

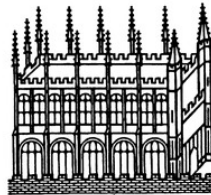


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Civic Image and Civic Patriotism in Liverpool 1880-1914

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Trinity Term 2000**



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The late Victorian and Edwardian period saw ritual become increasingly important in political life. Towns and cities were involved in conscious efforts to construct and project attractive images of themselves. These images were intended to encourage a sense of civic patriotism. Ceremonies, honorific titles, public events and civic architecture were essays in the invention of tradition.

However, historians have applied the concept of the invention of tradition unevenly. Previous research has dwelt on the construction of images. Perceptions of official images and responses to them have been overlooked. This thesis employs a model which recognises images as processes with foundations in human relationships. It evaluates images in terms of intentionality, power, context and participation. The participative dimension is of particular importance, because images aimed to instil a sense of civic patriotism which would encourage citizens to make emotional and financial investments in their communities.

Liverpool attained the status of a city in 1880. The civic ideology of the city was dominated by images of commerce and by notions of Imperial duty and public service which celebrated commercial virtues. Many aspects of urban life were shaped by civic image. This study does not confine itself to public events and pageantry, instead it explores such spheres as municipal art policy, Liverpool's public health record, the attempts to extend the city boundaries, civic hagiography, the foundation of the University, women and the ideal of citizenship and the influence of football on civic identity to demonstrate the importance of images in the city's social, political and institutional history.

The purpose of the thesis is three-fold: to suggest that civic image opens new perspectives on Liverpoolian history, to discover why there were more conscious attempts to construct civic image and to restore participation to the study of civic image by unravelling the connections between image and patriotism.

Civic Image and Civic Patriotism in Liverpool 1880-1914

Between 1880, when it became a city, and the outbreak of the First World War, Liverpool witnessed conscious efforts to construct and promote attractive images of the city. Historians such as Eric Hobsbawm and David Cannadine have applied the concept of the invention of tradition to the growth of municipal ritual during this period. More splendid ceremonies, pageants and civic festivities, honorific titles and a heightened concern with iconography and glamour provide evidence of a resurgence of rites and symbols in late Victorian and Edwardian public life. Asa Briggs' seminal work, Victorian Cities, demonstrated the importance of civic images in fostering civic patriotism- a sense of identity with the city and pride in its achievements.

Although civic image and civic patriotism have been recognised as key elements in the urban experience of the period, previous research has confined the investigation of civic image to narratives of public events, municipal architecture and civic achievements. Civic image has been conceived in unduly narrow terms. Moreover, those who have described the invention of tradition in its urban setting have tended to concentrate on the construction of images and have reified civic image.

This thesis construes image as a process which must be related to individual human behaviour. Civic images aimed to encourage the development of an affective identity with the city through civic patriotism. A model which enables civic image to be more accurately described and more clearly understood is suggested. Civic image and civic patriotism were contested ground at this time. Hence, a model which incorporates intentionality, power, context and participation as explanatory variables is possessed of greater analytical power.

The creation of the Local Government Board in 1871 ushered in a search for a more uniform system of local government. Municipalities were viewed as essential foci of citizenship. Civic patriotism promoted the identification of citizens with their communities which would secure their participation and emotional and financial commitment. English notions of self-government relied on the consent and moral involvement of the governed, and civic images encouraged a sense of ownership of civic achievements.

Rivalry was one means by which civic patriotism could be promoted. The foundation of the Association of Municipal Corporations, the growth of publications such as the Municipal Journal, which compared the work carried out by local authorities, and the proliferation of professional bodies for municipal officials, all occasioned more frequent and more thorough examinations of civic image. Towns and cities assumed the administration of tramways, electricity, gas, education, child welfare and housing, partly as a result of national legislation, and partly to express and display the civic virtue of the community. Many municipalities sought to enlarge their geographical boundaries, too. The notion of civic patriotism, instilled through images, would predispose ratepayers and philanthropists to meet the additional financial challenges which such demonstrations of civitas necessitated.

Liverpool is particularly suitable for an investigation of civic image and civic patriotism. The city aspired to recognition as the 'second city of the Empire' and was engaged in intense rivalry with Glasgow and Birmingham in claiming this distinction. The cities strove to outstrip one another, not only in absolute measures of population, size and rateable value, but also in civic virtue. There was also a long-standing contest with Manchester within Lancashire and the north-west. Assertions of Liverpool's pre-eminence were phrased in the vocabulary of images of commercial success.

This aspect of Liverpoolian history has been overlooked. Liverpool's experience of civic image has been omitted from such surveys as Briggs' *Victorian Cities*. Liverpoolian historiography has concentrated on sectarianism and strikes, Tories and trade and industrial relations and the Irish; civic image, which illuminates power structures, social relationships and ideological contests, has been neglected. This thesis seeks to open new perspectives on Liverpoolian history. In addition, it aims to restore participation and ownership to an analytical framework of civic image to rediscover the significance of civic image and civic patriotism in the dynamics of late-Victorian and Edwardian municipal government. Civic image encompassed much more than official ceremonies and civic architecture, and the ten chapters of the thesis survey a wide thematic and chronological cross-section of evidence.

Chapter One- Civic Ceremonial

Royal visits and coronations were marked by essays in the construction of official images of Liverpool. The ceremonial which attended the royal visits in 1881, 1886 and 1906 expressed the city's commercial confidence and restated its position as the foremost port in the Empire. The coronation festivities of 1902 and 1911 communicated images of the Imperial mission of Liverpoolian commerce. The festal element to these events was needed to encourage participation in these images. The use of school children in ceremonial was a means of enforcing participation, which also countered portrayals of Liverpool as an unhealthy city.

The Conservatives, who governed the city throughout the period save between 1892 and 1895, met with opposition to these displays. Liberals confronted them on questions of expenditure, while Labour argued that the pageantry was a sham which concealed social problems. Irish Nationalists and suffragettes discerned civic ceremonial as a prop to the status quo and attacked it still more forcefully.

Chapter Two- The Liverpool Pageant of 1907

The septcentenary of the civic charter was celebrated with a pageant in 1907. This was one of a number of pageants which took place throughout the nation between 1905 and 1914. These pageants strove to use festive images from municipal history to instil civic patriotism. Considerable resources were invested in the Liverpool pageant, but it failed both commercially and as a didactic and normative exercise.

Liverpool's history proved contentious. The project suffered from functional ambiguity since it was unclear whether entertainment, education or making a profit was its central purpose. There was a severe participation deficit and the messages of commercial glory and civic pride were not communicated to a mass audience.

Chapter Three- Municipal honours

Honorific titles provided images of patriotism and established image building as a demonstration of patriotism. The mayoralty was a key office in the communication of Liverpool's image. Mayors were expected to entertain on a grand scale and they were judged on their ability to conduct ceremonial. The wives and daughters of mayors did much to organise ceremonial occasions.

The freedom of the city was a reward added to the gift of the Corporation by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1885. The title bestowed civic recognition on individuals and was therefore an important channel through which behaviour might be modelled. The ceremonial

at the conferral of the award became increasingly lavish and the acceptance speeches provided platforms for the construction and propagation of visions of municipal life. These honours became politicised for they commanded strategically important political territory.

Chapter Four- Civic Hagiography

Biographies of leading citizens emerged as a literary genre. The works advanced different virtues, but shared certain stock themes. They were hagiographic in tone, for they portrayed their subjects as exemplars of civic virtue and depicted civic patriotism as a holistic moral approach to urban existence. Nonconformity did not acknowledge a litany of saints but Nonconformist ministers were to the fore in the development of the genre. Businessmen such as Alexander Balfour and William Rathbone served as exemplars of the ideal of the Christian merchant- a figure who allied commercial ability to a strong moral sense. Directories of Liverpool worthies, of which Liverpool's Legion of Honour was the most famous, also paraded the civic virtue of the city's elite. A canon of citizenship was forged, defined by commercial achievement and loyalty to Liverpool.

Chapter Five- Civic Blame

Assertions of virtue and allegations of blame were vehicles for the expression of social and political conflict. Groups which were portrayed as having damaged the city's reputation were accused of showing a lack of civic patriotism and could be excluded from the privileges of citizenship. Public health was one of the most serious threats to the civic image of a city denigrated as the 'Black Spot on the Mersey'. The evaluation of the municipal health record involved attributions of responsibility and blame. Scapegoating was not a novel feature of urban life, but in this period it acquired an added ideological edge. Private lifestyles might damage Liverpool's public image, so citizenship encroached into domestic life.

As the private/public distinction was blurred, the 'separate spheres' division of gender roles became increasingly untenable. The role of the woman as home-maker was becoming an aspect of civic duty. In consequence, some women, such as Eleanor Rathbone, found avenues into public life opened to them. However, the extended scope of municipal administration was not a universally empowering experience for women. Working-class lifestyles, and the mores of the Irish in particular, came under attack. Depravity and deprivation were linked in a dialectic which absolved the Corporation from blame for Liverpool's social problems.

Chapter Six- Liverpool's M.O.H.s and the doctoring of civic image

In the field of public health, Liverpool's image was bifurcated. The city could boast a number of pioneering achievements. It was the first city to have a medical officer of health, for instance. However, the city continued to suffer from death rates which were amongst the highest of any British municipality. The slums which lay within minutes of the Exchange Flags at the centre of commercial Liverpool undermined the image of a prosperous and progressive city.

Attacks on the Corporation's public health record began to multiply during the 1880s, putting M.O.H.s in an unenviable position. The post of M.O.H. was a Corporation appointment, so both professional pride and self-interest demanded skills of image management from the incumbent. E.W. Hope was Liverpool's medical officer for five decades and demonstrated an awareness of the importance of image management. At times, this duty ran counter to the M.O.H.'s statutory brief to discover and publicise the causes of disease. Hope appeared before government commissions, medical conferences and local societies to champion Liverpool's

achievements and to argue that the headline death-rate was a misleading measure. He did not always reconcile statistical accuracy with presentational concerns.

Chapter Seven- Carthage, Venice and the Liverpool School of Painters

Municipal art policy in Liverpool was dominated by a few self-proclaimed aesthetes, of whom Philip Rathbone was the most influential. Wealthy ports such as Carthage, Venice and Florence had established the patronage of the arts as one of the civic duties of commerce. In the early nineteenth century, William Roscoe had formulated a vision of civic virtue which combined commerce and the arts. Roscoe was universally revered as a paragon of Liverpoolian citizenship. The late-nineteenth century witnessed a fascination with the decline of empires, and cultural production was viewed as part of Liverpool's imperial mission. Local artists did not welcome municipal intervention in the arts. They questioned the authority of the Corporation's aesthetic judgements and argued that municipal interference was damaging local cultural production. H.C. Marillier's work, *The Liverpool School of Painters*, postulated that local artists had been neglected by the Corporation.

Chapter Eight- Liverpool's attempted incorporation of Bootle

As Liverpool and Glasgow competed for recognition as the 'second city of the Empire', civic aggrandisement became one expression of civic rivalry. The Conservatives sought to follow a policy of expansion which was informed by the notion of 'Greater Liverpool'. In this conception of the community, commercial interests were dominant. Robert Hampson, the leader of the Parliamentary Committee on the Council, intended to incorporate the borough of Bootle into the city to strengthen Liverpool's claims to precedence over Glasgow.

Bootle successfully resisted the scheme by undermining Liverpool's civic image. The Bootle Corporation argued that there were social and spiritual aspects to municipal life which a commercially oriented definition of a community overlooked. Whereas Bootle exploited the symbolic power of its civic charter as a focus for loyalty, the Liverpool Corporation failed to win support for a case which merely asserted the city's commercial glory.

Chapter Nine- The University of Liverpool

In 1881, University College, Liverpool was founded as part of the federal Victoria University. The campaign for a university college in the city proposed that such an institution would demonstrate that learning and commerce could enjoy a mutually profitable relationship. The new college would mute criticism of the materialism of Liverpool and would bring academic theory to the conduct of business at a time when international competition was intensifying.

The institution had been conceived in terms which related it to the hegemonic image of commerce. Both the college and individual academics prospered by portraying their work as a strain of civic patriotism. The federal framework of the Victoria University was ill-suited to a college founded on commercial specialisation and fierce civic pride. The case for an independent university centred on the need for administrative arrangements which could channel civic patriotism as effectively as possible. In 1902, the City Council and University College successfully campaigned for an independent University of Liverpool.

Chapter Ten- Emotional Communities and Football in Liverpool

Football clubs were important in encouraging a sense of civic identity and were recognised as civic institutions. However, football identities were more than reflections of wider socio-economic patterns. The Liverpool and Everton clubs were emotional communities forged by participation which exerted an enormous influence over the lives of their supporters. The bond between supporter and club had an emotional resonance which has been understated. This was no less true of middle-class than of working-class supporters, for the commercialisation of leisure was only one aspect of middle-class involvement in football.

Where loyalty to club and city coincided, civic patriotism was powerfully restated. Yet, civic and club identity sometimes bisected. The history of Liverpool and Everton football clubs illustrates the importance of participation and emotional ownership in defining communities.

In this thesis, it is argued that official images of civic glory and of civic patriotism were rooted in a municipal ideology which placed commerce at the centre of Liverpoolian identity. Although not all of Liverpool's elite were merchants, their status was exalted by association with these images of commercial grandeur. Commerce offered a means of relating personal, civic and Imperial ambitions. It is harder to unravel the attitude of the working-classes to the elite's pretensions to be citizens of the 'second city of the Empire.'

Participation is a crucial aspect of the relationship between image and behaviour. In order to understand why certain images were more successful than others in winning participative support, historians must do more than narrate the story of how images were constructed. The affective potential of images must be evaluated if the imaginative landscape of the working-classes is to be charted accurately.

Civic Image and Civic Patriotism in Liverpool 1880-1914

Introduction

APRIL 30. Perfectly astounded at receiving an invitation for Carrie and myself from the Lord and Lady Mayoress to the Mansion House, to 'meet the Representatives of Trade and Commerce'. My heart beat like that of a schoolboy. Carrie and I read the invitation over two or three times. I could scarcely eat my breakfast...

MAY 2...Told Gowing not to call next Monday, as we were going to the Mansion House. Send similar note to Cummings...

MAY 9...Gowing entered the room, without knocking, with two hats on his head and holding the garden-rake in his hand, with Carrie's fur tippet (which he had taken off the downstairs hall-peg) round his neck, and announced himself in a loud, coarse voice: 'His Royal Highness, the Lord Mayor!' He marched twice round the room like a buffoon.¹

The diary of Charles Pooter, the Grossmiths' tragi-comic 'hero', serves as a reminder of the diverse individual responses to civic image. The connections between images and behaviour were not unidirectional; yet the links between civic image and civic patriotism have been underexplored. This thesis examines civic image and the responses to it in late Victorian and Edwardian Liverpool. The introduction will discuss the theoretical and methodological premises on which the research has been conducted. The decision to focus on Liverpool between 1880 and 1914 is explained, and the merits and limitations of the episodic approach which has been employed are evaluated. Finally, the themes of each chapter will be related to these overarching concerns.

In 1982, David Cannadine stated that

in the period from circa 1880 to 1914...the British ruling elite...was greatly concerned with the creation and production of spectacle, pageant and 'public theatre' to an

¹ G. and W. Grossmith, The Diary of a Nobody, London, 1892, (1971 edn.) pp.49, 51 and 61.

*extent which has rarely been appreciated, and for reasons which, at a general level, remain unexplained.*²

This study documents the extent of the creation and production of civic imagery in Liverpool and sets it in a local and national context. As well as explaining why there were more conscious efforts to construct and project civic image, the thesis argues that historians must pay greater attention to how these images were received. If civic pride is not to be reified, or depicted as an unduly monolithic emotional response, there must be analysis of how images were communicated and of how a sense of ownership of these images was instilled, too.

In Eric Hobsbawm's judgement, political life in the late nineteenth century 'found itself increasingly ritualized and filled with symbols and publicity appeals...the **invention** of tradition.' He argued that there was 'a silent war for the control of the symbols and rites.'³

Cannadine, too, has recognised that Victorian civic leaders were

*concerned to proclaim the greatness and unity of their communities by appealing to history, to pageantry, and to glamour. They built elaborate town halls rich in civic iconography; they were greatly concerned with municipal etiquette and ceremonial; and they acquired aldermanic robes, coats of arms, maces and regalia. After the royal family, these city fathers were the greatest inventors of tradition between the 1880s and the 1930s.*⁴

Yet, the concept of the 'invention of tradition'⁵ has been applied rather unequally to the study of civic image, and there are few accounts of the battles in Hobsbawm's 'silent war'. The means by which images were communicated and the reasons for emotional investment and participation in such images have constituted a field largely characterised by both a paucity of

² D. Cannadine, 'The Transformation of Civic Ritual in Modern Britain: The Colchester Oyster Feast' in Past and Present, No.94, (1982), p.129.

³ E. Hobsbawm, The Age of Empire, London, 1987, pp.105-6.

⁴ D. Cannadine, The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy, New Haven and London, 1990, p.564.

⁵ see E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge, 1993.

empirical research and a poverty of theory. Even seminal works, such as Briggs' Victorian Cities⁶ and Cannadine's article on 'The Transformation of Civic Ritual in Modern Britain', have chronicled the construction of image far more thoroughly than they have explored how image was received. Winning commitment is as integral to image-building as is the creation and production of images.

E.P. Thompson once cautioned that historical relationships are marked by 'a fluency which evades analysis if we attempt to stop [them] dead at any given moment...The relationship must always be embodied in real people and in a real context'⁷; and Antoine Roquentin, the historian protagonist of Sartre's Nausea, confided in his diary, 'I don't think the profession of historian fits a man for psychological analysis. In our work, we have to deal only with simple feelings to which we give generic names such as Ambition and Interest.'⁸ The workings of civic imagery must be placed in a 'real context' and be subjected to analytical tools which are more precise than simple feelings and generic names.

In his psychological critique of imagination, Sartre concluded that an image is best understood as a process, for 'an image has no reality functionally speaking...it is never independent.'⁹ Geertz also insists that images are not autonomous. He reasons that 'culture is public because meaning is' and steps must be taken to evaluate the 'imaginative universe'. As an 'intertwined system of construable signs...culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviours, institutions or processes can be causally attributed, it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly- that is, thickly- described.'¹⁰ Images must be

⁶ A. Briggs, Victorian Cities, Harmondsworth, 1963.

⁷ E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Harmondsworth, (publ. 1963) 1991 edn., p.8.

⁸ J.P. Sartre, Nausea, Harmondsworth, (publ. 1938) 1987 edn., p.13

⁹ J.P. Sartre (trans. F. Williams), Imagination, Michigan, 1962, p.119.

¹⁰ C. Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures, London, 1975, pp.12-14.

related to human experience. This is affirmed by Blabock and Wilken who, in considering some of the challenges to the construction of theories of complex social processes, warned that 'macro level theories will tend to be inadequate to the degree that they ignore the fact that human motivations and behaviours constitute important driving forces of social phenomena.'¹¹

Cannadine has suggested that a fruitful methodological approach to the investigation of the transformation of civic ritual between 1880 and 1914 would be to ally 'thick description' to a chronological perspective.¹² The present study proceeds from such a standpoint, but aims to employ concepts such as ownership and participation to assess the social, political and ideological dimensions of civic image more fully by according human motivations and behaviours their due explanatory power. Civic patriotism was the behavioural response which civic image sought to provoke.

Images helped to construct the paradigms within which urban experience was interpreted. Richard Sennett contends that in 'the projection of a rigid group self-image...there lies a way of denying the dissonance and unexpected conflicts of a society's history...an attempt to build an image or identity that coheres, is unified, and filters out threats in social experience.'¹³ Ideology and image are frequently contiguous and the place of participation as a variable in models of ideology has long been assured. As Ashford comments, 'the legitimacy of nations rests on achieving some acceptable overlap between the leaders' purposes and the citizens' perceptions of these purposes...[the] analysis of ideology should concentrate on the ways by which individuals and groups adjust to the differences between their ideas and their circumstances.'¹⁴

¹¹ H. Blabock and D. Wilken, Intergroup Processes, London and New York, 1979, p.3.

¹² Cannadine, op. cit.

¹³ R. Sennett, The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life, Harmondsworth, 1973, pp.18 and 19.

¹⁴ D. Ashford, Ideology and Participation, London, 1972, pp. 20 and 24.

The current study examines these processes of adjustment by focussing on the contested terrain of image and patriotism. Civic images and strains of civic patriotism were multiple and often exclusive in a pluralist urban society. Participation was a key element of such competition: image makers vied to secure affective attachment to the images which served their ends.

The dynamics of this contract between image makers and citizens can be more precisely described and understood if the concept of image is dissected. A theoretical framework must encompass intentionality, power, context and participation. Hence, a model based on four chief components of image is suggested:

i) the intended image- the image as conceived by the image maker.

ii) the communicated image- the process by which the image is transferred to the recipient. Access to means of propagation, the quality of these means and the possession of adequate resources to exploit these means relate this process to prevailing power structures.

iii) the perceived image- wider socio-cultural values constitute the context within which the communicated image is appraised. The credibility and consistency of the image (both internally and historically) determine the probability of particular perceptions, as do pre-existing affective identities shaped by religious and political affiliations, socio-economic status, race and gender. The power of an image is located in the attitudinal shifts which occur here.

iv) the participated image- the image in practice. The behavioural responses to any attitudinal shifts which may have taken place at stage (iii) are registered in

participation. The notion of civic patriotism overlaps stages (iii) and (iv) since it entails an attitudinal position and a resultant behavioural response.

This model does not pretend to perfection. The very conduct of the historian's research is evidently subject to the logic of this model. It is difficult to penetrate to the intended image by interrogating the accumulated layers of communicated and perceived images. Evidence of group and individual perceptions of image and of group and individual behavioural responses is scanty.

The four components cannot be divided neatly into a linear progression. The intention behind an image, for instance, may change during the process of communication. Moreover, there are circular elements to the model, for the image maker's conception of the image will itself be shaped in response to developments at the other three stages. Nonetheless, this model does offer insights into how contracts are negotiated between individuals and images and why some images are more successful than others in inspiring commitment and promoting particular behaviours.

The story of Liverpool provides a suitable backdrop to explore these issues and to demonstrate how a more rigorous analytical approach to civic image adds greatly to an understanding of urban history. The establishment of the Anglican see of Liverpool in 1880 elevated the town to the rank of a city, and encouraged the projection of images commensurate with this status. The chronological span of this study is bounded by this event, and, by chance rather than by design, coincides with the period which Cannadine identified as of particular interest. Civic image was a matter of importance in the social and political life of Liverpool because of civic rivalry. Nationally Liverpool, Glasgow and Birmingham aspired to be recognised as the 'Second City of the Empire'; within Lancashire and the north-west there was a long-standing contest with Manchester.

Official images of Liverpool were rooted in visions of a city of commercial grandeur. Liverpool was to be ranked with the great merchant cities of the past, such as Tyre, Corinth, Venice and Florence. Commerce glorified both the city and the Empire. Liverpool was Britain's foremost port in terms of exports, and in import trade was exceeded only by London. Liverpool's aspirations to be the 'Second City of the Empire' were inextricably linked to the Imperial significance of commerce. Liverpool's civic mission was commercial in inspiration.

Despite the size and importance of Liverpool, the history of its civic image remains unwritten. Asa Briggs included Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham in Victorian Cities, but omitted the larger cities of Glasgow and Liverpool. A recent collection edited by Fraser and Maver¹⁵ has done much to fill this gap in Glasgow's story. Liverpoolian historiography, meanwhile, has been dominated by studies of sectarianism and its socio-political impact,¹⁶ and work on industrial relations and labour history.¹⁷

An episodic methodology has been employed in this thesis, in order to draw on a wide chronological and thematic cross-section of evidence. There was more to civic image than public ceremonies and civic architecture and, as Georg Simmel has argued, 'we shall discover the laws of social forms only by collecting...societary phenomena of the most diverse content, and by ascertaining what is common to them in spite of their diversity.'¹⁸ However, precisely because of the variety of means by which civic image was forged and civic patriotism expressed, there must be some prioritisation in thematic selection. The Vrynwy water supply,

¹⁵ W.H. Fraser and I. Maver (eds.), Glasgow Vol. II 1830 to 1912, Manchester, 1996.

¹⁶ P.J. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism: A political and social history of Liverpool 1868-1939, Liverpool, 1981 and F. Neal, Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience 1819-1914, Manchester, 1988.

¹⁷ For example E. Taplin, Near to Revolution: The Liverpool General Transport Strike of 1911, Liverpool, 1994 and J. Belchem, Popular Politics, Riot and Labour. Essays in Liverpool History 1790-1940, Liverpool, 1992..

¹⁸ quoted in G. Hillery, Communal Organizations, Chicago, 1968, p.vi.

the Liverpool International Exhibition of 1886, the new Adelphi Hotel, the construction of the Anglican Cathedral, the remodelling of the waterfront and the erection of the Liver Building, the Liverpool Overhead Railway, the municipalisation of the tramways, the City Beautiful Conference, the Liverpool School of Architecture and the strikes of 1911, are all aspects of the 1880-1914 era with implications for Liverpudlian civic image which have been excluded from the purview of this thesis.

Nevertheless, the ten chapters embrace a range of experiences. The first two assess the imagery surrounding royal visits and coronations and the septcentenary of Liverpool's charter in 1907. Such public events were conscious exercises in the construction and projection of official images of the city. Municipal office and honorific recognition similarly shaped a canon of civic virtue by rewarding and promoting particular activities. Chapters three and four demonstrate that titles and ceremonies commanded politically contested ground. The religious and political dimensions of civic hagiography are explored.

Civic recognition was accompanied by civic blame. The rights of citizenship were accessible only to those who performed the duties which civic patriotism demanded. Rivalry with Manchester and Glasgow made the maintenance of a favourable civic image a proof of good citizenship. The dialectics of civic imagery and civic patriotism expressed the power structures of the city, as chapter five illustrates. Chapters five and six both argue that Liverpool's public health record was a crucial element of its civic image. As a consequence, public health was a key arena in which both the Corporation and private citizens found their civic patriotism tested.

The next three chapters evaluate the impact of competing civic images and civic patriotisms in different contexts. Chapter seven, which examines Liverpool's municipal art policy, and chapter eight, which casts the story of the attempted incorporation of Bootle in a new light, indicate that images of civic grandeur and aggrandisement were not always sufficient to win participative commitment. The penultimate chapter contrasts the successful foundation of the

University of Liverpool with the failure to incorporate Bootle. It proposes a reading of the University's history which recognises how civic rivalry, civic image and civic patriotism were harnessed to foster an independent institution.

The last chapter details the experiences of two other Liverpoolian institutions which originated during this period- the Everton and Liverpool football clubs. The two clubs were emotional communities, capable of winning levels of commitment which other civic institutions could not match. Supporters evolved identities which simultaneously challenged and reinforced civic loyalty.

The concluding section suggests why there was a growing concern with civic image in this period. The Liverpool experience is set in a national context. As M.J. Daunton insists, 'the variations between towns...must be placed within a framework which can establish where a community stands in relation to others.' Daunton suggests three main questions: 'who held power in the town; what was the nature of its social relationships; what was the dominant ideology?'¹⁹

This thesis is founded on a conceptual definition of image as a process in which participation was a vital component. Such a definition is at once broader and more precise than one which restricts itself to the act of construction. The latter approach runs the risk of envisioning images as constructs disembodied from human relationships. The former expedites a more sophisticated model for describing and understanding the relationships between images and responses to them. An enquiry which is conducted in terms of civic image and which employs more powerful analytical tools will yield new answers to Daunton's questions. The connections between commercial glory, civic pride and corporate and individual ambitions are thrown into sharper relief once the workings of civic image are illuminated. When these

¹⁹ M.J. Daunton, Coal Metropolis: Cardiff 1870-1914, Leicester, 1977, p.147.

facets of municipal life are seen more clearly, more enlightened reflection about power structures, social relationships and competing ideologies is made possible.

This study explores how civic image was created, communicated, perceived and participated in. It assesses the connections between civic image and civic patriotism to draw attention to the part played by these two concepts in enlarging the scope of municipal government and in attracting the emotional and financial commitment which such an expansion demanded.

Chapter One- Civic ceremonial in Liverpool 1880-1914

Royal visits and coronation festivities were significant occasions for the projection of a civic image of Liverpool. Between 1880 and 1914, a number of royal visits focussed national attention on the city. Such occasions formed the backdrop for conscious exercises in the construction of image. Nevertheless, the decorations and rituals which marked these events cannot be dismissed as mere facades. The debates which surrounded civic ceremonial involved questions of expense, appropriateness and participation. For the success of any public event, it was imperative that there be a crowd. The festal and the spectacular were central to participation.

Royal visits attracted national attention. They must, therefore, be set in a national, as well as a local, context. The images projected were intended for internal and external constituencies and these different dimensions must be considered. In an age of intense municipal rivalries, of which Liverpool's jockeying with Manchester was not the least bitter, the grandeur of these occasions was as much a reflection of the city as of the monarch¹. Display had to be commensurate with civic aspirations. Although some might express reservations about the concealment of social problems, such legerdemain was necessary to uphold civic pride.

¹ R.H. Trainor has noted how royal visits and civic ceremonial focussed attention on Glasgow's elite and provided platforms for paeans of municipal achievement. R.H. Trainor, 'The Elite' in Glasgow Vol. II 1830 to 1912, W.H. Fraser and I. Maver (eds.), Manchester, 1996.

The external/internal duality was particularly significant in Liverpool, a city which depended on commerce for its livelihood. The connections between commerce and confidence invested Liverpool's civic imagery with particular responsibilities. The severe depression of the late 1870s had punctured the bullish mid-Victorian mood. The reverses inflicted on Beaconsfieldism at Kabul and Isandhlwana had similarly tarnished a forward Imperial policy. In 1881, when the Prince and Princess of Wales opened the new North Dock system and christened the Alexandra Dock after the Princess, the issues of commercial confidence and the Imperial mission were to the fore. This was evident from the ceremonial attending the visit.

Tony Lane has noted that 'major additions to the dock system appeared always as extensions of Liverpool's grandeur, as opportunities to reassert the role of the city as a world scale port and trading centre.'² Such an opportunity was taken in 1881. The Liverpool Echo quoted the Globe's opinion that the visit

*interested not only Liverpool itself, but the Empire, inasmuch as it was a sign that, in spite of a long period of depression, trade was reviving, and that Liverpool, as hitherto was ready to reap the advantage of the revival...Liverpool proves the confidence of its belief in the future increase of our imports and exports by constructing a dock of more than a hundred acres in area...The celebration was a formal sign of our commercial pre-eminence and Liverpool was the most fitting place to hold it.'*³

The souvenir programme concurred. It was noted that

Lately royal visits have been the order of the day in other parts of the country, where imposing demonstrations have attended...but it is doubtful if any of these have been

² T. Lane, Liverpool: Gateway of Empire, London, 1987, p.26.

³ Liverpool Echo, 10 September 1881.

fraught with more important results...it will not only affect the city...but also extend its commercial effects on the whole empire and its dependencies.

[The visit was] the celebration of a great work completed which marks a new epoch in the onward progress of Liverpool...The Docks at the North end are tangible evidence that Liverpool is determined...to retain and develop the commanding position she occupies in the peaceful arts of commerce.⁴

The 'peaceful arts of commerce' combined commercial confidence with Imperial duty. The Empire's purpose was to be trade rather than conquest. Liverpool was a Tory city, but the Liberal credo of 'Peace, Retrenchment and Reform' fitted its commercial interests. Raised to the rank of a metropolis in 1880, Liverpool could aspire to the title of the 'Second City of Empire' and this display of commercial might underscored the city's Imperial pretensions. The souvenir programme explained

John Bright once sagely remarked, 'Those who forward in the smallest degree one branch of commerce add to the amity of nations,' and their Royal Highnesses...must have had the double satisfaction of knowing that the loyalty of Liverpool was as true and sincere as ever, and that they were most materially helping in the increase of good feeling with other nations, which has its firm foundations on good commercial principle.⁵

It depicted the display of merchant shipping arranged for the visit in similar terms.

The broad bosom of the Mersey, swollen by a flowing tide and lighted by a radiant sun bore upon its waves some of the stateliest craft that ever graced the sea...in their gay attire of bunting they offered a sight more welcome than the warlike navy of any ambitious state. They are the messengers of peace and the carriers of prosperity and happiness to the nations of the world.⁶

⁴ A copy of the souvenir programme is held by the Local History section of the Liverpool Central Library, William Brown Street, Liverpool 1.

⁵ ibid.

⁶ ibid.

The moral dimension to Liverpool's commercial endeavours formed a central theme of the decorations and ceremonial. The Corporation had decorated some of the main streets with

*lines of handsome Venetian masts of various heights [which] bore upon their summits gilded crowns and cushions...Upon each mast were affixed circular shields with Prince of Wales plumes, crowns,...the Liverpool coat of arms etc. with rich trophies of national flags.*⁷

The official programme presented to the royal couple had a shield of Liverpool 'supported by elegantly modelled figures of Peace and Plenty, and surmounted by the terrestrial globe and other attributes of commerce'⁸ on its front cover.

As well as these official decorations, there were other displays which followed the international theme but from other motives. 'The leading tradesmen of Lord Street, Church Street, Bold Street, Elliot Street and Parker Street arranged for the due and uniform decoration of the thoroughfares in which their places of business were situated.'⁹ Tradesmen were bound to decorate the city as an exhibition of civic patriotism, and clearly they would reap the benefit of customers who might be attracted. Lewis' department store took out a front page advert in the Liverpool Echo which argued that, since many Liverpudlians could not provide decorations themselves,

⁷ ibid.

⁸ ibid.

⁹ ibid.

*all those who have the 'will and the way' should do their utmost to make this red letter day one of the most unmistakeably brilliant on record as a Royal Reception. To this end, Lewis's premises in Ranelagh Street will be lavishly decorated with flags of all nations and various devices, all forming a tout ensemble worth seeing. In the evening the outside of the entire building will be illuminated with gas...[and] still more brilliant effects of electric lights, variegated illuminations etc.*¹⁰

Despite Lewis' efforts, 'probably the finest display in the town was that on the frontage of the Reform Club'. In addition to the array of national shields and flags, the Club was adorned with the arms of the Earl of Sefton and the Earl of Derby who had recently joined. The heraldic emblems of Liverpool's aristocracy were particularly suited to such ceremonial display. Aristocrats commanded iconography which could enrich civic imagery and, as David Cannadine¹¹ has suggested, this ceremonial role added to their importance.

Decorations were central to encouraging and proving participation. Liverpool had to demonstrate that it could compete in loyalty with other cities. Moreover, such affection must be seen to be 'genuine' in contrast to the manufactured acclaim of Imperial France and Prussia. The editorial in the Liverpool Echo claimed

*Civic dignitaries and officials are today but the final representatives of the community; the city speaks for itself more eloquently than they, and by its crowded streets, profusions of decorations, vast array of shipping and spontaneous enthusiasm pronounces a welcome which autocratic power would seek in vain.*¹²

¹⁰ Liverpool Echo, 5 September 1881.

¹¹ D. Cannadine, 'The British Monarchy' in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge, 1993.

¹² Liverpool Echo, 8 September 1881.

According to the souvenir programme, 'dignitaries prepared the train and set it in motion with skill and good taste; but it was the masses of the people who, by their cordial and hearty participation gave the celebration its true grandeur and significance.'¹³ The colourful decorations in the city centre served to attract crowds and the informal displays elsewhere attested to the depth of patriotic feeling. In the Kensington district, which was on the route of the royal progress, there were festoons of paper flowers and flags and banners wishing 'Peace and plenty to the Queen.'

The Council could employ the city's school children to bolster the crowds and inject enthusiasm into the visit. In the Haymarket 25,000 children from sixty schools were assembled. The souvenir programme suggested that Liverpool was a pioneer in this field.

The Prince and Princess of Wales who were obviously interested at the novelty and magnitude of the sight of such an immense gathering of school children, all cheering heartily, bowed graciously in acknowledgement of the loyal and exuberant enthusiasm of their future subjects.

Both the Prince and the young Princess seemed to take the greatest interest in the appearance of the children of the Orphanage who were drawn up in line along the garden slope...The moment the carriage moved to depart amid the clang of the troopers' accoutrements there arose...a ringing silvery cheer that would have made a patriot of the greatest misanthrope...that striking spectacle which appeals to the ear as well as to the eye, but above all the mind, when young children sing in unison or join in the vocal expression of their feelings.¹⁴

The programme remarked that the organisation of such a mass of children had required 'perfect prior arrangements' and 'very efficient management.' In his autobiography, Sir William Bower

¹³ Royal Visit to Liverpool Souvenir Programme

¹⁴ ibid.

Forwood, who had been the Mayor at the time of the visit, revealed that he had still been concerned about the reception which would be bestowed upon the Prince on his way through the Irish quarter.

*We decided to quicken the pace of the carriage procession and to instruct the outriders to close in to the wheels of the royal carriage. These precautions were however unnecessary for right along Scotland Road the Prince and Princess had the heartiest reception, and when we turned out of Byrom Street into Dale Street it was with a sense of relief that I turned to the Prince and said, 'Sir, you have passed through the portion of Liverpool in which 200,000 Irish people reside.' He replied, 'I have not heard a "boo" or a groan it has been simply splendid.'*¹⁵

The royal visit did not pass without criticism. The decorations had been costly and objections, though muted, had centred on two issues. The first was raised by a correspondent to the Liverpool Echo who professed to be 'an advanced Radical in politics'. He did 'not object to all the fuss about to be made over the visit' but to 'the Town Hall being set apart for a privileged few. Cannot the ratepayers in general be permitted to have a look at the interior of the Town Hall after the Royal visitors have left?...even if they made a small charge for admission and handed the proceeds to the Infirmary.'¹⁶

The Town Hall had been extensively refitted for the visit. On viewing the refurbishments, the Prince was reputed to have ranked the Town Hall next to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg as 'the best proportioned rooms in Europe'.¹⁷ The alterations had been funded from the rates and

¹⁵ Sir W.B. Forwood, Recollections of a Busy Life, London 1920, p.91.

¹⁶ Liverpool Echo, 5 September 1881.

¹⁷ Forwood, Recollections of a Busy Life, p.97.

thus it was claimed that ratepayers had a right to view them. Forwood's response at a City Council meeting was to open the hall. Nevertheless, this was only a gesture, for admission was by no means available to all, but only on presentation of 'members' cards or by an order signed by a member'.¹⁸

The Liverpool Echo broached the second question on the day of the visit.

*To day the city puts on its gayest appearance to welcome its future King and Queen...What needs dwelling upon at such a time is that the brightening of the city is so temporary, and that behind it all is so much squalor and ugliness...it is right to make a brave show of gay bunting and scarlet cloth. But behind all our social problems press for solution, and it is a question if they are all credited with due importance.*¹⁹

For the Echo as a Liberal paper, the colourful celebrations should not be allowed to mark a triumph for the Conservative administration. Externally the city should present a splendid image, but this must not be unquestioningly accepted within the city. Civic imagery performed vital functions in raising the city's profile and in stimulating commerce, but glorification of Liverpool and of its administration must be kept separate.

The themes of expense, participation and suitability which can be distinguished in the 1881 visit, can be traced through subsequent visits. Hence the dynamics of the relationships between civic imagery, civic patriotism and political allegiance can be charted.

¹⁸ Liverpool Echo, 7 September 1881.

¹⁹ Liverpool Echo, 8 September 1881.

When the Prince of Wales next visited the city, in January 1886, unease about decorations had deepened. The Liverpool Review noted

The authorities provided a series of very effective pitfalls for pedestrians in the leading thoroughfares on Tuesday night. The pitfalls in question were the holes dug in the pavement for the planting of Venetian masts...The ratepayers have the consolation of reflecting that the pavement will probably retain uncomfortable signs of its disturbance until the whole of it is completely relaid. This may perhaps lead them to reflect that Royalty and loyalty are expensive luxuries.

The attack on the cost of civic display was linked to the question of how far it dignified both the monarchy and the city.

How awfully tired the Prince of Wales must be of the decorations which follow him about wherever he goes and with which he must be wearily familiar. Those Venetian masts and trophies must be as the decorations of a circus are to its principal performers, and he must sorely long sometimes that people would only allow him to come and go in peace and quietness without surrounding his progress with theatrical trumpery as tawdry as that of the stage.²⁰

The Review justified its attack by questioning how popular the visit had been. This paper did not have the circulations of the Liberal Liverpool Daily Post, or the Tory Liverpool Courier, but its weekly publication allowed it time for reflection and independence:

Of course the daily papers have spoken in glowing periods of the enthusiasm of the people...In such matters the daily papers are not reliable guides. But the truth is that the people were nowhere enthusiastic. Even in the Town Hall, the attempt at applause upon the entrance of the Royal party into the Council Chamber, where the address was presented, was ludicrously weak.²¹

²⁰ Liverpool Review, 23 January 1886.

²¹ Liverpool Review, 23 January 1886.

The expense of civic decorations could be defended only while it reflected the popular will. In May 1886, when the Queen visited the city to open the Liverpool Exhibition, such objections were revived with yet greater force. The occasion was of particular significance because it was the first time that a ruling British monarch had been the guest of the Corporation.²² The inauguration of the International Exhibition of Navigation, Commerce and Industry occurred on 11 May, the sixth anniversary of the sealing of the Letters Patent which had elevated Liverpool to the rank of a city. In his address at the opening of the exhibition, the Mayor exclaimed 'within these walls, the City of Liverpool, the greatest seaport of the greatest maritime nation of the world, has gathered together a collection bearing the stamp of its own individuality, and seeking to illustrate the art and science of navigation in ancient and modern times.'²³

The Times was swift to divine the resonance of the ceremony.

In population and importance Liverpool is the second city of England. Its commerce spreads into all lands. Its shipping and its docks are unrivalled in the world...Liverpool therefore is fully entitled, above all places in the kingdom outside the metropolis, and indeed in no unequal rivalry with London itself, to hold an International Exhibition...and to invite the august Ruler of the Empire to inaugurate it... Liverpool has been threatened of late with enhanced competition in its commercial and even in its maritime supremacy...Manchester has watched its vigorous and unchecked growth with undisguised jealousy and has determined to enter upon a rivalry with its maritime advantages by means of the Manchester Ship Canal. The International Exhibition...may be regarded in some sort, and however undesignedly, as Liverpool's answer to this challenge.²⁴

²² It was usual practice for royal visitors to stay as guests of the Earl of Derby or the Earl of Sefton on their visits to the region.

²³ Liverpool Review, 15 May 1886.

²⁴ The Times, 12 May 1886.

The Times also reported the preparations for the visit. It claimed that there were to be twelve miles of decorations and that the city was largely to observe a three day holiday for the visit. A nation-wide audience was informed that

*The corporation have appointed a special committee to make suitable preparations; as regards expense they have received carte blanche for the decoration of the principal streets and...nothing that money and good feeling can provide will be wanting...Private citizens are also vying with each other in erecting triumphal arches, decking their premises with bunting and ornamentation, and at night there will be an almost universal illumination of the business quarter of the town.*²⁵

This portrayal of the preparations was highly misleading, for the questions of loyalty and expense had provoked embittered clashes within the City Council. Irish Nationalist councillors found support from Liberals in resisting expenditure. At a Council meeting on 5 May, during discussion of the proceedings of the Finance Committee, the Nationalist Pat Byrne asked how much the decorations and illuminations were going to cost. The Mayor ruled that this was not a question for the Finance Committee. The Liberal leader, Robert Holt, sympathised with Byrne and noted 'When the special committee with reference to the decorations was appointed he thought it would have been discreet to have placed a sum of money at their disposal.' He suggested that the Council should take steps to do so.

The Town Clerk and the Mayor were joined by Conservative councillors in insisting that such steps would be out of order. The Town Clerk pointed out

[Town Clerk]- The whole question of the arrangements for her Majesty's reception has been delegated to a committee...it is not competent without notice to place any limit on such a reasonable amount as the committee think proper to spend...

²⁵ The Times, 5 May 1886.

[Byrne]-And can they spend as much as they like- perhaps £100,000 of the ratepayers' money?

[A Member]-Yes.²⁶

The Mayor, David Radcliffe, ruled Byrne's interruptions out of order, but Byrne raised the question again later in the same meeting. The Mayor assured the Council as the chairman of the committee that

Every care will be taken not to do anything unnecessary. but to do everything in a proper manner suitable to the occasion. I suppose that was the wish of the Council when they instructed the committee to take the necessary steps to give her Majesty that welcome which it is the duty of all loyal citizens to give her, and I am sure that this Council will be fully satisfied with what the committee have done and the way in which they have looked after, not only the object which the Council had in view- to give her Majesty that suitable reception which is due to her, and also suitable to the dignity of this city-but at the same time they have taken care that nothing is thrown away unnecessarily.²⁷

Radcliffe's speech is revealing. It maintained that civic decorations were not only a test of loyalty, but furthermore a test of civic patriotism. Expenditure on civic ceremonial was as much owed to the dignity of the city as to the person of the monarch. In addition, Radcliffe argued that the priorities of the committee were clear. Firstly, care should be taken that the decorations assured civic reputation, and only then should the question of cost be considered.

Byrne skilfully repackaged the loyalty arguments as he redoubled his attacks.

So long as it was the wish of the majority of the people to pay homage...let them do so by all means...He thought the Queen would get quite as loyal a reception if the decorations were left to the people themselves. Some of the streets through which the

²⁶ Liverpool Echo, 5 May 1886.

²⁷ ibid.

Queen would pass were being decorated by the Corporation and some were not, and the arch at the bottom of London road was, he was told, to cost £500 at the expense of ratepayers.

[Mr. J.B. Smith]- Do you rule this in order Mr. Mayor?

[Mr. Mayor]- The Town Clerk advises me it is not.²⁸

In spite of these attempts to curtail further discussion, Holt suggested that £10,000 be placed at the disposal of the committee. The Mayor ruled this out of order, but promised to have Byrne and Holt placed on the special committee. Both strenuously rejected this invitation since this might circumscribe their opposition.

Sir James Picton, a celebrated antiquarian and Independent councillor closed the debate by restating some of Radcliffe's arguments. Where civic image and civic dignity were at stake, conflict within the Council was unbecoming. The city's reputation could therefore be used to quash opposition.

If there had been meetings of the Council to wrangle over every item he wished to know whether the credit of the city would have been maintained or whether they would not have been degrading themselves (hear, hear)...Loyalty to the Queen was loyalty to themselves because she was the embodiment of their ideas of government and the head of the nation...He was glad to know the Queen would be welcomed in a noble and liberal spirit of which they would not be ashamed.²⁹

The Liverpool Review, as an independent Liberal paper, leapt to Holt's defence, maintaining that his views had been 'heartily sympathised with by the general public.' It floated a figure of £50,000 as the amount to be spent on decorations and calculated that this would cost a shopkeeper rated at £60 the sum of £1 10s. 'Now not a few will ask, is the game worth the

²⁸ ibid.

²⁹ ibid.

candle?' The Review concluded that 'Mr. R.D. Holt and gentlemen like him are more truly loyal than are the tuft hunters who imagine that they are behaving "nobly" when they spend other people's money.'

The expenditure on the visit ultimately cost the ratepayers £12,000.³⁰ The arch on London road was certainly impressive. It was built of wood coloured to imitate stone and was emblazoned with the Royal Standard, the arms of Liverpool and gold inscriptions of 'Our Queen Empress', 'Prosperity' and 'Loyalty'. The arch measured twenty-six feet across, the crown of the central arch was forty feet high and the highest point was eighty feet high.³¹ On the day of the Queen's arrival however, a gale was blowing and the arch toppled, injuring four people.

Elsewhere the decorations were similarly lavish. The entablature of St. George's Hall was surrounded by jets of light and on the main cornice 'Welcome; God Bless our Queen; Welcome' was spelt out in letters ten feet high.³² Even the Liverpool Review was overwhelmed by the illumination of the Town Hall which attracted the crowds.

The appearance of the Town Hall afforded every excuse for the block in front of it. Outlined in fire and with every detail of architecture visible in the blaze of light it looked like the fairy palace of a dream than anything more mundane (sic)...Dale Street was like an avenue of flame culminating in the Town Hall blaze of triumph...This was in fact the people's real part in the entertainment provided and they entered into it with a gusto which no discomfort could affect in the least.³³

³⁰ This sum was granted to Mayor Radcliffe to cover the expenses of entertaining the Queen in June 1886. See Council Proceedings 1885/86, 2 June 1886

³¹ Liverpool Echo, 4 May 1886.

³² ibid.

³³ Liverpool Review, 15 May 1886.

The illuminations were one means of encouraging mass participation in the visit. Another was a grand trades procession which 'paraded the principal streets with bands of music, banners and other decorations to the number of about five thousand'.³⁴

Once again, school children played a prominent part in the festivities. A parade of happy, healthy school children was a valuable asset in civic image building. Arguably the greatest threat to Liverpool's progressive image was its reputation for disease which had earned it the tag of 'The Black Spot on the Mersey.' The Bitter Cry of Outcast London had caused an outcry with its bleak picture of the social conditions in the capital and there had been similar investigations in Liverpool.³⁵ The most damaging had been Hugh Farrie's Squalid Liverpool and its sequel Toiling Liverpool which had been serialised in the Liverpool Daily Post- the city's leading Liberal paper. The Liverpool Review had joined in the declamations against Tory administration which followed. With national attention turned to the city in 1886, the Review took up a different stance.

*The school children, organised largely through the activity of Mr. William Oulton J.P. were marching soon after twelve o' clock and very pretty they looked- clean, neatly dressed and well behaved. Their appearance made it evident that, in spite of the revelations of 'Squalid Liverpool' and 'Toiling Liverpool' the working classes are not all in a condition of abject poverty.*³⁶

³⁴ ibid.

³⁵ It would be wrong to conclude that social investigation in Liverpool arose simply in emulation of London. As editor of Porcupine in the 1860s and 1870s, Hugh Shimmin had done much to raise awareness of the city's social problems.

³⁶ Liverpool Review, 15 May 1886.

A dinner in St. George's Hall 'provided at the expense of the Mayor for 700 poor men and women, none under the age of her Majesty'³⁷ was a further, high profile, indication that the municipality was not shirking its social responsibilities. Civic charity had long been a proof of civilisation in the Ancient World and such conspicuous alms-giving continued a tradition of civic virtue.

The Mayor himself, recently accused of 'tuft hunting', found his reputation rehabilitated after the ceremonies. The Liverpool Review contrasted Radcliffe with the sixty-four mayors who had been invited. They 'did not make a pretty picture...they felt themselves to be of importance. They were the centre of the show.'³⁸ Whereas Radcliffe's deportment

*was admirable...and when at the conclusion of the inaugural ceremony, the Queen touched him...and he arose Sir David Radcliffe the cheers were more hearty and spontaneous than at any other time of the day. The vast concourse of people felt with one accord that Her Majesty had fittingly honoured an energetic and worthy citizen and their plaudits came naturally and with unbounded enthusiasm.'*³⁹

The internal and external dimensions of image are striking. Radcliffe might be derided for his activities on the Council, but was to be honoured as the representative of Liverpool. Sir David Radcliffe had been transformed from a 'tuft hunter' to 'the best loved public man in Liverpool'⁴⁰ within the space of a week.

³⁷ The Queen, born on 24 May 1819, was approaching her 67th birthday. Liverpool Review, 15 May 1886.

³⁸ ibid.

³⁹ ibid.

⁴⁰ ibid.

When the Queen died, fifteen years later, the coronation of Edward VII was accompanied by extensive civic celebrations. These were as much an opportunity to review Liverpool's growth and reassert its economic position in the Empire as to acclaim the new king, since the festivities in the parks went ahead even though the King's appendicitis postponed the coronation. Indeed, Richard Holt, son of Robert, recorded in his diary

*The public seem to me to have taken the news rather coolly. The truth is that the King is not respected on personal grounds + the coronation ceremonies + rejoicings have been arranged for the idle + thoughtless rather than for the more serious minded.*⁴¹

The official programme, rather stiltedly, expounded on comparisons between the extent of the dock estate at the King's birth (in 1841) and his coronation (1902). This was a stage for a tale about the rise of Liverpoolian power. Reviewing the 'progress made during the sixty years completing the lifetime of the King', the programme stated

*Undoubtedly no port in His Majesty's dominions can, within the period named, furnish stronger proof of energetic effort to meet the requirement of every branch of trade than may be instanced at Liverpool...it must be acknowledged by every impartial observer that in this direction Liverpool is superior to all others...The trade and wealth of Liverpool have increased as time has advanced until it has become in many respects the **foremost port** in the Empire.*⁴²

⁴¹ Diary of Richard Holt in the Holt Papers, 27 June 1902.

⁴² City of Liverpool. Celebration of the Coronation of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. Souvenir Programme.

To mark the occasion, sports days were held for children at Newsham, Stanley and Sefton Parks and at Wavertree Playground, thus providing events throughout the city and not just at the civic centre. In addition to the cricket, rounders and races, there were bands and marionettes. Corporation commemorative medallions were presented to 130,000 school children and special booklets were published for distribution at schools. These booklets celebrated Liverpool's civic life, as well as the coronation. They included pictures of the Mayor (in full regalia), the Town Hall, St. George's Hall, the Museum, the Picton Library, the Walker Art Gallery and an Atlantic liner.⁴³

The week-long programme of events was varied and provided entertainment for all classes of citizens. Conspicuous charity was to the fore again. St. George's Hall, the city's finest public building, was the venue for a dinner of veterans of the Indian and Crimean campaigns, a distribution of sweets to poor children and a tea party for old people. As in 1886, there was a Trades procession, illuminations and fireworks. Nurses, municipal officers, telephone assistants and Hospital Saturday⁴⁴ women-workers were treated to trips to see the marine display of decorated steamers. A Working Men's Garden Party was given by the Lord Mayor⁴⁵ in the Botanic Gardens. There was a separate garden party and official ball which the Lord Mayor also hosted to which Liverpool's elite were invited.

⁴³ The labels for these presentation booklets are shown in Coronation of King Edward VII. Souvenir Programme., p.18.

⁴⁴ Hospital Saturday was a civic charity.

⁴⁵ From 1892, Liverpool's chief magistrate was raised to the rank of Lord Mayor.

Kept separate from the elite, Liverpool's working men and their wives could not claim civic entertainment as a right; it had to be won by proofs of civic duty. As the official programme explained, 'the invitations have been issued mainly to the firms whose employees have contributed above a certain sum of money to the Hospital Saturday Fund.'⁴⁶

The new King's only visit to the city was on 19 July 1904, when he laid the foundation stone of the Anglican Cathedral. The creation of the bishopric of Liverpool⁴⁷ had promoted the town to a city. The cathedral was of great significance for Liverpool's image and was intended as the crowning glory of civic architecture. At a Council meeting on 1 June 1904, a motion to provide £6,000 for the visit was discussed. The motion passed by a majority of twenty-six against variegated opposition. For the Irish Nationalist councillors and Non-Conformist Liberals such as Robert Holt, religious motives were added to their former grounds for resistance.⁴⁸

Holt wrote in his diary that many had thought the grant to be excessive, but had voted for it

*so as not to appear what they call 'disloyal'. The Visit, it is felt, is not to the City, but is an invitation from the Cathedral Committee...therefore many contend sectarian in its aspect and not municipal. Money however voted.*⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Coronation of King Edward VII Programme.

⁴⁷ For the background to the creation of the bishopric, see P.S. Morrish, 'The Creation of the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool' in Northern History Vol. XXXII (1996), pp. 173-194.

⁴⁸ Notwithstanding, Holt and the Nationalist Alderman Commins were members of the special committee charged with making arrangements for the visit.

⁴⁹ Diary of Robert Holt in the Holt Papers, Liverpool Central Library, 1 June 1904.

Councillors Skelton and Utley, both Tories, opposed the motion, pressing an amendment to increase the grant to £7,000. Their amendment was lost. An attempt by ultra-Protestant Tories to secure the appointment of George Wise, the uncompromising and inflammatory anti-ritualist pastor, to the committee was similarly defeated.⁵⁰

The question of expenditure was thus viewed differently in 1904 than it had been when Queen Victoria visited. For Edward's visit, a sum was fixed where it had not been in 1886. Although the King's visit was only for one day, the expenditure was half that of 1886. The Liverpool Review detected signs of economy.

I fancy- I would not like to say so on oath- but I fancy that a number of old Coronation decorations were being pressed into the service of Berry and Great George Streets...The finest example of individual decoration, and in this comparison I include all the city's public buildings, was that of Messrs. Cooper and Co., Church Street.⁵¹

Sir William Bower Forwood gave an address as the Chairman of the Executive Committee in which he set the cathedral against the context of Liverpool's commercial life. The siting of the cathedral had been a divisive issue, and those who insisted that it should be an important maritime landmark had carried the day.⁵²

Men looked for a stately building worthy of this great community with its stores of wealth, its world wide connections, its untiring industrial activities and its manifold interests, which should be reared by all and for all...The Cathedral, standing on St. James' Mount, 155 feet above the river, will be seen at once from every vessel

⁵⁰ Council Proceedings 1903/04, 1 June 1904.

⁵¹ Liverpool Review, 23 July 1904.

⁵² see P. Kennerley, The Building of Liverpool Cathedral, Preston, 1991 for an account of the proposed schemes for the Cathedral and of how the design evolved during construction.

approaching the Mersey. Its two great towers⁵³, by far the highest objects in the city, will rear their lofty heads 415 feet above the level of the sea.⁵⁴

The laying of the foundations occasioned high ceremonial, but where the Liverpool Review had praised the arrangements of 1886 and recognised the participants as representatives of the community, a more jaundiced view was taken in 1904. Civic ceremonial was no longer sacrosanct, but was open to ridicule.

At St. George's Hall,

At last a fanfare of trumpets...told of the approach of the King and Queen. First came the indispensable regalia, and then preceding their Majesties, the Lord Mayor bearing a white wand of office like a billiard cue. He was like Polonius in the play⁵⁵...Alderman Bowring on being presented almost forgot to leave the Royal presence backwards. In fact he had turned and was beginning to walk away when he suddenly remembered...the Lord Mayor suffered from the most abject nervousness...his expression was often rapt and trance-like...Principal Dale also suffered from stage fright and, in spite of the Earl of Derby's hints, was quite some time before he had plucked up enough courage to read the address...At the instigation of the Earl of Derby, who was like a father to all of them, the Lord Mayor flopped on his knees at the feet of the King, a bundle of crimson cloth and fur, to receive the knighthood...after he received the accolade he arose with a face so radiant that it looked like a rising sun.

You should really have more command of your feelings Sir Robert⁵⁶ - or shouldn't it be Sir Alfred- since the King so called you?...The King and the new Knight chatted for quite a minute over the pieces of plate presented to his Majesty by the Corporation...as though they were negotiating a bargain.⁵⁷

⁵³ The original concept of two towers was later abandoned in favour of the single central tower as executed. In the light of the frequent glorification of Liverpool as the new Venice, one of the designs submitted to the competition had been for a Byzantine edifice modelled on St. Mark's. Edwin Lutyens also chose a Byzantine design for his Roman Catholic Cathedral of which only the crypt was built.

⁵⁴ Liverpool Cathedral- Souvenir of the Laying of the Foundation Stone, Liverpool, 1904.

⁵⁵ Polonius was the Lord Chamberlain in Shakespeare's Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.

⁵⁶ Robert A. Hampson was the Lord Mayor.

⁵⁷ Liverpool Review, 23 July 1904.

The difference in tone from 1886 is partly attributable to the more satirical style which the Liverpool Review had adopted since it changed format in 1900. However, Edward VII did not inspire the same respect as his mother. Similarly, it was evident that the Lord Mayor was not seen to be as judicious in striking a balance between dignity and pomposity as his predecessor, Radcliffe.⁵⁸ In contrast, aristocrats such as the Earl of Derby were particularly suitable for public office because they were at ease in performing ceremonial. (Derby had been Lord Mayor in 1896 and his son would follow him in the office in 1911. Both served as Chancellors of Liverpool University.)⁵⁹

On the Saturday following the King's visit, a number of children's festivals were held in the municipal parks. As well as sporting events, other attractions were on offer, which did not escape the attention of the Liverpool Review correspondent.

Flaring posters in oils depicting an Australian gold miner being torn to death by seven South African lions amidst the icy mountains of the North Pole...I saw a lady in spangled sheen enter the cage of a lion who looked as though he were dying of old age and who had to be whipped into a show of fierceness and stirred into action with long poles...A boxing booth in which an anti-prepossessing lady of formidable appearance lifted huge weights and two other ladies, clad in pink and green tights respectively had a real good set-to with the gloves, a sight fully worth the twopence for admission, although scarcely an entertainment to elevate and instruct the rising generation, for which, it was, to all intents and purposes, provided.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ This was further illustrated by the furore surrounding Augustus John's mayoral portrait of Chaloner Dowdall with his valet in 1909. The Lord Mayor's heroic posture in civic regalia led to unflattering comparisons with Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

⁵⁹ See David Cannadine's chapter on 'Ornamental Mayors' in D. Cannadine, The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy, London and New Haven, 1990.

⁶⁰ Liverpool Review, 23 July 1904.

There was indeed a certain incongruity in the connection of such amusements with civic ritual and celebration, but the festal element of celebration could not be overlooked if participation was to be secured. For civic festivities to attract crowds, popular tastes and civic dignity had to be reconciled, at times with uneven success. At each of the venues, the Lord Mayor crowned a Rose Queen providing a civic climax to the celebrations.

*A pompous march by the band heralded in each park the approach of the Lord Mayor and his gracious Lady Mayoress. They were preceded by the full strength of the Civic Regalia, and there were so many strange new emblems that they might have been taken out of pawn in honour of the occasion. They were all- the Lord Mayor and the Regalia bearers- heavily clad in furs and crimson, and Sir, if you will kindly throw your memory back to the climactic conditions of last Saturday, you will agree with me that office has its drawbacks.*⁶¹

Two years later, the Prince of Wales visited the city to open the new Cotton Exchange. A comparison with his father's visit as Prince of Wales in 1881 is instructive. The vast crowds and elaborate decorations were gone. Although the Lord Mayor was present at the ceremony, the Corporation was not officially involved. The Liverpool Daily Post identified the visit as of a 'semi-private character'.⁶² It reasoned that this was to avoid envy on the part of other cities.

*The Prince had visited the city twice within recent years, and his Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, her Royal Highness the Duchess of Connaught, and her Royal Highness Princess Louise had each officiated at respective local functions within the past twelve months. Efforts are being made to honour provincial cities and towns with the favour of Royal presence in a proportionate equality that will cause neither jealousy nor complaint.*⁶³

⁶¹ ibid.

⁶² Liverpool Daily Post, 29 November 1906.

⁶³ Liverpool Daily Post, 1 December 1906.

Hence, although there were 'thick lines of spectators' in some areas, 'the immediate concourse usual on state Royal visits was absent.' The lack of enthusiasm for the visit seemed to indicate a certain fatigue with royal visits which outstripped official expectations. The police were 'present in strong force...but their duties were not of an exacting nature.'⁶⁴ As though to corroborate the claim that civic rivalry had determined the scale of the visit, the Manchester Courier contemptuously noted

*In Liverpool itself, save for scores of Union Jacks on the flagstaffs there was little to show the presence of the royal visitors until Old Hall Street was reached. Here the rather narrow thoroughfare was bedizened in the conventional manner...the scene was not a very brilliant one, save as regarded the splendid proportions of the hall.*⁶⁵

The Liverpool Courier was as ungenerous about Manchester. It related the new Cotton Exchange to the Manchester Ship Canal, musing 'it is one of the curious facts of Lancashire history that just as the Ship Canal became an actual fact, so our cotton brokers became more rooted in our midst.'⁶⁶ As Marriner has suggested, the Ship Canal was viewed with pride by Mancunians since 'they could simultaneously undermine the monopoly positions held by both the railways and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board.'⁶⁷ (It was more than aesthetic preferences that led both Manchester City and Manchester United football clubs to incorporate the image of the Ship Canal in their crests.) At first 'the Canal did not exert severe competitive

⁶⁴ ibid.

⁶⁵ Manchester Courier, 1 December 1906.

⁶⁶ Liverpool Courier, 30 November 1906.

⁶⁷ S. Marriner, The Economic and Social Development of Merseyside, London, 1982, p.97.

pressure on the existing Mersey docks...but gradually it was established and from 1906 Manchester ranked as the U.K.'s fourth port.⁶⁸ Liverpool remained defiant.

Some people imagined years ago that the trade of Liverpool had reached its highest altitude and must prepare to dwindle in favour of Manchester and other competing ports...[but] the trade of what the Prince of Wales very properly calls our 'world renowned port' is still developing and the splendid new Liverpool Cotton Exchange affords very tangible evidence that in the realm of King Cotton this Mersey port still holds its own and is in no danger of being superceded.⁶⁹

Despite such civic rivalry, the Prince of Wales' visit had not been marked by Corporation ceremonial; yet for his coronation as George V in 1911, the city provided entertainment more extensive than in 1902.

Civic charity was on an unprecedented scale. A total of 169,200 people (out of a total population of nearly 750,000) were estimated to have been entertained by gifts or festivities, excluding members of the general public who attended the entertainments in the parks. The bulk of this figure comprised of 137,000 school children and nearly 18,500 other disabled or disadvantaged children.⁷⁰ The Lady Mayoress distributed gifts in the main hospitals, and St. George's Hall witnessed treats for 1,100 aged poor and 600 adult blind. The entertainment in the municipal parks included conjurers, ventriloquists, fireworks, bands, marionettes and crayon cartoonists.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, pp.97 and 98.

⁶⁹ *Liverpool Courier*, 1 December 1906.

⁷⁰ See Waller, *Democracy and Sectarianism*, p.252.

Frank Leslie, the leading figure in the organisation of the Liverpool Pageant of 1907, had arranged a tableau of historical coronations which formed a didactic centre-piece to the festivities. In the souvenir programme, Leslie outlined the lessons which he believed could be drawn from the examples of Charlemagne, Elizabeth, the Mikado, Peter the Great and Victoria whose achievements were dramatised. 'To consecrate a life in devotion to a high ideal is at all times noble, but surely most of all when that ideal is the progress and prosperity of an Empire.'⁷¹ Leslie had not abandoned his hopes of employing imagery to stimulate patriotism after the problems he had encountered in 1907. The festivities which accompanied the 'Pageant of Coronations' eased some of the challenges of participation which had proved so intractable four years previously, not least because a coronation entailed a more lavish exposition of loyalty.

As Pat O'Mara recalled,

*On the morning of the great day, Mr. McGinnis handed each of us schoolboys four shining halfpennies with the dramatic announcement 'These coins are the gift of their most gracious Majesties to you- see that you keep them all your lives!' Mr. McGinnis was that unusual being: a zealous British patriot of pure Irish stock. It was rather strange, too, to see the snooty bourgeoisie and their children for once mingling with the slummies- being British one and all for the afternoon.'*⁷²

The monarch paid his first visit to Liverpool in 1913, when he opened the Gladstone Dock as part of his tour of Lancashire. The Liverpool Echo was in no doubt that 'from a spectacular point of view, Liverpool's function will surpass in picturesqueness anything seen in the other parts of the country through which their Majesties have passed this week.'⁷³ Although the King came to

⁷¹ King George V Coronation 1911. Souvenir Programme, Liverpool, 1911.

⁷² P. O'Mara, The Autobiography of a Liverpool Irish Slummy, London, 1934, pp. 93 and 94.

⁷³ Liverpool Echo, 10 July 1913.

open a dock, as his father had done in 1881, international developments invested the occasion with a very different significance.

Reference was made, as on that earlier occasion, to the

*place of the port amid the ports of the world and to that policy, of which the new dock is striking evidence, which brought it to the van and is determined to keep it there...In the great work of keeping intact the links that bind his Majesty's scattered peoples, Liverpool has for centuries played a leading part. To an increasing extent every year her ships maintain that flow of trade which means so much to the whole Empire.*⁷⁴

Circumstances had changed the tone but not the theme of the festivities. Liverpool's trade still underpinned the Empire at a time when pressure for self-government was growing in South Africa, Canada, Australia and Ireland. At the opening of the dock, the King recognised Liverpool's Imperial mission

*The trade of Liverpool and my overseas Dominions is an important factor in our Imperial development and I am confident that the completion of this and other new docks will extend and strengthen your relations with all parts of the Empire and secure the commercial pre-eminence on which our common well-being so largely depends.*⁷⁵

Martial virtues were extolled, too. The review of the merchant fleet of 1881 was replaced by night time illuminations of HMS Lancaster, HMS Liverpool and the vessels of the Channel Fleet. The Territorial units of the city marched past the King on church parade.

⁷⁴ Liverpool Echo, 11 July 1913.

⁷⁵ Liverpool Echo, 12 July 1913.

Once again, children were central to the ceremonial. The King visited the Liverpool Exhibition, where he was met by 10,000 elementary school children who sang the national anthem. It should not be forgotten that school children were performers who could be trained and employed in civic ceremonial to achieve massive effect at little cost. Later on in the itinerary, the Royal Procession made its way to the Everton football club ground, Goodison Park. Inside the stadium were

*ninety six drill squads...[who] have spent weeks in practising the physical exercises and marching and have attained a high pitch of efficiency...
4.45 assembly for massed drill display: to the strains of a stirring quick step 1,920 costumed boys and girls will march on to the arena; few in the crowd will witness the initial movement without a thrill but should there be any still left cold there is more to stir the emotions in the precision of the drill and the cadence of the movements and the obvious keenness of every boy and girl.⁷⁶*

Lest the martial element of this display of drill had escaped any observer, the grand finale involved the children forming a living Union Jack and singing 'Rule Britannia'. Leslie and Legge (the Director of Education) who had envisaged the 1907 Pageant as a means of inculcating children with the lessons of civic patriotism, co-operated again on the Display Committee for the drill, with Leslie chairing the committee.

The royal visit was attended by the familiar displays of civic largesse. About 134,000 children and 10,000 adults received municipal 'treats'. As they had been in 1881, the Town Hall state rooms were refitted. However, in 1913 the scale of the refurbishment and the access enjoyed by the public evidenced shifting attitudes towards ratepayers' rights concerning ceremonial. The Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee, Alderman Cohen, admitted

⁷⁶ Liverpool Football Echo, 5 July 1913.

*He would not say that the price of the alterations had been no object, but that the object was worthy of the price (hear, hear). The money had been spent with the greatest discrimination and economy, efficiency however being the first consideration. The Lord Mayor was giving the public an opportunity to see everything, and if they could not all put their knees under the mahogany, they could walk over the carpets and see the renovated suite of rooms.*⁷⁷

Where Radcliffe had set out the priorities of ceremonial expenditure in 1886 as display first and economy second, Cohen emphasised that the reverse held in 1913. The arrangements for public viewing were also more extensive than in 1881, with two sessions open at an admission charge of threepence which was to go to charity. Attendance at the most prestigious events was, however, strictly limited, as the symbolic function of ritual in expressing social status was not overlooked. St. George's Hall was filled by 'a company of ladies and gentlemen representative of all that is best in the civic, literary, artistic, educational, philanthropic, commercial and social life of the city.'⁷⁸

Admiration of the Town Hall was not universal. A letter to the Liverpool Echo bewailed

the eyesore which was once our Town Hall...At the first rumour of Royalty a horde of Corporation hirelings swarm over our public edifices, bandage them round with crepe, and plaster them with gilt and tinsel until they have the appearance of glorified sixpenny bazaars.

*The King is coming to Liverpool the port and home of industry and maritime enterprise, not to a provincial Fun City.*⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Liverpool Echo, 10 July 1913.

⁷⁸ Liverpool Echo, 11 July 1913.

⁷⁹ Liverpool Echo, 10 July 1913.

Nor was such cynicism an isolated opinion. The Labour Party shared this belief that rich display was an affront to the dignity of the city. The secretary of the Liverpool I.L.P., Mr. Higenbottom echoed the discomfort voiced in 1881- that decorations and grandeur were designed to sweep social problems out of sight. In protest 850 members or associates of the Liverpool Labour party chose the day of the royal visit to organise an outing to Llandudno. Just as in 1886, care had to be taken that such objections could not be labelled as disloyalty.

It had been said that the Labour party in leaving Liverpool on the day when the King came to the City was disloyal...[Higenbottom] did not think there was any member in their party who would go out of his way to disparage the present head of state. They recognised that he was head of state by the will of the people, and if the people chose to have a monarchy that was the people's own affair. But they did say that the enormous palaver and decoration and fuss was overdone, and that it had been organised by Lord Derby as a political move to rouse feeling for Toryism in Lancashire...the great Barnum and Bailey show in Liverpool had been organised for the purpose of bolstering up the Tory party, and while the King was supposed to be coming down to Lancashire to study the industrial conditions there...he did not go down to the docks at Liverpool and investigate the conditions in which the seamen had to live...The members of the Independent Labour Party did not like all the flummery and they claimed that their patriotism went far deeper than the patriotism of the Jingoese and Bunges of Liverpool.⁸⁰

If one approach was to ignore the celebrations, another was to disrupt them. The Liverpool Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) had already disrupted a number of public events. Lloyd George's rally in 1908, Haldane's speech at Sun Hall in 1909 and Churchill's visit of the same year had witnessed window smashing or heckling. During the King's visit in 1913, local suffragettes started a fire on the promenade in nearby Southport and burnt down Sir William Lever's holiday home at Rivington Pike.⁸¹ Krista Cowman has shown that Liverpool

⁸⁰ Liverpool Echo, 12 July 1913.

⁸¹ M. van Helmond, Votes For Women: The Events on Merseyside 1870- 1928, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1992, pp. 35-41 and 80-81.

suffragettes 'continued to devise increasingly imaginative ways of stretching the boundaries of political action.'⁸² On 12 July, the King's arrival in the city met with 'a curious exhibition of militant suffrage tactics.'

*A band of suffragettes had gathered to witness the proceedings which were evidently not to their taste...one of the suffragettes, Miss Jollie...armed with a poker...flew across the street to the shop of Messrs. Werner and Co. a side window of which is in South John Street. She deliberately smashed the glass with the poker...Her object accomplished, the enraged suffragette rushed back to headquarters.*⁸³

In a separate incident, a bouquet of flowers attached to a note addressed to the King was thrown at the royal carriage.

The responses of the Labour movement and the WSPU to civic ceremonial sheds more light on the paradigm within which these events, and the debates which accompanied them, were conducted. Throughout the four decades of visits and festivities considered, the concept of loyalty had set the boundaries for criticism of civic imagery. Loyalty and patriotism had been contested ground. Those who sought to oppose the ritual adopted by the Corporation had to define their relationship to the city and to the state lest their attacks be misconstrued.

As Sir James Picton had perceived in 1886, loyalty and display for the monarch were really loyalty and display for the city and social order. Hence, Liberal attacks were generally limited to the issue of expense since they fundamentally shared the Tory world-view of loyalty. Irish

⁸² K. Cowman, "'The stone-throwing has been forced upon us': The function of militancy within the Liverpool W.S.P.U., 1906-14' in Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Vol. 145, 1995, p.191.

⁸³ Liverpool Echo, 12 July 1913.

Nationalist and Labour councillors, however, could be more radical in their opposition because of other nationalist or internationalist ties. Similarly, the WSPU's militant suffragism challenged the legitimacy of the established order.

Loyalty also helps to explain why coronation festivities were so lavish when the visits of 1906 and 1913 indicate tighter financial constraints on civic ceremonial. Since the 1880s, as David Cannadine has demonstrated, royal visits were more commonplace.⁸⁴ R.C.K. Ensor commented that where Queen Victoria had shunned publicity, her son revelled in it. 'Along with his frank amiability went a genial delight in display, a passion for uniforms and decorations, for sumptuous entertainments and processions, and big shows of every kind.'⁸⁵ The demands which more frequent display made on ratepayers, the decreasing scarcity value of royal visits and the Labour campaign against 'junketing' instigated by John Morrisey as a municipal auditor in 1902, all contributed towards efforts to rein in expenditure. Coronation festivities, however, were extremely potent expressions of loyalty which demanded ceremonial to match other cities since direct comparisons were possible.

The importance of royal visits and civic ceremonial is in the analytical perspective which they open on civic image. The statements of Liverpool's commercial mission were as central to such events as the acclaim for the monarchy. In association with the loyalty owed to the state, the imagery of Liverpool and Empire legitimised commercial endeavours. The hegemonic image of Liverpoolian commercial grandeur and progressive administration was thus reaffirmed.

⁸⁴ See Cannadine's essay in The Invention of Tradition.

⁸⁵ R.C.K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, Oxford, 1988, p.342.

Chapter Two- Whose birthday is it? The Liverpool Pageant of 1907

In 1907, the Corporation of Liverpool organised a pageant to commemorate the septcentenary of the granting of the city's charter. Liverpool was not alone in such an enterprise. Philip Waller has identified a 'craze for historical pageants...between 1905 and 1909'¹. Indeed, between 1906 and 1913, pageants were held in Bath, Bury St. Edmunds, Chelsea, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Dover, Gloucestershire, King's Lynn, Lancaster, London, Oxford, Pevensey, Reading, Ripon, Romsey, Saffron Walden, St. Albans, Sherborne, Scarborough, Warwick, Winchester, West Dorset and York. Education and entertainment were combined in the depiction of colourful episodes from the civic past.

Louis Parker was the most celebrated of the pageant masters who organised such events. His pageant at Sherborne in 1905 signalled the start of the pageant craze. R.C.K. Ensor, who wrote Parker's entry in the Dictionary of National Biography, believed that his pageants 'essentially expressed the settled prosperous life of the historic England as it was before the world wars.'² In his autobiography, Several of My Lives, Parker set out his precepts for 'pageanting'.

A Pageant is...a Festival of Thanksgiving in which a great city or a little hamlet celebrates its glorious past, its prosperous present and its hopes and aspirations for the future. It is a Commemoration of Local Worthies. It is also a great Festival of Brotherhood in which all distinctions of whatever kind are sunk in a common effort. It is, therefore, entirely undenominational and non-political...It is the great incentive to the right kind of patriotism: love of hearth; love of town; love of country; love of England.

¹ P.J.Waller, Town, City and Nation: England 1850-1914, Oxford, 1983, p. 314.

² R.C.K. Ensor, 'Louis Napoleon Parker' in Dictionary of National Biography 1941-1950, Oxford 1959, p.652.

Parker's retrospective was a vision of the ideal type of pageant, yet the reality was much harder to achieve. He confessed 'if I were asked to indicate the ideal Master of the Pageant, I should unhesitatingly point to Signor Benito Mussolini.'³

Parker was not alone in his faith in the power of festive images to spur patriotic feeling. The programme for the Pageant of London, staged in 1910, explained that its aim was not for 'a pictorial and dramatic display which will please the eye and pass without leaving any lasting impression, but to stimulate thought and imagination and to demonstrate and remind us of the closeness of the associations which link the overseas dominions to the centre of British Imperial rule.'⁴ The Liverpool pageant was one instance of a wider movement which explicitly linked civic imagery and civic patriotism.

It was claimed that 'the modern revival of the Pageant in England, which may be said to have had its birth in the Sherborne Pageant of 1905, is essentially historical in character.' The London programme commented, 'no small part of the charm of the Pageants which have been held at places like Warwick, Oxford, Bath and Winchester was the presentation of episodes in the history of those places in a setting where historical associations of romantic interest were linked to scenery of great natural beauty.'⁵ Parker agreed, declaring that 'the impressiveness of a Pageant depends largely on the place in which it is performed. This should be a historical site: a ruined castle; the site of a monastery etc.'⁶ Liverpool would not be a propitious site.

The few medieval buildings of note which there had been in Liverpool, such as the castle, had been demolished as the town prospered and grew. The city's history presented particular

³ L.N. Parker, Several of My Lives, London, 1928, pp.279 and 284.

⁴ The Pageant of London, London, 1910, p.15. Celebrations in Canada commemorated the tercentenary of Quebec in 1908.

⁵ ibid., pp. 16 and 17.

⁶ Parker, Several of My Lives, p.279.

challenges. Unlike the other towns mentioned, Liverpool had not been noteworthy in the Middle Ages. The settlement on which King John had bestowed a charter in 1207 was barely more than a fishing village. Apart from the brief siege of the town by Prince Rupert during the English Civil War, Liverpool had played no discernible role in the nation's story. When it did come to prominence in the eighteenth century, Liverpool's fortune had been built upon the slave trade- hardly promising ground for edifying lessons in civic virtue. Sectarian divisions also demanded particular sensitivity. Scenes such as William of Orange's forces driving off drunken Irish looters, which heralded the arrival of Reading's civic insignia in that town's pageant, would be as likely to excite mob violence as civic pride in Liverpool.

The septcentenary pageant was an exercise in the construction and communication of civic image on a grand scale. The City Council's grant to the Pageant Committee of £2000 was the same amount as was usually granted to the Lord Mayor to support civic receptions and ceremonial for a whole year.⁷ The cars, banners, trophies and costumes cost almost £2500.⁸ Robert Holt recorded in his diary that it was a 'splendid show', but added, 'whether you might think the event of sufficient importance to celebrate by such a display is an open question.'⁹ The purpose of the expenditure was unclear. The competing, albeit not exclusive, claims of entertainment and education were not convincingly reconciled and this uncertainty of direction was further clouded because the festivities were run as a commercial enterprise.

Consequently, the pageant suffered from a participation deficit; subscriptions were low, voluntary assistance from Liverpoolians was slow to materialise and fears were frequently voiced about how popular the events would be. The story of the Liverpool pageant suggests the need to include participation in any theoretical framework of civic image and civic

⁷ W.B. Forwood, Recollections of a Busy Life, Liverpool, 1910, p.98.

⁸ '700th Anniversary of the Foundation of Liverpool. Celebration Fund.' in Council Proceedings 1906/7, pp. 2260 and 2261.

⁹ Diary of Robert Holt, 3 August 1907 in Holt Papers at Liverpool Central Library.

patriotism. There was no inexorable connection between a grandiose narrative of civic achievement and an increased affective investment in the city by citizens. The septcentennial pageant failed to generate civic patriotism and made a loss because its organisers neglected to foster participation. They believed instead in a rather crude, deterministic link between the images of triumphant Liverpool and a growth of civic patriotism.

In a report to the Finance Committee of Liverpool City Council on 4 January 1907, the Town Clerk, Edward Pickmere related proposals for the celebration of the sevenhundredth anniversary of the grant of the civic charter. Pickmere had discussed the matter with Professor Ramsay Muir, who held the Chair of Modern History at the University of Liverpool, on 10 August 1906. Pickmere explained

Two kinds of celebration are suggested- (1) Exhibitions running throughout the summer; (2) festivities on the actual date elected to celebrate the foundation of the old borough.

(1) Three or four Exhibitions of distinct types...are suggested...the Exhibitions suggested below would serve a double purpose. They would stimulate civic pride and patriotism and (especially in the young) encourage the growth of a higher citizenship, and they would bring Liverpool more prominently to the notice of other countries and be the means of inducing visitors to the British Isles to spend some time in the City.¹⁰

Attracting trade to the town was an important justification for staging a pageant. The programme for the Bury St. Edmunds pageant, also held in 1907, advertised that it was the only pageant conducted by Louis Napoleon Parker that year and offered details of railway connections from as far afield as Southport, Liverpool and Manchester. In 1910, tickets for the London Pageant could be booked at Thomas Cook agents world-wide. The accounts for the Liverpool Pageant record that advertising (at £1223 6s 6d) made up over a tenth of the

¹⁰ 'Report of the Town Clerk on the Proposed Celebration of the 700th Anniversary of the Foundation of Liverpool' appended to Council Proceedings 1906/7.

total pageant costs of £11358 12s 9d.¹¹ Pickmere's initial report had identified a double purpose for the pageant, and, with the Corporation acting as impresario, commercial imperatives and civic patriotism did not mesh smoothly.

A number of proposals were adumbrated in Pickmere's report. An exhibition of ancient Liverpool with reconstructions of the castle and the tower; a modern exhibition of both municipal government and trade and industry; an exhibition of the Liverpool School of Painters and an educational exhibition which would be 'of great value to teachers' were all advanced. Ramsay Muir suggested that the Schools of Local History and Architecture at the university would help with the design and construction of the castle and tower.

Under the separate heading of special festivities, Pickmere included 'a pageant or pageants like that of Warwick, illustrating episodes in the history of Liverpool. For this the proposed models of castle and tower would form the appropriate background.'¹² Other, more familiar, proposals made were for a public service of thanksgiving, a visit by the Channel Fleet, games for school children in the parks, an illumination of the river and a commemorative medal.

Pickmere was unequivocal in his statement that the scheme should be conducted under the municipal aegis. Perhaps fearing a lack of support, he suggested that the calling of a Town's Meeting was not advisable.

As the matter...is principally one affecting the Municipality,...if the scheme is at all desirable, it should be initiated and carried out by the Council...If this course is adopted, the funds required for the celebration could be obtained by an addition from the Lord Mayor's allowance.¹³

¹¹ Council Proceedings 1906/7, p.2261.

¹² Report of the Town Clerk on the 700th Anniversary

¹³ ibid.

The staging of civic festivities clearly touched closely on civic pride. Pickmere's forceful recommendation that the Council should take full responsibility for participation and fund-raising left no doubt that he believed that the event should be accorded the status of civic ceremonial. Nonetheless, he recognised that expertise would be essential in the management of image which lay at the heart of such an enterprise. He advised the Council to consider

*obtaining the services of some person who has been accustomed to organise Exhibitions and Pageants of this kind. Similar celebrations have already been held...and others are contemplated...special Masters of the Ceremonies were appointed to arrange and conduct the proceedings.*¹⁴

When the report was discussed by the full Council on 13 February 1907, the questions of purpose, cost, responsibility and pride to which Pickmere had alluded proved to be disputed ground on which party political lines disintegrated.

The Conservative councillor and M.P. for Everton J. Harmood Banner, argued that Liverpool 'should not consider itself so full of commerce and business that it should never have time to play'; and he pointed to the examples of 'Warwick and other places giving celebrations for the edification of their own populace.' Indeed, he insisted that

*the citizens had a right to some species of entertainment on such an occasion...if the citizens did desire that the 700th anniversary of the charter should be celebrated...they, as a Council had no right to refuse such a reasonable request (hear, hear).*¹⁵

Sir Charles Petrie, former leader of the Conservatives in the Council, concurred, adding that the celebrations would not only interest the citizens, but also 'attract thousands of strangers for whom, in the summer especially there was a lack of entertainments'.¹⁶

¹⁴ ibid.

¹⁵ Liverpool Echo, 13 February 1907.

¹⁶ ibid.

Others, however, did not accept the provision of entertainment as a proper municipal concern. Alderman Salvidge rejected this 'silly proposal', confessing that he did not see 'the necessity for Liverpool to advertise itself like a seaside place with processions, cocked hats and gold braid.' Furthermore, he 'did not think the smaller shopkeepers and the working men would welcome a celebration at their expense in increased rates and enforced idleness.'¹⁷ Salvidge was able to claim some authority in speaking for the working man from his chairmanship of the Liverpool Workingman's Conservative Association.

John Morrissey¹⁸, a Labour councillor who had campaigned vigorously against Corporation junketing during his time as the municipal auditor, also claimed to voice the concerns of the working classes. The Labour Party in Liverpool had previously opposed expenditure on civic decoration and pageantry during royal visits. As on these occasions, the Labour resistance to civic ceremonial was not exclusively based on the cost involved. Morrissey questioned whether civic triumphalism was justified by Liverpool's social problems and warned that working men

were not animated by the mere spirit of local patriotism as some members of the Council seemed to imagine. With all our greatness he did not think we had a good deal to boast about during 700 years of so-called progress. They had today a larger proportion of citizens down in the depths of poverty than at any time in the history of the city ('oh oh' and 'shame').

Morrissey addressed the question of an enforced holiday which Salvidge had broached reminding the Council that working men did not always welcome holidays being 'thrust upon them without the asking.'¹⁹

¹⁷ ibid.

¹⁸ Morrissey's suspicions of the realities behind Liverpool's civic image had also surfaced during the attempts to annexe Bootle and are discussed in the chapter dealing with the proposed extension.

¹⁹ ibid.

Salvidge's reservations were echoed by Dr. Permewan, too. He was troubled by how such an event sat with civic dignity and maintained that Liverpool's importance was 'entirely modern'.

What remained of medieval Liverpool? Nothing at all...There would be nothing more absurd than to be asked to go in state to a pasteboard castle on a conjectural plan (laughter) and hold a celebration of thanksgiving for 700 years of prosperity in or near that castle (laughter). 'I suppose my Lord Mayor' Dr. Permewan continued 'would be King John' (laughter)...It might be said that the celebrations would advertise the town and bring strangers into it. They might as well have a zoological gardens or a menagerie...Were we to hold ourselves out as givers of entertainment for the purpose of bringing people into the town? It was most undignified...What the effect would be was to advertise a local school- if there was one in the city- of local history; and he was not prepared to vote £2000 to advertise such a school.²⁰

Permewan's insinuation that Ramsay Muir's involvement was not entirely disinterested deserves consideration. Muir's History of Liverpool was to be published in 1907, and would clearly benefit from any upsurge of interest in the city's history. In his autobiography, Muir recalled that he had spent seven years researching and 'the last section...needed a good deal of extra labour, for it had been hastily written. But it had to be out in time for the seven hundredth anniversary of King John's Charter in 1907.'²¹ When the book was published it sold out.

The resistance to the pageant by Permewan and Salvidge was not based on a belief that civic image was a trivial issue. On the contrary, they believed that civic gravitas would be dented by the provision of entertainment and must be protected. In the face of such arguments, Frank Leslie²², a leading member of the Education Committee who was also to become the chairman

²⁰ ibid.

²¹ R. Muir, An Autobiography and Some Essays, S.Hodgson (ed.), London, 1943, pp.65 and 66.

²² Leslie's connection with civic image-building was of long standing. In 1886 he had served as secretary to the committee for the Liverpool International Exhibition of Shipping, Commerce and Navigation.

of the Pageant Executive Committee, rallied to the pageant's defence. He 'did not advocate the celebrations as an advertising medium for Liverpool but he would put the celebrations on a higher plane...a means of popular education.'²³ The inconsistency at the heart of Pickmere's 'double purpose' for the pageant was beginning to widen.

Not all recognised the purpose of the pageant as being to stimulate civic patriotism. Some thought of the pageant as a municipal entertainment and welcomed it or were wary of it on these grounds. The concern for civic dignity had been met by a denial that the pageant was a commercially motivated attempt to attract trade. However, even if the pageant had educational aims, its administration and ultimate financial success would have implications for perceptions of Council efficiency, since the project had been so firmly identified as a municipal one. Moreover, doubts had been aired as to whether working men and shopkeepers would welcome the undertaking.

The Council's decision to proceed was far from unanimous. An amendment to refer the recommendations back to the Finance Committee for further consideration was defeated by 63 votes to 31. Misgivings about the nature and purpose of the pageant were not confined to the Council chamber. On 7 March, less than a week after the Lord Mayor had issued an appeal to Liverpool citizens for subscriptions to the celebration fund, the leading Congregationalist minister Stanley Rogers wrote to the Liverpool Daily Post. The lack of facilities at the north end of the city had been highlighted by the Bootle Corporation in 1903 as evidence of the shortcomings of Liverpool's municipal government and Rogers seized the opportunity presented by the pageant to revive the grievance that the northern districts were neglected.

Honours no doubt will be freely distributed to the few, and festivities, more or less private, fully enjoyed by the same. But what about the people?...We at any rate in the north end may reasonably ask for our share of the spoil. Imagine a district with 60000 inhabitants, having no public hall or assembly!...There could be no more fitting

²³ Liverpool Echo, 13 February 1907.

*celebration of the anniversary of the founding of our city than the erection of such a people's hall.*²⁴

The subscriptions as of 11 March confirmed that enthusiasm for the pageant was confined to the upper echelons of Liverpool society. The total of £1791 1s 6d might have seemed impressive, but the Liverpool Daily Post was convinced that 'to carry out the celebrations successfully and on the scale contemplated, as well as to provide a suitable memorial of the historic occasion, larger contributions must be received from the public.' On analysing the list of subscribers, the paper calculated that there were 'only 168 subscribers out of a community within the city boundaries of over three-quarters of a million and more than half the total sum received from the public has come from nine subscribers.'²⁵ Twenty-one subscribers accounted for 72% of the total.

At a meeting of the general committee for the pageant on 15 March, it was estimated that the total cost of the pageant would be £6500. D'Arcy Ferrars, whose credentials were ascribed vaguely to previous experience 'in organising a number of pageants in Ripon and elsewhere'²⁶, was appointed to superintend the pageant.

With numerous costumes and banners to be made for the pageant, female involvement in the preparations was imperative. A Ladies Committee was appointed which included the Lady Mayoress, the Countesses of Derby, Latham and Sefton and the Ladies Alice Stanley, Petrie, Russell and Hampson.²⁷ This list of titled ladies was, perhaps, intended to attract funds and participation to the pageant, for only the Lady Mayoress and Lady Petrie were named as members of the Ladies Executive Committee in May.²⁸ The appointments of Mrs. Pickmere

²⁴ Liverpool Daily Post, 7 March 1907.

²⁵ Liverpool Daily Post, 11 March 1907.

²⁶ Liverpool Daily Post, 16 March 1907.

²⁷ ibid.

²⁸ Liverpool Daily Post, 11 May 1907.

and Mrs. Legge as Honorary Lady Managers, ensured that their spouses, the Town Clerk and the Head of the Education Board respectively, were kept closely informed as its work progressed.

By 16 May, subscriptions had advanced to £2703 17s. When this was added to the £2000 voted by the Council and £625 3s from concessions, a total of £5328 was reached. More detailed information emerged about ticket arrangements and the scale of the pageant. Admission was priced at 6d but seats were to cost 5s. Five performances were planned; two on Saturday 3 August, two on 5 August and one on 6 August. There would be a procession of fourteen cars (costing £500) and 900 people. In addition there would be a thousand-voice choir and a display of physical drill by between three and four thousand children²⁹ 'such as has never been performed on a large scale before in this country.'³⁰

The wide disparity between ticket prices and the arrangement of three of the five performances on weekdays indicate that the pageant was not conceived in terms of a mass spectacle to appeal to the working classes. Indeed, the plans for a commemorative medal outlined gold, silver and bronze versions. A 'cheaper metal for the public who desire to purchase them' was deemed only a possibility.³¹ The rhetoric of the pageant however, continued to be framed by aims of mass education. Frank Leslie rapidly assumed the role of apologist. On 3 May, he delivered a lecture on 'Seven Hundred Years of Liverpool Life' at Liverpool College in which he

alluded to the anniversary festivals of this year, which would, he hoped, dispel a large amount of ignorance about Liverpool's past and quicken and deepen the affection and

²⁹ The significance of drill in the light of Liverpool's health record is explored in more detail in the chapter on royal visits.

³⁰ Liverpool Daily Post, 16 May 1907.

³¹ ibid.

*regard of every citizen for the great city of which he formed a part and give him a stronger interest in its welfare.*³²

For such an ambitious vision connecting civic image and civic patriotism to be realised, broad interest and participation were prerequisites.

Leslie's article in the Liverpool Daily Post on 24 May returned to the themes of his lecture.

He wrote

The poorer classes in our great cities lead lives as grey and dull as the wearily monotonous streets they live in and the Festival in August will have done much if it only brings to their unaccustomed gaze a living spectacle, splendid in grouping, gorgeous in colour and telling at the same time a story of absorbing interest. And its historical side must give some food for thought, even to the most ignorant. An unforeseen but very encouraging result of the project is that, ever since it was announced, every book in the free libraries bearing on local history has been in constant demand.

Despite Leslie's hopes that the pageant might uplift the lives of the poor and stimulate historical interest, it remained a commercial event. The cost of admission might prevent these benefits from being reaped, but if entry charges were waived, the committee would once more be open to criticism of the pageant on the grounds of the cost to ratepayers. By appealing for the Liverpool Daily Post and the Liverpool Courier to 'try to outdo each other in providing admission for the greatest number of poor citizens'³³, Leslie hoped to escape this dilemma. Neither paper took up his challenge.

Enthusiasm was in short supply. On 6 June, it was reported that the prize for competitive odes or songs was not to be awarded since no entries had been received which were both suitable and able to be set to music. Furthermore, 'the finding of ladies and gentleman to take characters in the Pageant was at first somewhat difficult. Timidity and reluctance to be seen in

³² Liverpool Daily Post, 3 May 1907.

³³ Liverpool Daily Post, 24 May 1907.

a new role at first prevented many offers being made but considerable advance has been made during the past week.¹³⁴

Attempts to ensure the presence of the poorer classes at the pageant continued. The Lord Mayor intended 'inviting gentlemen to contribute to a fund to be raised for the purpose of giving admission to the Pageant to the poor of the city.' Under the scheme a subscription list would be established to buy tickets for the poor at a cost of 4d each rather than 6d. Civic patriotism was subject to financial constraints. An Advertisement Committee and a Traffic sub-Committee 'mainly composed of representatives of the railway companies' were 'busily occupied in arranging for the public of Liverpool and elsewhere to know of the Pageant'¹³⁵ as steps were taken to bolster the celebration's commercial prospects.

Anxiety about attendance mounted as the pageant drew nearer. In an article of 11 June, Leslie blustered

it is safe to prophecy that those good citizens who will not set aside even one opening day of their August holidays to see the pageant of Liverpool's 700 years of glorious life will regret their neglect when it is too late to correct it. That there are very many who do not intend to miss it is shown by the hundreds of seats already taken on the grandstand.¹³⁶

The grandstand had a capacity of 3500 per performance, so hundreds of seats did not constitute overwhelming advance bookings for the five performances. It is unlikely that many of the seats for this 'living spectacle' had been taken by the 'poorer classes', for grandstand seats cost 5s.

¹³⁴ Liverpool Daily Post, 6 June 1907.

¹³⁵ ibid.

¹³⁶ Liverpool Daily Post, 11 June 1907.

Leslie suggested that there was an unwillingness to spend a holiday at the pageant, yet for many the lack of a holiday prevented them from visiting the site. Frank Sugg, who owned an athletic goods shop, called for a holiday to allow working people to see the pageant. He noted

*Many of our leading aldermen and councillors are...taking...a fat place all through these celebrations, therefore it is evident their local patriotism, their pride in the good old city, and their public spirit cannot fail to prompt them to close their premises for at least one day.*³⁷

There was no coherent strategy as to whether the pageant was aiming for a mass audience or how this might be secured.

The Historical Exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery had been the first of the festivities to take place. It opened on 15 July, and as late as 26 June an appeal was printed in the Liverpool Daily Post for more exhibits. Lord Stanley's speech at the opening insisted that the exhibition had been

gathered with no purpose of ostentation. It had been promoted through a desire to show to Liverpool people what their forefathers had done for the city, and how much it behoved them in turn to do...what they could for future generations...citizens of every shade of politics and creed could come to learn or to enlarge that love which ought to exist in the breasts of everyone for the place of his birth and for the county and country of his kith and kin.

To cultivate such civic devotion the exhibition was open to the working class at a lower charge in the evenings. Notwithstanding, Leslie remained anxious. He confessed, 'his only fear was that during the three weeks season of the exhibition, big Liverpool would not awaken to the interest of the exhibition (laughter and applause).'³⁸

³⁷ Liverpool Daily Post, 11 July 1907.

³⁸ Liverpool Daily Post, 16 July 1907.

Leslie's fears were not groundless. A letter to the Liverpool Daily Post from the pen of an 'Old Citizen'³⁹ urged Liverpoolians to visit the exhibition. The author confided, 'so many persons have surprised me by saying they did not recognise that the Historical Exhibition was of any particular interest and had not given any attention to its existence.' Just under 21,000 people visited the exhibition. The ordinary tickets, at 6d, cost the same as admission to a football match. A total of 19,106 were bought over the three weeks.⁴⁰ At this date both Everton and Liverpool F.C.s could expect similar crowds at each home game.

At the Town Hall on 25 July, a large gathering assembled for an exhibition of the banners and flags which the women had made. Ramsay Muir was unable to attend, but the letter which he sent betrayed his lack of confidence in the prospects for the pageant. He believed that the celebrations 'would doubtless bring a new note of dignity and pride into the civic life of the venerable city.' However, he added the caveat that

*should the worst misfortune attend them, they had already achieved magnificent results...to have set thousands of the most active and public spirited citizens at work...was already to have achieved something that would leave a mark upon the present year of civic life.*⁴¹

The lowest price for admission to the pageant had risen from sixpence to a shilling. The increase revealed that there was something of a financial crisis, since Leslie's comments at the display made it apparent that the lack of popular enthusiasm was a cause for alarm. He made the vague promise that 'the general public would have the opportunity of witnessing it [the pageant] for a small charge, and even those unable to pay the sum of one shilling were being considered, and something would probably be done for them.' Putting up admission charges

³⁹ It is possible that the letter was written by Leslie himself, or another member of the Exhibition Committee, to provoke interest.

⁴⁰ Foundation of Liverpool 700th Anniversary. Historical Exhibition of Liverpool Antiquities, Liverpool, 1907, frontispiece.

⁴¹ Liverpool Daily Post, 26 July 1907.

would scarcely attract an audience. The pricing policy for the pageant was foundering on the rip-tides of mass participation and commercial success.

Moreover, as one shopkeeper argued in the Liverpool Daily Post, closing the shops to allow Liverpudlians to attend the pageant would project the wrong image of the city to visitors from elsewhere and entail missing out on increased trade. He inquired 'is any "pleasure" more sad than that of walking about the streets of a town with the shops closed?'⁴²

The issue of admission charges was aired by other correspondents. 'Fairplay' pondered 'Is the Pageant for the Rich only?' and concluded that a good view would cost at least five shillings because there would be so much jostling for position in the shilling enclosure.⁴³ Allan Ward agreed. He highlighted the inconsistency that those whose 1/- tickets were for Wavertree Park would only see the half-hour procession, whereas the same outlay in the Exhibition Ground would secure a view of the pageant itself for two hours.⁴⁴ The pageant organisers would have to adopt a more populist approach to selling the pageant.

The front page advert in the Liverpool Daily Post on 29 July seemed to confirm Salvidge's and Permewan's worst fears of how the pageant would sit with civic dignity. Far from reflecting Leslie's lofty statements on civic patriotism and the need to nurture a due sense of history, the advert used the marketing techniques of the music hall. Pageant-goers were promised

4,500 PERFORMERS 400 BEAUTIFUL BANNERS AND TROPHIES

THE SEALING OF THE CHARTER

STIRRING FIGHT BETWEEN THE STANLEYS AND THE MOLYNEUXS

⁴² ibid.

⁴³ ibid.

⁴⁴ Liverpool Daily Post, 27 July 1907.

QUEEN ELIZABETH AND HER COURT
MOLLY BUSHELL AND HER EVERTON TOFFEE
SIEGE AND DESTRUCTION OF THE CASTLE

and, most tantalisingly of all,

*THE FUNERAL DANCE OF SIR RICHARD MOLYNEUX*⁴⁵

Evidence of a conscious shift to a mass marketing approach is also found in the Official Medals. It has been noted already that the initial proposals for such medals were not aimed at the poorer classes. By 29 July, however, the adverts for the medals listed a 'white metal' medal, available for 1d. The medals depicted a ship, seven laurel wreaths (one for each century) and the civic motto.

Although such commercial initiatives could plainly augment civic patriotism, the overall direction of the pageant was confused. From a commercial standpoint, a broadly targeted advertising campaign was accompanied by a rise in admission charges which was part of a poorly thought out pricing structure. If access to the pageant were denied, the event's affective potential as a participated image would be lost.

A meeting of the City Council on 1 August took up the issue of admission charges. Councillor Kelly contended that 'prohibitive charges had been fixed for witnessing the Pageant'. A fellow Irish Nationalist, Austin Harford, suggested that there should be a parade through the streets. Sir Charles Petrie, formerly the Conservative leader on the council, claimed that such a parade was impossible because the high banners would not pass under the electric tram wires. Councillor Joseph explained that 'the general body of the public would be admitted to the dress rehearsal tomorrow evening at a charge of 1d for children and 5d for

⁴⁵ Liverpool Daily Post, 29 July 1907.

adults who accompanied them. They would see the whole performance just as it would be gone through on Saturday and following days.⁴⁶

The tension between encouraging civic loyalty and ensuring the financial success of the pageant remained unresolved. Children had been identified by Leslie as the key constituency to which the message of civic virtue should be attuned and it is noteworthy that this reduced entrance was open only to those adults who accompanied children. Whereas conspicuous charity had long been an integral part of civic festivities on occasions such as royal visits, provision for charitable institutions in 1907 was intended to be limited to the dress rehearsal, rather than to include the event itself.

On 2 August, it was reported that, 'the majority of the onlookers at tonight's rehearsal will be nurses from most of the charitable and fostering Institutions and the inmates of some of the workhouses and of many of the charitable institutions of the city.'⁴⁷ Thus, charity was excluded from the pageant proper, reinforcing the message that this was a profit-making enterprise. As the Liverpool Daily Post related,

*The newspapers have during the last day or two contained correspondence from working men complaining of the high prices of admission to be charged. It should not be forgotten that the Pageant is entirely a voluntary effort, supported by public subscriptions. The whole cost will probably run to £10,000.*⁴⁸

The description of the pageant as a 'voluntary effort' was misleading. The £2000 contribution voted by the Council in February would ultimately be charged to ratepayers, and there was no charge for the use of the Edge Lane estate because this was owned by the Council.

⁴⁶ Liverpool Daily Post, 1 August 1907.

⁴⁷ Liverpool Daily Post, 2 August 1907.

⁴⁸ ibid.

Furthermore, on Pickmere's insistence, the project had been firmly identified as a municipal undertaking from its inception.

Nonetheless, the high prices for admission to the grandstand and the exclusion of charitable bodies from the pageant attested to its importance as a social function for Liverpool's elite. The plan of the pageant grounds (*figure 1*) clearly illustrates that those in the grandstand were favoured. The grandstand monopolised the best views of the arena. No-one paying less than 5/- would have enjoyed a frontal view. The edifying celebration of the city's mercantile achievements would be played to the civic elite.

Many of the significant roles in the pageant were taken by councillors and members of their families. In the seventh scene for instance, the Midsummer's Eve Pageant saw the Rose Queen played by Olive Japp (the Mayor's daughter), Queen Elizabeth played by Councillor Patterson's wife and Sir Francis Bacon played by Councillor Paris. It is possible that the problems of finding actors had been solved by pressing councillors into service, but the pageant was attended by a series of parties. The most brilliant of these was held by Lord Derby at Knowsley Park. 'The leaders of Liverpool's public life, its councillors and magistrates, and its most distinguished exemplars in "arts and learning, law and commerce"⁴⁹ were counted among the guests. The pageant had become an addition to an exclusive social circuit.

The challenge of inspiring civic patriotism through appropriate historical images was added to the problems of attendance and finance. Leslie attributed the flurry of pageants to

*a general and almost unconscious expression of a revived general interest in the past...a man who through mental affliction has lost his memory is a pathetic object and we, whether as a nation, or as a city, have in our preoccupations been in danger of losing all memory of our own past.*⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Liverpool Daily Post, 8 August 1907.

⁵⁰ Liverpool Daily Post, 3 July 1907.

Liverpool's lack of physical reminders of its past exacerbated this danger. Leslie explained in his foreword to the 700th Anniversary Festival Programme

a great commercial city has but little time for historical research, and thus generations of Liverpool people have trodden its familiar streets...knowing nothing of these long stored up traditions, and so, to their own loss, feeling none of the respect and affection which such knowledge alone can bring. The ambition of every true citizen must surely be to leave the dignity and worth of the City higher than he found it, and to aid him in this a knowledge of the past is essential. This Pageant will help to show us all that Liverpool has a history of which her citizens may justly be proud...It is well for us to remember all this, and to realise the responsibilities which it lays upon us; it is better still for our children to do so.⁵¹

The Liverpool Daily Post's 'Woman's World' column for pageant week concurred with Leslie's analysis. A more proactive approach should be taken in inculcating civic patriotism, and historical imagery could form a valuable part of such a strategy.

*The vogue for pageants which latterly has spread throughout the land must indicate some sort of reaction from the blight that has for a long time past fallen upon historical studies...rightly taught, would there be a more fascinating study than...to learn by what strange process of development our national life has reached its present form...
A good result of the forthcoming celebrations will perhaps be to make citizens take a more individual pride in the prosperity of their native or adopted city, and a more individual concern for its continued and increased well being.*

Civic patriotism's emphasis on the individual's relationship with the community represented a resolution of the tension between personal freedom and communal efficiency.

We English people are only beginning to realise the importance of teaching patriotism in its highest sense to our children. Hitherto we have taken such a sentiment for granted and our innate horror of expressing anything in the nature of deep feeling has prevented our discussing such matters as love of country and pride in the honour of one's native land or city. Abroad they do things differently...In American schools...children are taught to salute the flag, and a passionate patriotism

⁵¹ 700th Anniversary Festival Programme, Liverpool, 1907.

PLAN OF PAGEANT GROUNDS.

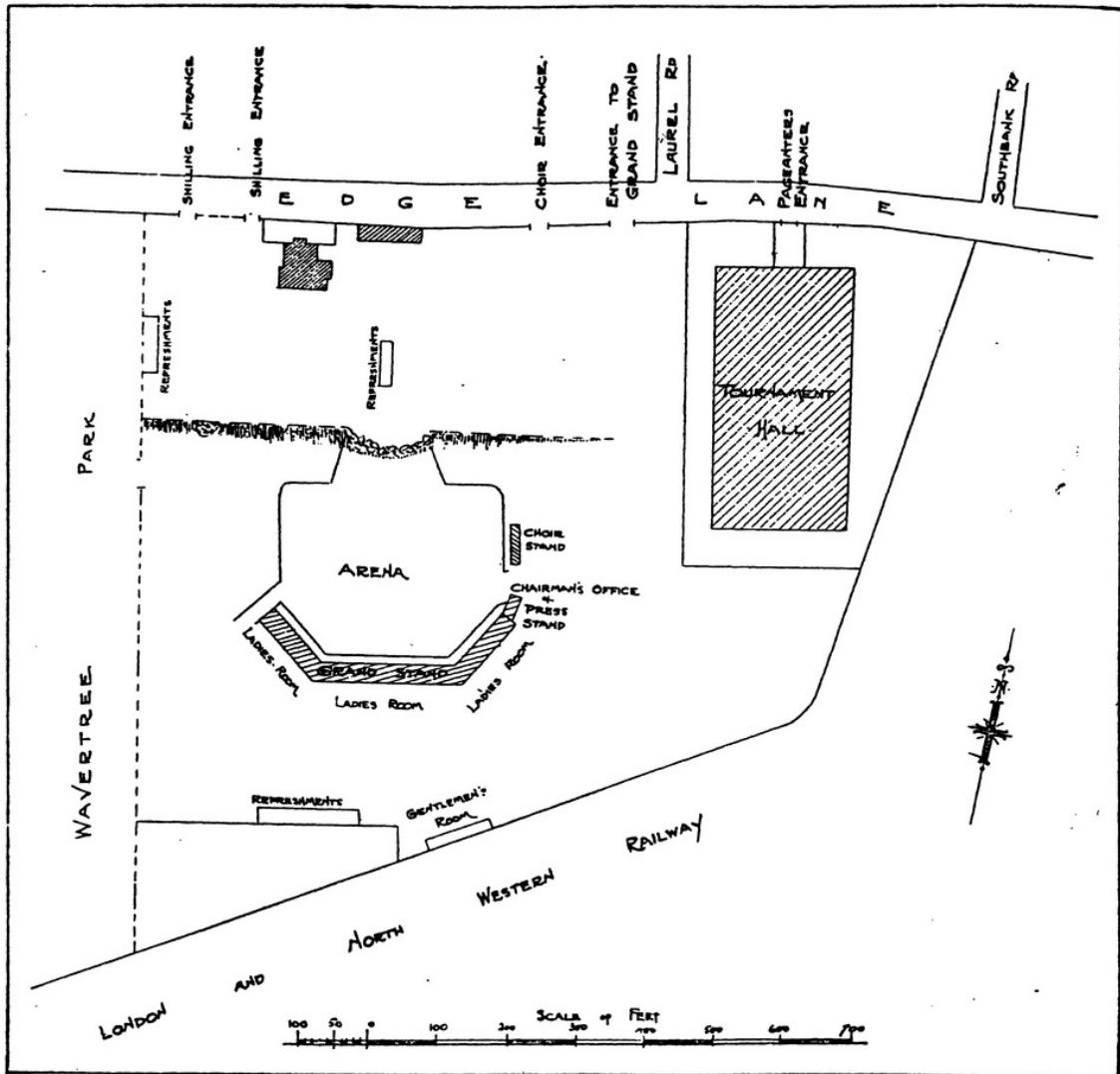


Figure 1- The Grand Stand monopolised the best views of the Pageant arena.

*is one of the sentiments which is inspired and fostered in the heart of every American child.*⁵²

The implications for women, as the educators of children, were clear. Women should take responsibility for the development of civic patriotism. Emotional attachment to the city could be taught.

This rationale for the pageant and the role of education in civic patriotism was bound up in the backgrounds of Muir, Leslie and Legge. The three men were to the fore in organising, defending and executing the pageant. Leslie and Legge were key figures in education policy on the City Council. Muir, as Professor of Modern History at Liverpool University, 'held that one of the services which a university ought to render to its community was to make it aware of its history. As soon as I settled in Liverpool, I set to work on this subject.'⁵³

Derek Heater has identified the civic function of history in providing a collective memory for a society. This function is performed by creating a repository of facts and by shaping myths.⁵⁴ Muir's view of history embraced such a civic dimension. He took William Roscoe as the subject for his inaugural lecture at the university. The Historical Exhibition also accorded Roscoe an exalted place in the pantheon of civic worthies. His memory was treated with cultic reverence. The exhibits included a 'snuff box made from oak taken from the house in which William Roscoe was born', a 'picture of the home where William Roscoe was born...framed in a piece of oak from same' and Roscoe's walking cane and gold pencil case.⁵⁵

⁵² Liverpool Daily Post, 1 August 1907.

⁵³ R.Muir, An Autobiography, pp.44 and 45.

⁵⁴ D. Heater, Citizenship- The Civic Ideal in World History, Politics and Education, Harlow, 1990, p.184.

⁵⁵ Historical Exhibition Catalogue

Muir corresponded in the Liverpool press on a number of occasions to defend the historical accuracy of the pageant, and eventually took the role of King John, the only speaking part in the whole pageant. The festivities followed the historical perspective of Muir's History of Liverpool. It was his belief that the city suffered from the abnormally large number of clerks amongst its citizens, because their work tended to limit their individuality and imaginative capacities. Liverpool owed its progress to the outstanding abilities of its merchant families.

Great merchants and shipowners...are rendered by the character of their work...alert, open-minded, hospitable to big ideas, accustomed to and tolerant of the widest divergences of view. For this reason it is that great trading centres have so often been, like Athens, Florence, Venice, Amsterdam, also centres of vigorous intellectual life. One of the greatest interests in the study of Liverpool...must be to see how far the vigour and enlightenment of the directing classes in this great seaport community have been able to counteract the depressing tendencies, in other directions, of the remarkable material progress of this period.⁵⁶

The pageant opened with the banner of Liverpool ushered in by three marshals in Venetian heraldic costumes. The songs which narrated the episodes of the pageant were similarly inspired by commercial glories. The Song to Liverpool extolled the 'Queen and Goddess of our City, nestling on seven hills and ruling Mersey's tides...Seven oceans read her name, bend in homage to her fame, rise to kiss the titled stems with eager grace.' The rather strained references to Liverpool's topography elevated the city as a new Rome, based on commerce. The Song of the Charter echoed this.

*Great and white the walls shall stand,
And the rising waves command;
Ships upon the waves shall ride,
And the people's wants provide.
They shall come from east and west,
Bringing treasure goodliest.
Hope within our hearts has thrilled;
Here a city shall we build.⁵⁷*

⁵⁶ R. Muir, History of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1907, p. 308.

⁵⁷ Words and Music for the 700th Anniversary Pageant, Liverpool, 1907, p.18.

Leslie wrote the lyrics to The Blue Coat Hospital himself. This song enshrined the connection between merchants and civic virtue. The founder of the famous school, Bryan Blundell, was portrayed bestowing Christian charity in the manner of King Wenceslas.

*Good Bryan Blundell safely home had brought
Rich merchandise, o'er many a stormy sea
And now, his ship at anchor in the port,
He stood, with thankful heart, upon the quay.*

*The urchins playing by the river side
Came thronging round him as he stepped ashore,
Hungry and cold, yet smiling, open-eyed,
And happy, caring nought for ills in store.*

*And as he gazed on them, unkempt, untaught,
His loving pity shaped itself to this,
'God has been good to me, and shall I not
Do good to these poor little ones of His?'⁵⁸*

The final scene of the pageant was the triumph of Liverpool.

The Goddess of Liverpool bore a liver bird sceptre...[and] an orb with a ship. Beneath her, on the pedestal, were four other goddesses, those of Literature, Science, Art and Music, each with an emblem of her mission. The base of the column was surrounded by ladies' characters arranged in couples in the four corners to depict the industries of the town.⁵⁹

The Goddess of Liverpool's regalia invested her as the Goddess of Commerce. There was no need for a separate deity, for Liverpool and commerce were indistinguishable. The apotheosis of Liverpool was a symbol of how other virtues sprang from commercial pre-eminence.

However, the generation of civic feeling through a heightened sense of history was no simple process. Louis Parker's maxim was that a pageant should be kept free from political and

⁵⁸ ibid.

⁵⁹ Liverpool Daily Post, 5 August 1907.

denominational wrangling, yet the contested nature of history ensured that it could not easily be kept free from such conflicts in Liverpool. In addition, it sometimes proved difficult to find appropriate texts for civic virtue.

The story of the pageant was that of Liverpool's progress towards its destiny- to become the greatest port in the world. In the eighteenth century, however, 'the opportunity came to it of making money quickly in a traffic of which we cannot now be proud- the buying and selling of slaves.' The cult of William Roscoe was significant because he had been Liverpool's most prominent abolitionist. Leslie's regular column in the Liverpool Daily Post revealed the discomfited efforts made by the pageant's organisers to reconcile pride in the commercial achievements of the city with shame at the slave trade.

Leslie reminded his readers that

Many of the old Liverpool merchants who built up vast fortunes in this way seem to have been very worthy and highly respected citizens, examples of all the virtues which go to the making of God-fearing, clean living Englishmen. They were generous of their wealth, and to them some of Liverpool's noblest charities owe their beginning. It was not easy to find a distinctive title for this somewhat mixed and perplexing period of our Pageant, and it was the ingenuity of Mr. Legge, our new director of education, which coined for us the descriptive and comprehensive heading of 'The Beginning of Wealth, well gotten and ill gotten, and of charity which covereth a multitude of sins'.

Because the wealth of some of Liverpool's leading families had originated in the slave trade, such associations could destroy their moral right to leadership. If the pageant were to be a commemoration of local worthies, this episode would need careful management. As the author of a pamphlet of 1884 entitled Liverpool and Slavery had admonished

the slave trade laid the foundations of fortunes of a great many of the existing families who are now richly enjoying their wealth...Is there a troubled conscience somewhere when they think of the past? Does the coin cry out with a truthfulness that cannot be silenced?...All the great Liverpool families were more or less steeped in the slave trade.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Anon., Liverpool and Slavery, first published Liverpool 1884, reprinted Liverpool 1969, pp.14 and 15.

The presentational strategy adopted at the pageant reflected the concern to limit criticism of the city's merchant elite. The Blue Coat Hospital which commemorated Blundell's civic virtue was the song written for this period of Liverpool history. There were two banners of the docks and one of them depicted slaves and a driver, but this banner was not accompanied by actors playing slaves. Instead, it was escorted by actors in the roles of the Reverend John Newton 'a well known and much respected divine, who actually commanded a slave ship and read for the ministry at one and the same time' and 'Captain Hugh Crow, another much esteemed citizen, who spent much of his life in command of slaves'. Such an arrangement reinforced the lesson that those whose wealth had been founded on the slave trade had also been exemplars of civic virtue. The pageant was fortuitously ordered, for after these 'themes of horror and pathos, the lighter touch afforded by Molly Bushell, the illustrious founder of Everton toffee will be doubly welcome.'⁶¹

Civic history was to inform civic pride. The didactic and normative power of history could draw more partisan conclusions from the past. The Protectionist question was of particular relevance to Liverpool as a great port, and Liberals were eager to 'point out how thoroughly the enrichment and growth of Liverpool have been identified with Free Trade.'⁶²

An editorial which appeared in the Liverpool Daily Post⁶³ on 5 August, when the pageant was being performed, found parallels between Protectionism and the activities of the Elizabethan Merchants' Guild (sic). The Guild

did not encourage trade with 'foreigners', that is with people from Ireland, or Bristol or from other Lancashire towns. Produce brought into the town was first to be

⁶¹ Liverpool Daily Post, 21 June 1907.

⁶² Liverpool Daily Post, 3 August 1907.

⁶³ The Liverpool Daily Post and its sister paper the Liverpool Echo were the most widely read papers in the city. Both were Liberal in outlook.

offered to 'the Mayor and town' and there were officials whose duty was to put a price upon it. At this price it could be bought and equitably distributed among the merchants of the Gild, but if not bought by the town the importer had to pay the town for permission to sell openly at the best price he could. Our modern Fiscal Reformers would take us back to a weak imitation of this protective system. But it did not promote trade. It was when the whole system was revolutionised that Liverpool's prosperity began.⁶⁴

The 'Political Letter'⁶⁵ in the Daily Post of two days previous offered a reading of Liverpool's history which was unmistakably informed by the Whig tradition. It identified the Glorious Revolution as not only establishing 'the Protestant Constitution about which also the nation is practically still unanimous' but as ushering in Liverpool's greatness.

From that point in our history there have been no retrogressions... We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that at the present moment there is a question upon which retrogression is threatened, so that we must not assume that advance upon the lines of the country's general course is always permanent.⁶⁶

The Whig interpretation of history depicted Protectionism as a retrogression which would run counter to the progressive logic of the past. The pageant's glorification of Liverpool could provide a historical justification for arguments which might embarrass the Conservative Corporation.

If Liberals did hope to employ historical trends to score political points caution was required. Liverpool's spectacular growth had taken place under Conservative hegemony. The author of the 'Political Letter' confronted this problem by advancing a revisionist view of the city's political history.

⁶⁴ Liverpool Daily Post, 5 August 1907.

⁶⁵ Although the authorship of this letter cannot be proved definitively, the paper's proprietor, Sir Edward Russell, frequently wrote this column himself.

⁶⁶ Liverpool Daily Post, 3 August 1907.

Although there have always been, and no doubt always will be Conservatives, our Conservatives have not been reactionaries.

A curious feature in our political history as a city has been the identification of great Conservatives with us, and the fact that these Conservatives were extremely Liberal...while Mr. Canning and Mr. Huskisson came here as Tories and made no suggestion of secession from their party, they really represented coming doctrines of Liberal policy. Both were Free Traders. Both were in favour of Catholic Emancipation.⁶⁷

Religious denominations also advanced their own interpretations of Liverpool's pageant. St. George's Hall had been chosen for the official thanksgiving service, instead of St. Peter's pro-Cathedral where Liverpool's mayors (whether Anglicans or Dissenters) attended in State following their election. In addition to this more neutral venue, the Bishop of Liverpool was to preach, the Rector was to read prayers and Rev. Alexander Connell, a Free Churchman, was to read the lesson. Rev. T.E. Ruth, who preached at the Baptist church at Prince's Gate, remained unimpressed. He dismissed the service as 'purely Anglican'. He argued that Connell's presence was no real concession since 'the function assigned to him is frequently discharged by laymen in the Established Church.' Ruth maintained 'that one sect should be selected and all others ignored is a violation of the canons of common courtesy and common citizenship, to say nothing of cosmopolitan Christianity.'⁶⁸

Ruth did not limit his ire to the press, but preached a sermon on the New Jerusalem at his church. He

described the pageant as a pictorial representation of the past. The Apocalypse was a pictorial representation of the future...The pageant programme itself was a powerful parable- a parable of the progress of Liverpool in seven centuries from an insignificant village to the mightiest seaport in the world...The Liverpolitan literature which the septcentenary had inspired would certainly tell for a truer conception of civic service...But...one great disappointing thing in the pageant was the exclusive character of the religious service...after the protest had been made, the Roman Bishop

⁶⁷ ibid.

⁶⁸ Liverpool Daily Post, 26 June 1907.

*refused to unite with Protestants in a religious service...the Anglican Bishop refused to equal prominence to the Free Churchmen.*⁶⁹

During Pageant Week, the Anglican bishop of Liverpool, Dr. Chavasse, preached a sermon on 'Civic Greatness'. He portrayed the city as 'entering at the Reformation upon a new era uplifted with the opening of direct trade with the American colonies and with the West Indies; confirmed in its right to self government by a Charter of William of Orange.'⁷⁰ The pageant organisers had not included a charter trophy to commemorate this charter in the festivities; despite its significance in restoring rights granted to the town by Charles I, but later rescinded by a charter which James II forced on the Corporation. The charter trophy of James II was accompanied by the infamous Judge Jefferies in the pageant, but William's charter was overlooked.

Parades and images had long been flashpoints for sectarian strife in Liverpool. In 1886, Catholics had burned effigies of William and Mary while whole streets had revealed their Orange allegiances by their decorations on 12 July⁷¹. As both Frank Neal and Philip Waller⁷² have demonstrated, processions and symbols expressed denominational differences. Consequently, there were large numbers of people in Liverpool with a sophisticated understanding of the relationships between image, ideology and participation.

Pat O'Mara remembered that a fight had been sparked at a Protestant parade by a woman who 'held her skirts sky high (disclosing a fine pair of green drawers)...[and] danced slowly and defiantly backward.' Similarly he recalled violence which erupted at another Orange parade

⁶⁹ Liverpool Daily Post, 30 July 1907.

⁷⁰ Liverpool Daily Post, 5 August 1907.

⁷¹ F. Neal, Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience 1819/1914, Manchester 1988, pp. 187 and 196.

⁷² P.J. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism: a social and political history of Liverpool, Liverpool, 1981.

when 'the little child who impersonated King Billy on his white charger had his head staved in with a brick, falling off the horse bleeding and screaming with pain.'⁷³ In a city where such visual statements had been assimilated into a vocabulary of image, the staging of a pageant could hold its own terrors.

Although the pageant organisers seem to have been aware of these dangers, the festivities encouraged historicism. Chavasse's sermon clearly identified Christianity as the cornerstone of all civic patriotism.

A municipality cannot legislate successfully in advance of public opinion. We must educate the conscience as well as the mind. We must form the character. We must leaven the people with the spirit and truth of Jesus Christ if our city is to fulfil her great destiny. Change men's hearts by the power of the Gospel and you will change their laws and lives.

Chavasse delineated a vision of Liverpool as the New Jerusalem of Revelation. He drew on the building of the city's Anglican Cathedral for inspiration and concluded his oration with a plea for financial support.⁷⁴

On the summit of St. James' Mount- the Mount Zion of our forefathers- are slowly rising the lofty walls of our future cathedral...Let Liverpool lay its culture and wealth at the feet of the Christ...Then the vision of the Apocalypse will find one of its fulfillments on the banks of the Mersey. Our city shall be a holy city, for 'the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein, and his servants shall do him service.'⁷⁵

Thus a combination of civic patriotism and Christian duty would command financial support for the new cathedral.

⁷³ P. O'Mara, The Autobiography of a Liverpool Irish Slummy, London, 1934, pp. 87 and 89.

⁷⁴ The foundation stone of the Anglican Cathedral had been laid by Edward VII in 1904.

⁷⁵ Liverpool Daily Post, 5 August 1907.

The Roman Catholic Church also employed the image of the New Jerusalem, but to quite a different purpose. At a separate Catholic celebration, attended by a number of Irish Nationalist councillors, Father James Hughes 'delivered a striking discourse based on the text "And the angel that spoke with me had a measure of a rod of gold to measure the city and the gates thereof and the walls." Apoc. xxi. 15.'

Hughes offered a Catholic reading of Liverpool's history. He expounded on the role which the Catholic Church had had in resisting unjust rule. The appeal which this would have had for Nationalist ears is obvious. More subtly, Hughes indicated the Church's involvement in securing the constitutional rights of Englishmen and suggested a continuity of tradition between Catholics and Liverpool's earliest citizens.

[Liverpool's] birth was in days when men strove for freedom. Resistance to oppression was in the air. Men of middle age could remember Thomas a Becket's death for justice sake...the Roman cardinal was the mastermind who led the barons of England...to force the King to sign the Great Charter of English liberties. To the first burghers of Liverpool as to us, the Bishop of Rome was Christ's own Vicar whose laws even monarchs must obey.

The contributions of other faiths were not denied, but Hughes' list of great Liverpool families; the Holts, Horsfalls, Bowrings, Cohens, Roscoes and Rathbones, comprised five Unitarians and a Jew, but no Anglicans. Hughes' ecumenicalism was one of Catholic supremacy. He ended his homily with a picture of a city

whose churches will not voice the cries of warring sects, but, as in days of old, will join in teaching that there is but one shepherd who longs to see his sheep in but one fold; a city shadowing forth on earth the vision of St. John in Patmos, the New Jerusalem.⁷⁶

The symbols and images employed in the pageant had not been overtly sectarian, and attempts had been made to make the thanksgiving service more inclusive, but the very act of evaluating the city's history had encouraged more partisan readings. The Nonconformist

⁷⁶ Liverpool Daily Post, 5 August 1907.

minister, H.D. Roberts concluded his history of Nonconformity in Liverpool, which was published in 1909, with some remarks on the religious dimension of the Pageant. He noted the case of Henry Finch, a dissenter who was vicar of Walton until being forced from his parish in 1665. 'He did not feature in our Pageant, for the "under-side" is not usually represented in the scrolls of honour.' Roberts pondered

*When we hear the Catholic bishop asserting 'Our principles debar us from any religious service with those not one in faith with us'; when we see the antagonism existing still between Anglican and Dissenter...we wonder how long after our triumphant Septcentenary will come the day when we...shall bow our heads together.'*⁷⁷

Although Liverpool's clerics may have been moved to thought, Pageant Week continued to be marked by a lack of enthusiasm for the festivities. During royal visits, private residences and businesses were swiftly adorned with decorations. In contrast it was the Town Hall which gave 'the lead in the matter of external decorations in honour of the septcentenary celebrations. "Other buildings, please copy" is no doubt the implied request of the Lord Mayor and Pageant Committee...citizens would be lacking in patriotism if they failed to exhibit some approval and support of the sentiment to be expressed in the pageant. Today we expect to see the whole city in festive array.'⁷⁸

Festive feeling was hampered because 'the employees of the principal shops of the city' were not given a holiday 'in connection with the Pageant.' The Liverpool Daily Post reported

*In Bootle...the day is to be observed as a general holiday; but in Liverpool so far as can be gathered, the holiday- if there is to be any holiday at all- will be anything but general. A situation which may prompt the visitor from a distance to inquire: Whose birthday is it- Liverpool or Bootle's?*⁷⁹

⁷⁷ H.D. Roberts, Hope Street Church, Liverpool and the Allied Nonconformity, Liverpool, 1909, pp. 490, 491 and 495.

⁷⁸ Liverpool Daily Post, 3 August 1907.

⁷⁹ Liverpool Daily Post, 3 August 1907.

The Pageant was a commercial failure. The account closed with a 'surplus' of £366 5s 1d, but if the £2000 grant from the City Council is deducted, the project can be seen to have lost £1634 14s 11d.⁸⁰ L.N. Parker had been convinced that a properly run pageant should always turn a profit. Indeed, the mayor of Oxford claimed that the pageant held in that city in the same year would make several thousand pounds.⁸¹

The pageant had not succeeded as a participated image either. In Models and Mirrors, Handelman has argued that public events may incorporate elements of statement, change and entertainment. He distinguishes between a 'mirror', which presents aspects of the real world, and a 'model' which presents aspects of the lived-in world to be operated on and changed by participants acting with intentionality and consequentiality. His thesis is that 'the mandate of public events' is to 'engage in the ordering of ideas, people and things' through 'devices of praxis that merge images of the ideal and the real, to bring into close conjunction ideology and practice, attitude and action.'⁸²

The Liverpool pageant suffered from functional ambiguity. To adopt Handelman's terminology, Leslie's vision of the pageant was as a model. Participation in a celebration of Liverpoolian achievement would encourage a new sense of civic duty. However, there was no concerted attempt to win the necessary participation. The dictates of municipal finance and the arrangement of the pageant as an exclusive social event placed further obstacles against such a didactic and transformational direction. Admission charges and the social gradations symbolised by the grandstand resulted in the pageant becoming a mirror, reflecting a hegemonic image of Liverpool. In 1907, the pageant offered a restatement of Liverpool's image which was poorly suited to winning the popular participation on which any normative shift would be founded. As in 1903, when Bootle had tested Liverpool's civic image, the

⁸⁰ City Council Proceedings 1906/7, pp.2260 and 2261.

⁸¹ Oxford Historical Pageant, Oxford, 1907.

⁸² D. Handelman, Models and Mirrors, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 4-16.

pageant demonstrated that the city's commercial might would not form the basis for a widespread civic patriotism.

Chapter Three- Civic Office and Honour

Civic gospel gave rise to a litany of municipal saints. Civic hagiography took a variety of guises, but the closing years of Victoria's reign witnessed more conscious efforts to bring exemplars of civic virtue to the fore. Biographies of leading Liverpool figures, almost all identified as 'merchants', presented model lives to be emulated. In addition, a number of works, of which B. Guinness Orchard's aptly titled Liverpool's Legion of Honour was the most comprehensive, acclaimed those noteworthy for their sense of citizenship.

To these works, which are the subject of a separate chapter, must be added other forms of a more official nature. The freedom of the city, a reward in the Corporation's gift after 1885, was one means of recognising outstanding contributions to the community. Another title of longer standing was that of the mayor (Lord Mayor after 1893) who was symbolically the first citizen and who was central to the processes of ritual and ceremonial which helped to forge civic image.

These hagiographic and honorific devices clearly linked civic image to civic patriotism, yet image and patriotism were not neutral concepts. Consequently, the creation and maintenance of civic hagiography was a political process. The vocabulary of civic imagery, structured by the syntax of civic patriotism, shaped political discourse. The elements of power and intentionality involved in the construction of a canon of civic virtue must be considered.

The mayoralty was obviously a politicised office even though the mayor's ceremonial function was as the representative of the whole community. In Liverpool the role of the mayor in image management was unusually taxing.

Excepting the metropolis, no city in the Empire receives so many distinguished visitors as Liverpool does, and these are almost invariably the guests of the mayor, who thus has to entertain, and maintain the reputation of the community before native

*and foreign persons of the greatest note. To do this, tact, judgment, adaptability and other uncommon qualities are requisite at all times.*¹

The visit of King Kallikahna of the Sandwich Islands, which took place during Sir William Bower Forwood's mayoralty of 1880/81, illustrates the finesse that entertaining might demand.

*At the banquet in the evening I was warned by his equerry that I must prevent His Majesty imbibing too freely. It was not an easy thing to do, but to the surprise of my guests I stopped the wine and ordered cigars; this had the desired effect. I believe this was the first time that smoking was allowed at a Town Hall banquet.*²

The failings of those who did not meet the required high standards of deportment were noted. In 1884, the Liverpool Review criticised David Radcliffe's early performances as Chief Magistrate

*As host at the Town Hall he was not the success which was expected, His manner was genial but superficial and somewhat deficient in grace, and his speeches were worse than his manner. He had not taken the trouble to think of something to say, and therefore he said nothing and said it very badly...If he had provided himself with a few pleasant nothings to say and had fired them off gracefully and easily he would have made the evening more pleasant and have enhanced his reputation considerably.*³

After such an inauspicious start, Radcliffe paid more attention to this aspect of mayoral duties. The improvement was so marked that he was reappointed mayor for a second year in 1885/86 and was widely praised when he was knighted by the Queen for being her civic host during a visit to the city in 1886. Experience was invaluable in hosting civic receptions. Lord Derby, as Lord Mayor in 1911/12

delighted in arranging banquets at the Town Hall and was in his element at such gatherings- full of humour and engaging in badinage...the simple jests which on

¹ Lancashire Leaders. Social and Political. Vol. II, Exeter, 1895, p.21.

² Sir W.B. Forwood, Recollections of a Busy Life, Liverpool, 1910, p.90.

³ Liverpool Review, 22 November 1884.

another man's lips would scarcely have provoked a smile, aided and transmuted by his exceptional bonhomie, charm and abundantly genial presence seem to have dissolved the company in laughter at almost every sentence.⁴

Yet not all were born to the role- for some expertise was hard won. Robert Holt's final Town Hall function as Lord Mayor was the visit of the American ambassador. He confided in his diary,

The best thing of the sort we have ever done. About 500 people attended it. This is our best function at the Town Hall and it is pleasing to know that everyone speaks of it as the best. The fact is we are just beginning to understand how to do high class entertainments. Another 12 months and we should be quite...!!⁵

Holt had come to understand the problems of staging civic receptions. He commented on a function hosted by his successor as Lord Mayor, 'dinner very fair for Town hall, but it is almost impossible to give a good hot dinner there.'⁶

Apart from such culinary anxieties, mayoral duties could be a two-fold burden. One concern was the sheer quantity of time taken up by meetings, receptions, prize-givings and dinners. In his evidence before the Royal Commission on the Amalgamation of London in 1894, Liverpool's Town Clerk, Harcourt Clare, stated that the mayor's time was

so taken up with his official duties at the Town hall that he really has very little time for any municipal work...his duties consist in being in the Town hall, I think, pretty well from 10 until 4 every day, to be at the beck and call practically of everybody who goes there, but his duties are very largely composed of acting in connexion with charities and public matters, entertaining etc.⁷

⁴ R. Churchill, Lord Derby: 'King Of Lancashire', London, 1959, pp. 135 and 136.

⁵ Diary of Robert Holt in Holt Papers, Liverpool Central Library, 6 November 1893.

⁶ Holt's Diary, 15 November 1894.

⁷ Royal Commission on the Amalgamation of London (1894), p.374.

In Holt's diary for his year in office there were 137 days marked by functions, and in some cases there were three or four functions on the same day.⁸ Unsurprisingly, the prospect of mayoral office was not always welcomed without reservation. When first approached in 1890, Holt wrote 'I was quite unprepared either in my business or in my domestic arrangements to add the burden of the Mayoralty...I feared the chance of the Tories playing a trick and possibly electing me which would be the worst misfortune.' Sixteen years later, Dr. Richard Caton felt likewise and initially declined the office.⁹ Between 20 January and 4 March 1908, Caton undertook at least seventy-two separate engagements and, after a fortnight's holiday, was faced by twenty-seven more in the two weeks following his return.¹⁰

The Municipal Journal believed such copious duties were common,

for the lord mayors and mayors of now-a-days are really officers of the corporations who devote quite as much time to the municipal works as the salaried officials. Being public men, penalties attach to their position which do not exist in the case of other officers...they must entertain lavishly at the town hall, and their 'parlours' must always contain supplies of the choicest of wines for the refreshment of their casual visitors, who are about always thirsty and very often hungry. The lord mayor or mayor who does not entertain on a large scale as soon as he is 'elevated' is at once condemned.¹¹

Entertainment was not merely a matter of epicurean indulgence. E.D. Simon, recalling his experiences in Manchester, wrote of 'the importance of the mayoral lunch, easily the best lubricant in municipal affairs...when two sets of people are suspicious of one another...a good

⁸ ibid.

⁹ Letter from Caton to Sir Charles Petrie dated 13 September 1907 in Caton Papers, Special Collections, University of Liverpool.

¹⁰ According to E.D. Simon, the duties of the Lord Mayor of Manchester were time-consuming, too. As well as presiding at ceremonial functions, the Lord Mayor received correspondence on all manner of subjects. Simon quoted one which entreated 'Will you advise applicant whether he has small-pox?' E.D. Simon, A City Council from within, London, 1926, pp. 153-156.

¹¹ Municipal Journal Vol.13, 1904, p.211.

lunch in the private apartments is about the best way of ensuring a friendly and sometimes useful meeting...Many important Manchester movements have been given a good start in this way.¹²

The ceremonial aspect of mayoral duties devolved responsibilities on others besides the mayor. As mayoresses, wives assumed important roles in hosting civic functions and taking a special interest in women's charities. Holt referred to the assistance given by his wife, Lallie¹³, and their daughters in arranging flowers and table decorations on several occasions.¹⁴ Indeed, Lallie's part in Holt's social and political ascent had been considerable. Her younger sister, Beatrice Webb, believed that Holt's 'position of mayor...fostered his instinct of self importance'¹⁵ and that he had 'lost his head over the social position which Lallie, by her energy, created for him'.¹⁶

In a study of Beatrice, Lallie and their sisters, Barbara Caine has suggested that

*the division between public and private life was not as sharp as some recent discussions of Victorian domestic ideology might suggest...not only did most of the sisters marry men whose wealth and position meant that lavish and large scale entertaining was part of their normal wifely role, but in many cases this entertainment was directed towards specific public goals.*¹⁷

Entries in Holt's diary attest to Lallie's contribution to civic ceremonial.

¹² Simon, A City Council from within, pp.161 and 162.

¹³ Lallie was short for Lawrenceina.

¹⁴ Holt's Diary, 20 January and 7 September 1893.

¹⁵ N. and J. MacKenzie (eds.), The Diary of Beatrice Webb Vol.2, London, 1983, p.164.

¹⁶ ibid., p.279.

¹⁷ B. Caine, Destined to be Wives, Oxford, 1988, p.159.

While her husband attended a meeting, 'Lallie received guests at the Geographic Soiree at Free Library'¹⁸. After a dinner at the Adelphi Hotel, Holt 'went over to the Art Gallery where Lallie had been receiving an evening party'.¹⁹ The mayor's daughters were civic figureheads, too. When they patronised a theatrical benefit 'they were received with much ceremony'.²⁰ The older daughter, Kitty, acted as her father's consort at a dinner when her mother was away in London.

The skills of domestic management and successful entertaining which women had honed in Liverpool society made them indispensable in organising civic functions²¹. Sir William Bower Forwood recalled that Town Hall hospitality had once been limited to dinners, but that his sister-in-law, as mayoress in 1877, had introduced the 'afternoon receptions which have proved so great an attraction'.²² To celebrate the Queen's birthday, Holt had intended to hold a reception, 'but as Lallie could not be present we gave up the Reception'.²³ On the occasion of the Lord Mayor of London's visit, other Lancashire mayors were invited to lunch. Holt added 'Lallie girls and family generally receive guests after lunch in drawing room'. He was satisfied that 'upon the whole I think we managed the visit well and imported a good deal of ceremonial. The flowers and decorations of lunch table were generally admired'.²⁴

¹⁸ Holt's Diary, 24 February 1893.

¹⁹ ibid., 5 March 1893.

²⁰ ibid., 13 July 1893.

²¹ Women performed similar roles in entertainment and civic ceremonial in Glasgow. R. Trainor, 'The Elite' in Glasgow Vol. II 1830 to 1912, W.H. Fraser and I. Maver (eds.), Manchester, 1996, p.237.

²² Forwood, Recollections, p.97.

²³ Holt's Diary, 4 June 1893.

²⁴ ibid., 15 July 1893.

The second major burden of the mayoralty was the expenses which might be incurred as a result of mayoral entertainments. These rose throughout the period. In 1920, Sir William Forwood explained

*The Lord Mayor receives an allowance of £2000...In olden times the allowance was ample but it is no longer so, and it is impossible to maintain the old traditional hospitality of the Town Hall unless the Lord Mayor expends a further £2000 out of his own pocket, and many Lord Mayors have considerably exceeded this sum. It has often been urged that this allowance should be increased.*²⁵

As Liberal leader, Holt had resisted exorbitant expenditure on civic ceremonial and he kept a balance of £14 10s in hand at the close of his term as mayor.²⁶ Holt's parsimony was not the norm. When Thomas Hughes served in 1889/90, the Liverpool Review had urged him to

*have the moral courage not to spend...one penny more than the sum allowed him by the ratepayers...The prevailing idea, even amongst men who imagine themselves democrats, is that only a rich man should be mayor and that the success of the mayoralty is in the ratio of the amount of money spent by the mayor.*²⁷

The scale of civic entertainment came to reach enormous proportions. Liverpool's willingness to spend on civic image was exceptional. In 1908, A. Lawrence Lowell claimed that the mayoral salary of £2000 (and a £700 allowance for a coach and horses) was the largest sum at the disposal of any mayor.²⁸

As the Liverpool Review had observed, those who took up mayoral office had to command substantial private resources. The circumstances of the first five Lord Mayors after the municipal boundaries were extended in 1895 demonstrate this. Lord Derby, the largest private landowner in Liverpool, was followed by Thomas Hughes (owner of a large firm of timber

²⁵ Forwood, Recollections, p.98.

²⁶ Holt's mayoral bank book in Holt Papers.

²⁷ Liverpool Review, 19 October 1889.

²⁸ A.L. Lowell, The Government of England, London, 1908, p.162.

merchants), John Houlding (left £45,000), William Oulton (left £85,924) and Louis Cohen, the co-partner in the David Lewis department store ('Liverpool's greatest shopkeeper and champion advertiser').²⁹ In 1909, H. Chaloner Dowdall wrote to Percy Corkhill, the mayoral secretary, to inquire as to the number of guests entertained after nine months of his mayoralty. He received the reply

<i>Dinners</i>	917
<i>Breakfasts and luncheons</i>	706
<i>Afternoon parties</i>	5161
<i>Evening parties</i>	5138
	11922

*Add this next week's figure and it brings the figure well over 12,000...add 8,000 invited but not accepting or attending + this would bring the total to 20,000. This is a good answer to criticism, of which, by the way, I have heard none.*³⁰

Such largesse was evidently expected to maintain the city's image. As Forwood commented

*The invitations to Town Hall functions might be more strictly limited to representative people, or the entertainments might, as in Manchester, be placed in the hands of a committee, but it must not be forgotten that more is expected of the Lord Mayor in Liverpool than in other places. He is not only the head of the municipality, but of all charitable and philanthropic work. The initiation of every undertaking, national as well as local emanates from the Town Hall.*³¹

The Mayor chaired the annual meetings of many of Liverpool's charities. While such participation reinforced the identification of charitable effort with civic virtue, it could also result in incongruous scenarios. Thus, Holt was the host for the Licensed Victuallers Ball, an arrangement which he confessed, 'was a little against our grain.'³² As a Unitarian, Holt was also uncomfortably aware of the symbolic identification of the mayoralty with Anglicanism.

²⁹ B.G. Orchard, Liverpool's Legion of Honour, Birkenhead, 1893, p. 242.

³⁰ Letter from Corkhill to Dowdall dated 23 July 1909 in Dowdall Papers, Liverpool Central Library.

³¹ Forwood, Recollections, p.98.

³² Holt's Diary, 9 February 1892.

He admitted his pleasure in attending a bazaar for the Catholic St. Vincent de Paul society since

*the English Church people had demanded my presence so often at Sunday Church performances making collections for their own denominational Schools. If I had to go through another year of mayoral duty, I wld stipulate with these Church people that I wd. attend no service as Mayor where they had not the promise of at least 20 members of the Council to support me. It is ridiculous for me a Unitarian to go to a Church service and find hardly any of the Church Councillors supporting me.*³³

Six days later, after chairing a meeting for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, he made the barbed observation that

*the meeting opened with prayer and we prayed for the conversion of Jews, infidels and heretics. I suppose I, the chairman of the meeting, was among the latter...All went off harmoniously and the meeting actually stayed and drank my heretic tea.*³⁴

Such inconsistencies emphasise the importance of the mayoralty's representative functions. The mayor's own religious persuasion was not to interfere with his ritual duties. Between 1880 and the First World War, the mayoralty was held by Unitarians, Presbyterians and even a Jew³⁵ as well as by Anglicans.³⁶ The 'First Citizen' was a personification of civic dignity and had to act accordingly. Expectations of mayoral deportment and the nature of mayoral duties illuminate how civic imagery expressed the underlying assumptions of municipal government in Liverpool. Lavish entertainment and display stated Liverpoolian claims to Imperial grandeur and the mayor's attendance at St. Peter's pro-Cathedral on the first Sunday after his election was a traditional ceremony, regardless of his personal beliefs.

³³ Holt's Diary, 3 October 1893.

³⁴ Holt's Diary, 9 October 1893.

³⁵ Louis Cohen was Lord Mayor in 1899/1900.

³⁶ The prosopography in P.J. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, Liverpool, 1981, pp.476-518 details the religious affiliations of a number of those who held the office.

If personal convictions were subsumed by mayoral duty, the office's ceremonial functions could be turned to political purposes. On 30 October 1893, two days before the municipal elections, Holt hosted an evening reception at the Town Hall for 800 people 'chiefly the leading tradesmen and guardians and public officials etc.'. His son Robert styled it a 'vote catching party'.³⁷ Ironically, when the Lord Mayor, William Rutherford defeated Holt's other son, Richard, in the West Derby parliamentary by-election of January 1903, Holt was quick to suggest 'The influence of the "Lord Mayor", the democratic entertainments at the Town Hall, the treats at Xmas to the children in St. George's Hall...have placed the constituency entirely in the hands of the Tory party.'³⁸

Holt himself had energetically sought to enhance the dignity of the office to extract political advantage. In December 1892, as the first Liberal mayor of Liverpool for over a decade and the leader of the first Liberal administration for fifty years, he had succeeded in bestowing the Freedom of the City upon William Gladstone, a Liverpudlian by birth. The circumstances of the award will be outlined later, but Holt took advantage of the Prime Minister's visit to talk to Bryce, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. In April 1893 he reminded Bryce

When you were in Liverpool last December I mentioned to you that I was very desirous to get this municipality elevated to the position of its chief magistrate bearing the title of Lord Mayor...For population we stand the Second City and in commercial importance we are only second to London.

It strikes me that it would come as a very graceful compliment from Mr. Gladstone's government to the city of his birth and where he was under exceptional circumstances so cordially welcomed by the whole community. Within the last few years the Tory Govt. made Belfast's Chief Magistrate a Lord Mayor. Glasgow is also Lord Provost.³⁹

Personal and civic ambition coincided and Holt was anxious that the Lord Mayoralty be conferred as part of the Queen's birthday honours. Bryce's reply alluded to the pernicious

³⁷ Holt's Diary, 30 October 1893.

³⁸ ibid., 20 January 1903.

³⁹ Letter from Holt to Bryce in Holt Papers dated 21 April 1893.

question of civic rivalry. Although he accepted that Holt's request was reasonable, Bryce foresaw a difficulty in 'drawing a line between yours + other cities. Manchester could not be passed over without giving great offence. If Manchester were included I should fear much pressure on the part of Leeds and Birmingham.'⁴⁰

Holt continued to press and Gladstone involved himself in the matter.

My sympathies are entirely with you...the question is not so simple as might be inferred from your letter is the case of Liverpool so broadly and clearly above that no jealousies would be aroused in other great towns such as Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham?

If it is not, there is a double danger- the jealousies of those who have it and the envious [word illegible] of those who want it. Should it be found practicable I think no time could be so suitable as that of the present mayoralty.⁴¹

Holt sharply reasserted Liverpool's grandeur with the veiled implication that a failure to meet the request might be perceived as an insult from which the Tories might benefit.

I should like to have more than your 'sympathy' with my desire to see the compliment paid to Liverpool while you are Her Majesty's Prime Minister. The title, I feel sure will be conferred and I sh [ould] be sorry if it sh [ould] ultimately come from the Tory party.

I think the claim of Liverpool to the distinction is most special.

Manchester which alone approaches our position is a divided or dual Corporation. It would hardly be possible to confer the distinction on Manchester and on Salford- and which of our other large cities compares in importance with Liverpool and her connections by Trade with all parts of the Globe? Glasgow has her Lord Provost.⁴²

The peculiar demands for ceremonial which stemmed from Liverpool's position as an port of international renown have already been noted. Holt was convinced that this constituted another reason for the honour. He drew attention to

⁴⁰ Holt Papers. Bryce to Holt, 24 April 1893

⁴¹ ibid., Gladstone to Holt, 25 May 1893.

⁴² ibid., Holt to Gladstone, 27 May 1893.

*...our representative character of English commercial life and close connection with every English settlement and Trading Centre, our constant reception of the representatives of Foreign nations and of our own Colonies. I should be greatly delighted to see the compliment come through your hands and though your letter is poor comfort, yet I shall earnestly trust that this honour may be shortly conferred upon our city.*⁴³

On 12 June, Gladstone informed Holt that the honour was to be awarded, although his letter contained the hint of a reproof that Holt had not acted through the customary channels.

*In fulfilment of my willing engagement to you I entered with Mr. Asquith on a full consideration of your suggestion...Manchester could not properly be excluded...The Cabinet agreed and Her Majesty has approved. The matter will now run in the strictly official channel: in the meantime this is for your private + personal information.*⁴⁴

When the official notification had been sent, Holt reflected in his diary that he had received 'this "gracious" communication...I think there is general satisfaction expressed at this "glorification" of what is representative of municipal Govt.'⁴⁵

The bestowal of the Freedom of the City on Gladstone had been a bargaining counter in the negotiations over the Lord Mayoralty. The premier was the sixth man to be so honoured. The decision had followed clashes between Tories and Liberals on the City Council. Nor was such manoeuvring unprecedented, for the symbolic power of the Freedom in conferring civic approval for particular stances and opinions had naturally led to the exercise of the privilege being contested before. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1885 afforded municipalities with a means of recognising civic patriotism by conferring honorary freedom upon those 'who have rendered special service to their county or their borough.'⁴⁶ Sir William Bower Forwood claimed

⁴³ ibid.

⁴⁴ ibid., Gladstone to Holt, 12 June 1893. Asquith was Home Secretary.

⁴⁵ Holt's Diary, 15 June 1893.

⁴⁶ E. Rathbone, William Rathbone- A Memoir, London, 1905, p.465.

Much as I valued the honour of knighthood I still more greatly esteemed the distinction conferred upon me by my fellow citizens when they bestowed upon me the freedom of the city- the greatest honour any man can receive...particularly when its bestowal is so jealously safeguarded and kept so entirely free from political bias as it is in Liverpool.⁴⁷

Despite Forwood's assurances, almost from the first, the honorary freedom aroused strong political feeling. However, the ceremony was not always attended with the pageantry which it acquired with the passage of time. The Liverpool Review reported on the arrangements for Sir Andrew Walker, a Conservative brewing magnate and the donor of the Walker Art Gallery, in 1890. Walker was the second recipient of the honour and

the thing which Sir Andrew signed was a very disappointing and prosaic affair, nothing more, in fact, than the binding of a large book with parchment pasted inside...there is only room for about half-a-dozen names...Then it was all over. During the ceremony, while the members of the council were standing, some few of the members- to perpetuate a bull- kept their seats. These were a few Liberals and all, are nearly all, of the Irish party. As the etiquette of the proceedings is not well defined, possibly this may have been the result of indecision, but the general impression was that it was a parade of rudeness and of a cheap independent spirit. It passeth the wit of man to say what the precise significance of the freedom of the city may be. No one seems to know if it confers any privileges, so the safest conclusion is that it is merely an honour and a distinction, the 'blue ribbon', so to speak, of municipal rank.⁴⁸

The conferral of municipal honour on a brewer was contentious. Holt recorded in his diary that there had been a 'lively day in the Town Council' when the honour was voted. Some criticised Holt for seconding the proposal made by the Conservative Sir Arthur Forwood. Holt disagreed because he 'thought it a recognition of his considerable munificence and as his trade is a legitimate one I did not see why we should object to receive his gifts and acknowledge them.'⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Forwood, Recollections, p.131.

⁴⁸ Liverpool Review, 11 January 1890.

⁴⁹ Holt's Diary, 9 November 1889.

In a series of sermons preached on the concept of civic patriotism by the Reverend Veitch, which were published in the Liverpool Pulpit, a different reading of the honour was advanced. Veitch referred to the civic honours which Walker had acquired. He had been mayor twice as well as receiving the Freedom of the City. 'Liverpool must have had knowledge of one on whom it conferred this dignity. They...tell us something about Liverpool citizens.' Veitch's retrospective of Walker's career did not omit his philanthropic works, but argued

The greatest moral choice a man makes in his life is his daily calling..[it is] strange that any one like Sir Andrew Barclay Walker should have taken an interest in the Art and Education of the City and yet should cling to a business which manifestly was the cause of more poverty, crime and moral degradation than all other influences put together.⁵⁰

Veitch's contention was that civic patriotism entailed more than adding to the glory of Liverpool's image. There was a moral dimension to municipal recognition. From this perspective, Veitch challenged Walker's honours:

The honorary freedom of the city may...seem to say- 'Succeed by any means. Your fellow citizens worship the god "success" therefore by all means succeed'... Let no possible civic honours or gift which can win popular applause blind you to the fact that in business you have your chief opportunity to bless or curse your city.⁵¹

Walker's investiture had proved controversial because of his background. The ceremonies for the three men honoured in the following year also aroused criticism, but it was occasioned by the conduct of the ceremony and not by the merits of the individuals concerned.

As mayor, Joseph Morgan showed scant understanding of the importance of civic ritual. B. Guinness Orchard wrote that

⁵⁰ Liverpool Pulpit no. 36 Vol. IV, January 1895, p.6.

⁵¹ ibid., p.8.

*his constitutional distaste for waste of time and strength...came into action, and he proposed to greatly reduce the calls upon a Mayor's time as chairman at annual Town Hall meetings of charitable institutions. In this, however, he utterly failed to carry with him those whom it concerned.*⁵²

Orchard believed that Morgan's successor, James de Bels Adam, was 'elevated to the civic chair in 1891 with the special object of increasing its popularity, which some previous occurrences had diminished.'⁵³ In the early days of Morgan's mayoralty, William Cliff had been awarded the freedom of the city in a poorly staged ceremony. Robert Holt commented on the 'miserable manner in wh [ich] the presentation...was made'.⁵⁴ As his year in office drew to a close, Morgan hoped that the ceremonies in honour of Henry Tate⁵⁵ and William Rathbone⁵⁶ might provide an opportunity to revive his reputation.

Concerned that Tate's ill health might delay the investiture until after he had vacated the mayoral chair, Morgan wrote to Rathbone to urge him to receive the honour before the Council dissolved and the authors of the motion left. Tate and Rathbone saw through Morgan's plan. The mayoral year closed on 1 November, and in a letter of 14 September 1891, Tate thanked Rathbone for forwarding Morgan's letter to him. Tate enclosed a cutting from the local press which listed the retiring councillors,

There is really nothing in what the Mayor says. The movers + seconders of the Resolution are none of them leaving the Council this next Election as you will see by the enclosed list.

⁵² Orchard, Liverpool's Legion of Honour, p.509.

⁵³ ibid., p.121.

⁵⁴ Holt's Diary, 25 October 1891.

⁵⁵ Tate was the wealthy sugar refiner whose bequests funded the Tate Galleries in London and Liverpool.

⁵⁶ Rathbone was the head of Liverpool's most prominent merchant family. A philanthropist on a prodigious scale, he also championed the episcopal see and the university. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism, p.507.

*I believe it is only the Mayor's anxiety to make amends during his Mayoralty for the sad fiasco he made of the presentation of the freedom of the city to the late Mr. Cliff. I hope to go with you about the middle of November.*⁵⁷

The issue began to assume a wider political significance. Robert Holt, the Liberal leader, wrote to William Rathbone's son, Ashton, explaining the dilemma which faced the Tory mayor.

*If the ceremonial were much more elaborate than on Mr. Cliff's occasion, it appears to me it might be misinterpreted by the family of Mr. Cliff. The Mayor is somewhat in a corner and as the Council has spoken out strongly in the matter of the Cliff presentation we may be sure that the presentation to your Father and Mr. Tate will be more ceremonial.*⁵⁸

Ashton Rathbone informed Morgan that his father wished to receive the honour at the same time as Tate and that this was likely to be in November. Morgan was not to be put off and replied 'I feel that I cannot properly acquiesce in any further postponement of a formality towards which all Members of the Council look with great interest.'⁵⁹ He requested that William Rathbone offer a choice of two or three dates before 28 October.

Morgan's poor management of the Cliff ceremonial and his pushy approaches to Tate and Rathbone had created an embarrassing situation. Unskilled handling of civic imagery could be politicised. Liverpool's most eminent Conservative councillor, Arthur Bower Forwood, intervened. He explained to William Rathbone

*An idea is afoot amongst the Liberals that the Mayor is lacking his duty by the long postponement of the presentation, + the Town Clerk rather inclines to say it ought to be done before 1st Nov. If you still desire to postpone for Mr. Tate's convenience I suggest you reply to the Mayor.*⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Tate to Rathbone, 14 September 1891 in Rathbone Papers, Special Collections, University of Liverpool.

⁵⁸ R.D. Holt to Ashton Rathbone, 26 September 1891, ibid.

⁵⁹ Morgan to William Rathbone, 6 October 1891, ibid.

⁶⁰ A.B. Forwood to W. Rathbone, 9 October 1891, ibid.

Forwood's intervention was decisive, and the ceremony took place on 21 October, just over a week before the municipal elections. The pageantry which marked the proceedings was noteworthy.

The mercantile and professional interests of the city, the clergy, the city and county magistrates, and even the naval and military services were represented. In accordance with the arrangements of the Mayor the presentations were made with every accessory of municipal ornament and in a way that proved sufficiently impressive. That they might be witnessed by as large a gathering as possible, the proceedings were associated with a Mayoral At-Home for which some 1200 invitations were issued. The elegantly appointed saloons were accordingly decorated...the Police Band played a selection of music. [There were] handsome silver-gilt caskets containing the resolution conferring the honorary freedom...behind were hung some of the ancient regalia.⁶¹

From uncertain beginnings, the ceremonial content of the conferral of the freedom of the city had become more lavish. Caskets adorned with the city arms and the arms of the recipient, with four dolphins as rests, had replaced the parchment scroll which Sir Andrew Walker had signed. The bestowal of a municipal honour had implications for the reputations of the city, the mayor and the ruling administration and was to be conducted appropriately.

The municipal freedom was more than the celebration of an individual. The ceremony enshrined and encouraged civic virtue. The Liverpool Daily Post professed a hope that 'the example of such men as have been thus honoured by the city should inspire each citizen to do what he can for the public.'⁶² The ceremony was a platform for lessons in civic patriotism and the presentation and acceptance speeches set out an ideological framework for civic virtue.

For instance, a stock theme of civic hagiography was the need for prominent men to resist the allure of suburban or London life and to devote themselves to Liverpoolian affairs; and this was reflected in the ceremony. Praise for Tate's philanthropy was due because 'when he

⁶¹ Liverpool Daily Post, 22 October 1891.

⁶² ibid.

removed to London he did not forget the needs of the city he had left and has always not only maintained but increased his interest in its institutions.' In accepting his title, Rathbone recalled his time as Liberal M.P. for Liverpool and 'confessed his sense of the importance and difficulty of serving a place with so extended a range of interests and where important questions presented themselves in a concentrated form.'⁶³

Rathbone continued by presenting his own conception of the connections between personal wealth and public duty.

*Allusion has been made to my having devoted some part of my wealth gained in Liverpool to the benefit of the town...wealth, talents, station and opportunity are not freeholds to be selfishly enjoyed by a man and his family and friends but sacred trusts to be employed for the welfare of the community.*⁶⁴

This speech was widely quoted afterwards. Rathbone's daughter, Eleanor, maintained that the imagery of trusts and freeholds 'repeated since on divers occasions in slightly varying forms, became more, perhaps, than any other words of his, identified with his name.'⁶⁵ In Glasgow, William Collins had marked his investiture as Lord Provost in 1877 with a similar speech which reminded the audience that 'property has its duties as well as its right.'⁶⁶

Other Liverpool figures, too, clearly intended their acceptance speeches to convey their visions of the city and civic duty in distilled form. Sir William Bower Forwood reproduced his acceptance speech in full in his autobiography. Once more, he elaborated on the need to invest time and energy in municipal, rather than national, affairs.

A goodly number have, I am glad to say, remained faithful to the municipal government of the city, recognising that they can undertake no more useful or noble

⁶³ ibid.

⁶⁴ E. Rathbone, William Rathbone, p.466.

⁶⁵ ibid.

⁶⁶ Trainor, Glasgow Vol. II, p.229.

*work. Municipal work is many sided: it is full of interests: it is very attractive, and even fascinating; and it brings with it its own reward in the satisfaction of the feeling that you are doing good. It may lack the glamour and prestige of the Imperial Parliament, but it has this great advantage: the City Council affords greater opportunities of initiating and carrying into effect measures for the benefit of people among whom we live, and we have the added advantage of seeing the growth and fruition of our work.*⁶⁷

The freedom of the city implied municipal approval of an individual's activities. As a ceremonial occasion its conduct reflected on the municipal administration. The ceremony encouraged the recipients of the honour to be treated as exemplars and it offered them a forum which gave their views civic sanction. That the award of the freedom to the city's most famous son, William Gladstone, was so fiercely debated should come as no surprise.

Gladstone's visit to the city in 1886 had demonstrated how sharply he divided the city in judgement. Robert Holt, who escorted him to Hengler's Circus where he spoke, noted an 'audience, vast densely crowded...Gladstone speaks 1hr 45mins. Audience listens with perfect quietness...Gladstone leaves in a storm of cheering...a wonderful popular demonstration.'⁶⁸ The Liverpool Echo reported 'when the end came at last, in an exquisitely touching passage, which spoke of the Minister's great age⁶⁹, and probability that these would be the last words he should ever speak to his fellow townsmen, a hush that was almost painful fell upon the meeting.'

The Liverpool Courier, the best-selling Conservative paper in Liverpool, was unmoved.

The gathering was representative not of the Liberalism of Liverpool but of Parnellism and of those who blindly follow Mr. Gladstone. It was a pitiable exhibition...an appeal to maudlin sentiment...it was in the pathetic passages where Mr. Gladstone was most effective. He said he was born in Liverpool and what he was saying to them

⁶⁷ Forwood, Recollections, p.138.

⁶⁸ Holt's Diary, 28 June 1886.

⁶⁹ Gladstone was seventy-seven years old.

*might be the last words he would utter in Liverpool. This touched the audience. Sobs were heard, handkerchiefs were freely applied.*⁷⁰

On 11 December 1891, Holt, three other Liberal councillors and a Nationalist called for the City Council to consider bestowing the freedom of the city on Gladstone. The Liverpool Courier viewed the move with suspicion.

The circumstances of the time give the new movement of the Liberal councillors a peculiar appearance. If they thought the honour should be conferred, why did they not choose one of the many more fitting occasions that have arisen in past years instead of waiting till the eve of a general election?

*...The Gladstonians evidently hope to place the Conservatives in a false position. In the past the rule has been to discountenance politics in connection with the presentation.*⁷¹

On the eve of the meeting, an editorial emphasised that 'the freedom of the city is a public compliment and to be of any real value it should be endorsed by the whole community spontaneously.' Recognising the awkward position in which the Tories were placed, the Courier counter-attacked. Rather than criticising Gladstone, it argued that the Liberal requisition had 'placed their great leader in a false position derogatory to his dignity...[and] degraded a municipal honour to mere party nothingness.'

*The Conservatives have merely to walk out of the Council Chamber...they are being coerced into bestowing a compliment which under other circumstances they would gladly bestow with cordial spontaneity...the obvious purpose of the Liberals is to fasten on their opponents the odium of refusing a compliment to an honoured citizen.*⁷²

Robert Holt was convinced that if the Conservatives opposed the proposal on party grounds 'nothing would place them in a worse light before the Town.' By adding the motion to a special meeting which was to elect a coroner, Holt had tried to ensure that enough councillors

⁷⁰ Liverpool Courier, 29 June 1886.

⁷¹ Liverpool Courier, 12 December 1891.

⁷² Liverpool Courier, 21 December 1891.

would attend to constitute a quorum.⁷³ The Conservatives could hardly deny that Gladstone had achieved more than any other Liverpool citizen. Therefore the most promising line of attack was to insist that the Liberals were undermining the dignity of a civic honour. By simply leaving the debate, Conservatives would escape the slur of having rejected the proposal by vote.

The meeting was held on 21 December. Holt insisted

I had not the slightest idea of making this anything of a political or party name. That element has unfortunately been introduced by the determination of the Conservative party who have held aloof and would not take part in what I consider is a duty on our part to pay respect to an illustrious townsman...we should be glad to couple and associate the name of Mr. Gladstone with Liverpool as one of her sons and enrol him in our list of freemen. (applause)⁷⁴

To confirm Tory fears, Holt embarked on a panegyric of Gladstone's politics on the flimsiest of pretexts. The purpose of the award was to recognise outstanding service to Liverpool. Holt conceded

Of course it is impossible to allude to Mr. Gladstone without alluding to politics...It appears to me if we look back over his long honourable life we must recall many instances of great reforms of immense benefit...These reforms have done much to liberate and promote the trade of the country, to make it free, and thus they have brought indirectly trade and a great deal of success to Liverpool.⁷⁵

His fellow Liberal, William Bowring, disingenuously argued 'I do not think the Liberal party could gain any political capital out of it; how could they? But they might gain if the Conservatives opposed the motion.'⁷⁶

⁷³ Holt's Diary, 13 and 21 December 1891.

⁷⁴ Liverpool Daily Post, 22 December 1891.

⁷⁵ Liverpool Daily Post, 22 December 1891.

⁷⁶ ibid.

Edward Whitley, a Conservative councillor and M.P. accepted such protestations of innocence, and pointed out that the Liberals in Glasgow had conferred the freedom of the city on Lord Salisbury. William Forwood agreed with Whitley and confessed to

the greatest sympathy with Mr. Holt's proposal...I felt that the roll of honour in this hall would not be complete without the name of Mr. Gladstone...the question only was as to the appropriateness of the moment...I regret that they pressed and Mr. Holt pressed his requisition before I was free to sign it; because if he had delayed it a few days longer I for one would very gladly have signed it...I do hope therefore that all the members of the Conservative party here present will record their votes in favour of the proposition.⁷⁷

The accommodating stance adopted by these senior Conservatives may well have rested on a premeditated strategy to find the meeting inquorate. The possibility of a walk-out had been raised by the Courier when the meeting was first announced. Twenty-one Conservatives did not attend the meeting, and three more walked out to make the meeting inquorate. Forwood and Whitley had fifty years experience on the Council between them. If they could be certain that the meeting would be curtailed, they might take up a conciliatory tone to mollify criticism of the Conservatives. Holt was pleased by their 'strong and noble language'⁷⁸. It should be noted that Forwood called only upon those Conservatives 'here present' to support the proposition, and that the meeting was inquorate by a single member. The Tories had side-stepped the trap without leaving themselves open to charges of a lack of civic patriotism.

In 1892, with Liberal confidence bolstered by the General Election victory in July, Holt advanced Gladstone's claims to municipal recognition again. This time Holt's tactics were different. In September, the Liverpool Daily Post related that he was holding conferences with leading Conservatives to win their support. Arthur Forwood was one of the first to sign the requisition and he seconded the proposal at a Council meeting on 5 October.

⁷⁷ ibid.

⁷⁸ Holt's Diary, 21 December 1891.

The honour was conferred on 3 December, by which time the Liberals had formed their first municipal administration in Liverpool for fifty years. Holt had become mayor and he

presented Mr. and Mrs. G at balcony over the Exchange Flags. Wonderful sight packed with people- reminded one of the Piazza S.Pietro at Rome on Easter Sunday when I, with my mother and sisters...saw the Pope Pio IX bless the assembled multitude.⁷⁹

The civic beatification⁸⁰ of Gladstone was a Liberal triumph as well as a civic compliment.

The Liverpool Daily Post admitted

It was impossible for his own adherents not to feel especial pride that to them he was not merely a brilliant Briton and an admired statesman but their trusted guide and leader in all matters of civic duty and national policy...There are men in whom local patriotism...is virtually extinct if it ever lived. Mr. Gladstone evinced an interest in Liverpool that could not be exceeded by the civic feeling of any venerable man in such....

[In the light of] the unapproachable magnificence and the intrinsic majesty of such scenes as Liverpool presented on Saturday, this moral may without presumption be taken home by every person whose imagination was touched by the great thought of the homage that was paid to our greatest citizen.⁸¹

Since the Liverpool Courier could not criticise the honoured guest, it concentrated instead on the favourable image which should be given of Liverpool. It was noted that there were

occasions when communities, as well as representative bodies, ignore political distinctions and forget personal differences in the desire to honour distinguished public personages. This fine characteristic of the English people has just been most gracefully shown by the citizens of Liverpool.⁸²

⁷⁹ Holt's Diary, 3 December 1892.

⁸⁰ Gladstone's uneaten bun from the celebration dinner was taken by an official afterwards and put into a glass case as a memento.

⁸¹ Liverpool Daily Post, 5 December 1892.

⁸² Liverpool Courier, 5 December 1892.

The report was also remarkable for its depiction of the pageantry and 'traditions' which were accumulating to enrich this celebration of civic image and civic patriotism. Gladstone was to receive

*a civic distinction- honourable from its antiquity as well as on account of the many eminent men who have held it...In former years it was, as now, conferred upon famous statesmen and warriors or men who had performed signal service in connection with the city.*⁸³

Where Sir Andrew Walker had been honoured in the Council Chamber, Gladstone was led into St. George's Hall 'preceded by the sergent-at-mace, the sword bearer and the other bearers of the corporation regalia.' The Liverpool Daily Post concluded

*If the city of his nativity has been slow to do him honour, she has made worthy amends and the magnificent reception which he met with on Saturday from the whole Liverpool people, was enough to efface from the mind any lingering memories of past neglect.*⁸⁴

Despite this assertion, even after Gladstone's death in 1898, commemoration of the Liberal premier was muted in a Conservative-dominated city. When Robert Holt organised a memorial subscription the fund was almost all contributed by Liberals. 'Tories talk loudly but don't subscribe'.⁸⁵ The money was used to erect a statue of Gladstone in St. John's Churchyard -'Liverpool's al fresco Valhalla'.⁸⁶ Yet the statue was sited at the back of St. George's Hall while Disraeli's likeness, in the pose of a Roman senator, stood with Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort in front of the Hall's massive portico.

⁸³ ibid.

⁸⁴ Liverpool Daily Post, 5 December 1892.

⁸⁵ Holt's Diary, 19 March 1899.

⁸⁶ Liverpool Review, 11 March 1899.

Where Holt had used the freedom of the city to Liberal advantage in 1892, he found a candidate forced on him by the Tories in 1897. One of the achievements of the Liberal's three-year ascendancy in the municipality had been the extension of the city's boundaries in 1895. An article in The Ludgate in May 1896 entitled 'In praise of "Greater Liverpool"' illustrated the importance of the boundary extension for civic aspirations. The incorporation of such outlying areas as Wavertree and West Derby had increased the city's population to 631,350.

*but if the residential districts on both sides of the Mersey...are included, the total number of inhabitants could not be estimated at less than a million, so that even the recent attempt on the part of Glasgow to gain the title of the 'second city of the empire' in point of population, at once vanishes into thin air.*⁸⁷

The extension had been secured by a Liberal administration, but Thomas Hughes, a Conservative, had chaired the Parliamentary Committee which steered the proposal at Westminster. On reclaiming power in Liverpool, the Conservatives had elected Lord Derby as the first Lord Mayor of 'Greater Liverpool'.⁸⁸

In 1895, during Derby's mayoralty, the Conservatives organised a testimonial subscription for Hughes. Holt explained to Derby that he did not feel able to support the movement.

*The terms...appear to be hardly fair to his able Deputy Chairman and to the other members of the late Parliamentary Committee of which Mr. Hughes was the Chairman.
The letter gives all glory and honour to Mr. Hughes for the successful carrying out of the Borough extension and no credit is given to the members of the Committee...
I have suggested to Mr. Oakshott that some personal compliment might be offered Mr. Hughes such as a Knighthood for his long service, but if such a movement as that suggested in the letter is decided upon, I venture to think it should not 'emanate' from the Town Hall.*⁸⁹

⁸⁷ The Ludgate no.7 Vol. II, May 1896, p.28.

⁸⁸ Holt had first suggested Derby to the Liberals as a suitable mayor a year before, but had been unable to win support.

⁸⁹ Holt to Derby, 27 November 1895 in Holt Papers.

In two letters to Oakshott, the Conservative organiser of the testimonial, Holt outlined his reasons for opposing the scheme.

The circle of political friends surrounding Mr. Thomas Hughes have chosen a most inappropriate moment to urge united municipal and political action in regard to Mr. Hughes...

[I do not] see in the circumstances of our enlarged Liverpool special reasons for such a departure...

A Knighthood might be obtained which would take the compliment out of local considerations or as some might say 'jealousies'.⁹⁰

...to attribute the extension of the Borough Boundaries as mainly due to Mr. Thomas Hughes is a stretch of the imagination which could only have emanated from the most Conservative of minds.⁹¹

It was the municipal recognition of Hughes as the driving influence of the borough extension, rather than an honorific title as such, to which Holt objected. In terms of municipal politics, a testimonial would be a greater coup than a knighthood, since it would symbolically recognise the Tory reading of 'Greater Liverpool'.

The message was reinforced by the choice of Hughes as Derby's successor. In a 'flowery and carefully written out speech'⁹², Arthur Forwood had argued that Derby would make a fitting first Lord Mayor of 'Greater Liverpool'. The appointment of Thomas Hughes as the second to preside over the extended city acclaimed him as the author of the project.

Municipal honours continued to be heaped upon Hughes. At the close of his mayoralty, it was proposed that he be awarded the freedom of the city. Holt left the Council Chamber in disgust. He refuted the three reasons advanced for the honour; diligent discharge of mayoral

⁹⁰ Holt to Oakshott, 2 December 1895 in Holt Papers.

⁹¹ Holt to Oakshott, 10 December 1895 in Holt Papers.

⁹² Holt's Diary, 9 November 1895.

duties, the part played in the extension of the city boundaries and Hughes' work on the Licensing Board.

*To 1st our reply was all Mayors have done the same
2. The extension of City Boundaries was a Liberal measure inaugurated and completed while the Liberals were in power- we made Mr. H chairman of the Com [mitt]ee and a lavish price he paid to any opposition so as to get the work completed knowing when Villa-dom was incorporated the Liberal government would come to an end.
3rd. As Chairman of the Licensing Bench he voiced the views of the Liberal justices + a few Tories but the influence was from the Liberals and it has taken years of steady work to break the powerful ascendancy on the Bench of Tories and the Drink Interest.⁹³*

Holt's opposition was to no avail and the honour was conferred on Hughes. To Holt's infuriation, Hughes was also knighted in the New Year honours for 1898. At a Council meeting which rang with congratulations for Hughes, Holt 'tried in a semi-jocose manner' to point out that Hughes' greatest achievement had been accomplished with the Liberals. He noted 'the main thing is for him and his friends to claim almost all the credit of conception etc. the part that properly belongs to them is the reckless expense of carrying the measure.'⁹⁴ Holt had conceded that the array of honours had firmly identified Hughes with the extension. Indeed, Hughes became a figure of civic myth. During the proposed incorporation of Bootle in 1903, both opponents and supporters of expansion paid homage to the memory of Sir Thomas Hughes as the author of the successful extension of 1895.

The mayoralty and the freedom of the city helped to construct and project civic image. Image-building was central to mayoral responsibilities. Liverpool's international links and aspirations to the status of the 'second city' demanded ceremonial and civic functions to match. The mayor's position as a civic figurehead dictated that those who held the office must

⁹³ *ibid.*, 27 October 1897.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 5 January 1898.

have time, money, a supportive family and social grace. Ceremonial functions thus created qualifications which kept the office in the hands of the wealthy. Mayors were chosen and evaluated on how they performed their ceremonial duties. In 1886, Sir David Radcliffe, whose uneasy manner had formerly provoked criticism, won wide acclaim for his behaviour when the Queen visited. In contrast, Joseph Morgan's neglect of ceremonial, Robert Hampson's barely disguised glee on being knighted in 1904 and Chaloner Dowdall's bombastic mayoral portrait garnered disapproval.⁹⁵

Although expectations and traditions placed limits on the mayor's freedom to work civic ritual, the manipulation of ceremonial forms and functions could steal a march on political adversaries. The elevation of the chief magistrate to Lord Mayor, for instance, was an achievement for Robert Holt and satisfied both personal and municipal ambitions. The judicious use of entertainment could earn votes at elections, too.

The history of the freedom of the city tells another story of how civic imagery, civic virtue and political jousting were tightly inter-related. Less than a decade after the Municipal Corporations Act of 1885 put the honour in the municipal gift, the ceremonies associated with its conferral had become lavish celebrations of civic virtue. The investitures offered platforms for the propagation of ideologies of civic patriotism and the municipal recognition which the award implied opened it to partisan feeling.

The office of mayor and the title of freeman of the city thus occupied key strategic points governing the political and ideological ambits of civic image and civic patriotism. They acted as channels for the communicated image. As Fred Inglis has commented, 'certain traces of historical activity...are fiercely charged up in tight little nodes with human *values*, where a value simply means a concentration in action or artefact of human significance'.⁹⁶ Ceremonial

⁹⁵ The last two incidents are related in the chapter on royal visits.

⁹⁶ F. Inglis, Cultural Studies, Oxford 1994, p.5.

imagery and municipal recognition possessed formed such 'nodes', making the mayoralty and civic freedom vehicles for the expression of values through actions and artefacts. Thus, political groupings competed for the power which these titles bestowed to construct and communicate civic image and to reward civic patriotism.

Chapter Four- Civic Hagiography

If history records good things of good men, the thoughtful reader is encouraged to imitate what is good.¹

His figure, as he clattered past on his black horse, became very familiar to Liverpool citizens...Sitting rather forward and bending over his horse's neck, the pockets of his Inverness cape stuffed out with papers, his whole appearance betokened business and an eagerness to arrive...he was not a little proud of the fact that none of his sons or daughters could manage [the horse].²

The two children were walking together along the road, having each got a penny to spend on sweetmeats. Meeting a poor old man, Alexander slipped the penny into his hand. To the inquiry why he had done this, the boy gravely replied 'Don't you remember, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord"'.³

The rider with the mysterious power over his horse and the youthful display of charity are scenes which could sit with Bede's didactic tales of King Oswy and Saint Aidan. Yet these incidents are not taken from eighth century chronicles, but from the biographies of William Rathbone and Alexander Balfour, written in 1905 and 1889. A genre of biographical memoirs of local worthies, which enshrined and encouraged civic patriotism, emerged in Liverpool at the close of the nineteenth century.

The portrayal of a particular figure as worthy of emulation was a way of advancing a vision of civic patriotism; different biographies preached the importance of different virtues, such as philanthropy, aesthetic sensibility, hard work and sobriety. Nevertheless, the recurrence of certain stock themes in these works make their treatment as a hagiographic genre to be fruitful. That Christian morality should inform concepts of civic duty and civic patriotism is unsurprising. The remarkable feature of these civic hagiographies is the employment of

¹ Bede, A History of the English Church and People, Harmondsworth, 1968, p.33.

² E. Rathbone, William Rathbone- A Memoir, London 1905, p. 477.

³ R.H. Lundie, Alexander Balfour- A Memoir, London, 1895, p.vi.

parables, superhuman feats and quasi-messianic imagery to depict local heroes who were, like Christ, at once ordinary and extraordinary. Some of the biographies were written by clerics; and sermons, pamphlets and iconography provide evidence of further connections between Christianity and civic patriotism.

However, secular influences on civic hagiography were not lacking. The tendency for history to be conceived in terms of lives of great men encouraged a similar reading of achievements in municipal affairs. The Dictionary of National Biography, begun in 1882, was one manifestation of this trend. Rosemary Jann's study of Victorian historical thought argues that

Rendering the historical foreground as a pageant of heroism affirmed the potential for human greatness and the meaningfulness of moral choice, it released the reader from the limits of the ordinary but not from the pressure of duty and emulation... History provided the sacred text and a secularized communion of the saints.⁴

A number of works catalogued Liverpool's 'natural aristocrats'. The greatest of these, not least in its scale, was Liverpool's Legion of Honour by B. Guinness Orchard⁵. Orchard's directory of worthies was imbued with a fierce civic pride. The superiority of Liverpool society to life in the capital or in Manchester was asserted; it was incumbent on Liverpool's elite to continue living in and working for their city.

Although civic hagiography was not the heir of a single tradition and did not assume a universal form, it may be clearly identified as an important bridge between civic image and civic patriotism. The image of Liverpool as an arena in which moral endeavour would win an ideal city had a wide currency in these works. Individual emulation of the municipal saints would earn Liverpool a glorious reputation. The image of Liverpool as a New Jerusalem was

⁴ R. Jann, The Art and Science of Victorian History, Columbus, Ohio, 1985, pp. xiii and 208.

⁵ B. Guinness Orchard, Liverpool's Legion of Honour, Birkenhead, 1893.

multi-faceted; it could express aspirations to build a godly city and, in some cases simultaneously, stand as a vision of a city basking in the virtues of enlightened commerce.

On 25 October 1891, the Sunday following the conferral of the freedom of the city on William Rathbone and Henry Tate⁶, the Broad Churchman T.W.M. Lund preached a sermon entitled The Praise of Famous Men. According to Orchard, 'his sermons on special occasions are invariably reported by the daily papers'⁷. In addition, this sermon was subsequently published in pamphlet form.⁸ Lund called for financial assistance for the School for the Blind which was connected to his chapel and set his appeal in a tradition of civic virtue.

We are proud of our age, proud of ourselves, ready to suppose our vantage ground wholly our own. But in fact, we are debtors to a long past...countless efforts of forgotten heroes and heroines...

Individually we may not be able to do such great things, but at least the example of our benefactors may hearten us to strain every nerve to fit ourselves for taking an honourable stand in the world...

We want a Sir Andrew Walker, or a Mr. Henry Tate, or some other deep-pursed and liberal-hearted philanthropist to plant our Institution where the enfeebled health of the blind may be strengthened by purer air.⁹

In a religious sermon, Lund was suggesting that moral exemplars were to be found, not amongst the saints and holy men of the past, but in the philanthropic business men of more recent days. Civic and religious duty coincided in these heroic figures. It should be noted that financial considerations could be served by imbuing civic fame with a religious dimension.

Clerics were to the fore in the creation of civic hagiography. Robert Veitch, a Congregationalist minister, preached a series of sermons in 1894 which aimed to 'enkindle

⁶ See chapter three for a more detailed account of the ceremony.

⁷ Orchard, Legion of Honour, p.467.

⁸ T.W.M. Lund, In Praise of Famous Men, Liverpool, 1891.

⁹ ibid., pp.11, 13, 14 and 17.

that order of civic patriotism which has the force of religion.¹⁰ Under the title of Civic Patriotism or Studies in Liverpool Citizen Life, Veitch took an extract from the 137th Psalm as his 'sacred motto'-

*If I forget thee O Jerusalem
Let my right hand forget her cunning
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
If I remember thee not
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.*¹¹

Veitch contended that civic patriotism was an essential safeguard for Christian life, and that a moral sense would achieve Liverpool's civic mission.

*If Liverpool be a city loved by her sons, prayed for by her daughters, thought of before God, her real well-being and usefulness- cherished as an object of life by her citizens, she will become what she ought to be. Not otherwise.
Our citizens cannot live a worthy life without devotion to the civic weal. If such public spirited and elevated aims be not abroad amongst us, many of our sons inevitably become selfish money grubbers, oppressive and tyrannical, perhaps also lustful: and the daughters of the city will be at best without that wide intellect and sympathetic interest which can provide a new generation of noble characters. The tone of civic morality and enthusiasm for the city's good should preserve from such disaster.*¹²

Veitch chose Alexander Balfour as his first model of civic virtue, for 'this citizen's life had become a kind of poem, a drama of growing beauty to the devoted and religiously inspired mind.' Balfour was a Scot by birth, but had made his fortune as a merchant in Liverpool. He was an energetic advocate of temperance and had been involved in a number of philanthropic projects for seamen. Praise for Balfour's campaign for temperance was to be expected from a Congregationalist minister, but these activities did not encompass all of Veitch's admiration.

¹⁰ R. Veitch, 'Civic Patriotism or Studies in Liverpool Citizen Life' in Liverpool Pulpit Vol. III no. 35 (1894), p.177.

¹¹ ibid.

¹² ibid.

It was suggested that 'Balfour regretted that many who made their fortunes in Liverpool retired to suburban ease...This is a growingly serious condition of things to be regretted both for the sake of the slummer and the suburbanite.' The flight to the suburbs was a feature of nineteenth century urban life which was

*widely deplored. The suburban dream equalled selfishness, a rejection of obligation and commitment to the city where the suburbanite earned his living...the city core was devitalized and the municipalities' fiscal resources were depleted as a consequence of suburban development. Suburb and slum thus remained intimately connected.*¹³

The case for Liverpool's incorporation of Bootle in 1903 was to contend that Bootleians were guilty of dereliction of duty in earning a living in the city, but paying the borough's (lower) rates. The continued residence of the wealthy in Liverpool was a moral question and a theme of civic hagiography.

Balfour's career was used to illustrate another motif- that of commerce as a moral training. Veitch believed it 'specifically worthy of note that much of his philanthropy grew out of his business. His efforts on behalf of seamen arose from his generously recognising that, being linked with them through business, he was bound to care for their real well being.'¹⁴Civic patriotism represented a union of commercial Liverpool and the New Jerusalem. As Veitch concluded, 'For this city's weal, and for the fulfilment of God's purpose in it, other Alexander Balfours are needed.'¹⁵

Civic mindedness also received religious sanction in Veitch's portrait of Sir James Picton, the Liverpool-born architect and antiquarian. Veitch acclaimed Picton for writing Memorials of Liverpool, a history of the city.

¹³ P.J. Waller, Town, City and Nation: England 1850-1914, Oxford, 1983, p.145.

¹⁴ Veitch, Civic Patriotism- Alexander Balfour, p.178.

¹⁵ ibid., p.179.

*To maintain a city consciousness, a sense of unity, and a devotion to the city as a whole, there must be some knowledge of the city as such, some interest in its past, some faith in its future possibilities...This must be understood if an intelligent devotion to the city is to be possible. The disintegrating influences are constantly at work. Suburbanism, for example, draws off the gifted portion of the population in their leisure hours to the outskirts, and the source of responsibility for Liverpool's life is by so much weakened. Commercialism tends even to reduce the City to the sphere of mere money-getting.*¹⁶

Yet Picton's civic patriotism was not exalted as an unattainable ideal. The Picton Reading Room, opened in 1879, was a testament to his abilities, but Veitch emphasised that Picton was not a man of genius.

*'By attending to little things', 'by making good every step before the next was taken', 'by commending the object to the good sense and right feeling of the community' not 'by eloquence or genius' but 'by the most humdrum commonplace means', Sir James Picton says the whole thing was done. There is philosophy of life at least in his words. Attend to little things; one step and then another; believe in commonplace means. ...[Picton wanted his epitaph to be] he was one who moved in a narrow sphere with limited opportunities, but he did what little he could and did that little from a sense of duty.*¹⁷

The basis of the civic patriotism which Picton exemplified was that all might achieve greatness through dedicated application of limited means. This inclusive vision of civic endeavour was well suited to the didactic purposes of hagiography.

Briggs has contended that 'the vitality of the civic gospel in Birmingham derived from the abandonment of narrow conceptions of evangelicalism and the search for a more relevant and inspiring message.'¹⁸ In the Midland city, Nonconformity provided a 'social cutting edge'.¹⁹ Glasgow's elite was characterised by a preference for Presbyterian dissent and by 'an often

¹⁶ R. Veitch, 'Sir James A. Picton' in Liverpool Pulpit Vol. IV no.37 (1895), p.22.

¹⁷ ibid., p.24.

¹⁸ A. Briggs, Victorian Cities, Harmondsworth, 1971, p.200.

¹⁹ ibid., p.202.

religiously inspired sense of obligation' to solve social problems. James Martineau of Liverpool had influenced such figures as George Dawson, R.W. Dale and H.W. Crosskey who had been central to the emergence of Birmingham's civic gospel. The cross-fertilisation of ideas between Liverpool and Birmingham was continued by the biography of Crosskey which Richard Acland Armstrong, the minister at Liverpool's Hope Street Unitarian Chapel, wrote in 1895.²⁰

Bebbington has identified activism, or the 'expression of the gospel in effort' as one of the defining characteristics of Evangelicalism. In 1879, Dale declared, 'the Evangelical saint of today is not a man who spends his days and nights in fasting and prayer, but a man who is a zealous Sunday School teacher, holds mission services among the poor, and attends innumerable committee meetings. "Work" has taken its place side by side with prayer.'²¹ Dale's son, Alfred, was the Principal of University College, Liverpool, and later became the Vice-Chancellor of the University.²² Thus, there was a tradition of Dissenting intellectual interest in civic affairs in Liverpool which made civic patriotism fruitful ground for preaching.

Veitch's use of hagiography as a tool for moral regeneration was not simply a matter of extolling the virtues of the civic elite. As Bebbington has observed 'Nonconformists tried to stamp their standards of behaviour on public life.'²³ The Nonconformist conscience which evolved during the 1870s and 1880s had three features; 'a conviction that there is no strict boundary between religion and politics, an insistence that politicians should be of the highest character, and a belief that the state should promote the moral welfare of its citizens.'²⁴

²⁰ R.A. Armstrong, Henry William Crosskey, His Life and Work, London, 1895.

²¹ D. Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain, London, 1989.

²² T. Kelly, For Advancement of Learning: The University of Liverpool 1881-1981, Liverpool, 1981.

²³ D. Bebbington, The Nonconformist Conscience, London, 1982, p.ix.

²⁴ ibid., p.11.

It was this approach, applied to municipal life, which informed Veitch's sermons. His praise for Balfour and Picton was sharply contrasted by the scorn which he reserved for the claims of Sir Andrew Walker, a prominent brewer, to civic honour. Moreover, Veitch singled out Josephine Butler, the Nonconformist heroine of the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts and a former Liverpool resident, for her far-sightedness.

*Mrs. Butler saw clearly what is still hidden from many, that the industrial freedom and independence of women, their higher education, their claim to a wider place in social activity, their equal rights with men before the law, and their full enfranchisement as citizens were all parts of the assertion of the natural dignity of womanhood.*²⁵

The series of portraits ended with Veitch's exhortation 'In the fear of God, and for love of men, let us fulfil our citizen duty in the Christ like spirit of sacrifice and service on behalf of the least.'²⁶

Jeremy Morris' study of Croydon concluded that the incorporation of the borough in 1883 had ushered in a decline of religious influence over community life.²⁷ Morris found 'no evidence to support the view that...preachers were ready to formulate a general religious basis for citizenship...[limiting themselves to] little more than weak comparisons between Christian and municipal life.'²⁸ Morris attributed this ideological poverty to the impossibility of reconciling a sectarian vision with a pluralist Corporation and argued that 'the religious conception of "civic duty" could only be one which carefully avoided an open pronouncement of opinion in municipal affairs.'²⁹

²⁵ Veitch, 'Josephine Butler' in Liverpool Pulpit Vol. IV no. 40 (May 1895), p.51.

²⁶ ibid., p.53.

²⁷ J. Morris, Religion and Urban Change: Croydon 1840-1914, Woodbridge, 1992.

²⁸ ibid., p.163.

²⁹ ibid., p.164.

In view of the chronology of municipal development in Croydon, some degree of transferral of energies and prestige from the Parish Church to the Town Hall must be expected. Much of the decline of religious influence which Morris posits is explained by the emergence of a new focus for community life. Liverpool had held a charter since 1207, and clerics in the city were not marked by any reluctance to engage in the construction of theoretical modes of citizenship. When Philip Rathbone, a member of Liverpool's most prominent Nonconformist merchant family, died in 1895, T.W.M.Lund delivered a sermon which was published as The Ideal Citizen. Veitch's belief that citizenship could offer a holistic approach to contemporary moral questions found an echo.

True citizenship is the highest realisation of ourselves in the service of the community among which we live...if he gives himself to his city...so that you feel the very vitality of his being to have flowed from him and vitalised in turn the human material in his vicinity...you have among you not only no mean citizen of your city, but one whose career will show us at least some signal traits of Ideal Citizenship. Liverpool is awakening to her loss in a citizen who furnishes a striking object lesson in civic patriotism...a model and an inspiration to us all... When the light of citizenship burns low...look back on this picture of a citizen, and whatever flaws we may detect there, we shall find enough of nobility and beauty, of self giving and virile worth, to give us wings and bid us soar above the cramping penury and stifling atmosphere of vulgar aims into the free pure air of beauty and life and love.³⁰

Preaching was but one avenue along which civic virtue and religion advanced. B. Guinness Orchard commented that there were 'many ministers' sons who have made for themselves prominent and influential positions in the community.³¹ Orchard recounted the case of George Ball, 'a prominent member of the commercial community'. Although Orchard labelled Ball a churchman, he had been 'a pupil in the school then conducted by the Rev Mr. Thompson, minister of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, Canning Street, amongst his

³⁰ T.W.M. Lund, The Ideal Citizen: An Appreciation of Philip Rathbone, Liverpool, 1896, pp. 3, 4, 27 and 28.

³¹ Orchard, Liverpool's Legion of Honour, p.132.

companions being many young members of old Liverpool families, some of whom now occupy leading positions in the city.¹³²

Nonconformist and Broad Church religiosity thus impinged on the intellectual landscape of a number of Liverpool merchants and was not confined to those formally identified as Dissenters. Moreover, it lay behind the burgeoning literary genre of civic hagiography to a remarkable extent. Seven biographies of citizens³³ were written in Liverpool between 1885 and 1910: Alexander Balfour- A Memoir by R. Lundie; Sir James A. Picton: A Biography by J. Allanson Picton; The Ideal Citizen (Philip Rathbone) by T.W.M. Lund; The Founder of the White Star Line (Thomas Ismay) by an unknown author; William Rathbone- A Memoir by E. Rathbone; William Roscoe- An Inaugural Lecture by R. Muir and Kitty Wilkinson by W. Rathbone.

The careers of Balfour, Picton and Philip Rathbone have already been outlined. Thomas Ismay was the founder of the White Star Line. William Rathbone, Philip's brother, was renowned for his philanthropy, as well as for his work in establishing the University of Liverpool. William Roscoe had been a fierce critic of the slave trade at the start of the nineteenth century and had envisioned Liverpool as a new Venice where the arts might flourish. Kitty Wilkinson was a working-class woman who was involved in the establishment of municipal wash-houses in Liverpool.

³² Margaret Simey suggested the influence of Scottish Presbyterianism on conceptions of citizenship in Liverpool during a discussion with me in May 1997. *ibid.*, p.142.

³³ The analysis which follows is concerned with the layman as the subject of hagiography. There were also five biographies of ministers written in the same period: A.H. Grey-Edwards, Life of Canon Major Lester, London, 1903; G. Hughes, Evan Roberts, Revivalist, London, 1905; G.G. Armstrong, R.A. Armstrong: A Memoir, London, 1906; W.R. Nicholl, Ian MacLaren; The Life of Reverend John Watson, London 1908 and R. Griffiths, The Life Story of Pastor George Wise, Toxteth 1909.

The seven biographies set out in *Table 1* yield ten Nonconformists (five as subjects and five as authors) and two Broad Churchmen (one as subject, one as author). Only the anonymous author of The Founder of the White Star Line and Kitty Wilkinson (an Irish Catholic) do not conform to this devotional pattern. An explanation can be drawn from Bebbington's thesis of the 'Nonconformist conscience'. Nonconformity was negotiating a new relationship with politics between 1870 and 1914 and the proliferation of civic hagiography was an indication of this process. An alternative cause may be found in the nature of Nonconformist devotion. Unlike the Catholic and Anglican traditions, Nonconformity did not enshrine a litany of saints as exemplars of virtue. Consequently the Nonconformist models for emulation had to be constructed from the lives of laymen.

Certain thematic concerns common to the genre are summarised in *Table 1*. The theme of the self-made man, which Veitch had discerned in Picton's life, recurred elsewhere. When Alexander Balfour first came to Liverpool from Fifeshire, 'his path at first was by no means a path of roses...the delay, disappointment and rebuff through which he passed at this time was a valuable discipline.'³⁴ Ismay arrived in the city from Cumberland at a time when 'there was still room for men of talent and energy to open up fresh lines of intercourse between the Mersey and the lands across the sea.'³⁵ William Rathbone, although born into a wealthy family, served an apprenticeship where he 'did nothing but copy letters and accounts, run errands, mend the fires and take weights on the dock quays and in warehouses...he found the advantage of it in several ways, and especially in enabling him to judge how everyone in his office, from highest to lowest, was doing his work.'³⁶ In Kitty Wilkinson's case, her

³⁴ R.H. Lundie, Alexander Balfour: A Memoir, London, 1889, pp. 19 and 20.

³⁵ Anonymous author, The Founder of the White Star Line, Liverpool, 1901, no page numbering.

³⁶ Rathbone, William Rathbone, pp.61-63.

biographer speculated 'perhaps it was the sadness of her early life that helped to make Kitty rather old and thoughtful for her age.'³⁷

From the hardships of these formative years, five of the subjects rose to become merchants. Moreover, they were merchants who conducted their business with a clear moral tone. Lundie assessed Balfour's business affairs in a chapter entitled 'The Christian Merchant' which was introduced with a quotation from Isaiah; 'The crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose trafficks are the honourable of the earth'.³⁸ The glories of commerce and the merchant were foundations of Liverpool's civic image and ideology of civic patriotism. The image of the city propagated at public events such as royal visits and the Pageant of 1907 and in the civic mission encapsulated by aspirations to be the 'Second City of the Empire' centred on the spiritual and temporal grandeur of commerce. The hagiography of merchants reasserted these connections of commerce and civic patriotism.

Balfour's biographer, the Presbyterian minister R.H. Lundie, narrated that

*He was wont to say he would not exchange the proud position of a British merchant, with all its interests and opportunities of usefulness, for that of the richest landed proprietor of the realm. He frequently spoke with pity of men who had retired from business...His sole object in continuing to follow business pursuits in Liverpool was that he might employ the position thus given him, as a fulcrum, by means of which to exercise a salutary influence on the town.*³⁹

William Rathbone, for all of his public work, felt that business was 'a more wholesome training than politics or philanthropy with their inevitable accompaniments of a facile conspicuousness and exaggerated praise.'⁴⁰ For Nonconformists such as Rathbone and

³⁷ W. Rathbone, The Life of Kitty Wilkinson- A Lancashire Heroine, Liverpool, 1910, p. 14.

³⁸ Isaiah xxiii.8.

³⁹ ibid., p.42.

⁴⁰ Rathbone, William Rathbone, p.106.

Hagiography in Liverpool 1889-1907

Table 1

Subject	Date ¹	Author N/C ²	N/C ³	Self- made	Merchant	Theme 1	Theme 2
Balfour	1889	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Picton	1891	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
P. Rathbone	1896	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Ismay	1901	?	N	Y	Y	Y	N
W. Rathbone	1905	Y	Y	Y/N	Y	Y	Y
Roscoe	1907	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Wilkinson	1910	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N

Theme 1- Application is more important than innate ability.

Theme 2- Those whose fortunes were made in Liverpool should be 'loyal' to the city.

William Rathbone is classified as Y/N for self-made man because he claimed the years of voluntary drudgery he had spent as an office clerk had been a formative influence although he came from a wealthy background.

¹. Date of publication of book or pamphlet.

². Author either a Nonconformist cleric or of Nonconformist upbringing.

³. Nonconformist.

Balfour, commercial success was to be valued as providing a 'fulcrum' for citizenship. The prestige which a wealthy merchant enjoyed could be turned to moral improvement. William Rathbone

*had observed that in England especially, the weight which was given to a man's words or principles was greatly determined by the skill which he had shown in managing his own affairs, and that this skill, in the case at any rate of men of business was inevitably roughly measured by the amount of his wealth.*⁴¹

Ramsay Muir, the son of a Presbyterian minister, suggested that the Nonconformist merchant William Roscoe had modelled himself on Lorenzo de Medici for similar reasons.

*What had made Lorenzo Roscoe's...model, was the fact that, being a great magnate of commerce and a statesman...he yet contrived, without neglecting these duties...to keep his mind open to the best thought and the noblest art of his day, and to be the most generous patron of artists, scholars and philosophy because he recognised that their contribution to the welfare and progress of man was of more moment than all his own vast commercial enterprises.*⁴²

Civic hagiography was not blind to the dangers of materialism and greed, but suggested that such faults would find reparation in the heroic figure of the enlightened merchant. The merchant would be tempered by hard work, would meet the moral challenges of business and would win the lofty position from which he could inspire others. In 1898, James Samuelson's Footsteps in Human Progress was published. Samuelson was the defeated 1885 Lib-Lab candidate for Liverpool Kirkdale and he dedicated the work to Rev. John Sephton, a fellow Unitarian who had been Principal of the Liverpool Institute. The book illustrated how the themes mentioned above informed Unitarian conceptions of citizenship. Samuelson agreed with Veitch, an occupation was a moral calling, and commerce was amongst the highest vocations of all.

⁴¹ ibid., p,113.

⁴² R. Muir, William Roscoe- An Inaugural Lecture, Liverpool 1906, p.18.