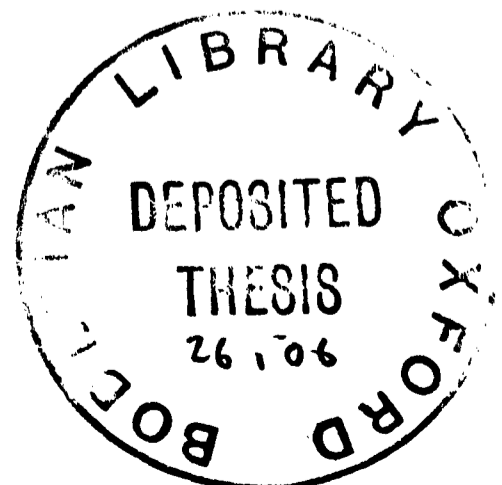


**REDEFINING 'LOYALISM', 'RADICALISM' AND
NATIONAL IDENTITY: LANCASHIRE UNDER THE
THREAT OF NAPOLEON, 1798-1812**

**Katrina Navickas
St. John's College
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Lastly, thanks to Rochdale, the town that Samuel Bamford mistook for "a fair and sunny vale." Thanks also to Manchester: I have witnessed the city's transformation over the course of writing this thesis, and it is even more inspiring each time I return. I have strived to remain objective in my writing, but occasionally it may be infected by what Tony Wilson (predictably) termed 'a superfluity of civic pride.'

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Lancashire redefined popular politics and national identity in its own image. The perceived threat of invasion by Napoleon, together with the Irish Rebellion, sustained the evolution in extra-parliamentary politics that had begun in reaction to the American and French revolutions. The meanings and principles of 'radicalism,' 'loyalism' and 'Britain' continued to be debated and contested in 1798-1812. Elite loyalism became even more exclusive, developing into the Orange movement. Radicals remained silent until the Napoleonic invasion scares had faded and opportunities arose for renewed vocal criticisms of government foreign and economic policy from 1806. Conflicts re-emerged between radicals and loyalists in the middle classes and gentry which provided the training for a new generation of postwar radical leaders and the popularity of the free trade campaign.

Inhabitants of Lancashire felt British in reaction to the French and Irish, but it was a Lancashire Britishness. Political identities and actions followed national patterns of events but were always marked with a regional stamp. This was in part because most political movements were held together by a shared 'sense of place' rather than vague notions of class-consciousness or shared class identity. A sense of place manifested itself in the regional organisation of strikes, petitions and the Orange institution. Furthermore, it could also entail a common bitter or defiant provincialism against the government or monarchy. In an atmosphere of anti-corruption and a growing desire for peace, this provincial frustration ironically brought professed loyalists closer to radicalism in campaigns against the Orders in Council and other government policies. Provincialism and other elements of regional identity ensured that any ideas of Britishness were tempered through local concerns and allegiances, but an identity with the nation that was

not an acquiescent acceptance of national tropes and stereotypes. Lancashire Britishness was commercial, manufacturing, and above all, independent from homogenisation and the impositions of government.

Abstract

Lancashire redefined popular politics and national identity in its own image. The first part of this thesis discusses the political views of those in positions of local power and the inhabitants they led in reaction to the Napoleonic invasion scares of 1798-1805. Historians have assumed that the ideology of loyalism remained static after the initial reaction to the French Revolution and British Jacobinism. Loyalism's mutations into the Orange movement, patriotism and the legacy of Jacobitism are highlighted here as evidence against this presumption. The political events of 1798 were as consequential to Lancashire political life as events in 1789. Orangeism and patriotism are also indicators of the unique effects regional circumstances had upon loyalism. Loyalism in both its elite and popular forms was not a product of passive acceptance of generic tropes about the King and nation propagated by government and preachers. It was rather a conscious evaluation of the socio-political circumstances, often in the region as well as in the whole country.

Radicalism by contrast had to maintain its principles underneath a veil of silence which was enforced by fear of loyalist repression that had occurred in the early 1790s. The United Englishmen did pose some threat of armed rebellion, but the loyalist forces of order developed a spy system to suppress agitation relatively quickly. Committed individuals and isolated circles in Liverpool, Manchester and Royton kept radicalism alive until the circumstances of the war altered to enable more general criticism of the government and the monarchy to surface. These more vocal individuals however varied widely in their radical views; they could not and indeed did not want to form any sort of organised movement.

While radicals fell silent, activity by trade combinations and unions by contrast intensified. Bitter conflicts between cotton manufacturers and their employees disturbed the apparent patriotic unanimity of the period 1798-1805. The Combination Acts of 1799-1800 were significant in reformulating class relations, but they formed only one part of the complex history of negotiation and identity of the working classes. A shared discourse of legality and common narratives of action overcame the physical limitations of unionised action in this period of early industrialisation. Furthermore, Luddism was not a reactionary outburst of violence, but a product of all the methods of collective action that had occurred during two decades of war. Together with food rioting, radical politics and opposition to military conscription in the ballot, Luddism signified the psychological response to the war and the government which cannot be analysed solely in socio-economic terms.

Luddism was only one example of how geographical identity was shaped by the combined strains caused by industrialisation and the Napoleonic invasion scares. A sense of 'Lancashire Britishness' was the result of these tensions. It was vividly expressed in autobiographies, dialect writing and the volunteer corps. Patriotic or national tropes were popular, but regional inhabitants only identified with 'John Bull' once the British character was filtered through local identities and more personal allegiances. In this sense, most inhabitants of England felt 'British,' but what qualities this entailed varied from region to region. Lancashire Britishness was commercial, manufacturing and above all, independent from homogenisation and government impositions.

The second part of the thesis demonstrates how both activists and the general population redefined their political positions after the Napoleonic invasion scares had

faded. From 1806, opponents of Church-and-King loyalist elites openly challenged their authority over the representation of their towns and its loyalism. This involved conflicts of politics more than of class. Some of the radicals who had kept the spirit of radicalism alive during the invasion scares were among those who led the opposition. There were many others who briefly participated and then retreated back into anonymity. Challenges to the very meaning of loyalism entailed battles over the symbolism of public places as well as over rhetoric and language. This part focuses on the methods of protest used by different sections of activists, including bourgeois radical intellectuals, crowds in food riots and impressment riots, unionised workers in strikes and Luddites. All these groups contested the meaning of loyalism in various ways, using their environment as a symbolic and physical weapon against their opponents. This suggests that place and space - urban, rural and especially semi-rural in the 'neighbourhoods' of towns - influenced the political thoughts and actions of individuals as did text and discourse. Its multiple symbolism was important and also perhaps explains in part why political events or groups occurred in certain places in the region.

The altered national political situation from 1806, especially the government's economic blockade and increasingly aggressive foreign policy, made these conflicts much more than local power struggles. Issues such as economic corruption, Catholic Relief and slave trade abolition were debated in borough elections and civic meetings to draw up petitions and counter petitions. Most of the population, certainly in the urban areas, were involved in processes of renewed political contestation and debate. This illustrated the complex relationship between provincial politics and the national political sphere. These conflicts moreover opened the way for the peace and Reform campaigns to take hold of a general population who would have described themselves as loyalist rather than radical. The latter years of the wars witnessed a rejuvenation of popular political activity on a

scale not seen since the early 1790s and much earlier than historians of the postwar 'mass platform' give credit for. In this period, a new generation of radical activists emerged, who become the leaders of the postwar mass platform movement. They found inspiration in witnessing the conflicts of 1806-12 just as the writings of Paine had inspired their predecessors. This period therefore formed the crucible for the personalities and ideas leading to Peterloo and northern campaigns for suffrage.

The thesis finally argues that the region is the optimum medium for historical study. Rather than the top-down generalising approach of a national survey of popular politics and British identity, regional history is able to take local examples in their context and chart detailed changes in local societies without resorting to the isolation and antiquarianism of single town studies. Regional studies can help construct a new history of the nation from the regions upwards, thus looking towards a comparative regional approach.

Abbreviations

BL – British Library

CRO – Cheshire Record Office, Chester

CuRO – Cumbria Record Office, Barrow-in-Furness

GMRO – Greater Manchester Record Office, Manchester

HLRO – House of Lords Record Office, Westminster

JRLUM – John Rylands Library, University of Manchester

LCRO – Lancashire County Record Office, Preston

LivRO – Liverpool Record Office

MCL – Manchester Archives and Local Studies, Manchester Central Library

PRO – National Archives: Public Record Office, Kew

WYRO – West Yorkshire Record Office, Leeds

Cowdroy's – Cowdroy's Manchester Gazette.

MM – Manchester Mercury.

MC – Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle.

Holden diaries – Bolton Archives: ZZ 530/1, diaries of John Holden of Bolton

Rowbottom diaries – Oldham Local Studies: typescript, 'annals of Oldham' by William Rowbottom, 1787 – 1823

EcHistRev – Economic History Review

EHR – English Historical Review

HJ – Historical Journal

JBS – Journal of British Studies

JEcHist – Journal of Economic History

JHistGeog – Journal of Historical Geography

JORALS – Journal of Regional and Local Studies

MRHR – Manchester Region Historical Review

NH – Northern History

P & P – Past & Present

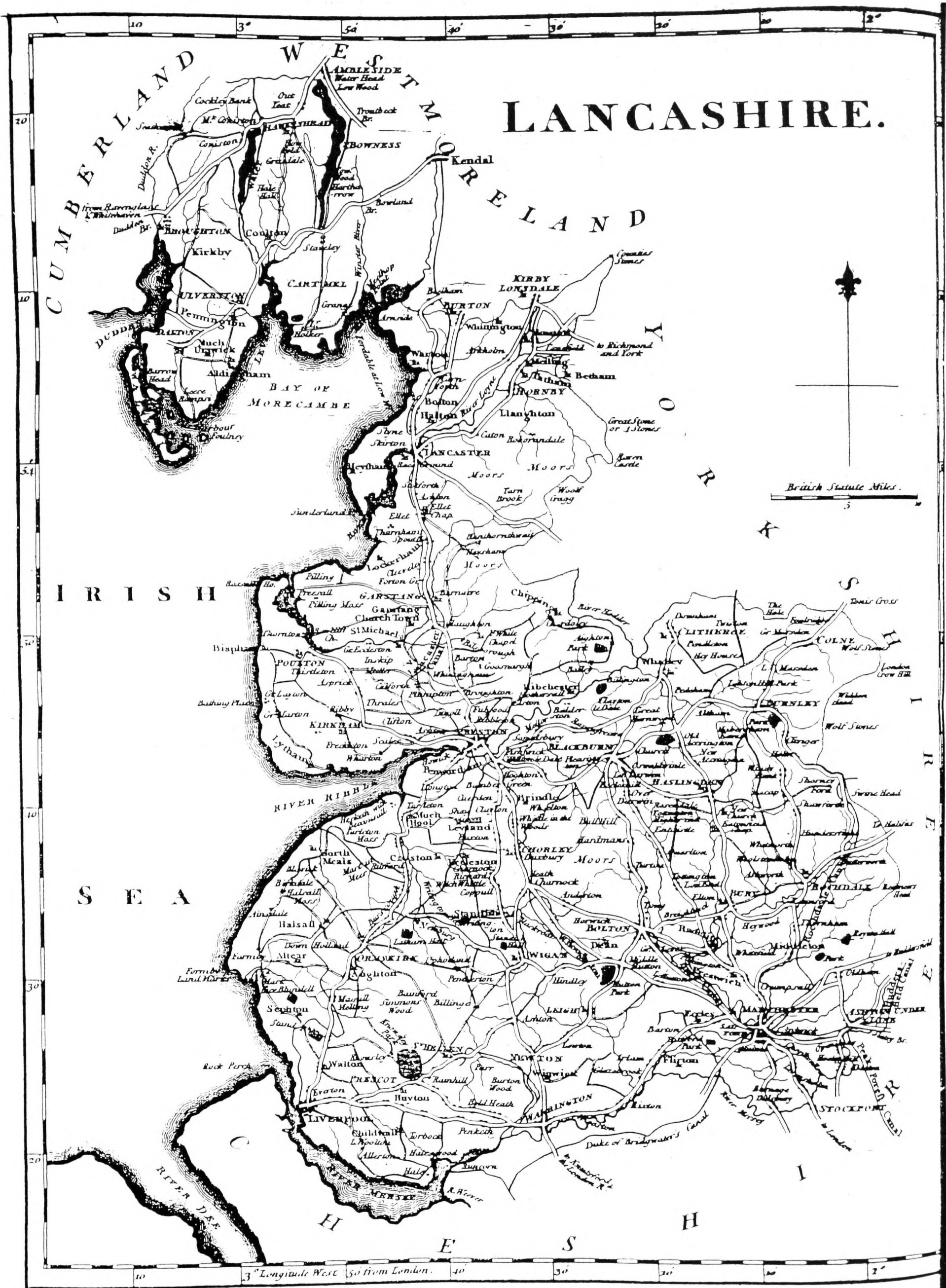
SH – Social History

TInstBritGeog – Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers

THSLC – Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire

TLCAS – Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society

Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.



Published October 13. 1794. by J. Stockdale Piccadilly.

Map 1: Map of Lancashire by J. Stockdale in J. Aikin, *A Description of the Country From Thirty to Forty Miles Around Manchester* (1795), with major turppikes and canals foremost.

INTRODUCTION: DEFINING 'IDENTITY'

To the tenants of the stye in general and to the swine of Lancashire in particular:
"Theaw kon ekspekt no mooar eawt oy a pig thin a Grunt."

The Rochdalian dialectician Robert Walker defended his use of the 'Lancashire idiom' in the preface to his radical pamphlet *Plebeian Politics*, published in late 1801. He commented that although dialect "may have been dispised [*sic*] by the aristocratic and literary pride of a Burke," his opening dedication was "done more out of derision to that pensioned apostate," than from any contempt for his readers' understanding. He proclaimed his conviction that the Lancashire dialect contained "the venerable and valuable reliques of the ancient Anglo-Saxon and Gallic languages." Finally, he hoped that Lancashire amongst other counties would still contain:

Some village Hampden, who with dauntless breast,
Can bay the little tyrant of his cot;
Tho' when he sees his country's wrongs redress'd,
Can rest contented with his humble lot.¹

The majority of the region's population may not have agreed with his republican tenets and radical patriotism, but his strong sense of regional identity was certainly shared by most.

¹ R. Walker, *Plebeian Politics* (Salford, 1801), i.

Defining geographical identities

Regional monographs still bear less currency in historiography than works of high politics and national surveys. For over thirty years, J.D. Marshall has continued to argue for the primacy of the region as a unit of historical study. He pointed to the importance of regional dynamism captured in early twentieth century regional studies and the work of historical geographers in the late 1970s.² Some studies of the North West followed, but they are often regarded as case-studies rather than integral explorations of social, political and economic change in their own right.³

The considerable influence of Colley's work on the formation of British identity has however overshadowed Marshall's call.⁴ A profusion of studies on 'Britishness' followed in the wake of *Britons: Forging the Nation*. The fact that predominantly all the historiography of British identity and indeed much of that about society and politics from 1688 addresses the ideas Colley raised is testimony to the power of her work. J.C.D. Clark's arguments about the strength of the conservative confessional state are generally now regarded as redundant, but *Britons* remains centre-stage. Its novelty and historiographical power lay in its argument that British identity was able to overlay or integrate itself into these differences in a particularly resonant and lasting way during the French Wars. The question of national identity is still very much at the core of new studies of the period 1688-1914. Following Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, national

² G.H. Tupling, *The Economic History of Rossendale, Chetham Society*, 86 (1927); A.H. Dodd, *The Industrial Revolution in North Wales* (Cardiff, 1933); J. Langton, *Geographical Change and Industrial Revolution: Coalmining in South West Lancashire, 1590-1799* (Cambridge, 1979); D. Gregory, *Regional Transformation and Industrial Revolution: A Geography of the Yorkshire Woollen Industry* (1982).

³ J.K. Walton, *Lancashire, A Social History, 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987); C.B. Phillips and J.H. Smith, *Lancashire and Cheshire From AD 1540* (1994); G. Timmins, *Made in Lancashire: A History of Regional Industrialisation* (Manchester, 1998).

⁴ J.D. Marshall, *The Tyranny of the Discrete: a Discussion of the Problems of Local History in England* (Aldershot, 1997); L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992).

identity is no longer seen as organic or inherent but as a constructed cultural concept, often in reaction to a foreign 'other.'⁵ Yet like the old Whig histories, many historians still generalise about British identity; if regional or local differences are acknowledged, they are regarded as subservient to an all-encompassing, coherent, and indeed forward-marching Britishness, contested only by the Irish and to a lesser degree the Scots and the Welsh.⁶ Other historians emphasise religious diversity and the weakness of the British Protestant 'elect nation,' together with Colley's reluctance to tackle the Irish question, continued Francophilia and the unpopularity of the Hanoverian monarchy.⁷ In doing so, however, their approach still involves the task of having to attack Colley's theses head-on. Colley indeed responded to the new emphasis in historiography on imperial identities, with *Captives*.⁸

It is all too easy to simplify *Britons*' thesis to a simplistic narrative where the French Wars were the final catalyst for the 'forging' of British identity as anti-French, anti-Catholic and pro-George III. Many of these new 'British' studies have misunderstood Colley's main arguments. *Britons* accepted the existence of multiple identities existing in parallel; it did attempt to account for the persistence of the regional make-up of the nation. Although Colley's arguments were in danger of treating Protestantism as the hegemonic ideology in the formation of Britishness, she did not go so far in that direction as Clark did. This thesis therefore does not reject the central arguments that made *Britons* so

⁵ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983).

⁶ K. Robbins, *Great Britain: Identities, Institutions and the Idea of Britishness* (1998); J. Mori, *Britain in the Age of the French Revolution* (Harlow, 2000); M. Pittock, *Inventing and Resisting Britain* (1997); J. Smyth, *The Making of the United Kingdom, 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001); G. Cubitt, ed., *Imagining Nations* (Manchester, 1998).

⁷ T. Claydon, and I. McBride, *Protestantism and National Identity, Britain and Ireland, c.1650-c.1850* (Cambridge, 1998); R. Eagles, *Francophilia in English Society, 1748-1815* (Basingstoke, 2000); H. Brocklehurst and R. Phillips, *History, Nationhood and the Question of Britain* (Basingstoke, 2004); L. Brockliss, and D. Eastwood, eds., *A Union of Multiple Identities, The British Isles, c.1750-1850* (Manchester, 1997); A. Murdoch, *British History, 1660-1832: National Identity and Local Culture* (1998).

⁸ K. Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (2003); L. Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1660-1850* (2002).

influential nor does it neglect the nuances within her work that are often ignored by other historians. Britishness was undoubtedly an important concept shared by most inhabitants in this period and it was brought into sharp focus by the Napoleonic invasion scares. Rather, it asks whether a new historiography can emerge which deals with questions of identity formation from 1688 but does not have to refer constantly to Colley's work, whether in support or refutation.

This thesis demonstrates that the complexity of national identity must always be taken into account. It was never a monolithic or identical concept. Nor did it progress, Whiggishly, from confusion and localism to clear, national principles shared by all. Geographical identities have always been multiple, changing, overlapping and contested. Indeed, Semmel's study of British writers and propagandists demonstrates how even the most convinced loyalists doubted the coherence and strength of Britishness in the face of Napoleon.⁹ Britishness encompassed a conglomeration of local and regional affiliations, which could be transcended or connected by supra-national allegiances such as religious, philosophical or political beliefs.¹⁰ Marshall and Phythian-Adams have asserted this concept of overlapping identities. They argue that the primary purpose of the history of geographical space is the analysis of how contemporaries saw their own regional social groupings and the relationships between these groups.¹¹ Baker and other historical geographers, repeating the argument that the region is a mediator between locality and nation, have suggested that the process of absorption of communities into wider national

⁹ S. Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (2004).

¹⁰ J. Hoppit, ed., *Parliaments, Nations and Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1660-1850* (Manchester, 2003), p.2.

¹¹ Marshall, *Tyranny of the Discrete*, p.84; C. Phythian-Adams, ed., *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850, Cultural Provinces and English Local History* (Leicester, 1993).

polities and societies is quite likely to have been spatially and chronologically uneven and by no means unilinear.¹²

An important factor that must be taken into account in analyses of the composition of all identities, allegiances and beliefs in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is that most people had a range of choices. Furthermore, they were often aware of the range of choices available and made conscious decisions to adopt different – even contradictory – positions according to their assessment of the circumstances in which they found themselves. A denominational sect or racial prejudice could unite individuals vertically along social strata; while in times of economic crisis, those individuals could coalesce against each other in line with their respective occupations and trades. A British identity, or some sense of shared identification with all the nation's inhabitants, would add another dimension and permitted the adoption of ideas and values selectively from the range on offer. Beliefs and ideas could be drawn from interlinked concepts, not from one view wholesale.¹³

The principal nationally-propagated characteristics of Britishness, especially anti-Gallicanism, were undoubtedly popular. Yet they were not consumed unquestioningly. Inhabitants in the provinces could only accept tropes of Britishness through the filter of local and regional structures and texts. Volunteering is the most obvious example, although the creation of regional 'John Bulls' in dialect ballads is a less well-known cultural illustration of this process.¹⁴ Britishness was composed of regional variations on similar themes. Lancashire faced Napoleon with similar ways and mentalities to other

¹² R.A. Dodgshon and R.A. Butlin, eds., *A Historical Geography of England and Wales* (2nd ed., 1990), p.225.

¹³ J. Black, 'Confessional State or Elect Nation? Religion and Identity in Eighteenth-century England,' in Claydon and McBride, *Protestantism and National Identity*, p.72.

¹⁴ Chapter 5, part II.

regions, but adapted the situation to the region's own identity. This culminated in a 'Lancashire Britishness,' shared by all classes and political persuasions.

Marshall and historical geographers have illustrated that an alternative approach to the continuing historiographical obsession with Colley is through comparative studies of regions.¹⁵ The region offers a concentrated depth of context and basis for comparison that national surveys cannot, for, as Royle has argued, "the nation-state is often too large a territory within which to attempt to group the full range of human experience." The region avoids the static frameworks or constructs of a town, county or state. It provides context "containing sufficiently similar case studies for comparisons to be meaningful, but sufficiently different for more general interpretations to be checked and qualified."¹⁶ Studying a region avoids the pitfalls of employing isolated examples of individual events or texts from towns or counties to support a generalised thesis.¹⁷ It also goes beyond the antiquarian and literally parochial tendencies of local history. Daniel Defoe and other contemporary observers recognised that the fortunes of a town are often determined by its economic, social and political commerce with its wider surroundings.¹⁸ Stobart's recent study of early modern North West England emphasises how regional patterns of economic development had been established in the North West from the early eighteenth century. He stresses the importance of Manchester, Liverpool and Chester as

¹⁵ A.R.H. Baker and M. Billinge, eds., *Geographies of England: the North-South Divide, Material and Imagined* (Cambridge, 2004); A.R.H. Baker, *Geography and History, Bridging the Divide* (Cambridge, 2003); S. King and G. Timmins, *Making Sense of the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester, 2001); J. Allen, *Rethinking the Region* (1997).

¹⁶ E. Royle, *Issues of Regional Identity: in Honour of John Marshall* (Manchester, 1998), p.12.

¹⁷ J.D. Marshall, 'Proving Ground or the Creation of Regional Identity?: the Origins and Problems of Regional History in Britain,' in P. Swan, and D. Foster, eds., *Essays in Regional and Local History* (Cherry Burton, 1992), p.19.

¹⁸ J. Stobart, 'County, Town and Country,' in P. Borsay and L. Proudfoot, *Provincial Towns in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Oxford, 2002), p.172.

‘gateway cities,’ drawing together the region and linking it to wider socio-economic and cultural systems.¹⁹

The region is unfortunately still equated with the county. This has much to do with organisation of local administration and the consequent distribution of their records in a county-based system of record offices. The county was important as an administrative entity, but the effects of the industrial revolution created alternative centres of economic and political power. Trade links and socio-familial relationships often crossed county boundaries. This thesis therefore uses the county definition of Lancashire, including the Lonsdale hundred ‘over the Sands,’ only as a base for the wider region. The ‘Lancashire region’ encompasses north-east Cheshire, the Pennine parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire and southern Cumberland and Westmorland. Indeed, it is often in these areas of ambiguous jurisdiction that the most interesting political events and geographical identities come to light.

The Lancashire region is particularly worth analysis in this period because, as Stobart proclaimed confidently: “north-west England can lay strong claim to be the first industrial region.”²⁰ It was in many ways unique. The rise in its urban populations was phenomenal; vivid changes to the physical landscape were rapid and lasting. The ‘King Cotton’ appellation on the other hand masked the intra-regional specialisations which also make Lancashire fruitful as a focus of study: the port of Liverpool, the coal-based heavy industries of its hinterland and the fertile agricultural plains of central and west Lancashire, each with its own subregional character and identity.²¹

¹⁹ J. Stobart, *The First Industrial Region: North West England, 1700-1760* (Manchester, 2004), p.7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.32.

²¹ Chapter 2.

The region was a socio-spatial concept as well as an economic entity; the two shaped each other and both influenced the nature of future economic and political development in the early nineteenth century. Regional history avoids the pitfalls of the *Annales* School while reasserting its strength in “concern for reconstruction of the mentalités or collective consciousness as well as of the material conditions of past societies.”²² This thesis thus discusses contemporary perceptions of and attachment to the region as well as its physical definition. It furthermore explores the use inhabitants made of their regional identity: that is, how the symbolism of landscape and place provided important tools in oppositional popular politics.²³ Baker and Billinge’s most recent work examined the North-South divide and they concluded that the idea, only embryonic before 1750, “came to be born between then and 1830.” This divide did not however reflect a positive identification with a generalised ‘North’ across the Pennines, the North East or indeed the Scots: it was rather a useful metaphor or trope when inhabitants of the regions were faced with the ‘other’ of the South and vice-versa. They suggest that a ‘London versus the provinces’ discourse was less prominent and less influential than that of a North-South divide.²⁴ This thesis on the other hand identifies a running theme of shared provincial suspicion of the metropolis in the language of petitions, the nature of how the county’s interests were put forward in parliament and the longer history of the conditions attached to loyalism in the region. It may have surfaced over and above a growing suspicion of the south only during the wars, but it was prominent nonetheless.

²² A.R.H. Baker and D. Gregory, eds., *Explorations in Historical Geography: Interpretative Essays* (Cambridge, 1984), p.7.

²³ Chapter 8.

²⁴ A.R.H. Baker and M. Billinge, *Geographies of England: The North-South Divide, Material and Imagined* (Cambridge, 2004), p.179.

Defining class

Class is the other major preoccupation in studies of this period and events in industrialising regions. Forty years after its publication, E.P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* still resonates with relevant or unsolved questions. Most new studies which approach the question of class ignore that different terminology and conceptions of occupations or economic and social positions existed, usually in parallel rather than contesting each other. 'Order,' 'rank,' 'position,' 'trade,' and class(es) were all equally valid terms. Definitions of class also involve the problem of assumptions based upon individuals' occupations. There is a difference however between occupation and work. Occupational designations imply wrongly that workers predominantly followed a single activity rather than, what was often the case, deriving a composite livelihood from several sources. This was especially the case with women and small farmers. Furthermore, changes of trade following apprenticeship were far from uncommon.²⁵ Activity by early trade unions and combinations in this period demonstrated that most trades remained very much separate in organisation and identity, even when expounding common grievances against employers or political figures. This does not mean that class-consciousness did not exist, but that workers and indeed all different 'classes' had recourse to other means of expression and organisation.²⁶

Some social historians have argued that class consciousness resulted from the forging of permanent links among local communities superseding intra-communal solidarities.²⁷

²⁵ Chapter 2; P. Glennie, *Distinguishing Men's Trades, Occupational Sources and Debates for Pre-Census England* (1990), p.103.

²⁶ Chapter 6.

²⁷ M. Steinberg, *Fighting Words, Working Class Formation, Collective Action and Discourse in Early Nineteenth England* (Cornell, 1999); K.D.M. Snell, 'The Culture of Local Xenophobia,' *JH*, 28 (2003), 3; Baker, *Explorations in Historical Geography*, p.191; C. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle* (Oxford, 1982).

This thesis demonstrates that class consciousness in this period did not depend upon expanding communications but could exist alongside them. The formation of a shared class identity, like that of British identity, was not necessarily a progressive process, beginning in the handloom weaving colonies in the Pennines or in the gigantic spinning mills of McConnel and Kennedy in Ancoats. Notions of class did exist, but they were one among many conceptions of collective belonging, and again like geographical identities, were used according to circumstances. Individuals and ‘communities’ usually made their own choices about shared identities, rather than class being a predetermined process or the sole identity available. The process was not however entirely a matter of objective free-will; cultural geographers have argued that identities of all kinds were “subject to social regulation through cultural norms and expectations,” and the power of some groups to define the identity of others.²⁸

The conclusions by cultural geographers about social groupings (ironically in view of their attempts to move away from *The Making*) hark back to Thompson. They argue that class divides and elite hegemony were experienced in the cultural sphere; political and economic determinants of class determination are therefore insufficient to “capture the real subtlety of real social mediation.” As definitions of culture were relative, fluctuating and contested, so was class. Billinge and Williams therefore have come to a similar conclusion to Thompson: that class was a process. It was not, except analytically, a system or a structure. The rooting of class in culture means that, as Thompson had

²⁸ P. Jackson, *Maps of Meaning*, cited in C. Brace, ‘Landscape and Identity,’ in I. Robertson and P. Richards, *Studying Cultural Landscapes* (2003), p.122.

argued, it was “a realised complex of experiences, relationship and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits,” and is therefore always contested and redefined.²⁹

This thesis however cannot avoid using class labels to categorize groups of individuals with shared social or political interests. The associational world of the eighteenth century organised the lives of most urban inhabitants. Although some clubs and institutions served to unite people of varying political and religious persuasions, they could also indicate a class allegiance that had socio-cultural more than socio-economic filters. Clubs, societies, correspondence and marriage patterns reveal that, in general, ‘Church-and-King loyalists’ were composed of lower gentry and the gentry-aspirant middle classes.³⁰ Radical activists were often either bourgeois Dissenting intellectuals or self-educated artisans (often of evangelical Dissent), as Thompson had argued.³¹ This also implies that an individual’s financial and cultural position influenced their political persuasions. There were of course always significant exceptions but the membership of the various political societies and local government elites demonstrates this to be usually the case. ‘Elite’ is used in this thesis not in the sense of a closed circle, but conversely as a convenient term for the members of local government and other social groups who effectively ran local affairs. Indeed, the aspirant manufacturers were successful in entering and transforming these elites, while other high status circles such as Rational Dissenting merchants often challenged their authority and representation over the opinion of their town.³²

²⁹ R. Williams, cited in M. Billinge, ‘Hegemony, Class and Power in Late Georgian and Early Victorian England: Towards a Cultural Geography,’ in A.R.H. Baker and D. Gregory, *Explorations in Historical Geography Interpretative Essays* (Cambridge, 1984), p.34.

³⁰ Chapter 3.

³¹ Chapter 4.

³² Chapters 7 and 8.

The 'general population' is used as a convenient term in this thesis for all those who were not so committed to a cause. It can encompass the majority of inhabitants of a village protesting against enclosure of common land or the majority of the whole nation. Philp hinted at this distinction between activists and the general population in his 'vulgar conservatism,' of which there is much evidence from the 1790s.³³ To say this is not, on the other hand, to subscribe to notions of 'labour aristocracy' that may or may not have developed by the 1830s. The rhetoric of class, as expressed in texts or reports of action, was evident, if not as prominent as historians have argued. It could be an expression of a genuine identity for committed activists in trades unions or radical cells. The actions of the majority of workers during strikes and agitation suggest, however, that the language or organisation of class could also be a stance in response to particular circumstances rather than representing concrete and unfailing ideologies.³⁴

Following the stalemate reached after the 'linguistic turn' in historiography, social historians are slowly appropriating the 'cultural turn' that has been well established in historical and cultural geography. Cosgrove and other heirs of Lefebvre have demonstrated how spaces and places can be read in a similar manner to postmodern 'reading' of texts for multiple meanings to contemporaries.³⁵ Furthermore, the symbolism of space was changing and contested. Epstein has recently progressed from focusing on the symbolism of ritual and theatre of protest to assessing the role of the physical situation in this ritual.³⁶ Harrison and other socio-urban historians have in more isolated

³³ M. Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3,' *EHR*, 110 (1995), 42-69.

³⁴ Chapter 6; M. Steinberg, 'Culturally Speaking: Finding a Commons Between Post-Structuralism and the Thompsonian Perspective,' *JH*, 21 (1996), 193-214.

³⁵ D. Cosgrove, and S. Daniels, eds., *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge, 1988); I. Robertson and P. Richards, eds., *Studying Cultural Landscapes* (2003); D. Mitchell, *Cultural Geography, A Critical Introduction* (Oxford, 2000); P. Jackson, *Maps of Meaning, An Introduction to Cultural Geography* (1989); D. Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Oxford, 1985); J.S. Duncan, *The City as Text* (Cambridge, 1990).

³⁶ J. Epstein, *In Practice, Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford, 2003).

studies demonstrated that place formed not just a passive background to discourse but an essential part of the process of contestation of meaning.³⁷

Contested spaces as well as words are an important theme of this thesis. The meanings and principles of 'radicalism,' 'loyalism' and 'Britain' were debated, contested and redefined in this period. This thesis discusses these redefinitions in a regional context and adds a different perspective by demonstrating how conflicts over the symbolism of place influenced popular politics and allegiances. It argues, furthermore, that local and increasingly regional identities were especially important as one means of expression and organisation in this period. It analyses the narrative of radicalism, strikes and social relations in Lancashire with reference to expressions of geographical identity. A 'sense of place' was a vital ingredient in protest or campaigns in which expressions of class conflict or class-consciousness were strained or ambiguous.³⁸

Key sources

This thesis uses myriad archives and local histories scattered across the archive repositories of the region and elsewhere. Certain sources are employed extensively because of their detail or because they shed new light upon events. The annals of Oldham compiled by William Rowbottom from 1787 to 1820 are the key detailed record of daily events in this period. They appear to have been almost immediately contemporary and generally objective, although Rowbottom occasionally slipped into

³⁷ M. Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835* (Cambridge, 1988); C.P. Graves, 'Civic Ritual in Seventeenth to Eighteenth Century Newcastle,' in S. Lawrence, ed., *Archaeologies of the British* (2003); S. Poole, '“Till Our Liberties be Secure” Popular Sovereignty and Public Space in Bristol, 1780-1850,' *Urban History*, 26 (1999); J. Stobart, and A. Owens, eds., *Urban Fortunes, Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700-1900* (Aldershot, 2000); P. Borsay, 'All the Town's a Stage': Urban Ritual and Ceremony, 1660-1800,' in P. Clark, ed., *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns* (1984).

³⁸ Chapter 8.

sympathy for poor weavers and local radicals and expressed the general desire for peace at the lowest points of the war. The unpublished diaries of John Holden, an attorney clerk from Bolton, provide a contrasting loyalist perspective on daily and national events and politics.³⁹ Working class autobiographies and diaries - especially by Samuel Bamford of Middleton, David Whitehead of Rossendale and Benjamin Shaw of Preston - provide a more personal insight into reactions to industrial change and the wars. They were written in the 1830s and 40s and thus were filtered through nostalgia and retrospect. They are discussed in detail with reference to what they revealed beneath these filters about contemporary regional identity and patterns of migration.⁴⁰

The thousands of letters sent by magistrates to the Home Office in this period unfortunately are often the sole record of many radical meetings, individuals and organisational networks.⁴¹ Their biases and prejudices are obvious, and the exaggerations and misleading statements of the paid spies render it very difficult to assume that anything reported was genuine. Witness statements at trials at the Assizes and King's Bench are equally unreliable in this respect.⁴² Nevertheless, the sheer amount of detail cannot be disregarded wholesale. The magistrates did not want to damage their standing in the eyes of the Home Office through too much exaggeration.⁴³ Furthermore, when historians question the value of the correspondence, they are often not concerned with what the prejudices expressed in the letters reveal about the mindframe and politics of

³⁹ Oldham LS: Rowbottom diaries, typescript; Bolton Archives: ZZ 530/1, Holden diaries.

⁴⁰ Chapter 2.

⁴¹ PRO: HO 42 and 40/1.

⁴² PRO: PL 27; TS 11.

⁴³ A. Booth, 'The United Englishmen and Radical Politics in the Industrial North West of England, 1795-1803,' *IRSH*, 31 (1986), 272.

their writers. These very views however in turn influenced their actions towards the working classes and were a core part of magistrate loyalism.⁴⁴

Broadsides, especially broadside ballads, are a relatively underused source in historiography. They too have their methodological problems, particularly with regard to their authorship and the commercial nature of their composition.⁴⁵ The sheer volume of surviving material and the range of subjects they covered nevertheless indicates their centrality to popular culture in this period. They were representative of part of the texture of quotidian life for a large proportion of the general population. Dialect ballads and literature give an even deeper insight into the nature of geographical identities. The creation of Oldham and Newcastle variations on the character of John Bull during the wars was especially demonstrative of how the tropes of Britishness were adapted to regional stereotypes and identities.⁴⁶ Provincial newspapers, particularly the Tory *Harrop's Manchester Mercury* and the radical *Cowdroy's Manchester Gazette*, are another valuable source for local interpretations of national politics.⁴⁷

Topics not covered

This thesis has attempted to survey the whole region from Cumberland to north Cheshire, but it is problematic to balance the narrative of events and personalities between north and south of the county. The huge significance of Manchester and its textile satellite towns and Liverpool and its mining and engineering hinterland has entailed this thesis centring more on south Lancashire than it perhaps should. Stobart's

⁴⁴ Chapter 3.

⁴⁵ Chapter 5; F. Anderson, O. Halzapfel and T. Pettitt, *The Ballad as Narrative* (Odense, 1982).

⁴⁶ Chapter 5.

⁴⁷ Chapter 2 and 4; H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998).

study of the North West has demonstrated how urban trade and transport systems defined the region; north Lancashire was increasingly left out of the frame because Manchester, Liverpool and Chester were the centres of these spatial-commercial networks.⁴⁸ Borwick's thesis on north Lancashire has sealed some lacunae to counteract this bias, but even he conceded that most of the popular political action occurred in Lancashire 'below the Sands.'⁴⁹ This does not imply that radicalism or strikes did not feature in north Lancashire, rather that little may have been recorded.

Similarly, there are three sections of Lancashire society who do not feature much as political activists in this period or for whom only deeds survive: the aristocracy, yeomen farmers and their labourers and domestic servants. In part this is because Lancashire was not aristocratically dominated compared with its surrounding regions, and this is indicative of the nature of social relations in itself.⁵⁰ There are myriad archives of yeomen farmers and parliamentary enclosure in the northern Pennine uplands but most contain only passing relevance to the political themes of this thesis.⁵¹ The memorandum book and diaries of the Craggs of Wyresdale promised to enlighten the situation about the latter, but are concerned only with the 1790s.⁵² The political views and actions of domestic servants and agricultural labourers remain largely undiscovered.⁵³ There are also many groups of individuals within the region who may yield new perspectives but could only generate a few lines of enquiry: miners, the immigrant Welsh and Scottish, Jews and

⁴⁸ Stobart, *First Industrial Region*, p.89.

⁴⁹ P.D.R. Borwick, 'An English Provincial Society, North Lancashire 1770-1820' (Lancaster Univ. PhD thesis, 1994).

⁵⁰ Chapter 2.

⁵¹ LCRO: AE 6, enclosure records; DDSc 9/65, Scarisbrick papers; DDBa bk 13, Bankes of Winstanley, servants' wages, 1798;

⁵² Rural life and yeoman politics is expanded in K. Navickas, 'The Cragg Memorandum Book: Society, Politics and Religion in North Lancashire During the 1790s,' *NH*, 42 (2005), 151-162.

⁵³ A. Gritt, 'The Survival of Service in the English Agricultural Labour Force: Lessons from Lancashire, c.1650-1851,' *Agricultural History Review*, 50 (2002), 35-56.

Africans, attorneys, doctors and fishermen amongst other specialised trades and occupations.⁵⁴

Women in their own right have not been a focus. Gender politics did exist in this period, but there is no space within the remit of the thesis for this to be discussed as a separate question. Although the views of Mary Rathbone, Elizabeth Aikin and other women among the Liverpool 'Friends of Peace' circle are accounted for, there is much women's correspondence that could not be included, again for reasons of space and relevance, principally that of the Wigan circles of Joanna Holt Leigh and the Standish family.⁵⁵ Religion was also a highly important factor but has been integrated into the overall analysis in relation to loyalist theology, the radical views of the Rational Dissenters and the distinctiveness of the Methodist New Connexion.⁵⁶ The unpublished mass of Bishop of Chester visitation returns of 1788, 1804 and 1811 are enough to fill a chapter on their own, but general religious trends in Lancashire have already been well covered by religious historians.⁵⁷

This thesis demonstrates that all classes in the region welcomed ideas of Britishness in response to the French threat. This was not a passive response but a conscious choice,

⁵⁴ J. Langton, *Geographical Change and Industrial Revolution: Coalmining in South West Lancashire, 1590-1799* (Cambridge, 1979); B. Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry* (Manchester, 1976).

⁵⁵ Wigan RO: D/D Lei C, Correspondence of Robert Holt Leigh and Joanna Holt Leigh of Wigan, 1796-1811; D/D St C, Correspondence of the Standish family of Standish, 1793-1812. For the earlier period, see A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, 1998).

⁵⁶ Chapters 2 and 3.

⁵⁷ M. Snape, 'The Church in a Lancashire Parish: Whalley, 1689-1800,' in J. Greg, and J.S. Chamberlain, eds., *The National Church in Local Perspective* (Suffolk, 2003); M. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society, Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994); J. Albers, 'Papist Traitors and Presbyterian Rogues': Religious Identities in Eighteenth Century Lancashire,' in J. Walsh et al, *The Church of England, 1689-1853: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993); P.B. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context, Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760-1857* (Cambridge, 1994).

made in acutely awareness of the myriad identities available to be taken up in response to different circumstances. A sense of Lancashire Britishness was thus infused among the population, which differed from the Britishness of other regions. It was shaped by the filters of regional identity and local prejudices. This regional Britishness could incorporate suspicion of intrusion in local affairs from the metropolis and parliament, a provincial or 'country' attitude common to both radicals and loyalists. Loyalty and radicalism were redefined from the extremes they had been forced into by the immediate reaction to the French Revolution. The superficial unity of Lancashire had attained in the face of the Napoleonic threat had weakened the need for such extremes. International events and government policies in the latter half of the Napoleonic Wars exacerbated this mistrust of parliament and distinct sense of provincial identity. The actions of the government after the threat had passed, combined with an increasingly attritional war, allowed the extreme polarity between loyalty and radicalism to diminish. Elements of loyalty could therefore adopt previously radical criticisms of government and monarchy and encompass a wider section of a generally loyal population. The end of the war left most inhabitants dissatisfied with their economic or political situation and provided the opportunity for even more vocal displays of discontent.⁵⁸ Lancashire, as a region, had been at the forefront of popular political action during the 1790s and the latter years of the Napoleonic war. It would head the new radical movement in the 1810s and beyond.

⁵⁸ The personalities and politics of the postwar radicals have been extensively discussed in M. Turner, 'Reform and Respectability, the Making of a Middle-Class Liberalism in Early Nineteenth Century Manchester,' *Chetham Society*, 3rd ser., XL (1995) and L. Edwards, 'Popular Politics in the North West of England, 1815-21' (Manchester Univ. PhD thesis, 1998).

DEFINING THE REGION

Samuel Bamford (1788-1872), post-war Radical and writer, later wrote a lyrical paean to the landscape of south-east Lancashire. He described the view from the summit of the road through Thornham near his native town of Middleton:

Could I feel less than admiration and thankfulness at the prospect of the goodly land which his beneficent Creator had spread out for his habitations? To the west are the hills and moors of Crompton, the green pastures year by year, cutting further up into the hills; the ridge of Blackstone Edge, with Robin Hood's bed, darkened as usual by shadow; whilst the moors, sweeping round to the left (the hills of Caldermoor, Whitworth and Wuerdle) bend somewhat in the form of a shepherd's crook around a fair and sunny vale, through which the Roche flows past cottages, farms and manufactories.¹

Traversing the hills built up his connections and attachment to the landscape and locality. He evoked a vivid awareness of the changes affecting place, particularly the spread of manufactories and enclosure. His view was a physical representation of how industry and rurality was evolving in the early nineteenth century, perhaps not harmoniously but certainly not in isolation from each other. The connection between urban and rural life and attachment to place were two important influences shaping identities and action in this period. The region was composed of a network of economic and communication links, but, as Bamford's recollections intimated, it was also formed by its inhabitants' growing sense of their own geographical identity. Both physical and psychological formations of the region were significant: they influenced patterns of trade, migration

¹ S. Bamford, *Walks in South Lancashire* (1844), pp.25-6.

and political action. Wider horizons of regional identity were often more important factors in shaping collective action than nascent class consciousness.

Economy and Communications

Contemporaries were conscious that industrialisation was solidifying the cohesion of the region of south-east Lancashire and north-east Cheshire. Dr John Aikin (1747-1822) focused on Manchester and its textile economic links in his magnificent survey of 1795, *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Around Manchester*. The book reflected the changes of industry and commerce upon the society and interests of the inhabitants within its remits, as well as the analytic and scientific minds of Aikin's former fellow scholars at Warrington Dissenting Academy including Thomas Percival and T.R. Malthus.² Aikin was primarily concerned with delineating markets, urban institutions and housing, a progressive farming landscape and economic conditions rather than the aristocratic seats and endowed parishes of traditional county histories.³ He personified the cotton trade as the region's defining characteristic, both economically and in terms of identity:

Manchester is... the heart of this vast system, the circulating branches of which spread all around it, though to different distances. To the north-western and western points it is most widely diffused, having in those parts established various headquarters, which are each the centres to their lesser circles. Bolton, Blackburn, Wigan and several other Lancashire towns are stations of this kind; and the whole interesting country takes its character from them. Stockport to the south, and Ashton to the east, of Manchester, are similar appendages of this trade; and its influence is spread, more or less, over the greatest part of Lancashire.⁴

In 1844 the French observer Léon Faucher mirrored Aikin in his famous analysis of Manchester as "like an industrious spider," at the centre of a web of roads and railways

² J. Aikin, *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Around Manchester* (Manchester, 1795).

³ C.R.J. Currie and C.R. Elrington, *English County Histories, A Guide* (Stroud, 1994), pp.219-20; see R. Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth Century Britain* (2004).

⁴ Aikin, *A Description of the Country*, p.3.

“towards its auxiliaries, formerly villages but now towns, which serve as outposts to the grand centre of industry.” He described the whole regional process of the textile industry, where an order sent from Liverpool to the Manchester Exchange would be spun at Manchester, Bolton, Oldham or Ashton, “woven in the sheds of Bolton, Stalybridge or Stockport; dyed and printed at Blackburn, Chorley or Preston and finished, measured and packed at Manchester.”⁵ This simplified the complex economic processes which were occurring in industrialising Lancashire,⁶ but in essence it still indicated contemporary awareness of the centrality of Manchester to the economic life of the region. By the time Faucher and Bamford published their surveys, railways had brought communications and trade to a new level, but they only served to add an extra level to the region’s existing turnpike and canal networks. As Aikin recognised in 1795, if the matrix was extended to include links with banks, engineering shops and suppliers, the regional nexus was very dense indeed.⁷

Lancashire as a whole was varied in economic character, with many areas of specialisation. The south east Pennines focused mainly on textile production, stretching over into north-east Cheshire around Stockport, north-west Derbyshire around Glossop and the Pennine parts of the West Riding towards Huddersfield and Halifax. Liverpool stood somewhat removed as the major commercial port hub.⁸ South-west Lancashire was dominated by mining and heavy industry while agriculture still marked the character and landscape of north Lancashire and Westmorland, especially as the port of Lancaster was

⁵ L. Faucher, *Manchester in 1844* (Manchester, 1844), pp.15-6.

⁶ J. Langton, ‘The Industrial Revolution and the Regional Geography of England,’ and M. Freeman, ‘A Comment,’ *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, N.S., 9 (1984); D. Gregory, ‘The Production of Regions in England’s Industrial Revolution,’ *JHistGeog*, 14 (1988), 50-8.

⁷ D. Gregory, ‘A New and Differing Face in Many Places: Three Geographies of Industrialisation,’ in R. A. Dodgshon and R.A. Butlin, eds, *A Historical Geography of England and Wales*, 2nd ed. (1990), p.377; Aikin, *A Description of the Country*, p.176.

⁸ B.L. Anderson and P.J.M. Stoney, eds., *Commerce, Industry and Transport, Studies in Economic Change on Merseyside* (Liverpool, 1983)

losing business to Liverpool.⁹ This differentiation was not an immediate result of industrialisation. Stobart has suggested that these internal sub-regions had already been established by the early eighteenth century. This was reflected in the network of turnpikes, which focused on Manchester and left Liverpool relatively isolated from its hinterland, while Chester was oriented towards western Cheshire and north Wales.¹⁰ The notion of an economic region and intra-regional differentiation thus had a longer, pre-industrial and deeper-engrained history.

Lancashire as a region was a dynamic entity.¹¹ It interacted with the ever-expanding dominance of London but developed its own provincial character and connections in response. The lessening of mailcoach times from the metropolis to provincial towns was one product of this. In 1770 there was only one bi-weekly stagecoach from Manchester to London and one to Liverpool; by 1816 there were seventy distinct coaches.¹² The lavish celebrations and ceremony that greeted canal openings were testimony to the easing of trade, communications and travel the system offered. Huddersfield Canal, for example, was opened in April 1811; about 500 investors sailed from Ashton-under-Lyne to Marsden in the West Riding: “attended by a band of music playing Rule Britannia and entered the tunnel loudly cheered by at least 10,000 spectators.”¹³ The huge investment in canals by individual gentry and companies set up by manufacturers was not solely financial but also involved local pride and regional vision.

⁹ Historians who accept these internal differentiations include: S. King and G. Timmins, *Making Sense of the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester, 2001), p.36; J.K. Walton, *Lancashire: A Social History, 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987), p.121; C. Phythian-Adams, *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580-1850: Cultural Provinces in English Local History* (1992); C.B. Phillips and J.H. Smith, *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1540* (1994).

¹⁰ J. Stobart, ‘The Spatial Organisation of a Regional Economy: Central Places in North-West England in the Early Eighteenth Century,’ *JHistGeog*, 22 (1996), 152.

¹¹ J. Stobart, *The First Industrial Region: North West England, c.1700-60* (Manchester, 2004), p.7.

¹² D. Gregory, ‘The Friction of Distance,’ *Information Circulation and the Mails in Early Nineteenth Century England*, *JHistGeog*, 13 (1987), 134.

War affected the structure and communications of the region. Fourteen of the twenty-two harvests between 1793 and 1814 were deficient. Combined with fluctuating international trade, this strained most sections of the economy, forcing the scope of economic activity to reach further geographically. Reports commissioned by the Board of Agriculture in 1795 and 1812 revealed how grain shortages in the rapidly populating towns caused 'badgers' or middlemen dealers to travel further in search of supplies.¹⁴ During near-famine conditions in many parts of Britain in the winter of 1800-1, the Anglican cleric of each parish made returns to the Home Office about the state of the market. Most expressed a deep suspicion of 'badgers.' The curate of Preston believed they "keep up the Price by purchasing the farmers' stock of grain, cheese, etc, at their houses and by a variety of their manoeuvres it is supposed that the Price is kept up far above such prices as might be proportionate to the real state of the grain."¹⁵ This was a common conspiracy theory among all classes during times of shortage. Broadside ballads reflected and perpetuated the rumours. 'The Badger's Downfall or Good News for the Poor' was published around the time of the food riots of 1800. It lamented:

There's a gang of hucksters that ride up and down
Forestalling the markets in capital towns,
They buy all the butter, potatoes and greens.¹⁶

Lancaster market increased its importance as the crossing point between north and south grain currents. In 1796, Cragg, a diarist from Wyresdale, the agricultural district to the east of the port, reported "badgers, or traders in corn and meal going from Preston, Chipping and other parts and buying up all the meal they can from Kendal, Penrith and the North Country all of which passes through Lancaster and goes to Blackburn,

¹³ *Cowdroy's*, 13 April 1811.

¹⁴ R.W. Dickson, *General View of the Agriculture of Lancashire* (1815); see R. Scola, *Feeding the Victorian City: the Food Supply of Manchester, 1770-1870* (Manchester, 1992).

¹⁵ PRO: HO 42/54/100, Preston return, 1801; See Appendix IV:i for graph of prices.

Burnley, Bolton and other parts.” Lancaster remained the market for local farmers and those whom Cragg called “North Country people,” but in this case, “carts from Ellel and other parts” conveyed local grain to the “South.”¹⁷ The suitability and profitability of dairy farming in the North West encouraged this situation. The returns to the Home Office suggest that even the more rural areas had long relied upon fairly distant sources for the greatest part of their consumption of arable produce. Haslingden, for instance, was said to be “almost wholly dependent upon Yorkshire and Cheshire for meal, flour and potatoes,” whilst the incumbent of Burnley believed that “both flour and meal are brought to our market from the eastern and northern Ridings of Yorkshire chiefly by the Leeds and Liverpool canal.”¹⁸ This was not an exaggeration, as the new canals enabled and indeed created reliance on cross-Pennine traffic for market provisions.¹⁹ The war heightened merchants and farmers’ dependence on a wider network of business connections; consequently, when London markets were affected by Napoleon’s economic sanctions, the Lancashire region suffered. The Oldham diarist William Rowbottom recorded on 14 August 1810: “At Manchester this day trade very slack on account of so many failures in London, Manchester and other places, the House of Messrs Longsden as stoped [*sic*] this day for a very large sum and it will materially affect the Manufacturers in Royton.”²⁰ Furthermore, like the clergy, the ballad writer was well aware of the international market sustaining local supplies:

Our wants to supply, foreign corn’s coming in,
Which makes these black badgers a little to grin.²¹

¹⁶ MCL: BR f.824.04, BA 1, ballads, vol 2, p.165.

¹⁷ LCRO: DDX 760/1, Cragg family memorandum book.

¹⁸ D. Bythell, *The Handloom Weavers: A Study in the English Cotton Industry During the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 1969), p.46; PRO: HO 42/53-54.

¹⁹ Scola, *Feeding the Victorian City*, pp.100-1.

²⁰ Oldham LS: Rowbottom diary.

²¹ MCL: BR f.824.04, BA 1, ballads, vol 2, p.165.

The increasingly intricate pan-regional market was complicated further by the growing reliance of industrialising areas upon grain imported from America and the Baltic; clergy in some areas reported that virtually all the supplies were foreign.²²

Administration and landownership

Industrialisation was also altering the geography of administration of the county. A conflict arose over the Quarter Sessions which exemplified an emerging breach between traditional notions of county government and new requirements of the region. It is significant that the disagreement surfaced in 1798 at a time of distress and threat of French invasion, when the war was straining magistrates' capabilities to administer the rising population and threats of disorder in the south-east of the region. The magistrates from the southern hundreds wanted to meet in a location nearer to centres of agitation and more concentrated population. They thus proposed a parliamentary bill to move the Quarter Sessions from Lancaster to Preston. This caused a protracted wrangle with the magistrates of the two Lonsdale hundreds north of Lancaster. The records of the Quarter Sessions from 1797-1808 are filled with acrimonious debate over the relative importance of both sites for the county. The Lonsdale magistrates effectively seceded in 1798 by refusing to attend Sessions south of Lancaster, apart from one delegate whom they sent to argue their case and keep track of decisions made.²³

Petitions to parliament on both sides gathered thousands of signatures, from freeholders of all political stances as well as the magistrates and major landowners.²⁴ This indicated the great importance attached to the issue of whether the political centre of the county

²² HO 42/54; A. Booth, 'Food Riots in the North West of England, 1790-1801,' *P & P*, 77 (1977), 84-107.

²³ R. Sharpe-France, 'The Lancashire Sessions Act, 1798,' *THSLC*, 96 (1944), 1-57.

should reflect historical precedent or the changed economic landscape. The petitions against the bill suggested that the dividing line rested along the Wyresdale district around Lancaster and not just those in Lonsdale north of the Sands. The general petition against the bill stressed the inconvenience of travelling to Preston from this area. By contrast, the individual petition from Lancaster focused on the civic identity of the port as the “capital town of the County” and the potential loss in value of the newly-built townhouses which they believed would ensue from the move. The historic and aristocratic connotations of the county town still meant much to north Lancashire inhabitants. Petitions for the bill were less numerous signed, although there were individual petitions from Preston, Rochdale, Manchester and Salford, Bolton, Wigan, Blackburn, Liverpool and Warrington. This was the last attempt by Lancashire north of the Sands to save the vestiges of an old Lancastrian county identity. When the bill passed, they were pushed into a growing identification with the more rural and aristocratic-dominated culture and customs of Cumberland and Westmorland, gradually consolidating under the forceful influence of the predominant landowner Sir James Lowther, first Earl of Lonsdale (1736-1802).²⁵

The Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, Edward Smith Stanley, the twelfth Earl of Derby (1752-1834), was no Lord Lowther, in terms of either political or even landed influence.²⁶ Lancashire’s landowning patterns and lack of aristocratic dominance contrasted with its neighbouring counties. South-east Lancashire was essentially a land of squirearchy.²⁷ This in part influenced the nature of economic and political development. Aikin was one of many contemporaries who charted the dying lines of old gentry and the fragmentation of

²⁴ HLRO: HL/PO/JO/10/3/292/48, petitions for and against the Lancashire Sessions Bill, 31 May 1798.

²⁵ Borwick, ‘An English Provincial Society,’ p.278.

²⁶ J.J. Bagley, *The Earls of Derby, 1485-1985* (1985).

²⁷ F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (1963), p.47; see chapter 3, p.56.

landownership in the east of the region. For example, he wrote about Mottram-in-Longdendale, on the border of Lancashire and Cheshire: "The neighbourhood...was formerly famous of the number of halls occupied by their owners, who resided on their own estates, most of which are now in the possession of farmers."²⁸ In 1815, W.R. Dickson reported to the Board of Agriculture that there existed only a few large landed estates in the county, with more than a third of the land remaining divided amongst properties of "from 1000l to 5000l to 6000l per annum."²⁹ Baines's *Lancashire* compared the rising prosperity of Blackburn attorney Henry Sudell, displayed by his building of Woodfold Park estate on the outskirts of the town, with "the ancient family of Osbaldeston, after occupying the mansion for six hundred years sunk into decay and sold the demesne to Sir George Warren for £5000 and a life annuity of £400."³⁰ This area may have been in part the inspiration for Rev T.D. Whitaker's nostalgic 'country' lament on the decline of the old gentry in his history of Whalley.³¹ Other Anglican clergy across the region reported their dismay in response to the question about the number of 'families of note' in their visitation returns to the Bishop of Chester. The curate of Milnrow near Rochdale, for example, reported in 1804 that there were none "since Richard Towneley left Belfield about fifteen years ago."³²

This pessimism owed a lot to conservative reactions to visible change on the horizons of towns. It did not take into account that landowning had always been in a process of flux, especially after confiscations following the Jacobite rebellions. Moreover, the small estates and mansion-villas could never match the prominence of old aristocratic estates. There were numerically more landowners holding small estates and various other forms

²⁸ Aikin, *A Description of the Country*, p.468.

²⁹ Dickson, *General View*, p.91.

³⁰ E. Baines, *Lancashire* (Newton Abbot, 1968), p.508.

³¹ T.D. Whitaker, *An History of the Original Parish of Whalley* (Blackburn, 1801).

of property, but the gravity of the surviving aristocracy and old gentry, though small in relation to other counties, still prevailed.³³ The distribution of titled estates was uneven in the rest of Lancashire, but generally congregated in the fertile plains of the south-west and the Fylde. In 1815, Dickson listed eleven “noblemen who possess landed property in this county,” who included Derby, the Earl of Wilton, the Earl of Sefton, Lord Lilford and Sir Henry Houghton.³⁴ Derby’s annual income from Lancashire rents was over £26,000 net in 1797 with his largest gross rents from Preston, his Knowsley seat, Bury and Pilkington.³⁵ George Harry Grey (1737-1819), 5th Earl of Stamford and Warrington, Derby’s counterpart in Cheshire, held large agricultural estates and almost 10,000 acres around Ashton-under-Lyne. The Earls of Dysart from Surrey held 15,000 acres in the Longdendale valley.³⁶ Sefton owned a large estate less than seven miles from the Stanleys’ Knowsley estate. Much of the land extending from Southport to the river Wyre in central north Lancashire was shared between branches of the Heskeths and the Cliftons of Lytham, who owned an estate of 16,000 acres.³⁷

In agricultural areas outside estates, small farms were the most common form of landholding. The assessors from the Board of Agriculture seemed overwhelmed at their spread in Lancashire and regarded them as obstacles to agricultural modernisation. Aikin noted: “As proof of their smallness, the late Henry Blundell of Ince had in Formby, Ainsdale and Birkdale, 230 such tenements, consisting of about 1300 Lancashire acres.”³⁸ Furthermore, leases were increasingly commercialised by the shift from customary inheritance to a general limit of three lives. This did not immediately change the make-up

³² CRO: EDV7/3, Bishop of Chester Visitation Returns, 1804.

³³ As discussed in P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People* (2000).

³⁴ Dickson, *General View*, p.91.

³⁵ LCRO: DDK 27/11, Statement of Derby Annual Income, 1797.

³⁶ M. Nevell, *Tameside, 1700-1930* (Tameside, 1993), p.93.

of the Lancashire countryside and its social relations, but it did mean that landowning cannot be classed as a static (rural) - changing (urban) dichotomy.³⁹ Farms and their occupants were not all entrenched in old ways; they invested, expanded and changed hands as did urban and commercial property.⁴⁰

As Bamford witnessed, the enclosure of moors opened up land opportunities for urban development in manufacturing towns. The period 1789-1815 was the most eventful for parliamentary enclosure across the country; in Lancashire more than forty acts, public and private, were passed from 1789 to 1815.⁴¹ Indeed, more of the parliamentary enclosure of North Lancashire was concentrated in the first two decades of the nineteenth century than most other regions: nearly fifty-eight percent, comprising of a total area of 30,000 statute acres. Extensive areas of common were reclaimed on either side of the Lune above Lancaster and on the fringes of Bowland, beginning with Ellet in 1757. Further north, nearly all the Lonsdale commons and wastes had been enclosed by 1800.⁴² Rising rents were also a consideration for farmers who leased land from great estates. In some manufacturing towns, the main purpose or consequence was urbanisation and the development of working-class 'colonies' on the outskirts of towns. Hundreds of landholders took up of plots in the private enclosure of the moors around Oldham in 1810 and Bolton expanded its residential and manufacturing areas on land

³⁷ B. Lewis, 'Bourgeois Ideology and Order: Middle-Class Culture and Politics in Lancashire, 1789-1851' (Harvard Univ. PhD thesis, 1994), p.29.

³⁸ Aikin, *A Description of the Country*, p.326.

³⁹ C.B. Estabrook, *Urbane and Rustic England: Cultural Ties and Social Spheres in the Provinces, 1660-1780* (Manchester, 1998) over-emphasises elements of urban-rural separation.

⁴⁰ See A. Gritt, 'The Survival of Service in the English Agricultural Labour Force: Lessons from Lancashire, c.1650-1851,' *Agricultural History Review*, 50 (2002); also LCRO: DDX 760/1, Cragg family memorandum book and DDSc 78/3, Ecclestone mss; JRLUM: EGR 4/1, papers of the Earls of Stamford.

⁴¹ R.H. Adcock, *A Handlist of Lancashire Enclosure Acts and Awards* (Preston, 1946).

⁴² I. Whyte, *Transforming Fell and Valley, Landscape and Parliamentary Enclosure in North West England* (Lancaster, 2003), p.24; J. Chapman, 'The Extent and Nature of Parliamentary Enclosure,' *AgrHistRev*, 35 (1987), 25-35; G.E. Mingay, *Parliamentary Enclosure in England, An Introduction to its Causes, Incidence and Impact, 1750-1850* (Harlow, 1997).

from the moor to the south of the town enclosed in 1793.⁴³ The effects were visually striking and further blurred the boundaries between urban and rural areas.

Maps were increasingly important in envisioning geographical changes of the region. Maps were never objective. A wider range of maps represented the different conceptions of county and region envisaged by the patrons of their cartographers. The later eighteenth century witnessed a professionalisation of chorography and a greater emphasis on accuracy.⁴⁴ The Napoleonic invasion scares had heightened the Board of Ordnance's desire for detailed representation of potential targets. In the provinces, the rising value of land and the multiplicity of transactions of property ensured that estate maps and town plans showing urban and manufacturing growth were a predominant means of cartography. The popularity of local histories fuelled the desire for regional perspectives. Aikin included in his *Description of the Country* maps of the Tame valley as well as a more traditional county map of Lancashire, with market towns and communications highlighted. Significant reflections of regional representation can be seen in two circular maps. One map, drawn by the local historian Edwin Butterworth, had Tandle Hill in Royton near Oldham at its centre rather than a major town. It illustrated the Pennine viewpoints and industrialising settlements within sight of the top of the hill for a radius of seven to eight miles. A map of 'Forty Miles Round Liverpool' drawn by Thomas Troughton in the 1800s showed the reach of Liverpool (and implicitly its commerce and influence) to the counties of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, four counties in north Wales, Shropshire and Staffordshire.⁴⁵ Unlike county,

⁴³ LCRO: AE 5/7, Oldham enclosure map, 1810; Bolton Archives: ZAL/1, Enclosure Plan of Bolton Moor, 1793; see Appendix I.

⁴⁴ S. Daniels, 'Re-Visioning Britain: Mapping and Landscape Painting, 1750-1820,' in K. Baetjer, *Glorious Nature: British Landscape Painting, 1750-1850* (1993), p.61.

⁴⁵ See Appendix IV:ii, Oldham LS: map of Tandle Hill; LivRO: T. Troughton, 'A Map of Forty Miles Around Liverpool.'

estate or administrative surveys, regional circular maps of course could overlap, which intimated shared or multiple identities rather than exclusive boundaries. Maps were thus not merely illustrations of the changing economic and political landscape. They also influenced perceptions of geographical horizons; regional maps in particular could show the physical possibility of travel and furthermore a network of localities and regions that could be combined to form the nation.⁴⁶

Geographical identities

The impact of the changes wrought by industrialisation and the wars was not merely economic or physical. It affected the cultural and psychological aspects of what constituted place in inhabitants' views. The region, like the nation, was an 'imagined community' which consisted of a multitude of perceptions about geographical spaces, places and personal connections.⁴⁷ Marshall has argued that a function of regional history is to "discover manifestations of the sense of place," and thereby to define the region as it was seen by its inhabitants and how various factors changed these perceptions over time.⁴⁸

Historians have not readily adopted this approach because this very intangibility raises methodological problems about the survival and reliability of evidence of genuine feelings of individuals and groups.⁴⁹ Different factors affected readings of the region or

⁴⁶ Daniels, 'Revisioning Britain,' p.61; J. Black, *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past* (1997); D. Cosgrove, ed., *Mappings* (1999).

⁴⁷ J. Allen et al, *Rethinking the Region* (1997); A.R.H. Baker, *Geography and History, Bridging the Divide* (Cambridge, 2003), p.161; B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983); see K.R. Olwig, *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic* (Wisconsin, 2002); Y.F. Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (New Jersey, 1974).

⁴⁸ J.D. Marshall, *The Tyranny of the Discrete: A Discussion of the Problems of Local History in England* (Hants, 1997), p.104.

⁴⁹ E. Royle, *Issues of Regional Identity* (Manchester, 1998), p.4.

geographical identity, especially class, trade, gender, mobility. Some inhabitants travelled extensively; others “lived very narrow lives indeed.”⁵⁰ Billinge has indeed recently questioned whether most inhabitants had time or need to question abstract notions of “place and personality let alone location and context.”⁵¹ The geographer Tuan argued that regions lacked visibility because they did not have a “solid political base.” He believed the efforts of writers and artists to promote regionalism impressed only the “literary and the artistic” unless the qualities they perceived assumed political importance, to be defended against outside forces.⁵² Yet searching for the region can be analogous to the pursuit of the meaning of class or indeed Britishness: penetrating and critical historical analysis can “make the physical form disappear, yet something still remains.”⁵³ In this period, geographical awareness was an influential factor in quotidian life and provincialism did gain political connotations

Modes of transport and landscape shaped perception of geographical distance and familiarity. The commonly quoted daily walking distance of ten to fifteen miles had very different meanings according means of transport, terrain and whether this involved crossing a large town or along footpaths over fields.⁵⁴ A sailor in the coasting trade must have had a different awareness about travelling distances than, for example, a baker in a Pennine village. Furthermore, static identities could co-exist with widening of geographical awareness through mobility. Thus the experience of wartime – when many more people were on the move, especially through militia service or searching for work – opened the geographical horizons of those who were mobile. The wars altered ideas

⁵⁰ J.D. Marshall, ‘Communities, Societies, Regions and Local History: Perceptions of Locality in High and Low Furness,’ *Local Historian*, 26 (1996), 48.

⁵¹ M. Billinge, ‘Divided by a Common Language: North and South, 1750-1820,’ in A.R.H. Baker and M. Billinge, *Geographies of England: The North-South Divide, Material and Imagined* (Cambridge, 2004), p.103.

⁵² Y.F. Tuan, ‘Place: An Experiential Perspective,’ *Geographical Review*, 65 (1975), 163.

⁵³ Royle, *Issues of Regional Identity*, pp.5-6.

about distance in different ways. The coaster could be impressed into the navy; the baker had to deal with fluctuations of the national grain market and food riots. Conversely, war could constrict these perceptions when inhabitants were in the place they considered as 'home.' This was usually their native town, place of settlement or where their family resided. Parish boundaries had much bearing on secular daily life: settlement, balloting for the militia, the duties of constables, burial entitlement, liability for tithe, access to commons and waste, rights of way amongst other requirements.⁵⁵ The war, population growth, bad harvests and a restricted international market exacerbated demands and stretched these boundaries. Xenophobia against 'foreigners,' meaning those from outside the parish, and fear of more people on the move, especially labourers, tramping artisans, ex-soldiers, vagrants, could occur among those who were normally mobile themselves.⁵⁶ The vicar of Disley in north-east Cheshire told the bishop of Chester in his visitation return that in 1795 the building of the Peak Forest Canal brought "a number of unsettled people" who then stayed "to cut a new turnpike road." He accused the newcomers for causing a rise in "the habit of drinking...amongst the natives." He likewise complained about the printing and cotton shops in the township "continually bringing in and sending out strangers."⁵⁷ Although his personal views were shaped by his worry about transience causing 'irreligion,' his choice of the terms 'natives' and 'strangers' was probably common among the other settled inhabitants.

Reactions to enclosure indicated a long-established sense of place among the local communities it affected. Sustained and briefly successful resistance by freeholders to enclosure in this period was often against encroachment and private enclosure rather

⁵⁴ P. Laslett et al., *An Introduction to English Historical Demography* (New York, 1966), p.73.

⁵⁵ K.D.M. Snell, 'The Culture of Local Xenophobia,' *JH*, 28 (2003), 6; see D. Fletcher, 'The Parish Boundary, A Social Phenomenon in Hanoverian England,' *Rural History*, 14 (2003), 177-96.

⁵⁶ Snell, 'Culture of Local Xenophobia,' 23.

than parliamentary enclosure. In 1810, the steward of the Earl of Stamford reported that the cottagers at Fulshaw near Wilmslow “destroyed the fences of new enclosures made on Lindow Common by Lord Stamford’s tenants on the moss rooms” (strips of peat moss fields held in common).⁵⁸ Physical resistance however was generally limited. Opposition was rather diffused into commissioners’ procedures.⁵⁹ There was a process of consultation, even if claims on common rights were not always taken into account in the act. John Albinson, the Bolton surveyor, kept a notebook of the proceedings regarding the enclosure of Horwich Moor in 1816. It included a list of objections from the tenants of Lostock Hall estate and elsewhere which centred on the loss of common rights by small farmers.⁶⁰ Witnesses demonstrated their attachment to the landscape and locality as much as to their common rights, mainly by the phrase “known Moor all his/her life.” This attachment was also expressed in examinations of smallholders regarding the enclosure of nearby Tonge Moor in 1805. Adam Greenhaulgh, aged 90, provided a pleading statement:

Says he has known Tonge Moor ever since he was a Boy – that he lived close to Tonge Moor for 60 years – says he was primer and looker over Harwood Lee Common which lies near to Tonge Moor. Says that since he knew Tonge Moor the Occupiers of Lands in Tonge and Haulgh always turned their Cattle upon Tonge Moor.⁶¹

These statements also indicated how inhabitants were in contact with both Bolton and its townships and rural life. Resistance was more often to do with long-disputed rights over titles and dues than with physical confrontations over common rights: the case of

⁵⁷ EDV 7/3, Bishop of Chester Visitation returns, 1804.

⁵⁸ CRO: EGR 4/1/8/9/28, I. Worthington to Earl of Stamford, 20 May 1810.

⁵⁹ G. Rogers, “Custom and Common Right: Waste Land, Enclosure and Social Change in West Lancashire,” *Agricultural History Review*, 41 (1993), 137-154; M. Turner, *English Parliamentary Enclosure, its Historical Geography and Economic History* (Folkestone, 1980); A.P. Coney, ‘Aughton Enclosure in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries: the Struggle for Superiority,’ *THSLC*, 136 (1987), 59-76; N. Gardner, ‘The Contest Over the 1796 Cartmel Enclosures Act,’ *Lancashire History Quarterly* 1,1 (1997).

⁶⁰ Bolton Archives: ZZ 223/6, John Albinson notebook.

⁶¹ Bolton Archives: DDBR/5/2/2, examination of Adam Greenhaulgh, 20 August 1805.

Saddleworth ran from 1810 to 1834 involving a variety of complications over claims to rights and encroachments on the commons.⁶² Ideas about the nature and ownership of property were obviously strained in this wartime period of high food prices, when common grazing and fuel were essential means of survival for many inhabitants of these areas. These pressures on the other hand were likely to have strengthened attachment to land and locality, whether threatened by a local landowner in private enclosure or by a multitude of buyers through parliamentary enclosure. As Bamford recognised, the visual impact on the landscape and the restrictions on rights of way were also immediate and striking. The development of footpath preservation societies in 1820s were another expression of challenges to exclusion from open spaces. They developed in and around Lancashire in particular as a response to the Stopping-up of Unnecessary Roads Act of February 1815, the counterpart to parliamentary enclosure acts in providing additional powers to resist the pressures for rural recreation in an urbanising society. Taylor has demonstrated how “the vehemence with which the old routes were defended indicates their popular importance.”⁶³

Geographical identities in working-class autobiography

Attachment to region was explicitly stated in text and action. Published working-class autobiographies began to take shape from this period, in part due to the influence of Methodist self-examinatory writing. Autobiographies and diaries clearly contained inherent biases and nostalgic retrospection in their selection of memories to be printed or preserved. The validity of working-class writings is nevertheless not lessened by their biases; ‘objective’ abstract data or collections of contemporary letters also have their

⁶² A.J. Petford, ‘Enclosure in Saddleworth, 1625-1834,’ *TLCAS*, 84 (1987), 78-117; See I. Whyte, *Transforming Fell and Valley, Landscape and Parliamentary Enclosure in North West England* (Lancaster, 2003).

prejudices, the latter being hard to find for the working classes. In different ways, autobiographers were building upon puritan assumptions about the significance of the inner lives of ordinary men and women, that even the lowliest individuals had histories worth recording.⁶⁴ The deliberate filtering of information by the author is significant in itself for assessing the impact of events and ideologies upon the protagonists.⁶⁵

Samuel Bamford's recollections of Middleton and Manchester life as a young man (c.1788-1815) were deliberately polished and revised to create a marketable literary work. Being published in 1848, they were however tinged with political influences and hindsight built up from postwar radicalism to Chartism.⁶⁶ A more recent object of attention by historical geographers, particularly with regards patterns of migration, has been Benjamin Shaw (1772-1841), a machinemaker of Dolphinhholme and Preston.⁶⁷ His recollections were written in 1826. David Whitehead of Rawtenstall (1790-1865) rose from humble origins to become a leading cotton manufacturer and entrepreneur in the district. He wrote his autobiography at the same time as Bamford.⁶⁸ The works of Bamford, Shaw and Whitehead were not autobiographies and diaries of 'class,' but of and identity with place. That place, moreover, was often the region. 'Class' and notions of class conflict are played down in Shaw's and Whitehead's selected perceptions of their lives. Only Bamford laboured the point about the integrity of the working man, and this was in the Chartist year of 1848. Rather, childhood, family, their desire for improvement and self-education, and most of all travel and geographical identity, formed the centrepiece of their life outside work, however much these factors were connected with

⁶³ H. Taylor, *A Claim on the Countryside: a History of the British Outdoor Movement* (Edinburgh, 1997), p.22.

⁶⁴ J. Burnett, D. Vincent, D. Mayall, eds, *The Autobiography of the Working Class* (Brighton, 1984), p.xiii.

⁶⁵ J.J. Bagley, *Lancashire Diarists, Three Centuries of Lancashire Lives* (London, 1975), p.175.

⁶⁶ Bamford, *Early Days*.

⁶⁷ *The Family Records of Benjamin Shaw, Mechanic of Dent, Dolphinhholme and Preston, 1772-1841*, ed. A.G. Crosby, LRS, CXXX (1991).

what can be identified with class.⁶⁹ This is not to argue that class was not important in their lives; rather than geographical identities were as important as motivators of political action and thought.

A common theme in the autobiographies was the protagonist moving through the Lancashire landscape. The quotidian mobility of workers in textile trades must not be underestimated, nor the possibilities that this afforded them.⁷⁰ Consciousness of the wider region and Manchester's centrality was built up by 'bearing home.' This involved handloom weavers delivering the week's woven cloth and collecting new raw materials from a Manchester warehouse. Bamford and his family were chiefly employed by Messrs Samuel and James Broadbent of Cannon Street. He described the journey from Middleton to Manchester, which followed "the brow at Alkrington, which was a pleasant footpath through fields...through the village of Blackley, over Tetlow Bridge, across Smedley Fields...down Red Bank into Manchester."⁷¹ The weekly journey strengthened their knowledge of the places they passed through as well as their relations with weavers from other towns and villages. At the Broadbents' warehouse, Bamford and his uncle "would probably find some half-dozen weavers and winders, waiting for their turn to deliver in their work and to receive fresh material." If the warp was not available until after dinner, his uncle waited in the *Hope and Anchor*, which was frequented by other weavers. Companionship was particularly sought on dark winter nights' home, stopping at pubs on the way. Bearing home strengthened both local personal connections and a wider regional identity. Handloom weavers were hardly isolated domestic workers in this context, and nor did they maintain purely local horizons. The weekly journeys also gave

⁶⁸ S. Chapman, ed., *The Autobiography of David Whitehead of Rawtenstall, 1790-1865* (Helmshore, 2001).

⁶⁹ D. Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: a Study of Nineteenth Century Working Class Autobiography* (1981).

⁷⁰ See chapter 6.

⁷¹ Bamford, *Early Days*, p.116; See Appendix IV:iii for map.

weavers the opportunity to learn about wider issues; Bamford wrote that in the pubs, “News [was] interchanged with the host or some of his company; half an hour or sometimes more was thus spent.”⁷² Pubs were often the sole meeting places for political clubs, benefit societies, ticket offices and collecting points for carriers and coaches.

Bamford’s experience illustrated how many migrants, and thus many among the working classes, felt part of both urban and rural life. It contradicted any historical notion of rural workers becoming ‘proletarianised’ or isolated from their background when they moved to a town in search of industrial employment.⁷³ Workers living in Manchester maintained a strong connection with the countryside through rambles, bearing home and helping with the hay harvest. While Bamford was employed at a printing warehouse on Peel Street in Manchester, he rambled through Hopwood and Middleton, as far as the “wood-crowned Tandles.”⁷⁴ He became a weaver in Middleton again in 1802 which gave him even more time to ramble and “partake in country amusements with the other young fellows of the neighbourhood and frequently went out hunting.”⁷⁵ As Taylor has argued, the formation of footpath preservation societies resulted from this close connection with rural life that remained extended to workers in industrial towns. Regular use of a network of paths and drove-roads was part of a “deeply ingrained cultural heritage, onto which were later grafted newer demands for rural recreational activities from a greatly expanded population.” The defence of these routes looked backwards to traditional ways of life but

⁷² Ibid., pp.117-9; see J.D. Marshall, ‘The Rise and Transformation of the Cumbrian Market Town, 1660-1900,’ *NH*, 19 (1983), 176; H. R. Southall, ‘The Tramping Artisan Revisited: Labour Mobility and Economic Distress in Early Victorian England,’ *EcHistRev*, 44 (1991), 272-96.

⁷³ For example, as argued in J. Foster, *Class Struggle in the Industrial Revolution, Early Industrial Capitalism in Three English Towns* (1974).

⁷⁴ Bamford, *Early Days*, p.276.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.226.

also reflected a positive desire for leisure in response to the new restrictions on time imposed by factory-working and space imposed by enclosure.⁷⁶

The categorisation of a large proportion of south Lancashire workers as ‘weavers’ must be qualified by the recognition that many wove only casually or at desperate times in their lives, and perhaps would only call themselves weavers at these times.⁷⁷ Bamford, Shaw and Whitehead all relied on weaving when their other endeavours floundered. Their wives and families wove on a casual basis to supplement their income. Whitehead’s employment pattern as a weaver in the Rossendale forest was diverse, involving milking cows in the morning and evening, while weaving fustian during the day.⁷⁸ Charles Hulbert, later an evangelical preacher in Manchester and Shrewsbury, wrote an autobiography with even more religious didactic motives. Yet within his theological musings, he recalled that he learnt to spin and weave at his uncle’s farm near Worsley, where his family “were engaged in some way or other during the season of Hay and Corn Harvest, so that at the end of four years, I was not only a Cotton manufacturer, but in a limited sense, a Practical Agriculturalist.”⁷⁹

The meeting of urban and rural life in the neighbourhood was a key part of the history of the Lancashire region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁸⁰ A common term in the autobiographies was ‘neighbourhood.’ ‘Neighbourhood’ was a key geographical description commonly used by reports in newspapers, examinations in court, magistrates’ descriptions of unrest, personal correspondence and almost every

⁷⁶ Taylor, *A Claim on the Countryside*, p.22.

⁷⁷ Bythell, *Handloom Weavers*, p.60; G. Timmins, *The Last Shift: the Decline of Handloom Weaving in Nineteenth Century Lancashire* (Manchester, 1993).

⁷⁸ Bamford, *Early Days*, p.3; M. Winstanley, ‘Industrialization and the Small Farm: Family and Household Economy in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire, *P & P*, 152 (1996), 157-95.

⁷⁹ C. Hulbert, *Memoirs of Seventy Years of an Eventful Life* (Shrewsbury, 1852), p.79.

other written source and written record of oral testimony in this period. Its immediate root was in the definition of a day's walk, being not too far from home but with larger horizons than the parochial.⁸¹ Although familiar geographical perspectives were reaching further, travellers remained in touch with their original locality, always able to go back in time of need or fortune. This included the workers' cottages on the Pennine horizons, old agricultural hamlets and folds and also small dependent townships perhaps with chapels of ease and certainly nonconformist circuits. Itinerant circuits, camp meetings and chapels indeed flourished in semi-rural 'neighbourhoods' as well as in the more concentrated industrial populations of Lancashire towns.⁸² Preachers' skilful exploitation of the geographical setting formed an essential part of their appeal.⁸³ 'Neighbourhood' demonstrated that industrialisation did not cause an irrevocable urban-rural divide. Farmers and agricultural labourers supplemented their income by weaving or trading in the town; most towns were only a couple of miles away from bleak moors, enclosed fields or common mosses or marshes. Though both could be consciously separate, urban and rural mentalities, cultures and identities interacted with each other. Neighbourhood encompassed the ambiguous realm of semi-rural life, where industry met rurality and where they adapted to each other. The semi-rural neighbourhoods played a large part in popular politics and identities.

Pooley and Turnbull's analysis of the Shaw family's migration patterns, together with more comprehensive analyses of other life histories of individuals, have demonstrated

⁸⁰ Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, see chapter 8.

⁸¹ M. Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1971).

⁸² D. Hempton, *The Religion of the People, Methodism and Popular Religion, c.1750-1900* (1996); M.A. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society, Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994); P. Stigant, 'Wesleyan Methodism and Working-Class Radicalism in the North, 1792-1821,' *NH*, VI (1971), 98-116.

⁸³ J. Albers, '“Papist traitors” and “Presbyterian rogues”': Religious Identities in Eighteenth-Century Lancashire,' in J. Walsh, and C. Haydon, eds., *The Church of England, c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), 317-33; J.M. Valenze, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England* (Princeton, 1985).

how migration and mobility were an integral part of working-class life in industrialising Britain. Furthermore, return migration, often to smaller size settlements, was very common.⁸⁴ Southall believes that migrants should not be treated as exceptions to a closely defined regional identity but as “crucial agents both of change and of maintaining the community’s links with a wider world.”⁸⁵ Local communities were thus never isolated as Estabrook and Calhoun have argued, but constantly fluctuating and connecting with each other through personal movement.⁸⁶

Shaw, Bamford and Whitehead’s narratives reveal that inhabitants were attached to the region while simultaneously personally tied to a locality. Joseph Shaw, Benjamin’s father, was a regular migrant, but his wife identified only with Dent in the West Riding, where Benjamin was born. Benjamin wrote: “It seems that my mother was very partial to the place of her nativity.”⁸⁷ They left the village in order to find work in the new worsted mill in Dolphinholme, about twenty-five miles south-west of Dent. Shaw again commented: “This leaving our own country [*sic*] was a great cross to my mother, for she is attached to her Native town, and had she known what would follow, I am sure that she never would have left her relations and country on any account.”⁸⁸ The experience of moving to a relatively remote location, and a mill which recruited labour over a wide area, hence from among people with a large mix of different local identities, was thus too traumatic, and they eventually returned to near Dent. Benjamin mirrored his mother’s reluctant

⁸⁴ C. G. Pooley and S. D’Cruze, ‘Migration and Urbanisation in North-West England, c.1760-1830,’ *JH*, 19 (1994), 339-58; C.G. Pooley and J. Turnbull, *Migration and Mobility in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century* (1998); A. Redford, *Labour Migration in England, 1800-50* (Manchester, 1926); Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire*.

⁸⁵ H. Southall, ‘Mobility, the Artisan Community and Popular Politics in Early Nineteenth Century England,’ in G. Kearns and C.W.J. Withers, eds., *Urbanising Britain, Essays on Class and Community in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1991), p.128.

⁸⁶ Dennis, *English Industrial Cities*, p.285; Estabrook, *Urbane and Rustic England*; Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle*.

⁸⁷ *Family Records of Benjamin Shaw*, p.21.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.26.

migration, only doing so when forced by economic necessity; but when he did move, his choices held some significance regarding his sense of identity. It is significant that Preston, with all its prospects of employment, was not Shaw's first choice. Although he knew Preston slightly, and his wife had worked in the textile mills there for a year, only after local possibilities were diminished did Benjamin consider moving fifteen miles south. He began work in a machinemaking workshop within the Horrockses' industrial complex, living in adjacent rooms; his family soon moved to a few streets away, another common feature of migration. Yet Shaw's desire for stability shaped his inclination to stay in Preston. The sole occasion during the rest of his life when he left the town was due to illness. He claimed poor relief and was forced to return to his parish of settlement, Ellel, where Dolphinholme was situated. After desperate pleas with the parish authorities, he returned to Preston and lived in the same house until his death in 1841.

The process of migration was not alien to inhabitants of industrialising areas. It was usually undertaken through familiar areas and channels of kinship, as migrants often moved to live with family or friends already resident in their destination village or town. David Whitehead's early life was occupied by almost constant mobility in response to his inability to keep up apprenticeships. In general, his horizons were confined to the larger towns in the area of the Pennine circle north and north east of Manchester, and his choices were shaped by personal contacts. He often stayed in some places for only a few weeks, trying an alternative trade, and returning home after each attempt.⁸⁹ He must have gained some intimate geographical knowledge of Pennine Lancashire during a job of six months on the post-chaise between Blackburn and Clitheroe, but his only long-distance move was to Wales again in search of work. Whitehead confirms the patterns found by

⁸⁹ *Autobiography of David Whitehead*, p.13.

Pooley and Turnbull, including short-distance migration between towns of similar size as a result of a search for employment, and regular return migration, usually to the family home.⁹⁰ Whitehead returned to employment contacts and a community in Wales of Rossendale migrants, demonstrating the significance of chain migration. Migrant 'communities' who welcomed other migrants from their home towns into new areas played a vital part in migration. Migrants thus sustained their traditions and identity because of this continuing process until they were assimilated or rather, combined both old and new traits.⁹¹ Significantly, these migrants retained a strong attachment to their old residences; Whitehead wrote that his employers in Wales: "was very glad to hear of her old country" and "inquired about everything they could think of in Rossendale," and Whitehead obliged by "telling them all I could." He was shown "very great kindness," specifically because of his Rossendale connections.⁹²

Geographical identities were thus shaped perhaps decisively when inhabitants were removed from 'home.' Samuel Bamford described his first views of London with astonishment at the size and beauty of the city, especially the port.⁹³ Yet he found the sea journeys and work tiresome and escaped from the ship, having to walk back to Manchester through many provincial market towns, including St. Albans, Northampton and Leicester, avoiding the press gangs along the way. The long and dangerous journey home was a central part of *Early Days*, and Bamford's obvious intention was to add some drama into his literary work, but it also serves to highlight the sense of regional identity

⁹⁰ C.G. Pooley and J. Turnbull, 'Migration and Urbanization in North West England: A Reassessment of the Role of Towns in the Migration Process,' in D. Siddle, ed., *Migration, Mobility and Modernisation* (Liverpool, 2000), pp.193, 196.

⁹¹ Estabrook, *Urbane and Rustic England*, p.10.

⁹² *Autobiography of David Whitehead*, p.18; see map in Appendix IV:iv.

⁹³ Bamford, *Early Days*, p.278.

retained throughout his life. His adherence to his native countryside was absolute. He was:

more anxious to get to Buxton, since I should then be only twenty-two miles from home...Encouraged thus by the consciousness of being almost on the verge of my native country, and of being now traversing the tops of some of those hills which I had so often contemplated from our play ground at Middleton, I stepped forward with a light heart, over a country of waste and cheerless moors.⁹⁴

His temporary migration ended with his wish to end “an unsettled life” and he sought employment at a calico printers’ warehouse in Manchester, commuting at weekends to his new wife and child who remained in Middleton. Bamford’s attitudes expressed more openness than notions of the ‘other’ imply – but were still indicative of strong attachment to home locality.

The sociologist Relph argued: “Drudgery is always a part of profound commitment to a place.” The autobiographers expressed a dialectical experience of place, “balancing a need to stay with a desire to escape.” When the former is too readily satisfied, melancholia arises from feeling the imprisonment of a place; when removed from the place, on the other hand, “nostalgia or a sense of being uprooted” comes to the fore.⁹⁵ Indeed, the only occasion Samuel Bamford left the Middleton-Manchester area before 1815 resulted from adolescent rebellion, when he worked in a ship delivering coal between South Shields and London. He defied the wishes of his family from a feeling of geographical claustrophobia: “I had become strangely unsettled; and it was time that a change of some sort should take place.” Age and marital status were thus obviously major factors in mobility; Bamford’s “companions were chiefly lads from factories and dye-houses.”⁹⁶ Marshall has suggested that migration among agricultural labourers was

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.269-70.

⁹⁵ E. Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (1976), p.42.

⁹⁶ Bamford, *Early Days*, pp.233-4.

restricted to “young, single or independent people,” with other rural workers remaining within their native farms.⁹⁷

The Lancashire region consisted of a population on the move. Autobiographies, settlement examinations and removal orders reveal that many migrated as youths in search of work or in response to life crises. Towns were likely to contain inhabitants with a wide variety of geographical experiences. There were strong regional patterns of migration. Evidence from quarter sessions removal orders indicated that immigrants to Liverpool were drawn firstly from the district within five miles of the port, and then strongly from the south and west of the region along lines of communication: ninety-seven cases were removed back to villages and towns in Cheshire (of which thirteen were from Chester). Ninety cases were removed to Wales (especially the northern counties such as Anglesey and Flint).⁹⁸ Mobility and migration had implications for political action, widening horizons and extending personal connections.⁹⁹

Survival of Folk Traditions

Another element of regional identity lay in popular culture and customs, whether ‘traditional’ or artificially constructed.¹⁰⁰ The surviving vitality of this interaction was important in maintaining a sense of community or identity in a period of rapidly changing industrial and urban landscapes. Samuel Bamford did much to perpetuate interest in Lancashire dialect and traditions, initiated earlier in the eighteenth century by

⁹⁷ J.D. Marshall, ‘The Lancashire Rural Labourer in the Early Nineteenth Century,’ *TLCAS*, 71 (1961), 114; Gritt, ‘The Survival of Service in the English Agricultural Labour Force.’

⁹⁸ See maps in Appendix IV:v and vi; LCRO: QSP/2385-2630, removal orders, 1798-1812; PR 3021/2/5, Culcheth settlement examinations. ‘Case’ refers to individuals and families.

⁹⁹ See chapter 6.

¹⁰⁰ As discussed by Thompson, *Customs in Common*.

Tim Bobbin and popularised to a greater extent by Edwin Waugh among Victorian Lancastrians.¹⁰¹ It does seem to have been a particularly south east Lancashire interest, however, as there are no records of dialect poetry, songs or public readings from the rest of the county, especially the north. In 1795, Aikin wrote specifically about “Rochdale and its vicinity,” that it “may be considered as the centre of the genuine *Lancashire dialect*, a variety of the English tongue, which, though uncouth to the ear, and widely differing in words and grammar from cultivated language, is yet possessed of much force and expression.”¹⁰² It is indicative of the south-east’s sense of self-importance that the dialect of Rochdale and its neighbourhood was termed the Lancashire dialect, perhaps because of the writings of Rochdale’s most famous inhabitant, such as ‘A View of the Lancashire Dialect,’ as well as works to which Bamford added glossaries.¹⁰³ Dialect poetry required great self-confidence, as it often used the tactic of self-mockery, and the use of dialect incurred opposition from the middle and upper classes. Robert Walker of Rochdale recognised this in his introduction to his 1801 dialect pamphlet *Plebeian Politics*, but its success (it was being printed in numerous editions) reveals the continued interest.¹⁰⁴

Bamford was conscientious to include notes about the peculiar traditions of Middleton and other areas in his *Early Days*, as he believed they formed a significant part of local life and identity. Smith’s study of Oldham and Saddleworth maintains that locally at least, neighbourhood identities were created rather than destroyed by the progress of urbanisation, a process which encouraged the proliferation of communities.¹⁰⁵ This was

¹⁰¹ See P. Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: the Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994), part I.

¹⁰² J. Aikin, *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Around Manchester* (Manchester, 1795), p.250.

¹⁰³ J. Collier, *A View of the Lancashire Dialect...* (1770); S. Bamford, ed., *Dialect of South Lancashire* (Manchester, 1850).

¹⁰⁴ R. Walker, *Plebeian Politics* (Salford, 1801).

¹⁰⁵ M. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society, Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994), p.32; see R. Poole, ‘Oldham Wakes,’ in J.K. Walton and J. Walvin, eds., *Leisure in Britain, 1780-1939* (Manchester, 1983), pp.71-98.

exemplified in the annual rushbearing, in which the new industrial colonies of manufacturing Pennine towns competed against each other. Industrialisation did not strike the death knell of working-class culture but rather put it in a new, regional context. Rushbearing and Wakes holidays helped to bind communities with the constant streams of incomers. The traditions and the hospitality associated with them helped to widen regional identity as well as strengthening local identity. Bamford wrote about Wakes: “Even decent strangers who apparently had no fixed place of visitation, would be frequently called in as they passed the open door and invited to partake with the family and other guests.” He insisted: “This was not the custom at Middleton only, but at all wakes-holidays in that neighbourhood, and at none was it carried out with more genuine and hearty welcome than at Oldham, The town would, during the afternoon of this Sunday, be thronged with visitors.”¹⁰⁶ Wakes were an occasion for the development of new traditions, such as the parading of two men dressed as man and wife spinning and quarrelling in song, a feature of Droylsden wakes imitated from neighbouring Failsworth in the 1790s.¹⁰⁷ Hospitality shown to visitors and kin was badly affected by the economic distress of the wars. Rowbottom reported how traditional celebrations and opportunities for meeting were impaired by the levee-en-masse 1803: “On the 27th, 28th and 29th of August was the Oldham Rushbearing which owing to the Country being so denied of its men in consequence of the War it was thinly attended.”¹⁰⁸

The persistence of folk traditions again demonstrates the permeability between rural and urban cultures in this transitional period of early industrialisation. The development of ‘industrial ballads’ was just one indication of coping strategies used to familiarise and contextualise the rapid changes in employment and physical landscape occurring in this

¹⁰⁶ Bamford, *Early Days*, p.156.

period. It also reflected the sense of community in weaving villages as well as old market towns. A sense of local community and regional identity did not override political and class tensions; they did on the other hand provide a shared focus when faced with a common threat, whether that threat was Napoleonic invasion or later in the war, government economic policies.

Bamford, Whitehead and Shaw's identification with their localities within the wider Lancashire region was formed from positive allegiances built up from childhood and migration; they only fully became aware of this identity when they travelled to other regions and felt out of place or did not succeed there. Whether this was the experience of the general population of the Lancashire region is a complex question, but the migration, settlement and marriage patterns that can be identified suggest that the authors' experiences were not unique. Billinge has suggested that the idea of a northern identity was a useful cultural construction or trope that was useful in certain circumstances. A negative sense of 'otherness' was not uniquely defined in North-South terms: as the experiences of the authors and migrants illustrated, often 'northerners' were northerners only to 'southerners' and did not feel such in the presence of other 'different' northerners and vice versa.¹⁰⁹ It was only towards the end of this period, possibly from the renewal of the Corn Laws in 1815, that the North-South divide gained currency as "a discursive device for simplifying what in reality is necessarily a complex socio-economic landscape."¹¹⁰ In this period, a positive regional identity, connected to but separate from

¹⁰⁷ J. Harland, *Ballads and Songs of Lancashire* (1865), p.29.

¹⁰⁸ Rowbottom diaries.

¹⁰⁹ Baker and Billinge, *Geographies of England*, p.110; D. Russell, *Looking North: the North in the National Imagination* (Manchester, 2004).

¹¹⁰ Baker and Billinge, *Geographies of England*, p.181.

contemporaries over the Pennines, was foremost in influencing the actions and movements of the general population.

DEFINING LOYALISM

From 1798, Church-and-King loyalists faced two new challenges: the lingering impact of the Irish Rebellion and Napoleon Bonaparte's threat to invade the British mainland. The historiography of popular politics in this period has often neglected the significance of these new threats for loyalism. Developments in loyalist ideology and organisation are placed firmly with the immediate reaction to the French Revolution and Paineite republicanism. After discussing the enforcement of the Two Acts of 1795, the historiographical focus shifts to patriotism. Loyalism merged into patriotism as the threat of invasion bolstered a wider attachment to monarchy, the Established Church and a common anti-Gallicanism against the imperialist Catholic French.¹ The predominance of patriotic rhetoric from 1798 has thus led some historians to assume that loyalism won a 'debate' with radical principles and therefore remained secure in its modes and arguments of the early 1790s.²

If the French Revolution stirred up so much vitriol that those in power wished to quell, it seems remarkable therefore that reaction against it apparently subsided so quickly. Church-and-King clubs no longer met fortnightly or disseminated hundreds of loyalist pamphlets, as the main club in Manchester, the 'Association for the Protection of

¹ J. Mori, 'Languages of Loyalism: Patriotism, Nationhood and the State in the 1790s,' *EHR*, 118 (2003), 33-58; H.T. Dickinson, 'Popular Loyalism in Britain in the 1790s,' in E. Hellmuth, ed., *The Transformation of Political Culture: England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1990), 503-33.

Constitutional Order and Liberty against Republicans and Levellers' [APCOL] had done in the early 1790s. Their activities shrank to annual commemorative dinners, while APCOL failed to reach quorum in its two meetings of 1798 and subsequently dissolved.³ Loyalist elites attempted to channel their principles into the volunteer corps they led, but were unable to do so because the patriotism of the rank-and-file encompassed a wide range of political opinions.⁴ Underneath the 'waves of patriotism,' the loyalist local elites felt threatened. They had attempted to prevent and then control the apparent transformation from the Church-and-King mobs of the early 1790s into the food rioters and peace petitioners of 1795. They saw Jacobinical radicalism still expanding its remit as the two new threats of Napoleon and Ireland brought different enemies into prominence. Now the general population were being armed while rebellion was breaking out over the Irish Sea.

Elite loyalism did not remain fixed, but evolved in ideology and organisation. Church-and-King loyalists became more exclusive while patriotism rendered non-elite loyalism more inclusive. They felt forced to square the consequences of the *levée-en-masse* with their own beliefs and prejudices, especially suspicion about the political intentions of the general population. Elite loyalism developed into two contradictory but complementary forms in reaction to 1798: Orangeism and the legacy of Jacobitism. These forms of exclusivity were a means of self-defence by the local elites and helped to sustain their sense of identity and authority as the boundaries of popular loyalism became more fluid and open.

² F. Dozier, *For King, Constitution and Country: The English Loyalists and the French Revolution* (Lexington, 1983); see the counterargument in M. Philp, *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991).

³ Chetham's: Mun A.6.45, APCOL minute book; Cambrics broadsides.

⁴ See Chapter 5.

Part I:

Defining local loyalist elite power

Local elites anxiously attempted to maintain control over the principles and tropes of loyalism. During the Napoleonic War, this was achieved not just by debate or discourse with radicals or propaganda in texts but also in action and symbol. The general population were offered physical and visual displays of the loyalist identity of their Corporations, boroughreeves, employers and landowners. The latter were anxious to promote this identity as representative of the whole town to parliament and the nation. A more ostentatious civic identity in public buildings and spaces was a tool of reinforcing this power. This was even more important in a time of national patriotic displays with their focus on George III and British identity. Loyalist local elites therefore defined themselves with reference to their own realms of power as much as in relation to national ideas and allegiances. The general population were not, on the other hand, passive observers of this loyalist ostentation: there were always opportunities to subvert or manipulate the meaning of ritual and public space.⁵

Defining the loyalist elite

The French Wars occurred during a transitional period for the social position of a prominent section of the middle classes. Lancashire was unique because it was governed on the ground by predominantly Pittite Tory middle classes and gentry rather than a

⁵ See N. Rogers, *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford, 1998), chapters 6-8.

Whig aristocracy.⁶ Gaining wealth, status and recognition, the 'bourgeois-gentry' were filling the magistrates' bench. They aspired to enter the squirearchy, but continued their involvement in manufacturing and commerce. Their common conception of eminence was to live in a fine house in its own park, to become a magistrate, colonel of the county Militia and Deputy Lieutenant of the county. Many built up a collection of estates at the highly inflated prices of the wars.⁷ They acted as justices of the peace, lords of the manor, local volunteer leaders, officers in a Court Leet or Corporation and chairs of charity committees. Smaller manufacturers and merchants also claimed positions of prestige and responsibility in local government as constables, police commissioners and charity committee members.

This middle-class dominance illustrated the open dimension of social mobility in industrialising regions, but did not change their essential social structure. It was rather a product of longstanding aristocratic weakness and the economic circumstances of the wars.⁸ The most visible example of the new alliance between the gentry and the aspirant middle class was the electoral coalition that was negotiated between Samuel Horrocks (1766-1842) and Lord Stanley (1775-1851) in Preston in 1802, which ended decades of bitter party conflict between the latter and the Tory merchant Corporation. The Horrocks brothers had gradually built up their assets to become the richest millowners in Preston. They were eager to change their attributes to fit in with gentry norms. John Horrocks (1768-1804) had been a Quaker in his youth, but converted to Anglicanism and ensured he was seen with the other aldermen at divine service at the parish church. The

⁶ See chapter 2, p.27.

⁷ T.C. Barker and J. R. Harris, *A Merseyside Town in the Industrial Revolution: St. Helens, 1750-1900* (1959), p.150; B. Lewis, *The Middlemost and the Milltowns: Bourgeois Culture and Politics in Early Industrial England* (Stanford, 2001); the same was occurring in Leeds: see R.G. Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants: the Merchant Community in Leeds, 1700-1830* (Manchester, 1971).

⁸ See chapter 2, p.29.

election of John and then Samuel to parliament reflected the borough's recognition of their social and economic prowess. The coalition with Stanley resulted from the Earl of Derby's realisation that his traditional aristocratic position was no match for the Horrocks' control over much of the land and workers in Preston.⁹ Outside Preston, Derby could not maintain a forceful Whig agenda. His relation Colonel Stanley shared the county representation with a Pittite Tory West Indies merchant, John Blackburne (1754-1833). Derby's position as Lord Lieutenant over a predominantly Tory magistracy was unusual. Buttressed by Lord Lowther's Tory rule in Westmorland, the North West was not governed by an equivalent to Earl Fitzwilliam, who ensured Whig political dominance in Yorkshire. It was rather Tories like the Horrockses and the more politically active of their gentry allies who strained to keep Lancashire in order and shaped the development of loyalism in this period.

Rapid industrialisation and urbanisation condensed rather than amplified the distance between magistrates and the working classes. This was exacerbated by the pressure of the wars. The magistrate bench as deputy lieutenants became the sole source of active authority as the notionally distinct work of the county lieutenancies and the quarter sessions was combined. Pitt's anti-sedition legislation of the 1790s contributed to this process as did the magistrates' responsibility of monitoring the registration of friendly societies from 1793. The Combination Acts fixed their role as arbitrators in labour relations, associating them with a legal dispensation hostile to the interests of organised labour even if they strove to be objective.¹⁰ Many had direct influence in working-class lives as employers. John Singleton JP of Wigan wrote to William Pitt: "I and my brother

⁹ LCRO: DDK 1683, Preston election material, 1796; S.W. Urbanski, 'Parliamentary Politics 1796-1832 in an Industrialising Borough, Preston, Lancashire' (Emory Univ. PhD thesis, 1976), p.15.

¹⁰ D. Eastwood, *Governing Rural England: Tradition and Transformation in Local Government, 1780-1840* (Oxford, 1994), p.47; See Chapter 6.

Wm Singleton are manufacturers of Gingham muslins etc – my brother is a half-pay Lt of Marines and we employ more than 1400 weavers and we do our duty as all true Britons do.”¹¹

Certain Lancashire magistrates were prolific correspondents with the beleaguered Secretary of State in the Home Office. Munger denigrated any correlation between the tendency of these individuals to correspond and levels of ‘repression’ in the region.¹² The link was weak in some areas: magistrate William Fleming of Ulverston recorded in his diaries his suspicions and prosecutions to a similar scale to those of the southern Lancashire justices, but he rarely wrote to the Home Office about his concerns for law and order.¹³ The Home Office papers nevertheless reveal that particular magistrates in south Lancashire saw themselves in a special relationship with the Pittite governments. The most frequent correspondents from the 1790s included: mineowner Colonel Ralph Fletcher (1757-1832) and Rev Thomas Bancroft, vicar of Bolton (d.1811); former spy William Chippindale and former manufacturer Joseph Radcliffe (1744-1819) of Oldham and later Huddersfield; Rev William Robert Hay (1761-1839) of the Collegiate Church, Manchester; John Entwisle of Rochdale; Henry Fielden of Wigan and John Lloyd of Stockport. They presided over the most rapidly populating manufacturing districts of the region; most had manufacturing or commercial backgrounds but had risen into the gentry ranks and invested their money in coal mines, canals and small estates; all met regularly at petty and quarter sessions and socially in loyalist clubs and masonic lodges.¹⁴ The county sessions administration enabled them to rise to prominence in Lancashire associational life. On 29 May 1800, for example, a meeting was held at the Court House

¹¹ PRO: PRO 30/8/178/2/235, Singleton to Pitt, 22 April 1799.

¹² F. Munger, ‘Measuring Repression of Popular Protest by English Justices of the Peace in the Industrial Revolution,’ *Historical Methods*, 12 (1979), 76-83.

¹³ CuRO: Diaries of William Fleming.

in Preston to congratulate the King for surviving an attempt on his life, with the Manchester merchant James Ackers, High Sheriff, and magistrate Thomas Butterworth Bayley in the chair.¹⁵

Loyalist local elites maintained their connections, power and ideologies through associations and other informal gatherings.¹⁶ Prominent manufacturers and merchants comprised the other interconnected section of the loyalist elite. They had not yet climbed the social ladder to become bourgeois-gentry but frequently associated with them and intermarried. Unlike most magistrates, their first priority was their daily commercial concerns and they often leaned more towards High or Pittite Toryism rather than Burkeite Whig or Orange tendencies. They eagerly involved themselves in civic or parish government and institutions. Manchester and Salford, like Bolton, were governed by court leets of boroughreeves and constables. Of the eighteen boroughreeves and constables who served in Manchester between 1792 and 1797, sixteen were members of the executive committee of APCOL.¹⁷ Individual loyalists were usually members of more than one club or society and thereby formed a tight network of association within a town. Edwards has commented on the “overlap not only between government and loyalist associations but also between the different loyalist associations.” Her biographies can be expanded further back to a longer history of participation in loyalist clubs. It is this institutional membership which defined the local governing gentry and merchants as active loyalists in civic society; after the suppression of the corresponding societies in the

¹⁴ See WYRO: WYAS, Radcliffe papers; GMRO: E/Fox/11/D, account book of John Entwisle.

¹⁵ *MM*, 3 June 1800.

¹⁶ P. Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689-1798* (Oxford, 1991).

¹⁷ Chetham's: APCOL minute book; Mun A.2.79, Manchester Pitt Club minutes.

1790s, the radical individuals that loyalists opposed did not have recourse to this source of identification.¹⁸

Although many loyalist societies ceased to meet regularly from 1798, the political connections had been solidified and their legacy continued. Loyalist manufacturers and magistrates were regulars at John Shaw's Punch House on Old Millgate, Manchester, where an informal loyalist club was sustained well into the nineteenth century.¹⁹ Perhaps less demonstrative of Church-and-King views, but more representative of Tory leanings were the Pitt clubs from 1812, membership of which was perhaps almost obligatory for the governing elite. Heading the list of signatories to loyalist addresses and acting on committees was also a highly ostentatious way of demonstrating participation in the loyalist elite. Key petitions in this period included: counter-petitions against the peace petition of 1795, loyal addresses to the King in April 1807 congratulating him on the defeat of Lord Howick's Catholic Relief bill, and the controversial address from Manchester supporting the Prince Regent's decision to support the Tory administration in power in April 1812.²⁰ Many were printed or organised by printers James Harrop and James Wheeler, who published and propagated Tory views in their *Mercury* and *Chronicle* respectively.

Dynasties of local status and authority were established by the late eighteenth century. Peter Drinkwater owned a factory with the highest poor rate assessment in 1797, probably the largest single building designed for manufacture in Manchester at the time. He was constable in 1786 and a member of APCOL. His two sons also became cotton

¹⁸ L. Edwards, 'Popular Politics in the North West of England, 1815-21' (Manchester Univ. PhD thesis, 1998), pp.82-3; See Appendix III.

¹⁹ F.S. Stancliffe, *John Shaw's, 1738-1938* (Timperley, 1938).

²⁰ See chapter 7, p.284.

spinners and manufacturers: John was constable of Manchester in 1809, while his brother Thomas became a magistrate of Lancashire.²¹ The Philips family were another loyalist dynasty. Their dominance militarily and in local government demonstrates their central role in the socio-political elite of Manchester and Salford.²² John Philips of Bank Hall in Heaton Norris, was Deputy Lieutenant for Cheshire, JP for Lancashire and Cheshire and chairman of the magistrates at Stockport. His sons John Leigh and Francis formed a partnership as cotton merchants and silk manufacturers. John Leigh (1761-1814) commanded the First Regiment of the Manchester and Salford Volunteers with his brother Francis as captain and commandant of the first battalion, while three of their cousins commanded various other regiments in Manchester and Salford.²³ Francis continued his father's role by becoming a magistrate and deputy lieutenant of the county and he married the daughter of the Mayor of Liverpool. He was a member of the APCOL in 1792, and he was elected president of the Manchester Pitt Club in 1813, while John Leigh was in charge of 'procuring medals' for the club.²⁴ John Leigh was foreman of the jury of Manchester Court Leet in 1800 and he appeared as a signatory on most loyalist addresses and petitions.

The loyalist local authorities did not, however, face a unilinear situation of control. They feared the masses but also vocal opponents within their own class, especially the wealthy Dissenting bourgeoisie. Gatrell identified a Tory counter-attack against wealthy office-holding Unitarians in Manchester through the new Police Commission and an infiltration of (rather than co-operation in) what had been a prominently Dissenting Literary and Philosophic Society. Thirteen members of the Lit and Phil had been marked out for

²¹ J.F. Smith, ed., *The Admission Register of the Manchester School...vol 1* (Chetham's, Manchester, 1868), pp.163-4.

²² MCL: M84, Philips family Ms.

²³ PP 1803, Returns of Volunteer Corps.

examination by Church-and-King societies in 1794, but from the late 1790s, it no longer speculated in political philosophy. By 1805, a new type of member was being admitted, who fitted the archetype of the loyalist or Tory-Anglican political elite, including Hugh Hornby Birley, Robert Peel and his son. Henceforth, the society allowed no opportunity for radical political involvement. The Police Act of 1792 was even more effective in filtering out any opposition; it established a new body of police commissioners, who consisted of the boroughreeve and constables, the wardens and fellows of the collegiate church and £30 ratepayers. Its treasurer from 1810, the Tory dye-manufacturer, Thomas Fleming, became the effective leader of “an allegedly corrupt but certainly Tory oligarchy which soon monopolised all significant posts in the town.”²⁵ William Rathbone, the Liverpudlian ‘Friend of Peace,’ identified the more rigid political atmosphere of Manchester. He wrote in disgust to William Roscoe about the Mancunian address that supported the government’s Orders in Council of 1807:

See the respectability of the private characters of the subscribers; their influence and stations in society; their opulence etc. How are the councils of administration to be changed when such men and in such numbers support them?...In Liverpool, bad as it is, I do hope we are not quite so ignorant or so enervate.²⁶

Rathbone’s comment was just one indication of how the extent of loyalist control varied amongst Lancashire towns. Some historians have suggested that civic associations overrode the political and religious differences of the middle classes and assuaged Dissenters and radicals who could not take part in local government.²⁷ Brooks argues that the Portico library served to unite the Manchester middle classes; its first committee included Manchester Constitutional Society members George Duckworth, George

²⁴ APCOL minute book; Manchester Pitt Club minutes.

²⁵ V.C. Gatrell, ‘Incorporation,’ in D. Fraser, ed., *Municipal Reform and the Industrial City* (Leicester, 1982), pp.33-5.

²⁶ LivRO: 920 ROS 3063, Rathbone to Roscoe, 23 March 1808.

²⁷ J. Stobart, ‘Culture Versus Commerce: Societies and Spaces for Elites in Eighteenth-Century Liverpool,’ *JHistGeog*, 28 (2002), 471-85.

Philips and the Unitarians Nathaniel Heywood and Samuel Greg together with loyalist merchants and manufacturers Charles Frederick Brandt, John Leigh Philips and Peter Ewart.²⁸ The campaign against the slave trade also encouraged cross-political co-operation in many towns.²⁹ The new Lit and Phil, Botanical Gardens, Infirmary and *Athenaeum* in Liverpool were cross-political, cross-denominational organisations at committee level.³⁰

Yet in the larger towns and on occasions in Liverpool, the experiences of ‘independent’ bourgeoisie outside their newspaper reading-rooms and charity committees, that is, of political conflict and opposition, indicate that political and religious prejudices were not wholly overcome by polite conversation indoors.³¹ In Liverpool, the issue of abolition became much more closely related to political divisions between the dissenting intellectuals from the Corporation and its West Indies interests. The latter’s regular motions in Council gave thanks and financial reward to members delegated to parliament to promote their case against abolition.³² By contrast, of the fourteen presidents of the American Chamber of Commerce between 1801-21, six were Unitarian and two were Quakers. Nor on the other hand were Rational Dissenters welded to a defence of radicalism. The manufacturer Thomas Potter, a member of Cross Street Chapel in Manchester, signed loyalist addresses and was a major in John Leigh Philips’ volunteer

²⁸ A. Brooks and B. Haworth, *Boomtown Manchester, 1800-50, the Portico Connection* (Manchester, 1993), p.114; see also A.J. Kidd and D. Nicholls, eds., *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of the Regional and Cultural Diversity Since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998).

²⁹ House of Lords RO: HO/PO/JO/10/8/106, Manchester petition in favour of slave trade bill, 1806; R. Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760-1810* (1975).

³⁰ A. Wilson, ‘The Florence of the North?’ The Civic Culture of Liverpool in the Early Nineteenth Century,’ in A.J. Kidd and D. Nicholls, eds., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1999) p.39.

³¹ See Chapter 8.

³² LivRO: 352/CLE/TRE/2/11, Liverpool Town Book, 1793-1804.

regiment. The bourgeois elites were divided, although the religious and political lines within each side were not always completely distinct.³³

Defining loyalism in civic space

The loyalist local elites imposed their identity and authority upon the general population through building civic space. The fabric and appearance of most towns in Lancashire were being transformed by urban development. One particular feature was ‘gentrification,’ as fashionable townhouses, ‘public squares’ and civic buildings sprang up in response to the needs of the ‘polite and commercial’ middle classes and their need to express civic identity. Politics created place by making it visible. Civic identity translated into the symbolism of economic and political prowess and authority over the concept of loyalism. The ruling elites displayed their power using the physical and symbolic stages of architecture and town-planning in conjunction with civic rituals and rivalries with other towns. Towns were “politically organised places” and visibility of power was an important aspect of this process.³⁴

Most large towns and ports experienced early and rapid transformation in their appearance and civic identity from the mid eighteenth century because of the economic activities of their merchants and manufacturers. Fashionable suburbia was one result. Aikin commented on Manchester’s “many excellent houses, very elegant fitted up, chiefly occupied by the merchants of the town, which may in some measure be considered as their country residences, being one or two miles from their respective warehouses.” He highlighted Ardwick Green as being “particularly distinguished by the neatness and

³³ See P. Taylor, ‘A Divided Middle Class: Bolton, 1790-1850,’ *MRHR*, VI (1992), 3-15.

³⁴ Y.F. Tuan, ‘Place: An Experiential Perspective,’ *Geographical Review*, 65 (1975), 163.

elegance of its buildings.”³⁵ In Liverpool, the Earl of Sefton developed Toxteth Park as a fashionable residence to the south of the town, although its social character was soon altered by the encroachment of working-class housing. Williamson Square and Everton were also becoming fashionable areas.³⁶ Suburbanisation and manufacturers erecting villas on the outskirts of towns was a common feature across the region, reflective of the visual identity that individuals wanted to portray.³⁷ It was nevertheless still common for many merchants, manufacturers and attorneys to remain in the centre of towns. This was significant socially and politically. Public space was bourgeoisified through the building of civic and commercial buildings.³⁸ The Palladianism of the Georgian townhouse was demonstrative of a desire for privacy and exclusion, although labourers often lived in courts behind their elegant rows. It articulated the separation of private and civic roles while maintaining a front of wealth and respectability against the workers passing by on their way to the factories around the corner.

The building of civic space in a specific area within the town involved a deliberately cultural choice, reflecting the polite needs of aspirant middle classes. Buildings encapsulating the cultural authority of the local elites were situated near to but separate from the traditional (often Corporation-owned) old town. Relative to the size of the town, they were usually in a concentrated space, rather than being distributed haphazardly across the town. This was not merely for convenience of being able to move from townhouse to library to theatre: the visual effect of the new clean, Classical-style

³⁵ J. Aikin, *A Description of the County From Thirty to Forty Miles Around Manchester* (Manchester, 1795), p.205.

³⁶ F. Vigier, *Change and Apathy: Liverpool and Manchester During the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester, 1970), p.52; P. Laxton, ‘Liverpool in 1801, a Manuscript Return for the First National Census of Population,’ *THSLC*, 130 (1981), 102.

³⁷ See for example, Lewis, *Middlemost and Milltowns*; G. Timmins, *Blackburn: A Pictorial History* (Chichester, 1993).

³⁸ P. Borsay, ‘All the Town’s a Stage; Urban Ritual and Ceremony, 1660-1800,’ in P. Clark, ed., *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns* (1984); see also P. Borsay, ‘Culture, Status and the English Urban Landscape,’ *History*, 67 (1982), 1-12, and chapter 8, p.296.

buildings was intentionally striking, especially as the change was enacted in less than thirty years.³⁹ In Manchester, the intended effects and purposes were immediate. New civic buildings included: the Assembly Rooms on Mosley St (1792), Portico Library opposite designed by Thomas Harrison (1802), the Literary and Philosophical Society building behind it on George Street and another Harrison creation, the Theatre Royal on the corner of Fountain Street (1807). These were surrounded by fashionable townhouses on St Ann's Square, St John Street and King Street.⁴⁰

A common means of urban development in Manchester, Liverpool and the other larger towns was using leasehold as a form of land allocation in blocks to private speculative builders. The former estates of Byrom, Chorlton Hall, Lever, Mosley and Legh which had covered most of what had been the outskirts of old Manchester were divided into plots and built on by speculating merchants and builders.⁴¹ Chorlton Hall estate became Chorlton Row, a major manufacturing and working-class residential district; the Philips and Potter families, Hugh Hornby Birley, John Leaf, James Ackers and virtually every other prominent Manchester merchant and manufacturer invested in its development.⁴² Green's map of 1804 illustrated the ghost of its outline underneath the new streets and planned buildings.

Cosgrove hinted at the psychological impact of this process. The town was not formally planned but a combination of the preservation of ultimate ownership in the hands of large landowners with the creation of a market in land. Even in Ashton-under-Lyne,

³⁹ D.E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Beckenham, 1984), p.217; K.R. Olwig, *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic* (Wisconsin, 2002), p.123.

⁴⁰ C. Hartwell, M. Hyde and N. Pevsner, *Lancashire: Manchester and the South-East* (2004), p.257.

⁴¹ C. Hartwell, *Manchester: an Architectural Guide* (2000), p.12.

⁴² MCL: m/c 699, Chorlton Hall deeds, 1808; GMCRO: E16/2/27, Legh of Lyme papers, bond of 3 October 1803.

where the Earl of Stamford planned the gridiron pattern of the streets, private individuals leased the building land in-between to develop as they wished. It thus represented “a form of capitalist ownership which retains minor remnants of feudal rent.”⁴³ This may not have been directly obvious to the loyalist elites or the other inhabitants whose *vistulas*, places of work and leisure had been altered or destroyed. Yet there was definitely a process of representation of control of the dominant economic group over those who were not involved in the dealings of the Exchange or the gentrified conversation of the Athenaeum.

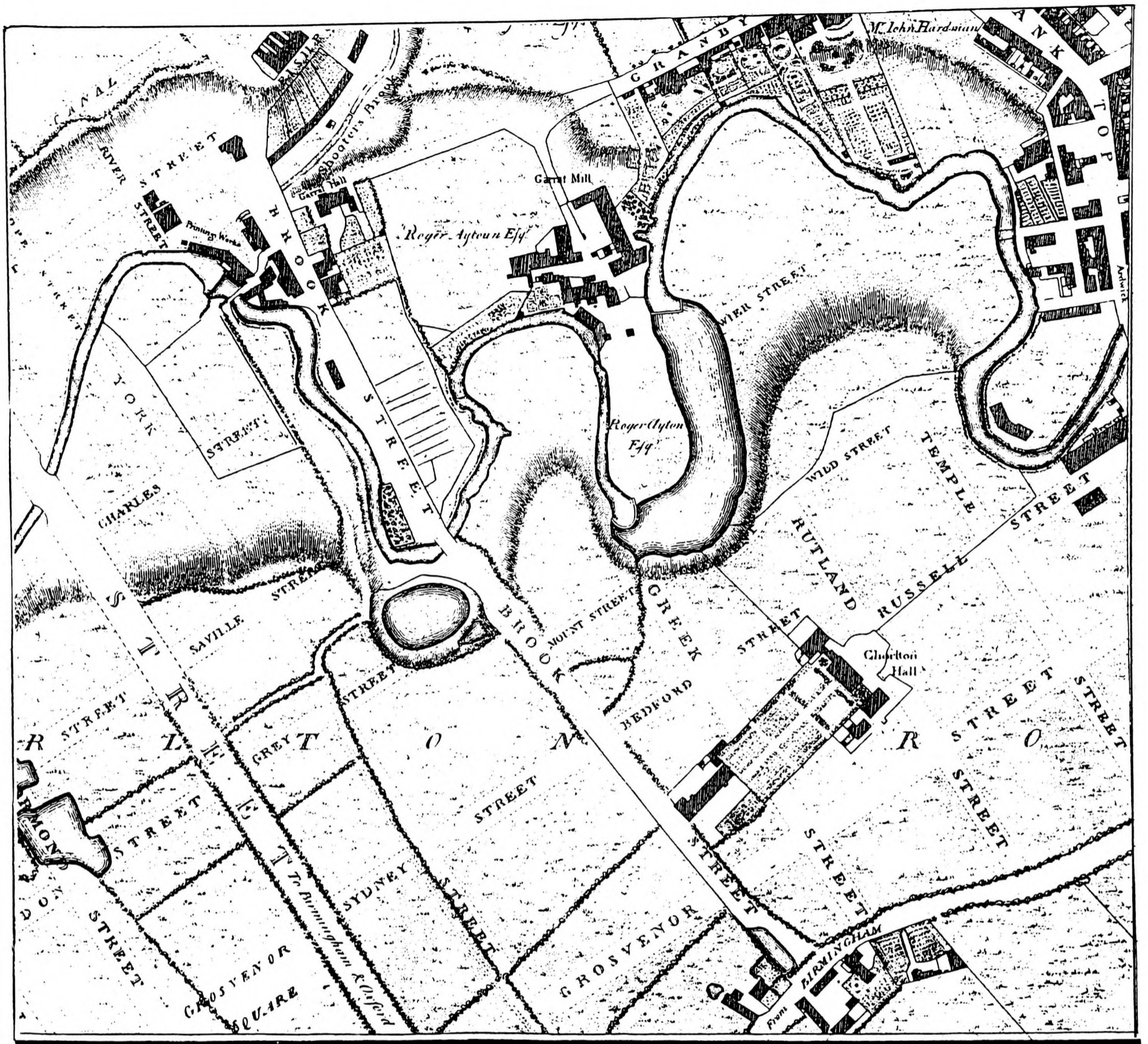
The civic scene was deliberately incorporated into the symbolism of local politics in an enforcement of loyalist space. It also marked a demonstration to other towns and the nation of their provincial prowess and civility. These political and commercial symbols were notably built on old aristocratic land. In 1804, old buildings owned by Lord Ducie in Market Place and Exchange Street were demolished and on 21 July 1806, the cornerstone of the new Exchange was laid. Medals of Lord Nelson and Pitt were enclosed in the wall with much ceremony.⁴⁴ The loyalist connotations of this were manifest. Liverpool responded almost in rivalry with their Athenaeum and fashionable residences around Great George Street from 1805. In Liverpool, expansion meant the proportion of urban land over which the Corporation had control was declining.⁴⁵ The new Exchange was opened in 1808.⁴⁶

⁴³ T. Burke and M. Neville, *Buildings of Tameside* (Manchester, 1996), p.52; Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, p.217.

⁴⁴ Aikin, *A Description of the Country*, pp.10-14; *MM*, 22 July 1806; JRLUM: E26, Ducie Ms, Exchange Building committee.

⁴⁵ Aikin, *A Description of the Country*, p.374.

⁴⁶ Laxton, ‘Liverpool in 1801,’ 102; Stobart, ‘Culture Versus Commerce’; T. Baines, *History of the Commerce and Town of Liverpool* (1852), p.325.



Map 2: Re-development of the former Chorlton Hall estate, Manchester.

Source: Green's map of Manchester, c.1804.

Cultural historians have argued that 'high' or 'polite' culture was increasingly polarised from the 'low' or 'popular' in the eighteenth century. Borsay believed that the new civic buildings were a spatial and temporal parallel to this process, in that ritual and ceremony was bourgeoisified and made more exclusive for those in power.⁴⁷ The loyalist processions during the wars exemplified this dichotomy; private loyalist clubs displayed their social and political exclusivity in a public arena on their own terms. In Manchester, the central area for loyalist display was St Ann's Square and the Collegiate Church, augmented by the New Exchange from 1807. During the celebration of the King's birthday in Manchester on 4 June 1803, the day began with the ringing of bells:

At noon the officers of the town of Manchester and Salford, with a number of gentlemen preceded by music and the flags of the loyal associations went in procession from the Bull's Head to St. Ann's Square, where they were received by parties of the 18th Light Dragoons and the 6th Dragoon Guards, who fired most excellently.⁴⁸

The *Bull's Head Inn* in nearby medieval Hanging Ditch was the place of choice for loyalist political meetings, thanks to its heritage as a Jacobite recruiting centre, although it had also been used by groups of all political persuasions such as Dissenters campaigning for repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1790. St. Ann's Square had already gained notoriety in loyalist politics for the Church-and-King mob riot that occurred there on 4 June 1792, when the trees were uprooted and used to block Cross Street and Mosley Street Presbyterian chapels. An effigy of Paine had been hung at the top of Deansgate, presumably near the collegiate church.⁴⁹ Castlefield, at the other end of Deansgate, was the site for volunteer reviews after processions from the centre.⁵⁰ Kersal Moor, to the

⁴⁷ Borsay, 'All the Town's a Stage,' p.249.

⁴⁸ *MC*, 11 June 1803.

⁴⁹ Rowbottom diaries.

⁵⁰ *MM*, 9 June 1801.

north west of the town, was usually used for volunteer parades and duels as well as the venue for Manchester Races.

Appearances and visual symbolism meant little without associated ritual. Traditional methods of celebration such as paternalistic feasts and illuminations gained a new meaning in this civic context. An important part of local and national loyalist events involved a ritual and symbolic demonstration of local elite power over 'public' space. Parades, marches and organised events focused on these new civic areas. These were as inclusive as possible, because the motive was to involve masses to demonstrate power and inspire allegiance. The order of processions was visually emblematic of power hierarchies within the town, with boroughreeve and constables or mayor at the forefront, leaving the general inhabitants as observers. The local elites were fully aware the masses could revolt and therefore made visually certain their domination of the new spaces. This had precedents in 'riding the boundaries,' a practice undertaken annually by members of Lancaster Corporation around the limits of their property and on common land to which they had rights, and by Liverpool Corporation around the old town on 11 October 1811.⁵¹ Loyalist displays of power in urban centres were centred on processions through the main streets to the parish church (although also to chapel on national occasions), reaffirming the Established Church as a rallying point of loyalty. There was always an element of socio-political separation in these events. Addresses to the King or parliament were often drawn up at 'public' meetings in the new civic buildings, attended by invited 'respectable gentlemen' only. The routes of civic processions in larger towns avoided

⁵¹ LCRO: DDX 760/1, Cragg family memorandum book; E. Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancaster* (Newton Abbott, 1968), p.546; see Olwig, *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic*, p.58.

poorer areas, asserting therefore that the definition of the town was identical with places of wealth creation, consumption and display.⁵²

Focusing on the parish church also bore symbolic significance. Corporation members or the boroughreeve and his officers acting as a body attended church on Sundays and public feasts and commemorations. They therefore deliberately or unconsciously confirmed at a supernatural level their secular power.⁵³ Pew ownership and proprietary chapels were further symbols of this power. St. George's in Preston, St. John's in Blackburn and St. George's in Little Bolton were constructed in the later eighteenth century to cater for swelling polite society. Peter Ainsworth, the Halliwell bleacher, laid the foundation stone of the latter in 1794 on land bought from merchants Thomas and Richard Ainsworth. Its subscribers nominated trustees who were to nominate the curate for fifty years.⁵⁴ In 1804, the proprietors of St. John's protested to the vicar that he had buried non pew owners in the graveyard. Preston parish church was scarcely less exclusive.⁵⁵ This was not confined to Anglican churches: among the wealthy bourgeois, Unitarian chapels were similarly elitist.⁵⁶

Different religious denominations' expression of loyalism conformed to Anglican loyalist elite practices or expectations while national events were filtered through these local hierarchies of power. In June 1793, the Catholic clergy of Preston organised a performance of the Messiah and the Coronation Anthem in a conspicuous display of loyalty. Their intentions were genuine, but it is clear that the Established Church set the

⁵² C.P. Graves, 'Civic Ritual in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Newcastle,' in S. Lawrence, ed., *Archaeologies of the British* (2003), p.41.

⁵³ Borsay, 'All the Town's a Stage,' p.239.

⁵⁴ Bolton Archives: ZAH 3/3, Ainsworth Ms., Ainsworth to unknown, 10 September 1796.

⁵⁵ Lewis, *Middlemost and the Milltowns*, p.169.

⁵⁶ L. Burney, *Cross Street Chapel* (Didsbury, 1983), passim.

rules for observance by their underlying suspicion and other denominations' feeling of the need to express their loyalty in the terms and ritual set by Church-and-King loyalists. During the National Fast of March 1800 in Manchester, volunteer corps attended divine service at the Collegiate Church while: "the solemnity was devoutly observed by the Jews in this town in their synagogue – in a prayer composed for the occasion – praying for the Royal family, the Counsellors, the nobility, the representatives of the People and the whole nation."⁵⁷ Their patriotism was inclusive and sincere, but was nevertheless restrained by its links with the tropes and notions of loyalism which the socio-political elites defined.⁵⁸

The route taken by the procession of Manchester dignitaries during the Jubilee celebrations of October 1809 physically manifested the churchwardens' and the newly-formed police commission's sphere of authority, although now swamped by the massive urban growth around collegiate property. The more public procession to celebrate the end of the war in 1814 followed a wider route through the new fashionable areas around Mosley Street and King Street and ventured over the bridge to central Salford.⁵⁹ In Liverpool, processions followed the 'usual route' of Dale Street, Lime Street, Duke Street, Lord Street and Castle Street. This circuted and crossed old Corporation property and the heart of the old town before expansion. The town hall at the juncture of Dale Street and Castle Street provided the focal point for civic identity. The visit of Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence in September 1806 culminated in an illumination and a banquet held there.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *MM*, 18 March 1800.

⁵⁸ M. Pottle, 'Loyalty and Patriotism in Nottingham, 1792-1816' (Oxford Univ. DPhil thesis, 1988), p.292.

⁵⁹ See Appendix IV: vii; T. Preston, *The Jubilee of George III* (1887); *Cowdroy's*, 16 April 1814.

⁶⁰ See Appendix IV: viii; Edwards, 'Popular Politics,' p.159.

In Preston, addresses were drawn up at the Court House and events exhibited a more long-established civic identity because of the town's status as Corporation, Guild and new centre of county administration and gentry politics. The 1801 celebration of the King's birthday saw the Volunteers assembling in the Market Square before processing to Lt Col Grimshaw's newly built 'mansion' in fashionable merchant-built Winckley Place.⁶¹ Preston Guild Merchant, held every twenty years, was a demonstration of a more inclusive civic identity. The Guild of 1802 featured more festivity and pageant than usual because of the Peace. The Corporation assembled in the Guild Hall; societies and volunteer corps arrived at the Town Hall. It was reported that the huge number of people present prevented the Corporation starting a procession. Aldermen attended a service at the parish church while a Grand Mass was held at the Catholic Chapel. The procession eventually made its way towards the Churchgate and an elaborate pageant with floats representing the different trades and industries entertained the crowds "through the principal streets."⁶² In some of the larger towns, events increasingly ventured from or into the new gentrified areas of towns. In Manchester, the King's birthday procession culminated in Ardwick Green in 1804.⁶³ The focus in Liverpool remained on the old Corporation centre of power, although processions coming into the town responded to the south east expansion of the city, using Clayton Square as a base. Processional crowds began to 'connect' the new and old centres and in so doing marked out a central boundary for the city.⁶⁴ In smaller towns, however, it is more difficult to make this sort of analysis: the 'main streets' were often the only streets and processions thus usually followed the largest street towards the parish church.

⁶¹ *MM*, 3 June 1800; *BM*, 10 June 1801.

⁶² T.R. Flintoff, *Preston Guild Merchant: Preston's Week of Pageantry as Celebrated From 1328-1952* (Preston, 1973), p.113.

⁶³ W.E.A. Axon, *The Annals of Manchester* (Manchester, 1886), p.133.

Participants in civic processions and feasts had always been restricted to the 'respectable,' with the general population merely as spectators or receivers of paternalist charity. Much political and commercial activity remained in the 'old town' of Liverpool, Manchester and Preston, while other smaller towns were slower to expand and change their geographical axis. In other spheres, they may not have "disengaged from traditional culture," if ever inhabitants were conscious of that culture as a genuine concept. During the 1790s, the distinction of places reflected the loyalist reaction against radicals on all social levels.⁶⁵ Hence innkeepers were obliged to sign a public declaration against 'seditious' meetings on their premises. Cockhill Pump at Ashton-under-Lyne was renamed 'Jacobin's Pump' and "during the peace of 1802, no Jacobin dared scarcely show himself in the streets without being in danger of having to undergo the dreaded pumping." The landlord of the White Hart in the town renamed his inn the *Pitt and Nelson* in 1806 in honour of his two heroes.⁶⁶ In Bolton, the *Bridge Inn* was the place of meeting for the Church-and-King club in 1794 and the Pitt Club in 1809.⁶⁷ Loyalism at both elite and popular levels thus involved a common recognition of the governing elites' authority to name and symbolise place.

Church-and-King reaction to the invasion scares

Loyalism and social aspiration as show and ritual became even more conspicuous when the international events of 1798 and 1803 altered the boundaries and context in which elite loyalism operated. Loyalist clubs and anti-Jacobin pamphleteering were replaced by volunteer reviews and patriotic sermons. Despite patriotic unanimity with the general

⁶⁴ Harrison, *Crowds and History*, p.161.

⁶⁵ J. Epstein, 'Understanding the Cap of Liberty: Symbolic Practice and Social Conflict in Early Nineteenth Century England,' *P & P*, 122 (1989), 82.

⁶⁶ W. Bowman, *England in Ashton-under-Lyne* (Altrincham, 1960), p.315.

population in the face of Napoleon, the loyalist elites remained anxious about radicalism and therefore continued to assert their authority and loyalist principles. They employed more symbolic and subtle means than they had previously in the 1790s.

War gave the local ruling elites many more opportunities to ensure that their loyalist authority was demonstrated symbolically and physically. Volunteer regiments were reviewed in public squares, racecourses or outside commanders' mansions. Lieut-Col John Leigh Philips wrote to the poet Anna Seward about the upcoming review of the volunteer regiments by the Prince of Gloucester in late 1803: "it will be a grand spectacle and no doubt flattering to the vanity."⁶⁸ Being an officer and especially a commandant became a prestigious honour in the associational world in which local elites mixed. Volunteering provided an ideal opportunity, not just to imitate the aristocratic militia without having to undertake a full-time military career, but also to flaunt the trappings that came with it: such as the chance to participate in parades for national celebrations and local civic occasions, and to bestow paternalism and display wealth, for example in the extravagant uniforms and feasts provided by many commandants for their rank and file. In December 1803, the *Blackburn Mail* reported how: "Thomas Cooper Esq, Lieut of the Preston and Chorley Light Horse and commander of the Chorley Division, gave a most sumptuous Entertainment to them and the gentlemen of the Neighbourhood; everything the season could possibly produce was given on the occasion."⁶⁹

The volunteer corps generally reflected the divisions of authority within local society. The Bolton committee to form a volunteer corps comprised the major manufacturers and wealthy professionals of the town, including: the Tory-Anglican manufacturer

⁶⁷ J.C. Scholes, *History of Bolton* (Bolton, 1892), p.439.

⁶⁸ MCL: M84/3/5/4, Philips Ms, Philips to Seward, n.d., 1803.

Thomas Ainsworth, of the firm Peel, Ainsworth and Co, who had a significant hold on the land and employees of both Great and Little Bolton; John Pilkington, Unitarian but loyalist manufacturer; James Bradshaw JP, and the manufacturers Thomas Fogg, Thomas Hindle and Thomas Howell.⁷⁰ A sermon given by the rector of Bury on the occasion of the colours being presented to the Bury Loyal Volunteers (at that time led by Sir Robert Peel and his business partner Robert Yates), expressed the common sentiment about the prominent role the manufacturing and commercial middle classes played in patriotism and opportunities offered for social advancement: “You increase the weight and respectability of your characters, while you are adding to the general strength of the country.”⁷¹

The increasing social ambition of wealthy manufacturers and merchants was further satisfied through volunteering as an opportunity to participate in gentry life. The position of volunteer commander reflected again the blurring of lines between the gentry and aspirant middle classes.⁷² The Wigan Volunteers of 1803, for example, were commanded by the Earl of Balcarres, the new lord of the manor, together with the mayor Lieutenant Thomas Woodcock, a banker and treasurer of the Corporation, and Captain Samuel Singleton, a gentleman.⁷³ Because of business commitments, however, most men of the middle classes remained volunteer commanders rather than joining the aristocracy and titled gentry in the Royal Lancashire Militia. The huge honour associated with the status implied by holding a volunteer office was illustrated by the correspondence about conflicts over superiority in the regiments which overflowed the letter boxes and records

⁶⁹ BM, 21 December 1803.

⁷⁰ B.T. Barton, *Historical Gleanings of Bolton and District*, vol 3 (Bolton, 1883), pp.82-4.

⁷¹ *Sermon Preached in the Parish Church of Bury, 18 October 1798, by Rev. Sir W. H. Clerke, Bart, Rector of Bury...* (Bury, 1798), p.15.

⁷² Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman*.

⁷³ G. Derbyshire, *A Wigan Military Chronicle*, vol 1 (Wigan, 1950).

of the Home Office.⁷⁴ The loyalist elites initially attempted to accommodate their exclusive loyalism to the inclusive patriotism of the volunteer corps and mass meetings. Members of social elites, Unitarian as well as Anglican, ostentatiously donated huge sums to the voluntary subscriptions of 1798 and 1803. The accounts of the Committee for General Defence for Manchester in 1803 totalled the huge amount of £21,581, 5s, 8d from over 1300 subscribers, including the manufacturers and merchants: the Gould brothers who gave £315; Lawrence Peel, £300; James Ackers, Thomas and John Drinkwater, four members of the Philips family, the Unitarians Samuel Greg and Benjamin Heywood, who all donated £100 each and the lord of the manor, Sir Oswald Mosley, £200.⁷⁵ Social elites, however many paternalistic dinners they gave for their dependants, maintained a distance from them in terms of ostentation.

Western engendered a preconception about volunteers that linked them inextricably with Church-and-King loyalism.⁷⁶ Cookson and Gee have generally disproved this direct connection,⁷⁷ but in the Lancashire context, it nevertheless holds some ground in the context of the armed associations formed around 1797-8. In 1797, the Bolton Volunteer Infantry had to participate at a celebration of the defeat of the campaign to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts.⁷⁸ The Irish Rebellion and magistrates' attempts to suppress the United Englishmen and weavers' combinations in 1799-1801 formed another context. A broadside from 1797 written by 'J.L.P.,' undoubtedly Lt-Col John Leigh Philips, addressed the "Loyal Association of Manchester on the subject of training a

⁷⁴ PRO: HO 50/137, Internal Defence, 1803-4.

⁷⁵ MCL: BR 356 M12, Accounts of the Treasurers to the Committee for General Defence, Manchester, 1803.

⁷⁶ J. Western, *The English Militia in the Eighteenth Century* (1965).

⁷⁷ J.E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1997); A. Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement* (Oxford, 2003).

⁷⁸ Lewis, *The Middlemost and the Milltowns*, p.21.

body of no fewer than 20,000 men in this Town alone.”⁷⁹ The last few entries of the minutes of APCOL in January 1797 discussed the proposal for an Armed Volunteer Corps by the ‘United Delegate Meeting of the Loyal Associations of Manchester and Salford.’ The committee decided to make a list of APCOL members willing to serve, unfortunately not extant.⁸⁰ Philips’s suggestions in his broadside were specifically directed at manufacturers like himself, advising them to lead weavers and “other Dependents” in their employ in military exercises one afternoon a week.

The magistrates and loyalist manufacturers who led volunteer corps were often hopeful that their corps could serve a dual role in putting down internal disorder. Preston cotton manufacturer John Watson requested the Earl of Derby to approve his request for the Loyal Preston Volunteers to act “under the civil power when call’d out upon any riot or disturbance within the said town or five miles circumjacent,” as did Furness magistrate Thomas Sunderland of the Ulverston Volunteers.⁸¹ This policing role for the volunteers was officially sanctioned by the Commander General of the North West Military District, the Duke of Gloucester. He reported to the War Office in September 1803 that the 6000 volunteers and five troops of the Sixth Dragoon Guards stationed in Manchester would be sufficient for internal security and “for keeping the disaffected in order.” He insisted that the Manchester volunteers “cannot be drawn away for the defence of Liverpool and I trust will be able to prevent any disturbances occurring.”⁸² With reference to the Bolton Volunteer corps, Rev Thomas Bancroft infamously reminded Lord Derby of “the populousness of this neighbourhood, and how needful it may be in times of apprehended commotion, to encourage a spirit of loyal Association among the numerous

⁷⁹ MCL: f1797/3B, broadside ‘Copy of Two Letters.’

⁸⁰ Chetham’s: Mun A 6.45, APCOL minutes, 1792-7, p.41.

⁸¹ PRO: HO 50/75, Internal Defence, Lancaster, January-August 1803.

classes of manufacturers.”⁸³ Philips’ APCOL plan had already expressed the Church-and-King loyalist fear of mobilising the working classes: he was insistent that: “the Arms should be kept entirely by the Masters and only be in possession of the Men on the days of exercise, that they may be returned in good condition to Government.”⁸⁴ This was illustrative of how the magistrates and special constables felt they could not cope with the rapid expansion of urban areas and the working classes. It did not preclude crowds’ hostility to the volunteers during riots and disturbances.⁸⁵

Divided middle classes

Conflicts within Lancashire volunteer regiments were endemic if not inherent. They exposed how local social structures and concerns formed the basis of patriotism and loyalism in the face of invasion. The row that occurred in Manchester was especially portentous, not just for social relations but also for aspects of the political effects of the wars on the town and the wider region. It indicated that the socio-political tensions of the 1790s were not destroyed by the invasion scares. They were rather channelled into the new institutions where the underlying friction occasionally rose to the surface, agitated by Church-and-King loyalist elites.

On 28 July 1804, Joseph Hanson Esq., of Strangeways Hall, met John Leigh Philips, Esq of Norfolk Street, Manchester, for a duel on Kersal Moor. Philips commanded the First Regiment of the Manchester and Salford Volunteer Corps, Hanson commanded the

⁸² PRO: WO 30/71, Reports from Officers commanding Districts, Duke of Gloucester, 14 September 1803.

⁸³ HO 50/75, Bancroft to Derby, 26 August 1803.

⁸⁴ MCL: f1797/3B, ‘Copy of Two Letters.’

⁸⁵ See P. Haythornthwaite, ‘Rochdale Volunteers, 1795,’ *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 250 (1984).

Manchester, Salford and Stockport Independent Rifle Corps. Just as the two men were about to shoot, Deputy Constable Joseph Nadin arrived, halted the duel and cautioned them to keep the peace.⁸⁶ John Leigh Philips had challenged Hanson to the duel because the latter had decided to call himself Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant, thereby claiming authority over the commanding officers of all the regiments of the Manchester and Salford Volunteers. His assertion rested on two claims: that his offer to form a regiment had been accepted by the Home Office at an earlier date than Philips and that he had augmented his Rifle Corps by two companies of fifty men each, which he believed enabled him to claim automatic promotion to the position of Lieutenant Colonel. Philips and the other officers of the First Regiment protested to the Secretary of State, asserting that Hanson's demand had "been obtained through incorrect representation." Then followed a protracted wrangle over the interpretation of the regulations and the dates on which the offers made by Hanson and Philips had been accepted. The Earl of Derby supported Hanson but washed his hands of the affair. Eventually, Lord Hawkesbury upheld Hanson's claims and issued a rebuke to John Philips for "disputing the authority under which these regulations were made."⁸⁷

Philips and his entire officer corps resigned in protest, and the regiment eventually collapsed, which has significant implications for the nature of their loyalism as well as their patriotism. They stated in an address to the local newspapers: "Had they submitted to the undue precedence that has been obtained, they should have felt that they had incurred a degradation."⁸⁸ An anonymous satirical pamphlet was subsequently published, probably either by John Philips or his brother Francis, defending their resignation and proclaiming:

⁸⁶ *MM*, 24 July 1804.

⁸⁷ E. Little, 'Joseph Hanson, the 'Weavers' Friend,' *MRHR*, VI (1991), 23-4.

Idolised by their fellow citizens, their submission gave them more than the effects of a victory. Their opponents, who expected to enjoy their defeat, were humiliated by their magnanimous conduct.⁸⁹

The affair illustrated the networks of power and control in Manchester. As with the Philips family themselves, the officers who resigned in 1804 also represented a section of the merchants and manufacturers who controlled the main seats of power in Manchester. They included four former or future boroughreeves of Manchester. Three of these men were former members of APCOL, including Captain James Ackers, a cotton twist manufacturer, magistrate of Manchester and Salford, chairman of the committee of APCOL and member of the Pitt Club, together with John Leaf, who was constable when Ackers was boroughreeve of Manchester.⁹⁰

Hanson was a Unitarian and therefore held no position in local government. He was not involved in any prestigious civic society and the officers in his corps (including his brother Edward and his friend and later relation Joseph Kershaw) do not appear to have done so either. There was thus a fine line between Hanson being merely over-ambitious and whether he was genuinely challenging the predominance of the Tory bourgeois elite which Philips and his colleagues in the First Regiment represented. Hanson acted against the social mores of his class, by his presumptuous claim to the Philips family's dominance in military command of Manchester and Salford, and consequently their relations with the Lord Lieutenant. In 'usurping,' as Philips and his colleagues saw it, one of the upper middle classes' status symbols and paternal roles in society – authority over all the regiments – he was also subverting the nature of the hierarchy they upheld. Francis Philips wrote to his brother after the duel: "You will be amply repaid for the

⁸⁸ *MM*, 24 July 1804.

⁸⁹ Anon, *Travels of Fum Hom* (1804), p.10.

⁹⁰ *MM*, 24 July 1804.

vexatious anxiety Hanson has occasioned to you, by the reflexion that all loyal and respectable people, poor as well as rich, approve your opposition to a democratic Tyrant.”⁹¹

This was an ironic comment in the light of future events. Hanson was later to make his name in opposition to John Leigh Philips and his Tory-Anglican colleagues. He became a hero of the peace movement in Manchester and across the North, amplified by his support of the handloom weavers’ petitions for a minimum wage in 1808.⁹² Through his activities, he challenged the manufacturing elite’s interpretation of ‘loyalism,’ their ideas concerning economics and the relationship they believed the middle classes ought to have with the working classes they employed. The conflict during the years of supposed patriotic unity was therefore the first juncture of much deeper social rift within the Manchester bourgeoisie, which was to be highlighted and exacerbated by the wars.

A parallel conflict to the duel occurred in Preston, although a more definite party political bias can be attached to the social divisions it exposed. John Watson was commander of the Loyal Preston Volunteers and campaigner for the Lord Derby interest. In 1803, he challenged the authority of Nicholas Grimshaw, commander of the Royal Preston Volunteers and a Tory-Anglican manufacturer, member of the Corporation and Mayor in the following year. Grimshaw’s volunteers were patronised by the leading manufacturers in Preston, Samuel Horrocks and Co, who gave £500 on two separate occasions, together with Preston Corporation, who gave £100.⁹³ The Tory-led tone of the corps was therefore assured in opposition to the Whig leadership of John Watson’s Loyal Preston Volunteers. This occurred despite the new electoral ‘coalition’ of

⁹¹ MCL: M84/1/4/3, F. to J.L. Philips, 26 July 1804.

⁹² See chapter 7, p.249 and *passim*.

Horrocks and Derby in 1802, perhaps indicating that this co-operation was confined to the electoral sphere. Hence party conflict transferred into volunteering. Both regiments were accepted by the Home Office on the same date, but the commissions of the Loyal Preston's officers dated from a week before those of the Royal Preston Volunteers, thereby according precedence and seniority to Watson. Watson claimed that this was simply because he was first on the field; Grimshaw and his officers on the other hand believed that it had only been obtained through private solicitation, presumably the influence of Lord Derby. The dispute dragged on publicly, with Grimshaw's Volunteers conceding defeat in late 1804.⁹⁴ Notably, in a subsequent pamphlet defending his stance in the affair, Grimshaw cited Lord Hawkesbury's interpretation of the regulations in the Hanson versus Philips affair.⁹⁵

Elite loyalism was not just an issue of political ideology but was integral to definitions of class and social status. Local elites used civic ritual and national events to enforce their authority through the symbolism of patriotism. Church-and-King loyalist gentry and gentry-aspirant bourgeoisie built themselves physically and visually tangible spheres of power where they could make resolutions in private.⁹⁶ The wars impelled them outside of their exclusive domains to lead the mass patriotism of the general population. They attempted to maintain their control over both the meaning of loyalism and the identity of the town as represented to the nation. The crowds did not share their social and political motivations in participation in civic ritual. Significantly, those organisers of events were acutely aware of this ambiguity. Ceremonies designed to display loyalist authority were

⁹³ LCRO: DDP_r 137/4, Proceedings of the Royal Preston Volunteers, 1803-4.

⁹⁴ B.D.A. Lewis, 'Bourgeois Ideology and Order: Middle-Class Culture and Politics in Lancashire, 1789-1851' (Harvard Univ. PhD thesis, 1994), p.76; PRO: HO 50/75, Internal Defence.

⁹⁵ N. Grimshaw, *Observations on the Reply to the Statement of the Question* (1805).

always products of this tense discourse with an undercurrent of potential opposition, not only amongst the 'mob' but also amongst their own class who were left out of power.⁹⁷ They were successful in maintaining control during the period of the invasion scares, but the balance would shift later in the war.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Borsay, 'All the Town's a Stage,' p.249.

⁹⁷ Edwards, 'Popular Politics,' p.122.

⁹⁸ See chapters 7 and 8.

Part II:

Church-and-King Ideologies

Church-and-King loyalism was the ideology of a large proportion of the gentry and bourgeois governing elites in Lancashire. It was, however, composed of different, even opposing, ideological strands, involving contrasting attitudes towards the Established Church and monarchy. The historiography of British loyalism during the French Wars rarely considers the multiple identities of elite, as opposed to popular, loyalism. Historians often focus on the debates within print literature of the 1790s, which portrayed a single front against radicalism.¹ The Lancashire region, on the other hand, was unique in the way Church-and-King loyalism evolved during the Napoleonic War. Lancashire loyalism divided into two contrasting strands from 1798: Orangeism and remnants of Jacobitism. Although they were completely polar traditions in relation to the King, they both influenced how local elites justified their power in the region.

This elite loyalism again illustrated the unique position of Manchester. The town fostered a paradoxical combination of both ideologies: the Collegiate Church was the centre for High Church High Tory principles, while the first Orange lodges and English Orange Institution were formed nearby. The presence of Orangeism and the legacy of Jacobitism in Lancashire demonstrate that the response to radicalism was not a generic and static reaction; conversely it had regional variations, which depended much upon the historical

¹ Mori, 'Languages of Loyalism.' Even A. Goodrich, *Debating England's Aristocracy in the 1790s: Pamphlets, Polemics and Political Ideas* (Woodbridge, 2005) acknowledges little about the continuing development of loyalism after 1798.

and immigration patterns of respective places. It was an active process as well as rhetorical discourse.

High Church Anglicanism and anti-Catholicism

Lancashire was unusual amongst other regions because of the strength of High Church Anglicanism. It crystallised around the Collegiate Church in Manchester. This factor played a decisive part in delaying Evangelical Anglican entry into many Lancashire towns until the early nineteenth century.² Smith's optimistic picture of Evangelical pastoral provision in Oldham is somewhat exceptional, especially when compared with Rycroft's more pessimistic survey of the huge parish of Whalley. Few members of the Leeds-based Evangelical Elland Society served in Lancashire before the 1830s.³ High Church clergy were evident even within the vicinity of Oldham: the vicar of Littleborough near Rochdale expressed anxiety about being asked to perform baptisms in private houses and claimed he had "consequently incurred much ill-will because there are clergymen not far distant who make no scruple about these matters." Presumably these were the Saddleworth and Oldham clergy lauded by Smith. The vicar continued: "Dr Cleaver and Dr Majendie strenuously discountenanced such practices yet I am told they are still persisted in."⁴ The Bishops of Chester leaned decisively to the theological right, especially William Cleaver, who expounded High Church tenets in his charges and sermons while bishop during the crucial period of 1787 to 1800.⁵

² F.C. Mather, *High Church Prophet, Bishop Samuel Horsley and the Caroline Tradition in the Later Georgian Church* (Oxford, 1992), p.253.

³ M. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society, Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994); P.J. Rycroft, 'Church, Chapel and Community in Craven, 1764-1851' (Oxford Univ. DPhil thesis, 1988), p.145.

⁴ CRO: EDV 7/4, Bishop of Chester visitation returns, 1811.

⁵ M. Cragoe, 'William Cleaver (1742-1815),' *Oxford DNB*, www.oxforddnb.com.

Church-and-King attitudes towards the defence of the Establishment were already stoked up before the French Revolution, exacerbated by Cleaver's tour of his diocese "charging against Socinianism" in the summer of 1789.⁶ The campaign against the bill to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts in 1788-90 was particularly vicious and became part of loyalist collective memory. The diocese was not however united on the issue. In February 1790, 234 clergymen issued a conciliatory statement regarding toleration.⁷ By contrast, the High Church core were the most conspicuous, especially in Manchester, producing many anti-Dissenting broadsides.⁸ The divisions raised by the issue reverberated well into the Napoleonic Wars as its tropes were re-enacted and incorporated into loyalist ritual. The central toast at the Bolton Church-and-King club's annual dinner was to "294 members of the House of Commons whose constitutional firmness secured by their decision in 1790 our civil and religious establishments."⁹ Inter-Anglican conflict should not however obscure the fact that the French threat nevertheless created many unifying issues. Both High Churchmen and Evangelicals were anxious to propagate passive obedience, submission to authority and a suspicion of Dissent and Methodism.¹⁰

Anti-Catholicism was another long-standing and unifying element of Anglican clergy and their congregations.¹¹ The historiography of Britishness often assumes however that anti-Catholicism involved an instinctive reaction against the Catholic French or an attachment

⁶ W. Cleaver, *Two Sermons by William Lord Bishop of Chester Addressed to the Clergy of the Diocese* (Oxford, 1789).

⁷ MCL: broadsides, f.1790/1/A; see also Chetham's Library: Cambrics broadsides, 105 (2).

⁸ Mather, *High Church Prophet*, p.78.

⁹ Chetham's: Hay mss, Mun A. 3.14, Scrapbook, p.133.

¹⁰ T. Bancroft, *The Chain of Duty, or, an Exhortation to Civil and Religious Obedience* (Bolton, 1797); See P. Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760-1857* (Cambridge, 1994); N. Murray, 'The Influence of the French Revolution on the Church of England' (Oxford Univ. DPhil thesis, 1975) and R. Hole, *Pulpits Politics, and Public Order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1989).

¹¹ See C. Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, A Political and Social Study* (Manchester, 1993).

to a benign Protestant Establishment with the Hanoverian monarchy at its head.¹² Fewer French émigré clergy were placed in Lancashire than elsewhere in Britain and those that were sent resided mainly in Liverpool and towns nearby: the largest amount from the government for their upkeep was £45 given to Liverpool's parish church of St. Nicholas. They may have been relatively well received or at least attracted little initial comment, apart from the active magistrates (who were often only suspicious of later émigrés whom they believed had been sent to assist the United Irishmen).¹³ Outside the realm of national propaganda, it was the Irish more than the French who were vilified. Reaction against the religious identity of the 'other' therefore did shape political identities and prejudices, although in a specific regional context and was often anti-Irish rather than anti-French.

Vocal and physical manifestations of anti-Catholic prejudice surfaced intermittently according to national circumstances in Lancashire from 1798 to 1829. The decade following the Union with Ireland was one of Anglican doubt over the religious stances of the various administrations. The rapprochement between the Catholic Church and France coincided with a period of Protestant insecurity lasting from Pitt's resignation over the Catholic question to the formal rejection of the Catholic Relief Bill in 1805.¹⁴ The largest crisis of the war period erupted in 1807, when Lord Howick put forward his Roman Catholics' Army and Navy Service Bill, to allow Catholics to become officers. The issue of toleration was kept alive by Sidmouth's bill to restrict itinerancy in 1811 and

¹² L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992).

¹³ PRO: T93/44, accounts given to French émigrés in Northern Districts, 1797; HO 42/61/176, Bancroft to Portland, 1 March 1801.

¹⁴ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, p.231; Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*.

another Catholic relief bill in 1813, all of which raised much pamphlet debate and extra-parliamentary campaigns from both sides.¹⁵

The Manchester anti-Relief address of 27 April 1807 was composed by a committee consisting of Revs John Gatcliffe, C.W. Ethelstone, Samuel Hall and Thomas Stone, the physicians Dr Foxley and Dr Bardsley together with the manufacturers Charles Frederick Brandt, James Ackers and John Leigh Philips. It thanked the King for his: “superintendence of a Divine Providence in having placed under your protection that structure of Ecclesiastical and Civil Polity which our ancestors projected in their wisdom and cemented with their blood.”¹⁶ The response by radicals and other opponents of the High Anglicans was to accuse them of religious bigotry. On 9 May, the radical editor of the *Manchester Gazette*, William Cowdroy, claimed that anti-Popery was infusing into electoral politics: “The moderation of the Catholics presents a striking contrast to the conduct of certain *Protestants* who are setting every engine at work to excite the popular fury against them.”¹⁷ Hostility was indeed aroused during the Preston elections. The Mayor, Aldermen and burgesses of the borough drew up an address to the King similar to the Manchester address in tone and Protestant tropes.¹⁸ In response on 25 May 1807, Catholic priest Father Joseph Tate felt compelled to publish his sermon on the topic. He defended his congregation’s loyalty, highlighted Catholic participation in British military victories to support his case and, in stating that Pitt had been in favour of Catholic relief, pointed to the hypocrisy of Pittite ministers and their supporters’ anti-Popery.¹⁹

¹⁵ *Hansard*, IX, 5 March 1807, p.2; XXV, 30 April 1813, p.1107; XXVI, 29 June 1813, p.974.

¹⁶ *Cowdroy's*, 25 April 1807.

¹⁷ *Cowdroy's*, 9 May 1807.

¹⁸ *MM*, 25 April 1807.

¹⁹ *A Discourse Delivered in the Catholic Chapel Preston before the Catholic Association for the Relief of the Sick on Monday May 25, 1807, by Rev Joseph Tate* (Preston, 1807).

The ferment aroused by the bill was evident across the region. The Whig-radical Unitarian William Roscoe felt forced to stand down from re-election for Liverpool in the next month as a result of shouts of 'No Popery' in riots upon his return. Vivid anti-Catholic election squibs stirred up the disturbances. They focused on Roscoe's support in parliament for Catholic relief, rather than what should have been more contentious in Liverpool: his key role in the abolition of the slave trade.²⁰ Further instances illustrate that 1807 was a high-point of religious tension. The *Liverpool Courier* was established by Thomas Kaye at the end of the year. Victorian historian Thomas Baines claimed that it was the first openly political provincial newspaper which flourished because of its overt High Church-and-King principles.²¹ Religious tension continued to mount towards the end of the war. In February 1813, the Commons received myriad petitions against the Catholic relief bill from across the country, including Bolton, Chester and Carlisle. The 'magistrates, clergy and other inhabitants of different denominations of Protestant Christians' of Bolton were adamant in their petition that the Catholic doctrines and loyalties to the Papal supremacy meant Catholic participation in the political process would endanger the 'spirit' and 'stability' of the "constitution purely Protestant."²²

The Bishops of Chester encouraged these attitudes in their charges and visitation questionnaires. Clergy in predominantly Catholic-dominated areas expressed anti-Catholic comments in their replies, even though they associated and co-operated freely with priests in civic occasions. Hence the vicar of Preston, Rev William Starkie, wrote in 1804: "This Quarter of Great Britain is supposed to constitute the Head Quarters of Popery," and complained: "A new and most commodious place of worship for the adoration of dead men and women as well as Angelic beings was erected about eleven

²⁰ See chapter 7, p.263.

²¹ T. Baines, *History of the Commerce and Town of Liverpool* (1852), p.527.

²² *Hansard*, XXIV, 8 February 1813, 411-4.

years ago capable of containing at least 2000 devotees.” Using typical anti-Catholic tropes, he denigrated the ostentation of the Abbess with her ‘gold crozier’ and expressed a sense of being swamped by the nunnery and the Catholic church off Winckley Square: “These two buildings are within a few yards of each other and both are very close to the back of my house which stands between the popish parsonage inhabited by two Jesuits.”²³ The response was what the Bishop wanted to hear rather than quotidian reality. Rev Starkie partook in cross-denominational activity with Father Joseph Dunn. The committee for a subscription to help the wounded and orphans after Admiral Duncan’s victory of 1797 began at a non-sectarian dinner including Starkie, Dunn and the Independent Minister Rev J. McQuhae.²⁴ Other clergy in the diocese did not abide by the anti-Papist assumptions in the Bishop’s questionnaire. The vicar of Altham with Accrington described the Catholic priest at Dunkenhaulgh [near Church, owned by the Catholic peer Robert Lord Petre (1742-1801)] as “a respectable, candid man and by no means gives offence to any of the neighbouring clergy.”²⁵

Regional differences in anti-Catholicism and consequently in the development of loyalism in the North West had their roots in two factors: the west-east divide in patterns of survival of Catholic recusancy, and secondly levels of rapid Irish immigration. English Catholic families were quite sharply concentrated in the west of the region, from Lancaster to Preston through to Wigan and the south west coast. Recusant gentry had managed to endure in the west until their lands were confiscated or they died out by the mid eighteenth century, but the small communities they had sheltered remained. Father Dunn compiled two censuses of his congregation in Preston in 1810 and 1820, neither of

²³ CRO: EDV 7/3, Bishop of Chester visitation returns, 1804.

²⁴ Lewis, *Milltowns and the Middlemost*, p.20.

²⁵ EDV 7/3, Bishop of Chester visitation returns, 1804; see PRO: E 192, papers of Robert Lord Petre.

which listed many Irish names.²⁶ The fortunes of Stonyhurst College were revived by priests exiled there from Douai after the French Revolution.²⁷ In Lancashire ‘over the Sands,’ Catholics were only numerous in the main ports of Ulverston and Hawkshead.²⁸ Borwick has described the situation in Furness as two-sided, a situation similar to south west Lancashire. Latent opposition to Catholics and Methodists did exist. William Fleming, magistrate of Ulverston, filled his diaries with many anti-Catholic comments. He complained on Ash Wednesday 1813: “The Roman Catholics, who are become very numerous in our Neighbourhood, take every pain to pamper their palates instead of fasting.”²⁹ As in Preston, however, anti-Catholicism did not thwart inter-denominational co-operation. The Catholic priest in Ulverston, Father Everard, joined magistrate Joseph Brooks in leading the celebrations over the Peace of Amiens; he was a committee member of Ulverston library and one of the seven prominent figures who dined the Volunteers in May 1805. It was rather the influx of Irish reapers and weavers to the area which was seen as the problem.³⁰

The Pennine areas of Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire had been more strongly Protestant of all denominations since the Reformation. Indeed, Bolton was dubbed the ‘Geneva of the North.’³¹ What fostered anti-Catholicism there was the relative weakness of Catholic presence and the consequent myths built up from ignorance. These places became the heart of the industrialising North to which the Irish emigrated. Large-scale Irish immigration into England and Scotland began from 1798, on

²⁶ J. Dunn, *Census of the Catholic Congregation of Preston, 1810 and 1820* (Blackpool, 1993).

²⁷ T.E. Muir, *Stonyhurst College, 1593-1993* (1992).

²⁸ Catholic Record Society, *1767 Papists Returns*; J.A. Hilton, *Catholic Lancashire: from Reformation to Renewal: 1559-1991* (Chichester, 1994); J. Langton, ‘The Continuity of Regional Culture: Lancashire Catholicism from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century,’ in E. Royle, ed., *Issues of Regional Identity* (Manchester, 1998).

²⁹ CuRO: diary of William Fleming, vol 8.

³⁰ Borwick, ‘A Lancashire Provincial Society,’ pp.342-3.

³¹ J.C. Scholes, *History of Bolton* (Bolton, 1892), p.432; J.A. Hilton, *Catholic Lancashire: from Reformation to Renewal: 1559-1991* (Chichester, 1994).

a different scale and intensity from the regular seasonal labour that had been crossing the Irish Sea throughout the eighteenth century.³² The Manchester Collegiate Church complained of a rapid increase in Catholics because of “the great influx of Irish” and ‘proselytising’ priests.³³ Contemporaries did not formally investigate what they had long seen as a major social problem until the parliamentary select committee of 1836. Some manufacturers testifying to the committee indicated that the first wave into Lancashire occurred when they had invited Irish weavers over to replace native workers turned out during the strikes of 1799. The witnesses focused on the leading question about immigrant Irish maintaining a separate identity through residential segregation and Roman Catholicism. An overlooker in a Dukinfield cotton factory reported that this had been the case in Stalybridge: “The masters began to build cottage-houses, because the natives would not take in the Irish. A great many Irish have come over since to Staley Bridge at different turnouts.”³⁴ The vicar of Disley in Cheshire wrote in his visitation return of 1811 that a “continued variety” of journeymen calico printers from Ireland and north Lancashire came to work at printing works along the river Goyt.³⁵ Most witnesses to the committee had strong anti-Irish prejudices, stereotyping them as drunken, unwilling to work and prone to crime, disease and violence. These stereotypes were compared with what they claimed was the apparent sobriety of the English working classes and occasionally more favourable views of Welsh and Scottish immigrants (this in itself contrasted with manufacturers’ accusations about English workers’ idleness in select committees on petitions for minimum wage legislation).³⁶

³² D. MacRaild, *Irish Migrants in Modern Britain, 1750-1922* (Basingstoke, 1999).

³³ EDV 7/3, Bishop of Chester visitation returns, 1804.

³⁴ PP 1836, XXXIV, 427, *Report on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain*, pp.558-9.

³⁵ EDV 7/4, Bishop of Chester visitation returns, 1811.

³⁶ PP 1803, III, *Minutes of Evidence on...Petitions Relating to the Act For Settling Disputes between Masters and Servants...*

The 1836 report surmised that the Irish in Manchester and its environs accounted for two-thirds of a Catholic population totalling 30-40,000. An estimate for 1793 had put the number of Irish residents in Manchester and Salford at 5000 or about eight percent of the population.³⁷ Some residential segregation was in evidence. The Irish-dominated streets in Manchester were in the north, parts of 'New Town or Irish Town' by the river Irk and the streets south of Angel Meadow. Rapid urban expansion of Irish Town occurred between 1795 and 1831, encompassing all the area between the Rochdale Road and the river Irk.³⁸ According to the 1798 poor rate assessment, 'Newtown Irish Row' was composed of twenty eight terraced cottages; the inhabitants mostly had Irish surnames and were listed as poor and unable to pay. There was some residential stability, in that sixteen of the names were listed in the previous year's assessment. By 1811, 'Irish Row' contained almost completely new inhabitants, but all were Irish.³⁹ In 1798, Hannah Greg, wife of Samuel the Unitarian manufacturer, wrote that a magistrate had told her that Mancunians associated all Irish with Jacobinism. Hence "he thinks it very well the Irish all inhabit the Q[uarter] (about Newtown Lane) or else they would all be murdered."⁴⁰ The Manchester overseers anxiously responded to the influx of Irish. Their reports reveal that by 1808, a separate account was kept for relief given to 'Irish resident poor.' The amount expended in 1808-9 was £2456.⁴¹ MacRaild has noted that even in the small rural parish of Rockcliff near Carlisle, nearly fifty per cent of the poor rate was spent on Irish and Scots itinerants.⁴² The situation in Liverpool required extraparochial assistance. Liverpool's Hibernian School was founded in 1807 by the Benevolent Society

³⁷ A. Redford, *Labour Migration in England, 1800-1850* (1926); M. Busted and R. Hodgson, 'Irish Migrant Responses to Urban Life in Early Nineteenth Century Manchester,' *Geographical Journal*, 162 (1996), 141.

³⁸ M. Busted and R. Hodgson, 'Coping with Industrialisation: the Irish in Early Manchester,' in S.J. Neary et al, eds., *The Urban Experience, A People-Environment Perspective* (London, 1994), 469-478.

³⁹ MCL: Manchester Poor Rates, 1797, 1798, 1811.

⁴⁰ Liv.Univ. Special Collections: RP.II.1.60-9, Greg to Mrs Rathbone, April 1798; See chapter 4 for the residences of the United Irishmen in and around Newton Lane.

⁴¹ MCL: BR ff.942.72.L15, local broadsides, 20-1.

⁴² D. MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration, The Irish in Victorian Cumbria* (Liverpool, 1998), pp.30-1.

of St. Patrick to educate 'Poor Children descended from Poor Irish Parents.'⁴³ Irish societies were another example of distinct identities, though membership of course did not preclude integration into general friendly societies. In 1812, St. Patrick's Day was celebrated by "about eighty" at the Fox Tavern in Manchester, where "a number of patriotic toasts were given."⁴⁴

The situation on the ground may not however have been as dire as magistrates and others suspicious of the Irish feared. In living close to friends and relatives, the Irish were no different from other migrants in most large towns.⁴⁵ The slums by the Medlock known as 'Little Ireland' did not develop until the late 1820s, and in Liverpool, although the Irish lived in cellars and courtyards, so did many other migrant labourers.⁴⁶ Residential concentration cannot be automatically assumed to mean segregation or isolation, although witnesses to the 1836 select committee certainly saw it that way. Significantly, on the other hand, some witnesses claimed that the Irish quickly adapted to speaking English and that the children used English as their sole language. Nor were the Irish a coherent body in unionised activity. Although the Manchester manufacturer John Potter was certain that "the Irish are more given to combinations," by contrast the owner of Newton Heath silk mill boasted of using the Irish as strike breakers.⁴⁷

The experiences of Irish migrants were far more varied than nineteenth-century stereotyping of them suggested. They differed with the rate and timing of the migrant inflow, the size and economic structure of the place of destination and the religious

⁴³ *Liverpool Chronicle*, March 1807.

⁴⁴ *Cowdroy's*, 21 March 1812.

⁴⁵ M. Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth-Century Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1971).

⁴⁶ P. Laxton, 'Liverpool in 1801: a Manuscript Return for the First National Census of Population,' *THSLC*, 130 (1981), 88.

⁴⁷ MacRaild, *Irish Migrants*, p.53.

composition of its population, its local history and civic leadership.⁴⁸ The Ulster Irish mostly embarked for Glasgow and the Cumbrian ports. The Leinster Irish sailed from Dublin to Liverpool. Most Irish migrants to the Manchester region appear to have come from the predominantly Catholic north-western counties of Roscommon, Sligo and Leitrim.⁴⁹ This leads to questions of the effect of Irish regional variations in the Lancashire region's migrants, unanswerable due to lack of concrete evidence. It is difficult to assess the level of Protestant Irish immigration, although 12 July riots indicate intra-Irish sectarian tension was clearly carried over the Irish Sea. The Protestant Irish were more likely to have assimilated more readily to English society than their Catholic counterparts, especially serving under manufacturers favourable to Orangeism.

Orangeism

Orangeism has been neglected in studies of both loyalism and the suppression of disorder in this period because it was not a national phenomenon. By 1830, 230 lodges existed in Great Britain, but the majority were concentrated in Lancashire (77), Yorkshire (36), and southern Scotland (39).⁵⁰ Studies of the Orange movement in these areas have been conducted by Senior, MacRaild and Neal, but these also remain outside more general historiography of British loyalism in this period.⁵¹ Yet it was because of its provincialism that the Orange Order was able to survive official liquidation in 1835 and

⁴⁸ Busted and Hodgson, 'Irish Migrant Responses,' p.141; C.G. Pooley, 'Segregation or Integration? The Residential Experience of the Irish in mid-Victorian Britain,' in R. Swift and S. Gilley, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939* (1989); G. Davis, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1914* (Dublin, 1991).

⁴⁹ MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration*, p.40.

⁵⁰ D. MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration: the Irish in Victorian Cumbria* (Liverpool, 1998), p.165.

⁵¹ H. Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain* (1966); F. Neal, 'Manchester's Origins of the English Orange Order,' *MRHR*, 4 (1990), 12-24; F. Neal, *Sectarian Violence: the Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914* (Manchester, 1988); W.S. Marshall, *The Billy Boys: A Concise History of Orangeism in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1996); E.W. McFarland, *Protestants First: Orangeism in Nineteenth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1990).

become a feature of Tory working class community life.⁵² Although Orangeism was 'deserted' by the upper classes after the war, particularly by its Grand Master, Lord Kenyon, this is no reason to assign it no role in loyalism. It expressed the values of the section of Lancashire society who enforced law and order against 'sedition' and working-class combinations. The strength of Orangeism in the region, particularly among magistrates and bourgeois gentry, entails a re-assessment of the role of anti-Catholicism in creating or sustaining loyalist and British identities.⁵³

Orangeism was a binding force to the loyalism of magistrates and clergy in south-east Lancashire. It was strongest in towns with large numbers of handloom weavers, intense Irish immigration and active magistrates who had served in Ireland during the Rebellion of 1798. A tradition of virulent Protestantism and insignificant Catholic recusancy was integral to an active response. In comparison, the two major ports, Liverpool and Lancaster, despite their fair share of Irish immigration, seem to have been devoid of Orangeism, at least until after the war. Orangeist anti-Irish tropes were not used in the virulent Church-and-King rhetoric of the Liverpool election squibs of 1807, nor is there any surviving description of Orangemen being involved in the riots about the Catholic relief bills there. The wealthy corporation families and merchants on Liverpool Corporation, though staunch Church-and-King Tories, played no part in initiating Orange lodges, which only appeared there after 1815. Rural areas also lack evidence of Orange activity.⁵⁴ Gentlemen in north Lancashire had little need of the movement, having neither factories to defend nor major labour combinations to contend with.⁵⁵

⁵² MacRaid, *Culture, Conflict and Migration*, pp.139-40.

⁵³ T. Claydon and I.R. McBride, eds., *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650-c.1850* (Cambridge, 1998) stresses anti-Catholicism but does not discuss English Orangeism.

⁵⁴ LCRO: DDX 760/1, Cragg family memorandum book.

⁵⁵ Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, p.39.

During the wars the magistrates of the south east maintained an atmosphere of fear and suspicion of 'sedition' within their localities, particularly with the use of Home Office-funded spies.⁵⁶ Hole has suggested that magistrates subscribed to a 'conspiracy theory' of working-class combination associating them with Jacobinism because of their staunch High Anglicanism.⁵⁷ Colonel Fletcher believed weavers campaigning for the minimum wage were seditious and linked to the United Irish, despite their protestations of loyalty.⁵⁸ Similarly, in 1805, even though he intimated that he was favourable towards "an alteration in the corn laws," he believed that the campaigners who "most assert it here are of the Jacobin Cast." Bourgeois radicals complained about magistrates and the actions of their spies in stirring up Luddite agitation in 1812, specifically attributing this to their obsession with hunting out Jacobinism long after the 1790s. Radical Dr Robert Taylor of Bolton argued this fervently in letters that he published about magistrate repression of Luddites: "Anti-Jacobinism had been a very thriving trade and...those who were fattening upon it were unwilling to relinquish it."⁵⁹

The circumstances within which the magistrates acted provide some understanding if not justification for their actions or at least their beliefs and suspicions. The burden upon magistrates in rapidly populating and industrialising areas was so great that spies and special constables were often the only resort to gather information and maintain order. In 1812, Joseph Radcliffe, answering to General Maitland, the southern commander sent to quell the disturbances, referred to a militia corporal being used as a Luddite spy. He

⁵⁶ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1968); See PRO: HO 42/83/488, Fletcher to Home Office, 24 December 1805.

⁵⁷ R. Hole, *Politics, Pulpits and Public Order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1989), pp.200-1.

⁵⁸ HO 42/80/93-4, Fletcher to Home Office, 16 February 1805; HO 42/82/45, Fletcher to Home Office, 16 January 1805; HO 42/95/5, Fletcher to Home Office, n.d, 1808.

⁵⁹ R. Taylor, *Letters on the Subject of the Lancashire Riots* (Bolton, 1812), p.9.

stated that “desperate diseases...require desperate remedies.”⁶⁰ In other spheres of action, magistrates were keen to be paternalistic to ‘deserving’ workers: Thomas Butterworth Bayley’s efforts in prison reform and poor relief in Salford were exemplary although his attitudes to ‘Jacobins’ mirrored the rest of his contemporaries.⁶¹

The Irish Rebellion was as defining a moment as the French Revolution in those parts of the region which received both Catholic and Protestant Irish exiles. Certain magistrates seem to have been obsessed with the Irish threat in their correspondence with the Home Office in 1798-1802. Colonel Fletcher spent much of his allowance from the government on spies following Irishmen across the country. He sincerely believed that former United Irishmen were looking for an opportunity to seduce the ‘deluded’ lower classes. Even as late as 1805, Fletcher expressed his continued suspicions as his spies, who had “connections both with the Irish who are resident and those who have lately passed through Manchester,” intimated that “an Insurrection will be soon attempted in that part of the United Kingdom.”⁶² Rev William Hay’s commonplace book contains much material on the Irish rebellion and Catholic emancipation petitions, and ballads such as ‘Dying Rebel air’ and ‘The Popish Address to a Great Lady.’⁶³ Whether a United Irish or English insurrection was possible or just a figment of the spies’ commission-hungry imagination is still debatable.⁶⁴ What is important is that Fletcher and his colleagues believed it. This continued throughout the war. During the handloom weavers’ strikes of 1808, the magistrates demonstrated a relative degree of understanding with regards the demands of the weavers, but the agitators were often assumed to be Irish and associated

⁶⁰ WYRO: WYAS 1096 (acc 3797), 4, Radcliffe to Maitland, 3 July 1812.

⁶¹ M. DeLacy, *Prison Reform in Lancashire, 1700-1850* (Stamford, 1986), pp.93-8; J. Innes, ‘The State and the Poor: Eighteenth-Century England in European Perspective,’ in J. Brewer and E. Hellmuth, eds., *Rethinking Leviathan: the Eighteenth Century State in Britain and Germany* (Oxford, 1999).

⁶² HO 42/65/442, Fletcher to Pelham, 3 April 1802.

⁶³ Chetham’s, Mun A.3.13., Hay mss, scrapbook 4.

⁶⁴ M. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution: the United Irishmen and France* (Yale, 1982); R. Wells, *Insurrection: the British Experience, 1795-1803* (Gloucester, 1983).

with 'sedition.' The Manchester magistrate R.A. Farington for example commented on the "great number of Irish weavers" whom he regarded as "the foremost and most turbulent in all the proceedings."⁶⁵ The connection between Emmet, Despard and the French had sunk deep into their political outlook and influenced their dealings with the working classes well after 1801.

Similar ideas resonated during the Luddite disturbances. On 22 May 1812, Fletcher's former spy, Captain William Chippindale of Oldham, wrote to the Home Office about Luddism and felt it necessary to mention that: "In the year 1801, a conspiracy against the Government broke out which was somewhat similar to the present, but not characterisably so desperate and sanguinary a spirit."⁶⁶ He mentioned that a spy who provided him with information in 1801 had now infiltrated a suspected Luddite committee at his request. The evidence and Chippindale's interpretation of it must have been biased by this prior experience. Colonel Fletcher caused even more controversy with his belief that Luddism was motivated by "the principles so long (since 1792) promulgated" by radical pamphlets and that the influence of Jacobinism was so great that he did not "expect that any [sense] of permanent tranquillity can reasonably be expected until the present Generation shall have passed into oblivion."⁶⁷ Dr Robert Taylor responded directly to this in his pamphlet, in which castigated the Bolton magistrates for their employment of spies and especially the Orange network. He wrote: "The public notice taken of certain letters, the writer of which, after imputing all the disturbances to Jacobinical emissaries who he says are at work everywhere throughout the country, gives it as his deliberate opinion, that the waves of discord will never subside till this

⁶⁵ Farington to Hawkesbury, 4 June 1808, in A. Aspinall, *Early English Trade Unions: Documents from the Home Office Papers in the Public Record Office* (1949), p.99.

⁶⁶ HO 42/123/14, Chippindale to Ryder, 22 May 1812.

⁶⁷ HO 40/1/1/68, Fletcher to Home Office, 30 April 1812.

generation of disturbers is *swept into oblivion!*"⁶⁸ This indicates that the letter to Ryder filtered into common knowledge but it is unclear how. The magistrates and militia officers remained steadfast in their convictions and in 1813 were rewarded by gifts from the other gentlemen and rank-and-file.

The Orange movement in the North West had its roots in the regiments of volunteers and militia sent over to Ireland to suppress the Rebellion, who returned to their home towns with new ideas and possibly new Irish recruits. Toasts at a 12 July meeting in Bury in 1803 congratulated the British regiments sent to Ireland. Several were from the Manchester area, principally Colonel Stanley's First Regiment of Lancashire Militia, the Second Battalion of the Manchester and Salford Volunteer Rifles and Lord Wilton's Corps of Lancashire Volunteers.⁶⁹ The Grand Lodge in Ireland granted warrants to individual soldiers, who then enrolled others in their private lodges.⁷⁰ It is therefore almost certain that ex-officers were important in the process of establishing Orangeism in Lancashire. There was a lodge in the Manchester and Salford Rifle Volunteers, commanded by Colonel John Silvester, which held Irish warrant 1128. Silvester was a magistrate and owned mills in Atherton and Chorley. 500 members of his regiment of Manchester militia were called out by the magistrates against Luddism in the area in May 1812.⁷¹ His regiment had been raised and financed by the Grand Master, Colonel Samuel Taylor. Taylor was one of Fletcher's compatriots on the Bench and commander of a battalion of the Manchester and Salford Volunteers. Colonel Stanley's regiment held warrant 320, which was converted to the English warrant 43.⁷² The *Manchester Mercury* in

⁶⁸ Taylor, *Letters on the Subject of the Lancashire Riots*, p.8.

⁶⁹ Neal, 'Manchester Origins,' 13; R.J.T. Williamson and J. Lawson Whalley, *History of the Old County Regiment of Lancashire Militia* (1888).

⁷⁰ Marshall, *The Billy Boys*, pp.6-7.

⁷¹ F.O. Darvall, *Popular Disturbances and Public Order* (1969), p.256.

⁷² W. Nuttall, *Orange Miscellany* (Huddersfield, 1815) p.200.

1807 reported that the officers of the Royal Lancashire Militia, quartered in Bristol, decorated a statue of King William “with Orange and purple ribbons, being the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne, in which a corps of Lancastrians distinguished themselves under the command of Lord Stanley.”⁷³

The Lancashire militia officers mixed in Irish Protestant gentry circles and indeed some of them already held land in Ireland. In June 1799, Lieutenant James Radford, Paymaster in the RLM wrote from New Ross, Wexford, that he, Colonel Stanley and Major Orlando Bridgeman of Wigan breakfasted with a ‘Col. Tottingham MP,’ presumably John or Charles Tottenham, barons Loftus.⁷⁴ His correspondence revealed the close bonds formed through frequent balls and dinners held by the gentry for the officers. Patterson’s study of counter-revolutionary violence in Leinster and Wexford portrays a world similar to that the gentry of the Lancashire militia faced on their return home. Irish Orange lodges were “sponsored by a group of hard-line magistrates,” who “commanded highly sectarianised yeomanry corps comprised of likeminded Orangemen.”⁷⁵ Parallels perhaps were envisioned in the minds of Silvester and his compatriots to the situation in Manchester and its neighbourhood. Certainly, the return of Earl de Wilton’s regiment in May 1802 was greeted with much ceremony by the Manchester loyal associations, whom Wilton praised for keeping order in the locality during his absence. The RLM were treated to a volunteer muster in St. Ann’s Square and dinner at the Bull’s Head.⁷⁶

Orange lodges were composed of manufacturers and gentry while Orange societies were friendly societies of working class Irish Protestant immigrants. A pamphlet by

⁷³ *MM*, 21 July 1807.

⁷⁴ LCRO: LM1/1, Lancashire Lieutenancy correspondence; D. Hayton, ‘Charles Tottenham (1685-1758),’ *Oxford DNB*.

⁷⁵ J.G. Patterson, ‘White Terror,’ *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, 15 (2000), 39.

⁷⁶ *MM*, 18 May, 8 June 1802.

Rochdalian William Nuttall, *Orange Miscellany*, listed over seventy lodges or societies in existence in 1811. Significantly, the first seventeen English warrants were given to lodges in Manchester and its satellite towns, including: warrants 1 and 3 held at the *Highlander* in Church Street and *Prince of Wales* in Miller Street, Manchester; warrants 2, 5 and 8 at pubs in Oldham and warrant 4 at the *Black Lion* in Stockport. Most societies were held in pubs as friendly societies, although warrant 14 was held at Grand Master Col. Samuel Taylor's house in Ashton-under-Lyne and warrant 15 at Shaw Chapel near Oldham.⁷⁷ By July 1804, an 'Orange Loyal Beneficial Association' had been established in Oldham.⁷⁸ An 'Orange Society or Orange Boys' was held at the *Reed* in Rochdale, with the innkeeper in charge of the box.⁷⁹ Names of individual members were not recorded and the proportion of immigrant Irish to English Protestants cannot be ascertained.

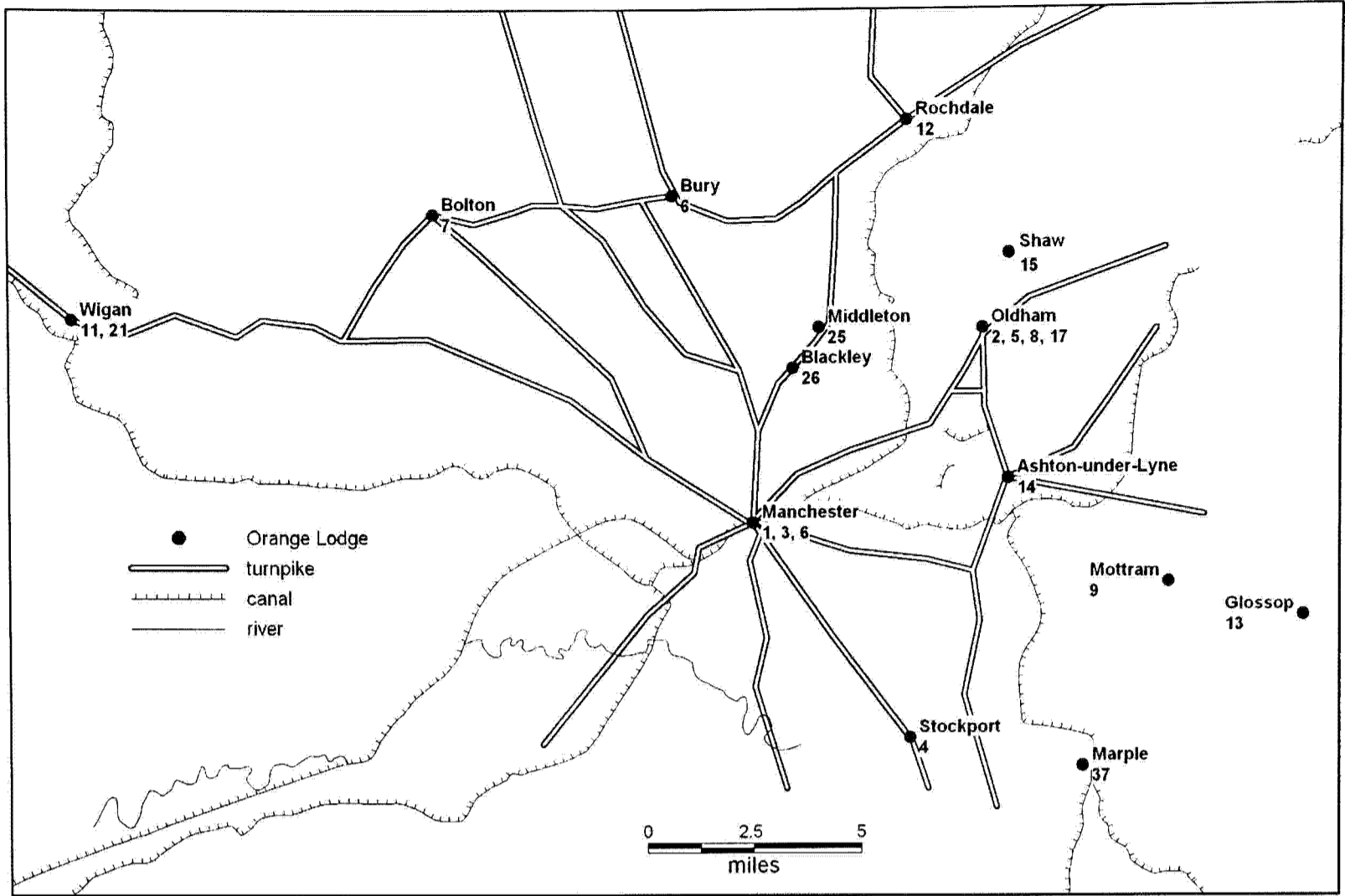
The first Orange meeting recorded in the local newspapers occurred on 12 July 1802 in Stockport. It was described as 'annual,' implying that similar celebrations had been held previously. It was also clearly respectable, beginning with a service in the parish church, "where an excellent sermon was preached by the Rev William Harrison, MA, from the first epistle of St. Peter – 'love the Brotherhood; fear God, honour the King.'" Their dinner was held at the *Britannia Inn*, with President Joseph Hearnnet in the chair. The toasts included the Grand Master, Sir George Ogle (governor of county Wexford where the regiments were sent), defenders of the King and Constitution and, significantly, "Major Watson of the late Stockport Volunteers."⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Nuttall, *Orange Miscellany*, appendix.

⁷⁸ PRO: FS 2/4, no.1361, 16 July 1804.

⁷⁹ *PJ*, 9 September 1809.

⁸⁰ *MM*, 20 July 1802.



Map 3: English Orange Lodges, 1811

Source: W. Nuttall, *Orange Miscellany* (Huddersfield, 1815), appendix.

Magistrates in Manchester and its satellite towns were integral to the organisation of the Orange movement. Rev William Robert Hay, chairman of the Salford Quarter Sessions, was a prominent suppressor of the 'seditious' from 1798 to Peterloo. One of his scrapbooks contains an account of the 12 July dinner in Bury in 1803. It suggests very strongly that he and several of his colleagues were Orangemen. The toasts reiterated the common hope for the Duke of York to become Grand Master and congratulated the Bishop of Chester "may he still continue to support the Protestant interest." Finally, they thanked Rev Hay himself and his colleagues on the bench: "R A Farington Esq. of Manchester, Matthew Fletcher Esq. of Bolton, the magistrates of Stockport, Mr Winter of Oldham."⁸¹ William Rowbottom's diary recorded that the first Orange meeting in Oldham occurred on 12 July 1803, and that they heard a sermon by Rev William Winter, "one of the members." It is therefore reasonable to suggest that all the magistrates and clergy mentioned in the Bury toasts had Orange sympathies at least.⁸²

High Church clergy were prominent in their own right and as magistrates. The various 12 July celebrations in Oldham, Mottram and Bolton were centred around the parish churches in which the vicars gave 'appropriate sermons.' Rev C.W. Ethelston, Rev Ralph Nixon and Rev Hay were the Orange exceptions among the Manchester Collegiate Church.⁸³ Significantly, Ethelston was chaplain of Lieut-Colonel John Silvester's volunteer regiment.⁸⁴ The *Manchester Mercury* reported in 1808 that the Bolton Orange Society celebrated the birthday of King William III on 4 November, attending Divine Service in the Old Church. The toasts included notables favourable to the Orange cause, national and local: Earl de Wilton of Heaton Hall, Manchester, Sir Richard Musgrave,

⁸¹ Chetham's: Mun A. 3.10, Hay mss, scrapbook vol.2.

⁸² Rowbottom diaries, 17 July 1803.

⁸³ Nuttall, *Orange Miscellany*, p.132.

⁸⁴ *MM*, 29 June 1802.

Col Samuel Taylor, Col Fletcher and the Bolton Volunteer Infantry, Major Pilkington, Rev Bancroft “with thanks for his excellent sermon,” and Mr Ralph Nixon.⁸⁵ John Pilkington was a dimity manufacturer, commander of the Bolton Light Horse Volunteers and Deputy Lieutenant for Lancashire.⁸⁶ The social level and aspirations of these Orangemen are clear. In 1808, Thomas Grey Egerton, Earl de Wilton, wrote to John Lloyd Broughton on his receiving a request to take up the position of County DGM: “Induced I think the aspect of the times such that it is of the utmost importance to know friends from foes, and at the same time to belong to a Loyal Protestant organised association.” He hoped to see him for a “little Orange Conversation.”⁸⁷

Two surviving documents chart the early gentry and magistrate membership of the Orange movement. The House of Commons launched a select committee in 1835 to investigate the growth of Orangeism in Britain. The report revealed that Colonel Samuel Taylor set up the Grand Lodge in Manchester in 1807 when his attempt to do so in London failed. Another key document is a comprehensive list of rules of the Orange Institution from 1810, sent to the Home Office by Joseph Radcliffe, JP of Huddersfield. He requested the Home Secretary’s assent to the rules but the latter refused. The rules listed that Colonel Taylor was Grand Master, James Lever, Esq of Bolton was Grand Treasurer, and Ralph Nixon of Manchester was secretary to the Grand Lodge.⁸⁸ Radcliffe shared many of the same attributes of magistrates like Colonel Fletcher. Born in Ashton-under-Lyne, he acquired interests in all the major canal companies, and served as magistrate at Royton and Oldham before moving to Huddersfield. He travelled regularly

⁸⁵ *MM*, 15 November 1808.

⁸⁶ J. Brereton, *Chain Mail: the History of the Duke of Lancaster’s Own Yeomanry* (Chippenham, 1994), p.4.

⁸⁷ LCRO: DDX 24/24, Egerton to Broughton, 1808.

⁸⁸ HO 42/101/162-5, Radcliffe to Ryder, 29 June 1810.

over the Pennines to see Fletcher and used spies to counteract disorder. He became one of the most active magistrates against Luddism.⁸⁹

Orange clubs were integrated into the associational world of loyalism and the local elites' representation of loyalism to the nation. This was exemplified in the Jubilee celebrations of October 1809. In Manchester, the procession to attend the service at the Collegiate Church included: the Manchester and Salford Rifle Regiment, a "most respectable and numerous assemblage of Gentlemen," and "the United lodge of freemasons dressed in their regalia with the Orangemen in their rear in their orange scarves." Events in other Lancashire towns followed a similar pattern. William Rowbottom recorded that in Oldham: "Public service was performed at both Church and chapel and the Orange Societies walked in grand procession and made a fine show."⁹⁰ In Bolton, John Holden noted that factory workers marched together to Church, "with the Orange Men from John Baron's, Church Bank and the Freemasons from two Lodges."⁹¹

Orangeism was not just about gentry show and sociability. Magistrates' military connections and their obsession with tracking down 'sedition' enabled Orangeism to provide the ideal network during the crisis years of the War. At the select committee, Lord Kenyon stated that Colonel Taylor of Bolton was the principal cause of his joining the Orange Institution "from the statement he made to me of the benefit he conceived from the cause of good order received in his neighbourhood from the Institution."⁹² The emphasis throughout Joseph Radcliffe's 1810 document is on the enforcing of order

⁸⁹ R. Reid, *Land of Lost Content* (1986), pp.19-22; WYAL: RAD, Papers and correspondence of Sir Joseph Radcliffe of Rudding Park, 1796-1818.

⁹⁰ Rowbottom diaries.

⁹¹ Holden diaries.

⁹² PP 1835, XVII, *Select Committee Report on Orange Lodges in Great Britain and the Colonies*, q.2604.

against sedition.⁹³ The Orange oath was explicit in stating: “I solemnly swear that I will aid and assist all magistrates, and all high and petty constables in the lawful execution of their office, when called upon.”⁹⁴ This was a major part of their association, coming before any mention of William III. The oath, swearing that the member is not a Roman Catholic, an United Irishman or, significantly in the local context, United Englishman, indicates how this aspect of magistrates’ loyalism was shaped more by the troubles of 1798-1801 than by the French. It is conceivable that magistrates, obsessed with tracking down seditious combinations, composed this oath and oversaw working-class members taking it in their own factory or mine. Rev Nixon wrote to J.J. Stockdale in 1814, claiming that in 1812 Orange magistrates had sworn in a number of Orangemen as special constables and probably as spies, specifically to target potential Luddites.⁹⁵

Orangeism was integral to the organisation of elite Church-and-King loyalism in Lancashire during the Napoleonic Wars. The appendix to the select committee report included a letter of May 1808 by Ralph Nixon to Colonel Taylor, which commented on the utility of the Orange movement during the weavers’ strikes: “Especially at this crisis, when the overgrown power of an implacable enemy threatens to overwhelm us, and when internal dissatisfaction is not altogether extinguished, surely the good policy of supporting those who are sworn to ‘assist the civil and military power in the execution of their duty’ cannot be disputed.”⁹⁶ One of the witnesses, Deputy Grand Secretary, Eustace Cheetwoode, admitted: “being in communication with the late Colonel Fletcher and others in that quarter, I understood that the society was considered useful by the magistrates,” and that “the great manufacturers felt that their men being embodied in the

⁹³ HO 42/101/165, Radcliffe to Ryder, 29 June 1810.

⁹⁴ J.J. Stockdale, *Orange Institution: a Slight Sketch* (1813), p.22.

⁹⁵ Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain*, p.157; PP 1835, XVII, pp.179-80.

⁹⁶ PP 1835, XVII, p.174.

Orange Society, they were ready at all times to come forward in the suppression of disturbances.”⁹⁷

It is therefore no coincidence that the Orangemen Fletcher, Radcliffe, Hay, and their friends and colleagues, Charles Prescott, John Lloyd and William Chippendale, were the most active magistrates against Luddism.⁹⁸ Nuttall’s *Orange Miscellany* reported that at a dinner on 4 November 1814, at the Spread Eagle, Manchester, Colonel Fletcher, gave a speech in which he proclaimed: “He had witnessed the utility of the Orange Institution, in the cheerful co-operation of its members with the civil and military powers, at an alarming period, in maintaining the peace of the country, and he knew nothing better calculated for public good than a great diffusion of its principles.”⁹⁹ The pamphlet then stated: “The Orange Institution has wrestled successfully against the Institutions of King Lud.”¹⁰⁰ A pamphlet of 1813 printed by J.J. Stockdale again espoused the links between religion, Ireland and maintaining order in the minds of Orangemen: “The rebellious associations of the followers of King Lud, closely resembling, in many material features, the principles and practices of the United Irishmen, caused the aid of the Orange institution to be invoked in Lancashire, where it has much extension.”¹⁰¹ The Irish Grand Lodge issued a declaration to its English counterpart on 12 July 1813 which proclaimed: “Following your loyal example, the British Orangemen have saved their country by suppressing the treasonable bands calling themselves Luddites.”¹⁰² Some of the magistrates who played a key role in suppressing the Peterloo meeting in 1819 were

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.33.

⁹⁸ Darvall, *Popular Disturbances*, p.244; see B. Turner, ‘A Loyal Englishman?: John Lloyd and Aspects of Oath-Taking in 1812,’ in M.T. Davis, *Radicalism and Revolution in Britain, 1775-1848* (Hampshire, 2000).

⁹⁹ Nuttall, *Orange Miscellany*, pp.131-2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.138.

¹⁰¹ Stockdale, *Orange Institution*, p.2.

¹⁰² Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain*, p.157; PP 1825, IX (181), *House of Lords Select Committee Report to Inquire into the State of Ireland*, p.352.

Orangemen: Colonel Fletcher, William Hulton, Rev C.W. Ethelston and Rev William Hay.

The growth of English Orangeism also involved a reaction against the activities of parliament in religious affairs. Orangemen linked their fear of losing control over the enforcement of loyalism in their localities with the successive Catholic relief bills. Some of the towns that were organising petitions against Howick's Bill of 1807 had Orange lodges that federated to the new Institution. A common Orange lament involved the maintenance of true Protestant principles. Their definition of loyalism was formed in the context of their belief that government and even the Crown were abandoning the 'Protestant Constitution' as established in 1688. Stockdale's pamphlet was invoked in the Commons debate on the select committee report. It declared: "the confidential advisers of the sovereign have thought fit to abandon, as a cabinet, the protection of the Protestant Ascendancy, and of the Whig principles, which seated the House of Brunswick on the throne...the Protestant Ascendancy has now no support."¹⁰³ The role of the Orange Institution was to defend the Church against these attacks by those who 'misunderstood' the lodges and their aims. The Orange oath to defend the King and his heirs was initially conditional; it only applied "so long as he or they shall support the Protestant ascendancy." A right of resistance was implied. Church and King loyalism had meant loyalty to King and his Government; loyalty for Orangemen was integral to high Protestantism which came before both.

At the very time petitions were being raised against the bill to allow Catholics to become army officers in 1807, the English Grand Orange Institution was instituted in

¹⁰³ Stockdale, *Orange Institution*, pp.3-4.

Manchester, following a riot in Newton Lane.¹⁰⁴ Orange parades on 12 July re-emerged during the sectarian tension of 1807, having been forbidden by the boroughreeve after trouble in 1803. A letter in the *Liverpool Chronicle* referred to the atmosphere surrounding an Orange parade in Manchester: “in consistence with the spirit of the times, it was conducted with extraordinary pomp.” It stated that the Orangemen were “guarded by the civil officers of the town.”¹⁰⁵ Irish Catholics met the Orange parade en route and violence ensued.¹⁰⁶ The incident was not reported to the Home Office. Cowdroy claimed that ‘No Popery’ slogans had been chalked on walls, and when the local regiments sent recruiting parties into Manchester, their bands paraded the streets playing Orange tunes, particularly ‘Croppies Lie Down.’¹⁰⁷ It is significant that Lieut Col Silvester’s regiment, experienced in Ireland and later involved at Peterloo, put down the disturbance.¹⁰⁸ 12 July parades from then on caused more riots; the disturbances following the parade in 1811 “originated in a party spirit amongst the Orangemen and others.” Cowdroy commented: “’Tis a pity but the Societies would altogether abandon the ostentatious parade of our populous streets.”¹⁰⁹

It is more difficult to clarify the motivations of Orange rank-and-file. Orange societies were much less Masonic in organisation and symbolism than the lodges and functioned much more as friendly societies for Irish Protestant immigrants. Their spread in areas of Protestant Irish immigration reflects a migration of culture over the Irish Sea as well as a means of pooling resources and a shared identity.¹¹⁰ Members may have been influenced

¹⁰⁴ Neal, ‘Manchester Origins,’ 15.

¹⁰⁵ *Liverpool Chronicle*, 12 August 1807.

¹⁰⁶ *MM*, 21 July 1807.

¹⁰⁷ Neal, ‘Manchester Origins,’ 15.

¹⁰⁸ *MM*, 21 July 1807.

¹⁰⁹ *Cowdroy’s*, 20 July 1811; see D. MacRaild, “‘The Bunkum of Ulsteria’: the Orange Marching Tradition in Late Victorian Cumbria,” in T.G. Fraser, ed., *The Irish Parading Tradition: Following the Drum* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp.44-59.

¹¹⁰ Thanks to Prof. D. MacRaild for this suggestion.

by the manufacturers' Orange lodges and the apparent existence of UI agitation and personalities in the Manchester area and formed their own clubs. Continued military comradeship was certainly a factor. At the trial of the Westhoughton Luddites, prosecution witness Robert Martin claimed a suspect attempted to twist him into the Luddites, to whom his alleged response was that he was in the local militia and an Orangeman and as such would never desert his colours. Colonel Silvester testified that Martin was indeed in his regiment of Manchester local militia and he had given him £2 for his passage to Ireland for convalescence. Samuel Fleming, the main prosecution witness was a member of Colonel Silvester's Regiment and an Irishman, having previously served in Lord Rosmore's regiment.¹¹¹ The use of Orange privates as the sole prosecution witnesses at the trial led to the accusations of prejudice by the radical Dr Taylor to Henry Brougham. Brougham then voiced these concerns in the Commons at the debate on the preservation of the Peace Bill in July 1812.¹¹²

Among the Irish working classes, Manchester rather than Liverpool again formed the centre for sectarian rivalry in the 1800s. In February 1802, a riot among Irishmen occurred at the *Goat* on Stafford Street. Cowdroy reported that "the quarrel arose from a dispute on the subject of the Union."¹¹³ During the Luddite disturbances, John Moore, a sergeant of Colonel Silvester's regiment, was attacked outside an Ancoats inn and thrown into the canal, seemingly by Catholic Irish. *Aston's Exchange Herald* stated that Moore was "a Protestant Irishman, and was or had been a member of the Orange Society." His widow received a day's pay from all the members of his regiment. Rev Hay knew about the incident and reported it to the Home Office although he did not mention the

¹¹¹ PRO: TS 11/1059, trial of Lancashire Luddites, 1812.

¹¹² Taylor, *Letters on the Subject of the Lancashire Riots*, *Hansard*, XXIII, 13 July 1812, 1021; see *Hansard*, XXVI, 29 June 1813, 974-986; Turner, 'John Lloyd,' p.138.

¹¹³ *Cowdroy's*, 20 February 1802.

sectarianism involved.¹¹⁴ Manchester Orangemen may have been involved in Colonel Silvester's cavalry regiment or as special constables during the Peterloo riots, although many other factors were involved in the suppression of the crowds. Furthermore, the clash of Liverpool Orangemen with their mayor attracted more attention in the newspapers and crucially in parliament. The Mayor stopped a 12 July parade, which was reported to have carried a mock pope and cardinal to be burned at the church door. The Orange Grand Lodge took the matter to court and lost. The legal expenses of £200 were relieved in part by Lord Kenyon but the incident provoked another attack on the Orange institution in parliament.¹¹⁵ It was from this point that Liverpoolian Orangeism grew in strength compared with Manchester.

The difference between formal Orange lodges and Orangeism as a diffuse conservative value system must also be noted. In England, the Orangeism internalised what was to become a defence of the principles of the Established Church and the Tory party. This was much more acceptable to a broader swathe of Victorian working and middle classes than the Masonic symbolism of the Institution. It was thereby able to give the impression of a much broader support than mere lodge membership. Orangeism could be seen as forming part of the root or at least the influence for the predominance of a Tory English working class in the mid nineteenth century.¹¹⁶

Jacobitism

Jacobitism adds another perspective to the ideology of elite loyalism in this period. It is usually portrayed as dead, both ideologically and as a physical presence, soon after the

¹¹⁴ *Aston's Exchange Herald*, 12 May 1812; HO 40/1/1/117, Hay to Ryder, 20 May 1812.

¹¹⁵ Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain*, p.171.

¹¹⁶ MacRaild, *Culture, Conflict and Migration*, p.141; McFarland, *Protestants First*, p.6.

1745 rebellion.¹¹⁷ Yet a handful of historians have attempted to reassert evidence of its survival into the late eighteenth century.¹¹⁸ The issue of the nature, strength and meaning of Jacobitism remains contentious. Although mock corporations may have been merely harmless drinking clubs for local elites, some of their personal connections and the ambiguities of language in addresses to the monarchy support Monod's assertion that the legacy of Jacobitism could survive, albeit in a very modified or intangible form, in former strongholds.

The physical strength of Jacobite sympathisers was rapidly decimated after 1745. A majority of the Lancashire gentry involved in the rebellion were arrested, executed or had their estates confiscated. The last direct mention of Jacobitism on Restoration Day in Lancashire was made by Samuel Curwen, an American Loyalist who was passing through Manchester on 29 May 1777. His Jacobite landlady informed him that all those "in the abdicated family's interest, which is here openly professed" were in the habit of "putting up large Oak boughs over their doors on 29 May to express Joy at the glorious Event of the restoration of the Stuart family to the English throne; many such I saw."¹¹⁹ Tory loyalist opinion in favour of coercion of the American colonies was unusually dominant in the 1770s, particularly in Manchester and Bolton.¹²⁰ By the 1790s however no Tory would make direct connection with a Jacobite heritage.

The Lancashire loyalist calendar nevertheless exhibited significant remnants of the past reinterpreted in a new context. Its distinctive Jacobite history could not be shaken off

¹¹⁷ L. Colley, 'The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation, 1760-1820,' *P & P*, 102 (1984), 94-129.

¹¹⁸ P.K. Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788* (Cambridge, 1989); D. Szechi, *The Jacobites, Britain and Europe, 1688-1788* (Manchester, 1994); E. Cruickshanks, 'Jacobites, Tories and "James III",' *Parliamentary History*, 21 (2002), 247-54.

¹¹⁹ Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People*, p.209.

¹²⁰ P. Marshall, 'Manchester and the American Revolution,' *BJRLUM*, 62 (1979), 173.

and it appears that local elites in some towns may have used its tropes or connotations for their own ends. Vestry accounts show that 29 May was celebrated annually in Didsbury and Bolton.¹²¹ Restoration Day had long been neutralised into a benign ‘Oak Apple Day’ across the country. It gained particular anti-French loyalist connotations after 1789. In Blackburn, the day was combined with popular loyalism during the height of the reaction against radicalism; the number of oak boughs on show in May 1794 was noted as conspicuously high and “the sight at this time was truly pleasing, as it evinced the detestation entertained of French tyranny etc by the loyal inhabitants of the town.”¹²² The bellringing accounts further suggest that 10 June, the birthday of ‘James III,’ was no longer celebrated as it had been in Lancashire earlier in the century. William Rowbottom’s diary made the comment on 9 June 1799 that “Oak branches – those emblems of British loyalty” could not be found because of the cold weather. They were used to adorn Oldham Church steeple and Rowbottom noted: “Some of the most loyal Burning enthusiasts of the day made diligent search to have found a sprig but in vain to the joy and triumph of the Jacobin party.”¹²³ This implies that the two festivals may have been amalgamated and were used to propagate elements of anti-Jacobin loyalism. In some towns they may still have had some taints of their original meaning, by surviving as a distinct historical feast.

The remnants of the inchoate ideology of Jacobitism left a legacy in Lancashire. Firstly, High-Church High-Tory strongholds in what had previously been Jacobite centres were obviously more susceptible to principles of divine right and passive obedience. Secondly, across the region the provincial gentry fostered a sense of independence from parliament

¹²¹ MCL: M62/1/2-3, First and Second ledgers of William and Thomas Wood of Didsbury, 1791-1838; Bolton Archives: Bolton Vestry ledgers.

¹²² Lewis, *Middlemost and the Milltowns*, p.19.

¹²³ Rowbottom diary.

or the nation (and by implication, the monarchy). It may be something more than a coincidence that centres of Jacobite unrest such as Preston and Manchester also experienced radical activity or at least expressed elements of provincial independence during the French and Napoleonic Wars. No direct links between persons or ideas can be ascertained; it was the ethos of independence rather than the original principles that was important. As Monod tentatively hints: "The roses of 10 June had withered to ashes by the time the English working class was born: but their sweet aroma may have wafted around the cradle."¹²⁴ Anti-Jacobin loyalism did not automatically imply pro-Hanoverian loyalty. The last Jacobite rebellion had occurred only during the lifetime of the previous generation.¹²⁵ Traces of some traditions continued: for example, in many places 'Whigs' who refused to wear oak boughs on 29 May were attacked.¹²⁶ Pubs still bore symbolic names. In Ashton-under-Lyne, the *Royal Oak*, a meeting-place on 29 May, was confronted by the *Bull's Head* on the opposite side of Town Street. The *Highland Laddie* on Manchester Road was built after the town was ransacked by Jacobites, and the *Sun Inn* or *Rising Sun* (Prince of Orange) nearby.¹²⁷

Significantly, a line of nonjuring bishops and a small congregation had been maintained in Manchester.¹²⁸ In 1804 according to Aston's *Manchester Guide*, nonjuror Bishop Garnett was still administering to a congregation of thirty.¹²⁹ Even more significantly, in 1798, Garnett distributed nonjuring litany and prayers to certain fellows of the Collegiate Church: Rev Dr Cornelius Bailey, (1751-1812), rector of St James; Rev John Gatcliff, (1763-1843) senior fellow of the Collegiate Church, rector of St Mary's and curate of

¹²⁴ Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People*, p.222.

¹²⁵ See LCRO: LG3/CRAG, 'The Life of Timothy Cragg of the Chappelhouse in Wyersdale.'

¹²⁶ Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People*, p.209.

¹²⁷ Bowman, *England in Ashton-under-Lyne*, pp.314-5.

¹²⁸ H. Broxap, *The Later Nonjurors* (Cambridge, 1924), pp.285-7.

¹²⁹ J. Aston, *Manchester Guide* (1804), p.136.

Didsbury; Rev Joshua Brookes, (1754-1821), Chaplain of the Collegiate Church; Rev John Clowes, rector of St John's (1743-1831) and Rev C.P. Middleton, Rector of St Mary's. These clergy were a mixed group: Bailey for example was also "the first evangelical clergyman to acquire a church in Manchester," and "a rank Methody" according to Joshua Brookes, who nevertheless upheld an uncompromising view of the exclusive rights and apostolic descent of the episcopally-ordained ministry.¹³⁰ Clowes was a Swedenborgian, but this did not affect his adherence to High Church politico-theory. The Collegiate Church's High Church stance had obviously maintained the right atmosphere for sympathisers. There were on the other hand limits to the influence the nonjurors could develop. Garnett reported back to Bishop Cartwright that: "The clergy mentioned above all approve of the forms but they say they cannot introduce them into their respective churches without the consent of all the bishops."¹³¹

Mock corporations still functioned, the most prominent being Ardwick Mock Corporation. Ostensibly benign, they can also be seen in a more political light. Mock corporations had been prominent in Preston, Walton and Sefton, but no longer existed or had lost their Jacobite connotations.¹³² Yet Ardwick MC was the last to adhere to Jacobite ritual such as the drinking of Charles' health over water and leaving an empty chair at the dinner table for many years after the Prince of Wales had died in 1788. After the first course, the Mayor would say to the Recorder, "Mr Recorder, will he come?" and the Recorder would answer, "No, he will not come I fear."¹³³ Its influence may have been isolated in the rest of Lancashire but it was important in context of loyalist associations in Manchester. The members included many respectable merchants who resided in

¹³⁰ H.D. Rack, 'The Providential Moment: Church Building, Methodism and Evangelical Entryism in Manchester, 1788-1825,' *THSLC*, 141 (1991), 235-245.

¹³¹ Broxap, *The Later Nonjurors*, p.288.

¹³² E.B. Saxton, 'Early Records of the Mock Corporation of Sefton,' *THSLC*, 100 (1949), 73-90.

¹³³ R.A. Burrows and H.S. Kershaw, *The Ancient and Loyal Corporation of Ardwick* (Ardwick, 1954), p.1.

Ardwick or in other parts of Manchester. The manufacturers Thomas Tipping, James Potter and James Bateman consecutively held the post of mayor, and its chaplain was the nonjuring sympathiser Rev John Gatcliffe.¹³⁴ Laurence and Robert Peel and Francis Philips were among the other members, although the corporation's political significance may not have been so serious considering that Orange magistrate R.A. Farington was also a member. Many of its officials who met in Ardwick would see each other regularly again at John Shaw's punch house, and draw up loyalist addresses or pamphlets in APCOL, Church and King club and later Pitt club. John Shaw's club had a direct Jacobite history in that Dr John Byrom had been a customer; John Shaw himself was reputed to have been a Jacobite.¹³⁵

Jacobite remnants could be therefore rejected as devoid of any real political meaning; but on the other hand, the prominence of the members of Ardwick Corporation and sympathisers with the nonjurors raises the question of its lasting legacy. Dividing ideologies of loyalism may have influenced individual choice of associates. It may have only been a benign form of Tory loyalism, with a particular stress on divine right and a suspicion of the Hanoverians. The geographical locations suggest that this form had its roots in strongholds of Jacobitism; the politico-theological reaction to the French Revolution was thus only a confirmation or extra level to these attitudes or legacy.

The Orange and Jacobite strands of Church-and-King loyalism were admittedly minority interests in English loyalism as a whole. The numbers involved in English working-class Orangeism in this period were slight. Their importance however lay in the fact that they

¹³⁴ MCL: BR F 369.242.A.3, Ancient and Loyal Corporation of Ardwick Mss.

¹³⁵ Stancliffe, *John Shaw's*, p.26.

were held by local socio-political elites attempting to keep order in the most rapidly populating and disturbed parts of the region. The problem was that the more exclusive the elites made their loyalism in order to justify or confirm their identity, the more other sections of the loyalist middle classes could challenge it on their own terms.¹³⁶ Elite loyalism during the French and Napoleonic Wars demonstrated not confidence or unity but rather anxiety and fear that they were becoming alone in their principles, deserted even by the Government in its seeming acquiescence to attempts to pass Catholic Relief. This was exacerbated by the lack of a solid Establishment consensus. Anti-Catholicism, however passionate within Orangeism and within the general population, fell short of a positive Protestant construction of national identity.¹³⁷ Co-operation with, toleration or mere indifference towards Catholics, especially in the south west of Lancashire, often intervened between occasions of national religious and political stress. The fellows of Manchester Collegiate Church were left to pray with trepidation: “Yet amidst these papists and Calvinists and Methodists common foes I hope it may be said ‘Fear not o little flock’ to our Established Church!”¹³⁸

¹³⁶ See chapter 8.

¹³⁷ Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*, p.91; Claydon and McBride, *Protestantism and National Identity*.

¹³⁸ EDV 7/3, Bishop of Chester visitation returns, 1804.

DEFINING RADICALISM

“Who blushes at the name of democrat or shrinks from the term Jacobin, when it is applied to those who rejoice in the improvement of society?” proclaimed William Clegg, a Stockport schoolmaster in a pamphlet of 1798. He was proud to be an English Jacobin in particular, calling for Englishmen to defend their “principles” of democracy against “a proud and over-fed aristocracy.”¹ Clegg published *Freedom Defended* while he was involved with the United Englishmen. Colonel Fletcher suspected him to be a delegate, sending the pamphlet to the Home Office in April 1802 accompanied with a note that he was “indefatigable in organising the Neighbourhood.”² He was one of the few who kept the flame of republicanism alive around Stockport and Ashton-under-Lyne until popular radicalism revived from 1812.

Clegg was in the minority: most of those who faced opposition from loyalists would have indeed ‘shrunk from the term Jacobin.’ Many radicals had shunned republican radicalism altogether after the Terror in France.³ They were only ever loosely linked together in the 1790s and 1800s by having gone through the process of opposition to loyalists and elite repression.⁴ From 1795, there were few opportunities to be a respectable, vocal and well-known radical without fear of arrest. Magistrates associated attempts by radicals to convene public meetings on reform and the war with the night-time moorland activities

¹ W. Clegg, *Freedom Defended, or the Practice of Despots Exposed* (Manchester, 1798), 11-12.

² PRO: HO 42/65/442, Fletcher to Pelham, 3 April 1802.

³ M. Philp, ed., *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991), p.84; see H.T. Dickinson, *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815* (Basingstoke, 1989).

of the United Englishmen and Irishmen between 1798 and 1801, occasionally but not always with reason.⁵ The government and local suppression had made it ultimately inchoate, secret and private by 1798. Radicalism in the 1800s was not the outspoken, association-based, openly popular movement of the 1790s. Only a few individuals like Clegg were prepared to speak out.

Definitions

The radicals of the 1790s and 1800s drew inspiration from two sources. The first, 'constitutionalism,' encompassed a tradition inherited from Wilkes and Wyvill. Its common tropes of old Whig tenets included appeals to precedent based on Magna Carta, Hampden, Commonwealth and the restoration of liberties lost to a Norman 'yoke.' Its demands usually centred on a moderate reform in parliament, particularly the removal of pocket boroughs and parliamentary corruption, reasonable extension of franchise and freedom of the press.⁶ It is notable that radicals had always been outnumbered by vocal and powerful loyalists in Lancashire, compared with the heartlands of Wyvill's Association movement over the Pennines.⁷ The second source was Jacobin or 'Paineite' radicalism, which moved away from appeals to precedent and expressed ideas of inherent rights and political economy. It was infused with elements of republicanism, egalitarianism and secularism. Demands centred upon the redistribution of representation into equal electoral districts, purity of elections, secret ballot and universal

⁴ M. Philp, 'Disconcerting Ideas: Explaining Popular Radicalism and Popular Loyalism in the 1790s' (unpub. ms., 2000), 37.

⁵ R. Wells, *Insurrection: the British Experience, 1795-1803* (Gloucester, 1983).

⁶ H.T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property, Political Ideology in Eighteenth Century Britain* (1977); J. Epstein, 'The Constitutional Idiom: Radical Reasoning, Rhetoric and Action in Early Nineteenth Century England,' *JSH*, 23 (1990), 553-74;

⁷ S. Conway, *Britain and the War of American Independence* (Cambridge, 2004), p.135.

suffrage by right, rarely extended to women. More extreme republicans maintained their Francophilia beyond the general reaction against the Terror.⁸

Both constitutionalist and Paineite tenets were employed in parallel. There was much ambiguity and fluctuation of opinion and political positions. They were applicable to different individuals at different times and did not determine political behaviour. Paineite radical appeals to an economic and social base to the movements for reform remained rare; the exception of tenets nurtured by isolated groups such as the Royton radicals, there was no clear ideological argument that the artisan and labouring classes produced the wealth of society and thereby deserved a right to vote. Radicalism therefore involved not concrete ideologies but political stances, to be used selectively according to the situation or challenges by loyalist opposition.⁹ Hence after the suppression of the corresponding societies of the 1790s, radical identities were not institutionalised like loyalist activists, but amorphous and responsive to specific circumstances. What united all was a desire for change, although with different ends and means.

In the early 1790s, personalities and leaders had been as important as ideology. In Lancashire, the most prominent radical figures included the organisers of the Manchester Constitutional Society: the cotton merchants Thomas Walker (1749-1817), Thomas Cooper (1759-1839), George Philips (1766-1847), and manufacturers James Watt jnr (1769-1848), George Duckworth, Samuel Greg (1758-1834) and John and Arthur Clegg, amongst other bourgeois merchant Dissenters with broad interests in philosophy and

⁸ Philp, *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, p.84; see also E. Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia? Reflections of the Threat of Revolution in Britain, 1789-1848* (Manchester, 2000); I. McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1993).

⁹ Philp, *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, introduction.

science.¹⁰ Organisation was relatively inclusive. Middle-class and artisanal debating and corresponding clubs formed in the larger towns, Paineite radical principles were propagated in the *Manchester Herald* from 1792 and numerous pamphlets were published, including *The Necessity of a Speedy and Effective Reform in Parliament* by George Philips in 1794. Challenges to loyalist authority were held in the open, culminating in mass meetings to draw up peace petitions in 1795.¹¹ The loyalist reaction decisively fixed the boundaries of political activity for the rest of the wars: sanctioned by local elites, the offices of the *Manchester Herald* were attacked by Church-and-King ‘mobs,’ leaders of the Constitutional Society and other suspected radical organisations were arrested or exiled and an atmosphere of suspicion and repression was later maintained by the magistrates’ network of spies.¹²

The decade 1801-1811 was one of radical silence. Little radical correspondence and few records of regular meetings or pamphlets survive. Magistrates’ letters to the Home Office become intermittent on perceived radical threats from 1803 until 1808. It is very difficult to track down artisanal individuals who left little or no personal documents, and who were more likely to be mobile or migratory. The history of English radicalism after 1801 has therefore been sparse; it assumes either that loyalists succeeded in suppressing all radical activists with Pitt’s Two Acts of 1795, or that radicalism continued in a secret ‘underground,’ that is, concrete but hidden radical connections between the Jacobinism of the 1790s and the mass platform radicalism from the 1810s.¹³ A search for continuity of personalities and ideologies could be dismissed however as a somewhat Whiggish

¹⁰ M. Turner, ‘The Making of a Middle Class Liberalism in Manchester, c.1815-32: A Study of Politics and the Press’ (Oxford Univ. DPhil thesis, 1991), pp.44-5.

¹¹ P. Handforth, ‘Manchester Radical Politics, 1789-94,’ *TLCAS*, 66 (1956), 87-106; G. Philips, *The Necessity for a Speedy and Effectual Reform in Parliament* (Manchester, 1793).

¹² F. Knight, *The Strange Case of Thomas Walker* (1957); T. Walker, *A Review of Some of the Political Events which have Occurred in Manchester* (1794).

¹³ E.P. Thompson, ‘Hunting the Jacobin Fox,’ *P & P*, 142 (1994), 94-140; See the debate between J. Dinwiddy, J.L. Baxter and F.K. Donnelly in *P & P*, 64 (1974), 113-135.

assumption that the radical organisations of the postwar movement had to be connected with the wartime groups without disillusion or indeed dissolution. Clegg's proclamations on Jacobinism were published in a transitional period for radicalism. Most committed radicals shifted their focus from active to personal or private radicalism. The silence makes popular radicalism problematic to document but there are indications that it was maintained in this form until the opportunity arose to be more vocal and organised. Silence was indeed a means of protest in itself. A 'Thinking Club' met in Manchester at which the members sat in silence in protest against the Two Acts of 1795.¹⁴ Political principles do not disintegrate even if their proponents are disillusioned or inactive. Similarly, loyalist principles and adherences did not consequently dissipate or connections break up despite loyalist activities and societies seemingly being put on hold from 1803.

During the French wars, challenges from loyalists engendered a process whereby radicals of all stamps had to decide whether their rather vague ideas and principles were fundamental to their identity and worth fighting for.¹⁵ The spectrum of radicalism encompassed different levels of commitment forged against loyalist opposition. Those who decided that their commitments were intellectual rather than circumstance-motivated were more likely to be radical activists. These 'Jacobins' were activists who had a practical and sustained commitment to opposing loyalist government and repressive forces of order. Paineite radicals did not cease thinking in republican tones, but had to speak publicly in the terminology and ideas of constitutionalism. Some may have indeed been swayed into this more reactionary radicalism. The language in which radical aspirations were expressed in petitions and addresses did not necessarily capture the

¹⁴ Turner, 'Making of Middle-Class Liberalism,' p.56.

¹⁵ Philp, 'Disconcerting Ideas,' 30-1.

commitments of those who wrote them and acted within the movement; nor did they always represent the views of the general population who supported them.¹⁶

Both radical and loyalist ideologies and commitments fluctuated according to circumstances for all but the most committed. The general population ventured from a broad loyalist position into a vague composite of radical tropes and ideas during the wars. They identified at times of distress with elements of radical ideology, particularly the more moderate 'romantic' versions.¹⁷ Others were not so necessarily committed, but could identify with radicals through a shared sense of solidarity against suppression of liberties or opinion by loyalist local government and forces of order. Membership of reform societies or participation in public meetings might well have been as conditional for many radicals as it was for many loyalists.¹⁸ Daniel Burton and Sons, manufacturers of Middleton who signed the Manchester peace petition of 1795, did not sign any other radically-orientated petitions and became key objects of Luddite attack in 1812.¹⁹

Three groups of individuals in Lancashire maintained the vestiges of radical principles and identity during the 1800s. Republican-radical individuals felt the need to publish radical pamphlets at opportune moments. Local families fostered radicalism in certain villages in the region. Bourgeois intellectuals, often Rational Dissenters, sustained a more moderate radicalism at a respectable level, but were willing to support financially, albeit silently, the new generation of radical leaders who emerged towards the end of the war.

¹⁶ Epstein, 'The Constitutional Idiom,' 555.

¹⁷ P. Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism: War, Popular Politics and English Radical Reformism, 1800-1815* (Aldershot, 1996).

¹⁸ Philp, 'Disconcerting Ideas,' 28.

Radical pamphlets

Clegg's *Freedom Defended* was published in retort to William Cobbett's loyalist pamphlet, *Democratic Principles Illustrated by Example*, or more particularly, to the magistrate John Philips' distribution of it around Stockport in 1797.²⁰ Clegg's strong republican arguments indicated his ideological involvement with the United Englishmen. His admiration of France was not sullied by the Terror but rather confirmed in reaction to loyalist rhetoric against those "whose better information, and more manly principles, have induced them to applaud the emancipation of millions and the downfall of despotism."²¹ Its main themes reiterated radical complaints and tropes, including the futility of the loyalists' aim of restoring the Bourbons to the French throne. "The Hoary Apostate" Edmund Burke and his "specious rhetoric" were another obvious choice of attack for hypocrisy.²²

Clegg struck one note of caution among his vitriol. He implied that democracy only applied to rational individuals; he assured the reader that rule: "by the people" did not mean by "mobs or clubs."²³ Clegg may not have believed that this could be achieved through the United Englishmen or indeed conversely by the rhetoric of pamphlets like his. He perhaps knew that activism on a regional scale, without the secrecy of the UE, would be most effective. He proved this in his own activities. Most prominently, he

¹⁹ C. Hulbert, *Memoirs of Seventy Years of an Eventful Life* (Shrewsbury, 1852), p.132; B. Hall, 'Luddite Riots in Middleton,' *Lancashire Local Historian* (1985).

²⁰ Thanks to Prof. Robert Glen for extra information about this.

²¹ Clegg, *Freedom Defended*, 11.

²² *Ibid.*, 4-5.

²³ *Ibid.*, 22.

served as secretary at a meeting in Ashton-under-Lyne on 23 November 1807, when it was decided to call for a petition to parliament for peace.²⁴

Clegg nevertheless continued to regard rhetoric as a valuable tool of propaganda and opposition. *Cowdroy's Manchester Gazette* published his 'Ode to France' at the height of the invasion scares in 1803. It bemoaned the "scepter'd despotism" of Napoleon destroying "thy dear-bought conquer'd Liberty" and wasting "all the blood for freedom spill'd" achieved by the French Revolution:

By Heav'n! great land, thy glory shall not rest
Beneath a vain Usurper's haughty crest!²⁵

This was a common view amongst radicals such as the Liverpool Friends of Peace who bitterly regretted Napoleon's imperialism and dictatorial tendencies as he had destroyed their hopes of the Revolution coming to fruition.²⁶ Radicalism therefore successfully utilised the language of loyalist execration of Napoleon. Another of Cowdroy's correspondents during 1803, with more constitutionalist sentiments, went under the pseudonym 'ALFRED.' He expressed radical patriotism in a call to defend the nation because the corrupt government "can never be restored to its ancient purity by foreign interposition." He also echoed the common radical opinion that British anti-Gallican rhetoric had inflamed the French and brought about the disintegration of the Treaty of Amiens: "Will not calm reasoning infuse more real and lasting courage into British bosoms, than an inhuman exhortation 'to inflict a terrible vengeance' on the 'savage hordes' of France; for that is one of the appellations with which that civilised people have lately been branded."²⁷ Cowdroy printed another of Clegg's poems, 'Petitionary Lines for Peace,' during the renewed peace campaign in winter 1807-8. It addressed the

²⁴ R. Glen, *Urban Workers in the Industrial Revolution* (New York, 1984), p.154; see Chapter 7.

²⁵ *Cowdroy's*, 10 December 1803.

²⁶ Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, p.180; see S. Bainbridge, *Napoleon and English Romanticism* (Cambridge, 1998).

King and reflected the general shift in radical rhetoric away from supporting French democracy to attacking 'Old Corruption' of the British government²⁸:

Rather banish ev'ry knave,
Purge thy councils, gracious Sire!
Quick the British State to save,
Bid the friends of war retire.²⁹

Clegg obviously aimed his poem at the general population to encourage them to petition the King, keeping his personal Paineite tenets private for the sake of the immediate cause.

A contemporary of Clegg's, though they may never have met, was the self-styled 'Tim Bobbin the Second': Robert Walker of Rochdale. He composed his comic dialogue *Plebeian Politics*, on the event of the peace Preliminaries of November 1801. It was printed in instalments in Cowdroy's *Manchester Gazette* and was "so well received" that Cowdroy republished it as a pamphlet. It was reprinted again in 1812.³⁰ *Plebeian Politics* is highly important as a dialect text, as one of its many rhetorical levels was directed at south east Lancashire communities who knew of the isolated radical cores within them. He obviously felt that the situation in November 1801 was safe enough to publish before he retreated back into a less contentious career as a dialect writer.

Like Clegg, Walker was self-conscious of the role of radical rhetoric and tropes. He used the theme of pigs in conscious reference to Edmund Burke and to Thomas Spence's republican pamphlet *Pig's Meat* of 1795. It thereby simultaneously aimed to appeal to radical audiences and satirise critics of Spence. Walker explained that the characters formed their political education through reading *An Impartial History of the War* (printed

²⁷ MCL: Broadside dated 29 August 1803, 'To the Inhabitants of the Town and Neighbourhood of Manchester,' by ALFRED, printed by Cowdroy; see *Cowdroy's*, July 1803.

²⁸ See chapter 7, p.262.

²⁹ *Cowdroy's*, 2 January 1808.

by Sowler and Russell of Manchester in 1799) and Thomas Erskine's *A View of the Causes and Consequence of the Present War with France*, first published in 1797. Walker recommended these books as a wider background to his own propagandic purposes of the dialogue. He furthermore advertised that the works were available for borrowing from 'Jim Street, in Sugar Lane' (in Dobcross near Delph, east of Oldham).³¹ This indicates two features of the dissemination of printed information: firstly, that the texts were available to the general population well beyond being sold once; secondly the local and personal nature of this informal distribution. National print distribution was thus dependent upon local means of transmission.³²

The comic dialogue between the characters of Tum and 'Whistlepig' was again a common device of both radical and loyalist propagandists.³³ It aimed to expose the hypocrisy of Church-and-King loyalist elites celebrating the preliminaries after having refused demands for peace from 1795. In the concluding part, Tum declares that a local 'nabob' who illuminated his house on the event of peace is: "Just like th'rest o'th' foos ot han no oppinnions o'the'r own: bod grunt'n afthr eawer nashonal pig-leaders, one dey for war, an another for peeoss."³⁴ [Just like the rest of the fools that have no opinions of their own: but grunt after our national pig-leaders, one day for war, and another for peace.] The purpose of the tract was less to explain radical principles than to attempt to convince or remind readers about the ways in which both local and national government were "wetherkok, fawnink, krinjink, hypokritical, sykofantine skeawndrils." A particular target was Church-and-King loyalists' use of religion to support their case for war. Tum

³⁰ *Cowdroy's*, 27 March 1802; R. Walker, *Plebeian Politics: Or the Principles and Practices of Certain Mole-Eyed Maniacs Vulgarly Called Warrites* (Manchester, 1802).

³¹ Walker, *Plebeian Politics*, 14-15.

³² P. Isaac and B. McKay, eds., *The Human Face of the Book Trade: Print Culture and its Creators* (Winchester, 1999).

³³ O. Smith, *The Politics of Language, 1791-1819* (Oxford, 1984); K. Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1996).

³⁴ Walker, *Plebeian Politics*, 52-3.

expressed disgust at his local clergy leading militia regiments into their parish church, sanctioned by the magistrates and government: “when the’n drum’t an ekorsis’t foke o the’ Sundy o’er, heaw fort’ kill the’r fello kreturs; ods flesh mon! th’ kristian religion teaches no sitch wark.” [when they drilled and exercised folk all the Sunday over how to kill their fellow creatures; God’s flesh man! The Christian religion teaches no such work.] Walker thereby used comic rhetoric to subvert their religious arguments and exhibit Christian pacifism. It is unclear how widely these pamphlets were distributed or how far their rhetoric was effectual in changing minds about the war, but they must have confirmed and sustained the views of some committed radicals among the regional population. It is also significant that they were published at all after the much publicised attack on local radical printers in the 1790s.

Radical individuals in the 1800s

Clegg and Walker were lone voices in publishing pamphlets in the 1800s but they had not been main protagonists in 1790s radicalism. Walker constructed a litany of radical martyrs in *Plebeian Politics*. These included national figures such as Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, Joseph Priestley, John Thelwall and others; and local heroes including the Manchester booksellers and printers William Cowdroy, Matthew Faulkner and William Birch (who published the *Manchester Herald* and radical pamphlets) and William and John Knight of Saddleworth: “Le meh naw forget Measter Tummus Wawker, o’Manchester, a mon persekutet an prosekutet to his utter ruin, uppo th’evidense ov a for-sworn skeawndril, for no other krime, thin beink a knone frend to liberty.”³⁵ [Let me not forget Mr Thomas Walker of Manchester, a man persecuted and prosecuted to his utter ruin, upon the evidence of a forsworn scoundrel, for no other crime than being a known

friend to liberty] He underlined the hypocrisy of the Pittite claim that government was restoring “social order,” which he claimed meant that Walker and others: “suffert’n’t impris’nment, on sum on ‘em deecho, for beeink true lovers o’rashional liberty.”³⁶ The significance of these hagiographic sketches is that they were written in a position of rational despair when there were few prominent activists left.

Thomas Walker and the other leaders of the Manchester Constitutional Society were tried at the Lancaster Assizes of April 1794 but were eventually acquitted. Walker took part in later agitation, associating with the United Englishmen, abolitionists and the Luddites, and was regarded by each new movement as somewhat a veteran.³⁷ Thomas Cooper, former Manchester Reformation Society secretary George McCallum and John Smith amongst others exiled themselves to America in 1793-4 and established an anti-slavery movement there.³⁸ Similarly, in March 1793, Priestley wrote of the flight from England of the Manchester printers Faulkner and Birch; they were, he hoped, “safe in America.”³⁹ Rowbottom reported that former MCS member John Clegg had died in Manchester in November 1800, “a Gentleman of fine abilities, a True Patriot, a firm friend to the Cause of Freedom.”⁴⁰

Certain individuals managed to remain active locally. John Knight of Saddleworth was probably the most involved among the disparate few. He was arrested as a radical leader in 1794, joined the United Englishmen’s county executive in 1801 and was again arrested in Manchester in 1812 for what the magistrates regarded as his leading part in the

³⁵ Walker, *Plebeian Politics*, 27-9.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

³⁷ *Cowdroy’s*, 8 February 1817.

³⁸ D. Malone, *The Public Life of Thomas Cooper* (New Haven, 1926).

³⁹ J. Graham, *The Nation, the Law and the King: Reform Politics in England, 1789-1799*, vol 2 (Oxford, 2000), p.516.

⁴⁰ Rowbottom diaries, 10 November 1800.

renewed reform activity. He became editor of the *Manchester Register* in 1817 and was arrested a fourth time in 1819.⁴¹ His activities are unrecorded between 1803 and 1811, however, and in the region as a whole, he was a notable exception. The radical pamphleteer George Philips also remained in Manchester. In January 1807, he was elected a member of the 'King of Clubs' dining club of London, joining the company of leading Whig-radicals including Lord Holland, the Marquess of Lansdowne and Henry Brougham.⁴² He continued to vent his political frustrations in frequent but private correspondence with William Roscoe and the Liverpool 'Friends of Peace.' For example, on 20 February 1808, he sycophantically thanked Roscoe for sending him a copy of his new peace pamphlet: "It is impossible to avoid shuddering at the retrospect of those follies which have led to the subjugation of Europe; or to read without alarm your able description of the probable consequences of the continuance of that infatuation in our councils from which the evils of our present situation are observed."⁴³ Although his radical mind remained active, his public face was quiet.

Most of Thomas Walker's political contemporaries did not "interfere much in public life"⁴⁴ from their arrest or moment of suspicion against them. It is difficult to discover much about the later activities of the other officers of the MCS and Manchester Reformation Society. It is further problematic to trace the destinations of less prominent radical circles in smaller towns. Very few names reappear on petitions; for example there is little correlation between the signatories of the peace petitions of 1795 and 1808 or the

⁴¹ J. Foster, *Class and the Industrial Revolution: Early Industrial Capitalism in Three Towns* (1974), p.43; PRO: HO 42/117/524, Fletcher to Home Office, 21 November 1811; *Trial of the Thirty Eight Men...* (Manchester, 1812).

⁴² MCL: M/C 2688, lease for building in Mosley St adjoining the Rochdale Canal, together with Thomas Philips and deal with Samuel Greg and Peter Ewart, June 1802; BL: Add.37337, Register of the King of Clubs dining club, 1798-1823.

⁴³ LivRO: 920 ROS 2977, Philips to Roscoe, 20 February 1808.

⁴⁴ *Cowdroy's*, 8 February 1817.

popular addresses concerning the Duke of York corruption scandal in 1809.⁴⁵ Former MCS members John, Jeremiah, Abraham and Arthur Clegg continued as timber merchants in Manchester.⁴⁶ George Duckworth, former member of the MCS and Lit and Phil and antislavery campaigns, continued his career as an attorney, remaining in the relatively high profile role of notary public of Manchester, which involved dealings with many local notables.⁴⁷ Duckworth was one of the four buyers of the Chorlton Hall estate which was leased for redevelopment in 1796.⁴⁸ He continued as a respectable figure, acting as Master extra in Chancery hearing the oaths of prominent manufacturers for legal agreements.⁴⁹ The only political petition he signed during the Napoleonic War however was the Manchester petition in support of the slave trade abolition bill in May 1806. The abolition campaign also brought radicals briefly back into public action, including: Ashworth Clegg, merchant trustee of Stand Unitarian Chapel and member of the Lit and Phil, Bolton radicals; the manufacturer Robert Heywood (1786-1868) and physician Dr Robert Everleigh Taylor (1773-1827); William Clegg of Stockport and “James, Joshua, John, Sam, Charles and William Taylor,” possibly from the infamous radical family from Royton.⁵⁰

Individual activists connected the radical agitations of the 1790s and of 1798-1801, but there is little evidence of their direct involvement in the reform campaigns later in the 1800s. Booth has found continuities between the membership of the MCS and those arrested as United Englishmen, naming six men as possibly being involved in both. Hence the United English were separate from the UI and indeed in Lancashire, distinct

⁴⁵ See chapter 7, p.261; MCL: BR f 942.7389 Sc 13, Scrapbook 1808-24.

⁴⁶ MCL: M156/53/4/39, bond of John Clegg, 1807.

⁴⁷ MCL: L4/1/5,6, John Bury papers, arbitration bonds, May and July 1802.

⁴⁸ See map of Chorlton estate, chapter 3, p.66.

⁴⁹ PRO: HO 42/82/94, Peter Marsland oath, 25 May 1805.

⁵⁰ House of Lords RO: HO/PO/JO/10/8/106, Manchester petition in favour of slave trade abolition bill, 14 May 1806.

from the London-based United Britons.⁵¹ The Lancashire UE were not therefore created by the itinerant Irish delegates whom the magistrates' spies followed around the country, "but grew naturally out of the MCS."⁵² It is possible indeed that they formed as an English alternative with their own republican identity rather than campaigning for Ireland. Yet it appears that in early 1797 disputes occurred between former MCS members after "a quarrel between the Gentlemen who had given great support to the MCS" and "the mechanics of the Society."⁵³ Only the most dedicated henceforth continued and spent most of their efforts travelling around the North looking for new recruits to the UE.

The UE held genuine republican tenets and were intent on effecting revolution in Britain, but were unable to embody the general population into their cause, both because of the extremity of their views and their secret cell organisation. Exaggeration by spies about their capabilities and connections with the French, compounded by arrests by magistrates brought any concrete plans to a standstill by 1801.⁵⁴ UI delegates proved elusive, escaping to Ireland via Liverpool,⁵⁵ but the UE may not have been so anonymous to their immediate local communities. William Rowbottom provides perhaps the only personal evidence about the fate of Lancashire individuals arrested for United Englishmen activities. It is significant that he remembered who they were and furthermore what had happened to them. In 1808, he wrote:

19th August – last night John Jackson of near Chaderton arrived at his house after serving 7 years transportation.

⁵¹ Wells, *Insurrection*, p.151.

⁵² A. Booth, 'The United Englishmen and Radical Politics in the Industrial North-West of England, 1795-1803,' *IntRevSocHist*, 31 (1986), 276.

⁵³ Wells, *Insurrection*, p.74.

⁵⁴ For the whole debate on whether revolution was possible see *ibid.*; M. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution: the United Irishmen and France* (Yale, 1982); and Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia?*

⁵⁵ HO 42/65/481, Fletcher to King, 31 July 1802; Wells, *Insurrection*, pp.231-2.

20th – Stansfield and Buckly the two unfortunate companions of the above Jackson have died some time since on the coast of Guinea the vollonteers for soldiers in preference to serving as transports.⁵⁶

A James Jackson, John Buckley, John Stansfield and John Bradley, all labourers late of Chadderton were indeed indicted for seditious activity in 1801 at the Lancaster Assizes.⁵⁷

The men appear to have been established locals, intimating a sense of community identity. It is likely that returnees from transportation did not fall back publicly into radical activism. Colonel Fletcher stridently reported after a peace meeting on Oldham Edge on Christmas Day 1807: “I need only observe that the leaders in this meeting were intimately connected with several of those persons who were at the Autumn Assizes for this County in the year 1801, transported for having administered unlawful oaths.”⁵⁸

Rowbottom’s observation on the return of radicals in 1808 invalidates this claim. Foster also exaggerated continuities of action in his study of Oldham radicals; for example he stated that John Jackson of Chadderton was active from 1797 to 1808, but it is clear from Rowbottom’s account that he was serving his transportation between 1801-8.⁵⁹ The possibility still remains that former United Englishmen supported renewed and broader campaigns for peace and reform after their return or when the local political atmosphere lightened. Hence it is difficult to confirm or deny Colonel Fletcher’s claim in February 1808 about the Bolton peace petition: “Three of those who went round the Country with the Petition are known by myself to have been of the Affiliated Jacobin Societies...their names were transmitted to Government as such as nine or eight years ago.”⁶⁰ Most United Englishmen remained untraceable. William Cheetham, the main delegate from Manchester, was imprisoned in Coldbath Fields 1798-1801. On his release, he acted as a delegate to London radical committees and was still arousing Colonel Fletcher’s

⁵⁶ Rowbottom diary.

⁵⁷ PRO: PL 28/4, Crown Office minute book.

⁵⁸ HO 42/91/963, Fletcher to Hawkesbury, 27 December 1807.

⁵⁹ Foster, *Class Struggle*, p.151.

⁶⁰ HO 42/95/5, Fletcher to Home Office, February 1808.

suspicion in May 1803, but there is no surviving evidence of his activities after this.⁶¹ It is likely that some UI and UE joined the navy as a means of avoiding incarceration or deportation.

The physical force radicalism of the UE resulted not from destitution caused by residential separation but, as Booth and Thompson argued, from depressed artisanal districts of mixed ethnic origin.⁶² Three-quarters of the secretaries of the society named by the spy Robert Gray in 1798 lived in the mixed Irish-English artisanal area around Ancoats and Newton Lane.⁶³ None marked were marked as 'poor' in the poor rates and Moses Fry was listed as the ratepayer of a high value house on Church Street, a main street.⁶⁴ Gray himself was a cotton manufacturer and an important figure for both UE and magistrates in 1798-1801. He became secretary of the UE in Manchester and was employed as an informer by the magistrate Thomas Butterworth Bayley. Notably, William Cheetham derided him because of his hostility to republicanism, his religiosity and ignorance of Paine.⁶⁵ Hannah Greg, wife of Samuel the Unitarian manufacturer, identified him as "the Informer" as early as April 1798 in a letter to Samuel Rathbone of Liverpool. She argued that the United activity and tendency to violence in Manchester was the result of Gray "spiriting them up." Greg's comment indicates a common knowledge of the UE among radical sympathisers; she indeed mentioned "our united friend" giving her the information.⁶⁶ Middle-class radicals who had stepped down from

⁶¹ A. Hone, *For the Cause of Truth: Radicalism in London, 1796-1821* (Oxford, 1982), p. 136; PRO: PC 1/42/148; HO 42/65/442, Fletcher to Home Office, 3 April 1802; HO 42/65/491-2, Fletcher to Home Office, 7 July 1802.

⁶² Booth, 'The United Englishmen,' 276-7.

⁶³ PRO: PC 1/3118, Papers relating to United Irishmen and United Englishmen, 1798; MCL: Manchester poor rate, 1798; note LCRO: WCW 1802 and 1808, wills of David Dougherty and James Dixon.

⁶⁴ MCL: Manchester poor rate, 1798, district 4; Fry was marked 'in jail.'

⁶⁵ PRO: PC 1/41/A139; Wells, *Insurrection*, p.125; A. Booth, 'Reform, Repression and Revolution: Radicalism and Loyalism in the North West of England, 1789-1803' (Lancaster Univ. PhD thesis, 1979), appendix, p.414.

⁶⁶ Liv.Univ. Special Collections: RP.II.1.65, Greg to Rathbone, April 1798.

active involvement in radicalism continued in the background in keeping up these connections and knowledge.

Cowdroy and Hanson, radical fathers and sons

William Cowdroy (1752-1814) and his son William were two of the key individuals in Lancashire who formed the link between the silent radical middle classes and the active working-class 'Jacobins.' Cowdroy senior was a survivor and member of the 1790s radicals who responded in print to the trends within and restrictions on radical opinion. He was born in Chester and moved to Salford in 1794, when he went into partnership with Thomas Boden, bookseller and stationer of Deansgate, who was already known for printing the trial of Thomas Walker.⁶⁷ In November 1795, they bought the *Manchester Gazette* and radicalised its editorial content. This was somewhat remarkable in the circumstances, as memories of the suppression of the *Manchester Herald* were fresh. William, his eldest son began business as printer and publisher in Salford in 1803 and took over the *Gazette* on his death.⁶⁸ Cowdroy's radical credentials were certified not least by the Liverpoolian republican poet Edward Rushton who wrote an elegy on his death. William senior named one of his other sons 'Citizen.' Manchester Collegiate Church marriage register records the marriage of 'Citizen Howarth Cowdroy, letter press printer, son of William,' in 1816. He was listed as a 'minor,' which suggests he was born in 1799 or 1800: that is, during his father's involvement with the United Englishmen.⁶⁹

Cowdroy's editorials were crucial in maintaining the vestiges of radicalism in Lancashire and beyond during the period following 1798 until 1812, when the upsurge in popular

⁶⁷ C. Horner, 'William Cowdroy (1752-1814),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com.

⁶⁸ MCL: Biographical cuttings.

radicalism gave openings for new radical newspapers to be published. Sales of the *Gazette* allegedly reached a wartime high of 1700 a week in the summer of 1796 and apparently never fell below a thousand.⁷⁰ In 1797, when the stamp tax was increased, Cowdroy spoke of “the little circle of friends who subscribe their pence for a single paper” who would have to “either extend these circles by taking more into the firm, or advance (if four of them) their halfpenny each week, rather than shut up their weekly channels of information.” He estimated that each copy of his paper was read on average by “ten different persons...although the most of them are individually read by considerably more.”⁷¹ The tone of the political rhetoric in his editorials was clear and it is a mystery why the authorities did not arrest him earlier.

In March 1798, William Cowdroy junior was arrested for printing the ‘Declaration of the United Englishmen’ for the spy Robert Gray. He was bailed in June. On being shown Thomas Paine’s pamphlet, ‘Letter to Thomas Erskine,’ his confession stated that “he had a dozen of them from America and that he sold them.” Cowdroy senior was nearly prosecuted after donating two shillings to assist UI Joseph O’Coigley’s passage to France but Gray’s evidence was not enough to convict him.⁷² Cowdroy’s most significant and perhaps inexplicable achievement was being able to continue printing after being suspected of UE involvement; indeed his editorials retained their radical comment, particularly after 1805. He remained under surveillance: information transmitted by Colonel Fletcher to the Duke of Portland in July 1801 indicated the local and national radical circles he was mixing with or at least was perceived to be so:

⁶⁹ LCRO: WCW/1815, will of William Cowdroy of Manchester; MCL: MFPR 43, Manchester Cathedral marriage register, p.384, no.1150.

⁷⁰ Turner, ‘Making of a Middle-Class Liberalism,’ p.57; see chapter 2.

⁷¹ *Cowdroy’s*, 24 June 1797, 25 June 1796; D. Clare, ‘The Local Newspaper Press and Local Politics in Manchester and Liverpool, 1780-1800,’ *TLCAS*, 74 (1963-4); H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998).

⁷² PRO: PC 1/42/140, Middlesex Quarter Sessions, Trial of William Cheetham, April 1798.

Thelwall was at Manchester on the 2nd inst. at the House of Cowdroy the Printer of the Manchester Gazette of whose character I presume your Grace is not wholly ignorant...Thelwall has been with several Jacobins of the higher order in Manchester particularly with Thomas Walker, William Hanson and Preston the younger.⁷³

Thomas Walker here reappeared together with William Hanson, silk manufacturer of Cannon Street and father of Joseph. William had signed the Manchester peace petition of 1795 (he also signed petitions against the abolition of the slave trade in 1788 and 1794).⁷⁴ In their examinations at the Middlesex Quarter Sessions of 1798, Cowdroy junior and his brother Thomas admitted that they borrowed money from Joseph Hanson “for the use of the office,” and produced evidence in his handwriting.⁷⁵

The Hanson family were amongst the section of the middle class not openly involved in radical activism in the 1790s, but crucial to its maintenance in the 1800s. A letter from the magistrate Mr Floud to the Home Secretary of 12 April 1798 described how wealthy patrons supported the suspected United Englishmen. The informant Gray implicated the ‘Gentlemen’: Hanson, “a young man in partnership with his Father, a Merchant and who is supposed to be worth £100,000,” together with Jackson, “also a considerable merchant and the man who was tried with Walker of Manchester five years ago,” the bookseller Hopper and the manufacturer Robert Norris.⁷⁶ On both occasions that O’Coigley passed through the town, the UE felt able to turn to ‘gentlemen radicals’ for financial assistance: Thomas Walker, Thomas Collier, Thomas Norris, Joseph Hanson and Samuel Jackson. When the delegates from the United societies called upon Joseph Hanson in connection with the subscription for O’Coigley, Hanson allegedly replied: “You never come but [when] you want something.”⁷⁷ The remnants of the 1790s radicals were connected with

⁷³ HO 42/62/238, Fletcher to Portland, 8 July 1801.

⁷⁴ House of Lords RO: HL/PO/JO/10/3/286/3, Manchester petition against the slave trade bill, 25 March 1794.

⁷⁵ PC 1/42/140.

⁷⁶ PC 1/42/140.

⁷⁷ Booth, ‘The United Englishmen,’ 280.

these 'gentlemen radicals.' A legal document concerning sales related to the bankruptcy of Thomas Walker and his brother Richard listed their assignees as Joseph Hanson and his fellow Dissenting and abolitionist merchants James Darbshire and William Marsden in October 1803. The sale involved a pew in St. Mary's church; it was sold in March 1804 to James Roberts and John Shaw of Manchester.⁷⁸ Tacit financial support from middle-class sympathisers was experienced in other towns of radical agitation. In May 1801, nine out of the twenty-one men arrested at a radical meeting on Rivington Pike (a large hill overlooking Horwich) were bailed by Bolton 'cotton manufacturers' presumably favourable to their cause.⁷⁹

William Cowdroy father and son continued to risk their freedom to aid the UE in this period. William senior collected subscriptions for the London-based committee to relieve the families of those imprisoned in 1798. The remnants of the United Englishmen used his newspaper for communication with the wider public. Cowdroy published their addresses appealing for money and defending their innocence. In May and June 1800, the UE imprisoned in Cold Bath Fields wrote to the London committee for their relief, stating that they wished to "confine any correspondence to Mr Cowdroy, Printer of the Manchester Gazette, whose amiable disposition and zeal in the cause of Freedom," they believed contrasted significantly with other 'Manchester Patriots,' who "have been very cold in the cause of Freedom, since the bug-bear – the pretended Plott, were discovered." This suspicion illustrated that the silence of Mancunian bourgeois radicals owed much to fear of arrest as well as a distancing from the UE's extremism. The monetary support for the UE was however far from substantial, as in July they thanked

⁷⁸ House of Lords RO: HO/PO/JO/10/8/106, Manchester petition in favour of slave trade bill, 14 May 1806; MCL: deeds, m/c 129, 8 October 1803; m/c 132, 3 March 1804; *Manchester Herald*, 9 March 1793.

⁷⁹ Wells, *Insurrection*, p.217; HO 42/62/111, Bancroft to Portland, 27 May 1801.

the relief committee for the £3, 17s, 6d they had received.⁸⁰ Cowdroy maintained his support for their cause in 1801. In April, his editorial commented on William Cheetham, “the last of the Manchester TRAITORS,” being discharged from Coldbath Fields after three years without trial. This was significant because it marked Sir Francis Burdett and Horne Tooke’s first foray into public light. Cowdroy believed that Burdett and Tooke intended “to move the house to indemnify these long afflicted men and their families, for the ruinous losses they have sustained in consequence of their captivity.”⁸¹ Local interests were therefore paramount; Cowdroy focused on this aspect rather than their campaign against the governor of the prison which made Burdett’s name in metropolitan radical circles.

Anti-clericalism underlay much of Cowdroy’s rhetoric and his opinions mirrored those of the UE. The anti-Catholic undertones in much of radicalism brought radicals closer to loyalists than they might have envisaged. In 1798 Cowdroy criticised Pitt, the “haughty Monarch of Downing Street,” for his attempts “to root out Jacobinism, to starve Republicans and to disseminate the principles of Christianity by the sword and the bayonet.”⁸² In his examination, the UE spy Robert Gray had alleged that Cowdroy had told him that England had no defence against the French and “as long as Priestcraft was suffered in the country information could not be had.”⁸³ It was reflective of the anti-hierarchical elements in his radicalism and was a significant theme underlying much of Lancashire radicalism. This may indeed have been a reason why the UE kept themselves distinct from the UI. The UE had grown out of the remnants of constitutional societies, with their sympathies towards Jacobin and Enlightenment atheism and suspicion of

⁸⁰ BL: Add. 27816, Place papers, fo.571, W. Cheetham, J. Dods, A. Donoughy to M. Hewitt, 14 June 1800; fo. 573, 7 July 1800.

⁸¹ *Cowdroy’s*, 11 April 1801; see also 30 May 1801, 12 June 1802.

⁸² *Cowdroy’s*, 20 January 1798.

⁸³ PRO: PC 1/42/A140, examination of Robert Gray, 15 April 1798.

established churches, while the identity of the UI by contrast centred around Catholicism. William Clegg criticised Burke's rhetoric which was "in support of a war for the continuation of popish superstition and regal despotism."⁸⁴ The tropes surfaced regularly in radical rhetoric: Robert Walker used the character Whistlepig to allege that "this war-lovink tinkor" Pitt used his budgets (and the new income tax) to maintain "a parel o'French runagates, ot wurn'n komn to this kuntry, ot te kode'n t'klergy and Laety - £540.000." [a group of French refugees that had come to this country, that they called the clergy and laity].⁸⁵ Peace petitions from Chowbent and Chorley in 1812 again detailed the fund for exiled Catholic clergy and laity to highlight their belief in the government's hypocritical ignorance of the plight of the working classes.⁸⁶

Cowdroy often proclaimed that he intended to influence public opinion directly through the *Gazette*. His hopes were often fulfilled. In May 1801, the Wigan magistrate John Singleton complained that the paper had "done a deal of mischief by corrupting the minds of the lower orders."⁸⁷ Information and radical viewpoints were indeed gleaned from the paper about the government and the effect of the war: Rowbottom noted the "National Debt as it appears in Manchester Gazette of June 26th 1802."⁸⁸ On 31 October 1801, Cowdroy's response to the preliminaries of peace included a restatement of his intention to follow the "undeviating and immutable" path of "proclaiming to the world that the war was neither just nor necessary." He recognised the significance of the paper in the preceding and current political atmosphere: "Our paper has been often burnt, after *solemn* and *salient* debate, in public bars, by the hands of pitiable ignorance and inveteracy: - And for what? - For *disaffection and Jacobinism!*" He argued against the loyalist view that

⁸⁴ Clegg, *Freedom Defended*, 4-5.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁸⁶ See chapter 7, p.269.

⁸⁷ HO 42/62/112, Singleton to Home Office, 27 May 1801; HO 42/65/310, 491-2, Fletcher to Home Office, May and 7 July 1802.

opposing the war was Jacobinical; hence in a manner similar to *Plebeian Politics*, Cowdroy ironically commented on the hypocrisy of loyalists celebrating the Peace: “*John Bull* himself is a Jacobin and frantic joy that pervaded the kingdom from one end to the other is an incontestable sentiment – that *Jacobinism* is now ‘the order of the day.’”⁸⁹

There was no progressive development in political thought in Cowdroy’s editorials during the decade. Rather, he dexterously employed elements from the whole range of radical repertoire according to the circumstances. He called for Reform at opportune moments when it was less likely to provoke arrest, for example, on 20 February 1802, combined with an appeal for abolition of the slave trade. His rhetoric was more subdued at other times, with particularly brief and less opinionated editorials during 1803-5. His annual New Year editorial perhaps evinced aspects of his genuine opinions most clearly, those of radical patriotism and opposition to Pittite repression and corruption. On 7 January 1804, in face of invasion, he proclaimed his intention to maintain “the same bold and decisive adherence to the true principles of British Liberty.”⁹⁰ From 1805, he again expressed fairly constant demands for peace. By 4 January 1812, he was renewing similar themes to the war-weary distress of 1800: “since [the *Gazette*]’s commencement, it has been the painful task of the printer to record an almost uninterrupted succession of sanguinary warfare and to stain his columns with human conflict, blood and slaughter.” He was pessimistic for the forthcoming year and castigated “the errors of our Rulers” for “procrastinating the evils of War and thereby palsied our trade and manufactures.” He asserted the radical patriotic belief in unity of Britain against France: “the printer has only to add that he shall still pursue the part of, and invariably be the advocate for, PEACE

⁸⁸ Rowbottom diaries.

⁸⁹ *Cowdroy’s*, 31 October 1801.

⁹⁰ *Cowdroy’s*, 7 January 1804.

and REFORM – as the best and surest security of the constitutional liberties, the Happiness and Prosperity of our Country.”⁹¹

Local radical circles

Small radical circles survived amongst the shelter of local communities. This was not a ‘radical underground’ in the sense of a revolutionary conspiracy waiting for a chance to be ignited, but more of an individual nature, often centred in one family in a town. Foster termed these as “more permanent cells of opposition, isolated groupings of families which provided at least some of the long-term continuity of language and direction.”⁹² Once the radicals retreated into their communities, their thinking was shaped less by textual or ideological abstracts than by local circumstances.

The village of Royton near Oldham, with a population of about 3500, was one of the hotspots of radicalism throughout this period. This is most likely because of the influence and organisation of the Taylors, the most commonly mentioned family in the magistrates’ reports. In his memoirs, Samuel Bamford commented that Royton was “looked upon as the chief resort of Jacobins on that side of Manchester.”⁹³ The expiration of the repeal of *Habeas Corpus* in 1801 provided a short opening for mass meetings to be held for the first time since 1795. The first major peace meeting in Lancashire was held on Tandle Hill in Royton on 5 April 1801. It was allegedly attended by up to 10,000 inhabitants from Oldham, Rochdale, Chadderton and Middleton. The resolutions passed at the meeting expressed much more awareness of the economic situation than the average constitutionalist rhetoric of other addresses and petitions.

⁹¹ *Cowdroy’s*, 4 January 1812.

⁹² Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution*, p.31; see C. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism During the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1982).

They included the assertion in terminology reminiscent of Thelwallian political economy: “that nothing is produced without labour, however taxes are laid in the first instance, they ultimately fall upon the labouring poor.” They demanded “nothing less than an immediate peace, a thorough reform in the representative system and a reduction of the national debt.”⁹⁴ The Taylors were probably the originators of this rhetoric. Royton’s reputation continued and spread across the region. When Joseph Hanson stood for election for Preston in 1807, a squib, ‘Hanson and Bony, A New Song,’ hinted at the village’s reputation and radical history, which was cemented by the ‘Royton Races,’ the legendary battle between radicals and a Church-and-King mob on 21 April 1794, put down by the cavalry⁹⁵:

To Royton he once went to make revolutions,
 For like his friend Bony he hates constitutions;
 But the King’s Dragoons, in all that saw no fun,
 And a charge sword in hand, made the jacobins run.
 ... We’ll soon make him run and we’ll soon make him sweat,
 In spite of his green men and *Cowdroy’s Gazette*.⁹⁶

The resurgence of the reform movement in the later 1800s in the area seems also to have been promoted by the Taylors. William Chippindale gave an account of the peace meeting on Oldham Edge on Christmas Day 1807, in which the Taylors were identified as the leading radicals. According to his report, the speaker was “attended by several of the family of the Taylors, whom I have mentioned to you under the name of O’Calebs, viz Jo’ O’Calebs, Caleb O’Calebs and many more.”⁹⁷ Caleb Taylor had been an UE suspect in 1801; in 1802, Fletcher reported that William Cheetham had been sent as a delegate to London to procure instructions “of which they have been in want since

⁹³ S. Bamford, *Early Days* (1849), p.44.

⁹⁴ HO 42/61/459, Fletcher to Portland, 6 April 1801.

⁹⁵ G. Shaw, *Annals of Oldham and District*, vol 3 (Oldham, 1905), p.202.

⁹⁶ *Account of the Election at Preston...1807*, p.16.

⁹⁷ HO 42/91/967, Chippindale to Hawkesbury, 25 December 1807; see chapter 7, p.248.

Taylor of Royton died.”⁹⁸ The report by Chippindale was perhaps unreliable, as it came from an ‘informant’ who was convinced the meeting was called to create discontent, “which they think favourable to the ultimate attainment of their revolutionary designs.”⁹⁹ There are sufficient references to the Taylors of Royton on the other hand to assume that they continued to play a significant role in maintaining radicalism in the village and its neighbourhood. Cookson points out that the inhabitants of Royton were the first to declare in favour of petitioning the House of Commons in 1807 and their petition was the most offensive to the government, alleging that the ministry was committed to ‘perpetual war.’¹⁰⁰ Their legacy continued through the postwar radical movement: the first Hampden club in Lancashire was formed in Royton in August 1816.¹⁰¹

The Wilsons of Manchester were another family who kept the radical tradition alive within a closed context. They originated from Edinburgh, settling in Manchester in the late eighteenth century. Charles Wilson became a handloom weaver in Newton Lane. His son Michael (a furniture broker in Red Bank from 1806) and grandsons Thomas and Alexander became locally infamous for expressing their radical principles in some of the many oral ballads they composed. Michael Wilson was described as “a Jacobin at heart.” This was exemplified by a portrait he commissioned, which “he said would leave no mistake as to either his religious or political views and opinions.” He was represented with his hand resting on two volumes, one a work labelled ‘Democracy’ and the other a ‘Life of John Wesley.’¹⁰² The Victorian antiquarian John Harland noted this anecdote about his regular confrontations with Rev Joshua Brookes of the Collegiate Church:

The Rev Joshua Brookes had a speaking acquaintance with him and sneered much at his politics. Passing the shop door one day, the parson saw Michael sitting at the door

⁹⁸ HO 42/65/442, Fletcher to Home Office, 3 April 1802; Hone, *For the Cause of Truth*, p.103.

⁹⁹ HO 42/91/967.

¹⁰⁰ Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, p.211.

¹⁰¹ J. Dinwiddy, ‘Luddism and Politics in the Northern Counties,’ *SH*, 4 (1979), 40.

¹⁰² J. Harland. ed., *The Songs of the Wilsons* (Manchester, 1865), pp.3-4.

reading; and called out – ‘Well Michael, reading Tom Paine I suppose.’ The ready reply was ‘Well I might read a worse book, Mr Brookes.’¹⁰³

One example was the “best song in Mr Wilson’s estimation that he ever wrote,” entitled ‘An Ode to Freedom.’ No record remains except the first line: “Great goddess of Freedom, appear to thy sons.” Harland also noted an incident recounted by Michael’s son Alexander about his brother Samuel. Samuel composed a ballad shortly after the mass meeting of weavers at St George’s Fields in April 1808. “On addressing my father, almost breathless, [he] exclaimed, ‘Father, I’ve made a Song’”:

It was in the year one thousand eight hundred and eight,
A lot of bold weavers stood in a line straight
Then coom th’barrack sogers¹⁰⁴ o in a splutter,
And knock’d the poor weavers right into the gutter.¹⁰⁵

Radical tenets and knowledge were thus transmitted through oral and printed ballads. *A Political Garland*, printed in Preston, probably in the late 1790s, included pro-French anti-war ballads and a ‘Song for the Thinking Club’ of Manchester. This castigated ministers as “ye detestable foes to mankind” whose legislation had enforced radicals to meet in silence.¹⁰⁶ Printers were obviously reluctant to publish radical ballads and there were fewer radical writers than loyalist propagandists, they sold less well and perhaps were better suited to oral transmission. The radical verses of Samuel Bamford’s father were only recorded in *Early Days*; for example, his ‘God help the Poor’ of 1792. Some of the songs of the Wilsons seemingly only survived because of the antiquarian efforts of Harland. He claimed that he was publishing much of their work for the first time. There may have been many other radical poets in Lancashire like the Wilsons whose work has been lost or never recorded. The situation was similar over the Pennines, where Joseph

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.25; see also L. Banks, *The Manchester Man* (Manchester, 1874).

¹⁰⁴ soldiers

¹⁰⁵ Harland, *Songs of the Wilsons*, pp. 6, 14-15; see chapter 7, p.255.

¹⁰⁶ *A Political Garland* (Preston, printed by E. Sergeant, n.d.).

Mather was the voice of the Sheffield Radicals in the 1790s, whose poems concerned the oppression of local radicals by the town's authorities.¹⁰⁷

Committed radicals of all stamps were nevertheless in the minority. They were able to survive because they usually remained publicly silent in the 1800s. Thompson characterised the culture of handloom weaving villages not as inherently politically radical but as “a unique blend of social conservatism, local pride and cultural attainment.” He presented the villages as clinging tenaciously to dialect, regional customs and superstitions.¹⁰⁸ The culture of the general population in localities was essentially conservative. This meant that radicalism usually inhabited a sphere of reaction. Cowdroy complained in January 1800: “A national torpor appears to pervade the great mass of subjects in this kingdom; otherwise petitions in favour of peace would immediately be sent from every part of the country.”¹⁰⁹ The peace issue was muted in 1801 as the general population quietly recovered from the atmosphere of suspicion from 1795-1801. Calls for peace were confined to certain places within south-east Lancashire such as Royton and Tameside. The effect of the repression by local and national government still dampened proclivities to act publicly in less radical areas.

Instead of searching (perhaps spuriously) for ‘links’ among peace demonstrations or radical meetings in the early 1800s, it therefore must be noted that this was an acute period of constraints on use of place and ability to meet. Only the bravest or most committed activists felt willing to express more forward-looking and republican or ‘Jacobin’ opinions. The rest of those disposed to radicalism remained silently disposed to vague principles of restoring the purity and representation of the ‘constitution.’ They

¹⁰⁷ *The Songs of Joseph Mather...with Introduction and Notes by John Wilson* (Sheffield, 1862).

¹⁰⁸ Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, p.322.

¹⁰⁹ *Cowdroy's*, 11 January 1800.

opposed government intervention in their own affairs as much as innovation. They could, without internal inconsistency, retreat within the safer bounds of loyalism during more challenging times or revert to more radical tenets when activists roused campaigns.

The 'Friends of Peace' and 'romantic' radicalism

In 1794, Thomas Walker reflected bitterly on the failures of the English reform movement and pointed to the timidity of the Dissenters:

They have, as a body, constantly fallen short of their own principles; they have excited opposition which they have never completely supported; and through fear, or some other motive, they have been so strongly the advocates of an overstrained moderation, that they have been rather the enemies than the friends of those who have ventured the most for the rights of the people.¹¹⁰

With the vitriol of a dedicated activist, Walker was sorely disappointed at the Rational Dissenters' failure to live up to the example of Priestley. Other denominations as institutions and individuals similarly had also been keen to demonstrate their loyalism. Walker's criticism was true of Rational Dissenters as a whole after 1800 and is understandable from a Mancunian standpoint, as repression and fear had driven the Unitarians behind the safety of the elite Cross Street Chapel doors. Walker neglected however to look across Chat Moss to Rational Dissenters in Liverpool. Dr James Currie (1756-1805) was part of the "small circle of literary friends," whom he believed were "remarkable for a prompt discussion and open declaration of their opinions on public questions."¹¹¹ The Liverpool 'Friends of Peace' - given that eponym and discussed in detail by Cookson - were significant because they were very self-aware of their own identity and principles.¹¹² Their other prominent members included: the American

¹¹⁰ Cited in J. Seed, 'A Set of Men Powerful in Many Things,' in K. Haakonssen, *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge, 1996), p.167.

¹¹¹ W.W. Currie, *Memoir of the Life, Writings, and Correspondence of James Currie* (London, 1831), vol 1, p.500.

¹¹² Cookson, *The Friends of Peace*, see I. Sellers, 'William Roscoe, the Roscoe Circle and Radical Politics in Liverpool, 1789-1807,' *THSLC*, 120 (1968), 45-62.

merchant William Rathbone (1757-1809), the banker and intellectual William Roscoe (1753-1831), Unitarian ministers James Yates (1755-1826) and William Shepherd, printer and poet Edward Rushton and the Spanish poet Joseph Blanco White (1775-1841).¹¹³ Families associated with the intellectual circle - the Heywoods, Rathbones, Nicholsons, Thornleys, Holts and Booths - gathered at the various Presbyterian and Unitarian chapels of the port, including Benn's Garden and Gateacre, where Rev William Shepherd preached from 1791 to 1847.¹¹⁴ They had much wider connections across the region and country than other radicals, while retaining a distinctive Liverpoolian identity within the larger intellectual and Unitarian community. They were much more cohesive than other groups of radicals, regularly discussing their ideals in correspondence but rarely disagreeing with each other.

The Friends of Peace kept radical principles alive during the Napoleonic Wars, although their views were more moderate than radicals elsewhere and their attitude to the working classes and reform campaigns separated them from future radical movements.¹¹⁵ In 1800, Rev William Shepherd visited his friends across the region. He wrote to his wife from Lancaster about his visit to Benjamin Heywood, Dr Robert Everleigh Taylor and John Pilkington's wife at Bolton. The Heywood family and Dr Taylor were involved in sustaining radical opposition in Bolton. The Bolton magistrate Colonel Fletcher wrote of their cross-regional links in February 1808, claiming: "the ostensible leader of those clamouring for peace is brother to Doctor Brandreth of Liverpool, who is much connected with Roscoe one of the representatives of that borough in the late parliament.

¹¹³ A.M. Wilson, 'Culture and Commerce, Liverpool's Merchant Elite, c.1790-1850' (Liverpool Univ. PhD thesis, 1996), p.51.

¹¹⁴ S. Checkland, 'Economic Attitudes in Liverpool, 1793-1807,' *EcHistRev*, 2nd ser, 5 (1952), 63.

¹¹⁵ J. Seed, 'Theologies of Power, Unitarians and the Social Relations of Religious Discourse, 1800-50,' in R. J. Morris, ed., *Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth Century Towns* (Leicester, 1986).

Though educated in the Establishment, John has become a Socinian.”¹¹⁶ After visiting Bolton, Rev Shepherd went to Chorley to see the inventor of the spinning mule, Samuel Crompton, who was receiving treatment from Dr Taylor. He then travelled to Preston, where he “saw Lloyd for whom Mr. Duckworth had collected 15 guineas in Manchester.”¹¹⁷ This also indicates that George Duckworth was still radically active in a private measure in support of George Lloyd, the former MCS member, who had moved to Bath.¹¹⁸ Shepherd also corresponded with Gilbert Wakefield and cared for his son during Gilbert’s imprisonment.¹¹⁹ Dr Aikin of Warrington was a correspondent of the Liverpool circle throughout 1790s and 1800s, as was George Philips of Manchester.¹²⁰ The women of the circle also maintained their own pan-regional links. Mary Rathbone of Liverpool and Hannah Greg of Styal Mill and Manchester wrote regularly to each other, occasionally on political matters, local and parliamentary. For example, Hannah wrote in April 1798: “As to the gloom of public affairs of which I am so situated as likewise to have full share, I thank God I have been accustomed to confide [in you].”¹²¹

The presence of middle-class Rational Dissenters had some relation to the level of radical activity in large manufacturing towns in the 1800s. Vocal radicalism did not surface in towns such as Preston and Blackburn, especially after the 1790s. In both towns, there were few prominent bourgeois intellectuals amongst the Unitarians (who could be considered an elite); they were largely made up of artisans, tradesmen and shopkeepers.¹²² The radical intellectuals who had been involved in the Warrington Academy mainly dissipated to Manchester and Liverpool after its closure in 1786 or they remained quiet.

¹¹⁶ HO 42/95/5, Fletcher to Home Office, February 1808; see Liv RO: 920 ROS 423, Brandreth to Roscoe, 5 June 1808; 920 ROS 430, Roscoe to Brandreth, 1810; LCRO: WCW/1815, will of Joseph Brandreth, testified by John Pilkington of Bolton.

¹¹⁷ Harris Manchester College: William Shepherd papers, vol. iv, p.20, Shepherd to Wakefield, March 1799.

¹¹⁸ *Manchester School Register*, VI, pp.99-100.

¹¹⁹ William Shepherd papers, vol. iv, p.29.

¹²⁰ LivRO: 920 ROS 15, Aikin to Roscoe, 30 April 1808.

¹²¹ Liv.Univ. Special Collections: RP.II.1.64, H. Greg to M. Rathbone, 31 July 1798.

Other old Warringtonians died before radicalism revived: for example, the physician Thomas Percival died in 1804 and George Walker, president of the Lit and Phil, died in London in 1807.¹²³

The Roscoe circle had been involved in Francophile radicalism in the Liverpool Constitutional Society until the Terror tested British radicals' faith in the French Revolution.¹²⁴ The War was obnoxious to them because of their belief in freedom of speech which was repressed by the government. Dr Currie wrote in an autobiographical account: "The War of 1793 came, a fearful crisis to the lovers of freedom and the friends of their species."¹²⁵ William Rathbone's scrapbook contains many records of the early years following the French Revolution, for example a meeting on 14 July 1791 at the Globe Tavern. There is no more political or reform material in the scrapbook between 1795 and January 1807 (a report of Whitbread's speech on the negotiations for peace).¹²⁶ Most of Roscoe's voluminous correspondence is apolitical before 1805, with little or nothing on the events of 1798, the peace or the invasion scare of 1803. He began to comment on political affairs again from 1806 but he was mainly concerned with wider economic and religious campaigns and elections. This perhaps intimated a continued fear of his letters being read by spies and he confined his more radical ideas to private conversation, or conversely, in published pamphlets.

Their Francophile radical optimism continued into the first few years of Napoleonic rule, partly out of a misguided hope that Napoleon would fulfil the original aims of the Revolution. Dr James Currie wrote to his lifelong friend Thomas Creevey MP on 25

¹²² J. Seed, 'Theologies of Power,' p.121.

¹²³ J. Kendrick, *Profiles of Warrington Worthies* (Warrington, 1853).

¹²⁴ LivRO: 900 MD 16-18, Currie papers, Liverpool Constitutional Society, 1791-3.

¹²⁵ Currie, *Memoir*, v.1, pp.500-1.

¹²⁶ Liv. Univ.: RP.II.4.16, Rathbone papers, Scrapbook 1.

January 1801: “What an astonishing being is this Corsican! Since the days of Julius Caesar, there has not been such a combination of great gracious talents with great power.”¹²⁷ Similarly, Cowdroy wrote curiously in an editorial of April 1802:

We are far indeed from being the panegyrist of Bonaparte...But the more dishonest we admit the Chief Consul to be in his professions, the more we behold him, in order to secure his situation, compelled to consult the will of the people...the more we behold the Triumph of Public Opinion.¹²⁸

The Friends of Peace were also bitterly dissatisfied with the British government and press’s attitudes towards France during the negotiations for peace in 1801. Currie believed that “Buonaparte was not disposed to war” but “the irritations of the press have had more share in producing war than any other cause.”¹²⁹ With the renewal of the war in 1803, their hopes turned to disillusionment with Napoleon and his autocratic imperialism.

The path the Friends of Peace took to the formation of the new Friends of Reform society in 1810 differed greatly from the transition that occurred in Manchester, where the MCS were superseded by a new generation of radicals who would organise the reform petitions and Hampden clubs in Manchester.¹³⁰ This contrast reflected the different political outlooks and atmospheres in the two towns. The radical silence during the 1800s saw the Liverpool circle become actively involved in middle-class economic campaigns against the Orders in Council, the slave trade and the East India Company monopoly. It is significant that they did not in any way attempt to re-ignite the vigorous campaign of 1788-91 for repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, despite most Dissenters believing they had proved their loyalty during the invasion scares and their

¹²⁷ LivRO: 920 CUR 6, Currie to Creevey, 25 January 1801; Note also Currie’s efforts assisting French Prisoners of War, A. de Curzon, *Dr James Currie and the French Prisoners of War in Liverpool, 1800-1801* (Liverpool, 1926); See S. Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (2004), p.24, for the Lake Poets and other republicans’ continued optimism with regards Napoleon in 1800; also, E. Tangye-Lean, *The Napoleonists, a Study in Political Disaffection, 1760-1960* (Oxford, 1970).

¹²⁸ *Cowdroy’s*, 24 April 1802.

¹²⁹ Currie, *Memoir*, v.1, p.362, Currie to Creevey, 21 May 1803.

vigorous support for Catholic relief from 1806. They maintained their prominence and respect within the ruling local elite and Whig aristocracy while still opposing government. Their involvement in the peace campaign centred on publishing pamphlets and organising petitions, but they managed to maintain their respectability.

Despite their sympathies for revolutionary France in the 1790s, the Friends of Peace were not English Jacobins in the 1800s. Cookson applied the epithet 'liberal' to their political views while Spence has termed them reactionary or 'romantic radicals.'¹³¹ Reactionary or romantic radicalism involved not new Paineite ideas but had its roots in a Burkeite loyalist emphasis on an organic constitution and state. A central theme of reactionary radicalism was the corruption of constitution and a vocal opposition to a Pittite "boroughmongering faction" who had encroached upon the liberties of the press and judiciary and extended the libel and treason laws.¹³² Anti-Pittism was a key theme in many of their writings and addresses. Unlike other radicals, they actively campaigned for Catholic Relief. Reform was in essence Whiggish in tone and aim. Roscoe's recommendations on reform in 1810 pamphlet addressed to Henry Brougham were moderate: a limit on numbers of inferior placemen in House of Commons, a correction of the corrupt representation of Scotland, the elective franchise to English copyholders and the foundations of borough reform.¹³³

This moderation can be attributed to their mistrust of the 'mob' which followed Burdett in London and the mass platform in general. This was another feature of in the 1800s which distinguished them from other radical circles. Disorderly or immoral working classes had no place in their view of society (unlike Hanson's courting of and

¹³⁰ See chapter 7, p.271.

¹³¹ Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism*.

¹³² Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism*, p.20.

campaigning for the weavers over the minimum wage and peace issues).¹³⁴ Unitarianism incorporated a patriarchal structure even among those most enamoured of the free market, exemplified by the Greg family at their factory at Styal with its paternalistic hierarchy. It encouraged a particular view of the ideal working class: William Rathbone's father-in-law, Richard Reynolds, wrote to his daughter Hannah about the wages dispute between manufacturers and weavers in Manchester in 1808: "I suppose there will continue to be many deserving poor families and individuals where circumstances make further relief necessary, and whose sobriety, industry, orderly conduct and cleanliness, entitle them to the notice of their neighbours."¹³⁵

Mistrust of the Burdettite 'mob' furthermore formed part of a stance of opposition to the metropolis and an assertion of respectable provincial and civic identity. Roscoe wrote to Lord Holland after his election victory in November 1806: "I lament with your Lordship the extremes to which a good and virtuous man like Sir Francis Burdett allows himself to be carried; and fear that a line of demarcation between the firm consistent and temperate friends of liberty and those who allow their feelings on this subject to mislead their judgement, must ere long be drawn." He significantly believed that "this want of union" among radicals was less important because of the strength of provincial radical identity. He argued: "the rational friends of freedom should rely on their own efforts, than that they should be led by the desire of effecting this purpose, to countenance measures which they cannot appear or should even suffer their cause to be injured in the public eye by any association with crude, inexpedient or injudicious designs."¹³⁶ Roscoe was not merely pandering to Holland; he was very much a Foxite Whig, as were his Liverpudlian colleagues, again which made them somewhat distinct from other radical

¹³³ W. Roscoe, *A Letter to Henry Brougham Esq on the Subject of Reform* (Liverpool, 1811), p.15.

¹³⁴ See chapter 7, p.255.

¹³⁵ Liv.Univ.: R.P. III.1.96., Reynolds to Rathbone, 6 June 1808.

groups elsewhere. Dr Currie had already written to Creevey in November 1802 about his pity for Fox's current position in having to resort to popular politics: "to think of a man fit to make England and Europe listen and obey, being asked to lead the drunken mob of Sir Francis Burdett, or to fight election squabbles in a committee."¹³⁷ Reform for the Liverpool circle therefore had little to do with emancipating the working classes. They were proud of their composition as an "independent" middle class, but they did not refuse aristocratic links, and did not feel it their responsibility to push forward the specific needs of the working classes with whom they had little contact. In 1812, Roscoe expressed to Brougham a revealing insight into his political position: "I consider myself in some degree as a sort of connecting link between the more aristocratic and democratic friends of our cause, and if I were to give way to every popular impulse I should not only act against my own feelings, which revolt at all extremes, but do essential injury to the cause."¹³⁸ His actions had been influenced by this self-consciousness about his role and fulfilled it.

Cookson's "final analysis" concludes that the actions of the Friends of Peace were "founded on their opposition to oligarchical society." Hence their campaign against the war was "a 'symbolic' protest against a ruling class and the social system on which it depended."¹³⁹ Lewis has also argued for a "building of a bourgeois-radical narrative defined in opposition to an aristocratic state at the national level and to a developing Toryism at the local level."¹⁴⁰ This may have been the case with the Royton radicals and more republican strands such as the UE, although their aims were unclear or bound up

¹³⁶ BL: Add 51650, fo.92, Roscoe to Holland, 13 November 1806.

¹³⁷ Currie, *Memoir*, vol 2, p.360.

¹³⁸ R.G. Thorne, *History of Parliament, 1790-1820*, vol V (Cambridge CDROM), p.45.

¹³⁹ Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, p.118.

¹⁴⁰ B. Lewis, ' "A Republic of Quakers": the Radical Bourgeoisie, the State and Stability in Lancashire, 1789-1851,' in A. Kidd and D. Nicholls, eds., *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity Since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), p.86.

with the Irish issue. The Friends of Peace certainly chose not to put themselves in this position. They survived without arrest or even censorship precisely because they had close links with aristocracy and co-operation with Tory-Anglican loyalist elites in civic institutions. Their behaviour and most of their rhetoric would suggest that they supported the existing hierarchical situation and wished only for change where there was corruption. They clashed with loyalist authorities during 1806-8,¹⁴¹ but on the whole, reaction to an aristocratic loyalism did not form part of the making of their brand of radicalism. They and their friends may have resented the Corporation's hold on all the institutions of local government, but this emanated from their inheritance from Rational Dissent, a desire for freedom of expression rather than an inherent hatred of the Tory-Anglican hierarchy, a wish for less state interference in personal religious and political affairs rather than a demand for immediate representation and equality.

The circle as an intellectual group remained respected members of Liverpool polite society. Roscoe's literary merits as well as his wealth helped him rise to the highest status. His most noted work was *Lorenzo di Medici*, first published in 1796 to international literary acclaim. Its reputation was enhanced locally by his explicit Venetian analogies with contemporary Liverpool, flattering the merchants' wealth and political position.¹⁴² In January 1802, the freedom of the town was unanimously conferred on Dr Currie in acknowledgement of "his very great attention, skills and abilities" as one of the physicians to the Infirmary.¹⁴³ Roscoe and Rathbone were especially prominent in helping establish many of the plethora of civic and intellectual institutions which were set up at this time of growing urban pride and wealth. Roscoe corresponded regularly with Lord Derby, the Duke of Gloucester and Lord Holland, who patronised him in both his

¹⁴¹ See Chapter 7.

¹⁴² Wilson, *Culture and Commerce*, pp.77-8; W. Roscoe, *The Life of Lorenzo di Medici* (1796).

¹⁴³ Currie, *Memoir*, vol 1, p.343.

literary and political endeavours. This was reflective of how he could fit, when he wanted to, into Whig loyalism. Lord Derby wrote in February 1808 about Roscoe's pamphlet calling for peace: "the sentiments of which I heartily agree. I see nothing in the continuance of the war but misery and ultimate ruin."¹⁴⁴ Despite becoming disillusioned with the Whigs after the ministry of All the Talents,¹⁴⁵ they maintained close relations with the 'Mountain.' Rathbone wrote to Roscoe from Mascalls Hotel in London in February 1808: "Mr Brougham breakfasted here this morning and is gone with W.R. etc to Lord Grey and Ld Erskine."¹⁴⁶ The Foxite MP Thomas Creevey played the faithful role of their eyes and ears in the Commons, corresponding and meeting regularly with Currie, Roscoe and Rathbone.¹⁴⁷ They involved themselves personally with the Whigs in campaigns against the Orders in Council and EIC monopoly. Cookson's anti-oligarchic argument fits uneasily with the society in which Roscoe, Rathbone and Currie mixed, particularly considering the contact and standing they had in civic institutions and the aristocracy.

Radicalism of the general population

Among the general population, radicalism was a process of opposition, influenced by levels of local suppression. Robert Walker's main criticism of magistrates in *Plebeian Politics* was against their over-zealous hunt for 'Jacobins,' and indeed how they had expanded the meaning of Jacobin to encompass anybody who opposed them, whether they had radical principles or not. This was directed to a local audience as well as referring to the national situation. 'Whistlepig' recounted a tale of 'Warhawks' watching a

¹⁴⁴ Liv.RO: 920 ROS 1192, Derby to Roscoe, 9 February 1808.

¹⁴⁵ 920 ROS 3060, Rathbone to Roscoe, 22 April 1807; BL: Add 51650, fo.106, Roscoe to Holland, 1 February 1808.

¹⁴⁶ 920 ROS 3061, Rathbone to Roscoe, 29 February 1808.

¹⁴⁷ J. Gore, ed., *Thomas Creevey's Papers, 1793-1838* (Harmondsworth, 1948).

‘Jacobin’ risking his own life in rescuing the workers of a flooded cotton factory in Stockport on 17 August 1799. The “rack of fools” responded ironically about his courage: “it wur a theawsunt pittys ot sitch a mon wur a jakobin.”¹⁴⁸ [it was a thousand pities that such a man was a Jacobin.] It is possible that this was based on a genuine incident with some exaggeration. Walker perhaps wanted to portray real Church-and-King loyalist individuals in the hamlets of Cutler Hill and Wood Houses near Failsworth, with their prejudices against ‘Jacobins’ expressed in petty acts of hostility.¹⁴⁹ The sphere of reference was thus the southeast Pennine towns and their neighbourhoods, including: Ashton, Saddleworth, Failsworth, Stalybridge, Rochdale, Oldham, Dobcross and Middleton. The local loyalists were well known to their immediate neighbours, as were those they berated as ‘Jacobins,’ but beyond the local area, they were anonymous.

The radicalism of the general population was imbued with various Paineite and constitutionalist tropes, but in practice it employed these ideas not so much to construct alternative political systems but rather in reaction against loyalist elites and forces of order. An infamous handbill was pasted on New Bridge Tollgate in Manchester in November 1800 which associated magistrates and constables with national radical enemies:

No peace, No King,
To kill Billy Pitt it is no sin
Likewise Justice Bayley and all his kin
No forgetting Farrington, Leaf and Milnes,
When they are hung we will have our fills
Also Lloyd and Topping too.
We will have a big loaf for a shilling
Or else the Justices we will be killing.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Walker, *Plebeian Politics*, 18.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 34-5.

¹⁵⁰ HO 42/53, handbill enclosed in Bayley to Home Office, 30 November 1800.

Republican rhetoric is evident in this, together with more traditional tropes of ‘a big loaf.’ Hostility to both Pitt and local Pittite magistrates reflected the connections made between local and national politics.

Throughout the Napoleonic Wars, the targets for attack in food riots, political gatherings and Luddite agitation were the magistracy and clergy more than manufacturers. This was only in part an obvious reaction by an angry crowd when approached by the first face of loyalist authority. Most crowds were assembled for a purpose, either planned in advance or directed by activists, so attacks on justices were not merely unfortunate irrational expressions of over-heated passions.¹⁵¹ A food riot occurred in Ashton-under-Lyne on 3 February 1800, at which the Captain of the Ashton Volunteers defending a warehouse claimed: “the rioters laid hold of him and Mr Popit the Clergyman at Ashton and carried them away some yards.” The Captain also alleged that when magistrate Rev William Hay arrived, a member of the crowd shouted: “ ‘Now Lads this is the time Stone that devil to death,’ meaning Mr Hay.”¹⁵² It is an interesting testimony to the crowd knowing its own limits in that no magistrates or manufacturers were actually murdered in this period, though their property was attacked without reserve. Workers in trade combinations knew exactly who to target: during the handloom weavers’ strikes of 1808, protestors “collected opposite to where the Magistrates were assembled transacting public business,” on the top of Yorkshire Street in Rochdale. The strikers then rioted outside the prison, eventually burning it down to release their fellow weavers imprisoned inside.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ G. Rudé, *The Crowd in History, 1730-1848: a Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England* (1964).

¹⁵² PRO: PL 27/7, examination of John Smith, 4 July 1800.

¹⁵³ PL 27/8, part 2, ‘confession of John Shepherd,’ 20 June 1808; see chapter 6, p.217.

Thompson and later historians of popular protest have concluded that the targeting of magistrates and clergy marked the destruction of the 'moral economy' of the eighteenth century and a politicisation of the working classes.¹⁵⁴ Calhoun and Bohstedt linked the nature of protest to varying patterns of authority within territorial communities. Propensity to disorder and radicalism thereby increased with urbanisation and industrialisation, which they believed destroyed the confines of cross-class community and authority. In this period, a middle ground was created by industrial villages and in small town and urban communities of artisans and outworkers, where "resident authority was weak but a sense of working-class autonomy was strong, enabling a greater degree of concerted collective action."¹⁵⁵ It was among these communities where Thompson found the making of the English working class and where radicalism and other protests flourished. From 1795, the cultural hegemony that Thompson believed resided in the theatre of power of the assizes and quarter sessions and the "equilibrium between paternalist authority and the crowd" was subverted by this sense of independence. The "great and undeferential popular agitations at the end of the French Wars" were therefore the product of an inherent independence among artisans newly freed from the cultural and ideological paternalism of the gentry class.¹⁵⁶

Thompson's portrayal of the tensions within local societies remains true for the patterns of agitation in Lancashire. The region was composed of a patchwork of levels of authority, and some areas such as 'Tameside' were particularly radically active because of a lack of supervision and the ambiguous jurisdictional boundaries.¹⁵⁷ It is however too

¹⁵⁴ A. Booth, 'Food Riots in the North West of England, 1790-1801,' *P & P*, 77 (1977), 84-107; J. Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810* (Harvard, 1983).

¹⁵⁵ C. Calhoun, 'Community, Class and Collective Action: Popular Protest in Industrialising England and the Theory of Working-Class Radicalism' (Oxford Univ. DPhil thesis, 1979), p.102.

¹⁵⁶ E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1991), p.86; P. King, 'Edward Thompson's Contribution to Eighteenth Century Studies: the Patrician-Plebeian Model Re-Examined,' *JH*, 21 (1996), 222.

¹⁵⁷ See chapter 8, p.317.

deterministic to attribute disorder to the social structure of towns without accounting for the importance of individual personalities. Calhoun and Bohstedt underestimated the continued social mixing and lack of segregation and placed too sharp a distinction between artisanal and factory workers, particularly in Manchester. Some towns and villages where magistrates were overtly 'active' with spies and arrests often aroused more reaction among their inhabitants, particularly in Bolton, Oldham and Stockport. The actions of crowds in food riots and other disturbances therefore demonstrated rather their astute reaction to a situation where national orders and edicts were channelled through the magistrates. The Two Acts and Combination Acts were often experienced in their local context carried into effect by magistrates, heightened by the use of local spies paid by the government. Nor were many of the Lancashire weaving and bleaching villages wholly devoid of paternalistic authority; feasts, charity schools and soup shops supported by local landowners and lords of the manor were still a feature of the lives of the general population in many areas.¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, the moral economy was not necessarily politicised or radicalised by the 1800s. A shared sense of what justice should entail was still enacted. In 1809, Rowbottom described an incident where a man convicted of begging was "tied to a cart tail and whipped [*sic*] through Oldham" by the constable Richard Brown. The response was a reassertion of the moral economy: "the audience particularly the females were highly incenced [*sic*] against the treatment and gave vent to their disapprobation by insulting and stoneing His Honor Mr Brown."¹⁵⁹ Here again the inhabitants demonstrated an amorphous but defiant stance forged against what they regarded were the injustices effected by loyalist elites and forces of order. It was a continued

¹⁵⁸ See for example JRLUM: EGR 4/1, papers of 5th Earl of Stamford and Warrington; LCRO: DDLi, box 57, Lilford papers.

¹⁵⁹ Rowbottom diaries, 3-4 August 1809.

conservative defence of the moral economy, which was more reactionary than radical, despite the altered connotations of crowd action after 1792.

Radicalism in Lancashire during the Napoleonic Wars was a tense composite of various strands of political thought, disparate connections and attitudes towards the role of working classes within the political nation. Its activity was however circumscribed less by these divisions and more by the continued surveillance of the Church-and-King local elites. Radical activists were disparate, silent or hidden in their own communities, focused their energies on less controversial campaigns or spoke out intermittently when the atmosphere of suspicion lightened. The range of radical opinions and rhetorical strategies was wide and often diffuse or conflicting, but all had in common a committed political opposition to Church-and-King loyalism locally and nationally. A sense of local identity and provincial independence also infused their actions on and off the electoral platform. Although lone voices in the 1800s, their attitudes against parliamentary corruption, loyalist repression and the war effort provided a solid basis for renewed popular agitation for reform from 1808.

DEFINING POPULAR PATRIOTISM

Part I:

Facing Napoleon and Parliament

Patriotism, either avowed or assumed, enabled individuals to feel part of the nation as constituted in opposition to revolutionary France and then against Napoleon. The difficulty lay in defining what exactly they were defending. Historians have referred to ‘surges’ or ‘waves’ to explain the apparent effusions of popular loyalism along with a more consistent but more ebullient patriotism during the invasion scares of 1797-8 and 1803-5. This assumes that the general population had an inconsistent propensity to adhere to whatever ideological trend was most likely to be to their advantage. Loyalism is therefore depicted as ephemeral or an unstable phenomenon, easily eclipsed by riots or radical protest, rather than being consistent and genuine.¹ Patriotism by contrast could encompass both loyalist anxieties to defend the British ‘constitution’ and radical aspirations to reform it.² A considerable range of nuance thus lay between anxious Church-and-King loyalist manufacturers and clergy preaching obedience and the rational

¹ C. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism During the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1982).

² M. Pottle, ‘Loyalism and Patriotism in Nottingham, 1792-1816’ (Oxford Univ. DPhil thesis, 1988), p.292; M. Philp, ‘Disconcerting Ideas: Explaining Popular Radicalism and Popular Loyalism in the 1790s’ (unpub. ms., 2000); H. Cunningham, ‘The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914,’ *History Workshop Journal*, 12 (1981), 8-33.

Christians committed solely to defence.³ The general population inhabited a range of positions between the two extremes, where ideological or political attitudes were tempered by a variety of other considerations including self-preservation and civic identity.

The distinction between activist and popular loyalism helps to resolve this historiographical confusion. In the 1800s, the need to unite the nation through patriotism forced popular loyalism to change its mode of expression in public life. Napoleon was intriguing because he was not the simple French 'other' that the *ancien régime* and the Jacobins had provided: his ambiguous and fluctuating political and religious character and empire was not always seen as a polar opposite to Britain. This brought into question the very nature of British identity.⁴ Irrational emotion or anger were no longer a common scene on the streets, as they had been in the early 1790s when William Rowbottom noted in his diary: "peoples' minds far from temperate for a kind of frenzy [h]as burst out amongst the people of this land under the cover of loyalty and shielded by the cry [sic] of Church and King and Constitution have burst out their disgust against the people that have countenanced the opinion of Thomas Pain."⁵ The attendees at Paine-effigy burnings may not have shared the strong ideological convictions of their local loyalist sponsors and therefore saw no need in continuing the protests without activist instigation after the early 1790s.

Loyalist sentiment expressed through the medium of patriotism did not represent an identical sense of reaction shared among the whole nation. It cannot be assumed that the

³ B. Lewis, 'Bourgeois Ideology and Order: Middle-Class Culture and Politics in Lancashire, 1789-1851' (Harvard Univ. PhD thesis, 1994), p.20.

⁴ See S. Semmel, *Napoleon and the British* (2004).

⁵ Rowbottom diaries, 4 January 1793.

general population were passive recipients of propaganda presented to them by Church-and-King elites.⁶ The real situation was more complex. As with patriotism, there was scope for opposition or questioning within what were the somewhat ambiguous tenets of popular loyalism. If 'waves' of popular feeling surfaced in this period, they were expressions of grievance from within a persistent if amorphous loyalism. Some individuals may have felt swayed by distress to support the mass peace meetings of 1795, while others may have simply felt the initial danger from radicalism had been quelled by local and national repression. This does not lessen the sincerity of their loyalism but illustrates the range of options available after the initial reaction of the early 1790s. During the invasion scares, popular loyalism was not merely a mindless upsurge of atavistic patriotic passion, but a "subtle compound of nationalistic pride, fear of uncontrollable unrest, economic calculation and social aspiration."⁷ Among the general population, this could mean no more than a willingness to acquiesce to the unreformed state and monarchy. It is therefore more difficult to chart than elite loyalism because of the room it allowed for ideological manoeuvre. Popular loyalism channelled through the conduit of patriotism was therefore not solely a reaction to Jacobinism or the French but also involved a sense of provincial opposition to parliament against its views of what the nation should represent.

Economic distress and the invasion scares, 1798-1805

The poor harvests and high food prices of the turn of the century disrupted public order and affected patriotism in response to the first serious French invasion threat of 1798. Rowbottom intimated how 1799 was a particularly bad year. His personal view of the

⁶ M. Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3,' *EHR*, 110 (1995), 44.

⁷ S.C. Smith, 'Loyalty and Opposition in the Napoleonic Wars: the Impact of the Local Militia, 1807-15' (Oxford Univ. DPhil thesis, 1984), p.ix.

economic situation in Oldham was often prone to overstatement – events were often the worst ‘in the memory of the oldest person living’ – but his impressions were reflective of popular reactions to wider patterns in wages and prices. He was sympathetic towards the weavers’ plight in these lean years; on New Years’ Day 1799, he bemoaned: “Roast beef, Pies and Ale are not to be seen in the poor mans table on the contrary it is grazed with Misery and Want and a universal lowness of spirits and dejected countenance appear in every one.” He was well aware of the wider regional economic connections exacerbating distress; on 28 February 1799, he wrote: “Never in the memory of the oldest person living was weaving at a lower Eb than at present especially Fustians for it is an absolute fact that Goods within this last fortnight have lowered in Manchester Market astonishingly so that the Masters have lowered the wages at least 5s a piece.”⁸ Wheat prices reached their highest wartime level in April 1801.⁹ In September 1800, Lord Lilford attempted to alleviate the situation by sending the grain produced on his estate to Atherton market at a “respectable price,” but by March 1801 his steward indicated the sense of unease in districts that had not as yet broken out into the food rioting that was blighting public order across the region:

If the explosion do take place it will be dreadful and I confess I do not at present see how it will be avoided – The poor are absolutely starving for want of food and clothing...The manufacturers are already beginning to reduce their work people and I look forward with the most alarming apprehensions to the moment when the Port of Hamburgh will be against us.¹⁰

The economic impact of the peace preliminaries of October 1801 was immediate. On 16 November, Rowbottom reported ‘briskness’ in weaving and spinning; the reaction of the populace was one of relief and calm: “upon the whole the very countenance of the poor

⁸ Rowbottom diaries.

⁹ See Appendix IV:i for graph.

¹⁰ LCRO: DDLi, box 57, Lilford to Hodgkinson, 27 September 1800; Hodgkinson to Lilford, 22 March 1801.

is altered...we meet with nothing worse than courteous smiles, so much for the Blessed Peace.” He connected the “universal Joy” with high wages, as on 18 February 1802, “mule spinning is behind [beyond] all Imagination for a man upon average earns 30s a week.” It is difficult to confirm the generality of this statement for various methodological difficulties in assessing average wage rates.¹¹ Nevertheless the impression Rowbottom amongst other diarists and magistrates’ observations gave was that the brief period of peace was one of general respite and optimism.

The celebrations of the peace preliminaries however marked the beginning of an uncomfortable period for many loyalist activists and governing elites. They had publicly (or at least in the eyes of radicals) to re-evaluate the nature of their opposition to revolutionary France as well as their attachment to the British government. John Holden of Bolton saw no contradiction with his loyalism when he wrote in his diary about the general illumination on 15 October 1801: “the greatest rejoicing took place in Manchester God save the King!”¹² Rowbottom by contrast made a telling comment about the Middleton ‘day of rejoicing’ with regards what he saw as the hypocrisy of Church-and-King loyalists: “Notwithstanding they have been such staunch advocates for the last just and honorable war as they termed it.”¹³ Accounts of Napoleon in a positive light soon appeared. Tourists flocked across the Channel to catch sight of him; these included Lancashire loyalists as well as radicals, who also had French business contacts to renew.¹⁴ The brevity of the peace of 1801-2 and reports of Napoleon’s treachery and double-dealing therefore saved loyalists from having to reconcile their anti-Gallicanism with renewal of British relations with France.

¹¹ See F. Collier, *The Family Economy of the Working Classes in the Cotton Industry, 1784-1833* (Manchester, 1964).

¹² Holden diaries.

¹³ Rowbottom diaries.

¹⁴ Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*, p.29. See LSE Special Collections: Misc 0146, Potter family mss.

The invasion threat from 1803 produced an atmosphere of serious determination in contrast to the ebullient patriotism during the previous scares of 1798. This was in part because loyalist elites were obliged to mobilise a wider patriotism into action to fulfil the *levée en masse*. The economic situation began to decline with the resumption of war, but not so sharply as to affect general morale. The huge scale of military participation from the whole nation was unprecedented. The raising of volunteer regiments involved almost a fifth of adult males and the auxiliary efforts of their families.¹⁵ This meant that the volunteer corps of 1803 contained a wider spread of religious and political views. In Ulverston, non-Anglican volunteers were allowed to fall out of their church parades to attend their own chapels.¹⁶ This was momentarily enforced by an idealised patriotism; the *Manchester Mercury* declared:

We shall soon behold the rich and the poor harmoniously blended and mixed together in the same corps in the same line – We shall see the labourer and the mechanic, after the day's business is over, assembling with their fellow citizens, to learn the use of arms.¹⁷

This was a reality in many regiments as a consequence of manufacturers recruiting their workmen, or whole villages forming one corps. Some religious and political fissures could therefore be bridged through volunteering; this was particularly a feature of smaller towns where the wealthy inhabitants were all known to each other. Despite the Whig-Tory conflict amongst the officers of the two Preston volunteer regiments at the contested election of 1807, twenty-one privates from each regiment who can be identified voted for the independent radical Joseph Hanson.¹⁸ Similarly, in the Liverpool election of 1806, although volunteer officers voted overwhelmingly for the two sitting

¹⁵ J.E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1997), p.101.

¹⁶ P.D.R. Borwick, 'An English Provincial Society, North Lancashire 1770-1820' (Lancaster Univ. PhD thesis, 1994), p.275.

¹⁷ *MM*, 2 August 1803.

¹⁸ See chapter 7.

military members, the voting of the privates was more mixed, some voting for the Whig-radical contestee, William Roscoe.¹⁹

Volunteering could not have been anything but decentralised and highly individualised. However much it was couched in patriotic British rhetoric, volunteering solidified local identities in potential opposition to national control. Regiments were independent of each other, initially electing their own officers and selected their own rank and file. According to the December 1803 returns, Lancashire possessed a total of 53 volunteer regiments, with 14,278 rank-and-file and 61 field officers.²⁰ Manchester had nine regiments of over 4000 rank-and-file; Liverpool had eight regiments of over 2000.²¹ All served under different conditions and varying levels of pay. 'Independent' companies of volunteers were either accepted under the June allowances or raised by commanders at their own expense. The volunteers were by no means a homogeneous, nationally-controlled force by design and result.

It is clear that the popularity of volunteering during 1803-5 demonstrated what Cookson terms "national defence patriotism," rather than any strict adherence to Church-and-King loyalist principles. This patriotism was personal, localist and often motivated by instincts of self-preservation rather than out of a sense of public spiritedness or loyalist reaction against radicals.²² Volunteering could however arouse hesitant or hostile reactions, especially among nonconformist congregations. Samuel Bamford "immediately

¹⁹ *The Whole of the Addresses, Squibs, Songs...* (Preston, 1807); *A Collection of Addresses, Songs, Squibs etc...* (Liverpool, 1807).

²⁰ PP 1803, Returns of Volunteer Corps.

²¹ J. Fortescue, *County Lieutenancies and the Army, 1803-14* (1909), p.79.

²² Cookson, *British Armed Nation*, p. 236; J.E. Cookson, 'The English Volunteer Movement of the French Wars, 1793-1815: Some Contexts,' *HJ*, 32 (1989), 867-91; A. Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement, 1794-1814* (Oxford, 2003).

offered” himself when he heard the recruiting parties’ drums in Middleton in 1803 and 1806, but his aunt reprimanded him for enlisting, saying “it was the first time a cockade had ever been worn by one of their family, and that I was in the way to perdition.”²³

The privates of volunteer corps may not have shared their officers’ views on loyalism and the nature of patriotism but both shared a common opposition to compulsion. This underlay most of the conflicts over questions of authority, state control and pay that filled the Home Office defence papers from 1803.²⁴ Radicals and loyalists alike conveyed a sense of local identity and opposition to intrusive government orders regarding the volunteers. The issue of compulsion by the government clouded instinctive patriotism; volunteering was not akin, and indeed opposite in principle to, a ‘fiscal-military state’ run from London. Britishness was therefore associated with ‘liberty’ and freedom to the lowest levels from intrusive edicts of the state. Castlereagh attempted to deal with the problems caused by the heterogeneous nature of the volunteers by transferring them into the more centrally controlled local militia in 1807.²⁵ Opposition was exemplified in the memorial to Lord Hawkesbury written by the officers of the Warrington Volunteers in 1809. They had been under the impression that transferral to militia status would not change their identity or officers, but when informed that a “smaller neighbouring corps” would be compulsorily added to theirs, voiced indignation that: “the command of the regiment may be committed, and two at least of our field officers as well as others of lower rank will become supernumerary.”²⁶ This emanated a very strong sense of civic pride, loyalty to their officers and the social status conferred by their positions, and perhaps unfamiliarity with other towns in the wider region. Similarly, the officers of the

²³ S. Bamford, *Early Days* (1849), p.176.

²⁴ PRO: HO 50/73.

²⁵ Smith, ‘Loyalty and Opposition,’ p.57.

²⁶ J.A. Borron, *A Statement of Facts Relative to the Transfer of Services of the Late Warrington Volunteer Corps into the Local Militia* (Warrington, 1809), pp.33-5.

Hulme Volunteers retracted their original offer to transfer when they discovered that they might be consolidated with another larger corps to be placed “under the command perhaps of a stranger, who himself not a man of Business may neglect to consult the convenience of Commercial and Mechanic persons.”²⁷

Fear of the militia ballot was probably the most common experience of all the inhabitants of the region and the country during the wars. There is no doubt that the general population of Lancashire were genuinely anxious about actual invasion but their preferred means of self-defence was through enrolment into a volunteer corps rather than into the militia or army. This does not denigrate the genuine patriotism and loyalty of the population but re-emphasises its preference for local over nationally organised institutions. Dread about the ballot was a running theme of many contemporary diaries and autobiographies, which often dramatically recounted their authors’ close shaves with press gangs as they journeyed or tramped across the country. David Whitehead of Rossendale expressed this in his autobiography with his sole comment on national affairs in this period: “I had always an objection to be a soldier and for fear of being lotted for the old Militia, I volunteered for the Local Militia, as the old Militia were in constant service, but the Local Militia were only to serve a month in the year.” His choice illustrated the degree of self-interest involved, especially with regards working time, and a suspicion of compulsion and the army. With a typically Methodist mindset, he commented on the fact that having been dismayed by the drunken revelry of the other militiamen and he saved the two guineas he received together with the “marching allowance to Blackburn and back” for his mother.²⁸

²⁷ Smith, ‘Loyalty and Opposition,’ p.57; HO 50/196, Pooley to Derby, 1 October 1808.

²⁸ S. Chapman, ed., *The Autobiography of David Whitehead of Rawtenstall, 1790-1865* (Helmshore, 2001), p.12.

The ballot heightened awareness of the direct impact of the state and fostered annual resistance against it. As Quakers, the Cragg family of Wyresdale expressed acute concern with any moves by the state to recruit men in their district and the nation in general.²⁹ The reaction to the war effort in north Lancashire recorded by the Craggs illuminated how national policy was diffused into local rivalries because of the politics of recruitment. The recruiting Act of December 1796 to raise 15,000 men for the Army and Navy resulted in three parishes fighting over the scarce resource of men who were willing to serve.³⁰ One of the men hired for Wyresdale, named Dilworth, came from Garstang, eight miles away. One Cragg noted that Garstang inhabitants were 'vexed' at this and took Dilworth from Lancaster (where he was stationed) and imprisoned him in the House of Correction in Preston. The wrath of the inhabitants of Ellel was also roused when they realised "that Wyresdale folk had hired men for less money than they could do." Following this chain of rumour, the constable of Wyresdale went to see the High Constable at Lancaster, who made a ruling that "Garstang folk had no business" with the fate of the substitute. The spread of this knowledge or rumour consolidated sub-regional identities but also created tensions between localities in times of stress.³¹ The scarcity of men in north Lancashire was on a much more acute scale than in the south: Lonsdale Hundred had the highest bounties for substitutes in the county and some of the highest in the country.³² Whole communities in north Lancashire faced having to lose some of their best men who could otherwise be employed on the farm or

²⁹ LCRO: DDX 760/1, Cragg family memorandum book.

³⁰ LCRO: QDV 1/1/13/10, Lonsdale South Army and Navy Ballot, 1796.

³¹ K.D.M. Snell, 'The Culture of Local Xenophobia,' *JH*, 28 (2003), 1-30.

³² P.B. Park, 'The Lancashire Quota Men of 1795 and 1796' (Lancaster University, Cert. Local History dissertation, 2001), p.11.

were skilled and valued artisans. Liverpool was attracting migrant rural workers away from north Lancashire with promises of higher wages.³³

Militia riots occurred across the country in 1796-7. In January 1797, a crowd broke into the lieutenant's room at Ulverston, hung a magistrate by his ankles out of the window and burned the township lists.³⁴ By contrast, Wyresdale and region did not resort to rioting but resolved their disputes with the system and their neighbouring townships through tense local mediation and administrative structures. This perhaps indicates the different structure and mores of north Lancashire rural society compared with the larger and urban population of the Ulverston region or the port of Lancaster. Similarly, the ballot was evaded through substitute clubs and evading the rules rather than outright refusal, Quakers excepted. The centre of Liverpool was disrupted during major anti-impressment riots in 1809 and 1810, where 'large mobs' violently attempted to release men from the two rendezvous houses in the port.³⁵ Loyalist patriotism during the Napoleonic war was thus always tempered by a strained relationship with the state and its military and financial demands.

'Lancashire Britishness' among volunteers

Volunteers thought of themselves as British, but it was a Britishness which often identified specifically with their town or neighbourhood. The more general sense of 'national defence patriotism' invoked expressions of a regional Britishness. This was reflected in their declarations of where volunteer corps were willing to serve. Many

³³ A. Gritt, 'The "Survival" of Service in the English Agricultural Labour Force: Lessons from Lancashire, c.1650-1851,' *AgriHistRev*, 50 (2002), 25-50.

³⁴ Borwick, 'An English Provincial Society,' pp.264-5.

³⁵ PRO: PL 27/8 part 2, witness statements, 24 June, 21 September 1809, 18 July, 29 August 1810.

would serve within their military district only. Colley attributes this to the variegated nature of a common patriotism; it was also another intimation of loyalism suspicious of government impositions on provincial independence and identities.³⁶ John Cross's regiment of Manchester and Salford volunteers would serve only in their towns and 'vicinity,' as would the Earl of Sefton's Croxteth volunteers.³⁷ Liverpool Port Officers of Customs set up the First Royal Independent Company on the proviso: "that having regard to the importance and indispensable official duty of the individuals of this corps in collecting and guarding the revenue of Customs at this great commercial port, it is hoped that its military duty may be considered as confined to the town of Liverpool."³⁸ Many corps were based entirely on the personalities of their commanders. The Warrington volunteers again were very attached to their officers, many of whom were factory owners and may have employed the 98 weavers among the privates, or rented cottages to the artisans and mechanics who formed the rest of the corps.³⁹ A broadside ballad about the regiment praised the 'Warrington heroes' and each officer in turn. They held their own identity against that of the 'Bluebacks,' the more 'respectable' corps of 1798 who derided their successors as 'Robin Redbreasts.'⁴⁰ There thus appears to have been a clear distinction between the association patriotism of the more gentrified corps of 1798 and the wider social spread in those of 1803.

The British identity of volunteers was associated in south Lancashire towns with industry, particularly when manufacturers enlisted their own workers in their personal corps. John Watson of Preston offered to raise 500 men in Preston, Penwortham and

³⁶ L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992), p.313.

³⁷ PRO: HO 50/75, Internal Defence, Lancaster, January-August 1803.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Warrington Library: MS 11, Warrington Volunteers Muster Roll 1807; Warrington poor rates 1802.

⁴⁰ 'A New Song in Praise of the Warrington Volunteers by J.B., One of the Corps' (1803); J. Kendrick, *Some Account of the Warrington Volunteers* (Warrington, 1856), p.3.

Walton-le-Dale, where his factories were to be found. Sir Robert Peel's brother, Jonathan Peel of Accrington House, embodied the workmen of Peel, Yates and Co's printworks at Church Bank, in a regiment of 500 under his command.⁴¹ A significant example of Lancashire Britishness was displayed in September 1803, when the Duke of Gloucester, Commander General of the North West Military District, travelled around the county inspecting troops and surveying the preparations for defence. In Manchester, the colonels of the volunteer regiments placed great emphasis on their contribution to the national economy. They gave the Prince a tour of their respective factories, printing works and warehouses, including a demonstration of "the operation of weaving the Imperial Arms of the United Kingdom" at Greenwood and Bateman's factory.⁴²

Lancashire British patriotism thus entailed an identification of Lancashire as the cotton textile manufacturing heart of Britain and manufacturing as essential to its success and survival. The aristocracy on the other hand were associated with the regular militia and the army, who had no permanent residence in the region and usually served outside it. Volunteer corps raised by the gentry thus by contrast firmly indicated the geographical extent of their social control: John Trafford Esq of Trafford House, raised a regiment of 350 upon his estates in Barton, Eccles and Stretford.⁴³ When they assembled in Trafford Park in August 1803, his speech proclaimed that Napoleon had pledged to deprive Englishmen of their right to England as a nation and therefore: "The towns of Barton, Stretford and Eccles have sent Heroes to the field, and victory has crowned their zeal."⁴⁴ This therefore, at least in the eyes of Trafford, was an English patriotism rather than British, and a patriotism filtered through and firmly centred around the local identity of

⁴¹ Lewis, 'Bourgeois Ideology and Order,' p.76.

⁴² *BM*, 28 September 1803.

⁴³ *BM*, 24 August 1803.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

the Trafford area and its resident landowner. The Trafford family had fostered recusants on their estates; it is possible that there were Catholics in John Trafford's corps.

Britishness could not be enforced through a centralised system, but one that was variegated and particularist. The nature of geographical identity expressed in north Lancashire in volunteering was diffuse. By contrast with the enthusiasm of manufacturers and lower gentry to set up their own corps in urban centres around the south of the region, there were only two volunteer regiments in north Lancashire: Lancaster and Ulverston. The commander of the Ulverston Volunteer Corps highlighted the problem of recruitment and subscriptions from rural areas; he wrote to the Earl of Derby in August 1803 asking for funds because the local population was "less opulent than many others." He explained that Furness "consists of Five Agricultural Townships, principally occupied by Tenants at Rack Rents, and thinly inhabited." Only 380 men could be collected in a district of over thirty miles in extent "dispersed in small bodies through twenty-nine townships."⁴⁵ Colonel Sunderland's speech at the presentation of the colours to the Ulverston Volunteers expressed a combined awareness of nation and the strength of local identities:

To the credit of this little town, with pride I speak it, this general ardour has in no quarter of the Kingdom shone with brighter lustre...I must give equal praise to the men of Bardsea and those in our ranks from neighbouring townships, who eagerly joined our small but choice Battalion.⁴⁶

Local rivalries affected service and illustrated inter-regional divisions. The Ulverston Volunteers disbanded in October 1806. Col Sunderland, in a private letter to Derby, attributed this to a lack of financial support: "from the opulent on this side of the

⁴⁵ HO 50/75, Sunderland to Derby, 13 August 1803.

⁴⁶ A. Fell, *A Furness Military Chronicle* (1937), p.124.

Sands.”⁴⁷ The magistrate William Fleming of Pennington went further in explaining their failure. He noted in his memorandum book on 27 October 1806 that the ‘Gentlemen in Furness’ subscribed to the corps, “whilst those People of property who lived in Furness Fells, secure in their native Hills, contributed very little towards their support.” The fund failed after two years, the accounts were examined and “it was found that they had spent near three thousand pounds and were £600 in debt.” Fleming alleged the officers had been extravagant in their use of the money so the subscribers had refused to continue contributing.⁴⁸ The response to the state’s needs for manpower was inevitably diffused through local mechanisms and could not guarantee an enthusiastic or patriotic return. By contrast, funds were overflowing at the disbandment of the Manchester volunteer regiments in 1807.⁴⁹

Popular celebrations of national events, Trafalgar in particular, were further expressions of the double-edged nature of patriotism and popular loyalism. Loyalist elites and the government may have intended that national celebrations of naval victories to be a way of inculcating a deeper allegiance to the monarchy and unreformed state. The crowds at such events, although the sincerity of their patriotism and loyalism was mostly genuine, still maintained the capability to criticise. Popular patriotism often did not venture beyond the ‘wooden walls of Old England’ to an unquestioning attachment to the monarchy. Semmel has argued how the change in the French threat from Jacobins to Napoleon blurred the contrast between Britain and France which had previously defined the former’s national identity: “Britons of all political temperaments read in Napoleon’s complicated, ambiguous person lessons about their own government and nation,”

⁴⁷ Borwick, ‘An English Provincial Society,’ p.139.

⁴⁸ CuRO: Diaries of William Fleming, vol IV.

⁴⁹ MCL: MS BR 21/BR F 356.M12, Accounts of the Treasurers to the Committee for General Defence, Manchester.

including a propensity to repressive political rule and centralisation.⁵⁰ All the Lancashire diaries and autobiographies highlighted Trafalgar in the midst of their domestic detail, reflecting on Admiral Nelson's complex personal role as victor and martyr.⁵¹ The cult of Nelson increased its importance in patriotic celebrations, often at the expense of representations of the monarchy. It could also be construed as subversive. Nelson's career was read in some circles as a commentary on the establishment's ingratitude for spectacular victories and on the ways in which political and social influence affected the distribution of national honours. Many perhaps preferred a somewhat maverick hero to a royal family and government that was beginning to be revealed as corrupt as soon as Nelson had been interred.⁵² This was only briefly assuaged after the end of the war and Waterloo. During the general illumination of April 1814, the transparencies on display in almost every house in Manchester and Salford generally demonstrated that individuals had absorbed the symbolism and stereotypes of caricatures and loyalist pamphlets. The most common figure on display was Wellington, followed by George III and the Prince Regent. The return of criticism of the monarchy soon after Waterloo, building up to the Queen Caroline affair, illustrated that this attachment was conditional and complex.⁵³ The monarchy was not and could not be regarded as the sole representatives of true Britishness, if at all, over and above party factionalism: it was rather naval and army heroes who played that role.

Lancashire and Parliament

⁵⁰ Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*, p.6.

⁵¹ See Fleming diary, 10 November 1805, for illuminations in Ulverston and Dalton.

⁵² G. Jordan and N. Rogers, 'Admirals as Heroes: Patriotism and Liberty in Hanoverian England,' *JBS*, 28 (1989), 201-224; see chapter 7, p.262.

⁵³ *Cowdroy's*, 23 April 1814; E.A. Smith, *A Queen on Trial: the Affair of Queen Caroline* (Stroud, 1993).

The region's relationship with parliament was yet another indication of and influence on a sense of Lancashire Britishness. Parliament was still seen as enabling rather than dictating legislation, even after the Reform Act and new Poor Law.⁵⁴ The powers of provincial elites were therefore strengthened as they were bestowed with more responsibilities. Interested parties used parliament as an enabler for local acts that they put forward, often with the aim of protecting the regional economy. They themselves became responsible for translating the measures into practice on the ground.⁵⁵ Innes has seen this relationship as "a feature of a particular phase of British constitutional development," when the idea of the supremacy of national statutes had been established, but were used only in response to provincial requests rather than as centrally-enforced government policies.⁵⁶

In this period, the House of Commons performed the function of facilitating interests and arbitrating between disputing sections of provincial society.⁵⁷ Magistrates often travelled to London to support bills in which their towns had specific concerns. John Entwisle JP of Rochdale wrote in his account book on 27 May 1805 about a bill for providing an increased salary for the chairman of the Salford magistrates. He: "accompanied Messrs Hay, Leaf and Gorst to the House of Commons," heard the third reading which passed and "dined together afterwards at the St. Albans Hotel."⁵⁸ The Liverpool Corporation minute book contains frequent votes of thanks and financial gifts to merchants for their activities defending the slave trade in London. Liverpool was

⁵⁴ R. Sweet, 'Local Identities and a National Parliament, 1688-1835,' in J. Hoppit, *Parliaments, Nations and Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1660-1850* (Manchester, 2003), 48-63.

⁵⁵ P. Langford, 'Property and Virtual Representation in Eighteenth-Century England,' *HJ*, 31 (1988), 83-115.

⁵⁶ J. Innes, 'The Local Acts of a National Parliament,' in D. Dean and C. Jones, eds., *Parliament and Locality, 1660-1939* (Edinburgh, 1998), p.33.

⁵⁷ D. Eastwood, 'Parliament and Locality: Representation and Responsibility in Late-Hanoverian England,' in Dean and Jones, *Parliament and Locality*, p.74.

⁵⁸ GMCRO: E/Fox/11/D, account book of J. Entwisle Esq of Rochdale.

particularly active in this period. Liverpool Corporation and merchants among other inhabitants petitioned the Commons 825 times from 1775-1835, with the two most popular topics of petitions being economic regulation and civic improvement. The Liverpool American Chamber of Commerce, after initial reluctance, set up a London office to co-ordinate its lobbying of parliament.⁵⁹

Liverpudlian merchants, both West Indian and American, recognised the need for state policies to back successful enterprise but were keen to stress their distinctive economic identity. The strength of the various special interest groups in the town was perhaps unusual. The focus of civic identity of all of the region's boroughs lay in their chartered privileges. This critique of parliamentary interference or obstruction of local needs was shared by both constitutionalist radicals and loyalists. The 'independence' both of candidates and voters was a vivid and essential theme running through most squibs and speeches of borough elections and would gain new significance during the anti-corruption campaign later in the decade.⁶⁰ For other towns, particularly non-boroughs, enclosure and turnpike bills took up much attention. These concerns still evinced this sort of feeling of independence and identity, and this suggests why the anti-corruption campaign was able to take root so successfully later in decade, because it was able to build upon provincial opposition to parliament.⁶¹

The representation of Lancashire in parliament by its MPs also perpetuated feelings of provincial opposition and identity. It demonstrated how members saw the role of

⁵⁹ LivRO: 252 MIN/COU I, Liverpool Corporation minute book; J. Civin, 'Slaves, Sati and Sugar, Constructing Imperial Identity through Liverpool Petition Struggles,' in Hoppit, *Parliaments, Nations and Identities*, pp.187-8.

⁶⁰ R. Sweet, 'Freemen and Independence in English Borough Politics, c.1770-1830,' *P & P*, 161 (1998), 88; F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: the Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England* (Oxford, 1989), p.300.

⁶¹ See chapter 7.

parliament in relation to the provinces and their own role within that link. Lancashire MPs spoke over sixty times on military issues between 1798-1812. This was expected because of their military role within the county during the wars.⁶² The generals Isaac Gascoyne (1763-1841) and the infamous Banastre Tarleton, baronet (1754-1833), MPs for Liverpool, were by far the most vocal on issues of pay for the army, the raising and organisation of the volunteers and military victories or failures on the Peninsula. The second subject that persuaded Lancashire members to raise their voices in parliament was that of commerce: twenty-seven speeches concerned the slave trade and thirty-six were on other issues of interest to merchants, particularly the Orders in Council and the East India Company monopoly. These latter two issues also saw the highest number of petitions presented to parliament from Lancashire towns.⁶³ The two Generals and John Dent (1761-1826) of Cockerham, MP for Lancaster (who married Gascoyne's sister-in-law) were the most vocal members from Lancashire boroughs in parliament. This vocality was a result of the pressure placed on them by Liverpool and Lancaster corporations and merchant associations. General Tarleton, who might have voted for abolition if he had represented a borough other than Liverpool, felt it his duty to oppose it in May 1804, though he explained that this was because of the need to defend the colonies against Napoleon.⁶⁴

Lancashire and particularly its ports were on the whole well served by its members, although this was uneven and depended upon the levels of pressure from the boroughs. The activity and vocal presence of Liverpool and Lancaster MPs were however counter-balanced by the relative inactivity of other members. John Cust, MP for Clitheroe in

⁶² *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*, 1798-1804; *Hansard*, vols I-XXII, 1804-1812: analysis of 191 speeches, 28 votes and 20 petitions by MPs from Lancashire boroughs and county, excluding Sir Robert Peel.

⁶³ See Civin, 'Slaves, Sati and Sugar.'

⁶⁴ *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*, XXXVII, 469, 30 May 1804.

1802-7, “made no mark in the House and is not known to have spoken in debate.” He was often away on duty as captain of the north Lincolnshire militia and in 1807 was a defaulter ordered to attend the House.⁶⁵ The borough of Newton produced a string of inactive MPs, including Thomas Brooke, MP from 1786 to 1807 and a relation of the Legh family. He did not speak in the House after 1790 and the only known votes he cast were against slave trade abolition and for Brand’s motion condemning the ministerial pledge on Catholic relief on 9 April 1807.⁶⁶

Even allowing for the inconsistencies of reporting parliamentary business in *Cobbett’s Debates* and *Hansard*, speeches and voting in parliament were not how Lancashire (as with most other counties) was best represented. Rather, MPs played an active role in select committees, which reflected much more about their view of their role. They were also an important means of involving the non-electorate, especially unionised artisans, in the national legislative process. County members Colonel Stanley and the manufacturer John Blackburne, quiescent in the Commons, were intimately involved in the workings of many committees. Many investigated the grievances of the working classes in Lancashire, for example the 1810 select committee examining the petitions for relief from Bolton handloom weavers. Their investigations and judgements were on the whole sympathetic, with Stanley’s questioning of weavers seemingly genuinely understanding of their plight. The members of the committee reveal how the endeavours could be a cross-party Lancashire interest. They included: John Blackburne and chair Colonel Stanley; the Foxite Scottish MP for Lancaster, Lord Archibald Hamilton (1770-1827); Sir Robert Peel

⁶⁵ R.G. Thorne, *The House of Commons, 1780-1820* (Cambridge, CDROM), p. 555; see BL: Add mss 35646, f.70, Cust to Hardwicke, 1806.

⁶⁶ Thorne, *House of Commons*, p.264.

(1750-1830) and Edward Wilbraham Bootle (1771-1853), Baron Skelmersdale and MP for Clitheroe from 1812.⁶⁷

Hence while the 'fiscal-military state' was expanding domestically, it enhanced local and regional identities and sources of power in parallel with developing a shared sense of the British nation.⁶⁸ This was a negative as well as positive process. Taxes indeed were a source of tension amongst most avowed loyalists, as the militia ballot was amongst the general population. Wigan magistrate John Singleton wrote personally to Pitt on 22 April 1799 about himself and his brother: "We shall this year pay the Govt for our Estates and for our profits in trade and manufacture – more than the whole of what my Brother hath received from Govt half pay as 2nd Lt of marines and he was put on that list at the end of the American Warr and thank God we pay it cheerfully and freely."⁶⁹ Restrictions which affected Lancashire merchants directly - such as the Orders in Council and the East India Company monopoly - roused mistrust which motivated successful campaigns to the Commons against them among loyalists as well as radicals.⁷⁰ In April 1812, Rev Thomas Wilson of Clitheroe expressed his cynical relief to Samuel Staniforth of Liverpool that the petition against the EIC monopoly would "give us an opportunity of communicating with our representatives and making them of some use to us."⁷¹

This sense of regional Britishness was not merely a feature of merchant-manufacturing elites but was a wider feeling among the general population. O'Gorman has demonstrated the wider participatory political culture of borough elections and petitions

⁶⁷ PP 1810-11, II, *Select Committee into the Petitions for Economic Relief...*; PP 1803, III, part 4, *Minutes of Evidence on ...Petitions Relating to the Act For Settling Disputes between Masters and Servants Engaged in the Cotton Manufacture, June 1803*; PP 1808, II, *Report from the Committee on Petitions of Several Cotton Manufacturers and Journeymen Cotton Weavers, April 1808*.

⁶⁸ Sweet, 'Local Identities and a National Parliament,' pp.48-9.

⁶⁹ PRO: PRO 30/8/178/2/235, Singleton to Pitt, 22 April 1799.

⁷⁰ See chapter 7, p.270.

⁷¹ F.R. Raines, *Miscellanies* (Chetham's, Vol 45, 1897), p.211.

encompassing non-voters of all political persuasions, while Sweet has emphasised the “vitality of the indigenous political traditions and civic culture which mediated and reinterpreted national politics in the local context.”⁷² Local issues predominated but were increasingly infused with their national consequences, which reached a peak in the wave of contested elections from 1806. Electoral squibs illustrated the vitality of ideas about the role of parliament and particularly the responsibilities of representatives to their boroughs.⁷³ Although written by party hacks, riots were regularly sparked by certain inflammatory phrases in squibs, demonstrating some influence on the non-electorate. Hence many squibs took the form of popular broadside ballads.⁷⁴ Highly local or idiosyncratic matters were still integral to wider national issues discussed and played a large part in elections. Local xenophobia or suspicion of outsiders was one outlet.⁷⁵ In the Preston election of 1807, several squibs made much of Joseph Hanson as a Mancunian outsider and some gave him the even more localist epithet of ‘Pendleton Joe.’ The squib ‘Hanson and Independence!’ denigrated his geographical intrusion upon the borough:

The gentlemen who brought Col Hanson from Manchester, having now effected their object...those inhabitants of Preston, who, on Colonel’s entry into the Town, acted the parts of Horses or rather Asses, are requested to be in readiness at 4 o’clock on Wednesday next, at the Town Hall, to convey him back to the place from whence he came.⁷⁶

Liverpool squibs evoked a distinct geographical identity based upon the port’s primary focus on the slave trade and commerce. A pro-Roscoe squib of 1807, ‘The Liverpool Freeman to his Brother Electors,’ illustrated the complex relationship between notions of electoral independence and the multiplicity of local and national identities:

By his birthright a Briton does think and speak free.
As a Liverpool lad, I wish well to our trade;

⁷² O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Politics*, p.292; Sweet, ‘Freeman and Independence,’ 114.

⁷³ See LCRO: DDP 131/13, Draft Squibs, Preston, 1804.

⁷⁴ See part II.

⁷⁵ See chapter 2, p.35; Snell, ‘The Culture of Local Xenophobia.’

⁷⁶ *Whole of the Addresses, Squibs, Songs...*, p.15.

As a Lancashire boy, it shall never be said,
That the fair cause of Freedom I e'er did desert,
...Brother Freemen, for Roscoe, your townsman, encore.⁷⁷

The elections in Liverpool were vital in reaffirming the town's civic identity and historic status. The terminology of the squibs reflected the communal memory of the town. For example, the 'Whig' or 'Jacobin' party were referred to by Tory Corporation as 'the Rump,' which recalled the days when Liverpool had fallen into the hands of the Parliamentarians in the Civil War.⁷⁸ 'Independence' and ideas of virtual representation were therefore significant tropes that identified the provinces with parliament. This tense relationship was demanding and did not engender immediate demands for Reform but rather suspicion of government intentions among loyalists.

Popular patriotism and loyalism in Lancashire rose to the occasion of the Napoleonic threat, but did not shed the multi-layered allegiances which underlay both concepts. Nor did the war weaken their ambiguous relationship. National patriotic rhetoric and volunteering activity was filtered through local and regional identities. Borough elections and MPs' activity in parliament indicated a distinct sense of provincial independence. When the bulk of the general population and even professed loyalist activists professed affection for Admiral Nelson more than the monarchy, and were suspicious of parliamentary intervention in the provincial economy and volunteers, adherence to Britain as a nation was complex and questioning.

⁷⁷ *Collection of Addresses, Songs, Squibs etc*, p.58.

⁷⁸ Hoppit, *Parliaments, Nations and Identities*, p.112.

Part II:

Lancashire Britishness

“Local attachment...is the tap-root of the tree of patriotism,” wrote William Wordsworth, a theme common to Burke and to other Romantics.¹ The reception of British patriotic propaganda during the French Wars was not a passive process; it involved integration and interpretation among the general population of the provinces in relation to their own experiences and local identities. Participation in volunteer corps was one means of responding to ideas of Britishness in a local context; knowledge of national and international events was also built up from a patchwork of personal experience, oral transmission, newspapers, civic rituals and other sources. Broadside ballads were another dominant part of quotidian life for the working and middle classes. Ballads took up tropes and stereotypes of Britishness, but as with propaganda, reception of these ideas was not unquestioning and involved an interplay of commercial considerations, pre-existing prejudices and local identities.

Diffusion of information

Many provincial inhabitants had direct contact with information from relatives and friends in the military. Former soldiers diffused awareness of the Continent and contemporary history. This was illustrated in the most parochial sources. For example, the curate of Preston recorded in his visiting book the life history of John Wilcock, who

¹ K.D.M. Snell, *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1990* (Cambridge, 1998), p.46; E. Wohlgenut, ‘Southey, Macaulay and the Idea of a Picturesque History,’ *Romanticism on the Net*, 32-3 (2003-4), www.erudit.org/revue/ron/

lived in the workers' cottages of Singleton Row. He claimed he had served in the army in Germany, Minorca and America and had travelled to London the previous year to claim his pension. The son of Mary Knowles had just returned home from Ireland, had served in Spain, Flushing and was wounded serving with the Duke of York in Holland.² News of the French wars was disseminated directly, although with the delay and various biases that personal connections entailed. At the trial of the Westhoughton Luddites in 1812, witness Mary Speakman told the court: "I have a brother in the artillery, who went to Spain, with Sir J. Moore, and have not heard from him since. I got [the defendant] to talk about the expedition to Holland and how the Dutch behaved to prisoners."³ Gentry usually had sons in the military who maintained a more regular correspondence. Thomas Parker Esq of Alkincoats near Colne gained information directly from his son Captain Thomas Parker in the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards in the Peninsula. He wrote for example from Thomar, Portugal, on 25 January 1813: "All these towns the French have occupied, nothing can be more wretched than they appear."⁴ It is interesting that the process was reciprocal and localised. Captain Parker was in Luz on Christmas Day 1812 and requested that his father send him the *Lancaster Gazette* and the *York Herald* for British and local (pan-Pennine) news.⁵

Newspapers still played a crucial role simultaneously responding to demand for regional identity and international affairs, particularly as the campaign for peace took hold from 1807. It is likely that the most widely-read newspaper in Lancashire if not the whole region was *Cowdroy's Manchester Gazette*, which advertised that it was distributed by twenty

² LCRO: DDX 104, acc 7780, visiting book of Rev William Myers of Preston.

³ *The Trials of all the Prisoners... Convicted at Lancaster Assizes... August 1812*, p.22.

⁴ LCRO: DDB/72, Parker to Parker snr, 25 January 1813.

⁵ DDB/72/718, Parker to Parker snr, 25 December 1812.

agents as far afield as Bristol, Leicester, Sheffield, Litchfield, and Newcastle.⁶ More short-lived local papers during the war confirmed interest in national information. The historian of Oldham James Butterworth published thirteen issues of the *Manchester Political and Literary Repository* in April-July 1798. He condensed foreign and parliamentary news reports into verse, presumably with the aim of transmitting anti-Gallican patriotism to a wider audience within the locality because:

For from the beggar to the king I vow,
All are or would be politicians now.⁷

The paper was a significant if brief attempt at combining direct reports and ballads from Oldham, Manchester and Stockport, with news taken from the London papers, even if it concerned local individuals, such as the UE tried at Middlesex:

The papers that arriv'd this day,
From the Metropolis do say
That the following persons from this place
Were all examin'd before his Grace...
Cowdroy, Dixon, Dodd and Towle.⁸

Radical activists were certainly eager to find out news, directly or indirectly through the newspapers. At the trials of the Luddites, witness William Kay of Chowbent gave the reason why he visited the suspected John Charlson: "I had heard that some news had come from Spain, about Badajos, and went to see if it was true, knowing that he read the papers." William Speakman, a Bolton weaver, spoke about his relationship with the prisoner Christopher Medcalf, who was "a tailor and has been a soldier. My wife and he were talking about the expedition to Holland."⁹ Provincial populations were therefore never isolated from international events, although perhaps with less of the immediacy than inhabitants of London. This awareness must have kindled a sense of Britain as a

⁶ *Cowdroy's*, 16 April 1796, 5 August 1797; H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998), p.114.

⁷ MCL: MF 530, *Manchester Political and Literary Repository*, 4 April 1798.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 18 April 1798; see chapter 4.

⁹ *The Trials of all the Prisoners... Convicted at Lancaster Assizes... August 1812*, p.22.

economic and military player on an international stage, although filtered through personal connections or provincial papers.

News of local events and national print distribution were dependent upon local means of transmission. Both radical and loyalist views of national events therefore referred or used analogies to local places. In Robert Walker's radical pamphlet *Plebeian Politics*, discussing the British acquisition of Trinidad and Tobago, the character of Tum retorted in a fusion of local and international analogies:

Dun they think ot too ilonds ar' a rekompense for o th' blud an tresure ot has bin spilt an spent? Beh th'wuns I'd oz leef a had Duck'nfilt Ho, an Sheply Ho; gan meh; beside these ilonds ne'er belong'nt to France; Bonnipeeter wud naw let us ha nout ot belongt to France.¹⁰

[Do they think that two islands are a recompense for the blood and treasure that has been spilled and spent? But you know I'd rather have had Dukinfield House and Shepley House¹¹ given to me; beside these islands never belonged to France; Buonaparte would not have let us have anything that belonged to France.]

Loyalist patriotic propaganda in pamphlets and sermons used similar local analogies. This was especially the case in response to the invasion threat, where a very common theme of ballads, sermons and tracts portrayed Napoleon and his troops raiding each individual town and family of their property and liberty.¹² Defencist tropes such as these reflected the inherent conservatism and localism of the general population who anxiously responded to the idea of the threat of 'Boney.' As the war dragged on, however, the national tropes were supplemented or altered by additional information provided by relatives in the military, newspaper comment and a wider assessment of international events beyond the nationally-propagated tales about Napoleonic massacres at Jaffa and the colonies. In 1806, Rowbottom wrote about the connections between the progress of

¹⁰ R. Walker, *Plebeian Politics* (Salford, 1801), p.33.

¹¹ near Audenshaw

¹² A. Franklin and M. Philp with K. Navickas, *Napoleon and the Invasion of Britain* (Oxford, 2003); Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*, p.58 and passim.

Napoleon on the Continent and the state of trade and therefore local economic conditions:

In plenty of families, there was plenty of Ale, Roast Beef, Pies etc. But the late disastrous events upon the Continent throws a gloom upon the features of the[ir] thinking for unparalleled victories of Buonaparte have thrown Europe into the greatest consternation and has had a visible effect upon Trade and Commerce.¹³

Popular loyalism and patriotism involved a more complex personal response to a range of circumstances and sources of information. It was not merely a simple passive acquiescence to the propaganda created by the government and individuals in positions of power. The threat was personal, local and immediate; identification with what this meant with regards the British nation was often initially filtered through more personal and tangible identities or allegiances.

Patriotic Ballads

A sense of 'Lancashire Britishness' was expressed and disseminated through popular song. Music was a key feature of volunteer reviews and parades as well as many other patriotic and civic occasions and quotidian life. Ballads were composed for individual regiments, while more generic 'loyal and patriotic' songs available on the national market were popularised at these events. By the 1790s, a national distribution network for broadsides was well established. The main North West regional printers represented in surviving ballad collections are: Swindells and Dean of Manchester, Singleton in Liverpool and unnamed printers from Warrington, Congleton and Ulverston. Other printers represented originated from across the country.¹⁴ Pedlars travelling to each town diffused ballads across the region, while the main printers may have been in direct

¹³ Rowbottom diaries.

¹⁴ MCL: ballads collection, BR f.824.04, BA 1, vols 1-5; 398.8 B1, Swindells Ballads; Bodleian: ballads collection, www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ballads.

contact with their counterparts in other parts of the country, anxious to pick up on trends and successful material that could be sold in their own area.

Ballads are a source that has to be treated with some methodological care.¹⁵ Most oral ballads do not survive. Printed broadside ballads cannot be considered as part of 'genuine' folk culture, if such culture ever existed, because they were generally composed by professional hacks for purely commercial reasons. Even though some traditional ballads and songs found their way into print and a number of broadside pieces entered the tradition, the orally circulating song and the printed broadside have been regarded as essentially distinct.¹⁶ Surviving examples of broadsides are more likely to be nationally rather than locally distributed ballads because they were the most successful and therefore copied by other printers. It is difficult to determine which broadsides are by local authors and which are direct copies of generic, 'national' broadsides; some are local adaptations with slight differences. Even ballads dealing with the sufferings of the working classes are heavily overlain with commercial considerations. 'The Weavers' Garland or the Downfall of Trade' was a common ballad. A version printed by Dean and Co of Manchester adapted it to the local circumstances of Bolton in the economic downturn of 1805. It could initially be considered as an incisive commentary on the meaning of patriotism in relation to the role of weavers and spinners in the nation. One stanza proclaims that although the 'Tradesmen of Bolton' demonstrate their loyalty in raising a marine corps: "But it is the weavers that do pay for it all." Yet the last stanza of

¹⁵ Literary studies include: M. Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse, A Study of Nineteenth British Working Class Literature* (1974); R. Palmer, *The Sound of History, Songs and Social Comment* (1996); D. Harker, *Fakesong, the Manufacture of British Folksong, 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes, 1985); L. Shepard, *The History of Street Literature* (Newton Abbot, 1973) and C.M. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and its Music* (New Brunswick, 1966).

¹⁶ C.M. Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and its Music* (New Brunswick, 1966), p.ix.

the ballad rings with a loyalism rather incongruous to the sardonic sentiments expressed in the previous verses:

So now to conclude the bells they shall ring,
We will drink a good health to our Country and King,
Let each jolly weaver then for a full bowl call,
And though the last penny with joy we pay all.¹⁷

This may well have been added or adapted when translated into print to suit a wider audience.

Nor did most broadside ballads call for radical political and social change. New ballads dealing with social issues maintained an old tradition of fatalism in popular song, a reliance on patient resignation and submission to fate. Their main purpose appears to have been cathartic rather than inflammatory. Broadside ballads sympathetic towards the working classes contained generic tropes of the starving weaver and depression of trade, which lent themselves more to translation over time and across the region. The majority of ballads concerned subjects similar to those of penny romances, escapist literature with little political content. Many concerned Ireland and Scotland; the market for these was presumably large in Lancashire because of its immigrant population. The extent to which the immigrant folk traditions and voices merged into both the market and native Lancashire songs is however difficult to ascertain. Surviving broadsides relating to specific parts of London or rural villages in the south of England are also profuse. Most of these were romances and therefore the references to places perhaps unfamiliar to a Lancashire audience were less pertinent than the sentimental message conveyed. The issue of the 'slavery' of the working classes at home did not produce even a fraction of the broadsides on the slavery of Africans abroad. Evangelicals saw broadside ballads as a very useful tool in promoting the anti-slave trade campaign amongst the lower and

¹⁷ Bodleian: Harding B 25 (2016).

middle classes. Many moving accounts of the tribulations of slaves, real and fictional, therefore survive in the ballad collection, such as 'The Desponding Negro' and 'The Sorrows of Yamba or the Negro Woman's Lamentation,' a Cheap Repository Tract.¹⁸ They were more likely to be written by the middle-class or clerical campaigners with the specific purpose of propaganda, although their popularity reflects something on taste for sentimental material as much as support for anti-slavery.

Broadsides cannot however be ignored as a historical source. The vast amount of broadsides still in existence, even though they were treated as cheap popular culture or pasted up on pub walls, indicates their popularity and centrality to quotidian life of most classes. The Manchester collection contains over a thousand different broadsides. Edwin Waugh recounted how weavers in the village of Smallbridge near Rochdale, which had no church or school, "clustered together in their cottages, but oftener at the roadside, or in some favourite alehouse, and solaced their fatigue with such scraps of news and politics as reached them or by pithy idiomatic bursts of country humour and old songs."¹⁹ The national market and migration ensured that music was not restricted to local material and was not the product of a culturally isolated community. Furthermore, ballads and dialect literature as a whole were self-conscious of their comic and commercial nature. As Walker proclaimed in his preface to *Plebeian Politics*, they expressed a 'knowingness' that derived from northern stoic humour and a strong sense of provincial identity equal to and contrasting with metropolitan standard English literature.²⁰

¹⁸ MCL: BR f.824.04, BA 1, Ballads, Vol 3, p.1, or Bodleian: Vet. A5a15(20); BR f.824.04, BA 1, vol.4, p.153, or Bodleian: Harding 9 12 (20).

¹⁹ Elbourne, *Music and Tradition*, p.30.

²⁰ Chapter 1, p.2; Compare P. Bailey, 'Conspiracies of Meaning: Music-Hall and the Knowingness of Popular Culture,' *P & P*, 144 (1994) for the development in popular entertainment from the 1830s. Also, D. Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester, 2004).

General broadside ballads differed only slightly in language and tone from those composed by professionals and sung in theatres, that is between 'low' and 'high' ballad culture. Nor did working-class singing have to mean 'low' culture, as the popularity of Handel's *Messiah* sung by choral groups such as 't'Deighn Layrocks' in Rossendale exemplified. Nationally-distributed music significantly did not form the sole repertoire: local families, Ashworths, Hudsons and Nuttalls, were prolific as composers of material for the choir.²¹ The prevalence of songs in electoral squibs indicated the candidates' belief that they could influence the political opinions of the voters and the general population. Although the tropes of the ballads cannot be regarded as true expressions of the beliefs of their buyers or hearers, they were regarded worthy enough to be bought and disseminated. The market must have dictated their content in some measure, even though the broadsides may not have used the language or wider range of opinions of the general population.

The invasion scares from 1803 produced an efflorescence of patriotic ballads, seemingly unparalleled in quantity in other periods. Patriotic ballads were printed each week in *Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle* and there are copious examples in the Manchester collection. Most were full of common tropes of the courage and bravery of Britain personified, its Navy and George III as father of the nation. Many versions of 'God Save the King' were composed, often by respected composers such as Charles Dibdin, and then adapted for popular use. Numerous copies of 'Bonaparte's Stoppage to Stride Over the Globe' appear in the Manchester collection:

He strode o'er France, then threw his leg o'er Switzerland and Italy
And a little peck before him saw, a paradise he knew it to be

²¹ Ibid., p.115; J. Seymour, 'The Larks of Dean and their Music,' www.westgallerymusic.co.uk/articles.Seymour94.html

‘Twas that garden called England.

The broadside in the Manchester collection was printed in Warrington, but it was nationally circulated.²² The ballads mirrored the shift in propaganda, from ideological defence to naval defence and where the highlighted danger of revolutionary fervour subsided to that of a more traditional tyrant. Bonaparte was ridiculed as being impetuous, over-ambitious, short and perhaps less dangerous to the stout John Bull than revolutionary Jacobin ideas. The end of the war saw a profusion of new ballads satirising Bonaparte’s fate and a renewal of faith in the continental powers propagandists had previously denigrated. ‘Elba Room for Boney’ was sung by the performer Mr Tayleure in the Theatre Royal in Manchester on 9 May 1814:

Bourbon’s flags displayed on every tow’r and steeple.
Austria’s monarch cheer! Huzza for Alexander!
Prussia’s King revere.²³

National propaganda formed a key tactic used by government and loyalist activists to persuade the general population to remain loyal to what were in effect still merely rhetoric and images.²⁴ The caricatures and tropes may have reflected loyalists’ lack of confidence in British identity and defence capabilities. Their defiance and generic proclamations about John Bull as the last defence of liberty after Napoleon had subdued all other continental nations hinted at an underlying doubt about the capability of Britons to withstand the Corsican’s lure. The many pamphlets explaining how the poor would not be better off under the French suggested that loyalist writers feared that national character was malleable and had already degenerated. Hence a Manchester broadside warned ‘Englishmen’ and ‘fellow labourers’ not to fall as weak as the Continent: “Have [the French] not sold the People of Venice, who received them as Friends? Do not the

²² MCL: BRf. 824.04.BA1, vol 3, p.97; Bodleian: Harding B 25 (1841).

²³ MCL: BRf. 824.04.BA1, vol 1, p.106.

²⁴ Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*, pp.9, 40.

Hollanders, the Flemings and the Italian States groan under the Yoke of their Tyranny?²⁵

Local ballads composed for new volunteer corps were more expressive of local identities and patriotism than generic patriotic broadsides. It is in Volunteer material where a genuine sense of 'Lancashire Britishness' and civic pride infused into the sentiments of its hearers. Although the ballads were likely to have been composed or commissioned by officers of regiments, they appear to have been more representative of audience demand. Local identity was just as appealing during wartime as escapist romances or 'national' themes. Local tropes were featured in local patriotic ballads in great numbers from the American War. Some ballads may have been reused in the new circumstances, with 'Yankees' simply substituted for the French or Boney. The ballad 'The Lancashire Volunteers' may have been adapted from a London text because the last stanza referred to London parishes, but the rest stressed local patriotism, ensuring it would sell in those towns at least:

The Lancashire volunteers so neat,
And Manchester they look so complete.
Liverpool, Bolton and Wigan too
They all do make a noble shew
...What Corsican monster need we fear
While we've such loyal volunteers.²⁶

'Captain Starky's Light Horse, a New Song by a Weaver in Unsworth,' dated 1793, appears to have been an adaptation of 'The Valiant Hero,' printed in London in 1794. It substituted the commander of the Bury and Rawtenstall Volunteers for the Duke of York in the original. Its references to Bury and nearby Redivals suggest its intended

²⁵ MCL: BR FF. 942.72.L15, Broadsides scrapbook, no10.

²⁶ BRf. 824.04.BA1, vol 1, p.53.

distribution among the Bury Volunteers and their families.²⁷ Hence notions of Britishness were more successfully disseminated when filtered through local identities. As volunteering was part of most inhabitants' experience of the war, this sense of local or Lancashire Britishness, putting a local leader on the level of a national figure, was more pervasive than generic British tropes.

A flurry of new songs was composed for the occasion of the Duke of Gloucester's tour of the North West Military District. William Fleming recorded an unpublished song of 1804 for the Ulverston Volunteers, which illustrated the dual identity shared by the local population:

If Gallia's sons our Land invade
And George his loyal Britons call
...Ulverston brave Volunteers
Urge on to conquer or to die.²⁸

Generic ballad collections were adapted to regional market, although for commercial purposes. The *Lancastrian Songster* contained 'Lancaster Red Rose' sung at Lancaster Town Hall on the occasion of the Jubilee of 1809. It used common tropes to exploit feelings of Lancashire Britishness and civic identity of the town:

Soon Lancaster flourish'd its country's pride,
Her sons, ever loyal and true,
Attach'd to their Sovereign – oft bled by his side,
And ting'd our Red Rose with its hue.²⁹

The 'Royal Lancashire Brigade' published in the *Manchester Chronicle* in 1804 expressed similar tropes of the red rose of Lancashire re-enacting Agincourt against Napoleon.³⁰ Ballads written by local entertainers for specific occasions were more likely to appeal to knowledge of their audience. 'The Liverpool Sailor, a Comic Song' was written and sung

²⁷ Manchester Ballads, vol. 2, p.133; Bodleian Library: Ballads, Curzon b.15 (86); T.H. Hayhurst, *A History and Some Record of the Volunteer Movement in Bury* (Bury, 1887).

²⁸ CuRO: Fleming diary.

²⁹ *Lancastrian Songster* (Lancaster, n.d), p.4.

³⁰ *MC*, 14 January 1804.

by the popular entertainer Mr Ryley at the Theatre Royal, Liverpool in 1798. It again emphasised the combination of local newspapers, volunteers and the international threat in the propagation of information and a multitude of 'knowing' identities:

What a saving dear favour it would be to us all
To use Frenchmen's heads for cannon ball,
So pray Advertise it next week if you chuse,
In *Billinge*, in *Gore* and in *Phoenix News*.
...The brave Volunteers will soon give 'em a shock
And tumble them into St. George's Dock.³¹

Jone O'Grinfilt: the Lancashire John Bull

Britishness expressed in ballads was a shared idea among the general population of all political persuasions, but the key to its success as a concept was its adaption by local and commercial writers to suit the regional allegiances of its audiences. The common idea of what a 'Briton' represented in Lancashire was distinct from other regions. An key example of this transformation was one of the most successful series of broadside ballads in Lancashire, 'Jone O'Grinfilt.' Joyce has highlighted the ballads' role in nineteenth century formations of class identity; although elements of this were important, prior to the 1820s, its significance lay rather in what it reflected about Lancashire Britishness.³² The character of 'Jone O'Grinfilt' was the Lancashire version of the national fictional figure of John Bull.

The ballad character of 'Jone O'Grinfilt' was created in the mid-1790s by Joseph Lee (1748-1824), a schoolmaster from Glodwick, near Oldham, perhaps with the assistance

³¹ *A Choice Garland* (Liverpool, 1799).

³² P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.236-9.

of his contemporary, Joshua Coupe, a member of Lees musical society.³³ Its first stanza ostensibly illustrated the nature of Lancashire patriotism:

Says Jone to his wife on a whot summers day,
Aw'm resolv'd in Grinfilt no longer to stay,
For aw'll go to Owdham as fast as aw con,
So fare thee weel Grinfilt and fare thee weel Nan
A soger³⁴ I'st be un brave Owdham I'st see,
Un awll have a battle wi' th' French.³⁵

The ballad was immediately a success and within a few years a dozen imitations were circulating throughout the north of England.³⁶ The Victorian antiquarian John Harland believed that “perhaps more copies were sold among the rural population of Lancashire than of any other song known.” Samuel Bamford recalled standing at the bottom of Miller Street in Manchester, viewing with surprise the near rage with which a crowd purchased the verses from a ballad pedlar.³⁷ Possibly the first imitation of the ballad was created in response to the French invasion scares from 1803 and began:

Ye warriors of England I pray lend an ear
Of this hero from Greenfielt once more yo shall hear
...For Bony once moar is for cumin on shore;
He's for fotching owd Englond in't France.³⁸

The ballad was immediately propagated and inspired many imitations. Coupe claimed that he and Lees immediately “put it i' th' press,” but he did not mention how or where.³⁹ It became a feature of Wakes celebrations: Harland recorded that a man from Oldham would go to Gorton Wakes to sing the ballad. This suggests that a means of its spread was by deliberate commercial advertising from Oldham outwards.

³³ B. Hollingworth, *Songs of the People, Lancashire Dialect Poetry of the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester, 1977), p. 127.

³⁴ Soldier.

³⁵ Bodleian Library: 2806.c.16 (70); J. McGann, ed., *The New Oxford Book of Romantic Period Verse* (2002), pp.243-4, dates it wrongly to 1805. See Appendix II: figures i and ii for the full texts.

³⁶ M. Vicinus, *Broadsides of the Industrial North* (Newcastle, 1975), p.18.

³⁷ J. Harland, *Ballads and Songs of Lancashire* (London, 1865), pp.212-3.

³⁸ MCL: BRf. 824.04.BA1, Vol 4, p. 155, 'Loyal Jone', printed by J. Haddock, Warrington.

³⁹ Harland, *Ballads and Songs*, p. 214.

Local dialect in 'Jone O'Grinfilt' was deliberately toned down in print while still retaining its essence and evoking its syntax and turn of phrase; broadsides could therefore had wider commercial appeal combined with a distinct local identity.⁴⁰ Yet printed and oral ballads cannot be divided by a simple distinction between commercial and 'genuine'; they influenced each other. Not all the members of the urban working classes were illiterate or developed their own literary culture entirely separate from that in the more rural villages. Harland described how some of the urban broadsides had their origins in what he called 'local' songs taken up by printers. The various versions of 'Jone O'Grinfilt' illustrate that popular culture as such in urban areas was not an anachronistic or reactive reliance on nostalgic rural folk tradition. It was rather dynamic and responsive to new circumstances, using traditional melodies and patterns of verse as a base for innovation and social comment.

The national stereotype of John Bull has been documented in discussions of caricature and loyalist pamphlets.⁴¹ The archetypal English everyman was portrayed as a provincial country bumpkin, simple and stubborn but imbued with a strong sense of British or English patriotism. It is significant that the caricaturist James Gillray gave the character ambiguous political qualities: John Bull was an opponent of all government interference in provincial rights, capable of adhering to Thomas Paine's tenets as well as to King and Country. He was seen as courageous, good-hearted and, in the opinion of non-loyalist pamphleteers, as suspicious of Church-and-King intolerance as well as radical fanaticism.⁴² Indeed, with reference to caricatures, Taylor states "the Napoleonic Wars

⁴⁰ A. Walker, conference paper, 'Identities,' Annual Conference of Liverpool and Merseyside Studies, Edge Hill College, 31 March 2005.

⁴¹ M. Taylor, 'John Bull and the Iconography of Public Opinion in England, c.1712-1929,' *P & P*, 134 (1992), 93-128; T. Hunt, *Defining John Bull: Political Caricature and National Identity* (2003).

⁴² See Gillray's 'John Bull and the Alarmist' (1803), in D. George, *English Political Caricature*, vol.1 (Oxford, 1959).

demonstrated the political ambiguity, rather than the implicit loyalism, of John Bull.”⁴³ On the other hand, John Bull also retained his reactionary loyalist characteristics, depending upon the purposes to which he was used. The character therefore did not have singular political connotations, being dominated firstly by radicals and then taken over by xenophobic patriots. Rather, both “radical and conservative ideologues made equal use of John Bull throughout the period.”⁴⁴ The Lancashire character of Jone O’Grinfilt indeed proves this assertion and transfers it into a provincial context.

Jone was continually identified as an Oldham or Greenfield man, but with distribution he became a stock character representative of a general Lancashire identity. He was portrayed comically and as simple-minded, “Wi’my hat i’mi hont and mi’ clogs full o’sumps.” In this he paralleled the figure of John Bull and his ambiguous provincial loyalties. Perhaps it is significant that the author came from Glodwick, which although being a small hamlet, was suspected by magistrates to contain an United Englishmen cell in 1801.⁴⁵ Jone O’Grinfilt was a version of John Bull filtered through local customs and character and was much closer to the ambiguous caricature than the one-sided John Bull of most Church-and-King loyalist tracts. The ballad and its variations thus gained a generic appeal, despite its localism, and this enabled the character to be used over and over again in different circumstances. It is possible that other authors had already created similar local characters, but they were not as appealing as Lees’s ‘Jone O’Grinfilt’ and therefore did not survive to posterity. The character was therefore an important reflection of local and indeed regional taste.

⁴³ Taylor, ‘John Bull,’ 104.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴⁵ PRO: HO 42/61/149-150, Hay to Portland, 7 June 1801.

Jone O'Grinfilt was not the only regionalised John Bull created during the French wars. 'Bob Cranky' was a distinctly Geordie character in dialect ballads of Newcastle-upon-Tyne from at least 1803. For example, 'Bob Cranky's Leumination Neet' of 1814 asserted: "For oor Geordy Prince Rex; - Nyan spelt it se weel as Bob Cranky." Admittedly, this and other 'Bob Cranky' poems were probably written by professional writers or hacks in imitation of Tyneside dialect and mannerisms rather than being a product of 'pure' dialect tradition.⁴⁶ 'Jone O'Grinfilt' and its early successor, the 'Boney' version, were therefore perhaps a closer indication of attitudes to the war and perceptions of identity than later 'commercialised' imitations. Both the original and the 'Boney' version touched on a specific view of local identity which would have resonated with and been seen favourably by a local audience, despite the slightly mocking tone on the part of schoolmaster Lees.

The main plot of the ballads was Jone's journey to Oldham to sign up to the volunteers in response to the French threats. The character came from the village of Greenfield, near Mossley. Greenfield was portrayed as distinct from Oldham in the identity of its inhabitants as well as topographically. Jone views Oldham both as a gateway to the outside world and the epitome of military bravery. His hamlet does not have these qualities; he is thus "determined...no longer to stay" there, forsaking it for an Oldham identity. This Oldham identity and reputation he presumes to be known even by Britain's enemies rather than the name of England:

Oather French, Dutch, or Spanish to me it's o one;
Aw'll mak um to stare like a new started hare,
And aw'll tell um fro Owdham aw'm coom.

⁴⁶ R. Colls, *The Collier's Rant, Song and Culture in the Industrial Village* (1977), pp.25-6; See Bodleian: Johnson ballads 1940, 'Bob Cranky's 'Size Sunday' (1804).

This may also however have been satire by Joseph Lees of local pride's pretensions over national identity. Jone's Aunt Margaret, on the other hand, would resolutely defend her hamlet. Significantly, she equates this with remaining in England. Comically, she thus associates going to Oldham with leaving to fight abroad. Again it is the defence of England rather than Britain that is seen as at stake. The 1805 ballad's development of the themes of the original demonstrated their generic appeal. In the 1790s ballad, Jone goes to fight the French because his hamlet was "clamming and starving." Although the militia money is mentioned, it is not the main motive as it is in the latter half of the 1805 ballad, where Jone vows to fight for his King, "Un when I return back some money I'll bring." This emphasis perhaps had the authorial motive of either encouraging recruitment through appealing to self-interest or questioning this eagerness to serve for the material rewards. An awareness of Bonaparte's actions abroad in Egypt was either reflective of local responses to loyalist propaganda, or an authorial reminder which nevertheless assumed an awareness of events on the part of the hearer or reader.

The diffusion of knowledge of current political events was left however to the newspapers. The main purpose of those ballads that commented on foreign affairs was a topical relevance to quotidian lives. 'Jone O'Grinfilt' was particularly successful in expressing the nature of patriotic reactions to volunteering and the general circumstances of the war in a local context. In some later versions of the original ballad, peace is proclaimed and Jone returns home:

Soa neaw aw'm at whoam, an' th' loom's set agate,
Wee'n plenty o'praties an' dumplins to ate;
And now peace is made, th'weyvers may laugh
At Billy's brown loaf, made o'bran an' o' chaff.⁴⁷

[So now I'm at home, and the loom's set on the way,
We have plenty of potatoes and dumplings to eat;

⁴⁷ Harland, *Ballads and Songs*, p.215.

And now peace is made, the weavers may laugh
At Pitt's brown loaf, made of bran and of chaff.]

Harland also remarked that Jacobin radicals issued a parody of the song. Some 'paviours' or roadlayers on the road pointed Jone out, who replied:

But aw fin' by their jeers, un' comical sneers,
They'rne akin to th'owd maker o'stays.⁴⁸

The radical version apparently "never became popular and is supposed to be almost wholly forgotten."⁴⁹ It may have circulated orally among the Taylors of Royton and other radical families, but the surviving collections indicate that the market for printed broadside ballads across Lancashire remained for patriotic material and the usual non-political romantic staples.

The more the original Jone O'Grinfilt evolved into different versions, the further away they moved from the context in which oral ballads were composed. Jone's creation and evolution nevertheless reflected aspects of how local identities were perceived and used. As with many stock characters, Jone was used as a vehicle for political intentions, including a radical version concerning the Queen Caroline affair.⁵⁰ He was still used as a character during the Reform debates of the 1830s, as in 'A Laughable and Interesting Dialogue between Joan O'Greenfield, Nosey and Earl Grey,' printed in Sheffield.⁵¹ A rather different purpose and consequence was created with the performance of purchased ballads pasted on the walls of pubs or cottages than those hawked by their original writers in their local area. All served to localise John Bull and popularise his regional cousin.

⁴⁸ referring to Thomas Paine's occupation as a stay-maker.

⁴⁹ Harland, *Ballads and Songs*, p.216.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.227.

⁵¹ Vicinus, *Broadsides*, p.35.

Expressions of geographical identity in popular culture did not remain static in a rapidly changing region. It is often assumed that industrialisation destroyed the old rural way of life and consequently its culture, folk-lore and traditions. The creation of the 'Jone O'Grinfilt' ballads amongst others demonstrates that this was not entirely the case. Musicologists have identified a new development in ballads: the creation of 'industrial folk song'.⁵² They were a hybrid form between traditional song and the purely commercial broadside, sharing a number of characteristics of both. Moreover, broadsides may have inspired more popular composition of ballads rather than, as it claimed, eroding oral tradition. Rural-urban links were maintained and if there had been a rural 'culture,' it was modified to suit the new circumstances. Literate working classes in the towns were gradually displacing the old oral culture of rural villages, but this process was very slow and patchy, and indeed the period before the 1840s may have witnessed the decline of practical literacy among factory children compared with their agricultural peers.⁵³ The original 'Jone O'Grinfilt' and like ballads were the popular literary articulation of the ambiguous and permeable boundaries between urban and rural life in this period. It also illustrated a provincial suspicion of national propaganda dictated by metropolitan culture and an irony characteristic of the North.

Popular loyalism was sincere but it was not unquestioning or acquiescent with regards generic tropes of Boney and John Bull. Patriotism involved ideas of what or who the nation represented. It also raised questions about the nation's relationship with the individual as well as to the common whole. Patriotism was a tool in building up the 'imagined community' of the nation, but radical and loyalist activists formed only two of

⁵² Elbourne, *Music and Tradition*, pp.55-6.

⁵³ M. Sanderson, 'Social Change and Elementary Education in Industrial Lancashire, 1780-1840,' *NH*, 3 (1968), 131-54.

many different communities competing for identity or identified with the 'patriotic.' Lancashire Britishness was an expression of opposition to metropolitan interference in provincial affairs, government and identity, where loyalism met radicalism in agreement, in essence, a common 'country' opposition. It was also a means of identifying with the wider nation while maintaining a strong attachment to regional customs and allegiances which still played an important part in the quotidian life of the general population.

DEFINING TRADE UNION ACTION

The apparent patriotic unanimity and radical silence in the face of the Napoleonic invasion threat contrasted with intensified activity of collective action among many trades. This was in part a response to the heightened focus created by the Combination Acts of 1799-1800, but also resulted from the economic strains engendered by the war. Most activists used traditional polemical tropes of legality based on precedent and statutory regulation of wages, although this shared rhetoric was still filtered through the particular needs and demands of individual trades. What united trades during the wars were connections based on locality and a shared regional identity. Unionised workers utilised the possibilities of regional co-ordination to achieve their sectional aims. Combinations and disturbances were not merely a response to the economic situation; workers expressed their geographical awareness within the wider evolving narratives and mythologies of popular protest.

The geography of collective action

The narrative history of early trade unions has been well examined since historians rejected the Webbs' belief that 'genuine' trade unions could only have existed once the

Victorian era of national, formal and regular organisation was established.¹ Combinations, shops and other forms of collective action before the great strikes of 1824 have been shown to be part of a large and effective unionised repertoire. Most trades had some sort of shop system, to be called into action as circumstances required, and negotiations and strikes had been a feature of working life throughout the eighteenth century. Although the general working population often differed from the small number of skilled activists who held committees for negotiating with their employers, most were involved in some form of collective action, including anonymous letters or 'rough music.'² Most male workers also could relate to the language employed by combinations, a long-established rhetoric of legal rights and protection of restrictions on employment of women and apprentices.³

Calhoun has argued that collective action and political organisation faltered when it attempted to reach beyond coherent 'communities' in which they were based.⁴ Yet although personal connections may have been intermittent and faltering, regional horizons were sustained. The major strikes of 1799-1801, 1808, 1810 and 1812 by textile workers and miners in Lancashire illustrated how collective action relied upon connections between localities and a wider regional identity to be effective. A sense of place and geographical awareness, infused through the putting out system, tramping and expanded communications, were key elements in unionised activity and strikes in this period of early industrialisation. Patterns of strikes depended in part upon this knowledge

¹ S. and B. Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (rev.ed., 1902); B. and J. Hammond, *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832* (1917).

² E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1991).

³ See p.227; M. Chase, *Early Trade Unionism. Fraternity, Skill and the Politics of Labour* (Hants, 2000), p.66; J. Orth, *Combination and Conspiracy, A Legal History of Trade Unionism, 1721-1906* (Oxford, 1991), pp.49-50; B. Pimlott and C. Cook, eds., *Trade Unions in British Politics* (1982); C.R. Dobson, *Masters and Journeymen: A Prehistory of Industrial Relations, 1717-1800* (1980); J. Rule, *British Trade Unionism, 1750-1850, The Formative Years* (Essex, 1988); A.E. Musson, *British Trade Unions, 1800-1875* (1972).

⁴ C. Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle: Social Foundations of Popular Radicalism During the Industrial Revolution* (Oxford, 1982).

and the support, willing or acquiescent, of individual communities where action originated.⁵

Workers' two poles of attachment to locality and exclusion based on skill were powerfully combined where certain trades were highly developed in particular localities.⁶ The concentration of the textile, shipwright and mining industries in different areas of Lancashire gave their unions a particular regional scope in connections and patterns of action.⁷ Hence the mule cotton spinners, bleachers and calico printers in south-east Lancashire maintained a strong geographical and trade identity with a shop system. This was not exclusive, as tramping artisans extended this network far beyond its regional identity and thereby gave the potential for pan-regional action. Short distance migration encouraged mutual trust and the emergence of friendly societies and localised forms of trade unionism. Closed shops could therefore be realisable without a system of formal apprenticeship.⁸

Unionised workers employed methods of collective action and used a combination of ritual on the ground and geographical connections on a regional scale. Skilled textile workers in south Lancashire demonstrated the effectiveness of combining organisation concentrated in one region with wider pan-regional connections. The petitions of spinners and other trades' campaigns against the Combination Acts in 1799-1800 were similar in language and style, intimating some scope of pan-regional co-ordination.⁹ Journeymen calico printers from Lancashire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire and five

⁵ A. Randall, *Before the Luddites, Custom, Community and Machinery in the English Woollen Industry, 1776-1809* (Cambridge, 1991).

⁶ K.D.M. Snell, 'The Culture of Local Xenophobia,' *JH*, 28 (2003), 3.

⁷ H. R. Southall, 'Towards a Geography of Unionisation: the Spatial Organisation and Distribution of Early British Trade Unions,' *TransInstBritGeog*, 13 (1988), 466-483;

⁸ Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, p.41.

⁹ Orth, *Combination and Conspiracy*, pp.49-50.

Scottish counties organised petitions to parliament about the employment of apprentices in place of journeymen, investigated by a select committee in July 1804.¹⁰ Effective strike action was by contrast conducted through the 'rolling strike,' targeting selected individual employers and sustaining the strikers with a subscription from a network of shops or friendly societies, which would then spread the agitation across the region. Geographical links and personal connections created by bearing home or tramping were crucial elements in maintaining strikes for months.

The rolling strike had been used successfully by calico printers in 1795,¹¹ and was employed to its fullest geographical extent by mule spinners in 1810 and handloom weavers in 1803. In 1810, the Manchester-based General Congress of cotton mule spinners elected to concentrate their efforts in two towns: Stalybridge and Preston. The chosen targets were about thirty-three direct miles from each other, but in travelling terms, much further. They also differed in size and in structure of industry and landholding. From a small village, Stalybridge had rapidly expanded as a direct result of myriad manufacturers building of spinning mills alongside the river Tame; Preston was more gradually transformed from a centre of gentry leisure to the manufacturing empire of the Horrocks brothers and a population of over 17,000 in 1811.¹² The object of the strike to raise wages in the 'country' districts to Manchester levels of halfpence more per pound. The Congress chose to call out only a few mills at a time in both towns, until each master should agree to the Manchester terms. 8000 to 10,000 in Stalybridge and Preston allegedly turned out in total.¹³

¹⁰ PP 1803-4, V (887), *Minutes of Evidence on the Petitions of the Several Journeymen Callico Printers...*, July 1804.

¹¹ Anon, *The History of the Combination of the Journeymen Calico Printers* (Manchester, 1795), p.20.

¹² M. Nevell, *Buildings of Tameside: a History and Archaeology of Tameside* (Manchester, 1996); N. Morgan, *Vanished Dwellings: Early Industrial Housing in a Lancashire Cotton Town, Preston* (Preston, 1990).

¹³ PP 1824, V, *Report on the Combination Laws*, p.393.

The scale of the spinners' strike was impressively pan-regional; geographical links contributed to its initial success. James Frost, a Mancunian spinner activist, provided the 1824 Select Committee into the repeal of the Combination Acts with a list of receipts received from those shops towards the subscriptions in the week beginning 2 June 1810. The importance of Manchester was again in evidence in the amount - over six hundred pounds - that they raised for both Preston and Stalybridge. Preston received more contributions from Oldham, Stockport, Macclesfield, Manchester and Carlisle, while Stalybridge was funded by Bolton, Chorley and other smaller places in the south east.¹⁴ Some cross-trade co-operation was in evidence although this cannot be verified: woollen workers from the West Riding may have supported the subscriptions and the judge at the Manchester Quarter Sessions alleged: "it had appeared in evidence at the West Riding sessions, that a combinations of cutlers in Sheffield had been supported by contributions from cotton-spinners in Manchester."¹⁵ The spinners' strike maintained momentum for three to four months because its subscription fund enabled the Congress to make weekly payments of twelve shillings to the strikers. The failure of the strike was attributed less to employer repression than to a decline in subscriptions as the renewed depression of winter 1810-11 set in.¹⁶ This suggests that the spinners, already better paid than weavers, had sufficient prosperity in the summer of 1810 to maintain each other's standard of living. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of strikes by spinners and calico printers amongst other apprenticed trades was dampened by the economic instability of the war; whereas handloom weavers were active throughout the war period as their position progressively declined.¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., p.604.

¹⁵ *BM*, 23 May 1810.

¹⁶ Tufnell, *Character, Objects and Effects*, p.14.

¹⁷ R. Glen, *Urban Workers in the Industrial Revolution* (New York, 1984), pp.85-6.

Unable to tramp, handloom weavers have often been erroneously perceived as more disorganised than traditionally unionised textile trades such as hatters, bleachers and mule spinners. Unskilled workers seemingly lacked the ability to transcend geographical boundaries in trade terms and their attachment was predominantly focused on their parish or immediate locality.¹⁸ Women, children and casual labour did indeed undertake a large proportion of weaving work. Bythell has argued strongly that the handloom weavers should never be regarded as skilled fulltime craftsmen who fell from a high position into abject poverty.¹⁹ Yet as with radical activists, an unionised minority differed from the majority of weavers. Unionised activists were usually male, full-time, often weavers of fine cloths requiring some skill. James Draper, President of the new Weavers' Association formed in Bolton in 1799, had worked for thirty years as a muslin weaver for Thomas Ainsworth, Robert Peel's partner and one of the largest Bolton manufacturers.²⁰ Most towns had some fine weavers, but they were especially concentrated in Bolton, Stockport and Manchester. Check weavers in Manchester had organised a combination as early as the 1750s. Despite not having formal apprenticeship to defend, the unionised weavers of the region employed the rhetoric of skill and legality as established by their peers in other textile trades and other artisans, and took similar collective action to defend their status.

The Secretary of the Weavers' Association, James Holcroft, illustrated the extent of erudition of the unionised weavers. He had been both a fine and coarse weaver for fifteen years before becoming a putter-out for Joseph and Jeremiah Crooks of Bolton. He played a major role acting as arbitrator between manufacturers and their employees to

¹⁸ Snell, 'Culture of Local Xenophobia,' 3.

¹⁹ D. Bythell, *The Handloom Weavers: A Study in the English Cotton Industry During the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 1969), p.60.

²⁰ PP 1803, III, part 4, *Select Committee into the Masters and Servants Act*, p.17.

the prodigious number of over three hundred times under the provisions of the new Arbitration Act of 1802. Holcroft was thus among some leaders who acted almost as professional representatives, being paid two shillings a case by the committee of the Weavers' Association in some disputes.²¹ Despite high turnover rates in many trades, there was some continuation of leadership amongst skilled workers involved in unionised activity. Richard Needham was a committee signatory to weavers' addresses and petitions from Bolton in both 1799 and 1808, an arbitrator in 1801-2 and he testified to various parliamentary select committees from 1802-24.²² Yet continuous leadership was not, as the Webbs assumed, a prerequisite for successful action. Patterns of organisation could be established by geography and identification with a wider community.

From April 1799, the General Committee of the Weavers' Association directed the campaign for parliamentary legislation to provide for an arbitration system to raise piece rates and later to enforce a statutory minimum wage. The Weavers' Association used the ostensible form of a friendly society as the basis for their central organising body. John Holden believed that sixty-three members had entered a society at the *Jolly Tailor Inn* on 17 March 1799 explicitly "for the purpose of regulating the price of muslins."²³ Lancashire had the highest rate of friendly society registration in England and also the largest proportion of its population enrolled in registered friendly societies.²⁴ Although most societies, particularly those under the treasureship of manufacturers, denied direct links with unionised committees and refused to fund them, Sir Francis Place later

²¹ Ibid.; HO 42/61/176, Bancroft to Portland, 1 March 1801.

²² Holden diaries; PP 1803, III, part 4, p.3; PP 1824, V, *Report from the Committee on...Artisans and Machinery*, p.543.

²³ Holden diaries.

²⁴ P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800: the Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000), p.373; H. Southall, 'Mobility, the Artisan Community and Popular Politics in Early Nineteenth Century England', in G. Kearns and C.W.J. Withers, eds, *Urbanising Britain, Essays on Class and Community in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.127-8; M. Gorsky, 'The Growth and Distribution of English Friendly Societies in the Early Nineteenth Century,' *EHR*, 101 (1998), 502.

believed the connections were obvious.²⁵ Bolton was unusual because it fostered many single-trade friendly societies.²⁶ President James Draper corresponded with magistrate Rev Thomas Bancroft, forcefully asserting their legality and loyalism and that they did not need to use the friendly society as a front for their real aims.²⁷

The weavers and spinners' strikes of 1799-1801 exemplified connections established by tramping, putting out, friendly societies and religious meetings, all integral elements of their lives. The origin of the delegates to the General Committee of the Weavers' Association indicated the proportionate importance of fine weaving in the various towns in the region. Six delegates represented Bolton and 'neighbourhood' and there were three delegates from Manchester and Salford. Stockport, Oldham, Wigan and Bury sent two each, as did towns further out of the circle: Blackburn, Chorley, Newton and Warrington. The villages of Chowbent, New Chapel (four miles from Bolton) and Whitefield sent one delegate each.²⁸ Links were sustained by mobility, bearing home and putting out. James Holcroft "put out work two days in a week, at a place called Chowbent, five miles from Bolton, and the next magistrate is about a mile beyond Bolton."²⁹ This perhaps indicates why the small village of Chowbent had a delegate to the General Committee.

The Committee demonstrated their application of geographical connections and awareness in February 1803. Most of the major manufacturers of Manchester met to oppose the Arbitration Act, passed as a compromise measure as a result of the weavers'

²⁵ BL: Add. 27798-9, Place papers, Proceedings for the Repeal of the Combination Acts, 1824-5; PP 1824, V, *Report from the Committee on...Artisans and Machinery*.

²⁶ Bolton Archives: PGB/2, friendly society certificates; LCRO: QDS 1/1, friendly society bonds; PRO: FS 1/239-45, 2/1, Lancashire friendly societies rules.

²⁷ PRO: PC 1/44/A155, J. Draper et al to T. Bancroft, 16 April 1799; PC 1/44/158, evidence on weavers' combinations, 1799.

²⁸ See Appendix IV:ix for map of agitation; 'The Association of Weavers to the Public,' HO 42/47/3, Singleton to King, 27 May 1799; A. Aspinall, *The Early English Trade Unions* (1949), pp.21-3.

²⁹ PP 1803, part 4, p.33.

petitions for the minimum wage.³⁰ The act allowed for a system where weavers could negotiate wages with their employers, under the arbitration of a magistrate. In response to the manufacturer opposition, the Committee tested a loophole in the act solely in the township of Pilkington, near Bury. Manufacturers in Whitefield within Pilkington were presented with over 900 arbitration demands in one day, in an attempt to force the wages up comprehensively in a specific area. Similar demands were made to two manufacturers in nearby Stand; the manufacturer James Ramsbotham reported that 108 notices of arbitration were delivered to him in one day, “principally from heads of families where we had two to four people employed, and those were all brought us by one man.”³¹ The Pilkington arbitration cases could not have occurred spontaneously and indicate the extent of organisation and regional awareness of the weavers in towns connected with the Committee. Holcroft denied any connection with the instigation of the tactic, but his claim is somewhat implausible because Whitefield had a delegate to the Committee and Holcroft admitted to the 1803 Select Committee into the Masters and Servants Act that he had been asked immediately to arbitrate many of the cases.³²

Pilkington may have been chosen in particular because of its social structure. Most of the land in Whitefield was owned by the Earl of Derby but was overseen by local manufacturers. This contrasted sharply with neighbouring Prestwich, which was closely supervised by the Earl of Wilton (an Orangeman) at Heaton Hall, and was seemingly inactive in the field of weaver agitation.³³ The Unitarian branch of the Philips family were the most prominent landowners in the area and the existence of an Unitarian chapel

³⁰ *BM*, 2 March 1803.

³¹ PP 1803, III part 4, p.40.

³² *Ibid.*, p.33.

³³ J.F. Wilson, *A History of Whitefield* (Whitefield, 1979), p.17.

there may have been significant.³⁴ Whitefield had a tradition of political and social polarisation from Jacobite times and would continue to do so. Luddites were to be active in the area; Whitefield men were prominent in the attack on Burton's mill in Middleton in April 1812.³⁵

Handloom weavers could therefore organise with a regional scope approaching that of other textile trades and invoke tactics of geographical targeting of employers. They differed from mule spinners and calico printers however in their outlook towards parliamentary legislation; hence while sympathetic to the campaigns for repeal of the Combination Acts, their petitioning campaign focused on more positive legislative intervention into their wage conditions. Strikes against local manufacturers were therefore never isolated from national political concerns, but perhaps this difference of perception eroded possibilities for joint class co-operation.

The largest collective action by handloom weavers in the decade occurred in 1808 in response to renewed petitioning to parliament from many towns for a statutory minimum wage. The agitation again demonstrated the regional scope of action, although the locus of the campaign had shifted from Bolton to Manchester and Stockport and the committee began to lose control of the wider repercussions of its actions. The strikes were not a blind reaction to distress; rather calculated co-operation amongst unionised weavers across the region was based upon hope for legislation from parliament. Hence only after the rejection of the minimum wage bill in parliament on the 19 May 1808 did strikes occur, which indicated continued heightened awareness of the role and impact of government legislation. News reached Manchester of the rejection of the bill on 22 May

³⁴ Ibid., p.18.

³⁵ HO 42/122/600, Manchester Police Office to Ryder, 27 April 1812.

but no disturbances occurred there until a committee at Stockport took the lead in organisation and began the strike on the following day.³⁶ It was claimed at the trial of the Stockport weavers: “uncommon pains were taken by means of delegates from the assembly at Stockport to communicate the object and by the next day the rising of the weavers in the different manufacturing towns became very general.”³⁷

The strikes were enforced by large groups of weavers taking away the shuttles from reluctant weavers in their homes and workshops in Rochdale, Bolton, Wigan, Stockport and other south east towns, although the weavers’ committee did not officially countenance the direction of these gangs.³⁸ On 30 May, in an attempt to release arrested strikers and reclaim confiscated bundles of shuttles, weavers burnt down Rochdale prison.³⁹ Significantly, the strikers’ aims and actions became more diffuse the further away they were from the committees at Stockport and Manchester. Prosecutions of weavers from Blackburn, Haslingden and other towns heading up to the calico-weaving district were numerous but involved rioting more than organised combinations or the removal of shuttles.⁴⁰ Whatever the ambiguities over the organisation and individual opposition to the shuttle-takers, the general community were likely to have been complicit in the strike and maintaining strikers’ anonymity when faced with the magistrates; the Mayor of Wigan and his colleagues claimed that they: “endeavoured to identify the persons who had taken the shuttles, but all the owners (except one) pretended that they did not know any of the offenders.”⁴¹

³⁶ *The Whole Proceedings of the Trial of Joseph Hanson* (1809), p.30; Glen, *Urban Workers*, p.160.

³⁷ PRO: TS 11/836, King vs Joseph Leah et al, 27 May 1808.

³⁸ HO 42/95/274, Farington to Home Office, 25 May 1808; see HO 42/95, Mayor of Wigan to Hawkesbury, 15 June 1808, Aspinall, *Early Trade Unions*, pp.102-3; Holden diaries.

³⁹ Rowbottom diaries; HO 42/95, Drake and Entwisle to Hawkesbury, 4 June 1808, Aspinall, *Early Trade Unions*, pp.99-100.

⁴⁰ LCRO: QJC1, MF10/139; *BM*, 7 September 1808.

⁴¹ HO 42/95, Mayor of Wigan to Hawkesbury, 15 June 1808.

Participants' awareness of routes and locations, fostered by mobility and migration, was again influential upon patterns of action. Expanding geographical communications did not inhibit protest but conversely facilitated it beyond local 'communities.' The very road on which Bamford 'bore home' between Middleton and Manchester was prominent in weavers' disturbances throughout this period.⁴² Handloom weavers held a mass meeting on St. George's Fields in Manchester on 25 May 1808 to draw up a petition for a minimum wage. The deputy constable Joseph Nadin "received information that a considerable body of weavers were on their way from the villages of Blakeley and the Neighbourhood round the town of Manchester to join the mob."⁴³ After the dispersal of the demonstration, the military then scoured the countryside, allegedly breaking up smaller meetings in the villages of Blackley and White Moss, in Middleton and on Kersal Moor.⁴⁴ Bamford commented on the route again in his recollections of the Luddite attack on Emmanuel Burton's factory and house in Middleton on 20-21 April 1812. He met individuals on the road from Middleton going back to Manchester, bringing back pieces of mahogany that they had raided from the remains of Burton's house.⁴⁵ The location of this wider district and its communication of particular roads were therefore integral to encouraging participation in the attack.

The strikes of 1808 also illustrated the close geographical identity amongst trades of the Westhoughton mining district. The rise of population in tandem with the distance from Bolton and Wigan appear to have been a less manageable problem for the magistrates than elsewhere. Most unionised action by textile trades therefore occurred within areas where skilled workers were concentrated and geographical connections could be

⁴² See map in Appendix IV:iii.

⁴³ See chapters 7 and 8; TS 11/657/2075, King vs Hanson, 1808, prosecution brief.

⁴⁴ E. Little, 'The Weavers' Friend,' *MRHR*, 5 (1991), 28.

⁴⁵ Bamford, *Early Days*, p.300.

maintained by delegate systems. John Holden stated in his diary that striking weavers who demonstrated in Bolton on 25 May dispersed to Leigh, Chowbent and Tildesley.⁴⁶ These townships had contrasting patterns of authority with Bolton itself and suggest that either large groups of protestors were more likely to come from outlying areas or included Boltonians who knew family or friends in the 'neighbourhood' who would support them there. Leigh, Chowbent and Tildesley were rapidly expanding weaving and mining townships. Aston's *Gazeteer* of 1808 described Tildesley as "a most flourishing place; risen (during the life of the present proprietor, T. Johnson Esq.) from an insignificant place with only two farm houses and a cottage, to a large populous village, with a neat chapel and upwards of 1000 inhabitants." Chowbent was renowned for the strength of its Dissenting population.⁴⁷ Some of the Luddites arrested at Westhoughton came from Chowbent, Atherton and Tildesley and appear to have known each other.⁴⁸ The Holdens of Hag End were prominent among those arrested and appear to have associated with the other prisoners who worked in handloom shops of Hag End or the Great Lever bleachworks of Thomas Hulme and Co.⁴⁹ Colonel Fletcher's informant, Joseph Lomax, a cropper of Darcy Lever who worked for Messrs Cooke and Hulme, claimed he met others at Tanner's Hole, went to Dean Moor and then called upon his friend 'Arthur Holding' [Holden] at Hag End.⁵⁰ Patterns of action were established and would be reflected in the more amorphous collective disturbances of 1812.

Luddite action

⁴⁶ Holden diaries; see map in Appendix IV: xi.

⁴⁷ J. Aston, *Gazeteer of Lancashire* (1808).

⁴⁸ PRO: TS 11/980, Westhoughton trial, briefs for prosecution.

⁴⁹ V.I. Tomlinson, 'Letters of a Lancashire Luddite Transported to Australia, 1812-16,' *TLCAS*, 77 (1967), 121.

⁵⁰ HO 42/122/522, examination of Joseph Lomax, 15 May 1812.

Luddism in Lancashire and Cheshire was more complex than previous strikes by handloom weavers because the agitations were not solely under the ostensible control of unionised committees. Machine breaking was a calculated imposition of the weavers' interventionist economy against the manufacturers' laissez-faire economics.⁵¹ Yet the disturbances as a whole encompassed most forms of collective action, including food riots, radical meetings, threatening letters and secret cells; the connections among all forms were ambiguous and fluctuating.⁵²

Although often resulting from breakdown in negotiations, the weavers' committees did not explicitly direct Luddism. Indeed, reports from spies suggested that dissensions within the committees resulted in outbreaks of machine breaking. At a meeting in Salford on Sunday 5 April 1812, an executive committee drew delegates from Bolton, Stockport, Failsworth, Saddleworth, Oldham and Ashton-under-Lyne.⁵³ It constructed a deal with the manufacturers for a twenty per cent increase in wages but its more moderate approach isolated some delegates, who then appear to have deliberately acted alone. According to spy reports, the committee decided that on the following Thursday simultaneous attacks should be made on factories at Bolton, Stockport and Manchester. Yet representatives from the Manchester districts later rejected the plan and delegates were sent to Bolton and Stockport to countermand the operation. From this point, as Dinwiddy suggests, the Bolton committee and its Chowbent subsidiary seem to have proceeded independently from Manchester.⁵⁴ Fletcher's spy Bent reported that a committee meeting was held at Ardwick Green on 20 April 1812. Representatives attended from townships in Manchester's southern neighbourhood and Tameside, but

⁵¹ K. Binfield, *Writings of the Luddites* (Baltimore, 2004).

⁵² See chapter 7; J.R. Dinwiddy, 'Luddism and Politics in the Northern Counties,' *SH*, 4 (1979), 33-63; B. Bailey, *The Luddite Rebellion* (Stroud, 1998); R. Reid, *Land of Lost Content, the Luddite Revolt, 1812* (1986).

⁵³ Dinwiddy, 'Luddism and Politics,' 42; HO 40/1/1/48.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 45; HO 40/1/1/47.

significantly, no delegate from Bolton was present and the Manchester committee threatened to disassociate itself from the committees of other towns.⁵⁵ It was perhaps no co-incidence that the day after the Bolton delegates missed the Ardwick Green meeting, attacks began on the factory and house of Emmanuel Burton in Middleton, followed by the pitched battle at Wroe and Duncroft's powerloom factory in Westhoughton on 24 April. The scale and organisation of the Westhoughton attack was probably unique because activities in Bolton were separate from the Manchester committee organisation. The other Luddite attacks on factories in Stockport and Middleton were unlikely to have been part of a directive plan from the committees but rather the result from local initiatives combined with pressure from the spies. Inter-trade committee sympathy was also strained at this point. John Buckley, a Dissenting preacher and weaver, called on the spinners and tailors in Manchester to contribute money but they "refused to pay anything to the weavers."⁵⁶

Wider inter-trade and cross-community participation was achieved therefore not in unionised committees but in direct action inspired by a more extensive regional identity. Luddism encompassed both the local bases of food riots and the geographical connections of previous unionised activity. A characteristic of the Lancashire Luddite disturbances was participation by workers from outside the 'neighbourhood.' Bands of colliers were especially prominent. This was exemplified at the disturbances at Middleton, a combination of attacks on machinery, manufacturers and food rioting. The magistrate William Chippindale reported that agitation began in Oldham market place on 20 April, where a crowd assembled, "chiefly from Saddleworth and Hollinwood." He identified the latter inhabitants as "almost all colliers." He termed the Saddleworth inhabitants

⁵⁵ Ibid.; Glen, *Urban Workers*, p.178.

⁵⁶ Dinwiddy, 'Luddism and Politics,' 45.

“rude” and “uncultivated,” which perhaps reflected town magistrates’ perceptions about the semi-rural villages on their outskirts. The crowd then walked the few miles to Burton’s powerloom factory at Middleton.⁵⁷ Rowbottom’s description confirms this account and the origins of those shot or arrested at the scene. He wrote of a “great number” from Oldham heading for Burton’s factory on 20 April. The next day, he observed that a “large mob again assembled at Middleton armed with Guns and Pistols and a very large number of colliers arrived with picks no doubt for the purpose of destroying the weaving factory.”⁵⁸ Chippindale’s report about the events of 21 April again identified colliers from the neighbourhood of Oldham assembling outside his arms depot before going on to Middleton: “there were several hundred Colliers with their picks for the purpose of sapping my little Fortress.”⁵⁹ Similarly, the Luddite disturbances at Stockport in March featured colliers from Denton and elsewhere, having apparently assembled in the ‘neighbourhood of Gee Cross’ (two miles south-east of Denton and five miles east of Stockport) before descending into the town.⁶⁰ During a food riot in Macclesfield in April, the main instigators were described as “Colliers and Carters from Bollington and Rainow [mining villages], or spinners from the hill country near Stockport.”⁶¹

The participation of colliers in the disturbances demonstrates the uniquely strong bonds formed on the south west Lancashire coal belt and their sympathy with other trades. The colliers and their families were distinctively bound together by tight kinship connections,

⁵⁷ B. Hall, ‘Luddite Riots in Middleton,’ *Lancashire Local Historian* (1985), 9.

⁵⁸ Rowbottom diaries.

⁵⁹ HO 42/122/515-7, Chippindale to Chippindale, 21 April 1812.

⁶⁰ PRO: KB 8/90, King vs John Jackson, 1812.

⁶¹ *MM*, 21 April 1812.

Catholicism, unionisation, insecurity and migration along the belt.⁶² Why they felt particularly strongly to take part in the Luddite disturbances on the north-east fringe of the coal district is however difficult to establish. The conscious decisions made were significant: to leave their place of work, travel a distance from the coalfield and enforce anonymity in large groups in disguise. These tactics aided communities where magistrates would recognise local participants and it also involved a collective distancing from an individual sense of self associated with daily arduous working life. Miners had a long and solid history of striking and also of radical activity. In the same area, colliers had taken part in UE agitation during 1799-1801. Of the twenty-one UE arrested at Rivington Pike in 1801, the most prominent were employed at Orrell colliery. The arrested appear to have known each other well. For example, John Houghton and Ralph Wood left home and travelled the twelve miles to Rivington. Bancroft wrote that they were: “suspected of being a delegate from the colliery at Orrell where it is said there are many United, Mr Blundell the proprietor having frequently reproved and warned them upon the subject.”⁶³ In attacking powerloom factories, colliers perhaps saw their role as enforcing a wider political economy in a sense of trade solidarity.

Luddites were not solely handloom weavers attacking their employers' machinery. Lancashire Luddism involved the 'neighbourhood' in a brief trades alliance. Bands of colliers and handloom weavers formed the most significant section but were not the sole participants. Various trades from the surrounding 'neighbourhood' and further, particularly hatters, were involved. After two days of pitched battles around Burton's factory and house in Middleton, those shot by the military included: a joiner and three

⁶² J. Langton, 'Proletarianisation in the Industrial Revolution: Regionalism and Kinship in the Labour Markets of the British Coal Industry from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Centuries,' *TransInstBritGeog*, 25 (2000), 42.

⁶³ HO 42/62/111, Bancroft to Portland, 27 May 1801; D. Anderson, 'Blundell's Collieries: Wages, Disputes and Conditions of Work,' *THSLC*, 117 (1965), 109-43.

hatters from Oldham, a hatter from Alder Root (near Oldham), men from Hollinwood, Middleton, Radcliffe Bridge “and a deal more from this neighbourhood.”⁶⁴ The Manchester executive committee had spinner and tailor representatives, although as has been seen, these connections would later be strained by the weavers’ demands for money.⁶⁵ The oath takers at many places appear to have been cotton spinners, such as in Tameside, where at Dukinfield spinners took oaths on a coal pit hill.⁶⁶ Powerloom factories were not the only workplaces to be attacked; John Pilkington of Bolton reported an attempt to set fire to “a very large spinning factory on the north side of the town” belonging to Roger Holbourn and Co on 18 April.⁶⁷

The origins of those arrested for rioting or attempting to ‘twist in’ spies perhaps did not accurately reflect actual participation; it may have had a wider range of class and geography than what is recorded. In their arrests following incidents, magistrates and constables appear to have targeted specific places within towns. In Bolton, magistrates focused on the newly built streets of working-class housing. Holden wrote on 28 April 1812: “Tuesday night the local out all night and constables – and took up during the night and Wednesday morning in Howell Croft, Spring Gardens and Bengall Sq 25 men.”⁶⁸ The men tried for administering the illegal oath to the spy Holland Bowden were indeed mainly weavers from Bengal Square, Howell Croft, Can Row and Silver Street.⁶⁹ After Westhoughton, the local Militia arrested men in raids on the town and Chowbent and Tildesley.⁷⁰ The sphere of arrest after the attack on Burton’s mill and house in Middleton was wider. According to Rowbottom, the Manchester deputy constable

⁶⁴ Rowbottom diaries.

⁶⁵ Dinwiddy, ‘Luddism and Politics,’ 45.

⁶⁶ F.R. Raynes, *An Appeal to the Public* (1817), p.90.

⁶⁷ HO 42/122/44, Pilkington to Beckett, 26 April 1812; see Binfield, *Writings of the Luddites*, pp.172-4 for more examples of spinners’ Luddism.

⁶⁸ Holden diary.

⁶⁹ See map in Appendix I.

⁷⁰ Bolton 1811 census; *Trial of the Luddites...at Lancaster Assizes* (1813).

Joseph Nadin arrived at Middleton on 5 May and arrested a few suspects there, before moving on to Royton, then Oldham and finally to “Thorp Clough he attempted to take two persons but failed.”⁷¹

Lancashire Luddism was thus not merely a case of local communities of weavers reacting against isolated employers and powerlooms. It included different levels of demonstration and targets of attack. The general population were involved in the riots or coalesced to the threats. It should not be assumed however that the situation was as clear-cut as the ‘neighbourhood’ united against the magistrates and manufacturers. In some townships, the situation approached almost a local civil war. Those who were not involved as sympathisers became special constables. The Home Office had enforced this situation by initially insisting that no extra troops were available to suppress disorder; the magistrates felt the necessity so great that they overcame their misgivings about the loyalties of the general population. Their change of mind was vindicated by the response. Colonel Fletcher wrote on 1 May that in the Bolton division alone they had “sworn in Special Constables the number of about 1000 – being after the proportion of two to every hundred inhabitants – or about a tenth part of the adult males.”⁷² Rowbottom indicated that there were many willing to serve under the magistrates in Oldham, when on 27 April, “Rev Horden and Taylor swore in a Large number of Constables for the parish of Oldham and Ashton” and two hundred of Oldham Local Militia were called on duty.⁷³

The eventual military response by the Home Office indicated how officials both within and outside the region believed that Luddites shared a common regional identity, whether or not this was the case in practice. The magistrates and Home Office had

⁷¹ Rowbottom diaries; PRO: TS 11/980, trial of Westhoughton rioters.

⁷² HO 40/1/1/71, Fletcher to Beckett, 1 May 1812.

⁷³ Rowbottom diary.

already suspected this when some volunteer corps had refused to put down food riots in 1800.⁷⁴ After failing to obtain military reinforcement to repress food riots on 20 April 1812, Rev Hay anxiously pleaded with Colonel Silvester in Manchester for troops, but specified that “the Militia regiments from which the force should be selected should be those of the Southern counties, unconnected with manufacturing districts.”⁷⁵ General Maitland was eventually sent by the Home Office from the south to take control of events. He was intentionally free from local bias. John Holden recorded that on 29 May, two thousand soldiers were encamped in tents in the Bolton district, possibly on the moor. There were three regiments: one southern English (Buckinghamshire militia), one Irish (Louth) and one Scottish (Sterling).⁷⁶ The Home Office’s perception of the necessity for a ‘British’ force is thus significant, especially the deliberate exclusion of a northern regiment.

The geography of the Luddite disturbances had also a more sinister explanation in relative patterns of repression by magistrates and other forces of order. The magistrates announced an amnesty for those who had taken the Luddite oath on 9 July. It significantly received little response until it was publicised in *Cowdroy’s Manchester Gazette* on 22 August, another reflection of the paper’s wide circulation and influence among the working classes.⁷⁷ Those who came forward to take the oath of allegiance which formed part of the amnesty, however, were almost exclusively from those parts of the region where Captain Frederick Raynes and his troops had been continually harrying the local population, that is, Stockport and north-east Cheshire.⁷⁸ Raynes later noted that “not less than 300 persons were assembled in the outskirts of Newton to set off to Stockport for

⁷⁴ HO 42/61/213, Bancroft to Portland, 12 March 1801.

⁷⁵ HO 42/122/22, Hay to Beckett, 21 April 1812.

⁷⁶ Holden diaries.

⁷⁷ Glen, *Urban Workers*, pp.186-7.

⁷⁸ Bailey, *The Luddite Rebellion*, p.80.

the purpose of taking the oath of allegiance,” whereas “the Luddites at Stayley Bridge did not shew a disposition to return to their allegiance.”⁷⁹ Few Mancunians or others in Lancashire came forward. Magistrate J.S. Lloyd of Stockport was known to have brutally interrogated arrested suspects, which suggests the difficulties of assessing the extent to which the witness statements were invented to forestall more of Lloyd’s rough treatment. For example, to avoid more torture by Lloyd, Corporal Barrowclough invented information about those involved in the murder of the manufacturer William Horsfal of Huddersfield. This consequently led to Lloyd’s dispute with Joseph Radcliffe in Huddersfield over the boundaries of each other’s spheres of authority.⁸⁰ As Thompson suggested therefore, the relative severity of magistrate repression and responses to them played a part in determining the pattern of Luddism.⁸¹

There were many places in Lancashire which saw neither unionised nor radical agitation. Prominent campaigns or major strikes did not feature in the histories of the smaller towns in the north of the region, where the textile industry was less invasive and where the population was more dispersed. Yet there were towns with many of the same economic and social characteristics as the disturbed areas but which also did not experience any major agitation. Warrington was a prime example, apparently unaffected by food riots or by radical activity of any kind. It produced no petitions for peace or reform and was seemingly unmoved by Luddism. Sellers attributed much of this quiescence “to the social composition of the town, the absence of factories and its dispersed, politically unawakened working class, with a middleclass small and insignificant.” He also pointed to the “heavy hand of the junta [local Anglican clergy, Botelier Grammar School, lord of manor] interrelated by marriage, engaged in all kinds

⁷⁹ Raynes, *An Appeal to the Public*, p.60.

⁸⁰ Reid, *Land of Lost Content*, pp.176, 191.

⁸¹ Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, p.536.

of commercial enterprises.”⁸² The sail-making and heavy industries in Warrington were busy in wartime and this perhaps also satiated its inhabitants. Other towns such as Glossop, which expanded its population and industry on a scale approaching that of its neighbours Dukinfield and Hyde, also did not share their strains. It was therefore not due to the survival of what Bohstedt would regard as a paternalistic moral economy.⁸³ Perhaps it can only be surmised that the reason lay in a peculiarly local temperament, character or identity which engendered contentment or acquiescence with the status quo in some areas, while areas including the Westhoughton district, Middleton and Tameside contained particularly radical or oppositionist inhabitants willing to take the considerable risks involved.⁸⁴

Applying the ‘cultural turn’ to collective action

The Making of the English Working Class still casts a long shadow over the subject of workers’ combinations in this period. Thompson believed class identity was formed among artisanal trades who shared a reactionary or romantic nostalgia for a pre-industrial domestic economy, but were sparked by Paine’s egalitarian message to incorporate these ideas into a progressive social programme. Postmodern historiography attempted to formulate an alternative approach by focusing on the transmission of class consciousness through oppositional discourse. Studies of the Lancashire working classes in this vein dealt mostly with the renewed activity of formal trade unions in the Victorian period.⁸⁵

⁸² I. Sellers, ‘Prelude to Peterloo, Warrington Radicalism, 1775-1819,’ *MRHR*, 3 (1989), 17.

⁸³ A. Charlesworth, ‘From the Moral Economy of Devon to the Political Economy of Manchester, 1790-1812,’ *JH*, 18 (1993), 205-17.

⁸⁴ See map in Appendix IV:x.

⁸⁵ P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge, 1991); J. Vernon, *Re-Reading the Constitution: New Narratives in the Political History of England’s Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1996); M.W. Steinberg, *Fighting Words, Working Class Formation, Collective Action and Discourse in Early Nineteenth Century England* (Cornell, 1999); G. Stedman-Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983).

Ironically, however, revisionist readings of Thompson's work miscast his explanation of opposition to the cultural hegemony of local elites. Steinberg has suggested that, as with postmodern historians, Thompson similarly argued that workers appropriated the moral language of hegemony to construct an oppositional discourse and morality. Thompson saw artisans expressing independence from gentry cultural hegemony through their work patterns and in cultural life from 1780 to 1820. Using culture, workers defended their position against their employers and local elites.⁸⁶

All unionised petitions and addresses utilised rhetoric from a long-established repertoire of ideas about skill and legality in an attempt to defend them.⁸⁷ The rhetoric of skill and legality was an oppositional discourse, although it did not necessarily create a shared class identity in practice. The terminology had its roots in the guild organisation, apprenticeship, the Statute of Artificers and skilled opposition to female and casual labour.⁸⁸ It invoked ideas of a moral economy of productive activity, which conceived of law as a means of maintaining the inviolable right to a livelihood and a balance of trade relations.⁸⁹ The mule spinners' petitions against the Combination Acts in 1799-1800 bore hallmarks of this rhetoric. The Manchester and Liverpool petitions drew attention to the absence of a provision in the first Combination Act comparable to the hatters' act of 1777 disqualifying justices engaged in trade.⁹⁰ 'Class' grievances were therefore linked in spinners' minds with the law and parliamentary intervention, being highly aware of their legal rights and history.⁹¹ The employment of the rhetoric of skill and restriction by most skilled trades and unionised handloom weavers did not however necessarily result in a

⁸⁶ M. Steinberg, 'Culturally Speaking: Finding a Commons Between Post-Structuralism and the Thompsonian Perspective,' *SH*, 21 (1996), 194, 205.

⁸⁷ Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, Orth, *Combination and Conspiracy*.

⁸⁸ Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, p.66.

⁸⁹ Steinberg, *Fighting Words*, p.29.

⁹⁰ Orth, *Combination and Conspiracy*, pp.49-50.

⁹¹ Steinberg, *Fighting Words*, p.29.

shared class consciousness among the unionised trades. It rather sustained distinct trade identities. The leaders of the unions of the mule spinners, calico printers, fustian cutters, shoemakers and machinemakers were involved in drawing up the Manchester petition of 1799. Thompson made much of this temporary association of different trades,⁹² but in essence it was short-lived and specific to the town, with no similar cross-class alliance elsewhere in the spinning centres of Lancashire; Glen for example has found no similar association in Stockport in 1799.⁹³

What fostered inter-trade sympathy and participation, as demonstrated in Luddite disturbances, was action. Experience was not solely reducible to discourse. The 'linguistic turn' and its antecedents often privileged language to the detriment of the influence of experience in challenges to the ideologies of hegemony. Yet oppositional discourse could only be a form of resistance if its proponents believed it to be important and effective, rather than merely an alternative view.⁹⁴ Epstein has demonstrated how the use of ritual in radicalism and popular protest was integral to the process of opposition to local elites.⁹⁵ Thompson similarly emphasised the subversion of cultural hegemony by the growing independence of artisans at their work and in the carnivalesque world of 'rough music' and the theatrical of the moral economy in local justice and food riots. He was therefore much closer to the cultural turn than his critics allowed.⁹⁶ Although unionised activity did not involve the whole of the general population and indeed often caused frictions with local communities during strikes and agitation, participants adopted similar patterns of action. It was a shared discourse of action.

⁹² Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p.547.

⁹³ Glen, *Urban Workers in the Early Industrial Revolution*, p.105.

⁹⁴ D. MacRaild and A. Taylor, *Theory and History: Social Theory and Social History* (Basingstoke, 2004), p.136.

⁹⁵ J. Epstein, *Radical Expression, Political Language, Ritual and Symbol in England* (Oxford, 1994).

⁹⁶ Thompson, *Customs in Common*; Steinberg, 'Culturally Speaking,' 194.

John Holden gave in his diary what was most likely an eyewitness account of the weavers' strikes of 1808. On Wednesday 25 May: "all that day the mob continued to assemble on Bolton Moor and to parade the streets with the effigy of Sir Robert Peel and they took off to Chowbent, Tidsley Banks and Leigh." They assembled the next morning and "carried the effigy of Thomas Ainsworth and a Board with [line blank]."⁹⁷ The elder Sir Robert Peel and his business partner, the magistrate Thomas Ainsworth, achieved a certain infamy in the town and across the region where the weavers had been on strike since 22 May. Reports of attacks on individual manufacturers' factories and homes across agitated districts are plentiful throughout the war, but this kind of ritual or symbolising appeared specifically in reports of the strikes of 1808. In late June the *Manchester Mercury* alleged that weavers in Manchester were assembling in large numbers, stopping looms and burning effigies of "several respectable manufacturers, whom they deem inimical to their claim."⁹⁸

The burning of effigies, together with other common tactics including threatening letters and machine-breaking, was not merely 'bargaining by riot.' It rather subverted the loyalist modes of action, especially Paine-effigy burnings which those very manufacturers had condoned in the 1790s. It was indicative of the complex identity of towns and villages still dominated by domestic production but increasingly aware of their wider role in a new industrial age. Being organised and orientated locally or regionally therefore did not make protests less valuable or less 'modern.' It was an expression of provincial opposition to both local and national figures and institutions that they believed had betrayed them by siding with the tide of economic laissez-faire. This involved what Thompson would have seen as a rebellious but conservative popular culture reacting

⁹⁷ Holden diaries.

⁹⁸ *MM*, 28 June 1808.

against the very independence it had.⁹⁹ The strikers were well aware of the reciprocal obligations of parliament; hence their use of effigies of Robert Peel. Peel was the enemy on both a local and national scale because of his antagonism towards his employees in the region and in parliament against minimum wage legislation.¹⁰⁰ Striking weavers furthermore regarded themselves as loyalists and genuinely denounced radicalism; they saw themselves therefore conducting their protest within the loyalist repertoire of action.¹⁰¹

Discourse and rhetoric nevertheless did form part of collective action, although it was most likely an expression of the beliefs or tactics of the unionised activists rather than the general population and was not the sole basis of a formulation of class-consciousness. Luddite threatening letters consciously reflected the language of legality, simultaneously tapping into the skilled trade discourse as well as subverting the authority of magistrate and manufacturer rhetoric served against them. They displayed an alternative political economy, furthermore, with many demands reiterating the previous decade's unionised claims for minimum wage legislation against the laissez-faire political economy of their employers.¹⁰² Binfield has demonstrated that the rhetoric of Luddite texts in the North West expressed a wider knowledge of economics than the Luddism of other regions. For example, in a letter sent to the Fire Office Agents in Wigan on 26 April 1812, the anonymous writer recognised not only a larger financial system connecting the powerloom owners with their insurers but also the position of fulfilling a reciprocated potential in destroying by fire the steam looms: "That shou'd you have any of the Persons Insured in your office not to Insure them anymore (for the sake of your

⁹⁹ Thompson, *Customs in Common*.

¹⁰⁰ *Hansard*, XI, 19 May 1808, p.426.

¹⁰¹ See PRO: PC 1/44/A155, J. Draper et al to T. Bancroft, 16 April 1799.

¹⁰² Chase, *Early Trade Unionism*, p.66.

Employers) who keeps winding machines.”¹⁰³ These connections, repeated in other Luddite texts and in peace and reform petitions, contradict generic impressions about the reactionary or ill-educated nature of Luddism.¹⁰⁴ The agitation was not a blind reaction against economic change but a desperate adjunct of the well-informed and progressive early trade unionism.

Luddite discourse was powerful but could not be effective without the context of wider action outside threatening letters and machine-breaking. Part of the ambiguity about Luddism among other forms of collective action was its intangible elements. Contemporaries and historians could not separate them from the secret oath organisation and night-time meetings of the UE, the millenarian imaginings of forms of evangelical religion and folk culture, and the psychological impact of war and economic distress. Tilly reacted against this by depicting collective action as calculated in structure and solely political in aim. He detected an almost constant state of ‘contention’ in quotidian life, which influenced the evolution of what he termed as ‘repertoires’ of action much more than the ‘moments of madness’ which he believed bring them to the surface.¹⁰⁵ He criticised the sociologist Smelser for his focus on the role of irrational ‘generalised beliefs’ in social movements.¹⁰⁶

Yet collective action cannot be analysed in relation to purely structural concepts. Identity and culture were as important as physical organisations and structural economic change to most social movements in this period. New currents in sociology provide an

¹⁰³ Binfield, *Writings of the Luddites*, p.174.

¹⁰⁴ For example, Bailey, *Luddite Rebellion*, which denigrates Lancashire agitation as being mere violent imitation of Nottinghamshire Luddism, p.106.

¹⁰⁵ C. Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758-1834* (Cambridge, Mass, 1995); S. Tarrow, ‘Cycles of Collective Action,’ in M. Traugott, *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action* (1995), p.104.

¹⁰⁶ N. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behaviour* (1962).

alternative way of analysing the motivations of collective action. They show how movements relied upon the construction of a shared narrative of beliefs or tropes to mobilise their supporters and construct collective identities.¹⁰⁷ Polletta, for example, has argued that narratives are a significant factor in social movements. By explaining past events and formulating possibilities for the future, shared narratives were a key method of defining collective identity. They encouraged the spread of protest among disparate groups, particularly in its initial stages.¹⁰⁸ Luddism demonstrated the use and currency of irrational beliefs in holding the movement together. Psychology and 'irrational' motivations have their place in collective action together with the more traditional emphasis on structural causes. Binfield's study of the shared rhetoric of Luddite texts can be augmented by an understanding of the psychology of protestors and their opponents and the effect of two decades of war upon this psychology.¹⁰⁹ 'General Ludd' was perhaps only the most visible manifestation of what was in fact a mythology of Luddism, a whole mindframe of opposition which was framed by both participants in and suppressors of the disturbances.

Even more 'organised' forms of protest and association were influenced by a shared narrative of geographical beliefs and tropes. Unionised and radical movements in the region during the wars were sustained not by physical networks but through shared narratives. The rhetoric of legality among unionised workers was part of this narrative, but perceived notions of geographical spread formed a more common theme among all activists in this period. Tropes of exaggeration or the possibilities of geographical

¹⁰⁷ S. Barkan and L. Snowden, *Collective Violence* (Boston, 2000), pp.24-5; B. Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest* (Oxford, 1997); F. Polletta, 'Contending Stories: Narrative in Social Movements,' *Qualitative Sociology*, 21, 4 (1998), 419-46.

¹⁰⁸ F. Polletta, ' "It was Like a Fever." Narrative and Identity in Social Protest,' *Social Problems*, 45 (1998), 143.

¹⁰⁹ Binfield, *Writings of the Luddites*.

capabilities ran through the pronouncements and actions of the United Englishmen, unionised workers, Luddites and the general population. These 'irrational beliefs' gave some sort of unity and common purpose to the disparate movements beyond their community bases. These beliefs persuaded many to act rather than vague notions of a shared class identity. They also illustrated the ambivalent and often terse relationship the region had with parliament and the nation as represented in London. As unionised workers and a war-weary population grew ever more dependent upon government for legislation, their petitions and actions demonstrated an assertion of local needs and provincial opposition to centralisation and a generic national identity.

The role of protestors whom the manufacturers termed 'strangers' was prominent. It reflected not only the independence of artisans from paternalist control that Thompson identified but also the irrational, almost millenarian atmosphere surrounding the events of 1812. It may have been a means of evading recognition and thus arrest on the part of inhabitants of other towns, having travelled in on different routes from the bearing-home roads. Jeremiah Bury, a major manufacturer from Stockport whose factory was attacked, claimed when examined by the Select Committee into the Orders in Council that he did not believe the riots were caused by "the resident weavers, I mean those brought up in the country," a significant distinction. Rather, they were caused by: "persons who come from a distance," of whom he knew "very little." He testified to the good behaviour of the resident weavers and stated: "I believe they have the system of leaving their own neighbourhood when they intended to riot."¹¹⁰ On 22 April 1812, Rev Hay gave his account of the attack at Middleton to the Home Office, which corroborated Bury's opinion:

¹¹⁰ PP 1812, III, *Minutes of Evidence on...Petitions...Respecting the Orders in Council*, p.269.

The outrage which was very considerable was committed for the most part by strangers and therefore their proceedings being complete, they were no more heard of. This method of supplying strangers to commit such riots is generally resorted to and is one amid many other circumstances to prove that the insurgents act under an organised system.¹¹¹

Rev Hay's call for troops from the southern counties intimated his anxiety that the whole of Ashton-under-Lyne and its neighbourhood was against him. The emphasis on strangers may have been a delusion by the overwhelmed authorities and forces of order, who certainly exaggerated the situation or perhaps wished to hide their incapability to control the situation. It is possible on the other hand that there was some communication involved in inhabitants of other districts travelling to disturbances and that the strangers were colliers. On 24 April, Hay, John Silvester and Ralph Wright at the Manchester Police Office (set up a few years previously as an attempt to manage the increased demands placed upon magistrates) wrote mysteriously:

In the course of Sunday and Monday some thousands [of] seemingly strangers resorted to this town. They were all of awkward description – yesterday these people who very many of them had bundles and newly cut sticks totally disappeared.¹¹²

This delusion or scapegoating perhaps also indicates why the magistrates and many others placed much of the blame on Irish weavers while few Irish were among those arrested.

Both radical and unionised protestors consciously manipulated confusion and imagination as a disguise and method of action. Exaggeration about the extensiveness of agitation and the existence of a movement rather than isolated groups was initially a useful tactic in maintaining morale. The activist leaders of the UE did travel across the country and to Ireland, but their supporters and indeed the magistrates' spies inflated this out of proportion. The spy Robert Gray claimed in 1798 that two delegates were sent to

¹¹¹ HO 42/122/592, Hay to Ryder, 22 April 1812.

¹¹² HO 42/122/546, Hay, Silvester and Wright to Ryder, 24 April 1812.

deliver “reports from France” throughout Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Cheshire and Yorkshire. Whether they undertook this journey is unverifiable, but it is very likely that, as Gray asserted, they did meet radicals in most of the Pennine towns circling Manchester.¹¹³ In so doing, they may have given the impression of a pan-regional network and international organisation to the inhabitants who were not in direct contact with other groups. Rumours and beliefs continued to escalate. Rev Bancroft reported in February 1801 that the UE of Bolton “talk again confidently of Ireland being made a theatre of insurrection...possibly hoping for the confederation of French invaders.” He believed they met frequently with delegates from London, Sheffield and Ireland. To this unverifiable chain of rumour, he added: “A Frenchman who lives I believe at Congleton in Cheshire but whose name I cannot learn has been seen very often in the Jacobinical meetings in and about Manchester.”¹¹⁴ What is important is not whether it was accurate but that both the UE and the magistrates wanted to believe it was true.

Hyperbole developed into a common tactic among all types of protestors needing to use idea of collective strength. It then became a mythology with a wider variety of meanings for participants and supporters. The leaders of the Weavers’ Association during the strike of 1799-1803 envisaged a unified, although federated, northern weaving identity. Although the practical spread of the Association was cast among skilled delegates within relatively easy reach of Bolton, the committee claimed to work “in conjunction with the cotton weavers of the several counties of Chester, York, Derby and Lancaster.”¹¹⁵ Although this was a rhetorical device designed to persuade the legislators, the repetition of such tropes perhaps created a belief among activists and supporters that it was

¹¹³ PRO: PC 1/42/140, 15 April 1798, Middlesex Quarter Sessions, examination of Robert Gray of Manchester, cotton manufacturer.

¹¹⁴ HO 42/61/122, Bancroft to Portland, 9 February 1801.

¹¹⁵ BL: Add. MS. 27835, Place Papers.

possible. When James Holcroft of Bolton was asked by the 1803 Select Committee: “Was it the favourite wish, in Whitefield, there should be a regulation of wages?” he proclaimed with confidence: “It was not only the favourite wish of the People at Whitefield, but the favourite wish of the four counties of Lancaster, Cheshire, Yorkshire and Durham.”¹¹⁶ Again, this was an obvious generalisation to convince the Commons that the demand for a minimum wage prevailed over sectional interests and regional boundaries, but his reply illustrated the pan-regional identity envisaged by the Committee. Holcroft’s thinking was also utopian compared with the practical horizons of the ordinary weavers he led. It is hard to judge what the Bolton weaver Thomas Thorpe actually knew about the extent of support for a new Arbitration bill, when he proclaimed before the 1803 Select Committee:

I believe the whole Body of Mechanics are anxious for it at large...generally speaking, the whole Body wishes it to be done. What I speak of are in Lancashire, and a great number in Yorkshire, that I know are anxious for the Bill.

When asked, however, “Are they anxious about it at Blackburn?” he replied: “I do not know much about Blackburn.” The reason for this ignorance may have been that he had no personal contacts there, but possibly did in other places, as he assured the examiner that “there are a great many anxious about it at Chorley and Preston...and at Wigan too.”¹¹⁷

As with the unionised workers, the UE, Luddites and some radicals similarly used exaggeration of their pan-regional and national spread to rally their supporters, give wider legitimacy to their campaigns and to intimidate their opponents. Their much more imaginative narrative about their enemies and leaders differed from the direct and legislation-based appeals to parliament of the unionised workers. Although using many

¹¹⁶ PP 1803, III part 4, p.34.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.13.

of the same legalistic tropes as the unionised workers, it formed less of a common rhetoric than a mythology, shared not only by its participants but also by their suppressors, who served to further develop the narrative.

A key theme repeated in testimonies, reports and other contemporary records of Luddism was a perception on the part of those confessing to be Luddites and the magistrates' spies that they were part of a much wider pan-regional network. Their language and beliefs in this respect was very similar to the evidence given by the United movement and the striking weavers and spinners of the previous decade. For example, the information given by Thomas Whittaker, a silk weaver from Stockport in 1812, was typical of Luddite rhetoric and vision, but was also reminiscent of UE and unionised claims:

Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire were in a very forward state and it was doubted if they would wait for the other counties that it was calculated that Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Westmorland and Cumberland would have 500,000 men capable of bearing arms that one third of them were in good discipline.¹¹⁸

Reid believed that Whittaker's statement displayed "not the ranting of a rabid revolutionary but the apologia of a naïve idealist."¹¹⁹ The Luddites based their organisation and networks on experience of unionised action, but had wider horizons. Whittaker claimed that he initially thought the meetings he attended were merely combinations to advance wages but he became disillusioned with their increasingly violent plans. He attended a meeting of delegates in a Manchester pub, where "never was more surprised in my life when I heard the Manchester delegate lay down the plans and communications with other towns, first acting if all Persons there were friends."¹²⁰

Whittaker was most likely a spy, which further illustrates the extent of the common

¹¹⁸ HO 42/121/434, statement of T. Whittaker, 4 July 1812.

¹¹⁹ Reid, *Land of Lost Content*, p.168.

¹²⁰ HO 42/121/434, 4 July 1812.

delusion between activists and the forces of order. The significance of the plans of the delegates was their vision. It was not just Whittaker who was naïve: so were the Manchester committee members who seemed to him and the magistrates as so organised and revolutionary.

Pan-regional networks may not have worked in practice, but perceptions of them were crucial. Thomas Miller of Stockport was present at the meeting and reported: “all was going on far beyond expectation that the Country Districts were pushing it from one to another as fast as possible that 900 had taken the Oath in Manchester.”¹²¹ Mythology was reliant upon superlatives: that thousands were taking the oath. It was essential that the oath network was perceived to be crossing geographical and trade boundaries. Thomas Whittaker’s statement again expressed this belief, alleging that a James Buckley of Manchester “administered the oath to several thousands,” including to tailors. He was anxious to assert that the oath-taking was not confined to weavers but encompassed the manufacturer Hyde of Edgeley in Stockport encouraging his male spinners to take the oath and Sampson Robinson “is doing the same amongst the Hatters.”¹²² This may not have occurred but perceptions of its possibility are significant. Again, the contributions of the spies inadvertently added to this mythology and filtered into Luddite imagination. Colonel Fletcher’s spy ‘B’ claimed that Napoleon was ready to supply men and arms and that 10,000 men and 30,000 men were standing by in Ireland to bolster the coming revolution.¹²³ Before the attack on Westhoughton mill, the spy John Stones apparently persuaded some local workers in an alleged secret committee that radical leaders in London, were only waiting for the northerners to rise. Colonel Fletcher then reported that the attack had been postponed because preparations for a simultaneous rising in the

¹²¹ HO 42/121/433, statement of T. Miller, 4 July 1812.

¹²² HO 42/121/434, 4 July 1812.

¹²³ HO 40/1/1/4, Fletcher to Beckett, 11 April 1812; Reid, *Land of Lost Content*, p.124.

capital were not complete.¹²⁴ This was a total fantasy and another significant element of the mythology of Luddism.

The influence of these popular campaigns against corruption and for peace and reform infused into Luddite mythology. They therefore shared a perception of the extent of connections and delusions reliant upon London. A prisoner of the Stockport magistrate J.S. Lloyd spoke of Burdett as destined to become the first president of the Commonwealth when George III and the Prince Regent had been dispatched.¹²⁵ Henry Brougham was also a crucial figure in inspiring ideas of wider connections. He acted as a defence lawyer for the 'Thirty Eight,' arrested in Manchester in May 1812 during a meeting to discuss reform and also defended the Luddites against over-zealous magistrates and their spy system in the Commons debate on the select committee report into the disturbances.¹²⁶ Knowledge of these links with London personalities were evolved by extremists and other activists into plans for a rising being reliant upon Burdett and the other London reformers. On 29 April 1812, a gaoler at Lancaster Castle found a letter in the pocket of a Bolton cloth worker written by James Burdett on 16 April, which mentioned his brother Francis and linked him with the cause of the Bolton committee.¹²⁷ The fact that those Luddites who were not directly involved in moderate reform meetings took up the idea of support from London again demonstrates the intricate web of connections and ideas circulating in Luddism. The support of Ireland and France was still a hope, but the Luddites demonstrated their recognition of the growing importance of the role of parliament and London radical leaders in furthering

¹²⁴ Bailey, *Luddite Rebellion*, p.67.

¹²⁵ Reid, *Land of Lost Content*, p.176.

¹²⁶ *Liverpool Mercury*, 22 May 1812.

¹²⁷ Reid, *Land of Lost Content*, p.146.

their demands. This may indeed have been a consequence of the increasing size and effectiveness of the petitioning movements for peace and reform.

Unlike constitutionalist radicalism, Luddism was a movement of pro-action rather than discourse. Images, symbols and awareness of place were used in action as threats to manufacturers and magistrates, tropes were transmitted through ballads and at meetings. 'General Ludd' was the central fiction in the mythology of Luddism across all disturbed counties. Binfield's recent anthology has highlighted the shared language among Luddites, with General Ludd as a 'metonym' embodying a whole range of intangible concepts or opinions under one tangible imagined leader.¹²⁸ He has also successfully demonstrated the regional variations in this language and political opinions therein expressed. Hence Lancashire Luddism was unique for its wider awareness of national and international economic conditions and trade networks, which Binfield attributes to the more virulent Jacobin tradition within the region. Luddism was nevertheless a potent and forceful movement across regions because it was generated "not by conspiracy or the sudden emergence of class consciousness" but rather by "the creation and appropriation of the eponym Ned Ludd."¹²⁹

Most magistrates and their spies again shared and contributed to in the delusions. Captain Raynes, stationed in Tameside, argued: "There is no reason to believe there was any one leader, for in each disaffected district, the most daring and aspiring assumed the titled of General Ludd."¹³⁰ Yet at the trial of men charged with administering an illegal oath to the soldier-spy Holland Bowden on the road to Bolton, most of the prosecution witnesses were members of Bolton Local Militia, employed as spies for magistrate

¹²⁸ Binfield, *Writings of the Luddites*, p.46.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.18.

¹³⁰ Raynes, *An Appeal to the Public*, p.10.

Colonel Fletcher. One said he “heard that he knew where these men met, as it was generally talked of in the croft, amongst the workmen. They said a man they called General Ludd was reviewing about 300 men, two or three times a week.” Many spies were deliberately searching for Ludd rather than for other participants. Abraham Kaye, a private in the Bolton militia, reported he saw “one called General Ludd, who had a pike in his hand, like a serjeant’s halbert; I could not distinguish his face, which was very white, but not the natural colour.”¹³¹ Other spies claimed they recognised the accused John Hurst as General Ludd. The hysteria of magistrates in facing a crisis of public order engendered these delusions, both amongst their spies desperate for information and amongst the victims of the interrogatory tactics of J.S. Lloyd.¹³²

General Ludd was much more than a simple product of popular imagination in a period of war-weariness. The character was imagined because the increasingly radical-leaning general population were searching for a leader. In 1812, they could not find one locally or were unable to raise one themselves because of magistrate repression. Most of the Jacobin radicals of the 1790s had faded into obscurity. Major national figures such as Major Cartwright and his metropolitan supporters distanced themselves from the working classes during the 1800s in an attempt to create an elite radical political party in parliament. Cartwright only reached the North on a popular reform campaign once dissensions within his chosen party made this goal unachievable and after Luddism had begun to subside.¹³³ The only genuine ‘gentleman leader’ of the 1800s, Joseph Hanson, had died in 1811.

¹³¹ *Trials of all the Prisoners...Convicted at Lancaster Assizes...August 1812*, p.50.

¹³² Reid, *Land of Lost Content*, B. Turner, ‘A Loyal Englishman? John Lloyd and Aspects of Oath Taking in 1812’, in M.T. Davis, ed., *Radicalism and Revolution in Britain* (Hampshire, 2000).

¹³³ R. Eckersley, ‘Of Radical Design: John Cartwright and the Redesign of the Reform Campaign, c.1800-1811,’ *History*, 86 (2004), 560-80.

Previous disturbances of working-class action against manufacturers or magistrates had not featured such a semi-mythical figure. Only loyalist demonstrations, often encouraged or organised by local authorities, fictionalised real characters such as Guy Fawkes or Thomas Paine in effigy to be burnt or 'hung.' These were objects of attack rather than positive leaders of action. Future popular outbursts, however, utilised the latter psychological method, especially 'Captain Swing' in the agricultural riots in the southern counties of the 1830s and 'Rebecca' during the tollgate riots in Wales in 1839-44.¹³⁴ Furthermore, the pan-regional nature of the character of 'General Ludd' sheds new light on the current historiographical emphasis on the effect of the French wars on British national identity. It suggests that the wars' impact on the general population was not altogether positive; nor did the wars enable loyal and patriotic nation-building alone. Rather the circumstances of war-weariness and opposition to government or forces of order forged psychological links and shared identities among regions.

While John Bull was a positive figure, General Ludd was a product of the negative side of defensive patriotism. Embodying a leader of trade defence for his supporters, like the volunteers, he embodied a provincial alternative to the generalised images of military bravery and patriotism propagated by the government. Unlike the defensive patriotism of the invasion scares or the hopeful relief during the final victories of 1814-5, the period 1811-12 displayed a peak in war-weariness of the general British population. Some of the population in industrialising areas under economic and psychological strain therefore found catharsis in the military drilling and oath-taking which comprised elements of Luddism. General Ludd and his regiments were not merely tropes but opposition expressed in action. Luddism directly mirrored and in some senses subverted their

¹³⁴ E. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, *Captain Swing* (1969); P. Molloy, *And They Blessed Rebecca: An Account of the Welsh Toll-Gate Riots, 1839-1844* (Llandysul, 1983); G. Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (rev. ed., 1981), 247.

previous experiences of volunteers and the ballot. Another contributing factor to the military ethos of Luddism was that in 1807, Castlereagh had disbanded the volunteer regiments and transferred them to more centralised units of local militia.¹³⁵ The Luddite regiments were thus not only a means of training for attacks on machinery but also a reaction to the element of compulsion and government dominance perceived to have been introduced into what had been a voluntary means of demonstrating patriotism and local identity. Unionised action was therefore not wholly distinguishable from disturbances and Luddism cannot be analysed solely in socio-economic terms. The psychological effects of war and provincial identity had resonances within most collective action.

The organisation of unionised committees relied upon the current economic situation, relative levels of repression by local forces of order and the progress of bills in parliament. Conflicting aims and strained connections altered the location and activities of committees. This did not mean that concerted action was impossible in this period. Nor did it need either a formal permanent structure or shared class-consciousness to be effective. The concurrent campaigns for peace and reform were able to bridge local boundaries; the strikes and petitions by weavers and spinners were pan-regional in scope. Furthermore, the rhetoric of Luddism revealed wider aims and greater links and bonds among communities. Luddism did not just consist of reactionary machine breaking but was well aware of the traditions of unionised action and its relationship with parliamentary legislation. The language and mythology of Luddism illustrated that wider horizons were important both regionally and towards London. It consolidated the

¹³⁵ M. Smith, 'Loyalty and Opposition in the Napoleonic Wars: the Impact of the Local Militia, 1807-15' (Oxford Univ. DPhil thesis, 1984).

movement without need for unified organisation. Collective action by the working classes relied on geographical identities as well as class consciousness to sustain its aims and solidarities.

REDEFINING RADICALISM

After years of inactivity, popular radicalism revived from 1806. Led by activists, campaigns for peace and reform rapidly burgeoned with a wide range of support. This does not mean that the general population forsook their genuine loyalism for Jacobin republicanism. Rather, the premise of radicalism opened out to encompass a spectrum of issues directly relating to the government's actions in the war. These issues were not entirely 'Jacobin' or indelibly linked to the cause of universal suffrage; the general population participated in revived criticism of the government's foreign policy in particular and of corruption in parliament and the monarchy in general. The shifting state of the international situation provided the opportunity for this to occur, while the deepening economic distress of manufacturing and commercial districts pushed even sworn loyalists among the general population to some sort of opposition to government policies or the actions of the monarchy.

This provincial opposition was influenced by the moderate metropolitan radicalism of Francis Burdett, but its ideas were moulded by expressions of regional Britishness. This change in popular politics had two consequences. It firstly questioned the decisiveness of the loyalist reaction of the 1790s. Secondly, it narrowed the ideological gap between loyalists and radicals. Involvement in radicalism may have only been a necessary tool

adopted by a large proportion of the general population during dire circumstances.¹ For radical activists however, the revitalised campaigns marked a genuine, enduring change, especially the new generation of radicals who became involved and would later lead the postwar mass platform movement.

Peace and Reform Campaigns, 1807-10

On Christmas Day 1807, a mass peace meeting was held on Oldham Edge, common moorland overlooking the town. Up to a thousand people reputedly attended, the largest number since the meetings of 1801. The event appears to have been organised and led by the Royton radicals, who drew up a petition to parliament calling for peace. The newspapers recorded that the first open gathering concerning peace in Lancashire occurred in Rochdale on 7 December, although there were smaller meetings of radical activists before this.² The campaigns for peace and later Reform were locally-based but envisaged on a regional scope. Joseph Hanson was a key figure in the first few years of their revival, preparing the ground for a radicalism that was provincial and firmly grounded in regional identity. The handloom weavers' campaign for minimum wage legislation resurfaced in parallel and although not directly connected, sustained a favourable atmosphere for general discontent and methods of crowd protest.

As in 1801, the campaign for peace in the North West was slower to emerge than in the West Riding, which had already organised mass meetings for peace in Sheffield and Leeds.³ Inspiration for petitions and meetings thus crossed the Pennines from east to

¹ D. Bythell, *Handloom Weavers in the Industrial Revolution, A Study in the English Cotton Industry During the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 1969), p.217.

² Chetham's: Hay mss, Mun. A. 3.10, scrapbook 4, p.109.

³ *PJ*, 31 October 1807.

west. In both regions, radicals recognised that it would be more effectual for regional rather than local figures to take the campaign to parliament. A few hundred inhabitants from Oldham, Ashton, Stockport and Saddleworth attended a meeting in Ashton-under-Lyne on 23 November 1807. The Tameside inhabitants, or at least the organisers - the radical schoolmaster William Clegg and Richard Partington - envisaged a regional petition with Joseph Hanson as a pan-local leader, rather than drawing up their own petitions as Oldham and Stockport had done autonomously in 1800. They resolved to request Hanson and "other gentlemen of rank and respectability in Manchester and its neighbourhood" to organise the petition. The resolutions further portrayed a provincial identity in stating that the war was affecting the economic position of the "lower and middling classes of manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire."⁴

Joseph Hanson was regarded as the most suitable 'gentleman leader.' He publicly disagreed with Lord Milton in arguing that Yorkshire peace petitions should be presented to parliament. This stance therefore induced respect from the petitioners across the Pennines. A letter in *Cowdroy's* in December 1807 from 'a woollen clothier' therefore thanked Hanson "at the request of a number of respectable distressed tradesmen in the West Riding."⁵ Hanson attempted to arrange for a meeting in Manchester to draw up a peace petition. It was well publicised by *Cowdroy* and must have influenced if not inspired organisers of meetings and petitions across the region. Colonel Fletcher alleged in February 1808 that the Bolton campaigners knew "they should fail to obtain such a meeting in the same manner as Mr Hanson Lieut. Commander of the Rifle Corps and his abettors had failed to obtain the call of a meeting."⁶ Hanson then published *A Defence of*

⁴ *Cowdroy's*, 28 November 1807.

⁵ *Cowdroy's*, 5 December 1807.

⁶ HO 42/95/1, Fletcher to Home Office, February 1808.

the Petitions for Peace, containing strictures against the Manchester elites for their repressive actions in the town against the working classes.⁷

The results of this difference of approach were immediate geographically and politically. In Manchester and its surrounding towns, reformism became an active movement among the working classes from 1808. In Liverpool, there appears to have been much less radical activity amongst the working classes. The reform campaign there remained bourgeois with the same leaders as in 1790s, centred on Roscoe and Rathbone.⁸ Hanson could be described as the first Lancashire mass-platform radical, although he has been neglected by historians of early nineteenth century radicalism.⁹ His peace pamphlet was concerned primarily with the effects of the war on the weavers, and his belief that the duty lay with the government to prevent their starvation by negotiating for peace. He also accused the gentry in parliament and locally of prejudice against the middle classes: "Talk of the distresses of manufacturers and others, they instantly refer you to the sudden rise and extravagance of commercial men."¹⁰ He criticised the failures of the Whig opposition, particularly their alignment with the peace party solely to gain votes. The great disappointment that filled the Liverpool circle over the failures of the Ministry of All the Talents was more rancorous for Hanson. He announced his independence from 'party' much earlier than the Friends of Peace and maintained this stance, although to his eventual detriment.

A larger section of society gravitated to demands for an end to the government's war of attrition against Napoleon and his economic blockade. At base, the rising levels of

⁷ J. Hanson, *A Defence of the Petitions for Peace* (Manchester, 1808).

⁸ See p.265 below.

⁹ J. Belchem and J. Epstein, 'The Nineteenth-Century Gentleman Leader Revisited,' *SH*, 22 (1997), 174-93.

¹⁰ Hanson, *A Defence*, pp.15-16.

economic distress among large sections of both working and middle classes motivated the high proportion of signatures across the region. Warfare with France shifted in 1806 from the military sphere to economic blockades. The earlier patterns of peaks and troughs in prices and wages were no longer characteristic. The average price of wheat and oats in Lancashire rose steadily from 1808-12 to the levels reached in 1800-1. Wheat was at the highest level of the war at 163s 10d per quarter in the week ending 29 August 1812; oats reached their highest price at 72s 5d per quarter.¹¹ The select committee reports of 1808 and 1812 concerning the petitions against the Orders in Council charted the manufacturers' reactions to the trade restrictions and the weavers' increasing distress. They disclosed that the economic situation was much more serious than when they had been interviewed about the Masters and Servants Act in 1801. Although both periods experienced high prices, unemployment and low wages were more widespread from 1808. Jeremiah Bury, a major muslin manufacturer of Stockport, claimed he had turned off 500-600 weavers and was paying one third of the wage levels of 1803.¹² The effects were again voiced most clearly in the observations and lamentations of William Rowbottom in his diaries. He intimated a wish for peace for the first time in the winter of 1807-8, although this was not an overtly radical view: "Uncommon gloomy appearances for Christmas for the weaving Trade in all its Branches in the lowest Ebb wick as [*sic*] put the poor into a very deplorable situation and there is no hope of better times until a General Peace takes place." This provides the specific context for the mass attendance at the meeting at Oldham Edge, but his comments also indicate more generally why the peace campaign spread in the rest of the region. On 3 April 1808, he observed:

The poor at this time are in a wretched situation such as was seldom known before[.] all sorts of work Both scarce and a very little for working it and all sorts of provisions

¹¹ MC; See Appendix IV:i, price of wheat and oats.

¹² PP 1808, II, *Report from the Committee on the Petitions of Several Cotton Manufacturers...*, p.2.

at an Enormous price makes the state of the poor to be miserable behind [beyond] description and a great deal of poor familys [*sic*] in a state of actual starvation.¹³

Rowbottom punctuated the rest of his annals with similar comments about the state of the poor and the economic effects of the war. Crucially also, the economic position of manufacturers and other middle classes was turning desperate on a greater scale than previously. Bury claimed: “out of fifteen or sixteen [muslin] manufacturers in Stockport, eleven have failed within the last twelve months.”¹⁴

Economic distress alone could not have popularised widespread calls for peace. War-weariness was heightened by an increasingly vocal questioning of government policy and the rise of anti-corruption campaign begun by metropolitan radicals.¹⁵ The war, especially in its phase of trade blockade, widened the economic, geographical and political perspectives of the working and commercial populace. The population readily gleaned from the newspapers the increasingly isolated position Britain was in after losing its allies at Austerlitz, Jena and Friedland. This situation of genuine doubt about victory persisted from 1806 to 1813.¹⁶ The economic blockade inevitably put an extra strain on British manufacturing and trade, especially in Lancashire. The region was certainly not alone in this case, but it reacted to the changes distinctly. The key conceptual connection the population made from 1806 was between the government’s seeming mismanagement of the economy and its foreign policies. Although this critique was initially conducted within the outwardly neutral confines of ‘independence’ or evangelical humanitarianism, it nevertheless shook the general torpor of the preceding few years. Pamphlets by

¹³ Rowbottom diary.

¹⁴ PP 1808, II, p.2.

¹⁵ See P. Harling, *The Waning of Old Corruption: the Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779-1846* (Oxford, 1996); P. Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism. War, Popular Politics and English Reformism, 1800-1815* (Aldershot, 1996).

¹⁶ J.E. Cookson, *The Friends of Peace: Anti-War Liberalism in England, 1793-1815* (Cambridge, 1982), p.182.

William Roscoe and Hanson and Cowdroy's editorials were amongst the literature that politicised the distress and centred it on campaigning for peace.¹⁷

In his pamphlet of 1808, *Considerations on the Causes, Objects and Consequences of the Present War*, Roscoe commented that public interest in the government's conduct of the war had reawakened and that it stemmed from the shift in the British perspective from a physical threat of invasion to economic warfare:

These circumstances, added to the threatening aspect of public affairs, have at length excited the dormant feelings of the people; and a suspicion, not wholly groundless, begins to prevail, that if they sleep much longer they may awake only to their destruction. Subjects of the greatest importance to their interests begin again to be discussed.¹⁸

The contested elections of 1806-7 in Westminster, Liverpool and Preston, were highly significant in this respect. They formed part of both the cause and consequence of revitalised awareness of these issues on a local level in the extra-parliamentary sphere of campaigning. 'Independence' was a common trope used by most candidates and at elections, but it gained an additional level of meaning from Sir Francis Burdett's contest of Middlesex in 1802. The language of 'independence' and representation of local interests in parliament were metaphors for the real political issues at stake, as demonstrated in the extra-parliamentary sphere.¹⁹ The furore surrounding Burdett was dimly mirrored in Liverpool by the challenge in that year of Joseph Birch (1755-1833), a local West Indies merchant esteemed in dissenting circles for expressing "his opposition to the late administration and the war."²⁰ The main issues of the elections of 1806-7 involved the pledge demanded of the ministry by the King, the upshots of the abolition of the slave trade and renewed anti-Catholic sentiment, the major issue in seven of the

¹⁷ W. Roscoe, *Occasional Tracts Relative to the War Between Great Britain and France* (1810).

¹⁸ W. Roscoe, *Considerations on the Causes, Objects and Consequences of the Present War...* (London, 1808), 2.

¹⁹ R. Sweet, 'Freemen and Independence in English Borough Politics, c.1770-1830,' *P & P*, 161 (1998), 84-115.

²⁰ LivRO: 920 CUR 9, Currie to Creevey, 9 July 1802. He married the daughter of merchant banker Benjamin Heywood.

eleven contested English counties and in fifteen contested English boroughs. O’Gorman has suggested that a level of “restlessness against oligarchies” had always existed within the electoral system, a “fundamental layer of political consciousness among the non-electors as well as among electors, the core element upon which other issues were engrafted.”²¹ Yet it only periodically asserted itself when the opportunity arose. 1806-12 was such a period and was possible in Preston and Liverpool because of the wide franchise in both boroughs.

In Liverpool, the ‘Friends of Peace’ as always took the lead. To the dismay of the anti-abolitionist Corporation, Roscoe was elected. Roscoe wrote to Lord Holland after his election victory in November 1806 about his surprise that “a friend to liberty and toleration and open and proclaimed enemy to the African Slave Trade should be returned for this place.” He optimistically attributed the result to the “liberality, spirit and independence of my Townsmen.”²² The reality was probably a combination of a desire for change among professionals and American merchants, optimistic at the end of the Pittite regime, and Roscoe’s considerable expenditure on the campaign.²³ In Preston, the ‘independent’ party was initially led by an attorney, a timber merchant and a banker. In the following year, Joseph Hanson came up from Manchester to contest the coalition between Lord Stanley and the Tory manufacturer Samuel Horrocks. Cowdroy reported in hyperbole: “a closely pent-up borough, considered to be the almost unalienable property of a noble family, bursting as it were, into an effort of emancipation, scarcely to be paralleled...another attack and it must fall.”²⁴ Hanson failed to win a seat, but received a total of 1001 votes, including 960 plumpers, mainly from weavers and also professional

²¹ F. O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Politics: the Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 298, 259.

²² BL: Add 51650/92, Roscoe to Holland, 13 November 1806.

²³ *History of the Election for Members of Parliament for Liverpool...* (Liverpool, 1806).

²⁴ *Cowdroy’s*, 23 May 1807.

middle classes, particularly attorneys.²⁵ Both results indicated a new atmosphere and activity among 'liberal' or Whig-radical middle classes and artisans. A general atmosphere of discontent was maintained by the concurrent petitioning by handloom weavers for minimum wage legislation, though the two campaigns kept separate in organisation and aims. Hanson became the figurehead for both campaigns, their respectable representative to Commons select committees. His most infamous moment occurred on 25 May 1808 during the mass demonstrations of thousands of weavers on St George's Fields in Manchester. He had previously met with the Manchester weavers' committee and promised financial support, but it appears that his decision to address the crowd was more spontaneous than premeditated. Together with his subsequent arrest, trial and imprisonment, the event secured his popularity amongst the working classes of the region and beyond.²⁶

Hanson was not alone in addressing the striking multitude, however. On the very same day as the St. George's Fields demonstration, a large assembly of weavers gathered in Stockport and was addressed and supported by William Dawson. Stockport magistrates arrested Dawson in similar circumstances. Dawson was a manufacturer who had published a pamphlet which described his conflict with the Mayor and Vicar of Stockport over supporting Catholic relief in the previous year. In it he expressed Whig-radical views typical of the Friends of Peace, although he wrote that he would not advocate Catholic Emancipation unless there was great public demand.²⁷ A William Dawson Esq had chaired a meeting in Wakefield to petition the King for peace in

²⁵ *The Whole of the Addresses, Squibs, Songs and Other Papers Circulated During the Time of the Contested Election in Preston* (Preston, 1807); R.G. Thorne, *History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1780-1830* (Cambridge, CD-ROM).

²⁶ PRO: TS 11/657, Rex v. Hanson, Lancaster Assizes, 1809; E. Little, 'Joseph Hanson, 'Weavers' Friend,' *MRHR*, 4 (1991), 22-30.

²⁷ W. Dawson, *Stockport Flim-Flams* (Manchester, 1807), 7-8. The MCL copy is from John Leigh Philips' collection of tracts.

January 1801, but it cannot be proved that this was the same Dawson of Stockport.²⁸ It is significant that there appears to have been some middle-class, possibly radical, sympathy for the striking weavers; 120 rioters were bailed for riot in Stockport on 14 June 1808, some of whom at least must have received outside financial support.²⁹ It is entirely possible that there were other members of the middle classes supporting the aims of weavers and other workers elsewhere in the region in this period. No more is heard of Dawson but Hanson's popularity rose to new heights.³⁰ Rowbottom wrote in his diary: "in May 1808, 39,600 weavers subscribed a penny each and bought a superb gold cup and salver wich [*sic*] they made him a present of the weavers from Bolton, Manchester, Ashton and Stockport."³¹ The large numbers involved and the regional organisation required in this endeavour perhaps forged a shared identity. Preston weavers wrote to him while he languished in Chester Gaol, calling for him to re-stand for election after his release. His response was tempered, but he wrote a public address printed in the *Preston Journal* that he looked forward to the day "when I shall see the shuttle and the loom once more carried as my Banners."³² He indeed answered the Manchester weavers' committee's request to represent them at the 1811 parliamentary select committee into the petitions from Manchester and Bolton about their economic distress, but died soon afterwards.³³

Hanson's predicament reflected in part the nature of radicalism in Manchester and also his own temperament. He did not and could not lead the same sort of vibrant and supportive intellectual Dissenting circle as the Friends of Peace. He was isolated

²⁸ Sheffield Archives: Wentworth-Woodhouse mss., Wakefield broadside, 30 January 1801; there are no records of his trial - thanks to Robert Glen for information on this.

²⁹ PRO: CHES 24/183, Chester County Sessions, trial of Stockport weavers, 1808.

³⁰ See MCL: BR f.824.04, BA 1, ballads, vol 1, p.117, 'A New Song in Praise of Colonel Hanson.'

³¹ Rowbottom diaries.

³² *PJ*, 6 May 1809.

³³ PP 1810-11, II, 'Minutes of Evidence from the Report on Petitions of Weavers from Manchester and Bolton'; *Cowdroy's*, 27 July 1811.

politically in the 1800s. After their support of the UE, he apparently made no attempt to co-ordinate his political activities in Manchester with his friends Francis Astley Dukinfield (the prominent Unitarian landowner of Dukinfield) and (possibly his brother-in-law) Joseph Kershaw, although he shared their mercantile, Volunteer and Unitarian associations.³⁴ These amongst other merchants and gentlemen testified for Hanson at his trial in 1808, but apart from William Cowdroy and the attorney Frederick Raynes (who would later defend the Luddites and the 'Thirty-Eight' radicals tried in 1812), they were otherwise politically inactive.³⁵ Hanson's isolation sprang from his situation. His family attended Stand Chapel in Pilkington³⁶ and so may not have had much contact with Roscoe's friends in the more socially respectable Liverpool and Manchester chapels. Most Manchester Unitarians were keen to disassociate themselves from his overt radicalism: the merchant Samuel Hibbert-Ware discontinued his friendship with Hanson in 1808 because of his involvement in the peace movement. William Roscoe's Mancunian friends, for example the merchant William Parr Cresswell of Denton, shared Roscoe's views rather than those of the more radical Hanson, but they remained publicly silent.³⁷ There is no surviving evidence of contact between Hanson and former MCS member George Philips. Hanson thus became relatively neglected in the history of Lancashire radicalism, what reputation he had built up being rapidly overtaken by the new generation of postwar radicals.³⁸

Petitioning

³⁴ Little, 'Joseph Hanson,' 27; LCRO: WCW/1812, will of Joseph Hanson of Strangeways Hall. Francis Astley's widow married the son of the abolitionist Thomas Gisburne.

³⁵ PRO: TS 11/657/2075, King Agt Hanson, 1808;

³⁶ Turner, 'Making of a Middle-Class Liberalism,' p.58.

³⁷ LivRO: 920 ROS 1865, Cresswell to Roscoe, nd., 1809.

³⁸ Belchem and Epstein, 'The Nineteenth-Century Gentleman Leader Revisited.'

Through the peace petitioning campaign, a mass popular movement was engendered. Such a movement in this period did not have to be integrated or formally federated to be genuine or successful. It merely required large numbers aware that similar activities were taking place in many other towns in the region. Signing a petition did not require active or regular political involvement or even adherence to a consistent programme. Neither, on the other hand, was it a sign of apathy or fear; petitioning was seen as indelibly part of the English tradition of constitutional rights and a means of wider representation in parliament.³⁹ The Oldham peace petition was presented to the House of Commons in February 1808 and contained an estimated 13,000 signatures, from a population total of about 12,000 in the centre and 36,000 in outlying townships and district.⁴⁰ The number of signatures may have been an exaggeration, but the stated number to other peace petitions at that time suggests that it was likely that several thousands signed. Manchester's petition, for example, was stated in parliament to have 50,000 signatures.⁴¹ Cowdroy also claimed Stockport had collected 12,000 and Bolton, 18,000. Liverpool also raised a large petition.⁴²

The loyalist spirit of Trafalgar was not, however, immediately erased. Cowdroy and the editor of the *Liverpool Chronicle* may have shaped rather than reflected public opinion, judging by their frequent complaints about public indifference. Cowdroy lamented on 3 October 1807: "Our countrymen, we fear, are too much infatuated by the splendour of military glory, if that can be called glory which is a terror to humanity, and utterly inconsistent with Christianity, to wish for peace." In October 1808, he called for his readers to address the King but with a hint of resignation noted: "we fear that our

³⁹ M. Ceadel, *The Origins of War Prevention: the British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1730-1854* (Oxford, 1996), pp.116-7.

⁴⁰ *Cowdroy's*, 27 February 1808; PP Census Abstracts, 1801.

⁴¹ *Hansard*, X, 18 March 1808.

⁴² *Cowdroy's*, 20 and 27 February, 12 March 1808.

countrymen are more impressed with warlike than peaceful sentiments.”⁴³ The enthusiasm shown for the revolutions against Napoleon on the Peninsula – and consequent radical hopes for renewed demands for Reform in Britain because of government and loyalists’ tentative support for these popular displays of liberty⁴⁴ – soon waned. Cowdroy felt that the situation had worsened in February 1809: “The public mind, which only a few months ago was so enthusiastically excited in favour of Spanish liberty, has rapidly sank into a state of desponding indifference.”⁴⁵ It would take the parallel efforts of radical activists and discontented merchants to focus general discontent onto the government and towards Reform.

The petitioning of 1807 and 1812 from ports and manufacturing towns across the country exposed a certain level of provincial opposition to metropolitan intrusion into laissez-faire economics and role in British prosperity. Many loyalist middle classes became involved in methods of protest more associated with radicals through the campaign against the Orders in Council. The manufacturers and merchants keenly felt direct impact of the shift in government tactics against the French and consequently America. The introduction of an income tax in 1799 had already fuelled ideas that the government was profiting from war contracts and the hard-won fruits of the industrious middle classes.⁴⁶ The peace petitions from 1807 placed great prominence with regards the ruinous economic effects of the government’s foreign endeavours, the French and American blockades, increased taxation, and the growth of the National Debt.⁴⁷ Resolutions passed in Rochdale on 7 December 1807 proclaimed that the war now affected both ‘the lower and middle classes of society’ rather than solely the working

⁴³ *Cowdroy’s*, 29 October 1808.

⁴⁴ Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*, p.138; Spence, *Birth of Romantic Radicalism*, pp.92-7.

⁴⁵ *Cowdroy’s*, 11 February 1809.

⁴⁶ Ceadel, *Origins of War Prevention*, p.182.

⁴⁷ Chetham’s: Mun A.3.10, Hay mss, scrapbook 4, p.109; Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics*, p.137.

classes. The issues of opposition to government and indeed Church-and-King loyalism were no longer the preserve of committed radicals in 'hotspots' such as Royton. The ongoing antislavery campaign was an important precursor to demonstrate that the line could be crossed when provincial attitudes conflict with those of government policy. It was thus harder for petitioning to be seen as disloyal in itself, however much the Church-and-King loyalists argued about the seditious nature of the process of petitioning for peace.

The middle-class reaction against the Orders in Council fed into the campaign against 'Old Corruption' in parliament and the monarchy that was stoked up by Whig-radical MPs and William Cobbett. The event which decisively crystallised opposition was the exposure by Colonel Wardle MP of the corruption of the Duke of York and his mistress selling army commissions in 1809.⁴⁸ In Manchester, a war of rhetoric in handbills and broadsides on the issue occurred in late April.⁴⁹ The fact that 2000 names could be published in full on a broadside calling for a meeting in support of Wardle indicated how the widening atmosphere enabled criticism of monarchy and government to be expressed in the open. Most names do not appear on other petitions for more oppositional questions of peace and Reform. The Hammonds contended that the rejection of the peace petitions of 1808 turned the working classes towards unionised action or radicalism,⁵⁰ but 1809 was only a temporary hiatus in the peace campaign. Manchester and Salford raised a peace petition to the Commons in summer 1810 which raised 18,000 signatures.⁵¹ This rose to 40,000 'manufacturers and artisans' in May 1811 together with

⁴⁸ Harling, *The Waning of Old Corruption*, p.103.

⁴⁹ MCL: BR f 942.7389 Sc 13, Scrapbook 1808-24.

⁵⁰ J.L. and B. Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer, 1760-1832* (Abingdon, 1995), p.85.

⁵¹ *Cowdroy's*, 30 June 1810.

7000 ‘weavers, spinners and artists’ [*sic*] from Bolton.⁵² Peace petitioning continued in parallel with the reform committees. John Holden recorded that another peace meeting occurred in Bolton in March 1812, where a petition was signed by over 11,000 weavers and was presented to the Commons by the Earl of Derby.⁵³

Radical patriotism and provincialism

The weighty petitions for peace and reform demonstrated that the radical patriotism that Burdett, the Friends of Peace and Cowdroy had fostered during the 1790s and early 1800s was successfully infusing into the rhetoric, if not the genuine beliefs, of the general population from 1806. Radical patriotism involved a particular view of Britain and its role in the world, influenced by Burdett’s critique but tailored to regional identity. The government and loyalist elites continued to propagate tropes of the “wooden walls of Old England,” unquestioning and very much in the 1803 mode of combining loyalism with patriotism. In the light of their interpretation of the newly aggressive stance of British foreign policy, however, radicals and an increasing number of previously ‘loyal’ provincial inhabitants increasingly perceived the hypocrisy of the government’s propaganda. This argument indeed was a major cause of William Cobbett’s shift from a loyalist to a radical position.⁵⁴

The polarisation of opinion between Church-and-King loyalism and Jacobin radicalism, enforced by loyalist elites after the French Revolution, drew those wishing to maintain their status in society into the difficult position that they had created for themselves.

Popular campaigns against ‘Old Corruption’ in parliament and in the monarchy involved

⁵² *Hansard*, XX, 30 May 1811.

⁵³ Holden diaries; *Cowdroy’s*, 7 March 1812.

⁵⁴ J. Stevenson, ‘William Cobbett: Patriot or Briton?’ *TransRHistS*, 6th ser., 6 (1996), 123-36.

more complex political decisions than the more clear-cut issues of peace and Reform.⁵⁵ Even though some might have agreed with the premise of the anti-corruption campaign, many felt obliged to take sides because of their previous positions and political groupings against peace and reform petitions. This confusion of political stances crystallised in Preston. The mayor refused to call a meeting to draw up a congratulatory address to Colonel Wardle. The front page of the *Preston Journal* for 20 May 1809 carried two columns of addresses and signatures for and against the mayor's decision. The issue was heightened by the fact that the borough's two MPs, Lord Stanley and the Tory manufacturer Samuel Horrocks, had both voted for Wardle's motion in parliament and thus were also included in the proposed address of thanks. The local elites thus significantly shifted political perspective to an acceptance of a wider loyalism. The counter request sent to the Mayor, although advising him not to call the meeting, nevertheless stated: "that [Wardle's] Conduct may deserve Approbation and applause and however we may with others lament and reprobate those corrupt Practices which have too plainly appeared."⁵⁶ This counter request was signed mainly by the clergy and gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood. Most of the signers of the pro-Wardle request who can be identified from the 1807 polls were artisanal but only a few had plumped for Hanson in that year.⁵⁷ Notably, the esquires who signed the counter request can be identified as having been listed in order of address. This suggests that the counter request was carried door-to-door for the gentlemen to sign, in contrast to most pro-Wardle petitions and others calling for peace, reform or against corruption which were usually left at printers, Unitarian chapels and specified houses for people to visit voluntarily.

⁵⁵ Harling, *Waning of Old Corruption*, passim.

⁵⁶ *PJ*, 20 May 1809.

⁵⁷ *The Whole of the Addresses, Squibs, Songs...1807*.

The popularity achieved by Colonel Wardle and the issues he represented illustrated how the consensual elements of patriotism at both popular and elite levels could criticise the monarchy and adopt elements of radical patriotism.⁵⁸ A well-rehearsed strand in radical patriotic rhetoric involved a moral imperative concerning Britain's behaviour and identity. The nation had to prove its worth through moral conduct and integrity at home and abroad, a theme already integral to the campaign against the slave trade.⁵⁹ Cowdroy wrote critically in March 1805 about the government's inconsistency in observing a General Fast "for the avowed purpose of repenting of national sins," but then rejecting Wilberforce's motion for the abolition of the Slave Trade.⁶⁰ The *Liverpool Chronicle* used similar rhetoric to call for peace on the "Day in National Humiliation" in February 1807: "we hope that national sins will not only be confessed but forsaken and that the love for War, which has long been a reigning sin in the land, will give place to a real desire for peace."⁶¹ This form of rhetoric would become prominent in the 'Christian' petitions for peace in 1811-12 which, according to Cookson, "floated on the high tide of non-Anglican morale" after the defeat in the Commons of Sidmouth's High Anglican bill to restrict itinerancy.⁶² During 1807-9, on the other hand, the most common theme was a wider patriotic concern about how Old Corruption poisoned the success of the war effort. Both Hanson and Roscoe were livid about the moral hypocrisy they believed had been at the root of the attack on Copenhagen in 1807. Roscoe wrote forcefully in his 1808 pamphlet: "The dread inspired into the nations of the world by the French, is to be rivalled by the dread inspired by the English; and it must be owned that our first effort,

⁵⁸ P. Harling, 'The Duke of York Affair and the Complexities of Wartime Patriotism,' *HJ*, 39 (1996), 963.

⁵⁹ Harling, *Waning of Old Corruption*, pp.67-8.

⁶⁰ *Cowdroy's*, 16 March 1805.

⁶¹ *Liverpool Chronicle*, 24 February 1807.

⁶² Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, p.193.

as exhibited in our attack upon Copenhagen, gives us a fair title to that 'bad eminence' which it seems is now become the great object of our ambition."⁶³

A series of letters published in the *Preston Journal* in January-February 1808 demonstrated that the issue of Britain's role in the war was increasingly open to public debate. The first letter gave a defencist reasoning for remaining at war, arguing "we are fighting for our very existence as a nation, [Napoleon] for conquest." A response in the next issue by 'amor patria' expressed pessimistic pacificism by using the common theme of the suffering of the working classes, which he scathingly attributed to Old Corruption's financial interest in continuing the war. Another common theme was representative constitutionalism, the right of petitioners to meet without being "accused of either disloyalty to His Majesty or disaffection to the country." A letter in the same issue brought up similar themes, but also argued that war was "diametrically opposed to our interests abroad." This isolationism was combined with a more radical attack on the government's prosecution of the war and a belief that it "now appears to be without any defined object," a view similar to the Friends of Peace. The loyalist counter-arguments in the next issue (interestingly by 'Prestiensis' and 'a townsman,' with their connotations of civic identity) demonstrated less development and some deliberate blindness to this change of circumstances, reiterating the same arguments from 1803 which focused on Napoleon and his "insatiable ambition," without providing practical solutions that might bring success.⁶⁴

⁶³ Roscoe, *Occasional Tracts*, p.193.

⁶⁴ *PJ*, 23 January, 6, 13 February 1808.

Defencist and pacifist patriotism fluctuated between advocacy of isolationism and a more interventionist, albeit economic, imperial or Atlanticist posture.⁶⁵ This illustrated the complex relationship between national and regional identities and versions of what Britain stood for on the world stage. This tension was exemplified in the peace petitions from 1808. The petition for peace from Oldham presented to the Commons on 23 February 1808 was concerned about international issues in detail. It intimated early on their fears about a potential war with America over commerce, stating the “uncertainty of whether the relations of amity could be maintained between our government and that of the United States of America has contributed no little to increase the difficulties of our situation.” The old Royton radicals and their new supporters had become fatalist, stating: “the destiny of Europe seems fixed beyond the power of us to alter.”⁶⁶ This was a dual identity: ‘us’ was both an identification with the nation and government as a whole, a reflection of the Friends of Peace’s isolationism in face of an undefeatable Emperor on the Continent. It also however may have intimated a sense of despair, ‘us’ being the petitioners alone, ignored by parliament.

The campaign against the economic blockade by Britain has been analysed as a middle-class issue heightening awareness of class.⁶⁷ Although some bourgeois intellectuals such as the Friends of Peace were well aware of their class position, widespread working-class support for the issue meant that it became a shared view of Britain from a provincial perspective, in opposition to that seemingly being enforced from parliament or

⁶⁵ Ceadel, *Origins of War Prevention*, p.57.

⁶⁶ *Hansard*, X, 23 February 1808, pp.708-9.

⁶⁷ Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, p.222; see however D. Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: the Political Representation of Class in Britain, c.1780-1840* (Cambridge, 1995), who believes the Orders in Council campaign was only a fillip in ambiguous class relations and identities.

London.⁶⁸ The more moderate radicalism of the Friends of Peace became popular not because of radical elements within their philosophy but because emphasis in their pamphlets and speeches lay in a provincial identity. During the Napoleonic Wars their anti-Pittism, rational dissent and active involvement in the campaigns for peace, reform and religious toleration “floated on the surface of a much deeper, provincialist and liberal impulse.”⁶⁹ Provincialism combined a distinct economic identity and consequent resentment at separation from the centre of power and decision-making. Elements of provincialism thereby diffused among loyalists involved in campaigns against the Orders in Council and the EIC monopoly. All expressed similar anti-Pittite resentment and a distinctive approach to British identity and the role of the industrial and commercial provinces in relation to parliament. This furthermore was a unique undercurrent of Lancashire Luddism, which expressed greater economic awareness and use of political economy language than Luddism of other regions.⁷⁰

The Friends of Peace actively propagated moderate radical patriotism in pamphlets and action. Their views became acceptable to a wider loyalism because their position on the war had shifted. They moved from being resolutely anti-war to proclaiming that the power of Napoleon on the Continent and the strength of the British Navy protecting Britain had made the loss of lives and trade unnecessary.⁷¹ As Cookson has discussed, this had a strongly ideological and religious basis, a Rational Dissenting worldview of internationalism and the ultimate goodness of human nature. They envisaged Britain as an impartial arbiter among nations, fostering good relations by expanding commerce.

⁶⁸ House of Lords RO: HL/PO/JO/10/8/144, Manchester petition against Orders in Council, 21 March 1808; HO/PO/JO/10/8/144, Liverpool petition against Orders in Council, 17 March 1808.

⁶⁹ Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, p.109.

⁷⁰ Binfield, *Writings of the Luddites*, p.41.

⁷¹ Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, p.193. See BL: Add 51650, fo.60, Roscoe to Holland, 25 December 1799; 920 CUR 7, Currie to Creevey, 8 April 1803; Harris Manchester College: Shepherd mss, IX, p.19, report of anniversary of Roscoe's election, 1808.

The influence of Liverpool is obvious in this respect, with its inherently international outlook. Isolationism from the Continent was integral to this view. Roscoe wrote in his peace pamphlet of 1802: “Are we not happily separated from the rest of Europe that surrounds us, and which places us rather as spectators than as actors in the concerns of the Continent?”⁷² They expressed this belief in 1803 in their execration of what they regarded as the excessive and incitative abuse of the French by the British press.⁷³ Austerlitz and the Treaty of Tilsit enforced isolationism and the promotion of peace through commerce. Atlanticism was preferred, another natural Liverpoolian outlook, and thus the Orders in Council and ensuing war with America increased their resentment against the government. Roscoe wrote in his 1808 pamphlet that Britain’s destiny was to become the “Emporium of the World” and the supreme sea-power, “Standing on her own foundation, independent of foreign allies; extending herself by her commerce, on the one hand to the East, on the other to the West.”⁷⁴

These sentiments were mirrored in the peace petitions, which were until 1812 relatively individual, not as yet composed to a pre-determined formula. Their rhetoric was probably still composed by radical activists, and it is unclear how much the general population who signed them could dissent from their sentiments. The Oldham petition of 1808 revealed more radical aspects than the Bolton petition presented the previous day, although it made no mention of Reform or Old Corruption. It asserted forcefully “something ought to be done to convince the world that we cherish the idea of perpetual war as little as any other nation, when peace can be had with honour and safety.” They were concerned for Britain’s moral image, which they believed the government eroded

⁷² W. Roscoe, *Observations on the Present Relative Situation of Great Britain and France* (1802), p.116.

⁷³ See *ibid.*, p.118; W.W. Currie, *Memoir of the Life...of James Currie, vol 1* (1831), p.362, Currie to Creevey, 21 May 1803.

⁷⁴ Roscoe, *Occasional Tracts*, p.134.

by its aggressive foreign policy and economic battles with the Continent. They furthermore clearly asserted that they: “deprecate the very idea of perpetual war being entertained for a moment by any order of men in this Kingdom.”⁷⁵ This was a highly charged pacifist statement, especially as the Bolton and other petitions made no statements as strident as this. The petition to the Commons composed by the ‘Thirty-Eight’ Manchester radicals in May 1812 began with a definition of just war: war “ought never to be engaged in, except in cases virtually essential to the welfare and independence of the state; and put a stop to, as soon as those objects are attained and secured; that the contrary practice unnecessarily creates enemies, and consumes the blood and treasure, the resources of the country.”⁷⁶

Professed loyalists briefly embraced a position oppositional to government because of the economic strains of war and evangelical Christian impulses. Class identities were combined with notions of provincialism perhaps more among the middle classes than their workers; there were however regional differences in the patterns and modes of expression. The petitions for relief submitted to the Commons in 1811 were different from those of 1808 because they were products of co-operation with ‘loyalist’ manufacturers. Holden wrote on 14 February 1811 that the “Committee of Weavers called a meeting of the merchants and manufacturers and landholders etc of Bolton at the assembly room” to draw up a petition for economic relief.⁷⁷ It was the loyalist manufacturer and commander of the Bolton cavalry John Pilkington who drew up the petition to the Prince Regent. He assured the Prince that the ‘cotton manufacturers’ who formed the petitioners “have beheld and can bear testimony to the Patience with which the labouring classes have borne their privations under the very reduced wages.” It

⁷⁵ *Hansard*, X, 22 February 1808, p.692.

⁷⁶ *The Trial at Full Length of the Thirty Eight Men from Manchester, 27 August 1812* (Manchester, 1812), p.124.

⁷⁷ Holden diaries.

specifically requested a prohibition on the use of grain in distilleries.⁷⁸ The Blackburn petition ‘respecting the state of Public Affairs’ presented on 20 March 1812 was in effect a middle-class petition against the Orders in Council and East India Company monopoly. Its major complaint was “the gradual disappearance of the middling classes, which are fast melting down into the lower orders of the community.”⁷⁹

The reticence of the petitions on the question of reform did not mean however that ideas about radical reform were not being propagated as early as 1808 in petitioning towns. A handbill from Bolton dated 4 June 1808 announced a meeting to discuss the distress. It was another virulent proclamation against the government as the “cause of war,” meaning the Pittite system: “Is not the British Cabinet the cause of this war? Did it not spring from that originally, and is it not the inflexibility of that nest of adders, that cripples our trade and commerce?” Resentments about the failures of the All the Talents faded rapidly in anti-Tory memory. The rhetoric of the handbill quickly turned more radical but still maintained the constitutional priorities of romantic or reactionary radicalism:

Do not our merchants and manufacturers deserve to lose their property for their parasitical nonsense presented to His Majesty and the Parliament, in which they propose to support the war with their lives and fortunes? ... Is it not time to drag the British constitution from its lurking hole, and to expose it in its original and naked purity, to show to each individual the laws of his *forefathers*?⁸⁰

Radicals, unionised workers and Luddites surreptitiously co-operated or sympathised with each other in 1812. The similarity between the petitions to the Commons from Chowbent and Chorley of May 1812 testifies to a revived network among the weavers’ committees and more tentatively, their links with reformers’ committees. The Chowbent

⁷⁸ HO 42/117/520, Pilkington to Derby, 12 November 1811; see Manchester petition in *Hansard*, XX, 30 May 1811.

⁷⁹ *BM*, 4 March 1812.

⁸⁰ HO 42/95, Fielden to Hawkesbury, 6 June 1808 in A. Aspinall, *Early English Trade Unions, Documents from the Home Office Papers in the Public Record Office* (1949), pp.100-1.

petition was signed by 1900 individuals.⁸¹ The two petitions employed very similar formats and rhetoric, which indicates that the individuals or communication in common in their initial composition. Chowbent and Chorley had raised delegates to the weavers' committees in 1799 and 1808 and were only about three miles from each other. They were different from the Manchester and Bolton petitions drawn up at the same time and therefore may not have been subject to any dictates from the Manchester executive weavers' committee. The Chowbent and Chorley petitions, being organised and presented separately, therefore showed that local identity remained paramount in the mobilisation of popular politics.

Significantly, both petitions repeated prevalent complaints in Cobbett and Cowdroy about sinecures and public money spent on Sicilian and Portuguese courts, German refugees, Catholic clergy and laity rather than on starving weavers. They regarded this expenditure as directly disrupting opportunities either for negotiation for peace or for bringing the war to a satisfactory conclusion. Both called on government to conciliate neutral nations. Each nevertheless contained slightly different aims which reflected their distinct identities. The Chorley petition claimed to represent more than one opinion, an alliance of loyalist middle classes and more radical weavers over economic grievances: "Some were against the East India monopoly, others against the Orders in Council and a third class against the Orders and also against sinecure places and pensions." It was therefore titled against sinecure places while that from Chowbent was specifically for peace. The weavers of Chowbent called themselves as "Englishmen" and saw the crucial quality of this identity as economic independence from both local and national paternalism.

⁸¹ *Hansard*, XXIII, 13 May 1812, p.180; *Hansard*, XXII, 4 May 1812, p.1156; Dinwiddy, 'Luddism and Politics,' 46.

The Blackburn petition of March 1812 professed a vision of Britain similar to that of Liverpool, as an international hub of commerce and manufacture operating in a system of mutual respect for other nations. Although stamped decisively with middle-class grievances, it also exemplified the petitioners' admission of multiple identities. Thus "as natives of a country professing the Christian religion, they deplore the moral effects of war," while "as men, they lament the miseries of their fellow creatures" and finally "as Britons, they feel convinced that war is inimical to their interests" commercially.⁸² Bolton radicals by contrast addressed the Prince Regent and were thus more obsequious in their rhetoric. They therefore gave less abstract reasoning about the war and a more graphically vivid account of its role in causing the distress of the working classes: "Their pale and ghastly countenances – their squalid and ragged clothing...might possibly beget a doubt in your Royal Breast whether the most glorious results of war and victory abroad would be sufficient to compensate for such a mass of wretchedness at home."⁸³

Petitions using language such as this had previously been unthinkable, even during the peace campaign of 1795. They marked a shift in public perceptions of Britain's role in the war and on the Continent. The revived rhetoric of Old Corruption was highly influential in shaping this change, but regional interests, principally economic, combined with a shared sense of provincial opposition to intrusion from London. This was not just the reactionary radicalism or the idealism of the Friends of Peace but contained hints of the legacy of Paineite radicalism of the early 1790s. This synthesis formed a distinctive Lancashire stance which ran through the peace and reform campaign.

⁸² *BM*, 4 March 1812.

⁸³ *Cowdroy's*, 2 May 1812.

The new generation of regional leaders

The Lancashire version of radicalism thus drew freely from constitutionalism and Paineite egalitarianism according to circumstances. It was regionally distinctive, imbued with a particular patriotism tailored to its geographical identity. Thompson conjectured that metropolitan popular politics differed from northern radicalism's distance from the middle classes, which drove it to continuing reliance on secrecy, oaths and the 'radical underground.'⁸⁴ Indeed, he stated: "Until 1815, neither Burdett nor Cobbett meant much in the heartlands of the Industrial Revolution."⁸⁵ By contrast, Belchem and Spence have portrayed the 'radical overground' across the country rallying behind the leadership of Sir Francis Burdett.⁸⁶ The reform campaign from 1810 indeed had the definite feel of a national movement with petitions to the Commons sent from across the country and much focus towards Burdett's activities. Yet as with other forms of opinion and identity, northern radicalism did not accept Burdettite tenets or leadership wholesale. Radicalism became popular through the filter of provincial identity and needs.

The petitions from 1809 and other broadsides and addresses were different from those of 1790s because of their adoption of Burdett as a focus for national leadership. This was partly attributable to the popularity of the Colonel Wardle case, which centred attention on the London radicals. In many places support for Wardle ran contiguous with the peace campaign. William Rowbottom noted on 20 March 1809: "a very numerous meeting took place on Boardman Edge⁸⁷ to petition for peace." This was followed on 3 April by: "a very numerous meeting at Tandle Hills and came to a resolution [*sic*] to

⁸⁴ Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, p.509.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p.514.

⁸⁶ J. Belchem, *Industrialisation and the Working Class: the English Experience, 1750-1900* (Aldershot, 1990), p.69; Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Radicalism*.

⁸⁷ A hill overlooking Lees, south east of Oldham.

petition for Peace and to return Collonall Wardle and Sir Francis Burdett thanks for careing [*sic*] the charges up to the Duke of York.”⁸⁸ A Liverpool reform petition of May 1810 avowed the “expediency of summoning Sir F. Burdett to assist in the deliberations” for reform and cited him in their rhetoric against parliamentary corruption.⁸⁹ Radical John Knight wrote or moved a letter of 4 June 1810 addressed to Burdett which was left for signatures in various places in Manchester and Salford. It thanked him for “the wisdom and benevolent earnestness with which you have on every occasion discharged the arduous and exalted duties of a patriotic Senator,” particularly against corruption.⁹⁰ There had been no comparable adoration of a national reformer since Wilkes.

Petitions and meetings were organised across the region by local committees composed of a mix of the old and new generation of radicals. In Bolton, a meeting on 7 May 1809 appears to have marked the beginnings of the new reform committee. A fortnight later, a request signed by 225 names called for a pro-Wardle meeting after the boroughreeves and constables did not reply to their original request. The signatures included the Bank Street Unitarian Chapel bourgeoisie, prominently the physician Dr Robert Everleigh Taylor and the cotton manufacturers Joseph Heywood and Jeremiah Crook.⁹¹ Other names were not encountered in earlier agitation and thus indicative of a new generation of radicals gradually coming to prominence. One new name who signed the notice, John Ormrod was a ‘currier’ from the working-class area of Spring Gardens; he appeared as one of the committee of four who organised the Bolton peace petition of 1812. Ellis

⁸⁸ Rowbottom diary.

⁸⁹ *Hansard*, XVII, 21 May 1810, 117.

⁹⁰ MCL: BR f 942.7389 Sc13, Scrapbook, p.15; *MM*, 30 June 1810; J. R. Dinwiddy, ‘Luddism and Politics in the Northern Counties,’ *JH*, 4 (1979), 38; Bedfordshire RO: Whitbread mss 2519, Knight to Whitbread, 16 June 1810.

⁹¹ Bolton Archives: ZHE 5/9, Heywood papers, Bank Street Chapel subscription of 1809.

Yates of King Street was another name on both petitions.⁹² He could have been the Ellis Yates who was later overseer, muslin manufacturer and owner of much property in the town.⁹³ The informant James Lomax implicated his employer, the bleacher Thomas Hulme during his examination for the Luddite disturbances at Westhoughton. He claimed he “was sometime back Chairman of a meeting for Parliamentary Reform,” and that “so many of his men have been found to have attended the late seditious meetings.” Spies were prone to exaggeration but at least some information or suspicions can be verified. Hulme indeed joined Major Cartwright’s Union for Parliamentary Reform in 1812 and was to be a Hampden Club delegate in 1817.⁹⁴

Provincial radicalism was influenced by national radicals but organised on the ground by a new generation of local leaders. Hanson, Dawson and others were gradually overtaken by these new radical personalities who would later help organise postwar mass platform radicalism. Their political education was grounded during the years of the Napoleonic War. They had not the experience or identity of the veterans of the 1790s. They were nurtured less directly on Paine and more on Cowdroy and Cobbett. One of the new generation, John Edward Taylor (1791-1844), indeed began contributing to Cowdroy’s *Gazette* from about 1812.⁹⁵ Their first experience of radical leadership was in witnessing the heady battle of meetings and words between the survivors among the 1790s radicals and loyalist authorities in 1806-8. Their postwar political activities, particularly their participation in the Hampden Clubs and at Peterloo have been examined in detail by

⁹² Bolton Archives: 1811 Bolton census return; MCL: BR f 942.7389 Sc 13, Scrapbook, p. 11.

⁹³ R. Dryburgh, ‘Individual, Illegal and Unjust Purposes: Overseers, Incentives and the Old Poor Law in Bolton, 1820-1837,’ *University of Oxford Discussion Papers in Economic and Social History*, 50 (2003), 24-5.

⁹⁴ HO 40/1/1/115, Fletcher to Home Office, 15 May 1812; Dinwiddy, ‘Luddism and Politics,’ 59.

⁹⁵ M. Turner, *Reform and Respectability: the Making of a Middle-Class Liberalism in Early Nineteenth Century Manchester*, Chetham’s, 40 (Manchester, 1995), p.16.

Turner and Edwards.⁹⁶ The events leading up to the Exchange Riot of 1812 brought them into the public light.

Two Manchester scrapbooks survive which contain handbills advertising political meetings to draw up addresses from 1809. John Shuttleworth (1786-1864) was one compiler and the other may have been Archibald Prentice (1792-1857).⁹⁷ John Shuttleworth was a leading new name among the 2000 signatories in Manchester who called for a meeting to address Colonel Wardle on 3 May 1809.⁹⁸ Some were Unitarians, including Ottiwell Wood (1760-1847), who headed the list. Wood was a merchant and a trustee of Cross St Chapel and his son John became a prominent campaigner for Reform in the 1820s.⁹⁹ The Manchester merchants, Thomas Slater and George William Wood (1781-1843), also signed. The former was a trustee of Cross St Chapel, while the latter was trustee of both Stand and Platt Chapel, future president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and later MP for Kendal.¹⁰⁰ The manufacturer Robert Philips was a Lit and Phil member and father of the first MP for Manchester. William Washington made his first public appearance chairing a meeting in the Manor Court Room in Manchester on 29 April 1811, held to petition parliament for redress for the economic distress.¹⁰¹ New radicals were not solely Unitarians. Joseph Brotherton was a member of Rev William Cowherd's congregation of Bible Christians in Salford. The sect had great faith in the 'march of intellect' and the postwar Peace Society was one of its offshoots.¹⁰² He became

⁹⁶ Ibid; L. Edwards, 'Popular Politics in the North West of England, 1815-21' (Manchester Univ. PhD thesis, 1998).

⁹⁷ MCL: BR f 942.7389 Sc 13, Scrapbook 1808-24; BR f.324.942733 S3 and Sh1, Shuttleworth Scrapbook; see also BR MS 091 B78, Brotherton Scrapbook 1809, compiled by Joseph Brotherton but does not contain much political material.

⁹⁸ BR f.942.7389 Sc13, Scrapbook, p. 5.

⁹⁹ MCL: biographical cuttings; T. Swindells, *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men*, vol 2 (Manchester, 1906), pp.116-7; T. Baker, *Memorials of a Dissenting Chapel* (1884), p.93.

¹⁰⁰ Baker, *Memorials of a Dissenting Chapel*, p.107.

¹⁰¹ *Cowdroy's*, 4 May 1811.

¹⁰² Ceadel, *Origins of War Prevention*, p.157.

overseer of the poor in Salford in 1811.¹⁰³ Samuel Bamford was brought up as a Wesleyan Methodist.¹⁰⁴ Absalom Watkin was a lay preacher of the Methodist New Connexion.¹⁰⁵

The new radical leaders were literally a new generation, mainly born in the late 1770s and 1780s. John Shuttleworth was 22 or 23 at the time of the pro-Wardle address; the attorney Fenton Robinson Atkinson, who defended the Luddites, the ‘Thirty-Eight’ radicals in 1812 and the Blanketeers in 1817, was only a couple of years older. They were therefore too young to have participated in the radicalism of the 1790s. Some of the infamous ‘Thirty-Eight,’ arrested in Manchester while meeting to draw up a reform petition in June 1812, were in their early twenties: James Knott, a hatter of Hyde, Charles Smith, a Manchester fustian cutter and Charles Wooling, a Manchester cotton spinner, were only 21; Aaron Marvel, a weaver of Mottram and John Howarth, a fustian cutter of Salford, were 22 and John Gorsley, a Newton hatter, was 23.¹⁰⁶ The prosecution at their trial indeed disbelieved that people of such an age were capable of discussing constitutional rather than revolutionary reform. Of the ‘Thirty-Eight,’ twenty-two lived in Manchester, with the rest from the immediate satellite towns, including Ashton, Oldham, Droylsden, Hyde, Stalybridge and Hadfield in Derbyshire.¹⁰⁷ Some of the new generation of radical leaders were newcomers from outside the region and had not therefore even seen the political events or the older radical personalities of the 1790s in Lancashire. The Potter family came from Tadcaster, Yorkshire, in 1801; John Edward Taylor was born in Illminster, Sussex, and moved to Manchester in about 1805. Fenton

¹⁰³ R.L. Greenall, ed., *The Making of Victorian Salford* (Lancaster, 2000), pp.30-1.

¹⁰⁴ Bamford, *Early Days*.

¹⁰⁵ M. Goffin, ed., *The Diaries of Absalom Watkin: a Manchester Man, 1787-1861* (Stroud, 1993).

¹⁰⁶ PRO: TS 11/1059; LCRO, MF 10/139, Lancaster Assizes indictments.

¹⁰⁷ *The Trial at Full Length*, p.41.

Robinson Atkinson was born in Leeds and Joseph Brotherton moved to Manchester from Chesterfield in 1789.¹⁰⁸

Differences of political perspective between the old and new radicals and the general population were not impermeable but still apparent. This can be seen in the conscious separation between Samuel Bamford and his father's generation. The young Samuel must have imbibed an openness towards radical ideas from his father and uncle's Middleton radical circle, but he appears to have considered their political beliefs as part of the old world of the 1790s. He rather attributed his political education to reading Cobbett's *Political Register* at work in the later 1800s, and only became deeply involved in the new radicalism following Major Cartwright's tours of the North in 1812.¹⁰⁹ Bamford's late entry into radical activism was comparable to that of his colleagues. During the summer of 1811, Absalom Watkin formed the Literary and Scientific Club in Manchester with Richard Watson, a Methodist preacher and a business friend, William Makinson, possibly as an alternative to the now Tory-dominated Lit and Phil. Watkin emerged into prominence after the Exchange Riot of 1812, when he read a provocative paper to the Club on the needless prolongation of the War. He only became fully involved in the public eye when he went to an anti-corn bill meeting in February 1815 where he met with J.E. Taylor, Archibald Prentice, Shuttleworth and the Potter brothers.¹¹⁰

The new generation used the metropolitan radicals and sympathetic Mountain Whig MPs as patrons for their own ideas, but it was a reciprocal process. In 1811, the reform committee in Bolton corresponded with Samuel Whitbread who advised them to petition

¹⁰⁸ P. Shapley, 'Joseph Brotherton (1783-1857)'; A.C. Howe, 'Thomas Bayley Potter (1817-1898),' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com.

¹⁰⁹ Bamford, *Early Days*, p.282.

¹¹⁰ Goffin, ed., *Diaries of Absalom Watkin*, pp.9-12, 21.

both parliament and the Prince Regent for peace.¹¹¹ Henry Brougham was also a significant contact, presenting the peace petition from Chorley amongst others to parliament in 1812. Major Cartwright corresponded with Shuttleworth, Atkinson, Potter and Walker. By 1812, they borrowed and disseminated direct rhetoric from the London radicals. During the Manchester Exchange Riot on 8 April, the new generation held a parallel meeting in St. Ann's Square. They adapted the set of resolutions moved two months previously by Robert Waithman in London. The petition submitted to a reform meeting in Manchester on 11 June was to have been presented to the Commons by Burdett. It included a number of romantic radical or 'liberal' grievances that he had already emphasised in his address to the Regent: the burden of taxation, the spread of army barracks across the country and the use of 'ex officio informations' to control the press.¹¹²

The Lancashire reform movement had a regional stamp fixed firmly over any wider influences. The metropolitan radicals provided inspiration and renewed radical ideas but the new generation brought it into practice. While Thompson underestimated the impact of Burdett and the metropolitan radicals in provincial radicalism, Harling and others perhaps have conversely neglected the role of local leadership on the ground in their explanations for the renewal of interest in Reform before the post-war mass platform.¹¹³

The Manchester reform committee led by William Washington still put their trust in the leadership of Joseph Hanson, deputed to represent them at the Commons Select Committee of 1811.¹¹⁴ The new generation remained in contact with old radicals after Hanson's death. Major Cartwright wrote to John Shuttleworth, asking him to forward a

¹¹¹ Dinwiddy, 'Luddism and Politics,' 39.

¹¹² *Trial of the Thirty Eight*, pp.124-5; Dinwiddy, 'Luddism and Politics,' 62.

¹¹³ Harling, *Waning of Old Corruption*, p.103; see R. Eckersley, 'Of Radical Design: John Cartwright and the Redesigning of the Reform Campaign, c.1800-1811,' *History*, 89 (2004), 560-580.

¹¹⁴ *Cowdroy's*, 11 May 1811.

paper to Dr Taylor in Bolton. Manchester veteran Thomas Walker sent subscriptions to Shuttleworth for the defence of the 'Thirty Eight' in August 1812 "from a friend of Peace and Reform," and they co-operated with Cartwright to this end.¹¹⁵ Radicals still dealt with pressing local issues in conjunction with national leaders. Deputies sent by the 'Friends of Freedom' of Bolton to the parliamentary select committee on the Luddite disturbances were not examined. They communicated their concerns to Henry Brougham; in response, he made an accusatory speech in the Commons against the Peace Preservation Bill on 13 July 1812, using Taylor's evidence on the magistrates' spy system. The Bolton Friends of Freedom presented 100g of plate to Dr Taylor in July for his efforts "for stepping forward to defend the character of the inhabitants from gross misrepresentation."¹¹⁶ The Liverpool Friends of Peace by contrast rejected organisation from London. In 1812, Roscoe twice refused Major Cartwright's requests to be a steward at the reform meeting of the 'Committee of Friends of Parliamentary Reform.'¹¹⁷ Spence argues that the opposition among metropolitan leadership to Cartwright's attempts to revive the tradition of grand reform dinners was because: "one half of romantic reformism had derived from popular loyalism and as such distrusted the political strategies of the patriot reformers."¹¹⁸ The Friends of Peace's 'romantic radicalism' was indeed more moderate than the radicalism of the new generation.

The new generation of radicals were eager to assert their own local identity and leadership on the growing movement. Both committed radicals and their supporters did not accept Burdettite radicalism unconditionally, adapting London resolutions to their own prejudices and identity. The Manchester resolutions of 11 June 1812 went beyond

¹¹⁵ MCL: BR f 324.942733 Sh1, Shuttleworth loose leaves, no.5.

¹¹⁶ *Hansard*, XXIII, 13 July 1812, 1021; Taylor, *Letters on the...Late Riots in Lancashire*, p.5.

¹¹⁷ Liv.RO: 920 ROS 759, Roscoe to Cartwright, 9 February 1809.

¹¹⁸ Spence, *Birth of Romantic Radicalism*, p.162.

Burdett's programme of moderate reform. While they asked for an extension of suffrage "as far as taxation," they did not repeat Burdett's demand for the enfranchisement of those subject to direct taxes; rather, they specifically requested "that each man, not insane nor confined for crime, be entitled to vote for his representative." Manhood suffrage had been an intermittent theme of many Lancashire radicals from 1789 and the opportunity had arisen again to demand it. This prefigured the success of Samuel Bamford and others in substituting this measure for a more restrictive proposal at the Hampden Club convention of January 1817.¹¹⁹

1812: nemesis

William Rowbottom made a prophetic observation in January 1812:

1812 – the old English hospitality is nearly Extinguished in every family at this time the lower class of people who have a family of small children are absolutely short of the common necessaries of life and a deal of familys have not left off work at all...there is nothing to be seen but misery and want...to all appearances if there be an alternation of times it must be for the Better except there be commotions or civil wars wich [*sic*] God grant may never happen in this country or Kingdom.¹²⁰

His comment marked the start of the most tumultuous year of the wars for Lancashire. If ever there was a serious threat to public order and social stability, it was not in the post-French Revolution years of 1792 or 1795, nor even during the United Englishmen conspiracies and food rioting of 1798-1801, but in 1812.¹²¹ 1812 was the year of nemesis for loyalist ruling elites. They witnessed and attempted to deal with a complex range of problems including: widespread rioting, serious economic distress, Luddite disturbances, the assassination of the prime minister by a Liverpudlian merchant, the success of the

¹¹⁹ Dinwiddy, 'Luddism and Politics,' 62; *Trial of the Thirty-Eight*.

¹²⁰ Rowbottom diaries.

¹²¹ A.D. Harvey, *Britain in the Early Nineteenth Century* (1978), as opposed to R. Wells, *Insurrection: the British Experience, 1795-1803* (Gloucester, 1983).

Orders in Council repeal campaign and the first mass radical meeting which began the momentum for the postwar popular radical movement.

The changing popular political atmosphere had reopened the scope for debate, particularly about the relationship between local and national issues. William Roscoe's introduction to his pamphlet criticising the election speeches of George Canning in 1812 declared that proof of this could be seen in electoral candidates who "find it necessary to state, more at large than was formerly done, the nature of their political opinions, and the grounds upon which they solicit the suffrages of the electors."¹²² This was evident in the tangible increase in the political content of election material and speeches. The conduct of the candidates in parliament or their specific political stances on national issues on the platform again mattered as much as or more than local circumstances and connections. It was exemplified by the situation of national figures contesting Liverpool in 1812: the Friends of Peace's parliamentary allies Thomas Creevey and Henry Brougham were pitted against the Tories' controversial choice of the pro-Catholic Emancipation Canning. One squib was adamant against "this political Chameleon," denouncing his duel with Castlereagh and calling upon Liverpoolian freemen to vote for Brougham and Creevey, "the Friends of Peace and Reform."¹²³ Preston was contested by Joseph Hanson's younger brother Edward; the squibs similarly highlighted issues unspoken in previous elections in language reminiscent of a decade's worth of Cowdroy's editorials. A letter by "an old Freeman" lamented the effects of the "blood-stained sword of desolation" with hints of Gothic millenarianism: "Cast a retrospective glance over your country; see her in the midst of a vortex of difficulties; groaning under an immense load

¹²² W. Roscoe, *A Review of the Speeches of the Right Hon. George Canning* (Liverpool, 1812), p.3.

¹²³ *Impartial Collection of Addresses, Songs, Squibs* (Liverpool, 1812), p.6.

of debt – her unparalleled taxation – her commerce almost annihilated...her mechanics and artificers starving.”¹²⁴

Cowdroy's editorials returned almost to his previous levels of detailed, bold and vitriolic spleen against the corruption of ministers and the conduct of the war. The founding of the *Liverpool Mercury* marked the culmination of the freer atmosphere of debate. The newspaper was published from 5 July 1811 by Egerton Smith, an abolitionist, poet and founder of the Mechanics' Institute.¹²⁵ He deliberately set out to propagate constitutionalist radical and 'liberal' themes from the outset. "Peace, freedom and improvement" were announced to be the leading objects to be advocated in its pages. The first issue contained Roscoe's letter to Henry Brougham in support of Parliamentary Reform. It was supportive of, but independent from, the 'Friends of Reform.' The editorial stated its approval of Roscoe's opinions and asserted: "It is not violence, but firmness, not virulence of language but clearness of reasoning, which distinguishes the reformer from the revolutionist, the friend of liberty from the partizan of anarchy."¹²⁶ In 1815, after the release of Daniel Lovell, editor of the radical *Statesman*, the *Mercury's* compositors donated money to the subscription for relieving his debts, together with "52 Friends to Freedom, at the *Green Man*, Preston."¹²⁷

March-June 1812 was the period of greatest activity among myriad committees and groups across the region, particularly in the south east. Liverpool had its own circle of action, agitated with the two renewed campaigns against the Orders in Council and East India Company monopoly. This climaxed in a dramatic debate in the House of

¹²⁴ *Complete Collection of Addresses, Squibs, Songs etc...at the Election at Preston* (October 1812), p.16.

¹²⁵ T. Baines, *History of the Commerce and Town of Liverpool* (1852), pp.545-6.

¹²⁶ *Liverpool Mercury*, 5 July 1811.

¹²⁷ Semmel, *Napoleon and the British*, p.155.

Commons between General Tarleton and Thomas Creevey. Creevey accused Tarleton of misrepresenting the genuine state of commerce in the port in order to further his own position in the eyes of the Corporation.¹²⁸ In the region itself, the boundaries between radicalism, both extreme and constitutionalist, and unionist activities were very thin indeed, although impossible to document. Historians have thus found it difficult to distinguish radical committees from Luddite and other movements.¹²⁹ Nor could contemporaries determine the difference, particularly the spies who infiltrated the meetings. The arrest of the 'Thirty Eight' radicals illustrated the mindset of the magistrates, eager to associate any political activity with Luddism. It is likely however that there was some overlap among radical activists, unionised workers and Luddite agitators, but much is still hidden under the veil of secrecy and confusion of magistrate and spies' reports and distorted witness evidence.¹³⁰

The Manchester Exchange Riot of 8 April 1812 was the most important event in the history of Lancashire popular politics of the Napoleonic Wars. Firstly, it confirmed to the magistrates their suspicions that the Church-and-King mobs they had countenanced in the early 1790s had transformed themselves into an oppositionist force. This was also the observation taken by postwar radicals. Archibald Prentice claimed that Thomas Kershaw, a calico printer who had associated with Thomas Walker in the 1790s, had asserted:

The occurrences of that day, however, indicated a turn in the current of popular opinion. Previously to that 'Church and King' was the favourite cry...but subsequently the old dominant party appeared to feel that they had an opposition to contend with and they became less arrogant in their conduct.¹³¹

¹²⁸ J.R. Harris, ed., *Liverpool and Merseyside: Essays in the Economic and Social History of the Port and its Hinterland* (1969), pp.113-4.

¹²⁹ Bailey, *The Luddite Rebellion*; R. Reid, *Land of Lost Content: the Luddite Revolt, 1812* (1986).

¹³⁰ *The Trial of the Thirty Eight*.

¹³¹ A. Prentice, *Historical Sketches and Personal Recollections of Manchester* (1851).

The riot did not however illustrate the fickleness of the crowd or their inherent radicalism. Rather, it was a product of a wider loyalism, which encompassed previously radical elements, which the majority of participants utilised as a channel for their own frustrations at the nadir of the war and economic distress. Secondly, the riot was again representative of the complex relationship between national and local political issues and identities. The thousands of people who assembled outside the Exchange to protest and in St. Ann's Square to give their assent to reform resolutions were reacting to local loyalist representation of a national issue. They challenged the loyalist elite's right to represent the town's opinion to the Prince Regent as much as the actual issue itself, the Prince Regent's choice of Tory government.

John Edward Taylor and his business partner John Shuttleworth were rumoured to be the authors of the handbill 'Now or Never,' the most memorable from the many that precipitated the riot. The rhetoric of the handbills emphasised the power of public opinion and the more striking language was written by the new generation. 'A Warning Voice' dated 2 April was one of the most vitriolic as an expression of radical patriotism: "You behold your country sunk in reputation, degraded in rank and pursuing those measures which will inevitably terminate in irremiable [*sic*] destruction and misery." The language of romantic radicalism ran through the broadside, with its idea of corruption of Pittite state at the root of the problem: "The Public mind is no longer ignorant of the cause. The cancer-worm of the state in piercing our feelings with agony has at once raised us from a general and unaccountable indifference."¹³² This was a strong theme adapted to more radical circumstances by local leaders.

¹³² MCL: BR f 324.942733, Shuttleworth loose leaves, no.4.

The situation was not a simple case of Tory-loyalists versus Whig-radicals. The original purpose of the meeting indicated the tense relationship with the Prince Regent of both camps. Hence a broadside by 'Falkland' provided a Tory-loyalist perspective that employed contractual language. It 'reminded' the Prince Regent that his situation was dependent upon public opinion:

You cannot change the present Ministry without acting in contradiction to more reason than ever opposed such a measure in any Monarch before. The Minister has, with the sanction of Parliament and the approbation of the people, placed only a portion of the prerogatives in your hands.¹³³

This illustrated the tense relationship with the monarchy as well as the government that was felt by provincial loyalists as well as radicals. The language of petitions and handbills may not have expressed true political beliefs of their writers, nor may it have been entirely shared by all of the general population. It was nevertheless important because it received an excited response which fuelled the riot. It was an optimal way of expressing opposition to government in time of acute economic distress and seeming perpetual war.

Elements within the general population took a more violent attitude towards anti-Pittitism and national events following the Exchange Riot. On 15 May, Colonel Fletcher of Bolton wrote:

The death of Mr Perceval has filled all good Loyalists with grief – and what is to be particularly lamented is that the Mob should have expressed Joy on such a melancholy occasion. It would appear as of John Bulls character had experienced a [change] and that he is become [a symbol] for Treason, stratagems and spoils.¹³⁴

The Vicar of St Mark's, Liverpool, the church on the street where the assassin Bellingham had lived, preached a sermon on the "melancholy event." In response, he received a letter signed by "Jenkins, Lt de Luddites," which ridiculed his sermon and added: "had it been in any other place than the church, my pistol would have silenced the

¹³³ BR ff 942.72 L15, no.7.

¹³⁴ HO 40/1/1/115, Fletcher to Beckett, 15 May 1812.

blasphemy.” It went on to speak of the “brave and patriotic Bellingham” and threatened death to the “depraved George the Prince.”¹³⁵ Tactics of intimidation like these were isolated and not indicative of any serious revolutionary danger, but they did illustrate how national political figures were by no means unequivocally revered. Threatening letters were sent from Manchester to the Prince Regent and a letter from “Ned Ludd” of Manchester was sent to Nicholas Vansittart, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer. It warned: “You will share the same fate but I trust the Justness of his Death have a proper effect upon your conduct.”¹³⁶

The postwar radical activists separated themselves from the violence of the crowd and extremists. They had learnt lessons from what had happened to their predecessors in the 1790s. Combined with a fear of arrest and desire for respectability, they perhaps also shared some of Roscoe’s suspicion of the ‘Burdettite mob’ in Westminster whom they may have believed were hampering the reform movement. Samuel Bamford wanted his readers to know that his “feelings and partialities had hitherto been all on the side of the populace, but I could not witness this cowardly outrage without feelings of indignation and disgust.”¹³⁷ Those who organised the opposition to the loyalist authorities’ requisition for a meeting withdrew from the proceedings when rioting broke out, to avoid giving any “appearance of countenance” to acts of violence. John Knight wrote in his introduction to the printed trial of the ‘Thirty Eight’: “These acts of violence induced a number of most respectable gentlemen, who intended to have moved a Counter Address, to decline carrying it forward.” He claimed the more exclusive meetings of the “friends of peace and parliamentary reform,” resulting in their arrest, were held in direct

¹³⁵ Reid, *Land of Lost Content*, p.159; HO 42/123/101, Blacow to McMahon, 27 May 1812.

¹³⁶ Binfield, *Writings of the Luddites*, p.190.

¹³⁷ Bamford, *Early Days*, p.295.

consequence of their revulsion of the violence of the crowd.¹³⁸ Significantly, William Cowdroy refused to print the resolutions of the Manchester reform meeting of 26 May in caution against the proceedings turning out to be less constitutional than they seemed.¹³⁹ The new generation of radicals had made their mark in a dramatic and somewhat unexpected manner. Though they denigrated the violence, looking towards the more 'respectable' artisanal radicalism of the postwar reform campaign, the experience of the Exchange Riot was essential in preparing the ground for the mass platform movement. Reform petitioning regained momentum following the Luddite disturbances, brought to fruition by Major Cartwright's tour of the North in late summer 1812.¹⁴⁰

Lancashire radicalism from 1812 was a composite of influences, from traditional constitutionalist arguments to remnants of Paineite republicanism, to be used according to circumstances. It was furthermore shaped by a distinctive economic outlook, regional identity and belief in Britain's role on the international stage. It looked up to national leaders such as Burdett and Cartwright, but was organised on the ground by a legion of local radical activists, old and new. Tensions existed among all these individuals and their rhetoric may not have represented all of the general population who signed the petitions and attended the mass meetings. Yet these tensions were overcome by a genuine and active desire for peace and reform, engendered by the pressures of over two decades of war and local and national elites who appeared to misunderstand their grievances and world-view. This was provincial in the sense of independence from parliamentary intrusion or corruption and from a Burdettite domination of the reform campaign. It was

¹³⁸ *Trial of the Thirty Eight*, p.iv.

¹³⁹ Dinwiddy, 'Luddism and Politics,' 54; Prentice, *Historical Sketches*, p.50; PRO: HO 42/124, 2 June 1812; *Cowdroy's*, 20 June 1812.

¹⁴⁰ Dinwiddy, 'Luddism and Politics,' 60.

also an outlook of Britain from the Lancashire perspective, as an arbitrator and trading exchange amongst nations. Lancashire radicalism and loyalism were redefined in its own image.

REDEFINING LOYALISM

A sense of place shaped collective action and political debate. Popular politics involved the appropriation of elite political and cultural hegemony.¹ Postmodern historiography has concentrated on popular protest after 1815 and used the ‘linguistic turn’ to analyse how radical and class identities were formed.² In doing so, they have neglected the spatial dimensions of historical action, as discussed by cultural geographers. Combining the two approaches demonstrates how opponents of loyalist elites redefined loyalism and radicalism in space as well as discourse. Epstein has called for “the writing of histories of the economies of social and discursive space, not as a supplement – as background or context – to meaning, but as part of a complex, active process bound to the production of meaning.”³ This offers therefore a more comprehensive method of charting regional socio-political change in response to the French Revolution and industrialisation.

¹ J. Epstein, ‘Radical Dining, Toasting and Symbolic Expression in Early Nineteenth Century Lancashire: Rituals of Solidarity,’ *Albion*, 20 (1988), 271-91.

² J. Vernon, *Re-Reading the Constitution, New Narratives in the Political History of England’s Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1996); P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge, 1991); M. Steinberg, *Fighting Words: Working-Class Formation, Collective Action and Discourse in Nineteenth Century England* (1999); C. Tilly, *Popular Contention in Britain, 1758-1834* (Cambridge, Mass, 1995).

³ J. Epstein, *In Practice: Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford, 2003), pp.107-8; see also D. Mitchell, *Cultural Geography, a Critical Introduction* (Oxford, 2000), p.165; P. Stallybrass, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (1986); L. Edwards, ‘Popular Politics in the North West of England, 1815-21’ (Manchester Univ. PhD thesis, 1998).

Battles of loyalism in discourse and place

The government legislation and royal proclamations against 'seditious meetings' of 1792-5 defined exactly who was authorised to hold legitimate (loyalist) gatherings. Radical activists and bourgeois intellectuals who had formerly met openly and then by the subversive tactic of 'radical dining,' were forced to meet in secret.⁴ This was a reaction to the specific threat of Jacobinism but could also be seen as the culmination of a longer process. The later eighteenth century experienced a gradual but noticeable transition in towns from "an open stage for the enactment of civic mystery and dispute" to "a controlled set of enclosed spheres in which other than officially institutionalised mass activity was incomprehensible and alarming."⁵ Crowds could only assemble legally if local loyalist authorities approved their purpose or were regulated through volunteer corps, other military displays and civic occasions. The effect was to relegate them to spectators of displays of local government authority.⁶

Battles over the meaning and authority of loyalism nevertheless continued to be fought out physically in the streets as well as in political discourse of pamphlets and speeches. Patterns of popular protest reflected reactions to the rapid expansion of towns and the creation of civic space in those towns by loyalist local elites. Protestors reacted to new arenas for loyalist display and in particular to the new connotations of civic identity and power given them by local elites. Political principles and authority were debated within a material space, so that the space itself became an object of contestation and symbol. Crowds of the political opponents of loyalist elites or striking workers, attempted to

⁴ See chapter 4, p.128.

⁵ M. Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835* (Cambridge, 1988), p.141; See P. Borsay, 'All the Town's a Stage': Urban Ritual and Ceremony, 1660-1800,' in Clark, P., ed., *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns* (1984).

⁶ See chapter 3, p.67.

subvert the meaning of these new arenas by adopting their symbolism, occupying them during work hours or rejecting them for alternative areas of oppositional display. The forces of law and order consequently had to respond to popular protests in the new cultural-geographical circumstances. This was a battle over who could represent local or civic identities in the national sphere; the two were interlinked and their meanings simultaneously disseminated through political action.

On 4 June 1807, the birthday of George III was celebrated on Ardwick Green, Manchester. Superficially, all elements of the usual loyalist display were present. Several volunteer corps mustered, led by Lieut-Colonel Joseph Hanson. The event was followed by a dinner. Yet despite the sincerity of the celebration, immediate appearances of loyalist patriotism, which had been annually ritualised by the local governing elites, were deceptive. The toasts at the dinner included:

The Friend of Humanity – Mr Wilberforce;
Lord Milton and the Independent Electors of Yorkshire;
Mr Roscoe and Independent Liverpool Plumpers;
Fox and the memory of Pitt;
Colonel Hanson and the independent plumpers of Preston.⁷

The event was another form of the ‘radical dining’ which Epstein identified as a means of anti-loyalist meeting and protest in the 1790s.⁸ It would have been unthinkable only a couple of years earlier. Hanson and his supporters partook in a brazen public demonstration of an alternative loyalism, directly imitating then subverting loyalist tropes and symbols. He had just returned from a narrow defeat contesting the borough of Preston.⁹ The toasts celebrated electoral challenges to the Pittite-Tory version of loyalism and in themselves subverted ownership over the concept. The location was also

⁷ *Cowdroy's*, 6 June 1807.

⁸ Epstein, ‘Radical Dining.’

⁹ See chapter 4, p.256.

significant, in that Ardwick was both the fashionable residence for aspirant Mancunian merchants and bore a Jacobite legacy in its mock corporation.¹⁰

Alternative celebrations of the King's birthday became an established method of protest elsewhere. 4 June was commemorated in Bolton in 1810 with a dinner headed by the Unitarian radical Dr Robert Taylor. The toasts included Whitbread, Burdett, Sheridan, Colonel Wardle "and all the enemies of corruption," and with reference to the current Reform bill: "Mr Brand and may a timely reform prevent the danger of a revolution."¹¹ The toasts thus expressed elements of 'romantic' or 'reactionary' radicalism, adopting Burdettite tropes, especially an execration of Pittite corruption, constitutionalist reformist language and support for metropolitan radical leaders.¹² The alternative celebrations of 4 June were concurrently firmly attached to the local context, challenging loyalist elites over actual physical place and forms of patriotic discourse. Imitation and subversion of civic loyalist ritual remained an effective tactic for sustaining a sense of radical purpose and identity in the new political circumstances from 1806. The Liverpool Friends of Reform met on 16 June 1810 in direct response to the Corporation's instigation of annual civic celebrations of Pitt's birthday. The occasion and the toasts were an exemplar of symbolic satire and rhetoric, focusing on Pitt's apparent abandonment of his Whig past.¹³ Anti-Pittism, a key theme of Roscoe's intellectual circle and romantic radicalism, was influenced by their perception of the new Pittite Tory ministry and their supporters. After his death, while Pittite Tories imagined their leader as solidly anti-Catholic and anti-Reform to suit their own purposes, anti-Pittites similarly formulated an imagined Pitt

¹⁰ See chapter 3, part II, p.118.

¹¹ *Cowdroy's*, 9 June 1810.

¹² P. Spence, *The Birth of Romantic Reformism: War, Popular Politics and English Radical Reformism, 1800-1815* (Aldershot, 1996), p.33.

¹³ *Cowdroy's*, 16 June 1810.

who had betrayed his earlier desire for Reform.¹⁴ William Shepherd's scrapbooks contained a satire on such loyalist celebrations of Pitt's birthday. Among the toasts were "Middling Classes of Society annihilated," "Sources of Corruption deepened and enlarged" and "France, during his administration, rapidly rose...to national wealth, annihilated her Public Debt, doubled her population, quadrupled her revenue and obtained the sovereignty of Europe."¹⁵

These events exhibited how, from 1806, the revived atmosphere of anti-corruption and more open political debate engendered renewed opportunities for oppositional activity, although in an altered and still tense milieu. The radical bourgeois intellectuals felt revitalised confidence to attack Pittite-loyalist elites within their 'civic' space. This involved a ritual on the part of both sides. It became an evolved form of theatrical subversion of symbols and actions.¹⁶ Local elites drew up loyalist addresses and petitions, always legitimised by a 'public' meeting. Their opponents requested the boroughreeve and constables or Corporation to call another meeting to draw up an altered petition. The local elites would refuse and usually retaliated with a counter-meeting and counter-petition. Often two opposing addresses or petitions were produced, each claiming to represent the views of the majority. This charade was well-established: it had been acted out during the Regency crisis in December 1788 when a public meeting in Manchester resulted in such turmoil that the chairman terminated the proceedings.¹⁷ It formed a rhetorical conflict of who had the right to represent the town's views to Parliament or King using the medium of meetings and petitions or addresses.

¹⁴ J.J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain, 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1993), p.133.

¹⁵ Harris Manchester College: Shepherd mss, vol IX, p.27.

¹⁶ J. Epstein, 'Understanding the Cap of Liberty: Symbolic Practice and Social Conflict in Early Nineteenth Century England,' *P & P*, 122 (1989), 75-118.

¹⁷ J. Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790-1810* (Harvard, 1983), p.104.

Opponents of loyalist elites directly interfered within their physical and symbolic space of authority. In Bolton, the boroughreeve chaired a public meeting to draw up a loyal address to the King on 21 December 1807. Colonel Fletcher reported that a group of Unitarians were present who: “more than once attempted to introduce the subject of a petition for Peace, but this the Chairman repressed as it was not the object of the meeting.”¹⁸ Another meeting was held in February 1808; Fletcher described the “conflict over the meeting room”: “a hundred petitioners burst in, refused to let the boroughreeve speak, crying, Peace, Peace, Peace.”¹⁹ The views of the radical dissenting intellectuals had gained the support of a wider section of the local middle classes. A letter to Cowdroy by ‘Verax,’ possibly Dr Taylor, complained that the tradesmen and manufacturers “who on former occasions have distinguished themselves by what is commonly called loyalty” were ignoring the voice of 18,000 pro-peace signatures by drawing up the town’s loyal address.²⁰ Cowdroy commented on the symbolism of place in the conflict: “The opposers of peace at Bolton after experiencing a disappointment in not being able to obtain access to their intended place of meeting adjourned to the shambles – a situation not ill chosen for the friends of Slaughter.”²¹

A parallel confrontation occurred in Liverpool in March 1808. The Corporation proposed a meeting to draw up a loyal address to the King. William Roscoe believed that the West Indies merchants within the Corporation had deliberately called the meeting because they were aggrieved at the American merchants’ campaign against the Orders in Council.²² During the meeting in the Town Hall, Roscoe proposed an amendment to the address which called for peace with France and maintenance of amicable relations with

¹⁸ PRO: HO 42/91/963, Fletcher to Hawkesbury, 27 December 1807.

¹⁹ HO 42/95/1, Fletcher to Hawkesbury, February 1808.

²⁰ *Cowdroy’s*, 20 February 1808.

²¹ *Cowdroy’s*, 27 February 1808.

²² LivRO: 920 ROS 1755, Roscoe to Gloucester, 17 March 1808.

America. In a similar situation to Bolton, the Friends of Peace received crucial support from hundreds of others who could not get into the meeting. Cowdroy reported: “the moment the Mayor mentioned the war, the cry of ‘Peace! Peace!’ was uttered by hundreds of tongues and a loud clamour for adjournment to the area of the New Exchange.”²³ The New Exchange was symbolic of the commercial power of the merchant elites and thus adjournment there would mean taking over their space. The Mayor repeatedly refused these calls and Roscoe alleged he almost sprung “from the bench over the Town Clerk upon the Table below to seize a Gentm who attempted to speak in favour of the amendment.” The Mayor left the chair and his opponents: “went into the square, where they were joined by a very large concourse of people who could not gain admission.”²⁴

Roscoe spoke to the crowd from a window of the Exchange, informing them what had passed in the Town Hall. Graves has pointed to the significance of windows in civic processions and ceremonies. Elites could use them to display authority and social status to the crowds below; favoured viewing-spots could be offered as patronage to visiting merchants or dignitaries. This crucially offered a combination of participation in the event from a higher level while being separated from the crowd. Windows were thus “a membrane between the arenas in which different identities were created and reproduced.”²⁵ Roscoe’s speech from the Exchange was perhaps indicative of his sense of social detachment from the general population. Yet by interacting with the crowd and using the windows as a frame for his argument, his action also marked a re-appropriation of the usual displays of loyalist authority from the Exchange viewed from below.

²³ *Cowdroy’s*, 19 March 1808.

²⁴ 920 ROS 1755, Roscoe to Gloucester, 17 March 1808.

²⁵ C.P. Graves, ‘Civic Ritual in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Newcastle,’ in S. Lawrence, ed., *Archaeologies of the British* (2003), p.41.

Roscoe and his supporters believed that the Mayor's attempt to force through the original address was a direct attack on their freedom of expression. He wrote to the Duke of Gloucester that by his actions of opposition, the Mayor "thus disgraced himself in the eyes of the town in a manner that will never be forgotten."²⁶ Both Gloucester and the Earl of Derby supported Roscoe concerning the behaviour of the Mayor.²⁷ Henry Blundell Hollinshead was backed by the West Indies interest and determined to maintain Corporation identity and authority.²⁸ The conflict was reignited the following year after the new Mayor, James Gerard, refused to call a public meeting to draw up a congratulatory address to Colonel Wardle. On 3 May 1809, a dinner was held in defiance for about a hundred people to pass the resolutions. Roscoe however commented to Creevey after the event about his disillusionment with this tactic, perhaps because he was in the stages of setting up the Friends of Reform and thus had alternative views of how opposition should be more successfully organised.²⁹ Nevertheless, similar debates and incidents occurred across the country from 1807. Poole has described conflicts in Bristol where a radical section of the middle classes broke their previous anonymity by intervening in loyalist spheres.³⁰

These challenges were not taken lightly by loyalist local elites, which is indicative of how serious they believed the threat to be. The boroughreeve and constables of Manchester and Salford and "certain individuals" signed a 'counter-request' against Joseph Hanson's request for a meeting to discuss a petition for peace in late 1807. Hanson accused them

²⁶ 920 ROS 1755, Roscoe to Gloucester, 17 March 1808.

²⁷ 920 ROS 1189, Derby to Roscoe, 26 March 1808.

²⁸ T. Baines, *History of the Commerce and Town of Liverpool* (1852), pp.533-4; LivRO: 352/CLE/TRA/2/12, Liverpool Town book, 1804-22.

²⁹ 920 ROS 1056, Roscoe to Creevey, 3 May 1809; Harris Manchester College: Shepherd mss, vol IX, p.19.

³⁰ S. Poole, ' "Till our Liberties be Secure," Popular Sovereignty and Public Space in Bristol, 1750-1850,' *Urban History*, 26 (1999), 44.

of having “wantonly traduced my character – and assigned to me designs of the most disloyal nature.”³¹ He attributed his resignation from commanding his rifle regiment to pressure placed on him by the local elites against his opinions on peace.³² The coalition of magistrates and Tory manufacturers solidified under the pressure of more challenges to their loyalism. In March 1808, a Manchester counter-petition raised 400 signatories, including John Leigh and Francis Philips, the largest manufacturers and the magistrates and clergy. It claimed representation of Manchester’s loyalism against the peace petition which they regarded as a “petition for the prolongation of the war.”³³ A broadside against petitioning for peace was published by ‘J.L.P.’, obviously John Leigh Philips, which implicated Hanson in its censure of “every individual that has distinguished himself as an advocate for Democracy” who were now “leading the petitions.”³⁴ In a draft article entitled ‘On the State of the War,’ he denounced the “disappointed and desperate faction” that was “impressing the People with an Idea that Peace is attainable at the present period.”³⁵ Perhaps deliberately, at the 1808 celebration of the King’s birthday, it was the boroughreeves and constables who led the procession from the Bridgewater Arms to Ardwick Green, thereby reasserting Church-and-King control over the ceremony and route.³⁶

Epstein, Rogers and others have suggested that radical middle classes retreated from the “raucous, dangerous places and tones” of plebeian crowds and culture between the two peace campaigns of 1795 and 1808.³⁷ The bourgeois intellectuals apparently shifted to a more exclusive organisation indoors, thereby “vacating a space that their opponents

³¹ *MM*, 15 December 1807.

³² *Address to the Members of the Manchester, Salford...Independent Rifle Regiment, December 10th 1807*.

³³ *MM*, 22 March 1808; MCL: BR f.942.7389 Sc13, Scrapbook.

³⁴ MCL: broadsides, ‘Plain Truth’ (1808).

³⁵ MCL: M84/3/5/21, Philips Ms., volume of draft articles.

³⁶ *Cowdroy’s*, 7 June 1808.

³⁷ Epstein, *In Practice*, p.115; Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, p.212; N. Rogers, *Crowds, Culture and Politics in Georgian Britain* (Oxford, 1998).

readily seized by revamping loyalism in a popular idiom.”³⁸ This was certainly the case in Liverpool, where the Friends of Peace distanced themselves from whom they regarded as the ‘mob.’ Similarly, Eckersley has found that between 1800 and 1812, Major Cartwright’s reform plan deliberately moved away from rallying the working classes in favour of creating a middle-class radical party in Parliament.³⁹ Joseph Hanson was isolated amongst his friends in Manchester in appealing to the weavers.⁴⁰ Cookson argued that the retreat in Manchester was the result of the rapid growth in the weaver population and a widening divide between rich and poor.⁴¹ Factors other than social status were however involved. Restrictions and repression by the boroughreeves, police office and magistrates in the town formed a major reason for the change.⁴²

Sympathetic pubs were the first option for the new generation of radical activists: the *Bridgewater Arms*, the *Good Samaritan* in Salford, the *Elephant Inn* on Tib Street and the *Prince Regent’s Arms*. It is difficult to ascertain whether pubs gained the reputation of a radical character or whether meetings occurred surreptitiously. Some were obviously more open than others. Annual celebrations of Roscoe’s election were held at the *Globe* tavern in Liverpool for years after 1806, in serious parody of loyalists’ continued commemoration of the ‘294 members’ who defeated the bill to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts.⁴³ The *Bridgewater Arms* in Manchester had been the meeting-place for the Manchester Constitutional Society (who celebrated the fall of the Bastille there in 1790), the United Englishmen in 1801 and members of the ‘Thirty Eight’ radicals in

³⁸ Rogers, *Crowds, Culture and Politics*, p.19.

³⁹ R. Eckersley, ‘Of Radical Design: John Cartwright and the Redesign of the Reform Campaign, c.1800–1811,’ *History*, 89 (2004), 560-580.

⁴⁰ See chapter 7, p.256.

⁴¹ Cookson, *Friends of Peace*, p.212.

⁴² See chapter 3, part I, p.72.

⁴³ *Cowdroy’s*, 12 November 1808; Harris Manchester College: Shepherd mss., vol IX.

1812.⁴⁴ It is unclear whether they met at the coffee room there, which advertised its membership fee of one guinea and that it took a whole range of London and provincial papers.⁴⁵ Subverting the symbolism of loyalist pubs was usually not possible. Radicals did not target or symbolise the *Bull's Head Inn* at Hanging Ditch. This may have been because radical meetings had been held there in 1788-90 and secondly, although Church-and-King clubs held their anniversaries in the inn, the more influential loyalist and commercial meetings were held in the Exchange Rooms. The Exchange was therefore easier to symbolise because of its specific associations with merchant and middle-class dominance of the economy, local government and loyalism. Where co-operation between radicals and loyalists took place, it was conducted within the local elite's realm of power in civic buildings. This was exemplified by the meetings in 1811 to draw up petitions for redress, which were supported by many manufacturers and elites. In Manchester, the Manor Court Room on Fountain Street was used for the meeting on 29 April 1811, chaired by the postwar radical William Washington. In Bolton, the Assembly Room was the chosen venue for the meeting of manufacturers, merchants and landholders on 14 February 1811, called by the Weavers' Committee.⁴⁶

Place was not incidental but integral to political debate. The bourgeois intellectuals, old and new, provided the defence, financial and judicial support and organisation for the new popular movements from 1807 and thus defined the spaces in which they operated.⁴⁷ There was perhaps not so much an alienation from mass protests but they believed that other means of protest, especially directly intervening in loyalists' realms during meetings, would be more effective. The 'Thirty Eight' radicals were arrested in the

⁴⁴ *MM*, 9 February 1790; PRO: PC 1/42/A143, depositions of corresponding societies; *The Trial at Full Length of the Thirty Eight Men from Manchester* (Manchester, 1812).

⁴⁵ *MM*, 31 January 1804.

⁴⁶ *Cowdroy's*, 4 May 1811; Holden diaries.

⁴⁷ See chapter 7.

Prince Regent's Arms on Thursday 11 June, having moved there from their usual meeting-place of the *Elephant* after Deputy Constable Joseph Nadin had already threatened to disrupt the meeting.⁴⁸ Manchester radical activists found it more expedient to meet in private places such as the warehouse of Thomas and Richard Potter on Cannon Street.⁴⁹ John Knight rented a disused spinning factory at New Islington, Ancoats, in 1816, where the first postwar meetings were held. Warehouse meetings reflected the economic position of many radical activists. In the early 1790s, the MCS had met at Thomas Walker's warehouse before shifting to pubs and private houses.⁵⁰

Challenges to the meaning of 'loyalism'

Conflicts over the meaning of loyalism did not just occur in abstract debates in newspapers or tracts; they meant more to their participants when undertaken within physical battles of authority. At the Liverpool débâcle of March 1808, Roscoe formulated an alternative address to the King as a tool to question the Church-and-King domination over the term 'loyal.' Cowdroy reported: "He appealed to the meeting whether it was fair to say that the *generality* of the town of Liverpool were loyal – he would object to that expression in the Address – he would say that *all* the people of Liverpool were loyal."⁵¹ This was a direct challenge to legitimacy with regard to the meaning of loyalism, within the discourse of the elites rather than outside it.⁵² Roscoe was anxious to stay within the bounds of bourgeois respectability and thus proclaimed his tolerance towards the opinions of his opponents. He nevertheless attempted to break the constraints which the

⁴⁸ J. Knight, 'Introduction,' *The Trial at Full Length of the Thirty Eight Men from Manchester, 27 August 1812* (Manchester, 1812), pp.iv-v.

⁴⁹ M.J. Turner, 'The Making of a Middle-Class Liberalism in Manchester, c.1815-32, a Study in Politics and the Press' (Oxford Univ. DPhil thesis, 1991), p.8.

⁵⁰ *Trial of Thomas Walker* (1794).

⁵¹ *Cowdroy's*, 19 March 1808.

⁵² M. Steinberg, 'Culturally Speaking: Finding a Commons Between Post-Structuralism and the Thompsonian Perspective,' *SH*, 21 (1996), 193.

Tory-Anglican definition of loyalism had placed upon his supporters, which charged them with “the impropriety of imputing disloyal motives to those who might differ.”⁵³ After the mass meeting to draw up a peace petition on Oldham Edge on Christmas Day 1807, the constables issued an address in the Manchester newspapers accusing the participants of Jacobinism. The Royton spokesmen Henry Whitaker and James Kershaw published a counter-address turning their rhetoric against the constables. They ironically admitted to and defended the charge against them being “enemies to the Government” because they believed the government had degraded and impoverished the country by pursuing the war. Cowdroy accompanied it with his typically sardonic editorial and radical patriotism:

Strange, that men who profess but one object...namely, our King's and Country's good – shall differ so widely about the means of obtaining that end: through war and blood, says one – through peace, commerce and manufactures, says another: - which are to be preferred, we leave history, policy, morality and above all Christianity to answer.⁵⁴

The definition of ‘loyalism’ and especially who loyalism represented were therefore highly significant because they were debated and challenged openly after 1806. This mirrored the radical re-interpretation of the Glorious Revolution as asserting the power of the populace with regards the constitutional monarchy in the 1790s; Semmel has identified a similar debate about ‘legitimacy’ in comparisons of the Hanoverian and Napoleonic empires.⁵⁵ The ‘romantic’ radicals were keen to reclaim the meaning of loyalism.⁵⁶ The *Liverpool Chronicle* criticised General Gascoyne’s speech after his 1807 election victory because it implied that “all opposition to his being returned” was “rebellion.” It cried ironically: “Have General Gascoyne and his party a patent for monopolising by

⁵³ *Cowdroy's*, 19 March 1808.

⁵⁴ *Cowdroy's*, 2 January 1808.

⁵⁵ K. Wilson, ‘Inventing Revolution: 1688 and Eighteenth-Century Popular Politics,’ *JBS*, 28 (1989), 349-86; S. Semmel, ‘British Radicals and “Legitimacy”’: Napoleon in the Mirror of History,’ *P & P*, 167 (2000), 140-75.

⁵⁶ Spence, *Romantic Radicalism*.

prescription all the loyalty of the town of Liverpool?”⁵⁷ The newspaper also printed a series of ‘letters to the Freemen of Liverpool’ by ‘M.N.,’ usually but not always Matthew Nicholson, a member of Roscoe’s circle.⁵⁸ He meditated on the ‘abuse of the word Loyalty,’ proclaiming: “Loyalty is a duty which we owe to His present Majesty as a King and as a man,” but that it should not be represented by the narrow views favoured by Tory-Anglican elites. He accused the Liverpoolian elites of regarding “loyalty as an excuse for the malignancy of their tempers, and as a very convenient passport into the Custom-House, and the Excise Office.” He believed a person could not claim to be a true loyalist “if he be outrageous in his language against those who differ from him in his politics.”⁵⁹

High Anglican suspicion of Dissent introduced ideological complexities into the conflict. ‘Church-and-King’ intolerance was so strong that Dissenters had again sensed that it would be futile to renew their campaign to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts. General Tarleton criticised the Liverpool peace petition in the Commons in March 1808, bearing “testimony to the respectability of Mr. Rathbone, the delegate from Liverpool, but he did not like his sectarian principles.”⁶⁰ Roscoe had already challenged Tarleton’s view of loyalism during his final speech at the poll in 1806, which defined his religious liberalism:

Sorry I am to have heard some improper language used and to have seen bills posted with the words Church and King. We are all Church and King, but whether the Church of England – the Church of Scotland – the Church in St Ann’s Street – or the Church in Paradise Street – is a matter that belongs in every man’s bosom.⁶¹

⁵⁷ *Liverpool Chronicle*, 20 May 1807.

⁵⁸ M. Nicholson, *Memorials of the Family of Nicholson* (Kendal, 1928), p.75.

⁵⁹ *Liverpool Chronicle*, 10 June 1807.

⁶⁰ *Hansard*, X, 3 March 1808, p.892.

⁶¹ *An Impartial Collection of the Addresses, Songs, Squibs...* (1806), 14; *Cowdroy’s* 17 November 1806.

Significantly, some of the anti-Roscoe squibs were placed in terms of loyalty; a call to support Gascoyne to repeal the African bill promised “the victory of loyalty (over disloyalty and those who wish to triumph over His Majesty’s Crown and Dignity).”⁶² ‘The True Meaning of Certain Phrases Used at Elections’ was a revealing electoral squib produced by the pro-Generals camp in 1807 and equally important was its pro-Roscoe retort. Both expounded in imitation of a dictionary the respective meanings which were attributed to common tropes. These included: ‘No Popery,’ ‘Down with the Rump’ and ‘loyalty to the King.’ The pro-Generals’ squib stressed how each entailed loyalty to an unreformed Anglican Hanoverian state; the pro-Roscoe squib focused on religious liberty and purging of parliamentary corruption to guarantee the stability of the constitution. Although the squibs’ highly exaggerated language was probably too extreme even for its writers’ beliefs, they demonstrated how the subversion and manipulation of meanings in political rhetoric was a live issue.

Crowds and protest

Many of the general population resident in and around towns manipulated public and civic space in similar ways to the loyalist elites and radical bourgeois intellectuals. This formed another challenge to the meaning of ‘loyalism.’ The means and locations of action were different, often owing to the larger numbers involved and the wider spectrum of views incorporated within the ‘crowd.’ Crowd action was a vital counterpart to radical activists’ intervention in loyalist meeting space and decisions. The general population demonstrated that they were not the passive recipients of loyalist elite display, but often subtle negotiators in the process. This renewed confidence in popular action

⁶² *An Impartial Collection*, 6.

from 1807 fostered the atmosphere for a wider acceptance of views on peace and reform and created the patterns of protest which captured the nation in the postwar period leading to Peterloo.

Harrison has surveyed patterns of protest in towns and their implications in this period. Some of his examples and methodology however are problematic. He argues that Liverpool was essentially different from Manchester in local government and public life; it was therefore “not dominated by industrial dispute or reform or by electioneering.”⁶³ The history of crowd events in Liverpool during the wars contradicts Harrison’s claim on all three counts. Shipwrights regularly went on strike, the reform movement was kept alive to a much more vocal extent than in Manchester through the efforts of Roscoe’s circle, and electioneering was central to Liverpool’s popular politics and identity. Harrison’s analysis of the frequency and organisation of crowds is also inconsistent for this period. For example, he records only thirty-five crowds assembling in Manchester between 1790 and 1835, stating that none of these was a ‘conservative’ meeting or procession.⁶⁴ The infamous Church-and-King riot in St. Ann’s Square in 1792 or the Jubilee celebrations of 1809 amongst other loyalist-organised events renders this analysis questionable. There were many popular meetings to draw up loyalist and patriotic addresses.⁶⁵ He comments somewhat vaguely about Liverpool: “Further research would probably show greater riotous and recreational crowd activity, but the general picture is of a town with clearly defined and institutionalised mass phenomena, usually (with the exception of elections) taking place outside worktime.”⁶⁶ The frequency of anti-

⁶³ Harrison, *Crowds and History*, p.101.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.132-4.

⁶⁵ See chapter 5, part I.

⁶⁶ Harrison, *Crowds and History*, p.136.

impressment riots in Liverpool in itself demonstrates 'greater riotous crowd activity' during worktime.⁶⁷

Meetings and gatherings on the streets cannot be classified too strictly as loyalist or radical. Hostile contemporaries often referred to 'mobs,' but both 'mobs' and 'crowds' were not homogeneous, spontaneous or mindless. Most crowds had a discriminating purpose, even amongst those whose actions appeared to be unplanned.⁶⁸ It is clear that crowds were composed of regular activists and the 'general population' who took part according to various levels of commitment to a cause. Activists often contained certain trade groups disposed to action such as miners, youths or unionised textile workers, joined at the peak in protest waves by other groups of individuals with different motives for action, who were more likely to become disillusioned or inactive when faced with repression or lack of success.⁶⁹

Attendees at both loyalist and radical meetings could always have the propensity to subvert their meaning, although not being able to do so visually until after 1806. Edwards has identified the "complex symbolic and discursive process whereby both radical and loyal meanings were read into ritual that was outwardly loyal or consensual."⁷⁰ Hence effigy burnings were underpinned by the suggestion of popular violence: the authorities in the 1790s had been fearful of the 'mob' they manipulated turning against them. This fear re-emerged in the *levée en masse* of volunteers in 1803-5 and gradually proved itself in the subversion of ritual and the challenges over control of place. This

⁶⁷ PRO: PL 27/8; J. Belchem, *Popular Politics, Riot and Labour: Essays in Liverpool History, 1790-1840* (Liverpool, 1992).

⁶⁸ G. Rudé, *The Crowd in History, a Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (rev. ed., 1995), p.247.

⁶⁹ S. Tarrow, 'Cycles of Collective Action,' in M. Traugott, ed., *Repertoires and Cycles of Collective Action* (1995), p.93; Rudé, *The Crowd in History*, p.238.

⁷⁰ Edwards, 'Popular Politics,' p.126.

also formed an appropriation of space through assembling during worktime. The general population, especially factory workers, used the same streets as the merchants and local elites, but for different functions and at different times. Protests undermined the social segregation enforced by working hours and activities. The “self-confident solidarity of Georgian squares” during the day and in elite-organised ceremonies became “shaky when repeatedly occupied by shabbier but sober political aspirants.”⁷¹

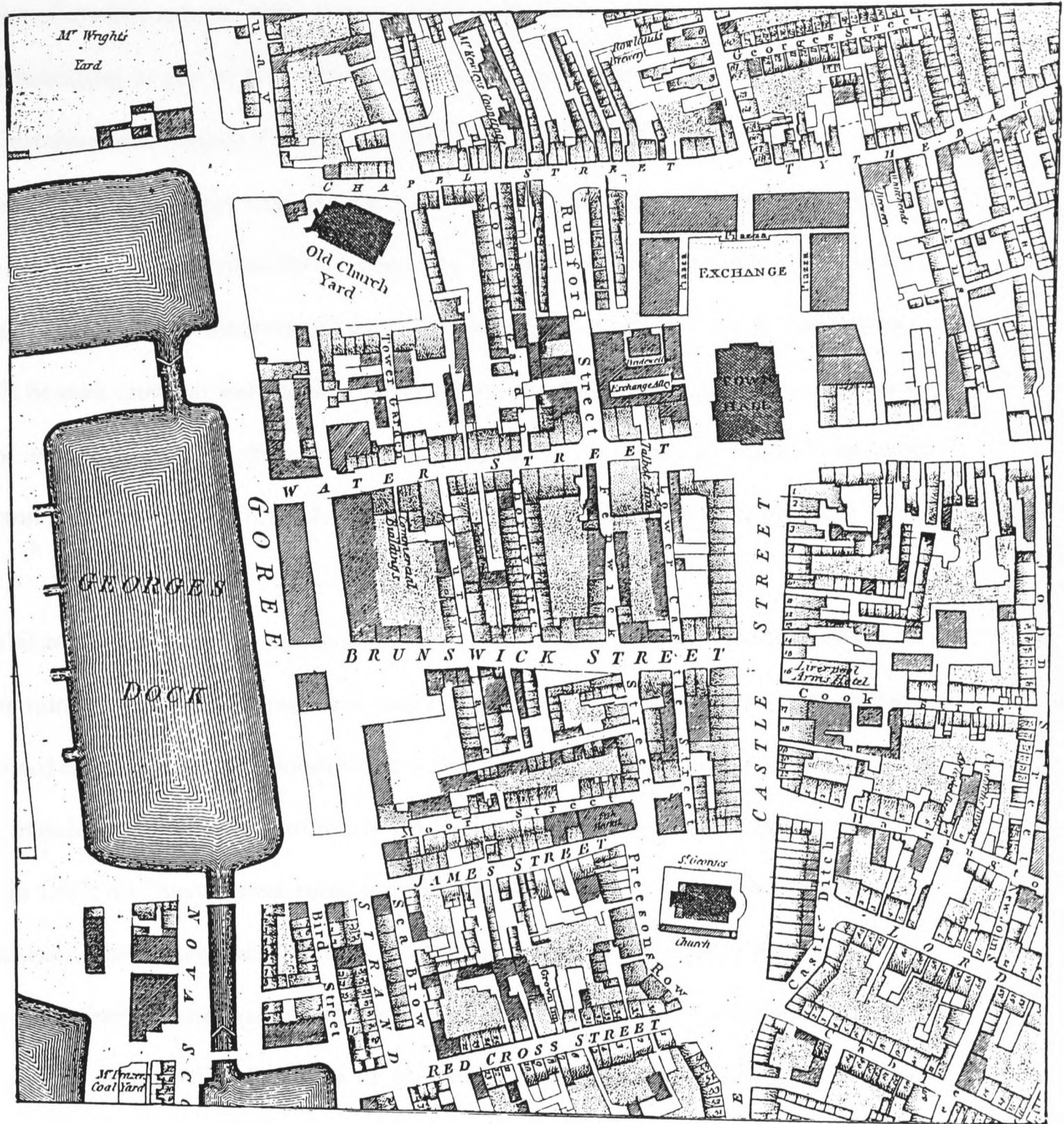
The Lancashire boroughs, particularly Preston and Liverpool, experienced electoral contests represented symbolically and literally in battles of authority over streets and public space. The processions through the streets were as important as the imagery in the banners, coloured ribbons and songs and the political discourse in the squibs. Voters, agents and committees controlled access to the town and its streets; it was the responsibility of the election committees to maintain law and order, although this task was often unattainable.⁷² At the contested election in Liverpool in 1806, a procession commenced from the head of Castle Street, which Roscoe stated “considerably exceeded 10,000.” It descended into a riot between the supporters of the Generals and those of Roscoe.⁷³ When Roscoe returned to Liverpool in 1807, the ensuing riot was so tumultuous that it convinced him to stand down from re-election. It again took place in Castle Street, the main street in the heart of the old town and Corporation property between the Exchange and St. George’s Church.⁷⁴

⁷¹ R. Dennis, ‘The Social Geography of Towns and Cities, 1730-1914,’ in R. Dodgshon and R.A. Butlin, eds., *A Historical Geography of England and Wales* (2nd ed., 1990), p.437; see chapter 3, p.65.

⁷² F. O’Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Politics: the Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England* (Oxford, 1989), p.255.

⁷³ *History of the Election... 1806*, pp.20, 29.

⁷⁴ *Cowdroy’s*, 9 May 1807.



Map 4: Castle Street and Exchange, Liverpool.

Source: map of Liverpool, c.1805.

The elections involved national issues relevant to local concerns on a very visual level to appeal to illiterate non-voters as well as the electorate. During the 1807 Liverpool election, Cowdroy reported: “two Negro children were seen carried about the streets by a party belonging to one of the Military candidates, accompanied by a standard on which was inscribed ‘the African Trade restored!!!’”⁷⁵ A pro-Henry Brougham account of the election of 1812 was eager to emphasise the change in political situation with reference to the urban scene. It described his entrance into the town, emphasising support from the bourgeois areas: “The windows of Mount Pleasant, Ranelagh St, Church St, Lord St and Castle St were crowded with fair and lovely advocates of peace and liberty.”⁷⁶ This was a route which cut through the city from the entry in the gentrified outskirts down past Clayton Square, St. Peter’s Church and towards the Exchange and the old town.⁷⁷

Inhabitants were well aware of the importance of manifesting on the streets of towns in sheer numbers, being well practised during food riots and strikes. The same pattern occurred three times by handloom weavers demonstrating in support of Joseph Hanson. The *Manchester Chronicle* reported that when Hanson left Preston after his failure to win a seat in 1807, his “horses were taken from his carriage by a vast concourse of people, of both sexes, who accompanied him beyond Walton,”⁷⁸ a distance of about three miles. On his release from Chester gaol on 15 November 1809, according to Rowbottom, Hanson was met by weavers “a mile before he reached Macclesfield” and all along the route to Manchester. His horses were released from his carriage at Stockport, which was then carried along the road by the crowd, a distance of about six miles. Significantly, Rowbottom noted, however, that he travelled ‘privately’ through Manchester to his

⁷⁵ *Cowdroy’s*, 16 May 1807.

⁷⁶ *An Account of the Election of 1812* (Liverpool, 1812), p.13.

⁷⁷ See Appendix IV:viii for map of Liverpool.

⁷⁸ *MC*, 23 May 1807.

residence Strangeways Hall because: “he was afraid of his Enemies raising a Riot and the consequence Being charged to Mr. Hanson’s friends.”⁷⁹ This indicates the huge impact of crowds subverting authority which was still possible in most towns in the region. Nevertheless, the streets of Hanson’s funeral procession in 1811 were again apparently lined with weavers. The loyalist elites who had opposed him presumably could do little to prevent this public display of solidarity and occupation of space.

Martyrs were another focus of identity and each trade ensured that its martyrs were celebrated publicly with much show: during the 1808 weavers’ strike in Stockport, sixty weavers were brought into custody on 14 June. The prosecution claimed: “The Prisoners were considered champions of the cause and were hailed as such. An assembly took place of such as appeared desirous of being made prisoners.”⁸⁰ On 19 September 1809, two Oldham hatters were freed from the Salford New Bailey after being imprisoned for remonstrating about the employment of women, a common complaint among unionised journeymen. Rowbottom reported that they returned “in a chaise [and] when the[y] arrived at Coppice Nook the hatters took the horses out of the carriage and drew them in great triumph through every publick place in Oldham.”⁸¹ Again the emphasis was on the reappropriation of space and forms of civic ritual.

Larger non-urban spaces gained symbolism among protestors or their loyalist meanings were reversed. The weavers’ meetings on 24 and 25 May 1808 were held on St. George’s Fields in Manchester. The gatherings attracted ‘ten to fifteen thousand’ calling for minimum wage legislation.⁸² They formed precursors to Peterloo not just because the

⁷⁹ Rowbottom diary

⁸⁰ PRO: TS 11/836, Chester Assizes, September 1808.

⁸¹ Rowbottom diaries.

⁸² Ibid.

cavalry were sent in to disperse the crowds but also by the choice of place by the participants. The Manchester weavers' committee may have made a conscious decision to hold the meetings there. It appears that the fields had not been used for meetings or demonstrations before. The weavers discovered the potential of assembling in great numbers not on the streets but in a large space they could claim symbolically as their own and use as a meeting place. Significantly, St. George's Fields was not in the centre of town but off Newton Lane, opposite the newly laid out streets of workers' houses of Ancoats.⁸³ They were easily accessible for weavers from north Manchester and the neighbouring villages. On the other hand, the weavers and others who lived in Chorlton Row and south Manchester would have had to cross the town to get there. This crossing of districts may have had visual and psychological consequences for both weavers and middle classes who witnessed them passing their houses and workplaces.

The challenge to loyalist authority at the Manchester Exchange Riot of 8 April 1812 was translated into a conflict over place. Place was not just incidental to the political purposes of the challenge to the loyalist elites: it was recognised at the time as integral to the meaning of the protest. The riot witnessed the protestors' appropriation of the commercial civic centre of the new Exchange and the loyalist parade ground of St. Ann's Square. This was deliberate. On 6 May 1812, Richard Wood, boroughreeve of Manchester, received a threatening letter from 'Thomas Paine' alleging his actions had led to the riot. It stated that instead of cancelling the loyalist meeting: "You might have adjourned to the Square called St. Anns or to a field."⁸⁴ The riot was a result of sheer numbers out of the control of the new radical committees. It was not a minor incident but escalated over the day. According to R.H. Whitelock at the Post Office, the crowds

⁸³ See Appendix IV:vii.

⁸⁴ K. Binfield, ed., *Writings of the Luddites* (Baltimore, 2004), p.184.

assembled at ten o'clock in the morning, taking possession of the Exchange for two hours until they "began to riot." Agitation outside the building apparently lasted until one o'clock, when the windows were smashed and the most violent entered the building and destroyed its furniture.⁸⁵

The symbolism encapsulated in action during the Exchange Riot was long-lasting in popular memory. The new postwar radicals furthermore exploited the creation of a new narrative of symbolism in place. The Exchange was crucially commemorated in mass platform radicalism as the beginning of the new movement: in a procession of 18 January 1819, 'Orator' Henry Hunt deliberately paused outside the Exchange to harangue the loyalist gentlemen inside.⁸⁶ The new generation of local radicals nevertheless made a conscious effort to move away from the old tactics of subversion of meaning of loyalist space. The Exchange remained as a symbolic reminder of what wartime radicals had attempted to achieve but the new leaders no longer purposely intervened in loyalist space. They henceforward employed a process of infusing new, untouched places with radical significance. Having experienced no previous political events, St. Peter's Fields and New Cross were adopted by the postwar radicals as central locations alternative to St. Ann's Square. The shift from St. George's Fields reflected the pattern of growth of the town southwards from St George's Road (near Ancoats) to St Peter's (towards Chorlton). The first radical meeting was organised on St. Peter's Fields on 4 November 1816.⁸⁷

The key radical-loyalist battles of the 1790s do not appear to have been commemorated or mythologised in the 1800s. They may not have been able to do so because of the

⁸⁵ HO 42/122/529, Whitelock to Ryder, 8 April 1812.

⁸⁶ Edwards, 'Popular Protest,' p.165.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp.164-6.

loyalist control of ritual or did so in private. Yet none of the toasts or rhetoric during radical dinners or meetings from 1808 mentioned such definitive incidents as the attack on the *Manchester Herald* or the 1795 petition against the Two Acts. Nor did the writings of later radicals concentrate on the significance of these wartime struggles. The surviving scrapbooks compiled by postwar radical leaders charted only recent radical events from 1809 in shaping and affirming their radical identity.⁸⁸ Archibald Prentice did summarise the conflicts in 1790s Manchester in his *Personal Recollections*, but only as a historical prelude to the efforts of his own generation and the role of 1815 in shaping post-war radical sentiment.⁸⁹ This perhaps indicated the new generation of radicals' desire for a clear break from the difficulties of co-ordination their predecessors experienced during the war. They had different priorities and sense of history from the radicals of the 1790s. The Mancunocentric nature of the surviving evidence about radical events is also attributable to this bias, with most postwar radical organisation in the region dependent upon the town. Hence there remains no indication of radical events in for example Preston or Ulverston, though the presence of radicals there, active or not, cannot be discounted.

This absence of evidence is similarly apparent with weavers and the rest of the general population. Epstein has pointed out how: "The weavers and spinners who marched on Manchester on 16 August 1819 mobilised behind a medley of libertarian symbols that they had made compatible with the language and rituals of popular constitutionalism."⁹⁰ These must have had precedents before 1815. Banners did exist for friendly societies,

⁸⁸ MCL: BR f 942.7389 Sc 13, Scrapbook 1808-24; BR f.324.942733 S3 and Sh1, Shuttleworth Scrapbook; see chapter 7, p.277.

⁸⁹ A. Prentice, *Historical Sketches and Personal Recollections of Manchester* (2nd ed., 1851).

⁹⁰ Epstein, 'Understanding the Cap of Liberty,' 93.

richly detailed with symbol and allegory,⁹¹ but nothing similar appeared in accounts of the mass meetings for peace and reform. It must be assumed that the atmosphere of suspicion and repression was still believed to be too tense to risk visual representations of political principles which would break anonymity.

Patterns of Protest in 'neighbourhood'

Only Manchester and Liverpool could provide alternative spaces in the expanding centres of the towns in this period. Elsewhere, challenges to loyalist space were not and could not be restricted to town centres. Greater numbers required larger spaces not in immediate control of magistrates and manufacturers. This was especially the case in smaller towns, where civic spaces were small and located with all the other public buildings, private residences and shops on one or two main streets. In the 'neighbourhood' most protests were led by radical artisans and weavers rather than middle-class intellectuals. The use of place in protest therefore differed according to the environment and aims of the protestors.

Historians have suggested that the period 1760-1830 marked the transition between ill-connected, localised protest and the emergence of national, ideological movements. Tilly argued that eighteenth century protests were limited in scope because of certain characteristics which localised their effectiveness. For a protest to be 'modern' in his view, it had to have an "orientation to the seats of public power and ostentatious display of numbers and determination."⁹² Rogers follows this argument by emphasising the Queen Caroline affair as a "turning point in popular political contention in which crowd

⁹¹ LCRO: DDP 138/76, Preston Scrapbook.

⁹² C. Tilly, 'Britain Creates the Social Movement,' in J.E. Cronin and J. Schneer, eds., *Social Conflict and the Political Order in Modern Britain* (1982), p.30.

action is reconfigured within a more complex repertoire of collective action.”⁹³ The campaign against the Corn Laws perhaps was an earlier example of this pattern.

This emphasis on a progression or change in the means and spread of protest contrasts however with other historians’ focus on the continuities of popular radicalism from 1760 to 1848 through the language of popular constitutionalism.⁹⁴ Various methods of action as well as tropes and ideas were drawn from a rich and continuous tradition. The general population still had recourse to this tradition and used whatever was appropriate just as the radical language was utilised from an extensive lexicon depending upon circumstances. The majority of protests during the French Wars displayed all Tilly’s pre-modern characteristics and did not lose them in the mass platform era or even during Chartism. Neither were the previous forms of protest ‘old-fashioned,’ less meaningful or disorganised because they did not approach Parliament directly. Food riots after 1800 were not replaced by, or as Booth has contended, forced to merge with, more ‘political’ means of protest such as machine-breaking or petitioning. They continued in parallel, with their own specific objectives usually divorced from radicalism, although they did die out as a ubiquitous method of protest by the 1820s.⁹⁵ Eighteenth century protest on the other hand had always had a link with the national political sphere in shared belief in the ‘constitutional right’ of addressing the King and Parliament through a trusted intermediary. This very much remained the case throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, interpreted in particular ways according to local disputes and grievances.⁹⁶

⁹³ Rogers, *Crowds, Culture and Politics*, p.19.

⁹⁴ J. Vernon, *Re-Reading the Constitution: New Narratives in the Political History of England’s Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1996).

⁹⁵ J.E. Archer, *Social Unrest and Popular Protest in England, 1780-1840* (Cambridge, 2000), p.40; A. Booth, ‘Food Riots in the North-West of England, 1790-1801,’ *P & P*, 77 (1977), 84-107.

⁹⁶ See chapter 6.

The key tactic for weavers and other workers was an initial assembly on the moor prior to descending into the town and parading the streets. Vernon has discussed the significance of radical meetings on the moors around Oldham after 1815, arguing that the surroundings were essential in the transmission of a collective identity and thereby a shared ideology of class.⁹⁷ The use of the geographical setting as a weapon against the forces of order, both physically and symbolically, was not an innovation of postwar radicalism but had a much longer legacy. During the French Wars, many of the large meetings for peace or reform occurred on prominent hills or moors overlooking the manufacturing towns. Hills and fields outside a town also often featured in reports of raids on provision warehouses and markets and in Luddite disturbances. The use of landscape may not have diffused a common class identity, but it was clearly an important weapon against loyalist elites.

The connotations of this use of geography worked on many levels. It was primarily a result of magistrate and clerical control over the towns. Whatever the circumstances or aims of the organisers or attendees, the effect was to create an inclusive environment physically and symbolically out of the control of the local forces of order. Hills crucially maintained anonymity in the crowd and distance from centres of population or justice, while simultaneously being deliberately visible and intimidating to the towns below. An added symbolic element of meeting on common land or occupying of enclosure-threatened land may also have played a role in the choice of place. The situations were accessible for large numbers of inhabitants of semi-rural or industrialising villages in the increasingly important outlying 'neighbourhood.' A sense of owning geographical space

⁹⁷ Vernon, *Politics and the People*, pp.208-13.

against the confines of loyalists and magistrates was an underlying characteristic of peace and reform meetings and strikes. They created a deliberate visual effect: when Rev Hay arrived at Buckton Castle in May 1801, he “there found a considerable assemblage of people in waiting and saw others in very large groups on the adjoining hills.”⁹⁸ Mass meetings involving the general population provided a visual contrast to secret United Englishmen meetings. Held during the day, magistrates, participants from other places and non-participants were intended to see them. Cowdroy estimated 10,000 attended the peace meeting on Tandle Hill on 5 April 1801; even Colonel Fletcher intimated: “the different persons who visited the ground during the course of the day might possibly be fourteen thousand.”⁹⁹ This must have created a huge visual impact that could be seen from Royton, Oldham Edge, Middleton and Rochdale.¹⁰⁰

Food riots had long demonstrated a combination of action with geography. The ‘mob’ similarly often assembled in fields or hills surrounding a town. They then followed the main road towards the market, often attacking badgers or other food carters en route, or the houses and warehouses of merchants, forestallers or manufacturers nearer the town. Rowbottom described the workings of the moral economy in Oldham food riots in late October 1799, where a “large mob of people from Saddleworth and the Neighbourhood of Oldham” firstly descended into Oldham to the marketplace, giving the dealers three days’ notice to lower prices. They assembled again “according to their promise,” not in the town but on the New Road leading to Ripponden, taking possession of the meal before it got to Oldham market and selling it at what they regarded as a fair price.¹⁰¹ The rioters were therefore well aware of the routes of supply and market networks. Oldham

⁹⁸ HO 42/62/11, Hay to Portland, 4 May 1801.

⁹⁹ *Cowdroy’s*, 18 April 1801; HO 42/61/459, Fletcher to Portland, 6 April 1801.

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix IV:ii, map of Tandle Hill.

¹⁰¹ Rowbottom diaries.

Edge was a convenient, highly visible and symbolic place for radicals, peace petitioners and striking weavers who all met there at various points during the war.

Similar patterns of protest were used in most Pennine towns by food rioters, striking weavers, spinners and Luddites.¹⁰² During a food riot in May 1808, the *Blackburn Mail* reported that Blackburn was “thrown into great alarm by seeing a crowd of people assemble on a hill near Grimshaw Park” (the residence of merchant Nicholas Grimshaw, off the southern turnpike). The aggrieved thus used the neighbourhood as a visible threat. They descended into the town and significantly gained control when they “paraded the streets for about an hour.”¹⁰³ In 1810, the magistrate Henry Fielden noted that striking cotton spinners “assembled on one of the hills that surround the Town and endeavoured by repeated shouts to increase the numbers.” Significantly, he believed that this “was the method adopted by the Rioters here in May 1808.”¹⁰⁴ In Stockport, Lancashire or Manchester Hill to the north of the town gained a specific symbolic role in protest. Each day during the strike of May-June 1808, the weavers allegedly moved as a body south from the working-class area of Edgeley to assemble on the hill, “joined by great bodies of weavers from the country.” On 23 May the strikers with a “Standard displayed” moved down from the hill towards Stockport and were met by the magistrates in the marketplace. Its notoriety was sealed when the bourgeois radical William Dawson addressed the weavers on the hill on 25 May and was consequently arrested there.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² See also Rowbottom diaries and PL 27/7, Ashton-under-Lyne, 3 February 1800, 20 May 1800; HO 42/61/216, Bury, March 1801; Holden diaries, Bolton, 21 April 1812;

¹⁰³ *BM*, 1 June 1808; see also *BM*, 24 September 1800; G.C. Miller, *Blackburn; The Evolution of a Cotton Town* (Blackburn, 1951), p.189.

¹⁰⁴ HO 42/108/243, Fielden to Home Office, 23 August 1810.

¹⁰⁵ See chapter 7, p.253.

Cheadle Heath, a couple of miles south-west of the town, then became a favoured site of assembly prior to action both in June 1808 and in the Luddite disturbances of 1812.¹⁰⁶

The district around the river Tame was one of the most animated in the region from the 1790s to the postwar period. One reason was its unique situation on the Pennine borders of Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and the West Riding. On 20 May 1812, Rev Hay recorded that a “very riotous mob assembled from various parts of the country at Ashton-under-Lyne.” They broke into provision warehouses and shops “throughout the town,” redistributed the spoils at what they considered a fair price, then “proceeded into Cheshire, thro’ Dukinfield, where I am informed they continued the same sort of outrage.”¹⁰⁷ The participants were well aware that they were acting within a physical sphere of ambiguous jurisdiction, where county borders merged in the hills and magistrates had relatively far to travel from different towns. It seems they knew the routes well. Another report by the militia captain George Hadfield of Stockport stated that the Ashton rioters also invaded Mottram and that “having traversed the county in every direction unopposed by Civil or Military authority,” engaged in “breaking such part of the Machinery in different Factories as is most obnoxious to them.”¹⁰⁸

The disturbances demonstrated the struggling control the magistrates had on the general population’s awareness of the non-urban environment. Rev Hay had previously mistaken turf-stacks on Ashton Moss for United Englishmen in 1801, as parodied in Robert Walker’s *Plebeian Politics*.¹⁰⁹ Captain Hadfield lamented during the Luddite disturbances: “There is only one magistrate within a distance of twenty miles and he is twelve miles

¹⁰⁶ PRO: CHES 24/183; MM 21 April 1812.

¹⁰⁷ HO 42/122/22, Hay to Beckett, 21 April 1812; See Appendix IV:x.

¹⁰⁸ HO 42/122/546, Hadfield to Beckett, 24 April 1812.

¹⁰⁹ R. Walker, *Plebeian Politics* (Salford, 1801), pp.46-7; See chapter 5, part II.

from us and in another County.”¹¹⁰ It appeared relatively easy to evade arrest by slipping over the border into another county. Ashton Moss and the moorland areas of Ridgehill, Urzley, Hartshead and Crossbank were the scene of nightly Luddite meetings; while the roads and turnpikes over Harthead and by Mossley and Lees which connected the parish of Ashton with Yorkshire and Cheshire were allegedly patrolled by bands of Luddites. Captain Raines recalled that one of his companies headed to Wednescough Green, often called ‘Mottram Moor,’ where several Luddite drillings took place.¹¹¹ Rev Hay reported the difficulties the magistrates and cavalry had in tackling the crowds’ use of their environment. He wrote about the Buckton Castle meeting: “I think it was nearly two hours before we succeeded in clearing the Hills immediately round and the people were no sooner driven from one than they took station on another hill and seemed to hold us at defiance.” Magistrates may have exaggerated the problems of counteracting moorland meetings because they were outside their sphere of knowledge or authority. The attendees were certainly acutely familiar with their surroundings and how to use them against the magistrates, who were either apparently less topographically aware or simply overwhelmed by the numbers. All Hay could do was “to order three or four shots to be fired after different people with a view to prevent them from getting from one Hill to another.”¹¹² In part, this was a deliberate attempt to evade the serious prospect of arrest; hence the radical meeting on Rivington Pike overlooking Horwich in May 1801 was chosen because “there was a place behind the Pike where the Horse could not travel.”¹¹³ In April 1812, Macclesfield Luddites and food rioters conceived that they were “inaccessible to the cavalry” when they made a stand in a tract of waste land used as the town’s rubbish heap. Participants thus consciously articulated both urban and rural

¹¹⁰ HO 42/122/546, Hadfield to Beckett, 24 April 1812.

¹¹¹ Bowman, *England in Ashton-under-Lyne*, pp.437-8.

¹¹² HO 42/62/11, Hay to Portland, 4 May 1801.

¹¹³ R. Wells, *Insurrection, The British Experience, 1795-1803* (Gloucester, 1983), p.216.

environments in defence against their opponents. The crowd returned to the market place and the cavalry were ordered to 'clean' the streets. The "rioters clung to the walls and took refuge in the numerous alleys, throwing stones and bricks...reduced in their last stand in the Old Church yard – the key of the great gates being procured, they dispersed with precipitation."¹¹⁴ Crowds challenged the segregation in place that had been enforced on them by working hours and the building of civic or loyalist space during the wars.

Another less tangible reason for the preponderance of disturbances in the Tame area was the protection offered by the landscape. The Pennine villages and towns provided a psychological environment for protestors and strikers as well as a physical one of control and secrecy. The neighbourhood 'community' may have had particularly strong bonds within south east Lancashire and influenced in part the geography of the outbreaks. The radical meeting atop Buckton Castle Hill on 3 May 1801 was exemplary of a selectively chosen location which crossed local boundaries and was thus crucially jurisdictionally ambiguous. Rochdale magistrate John Entwisle described the place as "a situation very high and where the counties of Lancaster, York, Chester and Derby nearly meets [*sic*]."¹¹⁵ Attendees reflected a wider regional identity that did not heed administrative boundaries; the magistrates "found at Buckton Castle people from Manchester which is a distance of twelve miles and from Stockport which is nine."¹¹⁶ These were most likely well-informed radicals, but the neighbouring semi-rural Pennine communities were not neglected: the magistrates heard a horn for two hours in different parts of Saddleworth, allegedly "sounded for the purpose of calling the people together." The location of the meeting

¹¹⁴ *MM*, 21 April 1812.

¹¹⁵ HO 42/62/15, Entwisle to Portland, 11 May 1801.

¹¹⁶ HO 42/62/11, Hay to Portland, 4 May 1801.

had been moved to Buckton Castle Hill because the Volunteers had already been raised to guard Tandle Hill.¹¹⁷

Visual communication between the hills and neighbourhood was also a tactic and reflected the spread of ideas about regional capability. Major F.R. Yates wrote on 4 May 1812 of rumours of the intended 'general Rising.' He claimed that: "Sky Rockets had been observed thrown up from Stockport for some nights preceding but that night a blue light of a circular form was seen and it is conjectured that was a signal not to rise."¹¹⁸ He surmised that the rising had been delayed by the arrival of the military, but his irrational belief in the mythology and rumours is also indicative of the general millenarian mood of mystery.¹¹⁹ Significantly, the magistrates and military also subscribed to the idea of mysterious signals on the hills. Apparently in response, the military installed: "Two pieces of Cannon and signal stations erected on the most prominent places to communicate thro' the principal towns in case of disturbances a signal pole set upon the Old Church Steeple to communicate with another at Stand in Pilkington and that to communicate with Kersley Moor, Heap, Middleton, Rochdale."¹²⁰ These communication points on the Pennine foothills across the region to the north of Manchester demonstrated the integral role of hills to the networks of the Luddites and previous working-class and radical protests in the region. The setting-up of these signal-stations suggests that the national forces of order were attempting to gain control of the geographical and psychological domain of the Luddites and general population in a way that the magistrates attacking turf-stacks could not.

¹¹⁷ HO 42/62/7, Gore to Portland, 3 May 1801.

¹¹⁸ LCRO: DDX 398/123, Palmer papers, Major Yates to 'lord,' 4 May 1812.

¹¹⁹ E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1991).

¹²⁰ Holden diaries.

Urban and rural landscapes were therefore crucial weapons in popular protest and politics in this period. The range and scope of loyalism had widened with more opportunity to debate the concept after 1806; the general population used the environment combined with discourse to challenge the domination of the Church-and-King local elites over loyalism. The middle classes in large towns and the general population in their 'neighbourhood' responded to changes in their environment. They symbolised buildings and employed knowledge of neighbourhood geography against their opponents. Popular protests could thus be both community-based and regionally and nationally aware. On the whole, the crowd was aware of the symbolism of its actions when it challenged the right of local elites to the loyalism and identity of the town to the wider nation. Mass meetings and strikes in the 'neighbourhood' of towns were more accessible and entailed the forces of order having to enter into their opponents' sphere of authority with uncertainty. Geography helped to redefine loyalism and radicalism in collective action.

CONCLUSION

The Napoleonic War was a formative period for popular politics and the industrialising economy in Lancashire. Local and national events during 1798-1812 built the foundations for the postwar working-class struggle for suffrage and the middle-class campaign for free trade. These developments engendered a distinctive identity upon the region. Lancashire responded to the strains of the wars and new political ideologies by redefining loyalism, radicalism and national identity in its own image.

Lancashire was not homogeneous in its economic or political composition and development. Political radicalism and trade union activity (although ambiguous in connection) predominated in the south east and larger towns of central Lancashire. They were sustained beyond physical capabilities through a shared narrative of geographical identity. The spread of Orangeism in these same districts was a response to Irish immigration and longer traditions of virulent anti-Catholicism that were not evident in the north and west of Lancashire. Despite its increasing economic importance for the rest of the region, Liverpool remained relatively unique economically and politically. Its international outlook and identity meant that electoral politics, economic campaigns and radicalism operated separately from elsewhere.

These processes of political and economic change were never uncontested. They were created through resistance and opposition. Luddism must be regarded not as reactionary but rather as part of this process of questioning of who had the right to represent the region's economic and political identity to the wider nation and parliament – as did

unionised negotiation, loyalist challenges to radicalism and the radical renewal of confidence to counteract these challenges from 1806. All were redefined in their respective conflicts. The use of geographical identity and physical landscape was a key tool. It enforced authority and power over political concepts and authority but could also be used to subvert them.

Historians who use local examples to support a national thesis must always take regional contexts into account. Intra-regional variations and a strong sense of provincialism had a bearing on the region's relationship with national patterns of politics. The Orange movement was unique to Lancashire, Cheshire, Cumbria and south west Scotland and hence has been neglected in the history of loyalism as a whole. The peace and reform campaigns did not gain popularity as rapidly or easily as in Yorkshire, where a Whig magistracy and Wyvillite tradition perhaps were more sympathetic or acquiescent than the Tory High Church forces of order in Lancashire. Burdettite radicalism and the Westminster elections were inspirational for provincial radicals, but new leaders of the postwar movements consciously maintained their own identities and the timing of political conflicts depended upon local conditions combined with national events. Indeed, Lancashire radicalism contained more Paineite elements and a wider knowledge of political economy than movements elsewhere. The strong economic identity of Lancashire also had a bearing upon loyalist and middle class identities. The successful campaigns against the Orders in Council and the monopoly of the East India Company demonstrated this commercial mentality and a sense of provincial independence from government. Petitions were shaped by regional economic needs and identity and portrayed a Britain conducting foreign relations upon commercial lines as the 'emporium

of the world,' obviously with Lancashire at its centre.¹ A distinctive 'Lancashire Britishness' was the result.

Britishness was not a unitary phenomenon in this period in response to the French invasion threat. It was an identity that had multiple variations. Indeed, it was only successfully disseminated as a popular identity after it was moulded to different identities and allegiances. Surveys of the formation of Britain as an 'imagined community'² must take this heterogeneity and the different methods of identity diffusion into account. Britain was and remains a nation of composite allegiances and politics, tensely held together by a central government and national economy, with provincial influences and demands continually restraining or altering the impact of the centre.

This study of the Lancashire region cannot exist on its own. It forms only one part of what should be a network of interconnected studies. Patterns of social, economic and political development identified in Lancashire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries need to be compared with those in other regions. The region is a living geographical unit, constantly changing in response to its multifarious connections with other regions and the nation as a whole. Marshall argued for inter-regional and intra-regional comparisons together with studies of contemporary perceptions of regions.³ This approach would generate a new 'national' study, in which the history of the nation is analysed from the region upwards, rather than, as is usually the case, the state and high

¹ W. Roscoe, *Considerations on the Causes, Objects and Consequences of the Present War* (1808), p.134.

² B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983); see D. Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester, 2004) and M. Billinge, *Geographies of England: The North-South Divide, Material and Imagined* (Cambridge, 2004).

³ J.D. Marshall, *The Tyranny of the Discrete: a Discussion of the Problems of Local History in England* (Aldershot, 1997).

politics downwards.⁴ It would indicate whether there was a shared northern or indeed provincial identity against the edicts and identity propagated by government or the metropolis, whilst keeping examples within their context and recognising the distinctiveness of local and regional allegiances within that wider provinciality.

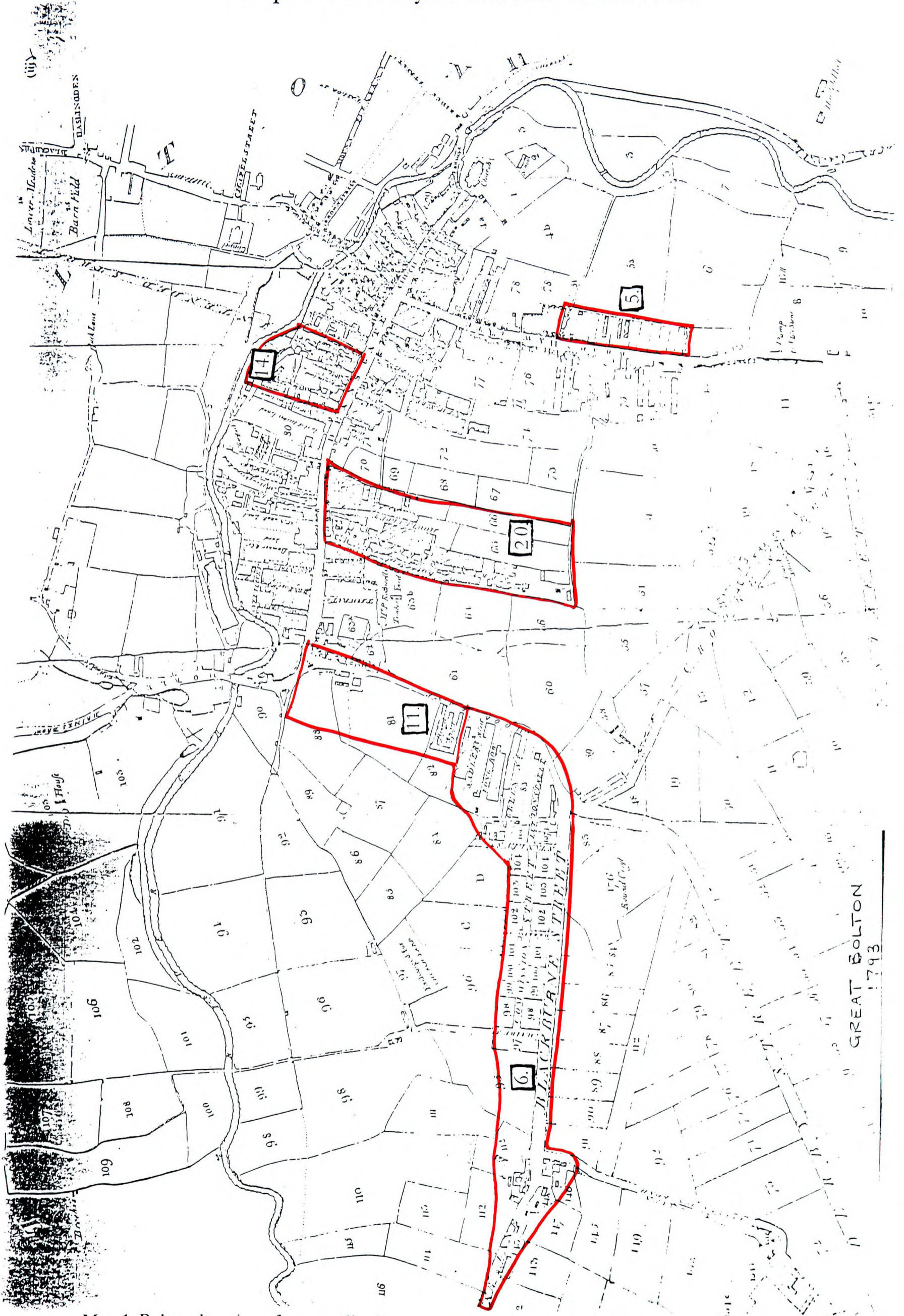
⁴ P. Clark has attempted this approach to some extent in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, vol 2: 1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000).

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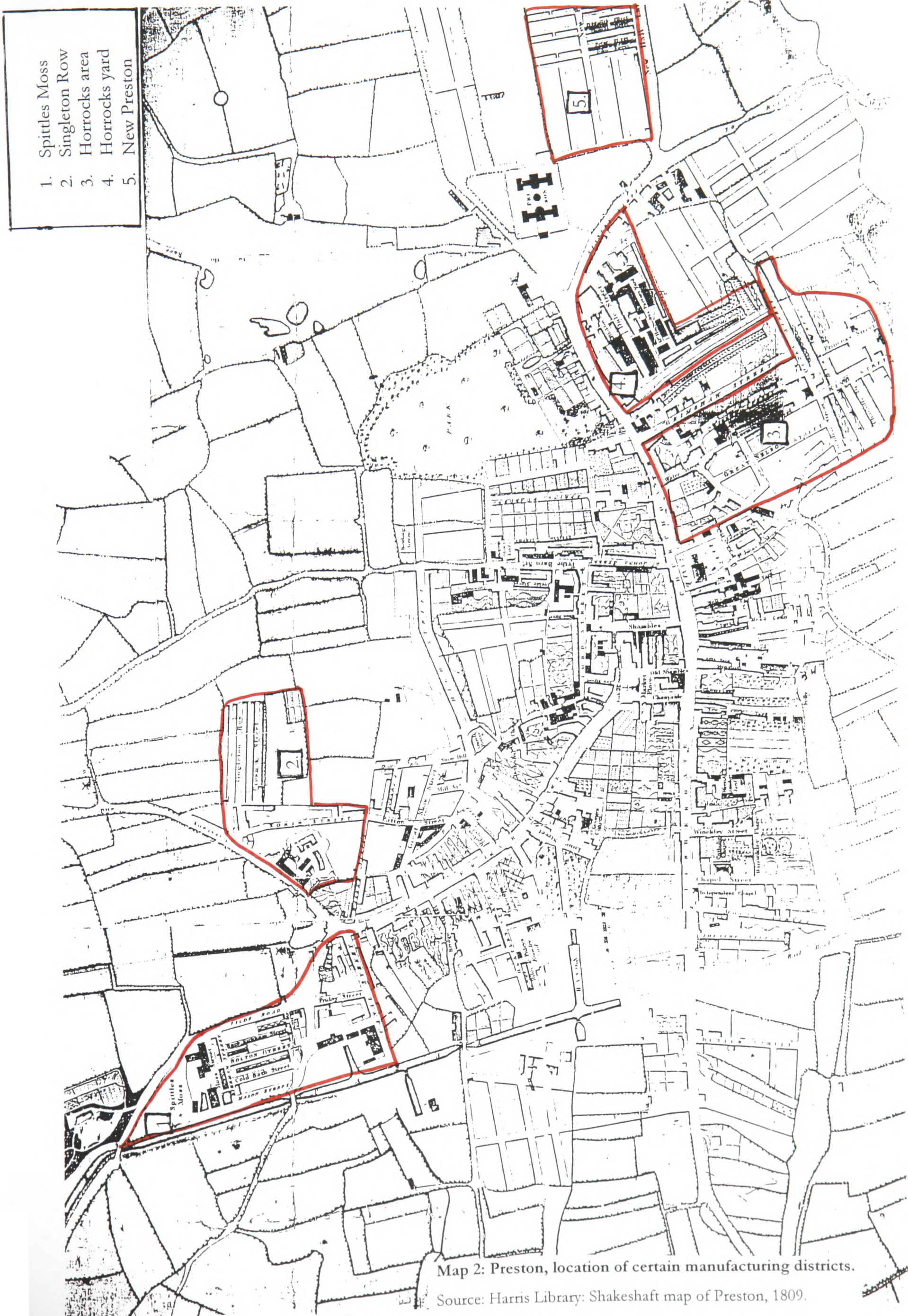
Appendix I

Occupational Analyses of Bolton and Preston



Map 1: Bolton, location of census districts.

Source: Bolton Archives: Bolton Moor Enclosure Map, 1793.



1. Spittles Moss
2. Singleton Row
3. Horrocks area
4. Horrocks yard
5. New Preston

Map 2: Preston, location of certain manufacturing districts.

Source: Harris Library: Shakeshaft map of Preston, 1809.

occupation	D(istrict) 5 [%]	D.6	D.11	D.14	D.20
weaver	99.1	80.9	54.7	25.9	36.1
spinner	0	0	9.3	3.4	6.7
other textiles ¹	0	0	6.7	5.1	10.1
artisan ²	0	3.5	12	34.5	22.7
trader ³	0	7.8	0	12.1	9.7
communications ⁴	0	0.9	0	0	1.3
manufacturer/merchant	0.9	1.7	2.7	5.1	4.2
respectable ⁵	0	0.9	2.7	0	2.5
gent/esq	0	0.9	2.7	1.7	0
labourer	0	0	8	12.1	6.3
agriculture ⁶	0	3.5	1.3	0	4.2

Table 1: Percentage values of occupations listed in census of Great Bolton, 1811. Source: Bolton Archives.

occupation	'Horrocks area' ⁷ [%]	Spittles Moss ⁸	New Preston ⁹
weaver	25.1	3.1	46.9
spinner	11	25.1	6.3
other textiles	16	20.1	21.9
artisan	24.5	26.4	14.1
trader	5.5	1.3	3.1
communications	0.6	5.1	0
manufacturer/merchant	0.6	1.3	0
respectable	2.5	2.6	0
gent/esq	0.6	0	0
labourer	7.4	10	7.8
agriculture	0.6	0	0
servant	0.6	0	0
miner	0	1.3	0
other	4.9	3.8	0

Table 2: Percentage values of occupations of voters listed in Preston pollbook, 1807

¹ 'Other textiles': warper, carder, hatter, warehouseman.

² 'Artisan': joiner, plasterer, shoemaker, sawyer, smith, machinemaker.

³ 'Trader': publican, baker, butcher, shopkeeper.

⁴ 'Communications': carter, postboy.

⁵ 'Respectable': clerk, bookkeeper, schoolmaster, attorney.

⁶ 'Agriculture': farmer, yeoman, gardener.

⁷ 'Horrocks' area was composed of: King St, Duke St, Charlotte St, Leeming St, Princess St, Paradise St. District 3 on map.

⁸ Spittles Moss area also included Kirkham St and Bolton St. District 1 on map.

⁹ District 5 on map.

Appendix II: Broadside Ballads

Ye warriors of England I pray lend an ear
Of this hero from Greenfielt once more yo shall hear
It happen'd of late he met Dick his owd friend,
Who tard him ogen his assistance must lend.
For Bony once moar is for cumin on shore;
He's for fotching owd Englond in't France.

Mon he's towd on't so oft, un yet never coom,
He'd rethor be boastink un tarry a whoam;
If he't here with his crew, I cou'd ha' some rare fun,
I'd punce him to deechoth un may tother 'run;
But he'll never ventur in't Englond for t'entur,
He's better see Egypt ogen.

Seys Dick if he cums wee'n have o rare chonce,
He'll tay these foak wi'him ot want 'o gut France,
He'll mak um int' monsiers and consuls and then,
They'n go fro' own Englond un ne'er cum ogen,
Unl shu'd no' wonder if he maks um plumeer,
For stealink has hung been his trade.

Theaw knows Dick I promist I'd help at a pinch,
Un if its for Englond I never will flinch.
If you preawd haughty Franch folk darn ventur fotcum
I'll soon mak um t' wish they'd tarry'd a whoam:

...Then Jone went toart whoam an towd whot he'd yer'd,
Ut Boney once mooar wur for havink o'th ward,
He'd better be quiet wi' th' plock or he's stown,
Says Madge for he knows it wur never his own.
Un money o one sen he mun lose it ogen,
Un th' French how'o king o ther own.

Then Jone sed to Nan I'll go feyght for my king.
Un when I return back some money I'll bring,
Eawr Jone's t'have a have a horse says owd Marget un then,
If Boney should run, he'll soon fotch him 'ogen,
So Nan gave consent, an Jone off he went,
For t'feight for Owd England ogen.

He took leeof o'Greenfielt and deawn th' broo once moor,
By th' Mumps an up Owdam where he'd bin before.
He geet sum good ale an then kept his way,
He sed he'd find Boney by neet or by dey:
For if he does no cum I will fotch him fro' whoam,
Then I'll give him feighting enough.

...Then God save the King, thougheawt Greenfielt we'll ring,
May Englond all join in the song.

Figure i: Source: MCL: BRf. 824.04.BA1, Ballads, Vol 4, p. 155, printed by J. Haddock, Warrington.

Says Jone to his wife on a whot summers day,
Aw'm resolv'd in Grinfilt no longer to stay,
For aw'll go to Owdham as fast as aw con,
So fare thee weel Grinfilt and fare thee weel Nan
A soger I'st be un brave Owdham I'st see,
Un aw'll have a battle wi' th' French.

Dear Jone, then said Nan, un hoo bitterly cried,
Will t'be one o'th' foote, or tha meons to ride?
Odsums, I'll ride oather ass or mule,
Ere I'll kewer t' Grinfield as black as ta dule,
Ere we're clamink on starvinkon never a farthink,
Ecod, it would mak' ony mon mad.

Aye, Jone, sin we coom inti' Grinfilt for t'dwell,
We'n had mony a bare meal I con vary weel tell
...I'm vary nee sided, afore I'll abide it,
I'll feight oather Spanish or French.

Then says my noant Margart theaw'rt so wot,
I'd ne'er go to Owdham, boh i' England I'd stop.
It matters nowt Margart, for to Owdham I'll goo,
As't naw clam¹ to death by sumbry shall know,
Furst Frenchman aw find aw'll tell him meh mind
Un if he'll naw feight he shall run.

Then deawn th'broo I coom, for wo liv'nt at top,
I thowt I'd reach Owdham ere ever I stopt,
Ecod² haw they start'n when a geet to th' Mumps,
Wi' my hat i'mi hont³ and mi' clogs full o'stumps,
But I soon towd um that I't gooink to Owdham,
An aw'd have a battle wi'th' French.

I kept eend way through th'lone unto Owdham I went,
A ax't a recruit if the'd made up their keawnt,
No, no, honest lad, for he tawk'd like o king,
Go wim meh through th'street and thee I will bring,
Where, if th'w art willink theaw may have a shil'ink
Ecod I thought t'is wor rare news.

...Said th'mon I believe theaw'rt my lad to an inch,
I thowt this'll do, aw'st have guineas ennoo,
Egad Owdham brave Owdham for me.

So fare thee weel Grinfilt, a soger am made,
Awve getten new shoon an o rare Cockade
Aw'll feight for Owd England as hard as I con,
Oather French, Dutch, or Spanish to me it's o one;
Aw'll mak um to stare like a new started hare,
And aw'll tell um fro Owdham aw'm coom.⁴

Figure ii: Bodleian Ballads, 2806.c.16 (70)

¹ Hunger or starve.

² By God.

³ Hand.

⁴ J. McGann, ed., *The New Oxford Book of Romantic Period Verse* (2002), pp.243-4, dates it mistakenly to 1805.

Name	Occupation	Position in Manchester local government	APCOL	Ardwick Mock Corporation	John Shaw's	Pitt Club, 1812	Counter peace petition, 1795	Loyal address, 1800	Loyal address, April 1807	Counter-peace petition, March 1808	Address to Prince Regent, March 1812
Ackers, James	merchant	JP, boroughreeve, Colonel of Volunteers	*, chairman of committee, 1792			*	*		*, committee	*	*
Bateman, James	Iron founder	Churchwarden, 1778-80		*, mayor, 1791	*, President, 1802-24	*	*	*	*	*	
Billinge, James	Fustian manufacturer and gent	Churchwarden, boroughreeve 1788-9	*		*, president, 1796-1802		*				
Brandt, Charles Frederick	German merchant and manufacturer	Boroughreeve, 1800	*			*			*, committee	*	
Cheshyre, Edward	attorney	Captain in RLM	*		*	*, secretary	*	*	*	*	*
Farington, R.A.	manufacturer	JP		*		*	*		*	*	*
Fleming, Thomas	Dye manufacturer	Treasurer of Police Commission, 1810-19			*	*				*	

Appendix III: Select members of the Manchester and Bolton loyalist elites (* indicates participation)

Name	Occupation	Position in Manchester local government	APCOL	Ardwick Mock Corporation	John Shaw's	Pitt Club, 1812	Counter peace petition, 1795	Loyal address, 1800	Loyal address, April 1807	Counter-peace petition, March 1808	Address to Prince Regent, March 1812
Gould, Nathaniel	merchant		*			*		*		*	
Harrop, James	Printer, newspaper editor						*	*	*	*	*
Kearsley, John	manufacturer	Constable, Police Commissioner, Lieut Col of Volunteers	*			*	*	*	*, chair of committee	*	
Leaf, John	manufacturer	JP, Lieut-Col, officer in Court Leet	*, chairman			*	*	*	*	*	
Peel, Robert	Manufacturer, gent		*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Philips, Francis	manufacturer	JP, officer in Court Leet, Captain of Volunteers	*	*		*, president		*	*	*	
Philips, John Leigh	Silk and twist manufacturer	Foreman of jury of Court Leet, Lieut Col of Volunteers	*			*			*, committee	*	*
Simpson, John	Cotton spinner	JP, foreman of Court Leet, 1798	*, treasurer			*, vice-president	*	*		*	

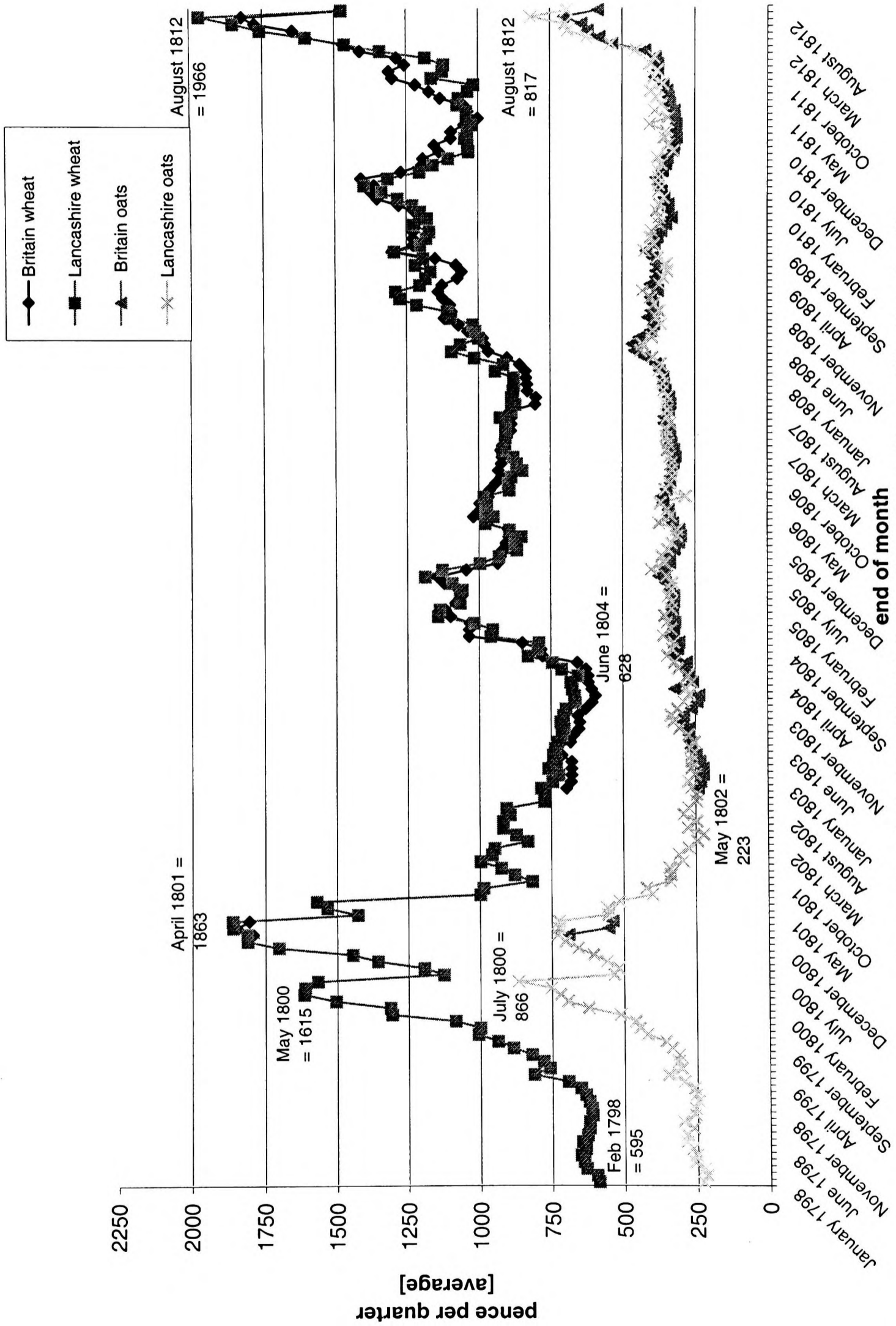
Appendix III: Select members of the Manchester and Bolton loyalist elites (* indicates participation)

Name	Occupation	Position in Bolton Government	SCI, 1792/ Church-and- King Club, 1794	Orange Lodge	Pitt Club, 1813	Loyal address 1807	Loyal Address 1819
Ainsworth, Richard	Bleacher	Captain of Bolton Volunteers, 1798, Deputy Lieutenant	*	(*)	*		*
Bancroft, Thomas	Vicar	Vicar of Bolton, JP	*	*	*	*	
Bolling, Edward	manufacturer	Father of William, first Conservative MP for Bolton			*		*
Bolton, Robert	Cotton manufacturer	Constable, 1806, overseer, 1811, boroughreeve, 1812	*		*		
Bolton, Robert	manufacturer	Boroughreeve, 1812-13	*		*		
Fletcher, Ralph	Gent, colliery owner	JP, commander of Bolton volunteers	*	*	*	*	*
Hulton, William	Gent	JP	*	*	*	*	*
Pilkington, John	manufacturer	Commander of Bolton Cavalry, Deputy Lieut, boroughreeve, 1802-3	*	*			*
Ridgway, John	Cotton spinner	JP, Captain of Bolton Volunteers, 1798	*		*	*	*
Rothwell, Peter			*		*		*

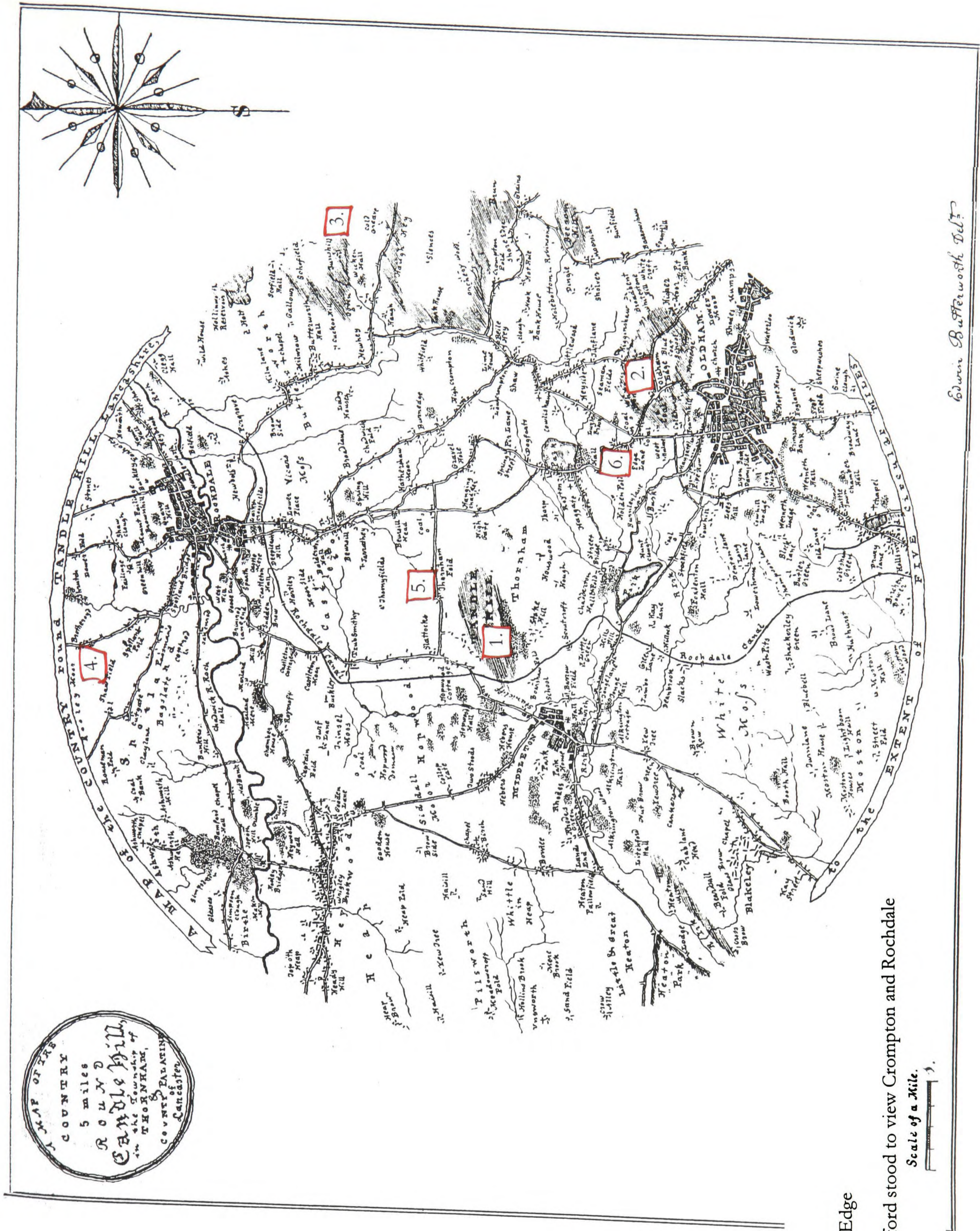
Appendix III: Select members of the Manchester and Bolton loyalist elites (* indicates participation)

Sources: Chetham's: Mun A.3.1-46, Hay Ms, scrapbook 4; Mun A.2.79, Manchester Pitt Club minutes; MCL: Biographical cuttings; BR F 369.242.A.3, Ancient and Loyal Corporation of Ardwick Ms; J. Wainwright, *Records of John Shaw's Club* (Manchester, 1898); MM, 27 May 1800; MC, 25 April 1807; MC, 19 March 1808; J. Earwaker, ed., *The Court Leet Records of the Manor of Manchester* (Manchester, 1890); Bolton Archives: biographical information; B.T Barton, ed., *Historical Gleanings of Bolton* (Bolton, 1883); J. Scholes, *History of Bolton* (Bolton, 1892), p.439, 444; LCRO: DDHu 59/82/11, Bolton Pitt Club papers, 1813.

Appendix IV:i Prices of wheat and oats, 1798-1812



Source: Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle; London Gazette for period January 1798 to November 1802
[National data archive, www.ahds.ac.uk]

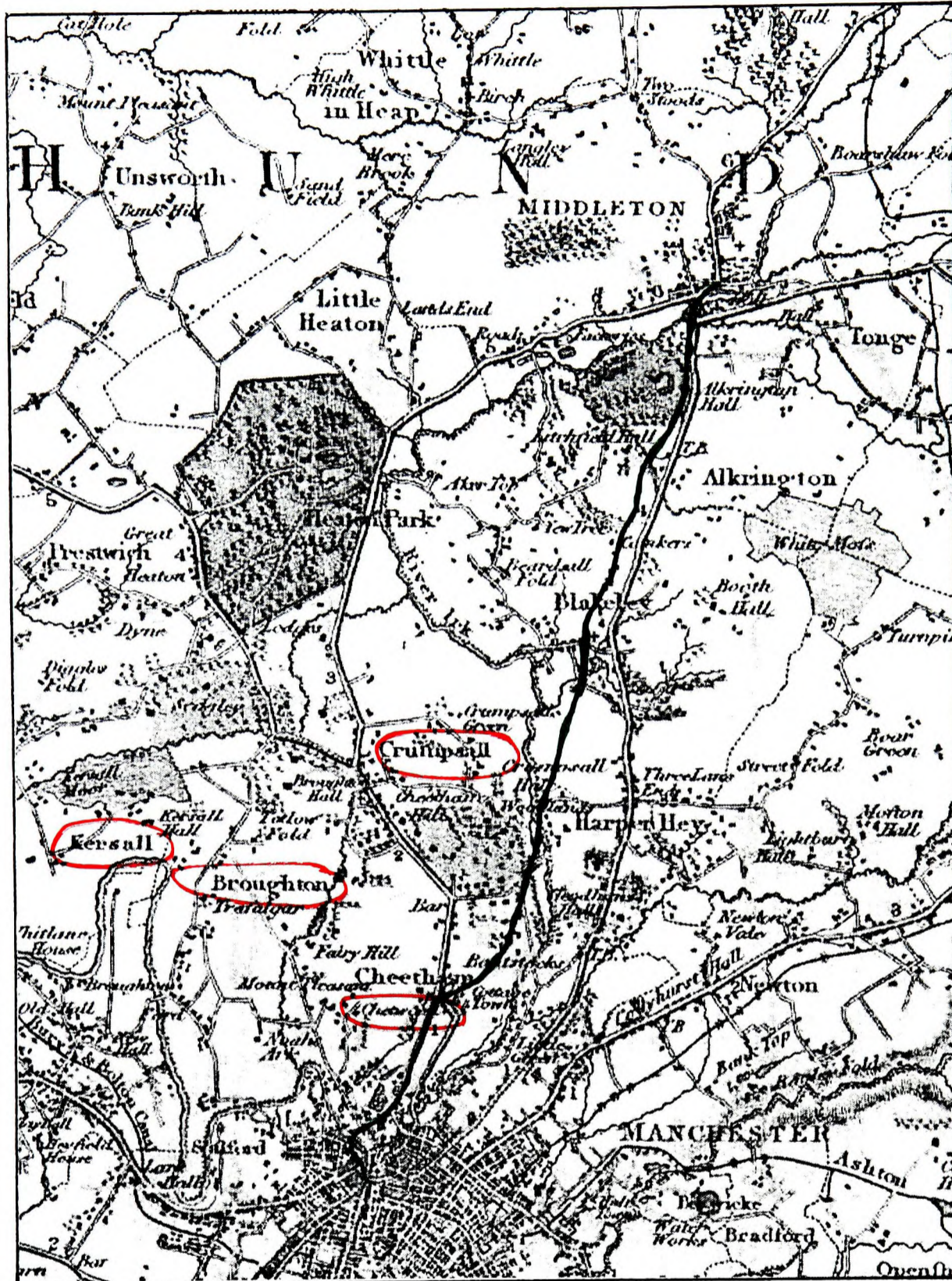


Edwin Butterworth Del.

Map ii: Tandle Hill, by Edwin Butterworth.

Source: Oldham LS.

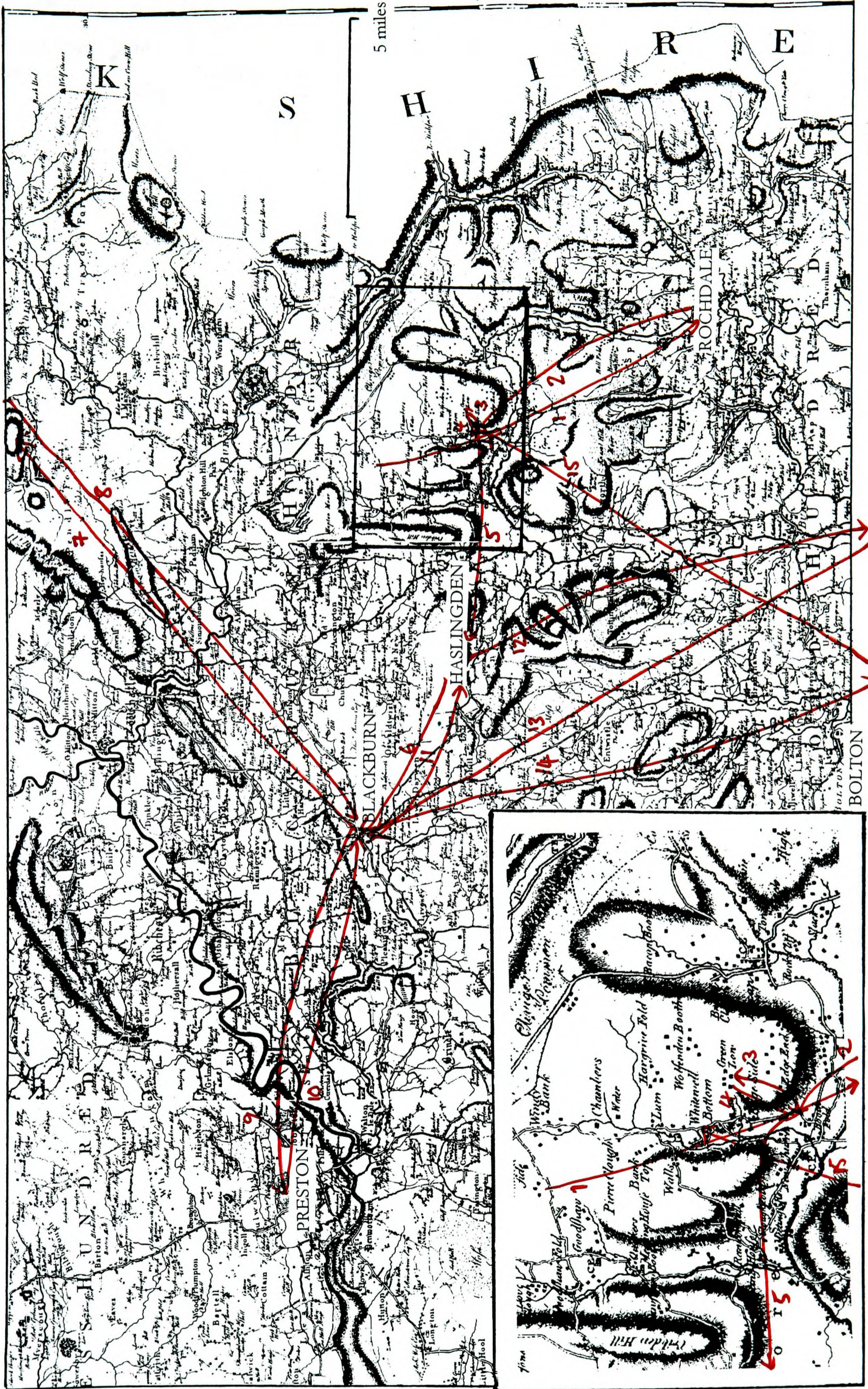
1. Tandle Hill
2. Oldham Edge
3. towards Blackstone Edge
4. Rooley Moor
5. Where Samuel Bamford stood to view Crompton and Rochdale
6. Royton



Map iii: District between Manchester and Middleton.

Source: Greenwood's map of Lancashire, 1818.

Sites of Samuel Bamford's rambles.
Possible 'bearing home' route [*Early Days*, p.116.]



→ Number of move
2

To Wales to Manchester

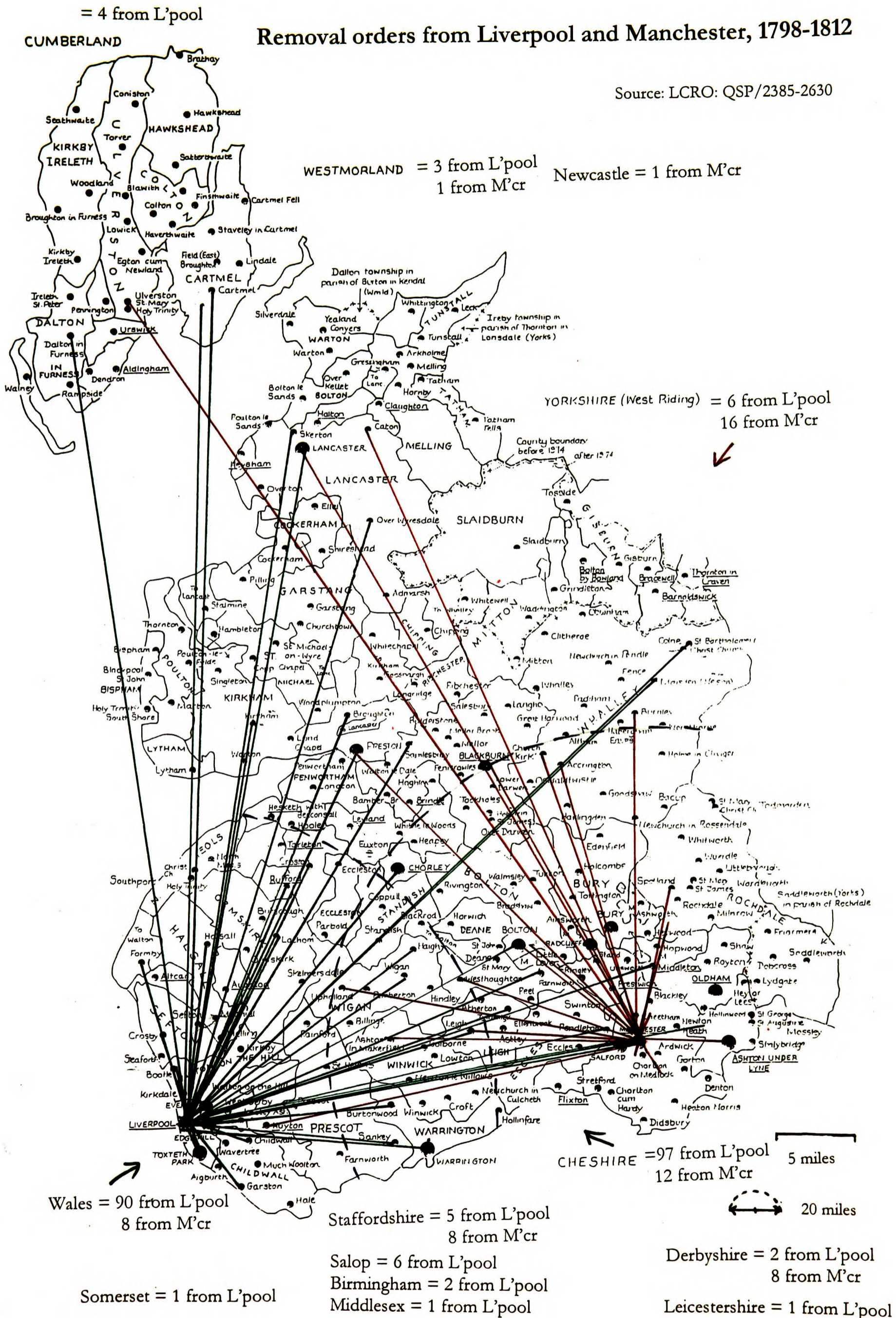
Insert: District of birth and mother's residence

Map iv: Migration of David Whitehead 338

Source: Yates' map of Lancashire, 1786.

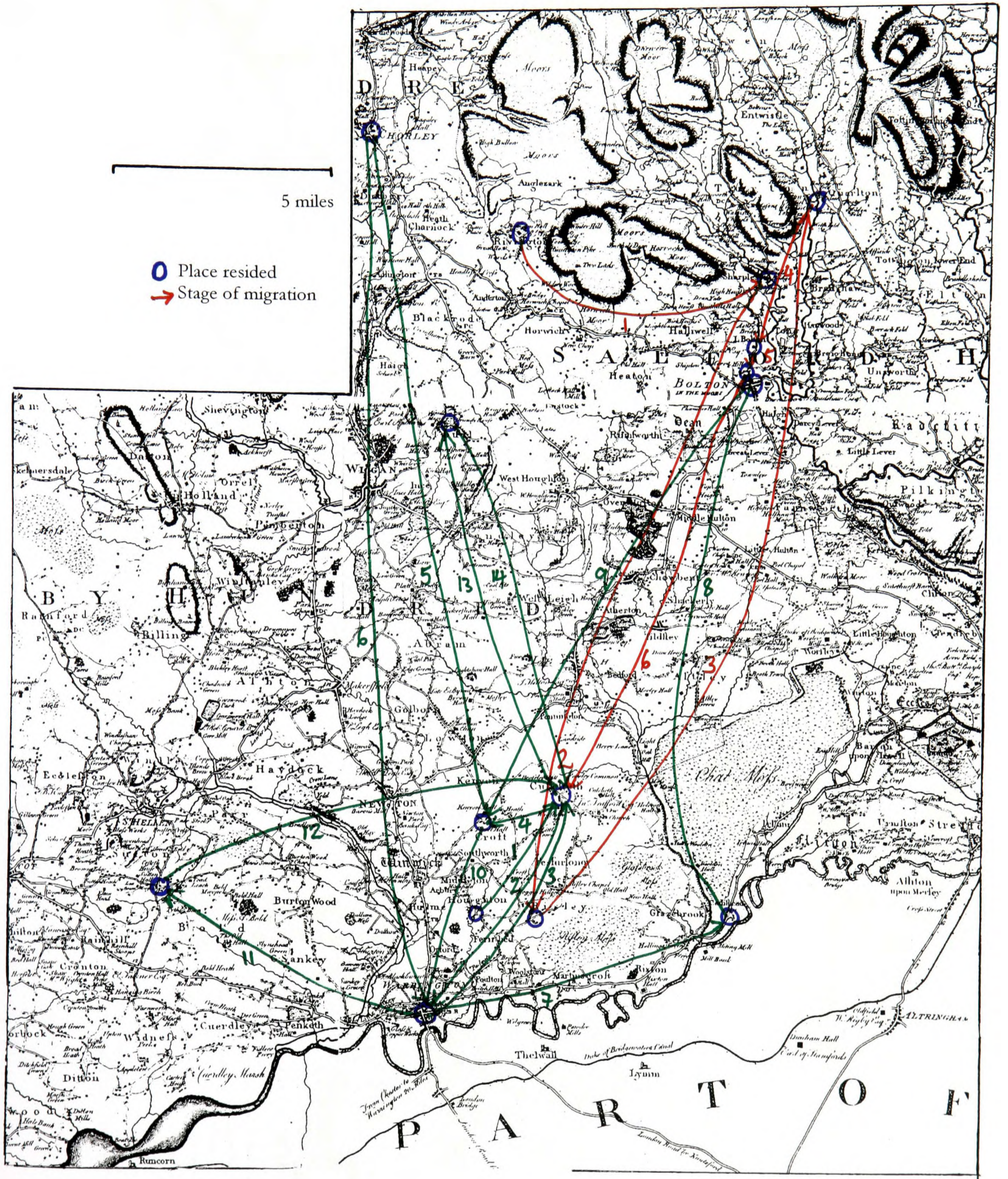
Removal orders from Liverpool and Manchester, 1798-1812

Source: LCRO: QSP/2385-2630



Map v:

Map of parishes with kind permission of Dr Alan Crosby and Lancashire Archives



Map vi: Migration of Ralph Derbyshire, tailor, 1763-1821 and Mary Harrison, 1790-1821.

Source: LCRO: PR 3021/2/5, Culcheth settlement examinations. Yates' map of Lancashire, 1786.



Map vii: Manchester places of assembly and procession

ENGRAVED for the LIVERPOOL GUIDE.

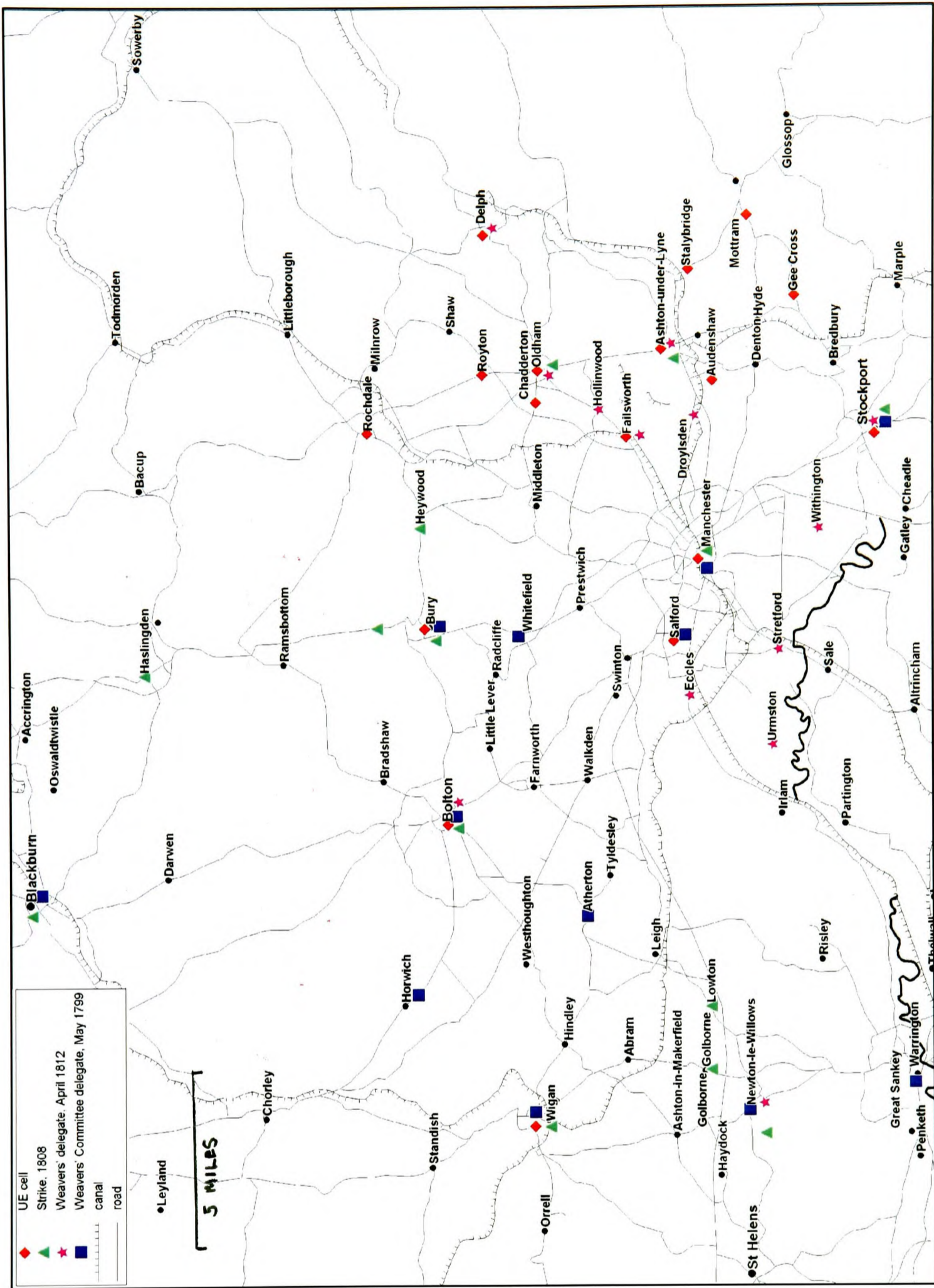


Map viii: Liverpool procession routes

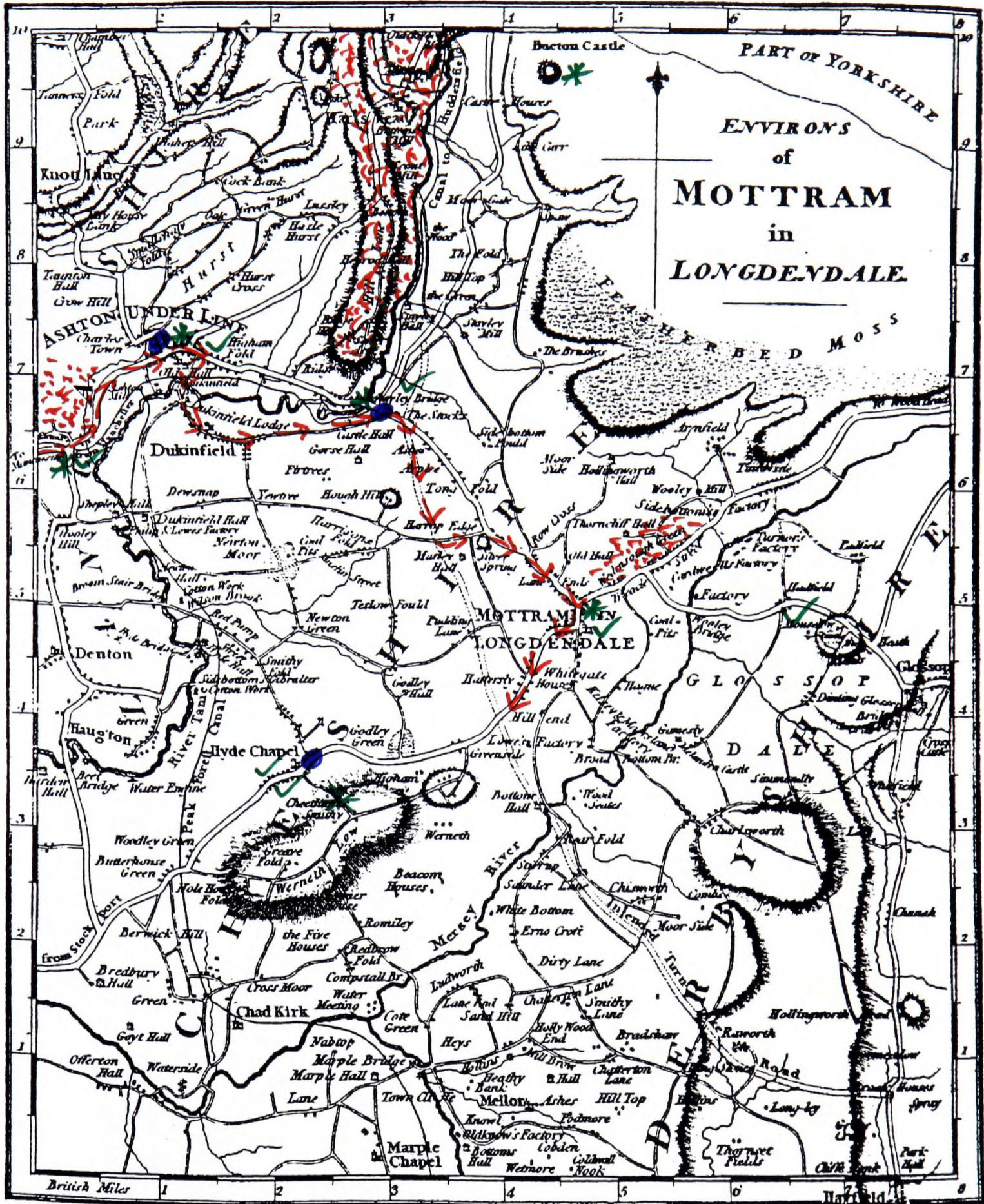
1. Exchange and Castle Street
2. Williamson Square
3. Clayton Square
4. Great Georges Street
5. Toxteth park
6. Everton

— Corporation procession route
 — Roscoe's election procession, 1807.

Published as the Act directs, Feb. 1st 1797 by CRANE & JONES, Castle Street.
Seamie Error *Woodside Ferry*



Map ix: South East Lancashire agitation, 1798-1812



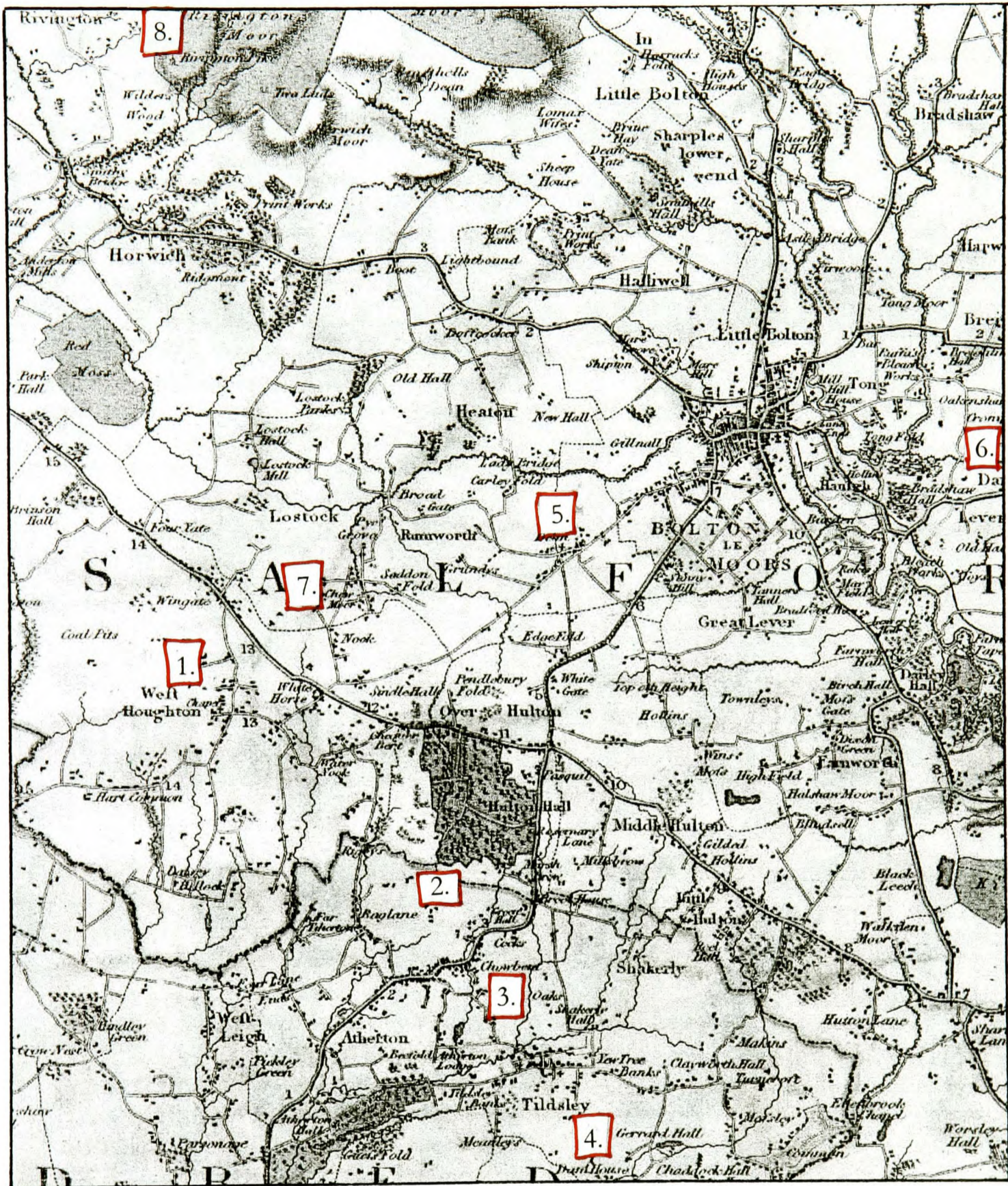
Published April 12th 1794. by John Stockdale, Piccadilly.

Map x: 'Tameside.'

Source: J. Stockdale's map of Mottram in J. Aikin, *A Description of the Country...* (1795)

- UE meeting
- Weaver or spinner strike
- Luddite 'territory'
- Direction of food rioters, 20 April 1812
- Member of 'Thirty Eight,' 1812

Sources: PRO: PC 1/41/A139; TS 11/1059/4766; PL 27/9, part 1, p.87; HO 42/122, Hay to Home Office, 21 April 1812.



Map xi: Bolton and neighbourhood

Source: Greenwood's map of Lancashire, 1818.

1. Westhoughton
2. Hag Fold
3. Chowbent
4. Tildsley
5. Dean Moor
6. Darcy Lever
7. Chew Moor
8. Rivington Pike

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