Electoral politics in Grimsby 1818-1835

Thesis

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ELECTORAL POLITICS IN GRIMSBY 1818 - 1835

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Open University in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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ABSTRACT

ELECTORAL POLITICS IN GRIMSBY 1818 - 1835

Christopher John Cooper

Open University 1987

Large urban parliamentary constituencies and rural (county) constituencies have received much attention in recent years from historical psephologists: the smaller borough constituencies have received comparatively little yet in important ways these were the 'typical' constituencies. This study is an attempt to remedy that hiatus, and is somewhat novel in examining electoral behaviour over a number of elections spanning the period of the first Reform Act. That voting was open is crucial to an understanding of voting behaviour in this period, for in general the smaller the constituency the greater the opportunities for influencing the vote casting of electors. The existence within small boroughs of a large body of independent electors freely expressing their will in the polls may be an image conveyed by campaign literature, yet it was in large measure a fiction. This study emphasises the pervasiveness and significance of 'influence', both legitimate and otherwise, and suggests that political inclination, social class, and even bribery were relatively unimportant when set against the widely spread tentacles of influence as mediated through
property. Family influences too were significant, and it is clear that electors were calculating individuals.

A detailed longitudinal study has been made possible by the nature of the available data (pollbooks, directories, corporation records, and a singular collection of letters and election material) and some considerable evidence on spatial distribution of partisan votes has emerged. It has also become clear that voting in parliamentary elections resembled closely that in local elections, and was subject to the same influences and directed by the same organisational machine, however informal that may have been.

Finally, the Reform Act of 1832, interpreted by whig historians as a landmark on the road to democracy, had a quite different impact locally. Formal changes in Grimsby made for a less representative electorate, a regression rather than advance of democracy. The Act left the influences on voters largely unchanged.

Electoral Politics in Grimsby
Within the last twenty years or so, since the publication of Vincent's "Pollbooks - How Victorians Voted", there have been a number of studies of voting behaviour in the era before the introduction, in 1872, of the secret ballot. In part the interest shown in voting has been historical, but in greater measure, perhaps, has been the social scientific interest. However, the majority of psephological studies have concentrated on the Victorian era and on the larger constituencies. Hanham has argued the need for the study of "sample constituencies of widely differing characteristics", and this thesis was prompted in response to this. Its subject is a small market town, scarcely larger than some villages, yet in many ways typical of borough constituencies of the time. It had interesting characteristics; although it was a small community it boasted a variety of occupations and a distinctive maritime element as a developing port on the Humber. It was also subject to partial disfranchisement by the Reform Act of 1832. Under Schedule B of that Act it lost one of its representatives, so that electors now had only one vote instead of two as hitherto. At the same time the boundaries of the parliamentary constituency were widened to include a number of adjacent small parishes which were overwhelmingly rural in character.

The study was advanced by the nature of the available data. Pollbooks provided the basic raw material, and there exists not only a complete run of pollbooks for all parliamentary elections between 1818 and 1835 (and beyond), but there are also pollbooks for some local
aldermanic and council elections. Thus it was possible to investigate elections at two levels, parliamentary and local: both shared broadly the same electorate. Record linkage also permitted a longitudinal analysis. To provide greater depth to the analysis, other important sources of contemporary data were examined, in particular the Freemen's Roll, Directories, Mayors Court Books, and other miscellaneous material. All of these made it possible to enquire into social, economic, and spatial aspects of voting behaviour.

Three features of the study may be original. The first of these is the use of local detailed maps to indicate the spatial distribution of voters and to elucidate some of the influences on voters. The second original feature is the rich information on procedures and personalities in municipal politics, and the possibilities this has provided to examine the close connection between voting in parliamentary elections and voting in municipal elections. Derek Fraser has provided an authoritative account of the nature of local politics in an urban setting, and the present study may to some extent complement this. That local issues, personalities, and procedures were fundamental cannot be doubted. The third original feature has been the uniqueness of a psephological study spanning the period of the Reform Act of 1832. It has been possible to examine voting behaviour both before and after the Act, and to note continuities and discontinuities. This has also permitted some observations to be made on the motives which lay behind the reform.

In the first chapter an attempt has been made to survey the variety of constituency types in terms of electoral behaviour to provide a context for the study of Grimsby as a small market town and
Preface

a justification for the choice of Grimsby as a subject for investigation. The suggestion is made here that constituencies may fall into three types, according to the influences present in them or the degree of independence enjoyed by voters. In chapter two there appears an outline of the main economic, social, and political features of the borough. Chapter three examines the nature of party, provides a survey of the principal issues and personalities both in Grimsby itself and in the county at large, and draws attention to the connections between them.

Chapter four contains an analysis of voting patterns in Grimsby over the period. Such analysis includes findings on cohort decay, the extent of plump, split, and double voting, and the extent of partisan behaviour. Some comparisons are made with another Lincolnshire port constituency, Boston. This analysis provides the basis for the main focus of the study, which is contained in chapter five: the determinants of voting. The findings here are placed against the models of voting behaviour derived from and current among historical psephologists, and illustrate very clearly what is essentially strategic behaviour on the part of both voters and candidates.

Chapter six takes a closer look at voting behaviour in municipal elections, and then considers the behavioural and organisational links between local and parliamentary contests, and reveals a marked interdependence, even symbiosis.

The central event of this period was the Reform Act of 1832, and its impact on Grimsby is the subject of chapter seven. The Act imposed formal changes in both the franchise and the boundary of the parliamentary constituency, yet it would be difficult to argue that
these brought any significant changes in the influences on voters or in the practical organisation of the means of mobilising and politicising the electorate.

The main findings and interpretations are drawn together in the concluding chapter, which also suggests potential lines of further research.

Acknowledgments

In undertaking this study I have accumulated debts of gratitude to a great many people.

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Dr. D.R. Mills of the Open University deserves a special mention for his encouragement and support, notably in the early stages of my venture. Without his interest I feel sure that my work would have been abandoned almost before it was begun, and it certainly could not have been sustained. Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to my late friend and colleague, Mr. Harold Watson, who gave up
much of his time to make it possible for me to process my data with computer. His efforts, freely and willingly given, enabled me to complete the most important part of this study.

I need hardly add that none of those mentioned is responsible for any of the conclusions.
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CHAPTER 1: NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study of electoral politics in Grimsby over the period 1818-1835 is intended to contribute to an area of historical psephology curiously neglected by works so far published, of which there have in recent years been a number. Such studies have tended to concentrate on the counties or the larger, urban constituencies, or constituencies of middling size. They have also in the main focussed on the post-reform era, though one or two smaller studies of pre-reform elections have appeared.

However, the majority of constituencies were not county seats, nor were they large or even middling in size. If we are to understand more fully the behaviour of early nineteenth century electors, we must study them in their typical setting - the small borough community. Grimsby was such a constituency, and the present study is an attempt to remedy a hiatus, namely the lack of information about how the 'typical' voter in the 'typical' constituency behaved.

The country was undoubtedly governed by a small ruling aristocracy whose influence was rooted in landed wealth, and whose power was associated with 'the county'; yet a large number of MPs were elected by the boroughs. Almost 70% of all constituencies in Great Britain were borough constituencies, and just over 70% of parliamentary seats were borough seats. The English boroughs numbered 185, and accounted in 1831 for 320 seats. As a borough constituency Grimsby was typical of many in that it had a relatively small population; it had a small electorate; and it returned, on the eve of Reform, two MPs.
The population of the borough at this time was 4,050 and in 1832, after the boundary had been extended, it was 6,838. The majority of English boroughs at this time had populations below 15,000, and nearly 40% had populations below 10,000. Boroughs with a population over 15,000 might indeed be described as large, and there were only eight with a population in excess of 100,000. Thus, the typical constituency was a borough with a population below 15,000. In terms of numbers of voters, Grimsby was again typical, falling clearly into the largest category of boroughs, that is, those with an electorate of less than 1,000 voters. No less than 59% of borough constituencies were in this category, and such boroughs accounted for 54% of parliamentary seats. As far as English boroughs were concerned, the position is even clearer, with almost 68% of boroughs having electorates below 600. Grimsby's electorate numbered rather less than 400 in all elections before 1832, and more than 600 after Reform. Until 1832 Grimsby was a two-member constituency, and in this respect too was typical of most constituencies of the time, as Table 1.1 shows. It will be seen that although one effect of the 1832 Reform Act was to reduce the number of two-member constituencies, they nevertheless constituted the bulk of constituencies until 1884.

Thus, in three important respects – size of population, size of electorate, number of representatives – Grimsby may justly be described as 'typical', and so is worthy of study since such constituencies have received little direct attention from historical psephologists.

It is important to understand, however, that even though the typical constituency was a small borough, there were wide differences between them, particularly in social structure and in the type of
Chapter 1: Nature and Scope of the Study

influences present in them. In some constituencies, as in Grimsby, the electorate was comparatively large and almost mirrored the social composition of the borough as a whole. In Preston, almost all adult males could vote. In others, however, large groups of inhabitants

Table 1.1: DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS, SELECTED YEARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. of Constituencies</th>
<th>No. of Constituencies Returning</th>
<th>Total No. of Members</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 MP  2 MPs    3 MPs  4 MPs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>106  207  -     3</td>
<td>658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>153  240  7     1</td>
<td>658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>196  211  12    1</td>
<td>658</td>
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Source: Mitchell (1976), p.292

particularly those lower down the social scale, were hardly represented, if at all. Such was the case in Boston where labourers, for instance, were conspicuous by their absence. The franchise varied greatly between boroughs; originally dependent on residence, it had become confused by time and custom. In some (including potwalloper boroughs) all householders or those paying scot and lot might vote; in some, holders of a burgage (a particular type of tenure based on service) could vote; whereas in others the right of voting was vested in the municipal corporation, as at Bath. The most important qualification was the freeman qualification which, however, itself varied greatly. On the eve of the Reform Act there were 127 boroughs in which this franchise existed, 80 of them in England. Brock has distinguished the English boroughs according to the nature of the voting rights to be
Chapter 1: Nature and Scope of the Study

found in them, and the freeman boroughs were by far the most numerous, accounting for 40%; of the five remaining groups the largest, i.e. the scot and lot boroughs, accounted for less than 19% of boroughs. Freedom might be conferred by purchase, gift, servitude, or birth, but practices varied widely with the result that there was no uniformity even in freeman boroughs, so that they varied in size of electorate, representativeness, and effectiveness. The borough constituencies varied too in the degree of influence or dominance which could be wielded by local patrons. Some boroughs, though possessing large populations, yet had very few voters and could be controlled or even sold to the highest bidder; others, such as Grimsby, though small in terms of population had electorates which were very representative. Burgage and corporation boroughs were close boroughs; the former were nomination boroughs, and the latter were generally so since 'corporators often welcomed a rich patron' and 'The magnate who had become a borough patron...had a good chance of maintaining his ascendancy.' In contrast, scot and lot boroughs and potwalloper boroughs were often open, that is their electorates generally exercised some freedom of choice. The freeman boroughs were more varied, and the very diversity of electoral types should thus temper generalisation with caution. It may be taken, however, that Grimsby was representative of the largest class of borough constituencies, not only in terms of size and number of electors, but also in the degree of openness which it exhibited.

The social context was crucial to the way voters behaved, and knowledge of that context is necessary for us to properly understand electoral behaviour. In this respect it is the large urban
constituencies and the county seats which have received most attention and which in themselves form distinct types. In the large urban constituencies voters were faced with a particular set of influences well documented by Fraser and Nossiter.\textsuperscript{13} In such places, whilst the voters might occasionally be bought by bribes, they were much more likely to have made their own political judgments free of the more blatant social constraints which faced their contemporaries in smaller more closed communities. In post-reform urban constituencies which had appeared or mushroomed as a result of rapid industrialisation, such as Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Liverpool, or Newcastle, a large proletariat existed often in hardship and squalor. In such places were the great movements for reform rooted. It was also in such places, however, that genuine political preference shone through. Thus, Fraser has shown that in the larger cities voters could 'place their own political views above the economic and social influences bearing upon them.'\textsuperscript{14} The very size of the electorate put bribery largely out of the question, not solely because of the cost, though for most if not all candidates this would have been prohibitive, but also because of the organisational problems its distribution would entail. Yet in such constituencies sound organisation, made necessary by the extension of the franchise in 1832 and by the need to register voters officially, was an essential ingredient of electoral success. So, too, in the conditions which made crude influence and money ineffective, was the personality of the candidate. His opinions mattered, they 'were his credentials', and he could expect to account for them to interested electors. Thus it was that 'elections were a resolution of issues.'\textsuperscript{15} This is not to deny that other influences were at work, even in the
metropolitan centres, and unscrupulous employers, landlords, and others in positions of economic or social standing might exert pressure on individuals or groups of voters to vote in particular ways. This was particularly so in the case of the large factory employers. In the event, however, there were remarkably few contested results (only one in all the elections of Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Liverpool between 1832 and 1867). There were many poor citizens who might have succumbed to bribery but who were not enfranchised, and the great new class of voters created in 1832, the £10 occupiers, might be expected to exercise more independence and resistance to bribery, particularly in view of the penalties which might otherwise accrue. In these large urban constituencies it seems clear that undue pressure and bribery was less important than rational choice or, as Mossiter puts it, 'agitation' or conscience.

In rural England matters were otherwise, and most people, if not most voters, at this time lived in the countryside. Here were to be found communities with a high level of social deference, dominated by landed influence and governed by traditional mores. As Hanham points out:

"...in the counties the largest single body of electors consisted of tenant farmers. Few had any security of tenure, and as a result their every action was carefully watched. It is scarcely surprising that they were anxious to vote in elections in such a way as to please their landlords." Whole blocs of voters, whole villages voted one way in deference to their social and economic leaders. According to Moore, such behaviour is explained by unquestioned social leadership: as the tenant deferred to his landlord in everything else, so he did in politics. Gash, too, writes of the subservience of the country voter, and Hanham speaks..."
Chapter 1: Nature and Scope of the Study

of it in terms of coercion, psychological if not physical, though indeed there are examples of the latter.\textsuperscript{20} Landlords generally expected their tenants to follow their instructions, or assumed that tenants would follow their wishes; and for their part, tenants occasionally refused to promise their votes without first ascertaining the wishes of their landlord. Sometimes tenants were selected for their docility. There is, indeed, much evidence to support the thesis of Moore and others who write in similar vein. Olney has found plenty of evidence for deference communities in Lincolnshire, but warns too that it does not explain the whole picture.\textsuperscript{21} There were many subservient voters, and they were no doubt the majority, but there were also, especially among the larger tenants, men of substance, afraid of no-one and perfectly capable of voting as they wished. Furthermore, even apparently deferential behaviour may have a number of explanations. It might, for example, reflect a wider political interest, or a local, rather than a tenurial context, even a kind of patriotism in miniature.\textsuperscript{22} Perhaps too, 'tenants voted with their neighbours as much as for their landlord.' Conformity, it seems, is not in itself evidence of deference, though it might reflect a proper sense of caution, local interest, or even apathy. Many rural electors may have thought little about political issues or may have been conditioned to conform. Many too were uneducated and to that extent powerless. Whilst in the counties there might be many wielders of influence, in each small scale community or village there would be one. The contrast with other, non-rural constituencies lies in this: that the voter in the village or on the estate was frequently locked into his position with little or no freedom to express his own choice, if indeed
he was capable of making a free choice in the face of powerful social and economic constraints.

Thus, recent studies have delineated two types of constituency: the large, urban centres in which rational choice was clearly important, and the more widespread village communities in which the exercise of the county franchise was subject to the severe constraints imposed by a vertically structured conservative local society.

As we have seen, neither the large urban constituencies nor the large rural constituencies were typical in the sense of being the most common or of containing the most voters. Hanham reminds us that, 'The whole balance of the electoral system was so tilted that it gave disproportionate emphasis to the smaller towns.' Such towns are exemplified by Grimsby and characterised by both freedom and constraint. The constraints were those arising from the nature of the local society: small scale, vertically structured, in which face-to-face relationships were important. It resembled, in these respects, the rural communities which provide the focus for Moore's study, yet the deference which was so much a feature of village communities was much less evident in towns. They contained, after all, a greater diversity of occupations and hence of interests. The single, all-powerful influence which kept the rural voter subservient to his master, politically and economically, gave way in the town to competing influences. Landholding and property, as will be seen, counted for much, but the rivalry of competing interests considerably enlivened the political scene and always provided a means for any dissatisfied voter to change allegiances. He could in this sense be bought; he could rarely, as in the countryside, be taken for granted. Deference to
social superiors was no doubt a habit, but not such as to command unswerving loyalty on the part of a voter who could, if he wished, change his employer, his landlord, or his patron. Thus Davis, who argues strongly in his Buckinghamshire study against the views of Moore, shows how the influence of the Duke of Buckingham, the greatest of the local landowners in Aylesbury, was not as great as one might have supposed. Though nearly one third of voters in the borough were tenants of the Duke, this was not sufficient to ensure success, for there were a number of other landlords of opposite persuasion and:

"The most important function of these small Liberal landlords seems to have been to provide for those whom the Duke ejected for voting contrary to his wishes."26

Parallels are to be found in Grimsby, and no doubt in many other small boroughs. In addition there were always those voters who, by virtue of their own property holdings, were beholden to none and who could exercise their franchise entirely as they wished. They were always in a minority, but they were not insignificant, even before 1832. It would be wrong to suppose, however, that the emphasis was on rational, unconstrained political choice. Bribery and corruption as well as more general influence were in evidence, much more so than in the large urban constituencies. It is not likely, as will be shown, that bribery caused many electors to vote contrary to their opinions, for its function was rather to get voters out, but it is certain that the majority of voters responded to influence of one kind or another.26 It was, in most cases, the influence of property, in some rare instances that of the employer-employee relationship, and in others the purse or the lure of patronage; but it was continuously present and pervasive. It is thus the smallness of the market town and the intimate relations
of its inhabitants, based on tradition and commonly held values, which
gave rise to those features which contrast it with the great urban
centres, whilst its diversity of interests and occupations contrast it
with the rural areas. A further contrast with the rural constituencies
lies in the fact that the town voters lived in a community in which a
variety of opinion was often expressed, even encouraged. In Grimsby
the voter was a freeman, and had probably as a result had the benefit
of at least an elementary education at the local free grammar school.
He was surrounded by people whose occupational interests might differ
from his own. He was regularly canvassed, at least once a year, for
his vote in one election or another, at the local or parliamentary
level. He was, in short, politicised in a way in which his rural
cousin was not.

Hanham has shown that in the boroughs there was a wide variety
of patterns of influence. The larger boroughs, and especially the
metropolitan ones, were relatively open; they could be neither bribed
nor bullied. The small boroughs, in contrast, often 'lacked the
resources in men and money to sustain an independent political
existence. Such boroughs were likely to fall into the hands of a
rich patron who controlled them absolutely, or to be put up for sale to
the highest bidder. It was this element of corruption which the Reform
Act sought to remedy, and the majority of boroughs disfranchised under
Schedule A fell into this category - they were the 'incurable' boroughs
(though they did not exhaust the class of rotten boroughs some of
which were considered to be curable, usually by boundary extension).
Before the Reform Act there were many small boroughs which were thus
closed; there were many others which, though not entirely closed, were
partly so, and even after Reform a number of proprietary boroughs survived in which the patron returned the representatives. Gash estimates the number as between 42 and 52, accounting for up to 73 borough seats in England and Wales. The number of such boroughs before 1832 was certainly greater than this. The crucial factor was not always size (even Liverpool with over 8,000 voters in 1832 had a reputation for venality) for wealth, too, counted. As Hanham points out, 'even a small place, if wealthy enough, might be very independent. A low taxable value plus a small population was an almost certain indicator of poverty and corruption.' Furthermore, some boroughs, by virtue of poverty and a large working class population in cheap housing, had only a small proportion of its population enfranchised. Yet many small boroughs contrasted greatly with this, having a relatively large proportion of voters to population.

Among the smaller constituencies Grimsby was not near any extreme, except perhaps in the proportion of electors to adult male population, for in the years before reform at least 40% of adult males voted (see Table 2.4). It was, however, neither very poor nor very rich, and although it was generally regarded as being under the influence of its leading patron, Lord Yarborough, his control was never such as to enable him completely to return without contest the borough's representatives. Indeed, hard contests were the rule, and the outcome was rarely certain in advance. Again, in this respect, Grimsby was representative of many borough constituencies, for as Hanham asserts, 'No borough of any size was so securely under the sway of a landowner that he could be sure of it through thick and thin.'

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Chapter 1: Nature and Scope of the Study

Thus, the majority of English parliamentary seats were from small borough constituencies, and they were rarely truly independent.

In the pre-reform era, and for some time after, there can be little doubt of the importance of hierarchical structures in producing pressures on the individual voter, and particularly so in the smaller communities. It was only later that group pressures took over and solidary structures replaced hierarchical ones. This study examines such influences in detail, but recognises too that money exercised sway as votes were bought and sold. Voters may have had political opinions and even occasionally have expressed these independently in their vote; often, however, such independence as voters might like to believe they had was hedged around with constraints which reduced and sometimes destroyed it.

A further aspect of this study, and an important one, is that it is longitudinal, tracing the continuous voting behaviour of electors over a series of consecutive elections, both parliamentary and local. Thus, despite the apparent narrowness of its compass - the single constituency - it covers a depth of detail which might not be possible over more than one constituency and which, in any case, has rarely been attempted. The study focusses on all voters, not just a sample, and seeks to elucidate not only the full details of electoral participation but also the reasons for it. In this respect it is perhaps ambitious.

Parliamentary politics did not, as Fraser has convincingly shown, provide the entire political arena, for this was also much occupied by the almost continuous concerns and preoccupations of local government. Even national issues, insofar as they were debated at all, were considered in terms of their local relevance and impact. The
early nineteenth century was the age of private legislation, when MPs were elected to serve directly the interests of their local community and present bills of a local nature. Corporation politics provided the real issues for electors to grapple with, and an arena in which those with modest political ambitions could contest. The issues were those of highways, enclosures, schools, lighting and paving, docks and harbours, and later railways. And corporations gave rise to frequent elections; annually for mayor, and fairly frequently in Grimsby for alderman or common councilman. The latter two offices were held for life and only the death of an incumbent meant another election. The electorate was formally the same as that for parliamentary elections (in practice it contained fewer outvoters - i.e. those not normally resident within the borough and brought in expressly for the purpose of voting in an election), and subject to the same pressures, and often open to similar, if lesser, rewards. The frequency of local contests served to keep politics alive; indeed, local concerns rather than ideologies were the very stuff of politics at this time.

It would be unwise to disembodied the psephological findings either from the social context in which voting took place or from the key issues of the day, and over the period there was no more telling issue than that of parliamentary reform. Indeed, it is the attempt to understand the significance of the Reform Act which has prompted a number of the studies which have so far emerged. The present study of Grimsby spans the era of the Reform Act and this has made it possible to examine the immediate impact of Reform on the behaviour of voters. Furthermore, because Grimsby was a small borough constituency just saved from extinction by an extension of its boundaries, it
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contained, after 1832, new elements with whom the old electorate may be compared. It thus provides an ideal choice of constituency.

There is a continuing and so far unresolved debate over the issue of the 1832 Reform Act. The traditional whig view saw reform as a concession to ever increasing revolutionary tendencies and insistent demands for a wider franchise. According to this view, associated, for example, with such writers as Lipset and Rokkan, the first Reform Act began the process of transferring power from the traditional landed interest to the emerging urban middle class. It disappointed radicals by its narrowness, but placated them because it appeared as a first step on the road to reform, and raised the hope of further concession grounded on precedent. It was thus, in this view, a milestone on the road to democracy. Gash and Hanham both advance this view of reform as concession but emphasize its limited nature. A more novel, yet interesting, interpretation has been provided by Professor Moore, who sees the first Reform Act as a cure for revolutionary tendencies. According to this thesis the landed aristocracy sought not to appease the masses but to consolidate their own considerable power which they felt to be under threat from the breakdown of social cohesion and the emergence of new interests. The Act sought to restore social discipline by reinforcing the 'natural state of society by restoring the cohesion of those local hierarchical communities through which traditional discipline has been exerted.' Whether the Reform Act was a concession or a cure, however, there was no revolution.

There can be no doubt that England was ripe for reform. This is not so much because of the fear of revolution and disorder such as had recently occurred in Germany and France, though some sections of the
Chapter 1: Nature and Scope of the Study

ruling class in England may have feared similar disturbances here; rather the time was ripe because of the march of social and above all economic change. The England of 1820 was not the England of one hundred or even fifty years before; it had witnessed, in a relatively short span of time very considerable economic changes stemming from commercial and industrial development. Such changes had caused the distribution and balance of wealth to alter considerably without any alteration in the distribution of political power. New economic interests had emerged, and they demanded representation. The clash over reform was not fundamentally a party one (though in its details it may have been) for as Gash points out "there was a substantial amount of agreement (between whigs and tories) on political fundamentals." It was, rather, a struggle of classes and economic interests. Neither tories nor whigs had democratic intentions; however, whilst the former were anxious to resist any diminution of landed interest, the latter (according to Gash) saw the necessity of bowing to the inevitable in recognising new class and economic interests and in attaching them to the established political system. By 1830 the existing system "was not regarded as satisfactory by the bulk of informed and influential opinion in the country."42

An important whig motivation in pursuing reform was the pragmatic one of bowing to necessity; the tory opposition was ideological if not dogmatic. On assuming power and the means of effecting reform, the whigs were then confronted with the crucial question of "how much reform?" In this, too, they were ultimately cautious, doing only what they thought was necessary to remove a great practical evil. The real intentions of the whigs, it is true, may be obscured by the wide
variety of opinion and demands to be found within their own ranks. Yet a number of evils of the unreformed system were conceded by most, if not all. These evils included 'nomination by patrons (a scandal in a number of boroughs), gross corruption of the lower classes of voters, inadequate representation of the larger manufacturing and commercial towns, the expense of elections and inequitable distribution of voting power between the middle and lower classes.'

One of the most persistent themes of the long debate in parliament over reform was that of the middle classes and the need to involve them more in the representative system. Grey himself referred to the middle classes as forming 'the real and efficient mass of public opinion...without whom the power of the gentry is nothing.' Their exclusion from power would strengthen popular discontent at the expense of the government; their attachment to the constitution was a matter of expediency and commonsense. There was neither revolutionary nor democratic intent here. Gash has argued with some force that purification rather than enlargement of the representative system was behind the changes brought by the Act. The abolition of small and corrupt boroughs would, it was hoped, reduce nomination and corruption; the introduction of a uniform £10 householder franchise in the boroughs, together with the creation of new boroughs would go a long way towards remedying the other evils, and in particular would admit the middle classes to the aristocratic constitution. This was, indeed, no more than a reassertion of the primacy of property and wealth. Furthermore, 'the motive which operated as powerfully as any was the desire to secure representation for "interest".'
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Herein is to be found the significance of Schedule B, depriving previously two-member boroughs of one of their seats, but retaining representation rather than abolishing them altogether 'to ensure the representation of certain elements in the population that would otherwise be unrepresented.' There was no uniformity of social or economic make-up among the Schedule B constituencies. Some, like Merthyr Tydfil, Frome, or Walsall had a distinct industrial or manufacturing profile; Whitby had a shipping interest. Grimsby combined agricultural with commercial interests, though the latter were under some threat as the port struggled to maintain its existence in the face of successful competition from rival ports such as Hull, Boston, or Gainsborough. There were, however, some marked continuities. The social structure of the electorate may have been altered by the inclusion of 10 householders, but the real significance of this lay much more in the long term. In the short term the electorate was less rather than more representative of the population as a whole, yet it remained open to the same influences that had prevailed in the preceding decades. If anything, landed interest was strengthened, and overall there was little reason locally to hail the Reform Act as a milestone on the road to democracy, for it seemed in its effects to be quite the reverse. It is not, of course, possible to confirm from the study of a single small borough constituency (however representative of boroughs it might be) the intentions of the reformers, nor is this the objective. It is possible, however, to comment on the impact of reform locally in the light of the continuing debate over such intentions.
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The key fact of electoral activity was open voting; the casting of a vote was a public act, recorded and frequently printed and published afterwards for all to see. This was so not only at parliamentary elections but also in those for mayor, less frequently for aldermen and common councilmen. The printing for sale of pollbooks must imply a ready market and therefore a clear interest in the behaviour of members of the community. It gave the casting of a vote a very special significance which it could never have under a system of secret voting. The individual voter stood up to be counted; he was declaring to the community something of his sense of identity, his allegiances, or perhaps even his preferences, though precisely which is not always clear and is the subject of debate between historical psephologists such as Moore, Nossiter, Vincent, Davis and others. That men were content to declare themselves in this way is evident from contemporary sources. At the Grimsby Reform Festival held in 1832 to mark the passing of the Reform Act, the question of the ballot occupied the attention of a number of speakers, some of whom were against it even though they had supported reform. Thus, Charles Anderson Pelham, the future Earl of Yarborough, a leading county whig and supporter of reform, abhorred the idea of vote by ballot:

'It would produce want of confidence between man and man - it would be a prolific source of suspicion - it would generate feelings inimical to the wellbeing and comfort of society.'

Another speaker, John Nicholson, was well received when he urged:

'...For God's sake let us keep from the vote by ballot...it is not in my opinion calculated to accord with English feelings and English habits, for who is the man who if a candidate for any office does not wish to meet the honest faces of his constituents, shake them cordially by the hand, and thank them for the honour of their support?"
Both speakers were large landowners for whom open voting provided a ready means of political control over their tenants, a control they were not averse to exercising. A more telling point, perhaps, was that made by John Drakard, editor of the Stamford News, when he argued that a secret ballot would 'lessen the enthusiasm that has ever been the twin sister of Liberty' and would engender suspicion between men. Pelham's erstwhile rival in Grimsby politics, Charles Tennyson, argued for the ballot, as did another prominent county whig, Sir William Amcotts Ingilby, for they were both anxious, they said, to rid electors of the tyranny which open voting encouraged by allowing a domineering aristocracy to dictate how votes should be cast. Tennyson had long fought elections on the issue of independence of voters (it was in his interest to do so, since he could never, with his more limited property holdings, command the automatic support which Pelham could). Ingilby by this time, was fast becoming tainted with the charge of radicalism. It was to be another forty years before the demands for a secret ballot were to be realised.

There appear to have been no major studies of electoral behaviour in 'typical' borough constituencies and, as has been shown, in key respects, Grimsby was typical. The choice of Grimsby is also relevant to the current position in historical psephology in that it fills a gap between those studies of larger urban constituencies and those of rural constituencies. The typical voter was to be found in neither of these, but in the small borough. By analysing voting behaviour in such a constituency over a series of consecutive elections it is hoped to shed light on the nature of influences acting upon voters. This study of Grimsby also spans the period of the first great scheme of
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parliamentary reform, and by permitting longitudinal analysis makes it possible not only to study voting over a series of elections but also to comment on the impact of the Reform Act locally in the light of the continuing debate over the intentions of its enactors. Finally, the size of the constituency and the nature of the data are such that it has been possible to avoid sampling techniques and to study the whole of the electorate.

NOTES


2. Nossiter deals with the north-east; Moore deals particularly with rural constituencies; whilst the more recent work of Phillips covers three constituencies of middling size.

3. Studies of pre-reform elections are rather less numerous but include Rude G. (1960), The Middlesex Electors of 1768-1769 in English Historical Review LXXV pp.601-617; and Speight M.E. (1969) Politics in the Borough of Colchester 1812-1847, London PhD; but the most important is the recent study by Phillips (1982).

4. See Gash I. (1953) Politics in the Age of Peel, London, Longmans, p.65. Since many constituencies returned more than one MP, the number of seats considerably exceeded the number of constituencies.


7. Ibid.

8. Brock N. (1973), The Great Reform Act, Hutchinson, Table 2, p.20. A very useful classification of English boroughs is given according to
the nature of voting rights and the number of voters. Only 7 boroughs boasted electorates over 5,000, and out of 202 English boroughs in 1830 only 43 had electorates exceeding 1,000 voters.

9. The representativeness of the electorate in Grimsby is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 4.

10. Brock M. (1973) p.20 indicates six types of borough, viz: Scat and Lot, in which any man who paid poor rates could vote; Potwalloper, in which every man resident for the last six months could vote (subject to minor qualifications); Burgage, in which the franchise derived solely from ancient property; Corporation, in which the corporators constituted the entire electorate; Freeman, in which voters were those who had their 'freedom' according to local rights and customs; and finally Freeholder, in which freeholders could vote (this group was the smallest by far).


15. Ibid p.197.


22. Ibid p.44.

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24. See Chapter 5 for evidence of this in Grimsby. Part of the work of agents and activists was to provide for voters evicted by opponents, or to offer tenancies to cement allegiances before the opposition could do likewise.


26. See Chapter 5.

In Grimsby influence was extensive and mediated particularly by property; indeed, competing influences virtually delineated the 'old' and 'new' towns.

27. Hanham H.J. (1972) pp.xxxii-xl. Such influences noted by Hanham range from constituencies absolutely under the control of a single patron to those where several influences were active. Absolute control by a single influence was, of course, consistent with few or no electoral contests.


33. Ibid p.xiv.

34. The figures shown for Grimsby in Table 2.4 are estimates but fairly accurate. In most borough constituencies the franchise was much narrower: as late as 1854 Hanham reports the ratio of electors to population in the boroughs as 1:18 (equivalent to roughly 1:5 of the adult male population). Hanham H.J. (1972) p.xix.


38. This applies, for example, to the studies by Davis (1972) and Moore (1976).


43. Ibid p.13. Such defects, of course, were not eliminated by the Reform Act, nor were they all addressed by legislative measures for a long time to come.

44. Ibid p.15.

45. Ibid p.23.


47. Grimsby Reform Festival, 1832, Report of Speeches, Drakard, Stamford, p.11.


49. Ibid p.4.
CHAPTER 2: THE LOCAL BACKGROUND

ECONOMIC

At the end of the eighteenth century Grimsby was almost on the point of expiring, its population having fallen over the years to a mere 855 in 1796. The decline was neither recent nor sudden, for in the words of one seventeenth century observer, Gervase Holles, 'The Haven hath been heretofore commodious, now decayed; the traffic good, now gone; the place rich and populous, the houses now mean and straggling by reason of depopulation, and the town very poor'. Further, the great hopes and aspirations which fired the promoters of Grimsby's first dock in 1800 were largely, and in some instances gravely, disappointed.

The causes of Grimsby's backwardness and isolation are not hard to find. They reflect to a large extent her position in a region which lacked the industrial and commercial development characteristic of much of England at this time. It is not that Grimsby was without advantages. Her position, at the mouth of the Humber and sheltered from North Sea storms by the land of the opposite shore, was itself favourable from a maritime point of view. Thus, from early times it was able to attract seamen, colonists, and conquerors, and contacts with Continental ports were relatively easy and frequent. But such advantages as it possessed were costly to maintain, and impossible without motivation or economic stimulus, and when, at the end of the
seventeenth century the Haven became inaccessible through silting, little was done to restore it for both agriculture and trade had received a blow by the destruction of religious houses. 3

As the early dock pioneers were to discover at great cost, it takes more than geographical position, however favourable that might be, to make a port. Fundamentally Grimsby commanded no hinterland capable of supporting an economically viable import and export trade. This lack arose from two interrelated factors. On the one hand, the Humberside region, particularly in the south, was on the edge of the main centres of economic activity, almost cut off, and did not share in the great industrial developments of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At the same time, the import of raw materials for the growing industries of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the Midlands, and the export of finished goods was effected through Hull with its vastly superior network of inland communications, or through the inland port of Gainsborough. This latter port, on the Trent, was the only market town in the region to show significant economic growth in the early nineteenth century. 4

Grimsby did not participate in the growing trade, and even the main improvements in inland communication in the region at the end of the eighteenth century left Grimsby largely untouched. A number of canals were proposed and constructed but were of much greater significance to Louth, Boston, and Grantham than they were to Grimsby. A turnpike road from the Haven to Vold Newton was constructed in the 1760s, but business was so slack that dividends were consistently poor until the end of the century. For as long as inland communications
remained inadequate, it paid to use the Humber as far as was navigable, and hence the preference for Gainsborough rather than Grimsby.

On the other hand, the poor inland communications were after all only a reflection of the agricultural economy of which Grimsby was essentially a part. Lincolnshire was perhaps the second most fertile and productive county in England after Yorkshire, with a rural settlement network of evenly distributed compact villages of Anglo-Saxon and Danish origin. Its towns were small, serving as markets the needs of these small and scattered rural communities. In the towns of Louth (at this time more populous and important than Grimsby), Horncastle, Market Rasen, Spilsby, and others, "tradesmen, corn merchants, lawyers, banks, fairs, and markets catered to the needs of the landowners, labourers, and especially farmers. Their fortunes were tied to the fortunes of agriculture." The agricultural interest was dominant in Grimsby as in all Lincolnshire towns even at the time of the Reform Act of 1832, and this may have been a central political fact as well, though it was not clearly reflected in the social make-up of the electorate.

Thus it was that at the opening of the nineteenth century Grimsby exhibited an air of economic decay. The completion of the dock in 1801 might have saved the town from complete oblivion, but it was never the resounding success its promoters had optimistically hoped for. Nor is this at all surprising. Among the subscribers only five were merchants, the rest landowners and rich farmers, gentry and notables. They included John Julius Angerstein (11,669 acres), Ayscouth Boucherett (5,834 acres), George Tennyson (3,504 acres), the first Baron Yarborough (56,796 acres), Sir Henry Nelthorpe (1,298
acres), Philip Skipworth (5,542 acres), George Heneage (10,761 acres), and other landowners both large and small. The larger among them were often key figures in county or borough politics. One of them, Lord Yarborough, held the political interest in the borough. All were motivated by the desire to extend their own interests by creating outlets for their produce. They hoped, too, to profit from a diversion of trade from Hull, particularly that bound for the West and Midlands, but they were disappointed precisely because of the lack of effective overland communication.

The new dock was indeed an impressive affair and was to remain the single most significant capital project (constructed at a cost of £70,000) in the borough until the coming of the railways in the late 1840s. Indeed, it was more than this: it was built by the leading dock engineer in the country, John Rennie, and was the largest in Britain, thus placing Grimsby in the very vanguard of a national dock building boom. In his report to the MPs, Mayor, and Corporation of Grimsby, engineer Ralph Dodd stated, in 1810:

"The old haven has been converted into a most spacious dock, nearly half a mile in length, with proportional breadth, capable of containing from 500 to 600 sail of vessels perpetually afloat, with extensive Bond warehouses and Bonding ponds, for many thousand loads of timber. This work alone, even in its present incomplete state, has given rise to the building of a new and extensive town on the south-east thereof."

Yet even in this there was an element of understandable exaggeration, and the dock ultimately failed to create a port of any significance. The 'new town' was far less extensive than one might suppose from Dodd's description, and the whole borough in 1811 housed a population of only 2747. The chief commercial buildings were concentrated in the vicinity of the Haven, and consisted of warehouses,
steam-driven mills for crushing bones and linseed, breweries, tanneries and the like.

The principal trade of the port was not fishing, nor was it to become so until the 1860s. In the early decades of the nineteenth century Grimsby was a warehousing port for all goods other than those from East India. The main items of trade were those connected with northern Europe, particularly Scandinavia and the Baltic - timber, deals, tar, bones and corn, whilst the home trade was mostly of corn and coal. The new dock brought an initial impetus to trade, but this was not sustained as the following figures show:

Table 2.1: FOREIGN-GOING SHIPPING ENTERING AND LEAVING GRIMSBY, SELECTED YEARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Inwards (tons)</th>
<th>Outwards (tons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>17,792</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>5,423</td>
<td>1,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>10,212</td>
<td>1,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>10,815</td>
<td>1,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>6,479</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jackson, G. "Grimsby and the Haven Company" (1971).

Coastal shipping remained fairly steady throughout the period. Until the coming of the railway and the extension of the docks around 1850, the continued existence of the port was in doubt. The 1830s were a critical period, for the fortunes of the town were such that the
population actually declined when in all other Lincolnshire towns it was increasing.

Thus, Grimsby was not a regional centre. The weight of its political representation and status was a throwback to former days of glory when the town could boast not only a royal charter but a much larger population and greater economic significance.

SOCIAL

At the beginning of our period there were in Grimsby no large employers of labour, and therefore no large homogeneous groups of employees. In social structure, then, it was pre-industrial, and in this respect typical of the majority of borough constituencies. The chief category of occupation recorded in the census returns of 1811 and 1821 was "Trade, Manufactures, and Handicrafts" which accounted for well over twice as many families as agriculture. The 1831 census report, more detailed, shows the borough population overwhelmingly in small trade, mostly, it would appear from other sources small, independent producers, self-employed; a typical urban peasantry making use of family labour and family capital. The customer-trader relationship was thus important.

The borough itself contained few people directly employed in agriculture, but it would be quite wrong to conclude from this that agriculture was relatively unimportant. Even though few people were employed directly on the land many of them served the needs of farmers and landowners. Rural influences were intrusive in most market towns at this period. Yet the community, although small, was an urban community, albeit pre-industrial, and although modest in size beyond
Chapter 2: The Local Background

the claims and aspirations of its citizens, exhibited nevertheless distinctively urban features. These features are those associated not with the new industrial towns which were beginning to make their impact on national life, but with pre-industrial market centres.

Firstly, the population itself was of a size which placed the community beyond that of even the largest villages. The construction of the Haven appears to have had an immediate impact for the population, said in 1780 to be 982 and in 1796 to be 855, was rescued from decline and reached 1524 in 1801, 2747 in 1811, and 3064 in 1821. Thus, by size but also by rate of growth the population was hardly that of a village. Secondly, there was a market, held weekly, which served the needs of the surrounding very productive countryside and in which were exchanged not only agricultural produce but also many articles of domestic consumption. There was in addition an annual fair (though there had previously been two 'and no stock ever seen'). In 1824, on the initiative of local farmers, a new warehouse near the Custom House was opened for the reception of wool intended for sale. Thirdly, the provision of economic services extended in variety well beyond those associated with villages. Its specialist function was, of course, that of a port, but occupations reflected a variety of crafts and semi-specialist concerns. In 1791 there were evident at least thirty different occupations including apothecaries, attorney, hairdressers, inn-keepers, barrel organ maker, tea and coffee dealer, peruke maker, as well as the usual crafts associated with small towns. There is no mention of mariners even though Grimsby is described as 'a port town under that of Hull, and has a deputy collector, comptroller, and coast surveyor.' Perhaps this confirms the
usual bias of town directories at this time in favour of 'respectables'. By 1828 there had been a very significant increase, with some seventy or so different occupations recorded (and confirmed in the pollbooks), including such distinctively urban ones as bookseller and stationer, mast and blockmaker, tanner, ship master, attorney, auctioneer, bacon factor, and so on. Again, there is no mention of mariners. Fourthly, social organisation also reflected urban values. The poor were much in evidence, and the local workhouse or house of industry, situated within the parish boundary at Brighowgate until the New Poor Law, contained provision for one hundred inmates (some of whom, however, would have come from surrounding villages). As will be seen, pauperism deprived many freemen of the vote. In contrast, displays of wealth were also to be seen. In 1831 the census listed 95 'Capitalists, Bankers, and Professional and Other Educated Men', and a total of 209 servants. Laceby, the largest neighbouring village at this time and soon to be included within the parliamentary borough, contained a population of 616 with only three capitalists and forty-four servants. Waltham (population 544) and Clee (population 497) contained no male servants, although the former could boast no fewer than twelve men of substance and learning.

In town politics domination by rural interests cannot be denied, but in significant ways it was a 'foreign' domination, made all the more obvious by being centred miles away at Brocklesby (the Pelhams), Bayons Manor (the Tennysons), or Hainton (the Heneages).

Although there was no large-scale industry, a distinctive occupational and interest group was emerging based on the developing port, and comprising the shipowners, agents, pilots, and mariners; few
in number before the middle of the century, yet giving the town a
flavour peculiar to itself and above all its very reason for existence
as a sizeable community. Yet the dock which nurtured this distinctive
group was nevertheless developed to serve agricultural interests and
political ambition.  

The pollbooks and directories all reinforce this general
impression. The only significant group of employees other than
mariners were labourers, and it is unlikely that many of them had
permanent employers: they existed as a pool of general labour available
as and when required by the numerous small enterprises that made up
the town's economy. Although relatively well-paid, they were prone to
unemployment; as one Lincolnshire observer noted in 1836, 'there are
generally from 20 to 30 unemployed labourers, and sometimes a much
larger number.'

Voting along class lines, therefore, if it existed at all, did not
reflect Marxian conflict for we are not dealing with anything
resembling an industrial proletariat. Indeed, it has been necessary to
largely abandon notions of class in analysing voting behaviour during
the pre-Victorian years.

It would appear that a large proportion of the population was
relatively poor, though it is doubtful whether the term 'working class'
could be applied to them as it was in 1866. Then a Parliamentary
Paper recorded the proportion of working class electors to the total
number of electors as 31.7%. Working class in this context refers to
those 'who come within the description of mechanics, artizans, and
other persons supporting themselves by daily manual labour.' In 1850
another official report states:
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'From a return furnished by Mr. Babb, town clerk, it is shown that 90.9% of the whole number of houses rated to the poor are under £10 per annum. It may be fairly presumed that the greater part of these houses are tenanted by the labouring classes, who thus bear a most undue proportion of the amount expended in the relief and maintenance of the poor.'

The houses were classified as follows:

Table 2.2: CLASSIFICATION OF HOUSES, 1850

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>No. of Houses</th>
<th>Proportion %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under £3</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£3 and under £5</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5 and under £10</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10 and under £15</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15 and under £20</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£20 and upwards</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An attempt has been made, following Nossiter, to analyse the electorate in terms of occupation. This is not to ignore problems which arise in translating to a relatively small market town the kind of occupational and economic differences which were characteristic of the larger cities (which were Nossiter's focus). However, it would almost certainly be a mistake to treat the population as a homogeneous unit. It may well be the case that differences of condition between members of the same occupation were less than one could find in the larger cities, but a case for adopting a schema similar to Nossiter's can be made, and is argued at length in Chapter 5 (pp.139-146). Whatever the theoretical and methodological problems are, they are almost certainly of less import than a failure to impose any kind of analytical schema would be.
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The majority of inhabitants were involved, as was usual in small towns, in craft and retail trades, as Table 2.3 shows:

Table 2.3: OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE OF THE PRE-REFORM ELECTORATE
(Mean over five elections)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Category</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Gentry &amp; Professional</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Manufacturing &amp; Merchant</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Craft Trades</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Retail Trades</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Drink Interest</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Port &amp; Shipping</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII Farming</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII Labourers</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX Not known</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks 1818, 1820, 1826, 1830, 1831.

The existence of a large group of labourers within the electorate was a marked feature of the constituency.

POLITICAL

The Constituency

Before 1832 the boundary of the Parliamentary borough was roughly coterminous with that of the parish, with the exception of the small district of Wellow, an area adjacent to its eastern boundary and containing only eleven houses the interests of whose inhabitants were entirely those of the town itself and whose peculiar status was, by
1832, an historical anachronism. The inhabitants of this small zone were denied the parliamentary franchise, and the existence of one dwelling spanning the boundary between Wellow and the borough of Grimsby was a source of hot dispute. On the eve of the Reform Act the parish extented over 2110 acres and contained a population of 4225. See Map 2.1.

The Voters

The right to vote was vested in resident freemen paying scot and lot. Freemen were admitted only at a full court of the mayor, aldermen, common councilmen, and burgesses, and there were a number of ways by which freeman status could be acquired. The most important of these was by birth, the right being conferred on the sons of freemen born within the parish and aged over 21, provided that the father was resident when the son was born. Marriage to the daughter of a freeman (if resident, and both daughter and father resident at the time of the former's birth), or to the widow of a freeman also conferred eligibility, as did the completion of seven year's apprenticeship with a resident burgess. Birth, marriage, and apprenticeship were the usual routes to freeman status but it might also be obtained by purchase (until 1835), although only members of parliament acquired freedom in this way in the nineteenth century; or even, as the court books show, by gift, but both these methods were comparatively rare.

Freedom once gained was not inviolate, and could be lost on conviction for felony or receipt of parochial relief (a not infrequent occurrence). Nor did freeman status of itself confer the right to vote in parliamentary elections, for this depended also on residence and the payment of scot and lot. The freeman's Call List was
MAP 2.1: THE PARISH OF GRIMSBY, 1831

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revised three or four times a year, and a year's residence was required to regain a place on this list after once having been struck off for non-residence. Scot and lot was understood by the early nineteenth century to mean payment of the poor rate. It occasionally happened, however, that between admission to freedom and the taking of a poll, no poor rate had been levied, in which case the franchise was not lost. Furthermore, in such a case the right to vote was still retained even though the freeman, newly admitted, returned 'to his family and former dwelling and although he had gone to Grimsby for the sole purpose of being admitted to his freedom and of voting at the election.'

There were large numbers of admissions prior to elections, far in excess of normal, and there can be little doubt that parliamentary influence was 'the principal object for which freemen are created.' Freedom was a source of income as well as status at election times, and it was possible to have admission fines paid by candidates or their friends, so that it paid to wait until election time before applying for admission. This practice was itself fairly widespread in freeman boroughs outside Grimsby.

The proportion of the adult male population possessing the franchise within the parish of Grimsby (the town proper as opposed to the outlying parishes included by the Reform Act) was certainly high, and much greater than was usual in constituencies of the period. Butler and Cornford have estimated that even after reform only twenty percent of adult males possessed the franchise; in Grimsby the meanest estimates suggest that more than forty percent could vote. The figures given in Table 2.4; are a slight underestimate, for in the years before 1832 they are based on the numbers of people actually voting,
excluding non-voters, though it is known that turnout was generally very high (over 90%). There existed at all elections an unknown number of 'foreign' or outvoters, people who were not normally or currently resident within the boundaries of the parish but whose admission to freedom was engineered by one or other of the leading borough patrons expressly for electoral purposes. An estimate of the numbers of such voters has been made, and they are taken to be those voters who at the next Mayor's Court following a parliamentary election are recorded as being struck off the Call List for non-residence. Since a few of these may have been genuinely resident at the time of the election, the final figures represent a further underestimate. In general the very extensive franchise is a reflection of the ease with which freeman status was conferred within the borough. This was not typical of freeman boroughs, and in another Lincolnshire borough, Boston, the

Table 2.4: THE FRANCHISE IN GRIMSBY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Voters</th>
<th>Adult Males</th>
<th>Voters as % of Adult Males</th>
<th>Excluding 'Foreign' Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831'</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>1006</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832''</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) = May election \(^2\) = old pre-reform boundary only.

Source: Pollbooks and census returns.
proportion was about eighteen percent - freeman status was conferred largely by apprenticeship and so was less easy to attain.³⁰

**Representation**

Before 1832 the borough had the right to return two representatives to parliament, and had since 1295. During the first half of the century it often appeared to be a safe whig constituency, but between 1818 and 1832 the tories made a significant impact, obtaining as much parliamentary representation as the whigs. Table 2.5 shows the members of parliament during our period.

**Influence**

Three principal family names dominate the political scene throughout our period: those of Pelham, Tennyson, and Heneage, all landowning families and significant investors in the economic fortunes of the borough.

Charles Anderson-Pelham (1748-1823) first Baron Yarborough, and his eldest son (later Earl of Yarborough) stood above all. Their country residence was at Brocklesby, some eight miles north-west of Grimsby. In 1763 Charles Anderson of Manby had inherited the estates of his uncle, Charles Pelham of Brocklesby. Now Anderson-Pelham, he was elected MP for Beverley and was one of the richest commoners in England. His trustees busily bought land in Grimsby, enabling them eventually to challenge the established position of the leading business family, the Claytons. In 1794 he was created Baron Yarborough. It was his eldest son, Charles Anderson-Pelham who succeeded him and in 1837 was created Baron Worsley, first Earl of Yarborough.³¹
Table 2.5: GRIMSBY: MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT 1818-1835, and unsuccessful candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>John Nicholas Fazakerley</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charles Tennyson</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John P. Grant</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Charles Tennyson</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Duncombe</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel Turner</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John M. Brackenbury</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>George Fieschi Heneage</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charles Wood</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sir Thomas Phillipps</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Charles Wood</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George Harris</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G.F. Heneage</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T.C.B. Challoner</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831#</td>
<td>George Harris (May)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Williers Shelley</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R.H. Gronow</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H.W. Hobhouse</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Hon. Henry Fitzroy (Aug)</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lord Loughborough</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H. Bellender Kerr</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Maxfield</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Captain William Maxfield</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lord Loughborough</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Edward Heneage</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sir Alexander Grant</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Election declared void on petition.

Source: Pollbooks.
'Brocklesby' candidates contested all elections up to 1832. The first Baron Yarborough was a man of very considerable drive, ambition, and ability, all of which he combined with "lineage, culture, and connexion" and an unassuming manner. He was by far the largest landowner in the county — indeed, one of the largest in the kingdom, with a family estate which in 1873 comprised 55,272 acres and was thus greater than that of the Duke of Portland in Nottinghamshire. Most of the estate was concentrated in north Lincolnshire, extending from Barton-on-Humber in the north to Louth in the south, and it comprised some of the finest land in Lincolnshire including much in the upland wolds. It also supported some wealthy tenants, and it is hardly surprising that the Yarborough influence was much felt in county politics, as Olney has shown. It was to further his agricultural (and his political) interests that he took an active part in promoting the new dock venture in 1800, in which his investment amounted to £3,215. His son, the first Earl, in addition, owned all or most of 30 parishes, seventeen livings, and, by 1840, 700 acres in Grimsby. This last is particularly significant, and helps to explain the almost total grip he appeared to have on the borough elite. The parish itself extended over 2110 acres so that his involvement is hardly surprising.

The second Earl of Yarborough (1809-1862) prominent in the politics of Lincolnshire, was for a number of years Chairman of the railway company which, in the 1850s, provided the basis for the town's economic take-off.

Yarborough was a true 'blue', a colour which locally designated the whigs; the 'red' or tory interest was furthered by George Tennyson and his son Charles. The Tennyson family rose to prominence in the mid
eighteenth century when all three sons of Ralph Tennyson, attorney of Wrawby, married into the prosperous and successful trading family of the Claytons, who had extensive property holdings within the town. George Tennyson, grandson of Ralph, inherited almost all of the Clayton and Tennyson property by the end of the century, and the election of his son Charles as MP for Grimsby in 1818 marked the height of their influence locally. Their home was Bayons Manor, Tealby, 15 miles south.35

George Tennyson lacked the culture and lineage of Yarborough, and also his modesty and even temper, so that his standing in society or 'county' was never as secure as Anderson-Pelham's. He was, however, a capable businessman and shrewd politician, and a worthy rival to Yarborough. As landowners the Tennysons were not at all in the same class as the Pelhams, and in 1815 the Tennyson acres amounted to little more than 4,000. However, George's stake in Grimsby was considerable, and he valued his property there in 1815 at £20,000. George was himself a leading county attorney and also a large investor in the town (including £3,215 plus £500 mortgage in the dock scheme).36

So great was the involvement of both the Tennysons and Anderson-Pelhams in the political and economic life of the borough that their rivalry cannot be ignored. It was through their cooperation, for business motives, that the dock was built, but it was through their political conflict that Grimsby was 'split from top to bottom'. They each sought control by 'a system of permanent influence and dependence that permeated every level of the town's life'.37 Such influence was mediated through property, patronage, and employment of all kinds.38
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However, for various reasons the Tennyson interest declined during our period and in any case Charles Tennyson's attachment to tory principles was never strong. In the mid 1820s another name entered the scene, that of Heneage. The Heneage country seat was at Hainton in the Lindsey division of Lincolnshire, and their estates locally amounted to 10,761 acres. They were whigs, connected by marriage with the Anderson-Pelhams, and owning substantial property in the borough. George Fieschi Heneage (1800-1864) was MP for Grimsby (1826-30) as well as, subsequently, for Lincoln (1831-5; 1852-62); and Edward Heneage (1802-1880) represented the borough, supplementing the Yarborough cause, continuously from 1835 to 1852 during which time there was no contested election. See Map 2.2.

By 1830 the Tennyson interest in the borough was much less evident, and after 1852 the Heneage and Yarborough influences were eclipsed as new economic development opened up the town to other forceful interests.

Table 2.6: LANDOWNERSHIP, 1850

Total area of parish: 1,640 acres.

Principal owners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earl of Yarborough</td>
<td>about 690</td>
<td>or about 42 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.F. Heneage Esq.</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation of Grimsby</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>14½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor and Burgesses</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>9½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Tennyson Esq.</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>8½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other proprietors, dock, roads, &amp;c.</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>11½</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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MAP 2.2: NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE & GRIMSBY RESIDENCES OF LEADING GRIMSBY LANDOWNERS

[Adapted from Jackson (1971) p.30].

Electoral Politics in Grimsby
Thus, throughout much of the period and certainly until 1832 Yarborough was credited with possessing 'the Influence'. Nossiter refers to this as the politics of status, and it is a notion which implies a model of social and political order which is one explanation, but only one, of political behaviour. "In this conception of what politics was about, the elector was encouraged to take his total social situation into account and by his vote express the network of influences of which he was a part." In contrast, argues Nossiter, were the politics of the market, in which financial considerations swayed voters, and the politics of individual opinion and interest. That these were all in some degree operative at all elections cannot be denied, yet their relative importance is difficult to quantify and ultimately, perhaps, imponderable. Nevertheless, as determinants of voting behaviour, they cannot be ignored.

It is necessary to distinguish between 'legitimate influence' deriving and receiving support from established practice and popular, if not universal, approval, and reflecting a realistic approach to the constraints of a system which after all never claimed to be democratic, and illegitimate influence, often involving violence and kidnapping as well as naked bribery. Most of the elements of both kinds of influence are amply illustrated in the elections of Grimsby - canvassing, entertaining, payment of electors' rates, hospitality, treating, bribery, fraud, intimidation, cooping (for example, aboard ship to keep adverse electors out of the way until an election was over), and so on.

Legitimate influence was exercised through a number of channels and ties of dependence were secured which bound many of the town's
inhabitants. At the beginning of our period both Yarborough and Tennyson were owners of considerable property in the town and the landlord-tenant relationship was an important source of potential influence. The rent rolls of both Yarborough and Tennyson, scanty though the survivals are, provide adequate testimony to this fact. There is additional evidence, particularly in the correspondence of MPs and agents. In 1818, for example, Joseph Daubney, solicitor and agent for Charles Tennyson wrote, "As to entirely defeating...the Pelhamites, it is impossible. Their property here will always make them formidable." The Tennysons had concentrated on buying up property in the 'new' town which had developed with the construction of the dock in 1800. Amid the hopes which fired the dock pioneers at the opening of the century this seemed politically to be a sensible move. However, Anderson-Pelham had consolidated his holding in the old town. In the 1820s and 1830s it was the latter's strategy which paid off as the town declined and people moved from the new to the old town. In another letter, Daubney refers to "poor old Robinson who was turned out...of his Daughter's House for voting for you...he is very old and totally unable to work." In the same way, the addition of outlying parishes in 1832 brought onto the scene a group of electors in perhaps even cruder dependence, often supposed to reflect clearly the wishes of landlords who themselves were bound to the traditional interests.

In all kinds of ways landlords could forge ties of dependence and obligation. Investments in improvements, the granting of abatements and a reluctance to exact rack rents in bad years are examples. Nevertheless, whatever the means adopted, it is not possible to prove that electors, whether tenants or not, were ever persuaded to vote
against their own inclinations. It was no doubt frequently the case that they had little interest in the elections other than as a means of 'playing the system' and reaping whatever rewards were going. Nor were those tenants who were interested necessarily in the pockets of their landlords: "for all the dark suspicions, voting was not mechanically regular; in election after election there were numerous dissenting votes, more on some estates than on others, but enough to disprove any assumption of mechanical compliance."44 However, whilst such considerations make it virtually impossible to speak with confidence of party identification, evidence does exist in abundance to demonstrate the existence of partisan behaviour.

Control over the corporation, that is the mayor, aldermen, and common councilmen was another important channel of influence. Both Tennyson and Yarborough maintained rival political clubs aimed at securing the election of aldermen and MPs. There was much behind-the-scenes dealing which is evident in surviving correspondence. From his London offices Tennyson was directing the activities of his local agents in Grimsby and even contacting Grimbarians in London.45 Yarborough was successful in packing the corporation with his own men, and in the 1831 parliamentary election, when the Brocklesby candidates lost, they nevertheless secured 19 out of the 23 aldermen and common councilmen votes. The whigs occupied most public offices and dominated the town council; the tories were mainly in opposition. There were even rival packets running between Grimsby and Hull with their chimneys painted in the rival colours, and according to one writer, "many persons would not go in the opposition boat on any account."46
There was an economic source of dependence too. Tennyson, Yarborough, and Heneage all invested heavily in the town and contributed much to its fortunes. The dock scheme which rescued the town from oblivion in 1800, product of cooperation between Tennyson and Yarborough, has already been mentioned. It was one of Tennyson's close political associates, Captain Harris who, in the 1830s erected a range of impressive buildings for the manufacture of New Zealand flax into sailcloth and cordage. The ropery represented one of the largest capital projects since the dock scheme, and Captain Harris clearly hoped for some political reward. When a candidate in 1832 he remarked that he had, "for these two years past watched with fatherly affection over its (Grimsby's) prosperity." He was unable, however, to afford the additional expenses of electioneering and withdrew from the contest. Heneage too was a prominent investor, particularly in rail and dock enterprises as well as in housebuilding. Looking at the matter from another side, the town was as an economic community made up largely of small producers and proprietors reflecting a wide distribution of small property and capital, and with a careful regard for clientele. There were thus red and blue drapers, tailors, butchers, bakers, and rivalry was very strong.

There was in the borough an elite identifiable to a large extent through successive pollbooks and directories, drawn from the professions or large businessmen (those 'capitalists' of the census returns) and emulating, if not actually able or willing to join the external landed upper classes. Yet although this upper class was external, and was careful to maintain its distance (and frequently more intimately connected with county politics), it was at the same time
involved in the economic life of the town. The prestige and wealth of this class were such that no aspiring candidate could hope to enter the political stage in Grimsby, let alone succeed, without support from one or other. In all elections up to 1852 all candidates were approved in this way, or else found the going too difficult and had to retire. In 1796 a General Loft had attempted, reputedly with strong government support, to secure election independently of the Yarborough-Tennyson interests, but failed.49

Illegitimate influence had in Grimsby, as elsewhere, a long history and certainly did not disappear, though it may have been exercised more discreetly, after 1832. "Few boroughs in England were more hopelessly corrupt than Great Grimsby, in which the franchise before 1832 was vested in freemen paying scot and lot."50 This claim of corrupt notoriety has been echoed by many commentators, and it is unusual to find a writer on Grimsby's history who does not refer to it. To Cobbett Grimsby was a "sink of corruption."51 One should nevertheless treat such claims with caution. In the first place even a brief acquaintance with studies of nineteenth century political history suggests that writers are only too keen to uphold their constituencies as models of corruption! Almost all borough constituencies, it would seem, were notorious for corruption; the currency of the term is thus debased.52 Corruption there certainly was, and in no small measure (and as Menzies found in Liverpool, it was often ill-concealed), but convincing comparisons are almost impossible to substantiate. Secondly, the claim of notoriety would imply that the electors of Grimsby were more than usually amenable to bribery or other corrupt practices, or that the candidates or their agents were unusually prone
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to indulge in corruption, or that the opportunities for such corruption were somehow greater than elsewhere. None of these propositions is, in itself, improbable, but there is little evidence to support any of them. The practice of illegitimate influence, whatever form it took, was in marked contrast to, and sometimes inversely related to, the public protestations against it, yet it was as much a feature of electioneering as the casting of a vote itself. Indeed, in 1831 one of the losing candidates somewhat ruefully credited his defeat to his refusal to give bribes. As will be shown, however, it is unlikely that illegitimate influence ever decided the day: it was a tactical manœuvre aimed more at getting voters out than in forcing their vote, and invariably accompanied by corresponding measures from the opposition.

Bribery was essentially a temporary phenomenon; legitimate influence and control were exercised permanently through institutions and practices carefully designed for the purpose. Both types of influence may well have broken the much flaunted 'independence' of the most singleminded freeman. Furthermore the organisation of influence provides clear evidence of strategic thinking by both sides in the process of political contest.

Certainly it appears to be the case that some contemporaries at least were conscious not just of influence or pressure, but of undue influence. The Corporation of Bath in 1832, for example, petitioned the Commons for the introduction of the secret ballot on the grounds:

"That a considerable number of those who are vested with the elective franchise, are more or less dependent upon others. The farmer, the artizan, and the tradesman, are respectively dependents of the landlord, the employer, and the customers; so that the latter possess the powers of controlling the votes of the former to an indefinite extent, or in the event of independent or conscientious voting, of inflicting enormous evils on the electors from which they ought to be protected."
That by means of this control, the elective franchise is virtually prostituted; men are sent to Parliament who obey the wishes and promote the interest of a few powerful patrons, rather than of those whom they nominally represent; and a vicious and spurious representation is the consequence, which is accompanied with the most immoral proceedings.\textsuperscript{55}

For all this, assessing the significance of such influence is another matter. Davis, in his study of Aylesbury, has shown how complex a web of influences was at work, and how much depended on tenant as well as landlord. In one respect his constituency after 1832 resembled that of Grimsby in that its boundary was deliberately extended to include a strong rural element, yet even so Davis concluded that influence and pressure were much less powerful determinants of voting behaviour than is often supposed, a conclusion which contrasts with that of Nossiter who, however, found some tendency for influence to be tempered by occupation.\textsuperscript{56} Similarly Vincent, in commenting on corruption, remarked, "Croesus fought many elections, but he never made shoemakers into good Tories, or butchers into good Liberals."\textsuperscript{57}

\textbf{NOTES}


2. Holles, quoted in Davies Rev. M \textit{History of Grimsby.}(1942), p.79. In former times the town is reported to have been thriving, see Tesseyman's \textit{Grimsby Directory 1852.}


4. Lewis P. & Jones P.W. \textit{Industrial Britain - The Humberside Region}, (1970), David & Charles, Newton Abbot. Rivalry with Hull continues to the present day, but in the early nineteenth century Grimsby's relative disadvantage was considerable.

5. Ibid p.39.
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7. Jackson G. Grimsby and the Haven Company (1971) GPL, pp.84-8. The estates of Angerstein and Skipworth were mainly purchased later. As Jackson makes clear, the figures are derived from a survey made in the 1870s.

8. Ibid p.53.


10. Dodd, Ralph, engineer, Report to MPs, Mayor, and Corporation on Improvement of Port and Harbour, (1810), GPL.

11. Census Return, 1811. For the extent of the new and old towns see Chapter 5 and Map 5.1


13. Vincent J.R. Pollbooks: How Victorians Voted(1967). Cambridge UP. Of course, the greatest of the new industrial centres were, by and large, as yet unenfranchised.


17. Lincoln, Bob The Rise of Grimsby Vol.I p.186. The new warehouse was described as commodious. Gillett reports that in the early decades the markets 'were still held in the streets in the oldest part of the town' and ancient ordinances were still enforced: see his A History of Grimsby (1970), Oxford UP, p.185.


21. Jackson G. (1971), Chapter 1. Jackson further remarks (p.5) 'Apart from economic advantages, there would be a new source of rewards for political services; new tenancies might be developed for potential voters; and existing voters would be grateful for the prosperity a dock
was expected to bring. The dock was first mentioned as part of the campaign for the 1790 election.'

22. Saunders (1836).

23. Ranger, William, Report on a Preliminary Inquiry into the Sewerage &c of Grimsby (1850). No systematic records survive of poor rates, but there is a single copy of the assessment for 1826 in the Grimsby papers of Sir Thomas Phillipps. It reveals that only 5% of those assessed occupied property valued over £20; 85% £10 or under - and the great bulk of these, being 71% of the total, £5 or under: see MS Phillipps-Robinson, c.649 (Bodleian Library).


26. Mayors Court Books, Vol.15 SHARO.

27. Babb MSS, GPL.

28. Greenfield L. (1950) Grimsby's Freemen,), Chapter 5. There is no direct suggestion of corruption in these practices, though clearly they provided a further channel for the operation of influence.


30. Boston pollbooks.

31. Leach, T.R. Brocklesby: A Brief Account of the Pelham Family, pamphlet in GPL.


35. Ibid pp.4-5; Dictionary of National Biography p.455.


37. Ibid p.5. Though enemies politically, at least in the early years of our period, socially their relationship was relatively harmonious. They corresponded more often than they met.

38. The nature and extent of such influence is examined more fully in Chapter 5.

39. Storey, T.H. The Henages of Hainton and their Grimsby Interests, pamphlet in GPL.
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41. Ibid p.7.

42. LAO 2 Td'E H/7 Daubney to Tennyson 8.11.1818. Such political strength of the Pelhams persisted well into the middle of the century.

43. LAO 4 Td'E H/13 Daubney to Tennyson, 14.6.1819.

44. Obelkevitch J. (1976) p.34.

45. GPL TP Tennyson – Daubney 23.10.1818.


47. Pollbook 1832. The matter of dependence is developed further in Chapter 5. Anderson Bates, writing of Grimsby elections in the early nineteenth century, remarks that 'half the houses erected on the Freemen's plots...were built with the money obtained at elections and...many of the Freemen lived on members (i.e. MPs) from one election to the next' – Bates, A Gossip about Old Grimsby p.61.


49. Jackson G. (1971) p.13. Loft was, however, successful on a subsequent attempt. The importance of gaining the support of those holding influence is implied in a letter of Lord Milton to Sir Francis Wood, father of Charles Wood, candidate in 1826: "I put up the enclosed that you may see on what terms a second whig candidate may come in for Grimsby – I mention the second because he has declared his intention of bringing his relation, Heneage, as his first"; and again, "My father has heard from Lord Yarborough today approving of your son as a candidate for Grimsby, so that matter is settled." Halifax Papers, A4/19.6, 18.10.1825 and 11.12.1825.

50. VCH, Vol.II.


52. Gash M. (1953) points to Warwick, Leicester, Southampton and many other constituencies with a reputation for corruption.


54. See Chapter 5.

55. Guildhall (1832) Petition from Mayor, Aldermen and Counsellors of the City of Bath – quoted in OU, D301, p.80.


CHAPTER 3: BOROUGH POLITICS

In terms of population Grimsby was throughout the period the smallest Parliamentary borough in Lincolnshire. Towns such as Louth (population 6,927), Gainsborough (5,837), and Spalding (6,395), all exceeded Grimsby in size in 1831, but had no direct representation of their own as boroughs, but only as divisions within the county. Their politics were very much those of an agricultural interest.

There was to a large extent, as Olney has shown, a separation of urban from county politics, even where the same personnel were involved. "It might almost be laid down as a rule, that the more intense and noisy urban politics became, the less notice was taken of them by the county people." The Pelham hold in Grimsby could at times be almost total yet it was not central to their standing or power in the county which reflected more their vast yet compact landholding. Brocklesby was ideally situated for the exercise of a powerful landed interest, the most impressive in the whole county and enhanced by support from neighbouring and not insignificant estates. The family standing within 'the county' - that select group of upper and upper middle class social leaders - was secure and second only to the Brownlows. Within North Lincolnshire Yarborough was supreme. Grimsby was not, however, the major urban influence in Lincolnshire that Louth was. To the political ambitions of the Pelhams Grimsby was no doubt marginal, whatever it may have been to the Tennysons.
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The Pelhams were whig and exercised a control over the Lindsey division which might have been the envy of lesser landowners who yet were much more prominent in national politics. In Grimsby itself, their interest stems from the mid eighteenth century when they first began to challenge the established interest of the trading and commercial Clayton family into which the Tennysons were later to marry. It was whilst he was at school that Charles Anderson of Manby inherited the estates of his uncle, Charles Pelham of Brocklesby. Before he was twenty Charles Anderson had been elected member for Beverley and trustees had been busy buying up property in Grimsby. His ambition was boundless and his ability as estate owner and businessman beyond doubt. The development of his business and political interests in Grimsby, if successful, would help him towards a peerage, but also inevitably would entail conflict with the Claytons in both fields. The Clayton stranglehold was successfully broken when Francis Evelyn Anderson, younger brother of Charles, won one of Grimsby's seats from the Claytons, and in 1780 and 1784 the Pelhams gained both. Thereafter, the Claytons faded into the background, but their cause was revived and spearheaded by the Tennyson brothers, all three of whom married into the Clayton family. With the absence of issue from two of these marriages, George Tennyson, son of Michael Tennyson and Elizabeth Clayton, inherited nearly all the Tennyson and Clayton property before the end of the century. Two interests now stood opposed: the landowning, country Pelhams and the lawyer, business Tennysons. Their rivalry in political terms was translated into a contest between influence and independence.
In 1794 Charles Anderson Pelham was created Lord Yarborough, and in 1802 his son, also Charles Anderson stood successfully for the county. Thereafter he represented the county until the death of his father in 1823 when he was removed to the Upper House as second baron. He was leader of the whigs in the county, and continued to exert extensive local and county political influence. His brand of whig politics was, however, moderate, and of his election speech in 1818 it has been said that it differed little from his opponent's, "so mild were whig politics in that day." The relationship between Yarborough and the Tennysons was always a little uneasy. In deference to his uncle's wishes, George Tennyson had initially felt obliged to oppose Yarborough, but on inheriting the Clayton property he no longer did so, and even remarked: "I dare say we shall never be at variance more." They joined together in bringing in two members for the borough and in promoting the Haven company, but such coalition was short-lived. However, George had ambitions for his son Charles, and there were advantages to be gained by cultivating relations with Brocklesby. Over the next few years the political relationship of George Tennyson and Yarborough blew hot and cold, though their personal relationship never greatly suffered. Yarborough maintained the power of nomination within the borough, and exercised a strong control over the corporation and over the creation of freemen. Charles Anderson Pelham represented the borough in 1803 and again with his brother George in 1806. In 1813 the uneasy coalition of Yarborough and Tennyson began to weaken as they fell out over the promotion of a new haven bill which favoured Tennyson's rather than Yarborough's views. The bill was dropped in committee. In 1817 Charles Tennyson announced his candidature at the
forthcoming election. Nevertheless he contemplated running with Yarborough's support, then unsuccessfully sought a Treasury nominee, and finally stood alone in opposition to Fazakerley. The rivalry during these years between Yarborough and Charles Tennyson was essentially political, and although real enough, its mainspring, and that of Tennyson's campaign, was political ambition. Their personal and social relations for the most part remained cordial; their political views and principles never too far apart. By the end of the 1820s when Tennyson had given up interest in Grimsby as a parliamentary seat they frequently worked together in the same cause. They were then joined by the powerful Heneage interest.

Party

Parties have been described as "agencies of mobilisation and politicisation through which individuals and groups with diverse aims channel their political demands to common ends." The modern party system is characterised by national organisation maintaining close links with the locality and responsible for the selection and sponsoring of party candidates, the formulation of common policy, the provision of finance, and the mobilisation and coordination of party activists. Organisation is of the essence, both locally and nationally, and links between the two are well established. The modern party system is inconceivable without the organisation which sustains it. The absence of such integrated and sophisticated organisation in the first half of the nineteenth century has led some commentators to argue that a party system did not then exist.
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Now while there can be no denying the lack of sophisticated organisation, it is not altogether accurate to say that some form of organisation did not exist, and even less accurate to argue that parties themselves did not exist. The crucial work which is now performed by a complex organisation was, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, performed by individuals who themselves maintained links with the centre and with party activists locally. The Tennysons in particular were most closely in touch with local organisation even when away in London for long periods. Their residence in London enabled them to keep in touch with both the capital and the constituency, and there is evidence that local activists and some electors were keen to be kept informed of all matters political which might affect their interests. Thus it was that the political system was but informally organised, and as Austin Mitchell has forcefully argued, party as opposed to mere faction was a reality and regarded by contemporary opinion as dominating the scene. Indeed, Mitchell goes further in arguing that the period before 1832 was the 'hey-day of strong two-party system'.

Such party as existed was a matter less of organisation than of principle, and although very different from the modern party system, its existence cannot be easily repudiated. Furthermore, as Mitchell observes, it is 'not the historian's job to think in modern terms.' It was common principles which bound party members together, and provided a focus for their external activities in mobilising support. Men thought in terms of two political poles, and whilst there were to be found within each party a wide spectrum of views, it was hardly wider
than is to be found today. Principles rather than organisation are the key to the existence of parties before 1832:

"In a period when the total electorate numbered a few hundred thousand, when under a third of the constituencies were contested at general elections, and when national issues were usually less important than local, extra-parliamentary organisation inevitably depended on personal initiatives, rather than elaborate machinery. At a time when the social world was small and intimate, personal connexions and social ties obviated the need for formal ties. All the functions necessary to a political party were performed. The methods by which this was done were those appropriate to the period."7

Party structure was already developed in some freeman boroughs before the end of the eighteenth century. In Grimsby each party had its own managers who maintained their own headquarters and core of dedicated activists. There was plenty for them to do, for their work involved mobilising an electorate not only for parliamentary elections but also for the more frequent local elections which took place at least once every year. The nature of their work is examined in more detail in Chapter 6, but there can be little doubt that however embryonic such organisation was, the terms whig and tory were meaningful to the majority of voters. They served to focus attention on genuine differences of political opinion which were perpetuated by informal party organisations each under the control of a dedicated core of activists in close contact with their respective candidates whether in or out of office.

The labels whig and tory were rarely used in electoral contests locally but they can be understood to have been implied in such terms as 'Ministerial' and 'anti-Ministerial' and to have been represented by colours, the 'Blues' being whig and the 'Reds' tory. Locally too, the Reds were referred to frequently as 'Independents' which marked their opposition to the established influence within the corporation (and
borough and county generally) of the whigs. Such terms served to focus attention on genuine differences of political opinion, and certainly local literature took the existence of parties for granted.

The whigs were the party of the aristocracy yet by tradition they placed great emphasis on 'the people', by which is to be understood not the great mass of people or working classes but the middle classes, articulate, educated, and claiming representation by virtue of wealth. The whigs were no democrats. In terms of principle they can be readily identified as a party with distinctive attitudes to finance (they were in favour of tax reductions and economy in government); Catholic emancipation and all kinds of reform generally which they favoured; foreign policy; free speech and natural rights. It should not be expected that all whigs would agree wholeheartedly over all issues, and a wide variety of opinion was to be found on many issues, yet they were 'a party banded together to obtain office upon certain principles'. They shared a body of inherited principles which were not those of tories, and whilst they favoured change, it was conservative, 'to bring things up to date, the better to preserve them.'

Matters of Principle and Party

Local issues were paramount. As in the majority of provincial constituencies, the voters concerned themselves much more with local concerns than with national issues yet even the latter figured in electoral literature and in campaigns in Grimsby, sometimes prominently.

At the beginning of our period the key issues in national politics centred around public order, the defence of property, and the
protection of agriculture. The Corn Laws were not a divisive party matter, for though they might divide one class from another they were supported by whigs and tories alike. The maintenance of public order, the defence of property, both of which seemed threatened in postwar conditions of unemployment, poverty, and revolutionary radicalism, were perhaps greatly exaggerated by the ruling and landed classes. None of these issues affected politics much in Grimsby, though there were groups of concerned people who organised themselves and to some extent divided along party lines. The Grimsby Association for Prosecuting Felons and the Old Association for the Prosecution of Felons were both well subscribed and active. The surviving election literature, however, gives little or no hint of these concerns, or of the preoccupations of national government. One issue of national concern did, however, surface in the election of 1818, that of reform in general. In an anonymous handbill supporting the whig candidates Fazakerley and Grant, reform was urged as:

"...the thing which the Parsons most dread,  
As our 'dear constitution' supplies them with bread;  
By their living and livings, their tithes, and their fees,  
They are able to live in luxurious ease;  
Whilst the labouring poor half worn out by starvation,  
And burdened with an enormous taxation,  
Must not speak a word to improve their condition,  
Nor must they Petition! Petition! Petition!!!  
At least if they do they are rebels and traitors,  
The Parsons worst friends, and their country's haters."

The identification of church with the ruling tory party was just, and indeed the landed interest in general was also unlikely to approve reforms which might undermine their monopoly of property and power. Whilst the general clamour for reform may have subsided following the Peterloo Massacre in 1819, it never completely disappeared as an issue.
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Following the Cato Street Conspiracy of 1819 a loyal address to the Regent was proposed at a public meeting called by the mayor, "for the purpose of expressing to the Prince Regent our Loyalty to the King, attachment to the Laws and Constitution of the Country and an abhorrence of the Means that have of late been taken to raise up seditious Treason and Rebellion."10 There was widespread support amongst the inhabitants for this petition, and both members of Parliament, Tennyson and Fazakerley, tory and whig, were invited to present it to Lord Sidmouth to lay before the Prince Regent. Nationally, however, the whigs, who became the party of reform, failed in these years to agree on any scheme, and it is not likely that the issue presented itself as a real one to the voters of Grimsby, far removed as they were from the turbulence of cities and industrial life.

Disunited on the question of reform, the whigs were nevertheless united on the issue of Catholic emancipation, a cause favoured by Lord Yarborough and his candidates Fazakerley and Grant. John Nicholas Fazakerley was a moderate and described as "a sensible man" and "the most civilized person in the world, and most agreeable and good."11 Grant, by contrast, was described by one of Tennyson's friends as "the most disagreeable man in the last Parliament, worse even than Sir Robert Heron."12 Grant had espoused the cause of Catholic emancipation in the previous election of 1812, and had come top of the poll. It is likely that now, in 1818, the cause may not have been unimportant to the townsfolk, yet it does not appear in any of the surviving tory election literature. The following year Tennyson was warned against associating himself with Catholic emancipation (which he was rumoured to favour) on the grounds that his 'most respectable'
constituents would be offended by so obnoxious a cause. Questor Veal, one of his activists, wrote, "I have not yet seen a list of Members who voted in favour of the Catholic claims; but it is rumoured here that your name is amongst them and I feel it may do you some injury in the opinions of the most respectable parts of your Constituents...on the other public questions your votes appear to have met their approbation." The issue was undoubtedly a sensitive one, and capable of arousing strong passions. It had also become a party issue, and as such reveals a dilemma in which Tennyson found himself: as effective leader of the tory party locally he must be seen to oppose Catholic emancipation, yet his sympathies were fundamentally whig. His attachment to the tory cause was a matter of strategy rather than conviction or principle, for it provided him with the best means of election.

Within months another national issue raised its head locally - the affair surrounding Queen Caroline. It was a divisive issue. The Regent's attempts to initiate divorce proceedings against Caroline on the grounds of misconduct (though serious charges had not been proved) were not popular, and the queen received considerable support throughout the country as a wronged and injured party. When George III died the matter became more urgent as the new King attempted, through his minister, to arrange either a divorce or a settlement which would keep her abroad. The government was thus seen to support the king. The issue was reflected in party terms locally, for Tennyson supported the government in its measures against Caroline whilst Lord Yarborough earned considerable popularity by his support of the queen. George Oliver, vicar of the parish church of St. James, wrote to
Tennyson to warn him of the danger facing him over this issue. A petition loyal to the king was proposed, but, said Oliver, "the Radicals here are preparing an Address to the Queen and it is a question whether, in the event of a Meeting your Petition would not be thrown out and their Address substituted in its stead." Such was the impact of this issue that Tennyson wrote a pamphlet to his constituents in which he claimed to be opposed to any further action against Caroline: in such a way he hoped to minimise the loss of any support. He was also probably being sincere. On Caroline's death after the 1820 election there were further problems locally when the corporation, composed largely of Pelhamites, ordered their pew to be hung with black which the minister, George Oliver, a supporter of Tennyson, ordered to be removed, for which he very nearly lost his appointment.

In the county the Caroline affair attracted attention, and so too in Lincoln, where it promoted sympathy for the queen from both the whigs and the populace in general, and opposition from churchmen and tories. A petition in favour of the queen was presented on behalf of the 'Low City Party'; a counter-petition from the tories in support of the king, though proposed, failed to materialise amid a great deal of popular agitation.

In the election of 1820 national issues were barely discernible. Corn, currency, and catholics were greatly overshadowed by more pressing local concerns. The whig cause locally was in temporary decline, and although Yarborough was returned for the county, he had difficulty in mounting a campaign within the borough. Fazakerley declined to stand and it was not easy to find an alternative candidate.
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Grant too dropped out of the running and the replacement candidates, Brackenbury and Turner were both relatively unknown locally. They also appeared at a time when the opposition, optimistic about its chances, was able to field two candidates both with realistic hopes of success.

Such is the political roundabout, however, that by the next election, 1826, fortunes had changed once again. Tennyson decided not to stand for Grimsby, and instead was elected for Bletchingly where his father owned property. His supporters in Grimsby had adopted a strong anti-Catholic stance, exacerbated by the news that one of the whig candidates was George Fieschi Heneage, a recent convert from Catholicism. Tennyson, not a tory by conviction, was not in sympathy with such feeling, and was well out of it. The Heneage family, with considerable land adjacent to the Yarborough estates, was to exercise much influence in the borough in years to come. G.F. Heneage stood now as a Yarborough candidate, along with Charles Wood. They faced a single tory candidate, Thomas Phillipps of Middle Hill Hall, Worcestershire, late High Sherriff of that county, recommended by an old Grimsby MP, General Loft. Phillipps was backed, he claimed, by his own independent fortune. The Catholic issue was a major part of his campaign:

"My two Opponents, I believe, support the Catholic Question...a Question which the next HEIR to the THRONE has solemnly declared he never will support....the Catholics hold such tenets they ought never to be tolerated because those tenets are weapons with which they would be enabled to overturn the Government, by introducing Rebellion and Anarchy whenever they might think proper to do so."21
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As earlier elections had clearly demonstrated, the issue was one over which much passion could be aroused. The freemen were urged in one election poster to reject Catholic claims:

"...it is the boast of the Roman Catholics, that their Religion never changes. Do not forget that trifling Matter, the Irish Massacre, when the Papists, in 1642, deliberately cut the Throats of Forty Thousand British Protestants! Keep in mind the Murder of more than Eighty Thousand More in France, on the Eve of St. Bartholomew, in 1572! Keep in perpetual remembrance the Horror of your late reverend Monarch when the Catholic Bill was proposed to him: his immediate answer was 'I can willingly resign my Crown, my Life - my Coronation Oath I will never break.'"

Perhaps it was for this reason that Heneage, with his recent Catholic connections, kept in the background, and made no pronouncements on the issue.

National issues also emerged in the county elections. Whig representation had passed to Sir William Amcotts Ingilby following the removal of Pelham to the Lords as second baron in 1823. Ingilby was a much less moderate whig than Pelham. The Catholic question received rather less attention in the county where the preoccupation was, not unnaturally, the Corn Laws. The possibility of their amendment or repeal was enough to cause consternation amongst the large landowners, and no candidate, whig or tory, would denounce them. The following year saw the presentation of a petition by Lord Yarborough on behalf of the mayor and corporation of Lincoln against amendment of the Corn Laws. He was attempting to demonstrate that the matter was of concern to townspeople as well as to agriculturalists, and warned against the dangers attendant upon the unrestricted or easy entry of low priced foreign grain. The ruin of landlords would spell ruin for urban tradesmen too. In 1828 Wellington's Ministry introduced a sliding
scale which met with local opposition, and in general both city and county were vociferous in their demands for protection and the amelioration of poverty which tariffs on wool as well as corn, and removal of taxes on malt, would afford. 

In the next three elections scarcely anything was heard of national issues, or even local concerns, apart from the overwhelming excitement and consternation over parliamentary reform. It was an issue over which, however, party principle clashed with local self-interest, and lost. Once it was resolved the constituency returned to seemingly less vital concerns, but interestingly national issues did make an impact. Civil and religious liberty, agriculture, and reform were the issues most widely debated around the country in 1835. Locally the question of the performance of the government at Westminster was raised: its record was put before the electorate in a way which was probably without precedent in the borough and might be interpreted as providing some evidence, however slight, of developing maturity of electoral politics. It was certainly an issue of principle which clearly divided whigs and tories.

It was reported to the electors that as Member for Aldborough in the outgoing parliament, Sir Alexander Grant, the new Grimsby tory candidate, had voted against a number of progressive reforms, including the Test and Corporation Acts; relief for the Jews; abolition of the death penalty for forgery; reform in the Court of Chancery; the transfer of the franchise from the corrupt borough of East Retford to Birmingham; the appointment of a committee to consider relief to the Catholics; and, in short, reform generally. At the same time he had voted in favour of harsh proceedings against slaves in Jamaica (himself
being a proprietor), and in favour of increasing the salary of the President of the Board of Trade. It was asserted too that "He has never been found to vote against the Minister of those days." Grant himself argued that politics was in crisis, that neither whig nor tory now existed, but only 'conservatives' and 'destructives', and he clearly placed himself with the former and urged support for the king and his ministers. Few campaigns confirm as clearly as this the importance of principle and the existence of party. Whether the electorate as a whole was in a position, having weighed the issues, to make a choice between them is another matter.

The whigs also went to the poll on the record of their administration, and put before the electorate a host of measures which in their eyes were unambiguous reforms. These measures included the reduction or removal of a large number of taxes, particularly those on imports; the reduction of official salaries and abolition of places; the destruction of the E. India monopoly; abolition of negro slavery; changes in the administration of justice, and especially in the Court of Chancery; establishment of the Central Criminal Court; abolition of the death penalty for housebreaking and forgery, and returning from transportation; reform of the Poor Law - and a number of other 'reforming' measures.

Grant also explicitly raised the issue of free trade, associated it with the opposition, and warned the electors, particularly those engaged in agriculture and commerce, against voting for the removal of protection. At no other election during the period were voters presented with such detail concerning national issues and government policy, and it is tempting to regard it as a response to the widening
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of the franchise. What is clear, however, is that such issues were clearly understood to be matters of party principle.

Local Issues, Influence, and Independence

The primacy of local concerns is evident in the attention they received in election literature; they were the major focus of virtually all campaigns except that of 1835. Even the elections of 1830, 1831 and 1832, in which the reform of parliament was the preoccupation of all concerned in electioneering, the issue was fought out almost entirely in terms of its impact locally.

A theme adopted by most candidates during the period was that of the prosperity of the port. Trade was never as much as the promoters of the Haven in 1800 had looked forward to, and investors received only a poor return. In the election of 1818 Tennyson condemned the outgoing representatives for having neglected the prosperity of the town, which had been "too long sacrificed to private objects or to views merely political." Trade indeed tended to fluctuate from year to year, but it was less healthy in the second decade than it had been in the first, and to this extent perhaps Tennyson had cause to complain. He was also one of the Company's major investors. Whether electors would be convinced by Tennyson's accusation, however, is doubtful, for Yarborough's stake in the Haven Company as a major shareholder was greater than Tennyson's, and so too was his property holding and hence his interest in maintaining property values. The decline of trade was not due to neglect by representatives but to the harsh realities of business and competition - but the theme was a
common one in all elections of our period. Certainly, in 1818, the depressed state of trade was not in doubt.

The prosperity of the port was an important issue in the election of 1830, the campaign for which was otherwise devoid of substance. The whig candidates were Charles Wood, secretary to Lord Grey, and George Fieschi Heneage; the tory candidates were Captain George Harris and Thomas Chaloner Bisse Challoner. The election literature reveals considerable rancour over an alleged denial of the Call List to Harris. The Call List was a list of all freemen entitled to vote, and a necessary item before full canvassing could be undertaken. Harris claimed that the list had been denied him, though he had offered the usual fees; Joseph Daubney, attorney, refuted this. Their accusations and counter-accusations fill the pollbook literature. Captain Harris, however, had made some impression within the borough and could count on a good deal of support despite the fact that he had a number of enemies only too ready to denigrate him. Appointed Captain at the age of nineteen, he was a highly successful naval officer, decorated many times for bravery in the French War, and a Companion of the Bath. It was said that he was well connected and dined often with royalty. Of greatest significance, however, was an invention of his of a new type of rope which he patented and planned to produce in Grimsby, a project which offered the prospect of more employment. Somewhat exaggerated claims were made for it, to the effect that the trade in hemp and tar, worth many millions of pounds, would be transferred from Russia to the colonies which produced a stronger hemp. The invention would, it was claimed, "fill our harbour with ships, and cover our shores with a busy population, conveying a degree of independence and plenty to the
inhabitants of all classes, which will elevate Grimsby to its proper rank as a seaport, and to its purity of Election as a Borough Town."\textsuperscript{28}

Harris's ropery was indeed subsequently established, a large and impressive range of buildings providing for the manufacture both of superior hemp rope and a new metal rope recently invented for the rigging of vessels. In the event, Harris was successful in the poll. He was also returned in the next election of 1831, but the result was subsequently declared void on petition on the ground of treating. In 1832 Harris made a brief appearance at the beginning of the campaign, and he appears to have expected election on the grounds of having 'expended so much money in and about the Borough' - a reference to his new ropery and, no doubt, to the treating which had unseated him the previous year.\textsuperscript{29}

The prosperity of the port and the state of trade were crucial to the continued survival of the borough, yet the most persistent theme of elections during the period was that of the independence of voters and of candidates. It was the tory camp under the leadership of George and Charles Tennyson who pushed this issue to the fore, and understandably so for they feared the superior influence of the Pelhams with their capacity to command a large section of votes and to nominate candidates. At no time was this more crucial than the beginning of the period when, in the elections of 1818 and 1820 (local as well as parliamentary) the Tennysons made a concerted bid to break the stranglehold hitherto exercised by the "genial and beneficial Influence" of the house of Brocklesby.\textsuperscript{30} This influence must be broken if Tennyson was to establish himself as a candidate and as a political force within the borough. Notwithstanding the intense
political rivalry which soon developed between Brocklesby and Bayons
Manor, personal relations between Yarborough and Tennyson were not so
strained. Indeed, before offering himself as an 'independent'
candidate, Charles Tennyson himself solicited the support of
Yarborough, referring to family connections and past kindesses.
Tennyson's concern was to develop a strategy which would secure for
him a firm political foothold within the borough and this meant
election as one of its representatives which in turn meant coming to
terms with the overwhelming influence exercised in all kinds of ways
by Yarborough. Tennyson could not rely on an alliance with
Yarborough, and he had other strings to his bow. In the event
Yarborough's support was not forthcoming and two other candidates
appeared in the whig interest. Tennyson was not, he claimed, afraid
to take on any rivals..."each standing singly, - but I think it right to
apprize you that I have reason to suppose an alliance is meditated
between the other two Candidates." In a sense he was right, for the
'other two', Grant and Fazakerley were both whig candidates, yet they
were not, apparently, comfortable partners. Tennyson was informed by
his agent Plaskitt that "Mr. Fazakerley told me yesterday...he was not in
any way connected with Mr. Grant, and that we should see his party as
separate and distinct from him as from you." At the same time
Tennyson had been unable, despite government backing, to find a
candidate to stand with him. The previous year a prospective
candidate, one Bryne, had begun campaigning ('treating') in a moderate
way but withdrew before the contest. Tennyson alone could not hope
therefore to wrest the borough completely from Brocklesby (though in
strategic terms he may have been better off without a partner).
Joshua Plaskitt as Tennyson's agent mounted an impressive and ultimately successful campaign in which much was made of the abuse of influence by Yarborough (that Tennyson had himself been prepared to contemplate harnessing such influence to his own ends was, of course, of no consequence). Such abuses covered both the selection of candidates and interference with the voting of electors:

"How much longer will ye suffer yourselves to be imposed upon? Many of you have paid the Money for your Admissions some years ago, and are not yet enrolled on Stamps. You have no right therefore to exercise the elective Franchise, and perhaps ere long you may experience a little more of the 'genial and elective Franchise' by being refused to vote..."24

This was from a handbill signed 'A Grimsby Freeman' which brought both issues together as "Slavery and Beggary, or Independence and Prosperity." The election campaign was attended with all the fierce calumny and near libellous billing so much a feature of elections at this period. Fazakerley, in the Pelham interest, came top of the poll; Tennyson also was elected, and Grant was defeated and retired to lick his wounds whilst his agents took the first steps towards bringing bribery actions against Tennyson. Joseph Daubney, acting for Tennyson, began to prepare a defence (part of which was to point similar accusations against Grant), but the matter was dropped before any harm was done.25

Two years later, in the election of 1820, there was little change of issues in the borough. Tennyson still had not paid all, or even most, electors the sums that had been promised in 1818, and some distress among poorer freemen was attributed to this by his agent who for months had been urging settlement. Now, however, it was too late, and another campaign was soon under way. Nevertheless, Tennyson must
have been under some apprehension as a handbill was circulated (anonymously, though without doubt prepared by Tennyson's agent or party activists) reminding electors of the conviction of Sir M.M. Lopez on charges of bribery at the last election. This case resulted in a fine of £10,000 and a two year jail sentence for Lopez for 'paying to the burgesses of Grampound that which they considered as an usual compliment', and also imprisonment for some of the electors for having taken the payment. Such payments for votes - or, as they were sometimes interpreted, for the trouble and time expended in turning out to vote - had long been customary in many constituencies, including Grimsby and Boston, and they were regarded as legitimate. Tennyson, however, was able to use the Grampound case to justify his tardiness in meeting his obligations. The Commons had passed a motion for disfranchising all corrupt boroughs, and the handbill was able to claim some virtue for Tennyson:

"If these compliments had been paid, and such sentences passed upon the payer, the receiver and the Borough...if you had found Mr. C. Tennyson in a Common Jail, ruined in fortune and reputation - and yourselves his companions - you might have cursed his weakness for yielding to your indiscreet importunities. This forbearance under such circumstances appear to me to be rather a subject for obligation than reproach."

Such forbearance was also a matter of prudence for during much of the period following the previous election Grant's supporters had been busy preparing evidence for an election petition against Tennyson on grounds of bribery. The issue was one of a most delicate nature, however, and mismanagement could well put an end to Tennyson's aspirations. His agent even suggested means by which outstanding monies might be paid surreptitiously, or even that Tennyson transfer to another constituency!
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The question of whether the monies would be paid, and when, was uppermost in the minds of many freemen as the election approached, though Tennyson's agent was busy reassuring them, and indeed few would have cause to doubt Tennyson's generosity or capacity to pay. At the same time he was careful to maintain, and be seen to maintain, his own independence from the house of Brocklesby, and also to exhort his own followers to maintain their independence from the blatant influences and pressures which were frequently brought to bear upon them by the opposition. There was clearly no issue of party principle here, only one of electoral tactics. Both sides extended bribes at the same time as they professed purity.

The theme of independence was a recurring one. In 1826 Tennyson himself decided not to stand for Grimsby. He was replaced as tory candidate by Thomas Phillipps on whose behalf General Loft intervened urging freemen to throw off 'the yolk of Brocklesby': "If your Monarchs had intended Farmers to choose Representatives for Grimsby, there was no necessity for Burgesses." Phillipps, however, had little support from Bayons Manor and could hope to make little headway. The whig cause was strong once more and the clear win for both whig candidates, Heneage and Wood, demonstrated once again that without support from local influence outsiders had little prospect of success. There was only one vote from within the corporation in favour of Phillipps, from Alderman Lusby who had proposed him at the hustings: it was no doubt a courtesy vote; his two seconders on the corporation voted for both the whig candidates.

Illegitimate influence might be exercised at any time by either party. Following the election of May 1831 the two losing candidates,
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Gronow and Hobhouse, presented a petition against the result on the grounds of corrupt practices. They claimed to have a majority of legal votes and alleged that some votes had been illegally rejected by the returning officer who had at the same time admitted other non-legal votes. Bribery, treating, and other undue influences (including kidnapping and cooping) were also alleged. The investigating committee of the House of Commons found in favour of the petitioners and concluded that the election of Captain Harris and Mr. Shelley was void on the ground of treating. A new election was called for and took place in August 1831. It is interesting that after the Kay election Gronow had attributed his defeat to a promise given, on Yarborough's request, not to give bribes. Such nicety on the part of any candidate could be taken as evidence of expediency or prudence rather than purity.

Harris and Shelley, of course, were now ineligible to stand, and for both it was the virtual end of their political ambitions in Grimsby. Their cause was taken up by Lord Loughborough and the Hon. Henry Fitzroy. The campaign was brief, the issues unaltered since May, and both tory candidates were again returned on a reduced poll. Once again George Tennyson had entered the contest by urging his tenants to support the candidates in the ministerial (whig) interest. Privately he deplored Yarborough's involvement in the choice of blue candidates: "It is very offensive to me that Lord Yarborough should presume to name candidates at Grimsby. I do not however see how we can on this occasion interfere to prevent him." More significant, however, was Tennyson's earnest bid to maintain his independence:

My son has repeatedly and positively refused to go down to Grimsby otherwise than independently. I feared our old interest was
preoccupied so that we could not expect success without an assurance from the blues that on political grounds we should on this occasion have their support. This we could have had only on the condition that my son must go down as a Blue."

Tennyson's son Charles now held principles which were more whig than tory, and even approaching the radical, but there was no wish to become pawns of the Pelhams.

As Yarborough was credited with possessing the influence, so Tennyson repeatedly asserted that his was the party of independence. As Pelham opposed the introduction of a secret ballot, so Charles Tennyson favoured it. At the Grimsby Reform Festival held at the time of the passing of the Reform Act, Tennyson related how the Marquis of Exeter had treated those of his tenants at Stamford who had voted contrary to his wishes; they had been unhoused, driven into the streets or into the fields. Such conduct had been laid also against his own father, George, but Charles denied it strongly, adding:

"I beseech you to vote according to your conscientious feeling...if you confer the right of voting on any large class of tenants, you ought to make a provision that they ought really and not fictitiously to exercise the franchise. We are bound to take care that the franchise given to one man is not in fact exercised by another."

For all this, the Tennysons were themselves not without influence locally and during the 1832 election campaign were approached by the tory candidate Lord Loughborough with the request "that your powerful influence will not be exerted against me in favour of my opponent." He was already too late, for the Tennysons had pitched their weight in favour of Maxfield, the whig candidate, and felt bound to promote his views (which they shared), though Loughborough was assured of a fair field "as my father did not enforce our political wishes." Despite this declaration, however, Charles Tennyson wrote to his agent: "I beg
of you to assist me in every way you can to accomplish the success of
the liberal candidate Captain Maxfield...I will do all in my power short
of coercion and threats, heartily wishing him success." This
astonishing coalition between Brocklesby and Bayons Manor could hardly
fail to gain the election of Maxfield.

The Reform Act indeed appeared to make little real difference to
the ways in which influence was exercised. At the election of 1835 the
independence of electors once again became an issue. Sir Alexander
Grant, standing in the tory interest, doubted the sincerity of the local
landed reformers:

"I ask whether the advancement of the prosperity of this Port and
the wealth of the Town can be consistent with the views of
'NEIGHBOURING GENTLEMEN' possessed of property within its limits, and
claiming (in spite of the Reform Bill) a sort of prescriptive RIGHT TO
NOMINATE the Member. I ask whether the 'NEIGHBOURING GENTLEMEN' must
not feel that it is an easier task to secure for their own purposes
370, than 600 or 700 electors." It was naive to suppose, of course, that 'neighbouring gentlemen' had
not fully considered the costs and benefits to themselves of supporting
reform; the interests of many of them had been directly enhanced by the
extension of the borough boundaries. Landlords were still exerting
pressure on tenants. Captain George Harris exposed the duplicity of
Heneage's agents in attempting to persuade the tenants of the Rev.
Doctor Chafy that they were free to vote as they wished. In fact Dr.
Chafy had written to Grant's solicitor to quite the opposite effect:

"I do hope that my Tenants will do (as they have done before)
vote, both in the Borough and County, for the Conservative Candidate;
and that I expect (Daubney) will express these my Wishes and
Sentiments in the strongest manner, to my Tenants." These were but surface rumblings, however, for there was some doubt as
to the destination of all the votes under the influence of the Tennyson
family. Joshua Plaskitt who still acted for the Tennysons had apparently, at the rent day, intimated to tenants that they should vote for Heneage. In doing so Plaskitt had in fact acted prematurely, though not entirely unreasonably in as much as the Tennysons and Heneages were friends and shared much the same political views. What Plaskitt did not know until too late, however, was that Charles Tennyson was not only in favour of reform but was anxious to promote reform and union between 'whig and liberal Reformers.' In this he was opposed to Yarborough and therefore to Heneage, because he got wind of a plan by Yarborough to exclude the prominent (and increasingly radical) county reformer, Sir William Ingilby, from the representation of Lindsey. Accordingly Charles Tennyson instructed Plaskitt to inform his father's tenants and friends "that we shall take no part for Mr. Edward Heneage at the Election." This was because Heneage himself was implicated in the Yarborough scheme.

Hearing of these developments, George Harris, acting for Grant and the tories, sought to capitalise on them by obtaining permission to publish such neutrality:

"when I would promise you my vote and influence at Lambeth (where Charles Tennyson was standing) - and all my influence for this division of the County against Pelham and Heneage who I understand are going to be in nomination against Sir William Ingilby."

Tennyson, however, was not to be so easily bought, for Harris was offering very little of substance since his influence would be used against Pelham anyway, and his contribution at Lambeth was unlikely to be significant. Tennyson used the occasion to disclaim any undue use of influence on his father's part:

"..my Father has never, even when I was a Candidate at Grimsby, done more than offer a recommendation to those with whom from connection and old attachment he had habitually acted, but neither his
feeling nor his principles ever permitted him to retort vindictively on any Tenant who declined to follow such recommendation. Tennyson was not to be drawn further and adopted a neutral stance. His sympathies were with the whigs, however, and he must have helped them for after the election we find Lord Yarborough writing to him as follows: "Please accept my best thanks for the very kind support you were so good as to give me during the late contest, and which, I can assure you I shall at all times remember with gratitude." Whether this refers to the borough or to the county election is not clear, but either way it represents a remarkable turn of events.

Thus, it is probable that the Reform Act had done little or nothing to reduce the power of landed influence, and indeed, one of the motives of the framers of the Act may have been the restoration or consolidation of such influence. At all events, landlords locally were still exerting pressure on tenants as they had always done. Their family connections were as significant as ever, though the Tennysons were able publicly to adopt an apparently neutral stance which belied their now distinctly whiggish and reforming tendencies and their support for Yarborough. Such were the forces ranged against the tory candidate Grant that his defeat was a foregone conclusion, and so safely returned was Heneage that there was no further parliamentary contest locally for seventeen years.

The greatest contests during the period were those of 1818 and 1831. The first of these was essentially the Tennyson challenge to the established ruling influence of the Pelhams, and had little to do with party issues. Indeed, politically the two contestants were none too far apart, and in later years Charles Tennyson himself sat as a
whig and espoused whig causes, including reform. His rivalry with Yarborough was more a personal and strategic matter. Over the next two years the Tennysons were riding the crest of a wave, the culmination of hard campaigning in which, through the exertions of his activists, they made considerable inroads into the corporation. So successful had they been that for the first time in many years a tory mayor presided over the corporation, able to exert not inconsiderable influence in the conduct of elections and more particularly in the enrolment of freemen. The 1818 parliamentary election saw the victory of Charles Tennyson running as the sole tory candidate. This was followed by important tory victories in local elections and then, in the parliamentary election of 1820, the return of two tory candidates. As the Tennyson political fortunes waxed, those of Yarborough waned - but the decline was temporary and in any case limited. Yarborough continued to exert overwhelming control over the corporation and his influence within the borough remained formidable.

The Reform Issue

The issue of parliamentary reform was one which nationally divided the two parties. The whigs favoured reform and it was they who presented the Reform Bill. Locally, however, principle very often gave way to self interest, and since most of the existing voters stood to lose by the terms of the Bill, they rejected it.

There was no hint, during the autumn of 1830, of those popular disturbances which affected southern country districts and northern towns and which were put down with immoderate repression. The whigs, out of touch at this moment with the common man had no positive
proposals to deal with such problems, but, perhaps with a view to making concessions, or perhaps with a view to consolidating aristocratic power, they proposed their measure of parliamentary reform. Their bill, framed by Lord John Russell, was introduced on 1 March 1831 and proposed, inter alia, the disfranchisement of some sixty boroughs with a population of less than 2,000 inhabitants and the taking of one member from 47 boroughs with a population between 2,000 and 4,000. It was this latter which was of crucial significance locally, for Grimsby was threatened with the loss of one member and also with the restriction of the freeman vote, as well as the inclusion of new voters in the form of £10 occupiers, a move which in Grimsby at least could upset the unusually democratic or representative nature of the established electorate. On 15 March notice was given of a public meeting to be held in the town to discuss 'the Plan of Reform introduced on the motion of Lord John Russell - the effect of which is NOT to take away the right of voting from resident Burgesses, but to add the same right to Householders paying Scot and Lot for Ten pounds a year.'

Tories throughout the country were frightened by what appeared so extreme a measure of reform, and excitement soon mounted. In the county at large the whigs tried to persuade the Tories that only by sensible concession could the defence of property be assured and leading Tories were only too well aware that rejection of reform could spark serious unrest. When, in April, the bill was rejected in committee having passed its second reading, parliament was dissolved. The issue was to be decided by general election.
Thus, the question of parliamentary reform dominated the campaign, and the excitement at large was reflected at Grimsby. The proposal to reduce the borough's representation placed the whigs in an impossible position in the town, whatever the general feeling in the country over reform. Charles Wood, in declining to offer himself for re-election, nevertheless attempted, in a parting message, to convince electors of the rightness of the proposed reform: "Believe me as your friend, that the advocates of this measure are those who will contribute most to your real welfare. Your rights and those of your children are preserved, whilst your constituency is placed upon a firm and independent basis."

In a remarkable coalition of interests, George Tennyson (father of Charles, and resident at Baysons Manor from where he exercised close control over his local interests) made public his unequivocal support for reform and issued, for the attention of all burgesses, a handbill in which he stated: "...it is my most earnest wish, that all my Friends should give their most strenuous support to the Measure - and that they will do so, by supporting the Candidates in the Blue Interest."

The whig, or blue, candidates were Rees Howell Gronow and Henry William Hobhouse, the latter appearing on the scene only three days before the election itself. Both were strong advocates of reform, but found it necessary to temper this by promising to seek the restoration of Grimsby's representation:

"...although I perceive the Town of Great Grimsby is included in the Schedule B by which it would be deprived of one of its Representatives, I beg to assure you that my most strenuous exertions shall be used, and I am emboldened to declare my most Sanguine hope (from particular circumstances) of procuring an exception in favour of so important a place of Commerce."
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Such was Gronow's address to the electors, but the parenthetical hint that he was a party to information favourable to Grimsby's interests was hardly likely to convince. Hobhouse, too, had to grapple as well as he could with a hopeless cause. Urging the necessity for reform he nevertheless promised, "that I will particularly direct my efforts to the removal of any disfranchisement which may be inadvertently included in the Bill." Local electors knew, however, that there was nothing inadvertent in the proposal to deprive Grimsby of one of its members.

On the face of it, the forces on the side of reform were considerable. They consisted of two whig candidates in a constituency which was itself traditionally whig and in which that influence, exercised from Brocklesby, was still in evidence. This was reinforced by the declaration of support, and direction of votes, from Brockleby's long-standing rivals, the Tennysons. Such an open alliance had never before been contemplated, but for all this it was not enough. Although Yarborough had for long been a supporter of, and advocate of, reform, he could not relish the prospect of the demotion of the borough from a two member constituency and the widening of its electorate to include voters who, being more substantial citizens might also be independent of his own influence. Yet if the motives of the government were to defend property by making concessions, Yarborough, the largest landowner in the county and one of the largest in the country, and a committed party man, could hardly oppose the measure either, and in any case he well understood the wisdom of reform.

The tory candidates were Captain Harris and John Villiers Shelley (son of Sir John Shelley, Baronet). Shelley assured voters that he was
anxious for the removal of abuses, but rejected the present proposals as crude and ill-digested, "calculated to overturn all social order and good Government." Harris shared these views and had already voted against the reform bill.

Both tory candidates were victorious and it is clear that the freemen, jealous of their interests, were apprehensive over the proposed curtailment not only of their rights but of an important source of income too. The corporation, on the other hand, by now firmly back within the Pelham fold after the tory encroachments earlier in the decade, voted solidly whig, the only exception being three members who had either proposed or seconded one or other of the tory candidates. This was another example of courtesy voting, for the members concerned were generally whig supporters.

Thus it was that a national issue of party principle, and one of the most important political and constitutional issues of the first half of the century, was received locally less as a matter of principle and more as a matter of self interest. Had Grimsby not been included in Schedule B, matters might have been different.

Broader Connections

Electioneering in Grimsby was not entirely unconnected with that in the county at large. The same personnel often had a stake in both. Yarborough himself was well established in the county which was far more important to his political standing than Grimsby could ever be. The Heneages and Tennysons both had interests in Grimsby and Lincoln City.

In the county, following the removal of Pelham to the Lords as second baron in 1823, the whig representation passed to Sir William
Amcotts Ingilby, a baronet from Yorkshire whose estate was at Kettlethorpe. The contest of 1823 between him and the tory Sir John Thorold was lengthy and expensive and, it was said, had been kept going "all for the honour of the House of Brocklesby." He may well have been acquainted too with Charles Tennyson for they had both attended Louth School. As a whig he proved ultimately to be much less moderate than Pelham, a matter which was to cause friction in later years. In Lincoln City, Fazakerley, who had so successfully fought Grimsby in the Pelham interest in 1818, stood again in 1826, this time in the Monson interest. The Monsons were a very powerful landed county family who for long had exercised influence at Lincoln, though they were now in something of a decline. Fazakerley had stood for them unopposed in 1812 but was now, in 1826, facing not one but two other candidates. One of these, Thomas George Corbett, had his own estate at Elsham Hall, at Brigg, near Scunthorpe, and stood with the support of both the Heneages and Tennysons — further evidence of their warm friendship and close association at this time. Such support however was insufficient to carry the day against his rival a Colonel Sibthorp, a man with considerable influence and standing within the county.

The electoral scenes at Grimsby, Lincoln City, and the county illustrate very clearly the importance of influence derived from ownership of land and also the often close connections which existed between local political interests. In the great election of 1831 the Pelham - Heneage - Tennyson interests were as much involved as ever, this time united on the question of reform. All pitched their weight behind the reform candidates at Grimsby. George Heneage was
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persuaded by the reformers to stand for Lincoln City, and he and
Colonel Sibthorp were returned unopposed, the one in favour and the
other opposed to reform. It was Sibthorp who first moved the
amendment to the Reform Bill attributed ever since to Lord Chandos and
known as the Chandos Clause. The effect of this was to extend the vote
to 50 tenants at will in the counties. As a tory Sibthorp pressed
for this as a means of extending landlord influence, and it was a
measure which, by widening the franchise, would also meet with radical
approval. The Tennysons for their part tried to persuade one of
their own supporters, Heathcote, to stand on the reform platform, but
he declined.

Most of the leading political figures in town and county were
brought together amid great feasting and rejoicing at the Reform
Festivals held at both Grimsby and Lincoln in 1832 to celebrate the
passing of the Reform Act.

In Grimsby the event, held in Marshall's granary, was attended by
many eminent local figures including the mayor and town clerk, Charles
Tennyson, the Hon. C.A. Pelham, Sir W.A. Ingilby, and Captain Maxfield.
Pelham and Nicholson (deputy Recorder), though reformers, were hostile
to the ballot. Ingilby, as county member became something of an
embarrassment to high society by the intemperance and whimsicality of
his speeches and views. He and Tennyson both favoured the ballot,
'upon principle, and as converts from the other side.' The editor of
the Stamford News, in reporting the speeches, opposed the ballot as an
extreme measure which would 'engender suspicion between man and man'
thereby altering the British character which "has from open voting
alone been truly considered as the most bold, independent, frank and
straightforward of all nations." Furthermore, the ballot would lessen
the enthusiasm which "has ever been the twin sister of Liberty."

This was indeed Pelham's own position. He regarded the ballot as
a threat to liberty, for it would be a prolific source of suspicion, it
would generate feelings inimical to the wellbeing and comfort of
society. He had supported the Reform Bill:

"from the firm conviction that corrupt boroughs...such as for
instance, the borough for which I was returned before I had the honour
of representing this county - a borough containing only 33 voters
(laughter) of whom I never saw one (laughter) nor even the place itself
(continued laughter)...from the firm conviction that such boroughs ought
to be disfranchised...the representative of one of these close boroughs
had equal power with a county member, returned probably by a
constituency amounting to 3 or 4,000 individuals...I rejoice that the
system is now repudiated. The first vote which I ever gave (in the
House) was that which contributed to turn the Duke of Wellington out of
office, a person who had no sort of intention, neither had his friends,
of repudiating the old corrupt system of legislation."

Sir William Ingilby could hardly have presented a greater
contrast. A man of title and wealth, he advanced the claims of the
poor in terms which were as unmeasured as they were popular:

"I would have the peasant whose freehold is stated as 40s as free
and independent as my Lord Brownlow with his £40,000 a year...the time
is fast approaching when the people of England shall no longer labour
under the dictation of a proud and imperious aristocracy, or of a
domineering and meddlesing priesthood."

He went on to inveigh in the strongest terms against placemen,
pensioners, and the church. It was a theme taken up with almost as
much assiduity by Charles Tennyson who, regretting Grimsby's loss of
one representative, nevertheless upheld the reform not only of
parliament but of other institutions and abuses.

Remarkably little divergence of opinion emerged at the Festival,
except on the question of the ballot. No clear party division was
evident: the radical, though aristocratic whig Ingilby was ranged
alongside Tennyson in favour of reform and the ballot; Pelham and his
deputy Nicholson in favour of reform but against the ballot, and the
mayor and corporation held up as "a model for the reform of others, as
everything of the least public importance depends on the free vote of
the whole body of burgesses."67

It is clear that whatever issues arose to divide the electorate,
family and county connections remained much as they had always been.
1832 did little for influence other than perhaps to reinforce it by
widening the electorate subject to it. The Tennyson influence was
still of considerable account even after Charles Tennyson had given up
all wish to represent Grimsby; and though he had formerly stood as a
Tory his political principles were such that his natural inclination
was towards the Whigs and reform. Finally, the emergence of the
Heneage interest from the mid 1820s served to greatly strengthen the
Whig cause; it supplemented that of the Pelhams, and was sufficient to
hold the borough from 1835 to 1852, by which time political forces and
economic conditions had changed radically.

NOTES

Grimsby was not as prosperous or developed as Louth, Gainsborough,
Boston, Spalding and other Lincolnshire towns.

Notwithstanding their considerable property holdings within the borough,
the Pelhams nevertheless were to rely heavily on the creation of new
freemen and on the manipulation of non-resident voters to secure their
majority, at least throughout the remaining years of the eighteenth
century and the early years of the nineteenth.

Scunthorpe mss. diary of Rev. Parkinson, 7 September 1798.

5. McKenzie, Namier, quoted in Mitchell A (1967) p.2. Thus McKenzie argued that by 1830 '...it was still almost impossible to identify within parliament or outside it anything that resembles the modern party system'; Namier, writing of eighteenth century politics suggested that there was '...no trace of a two party system, or at all of party in the modern sense.'


8. Ibid pp6-21. As Mitchell observes, whig attitudes on public opinion and on the economy were quite distinctive, and a product of long years in opposition. The whig emphasis on the people (the 'middling' classes rather than the masses) as opposed to the crown was traditional. Mitchell shows how broad differences on a series of specific questions during the reign of George III were drawn into existing conflict between ministry and opposition 'so that both sides became committed to a point of view', and 'it was this development..which created the basis of the division between whig and tory in the nineteenth century' (pp.12-13).

9. GPL TP Misc.

10. GPL TP 11.11.1819 Misc.

11. TP GPL C. Monck - C. Tennyson 23.6.1818.


13. TP GPL Veal - C. Tennyson 4.7.1819.

14. In the same handbill that featured reform, there appear these lines:
   "As to papists and parsons I can't see,
   But in preaching and practice they do well agree;
   The horse-race, the ballroom, the chase or cock-fighting,
   Is what most of these oracles of wisdom delight in.
   A touch from the sanctified finger or thumb,
   Will save poor lost souls from the wrath that's to come,
   A sprink of cold water, or a cross on the face,
   We're taught to believe that 'tis real saving grace.
   O, heaven-born teachers! Rare sport for the devil,
   Could barber or tailor e'er preach a worse evil."

15. TP GPL Veal - C. Tennyson 12.10.1820.


17. TP GPL Oliver - C. Tennyson 12.10.1820.

18. TP GPL Misc.
Chapter 3: Borough Politics


21. Pollbook 1826. Not only were his opponents sympathetic to the Catholic cause but so also was Tennyson, and he gave this as a reason for not standing. In a poster published at the time he noted "I find also that there is a considerable party desirous of Ministerial Candidates and opponents of the Catholic Claims; now as I do not answer that description I may not be thought a fit Representative in the next Parliament." This is also interesting in hinting at Tennyson's lack of tory sympathies. Halifax Papers, A4/20, 9.3.1826.

22. GPL Skelton Papers 1826.


26. GPL Skelton Proof Book 1834 p.233. The surviving literature relating to this election has a surprisingly modern ring to it both in its emphasis on matters of national importance (particularly economic) and in its attempt to persuade electors to view such issues in a partisan manner. It provides further support for the existence of parties at this time.

27. Pollbook 1818.


29. Pollbook (Skelton) 1832.


31. TP GPL Handbill from C. Tennyson to Independent Electors 19.1.1818.

32. LAO 4 Td'E H/17.

33. There can be little doubt that strategy informed much electioneering. In any situation where the incumbent party appeared strong, but not so strong as to make a contest fruitless, it would not be sound strategy for the challenger to put up two candidates. This was precisely the position which Tennyson found himself in before the 1818 campaign. It had been six years since the previous election and many new voters were to be enrolled on the Call List, many of these, as Tennyson well knew, favourable to his cause or easily won over. Furthermore, the result in 1812 had not been a walkover, so there was considerable residual support for any opponent of the Pelhams. By the purchase of property the Tennyson family had cultivated influence in the New Town, but only if he could be certain of more than 50% support would it have made sense for Charles Tennyson to enter with a partner. In the event, putting up only one candidate (himself) made sense for,
Chapter 3: Borough Politics

taking advantage of complete party loyalty of his own supporters (he had more plumpers than any other candidate before 1832) he could also count on opponents splitting their votes. To achieve success with two candidates would have been much more difficult, and carried the risk of complete failure since opponents 'free' or uncommitted votes would now be distributed over two candidates. As it happened, strategic considerations at this 1818 election coincided with expediency, for Treasury support (including the provision of a running mate) had not been forthcoming despite expectations to the contrary, and Tennyson was disillusioned with the Treasury.

34. TP GPL Handbill 16.2.1818.

35. LAO 4 Td'E H/14 Daubney - C. Tennyson 19.7.1818; TP GPL 19.1.1819 Squire - C. Tennyson 'Rebutting Evidence'. The Tennyson Papers provide considerable detail of the proceedings which apparently had gone a long way before being dropped. Considerable evidence had been collected by Tennyson's supporters, much of it against the return of Fazakerley (since Grant appears to have bribed for both), and it was probably Fazakerley's mediation which eventually persuaded Grant to drop the matter.

36. Handbill in 1820 Pollbook.

37. TP GPL Daubney - C. Tennyson 9.2.1820 and 6.2.1820. See also Chapter 5 for a discussion of the means of paying voters.

38. Pollbook 1826. Before indicating his intention not to stand, Tennyson announced: "If I do again represent Grimsby, I will, as before, owe my return exclusively to the Independent Freemen...the Blue Party...constantly seeks our destruction and now, as heretofore, grasping at the Two seats, would render Grimsby a close borough, and its representation merely nominal." Halifax Papers A4/20, 9.3.1826.

39. Pollbook 1826. There is some evidence of considerable mismanagement, and a hint of dishonesty, on the part of Phillipps' agent, General Loft. Alderman Lusby himself was adamant that Loft was responsible for the failure of Phillipps to be elected: see MS Phillipps-Robinson, d.268, Lusby - Phillipps 15.6.1826 and 3.7.1826 (in Bodleian Library).


41. In the Commons a Mr. O'Connell had proposed an amendment that the writ for a new election be withheld since Grimsby would shortly be reduced to one member anyway.


43. TP GPL G. Tennyson - Lusby 10.8.1831.

44. TP GPL G. Tennyson - Lusby 3.6.1831.
Chapter 3: Borough Politics


46. LAO Td'E H4/3 Loughborough - C. Tennyson 3.10.1832.

47. LAO Td'E H4/4 C. Tennyson - Plaskitt 13.10.1832.

48. LAO Td'E H4/5 C. Tennyson - Plaskitt 13.10.1832.


51. TP GPL C. Tennyson - Captain Harris, 25.12.1834.


53. TP GPL C. Tennyson - Captain Harris 25.12.1834.

54. TP GPL Harris - C. Tennyson 24.12.1834.

55. TP GPL C. Tennyson - Harris 25.12.1834.

56. LAO 2Td'E H/32/20 Felham - C. Tennyson February 1835.

57. Skelton Papers 15.3.1831.

58. Pollbook (Skelton) May 1831.

59. Pollbook (Skelton); handbill dated 29.4.1831.

60. Pollbook, and Skelton Papers 24.4.1831.

61. Ibid.


64. Drakard *Report of the Grimsby Reform Festival pamphlet (1832)* Drakard, Stamford p.4.

65. Ibid p.11. Notwithstanding his repudiation of corruption, however, it is clear that Yarborough's influence could not be sustained under the conditions of a secret ballot. At the same time, the Tennysons could never hope to match Yarborough's property holdings or influence and therefore stood to gain from the introduction of the secret ballot. Their respective positions on this matter are easily explained by self interest.


67. Ibid.
CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPATION AND PARTISAN BEHAVIOUR

PARTICIPATION

In size the borough electorate, made up as it was entirely of freemen, remained fairly stable up to 1832 when it was greatly extended, along with the boundary, by the Reform Act. The total number of freemen electors in 1818 was 369, reached a peak in 1830 of 394 and fell slightly thereafter. After 1832 the freemen voters declined in both absolute and relative importance, a process which accelerated after 1852.¹

The behaviour of the freemen voters before 1832 was thus the behaviour of the whole electorate, and as will be seen it was not always predictable or predetermined wholly by social or economic influences. The Lincolnshire port of Boston lying some 60 miles south of Grimsby and likewise containing a freeman electorate has been examined with regard to voting and participation to provide some contrasts.

Since it has been possible to identify new voters or 'cohorts' at each election, together with drop-outs, a clear picture of changes in the composition of the electorate over time can be built up (Table 4.1). The rate at which a cohort decayed (to be replaced by new voters) can be readily seen. Thus, of the original 369 voters recorded in Grimsby in 1818, 172 or 47% were still voting some twelve years later in 1832. A similar rate of decay has been found by Mitchell and Cornford for Cambridge.²
### Table 4.1

**Turnover in the Membership of the Electorate by Cohort, Grimsby 1818-1835**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1818</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FREEMEN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (May)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (August)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>369</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>289*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grimsby Occupiers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>65*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>428</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Occupiers in New Parishes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>574</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes 11 freemen who are shown voting as occupiers.
** Excludes the above 11 freemen.

Source: Linked pollbooks for Grimsby, 1818-1835.
Chapter 4: Participation and Partisan Behaviour

The most striking feature of cohort decay in Grimsby was the very high rate of loss between the first appearance of new voters and their second election, irrespective of time lapse. Indeed, the highest losses are recorded over the shortest time periods, and testify to the existence at each election of significant numbers of one-time voters, enrolled as freemen immediately prior to an election and struck off soon afterwards. Many of these no doubt enrolled for the sole purpose of obtaining short-term financial gain; others were brought in by party agents as a means of bolstering support.

After the initial losses, decay was gradual, reflecting no doubt purely natural processes of death or migration, together with pauperism.

In Boston, there are two significant contrasts. In the first place, there was a smaller proportion of new voters at each election, reflecting the characteristic and much narrower mode of admission to freedom (i.e. almost exclusively apprenticeship). Secondly, in general cohort decay was less rapid. Of new voters in 1820, 48% had dropped out by 1826 (the next election) in Grimsby compared with only 32% in Boston, and the contrast is as great between 1826 and 1830. 1831 and 1832 witnessed exceptionally high cohort decay in Boston, reflecting the strength of feeling over the reform issue. On the whole, however, the existence of fewer outvoters in Boston accounts for a much lower rate of initial cohort decay (See Table 4.2).

Losses in the electorate as a whole were much less marked in both Grimsby and Boston (see Table 4.3): they were particularly low in Boston in the early years because of the smaller number of outvoters.
Chapter 4: Participation and Partisan Behaviour

TABLE 4.2

TURNOVER IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ELECTORATE BY COHORT, BOSTON 1818-1832

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREEMEN</th>
<th>1818</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1832</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.

TABLE 4.3

EX-VOTERS, GRIMSBY AND BOSTON 1820 - 1832 (Abstainers in a given election expressed as a percentage of voters in the previous election).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRIMSBY</th>
<th>BOSTON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (May)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (Aug)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Freemen voters only.
Source: Linked pollbooks.
Chapter 4: Participation and Partisan Behaviour

The reform issue had a considerable impact in Boston leading to a high abstention rate and hence a large number of ex-voters.

It is also clear that at any election the great majority of electors were experienced in the sense of having voted at least in the previous election. This applies in both Grimsby and Boston and is in marked contrast to the finding of Phillips for early eighteenth century elections in which "the lack of experienced voters was one of the striking aspects of the electoral system." It may not, however, have differed much from nineteenth century experience, and Table 4.4 reveals a pattern not dissimilar to that which may be derived from evidence provided by Mitchell and Cornford for Cambridge.

**TABLE 4.4**

**NEW AND EXPERIENCED VOTERS, GRIMSBY AND BOSTON 1820-1835**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GRIMSBY</th>
<th></th>
<th>BOSTON</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voters (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Voters (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (May)</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (Aug)</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Linked pollbooks.
Chapter 4: Participation and Partisan Behaviour

In 1826 in Grimsby 56% of voters were voting in their third parliamentary election at least, and the majority of these would also have participated in local elections of one kind or another. In 1830 the figure was 52% and in May 1831 nearly one half of electors were voting in at least their fifth election. Commenting on rather less impressive figures for Norwich and Maidstone in 1790 Phillips argued that:

"Such a solid core of experienced electors must have affected the conduct of parliamentary campaigns, since this long-term participation, coupled with the consistent majority of experienced voters at each election, created the real possibility of an electorate with long standing loyalties and definite predilections."

In Boston the six year gap between 1820 and 1826 had rather less effect than in Grimsby. It is likely that this was due to a large number of outvoters swelling the Grimsby electorate in 1826, and just as many had done so in 1820 only to be struck off shortly afterwards.

It is indeed possible to point to longstanding loyalties on the part of many electors, though the explanation for them may lie partly elsewhere, in ties of dependence which encouraged consistent voting and occasionally penalised inconsistent voting.

Cohort decay is one side of the coin; the other is recruitment, and in contrast it does appear to have been related to time. This is to be expected under a system in which the franchise was limited by status and age. The number of new electors added each year in Grimsby varied between 24 and 27 before 1832, but between the two elections of May and August 1831 the rate was much higher (44 per annum) despite a 10% lower turnout in the second election. This second election had been occasioned by the first being declared void on grounds of corruption, and it stimulated much activity on the part of activists in...
recruiting new voters. Thereafter, with the passing of the Reform Act, the recruitment of freemen voters fell, to be replaced by occupiers within the parish and in outlying parishes.

Thus, what might be termed a 'natural' rate of recruitment may be distinguished from the feverish rate at election times. The natural rate is made up of those who sought permanent freeman status not solely for the franchise which accompanied it, or the favours of the moment, but for the prestige and social esteem it bestowed. Some were enrolled as freemen between elections on attaining their majority or the successful completion of their apprenticeship; many more found it prudent to wait until election times when their fees would be paid by parliamentary candidates seeking their allegiance. It is thus important not to misinterpret the large number of pre-election enrolments as evidence of corruption. The initiative for claiming the right to vote and for enrolment rested largely with the individual; it made sense for him to wait until election time when he could expect the necessary expenses to be met for him by parliamentary candidates. An impending election provided the motivation: for many there was no malpractice for they were fully entitled to their freedom. Once enrolled they remained on the Freemens Roll and thus entitled to vote, for life. In contrast were those recruited purely to vote in a particular election and showing little or no interest in permanent freeman status. Many were outvoters brought in for the express purpose of voting and often they disappeared from the scene without ever appearing on the official Freemens Roll, though they were admitted to freedom (with appropriate fees paid for them) and their names entered in the Mayor's Court Book. This practice of bringing in outvoters (or 'foreign' voters) was very
marked in 1826 for which election the pollbook gives a large number of names with residences outside Grimsby. They came from near and far: Waltham, Cleethorpes, Humberstone, Rasen, Ludborough, Keelby, Aylesby (all within a few miles of the borough), Alford, South Reston, Gainsborough, Brigg, Spilsby, Doncaster, Hull, Grantham, Nottingham, London, and elsewhere. In Boston few such 'foreign' voters are to be found.

In the period 1818-1832 the total number of Grimsby freemen admitted and recording a vote at one election only was 103, or 14.2% of all freemen voting in this period. This excludes one-time freemen voters in the first and last elections (1818 and 1835) as they cannot be identified from the data. However, of the 132 freemen admitted in 1818, 70 were struck off immediately afterwards, so that the proportion of one-time voters may be over 20%.

It would be reasonable to suppose that if such a 'natural' rate be admitted, it was roughly half the recorded recruitment (or ten to twelve new freemen per year) before 1832. Thereafter the decline in the importance of freemen in town politics and especially in parliamentary elections dimmed somewhat the attractions of freeman status and the prestige associated with it so that enrolments dropped off markedly.

It is very difficult to identify with precision non-voters in the Grimsby electorate until 1832 when they are indicated in the pollbooks. In 1832 abstainers represented approximately 21% of the electorate, an abnormally high figure which contained a high proportion of new occupiers from surrounding parishes recently enfranchised. In the following election, 1835, the proportion of the electorate failing to
register a vote was just over 8%. It is certain, however, that turnout was consistently very high during the years when the electorate was made up entirely of freemen, before 1832. Although they are not recorded in the pollbooks abstainers can be inferred with reasonable accuracy from data linkage, and it is likely that turnout never fell much below 90%. Mitchell, Phillips, and others have found similarly high turnouts in small constituencies. In Boston turnout was over 90% in all elections before 1832 with the exception of 1831 when it fell to a little over 70% as a result of disquiet over the reform issue.

It is quite impossible to discover fully enfranchised electors who never cast a vote, but virtually all persons on the Freemen's Roll in the early nineteenth century have been identified as voting at some time or another. Among those who were undoubtedly eligible to vote but who did not were mariners, and they were always represented amongst abstainers. Failure to turn out cannot otherwise be associated with occupational group, so small were the numbers involved.

There are a number of possible explanations for such high turnout, not the least of which is the financial gain to be enjoyed from either or both sides on the casting of a vote. In such conditions a vote not cast was a vote wasted. A high turnout is also consistent with the casting of a vote being seen as a social duty and a matter of interest to the community as a whole. That such attitudes prevailed must in large measure explain the very existence of pollbooks, particularly in smaller constituencies where printers would look to a relatively small market from which to recover their costs. The unusually large number of abstentions in 1832 is partly explicable in the same terms. The borough had lost the right to return one of its two MPs, new voters
had been enfranchised and the boundaries enlarged. The tories might normally have been expected to vote against the measure but were urged not to by their local leaders, Tennyson among them. The first election under the new franchise witnessed a protest in the form of abstention. It is possible too that in Grimsby at any rate votes were much more difficult to sell, both because of the experiences of the previous year surrounding the successful petitioning against bribery and because of the dilution of the electorate.

PARTISAN BEHAVIOUR

The interpretation of voting behaviour for much of the nineteenth century is a matter of some difficulty and requires great caution. There was a great variety of voting patterns permissible because each elector had two votes, and because at any one election before 1832 there might be three or four candidates. In 1818 and 1826 the tories in Grimsby put up one candidate only whereas in all elections the whigs put up two. After 1832 voting patterns are much simpler with each elector having only one vote to bestow or withhold.

Thus, suppose that, as happened in 1818 and 1826 (and in nearly all elections in Boston) one tory candidate faced two whigs. Then, using subscripts to distinguish between the two whig candidates, any one or two of the following votes might be cast by any one elector:

\( T, W_1, W_2. \)

This gives the following possibilities:

\( T, W_1, W_2, TW_1, TW_2, W_1W_2, NV, \)

that is, seven in all.
Chapter 4: Participation and Partisan Behaviour

A single vote is known as a plumper; such a vote for the tory candidate, or a double vote of the kind \( W_1W_2 \) are described as straight party votes (in party terms, a single vote for the tory might be described, following Phillips, as a 'necessary' plump; a single vote for one of the whig candidates as an 'unnecessary' plump'). If, as happened often in Grimsby, (though rarely in Boston) two candidates of each party stood, then any one or two of the following might be cast, which, with abstention, gave no less than eleven possibilities:

\[ T_1, T_2, W_1, W_2, T_1T_2, W_1W_2, T_1W_1, T_2W_1, T_2W_2, NV. \]

Again, single or plump votes and double votes of the kind \( T_1T_2 \), or \( W_1W_2 \) are party votes.

**Plump Voting**

The extent of plump voting in Grimsby is shown in the following table.

**TABLE 4.5: PLUMP VOTING IN GRIMSBY, 1818 - 1831**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Candidates</th>
<th>No. of voters giving a plump vote</th>
<th>Plump voters as % of total voters</th>
<th>Plump as % of total votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (May)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (Aug)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Linked pollbooks.
Very little plumping took place in four-candidate contests: generally not more than 1% in parliamentary elections, except in 1820 when over 19% of the votes were cast for the whig Samuel Turner. Such votes may be taken to indicate clear party support but reflecting also a clear preference for one candidate or a dislike of the other. In this case Turner had the support of Yarborough; Brackenbury, his running mate, though earlier on the scene was locally unknown and failed to gain the support of party activists.¹⁰

This pattern of plumping contrasts markedly with Boston where all contests were between three candidates: the tories only ever fielded one candidate at any election during our period, and the whigs two. In the first three elections - 1818, 1820, 1826 - plump voting in Boston was lower than in Grimsby. Thereafter, however, plump voting in Boston was much greater.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of voters</th>
<th>Plump voters as % of total voters</th>
<th>Plump as % of total votes cast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.
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The elections of 1831 and 1832 were characterised by low turnout and the polarisation of opinion around the reform question, and these probably explain the marked increase in plump voting (Table 4.6).

In local elections in Grimsby there were few plumpers. In December 1818 and December 1820 elections were held to fill one vacant post for alderman and one for common councilman. Each party put up one candidate for each post, a total of four candidates. Each of these was clearly running on a party ticket. In the first of these elections plump voters were 3.7% of total voters, and in 1820 only 2.4%.

There are voters who, from their pattern of voting, may generally be regarded as tories, i.e. who over successive elections cast straight party votes but who nevertheless in 1818 and 1826, having only one tory candidate to vote for, cast their second vote for a whig candidate rather than 'waste' it. It may perhaps be a little unreasonable to regard such voters as unstable, yet it is difficult to do otherwise. Essentially they were tories yet it cannot be argued that they were under necessity to split their votes. A vote not cast was frequently described as wasted, though from the point of view of party a split vote lent unnecessary succour to the opposition, unless, of course, since two candidates were to be returned anyway, the voter might have a clear preference for one of the opposition candidates over the other. Such behaviour would not therefore be irrational. It might indeed be based on a voter's understanding of his total social situation and his knowledge of the personalities involved, without any reference to party or ideology. Certainly it does appear that electors commonly avoided wasting a vote. Referring to late eighteenth century elections, Phillips remarks:
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"The frenetic and highly sophisticated partisan activity in Norwich proved inadequate to the challenge posed by 3-man races. Voters simply refused in large numbers to throw away their second vote, party or no party."

From a financial point of view there was no necessity to split, for when only one candidate was fielded electors were offered twice the going rate for a single vote. The almost complete absence of 'unnecessary' plump voting therefore may be largely explained by the financial penalties attached rather than by any ideological or party considerations.

Cross or Split Voting

The common occurrence of split voting further complicates the interpretation of voting behaviour. A split vote, sometimes known also as a cross vote, occurred when a voter cast one of his two votes for a tory and the other for a whig candidate. The extent of such splitting varied from one election to another, but was understandably greatest in three-man than in four-man contests. With three-man contests splitting was inevitable; in four-man contests it was never completely eradicated (see Table 4.7). The mean split vote over parliamentary elections was 15.1%. It is clear that 1818 was exceptional, and is to be explained by the unusually vigorous nature of the campaign which challenged the solidarity of whig voters and encouraged many of them to give up their allegiance totally. It was also an election in which only one tory candidate stood. There can be no doubt that during these years established influence itself was under attack.

Split voting varied greatly over time and between constituencies, and much depended upon the number of candidates fielded at any given election, though other factors were also involved. Phillips found
TABLE 4.7: CROSS PARTY VOTING, GRIMSBY 1818 - 1831

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Candidates</th>
<th>No. of voters giving a split vote</th>
<th>As % of total voters</th>
<th>Split votes as % of total votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818 Local</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820 Local</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (May)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (Aug)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.

TABLE 4.8: CROSS PARTY VOTING, BOSTON 1818 - 1831 (As % of total voters).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.
comparatively low levels of split voting in Norwich - a highly
politically freeman borough - in the late eighteenth century, but high
levels (over 78% in 1774) in Maidstone. Nossiter reported an
average of 20% split voting in north-eastern boroughs between 1832 and
1868, whilst Wright found that Bradford electors more often split
than not. Similarly high figures were characteristic of Boston in
the period before reform (see Table 4.8).

The unusually low figure in Boston for 1831 is to be seen against
the issue of reform which appears to have discouraged tories from
turning out, giving a low turnout and a low cross vote: with only one
candidate fielded, it would be the tories who would ordinarily have
been expected to split. The otherwise high figures for previous
elections are more easily explained by their being three-man contests.

There might be many motives for split voting. One contemporary
document giving advice to those charged with conducting elections
observes:

"In every borough there are many voters who, from various motives,
desire to please both parties, and therefore divide their votes; some
give one vote for principle and another for interest; some like to be
on the winning side and so 'hedge' accordingly, and a few try to get
all they can from both parties."

Shoemakers, grocers, butchers, tailors, joiners, craftsmen and retailers
of all sorts who relied for their custom on a wide clientele might be
supposed to have every reason to cast in this way to avoid giving
offence or displeasure, and so risk losing custom, and no doubt did
split with this in mind. Certainly in Grimsby trades people, craft
and retail, were more likely to split, though the tendency is only
slight. Nossiter suggests that the combined whig-tory split was
commoner among the upper and professional classes, but this
observation, which fits in well with the notion of an independent electorate freely exercising political choice, is not borne out in Grimsby where split voting was as common among the lower as among the upper occupational groups, if not more so. In his study of four eighteenth century constituencies Phillips found that it was the working men or lower orders who tended to cast fewer partisan votes. In Boston there was a slight tendency for merchants and retailers to split in 1820 and 1826, whilst in 1818 it had been the drink interest which showed such a tendency (voting split in the proportion 20:1). There was otherwise little occupational bias in split voting in Boston, and none at all in 1830 and 1831.

Nossiter puts forward four explanations for split voting, viz. the appeal of individual candidates; party tactics; competing influences; and real political inclination. It is likely that all of these were operative in Grimsby (though their influence would also be reflected in the votes of political converts, those who changed party allegiances between elections). Thus, in 1826, the tory candidate was both a late entrant on the scene and a virtual unknown. This, coupled with the withdrawal of active political interest in the borough by Charles Tennyson, must have strained party loyalties beyond measure, so that those tory voters who did not change sides altogether were inclined to split. The election of 1818 witnessed the greatest extent of split voting in Grimsby, the product of a campaign which may well have enhanced greatly the appeal both of Charles Tennyson himself and of the principle of independence for which he stood. Thus were many whig voters persuaded to cast one of their votes for the tory. Furthermore, whilst Fazakerley, the leading whig candidate, was
undoubtedly popular, his running mate, Grant, was not. It was an
election in which personalities played a not insignificant part.

Party tactics may help to explain why, in 1818 and 1826 the
tories fielded only one candidate. In the first of these elections
they were seeking to maximise their strength as their fortunes
increased; in the second they sought to minimise their weakness, and
tactical considerations meant that their greatest hope of overcoming
the pervasive influence of Yarborough lay in fielding one rather than
two candidates. Where one candidate was up against two opponents,
split voting, as we have seen, was likely to be marked. However,
party tactics as such do not appear to be a major explanation of split
voting in Grimsby, and seem to have little to do with the not
insignificant splitting in 1820 and 1830.

Competing influences, for example between two landlords, or a
 landlord and an employer, undoubtedly existed, though from this
distance insufficient data exist to make any detailed or meaningful
examination. Business considerations, and the maintenance of good
customer relations may, as we have seen, have produced a prudent cross-
vote.

The significance of real political inclination for cross voting is
more problematical, and certainly a large proportion of split votes is
not in itself evidence of 'real political inclination.' In certain
circumstances it might well be, as when, in the words of Cox and Grady,
a voter gave one vote for 'principle and another for interest.'20
Furthermore, as will be shown later, there are clear indications that
this happened.21 Many tenants of Lord Yarborough can be found
casting one of their votes for a tory candidate rather than for a
second whig, and whilst they might thereby be commenting on personalities, some undoubtedly were casting for principle. It is not often that principle was sufficiently strong to overcome interest, but where it was the voter became a convert, and faced the consequences. Generally a split vote was as far as most voters were prepared to go in satisfying political conscience when interest and principle were opposed.

Phillips argues that 'neither split voting nor inconsistent party voting indicate partisan ties or political awareness', and he suggests rather they they are signs of political immaturity. Voters, however, never operated in a political vacuum; open voting imposed many constraints arising from the social context in which it took place. Many voters may have demonstrated keen political awareness and sound social awareness by splitting; other voters, behaving in the same way, may have done so out of real indifference to political issues - there is simply no way of knowing. Consistency over successive elections likewise may reflect political maturity, as Phillips argues, but not necessarily so in all cases, for it might equally mask a total lack of interest in political or ideological issues as such, whilst for many it was quite simply the safest path to follow.

At any particular election, however, the majority of the electors in Grimsby did not split, nor did they plump; and in Boston, where frequently the majority did split, they did so consistently over successive elections, reflecting the presence of only three candidates.

**Partisan Stability**

The partisan distribution of votes at different elections lends support to findings so far. Inevitably, in a two-party constituency...
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in which parties variously put up one or two candidates, at any election problems arise in faithfully rendering the wishes of the electorate. No entirely satisfactory method has yet been devised, but it has been decided to use the method adopted by Fraser in preference to others.\(^2\)\(^3\) It has the unique advantage over that adopted by Nossiter of eliminating the problem of weighting strong and weak candidates of the same party, a procedure which necessarily carries its own distortion.\(^2\)\(^4\) (See Appendix C). The Fraser method, which is a 'computation of an assumed contest between leading Liberal (whig) and leading Conservative (tory)' also appears to reflect more accurately the actual outcome of elections. Thus, using the Nossiter method, in 1818 in Grimsby the tory share of the poll was 50.5%, yet the tory candidate, although elected, came only second. In contrast, the Fraser method indicates tory support of 48.1%, a result more consistent with the outcome. Similar comparisons over subsequent elections confirm the superiority of the Fraser method.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1818</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>65.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean tory vote: 47.7%
Mean whig vote: 52.3%

Source: Pollbooks.
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Linking the pollbooks of successive elections makes possible a more meaningful analysis of voting patterns, and in particular reveals the extent of consistency or otherwise on the part of electors. The distribution of votes by type over successive pairs of elections is shown in transition tables (see Tables 4.10 a - g).

The majority of voters in any successive pair of elections voted in both elections, but there were always some new voters and some who had, for one reason or another, left the electorate or who did not vote in the second election. The votes in the first election are shown as the row entries; those in the second election as the column entries. Over any given pair of elections, electors casting votes in both elections may be divided into three types, viz. those giving a straight single or double tory vote; those giving a straight whig vote; and those who split their two votes whig/tory. Except for the unusual and exceptional experiences of the 1820-26 elections, party voters displayed much greater consistency in their voting than did split voters. Over no successive pairs of elections did the majority of split voters split consistently; their voting patterns exhibit considerable instability. Many party voters, as will be shown, were constrained by ties of dependence, but the interpretation of the split vote is fraught with difficulty. Clearly, however, it is from amongst inconsistent splitters that the bulk of floating voters must have been drawn.
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TRANSITION TABLES FOR GRIMSBY ELECTIONS, 1818 - 1835

TABLE 4.10 (a) Flow of the Vote, 1818-1820

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1818</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Cross Voters</th>
<th>Ex-Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.10 (b) Flow of the Vote, 1820-1826

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Cross Voters</th>
<th>Ex-Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.10 (c) Flow of the Vote, 1826-1830

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1826</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Cross Voters</th>
<th>Ex-Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.10 (d) Flow of the Vote, 1830-1831 (May)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1831</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.10 (e) Flow of the Vote, 1831 (May) - 1831 (August)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1831 (May)</th>
<th>1831 (August)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.10 (f) Flow of the Vote, 1831 (August) - 1832

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1831 (August)</th>
<th>1832</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Voters</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 4.10 (g) Flow of the Vote, 1832-1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Non Voters</th>
<th>Ex-Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1832</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Voters</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.

Notes

Whigs and Tories are those who voted for one or both whig or tory candidates.

Cross Voters voted for one whig and one tory candidate.

Non-voters cannot be identified.

New voters entered the electorate between the two elections and so voted only in the second. Ex voters left the electorate and voted only in the first.

From the transition tables an index of partisan stability can be derived by estimating the percentage of all who voted in both elections who gave the same type of vote - party or split - at both elections. (From any table this would be the number of electors in the top left through bottom right diagonal cells divided by the total in all the cells within the heavy line).
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TABLE 4.11: INDEX OF PARTISAN STABILITY, GRIMSBY 1818 - 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1818-20</th>
<th>1820-26</th>
<th>1826-30</th>
<th>1830-31</th>
<th>1831-1831</th>
<th>1831-32</th>
<th>1832-35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Linked pollbooks.

The index suggests that partisan stability was highest when elections were closest together - nearly 93% between May and August 1831 - but the figure for 1818-20 is unexpectedly low and suggests that factors other than time were at work. Indeed, this is so - electors were faced with a determined campaign by the Tennysons to establish a strong independent interest in the borough aimed at both parliamentary and corporation seats. Voting was clearly more fluid at the beginning of the period and reflects this struggle. Such discontinuities in voting behaviour are highlighted by the transition tables.

This turbulence of Grimsby elections was in contrast to Boston where partisan stability was high until 1830, when the reform issue caused a marked drop in stability over three successive elections. This was occasioned in large measure by a big swing of normally solid tory votes to the whigs or to cross voting, and by a massive swing of cross voters to the whigs. This was between the elections of 1830 and 1831, and taken together with the unusually low turnout (many tories abstained) it reflects a polarisation of opinion over the reform question. Once reform was accomplished the first election saw a return of many of these voters to their usual allegiances.
TABLE 4.12: INDEX OF PARTISAN STABILITY, BOSTON 1818-1832

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>1818-20</th>
<th>1820-26</th>
<th>1826-30</th>
<th>1830-31</th>
<th>1831-32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Linked pollbooks.

The changes in electoral behaviour in Grimsby are confirmed in the tables showing the composition and the destination of the party votes at successive elections. Table 4.13 giving the composition of the party vote shows the origin of party votes. The constants made up the bulk of voters at most elections, but occasionally there were exceptions, as in 1826.25 There is also a much higher proportion of constants among whigs than among tories (except in 1826 and 1832): this may be largely accounted for by the fact that in years when there was only one tory candidate, some tory voters split their vote. Thus, from the same table, in 1820 the proportion of tory converts from cross voters (i.e. from the previous election when there was only one candidate) is high. But the high constancy among whig voters may also be a reflection of the hold over the borough, and particularly the old town property, of the Yarborough influence. Notwithstanding this, however, 1820 saw whig fortunes in the borough at a low ebb. One of the whig candidates, John Brackenbury, received the lowest poll by far of any candidate in the nineteenth century (31 votes only), and the leading whig, Samuel Turner, received the second lowest (131 votes). Lincoln attributes the poor performance of Brackenbury to his being a late entrant, but letters printed with the pollbook show this to be mistaken: Brackenbury was in fact the first to announce his intention to stand.26 It was Turner who was the late entrant, and a stranger as
well. The Tennyson tide was running strongly, and he was consolidating his interest and influence by buying up property, a strategy which paid off in 1820.27

### Table 4.13: Composition of the Party Vote: Changes at Successive Elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Tory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>88.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>93.2</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>79.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Non-voters are not recorded until 1832.

**Source:** Linked pollbook data.

In 1826 nearly one quarter of the whig vote was derived from those who had voted tory at the previous election, and this partly reflects widespread disaffection in the borough with the tory cause and the failure of the tory agents to muster sufficient support for a largely unknown and in the event unpopular, candidate, Sir Thomas Phillipps. But it was a decline evident even earlier (almost as soon
Chapter 4: Participation and Partisan Behaviour

as the 1820 parliamentary election was over) in the 1820 aldermanic election. Charles Tennyson was beginning to direct his attention elsewhere, to Bletchingley where his connection with the Claytons had deep roots and offered greater security and, no doubt, the prospect of easier success with less expense. George Tennyson continued to nurture the family interest in Grimsby from Tealby, and it was more anti-Yarborough than pro-tory. There also appears to have been a general feeling in the borough in favour of change after six years of not very inspiring performance from the two tory members. What appears to be a marked tory defection was in fact only partly so, for the swing also reflects a restoration of whig fortunes after their disastrous performance in the previous election. It began with a recovery of strength (itself never seriously in danger) on the corporation, and was skilfully managed by party activists.

Over the period 1818-1826, and in 1830, straight converts made up a significant percentage of party support. One might be tempted to argue, therefore, that voters were not entirely bound by social constraints and had genuinely to be wooed. They certainly proclaimed their independence, and candidates found it prudent to pay lip service to it even when trying to buy it. Nevertheless, the majority of electors voted consistently along partisan lines.

Transition tables for Boston (see Tables 4.14 a - e) not only reveal high partisan stability but also the discontinuities caused by the reform issue between 1830 and 1832. One significant difference between the two constituencies lay in the fact that since all Boston elections were three-man contests there were, not surprisingly, few straight converts.
### TABLE 4.14 (a) Flow of the Vote, 1818-1820

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1820</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4.14 (b) Flow of the Vote, 1820-1826

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1826</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4.14 (c) Flow of the Vote, 1826-1830

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1830</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 4.14 (d) Flow of the Vote, 1830-1831

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1831</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whig</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tory</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830 Whig</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830 Tory</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ex-Voters</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cross Voters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4.14 (e) Flow of the Vote, 1831-1832 (Freemen only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1832</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whig</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tory</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 Whig</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 Tory</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Voters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Voters</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ex-Voters</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cross Voters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Linked pollbooks.

A much larger proportion of voters at each election were cross-voters (Table 4.8), and this clearly reduces the likelihood of there being straight converts. Similarly, at most elections there were significant numbers of party voters who had split at the previous election, and previous splitters who now cast a party vote (plump or double party vote), but even at the height of the reform campaign there were few voters who switched outright their previous party allegiance: splitting
or abstaining was as far as they were prepared to go in registering a protest.

In Grimsby there were two general elections when the largest component of the party vote was that of new voters, i.e. 1826 and 1832. In the former this is mainly a reflection of the time lapse since the previous election (six years); in the latter it is the clear result of the Reform Act. Changes in the partisan distribution of new voters, shown in Table 4.15, are entirely consistent with the general political trends within the borough.

**TABLE 4.15: PARTISAN DISTRIBUTION OF NEW VOTERS, GRIMSBY 1820 - 1835**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Vote</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Vote</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The non-voters are not listed in the pollbooks.
Source: Pollbooks.

There was the familiar marked preference for the tory party in 1820 reflected in the general swing in both local and parliamentary elections. There was the familiar swing back to the whigs in 1826. In 1830 recruitment to the tory cause was proportionately only marginally less than their total share of the poll: the difference was insignificant. In 1831 the borough favoured the tories but new voters preferred the whigs. However, the number of new voters involved in
both elections was only 30, too few for the difference to have statistical significance. The same cannot be said of 1832, however, for new electors were a quite different element, as will be seen in the discussion of the effects of the Reform Act (Chapter 7).

In Boston not only was cross-voting much more of a habit than it ever was in Grimsby, it was also characteristic of new voters who - except in 1831 and 1832 - showed marked tendencies to split (Table 4.16). It is difficult to see in this anything other than the effect of three-man contests and the wary behaviour of an electorate made up largely of retailers and craftsmen whose relationships with customers or clients, not to say landlords or patrons, they would not wish to put at risk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1832</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Vote</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Linked pollbooks.

Table 4.17 shows the destination of the party vote in Grimsby, i.e. where a party's vote went at the following election. The constants (i.e. those giving their vote to the same party at the next election) in general made up the bulk of the voters, but again there are some significant fluctuations. Of those voting whig in 1818 only 44% did
so again at the next election when many of them split their vote or voted tory, although a considerable number had also left the electorate. In 1820 the proportion of tory voters who voted the same way in the next election, 1826, was remarkably low, under 22%. Many became straight changers, many were whigs who had defected in 1820, and others split their vote (in many cases again, no doubt, because there was only one tory candidate in 1826), and many left the electorate in the six years which had elapsed. Nevertheless, the disaffection with tories is again evident. In 1826 the percentage of leavers was high, but the proportion of constants again low, particularly among whigs many of whom, at the next election, voted tory or split their vote.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4.17: DESTINATION OF THE PARTY VOTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight Changers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splitters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pollbooks do not show abstainers until 1832.

Source: Linked pollbook data.
Chapter 4: Participation and Partisan Behaviour

The next landmark is provided by the Reform Act. Of whig voters in the 1831 election the proportion voting whig in 1832 was very high; but there was a considerable swing from the tories, and a large whig vote from new voters. In Boston there was also a high proportion of constants, a higher proportion of splitters than in Grimsby, but very few straight changers.

In Grimsby, therefore, throughout the period, despite the existence of a core of constant, experienced, and committed voters, there was always the possibility of altering the balance of the vote not simply by recruiting new party supporters but by converting existing voters. Independence may have been a reality, if only for a minority; there were certainly some voters who might reasonably be described as floating voters.

Floating Voters

The floating voter is amongst the 'unpromised' voters to whom so much attention was directed by party activists in the run-up to an election. Those who occupied property of one of the rival interests, or who were in other ways dependent, could, by and large, be relied on to vote in line with their patron's interest provided they could be persuaded to turn out. Even if they were not so dependent, other pressures of a social nature which characterised open voting in small communities tended to produce the same result. Those who were in a position to cast their vote in any way they pleased would, however, require special attention not simply to turn out but to commit
themselfes. Some were wooed by the promise of a residence or employment; some by inducements of a purely temporary nature.

With the strong pressures to conform, floaters were always a minority. Mitchell identifies four sources of floating voter, viz. (1) those most able to meet the social costs involved - generally high status and financially independent, and above the intense social interaction of the community (2) the totally dependent, e.g. servants; (3) the voters interested only in selling their votes; (4) outvoters. All four types existed in Grimsby though probably the totally dependent voter was relatively rare. Outvoters existed in significant numbers at some elections, notably in the earlier period, but many did not return to vote in a second election and many had already been secured by one or other of the parties who made the necessary arrangements for and paid the expenses involved in their poll. As for the venal voter (Nossiter's 'quoting' voter), it would be interesting to know how he chose from whom to accept bribes, since bribes of one kind or another were readily available from both sides: perhaps they chose him, and he operated on a 'first come first served' basis.

Whatever motivated the floating voter or the inconsistent voters, there is no reliable way of measuring the floating vote in a constituency in which parties variously put up one or two members and where every elector could cast two, one, or no votes. It is usual to define the floating voter in terms of behaviour as one who changed party allegiance, i.e. who is identified as a 'straight convert' or 'straight changer' in tables 4.12 and 4.16. Such floaters were usually only a small proportion of the electorate but in 1820 they were a significant element in the success of the tories (giving them nearly
10% of their total support) and even more so to the whigs in 1826 for whom they represented nearly 25% of total support. Many of the latter were reverting to old habits which the heady days of 1820 had induced them to break. As important to the success of a party could be the extent to which they could win over the second vote of splitters. The transition tables indicate that split voters were the least consistent of voters (in Boston as well as in Grimsby) and in this sense they might be described as reflecting a 'floating' element, deserving of as much attention at canvassing as straight changers - indeed, more so, since it appears that they were more easily won over. Thus, in 1820 the tories received no less than 35% of their total support from voters who had previously split compared to just below 10% from those who had previously voted whig. In 1831 a similar pattern occurred on a rather smaller scale, and with both parties fielding two candidates in this and the previous election.

Thus, in spite of very high levels of partisan voting and impressive levels of partisan stability, there existed a core of instability in the electorate which was generally sufficient to decide the outcome of any election. Whilst floaters defined in the narrow sense of straight converts might be relatively few in number, when coupled with inconsistent splitters whose votes could not be taken for granted or easily predicted, they had great influence. The uncertainty which characterised this electoral behaviour was thus a major factor behind the frenetic activity of party organisations, and added point to the necessity for mobilising the electorate at any and every opportunity, in contests at the local as well as the parliamentary level. It was always important to nurture experienced voters, for as
they voted so did new voters, and in general electoral outcomes were much influenced by such voters (see Table 4.18).

TABLE 4.18: CONVERSION OF EXPERIENCED VOTERS, GRIMSBY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Party Vote gained from Conversion of Existing Voters*</th>
<th>Proportion of Experienced Votes gained by Conversion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (May)</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (Aug)</td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Split and straight changers.
Party underlined = winning party.

Source: Linked pollbooks.

Those voters who broke promises made before the election might find themselves publicly castigated. Thus, the surviving printed pollbook for 1818 contains a number of names with an asterisk, and an
explanatory note at the beginning: 'Those marked thus * voted for Mr. Grant at the election of 1812, and AGAINST him on the present occasion.' The pollbook was printed for sale in the borough. More dramatic, perhaps, is the case of twentyfour 'turncoats' in 1830 who requested Joseph Daubney, tory agent, to meet them publicly when they would 'explain' and 'justify' their conduct. Daubney replied by means of a poster, prominently displayed, listing the turncoats and agreeing to meet them 'on condition that each of you, in order to be distinctly seen and heard, will mount to the top of the TOWN PUMP there, and deliver the justification of his conduct from thence.' He went on to suppose that in justification of breaking promises previously given each of the turncoats 'have got at least TEN SOVEREIGN Reasons.' The outcome of the meeting is not known; that it took place cannot be doubted. The suggestion of Daubney could hardly be more explicit: the voters had been bought. In Nossiter's terms, the 'floating' ('turncoat') voter was a quoting voter, selling his votes to the highest bidder.31

To sum up, this analysis of voter participation reveals a number of significant features, viz. (1) high turnout; (2) a high proportion of experienced voters at any election; (3) significant plump voting only at times of unusual turbulence or electoral fervour occasioned by key issues of intense local concern; (4) split voting which varied with the number of candidates fielded, and sometimes reaching high levels, though never as much in Grimsby as in Boston where three-man contests were the rule; (5) high levels of partisan voting and impressive levels of partisan stability.
Chapter 4: Participation and Partisan Behaviour

It is thus clear that in normal circumstances electors were very eager to turn out and on the whole they were loyal to their chosen party, although floaters could, and often did, make electoral outcomes uncertain. It now remains to consider the major influences on such behaviour.

NOTES

1. Pollbooks.


6. Mayor's Court Book, Vol.15. SHARO.

7. Mayor's Court Book, Vol.16. SHARO.


18. Pollbooks.


24. Ibid.


27. GPL TP Squire – C. Tennyson 23.1.1819.


30. GPL Skelton Papers 1830.

The characteristics of the community which provided the context for voting varied from one constituency to another, from the small rural backwater which may have been characterised by extreme forms of dependence and influence of the kind studied by Moore, to the large, more impersonal cities such as those studied by Fraser and Nossiter and characterised by looser ties and more independence. The borough constituencies, even small ones, varied enormously, though perhaps more in their franchise than in the types of influence present.

The community in Grimsby was comparatively small, pre-industrial, and close-knit. There were, to be sure, a number of specialised roles, but on the whole the population was relatively homogeneous (more so than in the large urban centres). Social relations were thus face to face, intimate, and enduring. Primary social relationships were important and there was correspondingly a high degree of involvement of individuals in the community. Thus, an individual's political role can hardly be distinguished from his other roles, and the expectations of others to which he was exposed tended to produce conformity.

One should also beware of translating into the early nineteenth century context the findings of modern psephologists on the degree of awareness and politicisation of electorates. Studies of recent voting behaviour have found that the average voter, far from making concerned assessments of specific candidates, issues, and programmes, tends instead to be both relatively uninformed and uninterested. In a study of the development of party identification, Campbell et al remark:
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"The average citizen is very much less involved in politics than is often imagined. His awareness of political events is limited and his concern with ideological problems is only rudimentary."^{22}

They then proceed to question whether in the past there existed a 'golden age' of interested and enlightened participation when educational levels and literacy rates were low and when communication facilities were more limited. They further question the accuracy of traditional literary sources of evidence which have tended to rely on newspapers, speeches of notables, diaries, and other 'elite' sources. Such studies, Clubb and Allen argue:

"...may have attributed to the population at large political attitudes, goals, and behaviour patterns that were in fact characteristic of only a limited segment of society."^{23}

Butler and Stokes, in what is undoubtedly a most influential and authoritative study of recent voting behaviour in Britain, have also drawn attention to the remoteness of politics to the average citizen:

"Certainly playing the role of voter is unlikely to inspire any deep involvement in political affairs...Few voters, moreover, engage themselves in any deeper involvement in the party system. The limits of the public's overt political activity are matched by the limits of its political information."^{24}

Nevertheless, voters do behave in a purposive way and seek goals which they value, and it is the existence of national parties which enables them to do this.

There are clearly some contrasts to be drawn with early nineteenth century voters. Although the franchise was limited, overt political activity on the part of the enfranchised was quite otherwise, at least in many borough constituencies. It was reflected in high turnout and great excitement such that elections generated what might be described as 'fever'. Educational and literacy levels may have been low, but in Grimsby at any rate and possibly in many freeman boroughs,
Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

the voting population was better educated. The freemen voters in Grimsby would by and large have been educated in the town's Free Grammar School to which they had access and to which they would, in turn, send their sons. It is probable, therefore, that they were in this respect more favourably placed than the rural voters. Whilst political activity could, on occasions, be intense, it was also frequent, revolving as it did around local as well as parliamentary elections, and it concerned the same freeman electorate. And it was this root in the locality which may have imparted a degree of involvement which resulted in voters being reasonably well informed.

It is not possible, of course, to quantify involvement or commitment, or awareness, and what on the surface suggests considerable ideological or purely political motivation might simply mask other factors which contributed to the intensity of electoral activity. The pressures of open voting which produced conformity also encouraged participation; and it was the fact of open voting above all others which distinguishes voting behaviour before 1872 and which made the casting of a vote a social, and not merely an individual act. The casting of a vote was a public declaration which for the individual had implications for his social relations generally, and the public nature of such declaration carried with it enormous opportunities for the workings of local influence—through bribery, corruption, and the more legitimate channels formed by everyday social interaction.

Stein Rokkan has outlined some important effects of secret voting, high among these being the isolation from hierarchical influences in the local community reducing the opportunities for pressure from landlord or other social leaders. He states:
"In sociological terms we might say that in the situation of secret voting the individual adult is cut off from all his roles in the subordinate systems of the household, the neighbourhood, the work organisation, the church and the civil association and set to act exclusively in the abstract role of a citizen of the over-all political system: there will be no feedback from what he does in this anonymous role to what he does in the other roles and therefore no need for him to take responsibility for the act of voting in his everyday interaction in his regular environment."

Thus, lacking accountability to either peers or superiors the voter now becomes less amenable to bribery and to any other overt social pressure. This isolation from hierarchical influences almost certainly explains in part the opposition to the ballot by the leading local interests, including Lord Yarborough.

Under open voting, in contrast, the social context was crucial: the individual's political role, as Mitchell argues, was:

"...merely one role, from a role set, embedded in the 'total network' of social relationships."7

The individual was thus accountable and responsible for his actions and correspondingly had to be prepared for the sanctions which might be imposed by peers or superiors. There were thus vertical pressures in the traditional sense of influence and horizontal pressures from kin or neighbourhood.

The total network provided a mechanism which enabled electors to be informed, recruited, and mobilised, and through which political spoils might be distributed. As Mitchell describes it:

"When an election occurs each party will try to win support...through the ‘cashing’ of obligations or the manipulation of favourable relations - friendship, kinship, common residence, common workplace or religion, and so on."8

Occasionally an individual's network was not clear so that his allegiances and obligations appeared ambiguous, producing the 'doubtful' votes often referred to in canvassing reports.
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From this distance in time it is not possible to chart in any significant detail the network of any individual voter or groups of voters. It is possible, however, to explore the influence of such important social factors as area of residence, occupation, and even family, and all of these can be shown to have had some influence on voting. There can also be little doubt that obligations could be engineered by candidates or their agents through leases, employment, patronage, or even outright bribery; and that favourable relations could be manipulated. Whilst the influences acting upon voters were many, varied, and often complex, nevertheless some significant patterns can be discerned. The first to be considered will be occupation for this is perhaps the most frequently studied by historical psephologists. This will be followed by a consideration of 'influence', both legitimate and otherwise, as understood by contemporaries. The importance of family will also be studied in a limited way: this has been made possible by the nature of the records of the admission of freemen the majority of whom, in Grimsby at any rate, qualified by birth.

OCCUPATIONS

The limitations of pollbook descriptions, terse and relatively uninformative as they are (even more so in the absence of information on rates) mean that any attempt to analyse voting by occupation can only be approximate, and any grouping of occupations for purposes of analysis must be fairly rough, and ultimately heuristic only.

The pollbooks for Grimsby all give information as to each elector's occupation. In general, these occupations were self-ascribed,
but in many cases can be verified from other sources such as directories, rent rolls, and other local material. They provide a starting point for the social analysis of voting behaviour, a task which, as all who have attempted it are aware, is beset with problems. It would be possible to examine the voting patterns and behaviour of individuals in each listed occupation, but, apart from any inaccuracies of occupational description, the result would hardly be worthwhile or informative; many occupations contained so few electors that the exercise would have little value. Clearly, however, one cannot be content to treat the electorate as a single uniform whole undistinguished by social or occupational differences. Nor is the solution to attempt to concentrate on selected occupations (though it has been attempted by Vincent), for it introduces an element of nonrandom selectivity which carries obvious dangers of distortion. Class divisions, too, are hardly admissible in this period, at least in the small town, preindustrial communities such as Grimsby. Despite the now abundant literature on class, and the important work of Neale, the problem of class has not been resolved, conceptually or in practical terms. Thus, any grouping of occupations will to some extent be arbitrary. Nossiter has pioneered a procedure which attempts to group together those who shared broadly similar function and market situation, and in examining northeastern constituencies Nossiter was able to identify a shipping interest which warranted separate treatment. In other constituencies, of course, such a group might give way to a textile, or coal, or iron interest, depending on the economic basis of its community.
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Nossiter's main groupings were (1) Gentry and Professional; (2) Manufacturing and Merchant; (3) Craft Trades; (4) Retail trades; (5) Drink; (6) Farming. In Grimsby group (2) was of negligible size and so has been merged into (1). Two further groups in particular have been identified as justifying their own category, namely a Port interest, made up of shipwrights, pilots, mariners, rope and block makers, and so on; and Labourers (including carters etc) who constituted a very significant proportion of the electorate throughout the period. The final grouping, and the distribution of the electorate over the various occupational categories is set out in Table 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1818</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1831#</th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Gentry &amp; Professional</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Manufacturing &amp; Merchant</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Craft Trades</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Retail Trades</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Drink Interest</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Port &amp; Shipping</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII Farming</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII Labourers</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX Others**</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* May 1831 election data; August 1831 election not included.

** Mostly not known.

Source: Pollbooks.
Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

It is not argued that any particular group exhibited anything approaching economic homogeneity (though both Gentry and Labourers may each have come close to it), yet in small market towns with their limited opportunities for advancement, it may be that differences in the conditions and life styles of members of the same occupation may be much less than is to be found in the larger cities. Vincent may well be correct when he argues that "there was nevertheless a feeling that people engaged in making the same kind of thing were the same kind of people."11

No doubt the adopted procedure ignores certain problems. Frequently, it is not the case that all cabinet makers, for example, were the same, in status or economic power, and as Phillips has pointed out, the differences between masters and journeymen could be very considerable, such, indeed, that perhaps on the basis of function, journeymen bakers, for example, should be classed as craftsmen and master bakers as retailers.12 To take account of such distinctions, however, would require not only a herculean effort, but also a wealth of fine detail which available data simply do not possess. However, the adoption of Nossiter's scheme by subsequent analysts provides a compelling reason for its replication in this study.

No attempt has been made to devise clearly delineated occupational rankings of the kind adopted by Phillips, whose occupational categories, similar to Nossiter's, were further refined into three hierarchical groups: an elite, a 'middling' class, and finally the 'lesser' sort.13 In this scheme, the 'Middling' class included retailers but not the bulk of craftsmen. Now as Phillips admits, within any occupational group there could, and did, exist wide disparities of both income and wealth.
unrelated to time or length of qualification or practice. There are dangers in regarding retailers as constituting a 'class' which can be distinguished from craftsmen, for, in terms of status, whilst many were undoubtedly educated to a reasonable degree, articulate, and possessing not inconsiderable capital, others were much smaller fry, forming, as Nossiter suggests, a kind of urban proletariat, possessing little or no capital and not much else besides the reward of their own labour. There were at the same time skilled craftsmen who owned considerable capital, who were educated and active in the social life of the borough, and whose status and economic strength set them apart from 'the lesser sort' amongst whom they are nevertheless squarely placed in Phillips' analysis of late eighteenth century borough constituencies. It is true that Phillips does draw some support from contemporary observations on the capital required to start up all sorts of trades and crafts. Perhaps there did exist a general feeling that somehow retailers or shopkeepers were a cut above craftsmen, whatever the level of skill the latter possessed, but there is no hint of this in Grimsby. Indeed, there appears to have been no automatic attribution of status either to shopkeepers or craftsmen in general or to the majority of types of shop or craft trades in particular.

Small town directories of the period tended to record only the more substantial and important tradesmen and might thus provide a more reliable clue as to status and economic standing within the community. If so, it is clear that many blacksmiths, joiners, wheelwrights, carpenters and others might reasonably be considered to be of the 'middling' class, equal in all respects to many of the substantial retailers and above others of their own fraternity who were perhaps
less experienced or less successful. By the same token, the absence of many retailers from the directories might be taken as evidence of rather lowly status. Even if the initiative for obtaining a mention in the directories lay with the individual shopkeeper or tradesman (and it is not entirely clear on what basis entries were made) it is still likely that it was the more established and successful who appeared. The distinctions between retailers and craftsmen, in terms of status and economic standing, were often very blurred, and whilst there is comparatively little doubt about who constituted the elite in the community and about labourers and similar unskilled workers being of the 'lesser sort', the majority of the population are less easily classified. They may, indeed, have tended towards the poorer end of the scale - the paucity of £10 houses in 1831 might suggest as much - but the distinction between craftsmen and retailers is too vague and the differences within each category potentially so great as to render any such threefold classification as adopted by Phillips problematical to say the least. No scheme, of course, is likely to be perfect or problem-free; as we have seen, even Nossiter's functional classification is not without weaknesses.

A social hierarchy undoubtedly existed, though not solely or even necessarily mainly, on the basis of occupation. There seems little reason, therefore, to abandon Nossiter's purely functional schema in favour of a looser, less easily justified, threefold classification which separates groups of people many of whom shared the same or similar market situation and possibly also the same status. Victorian England, remarks Nossiter, "was still an age of developing status and class awareness."16 Mitchell, in much the same vein, writing of the
middle years of the century says, "before there was a true 'class'
society, 'class' could not be the all explanatory variable in British
voting behaviour that it has become today." It is not necessary nor
entirely helpful to look for distinctions of class which themselves may
have meant little to contemporaries.

Social distinctions, of course, were recognised, as too were the
differences in wellbeing within occupations. Thus, in 1831, Brougham
was able to refer in the Lords to 'inferior shopkeepers' and 'the better
kind of tradesman', and clearly assigned labourers to a low position, as
being generally in want. He drew little distinction between the
first two, and in this was doing no more or less than the census
returns. Whereas before 1831 no occupational distinctions had been
made other than three (agriculture; trade, manufactures, handicraft; and
'others'), in 1831 the classification was more refined. It pinpointed
what might reasonably be interpreted as an elite under the heading
'Capitalists, Bankers, Professional and other educated men'. It
covered the majority of employed persons within the category 'Employed in
Retail Trade or in Handicraft as masters or workmen' (emphasis added);
and further indicated 'Labourers' who might thus be regarded as 'lesser'
men, not always above want. In addition were servants (none of whom
can be identified as electors in Grimsby) and persons employed in
agriculture, a relatively small proportion of the borough population.

Phillips' scheme assigns to the lowest orders many who were
skilled, wealthy, articulate, and possessing social influence. It
assigns to the middling class a group who, though above want, were not
always recognised by contemporaries as having such status and who
were, in effect, a sort of urban peasantry. The larger occupational
categories of Nossiter do provide a rational basis for investigation which is capable of rendering interpretations as 'fruitful' as those which appear to have persuaded Phillips to adopt his own schema. It further permits observations to be made as to the behaviour of an elite (categories I and II) and of the lower orders (labourers etc) in terms which contemporaries would almost certainly have understood and recognised. Phillips is right to question the use of specific occupations as the unit of analysis, but as Nossiter has shown, that is not the alternative. Finally, one great advantage, perhaps, of the functional schema is that it allows one to talk of the highest and lowest extremities of the social order (gentry and professional men, and labourers) unequivocally, without danger of straining the evidence further than it will go. Whilst these two groups may not be exclusive or comprehensive, they are at least well representative of the two ends of the social scale. To this extent, at least, Nossiter's groupings reflect a social hierarchy, and little harm is done by grouping retailers and craftsmen together, for in the absence of more detailed information, and a more firmly established conceptual framework, no great distortion is likely to occur.

Occupation is almost the only parameter of social behaviour which admits of analysis in Grimsby. There are no surviving rate books, no records of income or taxes, and only very partial and sporadic indicators of wealth in the form of wills.

For the pre-Reform era there was little point in testing separately the occupational distribution of non-voters: there were so few of them. Occupation was, however, found to be significant in determining whether a voter cast a plump vote or not. The null
hypothesis that there was no connection between plumpers and occupational category was tested for the three elections in which plump voting was most marked, i.e. 1818, 1820, and 1826. The results indicate that certain occupational groups were voting differently from the predicted distribution at each election (i.e. the null hypothesis was not confirmed). 1818 witnessed the greatest extent of plump voting yet the least connection between plumping and occupational group. This may be partly explained by the strength of the tory onslaught at this election, together with the fielding of only one tory candidate. Tennyson's agent was careful to offer £20 for a plumper, twice the going rate offered by both sides for a single vote, to discourage split voting. The result of the strategy was to produce an unusually high degree of plumping (well over 90% of it in favour of Tennyson) together with an unusually high degree of split voting. Many otherwise whig voters were thus won over and persuaded to cast one of their two votes for the tories. In 1820 and 1826 the correlation between plump voting and occupation was stronger. In the former the port interest showed a tendency to plump, but it was even stronger amongst the farming interest. This was the only election in which whig plumpers were significant; it was also an election at which the whigs received their lowest level of support. To some extent the pattern of plump voting here, though highlighting the tenacity of whig support from farmers, may be explained also by personalities. The farming interest always inclined to the whig cause (much of the farming land belonged either to Lord Yarborough or to the corporation which was itself controlled by him), yet neither whig candidate in 1820 was well known. One of them, Brackenbury, was very
unpopular, so by plumping farmers were able to demonstrate at one and the same time their loyalty to Yarborough and their dislike of Brackenbury. Furthermore, it was the only election at which plump voting was significant when both parties fielded two candidates. In 1826 plumping was again a tory phenomenon, with only one candidate being put up. Vote distribution was different from that expected, the port interest showing a marked tendency to plump. This provides further confirmation of their persistent support for the tory cause and reflects, in many cases, their dependence on Tennyson property for their place of residence. Over all other occupational groups plump voters were distributed more or less as expected. After 1826 plump voting was insignificant.21

Split voting was also subjected to the same tests. The extent of split or cross-party voting is indicated in Table 4.7. Although it varied from one election to the next, it was not especially significant at any election other than 1818. Nevertheless, tests on split voting and occupational category have in all cases revealed no consistent relationship: the null hypothesis that there was no connection between split voting and occupational group was confirmed for each election.

There is no evidence for the hypothesis that occupational category was related to whether a voter cast a partisan vote. In 1818 the mean percentage of voters casting a party vote (single or double, whig or tory) was 68.5 - a comparatively low figure - whilst of the gentry and professional classes no less than 86.7% cast partisan votes. It would therefore appear that the elite were more than usually disposed to behave in a partisan manner. At the same election those representing the drink interest were least inclined to cast partisan
votes (54.9%). However, these findings should be approached with caution, for whatever happened in 1818 was not repeated in subsequent elections, at which no such predispositions are evident for any occupational groups. Furthermore, the number of voters included amongst the gentry and the drink interest and voting in 1818 was very small (17 and 19 respectively).

Over all elections throughout the prereform period the majority of voters cast partisan votes, whatever their occupation, and in some elections the tendency was exceptionally marked, as in 1826 when it amounted to 90% of the electorate, and 1820 and 1830, 85%. The extent of such voting is shown in Table 5.2.

### TABLE 5.2: PERCENTAGE OF VOTERS CASTING A PARTISAN VOTE*, BY CATEGORY OF OCCUPATION, 1818 - 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1818</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I &amp; II Gentry</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>87.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof. &amp; Merchant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Craft</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>97.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Retail</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>92.2</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Drink</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>96.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI Port</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII Farming</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>93.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII Labourers</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>94.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX Others</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>90.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A partisan vote is a single or double vote for either whig or tory. Source: Pollbooks.
These findings contrast with those of Phillips for Maidstone, for which constituency in the late eighteenth century he reported:

"Social stratification...was strongly associated with the more general question of whether or not he (the voter) cast a partisan ballot, whatever party he ultimately chose."\(^{22}\)

He found that the tendency to cast partisan ballots increased with social standing, the lesser sort being least, and the elite most, inclined to be partisan. The findings for Grimsby reveal much higher levels of partisan voting than in any of Phillips' constituencies (Maidstone, Norwich, and Northampton). Whether or not partisan voting implies anything about political maturity, the reasons for the Grimsby findings are not clear, but it is possible that rather more is explained by the workings of influence than by occupation or social status.

Although a voter's occupational category exerted little or no perceptible influence over whether he cast a partisan vote, it did influence, occasionally, the direction in which he cast. Yet it was not, in general, a major determinant of voting behaviour, at least in the sense that it could overcome other influences. In some circumstances, and in some places, parties did attract disproportionate support from difference occupational groups, as Nossiter and Vincent have shown.\(^{23}\)

There was little of this in Grimsby, except in the special case of mariners (and the port interest generally) and, to a lesser extent, the farmers.

There are two questions which might be addressed. The first is the reliance of each party on support from each of the occupational categories. The second is the influence of occupation in predicting the
direction in which the voter might cast. Phillips, writing of late eighteenth century Norwich, Maidstone, and Northampton, found that:

"The social composition of the voters for one party duplicated the social makeup of the opposite party in all three boroughs with notable precision."^{24}

In Grimsby, however, the social makeup of the whigs did not exactly mirror that of the tories. The relative contributions of occupational groups to total party votes is indicated in Table 5.3 which shows the mean support by occupational category for all prereform parliamentary elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Category</th>
<th>Whig %</th>
<th>Tory %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Manuf. &amp; Merchant</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink interest</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port interest</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Linked pollbook data.

It is clear that before 1832 the single most important group to the tories was the port interest, made up largely of mariners; their relative importance to the whigs was much less. Vincent has drawn
attention to what he calls an 'anomalous Toryism' among those closely connected with port and shipping interests, and it appears to have been a characteristic in most port constituencies around the country (Bristol, Liverpool, Hull and others). So deep, persistent, and characteristic was this that it suggests, according to Vincent, a 'separate sense of identity, hereditary solidarity, and a closed world of experience.' The evidence from Grimsby supports this, the correlation between occupational group and voting being very marked in all elections in the case of mariners. That many of them, probably the majority, resided in the new town area which lay nearest the docks must further have reinforced this tendency.

Both whigs and tories relied significantly upon craftsmen and retailers - not surprisingly in view of the fact that these were the largest groups in the electorate, in Grimsby as in most other urban constituencies, especially small market towns - though the whigs relied rather more heavily on craftsmen. In northeastern constituencies Nossiter found that the tories were the most nearly representative of the electorate as a whole: in Grimsby this characteristic applied to the whigs, but it was not particularly marked.

Nossiter's finding that 'except in the understandable case of the shipping interest influence never entirely destroys the impact of occupation as a social determinant' received no support in Grimsby. Indeed, quite the reverse applies for, apart from the case of the shipping interest, and later to a lesser extent the farming interest, occupational category appears only as a rather weak determinant. Thus, in examining the second question, the strength of occupational grouping as a predictor of voting, the evidence points to only weak
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associations. The null hypothesis that partisan voting was not determined by occupational category was tested for all elections. The results indicate that where significant correlations do exist, they show the port interest as much more inclined to the tories, by a good deal more than 2 to 1, and the farmers inclined to the whigs, by almost 3 to 1. In the post-reform era the latter was of greater impact simply because farmers constituted a much larger element in the electorate than they did before 1832. For all other occupational categories there are no strong correlations to suggest that occupation was of any great significance in determining voting. These findings are illustrated in Table 5.4.

**TABLE 5.4: MEAN PERCENTAGE PARTY SUPPORT AND SPLITTING BY CATEGORY OF OCCUPATION, 1818 - 1835, GRIMSBY.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Occupation</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Split*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gentry &amp; Professional</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Interest</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There were no split votes in 1832 and 1835: in these elections abstentions were included as non-party votes.

Source: Linked pollbooks.
Labourers were, as a group, a large element in the electorate before 1832, reflecting their numerical strength in the community as a whole, and their vote was important to both parties. They had a preference for the whigs, at times approaching two to one, but this was reversed in 1820 and 1830 when tories were in the ascendent. All this suggests the working of local influences. Vincent found a widespread tendency for labourers to incline to the tories, even in Liberal areas, but it is not evident in Grimsby.\textsuperscript{27} It seems that labourers, occupying in many ways a position of disadvantage within the hierarchy of labour, looked down upon often, and subject to greater insecurity than almost any other major groups in a small town community (with the exception of mariners, perhaps), lay outside the main currents of working class and radical politics, or indeed any politics. Their chief concern was survival, to cushion themselves against the vicissitudes of their calling which frequently put them out of work. Their voting pattern can be explained not by class interest or ideology, or even by occupation, but by property: those voting tory tended to live in the new town much of which was owned by the Tennysons, whilst those voting whig lived in the old town. For those whose address can be positively identified, labourers in the old town voting whig did so by a margin of rather more than three to one; those in the new town voted tory by a margin of more than two to one.

Overall, then, there appears to be little social division between the parties, or between partisan and non-partisan voters. Where marked preferences of occupational groups appear for one party or another, as in the case of farmers and mariners, it is probable that
rather more is to be explained by the workings of influence, effected often through property. Fraser has commented that:

"The relationship of occupation and voting does not suggest, except in special cases (emphasis added) that men in the same economic interest thought the same way politically." 26

Interpreting this in the light of the heterogeneity which marks most of the occupational groups is of course difficult, but it is, by and large, supported by the findings in Grimsby.

INFLUENCE

Of all the available means of exerting influence, property was undoubtedly of major importance. It was through the ownership or control of properties that each side could offer not only places of residence but also shops and workshops, offices, places of employment, public houses, mills, and sources of employment to builders, bricklayers, painters, and many others. Voters, once provided with property, were easily influenced to cast their vote in favour of their benefactor - and it was both an enduring and a powerful influence, much more potent in the long run than the offer of bribes. It was largely through his ownership of land and property that Yarborough (and later, through ties of interest and marriage, the Heneages) came to dominate the political scene throughout the 1820s and 30s.

Influence in general is almost impossible to quantify since it operated along many channels any of which might be competing with similar channels carved out by the opposition. Occasionally voters were subject to strong cross pressures formed less by interest groups than by sources of influence producing conflicting loyalties.27
all channels of influence can be identified, and even if they could be it might not be possible to apply any sensible kind of measure to their effectiveness. In the case of property, full and precise analysis would require comprehensive information concerning the property holdings or tenancy of all electors, and this is not available. Fortunately, however, it is possible to catch glimpses, faint at times, yet very telling at others.

Joseph Daubney, acting for Tennyson, drew up and submitted to him on December 30 1818 a list of 'All those who took the Christmas Present.' It was, in effect, a poll list adapted with marginal comments to show those who were offered the present, those who took it, those who declined it, and also those who were not offered the present. The present in question consisted of a gift of coals, beef, and flour, and was in line with what appears by this time to have become established practice in the borough. Such presents - given as they were by both sides - were unquestionably politically motivated. When set against the pollbooks of 1818, both parliamentary and local, Daubney's list is most revealing. It shows, inter alia, that there were fortynine electors who were not offered the present. Of these, none had voted for Tennyson in the June parliamentary election previous; they had all cast double whig votes, apart from two voters who, as custom house officers, were ineligible to vote at the parliamentary election. The great majority of these voters are either recorded as occupying Yarborough property in the nearest existing rental (1824) or were outvoters brought in by Yarborough for the occasion. In both cases their preferences, or rather allegiances, would already be known by the opposing camp. Furthermore, the majority of the fortynine voted
also in the December local election for alderman and common councilman. Only one of these cast for the tories; all the others (31) cast both votes for the whig candidates. The number of voters denied the present who changed allegiance over the whole period was four, a very small number, and they did so only many years later. There is thus a clear inference that those from whom Tennyson bribes were withheld were known Yarborough supporters unlikely to be won over, and the staunchest of these were occupiers of their patron's property. Indeed, Tennyson's agent made this very point in a letter concerning the distribution of the present:

"We gave to all applicant Burgesses except such tenants of Lord Yarborough as are completely under his control, and those who from their connexions must necessarily be so."

The evidence, however, goes further, for in addition to those who were denied the Christmas present were another fifty voters who were offered it but did not call for it. The majority of these (31 in all) cast whig votes in this and the 1820 parliamentary election, and in the local election in December 1818 if they turned out for it. Fifteen were definitely tenants of Yarborough in 1824. Of those who did not vote whig, some split, some had left the electorate, and six were prominent Tennyson activists (including Joshua Plaskitt, Tennyson's agent) who were certainly rewarded in other ways, and were also above want. It is clear that the refusal of the present demonstrates, in the majority of cases, obligation.

Thus, in 1818 there were one hundred voters who were either not offered Tennyson's Christmas present or who declined it, and the great majority of these were in some way or another bound to Yarborough, apparently for both their votes.
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There were in addition ties which bound many electors for at least one of their votes, though it is virtually impossible to attempt to quantify such voters.

There were, of course, voters who were similarly bound to the Tennyson camp, and particularly those who lived in the new town where Tennyson owned much of his property. He received in 1818 no fewer than 96 plumpers, and in 1826 101 (when the tories lost). The majority of these almost certainly occupied Tennyson property.33

The likelihood is, therefore, that the majority of the electors were bound in some way for one or both of their votes to either Yarborough or Tennyson. Property was the most significant of these ties.

Three weeks after Daubney had submitted his list another of Tennyson's managers, John Squire, urged him to buy up property, particularly in the old town where Yarborough was not only dominant but also, apparently, considering the purchase of further property soon to become available. The seriousness of such a development was clear:

"Mr. Hewson (Yarborough's agent) came down yesterday afternoon and purchased the White Hart, for Thomas Milner to occupy, and the two adjoining Tenements in the tenure of Kemp; one of which calling up William Leigh Jun. in the Night - he let to him - and the other to John Stephenson Jun. For Thomas Stephenson Lord Y. is about to build a Tenement - thus, you see, they are attempting our ranks."34

Before this Lord Yarborough had been "pulling down and rebuilding several of his Houses here, repairing others, building new ones, and indeed seems to spare no expense to accommodate his Friends, or rather, by the way, to strengthen his Interest in the Borough."35 See Map 5.1.

Apart from properties already purchased there were others which Yarborough was about to acquire by which, according to Squire:
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MAP 5.1: Grimsby 'old' and 'new' Towns, Early Nineteenth Century

REFERENCE
- Boundary of the Old Municipal Boundary: Green
- Proposed Boundary: Purple
- Boundaries of Parishes or Parishes: Brown
- Rivers: Blue

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"Lord Yarborough will complete his Square, up to Mr. Heneage's Thatched House; and down to Wellow Gate - thereby accommodating nine more Tenants - and by this means drive us completely out of that quarter of the Town."

It was to the old town that Tennyson should direct his attention, for this was not only Yarborough's stronghold but also likely to become more important as economic conditions were causing the new town (in which Tennyson's property was concentrated) to decline. Thus:

"From the great deficiency in...Sea Trade...the new Town is deserting for the Old, and People in Trade, who can obtain anything like Public Situations, almost like wild Fire, or as removing from a contagious Disease, and therefore the necessity of providing for must be obvious. Truly it may be answered, there are plenty of Houses, but where are they situate - not in the Old but in the New Town, and in the former Lord Y. commands the greater part, of the most prominent Situations, and most of the rest are in the Hands of private Individuals."

To reinforce his point, Squire subsequently forwarded a 'sketch (map) of these properties, with the mediate and intermediate Squares, distinguishing each person's Property.' Six small maps, of varying scales, and together covering a large part of the old town area (see Map 5.2) were compiled, and are particularly valuable in identifying owners and occupiers in 1618. These maps are reproduced in total as Maps 5.2 (a - f). It is evident that Yarborough did, indeed, control this area which covered more than half the inhabited old town. Many of the occupiers can be identified as electors in the pollbooks of 1618 and 1820, and those who cannot be identified were either owner-occupiers, probably men of substance denied the franchise by not being freemen, or simply non-freemen occupiers of the property of smaller men. Of occupiers who can be identified from the pollbooks, in 1820 forty-four voted whig, thirteen recorded split votes, and only seven voted tory. With the exception of alderman Lusby who at the time was
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MAP 5.2 The Extent of Squire's Maps (1819)
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MAP 5.2 (a) Market Place - High Street - Turnpike

VOTING IN 1820 ELECTION

Key to Maps (a) - (f)

- = undivided whig support
- = undivided tory support
- = split vote
- = no vote (invariably non-freemen)
- = whig landlord
- = tory landlord
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MAPS 5.2 (b) and (c) High Street - Turnpike - Bull Ring
MAP 5.2 (d) Turnpike - Garden Street - Wellowgate
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MAP 5.2 (e) Baxter Gate - Silver Street - Flotter Gate
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MAP 5.2 (f) Baxter Gate - Turnpike
one of Tennyson's activists and who also occupied Tennyson's property, no tory votes are recorded from occupiers of Yarborough property. Seven split votes were cast either by independent owners or their occupiers free of the influence of the two main competing interests, and six split votes were from occupiers of Yarborough property. In view of the powerful onslaught being made by tories into traditional loyalties, these six split votes represent a small compromise on the part of Yarborough tenants who may well have been reluctant to risk all by casting both votes for the tories. Thus, the significance of the almost one hundred percent vote by his occupiers is not only that it vindicated Yarborough's strategy, but that it took place against a strong swing towards his opponent, thus further emphasising the importance of property. In addition, since many of the properties would have been occupied by more than one voter, Yarborough's control would have been greater than the limited number of voters who can be identified. Fathers and sons, and brothers, tended to vote in the same way.

Tennyson's hope of winning over voters lay in the possibility of persuading independent property owners and their tenants or in buying up and providing tenements and other properties for those in need. The Reverend George Oliver, writing to Tennyson's father in November 1818 urged the political importance of property:

"If I might presume to give my opinion as to the probable means of increasing your interest, I should advise you to build upon every vacant plot of ground you are possessed of, which is well suited for that purpose. Thus you would give employment to a great number of Freemen...and gain also a number of permanent tenants and consequently friends to your cause...Let Mr. Heneages estates be divided into Fields of 4 or 6 acres; and let these, together with your own estates be placed in the hands of Freemen to whom they would be an object of importance. Provide, if possible, small Farms for the sons of Lord Y's tenants; and by these united means you will break into his Lordship's
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Interest, gain a decided superiority at present, and secure the next generation almost entirely to yourself."

The suggestion to split family allegiances is particularly interesting although it could not have been easy to accomplish. John Lusby also wrote to Charles Tennyson:

"With respect to accommodation we labour under a very great disadvantage to the adverse Party, who have at command the Houses and Land belonging to Lord Y. in Grimsby, as well as the unoccupied Houses of Grant (whig MP in 1812 and unsuccessful candidate in 1818) for that purpose, if voters could be procured."40

In another letter Daubney drew Tennyson's attention to properties for sale, adding:

"Money laid out in this way would I think avoid the great waste of it at the time of an Election, but I would confine my purchases to the Old Town."41

A month later he repeated the point, urging the wisdom of expending a few thousand pounds in property.42 Sir John Beckett, writing to Tennyson in May 1818 reported a conversation he had recently had with one of Grimsby's voters who "mentioned having three brothers in law of the name of Blow, but he concluded they would be against you as they lived in Lord Yarborough's houses."43

Whilst it is generally true that tenancy secured the vote of the occupant and can be seen as a means of direct influence, there were occasions when tenants made a choice consistent with their own political preferences. Thomas Stephenson, a freeman, may have been one of these for he was offered a property of Yarborough's but hesitated to accept, preferring to become a tenant of Tennyson who was urged by Veal to accommodate him:

"...he is a steady young man and he voted with us on the late occasion and it would be desirable to keep him...his father urges him to take Lord Y's house and go over to their party, but he will not."44
The clear implication is again that tenancy carried political obligation. William Skelton, local printer and publisher of pollbooks, kept a diary which contains an entry which leaves no doubt as to the political uses of property:

"I became tenant of a house, as well situated for my business as any in the town, at a rent of only £10, and worth from £20 to £30 - but let at this low rent by the owner, Lord Yarborough, for the purpose of securing an interest in the borough, at the time of an election." 445

Joshua Plaskitt in a letter to Tennyson was confident of being able to win over some votes though some were inevitably committed: "I think Mr. Fazakerley can do us no more injury, in fact I do not believe he will get any of the unpromised men beyond Lord Yarborough's tenants." 446

It comes as little surprise to discover that failure to observe one's obligations could be attended with disastrous, if predictable, consequences, as one John Brown found to his cost. He wrote to Tennyson:

"I have rote a few lines to you that is to say that I have lost my place for voting for you duble vot which I dont rew (rue) not in the least but I ham now out of a Sutayshon at this time. I should like to have a house under you if I can." 447

The existing correspondence makes no mention of the outcome of this request but it seems likely that it was granted since Brown voted tory in all subsequent elections. In similar fashion, John Searby, a tenant of Yarborough's, claimed that just prior to the 1818 parliamentary election his sons were intimidated, having already promised their votes to Mr. Tennyson:

"His Lordship declared Mr. Fazakerley to be his Friend and told Searby he and his sons must vote for Mr. Fazakerley, and he had much rather they would all vote for Mr. Grant than Mr. Tennyson. The Searbys are all Tenants of his Lordship." 448
John Searby did indeed plump for Mr. Fazakerley; his son John voted for Fazakerley and Tennyson, as did a second son, William. His eldest son James, however, plumped for Tennyson and we learn that later he received notice to quit, along with two other voters, William Smelle (Dissenting Minister) and James Goulton (common councilman). A week or so later James Searby was reported to be 'well satisfied' with the accommodation which Tennyson was about to make available to him, whilst "Messrs. Smelle and Goulton are exceedingly pleased by your (Tennyson's) attention to them." The accommodation for Searby as compensation was, wrote Daubney, a 'place for his cow, my house in the Peppercorn, and a little close of my own to grow Hay in for her, for the present year.' However, although Searby again voted for Tennyson in 1820 he was back in the whig fold in 1826 and remained there in all subsequent elections.

The evidence of intimidation provided by this incident was, urged John Lusby, sufficient for Yarborough to be proceeded against:

"Lord Yarborough in this case would not get off like Lord Douglas by declaring on his Honour he was unacquainted with the interference of his Steward, himself being deepest in the mire."

It is highly unlikely, however, that either side could claim complete virtue and despite Lusby's strong pleadings the matter appears to have been dropped.

A more dramatic instance of a similar nature appears in a handbill issued by the defeated candidate John Henry Loft in 1812 and addressed to the burgesses. Loft had represented the borough for eighteen years and was bitter about his defeat, claiming, among other things, that it was he who had made the burgesses free of undue influence:
"In 1796 more than forty of you and your families were turned naked into the streets; nay some of you with your infants were obliged to take shelter in Hogsties for using your elective franchise agreeably to your own opinions; but, now you are independent by my exertions, you, spaniel like, lick the dust from the shoes of your oppressor."3

Such sentiments however were little more than a mixture of exaggeration and sour grapes, and unlikely to disturb an electorate which was both constrained by powerful interests and amenable to bribery and corruption which was but thinly disguised.

In general, throughout the period, the voters in the old town were much more inclined towards the whig than tory interests, Lord Yarborough being the principal property owner and the Heneage family also owning considerable property there. Addresses are not always available for earlier elections (other than those which can be derived from the maps of Squire referred to earlier, or from directories), but when they do become available there is a clear tendency for voting in some streets or quarters of the town to be inclined one way or another. In the old town, Flottergate, Bargate, the Market Place, High Street, Bethlehem Street, Brighowgate, and to a lesser extent Wellowgate, the Bullring, and St. Mary's Gates show a marked whig dominance, whilst areas in the new town, and particularly Lower Burgess Street and Lower Spring Street were overwhelmingly tory, for this was an area of largely Tennyson owned property. Table 5.5 shows the proportion of total votes cast in the principal streets in favour of the predominant whig interest. It is interesting that in the old town the largest sample is provided by Loft Street and this was one of the least whig strongholds. It was one of the longest streets in Grimsby and extended into the zone of the new town and also contained a number of small independent owner-occupiers. In general, however, the table
### Table 5.5: Whig Vote as Percentage of Total Votes Cast (all elections) by Principal Streets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'Old' Town</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Place</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bargate</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flottergate</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W St. Mary's Gate</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Street</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethlehem Street</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighowgate</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellowgate</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baxtergate</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Street**</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullring</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S St. Mary's Gate</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnpike</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N St. Mary's Gate</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loft Street</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Street</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'New' Town</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King Edward Street</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Burgess Street</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haveloc Street</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture Street</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Burgess Street</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Spring Street</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N* = all votes cast 1818-1835 (a plumer = 2 votes), ** = mostly occupiers.

Source = Pollbooks.

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Electoral Politics in Grimsby

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Yet another source is a surviving rent roll of Lord Yarborough's Grimsby property dated 1824. It lists 95 male tenants all but seven of whom can be traced as voters in some or all elections during the period (these seven were not freemen and therefore were not entitled to vote). In the election nearest the rental, that is in 1826, 81 tenants voted, 74 of them (91%) whig, three split, and four tory. The latter had all voted whig in the previous two elections and were never to cast a whig vote after 1826, and it is reasonable to assume that they had in fact ceased to be tenants of Yarborough by the time of the 1826 election. A large number of the tenants voted whig at all elections during the period, and 52 never cast a non-whig vote. In the great contest of 1820 which marked the zenith of Tennyson's cause, a small number wavered and split their vote (eight in all) whilst seven cast in favour of Tennyson. Three of these latter were unstable in their voting patterns, and three became staunch tory supporters later, and so it was possible for them to behave more or less independently. Once again, therefore, evidence suggests strongly that ties of tenancy acted as a powerful constraint on the free exercise of conscience and political preference. There were, as we have seen, a few voters whose allegiance subsequently changed, but it is not possible to say whether such voters were still Yarborough tenants. Such a possibility, in the light of all the evidence seems most unlikely, and it is probable that such voters had themselves progressed to become independent property owners or had become tenants of the opposing interest. It is also the case that the largest of the tenants on Yarborough's rent roll were on the whole the most loyal and many too were prominent political figures.
holding office in the corporation as aldermen or common councilmen. Such figures included William Bancroft, Edward Fletcher, Benjamin Gooseman, Samuel Gooseman, Bransby Harrison, Thomas Kennington, Matthew Wardale, and others (see Appendix D).

If property really was the cement of influence which is here suggested, then the obligations it imposed should have been such as to overcome even the strongest temptations. To test whether or not this is so, recourse may be had to transition tables. These indicate the numbers of electors changing their voting pattern between pairs of successive elections. Partisan stability was lowest between 1818 and 1820, the years when Tennyson's bid for power was at its height. One would expect that of all potential whig defectors, the last to succumb would be the occupiers of Yarborough property. It is possible to look behind the figures, identify individual voters, and link this with available, albeit scanty information on property holdings. It is from amongst the whig voters of 1818 that defections in 1820 were widespread: there were nineteen straight converts to the tory cause from amongst this group, only one of whom (John Walker, blacksmith) appears in Yarborough's rental, and he voted whig in 1826. Three of the nineteen are subsequently to be found voting whig, the rest being either consistently tory or cross-party voters, or drop outs. There were also twentyone 1818 whig voters who cast split votes in 1820: of these, five were subsequent dropouts (death, migration, and so on), ten voted whig at the next election (1826), and six are to be found on Yarborough's 1824 rental. These six are interesting in never casting a straight tory double vote: whatever reason they had for casting one of their votes for Tennyson, they were clearly not prepared to cast...
their other vote for the tories - a split vote was as big a protest or concession to conscience that they dared make. One need look no further than the experience of John Searby and his sons just referred to in order to understand their reticence. There were additionally fortysix whig voters in 1818 who cast no vote in 1820. Of these, forty were dropouts who never cast a vote again (seven had died, and the rest were no doubt amongst the 'out' or 'foreign' voters who had been brought in especially for the purposes of voting in 1818). The remaining six who did record votes in later elections help to confirm the emerging picture: three of them voted whig in 1826 and are to be found on Yarborough's rental; one voted whig generally though he missed some elections (he was a mariner); and the remaining two were subsequent tories and are not to be found on any surviving property lists.

It is interesting that between these elections there were only two tory defectors both of whom split their vote in 1820 and both were subsequently to be found voting whig. One of them, James Goulton, was a prominent figure in local politics and the spearhead of Tennyson's campaign in these years. Why he should change allegiance so soon after victory is not known, but he is listed as occupying Yarborough property in the 1824 rental.

It is clear, however, that much tory support in 1820 came from electors who had split their vote in 1818. There were 69 such voters fewer than half of whom subsequently showed any stability in voting behaviour, and none of whom can be traced in existing rentals. It is amongst such a group as this that the genuine floating voter is to be found, and it would seem that he was not occupying the property of any
major political interest. Hence such a large number could be swayed by Tennyson's campaign, the bribes offered by his agents, and any other inducements that might be offered. At the same time he could avoid giving offence to either party by splitting his vote, and in the case of shopkeepers and trademen this might have obvious attractions.

Between 1830 and 1831 partisan stability was relatively high (92.9%). Fourteen whig voters in 1830 voted tory in 1831 and a further seven split their vote: of these twentyone only one, a split voter, is to be found on Yarborough's rent roll and all but three regularly changed their allegiance and so appear to be genuine unstable or floating voters. Similarly, thirteen tory voters of 1830 voted differently in 1831 and again appear to be unstable in voting behaviour. Of twentytwo tory dropouts, only three recorded a vote in more than two elections. Of the 1830 split voters, thirtysix voted tory in 1831, twentysix of whom showed unstable patterns, the remainder being made up largely of otherwise regular tory voters.ss

Thus, a clear picture emerges of the floating voter being someone of independent property, and this confirms earlier findings. By the same token property is confirmed as the cement of influence. In discussing county elections in Lincolnshire, Olney notes that Yarborough allowed (or claimed to allow) his tenantry to vote as they pleased, and that in 1832 the pollbook suggests "that all the tenants on the Brocklesby estate gave one vote to their landlords's son, but that they did what they liked with their second vote."ss As we have seen, in Grimsby too, whilst a tenant might be persuaded to cast one of his two votes against the interest of his landlord and in this way salve his own conscience or avoid giving offence to others who were
important to him, he would rarely cast both votes in this way. To do so was to risk almost certain eviction. The majority of tenants, moreover, gave both votes in their patron's interest. Property was a long-term influence and ultimately the most powerful of influences.

There are some surviving rentals relating to Heneage family property in Grimsby and surrounding parishes.\textsuperscript{57} The Heneages were to become in the mid-century the leading political interest in the borough (and many of the new streets of houses erected in Grimsby at the end of the century bear testimony to Heneage influence). In 1835 Heneage property holding within the borough was small, though by 1850 it had grown to 16\% of the area of the parish, compared with Tennyson's holding of 6\% and Yarborough's of 42\%. A surviving rental dated 1834 and 1835 covers Grimsby, Weelsby, Clee, and Bradley, and lists fortyone names of whom twentynine can be identified as voters. All except two voted in the whig cause to which the Heneages were now committed. The two exceptions were themselves independent property owners within the borough, and substantial citizens, both staunch tory supporters. At the beginning of our period the Heneage family was not totally unsympathetic to the tories and although their tenants were considerably fewer in number than in 1835 one or two can be found voting for Tennyson at the height of tory success in the years 1818 and 1820. In general, therefore, the evidence from the Heneage property lists, limited as it is, helps to confirm the hypothesis that property exerted a powerful influence on voting behaviour.
In "Urban Politics in Victorian England" Derek Fraser asserts that, 'In the city (Birmingham) an election recorded the genuine political will of the electorate, not the power of money or influence.' Yet, as we have begun to see, in Grimsby and no doubt in the majority of small market towns, matters were otherwise. Vincent argues that 'Croesus fought many elections but he never made shoemakers into good tories or butchers into good liberals.' Indeed, Davis, Vincent, and Fraser all play down the role of influence, legitimate or otherwise. As Fraser says, 'In the cities, at least, opinion mattered.' Yet one is struck nevertheless by enormous pressures on individuals to behave in certain ways and to cast their votes in accordance with clearly defined interests, in the smaller towns at least. In casting his vote under the system which prevailed until 1872 the voter in the smaller borough could not fail to be aware that others were looking over his shoulder - local activists, his employer, customers, neighbours, and even his MP whose property he might occupy or whose patronage he might enjoy. The deference and slavish vote casting so much a feature of rural constituencies were not completely mirrored in towns, even small towns such as Grimsby where face-to-face relationships were common. But the voter was unlikely to enjoy the independence of action which secret voting confers and which makes the expression of political conviction possible.

Indeed, it is not even possible to be sure how far political conviction in ideological terms was a likely reality for the majority of voters. It is certain that many voters cast a vote because it paid
them to do so; without financial incentive they may simply not have bothered. This must have applied to parliamentary as well as local corporation elections. That rewards were paid by both sides and expected by voters as a matter of course only serves to reinforce the point. Joshua Plaskitt was political agent of Charles Tennyson in 1818 yet for all that displayed a naivety which was soon to take him out of the political scene. In a letter to Tennyson some weeks before the parliamentary election he refers to the giving of presents (mostly in the form of beef, flour, and even money):

"...I believe nearly all the men take this present and I dare say will do the same thing from all party's. I must own I was surprised at some of your friends but they say this is nothing to what we want of Lord Yarborough and therefore shall take all we can get. Here's a precious sample of the purity of Election, and yet there is not a few who are very willing to support this sort of Election...you will have an expensive business...All I fear is they should make a break into your plumpers. This would be a bad business, this is what they must rely on, and this is what we must prevent if possible. I see they are driving at this in all ways they can think of...I know the men will not promise yet, notwithstanding the treats and presents, provided you do the same thing."61

He need not have worried, for Tennyson was to receive the greatest number of plumpers in any election in our period.

It is frequently assumed that the function of bribes was to secure a partisan vote, but it might equally well have been to ensure that the voter turned out. Many studies of recent voting behaviour testify to a general lack of interest in and knowledge of political facts and affairs, and one might hesitate to suppose that early nineteenth century voters were any more naturally political: if it appears so, it is perhaps because they were made so by the pressures brought to bear by social as well as political considerations, and by the folly or
irrationality of not participating when much quite legitimate reward was consequent upon doing so.²

The pressures which demanded participation in turn gave rise to rationalisations which sought to imbue necessity with virtue and thus to repeated expressions of 'independence'. The acceptance of bribes was clearly a reprehensible matter in the eyes of many contemporaries, and Methodists and others were not slow to point this out and to exhort voters against it.³ Bribes were not legitimate, and the subject was naturally one of the darker sides of politics, recognised but not openly admitted by many. Some payments, however, though implicitly bribes, were regarded as legitimate and kept the political machinery well oiled. Such payments were an accepted feature of the electoral scene and their general acceptance, even approval, made it possible for voters to assert their independence without in any way seeming to engage in double talk. In many constituencies bribery and treating were regarded as normal.⁴

However, despite the fact that all voters could expect to receive, almost as a matter of course, £10 for each of their parliamentary votes (much smaller sums in local elections) such payments were nevertheless not strictly legal. Party managers were thus very careful about the distribution of such money, and this may be one reason why delay in payment was common. In February 1820, with an election looming, and payments for the previous election in 1818 not yet having been made in many instances, Daubney urged payment but also great secrecy in view of the petition prepared by Grant following the last election. Daubney wrote to Tennyson:

"The only expedient by which I think the late election money might be paid would be by sending an account to you of what is due to each
man, by holding the balance in a letter, and directing it to the person for whom it is intended, and forwarding it from London by a person who is not known nor can be traced. He might be stationed in a public house in a private room with some person at the door to announce who it is that applies, and the packet might be handed out accordingly without the person being seen or known who delivers them.

Four days later Daubney offered further suggestions for this clandestine operation:

"By inclosing bills of £20 or £10 or of £5 where those sums are wanted, and by using one and two pound bills to make up I think the thing might be effected. This plan however supposes that the banks from which the bills issue do not take notes of them, that is the number. It would be no difficult matter to have these letters addressed and put into different post offices on different days in different parts of the kingdom by a messenger or two sent out for the purpose.

Creosus did fight many, if not all, elections in Grimsby. Now the question arises as to whether he persuaded voters to cast against their conviction, and the argument of Vincent is that this is unlikely. Butchers, tailors, farmers, and other clearly identifiable social groups can be shown to have voted consistently in partisan ways, and though individuals within each group may always be found who do not conform to the general pattern, nevertheless group tendencies are in many instances clearly evident. In Grimsby this appears to be so in the case of the port interest (mainly mariners) and of the farmers - though with both it is probable that property or rather tenancy was the determining factor. However, another question is whether Creosus, even if he failed to win partisan support, nevertheless turned the scales by bringing out voters who would otherwise have not turned out. There is, of course, no way of knowing, and certainly no way of measuring how far this may have been so. This for two reasons: we have no means of knowing who would not have turned out had they not received some form of payment; and we therefore cannot tell how the
overall voting pattern may have been affected. Whether the voting pattern of those who would have turned out in the absence of bribes would have been different from those who would not cannot be known. Yet there are, perhaps, some clues.

First, in local corporation elections, votes for mayor were rewarded with a payment of five shillings out of corporation funds, whereas votes for JPs, cast on the same occasion, were not so rewarded: the former votes typically were double those of the latter. It may simply be the case, of course, that the post of JP was not seen as one of particular political significance by the average voter, or it may have been a matter of greater concern to the independent or more well-to-do citizen. Second, figures for turnout suggest that, with the exception of 1832, it was remarkably high, and that many of those who did not record a vote were either mariners away at sea or were away for other reasons. There were none who failed to turn out at all elections, and few who missed many.

The sums offered to electors for turning out at local contests had some legal backing inasmuch as they were made by order of the corporation itself out of corporation funds. When compared to the sums regularly though unofficially given by candidates at parliamentary elections they give the lie to the suggestion, not infrequently made, that the latter were due reward for the elector's time and inconvenience. The time and inconvenience could not have been significantly less in corporation elections, though the 'due reward' was only a fraction of that at parliamentary elections.

All those who voted for Tennyson in the 1818 parliamentary election received payment: £10 for a single vote and £20 for a
plumper. This is confirmed in accounts still existing which list all voters. Using the pollbook it has been possible to establish that no Tennyson voters were denied such payment, and no such payment was made by Tennyson and recorded by his agent to anyone who cast both his votes for the whigs. It was possible to ensure that voters did not default by making the payment after the election was over - in most cases some considerable time later. The accounts clearly show that some sums were paid out in advance, but never the full and rarely the major part of the money due. Thus, the agent's account rendered to Tennyson in February 1820, more than eighteen months after the event, shows that only £302.18.6d. had been paid out whereas another £2537.1.6d. was still outstanding. It comes as no surprise to learn that some to whom money was owing had died in the meantime (though often the money was subsequently paid out to widows or dependants). It may well be that further political gain was to be made by delaying payment - voters kept in want were thus in some continuing way dependent, and if another election occurred in the meantime, might be persuaded not to prejudice their chance of payment and thus to vote the same way. Something like this appears to have happened in the early period when payments for 1818 voters had still not been fully made by the time of the 1820 election - and there had in the meantime been two local elections. Such delay further caused frequent distress and no doubt served to emphasise in the minds of the voters their dependence.

Tennyson supporters within the corporation received the usual 'fees' but their wives also were given payment: those of aldermen received two guineas each and those of common councilmen received one guinea each. In addition, custom house officers who, as official
government employees were denied the parliamentary (though not local) franchise, were nevertheless paid: Alderman Moody received £12.2.0d., common councilman Brown £11.1.0d., and seven burgesses £10 each. A further five unidentified absent voters were given £5. In such a way was continuing local loyalty secured.

Clearly there were many interests to be cemented and family loyalties to be nurtured. There is no reason to suppose that the picture was any different on the opposing side. Although no detailed accounts exist among the Yarborough records as they do among the Tennyson papers, there are references to the usual sums of £10 and £20 being paid.

It would thus also appear that no electors were left out (though on conscience grounds it may be that some declined offers of money) and that therefore one can think in terms of a standardised payment or bribe of £10 for each vote, such payments not being regarded as illegitimate. Hence it is possible to argue that in a situation where all received the same bribe, none was influenced by it to cast his vote one way or another: what he was denied from one candidate the voter could expect from the other. Since the effect of such 'bribes' was nullified in this way, the question naturally arises as to their purpose.

From the giver's point of view it may in part be plausible to postulate that candidates were parties to a situation in which to give bribes was a relatively costly bid for success whereas not to give them was to risk total failure. By offering bribes each candidate ensured that he would be better off whatever his opponent did. Thus, in the pursuit of self interest both parties will pay bribes, for the
risk of one not doing so is too high. The rational approach would be for neither to pay bribes, but this would require that each could depend on the other to cooperate and that the cost of arrangements to cooperate was less than the cost of non-cooperation. It is difficult to imagine such cooperation arising. The possibilities are illustrated:

FIGURE 5.1: THE STRATEGY OF CORRUPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tennyson Pays</th>
<th>Yarborough Pays</th>
<th>Yarborough Does Not Pay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>half votes</td>
<td>no votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennyson Does not Pay</td>
<td>half votes</td>
<td>all votes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no votes</td>
<td>all votes</td>
<td>half votes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, if either side were to decide not to offer bribes it stood to lose all of the available votes, unless the opposition also failed to pay - a most unrealistic prospect, and too much of a risk for any serious contender to contemplate. By paying, however, the worst outcome is the gain of half the available votes. Of course, it is unlikely that at any given election, other things being equal, each side could in reality expect half the available votes: canvassing, influence, personalities, and even issues might turn the scales in favour of one side. Nevertheless, each side may have felt it possible to gain half the votes: there were few if any elections which were foregone conclusions. And even when large numbers of voters were constrained absolutely in
the way in which they cast, they often retained the option of not turning out at all.

However, it is perhaps unlikely that either side had but one single motive. The payment of bribes must be seen against a wider and longer term context, as a means of securing not only a present but also a future and hopefully enduring allegiance, particularly through family influence. Indeed, when requesting Tennyson to make early payment to particular individuals, Daubney frequently made reference to the size of the elector's family and amount of future support which might be expected.72

Hence bribery extended to all electors alike: the vast majority of voters accepted it, and many were influenced by it to turn out. Certainly it would have reinforced all the other tendencies to conformity which were a prominent feature of open voting. It is interesting that nowhere does voting itself appear to have been made a condition of tenancy. Had it been so, it would have been necessary only to offer bribes to independent property owners. Perhaps few voters had the freedom to choose from whom they would accept bribes - but it can only be from amongst this group that the genuine floating voter could come. Such a voter was in a position of some economic or social independence, not bound for his livelihood or place of residence to either candidate, and open to the highest or first bidder, or ready to convert his genuine political preference into cash without fear or necessity of compromise.

It is abundantly clear that the rewards and inducements to voters offered by any one party were conditioned to some extent by the known or expected reactions of the rival party. Sometimes the reaction of
Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

the opposition could be predicted fairly accurately; at other times it was a matter of guesswork. There can be no doubt, however, that each side thought strategically about its own behaviour.

It was usual, as we have seen, for each side to offer to the freemen a Christmas present the political nature of which was but thinly disguised. The *Stamford Mercury* as a rule found little space for Grimsby news, but one of its correspondents did report in January 1818:

"The freemen at large, the widows of freemen and some poor inhabitants of the borough have been presented with coals; the former with half a chaldron each and the others with one quarter each, but from what quarter it is not known. We live like fighting cocks at Grimsby, and without a reckoning, so generous and disinterested is the world become."  

The 'world', of course, was far from being disinterested, for such presents were the cement of politics. Now, in considering what form a Christmas present to electors should take, Tennyson activists carefully watched what the other side were doing and advised accordingly. Alderman Lusby reported to Charles Tennyson on the first day of December 1818:

"Alexander Grant...told their friends that Beef and Pudding would be given at Christmas as usual with this addition, 'to all who would accept it.' I need not observe to you it will be to your advantage to take the lead rather than appear to be spurred. Don't let that confidence and good opinion which was established by your first gift in coals be shaken. It will eventually secure your interest in the Borough."  

Shortly after, Daubney wrote:

"As to the Christmas Present, we know it would be desirable and would do an infinite deal of Good, but considering you as a Permanent Member or a Constant Candidate, we have some difficulty in making up our minds what course ought to be taken on Account of the Constant Expense. We cannot at present say what ought to be done. *We will watch the Motions of the Enemy* (emphasis added) and take care that they do not outstrip you in that kind of Liberality that gains the affections of the People. If we could be sure the other side meant to do anything we would be beforehand with them in our declarations, and..."
the only difficulty is to know whether we should voluntarily lead into this expense, which, if once begun, must at some season constantly rear."

Three weeks later he was able to report developments:

"Grant yesterday issued his Christmas Present which was a 10/= Ticket, without specifying how it is to be spent. This Present is confined to their Voting Friends only. I am glad they adopt such a narrow policy. I have not heard of any present from Mr. Fazakerley. If he should give one, I am afraid your Plumpers must be visited again with a further present."76

Not all of Tennyson's activists and advisers were agreed as to the best policy. Daubney later reported that Squire, Chairman of the Court of Requests and a prominent tory and Tennyson activist, was of the opinion that presents should be given to all who asked for them; alderman Veal argued that many exceptions should be made, whilst alderman Lusby and Daubney himself felt that a present should be given to all:

"...except those bound hand and foot to Lord Yarborough. We think you are wrong in your policy of exclusion. If you exclude Grant's Friends from Participation, from what class of men is your Interest to be Strengthened? You cannot strengthen it from Lord Yarborough because he has but few, except what are entirely bound to him, and those we cannot move. The Interest most likely to be afloat is that of Grants, and it is from them only that we can strengthen our own interest."77

It would appear that Daubney's sound advice was taken: the only freemen denied the present appear to have been known and committed Yarborough voters whom there was little chance of winning over.78 Grant, who had been defeated in the June election, nevertheless had an interest in the borough - founded partly on property - which could be important to Tennyson in his bid to wrest power from Yarborough. But Daubney was also concerned about the timing of the present:

"We thought it best to make our Christmas Present first, because we have the credit of forcing it from the others. If they make any, and if they exceed us much in value we may amend the one we now give."
We have purchased the Beef and Flour because it is less expensive than Coals - it will be less by about 3/= each Ticket.”

One year later the theme was repeated:

"I think some trifling present should be made, such as a Quarter of Coals; this would cost less than a Hundred Pounds and would be most gratefully received...I have it from some authority that he (Grant) has an intention of continuing his Christmas Presents...If the election money is not paid, nor no Christmas Present, your Interest will decline. If Grant keeps his property here and makes a Christmas Present he will keep up a harrassisng Interest.”

A week later Daubney again urged a present because Tennyson's 1818 election money was still largely unpaid:

"I am sorry that the Election Money as it is called cannot be paid but I think it absolutely necessary that something should be done this Christmas as an earnest that it will be paid at some future time, otherwise I think it impossible to keep what I consider the Popular Interest, fixed upon you. If the Borough is worth keeping, and it is inconvenient to you to advance the Money at Present out of your private Affairs for a Christmas Present, I would advance it to you.”

Both sides were in the habit of giving presents, and not only at Christmas, but the amount was a matter of strategy. It is clear, too, that failure to acknowledge the significance of a plump vote did not go down well:

"In your Present at Christmass 1818 the Plumpers received no more from you than the single voter - the single voter then received from the opposite party another present of equal value. Thus the single voter got rewarded double and the Plumper single. In your last Xmas Present Plumpers and Halfheads were made alike, and on my remonstrating with Mr. Daubney on the Injustice of the thing his reply was 'If the Other Party gives anything, I will then double the Plumpers.'" Lusby saw in this neglect the end of the plump voter:

"Of this I am certain, no candidate for Grimsby will ever be able to procure the support of 96 Plumpers at any future Election, no, nor half that number; they have been treated worse than the halfheads.”

He was not entirely accurate with his prediction for in 1826 when there was again only one tory candidate standing, there were 102 plumpers, but by then, presumably, accounts had been duly settled.
Strategic considerations were applied to many of the bribes offered. In February 1820 the announcement of the death of the king gave rise to another election before much of the money promised at the 1818 election had been paid. Tennyson's agent was somewhat alarmed at developments:

"...the election money unpaid has caused such a sensation here as you are little aware of. In the present temper of the People I am of Opinion it would be impossible to do anything of advantage to you, the expectation of the Election Money being paid having been so often excited and the Dissolution so near, has raised the People's Wrath and Disappointment almost to Fury. They say that the Pelhams trick is played off upon them again. They will have the Money, or you need not come again. Fazakerley's Money is not looked for nor is he expected again...Without Payment of the Election Money Lord Yarborough and Grant would (without a canvass) be too much for you." 

Alderman Veal agreed and Lusby warned that the opposition were making capital out of it:

"The Burgesses are greatly exasperated; the flame of Discontent breaks forth almost in every Quarter and I am sorry to say there are those who are continually adding Fuel to the Fire."

Somehow the matter was resolved satisfactorily, for Tennyson with a running mate went on to secure a resounding victory.

Christmas presents were a regular feature, and so too were election money payments. Gifts were also offered at other times. Squire informed Tennyson that the Christmas present had been well received but with an election looming he should consider bringing a colleague who should also:

"...give a similar present to Coal (i.e. 4 pecks of Wheat in grain); it will cost about £160 and is better by far than a Drunken Treat and far less expensive besides the great benefit resulting to wives and children by keeping Husbands and Fathers at home or work instead of carousing a whole night and next day spending their own money and thereby starving instead of benefitting their families."

However, within a few days Squire was to report that the 4 pecks of wheat would not suffice now that the opposition were giving presents,
and he recommended 1½ stone flour and 1¼ stone beef. In May 1818 the Stamford Mercury reported that freemen were receiving "beef and flour 15 shillings each from Mr. Fazakerley, coals and beef 20 shillings each from Mr. Tennyson."37

How then are such findings on the undoubted operation of influence to be interpreted? Superficially they might be construed as debasing altogether the idea of free political choice: all was corruption. Such a generalisation, however, though favoured by some, would be mistaken. The evidence does clearly indicate the existence of powerful constraints which acted upon many voters, yet it is clear that no patron could take everything for granted. The frequency of contests may itself be an indication of the limits of patron influence. Full patron control, and the stifling of free electoral choice would be consistent with few or no contests, not with many. In fact, in the fifty years before reform all elections in Grimsby were contested.

Interestingly, it is in the period after reform that uncontested elections emerge: between 1835 and 1852 no elections took place and the borough was firmly in the hands of the Heneages, resting on Yarborough support.

It is clear, too, that contests were hard fought, and fully taxed the energies of party activists. Voters were bombarded with literature of all kinds - posters, squibs, letters - and encouraged to weigh issues. Such were presented often in simple terms - as they are today - but it is difficult to believe that voters consequently had no awareness or understanding of issues. Frequently the issues presented were those which concerned them most: practical matters such as their own independence, or the emotional issues raised by religion.
Personalities, too, were much to the fore. There is no doubt that much feeling and passion was generated by such simply presented, clear-cut issues. In a constituency which was itself small and in which very nearly half the adult male population had the franchise, the excitement of elections was genuine, and not entirely a response to the prospect of material gain or ritual entertainment. The eagerness with which reports of their MP's activities at Westminster were sought provides further evidence of the maturity of the electorate. The establishment of news rooms, essentially partisan in character (and referred to in Chapter 6) would have been unnecessary for an apathetic, unthinking electorate.

However important these considerations may be, it is difficult nevertheless to dismiss influence in favour of party or principle, as Davis does. He sees influence as a two-way process, which indeed it was:

"...political obedience was a return for services rendered, the provision of a shield against bad times."

And it was expensive. Now whilst factors such as leadership, party, and issues were undoubtedly at work, it is important not to ignore the powerful constraining influence of the landlord-tenant or employer-employee relationship. It was this which provided the basis of the party vote, and which largely accounts for the high degree of party loyalty. Davis argues that such loyalty was, in Aylesbury, remarkable "in the face of the very considerable opportunities for, and inducements to, compromise and cross voting."

However, in Grimsby such inducements were more apparent than real, inasmuch as the majority of electors had limited choice as to which party's inducements they might
accept. In a study of the freeman voter in Liverpool in the early
decades of the nineteenth century, Menzies found similar pressures on
voters to those found in Grimsby, though employment was crucial: a
large proportion of freemen, "because of their position of economic
dependence, voted at each election for the party or faction supported
by their employers."

Indeed, there is not much evidence to support the individual model
of voting behaviour, that which sees the casting of a vote as the
reflection of clearly perceived and understood individual interests as
represented by issues. The freedom to act which individualist
theory elevates into both virtue and reality almost invariably vanishes
in the face of social and economic constraints, however dimly perceived
or even denied. There is no evidence either in favour of the class
model of voting behaviour, at least not at this time in the small
market town. Group interests - more often occupational, but
occasionally religious - can be discerned in most small borough
constituencies, and in various ways they might influence behaviour. In
the pre-Victorian period, however, the great majority if not all of the
small borough constituencies were preindustrial and to these the
concept of class is inappropriate. Another model sees voting as
almost entirely the product of bribery and corruption. This is the
model familiar to readers of "The Pickwick Papers". Bribery and
corruption there certainly was: it was deeply embedded in the
electioneering process, yet, as Vincent found, it probably rarely, if
ever, decided the day. If it did decide the day it was by influencing
turnout.
It is clear, however, that the factors which most influenced voters were, as Moore argues, 'endogenous to the localities in which the group existed', and whilst they may have included occupation or family or even issues, chief among them was influence. Deference communities may have existed within towns, but the variety of behaviour and interests which there undoubtedly were tends to blur their existence. The findings for Grimsby, however, do lend some support, however slight, for the existence of groups of voters almost exactly analogous to Moore's deference communities, in which men, living in close contact, sharing similar occupations or interests recognised 'the same individual, or individuals, as their social, economic, and ideological leader or leaders.' These leaders were those who were attributed by contemporaries themselves as exerting or having 'the influence'. Delineating such groups from the mass of amorphous data in the pollbooks is a difficult task and on their existence the pollbooks are themselves mute. Yet, as we have seen, reference to other records does make it possible to discern, though perhaps only dimly, their existence.

Despite the considerable criticism levelled at Moore's thesis since its publication, the following observation of his received ample support from Grimsby:

"Nomination and corrupt boroughs were but extreme cases of a universal pattern. They differed from the counties primarily in the relative numbers of those who wielded influence, and, in the corrupt boroughs, the nature of the ties which bound these men and their dependents. In the nomination and corrupt boroughs influence was concentrated in the hands of one man, or group of men, who may or may not have had any immediate social contact with their dependents, whose connections with their boroughs, although generally based on property, often existed for purely political reasons."
Above all, however, is the social context of open voting and the vertical and horizontal pressures to which it made electors subject.

FAMILY

The development of political ideas and awareness in the elector, that is the individual's socialisation into politics has been a subject of study by investigators into the behaviour of modern electorates. Of all the likely influences on individual socialisation, including community, work, and social milieu, that of parents and the immediate family has been found to be of primary importance, for it is an influence which, present as it is in the most impressionable and formative years of the voter's life, is remarkably enduring. Parental influences, of course, are often subtle, frequently indirect, and not always overtly political; they are also themselves a reflection of the wider culture.33

Not all parents are interested in politics; some never bother to vote at all, and many of those who do may be ill-informed and hold attitudes which are basically inconsistent. What applies to parents, however, is - today at any rate - likely to apply to their children. There has been found in many studies a high degree of congruence between the attitudes, positive or negative, well or ill-informed, of parents and their children. Such congruence, sharp at first, dims only slowly.34

Students of recent electoral behaviour have been able to interview or question voters about their preferences and about the preferences of one or both of their parents, both now and at earlier periods so as to
build up a profile as it were of family voting patterns over time. Using such methods Butler & Stokes were able to show a high degree of congruence in the voting patterns of members of the same family, and whilst the most recent studies have pointed to a diminution in the importance of family influence and early socialization they do not deny that it is nevertheless a significant factor.9

It may be asked whether the historical psephologist can contribute anything of value to such findings. The answer is both yes and no: yes, because the pollbooks may, if used in conjunction with other sources, show unequivocally how sons and fathers actually voted at any particular election or series of elections; no, because, removed as he is by many years from the events and people he is studying, the historical psephologist is unable to question his subjects on such matters as the degree of parental and family interest in, awareness of, and involvement in political life. The mere casting of a vote in itself tells us nothing about the elector's degree of interest in politics. Furthermore, in the early nineteenth century politics was essentially a male preserve. This is not to say that women, as wives and mothers, had no political views or did not express any, only that if they did, there is no means of knowing what such views were, and it is hence impossible to impute any female influence in voting behaviour. This is very much in contrast with modern voting behaviour. Butler & Stokes have convincingly demonstrated the importance of maternal influence:

"When the direction of mother's preference is distinguished from father's, it is plain that each parent, and not the father only, helps to form the nascent partisanship of their children."36
Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

The traditional view of the role of wife and mother in the early nineteenth century would lead one to suppose that mothers reinforced totally the political attitudes of husbands, and thus transmitted, through normal socialisation processes, the father's attitudes. Such a conclusion, however, would be naive, and at best a simplification. For all that, the influence of mothers must remain a closed book, a subject for speculation only; but it would perhaps be unwise to discount it altogether.

There are a number of practical difficulties to be overcome in the attempt to trace family voting patterns. The pollbooks give no clue as to family ties other than surnames; it is thus necessary to consult other sources. Fortunately, in Grimsby the problem is not insurmountable, for the electorate was made up exclusively of freemen of whom a large proportion received their freedom as a birthright. In the majority of cases the qualification for freedom is recorded in the Mayors' Court books and more conveniently in the Babb compilation. In both cases, where birth is the qualification the name of the father is invariably recorded. The Babb compilation, giving as it does also the dates of enrolment, in chronological order (alphabetically), makes it possible to identify as family groups the majority of voters admitted by birth and recorded in the pollbooks as having cast a vote. The procedure, however, is not without difficulties. Firstly, the fathers of many voters had died before the commencement of our period; in some cases it has been possible to trace the votes of such fathers in previous elections from manuscript polls existing in the court books. In some cases where fathers cannot be traced as having voted, it has been possible to identify brothers and to then compare their votes.
Secondly, not all the electorate can be covered in this way, for many received their freedom through marriage and apprenticeship. Nevertheless, the proportion of the total freeman electorate in the period 1818-1832 who can be identified in family groups is sufficiently large to give meaning to the exercise (see Table 5.6) It is possible in a few cases to identify brothers amongst those entering by marriage or apprenticeship. The following table indicates the extent of familial voting.

**TABLE 5.6: FATHERS AND SONS VOTING TOGETHER IN ELECTIONS 1818 - 1835**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voting together in:</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numbers of Relationships</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(Total=198)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks, Freemen's Roll, and Babb Compilation.

Thirdly, the electorate itself was constantly changing, giving rise to difficulties where the votes of fathers or sons at either end of the period are recorded for one or two elections only, for in these cases the vote cast may not necessarily reflect true party allegiance or partisan 'self-image'. In the absence of survey techniques, it is only possible to infer such an image from the voter's actual behaviour over a series of elections. Butler & Stokes' findings show that whilst votes cast reflect partisan self-image to a high degree, there is occasionally a divergence between the two, followed by a return to congruence. Thus, for any one of a host of possible reasons - personal reaction to circumstances, the impact of local issues and personalities, bribery, and so on - a voter might cast a vote at variance with his self-image.
Not all voters, of course, were committed party men, and as shown elsewhere there was a significant proportion of uncommitted or floating voters within the Grimsby electorate during this period. A fourth, and perhaps more serious, difficulty arises over the very concept of party itself, for the period is one in which party politics were much less clearly defined than they were to become later in the century. Party terms today tend to imply uniform and widely recognised responses to political issues, yet so much of early nineteenth century politics was determined or influenced by purely local concerns and personalities not necessarily in tune with national party thinking. There is also the added complication of the double vote which itself could be split. The split vote might represent genuine preferences for candidates, or the lack of committed partisanship, or merely the desire not to 'waste' a second vote when there was only one candidate of the voter's preferred party standing. The latter occurred on two occasions, 1818 and 1826, when only one tory candidate stood. A split vote could thus disguise a tory preference in those years but cannot be said to do so in other years when two candidates for each party were standing. The procedure adopted in interpreting such votes has been to allow split votes in 1818 and 1826 to indicate a tory preference if the voter cast tory votes in other elections. In cases where only the one election is recorded, the split vote stands as a split vote.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the evidence suggests patterns of voting which confirm in large measure the findings of studies of more recent voting behaviour. Table 5.7 (a) shows the distribution of votes of fathers and sons in the election of 1818. It is clear that there was a marked tendency for the votes of sons to agree with those
TABLES 5.7 (a - h): VOTES OF FATHERS AND SONS

Table (a): 1818 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congruence = 64.5%

Table (b): 1820 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congruence = 74.3%

Table (c): 1826 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congruence = 80.5%
## Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

### Table 5.7 (d): 1830 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congruence = 73.6%

### Table (e): May 1831 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congruence = 80.5%

### Table (f): August 1831 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Congruence = 84.2%
Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

Table 5.7 (g): 1832 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Sons</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>No Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Vote</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \text{Congruence} = 71.2\% \]

Table (h): 1835 Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Sons</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>No Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Vote</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \text{Congruence} = 69.1\% \]

* Includes freemen voters only.

Source: Linked pollbooks.

TABLE 5.8: VOTES OF BROTHERS, GRIMSBY ELECTION MAY 1831

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elder</th>
<th>Younger</th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Split</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \text{Congruence} = 64.4\% \]
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of their fathers, both where a party was preferred (straight tory or whig single or double votes) and where votes were split. Expressing the votes in the diagonal (top left to bottom right) cells as a percentage of the total family votes cast in this election reveals a fairly high level of congruence — some 64.5%. This, however, is not as high as in some other elections, and indeed is the lowest recorded for any parliamentary election in the period. Nor does it appear to be explained by the existence of only one tory candidate, for few sons of tory fathers voted differently from their fathers, and in 1826, another election in which only one tory stood, congruence was much higher. More significant is the party vote, whig or tory, of sons whose father's vote was split, and the tory and split votes of sons whose fathers were whig. It may be in the latter case that sons of whig fathers were making a protest by splitting their vote which fathers were reluctant to make: perhaps they had less to lose or more prospect of riding any injurious consequences. This would not, however, explain why the sons of fathers casting a split vote were more likely to cast a party vote — unless they were seeking to declare allegiances in the hope of some material gain in the form of property or employment. The existing data can carry us no further, and here the limitations facing the historical psephologist become evident. The pollbooks may, after all, simply reveal political preferences.

The table for 1820 (Table (b)) reveals greater congruence. It also provides further evidence of the swing towards the tories, with the votes of non-congruent sons tending to go to the tories where fathers' votes were either whig or split. In 1826 reversion to the whig cause is evident, together with even greater congruence in the
voting of fathers and sons. This, insofar as it tells us anything of political preference, reflects the swing of the borough back to the Brocklesby interest and the decline of tory strength generally within the borough. In subsequent elections congruence remained high until Reform. Here the fall in congruence in 1832 and 1835 (Tables g and h) reflects to some extent the loss of one MP and the disappearance of the split vote. Differences in political preference or in interest could no longer be so readily masked as in prereform days - yet there was still a marked and impressive congruence between votes of fathers and sons, whether whig or tory. In both these elections only freemen voters have been identified in father-son relationships. The mean index of congruence over all elections is 74.7%. In a post-war study of a small American community Berelson et al found virtually identical results: "About 75% of the first votes in the community sided with their fathers in their political choice." Interestingly, and with the benefit of survey techniques and attitudinal analysis, the authors were able to show that this reflected not only the importance of primary group solidarity - the family voting as a unit in the same way as the household might spend as a unit - but also a general lack of interest in politics on the part of young people.101

This rather tentative excursion into family voting patterns is further reinforced by a single examination of the congruence of votes of younger with eldest brothers which again reveal a high level of congruence (see Table 5.8). In the May 1831 election it was over 64%, yet the congruence between fathers and sons was over 80%. The difference is partly accounted for by the fact that some different voters were involved: where brothers were investigated, many had not
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appeared in the father-son tables because the father had not voted, having died or become non-resident. The bond between brothers was thus a weaker one than between father and son.

Of course, it does not follow that even in the majority of cases the votes of sons were determined or influenced wholly by those of fathers. Vote casting is subject to many influences. Thus, it is possible that when congruence was high it merely reflected a general tendency to support one party rather than another, i.e. both father and son were responding in the same way to common pressures or influences. Thus, in 1820 the proportion of whig fathers and sons was much lower, and that of tory fathers and sons much higher than in other elections: both fathers and sons, in other words, tended to move in the same direction. In many cases fathers and sons were bound by the same ties of dependence, either occupying the same property or, if in separate residences, holding it from the same landlord - who was most likely to be Lord Yarborough or Charles Tennyson. Indeed, an important consideration in the offer of tenancy was the family connection which it might carry with it, as the correspondence of agents and activists makes clear. It cannot be denied, however, that these findings for Grimsby do resemble those of modern studies of family influence.

Phillips has noted Plumb's observation that "most voters identify with a party in their youth and stay loyal to it through their lives", and he has further demonstrated the inappropriateness of this to mid-eighteenth century Norwich where large numbers of first-time voters were middle-aged. In Grimsby it is likely that new electors brought with them political preconceptions (as well as social and
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economic interests) gained from within the family, as we have seen. They were not always enduring, however, and much appears to have depended not only on the wider social context and ties of dependence, but also on the political climate which prevailed at the new voter's first election. In the majority of cases there was a rapid falling off in voting at successive elections, that is to say that cohort decay was initially very large. Of the new tory voters in 1818, a time of rising tory fortunes, the majority did indeed stay loyal, though by 1826, the third parliamentary election for these new voters, over half had dropped out. By 1835 those remaining were voting tory in the proportion of two to one. The new whig voters of 1818 displayed even more rapid cohort decay, reflecting perhaps a greater proportion of outvoters brought in for the occasion by Lord Yarborough. Those remaining, however, also tended to support the whig cause, although in both elections in 1831 there were almost as many voting tory or splitting as voting whig. The new split votes of 1818 showed an even greater rate of drop-out from the electorate, and those who remained tended to vote either whig or tory rather than to split, and their preferences followed those of the electorate as a whole.

What is true of 1818 is not true of 1820. New tory voters in 1820, the most triumphant year for their party, displayed almost as much tendency to vote whig or split in subsequent elections, and in most elections the combined whig and split vote was greater than the tory vote. The new whig voters who remained showed an equal tendency to vote whig or tory in subsequent elections, as did the split voters. The force of local circumstances and the workings of influence are the most likely explanations for this.
1826 was the year of the great whig recovery, to which new whig voters tended to remain loyal. There were no new tory voters, and split voters rather curiously thereafter showed an overwhelming tendency to vote tory.

In subsequent elections the data over a short period suggest continuing loyalty to the party of one's first election, but the period is one of only five years (though it does cover five elections).

AN ECONOMIC MODEL

Explanations or models of voting behaviour have typically been in terms which are psychological, sociological, or political. An economic interpretation of voting behaviour would rely upon the concept of opportunity cost. Opportunity cost refers to sacrificed alternatives arising from the choice of a given course of action - e.g. the cost of America's space programme is the social and international aid programmes which might have been undertaken with the same resources. Thus, the individual voter, at the point of polling, is assumed to have weighed up the costs and benefits of his decision and to have done so rationally. Now it is important to understand that this does not imply that no mistakes will be made. Occasionally the voter will get his calculations wrong (through ignorance or poor judgment) but it is assumed that the voter will do his best given his reading of present and future possibilities: his total situation. Nor does such an approach imply that the voter is completely free to choose: he faces constraints in the same way that all decision makers face constraints.
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Two basic choices thus face the elector: (1) whether to vote or not, and (2) for whom to vote. The first decision must have been a relatively straightforward one for the great majority of electors in our period. The costs involved in turning out were either minimal (the time involved in turning out and also, for new electors, getting entered upon the Call List), or met by one or other of the candidates. The 'registration' fees, i.e. those payable on admission to freedom, were met in this way, and so too were the costs of travelling including, if necessary, not only the coach, but food, hotel bills, and a generous allowance for the time and trouble expended. In contrast, the benefits of turning out could be massive by comparison, as too could the costs of not turning out. The financial benefits, whether legitimate or otherwise have already been outlined, and to these must be added treating in the form of food, drink, coal, flour, and other items. In addition, for new voters there was the considerable advantage of being made a freeman. This gave him some status in the community, and this he could pass on to his children. It entitled him to vote in local elections (for which he could also expect payment) and it allowed him the use of corporation land and gave him the associated privileges. Furthermore, as a freeman he was entitled to send his children to the Free Grammar School in the town. If he was a shopkeeper or craftsman (and most electors were) he might also obtain custom from the corporation acting in its capacity of provider of goods and services. Established voters too gained various non-financial benefits in the form of esteem or by way of satisfying the expectations which the community had of him. There was also the entertainment value associated with elections and the inducement to turn out and join
in the general festivities. In Liverpool, the freemen regarded an election as a "Saturnalia, in which they were to indulge in the most extravagant licentiousness" - and so, too, in Grimsby.\footnote{104}

In the circumstances it must have been very hard for the voter not to turn out, even if he were otherwise independent. The majority of the rewards were there for the taking. And if he were beholden to none, he had the opportunity to sell his vote to the highest bidder. It is likely too that there were social costs attached to not turning out, associated with failure to act out one's role, as well as the obvious opportunity costs consequent upon giving up all the available rewards. Not voting, in other words, could be a costly and an uncomfortable choice, and in some ways irrational.

In the same way it is possible to explain the direction in which voters cast. Contemporaries fully recognised the constraining effect of 'interest' or 'influence', and for many voters this was so strong that the costs of not voting in accordance with it were too great to contemplate. This obviously applied where a voter was dependent on a social superior for his property, employment, business, or custom: and such leaders were only too willing to manipulate the relationship to political advantage. By conforming, the voter was able publicly to demonstrate his allegiances and satisfy his benefactors. If he miscalculated, the voter might well regret it, as did John Wardale in 1826 when he wrote to Sir Thomas Phillipps, tory candidate:

"I wright these few lines to inform you through my atachment to your honour that having given you a Dubble Vote the first time that I entered my master Doores he hordered me out of is house and I had been in is employ 4 years. I was then Discharged from is employ I Lost then a constant employ. I lost then 1 pound per week still hopin in your benevolence...hopin that your honour will feel a pleasure in assisting a Reale friend at this time."\footnote{105}
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Not all electors, however, voted in clearly partisan ways: they might split (or, after 1832, abstain). Again, the decision to split may be seen as the outcome of a decision arrived at after the voter had taken his total situation into account. He might genuinely believe in the principles of one of the parties whilst being constrained in his other vote by interest; or he may have had no clear preference and so decide to minimise costs by pleasing both parties. It is not likely, however, that such splitting (except, perhaps, in the understandable case where his preferred party put up only one candidate) would enable him to obtain the maximum rewards due to undivided loyalty. And it is at this point that the small change of patronage becomes relevant. A voter might hope, by voting for a successful candidate or party, to obtain some reward in the form of public employment, intervention on behalf of a condemned or imprisoned relative, assistance in a legal dispute, or other benefits which would otherwise be quite out of reach.

Now it was possible for the voter to miscalculate, or to sacrifice material gain for principle, and to risk eviction, loss of employment, diminution of custom, or even some form of public opprobrium (an almost inevitable consequence of failing to fulfil promises given before an election). Thus, in casting a vote for one party rather than another a voter would have calculated that the benefits of doing so outweighed the costs: and the costs and benefits varied from one individual to another depending upon his situation.

On this model the voter chooses to act one way or another after calculating the highest discounted return, which includes any future costs and benefits accruing to his decision. The voter is thus a calculating individual. Looking at the problem from another direction,
political leaders, candidates for parliament or local office, attempt where possible to increase the costs to the elector of not voting in their favour (by withdrawing privileges and spoils) or to increase the benefits from supporting them, by increasing the rewards. Not only do voters calculate; candidates do too. This clearly explains, as we have seen, the practice of bribery. It also lies behind patronage, and is well illustrated in a letter written by alderman Lusby, one of Tennyson's activists, concerning a petition by Edward Shelton, liquor dealer, to the Lords of the Treasury to grant a license to supply HM ships and vessels with duty free wines, his first application to Customs and Excise having been ignored:

"Lose no time in presenting this petition. It will secure the two Sheltons to your interest and have a most powerful effect on the minds of the freemen - friends and foes - by convincing them that you have the ability and determination to serve your friends and the port of Grimsby."

Costs and benefits are not, therefore, to be conceived in purely monetary terms. They might be seen also in terms of self esteem, social comfort (the ability to live at ease with one's peers and superiors, having discharged one's obligations or performed one's role in a socially acceptable way), and approval.

Thus, the general criterion of social benefit will incorporate as special cases motivations based on deference, class, and even party. The theory allows for the fact that all men are not born equal in social and economic, or even political, opportunities. It helps to explain the phenomenon of a local corporation politically and socially at odds with the community. Being in office for life, and the possibilities for change seriously restricted, there was little cost
involved in sustaining principles not held by the majority of the borough population.

STRATEGY

The electoral scene clearly presented a situation characterised by a number of participants whose interests conflicted and whose rewards were interconnected such that the actions of each affected the rewards of all. Each side had fairly extensive and accurate knowledge of the support available both to itself and to the opposition. This arose from two circumstances, the relatively small size of the electorate and the practice of open voting. The publication of pollbooks immediately following each election provided a clear record for all, voter and non-voter alike, of how each elector cast his vote. This practice ensured a certain caution on the part of voters, to which were added further constraints of a social and economic nature predisposing electors to vote one way rather than another. So close to the ground were the eyes and ears of party activists and agents that the outcomes of contests were rarely a surprise; they could be predicted with a considerable degree of accuracy in advance from information obtained at the canvass and from what was already known of the allegiances of committed voters (there were always some who could not be won over in any circumstances and whose commitment was never in doubt). One election agent has been quoted as saying, 'our usual experience has been that we poll to within five percent of the promises.' Surviving correspondence between candidates and agents in Grimsby largely confirms this.
Where elections were held close together, as occurred between the parliamentary elections of 1818 and 1820, or 1830, 1831, and 1832, there was likely to be a high degree of certainty over outcomes. To this must also be added the behaviour of voters at local elections for members of the corporation, for voters at these were the same as for parliamentary elections (with the exception of a few outvoters who appeared at parliamentary elections) and they responded to the same influences. The frequency of elections was such as to reduce uncertainty to a minimum - yet there were always a number of independent voters, not amenable to the usual influences and perhaps sufficient, on occasion, to undermine what would otherwise be the most sanguine predictions. That there might be new voters at any election, those who had recently come of age or otherwise qualified for freedom, perhaps added little uncertainty for their votes would have been canvassed well in advance and their allegiances sought or bought by party agents.

Given these conditions, strategy became important, particularly for the challenging party. In 1818, as a result of years of boroughmongering, Grimsby seemed firmly in the grip of the Pelhams. Both retiring MPs had been nominees of Lord Yarborough, and one - J.P. Grant - was to stand again. The other - Fazakerley - was considered a strong candidate. Charles Tennyson, however, had set his sights on becoming one of Grimsby's representatives, and his family's local connections and influence were not inconsiderable. The question arose as to whether he should stand alone or in company with another. At first he had sought the help of Yarborough, and indeed, it is probable that his politics were in fact little different, though there was long-
standing rivalry and Tennyson did become associated in these years with the tory cause. In any situation where the incumbent party appeared strong, but not so strong as to make a contest fruitless, it would not be sound strategy for the challenger to put up two candidates. This was precisely the position in which Tennyson found himself. It had been six years since the previous election and many new voters were to be enrolled on the Call List, many of these, as Tennyson well knew, favourable to his cause or easily won over. Furthermore, the result in 1812 had not been a walkover, so there was considerable residual support for any opponent of the Pelhams. At the same time, the Tennyson family's cultivation of interest and influence in the New Town, by the purchase of property there, ensured a sound basis for a campaign. It he could be certain of more than 50% support and absolute loyalty from party supporters, it would have made sense for the Tennysons to field two candidates. Indeed, it is known that Charles Tennyson with ministerial support did seek a running mate, though he does not appear to have been too enthusiastic at the prospect. In the event, putting up only one candidate, (himself), made sense for, taking advantage of complete party loyalty of his own supporters (he had more plumpers than any other candidate before 1832) he could also count on opponents splitting their votes. To achieve success with two candidates would have been much more difficult, and carried the risk of complete failure since opponents 'free' or uncommitted votes would now be distributed over two candidates. This kind of strategic planning was common in elections in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, as we have seen, the nature and distribution
of inducements was also a matter of strategy, with activists on each side closely watching the activities of their opponents.

By the time of the next election, 1820, so much had the Tennysons consolidated their position within the borough, to the extent of increasing their numbers on the corporation and having their own mayor, that they could now confidently field two candidates. Lord Yarborough, on the other hand, could do little but follow suit, for his own interest and influence remained considerable. The Tennyson victory, however, was overwhelming. At the next election, 1826, things were back to normal, with the steam having gone out of Charles Tennyson's Grimsby ambitions, and once again the tories fielded only one candidate, who lost. In the last three elections before reform (1830 and two in 1831) the tory position was again strong, reflecting local fears over the partial disfranchisement of the borough, and in the circumstances the tories could sensibly field two candidates at each election - five out of six of whom were successful. Once the borough had been reformed and reduced to one member, the whigs regained the ascendancy and held the borough continuously for seventeen years.

What the elections before 1832 show is that contemporaries acted in ways which demonstrate clearly their intuitive understanding of the importance of strategy. Such knowledge is evident not merely from elections and their outcomes, but from contemporary writings. There is thus the clearest evidence of calculation on the part of voters and candidates alike.
Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

NOTES


8. Ibid p.198. For a fuller discussion of the nature and operation of social networks see pp.190-208.


13. Ibid Chap.7.


Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

18. Chi-square test significant to .01 (df=7).
19. GPL TP Lusby - C. Tennyson 13.2.1820.
20. Chi square test significant to .001 (df=7).
21. After 1832 voters had only one vote: all were thus party votes or abstentions.
29. For the significance of cross pressures in modern voting see Berelson et al. (1954).
31. LAO Yarb. 5.1.57-9.
32. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Daubney - C. Tennyson 28.12.1818.
33. See Table 5.5.
34. GPL TP Squire - C. Tennyson 23.1.1819.
35. LAO 2Td'E H/7/36 Veal - C. Tennyson 18.11.1818.
36. GPL TP Squire - C. Tennyson 23.1.1819.
37. Ibid.
38. GPL TP Squire - C. Tennyson 24.1.1819.
39. GPL TP Oliver - C. Tennyson 24.11.1818.
40. LAO 2Td'E H/7/20 Lusby - C. Tennyson 27.12.1818.
41. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Daubney - C. Tennyson 28.12.1818.
42. GPL TP Daubney - C. Tennyson 29.1.1819.
43. LAO 4T'd'E H/7 Sir J. Beckett - C. Tennyson 5.5.1818.
Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

44. GPL TP Veal - C. Tennyson 24.1.1819.

45. GPL Skelton Diary (entry date uncertain, but between 1824 and 1826).

46. LAO 4Td'E H/17 Flaskitt - C. Tennyson 7.5.1818.

47. GPL TP J. Brown - C. Tennyson 22.2.1819. There is evidence of similar cases, e.g. in the 1826 election Alderman Lusby wrote to Sir Thomas Phillipps informing him that George Thompson, sailor, had been dismissed the prevention Service 'for leaving to vote without leave' and arguing that it was unfair to punish a man for supporting HM Government - MS Phillipps-Robinson, d.268 Lusby-Sir Thomas Phillipps, 26.9.1826 (Bodleian Library).

48. LAO 4Td'E H/17 Lusby - C. Tennyson 28.4.1818.

49. LAO 2Td'E H/7/34 Veal - C. Tennyson 15.11.1818.

50. LAO 2Td'E H/7/43 Veal - C. Tennyson 28.11.1818.

51. GPL TP Daubney - C. Tennyson 18.4.1818.

52. LAO 4Td'E H/17 Lusby - C. Tennyson 28.4.1818. The emotions generated by such events must have done muchs to engage and strengthen the support of activists. However, only the existence of strong personal animosity between Yarborough and Tennyson would evoke legal retaliation; socially, however, they were not unfriendly.

53. GPL TP Misc.

54. LAO Yarb. 5/1/57-9.

55. See Tables 4.9 (a - g).


57. LAO Hen 3/31 and 2Hen 1/1/1.


61. LAO 4Td'E h/17 Flaskitt - C. Tennyson 2.5.1818.


70. Readers may recognise this as an illustration of the so-called 'Prisoner's Dilemma' game. Two prisoners are jointly charged with a crime and are held in isolation from each other. The prosecutor, hoping to have his task simplified, knows that a confession from one will convict the other, and also knows that the evidence he already has may not get him a conviction. He explains to each prisoner that if both plead not guilty he will set both free. If both plead guilty they will each be imprisoned for one year. But if one pleads not guilty and the other pleads guilty, the one pleading not guilty will be convicted on the confession of the other and be imprisoned for five years; the one pleading guilty will be freed and get a reward. The prosecutor thus hopes to induce two guilty pleas. The prisoners are clearly in a dilemma.

71. This, of course, assumes a constant zero-sum situation, i.e. one party's gains are the other's losses. Given the nature of the franchise this is a not unreasonable assumption.
Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

84. GPL TP Daubney - C. Tennyson 5.2.1820.

85. GPL TP Lusby - C. Tennyson 6.2.1820.

86. GPL TP Squire - C. Tennyson 1.2.1818.

87. GPL TP Squire - C. Tennyson 11.2.1818.


89. Ibid.


97. Ibid pp.48-58. Recent analysis by Robertson (springing from the British Election Study established in 1963) suggests that the importance of family influence may have diminished: "One must conclude that for a variety of reasons, there has been an attenuation of family political socialization, partly connected, but not restricted, to social mobility." - Robertson, D. (1984) *Class and the British Electorate*, Blackwell, p.78.

98. Ibid pp.51-52.


100. See Chapter 4.


103. See for example LAO 4Td'E H/16 (Squire's Account re Grimsby elections 1815-19; and Plaskitt's Account); also 4Td'E H/13 - various accounts).

Chapter 5: The Determinants of Voting

105. MS. Phillipps-Robinson d.268 Lusby-Phillipps, 19.9.1826 (Bodleian Library). There is no indication of the outcome of this plea and it was possibly ignored by Phillipps who by this time was fed up with the results of his experiences at Grimsby as he was being hounded on all sides by creditors and was unable to pay.

106. LAO 4Td'E H/17 Lusby - C. Tennison 22.4.1818. In a study of electoral change in the 1970s and in particular of the 1979 election, Robertson sees the voter as rational and motivated by a very complex self-interest calculus, see Robertson D. (1984).


In any electoral system the mobilisation of support is an important function of party organisation. Before 1832 many constituencies were not fully representative, but Grimsby was not the sole preserve of the dominant influence (though it often appeared so), and the outcome of elections during this period could not always be accurately or confidently predicted in advance of the canvass. The electorate may have been relatively small in absolute numbers but it represented nearly half of the adult male population of the borough. The support of this electorate had to be fought for, and invariably was, hard contests being the rule. Each side was forced to adopt some form of organisation which could not only rally support immediately prior to an election, but also maintain links between their elected representative (if any) and his supporters. This local organisation was closely entwined with corporation politics.

Much of the machinery of political campaigning was informal - in a small constituency it was not necessary to be otherwise. Yet it was pervasive. In essence it consisted of party agents (or more properly, agents of the two main competing family seats); a core of dedicated and active supporters easily recognised in the wealth of surviving correspondence and other literary material; a regular meeting place or "newsroom", of very considerable importance at election time; and representatives on the corporation.
The importance of the corporation would be hard to exaggerate. It existed as a platform for the display of local political power and was manipulated by local interests in their own support. In serving as a focus for political conflict between Parliamentary elections it contributed directly to campaigning at those elections. The continued existence of a whig-tory split (in the early years the ever-present Yarborough-Tennyson conflict) ensured an active and lively local political scene, and prompted the establishment of local organisation to influence both the conduct of corporation politics and the outcome of the larger contest.

The corporation prior to the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 consisted of a high steward, recorder, mayor, twelve aldermen, twelve common councilmen, and various other officers with day-to-day responsibilities, viz. two justices of the peace, two chamberlains, two coroners, two bailiffs, a town clerk, and a gaoler. The aldermen and common councilmen were collectively known as 'Gownsmen', probably from their practice of attending, as a body, divine service at church wearing their gowns on Christmas Day, Easter Sunday, and the Sunday after the election of mayor. They were also known as the 'Twentyfour'. The high steward and the recorder were elected for life. The incumbents of both posts, the Hon. George Pelham and Lord Yarborough respectively were members of the same family and resident outside the borough: an external elite actively involved in manipulating borough affairs to their own advantage. Formally, the function of the recorder was to assist the mayor and corporation as their legal adviser, and to attend
quarter sessions as a magistrate. In practice he wielded enormous influence over the composition of the corporation and election of officials, less by virtue of his office than by his extensive property holdings in borough and county. The election of mayor was subservient to his interest, for he was able, by adopting a variety of means to manipulate both the nomination and the election of mayor, and to a large extent that of most other officials.\(^2\)

**MAYORAL ELECTIONS**

The mayor was elected annually, being one of two aldermen candidates nominated or 'put on the light' (or leet) by the aldermen and voted in by the remainder of the corporation and freemen at a poll taken at the parish church. In the first stage, each alderman and common councilman appears to have had the right to cast two votes. The actual votes cast in the first stage selection procedure survive in only one instance, that for mayor taken in 1819 when a Red or Tennyson candidate succeeded in both stages.\(^3\) It was a close contest, there being three candidates: alderman Goulton, a recently elected alderman in the Red interest, and two Blue or whig candidates, alderman Shelton and John Joys. The voting was 13,13, and 12 respectively, so the two former candidates, Goulton and Shelton, were put on the leet. The selection of a Red candidate was in itself most unusual, and was to occur only once more during our period, namely in 1826 when alderman Moody was put on the leet. On this occasion the subsequent poll was declared void.\(^4\)
Chapter 6: The Structure of Local Politics

The Report on Municipal Corporations is therefore right in stating that the selection of candidates for mayor was largely in the Yarborough interest. It is much less accurate, however, in stating that it was usual for one of the two candidates put on the list to be so obnoxious to the freemen that the other was guaranteed election. The polling figures at mayoral elections would appear at first sight to support the assertion in that a very large majority for the winning candidate was the rule. However, it is wrong to infer from this that the losing candidate was unpopular. There does seem to have been some rule at work (again contrary to the Report), undoubtedly unwritten yet tacitly understood by all concerned. Firstly it is noticeable that newly elected aldermen appeared on the list for mayor at the earliest opportunity. Thus, Goulton himself, the new Red alderman elected in December 1818 was on the list for mayor the following year; Robert Joys, alderman in 1823 was on the list in 1824; John Kennington in 1826 and Bransby Harrison in 1827, both within one year of their election as aldermen. Secondly, a candidate unsuccessful in the poll one year could find himself with a large majority the next. Thus, Edward Shelton obtained only 52 votes in 1820, losing by 156, but in the following year won by a majority of 211 over John Robinson who obtained only 17 votes, yet Robinson had a similar majority himself in 1824 and was elected again in 1826. The same story is repeated for other candidates and, in fact, almost all aldermen became mayor at least once provided they supported the cause of Lord Yarborough. There were exceptions. John Joys, a consistent and committed Yarborough supporter, and occupier of Yarborough property, failed to win a mayoral election although he was put on the list. John Moody,
as we have seen, was a Tennyson supporter who succeeded in gaining a majority in an election which was subsequently void. He was, however, elected mayor in 1831. The other notable exception was James Goulton in 1819, the Tennyson candidate who so convincingly won the election for alderman in December 1818, and according to the Report he was the only successful 'obnoxious' candidate (no doubt the Commissioners' informant was a whig). William Bancroft was elected alderman in 1826 yet he was not subsequently put on the leet for mayor, probably due to his tory sympathies. \(^7\) See Table 6.1.

The thirteen Gownsmen who selected Goulton to be put on the leet in 1819 were mostly, but not all, tories. Six aldermen cast for him, five of them as plumpers. These were Tennyson supporters and occupiers of his property. Of the seven common councilmen voting for Goulton, five again were plumper voters, the remaining two were split voters who were normally supporters of Yarborough. Thus, one Blue and one Red candidate were put on the leet.\(^8\)

The final stage was the election by all members of the corporation including the freemen. Daubney reported to Tennyson that threats and influence were being brought to bear on freemen by Brocklesby, but he also insisted with apparent though not entirely convincing equanimity that it would not be necessary for Tennyson to expend money for "As the Freemen have long complained of the Brocklesby method of electing a Mayor, we leave it to them now to liberate themselves - we give them the opportunity of shaking off their yoke."\(^9\) Such appeal to virtue suggests a political naivety which Daubney simply did not possess. It is possible that with the parliamentary and aldermanic elections of 1818, and the Christmas
## TABLE 6.1: CANDIDATES AND VOTES FOR MAYOR, 1818 – 1834

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Election</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Loser</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Babb</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>219</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Shelton*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>193</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Wardale</td>
<td>Shelton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>208</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Shelton</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>228</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Fletcher*</td>
<td>Shelton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>207</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Shelton</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Joys J.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>249</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Robinson</td>
<td>Kennington*</td>
</tr>
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<td>1827</td>
<td>Moody</td>
<td>Harrison*</td>
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<td>Gooseman*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Gooseman</td>
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</tr>
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<td>168</td>
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</table>

* Candidates thus indicated had been elected aldermen within the previous twelve months.

Elections for mayor took place in the September prior to year of office.

Source: Mayors Court Books, Vols. 15 and 16.
presents, the freemen had had such windfalls in the way of treats, bribes, and patronage that they could hardly expect more. It is possible, too, that the petitions against bribery arising out of the 1818 parliamentary election were still fresh in the minds of freemen and activists alike. Be that as it may, Daubney was vindicated - Goulton was elected by 193 votes to 92. The Brocklesby sun had indeed sunk very low, and was to sink even lower in the parliamentary election the following year.

Details of the poll for mayor show a corporation divided along much different lines from the electorate as a whole. Half the aldermen and half the common councilmen voted for the tory or Tennyson candidate James Goulton, the other half remaining loyal to Edward Shelton who represented the Yarborough camp. At no other time was Tennyson to get so near to winning dominance within the corporation. The remaining electorate, in contrast, was divided much less evenly, 181 voting for Goulton, 80 for Shelton. The poll also reveals that each candidate for mayor cast his own vote in favour of his opponent, though this is no doubt explained less by magnanimity than by etiquette, and is confirmed in the only other surviving mayoral poll, that of 1827.

This latter poll generated particular interest by being declared void. The poll itself was very close: 142 votes for alderman John Moody and 140 for Bransby Harrison. However, after the proceedings were over and the winner declared it was discovered that a mistake had been made in recording the vote of alderman Gooseman. An inquiry established that although he was recorded as voting for Moody he had in fact voted for Harrison. The Mayor, John Robinson, thereupon refused to swear in either candidate, and so remained in office for the
It may be significant that the Court Books record no further court proceedings for a whole year following this. The election indicates however, that elections were not necessarily foregone conclusions, and that it was possible for candidates not in the Yarborough camp to succeed or nearly succeed despite the apparent odds against such an outcome (alderman Moody was in fact elected mayor in 1831). It was, of course, at times of close contest that pre-election activity was at its height.

It is in terms of local political organisation, however, that such contests assume greatest significance. The local electorate was called upon each year to exercise its franchise in the election of mayor, and it was the same electorate as voted in parliamentary elections. Whilst in general such local contests were rarely fierce, and often took place between candidates of the same party, occasionally inter-party rivalry occurred and was intense. At such times additional inducements to the customary fee out of corporation funds might be offered, and bribery was not unknown. Thus, these annual local elections for mayor contributed directly to the mobilisation and politicisation of the electorate. The turnout, estimated at between 86% and 96%, indicates a high degree of involvement (see Appendix B).

It is clear from Table 6.2 that there were relatively small fluctuations in the level of turnout, the rising numbers during the period reflecting the growth in population and number of freemen rather than any increase in the proportion of freemen polling. 1819 is particularly high due, possibly, to foreign freemen being brought in to what was a fierce contest between the rival parties. The figures for 1818 and 1820, both years when general elections took place, are
similarly high, as also are the figures for 1826, 1830, 1831, and 1832. The size of the borough electorate cannot be known precisely, particularly in the years between parliamentary elections, but it is probable that the turnout at mayoral polls is a fairly good guide at least to that part of the electorate eligible to vote by virtue of residence. Since each freeman received five shillings out of corporation funds for casting a vote it is highly unlikely that many would have passed up the opportunity if they could avoid it. It is also clear that the election of justices attracted much less support even though it took place immediately after that of mayor. There was no fee payable for voting for justices, and the posts must have seemed much less important politically than the office of mayor.

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>278</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mayors Court Books.

ELECTIONS TO THE TWENTYFOUR

The aldermen were elected for life by the corporation as a whole from among the ranks of common councilmen. Again Yarborough
influence was almost complete, as Table 6.3 shows. The great majority of aldermen were whig or Yarborough supporters. In 1818 Tennyson made a spectacular and successful bid to break further into their ranks when his own men were elected alderman and common councilman on the resignation of alderman Richard Nell.

In the election of aldermen, freemen usually each received two shillings and sixpence, the alderman also providing a dinner, so that he could normally expect to spend about £50 in total, and it was not unknown for aldermanic vacancies to remain unfilled for a year or two for want of common councilmen willing to take on the expenses of election.16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mayor</th>
<th>Aldermen</th>
<th>Common Councilmen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>1831 August</td>
<td></td>
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<td>10 0 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>whig</td>
<td>9 0 1</td>
<td>9 0 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* John Lusby: voted tory in all elections except May 1831 when he split his vote.

W = whig      S = split      T = tory.

Source: Pollbooks.
Just as Yarborough controlled the election of mayor and aldermen, so also the majority of common councilmen were his men. Their election was the same as that for aldermen, although their expenses were considerably less.

The aldermen and common councilmen were elected for life. As a body they were responsible for most of the other official corporation appointments many of which were filled from within their own ranks. Thus they formed a formidable, almost impregnable oligarchy with extensive influence over the administration of borough affairs and conduct of borough politics, both local and parliamentary. For this reason it was always a part of Tennyson's strategy in the years when he was interested in contesting the borough to establish his own strength within the corporation. His agent, Joseph Daubney, wrote in 1819,

"...if you are determined to wrest the Borough entirely from the Pelhams and to keep it, you must get a majority in the Twentyfour, because this will appall and dishearten the Blues more than anything else, and will give a strength and solidity to your Interest that nothing else can do; and though the Expense may seem great at first I am confident it will save money in the End...If any understanding is likely to be come to between you and the Pelhams, that understanding should embrace the management of the Twentyfour, for whatever Interest you may make in the Borough, the object is always liable to be baffled and annoyed, if not defeated, by the Mayor at his full Courts over which he has absolute control, as to adjournments etc."16

Daubney's reference to a possible understanding with the Pelhams arose out of Tennyson's victory in 1818 in gaining one of the two parliamentary seats. No other tory or Tennyson candidate had been found willing to come forward for election, so the question now arose as to whether Tennyson would be content to share representation with the Pelhams or whether he should attempt to wrest complete control. Daubney fully realised that the latter would be virtually impossible.
and prohibitively expensive, but even the former would entail some expense in maintaining support within the corporation, much depending on how the opposition approached the matter. Daubney added,

"If you think the other side will not be so ready to pay for the Gowns, of course our Exertions and Expenses will only be commensurate with their zeal and activity, the more supine they are the less expense it will be to us. But if we are to contest the Gowns at all, or to interfere with them we must pay, the Interest attempting them always pays as I understand. If we do attempt we must not be beaten, and not to attempt would be to publish that you had deserted the Borough or joined with the Pelhams which would alike be destructive to your Independent Interest."17

Tennyson had already had some remarkable success in this direction when, in December 1818 a vacancy occurred in the Gowns on the resignation of alderman Richard Nell. This resulted in the election of a replacement from amongst the common councilmen, and therefore a vacancy within the latter as well. The election was notable for the intense activity which it generated even eclipsing the parliamentary election six months previous, "The Election day was in my opinion not half so well contested" wrote Thomas Bell to Tennyson, while alderman Lusby remarked, "This has finished a contest the equal of which I never saw in Grimsby."18 The Stamford Mercury too was impressed: "The contest was as smart as at the time of a general election."19

The resignation of alderman Nell was known well in advance by the Yarborough camp but concealed from Tennyson supporters. Daubney claimed in a letter to Tennyson that Nell's resignation was dated 28th October, thus giving the Yarborough organisation some five weeks or more to prepare.20 It also provides further clear evidence of strategic thinking on the part of activists. In contrast, Tennyson's closest supporters, his campaign managers so to speak, were so taken by surprise, hearing of the resignation only on the Saturday
immediately prior to the Tuesday election, that Tennyson's principal agent, Joshua Plaskitt, was actually away at the time and returned only when the proceedings were almost over. Thus little time was left for Tennyson's party to organise, let alone canvass. With Plaskitt away it fell to Joseph Daubney to manage the affair on Tennyson's behalf. So well organised in contrast were the Blues that Daubney was later to write, "Fletcher and Kennington the Taylor canvassed the whole of our Friends in the Old Town before I could muster a party to put any Person in nomination for the Alderman and Common Councilman." Alderman Lusby, together with the Red candidate for common councilman, Questor Veal, undertook the canvass of the old town, at least that part of it not covered by the Blues (Yarborough's influence being greatest in the old town). James Goulton, candidate for alderman, together with Joseph Daubney (soon to become Tennyson's principal agent) covered the new town. They found that some of their friends (Daubney estimated twenty) had already promised the other side their votes on being told that there would be no opposition. Whether or not, on discovering that there was after all opposition, such friends would feel bound to their promises is difficult to say. The literature invariably conveys the impression that promises once given, whatever the circumstances, were irrevocable, but if this was so it is difficult to see how the Reds could, in the end, have won. On the other hand, those breaking promises always ran the risk, at least in Parliamentary elections, of being held up to public ridicule and scorn.

Tennyson's own campaigning and success in securing one of the Parliamentary seats earlier in the year had caused such a stir that the Blues were in no doubt as to the importance of this contest for the
Gowns. Should they lose, remarked Daubney to Tennyson, "it will be a death blow to them - if they do not proceed to the Poll it will be the same."26 This latter is a reference to the power of the mayor, then in Yarborough's influence, to adjourn the proceedings of the court at which an alderman was elected until a time which he might judge more favourable. During the night of 7th December Yarborough's agent left Brocklesby and, it was claimed, "threatened to turn several of Lord Yarborough's Tenants out of their Houses if they would not support Fletcher and Kenning (the Blue candidates)."26 Daubney, writing on 8th December, the day of the election, remarked, "What mischief might have been done in the night I know not."27 Daubney wasted no time in mustering support. Though late with his canvass he employed messengers and strenuously collected in 'foreign' or 'out' freemen such that their state of readiness was comparable to that at a parliamentary election.28

The conflict between the two rival parties was now bitter, Tennyson's attempt to consolidate his influence in the Gowns being at its height. There was little chance of avoiding heavy expense - the normal payment to freemen by the successful candidate would not on this occasion suffice: votes must be bought. The occasion of the poll, held in the town hall, was itself a most tumultuous affair. At the point when both candidates were standing even at 142 votes each the Mayor proposed an adjournment and immediately found himself with uproar and near riot on his hands. He attempted to leave the Chair, but "the Door was closed and the Windows of the Town Hall began to fly to pieces."29 The mayor relented and proceeded with the poll. Tennyson's candidate James Goulton triumphed over Yarborough's Joseph
Chapter 6: The Structure of Local Politics

Fletcher by 157 votes to 145. During the proceedings alderman Moody, a Tennyson supporter at local elections (though never recorded as casting a vote at parliamentary elections, himself being a government official) was actually assaulted by the mayor himself, George Babb, when the latter unsuccessfully asked for the promise of the vote of a freeman who had already promised it to the Reds.30

A short adjournment followed before the election of a common councilman, and during this Daubney learnt that Joseph Fletcher had been paying his voters ten shillings each, four times the customary compensation for loss of time. On confirming this with the mayor, Daubney let it be known that Tennyson's supporters would be paid too, and later reported, "This inspired them with great confidence and had the desired effect. Our friends have been paid 15/= a man for Mr. Goulton and 6/= for Mr. Veal." The latter was the successful candidate for the vacant post of common councilman. Such unusually large payments were, of course, borne by Tennyson rather than (as was usual) by the candidates themselves.31 Furthermore, Christmas was approaching, a time when both political interests offered a present to their supporters and a treat to the Twentyfour. Daubney urged an early treat, "because it will cover the Presents as well as for the Gowns, as dinner on the choice of Gowns is also customary." In treats and bribes the election cost each side between £500 and £600.32

The election is important for a number of reasons. It marked a real breakthrough into ranks which had long been regarded as closed. Thomas Bell, a local surgeon and prominent political figure wrote, in a letter to Tennyson, "It was not a trial of strength between the candidates but yourself and Yarborough."33 It reflects the
considerable degree of politicization within the borough and the ability of both sides to muster support quickly should the occasion demand. The very vigour of the short campaign and the tumultuousness of the proceedings testify to the importance of the Gowns to any political interest within the borough. Success at parliamentary elections required some influence within the corporation to ensure both nomination of parliamentary candidates and a proper conduct of registration of freemen. It was a recognition of this on the part of Tennyson and particularly his representatives on the Gowns which make it virtually impossible to separate his local from his parliamentary strategy. This strategy, designed to give him control over as many voters as possible, had occupied him all year. He was repeatedly urged by his closest advisers to meet the 'Iron Hand' of Brocklesby head on, by establishing a newsroom, securing greater support within the corporation, buying up property, distributing gifts, exercising his position as MP in the Ministerial interest to secure posts for reliable and well deserving friends among the freemen, and providing employment for friends.34

Daubney was urging the buying of new property. Alderman Lusby urged him to assist "the majority of burgesses in the assertion and recovery of their rights and in the selection of proper officers."35 In particular a very careful watch should be kept over the admission and striking off of freemen, especially those declared foreign. This, however, was a matter which was partly bound up with property. Writing to Tennyson after the election of alderman and common councilman Lusby remarked:

'I thought it right to pay some attention to this part of the business, and endeavour to persuade as many of our young Friends to
become resident as could possibly get a livelihood in the borough; but
with respect to accommodation we labour under a very great
disadvantage to the adverse party, who have at command the Houses and
Land belonging to Lord Yarborough as well as the unoccupied Houses of
Grant for that purpose, if votes could be procured."36

Following custom there would soon be held a court at which the Call
List would be under review and foreign freemen struck off. It was
known that some of the Blue leaders attributed the recent Red victory
to the number of young freemen brought in by them to vote on the
occasion, and so it was necessary to be prepared and to forestall if
possible any attempts to strike off young Reds. "How miserably will
they be deceived" wrote Lusby to Tennyson, "when we have fixed as many
of our party in the Borough as possible, and then by a Requisition of
the Mayor, demand a Court for the purpose of striking off all non-
residents, which it will soon become a bounden duty in us to perform
and prevent the Borough from becoming an open one."37 The tories
feared that if the borough were open Yarborough would be able to use
his extensive country influence to flood the electorate with foreign
freemen voters. An instance of this had recently occurred when the
Blues tried to remove a Red official and "most of the Gentlemen in the
neighbourhood together with his (Yarborough's) Tenants were either
persuaded or flogged like his hounds into the Borough to perform his
dirty business."38

Control over the admission of freemen was, after all, crucial to
the success of any electoral effort, local or parliamentary. One is
reminded of the activities of the registration courts and the battles
within them which became so much a feature of post-Reform
electioneering in many urban constituencies. In Grimsby such
struggles were a part of the political scene long before 1832, and so
vital was the process that control over it provided another powerful reason for each side wishing to dominate the corporation.

It would appear that voting in local elections was regarded in the same way as that in parliamentary elections, that in the system of open voting which prevailed, and in the climate of rivalry which dominated the local political scene, the casting of a vote in the local election was invested with the same significance as at a general election. It revealed, if not one's preferences, then at least one's allegiances, and the forces which influenced the casting of a vote in the one situation held good in the other. Thus it was that Tennyson's activists were able to furnish him with a break-down of the destination of votes after the December election (for alderman and common councilman) which showed how the votes cast in the June parliamentary election had been distributed subsequently. The record is revealing. It shows, firstly, that 71 voters present in June were absent in December but the effect of this on lost votes was the same for each party. Secondly, there is already a clear trend towards the tories, a trend which was reinforced in 1819 with the election of their new alderman (Goulton) as mayor and which reached fruition in 1820 with Tennyson's overwhelming victory in the parliamentary election. Thus, of those who split their votes in June, the majority supported only Tennyson candidates in December (55 percent of those voting split in June, but 68 percent of those split voters who actually were present in December). Only 14 percent split on the second occasion, and even fewer (8 percent) voted for the whigs. Of those who cast a straight party vote in June, there were very few defectors, after allowing for absentees, in December (one from the tories, four from the whigs). Thirdly, the voting pattern of thirteen
government officers is given. These, of course, were precluded from voting in parliamentary elections. Of the thirteen, two did not vote, seven voted for the Tories, and four for the Whigs. The information is additionally helpful in confirming the allegiance of alderman John Moody who was the only member of the Gowns who did not record a vote at any of the parliamentary elections during our period. He was a Custom House Officer, Portmaster, and landing surveyor, and a staunch supporter of Tennyson within the corporation.29

The social composition of the members of the Twentyfour during these years is shown in Table 6.4. By and large they were drawn from the more substantial burgesses, with a large (though declining) proportion drawn from the gentry and professional classes and also from the ranks of farmers. The corporation was thus clearly not representative of the electorate as a whole, and even less so of the borough population. Despite the fact that Grimsby still relied greatly for its wellbeing on the activity of the port, the 'port interest' made up of mariners, ship agents, shipbuilders, pilots and the like was very under-represented in the corporation with only one member (alderman John Moody, Portmaster); whereas, by contrast the port interest made up approximately eighteen percent of the electorate. Of course, other members of the corporation were sympathetic towards, if not dependent upon, the port's prosperity and could be relied upon to further its interests whenever the opportunity arose, as it did, for example in 1827 when it appeared that Hull was seeking to infringe the rights and privileges of Grimsby, or in 1830 when Captain Harris applied for land to establish a ropery.40 Lord Yarborough, principal patron of the borough, was also head of the family which played the major part in the
## TABLE 6.4: SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF THE TWENTYFOUR, 1818 - 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gentry &amp; Professional</th>
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<th>Farming</th>
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<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* During these last years there were unfilled vacancies due partly to the expense of election and partly, no doubt, to impending reform of municipal corporations.

Source: Mayors' Court Books, Pollbooks, Directories.
development of the dock in 1800. The gentry and professional classes, together making up less than five percent of the electorate during most of the period, accounted for thirty percent or more of the corporation, and farmers, normally under ten percent of the electorate (until the extension of the borough boundary in 1832) made up at least twenty-five percent of the corporation.

Such members of society possessed not only the necessary resources to assume positions of eminence, authority, and power, but also, in the case of attorneys and other gentlemen, very important skills and experience. Occasionally farmers on the corporation were barely able to read or write and there were instances of mayors unable to sign their own name. Thus, William Wardale, four times mayor during the second decade of the century, was illiterate and had the services of a secretary to deal with written matters. Members of the corporation drawn from amongst the craft and retail trades were generally better educated. Such were people who had risen to eminence and occupied key positions and prime sites within the town, and they were among the more substantial burgesses and successful tradesmen within the borough.

Not unnaturally, since members held office for life, changes in the composition of the corporation were very gradual, and awaited upon the death or resignation of members. No change in social composition is indicated by the table for the first six years, but this hides the fact that there were changes in personnel, changes which were reflected in the political composition of the corporation (see Table 6.3).

Fraser, looking at the social composition of Leeds corporation in the 1830s found a similar tendency for newcomers to originate from the
same social background, whatever their differences in politics or religion. There is perhaps little here which could not be explained by opportunity.

OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

The ruling oligarchy, the Twentyfour, was made up of members elected for life, and it was the key institution within the corporation. There were in addition a number of other offices to be filled. The Town Clerk held a lifetime appointment and was elected by the Gowns and the freemen. He was always an attorney. As clerk of the peace, clerk to the magistrates, and treasurer of the borough rate, he held an important position—and was invariably a nominee of Lord Yarborough. The post was held from 1824 by George Babb, the most prominent of local attorneys, and before him by his father, also George. Other official appointments were annual, and again reflect political influence. The two Justices of the Peace were elected by the mayor, aldermen, common councilmen, and freemen from among four aldermen (who must have served as mayor) put on the leet by the Twentyfour. Those opposed to Yarborough had little chance of becoming justices, though it was not unknown for a neutral candidate to succeed. One of the functions of the justices was to grant licences to publicans, some of whom, it appears, were prepared to pledge future support in return for a licence. The justices also acted as magistrates, as did the Recorder.

A leet jury of twelve burgesses impanelled by the Chamberlains each year was convened to elect two Coroners, two Chamberlains, three
Constables, six Auditors, a Common Serjeant, and two Pinders (the two Bailiffs were appointed each year, but the post was unpopular and went automatically to the senior common councilman and senior freeman each year). Many of the appointments were made from amongst their own number, and invariably were attached to the prevailing political party, for not only were the chamberlains sympathetic to the ruling interest, they also acted on the recommendation of the town clerk, himself the agent of the patron of the borough. This practice of appointing, so blatantly political, did not go unremarked. In 1818 alderman Lusby, at that time a Tennyson supporter, led and presented to the Court Leet a protest signed by himself and 46 aldermen, common councilmen, and free burgesses in the following terms:

'As a free Burgess of the Borough of Great Grimsby I protest against the power of the Jury of twelve Men as appointed this day to elect the annual officers of this Borough, particularly the Common Serjeant, it having been stated in Court by a great number of persons that the late Common Serjeant, Thomas Wharton, was elected by a majority of Burgesses, and no Bye-law having been produced to contradict that Custom or empower the High Steward to appoint a Jury of twelve Men for electing officers - although the Mayor and Deputy Recorder were requested to produce such Bye-law if any such existed.' 44

This was the time when Tennyson's assault on the Yarborough influence was nearing its greatest intensity, and this protest is clearly a part of his attempt to break into the corporation. In the event it appears to have been unsuccessful, and the records make no further reference to the protest. Six members of the Twentyfour supported the protest, and five are to be found voting for Tennyson in the parliamentary election of 1820 as well as vigorously supporting his cause in the meantime. After 1820, however, Tennyson lost their support: two of the aldermen died, Lusby and two common councilmen
## Table 6.5: Political Composition of Juries for Electing Officers, and of Principal Officers, 1818 - 1834

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Jury</th>
<th>Coroners</th>
<th>Chamber-</th>
<th>Auditors</th>
<th>Const-</th>
<th>Bailiffs</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

W = whig  T = tory  S = split  
* = Grammar School Committee (appointed annually to visit and inspect the grammar school).
Votes are those recorded at the nearest parliamentary election.
Source: Mayors Court Books and pollbooks.
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deserted to Yarborough, and the remaining alderman, John Moody, was ineligible to vote at parliamentary elections. An analysis of both the membership of the leet juries and of their appointments during these years points to the overwhelming political influence of Yarborough in borough politics. See Table 6.5.

It is thus evident that the prime governing and political authority within the borough was organised in such a way that all its principal constituent parts were subservient to the prevailing political interest. This interest controlled both the nomination and the election of all major appointments, and the life tenure of aldermen and common councilmen ensured that the oligarchy so formed was self-perpetuating. However, there was a rival political interest, at least in the early years, and the necessity of gaining control of the corporation in order to assert and sustain influence gave rise, as we have seen, to intense political activity and electioneering. The politicization of the borough was as much a product of corporation politics as of parliamentary politics. It is tempting to suggest that the needs of the former gave rise to channels of influence and organisation which served the latter and provided a ready mobilisation of an already active electorate. However, local imperatives produced their own organisation, and it is perhaps more accurate to suggest that though initially each may have been a response to particular needs, both became inextricably bound together. For freemen there were monetary rewards, more or less fixed by custom, which attended the elections of mayor, aldermen, and common councilmen. In general such rewards were regarded as proper and legitimate compensation for the loss of time on the part of voters, and in the case of the annual
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election of mayor were paid directly out of corporation funds. The election of an alderman was of greater significance inasmuch as it was for life, and this could give rise to more or less intense electioneering in which the successful candidate might incur far more expense than the two shillings and sixpence paid to each voter. Treating and bribes were not unknown, and the contest could equal that of parliamentary elections. That contests of such intensity were relatively rare occurrences does not diminish their importance for the political organisation of the borough in which all appointments were, in the end, political.

Finally, the changing fortunes of rival parties were as evident in local as in parliamentary contests, and the changing political composition of the corporation and its principal officers traces clearly the decline of the tory interest during the 1820s. As tory aldermen and common councilmen died their places were filled with whigs and the Tennyson camp lost its capacity to upset the natural whig dominance of the borough. It also lost the inclination.

PARTY HEADQUARTERS

The establishment of party headquarters, a centre for the meeting of active supporters, the organisation of election activities, the distribution and collection of funds, and the general conduct of all campaigns whether local or general was a matter of crucial concern to each side.

The supporters of Yarborough were the first to establish a fixed centre when, in 1819, the Granby Inn was let to Bransby Harrison, a
common councilman later to become alderman and mayor, and throughout the period a most active Blue. The inn was the most prominently situated of all in Grimsby, occupying with its yard and stables more than half the plot on which stood also the town hall and gaoler's house. It was bounded on one side by the Turnpike Road and on the other by the High Street and such a key position at the entrance to the town undoubtedly made it the principal inn. Of all Yarborough's lessees in the borough in 1824, Bransby Harrison, with the inn, its yard, stables, and kitchens was by far the largest, paying an annual rent in excess of £140.46 Meetings of party stalwarts took place regularly and opposition members were unwelcome. Important functions were often held there including the customary annual Mayor's dinner which took place shortly after his election.

As early as 1818 there were fears among Tennyson's supporters that the Granby would become closed to them once Bransby Harrison took over. As yet the Reds had no public house or newsroom of their own, and had been in the habit of resorting to the Granby itself. Its importance was noted by John Squire who wrote to Tennyson, "If it had not been for the use of the Granby, Goulton and Veal would have both lost their Elections." As their campaign to wrest power from Brocklesby intensified, however, attitudes hardened on each side and became less accommodating.

In a most revealing letter Daubney expressed some consternation at the prospect of being excluded from the Granby. The Reds frequently advertised themselves as the party of electoral virtue, the party of independence which was dedicated to the removal of bribery, corruption, and malpractice. Yet Daubney was to tell Tennyson, "if the
Granby were shut against us we should have no Public House to take our drunken voters to prevent them from being kidnapped - nor have we a place to hide those whom we may kidnap.\textsuperscript{49}

Fortunately for the Reds the opportunity of having their own headquarters in another prominent inn soon presented itself. Early in 1819 the Queen's Head, situated in the Market Place, was put on the market. Two years previously many Reds had been against it as useless and uninhabitable, but Daubney was now urging its virtues.\textsuperscript{49} However, there was difficulty in finding a tenant, and Daubney was engaged in this for some months. The occupier of the Granby before Harrison was Samuel Bowling, a Tennyson supporter who at first indicated a willingness to shut up the Granby at an early date if he was assured of having the Queen's Head.\textsuperscript{50} Later, however, it appeared that Bowling, though flattered by being offered it was not prepared to continue it. At the same time matters were complicated by the reluctance of the owner, Joseph Plaskitt, to give up possession of the inn.\textsuperscript{51}

Meanwhile a rival group began to appear when Thomas Squire opened a 'new upstart newsroom...composed mainly of enemies.'\textsuperscript{52} Tennyson sent votes of the House of Commons to this newsroom, as well as a paper, but was advised by alderman Veal to direct them to the Queen's Head which attracted the hard core Red campaigners. This was a matter of no small significance, for the circulation of newspaper reports giving information of the MP's activities and more particularly his views, speeches, and votes on key issues in the Commons was an important means of sustaining support within the constituency.
Alderman Veal urged upon Tennyson the necessity of keeping his constituents well informed:

"I do not find your name mentioned either in the Times or the Courier. It is absolutely necessary that what you say in the House on important subjects should be accurately reported to prevent any wrong impression being made on the Minds of your Constituents, or your opinions being misrepresented, and I hope you will always adopt the precaution of sending to the Newsroom a Paper which does contain a fair statement of your Speech on any Public Question."53

By constituents he probably had in mind the small core of opinion leaders and activists who inevitably dominate any party organisation.

The following day Veal was able to inform Tennyson that the Sun and Globe, containing reports of his speech, had indeed been placed in the Newsroom once it was confirmed that they had been supplied by Tennyson himself.54 By this time the Queen's Head had been acquired by Tennyson and opened with a newsroom on the first day of May. The landlord was to provide a private room with fire and candle, where papers could be read and deposited by subscribers who paid a fee of one guinea per annum. One London daily evening paper and two provincial weekly papers were to be provided, the choice to be settled by the subscribers. They selected initially the Courier, the Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury, and the Boston Gazette. The initial subscribers, twelve in all, were the local Red party activists, and five of them were members of the Twentyfour.55

VOTING AND ORGANISATIONAL LINKS IN LOCAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Fraser has convincingly shown that 'Politics intruded into the whole urban experience', being reflected in layers of political activity at different levels of urban life. He distinguishes four levels:
parochial, municipal, parliamentary, and political agitation. The evidence in Grimsby is very much in the same direction. Local organisation existed, as we have seen, to politicise and mobilise the electorate on the local level at both the annual mayoral elections and the occasional aldermanic and common councilman elections. Agents and activists maintained contact with electors and between electors and representatites by distributing rewards (legitimate or otherwise) for services (votes) rendered; by ensuring that all eligible to be entered on the Call List were enrolled at a suitable time; by conveying information from M.Ps to electors, particularly on the former's parliamentary activity; conveying information to their M.P. about voters' hopes and expectations for minor public office and appointment, favours and pleas; and - in a constituency in which newspapers were of little significance - by disseminating information and encouraging awareness by publishing all kinds of political propaganda. In such ways, and a host of others, was politics kept alive. It was a more or less continuous process.

The relationship between local and parliamentary campaigns was close, especially in terms of voting behaviour. Transition tables reveal just how close. At both kinds of election the electorate was virtually the same, except that outside or 'foreign' voters were less likely to be drafted in for purely local contests, though there were exceptions. All freemen were entitled to vote at both elections, and only they were entitled. A high turnout was characteristic of both types of election, for monetary rewards were available at both: it would be irrational for voters not to turn out. Not surprisingly, since it was the same electorate, mobilised by the same activists, and
confronted often by similar issues, and subject to the same influences, voting behaviour at local elections was similar to that at parliamentary elections. Trends between two consecutive parliamentary elections were mirrored at the local level. Indeed, there are voting records available for five elections between 1818 and 1820. The first was the parliamentary election in June 1818, followed in December by the election of an alderman and a common councilman. In 1819 (April) there was a mayoral election for which a poll still survives, and in 1820 two further elections, a parliamentary contest in March and a local one for alderman and common councilman in December. Over such a short period there were at any election relatively few new voters (fourteen at the 1818 local election, four at the 1819 election, twenty-five at the 1820 parliamentary election and eight at the 1820 local election). A longitudinal study covering all five elections makes it possible to chart the changing fortunes of the main political interests in the town. It was an exciting period, as intense as it was short. At its beginning, Charles Tennyson made his appearance as a serious political candidate, independent of Yarborough, though initially he had sought Yarborough's support. At its middle, Tennyson was triumphant, making impressive inroads into the corporation and capping it with the return of two tory MPs in the 1820 parliamentary election. At its end, the first signs appear of a cooling of Tennyson fortunes.

Overall, it was a time of unparalleled instability, and this was reflected in changing partisan fortunes (see Table 6.6).

The tory success in the 1818 aldermanic election was a result less of defections from the whig fold than of the capture of a very large proportion of those who had split their votes at the previous
parliamentary election (many of whom [64%] continued subsequently to vote tory). This was to be repeated in the parliamentary election of 1820. In addition, whilst relatively few voters had dropped out by or failed to vote at the second election, the tories gained 64% of new voters - although there were few of these.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elections</th>
<th>Stability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818P - 1818L</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1818L - 1819L</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819L - 1820P</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820P - 1820L</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Linked pollbook data.

The proportion of those voting differently between the first and second of these elections was: tory, just over 1%; whig 10%, split voters 87%. This represented a major achievement for the Tennyson camp, for there were more split than tory votes at the first election and also voting in the second. It also illustrates, however, the tenacity of partisan loyalties, for straight changers or converts were always very few in number. See Tables 6.7 (a - e).

Having won such support (at some considerable financial expense) Tennyson retained it at the subsequent mayoral election the following year. There were a number of tory defections from the whigs, and all previous split voters, if they voted at all, cast for the Tennyson candidate, Goulton. There were, of course, no split votes in 1819 since each elector had only one vote. Partisan stability was 82%, a very high figure in the circumstances and suggesting that when split
voting was not possible many electors had little real choice in how they cast their vote.

This support for Tennyson, generated amidst great electoral fervour, carried over to the important parliamentary contest in 1820. Only three previous whig supporters voted tory, whilst thirteen split. Tennyson, however, gained once again 64% of new votes.

The transition tables for the 1820 and 1826 parliamentary elections show that whig fortunes had, in the intervening period, been restored. The decline of the Tennyson cause, however, was evident almost as soon as the 1820 election was over, for before the year was out there was another local election, this time for one alderman and one common councilman. It was held in December. Once again the whig vote between the two elections was very stable (98%), the split voters very unstable (88% cast for party in the second election), and there were a large number of defections from the tory fold (over 40%). A similar picture emerges from the transition table for the 1819 mayoral and 1820 aldermanic elections - a high stability of whig voters, with a large proportion of tory defectors.

It is difficult to see in all this clear evidence of political or party commitment. It is unlikely that those who decided the outcome of these elections, the 'floating' voters, were responding to any but purely local pressures. A very large proportion of voters, sometimes over 90%, showed no inclination to change their party allegiance even when electoral pressures were greatest, and this testifies to the strength of other, non-ideological, constraints. Of these, property can be demonstrated to have been most important.
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Tables 6.7 (a - e): Transition Tables for Local and Parliamentary Elections, Grimsby 1818 - 1820

(a) 1818 Parliamentary - 1818 Local

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliamentary</th>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
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<td>3</td>
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Partisan stability = 67.5%

(b) 1818 Aldermanic - 1819 Mayoral

1819

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1818</th>
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<th>Tory</th>
<th>Cross Voters</th>
<th>Ex Voters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
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Partisan stability = 82%

(c) 1819 Mayoral - 1820 Parliamentary

1820

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1819</th>
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<th>Tory</th>
<th>Cross Voters</th>
<th>Ex Voters</th>
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</thead>
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<td>67</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>8</td>
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</table>

Partisan stability = 80.6%
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(d) 1820 Parliamentary - 1820 Aldermanic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Tory</th>
<th>Cross Voters</th>
<th>Ex Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Partisan stability = 63.9%

(e) 1819 Mayoral - 1820 Aldermanic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1819</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Partisan stability = 67.6%

Source: Linked pollbooks.

Voters were linked to each other and to their representative through party organisation which, though basically simple, was effective. Such organisation had an existence which was more or less continuous. Just prior to an election it was much in evidence, but its activities were not confined to election time. The organisation was in
the hands of an agent, usually an attorney, appointed for the task by
whoever wielded influence locally - Yarborough for the whigs and George
or Charles Tennyson for the tories. The agent's principal task was to
maintain his client's interest at all times, and this entailed managing
his campaign at election time and safeguarding his interests locally
between elections. It was a major undertaking even in a constituency
as small as Grimsby, and it necessitated frequent, almost daily, written
correspondence with his employer, keeping him informed of all matters
likely in any way to affect his interests locally. Thus he was
expected to be aware of what opponents were doing in the way of
campaigning, including treating, distributing rewards and 'presents',
issuing propaganda, intimidating voters, and all other such activities
designed to win over voters. He was expected also to see that all
possible favourable voters were properly enrolled as freemen and
entered on the Call List. To this end he needed to know which freemen
had sons soon to become of age; who was soon to qualify by virtue of
apprenticeship or marriage, and so on; who might be secured by the
timely offer of employment or place of residence. He needed also to
know what strategy might best be adopted with respect to the purchase
of property to provide tenancies which might secure the long term
allegiance of actual or potential voters. He was expected to offer
advice on all such matters which might materially affect his employer's
electoral standing within the community.

The agent had a responsibility too for the financial management
of his master's political interests. At election time this was a
considerable undertaking, and encompassed the placing of all manner of
contracts for the supply and provision of whatever was deemed
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necessary for a successful campaign - meals and drinks, ribbons and banners, hire of premises, bands, posters, handbills, transport, registration fees, and a host of other expenses.  

The work was not finished with the election, for many of the payments contracted at election time were in fact made later, sometimes many months later. In the meantime, between elections, there were other expenses to be met - the provision of Christmas presents or christening gifts, donations to local charities. In addition, expenses in connection with the maintenance of interests on the local corporation had also to be met.

It was upon the appointed agent that the major responsibility devolved, but he was helped by a number of activists who, acting separately or together, at or between elections, served to complete the organisation. Many of these shared in the tasks mentioned, and they also helped in the canvassing of electors, monitoring of opponents campaign, the distribution of rewards both legitimate and otherwise, the registration of voters, and so on. Together they ensured that their representative's activities at Westminster were reported to electors, particularly his voting in the House. They too kept up a correspondence with their MP, more sporadic perhaps, but no less vital for that, and they offered their advice on all manner of pertinent concerns and even, occasionally, on the behaviour of other activists, including the agent himself. Thus in 1826 Alderman Lusby, a member of the campaign committee working for the election of Phillipps, wrote directly to him complaining of the performance of General Loft, the agent, and blaming him for Phillipps' electoral defeat:

"The Committee have made no Account but they are entitled to Remuneration; for although Loft as sole agent denied them any Power to
Act, and even had the Effrontery to tell some of them in my presence..that he would have no Committee, yet the whole burden of arranging the Billets, regulating the Flags, and performing all the drudgery of a contested Election, he kindly suffered to rest on their shoulders, whilst he enjoyed the fingering and disposing of your Cash, and kept them and all your Friends in total Ignorance as to the probable Result of your Election.

To him alone, therefore, is to be attributed its Failure."°"1

The letter clearly points up the importance of the agent's contribution.

The continuity of organisation was assured by necessity; annual mayoral elections, occasional aldermanic elections, and the importance of control over the corporation all contributed to this. Many of the activists were members of the corporation or holders of important public office, and as such were in a position to influence voters. The corporation, for example, placed many small contracts for all kinds of work and provisions, a source of patronage directly of interest to a major class of voter, the small craftsman and retailer.

The Chamberlains' accounts reveal the corporation as a buyer of goods and services necessary in the discharge of its duties and maintenance of the borough, and thus resulting in the placing of orders with various business firms and traders in the borough. The amounts of money involved were frequently very small, but many were regular or recurring, and it is noticeable that the great majority of 'contracts' awarded or orders placed (over 70%) were with freemen traders.°"2

Precisely how much significance may be attached to this is difficult to say. The freeman electorate made up approximately forty percent of adult males in the borough and if it mirrored the social structure of the borough as a whole one might reasonably expect an even split between orders placed with freemen traders and non-freemen if the corporation were not in some way exercising influence. The figures do
not support this, but even so it is not necessarily the case that the social structure of the freeman electorate exactly mirrored the total population. The latter must have included some servants and no doubt a larger proportion of people at the lower ends of the social scale, as well as migrants. Nevertheless, there is a clear suggestion that the corporation did use patronage to exercise influence. Whether this was a device merely to maintain or express the solidarity and exclusiveness of the freemen, or whether it also was intended to carry political persuasion is another matter, but it is fairly certain that such patronage was not distributed randomly, even among freemen. Orders going to whig or Yarborough supporters outnumbered those to tories by anything between four to one and eight to one, and this must therefore be regarded as another source of political influence designed to cement ties of dependence.

The individual members of the Twentyfour made their influence felt in yet other ways, for many were active supporters of other organisations within the borough. There were at least three associations formed for the purpose of protecting life and property and bringing felons to justice. The Grimsby Association for the Prosecution of Felons held its annual general meeting regularly at the Granby Inn (which itself served as Yarborough's election headquarters) and its members were, by and large, whig supporters. The Grimsby Old Association for the Prosecution of Felons, a similar organisation, appears to have had no fixed venue for its annual or other meetings; many of its members were tory supporters. In the case of both associations members of the corporation were well represented: in 1826 fourteen of the Twentyfour were members of one or other of these...
associations. The third such association was the Bradley, Haverstow &c Association whose activities extended over a much larger area, mainly outside the borough boundary but occasionally within it. It had relatively few members from Grimsby itself, only seven in 1826, but all of them were prominent citizens. Although to some extent the membership of the two main associations appears in part to reflect political rivalries within the town, their aims were so much the same that they acted together on occasions. This was very evident in 1826 when a spate of crimes, mostly the maiming and stealing of sheep, caused great consternation for a period of months. All three associations, in what really amounts to a display of group closure, issued joint advertisements and offered rewards for information leading to prosecution.\(^3\)

The Grimsby Auxiliary Bible Society and Ladies' Association, whose president was Lord Yarborough, also received support from the well-to-do and once again the politically active in the town were much in evidence. The leading charity organisation was the Dorcas Charity, the members of which were made up of the wives of leading citizens. In 1826, of twenty-six committee members, no fewer than fifteen were the wives of political figures in the borough, and twelve of these were on the corporation.\(^4\)

Thus, the corporation, an almost impregnable oligarchy whose members, drawn from the more substantial citizens, were elected for life, had a significance which went far beyond the purely political. Its custom and patronage served to forge economic links with the local population. The involvement of its members in prominent social and charitable organisations served to strengthen those links. Yet it was
in the political sphere that the influence of the corporation was most significant. It was a vehicle for the direct and indirect exercise of political power by Lord Yarborough; it controlled, through the mayor, the admission of freemen and distributed fixed rewards to electors whenever they turned out to vote. Its annual elections for mayor, and intermittent elections for aldermen and common councilmen gave rise to informal organisation for mobilising and politicising the electorate, and this in turn greatly extended and enriched the political experience of the freemen, a body of men drawn from a very wide cross section of the borough population. It is against this background of wide and active participation that the reforms of 1832, examined next, are to be seen.

NOTES

1. See Chapter 2, Table 2.4.
3. GPL TP September 1819.
4. MCB Vol.15 18 September 1827.
6. MCB Vols. 15 and 16.
7. Ibid.
8. GPL TP.
10. MCB Vol.15 25 September 1819.
11. LAO 4Td'E H/13 Poll for Mayor 21.9.1819.
12. MCB Vol.15 18 September 1827.
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13. Ibid.


16. GPL TP Daubney - C. Tennyson 28.3.1819.

17. Ibid.

18. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Bell - C. Tennyson; LAO 2Td'E H/7/20 Lusby - C. Tennyson.

19. LRSM 11 December 1818.

20. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Daubney - C. Tennyson.


22. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Daubney - C. Tennyson 18.12.1818.

23. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Daubney - C. Tennyson 8.12.1818.

24. See Chapter 4, p.

25. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Daubney - C. Tennyson 8.12.1818.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Daubney - C. Tennyson 12.12.1818.

30. LAO 2Td'E H/7/2 Moody - Tennyson 18.12.1818.


32. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Daubney - Tennyson 25.12.1818.

33. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Bell - C. Tennyson.

34. See for example GPL TP Daubney - C. Tennyson 18.12.1819; 30.11.1819; Moody-Tennyson 28.8.1819; Daubney-Tennyson 10.10.1820; Lusby-Tennyson 4.2.1819.

35. LAO 2Td'E H/7 Lusby - C. Tennyson 10.11.1818.

36. LAO 2Td'E H/7/20 Lusby - Tennyson 27.12.1818.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.
Chapter 6: The Structure of Local Politics

39. GPL TP (Misc) Daubney - Tennyson (undated, probably December 1818).
40. MCB Vol. 15, 15 July 1827; Vol.16, 26 October 1830.
44. MCB Vol.15, 6 October 1819.
45. MCB Vols. 15 and 16.
46. LAO Yarborough Rentals 1823/4. YARB 5.
47. GPL TP Squire - C. Tennyson 23.1.1819. Of course, as part of any campaign, many other inns and taverns would be used for purposes of treating. In the 1826 campaign, for instance, the Tory candidate Phillipps paid bills from at least eight publicans (including Dabb, Lister, Mrs. Plumtree, Martin, Brown, and the landlords of the Hope & Anchor, the Rose & Crown, and the Black Swan). See MS Phillipps-Robinson, d.270 (Bodleian Library).
49. GPL TP Plaskitt-Tennyson 23.3.1819.
50. GPL TP Veal - Tennyson 9.3.1819.
51. GPL TP Veal - Tennyson 23.3.1819.
52. GPL TP Veal - Tennyson 29.4.1819.
53. GPL TP Veal - Tennyson 4.7.1819.
54. GPL TP Veal - Tennyson 5.7.1819.
55. GPL TP Printed handbill.
57. Pollbooks.
58. LAO Td'E H76/54 C.Tennyson - G. Tennyson 22.12.1817.
59. See Chapter 5.
60. See for example various accounts LAO 4Td'E H16 and H13; also among the papers of Sir Thomas Phillipps, especially e.445 and d.270, which include bills for musicians, publicans, individual voters' claims for loss of wages, and so on - MS Phillipps-Robinson, Bodleian Library.
MS Phillipps-Robinson, d.268, Lusby - Sir Thomas Phillipps, 15.6.1826. Three weeks later Lusby again wrote, noting the 'real cause of our Defeat - the prime Agent's character, concealment of his List of Promises, neglect amongst the young Freemen, tardy movements in the concerns of Election.' He even accused General Loft (the agent) of dishonesty: 'The Expenses it is true are heavy; but your prime Agent has been the chief Cause, and according to the Accounts put into my Hands has pocketed upwards of £400'. Lusby - Phillipps, 3.7.1826.

62. GPL Chamberlains Accounts (1820s).


64. GPL Skelton Proof Books, 1826; MCB Vol.15.
CHAPTER 7: THE REFORM ACT OF 1832

REPRESENTATION

Most of the psephological studies of the nineteenth century have concentrated on the middle years, those between the first Reform Act and the introduction of the secret ballot in 1872. In doing so, they take advantage of the existence of pollbooks which show unequivocally how electors cast their vote. To this extent they can do more than similar studies of the contemporary scene which, being based on surveys, have to rely on voters' claims which may or may not accurately reflect their actual voting behaviour. However, it is also the case that many of the mid-nineteenth century studies appear to assume that in virtually all respects 1832 marked an important watershed, and gave rise to organisational patterns which were quite new. Thus, the registration of voters begins to assume special significance as it becomes required in law; party lines become clearly drawn, and so on. However, it may be doubted whether history provides many marked discontinuities, and certainly very few in the case of voting behaviour. It is true that some hitherto unenfranchised groups received the vote and that the imbalance in representation between urban and rural England was to some extent reduced at the same time as yet other voters were deprived of the franchise. However, whilst the balance of partisan voting may have been altered thereby (and not always in ways which the reformers had anticipated), voting behaviour continued to be subject to familiar influences, tempered now and again by greater
prudence in the face of formally strengthened legal constraints. The importance to any political party of maximising turnout and support in its own favour was no different and the methods of achieving this were little different after 1832 from what they had been before. A new, though very small, group of voters may have been created by the Act but they could still often be reached by all the tentacles of influence, legitimate or otherwise, which had surrounded voters before. Perhaps only in the larger, newly enfranchised cities were there fresh beginnings and novel developments. Fraser asserts that "In the city (Birmingham) an election recorded the genuine political will of the electorate, not the power of money or influence." Social mobility and change had ensured that many of the new cities were expanding rapidly and that many of the new inhabitants and voters were free of the traditional ties which still bound men together in the smaller boroughs and rural villages. In addition, the very size of the new city electorates greatly inhibited the development of strong hierarchical influence of the kind which we have seen operated in the boroughs. In Grimsby, and no doubt in the majority of small market towns, money and influence continued to hold sway, whilst in the larger towns and cities the constraints of open voting were less obvious, even non-existent.

Originally the whig ministry in drawing up reform had proposed, in Schedule B, that all boroughs with a population under 4,000 should be deprived of one seat (in addition to those boroughs completely disfranchised under Schedule A), but this was later replaced by a different criterion, namely that of number of houses and assessed taxes. This included some thirty boroughs, some very small and deserving complete disfranchisement. Grimsby's case, however, was
very much at the margin, for its population was just over 4,000 so that on the original plan it would have been saved, but on the property and tax criterion it lost. This very fact caused considerable resentment locally whilst the whole of Schedule B gave rise to disquiet generally in Parliament, even Grey expressing doubts. Tories felt that pocket or nomination boroughs should be disfranchised completely or not at all, and disapproved of any democratic hint that representation should depend upon population. Radicals, however, felt that the provisions failed to go so far as to annihilate nomination boroughs altogether.

Grimsby had been placed in Schedule B because it failed to meet the requirements as to houses and taxes. Its population was of reasonable size such that it might have escaped disfranchisement on the original plan, but although it was not completely under the control of Yarborough, many of its electors, like those of Arundel or Wallingford which suffered the same fate, had been in the habit of selling themselves to the highest bidder.

Disfranchisement, complete or partial, had been perhaps the most bitterly fought of all the reform proposals, both in Parliament and the country at large - and so it appeared locally. This is hardly surprising, for few potential voters would object to the creation of new constituencies, but established voters would be most concerned at the prospect of losing representation, with all that entailed in financial and other reward. Thus locally the issue was hotly debated and candidates were careful not to offend; even those in favour of reform were at pains to promise to get the offending proposals regarding Grimsby removed. The reformers, however, were determined to get rid of nomination.
Chapter 7: The Reform Act of 1832

The franchise was widened by the inclusion of £10 householders or occupiers. However, the freeman vote was limited because widows and daughters of freemen were no longer able to confer freedom on their husbands. This provision ensured the gradual decline of the freeman vote, and, as Seymour has shown, in many places it broke the control of freemen in local politics. In Grimsby the freemen continued to be a force to be reckoned with until well beyond the middle of the century, but freeman status was no longer the attraction it had once been, and the numbers of freemen in the electorate, and in the borough population at large, steadily declined. Such decline, however, was by no means drastic. In many boroughs the enforcement of residence removed half the voters, but in Grimsby the effect of this was modest: the numbers of freemen voting in 1832 being 353 compared with 278 in 1835. This latter figure is unexpectedly low, due perhaps to a decline in population during the 1830s; at the election of 1852 there were 312 voters. In some boroughs as many as three quarters of the old electorate disappeared.

In addition to the restrictions on the freeman vote and the introduction of the £10 vote, the parish boundary was also considerably extended. The boundary commissioners found that although the population of the borough just exceeded 4,000 persons, the number of voters who would qualify by right of property was small. If these latter were added to the existing freemen it would make little difference: "From this cause a small addition to the present body of Electors would be scarcely felt, and indeed wholly inoperative." They therefore decided to recommend the annexation of surrounding parishes within four miles of Grimsby, namely Great Coates, Little
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Coates, Bradley, Laceby, Waltham, Scartho, Cleethorpes, and Clee with Weelsby. This extension of the boundary appears at first sight to have had least as profound an effect as the extension of the franchise, for it introduced a sizeable and therefore significant element, the farmers. As a class they can hardly be regarded as homogeneous, yet their interests were distinctive. Table 7.1 shows the distribution of new voters, and Map 7.1 shows the extent of the old and new boundaries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>No. of Houses etc. of or above £10 value</th>
<th>No. of Voters 1832</th>
<th>Voters as % of adult male population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Coates</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Coates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laceby</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waltham</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scartho</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clee with Weelsby</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleethorpes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report of Boundary Commissioners; 1831 Census Return.

One immediate result of all these provisions was an increase in the size of the electorate, from under 400 in 1831 to nearly 600 in 1832. This did not, however, enhance its democratic representation. The electorate in Grimsby had throughout our period been unusually representative of the population of the borough, as Table 7.2 shows:

Electoral Politics in Grimsby
MAP 7.1: The New Parish Boundary, 1832

Electoral Politics in Grimsby
### TABLE 7.2: REPRESENTATION OF GRIMSBY BOROUGH 1820 - 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>1012</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

[1] 1831 figure from census; others estimated assuming (a) population growth 1821-31 at a constant rate of 2.82% per annum, and (b) males approximately 50% of the population and adult males 50% of male population, based on 1831 census return. The number of adult males may thus be overestimated slightly.

[2] Includes voters only, not abstainers, except 1832 and 1835.

**Source:** Pollbooks and Census Returns.

Within the original parliamentary boundary, therefore, there was little change of representation in terms of numbers. The surrounding parishes, however, were less well represented with only 24% of adult males enfranchised. This was still high in comparison with the national average of 20%, yet the creation of the new boundary served to reduce the overall franchise to less than 36% of the adult male population. Locally, therefore, in terms of inclusiveness the 1832 Act brought little significant change other than through boundary extension, and in one sense it actually reduced inclusiveness.
It was not simply a matter of numbers, however, for the alteration of the franchise was significant for the make-up of the electorate and the balance of interests within the borough as a whole. The 1831 census distinguishes families according to three broad occupational categories: agriculture, trade, and 'other'. Within the original parish boundary the agricultural interest had been relatively unimportant (though this is not to deny that agriculture may have been much more significant in terms of its contribution to the economic, political, and especially social life of the borough). Within the outlying parishes now added to the parliamentary borough the agricultural interest was overwhelming (Table 7.3).

TABLE 7.3: FAMILY OCCUPATIONS, BROAD GROUPINGS, 1831 CENSUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grimsby Parish</th>
<th>Outlying Parishes</th>
<th>New Parliamentary Borough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The established retail, handicraft, shipping and commercial interests which had characterised the growth of Grimsby in the early nineteenth century as a port and market town were now joined by a significant agricultural component.
The social structure of the new borough differed from the old in yet further ways. Bankers, capitalists, and other professional people made up 9.4% of the population of the old borough but only 3.3% within the newly added parishes; non-agricultural labourers were 18% of the old borough, and under 3% in the parishes, whilst people engaged in retail and handicraft occupations were also considerably less in the new parishes (31% compared with 45%).

Thus, the social structure of the new borough was in significant ways different from the old, with relatively fewer professional people, craftsmen, retailers, and even labourers, and a much larger agricultural interest. Further, the new voters were all substantial citizens occupying property of an annual value of at least £10. It does not follow from this that the new farming interest was necessarily homogeneous and there could be wide differences between farmers and cottagers and even within these categories, and some wealthy cottagers might well be better off, and more independent than some poorer 'farmers'.

The occupational structure of the electorate itself was also much altered as a consequence, as Table 7.4 shows. The absence of labourers among the newly enfranchised is striking. At the time of the 1831 census their relative importance in the social structure was almost exactly matched by their representation in the electorate (Table 5.1). Constituencies varied greatly in this respect. Davis, for example, has shown in his study of Buckinghamshire constituencies that the role of labourers was a passive one, for they constituted only a small element. In other respects the working class was, says Davis, indistinguishable from the middle class. Amongst the £10 householders,
Chapter 7: The Reform Act of 1832

of course, there were no labourers in either the old borough or the outlying parishes, and overall, therefore, their representation was diminished and to this extent also the hitherto unusually democratic nature of the franchise. Retail trades, and especially craft trades

TABLE 7.4: OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE OLD BOROUGH ELECTORATE BEFORE AND AFTER THE REFORM ACT, AND OF NEWLY ADDED PARISHES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Old Borough Freemen %</th>
<th>Old Borough Occupiers %</th>
<th>Outlying Parishes %</th>
<th>New Borough %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Gentry &amp; Prof.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Manuf. &amp; Merch.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Craft Trades</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Retail Trades</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Drink Interest</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Port &amp; Shipping</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII Farming</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII Labourers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Not Known</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks

were much less represented in the new electorate, both within the old boundary and the new. This too made the electorate less representative of the wider society. In the newly added parishes, for example, the census return of 1831 shows that those employed in retail trades, and handicraft accounted for approximately 30% of the population, yet they were only 12% of the electorate. Similarly,
'capitalists, bankers, professional and other educated men' who made up only 3% of the parish population accounted for 9% of the electorate (groups I and II). Within the old borough this class had been under-represented, but their new strength within the electorate greatly exaggerated their relative numerical importance in the social structure. They accounted for no less than 26% of occupiers within the old parish, but made up as a class only 9% of the population. The overwhelming strength of farmers in the parish electorate likewise mirrored their importance, but within the old boundary they were much stronger than their numbers in the population would suggest.

Thus, in more than one sense the Reform Act diminished the representativeness of the electorate. In the first place, whilst more voters were created, the new parliamentary borough had been extended to include more people, and overall the electorate had been reduced from over 40% of the adult male population to about 36%. Secondly, the new electorate mirrored rather less faithfully the social structure of the borough, diminishing the labourer, craft, and retail vote principally in favour of the farming and professional vote. Since farmers were one of only two groups who can be shown to have been predisposed to vote one way rather than another (the port interest was the other), this shift in occupational structure may be regarded as having significance. Working class strength was diminished both by the disfranchisement of ancient right voters when residence was enforced, and by the £10 qualification.

The restrictions imposed on the creation of freemen voters had implications other than for their eventual decline, for it was to be no longer possible for the numbers of voters to be suddenly increased for
electoral purposes immediately prior to an election. As we have seen, this practice had been a marked feature of electoral activity in pre-reform years. Despite many petitions from boroughs asking that the daughters of freemen be allowed to confer the franchise on their husbands, the practice, with all its abuses, was ended. Thus, no longer were eligible ladies to be locked away at election time ready to marry at a moment's notice any men disposed to vote in a particular way. Stories of such happenings were not uncommon, even in Grimsby. On the morning of the poll in August 1831, for example, it is reported that 'several persons were admitted to their freedom: amongst whom were two who that morning had taken up their freedom getting married.'

The increase in the size of the Grimsby electorate was similar to the increase for boroughs nationally, but the boundary of the parliamentary borough had also been extended, thus wiping out this apparent gain. The new franchise constituted immediately some 38.5% of the total electorate; by 1835 this had risen to 45%. In borough constituencies in general the new occupier vote made up between a half and two-thirds of the electorate. After 1835 there was no election locally until 1852, by which time, as a result of the coming of the railway and beginning of new dock works which were to alter radically the basis of the local economy, the social structure had changed and the population began to grow rapidly. The freeman vote had thus lost some of its importance, yet still accounted for 36% of the electorate, whilst there were more freemen voters than in 1835.

Nationally, the introduction of the householder vote had been a most controversial issue, generally opposed by radicals who felt that it was inadequate and restrictive, and by the tories some of whom felt
that it went so far as to enfranchise the "dregs of the community". Many tories feared a new and dangerous element, made up of dissenters and lower middle class voters of a sort whom they associated however unfairly, with revolutionary tendencies. Peel on the other hand objected that the measure was too uniform and would upset the great advantage of the existing system, namely that it represented all classes. His judgment here certainly is borne out by the experience in Grimsby where the new electorate, as we have seen, was less rather than more representative of the community. Peel was also well aware that the £10 qualification meant different things in different places and would tend to work against the interests of smaller boroughs where property values were lower than in the larger towns and cities. The tory view that the existing system was preferable to that proposed did not, of course, prevail, and there were even local tories who were in favour of reform. Perhaps they understood locally what tory leaders did not - that the freeman vote on balance favoured whigs rather than tories. If so, they were wrong if they also supposed that reform would strengthen their position, for although local freemen tended to vote whig, they were nevertheless more likely to vote tory than were the new occupiers. The Tennysons, who favoured reform, could hardly have failed to understand this, for they knew full well the pattern of ownership and influence in the parishes, and it was decidedly whig. It seems, however, that by now the Tennysons had abandoned their toryism. Certainly, in the county, in 1841 Charles Tennyson gave his interest in support of Brocklesby, and Olney describes Tennyson as a Liberal 'with some radical leanings in the 1830s.' This being the case, the tories, whilst they clearly retained some not insignificant support
locally, lacked any really strong leadership. Captain Harris, their most prominent spokesman was himself largely discredited and in financial difficulty. Lord Loughborough, though elected in 1831, did not have the local connections and interests necessary to sustain a commanding position; he had little or no influence on the corporation, and no property to cement allegiances. Thus, as the tory cause languished, their fears were to some extent realised, at least locally. Radical sentiment too was much opposed to the new qualification, but there was little of this locally.

The whigs, however, sought reform without change, and whatever the motives of the reform Ministry the new qualification went some way towards weakening rather than strengthening the working class, both locally and in the nation at large, whilst the position of the aristocracy was little affected. The radicals were appeased by what they saw as the beginning of change; the tories, eventually, by the realisation that nothing too desperate had been accomplished, and the whigs by having given the appearance of change without too much substance, or too much threat to the continued exercise of aristocratic influence.

It might now be asked whether the changes wrought by the Act to the make-up of the electorate and to the balance of interests affected in any significant way electoral outcomes. The borough, as we have seen, was throughout our period a whig stronghold with relatively few completely independent voters; indeed, each election had been marked by insistent demands for more independence. Within the original borough boundary the Act may well have marked a move towards achieving such independence by adding the £10 householders - who might be expected to
Ch~pter 7: The Reform Act of 1832

behave independently - and by curtailing to some extent the freeman franchise, for it was this latter which was often held by contemporaries to be corrupt.

It is not easy, however, to detect such independence, except perhaps in the matter of abstentions. Two immediate effects of the widening of the franchise were an increase in the number and proportion of abstentions and a strengthening of whig support. The first election under the new provisions was in many ways exceptional, for it was characterised by a much larger than usual number of abstentions. Among freemen it was as high as 20%; among occupiers it was even higher at 24%. At the next election, 1835, it was down to 4% among freemen, a proportion much more consistent with usual practice. The occupier abstentions were also lower than in 1832, but much more substantial at about 14%.

Of the 69 freemen abstainers in 1832, 43 were traditional tory supporters and only 14 were whig voters. A substantial proportion of both groups never voted again (6 whigs, 12 tories). One third of those not voting were mariners (mostly tories, and many living in the new town), and it is possible that absence prevented them from turning out. The high tory abstention rate, however, suggests that issues at any rate played their part, and it may be that abstention was a form of protest either against the curtailment of the franchise or, more likely, against local tory (i.e. Tennyson) support for reform. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that 1832 was the only election during our period when the mariners as an occupational group did not vote overwhelmingly tory.\textsuperscript{22} In 1835 the number of freemen non-voters was down to eleven, of whom two never recorded a vote and three
were mariners. Of the 18 Grimsby occupiers who abstained, five voted tory and five voted whig at the next election, and the remaining eight cast no vote. It is not possible to draw conclusions from this, but at the following election the number of occupiers was greater but the number of abstentions was down to 13, of whom 8 were those who had not voted in 1832. It is amongst the parish occupiers that abstentions appear to have been more marked.

It is in fact difficult to reconcile the idea of a shift towards greater independence with what actually took place. It might be supported with regard to the number of abstentions, which were certainly greater amongst the new occupiers, but this might equally reflect apathy. Apathy, of course, might itself be a form of independence, particularly at a time when social pressures fostered intense politicization and conformity; but one of the great motivators - money - may have been removed or at least inoperative as far as the £10 voters were concerned. Among the freemen the high abstention rate was short-lived, being evident only in 1832; among the occupiers it remained high at subsequent elections.

TABLE 7.5: DISTRIBUTION OF VOTES 1832 and 1835, FREEMEN AND OCCUPIERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freemen</th>
<th>Grimsby Occupiers</th>
<th>Parish Occupiers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>1835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-vote</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.
With regard to actual voting, independence is not greatly in evidence. In a borough which was essentially whig, there was more support for tories among the freemen than among the new occupiers, as Table 7.5 shows. Clearly, this freemen support for tories was not a matter of independence, for such voters were largely tenants of tory landlords. In order to gain some idea of independence it is necessary to resort to transition tables.

**TABLE 7.6: TRANSITION TABLE FOR OCCUPIER VOTES, 1832-1835**

(a) Grimsby Occupiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non vote</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stability=69%

(b) Parish Occupiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>Tory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non vote</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stability=68%

Source: Linked pollbooks.
There is little difference between the two groups, and it is clear that both tory and whig voters in 1832 were overwhelmingly inclined (80%) to vote the same way at the subsequent election: it was the abstainers in 1832 who altered their voting pattern, and altogether there were relatively few straight converts. There were some variations between individual parishes, but in general a higher than average abstention rate in 1832 corresponded with a lower than average stability rate (Table 7.7).

**TABLE 7.7: ABSTENTION AND STABILITY RATES, PARISHES 1832-1835**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proportion of Non-voters (%)</th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleethorpes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clee</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Coates</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Coates</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>NA*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradley</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scartho</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laceby</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waltham</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All occupiers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Not applicable: only one voter common to both elections.

Source: Linked pollbooks.
Partisan stability, it appears, was little different among the new occupiers than it was among the old freeman voters. Furthermore, the traditional freeman voter, typically a tenant of one or other of the large landowners, found that what little independence he previously had when 'splitting' to allow a conscience vote was no longer possible - electors now had only one vote as opposed to two before Reform.

Voters in the surrounding parishes were thus subject to similar social pressures to voters in the original borough to cast their vote in particular ways. The £10 occupiers were tenants, in most cases, of not insignificant landlords. To establish whether their vote coincided with their own political preference, as Vincent suggests may well have happened, is virtually impossible, but we do know that a fairly large proportion were prepared to abstain.\textsuperscript{23} Such abstention may be interpreted as independence or apathy, and may suggest a lessening of the influence of corruption. To this extent, in the eyes of many of the reformers, the 1832 Act would have been justified.

Overall, the Act served to strengthen the whigs, but it also coincided with a weakening locally of tory leadership and shift of Tennyson support from tories to whigs. Traditional tory supporters felt keenly the weakness of their position, but helpless in the face of it.

There is little support for the view that 1832 brought greater freedom from aristocratic or landed influence. Moore has argued that the reform movement arose out of the desire of the landed classes to regain and consolidate their own power.\textsuperscript{24} That such might be a possibility did not go unnoticed amid the local fervour. At the nomination of candidates immediately preceding the August 1831
election, Edward Brown, common councilman, in seconding the nomination of Henry Fitzroy as tory candidate, was in little doubt as to the likely effect of the proposal to extend the borough boundary:

"...(it) will unite together in one common bond against your free voice...a number of gentlemen who surround us in the neighbourhood of Grimsby. Would not Sir Richard Sutton have some influence at Great Coates? Would not Mr. George Tennyson have influence at Scathow? Would not Mr. Richard Thorold and the Clergy and Gentlemen connected with Cleethorpe have their influence in this Borough? Would not Sir John Nelthorpe have an influence over his tenants at Bradley? (Cries of "Yes" and a partial uproar). Well, then, Gentlemen, would they not, think you, exercise that influence to a certain extent? I will not affirm they would exercise it unlawfully, but I do say the Bill would necessarily bring a power into the hands of the aristocracy which at present they do not, and ought not, to possess."26

The tory candidate, Lord Loughborough, favoured 'some slight alteration...that is, to destroy the domineering power of nomination lords.'26

Brown's suggestion is that whole parishes could be expected to vote in very predictable fashion reflecting the prevailing landowning interest. It would be exaggeration to claim that wholesale deference of the kind which Moore asserts determined county voting was evident in the Grimsby parishes, but a great deal of the voting was predictable and stability was high. In some parishes, notably Clee, Bradley, Scartho, and Little Coates the number of voters was so low that statistical analysis has only limited value, but what emerges overall never approaches the unexpected and may indeed be said to support Brown's assertion as to the predictability of parish voting and his implication of the subservience of the parish voter.

Cleethorpes

Lying to the east of Grimsby, Cleethorpes was one of the largest of the parishes added to the constituency, and it had a population of
Chapter 7: The Reform Act of 1832

nearly 500 in 1831. Ten years previously it had been little more than a fishing hamlet, but was now becoming a bathing resort. There were few houses above the value of £10, and only 25 voters in 1832. It was not a whig stronghold. The principal landowners are shown in the table:

TABLE 7.8: PRINCIPAL LANDOWNERS IN CLEETHORPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landowner</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard Thorold</td>
<td>866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge</td>
<td>716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.F. Heneage</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Nicholson White</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Russell (1982)

Lord Yarborough is recorded as having only four acres in Cleethorpes and appears indeed to have had little influence there. Election results were as follows:

TABLE 7.9: ELECTION RESULTS, CLEETHORPES 1832 and 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No vote</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks
It is not possible to identify landholdings in Cleethorpes with the precision or detail that has been possible in Grimsby, but it would appear that Heneage had influence over most of those who cast whig votes. The tory vote, unusually large for the constituency as a whole, being double that of the whig vote, does indeed reflect the predisposition of the leading landowner, Richard Thorold. The Thorold family was to become a major force in local politics later in the century, but the foundations of their power were already evident in their large landholdings. Thorold himself voted tory in the 1832 county election, whilst in the borough, of thirteen tory voters, seven definitely occupied Thorold property, and neither in 1832 nor 1835 can any known tenants of Thorold be found voting whig. There appears to have been a handful of independent voters, and some abstainers in 1832 who subsequently voted tory, but overall there was high stability, in the order of 75%. It seems highly probable that the tory bias in the parish is best explained by influence mediated through land and property.

Clee

Influence is even more strongly evident in Clee, a smaller village lying adjacent to Cleethorpes' western boundary. The total population in 1831 was less than 200 and there were 15 voters. This small electorate appeared sharply divided in partisan loyalties, as the results show:
TABLE 7.10: ELECTION RESULTS, CLEE 1832 and 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No vote</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.

There was also remarkably high stability - 86% - and there were no straight changers between the two elections. The tory vote was proportionately much larger than in any of the other parishes, and this is scarcely surprising in view of the fact that the major landowner was Richard Thorold. Without exception the tory voters were tenants of his and likewise whig voters were tenants of whig landowners - Yarborough, Heneage, or Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. Thus, property holding was an almost infallible predictor of partisan behaviour.

Great Coates

The parish of Great Coates lay to the west of Grimsby. It was a small village community of 235 people in 1831, and all electors were farmers or cottagers. The lord of the manor was Sir Richard Sutton, and he owned almost all the considerable land of the parish. He was a prominent county landowner and a whig. The election results reflect very clearly this whig bias:
TABLE 7.11: ELECTION RESULTS, GREAT COATES, 1832 and 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No vote</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 13

Source: Pollbooks.

All who voted in 1832 cast a whig vote; of these eleven, eight voted whig in 1835 and seven of these were tenants of Sir Richard Sutton. The straight changers appear to have been independent landowners (one, Thomas Tuplin, though a tenant of Sutton in Great Coates, was himself a landowner in Scartho, and probably quite independent). Overall voting stability was 64%.

Little Coates

Separated from Great Coates by the river Freshney lay Little Coates, an even smaller parish with only 49 inhabitants in 1831. It consisted of one farmhouse and a few cottages, and was almost entirely in the ownership of J.J. Angerstein Esquire, lord of the manor and himself another prominent county landowner. Angerstein was a London financier and underwriter who was the major shareholder in the Grimsby Haven Company. In Little Coates there was little stability in voting behaviour, as the election results show:
Chapter 7: The Reform Act of 1832

### TABLE 7.12: ELECTION RESULTS, LITTLE COATES 1832 and 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No vote</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.

It is possible that influence was at work, but there is no evidence to explain the tory vote in 1832. Angerstein's main tenant abstained in 1832 and was not registered in 1835. Angerstein himself was accounted tory before 1835 but consolidated the county whig position in 1841. The lack of data prevents any firm conclusions being drawn.

Bradley

A small parish lying to the southwest of the town, Bradley had a population of less than 100 and was almost entirely in the hands of Sir John Nelthorpe, Baronet.

### TABLE 7.13: ELECTION RESULTS, BRADLEY 1832 and 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No vote</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.
There were on the eve of reform six houses rated to the value of £10 or above, and six voters in 1832. Four of these were tenants of Nelthorpe and one of Heneage, and these all cast whig votes in both elections (see Table 7.13).

Bradley had the highest stability of all the parishes except Waltham (88%), with only one 'dissenting' voter, Leonard Leaf who occupied land belonging to a smaller, independent landlord.

It may be significant that seventeen years later, in the election of 1852, five of these six voters cast a vote, four of them for the Tory candidate! The whig candidate was the incumbent Edward Heneage, against whom considerable antipathy was in evidence probably through disillusionment with his performance as MP: he was widely felt to have done little for the borough. Thus, the voters of Bradley may then have simply reflected a general feeling and in so doing have been acting more or less independently. Yet is is also possible that they were tied, and resembled those 'blocs' of voters which Moore found so characteristic of county electorates. The single whig voter in 1852, John Kirk, was a tenant of Heneage himself.

Scartho

Scartho parish lying to the south of the town and adjacent to it was another small addition to the constituency, with a population of less than 150 and correspondingly few voters. It was overwhelmingly whig:
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TABLE 7.14: ELECTION RESULTS, SCARTHO 1832 and 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No vote</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks

It has not been possible to identify tenancies here in the same way as in the other small parishes. However, Lord Yarborough was lord of the manor and Charles Tennyson, as a result of earlier enclosure awards, was the largest landowner, owning 44% of the land awarded by the Enclosure. Charles Tennyson by the 1830s had abandoned his earlier toryism and was serving elsewhere as a whig, and it seems highly probable that the voting pattern, with its high rate of partisan stability (67%), can be largely explained by influence.

Laceby

Laceby, lying to the southwest of Grimsby, was the largest of the newly added parishes, with a population of over 600 in 1831. There was some diversity of occupation consistent with a large village community - essential craftsmen such as wheelwrights and blacksmiths, and retailers of food and clothing. Arthur Young had been impressed by it:

"Laceby is, I think, one of the prettiest villages in the country, containing a great number of very well built houses, with much air and comfort, and several of a more considerable appearance...I inquired the cause, and found it inhabited by freeholders, each man lives on his own."
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It is perhaps this relative independence which explains the low stability of voting (50%, the lowest figure for any of the parishes). Election results were as follows:

TABLE 7.15: ELECTION RESULTS, LACEBY 1832 and 1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No vote</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.

There were certainly a large number of independent landowners many of whom were voters, and it has not been possible to identify clearly any major source of influence. The lord of the manor was Philip Skipworth, a whig, and the two other major landowners, Theophilus Harneiss and William Brooks, were also whig, but in 1832 there were a number of abstainers who subsequently voted tory, as happened within Grimsby itself. Thus politically the parish was more evenly divided between the parties than any other part of the new constituency.

Waltham

Lying to the south of the town, beyond Scartho, Waltham was the second largest of the parishes, having a population of under 600. It constituted a thriving village community and was probably the most prosperous, having more men of substance and a greater variety of
trades than any other of the parishes. At the time of reform it contained 45 voters, and it was overwhelmingly whig:

**TABLE 7.16: ELECTION RESULTS, WALTHAM 1832 and 1835**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1832</th>
<th>1835</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whig</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tory</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No vote</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pollbooks.

Of 39 electors who voted in both elections, only one changed his party vote (from tory to whig); a handful abstained in one or other of the elections. Partisan stability was thus very high (89%) and most of the land of the parish was owned by a whig family, the Anningsons, the lord of the manor being Bushell Anningson.⁴⁶

Overall, two elections, few electors, and inadequate data cannot prove much, but it may be said that the findings are consistent with the notion of influence. Partisan behaviour of tenants was never unexpected given the party allegiance of their landlords, and whilst there were some independent voters able, and occasionally willing to alter their preference, on the whole partisan stability was high. Issues may well have swayed some voters, but they cannot explain why Cleethorpes and Clee should be strongly tory and Scartho and Waltham overwhelmingly whig, for all voters were affected alike by the key concerns of 1832 and 1835, and there was little to distinguish the parishes in social structure, economic interest, or religious make-up.
Of all the variables likely to affect voting influence is the one for which some evidence exists. It appears that voters were subject to the same pressures as had operated before reform: little had changed in this respect.

The Act of 1832 as it applied to Grimsby thus formally introduced significant changes by virtue of the fact that the borough was placed in Schedule B. The electors, until then all freemen, were partially disfranchised, a move which roused them more because of its impact on their pockets and prestige, no doubt, than because of its diminution of their voting rights as such. It also widened the electorate and extended the parliamentary borough, all of which might be expected to have altered considerably the political scene. Yet in essence it did little, except to make the borough less representative than it had been. The same influences on voters as had always existed continued to apply to freemen and occupiers alike, and the domination of local landlords continued to be in evidence and was, if anything, strengthened.

The formal changes, however, did not end with the franchise and the borough boundaries, for new provisions for the registration of voters were introduced and it is to these that we now turn.

REGISTRATION

A most important provision of the 1832 Act was the introduction of a formal system of electoral registration under which electors were required to prove their qualification and have their names entered on official electoral lists. The requirement was a notable innovation which had significant effects in both boroughs and counties in reducing
opportunities for sharp practice. Returning officers had prior to Reform often wielded powers of accepting or disqualifying claimants in ways which were at the very least questionable, and they were frequently guilty of partiality and open to corruption. Those who sought to introduce the new system, however, may have been less concerned to eliminate or reduce corrupt practices and more anxious to reduce the expenses involved when electors' claims to vote had to be verified, for the process frequently involved delays when identity and qualification had to be proved. A formal system, to be completed before election proceedings began, would considerably improve matters. The system introduced in 1832, though modified since, is essentially that in operation today.  

Overseers of the poor were charged with compiling electoral lists in the boroughs. Prospective electors must have paid their rates up to the beginning of the registration period. Lists were published, and electors omitted could give notice of their claims to the overseers. Lists of persons objected to were also published. These lists were handed over to the town clerk and copies prepared for the courts which would revise them. Claims and objections would be settled in the revision courts by specially chosen barristers outside local influence. Evidence was taken and the lists amended as necessary to conform to judgments made. Any elector had the power to object to any other, and objectors had themselves to appear in court or appoint an agent to act on their behalf. Strict rules were followed, but however strong an elector's claim might be, if he was objected to he was put to the expense and trouble of proving his qualification, which required also
his personal attendance. Final lists were compiled, sent to town clerks, and copied into books for the use of returning officers.48

Inevitably the system was subject to teething troubles, but its purposes were clear: to register those duly qualified with as little expense and trouble as possible, and to prevent the registration of those unqualified to vote. It was not completely successful, for the apathy of voters was sufficient to leave many unenfranchised. The novelty of the system may have been a contributory factor here, and it was even claimed that "The voter did not care for his vote and if left to himself would not go to register it."49 There were, however, other weaknesses. Poorer voters found it difficult to pay the initial registration fee (one shilling); and numerous objections of a frivolous nature were lodged, often the work of party activists in the pursuit of electoral gain. As Seymour has observed, 'the raising of objections on wholly unjustifiable grounds soon became a party weapon that was utilized with impunity as well as with success.'50 Votes were created by the practice of splitting the new leasehold qualification in devious ways (as the freehold qualification had been and continued to be), whilst electors were encouraged to realise their legitimate claims by becoming registered. In many constituencies attention to the registration of voters assumed critical significance for the outcome of elections, and agents were well aware of its importance. The necessity for registration has been held responsible for the consolidation of embryonic party organisation.

It might be questioned, however, whether the new system was really such a new departure. Prior to reform locally there were established criteria determining the right to vote, namely those which conferred
freeman status. There was also little doubt on the part of party activists of the importance of ensuring both that all who could be were enrolled as freemen in proper time, and that those who were improperly admitted should be objected to and excluded. Thus, there were before the Act informal pressures at work to ensure much the same result as that intended by the Act. Party agents were in the habit of keeping an almost continuous track of the ebb and flow of potential voters, amending their lists whenever freemen voters died or left the borough, and noting those soon to be entitled to freedom - the sons of freemen, husbands of widows and daughters, and apprentices. Thus, Daubney informed Tennyson in August 1818 that “Mr. Veal informs me that he is satisfied all the Admissions of the young Freemen were put upon stamp the morning of the Election.” The election had been held in June, and it was clearly important, both for local and future parliamentary elections, that young freemen had been properly enrolled. Daubney’s note was followed three months later by one from Lusby:

“I enclose the statement of the names and numbers by which it appears that the greatest number that can possibly be made foreign out of the young freemen that were admitted at the last Election is 64; 34 of whose votes were given to Grant, 32 to you, and 46 to Mr. Fazakerley.

I will attend every Court and when it is attempted to make the young freemen foreign, which I think is not likely to take place soon as the other parties will suffer a loss.”

The court referred to was the Mayor’s Court which (at the time of an election) served as a registration court for the admission of freemen and was particularly active in the run up to an election and the period soon following, when large numbers of voters who had been brought in for the purposes of election were struck off as foreign. There was clearly an abuse here, and one which the new Act was aimed at curbing.
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It was common for both sides to swell the ranks of their electors by bringing in outsiders and having them enrolled, though this often meant providing them with somewhere to live. Residence and payment of scot and lot were not always insisted upon; indeed, it was not necessary to have paid a rate had one not been levied between enrolment and election.

In February 1819 Veal wrote to Tennyson to inform him of the sudden death of John Croft senior, and the drowning of Robert Craiston: "I give you this information that you may correct your list of burgesses." In February 1820 Lusby notified Tennyson directly of the state of the register, informing him that it had been completed and listing freemen absent from Grimsby (from which it appears they were widely scattered - London, America, W. Indies, E. Indies). In November he further reported: "The Call Roll has been purged and 20 votes have been lost (outvoters struck off, those you have obtained situations for, deaths, readmissions of some of the friends of the other Party)."

In 1818 Tennyson had been provided with a list of Grimsby voters in London. This included not only their names, but also their qualification to vote, and in each case some indication of their leanings and likelihood of voting. Thus, Thomas Milner, publican of the Bull's head in Soho, is listed as 'doubtful but rather favourable' and as being qualified by virtue of apprenticeship. Percival Dixon, a sailor living off Ratcliff Highway, is listed, 'His Wife promises one vote and two if wanted.' Richard Chapman, journeyman tailor of Covent Garden, 'promised a plumper', and George Smith, joiner living in Oxford Street, was 'a near relation of Lord Yarborough's Whipper Inn (sic),
doubtful but rather favourable.' There were sixteen names on the list and its compilation clearly represented considerable effort and knowledge; that it should have been compiled at all is testimony to the importance attached to what was in effect a form of registration.55

In 1820 Tennyson was furnished with a list of young freemen entitled to be admitted and vote at the ensuing election, and later with a list of objected and objectionable claims. This latter contained 52 names together with the reason, in each case, for objection. There were a number of grounds for objection: pauperism, arrears of rates unpaid, employment by Customs and Excise, conviction for manslaughter, not having rateable property, residence outside the borough. Once again the list represents much effort on the part of the compiler, and it contained in addition an indication of how most of those listed were likely to vote.57

Thus, Daubney, Plaskitt, Veal, Lusby and no doubt others were keeping Tennyson informed of anything and everything which had a bearing on the number of freemen and potential electors, and on the number of votes likely to be cast. Their lists were as good as any registration.

The differences between old and new practice were few. Party activists were as anxious as ever to ensure that as many voters sympathetic to their cause as possible were enrolled. Before reform, such voters required little persuasion in view of the rewards - financial and other - available, whereas after reform, to the extent that such rewards were now largely proscribed, there was greater apathy. The new system of registration was conducted annually; the old was
largely confined to the period immediately prior to an election, though in practice there was continuous monitoring by agents.

The matter of objections was also little altered. The claims of inhabitants to be admitted to freedom were always under the old system subject to challenge, and every now and then such challenges were successful. They were also initiated for party reasons. Objections were sometimes also made, and successfully, when enrolled freemen cast their vote, usually on the grounds of non-residence or non-payment of scot and lot. In most elections such objections were few in number, but in 1831 a large number of objections were made reflecting perhaps the sensitivity locally to the Reform issue. The Mayor's Court Book records five objected votes at the 1830 election, seven at the May 1831 election, and no fewer than forty-nine at the August election. This latter, of course, was held following bribery which led to the voiding of the May election. Both sides lodged objections (on all the usual grounds: pauperism, bribery, non-service under apprenticeship, improper admission), and most were upheld. However, during the course of the poll some fourteen objected Blue votes and ten objected Red votes so far undecided by the assessor were waived on the suggestion of Captain Harris, one of the tory (Red) candidates unseated on petition after the May election. Mr. Pearson, agent for the Blues, readily consented, though it was already clear that the Blues had lost.

Formally, of course, the new system of registration introduced in 1832 was new, but in practical terms it may have made very little difference. Some attempt was made to introduce an element of impartiality not simply by laying down strict rules but also by appointing barristers outside local influence to serve in the revision
courts. To this extent, no doubt, some improvement ensued, although the whole procedure had always been grounded in legal precedent and conducted by legal practitioners. Both sides traditionally employed solicitors as agents and as legal advisors.

It is, of course, true that traditional procedures were informal, to some extent haphazard, and certainly partisan. The political control of the corporation, and in particular of the mayor and his court which decided admission was significant. The new system introduced a legalism which offered the prospect of a fair and impartial approach to the admission of electors. By divorcing registration from the heat of election time it also sought, as Prest remarks, to 'separate scrutiny from passion'. It was not, however, entirely successful, and though supposedly neutral politically, in practice it frequently turned out not to be so. In the first place, gains and losses at registration were a reflection - as they had always been - of party zeal. Much may have depended on money, as Prest has shown. Second, the revising barristers were mostly young and inexperienced, or unsuccessful; they were also too numerous, with the result that there were many contradictory and tactless decisions. Third, the revising barristers were themselves not above partisanship, and party activity itself at times "tested the new registration machinery almost to the point of collapse." Both whigs and tories (particularly the latter, who countrywide appear to have gained most from the new system) established associations for the purposes of conducting registration claims and objections and they were indeed to have important implications for the later development of national organisation. Nevertheless, they bore a close resemblance in make-
up, purpose, zeal, and method to the more informal activities of party management which had been in existence long before 1832. What these old informal associations did not possess, however, was any kind of connection with other associations having a similar role in other constituencies, and little potential in the absence of a formally constituted and more uniform franchise for such development. Thus, the crucial link between centre and locality which was essential for the development of national party organisation was yet in the future.

Davis has argued that "In the final analysis, the qualification to vote was inclusion on the electoral register. It therefore became an important object to politicians to get their friends on the register. This spurred local organisation and in a couple of years this was followed by the beginnings of national organisation." However, a register in the form of the Call List had always existed and, as we have seen, the need to include as many inhabitants on it as possible was recognised by all so that, in Grimsby at least, little was changed. What may always have been possible in a small market town, however, may not have been possible or evident in the larger urban or more widely scattered county constituencies, hence the impact of reform on national arrangements.

Locally the electorate under the new franchise grew sufficiently slowly for established and traditional arrangements to work more or less as they had done in the previous two decades without much change of a substantial nature. The competition for party members, adherents, and voters which increased the politicization of the electorate in so many of the larger constituencies continued largely unaltered in Grimsby. It was already highly politicised.
NOTES


4. The criterion was a complicated one: the number of houses in any one borough was divided by the average number per borough in 110 boroughs; the assessed taxes in that borough were also divided by the average and the two results added to give the relative importance of the borough in points. Those selected for disfranchisement were thus the least important in terms of wealth and population. See Seymour C. (1915) "Electoral Reform in England and Wales: The Development and Operation of the Parliamentary Franchise*, David & Charles Reprints (1970).


7. See candidates' addresses in pollbook, May 1831.


13. Census 1831.


Chapter 7: The Reform Act of 1832

16. See Chapter 4 p. See also Bates, A. (1893) *A Gossip about Old Grimsby* Grimsby, Albert Gait, though such stories of 'political' marriages should be treated with caution.


18. Ibid.


22. Chi square tests on the null hypothesis that there was no correlation between occupation and party support are negative for all elections except 1832 as far as mariners are concerned - i.e. mariners are shown to consistently support one party (tory) rather than another, except in 1832.


26. Ibid p.28.

27. Census 1831.

28. Census 1831 and pollbooks.

29. Pollbooks and Land Tax Returns (LAO) 1831, 1832.

30. Ibid.

31. Pollbooks and Census Returns.

32. Land Tax Returns (1832); LAO 2/HEN 1/1/1 Rental, 1834.


34. Pollbooks; Land Tax Returns.

35. Census 1831; White's Directory 1842.


38. Boundary Commission and Pollbook.

Chapter 7: The Reform Act of 1832

40. Ibid.

41. Census 1831.


43. Census returns; White's Directory 1842.

44. Quoted in *The Chronicles of Laceby* Laceby History Group, May 1980 (GPL).

45. Pollbooks and Land Tax Returns.

46. White's Lincolnshire Directory 1842.

47. Seymour C. (1915) Chapter V.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid p.117.

50. Ibid p.122.

51. GPL TP Daubney - C. Tennyson 3.8.1818.

52. LAO 2Td'E H/7/7/17 Lusby - C. Tennyson 10.11.1818.

53. GPL TP Veal - C. Tennyson 25.2.1819.

54. GPL TP Lusby - C. Tennyson 6.2.1820.

55. GPL TP Lusby - C. Tennyson 14.11.1820.

56. GPL TP Misc.

57. Ibid.

58. Hitchins J (1831) p.32.


60. Ibid pp.46-7.


62. Ibid p.25,39,41.

63. Ibid p.50.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Two major questions have been addressed by this study. The first concerns the determinants of voting behaviour, the explanations for why electors cast votes in the ways that they did. In this connection a number of hypotheses concerning the social determinants of voting behaviour were examined, for example that occupation influenced voting, or that party support was significantly associated with certain interest groups, or that voters showed the same party political preferences as their parents. Further, an attempt has been made to set the findings against the models of voting behaviour current among historical psephologists, such models emphasising either individual or communal influences. As the study progressed however, it became clear that existing frameworks were not entirely adequate. The second question addressed by the study concerns the significance of the 1832 Reform Act - although no attempt has been made to pronounce on the reasons for it: 'concession' or 'cure' is a debate left open for those who are able to take a wider view.

Speight in his study of Colchester politics in the early nineteenth century was at pains to emphasise the complexity of influences on voting behaviour. Now whilst this complexity is evident in Grimsby, it is important not to evade the issue and leave the central questions unanswered simply on the grounds that matters were so complex that in essence they are unknowable. Indeed, a good deal can be discovered, and much can be inferred about the influences on voters.'
It is also the case that the study has not been exhaustive. Had it set out to be so it would inevitably have foundered on the rock of inadequate data and the complexities of interpretation. Whereas the modern psephologist can question his subjects and learn much about their preferences and thinking, these can only be inferred by the historical psephologist whose subjects are long buried and whose only memorial is a mark in a printed or manuscript pollbook. The influence of religion in Grimsby cannot even be guessed at, for no records exist which might shed light on it, yet we know from recent work by Phillips that religious influences on electoral behaviour in boroughs could be considerable. Grimsby, like Lincolnshire as a whole, appears to have been much influenced by Methodism. Wealth, too, has been inaccessible: wills provide such a partial and incomplete guide as to be barely worth consulting, and Grimsby rate books, which might have provided a useful starting point, were lost some years ago in the confusion of war. Nevertheless, a sufficient wealth of contemporary material has survived to enable something of value to emerge, and in particular the evidence strongly suggests that property was of key significance.

To answer the question of what determines voting it was first necessary to examine voter participation in elections to establish the pattern of voting. The evidence pointed not only to steady recruitment and high turnout, as expected, but to high partisan stability. The variety of vote types makes the interpretation of voting difficult, for whilst a plump vote might clearly reflect strong partisan loyalty, a split vote might conceal such loyalty, and the problem is that recorded votes enable one to speak in terms of partisan behaviour without revealing much, if anything, about the
voter's inclinations. Despite high conformity and stability both encouraged by the very nature of open voting and the social context, the overall balance of the vote could always be altered by the recruitment of new party supporters or the conversion of existing voters, though there did exist a substantial core of constant, experienced, and committed voters. Floaters were a minority, but when taken together with inconsistent splitters, sufficient uncertainty was introduced into elections that outcomes could rarely be predicted confidently in advance. Thus, in what was essentially a whig borough in terms of the dominant interests and economic hegemony, the tories nevertheless succeeded in returning members to parliament in most elections at the parliamentary level during what turns out to have been a period of great instability. This came as a surprise, for nearly all local histories emphasise the stranglehold which Yarborough exerted over the borough. Whilst it is undoubtedly evident in the corporation, whose members were elected for life, it is not borne out at the level of parliamentary elections, and clearly this emphasises the reality of competing influences to which the structure of borough constituencies might so easily give rise. It was undoubtedly helped, too, by the fact that electors had the right to cast two votes. It was the Reform Act of 1832 which re-established whig fortunes as local landed influences were consolidated, and opportunities for floating and inconsistent splitting were removed with the curtailment of the franchise.

The occupational analysis of voting provides a major focus for a social perspective on electoral behaviour because it is the most readily accessible from available data. The use of occupations as such has only limited value in comparison with occupational groupings,
and in adopting Nossiter's pioneering schema one may claim the advantage of a firmly established conceptual framework which, without straining the evidence, allows one to talk in terms of a hierarchy of social order which would have been recognisable by contemporaries. Occupation occasionally determined the type of vote cast - plump, cross, or double - but its significance for partisan voting was much less. The majority of voters in all elections cast partisan votes, much more so, indeed, than Phillips found in his constituencies. Whilst mariners showed a marked tendency towards voting tory and farmers towards whig, in general occupational category was not a good predictor of voting. There was little social division, in terms of occupations, between the parties or between partisan and non-partisan voters.

Influence in the sense understood by contemporaries was that which emanated from landed proprietors, and was seen at its most crude extremes in the small pocket or nomination boroughs whose manipulation provided so much justification for the demands of liberal reformers in the years before 1832. Yet it was evident in some form in probably the majority of constituencies, though by its nature it is virtually impossible to quantify. In Grimsby it can be shown to have been mediated by property holdings which entailed ties of obligation. Property was bought up and leased out by the leading political families expressly for the purpose of securing votes at election time. Ample correspondence between agent and MP, together with property maps and annotated poll lists demonstrate that a significant number of voters, almost certainly the majority, were subject to its influence. It was also an enduring influence as patrons sought not just to secure individuals but also families. As a result whole streets demonstrated
a tendency to vote one way rather than another, and the town was split into two, with Yarborough (whig) dominant in the old town and Tennyson (tory) in the new. Buying up property was thus of strategic concern to rival camps and whilst voters could alter allegiance by changing landlord they were clearly tied by the obligations arising from tenancy. Whilst a voter might register his true opinion if it differed from that of his landlord by splitting his vote, he would rarely cast both votes against his landlord. So strong is the evidence that it is not possible to discount or diminish the importance of influence, as Davis is inclined to do in his Buckinghamshire study.

Not all influence was legitimate and there was much corruption of the traditional kind: bribery, treating, kidnapping, and so on. Its significance, however, is less clear, and it may ultimately have been indirect, through influencing turnout rather than partisan behaviour. In this connection much can be explained by strategy, for in a situation in which one party offered bribes the opposition had little option but to follow suit if it was to have any real hope of victory. Both sides understood this perfectly; both offered bribes; and both occasionally laid claims to electoral purity.

To property and bribery may be added the influence of family, for the available evidence does suggest significant congruence between votes of fathers and sons. The similarities here between then and now are striking. Nevertheless the investigation into family voting has been tentative and, for historical psephology, novel. The possibilities for this type of investigation are conditioned by the available data; in Grimsby, where freeman status was conferred largely by birth, the attempt has been possible and the results sufficiently
encouraging as to suggest further work of a similar kind in other constituencies. However, it would not be possible in all, and probably not in the majority, of constituencies.

If there is little to suggest that all was corruption, there is likewise little evidence that voters were free to exercise political choice in the way that was open to voters in the larger urban constituencies. They continually reacted to the pressures imposed on them by the social context and the open nature of the electoral system.

Of all the models of voting behaviour which have appeared in recent studies of historical psephology, it is not possible to find one which on its own can explain voting in Grimsby in the first half of the last century. Mitchell has summarised these models as follows:

![Figure 8.1](image)

Thus, Mitchell has identified two dichotomies: the first between issue, principle, or opinion and non-issue; the second between the individual and the collectivity. The first cell in the matrix stresses the individual and principle, the second stresses the individual and lack of principle (corruption), the third stresses the 'interests' of
collectivities (class), and the fourth stresses non-principalied interests or non-issue and collectivities.

There is some support for the models which explain voting at the individual level, whether in terms of party or of bribery and corruption. Yet as we have seen, it is unlikely that the majority of voters were swayed by these. Party was in evidence in the polarisation of opinion (albeit largely local in nature or in its concerns) and in the organisation of electoral activity, yet it seems likely that the majority of voters were not in a position to be ruled by ideology or personal opinion. The freedom to cast as one wished may have been a reality in the larger cities for many voters, but in the small boroughs it was probably confined to a small, independent, property-owning minority. Corruption, too, was greatly in evidence at all elections, and in many forms, but there is little to suggest that it generally overcame other pressures, and on the whole whatever effect it had was probably through its influence on turnout.

If the models at the individual level have only limited application, that model at the level of the community (collectivity) which emphasises class has even less - in the pre-industrial conditions of Grimsby at this time the concept of class is inappropriate. Something resembling class may have been looked for in occupational groupings, but even here the connection between a voter's occupation and his voting was tenuous in most cases, the mariners and farmers exhibiting group tendencies, but all other groups reflecting the overall political divisions.

Thus, neither of the models which emphasises issues and opinion - party or class - has substantial explanatory power in Grimsby.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

Rather, issues, though often dominating campaigns, were less persuasive in the voter's mind than the social and economic ties that bound him to his superiors and to his peers in the community. Much is to be explained by property, and it would be unwise to dismiss the ideas of Moore regarding deference communities. It is likely that something resembling them did exist within the small town community, though their boundaries might be blurred by the diversity of property owning and the conflict of interests which lay near the surface in all electioneering. To these groupings must be added the pervasive and undoubted influence of social networks. Berelson et al, in a study of American post-war voting behaviour, have observed, "By and large, the voter is tied into a network of personal association that is both homogeneous and congenial" and this is reflected in a corresponding political homogeneity. Such no doubt was the case in early nineteenth century Grimsby, and any tendency on the part of individual voters to avoid conflict with those socially near was reinforced with age. Yet to the usual ties which bound members of the community together should be superimposed the property holdings or tenancies which exerted almost irresistible force upon the voter.

Thus, party, corruption, deference, property - all were evident, though none more than the latter. Yet all can be seen as merely special cases of the more general criterion of social benefit, and it is the economic model of voting behaviour which at once widens and simplifies explanation. It sees the voter as a calculating individual, not so much in crude money terms (or bribery would have determined all) as in terms of self esteem and social approval. And the model can be extended to explain the behaviour of candidates as well as electors.
and is reflected in the strategic behaviour of the rival party organisations.

It is not argued here that voting was purely mechanical, and indeed it is clear that the view of older historians whose characterisation of the electoral process was one of gloom in the face of unremitting corruption is inappropriate. There were, in contrast, independent voters, often sufficient to turn the scales. There was, too, always the possibility that dependent voters could change the source of their dependence, and the existence of competing influences within the borough was such as to ensure a healthy and vigorous electoral scene. Above all, however, the voter, though calculating, was not thereby corrupt: the purse was not ultimately the most important or enduring of influences on voting behaviour. By the same token calculation and strategic planning underpinned the behaviour of party activists in their strenuous efforts to win over uncommitted voters, whether soon to be enrolled freemen or experienced electors. The distribution of bribes, legitimate rewards, and patronage were alike dictated by strategic considerations, as too were decisions about how many candidates to field and how to canvass. It is probable that such behaviour could provide a fruitful ground for further investigation.

The question naturally arises as to whether Grimsby was typical of borough constituencies. The argument advanced in Chapter 1 is that it certainly was typical, and that perhaps its typicality ultimately provides the justification for this study, since in concentrating on rural or larger urban constituencies the majority of psephological studies of the era before the secret ballot have neglected the 'typical' voter. Such a voter was to be found not in the countryside under the
Chapter 8: Conclusion

sway of one dominant landlord, or in the larger city or provincial town of middling size, but in any of the numerous small boroughs which provided the bulk of parliamentary seats both before and after 1832 - and which so far have received little direct attention by historical psephologists. Of course, not all such boroughs were identical, but as we have seen, there are strong grounds for the view that Grimsby, as a freeman borough, was typical of the largest class of borough constituency in size, make-up of the electorate, wealth, openness, and types of influence present.

The issues which engaged the attention of the voter were occasionally national issues, more often they were local concerns revolving particularly around the prosperity of the port and the independence of electors. Whether national or local, division of opinion was real and identifiable in issue terms, and party existed and even flourished despite the absence of links between centre and locality. In terms of organisation, party was informal for given the size and character of typical borough constituencies informality was entirely appropriate. It was nevertheless able to rise to the challenges of even the most hotly contested campaigns. Agents, committees of activists, clubs, newsrooms, canvassing, patronage, the existence of partisan inns (and packet boats!) and even the activities of the corporation itself all contributed to the essential work of politicising and mobilising the electorate.

It has been possible to dispense with the need for sampling and to examine the voting of all electors over a series of elections, both parliamentary and local, and to link this with considerable detail relating to occupations, tenancy, and rewards and bribes. Such
considerations should enhance the reliability of the findings and strengthen the argument for the choice of constituency.

A second issue addressed by this study concerns the nature of the Great Reform itself, in particular its impact locally. Whether reform represented a concession to radical pressure (the traditional whig view) or whether, in contrast, it was an attempt to cure radical tendencies altogether by re-establishing traditional landed power and influence (Moore's view), was not a central focus yet it has been possible to attempt some comment on it. Phillips has recently favoured the traditional view, and based his argument on an analysis of changes in split and plump voting in three constituencies before and after reform. Such an analysis is not possible in Grimsby for with the loss of one MP split voting ceased to be possible. The weight of current scholarly opinion now appears to be firmly behind the whig view; the weight of evidence in Grimsby at any rate is not so firmly behind it, and there was certainly no 'elevation of popular politics out of the mire of the unreformed system' as many whig accounts would lead us to believe. Rather, the emphasis is to be found in the continuity of traditional modes of electoral behaviour.

Nevertheless, some changes were evident. There was an immediate increase in the size of the electorate with an extension of the parish boundary to include surrounding agricultural parishes, and the growth of the traditional freeman vote was significantly curtailed. Such changes, however, did nothing to strengthen the representative nature of the franchise: indeed, as we have seen, in important ways the electorate in the new constituency was less representative. It was both a smaller proportion of total adult males within the community
and less representative of its social make-up. Before Reform, the old Grimsby electorate had been unusually representative, almost a mirror image of the larger community; after reform it lost this character and greater influence extended to the professional classes and to the agricultural element. There is little here to support the traditional whig view. The grip of Yarborough, long entrenched within the borough, was undiminished. Gash claimed otherwise:

'...the influence of the patron, Lord Yarborough, was diminished by the Reform Act and after 1834 successfully challenged by an ancient Lincolnshire family, the Heneages of Hainton. Edward Heneage was returned from 1835 to 1847, the last three times unopposed.'

Yarborough and Heneage were, however, both representative of the same whig cause, and they were related. They were, moreover, close allies and the success of Heneage, far from diminishing Yarborough's influence was indeed a product of it, or at least inconceivable without it. There were also more Yarborough than non-Yarborough voters in the surrounding parishes. On the eve of Reform prominent local tory leaders had expressed a fear that the domineering power of nomination lords would be consolidated, and so it appears to have been, in effect if not intent. Politics continued to be dominated by county aristocracy and the local gentry. Above all, voters were subject to the same influences as prevailed before, and they responded in similar ways. Joyce in his study of Lancashire politics portrayed Moore's 'politics of deference' as also an urban, post-1867 phenomenon. The study of Grimsby presented here sits more comfortably with this interpretation than it does with the critics of Moore, numerous though they are.'
The formal changes in boundaries and electorate were both evident and visible, and were complemented by formal changes in organisation particularly as regards the registration of voters. Such changes have usually been interpreted as laying the basis for the development of party. Whatever national significance such measures had, however, little was altered locally, and local party managers and activists continued to recruit and scrutinise much as they had always done. Yet there was little sign of the development of links between centre and locality which were crucial to the emergence of a national party organisation.

At an early stage in the investigation it became abundantly clear that voting behaviour at parliamentary elections had its parallel in local elections. Indeed, so close was the relationship that it may even be described as symbiotic. The health of parliamentary electioneering depended greatly on the vigour of local elections, insofar as these politicised and mobilised the electorate and habituated them to the voting process, whilst the conduct of local electioneering required the great spoils available from participation in the larger contests to provide the continuing interest in vote casting required of freemen. Without the stimulus provided by frequent local contests it is likely that parliamentary elections would have been more difficult to organise and perhaps, less meaningful for electors. Although it is not possible at this distance to gauge the degree of interest which electors had in political issues, certain it is that they were frequently called upon to make a choice and to weigh issues. Such were the pressures on voters that participation and turnout were high alike in local and parliamentary contests. The local elections were only marginally
smaller in scale (they rarely included many outvoters). The voters in both types of election were thus largely the same, and responded to the same influences. Longitudinal analysis demonstrates clearly the continuity and congruence between local and parliamentary elections.

Finally, this study is perhaps, as far as Grimsby is concerned, only a beginning. Much more is awaiting investigation, in particular the impact of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, for if local politics had greater significance in the voter's mind than parliamentary politics in this era, the changes brought about in 1835 must have been fundamental. They certainly destroyed the long established whig oligarchy and put a completely new face on the borough leadership. Whether the changes altered the types of influence on voters, or their relative importance, however, is not so clear and would be a fitting subject for further investigation. So also would other 'typical' borough constituencies.

NOTES


5. Davis R.W. (1972) Political Change and Continuity 1780-1885: A Buckinghamshire Study. Newton Abbot. David & Charles. It is doubtful whether many voters were free to be swayed by opinion where it conflicted with interest, and even those who were financially secure
and respectable were not necessarily above corruption. As Lord Milton observed in a letter to Fazakerley: "I know it is said that poor electors exercise their franchise corruptly - very likely they may, and so do rich and respectable electors." (Fazakerley Papers, Add.MS 61937, British Library, Milton-Fazakerley 5.12.1830).


7. See Chapter 5 and also Moore D.C. (1961-2).


APPENDIX A

Pollbooks and Data Linkage

A complete run of printed pollbooks exists for all elections from 1818 to 1835. They vary in the amount of information which they contain, and a summary of contents is given in Table A.1.

Before 1832 no addresses are given, but this is not a particularly serious omission as far as the problem of voter identification is concerned for the community was a small one; the number of electors was even smaller; there were relatively few common names; and there are additional sources which help in verification, in particular the Freemen's Roll.

For both 1832 and 1835 there are two pollbooks, one giving occupations, the other addresses, and it has been possible to match them with little difficulty.

None of the pollbooks after 1832 contains rateable values upon which the £10 household qualification rested, and there are no surviving rate books.

Considerable light is shed on the campaigns and issues by the election addresses issued by candidates and reproduced in all pollbooks except that for 1818 (for which, however, such material is available in abundance elsewhere).

The extent to which recorded occupations reflect actual occupations is another question, for it is not clear how the publishers of pollbooks obtained their information. Occasionally, too, peculiarly local nomenclature, though adding colour, may confuse (e.g. a 'swilljobber' of 1832 turns out to have been a publican). Here, again, however, reference to a number of sources has sometimes been possible and in few cases have discrepancies arisen. That some electors, seeking higher status than was theirs already, may have given false declarations must surely have happened on numerous occasions in the larger, especially urban constituencies, but the scope for such harmless delusion must have been very limited in the relatively small closed community of a town such as Grimsby, and so once again few distortions are likely to arise from using the designations given.

Pollbooks prior to 1832 record the names, occupations, and votes cast of electors; they do not give addresses, and these do not appear to be available on a systematic basis from any other source. Even directories cover only a sample of the electorate. Certain problems of data linkage therefore arise, but they are by no means insuperable. For any successive pair of elections individual voters should be identifiable as voting either (a) in the first election only, (b) in the second election only, or (c) in both elections. The problem is to
Appendix A: Pollbooks and Data Linkage

TABLE A.1: Summary of Pollbook Contents

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</table>

TS = T, Squire, SK = Skelton, PR = Palmer, MSS = Manuscript.

Ascertaining whether the John Brown who voted in 1820 is the same John Brown as voted in 1826, and to resolve this certain procedures have been adopted. Firstly, the primary attributes of surname and Christian name are compared. Secondly, secondary attributes — in this case titles and occupations, and very infrequently place of origin if not Grimsby — are referred to. Unfortunately, agreement of primary attributes cannot be taken as proof of identity, and since in most cases only one secondary attribute is available (namely occupation), agreement here also is not conclusive evidence.

A satisfactory resolution of the problem is to be obtained in almost all cases by reference to a register of freemen compiled in 1840 by the then Town Clerk, George Babb. Investigation has revealed this to be a much more complete record than the official Freemen's Roll, for the latter appears to have been formally compiled once or twice a year, no doubt from the Mayor's Court Books. It was possible, and indeed common, for a voter to receive his freedom, cast his vote, and subsequently be struck off before the official Roll was compiled. He therefore exists as a voter but not, apparently, as a freeman since his name does not appear on the Roll. In the majority of cases in which
this happened the reason for loss of freedom was non-residence. The Mayor's Court Books show that entries to freedom were few except immediately prior to elections, when large numbers were admitted, and the number struck off immediately after elections was sometimes considerable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Admitted</th>
<th>Struck off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Mayor's Court Book, Vol.16 and Babb Compilation.

In non-election years admissions to freedom numbered on average only five or six.

The official Roll was also found to be deficient in other respects, and in particular it fails to record a number of voters, some of them prominent citizens, recorded in the Mayor's Court Books and voting in a number of successive elections. Perhaps, as social leaders, they were thought too important to record in the usual way, but whatever the reason it is clear that the official Roll is of only very limited use.

In contrast, the compilation of Babb appears to be entire and accurate. It is made up from all the entries in the Mayor's Court Books covering a period from the early seventeenth century to the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act in 1835. All freemen, whatever the source of their qualification, had to be admitted at a full court the proceedings of which are recorded in full along with the other business of the court. It is unlikely that there were any freemen admitted who do not appear in the Mayor's Court Books, and certainly none have been found in this investigation. The great advantage of the Babb compilation is that it is arranged alphabetically and chronologically, and thus provides a very convenient record.

The Babb compilation records names, qualification (birth, servitude, marriage, purchase, or gift), date of entry, dates of suspensions and re-admissions, and finally, where available from the Mayor's Court Books, date of being struck off together with the reason. Where birth is the qualification, father and son are indicated; where servitude, the master and frequently the occupation; and where marriage, the name of the wife and her father.

Thus, data linkage now becomes possible with considerably enhanced confidence. If John Brown appears in the pollbooks in 1820 and 1826, and if a John Brown is not recorded as having been admitted to freedom between these years, then as a general rule identity may be assumed, and particularly so if only one entry for John Brown is to be found on the list of freemen. In many cases linkage is possible even
without recourse to secondary attributes, and to some extent this reflects the comparatively limited size of both the electorate and the adult male population.

The organisation of material in the pollbooks of 1820, 1826, and 1830 was of further assistance. Voters are arranged alphabetically by group though not by individual, and on working systematically through the data it soon became apparent that within each alphabetic group, new voters appeared at the end of the group list, and such voters were invariably recorded elsewhere as having been newly enrolled. It could therefore be assumed that voters appearing at the beginning of an alphabetical section were not new voters or newly enrolled freemen, and this was helpful when identifying voters who did not vote in the previous election. No doubt the explanation for this fortuitously helpful arrangement lies in the way the printer set up his presses in advance, possibly with a view to publishing the pollbook as soon as possible after the election.

Not surprisingly, some problems remain, but they are few and relatively minor. Names are not infrequently subject to a variety of spellings. Occasionally, too, occupations change although this is often a case of description rather than substance. No doubt some voters had dual occupations, and one would expect this to be the case if the findings of recent studies are to hold good. Some occupational categories are used interchangeably such as shoemaker/cordwainer, draper/mercer, and even whitesmith/blacksmith, and since almost all trades within the borough were carried out on a small (individual or family) scale, it would be wrong to assume any class implications or real differences.

The procedure for data linkage outlined here, with the high degree of confidence which it affords, has resulted in it being possible to allow change over time in both occupation and address without bringing into question the identity of voters so affected. In fact, addresses have little meaning before 1832 and are not shown in any of the systematic data collections available: they appear first in the pollbook for 1832. Even the changes of address noted between 1832 and the next election in 1835 in some cases may be more apparent than real because of the frequent vagueness attached to such information.

The overall result is perhaps remarkable in that it has been possible to identify all electors from the record of freemen enrolments, and it has not been necessary to reject any voters in any election because of uncertainty over identity. There is one small group of voters in 1832 (all named John Atkinson) who can be traced as individual voters but whose addresses cannot be assigned. There exists also a handful of voters shown as voting in one poll book but not in another for the same election. In this case the vote has been allowed if also recorded in manuscript in the Mayor’s Court Book, but otherwise rejected, except in 1832 when no such manuscript record exists, so that all votes shown in both pollbooks have been allowed. Any error arising from defects in this procedure cannot in any case be statistically significant. What has not been possible, however, is the identification before of 1832 of non-voters (see Appendix B).
It is not possible to gauge precisely the level of turnout at Grimsby elections, at least before 1832 (when non-voters are indicated in the pollbooks). The total number of electors casting a vote in the elections between 1818 and 1831 varied from 329 to 394 at a time when the population of the borough was relatively stable. What proportion these figures are of the total electorate cannot be stated precisely because no electoral registers exist, but the probability is that turnout was high, probably well over 80% in all elections and possibly well over 90% in some.

Non-voters cannot be identified with confidence for a number of reasons. The Freemen's Roll, although it helps us to identify voters, does not provide a complete register of electors for any given election: some regular voters do not appear in it at all (see Appendix A) and information relating to suspensions and deaths is patchy, incomplete, and therefore unreliable. The Babb compilation is more complete, but not sufficiently to be relied upon to provide a complete register for any particular election. Dates of death and of suspensions are too vague (relating to years rather than to days or months). Furthermore, it is quite possible that even registered or enrolled freemen would be ineligible to vote because of non-residence or non-payment of scot and lot, and this information would have to be taken into account. Of course, freemen so disfranchised would not be expected to register a vote, but it is clear that many attempted to (some objections were upheld at most elections) and it is likely that some succeeded; the number of genuine abstainers, however, remains elusive.

Perhaps the best estimates may be derived by noting the numbers of freemen who voted at one election, failed to register a vote at the second election, but who subsequently register a vote. This procedure suggests abstainers in the second election, for it identifies enfranchised freemen who remained freemen and who may be supposed to be electors. Unfortunately, their abstention in the second election could reflect temporary disqualification for any of the usual reasons. The proportions so identified, however, are very small (see Table B.1).

It is quite impossible to discover fully enfranchised electors who never cast a vote, but virtually all persons on the Freemen's Roll in the early nineteenth century have been identified as voting at some time or another.
Appendix B: Turnout

TABLE B.1: Identified Non-Voters Before 1832

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election</th>
<th>No. of Non-voters</th>
<th>Non-voters as % of total voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (May)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831 (August)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1832 and 1835 non-voters are identified in the pollbooks, and so the first true indication becomes available. In 1832 the abstainers represented approximately 21% of the electorate. This appears to be an abnormally inflated figure and contrasts greatly with estimates for previous elections and also with the subsequent election in 1835 when the proportion of the electorate failing to register a vote was just over 8%.

Thus, the indications are that turnout was high at most elections; that it was perhaps greatest during the years when the electorate was made up entirely of freemen; and that it may rarely have fallen much below 90% except in 1832.
APPENDIX C

Computing Party Support

As Fraser makes clear, it is very difficult to render statistically the wishes of the electorate when voters had the right to cast two votes and parties variously put up one or two candidates. Aggregating votes cast for a party and dividing the total by the number of candidates or the number of votes each elector had is apt to distort party strength by "overstating through adding on the votes of "also ran" candidates or understating through aggregating a strong and weak candidate of the same party." (Fraser 1976 p.223).

Nossiter has devised a method which eliminates weaker candidates, and votes are aggregated and divided by the number of serious candidates. In most, if not all Grimsby elections, all candidates may be regarded as 'serious', though where there was a significant discrepancy between two candidates of the same party some distortion inevitably arises.

Some distortion inevitably arises with whatever method is chosen. Fraser attempts to minimise disadvantages by assuming 'for statistical purposes that the two-member constituency was in fact a one-member seat and the result computed as though the parties were fighting for one seat. Hence the statistical result will be the computation of an assumed contest between leading Liberal and leading Conservative.' Translating this into whig and tory, the two methods may be illustrated from the 1818 Grimsby election. The votes in this election were as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
T &= 97 \\
W_1 &= 3 \\
W_1W_2 &= 150 \\
W_2 &= 1 \\
TV_1 &= 76 \\
TV_2 &= 42
\end{align*}
\]

Using the Nossiter method, the total tory vote is thus \(97 + 76 + 42 = 215\).

The total whig vote is \(3 + 300 + 1 + 76 + 42 = 422 - 2 = 211\).

The tory share is thus \(\frac{215}{426} = 50.5\%\)

The whig share is thus \(\frac{211}{426} = 49.5\%\)

The Fraser method, however, assumes a contest between leading whig (\(W_1\)) and the tory. Thus, the tory vote is \(97 + 76 + 42 = 215\)
Appendix C: Computing Party Support

The whig vote is $3 + 150 + 76 = 229$.

The tory share is thus $\frac{215}{444} = 48.4\%$

The whig share is thus $\frac{229}{444} = 51.6\%$

In this election the Fraser method reflects more accurately the actual outcome - the whig candidate did indeed come first and the tory second.

This superiority of the Fraser method applies to all Grimsby elections. For further discussion of the problems and method see Fraser (1976) pp.224-226.
## APPENDIX D

### Council Members 1818 - 1832

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1818</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>1830</th>
<th>1831</th>
<th>1832</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richard Nell</td>
<td>Gent</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Wardale</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Lister</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Woolmer</td>
<td>Draper</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Galland</td>
<td>Brewer</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Shelton</td>
<td>Gent</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Lusby</td>
<td>Gent/Merchant</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Robinson</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Gooseman</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td>George Babb</td>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>A</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Joys</td>
<td>Gent</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Moody</td>
<td>Custom Officer</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Wardale</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Gooseman</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Joys</td>
<td>Builder</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Goulton</td>
<td>Gent</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Shelton</td>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Marshall</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Bell</td>
<td>Surgeon</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Brown</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Bancroft</td>
<td>Gent</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Cook</td>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Fletcher</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questor Veal</td>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Kennington</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Gooseman</td>
<td>Maltster</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmund H. Carritt</td>
<td>Saddler</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bransby Harrison</td>
<td>Gent/Innkeeper</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Emerson</td>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Robinson</td>
<td>Hairdresser</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Warburton</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. Bancroft Jnr.</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Brown</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Barker</td>
<td>Bricklayer</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c = Common Councilman.  A = Alderman.  M = Mayor

Source: Pollbooks; Mayor's Court Books; Directories.
APPENDIX E

Short Biographical Notes on Leading Political Personalities Mentioned in the Text

Charles Anderson-Pelham, first Baron Yarborough (1746-1823). In 1763 Charles Anderson of Manby inherited the estates, surname, and arms of his great-uncle, Charles Pelham of Brocklesby, and became one of the richest commoners in England. Brocklesby became the family seat and Yarborough became the leading whig and largest landowner in Grimsby. Trustees busily bought up land in Grimsby, laying the foundation for their immense local political power in the first half of the nineteenth century. He was the leading property owner at Grimsby, and Recorder of the borough. In 1794 he was elevated to the peerage by the title Baron Yarborough, and then entered upon an informal alliance with George Tennyson (who hitherto had been opposed to him) whose influence within the borough of Grimsby was considerable. Together they controlled for some years the nomination of members for parliament. Both invested heavily in the plan for the Grimsby Haven Company. Charles Anderson-Pelham served as MP for both Beverley and Lincoln.

Charles Anderson-Pelham, first Earl of Yarborough (second Baron) (1761-1846). From the family seat at Brocklesby, 6 miles north-west of Grimsby, Charles Anderson-Pelham consolidated the family political interest. 'The solidity of the Brocklesby estate and the wealth of its principal tenants, made it the ideal centre for a powerful landed interest...consolidated by the adherence of a number of adjacent estates' (Olney, p.4). In 1837 he was created Baron Worsley, first Earl of Yarborough. His influence in both county and borough politics was considerable, and in the first decade of the century he represented Grimsby as MP (in opposition to government). His influence within the borough of Grimsby stood above all others. He was first Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron.

Charles Tennyson D'Eyncourt (1764-1852). The Tennysons were the dominant faction in the Haven Company in the first two decades of the nineteenth century and a forceful political group in the town. After this they gradually lost both influence and interest. Their family seat was at Bayons Manor, near Tealby, Lincs.

Tennyson involvement in Grimsby began in the mid eighteenth century when all three sons of Ralph Tennyson, attorney of Wrawby, married into the prosperous and successful trading family of the Claytons who had extensive property holdings within the town. George Tennyson, grandson of Ralph, an attorney who carried on the tradition of the Claytons, inherited almost all of the Clayton and Tennyson property by the end of the eighteenth century (Jackson, p.4). He enjoyed a wide circle of county friends and was a capable man of business. Though socially friendly with Lord Yarborough, he was politically opposed to him. The election of George's son, Charles, as MP for Grimsby in 1818 marked the height of their influence locally.
Charles, second son of George, was elected tory MP for Grimsby 1818-1826, whig for Bletchingly 1826-31 and Stamford 1831-52.

In his early parliamentary career he carried through the Commons a Landlord and Tenant Bill, and in 1827 succeeded in passing a measure to prohibit the setting of spring guns. He made unsuccessful attempts in 1833 and 1834 to bring in bills to shorten the duration of parliament and to repeal the Septennial Act. He gave his energetic support to all liberal measures and advocated municipal reform and the repeal of the Corn and Navigation Laws. He succeeded his father in 1835 and in that year took by royal license the additional surname of D'Eyncourt. High Steward of Louth and a magistrate, and Deputy Lieutenant for Lincs. 1829 elected FRS.

George Fieschi Heneage (1800-1864) son of George Robert Heneage and Frances Ann Ainslie. Elected MP for Grimsby in 1826. In 1830 he was defeated and represented Lincoln from 1832 to 1835 and from 1852 to 1862. In 1862 he again unsuccessfully contested Grimsby. His aunt was The Hon. Arabella Pelham, daughter of Charles, Lord Yarborough.

Edward Fieschi Heneage (1802-1880) brother of George. Elected MP for Grimsby in 1835 and continued to represent the borough until 1852. In the elections of 1837, 1841, and 1847 he was unopposed, but was defeated by a stranger to Grimsby, Lord Annesley, in 1852. One explanation for this defeat was that the rank and file of the burgesses had become tired of the Yarborough-Heneage influence in the borough's politics (T.H. Storey).

The Heneages were a long established county family tracing their ancestry back to the middle ages, and owned large estates based on Hainton, Lincs., as well as land adjoining Tennyson's in the centre of Grimsby. Many estates and extensions to the town in the later nineteenth century bear testimony to the family influence in surviving street names.

There was always in the popular mind some doubt as to the Heneage's religious loyalties. They were of an ancient Catholic family, but George Robert, Edward's father, had embraced the protestant faith.

George Babb (1793-1860) Leading attorney, Town Clerk, Clerk of the Peace, and treasurer of the borough rate. Clerk to the Enrolled Freemen; Secretary to Grimsby Dock Co. Political agent of Lord Yarborough in the borough. Compiled a register of freemen and produced a survey of local constitutional processes and rules governing electioneering (now in GPL). Mayor 1818. Clerk and Treasurer of Grimsby Association for Prosecuting Felons; Committee member, Dorcas Charity; leading whig activist.

Joseph Dauntony: Attorney. Clerk to the Trustees of Grimsby Turnpike, to the Magistrates of the hundred of Bradley Haverstoe, and to the Court of Requests. Secretary of Old Association for the Prosecution of Felons, and member of Bradley Haverstoe &c Association for Prosecution of Felons. £10 occupier (1832). Appointed Tennyson's political agent late 1818, and was the most powerful of Tennyson's activists in the borough in the 1820s. Voted whig 1832 and 1835 as

Electoral Politics in Grimsby Page 332
Appendix E: Biographical Notes

Tennyson’s sympathies became whig and as the Tennyson interest in the borough had declined.

**James Goulton** (d.1828). Admitted to freedom by marriage, 1799. Elected common councilman 1818. Tory Mayor 1819 after a spectacular contest which challenged the Yarborough hegemony (majority 193 votes to 92). In later years voted whig. Recorded as occupying Tennyson property 1810 and Yarborough property in 1824.

**Bransby Harrison** (b.1790). Freeman by birth 1811. Landlord of the Granby Inn, the most prestigious hostelry in the borough and headquarters of the Yarborough (whig) party. A leading public figure. Churchwarden 1825; common councilman 1826; Alderman 1827; Mayor 1829 and 1834. Committee member, Dorcas Charity; member of Bradley Haverstoe &c Association for the Prosecution of Felons. Largest Yarborough tenant in Grimsby.

**John Lusby**: Freeman by birth (father an alderman) 1789. Gentleman and leading political activist. Member of Old Association for Prosecution of Felons. Alderman. Initially a supporter of Tennyson in his campaign for break into corporation ranks, but later sympathies lay with Yarborough.

**John Moody** (d.1832). Freeman by marriage, 1780. A leading Tennyson activist, precluded from voting in parliamentary elections by virtue of government employment. Landing Surveyor at the Custom House. Member of Old Association for Prosecution of Felons; Committee member, Dorcas Charity (Secretary 1832); Subscriber to Grimsby Auxiliary Bible Society. Mayor 1830 (first election as mayor, 1827, declared void because of disputed vote, after very close result).

**Joshua Plaskitt** (d.1835). Freeman by marriage 1793. Tennyson’s political agent until 1818, and active after. Commissioner for taking special bail, Dock Office. Collector of dock dues. Despite his involvement in politics he was averse to ‘politicking’ and dubious dealings, believing instead in ‘the purity of elections’. ‘Electioneering is now one of his Antipathys’ wrote Daubney (December 1818). In his own words: ‘My greatest study would be to live privately and peaceably with all men’ - a curious claim for one so deeply involved in politics.

**John Squire**: Attorney and at one time a leading Tennyson activist. Member of the Grimsby Association for Prosecuting Felons. £10 occupier (1832). Unseated as Clerk to Court of Requests on the ground of excessive drinking and as a result of pressure from Yarborough supporters who successfully replaced him with one of their own men (George Babb).

**Questor Veal** (1790-1861): Freeman by marriage 1818. His election as common councilman in 1818 was claimed to have ‘removed the iron hand of Brocklesby’ and to have established the Tennyson interest in the borough upon a permanent foundation. Solicitor, notary public.

These notes are included to help the reader: they are not exhaustive.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Manuscript Sources

Grimsby Public Library (GPL)
(a) Tennyson Papers (TP) - a loosely sorted collection of election material and correspondence between Charles and George Tennyson and local agents and friends. Identified in the text by date.

(b) Babb MSS comprising:
   i. Freemen's Roll - a record of admissions, suspensions, etc. Probably compiled from Mayor's Court Books. See Appendix A.

   ii. Great Grimsby Election Brief: notes on qualification for admission to freedom; rights of freemen, etc.

(c) Skelton Diary - a diary of notable local printer.

South Humberside Area Record Office (SHARO). Formerly Grimsby Archives Office.
(a) Freemen's Roll

(b) Mayor's Court Books (include MSS record of parliamentary and mayoral polls.

Lincoln Archives Office (LAO)
(a) Tennyson family papers, estate accounts, etc. Classified under TdE (Tennyson d'Eyncourt). A much more extensive collection than the Tennyson Papers in GPL.

(b) Yarborough estate papers - YARE.

(c) Heneage estate papers - HEN.

(d) Nelthorpe Account Book 1818.

(e) Lindsey Quarter Sessions Land Tax Assessments (Bradley Haverstoe). Available for all constituent parishes of the 1832 Parliamentary borough except Grimsby itself and Scartho.

Boston Archives Office (BAO)
(a) Boston Council Minutes (Vol.9 covering the period 1818-1835 is missing, but Draft Minutes covering 1808-1824 are to be found in BAO (2/A/27).

(b) Books of Enrolments of Apprenticeship Indentures (5/B/2/5).

(c) Freemen's Roll.
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Bodleian Library, Oxford
Grimsby election papers among the papers of Sir Thomas Phillipps (unsuccessful tory candidate in the Grimsby parliamentary election of 1826).

Borthwick Institute of Historical Research (University of York)
Halifax Papers - principally A.4 being the official and professional papers of the Wood Family. Sir Charles Wood, First Viscount Halifax, was a successful candidate in the 1826 parliamentary election in Grimsby.

British Library
Correspondence of J.N. Fazakerley (Add MS.61937).

II Pollbooks

Grimsby: 1818 Printed by T. Squire
1820 T. Squire
1826 Skelton
1830 Skelton
1831 May: Skelton
1831 August: Skelton
1832 Skelton
1832 Palmer
1835 Skelton
1818 Poll for Alderman and Common Councilman (Squire - MSS in TP GPL).

Boston: 1818 Kelsey
1820 Kelsey
1826 Kelsey
1830 Noble J., Clarke J., and Bontoft W.
1831 MSS (in BAO)
1832 Bontoft
1835 Bontoft

Lindsey: 1832 Brooke & Sons.

III. Printer's Proofs

Skelton Proof Books: These cover the years 1824 - 1861 and are the proof books of the largest local printer of the time. They are a singular and rich source of information relating to the political, religious, social, and business life of the town. Found in GPL.
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IV. Contemporary Printed Sources

Articles:
- Acton J (1832) Address to the Freemen and Inhabitants of Grimsby (GPL).

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- Lincolnshire Directory, 1842. White W.
- UK First Annual Trades Union Directory, 1861 (Pamphlet in Birmingham Public Library).

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- 1801; 1811; 1821; 1831; 1841.

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- 1835 Appendix to First Report of Municipal Corporation Commissioners, Vol. II. R.1835 II.
- 1845 Minutes of Evidence of Tidal Harbours Commission.
- 1834 Report of Commissioners on the Poor Laws, Appendix A, part II.
- 1810 Report of Ralph Dodd, engineer, to MPs, Mayor, and Corporation on Improvement of Port and Harbour. GPL.
- 1817 First Report of the Committee of the National Sunday School, Great Grimsby. 1817. GPL.
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Chamberlains' Accounts (1825 - 1831). Abstracts. GPL.

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