

THE FREEMAN VOTER IN LIVERPOOL, 1802-1835

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Read 15 February 1973

LIVERPOOL received its first legal recognition in 1207, when by letters patent King John granted to the holders of burgages in Liverpool the 'liberties and free customs' of a free borough. This was confirmed by Henry III in Liverpool's first charter, 1229. In the late sixteenth century the borough was governed by the burgesses, or freemen, together with the Mayor and the two bailiffs in the general assembly, Common Hall. After this period the executive powers were taken over by a select body of the freemen, the Common Council. By 1802 the Common Council, composed of the Mayor, bailiffs and thirty-eight freemen, were in complete control of the administration of Corporation affairs and had established their right to pass by-laws and to elect their own members, although the Mayor and bailiffs were elected each year from the forty-one councillors by the freemen at large. The advantages of the freedom in the nineteenth century were mainly electoral and financial. Until 1832, when the Reform Act gave the vote at parliamentary borough elections to £10 householders, the franchise in Liverpool was confined to the enrolled freemen and this was the case in municipal elections until 1835.

THE FREEMAN BODY

1. Qualification for the freedom

The franchise in Liverpool was granted on birth, servitude, or by gift of the Common Council. The sons of freemen born in the borough and apprentices who had served seven years under a freeman were entitled to enrol as burgesses. It had been the practice for the Common Council to sell the freedom for varying sums but this had ceased in 1792.¹ The only direct source of Council influence over the creation of burgesses was,

therefore, the gift of the freedom. There is no suggestion in the nineteenth century that the Council used this form of patronage to manipulate elections. Generally the freedom was granted to national figures or to those who had done the borough especial service. In 1802 Dr Brandreth and Dr James Currie were given the freedom in recognition of their medical services.² In 1811 John Gladstone, Charles Lawrence and Cyrus Morrall, as heads of the town's three major commercial associations, were created burgesses for 'their able and zealous support in regard to the Liverpool Dock Bill and the Liberality uniformly evinced by them in the various Discussions and Arrangements which took place'.³ In August of that year, Thomas Sudlow and Elias Jones were given the freedom in recognition of their long service to the Corporation, the former as Treasurer's Clerk, the latter as Keeper of the Town Hall.⁴

Another form of gift of the freedom was the privilege allowed to the retiring Mayor each year, the nomination of one freeman. Not surprisingly, because of the financial and political advantages the freedom could bring a wealthy merchant, many Aldermen nominated their relatives or business associates. In 1801, for example, Alderman Leyland chose his partner, Richard Bullen;⁵ in 1804 Jonas Bold his son-in-law, William Hurry;⁶ and in 1827 Alderman Littledale his son, Harold.⁷ The Common Council were not unaware of their responsibilities in this connection, and in May 1803 they ordered an investigation into the occupations of the Mayors' freemen.⁸ Nevertheless, of the forty councillors of 1833 nine were free by gift.⁹

The privileges and functions of Liverpool freemen included voting at parliamentary and municipal elections, exemption from the town dues, and eligibility for election to the Common Council. In practice this latter privilege was meaningless since the Common Council was self-elective and had the power to create freemen.

2. *The admission of freemen*

An admission fee of two pounds was imposed on new freemen, of which one pound was stamp duty and one pound for the Town Clerk and other Corporation officers. This could be a serious financial obstacle to the enrolment of the poorer freemen, and in his *History of Liverpool*, 1795, William Wallace wrote of the instances of 'persons who follow public business and are free by indenture, but are unwilling to be at the expense of taking up their freedom . . . which yields little advantage to common tradesmen and the lowest order of people'.¹⁰

The one pound fee for officers and one pound stamp duty on admissions to the freedom by gift were defrayed by the Corporation. There were frequently long intervals between qualification for the freedom and admission, and between the admission of freemen and swearing in. In 1813, for example, there were admissions of freemen, some of whose indentures dated from 1801-2 or even as far back as 1784;¹¹ some of the freemen admitted in January 1822 were not sworn in until 1827 or 1830.¹² Not all applications for the freedom were accepted. Some indentures were not in order and some fathers were discovered not to have been registered freemen at the time of their sons' births. The reasons given both for the admission and rejection of applicants for the freedom seem valid enough and there does not appear to have been any party political bias in the Common Council's choice. Certainly there are few suggestions, even by opponents of the Common Council, that they controlled freeman admissions for their own political ends.

3. The social composition of the freeman body

Liverpool was both an 'open' and a 'closed' borough: although the freemen formed only a small proportion of the whole population, they were, nevertheless, socially mixed, including some of the lowest and highest classes of Liverpool society. Contemporary writers distinguished between voters of the mechanic class comprising a variety of craftsmen and employees, such as coopers, ropers, shipwrights, and those of the 'broadcloth' class, merchants, brokers and gentlemen. In 1818,¹³ at the election between the moderate tory, George Canning, General Isaac Gascoyne, the Corporation candidate, and the whig Earl of Sefton, twenty-five per cent of the votes came from the shipwrights, coopers, ropers, bricklayers and cabinet-makers, most of whom supported Sefton. Another twenty per cent of the votes, given for Canning and Gascoyne, were from the broadcloth voters, together with the mariners, joiners, riggers and blockmakers. In fact, the people most under-represented among the freemen were the lower middle-class tradesmen, and the effect of the Reform Act in Liverpool was to enfranchise these 'mushrooms', as they were disparagingly called by the old freemen, jealous of their privileges. In 1832 most of the 'mushroom' votes went to William Ewart, a moderate reformer and member of a prominent local merchant family, and to Thomas Thornely, a more ardent reformer and a Liverpool American merchant. Of the mechanic class, the largest number was for the tory, Lord Sandon, and for Ewart, although the ultra-tory, Major-General Sir Howard Douglas,

gained from this class a larger proportion of votes than from any other.

The nature of the Liverpool franchise was deplored by many contemporary politicians, in particular by whigs worsted at Liverpool elections. Henry Brougham, a candidate at Liverpool in 1812, was especially condemnatory. 'Liverpool is really a close borough', he wrote to Leigh Hunt,¹⁴ 'of 100,000 not 3,000 have voices and these are the Freemen admitted by birth and servitude. Think of such men as Roscoe having no vote¹⁵—while every slave captain who served seven years apprenticeship to that traffic of blood was enabled to vote against the person who made it a felony!' In another letter he wrote that 'in Liverpool the freemen . . . are chiefly the lowest and least worthy inhabitants',¹⁶ and to Dr John Allen that 'each shipowner, shipbuilder *etc*, has a certain number of the freemen in his service and these men vote as a matter of course with their masters'.¹⁷ Brougham's comments may be exaggerated but they contain an element of truth. One might roughly estimate that the lower class freemen formed between sixty and seventy per cent of Liverpool's voters, and there is no doubt that a large proportion of these, because of their position of economic dependence, voted at each election for the party or faction supported by their employers. It was by virtue of their being employers of large numbers of men as well as by their wealth that the West Indian merchants enjoyed a position of power and influence in the borough, unlike the American merchants who did not employ many Liverpool men. The issue of exclusion from the franchise of wealthy and respectable Liverpool inhabitants made the controversy over parliamentary and municipal reform one of peculiar intensity. A petition from Liverpool merchants asking for Corporation reform claimed that those who contributed most to the town were those who had the least direction of its affairs.¹⁸ This point was taken up by non-burgess witnesses to the Corporation inquiry. Francis Chalmers, a surgeon and non-freeman, who had lived in Liverpool for nearly forty years, asked if 'the members of a liberal profession' were not 'as qualified to vote as, for example, a blacksmith with seven years apprenticeship?'¹⁹

4. *The size of the pre-Reform electorate*

The Register of Electors for 1833 lists 3,627 burgesses.²⁰ If one takes 4,000 as a general estimate of freemen in the early 1830s one can assume that in 1802 there must have been about 2,750, for the call books show large numbers of admissions between 1802 and 1832. This estimate agrees with Miss

Whittingham-Jones's statement that in 1812 the freemen formed about three per cent of the total population, and in 1830 about two per cent.²¹ Thus, between 1802 and 1835 the freemen must have been eight to ten per cent of the adult male population of the borough. The figures for the total number of burgesses may, however, be an underestimate, and may refer only to freemen residing in Liverpool. According to Thomas Foster, Town Clerk after 1832, 3,733 freemen were registered under the act of 1832 as in residence, but there were 5,000 names in the call books,²² or lists of registered voters. The poll in November 1830 was 4,401. This discrepancy may be due to the efficient canvassing of out-voters during that election. Large numbers of out-voters would not, of course, alter the proportion of freemen to non-freemen in the town, but, equally, there must have been resident in Liverpool many entitled to the freedom who never took it up. In connection with the disfranchisement proceedings, 1831-33, it was stated that 870 freemen had not voted at the 1830 election and that there were 3,500 sons and apprentices of freemen who would shortly qualify for enrolment.²³

THE COMMON COUNCIL AND ELECTIONS

In the eighteenth century direct influence had been exercised by the Common Council over parliamentary and local elections. Until 1761 they returned both members of parliament and after that date shared the representation with an independent member. In the nineteenth century, though in many parliamentary elections the Common Council were known to favour a particular candidate, direct pressure on elections seems to have come only from councillors acting as individuals.

The Council's right to enfranchise and disfranchise could have given them a great deal of power at election time. The usual number of admissions of freemen at Council meetings was between twelve and twenty. At election time this number greatly increased. In 1802, for example, 320 freemen were admitted,²⁴ in 1812 480,²⁵ and in 1816 450.²⁶ These freemen, however, were entitled to the franchise by servitude and birth-right and belonged to all political parties. Nor were they admitted without proper scrutiny of their claims, anything between twenty and sixty applications might be rejected at a time. It is more reasonable, I think, to assume that this periodic increase in the number of registrations was a result of pressure from the candidates' committees and canvassers rather than political manoeuvring on the part of the Council. In

evidence to the Municipal Corporations Commissioners, 1833, the Town Clerk denied that the Council created batches of freemen for political purposes²⁷ and this denial was supported by the Commissioners. In their report they wrote, 'It is admitted that there has been no instance in modern times of any creation by gift of batches of freemen with such [*i.e.* electioneering] objects.'²⁸ The Commissioners were also convinced that 'in their appointment of subordinate officers, the Common Council do not appear to have been influenced by any partiality for those free of the Corporation'.²⁹ The Council could, and did, exercise their power of disfranchisement, as in 1828 when three burgesses were deprived of their freedom for fraud at the Mayoral election.³⁰ It cannot, however, be proved that they abused this power.

Individual councillors were, nevertheless, closely involved in election activities, as Thomas Foster, the Town Clerk, admitted in the early 1830s. There was no record, he said, that the Common Council had used money for election purposes nor, as a body, interfered in any way on behalf of any particular candidate. But they could not, he believed, be denied their rights as individuals to exercise political opinions.³¹ The 'Old Stager', James Aspinall, writing in 1852 of the Liverpool political scene of forty years earlier,³² could divide the town's influential families into three political groups. There were the 'greens', supporting General Tarleton, and including the Drinkwaters, Hollinsheads and Harpers, and there was the 'blue', or 'Townside' party, including the Fosters, Cases and Aspinalls who supported General Gascoyne. All these families were connected with the Common Council. Finally, there was the 'pink', or reforming, faction, which included prominent whig and Nonconformist families, such as the Earles, Lawrences, Croppers, Rathbones, Roscoes and Curries. These divisions were, however, extremely fluid and could change according to issues or individuals.

There are a few examples of abuse of patronage. In 1818 a Mrs Robinson paid £400 to secure a landwaiter's post for her husband. This transaction was carried out by General Gascoyne's election committee treasurer, Thomas Foster, later Town Clerk, and at that time employed as Clerk to the Dock Police magistrates. In the same year £400 was paid for the appointment of Samuel Hunter to a Customs post. The money was paid to Roger and John Leigh on behalf of General Gascoyne. John Leigh was a member of the Common Council.³³ It is not often, however, that one finds examples, before elections, of the sale of revenue posts for fixed sums for a

candidate's election expenses. More usual was for the new member of parliament to reward, on the recommendation of his leading supporters, active canvassers with posts after the election, and without any price mentioned.

The Council as a whole acted fairly responsibly in regard to its running of elections. In March 1820 John Tobin resigned from the Canning Club, stating as his reason that 'as Chief Magistrate of the Town [and, therefore, returning officer at elections] I think it my correct line of conduct to withdraw my name from all political societies'.³⁴ In 1827, after the hotly contested Mayoral election, the Select Finance Committee of the Common Council was instructed by the Council, after receiving a memorial signed by townspeople, to consider methods 'to eliminate bribery, disorder and excess' at elections.³⁵ The Corporation subsequently attempted, unsuccessfully, to secure a bill in Parliament to regulate elections.

The influence of the Common Council was, nevertheless resented both by the freemen and non-freemen. The cause of this resentment, which emerged particularly at election time, lay not so much in the Common Council's activities at such a time, as in two other points of controversy, the question of Common Hall, and that of the town dues. Throughout this period the freemen frequently attempted to secure a pledge from a Mayoral candidate that once in office he would call Common Hall. However, no Mayor did so, and no such assembly could be held without the presence of the chief magistrate and one bailiff. In August 1829 a meeting of 700 burgesses was held at the Shipwrights' Society building to hear the report of a deputation sent to the Mayor to demand the summoning of Common Hall. In October another meeting was held and among the speakers were leaders of the opposition to the Common Council.³⁶ To a parliamentary enquiry of 1833 the Town Clerk expressed the opinion that contested elections were frequently got up by the freemen so that they could 'talk of what is called a Common Hall . . . and the freemen will put up a man that they think will give them a Common Hall'.³⁷ In 1824, according to the evidence of the attorney Peter Woods to the Corporations enquiry, 'Some of us had subscribed £5 a head for Hollinshead in the hope he would call Common Hall'.³⁸ It would seem from the events surrounding the agitation for Common Hall in 1791 that the freemen outside the Council were principally interested in opening the Council to election by the entire Corporation, and in attempting to secure a ruling that the legislative power in the borough lay in the whole freeman body and not in the select body. Had they achieved these

two objects, the freemen would, of course, have had control over the activities of the Common Council, and it is reasonable to assume that agitation among the lower class of freemen was influenced by pressure from the upper class of non-Council freemen, or even from upper class non-freemen eager to exploit any possible source of opposition to the select body.

The town dues were duties fixed by the Common Council on goods imported and exported from Liverpool, and were paid only by the non-freemen. The dues were complained of as arbitrary, excessive, unequal and unfair in operation. Many of those who opposed them stated that they would not object to paying the dues if the freemen also paid. There is no doubt that the dues controversy strengthened opposition to the freeman franchise in 1831-33, since to gain the freedom was not merely to acquire a political privilege but also to win an economic advantage.

THE NATURE OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

In any discussion of Liverpool elections there are three points to remember. First, one must distinguish between the 'political' and 'non-political'; that is, between contests at which the freemen voted on their political opinions or on particular issues, as in 1826, and those at which the candidates' views were similar and votes gained on personalities and competitive bribery, as in 1830. Secondly, even when one is examining the political elections, one must realise that the party divisions one finds were probably extremely fluid and might have altered from one election to the next. In 1812, for example, the tory-Corporation party was split between Canning and Gascoyne. In the 1820s the moderate tories were joined by many whigs in support of William Huskisson. Thirdly, one must distinguish between 'pure' and 'corrupt' elections, between elections at which little bribery was used and those at which it was rife.

1. Political elections

Though increasingly rare in the second part of this period, there were some 'political' contests in Liverpool. They fall roughly into three categories: the party political contest; the contest fought on a controversial issue which might cut across normal alignments; and the contest in which there were attempts artificially to create party and political divisions.

Although no candidate in the general election of 1806 gave any specific pledges, for declarations of policy were rare before

1832, William Roscoe stood as a reformer and champion of the independence of the freemen. He was supported by local reformers and by the Lords Stanley, Sefton, Derby and Holland. Lord Holland, indeed, offered Roscoe, after his success, a share in his patronage. 'Perhaps to some of your friends', he suggested, 'a cadetship in India may be acceptable. I happen to have one at my disposal and nothing will give me greater satisfaction than to find it can be of any service to you'.³⁹ The other successful candidate was General Isaac Gascoyne, backed by the tory councillor, John Aspinall.

After his success the previous year, Roscoe, at the general election of 1807, attempted to renew his appeal to the independent burgesses. 'There exists', he declared, 'among the freemen of Liverpool, a spirit of integrity and of independence, of temperance and of order, which equally rejects the intoxicating draught and the degrading bribe'.⁴⁰ However, the merchants were displeased with Roscoe's performance in parliament, and the freemen, illogically, since his principles had always been known, by his voting on the slave trade question. A cry of 'No popery' was raised against him, for as a Unitarian he supported the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Roscoe seized the chance provided by an outbreak of violence, caused possibly by shipwrights in the African trade, to withdraw from the election. The successful candidates were General Tarleton, supported by the tories, and Gascoyne, supported by, as a broadside writer put it, 'Alderman, that well-known sleek horse' got out of 'Bribery and Corruption'.⁴¹

If the 1806 and 1807 general elections were, to a certain extent, radical against tory, that of 1812, even more, was a straight whig-tory contest, the last party-political election in Liverpool before Reform. The Common Council continued to support Gascoyne. The whig Thomas Creevey, a candidate himself, was of the opinion that the Corporation even 'with all their power and patronage' would not secure the election of 'this spavined broken-down jade of theirs',⁴² but in a more candid letter to his wife he admitted that though 'the people are as tractable as lambs . . . the enemy will spend 20,000 to carry their point and it is a most formidable coalition, it is the Corporation and Tarleton's old party, ours is really the cause of the Town and the people'.⁴³ Tarleton was dismissed by the tories possibly for his support to the opposition.⁴⁴ The other candidates were the moderate tory George Canning and the whig Henry Brougham. Brougham, unpopular as an abolitionist but popular for having secured the repeal of the Orders-in-Council, might have achieved his own return but the return of

two whigs, insisted on by William Roscoe,⁴⁵ was too much to expect of a predominantly tory borough. To Leigh Hunt Brougham wrote of the popular enthusiasm for his party but said that the poorer burgesses had been unable to vote for him for fear of loss of employment,⁴⁶ and in another letter to John Allen he declared that 'many are at this moment starving by having been turned off'.⁴⁷ It is perhaps more likely that the whig failures from 1812 to 1826 were due to their lack of an efficient election manager to oppose the activities of John Bolton and John Gladstone for the tories, though Bolton and Gladstone were by no means always united in their views or activities. Brougham's letters to William Shepherd describe the nature of a Liverpool election at this time. 'My nights', he wrote, 'are spent in the Clubs. I visited 25 or 30 last night for 7 hours and *spoke at length* and drank at each. This is *required* of each candidate, and is dreadful!'⁴⁸ The party political enthusiasm aroused before and during this election, though it quickly dissipated, had many side effects, such as the forming of the whig Concentric Society and the tory Canning Club and the establishment in 1811 of Egerton Smith's radical newspaper, the *Mercury*, founded in opposition to Thomas Kaye's tory newspaper, the *Courier*, which was backed by the Gladstones.

The second kind of political election was that in which the views of voters on a particular issue cut across normal political and social alignments. In the 1826 general election, for example, of the two candidates, the moderate tory William Huskisson and General Gascoyne, the latter had opposed the combination laws, the former had supported them. Thus, the ultra-tory General for the first and only time in his political life found himself supported by a large majority of the Liverpool working class. The freemen, led by the auctioneer Thomas Green, a staunch radical, gathered at Moss Lake Fields on 8 June to discuss election tactics. They had unexpected difficulties in finding a second candidate to oppose Huskisson, and eventually chose the General's son, Major Frederick Gascoyne, proposed by John Allen, a boatbuilder, and John Robinson, a plasterer. 'Some spirit', wrote Huskisson, 'as always, [was] shown by the shipwrights who had votes and by the Mob and the pickpockets who had none.' They had however, he pointed out, neither a definite leadership nor an effective candidate.⁴⁹ Huskisson with inter-party support from influential merchants and General Gascoyne, with Corporation and working class support, had an easy victory.

At the by-election of 1828, Huskisson's friends expressed anxiety over his position in the town. John Gladstone wrote

that the high Tories openly disapproved of his conduct, that the Whigs were 'greatly cooled', and the radicals disliked him for having voted against the repeal of the Test and Corporation acts.⁵⁰ The trouble seems to have been the political *volte-face* executed by Huskisson in joining the 'Vilifiers' of his late colleague, and Colonel Williams declared that he was merely a government placeman.⁵¹ However, the lower class of freemen does not seem to have noticed the controversy, and Huskisson, with the help of Gladstone, John Bolton and other staunch supporters, carried the election without opposition.

The scandal caused by the election of November 1830, at which bribery was extensive, led to Commons' proceedings and the temporary suspension of the writ for Liverpool. In the election of May 1831, perhaps because of the threat of disfranchisement, or because of the warning published by the Common Council of their determination to punish offenders against the bribery laws, the voting was purely on political opinion. 'This', said Thomas Rodick, 'has been the *driest* and purest Election ever remembered in Liverpool',⁵² and William Shepherd wrote to Brougham that, 'The Liverpoolians have redeemed their character. The Reform Bill has been their watchword and Ewart and Denison their champions.'⁵³ As reformers, the two moderate Whigs, William Ewart and J. E. Denison, secured overwhelming support against Gascoyne, whose extreme unpopularity was due to his opposition to the Reform Bill. Cyrus Morrall tried unsuccessfully to appeal to the jealousy of the freemen. 'The franchise', he said, 'is to be transferred from the "blue-jackets" of this town, men who knew the stem from the stern of a ship and whom the Ministers did not like, to the shopkeepers, a set of Cockneys who came down from London to vend haberdashery and other such trash, who suited the purposes of the Ministers better.'⁵⁴ Thomas Foster admitted that, with regard to Gascoyne, 'no money or drink would have gained him the election at that time, not being a reformer'.⁵⁵ Gascoyne in describing his visit to Liverpool wrote of 'the pressure of the crowd, and the anxiety of the many to offer me every possible insult'.⁵⁶

These elections were fought principally on party allegiance or on particular issues, but there were others at which attempts to create political feelings were more artificial. In the 1802 general election, for example, the Generals Tarleton and Gascoyne were opposed by Joseph Birch, a Whig and Unitarian corn-dealer, and by Francis Chalmers, a broker. According to Dr James Currie, General Gascoyne was unpopular for having voted against the peace. Birch attempted to create a peace and

prosperity party, and Chalmers appealed to the freemen's sense of independence. An anonymous writer, however, believed that the freemen had to vote as their masters voted 'or, lose, alas! their bread'.⁵⁷ The old members were again returned.

From 1812 George Canning and his agents built up strong inter-party support, which William Huskisson acquired when he succeeded Canning in the representation in 1823. Apart from the hostility to Huskisson in 1826, efforts to arouse strong political feeling against the sitting members from 1812 to 1830 entirely failed. In the 1820 election the opposition of the radicals, Peter Crompton and Thomas Leyland, to the return of Canning and Gascoyne was dismissed in the minutes of the Canning Club as 'a sham fight against the two old members'.⁵⁸

In 1823 John Gladstone, who had considered standing himself as member for Liverpool until forced to recognise that his personal unpopularity made his election unlikely,⁵⁹ wrote to Huskisson with advice concerning his candidature at the forthcoming by-election in Liverpool. 'You recollect', he said, 'Mr Canning in 1812 had a very powerful opposition to contend with, but the results of his representation have been such as to put down that spirit and conciliate all parties', although, he added, 'it will be necessary for you to make yourself, in some degree, acquainted with your constituents and in doing so, to visit a few of their principal clubs'.⁶⁰ David Hodgson, on behalf of the chief whigs, wrote that, 'If you would declare yourself a candidate . . . there would not be any real opposition'.⁶¹ A form of opposition was got up by the supporters of Lord Molyneux and Dr Crompton among whom were William Shepherd and Colonel Williams but few of the leading whigs. Lord Molyneux and Dr Crompton attempted to make the election one of political principle. 'We do not think', they stated, 'that it comports with the dignity of the town of Liverpool to be represented in Parliament by a servant of the Crown and a public sinecurist. We like not the school of politics to which Mr Huskisson has attached himself'.⁶² Their unsuccessful opposition was dismissed by John Backhouse, Secretary to the Liverpool Parliamentary Office, as 'mere disposition to mischief' from which the principal whigs abstained. Dr Crompton, he added, 'really seems a little deranged in his intellect'.⁶³ Mr Huskisson was elected 'with a more universal consent of all parties than ever attended the election of a member for this borough'.⁶⁴

The general election of June 1830 was fought by Huskisson and Gascoyne partly on a political level; both exploited the issue of the East India Company's China monopoly to gain merchant votes. Huskisson issued a manifesto nicely calculated

to appeal to the purses and ambitions of his constituents, *i.e.*, less taxation, more equal distribution of taxes with less on the industrious classes, the abolition of monopolies and greater facility to internal improvements. Huskisson's supporters now included influential tories and respectable reformers. Even William Shepherd declared that he would vote for Huskisson for his opposition to the measures of the ministers.⁶⁵ The candidature of Colonel Williams, according to John Hasleden, a witness before a parliamentary committee of 1833, was put up by 'some of the workmen, from some of the clubs', this was a 'phantom' election, that is, 'an election got up by men and by freemen for drink'.⁶⁶ The Colonel was proposed and seconded by two shipwrights, William Shea and George Bellington.

The by-election of June 1831 was fought largely on personalities and individual interest. The candidates were the moderate tory, Lord Sandon, and the reformer and Liverpool American merchant, Thomas Thornely. Thornely and his friends were not popular with the freemen, both because of their advocacy of disfranchisement and because ship-building and repairs in the American trade were carried out on the other side of the Atlantic and did not provide employment for Liverpool freemen. Sandon was placed in a difficult position because of the mixed political nature of his supporters. 'Mr Earle and Mr Lawrence, his chairman and vice-chairman', wrote William Shepherd, 'are certainly Whigs though feeble ones; but his committee consists of . . . Tories, haters of the ministers and the bill'.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the support of the old merchant aristocracy proved stronger than the reformer and the shopkeeper support of Thornely. According to Adam Hodgson, Thornely had very little support from 'what may be termed the Aristocracy of the Town',⁶⁸ and Robertson Gladstone wrote to his father, John, that 'Sandon has got all the respectability, as well as the popular feeling'.⁶⁹

The Huskisson papers for 1830 contain comments on the main political figures in the town.⁷⁰ The comments show how political allegiances fluctuated according to the issues of the moment, the interests of individuals, or according to the personalities of the candidates. Organised party politics, such as were seen in 1812, ceased in 1823. Perhaps the long reign of the like-minded Canning and Huskisson, with General Gascoyne, from 1812 to 1830, made the Liverpool voters less politically minded and, therefore, inevitably more open to bribery.

2. *Bribery at elections*

In March 1834 the House of Commons debated the question

of disfranchisement of the Liverpool voters. During the debate, a member of the House stated that, 'It was a notorious fact that the freemen of Liverpool looked upon the return of an election . . . as a "Saturnalia", in which they were to indulge in the most extravagant licentiousness.'⁷¹ The freemen, as has been seen, were not unaware of political issues and would, if the issue were important enough, vote according to their opinions, but by 1831 many had come to look on bribery and treating as a normal feature of elections.

There were four ways in which a candidate could buy himself support. One was to provide a good spectacle with musicians, flags, ribbons and an active canvass in the streets and in the freemen's clubs. The voters were also 'treated', that is, given food and drink usually in return for their votes. Publicans' bills formed a large item in election expenses. There was also direct bribery, the price of votes varying between six shillings and fifty pounds. Frequently the admission fees of non-registered burgesses were paid by a candidate's agents, although this did not guarantee the freemen's votes. A candidate could also enlist among his supporters the employers of large numbers of freemen, who could influence the votes of their workers by the promise of a day's wages or through the threat of dismissal. These forms of influence were used not only to gain the votes of resident freemen but also those of the outvoters, freemen living in Manchester, London and elsewhere.

Even the 1806 election, in which Roscoe appealed to the 'independent' freemen, was fairly expensive; according to John Drinkwater, the cost to Roscoe had been '£14,000, for General Gascoyne £5,000, for General Tarleton £6,000'.⁷² Drinkwater, as an opponent of Roscoe, might have been prejudiced but his statement is in part borne out by drafts of subscription lists in the Roscoe papers:⁷³ according to these, by 30 October Roscoe had been guaranteed over £6,000, this became £9,300 and a third list records another £3,000 promised. From 1812 to 1823, when Canning was a candidate, it was the custom for election expenses to be met by his 'friends', or circle of most influential supporters, although he might himself contribute £1,000 or £1,500. This was perhaps also true of other candidates. The election of 1807, again according to John Drinkwater, cost the Gascoynites £7,000 and General Tarleton's friends, £9,000.⁷⁴ Again in 1812 the political principles of the freemen were strengthened by treating and bribery. To Leigh Hunt Brougham attributed his failure to greater spending by the other side: 'Every means of influence was exhausted and at last *gold* carried the day.'⁷⁵ His party had spent a mere £10,000

while Canning's supporters were estimated to have distributed at least £25,000.⁷⁶

The best documented case of bribery at Liverpool is the by-election of 1830. The candidates at this election were William Ewart and J. E. Denison, both of whom were moderate whigs differing little in their political views. Ewart was perhaps the stronger candidate since he was a member of a Liverpool merchant family, and because Denison as Secretary to the Board of Control had his salary paid by the East India Company, whose monopoly of the China trade was resented by Liverpool merchants. John Atkinson, a freeman, in evidence to the parliamentary committee of July 1833 said that, 'It was more like a family quarrel, some took part one way and some another way. I do not think the two gentlemen thought much about it, they were two parties well-liked and equally respectable; they were not like radical and Tory.'⁷⁷ John Wright, Mayor in 1833, stated that, 'Many of my friends were for Mr Denison and many for Mr Ewart; they were in no political parties whatever.'⁷⁸ 'Parties', wrote Hatfield Nicholson at the time, 'are very much divided, their politics being much the same... neither will do if they don't spend freely',⁷⁹ and Robertson Gladstone wrote of the Ewart party, 'Their money is flying in all directions.'⁸⁰

The freemen were 'treated' liberally. It was not uncommon for a voter to have to be assisted to the poll by canvassers, and once there to be prompted with the name of the candidate for whom he was supposed to vote. Thomas Clarke, a publican in Crosshall Street, entertained several voters at his house and took the bill, for seventy pounds, to Ewart's headquarters, the King's Arms, where it was paid. He had had instructions from both sides to let the men have 'what was reasonable'.⁸¹ There was also pressure exercised by the employers of the freemen, either by verbal persuasion and the promise of drink money, or, more rarely, by direct threat. Thomas Sephton was offered twelve pounds ten shillings by his employers to vote for Ewart and threatened with the loss of his position if he did not. He was, however, eventually persuaded by a canvasser with the offer of fifty pounds to vote for Denison.⁸² When urging his father, John Gladstone, to stand himself, Robertson Gladstone assured him that 'Holmes the Builder has promised, with a 100 votes of his men... to reserve himself for you.'⁸³

It was thought that between £80,000 and £100,000 were spent on this election. Ewart's treasurer, William Myers, estimated that £34,000 had passed through his hands alone.⁸⁴ After the election Denison wrote to Lord Sandon admitting

that 'Liverpool has made a severe inroad into our estate'.⁸⁵ Nor was bribery confined to the lower class of freemen. The July committee condemned 'the conduct of Freemen in a better class of life and in good circumstances, who have shown fully as much readiness to take Bribes as the poorest and most destitute of their Fellow-Burgesses'.⁸⁶ The system of bribery was ill-concealed. Ewart's voters after polling in tallies (groups of ten men voting together) were given tickets and conducted to the King's Arms. When they arrived, their tickets were taken by the canvassing captains to Joseph Foreshaw's room where they were checked and a certificate signed. This was taken to the pay-room, presided over by Mr Thornhill, John Pennington and William Myers. The voters were then paid with sums varying between £5 and £40, sometimes sovereigns wrapped in ribbons, sometimes banknotes. Denison's voters were paid more discreetly through a hole in a partition at the offices of James Eckersley in Water Street. One Edward Jones remembered the price of votes soaring from £2-£5 on the first day to £30 or £40 on the fifth and had seen £50 a vote paid several times.⁸⁷ Out-voters were paid their travelling expenses, usually their board and lodging while in Liverpool, and varying sums of money in addition. Robert Buckley, a journeyman blockmaker from Deptford, travelled from London to vote for Ewart, and during his two weeks' stay had free food and drink whenever he wished from Mr Sharples, landlord of the Flying Horse, Dale Street. His freeman's admission fee was also paid for him.⁸⁸

In the general election of 1832 the voters to some extent returned to the practice of November 1830. John Bushell, in a letter to Lord Brougham,⁸⁹ stated his opinion that 'considerable numbers, both Householders and Freemen, have been influenced in their votes by persons controlling them from *business connections*. The Reform Bill has proved a dead letter so far as Liverpool is concerned'. John Wybergh agreed: 'The men', he said, 'are the same as ever grumbling that there is no drink stirring, asking how much they are to have this time, and declaring they will not vote at all.'⁹⁰ The poll lasted for two days. Eighty per cent of the new voters voted on the first day, with fifty per cent of the freemen. Canvassers denied having given money or drink although many had been asked to do so. Many of the old freemen refused to poll without drink, and others hung back until the second day, hoping to get a good price for their votes, or because they 'would not vote with the mushrooms', or shopkeepers. According to Thomas Turtle, an attorney's clerk, in his evidence to the first parliamentary

enquiry of 1833, some of the freemen voters were so drunk on the second day of the poll as to be unable to vote and many refused the bribery oath. Mr Blower Smith, a canvasser for Thomas Thornely, the radical candidate, had told a freeman cooper in Salt's Public House, Gore Street, that he dared not give him money for his vote, but had then given the voter sixteen shillings for his dog, which was given back to its original owner immediately after the transaction. There was also intimidation by employers. Thomas Mather, a merchant and supporter of Thornely, declared that the freemen 'did not promise their votes because they are in that dependent condition that they may promise their votes and cannot afterwards fulfil it'. John Breeze, an attorney's clerk and £10 householder, was given notice by Mr Brabner one or two weeks after the election. He had refused to accede to his employer's request to vote for Lord Sandon, the moderate tory, and Sir Howard Douglas, the extreme tory candidate, and had voted 'according to his conscience' for Ewart and Thornely. He had, he claimed, previously been on good terms with his employer.⁹¹

One of the most important instruments of support for a candidate, in the organisation of canvassing, treating and the distribution of patronage, was the political club. There were several of these, known as the candidates' 'firesides'. The True Blue Society was set up in 1818 to revive Gascoyne's waning popularity: its extreme toryism was summed up in its motto, 'Rex, Lex, Pontifex'. The Backbone Society, founded during the excitement of the 1812 election, with the Canning Club and the Canning Cycle, supported Canning. In 1823 the support of these clubs was given to William Huskisson. The Concentric Society, founded in 1812 and composed of respectable middle-class whigs, disbanded in 1822, and the like-minded Independent Debating Society did not survive the laws against sedition. The only active radical society in the 1820s was the Freemen's Club led by the auctioneer, Thomas Green. The political clubs drew their membership chiefly from the leading merchants, but there were also many trade clubs, of which the largest was the Shipwrights' Society.⁹²

MAYORAL ELECTIONS

Perhaps as bribery became an expected feature of elections and it was, therefore, in the freemen's interest to encourage contests, and as opposition to the Common Council from the reformers increased, Mayoral elections became objects of greater interest, whereas in the early part of this period contests

had been rare. The elections were held on St Luke's day, 18 October, each year, only members of the Common Council being eligible for election. The Council was predominantly tory but it opened its doors to a few select whigs. The year 1823, for example, saw the strange event of the election of a whig Mayor and whig Bailiffs, Charles Lawrence, William Earle jnr and W. W. Currie. This was unusual but there was just enough of a whig element on the Common Council to give the flavour of party politics to local elections.

In 1820 a lawyer and one of the reformers, Peter Woods, and his friends, in particular Cyrus Morrall, had secured the election of Thomas Leyland, and, the following year, of Leyland's nephew, Richard Bullen. In 1821 there had been an agreement between candidates not to pay more than six shillings per head for votes. This agreement was broken and competitive bribery led to a victory for Woods's side which was paying four pounds a head.⁹³

The most notorious of all Mayoral elections was that between T. C. Porter and Nicholas Robinson in 1827. Over 3,500 freemen voted and the poll lasted for six days. There were 540 freeman admissions. One James Ashburner recalled that on the last day there had been general drunkenness in the streets and that he had seen ten pounds per head given to voters.⁹⁴ George Robinson, a Liverpool stationer and non-freeman canvasser for Porter, was sent to Warrington to intercept a batch of voters on their way from London to vote for Nicholas Robinson. His instructions were to win over the voters or to stop them from voting and to that end he 'got about thirty or forty glassblowers to help'.⁹⁵ On the fourth day many frauds were discovered at the polling place, impersonations of dead freemen or freemen who had not yet voted. Twenty of the culprits were sent to the Bridewell. Mr Porter's subscription list was said to have come to over £7,000.⁹⁶

Since there were no political issues at this election and no real personal animosities, it is difficult to understand why there should have been such a keen contest. George Robinson gave one possible explanation. 'They were', he explained, 'a couple of Tories. It was more a town feeling than anything else; Mr Porter had been a respectable tradesman in the town, and most of the tradesmen wished to see a man of their own body there; the fact is, that we were all a mass of Whigs and Tories on the one side, and Whigs and Tories on the other.'⁹⁷ Thomas Porter was a successful plumber and painter, and Nicholas Robinson a wealthy merchant. James Stonehouse, in his *Streets of Liverpool*, described the contest in the same terms

of merchant-tradesman hostility: 'The election lasted six days, and was carried on with intense energy and at an enormous cost, every exertion being made to obtain votes for love or money by both sides . . . the contest was considered as a fair struggle for supremacy between the tradesmen and the mercantile body.'⁹⁸

At the elections of 1829 to 1832 the successful candidates were Sir George Drinkwater, Sir Thomas Brancker, Samuel Sandbach and Charles Horsfall and they were opposed each year by the ardent reformer, W. W. Currie. In 1829 Currie's name was put forward at a meeting of over 2,000 at the Shipwright's Club, his supporters including William Rathbone, Richard Radcliffe and Edward Rushton. Since Currie stood on an anti-bribery platform it is scarcely surprising that the poll was low, under 400, and that Drinkwater was successful. Though popular with the reforming anti-Corporation merchants and the middle class in Liverpool, Currie did not have the backing either of his fellow councillors or of the mechanics. Samuel Sandbach, as councilman John Wright pointed out, 'as an eminent merchant and a great shipowner . . . had always been disposed to employ his brother burgesses'.⁹⁹ The West Indian merchants, as the freeman builder Samuel Holme told the second parliamentary inquiry of 1833, were very formidable opponents at elections since they were the employers of large numbers of shipwrights. Asked how he influenced the votes of his own men, he replied: 'I canvassed the whole of them by simply telling them that Mr Horsfall, or any other individual, was going to be elected to the mayoralty, and that I should be obliged to them to vote, as I told them whom I should vote for myself.'¹⁰⁰

CONCLUSION

In the early nineteenth century the national image of Liverpool electors was unenviable. Liverpool was in its way as notorious as Grampound, Penrhyn or East Reiford. Its electoral practices were the subject of three parliamentary enquiries and were debated at length in parliament in connection with the Liverpool disfranchisement bill. In the House of Commons in July 1833 Edward Gladstone claimed that 'the proceedings at that election [1830] were certainly sufficient to secure for the town of Liverpool an immortality of disgrace'.¹⁰¹ In his 'Black Book', John Wade described open boroughs such as Liverpool as 'the vilest points of our representation, exhibiting, at every election, the most revolting spectacles of venality,

drunkenness, riot and licentiousness'. In both Bristol and Liverpool, he claimed, 'the DEMOCRACY is omnipotent, the freemen consist almost exclusively of shipwrights, journeymen and labourers, and what description of members – what friends and advocates of popular rights have they returned to parliament? They have chosen Canning, Huskisson and Bright, and rejected Romilly, Hunt and Brougham!'¹⁰² Many of Liverpool's voters before 1832 were in a condition of life which might be supposed to have rendered them susceptible to pressure. Too often, the lower class of freemen looked upon the acceptance of bribes at elections as their right, as the upper class merchants, Corporation and reformers, freemen and non-freemen alike, looked upon the giving of them as their duty. The freemen were a useful tool in the hands of Liverpool politicians; they were used by Councillors and tory freeman merchants to oppose the movement to open the Corporation, and by the radicals as a weapon against the closed local government body. The freemen could vote on their political opinions, they were neither unaware nor uninformed, but it is difficult to find any consistent political line adopted by them. Many such as the mariners and joiners tended to vote with the tories, but the shipwrights in the first half of this period often supported a radical candidate such as Leyland or Sefton. By the end of the period, however, they were supporting the moderate tory, Lord Sandon. Perhaps this is because the early radicals were identified with the freemen as champions of their independence of the Common Council, but by the end of the period the reformers were advocating freemen disfranchisement and the introduction of open, democratic corporations, which would, of course, have disfranchised many of the freemen who were not also householders.

One must, however, beware of being too serious about Liverpool elections. Chiefly, they were, in Sir James Picton's words, a time of 'fun and frolic'. The franchise was not a weighty constitutional right but a privilege to be made the most of in beefsteaks, ale, coloured ribbons and golden sovereigns. In his *Memorials of Liverpool*, Picton lamented the passing of these times: 'The days of squibs, poetry, and satire, had passed away. Elections had not been deprived of their bitterness, but they had lost the fun and frolic which took away the edge of the bitter feeling. Everything was now as dull and prosaic as the most ardent reformer could desire'.¹⁰³

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In this paper I have used extracts from the Canning papers with the permission of the Earl of Harewood, from the Harrowby papers with the permission of the Earl of Harrowby, and from the Glynne-Gladstone papers with the permission of Sir William Gladstone Bt. I should also like to acknowledge my debt to the Rev. H. L. Short, Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, for allowing me to work on the Shepherd papers there. To all four I should like to express my gratitude for their help and co-operation.

(N.B. Enquiries concerning the Glynne-Gladstone papers are dealt with by the Flintshire County Record Office and MSS may be read there. The actual collection is deposited in St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, Flintshire.)

NOTES

- 1 J. A. Picton, *Memorials of Liverpool* (Liverpool 1907), p. 220.
- 2 *Liverpool town book*, 1793-1804, 6 Jan. 1804, pp. 563-4, Liverpool R.O.
- 3 *Freeman's committee book*, Nov. 1795-Oct. 1811, p. 102, Liverpool R.O.
- 4 *Liverpool town book*, 1804-1815, 7 Aug. 1811, p. 350.
- 5 *Ibid.* 1793-1804, 3 June 1801, p. 530.
- 6 *Ibid.* 1804-1815, 1 Aug. 1804, p. 12.
- 7 *Gore's general advertiser*, 6 Dec. 1827.
- 8 *Liverpool town book*, 1793-1804, 4 May 1803, p. 663.
- 9 Egerton Smith, *Report of the inquiry into the affairs of the Corporation of Liverpool before His Majesty's commissioners... November 1833*, p. 40. (Henceforth referred to as Mercury report).
- 10 W. Wallace, *General and descriptive history of... the town of Liverpool* (Liverpool 1795), p. 276.
- 11 *Freeman's committee book*, Oct. 1811-June 1816, p. 287.
- 12 *Ibid.* June 1816-April 1828, p. 70.
- 13 J. Gore, *Poll for the election of members of parliament... 1818* (Liverpool 1818). (Referred to as Poll Book, 1818.)
- 14 Brougham to Leigh Hunt, Tuesday (1812), Leigh Hunt MSS, I, f. 59, B.M. Add. MSS, 38, 108.
- 15 Roscoe was presented with the freedom in 1815 in 'testimony of the high sense entertained by the Council not only of his great literary talents but of his private worth and value as a member of society, so justly appreciated by all his fellow townsmen'. *Liverpool town book*, 1804-1815, 6 Apr. 1815, p. 503.
- 16 Brougham to Leigh Hunt, Wednesday (1812), Leigh Hunt MSS, f. 62.
- 17 Brougham to John Allen, 28 Oct. 1812, B.M. Add. MSS, 38, 744, f. 126.
- 18 *Municipal corporations. Appendix to the first report of the commissioners*, Part IV, Parliamentary Papers 1835, XXVI, 2704-2705.
- 19 Mercury report, p. 36.
- 20 J. and J. Mawdsley, *Register of electors for the borough of Liverpool 1833* (Liverpool 1833).
- 21 Barbara Whittingham-Jones, 'Electioneering in Lancashire before the secret ballot. II. Liverpool's political clubs, 1812-1830', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, III (1959), p. 117.
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- 23 *Observations upon the proposed motion for the appointment of a select committee to enquire into the alleged corruption of the freemen of Liverpool* (1833).
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- 25 *Ibid.* 1804-1815, Oct. 1812, pp. 385-96.
- 26 *Ibid.* 1815-1819, July 1816, pp. 565-85.
- 27 Mercury report, p. 66.

- 28 *Municipal corporations. Appendix to the first report of the commissioners*, 2710.
- 29 *Ibid.* 2709.
- 30 J. Gore, *Directory of Liverpool and its environs* (Liverpool 1841), p. 49.
- 31 Mercury report, p. 61.
- 32 An Old Stager, (James Aspinall), *Liverpool a few years since* (1852), pp. 129-30.
- 33 *Report from the select committee on Liverpool borough elections with the minutes of evidence taken before them*, July 1833, Parliamentary Papers 1833, X, 137. (Henceforth referred to as Parliamentary report, July 1833.)
- 34 6 Mar. 1820, p. 210, Minute book, Canning Club MSS, Liverpool R.O.
- 35 *Gore's general advertiser*, 8 Nov. 1827.
- 36 *Ibid.* 27 Aug. 1829, 8 Oct. 1829.
- 37 Parliamentary report, July 1833, p. 194.
- 38 Mercury report, p. 42.
- 39 Lord Holland to Roscoe, 24 Nov. 1806, Roscoe MSS, 2091, Liverpool R.O.
- 40 *Letter to the independent freemen*, 19 May 1807, Holt and Gregson MSS, XVIII, 61, Liverpool R.O.
- 41 John Herring, *Collection of addresses, songs, squibs, etc. published at Liverpool during the election of members of parliament in May, 1807* (Liverpool 1807), p. 44.
- 42 Creevey to Brougham, 15 Sept. 1812, Brougham MSS. 10, 345, University College London.
- 43 Creevey to Mrs Creevey, Sunday (11 Oct. 1812), Creevey MSS, University College London.
- 44 John Drinkwater to Canning, 14 Jan. 1812, Drinkwater MSS, Liverpool R.O.
- 45 E.g. Roscoe to Creevey, 6 Sept. 1812; also, Brougham to Creevey, Monday, (7 Sept.) 1812, 'It is useless unless we can both do it', Creevey MSS.
- 46 Brougham to Leigh Hunt, Wednesday (1812), B.M. Add. MSS 38, 108, f. 62.
- 47 Brougham to John Allen, 28 Oct. 1812, *ibid.* 52, 178, f. 166.
- 48 Brougham to Shepherd, endorsed 6 Oct. 1812, Brougham MSS.
- 49 Huskisson to Canning, 12 June 1826, Canning MSS, Leeds Public Libraries.
- 50 John Gladstone to Huskisson, 19 June 1828, B.M. Add. MSS, 38, 756, ff. 263-36.
- 51 *Gore's general advertiser*, 7 Feb. 1828.
- 52 Thomas Rodick to Brougham, 30 Nov. 1830, Brougham MSS, 21, 231.
- 53 Shepherd to Brougham, Tuesday (endorsed 1831), *ibid.*
- 54 Picton, *Memorials*, p. 480.
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- 60 John Gladstone to Huskisson, 26 Jan. 1823, B.M. Add. MSS 38, 744, ff. 86-7.
- 61 David Hodgson to Huskisson, 20 June 1822, *ibid.* 38, 743, f. 157.
- 62 *Billinge's Liverpool advertiser*, 18 Feb. 1823.
- 63 John Backhouse to Mrs Huskisson, 14 Feb. 1823, B.M. Add. MSS 38, 744, ff. 127-130.
- 64 John Backhouse to Mrs Huskisson, 15 Feb. 1823, *ibid.* 38, 744, f. 134v.
- 65 *Gore's general advertiser*, 5 Aug. 1830.

- 66 Parliamentary report, July 1833, p. 93.
- 67 Shepherd to Brougham, Thursday, (endorsed 12 June) 1831, Brougham MSS 14, 828.
- 68 Hodgson to Lord Sandon, 27 May 1831, Vol. L, ff. 17, 18, Harrowby MSS, Sandon Hall.
- 69 Robertson Gladstone to John Gladstone, 10 Nov. 1832, Glynne-Gladstone MSS, Flintshire County R.O.
- 70 B.M. Add. MSS 38, 762, ff. 285-289.
- 71 *Parliamentary Debates*, XXII, 475.
- 72 Drinkwater to Canning, 14 Jan. 1812 (copy), Drinkwater MSS, 4, Liverpool R.O.
- 73 Roscoe MSS 3874, 3875, 3876, Liverpool R.O.
- 74 Drinkwater to Canning, 14 Jan. 1812, Drinkwater MSS.
- 75 Brougham to Leigh Hunt, Tuesday (1812), B.M. Add. MSS 38, 108, f. 60v.
- 76 Brougham to John Allen, 28 Oct. 1812, *ibid.* 52, 178, f. 166. However, Brougham wrote to Shepherd that his party had spent £8,000 and Canning's, £30,000, Brougham to Shepherd, endorsed 16 Oct. 1812, Brougham MSS.
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- 78 *Ibid.* p. 175.
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- 80 Robertson Gladstone to John Gladstone, 16 Nov. 1830, Glynne-Gladstone MSS.
- 81 *Minutes of evidence taken before the select committee on the Liverpool general election*, 28 March 1831, Parliamentary Papers 1830-1, III, 86-87. (Henceforth referred to as Parliamentary report, March 1831.)
- 82 Parliamentary report, July 1833, pp. 13-14.
- 83 Robertson Gladstone to John Gladstone, 18 Oct. 1830, Glynne-Gladstone MSS.
- 84 Parliamentary report, July 1833, p. 178.
- 85 Denison to Sandon, n.d. (1831), Vol. LI, ff. 149, 150, Harrowby MSS.
- 86 Parliamentary report, July 1833, p. 7.
- 87 *Ibid.* pp. 35-36.
- 88 Parliamentary report, March 1831, pp. 107-108.
- 89 Bushell to Brougham, 12 Dec. 1832, Brougham MSS 44, 178.
- 90 Wybergh to James Brougham, 18 June (1832), *ibid.* J. 1101.
- 91 *Report from the select committee appointed to inquire into the petition on the Liverpool borough*, 1 April 1833, Parliamentary Papers 1833, X, 46, 35-6, 103, 14, 80-1.
- 92 Information on Liverpool's political clubs is taken from the Canning Club MSS, Whittingham-Jones MSS and Liverpool Parliamentary Office MSS, all at Liverpool R.O.
- 93 Mercury report, p. 42.
- 94 Parliamentary report, July 1833, pp. 18-20.
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- 98 James Stonehouse, *Streets of Liverpool* (Liverpool, n.d.), p. 161.
- 99 *Gore's general advertiser*, 20 Oct. 1831.
- 100 Parliamentary report, July 1833, p. 157.
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- 102 John Wade, *The extraordinary black book* (1831), pp. 556, 559.
- 103 Picton, *Memorials*, p. 460.