Print and Politics in the East Midlands Constituencies c.1790-1832

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Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2018

Abstract

This thesis is an examination of printed political ephemera, produced and distributed during election canvasses between 1790 and 1832. Previous studies have highlighted the popular, public nature of election rituals during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, although, to date, few have fully appreciated the level and range of printed literature produced during the course of canvassing. This thesis uses a broad range of printed and manuscript evidence including political ephemera, local newspapers, election receipts, and correspondences from borough and county elections, highlighting the level of work which went into orchestrating a canvass in the unreformed era, especially by candidates, their political agents, and printers.

The focus of this study is the borough and county constituencies of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Nottinghamshire, with particular emphasis on borough elections. Between 1790 and 1832, this region, along with the rest of the country, underwent profound social and political change, and so this thesis not only acts as an important test case for the operation of local political culture nationally, but also represents the first comprehensive study of printed electoral culture for the region.

The central premise of this thesis is fourfold. Firstly, it aims to reinstate the importance of printed canvasses to the study of political culture and electoral politics, which have often been seen as secondary to the local press. Secondly, it argues that, such was the fast paced nature of elections and electioneering that, in comparison to provincial newspapers, handbills, broadsides, songs and

ballads offered a much more versatile form of communication between candidates and voters. This thesis also re-examines the assumption that, for much of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, local elections were dominated by local concerns and personalities. Finally, this thesis considers the audience, reach, and reception of election canvasses, arguing that, although printed canvasses were not always designed with non-voters in mind, the public nature of print and other election rituals meant that they were much more inclusive than initially appears.

Acknowledgements

My first thanks go to my supervisors Professor John Beckett and Dr Richard Gaunt for the help and guidance they have given me throughout my PhD, as well as for reading and commenting on numerous draft chapters of my thesis.

I am grateful to the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire, *Midland History*, as well as the History Department and the School of Humanities at the University of Nottingham for various research and travel grants. I would also like to thank the staff of the archive offices and libraries I have visited during my research for their assistance. I am also grateful to Dr Philip Salmon for allowing me access to unpublished draft articles from the forthcoming *The History of Parliament Online: The House of Commons, 1832-68*.

Thanks must also go to friends I have made at the University of Nottingham, in particular my fellow doctoral students Emma Vosper and Alex Henry, whose friendship, support, and encouragement have made the past four years much more enjoyable than they might otherwise have been.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Ed and Viv, for their endless patience, love, and support. They have listened to more than their fair share about early nineteenth-century political culture, even when I am sure they would have preferred to hear about any other topic. I must also thank my late grandmother Jean Nicholson without whose initial encouragement, enthusiasm, and financial support this project would not have been possible.

Contents

<u>List of abbreviations</u>

CJ   *Commons Journal*

DC   *Derbyshire Courier and Chesterfield Gazette*

DCR   *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter*

DH   *Derby Herald*

DLSL   Derby Local Studies Library

DM   *Derby Mercury*

DRO   Derbyshire Record Office

Electionana Retfordiensis   *Electionana Retfordiensis. Containing a complete set of the papers published during the late contest for the borough of East Retford, carefully collected for the amusement of all parties* (Retford, 1825).

HC Deb   *House of Commons Debates*

HC Papers   *House of Commons Papers*

LA   Leicestershire Archives

LC   *Leicester Chronicle* (1810 onwards)

LH   *Leicester Herald*

LJ   *Leicester Journal*

NA	Nottinghamshire Archives
NG	*Nottingham Gazette*
NH	*Nottingham Herald*
NJ	*Nottingham Journal*
NLSL	Nottingham Local Studies Library
NNM	*Nottingham and Newark Mercury*
NR	*Nottingham Review*
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
Paper War	*Coke and Birch, the Paper War, carried on at the Nottingham Election, 1803, containing the whole of the Addresses, Songs, Squibs etc. circulated by the Contending Parties Including the Books of Accidents and Chances* (Nottingham, 1803).
TNA	The National Archives, Kew
TTS	*Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire*
UNMSC	University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections

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Chapter One

Introduction

Introduction

The year 1695 has been described as a 'watershed' for the growth of provincial printing, and the growth of local newspapers.[1] From this moment, there was a noticeable 'surge in printing', and the number and range of printed, political information and ephemera in the form of newspapers, broadsides, handbills, and satirical prints grew exponentially. From the end of the eighteenth century, alongside a wealth of public notices and advertisements, 'political propaganda emerged as an increasingly noticeable category of ephemera in the late eighteenth century.'[2] The aim of this first chapter is to set the thesis in context, providing an overview of the region, the relevant historiography, as well as a discussion of the sources used.

A number of studies have shown how the unenfranchised played an active role in elections of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and contests were popular, lively events, 'wavering between a public fair and a political riot'.[3] Print was a key part of any canvass, with large amounts of money being spent on printing and distributing handbills and addresses. This thesis will investigate the connection between print culture and electoral politics between 1790 and 1832, examining the extent to which people were able to access and participate in

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[1] H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855* (Manchester, 2000), 1.

[2] M. Twyman, 'Printed ephemera', in in M. F. Suarez and M. L. Turner (eds.), The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain vol. 5 (Cambridge, 2009), 78-9.

[3] J. Neuheiser, *Crown, Church and Constitution: Popular Conservatism in England, 1815-1867*, trans. by Jennifer Walcoff Neuheiser (Göttingen, 2016), 80; H.T. Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Basingstoke, 1994), 13-56.

political debate and discussion in the un-reformed parliamentary system, regardless of whether they were in the franchise or not.

Hannah Barker and David Vincent have shown the importance of printed canvasses in the Staffordshire borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme, highlighting the range and style of handbills printed between 1790 and 1832. More recently, Ian Maxted has focused on a range of ephemera produced for Devon election contests.[4] Rather than focusing on a single borough or county, this thesis takes a regional approach, examining the East Midland counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Nottinghamshire, and their respective borough constituencies.

The East Midlands provides an ideal location in which to set such a study since the region covers a range of different types of unreformed boroughs, representing a diverse electorate.[5] However, particular attention will be paid to the boroughs of Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham because, although 'the counties were increasing sites of contestation, the boroughs remained the fulcrum of political conflict throughout this period.'[6] Furthermore, rather than focusing solely on printed canvasses, this thesis will also consider the importance of the provincial press during election campaigns, providing reports

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[4] H. Barker and D. Vincent, *Language, Print and Electoral Politics, 1790-1832: Newcastle under- Lyme Broadsides* (Woodbridge, 1991); I. Maxted, 'Squibs, Songs, Addresses, and Speeches: Election Ephemera in Nineteenth-Century Devon', in D. Atkinson and S. Roud (eds), *Street Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century: Producers, Sellers, Consumers* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2017), 254- 277.

[5] See Table 1.1, page 10, for an overview of the different types of constituencies mentioned in this thesis.

[6] R.A. Gaunt, 'Vital Statistics', Review: The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1820-1832 (Cambridge, 2009, 7 volumes), edited by D. Fisher, *Parliamentary History*, 31 (2012), 460-80.

of speeches made by candidates, and building suspense in the run up to the start of canvassing, and the opening of the polls.

Context

Under the unreformed parliamentary system, there were a total of 245 English constituencies, divided into forty county seats and 203 borough seats. The remaining two boroughs were the university constituencies of Oxford and Cambridge.[7] The majority of constituencies returned two members each to the House of Commons. County franchise depended upon the forty-shilling freehold, where those who held freehold land valued at forty shillings or more per year were eligible to vote.[8] In borough constituencies, the franchise was more varied, with R.G. Thorne showing how constituencies depended on householder, freeman, scot and lot, corporation, burgage, or freeholder franchise. Some constituencies were a combination of these factors.

Fisher has estimated that the total borough electorate in 1832 was about 112,000, an increase of 29,000 (thirty-five per cent) from 1818. He argues that it was in larger boroughs, such as 'Leicester, Lancaster, Liverpool, London, York, Maldon, Newcastle, Bristol, Norwich, Nottingham, Worcester and Canterbury', where 'the most striking increases occurred'.[9] Poll books are often used to measure the size, composition, and partisanship of the electorate. O'Gorman has shown how, in some of the larger freemen boroughs, up to twenty-five per cent

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[7] R. G. Thorne (ed.), 'The Constituencies: Introductory Survey', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 2/4/2015]; M.S. Smith, 'Parliamentary Reform and the Electorate', in C. Williams (ed.), *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2004), 156.
[8] D.R. Fisher, 'Introductory Survey', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 21/02/2015].
[9] Fisher, 'Introductory Survey', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 28/07/2018].

of men were enfranchised.[10] James Vernon has noticed similarly high levels of enfranchisement in borough constituencies. In Boston, he calculated that in 1802, 25.1 per cent of all men were eligible to vote, whereas, in Lewes, the figure was even higher. Here, 46.3 per cent of men could vote during the same period.[11] Poll books, however, only record those who cast their vote. It was not uncommon to find electors voting twice in the same election, whilst others may have 'voted only once in their lives'.[12]

Rumours of a possible contest and candidates might emerge months ahead of voting, with speculations appearing in the press. However, parliaments could be dissolved with little prior warning, meaning that the nomination of candidates and elections were often hastily arranged, especially in the case of by-elections. As Chapter Three will show, local newspapers were vital in the initial stages of an election as they were often used to gauge the political feeling in a constituency, as well as assess the likely success of a potential candidate. Letters of invitation and notices of acceptance were often printed in the press, prior to the commencement of canvassing.[13]

Before 1872, and the introduction of the secret ballot, voting was open, and often lasted several days. In 1784, polling for the Westminster election lasted from 1st April to 17th May, after which a subsequent act of Parliament a year later

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[10] F. O'Gorman, 'The Unreformed Electorate of Hanoverian England: The Mid-Eighteenth Century to the Reform Act of 1832', *Social History*, 11 (1986), 35.
[11] J. Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture c.1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993), 33.
[12] O'Gorman, 'The Unreformed Electorate of Hanoverian England', 38.
[13] See Chapter Three, pages 123-25; Maxted, 'Squibs, Songs, Addresses, and Speeches', 260; Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xxix.
LJ, 12th May 1826; *LJ*, 19th May 1826; *LJ*, 26th May 1826.

restricted polling to a maximum of fifteen days, excluding Sundays.[14] During this time, candidates, their agents, and committee members attempted to win the support of voters. A personal canvass was often seen as the preferred method of reaching voters; however, as this thesis shall explore, candidates and their supporters attempted to reach voters in a variety of different ways. Speeches at the commencement or end of the day's canvassing were delivered at the hustings, and frequently appeared in print, either produced as handbills, or else re-printed in local newspapers.

Voters would often 'pledge' at least one of their two votes to a particular candidate in exchange for food, alcohol, or money. Charges of bribery were not uncommon, and at the time of the Reform Bill of 1832, several members of the Commons suggested that bribery was one of the main evils of the existing system.[15] J.M. Fewster has highlighted the apparent widespread bribery that went on in the pocket borough of Morpeth, Northumberland, suggesting that financial 'rewards' were especially important to many of the borough's poorer voters.[16] Such a view is at odds with claims made by, amongst others, Phillips and O'Gorman, who suggest that incidences of direct bribery were rare and had little overall sway on a voter's choice of candidate. Furthermore, O'Gorman has suggested that in large boroughs, 'few patrons had sufficient wealth to control relatively large electorates.'[17] The provision of entertainments, food and drink,

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[14] F. O'Gorman, 'Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies: The Social Meaning of Elections in England 1780-1860', *Past & Present*, 135 (1992), n.88.

[15] N. Gash, *Politics in the Age of Peel: a study in the technique of parliamentary representation, 1830-1850* (London, 1953), 122.

[16] J.M. Fewster, 'The Earls of Carlisle and Morpeth: A Turbulent Pocket Borough', *Northern History*, 51 (2014), 247.

[17] Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain*, 19; F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1989), 151-52; J.A. Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England: Plumpers, Splitters, and Straights* (Guilford, 1982), 77-80.

as well as travel and accommodation for out-voters was in many cases the greatest expense during an election, and memories of 'ruinously expensive' election contests often dissuaded potential candidates from running a campaign, or meant that they withdrew from the contest after informal polls had been conducted.[18]

Printers were relied upon to produce 'addresses, adverts, cards, pamphlets and letters' supporting candidates and issuing slurs and responses to opposing MPs.[19] The number of prints which could be in circulation during the course of one election campaign has been shown to be large. O'Gorman estimated that, by 1780, it was not uncommon for over 100 separate pieces of literature to be written, printed, and then distributed during the course of one election campaign. Similarly, Barker and Vincent showed that, in Newcastle-under-Lyme, it was possible that during an election, 'well in excess of 50,000 pieces of paper were distributed,' to a population of 4,500 in the 1790s. [20]

The value of this print is clear. Canvasses offer a unique insight into the intricacies of elections during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and, as one Leicester poll book commented, 'the squibs, songs, handbills, addresses, published during the conflict, will, in general, form ... the best history of [an election's] origin, progress, spirit, and conclusion'.[21] Taking this comment as its basis, this thesis will focus on printed political canvasses produced across the East Midlands between 1790 and 1832. It will examine the

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[18] Thorne (ed.), 'The Constituencies: Introductory Survey', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 5/09/2015].
[19] Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, 104.
[20] O'Gorman, 'Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies', 97; Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xxviii.
[21] *The Poll for electing two burgesses to represent the borough of Leicester in parliament. Commenced On Tuesday June 13th and closed in Friday June 23rd 1826* (Leicester, 1826), iii.

range and style of printed handbills and election addresses, and consider its role and importance during election campaigns across the region.

To date, much of the work on election canvasses has focused on handbills and broadsheets. In contrast, this thesis will also consider the importance of the local press, examining how newspapers and other forms of print worked in conjunction with each other over the course of an election campaign. Examining the role of newspapers also allows for a much more detailed analysis of the political issues and debates which mattered to both candidates and their constituents. Finally, although it has been argued that printed canvasses were 'an inclusive rather than an exclusive category of the political process', this thesis will show how, in many cases, this was not necessarily true.[22] Whilst it is clear that elections involved large numbers of people, from all levels of society, how far the majority of print specifically aimed to involve and include those not in the franchise is questionable. This thesis brings together ideas relating to both print culture and electoral politics of the unreformed era. It expands on and contributes to current historiographical debates of print and political culture, political language, and the political engagement of the unenfranchised.

The rest of this introductory chapter will explore the major themes and historiography raised in the rest of the thesis. The next section will outline the background of the East Midlands, explaining how it fits into the broader narrative of political culture during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is followed by a more in-depth examination of the ongoing debates surrounding the production and reception of the provincial press and ephemeral

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[22] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xxxvi.

literature, the structure of the unreformed electorate, class and gender, the key political issues which emerged during the period, as well as the role of Parliament in local politics of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The final section of this chapter will outline the sources and methods used in this study, as well as providing an outline of the subsequent chapters.

East Midlands

Between 1750 and 1800, the population of England grew by around fifty per cent, with the greatest growth being in the East Midlands, especially in and around Nottingham and Leicester.[23] In 1781, the combined total population of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Nottinghamshire was around 345,000. By 1801, this had grown to 431,998, rising to 659,578 by 1831.[24] Whilst no formal links between the counties existed, their informal links are clear, especially in terms of the flow of goods, capital, and information.[25] As shall be demonstrated in later chapters, newspapers circulated across the region, and evidence from poll books reveals how, in many East Midland constituencies, a large proportion of out-voters often lived in neighbouring counties.

Until 1832, the region sent a total of sixteen MPs to Parliament. In certain areas around the country, decades could pass before a county was contested. In Nottinghamshire, for instance, no contest took place in the county during the forty-two years between 1790 and 1832. Similarly, in Derbyshire, the only contest during this period took place in 1820.[26] However, there were many more

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[23] R. Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840: Government, Society and Culture* (Harlow, 1999), 12-15.
[24] J.V. Beckett, *The East Midlands From AD 1000* (Harlow, 1988), 3-5, 190-91, 354.
[25] J. Stobart, 'Regions, localities, and industrialisation: evidence from the East Midlands circa 1780-1840', *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 33 (2001), 1309-11.
[26] See Appendix for list of contested and uncontested elections.

'desperate' fights for both county and borough seats than polling records would suggest, and, as Chapter Two will show, even when no contest was expected, large quantities of election ephemera was still printed and distributed across constituencies.[27]

As Table 1.1 below demonstrates, the majority of boroughs in the East Midlands were freeman boroughs, granting voting rights to those who held the freedom of the town. Politics in Leicester was controlled by its Tory-Anglican corporation, 'a closed, irresponsible, and self-electing body', whilst Nottingham's corporation has been described as a 'Whig oligarchy'.[28] Elsewhere in the region, aristocratic influence was stronger. In Derby, for instance, the Cavendish family controlled one of the two borough seats, whilst the other was under the influence of the town's Whig corporation.[29] From the beginning of the nineteenth century, Newark was largely in the hands of the Dukes of Newcastle and the Middleton family.

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[27] R.W. Smith, 'Political Organization and Canvassing: Yorkshire Elections before the Reform Bill', *American Historical Review*, 74 (1969), 1538-9; Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain*, 42-3; Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England*, 72-3.
[28] A. Temple Patterson, *Radical Leicester: A History of Leicester 1780-1850* (Leicester, 1954), 21; M.I. Thomis, *Politics and Society in Nottingham* (Oxford, 1969), 2.
[29] J.V. Beckett, 'Parliament and the localities: the borough of Nottingham', *Parliamentary History*, 17 (1998), 73-4.

Table 1.1: List of East Midlands constituencies 1790-1832.[30]

Constituency	Right of election	Population	Estimated Electorate
Derbyshire	County franchise- 40 shilling freehold	1801:161,567 1811:183,349 1821:213,333 1831:237,181	c.3,000
Derby	Freeman	1801:10,832 1811:13,043 1821:17,423 1831:23,627	c.650
Leicestershire	County franchise- 40 shilling freehold	1801:130,081 1811:150,419 1821:174,571 1831:197,003	c.6,000
Leicester	Freeman and householders paying scot and lot	1801:16,953 1811:23,146 1821:30,125 1831:39,904	c.6,000
Nottinghamshire	County franchise- 40 shilling freehold	1801:140,350 1811:161,600 1821:186,873 1831:225,394	<3,000 before 1820 rising to c.6,000 by 1830
Nottingham	Freemen and freeholders	1801: 28,862 1811: 34,030 1821: 40,415 1831: 50,216	rising from about 2,000 to nearly 4,000
East Retford	Freemen	1801: 1,948 1811: 2,030 1821: 2,461 1831: 2,491	c.200 before 1830 2,000 in 1830*
Newark	Inhabitants paying scot and lot	1801: 6,730 1811: 7,236 1821: 8,084 1831: 9,957	c.1,000 before 1831 rising to c.1,700 thereafter

* In July 1830, the constituency boundary of East Retford was extended to include Bassetlaw. This extended the franchise to include 210 freeman and upwards of 2,000 freeholders.

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[30] Sources: Beckett, *The East Midlands From AD 1000*, 354-56. See also individual notes on constituencies on *HP Commons 1790- 1820* and *HP Commons 1820-1832*.

East Retford was also under the influence of the Newcastle family, but there was an understanding that one member should be chosen by Newcastle, whilst the other should be the choice of the freeman electors.[31] R.A. Preston has suggested that 'there were two faces' to the borough. Socially, he argued, East Retford 'mirrored the gentility of Cranford ... politically, it rivalled Eatanswill.'[32] Furthermore accusations of bribery and corruption during the 1826 election led to the East Retford Disenfranchisement Bill. Rather than disenfranchising the borough as had initially been proposed, the Bill, when finally passed in 1830, extended the franchise to include those freeholders in the hundred of Bassetlaw, extending the franchise from around 200 to 2,000.[33]

Like many areas with a rapidly expanding population, towns in the East Midlands presented a number of challenges to their corporations. Throughout the 1790s, riots and social unrest were common, with historians such as E.P. Thompson and Roger Wells suggesting that Nottingham in particular had a notorious reputation for radicalism and rioting, arguing that the situation was often so volatile the town often bordered on revolution.[34] Whilst such a view has been challenged in subsequent historiography, along with other areas across the country, the region was still particularly susceptible to instances of riotous

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[31] Beckett, 'Parliament and the localities: the borough of Nottingham', 75; R.A. Preston, 'East Retford: Last Days of a Rotten Borough', *TTS*, 78 (1974), 94; J.H. Moses, 'Elections and electioneering in the constituencies of Nottinghamshire, 1702-1832', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Nottingham, vol. 1, 1965), 351-53.

[32] Preston, 'East Retford: Last Days of a Rotten Borough', 94.

[33] S. Harratt and S. Farrell, 'East Retford', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 03/06/18].

[34] H.T. Dickinson, 'Popular Politics and Radical Ideas', in H.T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2002), 101-04; Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain*, 126-42; E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1968), 68-9; 495; 516-7; R.A.E. Wells, *Riot and Political Disaffection in Nottinghamshire in the Age of Revolutions* (Nottingham, 1984), 10, 37.

behaviour, with elections and other public events throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often ending in public disturbances.[35]

Print

Print has often been credited with opening up public debate and discussion. From the beginning of the eighteenth century, the number of provincial printers in operation grew rapidly, producing a vast range of print, including ephemera and newspapers. In 1700, no provincial newspaper is thought to have existed in England, although a year later both Norwich and Bristol had established papers of their own, with the East Midlands following soon after.

The British Book Trade Index lists William Ward as working as a Nottingham bookseller, printer and stationer in 1705, some five years before William Ayscough, described by W.J. Clarke as the 'pioneer printer of the town' and the first to set up a printing press.[36] In contrast, printing appears not to have started in Leicester until the 1730s, and the first newspaper was not published in the town until 1753, some thirty-four years after the first Derbyshire newspaper, the *Derby Postman*, and forty-three years after the first two newspapers were printed in Nottingham.[37] By 1770, over forty provincial papers existed across the country, and by the start of the nineteenth century, the local press newspaper had

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[35] J.V. Beckett, 'Radical Nottingham', in J.V. Beckett, P. Dixon, C.P. Griffin and K. Brand (eds.), A *Centenary History of Nottingham* (Manchester, 1997), 285-92; J.V. Beckett, 'Responses to War: Nottingham in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815', *Midland History*, 22 (1997), 71-5.

[36] M. Bell and J. Hinks, 'The English provincial book trade: evidence from the British book trade index', in Suarez and Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* vol. 5, 344; W.J. Clarke, *Early Nottingham Printers and Printing* (Nottingham, 1942), 12.

[37] Bell and Hinks, 'The English provincial book trade: evidence from the British book trade index', 344; J. Hinks, 'The History of the Book Trade in Leicester to c1850' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Loughborough, 2002); J.D. Andrews, The Derbyshire Newspaper Press 1720-1855 (University of Reading, M.A. thesis, 1950), 3.

established itself as an integral part of provincial life. By 1830, there were around 150 local newspapers across the country, with readers also having access to around fifty London newspapers.[38]

In the early historiography of the press, provincial newspapers were often ignored. Laprade makes no reference to the growth of the provincial press.[39] Aspinall, whilst making more of a concerted effort to investigate the importance of provincial newspapers still dismissed them as being largely reliant on the London papers for information. He also suggested that they had a much lower circulation than any of those papers from the capital.[40] From the 1960s onwards, this oversight began to be addressed, with Cranfield and Fraser being amongst the first to bring the importance of the provincial press to the forefront of discussion on political culture.[41]

Fraser's work tended to focus on an individual town and its papers, or even that of an individual paper. This method has several limitations, not least failing to understand the wide distribution networks that some newspapers achieved.[42] Although Cranfield took a broader approach than Fraser, he still failed to recognise the importance and influence of the provincial press. Echoing

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[38] C.Y. Ferdinand, 'Newspapers and the sale of books in the provinces', in Suarez and Turner (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Book In Britain* vol. 5, 444; R. Sweet, *The English Town, 1680-1840: Government, Society and Culture* (Harlow, 1999), 244.

[39] W. T. Laprade, 'The Power of the Press in the Eighteenth Century', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 27 (1928), 426-34.

[40] A. Aspinall, Politics and the Press c.1780-1850 (London, 1949), 350.

[41] G.A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760* (Oxford, 1962); D. Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester c.1790-1850s', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 42 (1966-7), 53-75; D. Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', *TTS*, 67 (1963), 46-65.

[42] Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester c.1790-1850s', 53-75; Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 46-65.

Aspinall, Cranfield claimed that many early examples were 'small, badly-printed and primitive.'[43]

The idea that provincial newspapers were the 'poor relations' of the more sophisticated London press has been reassessed by the works of Barker, Black, and Ferdinand.[44] By looking at what news provincial papers selected from the metropolitan press, and examining how widely they were distributed, it has been found some of the more successful provincial papers were beginning to develop their own identity politically, targeting specific audiences.[45] In doing so, this represents a clear break with the 'cut and paste' style of operation as described by Aspinall.

One major debate which surrounds the press and local politics is how far newspapers followed the views of their readers, as opposed to the extent to which the views of the audience were shaped by what they read. Several attempts have been made to address this issue, without any clear conclusion ever having being reached. The provincial press has been described as one of the 'main key[s] to public opinion outside of London.'[46] Barker argues that, by the 1780s, newspapers came to rival all other forms of political print.[47]

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[43] Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper*, v, 28-9, 117.
[44] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*; 112; J. Black, *The English press, 1621-1861* (Stroud, 2001); Ferdinand, 'Newspapers and the sale of books in the provinces', 434-47.
[45] A. Walker, 'The Development of the Provincial Press in England c.1780-1914', *Journalism Studies*, 7 (2006), 377; H. Barker, 'Catering for Provincial Tastes: Newspapers, Readership and Profit in Late Eighteenth Century England', *Historical Research*, 69 (1996), 42-61; Ferdinand, 'Newspapers and the sale of books in the provinces', 434-47; Harris, 'London Newspapers', 413-33.
[46] J.E. Bradley, 'Parliament, Print Culture and Petitioning in Late Eighteenth- Century England', *Parliamentary History*, 26 (2008), 99.
[47] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 127.

By the 1820s, Peter Jupp has estimated that there were 'probably in excess of two million' newspaper readers across the country, and the press became 'the principal medium in which to articulate and disseminate protests against the government, and played a crucial role in the political education and politicisation of the English people.'[48] Whilst the importance of the press should not be underestimated, it is clear that it did not operate in isolation from these other types of prints and instead existed alongside them. Furthermore, although the increase in the number of political pamphlets, books, and broadsides certainly gave people a greater opportunity to engage in political discussion, whether this meant that they did so, needs to be examined in greater detail.

Measuring literacy can be problematic, although the majority of historians agree that, between 1650 and 1850, both male and female literacy increased. David Cressy, for instance, has estimated that in 1650, thirty per cent of men were literate, compared to fifteen per cent of women. By 1714, around forty-five per cent of men and twenty-five per cent of women were literate, rising to sixty-seven per cent and fifty per cent by 1840 respectively.[49] Whilst it is generally accepted that literacy was higher in urban areas, Carolyn Steedman has highlighted that, by the early nineteenth century, even relatively poor rural workers had high levels of literacy, with reading forming an 'everyday' part of their lives.[50] This is important for a study such as this, as it shows that even those

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[48] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 127; P. Jupp, *The Governing of Britain 1688-1848: The Executive, Parliament and the People* (London, 2006), 206-7.

[49] G. Sutherland, 'Education', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950* vol. 3: *Social Agencies and Institutions* (Cambridge, 1990), 122; J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997),167-8; D. Cressy, *Literacy and the social order: reading and writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980), 177; Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840*, 243.

[50] C. Steedman, *An Everyday Life of the English Working Class: Work, Self and Sociability in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2014), 41.

unable to vote, would still in many cases have been able to read. Nevertheless, this does not mean that just because a person was able to read meant that they did so.

Historians have often been quick to accept the view that the working classes bought and read newspapers, political literature, and ephemera. Marcus Wood has identified two distinct 'waves' in the output of radical literature. In the early 1790s, inspired by the Revolution in France, support for radicalism was strong, prompting an outpouring of radical literature which lasted until 'the notorious "Treason Trials" of 1794.'[51] Both Wood and E.P. Thompson have demonstrated the 'phenomenal' success of radical literature, such as Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, with Paine himself claiming that 'every cutler' in Sheffield had a copy.[52] However, since much of the evidence for the book's success comes directly from Paine, or those who sought to over exaggerate the threat posed by radical literature, the popularity of *Rights of Man*, and similar publications, amongst members of the working classes must be questioned. Prompted by 'the massive human and economic cost' of the French Wars, and helped by the work of corresponding societies, the second 'wave' in radical publishing lasted from 1815 to 1822, incorporating the work of radicals such as William Cobbett and Richard Carlile. This second wave, Wood has claimed, was able to 're-establish mass appeal', and reach out to growing industrial areas.[53]

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[51] M. Wood, 'Radical Publishing', in Suarez and Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book In Britain* vol. 5, 834-36.
[52] Wood, 'Radical Publishing', 838; Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 117-8.
[53] Wood, 'Radical Publishing', 836.

On the other hand, H.T. Dickinson has questioned the success and influence of radical print, in particular claiming that publications of the London Corresponding Society were only able to sell around half of the total number of their publications.[54] Dickinson also suggested that the number of radical newspapers advocating reform were lower than has previously been imagined. Whilst provincial papers such as the *Leicester Herald*, *Derby Mercury*, and the *Newark Herald* promoted the cause of parliamentary reform, radical newspapers 'were never in the majority', with no more than eight in existence during the 1790s. Furthermore, war with France heightened conservative fears of a revolution in England, prompting the growth of anti-radical literature and increasing support for popular conservatism. In towns such as Manchester, Leicester, and Newcastle, where both radical and loyalist papers were printed, it was generally the latter which was the more successful.[55]

Of those radical publications which did sell, how many of them were read, or to what extent they influenced views, is also difficult to measure. If they were read, it is also unlikely that all of those who did so would have believed or agreed with the views contained in texts.[56] Questions relating to readership and reception are difficult to answer, often relying on sources such as diaries and letters. By looking at the way in which political events are described in the press, and whether or not different types of print adapted their message for different audiences may be one way in which these questions can be answered.

[54] Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain*, 240-1.
[55] Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain*, 240-1, 272.
[56] M.S. Smith, 'Anti-Radicalism and Popular Politics in an Age of Revolution', *Parliamentary History*, 24 (2005), 74.

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, newspapers and political texts were often read aloud, either via formal and informal subscriptions, reading clubs and societies, or else in inns and public houses. In particular, E.P. Thompson has highlighted 'thousands of *ad hoc* arrangements', where workers gathered together to buy and read radical newspapers and literature.[57] Similarly, Aytoun Ellis described a somewhat idealised picture of the eighteenth-century coffee houses where anyone, irrespective of rank or station, may 'take a free seat and ... engage his neighbour in conversation ... [or] hear the news read aloud.'[58]

Songs and ballads were 'one of the most accessible forms of print in early-modern England ... cheap and easily transported by street hawkers and chapmen.'[59] From the seventeenth century, songs began to address topical subjects, and became a way to voice grievances, or to spread news and ideas. Political issues were, therefore, ideally suited to this style of printing. As the works of Roy Palmer and Robin Ganev have highlighted, subjects varied hugely, with war, crime, and daily life all providing inspiration.[60] 'Hard times, distress, [and] unemployment… were perennial themes in ballads', with subjects covering a wide range of contemporary issues such as Luddism and enclosure.[61] Despite the varied nature of political songs and ballads, James Vernon and

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[57] Thompson, *The Making of the Working Class*, 788-89; B. Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (London, 2005).

[58] A. Ellis, *The Penny Universities: A History of the Coffee-Houses* (London, 1956), xv.

[59] B. Crosbie, 'Half-Penny Ballads and the Soundscape of Eighteenth Century Electioneering', *Publishing History*, 70 (2011), 9.

[60] R. Palmer, *The Sound of History: Songs and Social Comment* (Oxford, 1988); R. Ganev, *Songs of Protest, Songs of Love* (Manchester, 2009).

[61] Palmer, *The Sound of History*, 236.

Barbara Crosbie have claimed that songs and the spoken word have been overlooked as means of 'reporting current affairs' by political historians.[62]

Frank O'Gorman has shown how, alongside 'fireworks, bonfires, banners and effigies,' music, songs, and ballads formed a distinctive and popular part of the election ritual, and studies have highlighted the range and style of election songs and ballads.[63] Whilst some were written as part of a candidate's formal canvass, designed to be sung either as part of their entrance or chairing parade, or else as during celebratory dinners at the end of a successful canvass, others were written by ballad singers, hoping to profit from the popularity of the election.[64] In particular, Barker and Vincent have shown how many election songs used tunes which were initially popularised in the London theatres, later adapted for political propaganda, 'directed towards the entire community'. They argue that, unlike the majority of other forms of print, election songs had no fixed form, existing in print, as well as in the minds of the people who sang them.[65]

Despite the growth and development of the provincial press, handbills and broadsides continued to provide audiences access to political information, debates, and ideas. During an election canvass, it was important to issue information as quickly as possible, and print was one of the primary ways in which candidates were able to address voters and non-voters in the run up to the

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[62] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, 117; Crosbie, 'Half-Penny Ballads and the Soundscape of Eighteenth Century Electioneering', 9.
[63] O'Gorman, 'Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies', 94-96.
[64] Crosbie, 'Half-Penny Ballads and the Soundscape of Eighteenth Century Electioneering', 9-31; B. Patton, 'Party political broadcasts in nineteenth century Nottingham', *Bulletin of Local History: East Midland region,* 19 (1984), 23-42; W.F. Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse: Nottingham 1789-1850' (Queen's University Belfast, Ph.D. thesis, 1983); Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*; R.A. Gaunt, 'Cheering the Member: Gladstone Election Songs at Newark', *TTS*, 114 (2010), 159-166.
[65] H. Barker and D. Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics, 1790-1832: Newcastle- under- Lyme Broadsides* (Woodbridge, 2001), xxxv.

poll's opening. However, despite their obvious importance, printed canvasses remain one of the most neglected of all sources of electoral history.[66]

Politics

Any work on parliamentary politics for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is greatly indebted to the work of Lewis Namier. Prior to Namier, British parliamentary history for this period had failed to attract much attention from historians. It was only *The Unreformed House of Commons* by Edward and Annie Porritt which made any attempt to address Parliament during the eighteenth century.[67] Many other early studies had been largely restricted to biographies of leading politicians, the majority of which resembled hagiography in reverence of their subjects. There were limited efforts during the late eighteenth century to collate collective biographies, although much of this work was largely conducted by 'diligent antiquaries' and the purpose of their projects was not always clear.[68] Moreover, as these works focused on the lives of the key political figures in the Houses, there was little focus on the influence of the press, or the way in which the public gained access to political ideas and information.

The method of collective biography, or prosopography, was developed by Namier. Whilst acknowledging the usefulness of biographies of key political figures, he argued that, by taking a single Member or constituency, 'one touches

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[66] F. O'Gorman, 'Coventry Electoral Broadsides, 1780', *Yale University Library Gazette*, 67 (1993), 161.

[67] J. Brooke, 'Namier and Namierism', *History and Theory*, 3 (1964), 334; E. and A. Porritt, *The Unreformed House of Commons: Parliamentary Representation Before 1832* 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1903).

[68] L. Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited* (London, 1981), 50-1.

merely the outskirts of political life.' In order fully to appreciate political history, Namier believed it was necessary to '[write] the history of a crowd.'[69] It was his *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, which first made use of this method.

The Structure of Politics focused on the history of the 'unnamed' crowd who, despite their apparent anonymity, nevertheless played an indispensable part in political life during the eighteenth century.[70] By looking at the crowd, Namier was able to ask questions regarding who went into politics and why. He was also able to examine Members' social and religious backgrounds. In doing so, Namier believed, it was possible to recreate the atmosphere in which politicians lived and worked, and 'rescue' eighteenth-century political history from those memoir and letter writers who aimed to amuse, rather than inform.[71] Namier's influence on parliamentary history is most clearly illustrated in the *History of Parliament*, a series begun by Namier himself, and one which he saw as a continuation of his work.[72]

Critics have pointed to the rather 'old fashioned ... prosopographical approach of *The History of Parliament* so inspired by Namier, and argued that the work 'does not include any kind of political narrative or chronological record of parliamentary activity', rather acting as 'a work of reference' for others to 'mine'.[73] By concentrating on providing 'a survey' of those who served in

[69] L. Namier, *Crossroads of Power: Essays on Eighteenth Century* (Freeport, 1962), 1-5.
[70] D.A. Winstanley, Review: The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III, by L. Namier, *English Historical Review*, 44 (1929), 657.
[71] Brooke, 'Namier and Namierism', 335; D. Cannadine, 'The History of Parliament: Past, Present-and Future?' *Parliamentary History*, 26 (2007), 369-70.
[72] Brooke, 'Namier and Namierism', 337.
[73] R. Saunders, Review: *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1820-1832* (Cambridge, 2009, 7 volumes), edited by D. Fisher, *English Historical Review*, 126 (2011) 1478-89; Gaunt, 'Vital Statistics', 479; J. Parry, Review: *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1820-1832* (Cambridge, 2009, 7 volumes), edited by D. Fisher,

Parliament, and details of constituencies, the *History of Parliament* does not always acknowledge the work that went into an election campaign, and the work of those involved in orchestrating a successful canvass. In particular, there is only limited reference to the importance of print during election campaigns.

Nevertheless, interest in Parliament's role in the politics of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has continued to grow. With increased work on the constituencies taking place, key areas identified include, the size and composition of the electorate, the influence that patrons had in the constituencies, and supposed corruption in the unreformed electoral system.

As seen, in many constituencies, the electorate was arguably more extensive than has been imagined, something which was especially true in large constituencies such as Leicester and Nottingham. Who voters were has only recently come to be studied in any great detail. Phillips, O'Gorman, and Vernon classified voters under six occupational headings: gentlemen, professionals and respectables; manufacturers and merchants; retailers; skilled craftsmen; skilled or semi-skilled labourers; and finally those occupations connected to agriculture. Their conclusions show that electoral power lay not with the gentry or elite, but instead with artisans, merchants, and skilled workers. In Leicester and Nottingham, for instance, O'Gorman has shown that over half of the electorate in both boroughs were skilled craftsmen, a significant proportion of whom would have been framework knitters.[74]

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http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/945 [accessed 03/06/18]; J. Peacey, Review: The History of Parliament Online, http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/1267 [accessed 03/06/18].

[74] Vernon, *Politics and the People,* 33-5; Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England,* 182; O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 201, 206; Thomis, *Politics and Society in Nottingham*, 143.

A significant proportion of poll book analysis, especially the work of O'Gorman, Vernon, and Phillips, has been based around 'the socio-economic categorisation of voters'.[75] As Martin Hewitt has argued, for much of the nineteenth century, 'class was not only the single most important form of social categorization, but also the bedrock of understandings of political and social change.'[76] Similarly, as Chapter Five will show, political and electoral language was often bound up in notions of class, with candidates and newspaper editors frequently addressing audiences on the basis of class.

Historians have long grappled with notions of class.[77] In *The Making of the English Working Class*, E.P. Thompson argued that, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a growing working class identity, and that, by 1830, the experiences of the Industrial Revolution, popular radicalism, and the struggle between 'Old Corruption and Reform', meant that it was 'possible to speak in a new way on working peoples' consciousness and their predicament as a class.'[78] Such a view has subsequently been challenged. Whilst references to the 'lower' and 'upper' classes emerged between the 1740s and 1770s, historians such as Dror Wahrman and Patrick Joyce have questioned the extent to which class consciousness existed during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[79]

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[75] Vernon, *Politics and the People,* 33-5; Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England,* 182; O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 201, 206; Z. Dyndor, 'The Political Culture of Elections in Northampton, 1768-1868' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Northampton, 2010), 7.

[76] M. Hewitt, 'Class and the Classes', in C. Williams (ed.), *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2004), 305.

[77] See J. Thompson 'After the Fall: Class and Political Language in Britain 1780-1900', *The Historical Journal*, 39 (1996), 785-806 for a historiographical review of the subject.

[78] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 781.

[79] P. Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), 652-55; P. Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the question of class 1848-1914* (Cambridge, 1991), 1-23;

Language of class has also attracted considerable interest, and for many, language was a source of identity. Both Gareth Stedman Jones and Olivia Smith have shown how class and language were intrinsically linked, with Smith arguing that 'late eighteenth century theories of language were centrally and explicitly concerned with class division.' Both Stedman Jones and Smith have paid particular attention to the 'formal' political language of the written word, an approach which has sometimes been seen as short-sighted, often ignoring the vast range of visual and ephemeral political print in circulation during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[80]

More recently, scholarship on political culture, language, and class, has taken a broader view. Patrick Joyce argues that language was an essential component of culture, incorporating verbal, non-verbal, written, and visual cultures. Similarly, in his examination of political culture, Vernon also considers the politics of sight, sound, and the spoken word, especially during election campaigns. Vernon suggests that, until the Reform Bill of 1832, 'a rich texture of oral, visual, and printed forms' of political communication meant that politics was an inclusive rather than exclusive process.[81]

Studies of language and class often incorporate ideas relating to gender. Traditionally, 'political historiography of the nineteenth century found no place for women's or gender history.'[82] Since the 1970s, and the growing attention paid to oral and visual communication, there has been increasing emphasis on

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[80] O. Smith, *The politics of language: 1791-1819* (Oxford, 1984); G. Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English working class history 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983); Thompson 'After the Fall: Class and Political Language in Britain 1780-1900', 796.
[81] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, 159, 333.
[82] S. Richardson, 'Politics and Gender', in Williams (ed.), *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 174-188.

the extent to which women were involved in political life prior to the campaigns for female suffrage of the early twentieth century.[83] In her study of election handbills, Anna Clark has shown how political literature was often used to reinforce ideas of class and gender.[84] Other studies have documented the way certain women from elite families played an active, public role in election campaigns, often canvassing on behalf of family interests.[85] However, such roles seem to have been the exception, rather than the rule, and whilst many elite and middle-class women took an active interest in politics, this was often dependant on local connections and kinship networks, rather than 'visible national public arenas.'[86]

Whilst several studies have focused on the role played by elite and middle-class women, it is important also to consider the extent to which working-class women were able to be involved in political and electoral culture.[87] In showing how visual and aural culture meant that working-class men could participate in

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[83] See, for instance, S. Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 2013); C. Parolin, 'The "She-Champion of Impiety": A Case Study of Female Radicalism', in M.T. Davis, and P.A., Pickering (eds), *Unrespectable Radicals?: Popular Politics in the Age of Reform* (Ashgate, 2008), 185-99.

[84] A. Clark, 'Class, Gender and British Elections, 1794-1818', in M.T. Davis and P.A. Pickering (eds), *Unrespecting Radicals? Popular Politics in the Age of Reform* (Aldershot, 2008), 107-24.

[85] J. Lewis, '1784 and All That: Aristocratic Women and Electoral Politics', in A. Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege and Power* (Stanford, 2001), 89-122; J. Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism: Gender, Class and Politics in Georgian Britain* (London, 2003); Dyndor, 'The Political Culture of Elections in Northampton, 1768-1868', 145-54; E. Chalus, 'Kisses for Votes? The Kiss and Corruption in Eighteenth-Century English Elections', in K. Harvey (ed.), *The Kiss in History* (Manchester, 2005), 122-47. One noticeable example of an elite woman's involvement in public political canvassing is the example of Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire in the 1784 Westminster election.

[86] S. Richardson, '"Well-neighboured houses": the political networks of elite women, 1780-1860', in K. Gleadle and S. Richardson, (eds), *Women in British politics, 1760-1860: the power of the petticoat* (Basingstoke, 2000), 56.

[87] Dyndor, 'The Political Culture of Elections in Northampton, 1768-1868', 144-79; Z. Dyndor, 'Widows, Wives and Witnesses: Women and their Involvement in the 1768 Northampton Borough Parliamentary Election', *Parliamentary History*, 30 (2011), 309-23. See also A. Clark *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Classes* (London, 1995).

political discussion, Vernon has shown how women too would also have had access to these ideas and debates.[88]

It is impossible to provide any meaningful discussion of electoral politics eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries without some consideration as to the role of party. In *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, Namier rejected the Whiggish interpretation of a two party rivalry between the Whigs and the Tories.[89] Since the 1960s and 1970s, however, the Namierite approach has come under increasing criticism. John Brewer and H. T. Dickinson, for instance, have shown that Namier was almost 'wilfully blind,' to the influence that political ideas and ideology had on the politicians of the eighteenth century, and it is only in recent years that 'the importance of the role played by parties and political principles has been reinstated by historians.'[90]

In the context of this thesis, the role of party is important for two main reasons. Firstly, as O'Gorman has argued, the outcome of an election was often dictated by party politics, both in the choice of candidates, the character of the campaign, and the political ideas and debates on which the canvass was hinged. Secondly, parties were responsible for bringing knowledge and awareness of 'their respective principles and ideologies, programmes and policies and, indeed, their

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[88] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, 249.
[89] P. Thomas, Review: *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, by L. Namier, http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/32a [accessed 13/06/2018]; L. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (London,1929); J. Brooke, 'Namier and Namierism', *History and Theory*, 3 (1964), 335; D. Cannadine, 'The History of Parliament: Past, Present- and Future?', *Parliamentary History*, 26 (2007), 369-70.
[90] Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain*, 2; S.M. Lee, 'Parliament, Parties and Elections (1760-1815)', in H.T. Dickinson (ed.), A *Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2002), 73.

contrasting party histories and mythologies' to those both in and out of the electorate.[91]

The extent to which political issues were dominated by political parties has been the source of contention. Historians such as I.R. Christie, J. Derry, and J.C.D. Clark, have argued that before the 1820s, the role of party was limited, with Clarke suggesting that issues such as war, the abolition of slavery, Catholic emancipation, and parliamentary reform 'cut across government and opposition alike'.[92] Such a view has since been challenged, and others including S.M. Lee and O'Gorman have suggested that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, party labels of Whig and Tory 'were beginning to enjoy wider currency', and during the general election of 1807, the Tories were seen as the 'defenders of court, church and established institutions', whilst the Whigs were 'advocates of civil and religious liberty'.[93]

Between 1790 and 1832, a number of social, religious, and political issues dominated political and electoral debate in the East Midlands. During the 1790s and early 1800s, along with much of the country, it was the fear of invasion, and the downturn in economic fortunes at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which came to dominate public discussion. Once peace with France was declared in 1815, the question of Catholic emancipation, the Corn Laws and the Reform Movement were amongst the most pressing concerns. Chapter Four will question to what extent these ideas became polarized, whilst Chapter Five will

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[91] F. O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1832*, Second Edition (London, 2016), 293.
[92] J.C.D. Clark, 'A General Theory of Party, Opposition and Government, 1688-1832', *Historical Journal*, 23 (1980), 309-11; O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, 289.
[93] O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, 287-95; Lee, 'Parliament, Parties and Elections (1760-1815)', 69-79.

show how far candidates and their agents attempted to appeal to audiences on the basis of partisanship.

As Phillips has explained, in the unreformed era, 'a major component of "partisan behaviour"... was nothing more than politically coherent behaviour', and that the two-vote system meant that there were a number of different ways a voter was able to show his support at the polls. In constituencies where two candidates of the same party was standing for election, a voter could cast a straight vote, using both votes for the same party. Alternatively, he could split his vote for a candidate from each party, or else use only one vote to plump for just one candidate.[94]

Jupp has suggested that voters 'favoured candidates with connections with their constituency', and those who would represent their interests both in and out of Parliament. Furthermore, 'most MPs were either Whigs or Tories', although a few 'fell into a number of other categories', determined either by their own politics, or their constituents.[95] Print was an essential part of cultivating a borough, and a way of establishing and maintaining a relationship with voters, not only emphasising their attachment to the constituency, but also highlighting their political views. Handbills also had a more practical use in informing voters of when and where the polls would be open, as well as relaying the results at the end of each days' polling.

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[94] Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England*, 20.
[95] Jupp, *The Governing of Britain 1688-1848*, 86-7.

Sources and Methodology

This thesis has used a broad range of manuscript and printed sources from across the East Midlands including newspapers, printed political ephemera, election expenses, and correspondences. It is hoped that by covering as extensive a range of sources as possible, this has provided a more rounded picture of political culture and electioneering across a region in the unreformed era.

Newspapers

As has already been made clear, newspapers were a central feature of urban life during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, giving a unique, detailed insight into the views and opinions of local people, personal and business advertisements, as well as providing reports on local events.

This thesis has used as extensive a range of papers from across the East Midlands as possible, covering a broad range of political opinions.[96] Despite this, some papers have been used more extensively than others. In common with local papers across the country, several publications in the East Midlands were short lived, remaining in print for only a few years, or, in the case of the *Derbyshire Chronicle and Universal Weekly Advertiser* and the *Newark Observer*, a matter of months. On the other hand, papers such as the *Nottingham Review* and the *Derby Mercury* enjoyed much more success, remaining in print for decades. These papers allow for a much greater level of analysis than those for which only a few editions exist, and give a much better picture of the development of

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[96] See Table 3.1, pages 109-110 for an outline of the provincial newspapers which form part of this study.

political thought across time. Furthermore, as the work of Derek Fraser, John Hinks, and Maureen Bell has highlighted, certain towns had a much more active printing and newspaper industry than others.[97] Moreover, whilst at least two newspapers were printed in Newark between 1790 and 1832, these were both short lived ventures. Instead, small towns such as Newark and East Retford would have relied on the news from Nottingham and other surrounding towns such as Stamford and Doncaster.[98]

Covering as extensive a range of papers as possible has meant that it has been necessary to use a sampling method. This thesis centres on the relatively short period of time immediately before, during, and after an election canvass. To this end, only newspapers printed over the month of an election were consulted. However, there are a number of pitfalls of such a system.

Focusing specifically on issues which appeared over the course of an election canvass means that political issues such as Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform are highlighted to a much greater degree than perhaps they otherwise would be. The Septennial Act in 1716 increased the length of time that Parliament could sit without an election to a maximum of seven years, thus ending the 'frenetic frequency' of elections earlier in the century.[99] However, from the 1790s, the number of elections taking place across the country increased, averaging one every four years. Between 1802 and 1831 there was a

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[97] Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 44-64; Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester c.1790-1850s', 81-104; Hinks and Bell, 'The English provincial book trade: evidence from the British book trade index', 344-47; J. Hinks, 'The History of the Book Trade in Leicester to c1850' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Loughborough, 2002).

[98] NA, DD/1104/1 Account book of J.S. Piercy of Retford 1823-1850.

[99] G. Holmes, *British Politics in The Age of Anne* (London, 1987), 218; C. Jackson, 'The Rage of Parliaments: The House of Commons, 1690-1715', *The Historical Journal*, 48 (2005), 568-7.

sharp increase in the number of contested elections seen, with nine taking place between these years, a rate which almost reached levels seen during the years of the 'first age of Party.'[100] Nevertheless, by focusing solely on newspapers printed during both general and by-elections (contested or not), there are times when there is a gap of more than six years between editions used, meaning that particular political issues are overlooked. On the other hand, in some instances, frequent by-elections meant that in some constituencies, less than a year passed between contests.

Whilst the provincial press has been a key feature of this thesis, occasionally national newspapers have also been used. As seen above, until the mid-nineteenth century, the provincial press was in many ways reliant on the London papers for much of their news. Therefore, papers such as the *Star and Evening Advertiser* and *The Republican* have been used by way of a comparison to provincial publications.

In recent years, the number of newspapers which have been digitized has increased thanks to the work of resources such as *19th Century British Library Newspapers* and *British Newspapers 1600-1900*. However, as James Mussell has outlined, there are a number of limitations associated with these online records. He argues that, in order to use these resources effectively, it is necessary to understand the way in which they differ from printed versions. Similarly, whilst enabling records to be 'searchable (and cross-searchable), digitization has transformed ... the study of the press', these searches 'will never be exhaustive.' Furthermore, Mussell argues, the selection of newspapers which have so far

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[100] O'Gorman, 'The Unreformed Electorate of Hanoverian England', 35.

been catalogued and digitized is highly uneven, often dependant on the particular criteria of individual digitization projects.[101]

Out of all the provincial newspapers used as part of this project, only two appear as digital editions, and in the case of the *Leicester Journal*, only volumes from January 1827 have been digitized. Therefore, out of a total of fourteen borough elections which took place in Leicester between 1790 and 1832, just three are covered by *19th Century British Library Newspapers*.[102] Therefore, the vast majority of newspapers used as part of this study are original or microfiche copies. However, these too have their limitations, not least because in some instances certain editions have not survived, or are too badly damaged to be read.

Election Ephemera

As with the provincial press, this study aimed to take as inclusive an approach to election literature and ephemera as possible. To that end, election handbills, broadsides, pamphlets, songs, and ballads have all been consulted during this research. Definitions of these prints often vary in the historiography, a discussion of which is provided in Chapter Two.[103]

In common with local newspapers, the availability of election literature varies between constituencies, with some areas having a much more complete collection than others. Similarly, some elections are much better served than

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[101] J. Mussell, 'Digitization', in A. King, A. Easley, and J. Morton (eds), *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers* (Oxford, 2016), 17-28.
[102] The other provincial newspaper studied here which has been digitized is the *Derby Mercury*. Whilst the *Mercury* first appeared in print in March 1732, the earliest edition to be digitized dates from January 1800.
[103] See Chapter Two, pages 42-48.

others. On the whole, borough constituencies have the more extensive collection of printed ephemera, with Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham having a larger number of handbills in comparison to other areas in the region. In particular, sources for East Retford are particularly scarce, with the only substantial collection of addresses to have survived being part of a collection of handbills from 1825 produced 'in consequence of the report that a dissolution of Parliament was about to take place'.[104] Why so few election handbills from East Retford have survived is not immediately clear. Whilst not focusing specifically on election ephemera, J.H. Moses reported a similar lack of evidence for elections in the borough.[105]

Why some elections have a more complete selection of canvasses than others may be down to the way in which handbills were displayed and distributed. As Chapter Two shows, in some instances, handbills were seen as temporary, relevant only for the period of canvassing and 'undeserving of any lasting memorial'.[106] This perhaps goes some way to explaining why there is little evidence to suggest that handbills composed in East Retford in 1825 were not reprinted for the borough election a year later. Given the value of paper in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it is likely that these, along with many other examples, would have been reused or resold as scrap paper.[107] Where collections do exist, in some instances they are in too fragile a condition to be

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[104] *Electionana Retfordiensis. Containing a complete set of the papers published during the late contest for the borough of East Retford, carefully collected for the amusement of all parties* (Retford, 1825).
[105] J.H. Moses, 'Elections and electioneering in the constituencies of Nottinghamshire, 1702-1832', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Nottingham, Volume 1, 1965), 351.
[106] *The Poll for electing two burgesses to represent the borough of Leicester in parliament 1826*, iii.
[107] Chapter Five, pages 229-31.

viewed with no digital copy available, and so have not formed part of this study.[108]

Once the polls had closed, it was not unusual for printers to gather all the canvasses which had been printed over the course of canvassing, publishing them as a collected volume. In the East Midlands, collected volumes survive for the Leicester election of 1826, Newark elections of 1790 and 1829, the Nottingham election of 1803, and, as mentioned above, the East Retford canvasses printed in anticipation of an election in 1825.[109] In instances where only a limited amount of printed election ephemera has survived, these collected volumes have been used in place of original prints. These too, however, have their limitations.

Collecting all those handbills, squibs, and addresses which were printed for contests would have posed a significant challenge to printers. Despite claiming to contain 'the whole of the addresses, songs, squibs, &c. circulated by the Contending Parties', not all prints were contained in the *Paper War* of 1803.[110] Similarly, in reference to the printed collection from 1825, Retford printer E.G. Woodhead claimed that, 'it was not without the earnest solicitation that the task of collecting the following papers was commenced, and the object has been accomplished, as far as circumstances would allow.' Woodhead states that,

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[108] This is in particular reference to the collection of Nottingham ephemera at the British Library- BL, 1888.c.18. 'A collection of addresses, handbills, posters, play-bills, squibs, &c., relating to elections, race-meetings, entertainments, &c., at Nottingham'.

[109] *Cockshaw's Edition The Poll for Electing two Burgesses to Represent the Borough of Leicester in Parliament Commenced on Tuesday, June 13th, and closed on Friday June 23rd, 1826* (Leicester, 1826); *Newark Complete Collection 1790*; *Particulars of Newark election* (Newark, 1829); *Report of the sayings and doings at the election for a Member of Parliament for the borough of Newark, March 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, 1829. From the Nottingham Review. To which is added, the concluding speeches, with some of the songs, &c.* (Nottingham, 1829); *Paper War*; *Electionana Retfordiensis.*

[110] *Paper War*; Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse: Nottingham 1789-1850', 61-2.

'apart from a few very immaterial papers', all of the canvasses were collected and reprinted.[111] As no printed copies from this election survive, which items were not contained in his collection is not known. Other limitations of printed collections include instances of where certain handbills or songs have been missed out of the printed collections, intentionally or otherwise. There are also often details missing off the reproductions including the name of the original printer or, in the case of songs, the tune to which they should be sung.[112]

Election expenses and correspondences

Much has been written about the huge cost of electioneering. However, comparatively little use has been made of these expenses in relation to the production and cost of election literature. Election receipts and lists of expenses exist for several elections and by-elections across the East Midlands, although only a handful specifically refer to the printing of election literature.[113] This thesis uses election receipts, accounts, and correspondences from the Leicestershire county election of 1789, the Leicester election of 1826, along with those from the Newark election of 1820 and the East Retford election of 1830. Election receipts and accounts are vital when looking at the production and distribution of election literature. Some give details as to payment to 'writers', whilst others highlight not only the volume of handbills and addresses ordered, but also the work that went into ensuring handbills and addresses were distributed as extensively across the constituency as possible. Using election

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[111] *Electionana Retfordiensis.*
[112] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse: Nottingham 1789-1850', 61-2.
[113] UNMSC Ne C 4524/6-4525/3 East Retford election receipts and accounts (1828-1830).

receipts, it is also possible to establish how much money was spent on printing and distributing this literature in comparison to other election expenses.

<u>Thesis outline</u>

The previous sections of this chapter have outlined the context of this thesis, the key areas of research, as well as providing a discussion of the historiography, and an outline of the sources and methods used. It is perhaps surprising that, to date, a comprehensive study of the electoral culture of the East Midlands has not been forthcoming, or that relatively little work on the extent to which the public were able to access and contribute to political print has taken place. This is all the more surprising when considering the political importance of the region during the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries, as well as the range and availability of sources which still survive. The remainder of this chapter outlines the way in which this thesis is structured, as well as the key areas to be addressed in each chapter.

Chapter Two provides a detailed discussion of the vast range of political ephemera printed as part of election canvasses across the East Midlands. It examines the range and style of print, as well as the work which went into the production and distribution of this literature, something which has so far been overlooked in the historiography. This chapter aims to demonstrate how the fast paced nature of eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century electioneering meant that speed was of the upmost importance when it came to printed canvasses.

Building on Chapter Two, the third chapter focuses on the provincial press. This chapter will re-examine Hannah Barker's suggestions that 'by the 1780s, newspapers came to rival all other forms of political print.'[114] Whilst this may have been true for extra-parliamentary campaigns, this chapter will argue that prior to 1855 the majority of provincial newspapers were printed weekly, and so their influence during election campaigns was limited, especially in comparison to the speed and adaptability of handbills. This chapter will examine the production and distribution of local newspapers, assessing to what extent they gained independence from the London press, developing their own political voice and agenda. Next, it will focus on the importance and role of the provincial press during election campaigns, demonstrating that it worked in tandem with other forms of printed ephemera. Finally, this chapter will examine the political agendas of papers, and how they came to be embroiled in political campaigns and debates.

There were a number of political issues and campaigns which emerged during the period 1790 to 1832. Chapter Four will consider the role and expectations of candidates, examining which issues candidates chose to emphasise in their election literature, thus helping to identify what was of the greatest interest and concern to constituents in the East Midlands. This chapter will examine both local and national issues, assessing to what extent, as argued by H.T. Dickinson and J.A. Phillips, that even into the nineteenth century, elections continued to be dominated by local issues and personalities.[115]

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[114] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 127.
[115] Dickinson, *The Politics of the People*, 49-50; J.A. Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill in the Boroughs* (Oxford, 1992), 5-6.

When examining print culture and literature, it is impossible to ignore the question of audience. Chapter Five will therefore first consider who the intended audience of election literature was. Previous studies have shown how printed canvasses were designed with the intention of being as inclusive as possible, appealing to those both in and out of the electorate. In contrast, this chapter will show how the majority of canvasses produced for elections in the East Midlands appealed specifically to voters rather than the wider public. More specifically, this chapter will show how, at times, candidates tailored their addresses to specific sectors of the electorate, appealing to voters on the basis of class, occupation or, occasionally, location.

On the other hand, it is clear that those who did not qualify to vote were not entirely excluded from the political process. This chapter will also show that, whilst handbills may have addressed a relatively narrow audience, this did not mean that others did not have access to political ideas and debate. In particular, the very public nature of print meant that, whilst its target audience may have been relatively narrow, this was not necessarily representative of who would have had access to it. Finally, this chapter will consider the impact of election literature, not only in influencing a voter's choice of candidate, but also in terms of the formation of political opinions.

Finally, Chapter Six will review the key findings from this study, and their implications for the state of knowledge of the subject. These shall be drawn together and presented with a view to showing that, during the period 1790-1832, the relationship between printed canvasses, the public, and candidates was much more complex than has previously been acknowledged.

Chapter Two

Print, Production and Distribution

Introduction

Election handbills have often been seen as secondary to the press, important for only a short period, 'consumed by their own intensity [and] perished with the excitement which gave them existence' once the polls had closed.[116] In 1826, it was claimed that the range and number of 'squibs, songs, handbills, [and] addresses' produced for the Leicester borough election 'were beyond all precedent', although 'the greater proportion of them were merely ephemeral and worthless, undeserving of any lasting memorial.'[117]

Leslie Shepard was one of the first to appreciate the range and value of what he termed 'street literature'. Whilst his work focused on the wide range of non-political chapbooks and ballads, there was some recognition of the value of election broadsides.[118] Frank O'Gorman has claimed that electoral broadsides of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are 'one of the most important, yet normally most neglected, of all sources of electoral history.' He suggests that it is their 'questionable political content… their extravagant language ... [and] puzzling local and personal references,' which have meant that, so far, little attention has been paid to the vast number of sources in existence.[119]

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[116] *The Poll for electing two burgesses to represent the borough of Leicester in parliament. Commenced On Tuesday June 13th and closed in Friday June 23rd 1826* (Leicester, 1826), iii.
[117] *The Poll for electing two burgesses to represent the borough of Leicester in parliament 1826*, iii.
[118] L. Shepard, *The History of Street Literature* (Newton Abbot, 1973), 5, 14, 39.
[119] F. O'Gorman, 'Coventry Electoral Broadsides, 1780', *Yale University Library Gazette*, 67 (1993), 160-61.

Separated into four main sections, this chapter aims to reinstate the importance of handbills and broadsides in the study of electoral and political culture. Elections prompted a huge range and style of literature, varying from formal addresses issued by candidates, to large posters designed to be publicly displayed. The first section will therefore consider the differences in style and form of election literature, outlining the role they occupied during canvassing.

The second part of this chapter focuses on the sound of elections, especially the power of oral and aural communication. Songs and speeches formed an integral part of canvassing, many of which were later reproduced as handbills and sold to members of the public. This section therefore examines the way in which candidates attempted to appeal to audiences through song, questioning the choice of lyrics and music used. The third section will show how, during the late eighteenth century, the range and style of printed ephemera grew. This in turn prompted candidates and their supporters to copy and parody new styles of print, using satire and humour to appeal to audiences, but also as a way to mock and ridicule their political rivals.

A candidate's chance at the polls depended on many things, not least large funds, an organised election committee, and an effective canvass. Organising and running a successful election campaign was highly complex, especially in larger constituencies, or those with a large number of voters, and required 'a central committee, a campaign manager, and election agents throughout the constituency'. In addition, it was vital that a candidate's election literature was written, printed, and distributed as quickly as possible, responding to the

rumours and gossip spread by their opponents. Such an operation would have required 'a legion' of writers, compositors, printers, 'postboys and runners'.[120]

The sheer scale of organisation which campaigns involved means that the role and business of print is highlighted to a much greater degree than at any other time. Elections, therefore, provide the ideal situation in which to study the production and distribution of print. The fourth and final section of this chapter will use election expenses and receipts to examine the way in which printed addresses were written, printed, and distributed around a constituency in the lead up to the poll's opening. Establishing the authorship of election literature is something which has often eluded historians. This chapter will therefore also consider who may have been responsible for writing printed canvasses.

Historians of the press have argued that, during the nineteenth century, local newspapers were becoming increasingly sophisticated, often outstripping all other forms of printed communication.[121] However, as Chapter Three will demonstrate, elections clearly posed particular challenges to candidates, agents, and printers. Therefore, newspapers alone could not be relied upon to deliver a successful canvass. In order to assess the extent to which the press superseded handbills, pamphlets, broadsides, and other forms of ephemera, Chapters Two and Three should be considered together.

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[120] R.W. Smith, 'Political Organization and Canvassing: Yorkshire Elections Before the Reform Bill', *American Historical Review*, 74 (1969), 1538.
[121] H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855* (Manchester, 2000), 127.

Handbills, Broadsheets, and Broadsides

Terminology used to describe handbills, broadsheets, and broadsides has often been used interchangeably, even when styles, sizes, and formats vary considerably. Between 1790 and 1832, single-sided handbills were by far the most common form of election canvass to appear throughout the period. Printed in a variety of styles, handbills included addresses from candidates, songs and ballads, satirical publications, mock playbills, and advertisements. Figure 2.1 is an example of a handbill, in this case a song, written as part of the Nottingham 1812 election in support of the Whig candidates John Smith and Lord Rancliffe.

FRIENDS of PEACE,

OR,

SMITH AND RANCLIFFE.

Come, rouse, ye Electors of this famous Town,
Give ear to the voice of fair Liberty's sound,
'Tis SMITH that invites you, and RANCLIFFE, to join
Your vote round the standard of liberty's shrine.

Chorus.

Friends of peace are our choice, & those Friends we'll maintain,
We always are ready,
Steady, boys steady,
To send them to Parliament again and again.

Let the sons of corruption their arts still employ,
To barter for lucre the rights we enjoy;
We will not be sold, neither will we decline,
Our votes to the true Friends of peace and mankind,

Friends of peace, &c.

Then join round the banners of RANCLIFFE & SMITH,
Support them ye freemen, the cause is your own;
They 'll always defend you, tho' dang'rous the way,
Then for RANCLIFFE & SMITH, huzza, boys, huzza!!

Friends of peace, &c.

Figure 2.1: DRO, D536/2/9/17/85 'Friends of Peace, or, Smith and Rancliffe' (1812).

Defining what is meant by a 'broadsheet' as opposed to a 'broadside' can be problematic, especially as, historically, both definitions were applied to similar types of print. Historians have used the terms interchangeably, and there appears to be little agreement on what the differences were.[122] Unlike handbills, which were generally single sided, broadsheets were often printed on both sides of the page, often folded to form a pamphlet. Reproduced below, Figures 2.2a and 2.2b show *The New Book of Chronicles*: *Chapter Second,* the second in a series of three pamphlets produced as part of the Nottingham election of 1812. As Figures 2.2a and 2.2b show, *The New Book of Chronicles*: *Chapter Second,* was a single sheet of paper, printed on both sides, then folded to form a pamphlet.[123]

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[122] O'Gorman, 'Coventry Electoral Broadsides, 1780', 160-70; H. Barker and D. Vincent, *Language, Print and Electoral Politics, 1790-1832: Newcastle-under- Lyme Broadsides* (Woodbridge, 1991), xv, xxvi-xlii; Shepard, *The History of Street Literature*; J. Barrell*, 'Exhibition extraordinary!!': radical broadsides of the mid 1790s* (Nottingham, 2001).
[123] DRO, D5366/2/9/17/80 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter Second*; DRO, D5366/2/9/17/82 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter First*; D5366/2/9/17/84 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter Third.*

NEW BOOK
OF
CHRONICLES.

CHAPTER SECOND.

AND on the morrow, when the appointed time was come, the MEN OF NOTTINGHAM, and the DANITES, and the RULERS, assembled together.

2 And John the son of Abel, and Peter the Physician, and Richard the son of his Father, offered themselves as their Spokesmen.

3 And on the day when the Sons of Freedom presented themselves before the Rulers, Daniel (as it is written of a great personage of old) came also among them.

4 And Daniel opened his mouth and said, GREAT IS THE GOLDEN CALF which I have set up.

2

5 And Richard the Higgler was pleased with the saying, and wished the people would bow down and worship it.

6 But they turned a deaf ear to his counsel.

7 And the hissings and groanings of the people were great, and waxed louder and louder, insomuch that he could not be heard.

8 Howbeit in this the loss was not great, because wisdom rarely proceeds from his mouth.

9 After these things were done, Richard opened his mouth, and attempted to speak, but the eyes of the multitude were upon him, and he was sore afraid, so that his speech failed him.

10 And when his Counsellor saw this, he had pity on him, and speechified in his behalf.

11 But John Bull, who was an eye-witness to these things, and knew full well,

"That Lawyers can with ease,
"Twist words and meanings as they please."

roared out with a loud voice, Away with this fellow; this Man of Wig shall not deceive us, neither shall he thrust this MAN OF WAR down our throats.

12 Now Peter the Physician, apprehending some individuals had contracted a foul disease, prepared a box of pills, some of which he administered unto Daniel.

13 But Daniel made many wry faces, and was very unwilling to swallow them.

3

14 Howbeit, his stomach was so foul, and his malady had become so obstinate, (for from the crown of the head to the sole of his feet, there is no soundness in him) that he could not digest them, and they operated the *wrong way*; and lo! his disease cleaveth unto him!

15 And many searching questions were put to Daniel, but he was speechless.

16 And many who saw that his trouble was more than he could bear, took pity on him, and cried, spare him! spare him! but they still held him in derision.

17 Peter had also prepared a dose for Daniel's CALF, but he answered not a word, for he found it was the wisest way to say nothing.

18 For he knew that if he opened his mouth his speech would betray him, as it had done before.

19 And Peter took the Man of Wig to task, and smote him hip and thigh, and he was inwardly sore.

20 And behold also a dose was mixed up for JOHN the Son of Abel, but when his case was examined, he was not only found fair to look upon, but sound in every part, and there was great shouting and rejoicing among the people.

21 And the MEN OF NOTTINGHAM were more pleased with him than they had ever been before, because they were more confirmed in their belief, that he was a real friend to *Peace*, and an enemy to *Corruption, War*, and *Bloodshed*.

Figure 2.2b: DRO, D5366/2/9/17/82 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter Second* **(1812).**

In contrast, broadsides were generally printed only on one side of the page. Larger in size than handbills, they were typically designed to be pinned or pasted up in public. Payments to billstickers appear in election receipts, suggesting that this type of print was relatively common.[124] However, in comparison to the volume of handbills which survive, only a relatively small number of election broadsides remain, most likely because, if pasted up in public, usually on walls or doors, they would have typically been whitewashed over, or other broadsides pasted over the top of them. One example (Figure 2.3) from the Newark election of 1829 has remnants of an adhesive on the back of the page, and is the only example from the East Midlands which bears any indication that it was once pasted up in public.[125]

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[124] UNMSC, Ne C 4523/5/1 Bill containing list of disbursements of William Broughton payment of £4 10s. for 'Bill Stickers Messengers etc' (1830).
[125] NA, DDNM/2/1/13 'To the Independent Electors of Newark' (March, 1829).

Figure 2.3: NA, DDNM 2/1/13 'To the Independent Electors of Newark' (1829).

Canvassing was an integral part of the preparations for an election, regardless of whether or not a contest was expected. In theory at least, canvassing gave candidates and their supporters the opportunity to meet voters and hear their complaints, creating a sense of goodwill between candidates and electors. A personal canvass, conducted by the candidate, was the preferred method of reaching voters.[126] However, larger constituencies, especially those with a diverse electorate spread over a wide area presented a number of challenges to candidates. Here, printed canvasses and the role played by committees and agents in arranging the canvasses of voters was crucial.[127]

In some constituencies, the chairman of the election committee would write to individuals requesting that they would form 'a District Committee; to commence a strenuous canvass throughout your town and *neighborhood*, and to communicate your proceedings from time to time to the General Committee here.'[128] To reach the maximum number of voters, candidates from the same party would occasionally work together. As part of the canvass for the 1790 Leicester election, Samuel Smith and Nathaniel Brassey Halhed claimed that between them, they had visited 'every Elector in [the] Town,' with plans to go into the county so that the out-voters could also be canvassed. In the absence of Smith and Halhed, members of the election committee were asked to 'attend every Day at the Exchange, from eight in the Morning 'till eight in the Evening, to receive any Information that may be offered by our good and worthy Friends.'[129] This particular handbill not only highlights the importance of the

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[126] F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1989), 99.
[127] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 71, 91, 98-99.
[128] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833, Address from Joseph Strutt 'Chairman of Mr. Vernon's Committee' (1831).
[129] LRO, 9D59/2 'To the worthy and independent Electors of the Borough of Leicester'.

committee, even when candidates had visited voters, but also demonstrates that printed addresses were not always seen as a substitute for a personal canvass, but rather a supplement to it.

Printed handbills and addresses not only advertised when and where a candidate would be present in the town, but were instrumental in establishing and maintaining a relationship with both voters and non-voters.[130] Typically produced in the run up to the polls' opening, addresses gave candidates the opportunity to outline their position on the issues of the day, including slavery, peace, and political reform.[131] Print was, therefore, one of the primary ways in which both voters and non-voters were able to access political discussion and debates.

If a candidate was standing for re-election, handbills often sought to emphasize their earlier good work and stated that, should they be elected again, they would continue to represent the constituency in such a way.[132] Handbills from all candidates, whether they had been elected before or not, made it clear where they stood with regards to issues ranging from parliamentary reform to the French Wars.[133] Once polls had closed, more handbills were printed, thanking

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[130] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 129.

[131] NLSL, L34.22A Uncatalogued Broadsheet Collection; DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833; DLSL, Box 28 Political Broadsheets (undated c.1790-1832); DRO, D5336/2/9/17/8-18 Nottingham election handbills; NA, DD/568/35/1-14 Political broadsheets and pamphlets (c.1802-1803).

[132] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'To the Noblemen, Gentry and Freeholders of the County of Derby' (1831); DRO, D5336/2/9/12 'To the worthy and independent Electors of the Borough of Leicester' (1818).

[133] LRO, MISC15/42 Election letter July 5th 1802 by Felix McCarthy; LRO, DE3804/4 'Make your choice, Electors, Independence and Slavery are offered to you' (undated c.1826); NA, DD568/35/4 'Daniels Lamentation' (1803); NA, DD568/35/11 Broadside to electors against Coke- printed by Dunn (1803); DLSL, Box 28 Political Broadsheets (undated c.1790-1832). Chapter Four examines which issues election canvasses chose to focus on in greater detail.

electors for their votes and support. These publications were another way candidates attempted to cultivate and maintain relations with the electorate.

Even during personal canvasses, candidates, along with their agents and committees, would only have visited homes of those eligible to vote. Although there were exceptions, handbills and addresses were likewise typically directed at voters. However, this did not necessarily mean that those unable to vote would not have seen, heard, or read them. 'Elections involved the whole community', and it was expected that many more than just those in the franchise would have participated in the contest, either through reading or listening to handbills, attending public meetings and speeches, or gathering at the hustings.[134]

As James Vernon has shown, the spoken word was central to political life, and 'a rich texture of the oral, visual, and printed' sources helped shape political language and opinions. He suggests that the tendency of historians to overlook oral and aural politics has provided a limited understanding of nineteenth-century English politics. Speeches, alongside ballads and music, played an important part in campaign rituals, with the potential to attract large audiences.[135]

Typically, speeches would be delivered outside, with the speaker raised on a platform or stage, accompanied by banners, flags, and 'usually an animated supporting cast' of followers and activists.[136] Crowds liked to feel part of the ritual, heckling, booing, and cheering candidates, and so speakers would have

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[134] S. Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 2013), 26; DRO, D369G/ZPE/78 Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Derby: Be on your guard; *Paper War*, 38-9, 116-7.
[135] J. Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture c.1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993), 117-60.
[136] Vernon, *Politics and the people*, 117.

had to battle both the elements and hecklers in order to be heard. During a speech as part of the 1826 Newark election, Michael Thomas Sadler, an experienced orator, 'lost his voice in attempting to make himself heard' over the noise of the crowd.[137] What proportion of the assembled crowd would have been able to hear above the noise is questionable, with some estimates suggesting that, at times, fewer than ten per cent of those at the hustings would have been able to hear.[138]

Audiences 'disliked the tedious reading out of a prepared text', demanding instead to be 'entertained', with O'Gorman highlighting the importance of delivering a 'rousing, good-humoured, but yet dignified speech' to ensure electoral victory.[139] However, few candidates would have been brave enough to face hecklers, whilst at the same time delivering an entertaining and rousing speech which flattered voters, without having some sort of prepared text. It was not unusual for candidates to have prepared a speech to read out, with many leaving the task of speech writing to their election agent.[140] Afterwards, copies of speeches would have been delivered to newspaper and printing offices to be reprinted in the press, handbills, or in collected volumes of election literature.[141]

Much of the print produced during canvassing would have lost its significance once the election was over. However, it was not unusual for printers to sell old

[137] R.A. Gaunt, 'The Fourth Duke of Newcastle, the "Mob" and Election Contests in Nottinghamshire, 1818-1832', *Midland History*, 33 (2008), 209.
[138] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 130; P.A. Pickering, 'Class without Words: Symbolic Communication in the Chartist Movement', *Past and Present*, 112 (1986), 153; Vernon, *Politics and the people*, 117. See Chapter Three pages 129-30.
[139] F. O'Gorman, 'Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies: The Social Meaning of Elections in England 1780-1860', *Past & Present*, 135 (1992), 99.
[140] LRO, 23D57/3430 Letter from John Caldecott to Thomas Cave; O'Gorman, 'Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies', 99.
[141] H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855* (Manchester, 2000), 91; LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester Election Bill from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798); LRO, 23D57/3425 Letter from Dr J. Vaughan to Thomas Cave (1790); LRO, 23D57/3430 Letter from John Caldecott to Thomas Cave (1790); *NR*, 16th October 1812.

copies of their canvasses, or collect all those which had been printed and circulated during a campaign, re-printing them as part of a collected volume once the polls had closed. These volumes not only highlight the interest and value placed on printed canvasses during an election campaign, but also demonstrate how this type of literature could continue to appeal to audiences even after the result had been announced.[142]

The *Paper War* of 1803 is a particularly good example of a printed collection of election ephemera.[143] Printed shortly after the Nottingham by-election, *Paper War* is a collection of almost 200 examples of election canvasses, including songs, satirical handbills, and addresses from the Tory candidate, Daniel Parker Coke, and the Whig candidate, Joseph Birch.

Out of all the East Midlands elections between 1790 and 1832, the Nottingham by-election of 1803 was one of the most ferocious.[144] Even the name *Paper War* gives some indication of the extent of canvassing. A year earlier, the election of 1802 had been marred by unprecedented levels of violence and intimidation when supporters of Daniel Parker Coke were pelted with stones, and had their coats torn and cut with knives.[145] It is this level of electoral violence which, in part, explains why the contest of 1803 was so hotly fought.

William Patton's work on Nottinghamshire political songs and ballads includes several of those printed for the 1803 canvass, many of which were reprinted in

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[142] Chapter Five, pages 229-31 discusses what happened to election canvasses after the polls had closed.

[143] *Paper War*.

[144] See Appendix for a list of all elections which took place in the East Midlands between 1790 and 1832.

[145] *Report from the select committee who were appointed to try and determine the Merits of the Petition of Daniel Parker Coke, Esquire, and also, of the Petitions of the several other Persons; Complaining of an undue Election and Return, for the Town and County of the Town of Nottingham: and minutes of the evidence* (1803), 14-15, 18-19, 159.

Paper War.[146] However, although he acknowledges that *Paper War* contained other types of election literature, by focusing only on this one style, Patton fails to take into consideration the importance of having a wide range of election literature available to the public. Although other works occasionally make references to *Paper War*, such as Anna Clark's study of the language of gender and class, there has been little detailed analysis of the handbills, broadsheets, pamphlets, and addresses contained in this publication.[147]

Songs and Ballads

Songs and music were an integral part of election campaigns, accompanying almost every contest, either during parades or as part of the chairing ceremony at the end of the poll, with lists of expenses documenting payment for musicians and instruments to accompany canvasses.[148] Many songs and ballads were printed as handbills, and so formed part of both the musical and the printed aspects of election campaigns. Although printed songs and ballads never outweighed other types of election literature, they could still make up a relatively large proportion of printed canvasses for certain elections, and make up almost

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[146] W.F. Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse: Nottingham 1789-1850' (Queen's University Belfast, Ph.D. thesis, 1983), 60-129; B. Patton, 'Party political broadcasts in nineteenth century Nottingham', *Bulletin of Local History: East Midland region,* 19 (1984), 23-42.

[147] A. Clark, 'Class, Gender and British Elections 1794-1818', in M.T. Davis, and P.A. Pickering, *Unrespectable Radicals?: Popular Politics in the Age of Reform* (Ashgate, 2008), 107-24; C. Steedman, *An Everyday Life of the English Working Class: Work, Self and Sociability in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2014), 46.

[148] Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, 105; O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 155; LRO, 10D72/599 Election Bill (5th November 1798); LRO, 10D72/607 Election Bill- Elisabeth Wightman to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (14th November 1798).

thirty per cent of the total number of handbills and squibs reprinted in *Paper War*.[149]

Although clearly written with the intention that they would be sung, how frequently such election songs were actually sung out loud is not always clear. References to singing during canvassing can occasionally be found in the songs themselves.[150] However, by referring to singing in election songs, it is not clear if this was an accurate portrayal of an election canvass, or rather an idealized description, especially as it is rare when accounts of elections specifically mention singing.

How accurate, then, are reports that during the Nottingham 1803 election people were singing 'in full chorus, to a noble band of Music, "God save the King," "Rule Britannia", [and] "Britons, strike home"', is not always clear.[151] These three songs, it has been suggested, were commonly performed together, with 'Britons, strike home' acting as 'an all-but-forgotten "third" national anthem'.[152] Taking this into account, the reference to these three specific songs is not surprising, especially since, in 1803 at the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars, Coke was attempting to convince people of his loyalty to the country. Whilst there are a small number of election songs from the 1803 canvass set to 'God

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[149] Out of a total of 195 handbills contained in *Paper War*, 58 (29.7 per cent) are songs, ballads, hymns or rhymes. In his study of Nottingham political songs, W.F. Patton identified a total of 56 songs in *Paper War*. Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse: Nottingham 1789-1850', 23.

[150] *Paper War*, 94; LRO, 9D59/2 'Leicester's True Blue' (1790). See Chapter Five page 269 for examples of where songs refer to singing.

[151] *Paper War*, 61, 283-5.

[152] M. Vandrei, '"Britons, strike home": politics, patriotism and popular song in British culture, c.1695-1900', *Historical Research*, 87 (2014), 679-80.

Save the King' and 'Rule Britannia', there are apparently none surviving which use 'Briton, strike home' as their basis.[153]

In contrast to his own image, several of Coke's election handbills attempted to depict supporters of his rival, Birch, as dangerous revolutionaries, singing 'such airs as "Ça Ira", the "Marseilles hymn", [and] "Millions, be free"'.[154] Few, if any, songs in support of Birch appear to have had revolutionary undertones, or were set to such tunes. It was the impact that these songs would have had on audiences which was important. References to songs such as 'Ça Ira' and 'Marseilles hymn' would have caused particular alarm in 1803 when the threat of invasion was at the forefront of people's minds.[155]

During the 1790s and early 1800s, there was 'a growing tide of loyalist songs' being distributed, most likely in reaction to the growing concern over the French Revolutionary Wars.[156] In various constituencies across the country, election songs printed during this period frequently used popular, patriotic tunes such as 'Rule Britannia' and the national anthem as their basis.[157] In Nottingham, one song composed for the 1803 by-election was set to the tune of 'The Golden Days of Good Queen Bess'.[158] Various versions of the original song date from the 1780s, and remained popular until the 1840s, although it is possible that the song

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[153] *Paper War*, 48, 281-2.
[154] *Paper War*, 285.
[155] M. Philip, R. Southey, C. Jackson-Houlston and S. Wollenberg, 'Music and Politics, 1793-1815', in M. Philip (ed.), *Resisting Napoleon* (Aldershot, 2006), 176; H. Nicholson, 'Print and Politics in the Nottinghamshire Constituencies c.1790-1832', *TTS*, 121 (2017), 181.
[156] Philip, Southey, Jackson-Houlston and Wollenberg, 'Music and Politics, 1793-1815', 174.
[157] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, 56-7; *Paper War*, 48; UNMSC, Special Coll os X Pamp PR 1181.B2 'New God Save the King Addressed to the People of Nottingham, Mr Birch, and the Whig Club'.
[158] *Paper War*, 123.

was initially composed as part of the celebrations for Accession Day, and in praise of the strength of the Protestant nation.[159]

The 'Golden Days', were seen as a time when people were more religious, going to church 'at least' twice every Sunday. Food was in plentiful supply, and 'the poor from the rich never wanted relief.'[160] Furthermore, 'The Golden Days of Good Queen Bess' conveys ideas connected to the Protestant succession, in contrast to the Jacobins of Catholic France. Produced in 1803, the song would have resonated with contemporary audiences, who would have been aware of its references to a time when the Protestant religion was assured, food was in plentiful supply and England's 'powerful alliance by all powers then was courted'.[161]

Typically, election songs which used loyalist tunes as their basis tended also to echo patriotic sentiments. In Nottingham, one song set to the tune of 'Rule Britannia' praised Daniel Parker Coke, describing him as 'the Champion of our Cause,' who 'defends his Country, and it's Laws'.[162] By using such a song, candidates like Coke were conveying the idea that they were themselves patriotic, supporters of both the King and the Constitution. Similarly, in Newcastle-under-Lyme, the fate of the French royal family at the hands of 'Tyrants' caught the imagination of songwriters.[163] It is possible that, regardless

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[159] The earliest version of 'The Golden Days of Good Queen Bess' listed in the British Library catalogue is from 1780. The last version dates from 1846. D. Cressy, *Bonfires & Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Stroud, 2004), 59, 130- 36. Accession Day was the celebration of the accession of Elizabeth I on 17th November 1558, a date which continued to be celebrated into the eighteenth century.
[160] 'The Golden Days of Good Queen Bess' (1790-1840), *Broadside Ballads Online* [accessed 27/09/2016].
[161] 'The Golden Days of Good Queen Bess' (1790-1840), *Broadside Ballads Online* [accessed 27/09/2016].
[162] *Paper War*, 48.
[163] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, 56-7.

of lyrics, election songs which used patriotic tunes as their basis would always be viewed as patriotic. On the other hand, there are a number of examples from across the country where it would seem that, at times, radical songs parodied patriotic songs, such as 'Bob Shave the King' which used the national anthem as its basis, although this does not appear to have been the case in the East Midlands constituencies.[164]

Alongside patriotic and nostalgic songs, other popular, well-known tunes were often appropriated as the basis for election songs. Some of those in support of more radical candidates used the revolutionary tune 'Millions be Free' as their basis, hinting at the principles of the particular candidate.[165] Other election broadsides used similarly well-known tunes, many of which originated from the early eighteenth century. Songs such as 'Chevy Chase', first circulated during the early 1700s, as well as forming part of the 1728 *Beggar's Opera*, were commonly used as the basis of election songs both in the East Midlands and further afield.[166]

It was rare that music would accompany the lyrics of election songs. Printing musical scores would have required the skills of a specialist engraver, or a copperplate printing press, not only increasing the time and cost to produce such prints, but also relied on the assumption that audiences would be able to read music.[167] Instead, by using popular songs, it was presumed that audiences would recognise the tune, and be able to sing along.

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[164] Philip, Southey, Jackson-Houlston and Wollenberg, 'Music and Politics, 1793-1815', 173.
[165] DLSL, Box 28 Derby Broadsheets 'Song: Tune- Millions be free'; *Paper War*, 226.
[166] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, xxxv-xxvi; LRO, M105 'A New Song' (1826).
[167] P. Watt, D.B. Scott and P. Spedding, 'The Nineteenth- Century Songster: Recovering a Lost Musical Artefact', in P. Watt, D.B. Scott and P. Spedding (eds), *Cheap Print and Popular*

Some songs were seemingly more popular than others, appearing several times across different constituencies and elections. As part of the canvass for the Newark election of 1790, two songs were set to the same tune, 'Bow Wow Wow'. The first, 'BLUE BOW, WOW, WOW', and the second, 'RED Bow, Wow, Wow'.[168] In Newark, blue was the colour of the Whig party, whereas red was that of the Tories.[169] It is not clear which song was the earlier version. Reprinted after the election, 'BLUE BOW, WOW, WOW' appears first in the collected volume of canvasses, although this may have been the order decided on by the printer, Daniel Holt. 'BLUE BOW, WOW, WOW' is described as a 'new song', again indicating that this may have been the first of the two to be printed.[170] By using the same tune and similar lyrics to the election song of their opponents, this demonstrates how composers of election songs not only copied and parodied those of their rivals, but also 'attempted to reverse whatever effect a specific ballad may have had.'[171] The tune 'Bow, Wow, Wow' appears to have first emerged during the 1780s, remaining popular into the 1800s when it was used in anti-Napoleon songs.[172] The song reappears during the Nottingham by-election of 1803, when it was used as the basis of at least two election songs, although, unlike in Newark, both seem to have been written in support of the Tories, with one denouncing the 'loyal Jacobins' of the town.[173]

Song in the Nineteenth Century: A Cultural History of the Songster (Cambridge, 2017), 1; Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, xxxv.

[168] *Newark Complete Collection 1790*, 44, 76.

[169] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse: Nottingham 1789-1850', 177-8. In Nottingham, the colours of the parties were reversed.

[170] *Newark Complete Collection 1790*, 44, 76.

[171] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse', 176-7.

[172] E.D. Gregory, *The late Victorian folksong revival: the persistence of English melody, 1878-1903* (Plymouth, 2010), 303.

[173] *Paper War*, 44-45, 143.

William Patton suggests that there were 'two main performance contexts' where election songs and ballads would have been sung out loud.[174] Firstly, some songs were designed to be sung during celebratory and election dinners, often once the polls had closed. As the *Nottingham Journal* reported, a number of songs including 'Coke and Freedom' were sung during Coke's celebratory dinner in May 1803.[175] Other songs were likely to have been sung in the more informal setting of the public house. Secondly, Patton also claims that songs would frequently have been performed on the street, either by supporters of candidates, or else ballad singers and sellers.[176]

During the Newark election of 1790, whilst there is little to suggest that election songs were designed specifically to be sung during political meetings, there are numerous references to drinking. Voters are called to 'drink success to Paxton from a Bowl of punch', and another song states, 'I'll drink to his Health in a full flowing Bowl.'[177] Such references to drinking and toasting hint at the treating of voters in the run up to the elections, as well as celebratory dinners once the successful candidate had been elected.

Treating voters was an integral part of the election process, with large sums of money being spent on providing food and drink, especially alcohol.[178] Inns and public houses would often be acquired by a particular party for the duration of the election. After having pledged their support for a particular side, voters would often be provided with tickets to be exchanged for alcohol.[179]

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[174] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse', 36-9.
[175] *NJ*, 28th May 1803; *Paper War*, 154-55, 233.
[176] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse', 36-7.
[177] *Newark Complete Collection 1790*, 19, 28.
[178] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 152-3; NA, DD/2723/3/5/7 'List of expenses at the Election of General Sir William Henry Clinton and Henry Willoughby' (1820).
[179] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 152.

In Nottingham, the White Lion Inn was frequently used as a meeting place for the town's Tories, and as the party's headquarters during elections. Several songs which appeared during the Nottingham by-election of 1803 were written as drinking songs, or at least designed to be sung during political meetings. 'Origin of TRUE BLUE' was written to be 'sung at the Anniversary Dinner of D.P. COKE, Esq. AT THE WHITE LION.'[180] Founded as a political society in 1774, The White Lion Club 'was probably as much a drinking club as it was a political organisation', where the singing of songs would have been commonplace.[181] In comparison to the majority of other election songs from the period, 'Origin of TRUE BLUE' was not composed specifically for this particular election, but rather one written by George Alexander Stevens and later used by Coke's supporters during a celebratory dinner.[182]

Another song, reprinted in *Paper War*, was 'Coke and Freedom'. Unlike 'Origin of TRUE BLUE', it was clearly written for this specific election, 'Set to Music by Mr. Nellson, of Nottingham'. As illustrated by the following lyrics, it was designed to be sung either in pubs or political dinners as part of a toast:

> Now ye Sons of Bacchus gay,
>
> Who laugh and sport the hours away,
>
> Drink to COKE, the honest soul,
>
> In a friendly flowing bowl.[183]

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[180] UNMSC, Special Coll os X Pamp PR 1181.B2 'Origin of TRUE BLUE'.
[181] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse', 75-76.
[182] UNMSC, Special Coll os X Pamp PR 1181.B2 'Origin of TRUE BLUE'; J. Sambrook, 'Stevens, George Alexander (1710?-1784)' *ODNB* (2004) [accessed 31/09/2018]. George Alexander Stevens was a well-known London actor, playwright, and composer.
[183] *Paper War*, 154-5.

Similarly, another song produced as part of Coke's canvass encouraged supporters to, 'let your tankard go round with success to the Cause'. On the surface, it would appear that the song was part of a toast to the 'King, Constitution, your Country and Laws.' [184] On the other hand, it could also refer to the practise of 'treating' voters with alcohol in the run up to the opening of the poll.

It is difficult to prove that treating voters during the course of an election campaign amounted to direct bribery, especially as O'Gorman argues that incidents have often been exaggerated to demonstrate allegedly corrupt electoral practises.[185] Nevertheless, the provision of alcohol did attract a certain amount of criticism during the early nineteenth century. As seen above, in Nottinghamshire, numerous songs made references to toasting, drinking, and treating, although few of these are critical of the practice. In Leicester, however, at least one election song is scathing of the practice, claiming that, 'May he be successful who gives us most to drink! For he that drinks most is less likely to think!' Rather than criticising the corrupt nature of treating and bribery, it is the daytime drunkenness and brawling which the song particularly objects to.[186]

In Leicester, Charles Abney Hastings was portrayed as the 'honest *True Blue…* unbrib'd [and] uncorrupt', whilst at Newark, one song was written as a response to claims of undue levels of bribery and 'influence' on the part of the fourth Duke of Newcastle.[187] Some songs which initially seem to be in support of Tory

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[184] *Paper War*, 92.
[185] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 158.
[186] DRO, D5336/2/9/12 'On the revival of that excellent practice of candidates giving away large quantities of liquor on their canvass' (c.1818).
[187] LRO, 23D57/3477 Printed 'extract from the letter alluded to in "the statement" from Mr Henry Ellis to Mr Otway Cave' (1826); S. Harratt, 'Leicester', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 07/11/16].

candidates, are actually subtle attacks on them. For instance, one song, 'True Blue For Ever', refers to Hastings as a 'Hero'.[188] The choice candidate of the corporation, in part due to his opposition to Catholic Emancipation, Hastings was first elected to the borough in 1826, prompting accusations from voters of corruption. His success in the polls was largely dependent on the support of out-voters, many of whom had been created honorary freemen by the corporation. In reference to this, the song goes on to claim that Hastings was 'unknown, Dependant on strangers, No will of his own'.[189]

Occasionally, a town's corporation, rather than individual candidates, was attacked in song. Given the unpopularity of Leicester's corporation, largely as a result of the 1826 election and the creation of honorary freemen, it is surprising that such attacks appear to have been more common in Nottingham where, on the whole, the corporation was more widely supported. In contrast to Leicester's High Church, Tory corporation, Nottingham's was non-conformist and Whig in its outlook. Songs and ballads in support of Daniel Parker Coke attacked both the corporation and Joseph Birch, the corporation's preferred candidate, during the 1803 by-election. The corporation was criticised on account of their 'Jacobin' principles and of making 'a great hubbub with tri-colour'd flags… playing "Millions be free"…. [and planting] "Liberty's Tree"'. The 'tricks' of the corporation are likewise attacked, accused of having 'cajole[d] the freemen in their choice of a candidate.'[190] Another song in support of Coke claims that,

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[188] DRO, D/5336/2/9/12 'True Blue For Ever!' (1826).
[189] DRO, D/5336/2/9/12 'True Blue For Ever!' (1826); Harratt, 'Abney Hastings, Sir Charles (1792-1858)', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 06/04/2018].
[190] *Paper War*, 123.

'the friends of Dan, the man of God! Have brought [the corporation] to disgrace'.[191]

The themes of songs and ballads, however, are less varied than their numbers might suggest. Across the East Midlands it would seem that, in general, the most common themes to appear in lyrics were broadly connected to the idea of freedom of election and reform, as well as songs in support and opposition of the various candidates standing for election. Songs with titles such as 'Freedom Triumphant over Oppression', 'The Progress of Freedom', and 'The Song of the Free' appear in all three counties, especially during borough, rather than county, elections.[192] What freedom meant in these songs varied. As one Leicester handbill explained, 'the freedom I mean, and of which I will sing; Is the freedom to honour, and love our good King'.[193] In this, it was not the idea of freedom, but upholding the religious and political norms, which was important. Elections free from undue patronage and bribery was one of the key ideas behind parliamentary reform. Whilst some songs appear to have been connected to the idea of political freedom and reform, typically, as a concept, parliamentary reform was only referred to much later, and references even then were much less common than the general idea of 'freedom.'[194]

Traditionally, broadside songs and ballads have been seen as a popular form of protest amongst the working classes.[195] It might therefore be expected that, given

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[191] *Paper War*, 200.
[192] *Paper War*, 333, 122; LRO, M105 'The Song of the Free' (1826); DLSL, Box 28 Derby Broadsheets song sheet sung to the tune of 'Millions be free'.
[193] DRO, D/5336/2/9/12 'Hastings for Ever!' (1826).
[194] DRO, D/5336/2/9/12 'A New Song' (undated); DLSL, Box 28 Song entitled 'A NEW Electioneering Echo- Duett'; LRO, M105 'The Song of the Free' (1826); *Paper War*, 164; DLSL, 'A NEW Electioneering Echo- Duett'.
[195] Ganev, *Songs of Protest, Songs of Love,* 20-6; Horgan, *The Politics of Song in Eighteenth-Century Britain, 1723-1795*, 2, 22; Palmer, *The Sound of History,* 236.

the accessibility of song in comparison to prose, a greater number of election songs would have been produced with the working classes in mind. However, when comparing those produced for elections across the East Midlands between 1790 and 1832, it is clear that this is not necessarily the case, and not all election songs were specifically designed to support one candidate over another.[196] For those songs reprinted in *Paper War*, where a political stance can be identified, twenty-six are in support of Coke in comparison to fourteen in favour of Birch. Whilst Coke may have been attempting to win members of the working classes over to his cause by appealing to them through song, a large proportion of these songs were designed to be sung during political dinners to a middle-class audience.[197]

As seen above, during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, many songs contained patriotic lyrics, or were set to loyalist tunes.[198] However, even after 1815, songs written in support of Tory candidates continued to emphasize their attachment to the crown, the church, and the constitution. In comparison to Nottinghamshire constituencies, in Leicester, relatively few election songs were produced in support of Tory candidates. One from 1818, however, written in support of Charles Abney Hastings, claimed that he would 'love our good King', and 'guard from all danger our Church and our Laws.'[199]

Popular support for conservative principles was not uncommon during the Napoleonic Wars, and as R.A. Preston has shown, even as late as 1826, there was still a not insignificant amount of working-class support for Tory candidates

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[196] See below, pages 91-93.
[197] *Paper War*, 157, 293, 307-8. See Chapter Five, pages 272-74.
[198] See above, pages 55-58.
[199] DRO, D/5336/2/9/12 'Hastings for Ever!' (1826).

in Nottingham and Leicester. Whilst Preston may have overemphasised the extent to which 'economic depression and social inferiority bred a resignation to accept the *status quo*', during the first two decades of the nineteenth century it is clear that there was a considerable amount of working-class support for the crown, the established church, and the constitution.[200] It is most likely, therefore, that, rather than being designed to be sung by a middle-class audience, election songs such as this would also have been sung by supporters lower down the social scale.[201]

It is clear that election songs were an integral part of canvasses throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with the numbers produced demonstrating the importance that was placed on them. In common with other forms of printed election literature, they addressed topical issues of the day, as well as informing voters and non-voters of the policies and personalities of candidates. As seen in the previous section of this chapter, speeches were an important form of oral communication. However, election songs which used popular, well known tunes as their basis would have been particularly effective, with audiences remembering the words far longer than most other forms of address. As the next section of this chapter will demonstrate, candidates and their committees went to great lengths to appeal to audiences, using a variety of different methods to capture their attention.

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[200] R.A. Preston, 'The Structure of Government and Politics in Nottinghamshire, 1824-35' (DPhil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1978), 125-27. See Chapter Five, page 286.
[201] Chapter Five considers the audience of election songs, and other canvasses, in much greater detail.

Mock Playbills and Advertisements

As Hannah Barker has argued, after the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, the number of provincial printers and newspapers operating in towns across England grew rapidly, and by the 1790s, there were almost a thousand printing firms listed in the *Universal British Dictionary*.[202] In Leicester, a total of five booksellers, printers, and stationers were recorded as operating in the town in 1794. By 1827, the number of printers had risen to eleven, with several more booksellers and stationers also in operation around the town.[203]

As the number of printers grew, so too did the style and range of print that they produced. Broadsides in particular, advertised public events such as 'freak shows, firework displays and theatrical performances,' although, according to Twyman, 'by far the most widespread category of entertainment ephemera from at least the early eighteenth century was the playbill.'[204] Marcus Wood has highlighted how the rapid growth of the printing trade affected the production of satire and political propaganda. Satirists such as William Hone and Thomas Spence exploited new styles of print for their own political agendas and, in turn, provincial printers came increasingly to rely on different formats for their own handbills.[205]

From around 1793, a new style of election handbill appeared on the streets of London. Mimicking the playbill, 'a series of mock-advertisements which

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[202] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855*, 1; Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, xxv.

[203] *Leicester Directory of Bankers, Manufacturers and Tradesmen* (Leicester, 1794); *The Leicester Directory containing an alphabetical list of the inhabitants, a complete classification of trades* (Leicester, 1827).

[204] M. Twyman, 'Printed ephemera', in M. F. Suarez and M. L. Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* vol. 5 (Cambridge, 2009), 74-9.

[205] M. Wood, *Radical Satire and Print Culture 1790-1822* (Oxford, 1994), 5.

represented the activities of George III and the government of William Pitt' as, amongst other things, auction sales, plays, pantomimes, and magic shows were produced.[206] Elections, like plays and sales, had the potential to attract a wide section of society. O'Gorman has suggested that, 'the form and process of election rituals seem to have been designed to attain maximum popular participation', regardless of whether those in attendance could vote or not. [207] It is appropriate that events such as plays were chosen as the basis for satirical election handbills, not only mocking the theatrical like nature of canvassing, but also showing the broad appeal of elections. One mock play from 1832 lists details of tickets, with boxes available from 3s., whilst a ticket for the gallery cost 1s. Such prices were broadly in line with the cost of entrance to real performances, reflecting the length that satirists went to mimic genuine handbills.[208]

The London mock playbills, Barrell has suggested, were in circulation between 1793 and 1795, after which they declined in popularity and no other versions appeared.[209] In contrast, there are few, if any, examples of mock playbills appearing in the East Midlands prior to the early nineteenth century, and they continued to be produced into the 1830s. A trend briefly popular in the capital was seemingly late in reaching the attention of provincial printers and, once used, remained in style far longer than in London.[210]

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[206] Barrell, *'Exhibition Extraordinary!!',* vii.
[207] O'Gorman, 'Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies', 81.
[208] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'Theatre Royal Derby' (1832); J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1997), 326.
[209] Barrell, '*Exhibition Extraordinary!!'*, vii.
[210] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'Theatre Royal Derby' (1832); UNMSC, Bg 174 'Positively the Last Time: Election Jugglers' (1818).

One of the earliest examples of a mock playbill to appear in the East Midlands was produced in 1803, and used the description of two plays running concurrently to highlight the differences between the two candidates, Daniel Parker Coke and Joseph Birch. In 'A CELEBRATED FARCE' entitled 'I would be A PARLIAMENT MAN', Coke is the principal character, with the first scene consisting of a 'Funeral Procession, with an empty Stocking Frame, grown rusty through the want of use, carried by a number of starving Workmen'. In contrast, the second play being performed has as its lead, 'a truly-honorable BIRCH merchant', with a 'STOCKING FRAME, in full Work, with a pleasing procession of industrious Workmen'.[211] Songs also featured in these handbills, with workmen described as 'singing and dancing… to the tune of "May BIRCH and FREEDOM ever reign, While PEACE and PLENTY fill the train!!!"'[212] Similarly, another mock playbill, this time in support of Coke, had as its finale, people dancing, ringing bells, and singing 'D.P. COKE is your man, independent and free, Then you true Sons of Freedom, join Chorus with me'.[213] These particular songs do not appear to have formed part of Birch's canvass, and again reinforce the idea that handbills often described songs forming part of an election canvass, regardless of whether this ever actually happened.

After 1803, there appears to have been a lull in the use of mock playbills during canvasses. In 1818, however, two mock playbills emerge with very similar titles. The first, printed by Charles Sambroke Ordoyno is called 'Election Jugglers: The Electors of Nottingham', whilst the second, printed by Charles Sutton, has the title 'Positively the Last Time: Election Jugglers' (Figure 2.4), and is the

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[211] *Paper War*, 171-72.
[212] *Paper War*, 172.
[213] *Paper War*, 173.

only clue as to the order in which they appeared.[214] As evidence from the *Paper War* has demonstrated, typically, it was rival printers who copied and parodied each other's publications. However, this does not appear to have been the case in this instance. Here, both handbills were in opposition to the Tories of the town, and used the same pseudonyms to refer to figures such as the fourth Duke of Newcastle and Thomas Assheton Smith, suggesting that these terms were in common usage in the town.

Joseph Birch stood as a candidate in both 1803 and 1818.[215] However, there are few other similarities between the two elections, or in the playbills produced for each contest. Given that, in some instances, styles appear to have remained popular longer in provincial towns, it is possible that Sutton reused the idea of a playbill, adapting it for the 1818 election to reflect the increasingly sophisticated styles of election literature emerging during this time. Why no other examples appear to have existed between 1803 and 1818, however, is less obvious.

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[214] NLSL, L34.22A 'Election Jugglers: The Electors of Nottingham' (1818); UNMSC, Bg 174 'Positively the Last Time: Election Jugglers' (1818).
[215] See Appendix for details.

**Figure 2.4: UNMSC, Bg 174 'Positively the Last Time: Election Jugglers'
(1818).**

Elsewhere in the East Midlands, the canvass for the Derby election of 1832 is the only other time when a handbill appears in the style of a mock playbill. This particular production stars 'Two Celebrated Characters from St. Stephen's, London', in this case the two liberal candidates Edward Strutt and Henry Cavendish, with St. Stephen's, London, a reference to St. Stephen's Chapel, which until 1834 served as the chamber for the House of Commons.[216]

Plays were not the only form of public attraction to be satirized by printers, and candidates and their policies were satirized in mock advertisements for auctions, sales, and race meetings.[217] As Ian Maxted has recently argued, likening an election contest to a horse race was the obvious choice for printers.[218] The Derby contest of December 1832 was not only the first to take place following the passing of the Great Reform Act in June 1832, but was also the first contested election in the borough since 1796. Whilst the lack of a contest, as we have seen, did not necessarily mean that no canvassing took place, using a horse race as a metaphor for this particular election is pertinent.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, accusations of libel were common, and so, in contrast to many other styles of handbills, fake or shortened versions of candidates' real names were used.[219] In 'Races Extraordinary' (Figure 2.5) MR. ST_TT, for instance, is almost certainly a

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[216] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'Theatre Royal Derby' (1832).

[217] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'To be SOLD by MR BOUNCE' (16th July 1832); DRO, D5336/2/9/12 Scrapbook of newspaper and handbills re. Leicester borough elections 1818-1826; DRO, D2375/F/J/1/6/5 'Grand Exhibition' (1829); LRO, M105 'To be sold by Auction'(1826); M105 'Choice Bargains!' (1826); UNMSC, Bg 174 'Positively the Last Time: Election Jugglers' (1818).

[218] I. Maxted, 'Election Ephemera in Nineteenth-Century Devon', in D. Atkinson and S. Roud (eds), Street Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century: Producers, Sellers, Consumers (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2017), 265.

[219] UNMSC, Bg 174 'Positively the Last Time: Election Jugglers' (1818); DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'Theatre Royal Derby' (1832).

reference to Edward Strutt.[220] First nominated to one of the Derby borough seats in 1830, he stood again for election in 1832.[221] The Strutts were well known in the town, and their connection to the cotton industry is highlighted by the description of Strutt as 'Master Taylor'.[222] Similarly, it is likely that 'FAT BUCK, THE GIFT OF THE DUKE OF DEV_SH_E', is a reference to Henry Compton Cavendish, member for Derby between 1812 and 1834, and the nominated candidate of his cousin, the sixth Duke of Devonshire.[223]

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[220] DLSL, Box 28 Derby Broadsheets, 'Races Extraordinary' (1832).
[221] See Appendix.
[222] S. Farrell and S. Harratt, 'Strutt, Edward, (1801-1880)' *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 28/09/16].
[223] DLSL, Box 28 Derby Broadsheets, 'Races Extraordinary' (1832).

RACES
Extraordinary!

December Meeting, Tuesday 18th,
TO START PRECISELY AT TWO O'CLOCK.

Ordinaries at the Screw, Albion-Street; Cod's-Head, Wardwick; and at the Young Buffalo's, St. Helen's-Street.

FIRST DAY,

A SEAT IN ST. STEPHENS'.

GIVEN BY THE DUKE OF DEV—SH—E AND THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORS.

Three to Start or no Race,—Leger-Weights.

SIR POMPOUS SHALLOW'S *b. c.* Radical, by Cotton-Bags,   4 *year's old.*
MR. TRUCK'S *br. c.* Colonel, by Placeman,   .   .   3 *year's old.*
ELECTOR'S *ch. c.* Duffield, by Patriot,   .   .   .   3 *year's old.*

The well known Jockies, LAK—N and D—WS—N, will ride the Corporation Horses, RADICAL *and* COLONEL.

A CORPORATION PLATE
FOR AGED HORSES,—THREE MILE HEATS.

MR. SUDBURY'S *bl. c.* Watercloset, by Mechanic, out of Window-Frame.
MR. EDITOR'S *b. c.* Infidel, by Noble, out of Revolution.
SIR F. B—RD—TT'S *ch. c.* Empiric, by Frenchman, Dam unknown.
DUKE of S—SS—X'S *b. c.* Freemason, by Fiddler, out of Dancer.
MR. DISPERSE 'EM'S *br. c.* Vulture, by Carrion, out of Lace-Frame.

THE CHATSWORTH BUCK STAKES,

A FAT BUCK, THE GIFT OF THE DUKE OF DEV—SH—E.

For Horses not thorough-bred, 2 miles and a distance,—Gentlemen Riders.

SITTING MEMBERS' *b. g.* Hokee Pokee, by Forge, out of Cast-Iron, *Crimson.*
MR. ST—TT'S *ch. h.* Master Tailor, by Snip, out of Broad-Cloth, *Green Cap.*
MR. LOV—K'S Vulture,* by Carrion, *Blue und Yellow.*
MR. M—US—EY'S *g. h.* Lather, by Shaver, out of Soap-Suds, *White and Black Cap.*
MR. BY—G'S *br. c.* Petrifaction, by Bluejohn, out of Swimming-Bath, *Orange.*
MR. H—RR—K'S *b. c.* Oyster, by Dando, out of Shell-Fish, *Yellow and Red Cap.*

* Vulture is not expected to go, having a screw loose and canker in the mouth.

Several other Nags will Start, but as their Pedigrees are of a DOUBTFUL Character, their Names have been omitted.

It is particularly requested that all Persons stand without the cords during the time of running. Persons obstructing the Staff-men, in doing their duty, will be prosecuted by the Corporation.

STEWARDS, } Mr. CODFISH.
                 Mr. GUZZLE.

CLERK OF THE COURSE, BELPER JOE.

Dress and Fancy Balls

In the Evening, at the Page and Dragon, St. Peter's-Street; and at the Hen and Chickens, Walker-Lane.

[Printed by Wm. Bemrose, Derby.]

Figure 2.5: DLSL, Box 28 Derby Broadsheets, 'Races Extraordinary' (1832).

Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, advertising came to be ever more important, occupying an increasing amount of space in newspapers. Alongside mock playbills and horse races, printers also parodied public announcements or notices in their attempt to ridicule candidates and the election process.[224] At least three satirical handbills were in the style of job advertisements and, like many examples, relied on local knowledge and in-jokes. The first, produced for the Leicestershire county election of 1796 (Figure 2.6), advertises for the position of 'a county member', listing the 'qualifications [which] are Indispensably requisite'.[225] The election was uncontested between William Pochin and Penn Assheton Curzon, both of whom had previously represented the borough before.[226] Neither Pochin nor Curzon took a particularly active role in representing their constituency, voting in the Commons only a handful of times, and rarely, if ever, spoke in the House.[227] The claim that 'electors… do not require that their Representative should possess the Talent of Speaking,' could therefore refer to either candidate.

It must be concluded that this style of handbill was seen as being particularly successful as two separate printers issued very similar examples during the Leicester election of 1802.[228] The first was printed by Ireland and Son and listed the 'Qualifications Necessary for a Popular Candidate'. The second was produced by John Pares and outlined the 'Qualifications Necessary for a

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[224] NLSL, L34.22A 'Wanted Immediately: A Suit of Rooms' (1803); UNMSC, Not 1 F19 NOT 'To Be Sold By Auctions A Beautiful Collection of Paintings' (1820); NLSL, L34.22A Third and last Day's Sale OF A MOST SUPERB Collection of Paintings' (1820).
[225] LRO, MISC15/102 'WANTED, A County Member (24th May 1796).
[226] See Appendix.
[227] D.E. Ginter (ed.) Voting Records of the British House of Commons 1761-1820, Vols. 2, 4 (London, 1995).
[228] LRO, MISC15/48 'Qualifications necessary for a popular candidate' (1802); LRO, MISC15/46 'Qualifications Necessary for a Ministerial Candidate & Loan Contractor, to Represent an Independent Borough' (1802).

Ministerial Candidate & Loan Contractor, to Represent an Independent Borough' (Figure 2.7). Given the apparent success of this style, it is surprising that no other examples are to be found from other constituencies in the region, especially as elsewhere around the country, handbills which advertised the qualifications required of a candidate continued to be produced into the 1830s.[229]

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[229] Barker and Vincent, *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, 308.

WANTED,

A County Member.

The following Qulifications are Indispensably requisite.

AN Averfion to the Extenfion of Trade and the encourage-
ment of Manufactures,— which, however ferviceable they may
prove to a Country, merely Commercial, muft be highly difgufting
to every *thorough bred Gentleman.*

An Invincible Repugnance to Inland Navigation (a vulgar In-
vention the offspring of a *Bourgeois* Brain) which facrifices, to the
paltry Confiderations of Trade and Agriculture, the Conve-
nience and Accommodation, of *Gentlemen,* objects of fuch vaft Im-
portance, as to admit of no adequate compenfation.

A determined Refolution to fupport his *own private Intereft* at
the expence of Public Good ; which fhews that a Member can, up-
on occafion, exert that *manly* firmnefs of mind, fo effential to the
formation of an able Reprefentative.

A Steady adherence to an Opinion once adopted, however er-
roneous in its principles or fatal in its effects : — Such an adherence
is ftrongly indicative of mental fortitude, alike impenetrable by the
fhafts of reafon and the arrows of Truth.

Any perfon poffeffed of thefe qualifications may apply at the
Caftle of *Leicefter* on the 30th. day of May Inftant.

N. B. The Electors (friends to the old maxim " *Sapiens eft qui
pauca loquitur*") do not require that their Reprefentative fhould poffefs
the Talent of *Speaking,* except when a *pledge* feems neceffary, for
fome particular purpofe, in that cafe, his utmoft Exertions will be
required, for as the veracity of a County Member can never be fuf-
pected, a *pledge* from him muft always have great weight with the
Houfe.

No Borough-Monger need apply.

Any perfon who poffeffes only *one* of the four qualifications above
mentioned will be confidered as a mere *Spring Member,* out of Sea-
fon during three parts of the year, therefore equal only to one fourth
of a proper Reprefentative; fuch will be rejected with difdain.

May 24th. 1796,

Figure 2.6: LRO, MISC15/102 'WANTED, A County Member'.

(1796).
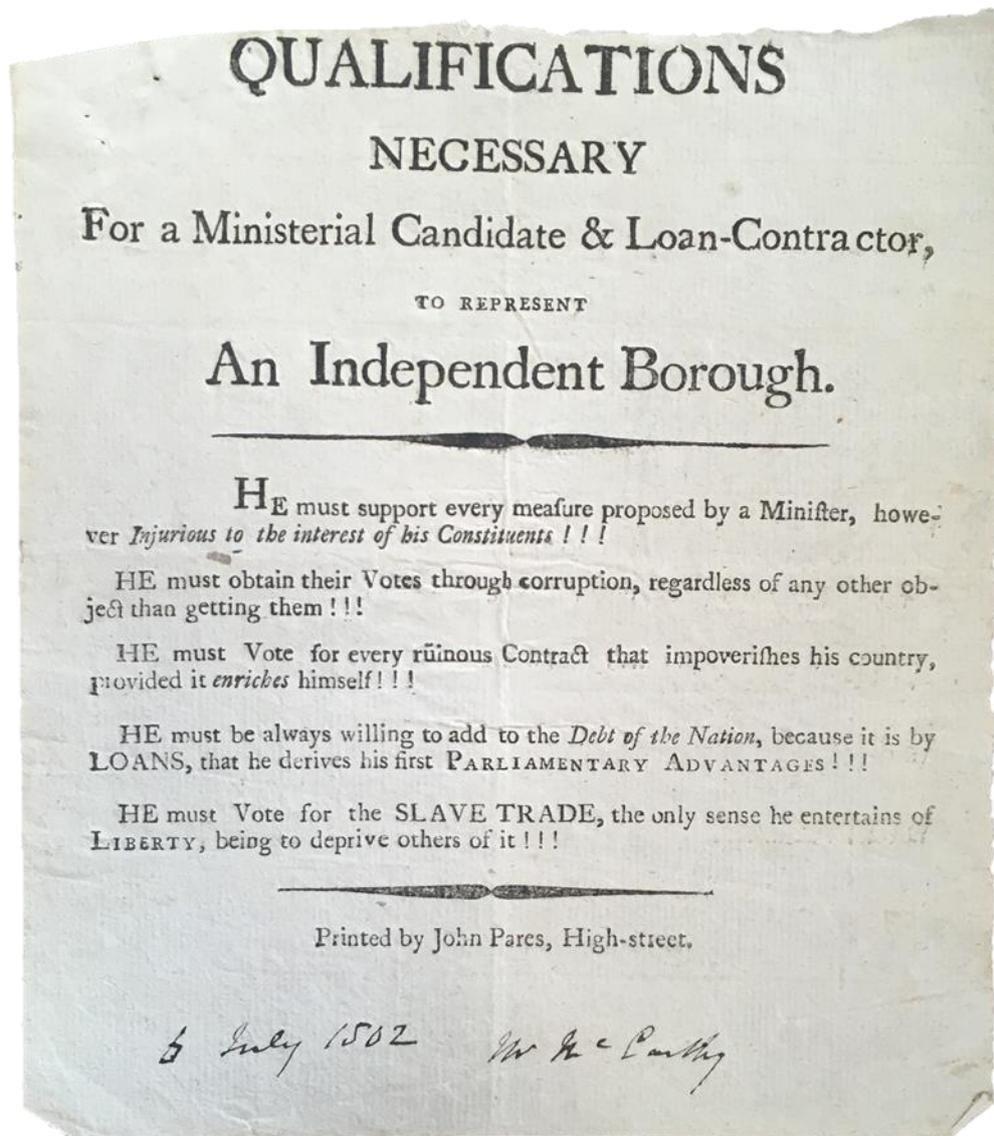
Figure 2.7: LRO, MISC15/46 'Qualifications Necessary for a Ministerial Candidate & Loan Contractor, to Represent an Independent Borough' (1802).

Figures 2.6 and 2.7 bear a number of similarities, including suggesting that a candidate should support principles 'however Injurious to the interest of his

Constituents', or 'fatal in effects'.[230] Rather than focusing on the political views and talents required, the second example from 1802 suggests that a candidate should have a tendency for bribery, vanity, and a questionable background.[231]

Vague descriptions, such as the ability to 'talk a great deal of nonsense, and persuade all the fools they can to believe them,' were common in many satirical handbills. However, comments such as that 'he must be out of Fleet Prison', 'if the necessary income to enable him to stand a Poll, should arise from an Estate in the County of Tipperary… so much the better,' and 'He must Vote for the SLAVE TRADE, the only sense he entertains of LIBERTY, being to deprive others of it!!!' suggest that both examples from 1802 were written with a particular candidate in mind.

During the 1802 Leicester election, the three standing candidates were Thomas Babington, Samuel Smith, and Felix McCarthy. Both Babington and Smith were opponents of the slave trade, and were well known to constituents, with Smith having represented the borough since 1790 and Babington first elected during the by-election of 1800.[232] Felix McCarthy, on the other hand, was unknown to the borough, never having stood for election. Described as an 'impecunious Irish Foxite', in 1796 he had reportedly been arrested over a debt of £50 and 'dissolved from the Fleet Prison under the Insolvent Act'. As such, he is the obvious target of both handbills.[233]

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[230] LRO, MISC15/102 'WANTED, A County Member'(1796); LRO, MISC15/46 'Qualifications Necessary for a Ministerial Candidate & Loan Contractor, to Represent an Independent Borough' (1802).

[231] LRO, MISC15/48 'Qualifications necessary for a popular candidate' (1802).

[232] P.A. Symonds, 'Babington, Thomas (1758-1837)' *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 14/09/2018]; L. Taylor, 'Smith, Samuel I (1754-1834)' *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 14/09/2018] Smith was a second cousin of abolitionist William Wilberforce and voted in favour of Wilberforce's bid to abolish the slave trade in March 1796.

[233] LRO, MISC15/44-45 Election leaflets against Felix McCarthy (1802).

Handbills which sought to mock both candidates and the election process were produced not only prior to the polls' opening, but also after the successful candidate had been announced. In December 1832, one Leicester handbill reported on what first seems to be news of a shipwreck. The handbill appears to have been produced a few days after the close of the polls, and describes how the 'old creaky Vessel *"Corporation Influence"*… lately received great injury from the new Ship REFORM [and]… fell on two rocks called Evans and Ellis, and then capsized.'[234]

In Leicester, William Evans headed the poll having represented the borough since 1830, and was a well-known advocate of reform, whilst Wynn Evans, 'a staunch advocate of political reform and free trade during his time in Parliament', had first gained a seat for the borough during the previous election of 1831.[235] Rather than the defeat of Tory candidate, John Ward Boughton Leigh, the handbill refers to the defeat of the town's corporation. Since the election had already taken place, it is clear that this is not the same as the handbills typically produced in the run up to an election, and those which canvassed for a particular candidate. Instead, the publication seems to have been produced to celebrate the electoral victory of Ellis and Evans, as well as ridiculing the corporation over their policy of bribery, corruption, and influence.

So far, this chapter has shown the variety of election literature produced over the course of an election campaign. Formal addresses from candidates, printed copies of songs and speeches, as well as more satirical handbills all formed an

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[234] LRO, DE3804/11/2 'Dreadful Catastrophe!' (1832).
[235] H. Miller, 'Ellis, Wynn (1790-1875)', *History of Parliament 1832-1868* (forthcoming) [accessed 29/07/18]; H. Miller, 'Leicester', *History of Parliament 1832-1868* (forthcoming) [accessed 29/07/18].

integral part of an election canvass. Similarly candidates went to great lengths to inform, entertain, and amuse audiences, often using impenetrable local jokes to mock their opponents. Not only did those responsible for writing election canvasses attempt to engage audiences through the use of popular songs, but also parodied other forms of popular prints such as public notices and advertisements to gain their attention.

 The decision to stand for election was not taken lightly, and proceeding to a full canvass could prove to be costly for potential candidates. Before 1832, uncontested elections were not uncommon, not least in the East Midlands, where in Derbyshire, there were only two contests between 1768 and 1831.[236] However, this did not necessarily mean that no canvassing took place, and as this chapter has demonstrated, even when no contest was expected, large quantities of election literature could still be printed and distributed around a constituency. The next section of this chapter will examine the role that printers, candidates, and election agents had in producing canvasses, the quantity of handbills produced, and the work that was involved in ensuring that they were distributed throughout the constituency, as well as giving some suggestions as to who was responsible for writing and composing election literature.

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[236] Contested elections in Derbyshire took place in March 1768 and March 1820 respectively. See Appendix for list of contested and uncontested elections between 1790 and 1832.

Production and Distribution of Print

Until the late 1790s, little had changed from the printing methods used by Caxton. However, with the invention of the tough iron-frame, by the early nineteenth century it was possible to produce up to 200 prints per hour. Barker and Vincent have shown how, for elections in Newcastle-under-Lyme, election literature was generally ordered in units of between 500 and 2,000, a figure broadly in line with orders from across the East Midlands.[237] Assessing the number of bills produced is not always straight forward, relying on election account books and bills sent from printers to candidates and their committees. Although expenses for elections exist for a number of elections across the East Midlands, relatively few record the number of canvasses produced. Furthermore, those which do, rarely, if ever, do they give specific details, such as the title of handbills to be printed. This makes identifying the authors of material difficult.

In 1798, the death of William Pochin meant that one of the two seats for Leicestershire became vacant. During the subsequent by-election in November 1798, Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp was selected as Pochin's replacement on the interest of the Duke of Rutland.[238] Despite being the only candidate standing for election, records detail how, in the run up to the poll opening, a number of payments were made to John Gregory for printing election literature on behalf of Cradock Hartopp.[239] On 10th October, 5,000 bills were printed at a cost of £5.

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[237] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xxvi-xxviii.
[238] M. H. Port and R. G. Thorne, 'Leicestershire' *HP Commons 1790-1820*; M. H. Port, 'Pochin, William (1731-98)', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 29/11/16]. See Appendix for a list of elections and candidates.
[239] LRO, 10D72/602-3 Election receipts from canvass of Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798).

Then on 30th October a total of 2s. 6d. was spent on printing '2 packs large cards' and '36 small cards.'[240] Despite the seemingly large number of bills and addresses printed, hardly any examples survive, with only a handwritten draft canvass, an address from Cradock Hartopp to voters expressing his desire to represent them in a 'reformed parliament', still remaining.[241] Voting ended on 1st November 1798, the same day that 2,000 further bills were printed at a cost of £2.[242] Although it is unclear precisely what these cards and bills were, especially as little of the printed canvass remains, in this case, it is highly likely that they were addresses thanking electors for their support.

During county elections, it was particularly important to reach as many voters living across the region as possible. Following the Leicestershire 1798 by-election, John Gregory was paid 6s. for his role in distributing handbills, along with Edmund Cradock Hartopp's election agent Thomas Pares who was paid a total of £14 8s. 3d. for 'messages and letters sent, payments for postage and delivery and delivering hand bills', as well as distributing handbills to Loughborough, Harborough, Melton, Ashby, Belvoir Castle, and 'about Leicester'.[243]

Elections often took place with little formal warning, meaning that candidates had to organize their canvass as quickly as possible. Announcements of a candidate's intention to stand would appear in the press as soon as an election was expected. It was also important that formal addresses and handbills were

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[240] LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester election receipt from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798).
[241] LRO, 10D72/606 Handwritten draft address of Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798).
[242] LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester election receipt from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798).
[243] LRO, 10D72/602-603 Election receipts from canvass of Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798).

printed and distributed to voters as quickly as possible. During the autumn and winter of 1825, a dissolution of Parliament looked likely.[244] In East Retford, 'expectation was raised to a high pitch amongst the Freemen', and candidates began canvassing the borough early, producing handbills, addresses, and songs, although no contest took place in the town until June 1826.[245]

Over 140 of these songs, addresses, and satirical handbills were reproduced in *Electionana Retfordiensis*. It is not possible to know how many, if any, of these handbills were actually printed during the winter of 1825/26. Furthermore, since so few printed canvasses from any East Retford election survive, it is also difficult to speculate as to how many were reused for the June 1826 election. On the other hand, evidence from the East Retford election of 1830 is much more fulsome, with election expenses detailing the huge number of addresses which could be printed over the course of a single contest.

Between 22nd July and the close of the poll on 6th August 1830, a total of 21,144 handbills, songs, addresses, and posters were printed on behalf of Arthur Duncombe.[246] Such a figure not only highlights the sheer number of handbills printed, but also the speed at which a candidates' printed canvasses could be produced, often in response to those of their rivals. Furthermore, it is clear that preparations for an election began early, even before Parliament was dissolved on 24th July 1830, less than a month after the death of George IV on 26th June.

[244] D.R. Fisher, 'Introductory Survey', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 28/07/2018].
[245] *Electionana Retfordiensis*.
[246] UNMSC, Ne C 4223/5/1 Bill containing list of disbursements of William Broughton (October 1830); UNMSC, Ne C 4524/10/1 Bill from John Whitlam, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, to the Worksop Committee for Captain Duncombe (July 1830); UNMSC, Ne C 4524/6 Bill from Francis Sissons, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, to the Committee conducting the Election of Arthur Duncombe (1830); UNMSC, Ne C 4522/1/1 Bill from F. Hodson of East Retford to 'Captain Duncombe's Committee (22nd July 1830).

With two other candidates standing for election in East Retford, presumably each ordering a similar number of addresses, it is possible that as many as 63,432 individual items were in circulation around a town with a population of around 2491, and an electorate of around 2,000, a figure even higher than the estimated 50,000 items in circulation during the 1790 Newcastle-under-Lyme election as calculated by Barker and Vincent.[247]

Unusually for election expenses, the receipt from printer F. Hodson gives a detailed list of not only the number of items printed, but also the titles of handbills produced (Table 2.1). On 4th August, 200 'demy quarto sheets' of a handbill entitled 'No Coalition' were printed at a cost of £2 8s. No copy of this handbill has been found, but a handbill with the same title appeared in *Electionana Retfordiensis*. It is possible that the 1826 version was reused or adapted for use four years later. However, evidence from other elections suggests that this was unlikely.

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[247] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xxviii. According to Barker and Vincent, Newcastle-under-Lyme had a population of just over 4500 in 1790.

Table 2.1: Bill from F. Hodson of East Retford to 'Captain Duncombe's Committee (22nd July 1830).[248]

Date	Quantity and item ordered	Cost
July 22nd	200 Demy Quarto "Old Hats"	10s.
23rd	800 Demy ½ First Address	£4 16s.
26th	400 … with Alterations	£2 8s.
27th	400 Demy Sheets "Vote for Duncombe"	£4 16s.
	400 Small Cards	16s.
	800 Demy ½ sheets "Duncombe's Address"	£4 16s.
28th	200 Demy Sheets "Duncombe will Stand the Poll"	£2 8s.
	Day Book	6s. 6d.
	Pens and Inkstand	2s.
29th	500 Demy ½ Sheets, Second Address	£3
	500 Circulars, Fly leaf Second Address	£3
	250 Circulars, Fly leaf "Duncombe's Committee"	£1 10s.
30th	500 Demy ½ Sheets Duncombe's 4th Address	£3
	Memorandum Book	3s.
31st	500 Songs "Duncombe and Independence"	£1 5s.
	500 Demy ½ Sheets "Vote for Duncombe 3rd Man"	£3
	2,000 labels on coloured paper	£2
	500 Demy ½ Sheets "Reply to an Elector"	£3
	300 Demy Quarto "Rare Avis"	13s.
Aug 1st	Memorandum Book	1s. 4d.
	200 Demy Quarto "Mission Deeps"	10s.
2nd	24 Pink and Blue Flags	£1 4s.
	24 Large Posters, for Coaches	12s.

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[248] UNMSC, Ne C 4522/1/1 Bill from F. Hodson of East Retford to 'Captain Duncombe's Committee (22nd July 1830). See Chapter Five for a discussion of paper sizes mentioned in this particular receipt, page 266.

	½ Quire of gilt Post	9s.
3rd	400 Songs	£1
	100 Large Sheets for Coaches	£1 4s.
	200 Demy Quarto "Yellow Cock"	£1 4s.
	200 Small Cards "Admit Mr…"	8s.
	500 Large Cards, Refreshment Tickets	£1 10s.
	India Rubber and 1 Quire Post 1/6	2s 9d
	Pack of Plain Cards 1/- Ruler 1/9	2s 9d
Aug 4th	200 Demy Sheets "No Coalition"	£2 8s
	400 Demy Quarto "State of the Poll"	£1
	100 Pens	6s.
	½ Quire of Foolscap and Pens	2s. 9d.
5th	100 Demy Sheets, Caution to Voters	£1 4s.
	400 Small Cards "Half-Refreshment Tickets"	16s.
	500 Demy Quarto "State of the Poll"	£1 5s.
	1 Quire of Large Post 2/4	3s. 6d.
6th	300 Small Cards "1/2 Refreshment Tickets"	12s.
	200 Demy Quarto "Behaviour of Voters"	10s.
	½ Quire of Tissue Paper	9d.
	Reprinting 200 Refreshment Tickets	5s.
		Total **£58 15s. 6d.**

Such large quantities of election literature raise a number of questions. In particular, who was responsible for writing or composing handbills and songs? Were all those printed handed out? If so, were they actually read by the public, and what happened to bills once they had served their purpose? Some of these questions are more difficult to answer than others.

It was the responsibility of printers, booksellers, and political agents to ensure that election addresses, cards, and handbills were printed and circulated around the constituency, as well as delivered to newspaper proprietors with the intention that copies should be reprinted in the press. However, whilst election receipts occasionally state how long a particular agent spent canvassing constituencies, there is rarely any suggestion as to how many handbills were handed out, or to whom. Even at the time of canvassing, it is unlikely that the agent himself would have known how many he had given out. Furthermore, few receipts give any details as to who was responsible for writing election literature. Those which do are often far vaguer than the descriptions of printing work.

Printers, especially those who were also newspaper proprietors, would have been in constant receipt of the gossip and rumours which election handbills relied on, and so would have been in an ideal position to write many of the canvasses they printed. How widespread this practise was, however, is difficult to assess, especially since, despite extensive printers' receipts, few if any refer to writing canvasses. Some receipts do give details of payment for 'composing' election literature. This, however, is much more likely to be a reference to setting the type prior to printing, rather than writing an election handbill, song, or ballad.[249]

There is some evidence from handbills themselves that, occasionally, printers were responsible for writing election literature. Two of the main printers to be involved in producing addresses which formed part of the 1803 *Paper War* were Charles Sutton and William Harrod. Prior to establishing the *Nottingham Review*

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[249] NA, DD/2723/3/5/6 Election receipt of Mr Hage (1820); Mosley, 'Technologies of printing', 176-78.

in 1808, Sutton ran a printing business, established in around 1791.[250] Between 1793 and 1795, William Harrod had been the printer, editor, and owner of the *Stamford Herald*, before moving to Nottingham sometime around 1801, going into partnership with printers named Turner.[251] During the 1803 Nottingham by-election, Sutton printed a range of canvasses in support of Joseph Birch, whilst Harrod produced literature in favour of Daniel Parker Coke. The two men were therefore not only rivals in business, but also in their political affiliations.

Sutton issued a series of printed attacks on Harrod. Alongside calling him a turncoat, he claimed that Harrod's work as a writer was poor, and that 'he cannot distinguish a NOUN from a VERB; and as for PRONOUNS he shaketh them together in a bag; then… draweth them out for his use, just as it happeneth.'[252] Sutton claimed that, in the run up to the 1802 election, Harrod had composed songs for the canvass, as well as a pamphlet called 'Chapters of Chance', which, Sutton claimed, 'like the rest of his productions [were]… very *foolish* and *lying* things.'[253] Sutton also claimed that Harrod was the author of a number of other election canvasses, including *Little Solomon Exposed* which attacked Robert Davison, a pro-Birch mill owner over his role in enclosing land at Arnold.[254]

How many other songs which appeared as part of the 1803 *Paper War* were written by any of the printers involved in the election is not clear. Patton has

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[250] British Book Trade Index [accessed 29/07/18].
[251] J. Jenkins, 'Harrod, William (1753-1819)', *ODNB* (2008) [accessed 19/04/2018].
[252] *Paper War*, 132; Nicholson, 'Print and Politics in the Nottinghamshire Constituencies c.1790-1832', 185.
[253] *Paper War*, 134; *Book of Chances, in nine chapters, containing a regular detail on the most remarkable occurrences, form the Commencement of the Nottingham Election in 1802 to the return of D.P. Coke, Esq. (As a Member of Parliament). June 6th 1803* (Nottingham, 1803).
[254] *Paper War*, 128-31; Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse', 69; Rev. R W King & Rev. J Russell (eds), *A History of Arnold* (1913) *Nottinghamshire History Resources for Local Historians and Genealogists* http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/books/arnold1913/arnold12.htm [accessed 29/07/18]. Harrod also claimed authorship of *Little Solomon Exposed.*

demonstrated how Sutton and Harrod parodied each other's work, and has attributed two examples, both with the title of 'The Triumph of Freedom', to them.[255] There is little in the text to point to this, but given the rivalry between the two men, and the way in which other printers would use and copy the works of their rivals, it is entirely possible that this was the case.

Some canvasses were also printed before the final poll had been announced. During the Nottingham by-election of 1803, one song was printed by Charles Sutton with the title 'Birch Triumphant', and was reprinted by Sutton in the *Paper War*. Finishing with the line 'Joseph Birch Triumphant was chair'd with Huzza!', it was clearly produced with the intention of being sung as part of the chairing ceremony.[256] Polling took place from Monday 30th May until Monday 6th June, and it was not until the end of the sixth day when Birch was behind Coke in the polls.[257] In this case, it seems as if Birch and his supporters predicted a favourable result, and started to produce literature to celebrate his success. How many copies of this song were printed is not known, nor is the extent to which it was circulated before the result had been announced. There is little to suggest, however, that Coke's supporters seized on the song, using it against Birch in their own canvasses, suggesting either that it was not widely distributed, or that it appeared too late to be mocked by Coke's supporters.

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[255] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse', 69- 70.
[256] UNMSC, os.X.Pamph PR1181.B2 *Ballads.* vol. 1: *Nottingham region* 'Birch Triumphant' (1803).
[257] *A Complete Alphabetic List of the 2525 Burgesses & Freeholders who polled at the Late Nottingham Election Including their Names, Occupations, Place of Residence and whom their Votes were given, From Monday, May 30th, 1803 to Monday, June 6th, 1803* (1803).

As Mark Philp has argued, when examining authorship of songs and ballads, 'information varies considerably'.[258] The Nottingham *Paper War* of 1803 is unusual in the sense that authors of some of the songs are identifiable. The majority were written anonymously, typically by ballad-writers who, Patton suggests, could be called upon to compose doggerel quickly as required, with printers and publishers often having 'a poet on whom they could rely for the versification of events.'[259]

Occasionally, however, ballad writers received some degree of local notoriety. David Love, for instance, was a ballad and chapbook seller in Nottingham, and as one source claimed, his 'compositions were very numerous, and, strange to say, considering their extreme lack of talent, at times very popular.'[260] Ballad sellers and pedlars often attempted to capitalise on the popularity of elections by composing works of their own creation, with the hope of making a small profit. In anticipation of a general election in May 1818, Nottingham 'was enlivened by the extraordinary circumstance of three candidates on the Whig interest, canvassing the town simultaneously' when Joseph Birch, Lord Rancliffe, and Thomas Denman all offered themselves as candidates, only for Denman to withdraw from the election in favour of Birch and Rancliffe, later joined by Tory candidate Thomas Assheton Smith.[261] During this time, Love composed at least one song in referring to all three initial candidates. (Figure 2.7).[262]

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[258] M. Philp, *Reforming Ideas in Britain: Politics and Language in the Shadow of the French Revolution, 1789-1815* (Cambridge, 2014), 237.
[259] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse', 68.
[260] *The Date Book*, 18; J. Sambrook, 'Love, David (1750–1827)', *ODNB* (2008) [accessed 08/12/16]; D. Love, *The life, adventures, and experiences of David Love, written by himself* (Nottingham, 1823), 139.
[261] *The Date Book*, 343. See Appendix for a full list of candidates in this election.
[262] NLSL, L32.44 'Canvassing for the Election' (1820).
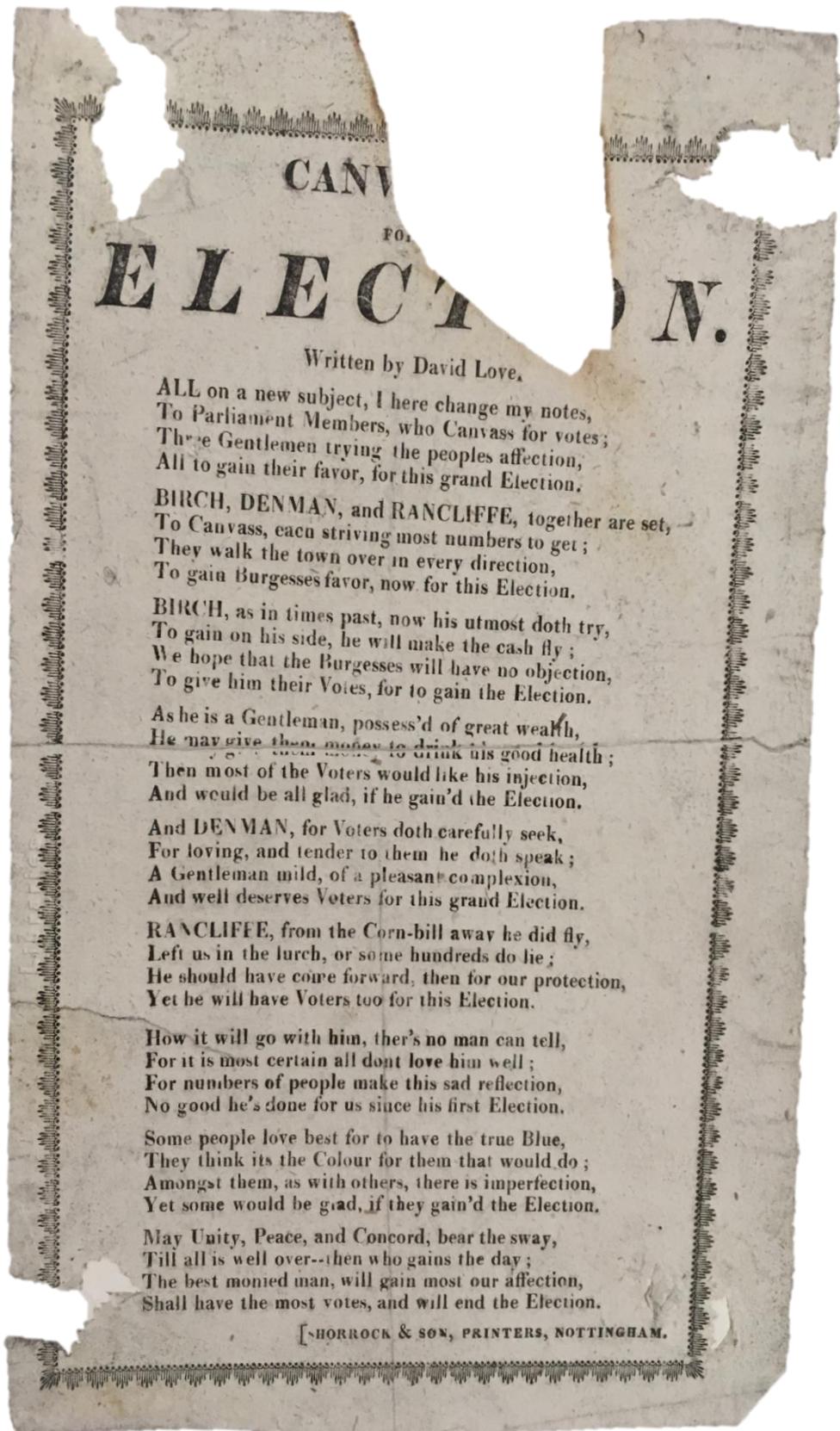
CANVASSING FOR ELECTION.

Written by David Love.

ALL on a new subject, I here change my notes,
To Parliament Members, who Canvass for votes;
Three Gentlemen trying the peoples affection,
All to gain their favor, for this grand Election.

BIRCH, DENMAN, and RANCLIFFE, together are set,
To Canvass, each striving most numbers to get;
They walk the town over in every direction,
To gain Burgesses favor, now for this Election.

BIRCH, as in times past, now his utmost doth try,
To gain on his side, he will make the cash fly;
We hope that the Burgesses will have no objection,
To give him their Votes, for to gain the Election.

As he is a Gentleman, possess'd of great wealth,
He may give them money to drink his good health;
Then most of the Voters would like his injection,
And would be all glad, if he gain'd the Election.

And DENMAN, for Voters doth carefully seek,
For loving, and tender to them he doth speak;
A Gentleman mild, of a pleasant complexion,
And well deserves Voters for this grand Election.

RANCLIFFE, from the Corn-bill away he did fly,
Left us in the lurch, or some hundreds do lie;
He should have come forward, then for our protection,
Yet he will have Voters too for this Election.

How it will go with him, ther's no man can tell,
For it is most certain all dont love him well;
For numbers of people make this sad reflection,
No good he's done for us since his first Election.

Some people love best for to have the true Blue,
They think its the Colour for them that would do;
Amongst them, as with others, there is imperfection,
Yet some would be glad, if they gain'd the Election.

May Unity, Peace, and Concord, bear the sway,
Till all is well over--then who gains the day;
The best monied man, will gain most our affection,
Shall have the most votes, and will end the Election.

[SHORROCK & SON, PRINTERS, NOTTINGHAM.

Figure 2.7: NLSL, L32.44 'Canvassing for the Election' (1818).

As William Patton has suggested, lyrics such as 'The best monied man, will gain most our affection, Shall have the most votes, and will end the Election', point to the importance of wealth in dictating the outcome of the election.[263] In terms of treating voters, Love singles out Birch, claiming that, 'To gain on his side, he will make the cash fly ... As he is a Gentleman, possess'd of great wealth, He may give them [the Burgesses] money to drink his good health'.

Both Birch and Rancliffe would have been well known to constituents, having represented the borough before. Rancliffe's inattentions to the borough received the attention of Love who claimed that he had left voters 'in the lurch' over the Corn Laws, and 'no good he's done for us since his first Election'. Regardless of his conduct, Love also claimed that Rancliffe 'will have Voters too for this Election', a prediction which ultimately proved correct, as Rancliffe came second in the poll behind Birch.

It is far more likely that Love composed and printed this particular song on his own volition rather than being appointed by any of the candidates. However, as election receipts show, it is clear that a significant amount of literature was commissioned, written, and printed on behalf of candidates. During the Newark canvass of 1790, William Dickinson Rastall wrote a number of addresses produced for the election. Described as the 'ringleader of the "Blue" opposition', Rastall declined to stand for election himself, choosing instead to support the Whig candidate William Paxton.[264] An address 'To the Worthy and Independent Electors of the Borough of Newark' claimed that Rastall attempted to secure a

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[263] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse'; NLSL, L32.44 'Canvassing for the Election' (1818).

[264] A. Henstock, 'Dickinson, William (1756-1822)', *ODNB* (2008) [accessed 18/04/18]; R. G. Thorne, 'Paxton, Sir William (c.1744-1824)', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 18/04/18]; R.G. Thorne , 'Newark' *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 18/04/18].

seat for Paxton by offering Charles Manners Sutton £3,000, a sum which was 'rejected without deliberation.'[265] Rastall responded in print to these accusations, and alongside the other more traditional styles of addresses from candidates, these also came to form part of Paxton's printed canvass.[266]

As part of William Clinton and Henry Willoughby's canvass during the Newark election of 1820, two writers were employed for a total of four days, each being paid one guinea per day, as well as an additional payment of 12s. per day for 'expenses'. Who these writers were, or what they were employed to do, however, is not listed.[267] Elsewhere across the region, other references to writers being paid to compose election literature exist, although these too are often fragmentary and vague.

Between 23rd May and 25th June 1826, Thomas Babington Macaulay, the historian and politician, assisted with the canvass of the Leicester candidate William Evans, during which time he appears to have composed at least two handbills in support of Evans.[268] Unlike Dickinson Rastall, Macaulay appears not to have signed any of his handbills, making it difficult to identify his work. So far, two have been identified as his. The first, a handbill entitled 'Fragment of an Ancient Romance', was signed CID HAMET BENEGELI, and contained a number of local references and in-jokes. It sets the election in a fictional historical age, when two knights competed for the love of a fair princess

[265] *Newark Complete Collection 1790*, 8.
[266] *Newark Complete Collection 1790*, 9-10, 11, 27, 39, 40-1, 50-1.
[267] NA, DD/2723/3/5/7 'List of expenses at the Election of General Sir William Henry Clinton and Henry Willoughby' (1820).
[268] S. Farrell, 'Macaulay Thomas Babington (1800-1859)' *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 11/12/16]; *The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay* vol. 1: *1807-February 1831* (Cambridge, 1974), 21; A. Temple Patterson, *Radical Leicester: A History of Leicester 1780-1850* (Leicester, 1954), 153, 197.

(Leicester) who was held captive by a Blue Magician (the town's Tory corporation). The first knight (Evans) was dressed in purple armour, whilst the second wore 'party-coloured armour, which changes its colour ... for now it was purple, and now again it was blue'. Written during the canvass, at the end of the tale, the Purple Knight was victorious, and the princess was 'set free'. In reality however, Evans came third in the contest, beaten to a seat by Charles Abney Hastings and Robert Otway Cave.[269] It is possible that, like 'Birch Triumphant', this example was also written before polling had ended and in anticipation of a favourable outcome for Evans.[270]

The second canvass written by Macaulay was 'A New Song', set to the well-known tune of Derry Down, a popular tune of the day. Bearing some similarities with the 'Fragment of an Ancient Romance', this time, Leicester is likened to 'a young Lady ... Both wealthy and witty, both modest and fair', whilst the town's corporation are depicted as her tyrannical 'Guardians ... half Knaves and half Fools.' In reference to the way in which candidates flattered voters, attempting to win their support, the lady is visited by two suitors. The song acts as a warning against voting for the candidate who makes promises, cautioning voters that he 'who flatters and vows, Oft turns out a surly and negligent spouse', and finally calls on voters to 'stand by old Leicester, and keep out Sir Charley.'[271]

Despite the extensive receipts from the Leicestershire South election of December 1832, there is only one possible reference to writing election literature, when on 28th November 1832, £1 was 'Paid to John Wade for

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[269] LRO, M105 'Fragment of an Ancient Romance' (1826); Temple Patterson, *Radical Leicester*, 153.
[270] See above, n.256.
[271] LRO, M105 'a New Song' (1826).

writing'.[272] No further information as to who John Wade was, or what he wrote is given. Given the timing of the payment, it is likely that it was for writing election canvasses, although as seen above, printing of handbills and addresses for this particular election had been taking place as far back as August.

Vincent and Barker have suggested that newspapers were especially important at the very beginning of a canvass when candidates were 'testing the waters' of a constituency, before deciding to proceed with a full canvass with all the additional costs.[273] However, the fast paced nature of elections meant that the weekly provincial press was at a disadvantage and news could be outdated before it was even printed. In contrast, as election receipts demonstrate, the production of election literature was far more versatile than that of the provincial press, and several thousand copies of handbills, songs, notices, and addresses could be printed in a few days, responding to the gossip and rumors spread by political opponents.

Conclusion

The total number of handbills printed over the course of an election campaign was extensive. Although only a few records which document exact printing numbers survive, as evidence from East Retford shows, several thousand individual bills and addresses could be printed during the course of a single contest. How many of these items were distributed around the constituency is

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[272] DRO, D5336/2/9/27 Green account book of election expenses for Mr Pares and Mr Dawson (1832).
[273] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xxix. See Chapter Three, page 132.

difficult to tell, although election receipts show how agents were responsible for handing out printed literature across a wide area. Furthermore, as Chapter Five will explain, knowing if these addresses were read, and by whom, is also difficult to tell.

This chapter has demonstrated how, between 1790 and 1832, election literature was produced in a wide range of styles, from formal addresses from candidates, to satirical handbills, songs and ballads, many of which were written by printers or chapmen. Generally there was little difference between the ranges of print produced for contested or uncontested elections, suggesting that the role of canvasses was more than convincing the electorate to vote in a particular way. There were, however, exceptions, and certain elections produced an unprecedented amount of literature. Out of the forty-six contested borough and county elections across the East Midlands between 1790 and 1832, it was the Nottingham by-election of 1803 and the 1826 Leicester borough contest which were the most hotly fought. Accordingly, these two elections stand out in terms of the range and style of canvasses produced, a fact which did not go unrecognised at the time.[274]

Elections also represent a unique time in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century political life. Barker and Vincent have argued that, prior to the 1790s, printed canvasses were 'conventional in ... form'. However, as the growing range of satirical addresses shows, elections represented an 'open season for

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[274] *The Poll for electing two burgesses to represent the borough of Leicester in parliament 1826*, iii.

political comment', when vitriolic attacks on candidates and other members of the community were tolerated to a much greater degree than at any other time.[275]

As Marcus Wood has suggested, the use of satire and new ideas surrounding advertising had 'an immediate and lasting impact on political propaganda', especially in terms of election campaigns.[276] Styles and trends which first appeared in London during the 1790s eventually made their way to provincial towns. Although examples of satirical election literature existed before 1803, it was the Nottingham by-election of that year when the use of satire became particularly prevalent. The impact or reception of these handbills is difficult to judge. However, unlike in the capital, where trends quickly changed, certain styles such as mock playbills appear to have remained popular for much longer. Although there is little evidence to suggest that printers saved election handbills to be reused during subsequent contests, it is clear that they were perceptive when establishing which styles were the most effective, sometimes adapting those which were deemed especially successful.

Across the country, the election literature of certain constituencies has attracted more attention than others. Newcastle-under-Lyme is particularly well covered. Hannah Barker and David Vincent have suggested that the rise of the professional election agent coincided with increasingly sophisticated election canvasses, and have speculated that during the thirteen contested elections which took place in the constituency between 1790 and 1832, 'around a third of a million pieces of printed communication' were distributed.[277] More recently,

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[275] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, xxx; Maxted, 'Election Ephemera in Nineteenth-Century Devon', 257.

[276] Wood, *Radical Satire and Print Culture 1790-1822*, 19.

[277] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, XXVIII.

those canvasses printed for elections in Devon have been examined.[278] Few studies, however, have examined the work which went into writing, printing, and distributing this material.

Evidence from election receipts has shown that agents and members of election committees were involved in writing and distributing official canvasses. However, from the late eighteenth century onwards, printers were increasingly partisan, often becoming embroiled in election canvasses. Besides printing election literature on behalf of candidates, they also wrote canvasses on their own volition, often with the expectation of making a small profit. As Maxted has shown, much of this was far more inventive than the material which formed part of the official canvass.[279] Whilst 'no candidate was going to be deterred by the prospect of a war of paper', as the *Paper War* of 1803 has shown, rivalry between printers was often as important as between candidates.[280]

Generally, much of what was printed in election canvasses relied on specific, local knowledge, and was relevant for only a relatively short period of time. Whilst many may have 'perished with the excitement which gave them existence', handbills and other forms of election literature are not 'worthless, undeserving of any lasting memorial' as one poll book suggested.[281] The range of canvasses printed over the course of a single contest highlights the importance which was placed on elections, not only by candidates and their supporters, but also members of the public. By focusing on the production and distribution of

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[278] Maxted, 'Election Ephemera in Nineteenth-Century Devon', 255-277.
[279] Maxted, 'Election Ephemera in Nineteenth-Century Devon', 257.
[280] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, xxx; *Paper War*.
[281] *The Poll for electing two burgesses to represent the borough of Leicester in parliament 1826*, iii.

election literature, this chapter has also highlighted the scale of organisation which went into running an effective campaign.

However, it is important to see printed canvasses in the broader context of elections, especially since, as O'Gorman has illustrated, elections were 'a prolonged sequence of… public displays' which incorporated 'the visual, the aural and the verbal.'[282] Contests could often prove to be hugely expensive for candidates, and whilst money spent on printing and distributing canvasses could be significant, it often paled in comparison to expenditure on food, drink, and other visual devices including flags, banners, and decoration for the chair.[283]

The focus of this chapter has been the examination of election canvasses which were printed and distributed across the East Midlands between 1790 and 1832. It has argued that the fast paced nature of elections meant that it was important to get canvasses out as quickly as possible after the nominations had been announced, something which the local press was not able to achieve. However, the growth and development of the provincial press should not be ignored, and its importance during canvasses should not be overlooked, particularly as many of those printers who were responsible for producing election literature were also newspaper proprietors. In light of work by Adelman and Gardner, the next chapter will assess to what extent the press in the East Midlands became increasingly politicised. Chapter Three will build upon some of the ideas discussed in Chapter Two to examine the extent to which MPs used the press to

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[282] O'Gorman, 'Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies', 94.
[283] NA, DD/2723/3/5/7 'List of expenses at the Election of General Sir William Henry Clinton and Henry Willoughby' (1820); O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 146-158.

direct their election canvasses.[284] Considered together, Chapters Two and Three will show how a successful canvass depended on both handbills and local newspapers, with the two often working together, fulling different roles.

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[284] J.M. Adelman and V.E.M. Gardner, 'News in the Age of Revolution', in R.R. John and J. Silberstein-Loeb, (eds), *Making News: The Political Economy of Journalism in Britain and America from the Glorious Revolution to the Internet* (Oxford, 2015), 54.

Chapter Three

Newspapers

Introduction

Chapter Two showed how, in order to run a successful election campaign, it was necessary for candidates to produce a wide range of print as quickly as possible. Building on themes raised in Chapter Two, Chapter Three re-examines the importance of local newspapers during election campaigns, especially in relation to other forms of printed ephemera. It argues that, despite a growing readership, candidates, political agents, and printers could not rely solely on the provincial press to deliver their message to the public, and instead the provincial press was often used in conjunction to those handbills, pamphlets, and broadsides discussed in the previous chapter.

The lapsing of the Printing Act in 1695 has been seen as a 'watershed' in terms of the development of the provincial press.[285] From what Laprade described as 'insignificant sheets' of the early eighteenth century, by c.1790, the press had come to be recognized by 'politicians, printers, and readers alike' as 'the key carrier of news, political information, and opinion.'[286] By 1800 there were more than seventy local papers in circulation across the country, a figure which, by 1832, had risen to 130.[287]

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[285] H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855* (Harlow, 2000), 1.
[286] W.T. Laprade, 'The Power of the Press in the Eighteenth Century', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 27 (1928), 462; J.M. Adelman and V.E.M. Gardner, 'News in the Age of Revolution', in R.R. John and J. Silberstein-Loeb, (eds), *Making News: The Political Economy of Journalism in Britain and America from the Glorious Revolution to the Internet* (Oxford, 2015), 48-9.
[287] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855*, 1, 29.

As previous studies have shown, providing definitions of these publications is complicated. Different definitions have been used regarding newspapers and news-sheets, broadsides and broadsheets, and periodicals and pamphlets.[288] Names such as 'essay-sheets', 'journals', 'papers', and 'public prints' were all applied to what were essentially similar publications. These different terms reflected the earlier styles of newspapers, many of which often represented pamphlets, rather than the standard style of newspaper seen in the later eighteenth century.[289]

Until the early nineteenth century, governments failed to define newspapers for tax purposes. Stamp duty on newspapers had first been implemented in 1712, with levels of duty rising over the period. Whilst the level of taxation rose periodically over the course of the eighteenth century, it was in 1797, when the level of duty paid rose to 3½d., that the Act first began to be referred to as a 'taxation of knowledge.' With the growth of provincial newspapers, and the increasing awareness of the press's role in changing and developing public opinion, a greater amount of importance was placed on providing political comment. From the 1790s, legislation came to differentiate between the 'radical' and 'respectable' newspapers. Under the Six Acts of 1819, the Newspaper Stamp Duties Act extended the definition to incorporate all pamphlets of one or two sheets, containing public news or comments upon Church or State. These

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[288] G.A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760* (Oxford, 1962), 28-35; Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 2; C.Y. Ferdinand, 'Newspapers and the sale of books in the provinces', in M. F. Suarez and M. L. Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* vol. 5 (Cambridge, 2009), 434-447; M. Harris, 'London Newspapers', in Suarez and Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book In Britain* vol. 5, 413-433.
[289] H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855* (Manchester, 2000), 2.

also had to be printed for sale periodically within twenty-six days and at a cost of less than 6d.[290]

Newspapers continued to be treated with suspicion by the authorities and several commentators saw the growth of the press as threatening to subvert the moral and social order of England. William Windham, MP for Norfolk, thought that newspapers 'contributed to the overthrow of governments', and in December 1798 stated that 'he never saw a man with a newspaper in his hand without regarding him with the sensation that he was taking in poison.'[291] The outbreak of war with France in 1793 heightened conservative fears of a revolution in England at a time when newspaper production and readership was growing. As a result, several well-known radicals including Thomas Spence, Daniel Isaac Eaton, and Richard Carlile were imprisoned as a result of their publications. Alongside these, a number of provincial printers such as Daniel Holt, Richard Phillips, and Charles Sutton, were also imprisoned for publishing newspaper articles deemed to be libellous or involved with the printing, publishing, and sale of radical and revolutionary texts such as *Rights of Man*.[292]

Regardless of these concerns, the provincial press continued to grow. Whilst many publications remained largely reliant on the London press, editors came to be progressively more selective in terms of the information that they used. Papers came to develop their own political stance and voice. Hannah Barker has

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[290] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 2.
[291] J. Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (Aldershot, 1987), 139; R.G. Thorne, 'Windham William (1750-1810)' *HP Commons 1790-1832* [accessed 17/09/18].
[292] M. Wood 'Radical Publishing', in M.F. Suarez and M.L. Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book In Britain* vol. 5, 834-35.

argued that, as the content of newspapers became ever more political, they came to supplant other forms of ephemeral print.[293]

Elections often took place with little warning, and so canvassing was often hastily arranged, with a wide range of printed literature produced to gain the attention of audiences.[294] Prior to the polls' opening, candidates often used the local press to establish the likelihood of electoral success via the press before proceeding to a formal canvass, and the outlay of cash that went with it.[295] During canvasses, addresses from candidates were printed in the press, along with speeches given by candidates and their supporters at the hustings. However, the weekly nature of the local press would have meant that it was impractical for candidates and their agents to be overly reliant on newspapers, especially when it came to connecting with voters and canvassing for their support.

The first part of this chapter outlines the various different newspapers printed and distributed in the East Midlands between 1790 and 1832. The second section focuses on the development and significance of the press, examining what role newspapers played during election campaigns. Finally, the last section will examine the political affiliations and associations of newspapers, showing how, in comparison to the satirical election literature examined in Chapter Two, newspapers were often subjected to much closer scrutiny, and so editors had to be much more restrained in what they printed.

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[293] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855*, 127.

[294] F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1989), 126-29; H. Nicholson, 'Print and Politics in the Nottinghamshire Constituencies c.1790-1832', *TTS*, 121 (2017), 185.

[295] H. Barker and D. Vincent, *Language, Print and Electoral Politics, 1790-1832: Newcastle-under-Lyme Broadsides* (Woodbridge, 1991), xxix.

<u>Production and Distribution of Newspapers</u>

Nottingham was the first town in the East Midlands to establish a newspaper of its own, although there is some discrepancy over which the first publication was.[296] Like many early provincial papers, those in Nottingham were often relatively short lived, taken over by other printers, or reissued under another name. Similarly, the various definitions that have been applied to the earliest examples of newspapers and news-sheets may be another reason for the confusion. Evidence suggests that the first paper in the town was either the *Weekly Courant* or the *Nottingham Post*, both of which were in print by 1711.[297] By c.1813, Nottingham had an active press, with a number of different political opinions catered for. In 1814, however, only a year after it had been founded, the Ultra-Tory *Nottingham Gazette* had been sold. A year later, it had ceased publication altogether, 'lamented by few' in a town which was overwhelmingly pro-Whig.[298]

Both Derby and Leicester trailed behind Nottingham in terms of establishing a newspaper of their own. Derby's first paper was the *Derby Postman* or *British Spy*. First published in 1719, by the 1730s, it was no longer in print. The leading paper for the area was the *Derby Mercury*, initially established in 1732 on non-partisan lines, it remained in print until the beginning of the twentieth century.[299] The *Mercury* was unusual in remaining in print for over 160 years, and as Table

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[296] W. J. Clarke, *Early Nottingham Printers and Printing* (Nottingham, 1942), 12-13; D. Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', *TTS*, 67 (1963), 46.

[297] Clarke, *Early Nottingham Printers and Printing*, 12-13; Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 46.

[298] Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 49.

[299] J.D. Andrews, 'The Derbyshire newspaper press, 1720-1855' (M.A. thesis, University of Reading, 1950), 121-22; J.E. Heath, 'Derbyshire Newspapers', *Derbyshire Miscellany*, 7 (1974), 82.

3.1 shows, the majority of other papers printed in the town were short lived, and so, until 1823 and the emergence of the radical *Derbyshire and Chesterfield Reporter*, there were few serious rivals to the *Mercury*.[300]

Leicester was later still in establishing a paper of its own, and it was not until 1753 when the first newspaper, the *Leicester Journal*, began to be printed. It remained the only paper in the town until 1792 when the Whig *Leicester Chronicle* and the more radical *Leicester Herald* were both founded. As a result of these two rival papers, Derek Fraser has argued that the Tory *Leicester Journal* was forced to become increasingly outspoken in terms of its political views.[301] In some ways this was true. Prior to 1792, whilst the *Leicester Journal* remained supportive of Pitt's administration, the king, and the constitution, the paper was rarely outspoken in its condemnation of political opponents.[302]

The political affiliations of the press will be examined in greater detail in the third section of this chapter. However, after the appearance of the *Leicester Chronicle* and the *Leicester Herald*, there was a noticeable change in the tone of the *Leicester Journal*. In December 1800, for instance, the *Journal* described the town's impending by-election as a contest between 'independence, public virtue, good order, and the constitution… on the one hand [and] corruption, selfishness, insubordination and anarchy on the other'. The paper continued, asking its readers, 'What will every virtuous and loyal Englishman think of a man, who, instead of quieting the minds of the lower classes under the present pressure of difficult times, exasperates and stimulates them into frenzy… trains them by

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[300] See Table 3.1, pages 109-110.
[301] D. Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester c.1790-1850s', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 42 (1966), 53.
[302] *LJ*, 4th June 1790.

Jacobean songs to every species of outrage and goads them onto sedition and treasons by a handbill entitled "the cries of Leicester"'.[303]

Cost, and the challenges editors faced in terms of distribution, meant that, prior to widespread rail networks, papers tended to be produced weekly throughout provincial towns.[304] In order to limit rivalry and competition, papers in the East Midlands were produced on different days. The *Derby Mercury*, for instance, was published on a Friday to coincide with the town's weekly market. On those occasions when the market day was temporarily moved to a Thursday, the *Mercury's* proprietors acted accordingly, ensuring that the paper was printed a day earlier. Having the *Mercury* available on the same day as the market made commercial sense. Whilst provincial newspapers were distributed across the county, market days would have attracted a greater number of people to the town meaning there was a captive audience present.[305]

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Nottingham's market was on a Saturday, and both the *Nottingham Review* and the *Nottingham Gazette* were printed a day earlier. Although in circulation at the same time, the staunchly radical *Review* and Ultra-Tory *Gazette* were unlikely to face competition for readers. The *Nottingham and Newark Mercury*, on the other hand, claimed to be 'extremely extensively circulated early every Saturday morning through the counties of Nottingham, Leicester, Derby, Lincoln and York', and so was not

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[303] *LJ*, 12th December 1800.

[304] Between 1800 and 1815, papers cost 6d., rising to 7d. from 1815 to 1837. According to Fraser, such a price meant it was 'impossible' to produce a paper on a more frequent basis. Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 65.

[305] Andrews, 'The Derbyshire newspaper press, 1720-1855', 161; V.E.M. Gardner, *The Business of News in England, 1760–1820* (Basingstoke, 2016), 29.

only ready for those who travelled into Nottingham on market day, but also was

widely distributed across the East Midlands and further afield.[306]

Table 3.1: East Midlands Newspapers 1790-1832. [307]

TITLE	PROPRIETOR/ PRINTER	EDITOR	YEARS PRINTED	POLITICAL STANCE
Derby Mercury	John Drewry snr. (1769-1794) John Drewry jnr. (1794-1835)	William Ward (1769- 1794) John Drewry	1732-1900	Neutral
Derby and Chesterfield Reporter	William and Walter Pike	Thomas Nobel (1823-1833)	1823-1855	Radical
Derby Herald	Charles Ordoyno	Ordoyno	1792-1792	Whig/ Radical
Derbyshire Chronicle and Universal Weekly Advertiser	Unknown	D.P. Davis	1813	Whig
Derbyshire Courier and Chesterfield Gazette	Lt. John Roberts	Henry David Inglis	1828-1855	Tory
Leicestershire Herald Renamed *Leicester Herald* 1828	Henry J. Wilkinson	Henry J. Wilkinson	1827-1842	Ultra-Tory
Leicester Chronicle	Thomas Combe	Thomas Combe	1792-1795	Whig
Leicester Herald	Richard Phillips	Richard Phillips	1792-1795	Radical

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[306] *NNM*, 31st July 1830.

[307] Andrews, 'The Derbyshire newspaper press, 1720-1855'; T.M. Blagg, Newark as a Publishing Town (Newark, 1898); Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850'; Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester c.1790-1850s'; Gardner, *The Business of News in England*, 1760–1820, 180-1; NewsPlan, http://newsplan.liem.org.uk/index.asp#results [accessed 05/02/17].

Leicester Chronicle	Committee (1810-14) Thomas Thompson (1814-1841)	John Ryley (1810-1811) G. Brown (1812-1813) T. Thompson 1813-1841)	1810-1864	Whig-Liberal
Leicester Journal	John Gregory (1789-1803) Gregory and John Price (1803-1806) John Price (1806-1831) B. Payne and B. Jackson (1831-1836)	See proprietors except C.H.T. Price (1831-36)	1753-1920	Tory
Nottingham Journal	George Burbage (1793-1807) George Stretton (1793-1832)	Burbage (1793-1807) Stretton (1807-1832)	1755-1887	Tory
Nottingham Review	Charles Sutton (1808-1828) Richard Sutton (1828-1856)	Charles Sutton (1808-1828) Richard Sutton (1828-1841)	1808-1870	Radical
Nottingham Gazette	Richard Eaton (1813-1814) Walter Tupman (1814-1815)	Richard Eaton (1813-1814) H. Barnett (1814-1815)	1813-1815	Ultra-Tory
The Nottingham [and Newark] Mercury	Committee	W.P. Smith (1825-1826)	1825-1852	Whig
Newark Herald	Daniel Holt	Daniel Holt	1791-1794	Radical
Newark Observer	Ben Johnson	Ben Johnson	1832-1832	Radical

Mail coaches were relied upon to distribute provincial papers around the region, and to deliver those papers produced in London to provincial printing offices. Recalling the early 1790s when he was editor and printer of the *Leicester Herald*,

Richard Phillips described how printers and editors were always under pressure to 'get ready in some way for the Nottingham and Derby coaches, which, at four in the morning, required 4 or 500 papers.'[308] In the century before the railway, the stagecoach was the primary form of 'fast' transport in England and Wales. Between 1790 and 1800, the average speed of a regional coach (excluding stop times) rose from 5.03mph to 5.32mph. By 1828, this had reached 7.12mph.[309] Writing in the 1820s, Phillips claimed that 'fifty years ago, the arrival of the mails was uncertain,' but, 'there are now at least twelve daily opportunities of going to London ... six to Nottingham [and] two to Derby.'[310] Such a network meant that there was a constant circulation of news around the country.

Local papers were tailored for the arrival of news from London, when printers and editors would start composing their own papers.[311] Some news came via 'express', highlighting the importance that readers placed on getting the latest news from the capital.[312] In contrast to other towns around the country, in the East Midlands, it would seem that, the majority of express news was from abroad rather than from London. Despite the 'express' delivery of international news, its arrival was often sporadic. Information was often dated by the time it reached London, and even more so by the time it made its way into local newspapers. Comments regularly appeared in the provincial press regarding the arrival of foreign news. As the *Derby Mercury* commented in 1800, 'American papers

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[308] R. Phillips, *Personal Tour through the United Kingdom; describing living objects and contemporaneous interests* (London, 1828), 197-8.
[309] D. Gerhold, 'The development of state coaching and the impact of turnpike roads, 1653-1840', *Economic History Review*, 67 (2014), 818-19.
[310] Phillips, *Personal Tour through the United Kingdom*, 78; Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855*, 102-03.
[311] Gardner, *The Business of News*, 26-30.
[312] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 112; *NR*, 2nd October 1812, *NR*, 16th October 1812.

have been received of a date much more recent that any had previously arrived.'[313]

Conversely, papers also reported delays in receiving international mail, meaning there was little in the way of foreign news to give, and printers often struggled to fill their paper.[314] Richard Phillips claimed that, in the 1790s, owing to a tight printing deadline and a shortness of information, a random collection of letters (known in the printing trade as 'pie') was used to fill space in the *Leicester Herald*, to the confusion of audiences. This 'jumble of odd letters, gathered from the floor,' had been labelled "DUTCH MAIL" which, the *Herald* explained, had not been translated owing to the late arrival of the Dutch papers.[315] This incident highlights not only the pressure which printers and editors were under to meet deadlines, but also the way in which provincial papers remained, to a relatively large extent, reliant on metropolitan and international news. It is unlikely that provincial papers such as the *Derby Mercury* or *Nottingham Review* would have had foreign papers directly delivered to their offices, with few being able to afford the expense.[316]

As the *Nottingham and Newark Mercury* highlights, newspapers were typically distributed much further than the town in which they were published.[317] Provincial newspapers were very often dependant on those sales from other towns.[318] The distribution system of the provincial press has been shown to be a complex organisation with agents, journeymen, and newsmen employed to

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[313] *DM*, 13th March 1800.
[314] *DM*, 27th May 1790, *DM*, 30th October 1806.
[315] Phillips, *Personal Tour through the United Kingdom*, 197-8.
[316] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 106.
[317] See above, pages 108-09.
[318] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 41.

travel the country taking in information to be included in the press, distributing newspapers and delivering messages.[319] The *Derby Mercury*, for instance, had agents in numerous towns across the East Midlands including Newark, Mansfield, Chesterfield, Buxton, Loughborough, Nottingham, and Leicester.[320]

Agents also operated further afield, in areas such as Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham, and Sheffield. Between 1790 and 1832, newspapers from the East Midlands were also taken in by London coffeehouses. The *Derby Mercury*, for instance, was available from W. Taylor and T. Newton on Newgate Street.[321] Whilst the *Derby Mercury* reached as far north as Newcastle, other than London, there were no towns south of Coventry where the paper was sold. When looking at the distribution of provincial papers, it would seem that publications such as the *Bath Chronicle* and the *Bristol Mercury* served towns south of Coventry, including Cambridge, Oxford, and Exeter. However, some of these papers appear to have had connections much further afield than many of those which were produced in the East Midlands. For instance, the *Bristol Mercury* sent papers as far as Liverpool and York.[322] Furthermore, with the growth in the number of provincial newspapers across England between 1790 and 1830, it is unlikely that audiences in southern towns had a particular need for newspapers directed at readers in and around the Midlands.

Establishing the number of papers sold prior to 1833, when official accounts were first published in the 'House of Commons Accounts and Papers', is

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[319] H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth Century England* (Oxford, 1998), 41-5; Gardner, *The Business of News*, 2, 99, 147-52; G.A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper* (Oxford, 1962), 190-206.
[320] *DM,* 2nd January 1800; *DM*, 6th November 1806.
[321] *DM*, 6th November 1806; *DM*, 8th March 1820.
[322] Gardner, *The Business of News*, 148- 50.

difficult. The number of stamps issued to newspapers does not necessarily reflect the number of copies sold, especially since some printers bought more stamps than they needed.[323] However, they can at least give a good indication of the number of papers printed, and the likely circulation figures.

Table 3.2: Circulation of East Midlands Newspapers 1833.[324]

Name of paper	Number of stamps issued year ending 1st April 1833	Number of stamps per week (average)	Census Figures (1831)
Derby Mercury (Neutral)	48,000	923	Derby 23,627
Derby Reporter (Radical)	40,200	773	
Leicester Chronicle (Whig)	43,400	835	Leicester 39,904
Leicester Herald (Radical)	4,075	78	
Leicester Journal (Tory)	89,500	1,721	
Nottingham Journal (Tory)	45,000	865	Nottingham 50,216
Nottingham Review (Radical)	70,800	1,362	
Nottingham and Newark Mercury (Whig-liberal)	44,000	846	

Based on the number of stamps issued to papers, Table 3.2 indicates that certain papers in the East Midlands were more successful than others. Nottingham had

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[323] A. Hobbs, 'Reading the local paper: Social and cultural functions of the local press in Preston, Lancashire, 1855-1900' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Central Lancashire, 2010), 29.
[324] Based on figures in *House of Commons Papers*, vol. 32, 'Account of Number of Stamps issued to Provincial Newspapers in England, 1832-33' (1833), 2-3 http://parlipapers.proquest.com/parlipapers/docview/t70.d75.1833-014536?accountid=8018 [accessed 21/02/18].

the greatest number of potential readers, with a population of 50,216, in addition to those readers who lived outside of the town. The *Nottingham Review* printed an average of 1362 copies per week in 1833.[325] However, many of these were likely to have been sold outside of the town, especially since, as Fraser has suggested, the *Review* was 'virtually a national weekly emanating from Nottingham'.[326] In comparison, Leicester had a population of almost 40,000 in 1831. With 1721 copies of the *Leicester Journal* printed weekly, there was, on average, 23.1 readers per copy.[327] Leicester, like Nottingham, had a broad range of newspapers, covering a variety of different political opinions, with some papers such as the *Leicester Chronicle* also attracting a large readership. The number of copies printed suggests that, rather than dominating newspaper sales in the town, the *Leicester Journal* had a greater proportion of out of town readers than other papers in the East Midlands. Similarly, taking into account that, out of the three towns, Derby had the lowest total population, comparatively the *Derby Mercury* had a surprisingly high number of issues printed, again suggesting that this paper also had a high circulation out of town.

It might be expected that, given the growing power and influence of the provincial press during the course of the nineteenth century, sales of newspapers in the East Midlands would be significantly higher in the 1830s as opposed to earlier in the nineteenth century. Before 1833, sales figures are less precise, and much of the information comes from the newspapers themselves. This can be problematic when attempting to examine the numbers of papers sold, especially

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[325] An average of 36.9 resident readers per copy.
[326] Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 55.
[327] Recent estimates have speculated that some newspapers could be shared between as many as 20 individuals. J. Neuheiser, *Crown, Church and Constitution: Popular Conservatism in England, 1815-1867*, trans. by Jennifer Walcoff Neuheiser (Göttingen, 2016), 20-21. See Chapter Five pages 274-75 for a discussion of how newspapers were shared amongst readers.

as it was not unusual for more papers to be printed than sold, or to find that proprietors exaggerated their sales.[328] In December 1812, Charles Sutton claimed that the *Nottingham Review* sold between 1,500 and 1,600 papers per week, of which only around 750 were sold in Nottingham.[329] In contrast, as seen above, an average of 1,362 stamps were issued per week during the year ending 1st April 1833.[330]

In 1812, the *Nottingham Review* was the only liberal paper in the town. Its campaigns against the Napoleonic Wars, and early support for parliamentary reform meant that, whilst it may have found a significant number of readers elsewhere across the country, it was a popular publication in Nottingham.[331] The *Review's* situation was also presumably made stronger by the absence of another liberal paper in the town. By 1825, a rival paper, the *Nottingham Mercury*, was being printed and sold, and by 1833, the paper was printing, on average, 846 copies a week.[332] After Charles Sutton's death in 1829, whilst it retained its radical views, and continued to press for further extension of the franchise, the *Review* came to have a more local outlook than before.[333] Although Sutton may have exaggerated the 1812 sales figures, in light of the changes after his death, the total number of weekly sales appear to have decreased by 1832/33.

Sales figures, however, do not necessarily correspond with how many people read or had access to newspapers. In 1815, the price of a newspaper rose to 7d.

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[328] J. Thompson, *British political culture and the idea of 'public opinion', 1867-1914* (Cambridge, 2013), 112.
[329] Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 55.
[330] See Table 3.2, page 114.
[331] *NR*, 11th September 1812; *NR*,18th September 1812; *NR*, 25th September 1812; *NR*, 2nd October 1812; *NR*, 9th September 1812; *NR*, 16th October 1812. Chapter 4 examines which issues dominated elections in more detail.
[332] The *Nottingham Mercury* was published between 1825 and 1826, before being renamed the *Nottingham and Newark Mercury*.
[333] Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 54-8.

which, Barker has speculated, could have been as much as twelve per cent of the weekly wage for provincial labourers.[334] Both E.P. Thompson and Arthur Aspinall have suggested that coffee-houses, public houses and gin-shops were 'important agencies for the dissemination of newspaper information,' where workers might club together to buy a newspaper between themselves.[335] The frequency with which this took place, however, has to be questioned. Whilst to some degree newspapers were shared or read in coffee houses, it is probable that Thompson overestimated the extent to which this took place, especially since evidence suggests that audiences of provincial papers tended to be from the middling classes, or those with higher standards of literacy.[336]

As Table 3.1 demonstrates, newspaper proprietors were also often printers and booksellers in their own right.[337] The *Leicester Journal*, *Leicester Herald*, and *Leicestershire Herald* were all printed by their owners. The same was also true of the *Nottingham Journal*, *Nottingham Review*, and *Nottingham Gazette*. In contrast, the *Nottingham Mercury* (later the *Nottingham and Newark Mercury*) and the *Leicester Chronicle* were run by a committee, and so were printed independently from their respective owners.[338]

As Cranfield, Barker, and Gardner have shown, between 1790 and 1832, newspapers tended to belong to individuals, with many passing on their interests from father to son, something which was certainly true for a number of papers

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[334] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 39.
[335] A. Aspinall, *Politics and the Press c.1780-1850* (London, 1949); 27; E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1968), 788-9.
[336] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion*, 115-7. Chapter Five considers the audience of newspapers.
[337] See pages 109-110.
[338] Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 63-4; Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester c.1790-1850s', 73.

in the East Midlands including the *Derby Mercury*, *Leicester Journal*, and *Nottingham Review*.[339] Provincial printing offices during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries tended to be small. Many employed only a few members of staff, usually consisting of no more than three or four compositors and pressmen, with the master printer, typically the proprietor, working in the trade as well.[340]

It was not unusual for a printing house to have at least one apprentice, especially if the paper was not a family run business. The success of a paper could often rely on a printer's ability to find and keep an apprentice. In January 1792, the *Derby Herald* advertised for two apprentices and 'a journeyman compositor.' Seemingly unable to fulfil these positions, the *Herald* ceased publication a month later.[341] Apprentices were expected to fulfil a multitude of roles, and early in their indenture would have undertaken all manner of basic tasks such as, delivering and selling newspapers, opening and shutting the business up, as well as preparation and cleaning tasks such as mixing ink and washing it from the type. Later, they would have been responsible for setting the type and proof checking. According to Gardner, 'compositors often had considerable responsibility', required to compose new items, often directly from the London papers by arranging the type for printing.[342] The *Herald's* promise of 'constant employment, and good Wages' suggests that there was a pressing need to find a

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[339] Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper*, 49; H. Barker, 'Catering for Provincial Tastes: Newspapers, Readership and Profit in Late Eighteenth Century England', *Historical Research*, 69 (1996), 51; Gardner, *The Business of News*, 95, 100-4; J. Hinks, 'The History of the Book Trade in Leicester to c.1850' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Loughborough, 2002), 200-7; Andrews, 'The Derbyshire newspaper press, 1720-1855', 121-5.
[340] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion*, 102.
[341] *DH*, 15th January 1792, *DH*, 30th January 1792.
[342] Gardner, *The Business of News*, 105.

suitable candidate.[343] The fact that, shortly after these advertisements were placed, the paper ceased publication highlights the importance of having a number of people to help with the various roles needed to ensure the success of a paper. This is perhaps why many of those papers which had the greatest longevity both in the East Midlands, and further afield, were passed down the family line.

Gardner has estimated that producing a weekly paper meant that printing presses were in use for around two days per week. As a result, there were at least four days when printers would have been able to use their printing press for other items.[344] As Chapter Two demonstrated, during the course of an election, newspaper printers such as Sutton, Stretton, Pike, Thompson, and Combe were called upon to produce an enormous range and volume of political prints, advertisements and handbills at short notice, which, unlike newspapers, had no set publication day. It is this 'endless flow' of ephemera which, Feather has argued, would have formed the mainstay of a printer's trade.[345] Despite this, Hannah Barker has suggested that 'the prominence and importance of the newspaper press increased in relation to other forms of political print.'[346] The next section of this chapter will reassess this statement, outlining the development of the press, examining its role and importance over the course of an election canvass, and determine to what extent handbills were superseded by local newspapers.

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[343] *DH*, 30th January 1792.
[344] Gardner, *The Business of News*, 75.
[345] J. Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1985), 120.
[346] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 127.

<u>Development and Role of the Provincial Press</u>

Despite the continued reliance on the London press, throughout the early nineteenth century, both national and local papers were seen as becoming increasingly important in providing access to political ideas, debates, and opinions. Some local newspapers retained the 'cut and paste' style of editorial, copying information from the London press. However, Walker has argued that the more successful provincial papers were beginning to target a particular locality and use a distinctive political voice.'[347]

In the East Midlands, although the majority of papers continued to source much of their material from the London press, from around 1813, some began to provide commentary and a sense of editorial in their columns for the first time. The *Leicester Journal* was one of the earliest provincial newspapers to provide political commentary. It was the growing presence of the radical press in the town that forced the *Journal* to become more outspoken in terms of its political comment. Fraser has suggested that it was from around 1807 when the central feature of the *Journal* became the "Leicester" column, offering a Tory point of view, partly in reaction to the radical *Leicester Chronicle*.[348] In contrast to Leicester, elsewhere, many early editorials were to be found in radical and Whig newspapers. As Andrews' study of the Derbyshire press demonstrates, it was the short-lived *Derbyshire Chronicle*, founded in 1813, which was the first paper in the town to provide political commentary.[349] In Nottingham, Fraser has shown

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[347] A. Walker, 'The Development of the Provincial Press in England c.1780-1914', *Journalism Studies*, 7 (2006), 377.
[348] Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester c.1790-1850s', 53.
[349] Andrews, 'The Derbyshire newspaper press, 1720-1855', 130.

that it was the radical *Nottingham Review* which first came to provide political commentary in a dedicated column for editorial remarks.[350]

Whilst Fraser has pointed out that provincial papers were 'geared to the arrivals of the mails and the London papers', which papers in particular were used is something which has not been examined in sufficient detail.[351] In York, Hannah Barker has shown that local papers were 'highly selective' in which London papers they chose to take information from.[352] In terms of the East Midlands, at times, it is unclear which papers editors took their information from. It is not unusual to find statements such as 'a morning paper says…' or 'we are informed', when using information gathered from other sources.[353] The third section of this chapter examines which London papers editors in the East Midlands took information from, and how they used this to suit their own political agenda.

As provincial newspapers became increasingly localised, editors also encouraged greater public engagement with their publications, printing letters from readers in their papers. A large proportion of these readers' letters were concerned with public figures such as politicians, landowners, or ministers. Many criticized individuals or attacked their conduct. The anonymous nature of letters meant that newspapers 'offered the unique opportunity to utter a tirade against' individuals who otherwise would have been at too great a social distance.[354] One letter printed in the *Nottingham Review* attacked an unnamed

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[350] Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 49.
[351] Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 47.
[352] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion*, 139-40.
[353] *DM*, 3rd July 1790; *DCR*, 28th April 1831; *LJ*, 5th October 1798.
[354] H. Barker, 'Britain, 1760-1815', in H. Barker and S. Burrows, (eds), *Press, politics and the public sphere in Europe and North America, 1760-1820* (Cambridge, 2002), 95.

'violent Tory Gentleman… residing in a midland county' on the basis that he had failed to declare all of his income. The letter asked 'Which is the greatest Jacobin? The Editor of the Paper who makes it his constant business to detect the abuses in the State [and] endeavors to remedy public grievances… or the man of Opulence who forgets that the only effectual way to prevent that admirable fabric, our envied Constitution, from falling to pieces is by timely keeping it to repair and each contributing his lawful share.'[355] Elsewhere, other local figures and public bodies were also criticized. In Leicester, one letter attacked the town's Tory corporation by drawing attention to an election handbill which warned electors not to vote against the corporation's chosen candidate. In doing so, the author highlighted the corrupt actions of the town's local elites.[356]

Readers' letters not only allowed local individuals to hold those in charge to account, but also, as Gardner has argued, by including letters in their papers, editors were encouraging 'ongoing conversations in their pages, in local communities and beyond'.[357] By discussing political issues such as Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform, this also gave audiences a chance to engage with and debate the key issues of the day.[358] However, readers' letters also had a much more practical use. As seen above, for various reasons, printers and editors could occasionally be short of information to include, whether due to tight deadlines or because news from London or abroad had failed to arrive.[359] It is probable that at least some would have been written by the editor, especially

[355] *NR*, 2nd Oct 1812.
[356] *LC*, 27th May 1826.
[357] Gardner, *The Business of News in England*, 39.
[358] See Chapter Four for which issues mattered most to constituents.
[359] See pages 111-12.

as letters, whether genuine or not, could provide a quick and easy way to fill space. Editors were able to reinforce their paper's political agenda through the inclusion of letters that they or those connected to their paper had composed. On the other hand, genuine letters sent in by the public would have provided editors and readers alike with 'a useful insight into the preoccupations' of audiences.[360]

Knowledge of the constituency and an understanding of which issues were of the greatest concern to voters was important immediately before an election, especially for candidates and their election agents. Although many candidates sought to emphasise their attachment to their constituency, not all who stood for election were local men. In cases such as these, it would have been essential for candidates to get a sense of the constituency, and one of the key indicators of public feeling would have been the local paper.

Furthermore, Barker and Vincent have shown how, prior to the polls' opening, it was important for a potential candidate to assess the likelihood that they would be successful in their campaign, and if they would decide to proceed to a full contest. Therefore, as soon as a contest looked likely, a candidate would place announcements in the press of their intention to stand for election. Barker and Vincent have calculated that the 'the costs of a single newspaper insertion, which might reach 1,000 purchases, were broadly comparable to a run of broadsides'.[361] As Chapter Two detailed, a typical run of broadsides could range anywhere from 200 to 2,000 copies.[362] Newspapers typically achieved a wide circulation, far higher than most estimates allow for, and so in this instance,

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[360] B. Clarke, *From Grub Street to Fleet Street: An Illustrated History of English Newspapers to 1899* (Aldershot, 2004), 86.
[361] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xxix.
[362] See Chapter Two pages 82-87; DRO, D533/6/2/9/40/8 Edward Dawson Esq. to Albert Cockshaw (1832); NA, DD/2723/3/5/6 Election receipt of Mr Hage (1820).

candidates clearly viewed the press as the most effective way to both assess a constituency's political climate, and to announce their intent to stand.

When the Leicester corporation found themselves without a candidate for the 1826 election, the *Leicester Journal* was able to evoke fear amongst the town's Tories, claiming that 'THE CORPORATE MACHINE, appears indeed to be in a very dilapidated state'. The paper tried to convince its readers to back Leicestershire magistrate, Charles Godfrey Mundy, suggesting that, 'without a zealous and active co-operation on your parts, it is possible that this ancient and loyal borough may become a non-entity in the preservation of the sound principles of the constitution in church and state'.[363] Mundy, on the other hand, vehemently denied his desire to stand, prompting a series of letters between the editor of the *Journal* and Mundy.[364] It is difficult to imagine a similar conversation between newspaper editors, readers, and potential candidates taking place in handbills. By printing editorials, readers' letters, and letters from potential candidates, it is clear that, in many ways, it was easier to discuss political and electoral issues over the course of a canvass in the press than compared to other forms of political communication.

Reports of possible candidates might emerge weeks, or even months, before Parliament was dissolved, with the press playing an invaluable role in circulating gossip and rumours, building up tension and excitement in the constituency. However, Parliament was often dissolved with little formal warning, and candidates were quickly nominated and canvassing hastily arranged. Canvassing

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[363] *LJ*, 5th May 1826, *LJ*, 12th May 1826; 'The City of Leicester: Social and administrative history since 1835', in R.A. McKinley (ed.), *A History of the County of Leicester: Volume 4, the City of Leicester,* (London, 1958) British History Online https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/leics/vol4/pp110-152#fnn348 [accessed 26/07/18].
[364] *LJ*, 6th May 1826; *LJ*, 19th May, 1826; *LJ*, 26th May 1826.

generally took place over a couple of weeks at most, and whilst in theory, voting could take place over a period of fifteen days, in the majority of instances polling continued for little more than a week.[365]

At the very beginning of an election, candidates announced their intention to stand, but, once formal canvassing had begun, addresses in the press were far less numerous, being taken over by handbills, squibs, and songs. As Chapter Two demonstrated, although uncontested elections produced a significant amount of ephemera, during a contest it was especially important that a candidate was able to canvass as many voters as possible, responding to the rumours and gossip spread by their opponents. Improvements in technology, especially the introduction of the Stanhope printing press in around 1800, meant that printing became quicker and easier. Large quantities of print could be produced quickly, and a handbill rebuffing any accusations made by political opponents could be on the street 'within hours'.[366]

During a contest, the fortunes of a candidate were changeable, with daily prints announcing the 'State of the Poll' at the end of a day's canvassing.[367] During the Nottingham 1806 election, it was reported that 'the printing press… had no rest, night or day'.[368] New handbills and addresses were able to be written and printed quickly, responding to the previous days canvass. Similarly, when a candidate

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[365] See Chapter One pages 4-5. There were, however, exceptions to the rule. The 1800 Leicester by-election, for instance, 'was continued for fifteen days'. *A copy of the poll alphabetically digested, taken at the guildhall in the borough of Leicester before John Saywell esquire, mayor, and Edward Dawson, esquire, bailiff which began on Monday December 1st and closed on Wednesday December 17th 1800; for electing a burgess to represent the borough of Leicester in parliament a burgess. In the room of the late Lord Rancliffe* (Leicester, 1801).

[366] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xxviii.

[367] NA, DDNM 2/1/12 'State of the Poll' (1829); NA, DDNM 2/1/15 'State of the poll of the second day' (1829); NA, DDNM 2/1/16 'Third days poll' (1829).

[368] J. F. Sutton, *The Date-book of Remarkable and Memorable Events Connected with Nottingham and Its Neighbourhood 1750-1850* (Nottingham, 1852), 278

fell behind in the polls, prints were able to be produced, encouraging those who had yet to vote to do so. It is clear that, in contrast to the wealth of election literature, the weekly provincial press was limited in what it could achieve. Its weekly format meant that candidates were unable to issue new addresses, responding to gossip or rumours, or the changing fortunes of a candidate.

On the other hand, it was not uncommon to find copies of handbills and addresses being reprinted in both the national and local press. In anticipation of the general election in 1790, Dr James Vaughan wrote to Sir Thomas Cave, 'My dear sir, the enemy is active… you should have an advertisement in the Leicester paper on Friday… I have sent you such a one, as I should suppose is proper if you like it, sign it and return it by the bearer, I will take care to have it inserted.'[369] Vaughan was most likely Cave's political agent, although with no further references to him in records from the 1790 election, this has been difficult to prove. The letter only describes that he has sent Cave a draft version of an advertisement; no indication of what the address said is given. The only likely example, an address 'To the Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders of the County of Leicester', is not in the same hand as the letter.[370] One probable explanation for this is that another member of Cave's election committee wrote it.

Candidates went to great lengths to ensure that their election addresses were distributed widely. Voters could be spread over a wide area, with some travelling large distances to vote. This was especially true for county elections, which typically had a higher proportion of out-voters than borough elections. It was, therefore, especially important that they were kept informed of the candidates

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[369] LRO, 23D57/3425 Letter from Dr J. Vaughan to Thomas Cave (1790).
[370] LRO, 23D57/3426 Handwritten draft 'To the Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders of the County of Leicester' (1790).

who were standing for election, as well as what their politics were, and so candidates made sure that their addresses were seen by as many people as possible.

Networks of newspaper proprietors operated across the country, linking the London press to those in the provinces.[371] It would seem that, as editor of the *Leicester Journal*, John Gregory had established links with newspapers in the capital, as well as other towns across the East Midlands. In addition to printing numerous bills and cards in the run up to the 1798 Leicestershire by-election, Gregory was responsible for inserting addresses on behalf of Edmund Cradock Hartopp in the *Sun*, the *Star*, and the *General Evening Post*.[372] Between October and November 1798, a total of £7 13s. 12d. was spent on placing addresses in the Derby, Northampton, Coventry, and Stamford newspapers.[373] Receipts show that Gregory contacted and paid the printers of these newspapers directly, suggesting that he acted as an agent, placing notices and addresses for other provincial papers around the country.[374] Whether or not these addresses were actually printed in any of the papers listed on the receipts is not clear, as looking through October and November issues of the *Northampton Mercury*, the *Derby Mercury*, the *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, and the *Nottingham Journal*, no election addresses appear to have been printed on behalf of Cradock Hartopp.[375]

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[371] Gardner, *The Business of News in England, 1760–1820*, 138.

[372] LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester Election Bill from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798); LRO, 10D72/ 608/1-3 (1798-99).

[373] LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester Election Bill from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798).

[374] LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester Election Bill from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798).

[375] *Northampton Mercury*, 13th October 1798, 20th October 1798, 3rd November 1798, 17th November 1798, 24th November 1798; *DM* 18th October 1798; *DM*, 25th October 1798; *DM* 1st November 1798; *DM* 8th November 1798; *The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury,* 2nd

Gregory does not appear to have acted as an agent to papers in the capital. Instead, he paid £2 19s. 6d. to John Wheatley for addresses and advertisements to be included in the London press.[376] Wheatley's identity is not clear. Many provincial newspapers used London-based agents to assist them with inserting advertisements into London newspapers. Certain papers, including the *Star*, used contacts based in a number of provincial towns. Their role was to take in advertisements and 'items of intelligence' to be included in the paper.[377] Leicester was not one of the towns where the *Star* claimed to have agents. Although there is little obvious reference to Wheatley in the *Star*, it seems as if he was most likely based in London. The *Sun*, in contrast, appears to have taken in advertisements directly into its office on the Strand.[378]

Whilst Edmund Cradock Hartopp's addresses do not appear to have been printed in local newspapers, more generally, addresses did appear in the provincial press throughout election canvasses. As stated above, this was more important during the earlier stages, when a candidate was assessing his chances of success in a particular constituency. During the later stages of the canvass, however, it was more important that handbills were produced quickly and in great numbers, generally sold or handed out on the streets. In part, this was due to the need to produce responses to opposing publications as quickly as possible. During rapid exchanges of handbills, as seen during the Nottingham paper war of 1803, there

November 1798; *NJ*, 13th October 1798; *NJ*, 20th October 1798; *NR*, 27th October 1798; *NR*, 3rd November 1798; *NR*, 10th November 1798.
[376] LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester Election Bill from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798).
[377] Gardner, *The Business of News in England*, 31, 48-50
[378] *Star and Evening Advertiser*, 25th, 26th, 27th, 29th, 30th, 31st October 1798, 1st November 1798; *Sun*, 25th Oct 1798.

would not have been time to orchestrate wide scale distribution of addresses in the press alone.

As well as including copies of printed addresses, many newspapers also reprinted the speeches of candidates. Speeches delivered at the hustings often attracted a considerable audience, and it was not unusual to find reports of the reactions of the crowd, especially in terms of cheers, applause, and hisses. As the *Leicester Chronicle* reported in 1818, during a speech given by George Leigh Keck, MP for Leicestershire, 'amidst hisses, groans, and cries of various sorts, and amongst others we distinctly heard "cram a hare down his throat"'.[379]

Occasionally, newspapers also reported on the way in which speeches by candidates and their supporters were delivered. This was usually when either a powerful speech was delivered or, in contrast, a performance was particularly poor or inaudible. For instance, during the Nottingham election of 1820, in reference to a speech by Francis Hardwick, a reporter from the *Nottingham Review* commented that, despite being interrupted by jeers and heckles, 'we were forcibly reminded of Orator Hunt.'[380] During his speech, Hardwick nominated Thomas Assheton Smith as a candidate for the Tory party. It is therefore surprising to find his speech being likened by the *Review* to the radical Henry Hunt. On the other hand, it was not always the crowd who was to blame for the speeches being unable to be heard as, according to the *Nottingham Review* the speech of W.H. Clinton, MP for Newark, was 'very inaudible from his low tone'.[381] Reprinted speeches not only allowed those not in attendance to

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[379] *LC*, 27th June 1818.
[380] *NR*, 21st March 1820; P.A. Symonds and R.G. Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 22/01/2017]; P. Salmon and H. Spencer 'Assheton Smith Thomas II (1776-1858)' *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 22/01/2017].
[381] *NR,* 16th June 1826.

have access to the views and opinions of candidates, but also was especially important given that it is probable that much of what a candidate said would have been drowned out by the crowd.

If speeches were unable to be heard, whether due to noise from the crowd, or because of poor oratory especially in the open air, this raises the question of how newspaper editors knew what was said. It is possible that reporters were 'forced… to sit on the edge of the [speaker's] platform' in order to hear the speech.[382] Whilst this particular report comes from the 1860s, there is little to suspect that reporters did not have to resort to such methods earlier in the century. Given that, very often, it was difficult to hear speeches above the crowd, it is probable that reporters would have misheard what was said, or even made up the general sense of the speech. As the *Derbyshire Courier* stated, 'who, among the very best of reporters, would even presume to take down a speech verbatim?'[383] Reports of some speeches must have been taken down in shorthand. Such a method was used by J. Hitchens, editor of the *Newark Times* when reporting on speeches given during a dinner held in honour of the town's representatives.[384] Which style of shorthand would have been used by Hitchens and other reports before the development of Pitman's Shorthand in 1837 is not clear, and Hitchens gives no indication in his report. Although methods of

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[382] J. Vernon, *Politics and the people: a study in English political culture, c. 1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993), 124.
[383] *DC*, 3rd September 1831.
[384] *A Report of the Proceedings at Newark on Friday, July 24, 1829, when the Electors of the Borough gave a dinner in complement to their Members, H. Willoughby, Esq. and M.T. Sadler, With all the speeches delivered on the occasion. Taken in short hand by J. Hitchins Editor of the Newark Times* (Newark, 1829).

shorthand existed prior to Pitman's version, it is likely that reporters developed their own style over time.[385]

Accuracy was clearly valued by candidates, and it was not uncommon for politicians to complain to printers regarding the way their words had been misreported.[386] If provincial papers such as the *Leicester Herald* were working to a strict deadline, with only a limited number of reporters to attend speeches and other local events, it is likely that not all reports in the provincial press were entirely accurate. It was presumably for this reason that, occasionally, copies of speeches were sent to newspaper offices prior to them being read out.[387] Even then, accuracy was not assured. As the *Nottingham Review* commented in 1812:

> we have this week given the speeches of Mr Denison and Dr Crompton, as written and sent to us since their delivery in the Exchange Hall. For the exact reporting of these speeches, we did not pledge ourselves: Mr Denison's speech was crowded with figures… As to Dr Crompton's speech, in it we purposely made some omissions, form [sic] motives which want no explanation, to those who understand the duty of a reporter.[388]

Such a statement shows how newspaper editors adapted the content of speeches for their readers, editing out dense statistical information. Furthermore, in this

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[385] T.D. Triggs, 'Pitman, Sir Isaac (1813-1897)' *ODNB* (2008) [accessed 11/02/17].
[386] Barker, *Newspaper, Politics and English Society*, 91.
[387] LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester Election Bill from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798); LRO, 23D57/3425 Letter from Dr J. Vaughan to Thomas Cave (1790); LRO, 23D57/3430 Letter from John Caldecott to Thomas Cave (1790); LRO, 1-D72/603 Leicester Election Bill from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798); *NR*, 16th October 1812.
[388] *NR*, 16th October 1812.

case, it seems as if the speeches were received after they had been delivered, and so there would have been time for candidates such as Dr Crompton to make amendments prior to printing. Speeches would presumably have been written to the strengths of the orator and once reprinted in the press, they would have become 'subject to print-culture conventions'.[389] As their media changed from the spoken to written, this opened up the possibility that words would be misconstrued. John Thelwall, for instance, had an aide write down his speeches in shorthand. This was partly due to legal protection following his trial for treason in 1794, as well as for his publication, the *Tribune*. When his speeches were reprinted, the *Tribune* stated that all speeches had been taken in shorthand and were 'revised by the Lecturer'.[390] However, it is equally possible that speeches could have been sent to printing offices either by candidates, or more likely their agents, prior to them being read out meaning that, if last minute alterations to speeches were made, those reported in the press may have varied.

By sending copies of speeches and election addresses to be included in both the national and provincial press, it is clear that candidates were making use of all available forms of communication, ensuring that as many people as possible had access to their canvasses. Newspapers were especially important before canvassing began, particularly for candidates who had either not stood for election before, or were unknown in the constituency. The press meant that they were not only able to 'test the waters', judging the likelihood that they would be successful, but also acted as an effective way to gauge the political feeling in the borough.

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[389] M. Scrivener, *Seditious Allegories: John Thelwall and Jacobin writing* (Pennsylvania, 2001), 169.
[390] Scrivener, *Seditious Allegories*, 169-70.

Chapter Two showed how large numbers of handbills, squibs, and songs were composed during the course of a contest, often by those outside of election committees. In contrast, the majority of canvasses reprinted in the press tended to come from candidates or their agents. Furthermore, many handbills, songs, and squibs relied upon local knowledge and in-jokes, and in many cases were distributed only around the constituency. Newspapers, in contrast, had a much wider circulation. By making sure that addresses and speeches were also reprinted in the London papers, candidates and their election agents were making sure that voters outside of the constituency also had access to their canvasses.

The number of printed addresses which were produced and distributed demonstrates that there was a clear appetite for this kind of information, and the importance of election contests should not be underestimated. However, it is clear that the press also came to play an integral role in elections, and it is little surprise to find that, during election campaigns, newspapers tended to focus their attention on electioneering and the progress of the election.

From the 1810s, it is clear that, whilst the provincial press continued, to some degree, to rely on the London papers, audiences came to expect an increasing amount of local news in the provincial press, and this was reflected in the increasing attention paid to local events and political commentary. Editors explained the apparent lack of focus on other affairs and instead accounted for the amount of dedicated space to elections, canvassing and other local events.[391] As the editor of the *Nottingham Review* stated during the election of 1812, and

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[391] *DM*, 21st June 1826; *DCR*, 15th September 1831; *DR*, 25th May 1826.

at the height of the Napoleonic Wars, 'the length of our remarks upon the local occurrences of the town, prevents us, this week, from doing justice to the state of the hostile armies.'[392] The extent to which the provincial press was involved in local politics is addressed in greater depth in the next section of this chapter.

Politics of the Press

The success of a newspaper was dependant on something more than the regurgitation of facts, and it was not enough solely to rely on accounts taken from the *Gazette* or other London papers. As Cranfield explains, audiences desired 'the very latest news and rumours,' often gleaned from unofficial or unreliable sources such as eyewitness accounts, gossip, and hearsay.[393] This would have been especially prevalent over the course of an election. Gossip, rumour, and speculation were eagerly received during canvasses and often made their way into a variety of different types of print including songs, satirical handbills, and cartoons. It would have been the job of both the editor and compositor to gather information and to decide how it would be used in their own publications.

Whilst copyright in the book trade was becoming an increasing concern, the same was not true of the newspaper industry, and there were few complaints as to the practice of 'borrowing' news from other sources.[394] It is perhaps for this reason that, in a number of cases, papers emanating from the East Midlands did not always cite their sources. In instances where papers are listed, it would seem

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[392] *NR*, 11th September 1812.
[393] Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760*, 2-3, 10.
[394] Gardner, *The Business of News in England*, 26-7.

that it was not just the London papers which editors used. For instance, the Tory *Nottingham Journal* quoted papers which shared many of their politics views, including the *Leicester Journal*, the *Yorkshire Gazette* and the *Glasgow Herald*.[395] Similarly, the radical *Derbyshire and Chesterfield Reporter* copied from the *Nottingham Mercury*, the *Sheffield Iris*, and the *York Herald*, all of which espoused radical or Whiggish principles [396]

The *London Gazette* was a common source of information for provincial papers, both in the East Midlands and elsewhere around the country.[397] Unlike other London papers used by the provincial press, the *Gazette* was the official organ of the government. It therefore contained no criticism of the government or little in the way of political comment.[398] This made it an ideal source of news for proprietors of papers away from the capital. Its lack of political commentary is apparent in the way that many newspapers of different political persuasions all relied upon it for information. For instance, the radical *Nottingham Review* as well as the Tory *Leicester Journal* both reprinted articles from the *Gazette* despite being on opposite poles of the political spectrum.[399]

By the early nineteenth century, editors were going to increasing lengths to include a greater sense of individual identity in their publications. Kathleen Wilson has suggested that newspapers came to be the 'central instruments' in the production and circulation of information, 'both representing and verifying

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[395] *NJ*, 20th June 1826; *NJ*, 10th July 1826.
[396] *DCR*, 15th July 1830.
[397] *DM*, 1st May 1794; *DM*, 2nd June 1796; *DM*, 15th July 1802; *LJ*, 5th October 1798; *NR*, 9th October; *NR*, 16th October 1812; *DR*, 15th June 1826.
[398] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion*, 36; Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper*, 2-3.
[399] *LJ*, 5th October 1798; *NR*, 9th October 1812; *NR*, 16th October 1812.

local experience.'[400] Whereas, previously, provincial newspapers have often been seen as the 'poor relations' of those operating from inside the capital, this was not always the case and, between 1790 and 1832, alongside a growing readership, papers became gradually more sophisticated, and profit margins rose.[401] This again points to the fact that, outside of an election campaign, in comparison to other types of ephemeral literature, newspapers were coming to be increasingly important to some provincial printers, even those who generally relied on jobbing printing for the bulk of their trade.[402]

Newspapers often encouraged their readers to engage publicly in political discussions. Readers of William Cobbett's *Political Register* kept him informed of issues such as agricultural distress around the country, information which he later used in his paper.[403] The same was not necessarily true for the provincial press. Instead, editors tended to rely on London papers, and those from elsewhere around the country, rather than their readers. That does not mean, however, that readers did not engage with political ideas and issues through the press, and across the country 'letters to the editor' were a common feature in the provincial press.[404]

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[400] K. Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, culture and imperialism in England, 1717-1785* (Cambridge, 1995), 40.
[401] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 96-7.
[402] Jobbing printing generally refers the printing of single sided, sometimes ephemeral, items such as handbills, advertisements, trade cards, and auction catalogues. See Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth Century England*, 26-27, 104-06 and M. Twyman, 'Printed ephemera', in Suarez and Turner (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* vol. 5, 66-67.
[403] K. Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The press and radical opposition in nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1996), 107.
[404] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855*, 25-6; Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth Century England*, 38-9; Clarke, *From Grub Street to Fleet Street*, 86. See above, pages 121-23.

The content of these letters could vary hugely according to the time of their publication, as well as the political agenda of the particular paper in which they appeared. Some letters addressed purely municipal topics, such as the provision of water, or the proceedings of local groups and meetings.[405] On the other hand, many came to focus on political concerns, especially during election canvasses, or when important debates were being discussed in the Commons.

Between 1790 and 1832, the provincial press in the East Midlands addressed numerous political issues. War with France broke out in 1793. The impact that the war had on the public was a common theme in letters to editors. Whilst the return to peace in 1815, and an end to wartime restrictions, should have meant cheaper food, the introduction of the Corn Laws in 1815 meant that prices remained high. A 'Constant Reader' of the *Derby Reporter* wrote to the editor of the paper, arguing that 'the Corn Bill should be totally repealed and free trade, with its importations, would greatly increase our foreign commerce.'[406] Another letter, printed in the *Nottingham Review*, highlighted the plight of the town's poor. Like many letters to the editor, it too was written under a pseudonym, this time, signed by 'an advocate for the widow, the fatherless, and those who are crying for bread'.[407]

The question of Catholic emancipation was another common theme raised in readers' letters. The Catholic Question dominated discussion over the course of the Leicester 1826 election, so it is unsurprising that many letters raised the question of increased civil and political rights for Catholics. A letter printed in the *Leicester Chronicle* suggested that a petition in favour of Catholic

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[405] *NR*, 19th May 1826; Gardner, *The Business of News in England*, 38.
[406] *DR*, 1st June 1826.
[407] *NR*, 19th May 1826.

emancipation would be welcomed in the town.[408] This example demonstrates how letters not only highlighted issues affecting a particular community, but sought to appeal to the public and attempt to enact change.

As seen above, it was common for newspapers to include reprinted copies of candidates' speeches.[409] Judging by reports provided in the press, it would seem that it was not unusual for reporters to attend speeches, publishing accounts based on their observations. Which issues proved to be popular with candidates can often be gleaned via the reports of boos and cheers from the crowd, which newspaper editors often included in their reports.

How accurate these reports were, or whether editors included them to support their own feelings on such issues, is perhaps more difficult to assess. Inaccuracies were common due to the difficulty hearing over the reactions of the crowd, but some reporters may have exaggerated the reception candidates or their policies received in order to support their own political agendas. During the Nottingham 1826 election, the *Nottingham Review* stated that the appearance of Lord Rancliffe 'was the signal for universal applause.'[410] In another speech, Rancliffe stated that 'he wished for the total abolition of the corn laws', and that 'he was such an ardent friend to the right and liberties of the people, that he would stick up for them so long as he had a drop of blood in his body.' This, like his other appearances, were met with 'loud plaudits' and applause.[411] Meanwhile, another candidate, John Smith Wright, stated that, although 'it was his heart's desire to make corn lower than it was now', 'the landed interest must

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[408] *LC*, 8th March 1828.
[409] See pages 129-32.
[410] *NR*, 23rd June 1826.
[411] *NR*, 9th June 1826; *NR*, 23rd June 1826.

be protected,' a statement which would have been unpopular with many in Nottingham. Wright's speech received, according to the *Nottingham Review*, both 'hisses and cheers' from the assembled crowd.[412]

Well known to the voters of Nottingham, Rancliffe had previously been elected as a candidate for the town in 1812.[413] Regularly in attendance in the Commons, he had voted in favour of Catholic relief, for the free exportation of corn and, in 1817, in favour of parliamentary reform.[414] The *Nottingham Review* had long been advocating reform in one form or another. It is, therefore, unsurprising that Rancliffe was portrayed favourably in the paper, and outlined the extent of support that his appearance at the hustings received.

On the other hand, the Tory *Nottingham Journal* gave a similar description of the reception that Rancliffe received from the crowd in 1818. According to the *Journal*, 'Lord Rancliffe was repeatedly cheered during the delivery of his speech, and at the conclusion a tumultuous shout of applause was sent up by the people.'[415] In this case, rather than appearing to include reports of speeches and audience reaction to lend support to a chosen cause, it would seem that both papers were accurately reporting the welcome reception that Rancliffe received from those who had gathered to hear his speech. During the Newark election of 1826, Samuel Ellis Bristowe 'alluded to the Corn Laws, as unjust and unwarrantable.' He advised the crowd that 'this was the only time to root out corruption, and to procure cheap bread.' In contrast to the way in which the *Journal* described the reception that Rancliffe received, during the Newark

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[412] *NR*, 9th June 1826.
[413] See Appendix.
[414] D.E. Ginter (ed.) *Voting Records of the British House of Commons 1761-1820*, Vols. 1, 4 (London, 1995).
[415] *NJ*, 20th June 1818.

election of 1826, Bristowe's speech 'served only to excite a violent and misguided spirit amongst his followers.'[416] Unlike Rancliffe, Bristowe appears to have been an unpopular candidate in Newark, denounced as 'a very foolish fellow' by Whigs in the town and was accused of inciting violence during his canvass.[417]

It was not just election speeches which received the attention of reporters. In 1831, the *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* reported on reform meeting in Derby, outlining the responses which certain statements received. The meeting appears to have been well attended, with 'great numbers standing on chairs and great crowds assembled in the market place who could not gain admission.' The two representatives for the town were also in attendance, and were 'cheered as they entered.'[418] It is unsurprising that the *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* reported favourably on the reform meeting, outlining the large crowds who gathered and the welcome reception that the speakers received. Founded in 1823 as a liberal paper, over the course of the 1820s, the *Reporter's* tone of editorial changed, becoming increasingly radical in its outlook and principles.

By 1831, it was not just radicals and Whigs who supported parliamentary reform, but even some Tory papers had seemingly been won around to the cause.[419] Speeches by Edward Strutt, stating the 'necessity' of 'securing… effectual representation', and that, the 'power of the people [was] too powerful to be resisted', reportedly received continued applause from the assembled

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[416] *NJ*, 17th June 1826.

[417] R.A. Gaunt, 'The Fourth Duke of Newcastle, the "Mob" and Election Contests in Nottinghamshire, 1818-1832', *Midland History*, 33 (2008), 203.

[418] *DCR*, 29th September 1831.

[419] Andrews, 'The Derbyshire newspaper press, 1720-1855', 131; J. Whitaker, *The Contest of Sophistry with the Truth: The Print Media of the Reform Era in Derby and Derbyshire 1830-1832* (University of Derby, M.A. thesis, 2012), 4.

crowd. Likewise, the speech by John Byng, the other candidate for Derby, reportedly received 'applause', 'cheers', and 'great applause'.[420] These reports and descriptions of the reactions of the crowd highlight the difficulty that some reporters had in finding different ways to describe the reactions of crowds without resorting to 'stinging monotony'.[421]

Reporting the reactions of crowds during election speeches allowed papers to indicate the popular political issues of the day, and general reactions to them. Although, in some cases, it is possible that certain papers may have exaggerated the reactions that contentious issues or particular candidates received, on the whole, it would seem that reports of cheers, applause, booing, and hissing were accurate. This is especially true since, in several instances, there are reports of both being heard in response to the same speech. According to the *Leicester Herald*, a speech by Sir Charles Abney Hastings received both 'cheers and hisses'. Similarly, Alderman Gregory, who had proposed Hastings as a candidate for the 1826 borough election, 'presented himself to the electors amidst applauses and hisses.'[422] Nevertheless, this type of political reporting, where the reactions of the crowd were included in reports, allowed editors to help form and shape audience opinions to issues such as the Corn Laws, Catholic emancipation, and parliamentary reform. However, where speeches were printed or reported without the reaction of the crowd, audiences were able to debate and engage in the issues themselves, forming their own opinions, either through letters sent in to the paper, or discussing what they had read with others.

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[420] *DCR*, 29th September 1831.
[421] P.A. Pickering, *Feargus O'Connor: A Political Life* (Monmouth, 2008), 128.
[422] *LH,* 4th August 1830; *LC*, 17th June 1826.

Although many papers were becoming increasingly involved in local politics, providing reports of elections and political meetings, it is clear that many also attempted to connect readers with more national issues and debates. Following the efforts of John Wilkes, and what became known as the 'Printers' Case', the freedom for newspapers to report parliamentary debates was established in 1771. Prior to this, journalists and reporters were not permitted access to the Commons Gallery, and it was not until around 1783 when they, or anyone else, were allowed to take written notes in the House.[423] According to Aspinall, opening up the Gallery changed 'the whole charter of the constitution,' and encouraged greater levels of transparency of parliamentary business, meaning that political culture, debate, and discussion was opened up to a wider audience.[424] The press, therefore, came to represent 'mediators between parliament and the people.'[425] Whilst this was welcomed by many, it was derided by some, including William Windham MP, as it gave 'the People an opportunity of sitting in judgement every day on the measure under discussion in that House… long before the details of its parts and the character of its principles could be discussed and unfolded by the Legislature.'[426]

By providing reports of parliamentary business in provincial newspapers, editors were closing the gap between London-based politicians and audiences who lived away from the capital. Moreover, editors had the freedom to select which

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[423] A. Aspinall, 'The Reporting and Publishing of the House of Commons' Debates 1771-1835', in R. Pares and A.J.P. Taylor (eds), *Essays Presented to Sir Lewis Namier* (London, 1956), 227-30; P.D.G. Thomas, *John Wilkes: A Friend to Liberty* (Oxford, 1996), 125-8; C. Reid, 'Whose Parliament? Political Oratory and Print Culture in the Later Eighteenth Century', *Language and Literature*, 9 (2000), 124.
[424] Aspinall, 'The Reporting and Publishing of the House of Commons' Debates', 227.
[425] Clarke, *From Grub Street to Fleet Street*, 92-3; Gardner, *The Business of News in England*, 19.
[426] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 20.

debates to report on, enabling them both to include and comment on issues debated in Parliament which were relevant to their readers, as well as highlighting national issues.[427]

As Victoria Gardner has shown, the sheer volume of parliamentary debates presented a challenge to both local and national newspaper editors. Estimates suggest that, if one London newspaper included nothing but parliamentary debates, this would comprise about 2¾ hours' worth of speeches, a fraction of the lengthiest, most important debates. Editors therefore had to decide which debates were of the greatest interest to their readers, choosing which issues to include in their paper.[428]

Provincial reporters occasionally attended debates in the Commons, although how often this happened is open to speculation, especially given the limited number of staff working in printing offices. Gardner has suggested that such a practice may have been 'unusual', given Charles Knight's surprise at seeing 'a provincial' in the Commons gallery during debates on Catholic emancipation in February 1812.[429] One reason why reporters may have been reluctant to attend Commons debates is perhaps best explained by the *Derbyshire Courier* who claimed that:

> In the gallery of the House of Commons there are no
> accommodations - no facilities whatever for reporting.
> There is not a table, a board to write on. There are seats,
> it is true (in the Lords, you must stand…) but there is less

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[427] Gardner, *The Business of News in England*, 38.
[428] Gardner, *The Business of News in England*, 38.
[429] Gardner, *The Business of News in England*, 35.

day or candle light in that gallery than in the shilling

gallery at the Dury-lane or Covent-garden… It has been

doubted whether… the architect of the Commons had

not been particular in making the gallery a place where

its occupants could see and hear as little as possible.[430]

The position of the gallery in the House made it difficult for reporters to hear the

speeches of those members whose voices were not powerful. Furthermore,

certain members, Prime Minister George Canning being one of them, spoke too

quickly to be understood by reporters. Taking the limitations of the gallery into

consideration, how accurate reporters' accounts of debates were must again be

questioned. For those reporters at the back of the gallery, it was also difficult to

see, meaning that, at times, speeches were attributed to the wrong person, or

newspapers complained in their reports that the speaker was unknown.[431] It is

perhaps because of these difficulties that a number of MPs were concerned over

how their speeches were reported. As Edmund Burke commented in 1794, 'it is

very unlucky that the reputation of a speaker in the House of Commons depends

far less on what he says there, than on the account of it in the newspapers.'[432]

Reporters and editors had to be careful what they included in their paper, and

trust was important to readers. Audiences expected that the information which

they read in the press was accurate and looked to editors to vouch for the

authenticity of their reports. It was important too that editors did not report

fallacies. Their reputation and credibility would have been built up over time

and false reports could ruin this. Furthermore, by printing inaccuracies, editors

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[430] *DC*, 3rd September 1831.
[431] Aspinall, 'The Reporting and Publishing of the House of Commons' Debates', 238-9.
[432] Reid, 'Whose Parliament?', 122.

also ran the risk of being prosecuted for libel, especially once the Newspaper Regulation Act of 1798 and its amendment of 1799 had been passed, requiring all those associated with the newspaper trade, including proprietor, printer, and editor, to be registered.[433]

Prosecutions for libel could be ruinous for an editor. Newspapers were reliant on the local community for information, gossip, and patronage. If found guilty, it was not uncommon for readers to remove their custom from a particular paper. Furthermore, as many proprietors of newspapers also relied on printing commissions for advertisements, election handbills, and all manner of other ephemera, the loss of reputation following prosecution could mean that, not only did the fortunes of the paper fail, but other orders also decreased.[434]

Overall, it is clear that the role of the provincial newspaper was not just one of copying information from the London papers. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, there is clear evidence that provincial papers were becoming an increasingly important and influential force, as demonstrated by an ever more engaged audience, who contributed and engaged in political debate and discussion via letters printed in the papers, addressing issues of national significance.[435] Furthermore, as the editor took on an increasingly complex role, there was a tendency to include more reports from local meetings and events, especially during election campaigns, when candidates would be most visible in the constituency. Although some editors adapted the reactions that these

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[433] Gardner, *The Business of News*, 12-3, 73; DRO, Q/RS/5/3 Printing presses 1799-1879 John Drewry of Derby (15th August 1799); Q/RS/5/10/1-3 George Wilkins of Derby, notice (1811).
[434] Gardner, *The Business of News*, 129-32.
[435] Chapter Five will examine which issues came to be forefront of political discussion between 1790 and 1832.

appearances received to suit their own political agendas, it seems as if most were following, rather than shaping, political opinion.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how, between 1790 and 1832, the provincial press became increasingly sophisticated and complex. At the end of the eighteenth century, only a handful of papers existed in the East Midlands, many of which tended to be neutral in their political views. However, as more papers were established in the region, rivalry between printers and editors meant that publications became increasingly outspoken, including a greater level of political content and opinion. This emphasis on politics was especially important during canvassing, not only for voters, but also for candidates who relied on the press to build up support, especially from out-voters who were unlikely to have been subjected to the same level of canvassing via other forms of printed ephemera.

Chapter Two demonstrated the wealth of print which was produced in the run up to the polls' opening. It is clear, however, that the provincial press was also an integral part of a candidates' printed canvass, especially early on, before formal canvassing had begun. Historians have argued that, as the provincial press came to be increasingly sophisticated, it outstripped the role of other ephemeral forms of print. However, as this chapter has shown, elections and canvassing posed particular challenges to candidates and their agents. The fast paced nature of elections meant that the weekly press could not be relied upon to keep voters up to date and informed of the progress of canvassing. In contrast,

handbills broadsides, and broadsheets could quickly be printed and distributed around a constituency for maximum effect, and offered a much more flexible way of keeping voters informed and engaged in the political process.

On the other hand, the growth of political reporting meant that readers were exposed to political views from across the country on a larger scale than before, and were becoming increasingly engaged with both local and national debates. As a result, the provincial press gives a particularly good insight into the types of concerns which occupied voters, and which issues came to dominate election campaigns. Chapter Four will therefore build on this chapter, examining which issues were of the greatest concern to voters in the East Midlands between 1790 and 1832.

Chapter Four

Local and National Issues

Introduction

H.T. Dickinson and J.A. Phillips, amongst others, have argued that, during the eighteenth century, local issues, as opposed to national ones, were of the greatest concern to constituents during election campaigns.[436] Uncontested elections were relatively common across the East Midlands. Derby is perhaps the best example of where a constituency could go uncontested for a number of years. Between 1790 and 1832, the only election to be contested in the town was in 1796.[437] Even uncontested elections could be hotly fought over, and historians such as C.E. Hogarth have summed up elections in the East Midlands as being dominated by 'personalities, local issues and local rivalries.'[438] In Leicester, whilst R.W. Greaves and A. Temple Patterson admit that national issues were coming to be more important, local loyalties remained strong. In particular, in both Nottingham and Leicester, it was the dominance of corporations which often came to dominate elections during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[439]

During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, bills passing through Parliament fell into three categories: personal bills, general bills, and local

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[436] H.T. Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Basingstoke, 1994), 49-50; J.A. Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill in the Boroughs* (Oxford, 1992), 5-6.
[437] See appendix for list of elections.
[438] C.E. Hogarth, 'The Derbyshire Parliamentary Election of 1832', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 89 (1969), 78.
[439] R.W. Greaves, 'Catholic Relief and the Leicester Election of 1826', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 22 (1940), 199; A. Temple Patterson, *Radical Leicester: A History of Leicester 1780-1850* (Leicester, 1954), 145.

bills.[440] Personal bills dealt with individual issues such as divorce, changes to names, estate ownership, or naturalization. General (or public) bills affected the country as a whole and were principally concerned with economic, social, or legal matters. Finally, local legislation, also known as private bills, affected a particular place, town, or constituency.[441] It was the role of local MPs to promote these local bills on behalf of their constituents, and to see them through Parliament. Many addressed a range of issues such as enclosure, street and navigation improvements, as well as the provision of street cleaning and policing.[442] Local bills and petitions sent to the Commons could also reflect wider, national issues such as electoral corruption, riots, reform, prices of corn, and religious freedom. It was these, as opposed to national legislation, which came to occupy the attention of both voters and MPs. These issues had the power to create local controversies, and provoked the need for public meetings to address matters. Petitions were sent from towns in support of both local and general bills on a range of subjects such as the Roman Catholic claims to freedom from civil disabilities, and parliamentary reform.[443]

Election times provide an ideal setting in which to investigate the extent to which local or national issues were of the greatest concern to residents for several reasons. In particular, issues which affected constituents often seem to be raised during contests much more than at other times, and the large number of handbills and broadsheets that could be produced during contests often addressed these

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[440] P. Jupp, *The governing of Britain, 1688-1848: the executive, Parliament and the people* (London, 2006), 71.
[441] Jupp, *The Governing of Britain, 1688-1848,* 71, 223.
[442] R. Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840* (Harlow, 1999), 42-3, 59.
[443] Dickinson, *The Politics of the People*, 50; *Records of the Borough of Nottingham,* Vol 8: *1800-1835* (Nottingham, 1947), 171, 367; *Records of the Borough of Nottingham* vol. 7: *1760-1800* (Nottingham, 1947), 300, 316.

concerns. The press also campaigned much more earnestly during election periods, and championed the causes of residents and policies of MPs to a much greater degree than at other times. Therefore, examining which issues contests were fought and won on may be one way to determine the extent to which local, rather than national, issues were of the greatest concern. Whilst there were many debates which emerged over the course of election contests across the country, this chapter will focus on issues relating to the effects of the Napoleonic wars, concerns over the imposition of the Corn Laws, religious and civic freedom, and parliamentary reform. Looking at if, when MPs failed to represent the views of their constituents, this had any impact on their success in subsequent contests, will be another way in which to examine which issues mattered most to constituents.

MPs had a responsibility to be present in the Commons, attending debates, and presenting petitions. To what extent they were expected to be a representative as opposed to a delegate of their constituency is discussed below. Attendance in the Commons was not mandatory, especially as the position was unpaid. At times, however, it was not uncommon for MPs to be summoned to attend particular, important debates. Thomas Pares, MP for Leicester, was summoned on 26th March 1819 by the House to attend the next ballot, although it is not clear who this order came from, especially as it was one of the clerks of the House for Commons who wrote the letter summoning Pares.[444] Despite this, it was not unusual for members never to attend entire sessions and those who did attend, did so only at irregular intervals.[445] Whilst it was not unusual for

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[444] DRO, 11/S/O 15-18; *CJ*, 26th March 1819, vol. 74, 271; DRO, D5336/2/9/18 Letter from the House of Commons summoning Thomas Pares to attend.
[445] P.D.G. Thomas, *The House of Commons in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1971), 105.

members only rarely to attend sessions in the Commons, back in their constituencies, there was still an expectation that they would do so.

Repeated absences were noted and often mentioned in election handbills. During regular debates in the Commons, it was rare when attendance was high. It was generally more important that a candidate was present for debates and votes that directly affected their respective constituency. As one 1832 handbill, critical of Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish, MP for Derby, claimed:

> He has now been 20 years in the House of Commons, and what I ask has he done for you, in Parliament or out of Parliament? Did he ever bring a Bill of any description? Did he ever make or second a single Motion? Or move or second an Amendment? Has he ever instituted any Inquiry into the Rights of the Burgesses or striven in any way to promote the local interests of the Town? Have you ever received any benefit whatsoever from him? No! He is a stranger to your Town, to your Persons, to your Wants, your Interests, and your Grievances - his face is never seen among you (except for perhaps 24 hours at an election) and he has no Interest in common with you. Moreover, he is not a political character; his voice has never been heard in the Senate, which indeed has rarely been favoured with his presence.[446]

Compton Cavendish served in the army during much of his time as MP and, like many politicians in the military, was rarely in attendance at the Commons.[447]

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[446] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'Electors of Derby' (1832).
[447] R.G. Thorne, 'Cavendish, Henry Frederik Compton (1789-1873)', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 14/07/16].

Rather than being overly critical of Cavendish's lack of attendance, the handbill instead focuses on his apparent lack of commitment to his constituents.

In the East Midlands constituencies, there were a number of MPs who were frequently absent either through military service or, as in the case of Sir John Borlase Warren, abroad after his appointment as the Russian Ambassador soon after his re-election to one of the Nottingham seats in 1802.[448] Described as an 'inconspicuous' member of Parliament, Lord Rancliffe was rarely in attendance in the Commons between 1790 and 1800. Even when present in the House, he rarely spoke and voted only a handful of times, although this does not particularly appear to have much effect on his public image or success at the polls since, following a commission in the army, he was re-elected to the Leicester seat in 1795.[449]

MPs for the county were similarly frequently absent from the Commons. Lord Robert William Manners, MP for Leicestershire, acquired his seat without a contest in 1806, largely thanks to the influence of his brother the fifth Duke of Rutland. His military career meant he was often abroad, particularly during the Napoleonic Wars, and so, only occasionally did he vote in the House. Following the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, he did take a more active role in the Commons, presenting a number of petitions including against Catholic emancipation. Despite the role he played in the Commons, Manners appears to have been a

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[448] M. Lester, 'Warren, Sir John Borlase (1753–1822)', *ODNB* (2008) [accessed 21/05/16]; P.A. Symons, 'Warren, Sir John Borlase, 1st Bt.', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 12/07/16].
[449] M.H. Port, 'Parkyns, Thomas Boothby (1755-1800)', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 16/07/16]; D.E. Ginter (ed.) Voting Records of the British House of Commons 1761-1820, Vols. 1, 4 (London, 1995).

reluctant Member of Parliament and once wrote to his brother, complaining that, 'I always told you I was not fit to represent the county of Leicestershire.'[450]

County constituencies generally had a more diverse and scattered electorate than boroughs, and MPs were not so accountable to their constituents, especially as they were free from the control of corporations. As a result, members were at liberty to spend a greater proportion of time away from the Commons than those in borough seats, and, when present, vote in contrast to the needs of residents in their constituencies.

In large boroughs such as Nottingham, Leicester, and Derby, the success of an MP often depended on the support of their respective corporation. If a member appeared not to be upholding the views or demands of the corporation as well as constituents, the future of their seat could be in jeopardy.[451] In contrast, in smaller, pocket boroughs such as East Retford and Newark, the dominance of patrons often meant that even when an MP failed to attend Commons debates or represent the views of constituents, their seat was more secure. By far the most important landowner in Newark during the 1820s was the fourth Duke of Newcastle who owned around 200 houses in the borough and had control over the corporation and the electorate. Whilst voters did not always conform to their landowner's expectations at the polls, in Newark at least, typically it was the chosen candidates of Newcastle and the second largest landowner in the

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[450] M. H. Port and R. G. Thorne, 'Manners, Lord Robert William (1781-1835)', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 16/07/16].
[451] One notable case is that of Daniel Parker Coke, who was reportedly 'abandoned' by Nottingham's corporation during the 1802 election allegedly on account of him failing to oppose the continuation of the war. P.A. Symonds and R.G. Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 26/07/16].

borough, Lord Middleton, who came to dominate the two seats for the constituency.[452]

In counties, there was no such control, and MPs had less of an obligation to uphold the views of those whom they represented. Even when a candidate voted against the wishes of those they purported to represent, they were unlikely to face revolt during contests since county elections were more frequently uncontested, and candidates were afforded the support of wealthy and influential patrons. Furthermore, as the case of Robert William Manners highlights, patrons could often be family members and, whilst MPs had a certain duty to uphold the expectations of their patrons, as a result their support was more secure, even when they failed to attend Commons sessions, or vote in a particular way.[453]

However, at times, it would seem that MPs often felt conflicted between their duty towards representing the views of their constituents and maintaining allegiance with their party, as well as adhering to the expectations of patrons and corporations. Some MPs saw their role as voting for the good of the country as a whole, or how their party expected them to, rather than on what was desired or necessary for the constituency. Others had another reason for partiality, and it was in the interest of their political career to support or speak out on a particular cause, especially if they were supported by a wealthy or influential patron.

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[452] S. Chapman, 'Patronage and Power in Eighteenth Century Newark', *TTS*, 115 (2011), 96; R.G. Thorne, 'Newark,' *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 07/08/16]; Thorne, 'East Retford', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 07/08/16].

[453] Manners was chastised by his brother the fifth duke for his inactivity in the Commons, but retained his seat, largely due to the patronage afforded to him by the duke. Port and Thorne, 'Manners, Lord Robert William (1781-1835)', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 16/07/16].

Language is also important when considering whom MPs represented. As Conal Condren has demonstrated, during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, terms such as 'representatives' and 'delegates' were often used interchangeably. However, by the late eighteenth century, 'Burke felt it necessary to disentangle representation from delegation.'[454] In his 1774 speech to the electors of Bristol, Burke claimed that 'Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest', and that:

> You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him,
> he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of *parliament*. If
> the local constituent should have an interest, or should form an
> hasty opinion, evidently opposite to the real good of the rest of
> the community, the member for that place ought to be as far, as
> any other, from any endeavour to give it effect.[455]

In short, Burke argued against the idea of an MP being a representative, acting on behalf of his constituents, and instead advocated the idea that they were a 'trustee', who was 'to use his own judgment to decide what is in the interest of his constituents', and to act upon this, regardless of the opinions of constituents.[456]

Similar sentiments were shared by the Tory newspaper the *Nottingham Journal,* which in 1802 stated that, 'when a man went into Parliament he was to consider himself not alone the representative of a particular place but a component of part

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[454] C. Condren, *The Language of Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 1994), 66-7.

[455] E. Burke, *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, collected in three volumes*, vol. 2 (Dublin, 1792-1793), 16.

[456] J. Conniff, 'Burke, Bristol, and the Concept of Representation', *The Western Political Quarterly*, 30 (1977), 330.

of the nation,' a view which certainly seems to have been shared by Daniel Parker Coke.[457] MP for Nottingham between 1780-1802 and 1803-1812, Coke claimed that a 'Member of Parliament is not bound, on all questions of a great national Policy, implicitly to obey the instructions of his Constituents'[458] Similarly, by reprinting part of Burke's Speech to the Electors of Bristol in his election literature, Coke further aligned himself with the view that an MP should act as a 'trustee' rather than a 'representative'.[459]

What reaction such a statement received is difficult to assess. However, prior to the Nottingham election of 1806, one of Coke's addresses claimed that, 'you have ... permitted me to follow my own judgment in Parliament', suggesting that to some degree voters accepted Coke's view on the role of an MP, especially as he remained the member for Nottingham until 1812.[460] Nevertheless, Coke was attacked over his views in his opponent's handbills. One address, printed in support of his rival Joseph Birch in 1803, issued the following statement:

> Mr Coke has audaciously declared, that only in local matters he thinks himself bound to attend to the wishes of his constituents, that in matters of national import he does not think himself under any obligation of that nature ... in other words, Gentlemen, as far as related to sticking a lamp to a wall, paving a street, or putting down a post, he would attend to your wishes; but, that in

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[457] *NJ*, 10th July 1802.
[458] NLSL, L34.22A 'Mr. Coke Vindicated. Duty of a Representative' (1803).
[459] NLSL, L34.22A 'Mr. Coke Vindicated. Duty of a Representative' (1803).
[460] *The paper war: comprising the addresses, squibs, songs, &c. as published by the different parties, during the late contested election, at Nottingham: with a preface containing some remarks upon the election, to which is added, by way of postscript, some account of Mr. Birch's conduct, in the late petition* (Nottingham, 1807), 7-8.

cases of national and political importance he … knows better

what is good for you ... A more glaring insult or a more daring

violation of the legislative rights of the people was never

offered.[461]

The accusation that Daniel Parker Coke felt himself duty bound to represent the

local concerns of his constituents, but not in relation to national issues, raises

another point. It was not uncommon to find MPs to be relatively active in the

Commons, drawing up, presenting and commenting on local bills and reports,

which would have the support of their constituents. When it came to national

issues, however, as seen above, some MPs saw themselves as members of a

party, or as a delegate, not always acting in accordance with the wishes of those

who had elected them. This chapter will examine which issues MPs chose to

emphasise in their election literature. The first section will focus on local bills.

This will be followed by subsequent sections on war and economic hardship, the

Corn Laws, Catholic emancipation, and finally parliamentary reform.

<u>Local Bills</u>

In the Commons, a number of local bills were introduced by MPs for the East

Midlands constituencies. These included bills to maintain and repair roadways,

such as in 1796 when Robert Smith and Daniel Parker Coke, both MPs for

Nottingham, were ordered by the House to prepare and present a bill for

repairing and maintaining a stretch of road between the north and south side of

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[461] *Paper War,* 19.

the Old Trent Bridge following severe flooding during the winter of 1795.[462] In February 1810, the *Commons Journals* show how candidates for Derby (and Derbyshire) were similarly ordered to draw and present a bill for maintaining the Turnpike Road from Ashford to Buxton.[463] In attending to these matters, politicians like Coke, Smith, and the Cavendish family were upholding their responsibility to their constituents by representing them on local matters.

Whilst newspapers occasionally reported on local legislation, especially in relation to crime and punishment, and the treatment of the poor, the type of information relayed to the public remained selective. The majority of speeches were not reproduced in full and not all debates were covered by the press.[464] Moreover, in election addresses, although it was not unusual to find candidates promising 'unremitted attention to … local interests,'[465] in many cases, election handbills and press addresses failed specifically to mention local bills, or clarify which local interests they were referring to. Instead, many preferred to emphasise their attachment to the cause of reform, peace, religious freedom, and the reduction of taxation.[466]

As Chapter One observed, between 1790 and 1832, the population of towns such as Leicester and Nottingham grew rapidly, increasing the pressure on land and resources.[467] Groups such as the Derby Philosophical Society became involved in campaigning for urban improvements such as 'rational street

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[462] *CJ*, 29th April 1796, vol. 51, 642.
[463] *CJ*, 20th February 1810, vol. 65, 108.
[464] J. Innes, 'Legislation and Public Participation', in D. Lemmings (ed.), *The British and Their Laws in the Eighteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2005), 107-8.
[465] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833, Handbill dated 2nd May 1831.
[466] LRO, M105 Scrapbook of election literature (1826); DRO, D5336/2/9/12 Scrapbook of newspaper and handbills from Leicester borough elections 1818-1826; DLSL, Box 28 Derby Broadsheets.
[467] Table 1.1 page 10.

development', as well as developing road, river and canal communications.[468]

One local issue which caught the attention of residents, candidates and MPs alike, was enclosure of common land.[469] During the eighteenth century, as land prices rose across the country, so did the pressure to improve and develop areas by enclosing sections of common land. Whilst those who supported enclosure hoped that the overall rental value of the land may improve, many opposed the plans on the grounds that it would destroy the historic common rights to the land.[470]

In contrast to issues such as parliamentary reform, enclosure remained a local, rather than national, issue which prompted various printed campaigns along with meetings, pressing for local parliamentary acts.[471] Enclosure was discussed in towns across the country, as well as in Parliament. In the East Midlands, Nottingham and Derby appear to have been especially active in campaigning both for and against the measure.[472] Paul Elliott has shown how enclosure could occasionally be achieved via general consent, but this was not always the case, and so, extensive campaigns ran, both in favour and against proposals.[473] During the 1780s and 1790s, a wealth of printed literature addressing the issue was produced on both sides of the debate, and notices frequently appeared in the press giving details of enclosure proposals.[474]

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[468] P.A. Elliott, *Enlightenment, modernity and science: geographies of scientific culture in Georgian England* (London, 2010), 232, 240-41.
[469] P.A. Elliott, 'The Politics of Urban Improvement in Georgian Nottingham: The Enclosure Dispute of the 1780s', *TTS*, 110 (2006), 87-101.
[470] Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840*, 135.
[471] Elliott, *Enlightenment, modernity and science*, 240.
[472] Elliott, *Enlightenment, modernity and science*, 243.
[473] Elliott, 'The Politics of Urban Improvement in Georgian Nottingham', 88.
[474] DLSL, Box 27 Nun's Green Broadsheets (1789-92).

In Derby, it was hoped that the money raised through the sale of Nun's Green, an area of land to the west of the town, would help to fund town improvements including the provision of street paving and lighting. It was these proposals which many of the handbills in support of the enclosure emphasised.[475] In stressing the benefits to the whole constituency, one handbill claimed that, 'Because the increase of the town by new houses on the Green, will increase the value of estates to landlords, will bring more business to shopkeepers, and will employ all the labouring Poor in buildings, &c. and enable them to better maintain their families.'[476] In contrast, those who attempted to oppose the plans pointed to the historic grazing rights on the land. Dating back 460 years, the land was a gift to the poor by the Duke of Lancaster and the Earl of Leicester. Plans for enclosure were described by one publication as 'a violent and bare-faced attack upon the poor Remains of your ancient rights and privileges.'[477]

Whilst the debate over the common lands transcended political, religious, and social classes, a number of prominent MPs became involved with the campaign.[478] From the 1780s, when enclosure first came to be debated in the East Midlands, Daniel Parker Coke was one of the MPs who had the greatest connection to the issue, first in his capacity as MP for Derby between 1776 and 1780, and later as MP for Nottingham.[479]

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[475] DLSL, Box 27 'To the Inhabitants of the Town of Derby' (January 1793); 'Address to the Ladies of Derby by one of their own sex' (undated).

[476] DLSL, Box 27 Letter entitled 'To Master Tully' (February 1792).

[477] DLSL, Box 27 'The Sorrowful Lamentation, Last Dying Speech and Confessions OF OLD NUN'S GREEN' (1791).

[478] P. A. Elliott, *The Derby philosophers: science and culture in British urban society, 1700-1850* (Manchester, 2009), 122-3.

[479] J.V. Beckett, 'Parliament and the localities: the borough of Nottingham', *Parliamentary History*, 17 (1998), 63-4.

Many of the handbills arguing the case both for and against the enclosure of Nun's Green date from the early 1790s, by which time Coke was MP for Nottingham. Nevertheless, he remained an important presence in the opposition campaign, addressing the public and announcing his intentions of visiting voters personally in order to understand their views on the issue more clearly.[480] In contrast, there appears to have been little in the way of canvassing, on either side, from the then sitting MPs, Edward Coke or George Augustus Henry Cavendish. Furthermore, much of the campaigning both for and against enclosure took place separate from election canvassing, with few handbills on the subject overlapping with election dates. Taking this into consideration, this perhaps indicates how this was a personal, rather than political issue for Daniel Parker Coke, whereas Cavendish and Edward Coke were concerned with other, more pressing local and national issues which concerned their constituents, especially during canvasses, and so centred on these in addresses.

Coke also became embroiled in the debate over enclosure in Nottingham. In 1795, he offered his help and support, if required, to the proposals to enclose Sneinton, a parish close to the centre of the town. The following year, when Nottingham enclosure was debated in Parliament in May 1796, Coke twice voted (with the minority each time) in favour of the proposal to enclose the Forest, Commons and Waste Lands of Nottingham.[481] Amongst the freemen, proposals were also unpopular. Whilst some acknowledged the necessity of expanding the town's medieval boundaries to accommodate the expanding town, many opposed the measure on the basis that it would remove the historic

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[480] DLSL, Box 27 'To the Inhabitants of the Town of Derby' (February 1793).
[481] *CJ*, 9th May 1796, vol. 51, 687.

rights of the freemen, who formed the greater proportion of the electorate in Nottingham.[482] Despite Coke's apparent support of enclosure, at the end of May 1796, he received enough support to retain one of the two seats for the town at the borough election. Taking this into account, it might have been expected that Coke would not have been successful as the results of the poll indicate, suggesting that it was perhaps not the most important electoral issue to voters during the 1790s.

Coke's support for enclosure was to some degree emphasised in the paper war of the 1803 election. Voters of Nottingham were warned that Coke would, 'rob you of your Fields - your Meadows, - your Burgess Parts; your Loans of Money, and all those Privileges which you and your ancestors have enjoyed for upwards of 400 years.'[483] Even taking into account Coke's support for various moves to enclose sections of Nottingham's common lands and fields, this was not surprising. As Thomis argues, 'no candidate ever fought a Nottingham election at this period without being so accused.'[484] Joseph Birch was similarly accused, along with the corporation, of having plans to enclose the open fields.[485] It was therefore in a candidate's interest to clarify their stance on the issue of enclosure, and in his own addresses, Coke is portrayed as the defender of the common land by opposing any attempt at enclosure and asks voters 'who has obtained the greatest part of your Land…who has been trying to get the Fields inclosed for years past? - Have you forgotten your gratitude to your friends of Mr Coke's Party for opposing it?'[486]

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[482] Elliott, 'The Politics of Urban Improvement in Georgian Nottingham', 94-6.
[483] *Paper War*, 102, 229.
[484] M.I. Thomis, 'The Politics of Nottingham Enclosure', *TTS*, 71 (1967), 96.
[485] *Paper War*, 222, 262-3
[486] *Paper War*, 144.

During the subsequent election of 1806, enclosure again came to be a divisive issue. Coke spoke out against enclosure and, in reference to an application to Parliament on the subject, reminded voters that that 'no exertions on my part shall be wanting to oppose that measure in every shape, - because it appears to be highly injurious to the Interest of the Burgesses, for whom I have for the last twenty-five years, considered myself to be a Trustee.'[487] Such a statement shows how, on the one hand, Coke took an interest in issues, such as enclosure, which were affecting the electorate of Nottingham. On the other, however, it is clear that Coke still saw himself as acting in accordance to his own judgement, rather than on the views of his constituents.

At the end of the election, Coke headed the poll with 1,773 votes out of a total of 4,759. John Smith, in allegiance with Coke, came second, gaining the remaining seat for the Borough.[488] He too had received criticism for his support for enclosure. During his canvass, he was forced to rescind his support for enclosure of the common lands upon discovering the strength of opposition to it.[489] As Elliott has argued, it was this popular opposition to enclosure, along with that of the corporation, which meant that little in the way of opening up the common lands in Nottingham was achieved until the 1840s.[490] Whilst the issue, to some degree, continued to be debated sporadically in the press and election literature, Thomis' claim that enclosure remained a constant theme in election literature during much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has perhaps been exaggerated, especially as, from the 1790s, with the outbreak of war, other,

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[487] *DM,* 30th October 1806.
[488] See Appendix.
[489] Symonds and Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 29/07/16].
[490] Elliott, 'The Politics of Urban Improvement in Georgian Nottingham', 99.

more pressing local and national issues came to the forefront of popular political debate.[491]

War and Economic Hardship

War between England and France was declared on 9th February 1793. Except for a brief period between 1801 and 1803, the two countries remained at war for the next twenty-two years. Until 1793, the French Revolution posed 'the most serious challenge' to Britain's social and political structure since the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and even before the outbreak of war, the East Midlands witnessed a growing interest in radical ideas and politics, and in Nottingham, radical activity dated back to the 1750s.[492]

On the whole, the East Midlands 'was no more or no less affected' by the French Revolutionary or Napoleonic Wars than any other inland region of England. However, during the 1790s and early 1800s, Nottingham in particular gained a reputation for radicalism, and during elections, candidates were often accused of harbouring Jacobin principles.[493] Other towns in the region also witnessed a rise in radical views, a growing sense of resentment towards the government, and discontent at the economic impacts of the war. The domestic reaction to the French Wars has been the subject of increasing interest, and this next section shall examine to what extent elections in the East Midlands came to be

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[491] Thomis, 'The Politics of Nottingham Enclosure', 91.

[492] F. O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1832*, Second Edition (London, 2016), 243; J.V. Beckett, 'Nottingham in the 1790s', *TTS*, 94 (1990), 56-7.

[493] J.V. Beckett, 'Responses to War: Nottingham in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815', *Midland History*, 22 (1997), 71.

dominated by discussions of war and revolution, how candidates addressed the war in their election literature, and whether their support or hostility towards it affected their success at the polls.[494]

The general election of 1790 was the first to take place since the beginning of the French Revolution, which was starting to 'stir the minds of men' across the country. Rioting took place in Leicester, where voters 'began attacking the colours which hung from the windows of the Exchange' building, and were 'presently torn into ribbons and scattered'. The poll booth was attacked, as was the town hall and the Exchange where 'the books, papers, checks &c. which had been made use of during the election were thrown out of the windows, and completely destroyed'.[495] Similar scenes took place during the 1790 Nottingham election, where, according to one report, the 'election was attended with more than the ordinary extent of rioting and destruction' and properties were 'literally smashed to atoms'.[496] The *Nottingham Journal* claimed that, after the polling was complete, 'a disturbance arose', ending in the breaking of windows. Rioting continued the next day, and 'the military were obliged to be called'.[497]

To what extent this violence was as a direct result of the French Revolution is questionable. Election riots were nothing new, and during the eighteenth century there were 'thousands' of riots and public protests across the country.[498] Furthermore, in Leicester at least, violence erupted as a result of a rumour that

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[494] For a study of domestic life during the French Wars, see J. Uglow, *In These Times: living in Britain Through Napoleon's Wars 1793-1815* (London, 2014).
[495] *LJ*, 25th June 1790.
[496] T. Bailey, *Annals of Nottinghamshire: History of the county of Nottingham, including the borough* Vol 4 (Nottingham, 1853), 136-37.
[497] *NJ*, 26th June 1790.
[498] H.T. Dickinson, 'Popular Politics and Radical Ideas', in H.T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2002), 101.

a compromise between Thomas Smith and Thomas Boothby Parkyns had been reached, rather than any genuine sense of radicalism.[499] Reports in the *Nottingham Journal* are less forthcoming as to the motives behind the rioters during the Nottingham election.

In Newark, it was claimed that the poll was interrupted 'by a Violent and Force unexampled in the History of this Borough'.[500] However, in common with Leicester, it would seem that the cause of violence was as a result of local rivalries and, as C.E. Hogarth has explained, as a result of a change in voting restrictions, supporting the earlier claim that contests of the late eighteenth century were dominated by local individuals, issues, and rivalries.[501]

Therefore, prior to 1793, although electoral violence was not unusual, there were few instances of where it seems to have been fuelled by a genuine sense of radical politics and ideas. To what extent the outbreak of war helped to fuel these ideas and came to dominate political discussion across the region needs to be examined in greater depth. Throughout the conflict, reports of war appeared in the press. However, the length of time that it took to reach provincial towns such as Nottingham and Derby may have meant that, for many, interest only really peaked when a significant victory or loss occurred. Whilst many local men served in the army, on the whole, the majority of the population would have been largely unaffected by the conflict. Only when invasion threatened did the actual conflict come into the minds of the public.[502] It is perhaps because of these

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[499] *LJ*, 25th June 1790; M. H. Port and R. G. Thorne, 'Leicester', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 12/07/2018].
[500] NA, DDNM 2/1/2 Address (4th May 1790).
[501] C.E. Hogarth, 'The Derbyshire Parliamentary Election of 1832', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 89 (1969), 78.
[502] Beckett, 'Responses to War', 76.

reasons why the press in particular came increasingly to focus on the cost of war at home.

At the immediate outbreak of war, historians have shown that the East Midlands, like the rest of the country, was largely supportive of the conflict. In December 1792, *The Times* reported that 'effigies of Paine had been burnt in every principle town in the kingdom', and as Alan Booth and O'Gorman have shown, popular loyalism was strong.[503] Despite its radical tendencies, in Nottingham, victories over the French were publicly celebrated by the ringing of bells and bonfires.[504]

Between 1793 and 1796, however, it is clear that support for the war waned, partly in response to growing economic difficulties and food shortages exacerbated by the poor harvest of 1793/94. In September 1794, the price of wheat had been 57s. per quarter. By the end of July 1795, it had risen to 126s. per quarter and, whilst the war impacted on the scarcity of food, drought during the summer of 1795 had ruined crops and only worsened the situation.[505]

In Leicester, one Hampden Society publication (Figure 4.1) questioned what impact that war would have on the happiness and prosperity of the country, and claimed that war would add to the burdens of the poor. Printed in 1793, this publication falls in between the 1790 general election and the town's by-election of 1795. Nevertheless, it highlights the opposition and concerns which were in circulation around the town. Furthermore, in addition to local concerns, such as

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[503] A. Booth, 'Popular loyalism and public violence in the north-west of England, I790- 1800', *Social History*, 8 (1983), 295-313; 'The Paine Burnings of 1792-1793', *Past and Present*, 193, (2006) 111-56.
[504] Beckett, 'Responses to War', 72; A. Henstock (ed.), *The Diary of Abigail Gawthern of Nottingham 1751-1810*, Thoroton Society Record Series, 33, (Nottingham, 1980), 58.
[505] M.C. Pottle, 'Loyalty and Patriotism in Nottingham, 1792-1816' (University of Oxford, Ph.D. thesis, 1988), 251; Uglow, *In These Times*, 139.

the fate of the stockingers and journeymen, it also addresses broader issues, claiming that 'War with France has already in great measure deprived is of the French, the Dutch, the Spanish, the Russian, the Prussian, the Austrian and the German Markets [and that] Our East India possessions will again be in danger.'[506]

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[506] TNA, TS 11/1064/4878 Leicester libel *WAR!! The Effects of War on the Poor* (September 1793).

WAR!!!

"War is the Pharo-table of Governments, and Nations are the dupes of the game."

"War's a game, that were their subjects wise, Kings would not play at."

THE *ostensible* motives by which Government were induced to enter into a War with the French Republic, being so effectually removed that it is ridiculous to entertain the slightest apprehensions of their relapse; it behoves every *true friend* and *well-wisher* to the HAPPINESS and PROSPERITY of this Country, to inquire how far its continuance may be inimical or beneficial to either; this duty is become more especially necessary, as the *object* of the War is *now* changed and every *rational* and *equitable* end is acknowledged to be completely obtained by it.

To the INHABITANTS of LEICESTER, and its vicinity, this inquiry is of infinite importance, and if the following Queries and observations (which are purposely calculated to suit the situation and circumstances of all persons) should render the matter in debate in any respect more clear, or its conclusion more evident, this publication will not be destitute of utility.

Will the *already depressed* price of funded property be enhanced by the continuance of the War?——Will landed property be encreased by it? Will it diminish the EXCISE, or the LAND TAX, or the HOUSE TAX, or the WINDOW TAX, or the COMMUTATION TAX, or any of the long, long catalogue of Taxes which lie so heavy on this devoted country?

Will the *present excessive and increasing* POOR RATES be reduced by it? Will the *already diminished* home trade be increased by War? by war which will add to those numerous burdens——which will enhance the price of all the necessaries of life——and which will lessen the consumption of manufactures of every kind.

Will the exporter benefit by War? which will increase the risk of exportation——the price of insurance——and the prime cost of many materials? By War, which will delay the execution of foreign orders by depriving our merchants of their seamen; and put in jeopardy the most material part of trade? What supported us during the American War? the export of our manufactures to countries that could purchase them, because they enjoyed the blessings of peace. But who is there now to buy our manufactures? where is peace now to be found? The nations of Europe are in arms from the White Sea to the Pillars of Hercules.

War with France has already in a great measure deprived us of the French, the Dutch, the Spanish, the Russian, the Austrian and the German Markets, for all Prussian, the Austrian and the German Markets, for all these nations are engaged in it. Our East and West India possessions will again be in danger, for sooner or later they must be involved in the contest. And as the French assisted the Americans to obtain *their* Freedom, the latter may think it right to return the compliment. And thus may we be deprived of every market for our manufactures which the world affords.

Suppose for a moment that the opulent manufacturer can support this——What will the MASTER STOCKING-MAKER say to such a crisis of affairs, when no one will take his goods off his hands, and whose profits when trade is *good*, maintain his family but from hand to mouth?

And what will the JOURNEYMAN say to this? when he finds (what thousands have already) that his wages are fallen and employment scarce. Where is employment to be found? and how are the families of the Poor to be maintained? If a decent subsistence cannot be obtained in time of Peace, but with unwearied labour and painful exertion, what is to be done when taxes increase, employment diminishes, wages sink, and provisions rise? Look to it ye Loyal Addressers, ye hood-winked half-witted politicians—for as your courtly effusions gave sanction to it, to you, and to you alone, the *starving people* will have a right to look for subsistence.

Ye numerous Speculators in building, are ye Advocates for the continuance of the War? how much will it add to the value of your property? how much will it diminish the price of building? what additions will it make to the number of sub-purchasers? or how will the covenants you, or they may have engaged in, be more advantageously fulfilled under the pressure of this national calamity.

Ye still more numerous Speculators in NAVIGATIONS Alas! where are *your* GOLDEN DREAMS? how much will it increase the value of your Stock? how much will it add to your premiums? will it not reduce the value of your Shares below par?

What will the industrious tribe of Brickmakers, and Bricklayers, and Carpenters, and Joiners, and Smiths, and Plumbers, and Workmen employed in building of all denominations say to these fatal measures? Should the War continue for any length of time (and at present there is no prospect of its speedy termination) what will they do? or where are they to go? will the projected canals supply them with work? or will the holders of Shares in those canals be able to answer the calls?

Is it possible ye can have forgot the streets filled with untenanted houses; and FRAMES TO LET staring ye in the Face, in every quarter of the Town, during the greatest part of the American War?

What war occasioned then, war may again occasion, and again the prosperity of the Country may be put upon the cast of a die!

Will the *murder* of some thousands of Frenchmen be any consolation under these *calamities*?

Will the cries of the many WIDOWS and ORPHANS increase the *numerous felicities* ye enjoy under our present GLORIOUS and HAPPY CONSTITUTION? will the *shattered fabric* of PUBLIC CREDIT derive any support from the continuance of the War? will the weight of that *enormous millstone* the NATIONAL DEBT be diminished by it? Or will the long list of SINECURE PLACES and CONCEALED PENSIONS be lessened by it?

Will the re-establishment of Absolute Monarchy in France ensure our future Peace with that Country? Will the dismemberment of France secure us from a visit of that infamous Combination whose treacherous conduct in Poland we are (to our eternal disgrace) indirectly giving a sanction to? Which is the most dangerous to the balance of Power in Europe, and to the remaining liberties of this Country; the permanent establishment of a Republic in France, or the increasing ambition of the combined Powers? Will the Christian Religion become more respected in France when propagated under the auspices of Cannon and Bayonets? Will not the successful prosecution of the War endanger the lives of the Queen and Dauphin? Why are the Combined Powers so anxious to divide Poland and France? because it answers the double purpose of Plunder and of the extinction of Liberty. Will they not for the same reasons divide the British Empire? and will our insular situation be any defence, and our navy be able to protect us from a host of enemies attacking us on all sides? and lastly, what indemnification can we expect for pursuing the War? had we any from the Dutch, the Spaniards, or the Russians, for the several armaments for Holland, for Nootka found, and for Oczakow.

Admitting that the motives which induced Government to commence the War were laudable, as it is now changed into a war of *extermination against opinions*, it will vindicate any atrocity that can be committed, for if a difference of opinion will justify nations *murdering* each other by *thousands*, it will consequently justify individual assassination!

Admitting that there was an unavoidable necessity for going to War, that necessity cannot exist now, as every

Figure 4.1: TNA, TS 11/1064/4878 Leicester libel *WAR!! The Effects of War on the Poor* (September 1793).

In 1793, Leicester had two radical weekly newspapers, the *Leicester Herald* and the *Leicester Chronicle*. Of the two, the *Herald* was generally the more outspoken in terms of its criticisms of the war. In the run up to the 1795 by-election, the *Herald* focused specifically on the fate of local people, claiming that 'the inhabitants of this kingdom more especially than those of the metropolis', are 'likely to experience the additional calamity of a scarcity of provisions of which even ministers themselves we are assured on respectable authority have dreadful apprehensions.'[507] The presence of two radical papers indicates that Leicester had a strong radical tradition, despite its Tory corporation. However, despite Fraser's claim that Leicester had a 'healthy' radical press, both the *Leicester Herald* and the *Leicester Chronicle* had ceased publication by the end of 1795, with no other radical paper emerging until 1810.[508]

As Chapter Three highlighted, it was the Tory *Leicester Journal* which was the dominant paper in the town. Whilst recognising the human and economic costs of the war, the *Journal* saw conflict as unavoidable, urging readers to accept the war with 'cheerful submission' and resilience, issuing recommendations that 'all families ... use rice with their flour in making of bread … which will make a very material and efficient saving of bread corn'.[509]

As Fraser has shown, the *Journal* showed contempt for all those not seen to be loyal, denouncing them as 'Jacobins', 'Peace-at-any-price men', and 'democrats'.[510] During his canvass of 1800, John Manners' 'signature' was a

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[507] Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester', 54; *LH*, 2nd January 1795.
[508] Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester', 59.
[509] *LJ*, 5th Dec 1800.
[510] Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester', 54.

'contest between the rich and the poor; the oppressors and the oppressed'.[511]

Yet, by portraying Manners and his supporters as democrats, the *Journal* linked them with the Revolution in France, and suggested that they were a threat to the crown and aristocracy. A similar comment can be seen in election literature printed during the Nottingham by-election of 1803. Throughout the contest, supporters of Birch were accused of being dangerous Jacobin radicals, inspired by the war in France.[512] However, as one handbill claimed, 'it is not at the Nottingham election alone, that the nick-names of Jacobin, Radical, Democrat, &c. have been applied to the stead, temperate friends of reform ... The whole country have long had this cant rung in their ears'.[513]

Whilst Michael Scriverner has argued that Jacobinism 'did not disappear entirely' by the early nineteenth century, references in election literature were becoming increasingly rare.[514] Despite the claims published in the 1803 handbill, elsewhere around the country, there is scant evidence that candidates and their supporters were levied with accusations of being 'Jacobins'. The *Leicester Journal* claimed that the 1800 borough by-election was 'a struggle between property and no property, between loyalty and true patriotism on the one side and Jacobinism ... on the other'.[515] Thomas Babington was the chosen Tory candidate of the town's corporation between 1800 and 1818. However,

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[511] *A copy of the poll alphabetically digested, taken at the guildhall in the borough of Leicester before John Saywell esquire, mayor, and Edward Dawson, esquire, bailiff which began on Monday December 1st and closed on Wednesday December 17th 1800; for electing a burgess to represent the borough of Leicester in parliament a burgess. In the room of the late Lord Rancliffe* (Leicester 1801).

[512] *Paper War*, 30, 39, 54, 61, 68, 90, 92, 96, 100, 163-64, 165, 166.

[513] *Paper War*, 181-82.

[514] M. Scrivener, *Seditious Allegories: John Thelwall and Jacobin Writing* (Pennsylvania, 2001), 31.

[515] Port and Thorne, 'Leicester', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 12/07/2018].

few, if any, handbills printed on behalf of Babington make any reference to Jacobinism.[516]

In a speech delivered at the hustings, Babington stated that he was 'a firm friend of the king and the constitution and a firm friend to peace whenever an equitable and safe peace can be obtained'. In his address, he also claimed to be an advocate of war only 'if peace was unattainable.'[517] Babington was the choice candidate of the town's corporation, as well as being popular amongst residents. His appearance at the hustings had an 'electrifying effect on the court and was welcomed by the loudest acclamations'.[518] In part, his popularity was as a result of his commitment to constituents and good works amongst the poor, and it is this which appears to have been of greater significance in terms of Babington's success than his opposition to the war.[519]

In Nottingham, Daniel Parker Coke had initially been a popular figure in the town, voting in favour of peace negotiations.[520] However, as a result of the increasing cost of grain, by 1802, public support for the continuing conflict was waning in Nottingham, and support for Coke diminished. In the run up to the 1802 election, Coke canvassed the town alongside Captain Sedley and 'friends of Sir John Borlase Warren' who was unable to canvass the town on account of a 'misfortune' in his family.[521] Despite claiming to have received a 'very cordial reception' during his canvass, Coke withdrew from the contest, and Joseph

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[516] LRO, MISC15 Broadsheets, election posters, newspaper cuttings.
[517] *LJ,* 19th December 1800.
[518] *LJ,* 19th December 1800.
[519] P.A. Symonds, 'Babington, Thomas (1758-1837)', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 04/09/16].
[520] *NJ*, 21st May 1796.
[521] *NJ*, 3rd July 1802.

Birch, nominated at the last minute, headed the poll despite being previously unknown in the town.[522]

Little of Coke's printed canvass remains, although according to the *Nottingham Journal*, handbills were printed. Coke made little direct reference to the war, although referenced the outcome of the French Revolution by claiming that 'in other Countries ... attempts to remove the miseries of a wretched Government, have ended in making the peoples of those countries still more wretched'. Other addresses, like his canvass of 1796, tended to flatter voters and the constituency.[523] Despite failing to acknowledge the economic difficulties experienced by those either in Nottingham, or elsewhere across the country, it is clear that Coke's continued support of the government resulted in widespread, popular hostility. Reports in the *Nottingham Journal* describe 'the difficultly and danger; in getting to the hustings, to poll for our late worthy representative, D. P. Coke Esq.' as a result of a 'mob', who attacked those who had voted for Coke as they exited from the poll.[524] Undoubtedly, therefore, it was the unprecedented levels of violence and intimidation directed towards Coke's supporters which was the primary reason why he lost the seat he had occupied for the previous twenty-two years.

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[522] *NJ*, 3rd July 1802; NLSL, L34.22A 'To the Worthy Electors of Nottingham (8th July 1802); NLSL, L34.22A 'To the worthy and independent burgesses and freeholders of the town and county of Nottingham (18th June 1802); NLSL, L34.22A 'To the Worthy Electors of the Town of Nottingham' (30th June 1802).
[523] *NJ*, 26th June 1802; *NJ*, 3rd July 1802; *NJ*, 10th July 1802.
[524] *NJ*, 17th July 1802; *Report from the select committee who were appointed to try and determine the Merits of the Petition of Daniel Parker Coke, Esquire, and also, of the Petitions of the several other Persons; Complaining of an undue Election and Return, for the Town and County of the Town of Nottingham: and minutes of the evidence* (1803), 14-15, 18-19, 159.

In contrast to Coke, Sir John Borlase Warren headed the poll with 987 votes. Although frequently absent from the Commons and Nottingham, Warren was a popular figure in the town, having received the freedom of the town in 1796 for his part in capturing three French frigates.[525] Warren's politics are somewhat opaque, rarely making any comments other than 'bald statements of constitutional orthodoxy'. Nevertheless, as Pottle has suggested, 'his appeal seems to have been largely his patriotic and patrician qualities', and despite his limited canvass of 1802, he remained a popular candidate in the town.[526]

Coke mounted a campaign against the result of the 1802 election and on 16th March, the election was declared void. At the subsequent by-election in May 1803, Moses has stated that parliamentary reform was one of the most important issues raised during canvassing.[527] To some extent this is true, and the question of reform is addressed below. However, it is clear that it was opposition to war which was the central theme of much of Birch's canvass. In his election literature, Birch accused Coke of being a 'blind supporter of the war', and printed criticisms of the 'unnecessary war which brought misery upon thousands,' appeared in election addresses, handbills, and newspaper articles. These criticisms tended to focus on three main points - the monetary cost of war, the poverty of the people, and the resulting food shortages, in short, the primary concerns of the electorate.[528] As the *Newark Herald* summarised, 'Battles are

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[525] J. Beckett, 'Radical Nottingham', in J. Beckett, P. Dixon, C. Griffin and K. Brand (eds.), *A Centenary History of Nottingham* (Manchester,1997), 293. See above page 152.

[526] Pottle, 'Loyalty and Patriotism in Nottingham, 1792-1816', 195.

[527] J.H. Moses, 'Elections and electioneering in the constituencies of Nottinghamshire, 1702-1832', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Nottingham, volume 1, 1965), 195.

[528] *Paper War*, 2; LRO, MISC15/42 Election letter July 5th 1802 by Felix McCarthy; LRO, DE3804/4 'Make your choice, Electors, Independence and Slavery are offered to you' (undated c.1826); NA, DD568/35/4 Daniels Lamentation (1803); NA, DD568/35/11 Broadside to electors against Coke- printed by Dunn (1803).

fought - blood is spilt - money is exhausted - taxes are multiplied - debt is doubled - trade at a stand.'[529]

High prices and food riots continued to be reported in the early nineteenth century. Nevertheless, during the election canvasses of 1806, 1807, and 1812, some constituencies were dominated by parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, signifying that even in wartime, other issues could often occupy the minds of MPs and constituents alike.[530] In particular, across the country, the election of 1806 was so dominated by the question of Catholic emancipation that it was referred to as the 'No Popery' election.[531] However, in looking at election addresses for the East Midlands, apart from a few exceptions, there are few specific references to Catholic emancipation until the following year.[532] In some ways this is surprising. As seen below, the East Midlands had a sizable non-conformist population, many of whom supported increased civil and political rights for Catholics and dissenters. Furthermore, even despite the fact that food prices remained high, with bread being in 'great scarcity', only a handful of candidates referred directly to the economic hardship experienced as a result of the war. Whilst some portrayed themselves as advocates of peace, others continued to focus on local issues, stressing their attachment to their constituency.

During the Leicestershire county election of 1806 George Leigh Keck, took the opportunity to appeal to voters early. On 23rd October, Keck addressed voters of

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[529] M.J. Smith, 'British Radical Newspapers in the French Revolutionary Era' (University of London, Ph.D. thesis, 1979), 48; H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855* (Harlow, 2000), 180.
[530] C. Cook and J. Stevenson, *A History of British Elections since 1689* (Oxon, 2014), 31.
[531] Uglow, *In These Times*, 417.
[532] *LJ*, 1st May 1807.

Leicestershire, stating that 'it being generally understood that a Dissolution of Parliament is on the eve of taking place ... permit me to renew the offer of my Services.' However, as this statement shows, it was on his 'Principles of Independence', and his 'Service' to the constituency which he sought to emphasise, rather than paying any attention to the impacts of war.[533] Similar approaches can be seen elsewhere around the region with the addresses of Edmund Cradock Hartopp.[534] On the other hand, it is clear that the war had not been forgotten altogether. In 1808, Charles Sutton founded the *Nottingham Review,* and 'from the beginning ... conducted a continuous campaign against the Napoleonic War', matched only by the *Leeds Mercury* in terms of 'leading provincial opinion in favour of peace.'[535]

By 1812, the *Review* had 'helped to stir up considerable popular antipathy to the war', and by September, there were reports of rioting in Nottingham over the price of flour. During the election a month later, a number of pamphlets made a particular point of referring to the views on the continuing war of those standing for election.[536] Whilst successful during the elections of 1803, 1806, 1807 and 1812, Coke had remained an unpopular figure in Nottingham, with 'ever wise, good and independent men' despising him 'in their heart, as they had done

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[533] DRO, D5336/2/9/7 'To the gentlemen clergy and freeholders of the County of Leicester' (1806).

[534] DRO, D5336/2/9/6 Statement of facts addressed by Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp to his friends (1806).

[535] D. Fraser, 'The Nottingham press, 1800-50', *TTS*, 67 (1963), 54.

[536] Beckett, 'Responses to War', 78; Field, *The Date- Book*, 229; *NR*, 12th September 1812; DRO, D5366/2/9/17/80 *New Book of Chronicles, Chapter Second*; DRO, D5366/2/9/17/82 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter First*; DRO, D5366/2/9/17/84 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter Third*. These three pamphlets are all undated, although it is likely that they are from the same election contest. The candidates referred to in them are, John Smith, Daniel Parker Coke, Peter Crompton, Richard Arkwright and Lord Rancliffe. The only election where all of these candidates stood is 1812.

before.'[537] The October 1812 borough election, therefore, centred on the increasing cost of provisions, capitalising on growing discount amongst voters.

As Figure 4.2 illustrates, voters were offered a choice between war and poverty, or peace and plenty.[538] In particular, both John Smith and Lord Rancliffe were portrayed as sympathetic to the situation. In a series of pamphlets printed for the election, Rancliffe is described as 'a friend to Peace… [and] said if [workers] had not plenty OF WORK and a LARGER LOAF, it should not be his fault for he was an enemy to WAR.'[539] Similarly, the electors of Nottingham were apparently 'more confirmed in their belief that [John Smith] was a real friend to *Peace*, and an enemy to *Corruption*, *War* and *Blood-shed*', and, if elected would ensure that 'the poor would soon have food to eat and raiment to put on.'[540]

[537] DRO, D5366/2/9/17/82 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter First*; Symonds and Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 04/08/16].
[538] UNMSC, Oversize Not 1.F19 NOT 'War and Poverty! Peace and Plenty' (1812).
[539] DRO, D5366/2/9/17/84 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter Third*.
[540] DRO, D5366/2/9/17/80 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter Second*.

Figure 4.2 UNMSC, Oversize Not 1.F19 NOT 'War and Poverty!
Peace and Plenty' (1812).

When it became clear that a contest was unavoidable, Daniel Parker Coke, 'old and stricken in years,' perhaps sensing his unpopularity in the town, retired from the contest in favour of Richard Arkwright, son of the industrialist.[541] Supported by the aristocracy, Arkwright ardently opposed reform and peace at any price. Despite extensive financial support from his father, and estimated election expenses of £20,000, Arkwright could not compete with either Smith or Rancliffe. Whilst no formal alliance between the two Whigs existed, Smith and Rancliffe received a combined total of 3,528 votes, in comparison to the 1,239 for Arkwright.[542] As the *Annals of Nottinghamshire* noted, it was the first time in 'a great number of years' that the Whigs found themselves occupying both borough seats.[543] In this instance, it would seem that it was a combination of calls for peace and reform which were the contributing factors to the Whigs' success.

Even in 1826, and so more than ten years after peace between England and France had been declared, candidates continued to hark back to the 'the year 1790 - then you had a blue Parliament - a blue administration which sanctioned a blue war- that blue war created a blue debt … blue taxation was imposed- which was the certain forerunner of a blue starvation.'[544] In this particular case, it is probable that few voters would have remembered the 1790s, but such a statement demonstrates how, even as late as 1826, candidates were evoking memories of the French Wars, and the hardships that they contributed to.

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[541] DRO, D5366/2/9/17/82 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter First*.
[542] Symonds and Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 10/07/2018]; W. Stokes, Arkwright, Richard (1781-1832)' *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 10/07/2018].
[543] Bailey, *Annals of Nottinghamshire*
[544] LRO, DE3804/4 'Make your choice, Electors, Independence and Slavery are offered to you' (undated c.1826).

Between 1790 and 1815, it is clear that attitudes to both the French Revolutionary and the Napoleonic Wars fluctuated. Initially, the outbreak of war was met with fear that revolutionary ideas might threaten security at home.[545] To some extent, the violent displays during elections reinforced the fears of revolution, leading to some candidates to be accused of being Jacobin radicals, sympathetic to the French revolutionaries. However, it is clear that this was not the case, and in their election literature almost all candidates reinforced their patriotic attachment to the king, country, and the constitution.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the wars had a significant impact on the East Midlands, especially in relation to high levels of taxation, food shortages, and an increase in the cost of provisions, and it was these issues which MPs came to focus on in their election addresses.[546] In terms of electoral success, it was more important for a candidate to at least appear to be supportive of peace, if not actively working for it. In Nottingham, Coke lost support with the town electors and the corporation largely due to his failure to oppose the war. After the election of 1812, both MPs for Nottingham, Lord Rancliffe and John Smith, paid particular attention to the rising price of bread in their canvasses, and continued to do so after the introduction of the Corn Laws in 1815.

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[545] Beckett, 'Responses to War', 71.
[546] *Paper War*, 69, 74-75, 155; LRO, DE3804/4 'Make your choice, Electors, Independence and Slavery are offered to you' (undated c.1826); DRO, D5366/2/9/17/84 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter Third*; DRO, D5366/2/9/17/80 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter Second*.

Corn Laws

The end of the Napoleonic Wars did little to alleviate the problems experienced by the population. Whilst the return to peace should have meant cheaper food, the introduction of the Corn Laws in 1815 and the demobilisation of troops meant that prices remained high, as did unemployment. As the population grew during the early nineteenth century, food supply became one of the most pressing questions.[547] The Corn Laws 'prohibited the import of foreign corn until the price of English corn had risen to 80 shillings per quarter,' leading critics to argue that the laws were, the 'instruments of landed privilege… standing between the consumer and cheap foreign food.' As a result, they were described as being 'one of the most naked pieces of class legislation in English history.'[548]

The number of signatures that petitions regarding the Corn Laws received often far outnumbered others in favour of peace and other controversial subjects such as parliamentary reform. As Fraser has shown, one petition from Nottingham received a total of 18,651 signatures. In contrast, petitions in favour of parliamentary reform in 1816 and 1817 received only 11,000 and 6,000 signatures respectively.[549] Whilst this might indicate the level of anger towards the Corn Laws present in the town, somewhat surprisingly, many election addresses make little reference to the Corn Laws, especially before 1826.

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[547] B. Hilton, *A Bad, Mad, & Dangerous People: England 1783-1846* (Oxford, 2006), 264.
[548] D. Fraser, 'Nottingham and the Corn Laws', *TTS*, 70 (1964), 81; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People*, 264.
[549] Fraser, 'Nottingham and the Corn Laws', 83.

The general election of 1818 was the first to take place since the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the implementation of the Corn Laws. Across the country, the main issues to be aired were 'parliamentary reform, restrictions on civil liberty, economy and retrenchment and Catholic relief.'[550] Fraser has suggested that, after the conflict, 'an all-embracing programme of radical reform which included the repeal of the Corn Laws' was born. As later sections of this chapter will show, canvasses in the East Midlands addressed a range of issues including reform and increased civil and religious liberties. However, although it is possible to see the Corn Laws as part of the wider social and economic issues to emerge during the early part of the nineteenth century, as Fraser has persuasively argued, it is also possible to see them as a separate issue entirely.[551]

During the 1818 Nottingham election both Birch and Rancliffe specifically referred to the Corn Laws in their election canvasses (Figure 4.3), stating that, whilst they were committed to a repeal of the laws, Thomas Assheton Smith, the other candidate standing for election, would make no such pledge. By using images and references to the size of loaves of bread, this particular handbill was not only outlining to audiences how the Corn Laws would affect them, but also attempting to capitalise on gaining a reaction in order to win votes.

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[550] R.G. Thorne, '1818 Parliament' *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 10/07/2018].
[551] Fraser, 'Nottingham and the Corn Laws', 83.
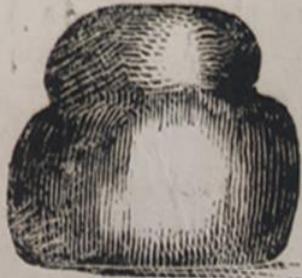
Figure 4.3: NUMASC Not1. F19.NOT/O/S, 86 'To the Electors of

Nottingham' (1818).

Once more we at the Hustings meet
To struggle for the prize;
We'll hear the speeches on both sides,
Then judge by our own eyes.

The Tory loaf is dear and small,
The Whig loaf cheap and big;
Judge for yourselves for which you vote,
A Tory or a Whig.

Tory Loaf, Ninepence.

Whig Loaf, Sixpence.

TORY.

1 The Tories cry, no foreign corn,
    Till we can spare no more,
  Or till the price is raised so high
    As to half starve the poor.

2 When corn is dear, then trade is brisk,
    And wages too are high;
  Then labouring men will have enough,
    Each want to satisfy.

3 Protect the landed interest,—
    Keep up the rent—and then,—
  The Landlord and his tenantry
    Will spend their cash like men.

4 Of all the schemes by men devised,
    None beats the sliding scale;
  Makes prices steady, and our goods
    Command a ready sale.

5 In Prussia, France, and Germany,
    Wages are very low,
  Were foreign corn brought freely in,
    'Twould make your wages so.

6 Some land no man would cultivate
    Because it would not pay,
  Then all our labour and expense
    Would quite be thrown away.

LIBERAL.

ANS.
1 We never do grow corn enough
    To satisfy demand,
  'Tis trade we want,—then why exclude
    The merchant from our land.

ANS.
2 Just look at England at this time,
    Provisions now are high;
  Men scarce have any work to do,
    And o'er low wages sigh.

ANS.
3 How many Landlords quit our shores,
    To spend their rents abroad,
  Because they there can cheaper live,
    Whilst we sustain the load.

ANS.
4 This sliding this deceitful scale
    Slides never for our good;—
  It slides to keep much corn in bond,
    That might be for our food.

ANS.
5 In France they have twice the support,
    That Englismen can get;
  We never knew provisions cheap,—
    Without good wages yet.

ANS.
6 Some land indeed would not be ploughed,
    Yet feed full many a head
  Of cattle, then we'd have
    Cheap *Meat* as well as bread.

Ye voters bear one thing in mind,
The widow droops her head,—
The orphan weeps,—kind parents sigh,
And all for want of bread.

By all that's sacred in distress,—
Whate'er the proud may say,
Vote for cheap bread and never fear,
For we shall win the day.

Figure 4.4 DLSL, Box 28 No.10 Derby Election Poem
(undated c.1832).

A similar address appeared as part of an election canvass in Derby (Figure 4.4). This particular handbill is a poem based on a hustings meeting between the Tories and the Whigs, and bears a striking resemblance to the version printed in Nottingham, especially in the way it uses imagery to suggest that under the Tories bread will be more expensive. After outlining that 'The Tory loaf is dear and small, The Whig loaf is big and cheap', it asks voters to 'Judge for yourselves for which you will vote'.[552] Unlike Figure 4.3, this handbill is undated and, as it does not specifically mention any of the candidates by name, it is difficult to identify for which particular election it was printed. However, no contest took place in Derby between 1802 and 1831, and given that the poem specifically refers to a contest, it is likely that it was printed in either 1831 or 1832.

Between 1822 and 1828, the initial Corn Laws of 1815 were revised, prompting lengthy debates on the subject both in and out of the Commons.[553] In 1825, a petition was sent from the 'Bankers, Merchants, Tradesmen and others, of the borough of Leicester… praying for an early revision of the Corn Laws,' highlighting how widespread opposition to the Laws were in the town, demonstrating that it was not just the poor and working classes who were against the measures.[554] R.W. Greaves suggested that the Leicester 1826 election was dominated by three major issues, namely 'corn, currency and Catholics', a similar theme which can be seen elsewhere across the country.[555]

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[552] DLSL, Box 28 Derby Election Poem (undated).
[553] J.R. Wordie, 'Perceptions and reality: the effects of the Corn Laws and their repeal in England, 1815-1906', in J.R. Wordie (ed.), *Agriculture and politics in England, 1815-1939* (Basingstoke, 2000), 35.
[554] *CJ*, 22nd April 1825, vol. 80, 331.
[555] Greaves, 'Roman Catholic Relief and the Leicester Election of 1826', 199; *LJ*, 16th June 1820; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People*, 164, 245, 328-29. Since 1797, cash

In Leicester, whilst all four candidates to stand in 1826 opposed the Corn Laws, William Evans, it would seem, was the most outspoken critic, declaring that he supported, 'above all a free trade in Corn,' and would 'zealously support the… revision of the corn laws.'[556] However, whereas Evans had seen their repeal as being of primary importance, Otway Cave 'pledged himself to support [their repeal],' believing them 'to be the STEPPING STONE to the removal of other abuses,' hinting at more important reforms to be gained at a later stage.[557]

In spite of Evans' avowed opposition to the Corn Laws, he was not elected to either of the two seats for the borough. Instead, an alliance was formed between Sir Charles Abney Hastings, the chosen candidate of the corporation, and Robert Otway Cave, both of whom were duly elected.[558] Despite claiming that the Corn Laws 'had been neither beneficial to the Agricultural nor the Commercial Interests,' Hastings was always more committed to opposing any concessions to Roman Catholics, reflecting the particular agenda of the town's corporation.[559] One of the particular concerns of agriculturalists and landowners was, as the *Derby Reporter* explained, many feared that, should the Laws be repealed, they would have to lower their rents.[560] Corn dominated much of Leicestershire's agriculture, and by referring to this in his address, Hastings was appealing to the county and out-voters, some of whom had been granted the status of honorary

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payments had been suspended by the Bank of England in order to preserve the Gold Standard. Whilst Hilton has stated that that, during the 1820s, 'the single overarching problem facing ministers was the currency' in the East Midlands at least, little reference is made to currency, at least in election canvasses. *LJ*, 16th June 1820.

[556] LRO, DE3804/9 William Evans address, Leicester (9th Dec 1832).

[557] *LJ*, 2nd June 1826.

[558] R.W. Greaves, *The Corporation of Leicester 1689-1836* (Leicester, 1970), 117.

[559] DRO, D5336/2/9/12 'To the Worthy and Independent Electors of the Borough of Leicester' (20th May 1826); LRO, M105: 'Fair play's a jewel' (1826); DRO, D5336/2/9/12: 'Hastings for Ever!' (1826).

[560] *DR*, 1st June 1826.

freemen in 1822 by the corporation. It was largely upon the strength of the county and out-voters which Hastings' victory was dependent. [561]

In terms of representing the views of constituents, Otway Cave spoke in the Commons against the tax on imported corn, claiming that he believed the 'present measure would do a great deal of mischief,' and 'would therefore vote for the amendment.'[562] He later presented an anti-corn petition from Leicester on 2nd June 1829, which was objected to by Hastings on the basis that 'it was not wholly representative of his constituents,' most likely those county and out-voters who had been so integral to his success in 1826.[563]

During the Newark canvass of 1826, Samuel Ellis Bristowe claimed he considered the Corn Laws to be 'unjust, not only to the labouring classes, but also to the agriculturalists.' As part of his canvass, a procession around the town included 'half a dozen blue silk flags, one which had inscribed on it "Bristowe and Cheap Bread," and another "Freedom of Election."'[564] At the close of the poll, despite advocating fair representation of the people, retrenchment, the abolition of slavery, and a relaxation of the Corn Laws, Bristowe came last, receiving only 296 votes out of a total of 1,538.[565]

In their canvasses, neither of the two successful candidates made any claims with regards to the Corn Laws. Instead, both William Henry Clinton and Henry Willoughby emphasised their previous attachment to the constituency. Clinton

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[561] S. Harratt, 'Leicestershire', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 15/08/16]. Hastings received 2,772 votes, out of a total of 9,324. Of those 2,772 votes in favour of Hastings, 1,562 were from county or out-voters.
[562] HC Deb, 29th April 1828, vol. 19, cc.209-229.
[563] S. Harratt, 'Otway Cave, Robert (1796-1844)', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 15/08/16].
[564] *NM*, 14th June 1826.
[565] S. Harratt, 'Newark', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 15/08/16].

sought to demonstrate that he 'always looked after the interest and welfare of the town,' and Willoughby claimed to have 'in every case conducted himself in such a manner he thought would benefit his Constituents,' without going into greater detail as to what these specific interests were.[566]

Of all those to state their aversion to the Corn Laws, arguably it was Joseph Birch who was most keenly opposed to them, having been an outspoken opponent since 1818. During his canvass in the run up to the 1826 election, he claimed he had always considered them as 'inequitable and unjust,' and 'wished for an alteration to take place, and for such laws to be enacted as may be for the benefit of the people.'[567] The crowd were reminded that Birch, 'during the time that he had been their representative in Parliament [had] readily listened to all the applications that had been made to him, whether from rich or poor, high or low, from one party or another.'[568]

When examining his stance on the Corn Laws, the *Nottingham Journal* reported that, 'with respect to the [Laws] he (Mr Birch) had opposed it in every stage, except on one occasion when he happened not to be present in the House.'[569] In short, Birch was portrayed as the ideal candidate, not only on the basis that he was opposed to the Corn Laws, but also that he was a true representative of his constituents both in and out of the Commons. The other successful candidate for the town was the second Lord Rancliffe. During his canvass, he reassured voters that, 'though he was himself a landed proprietor … he wished the poor man to have that cheap bread … and in order to accomplish this, he wished for the total

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[566] *NM,* 14th June 1826.
[567] *NJ*, 10th June 1826.
[568] *NM* 14th June 1826.
[569] *NJ*, 20th June 1826.

abolition of the Corn Laws.' The *Mercury* similarly advocated both him and Birch as candidates who would support their 'interests by opposing the Corn Laws.'[570]

In Derby, the general consensus in the town was that the Corn Laws were 'barbarous statutes,' although the lack of a contest meant that there was generally less at stake during canvasses. The press certainly spoke out against the laws, but campaigning was not as strenuous as may be imagined as candidates did not have to convince electors of their commitment to pressing for repeal.[571] The *Derby Mercury* placed some importance on the Corn Laws, prompting voters to examine Compton's previous actions in the Commons, and, as seen above, some election literature pointed out to audiences the impact of the Laws.[572] Nevertheless, in comparison to elsewhere across the East Midlands, the Corn Laws did not come to dominate discussion during election campaigns. For example, although most members for Derby were generally opposed to the Laws, when seconding the nomination for Samuel Compton, Edward Strutt stated in his speech that he was 'aware that this [canvass] is not the proper occasion to enter upon the discussion of the great question.'[573]

It is clear that 'the great question' of the Corn Laws prompted debate across the country. In this sense, there are clear parallels between contests in the East Midlands with those from elsewhere. As a number of studies have pointed out, in elections across the country, many candidates came to focus their attention on

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[570] *NM,* 14th June 1826; *NM*, 7th June 1826.
[571] *DR,* 15th June 1826.
[572] *DM,* 14th June 1826.
[573] *DM*, 14th June 1826.

the Corn Laws, advocating their repeal.[574] However, whilst clearly a national issue, it was one which acutely affected those in the East Midlands. In 1820, for instance, the *Nottingham Review* reported that the price of bread had risen to such a price that many people in the town could only afford to eat it on a Sunday.[575]

Establishing why people voted the way they did is something which is almost impossible to establish. Similarly, the impact which particular handbills had on audiences is another factor which often eludes historians, and is something addressed more fully in Chapter Five. As the rest of this chapter shows, from 1818, the Corn Laws had to compete with a number of different issues, both in the public mind, as well as in the election canvasses of those hoping to win votes. To what extent those candidates who advocated their repeal were elected on the basis of their opposition towards them is not always clear.

Some candidates were more lukewarm in terms of their support for repeal than others, although to some extent, this appears to have made little impact on their success at the polls. For instance, after 1826, opposition to the Corn Laws appears to have become significantly more important, and, as one Leicester handbill claimed, 'no man on earth can come to Leicester with any chance of success who will not oppose the *odious Corn Laws*'.[576] However, the success of Charles Abney Hastings highlights that other issues such as Catholic emancipation were gaining increasing interest. Candidates therefore focused the

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[574] Z. Dyndor, 'The Political Culture of Elections in Northampton, 1768-1868' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Northampton, 2010), 35-6, 38, 48-9; H. Barker and D. Vincent, *Language, Print and Electoral Politics, 1790-1832: Newcastle-under-Lyme Broadsides* (Woodbridge, 1991), 168-9, 235.
[575] Fraser, 'Nottingham and the Corn Laws', 83.
[576] LRO, M105: 'Electors, Englishmen, and Christians!' (1826).

bulk of their attention on these more controversial issues which had the ability to divide the public, rather than on issues such as the Corn Laws which the majority of the population was in agreement with. In this sense, it was often more beneficial for a candidate to be outspoken on divisive issues such as Catholic emancipation, rather than reinforcing the *status quo.*

Catholic Emancipation

Along with the Corn Laws, the 1826 general election came to be dominated by the Catholic Question. After gaining momentum across the country from the early 1820s, it had become the subject which 'most clearly divided ministers.'[577] As part of the Test and Corporation Acts of 1661 and 1673, all municipal office holders were to take the sacrament of Holy Communion in an Anglican Church. These Acts had originally been designed to target Roman Catholics; however, many nonconformists were also subject to the Acts and, as a result, were similarly restricted from holding civic, military, or corporate offices in England or Wales.[578]

The Catholic Relief Act of 1778 meant that Catholics were allowed to own property, inherit land, and join the army. Whilst these concessions were limited, amongst some Protestants, they created anger. For many, it was not so much the idea that Catholics had gained property rights, but as the Bishop of Lincoln

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[577] Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People,* 315.
[578] Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?,* 380; R.A. Gaunt, 'Peel's Other Repeal: The Test and Corporation Acts, 1828', *Parliamentary History*, 33 (2014), 245.

lamented in 1812, 'what they now demand is Political Power.'[579] It was for this reason that, despite the fact that many people supported the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, there were many who did not, believing that, 'far from being a step in favour of the catholic claims [it] would be the means of arraying an additional power against them.'[580]

Although the Test and Corporation Acts prevented those from Catholic and dissenting denominations from holding civic office, dissenters were not prevented from voting in parliamentary elections, a right extended to Catholics in 1793. Both nonconformists and Catholics were, however, still prevented from holding civic offices.[581] Following the Act of Union with Ireland in 1801, little progress had been made in terms of removing the Test and Corporation Acts prior to the 1820s, before they were eventually repealed in May 1828, followed by the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Act in April 1829.

Whilst extension of freedom to Catholics is never directly referred to, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts is one of the issues raised in several handbills. In the Nottingham 1803 *Paper War,* there are numerous references to 'civil and religious freedom' in the handbills for both Coke and Birch.[582] In one address, Joseph Birch highlights the extent to which Daniel Parker Coke has 'refused to support the wishes of his Constituents and the general voice of the Public' by opposing the repeal of the Acts.[583]

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[579] J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 2000), 434.
[580] G.I.T. Machin, 'Resistance to repeal of the Test and Corporations Acts, 1828', *The Historical Journal*, 22 (1979), 119.
[581] Clark, *English Society 1660-1832*, 438.
[582] *Paper War*, 10, 14, 16, 18, 21, 27, 30.
[583] *Paper War*, 63-4.

Throughout his time as MP for Nottingham, Coke appears not to have been present at any vote on the subject of the Test and Corporation Acts. He also seems to have voted only once against the motion to take into consideration changes to these laws when debated in the Commons on 22nd June 1812.[584] From his election literature, it would seem that Coke saw changes to the Test and Corporation Acts as both unnecessary and politically dangerous. He argued that dissenters 'are allowed every indulgence they could wish, the law protects every denomination of Christians alike, both in their worship and property … but the fact is they want the reigns [sic] of Government in their own hands.'[585] Given the sizable number of dissenting voters and the influence of the corporation, it is surprising that Coke was so successful at the poll. Therefore, whereas, on the whole, Nottingham seems to have been a town which appeared to have a greater range of views with regards to Catholic emancipation as well as the repeal of the Test and Corporation Act, this did not always translate into electoral success. In Nottingham, it appears there were more pressing matters which were of greater concern to the electorate, especially before the 1820s.

From the early 1820s onwards, however, petitions from across the country were sent to the Commons, both in favour and against any concessions to Catholics and dissenters. However, Machin has shown that, overwhelmingly, the number of petitions in support of repeal outweighed those against. In total, over 1,300 petitions in favour were presented to the Commons. In comparison just twenty-eight were against the move.[586] Nottingham's corporation sent petitions to the

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[584] Ginter (ed.), *Voting Records of the British House of Commons 1761-1820*, Vols. 1-2; *Journals of the House of Commons,* vol. 67, 'Resolution respecting Roman Catholics', 22nd June 1812.
[585] *Paper War,* 69-70.
[586] Machin, 'Resistance to repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, 1828', 119.

Commons in favour of both the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and Catholic emancipation in 1822, 1825, 1828, and 1829. Given Nottingham's largely dissenting corporation, it is unsurprising that these petitions were sent.[587] However, whilst there was a large amount of support for Catholic emancipation in the town, there were instances of anti-Catholic petitions also being sent. Those petitioners complained of 'the continued attempts made by the Roman Catholics of this Realm to obtain political power for the enjoyment of which they are rendered unfit by bearing allegiance to a Foreign Sovereign.'[588]

Elsewhere around the East Midlands, it would seem that the public was not always so much in favour of Catholic rights, especially in the boroughs of Newark, East Retford, and Leicester. Anti-Catholic petitions were sent from both East Retford and Newark, which, it was claimed, demonstrated 'that England is alarmed, and calls for prudence, care, and caution, least the Protestant religion should be endangered.'[589] Furthermore, in 1825, partly inspired by the publication of Rev. Joshua William Brooks' 'stinging denunciations of the Catholics ... "no Popery" feeling had begun to spill over into street violence' in East Retford.[590]

In 1826, the 'violently anti-Catholic canvass dinner' of Sir Henry Wright Wilson 'set the tone' for the subsequent East Retford election, with many of the canvasses taking a vehemently anti-Catholic stance.[591] Handbills in support of Wilson claimed that the two Whig candidates, William Battie Wrightson and Sir

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[587] Symonds and Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 16/07/2018].
[588] *CJ,* 15th April 1825, vol. 80, 308.
[589] *Particulars of Newark election* (Newark, 1829), 40.
[590] S. Harratt and S. Farrell, 'East Retford', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 16/07/2018]; J.W. Brooks, *Letter to inhabitants of East Retford* and the neighbourhood, occasioned by the statements recently put forth upon the subject of Catholic Emancipation (Retford, 1825).
[591] Harratt and Farrell, 'East Retford', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 16/07/2018].

Robert Lawrence Dundas, were 'avowedly arranged under the banners of the Pope of Rome', and that a vote in favour of Catholic emancipation would threaten property ownership, the 'beloved Constitution', and Irish Union, resulting in the country becoming 'the seat of civil wars and insurrections'.[592] Yet, despite these warnings, Wrightson and Battie headed the poll, receiving a combined total of seventy per cent of the votes. Following the election, violence erupted in the town, resulting in both the militia and the yeomanry being called to restore order. According to one report, 'party Spirit was So high that not only the chairing was Waived but the [election] dinner also was given up', and both Wrightson and Battie were forced to flee the town during the night.[593]

Out of a total of 291 votes cast in East Retford during the 1826 election, 123 people were able to dictate the outcome of the election. The result of the election was declared void on account of accusations of interference by the military and bribery and corruption. In particular, it was claimed that electors could expect to receive up to forty guineas for promising each of their two votes.[594] Whilst the reaction to the election of Wrightson and Battie demonstrates the high level of anti-Catholic feeling in the town, possibly inflamed by printed canvasses and Brooks' publication, it seems as if the ability of candidates to pay was enough to sway the election result. Furthermore, given the scale of violence seen, and

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[592] J.W. Brooks, *Letter to inhabitants of East Retford and the neighbourhood, occasioned by the statements recently put forth upon the subject of Catholic Emancipation* (Retford, 1825), 17, 209-10.

[593] R.A. Gaunt (ed.), *Unhappy Reactionary: The Diaries of the Fourth Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyme 1822-50* (Nottingham, 2003), 51; Harratt and S. Farrell, 'East Retford', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 16/07/2018].

[594] J.S. Piercy, *The History of Retford in the County of Nottinghamshire,* (Retford, 1828), 60-63.

the relatively small number of voters, the majority of violence was carried out by those not in the franchise.

The 1826 general election, it has been argued, represented 'the great turning point in Irish popular politics,' when six pro-Catholic candidates were elected, half of whom were in 'the popular and hard-fought county constituencies of Monaghan, Waterford, and Louth'.[595] As the election at East Retford demonstrates, across the country, the strength of anti-Catholic feeling was being felt, and a number of constituencies came to be dominated by the Catholic Question.[596] The strength of opposition to Catholic emancipation in 1826 was particularly evidence at Leicester, where, according to Frank O'Gorman, 'the most terrifying example of indiscriminate and uncontrollable electoral violence' was to be found.[597]

Since the seventeenth century, Leicester had become 'a flourishing centre of non-conformity,' where dissenters constituted 'a large proportion of the wealth and respectability of the town, and at least one-third of the population.'[598] By 1846, there were eight Anglican churches, which had the potential to seat a total of 12,000. In comparison, there was a combined total of twenty-six Protestant nonconformist and Roman Catholic chapels, seating around 16,000.[599] Considering the high numbers of nonconformists in the town, it is surprising that

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[595] Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People,* 384-85

[596] Jupp, *The Governing of Britain, 1688-1848*, 243.

[597] F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1989), 258.

[598] HC Papers, *First Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales,* 116, vol. 7 (London, 1835), 1909.

[599] 'The City of Leicester: Social and administrative history since 1835', in R.A. McKinley (ed.), *A History of the County of Leicester: Volume 4, the City of Leicester,* (London, 1958), 251-302. British History Online http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/leics/vol4/pp251-302 [accessed 18 July 2018].

it was the question of Catholic rights, rather than the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which came to dominate canvasses.

 In 1826, there were four candidates who reached the final Leicester poll. As has already been seen, hostility towards Catholic emancipation was particularly strong in the town, where, along with the Corn Laws, the issue came to dominate canvasses and debates. In the election literature produced, it appears to have been the question of Catholic emancipation, rather than the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which became the defining issue, and the one on which potential candidates canvassed most strongly, using it as ammunition to attack one another via handbills and other forms of print. One candidate, Robert Otway Cave, was attacked on the basis that he refused to state whether or not he would vote against any move to extend religious freedoms. An open letter to Otway Cave refers to his canvass as 'frivolous and puerile, inconsistent, and sometimes insincere.' The letter suggests that when Otway Cave first arrived in the town, he stated that he would oppose the 'Catholic Claims,' but during the rest of the canvass, remained silent on the issue. Later, Otway Cave declared that he would abstain from any such vote. Otway Cave's refusal to commit to opposing Catholic emancipation angered the anonymous author of the letter, who stated that a pledge to oppose Catholic claims, 'would have rendered [Otway Cave's] return certain', demonstrating the importance of the issue to voters.[600]

In contrast to Otway Cave's relative silence on the issue, another of the candidates, William Evans, claimed that he had 'constantly voted for the Roman Catholics and … told the electors of Leicester, both in his speeches and in his

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[600] LRO, M105 Letter to Robert Otway Cave (9th June 1826).

handbills that he will continue to do so.'[601] Rather than this statement being used against Evans, as might have been expected in a town with a High Church corporation, this address formed part of his own canvass, designed to appeal to those in support of greater concessions to Catholics. At other times, however, Evans' support for Catholic rights was used as ammunition by his opponents. In anticipation of an election, one handbill from June 1826 claimed, 'Mr Evans, it is well known is a friend to Catholic emancipation! I therefore call on all those who respect the Protestant religion … to oppose with all their might the man who would again introduce Popish intolerance!!!'[602]

Whilst some handbills against those candidates who spoke out in favour of Catholic emancipation were warned of the potential dangers that emancipation could create, others appealed to voters on the basis that, 'many among you, some time ago, signed the Petition to Parliament against any further concessions to the Roman Catholics…. Then who among you can send to Parliament a man who publicly avows his intention in opposing this, your Petition.'[603] Such a statement not only reminded voters of the necessity of electing a person who would represent their views in Parliament, but also highlighted the strength of anti-Catholic feeling in the town.

Despite not always remaining loyal to the town's Tory corporation, the *Leicester Journal*, on the whole, remained firmly opposed to Catholic emancipation, and has been accused of having 'supplied a constant barrage against Roman Catholics.'[604] It reminded readers that, 'year after year you have petitioned

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[601] LRO, M105 'Leicester Election' (1826).
[602] DRO, E5336/2/9/12 'To the Worthy and Independent Electors of the Borough of Leicester' (20th May 1826).
[603] LRO, M105 'Sense against Sophistry: Addressed to reasonable men' (1826).
[604] Fraser, 'The Press in Leicester', 55.

parliament through the medium of your representatives against the Catholic claims.'[605] The paper saw a vote in favour of Catholics as dangerous, for both Leicester and the country as a whole, and warned readers that a vote for emancipation 'would be a death-blow to the Constitution'.[606] The paper also published a reminder to 'fellow Protestants [of] the plots and conspiracies of which the Papists have been the authors. From the attempts of Anthony Babington to murder Queen Elizabeth down to the rebellions of 1715 and 45 and the late unhappy transactions in Ireland.' These events, the letter hoped, would serve as 'an AWFUL WARNING' to voters.[607]

Leicester's anti-Catholic feeling was nothing new. In 1807, candidates published statements in the press, declaring their aversion to granting emancipation. As Samuel Smith commented:

> I have learnt that many of you are displeased with me on the supposition that I am a friend to Catholic Emancipation- If that were so, this is the time when it would have been your right and your Duty to complain, and though it is not so it becomes with me, with the respect that it always is to answer your charge. I assure you, gentlemen, solemnly that I never have voted, and that according to my present conviction, I can never vote for such a measure; on the contrary, the only time when those claims have been urged, I have voted against them.[608]

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[605] *LJ,* 16th June 1826.
[606] *LJ,* 25th February 1820.
[607] *LJ*, 9th June 1826.
[608] *LJ,* 1st May 1807.

This statement highlights the point that it was necessary for a candidate at least to appear to be answerable to their constituents, and to be seen to be representing their views in the Commons. Few MPs, however, ever seemingly spoke in either support or defence of increased Catholic freedoms. In Leicester, the one exception is John Mansfield, who represented the borough between 1818 and 1826, the key years during which the Catholic question was in so much contention. On 15th December 1815, Mansfield spoke out against any further concessions to Catholics. He reasoned that he 'believed that the opinion of the people of this country was opposed to any further concession. Such were the decided wishes of his constituents; and with them he concurred.'[609]

Whilst few members ever directly spoke out in the Commons with regards to Catholic emancipation, several did at least vote one way or the other on the introduction of bills proposing extended religious freedoms. Samuel Smith, for instance, declared in the *Leicester Journal* that he had voted against any concessions to Catholics.[610] At the second reading of the Roman Catholics Bill in May 1813, the vote was split between ministers, with Smith voting against the introduction of the Bill. In 1816, he again voted against the introduction of a bill in favour of Catholics, but the overall result of the vote was that ministers were again split on the decision.[611] Nevertheless, by voting in this way, Smith was appearing to uphold the views of at least some of his constituents, as well as those of Leicester's corporation. By the following election in 1818, the

[609] HC Deb, 15th February 1825, vol. 1, 2 cc.422-4.
[610] *LJ*, 1st May 1807.
[611] Ginter (ed.), *Voting Records of the British House of Commons 1761-1820*, Vols. 1, 4.

corporation was no longer able to support two candidates, and as a result, Smith was forced to retire from the contest.[612]

When looking at the way in which newspapers referred to Catholic emancipation, it seems that the *Leicester Journal* was much more outspoken than other Tory newspapers in terms of the way in which they presented the case against granting any further concession to Roman Catholics. Although at times, the *Nottingham Journal* referred to proposals of extended Catholic rights as 'Protestant Captivity,' there was generally less anger directed towards the idea of emancipation.[613] As Chapter Two has shown, the distribution for local newspapers during the nineteenth century transcended county boundaries, but both the *Nottingham Journal* and the *Leicester Journal* were the only Tory papers operating from within their respective counties.

Why the *Leicester Journal* was so outspoken in terms of its views cannot therefore be explained via the idea that it was in competition with another newspaper of a similar political stance. On the other hand, whilst the paper did not always remain loyal to the town's Tory ruling elite, the corporation was vehemently anti-Catholic and able to manipulate elections to a much greater degree than in Nottingham. Both towns had a growing nonconformist population, who, in many instances, would have supported the granting of Catholic liberties.[614] However, Leicester was still dominated by its High Church, Tory corporation, in contrast to Nottingham which was ruled by 'a body

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[612] L. Taylor, 'Smith, Samuel I (1754-1834)', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 19/08/16].
[613] *NJ*, 20th June 1818.
[614] In Nottingham, Richard Hopper recorded a total of twenty nonconformist and Catholic churches and chapels in 1833, with the potential to seat around 12,000 people at any one time. This is in comparison to a total of five Anglican churches, holding a total congregation of 5,800. J. Beckett and B.H. Tolley, 'Church, Chapel and School', in Beckett, Dixon, Griffin and Brand (eds.), *A Centenary History of Nottingham*, 355-6.

Corporate of Civil and Religious Dissenters.'[615] Evidence strongly suggests that the primary reason why the Catholic Question remained such an important issue in Leicester is that the corporation were wary of granting civil rights to Catholics, which, by the repeal of the Test Acts, would also mean that Protestant dissenters would be in direct competition with the town's ruling elite.[616]

The preferred candidate to represent the Leicester Tory interest in 1826 was C.G. Mundy, whom the corporation hoped to convince to stand for election. When Mundy declined to stand, the *Leicester Journal* continued to encourage its readers to 'exert themselves in their several neighbourhoods in collecting votes and soliciting the interest of electors on his behalf.'[617] The repeated refusal of Mundy to stand for election left the corporation without a candidate, and the prospect of an uncontested election with two candidates, one of whom, Otway Cave, had refused to commit either way in the matter of Catholic emancipation and the other, William Evans, a supporter of the Bill.

By the end of May 1826, Sir Charles Abney Hastings had been invited by the corporation to stand as the 'true Blue interest' on account of his avowed opposition to Catholic emancipation, as well as his support for the King and the 'constitution in church and state.'[618] Hastings, it would seem, was initially reluctant to stand on account of 'not being in any way prepared with the funds for a contest.' The corporation 'assured him, that his return was certain and that the expense would be trifling … that his election expenses should not exceed a

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[615] Thomis, *Politics and Society in Nottingham 1785-1835*, 128-129; HC Papers, *First Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Municipal Corporations in England and Wales*, 116, vol. 7, 1909; Greaves, 'Roman Catholic Relief and the Leicester Election of 1826', 202.

[616] Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, 385.

[617] *LJ*, 12th May 1826.

[618] *Records of the Borough of Leicester 1689-1835* vol. 7 (Leicester, 1965), 402-3.

certain sum and that the surplus expenses, should a contest really take place, should be paid by the corporation.'[619] Despite his refusal to commit to opposing the Catholic Bill, in the eyes of the corporation, Robert Otway Cave was a more acceptable second candidate than William Evans. The corporation and Otway Cave's committee agreed to enter into a coalition on the basis that Otway Cave would not vote in favour of Catholic emancipation, and that Hastings' return would be secured by Otway Cave retiring if necessary. It was also agreed that the election expenses would be shared by both parties.[620]

At the end of the election, Hastings headed the poll with 2,772 votes, followed by Otway Cave with 2,678 votes, and both were duly elected.[621] Amongst the county and out-voters, Hastings and Otway Cave gained a significant advantage over their rivals. Amongst the borough voters, whilst still gaining the majority of votes, there was a less of clear-cut victory.[622] On what basis they were elected is open to speculation. No doubt, the actions of the corporation in 1822 in creating hundreds of honorary freemen helped to sway the vote in favour of Hastings, and, to a lesser extent, Otway Cave. During his canvass, Hastings had also stated that he was '*decidedly opposed* to what is called Catholic Emancipation.'[623] In contrast, Evans had been portrayed in handbills and the press as a 'TURN-COAT', unable to give a definitive stance on his views regarding Catholic emancipation.[624]

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[619] LRO, 23D57/3477 Printed 'extract from the letter alluded to in "the statement" from Mr Henry Ellis to Mr Otway Cave' (1826).
[620] *Records of the Borough of Leicester 1689-1835* vol. 7, 403.
[621] S. Harratt, 'Leicester', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 14/04/16].
[622] Harratt 'Leicester', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 07/08/16].
[623] DRO, E5336/2/9/12 'To the Worthy and Independent Electors of the Borough of Leicester' (20th May 1826).
[624] LRO, M105 'Electors of Leicester!' (1826).

Once in Parliament, Hastings voted against Catholic relief on 6th March 1826. A year later, on 26th February 1827, petitions from Baptists and Unitarians from Leicester requesting the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts were read in the Commons and, on the same date, Hastings voted against such a move. On 6th March he presented a petition to the House against the Act's repeal. Hastings also presented a petition from Leicester opposing Catholic relief on 17th April, voting against the measure on 12th May.[625]

As has been seen above, candidates were often torn between acting as a delegate of constituents, or as a trustee.[626] By 1829, Hastings was voting in opposition to the views of his party, and instead putting forward the views of corporation and those who had elected him. It is clear, therefore, that being outspoken on issues such as Catholic emancipation could prove beneficial to the career of an aspiring minister.

Despite Hastings' opposition to emancipation, much of the election literature produced during and after the 1826 election, shows that, in the town, Hastings was deeply unpopular. He was portrayed as a slave owner, a rumour he strongly denied, as well as controlling both the freemen of the town and profiting from the borough rates. Elsewhere, it was reported that he had 'chosen Intolerance for his Motto and INJUSTICE for his *Means.*'[627] The views he expressed in Parliament were less those of the people he represented, but more of those who had helped him gain a seat, largely via corrupt methods.

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[625] Harratt, 'Leicester', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 14/04/16].
[626] See above, pages 150-57.
[627] LRO, MI52/2 Election Cartoon (1826); LRO, M105 'Electors of Leicester!' (1826).

MPs from Leicester continued to petition the House both in favour and against Catholic emancipation, representing the views of both the town and county. In 1829, Hastings presented a further petition to the Commons opposing emancipation. In doing so, he stated that he had always felt it was his duty to oppose these concessions, that he remained opposed to them and that, 'though hitherto he had supported the government, he found it quite impossible to support it under the present instance. Whenever the measure of concession was brought forward, he should feel himself bound to give it his most strenuous opposition.'[628] Members claimed that some signatures on petitions had been falsely and corruptly obtained. Otway Cave claimed that children had signed petitions against the Catholic Bill and that in at least one instance, a petition had been taken to a gaol where it had been signed by a total of forty-four 'malefactors'. Otway Cave believed that although some names had been removed, those of boys and criminals remained, and 'such a practice was a gross abuse of the right of petition.'[629] Otway Cave himself later came under attack by Hastings, who claimed that of the five thousand signatures on a petition from Leicester in support of the Bill, 'many … had been surreptitiously obtained [and] that some of them were actual forgeries.'[630]

Whether or not by 1829 there existed genuine support for the Catholic Emancipation Bill in Leicester is difficult to ascertain. If the reports of forgery on petitions were true, then it would seem that there were few members of the population who felt strongly enough to sign them. Given the number of dissenters in the town, it is likely that there would have been at least some

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[628] HC Deb, 2nd March 1829, vol. 20, cc.649-661.
[629] HC Deb, 26th February 1829, cc.570-590.
[630] HC Deb, 3rd March 1829, cc.679-703.

support for the Bill. Some supporters of the repeal of the Test Acts were not necessarily in favour of giving Catholics the same level of civil rights as Protestant dissenters. On the other hand, many did support the Bill as they believed that, by granting Catholics extended freedoms, the same rights would also be granted to the many dissenters in the town. On 16th February 1829, Robert Otway Cave spoke in the Commons stating that a meeting had been held in Leicester where 'a resolution in favour of the Catholic claims was proposed, and only one hand was held up against it: on the resolution being put a second time, that one hand was withdrawn.' Otway Cave went on to state that, whilst the population of Leicester had not always been so in favour of Catholic emancipation, it seemed that a change in sentiments had taken place, and it was 'fair to suppose that a similar change might have taken place in other places.'[631]

To some extent it is clear that by February 1829, the public was increasingly in favour of extended rights for Catholics and Dissenters. However, as evidenced by the Newark by-election of March 1829, it is clear that the issue could still prove to be a highly divisive issue. Taking place the month before the Roman Catholic Relief Act passed before Parliament, the Newark by-election was almost overshadowed by the question of Catholic emancipation.

In February 1829, William Henry Clinton informed his patron and cousin the fourth Duke of Newcastle that he would vacate his seat if the duke intended to oppose ministers on the Catholic question. The Duke was unswerving in his opposition to Catholic relief, and so as a result of Clinton's resignation, the search for a replacement began. Dismayed by the prospect of a contested

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[631] HC Deb, 16th February 1829, cc.356-374.

election, Newcastle invited Thomas Michael Sadler, an experienced and well known Evangelical Protestant, 'as a bulwark of the Protestant cause to oppose the Roman Catholic Question'.[632]

Sadler's opponent in 1829 was the London attorney and King's Serjeant, Thomas Wilde. On 2nd March, the first day of the election, a broadside was published claiming that:

> Now is the time to decide whether your voices are for the preservation of our glorious Protestant Constitution, or for the bringing in of the Papists to political power ... the simple question is Sadler and Protestantism, or Wilde and Popery!!![633]

Much of Sadler's canvass centred on his commitment to opposing Catholic emancipation.[634] In contrast, however, rather than depicting the election as a contest between Catholic and Protestant 'principles', Wilde and his supporters chose instead to focus on the domineering nature of the fourth Duke, and his attempt 'to stifle the spirit of free election'.[635] It was the question of electoral freedom, and the dominant influence of the fourth Duke which Moses has claimed was the 'constant theme' of Wilde's canvass.[636] Polling took place over five days, at the end of which, Sadler was nominated to the borough seat, beating

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[632] R.A. Gaunt, 'On the Campaign Trail, Georgian Style: The Newark by- election of 1829', *The Nottinghamshire Historian,* 84 (2010), 10; Gaunt (ed.), *Unhappy Reactionary*, 57; Harratt, 'Newark', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 16/09/18].

[633] NA, DDNM 2/1/13 'To the Independent Electors of Newark' (1829). See Figure 2.3, page 48.

[634] *Particulars of Newark election* (Newark, 1829), 49-51, 64-66,

[635] Harratt, 'Newark', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 16/09/18].

[636] J.H. Moses, 'Elections and electioneering in the constituencies of Nottinghamshire, 1702- 1832', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Nottingham, volume 1, 1965), 298-99.

Wilde in the poll by 801 votes to 587.[637] However, it is clear that, initially, Wilde received a favourable reception, and according to Samuel Fenton, who accompanied him on his campaign, 'won every heart' in the town. At the end of the first day of polling, Wilde was ahead of Sadler in the poll by a total of ninety-one votes, and the *Nottingham Review* commented on the 'growing spirit of independence at Newark'.[638] It is clear, therefore, that regardless of Sadler's continued commitment to opposing Catholic emancipation other issues were coming to the forefront of political discussion in the borough.

In the East Midlands, it can be seen that there was a relatively wide range of views regarding both the Test and Corporation Acts and the Catholic Bill. Examining the differences between the level of interest that they created both in the press and in election canvasses highlights the way in which certain constituencies, especially Leicester, displayed a much greater response and generated much more interest than other areas. Such a reaction was by no means unique to the East Midlands, and, as Hannah Barker has shown, the Catholic question prompted a mixed reaction across the country, with divided opinions from Protestants, Dissenters, and Catholics.[639] Petitions were sent from across the country on both sides of the argument, but, what is perhaps more unusual is the scale and ferocity with which repeal was fought over, especially in East Retford, Leicester, and Newark.

Electoral control in East Retford was largely in the hands of the anti-Catholic 'defective' corporation and around 200 freeman, of whom, around half lived

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[637] *Particulars of Newark election* (Newark, 1829), 52.
[638] R.A. Gaunt, 'The Fourth Duke of Newcastle, the "Mob" and Election Contests in Nottinghamshire, 1818-1832', *Midland History*, 33 (2008), 207; *Particulars of Newark election* (Newark, 1829), 32.
[639] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855,* 203.

outside of the borough. It was this narrow electorate which, according to Harratt and Farrell, allowed for blatant manipulation and corruption.[640] In this sense, whilst Catholic emancipation clearly proved a divisive issue in the town, as evidenced by the violent outbursts when two pro-Catholic candidates were elected, it seems as if the matter was less important to voters. Instead, as Preston has argued, 'the only test of a candidate was his ability and commitment' to paying voters in exchange for their support.[641]

In contrast, Nottingham and Leicester were both large constituencies, where it was much harder for candidates to manipulate voters. Furthermore, as both towns had a significant number of voters coming from dissenting backgrounds, it is unsurprising that the question of greater civic rights for Roman Catholics and Protestant dissenters was so heavily fought over during election campaigns.

It is clear that the question of extending civil and political rights to Roman Catholics and Protestant nonconformists can be traced back to the late eighteenth century, especially after 1778. However, it was not until the 1800s, and in particular the 1820s, when the issue became a prominent feature of political campaigns. Until this point, as earlier sections of this chapter have demonstrated, it was the more pressing matters of war and entrenchment which, understandably, were of the greatest concern to voters in the East Midlands, and on the basis of which candidates canvased them. In particular, it is clear that from 1826, the Catholic Question came to the forefront of political discussion. In the East Midlands, we have seen how candidates sought to stress either their

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[640] R.A. Preston, 'East Retford: Last Days of a Rotten Borough', *TTS*, 78 (1974), 94; Harratt and Farrell, 'East Retford', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 16/07/2018].
[641] Preston, 'East Retford: Last Days of a Rotten Borough', 94.

commitment to supporting or opposing any bill in favour of Catholic emancipation. However, candidates in the East Midlands were not alone in this. As R.W. Greaves has shown, both the Chester and Coventry elections of 1826, the question of Catholic relief came to overshadow much of the election, and, in Chester, cries of 'Large Loaf' and 'No Popery', could be heard.[642]

Catholic emancipation was unquestionably a national issue, and one which crossed party lines, and during the election of 1826, 'results were recorded on a pro- or anti- Catholic basis.'[643] Nevertheless, it is clear that, in the East Midlands, emancipation took on a particularly local theme. The region had a high proportion of nonconformists, some of whom held significant positions of power in local government. However, 'the presence ... of numerous and organised dissenters would not alone have made the Catholic question so acutely divisive a matter'.[644] In Leicester, the future of the strength and dominance of the corporation depended upon preserving its High Church and Tory character. A vote in favour of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Act, as well as Catholic emancipation, threatened the power held by some in the corporation, thus explaining why the issue was so hotly fought over, with the corporation going to considerable lengths to ensure that it was a candidate of their choosing who was ultimately elected. On the other hand, the often violent reactions of both voters and non-voters, especially in East Retford and Leicester, demonstrates the strength of feeling regarding Catholic emancipation present in certain boroughs.

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[642] Greaves, 'Catholic Relief and the Leicester Election of 1826', 203- 4.
[643] Cook and Stevenson, *A History of British Elections since 1689*, 32.
[644] Greaves, 'Catholic Relief and the Leicester Election of 1826', 204.

Whilst the question of Catholic emancipation came to play a particularly important role in elections during the 1820s across the region, and indeed, across the country, following the 1826 election, increasingly, it was the question of parliamentary reform which came to the forefront of people's minds. The next section of this chapter, will, therefore, examine to what extent reform came to dominate political debate and discussion across the East Midlands, and the ways in which candidates addressed the issue in their election canvasses, appealing to voters in the hope of being elected.

Parliamentary Reform

Ideas relating to parliamentary reform underwent many changes between 1790 and 1832. David Worrall has argued that '1790s revolutionary radicalism was pursued with equal vigor in the 1800s and 1810s.'[645] However, it is clear that, whilst the question of parliamentary reform eventually came to occupy the attention of politicians, the press, and the public, this was not always the case. Between 1793 and 1815, parliamentary reform had to contend with more pressing national concerns, in particular the consequences of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Even after the return to peace in 1815, reform still had to compete with issues such as civil and religious freedom.

Nevertheless, E.P. Thompson has argued that, throughout the French Wars, there were committed radicals 'biding their time… waiting for the movement to

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[645] D. Worrall, 'Kinship, Generation and Community: The Transmission of Political Ideology in Radical Plebeian Print Culture', *Studies in Romanticism*, 43 (2004), 283.

revive.'[646] On the other hand, despite the efforts of radical newspapers such as the *Nottingham Review*, even contemporaries acknowledged that there were few who advocated reform, and even during the 1820s, reformers remained convinced that they were making little progress in advancing their case. When the radical *Black Dwarf* newspaper disbanded in 1824, its editor commented that no one in England was 'devotedly attached to the cause of Reform.'[647]

Establishing the origins of parliamentary reform has often proved to be problematic for historians. Early work on the subject often cites seventeenth-century petitions calling for greater parliamentary representation as being part of a long tradition of reform and petitioning, ending only with the passing of the First Reform Bill in 1832.[648] However, there are few historians who would now date the origins of the reform movement as far back as the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, with one recent exception being M.S. Smith, who claimed that reformers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries could trace their ancestry back to John Lilburn and the Levellers of the seventeenth century. Whilst E. Fearn suggested that, in Derby, 'interest in parliamentary reform began in the 1770s', this interest was not widespread, and, if there had been any sense of a need for reform before 1785, the 'process had not gone very far.'[649]

Bribery and corruption during election contests was well recognised. As has already been acknowledged, larger, open boroughs such as Nottingham were

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[646] E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1968), 201.
[647] M. Brock, *The Great Reform Act* (London, 1973), 15.
[648] E. and A. Porritt, *The Unreformed House of Commons: Parliamentary Representation Before 1832: Vol 1* (Cambridge, 1909), vii, 1-6.
[649] E. Fearn, 'Reform Movements in Derby and Derbyshire, 1790–1832' (M.A. thesis, University of Manchester, 1964), 24; I.R. Christie, *Wilkes, Wyvill and Reform: The Parliamentary Reform Movement in British Politics 1760-1785* (London, 1962), 6; M.S. Smith, 'Parliamentary Reform and the Electorate', in C. Williams (ed.), *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2004), 156.

harder for individual candidates to control. Similarly, there was little bribery at Derby, not least because of the strength of the aristocracy, and the compromises which often took place with the town's corporation, meaning that contested elections were rare.[650] However, this did not mean that candidates were not accused in print of trying to bribe voters. During the Newark election of 1790, for instance, it was claimed that each poor voter would receive five guineas for his vote, and for £3,000 it was possible to buy a seat in the borough.[651]

Regardless of the fact that many recognised the potential for corruption, calls for reform had to be couched carefully, especially after the outbreak of war when it became difficult for reformers 'to propagate reform without seeming to be a traitor'.[652] As evidence from the Nottingham by-election of 1803 has shown, those who advocated even moderate reform were often accused of being Jacobin radicals, who threatened the safety and security of the nation.[653]

Michael Smith has suggested that the question of reform became more pressing during times of crisis, noting how the Wilkes affair during the 1760s and the war of American Independence both raised serious questions as to the nature of parliamentary representation. In particular, he argued, it was the outbreak of the French Revolution which, 'more than anything ... gave the reform question overwhelming purchase.'[654] However, between 1793 and 1815, it was important to be seen to be patriotic, and so few MPs, even those in favour of parliamentary change, specifically advocated reform in their canvasses. Those who did, such as John Smith and Lord Rancliffe, continued to advocate for peace and religious

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[650] See Chapter One, pages 8-9.
[651] *Newark Complete Collection* 1790, 19, 29, 39.
[652] Fearn, 'Reform Movements in Derby and Derbyshire, 1790–1832', 5.
[653] *Paper War*, 89
[654] Smith, 'Parliamentary Reform and the Electorate', 156.

liberty alongside calls for parliamentary reform, highlighting how, before 1815, peace was generally the most pressing matter for both candidates and voters.[655]

After the return to peace in 1815, there is evidence that MPs and the general public became increasingly open to the idea of reform, with greater weight being paid to the issue in the press and election literature. What candidates, and more importantly voters, understood by parliamentary reform, however, is something which can be hard to determine, especially since there was no one single ideology, and the movement behind it was 'hopelessly divided on what changes ought to be made.'[656] Accordingly, many references which appear in the press or in election literature are vague as to what they are trying to achieve, often merely referring to a 'Reform in Parliament'.[657] Occasionally, however, details of reform are more specific. Common criticisms of the unreformed parliamentary system included bribery and corruption during election contests, as well as the question of equal representation. Representation was particularly pertinent in boroughs such as Leicester where reformers pointed to the practice of creating honorary freemen from outside of the town.[658] Therefore, when the demands of reformers are made clear, it is 'a full and fair, free and equal representation', and an end to the bribery and corruption that they advocated.[659]

Whilst many of the reformers' demands attempted to address the problems which existed in the East Midlands boroughs, popular support for reform on the

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[655] D5366/2/9/17/91 'Smith and Rancliff: Now or Never' (October 1812).

[656] M. Philp, *Reforming Ideas in Britain* (Cambridge, 2013), 11; Smith, 'Parliamentary Reform and the Electorate', 157.

[657] *LC*, 6th August 1830; *DCR*, 7th April 1831; *DCR*, 28th April 1831.

[658] *DCR*, 8th June 1826; DRO, D5336/2/9/12 'On the revival of that excellent practise of candidates giving away large quantities of liquor, on their canvass' (undated c.1818); LRO, M105 'An argument for the honorary freemen' (1826).

[659] LRO, MISC574/a 'REFORM- A meeting of the inhabitants of Leicester and its vicinity' (1816).

whole remained limited, especially as in the early 1820s demands for Catholic emancipation were the central focus of many canvasses. However, to some degree Catholic emancipation acted as a catalyst for parliamentary reform, and from 1826, there were increasing references to reform in election campaigns. In particular, by 1830, popular public interest in reform was growing. From across the East Midlands, petitions in favour of reform were sent. In October 1830, a petition from Nottingham praying for freedom in the choice of representatives gained 8,000 signatures. A year later, a subsequent petition from the 'Burgesses and Inhabitants' of the town received 9,000 supporters.[660] In May 1832, a petition sent from Derby in favour of reform received 3,500 signatures, far more than any reform petition previously sent from the town.[661]

As public support for reform grew, a greater amount of attention, both in election canvasses and newspapers, was paid to the issue. J.A. Phillips indicates that support grew quickly in the early 1830s, with few being able to imagine the number of men who 'championed reform before the end of the year.'[662] Even Tory newspapers had come to see some concession to reform as inevitable, with newspapers of all political persuasions agreeing that, in the words of the *Derbyshire Courier,* the 'measure has exclusively taken hold of the minds of all persons.'[663] Previously the role of the press had been to explain what various proposals meant for their readers. Tory publications both in Derby and Leicester convinced readers of the need to oppose reformist ideas and explained the consequences should proposals successfully pass into legislation. The *Leicester*

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[660] Symonds and Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 18/08/16]; *CJ*, 22nd November 1830, vol. 86, 128; *CJ*, 14th March 1831, vol. 86, 372.
[661] S. Harratt and S. Farrell, 'Derby', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 18/08/16].
[662] Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill in the Boroughs*, 18.
[663] *DC*, 8th Oct 1831; Whitaker, *The Contest of Sophistry with the Truth,* 4.

Journal, for instance, warned that reform would deprive certain men of the right to vote by 'disenfranchising certain classes and so destroy the connection of the 'highest aristocracy with the meanest artisan.' Broadsides similarly warned voters to 'give your Votes to some HONEST MEN who will DEFEND YOUR CHILDREN'S BIRTH RIGHTS.'[664]

As more people came to agree that some level of parliamentary reform was needed, even some Tory newspapers, such as the *Nottingham Journal*, came to be more accepting of the idea and, in some cases, even promoted the idea of 'moderate reform,' reflecting the changing views and wishes of the public.[665] Likewise, many candidates in the East Midlands were either reformers, or had been won over to the idea that some degree of reform was necessary. In terms of the weight of support shown to reform, the question of the secret ballot most strongly divided candidates. Some, such as Ronald Craufurd Ferguson, MP for Nottingham, came to be in favour of the measure, having seemingly been won over by allegations of corruption during previous elections.[666] On the other hand, in Leicester, the *Leicester Journal* continued to oppose reform far longer than its counterpart in Nottingham. Whilst acknowledging that 'it cannot be denied that the voice of a very large majority of the country has declared for the reform bill,' it maintained the view 'that a very large and intelligent class of persons are still found, in greater or smaller numbers, throughout the country who view those sweeping changes with great distrust.' Instead, the paper suggested that ministers ought to progress with caution and 'moderation,' when dealing with

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[664] *LJ,* 8th April 1831; DLSL, Derby Election Broadsides 1797-1832 'Burgesses of Derby' (27th April 1831).
[665] Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press', 51.
[666] M. Escott, 'Ferguson, Sir Ronald Craufurd (1773-1841)', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 18/08/16].

the idea of reform.[667] Furthermore, neither of the two candidates for the uncontested Leicester elections of 1830 and 1831 were entirely committed to full parliamentary reform. Likewise, the corporation was opposed to the idea of reform and petitioned the Lords against 'rash and ill-digested [reform] legislation' in 1832.[668]

William Evans was, on the whole, a supporter of parliamentary reform, and during his time as MP for East Retford, voted in its favour in the Commons.[669] During his canvass for Leicester in August 1830, however, he stated 'I have some doubt still as to the vote by ballot.'[670] Later, when questioned on the subject, Evans claimed that 'I feel its extreme importance … [and] believe it has worked well in France, but I am not prepared to give a distinct pledge on that question.'[671] Vote by secret ballot was a controversial subject. Few supporters of parliamentary reform were in favour of it, and whilst the issue had been raised in the Commons, in the first draft of the Reform Bill, presented to the Commons in March 1831 by Lord John Russell, the motion was left out. It is therefore not surprising that Evans, despite his sympathies with reform, had some reservations with regards to the ballot, especially given the views of Leicester's corporation. Charles Abney Hastings, the chosen candidate of the corporation, was even more adamant in his opposition to voting by ballot, declaring that he would support no motion in its favour, a statement which was received by both cheers and hisses from the crowd.[672]

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[667] *LJ*, 13th May 1831.
[668] *Records of the Borough of Leicester 1689-1835,* vol. 5 (Leicester 1965), 488-93.
[669] S. Harratt, 'Evans, William (1788-1856)' *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 03/09/16].
[670] *LJ*, 6th August 1830.
[671] *LH*, 4th August 1830.
[672] *LH*, 4th August 1830.

Handbills pressed voters to enquire as to where their candidates stood in terms of their support for reform, and what it would mean for them. As one handbill from Derby stated:

> Be not deceived- Ask your candidates whether they are not pledged to support the Bill of Reform, and are nothing but the Bill? Whether by its provisions, if passed into Law, your Children are not to be DEPRIVED OF THEIR BIRTH-RIGHT? Whether what your fathers gave to you, the BURGESSES' RIGHT OF VOTE, is not intended to be taken away? If they speak the truth, they will tell you such will be the effect of the Bill.[673]

Newspapers both for and against reform explained to readers what the implications of the bill would be, as well as outlining the progression of proposals and the debates they provoked in the Commons and Lords.[674] In April 1831, the *Leicester Journal* issued a list of 18 reasons to reject current reform proposals. Rather than opposing them on the basis that they would remove the rights of out-voters, or weaken the strength of the aristocracy in constituencies, much of the criticism was levelled at the way in which 'the measure has been pushed forward in an unconstitutional manner' and was 'an experiment and a violent innovation of that glorious constitution.'[675] On both sides of the argument, preserving the British Constitution was an important issue. Whilst the *Leicester Journal* believed that reform would be 'a fatal blow upon that

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[673] DLSL, Derby Election Broadsides 1797-1832 'Burgesses of Derby' (27th April 1831).
[674] *LJ*, 6th May 1831; *LJ*, 13th May 1831; *LH*, 13th April 1831; *LH*, 20th April 1831; *LH*, 27th April 1831; *DR*, 28th April 1831.
[675] *LJ*, 8th April 1831.

constitution under which a true liberty has for ages found a refuge', those in support of the movement argued that the present constitution had been tainted, partly as a result of the bribery and corruption which had come to be a part of many election contests. Reform, they argued would 'ensure the return of those who represent the *property* and *population* of the kingdom.'[676]

It is clear that those candidates who previously had opposed reform, but now spoke in its favour, were also viewed with suspicion. For instance, during the Derby election of December 1832, the first after the passing of the Reform Bill, one handbill claimed, Charles Colvile was once 'a decided Tory; he has been a professed Reformer; he is now nobody can tell what, but anything to gain a vote.' Voters were warned not to be so trusting as to give their votes to those who once had been 'the unrelenting enemies of reform, and persecutors of reformers,' but now claimed 'that they [had] seen their error, and that they have become reforms, aye radical reformers.'[677] Why those who had previously been opposed to reform now came out in its favour is not always clear. As newspaper reports show, by the 1830s, public support for reform was overwhelming, and so it may have been that even the Tories felt that it was inevitable. It may also have been that many felt there was little choice but to support the bill and that 'Reform [was] at any rate better than Revolution.'[678]

Candidates therefore had to take care as to how they campaigned on the basis of their support for reform. By the 1830s, the majority of people were convinced to some degree of the need for change, although there was little consensus as to

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[676] *LJ,* 13th May 1831; DLSL, Derby Election Broadsides 1797-1832 'What the Reform bill does not DO, AND WHAT IT does' (undated c.1831).
[677] DLSL, Box 28, 'Freeholders & Inhabitants of the County of Derby' (undated c.1832); DLSL, Box 28 'Electors of Derby' (undated c.1832).
[678] LRO, M105 'Electors of Leicester!' (1826).

exactly what this change should be, and the level of reform required. In Nottingham, the successful candidates during the 1830 and 1831 elections were Thomas Denman and Ronald Ferguson. Although both advocated reform, Denman was not convinced of the need for the ballot, whereas Ferguson had been won over in its favour.[679] Whilst Ferguson and Denman were elected as representatives of Nottingham uncontested in 1831, in 1830, a third candidate, Thomas Bailey also stood for election.[680] Despite being a supporter of reform, it would seem that Bailey, an independent Whig, was more moderate in his views than were either Denman or Ferguson. Regardless of his conservative support for reform, and backing from the Nottingham Tories, it was not enough for Bailey to 'break through the Whig hegemony,' and he was forced to retire three days into the contest, having only received a total of 226 votes.[681]

During the 1830 and 1831 Derby borough elections, as was customary for the town, the elected members belonged to prominent Whig Derbyshire families. Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish was a member of the Devonshire family. The other elected candidate, Edward Strutt, was a member of an influential Dissenting family in Derby who were 'advanced Whig stalwarts on the corporation.'[682] Strutt was an advocate of reform and during his time as MP for the borough, presented numerous petitions to the Commons in favour of reform, citing the importance of a candidate being answerable to his constituents.[683] Whilst less convinced of the need for parliamentary reform, Compton Cavendish

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[679] Symonds and Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 18/08/16].
[680] See Appendix for details of the election.
[681] Symonds and Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 18/08/16].
[682] J. J. Mason, 'Strutt, Jedediah (1726–1797)', *ODNB* (2011) [accessed 03/09/16]; Thorne, 'Cavendish, Henry Frederik Compton (1789-1873)', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 03/09/16]; S. Farrell and S. Harratt, 'Strutt, Edward (1801-1880),' *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 03/09/16].
[683] Harratt and Farrell, 'Derby', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 18/08/16].

continued to act as a representative for the borough, presenting numerous petitions and voting in favour of reform in the Commons.[684]

In contrast, Abney Hastings never appears to have been fully committed to the idea of parliamentary reform, especially in terms of the vote by ballot.[685] However, despite being the representative of Leicester, where support for reform was gaining in popularity, on 18th February 1830, he voted against proposals to 'restore Constitutional influence in the Commons,' as well as against proposals to enfranchise Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds on 23rd February 1830.[686] Nevertheless, he was elected, uncontested, to the borough seat in August 1830, along with William Evans, although he retired from the seat at the subsequent election, partly on account of his determination to oppose reform.

Hastings' replacement in 1831 was William Taddy, a surprise last minute nomination at the behest of the corporation. Denounced as a 'bit-and-bit reformer', he retreated from the contest having been drowned out by the support for the two pro-reform candidates, William Evans and Wynn Ellis, highlighting how, by 1831, reform came to be the dominant issue in Leicester upon which electoral success depended.[687]

Although vague references to parliamentary reform had existed in election canvasses from the end of the eighteenth century, until the 1820s, there was little clear indication as to what reform in practice meant, and more particularly, what

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[684] Thorne, 'Cavendish, Henry Frederik Compton (1789-1873)', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 18/08/16].
[685] *LH*, 4th August 1830.
[686] S. Harratt, 'Abney Hastings, Sir Charles (1792-1858)', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 19/08/16]; *CJ*, 19th February, vol. 85, 70; *CJ*, 23rd February, vol. 85, 96.
[687] Harratt, 'Leicester', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 18/08/16]; *LC*, 7th May 1831.

impact it would have on the lives of those in the East Midlands.[688] Promises from candidates to support reform in the Commons subsided as more immediate concerns, in particular the impact of the French Wars at home, took over. Not only were candidates wary of being accused of attempting to undermine the security of the nation, but in comparison to rising food prices, how concerned voters were reform, especially one that had little meaning, has to be questioned. Only when peace was restored can it be said that there was any genuine enthusiasm for reform amongst the majority of voters.

Conclusion

National and local issues remained important both during and outside of election periods. The number of petitions sent from across the country to the Commons, Lords, and the King also highlights the number of issues which caught the attention of the public. Threats to national security, and other peak moments, however, often reflected underlying issues in towns.

From the outbreak of war with France in 1793, to the passing of the First Reform Bill in 1832, issues including enclosure, the impact of war, Catholic emancipation, and parliamentary reform increasingly came to dominate newspaper columns, as well as the attention of the public and their representatives in Parliament. Due to the public nature of canvassing, election contests brought these issues to the forefront of political discussion.

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[688] See above pages 214-19. See Chapter Two for examples of how notions of reform developed in election songs, page 64.

There was an expectation, amongst voters and non-voters alike, that their MP would represent their views in the Commons, presenting local and national bills, making speeches, and petitioning the House.[689] However, this does not always reflect how a candidate saw their role. From the late 1770s, an increasing distinction was made between a 'delegate' (or representative) who was elected to carry out the wishes of voters and a 'trustee' who would decide for himself how best to represent both his constituents, as well as his own party. As comments made by Daniel Parker Coke highlight, some MPs in the East Midlands did not always think it was necessary to act in accordance with the wishes of their constituents. Moreover, it would have been more difficult to appease everyone in boroughs such as Leicester and Nottingham, both of which had a large and diverse electorate.

Print was one of the primary ways in which MPs were able to clarify to the public which issues they would, if elected, support in Parliament. Public addresses often appeared in local newspapers, with candidates stating which issues they were particularly attached to. When looking at the way in which the candidates spoke about issues such as parliamentary reform, it was in these printed addresses where candidates clarified the extent to which they were reformers, and on which particular aspects, such as the vote by ballot, they were not prepared to support.[690] The press was also instrumental in both examining candidates as to where they stood on a particular issue, and explaining what the

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[689] *Paper War*, 19.
[690] *LJ*, 6th August 1830.

consequences would be for the public should certain bills such as Catholic emancipation and the Corn Laws become legislation.[691]

Timing was an important factor in which issues candidates and voters chose to prioritise. Between 1793 and 1815, it is unsurprising that the focus of attention was the threat of revolution at home, as well as the economic impacts of the French Wars. In the immediate aftermath of the conflict, the focus continued to be on the price of provisions locally, especially with the introduction of the Corn Laws. Similarly the question of Catholic emancipation had particular significance in the East Midlands. Across the country, there were roughly 150,000 Protestant Dissenters by 1801, however, both Nottingham and Leicester had a sizable dissenting population.[692] Although Catholic emancipation was a national issue, it was one which had particular pertinence in the East Midlands, placing doubt on the extent to which local and national issues are so sharply divided. In this instance, it is clear that some issues resonated with audiences in the East Midlands to a much greater degree than others.

References to parliamentary reform had been discussed from the end of the eighteenth century, with occasional references appearing in election canvasses. However, widespread support for change was limited until the late 1820s, and no candidate could hope to win the support of voters on this policy alone, especially during times of national crisis. Some constituencies in the East Midlands had a particular reason to press for reform, and this chapter has highlighted how election results in towns such as Leicester, Newark, and East Retford could be swayed by bribery, corruption, and the influence of the ruling

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[691] *LC*, 17th June 1826.
[692] Jupp, *The Governing of Britain, 1688-1848*, 108.

elite. Campaigns for reform, both in the radical press and by some pro-reform candidates also highlights how national campaigns could have particular importance in some areas, again demonstrating how not all national and local issues were so detached from one another.

This chapter has focused on five main issues which came to dominate election campaigns in the East Midlands between 1790 and 1832. Local issues such as town improvement, and enclosure bills; the security of the nation and impacts of the French Wars; the implementation of the Corn Laws in 1815 and their effects on the population; the question of Catholic emancipation; and parliamentary reform, all featured during election campaigns in the East Midlands. It is clear that local issues mattered to constituents, particularly if their 'historic rights' were deemed to be at risk, as in the case of enclosure. However, it was national issues, although ones which were especially pertinent to the region, which came to cause the greatest controversy during contests and on which candidates canvassed most strongly.[693]

The East Midlands was not alone in campaigning for a return to peace, an end to entrenchment and the Corn Laws, an extension of civil and religious rights, and a reform of Parliament. As numerous studies have shown, around the country, elections came to be dominated by similar debates. Barker and Vincent have, for example, shown how national issues came to be increasingly important in Newcastle-under-Lyme, especially after 1812 when the impacts of war and its effect on trade was particularly felt in the town. Similarly, during the 1815 election, one candidate was accused by his opponents of 'opposing education of

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[693] DLSL, Box 27 'The Sorrowful Lamentation, Last Dying Speech and Confessions OF OLD NUN'S GREEN' (1791); Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840*, 135.

the poor and supporting catholic emancipation', a claim which he was forced to deny in his election canvasses.[694] Elsewhere around the country, historians have argued that, although elections of the eighteenth century may have been dominated by local issues, by the 1830s, national issues were becoming increasingly important, especially over the question of parliamentary reform.[695]

On the other hand, the role of local personalities and individuals should not be underplayed, and it is clear that electoral success did not always depend on a candidate's commitment to either their constituents, or their particular concerns. In many ways issues which came to dominate political debate in the town was often dependent upon local factors, and in particular the role played by local governing elites.

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[694] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xvii, xxiii.
[695] E. Jaggard, *Cornwall politics in the age of reform, 1790-1885* (Woodbridge, 1999), 123-24; Dyndor, 'The Political Culture of Elections in Northampton, 1768-1868', 44-60.

Chapter Five

Audience of Print

Introduction

Over the course of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the rate and speed at which print was produced and circulated around the country increased dramatically. Between 1801 and 1816, the number of newspaper stamps issued nationally grew from 16.4 million to 22 million, an increase of 5.6 million stamps. By 1837, figures had risen again to a total of over 39 million.[696] Whilst these figures suggest that sales were increasing, they do not relate to sales figures and the number of people who read or had access to newspapers. Nor do they indicate the audience of newspapers.

Similarly, as Chapter Two demonstrated, over the course of an election campaign, candidates, agents, and printers went to great lengths to ensure that large numbers of handbills were produced quickly, with thousands of individual items being printed and distributed over the course of canvassing. How much of this literature, along with newspapers and other political ephemera, would have reached its intended audience, or even been read at all, is debateable. It is this question which is the central focus of this chapter. In attempting to address whether political awareness, participation, and engagement were growing in the East Midlands, the first part of this chapter will examine who printed canvasses were aimed at. The second section will question to what extent this is an accurate

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[696] H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855* (Harlow, 2000), 30.

representation of who actually read political literature, and consider how print was made available.

Samuel Bamford claimed that the writings of William Cobbett 'were read on nearly every cottage hearth in the manufacturing districts of … Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham.' Bamford suggested that copies of Cobbett's works were printed cheaply, aimed at and read by 'labourers', giving them access to political ideas such as parliamentary reform.[697] The accuracy of this depiction is hard to decipher. As Chapter One demonstrated, levels of literacy are notoriously difficult to measure, and early estimates often under-record the number of people who could read and write. Nevertheless, between c.1700 and 1840, both male and female literacy increased. As R.A. Houston has argued, although there were literates and illiterates in all classes of society, literacy and wealth were interlinked, with urban levels being higher than those in more rural areas.[698]

Rising literacy levels do not necessarily mean that there was an increase in the number of people actively reading. Nor does the growth of books, newspapers, and other types of print equate to a growth of readers. On the other hand, Wiles has argued that newspaper agents carried 'thousands of local papers to thousands of customers', and questions the extent to which customers would have purchased newspapers if they did not read them.[699] In 1815, the price of a newspaper rose to 7d., which could be as much as twelve per cent of a labourer's

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[697] S. Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (Oxford, 1984), 13-14.
[698] G. Sutherland, 'Education', in F.M.L. Thompson, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950* vol. 3: *Social Agencies and Institutions* (Cambridge, 1990), 122; J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1999), 167-168. R.A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education 1500-1800* (Harlow, 1988), 131-3.
[699] R.M. Wiles, 'The relish for reading in provincial England two centuries ago', in R. Darnton, F. Bernhard, R.M. Wiles, P.J. Korshin (eds), *The Widening Circle: Essays on the Circulation of Literature in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (1976), 90-1.

weekly wage outside London.[700] Presuming that at least some labourers bought newspapers, it seems highly unlikely that they would have spent such a relatively large proportion of their income on a paper to then not have read it.

If handbills were handed out for free, or pasted up in public places, it is difficult to speculate the extent to which people read or took notice of them. As Leah Price has claimed, 'in an age of taxed paper, reading constituted only one point in a cycle.'[701] Waste paper was in great demand during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Used to wrap foodstuffs such as cheese, meat, fish, and fruit, shopkeepers would often purchase waste paper to use in their businesses.[702]

Elsewhere, old letters were reused to light fires and pipes, whilst 'broadsheets pieced out dress patterns or lined pie-plates.'[703] Although meant as a satirical comment on the work of printer William Harrod, Charles Sutton's claim that Harrod's works were used as 'linings for BANDBOXES… [were] in great repute in the CHEESEMONGERS'S SHOPS', and used as toilet paper 'on *necessary* occasions', was probably not far from the truth.[704] Readers would have been selective in the material they chose and, for many, it would have been the paper itself, rather than the words printed, which would have had the greatest value.

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[700] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society,* 39.

[701] L. Price, 'Getting the Reading Out of It: Paper Recycling in Mayhew's London', in I. Ferris and P. Keen (eds), *Bookish Histories: Books, Literature, and Commercial Modernity, 1700-1900* (Basingstoke, 2009), 148.

[702] M. Harris, 'The Book Trade in Public Space: London street booksellers, 1690-1850', in R. Myers, M. Harris and G. Mandelbrote (eds), *Fairs, Markets and the Itinerant Book Trade* (London, 2007), 203.

[703] R. Coulton, M. Mauger, C. Reid, *Stealing Books in Eighteenth Century London* (London, 2016), 16, 70; Price, 'Getting the Reading Out of It', 148; W. Noblett, 'Cheese, Stolen Paper, and the London Book Trade, 1750-99', *Eighteenth Century Life*, 38 (2014), 100-1; Harris, 'The Book Trade in Public Space', 203.

[704] *Paper War*, 133.

There was some expectation amongst writers that audiences would have read print with care and concentration, as indicated in one handbill which addressed voters specifically, 'You now have before you the Addresses of the two Men who appear as Candidates, to represent you in Parliament ... You have doubtless read them both with attentive consideration.'[705] However, as has already been seen, it is likely that many handbills would have been recycled, reused, or passed on, often with little more than a passing glance.

Out of the thousands of handbills, cards, and addresses printed for a single contest, what proportion of this material was actually handed out or sold to the public is unclear. Whilst the election receipts used in Chapter Two showed how agents were paid to distribute canvasses throughout the constituency, and sometimes even further afield, how many were actually handed out is not described.[706] It is possible that at least some of the thousands printed for an individual contest would have been left over. What happened to them is open to speculation. Bearing in mind the demand for paper, printers may very well have either reused them in their businesses, or else sold or given away those not handed out as scrap paper.

In 1812 Charles Sutton advertised that 'a few copies remain unsold of the "Chapter of Accidents" as published at the former contested Election, with an emblematical frontispiece, price eightpence.'[707] It seems highly unlikely that the advertisement would have contained specific details of 'an emblematical frontispiece' had it been sold for scrap paper. This shows that, at some level, there was a market for the remains of election literature. Likewise, old issues of

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[705] NA, DD568/35/7 Handbill (26th March 1803).
[706] Chapter Two, pages 83, 88.
[707] DRO, D5366/2/9/17/84 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter Third*.

newspapers would have provided a reliable source of wastepaper. This perhaps explains why, in February 1802, Joseph Woolley, a stockingmaker from the Nottinghamshire village of Clifton, bought 'a bundle of "old newspapers" for fivepence'. What exactly Woolley bought or used them for is not recorded.[708]

Although, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, we know that people bought, borrowed, and read books, newspapers, and printed political ephemera, identifying audiences can be problematic. Where records do survive, it is rare to find details of the types of material they read, and how this was acquired. In the majority of instances, the survival of individual testimonies of readers is sporadic, often 'attributed to singular experience, activity, luck or to a combination of these factors.'[709] Identifying audiences of print, therefore, is often little more than speculation.

Intended Audience

Print was one of the primary ways to reach audiences, whether they formed part of the electorate or not. To some degree, handbills, squibs, and songs, were produced not only to inform and persuade voters, but also to entertain those who would have read or heard them. As Chapter Two demonstrated, the range and style of handbills and other election literature could vary considerably. The audience of a particular print is therefore going to be affected by the style, purpose, and intended impact of the text. As O'Gorman has outlined, canvasses reminded voters of their electoral rights, and informed audiences of the opinions

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[708] C. Steedman, *An Everyday Life of the English Working Class: Work, Self and Sociability in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2014), 45.
[709] J. Raven, H. Small, N. Tadmor, 'Introduction: the practice and representation of reading in England', in J. Raven, H. Small, N. Tadmor (eds), *The Practice and Representation of Reading In England* (Cambridge, 1996), 14-15.

and promises of candidates in the run up to the polls' opening.[710] Here, the main purpose of election handbills was to encourage people to vote, and to vote in favour of a particular candidate. However, in addressing the population via the written word, this automatically excluded those who were illiterate or possessed only basic reading skills.

As has already been established, despite divergences between occupation, gender, and region, literacy was increasing across the period.[711] W.B. Stephens used marriage registers to calculate that, between 1799 and 1804, overall literacy in Nottingham was around forty-nine per cent. By c.1832, levels had grown to around sixty-five per cent, and so broadly in line with national estimates. Although this method of measuring literacy is not without limitations, Stephens' calculations suggest that literacy in the town increased by sixteen per cent between c.1799 and c.1832.[712] Literacy levels in Derby and Leicester would have been similar. All three were county towns, as well as commercial and manufacturing centres, with a substantial middling class population, many of whom would have been literate; in contrast, both East Retford and Newark were market towns, surrounded by agricultural districts.[713] Here, literacy levels were likely to have been lower.

At its widest then, the potential audience of election literature and newspapers was relatively extensive, especially in larger towns such as Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham. Presuming they were sung out loud, election songs had the

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[710] F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1989), 247.
[711] See Chapter One, page 15 for details of national literacy figures.
[712] W.B. Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society 1830-70: the geography of diversity in provincial England* (Manchester, 1987), 6.
[713] Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society 1830-70*, 142

potential to reach audiences regardless of literacy or political stance. Songs would also have been accessible to all, irrespective of wealth. They would therefore not have been restricted to those in the franchise, typically freemen or those who paid scot and lot taxation.[714] Songs were often set to popular tunes, likely to have been recognisable to a large section of society, further reinforcing the idea that their potential audience was relatively extensive.

However, although songs may have had a broad appeal, many were not as inclusive as first appears, with many being directed specifically at voters. In *Paper War*, one song proclaimed, 'Ye Tories give ear to my groans…list, all ye supporters of Drones, To the pitiful plaint of a friend.'[715] Although the lyrics petitioned Tory supporters in the town, the song was really designed as a satirical attack on them, accusing their candidate, Daniel Parker Coke, of bribery and threats. In this case, the intended audience of such a song was likely to be Coke's opponents, rather than 'ye Tories', as the lyrics state.

In Newark, election songs of the late 1820s and early 1830s were similarly designed to appeal to specific audiences. During the Newark by-election of 1829, one song began, 'ELECTORS! Come list [sic] to my Story'.[716] In this instance, it stated:

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[714] See Table 1.1 page 10 for a list of freeman and scot and lot constituencies.
[715] *Paper War*, 89.
[716] *Particulars of Newark election* (Newark, 1829), 28-9.

Newarkers, pluck up your spirit,

Remember your Fathers of Old;

Disgrace not the Blood you inherit,

Be no longer thus bandied and sold;

Let no low-bred man represent you,

This SADLER send back to the North

And let no other Member content yoo [sic],

But one of tried Merit and Worth.

In 1831, the total population of Newark was 9,957, with about 1,700 (seventeen per cent) eligible to vote. Although the song began by addressing voters, it is not clear if 'Newarkers' referred to the population as a whole, or just the electorate. If 'Newarkers' did include those outside of the franchise, then it would appear to be addressing a broad section of society. However, as an attack on Michael Thomas Sadler, the choice candidate of the fourth Duke of Newcastle, the song was directed at those in opposition to Tories in the borough. Other songs were even more blatant in their appeals to voters. Another example from the 1829 by-election, 'said to be written by a Red [Tory] Partizan', addressed supporters of the town's Independent Blue interest, Thomas Wilde, as 'My worthy Blues'.[717] It seems unlikely for it to have been written by a Tory supporter, especially as the last verse proclaimed:

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[717] *Particulars of Newark election* (Newark, 1829), 62-3.

So, Blues, rejoice,

Now take your choice,

And vote for Freedom's Sons you know,

His banners free,

You e'er shall see…

Now led to *Vict'ry* by WILDE you know.

Given the potential to reach such a wide audience, it is surprising that composers of election songs sometimes chose specifically to address a comparatively narrow section of society. In contrast, writers of handbills and newspaper editors often simply addressed 'The Public' in their publications.[718] Who this represented is open to interpretation. In the broadest, most literal sense, 'the public' could be taken to mean the population as a whole, regardless of literacy, class, gender, wealth, or political views. However, whilst editors and writers may have used such a term with the intention of appealing to as many people as possible, in reality, the 'public' was a much narrower section of society than the word initially suggests. One satirical handbill mocked the way in which agents addressed 'The Public', claiming that this represented only 'about one in seven'. Similarly, the handbill claimed that agents had 'prostituted the title of Burgess' for their own political purposes and 'seek for favour among the heads of PARTIES'.[719]

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[718] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833, 'To The Public'; DRO, D369G/ZPE/69 'An address to the public' (1792); DRO, D369G/ZPE/70 'A remonstrance to the public' (1792); *DR*, 5th May 1831.
[719] *Electionana Retfordiensis*, 163-4.

Candidates and their agents continued to produce election literature which addressed 'The Public' even after the First Reform Bill. As part of the canvass for the Derby election of December 1832, Figure 5.1 (below) appealed directly 'TO THE PUBLIC'.[720] Written in the style of a public announcement or advertisement, the handbill was a satirical attack on the two liberal candidates, Henry Compton Cavendish and Edward Strutt.

Despite appealing 'TO THE PUBLIC', this is unlikely to be as extensive an audience as at first appears. Literacy, as we have seen, was on the increase throughout the region. However, figures do not correspond to reading comprehension levels, and the likelihood that all those recorded as literate would have understood the intricacies and in-jokes of the handbill must be questioned. Font size is considerably smaller compared to other examples, and the amount of text printed is greater than other, simpler handbills, suggesting that this particular example would have only really been accessible to those with relatively high levels of literacy.

In the handbill, Edward Strutt and Henry Compton Cavendish are accused of bribery and 'boroughmongery', and in reference to Edward Strutt's opposition to the Factory Acts, it is claimed that he is a supporter of 'Infant Slavery'. The handbill also makes specific appeals to voters, stating that 'Messers. Cot. and Col., therefore give notice to the Electors ... to come quickly to the poll.' The intended audience of this particular handbill would have been local, literate, and in the franchise.

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[720] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'To the Public' (undated c.1832). See Figure 5.1 on page 238.

James Vernon has argued that, across the country, 'the effect of the "Great" Reform Act was less than great and considerably less dramatic than has previously been supposed.'[721] By 1832 there were 1,384 registered electors in Derby (out of a population of 32,607) compared to an electorate of around 650 in 1820, and a recorded population of 17,423 in 1821, an increase of 0.5 per cent in the proportion of voters.[722] Based on these figures, it is possible that the handbill was aimed at less than 1,500 individuals.

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[721] J. Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture c.1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993), 31.
[722] S. Harratt and S. Farrell 'Derby', *HP Commons 1820-1830* [accessed 08/07/2017]; H. Miller, 'Derby', *HP Commons 1832-1868* (forthcoming) [accessed 08/07/2017].

TO THE PUBLIC.

Messrs. Cotton Bags and Colonel

Having for a long time carried on a successful and extensive traffic in

BOROUGHMONGERY,

beg to announce to their Friends and the Public, that they have made every arrangement for re-opening their Establishment

IN DECEMBER NEXT,

on the most liberal terms to the Electors and Independent Burgesses. They have been principally induced thus to deviate from their ancient and usual mode of conducting Business, in consequence of

SIR CHARLES COLVILE

having solicited the Patronage and support of the Electors and Burgesses, and very foolishly promised to serve his Friends and Customers in a fair, honest, and impartial manner, to the entire exclusion of Truck and Monopoly.

Messrs. Cot. and Col., therefore give notice to the Electors dependent on the Cotton Bags and Colonel interest, to come quickly to the Poll :—and for the satisfaction of the curiously impertinent, they publish the following short Programme of what they intend to do in the Reformed Parliament :—

Mr. Cot. will strenuously support the System of Infant Slavery

He will continue to refuse all inquiry into that Abominable Traffic in Flesh and Blood carried on in the West Indies.

He will also vote for a further Division of the County of Derby, intended to form the Principality of Belper.

N. B.—Mr. Cotton Bags embraces this opportunity of publicly declaring, that his Family still continue to deal in Bread, Cheese, Butter, Woollen and Linen Drapery, and all kinds of Hard-Ware, notwithstanding all the impudent and vulgar abuse heaped upon the "Truck System."

Mr. Colonel.—on his part declares, that he conceives himself to be the Duke's Member, and not the Town's, therefore he is perfectly independent, and desires that no more letters may be sent to him complaining of his neglect of his Parliamentary duties.

He further declares that he is convinced his Parliamentary career has been of immense service to the Nation, inasmuch as he has been continually absent from his place in Parliament, when large sums of money have been voted for War, Pensions, Sinecures, &c., &c., which had he successfully opposed, as it was his duty to do, the Country would never have arrived at that celebrity which it now enjoys.

N. B.—He wishes it to be distinctly understood that his own Pension is not more than One Thousand Pounds per annum.

LONG LIVE THE NOBLE HOUSE OF COTTON BAGS AND COLONEL.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BEMROSE, MARKET-PLACE, DERBY.

Figure 5.1: DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'To the Public'

(c.1832)

Occasionally, writers of handbills were more direct in their addresses, appealing specifically to 'Electors of Leicester!', and voters in other East Midlands constituencies.[723] In appealing to the electorate as a whole, many handbills did not presume to know the political views or affiliations of their audiences. Instead, they emphasised the freedom of choice that many voters had. One handbill addressed 'the free and unbought voters of Nottingham', whereas voters in Derby were reminded to 'Examine the conduct of each Candidate and choose men whose past fidelity affords the safest pledge of their future utility.'[724] Handbills acted as a warning to voters, cautioning them to 'Be on your guard … Do not trust them ['the leading Tories of the county … the unrelenting enemies of reform'].[725] Likewise, they also appealed to voters on subjects such as, 'the sake of the Real Independent and Tory Cause … the Church … the safety of your King, your Country, and your glorious Constitution.'[726]

Evidence suggests that several handbills directed their attention to voters living in particular areas. For instance, one handbill addressed 'The Independent Freeholders of Leicestershire, More Particularly Those in the Vicinity of Wymondham.'[727] Similarly, following the passing of the Reform Bill, one Derbyshire handbill from July 1832 targeted Freeholders in the Hundreds of Scarsdale and High Peaks, adding greater weight to the suggestion that, in some instances, handbills acted as alternatives to a personal canvass.[728]

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[723] LRO, M105, 'Electors of Leicester!' (1826); DRO, D239M/F/10891 'To the Electors of Derbyshire' (undated c.1831); DRO, D5336/2/9/17/12 'To the electors of Nottingham' (1812).
[724] DRO, D5366/2/9/17/76 'To the free and unbought voters of Nottingham' (1812); DLSL, Box 28 'Electors of Derby' (1832).
[725] DLSL, Box 28, 'Freeholders & Inhabitants of the County of Derby' (undated c.1831).
[726] DLSL, Box 28, 'To the Real Independent Electors of the County of Derby' (1832).
[727] DRO, D5336/2/9/17/51 'The Independent Freeholders of Leicestershire, More Particularly Those in the Vicinity of Wymondham' (28th June 1818).
[728] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833, 'Freeholders of Scarsdale & High Peak' (19th July 1832).

In June 1831, Sir Roger Greisley, alongside Sir George Crewe and Thomas Gisbourne, issued addresses offering to stand at the next opportunity.[729] In one of his addresses, Greisley addressed 'the worthy and independent electors of the southern district of the county of Derby'.[730] Such an address might have been expected after 1832, when the county constituency was split into two-Derbyshire North, and Derbyshire South. Prior to 1832, there was an informal agreement in Derbyshire that the southern half of the county would be controlled by the 'southern-based Tory gentry', with the northern area under the influence of the Dukes of Devonshire, supporters of the Whig party.[731] It is to those electors in the southern area of the county that the Tory Greisley was addressing.

Establishing a relationship with constituents, especially those in the electorate, was a key role played by candidates and their committees.[732] Cultivating and maintaining this relationship was important, but flattery too was an integral part of the canvass ritual.[733] Flattery was not only evident in the provision of food and alcohol, but also in addresses. Boyd Hilton has suggested that politicians 'nearly always' prefaced their addresses with descriptions such as, 'respectable', 'rational', 'sober-minded', 'intelligent', or 'the better sort of people'.[734] Alongside flattery, Hilton has suggested that describing voters in this way created 'an "imagined constituency" of the respectable' who had a shared

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[729] Miller, 'Derby', *HP Commons 1832-1868* [accessed 26/04/18].

[730] DRO, D239M/F/10893 'To The Worthy and Independent Electors of the Southern District of the County of Derby' (June, 1831).

[731] F.W. Wentworth-Shields, 'Gresley, Sir Roger, eighth baronet (1799–1837)', *ODNB* [accessed 14/03/17]; M. Escott, 'Gresley, Sir Roger, 8th bt. (1799-1837)', *HP Commons 1820-1830* [accessed 14/03/17]. Gresley changed the spelling of his name to Greiesly in August 1830.

[732] See Chapters Two and Three

[733] F. O'Gorman, 'Campaign rituals and ceremonies: the social meaning of elections in England, 1780-1860', *Past & Present*, 135 (1992), 84-5.

[734] B. Hilton, *A Bad, Mad, & Dangerous People: England 1783-1846* (Oxford, 2006), 311.

interest, and were linked together 'in prosperity and adversity'.[735] According to Wahrman, it was during the 1820s and 1830s when public opinion first came to be linked with the middle-class. Increasingly, it was generally those in the electorate who were considered representative of 'the people', rather than the population as a whole. It has been suggested that this 'imagined constituency' was not only synonymous with 'public opinion', but also the middle-class electorate. [736]

As discussed in Chapter One, defining 'class' and 'class consciousness' during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries can be problematic.[737] As Wahrman has indicated, historians have not only struggled to define what they mean by class, but notions of who was, and who was not, 'middle-class' were by no means clear during the 1790s, with definitions still vague well into the nineteenth century.[738] Hilton has suggested that, until around the 1760s, it might have been possible to think of the middling classes as typically earning twice the amount needed for subsistence. However, war and poor harvests resulted in the prices of necessities fluctuating, so calculations for the latter part of the eighteenth century are less precise. Using Patrick Colquhoun's social structure calculations for 1801-03, the average middle-class yearly income could be as low as £75, or as high as £120. In reality, it is probable that there was little

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[735] Hilton, *A Bad, Mad, & Dangerous People*, 311; K. Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, culture and imperialism in England, 1717-1785* (Cambridge, 1995), 40; B. Anderson, I*magined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London, 1983), 61.
[736] D. Wahrman, '"Middle class" domesticity goes public: gender, class and politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria', *Journal of British Studies*, 32 (1993), 396-8; Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class*, 193; Hilton, *A Bad, Mad, & Dangerous People*, 311.
[737] See Chapter One, pages 23-25.
[738] D. Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c.1780-1840* (Cambridge, 1995), 16.

distinction between 'less well-off middling persons … and well-paid working people such as clerks … or artisans and craftsmen.'[739]

Olivia Smith has suggested that, whilst newspapers were usually 'aimed at skilled readers', the fact that they did not specify the class of their audiences meant that, for the most part, they can be said to be seen as 'classless'.[740] As has already been seen, it was not unusual for newspaper editors to include readers' letters in their papers.[741] Regardless of whether they were genuine or not, by printing letters which claimed to be written by residents of the town, editors further reinforced the idea that newspapers were an open forum for public debate, and spoke with 'the voice of the people', regardless of class.[742] Editors were also able to select letters which best suited the agenda of their paper, giving the impression that readers were connected to each other through a sense of shared beliefs and commitments.

The *Nottingham Review*, for instance, published a letter from 'A Burgess of Nottingham', appealing to his 'brother Burgesses', offering them some 'judicious and constitutional advice' at the forthcoming election. In his letter, the Burgess claimed that, 'another War Parliament like the present will seal the doom of our country,' and that the current administration has 'produced famine, *loss of employment for the poor*, confusion and despair.'[743] Letters such as these

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[739] Hilton, *A Bad, Mad, & Dangerous People*, 126-8.
[740] O. Smith, *The politics of language: 1791-1819* (Oxford, 1984), 162.
[741] See Chapter Three, pages 121-22, 136-38.
[742] H. Barker and S. Burrows 'Introduction', in H. Barker and S. Burrows (eds), *Press, politics and the public sphere in Europe and North America, 1760-1820* (Cambridge, 2002), 9-10; H. Barker, 'England, 1760-1815', in Barker and Burrows (eds), *Press, politics and the public sphere in Europe and North America,* 94-5; B. Clarke, *From Grub Street to Fleet Street* (Aldershot, 2004), 86.
[743] *NR*, 2nd October 1812.

purported to be representative of public opinion, rather than an individual, and so emphasized the public nature of the press.

Like many letters printed in the press, the author of this particular letter hid behind a pseudonym, and so establishing to what extent these letters were from genuine readers can be difficult. Although some were written by members of the public, given the lengths that some editors went to in order to fill space, it seems likely that many wrote them themselves, or as one handbill in *Electionana Retfordiensis* claimed, written by appointed election agents.[744] Letters were often lengthy, sometimes running over two columns. Several also used relatively complex language, thus placing further doubt on the extent to which those with lower literacy levels contributed to political discussion in this way.[745] On the other hand, it is equally possible that shorter, simpler letters from the working classes were written, but were not chosen to be included by the editor.

Establishing a newspaper business was not without risks. Many did not remain in print long, with Barker indicating that, out of 220 traceable English provincial newspapers, 'almost a third' failed.[746] In keeping with this trend, out of the sixteen East Midlands papers studied, seven (43.7 per cent) failed within the first few years of their founding.[747] Subscribers were the mainstay of the provincial press. Evidence from Shrewsbury and Chester reveals that subscribers tended to be from the middle classes, including innkeepers, clergymen, merchants, and

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[744]*Electionana Retfordiensis*, 163.

[745] *NR*, 2nd October 1812; *DR*, 15th June 1826; *LC* 28th June 1828; *DCR*, 22nd September 1831.

[746] H. Barker, 'Catering for Provincial Tastes: Newspapers, Readership and Profit in Late Eighteenth Century England', *Historical Research*, 69 (1996), 44.

[747] See Table 3.1 pages 109-110 for a list of newspapers and their dates.

tradesmen.[748] In the East Midlands, few records survive giving detailed descriptions for who subscribed to newspapers. In his account book, John S. Piercy, Retford school master and occasional newspaper contributor, gave some indication of subscribers to a number of newspapers from across the region.[749]

In 1827, he listed a total of forty-eight subscribers (individual and institutional) to the *Nottingham Journal*, the *Stamford Mercury*, and the *Doncaster Gazette*. Twenty-six of these subscriptions were for the *Journal*, with one listed as 'The News Room'. A further four subscribed to the *Stamford Mercury*, with the remaining eighteen (The News Room being one of these) receiving the *Doncaster Gazette*. The majority of subscribers came from villages around Retford, including Clayworth, Dunham, Eaton, Gamston, and Welham.[750] Given the proximity of these villages to Doncaster, and to the boundary with Lincolnshire, it is not surprising that residents subscribed to newspapers from outside of Nottinghamshire.

The occupations of subscribers are generally not recorded in Piercy's list. Nevertheless, it is possible to get some indication of their social standing from their titles. Most are listed as Mr, with two being described as Esq. There is one clergyman, along with the Hon. J.B. Simpson, a subscriber to the *Nottingham Journal*. These titles indicate that many of those subscribing to the *Nottingham Journal*, *Stamford Mercury,* or the *Doncaster Gazette*, were likely to have come from either the middling or upper classes. Out of the total of forty-eight

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[748] V.E.M. Gardner, *The Business of News in England, 1760–1820* (Basingstoke, 2016), 130-32; Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth Century England*, 117-8.

[749] NA, DD/1104/1, Account book of J.S. Piercy of Retford 1823-1850.

[750] NA, DD/1104/1, Account book of J.S. Piercy of Retford 1823-1850.

subscribers, four were women, all of whom subscribed to the *Stamford Mercury*.[751]

Schweizer and Klein have argued that advertising was key to the success of a newspaper, as well as providing some indication as to its target audience. They have suggested that, as advertising was a major source of revenue, editors were careful to include advertisements which were targeted towards their readers. Products listed included high end items such as, 'wines and spirits, perfume, dentistry, hair-styling products [and] fashionable clothing', suggesting readers were from 'the new moneyed class who comprised a vital segment of the reading public.'[752]

In the East Midlands, the range of items advertised in the press was fairly typical for a provincial paper. Some of the most commonly advertised items included books, medicines, schools, and clothing, the majority of which appear to have been aimed at a middle-class audience.[753] Newspapers were also used to advertise houses for rent. Typically, advertisements stressed the 'genteel' nature of these houses. One such notice described the 'Genteel Lodgings in one of the principal streets … Also TWO BUILDINGS, Convertible…into good Warehouses, well calculated for a Lace Manufacture'.[754] Such advertisements reinforce the idea that many were aimed at wealthier clientele. Occasionally,

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[751] NA, DD/1104/1, Account book of J.S. Piercy of Retford 1823-1850.

[752] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth Century England,* 32; K. Schweizer and R. Klein, 'The French Revolution and the Developments in the London Daily Press to 1793', *Publishing History*, 18 (1985), 85-97; K. Schweizer, 'Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in the Later Hanoverian Era', *Parliamentary History*, 25 (2006), 33-4.

[753] *NJ*, 29th May 1790; *NJ*, 5th June 1790; *NG*, 18th March 1814; *NG* 25th March, 1814; *NR*, 20th January 1809; *NR,* 18th September 1812; *NR,* 2nd October 1812; *NR*, 23rd October 1812; *NR*, 24th May 1831; *NR*, 29th May 183; *DCR*, 24th June 1830; *DM*, 1st July 1802; *DM*, 1st September 1812; *DM*, 11th June 1818; *DM*, 8th March 1820; *DM*, 27th November 1822; *DM*, 28th July 1830; *LC*, 30th April 1831.

[754] *NR*, 18th September 1809.

used and second hand goods were also offered for sale, as the listing of a 'BREWING COPPER, as good as new (having been used but twice)' in the *Nottingham Review* demonstrates.[755] Advertisements such as these, listing second-hand or less expensive items, may well have been aimed at the working classes, highlighting that, in some instances, newspapers such as the *Review* did not always cater solely to the tastes and needs of the middle classes.

Alongside both new and second hand goods, it was not unusual to find job and apprentice advertisements in the provincial press.[756] These ranged from printers advertising for apprentices, to 'owners of a [hosiery firm] … wanting to form a partnership or connection', as well as 'A GOOD PLAIN COOK … a middle aged woman ... preferred.'[757] Although many of the products listed for sale in the press appear to have been largely directed towards a more middle-class audience, job advertisements appear to have been aimed at a much broader spectrum of the population. Although it is not always possible to ascertain who read newspapers, by examining the subjects of advertisements, we are able to speculate who the audiences of papers might have been.

Schweizer and Klein have stated that, amongst readers, there would have been some who were 'exclusively interested in commercial and entertainment notices.'[758] This may well have been true, but different audiences would have read newspapers for different reasons.[759] In common with many papers from across the country, those produced in the East Midlands typically carried a range

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[755] *NR*, 24th June 1808.
[756] *DH*, 15th January 1792; *NR*, 24th May 1831, 29th May 1831; *NG* 18th March 1814; *NJ*, 29th May 1790, 5th June 1790.
[757] *NR*, 18th September 1812.
[758] Schweizer and Klein, 'The French Revolution and the Developments in the London Daily Press to 1793', 86.
[759] Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society*, 60-2.

of material. Information on stocks and international markets, notices for lost dogs, advertisements for genteel housing, and second-hand kitchenware, could all appear in the press.[760] Audiences would have chosen material which was of the greatest interest to them, overlooking other sections of the paper. Consequently, editors had to get the right balance, ensuring that their paper contained enough information to suit a variety of tastes and audiences. Therefore, whilst it is possible to speculate on the audience of newspapers by looking at the types of notices and advertisements printed, it is by no means a conclusive method.

In the run up to election campaigns, the press was instrumental in promoting an individual's candidature, with large sums of money spent on printing advertisements and addresses.[761] It is unlikely that such large outlays of cash would have been spent advertising in the provincial press had the electorate not formed a sizable and profitable section of its audience. Between 1790 and 1832, newspapers and handbills were similarly instrumental in promoting and supporting the political aspirations of candidates, along with campaigns for parliamentary reform, civil and religious freedoms, and the abolition of slavery.[762]

The *Nottingham Review* was heavily involved in the campaign for reform and reprinted articles from the *Black Dwarf* on the subject of universal suffrage.[763]

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[760] *NJ*, 29th May 1790; *NJ*, 5th June 1790; *NG*, 18th March 1814; *NG*, 25th March 1814; *NR*, 20th January 1809, *NR*,18th September 1812; *NR*, 2nd 1812; *NR*, 23rd October 1812; *NR*, 24th May 1831; *NR*, 29th May 1831.

[761] See Chapter Three, pages 127-28, for details for money spent on placing addresses in newspapers.

[762] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833; DLSL, Box 28 Political Broadsheets; *Paper War*; NA, DD/NM/2/1/13 Large poster: 'To the Independent Electors of Newark' (1829); NA, DD/NM/2/1/22 'The Wildegoose Chase' (1829).

[763] *NR*, 29th May 1818.

Compared to other constituencies around the country, large freeman boroughs such as Nottingham and Leicester had a relatively extensive franchise, where, by the 1820s, around twenty-five per cent of adult men had the right to vote.[764] By focusing on reform, it is possible that the *Review* was attempting to appeal to those who did not have the vote and, as one visitor to the town in 1830 claimed, 'the working classes [of Nottingham] have their advocate' in the *Review*.[765]

In its second issue, the *Review* claimed that it 'particularly aims to gratify and be useful to various classes of Newspaper Readers.'[766] Charles Sutton, editor of the *Review*, acknowledged the difficulties in achieving this, especially since, 'it will happen, that some articles will be tasteless to one however acceptable to another.' It was, he explained, 'The first object and duty of a Newspaper … to give public events in a bulk proportion to their importance. But … it will still frequently happen that there is room for other matter; and then the editor comes to that part of his duty, to select various articles, not only for the *taste*, but the wants of his *readers*.'[767]

From such a statement, we can presume that Sutton knew both who his audience was, and what they wanted from a paper. First appearing in 1808, at the height of the Napoleonic Wars, the *Review* adopted a radical but patriotic stance, with a specific focus on national rather than local events.[768] By taking such an approach, Sutton was appealing to a relatively wide audience, many of whom

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[764] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 180.
[765] D. Fraser, 'The Nottingham press, 1800-50', *TTS*, 67 (1963), 57-8.
[766] *NR*, 10th June 1808.
[767] *NR*, 10th June 1808.
[768] J.V. Beckett, 'Responses to War: Nottingham in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815', *Midland History*, 22 (1997), 77-8; M.C. Pottle, 'Loyalty and Patriotism in Nottingham, 1792-1816' (DPhil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1988), 75-6.

did not live in the immediate area. As seen, in 1812, Sutton claimed that, of the 1,500 to 1,600 papers he supposedly sold per week, only around 750 were sold in Nottingham. The rest were distributed to towns including Sheffield, Derby, Leicester, and Newark.[769] The *Review* published election addresses directed to voters in Leicester, East Retford, York, Nottinghamshire, and Nottingham.[770] It is clear that, alongside non-electors, voters some distance from Nottingham were also seen as part of the *Review's* target audience. This reinforces Sutton's claim that he attempted to appeal to 'various classes', and demonstrates that his paper was directed towards a broader audience than were other papers in the East Midlands.[771]

The majority of election addresses printed in the *Review* addressed the electorate as a whole. For other papers this was not always the case, instead targeting particular sectors of the electorate. In June 1826, for instance, the *Nottingham Mercury* published an article aimed at the 'Whig electors of Nottingham!'[772] The article in question referred specifically to the election taking place later that month. During the canvass, rumours emerged that the Tory corporation intended to abandon its support for Lord Rancliffe in favour of John Smith Wright.[773] The *Mercury* appealed to 'Whigs [and] Dissenters', and asked them:

> Can you believe that the Pot-House Junta, who
>
> brought forward the opponent of LORD
>
> RANCLIFFE, were swayed by *moral*

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[769] Fraser, 'The Nottingham Press 1800-1850', 55.

[770] *NR*, 2nd October 1812, 9th October 1812, 10th October 1812, 9th June 1826, 11th February 1820, 3rd March 1820, 26th May 1826.

[771] *NR*, 10th June 1808.

[772] *NM*, 14th June 1826.

[773] P.A. Symonds and R.G. Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 20/03/2017].

> considerations, in the choice of their man? ...
>
> You know it is not … you will discover the
>
> folly, and danger, of either remaining neuter, or
>
> by identifying yourself with *them*, by
>
> supporting a man who they have brought
>
> forward to oppose you:- for it is against YOU!
>
> and *your most valued principles*, that they have
>
> brought MR WRIGHT forward.[774]

Similarly, the *Leicester Chronicle* targeted the many religious dissenters in the town by continuing to press for civil and religious freedoms, freedom of speech, and campaigning against slavery.[775] In contrast, the *Derby Mercury*, initially the organ of the town's liberal middling classes, placed less emphasis on campaigning for an extension of civil and religious rights than the *Leicester Chronicle* or the *Nottingham Review*.[776] However, after 1813, the *Mercury* changed its political stance, increasingly focusing on the Derby True Blue Club, providing favourable reports of their meetings and activities.[777] The *Derby Reporter*, on the other hand, became ever more radical in terms of its support for religious liberty and parliamentary reform, aimed at a dissenting, more liberal, and potentially working-class audience.[778] In contrast, the *Mercury* was likely to have been directed towards a more middle-class audience, who generally

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[774] *NM*, 14th June 1826.

[775] *LC*, 12th September 1812; *LC*, 26th September 1812; *LC*, 29th September 1812; *LC*, 6th June 1818; *LC*, 29th October 1818; *LC*, 25th March 1820.

[776] *LC,* 26th September 1812; *LC*, 25th March 1820; *LC*, 10th June 1820; *LC*, 17th June 1826; *NR*, 28th June, *NR*, 3rd March 1820.

[777] J.D. Andrews, 'The Derbyshire newspaper press, 1720-1855' (M.A. thesis, University of Reading, 1950), 123; *DM*, 25th June 1818; *DM*, 4th March 1829.

[778] Andrews, 'The Derbyshire newspaper press, 1720-1855', 131-32.

remained loyal to the Tory party whilst, at the same time, advocating some degree of parliamentary reform.[779]

By 1833, a total of 923 stamps per week were issued for the *Derby Mercury*. In comparison, an average of 773 stamps were issued for the radical *Derby Reporter*.[780] Although, as has been stated previously, the number of stamps issued does not necessarily correlate to readership or sales figures, it would appear that, in contrast to the radical *Reporter*, greater numbers of the *Mercury* were sold, most likely bought by the middling classes of Derby and the surrounding area.

Despite not strictly being directed towards people on the basis of class, on the whole, papers of the East Midlands targeted audiences on the basis of commonalities and shared beliefs, whether these were connected to politics, religion, or other ideas. The same can also be said of other types of printed ephemera in circulation. In Leicester, the Catholic Question received much attention, especially during the 1826 election.[781]

One particular handbill addressed the 'Reasonable Men' of the town, especially those who were against 'any further concessions to the Roman Catholics'.[782] Who these 'reasonable men' were (or were not) can be inferred by its content. As will be made clear below, a sizable proportion of electors in the East Midlands were artisans, with stockingers amongst them.[783] By claiming that 'the poor *Stockingmaker* and others will tell you that independence is in their

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[779] *DM*, 16th March 1831.
[780] See Table 3.2 page 114.
[781] See Chapter Four pages 196-206 for details of Leicester's response to Catholic emancipation.
[782] LRO, M105, 'Sense against Sophistry: Addressed to reasonable men' (1826).
[783] See pages 255-57.

mouths', the handbill itself suggests that readers were not from this section of society.[784]

The fact that 'many' readers were said to have signed an anti-Catholic petition suggests that audiences were perhaps likely to support Charles Abney Hastings, an avowed opponent of Catholic emancipation. Although under the Test and Corporation Acts, Protestant Dissenters would have been excluded from holding certain military, civil, or political positions, many were 'anti-Catholic' believing that emancipation would hinder their own claims.[785] It is possible that, at least some of the town's dissenting community would have been amongst the target audience of this address. Other handbills also appealed to voters by playing on their religious conscience. For instance, Figure 5.2 was directed 'To the CHRISTIAN AND HUMANE ELECTORS OF DERBY'.[786]

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[784] LRO, M105, 'Sense against Sophistry: Addressed to reasonable men' (1826).
[785] See Chapter Four page 205.
[786] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'To the CHRISTIAN AND HUMANE ELECTORS OF DERBY' (1832).
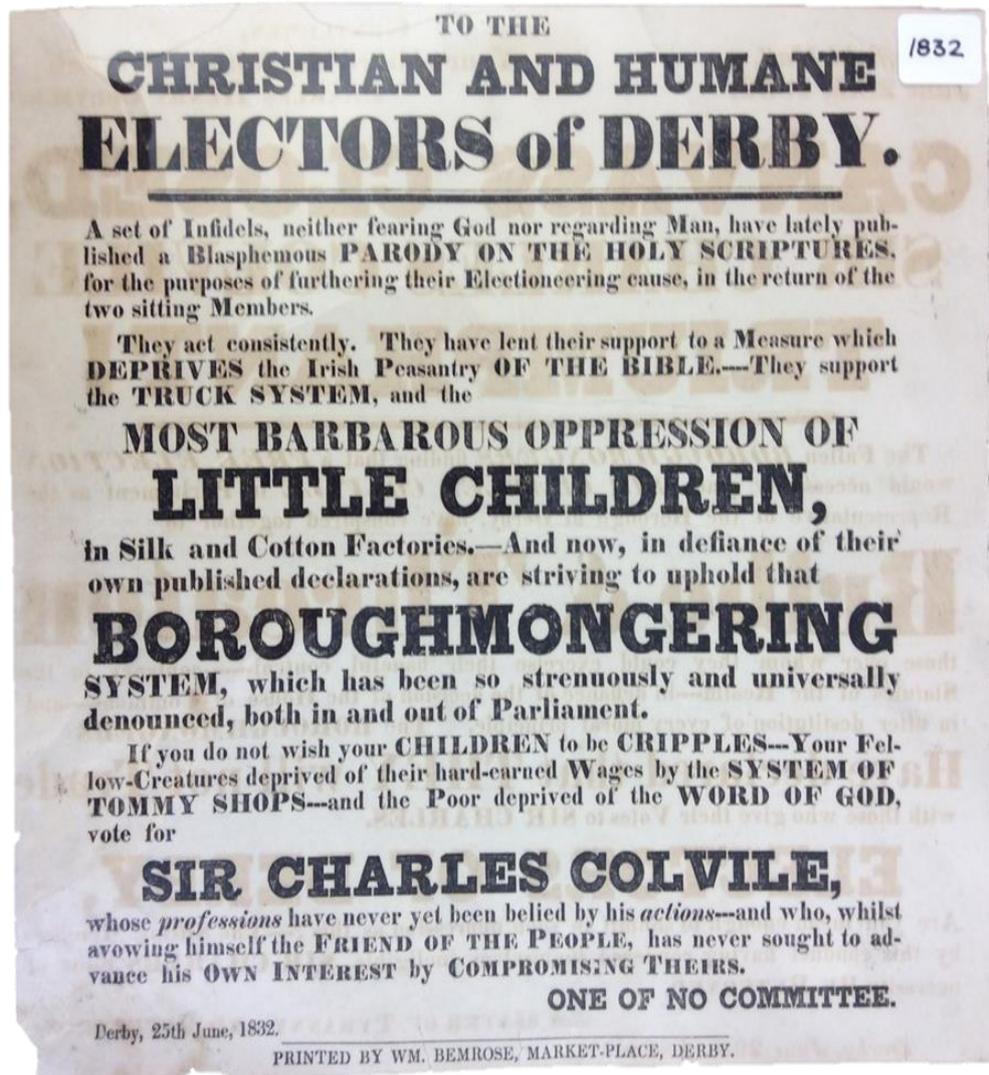
Figure 5.2: DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'To the

CHRISTIAN AND HUMANE ELECTORS OF DERBY' (1832).

Printed in June 1832, unlike other handbills which specifically addressed voters, this example was not printed as part of an election canvass. Instead, it appears to have been produced in response to a recent 'Blasphemous' publication in circulation about the town.

Using particularly evocative language, the handbill attacked 'the two sitting Members', Edward Strutt and Henry Compton Cavendish, claiming that they

had defamed the Bible 'for the purposes of furthering their Electioneering cause.' The handbill continues its religious undertones, appealing to Christian electors, suggesting that Strutt and Cavendish's policies deprived both the poor and the Irish of the word of God, and that both candidates condoned the Truck System where, in lieu of wages, employees often received payment in kind. Like Figure 5.1, this handbill also refers to Edward Strutt's opposition to the Factory Acts and uses scaremongering tactics, encouraging voters to support Charles Colvile if they 'do not wish [their] CHILDREN to be CRIPPLES'.[787]

Appealing to audiences on the basis of commonality, such as shared political or religious beliefs, was a recurring theme in letters and election literature. Letters which claimed to be written from 'A Freeholder', or signed by 'A Constant Reader', were purporting to be from the community in which many of the papers would be circulated.[788] Likewise, election handbills which addressed 'Brother Electors', or were allegedly written by 'ONE OF YOURSELVES', were, again, giving the impression that they were written by someone known to the reader, and someone who shared their beliefs and values.[789] Similarly, it was not uncommon to find letters in newspapers or election handbills appealing to readers on the basis of their occupation or social standing.

Across the East Midlands, there are numerous examples of where tradesmen were specifically targeted in election handbills and reprinted addresses.[790] By appealing 'To The Artizans, Mechanics, &c of the Borough of Leicester', or 'To

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[787] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833 'To the CHRISTIAN AND HUMANE ELECTORS OF DERBY' (1832). See Figure 5.1 page 238.
[788] *NR*, 2nd October 1812; *DCR*, 28th April 1831; *DR*, 1st June 1826.
[789] DLSL, Uncatalogued Broadsheets 1707-1833, 'To the Electors of Derby' (1831); *Paper War*, 305.
[790] DRO, D5336/2/9/12 'Scrapbook of newspaper and handbills re. Leics borough elections 1818-1826'; *LJ*, 19th June 1816; *LJ*, 2nd June 1826.

the Framework Knitters', audiences were being addressed on the basis of their shared interests.[791] Throughout the eighteenth century, the hosiery industry had been growing steadily in the East Midlands, particularly in the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Nottinghamshire.[792] However, thanks, in part, to wartime trade restrictions and increasing prices, framework knitters felt that they had been mistreated by their employers during the depression of 1811-12, and between November 1811 and April 1817, Luddites 'broke machinery rioted against high food prices, and wrote threatening letters, proclamations, and verses'.[793]

A number of MPs in the region took up the cause of the framework knitters, with John Smith, member for Nottingham between 1806 and 1818, blaming the actions of the Luddites on 'the great decay of trade'.[794] Surprisingly, handbills which addressed framework knitters specifically appear after c.1811-1817, and, rather than focusing on issues which affected framework knitters or artisans, many handbills instead focused on general election concerns, such as the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and the repeal of the Corn Laws.[795]

Several studies have established that artisans formed a significant proportion of the electorate during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The majority of these works have based their figures on the use of poll books.[796]

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[791] LRO, M105, 'To The Artizans, Mechanics, &c of the Borough of Leicester' (1826); LRO, M105, 'To the Framework Knitters' (1826).

[792] A. Temple Patterson, *Radical Leicester: A History of Leicester 1780-1850* (Leicester, 1954), 41.

[793] K. Binfield (ed.), *Writings of the Luddites* (Baltimore, 2004), 1-2.

[794] J.V. Beckett, 'Radical Nottingham', in J.V. Beckett, P. Dixon, C.P. Griffin and K. Brand (eds), *A Centenary History of Nottingham* (Manchester, 1997), 296-7; HC Deb, 14th February 1812, Vol 21, cc.807-24.

[795] LRO, M105, 'To the Framework Knitters' (1826); LRO, M105 'To the Framework Knitters' (undated c.1826).

[796] F. O'Gorman, 'The Unreformed Electorate of Hanoverian England: The Mid-Eighteenth Century to the Reform Act of 1832', *Social History*, 11 (1986), 38; J. Vernon, *Politics and the*

Whilst not without limitations, this method does at least give some indication of the broad spread of occupations present in elections, and the high proportion of artisans and labourers who formed part of the electorate in many constituencies across the country.[797]

As part of the poll taken during the 1790 Newark election, out of a recorded 1,080 votes cast, fifteen per cent of voters were classed as 'labourers'.[798] O'Gorman estimated that, in 1820, fifty-one per cent of Leicester's electorate came from amongst skilled craftsmen, and six per cent of the borough's electorate were, what he termed, semi or un-skilled men and labourers.[799] By 1826, twenty-six per cent of voters in Leicester were connected to the textile or lace industries, a further five per cent were listed as either 'gentlemen' or 'esq.', whilst three per cent were classed as labourers.[800] In 1830, sixty-five per cent of Nottingham's electorate were defined by O'Gorman as being skilled craftsmen, and four per cent were semi or un-skilled men and labourers.[801] Therefore, between 1790 and 1832, it can generally be seen that the proportion of working-class men in the electorate across the region was increasing. Although print was not necessarily directed at the working classes, since a sizable proportion of them were included in the electorate, newspaper editors, along with composers

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People, 33-4; J.A. Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England: Plumpers, Splitters and Straights*, (Guildford, 1982), 173-211.

[797] D. Beales, 'The Electorate before and after 1832: the Right to Vote, and the Opportunity', *Parliamentary History*, 11 (1992), 140-42.

[798] *An Alphabetical list of the poll taken for the election of two representatives in parliament for the borough of Newark upon Trent in the county of Nottinghamshire* (Newark, 1790). A total of 163 men were listed as being labourers.

[799] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 201, 206.

[800] *The poll for the election of two representatives in Parliament for the Borough of Leicester Commenced June 13th, and closed finally June 23rd, 1826* (Leicester, 1826). The 24 per cent classed as being connected to the textile industry were listed as 'framework knitter', 'framework spinner', wool 'spinner', 'comber' or 'stapler', 'hosier', or by the abbreviation 'F.W.K.' (taken to mean frame work knitter).

[801] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 201, 206.

of election handbills and songs, would have increasingly come to see them as being part of their target audience.

The high proportion of artisans and skilled craftsmen in the electorate was not unusual. In his examination of Norwich, Maidstone, Lewes, and Northampton, John Phillips concluded that the 'borough electorate [was] dominated by craftsmen, artisans, and skilled workmen.'[802] Similarly, when looking at Newcastle-under-Lyme, Frank O'Gorman, Hannah Barker, and David Vincent have shown that, between 1790 and 1832, the proportion of the electorate from amongst the town's craftsmen grew from sixty-two per cent to eighty-five per cent, falling to seventy-five per cent after the Reform Bill of 1832.[803] As Barker and Vincent have argued, 'voters possessed real clout, and could show their displeasure at the hustings.'[804] Given that such a high proportion of the electorate in the East Midlands were artisans and skilled labourers, it was important that candidates were seen not to be ignoring them.

One handbill (Figure 5.3), printed for the 1812 borough election, appealed 'To the British SOLDIERS, Electors of Nottingham'.[805] Daniel Parker Coke, well known for his support for the war, is the most obvious target of criticism in the handbill, produced with the intention of promoting the principles of the two Whig candidates, John Smith and Lord Rancliffe. By claiming to be signed by 'The Resident Electors', the handbill gives the impression that the public,

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[802] Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England*, 185.
[803] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 212; Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xi-xii.
[804] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xiv.
[805] DRO, D5336/2/9/17/19 'To the British Soldiers of Nottingham' (October 1812). See Figure 5.3 on page 259.

especially voters, were behind not only Smith and Rancliffe, but also the soldiers themselves.

Criticisms of the French Wars, and the subsequent increase in the cost of necessities, were common themes in both election literature and newspapers, especially from 1812 onwards.[806] In advocating Smith and Rancliffe, like many handbills in opposition to the war, Figure 5.3 below promotes 'PEACE, REFORM, and LIBERTY'. However, much of it is directed specifically at the soldiers of the town and their families. It asks, 'How is it that we have seen him [the soldier] shut up like a PRISONER … until he has given his Voice for that Candidate who is Supported by the Advocate for WAR and INTOLERANCE, and the OPPOSERS of REFORM?'[807]

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[806] See Chapter 4, pages 167-180.
[807] DRO, D5336/2/9/17/19 'To the British Soldiers of Nottingham' (October 1812).

TO THE
British SOLDIERS,
ELECTORS
OF
NOTTINGHAM.

WE venerate the Character of the BRITISH SOLDIER. In the Path of Duty he goes forth undismayed in the Face of Danger, in the Throat of Death, at the peril of LEAVING HIS WIFE AND FAMILY UNPROTECTED, TO DEFEND THE HONOUR OF HIS NATIVE LAND, AND RESTORE HER SONS TO THE BLESSINGS OF PEACE. With such Claims to our RESPECT and GRATITUDE, how is it that, upon the occasion of the present Election, *we have seen him, in many instances, return to his Native Town guarded like a CRIMINAL.*—How is it that we have seen him shut up like a *PRISONER,* and deprived of breathing his Native Air until he has given his Voice for that Candidate who is Supported by the Advocates for WAR and INTOLERANCE, and the OPPOSERS of REFORM?

The Reason is obvious; the Spirit of LIBERTY and INDEPENDENCE resides in the Breast of him whose Life is devoted to their DEFENCE, and *those who cannot Corrupt the HONOUR of a* BRITISH SOLDIER *are seeking to IMPOSE upon his* FEELINGS. Let him, then, who has Staked his Life in Defence of his Country, and would regard even the Sacrifice of it only as the Performance of his DUTY, reflect, that his COUNTRY ALSO Demands, at his Hands, the EXERCISE of his UNBIASSED JUDGMENT in the Choice of her REPRESENTATIVES IN PARLIAMENT.-----Let him consider whether those who make him a Prisoner, as a proper preparation for the Exercise of that Judgment, do not insult him only for the purpose of BETRAYING HIM!

On his Arrival at his Native Town let him seek to breathe the pure AIR of LIBERTY before he exercise the *Birthright of an Englishman.*—Let him resent with all the proud and indignant Feelings which belong to the Honour of a Soldier and a Briton, the Conduct of those who would teach him to assert the SPIRIT of LIBERTY by placing him in *Confinement.* He will thus imbibe the SPIRIT of INDEPENDENCE, the LOVE of PEACE, which distinguishes the Inhabitants of Nottingham. He will perform his DUTY as a CITIZEN, and will return for his Representatives in Parliament, those Generous Advocates for PEACE, REFORM, and LIBERTY, Mr. JOHN SMITH and LORD RANCLIFFE, whom the almost Unanimous Votes of his Friends and Neighbours have placed at the Head of the Poll.

We appeal to our Brethren of the Army as FATHERS, as HUSBANDS, as FELLOW-TOWNS-MEN.—LORD RANCLIFFE stands upon the same Principles as Mr. JOHN SMITH, for the special purpose of enabling all of them to assert their Independence and to obtain for them the BLESSINGS of PEACE, and that PROSPERITY which awaits her. Thus shall the Soldier be restored to his WIFE, his FAMILY, and his Social Habits. Thus shall he receive the grateful Thanks of those whom most he loves, and ensure the Admiration and Gratitude of his Fellow-Townsmen.

The Resident Electors.

NOTTINGHAM, October 16, 1812.

H. BARNETT, PRINTER, NOTTINGHAM.

Figure 5.3: DRO, D5336/2/9/17/19 'To the British Soldiers of Nottingham' (October 1812).

In August 1812, a meeting of the East Midlands representatives of the Friends of Peace was held at Loughborough. They pointed out that, of the past twenty years, nineteen had been spent at war, and that 'the lives actually sacrificed by war, may, without exaggeration, be computed to have exceeded the number of all male adults now in Great Britain.'[808] During the French Wars, thousands of men signed up as part of the militia, army, and navy, with many more individuals indirectly affected by the impact of war. Pottle stresses the 'numerical strength of the Nottingham infantry'. He comments that, over the course of the French Wars, there were never 'less than 400 active members,' and in 1808, around 419 were in the local militia, which he argues, represented a 'significant proportion of the town's male population.'[809]

Figure 5.3 is aimed at soldiers who qualified to vote in the Nottingham election of 1812. A total of fifty-seven members of the militia were recorded as having voted in the Nottinghamshire county election, with none listed for the borough election. In total, there were 4,780 voters for the 1812 borough election, meaning that the number of voters who this handbill was aimed at was limited.[810]

Generally it was voters who were the target of election literature, especially addresses issued by candidates, and even those addresses to 'The Public', were not always directed to as broad an audience as would first appear. Barker and Vincent have claimed that election canvasses and printed propaganda were

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[808] J. Uglow, *In These Times: living in Britain Through Napoleon's Wars 1793-1815* (London, 2014), 565.
[809] Pottle, 'Loyalty and Patriotism in Nottingham, 1792-1816', 184-5.
[810] *An alphabetical list of the Burgesses and Freeholders, who polled before Edward Allatt Swann, & Alfred Lowe, Gentlemen, Sheriffs, on the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th of October, 1812, for the election of two Burgesses to represent the Town of Nottingham in Parliament* (1812); H. Nicholson, 'Print and Politics in the Nottinghamshire Constituencies c.1790-1832', *TTS*, 121 (2017), 187.

'aimed at voters and non-voters alike.'[811] However, as one letter published in the *Leicester Chronicle* claimed, 'Ladies, although you have not been addressed hitherto on either side, I feel constrained to say a few words to you by the very imprudent and confident manner with which one of the candidates addresses himself to you'.[812] As this letter implies, formal printed addresses from candidates did not generally see women as being part of their target audience, and instead chose to address women during speeches at the hustings. Those printed addresses which did target women, as Figure 5.4 below illustrates, typically did not form part of a candidate's formal canvass, and were often printed in the style of advertisements or notices, designed to appeal to a relatively wide audience.

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[811] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, ix.
[812] *LC*, 17th June 1826.

Squib against MR. BIRCH's Party.

A Wonderful and New Collection
OF
Pictures in Purple and Yellow Frames,
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By TIMOTHY TELL-TRUTH,
(for Ready Money only)

Auctioneer. LADIES and Gentlemen.—These are a very rare and curious collection, selected out of thirty thousand, which for exact similitude, striking features, and stile of colouring, so much resemble life and nature, that no person can easily be deceived.—If you please, I'll make a beginning with No. 1, and proceed with the other numbers till the whole are sold.

Figure 5.4: *Paper War*, **81.**

O'Gorman has stressed the public nature of elections. He has shown how election rituals, usually staged in central locations within the town, created a sense of excitement, involving the whole community, with print forming an important part of any campaign.[813] This was no different in the East Midlands. However, given the large amounts of time and money dedicated to canvassing voters, it is perhaps unsurprising that the intended audience of election literature would have been the voters themselves. Nevertheless, as this section has shown, the ways in which candidates, and those responsible for writing election literature, appealed to voters differed. Some aimed their addresses at the

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[813] O'Gorman, 'Campaign rituals and ceremonies', 79-115.

electorate as a whole. Others took a more narrow approach, focusing on specific groups of voters, such as those from the textile trade, soldiers, or those who supported particular policies or parties. That is not to say that those outside of the electorate did not have access to, or engage with, political literature. With only limited anecdotal evidence available, it is often difficult to establish who, irrespective of target audience, actually read or had access to this literature. The next section of this chapter aims to identify who actually had access to political ideas and debates by examining where and how political print was made available in the community.

Actual Audience

As seen above, voters were typically the target audience of both election literature and newspapers. In constituencies such as Nottingham and Leicester, the electorate could be relatively extensive, incorporating upper, middling, and even working classes, with framework knitters forming a high percentage of those eligible to vote. Although the majority of election literature was targeted at electors, this does not necessarily mean that they read handbills and addresses printed as part of a canvass. Despite this, with literacy rising steadily throughout the period, the potential audience for election literature was increasing.

In county constituencies especially, voters could be spread over a wide area. As politics became increasingly public in nature, it was important to ensure that candidates got their message out quickly, and to as broad an audience as possible. Print, as Chapter Two demonstrated, was a fundamental component of any election campaign. However, as Barker and Vincent have highlighted,

candidates 'exploited' every form of communication available to them, especially in terms of music and colourful displays.[814] In particular, James Vernon has demonstrated the 'politics of sight', emphasising the importance of visual displays at elections including 'banners, colours, flowers, effigies, and other iconography.'[815] Print was often one of the most affordable forms of canvassing, with Barker and Vincent showing that, during the 1790 Newcastle-under-Lyme election, between £14 and £15 was spent on 'non-verbal imagery' for every £1 spent on print.[816]

In the East Midlands, spending on print could occasionally outstrip that of visual decorations. As part of the uncontested Leicestershire 1798 county election, printer John Gregory was paid a total of £37 13s. 6d. for printing and distributing election literature, with a further £16 19s. 6d. for arranging election addresses to be included in the London press.[817] In contrast, Elisabeth Wightman was paid £18 16s. 10d. for 'colours, silk and ribbon'.[818] Whilst it is possible that other payments were made for decoration, such a sum seems extraordinarily small, especially for a county election. In contrast, during the Leicestershire South election in December 1832, £89 3s. 7d. was spent on decorations, whereas Albert Cockshaw was paid the comparatively small sum of £25 18s. 6d. for printing.[819] Although this might suggest that, between 1798 and 1832, the importance of handbills and election literature decreased in comparison to that

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[814] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, xxix.
[815] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, 107.
[816] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics*, xxix.
[817] LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester Election Bill from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798); LRO, 10D72/608/2-3 Receipt J. Wheatley, London to Mr Gregory, Leicester (November 1798).
[818] LRO, 10D72/ 607 Leicester election bill Elisabeth Wightman to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (14th November 1798).
[819] DRO, D5336/2/9/40/8 Leicester election bill Edward Dawson Esq. to Albert Cockshaw (1832).

of other forms of electioneering, this does not seem to have been supported by the volume of print produced. In 1798, 7,000 handbills and 86 'cards' were printed by Isaac Cockshaw on behalf of Edmund Cradock Hartopp for an electorate of around 6,000. In comparison, there were a total of 4,125 voters registered for the December 1832 South Leicestershire election with a total of 10,000 addresses printed during canvassing.[820]

Not all of this election literature would necessarily have been handed out directly to voters. In his examination of elections and public events, James Vernon has suggested that 'handbills, squibs, and posters were displayed … almost everywhere- on walls, rocks, street-lamps, doors, and even on moving objects like coaches.'[821] The majority of Vernon's evidence comes from the late nineteenth century. However, the same would have been true for earlier elections. Compared to those handbills handed out to the public, it would have been the larger broadsheets which would have been publicly displayed. Evidence from the East Midlands has shown that broadsides would have been pasted up in public places, and in particular, as illustrated by one printer's receipt from the East Retford election of 1820, orders were placed for '24 Large Posters for Coaches' and '100 Large Sheets for Coaches'.[822]

Using a larger size of font, with fewer words on a single sheet than smaller examples, broadsheets and posters would have been highly visible during canvasses. Again, it is difficult to speculate as to the number of people who

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[820] LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester Election Bill from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798); DRO, D5336/2/9/40/8 Leicester election bill Edward Dawson Esq. to Albert Cockshaw (1832).
[821] Vernon, *Politics and the People*, 133.
[822] UNMSC, Ne C 4522/1/1 Bill from F. Hodson of East Retford to 'Captain Duncombe's Committee (22nd July 1830).

would have stood and read them. Election literature often parodied advertisements and notices, with many being pasted up alongside genuine announcements, rendering them almost indistinguishable from the work they sought to emulate.[823]

The overwhelming majority of literature which survives for elections of the East Midlands is of a smaller size than the style of broadsheets which would have typically been pinned or pasted up in public. This does not necessarily mean that only a limited number of broadsheets were printed or displayed. Ephemeral, and relevant for only a short period of time, there would have been little reason why they would have been taken down and kept. Instead, it is more likely that they would simply have been pasted or whitewashed over once polls had closed.

Election receipts rarely mention the size of prints produced, although evidence of broadsheets, as opposed to handbills, is scarce. Nearly all printed canvasses are described as either handbills or cards (both large and small), with little further indication of their size. It is only Hodson's election receipt from the 1830 East Retford election which makes any reference to specific size of prints ordered. In this case, some items are listed as either 'demy sheets', 'demy ½ sheets', or 'demy quarto'.[824] On the other hand, it is possible that some of these smaller handbills would still have been publicly displayed, especially those which parodied public notices and advertisements.

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[823] J. Barrell, *'Exhibition extraordinary!!': radical broadsides of the mid 1790s* (Nottingham, 2001), ix; See Chapter Two pages 75-80 for examples of how election handbills parodied other styles of printed notices.

[824] LRO, 10D72/603 Leicester Election Bill from J. Gregory to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (1798) ; UNMSC, Ne C 4522/1/1 Bill from F. Hodson of East Retford to 'Captain Duncombe's Committee (22nd July 1830). Demy sized paper is equal to 216mm x 138mm. Quarto measures 276mm x 219mm. 'Standard book sizes' *Slade School of Fine Art Knowledge Base* http://www.ucl.ac.uk/slade/know/3060 [accessed 15/09/2018]. See Table 2.1, pages 86-87.

Whilst the majority of election literature appears to have been distributed for free, some longer pamphlets were sold for a small sum. Produced as part of the 1803 canvass, William Harrod sold copies of *Little Solomon Exposed* for 1d. each. *Little Solomon Exposed* was seemingly successful. When defending his publications against allegations made by his rival Charles Sutton, Harrod claimed that he was able to sell 500 copies in 'less than two hours', and that it continued 'selling in spite of all the Chapters that can be written against it.'[825] It is difficult to substantiate Harrod's claims, especially as they were made in defence of his work. Similarly, who purchased his publications is also unknown. Copies of Charles Sutton's *Book of Chances* sold in Nottingham, London, Derby, Mansfield, Chesterfield, Newark, and Leicester for 8d. each, and so there was evidently a market in these towns for his work.[826] How many copies sold is unclear, although at least three editions were produced, indicating some level of success. Nevertheless, at the subsequent election in 1806, Sutton advertised that 'a few copies' remained unsold.[827]

At 8d. a copy of Sutton's *Chances* was 2d. more expensive than a newspaper, something which may have affected the number of people able or willing to buy it. However, it is clear that, even amongst the working classes, there was an appetite for buying election literature. In the run up to the 1803 Nottingham by-election, Joseph Woolley spent 2s. 2½d. on election literature.[828] Woolley does not record what type of literature he purchased. Nevertheless, the incident does at least demonstrate that members of the working classes were prepared to spend

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[825] *Paper War*, 138. See Chapter Two page 89.
[826] *Book of Chances, in nine chapters, containing a regular detail on the most remarkable occurrences, from the Commencement of the Nottingham Election in 1802 to the return of D.P. Coke, Esq. (As a Member of Parliament) June 6th 1803* (Nottingham, 1803).
[827] DRO, D5366/2/9/17/84 *New Book of Chronicles Chapter Third*.
[828] Steedman, *An Everyday Life of the English Working Class*, 46.

money on acquiring this type of political literature, even though much of it was unlikely to have been written with them in mind.[829]

Street pedlars selling chapbooks, broadsides, and ballads often sang the songs they sold. Whilst a single handbill, distributed on the street, would perhaps only be seen by, at most, a handful of people, songs had the potential to reach a much larger and more diverse audience. Songs, therefore meant that even those with lower standards of literacy still would have been able to engage with political debates from which they were often excluded. Furthermore, whilst the 1826 Leicester poll book may have been right when it suggested that many printed election canvasses were often quickly forgotten once the polls had closed, in comparison to prose, songs had the ability to last longer in the minds of people.[830] However, how extensive an audience was reached would have been almost entirely dependent on whether or not the songs were actually sung and, if they were, where they were performed.

Patton has suggested that the majority of election songs would have been sung on streets or in public houses.[831] Music certainly formed part of election canvasses throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with payments to musicians a common feature in election receipts.[832] To what extent singers accompanied these musicians is difficult to decipher, especially as there is little evidence from receipts that singers were paid to accompany bands.

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[829] Steedman, *An Everyday Life of the English Working Class*, 178-8.
[830] *The Poll for electing two burgesses to represent the borough of Leicester in parliament. Commenced On Tuesday June 13th and closed in Friday June 23rd 1826* (Leicester, 1826), iii.
[831] W.F. Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse: Nottingham 1789-1850' (Queen's University Belfast, Ph.D. thesis, 1983), 36. See Chapter Two, pages 60-62.
[832] LRO, 10D72/599 Election bill R. Cooke to Sir Edmund Hartopp (5th November 1798); LRO, 10D72/ 607 Leicester election bill Elisabeth Wightman to Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (14th November 1798).

However, Patton suggests that many would have been unpaid supporters of candidates, and so unlikely to appear in formal payment records from the canvass.[833]

Much of the evidence for singing in public comes from the songs themselves. As part of the 1790 Leicester canvass, one song in support of Samuel Smith and Nathaniel Brassey Halhed included the lyrics, 'With Music and Flags as we canvass the place.'[834] Another song, also in support of Halhed and Smith, was called *The Polling Song*. Although there is no specific reference to music or singing in the song itself, it was clearly produced with the expectation that it would be sung as part of the canvass. Presuming this particular song was sung on the streets, members of the public, both in and out of the franchise, would have heard it.[835]

Once the polls had closed, the chairing of the successful candidate was also accompanied by music, singing, and colourful processions. In 1802, the *Nottingham Journal* reported that the chairing of Joseph Birch was accompanied by 'twenty-four damsels, dressed in white, ornamented with wreaths of flowers, and carrying leaves of laurel in their hands.'[836] A year later, following the Nottingham by-election of 1803, reports claimed that a procession included 'a full band of music' in front of a crowd of 20,000.[837] In 1803, Nottingham had a population of around 30,000, with a total of 2,523 men voting in the by-

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[833] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse', 37.
[834] LRO, 9D59/2 'Leicester's True Blue' (1790); *Paper War*, 94.
[835] LRO, 9D59/2 'The Polling Song' (1790).
[836] *NJ*, 16th July 1802; A. Clark, 'Class, Gender and British Elections 1794-1818', in M.T. Davis, and P.A. Pickering (eds), *Unrespectable Radicals?: Popular Politics in the Age of Reform* (Ashgate, 2008), 115.
[837] *Paper War*, 307-8.

election.[838] Elections regularly drew large numbers of spectators, and, if these figures are to believed, such reports show how the majority of the crowd would have been from outside of the electorate, with many coming from outside of the town. Although unlikely that all would have been able to hear, or would have paid attention, such an incident demonstrates how election songs had the potential to reach an audience far larger than any printed prose.

As has already been seen, relatively few handbills and addresses specifically targeted women or men not in the franchise. However, that did not mean that they were excluded from the political process, and as the comment from the *Nottingham Journal* above demonstrates, women often took an active role during elections. Much has already been written regarding the involvement of women in election campaigns, although the ways in which those from the elite and middling classes were able to participate often differed from those from lower down the social scale.[839]

Anna Clark has shown how female participation in elections was often seen as 'acceptable if carried out in the traditional deferential fashion by "ladies" [waving] blue and white handkerchiefs from windows.'[840] During the uncontested Leicestershire by-election of 1792, for instance, 'the principle ladies' were given white ribbons embroidered with 'Curzon and

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[838] *A Complete Alphabetical List of the 2525 Burgesses & Freeholders who Polled at the Late Nottingham Election* (Nottingham, 1803); Census records for 1801 record that the population of Nottingham was 28,862.
[839] S. Richardson, '"Well-neighboured houses" : the political networks of elite women, 1780-1860', in K. Gleadle and S. Richardson, (eds), *Women in British politics, 1760-1860: the power of the petticoat* (Basingstoke, 2000), 56-68; E. Chalus, 'Gender, Place and Power: Controverted Elections in late Georgian England', in J. Daybell and S. Norrhem (eds), *Gender and political culture in early modern Europe, 1400-1800* (London, 2016), 179-196; Z. Dyndor, 'Widows, Wives and Witnesses: Women and their Involvement in the 1768 Northampton Borough Parliamentary Election', *Parliamentary History*, 30 (2011), 309-23.
[840] Clark, 'Class, Gender and British Elections 1794-1818', 116-17.

Independence'.[841] In Nottingham, Abigail Gawthern, witnessed the 1803 by-election procession from a window, later writing in her diary, 'it was a very grand sight.' At an assembly ball a few days after the election, Gawthern noted that 'every lady had something blue on; I and Anna [her daughter] had new blue chambrays for the occasion.' As a member of Nottingham's 'urban (or 'pseudo') gentry', Gawthern was typical of this 'acceptable' side of female political engagement, although, unlike many of Nottingham's minor gentry and leading manufacturers, Gawthern was steadfast in her support for the Tories, and during the 1806 borough election, her son canvassed on behalf of Daniel Parker Coke, despite not yet being of age.[842]

Upper-class women who expressed their support for Coke by wearing blue ribbons were mocked by the opposition's printed canvasses, with one handbill sarcastically noting 'it is very *genteel* to be for Mr. Coke,' dismissing their support as 'frivolous and unthinking.' In contrast, the 'twenty-four damsels, dressed in white' who formed part of Birch's procession in 1802 were described by John Bowles as being 'extremely immodest' the 'foremost of whom represented the Goddess Reason, and was in a state of the most grossly indecent personal exposure.'[843] Accusations which, it was claimed, insulted not only working-class voters, but also their wives and daughters. Such language, Clark argues, 'helped define the election as one based on class, rather than Whig-Tory factionalism.'[844]

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[841] LRO, 16D35/7 Election letter 1797 and enclosed election ribbon from 1792.
[842] A. Henstock (ed.), *The Diary of Abigail Gawthern of Nottingham 1751-1810*, Thoroton Society Record Series, 33, (Nottingham, 1980), 100, 125; A. Henstock, 'Gawthern [*née* Frost], Abigail Anna (1757–1822)', *ODNB* (2004) [accessed 15/05/2018].
[843] J. Bowles, *Thoughts on the Late General Election, as Demonstrative of the Progress of Jacobinism* (London, 1803), 3.
[844] Clark, 'Class, Gender and British Elections 1794-1818', 116.

Once the public processions and celebrations had finished, candidates and their supporters would often retire to dine at a local inn. At the Nottingham election dinner of 1803, 'the afternoon was spent with the greatest good humour and conviviality, and enlivened by several songs and glees.'[845] As seen in Chapter Two, several songs, especially in Nottinghamshire constituencies, appear to have been specifically written to be sung at political dinners, and other such celebrations.[846]

In other songs, drinking and toasting are common themes, suggesting that, rather than sung in public, they were designed to be sung as part of toasts during election dinners.[847] In Leicester, one song hints at the treating of voters over the course of an election campaign with the following lines:

MOST worthy Electors of this worthy Town,

No words can convey the pleasure I feel,

To see whilst the Ale that I give you goes down,

How great your devotion, - how fervent your zeal.[848]

The audience for many of these songs would have been much narrower than those sung during public canvassing, or as part of the chairing ceremony. Mee has argued that 'political meetings in the eighteenth century were routinely masculine affairs, dominated by rituals of speech-making, toasts, and serious

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[845] *Paper War*, 307-8. See Chapter Two pages 61-62 for the lyrics specifically referring to drinking.
[846] *Paper War*, 293; *Electionana Retfordiensis,* 25-26, 28, 44-46, 68, 89-90.
[847] *Paper War*, 154.
[848] DRO, D5336/2/9/12 'To the Free and Independent Electors of Leicester' (1818).

alcohol consumption.'[849]   Reports of election dinners from across the East Midlands make few, if any, references to women, instead stating how many 'gentlemen' were in attendance.

According to a report from Coke's election dinner, he 'dined at Thurland Hall with upwards of two hundred gentlemen.'[850] No indication of who attended the dinner is given, but diners would almost certainly have been those who had helped with the canvass, along with a few choice supporters. Many of those who attended election dinners would have been from amongst the town's middling class elite. The same would also have been true for other political dinners and meetings from across the region.[851]

During election campaigns, 'pubs came into their own', and it was common for certain inns to be taken over by one or other of the candidates. In the run up to the polls' opening, supporters would be provided with food and alcohol, and out-voters who had travelled in order to vote would also be provided with a bed for the night.[852] In even the smallest of towns, there would have been a number of drinking establishments, catering to a wide range of clientele. The inn would generally have been the 'superior' establishment in the town, patronised by the gentry, and wealthy middling classes. Inside, there would have been numerous different rooms, with space available for political meetings and dinners.[853] Beer, food, and wine would have been sold, with accommodation available for

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[849] Mee, *Print, Publicity and Radicalism in the 1790s*, 49.
[850] *Paper War*, 307.
[851] See Chapter Two pages 60-61 for details of political and election dinners; R.A. Gaunt, 'Cheering the Member: Gladstone Election Songs at Newark', *TTS*, 114 (2010), 159-166.
[852] J.J. Rowley, 'Drink and the Public House in Nottingham, 1830-1860', *TTS* 79 (1975), 75; O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 152-5.
[853] R. Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840: Government, Society and Culture* (Harlow, 1999) 231; K. Navickas, *Protest and the politics of space and place, 1789-1848* (Manchester, 2016), 33.

visitors. Alehouses, by contrast, would typically have been smaller, catering to the less well-off and labouring classes.[854]

Both inns and alehouses would have been centres of political debate and discussion, especially during elections. Political clubs and societies often held their meetings and election dinners in local inns such as the White Lion Inn, where Nottingham's Tories met until a 'takeover' by the town's Whigs forced them to move to the Flying Horse.[855] Membership of these clubs and societies would have been overwhelmingly male and middle-class, with the majority of members being in the electorate.

Speeches, toasts, and songs formed an integral part of political meetings. However, provincial newspapers have been described as being 'the minute books of the social, cultural and political life of their respective cities,' and many papers in the East Midlands printed detailed reports of the political dinners and speeches of organisations such as the True Blue Club or the Newark Red Club.[856] Therefore, the audience of these speeches and songs was, to some extent, wider than might initially appear.[857]Although newspapers were often unaffordable to members of the working classes, workers would often form informal subscriptions to newspapers, gathering in alehouses to read them, or purchasing old copies, sold at a discounted rate. Similarly, newspapers would have been

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[854] Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840*, 231.
[855] Rowley, 'Drink and the Public House in Nottingham, 1830-1860', 75.
[856] J. Neuheiser, *Crown, Church and Constitution: Popular Conservatism in England, 1815-1867*, trans. by Jennifer Walcoff Neuheiser (Göttingen, 2016), 19.
[857] DRO, D2375M/41/29/14 'Derbyshire Loyal True Blue Club Annual Dinner 7th Oct 1824' *DM*, 25th June 1818; *DM*, 4th March 1829; *LC*, 14th May 1831. The role which print played in the formation of popular conservative politics is discussed below.

shared, 'passed from table to table', with estimates suggesting that as many as twenty individuals read a single paper.[858]

So common was the practice of reading newspapers in alehouses that, at times, establishments permitting such activity were in danger of losing their licences.[859] In 1815, two Nottingham news-houses were listed with inns and public houses, further demonstrating the popularity of selling alcohol alongside newspapers.[860] Similarly, in Derbyshire, the *Chesterfield Gazette* was reportedly taken in by 'upwards of one hundred and sixty inns and public houses in the Scarsdale and High Peak area.[861]

Compared to alehouses, inns had a better reputation, attracting a higher class of clientele. It is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that the more 'respectable' newspapers would have been read and discussed in such establishments. The Swan Inn in Chesterfield, for instance, stated that 'approved papers' were taken in for its customers.[862] What the Swan meant by such a statement, or which papers it deemed acceptable, is not clear. From John Piercy's account book, we know that a Mr Taylor of the Newcastle Arms subscribed to the *Nottingham Journal*.[863] Which other papers inns such as the Swan or the Newcastle Arms subscribed to is not known, nor is there any specific evidence that their customers read newspapers. However, it is unlikely that proprietors would have subscribed to papers if there was not a demand for them from their customers.

[858] Neuheiser, *Crown, Church and Constitution*, 20-21.
[859] Altick, *The English common reader*, 324; Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855*, 54.
[860] *The Nottingham Directory containing a general list of the merchants, tradesmen and principle inhabitants of Nottingham* (Nottingham, 1815).
[861] Andrews, 'The Derbyshire newspaper press, 1720-1855', 185.
[862] *DM*, 22nd May 1800.
[863] NA, DD/1104/1- Account book of J.S. Piercy of Retford 1823-1850.

The Tory *Nottingham Journal* typically appealed to the middling classes in and around Nottingham. This, along with the suggestion that the Newcastle Arms provided 'approved papers', suggests that both attracted a higher class of customer than some of the other drinking establishments which would have existed in the region.

Alongside inns and alehouses, coffee houses would have been another important focal point in towns, and where newspapers and political literature would have been read and discussed. First popular during the seventeenth century, it has been estimated that, by 1700, there were as many as 2,000 coffee houses in London.[864] By the end of the eighteenth century, partly due to the growth of tea-drinking, the number of coffee houses was in decline.[865] Some appear to have merged with inns. In Leicester, for instance, by 1794, four coffee houses in the town were listed as inns.[866] Whilst newspapers occasionally referred to coffee-houses into the 1830s, there are few references to coffee-houses in the trade directories of the East Midlands from the beginning of the nineteenth century. In contrast, by the end of the 1820s, Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham each had well over 100 public houses and taverns.[867]

Who patronised coffee houses, inns, and alehouses may give some indication of the types of political literature they were likely to have stocked. John Brewer

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[864] P. Clark and R.A. Houston, 'Culture and Leisure 1700-1840', in P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* Vol II: 1540-1840 (Cambridge, 2000), 579.
[865] Sweet, *The English Town 1680-1840*, 246.
[866] *Leicester Directory of Bankers, Manufacturers and Tradesmen* (Leicester, 1794).
[867] *Leicester Directory of Bankers, Manufacturers and Tradesmen*; *The Leicester Directory containing a general list of the merchants, tradesmen and principle inhabitants of Leicester* (Leicester, 1815); *The Leicester Directory containing an alphabetical list of the inhabitants, a complete classification of trades* (Leicester, 1827); *The Nottingham Directory containing a general list of the merchants, tradesmen and principle inhabitants of Nottingham* (Nottingham, 1815); *Pigot and Co.'s National Commercial Directory for 1828-9*; *The Directory of the County of Derby containing upwards of fifteen thousand names* (Derby, 1829).

has argued that, 'the coffee house was a centre of political news open to all, including tradesmen, apprentices and mechanics, who could afford the beverages offered.'[868] As seen above, a number of newspapers and political literature in circulation across the East Midlands appealed directly to the working classes, including tradesmen and mechanics. Furthermore, national newspapers such as Cobbett's *Political Register* also had a large working-class following. It is possible that these types of papers would have been stocked by coffee houses and alehouses in the East Midlands.

Although coffee houses may have attracted a working-class audience, some of whom would have read and had access to political literature and the radical press, Clark and Houston have argued that provincial towns such as Leicester, Nottingham, and Derby 'gained a new breed of coffee-house with newsrooms attached.' Coffee houses such as these typically attracted a middle-class clientele, including 'shopkeepers and small manufacturers'.[869] In Leicester, for instance, the town's new Assembly Rooms, opened in 1800, boasted 'a coffee-room ... supplied with all the London papers.'[870] It was also not unusual for coffee houses to operate on a subscription basis, with several such establishments in operation in Nottingham and Derby, again suggestive of a more middle-class clientele.[871]

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[868] J. Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession Of George Iii* (Cambridge, 1976), 149.

[869] Clark and Houston, 'Culture and Leisure 1700-1840', 579.

[870] J. Hinks, 'Networks of Print in "Radical Leicester"' *Leicestershire Historian*, 46 (2010), 21-22.

[871] T. Fry, 'The pleasures of tea and coffee: an account of tea gardens and coffee houses in and around Nottingham in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries', *Nottinghamshire Historian*, 57 (1996), 8; Andrews, 'The Derbyshire newspaper press, 1720-1855', 186-7.

Across the country, newsrooms were a common sight in provincial towns. Offering a range of newspapers and periodicals for their customers, many also operated on a subscription basis. In February 1820, a subscription newsroom was founded at the town hall in Derby. By stating that 'all Gentlemen who may wish to become Members of this Institution are requested to give their Names to Mr Lakin,' this particular newsroom appears to have largely catered to the town's middling classes.[872] Similarly, in 1827, John Piercy noted in his account book that 'The News Room' subscribed to both the *Nottingham Journal* and the *Stamford Mercury*.[873] Piercy gives little indication as to which newsroom he meant, and there is little evidence in the trade directories for the town to suggest where or what it was.[874] However, as a resident of Retford, it is more than likely that the newsroom would have been located somewhere in the town, possibly attached to an inn. Which other papers the newsroom subscribed to, if any, is not known. However, by subscribing to the *Journal* and the *Mercury*, both of which targeted a middle-class audience, it is possible that it catered to the middle classes of the town.

Elsewhere in the East Midlands, there were a number of newsrooms which would have attracted members of the working and labouring classes. In 1795 a 'pamphlet room' run by Richard Phillips opened in Leicester.[875] A well-known radical in the town, Phillips and his newspaper, the *Leicester Herald*, were vehemently anti-Tory, and took a strong radical stance, campaigning against the continuation of the French Wars. Like a number of radical papers elsewhere in

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[872] *DM*, 23rd February 1820.
[873] NA, DD/1104/1 Account book of J.S. Piercy of Retford 1823-1850.
[874] *Pigot and Co.'s National Commercial Directory for 1828-9*; *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Nottinghamshire* (Sheffield, 1832).
[875] *LH*, 9th January 1795.

the region, the *Herald* appealed to members of the working classes and those with radical political views. Both the *Leicester Herald* and Phillips' pamphlet room were short lived, as in 1795, Phillips ceased trading in the town, leaving Leicester for London. Whilst no alternative radical newspaper was printed in the town until 1810, a number of radical printers remained in business. In 1800, another well-known radical printer, Isaac Cockshaw, opened a circulating library in Leicester.[876] After Cockshaw's death in 1818, one son, Albert, ran a 'Fancy repository', which included a print shop, bookbinders, circulating library, and a news and reading room.[877] According to John Hinks, Albert was renowned for his 'extremely radical views.'[878] Therefore, whereas many circulating and subscription libraries catered to middle-class audiences, it is reasonable to suppose that Albert's business would have stocked a range of radical books and pamphlets, along with radical papers from elsewhere in the region. His newsroom was likely to have attracted a wide audience, including those working and labouring classes who shared his radical views.

So far, it is the public sphere which has been at the centre of discussion. However, as various studies have shown, the home could also be 'an intensely political space'.[879] A personal canvass was often the preferred method of reaching voters and, as evidence from the Leicester 1790 election shows, candidates and their agents often went to considerable effort to ensure that, in addition to producing printed addresses, voters were visited in person by

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[876] J. Hinks, 'The History of the Book Trade in Leicester to c.1850' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Loughborough, 2002), 255.
[877] LRO, Misc717 Cockshaw printer's advertisement.
[878] Hinks, 'The History of the Book Trade in Leicester to c.1850', 255-7.
[879] S. Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 2013), 15.

someone from the election committee.[880] However, as Zoe Dyndor has pointed out, it was often women who would have received canvassers, especially since many men would have been at work. On the other hand, in boroughs such as Northampton, Leicester, and Nottingham, dominated by shoe and hosiery industries, many men were likely to have worked from home.[881]

Whilst many women continued to play a 'traditional deferential' role during elections, watching processions from windows or demonstrating their support by waving ribbons, many took an active role in politics, 'following elections closely, attending hustings and political meetings', as well as 'discussing in print the significance of local election results.'[882] However, although candidates recognising the women's ability to 'govern their menfolk's opinions', occasionally offering bribes in return for their husband's support, to what extent women were able, or willing, to influence the votes of their male relatives is debatable.[883] Prior to the Leicestershire 1798 by-election, James Powell wrote to Edmund Cradock Hartopp's election committee:

> Sir,
>
> I have received a letter from my sister Mrs Welch and
> another from my friend Mr Haverfield to request my
> vote and interest in your favour at the election of a

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[880] LRO, 9D59/2 'To the worthy and independent Electors of the Borough of Leicester' (14th June 1790).

[881] Z. Dyndor, 'The Political Culture of Elections in Northampton, 1768-1868' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Northampton, 2010), 169-70.

[882] K. Gleadle, 'British Women and Radical Politics in the Late Nonconformist Enlightenment, c.1780-1830', in A. Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege and Power* (Stanford, 2001), 143, 147.

[883] Clark, 'Class, Gender and British Elections 1794-1818', 116-17; S. Richardson, 'The Role of Women in Electoral Politics in Yorkshire during the Eighteen-Thirties', *Northern History*, 32 (1996), 134-5; UNMSC Ne C 4498/1, Volume containing evidence relating to the Newark 1790 election; *DM*, 8th July 1802.

member of Parliament to represent this County. From

these applications but more especially from the

private character of Sir Edmund Hartop, should you

stand in need of any assistance I shall be ready and

happy to give you my upmost support.

Though the influence of his sister and his friend appears to have had some

bearing on Powell's support for Cradock Hartopp, in this instance, it is clear that

it was the 'private character' of the candidate which mattered most.[884]

Although the majority of election handbills and addresses were handed out at

public gatherings or at the hustings, some were evidently designed to be read at

home. One handbill from the 1826 Leicester election stated that, 'Now you are

away from the noisy crowd that surround the Inn window, and quietly seated

beside your Parents, or your Wives and Families, allow a friend to make a few

important observations relative to the present Crisis.'[885] Despite being addressed

to 'reasonable men', it is likely that the audience of this particular address would

have been wider than this suggests, especially as 'politics were discussed at the

breakfast table, in the nursery, and in the drawing rooms,' with the home being

where interest in politics was often formed.[886]

Furthermore, as Sarah Richardson has suggested, in middle-class homes, 'the

distinction between the public and private sphere was mutable', with visitors

bringing 'the political world into the domestic environment exposing both

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[884] LRO, 10D72/566 File of letters Sept- Nov 1798.
[885] LRO, M105 'Sense against Sophistry: Addressed to reasonable men' (1826).
[886] Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women*, 15, 21-38.

women and children to debate and argument.'[887] This blending of the public and private spheres would also have been true of lower-class households and, as Christina Parolin has claimed, 'radical networks and discussion groups had long operated within private homes.' Meetings which took place in the home afforded some level of protection to those men and women 'who did not wish to expose their adherence to radicalism to the public gaze.' Likewise, the home offered the 'safety, familiarity and flexibility of intellectual exchange in a private setting, which more easily accommodated the domestic and childrearing roles.'[888]

Impact of Print

It is clear that, whilst the majority of printed canvases tended to address voters, a much more diverse range of people were involved in the election process. Both voters and non-voters, literate and illiterate, gathered at the hustings to watch candidates' processions or listen to their speeches, and were able to access political print and ideas through a variety of different channels including public houses, newsrooms, and coffee-houses. Printed newspaper reports of political meetings such as Derby's Loyal True Blue Club meant that, to some extent, even those handbills, songs, and speeches which addressed only a select group of people were, in some ways, accessible to a wider audience than was intended.[889]

Establishing how many people would have purchased newspapers, or heard them read aloud in public houses and coffee shops is almost impossible to tell. Furthermore, whilst we know that large quantities of election canvasses were printed, how many of these were handed out gratis during the course of

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[887] Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women*, 34.
[888] C. Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London, 1790- c.1845* (Canberra, 2010), 253-4.
[889] *DM*, 25th June 1818; *DM*, 4th March 1829; *LC*, 14th May 1831.

canvassing is largely unknown. Similarly, despite efforts to discourage political thinking amongst the working classes, it is clear that there was an appetite for political literature, with people, including members of the working classes, prepared to spend a small sum on purchasing election canvasses and newspapers. It is important to consider what impact that this wealth of political literature would have had on those who read it. However, although finding out who bought and read this type of information can be challenging, establishing what kind of impact and reception it received can be even more elusive, especially in relation to those who did not qualify to vote.

It is clear from the numbers who gathered at hustings that, prior to the First Reform Bill, a large proportion of the population was politically engaged, regardless of their right to vote. Although print was one of the primary ways in which the public were able to access and engage with political debate and discussion, to what extent it shaped their beliefs is questionable. As Chapter Three has shown, on the whole, provincial newspapers tended to follow, rather than form political views. Political canvasses were printed to entertain and amuse audiences, and whilst the majority were not aimed at non-voters, they still helped those outside of the franchise to feel part of the election process. Election addresses, especially those which formed a candidate's formal canvass were also designed to appeal to voters, convincing them to vote in their favour.

Whilst Namier suggested that, during the eighteenth century, 'not one voter in twenty could freely exercise his statutory right', such a view has subsequently been revised.[890] Under the unreformed electoral system the majority of voters

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[890] L. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (London, 1957), 73.

had the freedom to vote as they chose, and even in constituencies which had a deferential relationship, voters were generally only expected to use one of their two votes for the preferred candidate of their landlord or employer.[891] This freedom at the polls was especially true in large boroughs such as Leicester and Nottingham which, unlike East Retford or Newark, were comparatively 'free of aristocratic influence'.[892] One handbill, printed during the canvass for the Leicester election of 1826 and signed ELIA, addressed the 'Electors of Leicester'. It claimed that:

> THE shade of Freedom once more hovers over you...
> You are once more about to be called upon to elect your representatives. Consider well the force of that word ... In WILLIAM EVANS, you have a TRIED MAN ... who has supported, and in doing so has given the surest pledge that he will continue to support the cause of REFORM, RETRENCHMENT, and LIBERTY ... To EVANS, then, I mean, if necessary, to give A PLUMPER!! In OTWAY CAVE, you have a Liberal Blue ... If I can do it without compromising the cause of EVANS, I mean to give CAVE my second Vote.[893]

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[891] F. O'Gorman, 'The Unreformed Electorate of Hanoverian England: The Mid- Eighteenth Century to the Reform Act of 1832', *Social History,* 11 (1986), 48; S.M. Lee, 'Parliament, Parties and Elections (1760-1815)', in H.T. Dickinson (ed.), A *Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2002), 71.

[892] J.H. Moses, 'Elections and electioneering in the constituencies of Nottinghamshire, 1702-1832', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Nottingham, volume 1, 1965), 166.

[893] LRO, M105 Scrapbook of election literature (1826).

This handbill not only highlights the apparent choice which voters had in boroughs such as Leicester, but also the different ways in which voters used their two votes. Like the majority of other borough and county constituencies across the country, those in the East Midlands sent two members each to the House of Commons. During general elections, each elector got two votes, and could cast their vote in a number of different ways, either deciding to use both of their votes to 'plump' for a single candidate, splitting their vote between a candidate for each party, or using both votes for two candidates from the same party.[894]

During by-elections, voters had only one vote each, removing 'a whole range of well-established conventions and electoral possibilities.' Data from the *History of Parliament* records that, out of a total of 1,225 English by-elections between 1790 and 1832, a total of 177 (fourteen per cent) resulted in a poll.[895] Between 1790 and 1832, there were a total of twenty-five by-elections across Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Nottinghamshire. Of these, three (twelve per cent) were contested, the most significant of which was the Nottingham by-election of 1803.[896]

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the way in which people voted was dependant on a variety of different factors, not all of which were 'purely local considerations.'[897] During election campaigns, candidates and their agents went to considerable lengths (and expense) to appeal to voters

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[894] J.A. Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in Unreformed England: Plumpers, Splitters and Straights*, (Guildford, 1982), 20.

[895] P.J. Salmon, '"Plumping Contests": The Impact of By- elections on British Voting Behaviour 1790-1868', in T.G. Otte, and P. Readman (eds), *By- Elections in British Politics 1832-1914* (Woodbridge, 2013), 26.

[896] R.G. Thorne (ed.), *HP Commons 1790-1820* and *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 22/05/18].

[897] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 383.

via print, and as Chapter Four demonstrated, election handbills and newspaper addresses focused on a range of different issues. In addition to printed canvasses, voters were influenced by friends and relatives, as well as the personal conduct and reputation of a candidate, explaining why so many candidates in the East Midlands stressed their attachment to the constituency.[898]

To some extent, however, opinion was not always divided along class lines, and as Jörg Neuheiser has shown, from the late eighteenth century, there was strong working-class support for conservative views in some areas of the country.[899] Similarly, H.T. Dickinson has argued that, in reaction to the French Revolution, popular patriotism and loyalty was strong, encouraged by the influence of the Church along with 'a veritable flood of conservative and loyalist propaganda', far outweighing any radical publications.[900] Such a view is at odds with the works of Dinwiddy, Philp, and David Eastwood, who have instead suggested that popular conservatism of the 1790s came 'in waves', often in reaction to particular circumstances such as the threat of invasion by the French. Disillusion with the French Wars, and growing discontentment during the economic crisis of 1795-96 meant that popular loyalist support was waning, and that those men and women who burnt Paine in effigy during the early 1790s, may have been the ones rioting over food prices in 1796, and only after the 1830s 'did committed [loyalist] reformers recover'.[901]

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[898] LRO, 10D72/566 File of letters Sept- Nov 1798.
[899] Neuheiser, *Crown, Church and Constitution*.
[900] H.T. Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Basingstoke, 1994), 255, 261-64, 269.
[901] J. Dinwiddy, 'Interpretations of Anti-Jacobinism', in M. Philp (ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991), 48; D. Eastwood, 'Patriotism and the English State in the 1790s', in Philp (ed.), *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, 153-60, 168; M. Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792/3', *English Historical Review*, 110 (1995), 66; A. Booth, 'Popular loyalism and public violence in the north-west of England, I790- 1800', *Social History*, 8 (1983), 310.

Across the East Midlands, elections of the 1790s and early 1800s often came to be dominated by violent clashes between loyalists and radicals, as well as between voters and non-voters.[902] At the voided Nottingham election of 1802, accusations of Jacobinism were rife, and, as Patton commented, popular support for Birch was 'widely interpreted - even by moderate opinion - as evidence of Jacobinism', with reports suggesting that during the election celebrations, the Tree of Liberty was planted 'around which the Jacobanical mob exultingly danced, vociferating "We'll down with all Kings, and Millions be Free"'.[903]

Such reports are likely to have been exaggerated. As one commentator wrote, 'I know that a number of idle stories have been industriously propagated', making their way 'into newspapers and pamphlets', the author of which 'was either grossly deceived, or was a most barefaced misrepresenter.'[904] Furthermore, contrary to reports that revolutionary songs were sung, even the Tory *Nottingham Journal* claimed that Birch:

> was chaired amidst an innumerable concourse of spectators, a body of his friends, decorated with purple, pink, and yellow ribbons, forming a procession, with flags, and other symbols of *civil liberty*, a band of music playing to patriotic airs and

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[902] Beckett, 'Responses to War: Nottingham in the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815',71-84; Pottle, 'Loyalty and Patriotism in Nottingham, 1792-1816', 18-19, 30-34, 202-205.
[903] Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse', 198.
[904] Sutton, *The Date Book of Remarkable and Memorable Events*, 261.

hymns, sung by those forming the procession ... the

greatest good order prevailed.[905]

Whilst Birch did not deny that during the election of 1802 'proceedings ... which merit the severest reprehension' did take place, he claimed that 'there are, in all great towns, misguided men, who take advantage of the confusion attendant on every popular Election, to gratify their personal resentment', thereby distancing himself and his canvass from the violence. Nevertheless, this particular incident highlights the importance that print could have on peoples' perceptions.[906]

It seems unlikely that those who were responsible for the attacks on Coke and his supporters were inspired or provoked by Birch's formal addresses. Contrary to accusations of Jacobinism, in his election literature of 1803, Birch and his supporters were at pains to emphasise their 'Veneration for the Constitution', as well as declaring their fervent 'Attachment to those Whig Principles of Freedom which are engrafted on this Constitution ... the Bulwark of the Nation's Glory, and the Foundation of the People's Happiness.'[907]

In contrast to the suggestion that opinion was not typically divided along class lines, the Nottingham 1803 by-election has often been seen as a contest between the town's rich and poor, or more significantly between the town's freemen, many of whom were framework knitters, and the freeholders and out-voters.[908] As Thomis has argued, 'abstract concepts of freedom and liberty were no substitute for an attractive policy on wages, poor relief, cost of living, or

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[905] Sutton, *The Date Book of Remarkable and Memorable Events,* 255.
[906] *Paper War*, 6.
[907] *Paper War*, 6, 52.
[908] P.A. Symonds and R.G. Thorne, 'Nottingham', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 12/05/18].

opposition to the Combination Laws.' Whereas 615 framework knitters voted in favour of Birch, 454 voted for Coke, 'a very sizable minority.[909] Whilst this could be evidence of popular patriotism and support for conservative views, it is also suggestive that there were considerations other than printed canvasses which affected the way in which people voted, and the ultimate outcome of the election. In particular, as Preston has shown, economic factors were especially important during Nottingham elections, and greatly influenced the way in which those connected to the hosiery and framework trades voted.[910]

In some instances, a preliminary vote by show of hands often dictated whether candidates would run the risk of added expenses and proceed to a formal poll. Although canvasses rarely appealed directly to non-voters, their support was still coveted by many candidates, for, as Neuheiser has argued, 'the victorious candidate could claim to be the "peoples' candidate" who also represented the non-voters.'[911] Participating in informal votes and gathering at the hustings demonstrates how non-voters were involved in, and understood, electoral politics.[912]

Whilst non-voters took part in informal voting, it was not unusual to find those who did not meet the voting qualification attempting to cast their vote via the official poll. Elaine Chalus has argued that establishing who was and who was not a voter could often be 'complicated both by differing local criteria for the

[909] M.I. Thomis, 'The Nottingham Election of 1803', *TTS*, 65 (1962),), 98.
[910] R.A. Preston, 'The Structure of Government and Politics in Nottinghamshire, 1824-35' (DPhil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1978), 124-132.
[911] Neuheiser, *Crown, Church and Constitution*, 80.
[912] Dyndor, 'The Political Culture of Elections in Northampton, 1768-1868', 144.

creation of freemen and variations in the franchise'.[913] In Leicester, for instance, the franchise included freemen as well as householders paying scot and lot. During the Leicester 1826 election, a total of 262 votes were rejected, the majority of which were 'Persons residing in the Friars'.[914] During the 1812 Leicester borough election, George Brown, editor of the radical *Leicester Chronicle* commented that 'many, very many, actual paupers have voted, and no less than five persons, long mouldering in their graves, have been personated, and grace the majorities of Mr Smith and Mr Babington', suggesting that, in some cases, non-voters were deliberately attempting to cast their vote.[915] Similarly, in Newark, the following incident was reported in the poll book for the borough by-election of 1829:

> About four o'clock a circumstance occurred which gave rise to great mirth. An elderly female, dressed in a Newark Blue Frock and man's hat, presented herself with great confidence to the Poll Clerks to tender her vote, to the infinite amusement of the gentlemen on both sides. The following dialogue ensued:

> *Mr W. Wilde.* What is your name?

> *Woman.* John Bettinson.- *(Peals of laughter.)*

> *Mr W. Wilde.* Where do you live?

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[913] E. Chalus, 'Women, Electoral Privilege and Practice in the Eighteenth Century', in Gleadle and Richardson, (eds), *Women in British politics, 1760-1860*, 22.
[914] *Cockshaw's Edition: The Poll for Electing Two Burgesses to Represent the Borough of Leicester in Parliament, 1826* (Leicester, 1826).
[915] Hinks, 'The History of the Book Trade in Leicester to c1850', 253.

> *Woman.* Water Lane
>
> *Mr. W. Wilde.* What are you?
>
> *Woman.* Waterman.
>
> *Mr. W. Wilde.* Whom do you vote for?
>
> *Woman.* BLUE.- *(Considerable laughter.)*
>
> *Mr.- Sadler.* I object to this vote.
>
> *Mr Wilde.* Upon what grounds?
>
> *Mr.- Sadler.* Because HE is not a man.-
> *(Great laughter.)*
>
> *Woman.* You don't know that?-
> *(Tremendous peals.)*
>
> Here every Gentleman was convulsed with laughter,
> and the advocate for "Universal Suffrage" walked
> off, without a muscle of her countenance having
> been affected during this extraordinary scene.[916]

Before the 1832 Reform Act, in burgage and freeholder boroughs, women who met the property requirements, had the legal right to vote, although 'by custom they appointed proxies'.[917] This was evidently not the case in this instance. Not only was the franchise based on inhabitants paying scot and lot, but also the fact that this 'voter' appears to have attempted to disguise herself as a man, voting under the name of John Waterman shows that she was not eligible to vote. Whether her vote counted or not is not altogether clear, especially as the poll book lists a waterman called John Bettinson, living on Water Lane, as having

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[916] *Particulars of Newark election* (Newark, 1829), 48.
[917] E. Chalus, 'Gender, Place and Power: Controverted Elections in late Georgian England', in J. Daybell and S. Norrhem (eds), *Gender and political culture in early modern Europe, 1400-1800* (London, 2016), 180.

voted for the Blue candidate Thomas Wilde, with no indication that his vote was rejected.[918] Nevertheless, this incident, along with the attempts of 'paupers' to vote during the Leicester 1812 election, highlights the interest and understanding that many of those outside of the franchise had in electoral politics.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that, whilst Barker and Vincent have argued that broadsides and election handbills were part of 'an inclusive rather than an exclusive category of the political process', this was not necessarily true for all canvasses printed and distributed during an election campaign.[919] Whilst the range and style of canvasses printed over the course of an election campaign might be extensive, it was generally voters who were the target of the majority of printed canvasses produced over the course of an election campaign.

Conversely, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, elections were hugely popular, lively affairs, 'wavering between a public fair and a political riot', typically attracting a huge crowd ranging from members of the elite and upper classes, to those much further down the social scale.[920] Many canvasses were likely to have been sold or handed out for free at the hustings, with songs sung as part of election parades. Furthermore, whilst the many canvasses appealed directly to those in the franchise, the numbers printed often far outweighed the number of men who qualified to vote, suggesting that far more people had access to them than it initially appears.

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[918] *Particulars of Newark election* (Newark, 1829), 48.
[919] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xxxvi.
[920] Neuheiser, *Crown, Church and Constitution*, 80.

Inns, public houses, and coffeehouses also played a vital role in the dissemination of political literature, debate, and discussion, with many establishments taking out subscriptions for both local and national newspapers, which would then have been read and sold to patrons. However, although the 'public sphere' was undoubtedly important in providing those outside of the franchise the space and opportunity to access political literature and ideas, the importance of the private sphere must also be recognised, especially since the distinction between the public and private was often not as separate as has always been suggested.[921] For instance, although Habermas has suggested that, 'women and dependants were factually and legally excluded from the political public sphere', it is clear that women from across the social spectrum were able to access and engage with political print, and in many cases were well informed as to the political issues of the day.[922]

Whilst the public rituals of an election were central to any successful campaign, a personal canvass was still often the preferred method of reaching voters, and election agents and committee members went to considerable effort to ensure that as many people were visited at home, personally delivering election literature.[923] Whereas inns and public houses were the setting of many political clubs and celebrations, the home could also be 'an intensely political space', especially in middle-class and radical circles, where political ideas and print could be freely read and discussed.[924]

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[921] Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women*, 34.

[922] J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, 1992), 57.

[923] LRO, M105 'Sense against Sophistry: Addressed to reasonable men' (1826); LRO, 10D72/602-603 'Leicester Election Receipts 1798'.

[924] Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women*, 15; C. Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London, 1790- c.1845* (Canberra, 2010), 253-4.

Although a greater range of people had the opportunity to access and read printed political literature than might initially appear, establishing who read this type of print, and the impact it had can be challenging. Similarly, to what extent print had the ability to influence a voter's choice of candidate is questionable, especially since how individuals voted depended on a great many factors, and varied across constituencies. Often, however, it was the choice of candidate which was one of the most importance deciding factors, and so explains why a large proportion of print highlighted the positives of their chosen candidate, whilst besmirching those of their opponent.

The political opinions of non-voters was still seen as an important factor in the unreformed system, and whilst few canvasses appealed directly to them, print and other election rituals helped the unenfranchised to feel part of the electoral process, forming political opinions of their own. Furthermore, as this chapter has shown, across the East Midlands, there was a growing demand and appetite for political literature amongst all levels and sectors of society, regardless of their right to vote or not.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the culture and operation of local elections in the East Midlands between 1790 and 1832. With a particular focus on election canvasses, it aimed to examine the connection between print and politics. It considered who may have written canvasses and why, as well as questioning the extent to which those not in the franchise had access to political debates and opinions. By examining a broad range of printed ephemera, this study has also attempted to reassess some of the assumptions about the relationship between canvasses and the provincial press.

Election culture and the operation of local politics has attracted considerable interest, especially with the work of historians such as Frank O'Gorman, James Vernon, Hannah Barker, and David Vincent.[925] Such works have taken a relatively narrow approach, not always realising the full potential of election literature. Election songs, particularly those for Nottinghamshire elections, have been the focus of other studies.[926] Print, however, did not operate in isolation, and in contrast to these works, this study has brought together a much broader

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[925] F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1989); F. O'Gorman, 'Campaign rituals and ceremonies: the social meaning of elections in England, 1780-1860', *Past & Present,* 135 (1992), 79-115; F. O'Gorman, 'Coventry Electoral Broadsides, 1780', *Yale University Library Gazette*, 67 (1993), 161-9; J. Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture c.1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993); H. Barker and D. Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832: Newcastle-under-Lyme broadsides* (Woodbridge, 2003).
[926] W.F. Patton, 'Political Expression Through Song and Verse: Nottingham 1789-1850' (Queen's University Belfast, Ph.D. thesis, 1983); B. Patton, 'Party political broadcasts in nineteenth century Nottingham', *Bulletin of Local History: East Midland region,* 19 (1984), 23-42; R.A. Gaunt, 'Cheering the Member: Gladstone Election Songs at Newark', *TTS,* 114 (2010), 159-166.

range of print, including newspapers, handbills, broadsides, pamphlets, political ballads, and songs.

Examining a region, as opposed to focusing on just one constituency, has meant that this thesis has built up a much more detailed understanding of how election campaigns were run and organised. This also means that comparisons are able to be made between counties, as well as between different types of constituencies. By focusing on a range of printed political ephemera from across Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Derbyshire, this thesis offers the first comprehensive study of political and electoral culture produced in the region between 1790 and 1832.

Establishing and maintaining a personal relationship between candidates and voters was one of the primary purposes of an election canvass. Calling on voters has generally been seen as the favoured method of canvassing, with O'Gorman suggesting that print often acted as a 'substitute' for a personal canvass.[927] Whilst this may have been true of those handbills which addressed out-voters, such an explanation does not account for the variety and volume of literature produced. Whilst previous studies have demonstrated that campaigns could produce large quantities of printed canvasses, why they were produced in such a variety of different styles is something which has so far been overlooked.

Chapter Two examined the range and style of print produced over the course of election campaigns. In comparison to many other studies of political culture, this chapter demonstrated the great variety of literature which could be printed and distributed. The diverse range of styles not only illustrates the importance which

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[927] O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 99.

was placed on election literature, but also shows how those responsible for writing canvasses were competing for the attention of a growing reading public.

Although many addresses and handbills were most likely written by members of a candidate's election committee, Chapter Two has shown how not all handbills formed part of a candidate's formal canvass. Instead, many more were written by those hoping to capitalise on the popularity of elections by selling their handbills, pamphlets, songs and ballads. Whilst some handbills sought to outline the views of candidates, a large proportion chose instead to attack their political rivals, resulting in 'paper wars'. In particular, it was those handbills and pamphlets which were not part of a candidate's formal canvass which appear to have been the most provocative, designed specifically to gain a reaction from the crowd and sell as many copies as possible. These public attacks appear to have been an expected and accepted part of an election campaign, generally free from the threat of prosecution for libel.[928] Printed attacks on local figures and candidates therefore represented part of the 'ritual' of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century elections.

Chapter Three studied the nature of the provincial press, considering how important it was during election campaigns, especially in relation to those printed canvasses examined in Chapter Two. This chapter argued that, in contrast to Hannah Barker's suggestion that newspapers increased in importance in relation to other types of print, handbills and local newspapers fulfilled different roles, and served different purposes.[929]

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[928] *NR*, 10th October 1826.
[929] H. Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855* (Harlow, 2000), 127.

Election canvasses were generally distributed only around the constituency they referred to. In contrast, local newspapers could be circulated across a much greater distance, and, as Chapter Three has shown, even into the 1830s, the provincial press was still heavily reliant on the daily London papers. Furthermore, like elsewhere around the country, provincial newspapers were published weekly and so, in comparison to handbills, their influence during local elections was limited.

Elections, as we have seen, often took place with little prior warning and it was important that canvasses were able to be on the streets as quickly as possible, responding to gossip and rumours spread by opponents. Election handbills were produced to inform, persuade, and entertain both those in and out of the franchise, and were far more effective than newspapers at adapting to the challenges which elections posed. Whereas attacks on rival candidates in handbills appear to have been largely accepted as being part of the campaign process, the same was not true of the press. Instead, as Chapter Three argued, in comparison to other types of print, newspapers came under much closer government scrutiny, and so had to be far more reticent in their attacks on candidates.

The content of election handbills is something which historians have often overlooked, especially in terms of which issues dominated discussion during elections. However, printed addresses and copies of speeches were one of the main ways in which a candidate could communicate with voters, outlining where they stood on particular issues of the day. Chapter Four examined the content of both election handbills and local newspapers to establish what mattered most to constituents, and on what basis candidates were elected to office. Historians such

as H.T. Dickinson and J.A. Phillips have suggested that election contests of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries centered on local issues. However, such a view underplays the full range of issues debated during elections.

Until the early 1800s, references to specific policies were rare. Many handbills made vague statements as to what issues they stood for, referring to ideas connected to the constitution, freedom, and patriotism. Later, issues which came to dominate discussion in the East Midlands press, and appear most frequently in election canvasses, included Catholic emancipation, the Corn Laws, and parliamentary reform. Whilst some MPs may have been torn between acting in the interests of their party, or the country as a whole, rather than those who had elected them, Chapter Four has shown how very few candidates appear to have been directly influenced by Westminster. Instead, many chose to focus on those national issues which most acutely affected the constituency.

Given the range and scale of handbills in circulation, candidates were vying for the attention of their audiences, and, to date, insufficient attention has been paid to the way in which authors of election literature attempted to appeal to audiences, tailoring their message to specific sectors of the electorate. Chapter Five examined whom election literature was aimed at, to what extent this was an accurate reflection of its audience, and who would have had access to political ideas and debate. This chapter showed that, whilst some handbills did specifically target voters, this was usually those addresses which formed part of a candidate's formal canvass. Furthermore, these handbills addressed voters in a much more nuanced way than has been appreciated. Rather than targeting the electorate as a whole, or addressing voters on partisan lines, many canvasses aimed their message at certain sectors of the franchise. In larger county

constituencies, this included voters of a specific area. Elsewhere, handbills sometimes focused on key groups of voters, with many canvasses from this study addressing tradesmen and artisans, especially framework knitters, who formed a significant proportion of the franchise for the region.

Chapter Five also demonstrated that the volume of printed canvasses produced over the course of a contest often far outweighed the number of people who qualified to vote. This chapter has argued that, whilst some handbills were designed to appeal to voters, others were designed to appeal to a wide audience, including those outside of the franchise. It is clear that print allowed those without the right to vote to access political ideas and debate, as well as to participate in election 'rituals'.

One of the difficulties of looking at print, especially when thinking about audience, is knowing exactly who would have read it. As has already been seen, literacy levels were increasing over the period.[930] However, establishing who did, as opposed to who could, read election literature can be problematic. Even when records show who purchased newspapers and other political ephemera, this still does not necessarily mean that such items were read. The impact that print had on audiences therefore remains largely speculative.

Although a broad range of print has been consulted as part of this study, it has not been possible to examine every item printed over the course of every election campaign which took place throughout the region between 1790 and 1832. As seen, the East Midlands had an extensive and active press, with a wide range of political opinions catered for. Whilst some newspapers were relatively short

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[930] See Chapter Two page 15 and Chapter Five page 232.

lived, the large number of newspapers which appeared in the region has meant that a methodical approach has had to be taken.[931] This thesis took a sample selection of newspapers from across the East Midlands, taking care to ensure that a range of political opinions were covered. Although all were weekly papers, it was not possible to survey each issue. Instead, only those issues which were printed during an election campaign were studied. One of the limitations of such an approach is that this method gives greater emphasis to the issues which were raised during election campaigns as opposed to any other time.

In contrast to the press, the survival of election material can often be sporadic. As the work of O'Gorman, Barker, and Vincent has shown, over 100 items could be composed for a single contest; reprinted hundreds of times, there could be as many as 50,000 individual handbills in circulation at any one time. Some contests, such as the Nottingham by-election of 1803, or the East Retford election of 1830, could produce even greater numbers of election literature.[932] However, not all examples survive, with some elections and constituencies having a more complete collection of canvasses than others. For instance, as discussed in Chapter Two, out of all the constituencies studied as part of this thesis, few examples of printed election canvasses survive for East Retford. Here, the only quantity of print to survive for East Retford comes from 1825 when a dissolution of parliament was expected. In this instance, it seems as if

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[931] In total, there were over twenty individual newspapers printed across the East Midlands between 1790 and 1832. See Chapter 1 for discussion of sample size.

[932] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xxvii; O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties*, 139; UNMSC, Ne C 4522/1/1 Bill from F. Hodson of East Retford to 'Captain Duncombe's Committee (22nd July 1830).

the addresses printed in this volume were not published as handbills or distributed to the public.[933]

Despite the various limitations of the sources and methodologies used, this thesis has acted as a test case, and highlighted a number of important aspects of electoral culture before the 1832 Reform Act. As Barker and Vincent have argued, handbills and other forms of printed political canvasses offer a 'unique insight unto the operation of local politics' in pre-Reform England.[934] Evidence from the East Midlands has demonstrated the emphasis placed on print by those responsible for a candidate's canvass, as well as those hoping to profit from the excitement generated by the election. It is clear that much more thought went into creating canvasses than has previously been acknowledged, with a greater range and style of print available than has been appreciated.

The study of local politics has become an area of increasing interest to historians, with a number of studies focusing on cultural and social aspects of elections, especially in relation to ritual, the use of space, and class and gender relations.[935] Similarly, a large body of scholarship has focused on the growing importance of print culture during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Some of this work has considered how print became increasingly political during this period, although few have considered the role of this literature during elections, and the impact that it had on the political process. This thesis has built on these

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[933] See Chapter One pages 33 and Chapter Two page 84; *Electionana Retfordiensis*.
[934] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xlii.
[935] See K. Gleadle and S. Richardson (eds), *Women in British politics, 1760-1860: the power of the petticoat* (Basingstoke, 2000); S. Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 2013); K. Navickas, *Protest and the politics of space and place, 1789-1848* (Manchester, 2016); A. Clark, 'Class, Gender and British Elections 1794-1818', in M.T. Davis, and P.A. Pickering (eds), *Unrespectable Radicals?: Popular Politics in the Age of Reform* (Ashgate, 2008), 107-24.

works, bringing together ideas relating to printed propaganda, political language, and electoral politics with the business of print and the reading public.

Of all the constituencies in pre-reform England, the majority were either freeman or scot and lot boroughs, with some having relatively large electorates. In this regard, the East Midlands provides a good test case for the rest of the country. As well as examining the three county boroughs of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire, this study has also focused on five separate borough constituencies. Leicester and Nottingham were large freeman boroughs, with a diverse electorate, and where elections were frequently contested. The other constituencies which featured as part of this study were smaller. Derby has been described by the *History of Parliament* as a 'medium-sized' freeman borough, although with a much smaller and less diverse electorate than either Leicester or Nottingham. Finally, both Newark and East Retford were small constituencies, each with populations under 10,000. East Retford was a freeman borough, although freemen had to be resident in order to vote. In Newark, it was those residents who paid scot and lot who qualified to vote.[936]

This study has demonstrated how election campaigns were often much more complex than has been appreciated. Elections were colourful, popular events, but generally voting did not last much more than a week. It was therefore essential for print to make as much of an impression as possible in a short space of time. This thesis has argued that the fast nature of elections meant that newspapers were not typically seen as the most effective way of reaching voters.

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[936] R. G. Thorne (ed.), 'The Constituencies: Introductory Survey', *HP Commons 1790-1820* [accessed 15/01/2018].

Although many handbills, especially those which were written as part of a candidate's formal canvass, focused on issues of national interest, this was not always the primary focus of print. Whilst print was a central feature of any election, its primary purpose was not always to win votes. Instead, many canvasses used humour and satire to appeal to a variety of audiences, not all of whom would have been voters. Dickinson and O'Gorman, amongst others, have described how elections of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were highly ritualised events, often accompanied by feasting, 'music, effigies, gun salutes, firework displays, bonfires and bell-ringing.'[937] It is clear, however, that print also acted as an integral part of this election spectacle, and had the potential to be just as entertaining as other parts of the election.

The findings of this thesis suggest that a detailed examination of a wide range of printed political ephemera has the potential to reveal much about the intricacies of local elections, and the way in which contests were organised and fought. In particular, this thesis has highlighted the value of election handbills as a way of examining the issues which were seen as being important in local areas. Whilst other studies have focused on election canvasses from Devon, Coventry and Newcastle-under-Lyme, as Frank O'Gorman has suggested, election handbills remain 'one of the most important, yet normally most neglected, of all sources of electoral history in the period of the unreformed British parliament.'[938]

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[937] H.T. Dickinson, 'Popular Politics and Radical Ideas', in H.T. Dickinson (ed.), *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2002), 99; O'Gorman, 'Campaign rituals and ceremonies: the social meaning of elections in England, 1780-1860', 79-115.

[938] I. Maxted, 'Squibs, Songs, Addresses, and Speeches: Election Ephemera in Nineteenth-Century Devon', in D. Atkinson and S. Roud (eds), *Street Literature of the Long Nineteenth Century: Producers, Sellers, Consumers* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2017), 254- 277; Barker and

Generally, the majority of research has examined literature from borough constituencies, and whilst this thesis has examined county elections in the East Midlands, it is clear that there is still much work to be done in this area. Although several studies have focused on Yorkshire county elections, none has fully explored the range of canvasses printed. Elections for the county which might be of particular interest include 1807, described as the most expensive contest of the pre-reformed parliament.[939] Similarly, Cornwall might also be an interesting county to study especially since it was 'much more a part of the "political nation" than is often supposed', and although Edwin Jaggard made a detailed study of the county, he made only passing use of printed canvasses.[940]

This thesis has highlighted how it is often the study of borough elections which reveals most about the way in which local politics was organised. Future work might therefore also compare the findings from the large open freeman boroughs as examined here with burgage, freeholder, or corporation boroughs. Possible examples might include the Cornish borough of Helston, the largest of all the twenty-five corporation boroughs. Like the majority of corporation boroughs, Helston was small, with fewer than 1,000 voters, and contested elections were rare. The 1820 election might prove to be particularly interesting, especially since, prior to the poll opening, the press speculated that the borough would be fiercely contested.[941]

Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*; F. O'Gorman, 'Coventry Electoral Broadsides, 1780', *Yale University Library Gazette*, 67, (1993), 160;
[939] E. A. Smith, 'The Yorkshire elections of 1806 and 1807: a study in electoral management', *Northern History*, 2 (1967), 62-90.
[940] R.G. Thorne, 'Cornwall', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 03/02/2018]; E. Jaggard, *Cornwall politics in the age of reform, 1790-1885* (Woodbridge, 1999).
[941] T. Jenkins, 'Helston', *HP Commons 1820-1832* [accessed 03/02/2018].

Whilst the lack of a formal poll does not necessarily indicate that no canvass took place, it might be worth studying boroughs which were frequently contested. Such a study should help to highlight the importance of printed canvasses, and to what extent they influenced voters in their choice of a candidate. Constituencies worthy of study include Liverpool, where between 1790 and 1832, only one by-election in 1828 was uncontested.

The period between 1790 and 1832 represents a key moment in British political history, when the local power structures of the eighteenth century were being challenged by an increasingly politicised public. This thesis has shown how candidates, their political agents, and newspaper editors attempted to reach an increasingly diverse audience, giving them the opportunity to access political ideas and debate, especially over the course of election campaigns.

As Barker and Vincent have argued, after 1832, the nature of canvassing changed. The introduction of the penny post, the widespread use of house numbers, and letter boxes on front doors meant that it became possible for 'candidates to enter the homes of every voter by impersonal addresses.'[942] In light of work currently being done by the *History of Parliament*, it might be helpful to extent this study, and consider to what extent print remained an important feature of elections after 1832, and how printed canvasses changed after the First Reform Bill.[943]

As Chapter Five touched on, prior to the introduction of the secret ballot in 1872, voting was open, although this appears to have had little impact on the way

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[942] Barker and Vincent (eds), *Language, Print and Electoral Politics 1790-1832*, xlii.
[943] P. Salmon and K. Rix (eds), The *History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1832-68* (forthcoming).

voters were addressed via print. Another possible avenue of research might therefore consider the way in which the secret ballot changed the way candidates attempted to reach voters, and what impact this might have had on the way that people voted. Ultimately, as this thesis has demonstrated, printed ephemera can be a highly valuable source when examining the public nature of political ideas during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and has the potential to reveal much about the way in which elections were organised, and on what basis candidates were successful at the polls.

Appendix

Election Results from East Midlands Constituencies 1790-1832

DERBY

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
19 June 1790	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish Edward Coke	Uncontested
25 May 1796	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish Edward Coke *Peter Crompton*	239 238 6
2 Jan 1797 (By-election)	Hon George Walpole (Cavendish vacated his seat)	Uncontested
5 July 1802	Hon George Walpole Edward Coke	Uncontested
26 Feb 1807 (By-election)	Thomas William Coke (Edward Coke vacated seat)	Uncontested
5 May 1807	William Cavendish Edward Coke	Uncontested
8 Feb 1812 (By-election)	Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish (death of Wm. Cavendish)	Uncontested
6 Oct 1812	Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish Edward Coke	Uncontested
17 June 1818	Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish Thomas William Coke	Uncontested
8 March 1820	Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish Thomas William Coke	Uncontested

10 June 1826	Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish Samuel Crompton	Uncontested
31 July 1830	Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish Edward Strutt	Uncontested
2 May 1831	Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish Edward Strutt	Uncontested
12 Dec1832	Edward Strutt Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish *Sir Charles Colvile*	887 716 430

DERBYSHIRE

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
26 June 1790	Lord George Augustus Cavendish Edward Miller Mundy	Uncontested
22 May 1794 (By-election)	Lord John Cavendish (death of Geo. Cavendish)	Uncontested
2 June 1796	Lord John Cavendish Edward Miller Mundy	Uncontested
2 Jan 1797 (By-election)	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish (death of John Cavendish)	Uncontested
15 July 1802	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish Edward Miller Mundy	Uncontested
10 Nov 1806	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish Edward Miller Mundy	Uncontested
12 May 1807	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish Edward Miller Mundy	Uncontested

19 Oct 1812	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish Edward Miller Mundy	Uncontested
25 June 1818	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish Edward Miller Mundy	Uncontested
20 March 1820	Edward Miller Mundy Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish *Samuel Shore*	195 190 26
25 Nov 1822 (By-election)	Francis Mundy (death of Miller Mundy)	Uncontested
19 June 1826	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish Francis Mundy	Uncontested
7 Aug 1830	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish Francis Mundy	Uncontested
7 May 1831	Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish Hon George John Venables Vernon	Uncontested
22 Sept 1831 (By-election)	William Cavendish, Lord Cavendish George Cavendish called to the Upper House	Uncontested
12 Dec 1832	Edward Strutt Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish *Sir Charles Colvile*	887 716 430

DERBYSHIRE NORTH

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
24 Dec 1832	Lord Cavendish Thomas Gisborne Sir George Sitwell	3,388 2,385 1,183

DERBYSHIRE SOUTH

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
21 Dec 1832	George John Venables-Vernon Henry Manners Cavendish, Lord Waterpark *Sir Roger Gresley*	3,036 2,839 720

LEICESTER

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
25 June 1790	Thomas Boothby Parkyns Samuel Smith *Nathaniel Brassey Halhed* *Lewis Montolieu*	986 803 551 551
7 Feb 1795 (By-election)	Parkyns (re-elected after accepting a commission in the army)	Uncontested
31 May 1796	Samuel Smith Thomas Boothby Parkyns (Lord Rancliffe) *Bertie Greatheed* *Walter Ruding*	1,029 993 556 537
17 Dec 1800 (By-election)	Thomas Babington John Manners (death of Lord Rancliffe)	1,572 1,418
8 July 1802	Thomas Babington Samuel Smith *Felix Mccarthy*	1,169 893 333
29 Oct 1806	Samuel Smith Thomas Babington	Uncontested
12 May 1807	Thomas Babington Samuel Smith *John MacNamara*	1,794 1,372 1,020

Date	Candidates	Votes
8 Oct 1812	Samuel Smith Thomas Babington *William Roscoe*	1,116 967 412
16 June 1818	John Mansfield Thomas Pares	Uncontested
7 March 1820	John Mansfield Thomas Pares	Uncontested
23 June 1826	Sir Charles Abney Hastings Robert Otway Cave *William Evans* *Thomas Denman*	2,772 2,678 2,063 1,811
2 Aug 1830	Sir Charles Abney Hastings William Evans	Uncontested
4 May 1831	William Evans Wynn Ellis	Uncontested
14 Dec 1832	William Evans Wynn Ellis *John Ward Boughton Leigh*	1,663 1,527 1,266

LEICESTERSHIRE

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
28 June 1790	Sir Thomas Cave William Pochin	Uncontested
27 Feb 1792 (By-election)	Penn Assheton Curzon (death of Thomas Cave)	Uncontested

3 June 1796	(Hon) Penn Assheton Curzon William Pochin	Uncontested
25 Oct 1797 (By-election)	George Anthony Legh Keck (death of Curzon)	Uncontested
1 Nov 1798 (By-election)	Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp (death of Wm. Pochin)	Uncontested
12 July 1802	Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp, Bt George Anthony Legh Keck	Uncontested
6 Nov 1806	George Anthony Legh Keck Lord Robert William Manners	Uncontested
11 May 1807	George Anthony Legh Keck Lord Robert William Manners	Uncontested
15 Oct 1812	George Anthony Legh Keck Lord Robert William Manners	Uncontested
26 June 1818	Lord Robert William Manners Charles March Phillipps *Thomas Babington*	391 307 257
14 March 1820	Lord Robert William Manners George Anthony Legh Keck	Uncontested
16 June 1826	Lord Robert William Manners George Anthony Legh Keck	Uncontested
11 Aug 1830	George Anthony Legh Keck Lord Robert William Manners *Thomas Paget*	3,515 2,996 2,196
10 May 1831	Charles March Phillipps Thomas Paget	Uncontested

LEICESTERSHIRE NORTH

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
24 Dec 1832	Lord Robert William Manners Charles March Phillipps *William Augustus Johnson*	2,093 1,661 720

LEICESTERSHIRE SOUTH

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
15 Dec 1832	Edward Dawson Henry Halford	Uncontested

NOTTINGHAM

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
18 June 1790	Robert Smith Daniel Parker Coke *William Johnston*	443 415 237
28 May 1796	Robert Smith Daniel Parker Coke *Peter Crompton*	1,210 1,069 561
11 Nov 1797 (By-election)	Sir John Borlase Warren (Smith called to the Upper House)	Uncontested
6 July 1802	Sir John Borlase Warren, Bt Joseph Birch *Daniel Parker Coke*	987 928 636

30 May 1803 (By-election)	Daniel Parker Coke Joseph Birch (election of 1802 declared 16th March 1803)	1,359 1,164
31 Oct 1806	Daniel Parker Coke John Smith *Joseph Birch*	1,773 1,543 1,443
7 May 1807	Daniel Parker Coke John Smith *Peter Crompton*	1,216 937 635
7 Oct 1812	John Smith George Augustus Henry Anne Parkyns, Lord Rancliffe *Richard Arkwright* *Peter Crompton* *Joseph Birch*	2,013 1,515 1,239 8 5
17 June 1818	Joseph Birch George Augustus Henry Anne Parkyns, Lord Rancliffe *Thomas Assheton Smith*	2,228 1,863 1,840
6 March 1820	Joseph Birch Thomas Denman Thomas Assheton Smith *Lancelot Rolleston*	1,891 1,891 1,858 1,858
20 June 1826	Joseph Birch George Augustus Henry Anne Parkyns, Lord Rancliffe *John Smith Wright* *George Hopkinson*	2,234 2,158 1,894 1
30 July 1830	Thomas Denman Sir Ronald Craufurd Ferguson *Thomas Bailey*	1206 1180 1
29 Nov 1830	Denman re-elected after appointment to office	Uncontested
29 April 1831	Thomas Denman Sir Ronald Craufurd Ferguson	Uncontested
10 Dec 1832	Sir Ronald Craufurd Ferguson Viscount Duncannon *James Edward Gordon*	2,399 2,349 976

EAST RETFORD

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
18 June 1790	Thomas Pelham Clinton, Earl of Lincoln Sir John Ingilby	Uncontested
3 March 1794 (By-election)	William Henry Clinton (Lincoln called to the Upper House)	Uncontested
27 May 1796	William Petrie Sir Wharton Amcotts *John Blackburn*	82 68 60
5 July 1802	Robert Craufurd John Jaffray *William Bowles* *Henry Bonham*	85 77 69 59
29 Oct 1806	Charles Gregan Craufurd Thomas Hughan *William Ingilby*	98 80 69
6 May 1807	Charles Gregan Craufurd William Ingilby *Thomas Hughan*	88 77 75
8 Oct 1812	George Osbaldeston Charles Marsh	Uncontested
19 June 1818	William Evans Samuel Crompton	Uncontested
8 March 1820	William Evans Samuel Crompton	Uncontested
10 June 1826	William Battie Wrightson Sir Robert Lawrence Dundas *Sir Henry Wright Wilson* *Election declared void, 1 may 1827 no writ issued before dissolution*	120 118 53

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
6 Aug 1830	Charles Evelyn Pierrepont, Visct Newark Hon Arthur Duncombe *Granville Venables Vernon*	770 697 611
5 May 1831	Granville Harcourt Vernon Charles Evelyn Pierrepont, Visct Newark *Hon Arthur Duncombe*	1,075 954 610
15 Dec 1832	Granville Venables Harcourt Vernon Charles Evelyn Pierrepont, Visct Newark *Sir John Beckett*	1,311 1,153 970

NEWARK

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
21 June 1790	William Crosbie John Manners Sutton *William Paxton*	396 380 287
28 May 1796	Thomas Manners Sutton Mark Wood *William Paxton*	443 439 381
25 July 1797 (By-election)	Manners Sutton re-elected after appointment to office	Uncontested
8 May 1801 (By-election)	Manners Sutton re-elected after appointment to office	Uncontested
5 July 1802	Sir Charles Morice Pole (Sir) Thomas Manners Sutton	Uncontested
8 Feb 1805 (By-election)	Henry Willoughby (Manners Sutton appointed to office)	Uncontested
17 Feb 1806 (By-election)	Pole re-elected after appointment to office	Uncontested

31 Oct 1806	Stapleton Cotton Henry Willoughby	Uncontested
5 May 1807	Stapleton Cotton Henry Willoughby	Uncontested
7 Oct 1812	(Sir) Stapleton Cotton Henry Willoughby	Uncontested
19 May 1814 (By-election)	George Hay Dawkins Pennant (Cotton called to the Upper House)	Uncontested
19 June 1818	Sir William Henry Clinton Henry Willoughby	Uncontested
9 March 1820	Sir William Henry Clinton Henry Willoughby	Uncontested
10 June 1826	Henry Willoughby Sir William Henry Clinton *Samuel Ellis Bristowe*	647 595 296
6 March 1829 (By-election)	Michael Thomas Sadler Thomas Wilde (Clinton vacated his seat)	801 587
6 Aug 1830	Henry Willoughby Michael Thomas Sadler *Thomas Wilde*	775 746 652
21 Feb 1831	William Farnworth Handley Thomas Wilde (Willoughby vacated his seat)	833 543
3 May 1831	Thomas Wilde William Farnworth Handley *Sir Roger Gresley*	849 746 678
13 Dec 1832	William Ewart Gladstone William Farnsworth Handley *Thomas Wilde*	887 798 726

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
30 June 1790	Lord Edward Charles Cavendish Bentinck Charles Pierrepont (formerly Medows)	Uncontested
7 June 1796	Lord William Henry Cavendish Bentinck Evelyn Henry Frederick Pierrepont	Uncontested
19 Nov 1801 (By-election)	Hon Charles Herbert Pierrepont (death of Evelyn Pierrepont)	Uncontested
13 July 1802	Lord William Henry Cavendish Bentinck Hon Charles Herbert Pierrepont	Uncontested
9 May 1803 (By-election)	Anthony Hardolph Eyre (Cavendish Bentinck vacated his seat)	Uncontested
7 Nov 1806	Charles Herbert Pierrepont Anthony Hardolph Eyre	Uncontested
13 May 1807	Charles Herbert Pierrepont Anthony Hardolph Eyre	Uncontested
15 Oct 1812	Lord William Henry Cavendish Bentinck Charles Herbert Pierrepont	Uncontested
11 Apr 1814 (By-election)	Frank Frank (Cavendish Bentinck vacated his seat)	Uncontested
8 July 1816 (By-election)	Lord William Henry Cavendish Bentinck (Pierrepont called to the Upper House)	Uncontested
23 June 1818	Lord William Henry Cavendish Bentinck Frank Frank (Hereafter Sotheron)	Uncontested
16 March 1820	Lord William Henry Cavendish Bentinck Frank Sotheron	Uncontested

15 June 1826	Frank Sotheron John Savile Lumley	Uncontested
6 Aug 1830	Frank Sotheron John Savile Lumley	Uncontested
5 May 1831	John Savile Lumley John Evelyn Denison	Uncontested

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NORTH

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
21 Dec 1832	John Savile Lumley, Visct. Lumley Thomas Houldsworth *John Gilbert Cooper Gardiner*	1,680 1,372 1,171

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SOUTH

DATE	CANDIDATES	VOTES
17 Dec 1832	Henry Pelham Fiennes Pelham-Clinton, Earl of Lincoln John Evelyn Denison	Uncontested

Sources: *HP Commons 1790- 1832*; *HP Commons 1820-1832* and *HP Commons 1832-1868*.

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Q/RE 2/10: Mr Cokayne's Cheque Book for the first day's poll (1820).

Q/RS/5/3: Quarter Sessions (registration) Printing Presses John Drewry of Derby (15th August 1799).

Q/RS/5/10/1-3: George Wilkins of Derby, notice (1811).

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M105: Scrapbook of election literature: broadsides etc relating to Leicester borough elections 1826.

MISC152/1-2: Election cartoon and handbill c.1826.

MISC574/a-c: Leicester election posters and reform notices.

12D53: Election pamphlets (1826).

M373/1-15: Election Leaflets for Elections in Leicester and Leicestershire (1818-1820).

16D35/7: Election letter Oct 1797 and ribbon with 'curzon and Independence 27 Feb 1792.

9D59/2: Scrapbook of election literature c.1790.

MISC15/20-52, 56-108: Broadsheets, Election Posters, Newspaper Cuttings, etc. 1790-1826.

10D72/602-608: Papers of Sir Edmund Cradock Hartopp, 1st Baronet.

23D57/3425-3440: Political Papers of the Cave & Otway Cave Families 1790 Leicester Borough Election.

23D57/ 3441-3452: Political Papers of the Cave & Otway Cave Families 1818 Leicester Borough Election.

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Nottingham Archives

C/QDE/2/4/1-11: Examinations of witnesses re. franchise, bribery etc.

C/QDE/2/6: Pleas in William Wilson v William Dickinson Rastall alleging corrupt practices in Newark election (1792).

DC/NW/2: *Parliamentary election at Newark 1790 An Alphabetical list of the poll taken for the election of two representatives in parliament for the borough of Newark upon Trent in the county of Nottinghamshire before the worshipful Henry [Michaels?] Esq. Mayor on the 18th Day June 1790.*

DD/1104/1: Account book of J.S. Piercy of Retford 1823-1850.

DD/1917/1: Political broadsheet c.1794.

DD/2723/3/5/21: 'Receipt of S. and J. Ridge, printers, booksellers, upholsterers, and auctioneers, to the Election Committee'.

DD/2723/3/5/5: 'Receipt of John Wright, printer, bookseller and binder, paper hanger, and auctioneer to the Newark Election Committee'.

DD/2723/3/5/6: Election receipt- Mr Hage.

DD/2723/3/5/7: 'List of expenses at the Election of General Sir William Henry Clinton and Henry Willoughby' (1820).

DD/568/31-40: Nottingham political broadsheets.

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DD/764/1-6: Sutton of Nottingham family papers

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DD/MI/107: Newark Red Club Songbook (1832).

DD/NM/2/1/1-77: Newark Election posters and notices c.1790-1832

DD/NM/2/2/48-66: Newark election posters and printed items.

DD/NM/2/2/5-13: Newark Election posters and notices.

DD/NM/2/3/1-20: Coronation and Elections 1821-1880.

DD/NM/8/2/1/1-3: Newark and Nottingham elections c.1830.

DD/NM/8/2/1/2: Printed posters for the General Election in Nottingham (1830).

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DD/NM/8/6/2: Volume containing account of the Newark election with the addresses, speeches and songs etc. c.1830.

DD2/2/12-13: Newark election addresses April 1832.

DDE/8/21/8: Edge of Strelley Collection: Nottingham Elections 1803.

DDNM 2/1/1- 35: Newark elections c.1790-1832.

M24 606/C/2: Satirical Poem- Gazette Extraordinary the battle of the Presses!! Mercury and the Herald in Arms!!

Nottingham Local Studies Library

L34.22A: Uncatalogued collection of election handbills c.1790-1832

Nottingham University Manuscripts and Special Collections

Bg 174: Nottingham election broadside 'Election Jugglers' (1818).

Dr X 16/1-14 1832: 14 Election posters and handbills relating to Nottingham and Derby

East Midlands Special Collection (Over.X Not 3.F19 NOT NOT) Nottingham election leaflets, 1818-1865 and political broadsides.

Le 3 F26 E26: *Animadversions*- Leicester election 1826.

Ne C 4496-4498/1: Volume containing evidence relating to the Newark 1790 election.

Ne C 4520/1-4529: Papers relating to East Retford election 1830/31.

Ne X 6: Petition of the inhabitants of the borough and neighbourhood of East Retford, Nottinghamshire to the House of Lords; c.1827-8.

Not 3.F26.E03 BOW: A letter to the burgesses of Nottingham. George William Rusden

Not 3.F26.E20: Election for the town of Nottingham: Candidates, Joseph Birch, Thomas Denman, Thomas Assheton Smith, Lancelot Rolleston, esquires.

Not 307.F24 COM: *A full and circumstantial report of the proceedings at Newark, on Thursday, July 27, 1826, when the friends of freedom and purity of election gave a grand dinner to their late candidate, Samuel Ellis Bristowe, Esq.: with all the speeches delivered on the occasion: to which is prefixed, some interesting remarks, and a brief sketch of the political history of the borough: the whole extracted from the Nottingham mercury, of the second of August.*

Not 307.F26.E30: *Newark election, 1830: a reprint of the whole of the addresses, songs, squibs, &c. issued from the printing office of H. & J. Hage, prior to, during, and at the close of the contest.*

os.X.Pamph PR1181.B2: Ballads. vol. 1, Nottingham region.

Oversize Not 1.F19 NOT: Nottingham and Nottinghamshire election leaflets: relating to 1806, 1812, 1818, 1821, 1832, 1835-7, 1841, and 1870.

Over. X Not 3.F19 NOT: Nottingham election leaflets, 1818-1865 and political broadsides.

Pamphlet Not 3.F26.E03 BUN: Collection of 13 addresses printed from the Nottingham 1803 election.

Pamphlet Not 3.F26.E03 TRU: *Hydrophobia: or the dread of ducking; in measured prose.*

National Archives

HO 17/59/115: 3 individual petitions.

HO 42/34/38: Feb 7 1795 Folios 74-80. Letter from Daniel Holt, applying for his removal from Newgate to Nottingham Gaol with a view to avoiding the ruin of his commercial interests in Nottinghamshire.

HO 44/10/23 ff 44-49: Rev Charles Wylde, Nottingham, enclosing copy of newspaper A Slap at Slop and letter from John Hewker who bought it, with the suggestion the editor and printer Charles Sutton should be prosecuted (4th Sept 1821).

KB 33/6/6: Libel- John Lambert and others, members of Derby Corresponding Society 7 records 33-36 Geo III.

TS 11/1064/4878: Rex v George Harley VAUGHAN for publishing at Leicester in 1793 a printed paper of a seditious tendency: [Borough of Leicester sessions, 12 Oct 1793] Copy of handbill 'WAR!! The Effects of War on the Poor' included.

TS 11/836/2820: Rex v Daniel HOLT for publishing the Letter addressed to the Addressors, 1792 and an Address to the Tradesmen, Mechanics, Labourers, and other inhabitants of the Town of Newark: King's Bench.

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