



NUI MAYNOOTH

Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

**A SOCIETY IN TRANSITION: THE PROTESTANT
COMMUNITY IN TYRONE 1836-42**

DARAGH EMMETT CURRAN

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF PH.D

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

MAYNOOTH

**SUPERVISOR OF RESEARCH: PROFESSOR RAYMOND
GILLESPIE**

SEPTEMBER, 2010

A society in transition: The Protestant community of County Tyrone 1836-42.

Daragh Emmett Curran

This thesis deals with the transition that was taking place in Protestant society in the immediate pre-famine period in County Tyrone. It explores how this community, at all social levels, reacted to the changes that were occurring and which were considered detrimental to its position of dominance in society. These changes had the potential to dramatically affect the traditional paternalistic relationship that bound the lower classes to their social betters and this study examines how this relationship survived through economic recession, changes in law and order, increasing concessions being granted to Catholics, lessening government support for the Protestant Church, and the suppression of the dominant Protestant association of the time- the Orange Order.

The Order played an integral part in the lives of many Protestants and was an organization that transcended the class divide. Because of this, it becomes the pivot around which this work revolves as the Order, with its wide-stretching network, helped maintain the patriarchal relationship that bound the classes together. It is also a useful tool through which to examine attitudes towards law and order within the Protestant community as changes within this area, especially within the magistracy, affected the upper classes, the very people that the lower classes looked to for guidance. How this guidance manifested itself is reflected on the political stage as part of the elite used the mob as a political tool to serve its own needs. Despite eventual dissolution, the Order remained strong in many areas which further highlights its popularity amongst Protestants in County Tyrone.

The study concludes that despite the dramatic changes being experienced within the Protestant community, the traditional hierarchal structure remained and that

while the relationship between the classes was slowly unravelling, it remained, largely because of the Orange Order, unaltered in Tyrone in the immediate pre-famine era.

Acknowledgements

A number of people deserve special thanks for their assistance in the completion of this thesis. My supervisors Professor Raymond Gillespie and Dr Jennifer Kelly were of immense help in providing the themes and ideas behind this work and deserve special praise for their overall positivity and constant encouragement throughout the past three years. I would also like to thank Professor Jackie Hill for her assistance in the latter stages of this work.

Archive research was made much easier due in no small measure to the assistance provided by the staff at the National Library of Ireland, the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, the National Archives of Ireland, Dr Jonathan Mattison at the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, and Rebecca Hayes at the Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland.

I would like to pay special thanks to my classmates, in particular Liam O'Rourke, Seamus Coll, Darragh Gannon, Mel Farrell, Edward Tynan, and Breen Murphy.

Most importantly I would like to express my gratitude to my family for their support and encouragement and to my girlfriend Maggie for her understanding and patience throughout the entire process.

Table of contents

	<u>Page</u>
Abbreviations	i
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The social and economic conditions of County Tyrone.	17
Chapter 2: The forces of law and order.	73
Chapter 3: The Orange Order and the Freemasons.	120
Chapter 4: The Catholic threat- real or imaginary?	170
Chapter 5: The political split in the Protestant gentry.	208
Chapter 6: The dissolution of the Orange Order- reaction from above and below.	247
Conclusion	282
Bibliography	287

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Source
PRONI	The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
<i>LJ</i>	<i>Londonderry Journal and Tyrone Advertiser</i>
<i>LS</i>	<i>Londonderry Standard</i>
<i>NS</i>	<i>Northern Standard</i>
<i>NT</i>	<i>Newry Telegraph</i>
<i>ECEP</i>	<i>Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet</i>
<i>BH</i>	<i>Ballyshannon Herald</i>
<i>SOB</i>	<i>Star of Brunswick</i>
<i>FJ</i>	<i>Freeman's Journal</i>
<i>VIN</i>	<i>The Vindicator</i>
<i>BN</i>	<i>Belfast Newsletter</i>
<i>SMP</i>	<i>Strabane Morning Post</i>
<i>DEM</i>	<i>Dublin Evening Mail</i>
NAI: CSORP, OR	National Archives of Ireland: Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers, Outrage Reports
<i>OSM</i>	Ordnance survey memoirs

Parliamentary paper abbreviations

Abbreviation	Source
<i>First report on Orange lodges</i>	<i>[First] Report from the select committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange Lodges, associations or societies in Ireland; with the minutes of evidence, and appendix, H. C. 1835 (377), xvi.</i>
<i>Second report on Orange lodges</i>	<i>[Second] report from the select committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange lodges, associations or societies in Ireland, H. C. 1835</i>

- (377), xv.
- Third report on Orange lodges* [Third] report from the select committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange Lodges, associations or societies in Ireland, H. C. 1835
- 1835 poor enquiry* Royal commission on the poorer classes of Ireland, H. C. 1835 (35) (36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42), xxx.35, 221, xxx.1, xxxiv.1, 427, 643, 657.
- 1821 census* Abstract of answers and returns pursuant to Act for taking account of population of Ireland: enumeration abstract, appendix, H. C. 1824 (577), xxii.411
- 1831 census* Abstract of population returns for Ireland 1831, H. C 1833 (634), xxxix.59.
- 1841 census* Report of commissioners on census of Ireland, 1841, H. C. (1843) (504) xxiv.1.
- The Devon commission* Royal commission of inquiry into the state of law and practice in respect to occupation of land in Ireland, H. L. 1845 (672) (673), iv, v.
- Poor Law Union returns* Poor Law Unions (Ireland). Returns relative to Poor Law Unions, and of persons holding land, etc. in Ireland, H. C. 1845 (593) xxxviii.209.
- State of Ireland in respect of crime* Report from the select committee of the House of Lords, appointed to enquire into the state of Ireland in respect of crime, and to report thereupon to the House; with the minutes of evidence taken before the committee, and an appendix and index. Part I. Report, and evidence 22 April to 16 May 1839, H. L. 1839 (486), xi.1, xii.1.

Introduction

This thesis deals with the Protestant community at a cross-class level in County Tyrone from 1836 to 1842. It will examine how this community reacted to the social, economic, and political changes which were permeating Irish society at this time. This study is unique in that it not only looks at how Protestant society worked but also because it covers all levels of the Protestant social stratum from the lowest classes up to the elites of high society. The under classes will be viewed through the spectrum of crime, land occupation, the linen industry, and associational activity whilst the middle and upper classes will be viewed through election contests, membership of the magistracy, their ownership of the land, and in common with the lower classes, also through associational activity. Associational activity, and in particular membership of the Orange Order, was a vital element in bringing people of different backgrounds together, and it plays a pivotal role in this work as it provides the framework around which Protestant society is examined.

As with any thesis, the subject matter has received little attention from historians. While Catholic society has been well examined and documented over the period in question notably in Marianne Elliott's *The Catholics of Ulster*, little work has been produced regarding Protestant society in Ulster.¹ Allan Blackstock has attempted to redress this balance over the past decade with his works on the yeomanry, and the importance of this body in cementing the relationship between the upper and lower classes is brought to light in his studies.² In addition to this, Blackstock has produced an interesting study entitled *Loyalism in Ireland, 1789-1829*

¹ Marianne Elliott, *The Catholics of Ulster* (London, 2000).

² Allan Blackstock, 'Orangeism and the Irish yeomanry', in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxx, no. 119 (1997), pp 393-405. *An ascendancy army, the Irish yeomanry, 1796-1834* (Dublin, 1998). 'The social and political implications of the raising of the yeomanry in Ulster' in David Dickson, Daire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, radicalism and rebellion* (Dublin, 1993), pp 234-43.

which is one of the few works that attempts to tackle the issue of Protestant life during this period. This work provides a detailed study for the period in question by supplying vital information on the early Orange Order, the yeomanry, and the Brunswick Clubs, all of which played an important role in creating solidarity within the Protestant community. Unfortunately, as the title suggests, this study ends in 1829 meaning that the post Catholic emancipation period is left unattended.³ Another comprehensive study on Protestant society and politics has been provided by Ian D'Alton who deals with Cork from 1812 until 1844 but which examines a county very different in its religious make up to that of Ulster and with a community which was very much in the minority, something not the case with the Protestants of Tyrone.⁴ Suzanne Kingon has produced work specifically on the reaction of Ulster Protestant society to the granting of Catholic emancipation and more generally on Ulster Protestant politics from 1825 to 1835 which is most useful in providing an immediate political background to this thesis but again stops short of dealing with the timescale of this work.⁵ Frank Wright has produced important work regarding Ulster politics in the 1830s but missing from this otherwise significant study is the topic of inter class relations within the Protestant community.⁶ Jonathan Bardon's *A history of Ulster* is a useful read but is too chronologically wide ranging in its scope to provide any microscopic detail on the subject in question while K. T. Hoppen's *Elections, politics and society in Ireland 1832-85* supplies a tantalising glimpse in its early chapters of societal structure and the changing face of politics in the late 1830s.⁷

³ Allan Blackstock, *Loyalism in Ulster 1789-1829* (Woodbridge, 2007).

⁴ Ian D'Alton, *Protestant society and politics in Cork, 1812-1844* (Cork, 1980).

⁵ Suzanne T. Kingon, 'Ulster counties in the age of emancipation and reform', in Allan Blackstock and Eoin Magennis (eds) *Politics and political culture in Britain and Ireland 1750-1850, essays in tribute to Peter Jupp* (Belfast, 2007).

⁶ Frank Wright, *Two lands on one soil* (Dublin, 1996).

⁷ Jonathan Bardon, *A History of Ulster* (Belfast, 1992). K. T. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland 1832-85* (Oxford, 1984).

This work aims to make up for this shortfall of material by shedding light on how the Protestant community, which made up almost half of the population of Tyrone, functioned from its lower levels right up to its upper classes. Initially, it should be explained that by using the umbrella term 'Protestant society', all strands of Protestantism will be included and dealt with under the same banner as it is not within the scope of this project to deal with the differing factions within this religious category independently. Within these strands of Protestantism stood the lower classes and what was often called 'the mob'. This class was negatively viewed by many among the upper sections of society and the authorities who considered many among them to be drunken undisciplined troublemakers. The term 'the mob' was used pejoratively particularly by the liberal press in their reporting of the electoral violence in which they partook. This term was used to describe a grouping that were reported to be 'roughnecks', 'ruffians' and 'rascallions' at various stages by the anti-Orange press. The term features frequently in chapter five when politics is dealt with but it must be remembered that this 'mob' whether drunken hooligans or not played an important role in Tyrone politics and were part of a compromise that bound them to certain members of the upper classes. By focusing on the lower orders and the other strands of Protestant society, a comprehensive analysis of the tensions operating within a community which was in the midst of a period of major transition will be provided.

Protestant society was held together by a traditional, customary patriarchal relationship between the upper and lower classes. However, this relationship was beginning to crumble by the 1830s as landlords sought to maximize the productivity of their lands by inserting harsh clauses in land leases, enforcing farm consolidation, and halting traditional practices such as the sharing of common land and the

sub-division of farms. In addition to the changes being implemented by landlords, the lower classes also had to contend with the collapse of the linen industry, an industry which had helped to sustain so many of them on small farm holdings. For many of the Protestant lower classes, the world that they knew with the relative certainties that weaving and landlord paternalism provided was falling apart which naturally led to tensions emerging. Nonetheless, while the relationship between the local elite and their tenants was not as secure as it had once been, it still remained strong in a society which was still rigid in its social hierarchy. Despite increasing tension, Protestant society on the whole held firm during this period of social change which raises the question as to what mechanism was in place to keep the varying strands together, a central question which will be addressed throughout this work.

Tyrone was chosen as the county to examine for a number of reasons. This was a county divided almost equally among religious lines, one of the few counties in Ireland where this occurred. Because of the lack of numerical dominance enjoyed by any particular segment of the community, the historian is provided with a more focused insight into everyday relations between the religious factions than would be available in a county where one or the other enjoyed a clear majority. The county was mostly rural in its nature but contained urban centres in the important towns of Strabane, Dungannon, Omagh, Stewartstown and Cookstown, therefore life can be examined at both an urban and a rural level. The geographical location of Tyrone included much of the eastern half of the county within the 'linen triangle', an area of high population density which had flourished during times of economic prosperity but which by the 1820s and 1830s was suffering due to the downturn in the linen industry. A comparison can be drawn between this relatively commercialized part of the county and the somewhat less advanced areas of west Tyrone. This county was also a strong

centre of Orangeism which provides a wider scope for the examination of this body and the role that it played in the lives of Tyrone Protestants. Similarly, Freemasonry was also strong in Tyrone and offers an avenue for the examination of cross-class relationships amongst Protestants and indeed a study of relations between Protestants and Catholics. The county also benefited from a largely resident gentry, which was not the case in many other counties such as Donegal, and the resulting large volume of estate records, land leases, rent books, and personal correspondence which survive from figures such as the earls of Caledon and Belmore and the marquis of Abercorn provide the researcher with sources that are invaluable when tracing the workings of this particular society.

The time period of 1836 until 1842 was chosen for a number of reasons. First, from a political point of view, 1835 had seen the first contested election in the county in six decades, and had resulted in a bitterly fought contest. Elections held in 1837, 1839 and 1841 produced similar contentious battles in which the mob played a key role whereas the post 1842 period saw a stabilization in Tyrone politics which resulted in few contested election struggles. The Orange Order had reached its peak strength by 1835 but early 1836 saw the dissolution of the Order, an event which provides a useful focus on any study on Protestant society, as the reaction of its members highlights the seminal role that the society played in the lives of its brethren. By 1836 the economic depression was in full flow and the years that followed saw a dramatic decline in the living standards of the people, a decline which when traced, provides an insight into the pressures and tensions of life in Tyrone during these years. This period also saw the peak of Ribbon society activity in the county and the high profile trial and transportation of this sectarian Catholic society's leader in Tyrone, John Rogers. Police Outrage Reports, the main source for the study of crime in this work, became

more efficient due to the demands of the central authorities at Dublin Castle, and therefore more useful when researching, in early 1836 and provide invaluable information into plebeian life as crime is one of the few arenas in which the activities of the lower classes can be examined. These reports also provide a ground level view from policemen who lived in the community and who often came from a lower class background similar to that of the perpetrators of the crime. The cut off point of this work, 1842, coincides with a period in which the reports took on a more efficient character (from the point of view of the authorities), which resulted in less information being recorded, rendering a previously invaluable source next to useless for the historian. The time period chosen therefore, it can be seen, throws up many differing themes in which to scrutinize the subject in question and the wide range of sources ensure that there is no lack of material from which to research.

The lay out of the chapters takes on what is a logical path. Initially a profile will be built of the demographic and geographical nature of the county as population density, farm size and land quality are important factors in the study of agrarian society. The first chapter continues by constructing a portrait of the general living conditions prevalent in the county. Living conditions for the vast majority of both Protestants and Catholics had become dramatically poorer following the cessation of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 as the exaggerated prices of war time produce slumped. In addition to this, mechanical advances led to a decimation of the weaving class, a class who had depended on the extra income raised by this industry to supplement their survival on the small plots of land they occupied. These uneconomical plots were targeted by landlords who began implementing modern farming methods on their estates, often to the detriment of their tenants. Many of the weaving class slipped into the landless labourer category causing a saturation of the already over crowded

lowest and most desolate class of society. This base chapter will trace the downturn that affected much of the Protestant population and also examine the tensions that were emerging between tenants and their landlords as the traditional relationship between them, albeit slowly, began to unravel.

While this relationship was fraying at the edges however, the traditional bond between the Protestant classes still remained strong and the strength is apparent in chapter two, a chapter which examines the workings of law and order. Within this chapter a particular emphasis is placed on the role of the local magistrate, usually a figure drawn from the lesser or middle portion of the Protestant gentry who was given the role of enforcing the law, and who was a cornerstone of the local community. At a higher level, an examination of magistracy life sheds light on gentry life as they attended the numerous social events organized by the elites, events which provide a picture of how the upper classes lived. At a lower level, a sizeable portion of magistrates were land agents and this involvement with the local community at grass roots level ensured that they were figures who enjoyed a wide knowledge of rural events which enabled them to act as the link between the elite and the lower classes. A further involvement with the lower classes was copper fastened by involvement with the dominant Protestant association of the time- the Orange Order. This body was the one constant which held the different classes together and was one of the primary reasons that, despite the changes being implemented by landlords, the lower classes remained loyal to their social superiors. The Order enjoyed an extremely large membership and was dominated in its higher echelons by the upper classes. The popularity of the Order was such that it became part of the fabric that held rural life together and it was within this fabric that the lower class loyalty towards the upper classes continued to manifest itself.

Because of this popularity, government suppression of the Order was not at all welcomed by Protestants. A central question posed by this work asks how the Protestant community reacted to laws passed by a suspicious government which forbade processions and displays of party colour, elements which were key to the celebration of Orangeism. Furthermore, the question needs to be asked whether magistrates, as heads of the local community, and bitter at having had their powers severely curtailed by the government, encouraged adherence to the laws of the land or whether they continued in their roles as visible Orange leaders and turned a blind eye to the Orange activities of the lower classes.

Dealing with the discontent of Orangemen was the newly established constabulary, a body which had taken over many of the functions of the magistracy. Galen Broeker traces the changing face of law and order and the methods employed by the authorities to deal with rural outrages whilst Stanley Palmer adds to this by examining challenges to the authorities as well as their response on a nationwide level.⁸ This work will examine these challenges in the context of the arena that was Tyrone. The newly founded constabulary was the body charged with maintaining law and order which importantly included enforcing government laws regarding Orange processions. The attitudes of Orangemen towards the constabulary will be examined in order to ascertain the level of compliance that the law received. Crime, of course, consisted of much more than illegal processions and a focus on the type of general crime carried out provides a lens through which life at a local level can be examined. How the constabulary fitted into the everyday lives of the people will be shown as the location of police stations will be illustrated in order to show the areas that were most

⁸ Galen Broeker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland 1812-36* (London, 1970). Stanley Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 1988).

disturbed. The types of crime, their frequency, and location are shown to convey an indication of the problems and tensions that operated in Tyrone society.

In order to demonstrate the importance and strength of the Orange Order in the county, chapter three deals with the period prior to 1836 and in doing so sets an immediate historical background to the subject under scrutiny. This chapter begins by briefly tracing the origins of the Order before moving onto the 1820s, a period when it was firstly banned by the government but resurrected itself to deal with the threat of Daniel O'Connell and his campaign for Catholic emancipation. The location of lodges will be illustrated, the areas of Orange strength established, and the question asked as to why men joined the Order in such large numbers. As a means of demonstrating the popularity of the Order, the methodology used is as follows. The population of a chosen town or parish has been taken from the 1841 census. The Catholic population of the area has been eliminated by removing the figure provided by the 1835 Royal commission on religious instruction which therefore establishes the Protestant population. The 1841 census is then used to remove women and children from this figure which leaves only the male Protestant population of the parish remaining. The Protestant male population is then divided by the number of lodges which have been established from a study of the 1835 government report on Orange lodges. Thus, the popularity of the lodges and the proportion of Protestants joining can be established in this way as no roll books for Tyrone survive in the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland records. As the Order was such an integral part in the lives of so many Protestants, continuing government concessions to Catholics was an issue of great contention for many, and these concessions helped gel the differing classes into a united faction which helped to override the dissent that many of the lower classes may have felt regarding the loss of their traditional rights on the land and the economic depression.

Again, within this bond, the issue of upper class instruction comes to the fore. This raises a number of questions, most obviously, how the upper classes controlled the plebeians who made up the rank and file of the body. In their role as heads of society, the gentry were highly influential figures, and the guidance they provided to the lower classes is worthy of a thorough examination. Did they encourage the plebeians to show defiance towards the measures implemented by the government which appeared intent on corroding the traditional position of Protestant superiority in society? This raises the issue of 'conditional loyalism', that is Protestants being loyal to the Crown but not to the Crown's government. As explained by David W. Miller, if the government is not loyal to the people then the people cannot be expected to be loyal to it.⁹ Therefore it can be asked whether the elites provided an example of disobedience in their roles as Orangemen? Were they prepared to accept the level of violence that accompanied Orange parades? Or were they merely prepared to provide inflammatory instruction while remaining in the background? The answers to these questions will show the level of guidance that the lower classes received from their social betters and will also demonstrate the differing views of the Protestant upper classes regarding the Order.

Having examined the threats to and the fears of Protestants in the first half of this work, attention in chapter four turns to the threat posed by the Catholic community and more seriously, from a Protestant point of view, the sectarian Ribbon society. In Tyrone the religious denominations lived side by side and this raises a number of questions. Firstly, how did everyday relations between Protestants and Catholics manifest themselves? Did they mix socially which would have ensured that they generally knew each other? Or were they so polarized and entrenched that

⁹ David W. Miller, *Queens Rebels* (Belfast, 1978), pp 1-6.

mixing was out of the question? If this was the case, did it happen because of Protestant fears over a possible Catholic threat in the form of the Ribbon society? According to Tom Garvin, Ribbon societies were part of network that stretched throughout the north of the country.¹⁰ If Tyrone fitted within this framework, then Protestants surely had cause for alarm. On a more local level the frequency and nature of sectarian incidents is addressed to answer the question as to whether incidents occurred sporadically or whether they were part of a planned sectarian campaign undertaken by Catholics against Protestants. The fact that Catholics were slowly being granted a larger role in society by the government added to the alarm and stress that the Protestant community was feeling and once again the paternal relationship between the classes emerged, this time in the political arena which moves this work onto chapter five.

The elections of 1835, 1837, 1839, and 1841 saw a split in the attitudes of the upper classes with the lower classes being used as a political tool by a section of the elite which had adopted a hard-line ultra-Protestant stance. These hardliners, led by the Abercorn family, clashed politically with moderate Protestants under the leadership of the Caledon family over how to deal with the government concessions that were eroding the traditional Protestant ascendancy over Catholics. This clash in elite circles provides an insight into the workings of the upper classes at political level and highlights the dissatisfaction that this sphere of society felt towards the changes being forced on them by the government. The Protestant elites were also faced with candidates of the repeal association as O'Connell sought to make inroads into Tyrone. Yet again, the loyalty of the lower classes towards their social betters was evident as plebeian Orange mobs responded to the promptings of the upper classes and violently

¹⁰ Tom Garvin, 'Defenders, 'Ribbonmen and others: underground political networks in pre-famine

disrupted proceedings which ensured that the hard-line faction of Protestantism was triumphant.

Violent incidents involving the Orange Order contributed to increased government pressure being applied to the Order and to its eventual disbandment. However, some of the upper classes within the ultra conservative faction remained faithful to the Order after its dissolution in 1836 and the final chapter of this work ascertains who they were and whether they continued to exert their influence over the rank and file Order members. Indeed dissolution raises the question as to whether the Order survived in Tyrone at all. Desmond Murphy, while briefly touching on the subject, argues that the Order was reduced to an almost 'impotent' state during this period.¹¹ On the other hand, K. T. Hoppen suggests that the Order 'maintained a lively underground existence' and this train of thought shall be dealt with in this work.¹² Further questions arise when one considers the void that the dissolution left in the lives of Protestants across all classes. Did they organize themselves at a local level and continue their activities? Were the orders of the Grand Lodge of Ireland simply ignored by the rank and file? If so, did parades and processions continue as before? Were there any alternative societies formed to satisfy the associational needs of Order members? Did clashes with Catholics continue to take place? By addressing these questions a clearer picture emerges which sheds light on an aspect of Protestant history previously unexplored.

To sum up the content of this thesis, Protestant society in Tyrone is being examined at a cross-class level, mainly through the medium of the Orange Order, by scrutinizing the social and economic conditions being experienced, the levels and types of crime that occurred, associational culture, relations with Catholics, and

Ireland', in *Past and Present*, xcvi (August, 1982), pp 133-55.

attitudes towards law and order and the government. Despite many of the old certainties of life beginning to crumble, the relationship between the upper and lower classes, while not as straightforward as it had once been, remained as the central apparatus that held Protestant society together in the face of the many threats from outside which were threatening to shatter the position of ascendancy that this community had enjoyed for the previous 150 years. By focusing on these aspects, a clearer picture will emerge of a society which was in the midst of great change, a picture which has been largely ignored by the historian.

Helping to provide this clear picture is a large amount of primary source material. Parliament, in seeking a greater insight into the state of unrest that prevailed in Ireland, compiled frequent reports on the Irish situation. These reports involved interviewing numerous eye-witnesses although it must be stated that the majority of them came from the middle and upper classes. Nevertheless, despite this imbalance, these eye-witness accounts provide a valuable insight into the state of affairs at a local level. Particularly beneficial in tracing the downward spiral of tenant farmers is the Lord Devon chaired *Royal commission of inquiry into the state of law and practice in respect to occupation of land in Ireland*, which although drawn up in 1845 provides evidence of the increased demands being placed on tenants by their landlords in the previous twenty years. It is also helpful in tracing the desperate plight of the weaving class and the sense of loss experienced by the participants of this home industry. Also useful in tracking the economic downturn is the 1835 report of *Royal commission on the poorer classes of Ireland*, which drew many of its witnesses from the lower classes and further highlights the struggle that the majority of people faced in their everyday lives.

¹¹ Desmond Murphy, *Derry, Donegal and modern Ulster 1790-1921* (Derry, 1981), pp 70-71.

Particularly useful in the compilation of this work were the 1835 government reports examining the nature of Orange lodges which provide a mine of information regarding Orangeism and Freemasonry. It is true that the witnesses interviewed were mostly biased against the Orange Order but nonetheless useful evidence regarding the strength, structure and organization as well as gentry involvement of the Order come to light. Separate data was collected regarding population numbers and religious instruction by government commissioners. The findings of these reports are useful in establishing church attendance and the demographic nature of the county although caution is needed when examining the figures presented as errors occurred in the compilation of the data. Government reports continued with the drawing up of Ordnance Survey Memoirs, written in the mid 1830s, which provide detail on the social, cultural and economic conditions prevalent at the time and are extremely useful in providing a basic knowledge of each parish and town. The memoirs, written by officers and engineers of the British army, can be judgemental at times and some parishes are not included, whilst minimal information is provided on others. Nonetheless, these memoirs, which were only drawn up in a limited amount of counties in the northern half of the country, are a vital source of information for this study.

While government enquiries and reports are a vital source for this study, equally important were the thoughts and observations of private individuals. Vast quantities of land leases survive from estate papers from figures such as Abercorn, Caledon, and Belmore which provide first hand evidence of the changing views of landlords regarding the productivity of their lands. One such survey, carried out by John McEvoy, a land surveyor of Abercorn's, is invaluable in tracing the potential for

¹² K. T. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: conflict and conformity* (Harlow, 1989), p. 82.

improving farms and the methods employed by tenants.¹³ Much correspondence remains between landlords and their agents in relation to improvements, the economic situation, and the state of their tenantry. These estate records when used in conjunction with the Devon commission and the findings of the poor enquiry help provide a comprehensive understanding of agrarian life in 1830s Tyrone.

At a political level, one of these landowners, the earl of Caledon, served as lord lieutenant of Tyrone and compiled diaries of his experiences in this role which are most useful when examining the difficulties faced by the authorities in implementing law and order. Also available regarding law and order, and supplementing the police outrage reports, are journals from the police stations of Dungannon and Stewartstown, journals updated daily by members of the constabulary which provide an insight into the everyday lives and the problems experienced by the police. A wide range of newspapers with their reports on the outrages which took place in the county provide further understanding regarding the increasing social tensions being brought about by the changes entering everyday life of the majority of the people. These newspapers, with their differing agendas, provide this work with a cross section of opinion regarding Protestant society. From a liberal viewpoint *The Londonderry Journal and Tyrone Advertiser* and Daniel O'Connell's *Vindicator* provided a critical view and championed the Catholic cause. A more neutral opinion was put forward by the *Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet* while the *Dublin Evening Mail*, the *Ballyshannon Herald*, the *Londonderry Standard*, the *Londonderry Sentinel*, and the *Northern Standard* catered for ultra Protestant readership. As well as reporting on crime, newspapers compensate for the shortfall in surviving Orange material such as roll books, membership lists, and correspondence. Problems arise

¹³ John McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey* (Belfast, 1991).

in connection to examining the Orange Order archives mainly due to the fact that little information has survived. No such problems arise when examining Freemasonry as the archives of the Grand Masonic Lodge provide membership lists and minutes of Freemason meetings but a trawl of the Orange Order records turned up scant information, as very little material from west of the river Bann has been saved. Despite this, due to the large amount of material available from the sources mentioned, a comprehensive analysis of the Order is still possible. It is apparent, thus, that there is a wealth of primary source material available and that when material from public and private collections is used together, a wide-ranging view of Protestant society which spans all the classes can be provided.

Within these sources many names emerge which are used in this work and the problem facing any historian dealing with topics of a religious nature is how to establish members of the various religions. It is an unreliable process attempting to judge religion by surname but fortunately the sources can help in this regard. Outrage reports, in the majority of cases, provide the religion of the victim and the perpetrator involved in the crime. With regard to association membership, naturally Orange Order and Ribbon members will belong to either the Protestant or Catholic religion respectively. Most problematic are the names of Freemasons as membership lists do not provide religious affiliations. This leaves the researcher relying on modern day assumptions regarding Christian and surnames but at present little can be done to surmount this difficulty. Nonetheless, by using primary source material which does specify religious affiliation, the vast majority of names used in this work will be correct as regards their religion.

By using these primary sources, this study hopes to fill the large void which exists in historical literature regarding the role that the Orange Order has played in

Protestant social history. Hereward Senior's ground breaking *Orangeism in Britain and Ireland* deals comprehensively with the Order from its beginnings through until 1836 in a detached and dispassionate manner, which is in contrast to earlier partisan works by Sibbett and Cleary, and is generally considered to be the seminal work on Orangeism.¹⁴ Works by Gray, Haddick-Flynn, Dudley Edwards and Miller have attempted to continue the themes left by Senior's choice to end his study with the 1836 dissolution of the Order but have suffered by their choice to ignore the period of dissolution, by rather ignoring the social importance of the body, and by failing to make any connection between the classes.¹⁵ By merging this work with the pivotal works of Senior and Blackstock, a clearer and more thorough understanding of Protestant society in Ulster, and more specifically Tyrone, will be available for the historical researcher. Tyrone offers an ideal forum for such a study because of the wealth of gentry sources.

¹⁴ Hereward Senior, *Orangeism in Britain and Ireland* (London, 1966).

¹⁵ Tony Gray, *The Orange Order* (London, 1972). Kevin Haddick-Flynn, *Orangeism-the making of a tradition* (Dublin, 1999). Ruth Dudley Edwards, *The faithful tribe* (Belfast, 1999). Miller, *Queens Rebels*.

Table of contents

	<u>Page</u>
Abbreviations	i
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The social and economic conditions of County Tyrone.	17
Chapter 2: The forces of law and order.	73
Chapter 3: The Orange Order and the Freemasons.	120
Chapter 4: The Catholic threat- real or imaginary?	170
Chapter 5: The political split in the Protestant gentry.	208
Chapter 6: The dissolution of the Orange Order- reaction from above and below.	247
Conclusion	282
Bibliography	287

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Source
PRONI	The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
<i>LJ</i>	<i>Londonderry Journal and Tyrone Advertiser</i>
<i>LS</i>	<i>Londonderry Standard</i>
<i>NS</i>	<i>Northern Standard</i>
<i>NT</i>	<i>Newry Telegraph</i>
<i>ECEP</i>	<i>Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet</i>
<i>BH</i>	<i>Ballyshannon Herald</i>
<i>SOB</i>	<i>Star of Brunswick</i>
<i>FJ</i>	<i>Freeman's Journal</i>
<i>VIN</i>	<i>The Vindicator</i>
<i>BN</i>	<i>Belfast Newsletter</i>
<i>SMP</i>	<i>Strabane Morning Post</i>
<i>DEM</i>	<i>Dublin Evening Mail</i>
NAI: CSORP, OR	National Archives of Ireland: Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers, Outrage Reports
<i>OSM</i>	Ordnance survey memoirs

Parliamentary paper abbreviations

Abbreviation	Source
<i>First report on Orange lodges</i>	<i>[First] Report from the select committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange Lodges, associations or societies in Ireland; with the minutes of evidence, and appendix, H. C. 1835 (377), xvi.</i>
<i>Second report on Orange lodges</i>	<i>[Second] report from the select committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange lodges, associations or societies in Ireland, H. C. 1835 (377), xv.</i>
<i>Third report on Orange lodges</i>	<i>[Third] report from the select committee appointed to</i>

- inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange Lodges, associations or societies in Ireland*, H. C. 1835
- 1835 poor enquiry* *Royal commission on the poorer classes of Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (35) (36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42), xxx.35, 221, xxx.1, xxxiv.1, 427, 643, 657.
- 1821 census* *Abstract of answers and returns pursuant to Act for taking account of population of Ireland: enumeration abstract, appendix*, H. C. 1824 (577), xxii.411
- 1831 census* *Abstract of population returns for Ireland 1831*, H. C. 1833 (634), xxxix.59.
- 1841 census* *Report of commissioners on census of Ireland, 1841*, H. C. (1843) (504) xxiv.1.
- The Devon commission* *Royal commission of inquiry into the state of law and practice in respect to occupation of land in Ireland*, H. L. 1845 (672) (673), iv, v.
- Poor Law Union returns* *Poor Law Unions (Ireland). Returns relative to Poor Law Unions, and of persons holding land, etc. in Ireland*, H. C. 1845 (593) xxxviii.209.
- State of Ireland in respect of crime* *Report from the select committee of the House of Lords, appointed to enquire into the state of Ireland in respect of crime, and to report thereupon to the House; with the minutes of evidence taken before the committee, and an appendix and index. Part 1. Report, and evidence 22 April to 16 May 1839*, H. L. 1839 (486), xi.1, xii.1.

Introduction

This thesis deals with the Protestant community at a cross-class level in County Tyrone from 1836 to 1842. It will examine how this community reacted to the social, economic, and political changes which were permeating Irish society at this time. This study is unique in that it not only looks at how Protestant society worked but also because it covers all levels of the Protestant social stratum from the lowest classes up to the elites of high society. The under classes will be viewed through the spectrum of crime, land occupation, the linen industry, and associational activity whilst the middle and upper classes will be viewed through election contests, membership of the magistracy, their ownership of the land, and in common with the lower classes, also through associational activity. Associational activity, and in particular membership of the Orange Order, was a vital element in bringing people of different backgrounds together, and it plays a pivotal role in this work as it provides the framework around which Protestant society is examined.

As with any thesis, the subject matter has received little attention from historians. While Catholic society has been well examined and documented over the period in question notably in Marianne Elliott's *The Catholics of Ulster*, little work has been produced regarding Protestant society in Ulster.¹ Allan Blackstock has attempted to redress this balance over the past decade with his works on the yeomanry, and the importance of this body in cementing the relationship between the upper and lower classes is brought to light in his studies.² In addition to this, Blackstock has produced an interesting study entitled *Loyalism in Ireland, 1789-1829* which is one of the few works that attempts to tackle the issue of Protestant life during this period. This work provides a detailed study for the period in question by

¹Marianne Elliott, *The Catholics of Ulster* (London, 2000).

²Allan Blackstock, 'Orangeism and the Irish yeomanry', in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxx, no. 119 (1997), pp 393-405. *An ascendancy army, the Irish yeomanry, 1796-1834* (Dublin, 1998). 'The social and political implications of the raising of the yeomanry in Ulster' in David Dickson, Daire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, radicalism and rebellion* (Dublin, 1993), pp 234-43.

supplying vital information on the early Orange Order, the yeomanry, and the Brunswick Clubs, all of which played an important role in creating solidarity within the Protestant community. Unfortunately, as the title suggests, this study ends in 1829 meaning that the post Catholic emancipation period is left unattended.³ Another comprehensive study on Protestant society and politics has been provided by Ian D'Alton who deals with Cork from 1812 until 1844 but which examines a county very different in its religious make up to that of Ulster and with a community which was very much in the minority, something not the case with the Protestants of Tyrone.⁴ Suzanne Kingon has produced work specifically on the reaction of Ulster Protestant society to the granting of Catholic emancipation and more generally on Ulster Protestant politics from 1825 to 1835 which is most useful in providing an immediate political background to this thesis but again stops short of dealing with the timescale of this work.⁵ Frank Wright has produced important work regarding Ulster politics in the 1830s but missing from this otherwise significant study is the topic of inter class relations within the Protestant community.⁶ Jonathan Bardon's *A history of Ulster* is a useful read but is too chronologically wide ranging in its scope to provide any microscopic detail on the subject in question while K. T. Hoppen's *Elections, politics and society in Ireland 1832-85* supplies a tantalising glimpse in its early chapters of societal structure and the changing face of politics in the late 1830s.⁷

This work aims to make up for this shortfall of material by shedding light on how the Protestant community, which made up almost half of the population of Tyrone, functioned from its lower levels right up to its upper classes. Initially, it should be explained that by

³ Allan Blackstock, *Loyalism in Ulster 1789-1829* (Woodbridge, 2007).

⁴ Ian D'Alton, *Protestant society and politics in Cork, 1812-1844* (Cork, 1980).

⁵ Suzanne T. Kingon, 'Ulster counties in the age of emancipation and reform', in Allan Blackstock and Eoin Magennis (eds) *Politics and political culture in Britain and Ireland 1750-1850, essays in tribute to Peter Jupp* (Belfast, 2007).

⁶ Frank Wright, *Two lands on one soil* (Dublin, 1996).

⁷ Jonathan Bardon, *A History of Ulster* (Belfast, 1992). K. T. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland 1832-85* (Oxford, 1984).

using the umbrella term ‘Protestant society’, all strands of Protestantism will be included and dealt with under the same banner as it is not within the scope of this project to deal with the differing factions within this religious category independently. Within these strands of Protestantism stood the lower classes and what was often called ‘the mob’. This class was negatively viewed by many among the upper sections of society and the authorities who considered many among them to be drunken undisciplined troublemakers. The term ‘the mob’ was used pejoratively particularly by the liberal press in their reporting of the electoral violence in which they partook. This term was used to describe a grouping that were reported to be ‘roughnecks’, ‘ruffians’ and ‘rascallions’ at various stages by the anti-Orange press. The term features frequently in chapter five when politics is dealt with but it must be remembered that this ‘mob’ whether drunken hooligans or not played an important role in Tyrone politics and were part of a compromise that bound them to certain members of the upper classes. By focusing on the lower orders and the other strands of Protestant society, a comprehensive analysis of the tensions operating within a community which was in the midst of a period of major transition will be provided.

Protestant society was held together by a traditional, customary patriarchal relationship between the upper and lower classes. However, this relationship was beginning to crumble by the 1830s as landlords sought to maximize the productivity of their lands by inserting harsh clauses in land leases, enforcing farm consolidation, and halting traditional practices such as the sharing of common land and the sub-division of farms. In addition to the changes being implemented by landlords, the lower classes also had to contend with the collapse of the linen industry, an industry which had helped to sustain so many of them on small farm holdings. For many of the Protestant lower classes, the world that they knew with the relative certainties that weaving and landlord paternalism provided was falling apart which naturally led to tensions emerging. Nonetheless, while the relationship between the

local elite and their tenants was not as secure as it had once been, it still remained strong in a society which was still rigid in its social hierarchy. Despite increasing tension, Protestant society on the whole held firm during this period of social change which raises the question as to what mechanism was in place to keep the varying strands together, a central question which will be addressed throughout this work.

Tyrone was chosen as the county to examine for a number of reasons. This was a county divided almost equally among religious lines, one of the few counties in Ireland where this occurred. Because of the lack of numerical dominance enjoyed by any particular segment of the community, the historians provided with a more focused insight into everyday relations between the religious factions than would be available in a county where one or the other enjoyed a clear majority. The county was mostly rural in its nature but contained urban centres in the important towns of Strabane, Dungannon, Omagh, Stewartstown and Cookstown, therefore life can be examined at both an urban and a rural level. The geographical location of Tyrone included much of the eastern half of the county within the 'linen triangle', an area of high population density which had flourished during times of economic prosperity but which by the 1820s and 1830s was suffering due to the downturn in the linen industry. A comparison can be drawn between this relatively commercialized part of the county and the somewhat less advanced areas of west Tyrone. This county was also a strong centre of Orangeism which provides a wider scope for the examination of this body and the role that it played in the lives of Tyrone Protestants. Similarly, Freemasonry was also strong in Tyrone and offers an avenue for the examination of cross-class relationships amongst Protestants and indeed a study of relations between Protestants and Catholics. The county also benefited from a largely resident gentry, which was not the case in many other counties such as Donegal, and the resulting large volume of estate records, land leases, rent books, and personal correspondence which survive from figures such as the earls of Caledon

and Belmore and the marquis of Abercorn provide the researcher with sources that are invaluable when tracing the workings of this particular society.

The time period of 1836 until 1842 was chosen for a number of reasons. First, from a political point of view, 1835 had seen the first contested election in the county in six decades, and had resulted in a bitterly fought contest. Elections held in 1837, 1839 and 1841 produced similar contentious battles in which the mob played a key role whereas the post 1842 period saw a stabilization in Tyrone politics which resulted in few contested election struggles. The Orange Order had reached its peak strength by 1835 but early 1836 saw the dissolution of the Order, an event which provides a useful focus on any study on Protestant society, as the reaction of its members highlights the seminal role that the society played in the lives of its brethren. By 1836 the economic depression was in full flow and the years that followed saw a dramatic decline in the living standards of the people, a decline which when traced, provides an insight into the pressures and tensions of life in Tyrone during these years. This period also saw the peak of Ribbon society activity in the county and the high profile trial and transportation of this sectarian Catholic society's leader in Tyrone, John Rogers. Police Outrage Reports, the main source for the study of crime in this work, became more efficient due to the demands of the central authorities at Dublin Castle, and therefore more useful when researching, in early 1836 and provide invaluable information into plebeian life as crime is one of the few arenas in which the activities of the lower classes can be examined. These reports also provide a ground level view from policemen who lived in the community and who often came from a lower class background similar to that of the perpetrators of the crime. The cut off point of this work, 1842, coincides with a period in which the reports took on a more efficient character (from the point of view of the authorities), which resulted in less information being recorded, rendering a previously invaluable source next to useless for the historian. The time period chosen therefore, it can be seen, throws up many differing themes

in which to scrutinize the subject in question and the wide range of sources ensure that there is no lack of material from which to research.

The lay out of the chapters takes on what is a logical path. Initially a profile will be built of the demographic and geographical nature of the county as population density, farm size and land quality are important factors in the study of agrarian society. The first chapter continues by constructing a portrait of the general living conditions prevalent in the county. Living conditions for the vast majority of both Protestants and Catholics had become dramatically poorer following the cessation of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 as the exaggerated prices of war time produce slumped. In addition to this, mechanical advances led to a decimation of the weaving class, a class who had depended on the extra income raised by this industry to supplement their survival on the small plots of land they occupied. These uneconomical plots were targeted by landlords who began implementing modern farming methods on their estates, often to the detriment of their tenants. Many of the weaving class slipped into the landless labourer category causing a saturation of the already over crowded lowest and most desolate class of society. This base chapter will trace the downturn that affected much of the Protestant population and also examine the tensions that were emerging between tenants and their landlords as the traditional relationship between them, albeit slowly, began to unravel.

While this relationship was fraying at the edges however, the traditional bond between the Protestant classes still remained strong and the strength is apparent in chapter two, a chapter which examines the workings of law and order. Within this chapter a particular emphasis is placed on the role of the local magistrate, usually a figure drawn from the lesser or middle portion of the Protestant gentry who was given the role of enforcing the law, and who was a cornerstone of the local community. At a higher level, an examination of magistracy life sheds light on gentry life as they attended the numerous social events

organized by the elites, events which provide a picture of how the upper classes lived. At a lower level, a sizeable portion of magistrates were land agents and this involvement with the local community at grass roots level ensured that they were figures who enjoyed a wide knowledge of rural events which enabled them to act as the link between the elite and the lower classes. A further involvement with the lower classes was copper fastened by involvement with the dominant Protestant association of the time- the Orange Order. This body was the one constant which held the different classes together and was one of the primary reasons that, despite the changes being implemented by landlords, the lower classes remained loyal to their social superiors. The Order enjoyed an extremely large membership and was dominated in its higher echelons by the upper classes. The popularity of the Order was such that it became part of the fabric that held rural life together and it was within this fabric that the lower class loyalty towards the upper classes continued to manifest itself.

Because of this popularity, government suppression of the Order was not at all welcomed by Protestants. A central question posed by this work asks how the Protestant community reacted to laws passed by a suspicious government which forbade processions and displays of party colour, elements which were key to the celebration of Orangeism. Furthermore, the question needs to be asked whether magistrates, as heads of the local community, and bitter at having had their powers severely curtailed by the government, encouraged adherence to the laws of the land or whether they continued in their roles as visible Orange leaders and turned a blind eye to the Orange activities of the lower classes.

Dealing with the discontent of Orangemen was the newly established constabulary, a body which had taken over many of the functions of the magistracy. Galen Broeker traces the changing face of law and order and the methods employed by the authorities to deal with rural outrages whilst Stanley Palmer adds to this by examining challenges to the authorities as

well as their response on a nationwide level.⁸ This work will examine these challenges in the context of the arena that was Tyrone. The newly founded constabulary was the body charged with maintaining law and order which importantly included enforcing government laws regarding Orange processions. The attitudes of Orangemen towards the constabulary will be examined in order to ascertain the level of compliance that the law received. Crime, of course, consisted of much more than illegal processions and a focus on the type of general crime carried out provides a lens through which life at a local level can be examined. How the constabulary fitted into the everyday lives of the people will be shown as the location of police stations will be illustrated in order to show the areas that were most disturbed. The types of crime, their frequency, and location are shown to convey an indication of the problems and tensions that operated in Tyrone society.

In order to demonstrate the importance and strength of the Orange Order in the county, chapter three deals with the period prior to 1836 and in doing so sets an immediate historical background to the subject under scrutiny. This chapter begins by briefly tracing the origins of the Order before moving onto the 1820s, a period when it was firstly banned by the government but resurrected itself to deal with the threat of Daniel O'Connell and his campaign for Catholic emancipation. The location of lodges will be illustrated, the areas of Orange strength established, and the question asked as to why men joined the Order in such large numbers. As a means of demonstrating the popularity of the Order, the methodology used is as follows. The population of a chosen town or parish has been taken from the 1841 census. The Catholic population of the area has been eliminated by removing the figure provided by the 1835 Royal commission on religious instruction which therefore establishes the Protestant population. The 1841 census is then used to remove women and children from this figure which leaves only the male Protestant population of the parish remaining. The

⁸ Galen Broeker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland 1812-36* (London, 1970). Stanley Palmer, *Police and Protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 1988).

Protestant male population is then divided by the number of lodges which have been established from a study of the 1835 government report on Orange lodges. Thus, the popularity of the lodges and the proportion of Protestants joining can be established in this way as no roll books for Tyrone survive in the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland records. As the Order was such an integral part in the lives of so many Protestants, continuing government concessions to Catholics was an issue of great contention for many, and these concessions helped gel the differing classes into a united faction which helped to override the dissent that many of the lower classes may have felt regarding the loss of their traditional rights on the land and the economic depression.

Again, within this bond, the issue of upper class instruction comes to the fore. This raises a number of questions, most obviously, how the upper classes controlled the plebeians who made up the rank and file of the body. In their role as heads of society, the gentry were highly influential figures, and the guidance they provided to the lower classes is worthy of a thorough examination. Did they encourage the plebeians to show defiance towards the measures implemented by the government which appeared intent on corroding the traditional position of Protestant superiority in society? This raises the issue of ‘conditional loyalism’, that is Protestants being loyal to the Crown but not to the Crown’s government. As explained by David W. Miller, if the government is not loyal to the people then the people cannot be expected to be loyal to it.⁹ Therefore it can be asked whether the elites provided an example of disobedience in their roles as Orangemen? Were they prepared to accept the level of violence that accompanied Orange parades? Or were they merely prepared to provide inflammatory instruction while remaining in the background? The answers to these questions will show the level of guidance that the lower classes received from their social betters and will also demonstrate the differing views of the Protestant upper classes regarding the Order.

⁹ David W. Miller, *Queens Rebels* (Belfast, 1978), pp 1-6.

Having examined the threats to and the fears of Protestants in the first half of this work, attention in chapter four turns to the threat posed by the Catholic community and more seriously, from a Protestant point of view, the sectarian Ribbon society. In Tyrone the religious denominations lived side by side and this raises a number of questions. Firstly, how did everyday relations between Protestants and Catholics manifest themselves? Did they mix socially which would have ensured that they generally knew each other? Or were they so polarized and entrenched that mixing was out of the question? If this was the case, did it happen because of Protestant fears over a possible Catholic threat in the form of the Ribbon society? According to Tom Garvin, Ribbon societies were part of network that stretched throughout the north of the country.¹⁰ If Tyrone fitted within this framework, then Protestants surely had cause for alarm. On a more local level the frequency and nature of sectarian incidents is addressed to answer the question as to whether incidents occurred sporadically or whether they were part of a planned sectarian campaign undertaken by Catholics against Protestants. The fact that Catholics were slowly being granted a larger role in society by the government added to the alarm and stress that the Protestant community was feeling and once again the paternal relationship between the classes emerged, this time in the political arena which moves this work onto chapter five.

The elections of 1835, 1837, 1839, and 1841 saw a split in the attitudes of the upper classes with the lower classes being used as a political tool by a section of the elite which had adopted a hard-line ultra-Protestant stance. These hardliners, led by the Abercorn family, clashed politically with moderate Protestants under the leadership of the Caledon family over how to deal with the government concessions that were eroding the traditional Protestant ascendancy over Catholics. This clash in elite circles provides an insight into the workings of the upper classes at political level and highlights the dissatisfaction that this sphere of society

¹⁰ Tom Garvin, 'Defenders, 'Ribbonmen and others: underground political networks in pre-famine Ireland', in *Past and Present*, xcvi (August, 1982), pp 133-55.

felt towards the changes being forced on them by the government. The Protestant elites were also faced with candidates of the repeal association as O'Connell sought to make inroads into Tyrone. Yet again, the loyalty of the lower classes towards their social betters was evident as plebeian Orange mobs responded to the promptings of the upper classes and violently disrupted proceedings which ensured that the hard-line faction of Protestantism was triumphant.

Violent incidents involving the Orange Order contributed to increased government pressure being applied to the Order and to its eventual disbandment. However, some of the upper classes within the ultra conservative faction remained faithful to the Order after its dissolution in 1836 and the final chapter of this work ascertains who they were and whether they continued to exert their influence over the rank and file Order members. Indeed dissolution raises the question as to whether the Order survived in Tyrone at all. Desmond Murphy, while briefly touching on the subject, argues that the Order was reduced to an almost 'impotent' state during this period.¹¹ On the other hand, K. T. Hoppen suggests that the Order 'maintained a lively underground existence' and this train of thought shall be dealt with in this work.¹² Further questions arise when one considers the void that the dissolution left in the lives of Protestants across all classes. Did they organize themselves at a local level and continue their activities? Were the orders of the Grand Lodge of Ireland simply ignored by the rank and file? If so, did parades and processions continue as before? Were there any alternative societies formed to satisfy the associational needs of Order members? Did clashes with Catholics continue to take place? By addressing these questions a clearer picture emerges which sheds light on an aspect of Protestant history previously unexplored.

To sum up the content of this thesis, Protestant society in Tyrone is being examined at a cross-class level, mainly through the medium of the Orange Order, by scrutinizing the

¹¹ Desmond Murphy, *Derry, Donegal and modern Ulster 1790-1921* (Derry, 1981), pp 70-71.

¹² K. T. Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: conflict and conformity* (Harlow, 1989), p. 82.

social and economic conditions being experienced, the levels and types of crime that occurred, associational culture, relations with Catholics, and attitudes towards law and order and the government. Despite many of the old certainties of life beginning to crumble, the relationship between the upper and lower classes, while not as straightforward as it had once been, remained as the central apparatus that held Protestant society together in the face of the many threats from outside which were threatening to shatter the position of ascendancy that this community had enjoyed for the previous 150 years. By focusing on these aspects, a clearer picture will emerge of a society which was in the midst of great change, a picture which has been largely ignored by the historian.

Helping to provide this clear picture is a large amount of primary source material. Parliament, in seeking a greater insight into the state of unrest that prevailed in Ireland, compiled frequent reports on the Irish situation. These reports involved interviewing numerous eye-witnesses although it must be stated that the majority of them came from the middle and upper classes. Nevertheless, despite this imbalance, these eye-witness accounts provide a valuable insight into the state of affairs at a local level. Particularly beneficial in tracing the downward spiral of tenant farmers is the Lord Devon chaired *Royal commission of inquiry into the state of law and practice in respect to occupation of land in Ireland*, which although drawn up in 1845 provides evidence of the increased demands being placed on tenants by their landlords in the previous twenty years. It is also helpful in tracing the desperate plight of the weaving class and the sense of loss experienced by the participants of this home industry. Also useful in tracking the economic downturn is the 1835 report of *Royal commission on the poorer classes of Ireland*, which drew many of its witnesses from the lower classes and further highlights the struggle that the majority of people faced in their everyday lives.

Particularly useful in the compilation of this work were the 1835 government reports examining the nature of Orange lodges which provide a mine of information regarding Orangeism and Freemasonry. It is true that the witnesses interviewed were mostly biased against the Orange Order but nonetheless useful evidence regarding the strength, structure and organization as well as gentry involvement of the Order come to light. Separate data was collected regarding population numbers and religious instruction by government commissioners. The findings of these reports are useful in establishing church attendance and the demographic nature of the county although caution is needed when examining the figures presented as errors occurred in the compilation of the data. Government reports continued with the drawing up of Ordnance Survey Memoirs, written in the mid 1830s, which provide detail on the social, cultural and economic conditions prevalent at the time and are extremely useful in providing a basic knowledge of each parish and town. The memoirs, written by officers and engineers of the British army, can be judgemental at times and some parishes are not included, whilst minimal information is provided on others. Nonetheless, these memoirs, which were only drawn up in a limited amount of counties in the northern half of the country, are a vital source of information for this study.

While government enquiries and reports are a vital source for this study, equally important were the thoughts and observations of private individuals. Vast quantities of land leases survive from estate papers from figures such as Abercorn, Caledon, and Belmore which provide first hand evidence of the changing views of landlords regarding the productivity of their lands. One such survey, carried out by John McEvoy, a land surveyor of Abercorn's, is invaluable in tracing the potential for improving farms and the methods employed by tenants.¹³ Much correspondence remains between landlords and their agents in relation to improvements, the economic situation, and the state of their tenantry. These estate

¹³ John McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey* (Belfast, 1991).

records when used in conjunction with the Devon commission and the findings of the poor enquiry help provide a comprehensive understanding of agrarian life in 1830s Tyrone.

At a political level, one of these landowners, the earl of Caledon, served as lord lieutenant of Tyrone and compiled diaries of his experiences in this role which are most useful when examining the difficulties faced by the authorities in implementing law and order. Also available regarding law and order, and supplementing the police outrage reports, are journals from the police stations of Dungannon and Stewartstown, journals updated daily by members of the constabulary which provide an insight into the everyday lives and the problems experienced by the police. A wide range of newspapers with their reports on the outrages which took place in the county provide further understanding regarding the increasing social tensions being brought about by the changes entering everyday life of the majority of the people. These newspapers, with their differing agendas, provide this work with a cross section of opinion regarding Protestant society. From a liberal viewpoint *The Londonderry Journal and Tyrone Advertiser* and Daniel O'Connell's *Vindicator* provided a critical view and championed the Catholic cause. A more neutral opinion was put forward by the *Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet* while the *Dublin Evening Mail*, the *Ballyshannon Herald*, the *Londonderry Standard*, the *Londonderry Sentinel*, and the *Northern Standard* catered for ultra Protestant readership. As well as reporting on crime, newspapers compensate for the shortfall in surviving Orange material such as roll books, membership lists, and correspondence. Problems arise in connection to examining the Orange Order archives mainly due to the fact that little information has survived. No such problems arise when examining Freemasonry as the archives of the Grand Masonic Lodge provide membership lists and minutes of Freemason meetings but a trawl of the Orange Order records turned up scant information, as very little material from west of the river Bann has been saved. Despite this, due to the large amount of material available from the sources mentioned, a

comprehensive analysis of the Order is still possible. It is apparent, thus, that there is a wealth of primary source material available and that when material from public and private collections is used together, a wide-ranging view of Protestant society which spans all the classes can be provided.

Within these sources many names emerge which are used in this work and the problem facing any historian dealing with topics of a religious nature is how to establish members of the various religions. It is an unreliable process attempting to judge religion by surname but fortunately the sources can help in this regard. Outrage reports, in the majority of cases, provide the religion of the victim and the perpetrator involved in the crime. With regard to association membership, naturally Orange Order and Ribbon members will belong to either the Protestant or Catholic religion respectively. Most problematic are the names of Freemasons as membership lists do not provide religious affiliations. This leaves the researcher relying on modern day assumptions regarding Christian and surnames but at present little can be done to surmount this difficulty. Nonetheless, by using primary source material which does specify religious affiliation, the vast majority of names used in this work will be correct as regards their religion.

By using these primary sources, this study hopes to fill the large void which exists in historical literature regarding the role that the Orange Order has played in Protestant social history. Hereward Senior's ground breaking *Orangeism in Britain and Ireland* deals comprehensively with the Order from its beginnings through until 1836 in a detached and dispassionate manner, which is in contrast to earlier partisan works by Sibbett and Cleary, and is generally considered to be the seminal work on Orangeism.¹⁴ Works by Gray, Haddick-Flynn, Dudley Edwards and Miller have attempted to continue the themes left by Senior's choice to end his study with the 1836 dissolution of the Order but have suffered by their

¹⁴Hereward Senior, *Orangeism in Britain and Ireland* (London, 1966).

choice to ignore the period of dissolution, by rather ignoring the social importance of the body, and by failing to make any connection between the classes.¹⁵ By merging this work with the pivotal works of Senior and Blackstock, a clearer and more thorough understanding of Protestant society in Ulster, and more specifically Tyrone, will be available for the historical researcher. Tyrone offers an ideal forum for such a study because of the wealth of gentry sources.

¹⁵Tony Gray, *The Orange Order* (London, 1972). Kevin Haddick-Flynn, *Orangeism-the making of a tradition* (Dublin, 1999). Ruth Dudley Edwards, *The faithful tribe* (Belfast, 1999). Miller, *Queens Rebels*.

Chapter 1

The social and economic conditions of County Tyrone

In any study of how a particular society lived it is essential to study the conditions of the mass of the people and their relationship to local elites. This is especially important when looking at the early decades of the nineteenth century, a period that saw great change in industry and agriculture as the elites sought to maximize the productivity and profitability of the vast estates that they held. How these changes affected the Protestants of County Tyrone will be the subject of this chapter. To begin this work a demographic and geographical picture will be provided of the county especially to show population density, land quality, and farm size, factors which are of great importance when looking at any agrarian society. Ownership of the land and treatment of the tenants will be traced in a bid to assert whether living conditions were improving and whether tenants embraced or resisted the changes that were being forced upon them. The deterioration in living standards of many tenants will be explained together with the mounting financial burdens that they faced. What needs to be asked is whether the conditions and changes that were being experienced contributed to unrest among the Protestant community in County Tyrone? Were people pushed into a lower standard of living by conditions imposed by landlords seeking to profit from increased food demand from mainland Britain and by a newly industrialized linen industry which signalled the end of industry in the home? Did the lower classes turn on their social betters who were now applying harsher conditions in land leases or did they merely turn on each other in the struggle to maintain their holdings? Did desperation on the part of the peasantry lead to organized resistance or were they resigned to their fate of misery and increased hardships? Stephen R. Gibbons in his study of threatening notices in pre-famine Ireland asserts that 'it is abundantly clear that agrarian crime in early nineteenth century Ireland was indissolubly

bound up with the wretched economic conditions that affected every area'.¹ While Gibbons, in common with many other commentators, focuses attention on the Catholic population, this work will draw attention to the plight of the Protestant community in a county that was divided almost equally among the differing religious sects and it will examine whether this group of people suffered from the same problems and difficulties that have been well documented regarding the Catholic community and whether these difficulties forced them into resorting to violence. By providing an examination of the county, new light shall be shed upon these questions.

In common with the rest of the country, the population of Tyrone had increased dramatically in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In 1802 a statistical survey of the county compiled by John McEvoy put the population at 172,224.² Census figures show that this figure had grown to 261,865 by 1821 and had further increased to 312,936 by 1841.³ These figures point to a population increase of over 80 per cent in less than forty years. There were problems of course with the gathering of such data meaning that these figures possibly underestimate the population especially those provided by McEvoy. However, whatever their limitations, they should not be dismissed as they do provide an indication of the dramatic rise in population in the period prior to the famine. The size of the county amounted to 806,840 square acres with the most densely populated area being the lowlands of East Tyrone which held over 300 persons per square mile.⁴

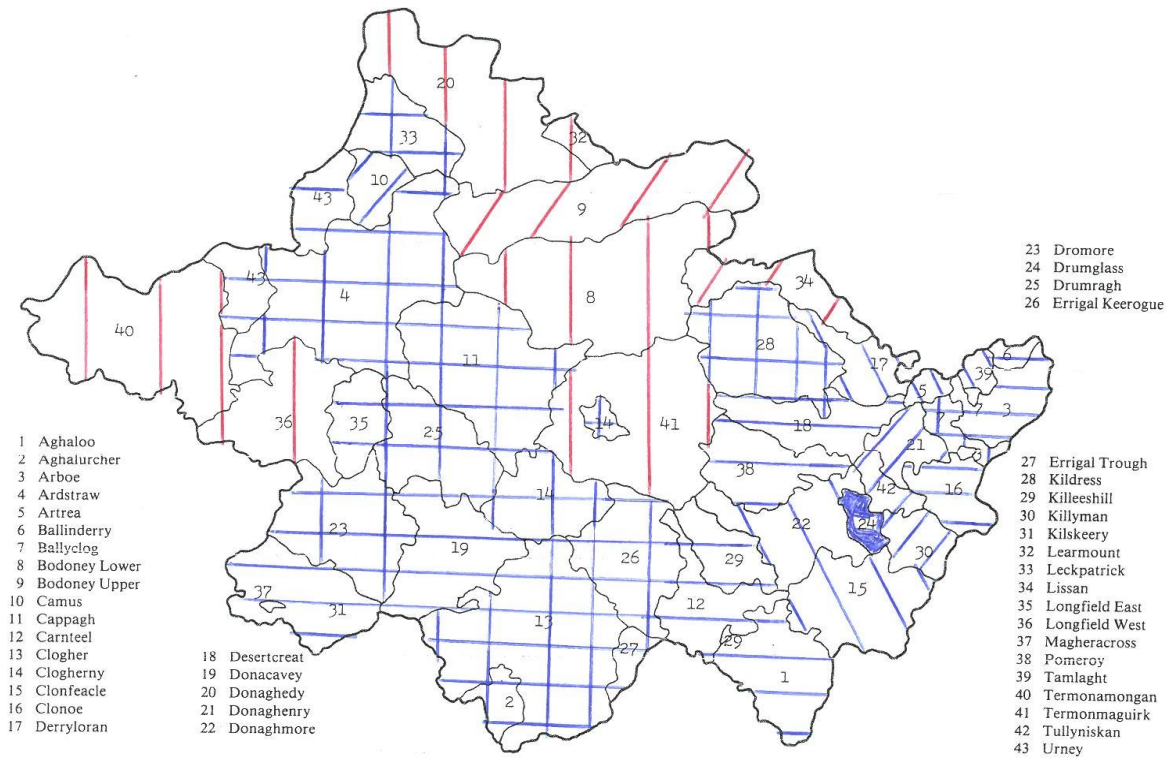
¹ Stephen R. Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant the threatening letters of pre-famine Ireland, 1801-45* (Dublin, 2004), p. 15.

² John McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey* (Belfast, 1991 edition), p. 35.

³ *1841 census*, p. 352.

⁴ William MacAfee, 'The population of County Tyrone 1600-1991' in Charles Dillon and Henry A. Jeffers (eds), *Tyrone: history and society* (Dublin, 2000), pp 443-61.

THE PARISHES OF COUNTY TYRONE



Map 1: Population of County Tyrone⁵

⁵ 1841 census, pp 348-52.

This area was covered by the barony of Dungannon which had a population of over 127,000 and in which were located the urban centres of Dungannon, Stewartstown, and Cookstown.⁶ It was roughly equal in size to the barony of Strabane in the west and the barony of Omagh in the central and northern regions of the county but because it contained vastly superior land which was described as being ‘of a pretty good quality, with a clay bottom...with a good deal of mossy meadow upon it’, the population was much higher.⁷ McEvoy described the land around Dungannon and the Moy as being ‘beautiful and fertile’ where ‘every kind of crop succeeds well’ and made similar observations about the Cookstown and Stewartstown areas.⁸ The barony of Omagh was said to be ‘two thirds arable and one third bog’ and included the Sperrin mountains in its northern areas, mountains that soared to a high point of 2,234 feet above sea level and which contributed to low population density in the parishes of Lower and Upper Badoney, and Leckpatrick.⁹ The principal towns in the Strabane barony were Strabane itself, Newtown Stewart and Castlederg, and it was also an area of mixed land quality according to local farmer Edward Sproule who reported that ‘it (the Derg valley) is a second rate quality of soil, rather rough; there is some good land, but a good deal of it is rough ground’.¹⁰ This rough ground was predominant in the parish of Termonamongan, the most westerly parish in the county. The smallest barony, Clogher, in the south of the county was home to the villages of Ballygawley, Fivemiletown, Clogher and Augher and was described by McEvoy as being ‘a rich extensive valley...producing as good crops as any part of the kingdom’.¹¹

⁶ *1841 census*, p. 352

⁷ *The Devon commission*, p. 827.

⁸ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 13.

⁹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 216, George Buchanan, p. 828. *OSM*, v, p. 20.

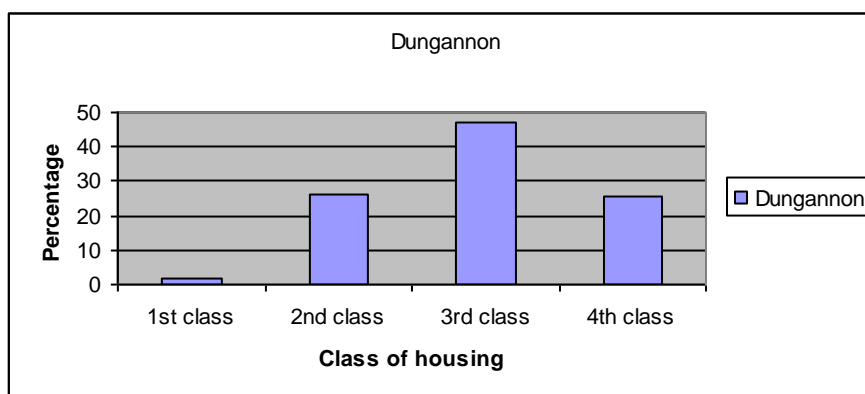
¹⁰ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 205, Edward Sproule, p. 798.

¹¹ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 12.

County Tyrone 1841		
Barony	Population	Total acres
Clogher	38713	97570
Dunganon	127051	243561
Omagh	76045	225019
Strabane	71143	240490
Total	312952	806640

Table 1: Barony size and population.¹²

With the most arable land, it is not difficult to understand therefore, why the highest concentration of people was found in the east of the county. It is recognised by most commentators that a general division in land quality and indeed in the quality of life existed between the counties east of the river Bann (Antrim and Down) and those west of the river (of which Tyrone was one). To this assertion, it could be added that in fact within Tyrone itself a similar division existed between east and west, the east being the more prosperous. Indeed, McEvoy was of the opinion that ‘the people of the baronies of Dunganon and Clogher are much more polished, than those of Strabane and Omagh generally are’.¹³ This claim is backed up by the difference in housing standards between east and west. A study of housing classes in 1841 highlights a more prosperous eastern half of the county. 25 per cent of housing in the barony of Dunganon was classed as being of a fourth class standard while third class standard housing made up 47 per cent.



¹² 1841 census, p. 352.

¹³ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 201.

Table 2: Housing standards in the barony of Dungannon

A similar picture was evident in Clogher- 28 per cent of housing being fourth class standard and 47 per cent third class.

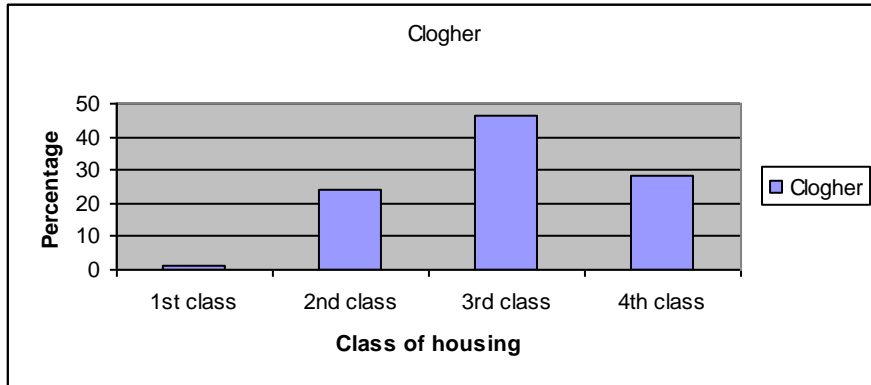


Table 3: Housing standards in the barony of Clogher

However, the barony of Omagh showed third class housing making up 40 per cent and fourth class housing 45 per cent of its housing.

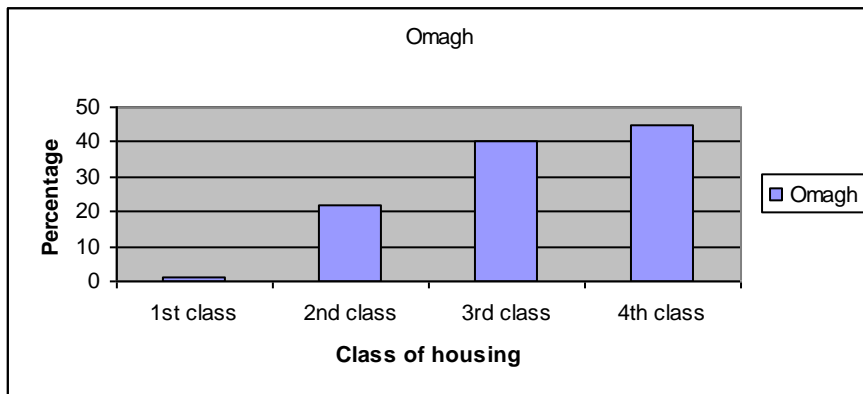


Table 4: Housing standards in the barony of Omagh

Strabane barony was also composed of 45 per cent of fourth class housing and just 28 per cent third class.¹⁴

¹⁴1841 Census. Appendix, pp 350-52.

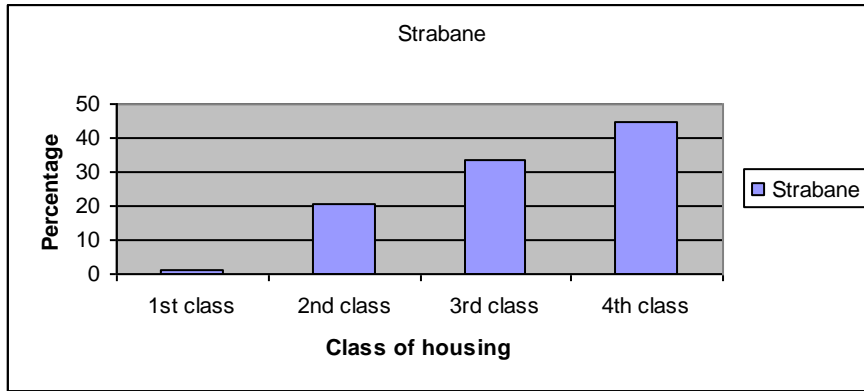
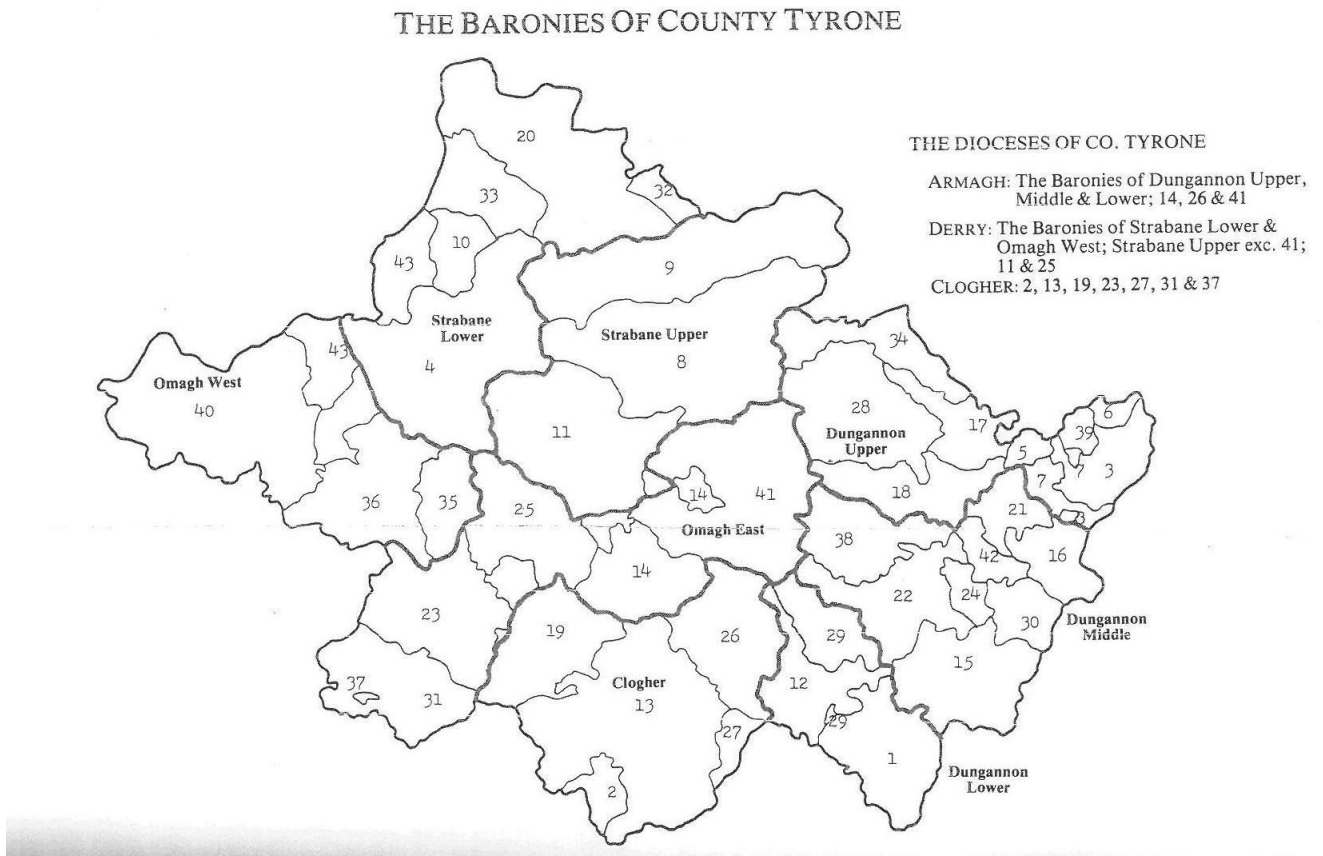


Table 5: Housing standards in the barony of Strabane



Map 2: The baronies of County Tyrone¹⁵

Therefore while third class housing was predominant in the baronies of Dungannon and Clogher, fourth class housing was more common in the baronies of Omagh and Strabane and

¹⁵ Brian Mitchell, *A new genealogical atlas of Ireland* (Baltimore, 1986), p. 107.

this would suggest a less prosperous western half of the county.

Farm size also highlights the difference between the east and the west of the county. As shown in the following bar-charts these smaller holdings (1-20 acres) were most prominent in the eastern unions of Dungannon, Cookstown and Clogher whereas the unions of Strabane, Gortin and Castlederg which occupied the mid and western areas of the county saw holdings of a larger acreage (10-50 acres) predominate. The superior land in the eastern districts meant that more crops could be produced and a living could be etched out from farms not as large as those in the central and western areas of the county. Because of the poorer land, the population density was much lesser in the west of the county meaning that holdings were usually larger but of lesser quality which resulted in farms of twenty acres in Termonamongan, for example, yielding fewer crops than ten acre farms in Clonfeacle.

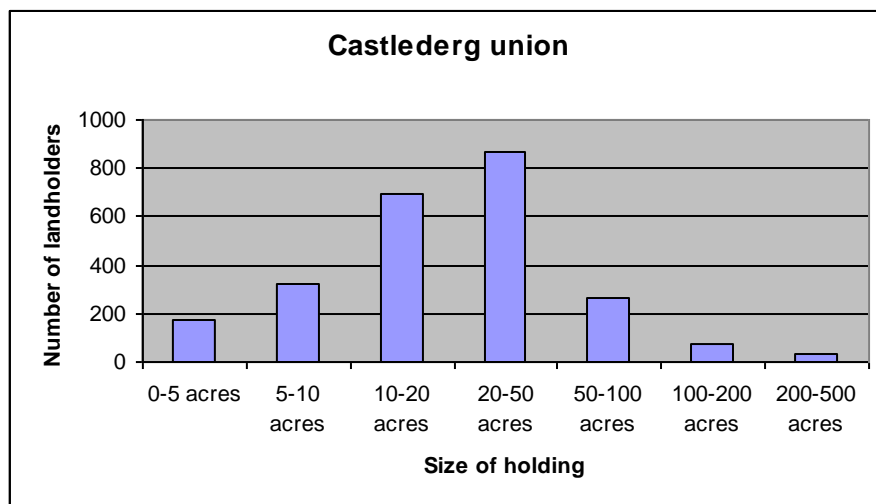


Table 6: Farm size in the Castlederg Poor Law Union¹⁶

¹⁶ *Poor Law Union returns*, p. 4.

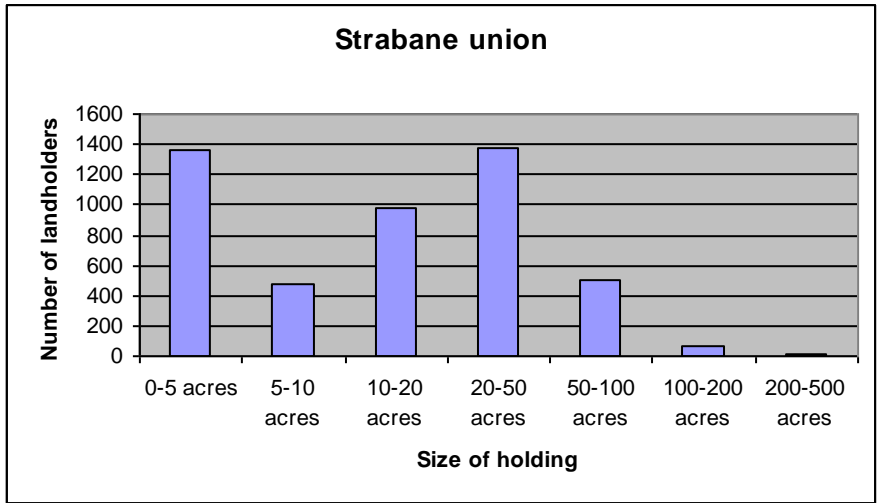


Table 7: Farm size in the Strabane Poor Law Union*¹⁷

* The 0-5 acre category includes an unspecified number of town gardens in the town of Strabane which are not distinguishable from family holdings. This also applies to the town of Omagh (table 8).

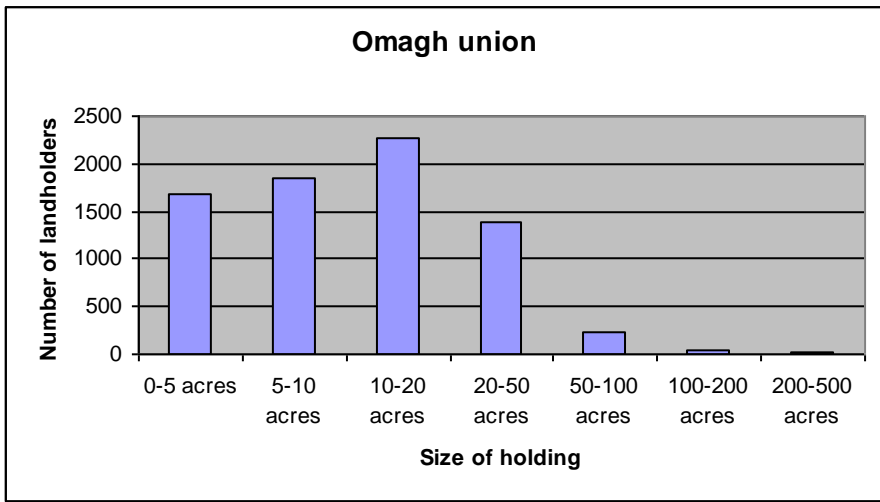


Table 8: Farm size in the Omagh Poor Law Union.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Poor Law Union returns*, p. 6.

¹⁸ *Poor law union returns*, p. 4.

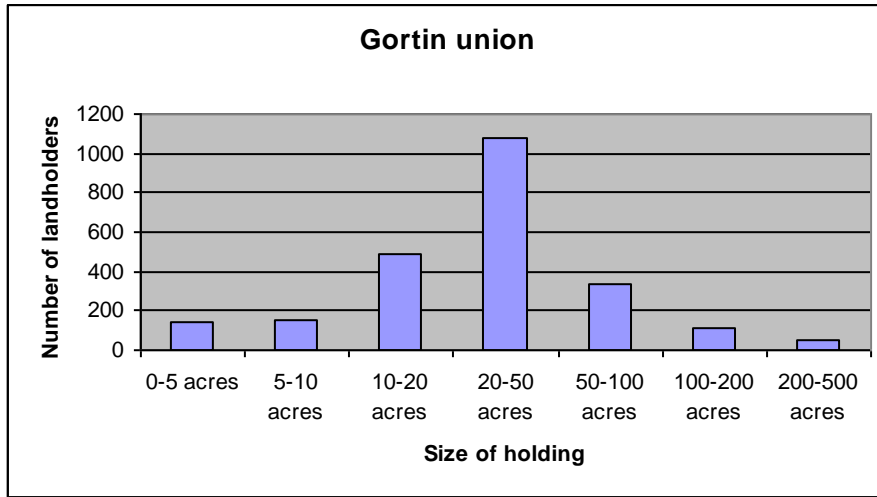


Table 9: Farm size in the Gortin Poor Law Union¹⁹

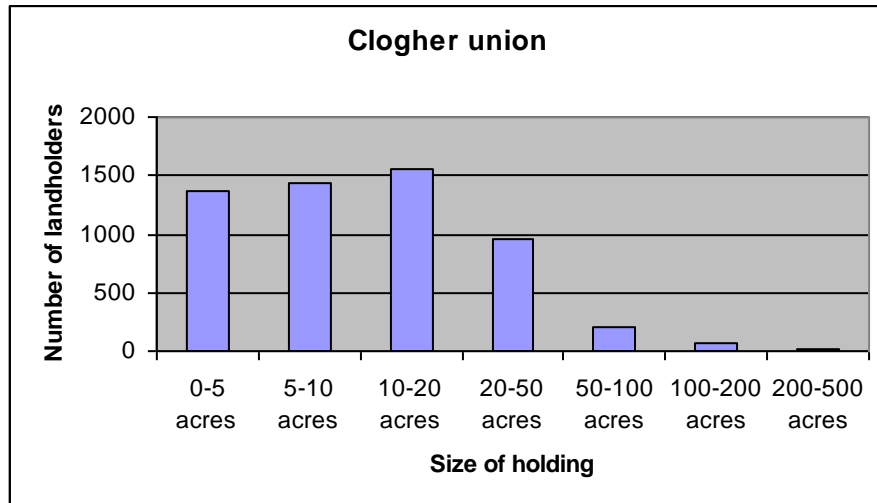


Table 9: Farm size in the Clogher Poor Law Union²⁰

¹⁹ *Poor Law Union returns*, p. 4.

²⁰ *Poor Law Union returns*, p. 4.

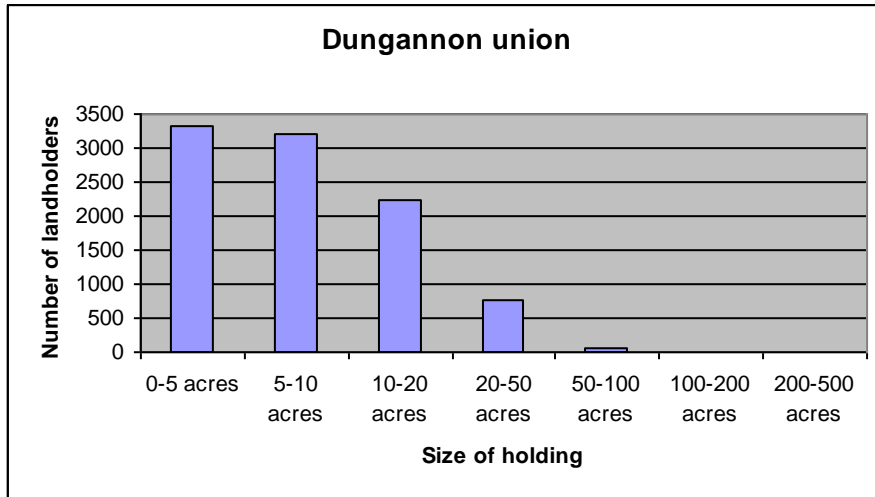


Table 10: Farm size in the Dungannon Poor Law Union. As with the Strabane and Omagh Unions, town gardens are not distinguishable and are included in the 0-5 acre category.²¹

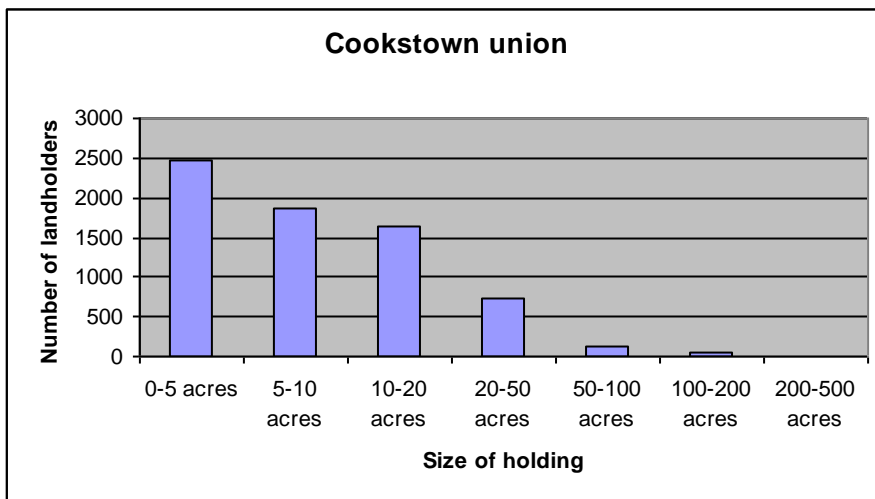
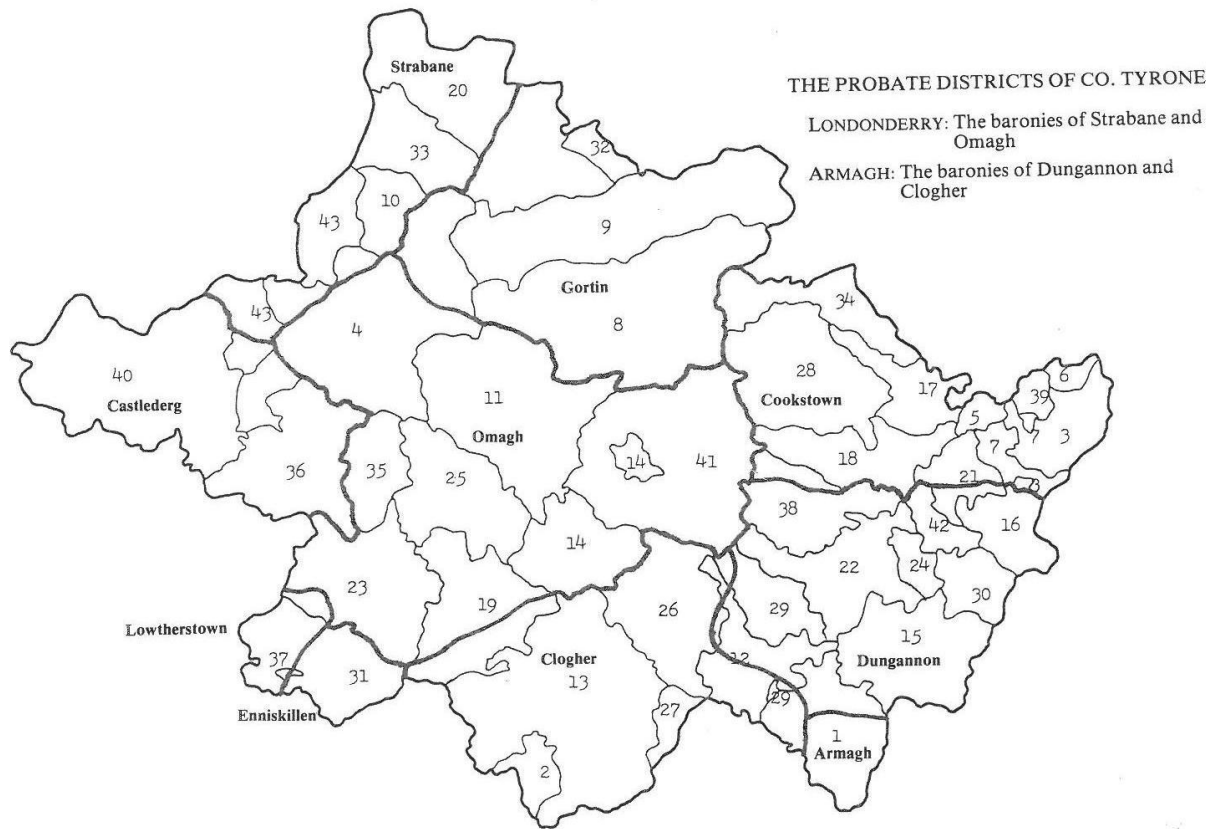


Table 11: Farm size in the Cookstown Poor Law Union. Similarly, Cookstown town gardens are included in the 0-5 acre category.²²

²¹ *Poor Law Union returns*, p. 4.

²² *Poor Law Union returns*, p. 4.

THE POOR LAW UNIONS OF COUNTY TYRONE



Map 3: The poor law unions of County Tyrone.²³

Thus it is evident that for much of the population in the east of the county a living had to be etched out from extremely small holdings while in the west slightly larger but unviable holdings were predominant. For example, on the estate of Lord Powerscourt in the Benburb area of Clonfeacle, 494 of the 835 farms consisted of less than ten acres.²⁴ In Cappagh, just outside Omagh, the average size of a farm was seven to eight acres²⁵ while on the estate of Colonel Verner near Ballygawley, ‘farms of ten acres prevail most’.²⁶ The reason for the small size of these farms was due to the practice of sub-division, a common occurrence during times of weaving prosperity as ‘farmer-weavers were easily persuaded to divide their holdings with their sons when the latter were still comparatively young, since fathers and

²³ Mitchell, *A new genealogical atlas of Ireland*, p. 108.

²⁴ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 223, Captain George Darley Cranfield, p. 847.

²⁵ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 213, Samuel Johnston, p. 821.

²⁶ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 224, Captain Henry Crossle, p. 850.

sons both won their livelihood far more from their looms than from agriculture'.²⁷ This policy may have worked in times of economic prosperity but it proved disastrous in the long run, as once the linen industry collapsed, it was impossible to make a living solely through agriculture from farms that were simply too small. In any case, Catholic emancipation in 1829 ended the forty shilling freehold vote and ended the potential incentive for subdivision.

The reason that people had been able to survive on small holdings was that Ulster farmers and cottiers had been able to supplement their income by engaging in spinning and weaving. The core of the weaving industry was the 'linen triangle' area which centred around Armagh, Lisburn and Dungannon. Within this area flax grown on small farms was prepared and spun into yarn by the women of the household. It was then woven into cloth by the men of the house before being sold to larger producers for manufacture. It was possible for the entire process up until sale to be completed within 'the framework of the household economy'.²⁸ In the west of the county spinning the yarn was more common as growing flax was more difficult in the poorer soil meaning that it was simply more practical to buy the flax from other regions. Naturally, buying flax was more expensive than growing it for oneself and this extra cost ensured that weaving was not as common in the west. The 1821 census figures show that 63 per cent of the working population of the barony of Dungannon were engaged in the manufacture of handicrafts while the overall county figure was 56 per cent.²⁹ McEvoy had estimated at the beginning of the century that cottiers, by their farm labours, only earned enough to make up one third of the income necessary to provide for their families. The rest, he contended, was supplied by income earned from weaving 'in this county, and throughout all of the North of Ireland, so far as the linen trade is in a prosperous

²⁷ Introduction to 'Land and religion in Ulster' in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly, Jr. (eds.), *Irish peasants- violence and political unrest 1780-1914* (Oxford, 1983), pp 143-54.

²⁸ Liam Kennedy, 'The rural economy, 1820-1914' in Liam Kennedy and Phillip Ollerenshaw (eds.) *An economic history of Ulster, 1820-1939* (Manchester, 1985), pp 1-61.

²⁹ MacAfee, 'The population of County Tyrone 1600-1991' in *Tyrone history and society*, pp 443-61.

way, the difficulty is easily answered; the wheel and the loom answer all'.³⁰ According to witness before the 1845 Devon Commission, James Sinclair from Strabane, 'there was scarcely such a thing as a small farmer without a loom, perhaps two, in his house'.³¹ The downside of having a little extra income was that 'when the weaving was flourishing any price could be had for a small take'³² meaning that small farmers paid high prices for their land or agreed to pay a high rent to their landlord. This was rather a short sighted policy on their part however because rents set in times of prosperity such as during the Napoleonic wars were seldom reduced by landlords during periods of economic crisis. This meant that the high rents agreed in the pre 1815 years still had to be paid during the economic crisis of the 1830s. Coupled with this was the almost complete collapse of the home textile industry because of new innovations such as 'wet spinning' and the development of large scale factory production. The price of flax which was grown by many farmers fell sharply until it was uneconomical to continue to grow it. 1836 prices highlight this price decline- the Belfast market of 6 February showed that 'all middling qualities [of flax] are neglected, at a further [price] decline'³³ and at the Derry market of 20 July demand was 'less brisk, and a decline of about 1s from last weeks prices may be quoted'.³⁴ An 1840 government report indicated that 'this trade is almost at an end, the introduction of mill spun yarn having limited the market and the profits of hand spun yarn'.³⁵ This was disastrous for small farmers, a fact pointed out by a farmer named Mr. Blaney- 'in small farms they could never pay the rent out of the produce; they could make it up by weaving, or by some other kind of industry'.³⁶ By the late 1830s making up the rent with income from weaving was no longer an option and as Kennedy explains 'a crucial prop of the smallholder economy had been eroded by technical

³⁰ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, pp 156-157.

³¹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 185, James Sinclair, p. 745.

³² *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 78.

³³ *ECEP*, 11 Feb. 1836.

³⁴ *ECEP*, 21 July 1836.

³⁵ *Royal commission on handloom weavers, assistant commissioners report part III (Yorkshire, W. Riding, Ireland)*, p. 648, H. C. 1840 (43-11), xxxiii.367.

³⁶ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 78 appendix F.

and organizational change elsewhere in the regional and international economy'.³⁷

As the farms of many weavers were too small to make a living from their produce, the labouring strata became flooded with weavers seeking to gain employment by offering their services in this market which was already saturated, a point explained by Mr. Ephraim Love a forty-two acre farmer from Clougherny, Omagh, who lamented that 'the linen trade having failed, men who formerly made their support by weaving, have been of late been obliged to take to labour to make out a living. This has made the labouring class plenty, which causes a little reduction in wages; what adds to their misery is, that their wives and daughters can make little or nothing by spinning'.³⁸ Labourers or cottiers had traditionally received a small cabin and a plot of land from larger farmers for which they paid rent set against days worked at an agreed wage which varied from 6 to 10d per day. They often paid 'an enormous rent, usually from £2 to £3 for a rood or half an acre of ground and a miserable cabin'.³⁹ Described as 'fourth class housing' by the census commissioners of 1841, these cabins made up over 18,000 of the county's residences which numbered just over 53,000.⁴⁰ The small plot of land received allowed the cottier to grow the bare minimum of food, usually potatoes, required for survival. Living conditions were abysmal and often shared with animals. A typical cabin was a mere mud hovel 'unfit for the residence of human beings, built on the worst part of the farms, and consisting mostly of but one smoky apartment, without window or chimney'.⁴¹ Gortin land agent James Montgomery Reid could not 'conceive a more miserable man than the cottier of a man of twenty or thirty acres'.⁴² A Tyrone cottier was defined as follows by the Poor Law Commission- 'he labours two thirds of his life to pay £4 4s., viz., the rent of a cabin, a little turf, and a spot of ground in no case exceeding two thirds of an acre, and the

³⁷ Kennedy, 'The rural economy, 1820-1914', pp 1-61.

³⁸ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 209, Ephraim Love, p. 812.

³⁹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 80, Thomas Eyre, p. 440.

⁴⁰ *The 1841 census*, pp 350-2.

⁴¹ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 67 appendix E.

⁴² *The Devon commission*, witness no. 212, James Montgomery Reid, p. 820.

remaining portion of his time is devoted to the cultivation of this spot, out of which he has to clothe himself and his family, to feed that family all year round...out of this lowly condition it is evident no exertions can raise him'.⁴³ Labourers had been by far the poorest sector of the agricultural work force, now they also had to contend with the class above them- small tenant farmers- dropping into their stratum. Naturally with an economic recession affecting all layers of the social make up of the community, less work became available and this coupled with a massive increase in the number of labourers ensured a wretched existence for this class of people. Hugh Quinn, a labourer, explained the decline in employment- 'I am half my time idle, I don't get half as much employment as I used to get three years ago; I don't get work in winter at all'.⁴⁴ The desperation to find work was so great that some men 'constantly go seven or eight miles to get a day's work'⁴⁵ and work that was obtained was 'jealously guarded...in particular, incoming men- 'strange labourers'-who might take local jobs or land were the targets of bitter resentment'.⁴⁶ This may have escaped the notice of the poor law commission which rather optimistically stated that 'an instance was never known here of threatening notices having been sent to prevent the employment of strangers, and no cases of violence have resulted where strangers have been employed; no combinations have ever existed among the labourers in this district'.⁴⁷ However, on the contrary, this situation certainly did occur as shown by the reaction of labourers in Dromore to the possibility of labourers from Connaught coming to the area and working for less than they. Police suspected that a combination had been formed between the local labourers and this combination had produced a threatening notice which warned the outsiders to 'go home to Connaught or hell' and which was signed by 'Captain Rock'.⁴⁸ There simply was not enough work to employ the locals and

⁴³ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 83 appendix D.

⁴⁴ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 73 appendix D.

⁴⁵ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 74 appendix D.

⁴⁶ Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant the threatening letters of pre-famine Ireland, 1801-45*, p. 27.

⁴⁷ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 74 appendix D.

⁴⁸ NAI: CSORP, OR:148 28 1837

the threat of losing what little work was available to strangers who undercut them drew this angry, united response from local labourers.

Thus far, it has been established that living conditions had deteriorated drastically because of the collapse of the linen industry. All this impacted on the Protestant family unit, a unit which operated within the strict moral code that existed during this period. The family provides a good example of how ordinary people viewed society at this time and by viewing this unit, the sense of place in the world that the lower classes were part of becomes evident.

The nature of the families living on these small holdings, crippled by the loss of what had been their main mode of survival, can provide an insight into the social conditions and expectations that prevailed during this time of economic downturn. Fitzpatrick, O'Neill and Lee have provided comprehensive analysis of the pre-famine Catholic Irish family and it is not the intention of this work to cover this ground in the detail that they provide, but merely to examine whether the same conditions applied to the Protestant family unit as did to its Catholic counterpart. Fitzpatrick asserts that 'in all societies disputes within families account for a greater proportion of criminal activity, since the closer the relationship between criminal and victim, the greater the potentiality for inflicting injury or seeking vengeance'.⁴⁹

This point is also taken up by Lee who states that 'vicious rivalries sometimes flourished in the most basic community of all, the family. The bitterness of family disputes over property could poison kinship relationships'.⁵⁰ With these assertions in mind, one would suspect that the Protestant family unit was subject to as much internal strife as the Catholic one.

The issue of land occupancy very often set family members against one another. In many cases disgruntled family members damaged the property of their siblings in rows over property rights. This was the case when an out office and stack of oats belonging to Doctor

⁴⁹ David Fitzpatrick, 'Class, family and rural unrest in nineteenth-century Ireland' in P. J. Drudy (ed.) *Ireland: land, politics, and people* (Cambridge, 1982), pp 37-75.

⁵⁰ Joseph J. Lee, 'Patterns of rural unrest in nineteenth-century Ireland: a preliminary survey' in L. M. Cullen and F. Furet (eds.) *Ireland and France, 17th-20th centuries: towards a comparative study of rural history* (Paris, 1980), pp 223-37.

McNorris in Donnemana was maliciously set on fire. Suspicion immediately turned to McNorris's brother who had occupied the land prior to him and who had said that he would do his brother 'some injury' such was his bitterness at losing the property.⁵¹ A barn belonging to William McKinley was set on fire in Aughnacloy although the blaze was extinguished in time. Police suspected his brother Edward who had wanted the premises, whilst an ongoing family dispute led to a corn stack belonging to Joseph Dunn, a Presbyterian from Derryloran, being burned down. Dunn suspected his two brothers and sister-in-law who had been fined 10s each previously for assaulting him and who had sworn revenge.⁵² These examples show the depth of feeling that could arise between family members when land disputes arose and demonstrate that family members often had no scruples over damaging the property of or assaulting one of their own.

In addition to disputes that arose over land, the marital expectations of Catholic society were also prevalent within the Protestant community. People married predominantly within their own parish or adjoining parishes which meant that potential marriage candidates and their families were well known locally. In order to be acceptable for marriage, a woman had to be of 'respectable' character. It was of the utmost importance that a woman was not previously 'stained' by having had eloped or stayed overnight with an unsuitable man. Any suggestion that virginity had been lost before marriage almost automatically disqualified a woman from finding a husband. Therefore, in many cases, parents strictly controlled the relationships of their daughters which led to many 'runaway' marriages. This requirement of parental approval in the choice of marriage partner caused a party of thirty men to attack the house of Huston Montgomery in 1838. The gang forced in the door and violently took away a girl named Moore who was staying there. They were led by Robert Moore, the girl's father. Montgomery was assaulted and some articles of furniture were taken. The girl had eloped

⁵¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 12 28 1836.

⁵² NAI: CSORP, OR: 14 28 1837, 24 28 1837.

with a man named Scott contrary to her parents wishes and was taken to stay in Montgomery's house prior to their marriage.⁵³ Scott, in the eyes of Robert Moore, was not a suitable husband for his daughter therefore action was taken to prevent the marriage and save what was left of his daughter's reputation. A more violent action was taken against Elizabeth Young who was waylaid and severely kicked and beaten by friends and relatives of her future husband William Sloan who disapproved of their forthcoming union. Obviously Young had tainted her character in some way previously or else came from a social class beneath Sloan and was not acceptable as a wife in the eyes of Sloan's family and friends. From these cases it is evident that it was of vital importance to Protestant society, in the same way as Catholic society, that the right marriage partner be chosen.

Alcohol consumption was a social problem that also affected all strands of the community. On returning home from Clogher in 1836, John Walker and Balfour Graham, who were in an intoxicated state quarrelled with the result that Walker was thrown into the ditch by Graham and then assaulted so badly that he died from his injuries.⁵⁴ Isabella Stewart fell victim to the over consumption of alcohol when she was raped in a public house by Robert Leonard in Stewartstown in 1838. Leonard had invited Stewart into the premises to pay her for linen that she had prepared, plied her with drink, then carried out the deed.⁵⁵ A similar fate befell Jane Galbraith who had spent the day drinking with Andrew Watson at Newtown Stewart market. The pair decided to elope together to get married and were on their way to Watson's uncle's house at Douglas Bridge when Watson raped her in a field.⁵⁶ A weaver by trade, Watson then ran off apparently to Scotland as rape was a capital offence such was the seriousness of society's attitude regarding chastity of the woman.

A child born outside of marriage, whether conceived by consent or otherwise, drew

⁵³ NAI: CSORP, OR: 24 28 1838.

⁵⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 34 28 1836.

⁵⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 36 28 1838.

⁵⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 10624 28 1839.

great shame upon its mother and her family. In most cases the mother was shunned by her neighbours and very often forced to leave home by her ashamed family. K. H. Connell explains that the character of an unmarried mother was forfeited and that few men would ever chose her as a partner such was the stigma of giving birth illegitimately.⁵⁷ Unless the father of the child could be identified and persuaded to marry by the local magistrate or the girl's parents, the unmarried mother faced a bleak future turning in many cases to begging or prostitution in order to survive. Faced with this prospect, many single women giving birth resorted to infanticide, either abandoning their newly born baby to the elements or in more extreme cases strangling or drowning the child. Connell makes the point that most of these girls were Catholic but as outrage reports seldom identify the perpetrators of infanticide, it is very difficult to make such clear cut distinctions. Figures from Ulster show a much higher rate of child desertion than in the rest of the country. In the period from 1831-34, 1,156 children were abandoned in Ulster, 195 of whom died. In comparison, 662 children were abandoned in Leinster, 170 of whom died, 551 in Munster, 122 of whom died, and 374 in Connaught, 153 of whom died.⁵⁸ Tyrone itself, in this period, accounted for nineteen deaths among the 140 children who were deserted within the county. This figure is high in comparison with counties of a similar size and population, for example Tipperary (seventy-eight desertions, thirty deaths) and Galway (118 desertions, fifty-five deaths).⁵⁹ This would suggest that illegitimacy was higher in Tyrone than in many southern counties and was a problem that surely affected both sides of the community. One of the few cases of the mother of a dead child being named in an outrage report involved Mary Manual, a Protestant from Clogher, who was arrested following the discovery of her child's body.⁶⁰ Local woman Mary Steen claimed that Manual had approached her requesting an abortion some time previously,

⁵⁷ K. H. Connell, 'Illegitimacy before the famine' in *Irish peasant society, four historical essays* (Oxford, 1968), pp 51-86.

⁵⁸ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 24, appendix A.

⁵⁹ *1835 Poor enquiry*, p. 24, Appendix A.

⁶⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 96 28 1836.

an allegation admitted to by Manual. This case was just one of seventeen reported infanticides from the years 1836 to 1840 and it is most likely that several others were not discovered by the police. Given the close religious divide within the county, there is no real reason why the phenomenon of illegitimacy was exclusively a Catholic one and it is most likely that the Protestant family unit was also affected by this social stigma. Therefore it is evident from this brief examination of the Protestant family that they faced many of the same difficulties as the stereotypical Catholic family from land disputes, the need for parental marriage approval, alcohol abuse, and sexual activity. The moral code that they adhered to kept them within the parameters that organized society demanded. Within this authoritarian moral code, in which marriage expectations were high (relative to one's status) and illegitimacy almost taboo, the lower classes remained bound and few moved outside its limits. The lower class psyche also recognized that deference to the upper classes was an expectation that was strictly within this moral code. This sense of acceptance was very much part of the lower class mindset and is a possible explanation as to why they remained loyal to their social superiors despite this relationship not being as straightforward as it once was. It also explains why violence was accepted as a tool for settling disputes among the lower classes while in contrast to this, the use of violence against one's social superiors was simply not acceptable.

The land on which these families resided was owned by a variety of landlords, the most prominent of these being the marquis of Abercorn in the Strabane region, the earl of Caledon in the area around the village which bore his name, Lord Powerscourt in the Blackwater region, the earl of Belmore in central Tyrone, the earl of Castle Stuart in the Stewartstown area, the earl of Ranfurley in Dungannon, the Eccles family in Fintona, and Colonel Verner in the border regions of Armagh.

Name of proprietor	Statute acres	Chief location
The marquis of Abercorn	51,919	Strabane
The earl of Caledon	30,502	Caledon
Sir John Stewart	29,967	Ballygawley
The earl of Castlestuart	26,671	Stewartstown
Colonel Verner	16,829	Moy
The earl of Belmore	15,996	Gortin
John Eccles	10,122	Fintona
Lord Powerscourt	9,528	Benburb
The earl of Ranfurley	9,506	Dungannon

Table 12: Chief landholders in County Tyrone⁶¹

There were also many smaller landlords and agents who let properties in the county but very few middlemen in comparison to some southern counties. In the preceding decades middlemen had availed of the fact that landlords had let their lands to them at a fixed rent and with long leases. This allowed them to sublet these lands, charge higher rents from the tenants than the landlord would have received, and increase the rent when they pleased. The *Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet* in 1839 was scathing in its criticism of middlemen claiming that ‘if the devil were to come up out of hell, for no other purpose than that of reducing a nation to the extremest verge of misery, the sub-letting system is precisely the system the devil would adopt’.⁶² Whatever feelings of moral obligation landlords felt towards the tenants, it is unlikely that middlemen felt any. Samuel Clark argues that ‘relationships between middlemen and their tenants were by reputation far worse than those between landowners and their tenants. This was primarily because subtenants enjoyed less security of tenure than did direct tenants, and because middlemen ordinarily charged at least double the rent than they themselves paid and often considerably more’.⁶³ Unsurprisingly it was considered much better to live under a landlord than a middleman ‘the tenantry holding directly under the head landlord are much better off than those holding under the middleman.

⁶¹ *Ownership of land (Ireland) A return of the names of the proprietors and the area and valuation of all properties in the several counties in Ireland, held in fee or perpetuity, or on long leases at chief rents*, p. 140, H. C. 1876 (412) lxxx.395. Although this data was gathered in the 1870s and is possibly chronologically unsatisfactory for this work, Suzanne Kingon makes the point that it can be used with caution as these are the earliest available figures and can be used as it is unlikely that they changed to any great degree over the previous thirty years. Suzanne T. Kingon, ‘Ulster Protestant politics in the age of emancipation and reform c. 1825-35’ (PhD Thesis, Queens University, Belfast, 2006), p. 20.

⁶² *ECEP*, 13 June 1839.

⁶³ Samuel Clark, ‘The importance of agrarian classes: agrarian class structure and collective action in nineteenth-century Ireland’ in *The British Journal of Sociology*, xxix (1978), pp 22-37.

The middleman must have his profit out of the land punctually paid'.⁶⁴ This undoubtedly would have made the middleman an unpopular figure and could possibly have led to him being a target for a discontented tenantry but this problem did not occur as almost everyone interviewed by the Devon commission acknowledged the lack of middlemen in the county. James S. Donnelly, Jnr. makes the point that 'for a variety of reasons but especially because it entailed a loss of income and control over tenant access to land, the middlemen system had been under attack from landlords and their agents since the late eighteenth-century', a point backed up by Kevin O'Neill, who in his work on Killashandra, County Cavan, claims that by the turn of the century, landlords wishing to cash in on the economic boom of the time became reluctant to grant the long leases that had made the middleman system possible.⁶⁵ This, quite naturally, reduced the number of middlemen in operation and it would appear that the same was true of Tyrone which was an enormous benefit to the tenantry. McEvoy had, in 1802, commented that 'happy would it be for the prosperity of the kingdom, if no person was concerned in land, except the lord of the soil, and those, who actually cultivate it' and it would seem that many landlords were of the same view.⁶⁶ The middleman system had become obsolete in the county by the late 1830s and the fact that this system was not common in Tyrone could be viewed as one less potential reason for possible agrarian unrest.

In addition to the removal of middlemen, another contentious issue, that of the con-acre system, had been removed by landlords and their agents. According to Cormac O'Grada, 'con-acre, a form of annual subletting of small, sometimes well fertilized plots of land... was a constant source of friction in the areas of the country where it prevailed'.⁶⁷ The desperation to obtain a lease of such land was such that failure to grant its use often led to violence

⁶⁴ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 838.

⁶⁵ James S. Donnelly Jnr, 'Landlords and their tenants' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v, 1 (Oxford, 1989), pp 332-49. Kevin O'Neill, *Family and farm in pre-famine Ireland* (London, 1984), p. 35.

⁶⁶ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 198.

⁶⁷ Cormac O'Grada, 'Poverty, population and agriculture 1801-45' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v, 1 (Oxford, 1989), pp 108-36.

against its owner or the plot of land itself being dug up or damaged by night. Tyrone, it would appear, did not suffer from agrarian unrest over the issue of con-acre as landlords and their agents had stopped this practice. Witnesses interviewed by the Devon commission were in agreement that ‘the con-acre system does not prevail in this country’.⁶⁸ Land agents such as Robert Wray, the agent for Lord Northland were ‘quite against it’ and had prevented its occurrence by notice which had the desired effect of causing its cessation and with it the potential for trouble that it brought.⁶⁹ McEvoy had mentioned that the letting of con-acre had been a common occurrence in 1802 and the absence of it forty years later indicates, again, a tightening of control being exerted over the land by landlords and their agents.⁷⁰

Further evidence of the increasingly commercial attitude shown by landlords towards their estates can be seen from the changing nature of leases being granted to their tenantry. One of the main changes was the shortening of the length of leases. On the estate of the earl of Caledon, John Hopps of Derrygooley signed a lease in 1782 for continued occupation of an eleven acre holding. This lease guaranteed his occupation for three lives, those of Prince Augustus Frederick aged six (the seventh son of George III), Prince Adolphus Frederick aged five (the eighth son of George III), and Hopps’ own son William aged one year.⁷¹ Given the ages of these children, there is every possibility that the lease may have lasted a considerable period, perhaps sixty to seventy years. However the length of leases began to shorten as landlords sought greater access to their lands preferring not to be tied into long contracts. In 1795 Andrew Galley, who lived in the same Derrygooley town land as Hopps, was granted a lease for just thirty-one years or the length of the life of his son who was aged twelve.⁷² By

⁶⁸ *The Devon commission*, evidence from James Sinclair, John Humphries, Ephraim Love, Captain Henry Crossle, and Robert Wray.

⁶⁹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 83, Robert Wray, p. 446.

⁷⁰ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 31.

⁷¹ Land leases of the Caledon estate, D2433/A/1/47/2, PRONI. A difficulty for land agents was knowing when the life of a person named on the lease had ended, therefore prominent individuals such as members of the Royal Family were often selected. Anthony Doyle, *Charles Powell Leslie II’s estates at Glasslough, County Monaghan 1800-1841* (Dublin, 2001), p. 31.

⁷² Land leases of the Caledon estate, PRONI D2433/A/1/47/3

1800, Hopps own son, the previously mentioned William, was given a lease of three Royal lives, the fifth, sixth, and seventh sons of George III, all of whom were by now in their twenties.⁷³ This resulted naturally in the lease granted to Hopps junior being much shorter than the one granted to his father. William Hopps, own son John, was, in 1832, granted a lease for the same life span of King George's same sons who obviously in their fifties at that stage therefore the lease was again much shorter.⁷⁴ In 1834 leases granted to Donald O'Donnell and Edward McAnallen who also resided on the Caledon estate were made for twenty-one years or for the length of the life of Prince William Frederick Charles who was son of the duke of Cambridge.⁷⁵ These leases were all granted by Caledon, who was what could be considered a 'generous' landlord, and who was not as hasty in cutting the length of leases as other landlords such as Lord Powerscourt.

Year	Parish	Tenure	Tenant's name	Lessee	Acres held	Price
1740	Clonfeacle	3 lives	Edward Harper	Powerscourt	105	
1771	Clonfeacle	21 years	John Miles	Powerscourt	22 2 roods	£13 2s
1782	Drumglass	3 lives	John Hopps	Caledon	11 3 roods	£9 8s
1786	Clonfeacle	21 years	John Wylie	Powerscourt	18 9 perches	£8 11s
1795	Drumglass	3 lives	William Hopps	Caledon	20 3 roods	£21 19s 8d
1797	Clonfeacle	21 years	William Williamson	Powerscourt	8 2roods	£7 14s
1801	Clonfeacle	21 years	William Mills	Powerscourt	17 15 perches	£10 5s 1d
1810	Clogher	21 years	John Little	J. C. Moutray	19 2 roods	£44 7s 3d
1834	Aghaloo	21 years	Donald O'Donnell	Caledon	16 31 perches	
1835	Donagheady	21 years	John Chambers	Abercorn	67	£29 3s
1835	Ardstraw	21 years	David Craig	Abercorn	55 1 rood 3 perches	£23 8s 8d
1835	Drumragh	21 years	John Houston	Belmore	13 3 roods	£30
1836	Cappagh	20 years	William Beacon	J. D. Johnston	4.5	£7 1s 10d
1836	Cappagh	20 years	Christopher Somerville	J. D. Johnston	19.5	£44 9s

Table 13: Land leases⁷⁶

Thus a shortening of land lease length can be traced over this period of one hundred years which resulted in less security of tenure for tenants. Changes can also be seen in the terms under which the lease was granted. On the lands of O'Donnell, the earl of Caledon, as

⁷³ Land leases of the Caledon estate, PRONI D2433/A/1/47/4

⁷⁴ Land leases of the Caledon estate, PRONI D2433/A/1/47/6

⁷⁵ Land leases of the Caledon estate, PRONI D847/5/56, D2433/A/1/107/18

⁷⁶ Land leases of the Powerscourt estate D1957/2/5, land leases of the Abercorn estate D623/b/12/19, land leases of the Moutray estate D2023/1/9, land leases of J. D. Johnston D1096/58/3, land leases of the Caledon estate D2433a/1/47, land leases of the Belmore estate D3850/6/5. All held in PRONI.

landlord, was allowed under the terms of the lease to enter at any time as gaming and hunting rights remained his. He also owned the rights to any minerals such as iron ore, or copper as well as slate, coal, sand, brick, clay, and potter's earth, all of which could be extracted from the ground by his servants at any time, although to Caledon's credit, the lease promised 'reasonable recompense and satisfaction' for any damage caused. Caledon insisted on the holding being kept in good repair and reserved the right to inspect the lands at any time. The walls of O'Donnell's house were to be pointed with mortar and whitewashed otherwise a penalty of £5 would be applied, and no other habitation was allowed to be built on the property. No dunghill or build up of manure was allowed and all corn had to be ground at Caledon's mill. The earl of Belmore applied similar clauses to his leases allowing him and his attendants to enter the land at any time and take what they chose. The lease granted to John Houston of Ballinahatty near Omagh specified that he build a house at the cost of £40 within the first three years and plant sixty apple trees as well as planting various other trees and erecting ditches.⁷⁷ On the Eccles estate at Fintona, a five shilling fine was applied to every bushel of grain not ground at the Eccles mill and again, the lands could be entered at any time for useful resources to be taken.⁷⁸ A more severe clause, with feudal undertones, was inserted by J. C. Moutray, who as recently as 1810, was demanding that his tenants 'furnish and provide six horses and cars properly attended, to work at any employment [Moutray] shall have occasion for within the demesne of Favor-Royal'. Failure to comply was punishable by a fine of 3s 3d for every day of non attendance.⁷⁹ This demand surely added to the workload of an already over burdened tenantry who could ill afford to ignore their own labour needs for any length of time. Few other landlords expected free labour and it must be said that the likes of Caledon paid for any labour carried out by his tenantry. Nevertheless the clauses previously mentioned were a severe burden on the tenantry. Clauses such as these had been

⁷⁷ Land leases of the Belmore estate, PRONI D3850/6/5

⁷⁸ Land leases of the Eccles estate, PRONI D526/1/417

⁷⁹ Land lease of the Moutray estate, PRONI D2033/1/9

inserted in land leases from the mid-eighteenth century but had become almost impossible to enforce and were largely ignored by the tenantry. However landlords had greatly clamped down on abuses regarding such clauses, indeed the eighth marquis of Abercorn had threatened to cut the length of leases to a paltry seven years if these clauses were not obeyed, such was his displeasure at the non-compliance of his tenantry and by the 1830s a much stricter enforcement of these clauses was in place.⁸⁰ The shortening of the length of lease being granted and the increasing amount of clauses being inserted, all served to increase the stress on the tenantry by lessening their security of tenure and by increasing the cost of occupancy.

In spite of the ever demanding nature of leases, those who held them were considered fortunate to be in such a position. A large number of small farmers were merely tenants at will, that is non holders of leases. This contributed to an inability on the part of this category to make any significant improvement on their lands. McEvoy recognised that improvements generally took place ‘in cases of long leases, or when the tenant has an assurance, that his land will be let to him again, at a reasonable rent, at the expiration of his lease’.⁸¹ However, having no lease meant that tenant could potentially be turned out at any time. It was thought by landlords that the granting of leases encouraged subdivision as the lease holder could then sublet part of his plot which would result in small, almost worthless farms being taken by desperate families. Henry Leslie Prentice, land agent to Caledon, recognised that ‘you have no covenant against subletting, you cannot come at them in any way as the law now stands’.⁸² However, the absence of leases led to great insecurity among tenants and resulted in few improvements being carried out. With the constant fear of being thrown off the land at any time, there was little point in making improvements. John McConnell, a thirty acre farmer

⁸⁰ William H. Crawford, *The management of a major Ulster estate in the late Eighteenth Century* (Dublin, 2001), p. 34.

⁸¹ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 91.

⁸² *The Devon commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 841.

from Cappagh, understood these feelings ‘I have known persons to make rapid improvements upon places, and then be turned off. An uncle of mine built houses which looked likely to last forever- he built them in a splendid way- he died, and his family were turned out...he also spent a large sum in draining and improving the land, but the family were turned out’.⁸³

Robert McCrea, a 170 acre farmer from Strabane, knew of ‘one tenant who had made great improvements under the direction and encouragement of the former agent, who had his farm taken from him, and another given in lieu of it, which he considered a great loss’.⁸⁴ The absence of leases, according to Samuel Glasgow, a farmer on the estate of Lord Castlestuart, had ‘destroyed the spirit of independence in them [the tenants] and has put down anything like improvements with those who had any taste and spirit, or had any capital. I think it has put down all improvement in a measure, compared with what ought to be met with’.⁸⁵ Samuel Johnston considered that if leases were granted the advantages could potentially be enormous to tenants ‘an extended tenure to my mind would be the best encouragement; it would go to their posterity, and the children living upon it would exert themselves to a greater extent in order to have the benefit of improvements. If a man had a family they would all work for their own interest’.⁸⁶ Glasgow had been granted a twenty-one year lease in 1815 but the lease was not renewed when it expired in 1836. Despite being continually promised a new lease, he still had not received one by 1844, which indicates Castlestuart’s reluctance to grant new leases.⁸⁷ This refusal to grant new leases may point to a possible moral decline at the other end of the social spectrum by landlords as productivity and profit became more important than the well being of the tenant. The few estates that were under lease saw ‘very spirited improvements’⁸⁸ taking place but unfortunately these were few and far between. For most

⁸³ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 210, John McConnell, p. 814.

⁸⁴ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 187, Robert McCrea, p. 752.

⁸⁵ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 152, Samuel Glasgow, p. 676.

⁸⁶ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 213, Samuel Johnson, p. 821.

⁸⁷ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 152, Samuel Glasgow, p. 676.

⁸⁸ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 205, Edward Sproule, p. 798.

tenants, potential improvements were left undone as the fear of rent increase or eviction would make it impossible to consider carrying out any such works.

The rent charged varied depending on the quality of the land. The price for poor mountain land such as that found in Killen, Termonamongan, was as low as 15s per acre.⁸⁹ The better lands of the Caledon estate fetched a higher rent. John Hopps 1782 rent amounted to £9 8s for his eleven acres, or 16s per acre. By 1800 his son paid a yearly rent of £21 19s 8d for occupancy of his twenty acre farm, which worked out at 22s per acre. By 1832 John Hopps junior was paying £16 10s 10d for his sixteen acres, or just over £1 (20s) per acre. The rent was paid in two instalments, one on 1 May and the other on 1 November, periods which were damaging to the tenants as produce was not fully seasoned but was rushed to market resulting in lower prices being paid. These rents were generally permitted to be paid up to one year after they were due because of the ‘hanging gale’ arrangement which gave tenants a little leeway although this was an informal agreement which could be changed by the landlord at any time.

The shortening of the length of lease or the non granting of these leases contributed to a deterioration in living conditions for many and emigration became the only option in numerous cases. John Johnson, a 100 acre farmer from Killen, claimed that the cottier class no longer existed in his area of west Tyrone because of their inability to pay the rent⁹⁰ and the fact that the population declined in some areas in both the east and the west of the county between 1831 and 1841 would indicate that people were indeed leaving the county. The increase in the use of steamships and competition between rival shipping companies made prices, which were well advertised in newspapers, more affordable for many people. A breakdown of the passenger numbers from the list of people that sailed from Derry to Quebec aboard the ‘Brig Lamb’ in June 1833 shows that fifty persons from Tyrone sailed. Only

⁸⁹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 207, John Johnson, p. 802.

⁹⁰ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 207, John Johnson, p. 803.

Donegal with fifty four bettered this number. Of the 206 men, women and children that sailed, sixty four were labourers and twenty seven farmers, by far the biggest percentage of trades which gives another indication of the decline that this class was suffering.⁹¹ By 1841, one person out of every 149 in the county was emigrating. This figure may seem small in comparison with the likes of Mayo (1 in 37) but it was much higher than in southern counties such as Tipperary (1 in 1086) or Waterford (1 in 3847).⁹² The parishes of Clogher, Donacavey, Aghaloo, Clonfeacle, Ardboe, Ballyclog, Cappagh, Longfield, Skirts of Urney, Ardstraw, Camus, Leckpatrick, and Termonaguirk all suffered from population decline during the decade, a decline which contributed to the fact that the overall population of the county rose by only three per cent during this period.⁹³ Naturally there was reluctance by many to leave because of their traditional ties to the land- ‘the peasantry do not like to leave their homes on any account; they speak with strong feelings of the spot where their fathers and grandfathers expended their sweat and labour’⁹⁴ and there was a fear of the unknown of what lay ahead- ‘if they have any means of subsistence at all they will not give it up; they know what they have here, but don’t know what they may meet with there’.⁹⁵ However, the basic struggle for survival meant that sentiment and fear had to be overcome and the fact that emigration had been frequent in Ulster in the preceding decades gave many intending emigrants the extra incentive of the chance to join relatives abroad. Speaking about Leckpatrick, Magistrate James Sinclair summed up this situation- ‘the number of emigrants, for very many years has been considerable; all the poor, or nearly all, have relatives in America, and when these send money, young folks are inclined to push their fortunes as they call it’.⁹⁶ Reverend John Hamilton of Cappagh claimed that ‘it may be safely computed that

⁹¹ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 79 appendix C.

⁹² *1841 census*, p. 27.

⁹³ 1831 and 1841 census figures.

⁹⁴ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 132 appendix F.

⁹⁵ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 132 appendix F.

⁹⁶ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 392 appendix F.

more have emigrated during the past three years than for twenty years previously⁹⁷ while *The Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet* could ‘never recollect so many persons emigrating as are this season’⁹⁸ and it may be assumed that emigration was the cause of the slow down in the population growth of the county.

Unfortunately emigration did not solve the problems of overcrowding in the labour market or on the small farms. A Magistrate, Reverend Mr. Stack from Omagh, acknowledged that ‘the emigration has been no means sufficient to reduce the competition for labour; it should be great and constant to produce that effect’.⁹⁹ Therefore it would appear that while emigration did provide an escape valve for some, the numbers leaving were not sufficient to ease the pressure on the labouring and small farmer classes and for the majority of people miserable conditions remained the dominant factor in their lives.

There is no evidence of landlords providing any assistance for those who may have wanted to leave and in some cases landlords were of very little help to their tenants. Some such as Lord Ranfurley who resided in Brussels, or Lord Powerscourt whose residence was in Dublin were absentee landlords. It was considered that estates on which landlords resided were much preferable to those where they were absent. John Buchanan, a forty acre farmer from Killyclogher, near Omagh, claimed that ‘there is a difference where there is a good landlord, who stays at home, and sees whether his tenant is in need of indulgence and gives it; it is a great improvement’¹⁰⁰ and Reverend John Montague from Clonfeacle criticised absentee landlords as they did not ‘relieve the distresses of their tenantry by offering them employment, or holding forth any encouragement to an increase of industry’.¹⁰¹ The *Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet* was adamant that ‘nothing is required to ensure the tranquillity and prosperity of Ireland than a close connexion [sic] between landlord and

⁹⁷ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 388 appendix F.

⁹⁸ *ECEP*, 21 April 1836.

⁹⁹ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 141 appendix F.

¹⁰⁰ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 217, John Buchanan, p. 831.

¹⁰¹ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 281 appendix F.

tenant; their interests are inseparable, and no landlord can know the real wants or supply the remedies our social state requires but by, at least a partial residence in the county'.¹⁰² It was of course much easier for a landlord who resided on his estate to take an interest in his lands and tenants than it was for one living in another part of the country or abroad. Most of these appointed resident land agents to manage their estates whose duties included 'looking after the comfort and welfare of the tenantry, receiving the rent, and settling disputes'¹⁰³ according to Robert Wray, a land agent to Lord Northland. Having an agent of integrity managing an estate could make an enormous difference to the tenantry, a fact pointed out by Ephraim Love- 'a discreet, well disposed resident agent is likely to manage an estate well; but an avaricious, proud, ill disposed agent, who will blister and bleed the poor tenants, is a curse on any estate'.¹⁰⁴ The Reverend William Brown, Parish Priest of Camus and Clonleigh, lamented that on estates 'not so well managed, I do not see the agents looking after anything but the money'.¹⁰⁵ Tenants fortunate enough to live under a landlord who took an interest in their property and a land agent of good conscience were certainly in a much better position than those who did not. It was difficult for many landlords to provide assistance to their tenants as the economic crisis also hit them. Added to this was the fact that many lived beyond their means and had amassed huge debts through holding lavish parties, gambling, and law suits and simply did not have the finances to help improve conditions for their tenants. Some estates were under the court in the late 1830s such as the Alexander estate in Newtown Stewart and the Mountjoy estate outside Omagh, an estate which had been considered extremely well run according to McEvoy in the early part of the century. Tenants on these estates were usually worse off as they were bound by the rigid legal system of the courts rather than by a landlord from whom some flexibility could be expected. Without help

¹⁰² *ECEP*, 28 April 1836.

¹⁰³ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 83, Robert Wray, p. 446.

¹⁰⁴ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 209, Ephraim Love, p. 812.

¹⁰⁵ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 189, Rev. William Brown, p. 759.

from the landlord agricultural improvements could not be carried out. John McConnell recognised that tenant farmers did not have the necessary resources to improve the land- ‘improvements are lying undone; the farmers have not the capital to carry them into effect...agriculture is not improving; they have not the capital for it; and it is not in the state that I would like to see it’.¹⁰⁶ Kevin O’Neill in his work on Killashandra, County Cavan, explains that ‘a great deal of the profit from the increasing agricultural productivity of Ireland went into the landlords’ hands, but very little of it was ever reinvested in either Irish agriculture or Irish industry’¹⁰⁷ and if this was the case in Tyrone then it was very difficult for tenant farmers to improve their situation.

While farming methods had been improving, the county was still relatively backward in its agricultural methods. On visiting the barony of Omagh, Jonathan Binns, a commissioner of the poor law enquiry, found that ‘the agriculture of this barony is very far behind that of the county of Armagh or any we have visited’.¹⁰⁸ The progress that was needed to improve agriculture was hindered by a number of practices which were prevalent among the small farms held by tenant farmers. The system of rundale whereby land was held in common by a number of different families still prevailed in some remote areas and was considered ‘to be a demoralizing system to the people wherever it is prevalent in the country, and deteriorating to the land; it keeps them in a constant state of broil- their children are always quarrelling, and every kind of mischief is done, such as the destruction of cattle and fowl’.¹⁰⁹ This system was stamped out by most landlords as it was injurious to the land and made the collection of rent extremely difficult. Patrick McAnulty, a 160 acre farmer from Aughabay recalled that ‘in former times when there was rundale in our country, they (the

¹⁰⁶ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 210, John McConnell, p. 813.

¹⁰⁷ O’Neill, *Family and farm in pre-famine Ireland*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ *1835 poor enquiry*, appendix F, p. 442.

¹⁰⁹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 208, James Anderson, p. 804.

tenants) paid little or no rent'.¹¹⁰ McEvoy had called for a clause to be inserted in leases prohibiting the system and by the 1830s the practice of rundale had largely died out and was only continued in poorly managed estates much to the disadvantage of both the landlord and his tenants.¹¹¹ Similarly, sub division was being halted by some landlords as the constant division of already minute plots of land made them practically unworkable and uneconomical- 'where the farms are very small, the divisions of the fields are very minute, and a great portion of the land is occupied by ditches, and the drains on each side of them'.¹¹² Henry Leslie Prentice, was aware of a six acre farm on which ten families lived,¹¹³ a type of situation that was common and one that required radical action on the part of the landlord. Lord George Hill speaking of his estates in Gweedore, County Donegal, recognised that 'the old plan of dividing the land among the children of a family has made many beggars; this will therefore, no longer be allowed.'¹¹⁴ Farm consolidation was the preferred method of many who sought to make their estates more profitable. The hope was that small farms could be moulded together into larger, more practical holdings which would be more productive and therefore economical. Consolidation, it was hoped, would lead to 'a great improvement in the face of the country, and in the management of the land'.¹¹⁵ This was carried out successfully in some cases as recalled by John Humphries, land agent to the marquis of Abercorn:

At first I apprehended a great opposition to this important undertaking, but by allowing their relative interests to be considered, and by exercising the strictest impartiality towards all parties, I had the satisfaction of witnessing in a few years, a contented and prosperous tenantry, enjoying their farms under leases of twenty one years or a young life; whereas before the consolidation of farms, the fields were so intermixed, and in some cases rundale, that no permanent improvement could possibly be made or leases granted.¹¹⁶

The obvious question that needs to be asked regarding farm consolidation is what was to

¹¹⁰ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 211, Patrick McAnulty, p. 816.

¹¹¹ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 91.

¹¹² *The Devon commission*, witness no. 187, Robert McCrea, p. 752.

¹¹³ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 841.

¹¹⁴ Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant the threatening letters of pre-famine Ireland, 1801-45*, p. 17.

¹¹⁵ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 841.

¹¹⁶ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 199, John Humphries, p. 782.

happen to the tenants who occupied the many small farms that were turned into larger single units. While it may have been carried out fairly by Humphries and ‘done by degrees and with caution and justice to all parties’¹¹⁷ on the Caledon estate, this was not the case for many tenants throughout the county. Naturally, persons ejected from their farms because of the consolidation process did not take kindly to this and what was seen as ‘progress’ by landlords and their agents was of little consolation to those whose farms were taken from them. Some reacted with violence to the situation. Indeed, another agent of Abercorn’s James Hamilton, encountered difficulty when he evicted a number of tenants for the purpose of enlarging Abercorn’s Baronscourt demesne. When the attendant charged with ploughing the land left his duties for a short break, one of the tenants, a man named Aiken ‘whose forefathers lived on, and improved’ the farm cut the tongue from the horse being used to plough.¹¹⁸ Mr. John Mullan, interviewed in 1835, mentioned a case of ‘seven families having been put out on the estate of Mr. Stewart...I know them all; some are now travelling (begging)...the entire farm from which these families were turned away contains about ten acres...a Mr. Gillion interfered with the landlord, and got some trifle for them, but none were able to go to America’.¹¹⁹ A Mr. Cohan, interviewed in 1835, spoke of the reaction which could occur - ‘a case was mentioned of three men being turned out in the town land of Willhoe in the parish of Dromore, on the estate of Mr. Darey Irwine, for the purpose of making one farm of the three; the men who were turned out “tumbled” the house of the man who got their farms; they scattered up and down the country’.¹²⁰ Reverend William Brown highlighted a case where Catholics occupying seven farms outside Strabane had been evicted by the landlord, Mr. Knox, and replaced by two Protestant families. This resulted in ‘some burnings of a turf

¹¹⁷ *The Devon Commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 841.

¹¹⁸ NAI: CSORP, OR: 37 28 1836.

¹¹⁹ *1835 poor enquiry*, appendix F, p. 131.

¹²⁰ *1835 poor enquiry*, appendix F, p. 131.

stack, and the burning of a house, and some of his gates were taken away'¹²¹ in acts of revenge. More serious was the united action of the tenants on the Powerscourt estate when faced with the prospect of farm consolidation. With over 50 per cent of the farms on this estate being of less than ten acres,¹²² it would have been considered suitable territory for consolidation. Lord Powerscourt had appointed an army captain, George Darley Cranfield, to serve as his land agent. Intent on enlarging farms on the estate which were considered to be too small, Cranfield soon found a threatening notice posted on the gate of his residence at Benburb Castle.¹²³ Written by what the police considered to be 'an experienced clerk', the notice threatened to kill Cranfield 'for his tyranny' and claimed that tenants from other estates would join to oppose him. In addition to this, Cranfield was accused by the tenants of spilling pitchers of milk and of attempting to run over a child in his carriage, although these actions were considered accidental by Chief Constable Kelly. It would seem that the posting of the threatening notice was not simply the work of one or two disaffected individuals but more likely to have been the work of the community. The use of an experienced clerk to write the notice would suggest that some thought had been put into the action taken rather than it being a spontaneous reaction. If true that tenants from others estates were prepared to join in opposition, this would show that communication was undertaken and collective action considered, something not all that common at the time. Added to this was the fact that Cranfield 'most assuredly'¹²⁴ gave preference to Protestant tenants over Catholics although the estate was split evenly between both. The notice claimed that Cranfield wanted 'to starve one part of the people [Protestants] and have Godly obedience from the other [Catholics]'¹²⁵ which would indicate the author taking the grievances of both religions into consideration, something that probably would only have occurred if both communities were united on the

¹²¹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 189, Reverend William Brown, p. 760.

¹²² See page 28.

¹²³ NAI: CSORP, OR: 80 28 1836

¹²⁴ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 223, Captain George Darley Cranfield, p. 848.

¹²⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 80 28 1836.

issue. The fact that they were demonstrates widespread opposition to consolidation on the Powerscourt estate, opposition that would appear to have been reasonably successful judging by Cranfield's admission to the Devon commission eight years later that 'very little has been done; seventy one farms of less than ten acres have been struck out, and have been added to other farms since I became the agent'.¹²⁶ This case shows that tenants were not at all receptive to the changes which were considered 'progress', would join together to oppose it if necessary and that landlords faced many difficulties in implementing this 'progress'.

What must be taken into consideration is the backwardness and lack of education of much of the population which could have contributed to suspicion of the gentry and their motives for implementing these changes. McEvoy explained that 'from the age of six or seven, to that of ten or eleven years, it is the usual time for children to be kept at school; at this early period they acquire but little, and that little is generally forgotten, before they come to the age of understanding'.¹²⁷ Some forty years later 45 per cent of the population still could not read nor write and only 16.9 per cent of children aged between five and fifteen were attending school.¹²⁸ It is only natural to assume that stories of injustices caused by the changes in traditional farming methods would have been passed by word of mouth and planted a fear in the minds of the peasantry that 'progress' could possibly have a similar devastating effect on their lives. Changes implemented were often undone by a suspicious peasantry. In some cases trees planted by land agents were cut down. McEvoy had lamented the lack of trees in the county and advocated wide scale planting as an answer to the timber shortage.¹²⁹ Fir trees were among the most popular among land agents because of their profitability and were frequently set- 'the increase in fir planting has been considerable, owing, we would suppose,

¹²⁶ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 223, Captain George Darley Cranfield, p. 849.

¹²⁷ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 164.

¹²⁸ *1841 census*, p. 32.

¹²⁹ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 143.

to the comparatively rapid growth of this class of timber'.¹³⁰ Unfortunately the setting of trees took up land, and despite the fact that fir trees can grow on extremely poor terrain, the desperation for land was such that even this type of ground was craved and this led to the destruction of many newly planted trees. On the property of Thomas Hamilton of Clogher, fifty young larch fir trees were 'cut down and otherwise destroyed'¹³¹ by persons unknown while a similar occurrence took place on the property of John Clarke of Killyman who had recently been given possession of a small field as a result of new boundaries having been created by Lord Northland's agent, William Pole. Twenty seven trees and a number of whitethorn plants were destroyed by Clarke's brother James who had rented the field prior to Pole's changes.¹³² This reaction demonstrates that new methods of farming were not always welcome especially from someone who had lost land as a result of them.

Tenants also showed reluctance to engage in the practices that were demonstrated to them by land agents such as fencing, crop rotation and the fertilizing of land. Rotation of crops was considered to be 'very rare; it is the exception generally'¹³³ and John Humphries admitted that 'there is some difficulty in making the poorer mountain farmers sensible of the advantage of this system'.¹³⁴ Fences were of poor quality as found out by the poor commissioners-'the fences in this barony [Omagh] are rude and bad, some few thorns, whins, and brace caps of earth'¹³⁵ and manure was hard to come by. Barney Connor, a Monaghan farmer, explained that 'there is a great scarcity of manure, if it was not for burning, we would all starve'.¹³⁶ The practice of land burning was a traditional method of fertilizing the land as it removed old growth, while the burnt ash fertilized the ground. This was considered by many farmers to be 'an excellent practice; I have been doing it these forty years, and my land is in

¹³⁰ *1841 census*, p. 30.

¹³¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 166 28 1836.

¹³² NAI: CSORP, OR: 69 28 1837.

¹³³ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 207, John Johnson, p. 802.

¹³⁴ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 199, John Humphries, p. 782.

¹³⁵ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 324 appendix F.

¹³⁶ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 322 appendix F.

as good heart as it can be'.¹³⁷ McEvoy considered burning a worthwhile exercise and a 'very ancient' practice within the county although it did lead to a great destruction of game especially grouse.¹³⁸ The modern farming methods being promoted by land agents, however, forbade the practice of land burning and sought to replace it with the use of lime which was considered to be more efficient and less dangerous. Failure to comply could incur the wrath of the agent and sanctions applied included the immediate demand of any overdue rent.¹³⁹ Land burning was soon forbidden on most estates, yet another major change that farmers had to deal with and surely something not wholly welcomed by a tenantry who had carried out this practice for generations.

The radical overhaul that was needed to make estates profitable could only be undertaken by landlords who were in a position financially to be able to do so. One of these was the earl of Caledon who showed a genuine interest in the welfare of his tenants. On his arrival to the area, Caledon had found the village 'in a sink of ruin, squalidness, and desolation',¹⁴⁰ but had soon transformed its appearance. Maurice Collis, Esq. who gathered statistics for Trinity College estates was highly impressed with Caledon's management- 'I would take the management of Lord Caledon's estate as a model. He has a splendid demesne, kept in excellent order; a nice town, with the houses regularly built, in which many are nice private residences, a very comfortable hotel, respectable houses for his tenants...many of his labourers have handsome cottages'.¹⁴¹ It would appear that Caledon recognised the needs of his tenants and acted accordingly making great efforts to eliminate the inefficiency in their farming methods which contributed to their continuing poverty. The drainage and reclamation of land was extremely beneficial to the farmer. The Strabane farming society recognised that 'stagnant water being, as every farmer must be aware, incompatible with the

¹³⁷ *1835 poor enquiry*, p. 322 appendix F.

¹³⁸ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 41, p. 59.

¹³⁹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 837.

¹⁴⁰ *ECEP*, 18 April 1839.

¹⁴¹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 39, Maurice Collis, p. 248.

healthful growth of all useful plants, the removal of it from the land may be said to be the first step towards its profitable culture'.¹⁴² James Anderson, land agent to Sir Robert Ferguson, considered that land drainage would pay for itself within three years and estimated that produce would increase by twenty per cent from good land and by forty per cent from poor land.¹⁴³ According to Henry Leslie Prentice, an allowance of £2 per Irish acre was provided for all lands drained on the Caledon estate with no interest being charged as 'he gives it as his own contribution towards a permanent improvement on his property'.¹⁴⁴ Ordnance survey memoirs reported that 'Lord Caledon is sparing no expense in his improvements here'¹⁴⁵ having spent £80,000 on improvements such as a flour mill which supplied 'the country from Belfast to Lough Erne and nearly equal distances north and south',¹⁴⁶ a grist mill, machinery for manufacture of oat meal, a mill for dressing flax, lime kilns, school houses, useful roads, embanking rivers and draining bogs.¹⁴⁷ These improvements, of course, gave employment to labourers which resulted in them being 'better off here. Lord Caledon employs many of them; he is very good in that respect. He finds employment for them if there is a deficiency of work, or a pressure upon that class, in making banks and roads at his own expense'.¹⁴⁸ Slates and windows were provided at half price in a bid to improve housing which was a great advantage as explained by Ephraim Love- 'if the landlords would furnish tenants with timber and slates for their dwelling houses and offices, I am of the opinion it would have a good tendency, as the thatching of houses is a loss of time and money, a consumption, and a waste of manure'.¹⁴⁹ Lime, essential for use as fertilizer, was easily accessible and provided at half price, something that was lacking on other estates- 'there would be a great deal more lime used, but the limestone quarries seem not to be put on

¹⁴² *ECEP*, 21 February 1839.

¹⁴³ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 208, James Anderson, p. 804.

¹⁴⁴ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 837.

¹⁴⁵ *OSM*, xx, p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ *OSM*, xx, p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 840.

¹⁴⁸ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 222, John Wilkin, p. 846.

¹⁴⁹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 209, Ephraim Love, p. 811.

a good footing by the gentlemen on whose property they are. The limestone quarry, is not set to tenants to work, or to a person who will turn out the stones; each tenant is allowed to go and quarry for himself. There would be a great deal more limestone used, if the lime was turned out and sold to the people'.¹⁵⁰ McEvoy had called for greater use of what was a plentiful resource and had pleaded for landlords to provide more efficient lime-kilns on their estates.¹⁵¹ However, it would seem that Caledon was one of the few estate owners to heed this call. An agricultural school and model farm were set up at Caledon's sole expense with a view to educating the children of tenants in the ways of efficient farming. The benefits of the creation of model farms were substantial according to James Anderson who created one on the town-land of Tullychar. By dividing the town land, which had been mainly bog land, into twelve farms and placing a graduate of the Templemoyle agricultural school in charge, Anderson estimated that by 1844 the farms were 'growing twice as many oats, one third more hay and one third more potatoes than they had been in 1837. The results and benefits to the tenants were enormous- it has had a great effect; they are now much better clothed , and a great deal better fed than they were at that time; they had great benefit from the labour, which they were paid for- roads and everything connected with the different farms'.¹⁵² With the help of the landlord, it was possible for tenants to lead a relatively more comfortable life than those who received no assistance, a fact surely appreciated by the 10,000¹⁵³ inhabitants of the Caledon estate- 'he is a generous landlord...a nobleman, who acts more fairly by them (the tenants) than many others'.¹⁵⁴ There was, of course, the added incentive that a contented tenantry were less likely to cause trouble than those who felt dissatisfaction over their conditions. This was recognised by Derry landlord H. B. Beresford, who on addressing his

¹⁵⁰ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 206, Thomas Sproule, p. 800.

¹⁵¹ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, pp 113-114.

¹⁵² *The Devon commission*, witness no. 208, James Anderson, p. 805

¹⁵³ Charles Dillon, 'Starvation in the midst of plenty' in *Duiche Neill, Journal of the O'Neill County Historical Society*, x (1995-6), pp 38-60.

¹⁵⁴ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 222, John Wilkin, pp 845-6.

assembled tenants outlined ‘his determination to reside among them, promoting their comfort and respectability by every means in his power, seeking in return, industry, morality, and good order, and this was best ensured by obedience to the law- by fearing God and loving their neighbour’.¹⁵⁵ It being the occasion of his son’s twenty-first birthday, Beresford proceeded to throw a lavish party for the gentry, while also supplying his tenants who numbered 200-300 with ‘an ox, roasted whole, barrels of ale, and a due portion of mountain dew’.¹⁵⁶ Other landlords also attempted to improve conditions for their tenants. Sir Robert Ferguson paid for boys to attend the Templemoyle agricultural school and paid labourers to carry out drainage works on his estate, while the Marquis of Abercorn introduced two agricultural agents on his estate to instruct on more efficient farming methods. It is difficult to tell however, if their generosity was self serving or whether help was given with the interests of the tenantry at heart. While Caledon provided the poor with ‘the sum of 3 pounds 16s 3d distributed among them every Saturday and at Christmas 80 pounds worth of clothes is given to them besides a quantity of money’,¹⁵⁷ there is no evidence of similar assistance being provided by other landlords. Caledon certainly fitted Cormac O’Grada’s ‘good’ landlord definition of being ‘resident and conspicuously active, patronizing farming societies, attending agricultural shows, and promoting new techniques’¹⁵⁸ and genuinely appeared to care for his tenants. On his death in 1839, the *Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet* recognised that ‘in his Lordship the poor of his extensive estates have lost a feeling and generous benefactor, liberal without ostentation’.¹⁵⁹ To live on his estate was of enormous benefit to tenants.

Unfortunately for many tenants around the county no such assistance was available.

¹⁵⁵ *ECEP*, 28 April 1836.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁵⁷ *OSM*, xx, p. 3.

¹⁵⁸ Cormac O’Grada, ‘Poverty, population and agriculture 1801-45’ in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v, no.1, (Oxford, 1989), pp 108-36.

¹⁵⁹ *ECEP*, 18 April 1839.

Samuel Johnson, a sixty acre farmer from Sixmilecross, lamented that he had seen ‘very little improvement in the state of agriculture; there is no draining or rotation of crops carried on to any extent’ nor were there any ‘farming societies or schools in the district’.¹⁶⁰ Samuel Glasgow, a farmer on the estate of Lord Castlestuart, was ‘not aware of the landlord in any case giving a single shilling to improve lands or houses’.¹⁶¹ Little assistance was given towards the improvement of land and it was considered that all classes of farmer were getting poorer with many becoming dependent on loans, which was considered to be ‘a ruinous system’.¹⁶² The huge amount of newspaper advertisements offering loans would suggest that many people availed of what James Anderson thought ‘a most injurious’ system.¹⁶³ Paying back these loans, which were advertised at rates of five to six per cent, forced the tenant to use ‘all their butter, eggs, yarn and everything to liquidate the interest and installments of their loan fund...and when the rent is due they are obliged to apply a second time to the loan fund’.¹⁶⁴ Once caught in the circle of the loan system and paying interest, it was very difficult to break free for most people.

One of the main reasons that loan use was prevalent was because of the ‘Ulster custom’ tradition. This custom was practised widely throughout the province even though it had no legal standing. It was a process that was obscure in its origins but had ‘become so generally the custom that it would be very difficult to abolish it’.¹⁶⁵ In 1785, James Hamilton, a surveyor employed by Abercorn to examine the feasibility of possible land improvements acknowledged that tenant right was ‘a thing well understood on your lordship’s estate’.¹⁶⁶ According to James Sinclair, a Strabane landed proprietor, the tradition stretched back ‘as long as I remember, and for a great length of time, as far back as the plantation of Ulster, the

¹⁶⁰ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 213, Samuel Johnson, p. 821.

¹⁶¹ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 152, Samuel Glasgow, p. 676.

¹⁶² *The Devon commission*, witness no. 212, James Montgomery Reid, p. 824.

¹⁶³ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 208, James Anderson, p. 806.

¹⁶⁴ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 208, James Anderson, p. 806.

¹⁶⁵ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 840.

¹⁶⁶ Martin W. Dowling, *Tenant right and agrarian society in Ulster 1600-1870* (Dublin, 1999), p. 3.

tenant right has been respected...from that time to this, the tenant right has been continued, and in no way altered by law, but by custom'.¹⁶⁷ The vast majority of landlords recognised and acknowledged this custom and did not interfere in its workings making it apparent that at least some unwritten law and custom still had a place in a society that was undergoing many changes at this time.

The significance of the Ulster custom was that it allowed tenants to receive a payment from those who replaced them on their lands and it gave compensation for any improvements that the outgoing tenant carried out. This gave tenants in Ulster the advantage of receiving payment on their departure from their land, something not enjoyed by tenants in the rest of the country. Even after ejection, the new tenants sought the goodwill of the old 'it is usual for a man to seek the goodwill of the person turned out; he thinks he has a right to remunerate him for his sweat and labour; he feels a moral obligation to do so even though the law may not compel him'.¹⁶⁸ However, this 'moral obligation' was more likely the fear of intimidation and retaliation being carried out by the outgoing tenants, something that could be brutal in the extreme. A new tenant and his family moving into a farm vacated without payment of some token of goodwill could face damage to their property or person, sometimes after warnings or often having received no warning. Warnings consisted of the posting of threatening notices, often found on trees, pillars or out houses. This type of warning was sent to David Keys by a tenant that he had replaced, Robert Monteith of Dromore. The notice told Keys to 'preparour [sic] for death' and was part of a wider string of outrages carried out by Monteith against Keys and another man William Cochrane. Monteith had burned down an outhouse, a turf stack, thrown down walls and fired at Cochrane and his brother over a period of six months leading police 'to strongly recommend a reward being offered for such information as would

¹⁶⁷ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 185, James Sinclair, pp 743-4.

¹⁶⁸ *1835 poor enquiry*, appendix F, p. 79.

lead to his arrest' as he was described as having become 'a regular outlaw'.¹⁶⁹ The notice posted by Monteith emphasizes a threat of violence, a threat that was common in many of these notices, some of which included crude drawings of coffins, guns or gallows. These notices varied between the crudely written, and others seeking to convey legal language which perhaps sought to lend an air of legality to the potential actions of the author(s). John Robinson who had taken possession of the farm belonging to a man named McQuade was served with the following notice which was rolled up and placed in the thatch of his house- 'Sir, take notice, if you do not stop your intention of going to [?] remember Charles Lee, you may provide a sheet and coffin for yourself. Take this as a warning and remember you will be ill handled to give up this land tomorrow if not we will soon visit you again'.¹⁷⁰ This notice attempted to legitimize itself with its official type language but is let down by poor grammar and punctuation, ending up as neither one nor the other. However, the threat is clear and the reference to Charles Lee, a man who had been barbarously beaten some time earlier for taking land from which a tenant had been evicted, left the recipient in no doubt that he would suffer a similar fate if the land was not vacated. There certainly appears to have been an acceptance of these methods by the community in general according to Lieutenant Wade of the Poor law enquiry 'in conversation with farmers in different parts of the district as to whether outrages were sanctioned by the mass of the agricultural working people, as necessary to protect their general interest, they said that if a man took land over their heads they would be revenged; the expression of one farmer was, "that he would stand over the man who took his land and see him burning in flames"¹⁷¹. In the face of such possible violence, it is little wonder that 'the incoming tenant would not accept the farm unless he was satisfied that the outgoing man wished him well'.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 47 28 1836.

¹⁷⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 31 28 1836.

¹⁷¹ *1835 poor enquiry*, appendix F, p. 79.

¹⁷² *The Devon commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 840.

This reason, and the desperation for land led to large sums being paid to the outgoing tenants by the new ones. The amount of the goodwill payment varied from four to twelve years worth of rent, a sum which could reach eighty pounds in some places.¹⁷³ Large sums such as these were frequently paid but had the effect of crippling the incoming tenant as ‘in many great instances, persons have given so high a price for farms, that the tenant afterwards has not been able to occupy it for want of capital’.¹⁷⁴ Henry Leslie Prentice explained the problem ‘the incoming tenant has frequently to borrow, or resort to extraordinary means, to raise purchase money, and comes in a worse state than the one going out. The object often is to get possession without duly considering the circumstances of the farm’.¹⁷⁵ Some landlords did attempt to regulate the custom in a bid to avoid the incoming tenant from being stripped of their capital but this only led to limited success as the deals conducted often took place behind the land agents’ backs. The Ulster custom while beneficial to outgoing tenants, especially in facilitating emigration with the money received, was potentially ruinous to the incoming tenant, who in desperation to secure a plot of land, was prepared to pay a sum way above his means. David W. Miller explains that ‘the kernel of the practice was the acknowledged right of an outgoing tenant (usually a bankrupt or failing tenant) to sell his interest to a solvent successor’.¹⁷⁶ However, it is open to question as to how many incoming tenants were actually solvent or soon became insolvent because of the huge burden of payment that they had undertaken. This payment also had the effect of ‘severely limiting the needed capital and credit which they could devote to production factors’¹⁷⁷ meaning that the capital needed to increase productivity was swallowed up leaving little possibility of improving the land and breaking out of the poverty cycle. Already faced with the collapse of

¹⁷³ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 185, James Sinclair, p. 744.

¹⁷⁴ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 206, Thomas Sproule, p. 801.

¹⁷⁵ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 220, Henry Leslie Prentice, p. 840.

¹⁷⁶ David W. Miller, ‘The Armagh troubles 1784-95’ in Clark and Donnelly, *Irish peasants- violence and political unrest 1780-1914*, pp 143-54.

¹⁷⁷ O’Neill, *Family and farm in pre famine Ireland*, pp 67-8.

the linen industry, payment of the Ulster custom added much misery and hardship to many people barely clinging to basic survival.

While the tradition of the Ulster custom was generally left alone by most landlords, there were many other rights and customs that were interfered with. A ‘very serious’¹⁷⁸ outbreak of agrarian violence occurred on the Shirley estate in Monaghan when the tenants were charged for the cutting of turf following a new valuation being imposed after the appointment of a new agent. Hunting and fishing rights had for generations been reserved for the elites and had been included amongst the clauses inserted in leases. However, the implementation of these clauses had been difficult as tenants generally ignored them. But as the century passed, a stricter enforcement of the clauses denied many tenants an extra income or basic food. On the subject of the poaching of fish, McEvoy recognised that ‘vast depredations are always committed by idle fellows, who make this business a great part of their occupation’.¹⁷⁹ Officials appointed to carry out the enforcement of these clauses were loathed and often suffered the wrath of the people that they protected lands and rivers from. On approaching poachers in Strabane, water keepers were severely beaten ‘by a party of men’,¹⁸⁰ an attack which left one water keeper’s life in danger. The fact that the attack was so brutal would indicate the hatred and contempt that water keepers were faced with. Revenge for prosecutions was often swift as found out by James McCasland, the gamekeeper over mountains belonging to the earl of Castlestuart, who barely escaped with his life when his isolated house was set on fire and completely destroyed. McCasland had recently prosecuted persons for poaching in the mountains and revenge was the obvious motive for this attack, an attack deemed so serious that the police offered a £15 reward for information.¹⁸¹ These cases would suggest that people were not prepared to accept all the changes being imposed and the

¹⁷⁸ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 212, James Montgomery Reid, p. 820.

¹⁷⁹ McEvoy, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey*, p. 134.

¹⁸⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 201 28 1837.

¹⁸¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 24 28 1838.

fact the perpetrators were prepared to resort to violence to continue with their ‘work’ shows that people were not prepared to accept every encroachment on their lives.

In instances such as this, where a contentious issue relevant to both communities arose, religious differences were sometimes set aside as both groups came together to oppose unwelcome changes that were being implemented. Issues such as rights of passage were changing as private interests were given permission to charge tolls on traditional walkways, waterways, and roads, and this was an issue sure to enrage the people of both sects who would have considered it their right to travel where they wished without being charged for the privilege. These interests faced having their property damaged by a populace unprepared to pay a toll for what had been hitherto a route which had been free to use. One source of much contention was the Tyrone navigation which linked Coalisland to the river Blackwater. This canal which stretched eleven and three quarter miles, contained seven locks, and had been paid for by the local populace, even though it was now considered to be a ‘wasteful and useless expenditure’¹⁸² because of the poor yields of coal that Coalisland produced. Vessels carrying produce such as flax, lime, turf, manure, or building materials were subject to a toll of 2s 6d per lock.¹⁸³ One must assume that these tolls greatly increased the cost of transporting local goods, something that would not have been appreciated by the locals affected by these costs. A police report from August 1837 reported how a crowd of up to 600 men ‘of all denominations’ assembled at the canal ‘for the purpose of enforcing a right of passage by breaking open several gates lately erected there’.¹⁸⁴ Along with the local magistrate, Mr. Murray, thirty police proceeded to the scene in a bid to preserve the peace. The surprising thing about this incident is that Murray, perhaps realizing the superior numbers of the mob or maybe even being sympathetic to their cause, instructed the police not

¹⁸² *Royal commission on general system of railways in Ireland, second report, appendices, index, atlas, plans and sections*, p. 14, H. C. 1837-38 (145), xxx.449.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, appendix b, p. 59.

¹⁸⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 130 28 1837. Journal of Dungannon police station, 11 August 1837. PRONI D804/3.

to interfere with the breaking open of the gates deciding instead to leave the dispute to a court of law. Judging by subsequent reports, it would appear that the gates were repaired and that a toll remained in place. A request was made by Mr. William Robinson, Inspector of the Tyrone navigation, for police to prevent further planned destruction although on this occasion no one turned up.¹⁸⁵ However, four days later, a police patrol discovered that a gate had been lifted off its hinges at the second toll gate near Coalisland,¹⁸⁶ and on 6 December a toll gate and pillar were damaged one mile from the village. Police acknowledged that ‘the general opposition to those toll gates is of long continuance’¹⁸⁷ and the fact that such a large group could organize and unite against the toll indicates the widespread opposition to its imposition, an opposition that stretched across both communities. While no violence occurred, the power of the mob was very apparent and demonstrates that while a large project such as the Tyrone navigation may have been welcomed by industrialists as it enhanced the communications network, it was not at all well received by the local populace, who by paying tolls were contributing to its upkeep and running. While violence was not used in these instances, its use as a legitimate weapon of the people was never far from the surface.

The power of the mob and the co-operation that could exist between communities was again apparent in the Coalisland area when agitation erupted over the conversion of a local mill for the purpose of obtaining starch from potatoes. The mill had the ability to grind forty bushel of potatoes in fifteen minutes and upon ‘this becoming generally known through the country, a very strong feeling soon got up lest all the potatoes in this and the neighbouring counties should be consumed by this wonderful mill, and that the inhabitants would have nothing to live upon’.¹⁸⁸ An Englishman, Mr. Baxter, had begun the process but gave up in despair when a large mob broke open the gates of the mill and destroyed several items of

¹⁸⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 154 28 1837.

¹⁸⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 156 28 1837.

¹⁸⁷ NAI: CSORP, OR: 191 28 1837.

¹⁸⁸ *LJ*, 20 March 1838.

machinery. In addition to this a turf stack belonging to tile and brick manufacturers James Grey, a Protestant, and John Hughes, a Catholic, was maliciously set on fire and destroyed because of the fact that Baxter lodged with Grey.¹⁸⁹ Upon making arrests, the police felt the need to draft extra troops from Armagh to guard Dungannon Bridewell where the accused were held.¹⁹⁰ The view of the police was that ‘considerable excitement appears to prevail in the neighbourhood of Coalisland and around Dungannon about these men’ and a military force of eighty men and a troop of cavalry was gathered as it was feared that the mob would attack and release the prisoners.¹⁹¹ At the following court case, Head Constable Robinson produced threatening notices that had been received by Baxter and also copies of songs that had been circulated in the area. Finding just one defendant, John McMahon, guilty, the judge remarked that ‘the misguided people, instead of perceiving in these works a source of wealth and industry, had conspired to destroy them’ instead.¹⁹² Obviously however, the local peasantry were rather sceptical about any of the wealth coming to them as they then directed their wrath towards the new owner George Sloan. As Sloan attempted to refit the mill, a trench was cut during the night from the mill dam to the water course in a bid to divert the flow of water.¹⁹³ While the trench was not deep enough to achieve its aim, it is apparent that the local populace were not prepared to give up their actions and their organized opposition to the work being carried out. Further displeasure was voiced at the Dungannon borough election of 1839 when the victorious candidate John Knox was ‘occasionally hooted by the mob, in consequence of having supplied Mr. Sloan’s starch mills with potatoes at Coalisland’ during his victory parade through the town.¹⁹⁴ The connection between Knox and the mill would appear to have been reason enough for the mob to gather and voice its disapproval.

¹⁸⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 25 28 1838.

¹⁹⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 30 28 1838.

¹⁹¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 33 28 1838.

¹⁹² *ECEP*, 21 March 1839.

¹⁹³ NAI: CSORP, OR: 45 28 1838.

¹⁹⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 71 28 1839.

This case further demonstrates that an issue of a sufficiently serious nature could lead to the coming together of differing religious factions and cross community action taking place.

Allan Blackstock deals with a similar coming together of the community in his examination of North Armagh and the ‘Tommy Downshire’ incidents of the early 1830s.¹⁹⁵ In this case Catholics and Protestants came together to stop a canal boat carrying potatoes for export, beating up the crew and damaging the boat. This incident was followed by meetings which succeeded in having some rents reduced before the movement fizzled out until it was revitalized in 1842. Blackstock points out that ‘alternative constructs of community could shape collective action, coexist with, and occasionally supplant, religious or political identities’ and this certainly seems to have occurred in Tyrone also.¹⁹⁶

In addition to paying rent, loan, and toll payments, tenants and farmers also had tithe and county cess payments to contend with. While there was, in general, less antagonism in Ulster over tithe payments due to tillage farming being more common than the more heavily tithed pasture farming, on occasion opposition to its collection did occur. Although some tension had been removed from the contentious issue of tithe payment by the government’s response to the tithe war of the early 1830s, tithe proctors remained much hated figures. The appearance of a tithe proctor often led to collective opposition from the community. Signalled by the sounding of whistles, horns or by the lighting of fires, community members often came together to challenge the collection. The *Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet* reported ‘a number of people collecting from all parts, brought together by whistling and shouting’¹⁹⁷ in Raphoe, County Donegal with a view to obstructing the tithe collection. The collectors ‘were immediately surrounded, obstructed, pelted with stones and knocked down,

¹⁹⁵ Alan Blackstock, ‘Tommy Downshire’s Boys: popular protest, social change and political manipulation in mid-Ulster 1829-1847’ in *Past and Present*, no 196 (August, 2007), pp 125-172.

¹⁹⁶ Blackstock, ‘Tommy Downshire’s Boys’, pp 125-172.

¹⁹⁷ *ECEP*, 14 January 1836.

and one of them robbed of a pistol'.¹⁹⁸ Faced with such a threatening situation, the collectors were forced to flee the area. A similar occurrence took place in the town land of Errigal Kieran when Owen McConaghy, a Catholic, was violently assaulted while serving tithe notices on behalf of Reverend John Mountjoy. Again, people were gathered by 'sounding a horn'¹⁹⁹ and proceeded to attack McConaghey with stones. In a separate incident, tithe collector William Clements, was stabbed with a pitchfork by a man called Peter McGhee while attempting to seize the tithe due to a Reverend Hart,²⁰⁰ while tithe collectors Francis Dixon and Archibald Allen were attacked with sticks and stones at Coagh, near Dungannon on their way home from collecting a parcel of weaving apparel from the house of a man named O'Neill.²⁰¹ Goods could be seized by tithe collectors in lieu of a monetary payment if decreed by the courts and a decree of this sort led Bailiffs Michael Power, a Catholic, and Thomas Stringer, a Protestant, to the home of Robert Moore outside Caledon. When they entered his house he seized a hatchet and swore he would use it unless they left. His wife then grabbed a pitchfork and stabbed Power forcing both bailiffs to leave. Moore then followed them with a gun. When the police went to the house Moore and his wife had vacated the premises.²⁰² Violent means were not always resorted to however. In 1832 3,000 farmers joined together seeking rent and tithe reductions and proceeded to the residences of gentlemen with petitions stating their grievances. This action was successful as some rent reductions were gained although 'this concession on their part arose from a consciousness that the rents were too high rather than from intimidation'²⁰³ according to Lieutenant Wade. Although this event passed off peacefully, the potential for trouble from these type of gatherings was always there. An anti tithe meeting due to take place outside Drumquin

¹⁹⁸ *ECEP*, 14 January 1836.

¹⁹⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 73 28 1836.

²⁰⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 46 28 1836.

²⁰¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 73 28 1837.

²⁰² NAI: CSORP, 56 28 1837.

²⁰³ *1835 poor enquiry*, appendix F, p. 78.

brought a worried reaction from Resident Magistrate Snow from Strabane.²⁰⁴ The public from Donegal, Tyrone, and Fermanagh had been notified by hand bills privately circulated to meet on 5 November 1838. Fearing an attendance of over 20,000, Snow requested an army presence from the authorities and was granted a company of the 38th regiment from Enniskillen to assist the fifty policemen who were to be on duty. Although the meeting ultimately did not go ahead, the fact that such a large event taking in a number of counties was planned, indicates that the tithe issue was very much to the fore in the minds of Catholics, Presbyterians, and Church of Ireland members who also were subjected to payment. Resistance, whether violent or peaceful, was often an organized, planned occurrence and demonstrated a willingness by many to go outside the law if necessary to oppose what was considered to be injustice.

The payment of a cess which was a tax paid for civil purposes such as road building, the construction of bridges or the upkeep of civic buildings was also a drain on the funds of the peasantry. Assize courts ruled on the amount payable by each town land or parish and the barony collector was empowered to collect the amount which had been decided. This amount often was as high as one eighth of the rent,²⁰⁵ a figure considered ‘enormous’,²⁰⁶ and had to be paid prior to each assize. Payment was collected by two local cess payers who were appointed by the local churchwarden. This left these collectors in an awkward situation as they were faced with the task of retrieving payments from friends and neighbours. As with the tithe, goods could be seized instead of the money due and this inevitably led to high emotions and violent obstruction occurring. It was also felt that cess funds were being used by the gentry for their own benefit and this also contributed to the resentment felt at having to pay such a tax. These issues together with the strain of having to find payment for yet another tax led to confrontation and violence occurring frequently during collection periods.

²⁰⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 114 28 1838

²⁰⁵ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 209, Ephraim Love, p. 813.

²⁰⁶ *The Devon commission*, witness no. 80, Thomas Eyre, p. 443.

With so many financial burdens to contend with, the fear of ejection was never far from the minds of many tenants. While the ‘hanging gale’ system of rent collection gave tenants a little breathing space, for many it merely postponed the inevitable. To lose a foothold on the land, however poor it may have been, was the ultimate disaster for a tenant. Gale E. Christianson, in his examination of agrarian violence, agrees that ‘the peasantry only had the land from which to derive their living, and, accustomed as they were to living at the minimum level of subsistence, when one of them lost his holding he and his family literally faced the possibility of death by starvation’.²⁰⁷ Evicted tenants in many cases resorted to violence, and as it was almost impossible to target a landlord, the new tenants brought in bore the brunt of the bitterness and frustrations of those evicted. The anger that ejected tenants felt manifested itself in many violent ways. Farm animals belonging to new tenants were often the target for attack. This fate befell cattle belonging to Samuel McMinn when his cow house was entered and the tails cut off his cows. McMinn had taken possession of an eight acre farm two years previously which had been occupied by John Wilson, who was turned off the property by Lord Northland when his lease expired. According to the police the Wilson family were of ‘bad character’ which led them to suspect John Wilson of carrying out the act.²⁰⁸

Inability to pay rent may not have been the main reason for evictions. O’Neill argues that eviction notices were more a warning system to tenants and that relatively few evictions were carried out because of non payment for the reason that ‘landlords were reluctant to expose themselves, their agents, and their Protestant tenantry to the hostile actions of an aroused Catholic community.’²⁰⁹ The process of distress was more commonly used, a system whereby bailiffs took away crops or animals equal to the value of the rent. This was a highly

²⁰⁷ Gale E. Christianson, ‘Secret societies and agrarian violence in Ireland 1790-1840’ in *Agricultural History*, xlvii (1972), pp 369-84.

²⁰⁸ NAI: CSORP, OR: 151 28 1836.

²⁰⁹ O’Neill, *Family and farm in pre famine Ireland*, p. 38.

unpopular and emotional process which often led to confrontation and sometimes violence between mobs of locals and the bailiffs.

Given all the factors examined, what needs to be questioned is whether a moral decline resulted in a society in which each stratum was adversely affected. In its examination of Tyrone, the commission examining the feasibility of a railway being established in the county remarked that the ‘spare time not required for the cultivation of their land, and which, in other districts is so often given up to idleness, intemperance, or crime, is here devoted to profitable and useful employment, which rewards industry with a fair return, and promotes habits of peace and order’.²¹⁰ This, however would appear to be a rather rose tinted view of a commission perhaps seeking to promote the installation of the railway system in Ireland. A bleaker picture was painted by Reverend Thomas Millar of Derryloran:

the way the linen trade has been carried on in the north for many years has been eminently conducive to the peace, morals, and the health of the community. The weaver held a few acres; he was separated from the crowded suburbs of towns, he wove when trade was good, he cultivated with spade labour his land; his health was improved; apart from temptation, his morals, and those of his family, were not corrupted. But divide labour, make all trades collect into towns- health and morals are injured, intemperance and quarrelling are the consequences.²¹¹

While this may be the opinion of a rather over zealous Protestant minister, it can be considered more realistic than the idyllic portrait presented by the railway commissioners. It is difficult to tell without a thorough examination of crime levels in previous decades whether crime increased during the period being examined, and certainly agrarian crime was well established in the psyche of the Irish peasant of all confessional backgrounds long before the economic crisis of the 1830s. Possibly morals did decline because of the collapse of the linen industry, but people had always been prepared to go outside the law to achieve their aims and this certainly continued in the pre famine period. Gibbons makes the point that a ‘clear notion of a code of laws, quite separate from that represented by government, magistrates, or police’

²¹⁰ *Royal commission on general system of railways in Ireland, second report, appendices, index, atlas, plans and sections*, p. 7.

²¹¹ *1835 poor enquiry*, appendix F, p. 384.

was 'applied by the Irish countryman to his own kind and to anyone interfering to age-old custom' and this would appear true of Tyrone.²¹² Far from being a brow beaten, spiritless society resigned to its fate, people did organize themselves, on occasion on a cross religious level, to resist changes occurring in their lives. Secret society and associational activity will be examined in later chapters, but as regards peasant organization at a less structured and more sporadic level, the cases shown at Dromore, the Coalisland starch mill, the Tyrone navigation, and on the Powerscourt estate are evidence that peasants were able to unite, organize themselves, and take decisive action against outside forces when considered necessary.

While some cross religious co-operation did occur, on many occasions land issues brought Protestants into conflict with Catholics although it can be argued strongly that sectarianism was not the issue, rather the struggle for land caused these clashes. This case is borne out by the fact that intra Protestant struggle also occurred whether it be within the family or on a wider level. This was not a society in which outrage was merely carried out by one religious grouping against the other. It was a society in which the struggle to survive superseded notions of religious solidarity and one in which extreme violence could occur if conditions conspired to bring it to the surface. Moreover, this violence was seldom carried out against the landlord or his agent, rather it was inflicted by tenant on tenant as the moral code which prevented attacks on the upper classes held firm. The next chapter examines law and order within the county and traces the level of compliance that it received from a society that was experiencing major change, not always for the better, in its mode of life.

²¹² Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant the threatening letters of pre-famine Ireland, 1801-45*, pp 22-23.

Chapter 2

The forces of law and order

The structure and working of the forces of law and order underwent a radical change during the years between 1800 and 1836. These changes greatly affected the lives of both the Catholic and Protestant communities. The aim of this chapter is to examine these changes and show how the police force became more organized and efficient under the changes brought about by the Tory Party Chief Secretary Robert Peel and by Thomas Drummond, who was given the role of Under Secretary by the Whig Party which governed from 1830 to 1841 apart from a short period in 1835. There were also changes in the judicial system, and the magistracy which had governed at a local level saw much of its power eroded. The composition of the magistracy and the important social role that its members performed will be examined as will the reaction of this cornerstone of the local community to the changes being imposed from Dublin. Far from appeasing the county, the revised set up of the police force in many cases faced enormous hostility from both sections of the religious divide and also from magistrates whose local power and position was threatened by a police force answerable not to them but to Dublin Castle.

According to *Pettigrew and Oulton's Almanac and Directory* of 1841, Tyrone was served by 105 magistrates with the number of magistrates in each parish varying depending upon its size and location.¹ A larger parish such as Clogher which contained the villages of Clogher, Augher and Fivemiletown was served by seven magistrates, whilst on the other end of the scale the parish of Killyman had no magistrate whatsoever.² Typically an average parish such as Ardstraw or Pomeroy would have three to four magistrates and this could be considered generally as being the number that served most parishes. In the early part of the century magistrates served as the cornerstones of government authority and effectively

¹*Pettigrew and Oulton's Almanac and Directory of 1841* (Dublin, 1840), pp 248-49.

²*OSM*, v, p. 50, xx, pp 66-69.

governed at a local level. Part of this local ‘government’ saw many magistrates serving on the Grand Jury which was a non elective body selected by the high sheriff of the county. This was beneficial as the position of the magistrate was an unpaid one and membership of the Grand Jury gave magistracy members the chance to profit financially from the position. The Grand Jury was arguably the most important local body in rural Ireland described as being ‘a sort of county parliament, in which members are anxious to have a seat’.³ This anxiety was expressed by one George Wade, who in a letter to Tyrone Grand Jury member Thomas Greer, canvassed for the position of secretary of the body despite the fact that the position was not vacant. Wade was certainly keen to make his interest in the position known-‘I only seek to stand upon equal terms with any other candidates who may offer, and as one has already presented himself, I might lose any opportunity and prospect of success if I was to wait until the situation was formally declared to be vacant’.⁴ This would suggest that membership of the Tyrone Grand Jury was part of a patronage system and that election to the body was dependent on sponsorship and connections which would lead one to imagine that membership of this body was very much closed to anyone lacking a suitable patron.

Tyrone Grand Jury 1835-36		
Lord Claude Hamilton #		Edward Houston Caulfield #
Lord Northland #		W. S. Richardson *
A. W. C. Hamilton #		John Ynyr Burgess # *
Sir Robert Ferguson # *		Samuel Galbraith # *
Charles Eccles # *		James Lendrum # *
A. G. Stuart #		J. C. Stronge #
Robert W. Lowry #		Samuel Vesey # *
Col Hugh Montgomery		Thomas Houston # *
Robert Waring Maxwell #		Henry Leslie Prentice # *
William Lenox Conygham		Robert Evans *
John Lindesay #		
Robert Montgomery Moore # *		

Table 1: Tyrone Grand Jury
Magistrate, * still a member by 1840⁵

The above table emphasises that many members of the Grand Jury were magistrates and that

³Virginia Crossman, *Local government in nineteenth century Ireland* (Belfast, 1994), p. 26.

⁴Correspondence of Thomas Greer, PRONIT2642.

⁵County of Tyrone Grand Warrant for Lent assizes 1836, PRONI TYR 4/1/48.

a high percentage of these served in their role for a number of years which backs up a claim made by the Tyrone Independent Club that the Grand Jury was a closed shop ‘frequented by the same men or their sons for the past twenty-five years’.⁶ Because of this prevalent feeling and because of the high cess that the body levied, especially on the strong farmer class, the Grand Jury was not a popular organization. Among the functions of the Grand Jury were the building and maintenance of roads and public works. The expense for these works fell on county cess payers who were not consulted when a scheme was being proposed and the system was considered to be most corrupt as the Grand Jury was comprised of many of the leading landholders in the county who often used cess payer’s money to improve roads and amenities on their own properties. The *Freeman’s Journal* was scathing in its criticism of this board as it considered that ‘under the name of the grand jury, immense sums have been levied for the special purpose of enriching the landowner. Bridges have been built were [sic] water never ran, and roads have been fashioned at an immense outlay of the public money for no earthly object. In Tyrone jobbing was systematised, and robbery was reduced to a science’.⁷ An examination of the county of Tyrone cess records of 1836 shows that magistrate H. G. Edwards was given £18 17s 6d compensation ‘for a malicious burning’ of his property while the earl of Belmore received £26 11s 6d for a similar occurrence.⁸ Sir Robert Ferguson, James Anderson, Rev. Archibald Hamilton, Rev. John Colthurst and John Barclay, all magistrates, were given £650 for building a bridge across the River Derg on the estate of Ferguson which was managed by Anderson.⁹ £100 was given to Lord Ranfurley for widening the road which led from his porter lodge in the town land of Gortmerron in Dungannon while in an even more blatant abuse of public money the Grand Jury decided in 1840 to commission a portrait of jury member John Corry Mountray for placement in the grand jury

⁶Political letters and papers, mainly printed, of the 3rd Lord Rossmore, PRONI T2929/12/27.

⁷*FJ*, 8 May 1839.

⁸County of Tyrone Grand Warrant for Lent Assizes 1836, PRONI TYR4/1/48, p. 43, p. 228.

⁹County of Tyrone Grand Warrant for Lent Assizes 1836, PRONI TYR4/1/48, p. 43, p. 228, p. 11.

room to show their appreciation of their fellow member.¹⁰ Because of abuses such as this the Grand Jury was an unpopular body among farmers as it was considered that their assessments ‘are levied and expanded by the landed proprietors alone, and are thus a heavy taxation upon the county, without any adequate representation on the part of the cess payers, while the landed gentry do not themselves, as such, contribute to the burdens which they thus levy upon the rest of the community’.¹¹

The Grand Jury also decided on which criminal cases went to trial and which were deemed to be too weak to go before the courts although it must be pointed out that magistrates received no formal legal training, a fact which was very much a drawback when it came to the dispensation of justice. Nonetheless it is evident that the Grand Jury was an extremely powerful body dominated numerically by the magistracy and a position upon it was most desirable and advantageous.

The reason for this desire was that magistrates generally came from the stratum beneath that of the top layer of society. Stanley Palmer asserts that ‘most magistrates belonged to the lesser gentry, a level below the country elite’ and this would certainly appear to be true in the case of Tyrone.¹² When looking at magistrates from the cream of society, whose positions were merely symbolic, such as the earl of Caledon or Sir James Richardson Bunbury the extent of their wealth is evident. Caledon was one of the biggest landholders in the county leasing lands to over 10,000 tenants and his residence displayed his enormous wealth. Set in a demesne of between 7-800 acres, Caledon House was described as being ‘a fine building with a handsome front supported on pillars of the Ionic order’ which contained an ‘extensive library’ and was surrounded by ‘a very fine garden’.¹³ Sir James Richardson displayed his wealth with his repair of Augher Castle, which had once been inhabited by Sir

¹⁰County of Tyrone Grand Warrant for Lent Assizes 1840, PRONI TYR 4/1/48, p. 71. D/1844/42

¹¹1848 Dungannon meeting of land holders, tenant-farmers, merchants, traders, and other inhabitants of the province of Ulster. PRONI T1689/72.

¹²Palmer, *Police and protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850*, p. 60.

¹³*OSM*, xx, pp 2-4.

Henry Dowcra, while Samuel Vesey who resided at Fintona lived at Derrybard House which was described as having ‘a convex bow containing 3 windows above and below on the south face. It has also a double porch of masonry, a cut stone cornice of very handsome appearance running around 3 sides of the outer wall, and the spacious offices contiguous form a quadrangle which is entered by a lofty gateway over which there is a belfry and clock’.¹⁴ These type of residences illustrate the level of wealth enjoyed by the elite of society, most of whom were magistrates in an honorary capacity only although some, such as Caledon, did carry out their magisterial duties.

The more typical magistrate, however, came from a class beneath those who could afford to display such grandeur. Almost exclusively Protestant, some were landlords of a smaller nature, others were land agents, doctors, surgeons, clergymen or former members of the military. From examining their residences it is apparent that they did not enjoy the wealth of the noble classes. For example, Killyfaddy House, the residence of Robert Waring Maxwell is described as being ‘built in a very plain style’.¹⁵ Despite the fact that Maxwell was a landed proprietor, his land was considered to be ‘too light for flax’ and unsuitable for growing the more lucrative produce of wheat. Poor land meant that Maxwell was confined to growing the less profitable produce of oats and potatoes and could not produce the necessary wealth to enable him to break into the elite class of society. Glebe House, the residence of the Reverend Gilbert King, had ‘nothing remarkable in its appearance’ while the home of Hugh Gore Edwards ‘had little either in situation or appearance to recommend it’.¹⁶ These type of residences are more typical of those inhabited by the average magistrate and provide an insight into their position in society.

A crucial part of magistracy life was social networking whether with each other or in higher circles. At the top level of the scale large dinners were frequently held by the elites

¹⁴*OSM*, v, p. 64.

¹⁵*OSM*, v, p. 64.

¹⁶*OSM*, v, p. 64.

which were essential for any magistrate who hoped to move up the social ladder to attend. These dinners brought the cream of society together and were important in the building of a social network. The 'Chronicles of Parkanaur', a series of personal journals written over much of the century by Dungannon magistrate John Ynyr Burgess provide a valuable insight into the social life enjoyed by members of the magistracy. Burgess frequently dined and enjoyed overnight stays at the residences of the upper gentry such as Northland and Caledon where many 'theatricals' and 'fancy balls' were held.¹⁷ The honouring of Colonels Verner and Leslie at an Enniskillen dinner was typical of the type of occasion frequented by Burgess and many of his fellow magistrates. The event was described in the *Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet* as follows 'as early as Sunday morning several gentlemen from distant places drove through town to the hospitable mansions of the neighbouring gentry, to which they had previously been invited...the carriages of the gentry thronged the town and the scene...was altogether enlivening'.¹⁸The dinner itself, held in the great room of the town hall, saw a great number of toasts being proposed and speeches made on the political state of the country. The fact that Verner and Leslie were to become future members of Parliament for Armagh and Monaghan respectively meant that magistrates who had obtained their positions through their patronage were compelled to attend the dinner in their honour. These type of occasions were a regular occurrence. A Derry dinner of 1828 to commemorate the anniversary of the lifting of the siege of the city attracted 200 gentlemen who dined together in the Coronation Hall. A special gallery was fitted for the ladies and was 'crowded to excess'. Following the usual toasts and speeches the company 'separated at an advanced hour'.¹⁹'Dinner and wine of the finest description' were served at a dinner in Aughnacloy which celebrated His Majesty's birthday and which was presided over by local magistrate Edward Moore, and at a 'fancy ball' hosted at Northland House, Dungannon by

¹⁷Abstracts from the chronicles of Parkanaur, PRONI T3863/1.

¹⁸*ECEP*, 4, 11 January 1827.

¹⁹*ECEP*, 21 August 1828.

Viscountess Northland 500 guests enjoyed dinner which was followed by dancing.²⁰ The Strabane Farming Society held an annual ploughing match which drew ‘most of the gentry and farmers in the vicinity’ and which was followed by dinner in the town hall.²¹ Attended by over seventy gentlemen, the dinner was graced by the president of the society, the marquis of Abercorn, and presided over by magistrates James Sinclair and Major John Humphries. These type of social events were an opportunity for magistrates to meet with each other and also to rub shoulders with the nobility thereby building a web of patronage.

What must be kept in mind is the fact that although the majority of magistrates came from a stratum below the elite, they were still way above the average society member in terms of wealth and social standing. It was essential that magistrates came from the upper classes as much of their authority depended on the level of respect shown to them by the local community. It was also important that magistrates knew the people that they were dealing with and because of the positions that they held, they were in more direct contact with the lower classes than the great landed magnates and therefore held much more influence. Many magistrates were land agents who are described by Terence Dooley as being ‘responsible for collecting rents...eliminating arrears, keeping accounts, drawing up leases and ensuring that their covenants were adhered to by tenants, supervising estate expenditure, overseeing improvements, carrying out evictions, and valuing property’.²² Being permanently resident and in constant contact with the local residents enabled magistrates to have a wide knowledge of rural happenings, so much so that the Reverend William Brown of Strabane complained ‘that a hen could not lay an egg unknown to them’.²³ This type of interaction was vital as a good knowledge of the people and the neighbourhood was paramount if a magistrate was to properly maintain the stability of the area of which he was in charge. The social lives that

²⁰ *ECEP*, 12 August 1828.

²¹ *ECEP*, 23 February 1837.

²² Terence Dooley, *The big house and landed estates of Ireland: a research guide* (Dublin, 2007), pp 18-19.

²³ *1835 poor enquiry*, appendix F, p. 759.

magistrates led also ensured a high level of familiarity between them and the lower classes, and the Orange Order provided such a cross class meeting point. The Order had grown in strength since its formation in 1795 and claimed a vast support from the Protestant lower classes. It was patronized by the upper classes who saw the advantages of having such a large number of people that could be mobilized in the event of any possible Catholic uprising. It was considered that the majority of magistrates were members. The structure of the Order entailed that all classes mix and that no particular lodge could remain exclusive to one class only. At the core of the Order were local lodges, lodges which served a particular town-land or village and which typically contained between 50 and 80 members. These were organized into districts which came under the control of the county lodge which was in turn controlled by the Grand Lodge of Ireland. While many magistrates filled important positions of the body at county and national level, the rules of the Order made it compulsory for members to attend their local lodges. This ensured that magistrates remained very much grounded at a local level because of their involvement in the Order. From examining the following table, the level of interaction that occurred amongst magistrates is noteworthy and secondly, the interaction with the lower classes that resulted from membership of the yeomanry and the Orange Order is striking. The local knowledge of these figures, with their involvement in so many spheres of life, whether with the elites of society, their own peers, or with the lower classes was a vital factor in their ability to carry out their duties as local peacekeepers.

	Magistrate	Grand Jury	Yeoman	Orange Order
Anderson, James	x	x		
Beresford, Charles Cobe	x			x
Burges, John Y.	x	x		
Burgoyne, Sir John			x	x
Cole Hamilton, Arthur W.	x	x	x	x
Crossle, Henry	x		x	x
Earl of Belmore	x	x	x	
Earl of Ranfurley	x		x	
Eccles, Charles	x	x		
Ferguson, Sir Robert	x	x		
Galbraith, Samuel	x	x		x
Greer, Joseph	x		x	x
Houston Caulfield, Edward	x	x	x	
Houston, Thomas	x	x		
Knox, Thomas	x		x	
Lendrum, James	x	x		x
Lenox Conygham, William	x	x		
Lindesay, John	x	x		
Lord Claude Hamilton	x	x		x
Lowry, James	x		x	x
Lowry, Robert William	x	x	x	
Marquess of Abercorn	x		x	
Maxwell, Robert Waring	x	x	x	
Moore, Robert Montgomery	x	x		
Mountray, John Corry	x	x	x	x
Mountray, Whitney	x			x
Murray, J. S.	x		x	
Prentice, Henry Leslie	x	x	x	
Richardson Bunbury, Sir James	x		x	
Spear, George	x		x	
Spear, John Laurence	x		x	
Staples, Sir Thomas	x		x	
Stewart Richardson, William	x	x		
Stewart, Mervyn	x		x	x
Stewart, Sir Hugh	x		x	x
Stronge, J. C.	x	x		
Stuart, Andrew	x	x		
Tottenham, Charles	x			x
Vesey, Samuel	x	x		x

Table 2: Sources of gentry interaction²⁴

The downside of involvement with the Orange Order and the yeomanry, from the point of view of basic law and order, was that many magistrates displayed blatant bias towards Orangemen when dealing with Protestant infringements of the law leaving a

²⁴Pettigrew and Oulton's *Almanac and Directory of 1841* (Dublin, 1840), pp 248-49. County of Tyrone Grand Warrant for Lent assizes 1836, PRONI TYR 4/1/48, *Yeomanry and volunteer corps. Return of effective yeomanry, and expense of each corps, in the United Kingdom, for the year 1833; with an abstract of sums voted, and expended, from 1816 to 1834*, H. C. 1834 (67), xlii.89. No actual roll lists exist listing Orangemen. I have deduced the names of the Orange upper classes from various sources in which their Orange activities are mentioned such as newspaper and parliamentary reports.

prevalent feeling among the Catholic community that the justice system was biased against them and that in many cases it was impossible to receive a fair trial. Catholic barrister Randall Kernan, who served the North West circuit, was adamant that ‘in cases civil and criminal between Protestant and Catholic, justice is positively denied to the Catholic’.²⁵ Author William Carleton claimed that ‘to find a Justice of the Peace not an Orangeman would have been an impossibility. The Grand Jury room was little less than an Orange lodge. There was no law against an Orangeman and none for a papist’.²⁶ The court system that Catholics complained so bitterly about was composed of Petty Sessions, Quarter Sessions, and Assize Courts. Petty sessions courts, set up in 1822 to deal with an increasing population and held monthly in nearby towns or villages, had a local focus and dealt with offences of the least serious nature. The jury were usually freeholders who owned property to the value of £10 per year (the strong farmer or shopkeeper class) and were chosen by the sub sheriff from a list provided by the clerk of the peace. Quarter session courts, held four times a year, dealt with more serious cases but not with more felonious crimes such as homicide or treason. Assize courts operated at a county level, were presided over by travelling judges, and dealt with the most serious crimes committed in the jurisdiction during its lent and summer circuits. Juries at quarter session and assize courts, which were held at Omagh, were chosen by the high sheriff from the ranks of the magistracy. Randall Kernan claimed in 1835 that sheriffs and sub sheriffs were generally Orangemen and that their religious bias was apparent when they chose jury members. He maintained that ‘the returning officer at the assizes and [quarter] sessions, the high sheriff generally, and sub sheriff always are both Orangemen and I conceive for the past thirty years to the best of my recollection that there has been no jury (in Fermanagh at least) consisting of other persons than Orangemen’.²⁷ In this instance Kernan refers to the neighbouring county of Fermanagh but it is quite likely that Tyrone suffered

²⁵*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 76.

²⁶Elliott, *The Catholics of Ulster*, p. 346.

²⁷*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 70.

from a similar bias among its juries. This point was highlighted by the Omagh correspondent of the *Londonderry Journal and Tyrone Advertiser* who stated that ‘there was the usual complaint in this county with regard to the formation of the juries. Not a single Catholic was put on them, nor has one been put on a jury in this town at either assizes or sessions for years, unless by mistake’.²⁸ While it is true that Kernan was a Catholic and may have exaggerated a little in his assessment, the words of the sheriff of Fermanagh, Daniel Auchinleck, serve to back up his claim. In a speech Auchinleck was insistent that ‘while he continued to hold the office he would never empanel a papist, or any man whose conscience was kept by his priest’.²⁹ Crown solicitor for the North West circuit, Edward Tierney, admitted that ‘it [a fair jury] entirely depends on the sheriff; if the sheriff is a strong partisan the juries are generally of the same character’.³⁰ Kernan highlighted the murder of a Catholic named McCabe by Orangemen in Tyrone in which the accused, a man by the name of Robinson, was found not guilty by what was perceived to be an Orange jury despite the fact that the judge had pushed for a conviction. Kernan claimed that ‘the impression of the bar was universal. They thought it was a monstrous verdict’.³¹ Gearoid O’Tuathaigh makes the point that ‘the problem was that the mass of people simply had no trust in a system from which all members of their own creed were excluded’.³² It is little wonder that Catholics felt no confidence in the justice system and in their chances of receiving a fair trial.

In contrast to this Catholic feeling of injustice, many Orangemen had the utmost confidence that the magistrates who were fellow Order members would view their cases with sympathy. This confidence was apparent in the attitude of contempt that many Orangemen showed towards the law, an evolving law that the liberal government was attempting to apply against the wishes of many Protestants. Safe in the knowledge that conviction was unlikely or

²⁸ *LJ*, 16 January 1838.

²⁹ *Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 84.

³⁰ *State of Ireland in respect to crime*, p. 614.

³¹ *Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 75.

³² Gearoid O’Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the famine 1798-1848* (Dublin, 1972), p. 87.

at worst a paltry sentence being applied, Orangemen regularly acted impertinently in court as highlighted by Mr. Shiel M. P. for Tipperary:

at the last spring assizes for the county of Armagh, three Orangemen were prosecuted for marching in procession. Baron Pennefather suggested to them, with a view to a mitigation of their sentence, that they ought to express regret for having violated the law. What was their reply? Did they intimate their contrition? No, Sir, in an open court, and in the face of the judge, the audacious confederates whistled an air called “the Protestant Boys”, and what do you conjecture was their sentence? Not two years imprisonment, not one year, not six months. No Sir, the learned judge tempers justice with mercy, and sentences these presumptuous delinquents to an imprisonment of three weeks.³³

The weakness of the law was highlighted by Sir Frederick Stoven, head of the Ulster constabulary, who pointed out that ‘prosecution is in my opinion a perfect nullity; it is rather an incentive to a renewal of the same scenes. In almost every instance in Antrim, in Derry, in Down, and in Tyrone, where men have been prosecuted under the Processions Act, after undergoing their slight punishment, or being held to be brought up for judgement afterwards, almost invariably they are received back by the processions in triumph’.³⁴ The *Londonderry Journal* highlighted the events that followed the release of three Orangemen in Limavady:

on their return home they were met by a number of persons with drums and fifes, and they marched into N[ewtown]-Limavady playing party tunes, shouting, yelling, and firing shots to the great annoyance of the peacefully disposed inhabitants of the place...all this was anticipated; indeed, that such a procession was to take place, was quite notorious, for some days prior; nevertheless no attempt was made on the part of the magistracy to stop the affair...if such proceedings are to be tolerated longer, laws will be made only to be violated; and administered only that they may be sneered at.³⁵

It would seem apparent that the court system with its large amount of Orange magistrates and with its limited powers of sentence was little deterrent to Orangemen who flouted the law.

No doubt there were magistrates who displayed impartiality in their handling of justice. James Sinclair, Esquire, a magistrate for thirty years and not a member of the Orange Order stated that ‘I have never seen orangeism interfere with the duty of either magistrate or

³³ *ECEP*, 20 August 1835.

³⁴ *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 318.

³⁵ *LJ*, 14 April 1835.

judge in my life'³⁶ and the earl of Caledon believed that 'on the whole justice is very fairly administered in the county of Tyrone at the petty sessions, the quarter sessions and the assizes'.³⁷ In theory the magistrate was supposed to have a sense of duty and an interest in public affairs whilst displaying no bias in his actions. The *Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet* optimistically hoped that the bench of magistrates 'should present itself as an example of purity, dignity and truth- stranger to prejudice or passion, it should respect itself, that it may command from others that respect which is necessary to secure prompt and cheerful obedience to the laws'.³⁸ The Reverend William Atthill of Fintona expected that the magistrate 'should in his magisterial capacity know neither creed nor party, but act towards all with the strictest impartiality' while he referred to 'the conduct of Jehosphaphat in appointing judges over the people as recorded in the 19th chapter of the 2nd Chronicles'.³⁹ But all too often magistrates did not fit these criteria and the positions were frequently filled by men seeking to profit politically and financially. It is true that many magistrates did act fairly and impartially and enjoyed the general support of the community. However on many occasions the conduct of magistrates was such that it made a mockery of any claims of impartiality. Randall Kernan talked of an Enniskillen magistrate, Mr. Gabbett, who refused to hear evidence from injured Catholics.⁴⁰ Magistrate, and future M.P. for Armagh, Colonel William Verner, flatly denied that he had taken part in an illegal orange procession in Dungannon despite the fact that he had been identified by Captain David Duff, head of the constabulary, who knew him personally. During a riot at Maghery in 1830 in which the village had been destroyed by Orangemen, Duff had asked Verner for permission to follow the mob. Verner replied that 'he had no orders for him'⁴¹ thereby denying the police the

³⁶*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 335.

³⁷*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 377.

³⁸*ECEP*, 29 September 1836.

³⁹*ECEP*, 6 June 1834.

⁴⁰*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 84.

⁴¹*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 121.

chance to identify or apprehend any of the participants. An investigation carried out by a government official, Louis Perrin, into the destruction of the village, known as the Perrin report, recommended the prosecution of Verner 'for criminal neglect of his duty'.⁴² Although no further action was taken on this occasion, Verner was later removed from his magistracy position for proposing a toast at a public dinner to the Protestant victory at the Battle of the Diamond in 1795. The Chancellor of the Exchequer claimed that 'the government in removing the gallant colonel from the commission of the peace, ought to be considered as having done its duty with respect to one who was scattering firebrands through the country'.⁴³ The problem from a government reform point of view was the fact that many magistrates were ultra Tories who detested the Liberal government and were loathe to support a regime which they held responsible for the dilution of their power in their local area. Certainly it is true that not all magistrates would have shared the extreme views of Gabbett or Verner or demonstrated their allegiances in such a blatantly obvious way but taking instances such as these into account it is little wonder that Catholics felt that the administration of justice was very much against them and that their chances of receiving justice were slim.

The fact that the appointment of magistrates was part of the patronage system that the government indulged in made it initially hesitant to reform the system of magistracy. Early in the century the Tory Party 'were acutely conscious that the county magistracy provided the bedrock of their political support in Ireland and were content to rely on it to provide the lynch-pin of the peace-keeping apparatus'.⁴⁴ As a result of this patronage system, government hands were rather tied in any possible reform of the magistracy. Added to this was the fact that there was reluctance on the government part to make any wide scale changes as there seemed to be no suitable alternative to the system of magistracy. Peel acknowledged the fact

⁴²Charles Dillon, 'The wrecking of Maghery, County Armagh, 1830' in *Duiche Neill, Journal of the O'Neill county historical society*, i (1987), pp 107-30.

⁴³*ECEP*, 14 December 1837.

⁴⁴Virginia Crossman, 'Emergency legislation and agrarian disorder' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxvii (1991), pp 309-23.

that 'the danger is that while you stop one hole, you make two'.⁴⁵ Therefore the magistracy, despite the fact that many magistrates were entirely unsuitable for the position, remained the cornerstones of law enforcement at a local level and held control over the constabulary during the early part of the century.

The changing nature of the police which was unwelcome in the minds of many magistrates had been growing since the early decades of the century. On Peel's arrival as chief secretary in 1812 he had immediately sought to improve the quality of the magistrates and the police force. Prior to this, each county had its own police force or baronial constabulary, whose members were appointed by the grand jury and which took its orders from the magistracy.⁴⁶ This force was inefficient, poorly paid and largely ignored by the government. With the inefficiency of this force in mind, magistrates often turned to the yeomanry to restore order. But from a law and order point of view, the yeomanry, with its close connections to the Orange Order was blatantly partisan and often caused more trouble than it prevented when dealing with Catholics. Peel believed that the traditional local leadership that magistrates had provided had broken down and that a new structure was needed if law and order was to be improved. Magistrates were expected to dominate local government but were failing in their duty making governing almost impossible. Magistrates had the power over the police; they could request military assistance and direct its use, had increased powers of arrest and made up the quarter session courts. The problem was that if a magistrate was inefficient or intimidated then the legal system could break down. There is no doubt that intimidation did play a part in the life of magistrates. They lived in a community system where they were well known and where they were served by a poor police force which was inefficient, poorly paid and which received little government help. It is little wonder that many of them felt isolated and hampered in carrying out their duties by fear. J.

⁴⁵Crossman, *Local government in nineteenth century Ireland*, p. 35.

⁴⁶Galen Broeker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland 1812-36* (London, 1970), p. 29.

G. Jones, a stipendiary magistrate speaking in 1835 acknowledged the problems faced by local magistrates-‘it ought to be said for the local magistrates that they are placed in a very different situation from the one I am placed in. I am independent and wholly unconnected with any thing except to do my duty’.⁴⁷ Henry D. Inglis, who travelled the country in 1834, was of the opinion that ‘local connexion is inimical to the steady and fearless administration of justice; and it is a fact, that strangers, brought into office...have more influence among the people and can effect more, than the magistrates who have always been resident among them’.⁴⁸ To counter the problems that magistrates faced, Peel proposed the appointment of stipendiary magistrates, such as Jones, who would be answerable to the government only while working in cooperation with local magistrates.⁴⁹ These positions were permanent and salaried which was in contrast to the unpaid local magistrates. A Peace Preservation Force was set up in 1814 which could be called to disturbed areas by magistrates while being controlled by stipendiary magistrates. This force supplemented the local police in times of trouble and withdrew once the troubled area was considered to be under control. The cost of housing this force was paid by the area involved and not by the government which led to a reluctance on the part of magistrates to request the Peace Preservation Force as the gentry had to contribute to its upkeep while in the area. Magistrates much preferred to request the Insurrection Act, a form of martial law which had been used in the past to quell trouble and the imposition of which gave the magistrate enormous power. Dublin Castle however, sought not to apply the act where possible, instead giving the lord lieutenant the power to send the preservation force to an area proclaimed by him without it being requested by local magistrates. The feeling among government officials was that by calling for the Insurrection Act to be applied, magistrates were not taking responsibility for their areas and were taking

⁴⁷*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 169.

⁴⁸Henry D. Inglis, *A journey throughout Ireland during the spring, summer and autumn of 1834* (London, 1834), p. 259.

⁴⁹Broeker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland 1812-36*, p. 59.

what was considered to be the easy option for themselves. The government applied the insurrection act to only the most extremely affected areas such as Tipperary and evidence given to the select committee on Orange lodges by the earl of Caledon in 1835 stated that the insurrection act had not been applied to Tyrone in the previous thirty years.⁵⁰ Resentment was often felt by magistrates who felt that their power was being eroded and that their requests were being ignored. M.P. Sir E. S. Hayes complained that ‘we have seen the viceroy wielding his power after the pleasure of a judicial priesthood- we have seen him set aside the authority of the law, and offering insult to the magistracy and to everything respectable in the land’.⁵¹ Caledon feared that stipendiary magistrates would become ‘the executive officer in cases’ and that the country would be better served by ‘the prudent influence of country gentlemen cooperating magisterially in the maintenance of tranquillity’.⁵² Galway magistrate R. J. Manseragh reflected the feelings of many magistrates ‘to send down a paid officer to take upon himself the duties which we, the more constitutional authorities, are fully competent and willing to perform, and that too without even the common and cold courtesy of an official communication appears in the face of the public to cast a slur on us which I know to be fully undeserved’.⁵³ The M.P. for Londonderry, Sir Robert Bateson, complained that ‘in many parts of the north of Ireland stipendiary magistrates had been introduced where there was no occasion for them, and that in several places tumult and constant broils had been the consequence’.⁵⁴ Many magistrates felt that newly appointed stipendiary magistrates, strangers to the area, were not as capable of keeping law and order as they had been and bitterly resented their appointments. This resentment often led to tensions in their relationships with the stipendiary magistrate. When asked if he had received cooperation from magistrates, J.G. Jones replied ‘no; I have not met with the cooperation I should have

⁵⁰ *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 376.

⁵¹ *ECEP*, 12 January 1837.

⁵² Crossman, *Politics, law and order in nineteenth century Ireland*, p. 75.

⁵³ *ECEP* 18 May 1837.

⁵⁴ *ECEP*, 19 July 1838.

expected'.⁵⁵ O'Tuathaigh describes stipendiary magistrates as being professionals among amateurs⁵⁶ and there is no doubt that their presence was not wholly welcomed by old school magistrates offended by the government perception that help was required in the carrying out of their duties. Not only were magistracy requests for military aid being ignored by Dublin, they were also faced with the indignity of sharing local power with a stranger appointed by Dublin. It is only natural to assume that disputes between the levels of the forces of law and order would contribute to much inefficiency within its structures.

The peace preservation force did face problems and it was by no means a success. Inefficiency dogged the force and it was of little use as a preventative measure. It was only sent for when trouble was already underway and was barely large enough to contain unrest in these areas. The important thing from a government point of view was that the force was free from local magistrate control and that a huge step had been taken in loosening the grip that an inefficient magistracy held over the country.⁵⁷ The expense of the force remained a problem but this was diluted somewhat when Peel proposed that the government should share in the costs which led to much opposition disappearing.

1822 saw a new constabulary formed under the Constabulary Act. This new constabulary was set up on a county basis and had a force of constables and sub constables under the direction of local magistrates. Each county was divided into police districts under the command of a chief constable who was appointed by the lord lieutenant. Magistrates retained much influence in that they appointed constables and sub constables although the lord lieutenant had the power to dismiss any member of the force. The system of patronage still prevailed as shown by the dilemma faced by Caledon when asked to canvass the lord lieutenant on behalf of William Robinson, brother-in-law of Lord Castlestuart. Robinson had been in the King's service in New South Wales but had lost his commission following a court

⁵⁵*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 158.

⁵⁶O'Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the famine 1798-1848*, p. 88.

⁵⁷Broeker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland 1812-36*, pp 55-70.

martial and now sought a position in the police force. A reluctant Caledon felt compelled to solicit on Robinson's behalf because of the size of Castle Stuart's estate in Tyrone and because 'his constant residence amongst his tenantry is so beneficial'.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the fact that magistrates could appoint policemen led to unsuitable men being admitted to the force. Speaking in 1835 Sir Frederick Stoven, inspector general of the police in Ulster, highlighted this problem.⁵⁹ A man named McLoughlin was recommended by an Antrim magistrate, accepted by Stoven and posted to Dungannon. Shortly after being accepted, McLoughlin requested time off to go to Derry which was granted to him. It emerged that McLoughlin's request was to facilitate his appearance in court on the charge of breaking windows in Catholic properties while returning from an Orange funeral in Bellaghy, for which he was convicted. Stoven did not have the power of dismissal himself but his recommendation was carried out by Dublin Castle. The fact that magistrates had the power to select recruits favourable to themselves did cause problems in the new constabulary and it did suffer on occasion from poor discipline. Stipendiary magistrates continued to work with local magistrates and a limited number of magistrates deemed to be unsuitable were dismissed. But the problem of magistracy control over the constabulary continued to hamper it.

In 1830 the Whig Party came to power, ending a long period of Tory dominance in government, and Thomas Drummond became under secretary in Ireland. He and the government hoped that if the law was seen to operate impartially that the peasantry would begin to place more faith in it and therefore abide by its rules. The Petty Sessions Act of 1822 had attempted to dilute magistracy influence and increase court efficiency by requiring two or more magistrates to sit publicly at petty sessions. In addition to this a court clerk, fixed fees, court records and established sitting times were introduced. Petty sessions allowed attorneys to defend the accused and in many cases they were much more legally astute than magistrates

⁵⁸Letter book of Caledon as lieutenant of Tyrone, 6 May 1836, p. 104, PRONI D2433/C/12/1-2.

⁵⁹*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 320.

or prosecuting police officers. The Whig regime then attempted to increase government control over petty sessions, quarter sessions and assize courts through increased use of stipendiary magistrates and crown solicitors. More Catholics began to be appointed to the legal apparatus of the state following the granting of Catholic emancipation as it was thought that a visible Catholic presence would make the legal process more acceptable to the Catholic community. As well as implementing changes to the legal system, Drummond also set about restructuring the police force and began to implement many of Peel's proposed changes. The four provincial generals were replaced by an overall inspector general appointed by the lord lieutenant. He was given two deputy inspectors and four inspectors to work at provincial level. Thirty two sub inspectors completed the layers of officialdom at a higher level. Recruits were trained for a period of four months at depots and were armed with a gun. Discipline was greatly tightened and an oath had to be taken by all men. Recruits faced stringent supervision from their superior officers and many faced disciplinary action or even dismissal from the force for not carrying out duties in the proper fashion. Dismissals occurred in Tyrone for theft, getting into debt, 'bringing improper females into barracks', general bad conduct, speaking disrespectfully to an officer, insubordinate conduct, and for marrying without leave. Lesser penalties included being fined or disgraced, sanctions which were applied to sub constables Armstrong, Reilly and Looney for 'being under the influence' whilst sub constable James Richie was disgraced for allowing a prisoner to escape. Sub constable Michael Benson was disgraced for 'absenting himself from his post' while Michael McIntyre suffered a similar penalty for 'assaulting his comrade'. Each station had to parade every morning and was subject to surprise visits from the Chief Constable. Such a visit from Chief Constable Kelly to the barracks at Moy caught sub constable McGee with his jacket off and apparently just after wakening up. Kelly was not impressed and promised that 'I shall inspect nightly

when least expected and will report the slightest neglect'.⁶⁰ Tight discipline such as this played its part in enhancing the efficiency of the force.

The early years of the 1830s saw much disturbance in the country as Protestant insecurity over Catholic emancipation came to the surface and the Catholic masses realized their power during the campaign which resulted in their showing of less respect to the forces of law and order. In addition to a famine that struck many parts of the country, the Catholic clergy began a campaign against the tithe which resulted in inevitable clashes with the police most notably at Carrickshock, County Kilkenny. Tyrone saw serious rioting at Strabane, Coalisland, Augher, Stewartstown, and the Moy in response to the granting of Catholic emancipation while the village of Maghera was destroyed by Orangemen in 1830.⁶¹ This period saw Dublin Castle consider re-mobilizing the yeomanry, the well armed Protestant force which had played such an important, if brutal, role in 1798. The yeomanry were armed and uniformed by the government, organized locally by gentry figures as a type of local defence force, and could be called out at any time by magistrates to supplement their authority.⁶² By 1833 there were twenty-eight yeomanry companies comprising 2,631 men in County Tyrone, a sizeable force controlled in some areas by elites such as the earl of Belmore, the marquis of Abercorn and Thomas Knox of the Northland family of Dungannon.⁶³ Lesser gentry figures were also influential such as magistrates J. C. Mountray, Mervyn Stewart, Sir J. J. Burgoyne, and J. C. Lowry, all of whom were Orangemen.⁶⁴

⁶⁰Day to day diary of Dungannon police station 1833-38, 3 October 1838, PRONI D 804/3.

⁶¹ Charles Dillon, 'The wrecking of Maghera, County Armagh, 1830' in *Duiche Neill, Journal of the O'Neill county historical society*, i (1987), pp 107-30.

⁶²Allan Blackstock, 'The social and political implications of the raising of the yeomanry in Ulster', in David Dickson, Daire Keogh, and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, radicalism and rebellion* (Dublin, 1993), pp 234-43.

⁶³*Yeomanry and volunteer corps. Return of effective yeomanry, and expense of each corps, in the United Kingdom, for the year 1833; with an abstract of sums voted, and expended, from 1816 to 1834*, p. 7, H. C. 1834 (67) xlii.89

⁶⁴*Arms and yeomanry (Ireland). Returns of the number and nature of unregistered arms seized in 1841, 1842, and 1843, under authority of a warrant from the lord lieutenant of Ireland, and also returns relating to the yeomanry corps in Ireland*, p. 10, H. C. 1843 (408). 1.5

Name	Corps	Date of commission
Edward Houston Caulfield	Aghalarge	31 Oct 1827
J. R. Bunbury	Augher & Clogher	20 Jan 1831
Henry Crossle	Aughnahoe	3 April 1812
J. C. Mountray	Ballinabaggart	31 Oct 1796
Marquis of Abercorn	Baronscourt	16 Feb 1832
Sir J. J. Burgoyne	Baronscourt	3 Mar 1810
H. L. Prentice	Caledon	7 Apr 1831
R. W. Maxwell	Clogher	24 Nov 1819
Thomas Knox	Dungannon	18 Jun 1807
Thomas Staples	Lissan	23 Jan 1831
The earl of Belmore	Lowrystown	31 Oct 1796
Joseph Greer	Moy	6 Jul 1820
Charles Harpur	Moy	30 Apr 1831
Sir Hugh Stewart	Omagh	16 Oct 1826
Mervyn Stewart	Omagh	18 Nov 1820
R. W. Lowry	Pomeroy	26 Dec 1807
J. C. Lowry	Pomeroy	11 Nov 1830
A. W. Hamilton	Loyal Gortin	28 Nov 1823

Table 3: A sample of gentry figures involved in the Tyrone yeomanry.⁶⁵

Given that the force was organized by the gentry and because of its Orange nature it was considered to be ‘a highly politicised force identified with the Protestant ascendancy’.⁶⁶ On various occasions since 1796 the yeomanry had been used by the government and were a much feared force especially in Ulster where memories of 1798 were still fresh. The indiscipline of the force made it a liability- members openly displayed Orange regalia and riots were often caused by the force itself as its sectarian nature frequently came to the surface. The killing of Michael O’Brien in Dromore in 1821 demonstrated the justification of Catholic fears against a force which was considered ill disciplined and in which members took the Orange oath. Armed yeomanry under the command of a Lieutenant Hamilton marched into Dromore and fired randomly into a public house killing O’Brien.⁶⁷ Protestant figures such as Mortimer O’Sullivan defended the corps and claimed that ‘the conduct of the yeomanry, though they were almost all reputed Orangemen, was such, that they assisted in keeping the peace rather than require a strong additional force to keep them in check or

⁶⁵ *Arms and yeomanry (Ireland)*, p. 10.

⁶⁶ Allan Blackstock, ‘A dangerous species of ally: Orangeism and the Irish yeomanry’, in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxx, no. 119 (1997), pp 393-405.

⁶⁷ *Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 78.

overawe them'.⁶⁸ But despite such assertions, Dublin Castle, having mobilized the force in the early 1830s, then considered the yeomanry to be more trouble than they were worth and they were disbanded in 1834 with government officials such as Stoven acknowledging that they 'were a useful institution' but now considering them to be 'quite useless, and more than useless in my opinion; I think they are dangerous'.⁶⁹ This was not well received by Protestants who considered the yeomanry to be a protective force, a force that had been established by the government in 1796 and was therefore perfectly legal. The fact that many yeomanry leaders in Tyrone had served in the body for long periods of time, some since its inception, made them well known and respected figures within their community and part of the adhesive that held Protestant society together. The disbandment of the corps again was proof in their eyes that the institutions that had maintained Protestant superiority over Catholics were being dismantled by the Liberal government which seemed intent on appeasing O'Connell and which had apparently forgotten the debt of gratitude that it owed the yeomanry for its role in 1798. According to Blackstock many Protestants 'recalled the fateful year of 1798, when Orangemen, yeomen, magistrate and general had fought together, a symbolic benchmark of how far treacherous administrations had deviated from the ideals of loyalty and unity'.⁷⁰ Nonetheless the government persisted with the dismissal of the corps leaving it with another problem- the void created by its withdrawal. With the disbanding of the yeomanry together with the number of soldiers in Ireland being greatly reduced, it became obvious that an overhaul of the police constabulary was required if law and order was to be maintained.

A major part of this overhaul was the ending of the influence that magistrates had held over recruitment. This resulted in many Catholics joining the force. The liberal policies

⁶⁸ *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 41.

⁶⁹ *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 320.

⁷⁰ Allan Blackstock, 'A dangerous species of ally: Orangeism and the Irish yeomanry' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxx, 119 (May, 1997), pp 393-405.

of Drummond actively pursued the policy of appointing Catholics where possible to the officer class of the force. Of the seventy one officers appointed nationwide between 1836 and 1838, 41 per cent were Catholic. Prior to this only a small proportion had been. Similarly it was hoped that the magistracy would include more Catholics and of the thirty four new magistrates appointed countrywide between 1835 and 1839 thirteen were Catholic. Oliver MacDonagh argues that ‘the police and related reforms of 1835-6 contributed more than any other single venture to the diminution of Protestant ascendancy’.⁷¹ To the Protestant elite, these reforms were further proof, at least in their view, of the loss of their privileged position in society following the granting of Catholic emancipation.

By 1845 the Irish Constabulary numbered 245 officers and 9,112 men, Ulster having the smallest force of around 1,400.⁷² By 1842 Tyrone had its own county inspector, five sub inspectors, six head constables, twenty four constables and 122 sub constables giving a total of 154 men to police a county with a population of 313,000 people, an increase of twenty men on the 1837 figure.⁷³ These figures are relatively low especially in comparison with the number of police stationed in what were considered disturbed counties. 1842 figures show that Tipperary (North and South) had 950 men, Kilkenny 379, Limerick (county) 349 and Queens County 324.⁷⁴ It would appear from these figures that there was a low level of crime in Tyrone and that it did not suffer from any sustained agitation. While the numbers of police did increase but this was probably only in proportion to the increase in population rather than any increase in the crime rate. On his return to parliament as M.P. for Tyrone following the 1841 general election, Lord Claude Hamilton was moved to ask ‘what county, having such a population as Tyrone, can boast of the same state of tranquillity? Here is a part of the country

⁷¹ Oliver MacDonagh, ‘Ideas and institutions, 1830-45’ in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v, no. 1 (Oxford, 1989), pp 193-216.

⁷² Michael Beames, *Peasants and power the whiteboy movements and their control in pre famine Ireland* (New York, 1983), p. 162.

⁷³ *The Devon commission*, p. 265.

⁷⁴ *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 320.

without a soldier, while the military crowd the districts to the south, to afford security to life and property'.⁷⁵ According to Hamilton therefore, the constabulary had succeeded in creating a county largely free of the sustained trouble that was very much part of life in some southern counties. However, these sentiments hide much of the obstruction that the constabulary faced in their efforts to maintain a peaceful and stable environment within Tyrone.

The constabulary faced many difficulties in their attempts to police the county in the midst of what was a major change over a relatively short period of time in the method of maintaining law and order particularly from disgruntled magistrates and Orangemen. An incident that occurred in Fintona in early 1837 highlights the problems that they faced when dealing with sheriffs and magistrates who were of an Orange persuasion. A Conservative dinner was being held in the village after which the band that had played went out to the streets and played party tunes while chanting 'to hell with papists', 'no popery' and 'no O'Connell'. The band was led by the new high sheriff of Tyrone Mr James Lendrum, described as being the leader of all the Orange factions on the Tyrone/Fermanagh border and by sub sheriff James Wilson, the Deputy Grand Master of the Tyrone Orange Order. When the police led by a Constable Johnston attempted to disperse the crowd they were assaulted and 'only for the interference of one or two of the party, the lives of the police could have been sacrificed'.⁷⁶ The police were then commanded by the high sheriff to withdraw having had their authority questioned by Wilson. According to Johnston, Wilson said that 'he would make them play any party tunes he pleased, up and down the street in spite of all the peelers in Fintona as he was no government man'.⁷⁷ It is strange to think that despite the fact that Wilson was appointed by the government to carry out the duties of sub sheriff, he still considered himself to be 'no government man'. The crowd then continued their illegal assembly before dispersing at their own leisure. The stipendiary magistrate Major Snow

⁷⁵ *ECEP*, 15 July 1841.

⁷⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 54 28 1837.

⁷⁷ *ECEP*, 23 Feb. 1837.

intended to bind the parties to stand trial at the next assizes ‘in order that they may receive the punishment that their illegal and improper conduct deserves’.⁷⁸ An investigation was held before eight magistrates at Clogher and bills were served against a number of persons for illegal assembly but also against constable Johnston for an alleged assault on one of the party. The jury at the trial proceeded to acquit all the persons charged, much to the dissatisfaction of the judge, Mr Justice Moore. Constable Johnston was then tried for assault on a Charles Scarlett and despite the incident being described as being of ‘a very trifling nature’ was found guilty by a separate jury, again to the consternation of the judge. Johnston was fined six pence, the only person convicted from the entire incident. This case shows the problems that the police had in their attempts to uphold the law in the midst of opposition from persons of an official capacity who were meant to work with rather than against them and the difficulties encountered when trying to secure convictions in a legal system that appeared to be dominated by Orangemen who seemed to have no difficulty in ignoring obvious infringements of the law by its members.

Actions of obvious favouritism by magistrates surely caused great frustration among the police force. The constabulary faced a difficult task as it was in maintaining law and order without having the magistracy obstructing their efforts. An obvious case of magistrates working against the police was demonstrated at Dungannon petty sessions in 1836 when a case against an Orangeman, William Robinson, was brought before the courts.⁷⁹ The police had received information that three or four persons had fired shots in the town and apprehended the group as they were leaving. A pistol which had been recently discharged was found on the person of Robinson and he was summoned to appear at the next petty sessions. To the dismay of the Chief Constable, the magistrates refused to hear the case unless a second policeman could swear that the pistol had been found on Robinson.

⁷⁸ NAI: CSORP, OR: 54 28 1837.

⁷⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 122 28 1836.

Apparently the evidence of the policeman who found the pistol on Robinson was not enough for the magistrates, Viscount Northland, Mr. Pole, Mr. J. S. Murray and Mr. Richard Murray and the charges were dismissed. It would have appeared to the constabulary that their authority was being undermined and their credibility questioned if the word of one of their constables was not believed by the magistrates and required confirmation from another. Tensions did exist between the constabulary and the magistracy as shown in a letter sent to Chief Constable Kelly of Dungannon from a magistrate George Darley Cranfield in July 1837. Cranfield demanded to know on what grounds an additional police force had been sent to Benburb on the twelfth of July without any application being made firstly to him. He claimed that he should have been consulted as to the best means of preserving the peace and enforcing the law. Claiming that Benburb was peaceful, Cranfield sought to know the reasons for the extra policing. The tone of Chief Constable Kelly's reply would suggest that he was not at all happy with the interference of Cranfield. His reply was strongly worded, stating that the force was applied 'on my orders, as constabulary officer in charge of the district of Dungannon for the peace of which I am responsible and as, from experience, I had sufficient grounds to apprehend the usual illegal procession in that neighbourhood on 12th of July last...as to the police party being marched there that night, that was my arrangement'.⁸⁰ Kelly informed Dublin Castle of the correspondence stating that he feared Cranfield, a land agent to Lord Powerscourt, would have the incident raised in Parliament through Powerscourt in a bid to question the powers of the constabulary and have magisterial power returned. The Castle's reply fully backed the actions of Kelly commending him on having 'acting very properly'.⁸¹ While not on the scale of the incident at the Carlow elections of 1837 in which the resident magistrate Vignoles and Inspector Gleeson of the constabulary came to blows, the case highlights the lessening influence of the magistrates and the desire of Dublin Castle to fully

⁸⁰NAI: CSORP, OR: 133 28 1837 (emphasis underlining as in original report).

⁸¹NAI: CSORP, OR: 133 28 1837.

support the new police force that it had created.

In addition to placing its full support behind the constabulary, the government continued with its reform of the magistracy. Some magistrates were popular with both communities as shown by the outcry that occurred when a Reverend Thomas Stack was removed from his Tyrone magistracy position. Under the Lord Lieutenants Act of 1838, an act under which the Liberal government attempted to remove many unsuitable magistrates, clergy were barred from serving as magistrates and this resulted in the dismissal of Reverend Stack from his position following forty years of magisterial service. His popularity was such that a public meeting was held in Omagh which was attended by both Catholic and Protestant sections of the community and where it was resolved to call upon the government to reinstate him to his position of magistrate. Catholic priest, Rev. Francis Quinn P.P. summed up the fears of many over the appointment of a paid stranger to oversee their area ‘the government might send a stipendiary magistrate, and that magistrate might have more legal knowledge than Mr. Stack but was it possible for any stranger to make himself more useful in every capacity?’.⁸² Despite his popularity, Stack along with clergymen who had served in the magistracy, some for many years, was removed from his position as the Whig government pressed on with its magisterial reform.

Having examined the reaction of the magistracy to the tightening of the law, the question needs to be addressed as to how the lower rungs of society reacted to these changes, changes which, if successful, would surely have infringed on their lives on a different but equally important level as they did on the magistracy. While Tyrone may have been relatively one of the more peaceful counties in Ireland it was part of a wider countryside society that could on occasion be extremely brutal and savage in its actions. An examination of the reported crime carried out in the county in 1836 shows not a great number of criminal acts

⁸² *ECEP*, 4 October 1837.

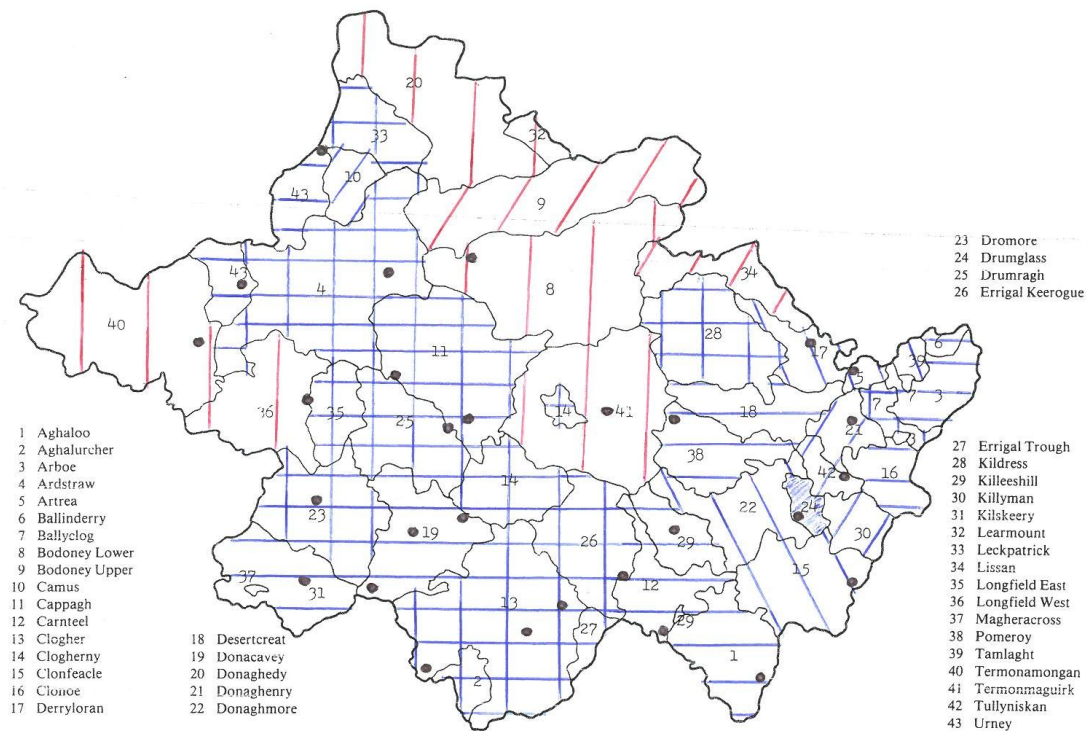
(156) but nevertheless extreme violence carried out when crime did occur.⁸³ Over the course of the year there were twenty five cases of assault, eleven of which were deemed to have endangered life. Five homicides were investigated in the county in addition to three cases of infanticide. Ten cases of waylaying and assault occurred, usually following fairs or markets, while seven cases of firing at the person were reported. Property and land disputes led to nineteen cases of injury to property or animals while eighteen cases of arson were reported, the majority of which were carried out on outhouses, turf stacks or corn stacks. Two cases of rape and another two attempted rapes occurred during the year which add to the notion that violence was a relatively regular event even in a county as comparatively quiet as Tyrone. The number of outrages reported the following year increased to a total of 173 with assault again the main crime being carried out closely followed by arson. With this in mind, the question must be asked if the small police force in Tyrone with a ratio of one policeman for every 2,032 people was able to cope with the level of crime being carried out and the violence which accompanied it or whether it was an inadequate force for a county of its size.

Police barracks were in general well spread throughout the county with an examination of 1838 reported crime revealing that the furthest distance the constabulary travelled to investigate a crime during that year was nine miles from their barracks when investigating injury to property in the isolated town land of Brookdary, in the mountainous parish of Lissan.⁸⁴

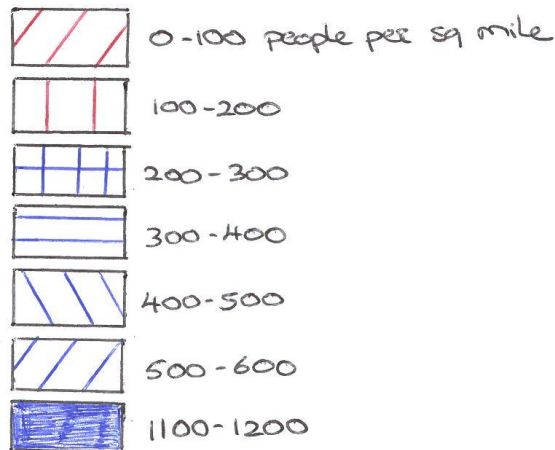
⁸³ NAI: CSORP, OR: 1-156 28 1836.

⁸⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 104 28 1838.

THE PARISHES OF COUNTY TYRONE



• police stations
Population density



The average distance travelled was usually between half a mile and four miles to the scene of an outrage and although the constabulary travelled these distances on foot, response time was

reasonably quick considering their lack of transport.

It must be stated that the police displayed great vigour in carrying out their duty in many cases. Although armed, their weapons were inefficient as they took considerable time to load and their orders instructed them not to fire until fired upon. In addition to this their numbers were comparatively small with the average police barracks housing just six to seven constables. Some exposed villages had even less men in their barracks- Trillick, in the extreme south-west of the county on the Fermanagh border, had just one sergeant and three constables, Newtownstewart in the west had just four policemen and the entire parish of Aghaloo had only one sergeant and three men.⁸⁵ For police situated in isolated areas there surely must have been a feeling of apprehension amongst constables given their small numbers. Larger centres did contain more men, the parish of Clogher for example had one officer, three sergeants and twelve men stationed within its three main villages of Clogher, Augher and Fivemiletown,⁸⁶ but an examination of police reports from 1836 shows Clogher to have been the most disturbed parish in the county which would explain larger police numbers. Included in the seventeen cases investigated by the police were two murders, one case of infanticide, one serious assault endangering life, and two cases of arson. Possibly because of this relatively high crime rate eight magistrates were required to serve the parish which had an 1831 population of 17,994. However not all parishes were as well policed as Clogher. In proportion to population numbers, police numbers were low in the extreme. For example, the parish of Ardstraw which had a population of 16,923 in 1831 which was policed by just four constables theoretically meaning that each man was to police over 4,000 people.⁸⁷ In addition to small numbers of policemen, some parishes had no resident magistrate. The parish of Dromore was served by just one sergeant and four constables and had no magistrate residing within it. With a population of 10,422 which was split almost evenly along religious

⁸⁵ *OSM*, v, p. 6.

⁸⁶ *OSM*, v, p. 50.

⁸⁷ *OSM*, v, p. 5. *1831 census*, p. 282.

lines, the parish was second only to Clogher in the number of crimes investigated in 1836. Thirteen offences which included one murder, one serious assault endangering life, two cases of arson, and one illegal assembly were investigated during the year. The following year saw an increase in crime figures within the parish as the number rose to twenty-seven making Dromore the most disturbed parish in the county. This shows the difficulty an undermanned police force faced in some areas. However, the constabulary did not hold back in its duty to uphold law and order despite the possible danger to the safety of its members. This fact is illustrated by the case of a cow being stolen from a man named Owen McGee from Magheracross. While it is true that a cow was a valuable animal, the zeal carried out by the police in their investigation is surprising. Acting on information received, chief constable Hill together with a sub constable Griffin went to Monaghan ‘merely on a very slight suspicion’ and having searched the mountains found the cow which had been driven a total of twenty-four miles. Hill recollected that ‘the risk we ran was certainly great, for the barony of Truagh in County Monaghan is proverbial for outrage and for two men going on such an errand was (to say the least of it) rather impudent however I did not like to give it up’.⁸⁸ It certainly was a risk going into such hostile countryside in order to find a mere cow and one has to wonder as to why the chief constable was involved in such a task but his presence highlights how seriously the job was taken and the lengths that the police were prepared to go to in order to carry out their duties.

Effort such as this by the police no doubt contributed to a fall in crime in 1838 with 118 outrages being investigated. In addition to this, the disturbed parishes of Clogher and Dromore saw a dramatic decrease in crime with just eight and five outrages recorded respectively. While the number of outrages slightly increased to 134 the following year, 1839 saw the number drop to ninety-eight. The same figure was recorded in 1840, a figure which

⁸⁸NAI: CSORP, OR: 23 28 1838.

dropped to ninety-two in 1841.

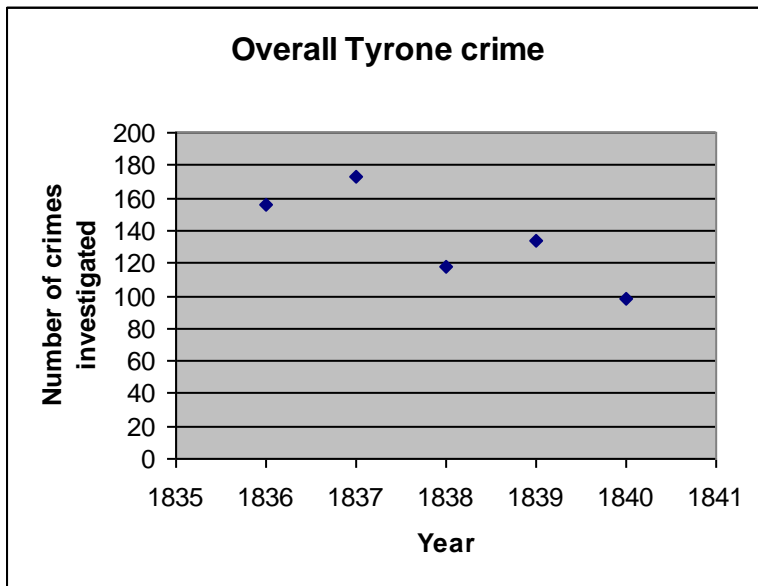


Table 4: Number of outrages investigated in Tyrone 1836-40.⁸⁹

The drop in crime figures would suggest that the constabulary were having the desired effect of acting as a deterrent to possible law breakers.

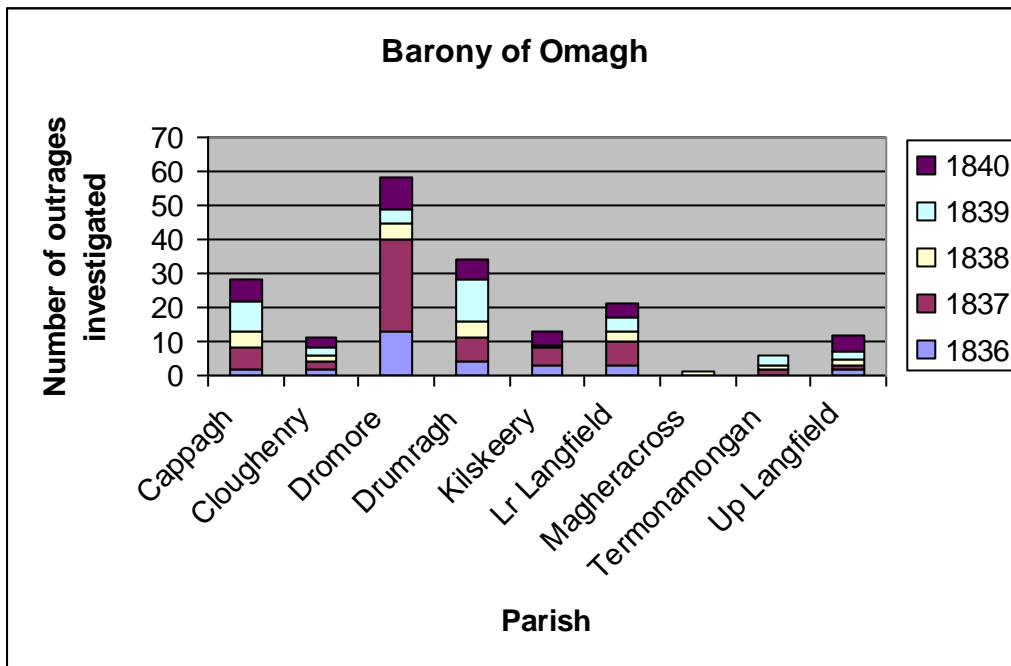


Table 5: Number of outrages investigated, by parish, in the Barony of Omagh.⁹⁰

⁸⁹NAI: CSORP, OR: 1836-1840

⁹⁰NAI: CSORP, OR: 1836-1840

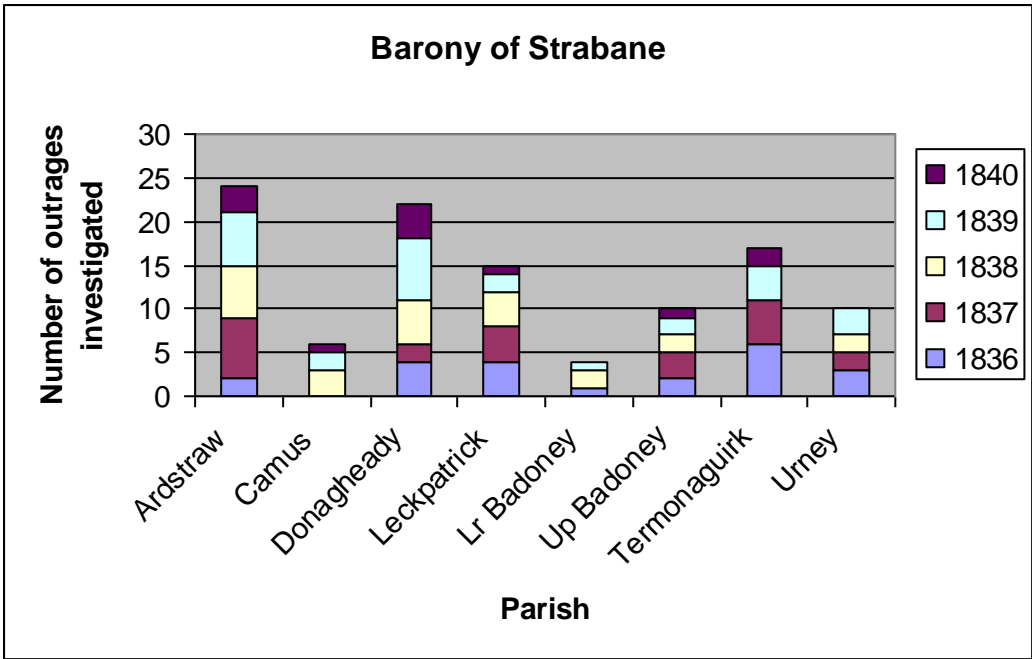


Table 6: Number of outrages investigated, by parish, in the Barony of Strabane.⁹¹

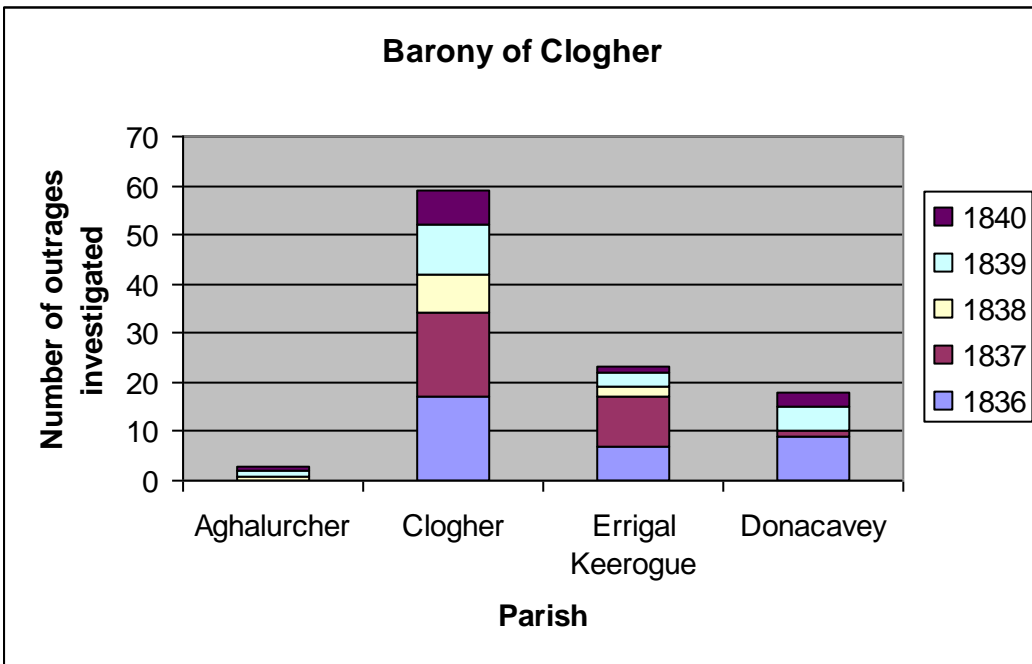


Table 7: Number of outrages investigated, by parish, in the Barony of Clogher.⁹²

⁹¹NAI: CSORP, OR: 1836-1840

⁹²NAI: CSORP, OR: 1836-1840

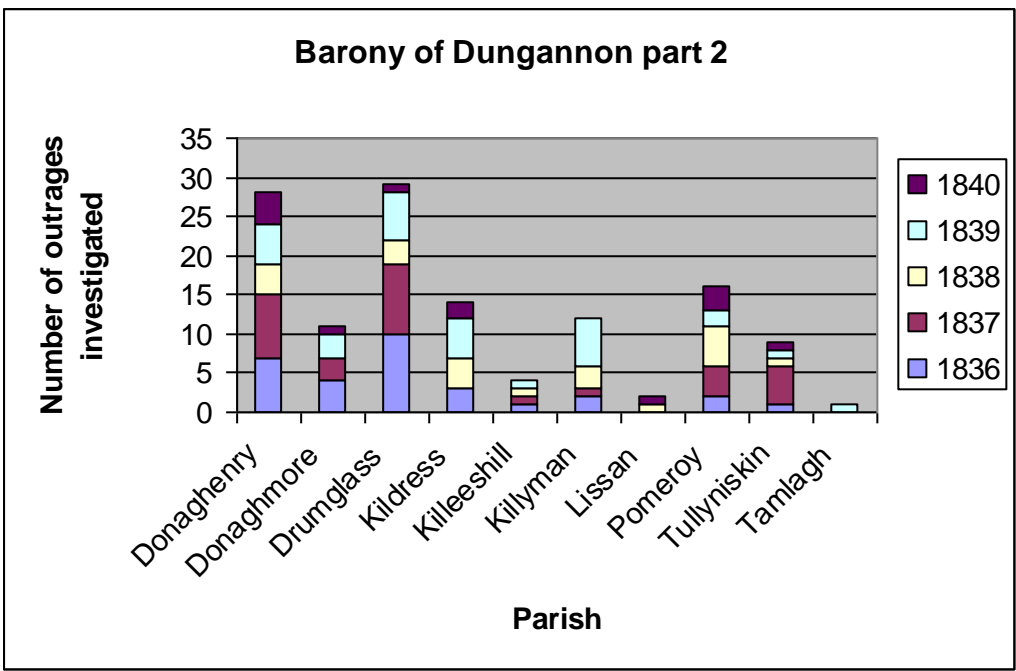
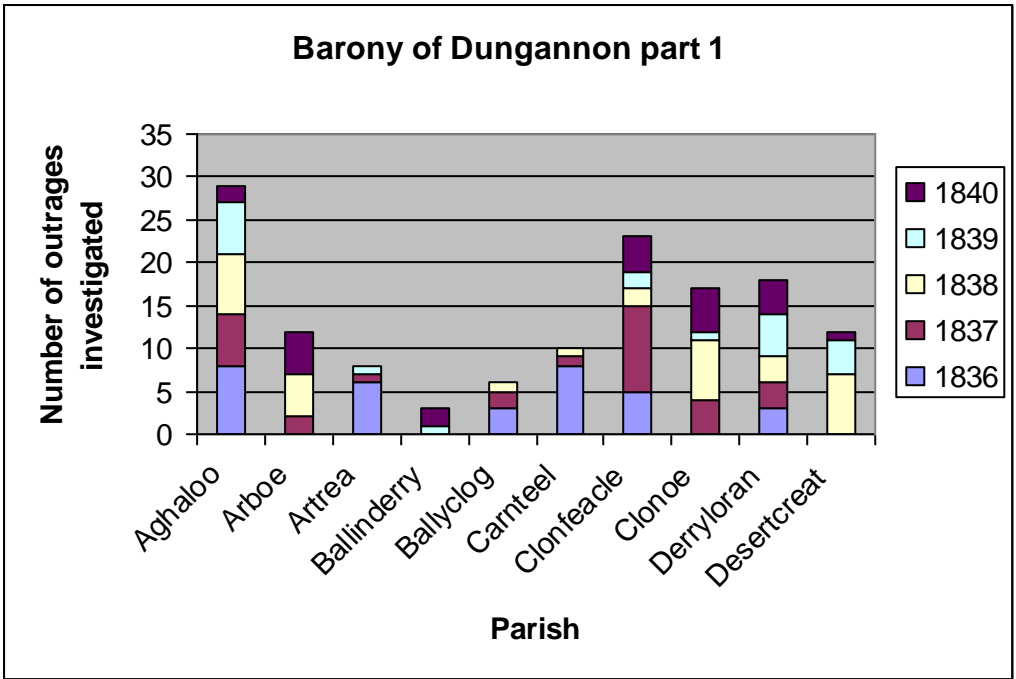


Table 8: Number of outrages investigated, by parish, in the Barony of Dungannon.⁹³

Bureaucracy also played a part in the increasing efficiency of the constabulary. Each station had to keep a daily journal which recorded proceedings of the previous day. Included in the journal was the requirement to note the number of bullet cartridges used and the name

⁹³NAI: CSORP, OR: 1836-1840

of the officer who had fired the shots.⁹⁴ All outrages, searches and warrants issued had to be recorded with reports of all crime carried out then sent to Dublin Castle for evaluation. The correspondence often reflects the high standards that were expected of the constabulary by the government. Reports were sent back to the chief constable on occasion with queries attached to them questioning the efficiency of the investigation. A report on an assault on a Thomas McCusker from Dromore was deemed unsatisfactory and a more complete account was requested from the chief constable who wrote the reports from the information received from his constables.⁹⁵ A Constable Scott from Castlederg incurred the wrath of the Castle for his handling of an Orange march which had assembled on a nearby hill and was firing shots. Instead of identifying the group members, Scott instead went in search of the local magistrate and the group had dispersed on his return. Despite the fact that he was faced by an armed mob, the Castle was extremely unhappy with his 'inefficiency'.⁹⁶ Another example shows Chief Constable Hill requesting from the authorities a reward to be offered for information leading to the arrest of 'a gang of fellows who come into Auchnacloy for no other reason than to attack people' claiming that 'no person is safe in that town after dark'.⁹⁷ Dublin Castle was unsympathetic to his request and asked 'why does not the Chief Constable exert himself with his police to protect the lives and properties of those who are exposed to the attacks of these depredators?' Hill, rather humbly, promised to send patrols out of the town to intercept the gang. In some cases Dublin Castle simply did not understand the difficulties of patrolling such a large area with such a limited force of men. The burning of a turf stack in Leckpatrick belonging to a man named Joseph Kyle was not well received by the Castle authorities who called upon sub inspector Armstrong who was examining the outrage 'to account for the apparent negligence of his police in the discharge of their patrol duties- seeing that the town

⁹⁴Journal of Stewartstown police station 1838-40,PRONI 548/2.

⁹⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 79 28 1837.

⁹⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 135 28 1837.

⁹⁷ NAI: CSORP, OR: 194 28 1837.

land in question, although within two miles of Strabane, has not had a patrol near it for nineteen days proceeding the occurrence'.⁹⁸ Armstrong, in defending himself, highlighted the logistical problems the police faced in rural Tyrone- 'there are very many public and private roads about Strabane, and in the country- Castletown, where Joseph Kyle lives on is near a mountain, and only frequented by those persons who live near the mountain'.⁹⁹ This type of correspondence reflects a high standard of communication and organization within the force and serves to emphasize how it was answerable to the central government rather than the local elites.

The support of the public was vital if the police were to be successful in creating a peaceful, stable countryside. But the question needs to be asked as to what degree of support and acceptance the police enjoyed. Recruits came from a stratum of society which gave the force, at a lower level at least, the ability to meet much of the populace at its own level. 1842 figures show that farmers' sons made up 24 per cent of the force while labourers accounted for almost 60 per cent of recruits.¹⁰⁰ Coming from a similar background as the general population gave the force a greater understanding of the workings and habits of the local populace. Dublin Castle expected the constabulary to uphold the law whilst also establishing good relations with the community. The code of conduct stated that constables should be 'men respected by the people and obtain the good opinion of the gentry'.¹⁰¹ However, this was a difficult balance to achieve. The local gentry had seen their position as upholders of the law slipping away and many felt bitterness and resentment against the force which had been empowered with what had been one of their functions. The general Protestant population disliked the police as they were considered impartial due to their rigorous upholding of the Party Processions Act which had banned all marches and displays of party colours. It was felt

⁹⁸ NAI: CSORP, OR; 10034 28 1839.

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland 1832-1885*, p. 412.

¹⁰¹ Jim Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary* (Dublin, 1997), p. 46.

within Protestant circles that Orange marches were much more severely dealt with than assemblies of Catholics because of the fact that many of the recruits were Catholic. This type of thought was shown in the *Londonderry Standard* reporting of the incident at the Fintona Conservative function which blamed the police for instigating the riot because of the fact that they were Catholics.¹⁰² Policemen were hated by many Orangemen as it appeared to them that they carried out their duty in an impartial way by showing favour to Catholics. Verner complained that ‘last year processions of Ribandmen took place very extensively, with flags, colours and music; no notice whatever was taken off them by the government; but when the 12th of July was approaching, proclamations were issued, and instructions sent to the chief constable of police to prevent Orange processions’.¹⁰³ Captain Duff agreed with the assessment that ‘if a man acts fairly in his duty as a magistrate or a police officer, he is denounced as a papist by the Orangemen’.¹⁰⁴ The constabulary vigorously carried out its duties in breaking up illegal assemblies of Orangemen and prosecuting participants for displaying colours or for playing party tunes. Little respect was shown to the police by an assembly of forty men who entered Stewartstown in October 1836 playing a fife and drum. They were led by an Orange District Marshall named William Galway for whom the men had spent the day reaping corn. When told by the police to disperse, Galway refused saying that ‘they were not in procession nor playing party tunes and that they would not be stopped by the police’.¹⁰⁵ This type of incident shows how Orangemen viewed the police as agents of reform, reform to which they were unwilling to subscribe. Their rights of marching, displaying their colours and playing tunes had been taken away from them by a government that had in effect caused the dissolution of the actual Orange Order in February 1836. The police were appointed by the government, were upholding government laws and as a result

¹⁰² *LS*, 22 February 1837.

¹⁰³ *State of Ireland in respect of crime*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁴ *Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 141.

¹⁰⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 119 28 1836.

became much hated within Orange circles. Captain Duff did not endear himself to Orangemen when he cut down an arch that had been erected in Dungannon in 1834 and became a hate figure having his effigy burnt and becoming known by the name ‘papist Duff’¹⁰⁶ even though he himself was a Protestant. Inspector General Stoven was shot at while observing a meeting of Protestants in Dungannon that occurred after a political gathering had ended.¹⁰⁷ The appointment of Stoven as inspector general of the police in Ulster was greeted with consternation by Protestants as he was well known for his anti-Orange views. These types of incidents show the hatred felt by many Orangemen towards a police force seen to be carrying out the orders of a Liberal government which seemed to be intent in their opinion on breaking the dominance and privileged position held by Protestants in Irish society.

In addition to this, the police also faced the hostility of many Catholics despite the fact that by 1842 over 50 per cent of the force was actually Catholic. The Catholic population remembered their actions in the tithe war of the early 1830s and saw the force as being government agents of political and economic repression. The police therefore faced a hugely difficult task in carrying out their duties in an environment in which it must have seemed that the entire population was against them or at best non supportive. George Cornwall Lewis acknowledged that there existed ‘a general and settled hatred of the law among the great body of the peasantry. The Irish peasant has been accustomed to look upon the law as an engine for oppressing and coercing him, administered by hostile persons, and in a hostile spirit’.¹⁰⁸ The continued expansion of the force was not well received as shown by attacks on new barracks that were in the process of construction. A house, the property of a Protestant James Hardy, was attacked at Donaghaney near Dungannon and six panes of glass were smashed. The house was being prepared by Hardy for use as a police barracks and this was not well received by an element of the local people. The police report stated that the new barracks ‘is

¹⁰⁶*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 320.

¹⁰⁷*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 320.

¹⁰⁸George Cornwall Lewis, *Local disturbances in Ireland* (London, 1836), p. 203.

obnoxious to the ill conducted portion of the peasantry in that neighbourhood'.¹⁰⁹ Attacks on barracks which were under construction were reasonably common and demonstrated a reluctance on the part of the populace to accept more state intrusion in their lives. An attempt was made to set fire to the police station at Rock by 'throwing a quantity of burning turf on the thatch'.¹¹⁰ Fortunately for the officer inside, the coals fell from the roof before any damage was done. A stone had previously been thrown at the window of the barracks and had broken two panes of glass, an action which prompted the offering of a twenty pound reward for information leading to a conviction. The police put these outrages down to 'a dislike on the part of some idle and loose character in that neighbourhood to have a police station at Rock'.¹¹¹ The new police force was unwelcome in many areas and faced difficulties in obtaining the cooperation of the people, cooperation that was vital in the reporting of and the investigating of crime. If the police were to function properly then local support was necessary. While it is true that the police may not have been popular, judging by the number of police reports that were compiled, the population in general did report a large number of crimes. Although it is of course impossible to know how many crimes went unreported as no documents obviously exist for these, the volume of police reports written up would suggest a good deal of faith in the police system shown by the local population. Crimes carried out against the individual or their property were usually reported albeit several days later in many cases and with minimum information forwarded. The threat of retaliation was always in the minds of victims of crime who supplied the police with information. Providing the police with information was dangerous in Tyrone as found out by the wife of George Wilson, who was severely beaten by two men which blackened faces who forcibly entered their house.¹¹² Mrs. Wilson had previously lodged information against persons in the neighbourhood for

¹⁰⁹NAI: CSORP, OR: 38 28 1838.

¹¹⁰NAI: CSORP, OR: 4001 28 1839.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²NAI: CSORP, OR: 113 28 1837.

assault and paid a heavy price for this action. Despite cases such as this however, many police reports do provide details of suspects or their motives supplied by the victims. Many assaults or thefts were carried out by family members or people living in the neighbourhood and in many cases the victims knew the perpetrators or were able to ascertain a motive for the crime. Many crimes were of a petty nature such as the stealing of flax, wool, corn, potatoes, clothes, bed clothes and small quantities of money which would suggest desperate persons of a local nature struggling to survive targeting their neighbours. This of course made them easily identifiable if caught in the act and usually the police were provided with this evidence, able to make arrests and prosecute. Information was not as readily received regarding crimes of a more serious nature such as animal theft, infanticide, serious assault or murder. While returning from Caledon fair in February in 1836 a man, Neale Rock, was seriously assaulted by an Arthur Brannigan who severely beat him endangering his life. Despite this fact, the family of Rock were unwilling to prosecute unless he actually died nor were they willing to provide information as to where Brannigan may have been concealed.¹¹³ This case was the result of a family dispute as both parties were related but the unwillingness of Rock's family to cooperate with the police shows that when it came to serious crime, people were less willing to become involved with the official forces of law and order. Matthew Barrington, Crown solicitor for Munster, speaking to a Commons committee in 1832 stated that 'I think it is always much easier to get evidence where the evidence was of a (private) nature than where of a public nature'.¹¹⁴ In some cases information was received although it is difficult to assess this as police reports did not provide the source from where it came and understandably the informant sought to keep their anonymity. Many of the police reports state that they acted 'upon information received' and it is difficult to establish whether this information was provided by members of the public or received from other police barracks,

¹¹³ NAI: CSORP, OR: 18 28 1836.

¹¹⁴ Cornwall Lewis, *Local disturbances in Ireland*, p. 207.

magistrates or the local gentry. But there is no doubt that information received did prevent many serious affrays and helped the police keep law and order. Police were able to prevent serious trouble at the funeral of Dupre Golding, the son of a local magistrate and Orangeman Captain Golding in Caledon.¹¹⁵ The coffin was to be carried by twelve Orangemen, an action which caused offence to a large number of Captain Golding's Catholic servants and a scuffle was only prevented because of the fact that the police had been tipped off by the town's inhabitants about the possibility of trouble. Similar information enabled the police to raid a boxing match at five a.m. outside Dungannon and disperse a crowd of sixty people that had gathered while also arresting the fighters.¹¹⁶ Despite intimidation, some people however were prepared to proceed with giving information. In February 1836, the cow house of Cormick McCaffrey was burned in two places apparently because he was prepared to appear as a witness in the murder case of Owen Campbell by a two men, Francis McCaghy and James McCaffrey.¹¹⁷ A fight had taken place at Augher fair where the 'deceased received a blow with a stick which fractured his skull and caused his death'.¹¹⁸ Further information received enabled the police to firstly arrest suspects Owen and Patrick McCaffrey, James McCaffrey in Rosslea, Co. Fermanagh the following year and Francis McCaghy a short time later. All the men were tried and found guilty of manslaughter and it is reasonable to assume that but for the cooperation from the people of the area that the case would have been much more difficult in bringing to trial and securing convictions.

In some cases persons convicted were willing to provide information on their accomplices when faced with the prospect of a severe sentence. For passing forged notes, Michael McGinn was convicted at Omagh assizes and sentenced to seven years transportation. Inspector Hill was most anxious that McGinn's transportation be postponed

¹¹⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 105 28 1836.

¹¹⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 109 28 1836.

¹¹⁷ NAI: CSORP, OR: 20 28 1836.

¹¹⁸ BN, 25 July 1837.

until he was able to travel to Dublin in order to interview him. Prior to the trial McGinn had shown a willingness to make a confession to Hill and was now ready on the eve of his transportation to provide the names of the forgers and the house from which they operated. Hill was most optimistic stating that ‘from what I already know there is little doubt of success’¹¹⁹ and felt certain of convicting the forgery team. Information of this type was most helpful to the police and this case shows that occasionally it was provided by convicted persons bidding to secure their freedom despite the fact that the informant would most certainly have to leave the country for fear of reprisal.

Rewards were also offered on occasion in a bid to bring forth information which would lead to criminal conviction. It was hoped that rewards would provide ‘beneficial results in bringing the evil disposed persons to justice and in putting a stop to such outrages in the future’.¹²⁰ From the list of rewards offered in Tyrone in 1836 it would appear that the seriousness of the offence was not always in proportion to the reward offered.¹²¹ The greatest reward offered was £100 following the robbery of arms from a John Lilburn in February of that year. What one would consider a more serious crime, murder, only prompted the offering of a £50 reward. John Laird was murdered by his nephew Nathaniel Laird by being struck by a spade which fractured his skull.¹²² Nathaniel Laird was thought to have absconded abroad as searches were carried out for him in Liverpool and Glasgow while the boat leaving Belfast for Quebec was also searched. However, despite the thoroughness of the search and the serious nature of the crime, a reward of just £50 was offered for his apprehension. £50 was also offered for information leading to the whereabouts of Daniel Gallagher who had assaulted a magistrate, Alexander McCausland, on market day in Dungannon.¹²³ In this case,

¹¹⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 67 28 1838.

¹²⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 84 28 1838.

¹²¹ *Return of the rewards offered by proclamation of Lord Lieutenant, and crimes and outrages reported by stipendiary magistrates and police in Ireland*, pp 2-7, H. C. 1837-38 (157), xlvi

¹²² *Return of the rewards offered by proclamation of Lord Lieutenant*, pp 2-7.

¹²³ *Return of the rewards offered by proclamation of Lord Lieutenant*, pp 2-7.

the amount of the reward offered probably reflects the social status and position of the victim. £40 reward was offered when the windows of Dungannon church were broken by Catholics who had been drinking at a nearby wake. However, rewards were not offered on a large scale, 1836 saw only eight being offered over the entire year. Another interesting fact is that none of the rewards were ever claimed which may point to a reluctance on the part of the people to get involved in what were the more serious cases despite the huge financial incentive that was being offered. It is possible to deduce that the reward system was not a success from these figures.

Much of the police success came from the local knowledge of its officers. Despite the fact that constabulary members were not permitted to be based in their own locality and were not allowed to have any marital ties, many officers and constables did become familiar with the area in which they were posted and the people that they dealt with. This local knowledge was invaluable when establishing motives for criminal acts and the character of the people carrying them out. Police were able to establish local persons of 'bad character' such as George Burrell of Ballygawley whose yard was searched for a stolen pig, which was found in an underground hole 'evidently made for concealing stolen property'.¹²⁴ Burrell's father had been transported the previous year for highway robbery and his family were 'notoriously bad characters'. These types of people often fell under suspicion in their local areas often with some justification. Local knowledge was also important for the police as many outrages developed from family disputes or from the ejection of persons from their properties. If background knowledge of a case was known, motives and perpetrators were much more easily identified. Therefore it was vital for the local constabulary to integrate into the local community and create a good relationship with the people where possible. To what degree this was possible is open to debate. Brian Griffin claims that 'the evidence suggests that in

¹²⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 143 28 1837.

times of comparative calm, they were fairly popular with their neighbours in the towns and rural areas of Ireland. Certain activities, such as enforcing drinking laws or prosecuting the owners of strayed animals, were disliked, but the Irish Constabulary as a force was accepted as part of the normal fabric of life'.¹²⁵ But it is open to question whether there ever were times of comparative calm in this period immediately prior to the famine. Sectarianism always remained close to the surface in counties divided roughly equally by religion especially during the mass campaigns of O'Connell. The fact that the police were used to clamp down on faction fights and to break up marches by both Catholics and Protestants caused much resentment among the populace and made it difficult for friendly integration, which was an important part of policing, to take place. Because of the nature of their duty in enforcing drinking hours, arresting drunks, breaking up prize fights and cock fights, suppressing illicit distillation, enforcing ownership of dog licences and even repressing certain ancient social customs such as the lighting of bonfires, the constabulary 'quickly integrated its members into every sphere of Irish life'¹²⁶ and a familiarity between the public and the police was inevitable. Whether this familiarity bred contempt or whether the relationship was amicable is a question that needs to be considered. Stanley Palmer makes the claim that 'the Irish Constabulary remained apart from and alien to the majority of the Irish peasantry...the barriers between police and people remained in place'.¹²⁷ The very nature of the structure of the constabulary created certain boundaries that were difficult to overcome for both the police and the public. Constables lived and worked in their barracks and were discouraged from forming meaningful relationships with the local population by the rules and regulations laid down by Dublin Castle. It is true that some of the constabulary were popular as shown by the glowing tribute received by Chief Constable Dixon on his transfer from nearby Swanlinbar- 'Mr Dixon's removal is greatly regretted by all ranks in the vicinity of Swanlinbar, where his

¹²⁵Brian Griffin, *The Irish police, 1836-1914: a social history* (Chicago, 1991), p. 810.

¹²⁶Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland 1832-1885*, p. 409.

¹²⁷Palmer, *Police and protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850*, p. 375.

conciliating manner rendered him a favourite, as his steadiness and impartiality in the performance of his duty tended to preserve peace in the neighbourhood'.¹²⁸ But all too often they were moved from area to area before relationships could be built up with the locals as the authorities maintained a policy of transferring members of the force around the country. While some degree of familiarity and cooperation did exist between the peasantry and the constabulary, it was not as strong as it could have potentially been because of the traditional dislike of the forces of law and order and because of the limitations placed on the police integration by the authorities. This proved to be a major obstacle to successful detection of outrage offenders in the pre-famine period.

The penalties for persons convicted of carrying out criminal acts were severe. Even what could be considered minor crimes were punished severely. The theft of a shirt was deemed worthy of three months hard labour while stealing a barrel of beer earned a twelve month stint with hard labour at the 1836 spring assizes in Omagh.¹²⁹ Transportation to Australia was the penalty in many cases for stealing sheep, cows or horses as it was for one unfortunate caught stealing milk and butter.¹³⁰ The theft of weaving apparel was deemed serious enough to warrant transportation as was the production of forged coins. The death penalty was not only applied for murder but also for rape, serious assault, waylaying and robbery, and burglary if deemed to be of a very serious nature. Despite the severity of the sentences crime was carried out to quite an extent, whether out of sheer necessity or not, and why it occurred on such a large scale is one of the questions this thesis will examine in some detail.

By 1842 the Irish Constabulary had taken over many of the duties that had traditionally been carried out by the magistracy at a local level in Ireland and had become the dominant and established force in the upholding of law and order. Controlled tightly by the

¹²⁸*ECEP*, 21 March 1839.

¹²⁹*ECEP*, 17 March 1836.

¹³⁰*ECEP*, 23 March 1836.

government, 'the new constabulary...provided a powerful arm of government and provided ministers and civil servants with much valuable local information as well as more effective means for maintaining law and order than had previously been available'.¹³¹ Oliver MacDonagh goes as far as claiming that 'Ireland came to possess a coherent, stratified, paramilitary police at a time when the lonely, untrained village constable was still the instrument of law enforcement over most of rural England [and that the police] provided the Irish executive with an instrument of rare efficiency, in terms of Europe of its day, for the enforcement of law and policy'.¹³² A much more efficient form of law implementation was now in force, one which infringed upon the daily lives of all classes of people. Magistrates had lost much of their power or in some cases were removed completely from their positions (Whig government reform saw one third of magistrates being removed in 1838). The court system had also changed although it still suffered from sectarian bias in many instances. To the local elites these changes were unwelcome as their power and prestige was undermined whilst the ordinary people were affected as the chances of succeeding in carrying out illegal activity greatly diminished. The public opposition shown by the magistrates towards the police was imitated by the lower classes who felt that the rhetoric of the upper classes legitimized their actions. Because of this, resentment towards the police was felt by all the sections of the community most notably within the Orange Order. Despite this, the constabulary cemented its place in the country and became the vital apparatus in the preservation of law and order in Ireland. The next stage of this work will focus on how Protestant society reacted to the transitions that threatened to pull it apart by joining associations that became dominant throughout Ulster namely the Orange Order and the Freemasons.

¹³¹Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: conflict and conformity*, p. 28.

¹³²Oliver MacDonagh, 'Ideas and institutions 1830-45' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v, 1 (Oxford, 1989), pp 193-216.

Chapter 3

The Orange Order and the Freemasons

So far it has been established that the Protestant community faced a number of threats at different levels in 1830s Tyrone. The economic recession had adversely affected the weaving and small tenant farmer classes in particular. Changes in the structure of law and order had seen a loss of magisterial power and a clampdown on Orange activities. The natural response of any society facing such serious encroachment is to join support groups in response to the threats faced and the changes being experienced. One of the goals of this chapter is to examine the type of groups that Protestants joined in the early decades of the century and to ask why they joined these groups. Another aim is to trace the social make up of these groups and to show whether all classes of Protestant society transcended class barriers and joined together to fight against the threats to their way of life.

One of the ways in which the Protestant community reacted to societal change was to establish the Orange Order in 1795 following the battle of the Diamond. The attack by Catholic Defenders on Dan Winter's inn in Armagh was one of a series of clashes between the rival sectarian factions and from this incident the Orange Order was formed. The Order was a response to increased Catholic activity and could be considered an organization which was formed to protect the relatively privileged position that Protestants had enjoyed in society since 1690. Protestants, unlike Catholics, were full citizens protected by the Constitution and were extremely loyal to the established church and to the crown. During the eighteenth century, Catholics had been suppressed by the Penal Laws and Protestants were very much in the ascendancy in many aspects of life. A type of sectarian moral economy had been in place throughout the country since the implementation of the penal laws which is described by Suzanne T. Kingon as being 'a popular consensus that since only Protestants could be loyal citizens, they had a historic right to superior political and economic status over

Catholics...a crucial consequence of the sectarian moral economy was that lower-class Protestants had the right to a special relationship with Protestant landlords: in short, a type of partisan paternalism'.¹It was felt by Protestants that their interests should continue to be protected by the gentry and that they should continue to receive favourable treatment from their social betters when it came to employment, justice, and the allocation of land. This 'sectarian moral economy', according to Allan Blackstock, involved a 'simple implicit contract' being in place between the plebeian membership and most of the Protestant elite which manifested itself through membership of the Orange Order and the yeomanry.² Protestants now, however, were faced with this superior status being diminished before their very eyes. Increasing economic competition generated by industrialization and the struggle to obtain a holding on which to survive led to growing tensions between Protestants and Catholics. Tension was further heightened in the Protestant community by the perception that the government was determined to grant concessions to Catholics which would strengthen the latter's position in society. The so called 'Second Reformation' was also a factor in galvanizing Protestant mistrust towards Catholics and increasing the polarization between both factions. This chapter will trace the actions of loyalist support groups to the above challenges from 1795 until 1835 and will provide the immediate historical background to the area being examined by this thesis.

In the congested areas of Armagh and east Tyrone the competition for land, the problems of sub-letting, and competition between weavers led to night time activities by a Protestant group known as the Peep O' Day Boys in the latter part of the eighteenth century. These groups broke into Catholic houses under the pretence of searching for arms, which Catholics had not allowed been allowed to hold under the penal laws, but soon their activities

¹ Suzanne T. Kingon, 'Ulster opposition to Catholic emancipation 1828-29', in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxiv, (2004), pp 137-56.

²Blackstock, 'Tommy Downshire's boys: popular protest, social change and political manipulation in mid-Ulster 1829-1847', pp 125-172.

took on the form of a type of terrorism which sought to drive Catholics out of Ulster. Looms belonging to Catholic weavers and the furniture in their homes were smashed and threats issued against the householders. In response to the threat posed by these Peep O' Day Boys and the ineffective action taken by indifferent magistrates, Catholics organized themselves into groups of 'Defenders' in a bid to protect themselves and their properties. Defenders organized themselves on a parish level using secret signs and passwords and were particularly active in interface areas. The late eighteenth century saw frequent clashes between these groups, one of the most famous being the Battle of the Diamond. This 'battle' saw the deaths of over thirty Defenders and was considered a great victory for Protestants.³

Following this 'victory' the decision was taken to form the Orange Order. Somewhat shocked by the numbers and organization of the Defenders, it was decided to organize an Order based on similar lines to the Defenders. This involved the organization of lodges firstly on a local district basis, then on a county and national level. According to Lieutenant-Colonel William Verner, Deputy Grand Master of the Orange Order, 'the original intention of the Orange society was to support the constitution of the country and allegiance to His Majesty, in opposition to societies of a rebellious and treasonable nature, to join the government in protecting the country in case of foreign invasion, and for purposes of self defence'.⁴The organization was comprised mainly of lower class Protestants -weavers and small farmers- but it did have the support of many gentry members who feared the possibility of a growth in Catholic power or in the worst case scenario, a Catholic uprising. There was of course initial gentry suspicion of such a large mass of people drawn from the lower classes organizing themselves but the fact that the Order stressed its loyalty to the Crown and government ensured a tentative general acceptance from the upper classes. There was also the realization that the Order, comprised mainly of the lower classes, needed to be controlled and kept in

³Bardon, *A history of Ulster*, pp 225-26.

⁴*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 1.

order. The possibility of the lower classes mobilizing under the control of potentially firebrand, poorly educated leaders was simply a risk the gentry could not afford to take. Therefore while ‘the plebeian origins of the Order and its reputation for aggression..meant that it held an uncertain appeal for the respectable classes’,⁵ it was considered that the Order was worth patronizing.

It has been thought that the Orange Order based its structure on the Freemasons although this is open to some debate. Phillip Robinson downplays the influence that Freemasonry had over the Order although Petri Mirala makes the point that it is quite likely that ‘a movement of its members and geographical extent did not fail to influence the emerging political brotherhoods’.⁶ This assessment is shared by Peter Clark who agrees that ‘Masonic influence on British voluntary associations was considerable in the late eighteenth century, setting the organizational pattern from which many types of club and society borrowed’.⁷ It cannot be ignored that the open display of colour, banners and regalia was a feature of Freemasonry and this was very much embraced by Orangemen.

The Grand Lodge of Irish Freemasonry was set up in 1725 and Freemasonry soon spread from cities and towns into rural areas. By 1800 there were over ninety Freemason lodges in Tyrone and if we take Mirala’s figure of fifty as being the average number of members per lodge, this would give a figure of roughly 4,500 Freemasons in the county.⁸ As shown in the accompanying map, Masonry was strongest in the more heavily populated east of the county especially around Stewartstown, Dungannon, Cookstown, Moy, Benburb, Caledon and Aughnacloy. Stewartstown, for example, was home to eight Masonic lodges, Caledon seven, and Dungannon six. The west of the county was strongly represented by Masons around the more urban areas of Strabane, Castlederg and Newtown Stewart. Masonry

⁵ Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998* (Oxford, 1999), p. 62.

⁶ Petri Mirala, *Freemasonry in Ulster, 1733-1813* (Dublin, 2007), p. 211.

⁷ Peter Clark, *British clubs and societies 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2000), p. 348.

⁸ Grand Lodge of Ireland roll books, available at The Freemasons Grand Lodge of Ireland, Molesworth St, Dublin. Mirala, *Freemasonry in Ulster, 1725-1813*, p. 68.

was well represented in the Clogher valley around the villages of Fivemiletown and Ballygawley although in contrast to this mid Tyrone saw a less high density of Masonic lodges around the Omagh district. The north of the county contained scarcely any lodges probably because of its mountainous rural nature and resulting low population.

THE PARISHES OF COUNTY TYRONE

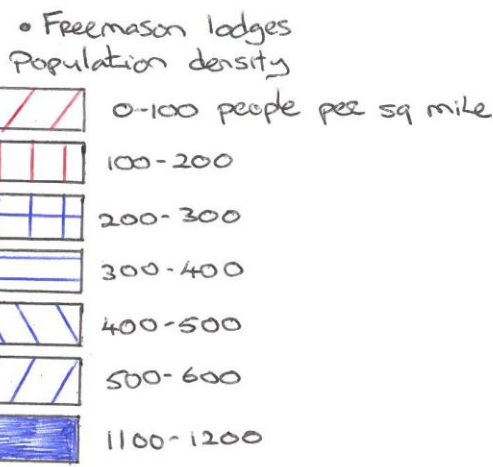
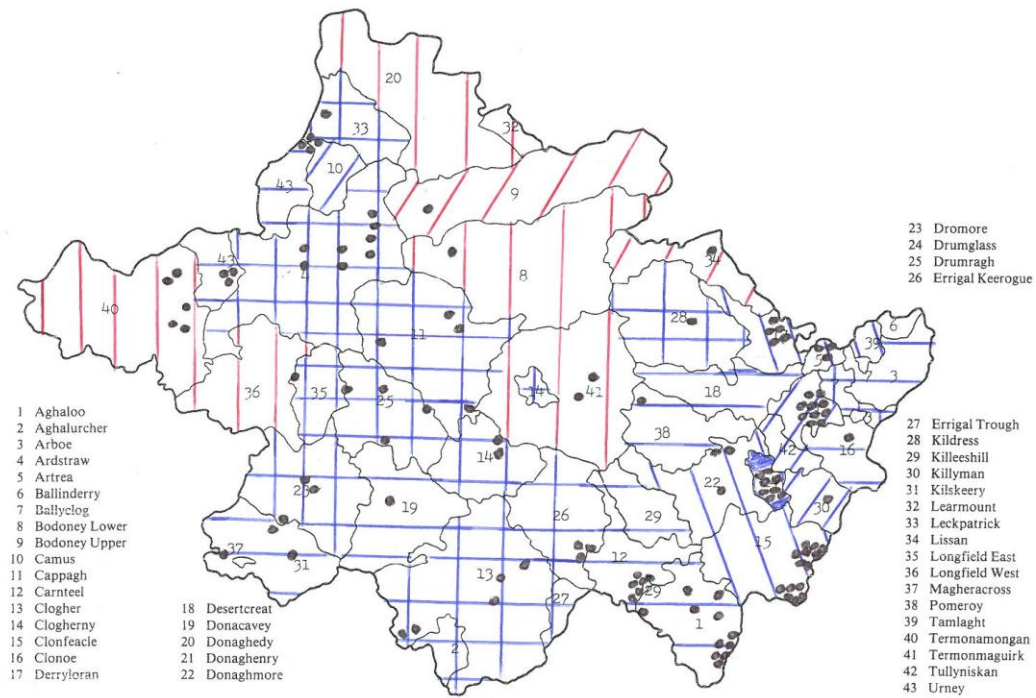
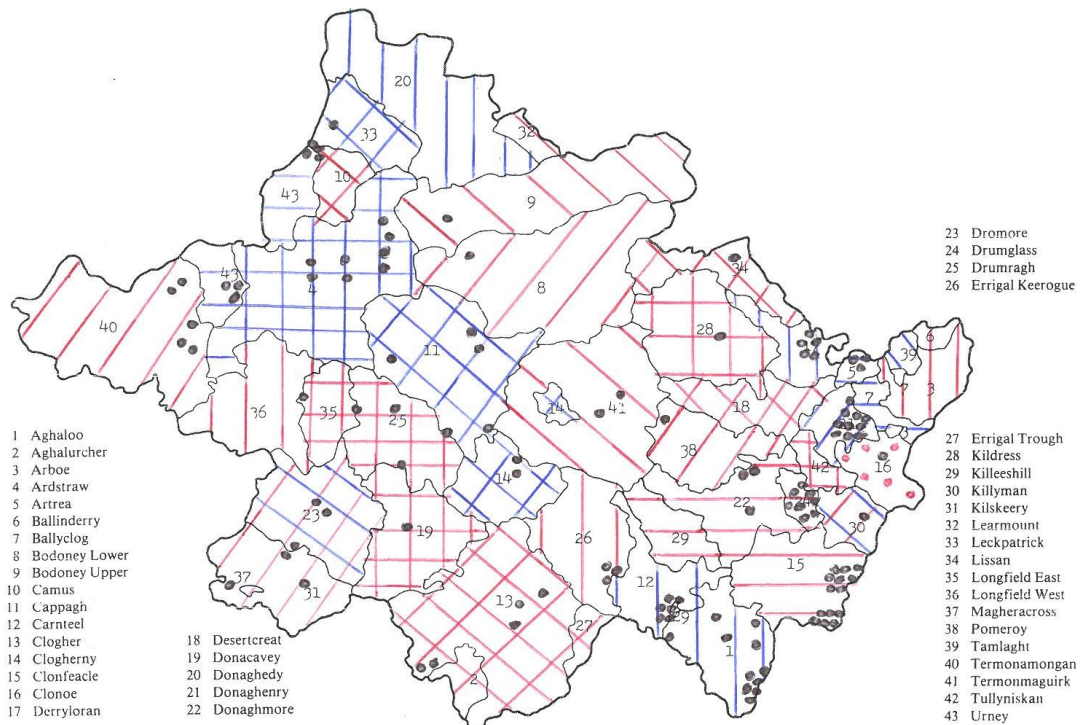


Figure 1: population density of County Tyrone showing Masonic Lodge locations⁹

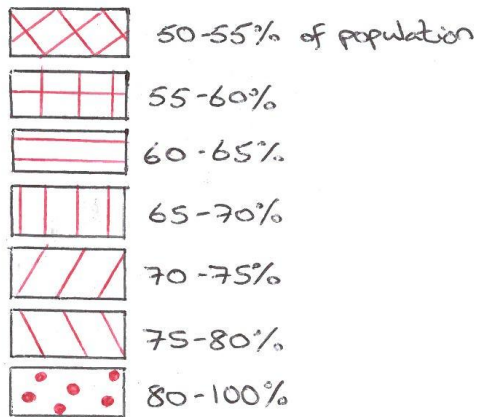
⁹Mitchell, *A new genealogical atlas of Ireland*, p. 109. Lodge locations supplied by the Grand Lodge of Ireland, Molesworth St., Dublin. 1841 Census.

THE PARISHES OF COUNTY TYRONE

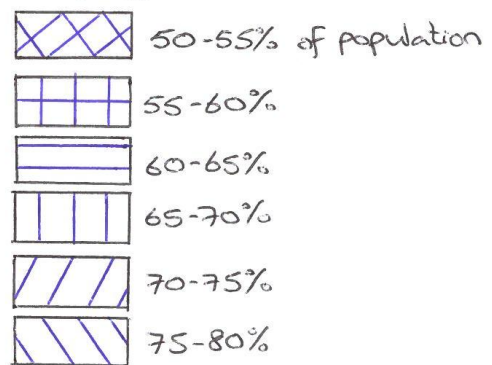


● Masonic lodges

Catholic
Majority



Protestant/Presbyterian
majority



Map 2: Religious make up of Tyrone showing Masonic Lodges¹⁰

¹⁰Mitchell, *A new genealogical atlas of Ireland*, p. 109. *Royal commission on state of religious and other public instruction in Ireland. First report, appendix, second report*, H. C. 1835 [45] [46] [47], xxxiii.1, 829, xxxiv.1.

The nature of the organization's membership which entailed that some disposable income was required to join was such that members of the trading classes were heavily represented and this meant that Freemasonry was strongest around the towns where the commercial classes had their businesses. Strong farmers frequented the Order in more rural areas thus ensuring a healthy Masonic representation in the smaller villages. But on the whole, when examining the geography of Freemasonry in Tyrone it is apparent that while rural areas were home to a reasonable number of lodges, the heavier concentrations were found in towns and larger villages especially in the east of the county.

The structure of the Masonic society with its emphasis on equality ensured that high positions within the organization were not solely reserved for the upper classes. James Henderson, an Ardstraw carpenter, held the position of honorary secretary for almost thirty years in lodge no. 547 (Newtownstewart) whilst Andrew Macklin, a blacksmith by profession, rose through the ranks to become senior deacon in the same lodge.¹¹ Wealth and status had initially played an important role in one being accepted into the Freemasons. New members in Armagh were expected to pay a fee of two guineas in the 1790s which was estimated as being seven weeks pay for an average general labourer.¹² It was advised that potential members should 'first consider their income and family, and know that freemasonry requires ability, attendance, and a good appearance, to maintain its ancient and honourable grandeur'.¹³ The expense of membership included the cost of garments, insignia, and jewels, along with charitable donations, the costs of hosting parades, and holding banquets. This expense ensured that the society would be open only to the upper classes of society originally but from the beginning of the nineteenth century an expanding trading class began to join the society as they sought to mix with the upper classes as pointed out by Clark- 'for many

¹¹ T. R. Henderson, *Two centuries of Freemasonry- Newtownstewart Masonic Lodge no. 547, 1777-1977* (?), 1977), pp 16-17.

¹² Mirala, *Freemasonry in Ulster, 1733-1813*, pp 52, 125.

¹³ Laurence Dermott, *The Constitution of Freemasonry; or AhimanRezon*, (Dublin, 1804), p. 14.

middle-rank people - shopkeepers and professionals especially - freemasonry provided regular and amicable contact with members of higher and more fashionable social groups'.¹⁴

Parades and processions were an important part of Freemasonry especially on 24 June and 27 December, the Feasts of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, and the 24 June procession 'was an important annual celebration in many, perhaps most, Irish towns of any significance well into the nineteenth century'.¹⁵ The Freemason parade was 'a central part of the social life of a lodge..closer to a carnival than a demonstration' and had few political aims.¹⁶ Gary Owens explains that the carnival feeling and entertainment was part of the attraction of the social event that was the parade and that 'above all they were good fun'.¹⁷ In addition to the entertainment element Clark makes the point that 'distinctive processions were vital for Masonic solidarity and for the publicity and promotion of the Order'.¹⁸ A typical parade took place in Benburb in 1835 and is described as having been attended 'by about fifty, with music, having a sword, decorated with sashes, purple and pink scarfs [sic], aprons, etc'.¹⁹ This parade, despite its small size, demonstrates the importance of symbolism, colour and music within the marching genre. A parade was a public spectacle designed to draw an audience. If this was not the case then organizations would simply parade in their local hall or in a remote area away from public view. If an audience was required then music was the perfect way to draw a crowd from their residences or places of work. Colour was also impressive to the onlooker whether it be coloured sashes, banners or uniforms. Pictured banners conveyed memories of past Masons or biblical figures relevant to the organization creating a visual display for the onlooker. The symbols of Masonry, aprons, hammers and the

¹⁴Clark, *British clubs and societies 1580-1800*, p. 328.

¹⁵PetriMirala, 'Masonic parades in Ulster' in Peter Jupp and EoinMagennis (eds.) *Crowds in Ireland, c1720-1920* (London, 2000), pp 117-39.

¹⁶Mirala, *Freemasonry in Ulster, 1733-1813*, pp 83, 12.

¹⁷ Gary Owens, 'Nationalism without words: Symbolism and ritual behaviour in the repeal 'monster meetings' of 1843-45' in J. S. Donnelly Jnr and Kerby A. Miller (eds.), *Irish popular culture 1650-1850* (Dublin, 1999), pp 242-69.

¹⁸Clark, *British clubs and societies 1580-1800*, p. 327.

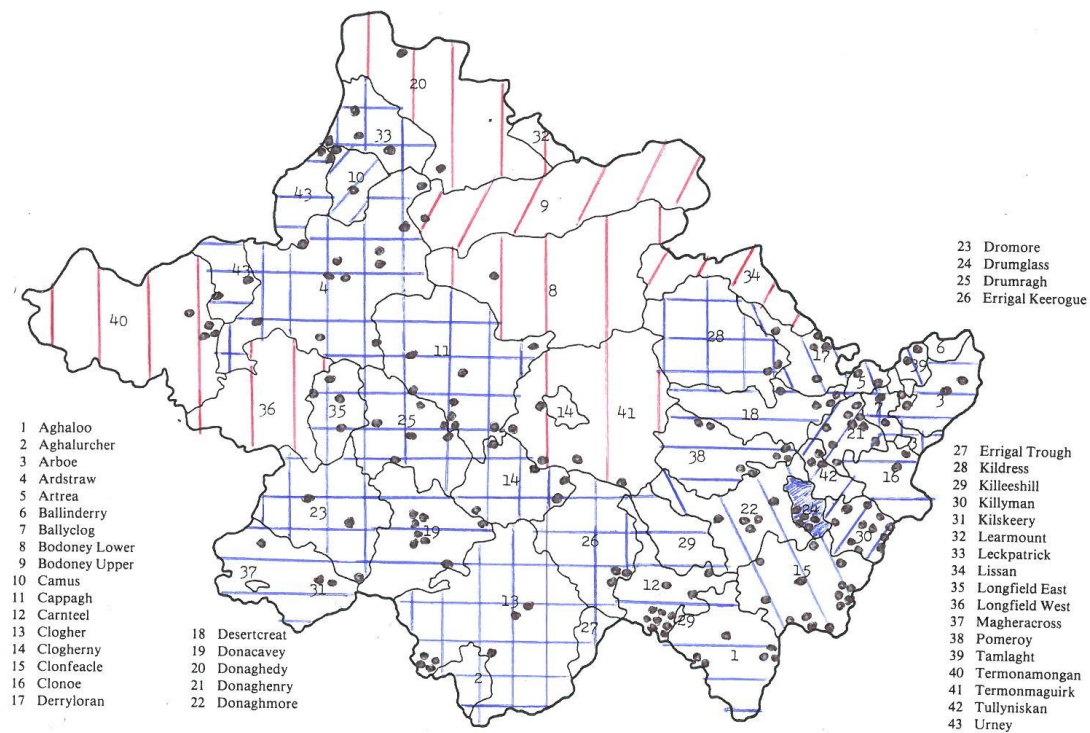
¹⁹*Second report on Orange lodges*, p. 127.

tools of the trade were displayed so that no doubt was left as to the identity of the marching group. A typical Freemason march given its numbers, colour, symbolism, music, and military type formation would have provided an impressive spectacle to onlookers and surely would have influenced any similar type of societies that were being formed.

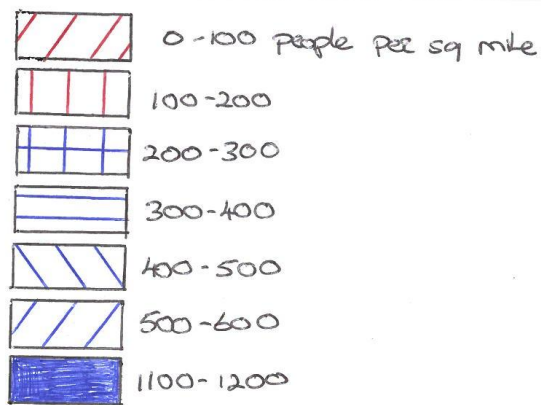
The Orange Order did borrow certain features of its make up from Freemasonry, however one aspect not embraced was the cost of admission as no real wealth was required for membership of the Orange Order. The fact that the organization had grown from the ranks of the lower classes ensured that membership costs remained low. The Order comprised ‘the lower orders, farmers and cottiers...weavers living on low wages, or servants in husbandry, or persons of that description’.²⁰ While the Order was patronized by the gentry, the vast majority of members were from the lower classes who joined local lodges. In common with the Freemasons, the eastern half of the county saw the highest concentration of lodges with the towns of Aughnacloy, Stewartstown, Cookstown and Dungannon having higher than average numbers of lodges. The extreme west and north of the county, again, did not see such a high concentration of lodges because of their largely rural nature and possibly because of a general inferior standard of living amongst its population. Strabane district hosted only ten lodges despite Strabane being the largest town in the county with a population of almost 5,000, whilst Killen district was home to only seven lodges.

²⁰*First report on Orange Lodges*, p.129.

THE PARISHES OF COUNTY TYRONE



• Orange lodges
Population density



Map 3: Location of Orange Lodges in Tyrone²¹

²¹Mitchell, *A new genealogical atlas of Ireland*, p. 109. Lodge locations found in *First report on Orange Lodges*, appendix, pp 48-69.

The religious demography of these districts was only slightly tilted towards Catholics, Protestants and Presbyterians made up over 40 per cent of the population thus no Catholic domination existed as an excuse for the relatively low levels of Orange lodges. The apparent reason is a simple lack of population. The parishes of Lower and Upper Badoney in the Sperrin Mountains made up an area of over 85,000 statute acres but were home to only 13,606 people by 1831 giving the area a population density of only 100 people per square mile. Termonamongan parish which contained the village of Killen was resided in by only 7,561 people despite being an area of almost 44,000 statute acres. In contrast to these rural northern and western areas, eastern parishes were much more densely populated. Drumglass, of which Dungannon was the principal town, was resided in by 6,089 people despite being only 3,504 acres in size. Derryloran which contained Cookstown had a population of 7,271 despite being a parish of 9,656 statute acres. Urban centres, by their nature, were home to large numbers of lodges because of their larger population demands. Aughnacloy with a population of 1,841 was home to eight Orange lodges, Dungannon's 3,801 residents were served by five lodges while Stewartstown's 1,082 dwellers had four lodges to accommodate the associational needs of their Protestant sector.²² Population numbers of course must allow for Protestant/Presbyterian numbers only as Catholics naturally were not going to join the Order. Therefore the population of Aughnacloy must be reduced to eliminate its 34 per cent Catholic population.²³ This number must be further reduced to remove the female population who were ineligible to join the Order. In 1831 891 males resided in Aughnacloy and if the Catholics among these are excluded, the number falls to 588. In addition to this, male children and those males not yet of an age to join must be excluded from this figure. No census figures are available for minors but one can surely speculate that they made up at least

²² *1841 census*, appendix pp 350-52.

²³ *Royal commission on state of religious and other public instruction in Ireland. First report*, appendix, second report.

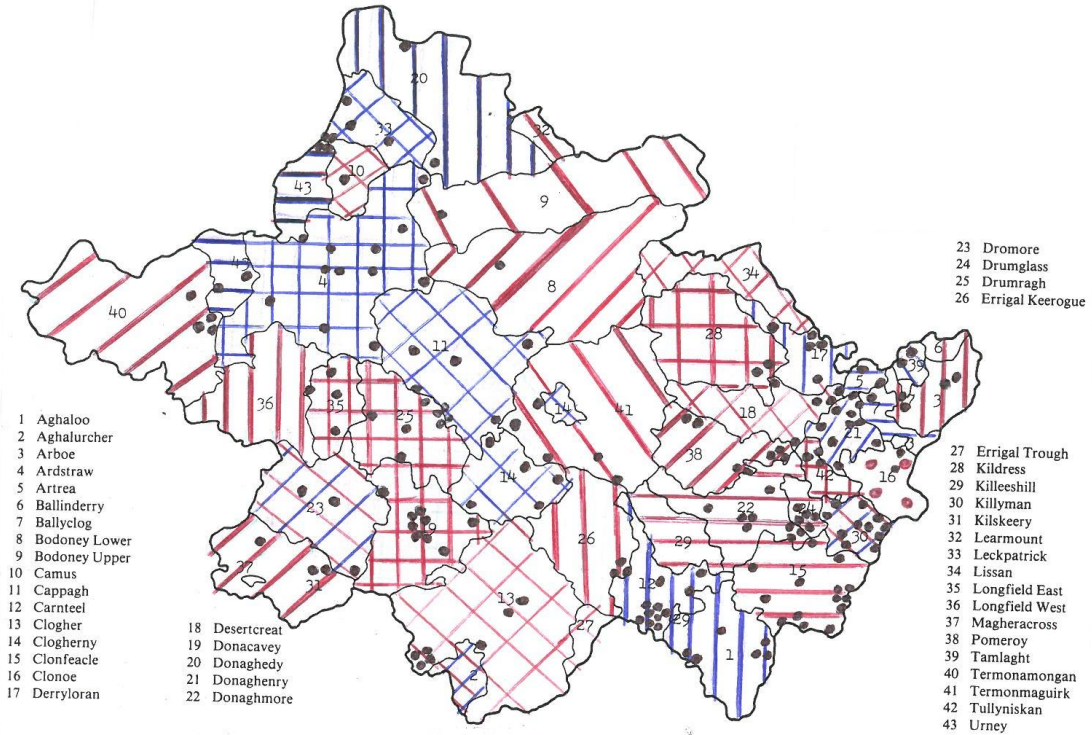
half of the male population of Aughnacloy. This would lead to less than 300 of the town's population being eligible to join the Order. Yet eight lodges were formed in the town, a fact that would lead one to suspect an extremely popular consensus among the Protestant male population of Aughnacloy towards the attractions of Orangeism. Similar reasoning eliminating Catholics, women, and minors being applied to Stewartstown reduces the number of people eligible to join the Order to less than 200, Cookstown to just over 400, and Dungannon to around 300. The geographical position of these towns, all with a short distance of each other, demonstrated extremely strong Orange Order support in the area. Because of the fact that the east of the county was within the 'linen triangle' area, it must be suspected that because of competition within the linen industry between Protestants and Catholics, the communities were more entrenched in this area than in the less populated and less commercialised west of the county. When viewing the configuration of the Orange Order no real pattern emerges as to why certain districts held more lodges than others. Killyman district, for example, was located within an area of Catholic majority population but contained a high number of lodges with five-sixths of Protestant adults in Killyman parish itself being Orangemen according to Reverend Mortimer O'Sullivan.²⁴ The parish of Clonfeacle for example, located within the Killyman district lodge area, was home to eleven Orange lodges, five alone in the village of Moy which had a population of 857. However 61 per cent of the parish population of Clonfeacle was Catholic. This would lead one to suspect that the lodges grew up as a Protestant response to Catholic domination in this parish. On the other hand, this argument is countered by an examination of the parish of Donaghery in which Stewartstown is contained. Despite this being a parish with a Protestant/Presbyterian majority population of over 70 per cent, the village of Stewartstown alone was home to four lodges. With such an overwhelming majority a possible siege mentality such as may have

²⁴*First report on Orange Lodges*, p.182.

been found in Killyman was unlikely to have existed in the Stewartstown area. This was a parish of Protestant dominance in which Catholics posed little threat yet Protestants still felt the need to organize into Orange lodges. Similarly eleven Orange lodges were located in Carnteel in the south east of the county, a parish where the population was 67 per cent Protestant. Yet the neighbouring parish of Aghaloo, despite being of a similar size to Carnteel and despite having a similar Protestant majority population, only contained six lodges and none at all in its principal village of Caledon possibly due to the influence of the earl of Caledon who was the lord lieutenant of the county and who strongly disapproved of the Order. Therefore contradictions apply when viewing areas of Orange Order strength and it is very difficult to interpret any real model when viewing the exact reasons for the setting up of lodges in particular areas.

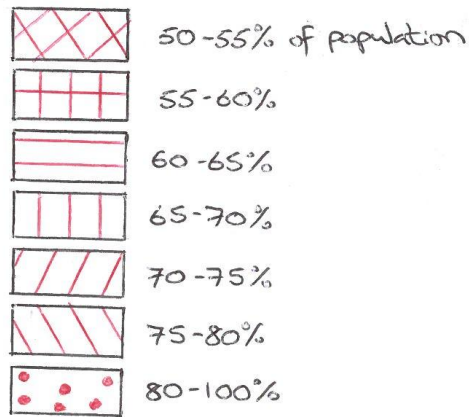
Interface areas where the population was divided reasonably evenly such as the Clogher valley saw large concentrations of Orange lodges, the towns of Fintona and Fivemiletown each being host to four lodges. Areas of high Catholic population such as Clonoe, Lower Badoney and Upper Badoney were relatively low in Orange lodges which would suggest that the Protestants in these areas did not follow Killyman's lead in organising themselves into a mutual society. Thus it is difficult to establish as to why greater concentrations of lodges emerged in different areas as no blueprint of conditions necessary to bring lodges into being is evident.

THE PARISHES OF COUNTY TYRONE

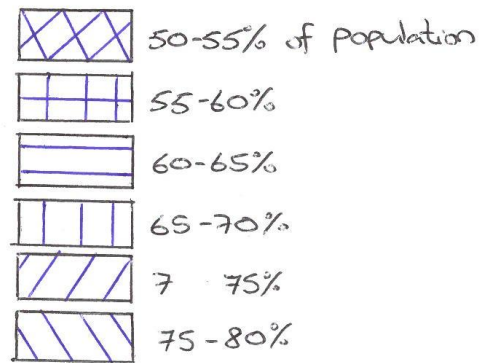


• Orange lodges

Catholic majority



Protestant/Presbyterian majority



Map 4: Religious make up of Tyrone showing Orange Lodges²⁵

²⁵Mitchell, *A new genealogical atlas of Ireland*, p. 109. *Royal commission on state of religious and other public instruction in Ireland. First report, appendix, second report.*

In examining the structure of the Orange Order, a body which crossed the class divide becomes evident. Each lodge was headed by a lodge Master who generally came from the lower classes. These local lodge masters were rather damningly described by Protestant solicitor Patrick McConnell as being ‘a very inferior class in society; artisans, I might say, of the lowest grade; of men quite incapable of writing a common note; men devoid of education and general information; weavers and small farmers’.²⁶ An examination of local lodge master’s professions tends to back up the notion that the lower classes headed local lodges. For example, Daniel Cook, a lodge master from Strabane was a spirit and porter dealer by profession, as was Robert Charlton of Ardstraw, while Coagh lodge master Richard Hamilton was a nailor. Richard Guynn another lodge master from Strabane was a tailor, David Gray from Omagh an innkeeper, whilst John McCormack from Cookstown was a grocer.²⁷ The professions of these lodge masters would suggest that the lower trading classes were the chief players in organizing local lodges and the attitude of McConnell reflects the feelings that many of the upper classes held towards the coming together and organization of the lower classes.

Local lodges were organized into districts of which there were fourteen in County Tyrone by 1835 containing 178 lodges, giving the county the second highest number of lodges in the country behind only Armagh.²⁸ Each district was under the control of District Masters, most of whom came from a wealthier background than local lodge masters. Fintona District Master Samuel Vesey for example served as a magistrate and had formerly been High Sheriff of the county while William Harpur had been commander of the Moy yeomanry until his dismissal for leading an Orange procession in Moy and the fact that he had held this position would suggest that he was from the upper classes of local society.²⁹ Thus it is evident

²⁶*Third report on Orange Lodges*, p. 21.

²⁷*Pigot’s Directory of Ireland 1824* (Dublin, 1824).*Slater’s Directory* (Dublin, 1846).*OSM*, xx, p. 77.

²⁸*Second report on Orange lodges*, appendix, pp 45-6.

²⁹*Second report on Orange lodges*, p. 124.

that while the lower classes could organize themselves locally, at a higher level they came under the control of the wealthier classes.

District	District Master	Number of Lodges
Killyman	Jackson Lloyd esq.	24
Stewartstown	Mr. William Galway	16
Cookstown	J. McCormack esq.	12
Castlecaulfield	Mr. Samuel King	6
Pomeroy	T. Irwin esq.	9
Annahoe	J. Aukatell esq.	25
Sixmilecross	H. Irwin esq.	13
Fintona	S. Vesey esq.	15
Ardstraw	A. Crawford esq.	13
Coagh	Mr. Alex Gray	6
Omagh	Mr. Stewart esq.	21
Killen	Mr. J. Semple	7
Benburb	W. Harpur esq.	10
Strabane	Sir J. Burgoyne	11
	Total	178

Table 1: Number of Orange Order lodges per district.³⁰

District lodges came under control of the county lodge of which Dungannon magistrate Joseph Greer was the Grand Master. The county lodge was in turn controlled by the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, a body well represented by gentry figures from Tyrone such as Mervyn Stewart of Ballygawley, Whitney Mountray of the Favor Royal Mountray family, Charles Tottenham, Reverends W. G. Stack of Omagh, Francis Galbraith of Cecil manor, Clogher, James Lowry of Somerset House, Clougherny and Mortimer O’Sullivan from Killyman. This structure was of a very similar nature to Freemasonry and the parallels echo the influence that the Orange Order drew from the Freemasons.

These parallels are apparent in the secret passwords and signals that the Orange Order applied to its members. In a bid to keep out non members, an ‘annual’ was passed to members which was described as being a word that changes ‘as often as occasion may require, generally once a year, but perhaps oftener, it is a sort of counter sign’. This ‘annual’ was usually one word, simple and relevant to the Order. For example the ‘annual’ for 1828

³⁰*Second report on Orange lodges*, p. 124.

was 'Ernest', first name of the duke of Cumberland, while annuals for other years included words such as 'Union', 'Boyne', and 'Eldon'.³¹ While not as difficult to remember or as complicated as Ribbon passwords, these 'annuals' did provide a basic level of security to Orange Lodges and also gave members a feeling of equality with their social betters. There is no doubt that the secrecy and rituals were an appeal to many of the men joining these societies. Historian James Wilson explains this appeal 'one night a month one could find escapism and status...secrets, passwords and degrees all helped create an alternative world where mundane lifestyles could be exchanged for exciting- often frightening- experiences that were rewarded with the impartment of esoteric knowledge and the conferment of rank. The annual parades to Church gave licence to wear sash and ribbon'.³² Regarding secrecy, David W. Miller maintains that 'this aspect of Orangeism was peculiarly attractive to the lower orders who were pleased with the idea of sharing the same secret with so many of those moving in the highest sphere of society'.³³ The mixing of the classes was ensured by the fact that even members who were involved in the higher levels of the Order at county or national level were still required to attend their local lodges on a regular basis.

Local lodges often met in public houses just as Freemason lodges did. This led to accusations that publicans benefited from meetings held in their premises because of the large quantities of alcohol that were often consumed. Strabane magistrate James Sinclair complained that 'publicans frequently do join with them, and promote them, for their own advantage, to bring custom to their houses'.³⁴ The earl of Gosford, lord lieutenant of Armagh, agreed that 'I should say generally, as to the Lodges, when they meet it is at public houses; there is generally a good deal of jollification and drinking going forward, and the

³¹ *First report on Orange lodges*, p. 86.

³² Quoted in Dudley Edwards, *The faithful tribe*, p. 182.

³³ Miller, *Queens Rebels*, p. 56.

³⁴ *First report on Orange lodges*, p. 348.

consequences are such as must be expected'.³⁵Orange Order rules stated that 'no publican, or retainer of malt or spirituous liquors, can hold an office in any Lodge'.³⁶ However, the adherence to this rule can be questioned. Publican Sam Gray, who came to prominence organizing Orange resistance to Jack Lawless in 1828, was later made Master of the Ballybay District in Monaghan. Despite the hopes of the Grand Lodge and its officers, it was extremely difficult to keep alcohol consumption separate from the Order. Alcohol consumption was a major social problem at the time and although drunkenness and swearing were forbidden under Grand Lodge regulations, it was surely impossible to expect compliance with these rules. Lieutenant Colonel William Blacker, former Deputy Lieutenant of Armagh and former Grand Master of Ireland was convinced that Lodges had been 'productive of various advantages; besides, in a moral and religious point of view, I am sure the discipline of those lodges has gone far to prevent many young men from falling into vice of different kinds, such as intoxication'.³⁷But while the Order advocated 'wisdom and prudence...temperance and sobriety...honesty and integrity', James Sinclair saw little of these things, blaming the trouble that frequently followed processions on alcohol- 'they are generally sober during the procession, the great body; but afterwards the evening always produces rioting'.³⁸ Here lay one of the problems that the gentry faced- how to control the mob. Typically, the gentry dispersed or adjourned to spend the evening in each others company following a procession. But for the lower classes, local taverns provided the post-march entertainment. There was no shortage of public houses or shebeens in which to drink. Alcohol was widely abused as recalled by Mr. Finch in 1835, founder of the Temperance Society in Strabane- 'the quantity of ardent spirits consumed in Ireland was almost incredible...every little village and hamlet, has its number of whiskey shops, and scarcely were there three or four houses together where

³⁵*First report on Orange lodges*, p. 278.

³⁶*Second report on Orange lodges*, appendix, p. 22.

³⁷*First report on Orange lodges*, p. 215.

³⁸*First report on Orange lodges*, p. 348.

there was not one or more of these places for vending liquid poison'.³⁹ Aughnacloy, for example, was home to thirty three whiskey shops while Dromore housed nineteen, leading W. Hemans of the Ordnance Survey to comment that 'there is a quantity of whiskey drunk in this small place quite disproportionate to the number of inhabitants'.⁴⁰ The fact that much trouble occurred in the evening would suggest that alcohol fuelled the perpetrators to antagonize their Catholic neighbours and that if local gentry were present they had at that stage little or no control over the crowd.

The Freemasons, on the other hand, advocated a sensible approach to alcohol consumption although it would appear that this was not always followed. Processions were usually followed by an evening of entertainment, as described by Mirala- 'typically, the Lodge or Lodges assembled at their Lodge room, usually a local tavern, and then marched to a religious service. Afterwards, they returned to the tavern for dinner, which more often than not was accompanied by the consumption of a considerable amount of alcohol'.⁴¹ Mason member Rev William Harkness from Sandholes, near Stewartstown, found himself suspended from his lodge for intemperance whilst Patrick Mallon, a member of Lodge no. 449, Dundrod, Lisburn, was suspended from 'all the rights of masonry...for being intoxicated at a procession of 24th June 1836 and in that state insulting several of the Brethren, also for wasting and squandering the Lodge's money'.⁴² Lodges were, according to Clark, 'major arenas of male conviviality and heavy drinking'⁴³ and the fact that alcohol played such a central role in society ensured that both the Freemasons and the Orange Order found it next to impossible to disassociate themselves from its use and abuse.

While Freemasonry was open to all religions, the Orange Order made no secret of the fact that Catholics could not join. The constitution of Freemasonry stated that 'members are

³⁹*ECEP*, 12 November 1835.

⁴⁰*OSM*, v, xx, pp 101, 22.

⁴¹Mirala, *Freemasonry in Ulster, 1733-1813*, p. 81.

⁴²Minutes of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, 1837-42, p. 6.

⁴³Clark, *British clubs and societies 1580-1800*, p. 325.

generally charged to adhere to that religion in which all men agree (leaving each brother to his own particular opinion) that is be good men and true, men of honour and honesty, by whatever names, religions, or persuasions they may be distinguished'.⁴⁴At an assembly of twenty-five Lodges at Crossgar, a sermon delivered by Reverend Moses Black taken from the 133rd Psalm was in keeping with the Freemason spirit of religious tolerance for all- 'Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity'.⁴⁵ Members were not allowed to 'introduce, support, or mention any dispute or controversy about religion or politics'.⁴⁶ Membership lists do not provide religious affiliations and attempting to judge religion by members' names is a difficult process.⁴⁷ However, Catholics did play an active part in the society judging by the evidence of police commissioner Duff who in 1835 reported that in Garvagh, 'a procession, not exceeding forty, with a flag, drum and fife...composed of Protestants and Roman Catholics' took place. Newry saw a similar cross-religious parade when a district of Freemasons 'marched in procession to church with aprons and sashes; had drums and fifes, but no party tunes played; composed of Protestants and Roman Catholics; all perfectly tranquil'.⁴⁸ Freemasonry was able to 'boast within its bosom persons of all creeds and classes, and all shades of political opinion...Masonry claims to be the neutral ground- the hallowed spot where discord ceases, where asperities are smoothed down and elements apparently discordant mingle in love, peace, and harmony'.⁴⁹Because of the fact that Catholics were accepted into the Masons some conflict did occur with the Orange Order. In general, Freemasons were more liberal in their attitudes and this is reflected in the views of one time Grand Master Lord Donaghmore who had supported Catholic emancipation and who was 'not fully sound on the grand issue of upholding the idea of a "Protestant

⁴⁴ Dermott, *The Constitution of Freemasonry; or AhimanRezon*, p. 17.

⁴⁵ *BN*, 30 June 1835.

⁴⁶ Dermott, *The Constitution of Freemasonry; or AhimanRezon*, p. 15.

⁴⁷ See introduction for an explanation of the methodology used in establishing religious affiliation by name.

⁴⁸ *Second report on Orange lodges*, p.127

⁴⁹ Minutes of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland, 10 May 1839, p. 188.

ascendancy” as advocated by the Orangemen’.⁵⁰ These type of views caused some resentment among Orangemen and this on occasion flared into trouble as demonstrated when Masonic Lodge no. 77 from Newry once borrowed a drum from the local Orange Order. To avoid causing any offence to Catholic members, the side of the drum on which ‘William of Glorious Memory’ was painted was turned to face downwards. This led to the Freemason group being attacked by furious Orangemen on their return to Newry.⁵¹ A Freemason march was attacked by an Orange mob in Kells, County Antrim for refusing to play party tunes while a similar occurrence took place in Garvagh, County Derry. The Grand Lodge was insistent that Masonry remained impartial in its views and requested Lodge Masters to inform them of any hints of Orangeism penetrating the organization. The Lodge Master of no. 82 (Loughbrickland, County Down) duly carried out his duty and informed the Grand Lodge of the wearing of Orange aprons and sashes along with Masonic jewels at a funeral by members of Lodges 105 (Loughbrickland) and 315 (Tandragee, County Armagh). The Grand Lodge offered thanks ‘to the master of Lodge 82 for the conscientious discharge of his duty’ and set up a committee to investigate the incident.⁵² There were of course Freemasons who were also members of the Orange Order. Newmills Orange lodge Master James Butler was a member of the Newmills Freemasons, yeomanry captain and Killyman Orange District Master Jackson Lloyd was a member of the Freemasons in Moy, Thomas Stewart was also an Orange lodge master in Newmills and a Freemason, Castlederg Mason John Semple was also master of his local Orange lodge whilst John Moorehead was an Ardstraw lodge master as well as being a Strabane Freemason. Cookstown Masonic lodge 470 consisted of Orange Order members Andrew McCrea, James McCord, Adam Neightman, James Sloan, James Walker, Thomas Weir and John White among others which would suggest a considerable

⁵⁰Mirala, *Freemasonry in Ulster, 1733-1813*, p. 250.

⁵¹R. E. Parkinson, *Historical sketch of St. Patrick’s Masonic Lodge no. 77 Newry 1737-1937* (Newry, 1936), p. 46.

⁵²Minute books of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland 1824-30, p. 15.

mixing between the two groups in Stewartstown.⁵³ However the Masons were quite adamant that no party feelings or displays should surface within its society therefore it must be assumed that Orangemen within the Freemasons were not deeply immersed in sectarian bitterness and were able to keep any party or political thoughts to themselves.

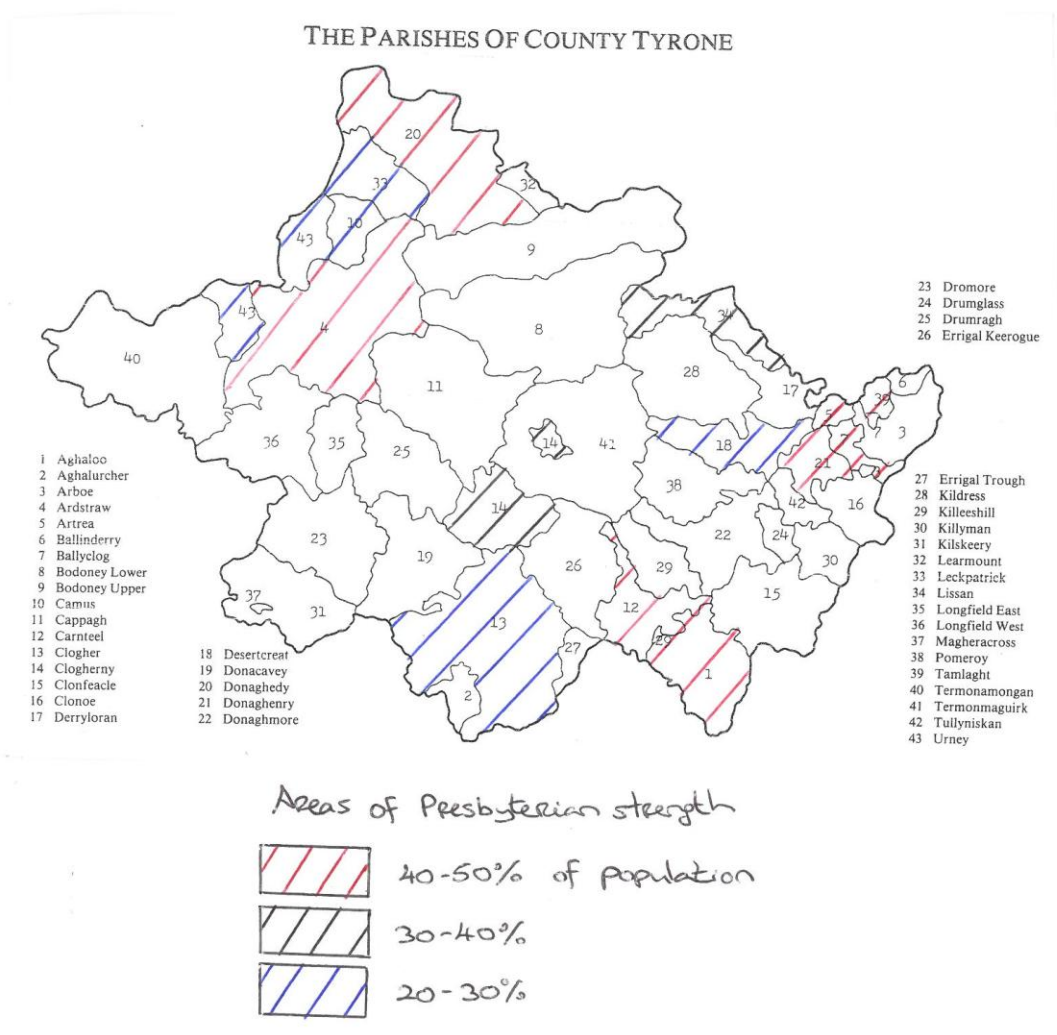
With the barring of Catholics from its ranks the Orange Order could make no claims of being open to all. Presbyterians and Methodists were welcomed into the society but ‘Roman Catholics were excluded by the rules of the society’ according to Verner.⁵⁴ This was made quite clear by secret rule no. 9 which stated that ‘no Roman Catholic can be admitted on any account’.⁵⁵ It was considered that a Catholic who gave his allegiance to the Pope in Rome could not be trusted to be loyal to the head of the Protestant Church, namely the king. Catholics were seen by many Orangemen as treacherous, rebellious and immersed in superstitious religious practices. They had traditionally been considered the enemy of Protestantism and now with increased economic and land competition the divide deepened. A Catholic of sufficient wealth and stature could join the Freemasons but there was simply no possibility of Catholics being accepted into the Orange Order. While Presbyterians had been involved in the 1798 rising, the majority had abandoned ideas of a break with Westminster. Nancy Curtin estimates that around 14,000 United Irishmen were active in Tyrone by 1797 and it is quite likely that in common with the organization in the rest of the province Presbyterians made up a considerable portion of this number.⁵⁶ The United Irishmen had been strong in west as well as east Tyrone which was untypical as generally the further west one moved the weaker the body became.

⁵³ Names obtained from Freemason membership lists and from 1835 select committee on Orange lodges.

⁵⁴ *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ *Second report on Orange Lodges*, appendix page 4.

⁵⁶ Nancy J. Curtin, *The United Irishmen* (Oxford, 1994), p. 69.



Map 5: Main areas of Presbyterian strength⁵⁷

⁵⁷Mitchell, *A new genealogical atlas of Ireland*, p. 109. *Royal commission on state of religious and other public instruction in Ireland. First report, appendix, second report.*

By examining the map, the reason perhaps becomes clear- the main areas of Presbyterian strength were the western parishes of Ardstraw, Urney and Donagheady and the eastern parishes of Tamlagh, Artrea, Derryloran and Carnteel. Consequently, it is apparent that a strong force of United Irishmen had been in place within the county but the manner of initial suppression and eventual defeat drove many Presbyterians away from their republican ideals. Added to this was the Catholic nature of the rebellion in Wexford which, argues S. J. Connolly, gave ‘Ulster Presbyterians a new appreciation of the particular dangers they faced as part of a Protestant minority in a predominantly Catholic Ireland’.⁵⁸ Therefore, claims Ian McBride, while 1798 remained firmly within Presbyterian popular memory, most Presbyterians were content to keep a low profile until the 1820s which he describes as being ‘a watershed decade for Ulster Presbyterians’ due to the rise to prominence of O’Connell and Henry Cooke.⁵⁹ By the 1830s Presbyterians had come to dominate the petty bourgeoisie, large farming, and mercantile classes of Ulster and the Union was beneficial to their interests.⁶⁰ In addition to this many Presbyterians followed the orthodox doctrine advocated by Dr. Henry Cooke who was a strict conformist and an open supporter of the Tory party. In a clash of ideologies, Cooke battled with Dr. Henry Montgomery who championed the Arian message and who was a liberal in his views campaigning for equal civil rights, free speech, Catholic emancipation and reform of parliament. Montgomery had a United Irishman background, a background abhorrent to Cooke and his followers. In a series of debates of the Presbyterian Synod including at Strabane in 1828 and Cookstown in 1829, Cooke splintered the various groups opposing his doctrine and eroded much of the influence of Montgomery and the Unitarians. In doing so he led many Presbyterians ‘away from liberal and enlightenment ideas

⁵⁸S. J. Connolly, ‘Aftermath and adjustment’ in *A new history of Ireland*, v, W. E. Vaughan (ed.), (Oxford, 1989), pp 1-23.

⁵⁹ Ian McBride, ‘Ulster Presbyterians and 1798’ in Thomas Barlett, David Dickson, Daire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *1798 A bicentenary perspective* (Dublin, 2003), pp 478-496.

⁶⁰Connolly, *Religion and society in nineteenth-century Ireland*, p. 4.

towards a conservative and Bible-based evangelism'.⁶¹ With this type of instruction much traditional Presbyterian liberalism was corroded in this period. Cooke urged the unity of all the Protestant churches against the campaigns of O'Connell and the period saw the Protestant and Presbyterian Churches come closer together politically. This drew many Presbyterians into the Orange Order with the *Dublin Evening Mail* reporting that County Grand Master Joseph Greer 'rejoiced to say that all the Protestants of the north, whether of the Established Church, Presbyterians, or Seceders, were fast coalescing in the conviction there existed of their firm union as Orangemen'.⁶² Because of this and the fact that Presbyterians and Methodists were willing to take the oath of allegiance to the King, they were considered loyal citizens and welcomed into the Order.

The 'Second Reformation' which occurred in the 1820s cemented the absolute belief amongst many Protestants in the righteousness of their religion. This aggressive campaign with its zeal to convert was met with fierce resistance by the Catholic Church and succeeded in heightening religious tensions. Blackstock makes the point that 'evangelical Protestantism inculcated a more vital form of religion, zealous, improving and participant: yet it also reinforced sectarian prejudices'.⁶³ The growing Catholic belief in millenarianism and the absolute destruction of Protestantism as predicted by Pastorini's prophecies caused great fear and alarm among Protestant communities and brought sectarianism to a new level.⁶⁴ Tensions heightened as Protestants feared 1641 type massacres. Church of Ireland Reverend W. Phelan who had once resided in Tyrone recalled a period of particular fear in 1825- 'each party was afraid that the other would rise in the night and massacre them. In my parish both Protestants and Roman Catholics sat up for nights during the Christmas week and the week

⁶¹ Dudley Edwards, *The faithful tribe*, p. 197.

⁶² *DEM*, 23 January 1832.

⁶³ Blackstock, *Loyalism in Ireland, 1789-1829*, p. 136.

⁶⁴ 'Pastorini' was the pseudonym used by an English monk who predicted that the absolute destruction of Protestantism would occur on various dates in the 1820s.

following; and in the town next to me the case was similar'.⁶⁵ Reverend Mortimer O'Sullivan spoke of a similar occurrence in his parish of Killyman following the lighting of turf during the night as a supposed signal for Catholics to rise against their Protestant neighbours:

We have historical testimony as to the massacre of 1641, which is said to have been preceded by fiery signals...the consequence was what might have been expected-universal alarm. In the house of every Protestant in the county some one person kept watch during the night, and apprehensions were felt that there would be an attempt at a general massacre...I was not surprised therefore, that among my Protestant parishioners the greatest possible alarm should prevail, or from the rumours they heard and the conduct of their Roman Catholic neighbours they were goaded almost to madness.⁶⁶

This incident was most likely a part of the 'blessed turf' episode which swept parts of the country in 1832, a frenetic Catholic reaction to a countrywide outbreak of the cholera epidemic. Connolly claims that the frenzy only swept as far north as parts of Derry and Armagh although he does acknowledge that not all magistrates bothered to report the incident.⁶⁷ With this in mind and also because of the fact that Killyman is on the Tyrone-Armagh border, it is possible that the turmoil seeped into the parish. O'Sullivan summed up the fears of many Protestants with his feeling that 'there were, I apprehend, various objects; one that there might be a satisfactory ascertainment of the speed with which signals could be conveyed'.⁶⁸ This type of thought was in keeping with those of many Protestants that episodes such as these were a type of test run for a mobilization and uprising of Catholics that seemed imminent. It was against this background of increased religious hysteria and fear that the Orange Order continued to attract members and grow.

There is no doubt that many among the Protestant clergy supported and were members of the Orange Order. The threat of Catholic emancipation, fears over the loss of the tithe and the possible disestablishment of the Church of Ireland led many clerics to join. The actual

⁶⁵ *Report from the select committee of Ireland*, H. C. 1825, p. 501 (129), xviii.i.

⁶⁶ *First report on Orange Lodges*, pp 39-40.

⁶⁷ S. J. Connolly, 'the blessed turf: cholera and popular panic in Ireland, June 1832', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii, no. 91 (May, 1983), pp 214-232.

⁶⁸ *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 39.

extent of their influence over the Protestant populace is difficult to judge however. In the early part of the century the Church of Ireland had suffered from many of the same problems that affected the Catholic church namely pluralism, non-residence of clerics and an inadequate supply of churches.⁶⁹ The Church of Ireland bishop of Clogher recognised the ‘lamentable want of church accommodation in many parts of this district. Most of the parishes are of a large extent, and great numbers of the parishioners reside too far from the parish church to be able to attend it’.⁷⁰ The Ordnance Survey Commission found that in the parish of Drumragh, of which Omagh was the principal town, ‘a second church is very much wanted: the Protestant population is extensive and many of them remain at home on the Lord’s Day, pleading their distance from the parish church or the want of sufficient good clothing to appear where the congregation is so well dressed, a very mistaken but prevailing notion’.⁷¹ Similar problems were to be found within the Presbyterian church which spent much of the 1820s and 30s engaged in a theological civil war rather than concentrating on the upkeep and well being of its congregation. Benburb Presbyterian congregation was forced in 1836 to ask the Synod of Ulster for aid in paying the preachers that had visited them during the year whilst in Urney the delicate state of the elderly local minister’s health meant that he was unable ‘to discharge his ministerial duties with efficiency’. In addition to this the meeting house was described as being ‘in a dilapidated condition’.⁷² The synod was forced to disband the Urney committee and place it under the care of the Presbytery of Strabane. These cases would suggest that in some areas the church held rather a tenuous grip over its congregation which meant that, as with the gentry, the influence of the clergy had its limits when dealing with the Orange mob. The case of George Richie in north-west Armagh provides a demonstration of how the mob could react if they felt the clergy had not acted in

⁶⁹ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society 1740-1890*, p. 63.

⁷⁰ *ECEP*, 4 July 1839.

⁷¹ *OSM*, v, p. 111.

⁷² Editor unknown, *Minutes of a general synod held at Omagh 1836* (Belfast, 1836), pp 54-65.

their interests. Richie, an Orangemen, was accused of the murder of a Catholic, Thomas McCrory, in 1827 and fled into hiding. Promised a character reference by Reverend John Bridge, his local clergyman, Richie surrendered himself to the authorities. However, Bridge then refused to provide the reference and Richie was hanged for the murder despite strong doubt over his guilt. The refusal of Bridge to provide a reference provoked the rage of Richie's supporters. They claimed that 'he had the blood of this man upon him, that he had sold this man' and despite the fact that Bridge had been their clergyman for thirty years and even though 'his character had stood high with his congregation' previously, the mob were intent on gaining vengeance for what they saw as his treachery. According to eye witness Richardson Bell from Castlecaulfield:

they threatened him; they came into the meeting-house yelling and shouting and threatening him, when he was in the pulpit, and ordered him from it, and he remonstrated with them, and begged of them to hear him in his own defence, and if they did he was certain that they would give him credit for what he had done; for he had acted conscientiously, that he was afraid of doing harm to the young man, and they would not hear him.⁷³

The following Sunday, 1,000 Orangemen disrupted the service given by Bridge destroying several seats, windows, and smashing part of the pulpit, forcing him to leave the area for good. Only twenty-five families followed Bridge to his new meeting house. The high feeling and anger felt at the execution of Richie was captured in a ballad which remained long in popular Protestant memory entitled 'The execution of George Richie':

Now tell my aged parents to go home and grieve for me no more,
As I am bound for Canaan's land, that bright and happy shore;
For Jordan's stream seems narrow, and we will soon be o'er,
Where traitor Bridge or perjured Belle McCrory can part us there no more.
When July comes, remember me as I am dead and gone,
Amongst my local brethren these verses may be sung;
Do not forget King William who first did set us free,
Who loosed the bands and broke the chains of cruel popery.⁷⁴

The biblical imagery suggests a strong religious presence in the lives of the Protestant

⁷³ *Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 51.

⁷⁴ John J. Marshall, *A famous Tyrone murder. Report of the trial of George Richie for the murder of Thomas McCrory at Omagh assizes, August 29th 1827* (Dungannon, 1936), p. 10.

populace but no respect or reverence was shown to their clergyman Reverend Bridge. This case further emphasizes that the hold of the church over its membership was questionable and that the power of the mob was such that it could overwhelm church authority if a sufficiently contentious issue arose.

High tension also existed within the Protestant community because of Ribbon activities. The 1822 trials of Dublin Ribbonmen Michael Keenan and Michael Hughes were well publicized and ‘sufficient to invoke in some Protestant minds the fearful image of a nation-wide conspiracy of Irish Catholics determined on the extermination of all Protestants’.⁷⁵ Formed from the remains of the Defender movement, Ribbonism was considered by many Protestants to be widespread in parts of Tyrone. While the movement may not have been as strong as Protestants feared, it was active in the Clogher valley and in some areas of east Tyrone.

The forces that both groups could muster were evident in Fintona in 1826. On hearing information that a gathering of Orangemen and Ribbonmen was due to take place at the town’s cloth market, police were summoned from Omagh and managed to disperse the 2,000 strong crowd. The gathering was blamed on previous aggression between Orangemen and Ribbonmen. Having been denied the chance to confront the Ribbonmen, the Protestants posted threatening notices around the town warning Catholics not to enter:

Notice to the parish of Drumragh that if any of the Roman Catholics attends in future any markets and fairs in Fintona on week days to buy and sell until such times that there be another arrangement made of which due notice will be given, any person or persons attending to Fintona after this notice (only for the purposes of attending on Sundays and Holidays for prayers) will meet with the severest punishment on their persons and if their persons do not be got they may expect destruction to be done on their cattle and property.⁷⁶

The references to the cloth fair would indicate that competition within the linen industry was extreme in this district and would suggest that the dispute was of an economic nature as

⁷⁵ M. R. Beames, ‘The Ribbon societies: Lower class nationalism in pre-famine Ireland’ in *Past and Present*, xcvi (1982), pp 128-143.

⁷⁶ *ECEP*, 13 April 1826.

opposed to one of a religious description. The Fintona linen market was held every alternate Friday and was described as being ‘perhaps the third linen market in Ireland for quantity and is attended by buyers from the bleach greens of counties Derry and Antrim’.⁷⁷ The fact that permission was granted to Catholics to attend Mass in the town would indicate tolerance being shown towards religious worship. But the sectarian nature of society ensured that competition within the linen industry kept within the boundaries imposed by the religious divide.

Perhaps because of the increase in religious tensions, the Catholic church in Ireland had finally begun to enforce the papal decree that no Catholic could be a member of the Freemasons. Mirala claims that the organization reached its peak numerically in 1813 and that because of the pressure exerted by the Catholic church membership then declined.⁷⁸ Lodge no. 77 from Newry called for the issue to be taken up with the church ‘it is the opinion of the different Masters of the Lodges of the town of Newry, that there should be letters sent to all the post towns in the north, to petition the Grand Lodge for the Roman Catholick [sic] clergy for not giving the rights of their church to Catholick [sic] Masons’.⁷⁹ However, despite this call the decline in membership continued. Lodge no. 77 which in 1806 had seventy-seven members, had only eight remaining by 1827.⁸⁰ The number of lodges which ceased to exist in Tyrone in the twenty year period between 1813 and 1833 would tend to back Mirala’s belief. During this period sixty-six lodges were either cancelled or transferred to areas of higher population.⁸¹ It must be stated that not all these lodges folded because of a drop off in membership. Some fell foul of the Grand Lodge for irregularities or for breaking the rules of masonry. In many cases lodges were slow to pay their fees to the Grand lodge, one of the reasons being that they preferred their donations to be used at a local level rather than

⁷⁷ *OSM*, v, p. 69.

⁷⁸ Mirala, *Freemasonry in Ulster, 1733-1813*, p.31.

⁷⁹ Parkinson, *Historical sketch of St. Patrick’s Masonic Lodge no. 77 Newry 1737-1937*, p. 23.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, pp 19, 25.

⁸¹ Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland roll book.

nationally. Lodge no. 470 from Dungannon which had fallen behind in its payments was warned that ‘they shall be informed that unless their debt be cleared of before 27 December next, 470 shall be cancelled’.⁸² Lodge no. 601 (Tynan) was fined for admitting brothers at under rate fees while a complaint from lodge no. 611 (Glaslough, Monaghan) led to an investigation being carried out by the Grand Lodge over allegations that several lodges in Caledon had admitted members while not charging the set out fees.⁸³ Initiating members who did not reach the standards required also brought censure on occasion. A complaint was lodged against lodge no. 452 (Baileiborough, Cavan) for admitting a brother who could not read or write while special permission had to be granted for the admission to lodge no. 453 (Derrylin, Fermanagh) of ‘a young gentleman deprived of the sight of his left eye but not born so’.⁸⁴ The Grand Master of Ireland, the duke of Leinster, was adamant that the society should remain elite- ‘I should very much lament to see it become too general and fear a bad use might be made of it, if extended to the illiterate and lower ranks of society’.⁸⁵ There is no doubt that the laws and requirements of the Grand Lodge were strict and do account for the cancellation of some lodges but given the mixed religious membership of the Brotherhood there is no doubt that the instructions issued by the Catholic church played a part in the decrease in Masonry numbers during this period.

Masonry numbers continued to drop in the early 1820s but the Orange Order suffered no such decline. This was due in no small part to the emergence of Daniel O’Connell and the mass mobilization of the Catholic multitudes. O’Connell had rejected the 1813 offer of Catholic emancipation and his stance was eventually backed by the Catholic clergy. Deciding to move outside the parliamentary arena, O’Connell sought to mobilize the Catholic lower classes. By forming the Catholic Association, O’Connell created a movement

⁸²Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland minute book 1837-42, p. 126.

⁸³Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland minute book 1837-42, pp 6, 55.

⁸⁴Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland minute book 1837-42, p.26, p.140.

⁸⁵Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland minute book 1837-42, p. 194.

which included the lower classes who were able to become members by paying 1d a month. He was able to tap into Catholic grievances and popular memory and create a dynamic movement which harnessed the power of the mass population. Alarmed by such a movement, the government passed the Unlawful Societies Act in 1825 banning such organizations.⁸⁶ Catholic leaders made a point of insisting that Orange lodges be included in the measure, and in March 1825 the Orange Order dissolved itself. The Grand Lodge of Ireland issued the following declaration to its brethren- 'it therefore becomes our duty, in consequence of the confidence you have reposed in us, to inform you, that any lodge meeting after this day commits a breach of the law, and is liable to all the consequent penalties. We therefore exhort you, that in the present crisis of our affairs...you will yield a willing obedience to what is now the law of the land'.⁸⁷ The Catholic Association found a way around the legislation by dissolving itself and forming under a new name, however attempts by Protestants to keep up a united front were fragmented and disorganized. By 1826, Senior argues, 'the Ulster Orangemen were so feeble and divided ... that there was really no Orange card to play'.⁸⁸

The reasons for this vary. O'Connell posed little direct physical threat to Ulster and his Catholic Association enjoyed nothing like the level of support in Ulster that it enjoyed throughout the rest of the country.⁸⁹ Therefore at this stage there was no great fear among Protestants in Ulster that the level of agitation which gripped the rest of the country would reach Ulster. The Ulster gentry was slow and unenthusiastic in organizing against the threat of Catholic emancipation. Kingon points out that a fear existed among some strands of elite society that political clubs would lead to sectarian violence and that in any case, many saw extra-parliamentary agitation as being unconstitutional.⁹⁰ Complacency was also a factor in

⁸⁶Hoppen, *Ireland since 1800: conflict and conformity*, pp 18-19.

⁸⁷*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 2.

⁸⁸Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain*, p. 218.

⁸⁹ Kevin Whelan, 'The regional impact of Irish Catholicism 1700-1850' in William J. Smyth, *Common Ground: essays on the historical geography of Ireland* (Cork, 1988), pp 253-77.

⁹⁰Suzanne T. Kingon, 'Ulster politics in the age of emancipation and reform c. 1825-35' (PhD Thesis, Queens

gentry inactivity as it was felt unlikely that 'Protestant' Wellington as prime minister and the vehemently anti Catholic King George IV would ever grant Catholic emancipation.⁹¹

Therefore efforts to reorganize Orangemen into a legal organization met with a lukewarm response. The setting up of the Loyal and Benevolent Institution of Ireland in 1825 was denied the vital support of the disinterested Verner and Blacker, hugely influential figures in the Armagh/Tyrone area. Ordinary Orangemen were further alienated by the fact that no oaths, signs or passwords were permitted and this lessened the appeal of joining. The Orange Order had provided an outlet for 'satisfying men's appetite for display, mystery, and conviviality'⁹² with these symbolic rituals. The absence of these in the new institution was a contributing factor to the lack of enthusiasm shown by the lower orders for the movement.

Protestant opinion remained divided and fragmented. While the election of the O'Connell backed Protestant landholder Villiers Stuart in Waterford may have caused little concern in Ulster, more serious concern was felt at the activities of O'Connell's association in the Monaghan and Armagh elections of 1826. The Catholic Association backed the election of Henry Westenra, son of Lord Rossmore, in Monaghan who they saw as being less extreme in his views than his opponent Charles Powell Leslie. Similarly in Armagh, William Brownlow was given support in his successful contest against the Orange candidate Colonel Verner resulting in much election violence as sectarian tensions heightened. Attempts to unseat Lord Farnham failed in Cavan but the Catholic Association backed Alexander Dawson triumphed in Louth. It seemed that Catholics were united under O'Connell but that Protestants were very much fragmented and abandoned by a gentry who could not risk going outside the law to mobilize the masses as O'Connell had done without the fear of violence erupting. One landlord wrote that 'the present state of things cannot be endured. The Romans

University, Belfast, 2006), p.56.

⁹¹Kingon, 'Ulster politics in the age of emancipation and reform c. 1825-35', p. 56.

⁹²Oliver MacDonagh, 'Ideas and institutions, 1830-45' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), pp 193-217.

are united as one man, and common safety will justify counter-association against the chance or dread of commotion'.⁹³ Events in 1828 would see the beginning of a much more unified Protestant response to Catholic Association activities.

With the passing of Catholic emancipation seemingly imminent, Protestants responded by forming what were known as Brunswick clubs. It was hoped by the elite that the lower classes could be mobilized peacefully in a similar manner to O'Connell's Catholic Association. However, the clubs provided only limited appeal for the masses. They were dominated by the lesser aristocracy and it is notable again that Verner did not lend his support. In addition to this, the earls of Caledon and Belmore were sympathetic to Catholic emancipation and therefore obviously took no part in the campaign. While 20,000 people, including Alexander Cole Hamilton of Beltrim who rode at the head of 400 of his tenantry, turned up at a 'Protestant meeting' in Omagh on 23 February 1829 organized by John Ynyr Burgess, no representative of the influential marquis of Abercorn turned up.⁹⁴ In addition to the lack of support from the extreme upper classes, the very factors that appealed to the masses which were present in the Orange Order were not present in Brunswick clubs. The Reverend Holt Waring from County Down acknowledged that 'as it (the Brunswick club) will not be held up as a society for drinking or parading, it will not induce them so much to join'.⁹⁵ Along with the lack of opportunity to drink or parade, another matter that dissatisfied the masses was the fact that they were used for propaganda purposes by the elites. Rather than actively resist the claims of Catholics, Brunswick leaders sought to air their grievances through petitions presented to Parliament. By presenting thousands of signatures, they hoped to show the government the level of resistance felt towards Catholic emancipation in Ulster. A petition presented to both houses of parliament by the Protestants of Aughnacloy was typical of the type of petition sent to Westminster:

⁹³ Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain*, pp 221-2.

⁹⁴ *SOB*, 28 February 1829.

⁹⁵ Blackstock, *Loyalism in Ireland, 1789-1829*, p. 239.

your petitioners are devotedly attached to the British constitution, and are grateful for the blessings of civil and religious liberty that they enjoy under its protection; but which they fear would no longer be secure if any further political privileges are granted to the Roman Catholics of Ireland...your petitioners can see no reason for believing that the Roman Catholics are now guided by a different spirit from that which has in ancient, and even modern times brought so much misery on their country; and they, therefore, most earnestly entreat your Honourable House to make no further concessions to persons whose avowed principle is, the hatred of all British connexion.⁹⁶

However, this method of resistance fell well short of what the lower ranks had expected. At the foundation of a Brunswick club in Omagh, the Reverend Mr. Horner called for 'resistance to all who would subvert the constitution...resistance by an appeal to the sword...even the alternative of Connaught may no longer be left as a refuge for the fugitives'.⁹⁷ Horner advocated a militant means of defence if it was considered necessary- 'I warn my Roman Catholic countrymen, that if they suffer themselves to be stimulated into insurrection by the demagogues who are now goading them to madness, they may bring down upon themselves a retribution that will be tremendous'.⁹⁸ At the foundation of the Clogher Brunswick Club, the Reverend Thomas Birney put it to members that they should 'be prepared to spill their dearest veins in the maintenance and support of that glorious constitution which our ancestors shed their blood to establish'.⁹⁹ This type of rhetoric was appealing to former members of the Orange Order who hoped for an organization that would be equally strong in its opposition to perceived Catholic treason and rebellion. But it was never advocated by Brunswick leaders much to the disappointment of the lower classes who thought that they would be armed and participant in a loyal armed association. Gray comments that 'most Orangemen favoured straight intimidation by marching and, if necessary, fighting, and the Brunswick clubs were a poor substitute for the old Orange Order'.¹⁰⁰ The use of strong and inflammatory language by gentry figures was one thing but actually participating in acts of violence was another. Once

⁹⁶*ECEP*, 24 April 1828.

⁹⁷Bardon, *A history of Ulster*, p. 246.

⁹⁸*ECEP*, 2 October 1828.

⁹⁹*ECEP*, 20 November 1828.

¹⁰⁰Gray, *The Orange Order*, p. 110.

again, the Protestant upper classes were reluctant to engage in law breaking acts and because of this the wider Protestant community soon became disillusioned with the clubs. Blackstock makes the point that ‘getting hands on a musket was more attractive than petitioning Westminster’¹⁰¹ and because of these reasons Brunswick clubs were not the success or force that their leaders in Tyrone or indeed elsewhere had hoped they would be.

The lack of support for the Brunswick clubs and for the Loyal and Benevolent Institution of Ireland saw them swallowed up by the Orange Order which had been reformed after the Unlawful Society Act had lapsed. August 1828 saw 6,000 Orangemen parade in Omagh while on the same day thirty-two lodges joined and played party tunes in Dungannon.¹⁰² The Orange parade was based on the model of the Freemason parade although on most occasions they were much bigger with large numbers of lodges coming together to parade during the marching season. The celebration of the battle of the Boyne was popular among the lower class Protestants who made up the majority of the Order. During the eighteenth century King William’s birthday, the fourth of November, had been celebrated by middle and upper class Protestants in preference to the twelfth of July which was more of a plebeian celebration.¹⁰³ The state had endorsed Williamite celebrations and St Patrick’s Day celebrations for a period during this century and both celebrations generally had passed off peacefully. However, as the century came near its close celebrations became more contentious as the sectarian element became reinforced by the newly founded Orange Order.¹⁰⁴ This resulted in a state cessation in the celebration of Williamite anniversaries and an increased state emphasis being placed on St Patrick’s Day. In line with this policy the respectable classes ceased celebrating on 12 July leaving it very much to the lower classes who according to Lieutenant Colonel William Blacker of the Armagh militia felt that ‘they

¹⁰¹Blackstock, *Loyalism in Ireland, 1789-1829*, p. 252.

¹⁰²Ibid, pp 226-27.

¹⁰³Jacqueline Hill, ‘National festivals, the state and ‘Protestant ascendancy’ in Ireland, 1790-1829’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiv, no. 93 (May, 1984), pp 30-51.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

have as good a right to celebrate St Williams day as the lord lieutenant as the mob in Dublin have to celebrate St Patrick's Day'.¹⁰⁵ The Orange Order continued to indulge in processions celebrating Williamite victories over Catholics and these parades were clear demonstrations of the superiority many Protestants felt over Catholics. While Masonic processions were well received by Catholics, this was not the case with Orange parades as explained by Maxwell Hamilton, Crown solicitor for the north east circuit of Ulster:

for instance let me suppose the case of a number of Orangemen who choose to walk in a procession through some village inhabited by Roman Catholics. In walking in procession they are decorated with various badges, music and insignia. The Orange flag is perhaps waved into some Roman Catholic's face; stones are then thrown at the procession party who of course repel the attack. The destroying or wrecking of the whole village probably follows.¹⁰⁶

This was the case when Maghery village was wrecked by Orangemen following a clash in 1830. Orangemen were frequently armed with yeomanry weaponry and openly displayed these arms while marching. Patrick McConnell spoke of seeing 'not less than a thousand guns exhibited openly, and a great number of pistols' at an 1831 Orange parade, whilst Sir Frederick Stoven was in no doubt that yeomanry weapons had been used when Maghery had been destroyed.¹⁰⁷ Openly carrying weapons whilst parading showed the strength of the Order, both to the government and to Catholics. These parades were designed to advertise a Protestant revival and demonstrate mass support which had been absent during the years that the Order was banned. The reformation of Orange lodges coincided with the Jack Lawless 'invasion of Ulster'. Lawless had been sent by O'Connell on a tour of Ulster to bolster interest in the Catholic 'rent' which had been poorly subscribed to in Ulster in comparison to much of the south. O'Connell had hoped that support could be gathered from a so far rather lethargic Ulster Catholic community for his emancipation campaign. Greatly alarmed by this threat Orangemen came together, organized from below, to meet Lawless and his followers at

¹⁰⁵ *Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 219.

¹⁰⁶ *State of Ireland in respect of crime*, p. 694.

¹⁰⁷ *Third report on Orange lodges*, p. 21. *First Report on Orange lodges*, p. 327.

Ballybay, County Monaghan. Faced by such a number, Lawless, rather humbly, was forced to bow to police advice and return home calling off the remainder of his 'tour'. The fact that so many Orangemen were able to mobilize and come together to see off the threat of Lawless and the Catholic Association was a clear sign that a vast reservoir of Orange support was available and willing to counter any possible Catholic encroachment. However, the problem remained for the gentry of how to harness and control the mob. They had been led at Ballybay by an influential and firebrand local publican named Sam Grey, who had once been tried for murder, and was the very type of figure that the upper classes could not contemplate being associated with. Senior speculates that had a strong leader emerged able to control the Protestant masses at this point, the government might have backed down and held back on granting emancipation.¹⁰⁸ But no such a figure emerged and this reason coupled with O'Connell's swift withdrawal from the Ulster arena led to a lessening of tensions and enabled the government to grant Catholic emancipation in May of the following year.

Reaction from Protestant quarters was predictable. James Christie of the Society of Friends had no doubt that the question of Catholic emancipation had been the main cause of the Orange revival- 'emancipation had the tendency in reviving it; I understood that fresh warrants were issued and new lodges established, and that those Lodges that had been discontinued were re-established again... 'til 1828 the processions were gradually dwindling down to great insignificance, they were not one fourth of that number that they were prior to that, after the year 1828 it revived again'.¹⁰⁹ Calls had been made by the government to Orangemen not to march on 12 July 1829, calls that were supported by the duke of Cumberland and the earl of Enniskillen, but in general, while figures such as Verner and Blacker formally supported the government request, they did little to discourage the parades. The Grand Lodge had issued a statement to its members not to march but this was more an

¹⁰⁸ Senior, *Orangeism in Britain and Ireland*, p. 230.

¹⁰⁹ *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 384.

act to relieve the Grand Lodge of responsibility rather than a concrete order which had to be obeyed. Large parades took place at over twenty locations, one of the biggest being held at Caledon. Lives were lost following clashes between Orangemen returning from parades and Ribbonmen at Strabane when members of the Ardstraw lodges were pelted with stones while crossing the bridge on their way home. The Orangemen retaliated by firing into the crowd, wounding three people, one fatally. As they continued their journey home, they were ambushed by a party stationed on Douglas mountain where further casualties were inflicted. At Coalisland 500 Ribbonmen met with armed Orangemen, a clash that resulted in at least four deaths while clashes at Stewartstown also proved fatal.¹¹⁰ This level of violence highlights the tensions that were prevalent in many areas of the county in the immediate aftermath of the passing of the Catholic relief bill.

One parish reacted unusually to the increased tensions that arose from the granting of Catholic emancipation. The landholders of Cloughenry, both Protestant and Catholic, issued a joint declaration on 1 October 1829 declaring their desire to avoid the conflict that prevailed in many parts of the county.¹¹¹ Protestants declared that:

we feel that in the heat of religious and political opposition what may not be intended as a cause of offence may, to other persons, appear to be intended as such, and we admit the propriety of conceding to the feelings of others even what we may consider innocent rather than endanger the existence of that peace and goodwill so necessary to the prosperity of the land we live in.

Catholics responded by declaring that:

we set a proper value on that kind declaration of our Protestant friends, in which they profess to concede even what they consider innocent, rather than endanger any interruption of friendship so necessary to all, and we pledge ourselves in every transaction of our lives, to make a suitable return for the expression of their goodwill towards us.

There were 1141 landholders in the area, which were broken down as follows:

¹¹⁰*ECEP*, 23 July 1829.

¹¹¹1829 declaration of the landholders of Cloughenry, PRONI D. 836.

Cloughenry	
Religion	Heads of family
Established Church	95
Dissenters	332
Catholics	714
Total	1141

Table 2: Religious make up of Cloughenry parish.

Of the 1141 family heads in the parish, only eleven refused to assent to the declaration.¹¹² It is difficult to establish why the people of Cloughenry were able to come to such an agreement. There is no evidence to suggest any organized combination activity at work in the area in the way that the Tommy Downshire Boys came together in Armagh and Down.¹¹³ One possible reason is that by 1835 there were only four Orange lodges in the parish, those at Ballyhallaghan, Beragh, Reacarson and Seskinore. This relatively low number could be an indication that there was little depth of party feeling in the area. The parish was described as ‘being generally contented and quiet’ by the Ordnance Survey Memoirs and it is also stated that ‘the inhabitants are generally in good circumstances. There is nothing particular in their mode of living, which is equal or superior to the adjacent parishes’.¹¹⁴ This assertion would suggest that the inhabitants of Cloughenry enjoyed a better standard of living than the parishes around them and as a result less tension may have existed between the religious factions residing there. Cloughenry, however, appeared to be an exception to the rule in the county and few areas enjoyed the relative tranquillity that was prevalent in the parish.

Anxious for no repeat of the 1829 troubles to occur in 1830, the government took the step of banning processions on 12 July. However, police numbers were not sufficient to prevent roughly the same amount of parades occurring although on this occasion little trouble took place. Trouble did occur in November of the same year as Orangemen wrecked the

¹¹²1829 declaration of the landholders of Cloughenry, PRONI D. 836.

¹¹³ Allan Blackstock highlights the coming together of both Catholics and Protestants to resist economic changes in his article ‘Tommy Downshire’s Boys: Popular protest, social change and political manipulation in mid-Ulster 1828-47’ in *Past and Present*, no. 196 (2007), pp 125-172.

¹¹⁴*OSM*, xx, p. 26.

village of Maghery following an altercation with local Catholics over the playing of party tunes.¹¹⁵ The fact that the local magistrate, Colonel Verner, appeared to sympathize with the mob and subsequently refused to provide evidence against them in court illustrated the bias of many magistrates who were in many cases themselves Orange Order members.

Against this backdrop of increased violence, a move to unite Protestants in the country emerged in 1831 when 120 members of the nobility and gentry met in the mansion house in Dublin in November and it was reported that ‘there was no part of Protestant Ireland that was not fully, fairly and efficiently represented’.¹¹⁶ Present at the meeting were Sir Hugh Stewart, Sir J. J. Burgoyne and J. C. Lowry representing Tyrone. According to the *Dublin Evening Mail*, the meeting was called to discuss ‘the advantages and possible disadvantages of forming an open and permanent political association which would serve best the interests of Protestants’.¹¹⁷ From the beginning a strong Orange flavour permeated proceedings. The Conservative societies that emerged from this meeting and the others that followed it were ‘not exclusively confined to Orangemen, but...exclusively confined to the truly Orange objectives of healing the divisions, and concentrating the energies of Irish Protestants’.¹¹⁸ The principles of Orangeism were much discussed and according to the Protestant press had the effect of causing many among the upper classes to re-think their negative views on the Order. The *Dublin Evening Mail* claimed enthusiastically that ‘since Tuesday last, that on which the great Conservative meeting was held, the Grand Lodge of Ireland has been almost exclusively occupied in the initiation of noblemen and gentlemen of the first rank and consequence in the country- who now, that the deluge of revolution and infidelity is abroad, find no resting place upon the waters, save Orangeism alone’.¹¹⁹ Thus it is evident that the

¹¹⁵ For a fuller examination of this incident, see Charles Dillon, ‘The wrecking of Maghery, County Armagh, 1830’ in *Duiche Neill, Journal of the O’Neill county historical society*, I (1987), pp 107-30.

¹¹⁶ *DEM*, 16 January 1832.

¹¹⁷ *DEM*, 12 December 1831.

¹¹⁸ *DEM*, 14 March 1832.

¹¹⁹ *DEM*, 20 January 1832.

Conservative society from its early stages took on very much an Orange nature.

Mere Orangeism alone however, would not be enough to send a message to the government that Protestant Ireland had arisen. The Orange Order since its 1828 revival had little effect on the political thinking of successive governments; therefore a new approach was needed by the Conservative society. Protestant Ireland with 'its three million tongues' needed to make its voice heard in another way.¹²⁰ The general appeal to 'Protestant nationalism' would be carried through the Protestant press and the grievances of Protestants publicly displayed through mass meetings.¹²¹ The enthusiasm which was sweeping the Protestant community was witnessed almost immediately in a series of countrywide assemblies in January 1832. A reported 30,000 people gathered at Rathfriland, County Down, despite the fact that the meeting had not been advertised; it was merely meant to be an Orange gathering in tribute of Lord Roden.¹²² This afforded 'another striking proof of the good effects resulting from an amalgamation of all loyal Protestants with the Orange Institution'.¹²³ Two days later a 'magnificent display of power' was witnessed at an Armagh meeting, while 20,000 people attended a similar meeting in Cavan the following week.¹²⁴ Smaller assemblies around Ulster took place at Saintfield, Glenavy and Tandragee, while 500 gentry gathered in Lisburn to affix their names to a petition which protested against 'the ministerial revolutionary bill lately introduced into the House of Commons'.¹²⁵ The following week saw meetings held in Sligo, Donegal, Newtownards, Magherafelt, Coleraine and Dromore while further south, Shilelagh was the venue for a gathering of Wicklow Protestants. More significant for Protestants in the southern regions of the country was a great meeting held in Cork where 'the voice of the county and city of Cork, in unison with the

¹²⁰*DEM*, 30 January 1832.

¹²¹ Gilbert A. Cahill, 'Some nineteenth-century roots of the Ulster problem, 1829-48' in *Irish University Review*, i (1970-71), pp 215-37.

¹²²*DEM*, 4 January 1832.

¹²³*DEM*, 4 January 1832.

¹²⁴*DEM*, 6 January 1832, 16 January 1832.

¹²⁵*DEM*, 16 January 1832.

voice of Protestant Ireland, now calls loudly on our Parliament and on our gracious King to arrest the course of revolution and to uphold the Protestant institutions of the Kingdom'.¹²⁶

The Cork assembly was a significant development as it showed that Protestants outside Ulster were prepared to join with their brethren further north to send the message that a united Protestant front was in place countrywide which could 'form a climate of opinion in both Ireland and England favourable to the Established Church and against O'Connell's demands for repeal of the union'.¹²⁷ The countrywide nature of the Conservative society prompted the *Dublin Evening Mail* to claim that 'it may now be safely asserted that Protestant Ireland is up, and that a spirit is aroused which will not be put down'.¹²⁸ Tyrone played its part in demonstrating this spirit by staging its own great meeting in Omagh, while 50,000 Protestants were attracted to the Fermanagh equivalent meeting in Enniskillen on 25 January. Orangemen from the districts around Omagh were led to the town by influential figures such as Arthur Cole Hamilton, who had gathered 600 of his tenants, and Samuel Vesey leading 2,000 Order members, and played tunes such as 'the Boyne Water' on their arrival. Such was the crowd that the meeting was moved outdoors despite heavy snow, where it lasted for over two hours before the crowd separated peacefully.¹²⁹ The calls made by the speakers echoed the rhetoric of the other meetings in demanding nationwide Protestant solidarity, opposition to the government and O'Connell, and loyalty to the King. Judging by the number of meetings held and by the size of the crowds that attended them, it would appear that the Conservative society had succeeded in arousing what Cahill terms as 'Protestant nationalism'.¹³⁰ The society remained active with weekly meetings held at its offices in Grafton Street, while funds were raised for distribution among the lower classes upon which the possible success of

¹²⁶ *DEM*, 20 January 1832.

¹²⁷ Gilbert A. Cahill, 'Some nineteenth-century roots of the Ulster problem, 1829-48' in *Irish University Review*, i (1970-71), pp 215-37.

¹²⁸ *DEM*, 16 January 1832.

¹²⁹ *DEM*, 27 January 1832.

¹³⁰ Gilbert A. Cahill, 'Some nineteenth-century roots of the Ulster problem, 1829-48' in *Irish University Review*, i (1970-71), pp 215-37.

the society was dependent. With the galvanizing of the Protestant community marches were well attended over the summer months of 1832 even though the duke of Cumberland as Grand Master of the Orange Order appealed for members not to parade. Dungannon provided the venue for the main Tyrone procession which was led by County Grand Master Joseph Greer. The Orange Order of Tyrone certainly subscribed to the ideals of the Conservative society with its declaration that 'we have witnessed with pleasure the exertions of the Protestant Conservative Society; and that while they continue to uphold the Protestant cause as they have hitherto done, they shall receive our fullest confidence and support'.¹³¹ Perhaps with instruction from the society in mind little violence occurred over the July period. However, the government, in another act of treachery in the minds of Protestants, passed an anti-procession act the following month.¹³²

Despite this act many parades took place in 1833 although on this occasion policing was much tighter and over 500 Orangemen around Ulster were prosecuted at the following year's spring assize courts. July 1834 saw O'Connell again attempt to make inroads in Ulster, this time by appealing directly to Orangemen rather than by directly confronting them as Lawless had done. Marcus Costello, a Dublin Catholic who had relatives in the Cookstown area was a leading trade unionist and anti-tithe campaigner and had defended Orangemen at court sessions previously. O'Connell's obvious thinking was that Costello would be listened to as he may have been acceptable to Protestants in his professional occupation. However, he was not acceptable as a Catholic haranguer standing on a barrel in Cookstown addressing Protestant farmers and was met by a hail of stones and insults.¹³³ Costello's next port of call was Dungannon where a 'bell man' summoned local Catholics 'for the purpose of receiving him and taking him in triumph through the town'.¹³⁴ This action led to a standoff between

¹³¹ *DEM*, 16 May 1832.

¹³² 2&3 William IV, c. 118.

¹³³ Haddick-Flynn, *Orangeism, the making of a tradition*, p. 249.

¹³⁴ *Second report on Orange lodges*, p. 144.

Catholics and Protestants who were assembled in opposition to each other, ‘one party for protecting him, and the other for pulling him off the coach’.¹³⁵ A major incident was averted by the actions of Captain Duff and the Dungannon constabulary who conveyed Costello through the town whilst keeping both parties apart. Disheartened by his failure to convey his message to his intended audience, Costello retreated to Belfast where he held a small indoor meeting with Catholics before returning home to Dublin, just as Lawless had done six years earlier, in failure. Perhaps because of this incursion by an O’Connellite representative, many Orange lodges marched on 12 July in defiance of orders issued by their local district lodges. At this stage the interest of some of the elite in the Order were beginning to decline. The continuing defiance of government by the lower classes became a source of embarrassment for some of those who mixed in government circles although others were less worried about how London viewed Orange Order activities and were happy to use the Order as a political tool. A meeting held in Dungannon in December 1834 which was called by the aristocracy of Tyrone demonstrated a split in gentry attitudes in the county. Again as in 1832, the Conservative society was the driving force behind a series of nationwide meetings designed to draw attention to the threats faced by Protestant society. A great Protestant meeting at the Mansion House in August 1834 drew 5,000 people and marked a new campaign of sustained popular agitation.¹³⁶ Following on from this, Hillsborough, County Down saw a gathering of 75,000 people, while other large gatherings occurred at Cavan, Armagh and Enniskillen, all with the aim of further highlighting Protestant dissatisfaction with the government. The Dungannon meeting had been called with the similar purpose ‘of addressing the King in support of His prerogative’ and was attended by prominent figures such as the earls of Caledon and Abercorn, and Belmore.¹³⁷ Caledon as a moderate conservative and lord

¹³⁵ Ibid. , p. 145.

¹³⁶ Gilbert A. Cahill, ‘Some nineteenth-century roots of the Ulster problem, 1829-48’ in *Irish University Review*, i (1970-71), pp 215-37.

¹³⁷ *Correspondence on meeting of inhabitants of County Tyrone, in Dungannon 1835* H. C. (120), xlv.511.

lieutenant of the county was unaware that several gentry figures had circulated notices inviting the lower class masses to attend. This action ensured that the meeting was attended by a reported attendance of 75,000 people, many of whom displayed Orange flags and banners. According to Sir Frederick Stoven, head of the Ulster constabulary 'it was not convened as a Protestant meeting, it was a meeting of the gentry, clergy, and freeholders of the county of Tyrone; it was turned into a party meeting, but it was not meant to be one'.¹³⁸ Among the gentry figures active in mobilizing the crowd were the duke of Abercorn and his brother Lord Claude Hamilton who made spectacular entrances on horseback 'splendidly decorated with orange and purple' followed by over 1,000 of their tenantry in a procession said to have 'occupied upwards of two miles'.¹³⁹ In addition to local Orange Lodges entering the town square in procession with music and banners, Ballygawley landlord and magistrate J. C. Mountray led his tenants to the meeting as did fellow magistrates Joseph Greer of Moy and Sir Hugh Stewart of Ballygawley. It is obvious that tenantry who came from as far away as Strabane or Emyvale did not merely turn up of their own accord on the morning of the meeting. They had to be organized, mobilized and transported to the venue, something that required advanced planning by the gentry figures with whom they entered the square. This would suggest that many of the gentry were prepared to go behind Caledon's back and disregard any notions that the meeting was to be a refined, peaceful meeting of the upper classes. Rather, they were prepared to use the masses and the menace that they supplied to send a message to the government demonstrating the widespread Protestant opposition to the changes that the Whig government was applying.

Caledon who had been reluctant to attend the meeting was horrified by the Orange display but felt that calling a halt to the meeting could lead to a riot and in any event had not requested a strong police presence as he did not anticipate so large a gathering. Captain Duff

¹³⁸ *First report on Orange lodges*, p. 339.

¹³⁹ *LJ*, 23 December 1834, *SMP*, 23 December 1834.

of the Dungannon police described the actions of the crowd, ‘the principal part of whom, contrary to his lordship’s expectation marched in regular procession several times through the town...with scarves, flags, music playing party tunes, and firing shots’.¹⁴⁰One of the shots was directed at Stoven who was observing from a distance which demonstrated the contempt that the multitude felt for the law. This contempt was further shown by the anger directed towards Magistrate J. C. Stronge, a rigid enforcer of the law, who was forced to hastily leave the meeting after being threatened. The crowd was further stirred by the impromptu action of Lord Claude Hamilton who allowed himself to be sworn into the Orange Order in a local public house and was then chaired through the town in triumph by the mob, much to the disgust of Caledon. Hamilton’s speech from the platform in defence of Protestant rights had been strongly worded and rather provocative-‘let us look back to a time when similar efforts were foiled by the glorious King William - when our ancestors bled and died in defence of the Protestant religion (cheers) and let us prove worthy of the rich boon which they left us, by showing that we are ready to die rather than yield to it’.¹⁴¹This type of rhetoric advocating violence and evoking popular Protestant memory was much more appealing to the lower classes than Parliamentary procedure advocated by the moderate members of the gentry or indeed the by now defunct Brunswick Clubs. A threatening note which was placed inside the prayer book of Captain Duff’s wife the previous Sunday warning Duff not to interfere in the rally indicated the plebeian way of thinking:

Sir, as this is the last day to be in this rotten town, I send you this advice, tell Robinson that he and that damned scout Stronge will do very little on Friday at the Protestant meeting; that Duff and Sir F. Stoven had better stay in the house or they may get an Orange ball which may cause them to stay at home on the 12th July. Tell Duff that he and Stronge, that they will not be able to stop the meeting, nor the walking on the 12th; tell them to kiss my---- and suck my ----.

I remain yours, Dodd, Amen.¹⁴²

The fact that this note was placed inside the prayer book of a lady possibly highlights the fact

¹⁴⁰*Correspondence on meeting of inhabitants of County Tyrone, in Dungannon 1835*, p. 2, H. C. (120), xlv.511.

¹⁴¹*BN*, 26 December 1834.

¹⁴²*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 325.

that the perpetrators were willing to ignore the normal areas of respect and decency that upper class society demanded and could suggest a lower class involvement in such an act. On the other hand, it is likely that Mrs. Duff sat at a prominent position among the upper classes at Church, an area socially inaccessible to the lower classes, which would point to upper class involvement in planting the note. This would indicate the depth of feeling among some of the upper classes prepared to move outside the normal areas of respect shown towards a lady. This note coupled with the actions of the mob at the meeting who continued their marching until a late hour was not the type of behaviour the politically moderate elite wanted to be associated with. The earl of Gosford and Lord Northland who had once belonged to the Order had already disassociated themselves from it and many other upper class figures were beginning to follow suit. Kingon makes the point that 'sectarian faction fighting, in which one side looked as criminal as the other, was the last thing the Protestant elite wanted'¹⁴³ and many of the elite who had shown initial reluctance to enter the Order began leaving it. On the other hand many influential figures were prepared to use the mob as an instrument to place pressure on the government and stayed on as patrons of the Order. An examination of elections that took place in the second half of the decade will show that this relationship between politically extreme gentry figures and the Orange mob remained strong with disapproval in government circles seemingly not affecting it. Senior argues that 'the Irish movement was in 1835, to all appearances, as strong as it had been in 1825 at the time of the dissolution of the Grand Lodge'.¹⁴⁴ Events in early 1836 left the Order in crisis in many parts of the country, however whether the Protestant population of Tyrone was affected adversely will be investigated in the concluding part of this work.

The Orange Order had grown in less than forty years into an enormous and extremely popular organization within the Protestant community. It had mobilized the

¹⁴³ Suzanne T. Kingon, 'Ulster opposition to Catholic emancipation 1828-29', in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxiv, no. 134 (2004), pp 137-56.

¹⁴⁴ Senior, *Orangeism in Britain and Ireland*, p. 253.

Protestant masses and had gathered enough gentry support to make it a serious problem for the government. Despite government suppression, the Order remained strong during this period and presented a formidable enemy to Catholic organizations operating within and outside of the law. Freemasonry declined as Catholics left the society but it did remain as a vehicle which facilitated the elites despite also being the subject of government suppression. Ribbonism remained the counter group to the Order and maintained a strong presence in Tyrone throughout the 1830s. It is to the Catholic presence that this work now turns and the threat that it posed to a Protestant community that was feeling an increasing sense of attack coming from various directions.

Chapter 4

The Catholic threat - real or imaginary?

Thus far this work has concentrated on how the economic downturn had an adverse effect on the lives of the people of Tyrone and it has examined the poor conditions that the vast majority of the people lived under. It has also focused on the more centralized means of social control that reforms within the organization of the police force, the magistracy, and the court system brought about. As a means of countering these changes, Protestants flocked in large numbers to associational groups, most notably the Orange Order, which offered support networks and a continuation of the upper class paternalism that was very much on shifting ground in other aspects of life. However, despite associational membership and the comforts that it brought, many problems remained and potentially the most destabilizing element in this society was the fractious relationship between the various religious groupings in the county which spilled over into sectarian violence at various points in the 1830s and 1840s. This chapter will investigate the association that attracted many Catholics, namely the Ribbon society, and examine how it was viewed by the Protestant population. It will also examine sectarian clashes of a sporadic nature which occurred in the everyday interactions of the populace.

With a population that was split almost evenly between Catholics on one side and Protestants and Presbyterians on the other, Tyrone was, along with Fermanagh and Armagh, one of the three counties in Ulster where such a close religious division existed. These religious statistics are gathered from the 1861 census, the first census to include religious affiliation within its data. This leads one to imagine these figures being drawn from a much different society than the one that existed in the 1830s due to the obvious changes brought about by the famine. However, the government, in 1835, collected data at a parish level which established religious affiliation (table 10), and when parish aggregates are added up,

they show that little change had occurred in the makeup of religious affiliation over the previous twenty-six years. Therefore, the 1861 county figures mirror the 1835 parish level figures and can be justifiably used to demonstrate the religious structure of each county.¹

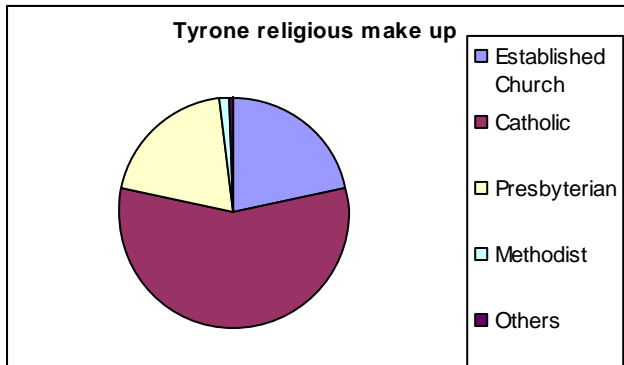


Table 1: Religious make up of County Tyrone

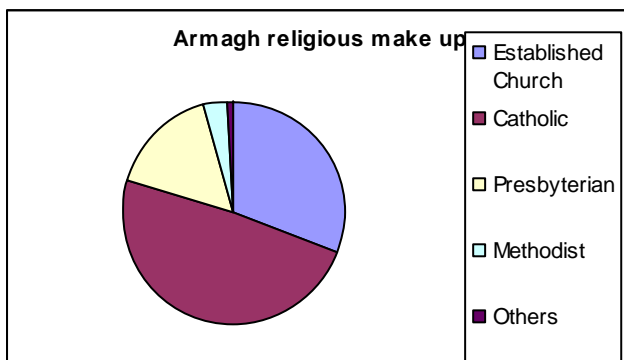


Table 2: Religious make up of County Armagh

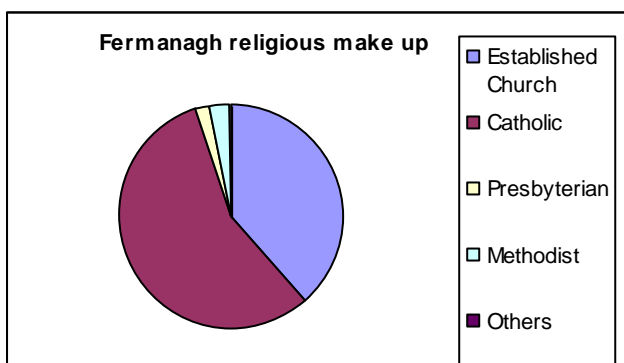


Table 3: Religious make up of County Fermanagh

The counties of Donegal, Cavan, and Monaghan had outright Catholic majorities

¹Enumeration abstracts of number of inhabitants in Ireland, 1841, 1851, and 1861; religious profession 1861; number of houses and families, 1841, 1851, and 1861, pp 10-11, H. C. 1861 (2865) L. 885. The information used in all these tables (1-9) is taken from this source.

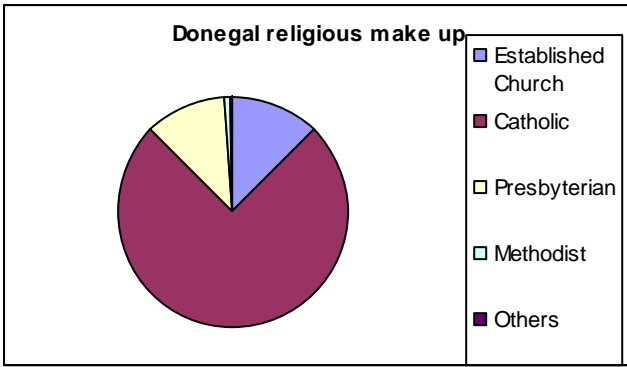


Table 4: Religious make up of County Donegal

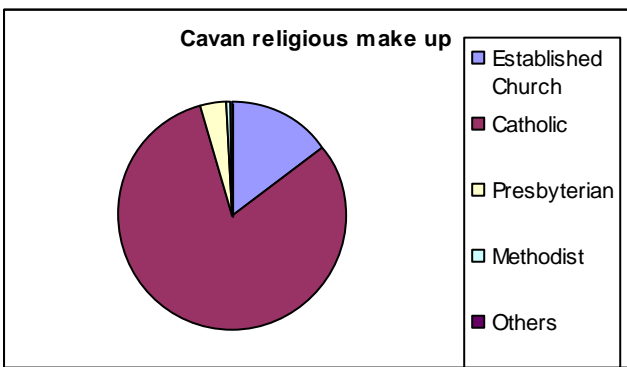


Table 5: Religious make up of County Cavan

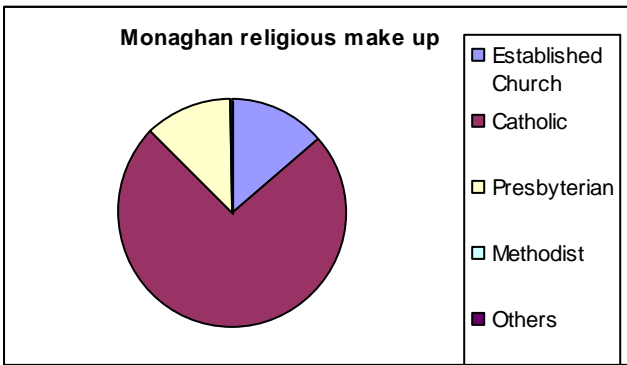


Table 6: Religious make up of County Monaghan

whilst the Protestant/ Presbyterian population was in the majority in the counties of Down, Antrim and Londonderry.²

²Brian Walker, 'Ulster society and politics, 1801-1921', in Ciaran Brady, Mary O' Dowd, and Brian Walker (eds.), *Ulster, an illustrated history* (London, 1989), pp 158-181.

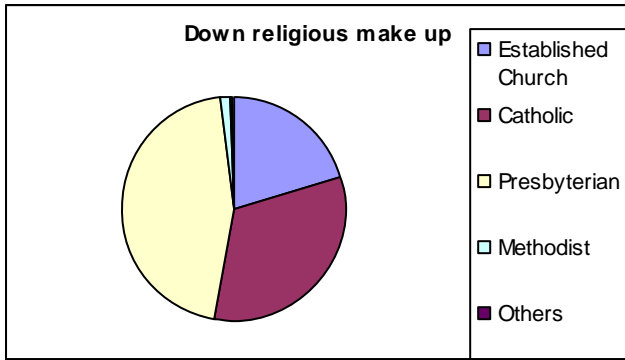


Table 7: Religious make up of County Down

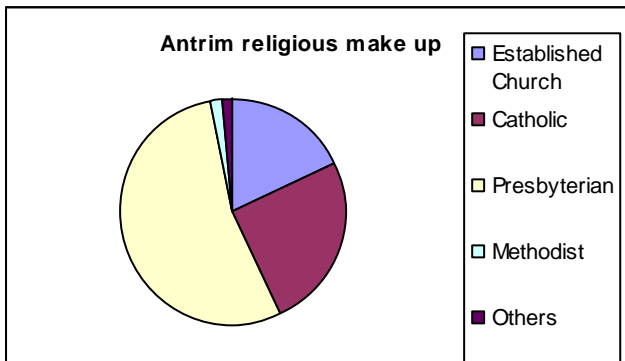


Table 8: Religious make up of County Antrim

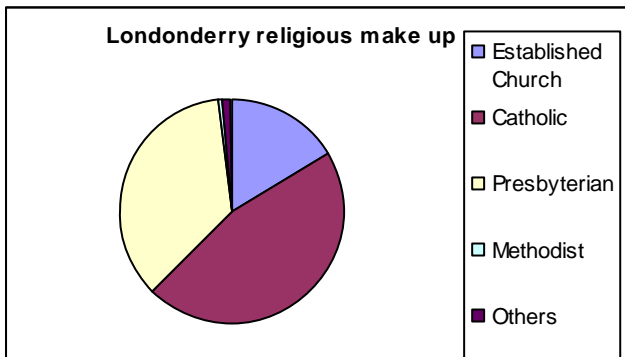


Table 9: Religious make up of County Londonderry

Oliver Rafferty makes the point that relations between the religious factions were better in the counties east of the river Bann because Catholics were simply too few in their numbers to be taken as a serious threat by the Protestant majority.³ Where large majorities of a particular race, ethnicity, or religion exist, there is a general tendency on their part to feel less threatened as the minorities simply do not have the numbers or resources to mount a serious

³Oliver Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster, 1603-1983; an interpretative history* (London, 1994), p. 112.

threat to the dominant faction. If the same logic is applied to counties where Catholics were in the majority, it would lead one to assume that Tyrone, Armagh, and Fermanagh were the counties which suffered from the greatest amount of sectarian conflict. The even distribution of religious belief made Tyrone much more likely to be affected by sectarian violence because no outright religious majority existed as it did in most other Ulster counties meaning that there were more possible interface areas where sectarian violence could erupt. Of the thirty nine parishes that made up the county, large Catholic majorities were found in Ardboe, Badony Upper and Lower, Ballinderry, Clonoe, ErrigalKeerogue, Langfield Upper, Pomeroy, and Termonaguirk, whilst the parishes of Aghaloo, Donaghedy, Donaghery, Skirts of Urney, and Tamlagh contained large Protestant and Presbyterian majorities. The remainder of the county, twenty four parishes, was split relatively evenly between members of the three main religions.⁴

⁴*Royal commission on state of religious and other public instruction in Ireland. First report, appendix, second report*, H. C. 1835 [45] [46] [47], xxxiii.1, 829, xxxiv.1.

Parish	Population	Est. Church %	Catholic %	Presbyterian %
Aghaloo	10645	26.5	32.8	40
Aghalurcher	17925	41.78	50.23	8
Ardboe	8316	11.42	68.86	19.54
Ardstraw	22272	16	42.9	40.66
Artrea	5129	20.86	38.79	40.33
Ballinderry	3375	27.11	67.55	5.33
Ballyclog	2849	18.6	38.68	42.43
Badoney Lower	7508	16.74	73.42	9.83
Badoney Upper	5849	9.21	74.83	15.79
Camus	6431	21.22	51.74	26.73
Cappagh	10900	24.95	47.95	26.98
Carnteel	5777	25.83	33.7	40.05
Clogher	18952	26.43	54.14	19.42
Clogherny	7109	19.71	44.96	34.85
Clonfeacle	7965	22.86	61.1	14.8
Clonoe	5831	10	87.29	2.67
Derryloran	8693	25.63	35.03	39.15
Desertcreat	7750	18.55	53.05	27.61
Donaghedy	10990	15.13	30.9	53.77
Donaghery	5364	31.09	28.95	39.95
Donaghmore	12218	19.83	61.15	18.35
Drumragh	11266	19.79	57	23
Errigal Keerogue	5766	19.27	68.9	11.79
Kildress	7410	18.9	57.61	18.62
Killeeshill	4844	9.9	59.66	29.5
Killyman	7731	45.18	50.46	2.75
Leckpatrick	6161	23.54	48.74	27.72
Lissan	6116	15.04	55.31	29.33
Longfield East	5061	23.16	58.93	17.92
Longfield West	2998	15.01	67.34	17.65
Pomeroy	8077	12.64	70	17.28
Tamlagh	3159	19.47	26.75	53.5
Termonaguirk	10912	15.78	75.6	8.6
Tullyniskin	4125	28.39	59.35	11.39
Urney	9864	22.3	49.8	27.5

Table 10: The religious make up of each parish.⁵

In a bid to examine relations between the members of the different religious groups, this chapter will focus on the two main types of sectarian violence in which Catholics partook against their Protestant and Presbyterian neighbours. The first being sporadic, unorganized violence which occurred especially when the abuse of alcohol was involved, the second a more organized system which manifested itself in the form of the Catholic dominated Ribbon secret society. The Ribbon society sparked fear and hysteria among many gentry and

⁵Royal commission on state of religious and other public instruction in Ireland. First report, appendix, second report, H. C. 1835 [45] [46] [47], xxxiii.1, 829, xxxiv.1.

magisterial figures throughout the country, some of it justified, some of it not. What I intend to explore in the second and main part of this chapter is the extent of which Ribbonism prevailed in Tyrone and whether the fears of the Protestant gentry within the county were indeed realistic.

One of the main causes of sectarian violence in Tyrone was the number of markets and fairs that took place. The very nature of fairs with their amusements and gambling opportunities offered ‘a temptation to the idler, of which he is ever ready to avail himself, and the town overflows on those occasions with persons who have no business whatever to transact’.⁶ An example of the frequency of fairs can be seen in the *Londonderry Journal* of 1 March 1842 which advertised the following number of fairs which were to be held during that week;

Wednesday- Aughnacloy, Castlecaulfield, and Gortin,

Thursday- Dungannon, Frederickstown, Mounthamilton, and Strabane,

Friday-Castlederg, and Moy,

Saturday- Cookstown,

Monday- Altmore, Beragh, and Carland,

Tuesday- Pomeroy.⁷

The frequency of these fairs and the numbers that attended them led to large groups of people converging on these towns. Whilst at the fair, those inclined to drink (which was a sizeable proportion of adult population) were well catered for by the large amount of public houses that each town and village provided. Aughnacloy, for example, held fairs on the first Wednesday of every month where ‘almost every house in the town is licensed to sell ale and spirits’,⁸ Clogher was home to sixty four licensed premises,⁹ while in Leckpatrick the

⁶*OSM*, v, p. 72.

⁷*LJ*, 1 March 1842.

⁸*OSM*, xx, p. 22.

⁹*1835 poor enquiry*, appendix E, p. 379.

Reverend Robert Hume lamented that ‘the number of public houses is frightful, about every twentieth cabin’.¹⁰ This situation applied to almost every town and village in the county as lax licensing laws ensured little difficulty in the selling of alcohol. Reverend R. N. Horner of the parish of Drumglass summed up the problem-‘under the present system persons obtain licence who have no property, and consequently no interest in the preservation of order, and whose houses are not capable of furnishing reasonable accommodation, and consequently are frequented only by the outcasts of society’.¹¹ Alcohol was very much part of the proceedings at fairs or markets partly because of the fact that ‘the country people do not make a single bargain without going to drink’.¹² As can be imagined therefore, with the amount of alcohol being consumed and the numbers present, disputes did arise. Very often these disputes were of a non sectarian nature with families or members of the same religion pitching against each other in a bid to settle old grievances but this work will concentrate solely on disputes that arose because of religious differences.

Interviewed by the select committee established to investigate customs at fairs and markets in 1830, James Weale Esq. , principal clerk in the Irish land revenue department, commented that ‘the fairs are far too numerous and too frequently held. Trade is rather injured than benefited by many of them; and the frequency of them only serves to encourage idle dissipation, and to keep alive disturbances in the county’.¹³ ‘Idle dissipation’ manifested itself in the stoking up of religious tensions on many occasions. On occasion, what would begin as a simple disagreement could end in a full scale sectarian riot. This was the case at Caledon fair during a dispute that arose between a Catholic named McSighery and a Protestant named Wilson. With both men ‘receiving cuts’ a mob formed which separated into rival groups shouting ‘no Pope’ and ‘no orange’. Stones were hurled by both parties, one of

¹⁰*1835 poor enquiry*, appendix E, p. 392.

¹¹*1835 poor enquiry*, appendix E, p. 385.

¹²*1835 poor enquiry*, appendix E, p. 109.

¹³*Report from the select committee on tolls and customs in Ireland, with the minutes of evidence 1834*, p. 74, H.C. 1834 (603), xvii. 229.

which severely wounded a Protestant named Johnston. Many Catholics were also struck and the police had to come between the mobs in order to restore peace.¹⁴ Another such incident saw a riot breaking out between the Protestant Thompson and the Catholic McGaurran families on their way home from a fair at Trillick which resulted in ‘several blows and cut heads’.¹⁵ Incidents such as these between rival factions decreased however as the 1830s progressed as more organized and efficient policing ensured that large police forces attended fairs thereby lessening the chances of full blown sectarian tensions erupting.

Although violence did occur at the fair itself, very often the journey home was more perilous especially if the parties coming into contact were intoxicated. This was the situation faced by two Catholics returning from Moy fair who were overtaken and attacked by a group of eleven or twelve Protestants. The cause of the attack was that one of the men, Bernard Donnelly, while drunk shouted that ‘he was able to beat any Orangeman in the town’. This incensed a Protestant grouping who had overheard this drunken boast causing them to attack Donnelly and his companion. The dispute was discovered by a priest and an army captain who tried to separate the parties but failed, the priest being struck by William Coleman who shouted ‘to hell with the priest and the Pope’.¹⁶ This particular insult was quite common and according to police chief Stoven generally bred a riot.¹⁷ William Kennedy and six Catholics returning from Dungannon market certainly took exception to shouts of ‘to hell with the Pope’ which were delivered by James Dilworth and five Protestants who had overtaken them on the road. Accusing Dilworth of perjury, Kennedy instigated a scuffle between the groups in which the Protestants were well beaten. However, stung by this defeat, Dilworth and his comrades went off to collect a stronger force and soon resumed the attack. Kennedy and his party were forced to shelter in a nearby vacant house where they were blockaded until a

¹⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 43 28 1837.

¹⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 13 28 1837.

¹⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 92 28 1836.

¹⁷ *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 337.

police force arrived and dispersed the parties.¹⁸ John Moore, a Protestant, was assaulted outside English by three men for expressing a similar declaration along the road. One asked him 'is that you Moore, you Orange Tory?' which indicates that they knew him, and then began the assault.¹⁹ A similar attack was carried out on James Maneely one mile from Stewartstown by three Catholic brothers named Lowe who beat him on the body breaking three of his ribs. The parties, who lived in the same town land, were known to each other and perhaps it was the knowledge that Maneely was a Cookstown Orange Lodge master that prompted the attack. However, when the case was heard at Omagh assizes the men were acquitted, as Chief Constable Lynch gave evidence that 'he (Maneely) was half drunk, and was shouting along the road for papists'.²⁰ Drunkenness again was the reason for an instance of sectarianism that occurred when a Catholic named Thomas Kennedy was threatened by William Hill, a Protestant, while standing in the front door of his home in Killyman. Hill threatened to shoot Kennedy if he did not retire inside and then proceeded down the street 'vowing to shoot any papists that would oppose him'. The case was dismissed at Dungannon petty sessions as 'a plea of drunkenness was put in by Hill who appeared sorry for what he did upon which Kennedy withdrew his complaint.'²¹ These were very much typical post fair incidents caused in no small measure by the coming together of two groups whose sense of religious difference was heightened by the effects of a day spent drinking. What stands out is how well the perpetrators of the assaults and their victims knew each other. This indicates that the various religious factions mixed and interacted with each other in everyday life and were in no way insular or ghettoized. A study of 1835 schooling figures back up this viewpoint.

¹⁸ NAI: CSORP, OR: 163 28 1836.

¹⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 135 28 1836.

²⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 7 28 1838.

²¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 14 28 1838.

School	Location	Pupils	
		Protestant	Catholic
Ramarket	Caledon	78	142
Mullycamron	Caledon	115	48
Tullyreagh	Artrea	50	20
Ballymagluire	Artrea	81	62
Eary Lower	Ballyclog	65	65
Tamlagh	Kildress	19	31
Killeeshill	Killeeshill	58	115
Sessia	Tullyniskin	81	32
Creenagh	Tullyniskin	21	19
Cullynane	Aghalurcher	55	21
Newtownstewart	Ardstraw	98	88

Table 11: A random sample of mixed schooling in Tyrone in 1835.²²

By mixing in their early years at school, familiarity naturally developed between the religious factions. Also, the fact that parents were prepared to send their children to mixed schools indicates a certain level of comfort existed between the religious blocs at a local level. This familiarity was cemented by the involvement of all sides of the community in what could be termed as ‘leisure activities’. A challenge fight organized between John Devlin, a Catholic, and Archibald Crawford, a Protestant, which occurred outside Stewartstown provides an example of how the different religious cliques came together within the same social circles in everyday life. Supporters of both fighters were present and ‘the combatants had only taken off their coats, when a general conflict commenced, between friends of both parties’ which led to eight arrests.²³ The riot arose from a previous dispute at a cock fight which again indicates that Catholics and Protestants intermingled on a regular basis and shared common interests. Religious friction may have never been far beneath the surface but in general the populace lived a relatively peaceful co-existence. However, the influence of alcohol certainly made this friction much more likely to emerge.

Outside of the tensions of the fair sectarianism also reared its head on an irregular basis. Church property was often the target of individuals or gangs of a bigoted nature from both sides of the religious divide. The Catholic chapel at Ballygawley was forcibly entered

²² *OSM*, v, pp 1-6, xx, pp 5-141.

²³ NAI: CSORP, OR: 110 28 1836.

and candlesticks and ornaments were taken,²⁴ while windows were broken in Dungannon church by Catholics attending a nearby wake.²⁵ The Catholic Church at Clonfeacle was entered through unlocked doors and a silver chalice was stolen.²⁶ The chalice was later found discarded in a hedge which would suggest that sectarianism rather than robbery was the motive. In a similar fashion, school property belonging to Protestant educational societies was often damaged as Catholics feared a campaign of religious conversion to be the goal of these schools. These societies generally targeted border counties as shown by the fact that 68 per cent of schools belonging to the London Hibernian Society were situated in Ulster by 1837.²⁷ With Tyrone containing a large number of educational society properties, many of these schoolhouses became targets for disgruntled Catholics. The windows of a schoolhouse, the property of the Kildare Street Society, were smashed in Upper Langfield in July 1838, an action which prompted the police to offer a £20 reward for information which would convict the culprits,²⁸ while twelve panes of glass were broken on the society's school house at Aughaloo the following December.²⁹ A number of New Testaments in the English and Irish languages were totally destroyed along with other books and desks when the schoolhouse of the London Bible Society was broken into in Termonaguirk, an action that demonstrated the feelings of some Catholics towards the alleged proselytising aims of these societies and of the tensions that these aims contributed to.³⁰

What stands out about all the cases of a sectarian nature examined is the fact that they occurred over the entire course of the year rather than merely when tensions were at the highest during the summer months of marching season. The cases highlighted show how the communities lived together in a state of uneasiness but that an external influence, for example

²⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 49 28 1836.

²⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 88 28 1836.

²⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 29 28 1837.

²⁷ Hempton and Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society 1740-1890*, p. 59.

²⁸ NAI: CSORP, OR: 84 28 1838.

²⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 131 28 1838.

³⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 44 28 1839.

alcohol, was needed to spark sporadic incidents of a sectarian nature. The attitude of the gentry and authorities was rather lukewarm towards incidents of this nature. It is true that the police did investigate events and many of the crimes were successfully prosecuted but the gentry did not view these sporadic incidents as a threat to the position of the Protestant ascendancy. What was of much more concern to the Protestant gentry and the mass of people that they influenced was a possible threat posed by organized Catholic secret society activity.

The largest Catholic secret society in Ulster was the Ribbon society, a society shaped from the remains of the Defender movement which was a type of local defence group formed in the late decades of the eighteenth century and whose purpose it was to defend Catholics against the attacks of the Protestant Peep O' Day boys. This all-male society was formed along Masonic lines with members being sworn to secrecy. Passwords were issued in a bid to maintain the secrecy of the organization while an oath taken on joining swore allegiance to the 'Church of Rome' and loyalty to fellow members. An annual membership fee was required and 'travel tickets' enabled members to travel throughout Ireland and Britain and receive the hospitality of fellow Ribbonmen. Organized at a parish level and with a structured hierarchy in place, members generally came from the lower classes. In common with the Orange Order, lodge masters were often public house owners and lodge meetings generally took place in licensed premises which suggests that alcohol played a big part in the association.³¹ There are varying degrees as to the extent of which Ribbonism prevailed in Tyrone. The view of ultra Protestants was that the organization was widespread throughout the county and a serious threat to the church and state. Reverend Mortimer O'Sullivan from Killyman explained that these fears 'naturally result from the belief that there exists a society of Roman Catholics confederated for the extirpation of Protestants'.³² In O'Sullivan's

³¹M. R. Beames, 'The Ribbon societies: Lower class nationalism in pre-famine Ireland', in *Past and Present*, xcvi (1982), pp 128-143. Tom Garvin, 'Defenders, Ribbonmen and others: Underground political networks in pre-famine Ireland', in *Past and Present*, xcvi (1982), pp 133-155.

³²*First report on Orange lodges*, p. 183.

opinion:

it (the Ribbon Society) keeps the mass of the Irish people disloyal. It keeps them under the government of laws hostile to the laws of the land, makes them amendable to influences which are unfriendly to habits of citizenship and order, and supplies principles of action wholly incompatible with those by which subjects or Christians should be governed. It weakens the strength of the British empire, and it keeps a large mass of people in a state of readiness for any enterprise by which the empire may be shaken. It is lawlessness. It is ready to become a rebellion.³³

O'Sullivan was adamant that Ribbonism was a dominant factor amongst Catholics in his area stating that 'if I were to give the information reported to me, I would say that every Roman Catholic in the parish, with the exception of about twenty, was a Ribandman'.³⁴ His parish of Killyman was split almost evenly along religious lines and was an area where religious conflict was prevalent. Frank Wright makes the point that 'Killyman and Clonfeacle were on the edge of Protestant majority territory and experienced sectarian contestation during the 1830s, the low point of the linen trade. Here, political and economic pressures to emigrate or, conversely, to band together were strongly interrelated'.³⁵ According to O'Sullivan, the Orange Order 'gave Protestants courage to stay rather than emigrate. In Killyman Protestant emigration had stopped altogether'.³⁶ The parish suffered badly with the economic downturn after 1815, had no resident police force or magistracy, nor scarcely any gentry, and perhaps because of this, residents may have felt the need to join a society which offered mutual protection whether it be the Ribbon society or the Orange Order. O'Sullivan claimed that five sixths of all Protestant adult males were members of the Orange Order and within this body was a well known faction branded the 'Killymanwreckers'.³⁷ This group was a hard core band which was involved in the wrecking of the village of Maghery in 1830, the burning of Annahagh village in 1835, and who were active in much of the sectarian violence that occurred in east Tyrone and north Armagh. Catholic inhabitants of the parish felt the need to

³³Letter from Mortimer O'Sullivan to Lord Beresford, 28 July 1839, PRONI T2772/2/6/28.

³⁴*First report on Orange lodges*, p. 184.

³⁵Wright, *Two lands on one soil*, p. 97.

³⁶*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 97.

³⁷*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 182.

send a memorial to lord lieutenant of the county, the earl of Caledon seeking a police station and a resident magistrate, an action seen as justified by Caledon who was ‘strongly impressed that the Roman Catholic inhabitants have every cause for apprehending acts of aggression from their Protestant neighbours’.³⁸ Because of this lack of government protection, there is every likelihood that Catholics did organize themselves into a type of local defence force, therefore O’Sullivan’s claims may well have been credible and not simply the hysterical ranting of an over apprehensive clergyman. More frantic and probably unrealistic were the claims of the *Enniskillen Chronicle* following the conviction of national Ribbon leader Richard Jones, who gave the near hysterical warning that ‘ribbon societies in all directions are nightly planning schemes of destruction, and under the very nose of the Castle, lodges are being held with systematic regularity which may well inspire just apprehensions to Protestant safety’.³⁹ This type of fear was also felt by Lieutenant Colonel William Verner, M.P. for Armagh, magistrate serving Tyrone, and deputy Grand Master of the Orange Order. Lamenting what he saw as the unfair treatment shown by the government towards the Order, Verner was able to ‘recollect persons taken up in the county of Tyrone and other parts with the Ribbonmen’s oath in their pocket’ having little or no action taken against them.⁴⁰ The problem for the historian is, however, that very often what was an innocent gathering of a Catholic group was automatically deemed to be Ribbon activity. Randall Kernan, a Catholic barrister covering the North West circuit courts, claimed that every society meeting for the purpose of opposing Orangemen was frequently called a Riband society.⁴¹ A typical case of this type was recalled by Captain Duff of the Dungannon police who approached a group of men who were reported for engaging in Ribbon activities. Duff stated that ‘the impression upon my mind was, that twelve or thirteen Roman Catholics were congregated and drinking;

³⁸The Caledon papers. PRONI D2433/C/12/2.

³⁹*ECEP*, 2 July 1840.

⁴⁰*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 23, p. 16.

⁴¹*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 102.

they turned out to be tradesmen, and we could not find out anything was going forward... I heard afterwards that they were entering into some combination about a baking system- they turned out to be bakers- something between them and their masters'.⁴²In a separate incident, Duff was given information of a Ribbon assembly which proved to be incorrect in his view- 'in one case I received a report of 5,000 armed men, styled Ribbonmen, and when I came to inquire (it took two to three days) I found it was not the case; they were Roman Catholics protecting a chapel, which it was stated to be pulled down, and then the report raised through the county was that the Ribandmen had assembled'.⁴³A rumour had circulated that a group of Orangemen were intent on pulling down the chapel on the forthcoming 5 November and this rumour had resulted in local Catholics assembling to defend it. But the report given to Duff had termed them as being Ribbonmen. Large gatherings of Catholics were often viewed with suspicion by apprehensive magistrates. Chief Constable Lynch was ordered to bring a police force to the 'Old Cross at Arboe' where 4-5,000 Catholics had gathered for 'devotional exercises'. Despite this being the largest crowd that Lynch had ever seen gathered in the district, he reported the meeting as passing off peacefully and quietly.⁴⁴ The gathering of Catholics at the Cross was an annual event particularly on 24 June, the Feast of St John, yet each year Stewartstown magistrates ordered the police to attend the event 'to preserve the peace' despite the fact that no incidents ever occurred at the gathering. These orders again reflect the apprehensions felt by magistrates over large gatherings of Catholics. From viewing cases such as these, it would seem necessary to keep an open mind on so called Ribbon assemblies as often they were no more than random meetings of various Catholic groupings.

It is of course true that organized Riband meetings and processions did take place. Police intercepted a march at Glencoe cross which was made up of between seventeen to twenty men and boys and which was accompanied by a piper in September 1837 whilst a

⁴²*Third report on Orange Lodges*, p. 149.

⁴³*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 149.

⁴⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 13941 28 1840.

similar march took place in Plumbridge in 1834.⁴⁵ But it would appear that Ribbon marches had somewhat waned in the mid to late 1830s in comparison to the early decades of the century. The above mentioned marches were on a small scale in comparison to processions in previous years. Verner spoke of a Riband meeting held in Benburb in 1825 where he claimed that Ribbonmen ‘assembled in great numbers; they had white tape or ribbons around their sleeves and round their hats, and excited a great deal of alarm throughout that part of the country’.⁴⁶ The extent of Ribbon activity and organization was evident on 12 July 1824 as over 1,000 Ribbonmen armed with guns, bayonets, scythes and pitchforks gathered on a hill between Castlecaulfield and Ballygawley in order to prevent an Orange march from passing through. Headed by a young well dressed man of ‘respectable appearance’ and several officers, they promised the local magistrate that they would separate peacefully if the Orangemen did not pass the local Church. The magistrate put this request to the Orangemen who refused claiming that they would march where they liked. By this time the Ribbonmen had left their strategically advantageous position on the hill and realized they could not now attack the Orangemen. Furious at this development, they turned their wrath on the magistrate who they felt had deceived them forcing him to flee for his life. While on this occasion the Ribbonmen failed in their objective, the organization of the group caused great alarm as pointed out by the *Enniskillen Chronicle*:

most of the people were strangers, and from their appearance, dress, and accent, must have come a considerable distance, and there is no doubt this was a premeditated plan, and reconverted by an arrangement that must excite considerable alarm; and the military array of the persons, and their being brought from a distance, shew [sic] evidently the organization and disposition of this illegal and dangerous society.⁴⁷

This description of the assembly demonstrates the interaction that took place between Ribbon members and that Ribbonism had the organization and infrastructure to facilitate the movement of vast numbers of its members throughout the province. The knowledge that the

⁴⁵NAI: CSORP, OR: 151 28 1837, *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 373.

⁴⁶*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 26.

⁴⁷*ECEP*, 28 July 1824.

Ribbon society could organize and mobilize its members in such a manner played a large part in Protestant fear and paranoia. The incidents highlighted at Castlecaulfield in 1824 and Benburb in 1825 would suggest a much more active society in the years prior to the mid 1830s. Police reports examined from the years 1835-8 show little in the way of organized Ribbon activity, the march at Glencoe cross being the exception rather than the norm. Similar low levels of recorded Ribbon activity were found by Jennifer Kelly in her study on Ribbonism in Leitrim from the same period and she argues that this shows the difficulty that the police had in discovering it.⁴⁸ According to the reports of senior police figures, it would seem that Ribbon activity had either largely ceased in the county, could not be discovered, or was no longer taken seriously by the authorities. Sir Frederick Stoven asserted that 'I think it is probable that such societies did exist then [1822], and do not exist now'.⁴⁹ Captain Duff was adamant that little Ribbon activity was carried out in Tyrone

I should suppose that if ribandism did exist, out of a police of 1,200 men we should be able to bring some case to bear, but in my experience we never have...I should be sorry to impugn the conduct of the constabulary as far as to suppose any (lodges) could exist without their being found out...I have employed people to find out, and I have set people as spies, but I could never discover anything of the sort.⁵⁰

Resident Magistrate J. G. Jones was equally dismissive of the organization operating at a serious level-'that the Riband society exists in Ireland I can have no doubt; but that it exists to any great extent in the north I have great doubt. I think it impossible it could have existed without it being communicated to me to any extent'.⁵¹ Strabane magistrate James Sinclair did not doubt the existence of Ribbon societies but had never traced the existence of any lodges whilst Stoven had 'very great doubts about Riband societies; I could never find out anyone that could show me a Riband society, or find me the members of one acknowledged to be

⁴⁸ Jennifer Kelly, 'An outward looking community? : Ribbonism and popular mobilization in County Leitrim 1836-1846' (Ph.D. Thesis, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, 2005), p. 20.

⁴⁹ *First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 341.

⁵⁰ *Second Report on Orange Lodges*, p. 146. The figure of 1,200 should read 120 policemen stationed in the county. This is unlikely to have been a mistake on Duff's part, more likely a typing error by the clerk compiling the report.

⁵¹ *Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 158.

so...I have always said show me these Riband fellows; I want to see something tangible; but I could never get anyone that could show me them yet'.⁵²Such an apparent attitude of denial surely must have rankled with the general Protestant population, many of whom simply had to have been aware of the existence of the society. O'Sullivan complained that the Ribbon system:

has been just so far visited with light as to provoke the anxious curiosity of all who will read the evidence of its existence. It has appeared to me rather strange that most of those who spoke of it as a matter of conspiracy thought proper to consider what might become, rather than what actually is; the dangers likely to result from it under supposed circumstances, rather than the mischiefs of which it is now the fruitful parent.⁵³

The above sentiments of the authorities were expressed in 1835 but events in the later part of the decade and the early years of the next would prove that the police had very much underestimated the strength of the Ribbon society in Tyrone and that O'Sullivan had, in fact, considerable grounds for his apprehensions.

A similar attitude of denial was expressed by Edward Kernan, the Bishop of Clogher who, according to his brother Randall, claimed that he 'knows nothing of them'. However, Randall Kernan went on to say-'I know he was always preaching against the formation of any such associations, and that he gave orders to his clergy, at a place of penance, to which Catholics resort, not to suffer any Ribandmen, or other persons bound by secret oaths, to enter the island of Lough Derg'.⁵⁴This poses the question as to why the bishop of Clogher felt the need to preach and impose sanctions against a society that he claimed to know nothing of. If the society was not in existence in Tyrone then condemnation of it would be pointless. Therefore it could be suggested that the society was in fact active, or believed to be so, in the county when the head of the Catholic Church in the area was driven to speak against it. In any event it is likely that his condemnation fell largely on deaf ears among the Catholic

⁵²*First report on Orange Lodges*, p 352, p. 322.

⁵³Letter from Mortimer O'Sullivan to Lord Beresford, 28 July 1839, PRONI T 2772/2/6/28.

⁵⁴*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 90.

population. According to Kevin Whelan, Ulster and North Connacht lagged behind the rest of the country when it came to Catholic Church influence because of the lack of a Catholic middle and upper class in the area.⁵⁵ The relative poverty of the Catholic population in Tyrone ensured that little disposable wealth was available in the county meaning that the Catholic Church was weak as funds to build churches or pay priests were scarce. Data collected by parliamentary commissioners in 1834 showed that Mass attendance ranged from 25 to 40 per cent in some poorer areas of the county.⁵⁶ The parish of Clogher, for example, was home to 10,261 Catholics who were served by the dean of Clogher and three curates. Eight churches hosted Sunday Mass throughout the parish and the number attending the services was given at just over 3,400 or roughly one third of the Catholic population, a relatively poor return.⁵⁷ One reason for the poor level of attendance was the state of many churches. The parish of Ballinderry contained no permanent place of worship, merely an altar in the town land of Derrycrin, whilst Termonamongan saw Mass held in a small glen in the southern part of the parish.⁵⁸ Where actual buildings did exist they were often in a poor state of repair. The church in Derrygooley, Aghaloo, was described as ‘having a rustic appearance’ being partly thatched, partly slated and surrounded by hawthorn bushes, whilst the church in the parish of ErrigalKeerogue was ‘surrounded with trees and could scarcely be recognised as a place of worship’.⁵⁹ These examples show that the Catholic Church was in a poor condition in the county because the necessary funds simply could not be raised in order to repair the existing churches let alone build new ones. For this reason influence of the church among its flock was limited. Desmond Murphy makes the point, which is backed up by Rafferty, that the main areas of Ribbonism generally coincided with areas poorly served by the church and

⁵⁵Kevin Whelan, ‘the regional impact of Irish Catholicism 1700-1850’ in William J. Smyth and Kevin Whelan (eds.) *Common ground; essays on the historical geography of Ireland presented to T. Jones Hughes* (Cork, 1988), pp 235-277.

⁵⁶Rafferty *Catholicism in Ulster, 1603-1983; an interpretative history*, p. 112.

⁵⁷*Royal commission on state of religious and other public instruction in Ireland. First report, appendix, second report*, pp 60-61.

⁵⁸*OSM*, v, p. 143, xx, p. 12.

⁵⁹*OSM*, xx, p. 20, p. 46.

if this is the case then the poor condition of the church in Tyrone would have made the county a possible centre of Ribbon activity.⁶⁰

The type of criminal activity carried out in many areas of the county makes it difficult to establish whether there was actually any Ribbon involvement or whether such acts were the work of disgruntled individuals or small groups. More often than not agrarian crime such as the burning of a turf stack or the scattering of hay stacks were carried out by jealous or begrudging neighbours rather than by an organized party of Ribbonmen. Stephen Gibbons makes the point that ‘an examination of many individual cases will reveal that in the great majority of incidents, it is very unlikely that any ‘society’ was involved’ but rather that much agrarian crime was carried out by *ad hoc* groups brought together by family ties or demands of mutual obligation’.⁶¹ Threatening notices were received by members of the community from time to time but were often written by individuals or families with a grievance rather than by Ribbonmen. Ribbonmen rarely posted threatening notices because as Jennifer Kelly points out ‘they inflicted immediate violence on their victims, often without warning, rather than simply threatening it through notices’.⁶² However, on occasion, certain acts did bear the hallmark of Ribbon activity. James McKiernan from Ardstraw would appear to have been the victim of an assault that bore the characteristics of a Ribbon attack. Whilst working at a hay stack, he was approached by a stranger who emerged from a nearby house and who asked him if he was McKiernan. On replying in the affirmative, McKiernan was struck several times by the stranger who then left the scene, joined with a group of between twelve and fourteen men, and made off. The cause of this outrage was that McKiernan lived on a property that was sublet.⁶³ This outrage would appear to match the workings of Ribbonism. What happened when a victim was targeted by Ribbonmen was explained by the *Enniskillen*

⁶⁰Murphy, *Derry, Donegal and modern Ulster*, p. 71. Rafferty, p. 105.

⁶¹Gibbons, *Captain Rock, night errant. The threatening letters of pre-famine Ireland, 1801-1845*, p. 12.

⁶²Kelly, ‘An outward looking community? : Ribbonism and popular mobilization in County Leitrim 1836-46’, p. 18.

⁶³NAI: CSORP, OR: 42 28 1838.

Chronicle:

it is necessary to premise that the directory or head committee obtains as nearly as possible, likeness of the intended victims no matter whether they reside in Cork, Limerick, or Fermanagh. The likeness so obtained, is then placed in the hands of the parties appointed to commit the deed and who are selected from ribbon lodges, perhaps one hundred miles distant from the locality of the murder; and these assassins generally travel as dealers, pedlars, or labourers, certain from the protection from the ribbon lodges throughout their route. When they arrive in the neighbourhood of their victim, they watch his movements, and await in perfect security the moment to strike the blow; after which they disappear, and the nearest coach conveys them, before twenty four hours, to perhaps Leitrim, Sligo, or county whence they came, being amply provided with travelling expenses.⁶⁴

The fact that the perpetrator of this outrage was a complete stranger who was never traced would suggest that he was an outsider 'employed' to carry out this task, a fact that might point to Ribbon activity in this instance. This was a common practice among secret societies which was designed to keep members identities secret.⁶⁵ If the *Enniskillen Chronicle* is to be believed, then a well organized system of communication and co-operation must have been in place between Ribbon societies throughout at least the northern half of the country. The extent of this organization will now be examined to show whether such an organization could have operated in Tyrone and whether the fears of the Protestant population in thinking that it could were justified.

Tom Garvin argues that Ribbon societies showed that, despite factionalism and localism, they were connected to each other and that a Ribbon network linked much of Ulster, north Connacht, and north Leinster, and was able to overcome the problems that long distances provided.⁶⁶ This seems to be very much the case when looking at Tyrone. It was not merely a local, inward looking society, but one which was part of a much greater network. The police infiltration of the Ribbon convention at Ballinamore, County Leitrim, during which county delegate of Tyrone, John Rogers was apprehended, demonstrates the extent to

⁶⁴ *ECEP*, 14 May 1840.

⁶⁵ Gale E. Christianson, 'Secret societies and agrarian violence in Ireland, 1790-1840' in *Agricultural history*, xlvii, no. 3 (July, 1972), pp 369-84.

⁶⁶ Tom Garvin, 'Defenders, 'Ribbonmen and others: underground political networks in pre-famine Ireland', in *Past and Present*, no. 96 (Aug. , 1982), pp 133-55.

which the organization had spread. Present at the meeting were the county delegates from Sligo, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Cavan, Meath, Leitrim, Longford, Dublin, England, and Scotland whilst the delegates from Donegal, Derry, Down, Antrim, Armagh, Westmeath, and Mayo had been due to attend but did not.⁶⁷ The organization of this meeting and the fact that so many delegates from around the country attended emphasises how far reaching the society was. Communication was kept on a regular basis between the county leaders. A letter from Richard Jones to Rogers demonstrates how regular communication was vital in the inter-county workings of Ribbonism:

Dear friends - I have been directed to inform you of an account of a villain of the name of Patrick Gaffney, who for some time has been given [sic] information to the government about us...Gaffney is a native of Mullagh, County Cavan, about 40 years of age, five feet ten high, stout made, about 14 stone weight, black hair and whiskers, and heavy eyebrows and flat footed. Caution all persons you know about him.

Rogers' reply makes evident what would happen if Gaffney was spotted, stating that 'if the lad comes this way I will settle with him'.⁶⁸ On searching a house in the Bogside, Derry, belonging to a cooper named William Collins who was thought to be the County Derry delegate, police found 'a considerable number of books and papers, containing signs and passwords'.⁶⁹ Included in the papers was a letter from County Cavan Delegate James Brady to John Rogers.⁷⁰ The same William Collins along with the alleged County Donegal delegate, Buncrana publican Patrick Doherty, was named by a former Ribbon member turned informer Neal Kelly at the trial of Rogers, who implied a connection between the men having himself received 'goods' from Collins.⁷¹ If the evidence of Kelly is to be believed then it, together with the documents found by the police, points to a well established network being in place between the county delegates. If each county delegate was theoretically in charge of all the lodges within his county and if he was on terms with county delegates from around the

⁶⁷*NS*, 25 July 1840.

⁶⁸*LJ*, 23 March 1841.

⁶⁹*ECEP*, 31 Oct 1839.

⁷⁰*ECEP*, 16 July 1840.

⁷¹*ECEP*, 25 March 1841.

country, this would mean that a large body of Ribbonmen could potentially be mobilized at relatively short notice, something that was a great threat to the Church and State Protestant ascendancy.

For a secret society to pose a serious threat however they must be well armed, but it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which this applied to Ribbonmen in Tyrone. Captain Duff was of the opinion that there were many unregistered arms on both sides of the religious divide particularly amongst the lower classes while Mortimer O'Sullivan believed that 'the Roman Catholics in that parish (Killyman) are fully as well armed as the Protestants'.⁷² This argument was countered by James Sinclair who contended that 'the Catholics are never armed with deadly weapons' whilst in his view Orangemen were.⁷³ The fact that Protestants could hold arms legally made them a target for Catholics who had not been able to until the penal laws were relaxed. Many Protestant households still held weapons from the by now defunct yeomanry and were targeted by Catholics in night time raids. Of the 3,557 muskets issued to the yeomanry by the government, 2,464 had not been returned following the 1834 disbandment of the corps.⁷⁴ This fact made the homes of ex-yeomen targets for Catholics seeking arms. The house of John Dixon, a Protestant, who lived near Aughnacloy was entered by five undisguised men armed with sticks who demanded his guns. When he and his wife resisted they were beaten in a barbarous manner by the gang who searched the house and removed a gun from above the fireplace.⁷⁵ The fact that the men were undisguised would suggest that they did not fear being recognised meaning that they were not from the area and were possibly Ribbon members carrying out the act for a local lodge. A similar break-in saw two muskets stolen from the house of Alexander Irwin in Tullyniskin although on this

⁷²*Second report on Orange Lodges*, p. 147, *First report on Orange lodges*, p. 183.

⁷³*First report on Orange Lodges*, p. 353.

⁷⁴*Arms and yeomanry (Ireland). Returns of the number and nature of unregistered arms seized in 1841, 1842, and 1843, under authority of a warrant from the lord lieutenant of Ireland, and also returns relating to the yeomanry corps in Ireland*, p. 10, H. C. 1843 (408), 1.5.

⁷⁵NAI: CSORP, OR: 28 28 1836.

occasion the house was unoccupied.⁷⁶ In a separate case the house of another Protestant James McHaron was entered by three men with blackened faces who proceeded to the kitchen and seized McHaron's musket. McHaron and his two sons were absent from the house at the time but his wife put up a fierce struggle hitting one of the men on the head with a poker before being dragged outside and severely kicked. As well as the theft of the musket, another motivation for this outrage was that some young boys had earlier assembled with a drum and fife and played party tunes and a shot was fired by a son of McHaron prompting the police suspect Francis Coleman to say that 'he would not have the gun for long'.⁷⁷ House entry and robbery was a relatively common crime, but in most cases the items stolen included weaving apparel, food, clothing and money- items that could be considered to be of a petty nature. The robbery of arms was a much more specific type of theft in that it necessitated advance planning and local knowledge of which houses were to be targeted. This would lead one to consider that Ribbonmen engaged in this type of activity as arms were needed to defend against the Orange Order on one level and on another to provide the necessary intimidation that such a society needs in order to function in the local community.

Whether or not the Ribbon society had any aims of a widespread organized rebellion is doubtful however. At the trial of Richard Jones, the attorney general admitted that 'there is no indication of any specific act, no contemplation of any direct proceeding of a seditious nature, such as the providing of arms and muniments of war'.⁷⁸ Jennifer Kelly agrees with the assertions of commentators such as Garvin, Beames, and Murray who claim that by the mid 1830s any revolutionary intent had disappeared from Ribbon rhetoric.⁷⁹ In general passwords and oaths expressed loyalty to the monarchy and expressed no thought of a severance from

⁷⁶NAI: CSORP, OR: 9900 28 1839.

⁷⁷ NAI: CSORP, OR: 2984 28 1839.

⁷⁸Beames, 'The Ribbon societies: lower class nationalism in pre-famine Ireland' in *Past and Present*, xcvi (Nov. , 1982), pp 128-143.

⁷⁹Kelly, 'An outward looking community? : Ribbonism and popular mobilization in Co. Leitrim 1836-1846', p. 5.

the crown. The following oath found on Fintona members is typical of the type taken by Ribbonmen:

I, A. B. do declare and promise, in and through the assistance of the Blessed Trinity, to be true to this society, and to keep secret from all who are not regularly made members. I swear allegiance to Her Majesty Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland. I will be true to my patron Saint Patrick, the saint of Ireland. I will duly and regularly conform to the regulations made by the society. That I will not challenge or provoke any of my brethren, or stand by to see them ill treated. That I shall endeavor to propagate brotherly love. That I will not get drunk at any of our meetings, so as to endanger the discovery of any of its words and regulations. That in towns or country I will give the preference in dealing as shall be necessary. I A. B. do of my own free will make the promises etc, narato, narato.⁸⁰

Similarly passwords found on the person of Thomas Morrow at Fivemiletown provide no hint of disloyalty to the Crown:

What do you think of the Queen's marriage?
I hope it will do good to the country.
It is disagreeable to the tories
I beg of you be quiet.
I was never quarrelsome.
The nights are growing short.
So is the life of man.
May Irishmen always stand true to the crown,
And ever keep Chartists and Orangemen down.⁸¹

This oath and password would suggest that the society did not aim to overthrow the establishment but rather that it was, as Jennifer Kelly has pointed out, a mutual aid society which sought to satisfy the machismo needs of young Catholic men.

The evidence of informer James Goodwin provides an informative insight to the workings of the Ribbon society in the county. It must be stressed that informers' evidence is notoriously unreliable as more often than not personal motives or grievances played a part rather than any great desire to uphold the law. Often the promise of a passage to America was the reason that information was provided or else payment from the authorities.⁸² The previously mentioned Neal Kelly who gave evidence at the trial of John Rogers had already

⁸⁰*ECEP*, 12 August 1841.

⁸¹*LJ*, 28 July 1840.

⁸²*NAI*: CSORP, OR: 59 28 1838. In this case Chief Constable Hill requested fifty pounds be left at his disposal to provide a passage to America for a potential ribbon informer and his family.

given evidence at Ribbon trials in Derry and Lifford which leads to suspicions that giving evidence could be a shrewd financial move if we assume that he was being paid for his information.⁸³ Clogher man Hugh Falls was prepared to pass Ribbon information onto the police even though he was not even a member of the society. Falls was confident that he could infiltrate the society as he had been asked to join ‘more than once’ stating that ‘he would have nothing to do but apply to the same persons who would have him initiated’. Chief Constable Hill was ‘quite sure that he will not deceive me, he will require no remuneration for his services, unless he succeeds in convicting’.⁸⁴ With a financial gain being the reward for conviction, it naturally would be in Falls’ best interests to make sure that the accused parties were indeed convicted, and this of course immediately casts doubts on any evidence he submitted. Another possible motive for providing information was ill treatment at the hands of the Ribbonmen. This was true in the case of ex-Ribbon member Dennis Gilgan who gave evidence at the trial of Fivemiletown Ribbon member Thomas Morrow. Gilgan’s motivation being ‘what he knew of the society he told, on account of his brethren giving him a severe beating’.⁸⁵ These type of reasons were the general motivations behind informers evidence against Ribbon members and with these motivations in mind, a certain amount of caution is required when examining their evidence.

The motivation of Goodwin was rather different however. A rather reluctant member who was pressurized into joining after being told ‘he could not live amongst the rest of the boys unless he became a ribandman’, Goodwin resided in the house of a Protestant man named William Maze near Fintona and worked as a servant to him.⁸⁶ The fact that Goodwin was intimidated into becoming a member implies that this practice was in force in Tyrone just as it has shown to have been in Jennifer Kelly’s study of Leitrim. James Kelly of Arboe

⁸³*ECEP*, 25 March 1841.

⁸⁴NAI: CSORP, OR: 4866 28 1839.

⁸⁵*LJ*, 10 August 1841.

⁸⁶*State of Ireland in respect of crime*, p. 1375.

was subject to similar pressure claiming under oath to magistrates that a party of eighteen men came to his house and forced him to go with them to a 'glen or fort' where they 'swore him on a book to become a ribbon man and to give assistance in the poisoning of a ewe'⁸⁷ whilst author William Carlton felt 'it was personally dangerous not to join, as non members were regarded with suspicion as potential informers and, at any rate, as deviants from local social practice'.⁸⁸ Marianne Elliott asserts that 'Ribbonism, like Defenderism, like the United Irishmen, were societies of young men. Peer pressure made it difficult (and at times positively dangerous) not to belong'.⁸⁹ If pressure and intimidation was common place in Tyrone then it would point to a large membership of Ribbonmen, whether reluctant or otherwise, and provide justification to Protestant anxiety that such a large body of Catholics were indeed members of a secret society.

Having brought his master's children to Sunday school each weekend, Goodwin soon began attending the Church of Ireland of his own accord. Although warned several times to cease attending Goodwin continued to do so and was finally beaten up by local Ribbonmen. While religious attendance may have been poor in the county, converting to Protestantism was almost taboo. A similar case of Ribbon activity relating to sectarianism was a threatening notice sent to a Dromore man named Peter Magee who had converted to Protestantism while living with a teacher named Hugh Whittson, who was employed by Reverend St George. The notice demanded that Magee turn back to Catholicism or leave Dromore otherwise his house would be burned down.⁹⁰ This threat to Magee most likely came from local Ribbon members unhappy with his dalliance with religion that was practiced by those whom they saw as a dangerous natural enemy. Goodwin's lodging of information on his own assault to local magistrates led to the conviction of Michael McCusker from Fintona, and Clogher men Pat

⁸⁷NAI: CSORP, OR: 70 28 1837.

⁸⁸Garvin, 'Defenders, 'Ribbonmen and others: underground political networks in pre-famine Ireland', in *Past and Present*, xcvi (August, 1982), pp 133-55.

⁸⁹Elliott, *The Catholics of Ulster*, p. 241.

⁹⁰NAI: CSORP, OR: 5209 28 1840.

Geary and Terence Minnagh. Following this Goodwin received several death threats and after consulting with former employers decided to turn informer despite never receiving any financial inducement to provide information. It would appear that Goodwin was willing to turn informer because of his religious conversion rather than because of any financial incentive and, despite the fact that even his own brother refused to speak to him, had sufficient conviction in his beliefs to press ahead with his actions. For this reason it is probable that the information provided by Goodwin was more reliable than most other informers. According to Crown solicitor James Perceval Graves who examined Goodwin in Dublin, his evidence was 'very distinct and positive'. Graves' assertion was that 'I thought he was telling the truth, I examined him very minutely; I think his examination ran to about twenty sheets of paper'.⁹¹ Goodwin's evidence was ultimately ignored by the Crown despite the recommendations of Crown solicitor Edward Tierney because not enough 'corroborative evidence' could be found to go ahead with any prosecution. If the earlier mentioned apparent lethargy of the police and authorities in investigating Ribbon activity is taken into consideration, then this could be a possible explanation as to why no 'corroborative evidence' was found. It also must be kept in mind that at the time Goodwin submitted his evidence, February 1838, the police infiltration of the Ballinamore Ribbon convention had not yet occurred, an event which rather changed official attitudes towards the extent and serious nature of Ribbonism. Finally in relation to the non use of Goodwin's evidence, it could be asked as to why it was produced in an important government report if it was considered to be of little importance or worse still downright untrue. As with any informer evidence caution is needed when examining Goodwin's evidence but it is reasonably reliable source material which is worth using.

The evidence of Goodwin fits in with much of what has been written about the make

⁹¹*State of Ireland in respect of crime*, p. 716.

up of the Ribbon society and can shed light on the organization in the areas of Fintona and Dromore. It is true that many informers merely provided the police with what was common knowledge in the local community but it appears that Goodwin could provide too much detail to be simply repeating local common knowledge.

On finally consenting to become a Ribbon member in 1833, Goodwin who lived in Dromore at the time, went to the house of Brian McQuaid, where in the presence of Patrick McCrorken, James McQuaid, and Patrick McBryan, he was ordered to his knees and ‘made swear various things’. On being given passwords and recognition signs, he then gave McCrorken half a crown and promised to pay the rest of the five shilling membership fee which had been set out by John Rogers.⁹² The fact that this fee was quite expensive would show that Tyrone fitted in with other counties in that membership was limited to men with a disposable income. Following his initiation, Goodwin went with McBryan to the public house of Rogers in Fintona and had a drink although the pub was too full to actually speak with Rogers.

Three months later Goodwin received a warning to attend a new house in the town land of Bedlam where, in the presence of twenty six others (the average Lodge size), McCrorken gave out renewals of signs and passwords for the new quarter. More renewals were provided three months after this at Michael McCusker’s barn outside Fintona, while the following quarter renewals were given out by John Rogers during a late night meeting at his own Fintona residence. Rogers asked if there were any complaints against anyone which would indicate that action would be taken against anyone deemed worthy of such a sanction such as the previously mentioned Ardstraw farmer James McKiernan. Although on this occasion there were no complaints, Goodwin was soon involved, along with some thirty men, in the levelling of a ditch in Dromore belonging to a Protestant named Ewings which ran

⁹² One Crown equalled Five shillings.

between his property and that of alleged Ribbonman James Lynch. No firearms were involved, the men were armed instead with pitchforks and bayonets. Soon afterwards Goodwin was called upon by William Slevin to assist in levelling a house belonging to Arthur Harvey in Dromore where along with another man, John Rae, they pulled down the gable of the house and broke a dresser inside. The reason for this nocturnal expedition was that Harvey employed a flax dresser named Hurst who was an Orangeman. On the same night Slevin broke a window belonging to a Catholic named Lanty Teague in the town land of Tullacleagh. According to Goodwin these were the only outrages that he ever attended.

The only procession that Goodwin attended was held on the Tyrone-Fermanagh border following a meeting at Patrick McQuaid's public house. 150 men were present, some of whom were from Fermanagh. Falling in four deep, the men marched up and down the road in time to music from two drums and three fifes. Following the reading of a Ribbon resolution, the meeting ended and the men returned home. A march in Ballintemple, Co Cavan that was surprised by the police demonstrates that drilling exercises of this type did indeed occur. This gathering consisted of 'a large party of men, amounting to at least two hundred men, who were marching in regular order, five deep, accompanied with music, several of whom were armed with either guns or large poles, carried on their shoulders like fire arms. They were under regular command'.⁹³If these accounts are true, then it would justify the fears of Protestants that these late night processions did indeed occur and indicate that the likes of Verner were correct in at least some of their suspicions. The question would have surely been asked within Protestant circles as to why these drills were taking place and what ultimate action were the drills preparing for. One of the functions of music and drumming at parades is to make noise in order to make the 'enemy' aware of the presence of the group marching and it is highly unlikely that Protestants living in the vicinity of a Ribbon

⁹³*ECEP*, 30 December 1842.

procession would not know of its taking place. With this type of night time activity occurring it is little wonder that alarm was prevalent within sections of the Protestant community.

It would appear that Fintona and Dromore were among the areas where Ribbonism was at its strongest within the county of Tyrone. Both parishes are in the diocese of Clogher which possibly prompted Bishop Kernan's condemnation. Goodwin claimed that he could identify many Ribbonmen in the area but 'if he was to tell all their names he would scarcely be believed' because there was so many, although he did provide a list of twenty.⁹⁴ As previously mentioned, Fintona publican John Rogers was the county Ribbon delegate and was ultimately transported after being convicted on separate occasions of being an active member. The parish delegate of Dromore, another publican, Michael McLaughlin, was tried for Ribbon membership but found not guilty, while Thomas Morrow from Fivemiletown was transported for seven years having being found in possession of Ribbon signs and passwords following evidence given by a Cavan ex-Ribbonman John Sheridan.⁹⁵ Despite these arrests and transportations, Ribbon activity continued in the area. In March 1841 Patrick Kirk, John McGrath, Thomas McWilliams and John McGinn were arrested in Fintona 'for acting as members of an illegal society' and for having 'passwords and declarations of the society on their person'.⁹⁶ The Crown prosecutor, Mr. Schoales Q. C. 'expressed his amazement that such an awful confederacy could exist, after it had been made the subject of trial in several counties in Ireland, and especially in this county, in the case of Rogers'.⁹⁷ Again, in this trial informer evidence was used, this time from ex-member Richard McGovern, the result being seven years transportation for McSorley and Kirk whilst the others were sentenced to twelve months imprisonment. In addition to this, and emphasising the sectarian ethos of the Ribbon society, McSorley was prosecuted for being part of a gang who pelted a preacher who was

⁹⁴*State of Ireland in respect of crime*, p. 1378.

⁹⁵*ECEP*, 6 August 1840.

⁹⁶*ECEP*, 12 August 1841.

⁹⁷*ECEP*, 12 August 1841.

instructing on the ‘errors of popery’ with mud and stones. In a similar manner to the evidence of Goodwin, McGovern’s testimony sheds light on Ribbon activity in the Fintona/ Dromore area. Claiming to have been a Ribbon member for sixteen years following his swearing in at Dromore aged just fourteen, McGovern rose to the position of committee man and knew McSorley to be the parish master. According to his evidence ‘meetings were held frequently, even more so if someone had to be dealt with’.⁹⁸ Outrages carried out during his time as a Ribbonman included ‘breaking the windows of a schoolhouse, burning a turf stack, and beating a Mr Johnston and his uncle, and nearly killing them’.⁹⁹ Despite the fact that Johnston was McGovern’s master, ‘on account of the rules of the society, he could not tell him that an assault was premeditated against him’.¹⁰⁰ Deciding to turn informer, McGovern followed the orders of Inspector John Hatton and attended meetings until 25 March 1841. Shortly after this he passed information that a meeting was to be held in a shop belonging to John McGinn. It was the police storming of this meeting that led to the arrest of the six defendants who were seated around a table drinking spirits. Kirk’s protestations that he had found the Ribbon papers ‘on the road, about a mile and a half from Fintona’ fell on deaf ears and the sentence of transportation was passed.¹⁰¹ The evidence provided by McGovern and Goodwin would point to an active Ribbon society in the Fintona/Dromore area which leads one to ask the question as to why it was more vigorous in this area than in others.

The parish of Donacavey which contained Fintona was served by three magistrates, two sergeants and eleven sub constables in total.¹⁰² This small force was expected to police a population of 9,586 people in 1831 including the 1,714 inhabitants of Fintona.¹⁰³ One of the magistrates, Samuel Vesey was Orange Order District Master for the Fintona region and in

⁹⁸*LJ*, 10 August 1841.

⁹⁹*LJ*, 10 August 1841.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁰¹*LJ*, 10 August 1841.

¹⁰²*OSM*, v, p. 71.

¹⁰³*1831census*, p. 280.

charge of the fifteen lodges within this area.¹⁰⁴ The fact that there were fifteen Orange Lodges in the area, four alone in the village, would suggest the Orange Order was a strong and well organized force around Fintona and this would have provided a focus for a rival Catholic association. The fact that Fintona was also home to a Conservative club would also have been a cause of contention for Catholics in the area especially as it was blighted with the sectarianism displayed at its annual dinner in February of 1837.¹⁰⁵ Dromore parish with a population of 10,422 had no resident magistrate and was served by just one sergeant and four sub constables.¹⁰⁶ The parish of Donacavey saw ‘the Roman Catholic religion predominate in this parish to a considerable extent, ie 700 Roman Catholics to 500 Protestants, including in the latter amount all the different sects of Presbyterians who occasionally attend church’.¹⁰⁷ These figures do not point to a considerable Catholic majority in the way that the Ordnance Survey Memoirs suggest however, as a division of seven twelfths opposed by five twelfths hardly counts as a substantial difference. The religious make up of Dromore showed an almost even split as ‘all persons of this description (Protestant and Methodist) may be classed under the general head “Protestants” and form about half the population. The rest are Roman Catholics’.¹⁰⁸ Fintona benefited from a strong linen industry from which many tenant farmers supplemented their income as well as a hammer mill which made spades and shovels. In relation to the Ribbon society nationwide, Beames makes the point that ‘the bulk of the membership were persons in regular employment with some limited amount of disposable income’.¹⁰⁹ These industries in the Fintona area would have provided the young men who joined the local Ribbon societies with a certain amount of disposable income, an income which was necessary to fund membership of the society which was quite expensive if

¹⁰⁴*First report on orange lodges*, appendix pp45-6.

¹⁰⁵ This incident is dealt with in chapter 2, pp 97-98.

¹⁰⁶ *1831 census*, p. 280. *OSM*, v, p. 102.

¹⁰⁷ *OSM*, v, p. 65.

¹⁰⁸ *OSM*, v, p. 103.

¹⁰⁹ Beames, ‘The Ribbon societies: lower class nationalism in pre-famine Ireland’ in *Past and Present*, xcvi (November, 1982), pp 128-43.

Goodwin's figure of five shillings is accurate. In addition to possessing the means with which to join a society, another factor present in the area which contributed to strong associational activity was a lack of other pursuits on which young men could focus. In Dromore, home to twelve ribbon lodges and 240 ribbon men according to informer John O'Neill, the people had 'no leisure or inclination to turn their thoughts to improvement or cultivation' while in Fintona 'nothing has been done for the encouragement of the useful arts or for the improvement of the intellectual and moral character of the people. There is neither library, reading room, benefit society or savings bank'.¹¹⁰ Nor was there any opportunity to become part of O'Connell's mass movements as Ulster remained a neglected area in the campaigns for Catholic emancipation and repeal following the failed Lawless 'invasion of Ulster'. However joining a Ribbon society brought for members 'a sense of participation denied them elsewhere' as Ribbonism 'was centred around the provision of entertainment for young Catholic men in local communities'.¹¹¹ The area had some history of associational culture; the United Irishmen had been active in the area in 1797 sustaining fatalities whilst attacking a glebe lodge inhabited by a Reverend James Johnston.¹¹² It can be seen therefore that the factors needed to create a strong fraternity were present in the Fintona-Dromore area. An undermanned police force struggling to patrol such a large district which had a population of over 20,000 people, a visible enemy in the form of the Orange Order, an even religious distribution, a disposable income, little leisure activity to focus upon, and a popular memory of previous clashes in the area all contributed to the strength of the Ribbon society in south west Tyrone. In addition to these reasons were the actions of the local vicar of Dromore.

The Protestant population of Dromore was under the guidance of Reverend St George, a character not afraid of expressing his political alliances. An Orange flag was

¹¹⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR; 47 28 1837, *OSM*, v, p. 99, p. 69.

¹¹¹ Kelly, 'An outward looking community? : Ribbonism and popular mobilization in Co. Leitrim 1836-1846', p. 205, p. 213.

¹¹² *OSM*, v, p. 72.

displayed from Dromore church in July 1835 and the eleventh night saw the firing of guns, drumming, and the erection of an Orange arch in the village. With the twelfth falling on a Sunday no parade took place but the following day saw fifteen Orange Lodges assemble in the village which was obviously chosen as the centre point of the Fintona district's celebrations. After marching in parade to the 'field' at Maralin, the Lodges returned to Dromore in the evening and played party tunes. Shortly after this the Orangemen began rioting with each other 'having no papists to maltreat', the Catholics having obviously remained indoors.¹¹³ On 12 July 1836 St George displayed Orange and purple flags from the belfry of his church and from the chimney of his house. The day's service was carried out by St George while wearing an Orange collar and he had gone to the church with an Orange lily in his hat. This display of colour was imitated by several of the congregation who in the evening assembled at the front of his house and played party tunes with a fife and drum before separating peacefully.¹¹⁴ The following year St George again displayed Orange flags as well as allowing an orange arch to be erected over the entrance to the church.¹¹⁵ July 1839 saw a repeat of these events and again in 1840 Dromore Church was similarly decorated, all this at a time when the flying of flags and the display of party colour was illegal.¹¹⁶ However, these actions in 1840 finally drew a response from a number of Catholics who 'in great numbers blocked up the street' while insulting and assaulting Protestants who were leaving the church. Police were needed to diffuse the situation and the *Northern Standard* was in no doubt as to where the blame lay- 'we do not at all wonder at this, as one of the Ribbon leaders whose trial was postponed at the last assizes in Omagh, resides in this locality, and it is likely that his men were only on this occasion showing that his lessons had not been lost upon

¹¹³ *LJ*, 21 July 1835.

¹¹⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 127 28 1836.

¹¹⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 131 28 1837.

¹¹⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 6424 28 1839, 12915 28 1840.

them'.¹¹⁷This may well have been the case but the actions of St George and his blatantly obvious support of the Orange Order would have been a contentious issue for many local Catholics and would have been a contributory factor in keeping sectarian feeling and a poisonous atmosphere strong in the parish- something that the Ribbon society thrived upon. The example provided by the parishes of Dromore and Donacavey provide an insight to the workings of the Ribbon society and the conditions that facilitated its workings. Less evidence is available regarding Ribbon activity in other areas of the county which would indicate that the body did not enjoy the same strength throughout the county but the provision of this mini study on these parishes provides ample evidence that the society was organized, active, and at its strongest in this part of Tyrone.

This chapter has shown that sporadic sectarian violence played a part in the everyday lives of the Protestant community but not at an organized level. The Reverend Phelan, a former resident of the county, argued that 'in their ordinary intercourse with Roman Catholics of their own level, I think there is a great deal of courtesy and of mutual forbearance towards each other' and this claim would appear to ring true to some extent when examining relations between Protestants and Catholics in Tyrone.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, friction did emerge, not necessarily exclusively during marching season, but more often during or after the trouble spots that were fairs and markets. Much more serious and dangerous to the Protestant community were the organized activities of the Ribbon society which posed a real threat from the Catholic lower classes, albeit not on a revolutionary scale, but a threat nonetheless. The fears shown by the Protestant gentry did have some foundation and surely would have been heightened by the apparent lack of interest shown by the authorities towards the activities of Ribbon society. These fears filtered downwards to the lower classes and no doubt provided the Orange Order, as the dominant Protestant counter movement, with a powerful recruiting

¹¹⁷NS, 25 July 1840. The 'leader' referred to was Michael McLaughlin.

¹¹⁸*Report from the select committee of Ireland*, 1825, p. 501.

tool. While, in a worst case scenario from a Protestant viewpoint, the Ribbon organization could be dealt with through the force of the Orange Order, how to deal with the government at a political level was a more perplexing problem facing Protestant society. The Order was certainly a looming presence when it came to politics but how it could be used politically, if used at all, brings this work onto its next stage, the political split in the Protestant gentry.

Chapter 5

The political split in the Protestant gentry

The 1830s was a decade in which the Protestant gentry of Tyrone faced a severe test of their political alliances. Despite the best efforts of many of their number, Catholic emancipation had been granted, a non denominational system of schooling had been introduced and the Church Temporalities Act had reduced the number of bishops while also creating a body of commissioners who were given control over much church income. A possible repeal of the Union was the next crisis that seemed to be facing the wider Protestant population. How the elites reacted to the latest threat which was coming from the Catholic masses of O'Connell and the liberal policies of the new Whig government will be the subject of this chapter. The gentry of Tyrone were conservative in their political outlook, of that there is no doubt, but the boundaries of this conservatism varied between extremism and moderation. As the decade progressed the split became wider and more bitter and resulted in much antagonism between the factions, one of whom was prepared to use the power of the lower classes and the Orange Order to further its aims, the other who resented the use of the mob as a political weapon and who were content to maintain the position of Protestant superiority through constitutional and parliamentary means. Tyrone was faced with elections in 1835, 1837, 1839, and 1841 and an examination of these elections will provide a valuable indication of the split in upper class Protestantism that occurred during the period in question as well as giving an insight on mob behaviour during these elections.

A welcome champion of the Protestant cause was the King, William IV, who dissatisfied with the apparent liberal policies of the Melbourne government, had dismissed several members of the cabinet in November 1834 thereby necessitating a general election to be held in January 1835. This election was to be the first contested election in the county in sixty-eight years as the sitting M.P. Sir Hugh Stewart was stepping down and excitement was

high. Police chief Sir Frederick Stoven was far from optimistic that the election would be a calm one, a fact he pointed out in his correspondence to Sir William Gossett- 'I have the honour to state, for the information of the Lords Justices, that there will be a very violent contest for the county of Tyrone, where party spirit runs exceedingly high, by which the peace will in all probability be disturbed'.¹ As the election drew near the High Sheriff, R. M. Moore, felt the need to ask Dublin Castle for 130 infantry police and a further twenty mounted police as well as requesting the help of a stipendiary magistrate. While J. G. Jones made his way to Omagh to perform this duty, a detachment of the 52nd regiment left Ballyshannon, County Donegal, and arrived in the town on 11 January.² The fears of the authorities were no doubt heightened due to what had been witnessed at the Dungannon meeting the previous month and by the fact that Lord Claude Hamilton intended to stand against Lord James Alexander, son of the earl of Caledon. Hamilton had the support of the Orange order following his impromptu swearing in to the body during the Dungannon meeting whilst Alexander, like his father, was contemptuous of the Order. The third candidate was the sitting M.P. , H. L. T. Corry, the son of the earl of Belmore, and a certainty to retain his seat. As only two seats were available and as Corry was virtually guaranteed one of them, this left the contest for the second seat a straightforward battle between Hamilton and Alexander. Despite the fact that Belmore was a traditional political enemy of the Abercorn family, Hamilton had managed to persuade him to remain neutral in his public views of who should accompany his son to Westminster. This was significant as Belmore was an influential political figure in the county having served as governor of Jamaica and was also a large landholder who had the power to influence his tenants on how they used their second vote. J. H. Whyte points to Thomas Spring Rice in Kerry and to Lord Courtown in Carlow as landlords who let their voters vote as they pleased and asserts that landlords in

¹*Elections, (Ireland) copies of correspondence between lieutenants of counties, deputy lieutenants, and magistrates in Ireland, relative to the late elections*, p. 21, H. C (1835) (170) xlv.385

²*Ibid.* ,pp 21-22.

general throughout the country did not force their tenants to vote as they instructed although most tenants voted as their landlord did due to an ignorance of the issues in question or quite simply a lack of interest.³ This assertion was later challenged by Peter Jupp but it would seem that in this instance voters on Belmore's estates were not subject to his guidance and had to give careful consideration as to how they voted.⁴ A freeholder residing on Belmore's estate wrote to the *Londonderry Journal* in appreciation of Belmore's directive which allowed his tenants to vote as they chose- 'I beg of you to give publicity to a generous act of a Noble Lord to his tenants in the county of Tyrone. The Right Hon the Earl of Belmore has directed his agent to inform his tenants that he leaves them to the freedom of their own will to give their second vote to either of the two candidates they may think proper'.⁵ This action by Belmore ensured that each vote would be vigorously sought after by the candidates and this, of course, inevitably led to heightened tensions in the election build up.

Whyte points out that prior to the 1830s 'elections were still generally speaking, not about issues at all: they were contests between coalitions of local gentry for power and prestige'.⁶ The latter part of this assertion certainly holds true for Tyrone with a power struggle and personality clashes most certainly taking place. Among the supporters of Hamilton, who was the brother of the largest landholder in the county, the marquis of Abercorn, were Samuel Vesey, a Fintona magistrate and district master of the Orange Order in the Fintona area, a man who had proposed a toast at a grand jury dinner which hoped that 'may Protestantism flourish over the earth till there is not a vestige of popery to be found in the creation'.⁷ Other figures included Rev. Arthur Cole Hamilton, magistrate and Gortin landholder, Sir James Richardson Bunbury of Augher, Fintona landlord, magistrate and

³J. H. Whyte, 'Landlord influence at elections in Ireland, 1760-1885', in *English Historical Review*, lxxx (October, 1965), pp 740-61.

⁴P. J. Jupp, 'Irish parliamentary elections and the influence of the Catholic vote, 1801-20' in *Historical Journal*, x, no. 2 (1967), pp 183-96.

⁵*LJ*, 13 January 1835.

⁶Whyte, 'Landlord influence at elections in Ireland, 1760-1885', pp 740-61.

⁷*ECEP*, 27 July 1826

member of the powerful Eccles family Charles Eccles, James Sinclair magistrate and land agent to Abercorn, Pomeroy magistrate and landed proprietor Robert W. Lowry, Rev. Mr. Douglas, Dungannon magistrate and Grand Master of the Tyrone Orange Order Joseph Greer, Omagh magistrate Alexander McCausland, J. C. Mountray an Augher magistrate and member of the Orange Order, his brothers Whitney and Anketell, Cookstown magistrate John Lindsay, Strabane magistrate Major John Humphries, Sir J. J. Burgoyne national committee member of the Orange Order and Strabane District Master, and Augher magistrate R. W. Maxwell whilst Alexander was supported by Andrew Stewart who was Deputy Lieutenant of the county, Sir James Stronge, Tamlagh landlord and magistrate William Lenox Conygham, William Stewart Richardson, magistrate Edward Houston Caulfield, Dungannon magistrate J. Y. Burgess, and Liberal M.P. for Londonderry Sir Robert Ferguson.⁸ Suzanne Kingon states that ‘electoral alliances were determined by local relationships and considerations’ and it is apparent that both parties had a strong network of influential figures and families as supporters.⁹ Many principal landholding families were related by marriage, William Lenox Conygham, for example, had married into the influential Staples family of Lissan, Sir Robert Ferguson was the brother-in-law of the earl of Caledon whilst the Mountrays were allied through marriage to the Anketell, Gledstane, Maxwell and Richardson Bunbury families.¹⁰ Marital alliances along with ties established through membership of the Grand Jury, the magistracy, the yeomanry, and the Orange Order drew the gentry into opposing blocs both determined to enjoy the patronage of the county’s Members of Parliament. The majority of the gentry would appear to have been supporters of Hamilton, which led the *Strabane Morning Post* to make the confident prediction that ‘the canvass of Lord Claude Hamilton for the representation of this county, on the conservative interest, has been most successful.

⁸*BH*, 23 January 1835.

⁹Suzanne Kingon, ‘Ulster counties in the age of emancipation and reform’ in Allan Blackstock and Eoin Magennis (eds), *Politics and political culture in Britain and Ireland 1750-1850* (Belfast, 2007), pp 1-23.

¹⁰J. I. D. Johnston, *The Clogher Valley as a social and economic region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (M.Litt Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1974), p. 153.

Promises of support from the gentry, clergy, and electors have put his return beyond doubt'.¹¹ However, this prediction was somewhat premature as the election result was far from being a foregone conclusion.

Hamilton at twenty-one years of age had made his first public appearance at the Dungannon meeting the previous month and it is possible that his actions on that occasion were due to inexperience in the public arena. While Hamilton was inexperienced due to his young age, Alexander aged twenty-three also faced this problem, and seemed almost apologetic of the fact in his newspaper election advertisement which stated that 'with my inexperience, it would be ill become me to do more, than express my unqualified and unalterable attachments to the institutions of the country, in church and state, and my determination to resist any changes in them, which are obviously not calculated for their amendment'.¹² Even though both candidates were relatively young, this did not stop a bitter campaign being fought, one which many more experienced politicians would have been anxious to avoid if possible.

Kington stresses that although elections highlighted the power struggles taking place between leading aristocratic families, they had also evolved to include some of the national political issues of the day something that had been previously lacking in local election contests. Brian Walker explains that at the beginning of the nineteenth century M.P.s did not belong to parties but simply either opposed or supported the government. By the 1830s most became identified with party groupings and most commonly with the Tories.¹³ C. R. Middleton asserts that one of the most important changes in the political landscape during the 1830s 'was the emergence of the political party as the principal form of political organization

¹¹ *BH*, 2 January 1835.

¹² *LJ*, 6 January 1835.

¹³ Brian Walker, 'Ulster society and politics, 1801-1921' in C. Brady, M. O'Dowd and B. Walker (eds.) *Ulster an illustrated history* (London, 1989), pp 158-81.

at national level'.¹⁴ The first Conservative Society was formed in Ireland in 1831 and branches were formed in Derry, Donegal and Sligo in the following years, with Tyrone following suit and forming its own in January 1837. The Tyrone Conservative Society was formed in Omagh 'contrary to his Lordship's wishes' as it was 'composed in general of the high Orange party'.¹⁵ The town of Fintona, with Charles Eccles and Samuel Vesey being the predominant figures in the area, formed its own Conservative society the following month and the Orange nature of this society has been traced in Chapter two.¹⁶ It now became more important to align with a political party at Westminster as party labels became more commonplace and to openly support party views than it previously had.¹⁷ In this case, both candidates were conservative in their views which led to a situation of both declaring their self perceived superior conservative credentials over the other. Allegations from the Hamilton camp had been levelled against Alexander claiming that he supported the new board of education and that he was in favour of the Whig changes which had eroded state support of the Church of Ireland. Faced by a fellow conservative Protestant candidate, Hamilton did not have the sectarian card to play that he could have used against a candidate of O'Connell, instead the use of bibles in schools and the new system of education was used by Hamilton as a rallying cry to arouse the mob. Denying the allegations, Alexander focused on more practical issues and promised to promote 'the general, and more particularly, the AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS of this great county'.¹⁸ Any thoughts that the public had regarding what they perhaps saw as Alexander's dubious religious ideals should have been offset by the fact that Alexander was a resident landlord in the county who provided his tenantry with the advantages that came with the residency of landlords on their estates. Both

¹⁴Charles R. Middleton, 'Irish representative peerage elections and the Conservative Party, 1832-1841' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, cxxix, no. 1 (March, 1985), pp 90-111.

¹⁵NAI: CSORP, OR: 4 28 1837.

¹⁶ See chapter two, pp 97-98.

¹⁷Kingon, 'Ulster counties in the age of emancipation and reform', pp 1-23.

¹⁸*LJ*, 6 January 1835. Block capitals as in newspaper advertisement.

he and his father provided employment, paid for land improvements, donated to the needy, and generally improved the district. Hamilton, on the other hand, was an absentee landlord who showed little interest in his tenantry. The liberal *Londonderry Journal* was adamant that:

They are both conservatives, we grant; but there is this very palpable between them, that the former [Alexander] well understands, for he has had ample opportunity of studying them, the true interests, wishes and wants of the country; while of such matters the other [Hamilton] must, of necessity, be entirely ignorant... We have no doubt that such tenants as have votes to give at the approaching election will, if not laid under restraint, beset one of them on Lord Alexander. Surely they cannot be so insensate as to hold good and bad landlords in equal esteem.¹⁹

Kington states that residency was a crucial consideration in electoral politics and with this reasoning in mind one would suspect victory for Alexander.²⁰ The answer as to why this did not happen may be seen in the election campaign itself.

As Corry was a certainty to top the poll, the second preferences of the electors were desperately sought by the remaining two candidates. This desperation for votes was demonstrated in the canvassing of Hamilton. Whyte claims that it was unusual for candidates to canvass electors as a word with their landlord was normally sufficient to ensure that they voted in his favour.²¹ This would indicate that the tenants of a supporter of the opposing candidate would not be approached as the exercise would prove to be almost certainly pointless. For example, tenants on the estates of Lenox- Conyngham would not be approached by Hamilton as their votes would have been given to Alexander. This fact did not deter Hamilton along with Samuel Galbraith from entering the estates of Sir Robert Ferguson and Sir James Stronge, supporters of Alexander, in the Castlederg area. While the neutrality of Belmore allowed both candidates the opportunity to canvass his tenants, it was an entirely different matter to canvass the tenants of an opposition supporter. On their entry into the town of Castlederg itself, Hamilton and Galbraith were jeered and hooted at by the residents of the town. According to the *Londonderry Journal*, 1,000 of 'his [Hamilton's] ragged adherents'

¹⁹*LJ*, 13 January 1835.

²⁰Kington, 'Ulster counties in the age of emancipation and reform', pp 1-23.

²¹Whyte, 'Landlord influence at elections in Ireland, 1760-1885', pp 740-61.

soon filled the town probably due to the fact that Castlederg is a relatively short distance from the Abercorn seat of power at Baronscourt. Hamilton requested that his supporters cheer him, an act that so irritated the town's residents 'that they rose in a body and drove the party and their followers out of the place'. No injuries resulted although a dinner organized by Hamilton was 'left untested'.²² The fact that Hamilton had the audacity to enter and canvass in opposition territory serves to indicate his desperation for votes and also would appear to imply that the campaign was not being fought within the normal 'rules' of such an event. Proof of this can be seen in literature distributed which personally attacked Alexander. One poem entitled 'A new suit for the minikin one' questioned Alexander's loyalty to the Church and the Protestant bible:

Who now would be a member for potent Tyrone,
Tho' Orange and Blue he will ever disown,
And like his Old Dad, promote the downfall
Of our Protestant Church! The Bible! And all!²³

²²*LJ*, 13 January 1835.

²³'The great doll undress'd, or a new suit for the minikin one!!!' PRONI T1689/2, p. 86.

The great Doll undress'd,

OR, A

New Suit

FOR THE

Minikin One !!!

Since a comical story just now you did tell
To all the Freeholders around 'Bessy Bell,'
I take up my pen to reply to it all,
And to prove my Lord CLAUD is by no means a Doll—
No—my Lord is a Person, both comely and strong,
Give *him* but fair play, and he'll conquer the throng
Of servile dependants who for CALEDON bawl,
And we'll prove to you soon *he's no Marquis's Doll.*

This young ALEXANDER (but that's *entre nous*)
If not a nice Doll, is a pet Cockatoo!
When he speaks (but hark ye) he can't speak at all,
For *his* is the mouth of a *minikin* Doll.
On Giblits* quite certain am I he was fed,
For he looks like a *man* just arose from the dead,
And only requires a *bonnet* and *shawl*,
To make him in *person*, a *minikin* Doll.

His visage is sallow, pale, meagre and lank,
While still in his *conscience* is stamped the word "*Bank*,"
Which ere long will prove the certain downfall
Of this *Petit-Maitre*—this *minikin* Doll;
Thro'out Omagh town, he may ride to and fro,
And canvass the County, in vain, we all know,
When at ev'ry door they will so him appal,
And bid him begone for a *minikin* Doll.

His grandfather *Pirate* ought now to draw near,
His heart to encourage, his spirits to cheer;
In despair the old *Miller* begins loud to call,
"Won't you be in support of my *Minikin* Doll?"
The *Rino* I'm certain which from *the Bank* came,
Will now in *seclusion* support his vile fame,
A crowd it will gather to bluster and bawl,
Hurra! and three cheers! for the *Minikin* Doll!

Ye men of old England, & thro'out Urope,
When Grand-daddy govern'd the Cape of Good Hope,
The poor Slaves were compell'd to scream and to bawl,
And all to *bedizen* this *Minikin* Doll,
Who *now* would be member for potent Tyrone,
Tho' Orange and Blue he will ever disown;
And like his Old Dad, promote the downfall
Of our Protestant Church! the Bible! and all!

Then alas! my poor ALICK, your canvass may cease,
You may go and lie by till your Daddy's *decease*,
For the trumpet will echo thro'out the *Mill-hall*,
And blow the retreat of the *minikin* Doll.
So let the shout be, for our BRAVE ABERCORN,
The Cock of the North, and bright Star of the morn,
On his brother Lord CLAUD, we ever shall call,
T represent us in place of the MINIKIN DOLL!

* A well known name for a distinguished Agent.

Alexander was portrayed as a figure of jest being given the insulting title of the ‘Caledon Miller’ because of the fact that the earl of Caledon owned one of the biggest corn mills in the county:

We’ve now come to C, the distress of the nation,
Caused by Radical Prigs, a disgrace to their station,
Standing highest among them, in list of the *pack*,
Is the *Caledon Miller*, “a government hack!”²⁴

²⁴ A new and true version of the County Tyrone A, B, C’ PRONI T1689/2, p. 40.

A New and *true* Version
Of the COUNTY TYRONE
A, B, C.

To the tune of the "*Rusty dusty Miller.*"

A Stands for Archer, to take a long shot,
 At a neat **ORANGE BOY*** when he turns a rat!
 (Therefore **ANDY**, my lad, I'd have you beware,
 How in the Election you so interfere;)
 But stanch to his colors, Lord **CLAUD** will be true,
 With his brother, the Marquis, he'll die for the *blue*!
 Rally round, boys, the standard of justice and truth,
 Become firm supporters of this noble youth,
 He'll defend all your rights, all abuses amend,
 Send to Parliament **HIM** who'll be ever a friend.

B Stands for Briton and Brunswicker too,
 And such, my brave **CORRY**, we've ever found you;
 United with **CLAUD**, you can't but defeat,
 That *would-be Conservative*, *Alick the great*! †

We've now come to **C**, the distress of the nation,
 Caused by Radical Prigs, a disgrace to their station,
 Standing highest amongst them, in list of the *pack*,
 Is the *Caledon Miller*, a "government hack!"
 "He lives in old Ireland" that is quite true,
 And supports all the claims of the *Papishes* too;
 But on hearing the sound of a *Protestant* drum,
 The *warwhoop* proclaims, fear the Whigs were undone;
 Undone sure they are! and have got the kick out—
 The *obsequious Miller* then wheels right about!
 With the *ebb* and the *flow* of the tide of the nation,
 This *radical* Peer will at *once* take his station;
 And *either* or *neither* sides equally fill,
 Just as it suits, to fetch *grist* to his *mill*;
 So of this *mushroom* lord, I would briefly relate,
 That like *twain brother* + *Barney*, he'll go with the state,
 Be a Whig or a Tory, directing the helm,
 He'll always chime in with the *hacks* of the realm!
 Beware then of trusting the *Son* of this *Sire*,
 For as sure as you do, he will plump in the mire—
 Leave your cause in the *lurch*, as oft it has been,
 By deserting the *Orange* for *Radical Green*.

* "Sir Andrew." + Rafferty. † The Miller's Son.

MORAL.

Awake now, ye men of Tyrone,
 Be alive to the call of the nation;
 And ne'er your *true colors* disown,
 But act as becomes your high station.

Then **ABERCORN**, you are the man,
 To plead for our **RIGHTS** in the Lords;
 To the Commons-house we'll, if we can,
 Send your Brother to *echo* our words.

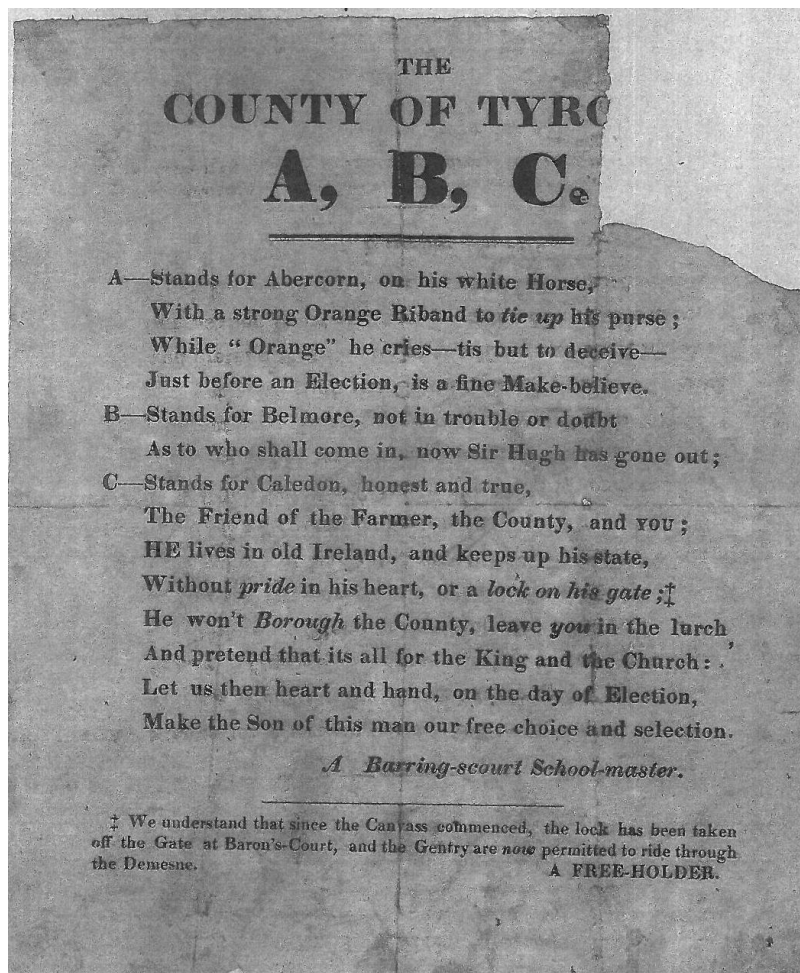
So farewell to all Radical prigs!
 "And a Bumper my boys fill together,"
 Let them dance down their *Caledon jigs*,
 To the tune of the "*old dusty Miller.*"

A National Schoolmaster, on the
Caledon Estate.

Hamilton election propaganda played on his loyalty to the Crown and invoked imagery of a final battle against Papists in which Protestantism would triumph-‘But staunch to his colours, Lord Claude will be true, With his brother, the Marquis, he’ll die for the *blue!*’²⁵

In contrast literature produced by the Caledon camp concentrated more so on the residency of Alexander:

C- Stands for Caledon, honest and true,
The friend of the farmer, the county, and you,
HE lives in old Ireland, and keeps up his state,
Without *pride* in his heart, or a *lock on his gate*.²⁶



²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ ‘The County of Tyrone A, B, C’, PRONI 1689/2, p. 47.

It is not difficult to imagine which message was more appealing to the crowds who frequented the town of Omagh during the five day election of January 1835.

Until 1850 each county constituency had only one polling station, in the case of Tyrone this centre was in Omagh. Five days were allowed for voting, a lengthy period which naturally increased the scope for trouble. This trouble was not necessarily caused by the voters themselves as only 1,250 freeholders were entitled to vote, hardly a sufficient number to engage in any serious agitation.²⁷ K. T. Hoppen makes the point that non-electors were just as important as electors because of their 'persuasive' means of influencing voters and this would certainly appear to be true when examining the Tyrone election of 1835.²⁸ The trouble came from the voteless mobs who descended into Omagh intent on exerting their 'influence' on those qualified to vote. Hoppen also observed that 'as polling invariably took place only in the larger towns, a high level of commitment and enthusiasm was required if rural rioters wished to attend the scenes of constitutional choice'.²⁹ This commitment and enthusiasm was very much present within the mobs who travelled to Omagh in support of the champion of the Orange masses, Lord Claude Hamilton. According to the *Londonderry Journal*:

the town of Omagh, the scene of the action, was early crowded by all the rascallions of the Orange party who could be collected for thirty miles round, and ruffianly Catholics who were prevailed on to shout for *Lord Claude*. Much has been said of the ignorance and fanaticism of the southern mobs; but in the way of fanaticism and ruffianism, nothing could exceed the display at Omagh.³⁰

Hoppen makes the point that much trouble was orchestrated by candidates or their supporters while E. P. Thompson asserts that the mob often hired itself out and worked under licence from magistrates, many of whom in this case were staunch supporters of Hamilton.³¹ It is difficult to ascertain whether money actually changed hands between candidates and the

²⁷*Electors registered, Ireland. Return of electors registered as qualified to vote at the last general election in Ireland*, p. 8 (H.C) (1836) (227) xliii.469.

²⁸K. T. Hoppen, *Elections, politics, and society in Ireland 1832-1885* (Oxford, 1984), p. 72.

²⁹Hoppen, *Elections, politics, and society in Ireland 1832-1885*, p. 398.

³⁰*LJ*, 20 January 1835.

³¹Hoppen, *Elections, politics, and society in Ireland 1832-1885*, pp 399-400. E. P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963), p. 74.

mob but what is certain is that they were provided with ‘refreshments’ if the *Freeman’s Journal* is to be believed:

during the election for Tyrone ten houses were opened in Newtownstewart, by the candidates for the county, for the supply of refreshments. The streets were frequently crowded by persons of the lowest grade, in a state of intoxication. A man on Thursday night, and another on Friday morning last, died in consequence of injuries received from an immoderate use of ardent spirits.³²

Mobs may not have been specifically hired to riot but the provision of such hospitality ensured that many of those present in Omagh would have been heavily under the influence of alcohol and not adverse to making their political feelings known.

The election process itself began with the opening of the court house doors at nine a.m. and ‘in a few minutes the court house was filled to such a degree that the proposers and seconders of some of the candidates could not gain admission’.³³ It was within this melee that the nomination of the candidates commenced. Alexander was proposed by A. G. Stewart who declared that ‘it was true he [Alexander] was not an Orangeman, but he was a true conservative, and would never flinch from an honourable discharge of his duty’, and seconded by Richard Stewart who professed that it was his conviction ‘that Lord Alexander would attend to the interests of the county with as much honesty and incorruptible integrity as any other man’.³⁴ This caused great uproar in the hall and cries rang out of ‘no Alexander’. Reverend Francis Gervais of Augher, another supporter of Alexander, attempted to speak but was drowned out by the crowd before J. C. Mountray took to the stage to propose Hamilton. In seconding his nomination Edward Litton K.C. emphasised the trueness and loyalty of Hamilton’s lineage and family, an answer to the circulating rumours that the house of Abercorn had actually sided with King James at Derry in 1689. Hamilton himself ‘faithfully promised, that if the present Ministry introduced any measure calculated to injure the existing

³²*FJ*, 22 January 1835.

³³*ECEP*, 22 January 1835.

³⁴*LJ*, 20 January 1835.

Protestant institutions, he would fearlessly resist them'.³⁵ Alexander in his speech defended himself against allegations that he was a 'bible burner' and that he had deserted his religion- 'gentlemen, calumnies and falsehoods without end have been heaped upon me...if gentlemen, you believe these falsehoods, or think I have deserted my religion, then it will be your duty to vote against me'.³⁶ He then declared his attachment to church and state and his 'utter dislike to any reform that may not be obviously necessary' before finishing by declaring that 'I have been, and I trust I shall always be a true conservative'. Despite his defence, Alexander's speech was continually interrupted and jeered. In contrast to this Hamilton was widely cheered by the crowd who had assembled in the hall. It is not difficult to see which tone of rhetoric appealed to the mob and this was reflected in the voting as Hamilton defeated Alexander by over 100 votes. How Hamilton was able to poll higher than his rival is questionable. Bribery and impersonation were common occurrences at elections throughout the nineteenth century and Hoppen makes the point that 'elections simply stood outside morality and people took bribes as a "matter of course" and this was especially true where parties in competition were of an equal strength'.³⁷ He also suggests that 'as in England, corruption was most intense where power was most diffuse- where, in other words, neither landlord, nor priests, nor anyone else could establish an exclusive or an almost exclusive authority' and this situation certainly applied to Tyrone.³⁸ The *Londonderry Journal* was in no doubt that corruption had occurred in this case- 'That bribery was employed by some of his party to a frightful extent may be easily proved'.³⁹ This allegation was never proven, in fact it was never even investigated, however the actions of Hamilton's party as the election was well underway provides some indication that there was some panic among his camp in relation to a possible future investigation of their election tactics. Hamilton's ally, Charles

³⁵*ECEP*, 22 January 1835.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ K. T. Hoppen, 'Electioneering and corruption' in *History*, lxxxi, no. 264 (October, 1996), pp 553-71.

³⁸ Hoppen, *Electioneering and corruption*, pp 553-71.

³⁹ *LJ*, 27 January 1835.

Eccles, was hurriedly proposed as a candidate mid way through the proceedings as it was feared that a petition calling for an investigation into the conduct of Hamilton's supporters may be circulated. A similar petition had resulted in the unseating of H. R. Westenra in Monaghan the previous year so a local precedent for such an outcome was there and fresh in the minds of the Hamilton camp.⁴⁰ Had Hamilton lost his seat upon appeal, it was hoped that Eccles would have filled the vacancy thereby keeping the seat in possession of the ultra conservatives and within the influence of the house of Abercorn. In any event this action was unnecessary as the petition never materialised but the fact that such worry swept the Hamilton camp would point to the fact that illegal activities had been carried out by members of their number.

The aftermath of the election saw Hamilton being chaired through the town by his supporters- 'Lord Claude went through the ceremony with all the insignia of Orangeism about him. The chair was of purple and orange velvet'.⁴¹ His victorious return to Strabane was celebrated by several hundred Orangemen marching through the streets in military order although the night ultimately passed off peacefully. The following Tuesday Hamilton was chaired through the streets of Newtownstewart as he entered the town on his way to Baronscourt. Music and parades lasted the night with windows being smashed on houses that were not illuminated.⁴² This aftermath was the continuation of a bitter election campaign which according to the *Londonderry Journal* 'appeared to us to be a struggle between sedate and determined conservatism during which Lord Claude evoked the fell spirit of party from its lowest depths, where it lay in a state of torpor, and let it loose upon the country'.⁴³ One candidate was prepared to use the mob, the other was not and paid the price with an election defeat. Even though many of Hamilton's most influential supporters were magistrates whose

⁴⁰ Brian Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 55.

⁴¹ *LJ*, 27 January 1835.

⁴² *LJ*, 27 January 1835.

⁴³ *LJ*, 27 January 1835.

job it was to maintain law and order, a blind eye was turned to the activities of the mob. Maura Cronin in her work on O'Connellite crowds makes the point that trouble could be prevented at mob assemblies if the elites intervened before matters escalated beyond control and if they behaved in a conciliatory rather than confrontational manner.⁴⁴ However, in this case much of the elite and magistracy ignored the excitement of the crowd and in fact encouraged it for their own benefit. But encouraging the lower classes to misbehave had a price for the elites. The price was a form of compromise and acceptance of what might have been considered law breaking activities in some circles. As discussed earlier, magistrates often acquitted Orangemen charged with illegal assembly or breaches of the peace. The right to march and display colour was an important aspect of lower class Protestant life and for many was an empowering experience because of the idea that participants were part of a wider group determined to defend their locality, country and religion. If this feeling of community defence was suppressed then it became more difficult for the upper classes to call on this support in their times of need which were namely elections and political meetings. In addition to allowing unlawful activities to go unchecked, other incentives had to be offered by the elites. At the conservative society organized Omagh meeting of 1832, William D'Arcy esquire gave the promise that 'the Protestant landlords have determined to reduce the rent to their Protestant tenants, and to support and cherish them in every way in their power- Brother Orangemen, in acting thus they are doing no more than their duty, because your conduct has been such as to claim the regard and esteem of all lovers of order and tranquillity'.⁴⁵ While order and tranquillity may not have been present at election contests, the elites willingly paid the price of public disorder in order to guarantee lower class support. Despite Thompson's assertion that, in an English context, the elite classes had a natural tendency 'to regard taverns, fairs, any large congregations of people as a nuisance- sources of idleness, brawls, sedition or

⁴⁴ Maura Cronin, 'Of one mind: O'Connellite crowds in the 1830s and 1840s' in Peter Jupp and Eoin Magennis (eds.) *Crowds in Ireland c. 1720-1920* (London, 2000), pp 139-72.

⁴⁵ *DEM*, 27 January 1832.

contagion', Hamilton had fought the campaign willingly bringing the Orange mob on board in order to secure victory.⁴⁶ The next question was what he would give these masses of Orangemen in return when he sat in Parliament. Would he defend their interests as he had promised? With the spilling of his own blood if necessary as he had vowed to do? The answer was an emphatic no.

Throughout Great Britain the Whig party had sustained severe losses in the 1835 election. In order for the party to form a government, the support of radical M.P.s and the Irish members of the House was required. Once this coalition government had been formed the Liberals were in the awkward position of having to appease the O'Connellite M.P.s in order to keep their support in Westminster, a support necessary for the very survival of the Whig government. One of the Irish demands was an investigation into Orangeism, an investigation which ensured that 'the Order was to be turned inside out and exposed to the gaze of the public'.⁴⁷ The investigation which contained four reports assembled into three volumes revealed officially what was already common knowledge- that Orange Lodges were present in the army. Secret oath bound societies within the army were banned as a matter of national security and the presence of Orange Lodges within the army comprised the position of the duke of Cumberland who was the King's brother and Grand Master of the Orange Lodge but also a Field Marshal in the army. The report also confirmed that many magistrates were Orangemen and that Orangemen regularly broke the law in the expectancy of receiving leniency from the judicial system on which these magistrates served. In addition to this, reports were published alleging an Orange conspiracy against the King which would see the rightful heir to the throne, Victoria, removed by a *coup d'etat* and replaced by Cumberland in the event of King William's death. These reports were greatly exaggerated and historians such as Senior and Haddick-Flynn have dismissed the notion that the Order was capable of

⁴⁶Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, p. 62.

⁴⁷Haddick-Flynn, *Orangeism, the making of a tradition*, p. 266.

staging such an action but the refusal of Colonel Fairman, the figure who had previously sounded out senior Orangeman on the possibility of a coup, to produce letters requested by Parliament added weight to the conspiracy theories.⁴⁸ It was against this background that the Whig government made moves to dissolve the Order but before this could happen, Cumberland, on 25 February 1836, announced the dissolution of the Orange Order in order to spare himself and indeed the Order the embarrassment and indignity of being banned by the government.

The question from the point of view of this chapter is what *did* Hamilton do as a member of parliament for Tyrone to defend the Order, of which he was a member, and which had ensured his election, against these allegations. The answer is precisely nothing. Orangemen such as Colonel Verner and Lord Roden vigorously defended the Order, indeed a meeting of Protestant gentlemen and freeholders held in Loughgall, County Armagh, thanked Verner for his ‘truly patriotic support of Protestant principles in the House of Commons, particularly in the late debate on the Orange Institution’.⁴⁹ Hamilton, on the other hand, made no contribution to its defence, in fact he did not speak in parliament until January 1840, and even at that addressed the House ‘very inaudibly’.⁵⁰ It must be stated that neither Corry nor the Dungannon borough M.P. Thomas Knox added any contribution to the debate but at least they attended parliament. However it would appear that Hamilton did not over exert himself in attending parliament never mind in defending the interests of his constituents. On 12 February 1836 during the very period that the Orange Order was fighting for its very existence, the Tory supporting *Dublin Mail* reported that ‘we are authorized to state- and it affords us great pleasure in being able to communicate the fact to the loyal and independent electors of Tyrone-that the representative of their choice, Lord Claude Hamilton, is now on

⁴⁸ Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain*, pp 270-73. Haddick-Flynn, *Orangeism, the making of a tradition*, pp 269-70.

⁴⁹ A meeting of the Protestant gentry and freeholders of Loughgall, PRONI T1689/2.

⁵⁰ Hansard’s Parliamentary Debates, H. C debate 29 January 1840 vol. 51 cc 737-835. *NT*, 4 February 1840.

his way to London from the continent- and that no loss to his party was sustained by his absence from parliament'.⁵¹ One might well ask why Hamilton was on the continent and not in parliament during such a time of crisis for the Order. The *Londonderry Journal* reported that 'even the Orange boys are deserting him in shoals. They say, and truly, that an open enemy would not have been so bad as him, their avowed friend, in the House of Commons, where his silence must have been construed into consent, in regard to all the charges which were brought against them'.⁵² Dissatisfaction was also prevalent in higher Protestant circles at the non activity of Hamilton, dissatisfaction that became obvious during the election campaign of July 1837.

The election contest of 1837 would, it was feared, see a continuation of the bitterness and bad feeling that prevailed in 1835. The *Ballyshannon Herald* noted that 'it is said that the contest will be very severe between the two lords. Lord Alexander, it is said, will come forward on moderate conservative principles'.⁵³ This was quite an admission on the part of an ultra Tory newspaper but it is indicative of how many supporters of Hamilton felt following his ineptitude in parliament.

Initially Hamilton declared his intention to defend his seat, an action that seemed nonsensical to the earl of Caledon who wrote with annoyance that:

I find that Lord Claude Hamilton has issued an address to say he will poll to the last. When every man in Tyrone must know [?] is conscious he has no chance of success, the only motive I can attribute this conduct to, is his desire to put the other candidates to trouble and expense...I am naturally anxious that a poll should (if possible) be avoided by Lord Claude's retirement...a suggestion of this nature coming from Mountray and MrEccles or any of his influential supporters, would save all of us from trouble and expense, and still more, it would save the peace of the county.⁵⁴

Caledon, as lord lieutenant of the county, regarded Hamilton as something of a troublemaker as well as a political opponent as shown by his response to Hamilton's earlier application to

⁵¹*BH*, 12 February 1836.

⁵²*LJ*, 11 July 1837.

⁵³*BH*, 30 June 1837.

⁵⁴Letter from Caledon to Belmore, PRONI D3007/H/7/25

join the magistracy-‘when I consider how my hopes of tranquilizing the county have been frustrated, and knowing as I do that the conduct of Lord Claude Hamilton has caused increased excitement, I cannot offer this recommendation to the Lord Chancellor without expressing myself to animadversion’.⁵⁵ Hamilton, however, still enjoyed the support of Eccles if a ‘freeholder in Tyrone’ was to be believed in his claim that Eccles demanded his tenants vote for the outgoing M.P. rather than his opponent-‘be it remembered that freeholders in Tyrone are unanimous in their first vote to the Honourable Henry Corry; but if left to their own will, a great majority would be in favour of Lord Alexander’.⁵⁶ This would indicate landlord pressure was again being put on the tenantry to vote against their wishes, which we may assume to have also the case in 1835. Belmore again gave consent for Hamilton and Alexander to canvass his tenants but was wary of the possible consequences-‘even then, I should have great objection to concur in such a proposal, knowing that it will give an occasion for every tenant in my estate to be assailed immediately by bribery’.⁵⁷ On this occasion however, tenants were spared the need to vote as shortly before the election Hamilton declared his intention not to run. Whether this decision was reached under pressure from the influential Belmore or whether Hamilton realized that most of his gentry support had evaporated is not known. The *Londonderry Standard* sided with the latter reason stating that ‘nowadays, hauteur is not the very best possible way of ensuring the representation of a large and important constituency; nor are the independent gentry and freeholders of Tyrone to be treated disrespectfully and with impunity’.⁵⁸ Alexander seemed determined that the allegations that had blighted his campaign of 1835 would be firmly addressed on this occasion by resolutely aligning himself with ‘the strictly conservative views of Sir Robert Peel, which have been so often and so ably expressed by him... should I be returned to

⁵⁵*First Report on Orange lodges*, p. 81. To join the magistracy, Hamilton needed to apply to Dublin Castle through Caledon.

⁵⁶*LJ*, 11 July 1837.

⁵⁷Belmore papers, PRONI D3007/H/14/29.

⁵⁸*LS*, 22 July 1837.

parliament for the county of Tyrone, it is my fixed determination to support those views, particularly as relates to the Established Church'.⁵⁹ Judging by Alexander's election public notice it would seem that he now enjoyed a wider range of support from the gentry than he had previously- 'several individuals of great influence, who formerly opposed me, having since had an opportunity of judging my views and actions, have now in a most honourable and truly gratifying manner, done me justice, by promoting that support at the ensuing election which they withheld from me at the last'.⁶⁰ The *Londonderry Standard* reported that 'a change has passed over the opinions of Lord Alexander since he last addressed the electors of Tyrone, and he is now, as his friends state, a thorough conservative'.⁶¹ It is likely that Hamilton realized that Alexander was now the more appealing candidate and spared himself the embarrassment and expense of an election defeat.

One final threat to the election of Alexander came in the form of a rumour that Eccles sought to stand in Hamilton's place for the ultra Tory cause. Caledon wrote to his agent Henry Leslie Prentice that 'I cannot give credit to it, as I am quite sure that Mr Eccles is a young man of high honour and would not lend himself to any electiontrick ... it would be a sad waste of money to have anything like a contest after Lord Claude's retirement, and I am sure that such a step would be at variance with Mr Eccles' conservative principles'.⁶² The rumour did indeed prove to be without foundation and both Alexander and Corry were elected without ballot as the only candidates put forward. Some trouble did occur after the election as a number of Orangemen 'gave vent to their feelings in loud cries of "Lord Claude for ever" [and] threw some destructive stones at the windows of the courthouse where the conservatives were carousing' but on the whole the event passed off quietly.⁶³ Alexander was

⁵⁹ Questions posed to Lord Alexander by the friends of Henry Lowry Corry, with Alexander's answers, PRONI D/3007/H/14/30

⁶⁰ *BH*, 28 July 1837.

⁶¹ *LS*, 15 July 1837.

⁶² Letter from Caledon to H. L. Prentice, PRONI D964/19 (underlining as in original letter).

⁶³ *LJ*, 5 August 1837.

welcomed home to large crowds, bands and bonfires and at this stage it appeared that the second parliamentary seat of Tyrone was very much under the control of the moderate conservative faction.

What changed this situation was the premature death of the earl of Caledon in April 1839. His son, James Alexander, sitting M.P. for the county, assumed his father's role as the earl of Caledon. This elevation to an earldom automatically disqualified Alexander from sitting as an M.P. , and this fact deemed that an election was needed to replace him. The election was a straight forward fight to replace Alexander, Corry did not need to stand as his seat was not included in the contest. Hamilton seeing his chance to regain his seat in the absence of Alexander decided to stand again. The *Ballyshannon Herald* confidently predicted that 'Lord Claude Hamilton, the brother of the Marquess of Abercorn will of course walk over the course as it is utterly improbable that any nominee of O'Connell would venture upon an invasion of a Protestant county in Ulster'.⁶⁴The *Northern Standard* was more cautious in its language and warned:

that the choice will fall with a large majority on a conservative, we do not for a moment doubt; but the only fear we have on the subject is that two conservatives having equally strong claims on the suffrages of the people, may stand, and by dividing the interest which, in no instance be permitted, mayhap allow a radical to gain a vantage-ground which, if not even at this moment successful, possibly will awaken that spirit of agitation which attends the most remote prospect of success to the radical cause.⁶⁵

The paper feared that the Conservative vote would be split between Hamilton and J. C.

Stronge, a supporter of Alexander who was widely tipped to run. As it transpired he did not

and Hamilton faced no challenge from a fellow Conservative, instead he was faced with a

contest against a Whig candidate James Alexander Boyle, a founder of the Drumquin

Precursor society.⁶⁶ Boyle was not a member of O'Connell's party, but he was like many

Whig candidates in Ulster regarded with the same contempt as the followers of O'Connell by

⁶⁴*BH*, 3 May 1839.

⁶⁵*NS*, 20 April 1839.

⁶⁶*ECEP*, 2 May 1839.

the Tory gentry and by the lower classes who followed them. The running of Boyle as a candidate marked a change in Tyrone electoral politics and the atmosphere in which elections were held. The elections of 1835 and 1837 had seen mob disruption certainly but no serious violence as both candidates were Protestants of the elite class who despite differing policies were ultimately conservative in their views. As no liberal or supporter of O'Connell had stood there was no opposition faction with which the Orange mob could come into contact. 1839 however saw the running of a candidate who was not from the elite and whose liberal views were very much at variance with those of the conservative landowners and the Orange mob. The hatred of the Orangemen towards Boyle and his supporters ensured a highly contentious election battle in June 1839.

In common with many Whig candidates in Ulster, Boyle was a Presbyterian merchant, financially comfortable enough to erect Drumrawn Lodge near Drumquin in 1808 at a cost of £160, and a member of a growing middle class who felt excluded by what Hoppen describes as 'Church of Ireland Toryism'.⁶⁷ In common with Catholics, Presbyterians were required to pay a tithe to the established church, an obligation that was resented by many of them. Anti-tithe meetings had been held throughout the county in the early years of the decade and it would appear that Boyle had been heavily involved in their organization. As late as October 1838, Boyle had organized a 'Great Northern Anti-Tithe Meeting' to be held at his home town of Drumquin although this meeting was ultimately cancelled due to Boyle being unable to attend.⁶⁸ This involvement with the tithe issue coupled with his foundation of the Precursor Society would indicate that Boyle was quite an active and politically aware member of the community and well suited to challenge for a seat in parliament.

In addition to dissatisfaction over the tithe issue many members of the Presbyterian middle and upper classes were unhappy at the workings of the grand jury and in January 1831

⁶⁷ *OSM*, v, p. 131. Hoppen, *Elections, politics, and society in Ireland 1832-1885*, p. 265.

⁶⁸ NAI: CSORP, OR: 114 28 1838.

had formed the Tyrone Independent Club at Aughnacloy. Members subscribed sums ranging from £10 to £20 to fund the club, figures which would suggest that reasonable wealth was needed to join. According to Castlecaulfield landowner and founder member Richardson Bell the only purpose of the group was to prevent grand jury abuses, no political issues were ever discussed.⁶⁹ The club comprised mostly Presbyterians and magistrates and hoped to end ‘the evils arising from the enormous and rapidly increasing sums laid on the county, as much as possible, from the vexatious and unnecessary expenses which already form a matter of great distress to the lower order of landholders’.⁷⁰The ‘lower order of landholders’, which would seem to include members of the Tyrone Independent Club, were affected most severely by the county cess and circulated a petition claiming that:

the county rate, or the Grand Jury cess, in the county of Tyrone, is an oppressive, unequal and injurious tax; burdensome to themselves, their tenants, and other inhabitants of the county, for which they receive no adequate consideration, or equivalent. And that this tax is an annually increasing evil all over Ireland. The rates in this county having more than doubled within a few years, last past, whilst in others, they have more than quadrupled since 1790.⁷¹

The *Freeman's Journal* was scathing in its opinion of the Tyrone Grand Jury stating that ‘in no county in Ireland have the people been subject to a more grinding tyranny. Plunder and peculation have been for years the characteristics of the gentry’.⁷²It is certainly apparent that there was considerable dissatisfaction within middle and upper class Presbyterian circles over grand jury abuses, a dissatisfaction that Boyle should have been able to capitalize upon. In addition to the Tyrone Independent Club, a liberal club had been set up in Tyrone in 1834 which was composed mostly of Presbyterians, and O’Connell was optimistic that the Conservative stranglehold on the county could be broken.⁷³

⁶⁹*Second Report on Orange Lodges*, p. 63.

⁷⁰ Poster of the Tyrone Independent Club found in the political letters and papers, mainly printed of the 3rd Lord Rossmore, PRONI T2929/12/26.

⁷¹Petition of landed proprietors - landholders- householders - and county rate payers of Tyrone found in the political letters and papers, mainly published of the 3rd Lord Rossmore. PRONI T2929/12/27

⁷²*FJ*, 8 May 1839.

⁷³*ECEP*, 18 December 1834.

Initially the campaign went well for Boyle according to the *Londonderry Journal* who claimed rather naively that he had been pledged the support of 800 freeholders and that ‘in every barony of the county which he [Boyle] has canvassed, he has received the most flattering encouragement’.⁷⁴ Again Belmore declared neutrality and went as far as promising Boyle that he would let his tenants vote as they pleased. In the days leading up to the election, it seemed that a very real contest would take place.

The proceedings at Omagh court house on election day began with the nomination of Boyle by Stewartstown attorney William Holmes with the nomination being seconded by Rev. Samuel Armour, a Presbyterian minister. In accepting the nomination Boyle attacked Hamilton claiming that he was an absentee landlord who had done nothing to defend the Orangemen in 1836, and that he was unfit to represent the county. Rather backing up this claim was the fact that Hamilton was not even present at the nomination process as he was on a tour of Egypt. Holmes challenged the court house crowd ‘to say how Lord Claude acted when a question was before parliament affecting the vitality of Orangeism’, and asked ‘did he then support them?’ To this question the mob cried ‘he did’ apparently forgetting his inactivity in defending the Order in its time of crisis.⁷⁵ It would seem that both the mob and certain members of the gentry had indeed forgotten Hamilton’s idleness and were prepared to back him in his bid to return to Westminster for a second term. In Hamilton’s absence he was proposed by J. C. Mountray and seconded by Captain Mervyn Stewart. With this absence in mind and the possibility that Hamilton might be disqualified because of it, Abercorn’s land agent Major John Humphries was nominated by Samuel Vesey and seconded by Sir James Richardson Banbury. This was designed to ensure that the seat would remain under the influence of Abercorn in the event of Hamilton being debarred. This action infuriated many members of the lesser gentry, who angry at the attempted monopolization of the seat by the

⁷⁴*LJ*, 30 April 1839.

⁷⁵*ECEP*, 9 May 1839.

Abercornfamily, left the court house and returned home.

The voting itself took place in an atmosphere common with many elections of this period where according to Hoppen, the booths ‘were crowded with noisy groups of landlords, agents, priests and roughnecks, all energetically ‘influencing’ electors and acting as brokers between the activities of the rioters outside and the wavering voters inside’.⁷⁶ While on this occasion no priests were present, one man who made his presence felt was the land agent of Belmore, Daniel Auchinleck. Auchinleck was a supporter of Hamilton, and more significantly had been the high sheriff of Fermanagh who had promised never to empanel a papist on any jury, and he had no intention of letting Belmore’s tenantry vote as they pleased.⁷⁷ According to the *Londonderry Journal*:

it was demonstrated that Mr. Auchinleck, agent on the Belmore estates, was not disposed to act up to the spirit of his Lordship’s letter to Mr. Boyle. One of the tenants on being brought to the booth, inquired of Mr. Auchinleck how he should vote, as he meant to be ruled entirely by his own wishes; to which the gentleman replied that he did not mean to direct him or anyone; *but for himself he meant to vote for Lord Claude*- which, of course, was a sufficiently significant hint, as imperative as the most positive injunction. The same inquiry was made of him by others of the Belmore tenantry, and the same answer was uniformly returned.⁷⁸

Faced with this ‘hint’ the voters of Belmore’s estate had little choice but to vote for Hamilton as the privacy of the secret ballot was still more than thirty years away. Of course this was a mortal blow to Boyle’s election hopes, a blow which was added to when potential voters from Clogher and Dungannon, discouraged at the actions of Auchinleck, refused to travel to Omagh. Over the next two days Hamilton received 223 votes to Humphries’ 80. Boyle received a mere one vote. Hoppen makes the point that Presbyterians were generally slow in supporting liberal candidates even though both parties had some similar grievances such as seeking the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland.⁷⁹ David W. Miller asserts that the liberal elites were Presbyterian but that rank and file Presbyterians voted Tory while Alvin

⁷⁶Hoppen, *Elections, politics, and society in Ireland 1832-1885*, p. 390.

⁷⁷ See Chapter 2, p. 83.

⁷⁸ *LJ*, 7 May 1839. Italics as in original publication.

⁷⁹Hoppen, *Elections, politics, and society in Ireland 1832-1885*, pp 264-68.

Jackson credits Henry Cooke with pushing Presbyterian voters towards Toryism.⁸⁰ Andrew Boyd stresses that Cooke himself was aware that ‘the better-informed Presbyterians seemed to have little fear of the Catholics being granted their rights, but that the lesser-informed almost entirely disapproved. By the lesser-informed Cooke had in mind people who knew little or nothing about politics and public affairs’.⁸¹ Whatever the reasons Presbyterians had for voting Tory it would seem obvious that Boyle could not persuade them to break with this trend on this occasion. The reluctance of lower class Presbyterians to vote liberal coupled with the actions of Auchinleck ended any small hope that Boyle ever had of breaking the conservative grip on the county.

While these developments were being played out in the court house, the streets of Omagh had filled with supporters of both sides. Clashes occurred as ‘a strong disposition for rioting was evinced by the mob on each side, who several times attempted an interchange of blows’.⁸² These clashes were on the whole prevented by the police and a battalion of the 8th Hussars under the command of stipendiary magistrate John Snow of Strabane. Snow’s report to Dublin Castle indicates an attitude of acceptance on the part of the law towards electoral violence-‘for the first two days of the elections there was considerable rioting and some assaults but nothing of a serious nature occurred. I beg to add that I have every reason to be pleased with the conduct of the military and police force on this occasion’.⁸³ This acceptance was also summed up in the attitude of Judge Burton of Tyrone crown court who recommended to his jury that ‘great allowances should be made for breaches of the law during the excitement of election times’.⁸⁴ These sentiments would suggest a perhaps *laissez faire* view on the part of the authorities towards election clashes and possibly explain why these clashes were a frequent occurrence during elections. Newspaper reports however

⁸⁰ Miller, *Queens Rebels*, p. 59. Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p. 64.

⁸¹ Boyd, *Montgomery and the black man, religion and politics in nineteenth-century Ulster*, p. 25.

⁸² *ECEP*, 9 May 1839.

⁸³ NAI: CSORP, OR: 3200 28 1839.

⁸⁴ *NS*, 7 November 1841.

portray a much more serious set of events with the *Ballyshannon Herald* in no doubt as to where the blame lay- 'there was a tremendous number of cudgel men, say 4,000 in town today, all on the side of Boyle' - but it was reported by the liberal press that Orange lodges were summoned by their district master and paraded around the town with a big drum while armed with bludgeons as 'it has been the invariable practice in Omagh to overpower the freedom of election by bringing the Lodges into town, in martial array'.⁸⁵ The lodges of the Omagh district had earlier stated that 'we deem it to be a gross affront to our Protestant county that an obscure individual, utterly unqualified for the object of his ambition, should offer himself as a candidate to represent us in parliament, disturbing our peaceful county by undertaking a hopeless attempt to dishonour it'.⁸⁶ Faced with this 'gross affront' the Orange faction saw fit to make sure that Boyle was not elected by using whatever means were necessary. It is not known who gave the order for the Orangemen to enter the town to oppose the Boyle faction but it would appear that they were well catered for during their time in the town- 'on Saturday, a person was sent around to the low shebeen houses to collect the bills for the whiskey which had been contracted for by the Orangemen; and he openly gave out, but with what truth we cannot say, that he had been instructed to do so by a certain gentleman'.⁸⁷ The name of this 'gentleman' was never revealed but it can be assumed that he was a member of the Hamilton entourage. The Orange mob on this occasion was not needed to place pressure on the voters as Auchinleck had ably performed this duty but its presence ensured a tense atmosphere in the town, and in the partisan view of the *Derry Sentinel* 'only for the army and the police the precursors of Boyle and O'Connell would have come in deadly contact with the loyal Orangemen; and we know well who would have got the worst of it- few of the Ribbonmen would have left this town to return to their mountain recesses'.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ *BH*, 10 May 1839. *LJ*, 7 May 1839.

⁸⁶ *ECEP*, 16 May 1839.

⁸⁷ *LJ*, 7 May 1839.

⁸⁸ *NS*, 18 May 1839.

This assessment again highlights the view of ultra Toryism that the Liberals, O'Connell, and Catholics, which they tarred as being ribbonmen, were all working under the same disloyal banner. The *Northern Standard* gloated 'so ended this presumptuous and impertinent attempt on the part of the radicals, to invade the sanctuary of the central North- the farce was indeed too ridiculous'.⁸⁹The *Freeman's Journal* had an altogether different view on Boyle's attempt to break the Tory monopoly in Tyrone- 'the liberals have been repulsed; but sooner or later- if they be only bold and fearless- they will defeat the corruptionists in their stronghold'. The paper had no doubt as to where the blame lay for Boyle's defeat:

ignorant and bigoted, and parson-trod as the Orangemen of Tyrone were and are, they refused to join their dissenting and Catholic brethren in an effort for the abolition of a system which pressed with equal severity on all...the masters of the lodges could in many cases boast of a seat at the grand jury board, and of course it was in their interest to discourage a combined movement against the common enemy.⁹⁰

Grand Jury members in the Hamilton camp included J. C. Mountray, A. W. C. Hamilton, Charles Eccles, R. W. Maxwell, Samuel Galbraith and Samuel Vesey, all influential members of the Orange Order who it can be assumed were unwilling to see any changes in the membership of the grand jury body.⁹¹ The *Londonderry Journal* was incredulous that Hamilton had been returned again:

As to the Orangemen, they must be the most spiritless beings in existence if they forget how, night after night, in the House of Commons, charges, the most serious that ever a body of men and Christians were subjected to (whether true or false is not now the question) were preferred against them by Mr. Finn and Mr. Hume, while not a word was said by their brother Lord Claude to justify or palliate their imputed enormities- *his role*, like that of others to sacrifice them for a party purpose.⁹²

However, despite the abuses of the grand jury system and the ineptitude of Hamilton during his last spell representing the county in parliament, Orangemen had remained loyal to their gentry leaders. Despite this loyalty, Hamilton, it would appear, was in no hurry home to take up his duties and missed much of the new parliamentary season. Even the ultra Protestant

⁸⁹*NS*, 11 May 1839.

⁹⁰*FJ*, 8 May 1839.

⁹¹County of Tyrone Grand Warrant for Lent assizes 1836, PRONI TYR 4/1/48.

⁹²*LJ*, 23 April 1839. Finn and Hume were the members of parliament most vocal in the calls to ban the Order.

Londonderry Standard saw fit to comment on his absence- ‘we can boldly assert, that a very general dissatisfaction prevails among the electors in consequence of the not very pleasant conviction, that they are without a voice in the Imperial Parliament, and likely to be longer so’.⁹³The paper then sarcastically hoped that Hamilton would:

shake the dust of the Egyptian pyramids from his shoes- pitch his papyrus into Lake Maeotis- leave his mummies undissected till the recess, and endeavour to convince himself that there is something fully as worthy of the most laborious employment of the human intellect among the bogs and mountains of our own poor, unpoetical Tyrone, as among the monuments of Sesostris and the Ptolemies.⁹⁴

Nonetheless Hamilton soon announced that he would not be attending parliament at all in the coming season, an action that enraged *The Warder*- ‘the constituents of Tyrone and indeed the conservatives of the United Kingdom at large, have just causes of remonstrance against his Lordship...his Lordship must have known, at the time he permitted himself to be put in nomination, whether he could attend to his Parliamentary duties or not’.⁹⁵Given his record this action was unsurprising but seemingly it had little effect on the Tyrone electorate or indeed the Orange mob, as Hamilton enjoyed an unbroken run as Member of Parliament for Tyrone for the next three decades.

January 1841 saw O’Connell travel to Belfast in a bid to galvanize his support in the city, an act which drew a furious response from the nobility and gentry of Ulster. Abercorn, Belmore, Castlestewart, Caledon, Ranfurley, and the sitting M.P.s, Corry and Hamilton, were among the Tyrone elite who lent their names to declarations calling on counter demonstrations to be organized in the city.⁹⁶ However the demonstration which took place was held without the above figures as none of them saw fit to attend.⁹⁷ This suggests a certain apathy among the elite towards the possible threat of O’Connell, an apathy no doubt heightened by Boyle’s miserable polling in 1839. However this apparent indifference was to

⁹³LS, 26 June 1839.

⁹⁴LS, 26 June 1839.

⁹⁵BH, 14 June 1839.

⁹⁶William McComb, *The repealer repulsed* ed. Patrick Maume (Dublin, 2003), pp 89-93.

⁹⁷Ibid, p. 105.

be shaken by the contest for the borough of Dungannon in the forthcoming June election. The Tyrone county election of 1841 saw no challenge to Hamilton or Corry and both men were returned without the need for an election contest, an apology from Hamilton being seemingly sufficient in the minds of the gentry and the mob to make up for his continued absences from parliament. This time 'he hoped to be most constant in his attendance on every occasion in the new parliament'.⁹⁸ The borough of Dungannon which returned one Member of Parliament was to see a violent contest however between Thomas Knox VI, the son of Lord Northland, and a local miller, John Falls, who was backed by a Presbyterian saddler named Henry W. Oliver.⁹⁹ The Northland family was the most powerful family in the Dungannon area and had held the seat without disruption for decades. The Knox family had been liberal in their politics with Northland's father- the earl of Ranfurley- being a supporter of Catholic emancipation. However, Northland had broken with family tradition and had become a conservative in the mid 1830s. His son Thomas followed his father's lead and was returned as M.P. for the borough without a contest in 1838. Now this conservative faction of the Northland family was faced with a challenge from a liberal candidate who, in a similar manner to Boyle in 1839, seemed to enjoy much popular support. As in 1839, many among the merchant class were prepared to vote for a candidate willing to represent their interests rather than a candidate from the seemingly corrupt elites. Falls was proposed for election by Andrew Vance and seconded by James Peebles who were both woolendrapers, which highlights the class of support that followed him. A study of Falls' eventual votes shows that the trading class provided his support base which would indicate a growing restlessness among the lower commercial sector in the town.

⁹⁸*ECEP*, 15 July 1841.

⁹⁹*Slater's directory of Ireland 1846*, p. 459. W. R. Hutchinson, *Tyrone Precinct* (Belfast, 1951), p. 178.

Falls' voters		Northland voters	
Occupation	Number	Occupation	Number
Attorney	1	Architect	2
Bank manager	1	Auctioneer & Valuator	1
Butcher	1	Australian agent	1
Carpenter	1	Baker	2
Clerk	1	Bookseller	1
Clothier	3	Builder	1
Druggist	1	Butcher	1
Grocer	5	Carpenter	1
Gunsmith	1	Carrier	1
Hardware merchant	1	Doctor	3
Hotel keeper	2	Druggist	1
Painter	1	Farmer	1
Priest	1	Free Burgess	12
Publican	17	Gentleman	2
Rake maker	1	Glazier	2
Saddler	2	Grocer	7
Servant	1	Gunpowder merchant	1
Shoemaker	1	Haberdasher	1
Shopkeeper	1	Hotel/Innkeeper	2
Tailor	2	Organist	1
Watchmaker	1	Painter	1
Whitesmith	1	Publican	7
Wine Merchant	1	Saddler	1
Woolen draper	4	Scrivener	2
		Seedsman	1
Total	52	Shoemaker	4
		Skinner	1
		Solicitor	2
		Surgeon	1
		Tanner	1
		Teacher	2
		Timber & iron merchant	1
		Unknown	1
		Watchmaker	2
		Woolendraper	1
		Total	72

Table 1: A breakdown of voter occupation and their allegiances in the 1841 Dungannon borough election.¹⁰⁰

In contrast to Falls' voters, Northland's voters appear to be from a slightly higher commercial class. For example, seventeen publicans voted for Falls whilst only seven voted for Northland. Included in the seven were James Dilworth, Cookstown District Master of the Orange Order, and John Liliburn in whose premises Hamilton had been initiated into the Order at the Dungannon meeting of 1834, neither of whom were likely to support a liberal

¹⁰⁰ *VIN*, 4 August 1841.

candidate. The elite remained very much aligned with Northland as all twelve Free Burgesses voted in his favour mindful of the fact, no doubt, that any possible change in the borough could deprive them of their position of local influence.

It initially appeared that the Whigs were in a position to mount a serious challenge in the borough. On Falls' arrival in the town to canvass 'it seemed as if every person vied with each other in an endeavour to give expression to their attachment and fidelity to him'.¹⁰¹ The *Londonderry Journal* was generous in its praise of 'a gentleman whose commercial knowledge and talents are of the highest order, and who, from his unclogged opulence, may safely be presumed to have more genuine independence than the lordling opposed to him, we cannot conceive a more fitting representative for Dungannon than Mr. John Falls'.¹⁰² O'Connell's repeal newspaper *The Vindicator* wildly claimed that Dungannon 'will be rescued from the enemy' and that Falls had been promised fifty-seven votes ensuring that 'his success is of course beyond question'.¹⁰³ Faced with the challenge of an apparently dangerous opponent Northland resorted to intimidation against Falls' supporters upon the commencement of voting in early July, which according to Desmond Murphy was flagrant even by contemporary standards.¹⁰⁴ The timing of the election added to the friction as it was held during what Hoppen terms 'the scared Orange months', the period when the Orange Order was at its most active.¹⁰⁵ In the days leading up to the election a group of 'distinguished persons' had invited a band of Northland's tenants and the notorious 'Killyman wreckers' into the town and this mob armed with bludgeons and stones began immediately rioting forcing businesses and shops to close. The following day the 56th Regiment arrived from Armagh and managed to keep a tentative grip on things but a tense atmosphere remained

¹⁰¹*LJ*, 22 June 1841.

¹⁰²*LJ*, 22 June 1841.

¹⁰³*VIN*, 16 June 1841, 23 June 1841.

¹⁰⁴Murphy, *Derry, Donegal and modern Ulster*, pp 85-86.

¹⁰⁵K. T. Hoppen, 'Grammars of electoral violence in nineteenth-century England and Ireland' in *The English Historical Review*, cix, no. 432 (June, 1994), pp 597-620. Hoppen points to poor timing of elections on the part of the government being a cause of election trouble as contests were held during the marching seasons of 1830, 1837, 1841, 1847, 1852, 1865, 1886, 1892 and 1895.

between supporters of both parties. On the Friday polling began and the courthouse ‘was in a few moments crowded in all parts by the most disorderly mob I ever witnessed (of course his Lordship’s supporters) who kept cheering and groaning etc’.¹⁰⁶ Outside a similar picture emerged with reports stating that ‘there could not have been less than 2,000 ruffians, armed with bludgeons etc, some of them half drunk, parading in the streets’.¹⁰⁷ It was within this atmosphere both inside and outside of the courthouse that polling began with it ‘running pretty smoothly until about five o’ clock, when an attack was made on a chaise used in conveying Mr. Falls’ electors from the committee rooms to the court, which ended in a terrible destruction of property by the Killyman ruffians, which gave the place the appearance of a town that had been stormed and sacked’.¹⁰⁸ In the midst of this chaos the polls closed for the night at six o’ clock with Northland standing on fifty-six votes and Falls having gained fifty-two. The closeness of the vote suggests a real contest with the supporters of Falls not being intimidated by threats from agents in the way that Boyle’s had been.

Unfortunately from the Whigs’ point of view the Orange mob continued their activities into the night wrecking the properties of Falls supporters causing damage estimated at £1,800.¹⁰⁹ This was too much for Falls who withdrew from the contest in the morning because of fears for his own and his supporters’ safety.¹¹⁰ The liberal press saw this as a new low in Tory election behavior- ‘in the annals of electioneering nothing is recorded equal to the ruffian and rascally conduct pursued by Lord Northland’s party and their hired bludgeon men...bad as the conduct of the tories has been in Armagh, and in Belfast, it has been transcended by their doings in Dungannon’.¹¹¹ Knox added to his overnight tally, eventually gathering seventy-two votes although this was immaterial as he was the only candidate left in

¹⁰⁶*LJ*, 6 July 1841.

¹⁰⁷*LJ*, 6 July 1841.

¹⁰⁸*LJ*, 6 July 1841.

¹⁰⁹*LJ*, 6 July 1841.

¹¹⁰Murphy, *Derry, Donegal and modern Ulster*, p. 86.

¹¹¹*LJ*, 6 July 1841.

the contest and this naturally ensured his re-election. During his victory speech Knox was joined on stage by Hamilton and Corry in a show of conservative unity and he went on to accuse Falls of indulging 'in bribery and intimidation' while downplaying the violence of his own supporters- 'I heard last night that he would not leave this court house without a party of infantry to escort him to his home, yet I am quite convinced that no one would have molested him'.¹¹² However, judging by the level of violence that had taken place over the course of the day, and because of a claim that he had received a 'death letter', it is not difficult to see why Falls feared for his safety.¹¹³ In spite of the intimidation suffered by Falls and his followers, the high sheriff in charge of the election declared that 'it is the duty of a sheriff to act impartially towards every man; I have the happiness to say that Viscount Northland has been fairly elected'.¹¹⁴

In the aftermath of the 1841 contest a government enquiry was held into the conduct of Northland and his agent and local magistrate Mr. Pole following the presentation of a memorial by Falls supporters. Both men were alleged to have 'headed a riotous mob' and encouraged them to indulge in 'illegal acts'. Even though a witness swore that they had urged the mob to 'spare neither man, woman, or child' it was established under oath that Northland and Pole were not in Dungannon at the time claiming that in fact they were 'engaged in making visits to gentlemen, our friends, residing at some distance from the town of Dungannon'.¹¹⁵ With that all allegations were dismissed by the committee. Among those who had signed the memorial was Dungannon clothier Patrick Fullon who had his house damaged by the mob during the election. Fullon and several other signatories paid a heavy price for submitting their petition as he and twenty others were soon afterwards evicted from their properties. He later recalled that 'there was an election in Dungannon in 1841, and I exceeded

¹¹²*NS*, 10 July 1841.

¹¹³*VIN*, 14 August 1841.

¹¹⁴*NS*, 10 July 1841.

¹¹⁵*NS*, 2 Oct 1841.

my privilege as a voter in the way I thought most prudent and beneficial to the country, and in consequence of that I was turned off my land as soon as they could serve me with a notice and take it from me'.¹¹⁶ Another evictee, innkeeper John Hagan, commented that 'all that had voted on the liberal side, generally, with very few exceptions, were served with notice to quit'.¹¹⁷ These allegations were denied by Richard Pew Morris, an agent of Northland, who stated that 'it is altogether untrue that Fullon or Hagan, or the other persons referred to by them, were turned out of possession of their town-parks, on account of their having voted, at the Dungannon election, in July 1841, against Lord Northland, and in favour of the other candidate'.¹¹⁸ Instead, claimed Morris, they were ejected because they signed the memorial against Lord Northland and Mr. Pole 'containing very gross and unfounded charges'. Whatever the truth behind the evictions, and it must be borne in mind that Northland was cleared of any wrongdoing at the election, it surely reflected badly on the Northland family, a family already not overly popular in higher circles due to forcing their claim for the earldom 'in rather an indecent way' according to the former Prime Minister Lord Grey.¹¹⁹ Grey was of the opinion that 'the earldom is I think quite enough, or rather too much for the Knox family...the Knox's from generation to generation have a horrible reputation as jobbers, and I have never had a good opinion of them in that way'.¹²⁰ Nonetheless, despite their unpopularity in some higher quarters, the Knox family faced no further opposition in Dungannon until the election of 1852.

Election contests were a new phenomenon for the people of Tyrone and the examination of elections in the 1830s and early 1840s has shown the changing face of politics in the county during this period and indeed how politics were viewed by the wider community. Elections remained power struggles between elite families with landholders

¹¹⁶*The Devon commission*, p. 853.

¹¹⁷*The Devon commission*, p. 854.

¹¹⁸*The Devon commission*, p. 996.

¹¹⁹Correspondence from Grey to Anglesey, 29 July 1831, PRONI D 619/28/A/70.

¹²⁰Correspondence from Grey to Anglesey, 3 September 1831, PRONI D 619/28/A/76.

eager to align themselves with the respective candidates. However national issues became more important and it became necessary to highlight one's viewpoint on the issues of the day- issues which were in many cases seen by the Protestant community as being detrimental to their way of life. What is apparent is that violence and intimidation were accepted tools of action during election campaigns and that ultra Conservative candidates were comfortable in engaging with the mob and taking whatever means were necessary in order to secure a seat in parliament.

From a lower class point of view while few of their number had a vote, election contests enabled them to have some sort of say even though it was often of a violent nature. Given the threat of O'Connell there simply must have been some political awareness amongst the lower classes as the widespread petitioning of the Brunswick clubs and the populist meetings of the conservative society had called on the support of this class. With this in mind an increasing politicization was evident amongst the lower classes, and this along with the attractions of free food and drink and the possibility of engaging violently with the 'enemy' were most likely the main reasons why the rabble attended election contests in such great numbers. In addition to this, it is apparent that the traditional compliance of the lower classes towards the upper classes remained strong despite outside forces changing the nature of their relationship. The emergence of Whig opposition added extra threat to already tense affairs but because of mob violence parliamentary representation remained firmly within the Conservative grasp. Despite its dissolution the Orange Order remained very much a potent force in Tyrone able to mobilize itself and provide a formidable ally to those of the elite prepared to use its force. The next stage of this work will examine the activities of the Order during its dissolution period and examine whether local lodges continued to function despite the orders to disband of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. Despite the commonly held belief that the elites abandoned the Order, from examining election activity it is obvious that at least

some of them remained on board the organization. Who these people were will form the focus of my next chapter as will the activities of the rank and file members of a body which did not now officially exist.

Chapter 6

The dissolution of the Orange Order- reaction from above and below

It has been shown thus far that by 1835 the Orange Order, despite the abandonment of some gentry figures, was an extremely strong force in County Tyrone. By its actions at the Dungannon meeting of 1834 and the county election of 1835, the Order had flexed its muscle politically and shown its strength as a force that could mobilize when called upon by gentry figures to oppose the government of the day and the continuing concessions that it seemed intent on granting to Catholics. This was an organization which enjoyed much popular Protestant support across all social classes in the county and was part of the adhesive holding Protestant society together during a turbulent time. With this in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to examine how the various Protestant classes filled the void left by the dissolution of an organization that so many of its members had subscribed to.

By 1835 the Order had grown to such strength that it provided a serious threat to the preservation of law and order, as well as, it could be argued, the government itself. The Dungannon meeting had succeeded in its objective as it had provided an impressive showing of Orange mobilization and strength to the government and provided proof that many gentry figures remained staunch supporters of the organization. Further evidence of this was displayed at the 1835 election and it seemed that the Order was a body that provided a significant threat to the government. This message circulated by ‘a voice from the north’ in 1835 provided a stark warning from the Orangemen of Ulster:

We boldly declare, that the government have no right to expect obedience from us, unless they pay us the fair and legitimate price of our obedience; that is PROTECTION!...if they demand obedience from *us*, we in turn demand protection from *them*...if they cannot protect ourselves and our Pastors from being murdered in broad day-light, then we refer to THE LAW OF NATURE- we must in the spirit of that law’s first principle, DEFEND OURSELVES...Of course I forbid you to break the law, even though it were a law pressed against eating plum pudding at Christmas; but I will remind you of a fact, and place before you the example of the “meekest of men”, leaving it to yourselves to say

whether his example is worthy of imitation or not: when Moses, the man of God, beheld the children of Israel in act of idolatry, *he dashed the tables of the law in pieces !!!*¹

The contradictory message of this pamphlet summed up the feelings of many Orangemen who, while remaining loyal to the King, state and Church, had no qualms about defying the government or breaking its laws and would defend themselves with force if they deemed this necessary. Such a large and powerful organization provided a considerable threat to attempts to stabilize what was an already a moderately disturbed country and many figures of the establishment were more than happy when the Order, in February 1836, under government pressure, voted to dissolve itself following the ‘Victoria’ plot, an alleged Orange conspiracy to replace the rightful heir to the throne, Victoria, with her uncle and the Grand Master of the Orange Order, the duke of Cumberland.² The vote of the Grand Lodge members had been by no means unanimous, seventy-nine members voting in favour of dissolution and fifty-nine against which indicated that a sizeable minority was unhappy with following such a course. The dissatisfaction of this portion of the gentry was no doubt mirrored by an even larger segment of the lower classes who made up the main body of the Order. Frank Wright makes the point that ‘organizations which have this kind of significance, however manipulable they may be, or appear to be, do not just disappear or fade when the calculations of their manipulators dictate that they are expendable’.³ The Order was an integral part of the fabric of the local Protestant community, a social meeting place in which a sense of inclusion flourished, and a movement which with its parades, provided the rank and file with one of the few political resources they had. The Order also provided a sense of community belonging, a notion of defending this community, and the local pride that came with it. Protestant solicitor, Patrick McConnell, when asked if an Orangeman would acknowledge

¹ Author unknown, *A voice from the north to the Orangemen of Ireland* (Belfast, 1835), pp 23-25. Italics and block capitals as in original publication.

² For a fuller explanation of this incident see chapter 5, pp 225-26.

³ Wright, *Two lands on one soil*, p. 151.

that he belonged to an Orange lodge replied, 'yes; they would rather boast of it'.⁴ It also provided members with the bond of solidarity and mutuality that such associations bring. Such solidarity was displayed in events such as funerals where the coming together of Order members to honour the deceased was an important part of the proceedings. A typical funeral assembly was seen in Caledon when the remains of an Orange lodge master passed through the town accompanied by 100 Orangemen. No music was played, nor were emblems or weapons displayed as the letter of the law was adhered to. The group only wore white hat bands and carried warrants enclosed in wooden frames. The gathering passed off peacefully and the Orangemen separated without procession.⁵ These type of peaceful gatherings were the feature of the Order less well publicized but were important aspects of socializing for the average member. Because of this level of social fraternizing that the Order afforded, in addition to the political purpose of the group, many lodges chose to ignore orders to disband from the Grand Lodge and according to Tony Gray, 'it was the view of most of the District and some of the County Lodges that if the Grand Lodge wished to dissolve itself that was its own business, but it had no power to dissolve the Institution as a whole'.⁶ The removal of such a resource from the lives of the lower classes was simply too much to expect given its importance to the local Protestant society. The following study will show that the Orange Order in Tyrone was not prepared to disband an association so central to the lives of many Protestants.

Reaction of the gentry to the dissolution varied. Isaac Butt's *Dublin University Magazine* called for Protestant associations to be formed to fill the void left by the Orange lodges as Protestants were 'like men standing in a current, they must join hands or be swept away'.⁷ During the period between 1825 and 1828 when the Order had been banned by the

⁴*Third report on Orange lodges*, p. 66.

⁵NAI: CSORP, OR: 67 28 1836.

⁶Gray, *The Orange Order*, p. 110.

⁷'Dissolution of the Orange Lodges' in *Dublin University Magazine*, vii, no xlii (June 1836) pp 687-92.

government, groups such as the Brunswick clubs and the Loyal and Benevolent Institution of Ireland had been formed to fill the vacuum. No such groups emerged on this occasion other than the continuation of Conservative societies and the question needs to be asked whether these associations acted as cover groups behind which the Orange Order continued its activities. A dinner held for the formation of the Tyrone Conservative Society was attended by 300 people in an Omagh hall decorated in Orange regalia whilst the Fintona Conservative Society met in Sherrard's hotel against the backdrop of a large transparency with orange letters on a purple background which read 'no surrender' and 'no, die first'.⁸ Toasts at Fintona were proposed to 'the duke of Cumberland and the rest of the Royal Family - Orange and Blue'.⁹ The meeting was addressed by the Rev Mr. Sampson, an Orangeman for thirty years, as well as Orangemen Samuel Vesey and James Lendrum, and the activities which followed the meeting led to a confrontation with the police over an illegal assembly and the playing of party tunes.¹⁰ The *Weekly Register* believed that 'the Orange system, though nominally extinct, has been perpetuated as to its character and objects by means of such societies as these, and is in the full vigour of operation throughout the county'.¹¹ This allegation was refuted by the *Londonderry Standard*, which challenged allegations from 'the priest ridden press' which claimed that it was 'in common with all other Conservative Associations, a revived Orange Club', and which went on to claim that 'its members are "Orange squires"'.¹² Conservative associations most definitely displayed Orange sentiments but never publicly endorsed or instructed Order members on how to behave so it is difficult to say that they were a cover group for the Order. However as discussed in chapter three, they had embraced Orangeism since inception and a great number of members were Orangemen. Whatever the truth, the problem from an Orange point of view was that Conservative clubs

⁸ *BH*, 13 January 1837, 10 February 1837.

⁹ *LS*, 8 February 1837.

¹⁰ For a fuller explanation of this incident see chapter 2, pp 97-98.

¹¹ *BH*, 6 January 1837.

¹² *LS*, 21 December 1836.

did not cater for the lower classes. Tickets for the dinner at Omagh were priced at 12s 6d, well out of the reach of the average Order member prompting the *Londonderry Standard* to admit that 'here is no congregation of the uneducated and the unwashed'.¹³ Charles Eccles, President of the Fintona Conservative committee, claimed that some of the middle and upper classes had not joined the Orange Order because of their uneasiness over the fact that it was a secret society but did join 'more legitimate' Conservative clubs, meaning in his opinion that 'Conservative Societies were capable of doing much more real service to the cause of Protestantism, for the sphere of action was much enlarged'.¹⁴ But this was a rather narrow view as, while it may have brought more upper class Protestants on board, it totally excluded the lower classes who quite simply could not afford financially to join such a society and who, in any case, would never have been socially acceptable in such company. Therefore Conservative Associations, while providing the better off classes with a social and political outlet, were of little use to the Protestant plebeian masses.

Similarly, Freemasonry, because of its membership requirements was also a social avenue unavailable to the lower classes. However, it remained as a vehicle for the middle and upper classes to interact despite government legislation in the form of the Party Processions Act which forbade Masonic marches in the same way as it prohibited Orange processions. Yet, despite the compliance of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland to the government's wishes, 'the processions on St John's Day were immensely popular with the Craft, particularly in the North of Ireland and the Grand Lodge encountered a good deal of opposition when it had to prohibit them'.¹⁵ The Grand Lodge was forced to refuse a request from Caledon lodge 611, who, with ten other lodges, asked for permission to continue its attendance of funerals of deceased members in full Masonic regalia. While acknowledging that 'the sentiments portrayed thro the entire assembly calls for their warmest appreciation for

¹³ *LS*, 31 December 1836, 21 December 1836.

¹⁴ *LS*, 8 February 1837.

¹⁵ Neil Jarman, *Material conflicts parades and visual displays in Northern Ireland* (Oxford, 1997), p. 52.

its Christian feeling, gentlemanlike style and Masonic spirit', the commission was adamant that 'the Grand Lodge beg to remind the Brethren that Masons are bound to obey the law'.¹⁶ This declaration did not stop local lodges from paying their respects to deceased members however. In February 1837 fifty Freemasons marched in procession behind the coffin of Michael Smith of Stewartstown wearing Freemason colours. On the body being interred the persons took off their colours and separated peacefully.¹⁷ Stewartstown again was the venue for a Masonic funeral procession when about 100 men 'dressed in the usual form of Freemasons' attended the interment of John McCorre in August 1839. After the burial the group marched through the town, some wearing aprons and white handkerchiefs on their hats whilst carrying the numbers of their respective lodges.¹⁸ These gatherings of Freemasons at funerals demonstrate the importance of the association in the everyday lives of members and highlight the fact that very often local lodges felt in no way bound to comply with the overall leadership of the movement. The Masonic tradition of celebrating St John's Day continued also as between fifty and sixty Masons marched through Drumquin with colours, fifes and drums headed by a man carrying an old sword on 24 June 1837 whilst the same day saw thirty members march through Benburb wearing badges although on this occasion no music was played.¹⁹ The Grand Master of the Freemasons, the duke of Leinster made clear his disappointment at these breaches of the law- 'I cannot express how much I regret the brethren will persist in having these processions and I am certain the Grand Lodge will also express their displeasure and prevent the occurrence of these processions which are most injurious to our Order'.²⁰ The Grand Lodge responded by setting up a committee of seven members as to

¹⁶Minute book of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland, 1830-36, 6 October 1836, p. 406.

¹⁷NAI: CSORP, OR: 36 28 1837.

¹⁸R.I.C. police diary, Stewartstown station, County Tyrone 8 February 1838 - 23 March 1840, 5 August 1839, PRONI D548/2.

¹⁹NAI: CSORP, OR; 104 28 1837, 105 28 1837.

²⁰Minute book of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland, 1837-42, 2 July 1837, p. 45.

deal with how best to suppress Masonic processions.²¹ It was adamant that it was ‘determined to visit with their heaviest punishment any lodge or Mason who shall be found by them guilty of violating their order respecting such processions’ yet orders from the Grand Lodge continued to be ignored.²² The following St Patrick’s Day music was played in the street of Clogher village at 4.15 am by a group of between twelve and twenty men made up of different religions. The group had played the tune ‘St Patrick’s Day’ but ceased playing once approached by police. The only action taken by the police was to summons publican James McGowan for having his house open at that hour.²³ Benburb again saw a Masonic procession on 26 December as about twelve Freemasons composed of both Catholics and Protestants paraded through the village. No music was played or arms displayed apart from one man who carried a drawn sword at the head of the procession. The group stayed in two public houses for about two hours and left peacefully thereafter. No arrests were made, police merely tried to identify if the sword was legally held.²⁴ The feast of St John saw a small parade take place in Stewartstown in 1840 as four lodges marched through the streets ‘with music and scarfs [sic] and carrying their warrants’. No flags were displayed and the day remained peaceful and quiet with the group dispersing at 6pm. On this occasion police noted a number of names.²⁵ The following year a similar procession took place in the town which also passed off peacefully whilst between eighty and 100 Masons marched with fifes and drums marched on 24 June 1842.²⁶ As shown in chapter three, Freemasonry was particularly strong in the Stewartstown area and the continuation of processions in the town would suggest that it remained strong during these years. These gatherings and public processions of Freemasons

²¹Minute book of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland, 1837-42, 2 July 1837, p. 45.

²²Minute book of the Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland, 1837-42, 6 July 1837, p. 46.

²³NAI: CSORP, OR: 40 28 1838.

²⁴NAI: CSORP, OR: 10857 28 1839.

²⁵R.I.C. police diary Stewartstown station, County Tyrone 24 March 1840 - 31 March 1842, 24 June 1840, PRONI D548/4.

²⁶R.I.C. police diary Stewartstown station, County Tyrone 24 March 1840 - 31 March 1842, 24 June 1841, PRONI D548/4. R.I.C. police diary Stewartstown station, County Tyrone 1 April 1842- June 1844, 24 June 1842, PRONI D548/6.

were in direct contravention of government and Grand Lodge orders but demonstrated that local lodges were prepared to continue their activities and that, despite a fall off in membership and continued government suppression, Freemasonry continued as an important social meeting point for the middle and upper classes. For the lower ranks of Protestant society, however, the joining of the Freemasons and Conservative Associations were not options available to them, therefore the only choice left open to them was to remain in their local Orange lodges and continue their associational activities without the guidance of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland.

The continuation of Freemasonry activities in the Stewartstown area implies that associational culture remained an important part of life in the district and the activity of the Orange Order strengthens this suggestion. One of the first Orange districts to react to dissolution and show local initiative had been Stewartstown which was quick to respond to a meeting held by Rosslea Orange Lodge in County Tipperary which resolved that:

we cannot avoid expressing the great regret and astonishment we feel at the *premature* and *precipitate surrender* of our glorious Institution by our late brothers in the Commons House of Parliament [and] that reposing the utmost confidence in the wisdom, discretion, and incorruptible *fidelity* of the Grand Committee, we cheerfully respond to the heart-stirring appeal of NO SURRENDER, and will rally under our unsullied banner at the usual times, until suppression by a legal enactment, or instructions to suspend our meetings by the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland.²⁷

These resolutions were agreed with and embraced by the sixteen Orange lodges of the Stewartstown district. Despite countrywide instructions from the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland which *did* order a cessation of all activities, the district of Stewartstown remained active in its Orange activities. An incident in October 1836 involving the district master William Galway and his labourers in Stewartstown resulted in the arrest of six Orangemen as they marched in procession into the town playing tunes.²⁸ On 12 July 1837, ‘twenty or thirty men and boys’ assembled in the town and proceeded to play party tunes on fifes and drums.

²⁷ Edward Rogers, *Memorials of Orangeism*, part 1, available at the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Belfast.

²⁸ For a fuller exploration of this incident see chapter 2, p. 110.

Constable Phillips of the local constabulary attempted to stop them but they refused to cease playing. Phillips then attempted to arrest some of the party but was attacked, suffering two deep cuts to the head. Two men were arrested, one of whom carried a gun loaded with marbles.²⁹ In addition to this incident, drums were heard in other parts of the neighbourhood, bonfires were lit and shots fired during the night.³⁰ Similarly, 12 July 1839 saw shots being fired ‘through all parts of town’ and an arch erected at the church although no procession took place apart from some small boys playing drums and displaying colour.³¹ 12 July 1842 saw arches erected in Stewartstown, Grange and Annahoe while ‘through the course of the night much noise of fifes and drums was heard in the town playing party tunes and firing [of] some shots through the streets and a tar barrel or two burned in this town’.³² In March of 1839 the gentry figures of A.G. Stuart, James Lowry and Joseph Greer had attended a meeting of the Stewartstown district lodges and ‘appeared much gratified by the demonstration of loyal feeling evinced by the brethren present’.³³ Stuart resided at Lisdhu, in the parish of Tullyniskan and had once been the deputy lieutenant of the county, Lowry from Rockdale, Pomeroy owned property around Cookstown, had served as a magistrate and was the Stewartstown district Grand Master, whilst Greer from Moy was the County Grand Master and a figure who had led an Orange march in Dungannon in 1832 which ended in a riot. In August of the same year another march was led by Greer and a fellow magistrate Mr. Stuart, a member of the influential Castle Stuart family of Stewartstown. The earl of Caledon, aware that this conduct was unbecoming of a figure whose duty it was to keep the peace, wrote to Greer hoping to dissuade him from participating in any further marches. Greer’s answer stated that he would give no such pledge and that he would face the consequences of his

²⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 122 28 1837.

³⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 101 28 1837.

³¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 6430 28 1839, R.I.C. police diary Stewartstown station, County Tyrone 8 February 1838 - 23 March 1840, 12 July 1839, PRONI D548/2.

³² R.I.C. police diary Stewartstown station, County Tyrone 1 April 1842- 1844. 12 July 1842, PRONI D548/6.

³³ *BH*, 8 March 1839.

actions.³⁴ Greer was later arrested in 1835 along with a former yeomanry captain William Harpur for being in procession in Dungannon leading Caledon to write 'I knew from the extreme violence of their party's feelings that there are no persons more likely to do what is wrong'.³⁵ Backing up Caledon's point was the fact that Harpur was later convicted of leading an Orange procession in Benburb which took place one week after the Order had been dissolved.³⁶ It is obvious that these figures were deeply entrenched in Orangeism and were unprepared to give up their Orange activities for either the law or the Grand Lodge of Ireland and their influence ensured that the Orange Order remained organized and active in the Stewartstown area.

The neighbouring district of Killyman with its high concentration of Orange Lodges (twenty-four by 1835) also remained active during the period of dissolution. This district covered the towns of Dungannon and Moy and the fact that Greer resided in Moy was no doubt a factor in ensuring that Orange activities continued. Another influential figure in this regard was the Reverend Mr. Horner who served in Dungannon. Horner had frequently breached the law by displaying flags at his church and had angered Caledon in 1834 by doing so

he (Horner) has heard and believes that a flag was suspended from the tower of the church but that he does not believe it was of an orange colour...I cannot rest satisfied with this explanation...I now beg leave to acquaint your Grace that the flag which was displayed upon the tower of the church was of purple with the words "Church and State" marked upon it in Orange letters, that the bells scarcely ceased to ring the entire day, and the flag floated till the following one. Mr. Horner states that the bells of the cathedral were rung in Derry on that day and asks whether there was anything criminal in similar proceedings at Dungannon. I answer that what may be deemed harmless in Derry may be opposed to the public peace in Dungannon, and though it may not have been criminal in point of law to ring bells and hoist a flag in the present instance, yet in another sense it was in as much as it contributed to inflame the passions of a particular party in a town notoriously prone to excitement, and its tendency was to lead, if it did not actually lead, the ignorant and unwary into a breach of the law.³⁷

³⁴ *First report on Orange lodges*, p. 370.

³⁵ Letter book of Caledon as Lieutenant of Tyrone, p. 91, PRONI D2433/C/12.

³⁶ Day to day diary of Dungannon police station 1833 -1839, 3 March 1836, PRONI D804/3.

³⁷ Caledon to the lord lieutenant, Caledon papers, PRONI D2433/C/12/1

Horner's answer subsequently summed up the attitudes of many Orange figureheads towards those figures attempting to uphold the law as he replied 'that not holding any appointment under government, I do not recognise in government any right to interrogate me upon such matters'.³⁸ Despite the dissatisfaction of Caledon, Horner continued to display flags from his church. On the anniversary of the battle of the Diamond on 21 September 1837, the bells of the church were rung and flags displayed bearing the words 'Church and State'.³⁹ The same flags were erected on 5 November to commemorate the gunpowder plot whilst on 10 May 1839 'bells rang at regular intervals throughout the day' and more flags were displayed to celebrate the resignation of the Liberal government.⁴⁰ Again, 12 July saw the same flags displayed.⁴¹ Crown solicitor for the north east circuit Maxwell Hamilton angrily slammed such an 'unchristian exhibition, and a very improper use of a house of worship' which was carried out to 'perpetuate animosity and cause strife...and therefore to increase crime of course'.⁴² But Horner's determination to continue with these displays indicates his contempt for the law and any ensuing breaches of the peace that resulted from his actions as well as highlighting his refusal to comply with the directions of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland.

With this type of agitation being carried out by such a prominent figure, one would suspect the town of Dungannon to be particularly disturbed in a sectarian sense. However this was not the case. The town itself was well policed and apparently well served by at least some of its magistrates. 12 July 1836 saw no procession in the town despite 'a great concourse of people in the town' due to the orders of stipendiary magistrate Mr. Thompson, the only incident of note being a bonfire which was lit on the road a quarter of a mile outside

³⁸ *Second report on Orange lodges*, p. 139.

³⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 152 28 1837.

⁴⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 170 28 1837, 3369 28 1839.

⁴¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 6426 28 1839.

⁴² *State of Ireland in respect of crime*, p. 714.

the town where between sixty to seventy men, women and children had gathered.⁴³ No procession was held in July 1837 although police did prevent Orange arches from being erected.⁴⁴ *Dublin University Magazine* made the claim that ‘under very suspicious circumstances, the town of Dungannon, on the evening of the 12th of July, attempts were made by Roman Catholics to create disturbances which would have been stigmatised as Orange riots. They were defeated by the moderation of the Protestants’.⁴⁵ It is impossible to verify the truthfulness of this claim but it would appear that Orange faction in the town was prepared generally to abide by the law. This is apparent in their compliance with the request of local magistrate John Ynyr Burgess who requested that the head of the local Orange party should meet him regarding the upcoming twelfth celebration of 1839. They met at a farmer’s house in the vicinity on the 5 July where sixty persons attended. The magistrate made known the lord lieutenant’s proclamation banning processions and ‘called upon them as loyal subjects to sanction and support His Excellency’s kind suggestions’. ‘To a man’ they fully agreed with his views and declared that they would not leave their houses on the twelfth.⁴⁶ The Orangemen kept their word and this resulted in a quiet twelfth in the area. It would appear that this magistrate enjoyed the respect and support of the local Protestant community and provides evidence that gentry figures could, if they chose to, keep the Orange rank and file under control. The fact that this particular magistrate carried out his duties stringently, coupled with the fact that the headquarters of the Tyrone constabulary were based in Dungannon, seem to be possible reasons for the relative absence of party feeling in the town during the Order’s period of dissolution. Nonetheless, the fact that the Orangemen had a procession in mind and that sixty of them turned up to meet the magistrate shows that they

⁴³ NAI: CSORP, OR: 85 28 1836, Day to day diary of Dungannon police station 1833 -1839, 1 July 1836, PRONI D804/3.

⁴⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 133 28 1837.

⁴⁵ ‘Memoranda from our tablets of the month’ in *Dublin University Magazine*, x, no. lvi (August, 1837) pp 230-40.

⁴⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 6279 28 1839.

remained organized in the town.

But while the town of Dungannon remained reasonably bereft of Orange displays, a different picture emerged in the surrounding areas most notably in Killyman, Benburb and Moy. While Dungannon was well policed, Killyman had no police force nor had it a magistrate residing within it. The Orangemen of the area did not take kindly to a plan by the liberal supporters, in 1836, to illuminate the houses of Dungannon in appreciation of the return of Lord Ranfurley from Brussels whom they saw a player in the deliberate (in their view) government policy of dismantling the Protestant ascendancy. By way of distributed posters they promised to enter the town and protect Protestants who refused to light their residences against ‘Dan’s finest pisantry [sic]’.⁴⁷ Although on this occasion the incident passed without trouble, Dungannon’s ‘friends from the country’ remained an ominous presence in the area.

⁴⁷ NAI: CSORP, OR: 48 28 1836. The middle two lines of this poster read ‘The prevailing religion amongst a people should be revered above all others, still every approach to God claims respect and perfect freedom’.

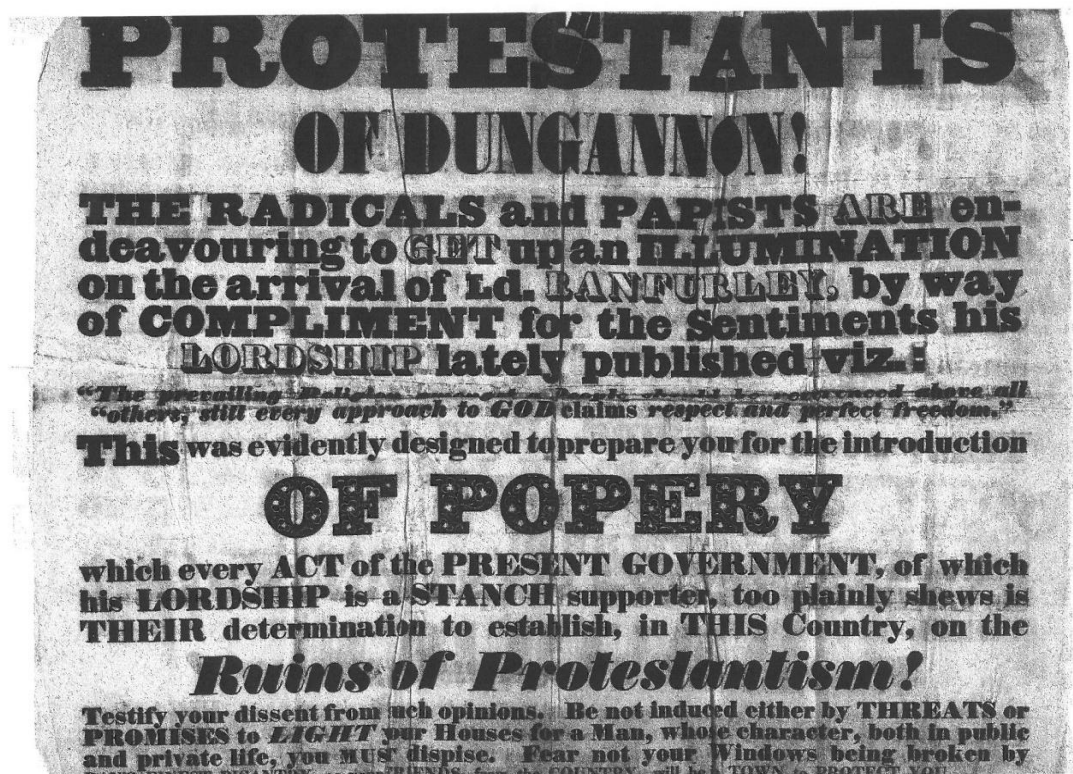


Figure 1: Declaration distributed by Protestants opposing support for Lord Ranfurley

The reputation of Killyman, with its ‘wreckers’, was well known to government figures such as the earl of Gosford, lord lieutenant of Armagh who stated that ‘I have always considered that there was more party feeling among the people from that district than from any other part I know’.⁴⁸ It is difficult to judge precisely why such party feeling was so strong in the eastern parishes in comparison with most western districts. One possible reason was lack of gentry control. West Tyrone, which was less entrenched in Orangeism, was dominated by the marquis of Abercorn who was rather lukewarm towards the Order. The Abercorns had traditionally disliked the Order, rather looking down socially on the likes of the Verners who supported it.⁴⁹ It is true that Lord Claude had broken the mould by being initiated into the Order following the Dungannon meeting, but this was more likely due to his inexperience, excitement, and ignorance of the nature of the organization given his prolonged absenteeism

⁴⁸ *First report on Orange lodges*, p. 267.

⁴⁹ Blackstock, *An ascendancy army: The Irish yeomanry, 1796-1834*, p. 226.

from the county rather than any change in Abercorn family thinking. Strabane magistrate

James Sinclair argued that:

in my immediate neighbourhood the greatest landed proprietor is the marquis of Abercorn; during the life of the grandfather of the marquis, he was always exceedingly opposed to it [the Orange Order]; and the greater number of magistrates in my neighbourhood have the same sentiments; and the clergy of the established church also, and the respectable farmers and yeomanry class highly disapprove of it.⁵⁰

This would suggest that the magistrates, clergy and better classes, who were included in the sphere of Abercorn's influence followed his line by not (publicly at least) encouraging the Order. In contrast to this, the extreme east of the county had few such calming influences.

Armagh M.P. Colonel William Verner was a large landholder around Moy, a figure who had vigorously defended the Order when under investigation from parliament, and one who had turned a blind eye to the actions of members of his tenantry during the 1830 wrecking of Maghery. In some areas, the 'Killyman wreckers' were also known as 'Verner's wreckers' which would point to a close connection between Verner and them.⁵¹ Orange Grand Master Joseph Greer was also a Moy landholder and had himself regularly flouted the law in leading illegal processions. Indeed, both Greer and Verner had been removed from the magistracy for openly displaying their Orange sympathies.⁵² The chief landholder in the Benburb area was the absentee Lord Powerscourt and the absence of a figure from the highest elites to control the Orangemen may have been a contributing feature to their high rate of activity in this parish. In addition to the poor example set by some of the gentry, the fact that the area had been so economically dependent on weaving made it likely that tensions surfaced on a more regular basis than in the west which did not have anything like the same number of people relying on weaving to survive. As explained earlier, the superior land of the extreme east made the growing and preparation of flax the main source of employment. According to

⁵⁰ *First report on Orange lodges*, p. 349.

⁵¹ Brendan MacEvoy, 'The parish of Errigal Kieran in the nineteenth-century' in *SeanchasArdmhaca*, i, no. 1 (1954), pp 118-31.

⁵² See chapter 2 for more on these incidents.

Blackstock, some yeomanry corps around Stewartstown, Coagh, and Arboe were composed entirely of weavers.⁵³ It is quite possible therefore, that given the close connection between the yeomanry and the Order, certain Orange lodges may have been made up entirely of weavers. Increasing mechanization and the economic recession had decimated this industry however, and it is natural to assume that, as weavers made up much of the Order, one of the ways that their dissatisfaction manifested itself was by openly defying the government by holding illegal parades and processions. This frustration would also have surfaced in a sectarian manner as Catholic weavers provided unwelcome competition. In the previous seventy years Protestant grievances over slumps in the linen industry and economy had resulted in the formation of sectarian action groups such as the Steelboys and the Peep O' Day boys, both of which had been active in this area. Both of these groups had operated prior to the formation of the Order, and it is reasonable to assume that for at least some Orangemen, the Order took on the functions that these groups had performed, albeit in a less extreme and violent form. With the increase in police efficiency, the level of violence carried out in the previous century was less likely to occur, at least on such a regular basis, but the Order provided a vehicle for disaffected weavers to display their anger. Therefore a combination of poor gentry example and frustrations at the failing of the lifeblood of the area, namely the linen industry, most probably were the causes for the higher levels of Orange activity in the extreme east of the county.

All three parishes were in close proximity to the Armagh border where a large crossover of Orangemen regularly took place and were part of an area of greater Orange strength where gatherings of a party nature regularly occurred.⁵⁴ On 11 June 1836 between 11 and 12 pm, fifty to sixty men and boys passed through Moy accompanied by two drums, a fife and a tambourine. The group proceeded to play party tunes including 'Colonel Verner'

⁵³Blackstock, *An ascendancy army, the Irish yeomanry 1796-1834*, p. 138.

⁵⁴ Parts of Clonfeacle and Killyman parishes actually stretch into County Armagh.

and shouted ‘to hell with the pope and the police’. Four pistol shots were fired before they marched towards Killyman where they separated. Police were unable to identify any of the group as it was too dark.⁵⁵A ‘number of ruffians’ armed with guns and bayonets assembled on the evening of 12 August and fired shots at Catholic houses at Escagh outside Dungannon. The group paraded all night according to the inhabitants who were moved to petition the lord lieutenant as they claimed that this had also happened twice the previous June. Both parties were taken before Lord Northland where the Catholics refused to prosecute, some going as far as denying that they had ever signed the petition, possibly out of fear of retribution. The local magistrate, Mr. Pole, informed the Orange party of ‘his utter dissatisfaction of their conduct and his determination to put a stop to such illegal proceedings’.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, 200 Orangemen, some of whom wore Orange ribbons, and accompanied by a drum and fife playing party tunes marched in procession with two Orange flags at Owna Bridge, near Moy the following July and used ‘insulting language to the police’ whilst in Pomeroy a party of Orangemen paraded the roads and arrived at a Catholic village, Coolmaghry, and began to fire shots. The group had drums and fifes and played party tunes while firing over Catholic houses. They shouted at residents to come out and engage, which some did, and ‘many on both sides were severely wounded’.⁵⁷On 1 July 1838 at Donaghey, between Dungannon and Cookstown, 300-400 Orangemen assembled playing party tunes and firing shots. A police patrol came to identify and disperse them but the Orangemen completely surrounded them and fired shots above their heads. They ‘swore that if they interfered with them that they would murder every man of the party, and actually disarmed one of the police’.⁵⁸Such a confrontation with the police points to a continuing hatred of the police constabulary and a total refusal to acknowledge what were now the laws of the land. This lack of respect for the

⁵⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 82 28 1836.

⁵⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 98 28 1836.

⁵⁷ *LJ*, 3 July 1838.

⁵⁸ NAI: CSORP, OR: 133 28 1837, *LJ*, 10 July 1838.

law would appear to have been at its strongest in east Tyrone.

Processions did take place in other areas of the county most notably in Castlederg where 300 Orangemen assembled on a hill and fired shots before retreating home peacefully, and outside Strabane where a large assembly of men ‘with drums, flags and party colours marched in Ardstraw celebrating the anniversary of the lifting of the siege of Derry’.⁵⁹ But on both occasions no major outrage or confrontation with the police occurred. Indeed police were able to report on quiet marching seasons from 1836-38 throughout most of the county save for sporadic displays of colour and occasional bonfires in Clogher.⁶⁰ The only display of colour in Omagh in 1838 was a decorated statue of King William placed in the window of a public house.⁶¹ No processions took place during this period in Strabane, Clogher, Dromore, Omagh, Augher, Pomeroy, Cookstown, and Coagh.⁶² The relative quiet of these areas would lead one to suspect a greater acceptance of the orders to dissolve on the part of Orangemen in mid and west Tyrone. The Orange Order had reformed in 1837 in Dublin after Armagh County Lodge had taken over the functions of the Grand Lodge of Ireland under the leadership of William Blacker shortly after dissolution. The new Grand Lodge was very much a rump organization with little evidence that local lodges from Tyrone or indeed anywhere else joined it. This prompted the *Londonderry Standard* to bemoan the fact that ‘this county, although containing 196 lodges, is not in the state of organization that could be desired, owing chiefly to the inactivity of the District Masters’.⁶³ This began to change in 1839 however. In November 1838 Caledon was asked by the lord lieutenant to investigate the possibility of an Orange revival among the gentry of Dungannon to which he replied:

I shall exert myself to ascertain for your Excellency’s information, whether it is seriously intended to reorganize an Orange lodge in the town of Dungannon. As far as I am acquainted with the sentiments of the gentlemen of Tyrone, I do not think such a

⁵⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 135 28 1837, 132 28 1837.

⁶⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 103 28 1837.

⁶¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 110 28 1837.

⁶² NAI: CSORP, OR: 102 28 1837, 127 28 1837, 109 28 1837, 112 28 1837, 122 28 1837.

⁶³ *LJ*, 28 November 1838.

proceeding will have their countenance [al]tho[ugh] there are individuals among them, who, if not taking an open part will encourage others less ostensible in society to do so.⁶⁴

The fact that the highest authority in the land felt the need to ask Caledon to investigate rumours of an Orange revival would suggest that rumblings were being felt from amongst the Dungannon gentry. Therein lay the problem that figures such as Caledon faced- how to judge gentry influence over the mob. The *Londonderry Journal* was in little doubt that some gentry figures were behind the continuation of the Order:

we are aware that only the most worthless of society engage in those scenes which involve a direct infraction of the law and the most revolting ruffianism; but while no man who values his own character will openly connect himself with them, it is not to be doubted that the chief actors, in most instances, are secretly instigated by persons in their vicinage, of influence sufficient to restrain them, were it only exerted.⁶⁵

Although some still supporting the Order remained in the background, others made no secret of their continuing involvement. As well as the previously mentioned Greer, Lowry, Stuart, Harpur and Horner, the Reverends Thomas Murray, Henry Lucas St George, Francis Gervais and Charles Cobbe Beresford remained Order members. Thomas W. Lowry, Alexander McCausland and James Crossle also publicly displayed their Orange allegiances. With these type of influential figures remaining members, the Order, while operating at a lesser strength, remained a visible force in Tyrone society. It must be said that some influential figures did use their influence to maintain law and order such as Mr. Fay who met with constable Lynch who requested that no arches be erected in the village of Sixmilecross. Fay was described as having ‘considerable influence with the Orange party’ and promised Lynch that no procession would take place the following day. True to his word, when the Orange party attempted to march into the village, Fay prevented the march and took their instruments from them.⁶⁶ However, on the whole, there seems little evidence that gentry figures made any sustained effort to control or prevent the processions that did take place.

⁶⁴ The Caledon papers, PRONI D2433/C/12/2.

⁶⁵ *LJ*, 10 July 1838.

⁶⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 122 28 1837.

Perhaps spurned by the stinging rebuke of the *Londonderry Standard* but more likely alarmed by the growing strength of O'Connell's repeal campaign, a reorganization of sorts began in the west in 1839. The Strabane district met in February with the *Ballyshannon Herald* reporting that 'for the first time since the expediency cry of "dissolve" went forth to the Orangemen of Ireland, the Masters and Deputy Masters composing the District of Strabane, being thirty in number, met at their district rooms for reorganization by Professor Butt, to recommence their labours, never again to desist until what remains of a once glorious constitution shall be beyond innovation'.⁶⁷This was followed by a meeting of the Orange lodges of the Omagh district who resolved that:

With respect to the county of Tyrone, the allegations, in and out of the House of Commons, that *we dissolved our lodges* in 1836, were false, and that such misrepresentation has been most injurious to the cause of religion and liberty in Ireland, by having given encouragement to the Precursor and Ribbon societies, by leading them to suppose we were indifferent to our own interest, and so disheartened by opposition and insult, as to give up the hope of protecting ourselves by a legal and constitutional union with each other...we will continue to act together in defence of the altar and throne, ourselves and our families, and for that purpose we will register our votes and arms, to preserve the Protestant interest in the House of Commons, and protect our habitations, each of us considering, as the law allows us, his house to be his castle.⁶⁸

These meetings were the first signs of reorganization in the west of the county and indicate a determination by Orangemen to reaffirm their loyalty to the Throne and defend themselves against any possible rebellion should O'Connell's repeal movement spiral out of control. The *Ballyshannon Herald* summed up the frustrations that were driving many Protestants back to active Orangeism with its complaint that:

the men who at a time of imminent danger [1798] to the state banded themselves together, and periled their lives in support of the Altar and the Throne, and who still remain the staunchest supporters of the constitution, were treated with contumely, and their loyalty attempted to be called into question, while Ribbonmen are connived at, and Precursors and Repealers fawned upon, and promoted to places of trust and emolument.⁶⁹

The *Derry Sentinel* was excited by this reorganization- 'in 1828 when a rebellion was

⁶⁷*BH*, 8 February 1839.

⁶⁸*ECEP*, 16 May 1839.

⁶⁹*BH*, 15 February 1839.

threatened, if emancipation should not be granted, Tyrone could boast of having 20,000 Orangemen ready, with arms in their hands to defend the Throne and the Church, if called upon; and we have reason to think their numbers increased rather than diminished, and their zeal invigorated rather than depressed'.⁷⁰ Secretary of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, William Swan, claimed in May that 'we have the evidence, that, despite of temporary defections, the Orange Institution continues thus deeply rooted in the affections of those classes of the community, amongst whom and for whose protection it originated'.⁷¹ With claims such as these in mind, one would have suspected the summer of 1839 to be much disturbed as Orangemen remobilized. However this does not appear to have been the case with reorganization evidently taking place at a slower pace one would have expected.

The police reported no processions in July 1839. The Clogher district remained quiet with no processions or displays of party colour. No offences were reported in Gortin or in its vicinity, none at Aughnacloy, Mountfield, Beragh or Sixmilecross, Termonrock, Castlederg, Coalisland, Omagh, Trillick or Fintona. A single Orange flag was planted in a turf stack at Drumquin whilst an Orange arch and Orange flag decorated the church at Dromore.⁷² Similarly an Orange arch was erected at Tullybeg and a group of boys attempted to parade at Coagh but ran off when they saw the police.⁷³ A flag was erected from the market house at Ballygawley and some windows decorated whilst many people wore Orange lilies on their coats.⁷⁴ The Twelfth at Fivemiletown coincided with a market day but despite a large crowd congregating in the village no trouble occurred other than some people wearing Orange lilies.⁷⁵ Strabane saw no display of party colour or processions other than a party of boys marching on the road between Newtown Stewart and Strabane carrying flags and playing

⁷⁰ *BH*, 19 April 1839.

⁷¹ Proceedings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland at the usual half yearly meeting, May 1839, available at the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Belfast.

⁷² NAI: CSORP, OR: 6424 28 1839.

⁷³ NAI: CSORP, OR: 6425 28 1839.

⁷⁴ NAI: CSORP, OR: 6427 28 1839.

⁷⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 6429 28 1839.

music on fifes and drums.⁷⁶ Thus from examining these police reports it is evident that the bravado of groups of boys resulted in the only processions occurring and that displays of colour were very much individual acts. It would seem that no associational organization was in place to mobilize the mob or organize any possible processions. At Omagh assize court Judge Torrens was happy to state that:

I have very great satisfaction in stating the fact, that in this large county- hitherto characterised by the frequent occurrence of party processions- no single person has been required to give bail on the score of a breach of the processions act. Party processions have, in fact, entirely ceased in this county- a state of things which must afford the most agreeable considerations to the public, as those anniversaries have now passed, upon which expressions of party spirit, and the indulgence of party feelings so often resulted, in consequences which were fatal to the peace of the community.⁷⁷

It would appear at this stage that the Orangemen of Tyrone had submitted to the orders of the Grand Lodge of Ireland and the laws imposed by the Liberal government.

However, the sentiments expressed by Torrens may have been simply wishful thinking on the part of the forces of law and order. Assemblies had continued in the Moy and Benburb areas although none of these had resulted in prosecution as the groupings seemed careful enough not to break any laws. Dungannon police noted three assemblies between May and June 1839 in the area which generally consisted of between fifty and sixty men and boys. While the groups did carry fifes and drums, they did not play party tunes or wear any party colours. One group entered Dungannon from the Benburb direction and played tunes outside the Protestant church in the town but none of these were of a party nature. The incident passed off with some 'contemptuous shouting and cheering the police' but no action was taken by the constabulary.⁷⁸ Resolutions were, however, passed by the Orange leaders of the Dungannon district 'in which they announce[d] their determination to punish with extreme severity every member of the Orange society who shall exhibit any party emblem, or shall by

⁷⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 6428 28 1839.

⁷⁷ BN, 30 July 1839.

⁷⁸ Day to day diary of Dungannon police station 1833 -1839, 1 April 1839, 25 May 1839, 22 June 1839, PRONI D804/3.

word or deed publicly infringe upon the true spirit and meaning of the act of Parliament'.⁷⁹The passing of this resolution confirmed Caledon's fears that re-organization at a higher level in the Dungannon area was indeed underway although a positive effect, from the point of law and order, was that no further parades occurred over the summer. Nonetheless, the incidents that did occur show Orangemen perhaps unwilling to break the law outright but maintaining their determination to assemble and march in procession. However, a fine line existed between peaceful assemblies and those which could erupt into violence. The potential for violence remained a serious threat with party and sectarian feeling being maintained by ballads such as the following, 500 copies of which were circulated through Killyman and which finished with the ominous line 'Be quiet- but rest with your hand on the sword'.⁸⁰

⁷⁹BN, 12 July 1839.

⁸⁰NAI: CSORP, OR: 3847 28 1839.

12th 78. 1849

TO THE

ORANGEMEN OF IRELAND.

By the duty you owe to your God and your Queen,

By your loyalty such as it ever has been,
By the soil which you till in the sweat of your brow,—

Up! Orangemen, up! there is need of you now.

By the blood of your fathers, the martyrs of old—

By the ~~love~~ and courage that never were sold—

By THE BOOK that you love, and the faith you revere—

Up! Orangemen, up! for the rebels are near!

By the dread recollection of horrors long past—
By the path of the Ribbonman, true to his

a Lodges—
to and murderers
let Orangemen cha.
seeds of the Evil One s.
right!

Be in peace, and reasonable in prayer—
A poisonous cup be your stimulant there;
Your homes and your altars, your country,
your laws,
are mocked when a drunkard would plead in
their cause!

Be virtue the rule, and be prudence your
guide—

Put "envy, and hatred, and malice" aside;
Be sober, be vigilant"—ready, but slow—
And charity's cloak be the banner you show!

Take counsel—be warned by example—and
ARM;

The terrified Minister sounds the alarm,
Your hope in yourselves, and your trust in the
Lord—

Be quiet—but rest with your hand on the
sword.

D. M. K.

J. R. R. Adams explains that ballad selling and the distribution of printed material was carried out by travelling chapmen and Allan Blackstock comments that ‘it is reckoned that ‘popular’ printed literature had a substantial audience, even amongst the lowest social classes to whom it was mediated by readers like clerics and schoolmasters’.⁸¹ A. A. Campbell found that the earliest introduction of printing in Omagh was in 1801, whilst William Douglas ran a printing press in Dungannon in the late 1830s, and according to E. R. Dix ‘til the coming of railways our smaller towns had to, and did, depend more on themselves for their printing and literature’.⁸² Leander Richardson owned a publishing business in Stewartstown while it is likely that wealthy individuals held private printing presses in their own homes such as Rev Francis Gervais who printed material from his Cecil Manor residence.⁸³ Judging from the amount of printed political propaganda that circulated at elections, it would seem that Tyrone was already well served by printed literature and that the impact of print entered the lives of many whether by reading such material for themselves or by having it read for them by the better educated. The fact that the trouble was taken to compose this ballad, have it printed and distributed suggests that a willing audience was in place to receive such literature, which kept the seeds of party spirit active in the imagination of the lower classes. While no procession had taken place over the summer months in Killyman, the police did interrupt an Orange meeting taking place in the parish in September at which music had been heard.⁸⁴ Although the group departed peacefully, the meeting was the precursor to a period of disturbance which rather undermined the claims of Torrens.

While 1839 had been relatively quiet regarding party processions, July 1840 saw a re-ignition of Orange activities although initially it seemed as if the relative tranquillity would

⁸¹J. R. R. Adams, *The printed word and the common man, popular culture in Ulster 1700-1900* (Belfast, 1987), p. 119. Blackstock, *Loyalism in Ireland, 1789-1829*, p. 135.

⁸²A. A. Campbell, ‘Irish provincial printing’ in *The Irish Book Lover*, vii (August, 1915), pp 6-7. E. R. Dix, ‘Printing in Strabane’ in *The Irish Book Lover*, iv, no. 7 (February, 1913), pp 114-16.

⁸³Seamus O’Casaide, ‘The Cecil press, Co. Tyrone A. D. 1837’ in *The Irish Book Lover* (May-June, 1936), pp 55-56.

⁸⁴NAI: CSORP, OR: 81818 28 1839.

continue as ‘for the first time, no flag was suspended from the steeple of Dungannon church, nor were the bells rung, as was usual on similar occasions’.⁸⁵ However while the Reverend Horner may have desisted from showing his allegiances on this occasion, Orangemen in the Dungannon area showed no such restraint. While no procession occurred on the twelfth, the following day saw 150-200 men wearing party emblems accompanied by drums and fifes playing ‘the Protestant Boys’ and ‘Colonel Verner’ enter the town followed by 1,000 men, women and boys who then marched in procession to a pub owned by William Lockhart at Owna Bridge five miles from Dungannon. The party drank there for a while before leaving for the village of Dyan. A shot was fired but police found no arms in the crowd and were only able to identify two men in the crowd as the rest were strangers.⁸⁶ On the same day about sixty men decorated with Orange lilies and ribands paraded in Moy and marched into Armagh. The men were accompanied by fifes and drums and played party tunes. A Catholic was assaulted by one of the party in Moy. On this occasion police were able to identify eighteen of the marchers.⁸⁷ Benburb was disturbed by about 100 men and boys who passed through the village with drums and fifes although they did not play any party tunes, fire any shots, or display colours. Some bonfires were lit, shots fired and drums beaten during the night but the police claimed that ‘these acts were entirely confined to idle and foolish persons of the lowest grade. It appears to be the anxious wish of every respectable individual to comply with the desire of His Excellency’s Proclamation’.⁸⁸ This may have been the case but there would appear to have been a number of ‘idle and foolish persons of the lowest grade’ in the Clonfeacle area as about ten men and boys passed through Moy accompanied by a fife and drums, and proceeded through Charlemont in the direction of Loughgall although in this case they wore no emblems and did not play any party tunes until they crossed over

⁸⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 12039 28 1840.

⁸⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 13015 28 1840.

⁸⁷ NAI: CSORP, OR: 13015 28 1840.

⁸⁸ NAI: CSORP, OR: 12039 28 1840.

Charlemont bridge into Armagh. The police were unable to identify any of the party as they were strangers to the area.⁸⁹ This again suggests that Orangemen from Armagh frequently ventured into Tyrone and vice versa, a point strengthened by the involvement of Killyman Orangemen in the wrecking of Maghery in 1830 following their return from a visit to Bannfoot Orange lodge in Armagh. On that occasion the village of Maghery which lay across Verner's Bridge was destroyed by the Killyman party whilst the same faction had burned the village of Annahagh, one and a half miles from Charlemont, on their return from the election of Colonel Verner to parliament in January 1835. The lord lieutenant of Armagh, the earl of Gosford, was of the opinion that 'I think when they commit the outrages, it is not generally in Killyman that they do it; but that they march from Killyman and perform these operations elsewhere'.⁹⁰ Orange factions moving outside their own locality seems to have been a relatively common occurrence which mirrored the 'tramping' of ribbonmen and no doubt provided problems for the local constabulary in identifying members of their number.

Rumblings of Orange discontent were stirring in the west also as marches took place in Newtownstewart on 11 and 13 July. Between 100 and 150 men assembled playing party tunes although no colour was displayed. No breach of the peace occurred even though police remonstrations were ignored by the party.⁹¹ Despite the marches passing off peacefully, these were the first in west Tyrone since 1837 and provide evidence again that at least some Orange lodges were reorganizing and remobilizing. The partisan *Londonderry Standard* played down these processions- 'the popish press of the North of Ireland is stuffed with statements respecting the violation of the Procession Act in many places, hardly one word of which has any foundation in fact. The truth is, never, since the act was passed, were its provisions better observed'.⁹² However, this blinkered view cannot hide the fact that 1840 had

⁸⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 18655 28 1840.

⁹⁰ *First report on Orange lodges*, p. 269.

⁹¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 12891 28 1840.

⁹² *LS*, 22 July 1840.

seen the beginning of a reawakening of public Orange activities.

As discussed in chapter five, elections provided opportunities for the Orange mob to come together and violently influence proceedings and the celebration of the 1841 Conservative victory saw the re-emergence of party spirit in Dromore. The Orange persuasions of the local vicar Henry Lucas St George have been examined in chapter four as his actions in displaying flags and arches at his church helped contribute to tensions with ribbonmen in the parish.⁹³ ‘A lover of the peace’ complained to O’Connell’s highly partisan *Vindicator* newspaper that St George had been to the fore during the celebration in which tar barrels were lit, church bells rung, guns fired, and drums beaten. The mob that gathered allegedly chanted ‘to hell with the Pope, Fr Matthew and Dan O’Connell’. Orange arches were erected along with an orange tree and flags. When police attempted to remove the arches they were met with violent resistance by the mob who dared the police to touch them screaming ‘no we will die first! We have liberty to walk’. One policeman received a blow, and the lives of his comrades were threatened leaving the force with no option but to withdraw as no magistrate was on duty and they were vastly outnumbered. The letter alleged that a clergyman, possibly St George, handed rum to the mob to keep them boisterous. Later the lodges from the district assembled in the town square ‘with all the paraphernalia of Orange trumpery’ where they performed a sham fight in celebration of the Battle of the Boyne. The tunes and gunfire continued into the night while the gentlemen of the area were off drinking at Cairn-Park leaving the mob to behave as it pleased.⁹⁴ This outbreak of party feeling followed up on an Orange procession in the village on the twelfth which saw clashes between Catholics and Orangemen and which resulted in four of the Orange party being summoned to court where the judge Baron Pennefather rather in vain ‘hoped that the good sense of the people of Ulster would have led them long since to have complied with the

⁹³See chapter 4, pp 206-8.

⁹⁴*VIN*, 21 July 1841.

expressed wish of the legislature, and to have given up these processions'.⁹⁵ These incidents were the first to occur in Dromore since dissolution and were imitated by parades in the Strabane area at Newtown Stewart and Ballymagorry. Police identified fifteen Orangemen who marched at Donnemana with Orange banners, flags, music and pistols and succeeded in securing convictions which resulted in five of the marching party receiving jail terms of one month each despite the fact that the accused presented a memorial to the court against the police.⁹⁶ The anxiety of the police to identify and prosecute Orangemen for breaching the party processions act was in stark contrast to the attitude displayed towards the Freemasons. Probably because of the difference in social class, a more lenient line was taken with Freemason processions, processions which were much less likely to cause any breach of the peace. The previously mentioned procession in Benburb on 27 December 1839 saw no arrests being made as it was the opinion of Chief Constable Kelly that it was not an illegal meeting as in his words, 'Freemasons generally walk upon St John's Day'.⁹⁷ This rather nonchalant attitude displayed by the police could be raised with some justification by Orangemen if the same logic was applied to their processions as they generally walk on 12 July! But no such sympathy was shown towards Orangemen by the police and relations between them and Orangemen remained terse at best.

The incidents of 1841 were part of a re-awakening of Orange activity in the west of the county. Meanwhile Clonfeacle remained at the hub of Orange disturbance. 12 July saw Catholic houses attacked and windows in Moy broken according to *The Vindicator*. Many of the alleged perpetrators were summoned to the next petty sessions in the village and when their cases were adjourned they spilled out into the streets shouting 'to hell with the pope'.⁹⁸ The following month between fifty and sixty men came into Moy from the Benburb direction

⁹⁵ *LS*, 11 August 1841, 16 March 1842.

⁹⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 66277 28 1841. *LS*, 16 March 1842.

⁹⁷ NAI: CSORP, OR: 10857 28 1839.

⁹⁸ *VIN* 14 July 1841.

with two drums and two fifes playing music. When ordered to stop by the police they commenced throwing stones hitting both policemen knocking one to the ground. Police were only able to identify two boys. The mob then proceeded in the Dungannon direction. Later thirty men and boys from the group came back into Moy from Dungannon. About a dozen branched off heading for Charlemont, the rest took the Benburb road. When passing the parochial house of the Catholic Reverend McCague, they threw stones which smashed two large panes of glass. It was the opinion of the police that they would have wrecked the house only for the fact that they chased them off. This prompted Rev McCague to send an application to Lord Charlemont, the lord lieutenant of the county, seeking the appointment of a stipendiary magistrate ‘on account of the turbulence of the Orange party’ in the area, an application that was ultimately denied.⁹⁹ This application was repeated the following summer by a Moy teacher, James McElroy, because of the bonfires, shots and ‘outrageous conduct of the Orangemen of this locality for several preceding 12ths of July’. The petition which was on this occasion addressed to the lord lieutenant, Earl Grey, called for the appointment of a permanent stipendiary magistrate and for a sufficient military and constabulary force to be placed in Moy in the lead up to and the day of the twelfth. McElroy claimed that Orangemen had smashed the windows of Roman Catholic homes some weeks previously and feared that they would be armed with yeomanry muskets and bayonets, and asked the military to confiscate these.¹⁰⁰ McElroy’s fears were proved to be correct as 150-200 men and boys marched through the village on 1 July playing party tunes, and firing shots before lighting a bonfire. It was difficult for the four members of the constabulary based in Moy to control such gatherings without the backing of additional police. However the problem for the authorities was how to distribute what was a small force. Additional police had to be sent to Newtownsaville near Clogher as an assembly of Orangemen and Catholics on the evening of

⁹⁹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 12769 28 1841.

¹⁰⁰ NAI: CSORP, OR: 1364 28 1842.

12 July was brought to the attention of the authorities by Reverend Mr. Burke. 200-300 Catholics armed with guns, bayonets, scythes and pitchforks had gathered to oppose an Orange march. The local constabulary remonstrated with the Catholics and asked them if they would be content if the Orangemen could be persuaded to return home without marching. On the Catholics agreeing with this, the police requested the Orangemen who were armed with bludgeons, guns and bayonets to go home. The Orange group agreed to this request and did so immediately. The officer went back to the Catholics with the news and while they were in the act of dispersing, someone thought they saw the Orangemen coming back in the fading light and shouted 'they are coming back, that traitor (meaning myself) has deceived us. To your posts boys'. At this time the constable was in the centre of the crowd and with much difficulty made his way to the front where two or three men were 'at the ready' and primed to fire. Fortunately he observed that the party was in fact Head Constable Duncan and his Clogher party on their way to the scene rather than the Orangemen returning, and shouted this to the mob. Only for this, lives would have been lost as the officer was of the opinion that they 'were quite determined to fire'.¹⁰¹ The mobs were strangers to the constable and none of the participants could be identified, again a source of frustration to the police. The same day a procession of twenty-five to thirty Orangemen in Omagh saw only five of the group being identified.¹⁰² This would suggest that groups of Orangemen were prepared to travel outside their own area in order to march, much the same as in south-east Tyrone where the cross over of Orangemen to and from Armagh regularly took place. This was possibly done to avoid identification and subsequent prosecution as the constabulary would have had a reasonable knowledge of people from their own parishes. Other processions were held at Coagh where 150 men and boys entered the town playing the 'Boyne Water' and at Williamstrong outside

¹⁰¹ NAI: CSORP, OR: 13142 28 1842.

¹⁰² NAI: CSORP, OR: 13147 28 1842.

Omagh where twenty boys with an Orange flag played party tunes.¹⁰³ These incidents, although small, occurred despite a meeting being held in Killyman with Jackson Lloyd in the chair which passed resolutions proposed by Mr. Robert Moore of Benburb and Mr. Thomas Monahan of Dungannon in which local lodges pledged that ‘we determine to manifest our loyalty in the strict obedience we will pay to the laws of our country...we will not celebrate the approaching anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne by a public procession, or in any means forbidden by the laws; and that, to the utmost of our power, we will dissuade all whom we can influence from any such illegal celebration’.¹⁰⁴ But despite the hopes of those present at the meeting, the parades that occurred hinted at a growing Orange revival and this revival was galvanized in the Dungannon area by the formation of a Repeal association on 10 August 1842.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Dungannon had been the scene of a highly controversial election in June 1841, an election which had seen O’Connellite candidate John Falls almost wrestle the seat from the Conservative Northland family. Contention and bitterness continued after the election with the saddler who proposed Falls, Henry W. Oliver, being forced to emigrate as his business was boycotted by Northland supporters and local gunsmith Daniel Kilpatrick having his professional credentials slandered as well as being falsely accused of forming an illegal gun club in Armagh.¹⁰⁵ Despite intimidatory acts such as these, O’Connell supporters in the area remained active setting up their own Repeal association with Patrick Fullon, the Dungannon clothier who had been evicted by Northland for signing the petition against him, appointed as its secretary. On 1 November 1842, a meeting was due to be held in Fullon’s house which was to be preceded by a band coming from Monaghan to march in procession through the town. This prompted Northland, in his magisterial capacity, to direct all police in the vicinity into the town as it was reported that a

¹⁰³ NAI: CSORP, OR: 13149 28 1842.

¹⁰⁴ *LS*, 6 July 1842.

¹⁰⁵ NAI: CSORP, OR: 12987 28 1841.

large body would be coming in from the country to oppose the procession. In the words of Northland:

We think it right to observe that a very populous district stretching from about a mile from the town over a considerable tract of country called Killyman [is] chiefly inhabited by Protestants having very strong party feelings and having the character of being very determined and excitable...we also regret to remark that party feeling and great excitement which unfortunately existed in this neighbourhood has been greatly increased by the recent establishment of a Repeal Association in this town which made any demonstration having a party aspect more dangerous and formidable.¹⁰⁶

Northland with his reinforced constabulary proceeded from the town where he met the band and a large gathering of country people on the Caledon road. On ordering the group to disperse, Northland's horse was struck amid cries of 'they can't stop you' and 'there is no law against it'. The police quickly arrested two men including James McElroy, the Moy schoolteacher. With this action the mob quietened and peacefully entered Dungannon where they again became excited and riotous. On the riot act being read by Northland, the crowd dispersed with the band going to the home of Fullon. At this point groups of Orangemen began arriving in the town forcing Northland to call upon the military from Charlemont. Despite their arrival at 8pm, the Orange mob chanted 'to hell with the pope' and 'no popery' and fired shots during the night which broke several panes of glass in Fullon's house and in a public house belonging to James McGill. At 9am the following morning, the military escorted the band and the remaining Catholics home.¹⁰⁷ This formation of the repeal association added fuel to the existing fears of Protestants in the strong Orange areas of east Tyrone by stirring up sectarian tensions and added to the determination of Orangemen to remain active, despite being part of a greater body which was officially non-existent, in order to defend their territory and religion.

Despite a later claim by the reformed Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland that 'during dissolution the Orangemen were not allowed to hoist a single colour, and still, to their credit,

¹⁰⁶ NAI: CSORP, OR: 20613 28 1842.

¹⁰⁷ NAI: CSORP, OR: 20613 28 1842.

to their immortal honour, they remained quiet, and upon no former occasion had the Queen's peace been so strictly preserved', it is evident that many Protestants in Tyrone continued their Orange activities.¹⁰⁸ Initially these activities occurred primarily in the more populated and entrenched eastern part of the county, however as time went by, west and south Tyrone began to follow suit so that by 1842 a more even distribution of processions took place throughout the county. While these processions were small in comparison to the large processions of the late 1820s and the first half of the 1830s which attracted thousands of marchers, the fact that they took place at all sent a message that the Order was still functioning and could still organize albeit on a much lesser scale than previously. During the previous dissolution period of between 1825 and 1828, Castlecaulfield landowner Richardson Bell asked 'how could they assemble themselves together in those large bodies, if they had not lodges to sit and consult?' and the same question can be asked about the post 1836 period.¹⁰⁹ In order to come together to march, even in groups that were small in comparison to previously, then meetings had to have taken place to organize these events. It is true that many gentry figures left the Order, many of these satisfying their associational needs in joining Conservative Societies or by continuing Masonic activities, but it is also apparent that some remained and provided guidance and organization to the rank and file members thus maintaining an important link that bound the upper and lower classes. The liberal *Northern Whig* had, in 1835, concluded that 'so wicked and outrageous are the party, that nothing short of extinction, as a party, can restrain them' but even the official extinction, ordered by the top echelons of Protestant society that made up the Orange Grand Lodge of Ireland, had not been able to bring about the cessation of local Orange activities.¹¹⁰ Caledon had written that 'it [the Order] cannot be expected to reach the degree of importance that it formerly acquired' and it is true that the

¹⁰⁸Report of the proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Ireland 1851 (Dublin, 1851), p. 19.

¹⁰⁹*Second report on Orange lodges*, p. 64.

¹¹⁰*LJ*, 14 July 1835.

Orange Order scaled down drastically during the years of dissolution.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, when the parades and the displays of colour are added to the mobilization and violence of the Orange mob seen during election campaigns, an active Orange organization is shown to have survived. For the upper classes, from a political point of view, the Order still served to provide muscle when threats arose at elections. For the lower classes, electoral mobilization demonstrated that the paternal relationship between them and their social betters still remained in place. However there was more to the Order than politics, it also served as a tool to satisfy man's appetite for secrecy and ritual, while at an economic level it provided the weavers and small farmers that dominated its membership with a bonding mechanism and a body to defend against Catholic competition in these areas. The popularity of the Order when it reformed in Enniskillen in 1845 and the revival it enjoyed following the defeat of Ribbonmen at Dolly's Brae in 1849 are proof enough that the sentiments of Orangeism were never too far beneath the surface during its years of dissolution and that it remained a powerful force in the lives of many Tyrone Protestants.

¹¹¹Caledon to Drummond, 13 November 1838, Caledon papers, PRONI D2433/C/12/2

Conclusion

This work has shown that Protestant society was under strain at a number of levels in the years immediately prior to the famine. The collapse of the linen industry dealt a serious blow to the substantial weaving class of the county, and this coupled with economic recession and price increases left many of the lower classes destitute. Adding to the poverty were landlords intent on maximizing productivity on their lands who implemented many changes in the farming methods that small tenant farmers had traditionally used, changes which substantially increased the cost of living on these small plots. It would be natural to imagine a backlash against the land owning Protestant upper classes but this never manifested itself, other than a few sporadic incidents in which both Protestants and Catholics united to oppose issues relevant to both factions. More common were outrages carried out by the lower classes against each other, often within the family unit, as competition over land intensified. There were, of course, varying reasons as to why this backlash against the upper classes never occurred. Most of the Tyrone landlords were resident and employed land agents to manage their estates. This bred a familiarity between tenants, land agents, and landlords which would not have been present in poorly managed estates owned by absentee landlords. This familiarity was heightened by membership of the yeomanry, the armed body into which the landlords who headed it recruited their tenants, and by the magistracy which was composed mostly of the same land agents who managed the estates. This familiarity enabled the upper classes to keep a tight hold over the lower classes regarding any possible unrest, while on the other hand maintaining the rigid social structure that bound this society. Therefore, for the most part, relations between the Protestant lower and upper classes survived this period of great agrarian transition despite the increasing hardships that many Protestants endured.

The main reason that the paternal relationship held firm was because of the many other transitions that were taking place affecting Protestants, changes which obviously were

deemed more serious than the economic downturn, by Protestant society. These changes presented a serious challenge to the position of dominance that this community had enjoyed for over two centuries. Continued government concessions to Catholics, erosion of magisterial power, the disbandment of the yeomanry, educational changes, interference in church matters, and a perceived threat from associational Catholic activity transcended discontent that may have been felt over decreasing living standards and served to galvanize the relationship between the Protestant classes. One organization can arguably be credited with holding the structures of Protestant society together and maintaining traditional relationships between the classes, and that body was the Orange Order. The Order enabled the upper classes to retain their position of dominance at a hierarchical level while giving the lower classes an active role, a role denied to them in most other spheres of life.

Through the Orange Order, lower class Protestants were allowed on a limited basis, the opportunity to mix with their social betters, an important part of maintaining a relationship which was otherwise in danger of slipping away as the traditional norms of upper class paternalism were on shifting ground. The maintenance of this relationship through the Order was beneficial to all Protestant classes. For the lower classes, the need for instruction, guidance, and legitimacy was answered by the upper classes who in turn benefited from their involvement by continuing to control the mob whom they could not possibly allow to run out of control thus maintaining the rigid social hierarchy that was in place throughout this period. Leadership of the Order was an extension of the leadership role that the upper classes exerted in everyday life, a role that manifested itself through membership of the grand jury, the yeomanry, the magistracy, and ownership of the land. Upper class control of the masses allowed them to use the power and force that this enormously popular association could muster. When it was considered necessary, Protestant tenants were mobilized, 'entertained' with food and drink, and paraded by the elites in shows of political strength aimed towards

the government. This benefit of such control was especially evident during elections as a sizeable section of the elite blatantly used the lower classes to intimidate opponents and send a message to the government that Tyrone remained, at a political level, very much in the control of ultra Protestants. The use of the lower classes as a political tool was part of the negotiated 'contract' that existed between the classes, one which allowed this usage in return for a blind eye being shown towards the activities of a ritual nature being undertaken by the lower classes. This would indicate that the elite-lower class power structure was not as straightforward as one might imagine with compromise and negotiation necessary to ensure the lower class could be used politically. From a lower class point of view, with the emergence of O'Connell and mass populist politics in southern Ireland, it is quite likely that politicization did become part of their psyche given the campaigns of the Brunswick clubs in opposition to Catholic emancipation, and of Conservative clubs determined to oppose repeal with popular countrywide meetings.

The problem for the Orange Order regarding law and order, was its sectarian nature and the trouble that occurred between its members and Catholics. While, for the most part, relations between the religious factions were reasonably good barring intermittent incidents following fairs or heavy drinking, parades and marches could easily spiral out of control which led to the police becoming targets of violence and abuse. As with election trouble many upper class figures, including magistrates, were content to turn a blind eye to the violent actions of the lower classes that they were meant to be in control of. Because of the displeasure expressed by magistrates and by some of the upper classes regarding the lessening of their local power and also because of blatantly sectarian judgements that courts, comprised of magistrates, imposed, a feeling of being above the law prevailed among many of the Protestant lower classes who felt a degree of protection from their social betters. Continual plebeian trouble led to government suppression of the Order and eventually

resulted in many within the upper classes distancing themselves from the organization as it became more difficult to control the activities of the mob. Others however, whether publicly or secretly, continued to support the Order through its suppression and eventual dissolution, and ensured that the patriarchal relationship between the upper and lower classes remained solid throughout a period when the Order was at its most vulnerable.

The importance of the Order in the everyday lives of Tyrone Protestants cannot be underestimated. As well as providing the lower classes with a political voice, the Order fostered a sense of community, and solidarity within this community, during this perturbing time of social transition. It was also part of a wider social network which was also patronized by the upper classes of Protestant society which created a feeling among the lower classes that they belonged to a common family united by religion and loyalty to the Crown. According to David W. Miller, despite the transition and difficulties being experienced, 'Orangeism sustained for Protestant workers in town and country the sense that the most important feature of the old structure- a special relationship between them and their Protestant betters- still obtained'.¹ The popularity of the organization in areas of numerical Protestant dominance in which no Catholic threat existed, points to much more than merely a sectarian or political association. This was an organization which fulfilled man's need for social inclusion, ritual, and secrecy, while bringing excitement and occupying the minds of a people who had little to look forward to. Parades, whether at a small local level or on a larger district or county scale, provided members with the opportunity to renew old acquaintances or simply enjoy a day away from the drudgery of everyday life. The reaction of the many Tyrone lodges that ignored Grand Lodge orders to dissolve demonstrates the importance of the Order to the rank and file members who could not contemplate such a void being brought

¹Miller, *Queens Rebels*, p. 56.

into their lives during a period of great change, most of which was unwelcome in the eyes of many Protestants.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Manuscript sources

National Archives of Ireland

Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers, Outrage Reports: County Tyrone 1836-1842

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

1829 declaration of the landholders of Cloughenry, D. 836

1848 Dungannon meeting of land holders, tenant-farmers, merchants, traders, and other inhabitants of the province of Ulster, T1689/72.

Abstracts from the chronicles of Parkanaur, T3863/1

County of Tyrone Grand Warrant for Lent Assizes 1836, 1840, TYR4/1/48

Crossle family scrapbook containing election materials among other things, D2151/2

Day to day diary of Dungannon police station 1833-1839, D804/3

Land leases of the Abercorn estate, D623/b/12/19

Land leases of the Belmore estate, D3850/6

Land leases of the Caledon estate, D2433/A/1/47, D847/5

Land leases of the Eccles estate, D526/1

Land leases of J. D. Johnston, D1096/58/3

Land leases of the Mountray estate, D2023/1/9

Land leases of the Powerscourt estate, D1957/2/5

Letter books of Caledon as Lieutenant of Tyrone, D2433/C/12/1-2

Letter from Mortimer O'Sullivan to Lord Beresford, T. 2772/2/6/28

Political letters and papers, mainly printed of the 3rd Lord Rossmore, T2929/12/1-34

Political letters to the earl of Belmore, D3007/H/6

R.I.C. police diary Stewartstown station, County Tyrone 1 April 1842- June 1844, D/548/6

R.I.C. police diary Stewartstown station, County Tyrone 24 March 1840 - 31 March 1842,
D548/4

R.I.C. police diary Stewartstown station, County Tyrone 8 February 1838- 23 March 1840,
D548/2

The Caledon papers, D2433/C/12

The Grand Masonic Lodge of Ireland, Molesworth St. , Dublin

Grand Lodge roll books 1828-36, 1837-42

Minute books of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, 1830-36, 1837-42

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, Belfast

Proceedings of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland at the usual half yearly meeting, May
1839

Report of the proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Ireland 1851

Rogers, Edward, *Memorials of Orangeism*, part 1

Printed primary sources

Day, Angelique and McWilliams, Patrick (eds.), *Ordnance survey memoirs of Ireland*, v, xx
(Belfast, 1990).

McComb, William, *The repealer repulsed*, ed. Patrick Maume (Dublin, 2003).

McEvoy, John, *County of Tyrone 1802, a statistical survey* (Belfast, 1991).

Parliamentary papers

Abstract of answers and returns pursuant to Act for taking account of population of Ireland: enumeration abstract, appendix, H. C. 1824 (577), xxii.411.

Abstract of population returns for Ireland 1831, H. C. 1833 (634), xxx.ix.

Report from the select committee on tolls and customs in Ireland, with the minutes of evidence 1834, H. C. 1834 (603), xvii. 229.

Yeomanry and volunteer corps. Return of effective yeomanry, and expense of each corps, in the United Kingdom, for the year 1833; with an abstract of sums voted, and expended, from 1816 to 1834, H. C. 1834 (67), xlii.89

[First] report from the select committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange lodges, associations or societies in Ireland, H. C. 1835 (377),

[Second] report from the select committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange lodges, associations or societies in Ireland, appendix, H. C. 1835 (475) (476), xv, xvi.

[Third] report from the select committee appointed to inquire into the nature, character, extent and tendency of Orange Lodges, associations or societies in Ireland, H. C. 1835

Elections, (Ireland) copies of correspondence between lieutenants of counties, deputy lieutenants, and magistrates in Ireland, relative to the late elections, H. C. 1835 (170) xlv.385.

Correspondence on meeting of inhabitants of County Tyrone, in Dungannon, H. C. 1835 (120), xlv.511.

Royal commission on state of religious and other public instruction in Ireland. First report, appendix, second report, H. C. 1835 (45) (46) (47) xxxiii.1, 829, xxxiv.1.

Royal commission on the poorer classes of Ireland, H. C. 1835 (35) (36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42), xxx.35, 221, xxx.1, xxxiv.1, 427, 643, 657.

Electors registered, Ireland. Return of electors registered as qualified to vote at the last general election in Ireland, H. C. 1836 (227) xliii.469.

Royal commission on general system of railways in Ireland, second report, appendices, index, atlas, plans and sections, H. C. 1837-38 (145), xxx.449.

Report from the select committee of the House of Lords, appointed to enquire into the state of Ireland in respect of crime, and to report thereupon to the House; with the minutes of evidence taken before the committee, and an appendix and index. Part I. Report, and evidence 22 April to 16 May 1839, H. L. 1839 (486), xi.1, xii.1.

Royal commission on handloom weavers, assistant commissioners report part III (Yorkshire, W. Riding, Ireland), H. C. 1840 (43-11), xxxiii.367.

Report of commissioners on census of Ireland, 1841, H. C. 1843 (504) xxiv.1.

Arms and yeomanry (Ireland). Returns of the number and nature of unregistered arms seized in 1841, 1842, and 1843, under authority of a warrant from the lord lieutenant of Ireland, and also returns relating to the yeomanry corps in Ireland, p. 10, H. C. 1843 (408), 1.5.

Report of Her Majesty's commissioners of enquiry into the state of law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland, H. C. 1845 (606), xix.

Royal commission of inquiry into the state of law and practice in respect to occupation of land in Ireland, H. L. 1845 (672) (673), iv, v

Poor Law Unions (Ireland). Returns relative to Poor Law Unions, and of persons holding

land, etc. in Ireland, H. C. 1845 (593) xxxviii.209.

Enumeration abstracts of number of inhabitants in Ireland, 1841, 1851 and 1861; religious profession 1861; number of houses and families, 1841, 1851 and 1861, H. C. 1861 (2865) L.885.

Ownership of land (Ireland) A return of the names of the proprietors and the area and valuation of all properties in the several counties in Ireland, held in fee or perpetuity, or on long leases at chief rents, H. C. 1876 (412) lxxx.395.

Contemporary newspapers

Ballyshannon Herald

Belfast Newsletter

Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet

Dublin Evening Mail

Freeman's Journal

Londonderry Journal and Tyrone Advertiser

Londonderry Standard

Newry Telegraph

Northern Standard

Star of Brunswick

Strabane Morning Post

The Vindicator

Other Contemporary Works

Author unknown, *A voice from the north to the Orangemen of Ireland* (Belfast, 1835).

Cornwall Lewis, George, *Local disturbances in Ireland* (London, 1836).

'Dissolution of the Orange Lodges' in *Dublin University Magazine*, June 1836, vii, no. 42, pp 687-92.

Dermott, Laurence, *The constitution of Freemasonry; or Ahiman Rezon*, (Dublin, 1804).

Editor unknown, *Minutes of a general synod held at Omagh 1836* (Belfast, 1836).

Inglis, Henry D. , *A journey throughout Ireland during the spring, summer and autumn of*

1834 (London, 1834).

Lewis, Samuel, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (Dublin, 1837).

‘Memoranda from our tablets of the month’, in *Dublin University Magazine*, August 1837, x, no. 56, pp 230-40.

Trade directories

Pigot’s Directory of Ireland (Dublin, 1824).

Pettigrew and Oulton’s Almanac and Directory of 1841 (Dublin, 1840).

Slater’s Directory of Ireland (Dublin, 1846).

Secondary sources

Adams, J. R. R. , *The printed word and the common man, popular culture in Ulster 1700-1900* (Belfast, 1987).

Bardon, Jonathan, *A history of Ulster* (Belfast, 1992).

Beames, M. R. , ‘The Ribbon societies: Lower class nationalism in pre-famine Ireland’ in *Past and Present*, xcvi (1982), pp 128-143.

Beames, Michael, *Peasants and power the whiteboy movements and their control in pre famine Ireland* (New York, 1983).

Blackstock, Allan, ‘A dangerous species of ally: Orangeism and the Irish yeomanry’, in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxx, no. 119 (May, 1997), pp 393-405.

_____, *An ascendancy army the Irish yeomanry, 1796-1834* (Dublin, 1998).

_____, ‘The social and political implications of the raising of the yeomanry in Ulster’ in David Dickson, Daire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, radicalism and rebellion* (Dublin, 1993), pp 234-43.

_____, ‘Tommy Downshire’s boys: popular protest, social change and political manipulation in mid-Ulster 1829-1847’, in *Past and Present*, xccvi (2007), pp 125-172.

_____, *Loyalism in Ireland, 1789-1829* (Woodbridge, 2007).

Boyd, Andrew, *Montgomery and the black man, religion and politics in nineteenth-century Ulster* (Dublin, 2006).

Cahill, Gilbert, ‘Some nineteenth-century roots of the Ulster problem, 1829-1848’ in *Irish University Review*, i (1970-71), pp 215-37.

Christianson, Gale E. , ‘Secret societies and agrarian violence in Ireland 1790-1840’ in *Agricultural History*, xlvi, no.3 (1972), pp 369-84.

Clark, Peter, *British clubs and societies 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2000).

Clark, Samuel and Donnelly, James S. Jnr. , (eds.), *Irish peasants and political unrest 1780-1914* (Oxford, 1983).

Clark, Samuel, 'The importance of agrarian classes: agrarian class structure and collective action in nineteenth century Ireland' in *The British Journal of Sociology*, xxix, no. 1 (1978), pp 22-37.

Connell, K. H. , 'Illegitimacy before the famine' in *Irish peasant society, four historical essays* (Oxford, 1968), pp 51-86.

Connolly, S. J. , 'the blessed turf: cholera and popular panic in Ireland, June 1832', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiii, no. 91 (May, 1983), pp 214-232.

_____, *Religion and society in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dundalk, 1985).

_____, 'Aftermath and adjustment' in *A new history of Ireland*, v, W. E. Vaughan (ed.), (Oxford, 1989), pp 1-23.

Crawford, William H. , *The management of a major Ulster estate in the late Eighteenth Century* (Dublin, 2001).

Cronin, Maura, 'Of one mind: O'Connellite crowds in the 1830s and 1840s' in Peter Jupp and Eoin Magennis (eds.) *Crowds in Ireland c. 1720-1920* (London, 2000), pp 139-72.

Crossman, Virginia, 'Emergency legislation and agrarian disorder in Ireland 1821-41' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxvii (1991), pp 309-23.

_____, *Local government in nineteenth century Ireland* (Belfast, 1994).

_____, *Politics, law and order in nineteenth century Ireland* (Dublin, 1996).

Curtin, Nancy J. , *The United Irishmen* (Oxford, 1994).

Dillon, Charles, 'Starvation in the midst of plenty' in *Duiche Neill, Journal of the O'Neill Historical Society*, x (1995-6), pp 38-60.

_____, 'The wrecking of Maghera, County Armagh, 1830' in *Duiche Neill, Journal of the O'Neill county historical society*, i (1987), pp 107-30.

Donnelly, James S. Jnr. , 'Landlords and tenants' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v, part 1 (Oxford, 1989), pp 332-49.

Dooley, Terence, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland: a research guide* (Dublin, 2007).

Dowling, Martin W. , *Tenant right and agrarian society in Ulster 1600-1870* (Dublin, 1999).

Doyle, Anthony, *Charles Powell Leslie II's estates at Glasslough, County Monaghan 1800-1841* (Dublin, 2001).

- Dudley Edwards, Ruth, *The faithful tribe* (London, 1999).
- Elliott, Marianne, *The Catholics of Ulster: a history* (London, 2001).
- Fitzpatrick, David, 'Class, family and rural unrest in nineteenth-century Ireland' in P. J. Drudy (ed.) *Ireland: land, politics, and people* (Cambridge, 1982) pp 37-75.
- Garvin, Tom, 'Defenders, Ribbonmen and others: underground political networks in pre-famine Ireland', in *Past and Present*, xcvi (1982), pp 133-155.
- Gibbons, Stephen R. , *Captain Rock, Night Errant. The threatening letters of pre-famine Ireland, 1801-1845* (Dublin, 2004).
- Gray, Tony, *The Orange Order* (London, 1972).
- Griffin, Brian, *The Irish police, 1836-1914: a social history* (Chicago, 1991).
- Haddick-Flynn, Kevin, *Orangeism, the making of a tradition* (Dublin, 1999).
- Hempton, David, and Hill, Myrtle, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster society 1740-1890* (London, 1992).
- Henderson, T. R. , *Two centuries of Freemasonry- Newtownstewart Masonic Lodge no. 547, 1777-1977* (?1977).
- Herlihy, Jim, *The Royal Irish Constabulary* (Dublin, 1997).
- Hill, Jacqueline, 'National festivals, the state and 'Protestant ascendancy' in Ireland, 1790-1829' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiv, no. 93 (May, 1984), pp 30-51.
- Hoppen, K. T. , *Elections, politics and society in Ireland 1832-1885* (Oxford, 1984).
- _____, *Ireland since 1800: conflict and conformity* (Harlow, 1989).
- _____, 'Electioneering and corruption' in *History* (October, 1996), lxxxi, no. 264, pp 553-71.
- _____, 'Grammars of electoral violence in Nineteenth-century England and Ireland' in *The English Historical Review* (June, 1994), cix, no. 432, pp 597-620.
- Hutchinson, W. R. , *Tyrone Precinct* (Belfast, 1951).
- Jackson, Alvin, *Ireland 1798-1998* (Oxford, 1999).
- Jarman, Neil, *Material conflicts parades and visual displays in Northern Ireland* (Oxford, 1997).
- Jupp, P. J. , 'Irish parliamentary elections and the influence of the Catholic vote, 1801-20' in *Historical Journal*, x, no. 2 (1967), pp 183-96.

Kennedy, Liam, 'The rural economy, 1820-1914', in Liam Kennedy and Phillip Ollerenshaw (eds.), *An economic history of Ulster, 1820-1939* (Manchester, 1985), pp 1-61.

Kington, Suzanne, 'Ulster counties in the age of emancipation and reform' in Allan Blackstock and Eoin Magennis (eds.), *Politics and political culture in Britain and Ireland 1750-1850* (Belfast, 2007), pp 1-23.

Kington, Suzanne T. , 'Ulster opposition to Catholic emancipation 1828-29', in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxiv, no. 134 (2004), pp 137-56.

Lee, Joseph. J. , 'Patterns of rural unrest in nineteenth-century Ireland: a preliminary survey' in L. M. Cullen and F. Furet (eds.) *Ireland and France, 17th-20th centuries: towards a comparative study of rural history* (Paris, 1980), pp 227-43.

Lowe, W. J. and Malcolm, E. L. , 'The domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary 1836-1922' in *Irish Economic and Social History*, xix (1992), pp 27-48.

MacAfee, William, 'The population of County Tyrone 1600-1991' in Charles Dillon and Henry A. Jeffers (eds.), *Tyrone: history and society* (Dublin, 2000), pp 443-61.

MacDonagh, Oliver, 'Ideas and institutions, 1830-45' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989), pp 193-217.

MacEvoy, Brendan, 'The parish of Errigal Kieran in the nineteenth-century' in *Seanchas Ardmhaca*, i (1954), pp 118-131.

Marshall, John J. , *A famous Tyrone murder. Report of the trial of George Richie for the murder of Thomas McCrory at Omagh assizes, August 29th 1827* (Dungannon, 1936).

McBride, Ian, 'Ulster Presbyterians and 1798' in Thomas Barlett, David Dickson, Daire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *1798 A bicentenary perspective* (Dublin, 2003), pp 478-496.

Middleton, Charles R. . , 'Irish representative peerage elections and the Conservative Party, 1832-1841' in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, cxxix, no. 1 (March, 1985), pp 90-111.

Miller, David W, *Queens Rebels* (Belfast, 1977).

_____, 'The Armagh troubles 1784-95' in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jnr. , (eds.), *Irish peasants - violence and political unrest 1780-1914* (Oxford, 1983), pp 155-91.

Mirala, Petri, *Freemasonry in Ulster, 1733-1813* (Dublin, 2007).

Mitchell, Brian, *A new genealogical atlas of Ireland* (Baltimore, 1986).

Murphy, Desmond, *Derry, Donegal and modern Ulster* (Derry, 1981).

O'Tuathaigh, Gearoid, *Ireland before the famine* (Dublin, 1972).

O'Grada, Cormac, 'Poverty, population and agriculture 1801-45' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v, part 1 (Oxford, 1989), pp 108-36.

O'Neill, Kevin, *Family and farm in pre-famine Ireland* (London, 1984).

Owens, Gary, 'Nationalism without words: Symbolism and ritual behaviour in the repeal 'monster meetings' of 1843-45' in J. S. Donnelly Jnr and Kerby A. Miller (eds.), *Irish popular culture 1650-1850* (Dublin, 1999), pp 242-69.

Palmer, Stanley, *Police and protest in England and Ireland 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 1988).

Parkinson, R. E. , *Historical sketch of St. Patrick's Masonic Lodge no. 77 Newry 1737-1937* (Newry, 1936).

Rafferty, Oliver, *Catholicism in Ulster, 1603-1983 an interpretive history* (London, 1994).

Senior, Hereward, *Orangeism in Britain and Ireland* (London, 1966).

Thompson, E. P. , *The making of the English working class* (London, 1963).

Vaughan, W. E. , (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v (Oxford, 1989).

Walker, Brian, 'Ulster society and politics, 1801-1921', in Ciaran Brady, Mary O'Dowd, and Brian Walker (eds.), *Ulster, an illustrated history* (London, 1989), pp 158-181.

_____, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland 1801-1922*, (Dublin, 1978).

Whelan, Kevin, 'the regional impact of Irish Catholicism 1700-1850' in William J. Smyth and Kevin Whelan (eds.) *Common ground; essays on the historical geography of Ireland presented to T. Jones Hughes* (Cork, 1988), pp 235-77.

Whyte, J. H. , 'Landlord influence at elections in Ireland, 1760-1885', in *English Historical Review*, lxxx (October, 1965), pp 740-61.

Wright, Frank, *Two lands on one soil* (Dublin, 1996).

Unpublished Theses

Johnston, J. I. D. , 'The Clogher Valley as a social and economic region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' (M.Litt. Thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 1974).

Kelly, Jennifer, 'An outward looking community?: Ribbonism and popular mobilisation in County Leitrim 1836-1846' (PhD Thesis, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, 2005).

Kingon, Suzanne T. , 'Ulster politics in the age of emancipation and reform c. 1825-35' (PhD

Thesis, Queens University, Belfast, 2006).