After the 1796 contest at Canterbury, for example, the Kentish Gazette commented:
From the number of houses which have been open on each
side during the whole of the contest, and the profusion observable in them, the expenses must have been uncommon-
ly great - but heavy as they are likely to be, to the
honour and credit of both parties, we find orders are
already given, for all bills to be carried in for immedi-
ate payment.
And in 1830; Viscount Fordwich paid £5,466 9s. 2d. for a seat at 2
the same constituency, despite an old family association. How-ever, it was in the county itself that contemporaries most fre-quently remarked upon 'the enormous expense to which Gentlemen
of fortune are put by such contests... 1 As the Kentish Gazette went on to note at the end of July 1790:
Greater expenses have been incurred on this head of County Elections now, than the oldest man remembers; it is the speediest way to ruin the most ample fortune, and at the
long run, if Ministers adopt such measures, few^indeed
will be the men left to contest them with them.
In spite of having 'injured my fortune, trenched on my income, and narrowed my circumstances', Sir William Geary expressed a
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determination to fight on as an independent in 1806. But when 1 Kentish Gazette, 31 May 1796.
2 Panshanger (Cowper) Collection Box 40: 'Viscount Fordwich 1 s Expenses at the Canterbury Election 1830'.
3 kentish Gazette, 27-30 July 1790.
4 Kentish Gazette, 4 Nov. 1806.

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standing at Maidstone just six months later, he was forced to admit that: 'The immense expense of contests in that field in which I had TWICE triumphed, was the only cause of my lately being obliged to retreat from it.' 1
Nevertheless, if gentlemen wished to sit in Parliament,high costs had to be borne, and if personal funds did not suffice, then other sources had to be found. Exact figures are not easy to obtain, but it is quite clear that the £2,000 paid by Dorset in 1734- and Robert Fairfax in 175^ for their campaigns in West Kent were greatly exceeded after 1790. 2 When again a candidate for Kent in 1812, Geary claimed that in 1796 and 1802 he had spent £22,000, and confirmed that he had retired in 1806 to escape 'inevitable ruin' 3; while the official balance-sheet of Hony-wood 's expenditure in 1802 alone, amounts to more than £5,500.^ In 1790 speculation was rife in the press as to the extent of Sir Edward Knatchbull's outlay. At the beginning of Hay it was estimated to be £10,000, and by the end of the month 'A FRIEND' was thinking more in terms of £20,000. 5 These writers were seek-ing to imply th;.it treasury gold was being distributed lavishly in the search for votes, but there is good reason to believe both that their calculations erred on the side of moderation, and that the vast majority of bills were met out of the baronet's own pocket. In 1818 the artist Farin-don was told by a gentleman of Maidstone that Knatchbull had 'formerly expended £40,000 in Parliamentary Contests' prior to 1812, while family tradition ho,s it that Sir Edward laid out at least £60,000 during his election-
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eering sorties. The largest proportion of this would appear to
1 Kentish Chronicle, 5 May 1807.
2 A. N. Newman, 'Elections in Kent and its Parliamentary entation, 1715-1754' (Oxford Univ. D.Phil, thesis 19S7)
3 Kentish Chronicle, 16 Oct. 1812. '
4 Honywood MSS. U221/04: 'Kent Election; Monies paid on Account of Filmer Honywood Esq. relating to the Kent Election 1802 bv Messrs. Clarkson 1. ^ 5 Kentish Gazette, 30 Apr. - 4- May and 26-30 May 1790.
6 Knatchbull-Hugessen, op. cit., pp. 151-2.

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have been used up in 1790, when a naturally extravagant young man was striving to restore political prestige to his house, and in 1806, when Knatchbull made a tremendous effort to regain the seat lost in 1802. Knatchbull had obviously dug deep into his purse on the former occasion, for in 1796 he entered into a con-troversial cross-voting pact with Geary by which he promised
, 000 or £4,500 and his fellow baronet £5,000 to defray joint

1 costs , and in both 1812 and 1818 he and his supporters seem to

have done everything to avoid any liabilities whatsoever.
The agreement of 1796 was just one way in which candidates
sought to off -set the potentially fatal drain on their income.
On 17 June 1796 Honywood's friends resolved to begin a subscrip-tion to pay for the poll and the expected petition, and within a

couple of weeks committees were at work raising money in all

p parts of the county. Similar schemes were set on foot on Knatch-

bull 's behalf at the Star Inn, Maidstone, and the King's Head, Canterbury in November 1806, and lists were opened for donations %

at most of Kent's banks. The same meetings also pledged to aid their champion by 'bringing up at their own costs the voters';
as had a pro-Honywood gathering at Canterbury in July 1802, on the grounds that 'the enormous expense attending a county contest is injurious to the cause of liberty, and subversive of the free-
h

dom of election.' Whether or not the Treasury contributed to Knatchbull 's coffers in more than an indirect manner it is impos-sible to say. Honywood, on the other hand, did receive £500 from the Whig Club in 1796.^ All these devices undoubtedly eased what could quickly become a crippling burden, but it was not until

1 Minutes of the Select Committee Appointed to Try and Determine • the Merits of the Petition of John Amherst, esq. and Others, : Complaining of an Undue Election and Return for the County of Kent. (Canterbury, 1797;, P- 13.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 21 and 28 June 1796.
5 Kentish Gazette 7~7 Nov. 1806.
4 Ibid.

5 I. Asquith, 'The Whig Party and the Press in the ^arly Nine-teenth Century', B.I.H.R.. xlix. (1976), 274-.

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18$1, when the freeholders burned with reforming zeal, that a concerted effort was made to return Rider and Hodges entirely free of expense.
Much of interest is to be learned by looking in detail at the accounts prepared for Viscount Fordwich in 1830 and Filmer Hony-

1 wood in 1802. The great majority of payments made by both men

were to friends or agents, like Mr. Cooper, Mr. Beard and Mr.
Hope at Canterbury, to cover canvassing expenses, and to local tradesmen. Fordwich paid out sums of £12 17s., £4 2s. 9d. and £8 for beer, oust over £341 to Field's Tavern, £188 to Chaplin's Tavern, and in addition gave away countless tickets which might be exchanged for refreshments. A dinner cost his lordship £54, a supper £388 10s., and some venison was purchased for £5- The size of the county constituency and Canterbury's numerous non-resident body meant that for both candidates, transport was an important item of expenditure. The Union Coach Company received £48 from Honywood, and many smaller payments were distributed to private individuals for fetching freeholders. Scores of electors were lodged in Maidstone at five shillings a night, and it was reported in the press that one sixty-year-old freeholder of Can-terbury claimed 6/9d. to defray the cost of his two-day journey
p to and from Penenden Heath. Fordwich donated £10 to aid the 'Sufferers in France 1 and ^5 for a 'Cattle Show', while Honywood united charity and self-interest by giving ten guineas to the Kent Dispensary. Finally, there was the poll itself to be paid for. Fordwich contributed £50 towards erecting the hustings, and Hony-wood 's account records £96 for arranging the poll and £570 as part of the Sheriff's fee, together with payments of a guinea a day to a number of polling clerks. In all, it w^s calculated that Ford- i wich's 945 supporters who lived in Canterbury or Kent were polled

1 The following paragraphs are based on the account books in ' Honywood MSS. U221/04 and Panshanger (Cowper) Collection Box
2 Kentish Chronicle, 23 July 1802.

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at a total cost of £3,333 12s. 11d., or about £3 10s. per vote n and that the 156 non-residents who favoured his lordship were secured at a charge of £2,032 16s. 3d., or £13 a head. The 4,763 freeholders who placed Honywood at the top of the poll, on the other hand, would seem to have cost about £1 3s. each, al-though this figure must remain highly tentative.
Other entries reflect the growing importance of propaganda
and the appeal to public opinion in Kentish politics. Colourmen and ringers were employed, ribbons were bought and given out to the candidates 1 friends, a band cost Fordwich &70, and Honywood paid £37 16s. for drums and £73 for a band. Musicians, banners and cockades were all part of the election pageantry and undoubt-edly helped to stimulate public enthusiasm. More representative of the new climate, perhaps, were the payments for printing in 1802 and the £124 5s. 3d. spent on 'advertisements' in 1830. Handbills, addresses, ballads and squibs all circulated freely, popularising the major national issues and satirising opponents, and supplemented the steady flow of comment and reports in the newspapers. Nevertheless it was the influence of the press which most clearly distinguished electioneering in Kent after 1768 from that of earlier decades. Very little was written in the Kentish Post during 1734 and 1754 about county or borough politics, and in the latter year,>the same addresses appeared month after month between the nomination and the poll. With the Wilkite and Association episodes, the Kentish press assumed a new stature, and in the four-month campaign of 1790 every edition carried
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columns of letters and verses from the rival camps. National papers were also widely read in Kent and were useful in reaching a scattered electorate. Lord Mahon had recognised this in 1782, and in 1802 Honywood expended sums ranging from £1 11s. 6d. to

1 For examples of election verse see Kentish Gazette, 16-20 and 20-23 Apr. 1790.

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£6 16s. 6d. upon the Morning; Post, the Morning Chronicle, the Morning Advertiser, the Sunday Review, the Courier and the English Chronicle.

II

Even the briefest survey of Kentish electioneering in the
late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries thus makes it abundantly plain that voters were neither ignorant of, nor unable to respond to, local and national affairs. Consequently, there is a sense in which public opinion was, as E. P. Thompson 1
has said in a different context, 'present at its own making 1. Contemporaries knew it existed and were aware of its potential. Lord Shelburne, for one, predicted: 'Public opinion ohce set free acts like the sea>never ceasing, controlling imperceptibly and irresistibly both laws and ministers of laws, both reducing and

2 advancing everything to its own level.' And at a Rochester

meeting on 15 December 1818, called to celebrate the 'triumph
of public principle1 •as represented! in the recent election of
W. P. Honywood, Major Torrens' thoughts ran on a similar theme: We live in difficult and dangerous times. While the
spread of knowledge, and the temper of the age, demand
a gradual relaxation of political monopoly, and the adop-
tion of more liberal sentiments in the administration of
public affairs, the Ministers of this country set them-
selves up to resist all change, and with ignorant and
impotent arrogance attempt to decree, that political in-stitutions shall not improve with the growing improvement
of the world. It is impossible that this unnatural state
of things should last.
But how exactly was it that public opinion was changed from a sporadic outburst of popular indignation or rejoicing, with only temporary significance, into a daily political reality to be cultivated and feared by Governments and Oppositions alike? The answer seems to lie in the economic and social developments of that crucial and formative period bounded by the Middlesex elec-1 E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Glass (new edn., London, 1968), p. 9-
2 Lord E. Fitzmaurice, Life of William, Earl of Shelburne, after-wards First Marquis of Lansdowne, with extracts from his" papers and correspondence (.London, 1873). iii. 498.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 5 Jan. 1819.

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tion. and the Reform Bill of 1832.
Two factors demand precedence - the growth of the population,
and the impact of London. Although relatively untouched by the Industrial Revolution, Kent's population increased from 308,077 in 1801, to 368,350 in 1811, 426,016 in 1821 and to 478,028 in

1 1831. Such a dramatic rise, of more than half inside thirty

years, could not be sustained by any society without severe conse-quences. Long-standing social bonds were torn asunder and a stimulous given to those improvements in transport and communi-cations to be discussed later. The appearance of a newly prosper-ous middle class and a landless poor tipped the balance of urban and rural life, and in their different ways hastened the passage of political reform. One reason for this striking population growth was the proximity of the metropolis and its expansion
into the county's north-western hundreds. Honied men and others familiar with the values of city life were increasingly anxious to escape from the smoky and crowded streets of London, and very often found retreat amid the leafy lanes of Charlton, Lee and Eltham. Young and ambitious Kentishmen, on the other hand, in-spired with hazy dreams of wealth and rank, flocked to the City or to Southwark, and it became customary for those upon whom fortune smiled to return to their native parts and assume the
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trappings of gentility. Innovations in the style of manners, dress and thought were thus reflected more rapidly in Kent than in less fluid communities, and could hardly fail to find eager ,. acceptance among the rising classes of merchants, bankers and tradesmen in the boroughs and principal market towns.
While Kent's geographical position facilitated an easy intercourse with the ways of government and society in London, its' ports, its busy highways and its natural amenities constantly threw the population into contact with a stream of travellers.

1 W. Page (ed.), The Victoria History of the County of Kent (London 1908), iii. 258-70.

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For Hasted, such an acquaintance with 'foreigners of all nations' meant that 'the inhabitants are more open and liberal-minded than others, who seldom, if ever, find an opportunity of conversing beyond their neighbouring district, or with any but their own
•^

countrymen.' In early-modern times, the road system in Kent had generally followed the chalk uplands from London to Canterbury and thence to Dover, with only two routes crossing the clay of the Weald. Acts of 1555 and 1563 made maintenance the responsi-bility of individual parishes, and it was not until the seven-teenth century that a rate was levied to pay full-time road-repairers in place of the always inadequate practice of compul-
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sory day labour. Even in 1801, however, a member of the Wood-gate family was complaining of the roads that, 'they are so in-tolerably bad that it will be impossible for me to attempt getting to Broad Oak'; and was able to recall how, in the not too distant past, 'it was customary for the Spring Grove V/oodgates to send out a wagon in advance with a number of faggots to repair the

5 worst places when they went out to dine in the winter. 1 never-

theless, the eighteenth century had afforded some relief to those who wished to travel for business or pleasure. Kent's first turnpike was established in 1709 and was quickly succeeded by another on the Dover Road in 1?11- The people of Maidstone petitioned the Commons early in 1?69, asserting that the road from their town to Borden and Bobbing was in a 'ruined condition, and cannot be effectually repaired and widened without the Aid
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and Assistance of Parliament' - which was duly given. A few years later, petitions were presented which sought to extend the powers of former turnpike acts and thereby further improve the

1 Hasted, i. 3-
2 E. Helling (ed.), Kentish Sources I; Some Roads and Bridges (Kent County Council, 1959), pp. vii and 1-2.
3 Woodgete, op. cit., P- 359-
4 Horn. Jour., xxxii. 152.

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highways between Farnborough and Riverhill and Rochester and
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Maidstone. Meetings, like that held at the Dog and Bear in Lenham on 19 November 1792 to advocate a turnpike from Maidstone

2 to Ashford and Hamstreet , became a common occurrence in which

gentlemen, farmers and tradesmen participated with equal enthusi-asm. The benefits of cheaper and swifter transport, as of the widening and paving of streets in Dover, Rochester, Canterbury and Sandwich, were legion, and helped greatly to enhance the economic and social progress of all classes.
Other improvements in communications complemented and diver-sified the advantages gained from an expanding road network.
The economic potential of Ramsgate harbour was much increased during the second half of the eighteenth century by the removal

3 of sand to permit the reception of larger vessels. An act of

parliament allowed John Hooker to make the Hedway navigable from Maidstone to Tonbridge by means of eleven locks, and from 174-0 until about 1830 his Medway Navigation Company was a thriving local business. Canals, too, were projected, but encountered stiff opposition. The canalisation of the Medway was held up
by local vested interests for over a century-^, while John Cal-craft described as 'farcical 1 a scheme to link Northfleet, Wool-wich and Chatham with Portsmouth by a Grand Southern Canal, and argued that Croydon should be made the terminus in order to save 1,4-00 acres of precious land. In the end the enterprise failed, as did another for a Weald of Kent Canal; but it was not long before transport entered its most revolutionary phase. In 1824-

1 Com. Jour., xxxiv. 20 and 69-70.
2 Kentish Gazette, 21 Dec. 1792.
3 J- Smeaton. ArTHlstorical Report on Ramsgate Harbour Ordered by and Addressed to, the trustees (London, 1791j, passim.
4 F. Chapman, The Book of Tonbridge: the Story of the Town'"s Past (Chesham, 1976J, pp. 75-5-
5 T. S. Willan, River Navigation in England, 1600-1730 (new London, 1964-), pp. 15-18.
6 Parl. Deb., 1st Ser. xix. 757-9.

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a correspondent in the Kentish Gazette expressed himself 'quite charmed 1 with the proposed 'Rail Road 1 between Canterbury and Whitstable, 'because I see in prospective the great advantage and convenience that will result to the public from its immediate

1 adoption 1. Passengers did not travel along the line until 1830,

yet in the long-run his expectations were amply fulfilled.
If the coming of the railway and the associated growth of population and industry did not transform towns like Tonbridge
and Ashford until after 1840, a start had at least been made during our period. Quicker and less troublesome communications prompted men to travel, and for those with leisure and money to spend, Kent had much to offer. That this was so, is demonstrated by the proliferation in the late eighteenth century of local and county guides and handbooks. Excursions were mapped out, antiquities, houses and landscapes described, and potted histories and biogra-phies supplied to beguile the journey. A favourite Kentish resort to attract this sort of treatment was Tunbridge Wells, whose restorative waters had been discovered by Lord North in the early

2 seventeenth century. At first the spa was frequented mainly by

the county gentry, but under the supervision of Beau Nash it rose to rival even Bath as a centre of fashionable pleasure. The Prince of Wales was a visitor in Defoe's day, Prince Frederick was there in 1739, and in 1765 the Dukes of Gloucester and York were among the .company, while in later years the Regent regularly took the waters.^ In 1780 the official guide painted an enticing picture: The place itself is now in a very flourishing state, with
a great number of good houses for lodgings, and all nec-
essary accommodation for company; its customs are settled,
its pleasures regulated, its markets and all other conveni-
ences fixed, and the whole very properly adapted to the
nature of a place, which is at once designed to give healtk
and pleasure to all its visitants.

1 Kentish Gazette, 19 Nov. 1824.
2 The Tunbrid^e"Wells Guide (Tunbridge Wells, 1780), pp. 5-6.
3 See account in D. Defoe, A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain, ed. P. Rogers (London, 1971), pp.
L\. The Tunbridge Wells Guide, p. 44.

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Other Kentish towns were not slow to recognise the lucrative

possibilities of tourism. The waters at Lewisham were being ac-
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claimed in 1681 , and a century later, temperate air and a spa
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were drawing men to Bromley. The cathedrals and ruins at Canter-

bury and Rochester had long been the object of pilgrimage, and in

the eighteenth century were constantly visited by families and parties of travellers along with the docks at Chatham and the fortifications at Dover. Kent was also well-endowed when sea-

bathing became popular during George Ill's reign. Some attempt to capitalise on the new fashion seems to have been made at Graves-

end. A bath-house was erected in 1796, part of the beach was ac-

quired, and bathing machines could be hired at a guinea for the

season, ten shillings a month or a shilling a time. A venture

of more lasting success was the development of Herne Bay. Until

the establishment of a small military post in 1796 began to attract curious sight-seers, St. Nicholas's Bay in the parish of Herne was

the haunt of seagulls, a few fishermen, and the occasional hoy in time of storm. Under the patronage of Lady Hales and her Canter-

bury friends, however, the bay was transformed, and by 1830 had assumed something of its now familiar guise. In 1817 Horn's Des-

cription of Dover proclaimed proudly:

The delightful situation of Dover, the purity of the air,
and the advantages of a fine beach for bathing, has caused
this place to be much frequented in the bathing season;
and it now promises to be one of the most fashionable
watering places in the kingdom.7

1 J. Peter, A Treatise of Lewisham Wells in Kent, showing the Time and Manner of their Discovery, the Minerals with which
they are Impregnated, the Several Diseases Experience hath
found them good for, with Directions for the Use of them (IGS'T).
2 T. Wilson, An Accurate Description of Bromley in Kent (London, 1797), PP. 23 and 25.
3 See F. Hull (ed.), 'A Tour through Kent in 1735', and 'A Tour into Kent in 1759', in M. Roake and J. Whyman (eds.), Essays in Kentiah History (London, 1973), pp. 171-84 and 185-92; and
F. Hull (ed.;, 'A Kentish Holiday, 1823', A.G., Ixxxi. (1967), 109-17-

4 Kentish Gazette, 11-15 June 1790, 'STIMULUS' seems to be refer-ring to Folkestone.
5 The History of the Incorporated Town and Parishes of Gravesend and Milton in the County of Kent (London, 1797). p. 19.
6 The Visitors Guide to Herne Bay (London, 1859), pp. 1-9.
7 Horn's Description of Dover (Dover, 1817), pp. 1-2.

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But, even before the advent of the railways, the most renowned of the Kentish resorts were Margate and Ramsgate. Margate became popular among the gentry soon after 1760, when the trip from London could be accomplished for 2/6d. by sea, or by road via
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Canterbury for 16/6d. By the 1820's a steamboat service had been instituted, and visits by Caroline, Princess of Wales, and her daughter had raised its prestige high among a 'great number

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of nobility and persons of fashion'. As at Dover, the delights of a 'pure and salubrious air 1 and a level sandy coastline, were combined with balls and card-parties to entertain a large company, and it was soon found necessary to undertake extensive building work. The Lord Warden was closely involved in a project to erect
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some 'handsome houses' at Dover , while in Margate, Cecil Square was begun as early as 1769 and was soon followed by Harley Square and Assembly Rooms 'of the Ionic order, with Venetian windows,

4. entableture and cornice'.

Penetration from outside did much to widen the horizons of Kentishmen and to cultivate a deeper understanding of national problems and attitudes. It is also instructive, however, to examine those means by which news and ideas were circulated among the indigenous population. For the sons of the aristocracy, West-minster or Eton, one of the Universities, and perhaps the Grand Tour was the natural initiation into life. But within the county itself were a number of Free Grammar schools which acted 'to diffuse a taste for the polite literature of Athens and Rome 1 and 'to afford to the gentry, the clergy, the liberal professions, and in particular, the middle ranks of society, the means and advan-tages of an education at once pious, solid and comprehensive 1.

1 W. C. Oulton, Picture of Margate and its Vicinity (London, 1820), p. 30.
2 Ibid., p. 41; and Hall's New Margate and Ramsgate Guide (Margate, nd.), p.~"§T
3 Horn's Description of Dover (Dover, 1819), p. 27.
i\. Hall's New Margate and Ramsgate Guide, p. 9; and Excursions in the County of Kent (London, 1822), p. 10$.
5 A Concise History of Eonbridge School (London, 1827), p. 5.

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A school was founded at Tonbridge in 1553 by Sir Andrew Judde

of the London Skinners' Company, and long retained its ties with

the City. Under the eye of the noted scholar and divine, the

Rev. Vicesimus Knox, who succeeded his father as Head Master in
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1778, Tonbridge reached the height of its popularity, and in due

course of time his son James became the first old-boy to obtain

the headship. 1 The King's School fulfilled the same role in

2 Canterbury , while between 1764 and 1777 another ex-pupil, the

Rev. William Polhill, did much to expand the facilities, repu-•7.
tation and social basis of Maidstone Grammar School.^

Among humbler electors and the unenfranchised in town and

country, Dr. Money has left us in no doubt of the importance of

taverns, coffee-houses, theatres and book-clubs in disseminating 4.

knowledge and fostering joint political activity. The Fountain

and the King's Head at Canterbury, the Star at Maidstone and a

host of smaller inns and ale-houses were the most common venue

for public meetings during elections, while in London each group

of non-residents had its own favourite rendezvous. Most Kentish

market towns had a book-seller , and an increasing number could

boast a library. Margate had four libraries by the 1820's, at

each of which the metropolitan papers were available; at Dover

Mr. Ledger was proprietor of the Albion Library and Mr. Horn
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kept the Apollo ; and in 1796 John Gale Jones visited a circu-

7 lating library owned by 'a friend of reform 1.' Such institutions

1 Ibid., pp. 4-9-54.
2 D. L. Edwards, A-History of King's School, Canterbury (London, 1957), P- 114.
3 F. Streatfield, An Account of the Grammar School in the King's Town and Parish of Maidstone in Kent (Oxford, 1913), PP. 71-27
4 J. Money,'Taverns, Coffee Houses and Clubs: Local Politics and Popular Articulacy in the Birmingham Area in the Age of
the American Revolution', Hist. Jour., xiv. (1971), 15-47.
5 See list of booksellers in Kentish Gazette, 20 Hay 1796.
6 Horn's Description of Dover (Dover, 1817), p. 24.
7 J. Gale Jones, Sketch of a Political Tour through Rochester T Chatham, Maidstone, Gravesend, etc, including Reflections on
the Tempers and Dispositions of the Inhabitants of those Places, and of the Progress of the Societies Instituted for the Pur-
pose of Obtaining a Parliamentary Reform CLondon, 179bj, p.26.
On the amenities at Canterbury, see Hasted, xi. 101.

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1 helped distribute American and French revolutionary tracts ,
while files of newspapers in clubs and coffee-shops enabled many of the poorer readers to keep abreast of recent news and comment. Probably most important of all in the creation of Kentish
public opinion was the growth of the newspaper press, both in London and locally. Newspapers made their faltering appearance in England during the latter decades of the seventeenth century, 2
and were widely employed in the bitter conflict of Anne's reign. However, it was not until the tail-end of the constitutional crisis, in 1?17» that James Abree, a Canterbury printer, founded 7.

The Kentish Post, or Canterbury News Letter. The Kentish Post generally gave moderate support to the Walpole ministry, although as the county's only paper, it could not afford to adopt ^n ex-treme position on contentious issues like the Excise and Jew Bills if sales were to be maintained. Apart from the columns
of advertisements, its contents were culled chiefly from the metropolitan press, and throughout its fifty-year history very little space was devoted to reports or comment on specifically

Zj. Kentish affairs. By 1768 the Kentish Post had become, as Mr.

Eaton has observed, 'to all intents and purposes apolitical 1 -?; and it is therefore no real surprise to discover that, when
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Abree f s former partner,George Kirkby^ joined James Simmons in establishing the Kentish Gazette, the moribund parent was soon incorporated into its more vigorous off-spring.
1768 was, in fact, a landmark in the development of the
1 For example, C. C. Bonwick, 'An English Audience for American Revolutionary Pamphlets', Hist. Jour., xix. (1976), 367.
2 See R. B. Walker, 'The Newspaper Press in the Reign of William III 1, Hist. Jour., xvii. (1974), 691-709; and J.A. Downie,
Robert Harle.y and the Press: Propaganda and Public^Opinion in the Age of Swift and Defoe (Cambridge, 1979), passim.
3 For much of the following information I am indebted to K. J. Eaton, 'Newspapers and Politics in Canterbury and Maidstone, 1815-1850: Opinion in the Kentish Town 1, (Univ. of Kent M.A. thesis 1972), chap. 2.
4- G. A. Cranfield, The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, 1700-60 (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 19, 28, 117 and 124.
5 Eaton, op. cit., p. 20.

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Kentish press, since it witnessed the birth of two newspapers which were to operate throughout our period. James Simmons was
a man of steadfast "bory views, and under his management the

1 Kentish Gazette remained a 'staunch supporter 1 of such principles.

The Kentish Weekly Post, which became the Canterbury Journal in 1770, on the other hand, was avowedly sympathetic to Opposition, and championed the movements led by Wilkes and Wyvill. In 1788 it was taken over by William Bristow, and as the Kentish Chronicle continued to pursue a distinctly whiggish line, until in the altered circumstances of 1792 it succumbed to the loyal sentiments of the nation. Both papers nerved Canterbury and the eastern parts of the county, but it was not until 1786 that John Blake founded the tory Maidstone Journal to meet the needs of the west-ern division. A Maidstone Mercury had failed after twenty-five issues in 1725} send in 1737 a Maidstone Journal managed just three editions before its collapse. Yet by the late 1780's the public's appetite for news had increased sufficiently to sustain Blake's enterprise despite the proximity of London and its many presses.

As Professor Christie has pointed out, the early nineteenth

p century saw a great expansion in the newspaper industry. Kent was no exception to this nationwide trend, since by 1830 the three journals already mentioned had been supplemented by John Saffray's more radical Kentish Herald at Canterbury in 1802, by the tory Maidstone Gazette in 1815, and by the Rochester Gazette in 1821. After Simmons 1 death in 1807, the Kentish Gazette assumed an open attachment to the party of government; the Kentish Chronicle returned to a more liberal stance at about the same time; while even the Maidstone Journal exhibited greater

1 Ibid., p. 21.
2 I. R. Christie, 'British Newspapers in the .Later Georgian Age 1, in Myth and Reality in Late-Eighteenth-Century British Poli-
tics and Other Papers (London, 1970)1 PP- 311-55.

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concern for politics when John Vine Hall took on the reins in 1814. Two twice-weekly papers and four weekly publications was a far cry from the days of the Kentish Post, when even the circu-lation of a single twice-weekly journal was regarded as something rather exceptional.'1
In May 1785 the printer of the Kentish Gazette observed that:
. . . the spirit and excellence of a Country Newspaper con-
sists in communicating to the Public, with the utmost
despatch, the County Business contained in the Advertise-
ments, ...and the State of the Markets, the Parliamentary Debates, with-other national occurrences both Foreign
and Domestic.

It was a formula to which the Kentish press adhered with conspicu-ous success well beyond 1832. Nevertheless, as the nineteenth century progressed politics acquired ever more significance. The patronage of pro- and anti-reformers in 1832 enabled the Kent Herald and the Kentish Gazette respectively to sell 66,000 and 39,000 copies of each edition*, while it may be that the Kentish Chronicle f s unpopular views on Catholic Emancipation led to its financial difficulties and contraction. Letters, reports and literary effusions had long been educating the public conscious-ness, and when the Kent Herald pioneered the practice of printing comments on the week's news, the old-style printer emerged from his chrysalis as the modern editor -and tutor of the populace.
And having read, Kentishmen could act. Just how far this process had developed by the early nineteenth century may be gauged by looking in detail at the crisis and elections of 1806-7.

Ill

Once the Peace of Amiens had collapsed-, it was inevitable that sooner or later Addington would fall; and it was equally certain

1 Cranfield, op. cit., p. 196.
2 Kentish Gazette, 11-14- ^iay 1?85-
3 Eaton, op. cit., pp. 36 and 4-3-
4- I. Asquith, 'Advertising in the Press in the j_,ate Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: James Perry and the Morning Chronicle, 1790-1821', Hist. Jour., xviii. (1975;, 709-16.
5 A. AsDinerll, Politics and the Press. 1780-1830 (London,
P. 350.

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that when he did so, he would be replaced by Pitt. Hence when Pitt died late in January 1806, the King seemed to have been left in toils. George III had vetoed Fox in 1804, but now he had apparently little choice but to accept the coalition of Lord Gren-ville and the v/higs. The story of British politics under the
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Ministry of all the Talents' has been often told. In opposition, the Pittites were divided; ' with on the one hand) Perceval, Castle-reagh and Hawkesbury, and on the other ilose end. Canning. Both groups looked to Grenville as their natural leader and spent many

p fruitless hours in negotiating a return to office. Government and its supporters were no more united. It was hard enough for Grenville to agree with his former opponents of the 1790' s, but the need to satisfy Whitbread and his radical friends and the con-servative Addingtonians as well, meant that few achievements were recorded in the sphere of policy. When at last it was decided to throw open commissions in the army and navy in England to cathol-ics and dissenters, the King objected, and demanded that a pledge be given never to attempt such a measure in the future. Ministers refused, resigned, and were replaced at the end of March 1807 by the Duke of Portland and the Tories.
The exploits of George III, the 'Talents' and the Pittites
were fully reported in the Kentish press, and on two occasions electors had an opportunity to make their voices heard. Weakened 5
by the death of Fox , and perhaps despairing at the state of talks

1 See, for example, P. Ziegler, Addinston; A Life of Henry Adding-ton First Viscount Sidmouth (London, 1965), pp. 250-69; E.A.
Smith, Whig principles and party .politics; Earl Fitzwilliam and the Whig party, 174-8-1833 (Manchester, 1973), PP. 284-98: A.P. Harvey, Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century (London, 1978), pp. 171-96; M* Roberts, 'The Fall of the Talents, March 1807', Eng. Hist. Rev., 1. (1935), 61-77; and A.D. Harvey, 'The Minis-try of All the Talents: The V/higs in Office, February 1806 to Furch 1807', Hist. Jour., xv. (1972), o19-48.
2 J. R. McQuiston^'Rose and Canning in Opposition, 1806-1807' Hist. Jour., xiv. (1971), 593-15 and 520-6.
3 See Fox's obituary notices in Kentish Chronicle, 19 Sept. 1806 and Maidstone Journal, 23 Sept. 1806.

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with Canning, Grenville determined upon an appeal to the country to bolster his majority. However the campaigning which got under way in Kent at the end of October 1806, although adequately covered in the press, lacked an issue with which to fire the imagination of voters. Events in Westminster were never lost sight of, but
in general the picture was one of Government using its influence to return supporters, and where this was not possible, of local politicians attending to their own interests. Nevertheless the election does reveal much about Kentish politics at the half-way point in our period, and when contrasted with that of 180?^ indi-cates just how easily public opinion could be aroused.
At New Romney the Bering interest was as strong as it had
ever been. In 1792 Oldfield had noted how Sir Edward Bering's agents, Mr. Coates and Mr. Walker, held the mayoralty in alter-nate years, and remarked that: "The number of places in the possession of Sir Edward's friends, and their relations, renders

1 the return of treasury candidates an indispensable duty 1. In

1816, when the electorate had dwindled to a mere eight, the same author could still write:
Sir Gholmondely Dering has, by a very simple method,
possessed himself of an influence in this port, not easi-
ly to be rendered insecure. His property in the neigh-
bourhood is tenanted out, without lease, at very easy
rents, to the electors; who, feeling that gratitude
which never fails to inspire those immediately interes-
ted in the present possession of a good thing, could not
be so ungenerous as to oppose the inclination of a passive landlord in so trifling a aoncern as that of the election
of a member of Parliament.
In 1806 the Dering partiality for ministerialists and City gold was reflected in the return of William Windham and John Pering. Neither was any opposition offered to the election of Samuel Romilly and William Frankland at Queenborough. Oldfield was to

1 T. H. B. Oldfield, An Entire and Complete ^ History , Political and Personal, of the Boroughs of Great Britain CLondon. 1792^ , iii. 70 and 71-

2 T. H. B. Oldfield, The Representative History of Great Britain and Ireland; with the History of the House of Commons, and of thft flovrntlfta . . Ci" •\e?i ™<j '^r'Hishn. gf the United Kingdom ,
rrom the iiiarlie.^; Ti I JJJT(London; 1 §: T577^Fr"zPOf: ————— ——

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estimate in his later survey that of the borough's 131 electors, eleven were employed by the Admiralty and twenty-three by the Ordnance, that seven were navy officers and one was in the artil-lery, and that fourteen or fifteen worked on the gun wharfs at Sheerness and Purfleet. Hence, as he concluded, Government had returned the H.P.s 'for the last sixteen years, by the mere power of 6'ffice, in opposition to the corporation, and to the influence
XI

of the Evans family' . This monopoly persisted for another twenty years after 1806, but it was never as absolute as at New Romney. The Admiralty was also strong at Sandwich, but could not
retrieve the seat lost to the independent party in 1790. After thirty-eight years of unbroken service, Sir Philip Stephens chose 1806 to announce his retirement from public life. He was re-placed in the government seat by Thomas Francis Freemantle, a connection of the Grenville family, who was unanimously nominated,

p together with Sir Horace Mann, at a Common Assembly on 23 October. Such a happy compromise was not arranged at Rochester, where,
as the Kentish Chronicle commented: 'A volume would not contain
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all the incidents of this extraordinary contest'. The paper then went on to explain how: 'Two parties of Rochester, whose lives have been spent in mutual animosity 1 had come together in
a 1 virtuous league' to defeat Sir Sidney Smith. On the one hand, Smith was opposed by that 'body of opulent freemen 1 known locally as the 'Family Compact 1 which owed its wealth to ministerial pat-ronage, and on the other by the so-called 'Parr's Head, or Jaco-binical party' whose strength had been steadily increasing since 1?68. With the gallant admiral absent on active service, his friends fought a hesitant campaign and for a time even put for-4.

ward T. B. Thbmpson in his place , while as a regular Pittite,

1 Oldfield, Representative History, iv. 79 and 80.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 28 Oct. 1806. For addresses, Kentish Chronicle, 31 Oct. 1806. —————

3 The following paragraph is based on Kentish Chronicle. 14 Nov 1806. ————————————— 4- Kentish Chronicle, 28 Oct. 1806.

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Smith was a prime target for the new whig Lords of the Admiralty. In addition, he seems to have fallen victim to the political and mercenary ambitions of the borough's electorate and its desire for a third man. One opponent was John Calcraft, the son of the city's former Ghathamite M.P., who appealed to the 'independent spirit' of the voters in the hope of assuming the mantle of his
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'worthy friend' James Hulkes. Calcraft seems to have claimed that he appeared in Rochester well disposed to Sir Sidney, and that he only shifted his allegiance when he discerned the temper of the borough. However Denis O'Bryen, when speaking on behalf of the admiral, accused Galcraft of having schemed for six months to oust the sitting Member. The other candidate, who had arrived so late upon the scene, was James Barnett. In his address of thanks, Barnett revealed that he had been encouraged to stand by men with 'expressions of their firm attachment to the Government, so congenial with my own sentiments'; and rejoiced 'to have been the instrument by which you have had the opportunity of asserting your independence in the exercise of your own free and uninflu-enced choice'.
The victory of Galcraft and Barnett over Sir Sidney Smith
shows clearly that electoral power in Rochester was still divided between ministers and radicals, although they would not again make common cause until 1831. The fact is most strikingly borne out by a breakdown of the voting figures which reveals the extent of cross-voting between the supporters of the successful candi-
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dates. Of the 382 votes cast for Smith^165 were plumpers, whereas Calcraft's 575 votes and Barnett's 393 votes only included 24 and 5
18 plumpers respectively. The corporation emphasised its strength by creating 4-9 new freemen only a few days before the

1 D.N.B., viii. 237-8. For addresses,Kentish Chronicle, 28 Oct 1806. '——— 2 Kentish Chronicle, 18 Nov. 1806.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 11 Nov. 1806.

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poll began, while a potential electorate of possibly 800 offered great scope for bribery and tumult. The 1806 election marked Rochester out as an expensive borough, and it was to be expected that Smith's friends should resort to a petition. However on
2 March 180? this was rejected by the Commons' committee, which at the same time confirmed the franchise in the hands of the whole
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freeman body.
The only other Kentish borough in which Government might
expect to exert a direct influence was Dover, where a large number of freemen included many non-residents. The earliest sur-viving poll-book reveals that of the 1,70? persons who voted in 1826, 1,06? were in-dwellers and 64-0 out-voters. 2 Dover closely resembled Rochester insofar as it was an expensive constituency and had sustained an independent interest since the days of t/ilkes However the unique circumstances of 1806 did not produce in the Cinque Port,the return of a Whig and a radical.
On grounds of the probable cost and pressing commitments,
J. S. Smith declined to recontest the borough, and recommended - every friend to the freedom of election to assist John Jackson,
a man 'possessing ample means of defending his pretentions 1.^ Jackson was 'a commercial man 1 who pledged 'a strict attention to your commands', and likened himself to 'the Citadel planted on your commanding heights immovably determined to guard your privi-leges and preserve your rights'.^ Charles Jenkinson on the other hand, took up the cudgels wielded by his 'very worthy and good friend 1 William Huskisson in 1802.
If [he declared) the most profound veneration for the
memory of that great Statesman with whom you were so near
ly and particularly connected, and a determination to
support those principles of Government, by which this
country, though surrounded by perils and difficulties

1 Com. Jour., Ixii. 28 and 193. Of. Appendix to 1806 poll-bonk 2 Dover poll-book, 1826, p. 55. pO11 book - 3 Kentish Chronicle, 31 Oct. 1806.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 28 and 31 Oct. 1806.

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unexampled in our history, has been under his auspices
maintained in its present state of security and prosperity,
are any title to your favor, (sic.) no individual in these kingdoms entertains these sentiments more warmly than my-
self. '
Memories of the 1790's and old associations obviously died hard, for in a large poll Jackson and Jenkinson squeezed out Trevanion. Elsewhere, there was a similar lack of specifically national issues. As in 1802 y Canterbury was uncontested, and returned, almost without comment, two independents - John Baker and James
p oimmons. But more than a thousand electors would not remain impassive for much longer. At Maidstone the municipal in-fighting, which had bred contests at every election since 1715> had departed only slightly from the balance of forces established in the early 1780's. One party was identified by Oldfield in 1792 as that led by the late Mr. Brenchly,. a brewer and partner in a Southwark bank, whose aim it was 'to compliment the minister with the nomination of its members 1; while the other, 'equally zealous in maintaining the independence of its constitutional rights' ad-hered to Clement I1 ay lor. However Oldfield did see hope for the popular cause at Maidstone. 'The death of Mr. Brenchly/ he thought, ' has considerably weakened the ministerial interest, and it is not improbable, but at another election, it may shake off the trammels of government dictation entirely 1. Nearly a quarter of a century later, these predictions had not been fulfilled. 'This borough' wrote Oldfield in the familiar manner, 'is divided into a ministerial and opposition party; the former generally
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prevails in returning the members'. In 1806.Sir Matthew 31oxam was defeated by the whiggish George ^ongman and the more conserva-tive George Simson, but there are grounds for supposing that in
a borough where seats retailed at ^5,000 to ^5,000, his Pittite

1 Kentish Chronicle, 28 Oct. 1306.
2 For addresses, Kentish Chronicle, 28 and 31 Oct. 1806.
3 Oldfield, History of the Boroughs, ii. 158 and 159.
4 Oldfield, Representative History, iv. 76.

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1 stance counted for less than the length of his purse.

At Hythe, where neither minister nor patron had. recaptured
the influence of the Sackvilles, the local gentry were again em-broiled in a contest. Oldfield had written in his earlier work that: 'The interest amongst the electors, is nearly equally divi-ded between government and Mr. Evelyn, one of the present members'; and had lamented that in its 'present debilitated form 1, the representation did not permit the consolidation of an independent interest. Nevertheless, the effects of Crewe's Act, the scarcity of ministerial places, and the retirement of Evelyn in 1802, threw Hythe politics into a confusion from which it did not escape until 1820. In 1806, Viscount Marsham, Thomas Godfrey and Matthew white all reappeared, and having severally canvassed the borough,

each was confident of success. On this occasion.polling went in / favour of Marsham and Godfrey, with the latter surviving the inevitable petition.
Finally, in the county, came on the fourth and last of the
great disputed elections. Nomination day was 3 November, and at once Thomas Hallett Hodges launched a bitter attack on the state of national politics.
If ever there was a time [he exclaimed] when the sordid
views of party were prevalent, it was never more &o than
at the present moment, odious and disgusting as they were
to every honest mind, and every feeling of just indepen-
dence.
The premature dissolution showed 'how much there was to be feared from party measures'; so that Hodges warmly recommended the ever independent Sir William Geary. Geary himself agreed that 'party animosity ran high'; and stoutly denied that he was about to Join one of his opponents.

1 Bloxam petitioned on grounds of bribery and corruption, but was unsuccessful, Com. Jour., Ixii. 22 and 151.
2 Oldfield, History of the troughs, iii. 65.
3 For addresses Kentish Chronicle, 28 Oct. 1806.
4- Pom. Jour., Ixii. $6 and 67.
5 For reportr Kentish Gazette, 4 Nov. 1806.

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I will not take the opinion of government, or of oppositioo
I will not act on the opinion of any man, or of any party,
but the opinion of a Representative of the County of Kent:
- My own opinion shall be my guide.
Geary was resolved to fight, on,whatever the cost, but there
was a move afoot to arrange some sort of compromise. Sir Edward Knatchbull, though undoubtedly eager to regain his seat, offered to stand aside if by so doing he could preserve the peace of the county. He might not have been so compliant had he read a letter addressed by Lord Howick to Lord Grenville on 25 October:
In my way here I met Lord Thanet, who had just left a
meeting of the Kentish people. They intend to support
Lord Marsham in conjunction with Honywood, if Lord Romney's previous engagements do not stand in their way. If Lord
Marsham stands for the county* some other candidate will be proposed on the same interest for Hythe. I thought it necessary to mention this in consequence of what passed
this morning about Sir William Geary, as you will probably
think it right to suspend any determination about their
second candidate till this,.is settled. Any thing will
be better than Knatchbull.

The Honywood in question was Capt. William Honywood.who claimed to share the same principles as his retiring brother, while the 'independent' Lord Marsham was the son of the Lord Lieutenant. Both men were nominated, Knatchbull withdrew, and a joint candidat ure was proposed by Mr. Hatton. But all did not go smoothly. Geary refused to retire, and a show of hands went in favour of Honywood and himself. Finally, in the evening Marsham announced his retirement, upon which Sir Edward immediately re-entered the lists.
The whole episode is a curious one. Knatchbull and the
Tories had apparently acted in good faith to prevent excessive expenditure, but among their opponents, motives were more ambigu-ous. The 'Talents 1 had no desire to see so staunch a Pittite in the new parliament, and were clearly scheming against his return. Marsham, who on 1 November had been elected at Hythe, probably lost his nerve when a contest threatened to involve his family in expenses far beyond their limited means, while there is a

1 HMC gortescue, viii. 401: Lord Howick to Lord Grenville
25 Oct. 18P6.

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strong suggestion that even Geary's principles were not unshakable After all, he had not scrupled to compromise his independence in 1796, and might have been tempted again. That Government resorted to such back-stairs methods again emphasises its electoral weak-ness in the county, as does the final outcome of the poll. Writing to Viscount Lowther on polling day, Charles Long was convinced that Knatchbull would secure his election ahead of

1 Geary , and events were to prove him correct. The principal topic of debate from the hustings was the Slave Trade, but this was scarcely an issue capable of swaying large numbers of voters, even had the candidates disagreed violently. Sir William Geary de-clared that 'no-one was more anxious for its abolition than himself; and associated his sentiments with those of Wilberforce. Knatchbull felt likewise, and recalled his motion of 1792 for the discontinuance of the trade, while Honywood could only add that in his opinion the trafficking in negroes was 'as disgusting to human nature, as it was disgraceful to Englishmen'. Voting then commenced, and by the end of the second day Geary recognised the futility of going further.

IV

With the rather insignificant exception of the Slave Trade,
no national question was mooted in any of the Kentish constituen-cies during the 1806 campaign. At Dover, Hythe, Maidstone, Roch-ester and in the county> where contests did take place, voters were asked to choose between well-known personalities or local interest groups, and in no instance was the established balance of power departed from. The most remarkable feature of the 1806 returns was the sizeable proportion of new men. Of the eighteen sitting Members at the dissolution, only four were re-elected, five were defeated, and line decided not to stand. The changed complexion of

1 -HJXIC . Lonsdale, p. 201: Charles Long to Viscount Lowther 11 Nov. 1806. Cf. ibid., p. 215: same to same, 24 Oct. 1806 '
2 Kentish Chronicle, 14 Nov. 1806.

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Government undoubtedly accounts for the new faces at Queenborough and New Romney, for Stephens' retirement at Sandwich and Smith's misfortunes at Rochester, and probably lay behind the results at Dover, where political distinctions had temporarily lost their keenness. While for the remainder, the persuasive qualities of newly opened purses and the natural ebb and flow of popularity may be ascribed.
However, the circumstances of Grenville's resignation pre-sented the in-coming Tories with an irresistible opportunity to scatter their beaten enemies and, wherever possible, to reverse - the nominations of the previous year. On 15 May 180? the Kentish Chronicle was claiming that the cry of 'No Popery' was rapidly dying down as people realised that the relief proposed by the 'Talents' was 'infinitely less than the boon granted in Ireland by Lord Westmorland 1. Nevertheless the paper was fully alive to the dangers of so emotive an appeal. It reminded its readers that Burke, Pitt, Ganning, Castlereagh and Portland had all advo-cated Emancipation, and pointed out that even Bishop Pretyman had not opposed the 'Talents' in the Lords. Kentishmen were advised to follow the laudable example of Westminster and the

1 City of London, and not to be deluded by unfounded exaggerations.

Even so, when Parliament was dissolved at the end of April 180? a • section, at least, of the electorate had been roused, and as A. D. Harvey has recently written: 'More than any previous elec-tion, with the sole exception of that of 1784, this was an eleo-' tion fought on a clear national issue. It was the 'No Popery' election 1.
To what extent, then, were the results in Kent attributable
to an inflamed public opinion, and in what ways does the presence or absence of the catholic bogey shed further light on the basic

1 Kentish Chronicle, 15 May 180?.
2 Harvey, Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century, p. 202.

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shape of county politics?
The evidence available for many of the Kentish constituen-
cies tends to recommejid Dr. Harvey's more general reflection, that very often 'voting seemed one thing, public opinion another'; and to emphasise the wisdom of his cautious approach to the over->i

all influence of anti-Catholicism. At New Romney, for example, the Derings were guided by motives far less idealistic than the safety of the British Constitution when replacing Pering and Windham with the Earl of Clonmel and the Hon. George Ashburnham. Likewise, the Kentish Chronicle anticipated that at Queenborough: 'The election is likely to be the longest ever known, owing to the necessary affidavits taken, as proposed by Colonel Chich—

2 ester' ; but there is no reason to believe that Joseph Hunt

and J. C. Villiers, or their challenger, were concerned primarily with religious liberty.
At Rochester, John Calcraft wasted no time before defending
his own conduct and the record of the ministry in which he had

5 served. Having made many references to his father's close

ties with the borough, Calcraft spoke of his recent support for the abolition of the Slave Trade, and described how, during his months at the Ordnance, he had participated in the 'Talents' programme of economy. Finally he attempted to explain Grenville's catholic policy, in a manner which argues a depth of confidence in the strength of Rochester's independent interest to resist the popular retrain. He complained that 'the dust of Popery is thrown in our eyes to blind us against premeditated peculation'; and urged that the Catholic Bill:
was only meant to enable His Majesty to avail himself of
the assistance of the whole of his subjects, and that
the effect intended to be produced by it was simply that
1 Ibid., pp. 43 and 203-
2 Kentish Chronicle, 5 May 180?. 3 Kentish Chronicle, 8 May 180?.

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an office in the army having local rank in Ireland,
should have the same rank and power if conveyed on this
side the water.

Sir T. B. Thompson was a typical Admiralty candidate, while Sir Thomas Trigge, an army officer of fifty years' service and a place-holder at the Ordnance, was critical of the 'Talents' coercion of the King, and believed their much acclaimed economies to be more apparent than real. The nine-day poll, in which 633 of the estimated 800 freemen voted, was hotly contested, but at

1 last Trigge conceded defeat. The Catholic question had been

debated as just one of a series of issues arising from the late ministerial hiatus, and had in no way affected the character of the borough's representation. Thompson regained the safe govern-ment votes which had dutifully returned Galcraft in 1806, and Gal-craft himself simply became the mouth-piece of James Hulkes'

p popular party.
As usual, Hythe was in a frenzied whirl. Thomas Godfrey was
a candidate, as were J. W. H. Brydges and Matthew White. Viscount Marsham's retirement brought Thomas Plummer into the field with
a pledge to uphold 'equally the Prerogative of the Grown, the Rights of the People, and especially the Interests and Privileges of your ancient Town and Port'; while in his turn, Lord Whit-worth professed:
a determined and inflexible adherence to those great constitutional principles, to aid him in the defence
whereof our best of Sovereigns has now called fop the
support of his grateful and affectionate people.
When Whitworth (who had married the widow of the third Duke of Dorset) appeared, Brydges immediately withdrew, but when his lordship himself retreated ®oon afterwards, it was William Deedes 4.

who leapt in to fill the gap , much to the annoyance of the

1 Kentish Chronicle, 12 May 1807-
2 Oldfield, Representative History, iv. 67-8.
3 For addresses Kentish Chronicle, 1 May 1807.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 5 May 1807-

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absent Brydges. Polling day was generally unremarkable, except for the accusation that Plummer had bought his previous constitu-ents, and it may have been for this reason, as much as for any other, that he and his partner White were eventually disappointed. Both Deedes and Godfrey were country gentlemen in theo rthodox mould, and there is no hint that any of the challengers were in-clined to a pro-catholic position. Hence we must conclude that the outcome was decided in the typical eighteenth-century manner. In the county, too, local factors were paramount. Tired of striving, and with bills from 1802 and 1806 still unpaid, the gentlemen of Kent had not the spirit for another tussle. Conse-quently, those freeholders who assembled on Penenden Heath found only two aspirants for their suffrage. Sir Henry Hawley described Knatchbull as 'a man firmly attached to his King, to the Consti-tution, and the Established Protestant Religion of these King-

2 doms 1 ; and in his published address, William Honywood had made the equally definite pronouncement that:
Frequent communications between the Representatives of
the People and their Constituents, I approve; but
national business depending in Parliament, the present dissolutionlcannot therefore approve.
Under different conditions, anti-catholic sentiments in Kent might well have prompted an opposition to an unrepentant Whig like Honywood. But in the prevailing atmosphere of exhaustion this was never even called for.
The attitudes towards the catholics expressed at Maidstone, Dover and Sandwich, where by 1790 one seat had been captured by an independent group, well illustrate how the French Revolution and the war had either upset this balance or drained it of its former radical dynamic. At Maidstone, whose elections were very inadequately reported during these years, expenses were high,

1 For nomination Kentish Chronicle, 8 May 1807.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 15 May 1807.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 1 May 1807.

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and the salt of party conflict seems temporarily to have lost its savour. George Longman, on behalf of the popular interest, promised to support our Established Constitution with firmness
1 and zeal 1 ; and thus, together with the steadfastly conservative Simson, was able to withstand the efforts of the more liberal-minded, but self-confessedly impecunious Sir William Geary. Although absent on active service, the freemen of Sandwich
were assured that the Hon. Charles Cecil Cope Jenkinson (a half-brother of the second Earl of Liverpool) would be 'invariably disposed to use all his exertions in support of our excellent
P Constitution in church and state 1. With ministerial backing, Jenkinson f s election was beyond doubt, but the fate of the other seat was by no means so predictable. Perhaps sensing that after seventeen years his credit with the borough's independents was running perilously low, Sir Horace Mann associated himself with the government man in an appeal to 'all those persons who have a due regard for the welfare of their Sovereign and the security of their church and state 1.* It was not enough, for on 29 April a Sandwich native, Admiral Peter Rainier, had been nominated at a Common Hall, and when the polls closed he had received 124 plumpers and only 47 cross-votes against Mann's 146 cross-votes
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and gust two plumpers. Nevertheless, the new standard-bearer of Sandwich's independence was, like his fellows, pledged to 'exert my utmost endeavours to preserve our excellent Constitution inviolate in Church and State'^; and evinced no more sign of espousing reform than the vanquished Mann.
A few miles along the coast at Dover, a similar struggle was
in progress. Of the ministerialists, the solid Pittite views of

1 Kentish Chronicle, 1 and 5 May 1807.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 1 May 1807.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 1 May 1807.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 12 May 1807.
5 Kentish Chronicle, 1 and 5 May 1807; and Oldfield, Reuresen-tative History, v. 394. ' H ••

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Charles Jenkinson need not be restated, while, as was to be expected, the Hon. Henry Manvers Pierrepont swore 'constant ad-herence to the Principles of our happy Constitution, and the most loyal attachment to the Person and Rights of our Sovereign.' 1
As to John Jackson, who had taken over the role so long played by John Trevanion, he too was enabled to win the applause of a meeting of metropolitan non-residents with a patriotic declar-
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ation , and squeezed home ahead of Pierrepont by six votes. Thus in all three boroughs anti-catholicism emerges as a prerequisite to success, but not a watertight guarantee thereof. Most elec-tors remained wary of change, and their conservatism was to persist for some years to come.
The only partial exception to the rule so far found applic-
able is that afforded by events at Canterbury. The borough had been uncontested in 1802, 1806 and at the by-election early in 1807, but the replacement of the deceased tory proprietor of the Kentish Gazette on the latter occasion, by a committed Foxite. ensured that Portland's snap dissolution would not have a similar scenario. During the first weeks of May a storm of rec-rimination broke about the ears of the sitting Members, S. E. Sawbridge and John Baker, comparable to anything undergone in 1796. Having outlined the manner of the 'Talents' fall and Brand's subsequent motion - which had amounted almost to an attempted censure of George Ill's conduct - one writer in the Kentish Chronicle asked: '...will Mr. Sawbridge's friends then presume to say that in voting for Mr. Brand's resolution, he
did not vote in favour of the Roman Catholics? 1; and was equally critical of the 'cautious neutrality' adopted by Baker in not
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attending the debate. Baker was also under fire from the city's'

1 Kentish Chronicle, 1 May 1807.
2 Ibid.

3 Eaton, op. cit., pp. 20-1.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 1 May 1807.

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independents, who had heard rumours that, fearing the expense of a contest, he had gone to the new ministers 'offering to lay himself bound hand and foot before them, and to give them his unqualified support, if they would not oppose his election. 1
'A LONDON FREEMAN OF CANTERBURY' was even moved by these tidings to declare that 'if the Pope himself in such a case were opposed to Baker, I would give his holiness a vote, if it would keep the
1 other out.'
Sawbridge chose to retire, but justified his vote as being
wholly consistent with his past professions, and deplored 'the shameful introduction of Religious Opinions for Election Pur-

2 poses'. However Baker was not left alone for long. His new

partner was to be Edward Taylor, a local man, who promised 'to maintain inviolate our liberty, laws and religion'. His further declaration of 'attachment to th& King, and to our glorious Consti-tution' was probably deemed obligatory, and was quickly called
in question by 'AN INDEPENDENT FREEMAN' who pointed out that Taylor's family had connections with the Grenvilles.^ There thus existed ample opportunities for a 'Church and King' opposition, which materialised in the persons of S. R. Lushington and R.T.
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Farquhar.
On the hustings, General Harris proposed Lushington, his son-in-law and former secretary in Madras, as a man from an old Kentish family. He had disliked Grenville's decision to be the

* auditor of his own accounts at the Treasury, and disapproved of

the 'Talents' proposal to disband the Volunteers. Above all, he welcomed the King's appeal to the nation, and insisted that Baker had 'connived it the Catholics coming into power'. Farquhar, for twelve years Lieutenant-Governor of the Prince of Wales Island,

1 Kentish Chronicle, 12 May 180?.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 1 and 5 May 1807.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 5 and 8 May 1807.
4- For addresses Kentish Chronicle, 1 May 1807.

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entirely concurred, and denied that any help had been rendered
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towards the Joint campaign by the Treasury. Canvassing was furi-ous and money flowed freely, but after three days Baker and Taylor, with their long-standing local associations, were victorious. Nevertheless the catholic factor had materially affected the result, since, while the new II.P.s had not actually voted for relief, Sawbridge who had, had been forced to quit. Moreover, the fear of popery had breathed new vigour into Canterbury toryism, and ensured its long-term acquisition of one seat.
In conclusion it may be noted that throughout the election, catholic relief was discussed in the press, and was mentioned in every constituency where the electorate had a voice. Yet, although Kentishmen were clearly conscious of this and a whole range of other issues relating to Grenville's short administration, the fact remains that the King's new servants did not make sweeping gains in the county. Public opinion was certainly not as articu-late or as fully developed as it was to become by the 1820's,
but even so, this failure to alter the status quo seems to spring more from the deficiencies of the central question itself. As was to happen again in 1826, anti-catholicism inflamed prejudice and passion but was incapable of achieving positive political progress, and, while it might numb local hostility, never succeed-ed in making lasting converts. Only the quest for reform of Parliament and the system of finance possessed the vitality needed to break old bonds, and within two years this leviathan was stirring from its enforced slumbers.

1 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 12 May 1807. For returns of thanks ibid. 15 and 19 May 180?.

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Chapter Seven
Kentish Society and the Problems of War and Peace
1809 - 1822
'There was little evidence in 1808,' it has been observed,
'that reform commanded great public support or could become the
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key to unlock the door to power 1. The repressive legislation of the 1790's had apparently purged the nation of Jacobins, while since the collapse of the Peace of Amiens, the war against Nap-oleon had been waged more as a patriotic crusade than an ideo-logical confrontation. The Slave Trade rather than the defects in the Constitution had kindled the reforming zeal of the 'Tal-ents 1, and the Whigs stubbornly continued to regard the Prince of Wales as offering the best hope of their own and the country's salvation. Nevertheless, two general elections in eight months could scarcely fail to stimulate popular awareness of contempor-ary politics, and thereafter, a steady stream of gloomy reports from the Continent, where Prance was rampant and the new Peninsu-lar campaign beset with difficulties, fanned the discontent which had already found expression in the metropolitan elections of 180?.
However it was not so much the news of military reverses,
as the discovery of corruption and abuses at home, that finally prompted a fresh spate of petitioning and public meetings. AS was to happen with even wider consequences between 1825 and 1829, the introduction of the catholic issue had focused attention on the use of the royal prerogative, and in many respects prepared menfe minds to receive the celebrated revelations of Colonel Wardle. At the beginning of 1809 it was disclosed that Mrs. Anne Clfcrke had exploited her position as the Duke of York's mistress to influence the distribution of army commissions, and throughout' the next excited months, Kentishmen were able to follow the Commander-in-Chief's every move in the pages of the county press.

1 J. Cannon, Parliamentary Reform 1640-1832 (Cambridge, 1972), p. 150.

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The pro-government Kentish Gazette counselled caution?
We have again and again presumed to say that there are
many defects in our Hilitary Services which call for
reform, but we cannot bring ourselves to believe that
there is the slightest foundation for the many flagitious
stories that have fed the ear that delights in slander
for this twelve month past.
But the Kentish Chronicle, fast re-emerging as an opposition journal from its patriotic torpor, was less disposed to be charit-able, since it felt the Duke to be guilty of 'several distinct

p and specific acts of abuse of his office...' During February, the paper insisted that so vital a matter should not be shelved, and when an enquiry was at length begun, it was careful to scru-tinise every piece of new evidence. Copious praise was heaped upon Wardle for his 'most excellent speech' in the Commons, and for the 'honest, candid, and manly 1 manner of his declaration in favour of an address to the King for York's dismissal; while as the crisis subsided, due prominence was given to accounts of meetings held in Westminster and the City to thank the zealous colonel.

The inhabitants of Canterbury, Deal, Dover, Hythe, Maidstone
n

and Rochester responded by assembling to discuss recent events , and as politicians realised that a new spirit was abroad in the land, further instances of financial waste and misappropriation were quickly brought to light. Among the most diligent in scen-ting out the merest hint of abuse was Rochester's John Calcraft, and in 1810 it was his sifting that exposed the misdemeanours of Joseph Hunt, the Treasurer of the Ordnance and H.P. for Queen-borough. Hunt had lately fled the country leaving his official accounts with a deficit of £93*296, and to make matters worse,

1 Kentish Gazette, 31 Jan. 1809.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 31 Jan. 1809.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 10 Mar. and ^ APr - 1809.
4 A. D. Harvey, Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century (London, 1978), p. 24-5-
5 Parl. Deb., 1st Ser. xv. 237-4-8.

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he had never been required to deposit the statutory £10,000 security, despite having held his office since 1807- 'This was so palpable a breach of duty on the part of the board, 1 asserted /j
Calcraft, 'as it was impossible to pass by without censure' ; but the House refused to condemn the Master-General of the Ord-nance, just as it had failed to pass judgment on the Duke of York in the previous year. The moral which many drew from such epi-sodes was that Parliament and party politicians were no longer capable of governing with justice and equity. An unsuccessful war and the spectacle of Cabinet colleagues engaging in a duel had discredited the Pittites, and the warnings and lamentations of the Whigs were widely regarded as simply the crocodile-tears of a power-hungry aristocratic faction. The only lasting remedy seemed to be a far-reaching constitutional reform, and in 1810 its urgent necessity was emphasised by the case of Sir Francis Burdett.

Burdett was imprisoned in the Tower in April 1810 for con-
tempt of the House of Commons, after giving his support to the recently arrested John Gale Jones in a letter to Cobbett's Political Register. Like Wilkes before him, the illustrious H.P. for Westminster captured the popular imagination, and tidings
of his exploits filled columns of news-print. The Maidstone Journal and the Kentish Gazette commented disapprovingly upon the antics of Burdett and his adherents, but the Kentish Chronicle fought in the van of his defenders. In mid April it loudly declared:

. . . had not the bare faced priests of corruption, traduced
and villified his character; and most shamefully stig-
matised and attempted to blacken the purest fame in the
nation; by ascribing motives to this worthy,popular
and justly esteemed man, which only tend to lessen them-selves in the eyes of the discriminating; proving the horrid state of corruption and venality to which the British press is reduced; whilst it exalts the patriotic

1 Parl. Deb., 1st Ser. xv. 237-

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and envied Baronet, in the estimation of every dispassion-
ate, reflecting and independent Man in the Kingdom.
The political and legal implications of the affair were examined by one correspondent; who feared that the Commons was seeking to establish the principle of summarily trying those whom it accused, and of coveting the 'right of being the sole judge what express-ions, in point of law, constitute a libel'. If these powers were obtained, he argued, the House would 'be rendered more formidable than the prerogatives claimed by the Stuarts'. 2
The same themes were taken up in a series of petitions from
the provinces. On 14 May a meeting outside Canterbury's Guild-hall expressed its 'heartfelt regret 1 at:
the seizure and commitment of two of their fellow sub-
jects, on a charge of having offended the House by their writings, the breaking open of a dwelling-house with an
armed military force, under the alleged sanction of a
Warrant from the Speaker of the House, and the foul stain
ol murder fixed by two Coroners Juries on that body of
Troops to which the care of the Royal Person is more particularly confided.

The petition went on to observe, 'that if a body of men is allowed to be prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner in its own Court, there is not sufficient virtue in Man, to prevent that body from becoming arbitrary, oppressive, cruel and tyrannical1; and con-trasted the speed of Burdett's trial with the constant obstacles used to delay the evidence of electoral venality against Castle-3 reagh and Perceval. The inhabitants of Rochester soon added their voice to the mounting chorus, and among other things, denounced the Commons' vote on the Walcheren expedition 'as contrary to the wishes, opinion and expectation of the Country, and as tending to induce a belief that the power of Government has an excessive weight in the deliberations of the House'.^ Both boroughs were convinced that reform was eseential, but stopped

1 Kentish Chronicle, 17 Apr. 1810.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 4 Hay 1810.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 8 June 1810; and Com. Jour. Ixv
4 Com. Jour., Ixv. 477-8. ————————

short of championing a specific plan.
Opposition sought to harness the national desire by means

1 of Brand's bill , but when the scheme was negatived on 21 May

1810, only John Calcraft and Maidstone's George Longman, from
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among the Kentish M.P.s, felt able to divide in the minority. However, if Kent's representatives still retained the suspicion of reform fostered in the 1790's, a county meeting summoned in the following October clearly showed that a section of the free-holders had regained their former enthusiasm. The day's pro-ceedings were opened by Mr. Hodges with many references to the reforming ideas of Chatham, Pitt and Blackstone, and his petition was then seconded by Robert Foote of Gharlton Place, who reso-lutely denied that 'some abstract question of policy, some difficult theory in the art and mystery of Government 1 was being demanded. All that was requested was 'the Constitution as established by the wisdom of our Ancestors'; and to Foote this blessing might be restored by remedies similar to those of Brand, coupled with curbs on election expenses. With the added recom-mendations of Thomas Rider and Sir William Geary.the proposal was approved, and a committee formed to assist the circulation of the petition. Greatest controversy surrounded the past and likely future conduct of Sir Edward Knatchbull. Not for the last time, Knatchbull was described by the Rochester auctioneer Charles Larkin as 'a bitter and deadly enemy to reform'; but, while acknowledging his recent vote against Brand, he was careful to preserve a cautious independence.
As the county petition steadily accumulated signatures,
Sir William Geary was hard at work formulating and popularising a coherent programme of reform. The fruits of his deliberations 1 For the attitude of the Whigs see M. Roberts, The Whig Party, 1807-1812 (new edn., London, 1965), pp. 265-73.
2 Parl. Deb., 1st Ser. xvii. 164-5.
3 ffppnrt in Kentish Chronicle, 23 Oct. 1810.

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were unveiled in the Kentish Chronicle on 14 December, along with a solemn warning that if relief was not quickly forthcoming, a demoralised nation would be laid wide open to conquest."* For the boroughs, Geary favoured a rate-payer franchise, and in cases where even the incorporation of the neighbouring hundreds could not achieve an electorate of 500, he wished for the trans-fer of seats to larger constituencies. He advocated the ballot and triennial parliaments, and argued forcibly for the county poll to be held in the petty session districts and the regis-tration of freeholders in order to check expenses, uuring the next months the debate raged in the press between writers like 'An Advocate for Reform 1 in the Kentish Chronicle and'Anti-

^ Reformist 1 in the iiaidstone Journal , and on 11 June 1811 all eyes were focused upon T./hitbread as he presented the Kent

z petition.

However, reform was not a panacea universally acclaimed by Kentishmen. The people of Maidstone seem to have bean reluctant
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to declare on behalf of Burd&tt in 1810 , while on 15 Play 1810 the corporation of Canterbury had affirmed its belief in the excellence of the Constitution and expressed 'indignation and concern 1 at the 'insidious and mischievous attempts made to degrade, villify and bring into contempt 1 the House of Commons. Sir Edward Knatchbull's refusal to take charge of the county petition, on the grounds that it had been voted at a meeting of inhabitants rather than freeholders of Kent, thus somehow symbo-lised the deep divisions which still existed on the great ques-tion. Moreover, public interest could not be sustained indef-initely, especially as better news was beginning to filter
1 Kentish Chronicle, 14 Dec. 1810.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 11, 18 and 25 Jan. and 1 Feb. 1811.
3 Debate in Parl. Deb., 1st Ser. xx. 563-70; and text of pet-ition in Com. Jour., Ixvi. 417.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 3 July 1810.
5 Com. Jour., Ixv. 411.

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back from Spain. Hence, when the Whigs failed to capitalise on the installation of the Prince Regent and the assassination of Perceval, there was a marked slackening in the popular and parlia-mentary agitation, and in this welcome breathing-space Lord Liver-pool went to the country.
While it lasted, the storm had been furious, but by the
autumn of 1812 it had abated sufficiently to give local rather than national issues predominance. Hythe was soon embroiled in another of its own private quarrels. Reports of the March 1810 by-election, in which the former Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Pering, had beaten John Brydges and the avowed enemy of ministers, W. Busk, record no specific references to events elsewhere1, and in 1812, Thomas Plummer, Matthew White and perhaps J. W. H. Brydges were preoccupied with" righting the injustices of 180?. White, for example, believed that he had been robbed of victory when his friends' second votes were given to the opposition, and had conse-quently made an agreement with the 'independent interest 1 to
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prevent a repetition. On the eve of polling he thus reminded freemen: 'The cause is YOUR OWN, the success, if you succeed, will be that of your own independence: and that success is certain, if you are UNANIMOUS 1; and together with Pering finished comfortably
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ahead of Plummer.

The cry of independence was stronger in 1812 than at any of
the three previous general elections, and reflects the depth of national disillusionment with the conduct and professions of Whigs and Tories alike. A typical product of this disposition among the electorate was Joseph Marryat, who stepped forward at Sandwich when the death of Captain Morgan deprived the popular

1 Kentish Chronicle, 16 and 20 Mar. 1810.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 2 Oct. 1812.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 13 Oct. 1812. Two non-residents petitioned against Pering on grounds of bribery, but were unsuccessful: Com. Jour., Ixviii. 56 and 108.

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interest of its likely candidate.'1 He pledged:
I am not enlisted under the banners of any party; that
I consider measures, not men; and that my vote is dir-
ected according to the best dictates of my judgement, by
a regard to the principles of the Constitution, and the
public good.
Such a creed was no better suited to the destruction of well-entrenched loyalties than had been anti-popery in 1807, and the radical Oldfield was inclined to label both Marryat and Sir
J. S. Yorke as ministerial men. However the former's disinteres-ted service over the next twelve years was to prove the worth
of his introductory promise.
Similar sentiments were upper-most at Dover and Maidstone,
with the result that in those constituencies too, issues were
at a high premium and even the merest hint of party bias might spell disaster. When William Huskisson's expected challange came to nothing, Jenkinson and the independent Jackson were re-
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elected at Dover without a contest. The appearance of Sir
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Samuel Egerton Brydges did at least enable the freemen of Maid-stone to hold a poll and enjoy all the accompanying spoils. Brydges and George Simson both attracted 380 votes, and it may possibly have been support for Burdett and Brand's reform bill in 1810 that prevented George Longman from repeating his previous triumphs.
Parliamentary reform had won more converts in the county
than in a borough like Maidstone where the corporation had wide influence and the spur of Clement Taylor's old radical interest had for the moment lost its vigour. William Honywood announced at the very outset that 'attacks of Gout and Rheumatism, these two years past, and the use of my limbs being so far gone 1 would prevent him standing again. However he could not bid farewell 1 T.H.B. Oldfield, The Representative History of Great Britain and Ireland; with the History of the House of Commons, and of the Counties, Cities, and Boroughs, of the United Kingdom,
from the Earliest Times (London, 1816),v. 394.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 2 Qc£. 1812.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 2 and 13 Oct. 1812.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 16 Oct. 1812.

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without offering some parting advice:
In retiring allow me to impress on your minds, the present situation of the Country at large, and thereby the neces-
sity of never losing sight of a CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM IN
PARLIAMENT.

The words encouraged Sir William Geary to advertise his candida-ture, and on 13 October he was recommended to the freeholders by T. L. Hodges as 'the tried friend of the rights and privileges of his fellow subjects', who had expended a fortune in their ad-

2 vancement. Geary himself was more specific:
By the plan he would propose, every man would be able to
vote in his own district, without the enormous expense
which at present attended contested elections: an ex-
pense which had formerly pressed so heavily on him, as
to prevent him, even now, from attending his duty in
Parliament, (should he be chosen) without considerable inconvenience.

Sir Edward Knatchbull was quizzed by Robert Foote on his attitude to reform and the Roman Catholics, but the baronet and his

V. supporters refused to venture beyond assurances of continued dedication to national and local business. Public feeling was not strong enough to inspire an opposition, but the election of Geary, with his reforming and independent background, does indi-cate substantial discontent with the current performance of the representative system.
A similar mixture of sentiments dictated the outcome at
Rochester and Canterbury. John Calcraft's delvings into the darker recesses of the administrative machine during the late parliament, left no doubt of his commitment to sweeping change, and on this basis he was nominated at Rochester on 7 October along with Admiral Sir T. B. Thompson.* The only discordant voice in 1812, as in 1802, was that of the ex-Jacobin, George Smith. Smith had been dismayed at the half-hearted policies adopted
by the 'Talents' when in office, and since their dismissal he had

1 Kentish Chronicle, 2 Oct. 1812.
2 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 16 Oct. 1812.
3 Ibid.

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adhered firmly to an independent course. Ciilcraft had always been closely associated with the Whigs, and perhaps for this reason he had incurred the displeasure of a group of the city's freemen led by James Barnett. The sitting Member publicly rejected a joint canvass with his former colleague, and respect for his family would probably have carried him home ahead of Smith even without Charles Larkin's passionate plea for unity in the face of a common enemy. Smith eventually withdrew, but not until he had heard Larkin speak out forcibly for change;
. . . we want no revolution, but we want a reform, we want
men who will watch over the expenditure of the public
money, and oppose such large grants of money as have late-
ly been made to the household, money which was granted
when the people were groaning under the weight of most grievous taxation, and suffering the most lamentable privations; how can it be that the Parliament will refuse supplies? How can it resist the will of a minister when
it is not elected by the people? It is impossible to
carry any plan of economy into execution whilst the House
of Commons is constituted as it is.
A poll was not so easily avoided at Canterbury, where the division of seats between roughly equal pro- and anti-government interests had not yet been finally established. Pour men were active during the weeks of canvassing. The friends of Edward Taylor and John Baker were confident of success, Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges was eagerly detailing his knowledge of politics, and Stephen Rumbold Lushington was hard at work among the non-

1 residents in London. By 7 October, when the election came on,

Brydges had decided to fight at Maidstone, but his departure had

2 in no way diminished popular excitement. The independent Baker

was prepared to rely on the fulfilment of his previous promises as the best guide to his principles, and Taylor seemed ready to employ the same strategy until cross-questioning by Samuel Kingsford revealed a disquieting ambiguity in his commitment to reform. Lushington, on the other hand, made no secret of his

1 Kentish 1812. ——————— Chronicle, 2 Oct. 1812 and Kentish Gazette, — 6 Oct. 2 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 9 Oct. 1812.

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attachment to existing practices:
I am free to confess, after reading all that has been
recently published upon this interesting subject, I have
seen no speculation upon the theory of representation,
which has promised to my judgement, any practical amend-
ment of the Constitution, as now carried into execution...
When the polls closed, Lushington was found to have avenged his 180? disappointment, and was accompanied to Westminster by the long-serving Baker.

II

The revival of reform between 1809 and 1812 was due as much
to economic as to political factors, and thus the period may

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be regarded as in every sense the harbinger of the post-Wco? crisis, The effects of Napoleon's Continental System, the retaliatory Orders in Council, and the collapse of the South American market, severely disrupted the country's manufacturing industry. The business community of Dover and Deal had complained bitterly in the winter of 1810-11 about the impositions of the Militia Act and the ravages of privateers in the Channel1, while among the casualties of depression were the Tonbridge Bank in which William
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Woodgate was disastrously involved , and the Hills' ship-building enterprise .at Sandwich.^ However in Kent as a whole it was the state of agriculture that held the key to prosperity, and it was an improvement in the rural economy after the summer of 1811 that temporarily checked the popular clamour. In August 1811, Lord Auckland at Beckenham found himself 'up to the eyes in wheat,
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oats, barley and clover 1 ; and a year later. Lord Liverpool was writing happily to £arl Bathurst from Walmer:
You know that this is the greatest wheat county in Eng^
land. I was very particular in my inquiries yesterday"
and I find with the exception only of the very heavy '
lands near the Medway the most favourable accounts of all
the crops of grain. Even in these lands it,-is now expec-
ted that the crops will be reasonably pj
1 Kentish Chronicle, 19 Oct., 13 Nov. and 14-" Dec .1810 and 1811. '
2 HiiG. Fortescue T x. 321: Auckland to Grenville, 11 Dec. 1812
3 R. F. Hills, 'Shipbuilding for the Royal Navy at oandwich in the eighteenth century' , A.C. , xciv. (1979), 213-28
4 HEP. Fortescue, x. 164: Auckland to Grenville, 12 <
5 ffiiC^athurst, PP. 195-6: Liverpool to

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By 1814, however, the pendulum had swung again, and this
time the boom of the war years was finally over. thereafter, letters like that of December 1815 from 'A RUINED FARMER', in-

1 forming friends and creditors of heavy losses , were all too

common in the county press, and until the early 1820's, petitions bewailing the distress and imploring relief continued to flood into Parliament. On 22 February 1821, for example, the Commons heard complaints from owners and occupiers of land in Kent's western division and in the parishes of Faversham, Ashford and Horsemonden, as well as from the merchants and traders of Ashford p
and Wye. Kentish peers and M.P.s were not slow to respond, and among them the younger Sir Edward Knatchbull won national acclaim as the spokesman of the Agriculturists. Public opinion, too, was active on a broad front. The air was alive with talk of protection and free trade, of low prices and unequal tithes, of burdensome poor rates and the state of the currency, while support was never lacking for reductions in taxation, rigid economy in expenditure, and reform of the representative system. But if the suggested causes of distress were many and diverse, they were united by an almost universal belief that Government bore the ultimate responsibility and possessed the most effective means of relief. Hence the reaction of ministers was crucial in determin-ing the peace-time attitude of those propertied and rural classes whose loyalty had upheld Pitt in the 1790's.
Parliament's first measure to assist farmers and landowners
was a bill to exclude foreign grain until domestic prices had reached 80/- a quarter. The Corn Laws rapidly became the rally-ing cry of the agricultural lobby, and it was not long before

1 Kentish Chronicle, 8 Dec. 1815-
2 Com. Jour., Ixxvi. 100.
3 B. Hilton, Corn, Cash, Commerce; The Economic Policies of the Tory Governments 1813-1830 (Oxford, 1977), chap. 1; and D.G, Barnes, A History of the English^Gorn Laws, 1660-1840 (new edn., London, 1961) , chaps. vii-ix. ""

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other producers were seeking the same safeguards. On 2 April 1816, Maidstone's fruit growers called on the Commons 'to impose such Duties on the importation of Apples, Pears, Filberts, and Walnuts, from Prance and the Low Countries, as may effectually afford protection... 1; and in April 1819 it was recommended: That all the productions of the soil of the United King-
dom may in future be protected from import of similar commodities duty free, in as full, ample and beneficial
a manner, as the Merchants and Manufacturers of the Uni-
ted Kingdom are, by the Navigation Act, and other stat-
utes of the realm, protected in their shipping and manu-facturies, from importation duty free.
Yet the Corn Laws never quite fulfilled the Agriculturists' over-sanguine hopes of a speedy return to the era of high prices. In February? 1815/owners and occupiers of lands in Kent were attributing their hardship to 'the defective state of the Corn Laws'; and even after amendments had been made, a similar petition of April 1816 could lament, 'the sudden and enormous fall in the price of corn, and every other sort of produce in

p agriculture 1. The reality of the situation was, of course, that no amount of legislation could sustain the grossly inflated profits of the decade of war and scarcity, or diminish the effects1 of over-production on now uneconomic marginal land. Moreover,
the population of Britain was no longer solely dependent on agri-culture, and in the age of Luddism, Peterloo and the Cato Street Conspiracy, low food prices had their advantages as a social opiate. The merits of freer trade were keenly debated in the
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Kentish press , and found a staunch advocate in W. P. Honywood, but to the Agriculturists the consequences of peace and the growing band of ministerial converts to the principles of Smith and Ricardo were gall and wormwood. Any attempt by Liverpool or Wellington to moderate or change their policy was guaranteed to

1 0°m * Jour., Ixxi. 260 and Ixxiv. 326.
2 Com. Jour., Ixx. 121 and Ixxi. 260.
3 K. J. Eaton, 'Newspapers and Politics in Canterbury and Maid-stone 1815-1850: Opinion in the Kentish Town' (Univ. of Kent M.A. thesis 1972), pp. 60-5-

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stir up a hornet's nest of protest. In 1821 Sir Edward Knatch-bull insisted that the nation's distress was due to foreign grain
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imports during the previous year , and in 1822 a county petition urged the rejection of a scheme to release bonded corn when

p the home price had risen to Just 65/- a quarter.
Equally controversial was the Government's policy towards
the currency. After arousing initial discontent, Pitt's suspen-sion of specie payments had won general approval within the agricultural interest. In 1812, for example, Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges argued on behalf of the fiduciary system:
It has been characterised on the other side as delusive, dangerous, and hollow; not as wealth, but as th& fal-
lacious appearance of wealth. He would assert that if
it was not wealth, it was at least the mother of wealth.
To what other source could be attributed the vast and
unexampled start which had been made by our population,
our commerce, our manufacturies, our shipping, our c-oialsj
and our buildings since the year 1785- These at least
were solid wealth: and from what other than this caluun-
niated, but creative source, could they spring?
He denied that inflation was the inevitable result, and claimed that since a metallic-based currency could not be vigorously maintained by the mines of South America, its reintroduction would bring economic stagnation.
Nevertheless it had been promised in 1797 tho.t peace would
be accompanied by the resumption of cash payments, while in the closing phase of the war, some worrying flaws had emerged. At the time of the Tonbridge Bank's collapse, Lord Auckland told Grenville that: 'The embarrassments of the paper currency are

4- tending to some great crisis' ; and as late as 1819 corres-
pondents in the Maidstone Gazette were still counting the cost of the disaster. An immediate decision was postponed in
1815, but at length a committee headed by Peel advised the imple-

1 Parl. Deb., New 3er. iv.
2 Com. Jour., Ixxvii. 235-
3 Parl. DebT, 1st Ser. xxiv. 298.
4 HMC. gortescue, x. 321: Auckland to Grenville, 19 Dec. 1812. 5 Letters on the Subject of the Kentish Banks' Affairs, occa-sioned by a Lapse of Nearly Three Years without any Distri-bution of the Assets (Maidstone, 1319).

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mentation of Pitt's wishes. 1 Agriculturists suffered badly in the predicted deflation. Having been induced by high returns to borrow capital, farmers found themselves burdened with debt re-payments which falling prices and rents could not satisfy. Earl Stanhope felt that the 15$ drop in the value of the 'circulating medium' should be compensated for by a comparable cut in tax-

2 ation, and even in 1830 the evils of Peel's report were capable

of firing the wrath of Kentishmen.
These two aspects of ministerial policy had the effect of straining relations between Government and its traditional ad-herents in the provinces. The apparent influence of commercial and industrial interests was bitterly resented, and there was a very real fear among the landed classes that economic distress, if not soon abated, might have disastrous social and political ramifications. The payment of tithes, for instance, had always been a source of rural disharmony, and its injustices became
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particularly unbearable at moments of acute hardship. The ques-tion of the 'heavy and vexatious burden 1 of tithes levied in kind was raised by Lance Tadman of Northfleet at a county meeting in March 1816, and freeholders were reminded of the severe checks
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imposed by the practice on agricultural improvements. Mr. Russell of Swanscombe also inveighed against the prevailing system, and made the revealing comparison between the farmer who paid £200 a year in tithes out of an income of £500, and his 'opulent neighbours' with ten times the capital return from 'manufacturies and warehouses' who were liable for only a few shillings. T&dman wished for tbe certainty of fixed payments
in lieu of tithes in order to finance the Church and to introduce

a greater equality of sacrifice. However for other speakers/ anti

1 Hilton, op. cit., chap. 2.
2 Parl. Deb., Hew Ser. i. 4-06.
3 E. J. Evans, The Contentious Tithe; The tithe problem and English agriculture 1759-1350 (London, 1976). pp. 16-3? fifi
4 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 15 Mar. 1816. Cf . Com. Jour.. Ixxi. 260. ————————

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clericalism was the principal spur. Based on a complex and obscure tangle of custom and precedent, the assessment and collec-tion of tithes often brought quarrelling farmers and parsons into the law-courts, while for Mr. Russell and Dr. Waddington the spectacle of non-resident clergymen'feeding in luxury on the very vitals of the country 1 argued irresistibly that reform was long overdue.

Like the agitation against tithes, concern for the plight of
the landless poor had its social as well as its economic dimension, Earl Stanhope painted an ominous picture in May 1820:
In circumstances like the present, of extraordinary diffi-
culty and danger, the consideration of this subject is
perhaps of all others the most interesting and important,
as we know that in almost every part of the country, the
want of employment for the poor has produced severe dis-
tress; and as we know also, that the discontent of those
who suffer from that distress has in some parts of the
country assumed even the character of disaffection.
The East Anglian riots of 1816 provided an awful warning of what might be expected elsewhere, and Stanhope was anxious to eradi-cate the potential cause of a future conflagration rather than

p simply to equip himself with 'fire-engines and buckets'. Hobsbawm and Rude have described in detail the process by
which the close relationship between farmer and labourer began
to disintegrate during the war years, and was replaced by a rural
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poverty-trap from which it was seldom possible to escape. Con-temporaries, such as Stanhope, analysed the problem somewhat diff-erently, and preferred to confine their attention to the inadequa-cies of the financial system and Government's neglect of the agri-i cultural sector. These ideas were far more akin to the views current among Agriculturists, while the desire to achieve perma-nent employment and an independent subsistence exhibited all the hall-marks of a wistful tory paternalism. Undoubtedly the most
1 Parl. Deb., New Ser. i. 395-
2 Parl. Deb., New oer. i. 395-6-
3 E. J. Hobsbawm and G. Rude, Captain Swin^ (new edn., London, 1973), chaps. 1-3-

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popular remedy in the 1820's was the division of waste lands into plots capable of being cultivated by a single family. TO Earl Stanhope, the adoption of this scheme would quickly stem the flow of paupers to the workhouse, and in the longer term he hoped the re-establishment of 'the class of small yeomen 1 might discourage wanton marriages and thereby check the growth of the rural popu-lation. The problem of poverty had, However, developed far beyond the resources of private philanthropy. Commentators like Stan-hope recognised that the use of Grown land and public money was essential to the success of his projects, but despite lengthy and detailed appeals from a group of dedicated individuals, Government

1 could not be persuaded to respond.

The worst effects of ministerial delay and inaction were felt
in 18^0 when Captain Swing went abroad to take vengeance on an unfeeling society. In the meantime, however, the propertied classes were left to maintain the poor cis best they could. The figures indicate the magnitude of their responsibility. In 1815, for instance, 11.25$ of Kent's population was being relieved from the poor rates. By 1823,8, 263 out of the 21,?19 inhabitants of sixteen v/ealden parishes were paupers, and in 1826 six of these

2 communities had more than sixty entirely unemployed persons.

•z

Kent never had been a major Speenhamland county , and it has recently been shown that in the south-east of England the cost of 4.

poor relief actually fell during the 1820's. Nevertheless, the dramatic increase in the level of rates from £77,895 in 1776 to ^213,989 in 1803 and to its peak of £399,201 in 1817-18 represen-ted a very substantial drain on the incomes of Kentish gentlemen

1 Parl. Deb., New Ser. i. 407-14.
2 Hobsbawm and Rude*, op. cit., p. 53 •
3 M. Blaug, 'The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New 1, Journal of Economic History, xxiii. (1963), 153; and E. Helling, Kentish Sources IV; The Poor (Kent County Council 1964), pp. 14-7-8.
4 D. A. Baugh, 'The Cost of Poor belief for South-East England 1790-1834', Econ. Hist. Hev., 2nd Ser. xxviii. (1975), 57. '

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and farmers at a time when they were least able to shoulder the

1 burden.
Ill

Alongside the agitation of the Agriculturists, was a nation-wide preoccupation with the urgent necessity of strict economy in the machinery and expenditure of the state, ,/riting in the Kentish Chronicle in April 1821, for example, 'AGRIGOLA' advised his neighbours to look beyond the unfruitful pursuit of increased protection to what he conceived to be the root cause of their distress.

. . . would it not be sounder policy in us, my friends, to
turn our thoughts to the reduction of the Immense and insupportable expenses that have risen by degrees in long
and tedious war and a destructive paper currency? To
unite and act for such a purpose would do an infinite
good, by securing to us, as farmers, a protection that
high prices could never yield.
The works of Halevy, Cookson and I-iitchell bear witness to the importance attached by public opinion and politicians of all descriptions in the post-war period to the assault on waste and extravagance , while it is clear that the same considerations weighed heavily with Kentishmen when selecting their I-I.P.s or determining the merits of a new county gaol.
Debates on military estimates and Household expenses con-
sumed many hours of parliamentary business after 1815> but among , the most celebrated and best publicised episodes was that sur-rounding the fate of the property tax. The abolition of Pitt's levy formed the subject of a number of whig-inspired meetings held during the latter months of 1814. The Kentish Chronicle

£- I devoted much space to events in London and Westminster , and on

1 Melling (ed.), Kentish Sources IV: The Poor (Kent County Council, 1964), p. 14?.
2 Kentish Chronicle., 24 Aug • 1321.
3 E. Hale'vy, A History of the ^English People in the Nineteenth Century; The Liberal Awakening 1815-1830 (sec, edn.« London, 1949); J. E. Gookson, Lord Liverpool's Administration; The Crucial Years, 1813-1822 (Edinburgh, 1975); and A. Mitchell,
The '.vhifts in Opposition, 1815-1830 (Oxford, 1967J.
4 Parl. Deb., 1st Ser. xxv. 19/-S.
5 Cookson, op. cit., pp. 44-69; and l^itchell, op. cit., pp. 81-99-
6 Westminster meeting reported in Kentish Chronicle, 27 Feb. 1815-

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15 February 1815 a petition for repeal was presented on behalf of the inhabitants of Rochester. 1 Ministers acquiesced readily enough, and only reimposed the tax when news arrived of Napoleon's escape from Elba. However the iasuefe appeal to both the English-man's fear of standing armies and executive encroachment and his financial self-interest, was well calculated to arouse popular feeling, and by the beginning of 1816 a second wave of protest was gathering momentum in the provinces. At Rochester's Guildhall James Hulkes and Charles Larkin secured the unanimous acceptance of a petition which declared the tax to be 'so unconstitutional in its principle, so oppressive in its execution, and so unequal
2
in its effects' ; and a few days later, W. P. Honywood told the freeholders that: 'Ministers have economy in their mouths, but extravagance in their hearts'. 3 Thomas Rider, Sir William Geary and the Earl of Thanet all spoke against the continuance of the tax, and stressed the need to put an axe to the t.owering tree of corruption. The county petition spoke of the distress which existed in Kent, and of 'the great weight of Taxes, public and parochial 1 which had been borne with resolution and loyalty throughout the war. Now that victory had been gained, however, it was time to remove those impositions and institute 'the most rigid system of retrenchment and economy in the Civil List as well as in every other department of state '.^
Reinvigorated by many similar demonstrations of public
opinion, the parliamentary battle was wa~ed with spirit and entei?- prise, and on 18 March the proposal to retain the tax was de-feated by 238 votes to 201. Of the nine Kentish M.P.s who par-ticipated, Calcraft and Marryat divided in the majority, while Lushington, Jackson, White, lorke, Brydges, Moorson and Osborn

^ Com* Jour., Ixx.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 8 Mar. 1816.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 15 Mar. 1816.
4 Com. Jour., Ixxi. 214; and Parl. Deb.. 1st 6er. xxxii. 1058-9

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'i

supported the Government. The triumph emphasised the potential strength of a well organised extra-parliamentary movement, and established economy as the leading issue of the day. However
the failure of Opposition to repeat its success in the next years led to renewed speculation about the extent of royal and minis-terial influence. Charles Larkin was thus not alone in his belief that '...it was much to be feared that no retrenchment would be

p affected till there was radical reform in Parliament 1.
By the beginning of 1817? the effects of a bad harvest and
the Government's uncompromising reaction to the Spa Fields riots, had intensified pressure for change, and for some months petition-ing became almost endemic. John Calcraft spoke in favour of a batch of petitions which deplored the suspension of Habeas Corpus,

5 and to Sir William Geary the demand for reform was widespread.

Geary was also entrusted with the presentation of another Kent petition, which among other things recommended that economy, further tax cuts, the limitation of sinecures and reform of 'the notoriously inadequate Representation of the People 1 were essen-

4. tial in a nation 'fast approaching to ruin'. Whether or not
the meeting had voiced the sentiments of the entire county was a matter on which Calcraft, Ponsonby and other leading Whigs viol-ently disagreed with Sir Edward Knatchbull. The baronet alleged that many men of substance signed the requisition merely out of a sense of duty, and was not prepared to acknowledge the valid-ity of a petition to which only the High Sheriff had affixed his name. But if talk of political innovation still terrified a conservative squirearchy, the regularity with which candidates and electors returned to the question of reform and retrenchment

1 Parl . Deb . , 1st Ser. xxxiii.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 15 Mar. 1816.
3 Parl . Deb . , 1st Ser. xxxv. 784 and 90-1.
4 Parl. Deb., 1st Ser. xxxv. 968; and Com. Jour., Ixxii. 151-2. 5 Parl. Deb., 1st Ser. xxxv. 958-71-

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during the 1818 general election does suggest that public opinion had finally discarded its anti-Jacobin reserve.
Of Kent's three uncontested constituencies in 1818, only Sandwich could boast a popular interest. As in 1812, the inde-pendent candidate was Joseph Marryat, and it was equarely on the basis of his record in the old parliament that he renewed his appeal.
I voted for the repeal of the Property Tax, and for
various reductions in our public establishments. I
opposed the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; being
of opinion that the other bills passed by Parliament,
had armed the Executive Government with sufficient powers, without resorting to a measure so repugnant to the prin-ciples of the British Constitution. I have supported every motion to promote the Repeal of the War Duty on
Leather; considering that tax not only as oppressive
upon the labouring classes of the community, but as in-
Ourious to^the manufacturers, and therefore prejudicial,
in a peculiar way, to the prosperity of the Town and

Port of Sandwich. '

Marryat made much of his willingness to listen to the views of his constituents, and it was with similar professions that Sir George Warrender filled his address. 2 No opposition was forth-coming, although the choice of an Admiralty official from the Canningite wing of administration does imply that great care was being taken to nurse the ministerial interest in the borough. Another experienced parliamentarian and former Canningite
was sent down to contest Dover. During twenty-five years in the House, Edward Bootle Wilbraham had steadfastly inclined to'those principles on which our excellent Constitution in Church and State is founded, and those measures which appeared to me beet calculated to uphold and maintain it'.* ,/ith these credentials and some local connections, wilbraham was returned top of the poll, but it was by no means so certain that the long-serving Sir John Jackson would enjoy as easy a passage.^ Frequently to be discovered in the government lobby, Jackson was no longer the
1 Kentish Chronicle, 2 May 1818.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 12 June 1818.
3 Kentish ChronicTe, 12 June 1818.
4- Addresses in ibid.

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ideal representative of the borough's popular party, and an attempt was made to entice John hinet Fector into the arena. 1 However this scion of two respected Dover families felt unable to undertake the arduous duties of an H.P., and in his absence,
R. B. Robson could muster only 256 votes against Jackson's 505. Perhaps the freemen had not yet recaptured that liberating spirit of 1774, although from the emphasis given to local matters in his return of thanks, it is evident that in the midst of his victory Sir John recognised that his enemies were cast down but not destroyed. 2
Since 1812 the electors of Rochester had unmistakably re-
corded their disapproval of government policy in a dispute which united the freedom of election with hatred of placemen. Trouble began in May 1816 when Sir T. B. Thompson was appointed Treasurer of Greenwich Hospital and it was announced that since the post was held on the same basis as a commission in the navy no by-election would be required. The inhabitants of Rochester, on the other hand, argued that the office was in fact a place of profit, and were upheld in their assertion by the House of Commons. 5
When a new writ was issued, Thompson was not unexpectedly defeated by James Barnett, and only obtained a second chance to make good his seat when the latter's two-vote majority was declared void on the grounds of bribery and the premature close of the poll. 4 However as the extent of Barnett's support became apparent, Thompson decided to withdraw, leaving anti-ministerialists in an unaccustomed tenure of both the city's seats.
This freak balance of power could not be expected to out-
live the dissolution, and the question thus arose as to which of the sitting Members would step aside. Galcraft believed that his colleague was bound to retire, and must have been dismayed

1 Kentish Chronicle, 16 June 1818.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 26 June 1818.
3 Com. Jour., Ixxi. 429.
4 Com. Jour., Ixxi. 525-6 and Ixxii. 74 and 111.

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when a Common Hall of 5 Hay 1818 denounced such a demand as 'a
1
dereliction of principle, and an insult to the Freemen at large 1. Rivalry between the two men had been fierce since 1807, and on the present occasion the purely independent Barnett romped home ahead of the Canningite, Lord Binning, and compelled Galcraft to
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have himself elected at Wareham.
The 1818 election marked a new departure in the politics of Ilaidstone. o.'he national convulsions of recent years had shown the freemen to be as divided as ever, but had at least primed the electorate for a change of men and ideas. In 1816, Sir 3. E. Brydges had stirred the wrath of Brougham and a section of his constituents when he claimed in the Commons that the borough
7.

shared his approval of the property tax , while in 181? the local ministerialists proclaimed their continued loyalty in an address congratulating the Prince Regent on his escape from an assassin-

4. ation plot. Neither Simson nor Brydges sought re-election, per-
haps realising that expense and popular dissatisfaction with past votes would assuredly overwhelm them, and were replaced by the more liberal pairing of George Longman and Abraham W. Robarts* Throughout the next decade, Robarts, a London banker, took on
the role vacated by Clement Taylor in 1796, and was instrumental in channelling Maidstone opinion along an increasingly progres-sive course.
A similarly heightened sensitivity to current affairs may
be detected at Canterbury, where on 9 June the Kentish Chronicle expressed 'a most fervent hope and expectation 1 that 'the Friends' of Freedom and Independence will ultimately triumph, and that our city will be once more returned to that consequence which it formerly held in the estimation of those who are the real friends to a free and full representation of the People in Parliament*. ^ 1 Kentish Chronicle, 19 May 1818.
2 Kentish ChronicTe", 30 June 1818; and Jom. Jour., Ixxiv. 60 and 2^8. for Torrens 1 unsuccessful petition.
3 Parl. Deb., 1st Ser. xxxii. 1052-3-
4- Kentisn Chronicle. 6 and 21 Mar. 1817-
5 Kentish Chronicle, 8 June 1818.

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Of the sitting Members, the most vulnerable to popular discontent was John Baker, who in early June was moved to seek self-preser-vation in some sort of alliance with S. R. Lushington. A declar-ation allegedly made by Baker to James Davey and William Lepine may shed further light on his motives:
You drive me to join Mr. Lushington, I cannot and will not
join Lord Clifton as I conceive Mr. Taylor and John Cooper brought him in to oppose me, and not Mr. Lushington, and
I will join with Mr. Lushington to oppose Lord Clifton
with all my might.
The contest, which began on 16 June, was clearly destined to be
a protracted and acrimonious one, comprehending both personal and
o

political antagonisms.
When proposing Lushington, Deane John Parker ranged widely
over the events of the previous six years, eulogising the efforts of his Majesty's counsellors, and recalling the happy termination of the late glorious war 1. The candidate himself then took up the theme. In 1812, he reminded the freemen, 'England was in a situation of the most alarming nature, engaged in a bloody war abroad, and threatened with a faction of discontented people at home'. 'But thanks to the wisdom of its legislature, 1 he con-tinued, '...the war is happily succeeded by an honoreble (sic) peace, and England is now in a state of happiness and tranquillity'. Lushington was also anxious to defend his own conduct. On his acceptance of office, he asserted:
It is an erroneous idea of some people, that a member
holding an emolument under Government is not at liberty
to exercise his free discretion; I can assure you on

my honor (sic) that I have in every instance acted strong^
from principle, and proud am I to boast that my conduct
has always been marked with strict uniformity.
And as to his share in wrecking a treating bill, he explained: For my part I am a strenuous supporter of the Elective
Franchise; it is, I conceive, a sight highly calculated
to impress the mind with the value of British .Liberty,
to see the colours waving and the cockades flying in all directions; and I think myself justified in asserting
that I never stood for any reasonable expense. ' 1 Kentish Chronicle, 2 and 9 June 1818.
2 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 19 June 1818.

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He did not regard expensive contests as furthering the designs of ministers, and concluded by hoping that he had ever acted with 'a degree of liberality and spirit 1.
To Sampson Kingsford, John Baker had the priceless advantage
of being a native of Canterbury, always on hand to listen to complaints, and in the habit of spending the whole of his income in the city. He was not the man 'to enrich himself or his family with a shilling of the public money 1; and in the future would at all times exercise an unfettered judgement. Mr. W. Frend des-cribed Lushington's place as 'an effectual bar' to an adequate representation, and Alderman Cooper was confident that Lord Clifton's 'princely fortune 1 would place him above temptation.
On the 'great question of Parliamentary Reform', Clifton admitted that 'he had not made up his mind, but he considered some reform necessary and was favourable to the measure as far as it could be carried into effect with safety to the state'. However beyond this, and a conviction that ministers were not justified in re-taining so large a standing army in peace-time, his lordship was not disposed to commit himself.
When the polls finally closed, Lushington and Clifton were
well ahead of Baker. The Earl of Darnley's heir readily acknow-ledged the assistance he had received from the city's Independent Club, and it was a member of this body who sought to dampen Lushington's boast of a 'triumphant majority 1, by reminding the ministerialist that while he had benefited from Baker's second votes, his noble opponent had fought alone and attracted the

1 most plumpers. But the central lesson of 1818 was that a

portion of the freemen were tired of the unadventurous indepen-dence of John Baker and had thus plumped for a more energetic agitation of their interests.
When compared with the titanic struggles of 1790, 1796 and

1 Kentish Chronicle, 26 and 30 June 1818.

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1802, the Kent county election of 1818 was a very modest affair. Sir Edward Knatchbull promised only to labour unceasingly in the service of his brother freeholders, while Sir William Geary announced:
I hesitate not a moment in determining once more, to come forward in defence of your independence. I cannot but
recollect the victories I have gained for that principle
in the County or Kent, and the spirit which you have
shewn(sic) in obtaining them. I look forward with a full reliance in your exertions to crown our cause in 1818
with the same triumph which has attended it in other
contests, when the whole strength of the County has been
polled.
New men were also in the field. William Philip Honywood was eager to associate himself with the views and achievements of his late uncle and father, and Sir John Courtenay Honywood, though well-inclined to administration, felt it incumbent upon him to pledge: Sensible how heavily the burdens, occasioned by a long
state of warfare, still press upon all classes, it would
at all times afford me the sincerest satisfaction to sup-
port those plans which might appear eligible towards
effecting a reduction of them, and also to oppose any
that militated against the accomplishment of so desirable
an object by.a disregard to proper economy in the public expenditure.
Sir John eventually retired in order to contest Hythe, and after a poll his namesake was returned along with Knatchbull.
Sir William Geary was perhaps the most pretigious casualty
of the striking alteration in the mood of the nation since 1812. At Hythe, where Matthew White made way for John Bladen Taylor to
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become the new partner of Sir John Paring , intense political in-fighting continued to preclude coherent debate, but at Rochester Dover, Maidstone, Canterbury and in the county, the old guard of independents was passing aray before the onslaught of a younger and more partisan generation. Parliamentary reform still hovered in the wings, awaiting a call that had not yet come. Neverthe-less, in economy and retrenchment, opposition groups had dis-covered an electoral issue of universal appeal.

1 Addresses in Kentish Chronicle, 9 June 1818.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 9, 12 and ^6 June 1818.

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IV

For the Whigs and their allies, the twelve months which
followed the 1818 election proved something of an anti-climax. Government made every effort to economise, and reformers could offer nothing more ambitious than Russell's Grampound Jill. Hence, the reports of blood-letting at Manchester's St. Peter's Fields, and Sidmouth's injudicious congratulation of the magistrates,
came as a welcome focal-point for renewed petitioning and aroused fresh fears for English liberty.
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The Kentish Chronicle published letters from Manchester ,
and John Calcraft was active mobilising county opinion behind the

2 Whigs. His hand may probably also be discerned in the summoning

of a Common Hall in Rochester during early October to consider
55
what Charles Larkin termed 'the cause of justice and humanity'. The meeting was not, Larkin told the freemen, 'one of a political nature, it was not one to discuss the necessity of a reform in Parliament, nor in what manner the Constitution was to be mended, but whether they were to have a Constitution at all 1. The crowd had behaved in an orderly manner on 16 August, and had assembled for the sole purpose of exercising the subject's right to pet-ition for the relief of grievances. Orator Hunt had appealed for harmony, and Larkin was convinced that only the provocative inter-vention of the yeomanry had excited tumult. The freemen of Rochester agreed, and voted an address to the Prince Regent re-questing an investigation and the punishment of the 'murderers'. The gentry and freeholders were more reluctant to pass
judgement, in spite of the passionate eloquence of 'DEPTFORDIUS'. My Brethren of Kent - You are individually and collective-
ly interested; the first public question on which you
may meet to deliberate, may be decided by a misdirected
soldiery among you with sharpened sabres. Surely you
will not allow the fertile and beautiful County of Kent
to sink in political importance to the level of a rotten borough^,- Justice, humanity and self-interest summon you
to act.

1 Kentish Chronicle, 20 and 2? Aug. 1819- 4 Kentish Chronicle. , 2 Mltchftll. OP. cit., PP. 126-31- 19 Oct. 1819.
3 ^ Kentish nf, --^v<=rz=- - — --— ——— ————,——!..-.,.,. Chronicle, ii ^^M^™»a»^™i^aMM» * 8 Oct. 1819-

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But no special meeting seems to have been requisitioned, and the county by-election in November, in which the young Sir Edward Knatchbull replaced his lately deceased father, witnessed no manifestation of popular clamour.^
Government's response to the crisis was swift and harsh. On
the one hand, the Six Acts were applauded as indispensable to the preservation of property, and on the other, they gave substance to 'JASPER'S 1 axiom of 1816 that: 'All governments, independent even of the intentions of those who administer them, have a ten-
P

dency to despotism 1. W. P. Honywood made no secret of his ab-horrence during the committee stage of the Seditious Meetings Bill on 13 December 1819- He rejected as 'a libel on the people of England', the suggestion that 'they were disloyal or dis-affected to the constitution'; and went, an:
That they were disaffected he would admit; but to whom
were they disaffected'; Not to their king; not to their
country; but to his hajesty's ministers. If that was a
crime, he was also guilty; for he was equally disaffected
to them.^

Peterloo and the repressive legislation appeared the logical ex-tension of ministerial policy in 1809-11 and 1816-1?, and the evident impotence of Parliament, after all that had been said on the hustings, led Honywood to confess that:
. . . although I think the plans broached on Parliamentary
Reform, at the different meetings in the country, are
wild and inpracticable, yet, after the proceedings which occurred in Parliament this year, when we saw a new Par-liament agree three millions of unnecessary taxes, which
fall almost exclusively on the impoverished and starving population - when we witnessed a Royal Grant of 10,000 per annum, and a determination to crush the rising Inde-pendence of South ^merica, I say, with these demon*
strations of a new Parliament, the people were justified
in raising their voice for a Reform in the Commons House
of Parliament, and I trust they will persevere in a firm
and constitutional manner until they have attained that
great object.
This represented a shift of emphasis in political thinking of

1 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 19 Nov. 1819.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 19 Jan. 1816.
3 Parl. Deb., 1st Ser. xli. 1076-?.
4- Kentish Chronicle, 8 Oct. 1819.

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immense long-term significance, which h,,d been hinted at in 1816 but not developed in 1818.
Nevertheless, Lord Liverpool was sufficiently sure of the continued loyalty of the propertied classes, to call another general election soon after the death of the old King on 29 January 1820. Candidates and electors were naturally inhibited by the threat of rebellion in the industrial regions, and there prevailed throughout a general desire not to inflame the passions of the lower orders by rash talk or excessive treating. There was, of course, a contest at Haidstone, but Robarts and the corporation's man, John Wells, proved too strong for Richard
1 Sharp. The status quo was also maintained at Rochester. Lord Binning again held the ministerial seat, while James i^arnett was replaced by Ralph Bernal, who was to win his spurs during the next decade as a fervent disciple of Joseph Hume in the war on

waste .

Both Sandwich's sitting Members believed they had fulfilled
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their former undertakings , and after completing his canvass Sir George Warrender was pleased to report that: 'I find universally pervading our numerous body, constituents of affectionate loyalty to the Throne, and ardent attachment to the ancient political institutions and liberties of your Country 1. 5 Wo opposition was offered, even though there was a feeling that Warrender 's duties at the Admiralty had caused him to neglect his local responsi-bilities. A similar tranquillity, or was it sheer exhaustion, settled upon the freemen of Hythe. White and Pering did come forward during February, only to retire before 8 March, and thereby permit Stewart harjoribanks and the wealthy banker, Sam-uel Jones Lloyd, to carry off the spoils unmolested.^

1 Kentish Chronicle, 22 Feb. and 10 and 14 Mar. 1820. For un-availing petitions, see Com. Jour., Ixxv. 187 and 188
2 Kentish Chronicle, 22 Feb. 1820.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 3 May 1820.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 29 Feb. and 14 ilar. 1820.

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But if the under-lying trend in the Kentish constituencies was one of harmony and circumspection, the elections at Dover, Canterbury and in the county did at least throw up matters of lasting interest. In 1823 Cobbett wrote in Rural Rides; Butterworth, the bookseller in Fleet Street; he who is
a sort of metropolitan of the Methodists, is one of the Members for Dover. The other is Wilbraham, or Bootle,
or Bostle Vilbraham, or some such name, that is,a Lanca-
shire magistrate. So Dover is prettily set up.
In 1820, the prejudices of the great peripatetic radical were evidently foreign to the borough's electorate. The principal object of the freemen's displeasure was Sir John Jackson, whose professions of 'zealous care for your .mcient Rights and Privi-leges, and a firm determination to support the British Glorious Constitution 1, had finally ceased to ring true. 2 A gathering at Canterbury's Fountain Inn on 15 February sounded the death knell of his association with Dover. It was resolved:
That it is the Duty of every Member of the House of Com-
mons to support the King and the Constitution, to resist
every encroachment upon the prerogatives of the Crown,
and upon those Liberties secured to the People by Magna
Carta, the Habeas Corpus Act, and the Bill of Rights.
That it is the opinion of this Meeting, that the Freemen of Dover have not been freely, fully, or constitutionally represented.
That we will use our utmost endeavours to ensure the Election of a Representative, who is unbiased by party prejudice, and whose main object in obtaining a seat in Parliament is to promote the best Interests of his Consti-tuents, and of his Country.

That Joseph Butterworth esq., from his tried and estab-
lished Principles, has proved himself to be equally the Constitutional Supporter of the Dignity of the Crown, and
the Rights of the People, and is therefore a fit and
proper man to represent this Town in the next Parliament? Butterworth acknowledged the truth of all that had been said and it was not long before Jackson let it be known that a slow recovery from illness would prevent him standing after all.**" ihe

1 W. Cobbett, Rural Rides, ed. G. Woodcock (London, 1967)
pp. 201-2.

'"

2 Kentish Chronicle, 22 Feb. 1820. 3 Ibid.—————————
* Kentish Chronicle, 22 and 29 Feb. 1820.

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independent interest had thus clearly restated its power of

nomination.

Shortly before polling day, Robert Foote addressed the

'UNBOUGHT 1 freemen of Canterbury in the following terms:

With one of your Representatives, I am far from coinciding
in many material articles of public opinion. I am, how-
ever, in the habit of a friendly intercourse with him -
but what private Income - what individual Independence
can stand in competition with a TREASURY PURSE? What
public principles (however just) can face the array of contractors and jobbers - of actual - and of would be
placemen? - such a struggle is nearly hopeless - such a
struggle I $ECLINED.
And concluded: i

It^is, I confess, with infinite regret, that I perceive
this most ancient and respectable city, becoming a prey
to ministerial thraldom, and registered in the list of
Treasury seats, I regret it to my soul - and I regret it
the more, because under present circumstances I feel
unable to assist with efficacy and success, a cause which
is so very near my heart.

Lord Clifton, on the other hand, welcomed the impending

'Trial of Political Conduct 1, since he was now a tried man and

could be judged on achievements rather than mere promises.^ 'I

have turned my most serious attention to prevent any increase

upon the burthens of the people 1, he told the electors on 7

March, and then went on to explain his activities in the last

seasioh:

I certainly was alive to the liberty and to the peace of
my country, I looked with a jealous eye to what was
passing on the one hand, and on the other to the proceed-
ings of his Majesty's Ministers. I had determined to
give Ministers my support if the Bills they proposed were calculated to allay the trouble that had taken place, but
when I saw the nature of those Bills, the obnoxious
clauses which they contained, I was unable to render them
that support,^but turned my back upon them and voted
against them.

Lushington, too, was preoccupied with Sidmouth's controversial

package, although to him it contained 'measures calculated for

the country's good, and intended to stop the progress of the

1 See letters in Kentish Chronicle, 16 Mar. 1820.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 14 and 29 Feb. 1820.
3 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 10 Mar. 1820.

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spirit of sedition'. Despite his public statement, Foote was put in nomination, and on this account polling dragged on into a third day. However his meagre haul of just eighty-six votes is a striking indication of the extent to which popular antipathy towards corruption had been temporarily over-shadowed.
Peterloo and its aftermath also exercised a profound fascin-ation over the minds of the freeholders, and for some weeks seemed likely to ahatter the peace of the county. The attitude of the Members was the all-important factor. Knatchbull wrote

in his address:

The short period of my service in Parliament, has been
marked by circumstances of a peculiar character. I have,
from a consideration of their necessity, supported such
5SSSJSS? as the Perilous state of the country required, EXPERIENCE and the EVIDENCE Oi' FACTS will enable you to
decide how far I have.acted consistently with your inter-
ests and my own duty.

However, Honywood's interpretation of 'that love of liberty which has signalised our county in the annals of history 1, had led him
in rather different paths:

You have seen me oppose a system of Laws, passed in a
moment of panic, artfully created; Laws, which exhibit-
ing no features of the British Constitution, bear a
Strong resemblance to the despotism of foreign Govern-
ments. They were conceived in haste, and adopted with precipitation, but must lead like all beginnings of evil
once neglected or connived at, to mischief no less r>er- '
manent than extensive.

The response to Honywood's parliamentary conduct, and his pledge '...strenuously to persevere in repelling the open strides of arbitrary power, and the no less dangerous, though more latent, encroachment of corruption 1, reveals that misgivings ran deep among the Kentish gentry. A meeting at the Fountain Inn, Canterbury, on 11 March published a series of resolutions highly critical of Honywood on grounds of his non-residence in Kent, his adherence to systematic opposition, and his 'insult 1 to the 'common sense' of the freeholders embodied in recent

1 Kentish Chronicle, 14 Mar. and 29 Feb. 1820.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 12 Feb. 1820.

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votes and comments. 1 Thus, while Knatchbull was entitled to 'the entire approbation, and warmest thanks of the County'; the re-election of the erring hember would 'reflect discredit on the Freeholders', and should be forestalled by the selection of an alternative candidate from the western division.
Additional weight and potency was given to these deliber-ations by the discovery of the Cato Street Conspiracy. Honywood certainly recognised his vulnerability, and composed a revised address in which he roundly condemned 'a plot, so foul and mur-derous, as scarcely to find in our language an epithet adequate to its enormous atrocity 1. He affirmed his readiness to forward those measures 'to trace and rescind all the ramifications (if any exist) of this most detestable confederacy 1; but could not resist the observation that the design had come to light more because of the 'compunction of accomplices' than the operation of Sidmouth's legislation. 2
The county assembled at Maidstone on 18 March, amid scenes reminiscent of Ivanhoe's tournament at Ashby de la Zouch.^ A vast and colourfully adorned crowd thronged the heath, and every eye strained for a glimpse of the expected third man. However he had not arrived when T. L. Hodges stepped up to nominate Honywood, or when Thomas Rider spoke scathingly of 'those dia-bolical bills, which tended to deprive Englishmen of their rights and privileges'. Nor had his mysterious figure arisen in the west as a volley of hisses greeted the proposal of Sir Edward Knatchbull. He was clearly not coming at all, and perhaps cheered by his reception, Honywood seized the initiative. Though not a resident of Kent, he pledged eternal fidelity to the county and strove to illustrate his independence by recalling his vote on behalf of the Cheap Publications Bill, knatchbull, for his

1 Kentish Chronicle, 14 i^ar. 1820.
2 Kentish^ Chronicle, 14 Mar. 1820.
5 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 21 Mar. 1820.

part, was content to reiterate his well-known views, and cited the evidence of the Lancashire magistrates and the 'horrid plot' by way of justification. Other issues were not altogether for-gotten. Both men had something to say on the catholic question, and the freeholders heard speeches in praise of economy, tax cuts and the 'policies of the 'agricultural interest'. The Kentish Chronicle believed the show of hands had been four to one in favour of Honywood, and the obvious collapse of the tory reaction inspired both relief and ridicule. William Deedes and Mr. Baldock were the butt of many verses and lampoons, and John Calcraft gloated publicly at their evident discomfiture.

V

Although the 'Manchester Massacres' and the ensuing crisis
had diverted public opinion from a widespread agitation of
economy and parliamentary reform at the hustings, the twelve months which followed the 1820 election restored those issues to national prominence. This was possible, partly because trade and agri-culture had not yet fully recovered, and partly because of Queen

1 Caroline.
There can scarcely have been a moment in British history when
the monarchy came under such detailed and protracted scrutiny as in 1820, and there can have been few occasions when it was worse fitted to meet the public gaze. No election meeting passed with-out some tribute to the career and virtues of the late King, and the nation's disposition to remember him as the paternal figure-head of the Napoleonic era rather than as the devoted pupil of Lord Bute, only heightened the contrast with his wayward son. George IV's every move was watched and chronicled. His rages, his sulks, his illnesses, his extravagance and his mistresses monopolised the gossip of fashionable society and

1 See account in Cookson, op. cit., chap. 5; and R. Fulford, The Trial of Queen Caroline (London, 1%7), passim.

spiced the pages of the opposition press. Ministers and the entire Establishment were bespattered by the reflected odium of this royal burlesque, and then found themselves cast head-over-ears into the mire by the popular espousal of the would-be Queen. In vice and licentiousness Caroline rivalled even her estranged spouse, but she was a fresh personality in a rather stale politi-cal world, and there were those who saw in her cause a precious stepping-stone to power. On 12 February 1820 the Kentish Qhronr-icle was anticipating the return of the prodigal princess, and during June her landing at Dover and progress through Kent was
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avidly recounted. Readers of Kentish newspapers were well acquainted with Alderman Wood and the other metropolitan radicals with whom Caroline consorted, while the publicity given to her trial can have left few electors in ignorance of her claims and supposed injuries.
The Earl of Darnley, who together with the Earl of Romney
and Earl Stanhope had voted for the ^ueen in the Lords Secret
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Committee , remarked in the House on 4 July that in his opinion 'nothing but mischief would arise from its report, and felt it slightly curious that Caroline should suddenly be excluded from the prayer book after having been remembered by congregations for
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so long as Princess of Wales. But the Kingfe anger knew no bounds, and compelled a reluctant Cabinet to embark a Bill of Pains and Penalties on its tedious and sordid passage. Out-of-doors public opinion roared its disapproval. Their lordships' deliberations were reviled in violent and oftan scurrilous arti-cles, while other observers preferred petitioning as the vehicle for their protests. Some inhabitants of Maidstone were moved to address the Queen in the following terms:

1 Kentish Chronicle, 12 Feb. and 9 June 1820.
2 Parl. Deb., NewUer. ii. 49.
3 Parl. Deb., New oer. ii. 1?2.

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But though the most deadly blows have been aimed at your Majesty's reputation and life; though your Majesty's steps have been followed by spies who have not scrupled to resort to the most odious and detestable measures; though it has been attempted to prejudice the minds of
the people by the circulation of the basest and most dis-
gusting calumnies, and finally to enact against you a
Bill of Pains and Penalties, yet we rejoice in confident anticipation of your Majesty's signal and glorious
triumphs.
Other Kentish towns acted quickly to acquaint Parliament with local dissatisfaction, and at the same time resurrected grievances of a more lasting character. On 26 January 1821, for example,
W. P. Honywood presented a petition from the freeholders of Margate calling for the dismissal of ministers and the restoration of the Queen to all her rights. Having done so, Honywood warned the Commons 'that if the petitions were treated with neglect, the people would be confirmed in an opinion which they had long enter-tained, namely, that the House did not speak the sense, or repre-

2 sent the wishes of the country'. On the same day, Ralph Bernal

delivered a similar petition from Rochester with 2,500 signatures,

5 and on 12 February Dover signified its concurrence. Bernal

claimed not to be motivated by party aims, but by a conviction that the nation was being degraded in the eyss of the world, and hence felt no compunction in declaring it was 'high time that a
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change should be effected'.
However, the Queen's appeal was not universal in Kent. When
a group of Greenwich and Blackheath householders met on 25 January 1821 to draw up a petition, a letter deploring their intention had already been circulated in the neighbourhood, and the meeting itself was marred by frequent disputes. As the Kentish Chronicle put it: 'for 10 minutes the din of war prevailed'; and although the 'enemies' of the Queen were finally ejected, a magistrate was conveniently on hand to read the Riot Act and arrest twenty of the

1 Kentish Chronicle, 24 Oct. 1820.
2 Parl. Deb., New Ser. iv. 127.
3 Com. Jour., Ixxvi. 12-13 and 63-
4 Parl. DebT, New Ser. iv. 131.

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combatants. The High Sheriff refused to convene a county meeting,

and if Sir Edward Knatchbull is to be believed, his misgivings

were widely shared by the magistracy. Knatchbull and many others

had boycotted a make-shift meeting at Haidstone's Town Hall, and

were confirmed in their suspicion that the voting of a petition

was merely the pretext for the launching of the familiar radical

programme.*

Public interest in the fate of Queen Caroline evaporated

rapidly in the spring and summer of 1821, but the revival of concern about the administrative machine was sustained by the

continued depression of the agrarian economy. On 14 June 1822

the Commons thus received a petition from Kent stating:

That the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the said county
have waited with the utmost anxiety to see what measures
of relief would be proposed by the House, in consequence
of the representations of distress which have been from
time to time urged by them, in common with many others from different counties...

And praying:

That the House will resolve forthwith to enter upon the
great work of Reform in the Representation; and further,
that they will be pleased to make a just reduction of the Interest of the National Debt.

Knatchbull described the last clause as 'the lamest rider a Whig

house ever had to carry'; and attributed its acceptance to

Cobbett's influence. However Lord John Russell was probably

nearer the mark when he argued:

The truth was, and it was a melancholy truth, that persons
not of the lowest orders, nor maliciously inclined, but possessing considerable property in the county, found
themselves in a state of approaching ruin, and in the
wreck of their fortunes, upon hearing any proposition
which bore the appearance of relief, they caught at it,
as drowning men catch at straws, without any intention
of injuring the government on the constitution of the
country.

1 Kentish Chronicle, 50 Jan. 1821.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 1? Jan. 1821; and Parl. Deb., New Ser. iv. 521-2.
3 Lords Jour., liv. 12.
^ Com. Jour., Ixxvii. $4-6-7-
5 Debate in Parl. Deb., New Ser. vii. 1078-92, especially 1079 and 1080.

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Ever since 1809, Kentishmen had laboured tirelessly to impress ministers with the urgent need to ameliorate their economic plight, and, as Russell was not slow to appreciate, the repeated failure of every moderate and reasonable demand had by 1822 led many to contemplate a more radical solution. Only an improvement in trade during the mid-1820's and the nation'.s pre-occupation with other issues postponed the final reckoning, but when distress returned in 1829, Wellington found that men had not forgotten the lessons so painfully learned in the decades of war and peace.

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Chapter Eight
The Catholic Question and the Kent Brunswick Club, 1820-1829
By 1823 the popular demand for economy and reform had consid-erably abated. The compelling spur of acute post-war industrial and agrarian distress had been blunted by a welcome up-turn in trade, and there was, moreover, a new and vital issue vying for the attention of public opinion. The catholic question derived part of its monopolising appeal from the reservoirs of hatred and suspicion stored up in the chilling and vividly-remembered tales of Cranmer and Pox's Martyrs, of the Armada and Guy Fawkes, and of Judge Jeffreys, the Bloody Assize and the Popish Plot. However, the debate over Emancipation was able to unite in protest men from all ranks of society, not merely because it touched those preju-dices which fed and fostered among the embroidered and sensation-alised myths of by-gone centuries, but because it still seemed relevant to daily politics. The most elderly of Kent's electors might perhaps recall stories of the Young Pretender and the march on Derby; the Gordon Riots had convulsed ^ondon in 1780; and as recently as 1807, anti-catholicism had materially influenced the personnel of administration and the course of a general election. During the 1820's, Emancipation was inextricably bound up with the tense and potentially explosive situation in Ireland, and represented the principal bone of contention between the more pro-gressive elements in British political life, and those entrenched interests whose sole ambition it was to preserve inviolate the 'Protestant Constitution in Church and State'. The issue excited unprecedented demonstrations of extra-parliamentary feeling on both sides, and in the context of the present study, the momentous decision of 1829 was crucial in achieving a re-alignment of opinion on the eve of the Reform .bill crisis.

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Despite the occasional fears of the Kentish Chronicle, the catholic question did not surface in the elections of 1812 or 1818,

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and even in 1820 it was of only secondary importance in the countyfe deliberations. Sir Edward Knatchbull, like his father, was a life-long supporter of the established order in all its branches, and as such was returned by the freeholders. 1 W. P. Honywood, on the other hand, was known to sympathise with the catholic cause, and on 18 March responded to a cry of 'No Popery 1 from the crowd at

Maidstone in the following manner.

The^great body of Catholics, who constitute millions of subjects, think that they are aggrieved; and in pursuance
of such belief they presented a memorial to the House. I
voted that such memorial should be received, to ascertain whether the alleged grievances were well founded; to as-certain whether the Catholics had any claims which ou3ht to be considered... If ever a similar claim be laid before the^House; and if ever the feeling of the House and the Anti-Catholic spirit of the County should render such a proceeding necessary, I will cause a County Meeting to be called, for you to have an opportunity to attend; and
shall then ask you for your instructions and by such in-structions being obtained, I will abide. I will follow
them.

By this pledge, Honywood was able to stave off further criticism, and only as the decade progressed did he come under renewed press-
ure to fulfil its terms.

There is no evidence that borough candidates were similarly catechised in 1820. However the new parliament had not been sitting long before Kentish M.P.s were called upon to make public declaration of their views. On 28 February 1821 Plunket moved for a committee to consider the catholic claims and was victorious by 227 votes to 221. 5 Seven of the thirteen Kentish Members present in the House divided with the anti-catholics - S. R. Lush-ington (Canterbury), E. B. Wilbraham (Dover), Sir E. Knatchbull (Kent), A. W. Robarts and J. 'Wells (Maidstone), R. E. Erie Drax Grosvenor (New Romney), and G. P. Holford (Queenborough) - while of the five absentees, J. Butterworth (Dover), G. H. D. Pennant (New Romney), the Hon. J. C. Villiers (Queenborough), and

1 Kentish Chronicle, 29 Feb. 1820.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 21 Mar. 1820.
3 Parl. Deb., New Ser. iv. 1030-34.

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J. Marryat (Sandwich), were probably of the s^me persuasion.
They were opposed by Lord Clifton (Canterbury), S. J. Lloyd and
S. Marjoribanks (Hythe), W. P. Honywood (Kent), Lord Binning (Rochester), and Sir. G. V/arrender (Sandwich), and although forced to abstain in deference to the sentiments of his Rochester constit>- uents, Ralph Bernal may also be numbered among the pro-catholics, •vhile exposing a not wholly unexpected anti-catholic bias in the ranks of Kent's representatives, this analysis also bears witness to the operation of Liverpool's 'open system 1, and confirms G.I.'I1. Machin's description of Emancipation as 'the non-party issue par

1 excellence*. Lloyd, Marjoribanks and the Canningites^ Binning

and Warrender, had approved ministers 1 handling of the Queen's

p business on 6 February , while on this vote and Russell's reform motion of 9 May, the anti- catholic Robarts rejoined his friends in Opposition.
Plunket's motion was the first to pass the Commons since
1813? and was followed by two bills which sought to modify the Oath of Supremacy and to institute 'securities' in the form of a veto on appointments to Irish bishoprics and a check on communi-* cations with Rome. As a single measure, these proposals advanced to the Lords, and there perished in a far less hospitable climate. The episode was, hfewever, of lasting significance in Kentish terms not only because it publicised the attitudes of the county's rep-resentatives, but because it drew forth the first expressions of organised extra-parliamentary opinion on the catholic question. On 16 March, for example, the Commons received a petition from the inhabitants of Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells making known their 'anxiety' at the efforts being made by the catholics to obtain
'a further enlargement of their privileges'; and praying that

1 u. I. T. Machin, The Catholic Question in English Politics 1820 to 1830 (Oxford, 1964-;, p. Z.
2 Parl. Deb., New oer. iv. 507-11.
3 Parl. Deb., New Ser. iv. 524-6.

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1 this might not be permitted. The House of Lords was also

approached, and on 16 April was acquainted with the anti-catholic sentiments of the Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders of Kent, the Rector, Churchwardens, Vestry and other inhabitants of Ashford,

o and the Mayor, Jurats and Commonality of Faversham. Once begun,

the campaign was never allowed to slacken. Canning's bill to give catholic peers a seat in the upper chamber provoked renewed agi-tation, and during June 1822 hostile petitions were duly presented on behalf of the Minister and other inhabitants of Ashford, the Mayor, Jurats and Commonality of Tenterden, and the people of
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Harden and Cranbrook.

The foremost authority on the Emancipation struggle of the
1820's has written confidently that: 'There can be no doubt that most of the inhabitants of Great Britain were opposed to civil

4 equality for Catholics, as they had been for over 200 years'.

But which specific groups and interests within Kentish society composed the anti-popery movement? The traditionally insular and conservative borough corporations of the county were naturally prominent in resisting any encroachment on their cherished liber-ties. The unenfranchised corporations of Faversham and Tenterden, as we have already seen, were active from an early date, and their concern was mirrored in the parliamentary boroughs. On 9 April 1821, for instance, the Mayor, Jurats and Common Council
of Maidstone, and the Mayor, Jurats and Common Council of Canter-

S bury both petitioned the jjords, and repeated the exercise in 1822.
Such bodies were well versed in the techniques of propaganda, and could be relied on to mobilise their local electoral influence behind 'No Popery! candidates.
Across the county as a whole, the Church of England possessed
1 Com. Jour., Ixxvi. 172.
2 Lords Jour, j liv. 3^8 and 34-9.
3 Lords Jour., Iv. 216, 222 and 258.
4 Machin. The Catholic Question in English Politics 1820 to 1830, p. 5«
5 Lords Jour., liv. 179, and Iv. 251 and 222.

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immense power to form the ideas and fashion the responses of its congregations. Dr. Machin has shown how the vast majority of Anglican clergymen strove to conform to the wishes of their super-

1 iors and potential patrons , and throughout the 1820's the closes at Canterbury and Rochester laboured diligently to give an un-mistakable lead. On 2 April 1821 the Dean and Prebendaries of Canterbury petitioned the Commons against the scheme of relief
p then under discussion , and a few days later, the same dignitaries, together with the Archdeacon and clergy of the diocese, made their views known to the House of Lords.^ Kentish parsons took up the refrain with resolution, and were instrumental in procuring dozens of petitions from rural and urban parishes. Frequent references to contemporary politics in the Sunday sermon, intense debate and lobbying at vestry meetings, and the systematic collection of sig-natures by the churchwardens, proved as effective in the campaign against the catholics as tHe* had been in the anti-Jacobin crusade of 3^92, and among the first to unveil the fruits of their endeav-ours were the Rector of St. Paul's, Dartford, and the Vicar of
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Goudhurst.
Professor J. H. Hexter has observed, with respect to the
catholic cause, that: 'From the top of their ranks to the bottom, from the days of the Protestant Association in 1778 to the bitter day of emancipation, the antipathy of the Methodist Connection to any concessions was outspoken and vigorous 1. Kent had been much affected by the evangelical revival, and John Wesley himself vis-ited the county on numerous occasions. He preached regularly at
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Mount Sion in Tunbridge Wells , and was well-known in Ramsgate
1 G. I. 0?. Machin, 'The Catholic Emancipation Crisis of 1825', Eng. Hist. Rev., Ixxviii. (1963), 469.
2 Com. Jour., Ixxvi. 224.
3 Lords Jour., liv. 171.
4- Lords Jour., Iv. 251.
5 J.H. Hexter, 'The Protestant Revival and the Catholic Question in England 1778-1829', Journal of Modern History, viii. (1936), 306-7-
6 F.F. Brotherton, 'John Lesley's visits to Junbridge Jells', Pro-ceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, x.(1912-13) 197-9

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where a sizeable congregation developed during the 1770's and
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1780's. By July 1821 the denomination's strength in i.ent was

p estimated to have risen to 5 > 14-9 , and when Gobbett made his rural

ride through the V/eald in 1823 he encountered lively and flourish-

ing chapels in most of the villages and small towns. Farmers,

shop-keepers and craftsmen, as well as the Humphry Clinkers of

the county's labouring and servant classes^ were attracted by the

fiery sermons of the circuit preachers, and Dover's Wesleyan H.P.,

Joseph Butterworth, undoubtedly spoke on their behalf when he

declared to Charles Abbott:

The more I know of the Roman Catholics the more deeply I
am convinced that... to give them political power... must inevitably lead to fatal consequences.

The attitude of the dissenting churches to Catholic Emanci-

pation was ambiguous and requires a few words of explanation. To

/ 4 Halevy, the determining factor was strictly theological , while

both Professor Hexter, and more recently H. W. Davis, have pre-

ferred a socio-economic criterion. Kentish Baptists and Presby-

terians certainly had been divided among themselves during the

eighteenth century as to the precise nature of the Trinity, and

were as disunited in their response to the evangelical spirit of
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the age as was the Church of England. However, those doctrinal

1 F.F. Brotherton, 'John Wesley and Ramsgate', Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, viii. (1909-10), 202-4.
2 W.R. Ward (ed.), The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting 1821- 1829, Camden Society, 4th Ser. ii. (1972), 85:James Gill to Bunting, 29 July 1821.
3 Hexter, 'The Protestant Revival and the Catholic Question in England, 1778-1829', 307: Butterworth to Charles Abbott^nd.
4 E. HaleVy, A History of the English People in the nineteenth Century; The Liberal Awakening, 1815-1830 (sec, edn., London. 194-9), p. 273-
5 Hexter, 'The Protestant Revival and the Catholic Question in England, 1778-1829', 313-19; and R. W. Davis, Dissent in Poli-tics, 1780-1850: The Political Life of ./illiam Smith M.P.
(London, 1971), PP- 231-3-
6 It was estimated that there were ten thousand evangelical dis-senters in Kent in the early 1820's, and this figure may be
taken as renresenting the strength of anti-catholicism in the county's nonconformist community, Ward (ed.), The Early Corres-

pondence of Jabez Bunting, 1821-1829, p. 85: Gill to Bunting, July —— ——

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disputes should perhaps be regarded as merely the external manifes-tations of a more fundamental rift in the basic fabric of English nonconformity. By far the largest proportion of Kent's dissenting population was firmly rooted in the rural communities of the Weald and the eastern division, and derived a modest subsistence from agriculture and trade. Often descended from Dutch or Huguenot families, these sober and devout protestants could recount lurid tales of persecution at the hands of catholic princes, and in the 1820's gave vent to their deepest fears through the Protestant Society. Emancipation had to be resisted at all costs, even though it might appear the logical extension of the dissenters' own pol-itical aspirations, and hence in the crises of 1825 and 1827-9, petitions from all three maQor denominations flooded into Parlia-

ment.

But if it is reasonable to assume that the majority of
Kentish nonconformists looked with disfavour on the catholic claims, it is at least possible to isolate a not inconsiderable body of contrary opinion. Since the 1730-3 the Dissenting Depu-ties had represented the interests of congregations within about twelve miles of the metropolis, and in the 1820's were notorious 1
as 'warm friends of Roman Catholic Emancipation 1.' As the spokes-men of the most prosperous and best educated among their brethren, William Smith and his colleagues could rely upon the support of like-minded men and ministers in the expanding urban hundreds of north-west Kent, and at the same time gave purpose and direction to pro-catholic enclaves in the county's principal towns and ports. The Deputies apart, however, the catholic cause in Kent could muster none of the persuasive, coercive and organisational advan-

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tages afforded to its opponents by the adherence of corporations, clergymen and chapels. This is not of course to argue that

1 B. L. Manning, The Protestant Dissenting Deputies (Cambridge, 1952), p. 205-

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Emancipation lacked its devotees in the county. Grenville's plan of relief had been widely applauded in the press and on the hust-ings in 1807, and there was no shortage of freemen and freeholders willing to elect pro-catholic M.P.s. Respected politicians like W. P. Honywood, Baron Teynham and the ^arl of Darnley were prof-oundly impressed with a sense of the injustice of the existing law, and publicly admitted ill-foreboding at the deterioration of

1 affairs in Ireland. Yet when a co-ordinated extra-parliamentary

campaign was required to forward the designs of their Westminster generals, the Kentish pro-catholics proved both hesitant and fragmented. Contemporaries were undoubtedly too sanguine in calculating the strength of the protestant interest in the nation as a whole, and thus had less justification for their open condem-nation of Peel and Wellington in 1829- But if Kent was in any way typical among English counties, the critics of Government may be excused for interpreting silence and inaction, until the eleventh hour, as an admission of weakness.
This conclusion was never more attractive than in 1825, when
the alarming progress of the Catholic association in Ireland led Burdett to propose and carry a motion on 25 February for a com-

p mittee of the whole House. A bill of relief and safeguards was
piloted through the Commons, and only foundered in the Lords after a passionate speech by the Duke of York and the threat of Liver-pool's resignation. The reaction in the country, though not altogether unexpected, was remarkable for its scope, its spontan-eity and its vigour. Petitions poured into Parliament. One batch, presented to the Commons on 18 ^pril, hailed from places as far
. apart as Beckenham, Ash-next-Sandwich, Chatham, Rolvenden,

1 On Lord Teynham see A. Vallance, 'The Ropers and their i-ionu-ments in Linsted Church 1, A.C., xliv. (1932), 149-50; and for Darnley's views Parl. Deb., New Ser. xii. 937, and xiv. 1201.
2 Machin, The Catholic Question in English Politics 1820 to 1850, chap, iii; and Machin, 'The Catholic Emancipation Crisis of 1825', 468-82.

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Aldington and Smeeth, East Peckham, Wye, Canterbury and Lydd ,

while the people of Birling, Hadlow, West Hailing, Jateringbury,

Ryarsh, Aylesford and Trotterscliffe swelled the throng of sup-p
plicants at the fe'et of the upper House during May. rhe guiding

genius of Anglican and dissenting clergymen was much in evidence,

and from every quarter the 'No Popery 1 refrain was loud and un-

compromising.

The Kentish press played a leading role in disseminating in-

formation and encouraging popular protest. Copies of petitions,

accounts of even the smallest parish meeting, and lengthy reports

of parliamentary debates were carried in every issue and readers

were given generous space to air their views, The pro-c'atholic

Kentish Chronicle and Kent Herald adopted a strangely subdued tone

in their advocacy of Emancipation, but the printer of the tory

Kentish Gazette had greater confidence in the disposition of his

subscribers, and was congratulated by one Faversham correspondent

for: 'The unequivocal manner in which, by your respectable publi-

cation, you declare your attachment to the Constitution in Church
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and State, as by law established of this nation 1. At the very

outset, the paper warned its readers to beware:

A bill is about to be brought into the House of Commons
which is of vital interest to every Englishman, and
especially to every Canterbury Freeman. I allude to khat
is called the Catholic Emancipation Bill. A bill which
may place our children, if not ourselves, at the mercy of the professors of that religion, which was planted in ignorance, and maintained in blood! Shall the Freemen of Canterbury stand idly by, while measures are taken which are likely to recall the scenes of Queen hary's day? On the wall of our City we may stand and look into the very field where our forefathers were butchered - may see the spot in which as our highly gifted young poet has remarked,

The victims of a bigot Queen
And creed more cruel, felt the torturing flame
Wind round their hearts, while things that bore the name
Of men, stood scoffing by!

1 Com. Jour., Ixxx. 314-15-
2 Lords Jour., Ivii. 823, 834, 82? and 830.
3 See K. J. Eaton, 'Newspapers and Politics in Canterbury and Maidstone 1815-1850: Opinion in the kentish Town' (Univ. of Kent M.A. thesis 1972), chap. 4.
4 Kentish Gazette, 28 har. 1825-

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And having thus conjured up the smoke-shrouded spectre and deathly-lament of the martyred host, the Kentish Gazette went on to a possible method of self-preservation:
From the numerous visitations of Catholic Intolerance
which our City has suffered, we are therefore called on
more than any others to exert ourselves against the friends
of emancipation. This cannot be more effectually accom-
plished than by watching the conduct of our Representatives
in the present Parliament, and witholding at any future
Election, our support from that Member who shall vote for
the Catholic Claims.
II

The Kentish Gazette was encouraged to broach the subject of electoral retribution on delinquent M.P.s, because it was widely predicted that the Ultras at Court and in the Cabinet would per-suade Liverpool to call a snap general election and thereby capit-alise upon the country's apparent 'No Popery' fever. Wellington seems to have favoured this policy, but at length the Prime Minis-
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ter was won over to Canning's preference for a delayed dissolution. Opposition's promise not to agitate the catholic question in the interim allowed passions to cool, and as R. W. Greaves .has dis-covered at Leicester, it was not long before electors were once
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more busily engaged in local intrigue. The renewed on-set of depression after the collapse of the South American market and Government's tampering with the sanctity of the Corn Laws diverted public attention into different channels and ensured that future parliamentary candidates would be judged on a whole range of issues. Furthermore, while dissensions among ministers and Agri-culturists disrupted the once unified front of the protestant party, the pro-catholics were able to launch a stealthy counter-offensive. 'A TRUE BLUE', for example, was emboldened to declare in the Kentish Chronicle;
The infatuated pertinacity with which the editor of the
Kentish Gazette maintains the admission of the rcoman
1 Kentish Gazette, 11 Apr. 1825-
2 Machin, The Catholic Question in English Politics 182Q to 1850. chap. iv.
3 R. W. Greaves, 'Roman Catholic Relief in the Leicester flection of 1826', T.R.H.S., 4th Ser. xxiii. (1940), 199-223.

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Catholics to power, as destructive of 'Protestant Ascen-dancy1 is every day strongly developed. When will this hereditary prejudice march off the stage? When will this towering load of superstition dissipate before the dawn of a brighter atmosphere? When will the 'march of the intellect 1 overtake the reason of the mind? Surely in
the nineteenth century, we have nought to fear from the admission of Romanism to power, than from dissenters of every other description? Flimsy, indeed, must that man's faith be, who imagines Catholicity would immediately inveifc 'Protestant ascendancy 1 - weak must be his opinion of the
dogmas of the latter to fear its overthrow by the admissior
of five or six Catholic Peers in England into the upper
House of Parliament, or the^return from Ireland of double
so many Catholic Commoners.
Hence, when the keenly anticipated dissolution finally came about in June 1826, an anti-catholic landslide was no longer to be expected.
The freemen of Canterbury had not been deaf to the Kentish Gazette's strictures against Burdett's bill, and as early as April 1825 a group of metropolitan non-residents had resolved to confer quarterly after listening to an harangue on the catholic
2 question. S. R. Lushington was the obvious man to harness this popular concern, and at a meeting at the Blacfc Lion, Bishopsgate, on 15 May 1826 he was toasted for 'his conduct in opposing any further concessions to the Roman Catholics, whereby he has evinced his regard for their Archiepiscopal City, and the general safety
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of the Kingdom in Church and otate 1. Lord Clifton, on the other hand, had aroused the wrath of the tory press, and his supporters could only remind their fellow electors of the noble Member's 1818 and 1820 assertions of independence when seeking to excuse his

4. pro-catholic votes. Nevertheless, both candidates seemed reason-ably confident of success, and for some weeks a contest appeared unlikely.
However, the two major parties had over-looked a growing r feeling among a section of the freeman body that somehow their interests were not being adequately represented. The non-residenls 1 Kentish Chronicle, 16 June 1826.
2 Kentish Gazette, 8 Apr. 1825-
3 Kentish Chronicle, 23 May 1826.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 6 June 1826.

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were particularly sensitive to rumours of a coalition between Lushington and Clifton, by which they might be excluded from
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borough politics , while on 31 Hay 1826, some 200 persons, 'chiefly mechanics', assembled at the City Arms, Northgate, in the hope of

p securing two entirely independent candidates. Thomas hather was anxious to prevent his city becoming a rotten borough, and John Chapman argued forcibly that Lushington had disqualified himself from their service by accepting a government office. The Kentish Chronicle took up the same theme on 2 June, and advised all elec-tors to disregard party labels and the current flourishes of oratory. What the nation required was the return of i-i.P.s like Joseph Hume:
... who will watch the bill-framers closely - who will
divide the House over and over again, before they let
stupid, crude, barbarous motions pass into laws - who will, without respect to persons or parties, fall foul of all
jobs, great and little, and not fear to carpy a lighted
dandle into all the recesses of corruption.
To the Kentish Chronicle, taxation, poor rates and the Civil List were the critical issues at stake in the election, and as polling day approached, public discussion of these ever-green topics rivalled even the debate on the catholic claims.
By 13 June a contest was assured, and although it proved weak
and ineffective, the challenge offered by a discontented minority did reflect in embryonic form many of the conflicts which were to
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prove decisive in 1830. As on previous occasions, DeaneJohn Parker urged that Lushington should be Judged oh the record of the administration of which he was a member, and the candidate himself drew his audience's attention to the 212,000,000 cut in expenditure and the beneficial effects of changes in the commercial code. But some freemen were not so easily impressed. Lushington was cloaely questioned by Mr. Chapman who was convinced that the country's

1 See reports of meetings in Kentish Gazette, 8 Apr. 1825; and Kentish Chronicle, 23 Hay 1826.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 2 June 1826.
3 Ibid.
4 For report Kentish Chronicle, 16 June 1826.

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distress was due to those sinecuitets whdofc were pocketing large sums annually from the public purse' ; and later oame under heavy-fire from Charles Larkin who bitterly attacked the great number of placemen and pensioners at Jestminster. Larkin poured scorn on the notion that 'the people of England were prosperous, that they were heaping gold in the day, and reposing upon a bed of roses at night 1; and listed the Corn Laws and high taxes among the prime causes of national hardship.
To Mr. Brent, Lord Clifton was 'a staunch friend to liberty 1
who would faithfully represent the 'popular cause', while to Alders man Cooper his conduct had exceeded the 'sanguine expectations'
of his supporters, especially by his votes in favour of reform and retrenchment. Here too, however, a chorus of voices were raised in angry protest, and it was in the hope of unseating Clifton that the Hon. Richs.rd Watson (the brother of Lord Sondes) was put in nomination. The Kentish Chronicle believed that this opposition originated in a local conviction that his lordship did not 'go
far enough in his political doctrine'; and the radical Kent Herald saw the move as necessary in order to end the practice

1 of compromise between the parties. The desire for an 'indepen-

dent third man' certainly testifies to a considerable disillusion-ment in the borough, although Watson's unwillingness to appear
on the hustings and his failure to attract more than 107 votes against Clifton's 4-36 and Lushington's 665, suggests that the scheme was premature. In 1830jWatson's star was visibly in the ascendant, so that his noble opponent had no hesitation in step-ping hastily aside; but in 1826 even Charles Larkin felt that the opposition groups would do better to unite and 'husband their resources'. The introduction of financial and commercial issues into the contest, coupled with the excitement of Watson's appeax-ance in the race, had, however, entirely over-shadowed the

1 Kent Herald, 15 June 1826.

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catholic question, which was scarcely mentioned on nomination day. The same preoccupation with local affairs is to be found in
most of the other Kentish constituencies. At Sandwich, for example, the younger Joseph Marryat came forward to recapture the seat formerly held by his late father, and did so with many professions of personal independence and support for the borough's harbour
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project. The only hint that the Sandwich freemen felt strongly about Catholic Emancipation is given by the retirement of Sir

p George Warrender on grounds of ill health. Warrender was a Cann-ingite and a pro-catholic, and his immediate acceptance of one of Lopes's seats at Westbury implies either a miraculous recovery,
or a calculation that a renewed candidature at Sandwich would not be greeted with universal acclamation, and might even damage the remaining ministerial interest. His chosen successor, Sir E.W.C.R. Owen, was thus an unswerving anti-catholic, who was to cause some-thing of a furore by his resignation on principle early in 1829- The election at Rochester reveals more explicit evidence of anti-catholic sentiment, inspired, no doubt, by the cathedral and corporation interests. The candidate nominated with the avowed backing of Government was the Hon. Henry Dundas, who openly declarg*

3 himself 'totally averse 1 to the catholic claims. The pledges

demanded from Ralph Bernal are even more instructive about the character of local opinion. Votes from Lord Clifton and James Barnett, his advocacy of reform and retrenchment, and his belief in the need for a revision of the Corn Laws, mark him out as the spokesman of the city's anti-ministerialists; - yet on the hustings Bernal unconditionally 'assured his constituents that as they were decidedly averse to the measure ^Emancipation] , he would remain entirely neuter, unless he received their further instructions'. Having dutifully accepted this constraint upon his freedom of

1 Kentish Chronicle, 23 nay 1826.
2 Ibid.
3 Reports in Kent Herald, 15 and 22 June 1826.

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action, however, there was little prospect of so well respected and active an I-;.P. being defeated by the third contestant, General Armstrong, despite that gentleman's self-confessed admiration of 'the form of the Jritish Constitution, and the way in which the King's ministers conducted the affairs of this great Empire 1. The traditional division of seats was thus preserved, albeit by a unique comDromise.
At Dover, the 1826 election was the first in a series of inter-factional disputes that was to convulse the borough on
four occasions before the passing of the Reform 3ill, and in which, as at Canterbury, the catholic question had only a superficial and transitory importance. The manoeuvrings among the freemen began

1 as early as 30 March at a meeting in the Guildhall. One group

proposed to invite Colonel Fitz-Clarence to seek nomination on account of his strong maritime connections; another urged that the sitting Members should not be disturbed; while a third party suggested James Morrison and Charles Poulett Thomson as likely to advance the liberties of the town. The final resolution went in favour of Fitz-Clarence, but the day's proceedings had sparked off a furious debate in the county press. A correspondent in the Kentish Gazette, for example, strove to rally 'All friends of the Constitution' behind Wilbraham and Butterworth, and violently denounced Lieut. Charles Pybus Lade ,and his fellow liberals. 'Under his auspices', ran the letter, 'with their open declaration of most radical principles, and their avowed intention to support Catholic Emancipation, these silk-mercers make their appearance here'.

In this manner, the various borough interests jockeyed for position during the next few weeks. Wilbraham was reasonably safe in the colours of administration and the corporation, while Thomson gradually c^me to the front as the selection of the

1 Kentish Gazette, 4- Apr. 1826.
2 Kentish Gazette, 8 Apr. 182o.

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progressive independents. The maverick in the field was John Halcomb, who, according to the hostile Kent Herald had been 'brouglt • forward on Ministerial interest, by a party of the inhabitants of Dover who were stated to be a little jealous of the exclusive patronage which a junta of Mr. Jilbraham's friends have long en-
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joyed 1. Having been approved as a fit candidate on 13 Hay2, Halcomb undertook an extensive canvass, and when at the Two 3rewers public house in Canterbury he was at pains to assure the assembled non-residents that he had neither been sent down by Peel, nor was in league with the Lord Warden. On the contrary, Halcomb wished 'to protect and watch the liberties of my countrymen, and to act on pure independent principles, courting no favours, nor fearing the frowns of any man in power 1. 5 Consequently, as the winning post approached, it was Joseph Butterworth that came under greatest pressure in maintaining his place, for as a Methodist, an anti-catholic and an anti-reformer, he somehow lacked the essential pedi-gree of a thorough-bred champion of Dover's uninfluenced freemen. Butterworth was slow to respond to the dangers which beset
him, and thus allowed his rivals to benefit from an extended appeal to public concern at the state of national politics. While at Canterbury, Halcomb announced his sympathy towards a modification of the Corn Laws, and made frequent references to a pamphlet
which he had himself penned on the subject. 'I do think that
the farmer ought to be protected', he agreed, 'but at the
same time am of opinion, that means ought to be adopted for the poor man to get his bread as cheap as possible'. He also called for a 'total alteration in the Poor Law 1, which at present 'placed virtue in a worse situation than vice, and discouraged all feel-ings of independence in the minds of the poor'; and advocated

1 Kent Herald, 22 June 1826.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 16 May 1826.
3 Kentish Chronicle, ^3 May 1826.

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adequate provision for the aare of orphans und the elderly. As to the current religious controversy, Halcomb publicly nailed his colours to the 1689 compromise between an Anglican establish-ment and toleration: 'I am for granting to the Catholics every advantage that a Protestant government could give them, with safety to the crown, but certainly would oppose the Catholics having the privilege of a seat in the British Parliament, as
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being contrary and dangerous to the British Constitution1.
And if Halcomb had in this way been enabled to steal Butter-worth's anti-catholic thunder, C. P. Thomson was making every effort to carry off the anti-ministerial vote. When seconding Thomson on nomination day, Mr. Beecham recalled Butterworth 1 s support for the suspension of Habeas Corpus, and the hopeful young candidate himself argued vehemently for an end to protection, a rigid policy of retrenchment, and a measure of parliamentary

2 reform. Butterworth tried to fight back. He had steadfastly

endeavoured to retain his independence, he was eager to assist the commercial interest by a change in the Corn Laws, and no doubt sought to profit from Thomson's vague and guarded comments on Emancipation, by restating his commitment to the House of Bruns-

x wick. But it was not enough; and when the polls finally closed

after a sttormy and often violent contest, the figures were: Wilbraham 1175
Thomson 7^6
Halcomb 628
Butterworth 198
Finch 13 Kingsford 8
In a sense, Butterworth was correct when he spoke of 'a contest
of party feeling rather than principle'; while Thomson penetrated to the heart of the matter when he congratulated the freemen 'on having rescued their town from the disgrace of becoming a Govern-ment Borough 1. Wilbraham triumphed in spite of his aloofness
1 Kentish Chronicle, 23 and 30 May 1826.
2 Kentish Gazette, 13 June 1826.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 19 May 1826.

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throughout the election, and Thomson chased him home because a sizeable body of the voters was in agreement with his abhorrence of ministers and all their works. Emancipation engendered much sound and fury, but in the end, for Butterworth and Halcomb, it signified nothing.
Maidstone had been divided on the subject of catholic relief
in 1825, and furnishes us with the only example of a Kentish H.P. to change his stance during the lifetime of the 1820 parliament. Having watched John Wells present the borough's anti-catholic petition to the Commons in 1825, A. W. Robarts rose to declare that:

. . . although the petition was carried at a very respectable. meeting of the inhabitants of Maidstone, he was able to
state that a great number of the people of that town entez?-
tained opposite sentiments with respect to religious tol-
eration. He had formerly been averse to what was common-
ly called Catholic Emancipation, but having heard the
speech of the Attorney-General for Ireland Q?lunkelO and
of the Secretary of State for foreign affairs [Canning]
his views had been entirely changed, and he much regretted
that he had ever voted against the Catholic claims.
It remains to be seen, however, whether or not the divisions and soul-searchings prompted by Emancipation were still at work in 1826.
Both the newly pro-catholic Robarts and the protestant stal-
wart John Wells, came forward for re-election at the dissolution. Their only opponent was Windham Lewis, the proprietor of 'an iron establishment 1 in Glamorgan, which, as the proud owner conceded, 'was the largest in the world 1 . On the hustings j^ewis admitted that Emancipation was 'a question of vital importance'; and went

on:

I am a steady friend to civil and religious liberty, particularly as it respects Protestant Dissenters, but I
cannot reconcile my mind to the idea of giving political
power to the Roman Catholics.
Unfortunately for the aspiring industrialist, these words brought no immediate avalanche of grateful votes from the borough's
1 Parl. Deb., New Ser. xiii. 175-
2 Kent Herald, 15 June 1826.

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nonconformists, neither was he caught up and borne aloft by the quondam adherents of the apostate Robarts. In fact, he could only attract ninety-five votes, and soon retired from the fray, grum-bling as he went, that he had been 'most deeply imposed upon 1. The two principal local interests were so well entrenched and evenly balanced that no single issue could break the electoral stalemate, and it must therefore be concluded that Lewis had been induced to stand simply to ensure the spending of money. The Kentish Chronicle's verdict on the contest clearly indicates that for the moment both sides had cheerfully accepted this impasse; Pew elections have taken place at Maidstone with such
perfect good feeling between the parties as the present,
and the result shows the,late Members being again returned
that they had obtained the good opinion of the electors
in general.
At Hythe the two leading candidates were similarly inclined towards a tranquil election, and thus carefully avoided any inflam-atory statements. Although a pro-catholic, Stewart I-Iarjoribanks did not elaborate upon the motives behind his votes of 1821 and

2 1825 in his published address , while Sir Robert Townshend Farquhar responded in guarded tones to the questioning of William

Deedes:

he was not the advocate for indiscriminately conceding
every demand made by the Catholics; but was desirous of
seeing that important subject, like other great leading questions of the day, settled by the mature deliberation
of Parliament upon grounds of justice and expediency.
However, if the persecutor of S. E. Sawbridge at Canterbury in 1807 had somewhat moderated his language, there remained zealots in both camps resolved to thrust the catholic issue before the electorate. Writing in the Kentish Chronicle in April 1826,
'J. W.' argued the case for Emancipation:
The great question of Catholic Emancipation, has undergone
the ordeal of Parliamentary investigation. It is not for
me to object to the decisions of the 'Collective Wisdom 1,
but, when I see a great portion of the inhabitants of this
1 Kentish Chronicle, 16 June 1826.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 6 June 1826. 3 Kent Herald, 15 June 1826.

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and the Sister Kingdom disabled, and unable to participate
in legislating for so great a portion of their brethren,
every feeling breast must irrepressibly hasree for the time,
when the march of intellect shall preponderate over bigot-
ry, and the dawn of reason dissipate the cloud of oppress-
ion.

Then, on the very day of nomination, the borough was excited by

a letter from Sir Egerton Brydges, which, having warned that 'a

false step frt this crisis' would 'render the agricultural, comm-

ercial, and financial decline of this country irrecoverable 1;

went on to hint at the dangers to persons and property from the
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impending changes in 'the grand provisions of Magna Carta'. The

intentions of both authors were plain enough, yet they entirely

failed to provoke either a contest or an extensive public debate.

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Marjoribanks and Farquhar could be relied upon to attend tireless^

to the day-to-day business of administration, and for the voters

of Hythe this was a recommendation more durable than passionate

and intractable commitment to a single cause.

Finally to the county constituency, where the opinions of

the likely candidates were summarised by 'A TRUE BLUE':

Sir E. Knatchbull is well known to have voted in oppositior
to Catholic claims, on every occasion when the subject
was brought before the House of Commons, His coadjutor
(Mr. Honywood) diametrically opposing every act bearing
a feature of illiberality, conceded his wishes to the
measure, by adding his support to that of many other honourable gentlemen, whose fears were not roused by the
prospect of burnings, scaldings, nail-drawings and seal-
pings, and although up to the time I am writing, unsuccess-
ful in his endeavours to emancipate a greatly injured
class of beings,^1 have no doubt, ultimately, the point
will be yielded.

The propaganda battle was entered into with alacrity by the

printers and correspondents of the rival Kentish newspapers, but

a serious challenge to either of the sitting Members was always

improbable. The Kentish Gazette demanded that all candidates be

thoroughly interrogated 'with reference to those two great and

and momentous questions, the claims of the Roman Catholics, and
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the state of the Agricultural interest 1 ; and the Kentish

1 Kentish Chronicle, 21 Apr. 1826.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 13 June 1826.
3 Kentish GhronicTe, 16 June 1826. 4 Ibid. —————

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Chronicle retorted:

The thread bare cry of 'No Popery 1 has been raised against Mr. Honywood, but the enlightened men of Kent, with whom
he is a great favourite, receive it as the offspring of interested persons; the attempt will therefore recoil,
with more force, to the mortification of those who advanced
it. r

On election day, Hodges and Rider did their utmost to eschew

specific mention of Honywood's pro-catholic sympathies, and con-

p cantrated instead on his efforts to curb extravagance. However

when Mr. Hatton rose to propose Hnatchbull, he called for definite

pledges on slavery, catholic relief and the Corn Laws. Sir

Edward naturally deplored slavery and associated himself with the

resolutions of 182$ which looked forward to the granting of free-

dom as soon as the interests of all concerned had been safe-

guarded. He restated his commitment to agriculture and his

determination to resist any further erosion of its prosperity,

and left the freeholders in no doubt that he believed a strong

landed interest held the key to the nation's well-being. Finally,

Knatchbull echoed Hatton's panegyric on the blessings and excel-

lence of the existing Constitution, and alerted his audience to

the potential strength of a united body of thirty or forty cath-

olic h.P.s in a future parliament.

But if Knatchbull had done all that was requested of him,

Honywood was not too be over-awed.

If he supposed that the Protestant Establishment would
be endangered by the admission of thirty or forty Cath-
olic Members into the House of Commons, he would not support the claim - but he considered that the required concession would have the effect of giving strength to the Institutions of the country. Painful as it was to differ in opinion with so many of his friends, yet bel-ieving that the safety of Ireland, and perhaps that of England, depended upon the concession, his conscience compelled him to support the measure. At the time when Catholics were excluded from political power, no measure could be too strong on that point. Nearly the whole of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales was attached to the cause of the Pretender, and nothing but strong measures would have prevented the Catholics from voting out Protestant-ism; but now the reason for restriction had ceased to exist, these restrictions ought to be removed.

1 Kentish Chronicle, 6 June 1826. 2 Kentish Chronicle, 23 June 1826.

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A few dissentient voices were raised, lief erring to lionywood,
J. P. Plumptre declared: 'Many of his friends who had supported him and his family before him, would, if there had been an oppor-tunity, have come in large bodies against him 1. But for the most part, the freeholders seemed ready enough to acquiesee in the return of both men without resort to a poll.
Ill

The preceding survey strongly suggests that in 1826 Catholic Emancipation did not exercise the exclusive fascination which

1 contemporaries expected or feared. Its limited influence is

repealed by comparing division lists from before and after the election. On 28 February 1825, seven Kentish M.P.s voted for

2 Burdett's pro-catholic motion, and nine opposed it. Of the former

group, Warrender and ^ord Binning may h^ve been induced to retire by the hostility of freemen at Sandwich and Rochester, but Clifton, Marjoribanks, Robarts and Honywood were all re-elected without much difficulty, and together with C. P. 'Thomson were in the minor-

's i ity when Emancipation was defeated in the Commons on 6 March 1827.

Five of the six anti-catholics who came forward again were success-ful , and in the new House their strength was augmented by the addition of Owen, Dundas, and Capel. With Bernal still neutral, and the absent Parquhar, Marryat, Tapps and Lord Downes likely to follow the lead of ministers, the balance had tilted slightly in favour of preserving the status quo, although by no means so dramatically as some had predicted.
Why should this have been so? In the first pl^ce, the
'No Popery* movement was not well suited to satisfy the special requirements of electoral politics. Kentish clergymen might achieve much from the pulpit and in the vestry, but there is no evidence that they could organise troops of voters in the style

1 Compare Machin, The Catholic Question in English Politics 1820 to 1830, P- 87.
2 Parl. Deb., New Ser. xii. 840-4.
3 Parl. Deb., New Ser. xvi. 109-13-

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of the Irish priesthood. Likewise, jrrofessor riexter has demon-

strated the very insignificant role of evangelical protestantism

1 in the open constituencies. Anti-catholicism was essentially an

extra-parliamentary creed, and one designed to denounce innovation,

rather than to take opinion by the nose or to win converts.

Founded upon fear, prejudice and the values of a former age, its

existence and vitality demanded a central focus for its protests,

and the undivided allegiance of conservative propagandists. Con-

sequently the silence of the parliamentary pro-catholics after

mid 1825 had the effect of halting the momentum gathered by the

protestant interest since 1821, while in the subsequent election,

potential supporters, as well as the tory press, were fatally side-

tracked by the more immediate attractions of agricultural issues.

Inter-factional strife within Tory ranks was to play an

important part in shaping the future of Emancipation in the next

few years, and even in 1826, the Kent Herald recognised its

debilitating effect on the protestant cause:

As far as we have observed, the present elections have been
less distinguished than any we recollect, for the display
of political feeling. Where the contest has been severe,
it has been chiefly from personal considerations; public
principle has been made of little account. Is this"1 to be attributed to the peaceful, contented, and flourishing state of the country? - it cannot be — since domestic dis-asters have pressed on us unceasingly of late; some yet prevail, and others are anticipated. Manufacturing dis-tress and agricultural apprehension, one might have imag-ined to call forth a greater intensity of interest in the choice of those who are to preside over our future destin-ies. Disgraces have so often knocked at the door of admin- ,j istration, that no great confidence can exist in its wiG-dom or competency; but its good intentions are not so
much questioned as formerly. In a word, we believe the secret to be in the altered policy which a portion of the ministry has succeeded in adopting, i-ore liberal views seem to actuate the ruling powers - they accede to, they act upon, in some degree, the principles which the Reform-ers - the Liberals - have so long advocated. They have, in part, renounced the errors of tyranny, Jigotfry, and Slavery
- they have approached tov/ards the standard of an enlight-
ened age - and shew (sic) a disposition to advance on it.
This disarms opposition from the popular party - and the
greatest dissention that exists, is betweenpthe new and
old factions into which Toryism is divided.

1 Hexter, 'The irrotestant Revival and the Catholic ^uestion in England 1778-1829', 208-12.
2 Kent Herald, 29 June 1826.

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The anti-popery campaign laboured under further disabilities throughout much of 1827. The protestant party had managed to draw some comfort from the overall election returns, and was en-couraged to offer stiff resistance to a renewed application for catholic relief. On 5 March the Commons received petitions from the corporation of Maidstone, the diacese of Rochester, numerous parishes in Canterbury, and small rural towns such as Biddenden and Smarden, while another entry in the Journals for the same
day records no fewer than sixty-five petitions from assorted

1 Kentish parishes. But jubilation at the frustretion of Burdett's

motion was short-lived, and was succeeded by a period of uncert-ainty and enforced inactivity. The sudden removal of Liverpool's stabilising presence threw the political world into chaos, and absorbed the attention of M.P.s and pundits alike. Canning caugbt briefly at the reins of power, but on 14- August the Kentish

p Chronicle reported the 'dismal tidings' of his premature death. For a few hectic months Goderich strutted and fretted his painful hour upon the national stage, and then, by the turn of the year,
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he too was gone to be heard no more. Not until Wellington and Peel returned to office was the semblance of sanity restored, and for many anti-catholics the eclipse of the Canningites no doubt presaged the end of their torments. Yet these hopes were soon to be disappointed, for, in the very hour of apparent victory, two events - the repeal of the i'est and Corporation Acts and the County Clare election - precipitated the crisis of final reckoning.
The surrender of full civil rights to dissenters came about
as the result of no nationwide agitation, and it was as surprising to their leaders as it was displeasing to the partisans of the Church of England. No immediate attempt was made to capitalise
1 Com. Jour., Ixxxii. 272 and 271.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 14- t oig. 1827.
3 See A. Aspinall, 'Canning's Ministry 1, and 'Goderich's Ministry, 1 . Hist, i-tev., xlii. (1927), 201-26 and 533-59.

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upon the precedent thereby established , but the integrity of the Constitution had been irremediably violated, and its ancient

2 mystique rendered as vulnerable as mist before the rising sun.

O'Connell's celebrated return at a County Clare by-election in July 1828 greatly accelerated the process set in motion by Russell unexpected victory, and finally convinced Wellington that Emanci-pation could no longer be postponed. The House of uommons again boasted a pro-catholic majority which it was now impossible to subdue by the threat of a dissolution, since a general election would allow the Catholic Association to repeat its recent success and provoke violent uproar throughout Ireland. Faced with the imminent prospect of civil commotion and the paralysis of the administrative machine, the Cabinet prepared to sacrifice princi-ple on the altar of expediency, and only delayed an open declar-ation of intent until a viable scheme aould be worked out.
While ministers strove to convince the King of the inaecap-
able logic of their policy, rumours of their impending volte face incited a group of ultra protestants to attempt a last-ditch
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defence of the old Constitution. In July 1828 a Brunswick Club was established in London, and in ^u~ust the "Sari of Winchilsea informed Lord Chandos of his plan to organise a similar insti-
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tution in Kent. During the next few weeks Vinchilsea laboured hard to implement his proposal, but having corresponded with most of the influential figures in Kentish politics, he must have been dismayed at the apparent coolness of the general response. Though 'a decided Staunch Protestant 1, Viscount Sydney preferred not to

1 G. I. '!. Machin, 'Resistance to Repeal of the Test and Corpor-ation Acts, 1828', Hist. Jour., xxii. (1979), 115-20.
2 See Manning, The Protestant Dissenting Deputies, pp. 217-53; R.W. Davis, Dissent in Politics 1780-1830; The Political Life
of William Smith El.P. (^ondon, 1971), chap. 12; and Davis, 'The Strategy of Dissent in the Repeal Campaign, 1820-1828', Jour-
nal of Modern History, xxxviii. (1966), 387-93-
3 See G. I. T. Machin, 'The ^; o-Popery Movement in uritain, 1828-29', Hist. Jour., vi. (1963;, 193-211.
4- Finch Hatton Papers FH. 4-608: .Vinchilsea to Chandos, 26 Aup;. 1828.

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commit himself until he knew exactly what the Government meant

1 to do , while the i-iarquifif Gamden argued that the whole matter

should be left to Parliament 'where I conceive those who have

seats in either House, can with more effect & propriety declare

p their sentiments'. Viscount Bexley wished to await further

3 developments before speaking out publicly , and i^arl Stanhope

told .Vinchilsea that 'the greatest prudence is requisite at the

present moment 1. The master of Ghevening explained:

that an awful responsibility with respect to Ireland rests
with the Executive Government, & that I should be very
unwilling either to share that responsibility or to take
any measure by which I might appear to be implicated in
the calamities that may ensue in that Gountry & you must have observed how much every Government is disposed to shift upon others the blame which may justly be ascribed to itself.

He was also anxious to prevent conflict nearer home:

There does not appear to exist in this or in any other County of England any popular feeling in behalf of the Catholics, but it would, I think, be excited through a necessary reaction by such measures as you have in contem-plation, & for the Protestants in this Country the wisest maxim appears to be quieta non movere & to avoid throwing any sparks which might lead to a mighty conflagration.

The Earl of Rormey raised another objection, with which his

father had been confronted in 1780:

The principle of a self constituted, permanent, political body I consider to be very objectionable. Different as
the practice has been, the principle I consider to be uniformly bad, whether it originates a Whig Club, a Pitt Club, a Jacobin Club, a Corresponding Society, an Orange Lodge- a Gatholic Association, a Brunswick Protestant Club. 5

Undeterred, Winchilsea replied:

I perfectly agree with you, as to the general objection
to political Clubs, where they are intended to support
any party question, but surely a Club established to guard against the attempt of Associations formed for the avowed

1 Finch Hatton Papers FH. 4-565: Sydney to Winchilsea, 2 Sept.
1828.

2 Finch Hatton Papers FH.4-595: Camden to Winchilsea, $1 Aug. 1828.
3 Finch Hatton Papers FH.4-567: Bexley to Winchilsea, 2 Sept. 1828.
4- Finch Hatton Papers FH.4-508: Stanhope to winchilsea, 3 Sept. 1828.
5 Finch Hatton Papers FH.4-572: Romney to Winchilsea, 7 Sept. 1828.

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purpose of subverting our Protestant Constitution cannot
be liable to that objection £ it must be important that
the Government, who are entrusted with the Maintenance
of the Constitution, should be made acquainted with the
real sentiments of the Protestants of England at this
momentous crisis.

And in this view he was upheld by the Earl of Guilford, who wrote

on 24- August:

... altho' in ordinary times I certainly think political
clubs unconstitutional, & that the regular mode for us to
express our opinions is in Parliament, & for the community
at large by petition; still as such associations of our
Enemies are not suppressed by law, we should not be upon
equal terms with them were we not permitted to use their
weapons in self defence, & upon this ground alone they
are justifiable.

Thus, despite the apprehensions of many Kentish tory aristo-

crats, Winchilsea pressed ahead with the arrangements for a meet-

ing at Maidstone on 16 September 'to take into consideration the

best means at the present crisis of expressing the determination

of the Protestants of the County to uphold the principles which
' 3
placed the House of Brunswick on the Throne of these realms.

With Colonel Wingfield-Stratford in the chair, Winchilsea opened

the debate at the Bell Inn by proposing the creation of a Kent

Brunswick Constitutional Club, and was seconded by Sir John

Brydges, who, having urged all men to 'rally round the Throne 1,

attempted to explain something of the philosophy which under-

pinned the awakening of militant protestantism.

They had not met to discuss the merits of the Protestant
and Catholic religions but whether the Roman Catholics
should take the lead as they had attempted to do, and
whether Protestants should be compelled to yield to them.
The Roman Catholics had shown the cloven foot; the sooner the expression of attachment to the Protestant Constit-ution was made the better.

And went on:

In the present day when liberty prevailed, and the cant
phrase of 'Civil and religious liberty 1 was in too many
mouths, but with the real meaning of which very few who
used it were acquainted, should he join with those who
desired such boasted liberty which really meant revolitLon?

1 Finch Hatton Papers FH.4-513: Winchilsea to Romney, nd.
2 Finch Hatton Papers FH.4-591: Guilford to Winchilsea, 24- Aug. 1828.
3 Report in Kentish Gazette, 19 Sept. 1828.

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No! God forbid! There could be no injustice in refusing
to the Catholics further political power; it being part
of the compact at the period of the Revolution of 1688.
The motion was warmly applauded by Lord Bexley and Sir Edward Knatchbull, but did not pass entirely unchallenged. The principal pro-catholic speaker was Lord Teynham, who felt 'deep regret that the question had been brought forward 1; and called upon Kentish-men to remember that:
Ireland had served this country with -great ardour, she
had fought our battles, and the blood of her sons had been
shed in our defence, even the very hero who was now at
the head of the government witnessed this, and seemed,
as he should presume, deeply impressed with the necessity
of reconciliation between the two countries.
Teynham believed 'the present proceedings were altogether prema-ture 1; and feared that 'agitating a question which required so much prudence and caution, was little short of agitating civil commotion 1. A conciliatory approach, on the other hand, might have considerable advantages. Peace in Ireland would permit sizeable savings in army expenditure, and the recovery of Irish agriculture would reduce England's dependence upon foreign corn in bad seasons. Hence, despite loud hissing, Teynham moved the indefinite adjournment of the meeting.
The motion was supported by Major v/aith, who asserted the
'just rights' of the catholics, and strove to invoke the spirit of the treaty of Limerick. However, the hearts of the assembled Kentish gentlemen were not to be melted by appeals to expediency, equity or self-interest, and with reluctance Teynham withdrew his resolution. The way was therefore clear for the formal inaugur-ation of the Brunswick Club by Sir w. J. Twisden and iir. Bering. Letters asking for enrolment from Lords Abergavenny, Guilford and Harris, Sir Brook W. Bridges and Sir Egerton Brydges were read out, and anti-catholic speeches were delivered by John jells,
W. Martin of Leeds Castle and J.P. Plumptre. Sir Edward Bering probably spoke for them all when he declared:
it was not his wish to join in dictating to the Government
of the country, but he thought if they were put in

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possession of the feelings of the great body of xjrotestante, it would hdve the effect of making them more decided on
the great question at issue, and it was due to them to
make them acquainted with the public feeling; and he
trusted the example of Kent should be followed throughout
the kingdom.
Bering's concluding observation leaves no doubt that it was
the primary intention of Winchilsea and his friends to use the xient Brunswick Club as a model to encourage concerted action elsewhere. A county meeting was to be summoned in the near future to give added impetus to the anti-catholic campaign, and in the meantime every sort of propaganda was to be employed to ensure an impressive display of popular enthusiasm. The Kentish Gazette acclaimed each new demonstration of protestant solidarity, and by 3 October was able to rejoice that:
The spirit of Protestantism is awake. The Papist may
menace - the Saint may cant - the Whig (if there be one) conciliate - the Radical Atheist may abuse - but the true
spirit of Protestantism is, thank God, at last awake. The .
long slumbering energies of that mighty engine, so long
supine to its danger, but so powerful in action when
brought into play, is at length aware of its own peculiar position. It sees that it is no longer the time to stand
on the defensive - it must act. And act it will.
Writers like 'PRIVATUS' searched the scriptures to illustrate the evil designs of the Holy See, and ransacked the annals of Euro-pean history for instances of catholic intrigue, brutality and
p oppression. The public was warned that, despite claims to the contrary, the catholic religion had not departed from the prac-tises and objectives of the Counter-Reformation, but was as in-tolerant and ruthless as ever. Hysterical fears were thus aroused for the safety of private property and the survival of the Church of England, which, as a score of polemicists were at infinite pains to point out, could never be allayed except by a resounding show of strength and determination.
It was with these dire forebodings ringing in their minds
that the freeholders of Kent gathered at ^enenden ueath on

1 Kentish Gazette, 3 Oct. 1828.
2 JJ'or examr>le T Kentish Gazette, 1? Oct.

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24 October. 1 The admittedly not impartial Kentish Gazette recor-ded with pleasure at the beginning of its report that: 'It is sup-posed at no former time were congregated so large a portion of the nobility, gentry and freeholders of the county'; and by any account the scene must have been an impressive one. Both the Dro-and anti-catholic parties were mustered in force, and were keenly aware that their every word and deed would be weighed toy the entire nation. The High Sheriff having stated the purpose of the meeting, George Gipps stepped forward with a petition which he trusted would help settle the catholic problem once and for all. He had no wish to revive the memory of Queen Mary, but solemnly counselled his audience that 'if you do consent to admit catholics to power, the threshold of the Constitution will be passed, and
a doorway will be opened to struggle and innovation 1. Gipps, like J. P. Plumptre, Sir Edward Knatchbull and the Earl of Winchilsea, could not ignore the tense and delicate situation in Ireland, yet the petition, on behalf of which all four Brunswickers spoke with eloquence and vigour* was boldly content to re-affirm the familiar constitutional platitudes.
The day was most remarkable, however, for the spirited oppo-sition put up by the opponents of the Brunswick Club. The pro-catholic interest had been thrown into temporary disarray during the confused months of 1827, and could do little to astern the torrent of hostile propaganda unleashed in the autumn of 1828. Nevertheless, on 24 October a very formidable arsenal of heavy oratorical artillery was on parade. As a former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Marquis Camden spoke with authority and a profound concern for the welfare of the Irish people. He deplored the excesses of the Catholic Association as much as any man, but was convinced that 'the strength and security of this united kingdom depended upon the tranquillisation of Ireland'. Since 1?97 Camden

1 For reports Kentish Gazette, and Kentish Chronicle, 28 uct. 1828. ———————~

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had regarded Emancipation as the logical and necessary sequel
to the Union, and only wished he had done more to discourage the formation of so dictatorial a body as the Kent Brunswick Club. Another Kentish peer with Irish connections was the iarl of Darn-ley, who confidently dismissed all suggestion of divided catholic loyalties, and denied that they any longer harboured treasonable or arbitrary ambitions. 'Be oust and fear not', he concluded, •Give her [irelandj , then, what you can, in safety now, or it may yet he too late to give'. Mr. Shea recalled the honour and res-pectability of English catholic families like the Howards, the Cliffords and the Talbots, while Lord Teynham declared against the petition as he felt the catholic claims to be 'oust 1, 'expedi-ent' and 'necessary'.
Most loquacious of all the pro-catholics was the Irish orator Shiel, who, despite frequent taunts and abuse, harangued the crowd with the fluency proverbial among his countrymen. 'I come to show cause', he announced, 'why sentence of eternal discord should not be passed upon my country 1. Winchilsea had stressed the fore-sight and wisdom of King Alfred, the Barons at Runnymede, Edward I and Edward III in establishing parliamentary liberties, but, asked Shiel, were these heroes not princes of papal Christendom? Then, by way of contrast) he enquired 'whether the cradle of the Reformation was not rocked by a bloody and an iron hand'; and very unfavourably compared the conditions in protestant Prussia, Sweden and Denmark, with the freedoms enjoyed in Venice, France and South America, where Rome still predominated. Neither were persecution and inquisition characteristics unique to Catholicism. Calvin's Geneva and Cranmer's England had never scrupled to en-force strict conformity, whereas to Shiel, the toleration then prevailing in France was sure proof that the catholic attitude had markedly softened in recent years. Hence, with the ghostly throng of Pitt, Burke, Fox and Canning at his shoulder, Shiel

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looked forward to the eventual triumph of a cause which the men of Kent with their boughs of oak would be powerless to resist.
In the short term, however, the meeting of 24 October proved
a valiant attempt to check the increasingly inevitable progress of events. T. L. Hodges and the Larl of Radnor moved the adjourn-ment of the proceedings to enable the Government to deliberate without duress, yet when the question was finally put, Gipps 1 petition was adjudged victorious, estimates of the majority differed widely. The Kentish Gazette agreed with the Times that two-thirds of the freeholders had voted with the Brunswickers,
the Horning Journal claimed that three-quarters of them had done so, and the Standard rejoiced in the support of nine-tenths of the assembly. All agreed that the Protestant Constitution had won an overwhelming vote of confidence, and were loud in urging a comparable response throughout the nation.
Celebrations were immediately organised in order to extract
every ounce of publicity from so apparently decisive an expression of public opinion. A Kent Brunswick Club dinner at Maidstone on 31 October, attended by two hundred of the county's most disting-uished inhabitants, was the occasion for much mutual congratu-lation, and afforded an opportunity to rebut the arguments of the
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pro-catholics. To Sir Edward Knatchbull the verdict returned on Penenden Heath had for ever refuted the charge that the protest-ants were compelled to skulk in 'holes and corners'; and both Lord Winchilsea and Mr. Hammond were resolved that 'the honest assertion of the public opinion of the Men of Kent, on this important question', was not 'to be stigmatised as an attempt to dictate to the government of the country, and to be cried down as illegal and unconstitutional'. The tory press endeavoured to keep popular interest alive by highlighting each new advance in the anti-catholic campaign, and the Kentish Gazette devoted space

1 Kentish Gazette, 4 Nov. 1828.

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to open letters from Lord Kenyon and the Bishop of Salisbury.'1 But if the Brunswickers were in buoyant mood in the closing months of 1828, their opponents were not ready to acquiesce meekly in defeat. The Kentish Chronicle detected evidence of sympathy towards Emancipation at Hythe, New Romney, Rochester, Canterbury and in the Isle of Thanet, and declared defiantly on 28 October that 'what ought to be called the sense of the county, can never

p be collected from such assemblies as had just been summoned 1.
A counter-petition was drawn up and circulated for signature, and
a dinner was held to give Shiel a platform from which to defend his

3 conduct. Handbills, satires and fiercely anti-clerical paragraphs

in ,the Kent Herald could hardly fail to claw back some of the ground lost in the great set-piece debate, and at the end of December a convivial meeting, which included Lords Torrington, Thanet, Sondes and SJeynham, as well as Sir J. M. Tylden, T. L. Hodges, Thomas Ride^
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Charles Larkin, S. E. Sawbridge, Richard Watson, J. Brockman and
E. Darell, listened with pleasure as Lord Clifton cast a new inter-pretation upon the events of 24- October:
. . . what would be the result of that and similar meetings?
Men would begin to consider the subject. Not long ago,
he believed that nine-tenths of the Men of Kent were wholly ignorant of^-it; but now it was under discussion all over
the county.
Both parties were thus in good heart as the theatre of con-
flict switched from the provinces to Parliament. Anti-catholic petitions had been trickling into Westminster from all parts of Kent since the spring of 1828, and perhaps because of the Bruns-wickers 1 example, this stream had swollen into a mighty flood by the beginning of the 1829 session. Ramsgate, New Romney, Ashford and Wye, the Protestant Dissenters of Woolwich, the baptists of Chatham, the clergy of Rochester and the Baptists and i-iethodists of Maidstone, and the townspeople of Chatham, Gillingham, Brormrbon, 1 Kentish Gazette, 1? Feb. 1829.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 28 Oct. 1828.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 11 Nov. 1828.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 30 Dec. 1828.

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Queenborough and Tunbridge Wells , were oust a few of the Commons' petitioners as the crisis mounted to its climax. Yet, in the final instance, it was Government rather than the weight of public opinion that determined policy, and in the King's Speech ministers announced to the world their conversion to immediate Emancipation. Hence when Knatchbull and winchilsea presented the Kent petition to their respective Houses on 12 and 13 February, they found Lord Clifton and the Earl of Darnley in ebullient spirits, and were reduced to lamenting that the Cabinet had chosen to act in'oppo-
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sition to all their former principles'. Wellington and Peel were unrepentant, however, and having plunged their knives deep into the vitals of the Constitution, it now only remained to administer the last rites to the fast-expiring colossus. In the division of 6 March, Owen, Marryat and ITarquhar joined Clifton,
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Robarts, Thomson and Marjoribanks in the pro-catholic lobby , and on 13 April the proposals received the Royal Assent.
Suddenly and dramatically the controversy which had dominated politics in the recent past was over. But the admission of catho-lics to Parliament and the disfranchisement of the Irish 40/- freeholder held out little prospect of enduring peace on either side of St. George's Channel. In England, Opposition had tasted success, while Wellington's apparent capitulation had created, both at Westminster and in the country, an unpredictable body of embittered anti-catholics who thirsted to avenge their betrayal. moreover, the Emancipation debate of the 1820's had accustomed electors and the unrepresented to the working of national instit-utions, and developed their ability to manipulate the means of extra-parliamentary protest. Consequently it should come as no surprise to discover that within a very few months of the Bruns-wickers' humiliation, a new issue and a fresh agitation were attracting the attention of Kentish public opinion.
1 Com. Jour., Ixxxiv. 147-8.
2 Parl. DebT, New Ser. xx. 266-75 and 2^9-306.
3 Parl. Deb., New Ser. xx. 892-6.

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Chapter nine
Public Opinion and the xieform Bill, 1830 - 1832
The undisguised hostility of George IV and his leading tory counsellors, an improvement in the economy under the skilful guid-ance of Huskisson and Robinson, and a public opinion involved heart and soul in the passions of the catholic debate, had con-spired during the 1820's to impose a temporary eclipse upon the cause of parliamentary reform. But the constellation launched by Wilkes and Lord Mahon, and pursued throughout the 1790's and the bleak years immediately before and after Waterloo by a faithful band of Foxites and radicals, was never far below the horizon, and as soon as attitudes and allegiances began to change, it re-emerged with enhanced brilliance. This element of continuity was crucial in the eventual success of reform. 'At length in 1830', wrote J. R. M. jJuliler in his classic account, 'the fuel is ready for the sacred spark which the Whigs have carried through their
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wanderings of forty years in the wilderness of distrust'; and there is a sense in which the Reform Bill conflagration in Kent was kindled upon the still smouldering embers of innumerable smaller fires scattered across the previous sixty years. Reform had devel-oped hand-in-glove with popular consciousness, and it was there-fore wholly appropriate that extra-parliamentary agitation should achieve its greatest triumph in the advocacy of an issue, with whose merits Kentishmen had gradually been familiarised by their reading of the local press and regular attendance at parish, borough and county meetings. It remains, however, for the follow-ing chapter to explain why and how reform was adopted and brought to fruition after 1830 rather than at some earlier date.
I

In previous decades, Parliamentary reform had always been one among a number of national issues Jostling for the attention of

1 J. R. M. Butler, The Passing of the Great Reform Bill (new edn., London, 1963), p. 5-

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public opinion, but by 1850 the majority of these questions had either been settled, or postponed to the consideration of more conducive times, horeover, the political contortions and economic hardships of the post-war period had discredited the personnel and constitutional bulwarks of the tory-dominated Establishment in
the eyes of its traditional propertied adherents, and persuaded them to regard a change in the representative system as an essen-tial pre-requisite to the immediate restoration of due weight and importance to their appeals and interests. Once these new and prestigious converts had joined the ranks of the protesters, the forces defeated in 1810, 181?, 1819 and 1821 became overwhelming and irresistible.
This process of alienation among Kent's landed classes was greatly assisted by the Government's controversial acceptance of Catholic Emancipation in 1829. The schemes of Sir Richard Vyvyan and fellow anti-catholics to capture the closet and piece together 1
an alternative administration were never seriously practicable , but they sprang from a .deeply rooted conviction that Wellington was, as the Duke of Newcastle declared, 'the most unprincipled, most artful, most heartless, most ambitious, and most dangerous man, not excepting Cromwell, that this country has seen for many p a long year'." oir Edward Knatchbull, described by Dr. Machin as: 'The most critical and objective of participants in this intrigue'^ agreed to accept office, although he preferred to vent his anger upon 'Peel and Go 1, rather than the Duke with whom 4.

he was still prepared to co-operate. vyiriting to Vyvyan in Sep-

1 See G.I.T. Machin, The Catholic Question in English Politics 1820 to 1830 (Oxford, 19&4J, PP- 181-7; Sir H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, Kentish Family (London, 1960), pp. 173-90; and B.J. Bradfield, Sir Richard Vyvyan and the Country Gentlemen, 1830- 1834', Eng. Hist. Rev., Ixxxiii. (1968), 729-30.
2 Knatchbull-Hugessen, op. cit., p.179: Newcastle to Vyvyan,
nd. 1829.
3 Machin, The Catholic Question in ^nglish Iplitics 1820 to 1830,

p. 183. 4 Knatchbull-Hugessen, op.cit., p. 182-4- ;xnd 185: Knatchbull to
Vyvyan, 26 Aug. and 4 Sept. 1829.

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tember 1829, Knatchbull expounded his hopes and fears for the future.

A Whig Government I should not like - that is the worst
state of all - the next bad state is the present Govern-
ment - in the stead of this I would have an old Tory -
a Church and State Government.
If this cannot be completely obtained, I would keep
as much as I could of the present Government, with as large
an infusion of good principles as possible. Peel and all belonging to him I will never support.
Far from strengthening the tory interest, however, these clumsy manoeuvrings had the effect of fatally weakening its power of resistance, both nationally and in the provinces, on the eve of its greatest challenge.
Knatchbull and Vyvyan strove to oust the apostate ministers
in 1829 in order to forestall concessions to reformers and free-traders. To Tories like the Marquis of Blandford, on the other hand, the granting of Emancipation argued strongly that further constitutional change was urgently required. Speaking in the Lords, the Earl of Winchilsea felt compelled to announce his espousal of parliamentary reform, and was particularly harsh upon the propri-etors of close boroughs, whom he accused of 'sacrificing their principles, in order that they might be able to patch up fortunes
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which had been broken and ruined by their vices'. To those gentle-men and freeholders of Kent who could recall the stirring scenes enacted upon Penenden Heath and the Commons' subsequent rejection of so many respectful petitions, the time must have seemed severely out of joint, and that some sort of reform was necessary if the House was ever again to speak the sense of the nation. Even Sir Edward Knatchbull was not immune to this line of reasoning, and
on 29 March 1830 told the Commons that although he remained the adamant foe of 'speculative and indefinite proposals of reform 1, he would henceforward 'be ready to assist in the exposure and redress of any specific abuses which were proved to have occurred

1 knatchbull-Hugessen, op. cit., p. 186: Knatchbull to vyvyan, 11 Sept. 1829.
2 Parl. Deb., New Ser. xx. 933-4.

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1 in the representation. By such statements, the new tory recruits

breathed fresh vigour into the old cause, and considerably broad-ened its social appeal.
While angry protestants plotted and threatened swift retri-bution, the winter of 1829/30 also saw the renewal of agrarian distress^from which neither gentlemen, farmers nor labourers were exempt. A county meeting was held at Maidstone on 12 March 1830 to discuss the prevailing hardship, which Earl Stanhope regretted most of all:

because it affected so much the happiness and comfort of
the labouring classes who, above all others, contributed
to the welfare of the state, and therefore had the best
claim upon the support and protection of Parliament.
In his proposed address to the King, Stanhope attributed the nation's problems to the lack of protection given to agriculture, and to the alterations in the currency which had reduced the price of manufactures and raised the value of taxes; and was seconded by Lord Teynham who condemned the adoption of Peel's report 'without any reflection upon the evils consequent upon such a change 1.
A number of petitions to the House of Commons were then brought forward, each of which attempted to analyse the causes of distress and to suggest likely remedies. In supporting the petition of
Mr. Bradley, Sir William Grosby declared:
The farmers, as a class, were ruined; their last capital
was expended. The labourers could no longer live by the
sweat of their brow; the productive classes paid far too
great a proportion of the public burthen.
The petition spoke of high taxes and poor rates, and Sir William echoed previous speakers in citing the late currency policy to explain the slump in corn prices from seventy to fifty shillings a quarter since 1825. Mr. Gipps ^nd the Sari of ',/ino.hilsea recom-mended the reduction of duties on basic necessities such as hops, malt, soap and leather, with the lost revenue being recouped by a

1 Parl. Deb., New Ser. xxiii. 988.
2 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 16 Mar. 1850.

property tax-; while Major Waith launched a blistering attack on tithes and demanded state regulation of clerical incomes. Finally, on the advice of Sir Edward Knatchbull, Gipps withdrew his petition, and thereby enabled the majority of the assembly to unite behind that of Mr. Bradley.
All the arguments employed by the agricultural lobby since
1815 were thus voiced in rapid succession, and were repeated in a host of petitions and addresses from every part of Kent. However in 1830 the pleas for relief were more urgent than ever before,
and it is possible to detect a much stronger popular disposition
to isolate Government as the prime author, or at least the passive spectator, of the country's misfortunes. As in the case of Emanci- : pation, ministers had ignored the many unmistakable expressions
of public opinion, and had even dared to weaken the protective shield of the Corn Laws by the introduction of a sliding scale. Conscious of the desperate plight of his constituents, bir Edward Knatchbull reacted sharply to the very half-hearted lamentation
in the King's Speech that 'Distress should exist among the Agri-cultural and "Manufacturing Classes in some parts of the United Kingdom 1, and the almost casual reference to the 'Pressure of temporary Difficulty'. His amendment to the Commons' Address w-^s an out-right rejection of the claim that distress was due to 'the Effect of unfavourable Seasons, and to the operation of other causes which are beyond the Reach of Legislation to Control or Remedy 1; and was seized upon by those numerous discontented groups ; to whom Wellington's administration appeared quite unaware of the realities of provincial life and incapable of rendering the neces-sary assistance.
In Kent itself, this sense of frustration and disillusion-
ment at the ineffectiveness of Government led freeholders to acconl parliamentary reform a new prominence in their deliDerations. Had. 1 Parl. Deb., New Ser. xxii. 3-4.

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Stanhope gave tae subject his cautious support on 12 March:
He ^ was proud to say that for a reform founded uoon
principles, and conducted upon a sound basis, he was a strenuous advocate. But he thought that a reform would
not be affected time enough to act as a cure for present distresses.

Charles Larkin, on the other hand, believed that in reform the country possessed the key to its relief and future prosperity. National expenditure had risen from £6,000,000 to &4,000,000 between 1792 and 1828, and in the period 1810 to 182?, the amount paid out in pensions had swollen from £94,000 to £484,000. Little wonder then that taxes were so high and the nation so poor, and to Larkin this trend would only be reversed by fundamental chunge in the constitutional basis of Church and state. The assembled men of Kent agreed, and after a show of hands the High Sheriff announced that Larkin 1 s more radical address should he presented to George IV on behalf of the county.
Thus, with anti-catholics and Agriculturists in the van, the reform movement was rapidly gathering momentum in the spring of 1830, and a series of letters published in the Kentish Ghronicle indicates that every effort was being made to educate and refine public understanding of the national panacea. In 'Practical Reform 1, the author sought 'a middle path 1 suited 'alike to the state of our foreign relations - our regrets for the past - our
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present sufferings - and our best hopes for the future 1. With
an eye, perhaps, to the still conservative attitudes of the Kentish!

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landed classes, he dismissed as equally irrelevant the American model and the plan of universal suffrage so often trumpeted in
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the Westminster Review , and proposed instead a scheme founded on the principle of 'equal representation to all the payers of direct

1 Kentish Chronicle, 16 Har. 1830.
2 Kentish Chronicle., 2 Mar. 1830: 'Practical Reform Letter II Equal Representation 1.
3 Kentish Ghronicle, 23 Feb. 1830: 'Practical Reform Letter 1 Common Sense versus Universal Suffrage - Annual ^.rliaments
and Vote by Ballot'.

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taxes'. 1 Constituency boundaries were to be redrawn in accordance with the distribution of the new voting population, and it was anticipated that each K.P. would be returned by 23,350 electors. Under this system, Cornwall's share of seats would fall from 42 to 11 and Lancashire's rise from 14 to 45, while Kent's quota of eighteen representatives would remain the same, and simply be redistributed to Canterbury, Margate and Ramsgate, Sandwich and Deal, Dover, Hythe, Romney, Ashford, fenterden, Tonbridge, Lenham, Strood, Maidstone, Wrotham, Rochester and Chatham, Sheppey and Sittingbourne, St. Mary Cray, Deptford, and Gravesend. 2 Voting was to be carried on in each parish in order to permit the use of local taxation registers, and it was hoped that the creation of single-member constituencies would deter the practice of comprom-ise so often resorted to at Dover and Rochester. 5 Annual parlia-ments were not to be adopted,since an electorate of over a million would involve candidates in enormous expense^, while the ballot was rejected as 'something repugnant to the feelings of an English-man' , and quite unnecessary in a well-administered electoral system. '
The series of letters had begun:
The enemies of Reform have long objected that its advocates
have never submitted any practical plan for a change in
the Representative System, to which a considerable number
had previously agreed.
*^nd having answered his critics, the author reflected on the pur-
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pose of his proposals:
They are not put forth with the presumptuous idea that such particular arrangements only can save the country; they
invite the exercise of reason and of common sense, in
declared hostility to empty theory and mob declamation.

1 Ibid.

2 Kentish Chronicle, 23 Mar. 1830: 'Practical Reform Letter IV1. Cf. the table in Kentish Chronicle, 24 Aug. 1830: 'Practical Reform Letter V*.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 2 Mar. 1830: 'Practical Reform ^etter II'. 4 Kentish Chronicle, 23 Feb. and 9 Mar. 1830: 'Practical Reform Letters I and III'.
5 Female electors were, however, to be permitted to vote by means of a letter to the returning officer.
6 Kentish Chronicle, 23 Feb. 1830: 'Practical Reform Letter I 1. 7 Kentish Chronicle, 23 Lar. 1830: 'Practical .xeform Letter IV.

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Such a statement well illuminates the aspirations of those gentle-men and farmers so eagerly enlisting under the banner of reform. There was a general realisation that changes were essential and even desirable, but these would have to be controlled within strict limits. 'Practical Reform 1 thus set out to restore equality to the representative system and to ensure its effective operation, while at the same time emphasising the continuing rights of property
and avoiding the most contentious elements in the radical pro-gramme. Moreover, if this cautious strategy was to be successful, all haste was required in its prosecution. As'Letter IV warned on 23 March:
. . . the apostles of Universal suffrage and its attendant
follies, are in the field, assembling and animating their
deluded disciples; it behoves the friends of efficient, consistent, and moderate reform, now to stand forward en
masse, to open channels of communication, and arrange the
plan of the impending campaign, in which they have a Judas
faced enemy to encounter.
II

The partisans of reform did not have to wait long for an opportunity to express their discontent, since the death of George IV was followed at the end of July 1830 by a snap dissolution.
The Kentish Gazette spoke on behalf of the ultra-tory press when declaring that the catholic question would be the determining fac-tor among electors whose oft repeated petitions had been osten-tatiously spurned, but in Kent, at least, the results seem to
p indicate that Emancipation had already become a dead-letter. Wellington probably calculated as much, and must, therefore, have been dismayed to discover^ as the returns trickled in, that econ-omy and reform had assumed an electoral significance far greater than the anti-catholic party had ever been able to muster.''
A contest was expected at Sandwich, where a by-election early
in 1829 had revealed considerable opposition to Wellington's newly 1 ibid.

2 Kentish Gazette, 2 July 1830.
3 j. Cannon. Parliamentary Reform, 1640-1832 (Cambridge, 1972), p. 197; and M. Brock, The Great Reform Act (London, 1973), p.86.

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announced pro-catholic policy among the traditional supporters of
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administration. Samuel Grove ^rice ws.s a candidate well suited to capitalise upon any such lingering dissensions, and was at some pains to point out that:
With respect to the Catholic question he contended that it
was impolitic to allow any set of men to legislate for
British interests and British people who would not tolerate
any vote but their own.
Though Emancipation had been granted, Grove Price assured the free-men that his principles 'were not likely to be swayed by motives of temporary expediency 1; and no doubt with reform in mind asser-ted resolutely: 'I am no convert to that policy which yields to
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f®ir what is not granted from a sense of justice 1. Nevertheless, e.ven the uncompromising Grove Price felt compelled to pledge sup-port for measures 'to alleviate the burthens of the people by a just economy, consistent with honour and public faith 1. The pro-catholic Joseph Marryat came forward once again with a commitment to retrenchment and personal independence, but in the end, the withdrawal of the official ministerial candidate forced neither man to undergo the uncertainties of a poll.
At Dover, the Kentish Chronicle saw 'every prospect of a most severe contest *\ especially since John Halcomb's defeat in the 1828 by-election and the subsequent petitions had revived non-resi-dence and the state of the franchise as major issues in local pol-itics.^ Like Grove Price, Sir John Rae Reid made no secret of his: 'Strong attachment to the Constitution in Church and State as by • law established, the maintenance and dignity of the Crown, and the honour and Independence of the Country' ; while C. P. Thomson's principal claim to the renewed mandate of the. freemen was his diligence in the parliamentary struggle for economy, tax cuts and 1 See the collection of handbills among the Sandwich corporation records, Sa. 2 2.
2 Kentish Gazette, 20 July 1830.
3 Kentish Gazette, 2 July 1830.
4 Kentish Gazette, 13 July 1830.
5 Com. Jour., Ixxxiii. 102-4 and 180; Kentish Chronicle, 25 Har. 1828; and Com. Jour., Ixxxiv. 6, 239 and
6 Kentish Chronicle, 13 July 1830.

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freer trade. 1 However, the most hotly debated topic in an electionI already enlivened by the re-appearance of the persistent Halcomb was colonial slavery. A barrage of rumour and open accusation led Reid to deny publicly any direct involvement in slave ownership, despite his possession of a West Indian mortgage, and to promise

rather evasively:
Whenever the time shall arrive at which circumstances may
justify the Emancipation of the Slaves, with a view to the augmentation of their happiness, conjoined with a proper protection of the interest of persons who may have embarked
their Capital in the Colonies in question, I shall not be absent2from my post to give the matter attentive consider-
ation.

The controversy rumbled on until nomination day, when Sir John was proposed amid criea of 'No Slavery', but ultimately proved quite unequal to the task of repelling the 'Treasury and Lord Warden's candidate'; who was duly returned along with Thomson.^ Anti-slavery, though never an electoral issue of more than secondary importance, was also prominently agitated at Rochester. As a West Indian proprietor, Ralph Bernal was closely questioned on election day by Mr. D. B. Lewes, and could only defend himself in the time-honoured manner by affirming his readiness to counten-ance emancipation so long as the interests of the owners were not
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forgotten. However, both Charles Larkin and the most radical of the hopeful candidates, John Hills, were quick to remind voters that there were slaves in England as well as in the Caribbean, and it was upon domestic issues that the contest was eventually settled As the son of the Earl of Jersey, Viscount Villiers was well-known in the borough, and in his published address declared that: 'the line of my conduct in Parliament will be to support a Government acting on the principles of the present beneficial Policy'. ^ 'He would 1, he told a meeting of London non-residents at the Spread

1 Kentish Chronicle, 20 July 1830.
2 Ibid.
3 Kentish Chronicle, 3 Aug. 1830.
4 Rochester Gazette", 3 Aug. 1830.
5 Kentish Chronicle, 13 July 1830.

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Eagle Tavern,'advocate every measure of economy compatible with

1 the dignity of the crown 1 ; and despite the somewhat hackneyed

ring of his rhetoric, the promise probably secured his election. Ministerial influence in the dockyards was still extensive enough in 1830 to restrict the popular party to a single seat, and after a decade of faithful adherence to his constituents' wishes on retrenchment and the catholic question, Bernal was not to be denied, In an election in which both the friends of Government and Opposition took every opportunity to associate themselves with the crusade against waste, an enlightened attitude on slavery was in-sufficient to break asunder long-standing voting patterns at Dover and Rochester. Only parliamentary reform had the potential to accomplish this mighty labour, and in 1830 there were indications that its power was already at work in the political arena. The first man to step into the fray at Maidstone was Philip Rawlings, an ex-commissionary—general, who announced his intention 'to defend the rights and privileges of the freemen, not to buy and sell them p like so many sheep'. 'He came', Edward Russell informed the electors, 'from no other Treasury than the treasury of his own mind'; and when pressed to explain his views, Rawlings observed that 'he had a convincing proof from his personal canvass that a
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reform in Parliament was absolutely necessary'.^
The lot of a reforming 'third man 1 in a borough renowned for
its venality was not likely to be a very happy one, but Rawlings 1 presence did at least inject new vitality into the popular debate. In his bid to succeed the retiring John Wells, Alderman Henry Winchester of the City was vigorous in denying that he was 'an ambassador from the Treasury 1, and in describing himself as 'an enemy to any thing like a useless or prodigal waste of the public money 1; although when requested to be more specific, only replied

1 Kentish Gazette, 16 July 1830.
2 Maidatone Gazette, 3 AU?. 1830.
3 Reports in ibid, and Kentish Chronicle, 3 .aig. 1830.

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that 'he was determined to vote for any kind of reform which seemed to him to have a beneficial tendency 1. A. W. Robarts, on the other hand, had always been 'the uniform and consistent supporter of every fair proposition made in favour of reform and retrenchment' ; and to Charles Ellis, 'it was to be hoped that he would continue his exertions until the second House of Parliament was made what
it ought to be made - the people's house'.
With party feeling running high, there was never sufficient likelihood of Rawlings being returned to justify his rather reproachful exit from the lists. However, the future of reform was far from bleak, since, as the Kentish Chronicle noted: 'The non-freemen who are strong in their numbers, wealth, and respecta-bility, take every opportunity of expressing their dissatisfaction'

1 with the present state of things'. On the second day of polling these unenfranchised rate-payers were responsible for nominating G. W. Tyssen, and although refusing to accept many of the votes tendered for this 'fourth man', the Mayor was not slow to recog-nise that the presence of a London lawyer presaged the trial of
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the freemen's privileges by a parliamentary select committee. John Halcomb had tried a similar stratagem at Dover, where he announced his willingness to accept the votes of the payers of scot and lot, of the former owners of freeholds in the borough, and of those men whose freedom had been derived from now deceased wives, and used the inevitable petition to catalogue local griev-3
ances against the corporation. Neither did iNew Romney, where the Bering writ had run unchallenged for seventy years, escape alto-gether unscathed from the new tide of public discontent. Though dutifully returned by the Mayor, even the Kentish Gazette was forced to record that the great majority of the nomination meeting was against Miles and Trevor, and in favour of the gate-crashers, 1 Kentish Chronicle, 3 *ug. 1830.
2 Com. Jour., Ixxxvi. 9, 100 and 385-
3 Kentish Chronicle, 3 -ug. 1830 and Kent uerald, 3 Aug. 1830; and Com. Jour., Ixxxvi. 85 and 353-

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XI

Major-General Loftus Otway and .Sir George westphal.
The best example of this new current of popular unrest is, however, afforded by events at Kythe. bearing some impending curtailment of its municipal privileges, a meeting at the Guild-hall resolved on 8 July:
That the Rights of the Freemen of the -I-own and Port of
Hythe to vote in the election of members to serve in
Parliament, having been publicly threatened with an attack
by some of the Inhabitants of Hythe, for the purpose of
obtaining their Freedom of the same Town and Port, it
behoves every Freeman to adopt such measures as will best
ensure to him a continuance of those Rights and Privileges,
which he has, from time immemorial, so justly enjoyed. Particularly vulnerable were the non-residents who made up half the borough's electorate of 390, and it was finally agreed to seek the help of the sitting Members, Loch and ..arjoribanks, in return for votes in the expected poll. Groups at Deal, Dover and in London seized on the idea, and were gratified to hear from the two candidates thj.t 'should any attempt be made to invade those rights,

3 we shall cheerfully undertake their defence 1.

'There has never been known an election here1, ran the report
in the ———————' Kentish Chronicle 'which has excited as intense * an inter-est as that which commenced on Wednesday, 2nd August 1. Before the candidates were presented, about thirty non-residents were admitted to their freedom, while a body of scot and lot payers and freeholders headed by Captain Hart was turned away. Fitzroy Kelly and william Fraser were, however, on hand to champion this aspiring 'popular interest', and on the second day tempers had become so inflamed that both sides were called to put their case to a committee presided-over by the Kayor and the Recorder. This tribunal could not be persuaded that the charter really invested all the inhabitants with the franchise, and at length Harjoribanks

1 Kentish Gazette, 3 Aug. 1830; and Com. Jour., Ixxxvi. 536.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 13 July 1830.
3 Ibid, and Kentish Gazette, 20 July 1830.
4 ZenTish Chronicle, 10 "Tug. 1830; and G. ',v. dilks, Phe Byons of the Cinque Ports and the Parliamentary representation of Hythe (Folkestone, 189VJ>, pp. 1

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and Loch were declared the victors by 2?0 to 8. nevertheless, the 263 invalid votes cast for Kelly and Eraser provided ample grounds
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for yet another petition.
Much had happened at Queenborough in recent years to banish
for ever its century-long role as the compliant slave of the Boards of Admiralty and Ordnance. Dissensions first began to ruffle the once tranquil waters of borough politics when a by-law of 1820 gave to the Mayor, Jurats and Bailiffs sole rights to exploit the oyster and other fisheries. This usurpation seems to have been inspired both by the desire for economic advancement, and by a hope, on the part of the corporation, that by destroying the livelihood of the inhabitants, it would be left in full enjoy-ment of the fruits of ministerial patronage. 2 But the starving fishermen of Queenborough were not to be so easily dismissed. Their plight was seen and to some extent relieved by John Gapel, and in the election of 1826 he was placed at the top of the poll. 5 Meetings on 22 December 182? and 13 February 1828 resolved to petition Parliament for redress , and failure to win a favourable response only strengthened determination to carry on the struggle

for local supremacy.
In the election of 1830 both parties made tremendous efforts
to achieve out-right victory, and if the petitions which appeared in its wake are to be believed, few methods of influence, intimi-dation or corruption were left untried. Capel and his partner Thomas Gladstone, were said to have received many illegal votes through the partiality of the returning officer, while the minis-terialists, Sir Philip Durham and William Holmes, apparently made extensive use of the patronage of the Ordnance, of which the
1 Com. Jour., Ixxxvi. 75-6.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 8 Jan. 1828.
3 Kent Herald, 15 June 1826.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 8 Jan. and 19 Feb. 1828.
5 Com. Jour., Ixxxvi. 50-1 and 90.

latter was treasurer. Heralded by the band of the Royal Artillery and flanked by a gang of 'prize-fighters and boxers', Durham posed as the post-admiral of Sheerness in order to hold out empty prom-ises of preferment to gullible freemen, and when the polls finally closed both he and Capel had attracted 130 votes, eight fewer than Holmes and seven more than Gladstone, Holmes eventually chose to sit for Haslemere, and then, on 6 December, a select committee disqualified Durham. Hence, on the eve of the Reform Bill crisis, Queenhorough was no longer the dependable government constituency of Captain Evans or Sir Charles Frederick.
The freemen of Canterbury also had specific local grievances which seemed to demonstrate the malfunctioning of both Government and Parliament. After his election in 1826, S. R. Lushington had been appointed to a post in Madras, but on leaving England, he had declined to vacate his seat. Repeated petitions for a new writ
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were ignored by the Commons , and having noted one such rebuff, the Kentish Chronicle commented bluntly: 'After this, we think
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representation is a farce'. London non-residents were active in shaping a bill to compel resignation on acceptance of office in India , while at a Common Hall in March 1828, Mr. Davy told an angry crowd:
He was satisfied the system of corruption would continue
till anarchy and confusion would so far insinuate itself,
that distress would generate despair, and end in universal anarchy. The only way to effect a Reformation, was for
the Electors to unite and return to Parliament such men
as were not contaminated by intriguing and designing men,
or influenced by Ministers, and who would see that the
powers of government were not applied to the injury of
the people.
However, two frustrating years were to elapse before this advice

1 Com. Jour., Ixxxvi. 14-8.
2 See Parliamentary Papers 1829, iii. (307): 'Report from the Select Committee appointed to examine the petitions of Electors of Canterbury, relating to the oeat of Stephen Rumbold Lush-ington, esq., to search for precedents in respect of Members of this House accepting offices abroad vacating their Seats'.
3 See correspondence with Lord Clifton in Kentish Chronicle. 10 June 1828.
4 SPP Kentish Chronicle, 10 June, 1 ouly, 7 Oct. and 23 Dec. 182a 5 Kentish Chronicle, 15 Mar. 1828.

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could be acted upon.
On 13 July 1830 the Kentish Chronicle was expecting 'a phalanx
of candidates', and counselled electors to enquire of each:
Will you exert yourself in reducing the national expendit-ure to the circumscribed means of the people? ,/ill'you
endeavour to obtain a reduction of the taxes by lo.pping
off useless places and pensions. Will you assist in res-
toring to the people a more fair and free representation?
In short, do you mean to protect the rights of those by
whom you wish to be delegated?
Lord Clifton seems to have offended many of his constituents by

p his long absence in Ireland during the previous session , ^jad thus • stepped down in favour of Viscount Fordwich, who was known to approve economy and moderate reform. The Hon. Richard Watson's appeal was founded upon an attack on sinecures, a readiness to help combat 'whatever blemishes and imperfections the lapse of time may have introduced into our excellent constitution^ and, rather significantly, a pledge to resign his army commission • while f roir . the tory camp, Henry Baring strove to off -set the crippling legacy of Lushington's misconduct by recalling Wellington's positive measures of retrenchment and by promising to resign his seat should,
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duty summon him abroad. Once polling had begun^ the outcome was not long in doubt, and with the Kentish Chronicle and the Kent Herald cheering them on, Watson and Fordwich romped home to notch up the anti-ministerial interest's greatest triumph since 1796. .L'here were many reasons why W. r. Honywood did not attempt
to seek re-election in the county constituency, not least of which was the fury inspired in the breasts of anti-catholic freeholders by his refusal to honour an undertaking made in 1820 to be guided by the sense of public opinion.^ The Kent Herald suggested Lord Clifton as a suitable replacement , but on nomination day it was
1 Kentish Chronicle, 13 July 1830.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 2? July 1830 and Kent Herald, 29 July 1830. Cf. letter to London non-residents in Kentish Chronicle, 30
Mar. 1830.

3 Kentish Chronicle, 13 and 20 July 1830.
4 Kentish Gazette, 30 July 1830.
5 For example, in Kentish Gazette, 12 Dec.
6 Kent Herald, 5 and 12 Air:. 1850.

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Thomas Law Hodges, the nephew of Major Cartwright, who was pro-

1 posed by Thomas Rider and W. Darell. He hoped 'to abate the taxes,

and promote Parliamentary Reform 1, and later in the day added that without reform 'this country can no longer be independent'. Sir Edward Knatchbull, on the other hand, laboured under none of the disadvantages which had compelled the retirement of his former colleague. He had remained in step with Kentish sentiments through all the twists of recent politics, and as William Deedes observed, he had worked hard 'to alleviate the general distress'. Moreover, ' though 'no friend to annual elections, nor to universal suffrage 1, he could reply with conviction to the questioning of Charles Larkin that he was 'a friend to every reform that tended to the good of the country'. In 1830 these credentials were sufficient to con— vince the freeholders, and in consequence no opposition was forth-coming.
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At a national level the 1830 election may have been 'unremark-
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able' , but in Kent it was quite the reverse. Contests took place: in seven of the nine constituencies, while of the eighteen men returned to Parliament, no fewer than eleven were new to the Commons. Economy was undoubtedly the principal topic of debate
on the hustings, but parliamentary reform was widely discussed and occasionally showed signs of the furore which it was soon to un-leash. Under the headline 'THE TRIUMPH OF ^IBERAL PRINCIPLES', the Kentish Chronicle summed up the results thus:
Tha progress of the Elections throughout the Empire furnish
at the present moment, perhaps, one of the most unequivo-
cal indications of the spirit and feelings which pervade
the great body of the people in favour of liberal princi-
ples. Whenever a Candidate has presented himself as the
steady and unflinching supporter of national economy and legislative integrity - whenever a decided avowal has been manifested to oppose that shameful and profligate waste of
public revenue which has tended to perpetuate Taxation;
1 Reports in Kentish Chronicle, 10 Aug. 1830 and I-iaidstone Jour-nal, 10 Aug. 1830.
2 cSmon, Parliamentary Reform 1640-1832, p. 197-

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there we have almost invariably marked a resolute determin-
ation on the part of electors to return such members to Parliament.
This sensitivity to current political issues had, as we have
seen, been developing over many months, and was thus in no way the spur-of-the-moment reaction to events in France which Halevy once

2 described. Nevertheless, the importance of the July Revolution

should not be under-estimated, since it is cle^r that news of the convulsions in Paris did much to accelerate the reform campaign both during and after the election. The Kentish press maintained a lively and well-informed interest in French affairs, and was never reluc-tant to make comparisons with ideas and practices prevailing in Britain. When examining the i''rench electoral system in June 1o30, for example, the Kentish Chronicle noted admiringly that, 'the Chamber of Deputies has more of the popular influence and less of • the aristocratic in it than the House of Commons ' ; and pointed out that the cheapness of contests threw open the public service to men

3 with as little as £500 a year. Hence, when Charles X angrily dis-

solved this freely elected assembly after its first clamorous sessions, it was impossible to contain public fears that such arbit-rary proceedings might be infectious. The Kentish Chronicle believec that the French King had hoped to obtain the assistance of William IV and his ministers, and drew its readers' attention to the close
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links between Wellington and Polignac.- Reform at home consequently became even more essential, while the speed and apparent ease with which 'We have seen a despot driven from his throne^, gave radicals ; and conservative country gentlemen ample food for thought in the autumn of 1830.

1 Kentish Chronicle, 24- Aug. 1830.
2 E. HaleVv. A History of the Snslish People in the lyineteenth Cen-tury The Triumph of Reform, 1830-1841 (sec, edn. , London, 1930),
PD. 3-6. Of. K. Gash, 'English reform and trench devolution in
the General Election of 1830', H. Pares and A.J.-f. Taylor (eds.j, Essays presented to Sir Lewis i^inier Uondon, 1956), pp. 257-83-
3 Kentish Chronicle, 8 June 1830.
4 'How Uill the Late Great Change in France Bear Upon ^n-land? 1 in 5 gS^oPgS'kt county meetin,. in Kentish Ohron-icle 10 Aug. 1830. Cf. ^heater Gazette, 10 Au% 1830.

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For the reformers gathered at the .London tavern, the 'triumph
of Constitutional Liberty 1 in Prance announced that a mighty jugger-naut had begun its irresistible progress. 1 20 more cautious spec-tators like Sir Edward Knatchbull, on the other hand, it was the relatively peaceful manner in which reforms h;^d been effected and the Bourbon monarchy finally swept away that made the deepest impression.
See, ...what is doing in a neighbouring country, where a
despot has been hurled from his throne, and the liberties of
the people asserted. I rejoice this has been done - and I
am not less rejoiced, that in the events which have taken
place, moderation has prevailed, and all parties are satis-
fied with the arrangements which have taken place. It must
be a matter of universal congratulation, when one thinks of
the former Revolution, which took years to finish, and to
refleat that the present has been accomplished in one short
week.

If moderate constitutional change could be introduced and carried at home with as little danger to life or property, then perhaps it should be welcomed and prosecuted with the utmost dispatch.
As August wore on, moreover, the full extent of the benefits which the French people had won by their courage began to emerge. The Kent Herald wrote on the 14th:
France is now essentially a commonwealth; the real sources
of power being vested in the representatives of the People
fairly chosen - which is sufficient to ensure freedom, ^he extension of the suffrage is now alone required to impart a
more purely popular character to the form of government
adopted - and no doubt this will follow, bringing necessarily
with it such other modifications and improvements of the
Charter as shall soon render it entirely worthy of the intel-
ligent and^free spirit which pervades the noble population
of France.

The new King had ascended a 'constitutional throne 1 and 'priestcraft' had 'received a mortal blow'. In short, as the Kent Herald went on to declare: 'A new era of human happiness may be fairly said to have commenced 1; and in 1830, Kentishmen were understandably eager to share in this rosy future.

The atmosphere of com.aon-sense, optimism and restraint which

1 Kentish Chronicle, 24 Aug. 1830.
2 Maidstone Journal, 10 A.un;. 1830.
3 Kent Herald, 2b ,ui>~. 1830.

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characterised the July Revolution, contrasted sharply with the sim-mering rural distress in southern England which erupted into open sedition in the last months of 1830. Rioting was reported near Canterbury in August, and then spread uncontrollably through the

1 eastern division and the weald during October and early November.

oixty-one cases of arson and twenty-nine wage riots were recorded in the county, eleven threatening 'Swing letters' were received, and
p thirty-seven threshing machines destroyed , in a wave of intimidation
and mob violence unknown since the seventeenth century, and in the subsequent restoration of order, twenty-five men were sentenced to
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transportation and four to the gallows. Confronted with a challenge to property and the spectre of a Jacobin deserter at the head of a

4 tricolour-brandishing gang , the gentry acted swiftly, but their

repression was always tempered with genuine compassion for the miser-able conditions endured by the labourers. After all, gentlemen and farmers were themselves victims of the agrarian depression and once the rule of law had been re-established, were as anxious as their tenants and workmen to seek relief, and if necessary, vengeance. Agriculturists like Stanhope and Knatchbull had repeatedly warned ministers of the incubus fermenting in the provinces, and now, a night sky painted crimson by the rick-burning orgies of Captain Swing
seemed to symbolise the wanton and near criminal folly of Government's disregard. Hence, when Wellington made public his hostility to :. reform, he found his opponents in massed ranks on every side and thus sought refuge in resignation.
Speaking in the Lords a month after the formation of Earl Grey's ministry, the Sari of Darnley voiced the feelings of a great propor-tion of his countrymen:
He always felt convinced, that there was much in the repres-entation of the people in the other House of Parliament which
1 L. J. Hobsbawm and G. Rude7, Captain Swing (new edn., London, 1973), pp. 71-8?.
2 Ibid., App. 1.
3 Ibid., App. 2.
4 Ibid., p. 76.

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required reform. He was persuaded that the question of
Reform could no longer be avoided or delayed. He would
advise his noble_friend at the head of his ^ao'esty's Govern-
ment, and their Lordships, not to refrain, tlXDugh the fear
of going too far, from doing that which was necessary to
satisfy the public mind in this eventful crisis.
The same message rang out with clarity and insistence from every part of Kent, as freemen and freeholders assembled to nrge on the uhiss. Thomas Bentley, for example, congratulated a meeting of the inhabitants of the northern division of the Lathe of Aylesford at Rochester on 18 January 1831:
that the united voices of the people had at length so
imperatively demanded the reform of what might properly be
termed the house of corruption, as to make it hazardous for
that house, or any Minister longer to refuse it.
Like many Kentish speakers at this period, Bentley was confident
of the friendly disposition of Grey and the King, and although still suspicious of the -lories in both Houses, was certain that 'a power now existed which, if properly directed by the irresistible influence of the press, would prove more than a match for the unconstitutional

2 power of the oligarchy 1.

The petitions presented in November and December 1830 had sought
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to couple agricultural and fiscal issues with pleas for reform ,
but by the new year it had clearly been decided to concentrate upon achieving a re-envigoration of the representation from which all other blessings would naturally flow. Charles Larkin advocated such a policy at the rcochester meeting, and at a gathering of ^ast Kent freeholders at Canterbury, Edward Hughes and Mr. Martin held up taxation, tithes, sinecures and the National Debt as areas where
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a reformed Legislature would enact speedy relief. Neither was it considered desirable to dictate to ministers on the precise plan of reform to be adopted. Mr. Prentis spoke warmly on behalf of a substantial redistribution of seats and the enfranchisement of copyholders and leaseholders at the 18 January meeting, while the 1 Parl. Deb., 3rd Ser. i. 12'-;5-

2 Maidstone Gazette, 25 Jan. 1831. • -, n ^ i. 3 For example, those presented by T. ±. Hod-es in Parl. Deb., 3rd.
Ser. i. 383-5 and 972-3-
4 Maidstone Gazette, 15 Feb. 1831-

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ballot was frequently applauded as 'the most efficacious means of

1 preserving purity of election 1. However, in the main, Kentishmen

were prepared to await the Whims' proposals and meanwhile to for-tify them for the struggle which lay ahead.
Lord John Russell cut short the nation's suspense on 1 March,
and shortly afterwards the Kent Herald observed: 'We never remember so intense and general an enthusiasm in favour of any question as
on the present measure of Reform 1. The Bill, it felt, was a 'consti-tutional evolution', and rejoiced that 'the grand principle of
2
actual and direct representation is recognised and established' .
C. J. Jacobson declared at Maidstone on 10 March that it was the duty of the public to support the King's ministers, and Mr. Ellis 1

3 resolution to this effect only attracted three dissentient voices.
4 The adherence of the corporation of Canterbury to the cause ,
allowed the Rev. H. Lacey to refute charges that the ijill was '_§ corporation robbery* , and to defend it as being revolutionary only in the sense that day followed night. Great pleasure at the breadth of the scheme, despite the omission of the ballot, was ex-
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pressed by Mr. Neve at a Sheerness assembly , and the list of approving speakers might be extended from dozens of other newspaper reports. 'Britain' , asserted the Kentish Chronicle, 'is rising
en masse to support a measure of Reform that transcends all our hopes'; while on viewing the national agitation, the Kent Herald reflected ominously that 'if the prayer for reform is now denied it will grow rapidly to a demand and who will dare refuse it 1.'
On 19 April, however, the Bill was defeated in committee, and three days later William IV attended in person to dissolve Parliament.

1 Maidstone Gazette, 25 Jan. 1831.
2 Kent Herald, 10 Mar. 1831 and Kentish Chronicle, 15 iiar. 1831.
3 Maidstone Gazette, 15 Mar. 1831.
4 Ibid.
5 Kent Herald, 10 Mar. 1831.
6 Maidstone Gazette, 15 Mar. 1831.
7 Kentish Chronicle, 15 har. 1831 and ^ent Herald, 10 Mar. 1831.

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IV
The division on Gascoyne's motion should recall us to the fact
that even in the spring of 1831 not all Englishmen were devotees of reform. In Kent, opposition to Russell's Bill was spear-headed by the tory press, and especially by the Kentish Gazette which observed on 29 April:
The plot thickens every hour, and the inhabitants of this
great nation are rapidly dividing themselves into two classes
- the friends of order and a conservative constitution on
the one hand, - the lovers of change at all risks and hazards
on the other.

The paper argued that it sought merely 'to transfer the cause from the tribunal of passion to that of reason and sober judgement 1; and concurred with most tory apologists of the day in dismissing th& damaging idea that those who disliked the present measure were 'secret or avowed enemies to all reform' . 'ilever 1 , it believed,
'was a greater or more invidious calamny put forth 1; and continued: • Is it really so, that no man can be hostile to the bill, who
is not also averse to meet the exigency of the moment, by
admitting such changes as shall have a tendency to strengthen
our institutions, at the same time that they trench neither
upon chartered rights nor established usages.
Finally it warned 'moderate thinking men' not to be hurried s into the adoption of measures, which however deeply they may find reason to

1 deplore them, can never be recalled*.

In the highly-charged atmosphere of late April 1831, however,
these political niceties fell upon stony ground. Public opinion desired only 'The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill 1, and division lists were closely scrutinised to discover the offending Members. After the Bill's second reading, one correspondent had written in the Kentish Chronicle;
I therefore repeat, that so far from being discouraged, this division plainly shows that in a new Parliament this vital
measure would be carried triumphantly, for it will be the
fault of the people if any county, or open place return any
man not pledged to reform. i,Ve may do much in our own county, and we ought to commence with the county itself. Rochester, Maidstone, Dover, and Sandwich, are like the county, neutral-ised, but need this be the case at a new election? Canter-bury and Hythe have done themselves the greatest credit by
1 Kentish Gazette, 29 Apr. 1831.

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choosing members who are staunch in the cause - and why
should not this example be followed?
Here, then, was a challenge, and Kentish electors were not found wanting in zeal to take it up.
At Canterbury, Richard Watson told the freemen that after 'del-iberate and mature reflection 1 he had supported the Bill 'conscien-tiously believing that the future tranquility and safety of our country depended on its successful termination 1; while Lord Fordwich Dledged himself 'to promote the iteform of our Representation, which is now loudly and decidedly called for by all classes of the com' ..

2 munity1. Both men arrived in the city on 22 April and were greeted

with enthusiastic popular acclaim. A 'worn out tory flag' was also hoisted above Mr. Baring's committee rooms, but having derived little encouragement, even among the labourers in the cathedral precincts, he announced rather lamely on the 25th that 'he was friendly to re-form himself, and to contest the city would not only be ungentlemanly 5
on his part, but a great waste of money to no good purpose'. 'The anti-r'eform party 1, gloated the Kent Herald, 'have consequently passed the week in disconsolable inertness, dreaming now and then of catching a golden gull of the Tory species, and quietly waking to the 4-

reality of desertion and utter defeat1. Since no other candidate could be induced to appear, nomination day proceeded without inci-dent, and was more a celebration of, as 'Jatson termed it, 'a bill that would not innovate or make a breach, but assist in closing up those breaches that had been made, and cause the constitution to spring up with greater fame and glory'.
The borough of Hythe also returned unopposed^a pair of M.P.s pledged to support Russell's Bill, in an election which strikingly reveals the deep in-roads made by reform since the previous summer. In 1830.Hardoribanks and ^och had been chosen as the defenders of

1 Kentish Chronicle, 29 Har. 1831 and Kent Herald, 31 har. 1831. 2 Kentish Chronicle, 26 Apr. 1831.
3 Ibid.
4 Itent Herald, 28 Apr. 1831.
5 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 3 nay 1831.

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freemens' privileges, and by April 1831 these rights appeared to be in even greater peril, owing to the Whigs 1 proposal to reduce the port's representation to a single seat and to disfranchise its non-resident electors. According to the Kent Herald, however, it was the 'patriotic spirit 1 of these same out-voters that rendered the sitting Members unassailable, 'purely on account of those gentlemen

1 having supported the measure1.

Elsewhere in Kent we may witness the decisive expulsion of anti-reform Members in a manner attributable to forces more profound than a mere change of Government. When considering the situation at Rochester on 28 April, for example, the Kent Herald reported:
Mr. Bernal and Mr. hills, Reformers both, are canvassing
without an opponent, Lord Villiers having quickly found
sufficieht reasons for abandoning a hopeless contest.
On the $0th, both men expressed strong attachment to the ministers 1 plans, and were then sent off to Westminster to assist in their enact*

3 ment by an electorate which defrayed all expenses.

The Kentish Chronicle was emphatic that Sir John Rae Reid 'must
ZL

go out for Dover 1 ; and in 1831 it aould invoke an issue more power-ful than popular dislike of colonial slavery to accomplish this des-, irable end. In his published address, Reid avoided any mention of the Reform Bill, but his two opponents made no secret of their commitment to Grey's scheme. G. P. Thomson was a reformer with a well-tested pedigree, while Captain H. H. Stanhope came to the borough 'in unflinching Opposition to Corruption and firm Support
of the great cause of REFORM and RETRENCHMENT', which he felt would best be secured by 'a Long Pull, a Strong Pull, and a Pull altogether'. The freemen were not quite as unanimous as otanhope might have hoped, and for some time Sir John's campaign was sustained by the good wishes of the borough's non-residents. Yet, in the end

1 Kent Herald, 5 May 1831- 5 See addresses in Kentish Ghron-
2 Kent Herald, 28 ; fc pr. 1831. icle, 26 Apr. and 3 May 1831—
3 Kent Herald, 5 ^ay 1831. and ^ent Herald, 26 Apr. 1831.
4 Kentish Gazette, 29 Apr. 1831- 6 For example, a meeting of Lon-
Cf. Kentish Gazette. 3 May 1831• don non-residents in Kentish
Gazette, 29 Apr. 1831.

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he retired from the race, and thus allowed the reformers to walk
'i
over the course.

No candidate in 1831, with the possible exception of Sir Edward Knatchbull, aroused more hostility than Samuel urove Price, the
tory Member for Sandwich. To the Kent Herald he was 'one of the chief mouth-pieces of the Boroughmongers'; and on one electioneering tour was actually attacked by a mob of Deal boatmen, who, as the Kentish Gazette rather scornfully reported, 'imagine that the Reform Bill will entitle them to the privileges of pilots 1. 2 jjike Reid
7.

at Dover, Grove Price directed his appeal to the out-dwellers^, but when the polls closed, he had obtained oust 297 votes, and was well behind Marryat's 493 and Admiral Trowbridge's 397- Trowbridge was an Admiralty nominee of the old-school, who no doubt benefited from all the influence which the ministerial interest could exert. Marry-at, on the other hand, drew together all the borough's independent and discontented elements in his triumphant campaign. He declared in the county press that:
Prom the short experience I have had I feel persuaded that no effectual Retrenchment of expenditure or diminution of Tax-
ation can be expected from the House of Commons as at present constituted.
Nevertheless, in both his address and in Parliament, Marryat was careful to couple professions of attachment to the principle of the Bill with a steady determination to amend its details in order to preserve the liberties of his constituents-^, and subsequently labouial hard to carry this undertaking into practice. In early May 1831, the Kent Herald was content to conclude: 'Nobly has that ancient Town rescued itself from the anticipative imputation on its character 1. At the meeting summoned to approve Maidstone's pro-reform
petition, much displeasure was expressed by the freemen at the con-

7 duct of Alderman Winchester. However, as late as 28 April no 'third

1 Ibid. ^ Kentish Chronicle, 26 Apr. 1831.
2 Zent*Herald, 28 Apr. 1831 5 Ibid.; and Parl. Deb.. 3rd Ser.
and Kentish Gazette, 29 iii- 932-3-
Apr 1831. —————— 6 Kent Herald, 5 hay 1831. Cf. Ken-
3 See, for example, the letter tish Chronicle, 10 May 1831.
from William Tapley in Ken- 7 Maldstone Gazette, 15 iiar. 1831. tish Gazette.* 28 Ar>r. 1831.

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man had come forward, and an exasperated Kent Herald could not refrain from enquiring: 'Surely the freemen are not so spiritless there as to suffer their town to be disgraced by such a return at the-

1 present important crisis'. By polling day the borough had fallen

into line with its Kentish neighbours, and two YD airs of rival candi-

p dates were proposed. Robarts and Bo.rrett appeared on behalf of the reforming interest, while Winchester and old George Simson united at the head of the tory faction. To Mr. Ellis, the question at issue was simply:
whether the enterprising and intelligent people of England
should live under the rule of King, Lords, and Commons,
agreeably to the spirit of the constitution, or whether they
should be subjected to the misrule of a vile oligarchy sanc-
tioned and supported by the tools of the Boroughmongers?
The freemen of Maidstone loudly signified their preference for the former proposition, and continued to shout and jeer throughout the speeches of the Tories. Simson just managed to record his ut&er abhorrence of the 'Russell Purge', while Winchester was heard to say that he opposed the Bill because it 'swept away rights and vested interests'. His later promise to assist in a 'moderate and consti-tutional reform 1 prompted general laughter, and did nothing to deter the voters from their resolution to 'redress the pplitical character of Maidstone1.^
Four H.P.s inimical to the Reform Bill as outlined in the late parliament had thus been defeated in the Kentish boroughs, and by the persistent exhortations of Sir J. M. Tylden and the editor of the Kent Herald, the freeholders were stirred up to expel a fifth
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from his county seat. We have already seen how Sir Edward Knatch-bull had espoused the idea of a limited reform in the early months of 1830, and to this principle he remained faithful in his 1831 address.^ But on the whig Bill itself, the renegade Tory had
1 Kent Herald, 28 Apr. 1831.
2 Report in Kentish Chronicle, 10 May 1831.
3 Kent Herald, 5 Hay 1831.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 26 <vpr. 1831.and Kent Herald, 31 war. 1831. 5 kentish GhronicTe, 26 Apr. 1831.

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regularly exhibited his disapproval, and for this failing alone, moves were quickly set on foot to find a more acceptable replacement. At the end of March the Kent Herald had run its eye over the princi-
st

pal contenders for any future vacancy. Though Lord Clifton was no longer eligible due to his recent inheritance of the family title, his younger brother^the Hon. J. Bligh was still a possibility. More probable was Thomas Bentley,'one of the first agriculturists of England, a liberal and reformer all his life 1. Then there were William Frend of Canterbury, Colonel Barrett of Lee Priory, Samuel Sawbridge,'a man of sterling and thoroughly liberal principles', Sir J. M. Tylden, 'a highly talented and zealous liberal 1, or even Edward Darell, 'the representative of a most ancient and honourable Catholic family, and an uncompromising friend of the people'. At a meeting at oittingbourne on 26 April, however, the county's choice

2 fell upon Thomas Rider of Boughton Place , whom the Kent Herald wel-
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corned as 'a veteran in the cause of reform 1.
With Rider and T. L. Hodges as their standard-bearers, Kentish reformers rallied to the great cause in ever increasing numbers.
The Sittingbourne meeting had resolved to return both candidates entirely free of personal expense, and to this end the election was organised in a quite unprecedented manner. A central committee was established at Mcd.dstone to co-ordinate the efforts of smaller bodies operating from such places as Bromley, Dartford, the King's Head,
4.

Canterbury, Tonbridge and Ramsgate. Subscriptions were instituted to cover local costs and to finance the traditional electioneering progress which Hodges and Rider undertook through many parts of the county. Finally, it was everywhere agreed that freeholders should transport themselves, and if possible their friends, to Penenden Heath on polling day.
Sir Edward Knatchbull's response to these elaborate proceedings

1 Kent Herald, 31 Mar. 1831.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 3 May 1831-
3 Kent Herald, 5 May 1831-
^ Kentish Gazette, 29 Apr. and 3 May 1831.

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was to restate the views which 'ill-health 1 had prevented him from explaining in the House:
Large populous towns ought to be directly represented -
the amount of qualification is a matter of detail to be
fixed upon deliberate consideration - I think it would be
injurious to divide Counties and.I am opposed to diminish-
ing the number of English seats.
A committee was formed at haidstone's Star Inn on 30 April to manage

2 Knatchbull's campaign , and the baronet seized every opportunity

to acquaint electors with his opinions.^ The Kentish Gazette also strove to stem the swelling tide of public feeling, and on 29 April published a fierce attack on Rider and the bill's likely effects
in Kent:
The m measure he pledges himself to support, takes the influ-
ence from the agriculturist..., and delivers it over to the shopkeeper. It takes the franchise from 27,348 voters, and
gives it to 5,182. It takes, for example, the franchise
of Dover from 1,866 to give it to only 273; of Rochester
from 841 to give it to only 156; of Sandwich from 955 to
give it to only 125.
Yet, on 4 May? Knatchbull was advised by his committee that he could not 'reasonably hope successfully to withstand the torrent of public opinion1; and a week later his withdrawal was officially announced. After 10 May the Kent election assumed an almost festive air. ; Excursions by foot, by carriage and by steam boat were arranged to transport Kentishmen to Penenden Heath, v/here, on 15 May, 40,000 cheering spectators acclaimed Rider and Hodges c,nd swore eternal fidelity to the Reform Bill, warts and all. It was a fitting climax to a general election/which public opinion had been unasham-edly rampant on a single national issue. And, when all the shout-ing had died down, the Kent Herald could look forward to the new session with hope and genuine local pride:
Imagine the Teller on the First division proclaiming aloud
- The honourable members for Kent representing TWENTY FIVE-THOUSAND Freeholders and Freemen for Reform. The honour-
able members foe Kent reDresenting TWO HUNDRED Freemen vote against Reform. 7
1 Kentish Chronicle, 3 way 1831-
2 Kentish Gazette, 3 i-.ay 1831- .
3 See ibid, for meeting at Janterbury's Fountain Inn.
4 Kentish Gazette, 29 -^r. 1851.
5 Kentish Chronicle, 10 ^ay lop'-
6 Kegtisg V «<* ™' 7 Kent '- crald i 12 ^ 1831.

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Only the farmers and fishermen of New Romney and ^ueenborough had failed to move with the national tide, and by that single act of defiance both somehow justified their fast-approaching dismemberment,

V

What were the exact provisions of the various iieform Bills respecting Kent, for which men voted and petitioned with such vigour during 1831 and 1832? One of the most controversial aspects of the whig plan was the proposal to divide counties, and thereby to enable both East and vvest Kent to return a pair of H.P.s. It was argued that the traditional unity of county society would be destroyed; that the influence of the landed interest would be fatally reduced; and that the Knight of the Shire would lose the prestige which had made him a by-word for independence and the natural channel for local business. Knatchbull, as we have seen, made his misgivings public in the 1831 election, while on 10 August even T. L. Hodges revealed that he did not acquiesce without reservations.
. . . the part of the Bill which he approved of least was the
division of the counties; but the feeling in favour of the
whole Bill was so unanimous through the whole country, that
he had been induced to alter his opinion. He was not so
much afraid of aristocratic influence, as some other persons seemed to be; and although he believed he should offend
many of his constituents, yet as the country demanded the
whole Bill, he was bound to preserve the consistency of the
Bill and vote for the division of counties.
It was, however, the fate of the ^entish boroughs which engen-dered greatest debate within Parliament and out-of-doors. As defined in Russell's original Bill, Schedule A condemned Queen-borough and New rlomney to the loss of both their seats, and so fierce was popular hatred of the'boroughmongering 1 system that neither constituency had any hope of a reprieve. Nevertheless, the arguments used in their defence are not without interest.
On 8 July 1831 oir ^dw^rd Dering told the ^ommons that the 'anomalies existing in the Constitution 1 were the 'cause of benefit rather than of disadvantage'; and warned against jeopardising the

1 Parl. Deb., 3rd Ser. v. 1237-

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nation's precious electoral system by a 'doubtful experiment' which 'did not promise one single advantage in return for the sweeping changes which it would effect in the condition of all classes in the community'. He feared the Bill would 'lay the ground of differ-ences, and open the door to discussions, which would be endless'; and was anxious not to diminish further the weight of the agricul-

1 tural lobby. Later, on 26 July, Bering suggested thao the boun-
daries of New Romney should be extended to include Lydd and Old Romney, and with the help of the 1821 census, demonstrated that the number of inhabitants would be increased from 967 to 2,573- On this basis, the borough had as good a claim to be in Schedule J as did

2 nearby Sandwich.
Sir John Brydges approved the idea as a way of balancing the
added influence given by the dill to the commercial interest; T.L. Hodges felt confident that the people of Romney 'were likely to form a set of as independent electors as any in the kingdom' ; and Bering assured the House that since he owned no property in Lydd^ there would
3 be no increase in his powers of nomination. Other i-i.P.s were not
so easily impressed. Colonel Evans rejected the comparison with

Sandwich:

. . . the town of Sandwich was a flourishing and increasing
port, with a good harbour, and which, together with Deal,
was likely to rise into importance; whereas New Romney and
Old Romney were not likely to rise above their present ^
condition, there being no port to increase their trade.
Lord John Russell was of a similar opinion^, and was not to be moved from his Government's initial decision.
Reflecting on the election of Grant and Gapel ahead of the
'staunch reformer' Captain Dundas, the Kent Herald described con-ditions in 'the insignificant fishing village of ^ueenborough 1 , where 'the poor oyster-catchers are too much engrossed by the
.. Deb., 3rd Ser. iv. 753-6.
2 Parl. Deb., 3rd ber. v. 734-6.
3 Parl. Deb., 3rd oer. v. 735-6.
4 Parl. Deb., 3rd Ser. v. 736.
5 £arl. Deb., 3rd Ser. v. 737-9-
6 Lords Jour. , Ixiii. 1024 contains New Uo'^ey's petition,

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pressing necessity of procuring daily food to have leisure for the discussion of abstract political rights'. The eclipse of the ministerial interest had certainly not resulted in any wholesale conversion to reform, but awareness of national events in the borough was not as blinkered as the radical press seems to have imagined, and it was felt locally that recent progress had been suf-ficient to warrant a sympathetic review of its future status. In the Commons on 26 July, John Capel asserted that ^ueenborough wae: neither a nomination nor a rotten borough, it contained 300
freemen, who, after a hard struggle of seven years, had
worked out their political independence. He and his col-
league had bean sent to the House as free and independent
as any Member.
Sir J. Grant agreed:
That borough had certainly formerly been much under the influence of the Hon. Board of Ordnance, but it had returned Members to the last three Parliaments entirely independent of the influence of that Board. Prior to the last election
he had received an invitation to come forward, accompanied
by a pledge that he would be returned without expense to
himself. He had accepted the invitation, and although
strongly opposed to his hajesty 1 s^Government, he had been
elected by a triumphant majority.
But these improvements were deemed too little and too late to allow Queenbcmough to cheat the gallows under which it stood.
Under the terms of the first Bill, two of the other Kentish boroughs were destined by Schedule B to forfeit one of their repres-entatives. The freemen of Hythe made no effort to escape the rig-ours of Russell's measure, and on 30 September even petitioned the Lords to pass the Bill. Considerable disagreement did, however, arise in the case of Sandwich, and was intensified when the second draft of the whig plan sought to combine the borough with Deal and V/almer in a new two-Member constituency. Joseph Harry at spoke up in support of the clause on 9 August, only to be instantly opposed by Sir Charles Wetherell who claimed that the inhabitants of

1 See Kent Herald, 12 and 10 Kiy, 1831.
2 P'arl. Deb'., 3rd Ser. v. 333-4.
3 Parl. Deb., 3rd Ser. v. 334.
4 Lords. Jour., Ixiii. 1024 contains ^ueenborough's petition.

- 34-2 -
Sandwich would prefer to unite with Margate and Ramsgate.'1 There were evidently many Sandwich out-voters resident in the Isle of

2 Thanet , but for ministers, economic factors were all important,

and in this respect. Deal with its flourishing maritime connections
x

was the obvious choice.
In addition to removing the dead and decaying branches of the Constitution, the Whigs were well aware of the need to extend elec-toral recognition to those areas whose wealth and population had grown rapidly in recent years. The division of the county and the enfranchisement of Deal were prompted by this desire, and in all three Bills it was proposed to give two seats to Greenwich and surrounding districts ii the north-west of Kent. Government's great-est difficulty in this sphere was posed by Chatham, which in the first and second drafts it proposed to incorporate with Rochester. Dissatisfaction was immediately voiced from all sides. On 9 August 1831 John Mills asserted in the Commons that Rochester's 1,069 £10 houses and population of 9,890 were quite sufficient to enable the city to stand by itself. He was not averse to a junction with Strood, but felt Chatham, with its 16,000 inhabitants and 1,506 £10 houses, would totally overwhelm and effectively disfranchise the thousand-strong electorate of the old constituency. Prom the tory benches, Lord Villiers reminded the House that many differences in outlook and interest divided the ancient and privileged city, with its corporation and cathedral, from the dockyards and military depots of Chatham; and under such concerted pressure Lord Althorp could only counter tht~t local boundaries were obscure end that the amal-gamation advocated in the Bill mi-ht go some way towards reducing
4.
undue influence at election-time.
Opinion outside Parliament was similarly split, and in their third Bill of 12 December 1831, ministers announced their revised 1 Parl. Deb., 3rd Ser. v. 1092.
2 Lords Jour., Ixiii. 996.
3 Parl. flebTT 3rd Ser. v. 737-9-
4 Parl. Deb., 3rd Ser. v. 10o2-6.

- 34-3 -
intention to create a separate single-Member borough at Chatham. Mr. Ashley welcomed the scheme at a meeting of the inhabitants of Chatham on 17 January 1832, because he conceived that the divergent aspirations of the two neighbouring communities would have been hard to reconcile. To Ashley, 'to say that they would be a corrupt borough was to send them into quarantine before they had the cholera amongst them'; and was convinced that at least some of the 600 to 700 new voters would be independent men. Mr. Dadd, on the other hand, regretted the alteration, since he believed neither Chatham nor a Rochester stripped of its non-residents would be strong enough to resist outside influence, especially when it was wielded by a statesman less liberal-minded than Lord Grey. Pears were also expressed that the expense of setting up a corpor-ation at Chatham would add greatly to the financial burden of the inhabitants, but, despite the almost unanimous demands of the Sun Tavern meeting, Government was not again prepared to reconsider.

VI

While Parliament settled down to a long summer of discussion
and wrangling over the details of the Whigs' Bill, Kentishmen could do little but follow events in the press, and occasionally spur on their representatives with petitions. In the immediate aftermath of the 1831 election the dominant mood was one of optimism and heady expectation since, as the haidstone Gazette declared: 'Now that the sense of the people has been so unequivocally expressed, further resistance to the measure may be looked upon as utterly hopeless 1. 2 Men everywhere rejoiced at the glorious victories won at Dover and Sandwich, and at a dinner given in honour of Rider and, Hodges at Rochester on 8 June, j_.ord Sondes looked forward to the day when a reformed Legislature would cast an enlightened eye upon

3 the criminal code and the game laws.

1 Haidstone Journal, 24 Jan. 1832.
2 Maidstone Gazette, 10 May 1831-
3 Kentish Chronicle, 24 June 1831-

But this intensity of feeling could not be sustained through-
out the tedious months when the ixlll seemed becalmed in a sea of minutiae. I'he unceasing war of words carried on between 'VTixDEX 1 in the Kentish Chronicle and f QUIEI'lUS dJRi'IUS 1 in the Kentish

1 Gazette drew upon fresh reserves of bitterness and acrimony , and

the pro-reform press in general abounded with denunciations of tory gentlemen and clergy. To frustration and anger at the delay was added the fear that the enemies of reform were stealthily regroup-ing. A number of petitions hostile to Government were successfully canvassed, and the Rev. G. R. Gleig, Rector of Ivychurch was em-ployed hy Wellington to entice Sir Edward Knatchbull out of his premature retirement. Late in August, 4-67 Kentish Tories sat down to a banquet at Sittingbourne, and when the cloth had been removed, the company heard anti-reform speeches from Lord hahon, the Earl
of Winchilsea, Lr. Grove Price, and Knatchbull himself, v/ho, having reiterated his criticisms and alarms, said enough to suggest that at the right moment he might again stand before the electors of Kent. 2

As tension mounted, it becs.me daily more apparent that every-thing hinged on the House of Lords' interpretation of the temper of the country. Sir Charles Wetherell and CD. L. Hodges crossed swords on this sensitive point when debating the union of Rochester and Chatham , and it was clearly uppermost in the minds of freeholders

4 at a county meeting at Haidstone on 30 September. Despite stiff

opposition from Lord Mahon and George Gipps, the assembly voted a petition, which, together with similar prayers from Cranbrook, Sandwich, Folkestone, Chatham, Dover, Gravesend and i.ilton, Dartforc and Crayford, Lewisham and many other places, was presented to the Lords to urge its acceptance of the Bill. 5 Nevertheless, at six
1 See, for example, Kentish Chronicle, 17 i-:ay 1831.
2 Maidstone Gazette, 31 Aug. 1831-
3 Parl. Deb., 3rd Ser. v. 1070-1.
4 Kentish Chronicle, 4 Oct. 1831-
5 Lords Jour., Ixii'i. 1034, 1035, 1036, 1037, 1040, 1026 and 1067-

o'clock on the morning of 8 October, Government was defeated at the end of the second reading debate, and three days later 'VTNDEX 1 wrote in the Kentish Chronicle:
The Bill has been thrown out by a majority of 4-1 votes 1 It
was right, however, to give them an opportunity of passing
judgment on the question - now we see how the land liesl
When the House of Lords stands out against the King and the
Nation, the remedy is a fresh creation. Lord Grey will man-
fully stand by the ship whilst there is any hope! Thousands
of petitions will soon be in preparation to his Majesty -
and every Englishman will take care to record his name in
support of the rights and privileges of his country.
It was some months before William IV could be brought to con- . sent to so drastic a step, and in the meantime the reform crisis entered its most extreme phase. Petitioning was endemic among the inhabitants of Kent, and one correspondent in the Kent Herald warned ministers not to purchase tranquillity at the expense of popular rights. He referred menacingly to the 'titled and mitred pests'
and trusted that 'the annihilation of peers as an hereditary body, in an enlightened Country like trance, will, no doubt, have due
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effect upon the insolent Boroughmongers of ^ngland'.- Bishops were burned in effigy at Sittingbourne, Sheerness and Canterbury; riots were feared when Wellington held the Warden's sessions at Dover; and the Kent Herald told its readers that 'the natural indignation of an insulted, outraged people can with difficulty be restrained within the limits of orderly and peaceful deportment 1. The scenes of tumult and destruction at Bristol cast an awesome shadow across national politics, and the Kent Herald believed that peace could only be restored by 'a prompt declaration of ministerial intent 1. While the nation waited for some statement, the more radical
among the reformers were turning their attention, as lories like Knatchbull and Dering had predicted, to other long-established institutions. At Canterbury, for example, it was decided to chal-lenge the privileges of the corporation, and iir. Keen was appointed to propose at a Court of Burghmote that all the freemen should
1 Kentish Chronicle, 11 Oct. 1831. 3 ibid; 'Dangerous State of
2 Kent Herald, 5 iMov. 1831. x-ublic Feeling through Delay — —— —— —— of Reform'. Cf. ———————— Kent Herald Oct. 1831

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participate in the election of aldermen. On 27 October the Kent Herald noted confidently:
As the majority of the members h^ve publicly declared them-
selves in favour of the parliamentary Reform Jill, and as
the civic question stands on precisely the same grounds, we
cannot anticipate any other than a successful result.
A week later a petition to Burghmote was about to be circulated, and the same paper hinted darkly that the Bristol riots had been

p inspired partly by corruption in local administration. Disil" lusionment followed swiftly, since Keen's motion could only attract two votes in the Court, despite being backed by the signatures of 125 freemen. But if the tussle for municipal accountability was temporarily over, the Kent Herald announced defiantly on 1? Novem-ber: 'We shall take all fitting opportunities of reverting to this
z

subject. It must not be lost sight of.
Parliament finally re-assembled on 6 December, and on the 12th
a third scheme of reform was unveiled. Sarly in 1832 'VTNDEX' wrote in the Kentish Chronicle;
This great measure engrosses all the attention of all ranks
in the country - men's hearts are fixed upon it - and to
such an extreme are we arrived, that it is much to be
doubted whether between iieform and universal convulsion,
any thing in the shape of an alternative could be discerned
by the most sanguine and anxious well-wisher of the consti-
tution.
'VINDEX' asserted that the 'lories could not possibly justify the preservation of the old system, which had inflated the national Debt and rendered intolerable the condition of the labourers and the Irish; while to 'oCRUTATOR 1 the Opposition was composed of
1 things-as-they-were men, corruptionists, worshippers of venerable and venerated abuses, idolaters of boroughism, et hoc omne genus'. Towards the end of January the slow progress of the Bill led the Kent Herald to urge ministers to act with 'alacrity and resolution^

1 Kent Herald, 2? Oct. 1831-
2 Kent Herald, 3 and 10 Nov. 1831-
3 Kent Herald, 1? Nov. 1831-
4 Kentish Chronicle, 1? Jan. 1832.
5 Kentish Chronicle, 10 Jan. 1832.
6 Kent Herald, ^bTan. 1832.

and by the middle of February 'SCRUTATOR' was speculating that the measure might again be lost. The public had formerly borne their disappointment with 'fortitude', but now circumstances had entirely altered:

Does Lord Grey really imagine that a second rejection of
the Bill will be received by the people with calmness and
placid resignation? I hope it may - but is there,, a man
in the kingdom credulous enough to think it will?
One manifestation of the country's impatience was the formation
of political unions on the Birmingham model. In November 1831 the Kent Herald could discover no advantage to the reform cause from

p these middle-class and rather conservative bodies , but by the spring of 1832, a vacillating Government and an impending clash with the tory peers had worked something of a transformation. On 9 May a meeting at the King's Head, Canterbury, agreed to establish the 'Reform Union of Canterbury and its Vicinity', 'for the purpose of promoting by all constitutional means, the success of the great

5 question of Parliamentary Reform'. The Union seems to have been

well supported in north-east Kent, and no doubt did much to focus the public outcry which greeted the King's refusal to create fifty peers and his acceptance of Grey's resignation. On 17 May the Kent Herald voiced its belief that Wellington would be unable to piece together a credible administration, but nevertheless counselled its readers to keep the machinery of agitation in a state of readiness. If the 'English Polignac* should succeed, the nation should initially adopt 'passive resistance':
. . . by allowing the law to take its course in restraining
their goods for taxes - they will abstain from the purchase
of all exciseable articles - they will pay no Tithes, no
rents to anti reform parsons and landowners - they^will
change all their bank-notes and deposits for Gold.
But even these contingencies were never put to the test. The
King was eventually compelled by Wellington's failure to consent

1 Kentish Chronicle, 14- Feb. 1831.
2 Kent Herald, 17 Nov. 1831.
3 Kent Herald, 10 n'ay 1832.
4 Kent Herald, 17 May 1832.

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to the Whigs' demands, and thereafter the tory peers offered no further opposition. On 7 June the Kent Herald acclaimed the success of the long campaign:
VICTORY:
THE BILL IS PASSED! - In these few words what a bulletin
of triumph is contained: What a moment of moral and
political victory over an inveterate and long preponder-
ating enemy. Thus has the popular will established its
due supremacy over a selfish and bigoted usurpation.
Reform had come a long way and endured many hardships since 1768, and it would never again be possible to neglect public opinion as a principal factor in county or national politics. In the space of just sixty years, the centuries-old structure of Kentish society had crumbled away and been replaced by a new consciousness of realities and potentialities in a rapidly changing world. In 1832,Kentishmen had achieved that which their fathers and grand-fathers had only dreamed of doing, but as 'VINDEX' soberly recog-nised in the midst of all the jubilation: 'The benefits of the

2 bill, the gold in the mine, must now be worked out 1.

1 Kent Herald, 7 June 1852.
2 Kentish Chronicle, 5 June 1852.

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Appendix 1

Membership of the Committee of the County of Kent

a) List of subscribers to the Duke of Dorset's emergency fund published in the Kentish Gazette, 21-25 August 1779-

At .the Assizes on 24 July 1779:

Duke of Dorset
W. Steade
Hon. Charles Marsham
Thomas Knight jnr.
William Evelyn
Sir Horace Mann
Sir John Filmer
James Best

Sir William Fagg
Sir Richard Betenson
Richard Hulfe
William Deedes
Sir Roger Twisden
Rev. J. Milner
Henry Hawley

J . V/hatman
I. Bartholomew
Rev. J. Lynch
Rev. T. S. Courteis
Rev. John Taylor
George Bishop
Charles Booth
John Sawbridge
John Cole

Rev. Richard Styles
P. M. Austen
Rev. Iii. Marshall
A . H . Shove
F. Austen

Lord Romney
Thomas Knight snr.
Hon. F. Bouverie

Absent from meeting, but members of the Grand Jury.

Other leading Kentishmen who also subscribed:

Sir Charles Farnaby
John Toke
Lord George Germain
Sir Edward Dering
Hon. Robert Fairfax
Thomas Best
Lewis Cage
Henry Cframpney
John Coke

The Archbishop of Canterbury Earl of Guilford
Thomas Heron
Rev. Ralph Drake Brockman Hon. John Cornwallis,
Dean of Canterbury
Thomas Barrett
James Lynch
Charles Pyott
Robert Kirk
Rev. Philip Breton
Stephen Richards
Thomas Hooker

b) List of the original 100 members of the Kent Committee. Stanhope I-ISS. U1590/253: 'Resolves of the Committee of the

County of Kent 1, f. 3-

Henry Whitfield
John Nash
Rev. Mr. Mansty
Earl of Darnley
Bonham Hayes
Joseph Brooke
Richard Hayes
John Market
George Smith
Edward Pilcher
Lord Sondes
Hon. Lewis Watson
Lord Conyngham
Richard Milles
Rev. Edmund Latter
Henry Woodgate
Rev. Henry Austen
Rt. Hon. Thomas Townshend Charles niddleton
Rev. Lr. Downing Wootton

Lord Abergavenny
Viscount Althorp
John Amherst
Stephen Amherst
George Arnold

Rev. Lr. R. Gunsley Ayersh J. Baker

otephen Beckingham
.oir i.ichard Betenson
il homas olackman

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Thomas Borritt
Nicholas Bourne
Hon. W. H. Bouverie
Rev. Mr. iialph Drake Brockman James Bunse
Lord Gamden
John Carter
Sari of Chatham
- Sir Robert Clayton
Robert Cobb
Thomas Wenman Coke
Thomas Coventry
Brass Crosby
Sir l\arborough D'Aeth
William Dalison
Rev. Mr. Francis Dodsworth Rev. Mr. Frederick Dodsworth Richard Duppa
Edward Eliot
Edward James Eliot
Rev. Mr. John Fermor
Savile Finch
John Ifrost
Mr. Gee
Rev. Mr. Maurice Gleyre Charles Goring
N. Haddock
Rev. Mr. Hardy
Robert Hilton
Sir John Honywood
Filmer Honywood
Philip Honywood
Mr. Hougham
William James
Mr. Richard James
Rev. Demetrius James
Earl of Jersey
John Lpngley
James Lucas

Rev. Mr. Lushington
H. Lyell
Viscount Mahon
Rev. Mr. Edmund Marshall Daniel Master
Dr. Thomas Milner

George Morland
Sir Henry Oxenden
Henry Oxenden
Edward Peach
Alured ^-incke
Mr. rlumer
John Plumptre
G. Polhill
Nathaniel ^-olhill
Rev. Hr. Joseph Pole
Hon. John J. Pratt
J. Pratt
Rev. Mr. Samuel Preston J. itadcliffe
Earl of Radnor
bir Thomas P.ider
Charles Robinson
M. Robinson Morris
Rev. Mr. William Robinson Hon. E. Roper
. Dr. Richard Rycrpft
John oargent
John Sawb ridge
William Saxby
Thomas Scott
Alured Henry Shove
Sir Robert Smith
Larl Spencer
^arl Stanhope
Oliver Stephens
Henry Streatfield
Thomas Streatfield
Clement Taylor
William Tempeth
j,arl of Thanet
Edward Toke
John Toke
Rev. Mr. Thomas Tourney xtt. Hon. Thomas Townshend James Trecothick
J . Warde
Godfrey Webster
Viscount vvenman
John Wills
Sir George Young

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Appendix 2

Kentish Knights of the Shire, 1768-1832

Additional biographical material and references relating to
the thirteen Kentish Kninrhts of the Shire may be found in G. P. Judd, Members of Parliament, 1734-1832 (New Haven, 1955) and
J. Cave-Brown, 'Knights of the Shire for Kent from A.D. 1275 to A.D. 1831', A.G., xxi. (1895), 198-243-

Bridges, Sir Brook (1733-91), 3rd Baronet, of Goodnestone Park, Kent. M.P. Kent 1763-74. See Gamier and Brooke, ii. 118.

Farnaby Radcliffe, oir Charles (1740-98;, 3rd Baronet, of kippington, near Sevenoaks, Kant. M.P. East Grinstead 1765-68, Kent 1769-
74, Hythe 1774-98. See Namier and Brooke, ii. 414.

Geary, Sir William (1766-1825), 2nd Baronet, of Oxon Hoath near West Peckham, Kent. M.P. Kent 1796-1806, 1812-18.

Hodges, Thomas Law (1776-1857), of Hemsted Place near Bennenden, Kent. M.P. Kent 1830-32, West Kent 1832-4-1, 184-7-52. See Sir
J. R. Twisden, The Family of Twysden and Twisden; Their History and Archives (London, 1939), pp. 421-3.

Honywood, Filmer (c.1745-1809), of Monks Hall, Essex, and Hall Place, Kent. M.P. Steyning 1774-80, Kent 1780-96, 1802-6. See Namier and Brooke, ii. 635-

Honywood, William (1760-1818). M.P. Kent 1806-12.

Honywood, William Philip (1790-1831), of Monks Hall, Essex. M.P. Kent 1818-30.

Knatchbull, Sir Edward (1758-1819), 8th Baronet, of Mersham Hatch near Ashford, Kent. M.P. Kent 1790-1802, 1806-19- See Sir H. Knatchbull-Eu^essen, Kentish Family (London, 1960), chap. viii.

Knatchbull, Sir ^dward (1781-1849), 9th Baronet, of i-iersham Hatch near Ashford, Kent. M.P. Kent 1819-31, East Kent 1832-45. See D.N.B., xxxi. 237-8; and Knatchbull-Hugessen, op. cit., chaps, ix-xiii.

Knight, Thomas (1735-94) of Godmersham near Canterbury, Kent. M.P. New Romney 1761-68, Kent 1768-74. See Namier and Brooke, iii.
14.

Marsham, Hon. Charles (1744-1811), 3rd Baron and 1st Larl of Romney, of Mote Park near Maidstone, Kent. M.P. Maidstone 1768-74,
Kent 1774-90. See Namier and Brooke, iii. 111; and Hon. R. Marsham Townshend, Chart and Narrative Pedigree of the Marshams
of Kent down to the"end of the year 1902 (London, 1908j, pp.35-4.

Rider, Thomas (1765-1845) of Boughton Place, Kent. M.P. Kent 1831- 32, West Kent 1832-34.

Sackville, John Frederick (1745-99) 3rd iJuke of Dorset, of Knole Place near Sevenoaks, Kent. n.P. Kent 1768-69- See Kamier and Brooke, iii. 396-7; D.N.B., 1. 92; and /. Sackville-West,
Knole and the Sackvilles (new imp.; London, 1926;, pp. 176-200.

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Appendix 3

Kentish Elections, 176B-1832

This appendix is based upon the returns and polling figures quoted in Sir L. B. Namier and J. Brooke, The History of Parlia-ment; The House of Commons, 1734-1790 (London, 1964;, H. B. Smith, The parliaments of England from 1st George 1, to the present time (London, 1844-50), and Parliamentary Papers 1878 Ixii. (69.): 'Members of Parliament1; with such amendments as are suggested by contemporary newspapers and poll-books.

Canterbury

17 Har. 1768

William Lynch 78?
Richard Milles 692
Robert Maguire 585
Thomas Best 544

7 Oct. 1774

Richard Milles 856
Sir William Mayne 761
Sir William Lynch 438
Sir Philip Hales 177

6 Sept. 1780

George Gipps 634
Charles Robinson 617
William Mayne, Baron Newhaven 560
Sir Henry Watkin Dashwood 150
Michael Lade 28

30 Mar. 1784

George Gipps
Charles Robinson
James Trotter 0
James Wynch 0

The Sheriff refused to accept votes for Trotter
and Wynch as they would not swear to their qualifications.

19 June 1790

George Gipps oOy
Sir John Honywood 732
Basil William Douglas, Viscount Daer 578
Hon. Lewis Thomas Watson 39^

28 May 1796

John Baker 777
Samuel Elias Sawbridge 754
George Gipps 739
Sir John Honywood 716

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10 Mar. 1797

John Baker 4-85
Samuel Elias Sawbridge 470
Sir John Honywood 195
George Gipps 185

re-elected, after the previous election had been declared void, Gipps and Honywood were then seated, after Baker and Sawbridge had
been adjudged ineligible to stand.

27 Feb. 1800

Hon. George Watson 572
Joseph Royle 248

vice Gipps, deceased.

5 July 1802

Hon. George Watson
John Baker

29 Oct. 1806

John Baker
James Simraons

2 Feb. 1807

Samuel Elias Sawbridge

vice Simmons, deceased.

12 May 1807

John Baker 901
Edward Taylor 826
Stephen Rumbold Lushington 673
Robert Townshend Farquhar 50$

9 Oct. 1812

Stephen Rumbold ^ushington 1025
John Baker 517
Edward Taylor 329

19 June 1818

Stephen Rumbold Lushington 990
Edward Bligh, Viscount Clifton 861
John Baker 655
Joseph Royle 8
Edward Taylor ^

8 Har. 1820

Stephen Rumbold Lushington 601
Edward Bligh, Viscount Clifton 566
Robert Foote 86

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10 June 1826

Stephen Rumbold Lushington 665
Edward Bligh, Viscount Clifton 435
Hon. Richard Watson 107

31 July 1830

Hon. Richard //atson 1334-
George Cowper, Viscount Fordwich 1101
Henry Baring 731
Samuel Elias Sawbridge 8 Hon. J. G. Milles 8

29 Apr. 1831

Hon. Richard Watson
George Gowper, Viscount IPordwich

Dover

18 Mar. 1768

Sir Joseph Yorke 446
George Bussy Villiers, Viscount Villiers 339
Hughues Minet 189

20 Jan. 1770

Sir Thomas Pym Hales 483
John Trevanion 456

vice Villiers, on his accession to the Lords
as Earl of Jersey.

2 Apr. 1773

Thomas Barrett 524
John Trevanion 385

vice Hales, deceased.

11 Oct. 1774-

John Henniker
John Trevanion

12 Sept. 1780

John Henniker
John Trevanion

5 Apr. 1784

Robert Preston 571
James Luttrell 529
John Urevanion 248
John Bazeley

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14 Jan. 1789

John Trevanion 511
Charles Small Pybus 454

vice -LAittrell, deceased.

9 June 1790

Charles Small Pybus 883
John Trevanion 532
William Bentinck 497
John Henniker 292

17 June 1791

Charles Small Pybus

re-elected, after accepting office.

28 Hay 1796

Charles Small I^ybus 425
John Jrevanion 283
Nicholas Bayley 192

27 July 1797

Charles Small I^rbus 291
Richard Heaton Sully 110

re-elected, after accepting office.

9 July 1802

John Trevanion 666
John Spencer Smith 584
William Huskisson 466

6 Nov. 1806

Charles Jenkinson 789
John Jackson 789
John Trevanion 744

12 May 1807

Charles Jenkinson 872
John Jackson 628
Hon. Henry Manvers Pierrepont 622

6 Oct. 1812

Charles Jenkinson
John Jackson

17 June 1818

Edward Bootle Wilbraham 510
Sir John Jackson 505
R. B. Robson

- 35? -

6 I-iar. 1820

Edward Bootle Wilbraham
Joseph Butterworth

19 June 1826

Edward Bootle Wilbraham 1175
Charles Poulett Thomson 74-6
John Halcomb 628
Joseph Butterworth 198
George Pinch 13
Michael Kingsford 8

11 Feb. 1828

William Henry Trant 738
John Halcomb 633

vice Wilbraham, on his accession to the Lords
as Baron Skelmersdale.

5 Aug. 1830

Sir John Rae Reid 975
Charles Poulett Thomson 974
John Halcomb 730

29 Nov. 1830

Charles Poulett Thomson

re-elected, after accepting office.

28 Apr. 1831

Charles Poulett Thomson
James Stanhope

Hythe

16 Mar. 1768

John Sawbridge 59
William Evelyn 53
Lord George Sackville 11
Sir Charles Farnaby 11

7 Oct. 1774

Sir Charles Farnaby 66
William Evelyn 59
John Sawbridge 38

9 Sept. 1780

Sir Charles Farnaby 62
William Evelyn 61
John Stevenson
Richard James

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1 Apr. 1?84

Sir Charles Farnaby 61
William Evelyn 56
John Sawbridge 38

17 June 1790

William Evelyn
Sir Charles Farnaby Radcliffe

25 May 1796

William Evelyn
Sir Charles Farnaby Radcliffe

7 Nov. 1798

Hon. Charles Marsham

vice Farnaby Radcliffe, deceased.

5 July 1802

Matthew White 104
Thomas Godfrey 92
Charles Mar sham, Viscount r.arsham 90
Alexander Evelyn 71

31 Oct. 1806

Charles Marsham, Viscount harsham 149
Thomas Godfrey 90
Matthew White 62

7 May 1807

Thomas Godfrey 109
William Deedes 104
Matthew White 93
Thomas Plummer 66

19 Mar. 1810

Sir John Pering 90
John William Head Bridges 51
William 3usk

vice Godfrey, deceased.

7 Oct. 1812

Sir John Pering
Matthew White
Thomas Plummer

19 June 1818

John jSladen Taylor
Sir John Pering
Sir John Courtenay Honywood Matthew White

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20 May 1819
Samuel Jones Lloyd 159
Sir John Gourtenay Honywood 90
vice Taylor, who accepted the Stewardship of
the Manor of the Chiltern Hundreds.
8 Mar. 1820

Samuel Jones Lloyd
Stewart Mar3oribanks
9 June 1826
Stewart Marjoribanks
Sir -iobert Townshend Farquhar
26 Mar. 1830
John Loch

vice Farquhar, deceased.
3 Aug. 1830
Stewart Marjoribanks 270
John Loch 270
Pitzroy Kelly 8
William j'razer 8
29 Apr. 1831
Stewart Marjoribanks
John Loch
Kent
30 Mar. 1768
Sir Brook Bridges
John Frederick Sackville
15 Feb. 1769
Sir Charles Farnaby
vice Sackville, on his accession to the Lords
as Duke of Dorset.

13 Sept. 1774
Hon. Charles Marsham
Thomas Knight
13 Oct. 1780
Hon. Charles Marsham
Filmer Honywood
21 Apr. 1784
Hon. Charles Marsham
Filmer Honywood

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Maidstone

18 I-iar. 1?68

Hon. Charles Marsham 697
Robert Gregory 433
Arthur Annesley 331

8 Oct. 1774-

Sir Horace Mann 541
Heneage Finch, Viscount Guernsey 456
Robert Gregory 225

16 hay 1777

Hon. Charles Finch 235
Charles Stanhope, Viscount Mahon 28

vice Guernsey, on his accession to the Lords
as Earl of Aylesford.

8 Sept. 1780

Sir Horace Mann 558
Clement Xaylor 399
Hon. Charles Finch 362

2 Apr. 1784

Clement Taylor 4-06
Gerard Edwards 393

William Geary 324

14 July 1788

Matthew Bloxam 328
George Byng 307

vice Edwards, who accepted the Stewardship of
the Manor of the Chiltern Hundreds.

22 June 1790

Matthew Bloxam

Clement Taylor 4-19
Robert Parker 158

27 May 1796

Oliver De Lancey ^5
Matthew Bloxam 328
Christopher Hull 281

8 July 1802

John Hodson Durrand ^^
Sir Matthew Bloxam 381

Hon. John Henniker Major 319

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9 Nov. -1806

George Simson 391
George Longman 368
Sir Matthew Bloxam 320

9 May 1807

George Simson 395
George Longman 374.
Sir William Geary 332

8 Oct. 1812

George Simson 389
Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges 389
George Longnan 211

1? June 1818

George Longman 233
Abraham W. Robarts 225
John Wells 162

9 Mar. 1820

Abraham W. Robarts 287
John Wells 250
Richard Sharp 236

10 June 1826

John Wells 375
Abraham W. Robarts 357
Windham Lewis 105

30 July 1830

Abraham W. Robarts 4-70
Henry Winchester 386
Philip Rawlings 156
W.G.T'.D. Tyssen 6

3 May 1831

Abraham W. Robarts
Charles James Barrett
Henry Winchester 195
George Simson 150

New Romney

18 Mar. 1768

Sir Edward Dering
Richard Jackson

5 Mar. 1770

John Morton

vice Dering, who accepted the Stewardship of
the Manor of the Chiltern Hundreds.

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7 Oct. 1774-
Sir Edward Bering
Richard Jackson
12 Sept. 1780
Sir Edward Bering
Richard Jackson
8 July 1782
Richard Jackson
re-elected, after accepting office.
12 Apr. 1784-
Sir Edward Bering
John Smith
June 1784-
Ri chard Atkins on
vice Smith, who accepted the Stewardship of
the Manor of the Chiltern Hundreds.
7 June 1785
John Henniker
vice Atkinson, deceased.
29 Jan. 1787
Richard Joseph Sulivan
vice Bering, who accepted the Stewardship of
the Manor of East Hendred.
19 June 1790
Richard Joseph Sulivan
Sir Elijah Impey
27 May 1796
John Fordice
John Willett Willett

9 July 1802
John Willett Willett
Manaseh Lopes
4- Nov. 1806
William Windham
John Pering
7 May 1807
Thomas Scott, Earl of Clonmel Hon. George Ashburnham

- 36-4- -

8 Oct. 1812
Sir John Thomas Duckworth
William Mitford
12 Feb. 1813
Sir John Thomas Duckworth
re-elected, after accepting office.
5 Feb. 181?
Cholmeley Bering
vice Duckworth, deceased.
18 June 1818
Richard Erie Drax Grosvenor
Andrew Straham
22 Feb. 1819
Richard Edward Erie Drax Grosvenor
vice Erie Drax Grosvenor, deceased.
8 Mar. 1820
Richard Edward Erie Drax Grosvenor George May Dawkins Pennant
9 June 1826
George May Dawkins Pennant
William Tapps-Gervis
5 Aug. 1830
Hon. Arthur Hill-Trevor
William niles
Sir Loftus Otway
Sir George Westphal
The Returning Officer refused to accept votes for Otway and Westphal.
9 Mar. 1831
Sir Richard Gresley
vice Hill-Trevor, who accepted the Stewardship of
the Manor of the ^hiltern Hundreds.

29 Apr. 1831
William Mles
Sir Edward Cholmeley Dering

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Queenborough
16 Mar. 1768
Sir Charles Frederick
Sir Piercy orett
7 Oct. 1774
Sir Charles Frederick 99
Sir Walter Rawlinson 80
Sir Piercy Brett 29
8 Sept. 1780
Sir Charles Frederick
Sir Walter Rawlinson
31 Mar. 1784

John Clater Aldridge 54
George Bowyer 48
Sir Hyde Parker 46
Robert Mackey 30
19 June 1790
Richard Hopkins 71
Gibbs Crawford 70
George Grant 43
William Popham 31
17 June 1791
Richard Hopkins
re-elected, after accepting office.
3 Dec. 1793
Augustus Rogers
vice Crawford, deceased.
15 Feb. 1794
John Sargent
vice Rogers, who accepted office.
27 May 1796
Evan Nape an
John Sargent
5 July 1802
John Princep
George Peter i«iOore
John Sargent
Admiral Payne

- 366 -
21 Mar. 1806

Sir Samuel Romilly
vice Moore, who accepted the Stewardship of
the Manor of East Hendred.
29 Oct. 1806
Sir Samuel Romilly
William Frankland
7 May 180?
Hon. John Charles Villiers 116
Joseph Hunt 102
J. P. Chichester 63
1 June 1810
Richard Wellesley
vice Hunt, who was expelled from the House of Commons
15 Jan. 1812
Robert Moorson

vice Wellesley who accepted office.
7 Oct. 1812
Robert Iioorson
John Osborn
17 June 1818
Sir Robert Moorson
Hon. Edmund Phipps
8 Mar. 1820
Hon. John Charles Villiers
George Peter Holford
22 Mar. 1824
Frederick Cavendish-Bentinck
vice Villiers, on his accession to the iuords
as Earl of Clarendon.
10 June 1826
Ulysses De Burgh, Baron Downes 144
John Capel 131
Frederick Cavendish-Bentinck 115

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2 Aug. 1830

William nolraes 138
Sir P.C.G.H. Durham 130

John Gapel 130
Thomas Gladstone 123

Holmes eventually chose to sit for Haslemere, and Durham's election was declared void. Capel and Gladstone were thus returned.

2 Hay 1831

John Capel 124
Sir John Colquhoun Grant 121
J.W.D. Dundas 83

Rochester

16 Mar. 1768

John Calcraft 313
William Gordon 308
Francis Geary 292

9 Mar. 1771

Thomas Pye 293
Richard Smith 154

vice Gordon, who accepted the .Stewardship of
the Manor of the Chiltern Hundreds.

18 Sept. 1772

George Finch Hatton 329
Nathaniel Smith 253

vice Calcraft, deceased.

7 Oct. 1774

Robert Gregory 350
George Finch Hatton 293
Thomas Pye 252

9 Sept. 1780

George Finch Hatton 331
Robert Gregory 319
Nathaniel Smith 281

1 Apr. 1784

Sir Charles Middleton 70
Nathaniel Smith 61
George Finch Hatton 44

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19 June 1790

George liest 367
Sir Richard Bickerton 322
William Henry Gavendish-Scott-Bentinck,
i-iarquis of Jitchfield 24$

7 Mar. 1792

Nathaniel Smith 299
Sir Richard King 253

vice Bickerton, deceased.

12 May 1794

Sir Richard King

vice Smith, deceased.

27 May 1796

Sir Richard King 286
Hon. Henry Tufton 186
George Best 77
John Longley $0

5 July 1802

Sir William Sidney Smith 423
James Hulkes 417
George Smith 45
James Soper Head 10

8 Nov. 1806

John Galcraft 575
James Barnett 393
Sir William Sidney Smith 382

8 May 1807

Sir Thomas Boulden Thompson 382
John Calcraft " 362
Sir Thomas Trigge 306

7 Oct. 1812

Sir Thomas Boulden Thompson
John Galcraft

27 June 1816

James Barnett 408

Sir Thomas Boulden Thompson 406

vice Thompson, who accepted office.

6 Mar. 1817

James Barnett

re-elected after the previous election had been declared void.

- 369 -
20 June 1818
James Barnett

Thomas Hamilton, '/iscount Binning $80
Robert Torrens 173
6 Mar. 1820

Thomas Hamilton, /iscount Binning
Ralph Bernal
1? June 1826

Hon. Henry Dundas 674-
Ralph Bernal 354-
W. Armstrong 311
4- Aug. 1830
Ralph Bernal 4-29
George Child-Villiers, Viscount Villiers 4-17
John Mills 339
3 Apr. 1831
Ralph Bernal
John Mills
Sandwich
16 Mar. 1768

Henry Conyngham, Viscount Conyngham
Philip Stephens
6 Oct. 1774-

Philip Stephens 516
William Hey 4-55
Henry Conyngham, /iscount Conyngham 68
25 Nov. 1776
Charles Brett

vice Hey, who accepted office.
11 Sept. 1780
Philip Stephens 4-77
Sir Richard Button 366
Charles Brett 302
1 Apr. 1784-
Philip Stephens
Charles Brett
17 June 1790
Philip Stephens 474-
oir Horace Mann 311
George Parker, Viscount barker 290

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13 Mar. 1795
Sir Jhilip Stephens
re-elected, after accepting office.
25 May 1796
Sir Philip Stephens
Sir Horace Mann
8 July 1802
Sir Philip Stephens
Sir Horace Mann
3 Nov. 1806
Sir Horace Hann
Thomas Freemantle
8 Hay 1807
Peter Rainier 171
Hon. Charles Cecil Cope Jenkinson 153
Sir Horace Mann 14-9
22 Apr. 1808

John Spratt Rainier 336
Charles Morgan 132
vice Rainier, deceased.
7 Oct. 1812
Joseph Marryat
Sir Joseph Sydney Yorke
18 June 1818
Joseph Harryat
Sir George ,/arrender
7 Har. 1820
Joseph Marryat
Sir George Warrender
10 Feb. 1824
Henry Bonham
vice Marryat, deceased.
10 June 1826
Joseph Marryat
Sir Edward Owen
16 May 1827
Sir Edward Owen

re-elected, after accepting office.

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14- Mar. 1828
Sir Edward Owen

re-elected, after accenting office.
30 Kar. 1829
Sir Henry Fane
vice Owen, who accepted the Stewardship of
the Manor of the Ghiltern Hundreds.
31 July 1830
Joseph Marryat
Samuel Grove Price
4 iiay 1831
Joseph Harry at 4-98
Sir Edward Thomas Trowbridge 397
Samuel Grove Price 297

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H. Parliamentary Papers

Secondary Sources
A. Reference Jooks and 3ibliographies
3. General History
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8 Apr.
3 Sep.

15 July and
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and Gounty Sxpress

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Canterbury

1774
1780
1790
1796-97
1818
1826
1830

Dover

1826
1828
1830

Hythe

1802
1807
1810
1812
1818
1819
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MS. in British Library xdd. MSS. 42594,

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Kent

1790
1796
1802
1806
1818

Maidstone

. printed

printed

1768
1774
1780
1784-
1788
1790
1802
1806
1807
1812
1818
1820
1826
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1831

printed
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printed
printed

Queenborough

1790
1807
1826

Rochester

1768
1771
1774
1780
1790
1792
1802
1806
1807
1816
1818
1826
1830

Sandwich

1807
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