

THE ORIGINS OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN LATE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY LANCASHIRE

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The early origins and growth of the whig and tory parties in late Stuart England have attracted a great deal of attention among historians on both sides of the Atlantic over the last thirty years. The role of party in the parliamentary and ministerial politics of Westminster and Whitehall has become a familiar subject of discussion. The role of party in the politics of the provinces, though by no means neglected,¹ is perhaps rather less familiar. Historians of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries have been more reluctant than their Tudor and early Stuart counterparts to describe at length the political development of provincial units such as counties, or the relationship in such units between politics on the one hand and local government or socio-economic change on the other. A county such as Lancashire, two hundred miles away from the centre of the political stage in London, undoubtedly saw the emergence of versions of the whig and tory parties during the period between the late sixteen-seventies and the end of Queen Anne's reign; it is worth considering whether these Lancashire parties were stimulated in their growth by the active interference of politicians at the centre, whether they arose through local imitation of the parties contesting national issues at court and in parliament, or whether Lancashire men were persuaded to identify themselves with one side or another by disputes that were peculiar to Lancashire.

I

The first, obvious explanation for the emergence of party

politics in Lancashire is simply that the politically conscious classes in Lancashire took sides on national events and issues just as Londoners and others did, because of a mixture of ideology, self-interest, and political circumstance in a national, not a local context. In the Restoration period, the memory of the civil war was naturally a starting point for allegiances and enmities to develop, in Lancashire as elsewhere. Some of those active on one side or the other during the war were still prominent members of Lancashire's political society in the sixteenth-eighties, like for example the two Cheshire peers who had territorial and political ambitions in Lancashire, the first earl of Macclesfield and the first Lord Delamer, formerly Sir George Booth of the 1659 Cheshire rising; or like Sir Geoffrey Shakerley, who had commanded a royalist regiment and who lived until 1696. A quite substantial number of Lancashire gentlemen at the time of the exclusion crisis had been adult heads of families in the sixteen-fifties, even if they had not actually fought in the war. Some veterans from this period, like Edward Fleetwood of Penwortham and Thomas Braddyll of Portfield, were still alive, though not especially active, as late as the accession of Queen Anne in 1702. Memories of the civil war and of the Cromwellian era reverberated through the last forty years of the seventeenth century; when in 1690 Leftwich Oldfield wrote to the earl of Derby after a conversation apparently with a catholic squire on the subject of the political condition of Lancashire, he reported the remarks that '... the old divisions in these parts were well known, and the original thereof was Cavalier and Rounded ... the Root of animosities here (the old Cause of new doeings) hath layn bare many years.'²

'New doeings', contemporary events in the national context, contributed to the polarisation of Lancashire into parties as well as 'old causes', the memory of the civil war. There is plenty of evidence that Lancashire was stirred by the news from London of the popish plot in 1678 and 1679. The Lancashire justices of the peace set about the enforcement of the recusancy laws with every sign of enthusiasm, and when in October 1680 a technical question arose about whether or not recusants who had been bound over from sessions to sessions to be of good behaviour but who had not taken the oath of supremacy, should forfeit their recognizances if they failed to appear, the sum involved was estimated at about £60,000.³ By 1684, as in other places, the emphasis had changed to the persecution of protestant

dissent; for instance, Henry Newcome, the Manchester nonconformist minister, was obliged to suspend preaching and to go into hiding.⁴ Lancashire, like other counties, drew up and presented petitions and addresses to the court during the exclusion crisis, and these tended to be of two different kinds, promoted by two different sets of men. In 1680, petitions were circulated demanding the meeting of the parliament elected in 1679 but apparently indefinitely prorogued. Rather later, in 1681 and 1682, contrasting addresses were promoted which professed loyalty to the Stuart monarchy, and relief and approval that the king had triumphed over faction and turbulence. As elsewhere, too, Lancashire towns suffered upheavals at the end of Charles II's reign with the surrender of the charters of Lancaster, Preston, Wigan and Liverpool following a *quo warranto*. The new charters strengthened a loyal oligarchy of faithful supporters of the Stuart monarchy.

There was a military element in the early development of party, which might have lent a certain starkness to the individual's choice of sides. The duke of Monmouth had many friends in the north-west of England, and the course of his rebellion in 1685 was followed with interest in Lancashire; persons described as 'disaffected to the king, and of principles obnoxious to the public peace, and at this juncture not fit to be at large' were seized and guarded by the militia, which was mobilised for the occasion.⁵ Lancashire, or perhaps more precisely Lancashire and Cheshire, was one of the areas where the Revolution of 1688 was an active, not merely a passive, affair. The second Lord Delamer declared for the prince of Orange on 15 November 1688, ten days after the prince had landed at Torbay, and he mustered a small force estimated variously at between 400 and 1,500 men at Bowden Downs near Altrincham before taking it off to Nottingham and then subsequently to join William at Hungerford in Berkshire, while the earl of Derby remained behind to take control of the Lancashire militia. Derby's role was to keep the peace in the north-west, threatened by a contingent of James's regular army under Colonel Gage, during Delamer's absence.⁶ Naturally, too, the outcome of the Revolution would play a large part in conditioning the future political allegiance of families for half a century ahead. When Thomas Legh, writing to his nephew Peter Legh of Lyme and referring to Delamer's declaration in favour of the prince of Orange, used the phrase 'the cloud of rebellion is great', he was as early as 22

November 1688 unconsciously defining the Jacobite political affiliations of the Leghs of Lyme until 1745 and beyond.⁷

The general point here is, that Lancashire was aware of great national events in the political history of England as a whole, and that Lancashire men responded to them in ways which were not markedly different from what one would have expected. Just as there had been Lancashire cavaliers and Lancashire roundheads, so there would be Lancashire anti-catholics, Lancashire exclusionists, Lancashire Jacobites, Lancashire whigs, and Lancashire tories. So the first of the possible explanations for the development of whig and tory parties in Lancashire is a somewhat banal and old-fashioned one, that Lancashire parties were units helping with other similar local units to make up two national totalities, the whig party and the tory party.

II

The second explanation for the origin and development of parties in Lancashire is that party politics emerged naturally out of the political processes that became routine and normal in the period between the sixteen-seventies and the end of Anne's reign. The three most important subheadings here are: parliamentary elections; patronage, that is the distribution of local office; and the ambition of national politicians who sought to strengthen an interest at court by consolidating a local power base. These all overlap, and it is not always easy to distinguish between them, but for the sake of clarity they may be taken separately.

Parliamentary elections were notoriously a means of exposing and widening the divisions in local society, and they became more so when, after a break of eighteen years from 1661 to 1679, three general elections were fought between 1679 and 1681. Then, after another gap with only three elections in fourteen years from 1681 to 1695, a routine of elections at triennial or occasionally (as in 1701-2) more frequent intervals was established from 1695 to 1715. It was not necessarily the case that at parliamentary elections great national issues were invariably debated; some elections during the period were dominated by purely local rivalries. One such was an unusually bitter by-election at Lancaster in 1689 when a spirit of personal hostility animated the rival candidates, Roger Kirkby and

Sir Thomas Rawlinson, which was reflected in coarse insults and in riotous behaviour by their respective supporters. Kirkby even threatened to smash the fiddles of the town waits if they refused to play outside the houses of his enemies at one in the morning! The main issue in this election was the assessment of rates by the mayor, which Kirkby proposed to challenge with the help of 'the meaner sort of the commons', and it is hard to trace any interest on this occasion in matters other than the most parochial of Lancaster's affairs.⁸ Stella Watson has suggested that elections of this type were the norm in Lancashire in the sixteen-nineties, and that it was not until the reign of Queen Anne (and then only indistinctly) that political parties bearing some correspondence with the whig and tory parties familiar at Westminster began to re-emerge. Before then, Lancashire elections were an arena for the personal rivalries of magnates, for the local ambitions of municipal politicians, and for quarrels over parish-pump issues. This meant that former enemies might co-operate, as when Peter Legh of Lyme, the owner of the most powerful interest at Newton, backed Thomas Brotherton in the 1695 election after thwarting his challenge ten years earlier. It meant too that allies in national politics might find themselves on opposite sides in Lancashire. For example, the Norris brothers, Thomas Johnson and Jasper Maudit all cast their votes in the house of commons when they were there, but they were ranged against each other in the electoral politics of Liverpool in the last years of William's reign.⁹

This analysis is in many ways persuasive, though it might be qualified in one respect. The evolution of political parties was dislocated by the Revolution of 1688, in Lancashire as in national politics; but patterns of allegiance might dissolve and re-form at election times in kaleidoscopic fashion, without the body of attitudes and opinions that underlay local parties expiring altogether. The distinctions between groups of men active in the exclusion crisis and its aftermath were never wholly effaced, especially when such distinctions were connected with religion. The three elections of the exclusion crisis and the struggle over municipal charters which followed had polarised opinion in some constituencies. At Liverpool, the conflicts of the sixteen-seventies between interest groups – the merchant-controlled corporation and the neighbouring aristocracy and gentry – had hardened by 1685 into a struggle between whigs and tories divided by religion and political principle.

At Preston, too, the rivalry of factions knit together by family and patronage had been transformed by the time of the election to the 'Oxford' parliament in 1681, when a party that can legitimately be described as 'tory' had come to dominate the town.¹⁰ These developments in the early sixteen-eighties were overlaid, but never quite extinguished, in the sixteen-nineties. The frequency of elections after 1695, coupled with the familiarity and immediacy of issues in national politics once government supervision of the publication of news was limited by the lapse of the Licensing Act in the same year, helped to keep such topics as religion, the succession and the war in the minds of the burgesses of Clitheroe, Newton and Wigan, the freemen of Lancaster, Liverpool and Preston, and the freeholders of the county. Early in Anne's reign, the divisive effect of the tack of the occasional conformity bill at Westminster, and the fortuitous emergence in Lancashire of one whig magnate – the tenth earl of Derby – as a focus of allegiance (and of animosity) following the elimination through death of the Macclesfield interest, gave Lancashire politics a more strongly party flavour. By the Queen's death, the words 'whig' and 'tory' were common currency in Lancashire as in national politics, in a manner that would have been unusual twenty years earlier; they were used frequently to describe the rival candidates in the two Wigan elections (one a by-election) in 1713, for example.¹¹ In short, what seems to have happened is that between the exclusion crisis and the Hanoverian succession the voters of Lancashire and the Lancashire boroughs became accustomed to intermittent adversarial politics and to the solicitation of their votes by rival candidates who came increasingly to emphasise the issues of national politics, so that the names 'whig' and 'tory' became gradually and imperceptibly familiar.

Patronage is a huge subject and can only be touched on lightly here. Lancashire was in this respect a special case because of the existence of those job-creating institutions, the duchy of Lancaster and the county palatine of Lancaster. The chancellor of the duchy, who was at the head of both, was normally a figure active in central politics; he tended to be a non-resident, London-based, often ill-informed personage, to be approached respectfully but somewhat warily by Lancashire's politicians. In spite of his remoteness, the chancellor of the duchy exercised much of the crown's patronage in Lancashire, and this patronage was naturally exercised in a spirit of party. This was

particularly evident with regard to the appointment and especially the dismissal of the county's justices of the peace. Nothing did more to clarify the political allegiance of the gentry in Lancashire, as in other counties, than the fact that their power and status as local administrators was vulnerable to shifts in the fortunes of the parties at the centre of politics. Exclusionists like Serjeant Rigby were purged in the sixteen-eighties; Jacobites like Peter Legh of Lyme were weeded out in the sixteen-nineties; tories came in with Queen Anne in 1702; and by the end of the queen's reign in 1714 tory gentlemen like Sir John Bland or whigs like Richard Entwisle might have been added, dismissed and restored, replacing each other in the process, as many as two or three times. In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that the party allegiances of the gentry families of justice rank became familiar. It was possible by 1715 to mark the names of the gentlemen in the Lancashire commission of the peace with symbols indicating 'tory' and 'whig', much as it was possible by then to identify the party affiliations of the members of the house of commons.¹² The militia was another means, this time controlled by the lord-lieutenant rather than by the chancellor of the duchy, through which parties could be consolidated by bringing together like-minded men in the common service of the county.¹³ For example, there was an occasion as early as 1673 when during the tenure of a stop-gap lord-lieutenant, the earl of Bridgewater, the king added nine new deputy-lieutenants to a list originally containing only thirteen names with a view to building up the 'court-party' in the county with a mark of royal approval. Parties, then, might have existed for short periods without patronage; but the systematic exploitation of the opportunities that it offered from the sixteen-seventies onward provided the cement which kept parties together over long periods.

There was one really serious attempt by an ambitious politician during the late seventeenth century to seize control of Lancashire politics as a method of strengthening a career at the centre. This was made by Charles Gerard, Lord Brandon during his father's lifetime to 1694 and second earl of Macclesfield thereafter until his own death in 1701. Brandon's early career was typical of a class of politicians identified by Professor J.R. Jones and described by him as the 'whig collaborators' with the policies of James II.¹⁴ Brandon was convicted of involvement in the Rye House plot at the time of Monmouth's rebellion in 1685,

and had been somewhat unexpectedly pardoned. He then identified himself whole-heartedly with the policy of toleration pursued by James II and was admitted into the Lancashire commission of the peace in April 1688 at the height of the catholic takeover of the bench. James's catholic lord-lieutenant, the third Viscount Molyneux, made him a deputy-lieutenant, and Brandon spent much of 1688 regulating the Lancashire corporations in readiness for an election that never came, an election that would have produced in the winter of 1688 – 9 a house of commons prepared to repeal the Test Act in accordance with James's wishes. Notwithstanding this record, the Revolution damaged Brandon not at all; he was elected M.P. for the county in the convention parliament, as he had been in all three exclusion parliaments. When, in early 1689, the ninth earl of Derby lost the lord-lieutenancy of Lancashire (because of his proud refusal to take Lancashire without Cheshire, which was earmarked for Delamer), it was Brandon who stepped in, an appointment which amazed and outraged Derby's friends and allies and went close towards providing an influential body of Lancashire gentry with permanently anti-Revolution attitudes.¹⁵ Through the sixteen-nineties, Brandon set himself to establish and maintain a whig interest in Lancashire. He tried to influence elections; in 1690 and again in 1698 he even attempted to infiltrate the burgh borough of Newton, which was rock-solid for the Legh family of Lyme. On the latter occasion he was alleged to have remarked that since he had an interest in most other elections in Lancashire he thought he would 'have a push' at Newton as well.¹⁶ He tried, with limited success until 1694, to overcome a tory chancellor of the duchy's reluctance to add his whig nominees to the commission of the peace. He promoted the association oath in Lancashire in 1696 following the failure of the attempt in that year to assassinate King William, and he tried to use the oath to discredit and displace his tory antagonists. Hot-tempered, on occasion violent – he had received a royal pardon for murder as well as one for treason – he regarded all his opponents indiscriminately as Jacobites, and he drove as many enemies into the tory camp as he attracted friends into the Lancashire whig party which he headed. When his brother Fitton Gerard was successful in the Clitheroe by-election of 1694 within a month of Brandon's own succession to the Macclesfield title, it was said in Lancashire that this was 'the beginning of a slavery that, if

not prevented, will grow up to our ruine', and Derby, resenting the challenge to his family's traditional influence in the county, was always alert to seize opportunities to score off his rival, as when some soldiers used extortionate methods of quartering at Ormskirk in 1696.¹⁷ At the time of his death in 1701, Macclesfield had done more than any other individual to divide the political society of Lancashire into two parties distinguished by the names of whig and tory.

Thus the ordinary conduct of politics in the circumstances of the last two decades of the seventeenth century contributed to the development of whig and tory parties in Lancashire. Increasingly frequent general elections; patronage as a prominent feature of the political process; deep divisions in national politics created first by the issue of exclusion, then by the Revolution, and latterly by the French wars with their inevitable side-effects of increased taxation and expensive standing armies; the whole mixture exploited by men like Macclesfield: all this polarised local political society. The ninth earl of Derby disliked the stress of political activity and resented the divisive extremism of Macclesfield and, earlier, Delamer. At a lower level, Roger Kenyon, the clerk of the peace, was temperamentally inclined towards the steady professional administration of the county with the minimum of fuss. Eventually, even men like these were forced, willy-nilly, to identify themselves with one party or the other because of the intensifying pressures both of abnormal and of routine political activities in the circumstances of the ten or so years on either side of the 1688 Revolution.¹⁸

III

A third explanation for the development of party in Lancashire is not an alternative to the first two, but it is linked to them and is, perhaps, an extension of them. It is that in the late seventeenth century there arose in Lancashire a number of largely local disputes which acquired what seems a disproportionate prominence in the correspondence of those involved in Lancashire affairs, and which clearly absorbed a great deal of time and energy, but which were only linked indirectly, if at all, to national issues. These quarrels meant little outside Lancashire. They were matters of controversial law suits, of minor patronage, or of elections

to offices which carried no national significance. It may be that one is tempted to inflate some of them to a greater degree of importance than they really deserve, simply because of the space they occupy in the surviving papers of the participants. Even so, they are worth considering as elements in the shaping of a distinctive political consciousness in Lancashire in this period. For the purposes of this essay, two especially well-documented examples have been chosen from a much longer list of similar episodes.

First, there was the issue of the appointment to the post of keeper of the Lancashire house of correction at Preston in the years immediately after the Revolution, an office normally in the gift of the county justices of the peace meeting under the chairmanship of the sheriff at assizes. The first post-Revolution sheriff was John Birch of Ordsall, a man allegedly of 'quality not greater than is fitt for a High constable, his converse with few above that ranke, and his interest accordingly'. He was, however, a zealous supporter of the Revolution. Birch, with the help of a group of justices meeting unofficially, discharged William Tomlinson, the incumbent governor of the house of correction, for suspected Jacobitism. At the sheriff's table at assizes in August 1689, at which Tomlinson was represented by a barrister, the justices of the peace heard evidence that in an affray with some dragoons Tomlinson had said that he preferred to serve 'his old master' (Derby) rather than 'a young rogue' (Brandon); but it was explicitly denied that Tomlinson had criticised King William or the new government. The justices, acting this time officially, accordingly voted to restore Tomlinson by ten votes to seven. Birch refused to accept this vote and ordered a few days later that his own nominee, one Willacy, should continue, on the grounds that Tomlinson, 'a very seditious and disloyal person', was not fit to be in charge of the house of correction. Tomlinson did not give up his pretensions to the job; the following spring Sheriff Birch and his friends procured through the secretary of state, the earl of Shrewsbury, a direct order from the king confirming that Tomlinson was to be dismissed and replaced by William Higgonson (Willacy having disappeared), who had the character of a 'loyal and sufficient man'. But Tomlinson's allies approached the other secretary of state, the earl of Nottingham, who was more sympathetic to the tories than Shrewsbury; and Nottingham invited the Lancashire justices to reconsider Tomlinson's

pretensions and to restore him if the allegations of Jacobitism levelled against him proved to be unfounded. This the Lancashire justices did, by thirteen votes to nine, at a sheriff's table meeting in August 1690, and it was then and there ordered that Tomlinson should take over from Higgonson as soon as possible. There followed a dramatic twist : Higgonson could not be evicted. He barricaded himself in the house of correction and refused to come out. The justices charged with enforcing the order to restore Tomlinson engaged in a fruitless shouting match with those behind the locked and barred doors, and they said that as they rode away they heard gunfire from within the house. In this impasse, Higgonson's supporters set to work once more to emphasise Tomlinson's disaffection to the Revolution regime. The matter had now assumed serious proportions; the gentry of Lancashire were divided on the rival merits of Tomlinson and Higgonson, and since the former was allegedly lukewarm in his attitude to the Revolution while the latter was backed by Brandon and his associates, it was natural that Tomlinson's friends should be regarded as tories and Higgonson's friends as whigs. One of Higgonson's champions, Roger Kirkby, showed the same sort of form at quarter sessions in October 1690 that he had displayed at the Lancaster by-election the previous year; he distinguished himself by 'noise and bawling' before he went off the bench in a rage over the issue. Tomlinson seems to have recovered the post temporarily by March 1691, when a new secretary of state, Viscount Sidney, was consulting with the assize judge and with Roger Kirkby on the best means of getting rid of him and restoring Higgonson. It was Higgonson who emerged as governor from 1691 to 1694, when he died. The persevering Tomlinson returned to office briefly, in the teeth of Macclesfield's hostility, but he was again sacked, this time for good, after the association of 1696.¹⁹ Few episodes in Lancashire politics attracted more attention over a longer period. Although some of the gentry changed their minds on the issue, as a comparison of the votes at successive meetings of the sheriff's table shows, there can be little doubt that the quarrel knit together the two parties engaged in disputing it, and further that a gentleman's toryism or whiggery can be discerned from the attitudes he took up on the question of the governorship of the house of correction in the early sixteen-nineties.

A little later in the same decade came the second example to be considered here of a conflict of local character yet also

apparently of overwhelming interest to those who participated in it: the Wigan recordership contest of 1697–8. In outline, this was a struggle between two parties in Wigan, both with outside backing, to instal their candidate as recorder and to blacken the reputation of their opponents in the process. On one side, the ‘tory’ side, were: the mayor elected at Michaelmas 1697, James Harvey; the two members of parliament for Wigan, Sir Roger Bradshaigh and Peter Shakerley, both of whom had refused the association in the house of commons in 1696, a mark of extreme toryism in national politics; and a group of aldermen, burgesses and other inhabitants who when at full strength could muster 123 signatures to a petition. Their candidate was George Kenyon, the son of Roger and his eventual successor as clerk of the peace for Lancashire. The leader of the other side, the ‘whig’ side, was of course the turbulent Macclesfield, and a caucus of outside gentry like Sir Alexander Rigby and Hugh Willoughby, plus another group of aldermen and burgesses, altogether numbering at their peak 109 signatures to their petitions. Macclesfield’s candidate was Bertie Entwisle, a Wigan lawyer of good family who had been a justice of the peace for the county since 1692.

As with many late seventeenth century disputes in municipal politics, the quarrel involved different interpretations of the Wigan charters. The charter of 1662 had provided that the king should nominate to the office of recorder in the event of a vacancy, but a new charter naming Entwisle as recorder had appeared in 1685. Rather surprisingly, Entwisle’s party did not base their argument on the 1685 charter; all sides were agreed that the 1662 charter had never been surrendered and that the 1685 charter had not been properly enrolled, and in any case had been cancelled by James II’s proclamation during the invasion period in 1688 recalling all the charters issued during his reign. Entwisle’s claim was that on receipt of the 1685 charter he had replaced Thomas Mort as recorder; that Mort had returned briefly after James’s proclamation cancelling that charter; that Mort had however refused the oaths to William and Mary, and had asked to be relieved of the office on the grounds of non-residence; and that since 1689 he, Entwisle, had performed the duties of recorder *de facto* with general approbation. Kenyon’s friends urged that the office had been technically vacant since the Revolution, and that, in accordance with the 1662 charter, Kenyon had been

selected by the corporation at the Michaelmas court leet of 1697 for nomination to the king, who in the last resort appointed the recorder. Kenyon's party submitted a petition requesting royal confirmation of their choice in October 1697, and this was instantly countered by Macclesfield, who warned the lords justices, acting on behalf of the king who was abroad, of a design by the two disaffected Wigan M.P.s to remove the loyal Entwisle from an office he had held since the Revolution.

A flurry of petitions to the privy council, with counter-petitions and answers to petitions, followed in December 1697 and January 1698, so that the two sides began to be referred to as 'petitioners' (Macclesfield's whigs, who at about this time adopted the practice of wearing holly in their hats as a party badge to mock Sir Roger Bradshaigh) and 'respondents' (the party of the mayor and the tory M.P.s). These appeals to central government referred not only to the recordership, but also to the excessive rates allegedly levied and then misappropriated by the tory corporation, and to the illegal detention of the town's charters and other records by the whig town clerk, who refused to give them up. The privy council referred these various petitions to the attorney-general, Sir Thomas Trevor, who was evidently impressed by what turned out to be the clinching manoeuvre: a batch of eleven affidavits taken from elderly and experienced burgesses by the mayor, which described the history of elections and appointments in the town since the sixteen-thirties, and the malpractices of the whigs. These were handed in to the council by Sir Roger Bradshaigh, and they proved decisive. In May 1698 the attorney-general delivered his report. The king, considering all aspects of the case on the basis of Trevor's findings, ordered that Kenyon be confirmed as recorder. Macclesfield was not yet beaten; he wrote a furious letter to Somers, the whig lord chancellor, insisting on a caveat to the king's warrant on the grounds that Kenyon was the nominee of Jacobites and that his appointment would everywhere discourage the king's true friends. Somers does not seem to have responded – he may well have thought that since he was lord chancellor, not chancellor of the duchy, the affair was nothing to do with him – but Macclesfield still did not give up; through the summer of 1698 he pursued the mayor with a string of mandamuses and attachments in the king's bench and in chancery, which required some hectic side-stepping, masterminded by Peter Shakerley, to avert.

Meanwhile the Wigan tories, with the mayor and the newly-installed recorder to the fore, renewed the complaints about the town clerk's retention of the charters and records in his own hands, and manoeuvred the jury at the Michaelmas court leet into presenting him for participating in a riot. In the midst of these excitements, Sir Roger Bradshaigh and Orlando Bridgeman were elected for Wigan in the 1698 parliamentary election, and Sir Alexander Rigby, the narrowly unsuccessful candidate of the Entwisle or whig party, retaliated by petitioning and also by sponsoring a tumultuous and apparently illegal election of aldermen and burgesses which had to be overturned at the Michaelmas court leet, when Sir Roger Bradshaigh himself replaced Harvey as mayor. The equilibrium of Wigan politics was to take time to recover. Macclesfield – not at his best on this occasion, perhaps because of his contemporaneous preoccupation with his divorce from the lady who was claimed to be the mother of Richard Savage the poet – was never able to shake Kenyon's tenure of the recordership, which he was to retain until his death in 1728.²⁰

The Wigan recordership quarrel was an unusually well-documented episode, and for this reason one might be cautious about drawing conclusions from it that are too sweeping. It was a very hard-fought battle between two groups in Wigan of roughly equal size, both led by politicians who were masters of tactics. It polarised opinion in Wigan and indeed in Lancashire generally, and memories of the animosities it aroused faded only slowly. The identification of Kenyon's party with the tories, and of Entwisle's with the whigs, is not made lightly. It is true that King William's eventual preference for a tory candidate backed by quasi-Jacobites is perhaps a little unexpected, but in the spring of 1698 the war with France was over and the king was beginning to lose confidence in his largely whig ministry. The whigs were not strong enough in the house of commons to protect him from a vigorous 'country' opposition, demanding reduced taxes, a drastically diminished standing army, and the scrutiny of his land grants in Ireland. It may be that the tories Bradshaigh and Shakerley realised that the whigs were on the defensive in central politics, and sought to exploit this weakness at the level of Wigan's municipal politics.

There were, of course, many more than two such locally focused episodes in Lancashire's history in the period from the exclusion crisis to the Hanoverian succession. There

was in the early sixteen-nineties a good deal of interest in, and competition for, some Lancashire estates forfeited because they had been conveyed to 'superstitious', that is catholic, uses in James's reign. There was also a chorus of complaints about the conversion of anglican chapels-of-ease to dissenting meeting houses after the passage of the Toleration Act in 1689; the cases of Hindley chapel, St Ellen's chapel near Prescott and Tatham chapel near Lancaster raised strong feelings and gave the divisions of whig and tory in Lancashire in the sixteen-nineties a certain flavour of anglicanism *versus* dissent.²¹ Much later, and coinciding in time if not in content with the celebrated affair of Dr Sacheverell in London in 1709-10, was a vehement dispute between Sir Roger Bradshaigh and the rector of Wigan over the seating arrangements in the parish church. Two much more serious affairs, when Lancashire, or at any rate the north-west of England, became briefly a focus of attention in national affairs, were the visit of the duke of Monmouth to a race-meeting at Wallasey in 1682, when he was greeted with much publicised enthusiasm by exclusionists like Delamer, who hailed Monmouth as the protestant alternative to the catholic duke of York as heir to the throne; and also the Lancashire plot of 1694, when a group of catholic gentry were accused of Jacobite conspiracy in what was intended to be a show-trial at Manchester but which collapsed when the witnesses, a very shady collection of mercenary informers, gave contradictory or clearly perjured evidence, or withdrew altogether. These events both crystallised Lancashire opinion. In the first case, Monmouth's visit, one either welcomed Monmouth as a protestant hero, or deprecated the stirring up of faction and fanatic enthusiasm that his presence in the north-west represented. In the second case, the Lancashire plot, one either believed, as did Macclesfield, that the Manchester prisoners were guilty and had only escaped because of the trickery of the defence lawyers and the knavery of the jury; or one believed, like Roger Kenyon, that the prisoners had been 'framed' by impudent charlatans in the Titus Oates tradition, and that they were gentlemen who deserved a fair hearing and impartial justice. On occasions like these, it was hard not to take sides and few Lancashire men escaped the temptation to do so.

IV

The development of whig and tory politics in Lancashire was thus the result of a complex mosaic of factors and circumstances. The issues of national politics, as they filtered through to the county, were understood and discussed in the country houses, towns and inns of Lancashire. Frequent parliamentary elections and the exploitation of patronage provided a framework within which loyalties and enmities could solidify and leaders emerge. The largely local issues, involving in some cases the expenditure of considerable effort, supplied an extra dimension, and perhaps this aspect of late Stuart political history deserves further study, not only in Lancashire. These local issues forced individuals to choose their party; and, having committed themselves once, men found it easy to do so again, or to act in combination with those with whom they had allied on former occasions.

There are important reservations to this conclusion. Men were not always consistent. For instance, Serjeant Rigby, one of the leading Lancashire exclusionists, acted in his professional capacity as a lawyer on behalf of some of the Lancashire victims of the popish plot hysteria, and he sympathetically promised to draw the plight of leading Lancashire catholics to the attention of the first earl of Shaftesbury, of all people; while Bertie Entwisle, the whig candidate for the recordership of Wigan, set his face against the takeover of anglican chapels by dissenters, a cause which Macclesfield himself and his presbyterian allies like Lord Willoughby of Parham and Sir Charles Hoghton naturally espoused.²² Also, as suggested earlier, the actual terms 'whig' and 'tory' do not come into use in contemporary correspondence or diaries to describe local, as opposed to national, politics until Queen Anne's reign, at any rate in Lancashire. Admittedly, two relatively humble individuals, Richard Mollineux and his wife, 'being much in drink', caused a disturbance in Wigan in September 1683 by calling their neighbours 'Presbyterian Rogues and Whiggs', but, since the words were also reported as 'Presbyterian Rogues, Rascalls and Papist doggs', it may be supposed that the Mollineux family was engaged in indiscriminate abuse rather than in the precise delineation of views of which they disapproved.²³ Roger Kenyon and his correspondents in the sixteen-nineties talked of 'the honest party', 'the friends of the king', 'the men of loyalty', 'the church party', 'the

disaffected party', 'the factious party', and so on, while Macclesfield generally referred to his opponents as 'the Jacobite party'. It would be hard to find a reference to 'the whig party' or 'the tory party', or even 'whig' or 'tory' used as adjectives, in any of the papers relating to the Wigan recordership. Party organisation was moreover loose, relaxed, often invisible; there were no headquarters and no regular meetings at fixed times in appointed places in Lancashire party politics as there were in the London clubs and coffeehouses of Anne's reign.

In spite of these qualifications, it is nonetheless possible to discern the emergence of groups among Lancashire men which slowly crystallised, under the pressure of external events and local quarrels, into parties recognisably identified with the whig and tory parties based in London and active in parliamentary and ministerial politics. Adam Martindale, the Lancashire dissenter who died in 1686 and who can therefore hardly be accused of writing with hindsight, recognised an early stage in this process with remarkable clarity as he surveyed the furore surrounding Monmouth's visit to Wallasey in 1682. He observed: 'at this I was very much troubled; for though I suspected not any such things as after followed, yet I considered that our gentrie, being already falling into two parties, this would certainly heighten that State-Schisme, beyond all probability of an accommodation', and he added, as was his custom, a moral reflection: 'it is a sad and dangerous thing to have factions in a countrey [by which he meant county] among men of interest'.²⁴

NOTES

- 1 Good examples of work on the local emergence of party in the late Stuart period are: Rees [J.R.] Jones, 'The First Whig Party in Norfolk', *Durham University Journal*, new series, XV (1953), pp. 13-21; L.M. Munby, 'Politics and Religion in Hertfordshire, 1660-1740', in *East Anglian Studies*, ed. *idem* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 117-45; P. Jenkins, *The Making of a Ruling Class: the Glamorgan Gentry 1640-1790* (Cambridge, 1983), chs. 5 and 6; A.M. Coleby, 'Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, 1649-1689: the Relationship between Central Government and the Localities' (unpub. D. Phil. thesis, Oxford Univ. 1985); and J.M. Rosenheim, 'An Examination of Oligarchy: the Gentry of Restoration Norfolk, 1660-1720' (unpub. Ph.D. thesis, Princeton Univ. 1981).
- 2 Kenyon (Gredington) MS. 742 : [Leftwich Oldfield] to earl of Derby, 31 July 1690.
- 3 L(ancashire) R(ecord) O(ffice), QSO/47: quarter sessions orders,

- Jan. 1679, which betray strong apprehensions about catholic activities in all four divisions of the county; J(ohn) R(ylands) L(ibrary, University of Manchester), Eng. MS. 213, f. 114: fifteen Lancashire justices to the lords of the council, 5 Oct. 1680 (copy).
- 4 *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome*, ed. R. Parkinson, (Chetham Society, 1st series, XXVI, XXVII, 1852), II, pp. 255–6.
 - 5 Manchester Central Library, Lancashire lieutenantancy book, Farrer MS. 73: order from earl of Derby, 18 June 1685; warrants to sieze various persons issued by Sir Robert Bindloss and others, 22 June 1685.
 - 6 Bodl(eian Library, Oxford), MS. Ballard 45, f. 18: newsletter, 19 Nov. 1688; MS. Ballard 12, f. 42: George Hicces to Arthur Charlett, 1 Dec. 1688; P(ublic) R(ecord)*O(ffice), State Papers Domestic, S.P. 31/4, f. 226: printed copy of Delamer's declaration on behalf of the Prince of Orange, n.d., about 15 Nov. 1688; D.H. Hosford, *Nottingham, Nobles and the North* (Hamden, Connecticut, 1976), pp. 85–95; B. Coward, 'The Social and Political Position of the Earls of Derby in later Seventeenth Century Lancashire', *T.H.S.L.C. CXXXII* (1983), pp. 149–50.
 7. J.R.L., Legh of Lyme MSS: Thomas Legh to Peter Legh, 22 Nov. 1688.
 - 8 Bodl. MS. Rawlinson D. 863, fos. 33–49: several letters dated between 15 Sept. and 13 Nov. 1689.
 - 9 Stella A. Watson, 'Parliamentary Political Interests in Lancashire and Cheshire in the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries' (unpub. M.A. thesis, Manchester Univ., 1979), pp. 29–30, 36, 66–72, 91–2, 115–17, 145–6. See also Janet M. Wahlstrand, 'The Elections to Parliament in the County of Lancashire, 1685–1714' (unpub. M.A. thesis, Manchester Univ., 1956), pp. 153–4, 214. P.D. Heitzman's 'The Revolution of 1688 in Lancashire and Cheshire' (unpub. M. Phil. thesis, Manchester Univ., 1984) was not available for consultation at the time of writing; its de-restriction in July 1987 is eagerly awaited.
 - 10 M. Mullett, 'The Politics of Liverpool, 1660–1688', *T.H.S.L.C. CXXIV* (1973), pp. 31–56; M. Mullett, "'Two Dwell Together in Unity": the Search for Agreement in Preston Politics, 1660–1690', *T.H.S.L.C. CXXV* (1975), pp. 61–81.
 - 11 L.R.O., Kenyon MSS, DDKe 9/102/121 – 3: three letters to George Kenyon, 10–18 May 1713; DDKe 9/104/9: Anne Kenyon to George Kenyon, n.d. [21 May 1713].
 - 12 Hertfordshire Record Office, Cowper (Panshanger) MSS, D/EP F 153: lists of Lancashire justices marked to indicate party sympathies, 1715; L.K.J. Glassey, *Politics and the Appointment of Justices of the Peace, 1675–1720* (Oxford, 1979), ch. 10.
 - 13 D.P. Carter, 'The Lancashire Lieutenantancy, 1660–1688' (unpub. M. Litt. thesis, Oxford Univ., 1981), ch. 5.
 - 14 J.R. Jones, 'James II's Whig Collaborators', *Historical Journal*, III (1960), pp. 65–73.
 - 15 H.M.C., *Kenyon MSS*, pp. 212–13, 233, 234–5; L.R.O., DDKe 2/19/11: Roger Kenyon's notes on Macclesfield's past career, n.d. [c. May 1698].
 - 16 L.R.O., DDKe 9/63/7: Thomas Legh to Roger Kenyon, 2 Mar. 1690; J.R.L., Legh of Lyme MSS, Legh Bowden to Peter Legh, 22 July 1698.
 - 17 Glassey, *Appointment of Justices*, pp. 279–81; W. Gandy, *Lancashire Association Oath Rolls* (privately printed, 1921); P.R.O., S.P. 44/274, p. 105: minutes of lords justices, 12 May 1696; L.R.O., DDKe 9/67/12:

- Thomas Marsden to Roger Kenyon, 6 Feb. 1694; DDKe 9/69/57-8: Derby to Roger Kenyon, 5 Nov. 1696 (two letters).
- 18 Coward, *T.H.S.L.C. CXXXII*, pp. 149-50.
- 19 *Proceedings of the Lancashire Justices of the Peace at the Sheriff's Table during Assizes Week, 1578-1694*, ed. B.W. Quintrell (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, CXXI, 1981) pp. 27-9, 155-7, 158-61, 166, and also p. 59 notes 110, 111, and the authorities there quoted; H.M.C., *Kenyon MSS*, pp. 224, 247; Kenyon (Gredington) MSS, 743, 745: copies of the sheriff's table order of 25 Aug. 1690 and of the letter of Sir Richard Standish and Alexander Rigby describing their failure to execute it; British Library, Egerton MS. 3348, f. 91: petition of fifteen Lancashire justices to [Carmarthen], 9 Oct. 1689; P.R.O., S.P. 44/97, p. 316: Shrewsbury to Lancashire justices, 24 Apr. 1690; S.P. 44/98, p. 96: Nottingham to Lancashire justices, 12 June 1690; S.P. 44/99, pp. 38-40: Sidney to, severally, Baron Turton, Col. Kir[k]by, Lancashire justices, all 19 Mar. 1691; L.R.O., DDKe 2/14/9-12: copies of information given by Elizabeth Osbaldeston and Mary Colly relating to Tomlinson's conduct, and draft notes by Roger Kenyon on the episode; DDKe 9/131/37: Earl of Derby to Sir Richard Standish and others, 31 Aug. 1690, Sir Richard Standish and Alexander Rigby to 'Gentlemen', 17 Sept. 1690 (copies); DDKe 9/63/21: Thomas Kenyon to Roger Kenyon, 10 Oct. 1690; DDKe 9/64/2: Nicholas Starkie to Roger Kenyon, 20 Jan. 1691; DDKe 9/67/25: William Tomlinson to Roger Kenyon, 12 Mar. 1694; DDKe 9/67/37: Thomas Marsden to Roger Kenyon, 27 Mar. 1694.
- 20 J.R.L., Crawford MSS 47/3/1 - 18: copies of petitions, affidavits and other papers relating to the recordership of Wigan, 1697-8; P.R.O., S.P. 44/275, p. 365: minutes of lords justices, 28 Oct. 1697; S.P. 44/347, p. 182: king's letter ordering the appointment of Kenyon as recorder, 21 May 1698; Privy Council Register, P.C. 2/77, pp. 142, 146, 160, 176; Kenyon (Gredington) MS. 1059: draft of the 'Humble Answer' of the mayor and other inhabitants of Wigan, n.d., read before the Privy Council on 17 Feb. 1698; MS. 1060: Sir Roger Bradshaigh to George Kenyon, 15 Jan 1697/8; MS. 1063A: John Harvey to George Kenyon, 25 May 1698; MS. 1065: Peter Shakerley to George Kenyon, 7 July 1698; MS. 1067: James Harvey to George Kenyon, 20 Aug. 1698; L.R.O., DDKe 9/99/14-15, 9/99/20-2: letters from Sir Roger Bradshaigh and Peter Shakerley to George Kenyon, various dates between 8 Feb. and 2 July 1698; DDKe 9/131/56: Sir Roger Bradshaigh to James Harvey, 12 Mar. 1697/8, referring among other things to the 'ridiculous' wearing of holly in hats; DDKe 9/105/9: George Kenyon to Cousin Hilton, 11 June [1698]; Surrey Record Office, Somers MS. 371/14/L22: Macclesfield to Somers, 21 May 1698; Wigan R(ecord) O(ffice), Court Leet Rolls, AB/CL 78-80: rolls for Michaelmas 1697, Easter 1698 and Michaelmas 1698.
- 21 J. Lowe, 'The case of Hindley Chapel, 1641-1698', *Trans Lancs. Chesh. Antiq. Soc.* LXVII (1957), pp. 45-74.
- 22 J.R.L., Eng. MS. 213, f.109: Edward Rigby to Robert Dalton, 5 July 1679; Kenyon (Gredington) MS. 744: notes on orders made at different times at the sheriff's table and at quarter sessions relating to dissent.
- 23 Wigan R.O., AB/CL 51, fos. 41-4: information taken by the mayor of Wigan, 8 Sept. 1683.
- 24 *The Life of Adam Martindale, written by himself*, ed. R. Parkinson (Chetham Society, 1st series, IV, 1845), pp. 227, 238.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Kenyon manuscripts for this period are of inestimable value, and I am grateful to Lord Kenyon not only for permission to make use of his papers preserved at the Lancashire Record Office and at Cumbers House, Gredington, but also for his kindness and hospitality on the occasion of my visit to consult the latter collection. I have referred to the versions of the Kenyon MSS printed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in 1894 unless, as is often the case, the original adds something substantial. I am also grateful to the earl of Crawford and Balcarres and to the Reigate and Banstead Borough Council for permission to consult and make use of their documents; to the Court of the University of Glasgow for a grant to cover travel expenses while part of the research was undertaken; to my colleague Dr Brian Dietz and to Mr Stuart Handley for a number of helpful comments and suggestions; and to the Council of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire for offering me the opportunity to deliver an earlier version of this paper to the Society in 1983.