The political structure of the Wolverhampton Borough Council since 1900

Volume 2

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CHAPTER 9

Independents, Ratepayers and Other Parties

The Labour and Conservative Parties have not always monopolised the municipal elections and the Council of Wolverhampton. Independents, Ratepayers, Liberals, Suffragists, Progressives, Communists, Fascists and Ex-Servicemen have all contested wards, and some gained seats.

The word Independent has had many connotations during the period. Around 1900 all save the Labour candidates would have ascribed themselves as Independent, in the sense of not being the official representatives of a political party. In the interwar years, indeed from 1908,[1] more and more Conservatives stood openly as Conservatives, save in those safish Labour seats where the term Independent was likely to be more attractive. In the safer Conservative seats they would try to have the best of both worlds, for example in 1939 a candidate for Park Ward said "I am standing as an Independent candidate, free of all party politics in Municipal Administration, but nationally I wholeheartedly support the Conservative Party."[2] During these years Liberals

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1. See above Chapter 1, pp. 60-65.
2. E. & S. 9.2.1939.

also used the term as did the Councillors of those areas recently amalgamated with Wolverhampton such as Heath Town; here Independent signified not so much detachment from a particular party as attachment to a particular ward. In the late 1940s the word applied to those candidates who opposed the Conservatives' attempts to force all anti-Socialists into the Conservative mould, such as A. L. Kitching and Mrs. Hayton in St. James' Ward, where Liberalism flickered still. Indeed the hostility of such Councillors was really a protest against the Conservative destruction of the last remnants of Liberalism. Also the term was adopted by Councillors who, like Mrs. Cattell, stood against former colleagues.[1] Such cases are rare; as is also the use of the term which is most commonly attributed to it, that is the case of the lone individual seeking to represent his ward, basing his appeal not on a party but on the merits of his case and on the force of his own personality. Over the period of 60 years less than a dozen have put themselves forward in this way. An example is W. A. Jones who stood 4 times in the 1930s. His main proposal was to extend the Manchester Ship Canal to Birmingham, since the geographical position of the Midlands caused high

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1. E. & S. 13.5.1960 and Mrs. E. Sproson E. & S. 22.3.1927, G. J. Williams E. & S. 2.11.1929. Miss M. L. Perry E. & S. 29.10.1930.

transport charges and thus prevented the emergence of new industries in the area.[1] His result in 1933 typifies his fate and that of other such Independent candidates who have stood without the backing of an organisation. He received 44 of 1,937 votes cast.[2] There is no evidence that such candidates have been driven out by party politics, as is often argued, for example in the local press. In 1952 it was said that "continued insistence on party labels is making it increasingly difficult for men and women interested in good local government and not deeply concerned with partisan politics to secure a seat on the local Council."[3] Such individuals, both cranks and sound men, relying on no organised support have but rarely come forward as candidates over the 60 years under survey and when they did their results were miserable. The last to stand in this way did so in 1950.[4]

A group of candidates who did not stand as representatives of a political party between 1910 and 1920 were women. The first female candidate stood in 1910, a Miss Edridge, a Conservative nationally who

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1. E. & S. 27.10.1933. In 1900 S. Eachus asked for support because he was a local man and first in the field. E. & S. 2.11.1900.
2. E. & S. 1.11.1933.
3. E. & S. 7.5.1952.
4. E. & S. 12.5.1950.

stood as an Independent.[1.] In 1912 a suffragist and Independent, Miss Pearson stood,[2.] and in 1920 a Mrs. Highfield-Jones as a representative of the Womens' Citizens' Committee.[3.] After this date women no longer presented themselves for election just on the basis of their sex, but adopted the same kinds of labels as the male candidates. The first female Councillor, Mrs. E. Sproson, was elected as a Labour representative in 1921.[4.]

The Penn Ward (Wolverhampton) Ratepayers' Society was founded in 1930, when Upper Penn was still a parish in the Seisdon Rural District of Staffordshire. Penn was originally a village on the outskirts of Wolverhampton 3 miles from the town centre, which in the course of the 1920s and 30s became linked to Wolverhamtpon by a ribbon of houses. More and more were built until Penn became a huge housing estate of detached and semi-detached dwellings, middle class, privately owned and owner occupied. In the early 1930s it was a wasteland of houses, lacking proper amenities and with few social activities. The Ratepayers' Society expressed the

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1. E. & S. 29.10.1910.
2. E. & S. 2.11.1912.
3. E. & S. 2.11.1920.
4. E. & S. 2.11.1921.

grievances of the inhabitants of Penn, wanting to obtain for their area amenities up to the standard of their desirable residences and to provide for the area some social activities. Besides the usual whist drives and dances which the Society held,[1] it organised a flourishing Choral Society and Chess Club.[2] Thus the Society was fulfilling its pledge as laid down on the membership card "to provide facilities for the promotion of social activities for the bringing together of residents for the purpose of getting to know each other."

The work of the Society was performed by a monthly meeting of the Central Committee, comprising the officers, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and other members elected at an Annual General Meeting; this latter was very well attended; 140 in 1930[3] and 150 in 1932 were present.[4] The objects of the Society as outlined by the Chairman at the first general meeting were to protect the interests of the ratepayers; to attack unduly high assessments; to give facilities for obtaining legal advice at cheap rates for fighting

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1. e.g. Minutes of the Ratepayers' Society (cited after as M.R.S.) 11.2.1932. These also provided finance.
2. Interview with A.A. Rogers.
3. M.R.S. 14.10.1930.
4. M.R.S. 26.1.1932.

appeals against assessments; and to bring to the notice of the R.D.C. by concerted action the ratepayers' views concerning amongst other things, the condition of the roads in the parish compared with those in the Borough of Wolverhampton, and the removal of refuse.[1] The Express and Star[2] said that its primary aim was to attack the rateable value of premises in Wynn Road, part of which was in the borough and part in Upper Penn. Though the houses in the road were identical, those in the borough had a lower assessment than those in Upper Penn. The inhabitants felt that to appeal individually without legal advice was useless, but that by banding together they could be a more effective force and retain a solicitor. In addition the part of the road in the borough was channelled and tarred, while that in the parish was not, and the resultant dust, so the householders complained, was a nuisance and a menace to health. Further, the dustbins in the borough were emptied each week, but those in Upper Penn were emptied once a fortnight and even at longer intervals;[3] also the refuse carts were pulled by horses, while Wolverhampton

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1. M.R.S. 26.8.1930.
2. 28.8.1930.
3. M.R.S. 12.11.1930.

had lorries.[1.]

The activities of the Society were therefore twofold. The first was to tackle the assessments; a solicitor was engaged;[2.] his services were paid for by a membership fee of 1/6d.[3.] and by charges levied on those houses whose assessments were to be contested at rates of 2/6d. on a rateable value up to £20, 5/- up to £25 and 7/6d up to £30.[4.] Appeals were made; those which failed before the Local Assessment Appeals Committee were taken to the Quarter Sessions at Stafford. Members were asked to pay an additional 5/- towards the costs.[5.] The Society appealed against garden sheds being assessed as garages and against garages being too highly assessed. They succeeded in having the assessment reduced by £1.[6.]

The second function of the Society was to obtain better facilities for the area. It pressed the Parish Council and the Rural District Council for the more frequent removal of the dustbins and for a lorry to be

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1. E. & S. 21.1.1931.
2. M.R.S. 1.9.1930.
3. M.R.S. 26.8.1930.
4. M.R.S. 14.10.1930.
5. M.R.S. 22.6.1931.
6. M.R.S. 29.2.1932.

used.[1.] It asked for footpaths to be improved,[2.] lighting to be brighter,[3.] a school bus to be provided[4.] and streets to have their houses numbered.[5.] The Society also sought to take over the Parish Council, which it regarded as dominated by a small clique with backward notions.[6.] The Society attacked the "3 years idleness in office."[7.] of the "old gang". It packed the election meeting of the parish and took 9 of the 11 seats.[8.]

Almost at once the Society found a new objective, to abolish the Parish Council and to have the area incorporated in the Wolverhampton Borough as a separate ward. It petitioned the Ministry and the local authorities involved. It attacked the R.D.C.'s opposition to the bill providing for the amalgamation as "an unwarranted spending of the ratepayers' money."

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1. M.R.S. 28.10.1930.
2. M.R.S. 19.5.1931, 12.1.1932.
3. M.R.S. 20.1.1931.
4. M.R.S. 19.5.1931.
5. M.R.S. 28.10.1930.
6. In 1949 the Secretary of the Society wrote to an inquirer at Wem that this was the nature of the Council before the Society captured it. Letter in M.R.S. 13.3.1949.
7. M.R.S. 29.1.1931.
8. Interview with F. W. Mason.

Penn would be better served and governed by Wolverhampton.[1] Their wishes were granted and Penn became a ward of the borough.

The 3 Councillors for the ward were all members of the Society and stood as the Society's candidates.[2] Until 1945 they were returned each year unopposed. Then the Labour Party ran candidates against the Society's, but in vain. The manner of the functioning of the Society remained the same over its 25 years existence.[3] When a matter requiring action by the Council was raised at a meeting of the Society, the Secretary would write a letter to the appropriate official outlining the grievances and seeking redress. The Society's Councillors would see the official also, bring pressure to bear on the committee concerned, and, if need be, raise the matter in full Council.[4] The Transport Manager was contacted about poor bus services and badly sited bus stops,[5] and the Borough Engineer about the

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1. M.R.S. 26.1.1932.
2. For the characteristics of these Councillors see above Chapter 3, pp. 146-147.
3. Interview with A. A. Rogers and M.R.S. 6.1.1948 for a description of the process.
4. e.g. in 1933 they urged in Council that the Corporation should buy land for playing fields for the children of Penn. E. & S. 2.8.1933.
5. M.R.S. 10.9.1935.

need to make up some roads, to improve damaged pavements and to number some houses.[1] The Chief Constable received protests about the diversion at night of heavy transport through the residential area of Penn,[2] and about unsafe roads.[3] The Town Clerk was informed of Penn's need for a branch library[4] and for a Maternity and Child Welfare Clinic.[5] For over 20 years the Society maintained a constant pressure on the Corporation for local amenities, waste-paper receptacles at bus stops or outside fish and chip shops,[6] traffic signs at dangerous junctions,[7] more conspicuous street name plates,[8] wider footpaths,[9] brighter lighting,[10] pillar boxes,[11] pedestrian crossings,[12] bus shelters,[13] and playing

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1. M.R.S. 19.9.1933, 18.12.1934, 14.2.1939.
2. M.R.S. 20.11.1934.
3. M.R.S. 25.4.1939.
4. M.R.S. 19.2.1935.
5. M.R.S. 3.12.1947.
6. M.R.S. 13.6.1933.
7. M.R.S. 7.9.1948.
8. M.R.S. 27.9.1938, 1.12.1953.
9. M.R.S. 14.2.1939.
10. M.R.S. 16.10.1934, 10.9.1935.
11. M.R.S. 10.9.1935.
12. M.R.S. 5.6.1951.
13. M.R.S. 4.5.1948.

fields.[1] A stream of complaints flowed to the Council about potholes,[2] blind corners,[3] dangerous cambers,[4] overhanging hedges,[5] flooding by storm water,[6] unpleasant water courses[7] and cesspools,[8] unsightly air-raid shelters,[9] smelly static water tanks,[10] waste food bins[11] and dumping grounds,[12] neglected traffic islands,[13] noisy motor cyclists,[14] flooded playing fields,[15] missing lamps[16] and stop tap covers.[17] The Society sought to preserve the middle class residential character of the ward by opposing plans to establish a public house in the ward[18] or the erection of cheap houses.[19] Thus the Society was performing its

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1. M.R.S. 13.6.1933, 10.9.1935.
2. M.R.S. 2.11.1950.
3. M.R.S. 10.9.1935.
4. M.R.S. 12.10.1937.
5. M.R.S. 13.6.1933, 10.9.1935, 25.4.1939.
6. M.R.S. 13.4.1948.
7. M.R.S. 13.6.1933.
8. M.R.S. 16.10.1934.
9. M.R.S. 7.9.1948.
10. M.R.S. 5.4.1949.
11. M.R.S. 5.10.1948.
12. M.R.S. 27.2.1951.
13. M.R.S., 5.7.1949.
14. M.R.S. 12.10.1937, 6.9.1949.
15. M.R.S. 5.1.1954.
16. M.R.S. 4.5.1952.
17. M.R.S. 8.1.1952.
18. M.R.S. 10.9.1935, 14.2.1939.
19. M.R.S. 13.2.1933.

function as laid down on its membership card "to draw the attention of our Councillors to complaints of irregularities and to generally support them in their efforts to improve the amenities of Penn."

Like the early Labour Representation Committee, the Ratepayers' Society was an organisation to promote the representation on the Council of a particular group, trades unionists for the L.R.C. and the householders of Penn for the Ratepayers' Society. Both organisations had a similar relationship with their Councillors. The Councillors were regarded as the servants of the organisation, bound to implement on the Council the wishes of the outside association. But although the Ratepayer Councillors financed their own campaigns and received no expenses from their Society,[1] they were as closely supervised by their Society as the Labour Councillors by their party. In 1938 the Society resolved that "all Council nominees for this Association shall be expected to support any unanimous proposal, framed by this Committee and in the event of such unanimous proposal being in opposition to the Candidate's opinion, the Candidate should refrain from opposing such resolution before the Borough Council or any of its

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1. Interview with A. A. Rogers.

Committees."[1] One of the 3 Councillors was expected to be present at each meeting to give "account of his Stewardship."[2] One representative had to appear before the Society to answer charges that he had been drunk at civic functions. He denied that he had been "in an unfit state to represent the interests of the people of Penn."[3] But no Councillor was ever expelled or lost the Society's support for the way he acted in Council.

Before 1945 party politics had not impinged on the Society. Then a Labour candidate was run against its nominee. The Ratepayers' candidate, M.P. Birch, stated that the Society was "composed of men and women of all shades of political opinion." "I am very strongly opposed to party politics entering into Municipal Affairs and consider that I should always be free of party pressure to enable me to work solely for the well-being of the whole of the electorate of Penn."[4] The Labour Party complained that the Society was not representative of all opinions in Penn; in 1949 the

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1. M.R.S. 27.9.1938.
2. M.R.S. 18.10.1938.
3. M.R.S. 20.11.1934.
4. Election address of M.P. Birch.

Labour candidate, who lived in Penn, said that he had never been asked to a meeting nor had any chance of assisting the Society to choose a candidate. He asked the Society "how if you are non-political can you explain the fact that Conservative canvassers for Mr. Birch are stressing almost exclusively the national policy of Toryism and neglecting local affairs."[1].

But the non-political nature of the Society was not in any danger from the Labour Party who could not muster any significant strength in Penn; it was the Conservative Party which was to disrupt and finally destroy the Society. In 1948 Penn, which had been part of the Cannock Parliamentary division of Staffordshire, became part of the South West Wolverhampton Constituency. Before 1948 there had been no Conservative organisation in Penn, but as soon as it became part of Wolverhampton, the South West Conservative Association quickly organised a branch there. At the same time Enoch Powell, the new Conservative prospective Parliamentary candidate, was beginning his campaign to have all non-Socialist Councillors sporting the Conservative colours. The Ratepayers resisted. Birch said to the Society in 1948 that "there should be no party politics in Local

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1. Letter from A. E. Eaton to the Ratepayers' Society, 4.5.1949.

Government." A Councillor should "not be tied down but be free to vote whichever way he pleased."[1] He refused to adopt the Conservative label and the Chairman stressed the intention of the Society to remain "non-political."[2] No Conservative ran against Birch in 1949. But in 1950 when A. Baker, the Ratepayers' candidate, refused to adopt a Conservative label or attend the Conservative selection conference, the Conservative branch chose its own candidate, S. S. Tatem. The Ratepayers' Society regretted the Conservative action[3] and restated its intention to be non-political. The Conservative Association was attacked by the Ratepayers and Independents on the Council for opposing the sitting Ratepayer candidate, and the Association replied that it had no power over the choice of candidates by ward branches. It was their responsibility. The Ratepayers' Society had meetings with the Conservatives, but to no avail. The election went ahead and the Conservative candidate came second to the Ratepayer.

An agreement was reached after the election that the Conservatives would not oppose the re-election of any

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1. M.R.S. 7.12.1948.
2. M.R.S. 1.2.1949.
3. M.R.S. 7.2.1950.

sitting Ratepayer Councillor. In 1954 J. Ireland retired and the Society discussed whether or not to promote a candidate. Birch argued that in view of the agreement in this instance it would be in the Society's interest to offer the seat to the Conservatives on the understanding that he and Baker would go forward in the future unopposed. A majority decided in favour of putting up a candidate.[1] The Conservatives were angry that, in view of their previous self-restraint, the Ratepayers had taken no steps to consult the Penn Branch of the Conservative Association. The Ratepayers stated that they were "strictly non-political" and saw no reason why they should "establish any precedent by consulting any organisation, political or otherwise."[2] The Conservatives adopted a candidate and the Secretary of the Ratepayers wrote to the Conservative leader in the town.

> "This Society exists as a democratic body, maintained for the purpose, amongst other things, of giving the residents of Penn facilities for taking part through its own representatives, in the administration of the affairs of the local Council; without reference to, or collusion with any political organisation whatsoever, and its first consideration has been and always will be, the residents of Penn and the effect its actions will have on them.

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1. M.R.S. 2.3.1954.
2. Letter from the Society to J. Beattie, 8.4.1954.

> The Conservative Party in opposing our Candidate is obviously actuated by its desire to increase its numbers on the Borough Council and not necessarily therefore to reduce the balance of power as between Socialists and anti-Socialists.
>
> On your own admission[1] our Candidates by their actions have always been anti Socialist, so what can the party gain by winning the seat in Penn, particularly if by expending, as you put it, their time, thought and money in such a venture, seats are lost in other wards for the lack of the expenditure of those very things."[2]

Beattie replied that he had become very tired of "all the argy-bargy."[3]

The battle raged in the press; Conservatives claimed that the Ratepayers' Society was not representative of all Ratepayers and that it could not effectively fight against the no. 1 enemy, the Socialists.[4] Enoch Powell proclaimed that "in national and local affairs there is room only for two parties."[5] A Ratepayer complained that party politics in local government was a "malignant disease" whose "vile insidious onslaught strangles initiative in Councils, stratifies thought, sets fellow

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1. In a letter from Beattie to the Society 12.4.1954 when he said "all your candidates have voted against the Socialists," and "if you have a bias at all it is not on the side of Socialism."
2. Letter from the Society to J. Beattie, 14.4.1954.
3. Letter from Beattie to the Society, 15.4.1954.
4. E. & S. 20.4.1954.
5. E. & S. 22.4.1954.

citizens at each others throats, directing their attentions from the welfare of the home town towards the welfare of the bickering, snarling denizens of the Westminster snakepit."[1].

In the election the Ratepayers' candidate was defeated, and the greatest indignity was that he came bottom out of 3.[2]. In 1955 Birch was due to stand for re-election. In late 1954 he told the Society that he had decided to stand as a Conservative. "Let me say that I know I can serve the inhabitants of Penn equally as well in either capacity and in view of the poor support given to your candidate at the last election it seems the best course to take."[3]. He said that "except for the Party Tag my position would not be altered."[4]. The Secretary asked for his resignation as the official candidate and decided to run a Ratepayer candidate against him.[5]. In the election Birch, the former

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1. E. & S. 26.4.1954.
2. D. R. Fellows (Con.) 1,424
   Mrs. I. M. Hayes (Lab.) 1,030
   S. M. Jones (R.P.) 987
   E. & S. 14.5.1954.
3. M.R.S. 8.11.1954.
4. M.R.S. 16.12.1954.
5. E. & S. 13.11.1954.

Ratepayer who had once resolutely stood out against party politics, was the official Conservative candidate. He came top and the Ratepayers' candidate was again pushed into third place.[1.]

Baker next deserted the Society. He said he had accepted the Conservative nomination for the May elections in 1956. He said he would still serve the Ratepayers as he had done in the past[2.] and he hoped good relations would continue.[3.] The Society put up no candidate at the election. It was defunct.

Thus an organisation which had been a genuine independent association, not attached to any party and solely devoted to looking after the interests of the ward of Penn had been throttled by the Conservative Association; not for local advantages but simply for Parliamentary tactics. However although the major cause of the death of the Society was Conservative opposition, other long-term factors were undermining its position. The young men of the 1930s who in their 30s

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1. M.P. Birch (Con.) 2,614
   Mrs. G. Brazier (Lab.) 1,070
   L.A. Hayward (R.P.) 890
   E. & S. 13.5.1955.
2. M.R.S. 6.3.1956.
3. M.R.S. 11.2.1956.

and 40s ran the Ratepayers' Society, by the 1950s were in their 50s and 60s; yet they still regarded Penn as an isolated poorly served community on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. They had become out of touch. Penn was very well served now with amenities and with social facilities and trolley buses could quickly take the inhabitants to the town centre.

The fight with the Conservatives and the departure of Birch eroded its strength, but even at the point of death the Society had its last moment of glory. It championed the interests of Penn in a burst of activity which brought to its meetings the 100s and 150s of the 1930s instead of the 20s and 30s of the 1950s.[1] In 1954 it was made public that the National Coal Board was going to set up trial boreholes in Penn in a search for coal, which was suspected to lie beneath the surface. The residents became anxious about subsidence and feared a decrease in the value of their property.[2] The Ratepayers took up their cause, while Enoch Powell refused to attend a protest meeting, exclaiming that the compensation was adequate if subsidence did occur.[3] By

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1. M.R.S. 6.9.1955.
2. E.&S. 4.9.1954.
3. M.R.S. 5.10.1955. Birmingham Post 7.9.1955.

1956 the scare had passed and with it died the Ratepayers' Society. Its Treasurer since 1930 had resigned after the defeat in 1954; the Society suffered financially, only 7 members paid their subscriptions.[1] Its candidates were trounced at the polls in 1954 and 1955. It had revived temporarily with the mining controversy, but with Baker's desertion, the Society collapsed. The last entry in the minute books of the Society is a copy of an untypically ill-typed letter sent in May 1956 to an inquirer who wished to know how to appeal against the raising of his assessment from £14 to £24. He was told to get a form from the Valuation Officer. The Society could give no further help. The letter ended on a pathetic note with the statement that the subscription to the Society was 2/6d.[2] Thus the last act of the Society was to deal with a problem which had initially brought it into being, assessments.

The Penn Ratepayers' Society was the first Ratepayers' Society in the town, and it lasted the longest. 2 other wards, St. Phillip's and Bushbury, also possessed Ratepayers' Societies from the middle 1930s to the late

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1. M.R.S. 8.3.1955.
2. M.R.S. May 1956.

1940s.[1] These 2 areas like Penn were recent acquisitions of the borough, but were not part of the Parliamentary Constituencies of the town until 1948. Thus the Wolverhampton Conservative Associations until 1948 had no real interest in these wards. The Ratepayers' Societies here were not so flourishing as the one at Penn, since they were not so deep-rooted in the needs of the ward. They had been formed as electoral organisations to get representatives onto the Council. Indeed they only came into being around election time, and never met continuously to advance the interests of their wards.[1] The Penn Society tried to link up with these Societies in 1934 and 1936, after demands for a Society for the whole town had been voiced at the Annual General Meetings.[2] In 1936 a scheme of federation was drawn up, providing for a central committee composed of 3 delegates from each ward society. It was to have little power, since the final clause stated that "no action of this committee is to interfere with the liberty of individual societies."[3] The plan came to nothing. The Societies preferred to cultivate their own wards; no other

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1. Interviews with J. C. Homer, W. J. Rawlins and A. A. Rogers.
2. M.R.S. 27.2.1934, 11.2.1936.
3. M.R.S. 14.7.1936.

societies sprang up in other wards. Indeed the aims of the societies were different, although the names were identical. Bushbury and St. Phillip's were mere electoral organisations; Penn however fulfilled other functions, acting as the spokesman of the ward and providing some social and community services. There was therefore no common ground for unification.

The St. Phillip's Society was more successful than that at Bushbury; the former returned all the Councillors for the ward from 1933 to 1949, while the latter was unable to break the Labour hold on Bushbury. In 1948 these 2 Societies were transformed into ward branches of the Conservative Associations in the town, when the areas were incorporated in the Parliamentary constituencies of South West and North East Wolverhampton. The change was peaceful; no one resisted or retired sulkily - again evidence that the Ratepayers' Societies here were not so thriving as at Penn and that they were basically anti-Labour electoral organisations formed in the absence of a strong Conservative Association. J. C. Homer, who had been a Ratepayer Councillor for St. Phillip's Ward since 1944, typifies the ease with which the transition was made. He announced that in 1949 he would stand as a Conservative and "in accordance with Conservative principles I retain the right to say and do

what I consider to be in the best interests of the borough and ward I represent."[1.]

Thus those Councillors who sported the title Ratepayer were of two types; those whose loyalty was to Penn and those who were concealed Conservatives. Conservatives have been reluctant on many occasions to fight elections openly as Conservatives, particularly in wards where there was strong Labour or Liberal support. They have adopted many labels, both to attract Labour or Liberal votes and because of their belief that national parties were inappropriate in municipal affairs. In 1913 a Conservative in a strong Labour seat called himself the Friendly Societies' candidate.[2.] The Friendly Societies condemned his presumption and stated that they were not running an official candidate.[3.] Independent was a favourite label for the Conservatives in the interwar years in such wards as Dunstall and St. Mary's. In 1925 and 1927 some Conservative business and professional men styled themselves as the "Business-man's" candidates;[4.] but their election addresses were identical to those of other members of the anti-Socialist

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1. W.C. 29.4.1949.
2. E. & S. 23.10.1913.
3. E. & S. 27.10.1913.
4. E. & S. 2.11.1925, 1.3.1927.

alliance.[1] In 1945 the anti-Socialist Caucus ran its candidates as Progressives. The Conservatives had feared that if they stood openly as Conservatives they would suffer as big a defeat as they had sustained at the General Election: the Secretary of the Progressives was however forthright in saying that it was not merely a subterfuge to disguise Conservatives but it was a genuine attempt to keep party politics out of the Council.[2] Their address proclaimed that over the last 25 years Wolverhampton had been very progressive; its achievements were listed as regards housing, health, sewage disposal, electricity, social welfare, education, highways and finance. This progress had not been due to party political influence as such; and it could continue without any drastic alteration in the composition of the Council. The address made no definite proposals for the future, save that in a general way by pursuing our present programme "we shall maintain full employment and the prosperity of the town." Each member would stand for the town's good and, "their National Politics shall not be carried into the chamber."[3]

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1. E. & S. 14.3.1927.
2. Interview with W. J. Rawlins.
3. Election address of the Progressive Association 1945.

Under this banner were united not merely Conservatives, but all candidates who were not Labour save the Communists.[1] It was the anti-Socialist alliance of 1927 resurrected.

The victory of the Labour Party in 1945 killed this group. The first reaction to the defeat came from one of the Progressives, Councillor L. R. Guy,[2] who proposed the establishment of a Civic Association, which was to be the Progressive Association put on a permanent basis. It was to consist of "all those citizens who have a definite stake in the country, those who have an asset to safeguard." It was to embrace "all industrialists, commercial men, tradesmen, shopkeepers, house owners (in particular owner occupiers and ratepayers)." Guy devised a constitution, which revealed that the Association was to be an organisation to fight elections and to promote on the Council the interests of the supporting elements. It was to be a locally based party to fight the Labour Party, although Guy said "I am not against the Labour Party as such. I am against any one Political Party having a monopolistic control of the Council." The Conservative Associations destroyed

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1. E. & S. 4.10.1945.
2. The details of his plan are preserved in his scrapbook.

this scheme, since they regarded it as an unnecessary duplication of their own efforts. From 1948 they pressed that all non-Labour candidates should wear the Conservative label. After this there were no more plans for a local party to fight the Labour Party.

The Liberals before 1914 fought local elections without official party support, although the loyalties of candidates were known and they were assisted informally by their political colleagues. In the early 1900s a group of Radical Liberals formed the Progressive Association to "sweep away the Education Act" of 1902[1]. and to curb municipal extravagance.[2] It was dead by 1910 when the controversy over education had subsided and when the Council was not engaged on any major projects. This Association was mainly an electoral organisation to find and sustain Nonconformist candidates against the supporters of the Education Act. On other Council matters it did not act formally to concert the voting of its members; unofficially and informally it probably did so.[3] In the interwar years the Liberals made an anti-Socialist pact with the Conservatives,

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1. W.C. 8.7.1903.
2. See above Chapter 1, pp. 47-57.
3. Interview with J. Reade, See Chapter 8, pp. 331-332.

participated in the anti-Socialist caucus and stood for the Council not as Liberals but as Independents, though their national allegiances were well-known. By 1946 they had no members of the Council.[1] They gave up fighting municipal elections in a systematic way. Up to 1962 occasional candidates would fight as Liberals, but rarely in the same ward each time.[2] Their backing in terms of organisation and votes was meagre.[3] They merely made individual gestures, which hardly indicated that the party as such was thriving. The Eastern part of Wolverhampton was the old stronghold of Liberalism, whose inspiration and strength came from the Mount Zion Primitive Methodist chapel. But in the 1950s the East was barren ground for the Liberals. The candidates who did stand there came from the South West division and they gained few votes. No Liberal organisation has existed in the North East constituency since its formation in 1948.

In 1962 and 1963, however, a mild Liberal revival occurred in the safe Conservative seats in the West of the town, where Labour candidates were pushed into third

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1. For more on the Liberals see above Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 8,
2. e.g. E. & S. 13.5.1949, 10.5.1957, 9.5.1958. They fought no wards between 1950 and 1956.
3. See Table II.

place behind the Liberals who ran the Conservatives a close second.[1] During the early 1960s the South West Wolverhampton Liberal Association flourished, so much so that it acquired a headquarters in the town. The majority of its membership and votes was concentrated in Merridale, Oxbarn and Penn, middle class and owner-occupied areas, very different from the Eastern part of the town. Two links, however, connect this new Liberal Party with the old. Its President, R. Lewis, is the son of the prominent Liberal leader at the turn of the century, Priee Lewis, and a Methodist Chapel, Beckminster, provides the party with many of its leaders. One Conservative Councillor saw the 1964 election in Merridale Ward as a clash between the Conservative church party and the Liberal chapel party.[2] The officers of the party are Nonconformists; the Chairman is a lay preacher.

The occupations of the officers are in the "superior white collar" category, a sales manager, a scheduling manager and a director of a small firm of heating engineers. No shopkeepers and no working men make up the leadership, which consists of that occupational

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1. ibid.
2. Interview with H. R. Elliston.

group, which has formed a small proportion of the two major parties' members of the Council.[1] The Liberal Party of the 1960s is a party of "new men", not previously active in municipal politics.

Although each ward has its own committee, the Executive committee of the Constituency Party gives leadership to the party, deciding which wards will be fought and who will stand. It consists of the officers, all close friends with similar occupations.

The party calls for changes in the conduct of Council affairs. It urges that committee meetings be open to the press and public and that party discipline over voting be relaxed. It presses for better treatment of the car owner, more car parks and wider streets in the town centre, and it protests on behalf of ratepayers against waste, for example the purchase of an expensive computer and the construction of a costly ring road.[2] These policies reflect the interests of the owner-occupier car owners of the West of Wolverhampton. The 1964 election blighted Liberal hopes of having a Councillor, for its share of the vote fell. The Liberal revival of 1962 and 1963 appears temporary.[3]

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1. See Chapter 4.
2. Liberal election addresses 1964.
3. On the Liberals generally - interviews with J. Bannon and A. H. Wright.

The Council has had a handful of members bearing less well-known titles. In 1919 2 Councillors were elected, who had stood as the candidates of the National Federation of the Discharged and Demobilised Sailors and Soldiers.[1] One, William Morgan, was the organising Secretary of the local branch; he had been an engineer before the war, had been wounded, could find no employment after demobilisation and collected together particularly the unemployed ex-soldiers of the town.[2] The first point of his election address was that "I will do all in my power to obtain increased Separation Allowances to Wives, Children and Otherwise, and Dependants of Serving Soldiers, as I think the Grants made under the present cost of living, are totally inadequate. I also want to see Increased Pensions for the Widows and Dependants." He then generally referred to the need for better housing and sanitation; he stood against the excessive expenditure of ratepayers' money and called for a greater Wolverhampton.[3] His colleague, an ex-fitter, also pressed for the same; in addition he sought free or penny fares on Corporation transport for

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1: E. & S. 3.11.1919.
2. Interview with W. Morgan.
3. Election address of W. Morgan.

ex-soldiers. He said he would fight Bolshevism as well as Capitalism.[1] They were elected in 1919 chiefly, says the ex-Councillor whom Morgan defeated, because they presented themselves as war heroes.[2] On the Council they made little impact. They concerned themselves only with trying to advance the ex-serviceman's cause, as for example in 1920 when they pressed for the setting up of a distress fund to help the ex-servicemen, their wives and dependants.[3] Otherwise they were insignificant on the Council and soon vanished.

In the 1930s members of the Independent Labour Association were represented on the Council by 4 Councillors. This was the breakaway organisation from the official Labour Party, financed by W. J. Brown as the machine to fight his Parliamentary campaigns in the town. It was used however by W. Lawley to return himself and 3 allies to the Council, where to all intents they acted with the official Labour Party.[4] One of these 4,

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1. E. & S. 29.10.1919.
2. Interview with A. H. Oakley. Morgan in his campaign made much of the fact that he had been wounded 3 times. E. & S. 29.10.1919.
3. C.M. 11.10.1920. W.C. 13.10.1920.
4. See above Chapter 2.

E. T. Bradley, whilst a member of the Council became the organising secretary of the local branch of the British Union of Fascists. He had been a miner before the war; he had served in the war and afterwards as a regular soldier. Unemployed after leaving the army, he was in turn a Communist, involved in the Unemployed Workers' Movement, a Socialist, a member of the I.L.A. and then a Fascist.[1] Whilst on the Council he always spoke and voted with his I.L.A. allies, but after he became a Fascist he ignored the Council. Indeed he said that he joined the Fascists because he found he could achieve nothing on the Council. Lawley however says that the reason for the change was that he was offered a motor bike and an allowance by Sir Osward Mosley to join the B.U.F.[2]

The same ward, St. James', which sent to the Council Morgan the ex-soldier's candidate and Bradley the I.L.A. and then Fascist, also sent K. M. Brutton the Communist in 1945. The Labour Party had refused to fight this ward in 1945, when the Mayor for the year 1944-5 was

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1. Interview with E. T. Bradley and E.&S. 24.1.1934.
2. Interview with W. Lawley. Bradley appears as "Badly" in J. Yates', Lifting Timber for the King, 1939 London, p.50.

seeking re-election.[1] He was T. W. Phillipson, a tobacconist and a Progressive, who faced opposition only from the Communist sheet metalworker who defeated him.[2] There was little difference between the Communist and Labour addresses; indeed in Park Ward the Communist candidate stated that if elected she would work with the Labour Party and she endorsed Labour's programme.[3] On the Council Brutton made little impact. He voted up to 1948 with the Labour Party and made speeches to the effect that Labour was not going far enough. But in 1948 and 1949 he became a regular voter with the anti-Socialist Caucus; opposing the Labour Group's demand for a closed shop for all Corporation employees;[4] supporting the Conservatives' traffic plans for the town;[5] attacking the Labour proposals to grant to the Co-operative Society leases of shops on new housing estates;[6] and advocating at the last Council meeting he attended, that contracts should be put out to tender and not granted to the Direct

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1. E. & S. 3.11.1945.
2. E. & S. 3.11.1945.
3. Election address of Miss D. Bootman.
4. C.M. 9.11.1948.
5. C.M. 14.7.1948.
6. C.M. 14.3.1948.

Building Department.[1] Many in the Labour Party claim that he became a member of the Conservative Party. The reason for his switch is supposed to be the attention paid to him by some leading Conservatives, particularly Sir Charles Mander, who is said to have helped to find work for him. They are said to have been amusing themselves by getting him to give up his old position and adopt theirs.[2] He retired from the Council in 1949 and emigrated to Australia.

Before 1945 the Communists were not very active in municipal politics. They first fought a ward in 1928 and again in 1932; both were safe Labour seats and they made little impact.[3] Except for 1945-47 they rarely fought an election, but in the late 1950s and early 1960s they have been much more active, running candidates at every election, most often in safe Labour seats, occasionally in a safe Conservative and never in a marginal ward.[4] They have always come bottom of the

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1. C.M. 11.4.1949.
2. Interviews with R. Garner, H. E. Lane, and W. Lawley. The Secretary of the Communist Party, M. J. Bennett, agrees with their assessment of Brutton.
3. B. & S. 2.11.1928, 1.11.1932.
4. Table II.

poll with rarely over 150 votes, except once in 1961 when their candidate had the same surname as the Labour candidate.[1.]

The Party before 1945 was very ramshackle, composed mainly of the unemployed who were organised also in the front organisation of the National Unemployed Workers Movement, whose members flirted with Fascism too. In the interwar years it was frequently reorganised, 6 times in 12 years.[2.] Its main policy was to champion the interests of the unemployed. The Party of today is quite different. It is firmly led by a school teacher and a cafe proprietor, whose close colleagues are white collar workers, like a laboratory technician, and skilled men, like engineers and electricians. The Party has no ward organisation; its members join constituency branches and they are led by a Borough Committee of 9. This body decides which wards will be fought and who are to be the candidates. The party also has a branch for Indians and a branch in an

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1. C. W. Jones (Lab.) 1,516
   D. J. Reynolds (Con.) 635
   E. R. Jones (Comm.) 304

2. J. Yates op. cit. pp.48-49.

aireraft factory. The total membership is around 120, mainly coming from the Council house estates of the east.

Its policy is to goad the Labour Party,[1] urging it to be more extreme and more sensitive to the needs of the working class, especially to reduce the rents of Council houses. It presses for more Council houses, complete comprehensive education, health centres, reduced fares, higher wages and pensions, abolition of nuclear weapons and the dismantling of N.A.T.O. "Peace and Socialism" is its slogan.

It fights those wards where its membership is concentrated, and does not fight in marginal wards for fear it may jeopardise Labour's majority and let the Conservatives take over. The leaders of the party are on very friendly terms with many leading members of the Labour party, and especially with the M.P., John Baird, whose meetings they have supported and in whose election campaigns they have assisted.[2]

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1. It accused the Labour Party of being "Tory fellow travellers". (E. & S. 6.5.1958).

2. For the Communist Party - interviews with M. J. Bennett and W. F. Laws, Communist posters and election addresses for 1964.

It is only since the middle 1950s that the members of the Wolverhampton Town Council have been drawn exclusively from the two major parties. The Labour and Conservative Parties dominate all. They fight each other at elections, and on the Council their Groups are ranged against each other. In 1900 there was no concept of the majority party forming the government of the town, facing the minority party as an opposition, which would seek to reverse the position at the next election. In 1960 this was the pattern of politics. Between these 2 dates minor parties and small groups have been squeezed out by the 2 leading parties. The vanishing of the small parties and Independents cannot be laid wholly at the door of the parties. The electorate bears the ultimate responsibility, since they have been faced over the years with other candidates than Labour or Conservative. That only 2 parties count is because the electorate has willed it so.

CHAPTER 10

The Chairmen

The key figures on the Council in 1900 were the Chairmen of the Council committees. In 1960 they were still most influential, but were restrained by some limiting factors not experienced in 1900.

The relationship of a committee to the full Council has not changed significantly over the period. In Wolverhampton the Council has always delegated wide powers to its committees. In 1911 the various delegations were consolidated in a "Delegation Book" kept in the Town Clerk's department, still in use today.[1] It shows that the Council has delegated to its committees the power "to carry out and execute the statutory and other duties and powers of the Council." As a new statute laid new powers on the Council, these specific duties were then laid on the appropriate committee.[2] But certain provisos have always been observed. The power to make a rate or to borrow money has never been delegated, nor the power to make byelaws, or to acquire

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1. The information on delegation is taken from this Delegation Book.

2. The distinction between "delegating", and "referring" has been very blurred in Wolverhampton.

or to dispose of land and buildings.[1] The Council has left itself with the right to a "concurrent and overriding exercise" of its functions and has the right "to make or to amend" the delegations at any time. The committees have also to seek Council approval for any resolutions involving any important matter of policy, or which may authorise the provision of any new service or the discontinuance of any existing service. Although wide powers have been delegated to the committees, the full Council has kept its hands on the reins; changes in policy and the spending of money[2] come within the Council's prerogative, and it has the power to supervise any action by any committee if it so requires, down to detail.[3]

The committees therefore over the period have been the workshops of the Council. In 1897 a Chairman said that "the very ABC of Council work was to, especially in great transactions, do the work in committee, and then have it ratified by the Council."[4] This position has

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1. Statutory limitations.
2. In 1900 a committee could spend up to £50 without seeking Council approval; in 1962 the amount was £300.
3. Exceptional are the Housing and Town Planning Committees. The former has very wide powers to construct houses, and the latter to make planning decisions. They are both bound to report their actions to each Council meeting. The other committees have to report only when appropriate.
4. W.C. 24.2.1897.

been true over the period. Some committees have resented the Council overlooking their activities, particularly if their Chairmen were imperious, like F. D. Gibbons. When he was Chairman of Sewage Committee in 1899 he moved a resolution that the Council give his committee permission to buy some land. He said "it was the cheapest piece of land the committee had ever bought."

A Councillor "Do I understand the land is already bought?

"Certainly"

"There is no use our discussing it"

"No" - loud laughter.

"I don't object to the committee buying this land; what I do object to is their method of doing it."[1]. In 1905 Gibbons was Chairman of Watch Committee, and he told the Council "If there was a disturbance tonight I could go to the Chief Constable and give him orders, without you or anyone else interfering."[2]. Thus the situation was that committees were relatively independent of the Council; they had the monopoly of information about a project; they knew the snags of the administration of a

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1. W.C. 14.6.1899.

2. W.C. 15.2.1905. The Watch Committee is in a slightly different position from other Committees.

service and they were thus in a more influential position than the rest of the Council. Further since the Chairman was apt to be the dominant element in the committee, he assumed in the full Council the leading role on behalf of his committee. Chairmen were inclined to run their committees as petty empires and to resent interference with their proposals by the Council.[1] Numerous were the complaints against the "dictatorship" of the Chairmen over their committees and over the Council.[2]

A Chairman possesses formally no powers beyond those of the Aldermen and Councillors who are not Chairmen, save that the Chairman presides at the meeting of his committee and has a casting vote.[3] Formally also a Chairman is appointed by his committee annually at the start of each municipal year; his election is announced to the next meeting of the full Council, which has to approve the choice.[4] In practice however his powers

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1. "Committeeitis" affects not only Chairmen, but the ordinary members of the committee, who become utterly devoted to the work of the committees on which they serve, not more than 5 and not less than 3. Interviews with Mrs. V. A. Fletcher, Mrs. I. M. Hayes.
2. e.g. W.C. 11.8.1915, 2.8.1923.
3. Council Standing Orders.
4. Between 1888 and 1963 the Council has never refused its consent.

have been greater, and the annual election a mere formality. Before 1945 a Chairman, once chosen, was constantly re-elected until he was removed by death, compelled to retire by senility or illness, defeated at an election, promoted from a minor to a major committee, driven to resign over a disagreement with the majority of the committee,[1] or disgraced publicly by incompetence or a scandal.[2] Thus a Chairman usually remained at the head of his committee for a long time. Joseph Jones was Chairman of the Free Library Committee for 29 years from 1883 to 1912, J. Marston of Waterworks Committee for 25 years (1892-1917), Sir C. T. Mander of Tramways Committee for 24 years (1896-1920) and T. A. Henn of Health Committee for 21 years (1915-1936). Since 1945 such longevity has been curtailed because party has been more significant. As one party gained control at the expense of the other, the Chairmen of the former controlling party were either ousted or retired. Between 1949 and 1952 no Labour members held Chairmanships and after 1955

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1. In 1918 the Chairman of Education Committee resigned in protest against the decision to appoint a Director of Education. Minutes of the General Purposes Committee, 25.6.1918.

2. e.g. The Chairman of Education and Finance Committees in 1917. See below p. 426.

no Conservatives. Apart from this change, the older tendencies continue; for instance in 1945 Labour members H. E. Lane and C. B. V. Taylor became Chairmen of Housing Committee and Parks and Baths Committee respectively; in 1962 they were still Chairmen of these committees and had been continuously except during the period of Conservative control from 1949-1952.

Over the period it has been common for a Chairman to be the Chairman of only one Standing Committee at a time. Before 1917 there was no firm rule on this, only an "unwritten law"[1]. broken by 2 exceptional cases. Sir C. T. Mander was Chairman of both Lighting (1893-1902) and Tramways (1896-1920) Committees; A combination justified on the grounds that electricity was a common factor of both, and that Mander's interest and expertise in electricity qualified him as the most suitable Chairman for both.[2]. Levi Johnson was Chairman of Finance (1898-1917) and Education (1905-1917). He undertook the latter responsibility only after it had been vacant for 6 months and only after the Mayor had urged him to take it on, since no one else was prepared

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1. W.C. 15.3.1899.
2. ibid.

to.[1] His dual role put "too much on his plate";[2] he was unable to fulfil either office effectively, and during his term an accountant clerk in the Education department embezzled £84,000.[3] As a result of this scandal it was definitely decided that no one should be a Chairman of more than one Standing Committee at a time.[4]

The length of the Chairman's term of office and his concentration on one committee meant that he became closely bound up with his committee and its projects; so much so that the Council chamber became to a large extent a battleground where each Chairman sought to promote the proposals of his particular committee, to obtain for his schemes the necessary amount of scarce resources and to prevent other Chairmen from pursuing any plans which might eat up the resources and leave none for him. Particular Chairmen were identified with their committees' objectives. F. Evans, Chairman of

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1. M.C. 5.12.1917.
2. W.C. 11.7.1917.
3. See below pp. 425-426.
4. Standing Orders of the Council. In 1962 the exceptions were Civil Defence, Sanitation, Tenders, Special Purchases, Rating and Payments and General Purposes Committees, all minor committees.

Markets Committee (1899-1912), "practically built up the Wolverhampton Markets," and was the driving force behind the construction of the new Wholesale Market, Cold Stores and Abattoir.[1] T. V. Jackson, Chairman of Public Works Committee (1887-1901) "initiated the idea of a new Post Office. He was the prime mover and the main spring in the whole of the negotiations."[2] A. B. Bantock was responsible for the laying out as a public garden some wasteground on the West front of St. Peter's, and for achieving improvements in Worcester Street. "He had the confidence of the Public Works Committee so entirely in his hands that practically he carried the whole of the negotiations in that matter."[3]

A few Chairmen, however, did not restrict their enthusiasm to the cause of a single committee. S. Craddock was Chairman of Parks and Baths Committee (1897-1917) and was instrumental in getting St. George's Churchyard laid out as a public park.[4] He was Vice-Chairman of Tramways Committee, and was regarded as the "Butty",[5] the working partner of Mander; and like him

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1. W.C. 13.11.1907.
2. W.C. 10.11.1897.
3. W.C. 13.2.1903.
4. W.C. 13.1.1897. This was in the ward he represented and where his boot factory was situated.
5. E. & S. 10.4.1929.

was thought to have "tramways on the brain;"[1]. Craddock followed Mander as Chairman of the committee (1920-25). He was known as the "father of the Free Library"[2]. and the power behind the town's Floral Fête; once when it was under discussion and he was absent, one Councillor remarked that it was "like playing Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark."[3]. His tentacles were resented. In 1903 a Labour Councillor commented that "he had noticed for sometime past that in every new scheme that was born in that Chamber Alderman Craddock always desired to have the first hand in rocking the cradle.....now he wanted to finish the lot to have a hand in bringing into existence their new education baby."[4]. Sir C. T. Mander was also not limited to one committee. He was especially renowned for bringing electric light to the town,[5]. for electrifying the trams,[6]. for promoting the Lorain system[7]. and for urging the abolition of the pan

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1. W.C. 13.1.1897.
2. See below Chapter 11, pp. 463-464.
3. W.C. 21.4.1909.
4. W.C. 11.2.1903.
5. W.C. 26.5.1897.
6. W.C. 13.11.1901.
7. See above Chapter 1, pp. 51-55.

method of excrement removal.[1] In the 1920s and 30s Aldermen Bantock and Myatt were regarded as the two leading Chairmen, (of Finance and Public Works respectively) who kept an overview on all the other committees.[2] Such Chairmen, however, with a range of concern wider than the particular committees over which they presided, were exceptional. Most often a Chairman devoted himself to promoting the interests of a single committee.

The Chairman around 1900, through his long concentration on one committee, would be the most knowledgeable member of the Council about the activities and problems of that committee. His continual involvement in the administration of his committee would make him more experienced in its difficulties than even the permanent chief official. At this time the work of the committee was not so complex or technical as today, and thus an "amateur" Chairman was not so dependent for advice on an official. The Chairmen were deeply involved in administrative and technical minutiae, which today would be regarded as the sphere of the officials.

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1. W.C. 15.11.1893.
2. Interview with F. W. Howell.

The Chairman of Markets Committee "had almost lived at the Town Hall on weekdays."[1]. The Chairman of Finance and Education Committees "had given practically 3 days a week to Corporation work for many years."[2]. This situation began to change after the First World War. A Director of Education was appointed in 1918 because "it was not a right principle that the Chairman of the Education Committee should be placed in the position of an expert" and because "it was not fair to Alderman Richards or any other Chairman that they should have to devote so much time to details."[3]. Often the officials at the turn of the century were not full time Corporation employees, but were engaged in private practice as well. The officials were not so professionalised as they later became, not having had to undergo a rigorous specialised training, nor served by professional associations and technical journals which kept them up to date on the latest developments. In expertise therefore the Chairman could overshadow his official, particularly when the Chairman was the better informed

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1. W.C. 11.11.1908.
2. W.C. 15.9.1915.
3. W.C. 12.6.1918.

about the local context. Sir C. T. Mander was most skilled in electricity, having introduced it into his house and works[1] and having experimented with it by models;[2] he could easily therefore face his official as an equal in technical knowledge. One official, R. E. W. Berrington the Borough Engineer (1886-1895), resigned as a Corporation employee, was elected to the Council[3] and was made Chairman of Health[4] and then of Sewerage Committees.[5] In these positions he found that he could make more headway in achieving his goal of Sanitary Reform, particularly in having a "destructor" erected and the water carriage system substituted for the pan system, than he could as a mere official.[6] Thus the Chairman was in a more influential position than the official.

A further factor elevating the Chairman above the official around 1900 to an extent not possible in the 1950s was the superior social status of the Chairman. The official was a mere Corporation employee, not entitled to any social deference, but the Chairmen were

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1. W.C. 16.11.1892.
2. W.C. 12.2.1902.
3. 1895.
4. 1898-1903, 1911-1915.
5. 1903-1911.
6. For his career see W.C. 16.11.1904, Wolverhampton Journal November 1904, E. & S. 25.1.1915.

some of the leading social figures not just in the Council but in the town also. Tables XXVI and XXVII show that the Chairmen in 1888-9 and in 1903-4 were drawn from the elite of the Council; they were the leading manufacturers, commercial and professional men of the town, owners of substantial enterprises, wealthy, and inhabiting large houses in the attractive and salubrious West end of the borough. Few officials could overshadow such prestige.[1] The same tables show that the occupational range of the Chairmen did not widen until the Labour Party gained Chairmanships, and that the Chairmen were most representative of the occupations of the members of the Council in 1953-4, when the Labour and Conservative Parties still shared the Chairmanships. But after Labour embarked in 1955 on the policy of taking all the Chairmanships, the occupational range of the Chairmen narrowed, to comprise an elite in reverse, working men, women and the lower middle class, on a lower social level than the officials. Thus the Chairmen of the 1950s have not been as socially superior as their counterparts in 1900; nor have they had the education, or the experience of the technical problems faced by the committees, of the Chairman of

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1. Table v shows that in 1900 the highest salary paid to an official apart from the Town Clerk was £450 a year.

1900. Further the work of the committees has become more dependent on the expertise of the official, now highly trained, and backed by his professional associations and journals. In 1900 the Chairman was the senior partner; in 1960 the official is the senior partner.[1.]

The possessiveness of the Chairmen and their jealous concern for their committees' independence can be illustrated by the stiff opposition they put up against proposals made from time to time to limit the autonomy of the committees. Since the late 1890s the story of the development of committees is largely that of attempts to check the independence of the spending committees, the vertical committees, by means of strengthening existing horizontal committees or by establishing new ones. In 1900 the Chairmen of the spending committees were very little restrained by the horizontal committees; in 1960 they were powerfully limited by them.

In 1896 the Finance Committee proposed that its

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1. See below pp.447-449 for a discussion about the contemporary relationship between the Chairman and the official. Table vi shows that in 1964 the chief officials, apart from the Town Clerk, earned salaries of £3,650 a year. This amount is much more than that earned by any Labour Chairman.

control over the expenditure of the vertical committees should b increased. At that time if a committee wished to spend more than £50 it had to send an estimate of the item to the Finance Committee for examination 8 days before it was submitted to the full Council. The annual estimates were subject to the same procedure. In 1896 the Chairman of the Finance Committee proposed that the estimates be sent to the Finance Committee a month in advance, that the Finance Committee should attach its own report to the committee's report for the guidance of the Council, and that a special Council meeting should be called to consider the estimates. Only 3 voted in favour, the Chairman and 2 members of his committee, not Chairmen themselves. "The Council generally objected to the report which was received by laughter and sarcastic comment."[1]. In 1902[2]. the Finance Committee again tried to assert itself, by moving that it be granted 14 days to consider the estimates, that it should have the power to ask for further explanations from any committee about any estimate, and that in its report to Council it should be able to draw attention to

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1. W.C. 16.9.1896. C.M. 14.9.1896.
2. C.M. 12.5.1902, 8.12.1902. W.C. 14.5.1902, 10.12.1902.

any item or items of proposed expenditure which it considered unnecessary or undesirable. The proposers said that the Council and the Finance Committee had no control over the expenditure of the committees. The Finance Committee just received the estimates and handed them to the Council. Neither had enough time to examine them in detail; the Council lacked information and its attention was not concentrated on any particular point. They did not intend the Finance Committee to veto expenditure or to interfere in the work of a committee "save and except that of making suggestions in regard to any items of expenditure which in their opinion might be cut down."[1]. The other Chairmen objected to "the veteran leaders of the Council being called to the bar of the Finance Committee composed as it was for the most part of junior members of the Council."[2]. The Finance Committee could in its reports draw the Council's attention to particular items of policy; there was no good reason to justify the proposed change and they opposed the view that "the Finance Committee ought to be the strongest, as it certainly was the most important Committee of the Council."[3]. Only the

1. W.C. 14.5.1902.
2. W.C. 10.12.1902.
3. ibid.

proposal allowing the committee 14 instead of 8 days to consider the estimates was adopted. But little change occurred. A few months later it was said "The Finance Committee is a complete farce. You sit round the table and the work is done by the Chairman, and the other members say yes."[1].

Since the Finance Committee had proved feeble, those who wanted to restrict the freedom of the spending Committees turned to the General Purposes Committee. One of the main points of the Chairmen was that the Finance Committee did not consist of the senior members of the Council: but the General Purposes Committee did. It comprised all the Aldermen, the Chairmen of the Standing Committees and the senior Councillor from each ward; the Chairman was the Mayor ex officio. It was the largest committee, around 30 in all, over half the Council. Its functions were manifold. It was responsible for overseeing the Parliamentary activities of the Corporation, the preparation of bye-laws, litigation in which the Corporation was involved, the conduct of the chief officials, the staffing, salaries and honoraria of the senior grades, appointments of Council representatives to public bodies, the mode of conducting

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1. W.C. 22.4.1903.

Corporation business and any duty or power not specifically delegated to any other committee. It was also to act as the consulting or advisory committee of every other committee.[1] Its main job was to act as a filter through which the proposals of committees passed before coming before the Council. Since it was largely made up of the Chairmen, it was a bargaining ground, where each Chairman sought to obtain support for his proposals and to ease their way through the full Council. If support could be obtained then the measure was likely to pass through, with the possibility of opposition from junior members only; if agreement could not be reached, which happened most often on big proposals, then the matter was transferred to the full Council for its final verdict. Thus it was not an effective control on the Chairmen; they used it to bid for support or to obstruct the plans of others. If their own plans were opposed they would deal direct with the Council. S. Craddock complained that the committee was in reality ineffective and not able to carry out its responsibilities.[2] In 1936 it was called a "ladies sewing meeting."[3]

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1. Council Standing Orders and the Delegation Book.
2. W.C. 22.4.1903.
3. E. & S. 10.2.1936.

In 1903 however some had hopes to strengthen it. A proposal was made that if a committee planned to spend over £1,000 on a scheme, it should go to the General Purposes Committee, not to be vetoed but for the committee to call attention to any items it felt unnecessary. This would stop the hurried consideration of proposals and would give time for a full investigation of all aspects of their implications. The General Purposes Committee was preferred to the Finance Committee, since it was "distinctly representative of every part and section of the Council."[1] Craddock opposed. Committees, he claimed, did not "rush" into things: everything was well thought out before coming to the Council. "Committees should be left to take the responsibility for their own work."[2] Though the proposal was approved, it did little to curb seriously the autonomy of the committees, and other devices were sought.

Following the elections in 1903, when a number of Progressives entered the Council committed to reducing municipal expenditure,[3] T. Reade proposed the

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1. W.C. 22.4.1903.
2. ibid.
3. See above Chapters 1 and 9.

establishment of a special committee to co-ordinate all the spending committees to achieve economies in the purchase of stores, stationery "and in other directions."[1] He said that "the time had arrived, when the Finance or some other Committee should have powers to check the expenditure of the borough."[2] The Chairmen were reluctantly prepared to co-ordinate the stores and stationery aspects but they objected to the "in other directions," which for Reade was essential since he wanted "a strong Committee of inquiry" of "wide scope."[3] By 1908 Reade admitted that it had been a failure, since the only man capable of making it work effectively, Bantock, had been made Mayor and a Chairman of a spending committee,[4] and because of the hostility and non-co-operation of men like Craddock, who Reade said "should look at their work as a whole and not regard each committee as an independent committee acting by itself."[5]

The General Purposes Committee was resorted to again in 1907 when it was proposed that it should have the power to supervise any increase in the number and salaries

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1. C.M. 12.2.1904.
2. W.C. 14.2.1904.
3. ibid.
4. W.C. 11.11.1908.
5. W.C. 11.4.1906.

of staff.[1] At that time each committee had control over the number and salary of the staff they employed, if their salaries were below £120 per annum. Craddock opposed the suggestion. "The respective committees were better able to judge of the worth of the staffs they employed than a committee who really knew very little about the matter."[2] But he was overruled.

The issue arose again in 1915 after the Local Government Board had circularised Councils to set up a committee to obtain economy. One group wanted an independent special committee composed of non-Chairmen, to watch the Chairmen, who "need watching most."[3] The others objected to a "ferreting" committee, staffed by junior members who would censure Chairmen. They wanted it to be composed of the leading Chairmen, which in fact it was when it emerged.[4]

Up to 1917 the Chairmen of the spending committees had fought strenuously to preserve their independence against attempts to strengthen the powers of the Finance and General Purposes Committees and to create new committees to limit their autonomy. They had had to make

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1. W.C. 24.7.1907, C.M. 22.7.1907.
2. W.C. 16.10.1907.
3. W.C. 11.8.1915.
4. C.M. 9.8.1915. W.C. 11.8.1915.

minor concessions, but none really impeded them. In 1917 however the revelations about Jesse Varley's embezzlement of £84,000 from the Corporation served as an incentive to establish tighter financial control over the individual committees. Varley was an accountant clerk to the Education Committee, who between 1905 and 1917 defrauded the Corporation of £84,335. 4s. 7d by drawing money for the salaries of non-existent teachers. He forged receipts, falsified entries, kept two sets of accounts and had bogus pages stitched into the minute books.[1] Both the Borough Treasurer and Levi Johnson, the Chairman of Finance and Education Committees, had had complete trust in Varley and let him have free rein in the Education department. The judge at Varley's trial said that "if proper supervision had been exercised,"[2] the money would never have been lost. With his gains Varley had bought a huge house and grounds on the outskirts of the town and ran 3 cars. He had said that he could live in such a luxurious style, whilst drawing his salary of only £325 a year, because his wife

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1. Details of Varley's techniques are found in the Report on the affair by Sir H. E. Haward presented to W. H. Fisher 22.10.1917, and in a report of a special committee of inquiry of the Wolverhampton Council 22.12.1917 and in E. & S. 6.7.1917, 11.7.1917.

2. E. & S. 11.7.1917.

had been left a fortune. This was one of his "fairy tales," in which so many had had such "childlike faith."[1]. In fact his wife was the daughter of an Irish peasant and her relatives lived in the poorest of circumstances. Varley received 5 years penal servitude. After his release, he floated a bogus company, used the money for his own purposes and was sentenced to another 3 years. The judge noted that Varley sought to "gain a place in good society."[2].

The repercussions of the case were far-reaching. Johnson was never to be allowed again to be in a position of responsibility as far as finances were concerned; the Treasurer and the Town Clerk were severely censured; a Director of Education was appointed; and it was decided that no one could be a Chairman of more than one Standing Committee at a time.[3]. But, most important of all, the Finance Committee elected as Chairman the man whom Reade in 1908 had regarded as the one able to make his economy committee work. A. B. Bantock was acknowledged as the most able and outstanding man on the Council. His appointment ushered in a new era for the

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1. E. & S. 19.11.1917.
2. E. & S. 12.5.1924.
3. W.C. 7.11.1917, 12.12.1917, E. & S. 24.1.1918, 18.6.1918.

Finance Committee. He forged it into an effective committee to control the other committees, although it was achieved not so much by devising new formal controls as through Bantock's own personal influence and persuasion.

Before Bantock, the Chairman of Finance Committee had not been the leading man on the Council. E. H. Thorne (1884-91), J. Marston (1891-92), J. Saunders (1892-98) and L. Johnson (1898-1917) were either not men in the top rank or else moved on to other committees to make a positive contribution to the town. Their terms of office were not long, save for Johnson's; and that he held the Chairmanship in conjunction with that of Education is evidence again of the lack of importance attached to the Finance Committee. But after Bantock, the Chairmanship of Finance was regarded as a position for the leading men in the Council. It was not merely an accounting committee which co-ordinated the expenditure of various committees and arranged the rate for the year. It was a supervising and interfering committee, which involved itself in the workings of each committee. The change came during Bantock's 21 years tenure of the Chairmanship of Finance Committee.

Bantock is remembered by the Town Clerk of 1919-29

as being "keen on finance."[1] He would ask of every proposal "where is the money to come from?", and "if this were your money, would you spend it?"[2] At almost every Council meeting during his term of office he was opposing some committee's plans to spend money, for what he regarded as extravagance, Turkish baths,[3] branch libraries,[4] milk for expectant mothers,[5] or land for playing fields.[6] He extolled the virtues of "sound finance" and "economy"; by cutting expenditure and reducing rates, trade could revive and the town prosper again. His views tallied well with the orthodoxy of economists and businessmen in the town, who faced the depression of the interwar years. Thus it was not merely the personality of Bantock which raised the importance of the Finance Committee; the times were propitious, and enabled its role to be elevated to a new

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1. Interview with F. W. Howell. Others regarded him as mean. He would not give tips to his dustman; and if he saw a member of the Town Hall staff carrying tea cups, he would enquire if he was paid to do it. Interview with A. A. Beach.
2. Interview with J. L. Chown.
3. C.M. 11.7.1921. W.C. 13.7.1921.
4. C.M. 14.4.1924. E. & S. 14.4.1924.
5. C.M. 10.10.1921. W.C. 12.10.1921.
6. C.M. 21.10.1924. W.C. 23.10.1924.

significance. In fulfilling his function Bantock introduced a new Standing Order which laid down that if a committee wished to spend over £5,000 on a scheme, the Chairman of Finance had to be consulted.[1] This gave him an opportunity through informal talks with the individual Chairmen and members of the committees concerned to try and persuade them to cut down the estimates before presenting the matter to the full Council. Bantock's main influence was exercised in these informal, pre-natal consultations with Chairmen. He also took the lead in the Salaries and Wages Sub-Committee of the General Purposes Committee. The spending committees resented the way in which it cut down their salary recommendations. In 1920 the Health Committee complained of the Salaries and Wages Sub-Committee sitting "in judgement" over the other committees.[2] In 1927 the Chairman of Education attacked "the deliberate interference or a deliberate refusal to recognise the authority and knowledge of the Education Committee."[3] Bantock retorted against such attitudes that Chairmen and committees could no longer act as

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1. Interview with F. W. Howell and see Council Standing Orders.
2. W.C. 13.10.1920.
3. E. & S. 12.7.1927.

"freelances;" they had to look at the work of the Council as a whole.[1.]

The two Chairmen of Finance Committee who followed Bantock were also regarded as the leading and most able men in the Council, Sir C. A. Mander (1938-50) and J. Beattie (1950-55); each of whom the Labour Party allowed to remain Chairman of Finance when it was in a majority (1945-49 and 1952-55), since it had no one to match their financial ability, experience and acumen.[2.] Each made a contribution to strengthening the influence of the Finance Committee over the other committees. Mander advocated considering the Corporation's financial policy over a 5 year period;[3.] and in 1939 he introduced his first 5 year report,[4.] which was dashed by the war. In 1946 a call was made for a 5-10 year plan, providing background information against which to judge finance proposals, since "financial matters were usually rushed through the Council partly because Councillors did not understand them, and partly because they knew they would be audited and were above suspicion."[5.]

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1. E. & S. 30.9.1929.
2. Interview with A. Cattell.
3. E. & S. 9.11.1938.
4. E. & S. 10.1.1939.
5. E. & S. 1.8.1946.

In the 1950s Beattie established a Priority Sub-Committee of Finance Committee to recommend which projects of the Council should have priority given the scarcity of resources, and to enable the Council to plan a long-term policy.[1] He was backed in this task by the Labour member G. Rastall, who also attempted within the Labour Group to set up a committee of Chairmen to plot out future financial commitments of the Corporation and to co-ordinate the plans of the individual committees. But his hopes were frustrated.[2]

In 1955 the Labour Group replaced Beattie by D. A. Birch, a young but most able member of the Labour Group, though not its leader.[3] He was very much in agreement with Beattie and Rastall about the need for the Finance Committee to control the expenditure of the other committees. During the 1950s costs had soared as the Council undertook new responsibilities and improved services; wages and salaries shot up; the credit squeeze and higher interest rates increased the cost of borrowing and of servicing the Corporation's debt.

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1. E. & S. 23.11.1954. Interviews with J. Beattie and D. A. Birch.
2. See above Chapter 7 pp. 310-313.
3. See above Chapter 7 pp. 319-320.

Fewer people bore the growing burden since the population of the town declined as areas were cleared and the population was rehoused beyond the boundaries. Changes in the grants system, the introduction of the Block Grant and a decline in the amount from the Rate Deficiency Grant further increased the financial difficulties of the Council.[1] To stop rising costs was "like trying to catch hold of a bouncing rubber ball in pitch blackness."[2]

In opposition Beattie complained that "the method of controlling finance was out of date." He noted the surprise that came when the estimates were produced, and the last minute attempts at pruning which followed. He advocated that "there should be places on the Finance Committee for the chairmen of other committees." They would be able to discuss wage trends and overspending, so that "the build-up of the rate would then be the result of a carefully discussed policy, instead of being handled late in the financial year, hurriedly and without time for manoeuvres."[3] Although Birch had the same long-term objectives as Beattie, his methods were

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1. E. & S. 24.9.1956, 23.9.1957, 22.9.1958, 23.2.1959, 26.10.1959.
2. E. & S. 28.2.1956.
3. E. & S. 28.2.1956.

different. Instead of bringing the Chairmen of the committees to the Finance Committee he wanted to take the Finance Committee to the committees, and involve it in the actual process of making the estimate. His aim was more permanent and continuous influence, a tighter and earlier control over the estimates to stop last minute panic steps to cut them down. He tried to get his way at first by voluntary methods and informal consultation, but some Chairmen objected. For instance H. E. Lane, Chairman of Housing Committee,[1] opposed Birch's proposals to introduce a differential rent scheme. Birch wanted to explain his ideas to the Housing Committee and to bring along the Borough Treasurer. Lane objected, saying that the Housing Committee had its own officials, and he refused Birch's request.[2] In 1959 Birch thanked "most committees", who had "voluntarily allowed a finance sub-committee (Priority) to exercise control over capital expenditure."[3] It was clear that stronger devices were required. Birch wanted the sub-committee to be able to veto capital

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1. A rival of Birch's for the Chairmanship of Finance.
2. Interviews with H. E. Lane and D. A. Birch.
3. E. & S. 23.2.1959.

expenditure but the Group would not agree. What it did agree to was embodied in the revised Council Standing Orders of 1962. These form a most telling comparison with the position in 1900, when the Finance Committee was weak and the spending committees were almost autonomous.

The process of making the rate begins in December or January when each committee approves the estimates of both its income and expenditure for the coming year. The form of the estimates is determined by the Finance Committee. When the committee discusses the estimates, the Chairman of Finance or his nominee is entitled to attend and join in the discussion, although he may not vote. When later the Finance Committee itself considers the estimates from a committee it can invite the Chairman of the committee, or his nominee, and the chief official of the committee to attend. The Finance Committee can refer an item back to the committee with comment for its reconsideration. No committee is allowed to seek a supplementary estimate from the Council until it has been submitted to the Finance Committee; and if it disapproves, the committee is only allowed to proceed with the plan on the express approval of the whole Council. Just before 1962 if a committee wished

to undertake capital expenditure it had to report the matter to the Finance Committee which had the opportunity to make comments to the full Council on the scheme. Birch wanted the power to veto such plans, but obtained only the rule that no capital expenditure was to be recommended to the Council until the Finance Committee had been informed, and either the Finance Committee had no objection or else two meetings of the Council had taken place after the Finance Committee had been informed. Thus it had the power to delay for 2 months any committee's recommendations for capital expenditure. This gives the Chairman of Finance and the Treasurer time to bring pressure to bear on the Chairman of the spending committee and his officials if the expenditure is regarded as inappropriate or inopportune. Birch has stressed the importance of such behind the scenes consultations,[1] while members of the spending committees have objected to what they regard as the "dictation" of the Finance Committee in the negotiations.[2] Birch has said that he realises that many members of the Council think that "the Finance Committee in general and its

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1. Interview with D. A. Birch.
2. Interview with Mrs. V. A. Fletcher.

Chairman in particular too often stand in the way of progress."[1].

This history shows that the spending committees and their Chairmen have over the period had their independence and autonomy severely curtailed. The most important area they have lost has been in finance; thus they have had taken away their power to decide what large projects they will advocate. In other fields too they have been limited. Control over their staff, their wages and conditions, has gone largely to national negotiating machinery and to a separate Establishment Committee set up in 1961. Control over goods and services used by all departments has been co-ordinated under a Tenders Committee set up in 1935. Rules have been devised laying down the procedure to be followed by the committees in many of their activities, for instance in awarding Corporation contracts. But these were pinpricks compared to the increase in the power of the Finance Committee and its Chairman over 60 years.

In addition to the limitations imposed on the Chairmen of Council committees by the horizontal committees and particularly by the Finance Committee,

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1. E. & S. 22.2.1960.

the Chairmen of the 1950s and 60s were further limited by their political parties to an extent which their counterparts in 1900 were not. The Chairmen of 1900 did not owe their seats on the Council to a political party, nor had they been made Chairmen because of their party's support.[1] Elections were not fought officially between parties nor did the parties plan the attitudes of their members inside the Council. The Chairmen did not have to attend Group meetings nor be bound by Group decisions. They could advocate in their committees and in Council whatever policy they liked without fear of reprisal because they had deviated from a party programme. Their loyalty was to their committees rather than to their party.

In the 1960s however all Councillors owed their seats to party backing; if they failed to follow the party's policy, they endangered their position, since their party could refuse to readopt them as official candidates. They were bound to attend Group meetings and to abide by Group decisions. Each Chairman had to fit

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1. Committees were jealous of their right to select their own Chairmen; they even resented Council discussion of their choice. In 1899 a Chairman said "The Council had no right to go behind any Committee in reviewing its decision as to the appointment of its Chairman." W.C. 15.3.1899.

his committee's plans into the framework set by his party and his Group. His loyalty was to his party rather than to his committee. In addition the majority party in the Council in the 1950s has had proportionately the same majority in each committee; thus although the Chairman has an automatic majority in his committee, these members of his party serve to limit him in the sense of ensuring that he keeps to the policy of the party. He cannot overrule them, since they could appeal to the Group for a final decision.

In 1900 the Chairmen were the dominant elements in their committees. Once they had the backing of the committee for a particular policy, they would meet together in the General Purposes Committee for horse-trading, and if they were dissatisfied, they could take the matter to the full Council. The party and its Group did not come into the process. In the 1950s and 60s however it played a most significant part. It acted as the clearing house for the proposals of the committees; their plans went to the Group and it decided what the attitude of the party was to be and which way members were to vote in the Council.

Thus the Chairmen of 1960 were far more limited than the Chairmen of 1900. But they have not been

utterly subordinated to the Group. They have held out successfully against Rastall's plan[1] to set up a Group committee of the Chairmen, since they did not want to compromise their independence further by submitting their proposals to their colleagues, each seeking to press for his plan and to block theirs. They preferred to take their plans direct to the Group without having to go through a prior stage of supervision. A consequence of Rastall's failure was that, since the Chairmen through their party would not submit to control over their committees' activities, other means were sought inside the Corporation itself, through strengthening the Finance Committee.

The increase in the power of the Finance Committee and the important role of the Group have detracted from the significance of the General Purposes Committee. Its composition has remained the same, the senior members of the Council. It performs a moderately useful function of tidying up items before they go to the Council, acting like a 2nd Chamber. It is no Cabinet, since its members belong to different parties and it is too large, like a miniature Council. It can therefore give no political lead. The Town Clerk says that it does very

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1. See above Chapter 7, pp. 310-313.

little.[1] It has been overshadowed by the Finance Committee and the Groups. It was not an effective restricting element on the Chairmen in 1900; it is far less so in 1960.

In 1900 a member of the Council became a Chairman because his committee had chosen him as the most able member of that committee. His party affiliation was not a significant factor in his appointment. Chairmanships were allocated without regard to the strengths of parties in the Council as a whole. Labour members gained Chairmanships before they were made Mayors or reached the Aldermanic bench. T. Frost was the first Labour Chairman, of the Free Library Committee (1917-19); in 1925 J. Whittaker was made Chairman of the Care of the Mentally Defective Committee (to 1940) and A. Davies became the first Labour Chairman of a major committee, Transport, which he remained until 1949. By 1944 Labour had 4 Chairmanships, Allotments, Care of the Blind, Cleansing and Transport. On gaining its majority in 1945 it removed from the Aldermanic bench 6 non-Socialist Chairmen,[2] ejected other Chairmen from their positions and took 11 Chairmanships, 6 major and 5

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1. Interview with R. J. Meddings.
2. E. & S. 9.11.1945. See below Chapter 11 pp. 478-480.

minor; leaving to the opposition also 11, 7 major and 4 minor. The Labour Group did not follow its party's model Standing Orders and take all the Chairmanships since it had not enough experienced members available. The Conservatives and Independents bemoaned the loss of experienced Chairmen, but C. W. Hill, the Secretary of the Labour Group, said: "I am not prepared to accept in all committees as years gone by, the crumbs falling from the rich men's tables. We are able to pass the plate for a fair helping and we intend to do it."[1.] In 1949 when the Conservatives regained a majority they offered the Labour Party 9 Chairmanships, 6 minor and 3 major.[2.] The Labour Group decided to refuse all;[3.] one of its members, A. A. Beach, Chairman of Watch Committee, refused to accept this decision. He thoroughly enjoyed being Chairman; it was the only part of the Council's work which interested him, meeting Home Secretaries, attending the Police Council and being saluted by the police.[4.] He resigned from the Group and said "I must retain my freedom to think, decide and vote

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1. E. & S. 16.11.1945.
2. E. & S. 23.5.1949.
3. See above Chapter 7, p. 321.
4. Interview with A. A. Beach.

for what in my opinion is right."[1] In 1952 when the Labour Party regained its majority, it removed him from the Aldermanic bench.[2] It did not at this point take all the Chairmanships; a decision praised by the leader of the Conservatives as "a sensible arrangement whereby the Chairmanships would be held to some degree by those best fitted by experience to take the responsibility. I do most sincerely congratulate the Labour Party on their fairness in this matter, and the Conservatives and Independents on their good sense in accepting the suggestions put forward."[3] Inside the Labour Group the battle raged between those who felt that all should have been taken and the majority who said that Labour had not enough able men to replace certain very experienced and not very partisan Conservatives.[4] Gradually as Labour increased its majority after 1952, it acquired more Chairmanships,[5] until in 1955 it decided to take all.[6]

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1. E. & S. 28.5.1949.
2. E. & S. 9.5.1952.
3. E. & S. 19.5.1952.
4. See above Chapter 7, pp. 321-322.
5. e.g. Health Committee in 1953 when the Conservatives objected to the removal of a Conservative doctor, who had been Chairman for 6 years, "like an old shoe". E. & S. 29.6.1953. Also Fire and Ambulance Committee in 1954. E. & S. 4.6.1954.
6. E. & S. 27.6.1955.

J. Beattie protested at "party politics exhibited in their most futile and stupid form." "Since no one had adversely criticised the work of the Conservative Chairmen in the past, they must have been removed this year and last not because they were inefficient, but merely because they were Conservatives."[1] The local paper said that the "real evil" was the fact that "men are being given jobs for political not personal reasons, and that there is a danger that if the Conservatives gained power they would retaliate by throwing out the best of the Labour members."[2] The Labour Party claimed that a Conservative Chairman of a committee whose majority was Labour was in a difficult position in a Council with a Labour majority, since he could not really speak for his committee, nor take snap decisions because he could not rely on the loyalty of his committee, nor in open Council could he wholeheartedly defend proposals with which he did not agree.[3] The leader of the Labour Group said that it was nonsense to have a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer (Chairman of Finance

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1. ibid.
2. E. & S. 28.6.1955
3. E. & S. 27.6.1955. Similar arguments were used when Labour refused to take Chairmanships while the Conservatives had a majority. E. & S. 7.5.1951.

Committee) in a Labour Government.[1.]

Closely connected to the choice of the Chairmen is the question of the party composition of the committees. Before 1945 the actual membership of committees was decided by the General Purposes Committee[2.] and immediately after 1945 by a special ad hoc committee of the leaders of the parties.[3.] In the late 1940s the majority party did not have a majority in every committee. In some it had, in others it was either equal or in a minority. In the 1960s the majority party has a majority in all committees, reflecting the strength of the parties in the Council. The actual composition of the committees is arranged by the Secretary of the majority Group, who considers requests from his members, prepares a draft, and submits it to the Group for a final verdict; the Secretary of the minority Group does the same for his members.[4.] After each election when the composition of the Council has changed, the Secretaries confer to redress the balance in the committees. The Conservatives have complained that the

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1. Interview with F. Mansell.
2. E. & S. 23.3.1927. Interview with J. Cahill.
3. E. & S. 9.11.1945, 27.4.1947, 23.5.1949, 1.7.1950.
4. Interviews with E. Y. Fullwood and F. S. Smith.

Labour Group has not given them adequate representation.[1.]

Thus the majority party Group has taken all the Chairmanships and has a majority in each committee. It also decides who shall sit in which committee and who shall be the Chairman of which committee.[2.] The Conservatives have objected to "the injection of permanent party politics" into the running of the Council. They have rejected the analogy of Parliament, claiming that although it might be run on this system, the Town Council should not follow that example.[3.] The Conservative leader has said that "practically all Council work was non-political",[4.] and that therefore there was no need to select the Chairmen and decide the composition of committees in this way. By 1962 however the Conservatives have come to accept the Labour view of how the Council should be run. If it had gained a majority in either 1961 or 1962 it would have taken all the Chairmanships, replacing the Labour members with their "Shadow" Chairmen. Thus both parties accept the need for one party to assume the responsibility for

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1. E. & S. 15.5.1958.
2. See also Chapters 7 and 8.
3. E. & S. 28.6.1955.
4. E. & S. 27.6.1955.

running the Council; and that entails that one party should have a majority on all committees and should take all the Chairmanships.

One objection to this system was voiced by the Conservative leader when in 1951 he asked the Labour Party to accept some Chairmanships. "There are not enough people of experience and ability on one side of this Council to take all Chairmanships. We want to pick the brains and ability from all sides of the Council."[1] Labour refused and it is acknowledged that some of the Conservative Chairmen were of very poor calibre. Labour too has faced this problem, although the leader has said that although some of Labour's Chairmen don't "shine", they have never had such "duds" as the Conservatives have had.[2] In Wolverhampton this difficulty is particularly acute, since the parties are so evenly balanced, and when the parties stood at 30-30, over ⅔ of the Labour members of the Council were Chairmen. While the majority party had "to scrape the barrel," able men in opposition, deprived of a Chairmanship, retired from the Council and the Corporation as a whole suffered a loss. The outstanding

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1. E. & S. 7.5.1951.
2. Interview with F. Mansell.

example of this trend was James Beattie, who retired in 1956 after being removed from the Chairmanship of Finance Committee.

The actual role of the Chairman varies according to a number of factors. It depends on the personality, temperament, ambition and ability of the Chairman, and as to how he conceives his job, and as to how much time he can devote to it. It depends on the work of the committee, whether it is largely technical or whether it is highly political. It depends again on the members of the committee, on their personalities, temperaments, ambitions and abilities, as to how they conceive their function and that of their Chairman and as to the time they have available. It depends also on similar factors in the make-up of the officials, particularly the chief official. It depends on the traditions of the Council regarding the role of the Chairman. The role therefore differs according to a host of fluctuating variables, so that it is impossible to generalise about the functions of the Chairman. Nowhere is it laid down what they should be, and practice is diverse.

Some Chairmen lead and guide their committees in discussion; others let the meetings ramble without direction. Some are speedy in expediting business;

others are slow. Some inform their committees fully; others are reticent. Some allow the officials full freedom to take part in the proceedings of the committee; others let the officials speak only when requested. The relationship between the Chairman and his chief official is crucial, and it varies tremendously. Some Chairmen hardly ever see their chief officials save at the committee meetings or for a few minutes before when they skim over the agenda together. Some Chairmen let the officials alone "to get on with the job they are paid for." Their own role they regard as being to provide the official with whatever services he needs to carry out his functions effectively. Others distrust their officials, seek to know everything that they do, swoop down on the departments for inspections and to seek out complaints. Some are very close to their officials, in touch with them often 3 to 4 times a week, always available to each other at any hour of the day or night; such can usually be regarded as a team of two equals, feeding each other with ideas and plans. Some of these duets take their committees into their confidence; others try to rush their proposals through without much consultation. The time when they enter their office is important. A new Chairman faced with an experienced official who has been

in the department for a long time will not be able to assert himself so much as an experienced Chairman facing a new official, recently arrived from another authority. The official's ability to assert himself will depend also on whether the topic under consideration is politically contentious. In some of the committees like Water political issues rarely arise, but in Housing, Town Planning, Public Works or Education, the official has to tread warily lest he become identified as the supporter of a particular party. In Wolverhampton the official is regarded as the servant to his committee or to his Council as a whole and not to a particular party, even if it has a majority. Thus the role of the Chairman in relation both to his committee and to his official varies according to an immeasurable number of factors.[1].

In the Labour Party some members have advocated that Chairmen should not stay indefinitely in office but should be limited to say a 3 year term. At present some feel that the Chairman gets "into a rut," becomes the mouth-piece of his official, lacks a critical approach to the work of his committee, resents criticism as a personal attack and generally runs his committee as a personal show. To bring fresh ideas and new blood into

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1. This section was based on numerous interviews with Councillors and Chairmen.

the committee whilst ensuring that Chairmen are experienced in the work of a committee, they suggest that after one year's service as Vice-Chairman, a member should then be a Chairman for 3 years and then move on to another committee. In this way also Chairmen will be forced to see the work of the Council as a whole and not from the viewpoint of one committee.[1] The opponents of this argument say that if such proposals were adopted, the influence of the official would be likely to increase, since it takes about 3 years for a Chairman to learn the work of his committee thoroughly. Until then the official with his expertise and superior technical knowledge would be the driving force behind the Chairman. Popular control of the administration would thus be relaxed by the institution of a scheme for Chairmen to hold their offices by rotation. The latter view is expressed invariably by Chairmen, the former by relative newcomers, itching for a Chairmanship themselves. Once they have attained the office, they don't return to their old cause.

In 1900 the key men on the Council were the Chairmen; in 1960 to a great extent they still were. They are the dominant element in their committees and in the

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1. Interviews with M. James and F. Mansell. E. & S. 26.2.1957.

Council speak for their committees, explaining and defending their proposals. The successful achievement of a project still owes much to the ability and energy of a Chairman. The Town Clerk has singled out the work of some Chairmen as being vital for the attainment of the objects of their committees: Mrs. R. F. Ilsley at Health Committee and H. Bagley in Cultural and Entertainments Committee;[1] Rastall at Public Works was the power behind the Direct Building Department; S. R. Swain in the Markets Committee behind the construction of the new Retail Market, H. E. Lane behind the house building and rent policy of the Housing Committee and D. A. Birch behind the increase in the powers of the Finance Committee. Most of the other Chairmen however have not the force, the ability or the ideas of the above. They are more led by their officials. In 1960 there are more of this kind than in 1900, a change produced by the decline in the occupational and social status of the Chairmen and by the increasing complexity and technicality of the work of the committees which has exalted the official. In 1960 the Chairmen, although still the key figures on the Council, suffer from a number of limitations on their autonomy, which

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1. See above Chapter 6, pp. 268-270.

their counterparts in 1900 never had to undergo. Now they have to work within the framework of a party policy and accept Group decisions as binding on them and their committees. Also horizontal committees have restricted their freedom; particularly the Finance Committee has encroached onto their preserves. The Chairmen resisted strenuously these limitations, and have yet not completely capitulated, but no longer do they rule with virtual autonomy over their petty empires.

CHAPTER 11

Mayors and Aldermen

The Mayors

The one individual in local government whose office is known to most people is the Mayor. His position is also the most sought after by Councillors and Aldermen. And once it has been attained it remains the high peak of a Councillor's career, that part of his life about which he is most proud and most eager to talk. The mementos of his period of office are carefully preserved; often the only press cuttings kept by a Councillor are those connected with his Mayoralty. Over 60 years the Mayor's legal position has not changed but in practice his functions have. The Mayor of the 1890s had a quite different role to perform from the Mayor of the 1960s.

The powers and potential powers of the Mayor can be seen as threefold. He can be a constitutional monarch, ceremonially representing the Corporation; a kind of Speaker of the Council, presiding at Council meetings; and a political leader of the Council, a kind of Prime Minister, promoting his own policy. The last function has been less performed after the 1930s than at the turn of the century; the performance of the second has depended on the individual capabilities of the Mayor,

and the performance of the first has altered significantly since 1900.

The Mayor is most often recognised and is the most well-known individual in a local authority because of his ceremonial activities. And it is these which make his office so attractive for aspirants. During his term of office the Mayor personifies the Corporation, the Council and the town. He is for a time "Mr. Wolverhampton,"[1] representing the Corporation at functions inside and outside the borough. Wearing his chain, the symbol of his office, he is the leading personality at school prizedays, at banquets of associations, at functions of all kinds. In 1929 it was said that "the calls upon a Mayor are heavy." He has to "attend dinners, bazaars, football matches, dog shows, and all manner of meetings, and make speeches on a bewildering diversity of subjects."[2] In the year 1929-30 he attended 228 functions.[3] In 1957-8 the Mayor attended 550 meetings in her term of office including 400 outside functions.[4] No wonder that a former Mayor

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1. Interview with H. Mash, Mayor 1960-61.
2. E. & S. 9.11.1929.
3. E. & S. 10.11.1930.
4. E. & S. 19.5.1958.

said that "social duties abound."[1.]

Around the turn of the century the Mayor had no Mayoral allowance provided by the Corporation to enable him to maintain the dignity of his office. He had to finance himself during his term of office, which would leave him little time to earn a living, and he had to provide the money for the entertaining. Up to 1898 the Mayor had always been picked from the leading social figures of the town, men of substance and wealth, able to dispense patronage to the poor and unemployed in the form of food and clothing, to donate handsomely to the town's charities, to dispense patronage to various associations and to regale the borough with Mayoral receptions, balls and feasts. To be a Mayor was expensive. When a man was found who had the high social status and the means to indulge the town, he would be called to have more than one annual term of office. The outstanding example of this was Sir C. T. Mander, the varnish manufacturer, who was Mayor for 4 terms, from 1892-96, the record number of years of office of any Mayor in the town. John Jones, the Japanner, was

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1. Interviews with L. J. Woolridge, Mayor 1954-55, J. C. Homer, Mayor 1958-59. Homer said that he attended functions from those at "working men's clubs to those of the best people."

Mayor for 3 terms (1878-81) and A.B. Bantock, the carrier, also for 3 terms (1905-7, 1914-15). Between 1919 and 1939 it became less common for a Mayor to have more than one term of office.[1] The last one was the son of Sir C.T. Mander, Sir C.A. Mander (1932-3, 1936-7), who was asked to become Mayor for a second term when it was known that Royalty was to visit the town. It was felt that he would be a more dignified representative of the town than the butcher R.E. Probert who was next on the list for the office.[2]

In 1898 a departure from traditional lines was recognised when the first "democratic"[3] Mayor was selected, Price Lewis, the Radical Liberal tailor. He said that he was "unequal to the pecuniary obligations which custom rather than necessity has attached to the office."[4] He said that he would not follow out the lavish expenditure of the past; yet he would accept no money payment or salary to enable him to follow in the lines of his predecessors.[5] One of his first economy measures was to cut out the luncheon at the Town Hall

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1. J. Thompson, Mayor 1920-22, the head of a firm constructing boilers, was given a second term because he spent money lavishly on the town. Interview with W. Ellwell.

2. Interviews with W.J. Rawlins and W. Lawley.

3. E.&S. 8.10.1898.

4. Midland Evening News, 4.10.1898.

5. E.&S. 4.10.1898.

after his ceremony of inauguration as Mayor.[1] Also, since he was a teetotaller, alcohol did not flow so freely as in the past. This change prompted a poem in the local press.

"Mourn Aldermanic gourmands
Who love the festive glass
For hock, champagne and cognac
The new Mayor will not pass.

No more you'll sip the eau de vie
Your inner man to cheer,
But Corporation water's cheap
If alcohol is dear." [2]

Lewis was an exception; traditional types were selected until T. Frost, a carpenter, the first Labour Mayor, was chosen in 1922. To meet "the essential disbursements incidental to the Mayoralty" a Mayoral allowance of £250 was instituted.[3] Fears were again expressed as to whether a working man could uphold the dignity of the office.[4] When the 2nd Labour Mayor, A. Davies, a railwayman, was chosen in 1930, the allowance was raised

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1. E. & S. 8.10.1898.
2. E. & S. 4.10.1898.
3. E. & S. 12.12.1922. Some said that the allowance was instituted with a view to helping the next Mayor, J. Clark, a "bankrupt" builder, who was granted 2 terms of office because he was in difficult straits. Interviews with W. Lawley and H. E. Lane. Clark was not as open handed as other Mayors, for when C. T. Morey went for charity for the Unemployed Workers, Clark gave only sympathy but no money. Interview with C. T. Morey.
4. Interviews with J. L. Chown and N. Frost.

£500[1]. In 1935 during the 3rd Labour Mayor's term of office (J. Whittaker, a retired plumber and trade union official), a car and chauffeur were provided;[2] and following the Labour victory of 1945, the allowance was raised to £750.[3] In 1954, at the end of the first Labour Mayor's term of office since 1949, an entertainment allowance of £500 was granted in addition to the existing £750.[4]

Objections were raised against these increases in 1945. "In the past the Mayor's position was looked upon as a job of honour and a pleasure to serve the town without any salary whatever."[5] Others argued that "it gave the opportunity to be Mayor to able men from the working-class" and that "it would give to those over-burdened with money and spare time the opportunity to show their honourable desire to serve the community for nothing by refusing to accept payment."[6] The early Labour Mayors found it impossible to maintain the expense

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1. E. & S. 27.10.1930.
2. E. & S. 7.8.1935.
3. E. & S. 4.1.1946. It was raised to £1,250 in 1964 to help a Labour Mayor in financial difficulties. E. & S. 4.5.1964.
4. E. & S. 25.10.1954.
5. E. & S. 10.1.1945.
6. ibid.

associated with being a Mayor; A. A. Beach[1.] and W. Lawley[2.] have both stressed that they were besieged by requests from various bodies for financial patronage.[3.] They were unable to equal the gifts given by such Mayors as Luce[4.] and Probert[5]; the latter is said to have spent £3,000 during his term of office.[6.] The largest expense for a Mayor today lies in the cost of clothes for himself and his wife. It is felt that they should uphold the dignity of the town by being turned out at their best on every occasion.[7.] The Conservative Mayors of late have also spent money in donating sets of cutlery and plate to the Corporation.[8.]

The rise of the Labour Party and its demand for the Mayoralty has caused the office to become to all intents and purposes a full time salaried job, financed out of the rates, since Labour members could not afford to be Mayors without pay. Where in the past the Mayor dispensed largesse from his own pocket, he now acts as a servant of

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1. Mayor 1945-6.
2. Mayor 1940-1.
3. Interviews with A. A. Beach and W. Lawley.
4. Mayor 1938-9.
5. Mayor 1937-8.
6. Interview with W. Ellwell.
7. Interviews with H. Mash, L. J. Woolridge, Mrs. R. F. Ilsley, Mayor 1957-8.
8. H. Bowdler, Mayor 1949-50. L. R. Guy, Mayor 1950-1.

the Council. Since the office has become salaried and full time it is no longer feasible for it to be held longer than for one term. Few individuals could be granted time off their work for a longer period than a year; and objections would be vociferous against continually employing the same man out of the rates to enjoy himself. In addition the competition for the office is so intense that one term is the maximum that is politically possible.

An important function of the Mayor is to act as Chairman of the Council. He presides at the Council meeting, keeps order in the Chamber, controls the debate, picks speakers and interprets the Standing Orders. At his left hand sits the Town Clerk, continually whispering advice about what points to make and when to close a debate and call for a division. In this role the Mayor is regarded as above party, as the impartial servant of all the Council. We have seen above however that the Mayor in 1936 managed to prevent a debate on the financial interests of some members, much to the annoyance of the Labour Party.[1.] In 1936 Labour members Lane and Lawley objected to the powers of the Mayor to disallow

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1. See above Chapter 5., p. 225.

supplementary questions, to remove a member who interrupted the proceedings and to clear the public gallery. They felt that these powers would be used to restrict the Labour Party's protests against Chairmen who did not give truthful answers to questions.[1] But it was in the early 1960s, when the Council was evenly divided, that this aspect of the Mayor's functions became of decisive political importance. In 1961 the Labour Party decided to take the Mayoralty although the Conservatives had not had it since 1958, because the Labour Party feared that in the May 1961 Council elections they would lose their majority of Councillors, and the ensuing Conservative majority would remove the Labour Aldermen up for re-election. Thus the Conservatives with the Mayor, a Conservative too, would have a majority of the whole Council. It was to avoid this fate that the Labour Party elected C. H. Davies as Mayor, and then for the election of Aldermen, brought him into the body of the Chamber to vote as Mayor from there, while another non-retiring Alderman took the chair and gave a casting vote. The subsequent law suit resulted in the judgment that the Mayor if not presiding must be deemed to be

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1. E. & S. 2.10.1936.

absent.[1] During the year of Davies' office he was constantly called upon to use his casting vote to preserve a Labour majority. This period was most exceptional, being the product of the even balance between the parties of 30 members each.

A function of the Mayor which has been swamped by his ceremonial duties is as the potential political leader of the Council. This role has not been performed by the Mayor to any extent since the First World War. Before then however the Mayoralty was not merely a ceremonial office; it was an office of influence, conferring upon the holder unique opportunities to advance a particular scheme of his for the town. Indeed many Chairmen of committees used their terms of office as Mayor to press forward plans of their own or of their committees'. They could do this in their speeches to the Council outlining the year's future at the start of their terms of office; in their addresses to the numerous functions they attended, they could stress their pet plans. At these functions they could make many contacts and collect further support for their proposals. As Chairmen of the Council, as ex officio members of all committees and as Chairmen still of their

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1. For the full story see Epilogue.

own committees they were in key vantage points from which to urge other Councillors to follow their lead. A particularly important position held by the Mayor ex officio was the Chairmanship of the General Purposes Committee,[1] which was composed of the Aldermen and senior Councillor from each ward, thus being basically a committee of Chairmen. It met before the full Council meeting to discuss the agenda of the Council meeting. Here the Chairmen sought to promote the causes of their committees; here the horse-trading occurred and here the Mayor as Chairman was in an exceptionally advantageous position to advance the proposals of his own committee.

Sir C. T. Mander during his 4 years of office continually urged a wider use of electricity, for lighting and for the tramways. In 1893 the first electric light works was erected in the town and mains were laid in the public streets. This had received " a large share of the attention of the Mayor who had worked zealously on behalf of it."[2] An outstanding example of a Mayor at action as the leader of the Council comes from the term of office of Stephen Craddock, Mayor 1896-7. He

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1. For this committee see Chapter 10., pp. 420-422.
2. W.C. 14.11.1894. He had installed electricity in house and works. W.C. 16.11.1892.

had pressed for some time for a new Free Library, but to no avail since agreement could not be reached on a site. He cut through the obstructions by buying personally a plot of land and offering it to the Council. "I have purchased it in my private capacity and if the Council do not ratify my action I shall not take it amiss. It required me to perform this act without delay; otherwise I consider a good bargain might have been lost."[1] The site was accepted and the town built a new Free Library to commemorate Victoria's Golden Jubilee. Craddock was renowned as the "father of the Free Library."[2]

The Mayors have not been such leaders since the 1920s. Their role has increasingly become ceremonial. Each year a Mayor makes the same sort of speeches at the same kind of functions as the Mayor of the previous year. Little distinguishes one Mayoralty from another. Since 1945 only one term of office stands out from the general run, that of James Beattie, the Conservative leader, in 1951-2. He is remembered as making a tour of all the departments of the Corporation to see for himself what exactly was going on. These reviews were not merely ceremonial; as he went round he made criticisms and

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1. W.C. 10.2.1897.
2. W.C. 17.4.1912.

suggestions for improvement.[1] The ultimate point in the Mayor's becoming purely a ceremonial figure was reached in the term of the Conservative leader, M. P. Birch (1962-3), when he promised the Labour Party that if he was made Mayor he would not use his vote in the Council to support the Conservative Party but would always allow the Labour Party to have a majority. Indeed the Conservatives agreed that if Labour members were absent from a division, sufficient Conservatives would leave in order to enable the Labour Party to keep a majority of 1.[2] Many Labour members were amused that the Conservatives were prepared to forgo political power in order to get Labour support for their nominee as Mayor, who would shake hands with the Queen when she visited the Grammar School during his term of office.[3]

There are many reasons why the Mayor of the 1950s has not acted the part of a leader of the Council as was done by the Mayors of the 1890s and 1900s. It is true that his ceremonial functions have increased and have left him with little time to do anything else. But the main reason for the change lies in the growing importance of party. The Mayor of the 1950s owed his

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1. Interviews with J. Beattie and J. Cahill.
2. See below, Epilogue.
3. Interviews with Mrs. G. Bagley, G. J. Costley and R. J. Garner.

position on the Council to the support of his party, and even his position as Mayor was attained by the backing of his party. As a party member he could advocate no policy at variance with a decision of the Group, and the Group has its own leaders. The Chairman of the two party Groups were the leaders of the two parties on the Council. The Group of the majority party has replaced the General Purposes Committee as the place where the Chairmen try to promote the causes of their committees over those of other Chairmen. Since the Mayor is not the Chairman of the Group, his influence has therefore corresponsingly declined.[1] The Group selects the Mayor for the performance of ceremonial not political functions; he is expected to be non-political during his term of office. Indeed he does not attend Group meetings during his term as Mayor. When Mansell, the leader of the Labour Group, was Mayor (1955-6), he resigned as leader and attended no Group meetings.[2] The only time a Mayor has attended Group meetings was druing C. H. Davies' term in the exceptional period of 1961-2.[3] The Mayor of the 1890s and 1900s did not owe his position to any party; he was not limited by any

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1. See Chapters 7 and 8.
2. M.L.G. 1955-6. so did the Conservative leader Birch when Mayor in 1962-3.
3. M.L.G. 1961-2.

party policy and could thus with more freedom act as a leader of the Council. Today however the Councillors regard the Mayoralty as a ceremonial office, without political power save in abnormal circumstances. Leadership is not the function of the Mayor.

Before 1947 the Mayor was chosen initially by the Mayoral Committee, on which sat all ex-Mayors of the borough, who made a recommendation to the Council which always accepted the advice of the committee. The committee would meet, deliberate and send 2 or 3 of its members to ask the chosen one if he would accept. The criteria by which a man was assessed, say ex-members of this committee, were his length of service on the Council, his work for the Council, his character, his religion, his speaking ability, whether or not he had a wife and the qualities of his wife; the health of the man and his wife were considered, since the strain of the term of office was a killer; for example Mrs. F. S. Thompson died in office.[1] Not all those who have been asked accepted. Some would cry off because of ill health or because their wives were ill,[2] or did not want the trouble, or because the term of office would cause their

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1. E. & S. 23.3.1945.
2. W.C. 6.10.1897.

business or professional activities to suffer.[1] Before the First World War the main qualification for Mayor seems to have been whether the individual had the wealth to maintain Mayoral hospitality, save for Lewis' case in 1898. Afterwards, up to 1945, seniority was the leading criterion for a request to be made, except that some Labour members, though senior to many non-Labour members were not asked.

The Labour Party objected to this method of selection; it suggested that the choice should emerge spontaneously from the Council and not be fixed beforehand.[2] It opposed the "self-elected" committee, which even announced its choice to the press before the whole Council had had a chance to consider the matter.[3] In 1947 the Labour Group decided to take the Mayoralty for the year and choose H. E. Lane; the Mayoral Committee did not agree, but Lane became Mayor through Labour's control of the full Council. From then whenever Labour decided to take the Mayoralty, the individual picked was selected at the Group meeting. The Conservatives however still adhered to the Mayoral Committee, so that whenever the

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1. W.C. 3.8.1898, 13.9.1899. Details about the Mayoral Committee are from interviews with W. J. Rawlins, T. W. Phillipson, W. Lewley and A. Byrne-Quinn.
2. E. & S. 10.11.1924.
3. E. & S. 14.3.1932, 12.4.1932. C.M. 11.4.1932.

Labour Group decided to let the Conservatives nominate for Mayor, their members on the Mayoral Committee would remain silent while the Conservatives chose their own man. In 1958 the Conservative members on the committee differed from the majority of the Conservative Group.[1] Although the former prevailed, the Conservatives decided to scrap the old Mayoral Committee and to follow Labour practice. In 1960 the Council decided that "in future mayors be nominated at a private meeting of the whole Council and not in the first instance by a special committee of all ex-mayors of the borough."[2] In practice the process is that the majority Group decides whether it will take the Mayor for the year; if it decides to do so then it elects one of its members and gets it through the Council; if it decides to allow the minority Group to nominate, then the choice is left to the Group of that party.[3] Conservatives have tried to obtain an agreement with the Labour Party about allocating the Mayoralty on a rota, but the Labour Party has always been reluctant to yield its freedom of manoeuvre.

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1. See above Chapter 8.
2. C.M. 26.1.1960.
3. See above Chapters 7 and 8.

The leader of the Labour Group, Mansell, has said in public that the main qualification for being a Mayor is "a record of public service to the town irrespective of financial ability or party affiliation."[1]. The main qualification in practice, as considered by both parties, is seniority within the Group on the Council. Concentration on that factor eliminates much wearisome and fruitless debate about the quality of a candidate. It makes the choice easy, except that in the Labour Party many Councillors entered for the first time in November 1945 and therefore within the Group the problem has arisen as to which is the senior. The issue has been settled by voting.[2].

Once the Group has selected the candidate, then it is expected that he will be supported by both parties. Indeed he is usually nominated in the full Council by a member of his own party and seconded by a member of the other; often the leaders of the Groups perform this function. It is also expected that throughout his term of office the Mayor will be backed by both parties, since he is regarded as above politics, representing the Council as a whole. The only complaints ever made that

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1. E. & S. 24.5.1954.
2. See above Chapter 7.

a Mayor was not being supported by the party opposed to his, came during C. H. Davies' term of office, when some Labour members complained that the Conservatives were boycotting functions attended by Davies.[1] This accusation the Conservatives strenuously denied.[2]

The growth of party inside the Council has caused the Mayor to be more of a ceremonial than a "political" leader of the Council. The advent of the Labour Party has caused the Mayor to become a salaried official of the Council, and has made the occupational range of the Mayors less restricted than it was at the turn of the century when the office was the preserve of the manufacturers, professional men and substantial shop-keepers. The Labour Party has given the Mayoralty to working men, women and old age pensioners.[3] The Mayors now are older and have served a longer period on the Council before becoming Mayor than at the turn of the century. The average age of the Mayors of 1888 to 1903 was 47.2 years: from 1954-62 it was 60.4.[4] The Mayors of 1888-1903 had served on an average 10.8 years on the Council; those of 1954-62 an average of 14.8.[5] These

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1. E. & S. 21.8.1961.
2. E. & S. 22.8.1961.
3. See Tables XXVII and XXIX.
4. See Table XXII.
5. See Table XXIII.

increases arise from the concentration on the factor of seniority as the main qualification for the Mayoralty.

All the Mayors of Wolverhampton right from 1848 have been chosen from existing members of the Council. Never has a prominent outsider been asked to fill the position. The reason for this is that not only has there been competition for the office from within the Council, but also it has been felt that for an individual to perform effectively the functions of the ceremonial head of the Council and of the Chairman of the Council, actual experience of the working of the local authority was a vital prerequisite. Only once has the Mayor been neither a Councillor nor an Alderman. In 1961 the Council elected C. H. Davies as Mayor, but did not re-elect him to the Aldermanic bench.[1.]

The Aldermen

A position which is also eagerly sought by Councillors is a seat on the Aldermanic bench. Although an Alderman has no more powers than a Councillor, the very title of Alderman is prized.[2.] To be an Alderman is

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1. See Epilogue for a full discussion of this episode.

2. Alderman J. Hill was keen that residents in his ward should address him as Alderman not Councillor. Personal experience of the author.

regarded as a high honour. In 1955 a Conservative Alderman claimed that the Labour plan to abolish Aldermen as undemocratic was a personal insult, since he had been elected in recognition of his service to the Council.[1] The Aldermen's robes are more splendid than those of the Councillors', and they sit apart from the Councillors on an elevated bench looking down upon the body of the Council Chamber. In 1960 a proposal was made that their seats should be occupied by the Chairmen of Council committees so that the Chairmen could be closer to the Council officials who sat behind the Aldermanic bench. This was to enable the officials to avoid an unseemly move through the Aldermen to brief Chairmen, who as Councillors sat in the lower part of the Chamber. The plan was dropped, and the Aldermen retained their superior position.[2]

The Aldermen form a quarter of the Council, and are elected to the bench by the Councillors for a period of 6 years, when they retire or seek re-election. Half of them retire every 3 years. Thus every third year the Councillors elect half the Aldermen. They could choose as an Alderman anyone qualified to be a Councillor, but

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1. E. & S. 28.11.1955.
2. M.L.G. 25.3.1960, 25.11.1960, Interview with J. K. Woodward.

from 1882 to 1964 they have selected only members of the Council, except in 1927 when W.M. Furniss who was not a Councillor was elected to the bench.[1] He had been a member of a Parish Council, whose area had just been taken into the borough, and thus his seat on the bench was not so much in recognition of his personal qualities as a peace offering to the area recently acquired. The office of Alderman has therefore not been used to bring onto the Council experts or people with special qualifications who for some reason were unable to involve themselves in elections. The bench has been reserved for Councillors.

Around the turn of the century the main qualification for becoming an Alderman was to have been a Mayor. Before 1890, it was said, "it had never happened that a Councillor had been elected to the position of Mayor without his having been appointed an Alderman before his retirement."[2] As late as 1924 it was said that it was the invariable rule to elect to the bench "those members of the Council who had gone through the Mayoral chair."[3] Between 1878 and 1964 only 3 Mayors have never been

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1. E.&S. 5.4.1927.
2. N.C. 30.7.1890.
3. E.&S. 29.9.1924.

Aldermen: E. L. Cullwick, Mayor 1908-9, who died during his term of office; J. Grout, Mayor 1909-10 who retired immediately after his Mayoralty; and J. Beattie, Mayor 1951-2, who never became an Alderman because the Labour Party took all the vacancies while he remained on the Council.

Another factor was length of service on the Council. The claims of E. Bagaley were urged in 1891 on the grounds that he had been a member for 28 years.[1.] In 1904 the senior Councillor, J. Mason, was elected to the bench after 27 years on the Council, although he had been neither a Mayor nor a Chairman, nor had he spoken much in the Council. The senior Councillor, although never a Mayor, was likely to be elected an Alderman if no ex-Mayor was still a Councillor.

Party too was a factor which must have been considered, since usually a Conservative took the place of a Conservative, and a Liberal that of a Liberal. As is shown in Table I, the ratio on the bench during the 1890s up to 1904 was 6 Conservatives and 6 Liberals; but after the education controversy the Conservatives took an extra seat to make the ratio 7-5, which lasted until after the First World War.

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1. W.C. 15.7.1891.

Although all the Councillors voted, the name submitted to the Council was decided in the General Purposes Committee, "the inner circle"[1] of the Council, consisting of the Aldermen and senior Councillors from each ward.[2] Here the trading was done, so that contests for the seats were rare in open Council and only arose if the committee had failed to agree.[3]

In the 1920s and 1930s Labour gained its first representation on the bench; the pattern was for the Labour Mayors to be given a seat after their Mayoralty when one was vacant. Thus the first Labour Mayor, T. Frost, was the first Labour Alderman in 1925; Davies, Whittaker and Beach, the next Labour Mayors, also became the next Labour Aldermen. The Labour Party argued however that they were not given adequate representation on the bench in proportion to their Councillors' seats, and that regard was not paid to the long service of some of their members.[4] They also claimed that Davies, who had been Mayor in 1929-30, should have filled an Aldermanic vacancy in 1930, which instead was taken by a

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1. E. & S. 5.10.1898.
2. See Chapter 10 pp420-422.
3. e.g. C.M. 9.11.1900.
4. E. & S. 1.11.1930, 4.11.1930.

Liberal[1]. who had never been Mayor, but who had served on the Council 8 years longer than Davies.[2]. Davies however was made an Alderman in 1931 at the next vacancy.[3]. Thus it was difficult to balance the many criteria for an Aldermanic seat in the 1920s and 1930s without upsetting somebody's feelings; by following one rule, another would be broken. Yet up to 1945 a balance was roughly kept between the Mayoral qualification, promoting the senior Councillor[4]. and sharing the seats in some relation to party strength on the Council. The only exceptions to these qualifications occurred after Wolverhampton had extended her boundaries in 1927, when newly elected Councillors from the recently acquired areas were made Aldermen at once, like J. Lewis of Heath Town.[5].

Up to 1945 a seat on the Aldermanic bench was secure. Between 1888 and 1945 only one Alderman who sought re-election was rejected by his colleagues, and that was H. C. Owen in 1898, the unpopular and inefficient

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1. C.M. 10.3.1930.
2. E. & S. 1.11.1930.
3. C.M. 13.4.1931.
4. e.g. J. Walsh 1927, C.M. 12.12.1927.
   A. Hughes 1930, C.M. 10.3.1930.
   W. Moseley 1932, C.M. 11.4.1932.
5. C.M. 5.4.1927.

Chairman of the Markets Committee.[1] Once an Alderman, the individual stayed on until death, illness or his own desire caused him to vacate the seat. However between 1945 and 1964 12 Aldermen seeking re-election were not chosen by their colleagues and were thus thrown out of the Council never to return, because none ever stood again for the Council. In 1945 Labour won a victory in the Council elections which gave them a majority of the Councillors;[2] at the ensuing Aldermanic elections they failed to vote for the 6 retiring Conservative Aldermen, and in their place put the 6 senior Labour Councillors,[3] which gave them a majority of the whole Council. The majority was further increased, because these new Aldermen vacated safe Labour wards which at the following by-elections duly returned more Labour members.[4] The Conservatives, who were removed, had been Chairmen; all but 2 had been Mayors and they were recognised as some of the leading figures on the Council. Their departure was bitterly resented by Conservatives, who date the influence of party politics

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1. E. & S. 9.11.1898. C.M. 9.11.1898, also see E. & S. 2.11.1903.
2. E. & S. 2.11.1945.
3. E. & S. 9.11.1945. C.M. 9.11.1945.
4. E. & S. 8.12.1945. See Table I.

on the Council from this event.[1] None of the new Labour members had been Chairmen; none had been Mayors and 3 of them made little impression ever on the Council.

In 1949 the Conservatives regained a majority,[2] and in the following Aldermanic elections threw off the bench the 86 years old Labour Alderman T. Frost, who had first entered the Council in 1901.[3] The Labour Party claimed that he had been given the "dirty kick-out" as retaliation for 1945. But the circumstances were different then. Labour had 26 and the anti-Labour forces had 34. It was necessary if they were to have a majority to displace 6 Aldermen. However if Frost had been re-elected the anti-Labour Group would still have had a majority of 6.[4] As the next Aldermanic elections came round in 1952 it was felt that "if the anti-Socialists maintain or increase their majority of

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1. Interviews with A. H. Windridge, J. Beattie, J. Cahill and W. J. Rawlins. The Express and Star commented "Town Councils ought not to be the cockpits of party politics. Nor should party considerations be the sole reason for depriving the community of the services of men who were fitted to continue the administration of local affairs. 10.11.1945.
2. E. & S. 13.5.1949.
3. C.M. 23.5.1949.
4. E. & S. 23.5.1949.

one on the Council, it may be assumed that the 5 retiring Labour Aldermen seeking re-election will be replaced from among the anti-Socialist Councillors."[1.] Labour however gained a majority,[2.] and turned off the 2 anti-Socialist Aldermen seeking re-election.[3.] From then until the notorious days of 1961[4.] no Alderman seeking re-election was removed. The Labour Group in 1955 and 1958 re-elected the retiring Aldermen en bloc.[5.]

The history of the Aldermanic bench from 1945 to 1952, and in 1961-2, shows that an Alderman is in a more insecure position than when he was a Councillor, since to qualify for an Aldermanic seat he will have to have been a Councillor for a long time, which presupposes that he has held a safe seat. Thus in Wolverhampton where the parties have been so evenly balanced and control of the Council is liable to go either way, a Councillor who gives up a safe ward to become an Alderman is not gaining security from the whims of the electorate but is putting himself in a more insecure

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1. W.C. 24.4.1952.
2. E. & S. 9.5.1952.
3. C.M. 19.5.1952.
4. See Epilogue.
5. C.M. 23.5.1955, 19.5.1958.

position. Since the parties are so close, the number of Aldermen possessed by a party may be of decisive importance in determining which side shall be in control. It is for that reason that the Conservative Group imposes discipline on its members with regard to voting for Aldermen. Where the control of the Council by the Group is at stake, a majority decision of the Group is binding on all members.[1.]

From 1952 to 1961 controversy about Aldermen centred on whether the Labour Group would allow a casual vacancy in a seat previously held by a Conservative to be filled again by a Conservative. The Conservatives constantly sought an agreement with the Labour Group about filling the vacancies, on the basis of the bench reflecting the proportion of Councillors possessed by each party. The Labour Group was divided. Some advocated that every seat should be taken by the majority party, while others pressed for an agreement. The way out of the dilemma was for each case to be considered on its merits.[2.] 1957 will illustrate a typical situation. In June following the resignation of the Conservative T. W. Phillipson, the Labour Group filled his seat with

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1. See above Chapter 8, pp. 357-358.
2. See above Chapters 7 and 8.

C. H. Davies, whilst the Conservatives voted for their senior Councillor, W. J. Foster.[1.] In July, after the death of the Conservative J. Haddock, the Labour Group allowed the Conservatives to fill the vacancy with W. J. Foster.[2.] One Labour Councillor, J. K. Woodward, walked out of the Chamber as the vote was taking place in protest against the Labour Group's decision not to take the seat.[3.] He was the main spokesman of those who wanted the party to take all the seats. During these years Labour did increase its proportion of members on the Aldermanic bench from 8-7 in 1952 to 10-5 in 1957.[4.]

Since 1945 the effective choice of the Aldermen has taken place not in the General Purposes Committee, but in the Groups of the two parties. The ultimate decision has lain with the Group of the majority party. If it decides to take the seat, then it will nominate and its majority will ensure victory for its choice. If it decides to let the minority party nominate, then it will stay silent and not vote in the Council when the minority Group brings forward its candidate. Inside the

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1. C.M. 24.6.1957.
2. C.M. 22.7.1957.
3. E. & S. 22.7.1957.
4. See Table I.

Groups the criterion for choosing an Alderman is length of service on the Council; the senior Councillor in the Group is granted the seat. If there is doubt about who is senior - for instance as in the Labour Group when many entered at the same time in 1945, a vote of the Group decides the winner.[1.]

Length of service is a convenient objective test on which to base a decision. To try to appoint Aldermen on the subjective test of merit would cause much controversy since opinions as to merit differ. Promotion by seniority helps to remove a large number of possible conflicts. A result of choosing Aldermen on length of service has been an increase in the average age of the Aldermen. The average age of those appointed to the Aldermanic bench in 1888 to 1903 was 50 years; those elected between 1953 and 1962 averaged 65.1. The average age of the Aldermen in the Council of 1903-4 was 58.5; in that of 1962-3 it was 68.2.[2.] The length of service on the Council before election to the bench has increased from 11.6 years for those chosen in 1888-1903 to 15.8 years for those chosen in 1953-62.[3.] Although

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1. See above Chapter 7 pp.323-324 and Chapter 8 pp.352-354. In March 1964 the Labour Group dropped the criterion of seniority, when it nominated as Alderman the Secretary of the Group, F. S. Smith, "for services to the Group." He won the ballot by one vote. Five Labour Councillors had longer periods of service than his. Interviews with A. Garner and A. Storer.
2. See Table XXII.
3. See Table XXIII.

the average age of the Aldermen has risen, there is no evidence that there are more useless and ineffective members on the bench than 60 years ago. If one takes any date over the period 1888 to 1960 one will find on the bench one or two, rarely more, who are too old to be efficient. Almost every decade has its Alderman who once gave good service to the Council, but in his 80s dutifully turns up to each Council meeting, is propped up in his chair, covered with a rug and sits staring to the front while business is conducted. Often his only movement comes when it is time to vote; and the way to vote is shouted down his ear trumpet or else a colleague lifts his hand or answers the roll call for him when his vote is called for. At the end of the meeting he will be carried out by a friend to a waiting wheel chair.[1] These individuals were once the leading figures in the Council, and members have not the heart to remove them from the bench, since they realise that the disappointment

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1. e.g.B.F. Williams, Alderman 1896-1911, aged 82 when out of office.

J. Marston,	Alderman	1891-1918,	aged	82	when	out	of office
F. D. Gibbons,	"	1882-1925,	"	87	"	"	"
L. Johnson,	"	1900-1937,	"	87	"	"	"
T.W. Dickinson,	"	1914-1942,	"	84	"	"	"
T. Frost,	"	1925-1949,	"	86	"	"	"
J. Haddock,	"	1931-1957,	"	83	"	"	"
J. H. Coleman,	"	1933-1961,	"	88	"	"	"
J. Cahill,	"	1938-1964,	"	89	"	"	"

would be fatal. These shadows of once effective men live only for the Council. A way out of the difficulty would be, as for J.P.s, to institute a compulsory retiring age of 75 years.

The Aldermen over the period have been the leading men of the Council, occupying the Chairmanships. Between 1888 and 1964 only 4 Aldermen have never held a Chairmanship.[1.] They became Aldermen through seniority and 2 of them were made Aldermen in 1945 by the Labour Party when the 6 Conservatives were replaced. Table XXX shows that the majority of Aldermen had been Chairmen on being elected to the bench or else became Chairmen within a year. Only a few were not Chairmen and only became Chairmen some years later.[2.] In the 1950s of course the Conservative Aldermen did not hold Chairmanships since the majority Labour Party took them all. In 1962-3 all the Labour Aldermen were Chairmen. The leaders of the Labour and Conservative Groups were Aldermen. Some leading Chairmen however did not have

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1. J. Mason, Alderman 1904
   A. C. Wiggins, Alderman 1945-48
   A. Gould, Alderman 1945-56
   W. J. Foster, Alderman 1957-60

2. A notable example is L. J. Woolridge, elected to the Council in 1935; an Alderman from 1945, who became a Chairman only in 1960 of the new Civic Catering Committee because no one else was available to take it. Interview with L. J. Woolridge.

Aldermanic seats, the Chairmen of Finance and of Education Committees for example, since they were not qualified through long service. Holding a Chairmanship is not proof of ability, but the holding of a key committee is. In 1962-3 Aldermen held the Chairs of Children's, Health, Housing, Transport, Parks and Cemeteries, and Civic Catering Committees, and if the judgment of the High Court had gone in favour of the Labour Party the bench would also have contained the Chairmen of Town Planning, Welfare Services, Watch, Cleansing and Fire and Ambulance Committees. Thus the Aldermanic bench is not merely dignified; it does support members of the Council who have leading positions of responsibility, save for the one or two who once held such positions but whom old age has overtaken. Such a picture is accurate over the whole period.

The occupational composition of the Aldermanic bench has changed since the turn of the century. Around 1900 the Aldermen were the leading social figures in the Council and in the town, the big manufacturers, professional men and merchants. With the rise of the Labour Party the 1940s and 50s have seen as Aldermen working men and women. Labour has brought new groups to the bench.[1].

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1. Tables XXXI and XXXII.

In Wolverhampton despite the fact that the Conservatives have suffered most from the Labour Party's use of the Aldermanic bench to reinforce or to obtain a majority, the Conservatives have defended the office of Alderman against Labour's attempts to abolish it. In 1955 the Council debated a Labour motion that the existence of the office was no longer justified either on grounds of principle or practical advantage, and that the Association of Municipal Corporations should be asked to make representations to the Minister to introduce legislation to abolish Aldermen. Labour members said that "Aldermen were elected to suit the whims and fancies of the controlling political parties;" they were "pawns in the political game." "The office had been abused up and down the country." "All power should come direct from the people and not second hand." "The Aldermanic bench represented the past and not the future." The Conservatives defended the office as being a reward for long service and ability. "It was good to have a group of elder statesmen not looking over their shoulders all the time to the electorate for votes." It was "a haven of rest from the hurly-burly of electioneering."[1] The motion was carried, referred to the A.M.C. whose General

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1. E. & S. 28.11.1955. C.M. 28.11.1955.

Purposes Committee rejected it.[1] Labour again called for the abolition of Alderman during the crisis in 1961-2, but the office has continued, still eagerly eyed by ambitious Councillors and still to be used as a "pawn in the political game."

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1. E. & S. 28.1.1956.

CHAPTER 12

The Town Clerks

The chief permanent official of the Corporation is the Town Clerk. He is its legal adviser, the head of the Corporation's administration and he is responsible for the secretarial work of the Council and its committees, e.g. providing clerks to record committee minutes. He also has various other duties to perform like issuing vehicle licences and drawing up the electoral roll. Legally he is the servant of the Council, but his permanency in office and his professional expertise give him in practice a more powerful role.[1] The potentialities of his office are great, since he surveys the work of the Council as a whole and is in touch with all departments and committees. But the use he makes of these potentialities depends on his personality, temperament and skill. If he so desires, he can become the leader of the Council, directing and energising all its activities, or he can be its servant in the background, confined strictly to his legal duties. Only the office of Treasurer has similar potentialities, since he too is concerned with the work of every committee; but

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1. See T. Headrick, The Town Clerk in English Local Government, 1963, London.

his impingement on other committees is confined to one field, finance, and is thus not so extensive as the Town Clerk's. If the Clerk is exceptionally retiring and the Treasurer exceptionally forward, then the latter may be more powerful than the former. In Wolverhampton this situation occurred only for a very few years,[1] and for this reason this study concentrates on the Town Clerks[2] without examining very deeply the role of the other officers.

Between 1900 and 1964 there have been 5 Town Clerks of Wolverhampton, each differing in personality, temperament, skill and style of working. These personal differences are an important explanation for the decline in the prominence of the office of Town Clerk over the period, and for this reason the first part of this chapter considers each Town Clerk individually. But other factors too have reduced the freedom of action, independence and autonomy of the Clerks, namely the growing functions of the Council, the increase in administrative staff, the rising importance of other officials of the Corporation and the impact of the party

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1. See below p. 506.

2. It would require another thesis to deal with the administrative history of the Corporation.

system on the Council. These will be examined after the personal sketches of the Clerks.

Sir Horatio Brevitt, 1882-1919.

In 1900 the Town Clerk of Wolverhampton was Horatio Brevitt, knighted in 1915.[1] He had been appointed Town Clerk in 1882 at the age of 35. He was the town's first full time Clerk, since his predecessors had performed their Corporation duties while still remaining in private practice as solicitors. His immediate predecessor was Henry Underhill, to whom he had been articled. Before 1882 Brevitt's work had been in Wolverhampton only, as a solicitor, holding such offices as solicitor to the Wolverhampton Tradesmen's Association, clerk to the county magistrates of the Wolverhampton Division and Deputy Coroner for Wolverhampton. He had experience of no other town and had not been to University.[2]

He was a very tall and imposing man, with a large head, prominent features and a military moustache. He dressed in clothes which accentuated his impressive figure, a top hat and tail coat with a fur collar. He

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1. W.C. 13.1.1915.
2. Wolverhampton Journal, April 1902. E.&S. 26.4.1933.

liked to convey to people that he was a man of power.[1.] He regarded himself and expected others to regard him as the "Town Governor"[2.] and the "leading man in the town."[3.] He counted himself as on the same social level as the manufacturers and professional men, who were members of the Council and held the Chairmanships. When dealing with them, when arguing with them over a scheme he would treat them as equals. Indeed he had been one of them when he had been a private solicitor, and he still met them socially and at church. He differed from the Chairmen only in that he was paid for his Council work and surveyed all committees and not just a few.

He did not regard himself as a mere servant of the Council. In debates he would intervene at will to expound his views and to explain his policy, much to the annoyance of those who were interrupted or attacked. In July 1905 Bantock was interrupted by Brevitt, who accused Bantock of making "mis-statements", and of knowing nothing about the subject. Bantock demanded a withdrawal

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1. Interviews with J. L. Chown, W. E. Ellwell, F. W. Howell and R. J. Wiley.
2. Interview with R. J. Wiley.
3. Interview with W. E. Ellwell.

of the insult; he would not submit to such impertinence from the Town Clerk, who was the servant of the Council. Brevitt replied, "I beg to say that I am not the servant of the Council." Bantock: "You are paid by the Council at any rate," Brevitt: "I am a public official of the Council."[1] The Town Clerk was determined to press his opinion, whatever the Council might think, and to act independently of it. "We have a Town Clerk who does not always obey his orders,"[2] said the Chairman of Parks and Baths Committee in 1910. Complaints were made against his "dictation",[3] that he was an "autocratic boss"[4] "on the high horse as usual."[5] And it was said that "any criticism of his actions amounted almost to a case of lèse majesté."[6] On Brevitt's retirement in 1919, the Mayor spoke of him as being "Napoleonic in manner and method,"[7] but "he had such a happy knack of being right: of suggesting the finest remedy, of clearly handling each

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1. W.C. 12.7.1905. In 1903 the Chairman of Education Committee objected to Brevitt's interventions. W.C. 18.3.1903.
2. W.C. 13.4.1910.
3. W.C. 15.3.1893.
4. W.C. 11.11.1908.
5. W.C. 10.10.1900.
6. W.C. 9.12.1903.
7. E.&S. 14.7.1919.

knotty problem that the town and his colleagues had suffered him gladly."[1].

His work for the Council can be divided into three periods; the first from 1862 to the early 1890s, when he was learning his job; the second from the early 1890s to the early 1900s, when he was vigorously engaged in promoting numerous projects of various committees; and the third from the mid-1900s to his retirement in 1919, when he "slowed down."[2]. In the second period, that of his great creative activity, he helped to promote the Wolverhampton Corporation Act of 1887, the Wolverhampton Improvement Act of 1891, and the Wolverhampton Tramways Act of 1899, which enabled the town to build an Art Gallery, School of Art and a new Free Library, to extend its sewage works, to buy out the old tramway company and construct a new electric system. He helped to initiate and extend the Corporation's electricity undertaking, to build the new Wholesale Market and Cold Stores and Borough Hospital, and to obtain for the town the East Park. He helped to pilot the bills through Parliament, he represented the Corporation in litigation over the acquisition of the

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1. ibid.
2. Interview with R. J. Wiley.

tramways, the disposal of the town's sewage, and its water supply, and he negotiated with businessmen and landowners for land for the Corporation's undertakings.[1] In all these schemes Brevitt did not work alone, nor initiate the projects by himself. He worked with the Chairmen of the committees, assisting, guiding and at times dictating. It was not a one man show; he was in partnership with the great social figures in the town, who were Chairmen of committees whose fortunes they were eager to forward.

Brevitt took great pride in being responsible for increasing in the Local Government Act of 1888 the number of County Boroughs from 10 to 61, thus including Wolverhampton. He claimed that when he saw that Wolverhampton was not to be a County Borough, he rushed to London to see H. H. Fowler, one of Wolverhampton's M.P.s, to whom he complained that Wolverhampton would become a second-rate borough. Fowler took him to see Ritchie, the President of the Local Government Board, whom they told that if he adhered to 10 places only, he might count upon agitation. Fowler later told Brevitt that "it was the immediate action he took which led to those

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1. W.C. 10.7.1907. E. & S. 26.4.1933.

good results",[1] i.e. of extending the number of County Boroughs to include Wolverhampton.

In the mid-1900s he sought no more great activity. In 1907 he was 60, and growing older inhibited him from undertaking any more large projects. Seeking to avoid extra work, he argued against those who wanted the town to extend its boundaries, or to widen the streets in the town centre, or to demolish the old Retail Market Hall and to construct a new one, or to build a Public Hall for the town. He stressed the difficulties involved; the powerful resistance of vested interests, whether neighbouring authorities, market hall tenants, landowners, shopkeepers and ratepayers.[2] He became a pessimistic "stick in the mud."[3] The eager Chairmen like Bantock, Craddock and Myatt wished that Brevitt would retire,[4] since he was a stumbling block to their plans for the town. But Brevitt's age, his long service and experience, the respect in which he was held by the majority of the Council and the town, all contributed to his survival. What finally brought him down was the

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1. E. & S. 15.7.1919.
2. Interview with F. W. Howell.
3. Interview with J. L. Chown.
4. There was no formal retiring age of 65 then.

Varley scandal, which revealed that Brevitt had been lax about his duties, in that he had not adequately supervised the Education Committee and that he had disobeyed Council Standing Orders by not informing the Council that Varley as a Company Director had a remunerative appointment in addition to his position as an employee of the Corporation.[1] Bantock, Craddock and Myatt hoped to use this episode to disgrace Brevitt and force him out.[2] He was severely censured by the committees of investigation, and he told the Council that "I have gone through enough to kill any man."[3] But he stayed on as Town Clerk for 18 months longer, until the end of the war. Although he had been "ruined,"[4] he was still held in great respect, especially for his previous services to the Council. In 1919 at the age of 72 he retired; yet he did not sever all connections with the Corporation for he was retained as a "consulting solicitor" for another 6 years at £500 per annum,[5] very much to the anger of some of his opponents.[6] He was

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1. See above Chapter 10, pp. 425-426.
2. Interview with F. W. Howell who drew up the Corporation's case against Varley.
3. W.C. 5.12.1917.
4. Interview with R. J. Wiley.
5. W.C. 12.3.1919.
6. Interview with J. L. Chown.

not consulted, however, by the new Town Clerk, who had no respect for Brevitt's abilities and regarded him as having neglected Wolverhampton's potentials through his negative and obstructionist attitude.[1.]

F. W. Howell, 1919-29.

Brevitt's successor was F. W. Howell, aged 35 in 1919.[2.] He had been articled to the Town Clerk of Birmingham, where he rose to be an Assistant Solicitor. In 1915 he was appointed Deputy Town Clerk of Wolverhampton.[3.] He was not a University Graduate. Like Brevitt, he was tall, with a handsome impressive figure and a forceful personality.[4.] He was as autocratic as Brevitt, "a man of iron, with steel in him,"[5.] but unlike Brevitt he was an adept flatterer, who knew how to insinuate his ideas into the minds of the Chairmen so that they would enthusiastically advocate his proposals while regarding them as their own. He was regarded as more able than Brevitt, more competent and on top of his job;[6.] he was "ultra-efficient,"[7.] "austere and dedicated

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1. Interview with F. W. Howell.
2. W.C. 18.6.1919.
3. W.C. 3.11.1915. E. & S. 29.12.1928.
4. Interview with J. L. Chown.
5. Interview with W. E. Ellwell.
6. Interviews with R. J. Wiley and W. E. Ellwell.
7. Interview with R. J. Wiley.

to his work."[1] He was a young man in a hurry, out to make a name for himself and thus rise to higher office.[2] In Wolverhampton he had full scope to make a reputation, since Brevitt's long neglect of the town provided ample opportunities for him to display his talents.[3] And to achieve his ends, he "worked all hours."[4]

Howell had his own opinions about the policy the Council should pursue and he sought to get the Council to follow where he led. He complained that Brevitt had had no breadth of vision about the future of the town. Wolverhampton, to Howell,[5] was in a "superb position" to attract industry, situated as it was on the edge of the Black Country close to a densely populated urban area which would provide a good market, and yet close to an attractive rural area which would provide charming residences for businessmen. Howell's aim was "to polish the apple to make it sell." His objectives were to rebuild the town centre, particularly to widen the streets to make the shopping area more accessible to traffic and to improve the shop frontages. This

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1. Interview with A. A. Beach.
2. Interviews with F. W. Howell, R. J. Wiley and W. E. Ellwell.
3. Interview with F. W. Howell.
4. Interview with R. J. Wiley.
5. Interview with F. W. Howell.

development would increase the rateable value of the property and attract more custom to the town. He wanted to demolish the old Market Hall, use the site as a parking area near the centre and rebuild the Market elsewhere. He wanted to expand the transport enterprise, to take the trams and then trolley buses further into the suburbs so that more people would find the town centre more accessible. He wanted to extend the boundaries of the town to produce a "Greater Wolverhampton", with more resources to pay for its projects, and he particularly wanted to join to Wolverhampton the industrial areas to the East and North of the town to diversify the economy of Wolverhampton as a guarantee against slump in the metal industry. For this end also he sought to bring new industry into the town. His aims tallied well with the aims of such leading members of the Council as Bantock, Myatt and Craddock.

In the 10 years of Howell's Town Clerkship of Wolverhampton most of his aims were realised. In 1926 the boundaries of the borough were extended for the first time in its history. Goodyear's and Courtauld's established big factories in the town. An Improvement Act of 1925 enabled the Corperation to widen and improve

the streets of the centre and to expand the transport services.[1] The only parts of his projects which he had not fulfilled by 1929 were the demolition of the old Market Hall and the provision of parking space near the centre. This was not achieved until the late 1950s. Howell's departure in 1929 delayed his plan for 30 years. Howell was in the thick of achieving these policies. He drew up the bills, piloted them through Parliament, was skilled in putting his case, showed up well in cross-examination, and was most astute in negotiating with businessmen to persuade them to come to Wolverhampton.[2]

Howell was not a dictator of the Council, he sought to carry it with him; and he did this chiefly by convincing the two leading Chairmen on the Council, Bantock and Myatt, of the value of his schemes. To those two he devoted much time, and once he had their support, he could rely on the Council following their lead. In debate also he would speak, explaining his policy and persuading the Council to back him. When later in Manchester he tried to speak for the same purpose in a debate, he found his action frowned upon.

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1. E. & S. 29.12.1928.
2. Interviews with W. E. Ellwell and R. J. Wiley.

Howell claimed that Brevitt had tamed the Wolverhampton Council into accepting a lead of this kind from the Town Clerk.[1.] Howell regarded himself not as a mere servant of the Council or an advisor, but as a "Managing Director" who was to stimulate and co-ordinate its work, to initiate policies and to create amongst the members of the Council enthusiasm for the policies. He was the leader of a team.[2.]

Howell regarded himself as the Chief Officer of the Corporation, to whom the other officials were subordinate. He "ruled" the other departments as the "boss".[3.] If he wanted to speak to another official, the latter had to come to Howell's office. He would tell other officials that they were incompetent and "pull them over the coals" if he was dissatisfied with their work.[4.] When the Borough Engineer, whom Howell regarded as incompetent and as having bought his qualifications,[5.] heard that Howell was leaving, "he danced a jig."[6.] Howell held regular meetings with his chief officials,

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1. Interview with F. W. Howell.
2. ibid.
3. Interviews with W. E. Ellwell and R. J. Wiley.
4. ibid.
5. Interview with F. W. Howell.
6. Interview with R. J. Wiley.

over whom he presided.[1] He was not merely a *primus inter pares* but a boss. He was forced to be this to a large extent by the nature of his plans. To produce the Improvement Act, for instance, required the active co-operation of almost every department. To advance his schemes for the town as a whole demanded that he had to run the Corporation as a whole. Howell says that he was able to do this in the Wolverhampton of the 1920s and not in the Manchester of the 1930s, because of the smaller size of Wolverhampton; its Corporation was small enough for him to be able to keep all departments under control.[2]

Howell was an impressive Town Clerk. He was regarded as a "man of vision", "initiative", "great resources" and "tenacity of purpose." He had been "an unparalleled success" as the "guiding star of the borough."[3] The reputation he earned at Wolverhampton gained him the appointment as Town Clerk of Manchester in 1928.[4] And in 1938 he was made Joint-General Manager of the Halifax Building Society.[5] This appointment too was based to a great extent on the

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1. Interview with F. W. Howell.
2. *ibid*.
3. *E. & S.* 29.12.1928.
4. *ibid*.
5. *E. & S.* 30.9.1938.

reputation he had made for himself in Wolverhampton.

J. Brook Allon, 1929-54.

As if seeking a respite and relaxation, the Council appointed as Howell's successor a man of "retiring disposition."[1] J. Brook Allon was 40 when he became Wolverhampton's Town Clerk in 1929. He was the town's first Town Clerk to have a degree, a B.A. from London. He had had experience of many towns: articled to the Town Clerk of South Shields, he then served as Assistant Solicitor at Exeter, Deputy Town Clerk at Middlesbrough and Town Clerk of Dudley.[2] Thus unlike his two predecessors he came to Wolverhampton after considerable experience elsewhere, and unlike Howell he was not at the start of a career with a name to make. It is generally agreed that he felt that on coming to Wolverhampton he had come to the end of his career. He was therefore not anxious to undertake any striking ventures; nor had he ability and drive like Howell to do so.[3]

The descriptions of Allon are in great contrast to

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1. E. & S. 4.12.1928.
2. E. & S. 11.12.1928, 2.10.1959.
3. Interviews with W. E. Ellwell, R. J. Wiley, J. R. Ireland and J. L. Chown.

those of Brevitt and Howell; "quiet",[1] a "nice gentleman",[2] and an "uncle type"[3] and "homely";[4] he early "got into the groove" and sought a "quiet life", playing safe by taking the line of least resistance.[5] He did not take the initiative, but waited on events and for others, whether the chief officers of other departments or elected members. Once these had proposed some course of action, he would try to guide them and smooth over any difficulties,[6] supporting them with his "anonymous enthusiasm."[7] He had no broad plans of his own for the town. He wanted the machine to keep ticking over. He has been praised for being good at delegating work.[8] Others have regarded the same trait as "laziness", and thought that he was inclined to leave things alone and let them slide.[9] Clerks in his

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1. Interview with H. D. Hughes.
2. Interview with W. H. Farmer.
3. Interview with D. H. Haselock.
4. Interview with A. A. Beach.
5. Interviews with R. J. Wiley and J. R. Ireland.
6. Interview with A. Byrne-Quinn.
7. Interview with W. Lawley.
8. Interview with A. Cattell.
9. Interviews with W. E. Ellwell and R. J. Wiley.

department felt that Brock Allon's appointment marked the start of the decline of the Town Clerk's department, which under Brevitt and Howell had been the leading department of the Corporation, with the greatest prestige and most attractive for school leavers. But from 1929 the reputation of the department fell. Other departments and their officials asserted their independence.[1] The Treasurer's department under Jesse Boydell,[2] a "bully", who "worked all day and night", had a higher standing than Brock Allon's department.[3]

When Brock Allon retired in 1954 after 25 years as Town Clerk, the list of his achievements was meagre compared to that of Howell after just 10 years. The Council singled out that he had successfully promoted a bill in 1932 to extend Wolverhampton's boundaries, that he had encouraged the building of the Civic Hall in 1938, that he was the Civil Defence Controller, had prepared Wolverhampton's evidence for the abortive Boundary Commission, had been responsible for the

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1. ibid.
2. 1926-1932. He was appointed Treasurer of Nottingham in 1932.
3. Interview with H. J. Waddams.

preparations for various royal visits and had been in charge of the celebrations of the centenary of the borough in 1948.[1] He was described as unassuming, a genial and kindly man of grace and charm.[2] His reply to these praises seemed an attempt to depict himself as far more significant than he had been. "It had been said that while a Council formed and initiated policy, an official should not interfere in the formation of that policy. But he had always felt it his duty to suggest policy to committees and to Chairmen and to take part in private, and in committee, in policy discussions. He felt he should make available to a committee the fund of experience and intimate knowledge of the Council's affairs which he had acquired over the years."[3] In 1949 he had said in an interview to the local newspaper that he was not "simply a grand co-ordinator," but that he did take the initiative in matters of policy, suggesting various lines to pursue.[4] Yet even his own description of what taking the initiative meant was very pale and weak compared to what Howell meant by the same words. It was curious that Allon was trying to claim

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1. C.M. 21.12.1953.
2. E. & S. 21.12.1953.
3. ibid.
4. E. & S. 16.11.1949.

that he did take the initiative on these occasions, perhaps he realised that he was somewhat impotent, and was compensating in words. It was said that if Allon had been any good he would have moved on from Wolverhampton and not stayed there for 25 years,[1] but once a local authority is lumbered with an unenterprising Town Clerk there is little that can be done to move him out.

A. G. Dawtry, 1954-6.

As if reacting to Allon's quiet regime, the Council chose as his successor the bright young A. G. Dawtry, aged 39. He was the town's first Town Clerk to have a law degree, from Sheffield University. He had been articled to the Town Clerk of Sheffield, Assistant Solicitor there too, and Deputy Town Clerk at Bolton. He had been a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Artillery,[2] and had been to Military Staff College.[3] First and foremost he was a brisk administrator, concerned to run a well-oiled machine and to prevent snags. In his 2 years in Wolverhampton he was not able to make any contribution in the form of policy or any new project, and the

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1. Interview with H. E. Lane.
2. E. & S. 24.9.1953.
3. Interview with B. Keith-Lucas.

reputation he earned was as an efficient administrator and manager of men in an organisation. He was not intimate enough with Wolverhampton nor interested enough in its problems to conceive any long range plans for its future. His chief concern as soon as he had arrived in Wolverhampton was to leave for a higher position. Within a year he was short-listed for the Clerkship of the L.C.C.,[1] and in 2 years he had been appointed Town Clerk of Westminster.[2] No positive achievements could be credited to his name on his retirement from Wolverhampton, and his own speech of farewell was largely a justification of his leaving so soon. He said that officials should move from place to place before settling down, to broaden their experience and to bring to Local Government as a whole the experience of other local authorities.[3] Dawtry's main achievement was perhaps to convince the Council that it did not want another bright young unknown out to use Wolverhampton as a stepping stone to higher office.

R. J. Meddings, 1956- .

Dawtry's successor R. J. Meddings was well known to

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1. E. & S. 4.10.1955.
2. E. & S. 9.3.1956.
3. E. & S. 23.7.1956.

the whole Council. Aged 39 in 1956, he had spent most of his working life in the Wolverhampton Corporation. He had been articled to the Town Clerk of Todmorden in Yorkshire and in 1947 arrived in Wolverhampton as third Assistant Solicitor. He rose through the grades until in 1954 he became Deputy Town Clerk,[1] and in 1956 Town Clerk.[2] Thus his only experience of the administration of a large town has been in Wolverhampton itself. He is not a University Graduate.

His outstanding characteristic to both Councillors and officials is his sociability; a "hail-fellow-well-met-type," on Christian name terms with all. "They call him Ronnie"; he plays darts, bowls and cricket and drinks with his colleagues and Councillors. He even married a typist in his own department.[3] He is a far cry from the unapproachability and disdainful aloofness of Brevitt, Howell and even Allon. Those who served under Brevitt and Howell see in Meddings further evidence of a decline in the influence and prestige of the Town Clerk and his department.[4] One Councillor thought him

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1. E. & S. 23.12.1954.
2. E. & S. 7.5.1956.
3. Interviews with A. Cattell, W. E. Ellwell, D. H. Haselock, C. B. V. Taylor and R. J. Wiley.
4. Interviews with W. E. Ellwell and R. J. Wiley.

"naif".[1.]

The Labour Group which has been in a majority whilst he has been Town Clerk has found him a "true servant".[2.] One Alderman, the Chairman of Housing Committee, regarded Allon as a "big stinker, hand in glove with the Tories", but Meddings he described as "a true white man".[3.] The Labour Group has had such faith in Meddings that they followed his advice in the Aldermanic controversy of 1961, against the advice laid out in their own party handbook.[4.] His defeat over that issue injured his standing somewhat amongst the Labour members.

So far the Town Clerk's position has been considered in terms of the personality of the individual holder of the office. The great divide has been seen as 1929 when the somewhat ineffectual Brock Allon replaced the dynamic Warbreck Howell. The decline of the Town Clerk however cannot be completely explained away by personalities. Other trends were at work which would have limited even Howell if he had remained in

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1. Interview with Mrs. V. A. Fletcher.
2. Interview with L. J. Woolridge.
3. Interview with H. E. Lane,
4. See below Epilogue, p. 606. The Conservatives were not so enamoured with Meddings. (Interview with S. Brindley).

Wolverhampton. The 1930s and 1940s witnessed the rise in the importance and independence of the chief officials of other Town Hall departments, and the rise and growing significance of the party Groups. Whatever the temperament and attitude of the Town Clerk to his job, he could not fail to be severely restricted by these two processes.

In 1900 there was no other official to rival Brevitt. Many were part-timers like the Treasurer and the Medical Officer of Health. Others had not the social standing nor the professional qualifications of the Town Clerk. During the 1920s and 30s as the work of the Corporation increased in amount and technicality,[1.] part-timers were removed and their jobs became full time.[2.] whilst new officials were appointed to new departments.[3.] A single solicitor could not have all the activities of the Corporation at his finger tips.

These chief officials were members of their professional associations, skilled in the mysteries of their professions, jealous too of their skill against interference by the unqualified; one of whom would be the

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1. See Introduction.
2. e.g. Medical Officer of Health and Treasurer.
3. e.g. Director of Education. Transport Manager.

Town Clerk. The coming of Brock Allon who was not of the temperament to assert his department's authority coincided with an increase in the self-consciousness of the other officials, who were eager to assert the independence of their departments against the subjection Howell had maintained over them. They would stress that they were directly responsible to their committees and ultimately to the Council as a whole and not to them through the Town Clerk, nor to the Town Clerk himself. Some idea of the standing of the Town Clerk's official colleagues can be gauged from a consideration of the offices held in their professional associations by the chief officers of the Corporation in 1954 on Brock Allon's retirement. The Chief Constable had been President of the Association of Chief Police Officers; the Medical Officer of Health, President of the Society of Medical Officers of Health; the Manager of the Sewage Disposal Department, the President of the Institute of Sewage Purification; the Water Engineer, the President of the Institute of Water Engineers; The Treasurer, the President of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants; the Transport Manager, the President of the Municipal Passenger Transport Association; the Borough Engineer, Vice-President of the Institute of

Municipal Engineers and the Inspector of Weights and Measures, the Vice-President of the Institute of Weights and Measures.[1] That they held these positions indicates that they were men of some standing in their professions and were unlikely to allow themselves to be dominated by the Town Clerk. They were experts in their own fields. Brevitt and Howell never had to face such qualified colleagues, conscious of their own professional standing. Meddings is limited by such men. He does not hold regular meetings with the chief officers, but if he is involved in any project which requires their assistance, then they will assemble to talk it over.[2] It is purely an ad hoc affair and implies no subordination of the officers to the Town Clerk. In Wolverhampton as the committees and the Chairmen are very independent, so are the chief officials. Meddings regards his job as one of co-ordination, to ensure that all the officials are pulling in the same general direction, and that the administrative machine is working smoothly. He sees the Council as a "confederation", of largely independent

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1. E. & S. 18.11.1954.

2. Interview with E. Jordan, the Chief Clerk, who singled out the Medical Officer of Health as a man not prepared to be subordinate to the Town Clerk.

departments and committees, subordinate only in a broad way to his department and the Council as a whole.[1.]

Another indication of the change in the relationship of the Town Clerk with the other chief officials can be seen from a comparison of the salaries paid to the Corporation officials in 1900 and 1963. In 1900 the Town Clerk received £900 a year; other officials received £450. In 1963 the Town Clerk received £4,300 and 5 other officials received £3,650.[2.] The narrowing gap between the salaries is symbolic of the decline of the supremacy of the Town Clerk with relation to his colleagues.

Neither Brevitt nor Howell had to face party Groups on the Council. The Conservative and Liberal Parties then had no municipal programmes to implement, and the Labour Party, which had, never numbered more than 13 until 1933.[3.] Policy making was effectively left to the committees of the Council and particularly to the Chairmen, assisted by their chief officers. In this context there was ample scope for the Town Clerk to intervene with policies of his own, and to act as a

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1. Interview with R. J. Meddings.
2. See Tables v and vi.
3. See Table I.

broker between the competing Chairmen and committees. During the 1930s the Labour numbers increased, and after 1945 the Group system became common to both sides. The parties therefore set the framework of policy, within which the Town Clerk was expected to operate. For him to press his own line would be taken as an intrusion into the sphere of the elected members. Thus the Town Clerk no longer intervenes in debate to advocate his own plans; nor can he be recognised as having a policy of his own. He is regarded by the Labour Chairmen of Finance[1.] as an "administrative leader", concerned with the overall efficiency of the Town Hall machine,[2.] and as the legal adviser to the Council. He is not viewed as the policy or political leader. That function is for the party Group. In 1900 only the Town Clerk had an overall view of the work of the Council. In 1960 the party Groups performed the function also.

Meddings then is not associated with any particular policy. He does not initiate. Most of the initiatives in the Corporation originate from the departments and especially from the chief officials. They then try to encourage the elected members to take them up, chiefly through persuading the Chairmen, who then try to persuade

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1. Interview with D. A. Birch.
2. He urged the introduction of O. & M. work, ibid. and see C.M. 24.11.1958. E. & S. 25.11.1958.

the leaders of the Group and then the Group itself. The Town Clerk points out the difficulties involved in the adoption of the proposals and gives assistance to his officials in smoothing away the snags. He is very close to the leader of the Labour Group, whom he can ring up at any time and with whom informally he has many talks about the problems of the Council. He is on similar easy terms with the leader of the Conservative Group too.[1] The Town Clerk then acts as a co-ordinator between the officials themselves, and between the officials and the party Groups through the leaders of the Groups. He thus tries to promote a consensus between the various elements which are concerned with policy, and in the process of working out compromises and arrangements between these elements, he can, if he is skilful, press home a particular line of his own, perhaps to produce a shift of emphasis. But he cannot impose a particular policy of his own.

Brevitt did not operate in the context of party Groups or face powerful chief officers of Corporation departments. He was imperious and autocratic, regarding himself on a par with the Chairmen. He had no overall thought-out plans for Wolverhampton, but reacted to

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1. Interview with R. J. Meddings.

initiatives of the Chairmen; in the 1890s he responded enthusiastically and assisted them to promote some great projects. In the 1900s he responded negatively and sought to obstruct the schemes of the Chairmen. Howell also did not come up against party Groups or rival officials. He was imperious, but able to flatter the Chairmen into following his guidance, and he had plans for Wolverhampton as a whole, which covered a wide range of Council activities. Brock Allon was retiring, not eager to assert himself against the growing influence of other officials in the Corporation. Also during his term of office the elected members organised themselves into party Groups, which regarded themselves as the source and final arbiter of policy. Dawtry was concerned with administrative efficiency only. Meddings has had to come to terms with the party Groups and with the chief officers of the Council departments. He is thus far more limited in his freedom of action and in his scope for promoting his personal plans for Wolverhampton, if he has any.

CHAPTER 13

Pressures and Controversies - the traditional system

The majority of the items dealt with by the Council have been and still are non-controversial; routine administrative matters or policy decisions which have been worked out thoroughly in the departments by the officials and in the Council's committees and sub-committees by the elected members. After scrutiny by the Finance and General Purposes Committees and then by the Groups, they pass quickly through the Council with little comment and no opposition. Over the whole period it would have been most exceptional for a single Council meeting to have witnessed divisions on more than 4 issues. At least 95% of Council business is non-contentious. However over 60 years there has been a slight decline in the number of divisions and a large change in the type of issue which resulted in a division. Around the turn of the century there were more divisions on a wider range of issues but provoking less intense reactions than 50 or 60 years later.

During the 1950s and 60s each Council meeting usually divided about twice, over issues which the speakers claimed involved the basic principles of their

parties. Set debates took place between two disciplined parties over items which had been selected at the Group meetings. Each party justified its policy; the majority party defended its proposals while the minority party criticised and suggested alternatives. When the vote was taken, the members of each party voted together. But around the turn of the century, when the officials were not so prominent, when the Finance Committee was not so significant and when there were no Groups, each Council meeting saw raised a hotch-potch of issues. Chairmen and their committees would advocate projects, which would meet opposition from other Chairmen and their committees, and conflicts would arise over priorities, the allocation of scarce resources and the prestige of individual Chairmen.[1] Councillors would bring forward measures to benefit their wards, meeting opposition from those who wanted their wards to receive the benefits instead or from those who claimed to look at the welfare of the town as a whole.[2] Members representing certain interests, economic, social and religious, would urge benefits for their groups or seek to prevent injury befalling them, whilst rivals

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1. See above Chapter 10.
2. See above Chapter 3.

would object to preferential treatment for them and try to channel the benefits to their own groups.[1] Some individuals would advocate their personal and idiosyncratic proposals and oppose those of others. Since neither the Conservative nor Liberal Parties had municipal programmes to implement, the Council did not divide along party lines, except when the Labour representatives, who had a policy of their own, brought forward their schemes. But even then, although the Labour Councillors voted together, they would sometimes attract some Conservatives and Liberals, so that it was only rarely that the Labour Party faced the united opposition of all the other non-Labour members of the Council. The party conflict therefore was not the dominant divisive factor in the proceedings of the Council which it became 50 years later.

Now non-party conflict is rare: only occasionally are party lines broken. The Chairmen and their committees may rebel against other Chairmen, particularly against the Chairman of Finance Committee, as when he opposed the Water Committee's proposal to provide extra parking space at the Water Department's offices.[2]

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1. See Chapter 5 and below pp. 528-560 and Chapter 14.
2. E. & S. 26.1.1960. C.M. 25.1.1960.

Councillors of a particular ward may rebel against a policy which they fear will harm their ward, as when the Councillors of Graiseley Ward objected to the prohibition on children playing games on an open space in the ward.[1.] Members connected with a particular group may rebel when they feel that its interests are in jeopardy, as when the allotment holders objected to their plots being turned back into public parks.[2.] Individual eccentricities may be allowed full scope, as over the question whether fluoride should be added to the drinking water of the town.[3.] These kinds of conflicts, the common stuff of Council meetings at the turn of the century, have become very few and far between, deviations from the norm of party strife.

In earlier chapters we have looked at the conflicts between the Chairmen,[4.] between the spokesmen of wards,[5.] between the representatives of religious groups[6.] and between those who were linked to various social and economic interests.[7.] In this chapter we shall examine

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1. C.M. 26.11.1962.
2. C.M. 28.9.1953. This was also a conflict between the Chairmen of the Small Holdings and Allotments Committee and of the Parks and Physical Recreation Committee.
3. C.M. 23.12.1963.
4. Chapter 10.
5. Chapter 3.
6. Chapter 5.
7. ibid.

more closely the latter, and what they sought to obtain from the Council. They can be regarded as contestants for the prizes which the Council has to offer. Before 1945 they were somewhat disparate and diffuse in activity, each seeking to promote its particular objective, but since 1945 they have had to operate within a framework set by the two parties. This development has tamed and neutralised them to some extent, since the parties in order to appeal to a wide electorate have been unable to be merely mouthpieces for narrow sectional interests and have thus forced the interests to take account of a wider public than their own immediate supporters.

Working within and through parties has forced together many interests, which previously had fought each other. Those most alike in aims have had to sink their differences to combine against what is regarded as the greater evil. Where at the turn of the century they had manifested themselves spasmodically in an ad hoc fashion competing against each other whenever their interests were touched, now they have been forced to support one of two parties. Thus around each party have coalesced certain groups; the parties can be regarded as coalitions of these groups, but although the groups do help shape the style, ethos and policies of the

parties to a great extent, the parties are not the mere spokesmen of the groups. Because the groups have come to act within the parties, the conflicts between the parties at local level over the policies of the Council are not artificial. The division between the Conservative and Labour Parties in local government in Wolverhampton is not merely a reflection of a national and Parliamentary conflict which has no relevance at local level. The contest locally is a genuine clash between local interests and pressures, which have found their homes within two parties. Each party on the Wolverhampton Town Council represents a distinctive set of interests, which has its own series of principles and its own policy, and seeks to obtain its aims in its own particular style and ethos, and through its own way of conducting its own affairs and those of the Council. Party politics are therefore not inappropriate in local government in Wolverhampton.

It must not be thought however that the parties in some blind determinist way merely repeat the economic and social demands of their constituent elements. In bringing them together in one party, the party has had to impose on them certain limitations as to their objectives. Since the primary objective of the party is

to win votes from as many people as possible, it cannot allow itself to appear too closely identified with a particular sectional interest. It has to cast its proposals to benefit the whole community and it has to proclaim its concern with the general public welfare of the town. Also for many members the party itself assumes a greater importance than the sectional interests to which they are also attached. It becomes an entity in its own right, and is regarded not just as a channel or device through which other groups can achieve their aims. It has its own policies which may conflict with those of the sectional groups. The party has its own set of loyalties which may be stronger than those linking members to their interest groups.

Further, those members of a party who become Councillors do so not merely because they want to promote the aims of a particular sectional group to which they belong. Although this factor is a significant motive for their desire to enter the Council, it is not the only one nor is it always likely to be dominant. It is well nigh impossible to explain why one individual becomes a Councillor. Some have a deliberate intention. They are interested in local government, in the welfare of the town or in the problems of a particular service.

Some might want to implement the policy of their party; others to further the interests of some group they are associated with. Some are out for personal gain. Besides tangible rewards, the intangible may be equally powerful. Some may want to be at the centre of events in the town and involved in the making of decisions which will affect them and the town; some may want to enjoy the exercise of power, others might be satisfied with the limelight of being a Councillor and the deference paid by the public to a member of the Council. Some might enjoy just being in contact with those who exercise power and have the distinction of being regarded as the town's leading citizens. Some may have a dull and unsatisfying job and they may find their talents and abilities satisfied through Council work. Some have ideas about public duty and seek to serve the community, or the movement, or their party or people like themselves. Some have become Councillors through no deliberate intention of their own. Fortuitous events combined and they just drifted in, perhaps asked to stand by a neighbour, or a business colleague or a friend at a club, or because their party asked them to stand, either as a reward for long service to the cause or because their abilities were regarded as suitable for

the Council, or because a Councillor thought the individual would support him once elected.

Once the individual is on the Council he is apt to stay on as he learns about the work, and appreciates the comradeship of the members. People who have joined the Council with no real interest or understanding have gradually gained an insight and an interest, and ultimately become effective members. Others however have stayed only for the three year term and then voluntarily resigned, because they were not interested, or because they had no opportunity to make a mark immediately, or because they had other more satisfying demands made upon their time from business, clubs, family, friends and hobbies. Poor health or failure to get on with colleagues are also explanations for wastage, as is the feeling that there was nothing significant for the individual to achieve, a feeling which particularly affects the Conservative members when in opposition. Thus it is hard to isolate a single motive or explanation as the reason why a particular individual entered the Council. Motives are often mixed, and even the individual himself may not be aware of why he wants to be a Councillor. What is certain is that men do not become Councillors simply to promote their own advantage

or that of their economic group, nor do they leave the Council when they fail to achieve these objectives.

With these qualifications and conditions in mind it is possible now to examine what the various groups sought to get from the Council.[1.]

The manufacturers

At the turn of the century the largest element amongst the manufacturers on the Council was that connected to the metalware industry,[2.] who also provided most of the Chairmen of the Council committees.[3.] We have seen that they were keen for money to be spent on the schemes of their own committees, but that they were reluctant for other Chairmen to have the money for their projects. Rates had to be kept low, save where one of their own committees' plans was involved.

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1. A cautionary note on the sources. The sources for some of the following allegations of sharp practice and self-interested activities are the political opponents of those accused. Such sources are, of course, not wholly trustworthy, but, in default of any adequate defence then or later, they have been used if the author considers them likely to be accurate. It is very difficult to find out the true facts about such episodes, since so much relevant material has been destroyed and many members have died or refuse to talk. At the time d, very many people did believe the charges and no court case either proved or disproved them.

2. See above Chapter 4, pp. 169-170.

3. See above Chapter 10, pp. 415-416.

The plight of the metal goods industry in the Black Country gave a special force to their argument to keep rates down.[1] Since the late 1870s Continental and American competition had hit hard their exports to Europe, the Empire, the world generally and even their home market. These relative newcomers to industrialisation, with ready supplies of raw materials and possessed of up-to-date technical knowledge, industrial plant and equipment, were able to steal the march on the Midland ironmasters and metalware

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1. The economic history of Birmingham and the Black Country has been told in:-
a) W. H. B. Court, The Rise of the Midland Industries 1600-1838, 2nd Edition, 1963.
b) G. C. Allen, The Industrial Development of Birmingham and the Black Country 1860-1927, 1929.
c) West Midland Group, Conurbation, 1948.
d) British Association for the Advancement of Science, Birmingham and its Regional Setting, 1950.
e) C. Gill and A. Briggs, History of Birmingham Vols. I & II 1952.

Specifically on Wolverhampton

a) G. P. Mander and N. W. Tildesley, A History of Wolverhampton to the early Nineteenth Century, 1960 (an antiquarian study).
b) D. B. H. Huffer, Economic and Social History of Wolverhampton 1750-1850. Unpublished London M.A. thesis.
c) T. Brennan, Wolverhampton Social and Industrial Survey, 1945-6, 1948.
d) W. H. Jones, The Story of the Japan, Tinplate Working and Iron Braziers' Trades, Bicycle and Galvanizing Trades and Enamel Ware Manufacture in Wolverhampton and District, 1900.

See also the bibliography pp.794-795.

manufacturers, whose enterprises had once led the industrial revolution, but whose equipment was now obsolete. Further they were losing their easy supply of local raw materials. The coal and iron seams, on which the Black Country was founded, were exhausted or else their few remaining sources were hard to tap because of flooding and subsidence. Consequently these resources had to be transported from other parts of the country. Freight charges were therefore an additional burden, but they were imposed not only on the carriage of raw materials, but also on the finished articles, which had to be taken to the ports for export. It is little wonder that Wolverhampton was to the fore in the campaign to lower Railway Rates.[1] All parties protested; the Conservative M.P. for West Wolverhampton Sir Alfred Hickman urged a reduction time and again in Parliament; the Labour Party bemoaned the ill-effects of high railway rates[2] and Liberal manufacturers in the Chamber

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1. i.e. freight charges.

2. In 1913 its newspaper criticised a 4% increase in the rates. "We have already seen the once prosperous district of Horseley Fields ruined by railway rates, previous to the latest imposition. We have seen works dismantled and removed to the seaboard: we have seen the district depopulated by the removal of its best skilled workers: we have seen prosperity give place to abject poverty. We have seen the small shopkeepers struggle on for years in a vain and pathetic attempt to keep the wolf from the door and the unskilled labourer has been thrown out of work because he could not be taken with the other skilled." Wolverhampton Worker, June 1913.

of Commerce supported the cause.[1.]

Since industry was thus burdened there was a great incentive for the manufacturers to keep municipal expenditure low, so as not to raise the rates they would be called upon to pay. High rates were blamed for the closing down and migration of Wolverhampton businesses like Thorneycroft's in the late 1870s, or Lysaght's which moved to Newport in the 1890s, or the Jones' galvanised iron factory which moved to Ellesmere in the 1900s. High rates, it was argued, had driven the bicycle, motor cycle and motor car industries from Wolverhampton to Coventry, where rates were lower.[2.] But high rates was not the only factor encouraging businessmen to move their enterprises. In 1903 E. P.Jones gave 4 other reasons why he was moving to Ellesmere. He would be nearer the ports and thus gain advantages in the export trade. He could evade heavy railway charges, increase his competitive power against newer firms, and make use of a new type of steel, which could not be made in the Black Country.[3.] Thus the complaint of "high rates" was merely one factor amongst many and perhaps not the

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1. See V. B. Beaumont, The Wolverhampton Chamber of Commerce 1856-1956, pp.61-74.
2. W.C. 1.4.1903.
3. W.C. 13.5.1903.

fundamental one which impelled factories to move out. Yet it was always a potent argument for manufacturers to use against those who wished to increase municipal expenditure.

Lysaght's also claimed that they had taken their firm from Wolverhampton to escape from the policy of the Council's Sewerage Committee. During the 1880s and 90s the Corporation was involved in litigation with the owners of land which bordered on those watercourses into which was poured the treated sewage effluent of the borough.[1.] The riparian owners successfully complained that the effluent had not been adequately processed and that it had polluted the water and fouled their land, thus depriving them of good fishing and fertile soil. After paying out heavy compensation, the Council, to prevent a recurrence of the contamination, decided to

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1.a) The Annual Report of the Sewerage Committee, Nov. 1890 tells the story of the litigation against Squire Giffard.
b) A Committee Report of March 1893 describes the controversy between A. Crosbie and the Sewerage Committee.
c) In December 1896 the Committee published its correspondence with Lysaght's from February 1891.
d) A series of articles in the Wolverhampton Chronicle: 20.11.95., 27.11.95, 4.12.95, 11.12.95, described the problems faced by Wolverhampton in the disposal of her sewerage.

These sources provide information about the difficulties besetting the industrialists, the Corporation and the riparian owners.

control more strictly the measures taken by the metal trades of the town to treat their industrial waste, the chemicals and acids which they used in the manufacture of their products. The Council claimed that this waste was the cause of the defilement of the watercourses. It built a new sewage works to treat the effluent and imposed on the industrialists the obligation to treat their own waste more effectively before discharging it into the public sewers. Those industrialists whose waste was found to be above the strength laid down were prosecuted. Lysaght's felt that this policy was too oppressive; and one industrialist, A. Crosbie, sought election to the Council in 1893 to protest against what he regarded as a discriminatory policy. He wanted the Council to build a sewage disposal unit capable of treating all waste and not to impose restrictions on business.[1]

Another limitation which the industrialists sought to avoid was any control on the amount of smoke they emitted from their chimneys. In 1898 they argued that

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1. W.C. 31.10.1893. In a letter to the Town Clerk, Crosbie said "My object in seeking a seat on the Council is to endeavour to assist, in however small a degree, a satisfactory solution of this sewage difficulty." Report of the Sewerage Committee. 20.3.1893.

control would hinder trade,[1] and in 1929 they opposed the Chairman of Health Committee when, anxious about the unhealthy effects of the thick smoke which covered the East end of the Town, he proposed to limit the emission of industrial fumes to 3 minutes within a period of 30 minutes. They claimed that such a policy would assist foreign competitors who were not so shackled; trade would therefore suffer and unemployment increase; and since it did not apply to houses the byelaw was unfair.[2]

Manufacturers were eager not only to prevent injury to their interests but also to obtain positive advantages. In 1931 during the depression, the Chillington Tool Company, whose Managing Director was Councillor B. E. Hunt, requested a reduction in the charges levied by the Corporation for electricity supplied to the firm. In opposition the Chairman of Electricity Committee said that factories taking bulk supply were obtaining electricity cheaper than domestic consumers and even the Corporation itself. His objections were overruled, mainly on the grounds that the Council had a

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1. E. & S. 12.12.1898.
2. C.M. 13.5.1929. E. & S. 14.5.1929.

duty to help local manufacturers in a depression.[1] This latter argument was most often used when tenders for contracts were being considered. Even if the tenders of Wolverhampton firms were higher than those from outside the town, then it was said that the contracts should be granted to the local enterprises to encourage trade and employment in the town. The opponents of this view argued that trade would recover only if municipal expenditure was kept low and that therefore the lowest tender should always be accepted. For example in 1932 a Manchester company tendered to supply electrical switchgear at £42,470, but the committee advised acdeptance of a local firm's tender of £43,813. The Chairman of Finance Committee exclaimed that "we need to buy everything as cheaply as possible."[2]

So valuable were these contracts to local industry that at times, especially in the depression, devious means were used to influence the Council's decision. For instance after the debate on the contracts for the switchgear, it was revealed that 2 local firms had canvassed Councillors to vote for their tenders.[3]

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1. C.M. 8.6.1931. E. & S. 8.6.1931. See also C.M. 11.4. 1932. and 30.10.1933, and E. & S. 11.4.1932 and 30.10.1933.
2. C.M. 3.8.1932. E. & S. 3.8.1932.
3. E. & S. 31.10.1932.

Officials too were vulnerable; for example in 1933 one official approached a firm tendering for the supply of machinery oil and paraffin and suggested the following course. The corks of bottles containing the firm's products were to be marked with a groove so that when he came to sample the oils he would be able to identify those submitted by that firm. When accused of this deceit he pleaded that he felt strongly that a local firm should have been awarded the contract.[1.]

The terms of contracts were of great importance for the businessmen and one aspect made them anxious over a long period of time. At the turn of the century they had been hostile to the demands of trade union members to include within the contracts a "fair wages clause". In 1891 one ironmaster on the Council said that if such a clause were embodied in contracts, employers would tell the Corporation to mind its own business,[2.] and in 1894 another ironmaster said that, if the Corporation interfered with the contractor and his men, work would stop.[3.] When the clause had been adopted, the contractors found that the Labour members were always keen to denounce

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1. E. & S. 30.10.1933.
2. W.C. 16.9.1891.
3. W.C. 15.8.1894.

breaches of it; as in 1904 when the low wage rates paid by a firm constructing a steam dynamo were exposed,[1] or in 1939 when a firm supplying electrical equipment was accused.[2] Labour members were anxious to impose severe penalties on errant firms, as when in 1924 they sought to prevent 2 building contractors from ever again executing a contract for the Corporation.[3] The manufacturers had to yield over the fair wages clause, but they made every effort to resist Labour's demands for penalties for breaches of it. They were successful in opposing Labour pressure that Corporation contractors should employ trade union labour only.[4]

Manufacturers therefore had many incentives to become Councillors both to prevent the Council from harming their interests and to use the Council to promote them. In 1930 one businessman Councillor said that "the interests of business should be made the paramount deciding factor in municipal and national matters. Manufacturers ought to get together, form an organisation on a non-political basis and be prepared to give it

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1. C.M. 8.8.1904.
2. C.M. 25.9.1939.
3. C.M. 11.2.1924. E. & S. 11.2.1924.
4. C.M. 9.3.1914.

proper financial backing with the object of putting forward their own candidates at municipal elections."[1.] He clearly recognised that there were prizes to be won from membership of the Council. But, as we have seen,[2.] from this time the number of manufacturers on the Council fell. The disadvantages of membership for the businessmen had become greater than the incentives.

The professional men.

Sharing the Chairmanships at the turn of the century with the manufacturers were the professional men, solicitors and doctors.[3.] Two jobs within the patronage of the Corporation attracted the solicitors to the Council, the offices of Borough Coroner and Clerk to the Borough Magistrates. Election to the first was by the Council as a whole, and to the second by the borough J.P.s, most of whom around 1900 were members of the Council.[4.] In open Council the merits of competitors for the office were debated. In 1899 R. A. Willcock, Chairman of Markets Committee 1881-99, was chosen Coroner, but only after his colleagues had weighed his

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1. E. & S. 23.12.1930.

2. For further discussion of the manufacturers see above Chapter 4, pp. 186-195.

3. See above Chapter 10, p. 416.

4. In 1903-4 13 out of 48 members of the Council were J.P.s. In 1962-3 5 out of 60 members of the Council were J.P.s.

qualifications against those of the Deputy Coroner.[1] On Willcock's death in 1911 two Councillors sought his office, W. G. Allen, Chairman of Lighting Committee (1903-1911) and J. Grout, Mayor (1909-10). The latter however promoted his own candidature so ineptly that one Councillor objected that "he had canvassed him personally and other members and had used his position as a member of the committees of the Town Council in such a way as should rightly debar him".[2] Again in 1924 when the office fell vacant, Councillor A. C. Skidmore, Chairman of the Care of the Blind Committee (1921-4) obtained this office. The Clerkship to the Borough Magistrates was gained in 1891 by Councillor E. H. Thorne, Chairman of Finance Committee (1884-91). He was succeeded in 1901 by Councillor T. F. Waterhouse who had competed against Councillor W. G. Allen for the position. Thus over a period of 33 years 6 members of the Council had sought to use the Council as a stepping stone to positions in the gift of the Council.[3] Through their membership of the Council they had the opportunity to gain a good reputation amongst their colleagues who would

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1. C.M. 11.9.1899. W.C. 13.9.1899.
2. C.M. 10.7.1911. W.C. 12.7.1911.
3. Councillor J. A. Wolverson (1916-20) was appointed surgeon to the borough police. E. & S. 4.10.1932.

ultimately decide who was to be appointed.[1]

Another inducement for solicitors to enter the Council was that here they could further the interests of their clients, and having won esteem as an effective defender of their interests, they could attract even more clients. Publicity gained from being a member of the Council would tend to raise the status and spread the name of the individual. R. A. Willcock by the time he left the Council in 1899 was the solicitor for many local trade associations: the Licensed Victuallers' Association, the Wholesale Grocers' Trading Association, the Coal Dealers' Association, the Butchers' Association and the Fruit and Poulterers' Trading Association.[2] As Chairman of Markets Committee he was well placed to assist their objectives. And in Council he was vociferous in defending their interests, as in 1898 when he led the opposition against a proposal to erect "kiosks" in the streets to sell stationery, sweets and tobacco in competition with local shopkeepers.[3]

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1. Since one could not by law be both a member and an employee of the Council, a contestant for one of these offices would resign from the Council just before selection was made.
2. Wolverhampton Journal, June 1902.
3. W.C. 20.4.1898.

The Labour Party has long been suspicious of solicitors and their connections with particular groups interested in land. In the 1930s Councillor H. H. Kendrick, a solicitor, was a director of a local building society. His efforts for the land owners could be seen for example in 1934, when he successfully persuaded the Council to reverse a previous decision that the owners of frontages should pay the cost of widening certain streets in the town centre. He claimed that it was a double hardship for the owners to give up their land and to pay for the widening. The opposition claimed that it was unfair for the Council to improve roads for the advantage of the landowners, without their being required to pay for the improvement. Kendrick's victory, said a Labour Councillor, was a concession to "vested interests."[1].

Labour members also complained about the Chairman of the Town Planning Committee from 1949-52, a Conservative solicitor, who, they allege, used information about the Council's plans to help his clients and sought to influence planning decisions in their favour.[2]. Similar accusations have been made in the late 1950s against

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1. C.M. 10.7.1933 and 8.1.1934. E.&S. 10.7.1933 and 8.1.1934.

2. Interviews with D. A. Birch and H. E. Lane.

another Councillor, a Conservative estate agent, who was also a member of the Town Planning Committee. He was regarded as a spokesman for companies wishing to develop land in the town. In 1958 when he had moved a motion to allow private enterprise to redevelop slum clearance areas, the Labour Group accused the private developers of trying to get a stranglehold on some of the best land in the town.[1] He has been accused of leaking to private developers which land the Corporation was about to purchase, so that when the Council came to buy the land, it found the value inflated.[2] Two other activities of his have angered Labour members. He has been accused of contacting individuals whose property was scheduled for slum clearance demolition and ultimately of acting as their spokesman at appeals against the Corporation's compulsory purchase orders.[3] And in 1959 when he opposed the terms imposed on the Retail Market Tenants for the stalls, he was accused of acting in a professional capacity for them.[4]

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1. C.M. 28.7.1958. E. & S. 29.7.1958. See also C.M. 22.9.1958. E. & S. 24.11.1958.
2. Interview with D. A. Birch.
3. Interview with Mrs. R. F. Ilsley.
4. C.M. 28.9.1959. E. & S. 29.9.1959. See above Chapter 5, pp.220-226 for further discussion of the property interests.

Solicitors have always aroused suspicion on the Council. In 1888 a Councillor objected to the large number of lawyers on the Council,[1] and the first Labour candidate ever to contest a municipal election in Wolverhampton complained that "the other side were bolstered up with help by clerks and members of the legal fraternity."[2]

The large proportion of medical men on the Council at the start of the century can be explained by the inducements offered with regard to the running of the hospitals of the town. Most of the doctors were not mere general practitioners but surgeons holding positions in the town's hospitals. The Red Books of the town between 1900 and 1920 show that serving the hospitals were such members of the Council as T. V. Jackson, E. Deanesely, T. H. Galbraith, F. Edge and J. Wolverson. With the removal of hospitals from the care of town councils to the regional hospital boards, there is no longer incentive for medical men, concerned about the work of their hospitals, to enter the Council.[3] Now they sit

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1. W.C. 21.10.1888.
2. E. & S. 3.11.1890.
3. One way in which the doctors could promote hospital reform occurred in 1890, when they pressed that two, not one, extensions be made to the Borough Infectious Diseases' Hospital. C.M. 10.11.1890.

on the regional hospital boards.[1] No longer does the Council contain a man like Alderman J. W. Hamp, a doctor, who "made the work of the Health Committee particularly his own" and took "especial interest in the Borough Hospital," for he was Chairman of the sub-committee in charge of it.[2]

At the turn of the century medical men took a keen interest in sanitary reform which they sought to promote on the Council. In the 1890s Councillor C. R. Smith, a doctor, displayed a "lively interest in sanitation"[3] and helped to inaugurate the campaign to substitute the water closet for the pan and earth closet, which he felt accounted for the high sickness and mortality figures in the East end of the town.[4] Another doctor on the Council, T. V. Jackson, urged the Council to inform the Local Government Board of the large number of unvaccinated people in the town, and to ask the Board to take immediate action, since there was serious danger of small-pox.[5] He was a champion of compulsory vaccination against a group of Radical Liberals, who regarded compulsion to be

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1. A statutory provision.
2. W.C. 14.11.1900.
3. W.C. 27.4.1892.
4. C.M. 13.5.1895, 18.11.1895. W.C. 15.5.1895, 21.5.1895, 20.11.1895.
5. C.M. 11.10.1897. W.C. 13.10.1897.

healthy as an invasion of personal liberty.

Thus professional men at the turn of the century had many incentives to encourage them to enter the Council. Since then however the incentives for medical men have declined, as regional hospital boards took over the hospitals and as sanitary reform advanced and public health improved, while the incentives for solicitors and estate agents have increased as the planning powers of local authorities have grown.[1.]

The shopkeepers

Throughout the whole period shopkeepers have formed a constant sizable section of the Council.[2.] One explanation why they have been so closely linked to the Council is that the Council has many prizes which they are anxious to obtain. As with the manufacturers, Corporation contracts were eagerly sought by the shopkeepers. In 1891 Councillor W. Shepherd, a coal merchant, proposed that tenders for supplying coal to the Corporation should be thrown open for public competition. His opponents stated that coal of the desired kind could be obtained direct from the collieries, and that the

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1. See above Chapter 4, pp. 176-177, 195-196 for further discussion of the professional men.

2. See above Chapter 4, pp. 177-178.

Council should not be put at the mercy of the coal dealers.[1] In the 1950s a contract of considerable importance was that of supplying milk to schools. When it was revealed that all tenders had been identical, Councillor P. Morrell, the managing director of a dairy, offered more favourable terms which were accepted.[2]

The Council's power over the licensing of certain trades encouraged interest from the shopkeepers. In 1927 a candidate sought election as "the voice of the fish frying trade;" "the most discouraged and restricted trade in Wolverhampton." He looked forward to "a new helpful and friendly policy towards this honest rate-paying and food supplying trade."[3] The objections against the trade were that nuisance was created by the smell. A similar complaint was made against private slaughter houses and knackers' yards. Those who wished to limit their numbers deprecated the smell and the screams, and wished that the butchers would use the municipal abattoirs. The butchers disapproved of the "persecution of small traders."[4] In 1929 the Chairman

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1. C.M. 10.8.1891, 14.9.1891. E. & S. 12.8.1891, 16.9.1891.
2. E. & S. 23.1.1956.
3. E. & S. 15.3.1927.
4. C.M. 14.12.1896, 13.12.1909, 10.1.1910. W.C. 16.12.1896, 15.12.1909, 12.1.1910.

of Health Committee said that it had been his committee's policy for over 20 years to close private slaughter houses; they had been reduced from 80 to 12,[1] but the pace had been so slow because of opposition from the butchers. The butchers also protested against the proposal to impose the use of the humane killer. The champions of this method were worried about the cruelty inflicted on the animals by the inexpert use of the pole-axe, but Councillor R. E. Probert, a butcher, denied that there was cruelty in Wolverhampton; "no one would take more care of an animal than the man to whom it belonged."[2] He again supported the cheap traditional methods, when it was proposed to introduce a mechanical killer for sheep. He said it was suitable for pigs but not for sheep; and if it was introduced the cost of salughtering would increase.[3] One other form of licensing caused conflict in the Council in the 1920s when some traders objected to a committee's refusal to let shopkeepers erect petrol pumps on the pavement in front of their shops.[4]

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1. C.M. 9.12.1929. E.&S. 9.12.1929.
2. C.M. 10.3.1930. E.&S. 10.3.1930.
3. C.M. 11.6.1934. E.&S. 12.6.1934.
4. C.M. 9.10.1922, 12.2.1923. E.&S. 12.2.1923.

The shopkeepers were united on the Council in 1898 against a scheme to erect "kiosks" in the streets to sell newspapers, magazines, tobacco, cigars, sweets and fruit. Anger was intense against the "syndicate of strangers" who would compete with the town's own traders, who would have to pay higher rates than the owners of the small kiosks.[1] But they were not as united just before the First World War over the Early Closing Movement. In early 1912 some butchers petitioned the Watch Committee to suppress Sunday trading by butchers and meat salesmen: other traders followed suit against Sunday trading in their wares. The committee decided to instruct the Town Clerk to issue a notice of caution to tradesmen that legal proceedings would be taken against breakers of the law. A group of smaller shopkeepers then organised themselves into the Small Tradesmen's Protection Association to protest against the reinforcement of an obsolete Act. They claimed that they conducted their Sunday trading in a quiet, steady and orderly way, and that if they were closed, great hardship would befall many widows, cripples and old people, who earned a meagre living out

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1. C.M. 18.4.1898. W.C. 20.4.1898.

of shopkeeping. The committee then reversed its decision, and the other traders then protested. During the Council debate on the topic the opponents of Sunday trading said that Sunday should be set aside for "something higher than shopping", and that poorer tradesmen should not be forced to work long hours. The Chairman of Watch Committee explained that it was difficult to enforce Sunday closing, since the Act of the reign of Charles II was "rusty, musty and fusty", and in many towns magistrates had refused to apply it: it did not cover publicans and refreshment house keepers, who could open and dispose of articles which others were not permitted to sell. His solution was to petition Parliament for a modern Act, which course the Council did take.[1.]

After the Shops Act of 1912 a similar division occurred over early closing on Thursdays. It was proposed to enforce a weekly half holiday on Thursdays, and again the Small Traders' Association protested against the injustice to small shopkeepers.[2.] When they lost, their spokesman on the Council, R. L. Clarkson, a furniture dealer, then sought to have various trades

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1. C.M. 1.8.1912. W.C. 3.8.1912, 11.9.1912.
2. C.M. 10.3.1913. W.C. 12.3.1913.

exempted from the ban, including his own, but, as before, he was defeated.[1.]

One group of traders which over the period was most concerned with the Council was the traders in the Wolverhampton Market, both the retailers in the Market Hall and the open market, and the wholesalers in the Wholesale Market. The users of the town's cattle market were also active whenever their interests were at stake. For instance in 1890 the Markets Committee proposed to end the privileges of the only two auctioneers allowed to conduct their business inside the cattle yards and to open them to all auctioneers. The market users protested[2.] and it was not until 1907 that another auctioneering firm was admitted.[3.] In 1891 the stall holders in the Retail Market condemned a scheme to increase the hours of sale in the Wholesale Market, on the grounds that their own trade would be reduced, the

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1. C.M. 12.1.1914, W.C. 14.1.1914. The Council's liberal attitude to early closing was at variance with its policy in 1907 and 1909, when it had rejected the requests of the sub-postmasters to close their post offices on Thursday afternoons. The business and professional men did not want to be inconvenienced by finding no post offices open on Thursday afternoons. C.M. 11.3.1907, 13.12.1909. W.C. 13.3.1907, 15.12.1909.
2. C.M. 10.3.1890.
3. C.M. 13.5.1907. W.C. 15.5.1907.

wholesalers would strengthen their monopoly, and they would have advantages over the stall holders who had higher rents, while ultimately the public would face higher costs. The wholesalers argued that the increase would bring more purchasers into the borough, which would help the trade of everyone.[1] The retailers and wholesalers however were more often in alliance than opposed, as in 1923 when they objected to amusement fairs which visited the town and set up their stalls on the market patch. Councillor T. W. Dickinson, a wholesale fruit and potato merchant, complained that the fairs caused grave inconvenience to the market people.[2]

The market traders were not merely negative, opposing projects harmful to their interests, they also promoted certain schemes to benefit their trade. They pressed for the acquisition of an extra and heavier weighing machine in 1891,[3] and in 1960 were urging the Council to devise a plan for large scale car parking facilities, offstreet and multi-storey.[4] Their greatest positive achievement was the construction in the early 1900s of a new covered wholesale market, cold stores and abattoirs, under the Chairmanship of the Markets Committee

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1. C.M. 25.3.1891. W.C. 1.4.1891.
2. E. & S. 11.6.1923.
3. C.M. 12.1.1891. W.C. 14.1.1891.
4. C.M. 25.1.1960. E. & S. 26.1.1960.

of F. Evans, himself a fruit, vegetable and fish merchant. In the 1890s the law against the use of borax and boracic acid as food preservatives was being strictly enforced, and butchers, poultry dealers and greengrocers required new means to keep perishable commodities. They also sought more extensive wholesale facilities, particularly a roof to protect them and their goods from bad weather. Evans and his committee persuaded the Council to grant their wishes.[1] A minority objected strenuously that the Corporation had been landed with a "white elephant" to satisfy the market men, and they attacked Evans for causing the rates to rise so much.[2]

If this project was the market traders' greatest positive achievement, then their greatest negative achievement was to delay for over 50 years the construction of a new Market Hall for the retail traders. In 1905 Horatio Brevitt, the Town Clerk, considered the removal of the Market Hall from opposite the Town Hall and his office to another site, but dropped the scheme when it became evident that some of the traders would oppose moving away from the centre and from proximity to the Wholesale Market.[3] In the 1930s Brock Allon, the

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1. C.M. 27.2.1899, 14.5.1900. W.C. 16.5.1900.
2. E.& S. 2.11.1903.
3. Interview with F. W. Howell.

Town Clerk, again considered the matter, and again the traders objected. Their spokesman was W. H. Farmer, a stationer with a stall in the market, whose vigour on behalf of the traders brought him to the attention of the Conservative Party, which asked him to stand for the Council.[1] He was elected in 1934. By 1940 positive proposals were made to demolish the old Market Hall and to construct a new one in the Brick-kiln Croft area. The traders however protested that this site was far from the traditional shopping flow of the public; putting the new market there would dislocate established shopping habits; shopkeepers near the existing market would be ruined; the town would lose revenue and trade would fall.[2] Twelve years later Farmer was still criticising the "indecent haste" with which the Markets Committee was planning the "rash move" to rebuild the market on the same "outlandish site".[3] Not until 1957 did the Market Hall Tenants' Association call off its opposition and decide to co-operate in the establishment of the new Market Hall, since "opposition now serves no useful purpose".[4] Peace however did not descend at once for a

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1. Interview with W. H. Farmer.
2. C.M. 8.4.1940. E. & S. 8.4.1940.
3. C.M. 29.12.1952. E. & S. 29.12.1952.
4. E. & S. 28.1.1957.

new quarrel arose over the terms on which the traders were to hold their stalls; they felt that the Corporation was charging too much.[1.]

One piece of sharp practice by the market men was detected in 1932. Councillor H. E. Lane suspected that the Chairman of the Markets Committee was treating certain butchers in the town with preference at the ratepayers' expense. For a week each night he hid in the Municipal Cold Stores and discovered that some butchers had keys to the Cold Stores. After hours they entered and took away in Corporation lorries ice for which they had paid nothing. In addition they were allowed to store their meat there free of charge and even to hold parties on the premises. In return the Chairman was rewarded by gifts. The affair was hushed up.[2.]

Shopkeepers and traders of various kinds had many incentives to enter the Council, since it had the power to influence their livelihood in many ways, through contracts, licensing, controls over certain trades,

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1. C.M. 28.9.1957. E.&S. 29.9.1959.

2. E.&S. 10.11.1932. Interviews with H. E. Lane, W. Lawley and Mrs. I. M. Hayes.

controls over hours and through its responsibility for the markets of the town. By becoming members of the Council shopkeepers and traders were in an advantageous position to promote their interests and to oppose schemes which might injure their interests.[1.]

The drink interest.

One particular kind of trade demands special consideration, the drink interest, licensed victuallers, wine and spirit merchants and brewers. Up to the 1940s they were a significant proportion of the Council. We have seen that they entered the Council around the turn of the century as a defensive move against the temperance reformers,[2.] and in the Council conflict between the drink interest and the teetotalers often flared up, sometimes on the most unlikely occasions. In 1892 when a motion was before the Council to erect a foot-bridge over a canal to link a housing estate with some nearby works, an advocate of the bridge complained of the dangers of the long walk along the tow-path to the road. He told the story of a man who fell in. "Was he drunk?" cried an Alderman who opposed the bridge, "I don't know", said Councillor Lewis,

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1. See above Chapter 4, pp. 196-200 for a further discussion of the shopkeepers.

2. See above Chapter 1, pp. 37,45 and Chapter 4, pp. 200-203.

who was a temperance reformer, "and if he was why should you grumble when you give a man plenty of opportunity to get drunk."[1]. The reformers were eager to prosecute any breach of the law by publicans, as in 1890 when they proposed that the Council should tell the Chief Constable to take proceedings against specific publicans who had served drinks after hours.[2]. Lewis was keen to prosecute men who got others drunk.[3]. They tried a more constructive approach in 1900 by proposing that the lease of the Squirrel Inn should be granted for 7 years at a rental of £120 per annum to the People's Refreshment House Association.[4]. This tavern was the last remaining in the Corporation's hands of those which it had acquired when improving the town centre in the 1880s. The reformers wished Wolverhampton to set an example to other towns by establishing a temperance refreshment house, which might influence future legislation on public house management.[5]. Opponents of the idea denounced it as a "fad", and complained that it would be unjust to the sitting tenant who was paying £130 per annum, and to the

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1. C.M. 12.12.1892. W.C. 14.12.1892.
2. C.M. 14.7.1890.
3. W.C. 15.7.1891.
4. C.M. 12.3.1900, 14.5.1900. W.C. 14.3.1900, 16.5.1900.
5. W.C. 16.5.1900.

ratepayers who would have to bear the loss of £10 per annum.[1.]

After the turn of the century the temperance reform movement declined, but well into the 1920s individual teetotalers sought to impede the publicans and brewers in various ways; objecting in 1920 to planning permission being granted the Springfield brewery to reconstruct its bottling stores[2.] and then its boilerhouse,[3.] or objecting to licensed premises being erected on new Corporation housing estates without a referendum amongst the inhabitants first. A retired brewer, Councillor J. Cahill, attacked the teetotalers who wanted to deprive the people on the new estates of the rights and privileges enjoyed by others. He saw the plan for a referendum as "the thin end of the wedge to provide a test case for local option".[4.] This occasion was the last time the drink interest had to defend itself against the reformers in the Wolverhampton Council.

Thus the drink interest was on the Council largely to protect itself. Of course being a Councillor could help attract custom to ones establishment and generally

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1. E. & S. 12.3.1900, 15.5.1900.
2. C.M. 14.6.1920. W.C. 16.6.1920.
3. C.M. 13.9.1920. W.C. 15.9.1920.
4. C.M. 10.1.1927, 3.8.1927. E. & S. 10.1.1927, 3.8.1927.

give the trade a good reputation for public service.[1] By the 1960s only 2 members of the Council had connections with a brewery, and one suggested explanation why they were on the Council was that since the brewery was a large landowner in the town, it was concerned to learn what sites it might profitably purchase. Its 2 representatives on the Council were therefore useful channels to keep it informed about the state of the property market of the town.[2] Thus the interest of the drink trade in Council membership has changed significantly over 60 years from anxiety about the very existence of its activities to a concern with the property transactions of the borough.

At the turn of the century the interests considered above, the manufacturers, professional men and traders, formed the bulk of the Council membership. Each occupational group sought to promote its own interests and to prevent harm to them. These objectives were not the sole reasons why individuals entered the Council but

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1. See above Chapter 4, pp. 200-203.

2. Interviews with W. Lawley and H. W. Small. One of the members was a licensed victualler, the other an accountant for a brewery; both were employed by Butlers' brewery, which over the whole period has always had at least two employees on the Council.

they were important ones, and for that reason are stressed in this chapter. Because concentrating on this aspect gives the impression that the members only sought to further their own interests, it is important to remember that this was not their sole motive for entering the Council and that it did not occupy all their time on the Council. As we have seen[1]. other motives operated and members had to busy themselves with many functions of the Council which did not touch their immediate personal or group interests. Other objectives which they sought to advance were the projects of their own committees and the welfare of their wards. Regard for these interests often cut across their economic interests, and it is impossible to propound a general law about which won.

In a Council which witnessed divisions over such various topics, it was impossible to have a constantly recurring cleavage along a single line. On each issue there was a new grouping of the Council members. Party politics was therefore inappropriate. The parties did not have distinctive municipal policies; their concern was with Parliament and national politics, with electing

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1. See above pp. 525-528.

an M.P. not with running the town council. What did eventually push the groups together was the rise of the Labour Party, representing a different set of interests opposed to those of the traditional groups on the Council. The latter found that they had a common cause in resisting the Labour Party and its policies. The objectives of the Labour Party and the nature of the party conflict in the contemporary Council are considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 14

Pressures and Controversies - the Labour Initiative and the Conservative response

The Labour Party in Wolverhampton was founded by the Trades Council and financed by trades unions; its Councillors were often unpaid part-time branch officers and some were even full-time district officials of their unions.[1.] In its early years the policies of the party reflected the interests of the trade unions, and it acted in the Council to promote some specific trade union objectives. The bulk of the Labour Party's votes and membership came from the working class,[2.] and its policies reflected their interests too. Through the whole period of its existence it has sought to improve the social conditions of the working class, an aim which has remained constant, even though its role as a trade union pressure group has declined. Council house tenants[3.] and the Co-operative Society[4.] have been two particular groups which have given support to the party: and its policies have consistently advanced their interests,

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1. Chapter 1, pp. 58-59, Chapter 4, pp. 179-182 and Chapter 5, pp. 215-217.
2. Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4.
3. Chapter 5, pp. 214-215 and Epilogue, pp. 633-634.
4. Chapter 5, pp. 226-228.

particularly those of the former. In pursuing the causes of these groups the party came into conflict with those groups examined in the last chapter. As a defensive move against growing Labour pressure they united their forces, which before had been divided, under the aegis of the Conservative Party.

The prime purpose of the Labour Representation Committee was to get its members elected to the Council. Direct Labour Representation was demanded not just on the doctrinaire grounds of political equality, that working men had a right to be represented by their own kind, but also because it was felt that the social position of the working man could be improved only if Councillors had first hand experience of the problems of working men.[1] This argument was rebutted by many businessmen, who claimed that as large employers, concerned to keep the wheels of trade and industry humming, and with the time, experience and knowledge to serve on the Council, they were best fitted to protect the interests of their workmen.[2]

To enable working men more easily to be Councillors, the L.R.C. advocated that the Council should meet not in

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1. E. & S. 3.11.1890.
2. ibid.

the afternoons but in the evenings.[1] At the turn of the century no allowances for loss of earnings were paid, and thus even if a working man could find an employer who would let him have time off work to serve on the Council, he could still suffer financial hardship. Labour members said that it would be easier for the businessman to give up the evening than for the working man to give up the afternoon. "Should the sacrifice be made by those members of the Council, who had to work hard every day for their daily bread, or should it be made by those to whom the matter was simply a matter of personal convenience."[2] Businessmen expressed amazement that trades unionists who campaigned for shorter hours were urging longer hours for Council work.[3] "Businessmen and tradesmen would come at 6.00 thoroughly fagged out and unable to give that attention they should do to the various important questions that had to be considered."[4] The timing of the Council meeting was thus arranged to suit the habits of the economic groups dominant in the Council. The payment for loss of earnings, first by the

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1. C.M. 8.5.1893, 13.12.1897, 10.10.1904.
2. W.C. 10.5.1893.
3. ibid.
4. W.C. 15.12.1897.

L.R.C. and then by the Council,[1] reduced the demand for evening meetings. It arose for the last time in 1946, when a minority of the Labour Group pressed for it against the majority. The latter argued that able officials would not serve the Corporation if they had to attend in the evenings; such a move would reduce the status of the authority to that of a district council; and in any case committees, where the real work was done, could meet at all times.[2]

Once on the Council the Labour representatives acted in concert with those trade unions who were seeking higher wages and better conditions for Corporation employees. For example in 1904 they called for a minimum "living wage of 6d. per hour"[3] and by 1912 of 25/- per week;[4] they proposed pensions and longer holidays for Council employees,[5] and higher wages and

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1. It has been impossible to penetrate the secrecy which surrounded the expenses paid to members in Wolverhampton. The variety of local authority practices is shown in the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Expenses of Members of Local Authorities. Cmd.7126. H.M.S.O.1947. Expenses were put on a more regular basis by the Local Government Act 1948.
2. E.&S. 15.1.1946. C.M. 14.1.1946.
3. W.C. 14.9.1904. C.M. 12.9.1904.
4. W.C. 12.6.1912. C.M. 10.6.1912.
5. E.&S. 1.11.1894.

improved conditions for tramway workers,[1] road sweepers and menders.[2] But the businessmen replied that "the price of labour ought to fix itself as any other commodity did." They should not run the Corporation as "a philanthropic institution," with "soft hearts and soft heads," but they should look at the issue from a "business standpoint."[3]

The Labour members retaliated by opposing salary increases for Corporation officials. Scarcely a year passed between 1894 and 1929 without Labour representatives objecting to such increases. They argued that since the workmen were in greater need, the increases should be refused until a minimum wage was granted.[4] In 1906 a Labour Councillor said "they looked through one end of the telescope at the higher officials' salaries, and reversed it when they looked at the wages of the rank and file."[5] During the 1920s the majority of the Labour members dropped their blanket opposition to

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1. W.C. 27.10.1897.
2. W.C. 15.6.1910.
3. W.C. 15.6.1910, 12.6.1912.
4. W.C. 15.8.1894, 13.7.1898.
5. W.C. 8.8.1906. In the First World War they complained that war bonuses and honararia granted to the officials were excessive compared to those for the workmen. W.C. 10.5.1916, 13.6.1917, 10.9.1919.

salary increases, accepting the argument that an able official, who would ultimately save the town money, deserved a high salary.[1] But there were still a vocal minority who protested that a salary of over £1,000 was too large for anyone[2] and that those at the bottom who did the work should be lifted up first.[3]

Conflicts in the Council over the pay of Corporation employees declined from the 1920s, as national negotiating machinery removed from the Council the responsibility of deciding the wages of its servants. This development was not accepted immediately with good grace. In 1920 the Council refused to implement an agreement negotiated by the National Joint Board of Employers and Members of Staff (Electricity Supply Industry). Labour members urged acceptance because the Council was under a moral obligation to honour the decision of a Whitley Council; if they dishonoured their pledge, the Ministry of Labour was likely to intervene; refusal might lead to a strike and a loss of power in the town. Their opponents claimed that the award was excessive; "electric rises", which would set other

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1. W.C. 13.10.1920.
2. W.C. 12.1.1925.
3. E. & S. 13.7.1936.

employees an example; it was inopportune, when works were closing down for lack of trade and when tradesmen could hardly make both ends meet. The Council "was in the cart" through granting plenary powers to the negotiating body. After the rejection of the award, union representatives and officials from the Ministry met members of the Council; a strike was threatened: special meetings of the Council were called and finally the award was adopted by a slim majority.[1] Both sides then accepted the machinery of negotiation, and no further conflict arose over this issue until 1941, when the Labour Party tried to alter an award, but in an upward direction. The majority now argued that the Council was not competent to deal with such matters, while the Labour Party said that it was not throwing over the negotiating machinery by paying wages above the minimum.[2] From the 1920s therefore the trades unions did not have to deal directly with the Council to advance the claims of their members, so that they had less need of the assistance of Labour Councillors to support their objectives. In addition they were stronger than in 1900, more able to stand on their own feet and negotiate

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1. W.C. 15.12.1920. E. & S. 27.1.1921, 1.2.1921. C.M. 13.12.1920, 26.1.1921, 14.2.1921.

2. E. & S. 28.10.1941, 9.12.1941. C.M. 27.10.1941, 8.12.1941.

without assistance from Councillors.

Controversy over the salaries of officials continued a little longer, into the 1930s. In 1930, in an attempt to stop the wrangles which occurred whenever an increase was proposed for an individual official, a comprehensive grading scheme was devised which fixed the minima and maxima for all officials, the increments and dates, so that each could know his exact position in the scale.[1.] This system produced no dissension until 1936 when the scales were increased. Labour members objected.[2.] The controversy resulted in the delegation of decisions on salaries to the General Purposes Committee. An attempt in 1947 to return this power to the full Council was heavily defeated. In was felt that such a topic should be discussed in secret to avoid the vituperation of earlier years, and to prevent bad relations between Councillors and the officials, who were unable to reply to debate in open Council.[3.] Thus an issue which had bitterly divided the Council sixty years ago no longer causes dissension, owing to the transfer of discussion to committee, the growth of the officials' trade union

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1. E. & S. 1.10.1929. C.M. 13.1.1930.
2. E. & S. 8.6.1936. C.M. 8.6.1936.
3. E. & S. 10.3.1947. C.M. 10.3.1947.

(N.A.L.G.O.) and their professional associations, and the establishment of national negotiating machinery.

Labour members were also eager to advance the interests of those employed by Corporation contractors, particularly to expose any breach of the fair wages clause and to prevent an employer condemned for such a breach from executing any future contract.[1] They also sought, but in vain, to impose on the contractors the obligation to employ trade union labour only.[2] Although not able to enforce this rule officially, the Labour Group has exercised unofficial discrimination. In 1959 for instance the Public Works Committee withdrew a proposal to purchase an air compressor from a company, because it refused to employ trade union labour.[3] This move took place in the Group and not in the Council. Such efforts on behalf of trades unions were more necessary in 1900 than they are in 1964, since the unions are stronger and more able to negotiate directly with the employers with more effect.

The only trade union objective which Labour members have tried to achieve since 1945 has been the "closed shop". In 1947 the Council resolved that all manual

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1. See above Chapter 13, pp. 536-537.
2. C.M. 9.3.1914, 11.5.1914.
3. M.L.G. 19.6.1959.

labourers employed by the Corporation should be members of a trade union.[1] Labour members said that there were times when the general principle of the liberty of the subject had to be subordinated to the benefit and the interests of the whole of the inhabitants: therefore those workmen who accepted benefits won by trades unions should pay for them through union membership. If the proposal was not adopted, it was feared that the Corporation's workforce would be disrupted, since unionists would not work with non-unionists. The Conservatives saw the plan as "the thin end of the wedge towards dictatorship". They regarded unions as "political machines for the Labour Party" and therefore opposed forcing a man to join a political group in order to earn his living.[2] Later they complained that an army of snoopers was wasting man hours discovering if men were union members.[3] One of the first reversals of Labour policy by the Conservatives when they regained their majority in 1949 was to rescind the resolution of 1947,[4] in order to clear away the spirit of compulsion

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1. C.M. 10.2.1947.
2. E.&S. 11.2.1947.
3. E.&S. 9.11.1948.
4. C.M. 28.11.1949.

which was against "all the finer principles of a free democracy". The Labour Party said that the Conservatives Group was "getting its own back" and was prejudicing the smooth operation of the Corporation departments.[1] Although Labour regained its majority in 1952, there was no return to the closed shop. In 1959 the Trades Council asked the Group to readopt the policy;[2] advice was sought from Transport House which replied that it was illegal to compel employees to join a trade union.[3] A deputation from the Trades Council pointed to other authorities which had made union membership compulsory for all manual workers, but the Group followed the advice of their party headquarters and let the matter drop.[4]

Labour members were concerned with the interests of men not merely at work but also when they were unemployed, particularly in the depression of the interwar years. Their objectives were twofold; to persuade the Council to provide work, and to ensure that adequate relief was paid. The undertaking of public work was, claimed the Labour members, a constructive approach to the unemployment problem, since work could be provided for the

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1. E. & S. 28.11.1949.
2. M.L.G. 10.11.1959.
3. M.L.G. 17.12.1959.
4. M.L.G. 4.11.1960.

men and the town could be improved; a new road built, streets and property repaired and the pan system finally abolished. But their opponents argued that their first requirement was "to get industry on its legs" and that meant reducing taxation and public expenditure. If the rates rose, industry would be further crippled, the unemployed would grow and more people would be unable to pay their rates. Public works and public expenditure would not break the vicious circle.[1.]

In the 1930s the Labour Party in Wolverhampton took the lead in opposing the rates of relief which the Ministry ordered the Public Assistance Committee to pay to the unemployed. Those given by the committee were more generous than those laid down by the Ministry. The Labour members convinced a majority of the Council to make a stand against the Government. Again and again the Council voted to defy the Minister, arguing that the inadequate benefit and the means test were demoralising the nation: family life was being broken up and the casual wards were overflowing with young men, who were being turned into habitual vagrants. When the Minister threatened to establish a Commission to administer the

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1. W.C. 15.2.1922. E. & S. 13.4.1931.

relief if the Council remained obdurate,[1] the majority capitulated; Labour members accused them of having "the backbone of a jelly fish." One Labour Councillor refused to sit down despite repeated requests from the Mayor. Another jumped up, shouting "I have no time for any of you people." Cries of "dirty dogs" were heard from the public gallery. Police were brought in and the two Councillors were "forcibly removed from the Council chamber still shouting and struggling."[2]

Labour members tried to get the Council to oppose the Unemployment Assistance Act of 1934, on the grounds that it was inhuman, injuring family life and the physical wellbeing of the people. To compel a man to receive training as a condition of receiving benefit was a renewal of chattel slavery. But the Council congratulated the Government on its prompt action to reduce hardship;[3] they were very pleased that no longer would they bear the odium of administering the relief. The Act may not have taken unemployment out of politics, but by transferring the responsibility of administering relief from local authorities to the Unemployment Assistance Board, it

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1. E. & S. 10.5.1932, 27.9.1932, 10.1.1933. C.M. 9.5.1932, 26.9.1932, 9.1.1933.
2. E. & S. 13.3.1933.
3. E. & S. 12.2.1935. C.M. 11.2.1935.

removed from the Council of Wolverhampton a topic which had caused bitter conflict.

Thus the Labour Party from its foundation in the 1890s to the late 1940s promoted the interests of trade unionists. But this aspect of Labour policy declined in importance as many of the topics with which the unions were concerned were taken from the purview of the Council, as the unions grew stronger and less dependent on Councillors to assist their campaigns and as the Labour Party became the majority and the governing party on the Council with responsibilities to a widened electorate and not just to the trade unions. This trend is exemplified in Labour's refusal in 1959 to advocate a closed shop for the Corporation's employees.

The Co-operative Society has supported the Labour Party in Wolverhampton in a spasmodic fashion.[1.] It has been interested in the Council in order to obtain contracts and sites for shops on new housing estates. In the 1930s the Labour Party claimed that the Co-op was refused permission to open shops in some areas because of prejudice against the Society. But the non-Labour members said, as in 1935, that the sites suggested were not zoned for shops: ribbon development had to be

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1. Chapter 5, pp. 226-228.

curtailed and the amenities of the area preserved.[1] In the 1940s and 50s the Conservatives alleged that the Co-op was given preferential treatment by the Labour Group in the allocation of shops on new Council estates. In one case a Conservative said that "it was obvious that pressure had been brought to bear on Socialist members of the Council to ensure that the Co-operative Society would get the site". The Labour Party was making "a goodwill offering for services rendered." Other shopkeepers should be given a chance, ex-servicemen or small traders from the slum clearance areas. Labour members said that they would support "co-operative enterprise in the interests of the people as a whole", against "private enterprise". The housing estates contained many members of the Society, who, if there was not a full range of Co-operative shops on their estate, would have to travel to town to purchase their goods. And since the rents of the new shops were too high for small traders, it was better that they should go to the Co-op, than to a large private concern.[2]

The Labour Group has not always been united over assisting the Co-op. In 1957 when it was proposed at a

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1. E. & S. 12.2.1935. C.M. 11.2.1935.

2. E. & S. 30.9.1947, 14.2.1949, 23.9.1958. C.M. 29.9.1957, 14.2.1959, 22.9.1958.

Group meeting to lease a shop site to the Co-op at the valuation of the District Valuer, two private grocers moved an amendment that the lease be put out to tender and awarded to the highest tenderer. Eleven were in favour and the same number against: the casting vote of the Chairman was for the original motion.[1] Members of the Group also attacked the Co-op for not allowing its employees sufficient time off work to pursue Council business,[2] and for taking part in a price ring for supplying milk to schools. (Five tenders had been submitted, all the same.)[3] So strained were relations between the Group and the Co-op, that the National Organiser of the Co-operative Party asked the Group to meet a Co-op delegation to clear up misunderstandings and to effect a closer relationship of mutual benefit.[4] After the meeting a Liaison Committee was set up to "discuss all matters of principle that coexist between the Co-operative Party and the Labour movement".[5] Relations became more congenial; the Co-op financed the election campaigns of 3 candidates,[6] gave money to the

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1. M.L.G. 19.7.1957.
2. M.L.G. 23.9.1959.
3. M.L.G. 25.1.1957.
4. M.L.G. 28.12.1956.
5. M.L.G. 25.1.1957.
6. C. B. Clark, Mrs. M. Dale, M. James.

general funds of the party and allowed the party and the Group to hold meetings at its central premises. But in the 1960s there was little contact. No more elections were financed, and only one Labour member of the Council was active in the Co-operative Movement and she was over 80. By 1964 the Co-op was not much in evidence as a pressure group on the Labour Party.[1.]

Council house tenants have given consistent support to the Labour Party, in votes, for the safe Labour wards are those where Council houses predominate, and in members, for a large proportion of the Labour members of the Council have been tenants themselves.[2.] In return the Labour Group has looked after the interests of the tenants assiduously. Municipal housing has been a bone of contention between the Labour and the non-Labour forces on the Council from the 1890s to the present day, when it remains one of the major items of conflict between the parties.

At the end of the nineteenth century Labour members urged that the Council should build houses with the latest sanitary improvements at a low rent for the working class.[3.]

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1. Interviews with A. Garner, R. Reynolds and A. Storer.
2. Chapter 3 , Chapter 5 and Epilogue, pp. 633-634.
3. W.C. 31.10.1894, 27.10.1898, E. & S. 10.10.1908. Wolverhampton Worker, November 1913.

It would not give "the private speculator and small property owner anything to fear," since the object was "to build a class of house to let at a rental to meet the incomes of small wage earners, which it would not pay the property speculators to erect."[1]. The Labour Party pressed for a permanent Housing Committee to be set up to build low rent houses.[2]. Their opponents, shopkeepers and builders particularly, objected to subsidising rents out of rates, since this would really mean subsidising wages. If these were higher than the working man could afford economic rents. In addition the builders feared municipal competition subsidised by their rates.[3]. One builder who was a Councillor said that "private enterprise would come along and solve the difficulty, if only speculators were allowed to get a fair remuneration on their outlay."[4]. Progress was slow before 1919: an ad hoc committee had built 50 cottage tenements by 1906, an expensive and disappointing venture:[5]. in 1913 a permanent Housing Committee was

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1. W.C. 3.7.1901.
2. W.C. 14.11.1906.
3. E.& S. 21.3.1900. W.C. 15.7.1914.
4. W.C. 11.2.1914.
5. Wolverhampton Journal, October 1906.

established when the Health Committee found that its plans to clear away unfit houses were held up because it was unable to find accommodation for tenants at rents comparable to what they had been paying.[1] The war prevented it from achieving anything significant, and only after the war, with generous Government subsidies, did regular and large scale construction of Council houses begin.[2]

Labour members then pressed that the houses should be built not by contractors but by a special Corporation department. In 1924 the Labour Party for the first time suggested the establishment of a direct building department which would build houses cheaper and quicker than private enterprise. But their opponents said that the Corporation should not pretend to teach the builders how to do their own business.[3] On gaining a majority in 1945 the Labour Group speedily set up such a department. It was, they claimed, "not based on any political fetish", nor would the contractors be cut out, for they would continue to exist side by side with the department. The Conservatives said that "this extravagant scheme" would

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1. W.C. 6.8.1913, 12.11.1913, 10.12.1913.
2. E.&S. 14.7.1919. C.M. 14.7.1919.
3. E.&S. 14.4.1924. C.M. 14.4.1924. It was raised again in 1926 (W.C. 10.2.1926. C.M. 8.2.1926) and 1935 (E.&S. 12.3.1935. C.M. 11.3.1935).

not build houses better, cheaper or quicker, and the engineer would be inconvenienced by additional duties. The Labour Party retorted that such arguments were invalid and that the town as a whole would benefit, for builders would have to cut their costs in the face of competition for the first time.[1] The Conservatives were very hostile to the department: they removed Sir Charles Mander from the Presidency of the South West Wolverhampton Conservative Association after he had praised the department.[2] Yet when they regained their majority in 1949, they did not dismantle it. The Conservative Chairman of the Housing Committee, who had previously been a bitter opponent, defended the department against many in his own party. It had made good progress; the men in the department had to be given work and if all contracts were sent out these men would be out of a job and house-building would be delayed.[3] When they returned to opposition, however, they resumed their whole-hearted criticism, advocating that all work should go out to tender, since "private enterprise would do the job better," and that the lowest tender should be accepted.

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1. E. & S. 12.3.1946. 29.10.1946. C.M. 12.3.1946.
2. Chapter 8 pp. 359-360.
3. E. & S. 26.7.1949. C.M. 25.7.1949.

They objected to the department being given any work, whether building and repairing houses or constructing a sports stadium.[1] Labour members alleged that the opposition represented private builders only, who feared the department because it had kept their profits low.[2] It had saved the ratepayers many thousands of pounds.[3]

The Labour Party has always taken a special interest in the welfare of the Council tenants, particularly trying to keep their rents as low as possible. Since 1919 the Labour Party has complained against rent increases,[4] while their opponents have said that if rents were subsidised from the rates, Council tenants would benefit at the expense of those having to subsidise them.[5] In the 1950s and 1960s much conflict has raged around the Conservatives' proposals to introduce a rent rebate scheme, varying the rent according to need. Councillor Farmer, its leading advocate, claimed that it would "ensure that people are not subsidising those better

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1. E.&S. 28.7.1953, 27.7.1954, 28.6.1955, 23.7.1956, 7.5.1957. C.M. 27.7.1953, 26.7.1954, 27.6.1955, 23.7.1956, 6.5.1957.

2. E.&S. 29.10.1957.

3. E.&S. 23.12.1958.

4. E.&S. 10.12.1919. C.M. 8.12.1919.

5. E.&S. 9.11.1938. C.M. 9.11.1938.

off than themselves;"[1]. the rates would be reduced, while relief would go to those people who genuinely could not afford to pay an economic rent.[2]. In the Labour Group a sizable minority was in favour of his proposal, but the majority has remained firmly opposed.[3]. Labour spokesmen said that the Conservatives had no workable scheme; it was liable to be so complex that no working man would understand it; it would be expensive to administer and there would be "prying and snooping"[4].into the financial circumstances of the tenants, a means test again. The present rents charged were high because of the Conservative policy of high interest rates. The Labour Party called on private landlords to set an example by applying a differential rent scheme for their tenants.[5]. The Labour Group has feared that such a differential rent scheme would raise the rents for the majority of the tenants, who might then refuse to support the Labour Party.[6].

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1. E. & S. 23.7.1956.
2. ibid. and E. & S. 24.3.1959.
3. Chapter 7 pp. 328-329.
4. E. & S. 24.11.1959.
5. E. & S. 25.6.1957.
6. C.M. 23.7.1956, 24.6.1957, 25.11.1957, 23.3.1959, 23.11.1959. The Conservatives almost succeeded in 1962. See Epilogue pp. 633-634.

In other ways the Labour Party has protected the tenants. In the 1920s it proposed that the £2 deposit paid by tenants on occupying a Council house should be abolished. Labour members said that it caused hardship, forced many to the money lender to borrow it and was a barrier to many against applying for a house. Their opponents saw it as a useful safeguard against bad tenants; it enabled broken windows and lights to be paid for; there was no evidence of hardship and tenants appreciated receiving back the lump sum when they moved elsewhere.[1.] Labour members were keen to expose evidence of the poor quality of repair or the building of the houses,[2.] complaining in 1950 of a reduction in standards, especially in size,[3.] and producing crumbling bricks to demonstrate inferior materials.[4.]

As a service to the tenants the Labour Party advocated extending municipal enterprise into two fields which provoked stiff opposition. In the 1930s it urged that Council house rents should be collected by the Housing Department and not by estate agents. It was

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1. E.& S. 20.4.1925, 12.7.1927.
2. C.M. 13.4.1930.
3. C.M. 27.11.1950. E.& S. 28.11.1950.
4. E.& S. 10.1.1949.

wrong in principle that the collection of the rents of publicly owned properties should be done by private individuals. Corporation employees would be more humane and less inconsiderate to the tenants than the estate agents, and they could act as a bridge between the tenant and the housing manager. But their opponents argued that they should let well alone; the agents were effective, lenient and reasonable in cost.[1.]

Then in 1938[2.] and 1956[3.] the Labour Party advocated that the Corporation should sell second-hand furniture to its tenants. If it provided garden sheds, why not essential articles of furniture?[4.] People who moved from slums required decent furniture on entering a new Council house, but the terms offered by private traders were excessive. The Corporation could offer better and fairer terms; the scheme would be self-supporting without any free gifts. The Conservatives, supported by the Credit Traders' District Council and by associations of retail furnishers and shopkeepers, called on the

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1. E. & S. 9.12.1930, 14.1.1933, 11.7.1933, C.M. 8.12.1930, 13.1.1933, 10.7.1933.
2. C.M. 31.10.1938.
3. C.M. 22.10.1956.
4. E. & S. 1.11.1938.

Council to leave trading to those whose job it was to trade. The Town Hall staff would be burdened by extra work; their time and the ratepayers' money would be wasted on buying furniture from dealers and auctioneers. Tenants could afford furniture and any rare cases of genuine hardship could obtain assistance elsewhere.[1.] The local paper saw the plan as a "step towards despotism", where people were "units of population, directed, fed, clothed, and owned body and soul by officialdom."[2.] The door would be open to "the ultimate Socialist Utopia in which the local Soviet will be the fountain from which all blessings flow."[3.]

The anti-Labour forces, who had been reluctant to allow the Council to build houses, have occasionally sought to persuade the Council to sell its stock of houses. This suggestion was first mooted in 1925, in a proposal to offer the houses to the sitting tenants. The Council had a duty to provide houses and not merely to remain landlords, claimed the advocates of the plan. They wanted every man in England to be not a tenant but

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1. E. & S. 22.10.1956.
2. ibid.
3. E. & S. 23.10.1956.

his own landlord. Labour members objected that no working man had enough money to be a purchaser, and that it would hinder mobility if a man had to take a job 100 miles away and he found himself tied to his own landlordship.[1] The scheme was introduced in 1928, and an Alderman claimed that "every Corporation house sold meant more capital for the Corporation to build more houses."[2] But as the Labour Party had predicted there was scant demand for purchase by the tenants, and the scheme petered out. The topic remained dormant until in 1952 the Conservatives urged the Labour Group to make a "Coronation gesture" by allowing tenants to purchase their own houses.[3] They could now afford to do so. It was unfair that people who could afford to buy their own houses or pay economic rents were subsidised by ratepayers who often earned less than the tenants. Ownership brought a sense of responsibility and it was the Conservatives' objective that we should not "become a nation of municipal tenants bossed around by little men with small minds and bigheads, who cling to the delusion that they know best what flowers should be grown, how

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1. E. & S. 14.7.1925.
2. E. & S. 13.2.1928. C.M. 13.2.1928.
3. E. & S. 27.10.1952. C.M. 27.10.1952.

tall your hedge should be and what colour your front door."[1]. The Labour Group replied that few had applied to buy; if they had the money they could buy through private enterprise: it was the Corporation's responsibility to provide houses for those who could not afford to buy them; and since the waiting list was not decreasing significantly, the Council needed as large a pool of housing for letting as possible. To devise a scheme would be difficult, since the houses were built under different Acts and qualified for different subsidies. In any case it would be a poor gesture to sell many of them since the new owners, especially of the older property, would face big repair bills. One Councillor alleged that the Conservatives were acting for the building societies, who wished to get their hands on the "golden plums."[2].

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1. E. & S. 26.10.1954.

2. For debates on this topic see: E. & S. 27.10.1952, 26.10.1953, 24.11.1953, 3.1.1956, 24.3.1959, 24.11.1959, C.M. 27.10.1952, 25.10.1953, 23.11.1953, 2.1.1956, 23.3.1959, 24.11.1959.
The Conservatives have also pressed the Labour Group in vain to sell land and give assistance to Housing Associations to build houses. C.M. 25.2.1963, 25.3.1963, 27.1.1964.

During the various controversies over housing policies, one particular item of the Labour proposals excited exceptionally fierce opposition, the expansion of municipal enterprise, whether in the building of houses, the collecting of rents or the selling of furniture. In the 1890s the question of municipal enterprise, ownership and trading did not divide the Council on political lines. Both Conservatives and Liberals advocated and opposed the municipal acquisition of the tramways and the gasworks, and these matters were discussed on their technical merits without any overtones of political ideology. But the Labour Party from its earliest years made municipal enterprise an article of political faith and principle, identifying it as a specifically Labour policy. In 1897 a Labour candidate based his platform on the principles of "municipal ownership and collective management."[1]. In time the anti-Labour forces united in opposition to this policy, so that two polarities existed whenever this topic arose and debates were conducted less on the technical merits of the proposals and more on the ideological case for public as against private enterprise.

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1. W.C. 3.11.1897.

In the 1890s the Labour Party, together with members of other parties, urged the municipalisation of the gas company and the tramways,[1] but the party made one cause in particular its own, the municipalisation of the cemetery. Labour members complained that the charges imposed by the Cemetery Company for interments, grave spaces, tombstones and monuments were too high: that the Common Grave was a mere pit into which too many bodies were put with too little soil covering each body; that the graves were inadequately numbered and cared for and that accommodation at the Chapel was unsatisfactory.[2] Not until 1936 was the company purchased by the Corporation and not until 1946 was a new Municipal Cemetery and Crematorium established. The delays occurred because many objected to the idea of a municipal cemetery competing against a private one and to the 1d. rate required to finance it; others objected to paying £20,000 demanded by the directors for buying them out; and there was always the difficulty of finding a suitable site.[3] During the investigations and

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1. W.C. 31.10.1894, 27.10.1897, 3.11.1897.
2. Report of the General Purposes Committee 26.9.1898.
3. Reports of the Cemetery Committee 10.10.1910, 2.12.1912.

arguments the Labour Party inveighed against "the revolting idea of making commercial profit out of the disposal of the dead."[1] On gaining power the party was determined to have a municipal cemetery which should be a "work of beauty", and they engaged a landscape gardener at a fee of 500 guineas and sent him on a tour of Continental cemeteries with all expenses paid. The Conservatives attacked the Labour Group for "thinking more of the dead than the living", but the party which had waited so long for a municipal cemetery was resolute to make it a first class enterprise.[2]

After the First World War Labour members called for the municipalisation of the retailing of milk, to get cleaner and cheaper supplies. The opposition argued that municipal trading lost money and that prices would rise further.[3] After the Second World War civic catering was a battleground for the rival factions. After 1945 the Conservatives sought to reduce the number of British Restaurants, claiming that the wartime need had gone; less overtime was worked and women had returned to their homes. Since many of the restaurants were

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1. W.C. 12.10.1890.
2. E. & S. 12.2.1946.
3. W.C. 15.6.1921. C.M. 13.6.1921.

running at a loss, they should be shut. In 1950 the Conservative majority closed two. The Labour Group argued that the service should be considered as a whole and not each restaurant separately. Profitable ones should subsidise those running at a loss, which yet provided a vital public service, especially in those areas where numerous small firms were unable to provide canteens for their employees. Conservative policy was driving men at lunch time into public houses in search of sandwiches.[1] In 1960 the Council set up a municipal catering department to provide meals at the new municipal restaurant in the new Market Hall and at the Civic Hall. The Conservatives proposed that all the catering should be put out to tender, so that private enterprise, those who had made it their life's work, should have the catering privileges and not the inexperienced Corporation. Business risks were the responsibility of businessmen minding their own money and not of local authorities using the money of rate-payers. The Labour scheme was a piece of empire-building and an attempt to introduce public ownership by the back door.[2] In these controversies the traders

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1. E. & S. 13.3.1945, 15.5.1945, 27.3.1950, C.M. 12.3.1945, 14.5.1945, 27.3.1950.
2. E. & S. 28.3.1960, 29.3.1960. C.M. 28.3.1960.

of the town disliked their rates being used to finance an enterprise which would compete against them, and they felt that they were the most competent people to provide the services.

Two further aspects of municipal enterprise have been attacked by the Conservatives in the 1950s and 1960s. They have urged that private enterprise should be allowed to redevelop clearance areas, which it was argued would speed up development, reduce the housing shortage and reduce the overspill problem. The Labour Group has maintained the Corporation's right to develop the land, alleging that the Conservatives were making a "snatch and grab" attempt to get a "stranglehold on some of the town's best land, in order to gratify the profit motives of the estate agents and builders who ran the Conservative Party."[1]. Secondly the Conservatives have opposed the use of the municipal farm as a means of disposing of sewage after treatment at the sewage works. They have claimed that the farm has always made a loss and that therefore it should be turned over to men who make farming their occupation. The Labour Group has tried to blame the losses on such contingent factors as

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1. E. & S. 29.7.1958, 22.9.1958. C.M. 28.7.1958, 22.9.1958, 24.11.1958, 25.11.1963.

the weather, or to blame industrialists for so polluting the effluent that it destroys the fertility of the soil, and in vain they have asked the Conservatives to suggest another means of disposing of the waste.[1.]

Both parties in Wolverhampton explain that they are bitterly divided over the place of municipal enterprise in the town, and another divisive issue is the provision of social services financed by the rates. Labour members are keen to use the Council to improve the social conditions of the working class, which means using the rates to finance services whose main benefits will flow to the working class. Conservatives usually oppose their proposals on the grounds that the money of rate-payers should not be used for services which people are able to afford for themselves. They dislike their rates being used to finance services for others, which very often they have provided for themselves independently. When such cases arise, the Conservatives stress their role as guardians of the rate and as proponents of the principle that people should be self-reliant and not dependent on public authorities. Labour members stress

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1. E. & S. 5.5.1964. C.M. 25.9.1961, 24.6.1963. The Conservatives also opposed the Labour proposal to remove the Workshops for the Blind from a voluntary institution and to run them as a Corporation enterprise. E. & S. 23.12.1957. C.M. 23.12.1957.

the inability of people with low incomes to obtain these services privately and they welcome the redistributive effects of using the rates from the richer groups to finance services for the poorer.

Such controversies have arisen over the whole period. Labour in 1908 was urging the implementation of the Feeding of Necessitous School Children Act and the introduction of medical inspection of school children, against a majority who argued that voluntary effort would suffice.[1] In 1931, following the Government's advice to make economy cuts, it was resolved to charge 3d. a tin for dried milk for nursing mothers; Labour members objected that it would bring hardship to the poor and unemployed. "Do not let us pursue this murderous policy of robbing little kiddies of their milk." But the majority said that economy was vital and that voluntary workers would relieve genuine hardship.[2] Nurseries provided a battleground in the 1950s. In 1951 the Conservative majority resolved to close the Birmingham Road Day Nursery, since the one at the Woodlands was sufficient. They complained that too many women were putting their children into nurseries in order to earn

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1. E. & S. 16.10.1908.
2. E. & S. 9.11.1931. C.M. 9.11.1931.

pin money, while their husbands were earning big sums too. They should be at home caring for their children. Labour members said that the production drive depended on women at work; if the nursery was closed they would have to get up at 5 a.m. to take their children to the nursery at the other side of the town; and the extra money was very often what held their homes and families together.[1] Although the Conservative motion was carried,[2] when the Labour Group regained its majority in 1952, the nursery was reopened.[3]

Education has provided another arena of conflict between the parties, not along sectarian lines as at the turn of the century, but over the position of the Grammar School. This school has always excited the wrath of the Labour Party. In 1896 in a debate on the disposal of the proceeds of the Local Taxation Act of 1890, Labour members opposed the proposal to give £250 to the Wolverhampton Grammar School to erect science buildings, because it was a "class school", not open to the children of the poor.[4] In 1905 they proposed that it be made a free school, open to merit without any barrier because of

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1. E. & S. 1.1.1952.
2. C.M. 31.12.1951.
3. C.M. 23.6.1952. E. & S. 24.6.1952.
4. W.C. 12.2.1896. C.M. 10.2.1896.

poverty.[1] In 1914 they opposed an increase in the grant to the school because they argued that each scholar assisted by the Council cost them £22, while the others were admitted at £15.[2] In 1920 the Labour Party said that "the principle of giving grants to schools over which the Council did not have control was wrong." The Council should run the school and make it open to all boys.[3] The opponents asked them not to injure "an asset to the town",[4] and claimed it would be injured if it were swamped with free place scholars.[5] Not until 1945 was its status settled in a way acceptable to most Labour members, when the Council was granted a third of the governors, control over the admissions policy and scope to carry out a "wide open door policy;" fees were abolished.[6] By the late 1950s some Labour members wanted to submerge the school in a comprehensive

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1. W.C. 14.5.1905.
2. W.C. 14.1.1914. C.M. 12.1.1914.
3. W.C. 13.10.1920. C.M. 11.10.1920. They had attacked the establishment of the Girls' High School for similar reasons. W.C. 7.10.1908. C.M. 5.10.1908.
4. W.C. 14.1.1914.
5. W.C. 12.10.1920.
6. E.&S. 25.9.1945. C.M. 24.9.1945.

system for the town as a whole. The Conservatives opposed, defending the Grammar School against abolition. The Labour Group itself was divided and eventual plans for comprehensive education excluded the Grammar School.[1] Still a sizable minority in the Labour Group wants to abolish the school.[2]

The Labour Party first went to the Council to promote specific trade union objectives, but over the period this aspect of its work declined. It also sought to advance in a more general way the social conditions of the working class, using the Corporation to undertake certain enterprises and to provide certain services. This aspect of its work has remained constant. Its championship of these aims brought it into conflict with those groups who had previously held sway in the Council. Their main concerns had been to improve the amenities of their particular wards, to protect the interests of their occupational and social groups and to further the cause of their particular committees. They found their interests attacked by the Labour Party. They objected to paying higher rates for better wages and conditions for Corporation employees and they opposed the

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1. E. & S. 25.1.1960, 23.2.1960. C.M. 25.1.1960, 23.3.1960.
2. Interview with J. K. Woodward.

growth of trade unions, which were limiting their freedom of action in their private concerns too. They objected to paying rates to finance municipal services which they had provided for themselves, and municipal enterprises which would compete against their own businesses. As the Labour Party grew, and as it organised itself into a united block on the Council, its opponents found that if they wished to defend their interests, they would have to follow suit and organise themselves in a similar fashion. Thus by the 1950s two parties faced each other. Behind each group was a different set of forces. Quite distinct sets of occupational and social groups provided the voters and the membership of each party and each Group. And each party was out to provide benefits for its voters and supporters.

Before the First World War and to a lesser extent in the interwar years, the voting in the Council was not along strict party lines. Some Conservatives and some Liberals supported some of the Labour proposals and at times the Council adopted Labour schemes. Sometimes an occasional Labour member would object to a particular plan of his party. But on the whole the Labour members took the initiative in bringing forward the kinds of proposals examined in this chapter, and on the whole the majority

of Labour members supported them; those from other parties who joined the Labour members on such items did not do so consistently, but only occasionally. And on the whole the opponents of the Labour schemes were those groups who belonged to other parties. The deviant from the party on either side was an eccentric odd man out. Since 1945 it has been very rare for a member of one Group to vote against his Group. Voting has been more strictly on party lines.

Thus the conflict between the parties over local government in Wolverhampton is not artificial. It is relevant to the local context, for both parties represent distinct sets of supporters, whose interests they are trying to promote. The division has not been imposed on the town by the political parties thinking only of their national and Parliamentary prospects. The division over local politics is the same as that over national politics; the same parties compete, the same people argue, and the same people fight both municipal and Parliamentary elections. The voters too are the same; but fewer of them turn out for the Council elections, although the share of the vote which each party obtains at the municipal elections is very

similar to what it gets at the Parliamentary elections.[1] There is no meaningful antithesis between the parties' activities in local and national politics; the two skirmishes are part of one battle fought by the same armies.

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1. See Table II D and Chapter 3 pp. 166-167.

EPILOGUE

Crisis in Wolverhampton 1961-62

In 1961 and 1962 Wolverhampton became a byword for the evil effects of party politics in local government. The national and local press pointed to Wolverhampton as an example of the way in which the conflict between parties abused the institution of the Aldermanic bench. The crisis of these years shows the political system on the Wolverhampton Council under exceptional strain.

In February 1961 the Labour Group unanimously decided to take the Mayoralty for the coming municipal year and to nominate for the office Alderman C. H. Davies, the Chairman since 1954 of the Fire and Ambulance Committee.[1] Protests came from Conservatives, who objected to the way the decision was reached. They claimed that the Labour Party was "inviting public conflict over who should be the chief citizen of the town", because it had not sought "any private and friendly discussions between past Mayors or senior members of both parties", in an attempt "to present a united recommendation".[2] Further, Labour's choice was announced to the press

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1. M.L.G. 24.2.1961.
2. E.&S. 29.5.1961.

immediately after its Group meeting and before the full Council, in private session, had had an opportunity to discuss the matter. Such precipitate action, claimed the Conservatives, was an insult to the Council. But their main objection was that they had not been allowed to take the Mayoralty. At the private Council meeting when Davies was adopted as Mayor-elect, the Conservative nominee, Councillor M. P. Birch, the leader of the Conservative Group, said, "my group put me up because we have had the mayoralty only once in the last eight years. We feel it is time we had it again."[1]. Two Conservative Councillors, who had not been Mayors, had each served on the Council a year longer than Davies.[2]. Birch claimed "I am senior to Alderman Davies..... and these things up to a point, should go on seniority."[3]. Some Conservatives also had private misgivings about Davies' competence. It was feared that he would not maintain the dignity of the office, because he was an old age pensioner who had never signed a four figure cheque, who lived in a Council house, who had often been

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1. E. & S. 27.2.1961.
2. Davies was elected in 1945, while M.P. Birch and A. H. Windridge were co-opted in 1944.
3. E. & S. 27.2.1961.

on the dole and whose last job had been to open and close the gates of the gasworks.[1] Davies was a Welshman, who had lived in Wolverhampton since 1941; he was 76 years old, now retired on his pension, living with his children, after many jobs as a miner, bus conductor, clerk, electrician's mate, and gasworker.[2]

One of their motives was never explicitly stated. It was expected that the coming municipal elections would prove unfavourable to Labour, producing a Council evenly divided with the Mayor holding the casting vote. He would therefore decide which party would be in control, and thus the Conservatives, in a minority since 1952, and without Chairmanships since 1955, felt that at last they were on the point of regaining a majority. The Labour Party naturally wanted to avoid this eventuality, and for this reason decided to take the Mayoralty, although some Labour members agreed that it should have been the Conservative's turn if there had been no prospect of Labour losing control. For the Labour Group it was important that the Mayor should follow Group instructions. Davies was "a safe man, who would do as he was told."[3]

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1. Interview with D. H. Haselock.
2. E. & S. 27.2.1961, 24.5.1961. Council Yearbooks 1945-61.
3. Interview with A. Garner.

He had never been a leading or controversial figure in the party, and he had always been loyal to Group decisions. Therefore he was the Labour choice for Mayor, not only because he was the senior Labour member of the Council who had never been Mayor and who was willing to take the office, but also because he would always give his casting vote to the Labour side in any controversy whatsoever.

Before the elections in May, Labour had 25 Councillors and the Conservatives 20; of the Aldermen Labour had 10 and the Conservatives 4.[1] There was one Aldermanic vacancy, because in March an 88 years old Conservative Alderman, J. H. Coleman, had retired, and although the Labour Group had elected the 80 years old Labour Councillor Mrs. M. Dale to the bench, she had not made the declaration of acceptance.[2] This episode embittered even more the relations between the parties, for the Conservatives felt that a Conservative should have replaced Coleman. Birch said "I have seen Mr. Coleman several times recently, and he had hoped that he could have made way for someone on the Conservative side.

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1. Table I a.
2. E. & S. 27.3.1961.

I know it will hurt him when he sees in tonight's paper that a Socialist has taken his place."[1]. Of the Aldermen due to retire in 1964, all 8 were Labour, while of the others due to retire in 1961, 2 were Labour, 4 were Conservatives and one seat was vacant. Thus control of the Council was going to depend on the results of the Aldermanic elections as well as on the results of the May municipal elections.

The municipal elections were a defeat for Labour, for Conservatives gained 3 seats in marginal wards, so that now they had 23 Councillors to Labour's 22.[2]. The Labour Group now faced a difficult situation. Only Councillors and the Mayor can vote in Aldermanic elections, and thus Labour could have a majority only if the Mayor gave both his Mayoral vote and his casting vote for the Labour candidates. It was important therefore that the Mayor should be a Labour supporter. But a snag arose because Davies was himself a retiring Alderman. The Town Clerk, whose legal advice the Labour leader sought, said that Davies would be able to give his vote as Mayor but not his casting vote as the presiding officer of the meeting, since he would be acting against

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1. ibid.
2. E. & S. 12.5.1961.

natural justice and common law if he presided over his own election. The prospect was of a tie without any means of reconciling it. The Labour leaders had many discussions with the Town Clerk about what they could do. They asked him to advise them on the procedure which would allow them to retain control of the Council by taking all the Aldermanic seats. The plan which emerged was the idea of the Town Clerk, and since his legal judgment was trusted completely by the Labour Group his proposals were adopted by the Group.[1.]

The plan was to go ahead with the election of Davies as Mayor. For the Aldermanic elections he would vacate the Mayoral chair and return to his old seat, while a non-retiring Alderman would be elected to the chair temporarily. When the vote was taken the Mayor could give his Mayoral vote, thus producing a tie, then the Alderman in the chair would give a casting vote in his capacity as Chairman of the meeting, thus giving the Labour candidates a majority of one. The Labour Group planned to replace all the Conservative Aldermen

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1. Interviews with G. J. Costley, A. Garner, Mrs. R. F. Ilsley, F. Mansell, H. Mash, R. J. Meddings and F. S. Smith. A reading of the Labour Party's Local Government Handbook 1960, pp.234-6, would have told them that the Town Clerk's plan was illegal. But no one looked at it. They had faith in the Town Clerk's judgment.

with Labour Councillors; by-elections would be held in the 5 safe Labour wards from which the new Aldermen had been taken, and 5 new Labour Councillors would be elected.[1] At the end of these events Labour would have all the 15 Aldermen and 22 Councillors, while the Conservatives would have only 23 Councillors. Labour would have a majority of 14.[2]

The Labour Party was determined not to lose control. After the declaration of the poll in May, Councillor H. Bagley, Chairman of the Borough Labour Party, had said "we shall take all the Aldermanic seats at the annual meeting, fight by-elections in Labour strongholds and so consolidate our position on the Council."[3] The leader of the Group announced after the Group had decided its course of action that "we shall take all steps to retain our majority on the Council."[4] The Conservatives however claimed that the voice of the electorate had spoken in their favour, and that with a majority of the directly elected representatives they were morally entitled to choose not only the Mayor but the Aldermen. Since they believed that the Aldermanic bench should

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1. M.L.G. 16.5.1961. E. & S. 17.5.1961.
2. Table I a.
3. E. & S. 12.5.1961.
4. E. & S. 17.5.1961.

reflect the respective strengths of the parties' numbers of Councillors, they said that they were entitled to a larger number of Aldermen than they had at the moment.

The counter-plan of the Conservatives was the handiwork of a Councillor elected only that May, Stanley Brindley, a solicitor. The Conservatives were lucky in being able to draw on his legal knowledge, for the Town Clerk was clearly assisting the Labour Group. The issue between the parties became to a large extent a battle between the lawyers, Brindley and Meddings. At his first Group meeting Brindley explained why he thought that the Labour plan, details of which had become known to the Conservatives, was illegal. He said that if a Mayor did not preside, he would have to leave the chamber, for the Mayor if present had to take the chair. Brindley's advice was to let the Labour scheme take its course and then to challenge it in the courts. His stiffest battle in the Group was to convince the older members, who were eager to be Mayors, not to oppose Davies' nomination for Mayor. He said that opposition would serve no useful purpose, as the Labour Party had a majority of the whole Council which would enable them to

make anyone Mayor. With so much at stake, they were unlikely to choose a Conservative. For the Conservative plan to work it was necessary that a Labour retiring Alderman seeking re-election should be made Mayor so that he would be unable to preside over the Aldermanic elections and have to leave the meeting. Brindley feared that the Labour Group might decide not to nominate Davies, the only one of the retiring Aldermen who had not been Mayor, and to choose instead a non-retiring Alderman, for example the sitting Mayor for another term of office. He would then be able to give both his Mayoral and his casting vote for the Labour Aldermanic candidates. Then, since he was an epileptic, he could resign as Mayor on the grounds of ill-health and Davies could take his place.[1] His fears in fact were groundless for the Labour Party had trust in the Town Clerk's advice. Brindley convinced the Conservative Group. Its plan was to let Davies be chosen as Mayor, and in the Aldermanic elections to vote for the 4 retiring

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1. He outlined later another possible course of action. The Labour Party could have elected Davies as Mayor, but he need not have signed the declaration of acceptance, thus leaving the previous Mayor in the chair. "Our party would have had no point of order to raise whatsoever," E. & S. 31.5.1961. Brindley enjoyed taunting the Labour Party and the Town Clerk with alternative legal means they might have adopted to gain their ends. E. &S. 2.8.1961.

Conservative Aldermen, to fill the vacancy with a Conservative, and to replace the 2 Labour Aldermen with Conservative Councillors from safe Conservative wards. The ensuing by-elections would return 3 new Conservative Councillors. This end might be achieved if any Labour member failed to attend the meeting. Otherwise the Conservatives hoped that the High Court would declare the Labour procedure illegal and thus validate the Conservative plan.[1] At the end of these events the final composition of the Council would be 8 Labour and 7 Conservative Aldermen, and 22 Labour and 23 Conservative Councillors, with the Labour Mayor tipping the balance in Labour's favour.[2]

The Labour Party then became anxious as to whether all their members would be able to attend the Council meeting. The Secretary of the Labour Group, Councillor F. S. Smith, was taken ill with gastric influenza. A photograph on the front page of the local paper showed him in bed, and the caption said, "I'll crawl there if necessary."[3] The leader of the Conservative Group

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1. M.C.G. May 1961. Interviews with S. Brindley, J. Cahill and W. J. Rawlins.
2. Table I a.
3. E.&S. 25.5.1961.

announced that "as far as I know, everyone is fit, no one is on holiday and all our members should be at the meeting to vote."[1].

May 29th was the day of the Council meeting and everything went as both Groups had planned. All members were present. Davies was elected Mayor by the Labour members, while the Conservatives abstained.[2]. He made the declaration of acceptance and was enrobed. Then the leader of the Labour Group, the non-retiring Alderman F. Mansell, was voted temporarily into the chair and Davies returned to his old seat. The Aldermanic elections were then held. Davies gave his Mayoral vote for the Labour candidates. Mansell announced a tie of 23 votes for each slate, and gave his casting vote as Chairman of the meeting for the Labour candidates. Brindley on behalf of the Conservatives in his maiden speech objected. He said, "If the Mayor vacates the chair, he must absent himself from the chamber immediately and remain absent until the completion of the elections." The Town Clerk was asked as legal adviser to the Council to explain the legal position. He said, "The Mayor as

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1. ibid.

2. A Conservative spokesman said "I am not putting up an alternative name because our party is not voting for or against the proposal." E. & S. 29.5.1961.

such is given a vote in the election of Aldermen. It has nothing to do with the question of whether he presides or not." He could "see no grounds for saying that merely because the Mayor had vacated the chair, he should forgo the right to vote.... If I am to be proved wrong, if the Council act on my advice and I prove to be wrong, it will have to be by taking High Court Action to get a ruling on this matter." Brindley replied that the Conservatives reserved the right to present an election petition to the High Court.[1.]

Two of the ejected Conservative Aldermen instructed solicitors to present a petition to the High Court to declare void the election of May 29th and to declare the Conservative Aldermen duly elected, because the Mayor having vacated his seat was not entitled to vote in the election.[2.] A public subscription fund was set up to meet the costs. Its Secretary was the Secretary of the Conservative Group, himself the son of one of the ejected Aldermen.[3.] The Vice-Chairman of the Group said that the Group was "right behind these ex-Aldermen in the fight."[4.] The petition was presented on June 11th.[5.]

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1. E. & S. 29.5.1961. C.M. 29.5.1961.
2. E. & S. 31.5.1961.
3. ibid.
4. E. & S. 1.6.1961.
5. E. & S. 13.6.1961.

The Conservatives objected to the Labour Party's manipulation on the grounds not only of illegality but also of immorality. It was "a negation of democratic principles."[1] They were attempting to remain in power for 3 years "irrespective of the will of the people and contrary to the spirit of our local government law and tradition."[2] There had been no need for them to turn off the Conservative Aldermen, for if they had re-elected the 4 Conservative Aldermen they would still have kept a majority, since the composition of the Council would have been 33 Labour and 27 Conservative members, "surely a large enough majority for effective control."[3] Instead the Labour Group removed 4 long-serving Aldermen, who had all been Chairmen of Council committees. But in May neither party was in the mood for compromise; each was eager to do the utmost damage to the other. The Labour Party was not prepared to let the Conservatives remove 2 of their Aldermen, including their Mayor, while the Conservatives, strengthened by their electoral victory, resented Labour's stratagems to deprive them of the Mayoralty, to keep them out of office and to

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1. E. & S. 6.8.1961.
2. E. & S. 31.5.1961.
3. E. & S. 2.6.1961.

manipulate the Aldermanic elections so brazenly.

The Labour Party was convinced it had succeeded. The Mayor was confident. He said "storm clouds are good , because behind the clouds, the sun shines. I know that the sun is behind the clouds, so I am not perturbed about that side of the matter."[1]. Labour candidates were selected to stand in the 5 safe Labour seats, vacated by its new Aldermen. The Chairman of the Borough Labour Party said, "we shall fight every inch to retain control of the seats."[2]. In one ward, Low Hill, a Communist candidate stood against the Labour candidate, while in Parkfield Ward an Independent Conservative stood. The other 3 Labour men faced no opposition. The Conservatives officially put up no candidates, since they argued that if the High Court upheld their petition, the elections would be void.[3]. The agent for the North East Conservative Association said, "In the circumstances this association does not intend to take any steps which might involve the ratepayers or the association in unnecessary expense."[4].

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1. ibid.
2. E. & S. 30.5.1961.
3. E. & S. 8.6.1961.
4. E. & S. 15.6.1961.

This view was not accepted by one Conservative, a solicitor, R. J. Dallow, who had fought Parkfield Ward as official Conservative candidate in May. He argued that since the new Labour Aldermen had made the declaration of acceptance of Aldermanic office, they had vacated their seats as Councillors and therefore by-elections to fill these seats would be valid. He was convinced that even if the Conservatives did win the petition, the by-elections would be legal, otherwise it would have been a waste of time and money for him to stand.[1.]

Labour won the 5 seats,[2.] and the new members attended the Council meeting in July, when Labour had a majority of 14.[3.] Four days later the High Court upheld the contention of the Conservatives' petition. The Counsel for the Labour respondents argued that if Parliament had intended to disfranchise the Mayor when he happened to be a candidate for the Aldermanic bench, it would have done so in express language. The fact that the Mayor was a candidate did not take away his vote. He further argued that the statutory provision that the Mayor should preside,

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1. W.C. 16.6.1961.
2. E.&S. 7.7.1961.
3. C.M. 24.7.1961.

should be read as impliedly subject to any common law rule, and that it was not mandatory but directive, and consequently the election was not invalidated by a breach. Their lordships rejected these arguments. The provision was mandatory. Mr. Justice Glynn-Jones said "a Mayor unless presiding, cannot be present at a meeting and cannot vote. If he could not preside there was no other capacity in which he was capable of being present at that meeting."[1.]

A similar case at Slough attracted press comment, but the procedure taken was sufficiently different to put it within the law. The Mayor, also a retiring Alderman, gave his Mayoral vote in the Aldermanic elections from his Mayoral chair, and then for the counting of the votes vacated his seat, which was taken temporarily by a non-retiring Alderman who gave his casting vote for the Labour list.[2.] The advisers of the Labour Party at Slough were clearly more astute than those at Wolverhampton.

The successful petitioners were met on the station at Wolverhampton by "a little group of people with a

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1. Details of the judgment can be found in All England Law Reports 3 Part 13, pp.914-918, Weekly Law Reports Part 43, pp.1,139-1,148. See also The Times 29.7.1961 and Justice of the Peace 5.8.1961.

2. Justice of the Peace 28.10.1961, Sunday Times 30.7.1961, The Observer 30.7.1961.

large-size Union Jack demonstrating their 'faith in British justice.'"[1]. The Town Clerk was shocked at the judgment. He felt that the judges had made a bad decision, making moral judgments on the political proposal to take all the Aldermen and not interpreting the intention of the law.[2]. The Borough Labour Party called a special meeting, instructed their solicitors to lodge an appeal and asked the National Executive Committee of the party for advice.[3]. Sir Frank Soskice examined the case, but gave little help, since he said that he found it interesting and hoped it would be taken further to clarify the position once and for all.[4].

The Conservative Party, though victorious, were uneasy, for they doubted whether their new Aldermen should make the declaration of acceptance. If the Labour appeal were successful, they might be deposed from their Aldermanic status, and if their old seats as Councillors had been filled at subsequent by-elections they might find themselves not members of the Council in any form. After some delay they signed,[5]. but only

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1. The Times 29.7.1961.
2. Interview with R. J. Meddings.
3. E. & S. 8.6.1961.
4. Interview with A. Garner
5. E. & S. 4.8.1961, 19.8.1961.

after the Town Clerk, having taken legal advice, announced that the valid members of the Council were the deposed Labour ex-Aldermen not the newly elected Labour Councillors. He said that the opinion of Counsel was that "the effect of the High Court decision is that none of the five persons was validly elected as an Alderman and that therefore no vacancy occurred in the office each held as Councillor. No one could therefore be elected to fill the vacancy which did not exist."[1]. The Conservative Aldermen could thus sign the declaration, secure that they would not be deprived of Council membership if the Labour appeal were successful. Official Conservative candidates were selected for the 3 safe Conservative wards vacated by the new Aldermen. Two were returned unopposed, but in the third an Independent Socialist candidate stood, backed by "six or seven members" of the Labour Party.[2]. The Labour Party officially did not put forward candidates on the grounds that if their appeal were successful the elections would be superfluous. The Independent Socialist stood in order to propagate his views on the H-bomb: his campaign was concerned more to display the views of C.N.D. than to

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1. E. & S. 4.8.1961.
2. E. & S. 29.8.1961.

discuss the problems of Wolverhampton.[1] He lost.[2]

The Town Clerk's ruling provoked a bitter battle within the Labour Party. His advice was accepted by the majority of the Borough Party, including two of the five who had been elected to the Council in July and then removed, but three of the five said that only the High Court not the Town Clerk could declare by-elections invalid. They therefore instructed solicitors to challenge his ruling.[3] The Borough Party warned that "if these persist in any legal action they will almost certainly be expelled."[4] They were accused of "going behind the backs of people."[5] A motion for their expulsion was brought up at the Borough Party. "I'm staggered," said one of them, "everybody is crying out for unity but this is not the way to get it."[6] One ward party passed a resolution that "the sooner we cut out the bickering that is going on inside the party the better."[7] The plans for expulsion were dropped, chiefly

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1. E. & S. 2.9.1961, 7.9.1961, 11.9.1961.
2. E. & S. 15.9.1961.
3. E. & S. 17.10.1961. The Times 17.10.1961.
4. E. & S. 17.10.1961.
5. Interview with H. Bagley.
6. E. & S. 10.11.1961.
7. E. & S. 27.11.1961.

through the influence of the West Midlands Regional Organiser of the Labour Party who urged the party to concentrate on winning the next May elections.[1] Two of the five refused to sign a pledge of loyalty to the party and were consequently excluded from the panel of municipal candidates.

Plans to seek a High Court ruling as to who were the valid Councillors were dropped and the party decided not to appeal against the High Court's decision over the Aldermen. There was by now considerable doubt if it would win the appeal and most important of all it feared the cost. A bill of £329 for the costs of Counsel and solicitors was presented to the party. "The organisation is broke,"[2] said the Secretary of the Borough Party. A public appeal was launched to raise the money, and the party's funds set aside for a new headquarters were eaten into.[3]

The composition of the Council remained at 30-30 with the Labour Mayor's casting vote holding the balance until Christmas Day, when Alderman H. Mash, the epileptic,

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1. E. & S. 30.11.1961.
2. E. & S. 6.7.1962.
3. E. & S. 8.6.1962. The Council had earlier agreed to pay the costs of the petitioners and the respondent of £525 and £217 respectively. E. & S. 21.3.1962, 27.3.1962. C.M. 26.3.1962.

died.[1] The election of his successor almost lost the Labour Party control, but the Conservatives' blunders saved their opponents. It caused bitterness between the parties to flare up again after a few months of relative peace. A reconciliation between the two groups had been called for by the Rector of Wolverhampton[2] and the leading Baptist Minister.[3] The December Group meetings of both parties discussed a pact. Two items were the centre of discussion, the Mayoralty and the Aldermanic vacancy caused by Mash's death. The Mayoralty for 1962-3 was particularly important, since three days after the Mayor-making ceremony the Queen was to visit the town. The Labour Group decided "not to nominate because we do not want there to be any fight between ourselves and the Conservatives over who shall be Mayor-elect. We particularly did not want any acrimony in view of the Queen's visit."[4] But there could be no compromise over the Aldermanic vacancy. Mansell said "we would like to see the office of Alderman abolished. Under these circumstances, the meeting felt that we could

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1. E. & S. 27.12.1961.
2. E. & S. 5.9.1961.
3. Interview with F. Mansell and J. L. Chown.
4. E. & S. 12.1.1962.

not start making an agreement when we don't believe there should be such an office."[1] The Group would support the Mayor for the vacancy. The Conservative leader had stated that "my group would welcome a peace pact,"[2] but the Conservative Group felt that it was entitled to the vacancy on the principle of proportional representation. Birch said that if the Labour Party had been prepared to discuss a general policy on the allocation of Aldermanic seats, "it is possible we should have supported Mr. Davies.... The Socialists have themselves to blame."[3]

For the January meeting of the Council when the election to the Aldermanic vacancy was to take place, all members of the Council were present except the Mayor who was very ill, just discharged from hospital and thought to be on the brink of death.[4] The appointment of a Chairman of the meeting was the first item of business. The Mayor from his hospital bed had chosen the Labour Alderman, C. B. V. Taylor, to be the Deputy-Mayor on the death of Mash. Taylor told the Council that he

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1. ibid.
2. E. & S. 28.12.1961.
3. E. & S. 25.1.1962.
4. He died 8 months later.

could not preside unless chosen by the Council. The Conservatives, realising that for the first time since 1952 they had a majority, elected to the chair by 30 votes to 29 Alderman Dr. A. Byrne-Quinn. Then followed the Aldermanic election. The 22 Labour votes were cast for the Mayor, while 23 Conservative votes were cast for Councillor A. H. Windridge.[1] Since he came from a safe Conservative seat, the Conservatives thought that they could hold a by-election quickly and then they would control the Council by 31 votes to 29, thus making nugatory the casting vote of the Mayor. As they began to seek a candidate, they found that they had miscalculated, for Windridge was due to retire in May 1962 and section 67 of the Local Government Act 1933 prevented them from filling the vacancy before the May elections, since it was laid down that if there is less than six months of the Councillor's term due to run before the May elections, then the vacancy must be filled along with the others at the annual elections. Thus the Mayor still held the balance between 29 Labour and 30 Conservative members.[2]

The local paper, hitherto hostile to the Labour Group, condemned the Conservative Party for flinging down

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1. E. & S. 22.1.1962. C.M. 22.1.1962.
2. E. & S. 23.1.1962.

the political gage and reopening warfare[1] by not voting the Mayor to the bench. It called for an end to the "wrangling and wangling."[2] In the Labour Group a significant number wanted to repudiate the promise not to nominate for the Mayoralty in view of the Conservatives' action in taking the Aldermanic vacancy, but the original promise was re-affirmed by a small majority,[3] and M.P. Birch was chosen Mayor-elect at a private meeting of the Council in February.[4]

The May elections were awaited. It was expected that they would resolve the deadlock. In fact they produced the worst situation so far. The local paper said after the declaration of the poll that "one of the biggest municipal rows in Wolverhampton's history is likely to follow."[5] Labour gained one seat from the Conservatives, thus making the parties equal with 30 members of the Council apiece while the Mayor held the deciding vote.[6] Thus at the Mayor-making ceremony Davies would hold the deciding vote, and if Birch were then elected Mayor, the Conservatives would be in control. Labour claimed that the elections were a Labour victory and that "it

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1. ibid.
2. E.&S. 1.2.1962.
3. E.&S. 23.2.1962.
4. E.&S. 26.2.1962.
5. E.&S. 11.5.1962.
6. ibid.

would seem contrary to Labour Party policy to allow a Conservative Mayor's casting vote to be used against the implementation of our policies."[1]. Some Labour members canvassed the idea that they should not let Birch be elected Mayor, but that they should choose one of their defeated candidates in the elections for the office.[2]. Some Conservatives suggested that one of their aged Aldermen should retire and make way for a Labour member to enable Labour to have a majority. "Forward a Sir Galahad! A Conservative Alderman willing to give up his seat," cried the paper,[3]. but none could be found. Some others suggested that Birch himself should give up his Aldermanic seat, and be, like Davies, a Mayor who was neither a Councillor nor an Alderman.[4]. The Young Liberals' Association stated that "a public referendum should be held to elect a new Mayor."[5].

The two Groups planned to meet on May 14th, a week before the Mayor-making ceremony. On May 13th, the leading members of both Groups met at the house of a

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1. ibid.
2. Interviews with G. J. Costley, A. Garner and E. Mitchell.
3. E. & S. 14.5.1952.
4. ibid.
5. ibid.

Conservative Alderman, H. T. Fullwood: the first time the leaders had come together officially to discuss the political situation in Wolverhampton since the crisis broke. They devised "an unprecedented agreement," "a triumph for reason," "a compromise worthy of the wisdom of Solomon."[1]. A pact was drawn up by Birch and signed by both sides. It provided that Birch was to be Mayor, but during his term of office he was to remain neutral and not to vote on any issue, even on Aldermanic elections. If a tie seemed likely when the Mayor would have to use his casting vote, a Conservative member would leave the Council chamber. "The Mayor elect has readily given his solemn pledge to remain neutral and not at any time during his year of office to exercise his right to vote in the Council chamber. To obviate any embarrassment which might be caused by the Mayor being forced to give a casting vote, one of the Conservative members would refrain from voting should there be a danger of an equal vote." Birch said "I have always felt that the Mayor should be neutral, and in agreeing I am not going against any of my principles."[2]. Thus the Conservatives were to gain the Mayoralty and the

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1. E. & S. 15.5.1962.
2. ibid.

Labour Party to maintain control.

The pact was not greeted with approval by all members of each Group. A significant number of the younger Conservatives objected to signing away the possibility of power in order that their leader might enjoy the delights of the Mayoralty. They argued that since Davies might be too ill to attend the Mayor-making ceremony they might win both the Mayoralty and control. But the pact was accepted by a majority.[1] In the Labour Group the pact was adopted by only 15 votes to 13. The minority contended that Conservatives could never be trusted: they would dishonour the pledge in order to take power. The Labour leaders must have been befuddled with Fullwood's drink to have agreed to such a proposition. The leadership claimed that the Labour Group was assured of control. The agreement was so public that the Conservatives would never dare abuse it: and by signing it the Conservatives had proclaimed that they were more interested in the honours of office than in implementing their principles and policies. At a crucial juncture a letter from Davies was read, which moved the Group almost to tears. He begged them not to make a dying man give his casting vote for a Labour Mayor

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1. Interview with S. Brindley.

but to let him enjoy his final meeting free from squabbling. It was so agreed.[1.]

Birch was elected Mayor. He shook hands with the Queen. He kept his pledge and remained neutral during his term of office.[2.] Labour stayed in control. At the municipal elections of May 1963 Labour gained 4 seats, thus having a majority of 8 in the Council.[3.] The Mayor for the year was a Labour nominee.[4.] During the municipal year 1963-4 two Conservative Aldermen died and were replaced, against Conservative opposition, by Labour Councillors.[5.] At the municipal elections of May 1964 there was no change.[6.] For the Aldermanic elections 7 of the 8 retiring Aldermen were Labour. The Conservatives did not oppose them, hoping that the Labour Group would support their single candidate. But the Labour Group took all the seats, replacing Windridge by a Labour Councillor,[7.] whose former seat was filled

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1. Interviews with Mrs. G. Bagley, G. J. Costley and A. Garner.
2. e.g. E. & S. 24.7.1962.
3. E. & S. 10.5.1963.
4. E. & S. 21.5.1963.
5. C.M. 24.2.1964, 23.3.1964.
6. E. & S. 8.5.1964.
7. C.M. 25.5.1964. E. & S. 25.5.1964.

at a subsequent by-election by another Labour member.[1] The Labour Party also took the Mayoralty again.[2] The composition of the Council at the end of June 1964 was that Labour had 10 Aldermen and 27 Councillors, while the Conservatives had 5 Aldermen and 18 Councillors, giving Labour a majority of 14.

1961 and 1962 were a time of great strain for the chief officials of the Corporation. The Town Clerk, although never criticised in public, was attacked in private by both parties. Labour members blamed him for the fiasco in Court; they felt his legal knowledge inadequate, and they regarded him as incompetent, especially when it was revealed that a block of flats containing 80 voters had been missed off the electoral register in the marginal ward of Graiseley.[3] The Conservatives blamed him for conniving at the Labour plot to retain control by turning off all their Aldermen.[4] He said that he found his position very difficult.[5] He preferred to work with a Council in which one party had a working majority. In the balanced

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1. E.&S. 26.6.1964.
2. E.&S. 25.5.1964.
3. E.&S. 28.3.1962, 29.3.1962, 11.4.1962.
4. Interview with S. Brindley.
5. Interview with R.J. Meddings.

situation each party was waiting to take up anything for its advantage against the other. If, for example, an official objected to the policy of one party, the other took up his point and used it to score off the other. His major objection was that business was not dispatched with speed and consistency. He gave as an example the story of the Health Committee's proposal for a compulsory purchase order for some houses in a clearance and redevelopment area. This recommendation came before the second January 1962 Council meeting.[1] The Mayor was absent, sick in hospital, and the Conservatives elected Dr. Byrne-Quinn to the chair. They proposed that there should be no compulsory purchase order, but a clearance order instead, which would allow the individual owners to retain the ownership of the land and to develop it themselves. The debate was a battle between the Labour advocates of municipal enterprise and the Conservative advocates of private enterprise. The officials had advised a compulsory pruchase order for technical reasons, because the individual owners were often unknown, and the area could be cleared and developed in one piece only if a compulsory

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1. C.M. 22.1.1962.

purchase order was made. The Conservative Chairman of the meeting gave his casting vote for the Conservative amendment.[1] The committee reconsidered the matter and at the next Council meeting, which the Labour Mayor was able to attend, the original Labour motion was passed.[2]

The way in which party conflict in an evenly balanced Council disrupted the business of the Council is seen also from the adventures which befell the motion of a Conservative Councillor, P. T. W. Farmer, that all Council houses should be offered for sale to the tenants. He had moved a similar motion for years and the latest one was due to be discussed again at the November 1961 Council meeting. It was the last item on the agenda.[3] About 4 p.m. some Labour members realised that they could embarrass the Conservatives by rushing through the agenda and reaching his motion while he was out of the chamber taking tea. The paper commented that "all thirteen items on the agenda had been disposed of with surprising speed."[4] No.14 was Farmer's motion. A Labour Councillor moved that it be struck from the agenda

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1. E. & S. 23.1.1962.
2. C.M. 19.2.1962.
3. C.M. 27.11.1962.
4. E. & S. 28.11.1961.

in view of Farmer's absence, which he said was a discourtesy to the Mayor and members. At 4.24 p.m. the meeting came to an "abrupt end." Farmer later said, "I went out for a cup of tea. We had such a lot of items on the agenda I did not expect my motion to be reached so quickly." The "ouppa controversy" raged in the correspondence columns of the press. Labour members condemned tea-tippling Tories for their absences while such items as old peoples' welfare, water supply and slum clearance were being discussed. "Catching these gentlemen out is quite easy. The difficulty is in catching them in." Conservatives attacked the Labour Party for "rattling through the agenda", working a "childish strategem" and for conducting "the slickest Council meeting I've ever known."[1.]

The motion came up again at the first meeting in the new year.[2.] It missed being passed by the slightest accident. The Mayor was absent, ill again. The Labour Group proposed its leader Mansell to act as Chairman; the Conservatives proposed Alderman Homer. Mansell was elected by 27 votes to 26. Homer himself

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1. E. & S. 30.11.1961, 2.12.1961, 5.12.1961.
2. C.M. 1.1.1962.

did not vote and a few seconds after the voting another Conservative arrived, too late to vote. The Labour members moved an amendemnt to Farmer's motion that a detailed report should be made on the full implications of the scheme to the tenants and the local authority. 28 voted for and 28 against. Mansell gave his casting vote for the Labour amendment.[1] The report came before the March Council meeting and the Labour Party moved that there be no sale. A Conservative amendment to sell was lost by 30 votes to 29, with the Mayor's vote again decisive.[2] Davies had managed to attend this meeting.

Council house rents were another topic of party conflict at this time. The Minister of Housing and Local Government had until February 1962 granted a dispensation to members of the Council who were Council house tenants enabling them to speak and vote on questions concerning Council houses. But since he felt that the Conservatives had a majority on the Council he granted the dispensation in February only to allow the tenants to speak but not to vote, thus disfranchising

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1. ibid. and E. & S. 1.1.1962.
2. E. & S. 27.3.1962.

15 Labour members.[1] The Conservatives thus were able easily to pass a resolution that a differential rent scheme be formulated.[2] The Labour Party escaped from this predicament by reforming the membership of the Housing Committee, replacing all Council house tenants by non-Council house tenants, thus ensuring that their members could vote in committee. In this way they could prevent any differential rent scheme from emerging from the committee.[3] Subsequently the Minister granted the dispensations, but only after great Labour protests.

Bitterness between the parties during this period was more intense than for some years. In June 1961 Councillor Farmer referred to the Aldermanic bench as "once a seat of merit and now a bench of dishonour."

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1. The Minister's policy on such dispensations was outlined in Circular 30/56 of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, May 1956, Voting by Councillor Tenants on Rent Policy. He would grant a dispensation, if a policy was likely to be adopted "to which the majority of the Council were opposed." The Guardian reported, "Normally the Minister grants a dispensation where it seems likely that without it the view of a majority of members will not be carried." 3.6.1964.

2. C.M. 26.2.1962.

3. E.&S. 16.5.1962, 30.5.1962.

A Labour member said "he is an ignorant devil." Cries for apologies and withdrawals were uttered.[1] In the debate on compulsory purchase in January, a Labour Alderman shouted at the Conservatives, "For years now you have had your pound of flesh, you Shylocks." Objections were immediate.[2] The Labour Party complained that the Conservatives were boycotting the Mayor, being conspicuously absent from Mayoral functions. "Nothing short of disgraceful," claimed the Chairman of the Borough Labour Party.[3] The Mayor described himself as "hung, drawn and quartered," but "in my heart, there is no bitterness towards anyone."[4] The Conservatives accused Labour Councillors, especially the married women, of claiming excessive expenses,[5] and alleged that a Labour Councillor had received preferential treatment in the allocation of a new Council flat.[6] Both charges were disproved, and condemned as unfair by the local

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1. E. & S. 27.6.1961
2. E. & S. 23.1.1962.
3. E. & S. 21.8.1961.
4. E. & S. 27.3.1962.
5. E. & S. 5.6.1961, 6.6.1961, 7.6.1961, 8.6.1961, 10.6.1961.
6. E. & S. 27.3.1962.

press, but they left a nasty taste and were not contributory to any reconciliation between the parties.

The Labour M.P. for North East Wolverhampton, John Baird, became involved in the controversy. In March 1962 on an adjournment motion in the House of Commons he criticised the Minister of Housing and Local Government for refusing to grant a dispensation to the members of the Council who were Council house tenants, and he accused Enoch Powell, M.P. for South West Wolverhampton and Minister of Health, of putting pressure on his colleague to refuse the dispensation.[1.] Earlier in the year, when the Conservatives had voted Windridge and not the Mayor to the Aldermanic bench, he said that Davies "should have been treated with more consideration and respect by these little squirts who call themselves Conservatives."[2.] The latter replied that "we do not wish to enter into a slanging match with Mr. Baird who is too well known for his habit of resorting to such language before fully acquainting himself with the facts. Therefore we treat his personal remarks with the contempt they deserve and without further comment."[3.]

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1. E. & S. 29.3.1962.
2. E. & S. 29.1.1962.
3. E. & S. 30.1.1962.

The controversy over the Aldermen stimulated a debate on the merits of the institution of Aldermen. The Labour Group, as in 1955,[1] called for their abolition. At the October 1961 Council meeting Labour members argued that the alleged advantages of Aldermen, their wisdom, experience and special aptitudes, had disappeared with the coming of party politics into local government. The system was not democratic and the office was used to give a political advantage to one side or the other.[2] The local paper agreed; "The office of Alderman had outlived its usefulness;" it was being used "solely in perpetuating a political ascendancy."[3] It had complained that the original non-political objectives of the Aldermen had disappeared. Elder statesmen, instead of being guaranteed a more secure place than Councillors, were liable to be cast out to make room for men of less experience in order to give one party the upper hand.[4] But a defence of the Aldermen was provided by the Conservatives. Brindley said that they had lasted for more than 1,000 years, and they gave to the Councils great practical advantages

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1. See above. Chapter 11, pp. 487-488.
2. E. & S. 24.10.1961.
3. ibid.
4. E. & S. 12.5.1961.

from their experience and they were a means of recognising and rewarding service.[1.] The Labour motion calling for their abolition was passed by the Council[2.] and sent to the Association of Municipal Corporations, whose Council as in 1956, rejected it.[3.]

The events of 1961 and 1962, from about February 1961 to May 1962, provoked more sustained interest in the work of the Council than ever before. More space was taken up in the press, particularly on the front page, with the crises which followed one after the other. The correspondence columns were full of letters about the Council. Some justified the positions of their respective parties; some called for reconciliation between the parties; some urged the removal of party politics from local government and one said "Some Sergeant-Major type, preferably a Communist, should get them into two lines and bang their heads together."[4.] But once Birch as Mayor had shown that he was adhering to the peace pact, the reporting of and the attention given to local government affairs subsided to the previous minor proportion of the newspaper's

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1. E.&S. 24.10.1961.
2. ibid.
3. E. &S. 25.1.1962.
4. E.&S. 1.2.1962.

coverage of events. The press and the majority of its readers were concerned primarily with scandals and rows. The normal routine of Council work would command few readers.

The Council in 1961 and 1962 seemed similar in many respects to the House of Commons in 1950 and 1951, when Labour then too held onto power by a handful of votes. But in Wolverhampton the Conservatives felt that they had won an electoral victory in May 1961, and were deprived of control by a Labour trick. The original bitterness of the Conservatives stemmed from Labour's refusal to join in an agreement about the sharing of the Mayoralty and the Aldermanic seats. It was intensified by Labour's refusal to discuss these matters with them and then by its illegal manipulation in the Aldermanic elections. The Labour Party on the other hand was desperate to remain in control and to keep the Conservatives in opposition. It was shaken by the High Court judgment, which also shattered its faith in the Town Clerk. For over a year each side sought to score off the other whenever an opportunity arose. What ended the conflict were the elections in May 1962, which far from resolving the deadlock offered the prospect of further bitterness. To avoid another year of dissension

was the motive behind the reconciliation between the parties. It would be wrong to judge the effect of party politics in local government from these events alone. They were crisis times, a purely temporary phenomenon, which could affect central government too. Indeed the crisis showed just how similar to the Parliamentary system is the Council system in Wolverhampton. Two parties face each other; the one the majority party holding all the positions of responsibility, the other the minority, the opposition party, whose function is to embarrass the governing party. Each party has its own committee to decide on policy and tactics in the Council. The chief officials of the Council, although striving to be neutral and to serve both parties, come to be the advisers of the majority party. But in central government there are no institutions corresponding to the Mayor or the Aldermen, and the crisis in Wolverhampton was intensified by the anomalous position of these two institutions. The Mayor found it hard to be a political figure, a speaker of the house and a constitutional monarch. In the end he was reduced to a constitutional monarch and an emasculated Chairman. The Aldermanic bench was revealed as anachronistic, able to be

manipulated so that one party could escape the consequences of electoral defeat. The crisis did not make the parties change their ways. In 1962, 63 and 64 they have carried on in their previous ways. No agreements have been made about the Mayoralty or the Aldermen. The events of 1961-2 could be repeated in the future.

Summary and Conclusions

At the turn of the century all the members of the Wolverhampton Town Council, except the few Labour representatives, were Independents. They did not stand at municipal elections as party candidates nor were their campaigns organised by political parties, either national or locally-based. In the Council they did not vote together in party groups: on each division there was a fresh coalition of members with no constantly recurring cleavage. No party took the responsibility for running the Council.[1.]

Contested elections were rare. Most members were nominated to the Council without opposition by business and professional colleagues, neighbours and fellow-worshippers. If a nomination was contested, each group emphasized the personal capacities of its candidate, his close attachment to the ward, his concern for its welfare and his opinions on controversial local topics. His party loyalties were not stressed. Most candidates and members, however, were members of

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1. In Mr. Bulpitt's terminology it was a "negative" party system. J.G. Bulpitt, "Party Systems in Local Government" Political Studies, 1963, pp. 11-35.

either the Conservative or Liberal parties; many were officers of the constituency and ward associations, and these allegiances were well-known in the town. At elections candidates were helped informally by members of their parties. But party involvement went no further; the policies advocated varied from candidate to candidate, from year to year and from ward to ward. It was an individual and not a party appeal.

The Liberal and Conservative parties kept out of municipal affairs for numerous reasons. Neither had a distinctive municipal policy which it wished the Council to implement. Their purpose was to gain and sustain support for an M.P. and not to run a Council. And since they shared the Parliamentary representation of the town, the Liberals in the East and the Conservatives in the West, they had no incentive to fight municipal elections to assist their Parliamentary campaigns. The work of the Council did not divide its members along party lines and it was thus impossible for party conflict about Council activities to arise in the elections. In addition the Councillors were of a fairly homogeneous social group, manufacturers, professional men and traders, marrying into each others' families, worshipping together, attending the same social functions and not divided over social and economic matters. The divisions in the

Council were over the claims of particular wards, of particular Chairmen and their committees and of particular occupational groups for support for schemes which would primarily benefit them. Party conflict was irrelevant.

This traditional style and process was disrupted first in the late 1880s and 1890s by a group of Radical Liberals, mainly small shopkeepers from the East of the town, who campaigned consistently for temperance reform against Conservative brewers and publicans, and then from the 1890s by the Labour representatives, trades unionists, who championed a series of proposals to benefit the unions and the working class against both Conservatives and Liberals.[1] But by 1902 these groups had made little impact on the Council, for they could muster only a handful of adherents.

The Council first divided along party lines when it took over the responsibility for education from the School Board. Since its establishment in 1870 the School Board had been divided into groups of Nonconformist Liberals and Anglican Conservatives.[2] Elections for the Board were keenly fought and attracted more interest than Council elections. The electoral arrangements - voting at large and not by wards,

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1. N.B. there was no national Labour Party until 1900.

2. Roman Catholics usually supported the Anglican position over education, even though many were Liberals and Irish Nationalists in party allegiance.

each voter having as many votes as vacancies and a triennial contest for the whole Board - enabled and encouraged more people to vote in the Board than in the Council elections, and gave to the parties an incentive to organise their supporters to cast their votes for a particular list of candidates. When the Council replaced the Board as the town's education authority, this electoral battle became part of the municipal contests and the schism in the Board was reproduced in the Council. So accustomed did the members become to working together over education that their alliances persisted for other topics, for example, over the introduction of the Lorain system of tramway propulsion. From 1903 to 1907 more elections were contested than ever before and the Council divided along party lines more than ever before. But sectarian conflict declined as the clash between employer and employee became more prominent. Conservatives and Liberals began to combine to combat the growing force of the trades unions and Labour representatives.

The Conservative Party was the first national party to run official party candidates at municipal elections in Wolverhampton. The motive was not to achieve a specific Conservative municipal policy but to help Conservative prospects in the Parliamentary elections. In 1906 the Conservative M.P. for West Wolverhampton, Sir Alfred Hickman,

was defeated in a straight fight by the Labour candidate, T.F. Richards. The shock of this defeat stimulated the Conservatives to use municipal elections as "summer manoeuvres" before the main Parliamentary battle. Seats were contested solely to help the party to regain the seat and, when it was won in 1910, to keep it. The tactics were to crush Labour municipally and to woo Liberals to the Conservative cause.

The divergence between the municipal and Parliamentary boundaries had important implications for the parties' attitudes to municipal affairs. The West Wolverhampton constituency consisted almost wholly of wards within the borough boundary, while the East Wolverhampton constituency was made up mostly of area beyond the borough boundaries, save for a few wards inside. The Conservative and Labour parties were predominantin the West and thus used the municipal elections to help their Parliamentary campaigns, all the more intensely since neither had a sure majority. The Liberals had really withdrawn from the West in return for a Conservative withdrawal from the East; here the Labour Party was weak and the Liberals very strong, but since the constituency did not contain much of the borough and since the Liberal majority was secure, the Liberals had little incentive to contest municipal elections. The Liberals maintained

their position for so long in the East largely because the Conservative and Labour Parties concentrated their efforts in the West and put forward no serious challenge to the Liberals in the East, so that the electorate was not faced with the need to choose between capital and labour. The Liberals, comfortable in the East, let the others fight it out in the West. But the Liberals were in the long run a declining party, since they could not command the resources available to the other parties. The Conservative Party was financed by the profits of the Birds' custard powder company, while the Labour Party was financed by the unions who nominated and sponsored the Labour candidates. The Liberals received no comparable backing. They had begun to decline after the Home Rule crisis; they were revived temporarily by the Education controversy but quickly fell back again, an anachronism in the conflict between labour and capital.

Before 1914 the Liberals did not put forward official Liberal municipal candidates, although some members of the Council and candidates were members and officers of the Liberal Party, and in the Council these "Liberals" did not meet to co-ordinate voting and policy. There was no Liberal municipal policy. The Conservative Party ran official Conservative municipal candidates not to promote a distinctively Conservative municipal policy but to assist its Parliamentary

campaign. In the Council its members did not meet together to plan an agreed course of action. The Labour Party ran official Labour candidates both to assist its Parliamentary campaign and to promote Labour's municipal policy, and Labour members of the Council met together to plan their activities in the Council. The purpose and practice of each party were different.

In the 1920s and 1930s the number of Labour members of the Council increased, following the widening of the municipal franchise in 1918 which enabled more working class people both to vote and to be eligible for Council membership, and after the extensions of the borough boundaries in 1927 and 1933 which acquired for the town more working class areas. This growth was somewhat held back by the split in the local Labour Party following the expulsion of W.J. Brown from the official Labour Party for supporting Sir Oswald Mosley. Brown, M.P. for West Wolverhampton from 1929 to 1931, carried many active members of the Labour Party into his Independent Labour Association, and so debilitating was his withdrawal on the local Labour Party that its candidate in the 1935 General Election was pushed into third place behind Brown. From 1931 to 1937 the I.L.A. and the Labour Party fought each other at municipal elections, although on the Council their representatives worked together harmoniously. After Brown gave up interest in the town,

they merged and the number of Labour members grew again.

Many of Labour's gains in the interwar years were at the expense of the Liberals, who became concentrated in a few East end wards. Informal arrangements between Liberals and Conservatives not to fight each others candidates were consolidated into a firm pact in the 1920s, which resulted in the Liberals running down their electoral organisation to rely on the Conservatives[1] and in the shrinking of the number of Liberal members of the Council.

In these years new types of Independents appeared, other than Liberals or Conservatives in national politics who either had or had not the support of their parties in municipal elections. The Councillors for the areas recently gained by the borough, who had often been members of their district councils, called themselves "Independents" to signify not so much their freedom from party connections as their devotion to their wards. In the new Penn Ward a Ratepayers' Association was formed to send representatives to the Council to advance the welfare of the ward, and to provide social functions for an area devoid of social amenities.

The various categories of Independent were all anti-Labour, united in opposing Labour's distinctive policies. In the 1930s the electoral alliances of the 1920s grew into an anti-Socialist "caucus", a regular meeting of all non-Labour

members of the Council held before the full Council meeting to plan their policies and voting at the next Council meeting. It was a copy of the Labour Group and was instituted because the growing Labour Party, acting as a single disciplined block, might have won its way against a disorganised number of Independents.

In 1945 the Labour Party won both the Parliamentary seats and gained a majority on the Council for the first time. Under the stimulus of defeat the Conservatives, as after 1906, reorganised their Association and their new candidate, Enoch Powell, pressed that all non-Labour candidates and members of the Council should stand as official Conservatives.[1] Most agreed, but the Penn Ratepayers' Association resisted, until by 1955 their candidates had all been defeated by the Conservatives. The Liberals had lost their last member of the Council in 1947; thus from 1955 the Council has consisted of only Labour and Conservative members. During the 1950s and 1960s the main contestants in the municipal elections have been the Conservative and Labour Parties. No other party gained seats on the Council. A new

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1. This was a policy urged by the Conservative Central Office. See Lord Woolton, The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Woolton, London, 1959, pp. 340-342.

Liberal Party emerged in the late 1950s to fight in some safe Conservative seats but with no success; the Communist Party too put up some candidates in Labour strongholds with equal failure. No genuine Independents have stood; all candidates were the nominees of national parties with Parliamentary aspirations and distinctive municipal programmes. The Conservatives evolved their policy as an alternative programme to that of the Labour Party, which lost control from 1949 to 1952 but regained it in 1952, never to lose it again, although from 1961 to 1963 the Council was evenly balanced at 30 members for each side.

In 1955 the Labour majority for the first time took all the Chairmanships, which had previously been shared between the parties. From then the Parliamentary pattern of a majority government party, taking all the positions of responsibility, facing a minority opposition party, was imposed on the Council. Now all members of the Council are party nominees, who profess the same policy and vote together in disciplined party groups. Parties are involved in Council affairs both because they wish to use municipal elections to strengthen their positions at a General Election and because they have programmes which they wish the Council to implement.

The growth of the parties' interest in the Council has

increased the amount of public participation in municipal affairs. More seats are contested now than at the turn of the century; more people want to be Councillors. A greater proportion of the town's population vote now than in 1900, since more seats, and even safe seats,[1] are fought, and since the franchise is broader than in 1900. More people now have the chance to vote and become members. Parties have enabled more people and a wider range of people to become members and they have enabled the wishes of the people to be transformed more effectively into Council policy. Further, the great increase in the responsibilities of the Council over the period has brought it into closer contact with the lives of more and more people. Growing apathy is illusory, a result of faulty memory and developments in the press. Since 1900 the local press in the quest for increased circulation has become less local, seeking to cater for an area far wider than Wolverhampton itself. It has also included more national news, gossip and photographs. Reporting of Council affairs has dwindled, but is in itself no indication of actual interest.[2]

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1. These are fought to help the Parliamentary prospects of the minority party.

2. On apathy elsewhere see J. Bonnor, "Public Interest in Local Government", Public Administration, 1954, pp. 425-428, and NALGO survey, "Interest in Local Government", Public Administration. 1957, pp. 305-309.

Voting behaviour in Wolverhampton's municipal elections has come more and more since 1945 to correlate with social class. There are three types of ward: safe Labour, where the working class predominate, living either in Council houses, or privately rented property dating from before 1914; safe Conservative, where the middle class predominate, living in private houses, either owner-occupied, or rented dating from after 1914; and marginal, where the social composition is fairly evenly balanced. But in 1900 social class was not the only major determinant of voting behaviour. Religious loyalty tended to divide people of similar social position into Conservatives if they were Anglicans, and Liberals if they were Nonconformists. The working class was divided between the skilled men, organised in trades unions, who supported the Labour Party, and the unskilled, not so strongly unionised, who supported any party but Labour. Since 1945 the religious factor has diminished, although Methodism and Liberalism still retain close links, and the working class has become more homogeneous and attached to Labour while the middle class has coalesced around the Conservative Party.

The turnout of the electorate at an election is influenced by three inter-related factors: the socio-economic composition of the ward, its safeness, and the intensity of party activity there. Turnout is lowest in safe Labour wards, highest in the marginals and in between in safe Conservative

seats. In the marginals, where the result decides which party will control the Council, the parties are most active; in safe seats the fights are often merely token contests. Turnout rises with the increase in the number of parties fighting in the ward, which enables their supporters to have the chance to cast their votes. The middle class electorate, better educated, more politically conscious and more sensible of the duty to vote than the working class, have a higher turnout than the working class.[1.]

In 1964 the wards have lost much of the individuality they possessed in 1900; now they are more integrated into the town and can be categorised into three socio-economic types. In 1900 each was a distinct entity. Swings in municipal elections were not uniform, either in general direction or size. However, in the 1950s and 1960s both were very similar over the whole town. Municipal voting closely correlates with voting at General Elections; although the turnout in municipal

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1. For local government elections in other areas see F. Bealey and D.J. Bartholemew, "The Local Elections in Newcastle-Under-Lyme, May 1958", British Journal of Sociology, 1962, pp. 273-285, 350-368. A.H. Birch, "The Habit of Voting", Manchester School, 1950. J. Grundy, "Non-Voting in an Urban District", Manchester School, 1950. L.J. Sharpe, A Metropolis Votes, London, 1962.

elections is about half that for a General Election, the shares of the vote gained by the parties are roughly identical on both occasions. The uniformity of the swing throughout the town and the similarity between municipal and Parliamentary voting suggest that municipal candidates and local issues do not affect significantly the result of the polls. What counts are the national fortunes of the political parties; if one party can stimulate its supporters to vote, it can win; if it fails to arouse them to turn out, it loses. At the turn of the century municipal candidates and local issues decisively affected the result of the municipal elections.

Councillors in 1964 have not such close connections with the wards they represent as their predecessors in 1900. Fewer now work or live in their wards, and this alienation has gone further with Labour than Conservative members. This trend is partly explained by the different procedures used by the two parties to select their municipal candidates. The Borough Labour Party, concerned solely with municipal affairs, draws up annually a list of approved candidates, from which each ward party makes its choice. But the Conservatives have no Borough Party and no approved panel; their ward parties have greater autonomy than Labour's, and thus make their own

choice, subject only to slight supervision by the constituency associations. A Conservative ward party tends to select a candidate living in the ward, who has come to the notice of the selectors through his activities in the neighbourhood or in professional, business, social or cultural organisations. A Labour ward party, faced with a panel of candidates from the whole town, tends to select people from other parts of the town, who have made their reputations in the eyes of the selectors through activities in the party or their trades unions.

Other consequences flow from these different selection procedures. Because Labour members owe their positions on the Council to their work for the party, they value the involvement of parties in local government more highly than Conservative members, who, owing their seats more to informal contacts than party activity, are apt to regard parties in local government as inappropriate nuisances. Further, Labour members do not engage in such a wide range of extra-party activities as the Conservatives, whose lives are not so devoted to their party. Labour members tend to be first and foremost "politicians" and "party men"; and thus stick at Council work, even in opposition, more tenaciously than Conservatives, who without positions of responsibility on the Council tend to fall away from the Council, keen to engage again in their other social activities. The "party" looms larger in the lives of Labour than Conservative Councillors.

In 1900 Councillors were more the spokesmen of their wards, where they lived and worked, than 60 years later. They would urge benefits for their wards in open Council and numerous divisions would take place over this type of topic. Now Councillors advance the claims of their wards inside the party Groups or with the officials responsible for the particular services concerned. In open Council the conflict is between parties not between wards, or rather the conflict between the wards has been subsumed by the conflict between the parties, for each party represents a distinct type of ward; Low Hill against Merridale is the battle between Labour and Conservative.

The occupational composition of the Council has changed over the period. In 1900 it comprised manufacturers, professional men and shopkeepers, but by 1964 the first two groups had declined, the shopkeepers were in the same proportion of the Council, and working class men and women, retired people and white-collar workers had a considerable number of members. The falling away of the industrialists has many reasons. The extension of limited liability throughout Midland industry meant that, if a manufacturer did not live in the borough, he could no longer qualify for Council membership by reason of his business interest, and increasingly businessmen came to live beyond the borough

boundaries. The growth in the size of Midland concerns and their amalgamation into nation-wide enterprises ended the personal control of one man over his local family business. Business executives became more mobile, not staying long enough in one place to put down roots, and thus not able to develop an interest in the local community.[1.] The demands of business became more fierce. Thus businessmen had not the time, the interest and the opportunity to become Councillors, nor the incentives, for before the introduction of Protection and the derating of industry in the 1930s, businessmen had sought to be Councillors to ensure that rates were as low as possible; after these measures to assist industry were introduced, they seemed no longer to want to enter the Council. Since 1945 the businessmen on the Council have been in charge of small concerns, easily susceptible to one-man control; they have invariably been born in the town, and still live there. The political allegiances of the industrialists in 1900 were shared between Conservatives and Liberals, but the free trade policy of the

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1. See A.H. Birch, Small Town Politics, Oxford, 1959 and M. Stacey, Tradition and Change - a study of Banbury, Oxford, 1960.

Liberal Party increasingly drove them into the Conservative Party, which now commands the loyalties of those Councillors who are businessmen. The rise of the number of Labour members has curtailed the places on the Council available for businessmen, if they had wanted to become Councillors, but over the period the desire of industrialists to enter the Council has diminished.

In 1900 the professional element consisted of solicitors and doctors. By 1964 this group had declined; there were hardly any doctors, although solicitors were still significant, together with estate agents and auctioneers. Professional men have come more and more to live outside the town; the pressure of their work has increased, and for doctors in particular there is less incentive to enter the Council, since the health of the town has improved and Regional Hospital Boards were set up with places reserved for doctors. The political allegiances of the professional men have over the period been overwhelmingly Conservative.

The shopkeepers have been a constant element on the Council and very much of the same type, small businessmen with local roots, deeply interested in the policies of the Council. In 1900 most were Liberals and Nonconformists, except for the more substantial traders, who were normally Conservatives and also usually Anglicans. Since the 1930s they have almost all

been Conservatives, although a few were Labour. Those connected to the drink trade were all Conservative at the turn of the century and they comprised a sizeable part of the Council, which they entered to defend their trade against the attacks of the Radical Liberal temperance reformers. Their numbers declined as the temperance campaign evaporated and as they lost their independent status, becoming merely employees of breweries and no longer the owners and controllers of their own premises.

The working class has filled the places left by the dwindling groups. This element has consisted mainly of skilled men, especially railwaymen and engineers, the wives of such men and men after retirement from these occupations. Active membership of a trade union has been a common feature of the lives of such people. They were enabled to enter the Council by the extensions of the franchise to the whole of the working class and by the foundation and growth of the Labour Party, which has been the vehicle carrying the working class into the Council.

White-collar workers are more prominent on the Council now than in 1900. They can be divided into those with responsible positions and those without. The former have tended to be Conservatives and the latter Labour. That more of both are on the Council now than in 1900 is explained by the

growth of such groups in the population as a whole.

In 1900 the parties were very mixed occupationally, but in 1964 each of the two parties represented distinct sets of occupations; the Conservatives comprising the shopkeepers, manufacturers, professional men and higher status white-collar workers, and the Labour Party comprising working class occupations, women, retired people and lower status white-collar workers.[1]

Each party's adherents also belonged to distinct social associations, whereas in 1900 Councillors of all parties belonged to the same kinds of clubs. All members over the period have been inveterate joiners of associations. All patronised various ward-based organisations with social, cultural and entertainment functions, but Labour members seem to have joined fewer than Conservatives. The range of associations of Labour members has been much narrower than that of Conservatives. Labour members have been active in their trades unions, trades council, Co-operative Society, Friendly Societies and Council House Tenants' Associations; most of their time, however, has been taken up with party work. The Conservatives have

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1. For Leeds see B.M. Powell, A study of the change in social origins, political affiliations and length of service of members of the Leeds City Council 1888-1953, Unpublished Leeds M.A. thesis, 1958.

been less concentrated on party activities and involved in more non-party associations, their trade and professional associations, Building Societies, Rotary, Round Table, Freemasons, and various social clubs. These have performed the functions of meeting places for Conservative members and recruiting grounds for new members of the Council. Thus socially as well as occupationally and politically the Council has become polarised into two separate groups.

At the turn of the century religion played a more significant role in the life of a Councillor than 60 years later. To be a Catholic, a Churchman or a Chapelman had important political implications. But after 1945, when sectarian conflict had died, religion has not correlated with political allegiance nor does it loom so large in the lives of Councillors. Only the Catholics act together in a common cause and then only over one issue, education.

In 1900 many Councillors were related to one another by ties of kinship. Their families frequently intermarried and such ties cut across party lines. But the family groupings did not form solid voting blocks; very often they were split into opposing camps. Since 1945 family ties have still been important between Councillors, but they have not been so wide as in 1900, being limited to husband and wife and parent and child relationships, and all within

the same party, for there has been less marrying across party lines.

A popular view is that the calibre of the members of the Council has declined over the period, because the numbers of business and professional men have decreased and because the Labour Party has introduced "politics" into the Council thus driving away the "Independents" and substituting working class men and women and pensioners with less ability.[1] Complaints of the poor quality of Councillors, however, are old - going back to the 1880s - and they did not always blame party politics. Some people argued that parties should involve themselves in the Council to raise the standard of the Councillors. It is difficult to find objective criteria by which to measure a Councillor's calibre. Occupation does not correlate significantly with performance in the Council; within each occupational group, some have been good, some bad and some indifferent. The same is true of education. Age too is not an important indicator, for the average age of members and

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1. The Economist, 30.1.1960, pp. 401-413. The Times, 9.7.1962.

their age when first elected has been fairly constant over the period. Fewer members of the Council rise to become M.P.s, but this may be evidence not of a decline in quality of the Councillor but that Council work has become more rewarding and demanding than Parliamentary work, which has become less attractive over the years.[1] A tentative way to assess calibre is a personal judgment of the author, based on the member's performance in Council work. This kind of approach reveals that the bottom grade, those who make little or no impact on the Council, has stayed constant, that the middling grades, those who make some contribution, although over a narrow field, have increased, and that the top grade, those who have influenced decisions effectively over a broad range of issues, has fallen. But it should be borne in mind that the work and responsibilities of a Councillor have grown tremendously since 1900; more is expected of each one. The first rate Councillor cannot be found in any one occupational group, nor has he had a particular type of

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1. D.E. Butler, "Local Government in Parliament", Public Administration, 1953, pp. 46-47. B. Keith-Lucas, "Local Government in Parliament", Public Administration, 1955, pp. 207-210. J.M. Mackenzie, "Local Government in Parliament", Public Administration, 1954, pp. 409-423.

education, nor is he at a certain age. His performance depends on his natural ability, but most of all on the time he is prepared to devote to Council work. Some people who made a significant mark in life outside the Council made little impact inside, because they did not commit themselves wholehartedly to its service, and many who were first rate Councillors were insignificant outside the Council. Here Labour members score heavily, for they tend to devote themselves more than Conservatives to Council and party work, since their jobs are tedious and provide no outlets for their administrative and executive talents, and since they have fewer alternative interests to distract them from Council work.[1]

The Labour Party invented the Group, that is the meeting of Councillors of one party held before the Council meeting to decide their course of action in the Council meeting. The Party from its foundation expected its representatives to adhere to party policy, first because it financed their

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1. See also A.M. Rees and T. Smith, Town Councillors, London, 1964. L.J. Sharpe, "Elected Representatives in Local Government", British Journal of Sociology, 1962, pp. 189-209.

election campaigns and paid their expenses and secondly because as trades unionists they valued solidarity in collective action to achieve their ends, and unlike the other parties the Labour Party had a municipal policy to implement. In its early days when Labour Councillors were few, they met other party representatives to decide their policy in Council. But as their numbers grew, splits and divisions occurred more frequently, especially between the trade union and the I.L.P. elements in the party. Harmony prevailed in the early 1930s with the retirement of the I.L.P. members from the Labour Party to follow W.J. Brown and the adoption of the model standing orders of the Labour Party, which limited effectual membership of the Group only to members of the Council who were to decide how to implement the general policy of the party in the Council. Until 1945 the informal leadership of Davies and Hill kept the Group together, and from 1945 with the increase in Labour members to form a majority, the Group met more regularly and its sessions were more formalised.

In theory the Borough Labour Party should decide the general municipal policy of the party and the Group should be responsible for carrying it out. In practice the Group merely goes through the monthly agenda of the Council meetings and decides tactics there. Some special Group meetings are held to debate particular topics. It does not

initiate or formulate policy, since it has no time, merely living from agenda to agenda; it pronounces the party's attitude on policies drawn up elsewhere and presented to it. It arbitrates between the competing claims of Chairmen and their committees and it acts as an information centre to keep its members in touch with the work of all the Council committees. Unlike Groups in some other towns it has no "inner Cabinet" or "policy committee", meetings of the key Chairmen to plot future lines of policy. Such were tried in Wolverhampton but failed, because the Chairmen did not want their freedom of action limited by having to refer the work of their committees to the scrutiny of their colleagues who might hinder the achievement of their schemes. For the same reason no "Groups" for individual committees have emerged. Since the Group does not make policy, the absence of the officials from these party meetings is of little consequence. In any case a Chairman, on close relations with his official, could always relay his official's views to the Group if needed.

The two most important types of decision taken by the Group concern "patronage" and discipline. The Group decides whether it will take the Mayoralty, Aldermanic vacancy, Chairmanship or Committee position for itself or let the other party have it; if it takes it itself, it then decides

which individual member of the Group will occupy the position. All members are expected to follow Group decisions, although on matters of conscience abstention is allowed but not voting against a Group decision. When breaches of discipline take place, a rare event, the individual is warned by the Group to obey in the future. Repeated offences result in the withdrawal of the whip.

The Group has filled a void in the legal structure of the English Local Government system. The nineteenth century system, which envisaged Councils elected by a narrow franchise and performing few functions, had no need for a co-ordinating central body. But in the twentieth century as the functions of the Councils increased and as a wider electorate demanded even more from the Councils, the Group enabled both democratic control of the administration and a more effective dispatch of business to take place. It enabled the electorate to choose a group of men pledged to a certain course of action, who would be able on election to see that it was carried out. The Administration could be held responsible to the Councillors, and the Councillors to the electorate.[1]

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1. For the Group system at work elsewhere see: B. Barker, Labour in London, London, 1946. B.K. Bentley, Conventions in Local Government: a study of the party system in Coventry, Unpublished Birmingham University M. Comm. thesis, 1960. M. Cole, Servant of the County, London, 1956. H. Morrison, How Greater London is Governed, London, 1935. A. Rees and T. Smith op. cit. H.V. Wiseman, "The Working of Local Government in Leeds", Public Administration, 1963, pp. 51-69, 137-155.

The non-Labour members of the Council at first attacked the Group system as inhibiting the freedom of the individual Councillor. They held no formal meetings to discuss Council policy, but there were informal get-togethers at clubs and places of worship, and sporadic lobbying on specific topics. In the 1930s this traditional system ended, because the non-Labour elements feared defeat at the hands of a growing Labour Party, because two leading members of the Council, Bantock and Myatt, who had led the Council for 20 years, died without any comparable successors, and because the Town Clerk in the 1930s, J.B. Allon, did not run the Council as his predecessor, F.W. Howell, had done. To fill the vacuum the non-Labour members established the "caucus", modelled on the Labour Group, to co-ordinate their activities on the Council. It was an informal gathering at first with party politics not to the fore. But after Enoch Powell had revitalised the Conservative Party in the town, the caucus was transformed from an anti-Socialist caucus into the Conservative Group, and from a comparatively informal gathering into a well organised committee.

It performs very much the same functions as the Labour Group. Both meet at the same time to survey the Council agenda and plan a course of agreed action. But in some significant respects the Conservative Group is different from the Labour. Since the Conservatives have been in opposition

from 1952 and without Chairmanships from 1955, they have been thrown more on their own resources than the Labour members who could rely on their officials and committees. Conservatives, therefore, have not been reluctant to form an inner Cabinet to plot out future policy or to set up Committee Groups to go into detailed examination of policy. The Conservative Group is more highly developed than Labour's. Again, since it has not held office, it has had less to do than the Labour Group and has not been so rent by divisions over policy. Its discipline is not so formalised. It prides itself on giving its members more freedom than Labour members, but in practice there is no cross-voting. Like-minded people have tended to vote together, whether there was the threat of discipline or not. Since the Conservatives have no Borough Party, the Group has come to perform many of the functions which the Borough Party performs in the Labour Party, e.g. planning election campaigns, seeking out and discussing the merits of candidates and talking generally about municipal policy. Since it has not come into conflict with the constituency associations, it is less jealous than the Labour Group about its prerogatives. Its membership is not confined to members of the Council, but the agents, some officers of the constituency associations and the M.P. are allowed to attend.

Both Groups are concerned with Council policy. The course of action they decide upon is theirs. They receive no instruction from their national headquarters about what they should do. Nor would they accept orders from their local parties. They are both autonomous, local organisations. Thus the Council of 1964 resembles the House of Commons in that a majority Government party faces a minority Opposition party, and both would refuse to accept instructions from their respective party organisations.

Over the period other parties and groups have made an appearance either in the Council or at elections. The Liberals never stood as Liberals, but as Independents, and on the Council they never had their own Group. They forged electoral pacts with the Conservatives and participated in the anti-Socialist caucus. By 1947 they had lost all their members of the Council. The new Liberal Party of the late 1950s had no substantial connections with the old, and made little headway in the safe Conservative seats it contested.

Between 1930 and 1955 the Penn Ratepayers' Association flourished. Its main concern was to promote the welfare of Penn Ward, which returned until the 1950s three Ratepayer Councillors. They were firmly controlled by their Association, which demanded accounts of their activities on the Council and issued instructions to them. They participated in the anti-Socialist caucus, but came into collision with the

Conservatives when they refused to stand as official Conservative candidates. Conservative opposition in municipal elections finally vanquished the Association in 1955. No other Ratepayers' Association in the town had the success of the Penn Ward Association. The others were merely electoral organisations of friends to return each other to the Council. They did not perform the social functions for their wards, which the Penn Association did.

The Communist Party has fought occasional elections usually in safe Labour wards since the late 1920s, but has only received a small percentage of the votes cast. In the 1930s many of its members switched to the Independent Labour Association and finally to the Fascist Party. This floating element consisted largely of the unemployed, especially ex-Servicemen, who immediately after the war had supported the Ex-Servicemans' Association, which sent two members to the Council. Thus in the interwar years this same group supported a number of different organisations. After the 1939-45 war the Communist Party changed into an alliance of white-collar and skilled working men, whose aim was to embarrass the Labour Party to force it into a more extreme posture.

The term Independent has had many meanings over the period. In 1900 it referred to all but the Labour members.

After 1914 it referred to candidates who fought elections without the backing of their party machine,or who claimed so to fight but in actuality were supported. The latter appeared usually in safish Labour wards where the title Liberal or Conservative would not win much support. By using this device the Labour strongholds were sometimes invaded. Conservatives and Liberals used numerous disguises, Businessmen, Progressives, Civic Association, to conceal their party allegiances and win particularly Labour seats. The term Independent has also been used by rebels from the main parties, but since 1945 they have not fared well at elections. The Councillors of areas recently acquired by the borough in 1927 and 1933 called themselves Independents to signify their Independence from Wolverhampton itself and not so much from a party. Very few people have ever stood as Independents without the backing of some organisation. The few which have were clearly cranks. The electorate has shown that it prefers candidates from the two major parties; minor parties and Independents now achieve no success.

The "workshops" of the Council are its committees to which all the statutory powers of the Council are

delegated or referred.[1] The Council maintains an overriding supervisory power and it must decide whenever a rate is to be levied, money borrowed, property sold or a change from existing policy is to be undertaken. Although the committees have great scope, the Council can have the final word whenever it so wishes. The position of the committees in relation to the Council has scarcely altered over the period.

The chief figure in the committee is the Chairman. In theory they are elected annually but in practice they are permanent as long as their party retains a majority. They are, of all their committee members, closest in touch with the officials, and they chair only one committee. These three factors, their permanence, closeness to the officials and concentration on one committee, tend to elevate the Chairmen above their colleagues. But in 1900 other factors raised the eminence of the Chairmen even further. The Chairmen then performed many of the functions now carried out by the paid officials. The work was not so technical or complex; officials were fewer, and

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1. In the West Midlands there is no clear distinction between "delegation" to and "reference" to a committee. See H. Maddick and E.P. Pritchard, "The Conventions of Local Authorities in the West Midlands," Public Administration, 1958 pp. 145-155, 1959 pp. 135-143.

therefore the amateur Chairman involved himself in the details of administering the technical services. Further the few officials who were appointed, excluding the Town Clerk, were of a considerably lower social status than their Chairmen, who were some of the leading figures of the town. Thus the Chairmen were equal to their officials in technical expertise and superior to them in social status; they were the senior partners, while the officials were the junior partners. In 1964 the positions are reversed. The work of the Council has become more technical and complex, only to be administered by skilled professional men. Officials have increased and their qualifications and social status have risen.[1] Technically they are superior to the Chairmen, and socially too since the 1950s when Labour took all the Chairmanships. Further, the Chairmen of 1900 were not limited by party Groups, who set the framework within which the policy of each committee has to conform.

The Chairmen in 1900 were very possessive about the independence of their committees, which they ruled like petty empires. They resisted forcefully any attempts to limit their freedom, whether it was by the Finance Committee, General Purposes Committee or ad hoc committees. Their first decisive defeat came after the Varley scandal had revealed the need for a stricter scrutiny of committees' activities.

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1. See J.M. Lee, Social Leaders and Public Persons, Oxford, 1963.

The new Chairman of Finance Committee, A.B. Bantock, who was in that position for 20 years, extended greatly the power and informal influence of his committee. Under his regime it became the leading committee of the Council. His successors of both parties carried on his policy, so that in 1964 the Finance Committee and its Chairman exercise a very powerful check on the schemes of all spending committees. This development was aided in the interwar years by the depression which gave an incentive to the Council to curb expenditure, and after 1945 by the need to devise priorities for expenditure in order to keep the rates within certain bounds. Some Labour members tried to achieve these ends by establishing a kind of Cabinet of Chairmen to co-ordinate their policies, but, as we have seen, it failed. And with its failure, and the failure of the General Purposes Committee to fulfil that function, it was left to the Finance Committee to operate the limitations.

In 1900 committees chose their own Chairmen, usually their most senior, respected and expert members. In 1964 the Group of the majority party decides who shall be Chairman of which committee. Before 1945 the parties shared the Chairmanships; in 1945 Labour continued this tradition, but took more positions. When it was in a minority in 1949-52, the Labour Group refused to take any; in 1952-55 it again

shared them and from 1955 it took them all, arguing that it now had sufficient people of the right quality to take all the Chairmanships and that it was only proper for one party to be responsible for the whole range of Council work. Although the Conservatives protested, they now accept this situation, and if they were to gain a majority, they too would take all the Chairmanships.

It is hard to generalise about the role of a Chairman, since it depends on so many variables, the temperaments and abilities of the Chairman, his committee members and the chief officials and the nature of the work of the committee and the problems it faces. In 1964 they are still the most important of the elected members, able to shape the policy of the Council; but they are less powerful than in 1900, because their officials, their party Group, and the Finance Committee check them in ways unknown in 1900.

In 1900 the Mayor performed three major functions, as the ceremonial head of the corporation, the Chairman of the Council meeting and the political leader of the Council. As the ceremonial head he was a kind of monarch, personifying the town and its Council. He had to be rich to be able to dispense charity and patronage, and when a willing

one was found, he was chosen for more than one term of office. The rise of the Labour Party, whose members eventually qualified to be Mayors and yet were not wealthy enough to sustain the office, resulted in the Mayoralty gradually becoming a full-time salaried position, limited to a single term for each incumbent.

As Chairman of the Council the Mayor was a kind of Speaker of the House, responsible for controlling the debate. When the Council was evenly divided as in 1961-3 his casting vote was of crucial political importance. These two functions are now the Mayor's major concern, but in 1900 the Mayor acted also as a political leader, using his influential position to advance his pet proposals. Since the growth of the party Groups, however, this aspect has diminished and the political leaders have become the leaders of the Groups. The Mayors normally give up all participation in party politics during their terms of office when they become political eunuchs. Political leadership emanates from the majority party and not the Mayor.[1.]

In 1900 Mayors were chosen by a committee of ex-Mayors,

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1. See B. Keith-Lucas, The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors, Unserville State Papers No.3, 1961.

who selected a man on the criteria of his wealth, his seniority, his ability, his wife and his willingness. Since the 1950s this committee has become defunct. The Group of the majority party decides which party will take the Mayoralty for the year and then the Group decides which individual of the Group will be the Mayor. The criterion is seniority. For this reason the age of the Mayors and their length of service on the Council before being chosen as Mayor have increased considerably since 1900. All the Mayors over the period have been members of the Council. Outsiders have not been selected, since the office is regarded as a reward for service to the Council and since it is thought that a Mayor should be someone who is conversant with the Council and its practices.

An Alderman has no more power than a Councillor, but the position is regarded as more dignified. Like the Mayoralty it has not been given to outsiders but only to members of the Council as an honour for their service. In 1900 the criterion for being chosen for the bench was to have been a Mayor, and if no one was available for a vacancy, the senior Councillor was picked. Liberals and Conservatives shared the office to a large extent, and the Labour Party before 1945 often complained that its members were kept off by political prejudice. To 1945 an Aldermanic seat was secure; members were re-elected until they retired or died. After

1945, however, the seat became very unstable, for both the political parties used the bench to consolidate their majorities in the Council, turning off experienced and long-serving members from the bench. The crisis of 1961-2 was caused by a squabble over the manipulation of the bench to upset an electoral verdict. Conservatives have repeatedly tried to get an agreement with the Labour Party for sharing not only the Aldermanic seats but also the Mayoralty.[1] But the Labour Group has kept its freedom of manoeuvre, so that it can decide each case on its merits.[2] It has done so because it has feared that its narrow majority may be upset by having to honour such an agreement.

In 1900 the General Purposes Committee suggested to the full Council the name it recommended for an Aldermanic vacancy. Now the Aldermen are chosen in the same way as the Mayors. The majority Group decides which party shall take the seat, and then the Group of that party picks the individual. The

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1. See W. Thornhill, "Agreements between Local Parties in Local Government Matters", Political Studies, 1957, pp. 83-88. B. Keith-Lucas, "A Note on the legal aspects of agreements between local political parties", Political Studies, 1957, p. 88.

2. A sign of an "immature" system, claims Mr. Bulpitt, somewhat unfairly. J.G. Bulpitt op.cit. He thinks that disputes over patronage typify "immaturity". It would have been politically "immature" of the Labour Group to have made an agreement limiting its freedom of action and jeopardising its majority.

criterion again is seniority of service, thus explaining why the age of the Aldermen and their length of service on the Council has risen over the period.

Although the bench has normally contained one or two very old members, well past their usefulness, it is not cluttered with such people. Most of the Aldermen of the majority party are Chairmen and those of the minority party are its leading spokesmen. The bench has always held the leading figures of the Council.

The chief official of the Corporation has always been the Town Clerk. At the turn of the century he was paid double the salary of the next grade of chief officers. They were subservient to him. The work of the authority and the size of the Corporation were small enough for one man to oversee all its activities, and since the work was not very technical, a solicitor could easily involve himself in the affairs of all departments. His social standing was well above that of the other officials, more of an equal to the Chairmen. He was usually their guide, working with them in trying to promote their proposals. He was, further, not limited by party Groups laying down the framework of schemes. The personality of the Town Clerk was important. Horatio

Brevitt was an autocrat, whose long term of office reinforced his domineering tendencies. In his early days he had been an energetic supporter of the plans of his Chairmen, but in his final years he sought to block most developments; he was only toppled by the revelations of the Varley affair, which showed that he had been negligent. His successor, F.W. Howell, was a young man out to carve a name for himself. As autocratic as Brevitt, he ruled his officials firmly, yet coaxed his Council to follow his initiatives by squaring the two chief men in the Council, Myatt and Bantock. His successor, J.B. Allon, was at the end of his career, seeking a quiet resting place; he was a retiring man who sought to keep the administrative machine ticking over. But even if he had had determination to pursue a fixed policy of his own, he would have found it difficult, since the work of the Council was growing and becoming more technical. A single solicitor could no longer from the 1930s keep his finger on the pulse of all the Council's work. In addition, party was becoming more prominent in the Council, and the Labour Party particularly resented any suspicion that the Town Clerk was leading the Council. More and more the party Groups designed the framework of policy into which the Town Clerk had to fit himself. Allon's successor made no impact on the town, using it as a stepping stone to further promotion. His

successor, R.J. Meddings, had begun his local government career in Wolverhampton and was well-known to the Council. He is not a domineering individual, but has behaved as a servant of the Labour majority. He is not the boss of the other chief officers, whose salaries come close to his own. He is far more limited by them than Brevitt was by his officers, for so much of the work of the Corporation can be handled only by trained professional men, who would resent the Town Clerk's interference into their preserves. Again, he is far more limited by the Councillors than Brevitt was, since they are now organised into party Groups. These factors plus the change in the personalities of the Town Clerk account for the decline in the supremacy of the Town Clerk over the period. In 1900 he was one of its leading figures, almost the leading Chairman; now he is the Council's legal adviser, provider of secretarial services and responsible for the efficiency of the administration. He has become a Civil Servant and not a policy leader as he was in 1900.[1]

Divisions in the Council in 1900 had various origins.

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1. See T. Headrick, The Town Clerk in English Local Government, London, 1962.

Chairman clashed against Chairman, each seeking priority treatment for the claims of his committee's proposals. Councillors from one ward clashed against those from others, each one seeking to promote the welfare of his own ward as a matter of great urgency. Occupational group clashed against occupational group, each seeking benefits for its members and to ward off injury to their interests. On each issue there was a new coalition of forces. Alliances were temporary. But today the clash is between party and party: cross-voting is rare. The old controversies are to some extent fought out in the secrecy of the Group meetings and they rarely rise in open Council.

The battle between the parties is not artificial, imposed on the town from above, but the parties are truly local parties, having emerged from the local context, representing distinct sets of local interests. Around the Conservative Party have coalesced a group of interests which in 1900 were often fighting against each other. In response to the growing challenge of the Labour Party, they sank their differences to provide a more effective opposition. Around the Labour Party too are gathered a set of interests, which right from the turn of the century saw the party as a means to promote their aims. The members of the party Groups, however, have not joined the Council merely to advance the interests of the supporting elements. Other less concrete

motives influence them, such as the desire to be in the limelight, at the centre of decision-making or to care for the public interest. Despite these individual motives the parties still basically serve to secure advantages for their backers.

The manufacturers entered the Council to keep the rates low, when their industries were facing stiff foreign competition and were burdened by heavy railway rates. They also sought to see that no restrictions were placed on their enterprises, like smoke and effluent control, and that contracts came their way. Traders too had similar motives; the market traders were keen to see that their concerns were not harmed, and the drink trade sought to defend the very basis of the trade against the temperance reformers' onslaught. Solicitors sought some jobs within the patronage of the Council and to make reputations which would attract additional clients, and impress existing ones. Solicitors, estate agents, auctioneers and building contractors, were and still are, vitally interested in the land transactions of the Corporation. Doctors were concerned to promote the health of the town and to see that their hospitals were run efficiently. All these interests have been contained within the Conservative Party, which serves to promote their causes.

The Labour Party was founded to advance specific trade union objectives and more generally to promote the social

welfare of the working class. The former objective has declined in importance as the trades unions have grown stronger and thus had less need of the Council to assist their campaigns. Still, however, the Labour Party seeks to provide benefits mainly for the working class. It receives most of its votes and membership from Council house tenants, and they have always had their interests taken care of by the Labour Party. It early pressed that the Council should build and let houses; it has urged low rents and sought to promote the welfare of the tenants. This policy has brought in into conflict with the Conservative Party, representing the middle class owner-occupiers who objected to subsidising out of their rates Council tenants, whom they regarded in many cases as better off than they were themselves. Municipal ownership and enterprise has long been advocated by the Labour Party for a variety of activities in order to ensure that the public interest was not sacrificed to private profit. This policy, too, has met the opposition of the Conservative forces, especially businessmen and traders who objected to their rates subsidising municipal enterprises which would compete against their own. The Labour Party has pressed for wider social and welfare services; this policy has met the opposition of those who are wealthy enough to provide such services out of their own pockets and object to their rates assisting other people to get the services free. The Party,

too, in education, has tended to want to open up privileged schools to all children, a policy which has brought it into conflict with the supporters of such schools.

Thus the fight between the parties at local level has been and is still very real, over topics which people care deeply about. Each party has its distinct sets of supporters, as voters and members; they inhabit distinct social worlds, which rarely come into contact. On the Council and in Council elections these local matters are at stake; and the same contestants fight at General Elections and over national policy. There is no dichotomy between the local and national fights; they are part of the same battle.

No other English study has gone so deeply or over such a wide time scale into the political process of a Town Council. Other studies have touched on a few topics or examined a short period.[1] The present state of our knowledge of the way the processes in Town Councils has developed is such that no general theories are yet possible.[2]

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1. A list is given on pp. 810-812.

2. e.g. on the lines of Mr. Bulpitt's approach. See Bulpitt op.cit.

Indeed the author doubts if at any time a general theory will be possible. Each Town Council has evolved its own set of unique conventions to make the bare legal system work. This study suggests that each Town Council has its own unique political process, which is dependent on the physical, social and economic environment of the town, its political history and most of all on the personalities engaged in the process. No other town could possibly have had an Horatio Brevitt, a Sir Charles Mander, a Baldwin Bantock, a Frank Myatt, a Ted Lane, a Will Lawley, a James Beattie, an Alan Davies, a Brock Allon, a Ronald Meddings or a Denis Birch and the host of others, who have provided the dynamic element to the structure of politics of the Wolverhampton Town Council since 1900.

Table (i)

Population of Wolverhampton.

1750	7,454	1891	82,662
1801	12,565	1901	94,187
1811	14,836	1911	95,328
1821	18,380	1921	102,342
1831	24,732	1931	133,190
1841	36,382	1933	138,600(1)
1851	49,985	1951	162,672
1861	60,860	1961	150,385
1871	68,291	future circa.	250,000
1881	75,766		

(1) includes extended area.

Source: Census Reports.

Table (ii)

TRADES AND INDUSTRIES OF WOLVERHAMPTON.

This list is not complete but will convey some impression of the diversity of the industries carried on in the town.

A
Acetylene Welding
Advertising Signs
Agricultural Implements
Aircraft
Aircraft Components
Aluminium Castings
Aluminium Foil
Aluminium Products
Animal Foods
Animal Products
Annealing Covers
Arc Rectifiers
Art Metal Work
Axle Plates

B
Bakers' & Confectioners' Sundries
Bar Hoop & Sheet Iron
Barrels
Baby Cars
Barrows
Ball & Roller Bearings
Baths
Bathroom Fittings
Bellows
Bicycles
Blast Furnaces
Blow Pipes
Boilers
Boots & Shoes
Boxes (Cardboard)
Boxes (Deed, Cash and Despatch)
Brassfoundry
Bricks and Tiles
Bridge Building
Brewing
Brewers' Apparatus
Bronze Work
Bolts and Nuts
Bedsteads
Buckets
Builders' Ironmongery

C
Cabinets
Cabinet Fittings
Carpet Sweepers
Carriages
Castings
Carburettors & Floats
Chains and Hooks
Chairs (steel & wood)
Chemical Stills and Cylinders
Chemicals
Chimneys (iron & steel)
Chippings
Chromium Plating
Cisterns
Coal Hoppers and Shoots
Coachbuilding
Coal By-products
Coffee Mills
Collapsible Boats
Colliers
Confectionery
Copper Stampings
Connecting Rods
Conveyer Belts
Concrete Work
Corrugated Iron
Cranes
Curry Combs
Cupolas
Cylinder Blocks

D
Dairy Utensils
Darts
Dog Foods
Drain Pipes
Dry Batteries
Drop Forgings
Drugs
Door Furniture

E
Earthenware
Edge Tools
Electrical Requisites
Elevating & Conveying Plant
Electrical Engineering
Electro Plating
Engines
Enamelled Ware
Engineering
Experimental Testing

F
Fencing
Fenders
Fire Brasses
Fireproof Doors
Files
Filler Caps
Fire Screens and Coal Boxes
Fireproof Safes
Flanges
Forgings
Furniture
Freewheels

G
Galvanized Iron
Galvanized Baths & Plant
Galvanized Hollow-ware
Galvanizers
Gas & Electric Fittings
Gas Cookers
Gas and Steam Tubes
Garden Furniture
Gauges
Gates and Railings
Gear Boxes
Girders
Girder Rollers
Grinders

H
Hames
Hammers and Pincers

Table (ii) (continued)

Hardware
Hay Barns
Hearth Furniture
Heat Exchange Equipment
Hinges
Hollow-ware
Horse Shoes & Nails
Hospital Furniture
Hydraulic Engineering

I
Ice Cream
Iron Bridges
Internal Combustion Engines
Iron Founding
Iron Plates
Iron Tanks
Iron Work

J
Japanned Work
Jigs and Fixtures
Joinery

K
Keys and Key Blanks

L
Lathes
Leather Belting
Leather Goods
Lead-lined Vessels
Lead-lined Batteries
Lighting Buoys
Light Chains
Lamps
Lawnmowers
Lime Burning
Locks and Latches
Lubricating Oils

M
Machinery
Machine Bands
Machine Tools
Magnetos
Mechanical Handling Equipment
Medicinal Products
Millers
Malleable Iron
Motor Car Frames
Motorised Rickshaws
Motor Omnibuses (petrol and diesel)
Motor Lorries
Motor Cycle Accessories
Motor Car Accessories
Motor Wheels

N
Nails and Rivets
Number Plates

O
Oil and Grease
Oxygen

P
Paints
Plating
Patent Manure
Patterns
Patent Coat Hangers
Paving Slabs
Pick Makers
Pit-head Frames
Perambulators
Pipe Lines
Plastic Cisterns
Polishes
Polythene Kitchenware
Presses
Pressings
Pulley Blocks
Pulleys
Pumps

Q
Quarries

R
Ranges
Rayon
Radios and Applifying Equipment
Railway Fastenings
Refrigerators
Ready-made Clothing
Road Signs
Rolling Mills
Ropes
Rubber Soles & Heels
Rubber Transmission Belts
Rubber Mouldings

S
Safes
Sanitary Pipes
Sausage Casings
Saw Mills
Scythes
Shafts and Axletrees
Sherardizing
Shipping Tackle & Rigging
Soaps
Spades, Shovels and Forks
Springs
Stampings
Steel
Steel Castings
Steel Convertors
Steel Ladles
Steel Range and Knobs
Steel Stampings
Steel Flooring
Strong Rooms
Stove Grates
Stokers
Structural Steelwork
Swimming Baths
Switchgear

T
Tanks
Tapestries
Tarmacadam
Tiles
Tools
Tool Kits
Toys
Tram Car Suspensions
Traps
Trolley Buses
Trunks
Tubes and Fittings
Tyres
Tyre Retreading
Transparent Packaging Material

U
Umbrella Stands

Table (ii) (Continued)

V
Varnishes
Vertical Boilers
Vices

W
Wagons
Water Softeners
Water Tanks and Mines
Welded Fabrications
Window Gear
Wire Drawing
Wrought Ironwork

Source: Wolverhampton Official Handbook, 1963, p. 97.

TABLE (iii)

Standing Committees of the Council, 1900-01 (1)

Title	Number of elected members.	Number of coopted members.	Meetings.
Art	8	4	monthly
1 Sub.			monthly
Finance	13	0	monthly
Free Library	8	5	monthly
2 Subs.			each monthly
General Purposes	varies (2)	0	monthly
Health	13	0	2 per month
2 Subs.			(i) monthly (ii) when required
Lighting	13	0	2 per month
1 Sub.			when required
Markets	13	0	monthly
1 Sub			when required
Parks & Baths	13	0	monthly
1 Sub.			when required
Public Works	13	0	2 per month
1 Sub.			when required
Sewerage	13	0	2 per month
1 Sub.			monthly
Streets	13	0	2 per month
1 Sub			when required
Team	12	0	2 per month
1 Sub.			monthly
Tramway	13	0	2 per month
1 Sub.			2 per month
Watch	17	0	2 per month
1 Sub.			3 per year
Water	13	0	monthly
1 Sub.			when required

Total 15 Committees
15 Sub-Committees

\+ 2 Special Committees.

	Elected Members.	Coopted Members.	Meetings.
Housing of the Working Classes	14	0	2 per month
Public Improvement, Queen Square	9	0	when required

(1) Source: Council Year Book and Wolverhampton Red Book.

(2) See above pp. 420-421.

Table (iv)

Standing Committees of the Council, 1963-64 (1)

Title.	Number of elected members.	Number of coopted members.	Meetings.
Children	8	2	monthly
Civic Catering	10	0	alternate months
Civil Defence	10	2	alternate months
Cultural & Entertainments	10	0	monthly
1 Sub.			monthly
Education	19	3 + 7 nominated	monthly
6 Subs.			3 monthly 2 alternate months 1 quarterly
Establishment	9	0	monthly
Finance	14	0	monthly
2 Subs.			when required
Fire & Ambulance	10	0	alternate months
General Purposes	varies (2)		monthly
5 Subs.			when required
Health	15	6	monthly
3 Subs.			monthly
Housing	10	0	monthly
Markets	10	0	monthly
1 Sub.			when required
Parks & Physical Recreation.	10	0	monthly
Public Works & Estates	10	0	monthly
1 Sub.			when required
Rating and Payments	6	0	monthly
Sanitation	8	3	monthly
Sewage Disposal	10	0	monthly
Smallholdings	10	3	every 3 months
1 Sub.			every 3 months
Special Purchases	4	0	when required
Tenders	9	0	when required
Town Planning	10	0	monthly
1 Sub.			monthly
Traffic and Highways	10	0	monthly
Transport	10	0	alternate months
1 Sub.			alternate months
Watch	12	0	monthly
Water	10	2	monthly
Welfare Services	11	4	monthly
1 Sub.			monthly.

Total 26 Committees
23 Sub-Committees

- Council nominates to 31 positions on 19 other bodies.

(1) Source: Council Year Book and Council Minutes May 1963.

(2) See above pp. 420-421

Table (v)

Corporation Officers 1900-01.

	Salary.
Town Clerk's Department.	
Town Clerk	£900
Assistant Town Clerk	£200
Chief Committee Clerk	
Second Committee Clerk	
3 Clerks.	
Finance Department.	
Borough Accountant	£450
Chief Clerk	
6 Clerks	
Borough Treasurer.	£100
Improvement Rate Department.	
2 Collectors	
Cashier	
Clerk.	
Water Department.	
Water Engineer	£450
Draughtsman	
2 Clerks	
3 Foremen at Pumping Station	
Water Rate Department.	
Cashier	
3 Collectors	
2 Clerks	
Electrical Engineer's Department.	
Electrical Engineer	£300
Draughtsman	
Collector	
Junior Assistant	
Foreman Engineer.	
Borough Engineer's and Surveyor's Department.	
Borough Surveyor	£450
Assistant Surveyor	
General Assistant	
Draughtsman	
2 Clerks	
Manager Sewage Outfall Works	
Foreman " " "	
Manager Sewage Farm	
Foreman " "	
Parks Superintendent	
East Park Keeper	
Manager of Baths	
Highways Foreman	
Highways Inspector	
2 Building Inspectors	
New Street Inspector.	

Health Department.

Medical Officer of Health	£175
Chief Inspector of Nuisances	£160
Assistant " " "	
Borough Analyst	
2 Clerks	
Matron Borough Hospital.	

Free Library Department.

Librarian	£250
Assistant Librarian	
Science Master	
Hall Keeper.	

Art Gallery and School of Art.

Curator and Headmaster.	£325
2nd Master	
Science Master	
Assistant Secretary	
Hall Keeper.	

Team Department.

Manager	£150
Collector	
Clerk.	

Markets.

Superintendent	£135
Cattle Market Superintendent.	

Police Force.

Chief Constable and Director of Fire Brigade.	£450
Superintendent.	
91 other ranks.	

Inspector of Weights and Measures	£200
Hall Keeper	
Mace Bearer.	

Source: Wolverhampton Red Book and Council Year Book.

Corporation Officers 1963

	Salary.
Town Clerk's Department.	
Town Clerk	£4,300 + £200 as Clerk of the Peace.
Deputy Town Clerk	
Senior Assistant Solicitor	
3 Assistant Solicitors	
Chief Clerk	
Organisation and Methods Officer	
Mayor's Secretary	
Mayor's Sergeant.	
Treasurer's Department.	
Borough Treasurer	£3,650
Deputy Borough Treasurer	
Principal Assistant	
Chief Audit Assistant.	
Engineer's and Surveyor's Department.	
Borough Engineer and Surveyor	£3,650
Deputy Borough Engineer and Surveyor	
Deputy Borough Architect	
Deputy Planning Officer	
Chief Engineering Assistant	
Chief Clerk	
Park Superintendent	
Cemetries and Crematorium Superintendent	
Alderaley Stadium Organiser.	
Education Department.	
Director of Education	£3,650
Deputy Director of Education	
Principal School Medical Officer	
Senior School Medical Officer	
Principal Dental Officer	
Chief Inspector of Schools	
School Meal Organiser	
Chief Clerk	
Superintendent, Educational Welfare Service	
Youth Employment Officer.	
Transport Department.	
General Manager	£3,650
Engineer and Deputy General Manager	
Traffic Superintendent	
Chief Clerk.	
Water Undertaking.	
Water Engineer	£3,530
Deputy Water Engineer	
Chief Assistant Engineer	
3 Assistant Engineers	
Chemist and Bacteriologist	
Chief Clerk.	

Health Department.

Medical Officer of Health	£3,650
Deputy Medical Officer of Health	
Senior Assistant Medical Officer of Health	
2 Assistant Medical Officers of Health	
Chief Public Health Inspector	
4 Authorised Officers (Mental Health)	
Superintendent Health Visitors	
Supervisor of Midwives	
Superintendent District Nurses	
Supervisor of Home Helps	
Supervisor of Occupation Centre	
Chief Clerk.	

Welfare Services' Department.

Chief Welfare Officer
Deputy Chief Welfare Officer
7 Superintendents of Centres.

Children's Department.

Children's Officer
Assistant Children's Officer
3 Superintendents of Homes.

Housing Department.

Housing Manager
Deputy Housing Manager.

Civic Catering Department.

Manager.

Civic Hall.

Manager
Assistant Manager.

Public Library.

Chief Librarian.

Art Gallery.

Curator.

College of Art.

Principal
Registrar.

Municipal Baths.

Superintendent.

Civil Defence.

Civil Defence Officer.

Cleansing Department.

Superintendent of Cleansing and Salvage
Chief Assistant.

Markets.

General Manager of Markets
Chief Assistant.

Weights and Measures Department.

Chief Inspector
Public Analyst.

Sewage Disposal Department.

Manager	£2,135
Chief Technical Assistant	
Engineer Assistant	
Farm Manager.	

Smallholdings.

Supervisor.

Registration Department.

Superintendent Registrar.

Police Force.

Chief Constable	£3,100
Police Surgeon	
Deputy Chief Constable	
3 Superintendent	
258 all ranks.	

Fire and Ambulance Service.

Chief Fire and Ambulance Officer
Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Fire Prevention Officer
Ambulance and Transport Officer.

Source: Council Year Book and the Town Clerk.

Table (vii)

Daily Circulation of the Express and Star.

1887	17,610
1890	22,435
1900	41,287
1910	51,442
1920	83,358
1930	85,142
1940	110,282
1950	196,842
1955	198,734
1960	201,596
1962	215,016
1963	232,208

Source: Express and Star Office.

n.b.

July-December 1963,	235,347.	E.+S.	7.1.1964.
January-June 1964,	243,297	E.+S.	8.7.1964.

Table (viii)

Area of Circulation of the Express and Star. 1963.

	%
Wolverhampton	38.78
Walsall	10.56
Dudley	10.34
Bilston, Willenhall, Darlaston	8.69
Cannock, Rugeley	6.49
Wellington	4.32
Wednesbury	3.92
Old Hill	3.75
Brierley Hill	3.68
Shrewsbury	3.14
Stafford	3.06
Stourbridge	1.94
Bridgnorth	1.33

Source: Express and Star Office.

TABLE I

Political Composition of the Town Council from 1887.

Abbreviations:
A = Aldermen
C = Councillors
T = Total

Total 1888-1926:
Aldermen 12
Councillors 36
Total 48

Date		Lab.	Con.	Ind.	Lib.
1887-8	A	-	4	-	8
	C	-	19	4	13
	T	-	23	4	21
1888-9	A	-	5	-	7
	C	-	18	4	14
	T	-	23	4	21
1890-91	A	-	5	-	7
	C	-	19	3	14
	T	-	24	3	21
1891-2	A	-	4	-	8
	C	1	20	4	11
	T	1	24	4	19
1892-3	A	-	5	-	7
	C	1	24	4	7
	T	1	29	4	14
1893-4	A	-	6	-	6
	C	1	23	4	8
	T	1	29	4	14
1894-5	A	-	6	-	6
	C	1	23	3	9
	T	1	29	3	15
1895-6	A	-	6	-	6
	C	1	24	4	7
	T	1	30	4	13
1896-7	A	-	6	-	6
	C	2	24	5	5
	T	2	30	5	11
1897-8	A	-	6	-	6
	C	3	22	4	7
	T	3	28	4	13
1898-9	A	-	6	-	6
	C	5	20	4	7
	T	5	26	4	13
1899-00	A	-	5	-	7
	C	5	20	5	6
	T	5	25	5	13
1900-01	A	-	6	-	6
	C	4	19	4	9
	T	4	25	4	15
1901-2	A	-	6	-	6
	C	5	18	3	10
	T	5	24	3	16
1902-3	A	-	6	-	6
	C	4	19	3	10
	T	4	25	3	16
1903-4	A	-	6	-	6
	C	4	19	2	11
	T	4	25	2	17
1904-5	A	-	7	-	5
	C	4	15	2	15
	T	4	22	2	20
1905-6	A	-	7	-	5
	C	5	12	2	17
	T	5	19	2	22
1906-7	A	-	7	-	5
	C	5	12	2	17
	T	5	19	2	22
1907-8	A	-	7	-	5
	C	4	13	2	17
	T	4	20	2	22
1908-9	A	-	7	-	5
	C	2	16	2	16
	T	2	23	2	21
1909-10	A	-	7	-	5
	C	2	17	2	15
	T	2	24	2	20
1910-11	A	-	7	-	5
	C	3	18	2	13
	T	3	25	2	18
1911-12	A	-	7	-	5
	C	4	15	3	14
	T	4	22	3	19
1912-13	A	-	7	-	5
	C	3	17	3	13
	T	3	24	3	18
1913-14	A	-	7	-	5
	C	3	18	3	12
	T	3	25	3	17
1914-15	A	-	7	-	5
	C	3	18	4	11
	T	3	25	4	16

War - No elections

Table I, cont.

Date		Lab.	Con.	Ind.	Lib.
1919-20	A	-	7	-	5
	C	6	18	6	6
	T	6	25	6	11
1920-21	A	-	8	-	4
	C	7	17	7	5
	T	7	25	7	9
1921-22	A	-	8	-	4
	C	10	15	5	6
	T	10	23	5	10
1922-23	A	-	8	-	4
	C	9	17	4	6
	T	9	25	4	10
1923-24	A	-	7	-	5
	C	10	16	4	6
	T	10	23	4	11
1924-25	A	-	6	-	6
	C	11	16	3	6
	T	11	22	3	12
1925-26	A	1	4	1	6
	C	12	17	2	5
	T	13	21	3	11

Total 1927-1933:
Aldermen 13
Councillors 39
Total 52

1927-28	A	1	5	2	5
	C	12	16	5	6
	T	13	21	7	11
1928-29	A	1	4	3	5
	C	11	17	5	6
	T	12	21	8	11
1929-30	A	1	5	2	5
	C	12	16	5	6
	T	13	21	7	11
1930-31	A	1	4	2	6
	C	9	16	9	5
	T	10	20	11	11
1931-32	A	2	4	3	4
	C	9	17	8	5
	T	11	21	11	9
1932-33	A	2	5	3	3
	C	10	16	9	4
	T	12	21	12	7

Total 1933-1963:
Aldermen 15
Councillors 45
Total 60

Date		Lab.	Con.	Ind.	Lib.
1933-34	A	2	5	4	4
	C	12	16	13	4
	T	14	21	17	8
1934-35	A	2	5	4	4
	C	13	16	13	3
	T	15	21	17	7
1935-36	A	2	5	4	4
	C	11	17	12	5
	T	13	22	16	9
1936-37	A	2	5	4	4
	C	13	17	11	4
	T	15	22	15	8
1937-38	A	3	3	4	5
	C	13	17	11	4
	T	16	20	15	9
1938-39	A	3	3	5	4
	C	14	17	10	4
	T	17	20	15	8
1939-40	A	3	2	5	5
	C	16	16	10	3
	T	19	18	15	8

War - No elections

1945-46	A	9	1	5	-
	C	23	12	10	-
	T	32	13	15	-
1946-47	A	9	1	5	-
	C	26	11	8	-
	T	35	12	13	-
1947-49	A	9	1	5	-
	C	22	15	8	-
	T	31	16	13	-
1949-50	A	7	1	7	-
	C	19	17	9	-
	T	26	18	16	-
1950-51	A	7	1	7	-
	C	19	19	7	-
	T	26	20	14	-
1951-52	A	6	1	8	-
	C	22	18	5	-
	T	28	19	13	-
1952-53	A	8	7	-	-
	C	27	18	-	-
	T	35	25	-	-
1953-54	A	8	7	-	-
	C	27	18	-	-
	T	35	25	-	-

TABLE II (A)

The parties' shares of the vote in the annual municipal elections in Wolverhampton, and the size of the poll in percentages.

1896 - 1925.

Note: Abbreviations.

Con.	-	Conservative.
Lib.	-	Liberal.
Lab.	-	Labour.
Ind.	-	Independent.
Anti-Soc.	-	Anti-Socialist alliance.
Comm.	-	Communist.
DSSF.	-	Demobilised Soldiers' and Sailors' Federation.
N.C.	-	No contest.
*	-	Elected.

Sources: Express and Star

Wolverhampton Chronicle

Wolverhampton Red Book

The Chief Election Registration Assistant.

Blakenhall Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	DSSF.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896	*					N.C.	
1897	45		55			70.	1419
1898	*					N.C.	
1899	*					N.C.	
1900		*				N.C.	
1901	*					N.C.	1640
1902	*					N.C.	1678
1903	38	62				75	1662
1904	43	57				77	1726
1905	47	53				72	1765
1906		*				N.C.	1840
1907		*				N.C.	1879
1908	48	31	21			85	1884
1909		*				N.C.	1914
1910		*				N.C.	1917
1911	48		52			74	1937
1912		*				N.C.	2017
1913	51	49				71	2023
1919			75	15	9	49	3991
1920	43		57			54	4118
1921	45		55			60	4146
1922	24		76			54	4330
1923	43		57			61	4376
1924			*			N.C.	4464
1925			*			N.C.	4538

Dunstall Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896	*				N.C.	
1897		83		17	74	1208
1898	53		47		73	1208
1899			*		N.C.	
1900		*			N.C.	
1901	*				N.C.	1654
1902	59		41		69	1734
1903	38	62			69	1777
1904	40	60			73	1844
1905			*		N.C.	1838
1906		*			N.C.	1839
1907		*			N.C.	1849
1908	51		49		83	1849
1909		*			N.C.	1896
1910		*			N.C.	1923
1911	*				N.C.	1910
1912		*			N.C.	1996
1913		55	45		66	2029
1919		40	60		69	4031
1920		52	48		60	4080
1921	44		56		70	4201
1922			*		N.C.	4322
1923		56	44		56	4352
1924	47		53		76	4412
1925			*		N.C.	4470

Graiseley Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896		46	54		73	1062
1897	42		58		72	1062
1898	*				N.C.	
1899			*		N.C.	
1900	53		35	12	69	1380
1901	*				N.C.	1393
1902			77	23	69	1450
1903	60	40			64	1441
1904	*				N.C.	1474
1905			*		N.C.	1475
1906	65	35			73	1561
1907	*				N.C.	1580
1908	53		47		87	1611
1909	*				N.C.	1634
1910	51			Woman 49	62	1765
1911	54		46		73	1846
1912	41		31	Woman 28	70	1936
1913	51		49		66	1978
1919	52		48		56	4130
1920	63		37		54	4319
1921	*				N.C.	4456
1922	*				N.C.	4930
1923	44		56		45	5125
1924	48		52		65	5325
1925	65		35		64	5498

(iv)

Merrindale Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896	*				N.C.	
1897	*				N.C.	
1898	*				N.C.	
1899	*				N.C.	
1900	*				N.C.	
1901	57	43			61	1086
1902	*				N.C.	1114
1903	54	46			75	1112
1904	41	59			80	1123
1905	40	60			75	1084
1906	*				N.C.	1104
1907		*			N.C.	1105
1908		*			N.C.	1082
1909	*				N.C.	1100
1910	*				N.C.	1098
1911	48	52			75	1091
1912	*				N.C.	1129
1913	*				N.C.	1146
1919	48		52		48	2219
1920	64		36		59	2355
1921		*			N.C.	2379
1922	67		33		62	2550
1923	*				N.C.	2603
1924		*			N.C.	2631
1925	56		44		60	2702

(v)

Park Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896	*				N.C.	
1897	*				N.C.	
1898	*				N.C.	
1899	*				N.C.	
1900	*				N.C.	
1901	*				N.C.	1545
1902	*				N.C.	1604
1903	51	49			66	1659
1904	46	54			75	1690
1905	56	44			68	1719
1906	60	27		13	71	1749
1907	61		39		41	1750
1908	*				N.C.	1765
1909	*				N.C.	1784
1910		*			N.C.	1788
1911	*				N.C.	1798
1912	*				N.C.	1851
1913		*			N.C.	1878
1919	54		46		54	3784
1920		85	15		68	3856
1921	*				N.C.	3940
1922	*				N.C.	4016
1923		81	19		56	4060
1924	*				N.C.	4139
1925	*				N.C.	4343

St. George's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896	*				N.C.	
1897		*			N.C.	
1898		*			N.C.	
1899	*				N.C.	
1900		*			N.C.	
1901		*			N.C.	1589
1902	*				N.C.	1632
1903		*			N.C.	1607
1904	30	70			69	1586
1905	45	55			65	1610
1906	*				N.C.	1592
1907		*			N.C.	1656
1908		*			N.C.	1617
1909	*				N.C.	1564
1910	41		59		63	1641
1911		*			N.C.	1697
1912	55	45			66	1732
1913			58	42	43	1759
1919	*				N.C.	3578
1920		68	32		64	3670
1921	*				N.C.	3939
1922	62		38		53	4337
1923		*			N.C.	4349
1924	*				N.C.	4585
1925	59		41		53	4693

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St. James' Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	DSSF.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896	*					N.C.	
1897	*					N.C.	
1898		*				N.C.	
1899		*				N.C.	
1900		*				N.C.	
1901		*				N.C.	1195
1902		*				N.C.	1201
1903	47	53				80	1169
1904		*				N.C.	1195
1905		*				N.C.	1147
1906		*				N.C.	1145
1907	47	53				97	1137
1908		*				N.C.	1137
1909		*				N.C.	1055
1910	*					N.C.	1061
1911		*				N.C.	1057
1912		*				N.C.	1096
1913	*					N.C.	1079
1919		44			56	43[illegible]	2359
1920		68	11	Woman 21		53	2428
1921		67		33		53	2522
1922			18	38	44	38	2534
1923		81	19			45	2605
1924		*				N.C.	2662
1925		*				N.C.	2916

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St. John's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896	*				N.C.	
1897	*				N.C.	
1898	49		51		62	1300
1899	*				N.C.	
1900	*				N.C.	
1901	55		45		64	1306
1902			*		N.C.	1319
1903			*		N.C.	1265
1904	*				N.C.	1264
1905			*		N.C.	1247
1906			*		N.C.	1235
1907	*				N.C.	1205
1908	57		43		78	1206
1909			*		N.C.	1148
1910				*	N.C.	1181
1911	*				N.C.	1182
1912	60		34	6	73	1197
1913	42			58	83	1271
1919	*				N.C.	2495
1920	*				N.C.	2572
1921	45		55		67	2687
1922	65		35		64	2728
1923	*				N.C.	2781
1924	53		47		56	2828
1925	*				N.C.	2897

St. Mark's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896	*			N.C.	
1897	*			N.C.	
1898	*			N.C.	
1899	*			N.C.	
1900	*			N.C.	
1901	*			N.C.	1207
1902	*			N.C.	1208
1903	63	37		63	1201
1904	*			N.C.	1190
1905	60	40		67	1180
1906	*			N.C.	1179
1907	*			N.C.	1170
1908	*			N.C.	1184
1909	*			N.C.	1180
1910	*			N.C.	1211
1911	*			N.C.	1166
1912	*			N.C. 1246	1246
1913	*			N.C.	1254
1919	*			N.C.	2419
1920	*			N.C.	2448
1921	*			N.C.	2408
1922	*			N.C.	2599
1923	*			N.C.	2702
1924	*			N.C.	2748
1925	*			N.C.	2775

(x)

St. Mary's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	DSSF.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896	*					N.C.	
1897				*		N.C.	
1898		*				N.C.	
1899	*					N.C.	
1900				*		N.C.	
1901		*				N.C.	1326
1902	*					N.C.	1334
1903		25		75		70	1321
1904		*				N.C.	1332
1905	*					N.C.	1330
1906				*		N.C.	1370
1907		*				N.C.	1334
1908	*					N.C.	1326
1909				*		N.C.	1268
1910		*				N.C.	1323
1911	*					N.C.	1331
1912				*		N.C.	1391
1913		*				N.C.	1426
1919				16	84	23	3006
1920		41	59			38	3144
1921	34		66			68	3174
1922	43		57			39	3341
1923	49		51			45	3437
1924			*			N.C.	3409
1925	36		64			48	3402

St. Matthew's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896				*	N.C.	
1897	37	63			87	1414
1898	*				N.C.	
1899				*	N.C.	
1900		*			N.C.	
1901	48		52		57	1375
1902		*			N.C.	1344
1903	60	40			76	1307
1904		49	51		75	1312
1905		*			N.C.	1326
1906		*			N.C.	1345
1907			*		N.C.	1354
1908		*			N.C.	1293
1909		*			N.C.	1250
1910	43		57		76	1261
1911		*			N.C.	1283
1912		*			N.C.	1337
1913	42		58		74	1360
1918		56	44		47	2812
1920			*		N.C.	2864
1921	*				N.C.	2980
1922		52	48		54	3073
1923		51	49		51	3101
1924	46		54		66	3186
1925	36		64		48	3215

(xii)

St. Peter's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Poll.	Electorate.
1896	*				N.C.	
1897	*				N.C.	
1898	*				N.C.	
1899				*	N.C.	
1900	*				N.C.	
1901	*				N.C.	1260
1902				*	N.C.	1251
1903	*				N.C.	1247
1904	68	32			65	1241
1905				*	N.C.	1196
1906	*				N.C.	1253
1907	*				N.C.	1195
1908	*				N.C.	1240
1909	*				N.C.	1215
1910	*				N.C.	1232
1911	45	55			81	1249
1912				*	N.C.	1300
1913	*				N.C.	1323
1919				*	N.C.	2688
1920	*				N.C.	2685
1921	*				N.C.	2835
1922	90			10	23	2942
1923	*				N.C.	3003
1924	*				N.C.	3031
1925	70		30		51	3054

TABLE II (B)

The parties' shares of the vote in the annual municipal elections in Wolverhampton, and the size of the vote in percentages.

1927-64.

Note: Abbreviations and Sources - the same as for Table II (A) above.

Blakenhall and St. John's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Ind.	Ind.Lab.	Poll	Electorate
1927			47	53			63	5709
1928	57		43				45	5653
1929	45		27		28		38	5989
1930	*						NC	5838
1931	*						NC	5820
1932	42		20			38	36	5822
1933	26				T.U. 56	18	47	5810
1934	*						NC	5708
1935	53		47				57	5646
1936					T.U. *		NC	5552
1937	*						NC	5475
1938	*						NC	5481
1945			59	41			40	7502
1946	45		55				32	7662
1947	56		44				41	7601
1949	51		49				49	7274
1950	38	3	43		16		51	7250
1951	53		47				41	7127
1952	41		59				54	7047
1953	47		53				46	6904
1954	46		54				39	6687
1955	52		48				45	6465
1956	43		57				43	6200
1957	44		56				45	6138
boundary revision			- renamed					
Blakenhall Ward.								
1958	49		51				44	5731
1959	48		52				49	5184
1960	59		41				47	4855
1961	60		40				46	4126
1962	53		47				52	3967
1963	57		43				48	3904
1964	58		42				44	3827

Bushbury Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Ind.	Comm.	Poll	Electorate
1927			55	45			21	3677
1928			*				NC	4916
1929			*				NC	6393
1930			*				NC	7080
1931			*				NC	7182
1932			*				NC	7541
- boundary revision.								
1933			*				NC	3751
1934			*				NC	4512
1935			*				NC	5755
1936			61		39		24	6944
1937			57		43		22	7927
1938	46		54				24	8513
1945			76	24			23	14877
1946	36		64				21	15513
1947	49		51				35	16331
1949	41		59				42	17829
1950			*				NC	18005
1951			66		34		20	18764
1952	24		76				34	19148
1953			*				NC	19268
1954			*				NC	19010
1955	37		63				29	18700
1956	34		66				22	18716
1957	32		68				25	18780
- boundary revision.								
1958			*				NC	8998
1959	28		72				20	9186
1960	45		55				25	9179
1961	39		61				40	9304
1962	29		67			4	27	9451
1963			87			13	22	9674
1964			87			13	19	9946

Dunstall Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Ind.	Poll	Electorate
1927			43	57		69	5087
1928			*			NC	5031
1929		57	43			40	5354
1930	65		35			57	5233
1931	*					NC	5228
1932		*				NC	5203
1933	*					NC	5182
1934	*					NC	5161
1935		*				NC	5162
1936	*					NC	5081
1937	*					NC	5082
1938		60	40			54	5006
1945			61	39		45	7046
1946	46		54			35	7129
1947	58		42			49	7197
1949	49		51			56	6899
1950	49		51			49	6871
1951	49		51			46	6847
1952	38		62			57	6797
1953	36		64			36	6673
1954			72		28	32	6582
1955	47		53			44	6419
1956	42		58			37	6383
1957	37		63			37	6303
boundary revision.							
1958	38		62			37	6119
1959	39		61			33	5869
1960	51		49			35	5842
1961	43		57			44	5737
1962	36		64			33	5720
1963	36		64			38	5499
1964	43		57			35	5357

Graiseley Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Ind.Lab.	Poll.	Electorate.
1927			46	54		66	6472
1928			*			NC	6466
1929	48		52			43	6757
1930	*					NC	6663
1931			*			NC	6630
1932	44		46		10	51	6561
1933	60		40			34	6508
1934			*			NC	6398
1935	51		49			43	6313
1936	*					NC	6211
1937	46		54			38	6121
1938	*					NC	6015
1945			58	42		45	7981
1946	55		45			40	8092
1947	57		43			54	8062
1949	49	11	40			60	7738
1950	54		46			53	7676
1951	63		37			50	7639
1952	49		51			59	7583
1953	56		44			54	7422
1954	55		45			50	7087
1955	60		40			54	6802
1956	58		42			50	6629
1957	49	9	42			49	6567
boundary revision.							
1958	48	14	38			52	6411
1959	58		42			49	6661
1960	66		34			43	6735
1961	53		47			54	6859
1962	49		51			55	6934
1963	49		51			54	6965
1964	58		42			52	6750

Heath Town Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Ind.	Comm.	Poll.	Electorate.
1927			36	64.			65	5363
1928	62		38				41	5474
1929					*		NC	5895
1930	*	*					NC	5827
1931	*						NC	5786
1932	63		37				39	5745
1933		*					NC	5768
1934	*						NC	5847
1935	69		31				35	6031
1936		*					NC	6162
1937	*						NC	6389
1938	*						NC	6688
1945			63	37			28	9736
1946	58		42				28	9836
1947			49		51		40	9738
1949			49		51		44	9856
1950	37	9	54				36	9979
1951			49		51		33	10258
1952			61		39		47	10213
1953	35		65				31	9988
1954	40		60				29	9949
1955	45		55				31	9711
1956	38		62				23	9802
1957	43		57				30	9602
- boundary revision.								
1958	37		63				26	9033
1959	37		63				29	8936
1960			52		48		29	8933
1961	45		52			3	41	8763
1962	42		58				37	8668
1963			*				NC	8702
1964			84			16	17	8807

Park Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Comm.	Poll.	Electorate.
1927			23	77		65	3881
1928	*					NC	3851
1929	*					NC	4079
1930	*					NC	3954
1931	*					NC	3995
1932	*					NC	3990
1933	*					NC	3981
1934	*					NC	3974
1935	*					NC	3944
1936	*					NC	3930
1937	*					NC	3917
1938	*					NC	3863
1945			27	48	25(1)	54	5979
			36	64			
1946	73		27			39	6056
1947	*					NC	6057
1949	77		23			54	5723
1950	*					NC	5747
1951	*					NC	5757
1952	71		29			47	5676
1953	*					NC	5652
1954	*					NC	5472
1955	79		21			43	5337
1956	*					NC	5227
1957	*					NC	5093

- boundary revision. Renamed

West Park Ward.

1958	*					NC	7002
1959	*					NC	6908
1960	90		10			33	6961
1961	*					NC	6876
1962	*					NC	6924
1963	70	30				35	7190
1964	74		26			38	7286

(1) The Communist candidate was regarded as fighting with the Labour candidates against the Anti-Socialist alliance.

St. George's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Ind.	Comm.	Poll.	Electorate.
1927			61	39			57	5522
1928			68		32		46	5345
1929			*				NC	5778
1930			65		35		43	5609
1931			*				NC	6104
1932			89			11	25	6134
1933			*				NC	6055
1934			*				NC	5993
1935			*				NC	6361
1936			*				NC	6301
1937			*				NC	6317
1938			*				NC	6215
1945			88	12			37	9059
1946			*				NC	9293
1947	33		67				36	9286
1949	32		68				40	9110
1950	40		60				40	9066
1951	46		54				39	9003
1952	24		76				51	8845
1953	26		74				27	8739
1954	23		77				25	8866
1955	28		69			3	27	8928
1956	23		73			4	28	8812
1957			*				NC	8718

* - boundary revision - renamed

Parkfield Ward.

1958			94			6	24	6088
1959			94			6	24	5872
1960	27		67			6	25	5786
1961	35		61			4	34	5728
1962	43		57				38	5752
1963			92			8	22	5790
1964			*				NC	5743

St. James' Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Ind.Lab.	Comm.	Ind.	Poll	Electorate.
1927			33	67				55	3317
1928		63	37					33	3315
1929		74	26					26	3721
1930		*						NC	3740
1931		*						NC	3668
1932		49			51			43	3605
1933	59		41					38	3559
1934		62	38					42	3504
1935		59			41			48	3273
1936	*							NC	3019
1937		58	42					29	2892
1938		*						NC	2765
1945				47		53		33	3852
1946		31	36			33		30	3980
1947			40			14	46	34	3976
1949			49				51	35	3681
1950			58			3	39	30	3614
1951			60				40	25	3621
1952			63				37	45	3595
1953			*					NC	3541
1954			*					NC	3448
1955	36		64					38	3286
1956			*					NC	3173
1957	28		72					34	3061

- boundary revision - renamed

Eastfield Ward.

1958			*					NC	7366
1959			*					NC	7546
1960	39		61					16	7711
1961	30		70					27	7834
1962			*					NC	7702
1963			*					NC	7232
1964			*					NC	7140

St. Mark's and Merridale Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Comm.	Poll.	Electorate.
1927			29	71		64	4639
1928	*					NC	4653
1929	*					NC	4858
1930	*					NC	4748
1931	*					NC	4724
1932	*					NC	4697
1933	*					NC	4521
1934	*					NC	4489
1935	*					NC	4418
1936	*					NC	4449
1937	*					NC	4413
1938	*					NC	4353
1945			36	64		39	6823
1946	86				14	37	6937
1947	*					NC	6916
1949	*					NC	6567
1950	*					NC	6568
1951	*					NC	6518
1952	70		30			48	6442
1953	75		25			38	6326
1954	80		20			36	6227
1955	*					NC	6188
1956	*					NC	6175
1957	*					NC	6312
boundary revision -renamed Merridale Ward.							
1958	77		23			45	7070
1959	*					NC	7040
1960	88		12			39	7041
1961	*					NC	7125
1962	57	29	14			55	7070
1963	64	36				40	7097
1964	70	30				34	7254

St. Mary's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Comm.	Ind.	Ind.Lab.	Poll.	Electorate.
1927			59	41				62	3019
1928			39		8	53		46	2943
1929			*					NC	3123
1930						*		NC	3130
1931						*		NC	3086
1932	26		74					27	3044
1933			28			72		52	3092
1934	28.5		29.5			42		47	3046
1935			68				32	33	3005
1936						*		NC	2910
1937						*		NC	2875
1938			*					NC	2997
1945			70	30				32	4132
1946			54			46		29	4248
1947			51			49		38	4257
1949			67			33		66	4023
1950			66			34		32	4003
1951	45		55					34	3969
1952			59			41		51	3931
1953	25		75					27	3883
1954	32		68					28	3726
1955	32		68					27	3620
1956			*					NC	3610
1957			*					NC	3125

- ward abolished.

St.Matthew's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Ind.	Ind.Lab.	Comm.	Poll.	Electorate.
1927			51	49				57	4125
1928		52	48					40	4088
1929		56	44					46	4442
1930			39		61			49	4314
1931		*						NC	4267
1932	27		32			41		40	4243
1933					(i) 58 (ii) 2	40		46	4155
1934		45	23		2	53		38	4092
1935					41	59		52	3654
1936					(i) 42 (ii) 2	56		51	3436
1937					45	55		40	2890
1938			*					NC	2435
1945			60	40				43	2928
1946			61		36		3	34	3273
1947	43		57					42	4264
1949	44		56					40	3960
1950	35		65					42	3931
1951	44		56					31	3791
1952	32		68					46	3665
1953	26		74					33	3655
1954	25		75					25	3535
1955	29		71					28	3672
1956			*					NC	3515
1957			*					NC	3248

* - boundary revision. renamed East Park Ward.

1958	22		78					27	5401
1959			*					NC	5195
1960	23	14	60				3	24	5034
1961		27	64				9	27	4842
1962			89				11	22	4640
1963			*					NC	4627
1964			90				10	19	4720

(xii)

St. Peter's Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Ind.	Comm.	Poll.	Electorate.
1927			32	68			55	2972
1928	60		40				35	2926
1929	69		31				26	3178
1930	*						NC	2826
1931	*						NC	2780
1932	65		35				38	2673
1933					*		NC	2570
1934	*						NC	2547
1935	77		23				38	2468
1936	40				60		29	2369
1937	*						NC	2372
1938	*						NC	2270
1945			52	48			41	3144
1946	80					20	24	3201
1947	60		40				39	3175
1949			49		51		47	2866
1950	53		47				45	2844
1951	55		45				43	2794
1952			56		44		52	2715
1953	51		49				51	2655
1954	56		44				43	2557
1955	56		44				44	2485
1956	53	10	37				41	2363
1957	49		51				41	2316
- boundary revision								
1958	48		52				31	4365
1959	49		51				40	4067
1960	53		47				34	3802
1961	52		48				46	3495
1962	46		54				41	3633
1963	41		59				35	3510
1964	51		49				40	3379

Penn Ward.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Anti-Soc.	Ratepayer.	Poll.	Electorate.
1933					*	NC	2862
1934					*	NC	3266
1935					*	NC	3759
1936					*	NC	4284
1937					*	NC	4954
1938					*	NC	5498
1945			37	63		44	8586
1946			28		72	34	8788
1947			20		80	50	8855
1949			25		75	49	9537
1950	33		26		41	54	10011
1951			25		75	40	10729
1952			34		66	43	10748
1953			28		72	34	10902
1954	55		23		22	40	10970
1955	57		23		20	41	11074
1956	67		33			31	11157
1957	69		31			38	11239
- boundary revision							
1958	*					NC	8411
1959	*					NC	8401
1960	90		10			37	8480
1961	*					NC	8540
1962	*					NC	8451
1963	*					NC	8525
1964	71	18	11			45	8595

Low Hill Ward

Year	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Comm.	Poll.	Electorate
1933			*			NC	3979
1934			*			NC	4829
1935			43	57		33	4833
1936			69	31		32	5280
1937			59	41		23	5489
1938			45	55		43	5774
1945			*			NC	8294
1946			*			NC	8623
1947			67	33		29	8695
1949			70	30		33	8746
1950			*			NC	8743
1951	22		78			23	9157
1952			*			NC	9892
1953			*			NC	10044
1954			*			NC	9915
1955	25		75			27	9754
1956		19	81			17	9736
1957			*			NC	9650
- boundary revision							
1958			*			NC	7481
1959			*			NC	7561
1960	24		70		6	25	7462
1961	26		62		12	34	7307
1962			90		10	21	7272
1963			91		9	20	7195
1964			83		17	18	7224

Upper Penn.

Year	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ratepayer.	Ind.	Comm.	Anti-Soc.	Poll.	Electorate
1927			20				80	58	1829
1928					*			NC	2058
1929					*			NC	2340
1930					*			NC	2600
1931					*			NC	2806
1932					*			NC	2972
- boundary revision.				- renamed					
St. Phillip's									
1933				*				NC	3184
1934				*				NC	3384
1935				*				NC	3577
1936				*				NC	3726
1937				*				NC	3958
1938				*				NC	4091
1945			30	44	26			51	6306
1946			20	61	18			47	6336
1947			17	83				66	6406
1949	83		17					61	6429
1950	*							NC	6528
1951	*							NC	6542
1952	80		20					59	6583
1953	*							NC	6555
1954	87		13					41	6609
1955	*							NC	6549
1956	*							NC	6623
1957	*							NC	6599
- boundary revision				- ward renamed					
Oxbarn Ward.									
1958	54	13	33					52	6434
1959	*							NC	6418
1960	74		26					40	6442
1961	91					9		31	6488
1962	45	39	16					51	6551
1963	52	27	21					44	6554
1964	56	15	29					43	6595

Oxley Ward

Year	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Poll.	Electorate
1958	47		53	37	6088
1959	52		48	38	5872
1960	58		42	46	5786
1961	52		48	51	5728
1962	48		52	49	5752
1963	47		53	50	5790
1964	51		49	49	5743

TABLE II (C)

Annual Swing in the Wolverhampton municipal elections.

(i)	To the Conservative Party.	1903-05.
(ii)	To the Labour Party.	1919-23, 1927-29.
(iii)	To the Labour Party.	1945-64.

Abbreviation: n.c. - no change.

(i)

Ward.	Park.	Dunstall.	Blakenhall.	St. George's.
Year.				
1904	+5	-2	-5	
1905	-10		-4	-15

(ii)

Ward.	Dunstall	Memdale	Graiseley	St. Johns	Blakenhall	St. Mary's.
Year.						
1920	-12	-16	-11			
1922				-20	+21	-9
1923					-19	-6
	Blakenhall & St.Johns	St.Matthews	St.George's	St.James'	St. Peter's	Heath Town.
1928	-4	-3	+7	+4	+8	+2
1929		-4		-11	-9	

(iii)

Ward.	Dunstall	Blakenhall & St.John's.	Graiseley.	St. Peter's.	Heath Town.	St. Mary's.	St. Matthews.	St. George's.	Penn.	Bushbury.	St. Mark's & Memidale.	St. James's	Low Hill.	St. Phillip's
Year.														
1946	-6	-4	-13		-21	-16			-9	-12				
1947	-12	-11	-2		+7	-3			-8	-13				
1949	+9	+5		+9	nc	+16	-1	+1	+5	+8			+3	nc
1950	nc			-2		-1	+9	-6	+1					
1951	nc		-9	-2		-11	-9	-6	-1					
1952	+11	+12	+14	+9	+11	+4	+12	+22	+9	+10		+3		
1953	+2	-6	-7	-7	+4	+16	+6	-2	-6		-5			
1954	+8	+1	+1	-5	-5	-7	+1	+3	-5		-5			
1955	-19	-6	-5	nc	-5	nc	-4	-6	nc					
1956	+5	+9	+2		+7				+10	+3				
1957	+5	-1			-5				-2	+2				

Ward.	Dunstall.	Blakenhall.	Graiseley,	St. Peter's.	Heath Town.	Bushbury.	Eastfield.	Oxley.
Year.								
1959	-1	+1		-1				
1960	-10	-11	-8	-4	-11	-17		-5
1961	+8	-1	+13	+1	+4	+6	+9	+6
1962	+7	+7	+4	+6	+3	+8		+4
1963	nc	-4	nc	+5				+1
1964	-7	-1	-9	-10				-4

TABLE II D.

A comparison of the parties' shares of the vote in municipal and parliamentary elections.

Source Express and Star.

(i)

West Wolverhampton

1945 November Municipal results

Ward	Con.	Lab.	Poll.
Graiseley	42	58	45
St. George's	12	88	37
St. Matthew's	40	60	43
Blakenhall St. John's	41	59	40
St. Mark's and Merridale	64	36	39
Park	64	36	54
Dunstall	39	61	45
Average	43	57	43
Parliamentary result 1945	40	60	75

(ii)

1951 May Municipal results

North East

Ward	Con.	Lab.	Poll.
St. Peter's	55	45	43
St. James'	40	60	25
Dunstall	49	51	46
Park[1.]	71	29	47
Heath Town	51	49	33
Bushbury	34	66	20
Low Hill	22	78	23
St. Mary's	45	55	34
Average	46	54	34

South West

Ward	Con.	Lab.	Poll.
Graiseley	63	37	50
St. Matthew's	44	56	31
St. George's	46	54	39
Blakenhall & St. John's	53	47	41
St. Mark's & Merridale	70	30	48
Penn	75	35	40
St. Phillip's[1.]	80	20	59
Average	61	39	44

Parliamentary results

	Con.	Lab.	Lib.	Poll.		Con.	Lab.	Lib.	Poll.
1950	29	60	11	83	1950	46	44	10	88
1951	37	63		81	1951	54	46		86

1. 1952 figures.

1955 May Municipal Results

North East

Ward	Con.	Lab.	Poll.
St. Peter's	56	44	44
St. James'	36	64	38
Dunstall	47	53	44
Park	79	21	43
Heath Town	45	55	31
Bushbury	37	63	29
Low Hill	25	75	27
St. Mary's	32	68	27
Average	45	55	35

South West

Ward	Con.	Lab.	Poll.
Graiseley	60	40	54
St. Matthew's	29	71	28
St. George's	28	72 [1.]	27
Blakenhall & St. John's	52	48	45
St. Mark's & Merridale [2.]	80	20	36
Penn	77 [3.]	23	41
St. Philip's [2.]	87	13	41
Average	59	41	40

Parliamentary Results

1955	37	63	71	1955	60	40	78

1. Included 3 Communist.
2. 1954 figures.
3. Included 20 Ratepayer.

1960 May Municipal Results

North East

Ward	Con.	Lab.	Poll.
St. Peter's	53	47	34
Oxley	58	42	46
Low Hill	24	76[1.]	25
Heath Town	48	52	29
Eastfield	39	61	16
Dunstall	51	49	35
Bushbury	45	55	25
Average	45	55	30

Ward	Lib.	Con.	Lab.	Poll.
Blakenhall		59	41	47
East Park	14	23	63[2.]	24
Graiseley		66	34	43
Merridale		88	12	39
Oxbarn		74	26	40
Parkfield		27	73[3.]	25
Park		90	10	33
Penn		90	10	37
Average	2	64	34	36

Parliamentary Results

1959	45	55	73	1959	64	36	79

1. Included 6 Communist.
2. " 3 "
3. " 6 "

TABLE II (E)

The parties' share of the vote in the Wolverhampton Parliamentary elections and the size of the poll in percentages.

1885-1959

Note: Abbreviations the same as for Table II(A) above.

Source: Whitaker's Almanack.

West Wolverhampton.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Misc.	Poll.	Electorate
1885	51	49			87	8391
1886	49	51			81	8969
1892	57	43			87	9691
1895	55	45			85	10330
1900	*				NC	11655
1906	49		51		92	12207
Jan.1910	52		48		92	13170
Dec.1910	51	49			88	13170
1918	57		43		45	51844
1922	54		46		84	39449
1923	51		49		80	39826
1924	51		49		86	40661
1929	40	10	50		84	51061
1931	61		39		84	51355
1935	55		3	Ind.Lab. 42	72	49537
1945	40		60		75	47231

- boundary revision.

- renamed South West Wolverhampton.

1950	46	10	44		88	50460
1951	54		46		86	51124
1955	60		40		78	54303

- boundary revision.

1959	64		36		79	51293

East Wolverhampton.

Year.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Misc.	Poll.	Electorate.
1885	40	60			83	7917
1886	41	59			78	8126
1892		*			NC	8394
1895	42	58			80	8734
1900		*			NC	9396
1906	33	67			86	9756
Jan.1910	46	54			95	10238
Dec.1910	43	57			87	10238
1918		52		48(1)	35	42041
1922	37	46	12	5(2)	81	31381
1923		*			NC	31912
1924	38	42	20		80	32602
1929	29	45	26		81	42222
1931	37	44	19		78	43162
1935	37	48	15		73	44817
1945	22	30	48		74	50749
- boundary revision.						
- renamed North East Wolverhampton.						
1950	29	11	60		83	59338
1951	37		63		81	60808
1955	37		63		71	53171
- boundary revision.						
1959	45		55		73	51217

(1) Coalition Labour.

(2) Lloyd George Liberal.

TABLE II (F)

Number of contests in the annual municipal elections in Wolverhampton 1849-1896.

- possible 12

Source: Wolverhampton Chronicle.

Year.	No. of contests.	Year.	No. of Contests.
1849	3	1873	1
1850	2	1874	3
1851	1	1875	1
1852	2	1876	1
1853	1	1877	3
1854	0	1878	4
1855	1	1879	2
1856	0	1880	3
1857	0	1881	1
1858	2	1882	0
1859	3	1883	2
1860	2	1884	1
1861	3	1885	2
1862	1	1886	2
1863	2	1887	0
1864	2	1888	2
1865	0	1889	0
1866	1	1890	3
1867	1	1891	2
1868	2	1892	2
1869	0	1893	1
1870	1	1894	2
1871	0	1895	2
1872	3		

TABLE II (G)

The percentage poll and number of contests in the annual municipal elections in Wolverhampton.

(i) 1896-1925

(ii) 1927-1964

(1)

Ward. / Year.	Blakenhall	Dunstall	Graiseley	Merridale	Park	St.George's	St.James'	St.John's	St.Marks	St.Mary's	St.Matthew's	St.Peter's	Number of contests - possible 12.
1896			73										1
1897	70	74	72								87		4
1898		73						62					2
1899													0
1900			69										1
1901				61				64			57		3
1902		69	69										2
1903	75	69	64	75	66		80		63	70	76		9
1904	77	73		80	75	69					75	65	7
1905	72			75	68	65			67				5
1906			73		71								2
1907					41		97(1)						2
1908	85	83	87					78					4
1909													0
1910			62			63					76		3
1911	74		73	75								81	4
1912			70			66		73					3
1913	71	66	66			43		83			74		6
WAR													NIL
1919	49	69	56	48	54		43			23	47		8
1920	54	60	54	59	68	64	53			38			8
1921	60	70					53	67		68			5
1922	54			62		53	38	64		39	54	23	8
1923	61	56	45		56		45			45	51		7
1924		76	65					56			66		4
1925			64	60		53				48	48	51	6

(1) The figures for the electorate as given in the press would produce a poll of 63% while those given in the Wolverhampton Directory would produce a poll of 97%. The Directory's figure appears more accurate.

Ward. / Year.	Blakenhall & St. John's	Bushbury	Dunstall	Graiseley	Heath Town	Park	St. George's	St. James'	St. Mark's & Merridale	St. Mary's	St. Matthew's	St. Peter's	Upper Penn	Low Hill	St. Phillip's		Nos. of contests. 1927-32 possible 13 1932-64 possible 15
1927	63	21(1)	69	66	65	65	57	55	64	62	57	55	58				13
1928	45				41		46	33		46	40	35					7
1929	38		40	43				26			46	26					6
1930			57				43				49						3
1931																	0
1932	36			51	39		25	43		27	40	38					8
1933	47			34				38		52	46						5
1934								42		47	38						3
1935	57			43	35			48		33	52	38		33			8
1936		24									51	29		32			4
1937		22		38				29			40			23			5
1938		24	54											43			3
WAR																	NIL
1945	40	23	45	45	28	54	37	33	39	32	43	41	44		51		14
1946	32	21	35	40	28	39		30	37	29	34	24	34		47		13
1947	41	35	49	54	40		36	34		38	42	39	50	29	66		13
1949	49	42	56	60	44	54	40	35		66	40	47	49	33	61		14
1950	51		49	53	36		40	30		32	42	45	54				10
1951	41	20	46	50	33		39	25		34	31	43	40	23			12
1952	54	34	57	59	47	47	51	45	48	51	46	52	43		59		14
1953	46		36	54	31		27		38	27	33	51	34				10
1954	39		32	50	29		25		36	28	25	43	40		41		11
1955	45	29	44	54	31	43	27	38		27	28	44	41	27			13
1956	43	22	37	50	23		28					41	31	17			9
1957	45	25	37	49	30			34				41	38				8

Boundary Revision.

	Blakenhall	Bushbury	Dunstall	Graiseley	Heath Town	Park	Parkfield	Eastfield	Merridale		East Park	St. Peter's	Penn	Low Hill	Oxbarn	Oxley	
1958	44		37	52	26		24		45		27	31			52	37	10
1959	49	20	33	49	29		24					40				38	8
1960	47	25	35	43	29	33	25	16	39		24	34	37	25	40	46	15
1961	46	40	44	54	41		34	27			27	46		34	31	51	12
1962	52	27	33	55	37		38		55		22	41		21	51	49	12
1963	48	22	38	54		35	22		40			35		20	44	50	11
1964	44	19	35	52	17	38			34		19	40	45	18	43	49	13

(i) The figures for the electorate as given in the press would produce a poll of 56%, while those given by the Town Hall would produce a poll of 21%. The Town Hall's figures appear more accurate.

TABLE II (H)

The annual increase or decrease in the percentage poll in the municipal elections in Wolverhampton.

(i) 1902-05
1912-13
1919-25

(ii) 1927-64

(1)

Ward. / Year.	Blakenhall	Dunstall	Graiseley	Merridale	Park	St. George's	St. Matthew's	St. John's	St. James'	St. Mary's
1903		NC	-5							
1904	+2	+4		+5	+9		-1			
1905	-5			-5	-7	-4				
1913			-4			-23		+10		
1920	+5	-9	-2	+11	+14			+1	+10	+15
1921	+6	+10							NC	+30
1922	-6							-3	-15	-29
1923	+7						-3		+7	+6
1924		+20	+20				+15			
1925			-1				-18			

Year / Ward.	Blakenhall & St.John's	Bushbury	Dunstall	Graiseley	Heath Town	Park	St.George's	St. James'	St.Mark's & Merridale	St. Mary's	St. Matthew's	St. Peter's	Upper Penn	Low Hill	St.Phillip's	Oxley
1928	-18				-24		-11	-22		-16	-17	-20				
1929	-7							-7			+6	-9				
1930			+17								+3					
1933	+9			-17				-5		+15	+6					
1934								+4		-5	-8					
1935								+6		-14	+14					
1936											-1	-9		-1		
1937		-2									-9			-9		
1938		+2												+20		
1946	-8	-2	-10	-5	NC	-15		-3	-2	-3	-9	-17	-10		-4	
1947	+9	+14	+14	+14	+12			+4		+9	+8	+15	+16		+19	
1949	+8	+7	+7	+6	+4		+4	+1		+28	-2	+8	-2	+4	-5	
1950	+2		-7	-7	-8		NC	-5		-34	+2	-2	+5			
1951	-10		-3	-3	-3		-1	-5		+2	-11	-2	-14			
1952	+13	+14	+11	+9	+14		+12	+20		+17	+15	+9	+3			
1953	-8		-21	-5	-16		-24		-10	-24	-13	-1	-9			
1954	-7		-4	-4	-2		-2		-2	+1	-8	-8	+6			
1955	+6		+12	+4	+2		+2			-1	+3	+1	+1			
1956	-2	-7	-7	-4	-8		+1					-3	-10	-10		
1957	+2	+3	NC	-1	+7							NC	+7			

Boundary revision.

Year / Ward.	Blakenhall	Bushbury	Dunstall	Graiseley	Heath Town	Park	Parkfield	Eastfield	Merridale	East Park	St. Peter's	Penn	Low Hill	Oxbarn	Oxley
1959	+5		-4	-3	+3		NC				+9				+1
1960	-2	+5	+2	-6	NC		+1				-6				+8
1961	-1	+15	+9	+11	+12		+9	+11		+3	+12		+9	-9	+5
1962	+6	-13	-11	+1	-4		+4			-5	-5		-13	+20	-2
1963	-4	-5	+5	-1			-16		-15		-6		-1	-7	+1
1964	-4	-3	-3	-2		+3			-6		+5		-2	-1	-1

TABLE III

Contests in Wards, 1896-1902.

Graiseley	4
St. Peter's	0
St. Mary's	0
St. James'	0
St. Matthew's	2
St. George's	0
St. John's	2
Blakenhall	1
Merridale	1
St. Mark's	0
Park	0
Dunstall	3

Source: Local press.

TABLE IV

Participation in Local Elections.

a) Town Council 1894. (Wolverhampton Chronicle 31.10.1894)

2 contests.
64% of those eligible in the 2 wards voted.
21% " " " " " town " .
3% of the population of the town voted.
17% of the population eligible to vote.

---

b) Town Council 1897. (W.C. 27.10.1897.)

4 contests.
76% of those eligible in the 4 wards voted.
27% " " " " " town " .
4% of the population of the town voted.
15% of the population eligible to vote.

---

c) Town Council 1900. (W.C. 7.11.1900.)

1 contest.
69% of those eligible in the ward voted.
6% " " " " " town " .
1% of the population of the town voted.
17% of the population eligible to vote.

---

d) Town Council 1903. (W.C. 4.11.1903.)

9 contests.
71% of those eligible in the 9 wards voted.
53% " " " " " town " .
10% of the population of the town voted.
18% of the population eligible to vote.

---

e) Town Council 1912. (Express and Star 2.11.1912.)

3 contests.
69% of those eligible in the 3 wards voted.
18% " " " " " town " .
3% of the population of the town voted.
19% of the population eligible to vote.

---

f) Town Council 1921. (E.&S. 2.11.1921.)

5 contests.
64% of those eligible in the 5 wards voted.
26% " " " " " town " .
10% of the population of the town voted.
38% of the population eligible to vote.

---

g) Town Council 1932. (E.&S. 2.11.1932.)

8 contests.
37% of those eligible in the 8 wards voted.
23% " " " " " town " .
10% of the population of the town voted.
46% of the population eligible to vote.

Table IV, cont.

h) Town Council 1952. (E.&S. 9.5.1952.)

14 contests.
49% of those eligible in the 14 wards voted.
43% " " " " " town " .
29% of the population of the town voted.
68% of the population eligible to vote.

---

i) Town Council 1960. (E.&S. 13.5.1960.)

15 contests.
33% of those eligible in the 15 wards (town) voted.
22% of the population of the town voted.
68% of the population eligible to vote.

Sources: local press, Wolverhampton Directory.

TABLE V

Results of Wolverhampton's Parliamentary Elections 1885-1959.

East Division		West Division	
	Nov. 1885		
H.H. Fowler (Lib.)	3,935	A. Hickman (Con.)	3,722
W. Bird (Con.)	2,648	W.C. Plowden (Lib.)	3,569
	July 1886		
H.H. Fowler (Lib.)	3,752	Sir W.C. Plowden (Lib.)	3,706
J. Underhill (Con.)	2,629	A. Hickman (Con.)	3,583
	July 1892		
H.H. Fowler (Lib.)	No opp.	Sir A. Hickman (Con.)	4,772
		Sir W.C. Plowden (Lib.)	3,656
	July 1895		
Sir H.H. Fowler (Lib.)	4,011	Sir A. Hickman (Con.)	4,770
R.E.C. Kettle (Lib.Un.)	2,977	G.R. Thorne (Lib.)	3,947
	Oct. 1900		
Sir H.H. Fowler (Lib.)	No opp.	Sir A. Hickman (Con.)	No opp.
	Jan. 1906		
Sir H.H. Fowler (Lib.)	5,610	T.F. Richards (Lab.)	5,756
L.S. Amery (Con.)	2,745	Sir A. Hickman (Con.)	5,588

Table V, Cont.

East Division		West Division	
Jan. 1908			
G.R. Thorne (Lib.)	4,514		
L.S. Amery (Un.)	4,506		
Jan. 1910			
G.R. Thorne (Lib.)	5,276	A. Bird (Un.)	6,382
L.S. Amery (Un.)	4,462	T.F. Richards (Lab.)	5,790
Dec. 1910			
G.R. Thorne (Lib.)	5,072	A. Bird (Un.)	5,925
R.B. Whiteside (Un.)	3,881	P. Lewis (Lib.)	5,631
Dec. 1918			
G.R. Thorne (Ind.Lib.)	7,660	A.Bird (Un.)	13,329
Rev. J.A. Shaw (Coal. Lab.)	7,138	A.G. Walkden (Lab.)	10,158
March 1922			
		Sir R. Bird (Con.)	16,790
		A.G. Walkden (Lab.)	13,799
Nov. 1922			
G.R. Thorne (Lib.)	11,577	Sir R. Bird (Con.)	17,738
C.H. Pinson (Con.)	9,410	A.G. Walkden (Lab.)	15,190
W.T.A. Foot (Lab.)	3,076		
Rev. J.A. Shaw(Lloyd Geo.Lib.)	1,169		

Table V, Cont.

East Division		West Division	
	Nov. 1923		
G.R. Thorne (Lib.)	No opp.	Sir R. Bird (Con.)	15,990
		W.J. Brown (Lab.)	15,749
	Oct. 1924		
G.R. Thorne (Lib.)	11,066	Sir R. Bird (Con.)	17,866
Sir T. Strangeman (Con.)	10,013	W.J. Brown (Lab.)	17,046
D.R. Williams (Lab.)	5,188		
	May 1929		
G. le M. Mander (Lib.)	15,391	W.J. Brown (Lab.)	21,103
P.G.T. Buchan-Hepburn (Con.)	10,163	Sir R. Bird (Con.)	17,237
D.R. Williams (Lab.)	8,840	G.H. Roberts (Lib.)	4,580
	Oct.1931		
G. le M. Mander (Lib.)	14,945	Sir R. Bird (Con.)	26,181
A.W. Taylor (Con.)	12,628	W.J. Brown (I.L.A.)	17,090
J. Smith (Lab.)	6,340		
	Nov. 1935		
G. le M. Mander (Lib.)	15,935	Sir R. Bird (Con.)	19,697
J. Brockhouse (Con.)	11,935	W.J. Brown (Ind.)	14,867
H.E. Lane (Lab.)	4,985	Rev. R. Lee (Lab.)	1,325
	July 1945		
J. Baird (Lab.)	17,763	H.D. Hughes (Lab.)	21,186
Sir G. le M. Mander (Lib.)	11,206	J. Beattie (Con.)	14,176
W.F.C. Garthwaite (Con.)	8,266		

Table V, Cont.

North East Division		South West Division	
	Feb. 1950		
J. Baird (Lab.)	29,235	J.E. Powell (Con.)	20,239
A.W.G. Holland (Con.)	14,592	H.D. Hughes (Lab.)	19,549
A. Brown (Lib.)	5,482	W.F.H. Rollason (Lib.)	4,229
	Oct. 1951		
J. Baird (Lab.)	30,643	J.E. Powell (Con.)	23,660
J.P.J. Ellis (Con.&Nat.Lib.)	18,563	Mrs. P.L. Davies (Lab.)	20,464
	May 1955		
J. Baird (Lab.)	23,596	J.E. Powell (Con.)	25,318
F. Hardman (Con.)	14,387	L.H. Burgess (Lab.)	16,898
	Oct. 1959		
J. Baird (Lab.)	20,436	J.E. Powell (Con.)	25,696
O.A. Pomeroy (Con.)	16,639	E.L.J. Thorne (Lab.)	14,529

Sources: newspapers and Wolverhampton Directory.

TABLE VI

Participation in Local Elections.

A) School Board 1894. (W.C. 21.11.1894)

58% of those eligible in the town voted.
10% of the population of the town voted.
17% " " " eligible to vote.

B) School Board 1897. (W.C. 24.11.1897)

59% of those eligible in the town voted.
10% of the population of the town voted.
16% " " " eligible to vote.

C) School Board 1900. (W.C. 28.11.1900)

59% of those eligible in the town voted.
10% of the population of the town voted.
17% " " " eligible to vote.

Source: local press.

TABLE VII

Percentage of the electorate voting in the contested wards.

Date	10-19%	20-9%	30-9%	40-9%	50-9%	60-9%	70-9%	80-9%	90-9%
1896-1913				2	1	20	26	8	1
1919-25		2	3	9	16	14	2		
1928-38		9	15	20	7				
1945-57	1	5	42	47	22	4			
1958-64	5	19	22	24	11				

Source: local press.

TABLE VIII

Average Percentage of the electorate in the contested wards who voted in the annual municipal elections.

	%		%
1900	69	1938	40
" 1	61	1945	40
" 2	69	"46	33
" 3	71	"47	42
" 4	73	1949	48
" 5	69	"50	43
" 6	72	1951	35
" 7	69	"52	49
" 8	83	"53	38
1910	67	"54	35
"11	75	"55	37
"12	69	"56	32
"13	67	"57	37
1919	49	"58	38
"20	56	"59	35
"21	64	1960	33
"22	48	"61	40
"23	51	"62	40
"24	66	"63	37
"25	54	"64	35
1927	58		
"28	41		
"29	37		
"30	50		
1932	37		
"33	43		
"34	42		
"35	42		
"36	34		
"37	30		

TABLE IX

Connections of Councillors with the wards they represent.

	Resident in ward they represent	Not resident in ward they represent
1903-4	14	22 N.B. 10 of 19 non Socialists had business interests in ward.
1929-30	21	18 N.B. 7 of 14 non Socialists had business interests in ward.
1945-6	21	24 N.B. 4 of 11 non Socialists had business interests in ward.
1962-3	20	25 N.B. No business interests.

Source: Council Minutes for addresses of Councillors.

TABLE X

Connections of Councillors with the wards they represent, correlated with party affiliation and safeness of seat.

(A)
1962-3

Resident in ward they represent				Not resident in ward they represent			
Con.		Lab.		Con.		Lab.	
Safe	11	Safe	5	Safe	4	Safe	13
Marginal	3	Marginal	1	Marginal	4	Marginal	4
Total Con.	14	Total Lab.	6	Total Con.	8	Total Lab.	17
Grand Total	20			Grand Total	25		

(B)
1945-6

Safe	11	Safe	8	Safe	2	Safe	9
Marginal	0	Marginal	2	Marginal	6	Marginal	4
Total Con.	11	Total Lab.	10	Total Con.	8	Total Lab.	13
Grand Total	21			Grand Total	21		

N.B. for 1945-6 a) 2 Liberals not resident in wards they represented.
1 Communist not resident in ward he represented.
b) 3 who were not resident in their wards had business interests in the wards they represented.

Source: Council Minutes for addresses of Councillors.

Occupational Composition of the Council.
(Figures are percentages)

TABLE XI

Specific Councils.

Occupation	1888-9	1903-4	1919-20	1929-30	1945-6	1953-4	1962-3
Manufacturer	38	33	35	21	12	12	7
Shopkeeper	19	23	21	19	18	23.5	27
Drink	10	10	10	8	7	3	2
Professional	21	17	19	8	7	5	8
Administrator (R)[1].	6	4	4	6	5	5	10
Administrator (N.R)[2].	0	0	4	8	8	8	10
Worker	0	9	13	13	25	23.5	15
Woman	0	0	0	4	5	10	13
Retired	6	4	4	13	13	10	8

1. Administrators, Managers - white collar workers holding positions of responsibility and status.

2. Administrators, clerical workers - white collar workers holding positions of no responsibility and low status.

TABLE XIa

New Entrants.

Occupation	1888-1903	1903-19	1919-29	1929-45	1945-53	1953-62
Manufacturer	27	24	27	8.5	15.5	9
Shopkeeper	26	22	9	20	20	26
Drink	9	6	2	2	0	0
Professional	12	30	8	10	2.5	13
Administrator (R)[1].	5	2	5.5	8.5	2.5	9
Administrator (N.R)[2].	2	4	11	10	13	11
Worker	15	8	23	24	31	15
Woman	0	0	5.5	8.5	11	11
Retired	4	4	9	8.5	4.5	6

1. See above Table XI..

2. " " " "

TABLE XIb

All members of the Council in specific periods.

Occupation	1888-1900	1900-10	1910-19	1919-30	1930-40	1940-50	1950-60
Manufacturer	33	27	27	25.2	16	18	13
Shopkeeper	23	20	23	18.1	22	23	25
Drink	11	8	7	7.1	11	8	3
Professional	16	21	27	13.1	8	8	7
Administrator (R)[1].	6	6	5	4.1	6	8	9
Administrator (N.R.)[2].	0	1	0	6.1	4	3	5
Worker	6	10	10	16.1	17	17	18
Woman	0	0	0	4.1	4	4	10
Retired	5	7	1	6.1	12	11	10

1. See above Table XI.

2. " " " "

Sources for occupation - Council Minutes, supplemented by press and interviews.

TABLE XII

Occupation and Party[al] Allegiance.

New Entrants.

(a) 1888-1919 Occupation	Conservative	Liberal	Labour	Others
Manufacturer	14	9	0	4
Shopkeeper	8	13	1	4
Drink	7	0	0	1
Professional	16	5	0	1
Administrator (R)[1].	3	1	0	0
Administrator (N.R)[2].	2	0	1	0
Worker	2	0	11	0
Woman	0	0	0	0
Retired	0	4	0	0
(b) 1919-45				
Manufacturer	14	2	0	2
Shopkeeper	11	1	1	2
Drink	0	0	1	1
Professional	5	0	1	3
Administrator (R)	4	3	0	1
Administrator (N.R)	1	3	4	2
Worker	1	0	21	2
Woman	0	1	6	0
Retired	3	1	4	1
(c) 1945-62				
Manufacturer	7		3	1
Shopkeeper	15	N	3	3
Drink	0		0	0
Professional	7	O	0	0
Administrator (R)	4		1	0
Administrator (N.R)	1	N	10	0
Worker	0		21	0
Woman	2	E	7	1
Retired	1		4	0

1. See above Table XI.
2. " " " " .

TABLE XIII

Occupation and Party Allegiance.

(a) Council 1903-4

Occupation	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Total
Manufacturer	9	6	0	1	16
Shopkeeper	2	7	1	1	11
Drink	5	0	0	0	5
Professional	7	1	0	0	8
Administrator (R)	1	1	0	0	2
Administrator (N.R)	0	0	0	0	0
Worker	1	0	3	0	4
Woman	0	0	0	0	0
Retired	0	2	0	0	2
Total	25	17	4	2	48

(b) Council 1962-3

Occupation	Con.	Lab.	Total
Manufacturer	4	0	4
Shopkeeper	13	3	16
Drink	0	1	1
Professional	5	0	5
Administrator (R)	3	3	6
Administrator (N.R)	1	5	6
Worker	0	9	9
Woman	1	7	8
Retired	3	2	5
Total	30	30	60

1. See above Table XI.
2. " " " ".

TABLE IV

Attachment to the Town.

	1888-9	1903-4	1919-20	1929-30	1945-6	1953-4	1962-3
Total	48	48	48	52	60	60	60
Unknown	19	18	17	20	14	12	10
Natives	15	16	18	19	30	31	31
Residence in the town over 10 years	11	11	9	9	13	16	15
Residence under 10 years	3	3	4	4	3	1	4
Therefore: Rooted	26	27	27	28	43	47	46
Unrooted	3	3	4	4	3	1	4

Sources: newspapers, interviews and questionnaires.

TABLE XV

Council Members being members of the Chamber of Commerce.

Council	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Total
1888-9	6	5	0	11
1903-4	5	4	0	9
1919-20	4	1	0	5
1929-30	3	1	0	4
1945-6	1	0	0	1
1953-4	3	0	0	3
1962-3	1	0	0	1

Source: press.

TABLE XVI

Council Members being members of Rotary and Round Table.

Council	Conservative	Liberal	Labour	Total
1929-30	7	5	0	12
1945-6	11	0	0	11
1953-4	10	0	0	10
1962-3	11	0	0	11

Source: press, interviews, questionnaire.

TABLE XVII

Council Members being directors of local building societies.

Building Socs.	1903-4 Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.	1919-20 Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.	1929-30 Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.	1945-6 Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.
1) South Staffs.	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	2	3	2	0	5	1	0	0	1
2) Freeholders	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	6	0	0	6	1	0	0	1
3) Permament	0	3	0	3	1	1	0	2	4	2	0	6	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	3	4	0	7	4	2	0	6	13	4	0	17	3	0	0	3

	1953-4 Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.	1962-3 Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.
1) South Staffs.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2) Freeholders	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
3) Permament	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	1

Source: Wolverhampton Directory.

TABLE XVIII

Religion and Party Affiliation (Specific Councils).

	1888-9			1903-4				1919-20				1929-30				1945-6			1953-4			1962-3		
Denomination	Con.	Lib.	Tot.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.	Con.	Lab.	Tot.	Con.	Lab.	Tot.	Con.	Lab.	Tot.
Anglican	13	3	17	17	0	1	18	11	0	2	13	6	0	3	13	12	5	17	10	7	17	19	14	33
Methodist	1	5	6	1	5	1	7	2	4	0	6	1	7	2	10	2	7	9	3	6	9	0	4	4
Congregationalist	0	9	9	0	8	0	8	1	4	0	5	1	4	1	6	2	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
Baptist	0	1	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Presbyterian	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quaker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
R.C.	2	1	4	2	2	0	4	2	2	0	5	4	0	1	5	3	2	5	3	3	6	3	2	5
Unknown		10			9				17				16				25			24			18	
TOTAL		48			48				48				52				60			60			60	

Source: press, interviews, questionnaire.

TABLE XIX

Religion and Occupation of New Entrants to the Council.

1888-1919	Anglican	Methodist	Congregationalist	Baptist	Presbyterian	R.C.	Unknown	Total
Manufacturer	8	6	2	2	0	2	7	27
Shopkeeper	3	9	2	0	1	3	8	26
Drink	1	0	0	0	0	3	4	8
Professional	8	1	2	1	0	0	10	22
Administrator (R)[1.]	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	4
Administrator (N.R.)[2.]	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Worker	1	3	0	1	0	0	8	13
Woman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retired	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	4
Total	24	22	7	4	1	8	41	107
1919-45								
Manufacturer	2	2	2	1	0	1	10	18
Shopkeeper	3	3	1	0	1	1	5	14
Drink	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Professional	2	0	0	0	0	3	4	9
Administrator (R)	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	7
Administrator (N.R.)	2	2	1	0	0	3	3	11
Worker	4	2	1	0	0	1	17	25
Woman	1	0	1	0	1	0	4	7
Retired	3	2	1	0	0	1	2	9
Total	19	12	8	1	2	12	48	102

Table XIX cont.

1945-62	Anglican	Methodist	Congregationalist	Quaker	Baptist	Presbyterian	R.C.	Unknown	Total
Manufacturer	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	7	11
Shopkeeper	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	21
Drink	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Professional	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	7
Administrator (R)	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
Administrator (N.R.)	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	11
Worker	4	2	0	0	1	0	1	13	21
Woman	4	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	10
Retired	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	5
Total	36	6	0	1	2	0	3	43	91

1. See above Table XI.
2. " " " ".

Source: press, interviews, questionnaire.

TABLE XX

Members of the Council being related to other members of the Council.

Council	Conservative	Liberal	Labour	Total
1888-9	7	7	0	14
1903-4	7	5	1	13
1919-20	6	5	1	12
1929-30	7	7	2	16
1945-6	9	0	6	15
1953-4	7	0	6	13
1962-3	8	0	4	12

Source: press, interviews, questionnaire.

TABLE XXI

Education and Party Affiliation. (Specific Councils)

	1883-9			1903-4				1919-20				1929-30				1945-6			1953-4			1962-3		
Education	Con.	Lib.	Tot.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Tot.	Con.	Lab.	Tot.	Con.	Lab.	Tot.	Con.	Lab.	Tot.
Elementary	5	1	6	1	4	1	6	2	3	3	11	3	4	5	12	3	17	20	6	16	22	3	18	21
Secondary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	1	3	4	6	5	11
Grammar School	1	3	4	2	2	0	4	7	1	0	8	2	1	0	3	1	1	2	5	2	7	10	1	11
Higher Grade Scl.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	5	2	3	5	2	2	4
Public School	1	2	3	1	3	0	4	1	2	0	3	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2
College	1	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
University	2	1	3	4	0	0	4	2	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	2	1	3	1	1	2	3	0	3
Unknown		29			29				23				34				26			18			8	
Total		48			48				48				52				60			60			60	

TABLE XXII

Average Ages of the members of the Council.

	1888-9	1903-4	1919-20	1929-30	1945-6	1953-4	1962-3
Councillors							
Lib.	49.1	52.1	54.4	56	-	-	-
Con.	43.7	54.7	49.8	54.1	58.9	53.9	47.2
Lab.	-	43.6	54.5	50.6	46.5	51.4	53.3
Rest	71	57.5	39.3	62	-	-	-
All Councillors	48.1	52.7	50.5	53.7	53.2	52.4	50.3
Aldermen							
Lib.	59.2	61.3	63.2	61.6	-	-	-
Con.	54.6	55.6	65.7	62	68	69.4	71.8
Lab.	-	-	-	66	57.9	59.8	64.1
All Aldermen	57.9	56.5	64.6	62.1	61.2	64.3	68.2
Whole Council							
Lib.	54.6	55.3	58	58.6	-	-	-
Con.	45.6	55	54.6	56	59.5	58.2	53.8
Lab.	-	43.6	54.5	51.6	51.5	53.4	55.8
Rest	71	57.5	39.3	62	-	-	-
Whole Council	50.5	54.4	54.5	57.8	53.5	55.4	54.8
Chairmen							
Lib.	54.1	53.4	58	62	-	-	-
Con.	54.6	53.1	57.4	61.1	64.8	58.5	-
Lab.	-	-	-	58.5	55.9	57.1	57
All Chairmen	54.3	53.2	53.2	60.8	59.9	53.1	57

	1873-87	1888-1903	1904-18	1919-30	1931-44	1945-53	1954-62
Mayors							
Lib.	50.2	48.2	50.8	51.2	65	-	-
Con.	47.1	46.5	48.8	61	51.5	51.5	69.5
Lab.	-	-	-	55	62	52	57.8
All Mayors	49.4	47.2	49.8	54.6	52.6	51.7	60.4

New Entrants	1888-1903	1903-19	1919-29	1929-45	1945-53	1953-62
Lib.	42.8	43.9	48.8	48	-	-
Con.	42.2	43.4	47	47.2	45.7	42.6
Lab.	39.6	32.5	39.9	48.1	45.4	46.1
Rest	52	44.5	46	-	-	-
All New Entrants	43.1	43.3	44.6	47.5	45.5	44

New Alderman	1873-88						
Lib.	50.5	50.6	54.6	57.5	63.3	-	-
Con.	48	49.6	58.5	54.6	63.9	56	70.1
Lab.	-	-	-	62	61.6	54.9	59.2
All New Alderman	49.8	50	57.1	56.6	65.1	55.2	65.1

TABLE XXIII

Average Years of Service on the Council.

	1888-9	1903-4	1919-20	1929-30	1945-6	1953-4	1962-3
Councillors							
Lib.	7.2	4.7	13.2	8.1	-	-	-
Con.	5.1	6.9	6.8	6.3	9.6	7.9	3.8
Lab.	-	2.7	7	4.9	2.2	4.6	8.6
Rest	7.5	4.5	6.5	1.5	-	-	-
All Councillors	6.3	5.6	7.7	5.9	5.6	7.6	6.2
Aldermen							
Lib.	16.7	19.8	23.4	22.8	-	-	-
Con.	12.4	19	28.4	17.5	26.2	29.5	24.2
Lab.	-	-	-	28	19	19.6	24.8
All Aldermen	14.9	19.4	26.3	20.7	21.4	20.2	24.5
Whole Council							
Lib.	10.1	9.7	17.5	14.9	-	-	-
Con.	6.9	9.9	12.6	9.1	12.8	14	9.3
Lab.	-	2.7	7	6.6	7.1	8	12.4
Rest	7.5	4.5	6.5	1.5	-	-	-
Whole Council	9.9	9	13.3	9.6	9.6	10.5	12.5
Chairmen							
Lib.	15	14	19.6	23.1	-	-	-
Con.	11.4	13.6	12.4	14	17.2	17.4	-
Lab.	-	-	-	14	11.9	12	13.6
All Chairmen	13.9	13.7	15	17.3	14.4	14.3	13.6

Service on Appointment

	1873-87	1888-1903	1904-18	1919-30	1931-44	1945-53	1954-62
Mayors							
Lib.	7.1	12.5	8.6	10.5	12.7	-	-
Con.	5.7	9.8	7.3	13	9.1	14.7	16
Lab.	-	-	-	15.5	19.5	16.2	14.5
All Mayors	6.6	10.8	7.9	12.3	11.8	15.5	14.8

Service on Appointment

	1873-88	1888-1903	1903-19	1919-30	1930-45	1945-53	1953-62
New Aldermen							
Lib.	7.3	13.1	11.3	14.4	14.6	-	-
Con.	6.5	10.6	13.7	8	16.7	19.2	19.1
Lab.	-	-	-	24	18	12.8	11.8
All New Aldermen	7	11.6	12.7	12.3	16.4	14.5	15.8

TABLE XXIV

Quality of Specific Councils.

(in percentages)

Type of Councillor	1888-9	1903-4	1919-20	1929-30	1945-6	1953-4	1962-3
A	10	10	12	8	8	5	2
B	29	27	19	23	18	25	28
C	17	23	31	32	30	33	26
D	44	40	38	37	44	37	44

Source: Author's assessment.

TABLE XXV

Quality of the Party. (Absolute figures)

Specific Council	TYPE A					TYPE B					TYPE C					TYPE D					GRAND TOTAL
1888-9	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Tot.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Tot.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Tot.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Tot.	
	3	2	0	0	5	7	7	0	0	14	4	3	0	0	7	9	9	0	4	22	48
1903-4	3	2	0	0	5	5	6	2	0	13	5	4	2	0	11	11	7	0	1	19	48
1919-20	3	2	1	0	6	4	4	1	0	9	7	5	2	0	14	12	1	2	4	19	48
1929-30	2	1	1	0	4	6	4	2	0	12	7	5	5	0	17	11	3	5	0	19	52
1945-6	2	0	3	0	5	3	0	8	0	11	10	1	7	0	18	8	2	14	2	26	60
1953-4	1	0	2	0	3	5	0	10	0	15	11	0	9	0	20	8	0	14	0	22	60
1962-3	0	0	1	0	1	6	0	11	0	17	12	0	4	0	16	12	0	14	0	26	60

Source: Author's assessment.

TABLE XXVA

Quality correlated with occupation - absolute figures.

Occupation	1888-9					1903-4					1919-20					1929-30				
	A	B	C	D	Tot.	A	B	C	D	Tot.	A	B	C	D	Tot.	A	B	C	D	Tot.
Manufacturer	4	6	3	5	18	3	4	1	8	16	2	2	4	4	12	1	4	3	3	11
Shopkeeper	-	1	-	8	9	-	2	5	4	11	-	2	5	3	10	-	3	3	4	10
Drink	1	-	-	4	5	1	-	1	3	5	2	-	1	2	5	1	1	-	2	4
Professional	-	5	3	2	10	-	3	3	2	8	-	3	3	3	9	-	1	2	1	4
Administrator (R.)	-	1	2	-	3	1	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	1	2	1	-	1	1	3
" (N.R.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	3	1	4
Worker	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	4	1	1	1	3	6	1	2	1	3	7
Woman	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Retired	-	1	-	2	3	-	1	-	1	2	-	1	-	1	2	-	1	3	3	7
Total	5	14	8	21	48	5	13	11	19	48	6	9	15	18	48	4	12	17	19	52

Occupation	1945-6					1953-4					1962-3				
	A	B	C	D	Tot.	A	B	C	D	Tot.	A	B	C	D	Tot.
Manufacturer	1	1	3	2	7	-	2	3	2	7	-	-	2	2	4
Shopkeeper	-	-	7	4	11	-	2	7	5	14	-	2	7	7	16
Drink	-	-	1	3	4	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	1	1
Professional	-	2	1	1	4	-	2	-	1	3	-	4	1	-	5
Administrator (R.)	2	-	-	1	3	2	-	1	-	3	1	3	1	1	6
" (N.R.)	-	1	2	2	5	-	2	-	2	4	-	1	1	4	6
Worker	-	5	2	8	15	-	5	5	5	15	-	4	1	4	9
Woman	-	2	-	1	3	-	2	1	3	6	-	2	-	6	8
Retired	2	-	2	4	8	1	-	2	3	6	-	1	3	1	5
Total	5	11	18	26	60	3	15	20	22	60	1	17	16	26	60

Source: Author's assessment.

TABLE XXVB

Quality correlated with occupation over the period.

Occupation	(i) Absolute figures					(ii) Percentages				
	A	B	C	D	Total	A	B	C	D	Total
Manufacturer	11	19	19	26	75	15	25	25	35	100
Shopkeeper	0	12	34	35	81	0	15	42	43	100
Drink	5	1	4	16	26	19	4	15	62	100
Professional	0	20	13	10	43	0	47	30	23	100
Administrator (R.)	8	4	5	5	22	36	18	23	23	100
" (N.R.)	0	4	7	10	21	0	19	33	48	100
Worker	2	20	11	23	56	4	36	20	40	100
Woman	0	6	2	11	19	0	32	10	58	100
Retired	3	5	10	15	33	9	15	30	46	100

Source: Author's assessment.

TABLE XXVI

Occupational Composition of the Chairmen.

Occupation	1888-9	1903-4	1919-20	1929-30	1945-6	1953-4	1962-3
Manufacturer	8	6	5	4	3	2	0
Shopkeeper	0	3	4	4	3	7	3
Drink	0	2	2	2	1	1	1
Professional	3	4	3	1	2	1	0
Administrator (R)[6].	1	1	2	1	1	2	2
Administrator (N.R)[7].	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Worker	0	0	0	3	3	5	6
Woman	0	0	0	0	1	3	5
Retired	0	0	1[1].	3[2].	6[3].	1[4].	1[5].
Total	12	16	17	19	22	22	21

1. Retired Shopkeeper.
2. " Shopkeeper, Commercial Traveller, Insurance Agent.
3. " Manufacturer, Brewer, Worker, 3 Railwaymen.
4. " Worker.
5. " Worker.
6. See above Table XI.
7. " " " " .

TABLE XXVII

Occupational Composition of the Chairmen and their Party Affiliation.

	1888-9			1903-4			1919-20			1929-30			1945-6			1953-4			1962-3	
Occupation	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lab.
Manufacturer	2	6	0	4	2	0	3	2	0	1	2	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Shopkeeper	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	2	0	1	3	0	2	0	1	5	0	2	0	3
Drink	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Professional	3	0	0	3	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Administrator (R)[1].	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	2
Administrator (N.R)[2].	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3
Worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	5	0	6
Woman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	5
Retired	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	1	0	1
Total	5	7	0	11	5	0	11	6	0	8	7	4	10	1	11	9	0	13	0	21

Source: newspapers, Council Minutes and Yearbooks.

1. See above Table XI.
2. " " " " .

TABLE XXVIII

Occupational Composition of the Mayors.

Occupation	1848-68	1868-88	1888-1900	1900-10	1910-19	1919-30	1930-40	1940-50	1950-61
Manufacturer	7	9	4	0	0	2	4	2	0
Shopkeeper	5	1	1	2	3	2	1	3	2
Drink	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	1
Professional	4	2	1	4	2	0	1	1	0
Administrator (R)[1].	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	1
Administrator (N.R)[2].	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Worker	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4
Woman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Retired	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2
Unknown	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

1. See above Table XI.
2. " " " " .

Source: newspapers, Council Minutes and Yearbooks.

TABLE XXIX

Occupational Composition of the Mayors and their Party Affiliation.

Occupation	1898-1900			1900-10			1910-19			1919-39			1939-40			1940-50			1950-64		
	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.
Manufacturer	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Shopkeeper	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	3	0	2
Drink	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Professional	1	0	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Administrator (R) [1]	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Administrator (N.R) [2]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Woman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Retired	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Total	5	3	0	5	4	0	4	3	0	2	3	2	6	2	1	3	2	4	5	0	10

1. See above Table XI.
2. " " " " .

Source: newspapers, Council Minutes and Yearbooks.

TABLE XXX

Aldermen and Chairmanships.

	1888-1900	1900-10	1910-19	1919-30	1930-40	1940-50	1950-60
Already a Chairman when elected Alderman	5	2	3	8	12	11	11
Appointed Chairman in same year as elected Alderman	5	2	0	2	0	3	0
Not a Chairman when elected Alderman	1	2	2	3	1	3	3

Source: Council Minutes and Yearbooks.

TABLE XXXI

Occupational Composition of New Aldermen.

Occupation	1848-68	1868-88	1888-99	1900-10	1910-19	1919-30	1930-40	1940-50	1950-60
Manufacturer	9	9	5	0	0	5	3	3	1
Shopkeeper	8	2	1	0	2	4	2	4	4
Drink	1	0	0	3	0	2	2	2	0
Professional	5	2	2	3	2	0	0	2	0
Administrator (R)[1].	4	1	2	0	1	0	1	1	0
Administrator (N.R)[2].	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	6
Woman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Retired	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	2	1
Unknown	12	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	39	18	11	6	5	13	13	17	14

Source: newspapers, Council Minutes and Yearbooks.

1. See above Table XI.
2. " " " ".

TABLE XXXII

Occupational Composition of New Aldermen and their Party Affiliation.

	1888-99			1900-10			1910-19			1919-30			1930-40			1940-50			1950-60		
Occupation	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.	Con.	Lib.	Lab.
Manufacturer	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	2	0	3	0	0	1	0	0
Shopkeeper	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	4	0	0
Drink	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Professional	2	0	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Administrator (R)[1].	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Administrator (N.R)[2].	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Worker	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	6
Woman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Retired	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
Total	7	4	0	5	1	0	2	3	0	7	5	1	7	4	2	8	1	8	5	0	9

1. See above Table XI.
2. " " " " .

Source: newspapers, Council Minutes and Yearbooks.

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A.A. Beach - see interview list below.
L.R. Guy - " " " " .
J.C. Homer - " " " " .
J.F. Myatt - " " " " .
Notes for an autobiography by W. Lawley.
Letters to the author from:
H. Brabin, Local Government Officer, Conservative Central Office.
W. Lawley, see interview list.

S.C. Loweth, Secretary of Wolverhampton Rotary Club.
Gravestones in the Wolverhampton Cemetery, Jeffcock Road.
Maps (i) Alfred Hinde's Map of Wolverhampton with borough and ward boundaries marked by the Borough Engineer's Department.
(ii) Burrow's Pointer Guide Map of Wolverhampton, London, circa. 1961.
(iii) Those in the various guides to the town.

Election Addresses

1900 Liberal A.B. Bantock.
1919 Discharged and Demobilised Sailors' and Soldiers' W. Morgan.
1939 Conservative L.R. Guy.
1945 Anti-Socialist M.P. Birch, L.R. Guy, W.J. Rawlins.
Labour H.E. Preece.
Communist Miss D.E. Bootman.
Independent A.E. Lacon.
1951 Ratepayer J. Ireland.
1960 Conservative T.J. Blest.
1961 Labour A. Morey, F. Henderson.
Conservative F.C. Evans, D. Reynolds.
1962 Conservative H. Miller.
Labour G.J. Costley.
1963 Conservative R.G. Gough.
Labour A. Lusby.
1964 Labour H. Bagley, P.F. Bentley, D.A. Birch, S.E. Birt, E.J. Foster, H. Turner, L. Clutton, M. Collis, Mrs. V.A. Costley, J.G. Davies, R.J. Garner, Mrs. W.F.K. Reynolds.
Conservative S. Brindley, H.J. Ebbon, F.E.C. Goatman, F.C. Evans, R.J. Greenly, G.A. Guy, W.G. Morrison, S.E. Nicholls.
Liberal R.J. Beddow, R.J. Washbourne, A.H. Wright.
Communist M.J. Bennett, K. Evans, K.H. Pearce, W.F. Laws.

Author attended meetings of:
Wolverhampton Conservative Group.
" Labour " .
" Borough Labour Party.
South West Wolverhampton Constituency Labour Party's General Management Committee.
Blakenhall Ward Labour Party.
Wolverhampton Fabian Society.
North East Wolverhampton Conservative Association, Young Conservatives.

Interviews

Mrs. G. Bagley, Labour member of the Council 1957-9, 1959-, wife of N. Bagley, Labour member of the Council 1945-61.
H. Bagley, Labour member of the Council 1945-, Mayor 1964-5, Chairman of Cultural and Entertainments Committee 1952-.
J. Bannon, Secretary of the South West Wolverhampton Liberal Party.
A.G. Barrett, Independent member of the Council 1949-52.
Mrs. G. Bates, daughter of J. Clark (see below) and daughter-in-law of G. Bates, Liberal member of the Council 1927-49.
A.A. Beach, J.P., Labour member of the Council 1921-24, 1927-52, Alderman 1941-52, Mayor 1940-41, Chairman of Cleansing (1937-45) and Watch (1945-52) Committees.
Mrs. A.A. Beach, wife of above.
J. Beattie, J.P., Conservative member of the Council 1935-56, Mayor 1951-2, Chairman of Water (1949-51) and Finance (1951-55) Committees.
R.J. Beddow, Liberal candidate for Oxbarn Ward 1964.
M.J. Bennett, Secretary of the Wolverhampton Communist Party.
P.F. Bentley, Labour member of the Council 1964-.
D.A. Birch, Labour member of the Council 1952-, Chairman of Finance Committee 1955-.
H. Bowering, Labour member of the Council 1960-.
S. Bowers, Agent for the South West Wolverhampton Conservative Association 1907-46.
V.J. Bowyer, Agent for the North East Wolverhampton Conservative Association.
E.T. Bradley, Independent Labour and then Fascist member of the Council 1932-5.
Mrs. A.A. Braybrook, J.P., Labour member of the Council 1937-, Alderman 1952-, Mayor 1953-4, Chairman of Children's Committee 1948-9, 1952-.
S. Brindley, Conservative member of the Council 1961-.
J. Cahill, Conservative member of the Council 1927-64, Alderman 1938-64, Chairman of Streets (1931-48) and Public Works and Estates (1949-52) Committees.
A. Cattell, Secretary of the Labour Group 1952-55, husband of Mrs. M. Cattell, Labour and then Independent member of the Council 1954-60.
G.T. Challenor, Liberal member of the Council 1937-46.
Rev. J.L. Chown, Minister at the Baptist Church, Waterloo Road.
F. Clapham, Labour member of the Council 1945-47, 1948-, Chairman of Town Planning Committee 1952-.
C.B. Clark, Labour member of the Council 1945-49, 1951-60, Chairman of Water (1952-54) and Education (1954-60) Committees.

J. Clark, Liberal and then Independent member of the Council 1912-54, Alderman 1925-54, Mayor 1923-25, Chairman of Education Committee 1928-54.
I.A. Clegg, Senior Assistant Solicitor of the Corporation.
J.H. Coleman, Conservative member of the Council 1910-61, Alderman 1933-61, Chairman of Art Gallery and Public Library (1946-8) and Small Holdings and Allotments (1951-2) Committees.
Mrs. W.H. Cooper, wife of Labour member of the Council 1921-28.
G.J. Costley, Labour member of the Council 1952-55, 1956-62, 1963-, Chairman of Sewage Disposal Committee 1960-62.
Mrs. V.A. Costley, wife of above and Labour candidate in Blakenhall Ward 1964.
J. Cox, member of the Labour Party in Wolverhampton since 1906.
Mrs. M. Dale, Labour member of the Council 1945-47, 1949-, Alderman 1964-, Chairman of Health (1946-7) and Welfare Services (1952-) Committees.
H.J. Ebbon, Conservative member of the Council 1959-62, 1964-.
H.R. Elliston, Conservative member of the Council 1957-.
W.E. Ellwell, Former Chief Clerk of the Corporation and employed by the Corporation from the 1900s.
R.J. Evans, Labour member of the Council 1923-27.
W.H. Farmer, Conservative member of the Council 1934-52, Chairman of Care of Mentally Defective (1940-48) and Public Relations and Development (1950-53) Committees.
D. Fenwick, Conservative member of the Council 1961-63.
Mrs. V.A. Fletcher, Labour member of the Council 1952-55, 1959-.
R.J. Foster, Municipal Correspondent of Express and Star 1962-4.
N. Frost. son of T. Frost, Labour member of the Council 1901-08, 1911-49.
E.Y. Fullwood, J.P., Conservative member of the Council 1955-, Secretary of the Conservative Group, son of H.T. Fullwood, member of the Council 1942-.
A. Garner, Chairman of South West Wolverhampton Labour Party.
R.J. Garner, Labour candidate in elections in 1962, 63 and 64.
F.E.C. Goatman, Conservative candidate in Dunstall Ward 1964.
A.G. Goodman, Conservative member of the Council 1939-51, Chairman of Water (1945-9) and Cultural and Entertainments (1949-51) Committees.
G.A. Guy, Conservative member of the Council 1960-, son of L.R. Guy, member of the Council 1939-.
D.H. Haselock, Conservative member of the Council 1947-57, Chairman of Accident Prevention Committee 1951-55.
Mrs. I.M. Hayes, J.P., Labour member of the Council 1954-58.
F. Henderson, Labour member of the Council 1952-7, 1958-61.
J.C. Homer, Ratepayer and then Conservative member of the Council 1944-, Alderman 1961-, Mayor 1958-9, Chairman of Welfare Services Committee 1949-52.

F.W. Howell, Town Clerk of Wolverhampton 1919-29.
H.D. Hughes, Labour M.P. for South West Wolverhampton.
Mrs. R.F. Ilsley, Labour member of the Council 1941-, Alderman 1952-, Mayor 1957-8, Chairman of Care of Blind Persons (1945-8) Sanitation (1952-54) and Health (1953-) Committees.
J.R. Ireland, Ratepayer member of the Council 1947-54, Chairman of Public Relations and Development Committee 1949-50.
M. James, Labour member of the Council 1957-60.
E. Jordan, Chief Clerk of the Corporation.
A.E. Lacon, Independent member of the Council 1941-45.
H.E. Lane, Labour member of the Council 1930-, Alderman 1945-, Mayor 1947-9, Chairman of Housing Committee 1945-49, 1952-59, 1963-.
W. Lawley, J.P., Independent Labour and then Labour member of the Council 1932-52, Alderman 1945-52, Mayor 1945-6, Chairman of Health (1945-46) and Civic Hall and Baths (1946-48) Committees.
W.F. Laws, Communist candidate in Bushbury Ward 1964.
A. Lester, Labour member of the Council 1956-, Chairman of Accident Prevention (1958-61) and Water (1961-) Committees.
R. Lewis, President of the South West Wolverhampton Liberal Party and son of P. Lewis, Liberal member of the Council 1888-1914.
G.E.J. Luce, Conservative member of the Council 1927-45, Alderman 1944-45, Mayor 1938-9, Chairman of Parks and Cemetries Committee 1942-5.
Sir G.K. le M. Mander, J.P., Liberal member of the Council 1911-20, Liberal M.P. for East Wolverhampton 1929-45.
F. Mansell, Labour member of the Council 1945-, Alderman 1954-, Mayor 1955-6, Chairman of Cleansing (1945-49), Transport (1952-) and Rating and Payments (1960-) Committees, Chairman and Leader of the Labour Group.
A.H. Marshall, City Treasurer of Coventry, employee of Wolverhampton Corporation in 1920s.
H. Mash, Labour member of the Council 1945-61, Alderman 1959-61, Mayor 1960-61, Chairman of Public Works Committee 1960-61.
F.W. Mason, Secretary of the Wolverhampton Ratepayers' Association 1930-1955.
R.J. Meddings, Town Clerk of Wolverhampton 1956-.
Mrs. R.R. Millard, wife of Labour member of the Council 1905-07.
E. Mitchell, Labour member of the Council 1953-, Chairman of Accident Prevention (1955-58), Public Works (1961-2) and Fire and Ambulance (1962-) Committees.
C.T. Morey, Labour Party member; active in the party in Wolverhampton since the 1900s.
W. Morgan, Ex-Serviceman's member of the Council 1919-23.
J.T. Morton, Labour member of the Council 1963-.
Mrs. J.F. Myatt, wife of Conservative member of the Council 1908-38.

S.E. Nicholls, Conservative member of the Council 1961-.
A.H. Oakley, Liberal member of the Council 1915-19.
T.W. Phillipson, Conservative member of the Council 1933-57, Alderman 1951-57, Mayor 1944-45, Chairman of Parks and Physical Recreation Committee 1949-52.
R.N. Pollard, Agent for the South West Wolverhampton Conservative Association.
A. Byrne-Quinn, J.P., Conservative member of the Council 1930-, Alderman 1949-, Mayor 1942-3, Chairman of Maternity and Child Welfare (1936-46) and Health (1947-53) Committees.
W.J. Rawlins, Ratepayer and then Conservative member of the Council 1932-, Alderman 1949-, Chairman of Sewage Disposal Committee 1938-55.
J. Reade, nephew of T. Reade, Liberal member of the Council 1903-11.
R. Reynolds, Secretary of the South West Wolverhampton Labour Party.
Mrs. W.F.K. Reynolds, Labour member of the Council 1951-, Chairman of Santitation Committee 1958-.
A.J. Robbins, Chief Electoral Registration Assistant.
A.A. Rogers, Chairman of the Wolverhampton Ratepayers' Society 1930-54.
H.W. Small, retired local journalist, and son of W. Small, a journalist in Wolverhampton since the 1890s.
F.S. Smith, Labour member of the Council 1952-, Alderman 1964-, Chairman of Water (1955-61) and Establishments (1961-) Committees, Secretary of the Labour Group 195 -
Miss Sproson, daughter of Mrs. E. Sproson, Labour member of the Council 1921-27 and first woman Councillor.
A.E. Steventon, Labour member of the Council 1958-, Chairman of Education Committee 1960-,
F.L. Steward, Solicitor of over 50 years interest in the town.
F.G. Stores, Conservative member of the Council 1961-64.
A. Storer, J.P., Labour member of the Council 1957-60, 1961-, Chairman of Markets Committee 1961-.
C.B.V. Taylor, Labour member of the Council 1927-, Alderman 1945-, Mayor 1946-7, Chairman of Parks and Physical Recreation Committee 1945-49, 1952-.
Mr. & Mrs. H.J. Waddams, Corporation staff since the 1920s.
C.M. Walsh, Independent and then Labour member of the Council 1945, 1952-, Chairman of Civil Defence (1955-61) and Housing (1962-63) Committees.
W.H. Whittle, Labour member of the Council 1958-61.
R.J. Wiley, former Chief Clerk and employee of the Corporation since the 1900s.
A.H. Windridge, Conservative member of the Council 1944-45, 1946-64, Alderman 1962-64, Chairman of Small Holdings and Allotments (1949-51) and Water (1951-52, 1954-55) Committees.

J.K. Woodward, Labour member of the Council 1953-60, 1963-, Chairman of Sewage Disposal (1955-60) and Civic Catering (1964-) Committees.

L.J. Woolridge, Labour member of the Council 1935-, Alderman 1945-, Mayor 1954-55, Chairman of Civic Catering Committee 1960-64.

A.H. Wright, Liberal candidate in 1964, Chairman of the South West Wolverhampton Liberal Association.

Addendum

G.W.R. Lines, Deputy Director of Education 1947-53, Director of Education 1953-.

Questionnaires received from:

x = see interview list for details.

Mrs. G. Bagley	x
H. Bagley	x
A. Baker	Ratepayer then Conservative member of the Council 1946-, Chairman of Sanitation (1951-2) and Public Relations (1953-4) Committees.
A.G. Barrett	x
J. Beattie	x
Mrs. J. Beddoes	Labour member of the Council 1956-, Chairman of Sewage Disposal Committee 1962-.
M.J. Bennett	x
P.F. Bentley	x
D.A. Birch	x
M.P. Birch	Ratepayer then Conservative member of the Council 1944-64, Alderman 1961-64, Mayor 1962-3, Chairman of Housing (1949-52) and Cleansing (1952-55) Committees. Leader of the Conservative Group 1960-62.
J.A.W. Bird	Labour member of the Council 1962-.
H. Bowering	x
Mrs. A.A. Braybrook	x
S. Brindley	x
A. Cattell	x
Mrs. M. Cattell	x
F. Clapham	x
C.B. Clark	Labour member of the Council 1945-49, 1951-60, Chairman of Water (1952-54) and Education (1954-60) Committees.
L. Clutton	Labour member of the Council 1964-.

M. Collis	Labour candidate in 1964, Chairman of Wolverhampton Fabian Society.
G.J. Costley	x
Mrs. V.A. Costley	x
Mrs. M. Dale	x
J.G. Davies	Labour candidate in 1964.
H.J. Ebbon	x
H.R. Elliston	x
K. Evans	Communist candidate in 1964.
P.T.W. Farmer	Conservative member of the Council 1951-.
D.R. Fellows	" " " " " 1954-.
Mrs. V.A. Fletcher	x
E.J. Foster	Labour member of the Council 1964-.
E.Y. Fullwood	x
R.J. Garner	x
Mrs. E.M. Gibbs	Conservative member of the Council 1964-.
W.E. Gibbs	" " " " " 1960-63, husband of Mrs. E.M. Gibbs.
F.A. Gill	Conservative member of the Council 1953-56.
T.W. Glynn	Independent member of the Council 1933-41.
F.E.C. Goatman	x
A.G. Goodman	x
R.G. Gough	Conservative member of the Council 1955-58, 1960-.
K.M. Green	Conservative member of the Council 1956-.
G.A. Guy	x
L.R. Guy	x
W.H. Hale	Labour member of the Council 1945-, Alderman 1960-, Chairman of Public Works (1947-48, 1962-), Housing (1959-62) and Small Holdings (1962-) Committees.
D.H. Haselock	x
Mrs. I.M. Hayes	x
G.H. Hodson	Conservative member of the Council 1961-.
J.C. Homer	x
Mrs. R.F. Ilsley	x
J.R. Ireland	x
M. James	x
C.W. Jones	Labour member of the Council 1960-.
A.B. Kennard	Conservative member of the Council 1957-63.
W.J. Kings	Labour member of the Council 1963-.
A.E. Lacon	x
F.V. Law J.P.	Labour member of the Council 1952-, Chairman of Traffic and Highways Committee 1961-.

W.F. Laws	x
A. Lester	x
Mrs. M.B. MacKay J.P.	Liberal member of the Council 1942-45.
A.N. Madden	Conservative member of the Council 1960-63.
F. Mansell	x
H. Mash	x
W.H. Miller	Conservative member of the Council 1962-.
E. Mitchell	x
W.T.D. Morgan	Conservative member of the Council 1949-56.
W.G. Morrison	Conservative member of the Council 1955-, Leader of the Conservative Group 1962-.
H.H. Mould	Independent member of the Council 1947-54.
S.E. Nicholls	x
A.H. Oakley	x
K.H. Pearce	Communist candidate in 1964.
D.J.L. Pedley	Labour member of the Council 1956-, Chairman of Small Holdings (1959-62) and Civil Defence (1961-) Committees.
T.W. Phillipson	x
A. Byrne-Quinn	x
W.J. Rawlins	x
Mrs. W.F.K. Reynolds	x
F.S. Smith	x
F.W. Smithies	Conservative member of the Council 1931-46, Chairman of Electricity Committee 1945-46.
A.E. Steventon	x
F.G. Stores	x
A. Storer	x
S.S. Tatem	Conservative member of the Council 1962-.
C.B.V. Taylor	x
E.F. Tivey	Labour member of the Council 1951-, Chairman of Cleansing Committee 1961-63.
H. Turner	Labour candidate in 1964.
C.M. Walsh	x
R.J. Washbourne	Liberal candidate in 1964.
J.E. Weaver	Conservative member of the Council 1957-62.
W.H. Whittle	x
A.H. Windridge	x
J.K. Woodward	x
L.J. Woolridge	x
A.H. Wright	x

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Polsby, N.W. Community Power and Political Theory, New Haven, 1963.
Sayre, W.S. & Kaufman, H. Governing New York City, New York, 1960.

MAPS OF WOLVERHAMPTON AND ITS WARD BOUNDARIES.

No. 1.	1896-1926
No. 2.	1927-1956
No. 3.	1957-1964

Notes.

Map No. 1.

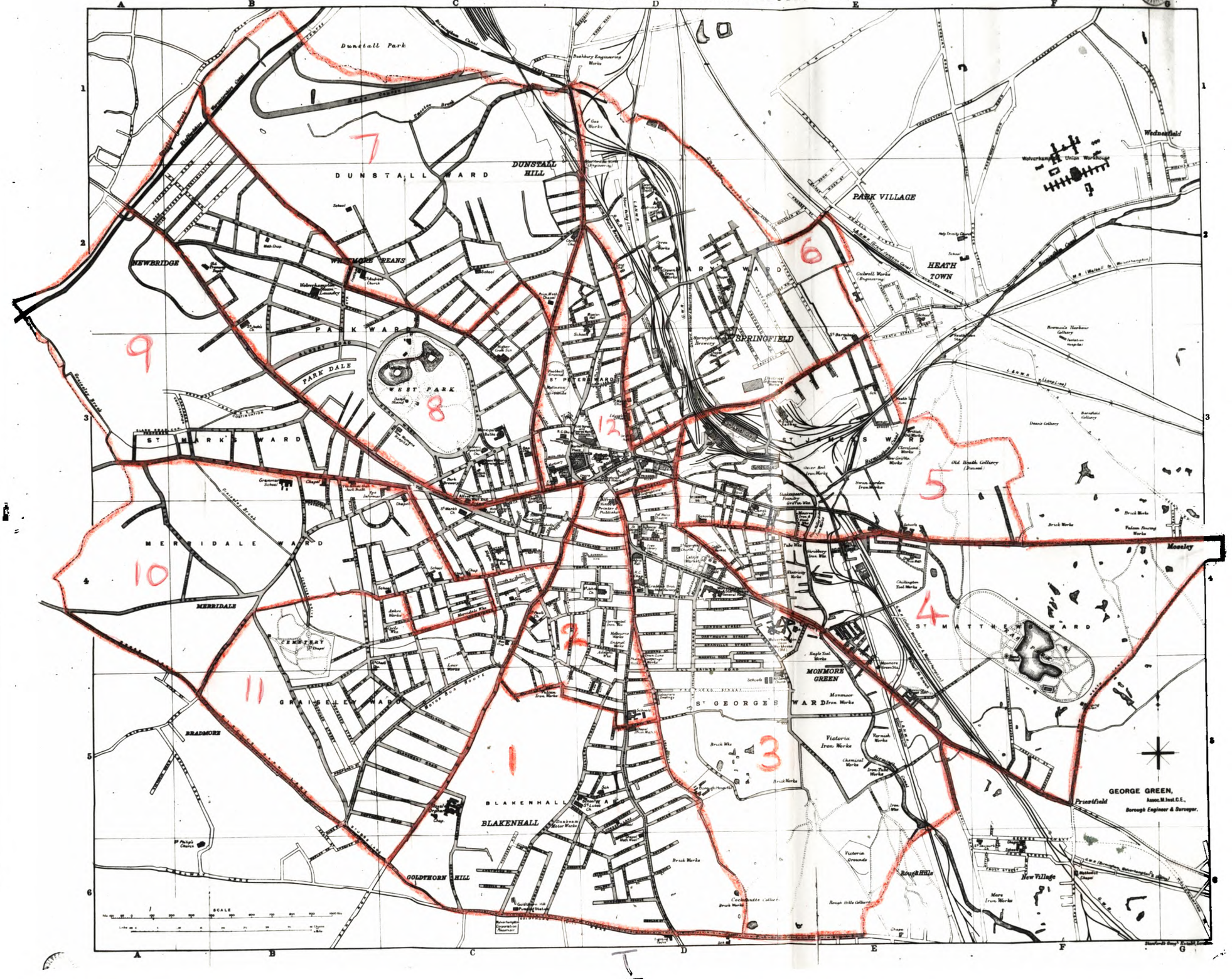
1. Blakenhall Ward.
2. St. John's Ward
3. St. George's Ward
4. St. Matthew's Ward
5. St. James' Ward
6. St. Mary's Ward
7. Dunstall Ward
8. Park Ward
9. St. Mark's Ward
10. Merridale Ward
11. Graiseley Ward
12. St. Peter's Ward

Map No. 2.

1. Penn Ward
2. Blakenhall & St. John's Ward
3. St. George's Ward
4. St. Matthew's Ward
5. St. James' Ward
6. Heath Town Ward
7. Low Hill Ward
8. Bushbury Ward
9. Dunstall Ward
10. Park Ward
11. St. Mark's & Merridale Ward
12. St. Phillip's Ward
13. Graiseley Ward
14. St. Mary's Ward
15. St. Peter's Ward

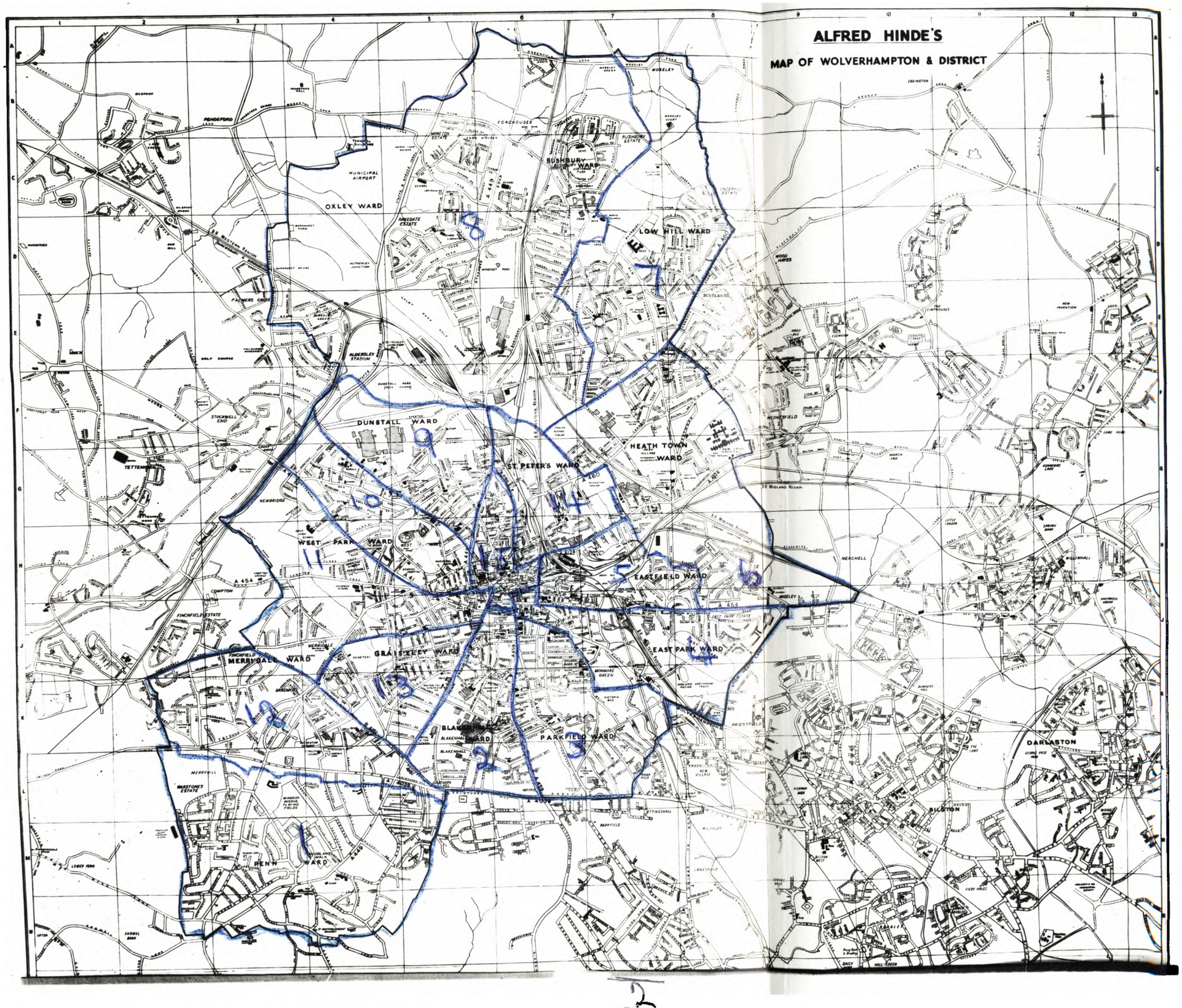
R14

ALFRED HINDE'S MAP OF WOLVERHAMPTON. 1906.



ALFRED HINDE'S

MAP OF WOLVERHAMPTON & DISTRICT



STREET MAP OF WOLVERHAMPTON.

H. SCHOFIELD B.Sc. (Eng.) M.I.C.E., M.I.Mun.E., M.T.P.I.
BOROUGH ENGINEER,
WOLVERHAMPTON.

BUSHBURY
LOW HILL
OXLEY
WOLVERHAMPTON MUNICIPAL AIRPORT
Lane Green
Oxley Parkgate Estate
Ford House
Mosely
Wood Hayes
Wood End
BLACKHALVE LANE
KNOWLE
LAMOS
HEATH TOWN
DUNSTALL
Stockwell End
Dunstall Hill
Falling Park
Park Village
ST. PETERS
New Cross
Heath Town
LEA CROSS
LEASOWES
WEDNESFIELD
March End
TETTENHALL
Tettenhall Wood
Newbridge
WEST PARK
Springfield
EASTFIELD
Neachell
Compton
Merridale
Moseley
EAST PARK
Monmore Green
Stow Heath
Green Lane
MERRIDALE
GRAISELEY
Blakenhall
BLAKENHALL
PARK FIELD
Merryhill
OXBARN
Penn Fields
Goldthorn Hill
PENN
New Village
Parkfield
Ettingshall
BILSTON
Lanesfield
Spring Vale
COSELEY
Upper Penn
Penn Common

Copy of Questionnaire

Name:-

Address:-

Date of birth:- Place of birth:-

Date of arrival in Wolverhampton:

Occupation:-

Political Party:- Date of joining Political Party:-

Membership and official positions held in Associations:-

e.g. Trades Unions, Trade Associations, Professional Associations, Social Organisations.

Education:-

Religion:-

Table I, cont.

Date		Lab.	Con.	Ind.	Lib.
1954-55	A	8	7	-	-
	C	28	17	-	-
	T	36	24	-	-
1955-56	A	9	6	-	-
	C	25	20	-	-
	T	34	26	-	-
1956-57	A	9	6	-	-
	C	26	19	-	-
	T	35	25	-	-
1957-58	A	10	5	-	-
	C	27	18	-	-
	T	37	23	-	-
1958-59	A	10	5	-	-
	C	29	16	-	-
	T	39	21	-	-
1959-60	A	10	5	-	-
	C	29	16	-	-
	T	39	21	-	-
1960-61	A	10	5	-	-
	C	25	20	-	-
	T	35	25	-	-
1962-3	A	7	8	-	-
	C	23	22	-	-
	T	30	30	-	-
1963-4	A	7	8	-	-
	C	27	18	-	-
	T	34	26	-	-
1964-5	A	10	5	-	-
	C	27	18	-	-
	T	37	23	-	-

Table Ia

May 1961, Position before Aldermanic election

	Lab.	Con.	
A	10	4	(1 vacancy)
C	22	23	
T	32	27	

Labour solution after Aldermanic election

	Lab.	Con.
A	15	0
C	22	23
T	37	23

Conservative solution after High Court decision

	Lab.	Con.	
A	8	7	Labour Mayor, not Alderman or
C	22	23	Councillor, has casting vote.
T	30	30	

January, 1962, After death of Labour Alderman

	Lab.	Con	
A	7	8	Labour Mayor
C	22	22	(1 vacancy, not still has
T	29	30	filled until May) casting vote

May 1962

	Lab.	Con.	
A	7	8	Tory Mayor agrees not to
C	23	22	vote at all.
T	30	30	

NOTES

Sources: Newspapers, interviews and Party minutes.

To about 1914 the political labels really denote national party affiliation.

The term "Independent" up to 1914 really denotes those whose affiliations cannot be discovered. Later it refers to those who did not stand openly under a party label at elections.