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**'THE NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM IN
WATERFORD, 1800-42'.**

by

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Summary:

This thesis examines the development of liberal Protestantism in Waterford between 1800 and 1842. Waterford liberal Protestants had much in common with their British Whig counterparts, but their ideology had been fundamentally altered by the experience of the late eighteenth century. This thesis focuses on the development of liberalism among the Protestant political élite at local level, examining in particular the liberal values among a section of Waterford Corporation and Waterford Chamber of Commerce. The parliamentary activities of Waterford's Whig representatives are an important theme, and the peculiarly Irish Whiggism of Sir John Newport, an important parliamentary figure in this period, is examined. The most important and defining feature of Irish liberal Protestantism in these years was their support for the removal of political disabilities affecting Irish Catholics. There was a strong tradition of support among Waterford Protestants for Catholic relief, and this support grew in the early decades of the nineteenth century, despite the friction caused by the question of 'securities'. This support endured into the 1820s, and liberal Protestants played an indispensable role in the famous 1826 election in County Waterford.

Despite this, some Waterford liberal Protestants were wary of what they perceived as O'Connell's demagogic strategies for advancing the Catholic question, and felt marginalised when the political impetus passed into Catholic hands after 1828. Few supported the campaign for a repeal of the union in the 1830s, which left them with few allies on the Catholic side, save for those Catholics who resisted O'Connell's call for repeal. This greatly reduced the prospects for a non-confessional approach to politics. The 1830s was a difficult decade for Irish liberal Protestants, and this thesis examines the responses of Waterford liberal Protestants to challenges posed by Catholic and parliamentary politics in this decade. Liberal Protestants in Waterford responded to these challenges in a variety of ways, with some maintaining close relations with Irish Catholics and others moving into a closer alliance with a revitalised Irish Toryism, and others retreated from the political scene.

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Abbreviations:

B.L.	British Library
<i>D.E.P.</i>	<i>Dublin Evening Post</i>
<i>D.N.B.</i>	Dictionary of National Biography
<i>Hansard 1</i>	<i>Cobbett's parliamentary debates</i> , 1803-12 (vols i-xxii, London, 1804-12); continued as <i>The parliamentary debates from the year 1803 to the present time</i> , 1812-20 (vols xxiii-xli, London, 1812-20).
<i>Hansard 2</i>	<i>The parliamentary debates...published under the superintendence of T. C. Hansard</i> , new series, 1820-29 (vols i-xx, London, 1820-29); continued as <i>Hansard's parliamentary debates</i> , 1829-30 (vols xxi-xxv, London, 1829-30).
<i>Hansard 3</i>	<i>Hansard's parliamentary debates</i> , third series, 1830-91 (vols i-ccclvi, London, 1831-91).
H.C.	House of Commons
H.L.	House of Lords
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
<i>I.H.S.</i>	<i>Irish Historical Studies</i>
M.P.	Member of parliament
N.L.I.	National Library of Ireland
N.U.I.M.	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
P.R.O.N.I.	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
Q.U.B.	Queen's University, Belfast
T.C.D.	Trinity College Dublin
U.C.C.	University College Cork
W.C.A.	Waterford City Archives
W.M.L.	Waterford Municipal Library

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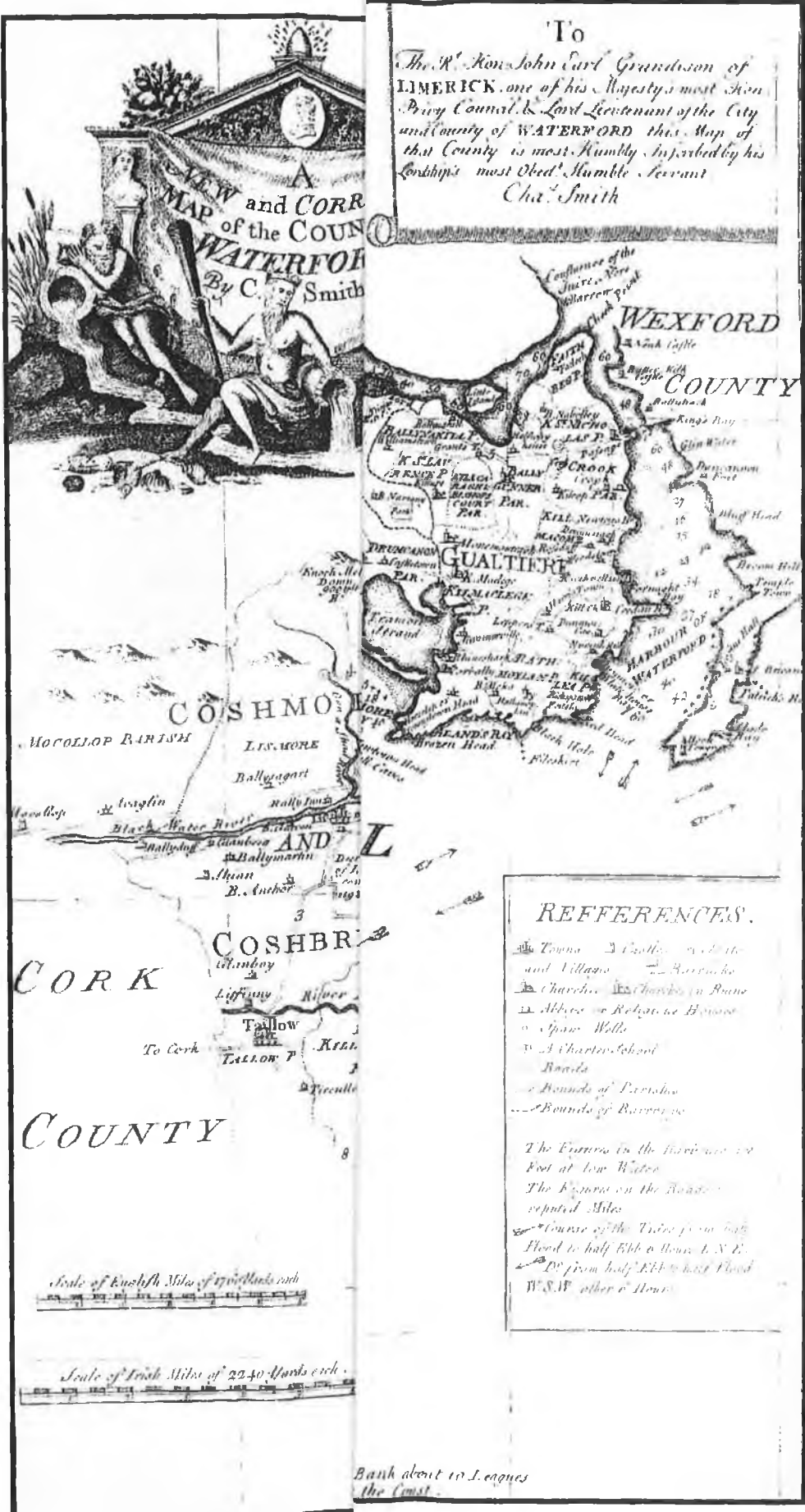


Plate 1: 'Map of County Waterfo

Introduction:

This thesis analyses the nature and development of liberal Protestantism in Waterford city and county between the act of union in 1800 and the implementation of the municipal corporations act in 1842. Waterford city by the early nineteenth century was an important southern provincial city with a strong liberal Protestant tradition. In 1800 the bulk of political influence and power in Ireland lay in the hands of Protestants, who controlled admission to and membership of all political institutions, as well as access to parliament. In Waterford city political prestige and influence was centred in the corporation, which remained exclusively Protestant until 1829, and all official posts in the city, including the police network, were held by Protestants, at least in the early years of the century. The political dominance of Protestants continued in the nineteenth century despite the growing importance of a commercial élite that had developed during the course of the eighteenth century, which was composed largely of Catholic and Quaker merchants. In County Waterford there had developed by 1800 a relatively wealthy Catholic landed class, but the largest landed estates in the county belonged to Protestant magnates, including the influential marquis of Waterford. The county magistracy and grand juries were dominated by Protestants. Owing to the remaining disabilities affecting Catholics and dissenters, it was Protestants also who represented the city and county in parliament.

There was a greater density of Protestants in Waterford city than in the county in this period. While in the city Protestants comprised 13.6% of the population in 1835, in the county they made up only 2.8%, and most of these lived in the smaller county towns, including Dungarvan and Tallow (see appendix A, tables A.1-A.2). Waterford was represented in parliament by a succession of Whig M.P.s between 1800 and 1842. The city was represented almost continuously by liberal Protestant Sir John Newport (1803-32), followed by liberal Catholic Thomas Wyse (1835-41), between 1803 and 1841.¹ A city electorate, measured at 1,300 citizens in 1831, was composed largely of freemen and a small number of freeholders. Although there was a small number of Catholic freemen in Waterford city at the beginning of this period (about

¹ B. M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1800-1922* (Dublin, 1978), pp 241 & 317-8.

12%), the bulk of the electorate was made up of Protestant freemen.² Whigs held one county seat continuously throughout this period, returning liberal Protestants Edward Lee (1802-6) Richard Power senior (1800-2 & 1806-14), Richard Power junior (1814-26), Sir Richard Musgrave (1831-2 & 1835-7) and William Villiers Stuart (1835-47).³ On two occasions in the 1820s and 1830s Whigs held both county seats, with liberal Protestant Henry Villiers Stuart (1826-9) famously capturing the second seat from the Tory interest for the first time in 1826. The county electorate was composed of £50, £20, £10 and 40s freeholders, the bulk of whom voted with their landlords up to and even beyond 1826, although the composition was altered in 1829 when the 40s freeholders were disenfranchised (see chapter five). Liberal Protestants among the political élite in the city and county, and among the freemen in the city were particularly active during this period, and an analysis of their interests, activities and attitudes in these years will add greater context to any general survey of Irish liberalism. Before launching into this analysis, it is useful to look at the British and Irish context, as well as the historiography of this period of history.

Britain in the early years of the nineteenth century enjoyed relatively stable government under the successors of William Pitt, which during the Napoleonic wars took the stance of a 'patriotic wartime government' and governed with relative flexibility and pragmatism. In comparison the Whig opposition seemed factious, disloyal and 'unattractive' to many parliamentarians. Weakened by the secession of the Portland Whigs in 1794 and the Grenvillite 'party' between 1817 and 1821, and with little in the way of charismatic leadership, the Whigs offered no realistic alternative leadership in these years.⁴ On top of this, the parliamentary opposition was disunited, and the Whigs were suspicious of the images of popular demagoguery offered by some parliamentary radicals, to the extent that they tended to rally to the party of government in periods of unrest.⁵ Thus the Irish Whigs, who joined their British counterparts at Westminster in 1801, found themselves part of an opposition that

² This figure of 12% has been offered by Brian Kirby, based on an analysis of the poll during the 1807 general election in the city (see chapter two), Brian Kirby, 'Civic politics and parliamentary representation in Waterford city, 1730-1807' (PhD thesis, N.U.I.M., 2002), pp 354-5.

³ Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 241-2 & 318-9. It is important to note that Edward Lee was a Tory on all but the Catholic question. He was a welcome ally of the Irish Whigs when promoting Catholic claims. As such he is referred to here as a 'liberal Tory'.

⁴ Norman McCord, *British history, 1815-1906* (Oxford, 1991), pp 1-5.

⁵ McCord, *British history*, p. 6.

suffered from a lack of unity, of strong leadership and of the necessary support to offer any concerted challenge to the existing government. In the 1820s the Whigs began to move towards a wider concern with the liberties of other groups, drawing support from beyond their own aristocratic circle and creating a provincial base of support for their parliamentary policies.⁶ They were relatively successful in pressing the government to implement 'economical' reforms aimed at reforming the government patronage system and instituting 'cheap government'.⁷ This revival was significant for the Irish parliamentary Whigs, as they found themselves part of an opposition 'party' with a coherent programme of opposition, and expectations grew that the Whigs could successfully garner support for reforms and for important Irish issues, such as Catholic emancipation. In Waterford, how were the parliamentary Whigs perceived by liberal Protestants? To what extent did parliamentary successes for the Whigs result in a growth of confidence in Waterford Whigs? To what extent did Irish liberal values reflect those of the British Whigs? The ways in which Irish liberal Protestants responded to Whig developments in Britain is of great importance in understanding the development of Irish liberalism in this period.

The Whigs, led largely by landed aristocrats, came to power in 1830 after a succession of weak Tory governments failed to summon sufficient parliamentary support. While many conservatives believed that extensive reforms would undermine the Protestant constitution, the Whigs alternately believed that by conceding moderate reform, 'the dangerous [i.e. radical or subversive] elements could be left isolated and weak, since respectable opinion would rally to a constitution purged of its indefensible features'.⁸ The 1830s witnessed the Whigs passing a succession of measures aimed at reforming parliamentary representation, as well as tithe reform and municipal and parliamentary reform. However, Norman Gash has pointed out that despite these concessions, a marked feature of the period between 1815 and 1845 was the success of the British aristocracy and gentry in retaining both the substance of their traditional political power and the social deference of other influential interests.⁹ This contrasted with the fate of the Protestant political ascendancy in Ireland during the same period,

⁶ W. A. Hay, *The Whig revival, 1808-30* (New York, 2004), p. 4.

⁷ McCord, *British history*, p. 26.

⁸ McCord, *British history*, p. 133.

⁹ Norman Gash, *Aristocracy and people: Britain 1815-65* (Harvard, 1980), p. 8.

and the ways in which the political security of the ascendancy class in Waterford was undermined in these years is one of the issues that will be examined in this thesis.

Before going any further, some note on terminology is required. The terms 'Whig' and 'Tory', and in turn the terms 'liberal' and 'conservative' were used fluidly throughout the period, and make any general use of them problematic. Party delineations in the eighteenth century were hardly ever clearly defined, and the quick succession of royal ministerial experiments in the 1760s led to the splitting of both Whig and Tory parties into factions, such as the Rockinghamite Whigs.¹⁰ Brian Hill has pointed out that what were different parliamentary groups of reformers and anti-reformers, '*both in various shadings*', had become generally known as Whigs and Tories by the time of George IV's accession in 1820.¹¹ In turn, the terms 'Liberal' and 'Conservative' are only useful to describe parliamentary parties and allegiances after the early or mid-1830s. To avoid confusion, this thesis has followed recent Irish historians in use of terminology, and in particular Brian Walker's *Parliamentary election results in Ireland*, Brian Hill's *The early parties and politics in Britain, 1688-1832* and the *Oxford companion to Irish history*.¹² The term 'Irish Whig', unless otherwise stated, refers to Irish Protestants in parliament, who generally cooperated with the English Whigs. The word Whig is also used, in early discussion, to denote the eighteenth-century political ideology, and to refer to British 'liberals' in parliament before the mid-1830s. For Irish Whigs and Protestants of a liberal hue, the term 'liberal' or 'liberal Protestant' has been used. This had been used in the lower case, to differentiate it from the British Liberals of the 1850s. The justification for the use of this term is found in the nature of Irish liberalism in this period. The English Whigs stood for a number of reforms and retained much sympathy with the dissenters and non-conformists, but in the Irish context, it was support for Catholic emancipation that most obviously distinguished the 'liberal Protestants'.¹³ It was their liberal standpoint on the Catholic question that makes liberal Protestants of particular interest in this period, and their approach to Catholic politics will be studied in greater detail in the course of this study.

¹⁰ Brian Hill, *The early parties and politics in Britain, 1688-1832* (London, 1996), pp 197-8.

¹¹ Italics appear in original document; Hill, *The early parties and politics in Britain*, p. 160.

¹² Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, xiv; Hill *The early parties and politics in Britain*, pp 197-203; S. J. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford, 1998), pp 313-4; 545-6 & 590.

¹³ Hill, *The early parties and politics in Britain*, p. 10.

More problematic is the term used to denote the government party and the forerunners of the Conservative party before the 1830s. In this I have followed Brian Hill's use of the term 'Tory' to denote Irish Protestants who followed the party of government up to 1830.¹⁴ According to Hill, after 1812 the former Pittites 'could begin to accept the description of Tory as applicable to themselves, since the government party of the regency was clearly no longer open to any accusation of dependence on royal leadership'.¹⁵ But also of interest is the development of 'liberal Toryism' in the 1820s. This change in direction of the Liverpool government was marked by the integration of the Grenvillites into government, the appointment of Robert Peel to the Home Office, and the appointment of George Canning as Foreign Secretary after the death of Lord Castlereagh. The liberal Tories promoted freer trade and legal reform, and although few contemplated major parliamentary readjustment, many shared Peel's fears that some form of parliamentary reform was inevitable. Liberal Toryism has been described as 'a fragile growth grafted on to deep-rooted conservatism', but the nature of relations between these liberal Tories and Irish liberal Protestants might be revealing of the development of Irish liberalism in this period.¹⁶ In local and other extra-parliamentary contexts, the terms 'conservative Protestant', and in some cases before the 1830s 'ultra Protestant', have been used. Where this terminology comes into conflict, in later chapters, with the references in contemporary sources to Irish Catholic repealers and O'Connellites as 'liberals', to avoid confusion the term referring to Irish liberal Protestants has largely been retained, with Catholic political 'liberals' – a name that was given to them largely by the Irish pro-Catholic press, which was designed to place them in political opposition to Irish conservatives (among whom liberal Protestants were often simplistically included by Irish Catholics, especially in the 1830s) – being referred to as either repealers or O'Connellites.

Two of the most significant issues in Irish politics in the early nineteenth century were the constitutional relationship with Britain and the civil rights of Catholics. In 1801 the act of union came into operation, interrupting a parliamentary tradition that dated back to the Middle Ages and temporarily subduing the broader

¹⁴ Hill, *The early parties and politics in Britain*, p. 197.

¹⁵ Hill, *The early parties and politics in Britain*, p. 200.

¹⁶ Hill, *The early parties and politics in Britain*, p. 182-3.

political culture in Ireland.¹⁷ The Irish parliament was dissolved and 100 Irish members attended the imperial parliament established at Westminster. The churches of England and Ireland were united, and a customs union was to be implemented within a set timeframe. However, the Irish administration at Dublin Castle was maintained and this provided a degree of continuity for both the British government and the Irish political élite. The ways in which liberal Protestants in Waterford viewed the act of union and came to terms with government from Westminster is of central importance to understanding how they comprehended their identity and their role in Irish society. The act of union also embodied a reform of Irish representation, as only 100 members, as opposed to the 300 members in the Irish parliament, had a seat in the imperial parliament.¹⁸ Before union, 234 out of the 300 members had represented Irish boroughs, but after union the balance shifted in favour of county representatives, who held 64 out of 100 seats. After union, County Waterford retained its two seats but the representation of Waterford city was halved to one seat. The ways this affected politics in Waterford city and county in the period directly after union is a significant issue which will be addressed.

One of the most important issues tackled in this thesis is that of Protestant-Catholic relations. Up to 1829 support for Catholic emancipation offered an area for cooperation between Catholics and liberal Protestants in Ireland. The hopes of the Irish Catholics, which had been temporarily extinguished by union, were encouraged in 1806 when the pro-Catholic Henry Grattan was returned to parliament for Dublin city.¹⁹ However, parliamentary support for the removal of remaining Catholic disabilities remained weak, and all divisions on motions for Catholic relief were heavily defeated between 1805 and 1812 (see appendix E, table E.3). Between 1808 and 1815 the Irish Catholics remained divided over the issue of Catholic 'securities', a series of measures that would include the state payment of priests and a government veto over Irish episcopal appointments in return for emancipation. One important development during these years was the emergence of Daniel O'Connell as a charismatic and popular Catholic leader. Irish Catholic fortunes were transformed in 1824, when the newly-founded Catholic Association gained strong popular support

¹⁷ Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998: politics and war* (Oxford, 1999), p. 24.

¹⁸ Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p. 26.

¹⁹ Walker, *Parliamentary elections results*, p. 210.

through the Catholic rent, a system of associate membership based on ‘a penny a month’ subscriptions. The Catholic question now became the most important Irish question at Westminster. By the mid-1820s parliamentary support for Catholic emancipation had grown, and the majority of the front bench politicians for both government and opposition in the House of Commons favoured some form of emancipation, despite widespread and continuing opposition among British public opinion.²⁰

In eighteenth-century Waterford there were relatively good relations between the different denominations in the city, and this thesis explores the ways in which this tradition of cooperation translated into liberal Protestant support for Catholic relief in the first three decades of the nineteenth century. But Irish Protestants, including the Whigs, also inherited an ascendancy tradition that was linked to notions of Protestant superiority and distrust of ‘popery’.²¹ It may be assumed that nineteenth-century Protestant views of Irish Catholics were a product of these earlier traditions, and this thesis aims to examine liberal Protestant views of Catholics and Catholicism in Waterford, and the nature of their support for Catholic emancipation. Both at local and parliamentary level, Irish Protestants were important allies in the campaign for Catholic emancipation, especially since Irish Catholics were excluded from parliament and, much of the time, from local politics.

The study of the development of Irish Catholic nationalism in this period has been a staple for historians for many years, including studies by Oliver MacDonagh, Fergus O’Ferrall and Thomas Bartlett, and the history of Irish Protestantism in this period had only recently formed the basis of serious study (see below). As such, the development of Catholic politics in this period, and particularly the campaign for Catholic emancipation, has been examined from this perspective, resulting in a failure to gain a proper perception of the part played by liberal Protestants in these years. For example, Alvin Jackson has contended that the campaign for Catholic emancipation in Waterford, and particularly the 1826 County Waterford election, was spearheaded by Daniel O’Connell, the Catholic Association and the Catholic clergy, and that the value

²⁰ McCord, *British history*, p. 32.

²¹ James Kelly, ‘The genesis of “Protestant ascendancy”: the Rightboy disturbances of the 1780s and their impact upon Protestant opinion’, in Gerard O’Brien (ed.), *Parliament, politics and people: essays in eighteenth-century Irish history* (Dublin, 1989), p. 95.

of liberal Protestants, who served only to highlight the divisions in Irish Protestantism, was limited.²² This thesis reconsiders the development of Protestant-Catholic relations from a Waterford perspective in the 1820s, and revisits the 1826 County Waterford election with the aim of considering the part played in it by liberal Protestants in the context of local and Irish Whig politics.

The development of Catholic political assertiveness in the 1820s, spurred by the activities of the Catholic Association, the Catholic rent, electoral campaigns in 1826 and 1828 and the spreading of liberal clubs, profoundly affected the approach of liberal Protestants to Catholic emancipation and civil equality. There is little doubt that to some extent liberal Protestants felt alienated and excluded from popular politics after 1828, and perhaps even as early as 1826. 'Planned by a Catholic leadership and won on the playing field of the Protestant constitution', the granting of emancipation in 1829 represented a huge symbolic victory for Irish Catholics.²³ The political impetus had effectively passed into Catholic hands by 1828, but how did this development affect liberal Protestant attitudes to Irish Catholics, with whom they had often worked in tandem for so many years? Did Waterford Protestants maintain their support for emancipation at either local or parliamentary level? Did liberal Protestants retire from the political scene, taking refuge in a revitalised Irish Toryism, as Eugene Broderick has suggested? Did all liberal Protestants react in the same way, or was there a variety of ways in which they responded to these altered political circumstances? All these questions form the basis of this study of developing Protestant-Catholic relations in Waterford in this period.

This issue is closely related to another theme: that of the growing sectarianism of Irish politics in this period. Growing Catholic confidence resulted in many leading Catholics in the late 1820s ignoring or rejecting the role played by many liberal Protestants in the emancipation campaign since the beginning of the century. For example, in August 1828 Richard Lalor Sheil, a Catholic activist with links to Waterford, complained at a Munster meeting that liberal Protestants were inclined to 'stand aloof on their own dignity', and contended that if the Irish Catholics had

²² Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, pp 32, 36 & 40.

²³ Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p. 35.

'committed a fault' towards them it was 'an excess of gratitude'.²⁴ In 1829 Thomas Wyse of Waterford contended that Irish liberal Protestants had long been 'indifferent' to existing evils, activated by 'relics of old prejudices' and little inclined to interfere in 'concerns that did not immediately affect [themselves]', to the extent that they had usurped the name of 'liberals'.²⁵ This rejection of the role played by liberal Protestants complemented Daniel O'Connell's promotion of an Irish identity based on the twin concepts of nationalism and Catholicism.²⁶ This profoundly alienated many Protestants, the majority of whom considered themselves Irish and leaders of Irish society, and forced them to reevaluate their position in Irish political life.

But as well as this, developments in Catholic politics offered both a stimulus and a paradigm for their conservative opponents.²⁷ The activities of the Catholic Association in the 1820s resulted in the establishment of Brunswick clubs in 1827 and 1828, which aimed chiefly at opposing emancipation.²⁸ The growth of the evangelical movement in the 1820s led to increased missionary activity aimed at proselytising the Catholic people and converting the masses to Protestantism. This added to Catholic suspicions of Irish Protestants and eroded opportunities for cooperation between Catholics and liberal Protestants. But the 1830s also witnessed a revival of Irish Toryism, which began to develop into a more popular and consensual political creed.²⁹ This revitalisation stemmed from a determination on the part of some Irish Tories to 'salvage something for Protestant Ireland from the wreckage of Catholic emancipation' and promoted the idea that a national feeling for Ireland was compatible with unionism.³⁰ This was complemented by the establishment of the Irish Protestant Conservative Society in 1832 and a revival of the Orange Order. These broad developments contributed to a growing sectarianism in Irish politics, in which the confessional aspects of Irish society were reinforced. Many liberal Protestants felt squeezed between increasingly exclusive Catholic popular politics on the one hand,

²⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Aug. 1828.

²⁵ Thomas Wyse, *Historical sketch of the late Catholic Association of Ireland* (2 vols, London, 1829), ii, 2-8.

²⁶ R. F. B. O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland, 1823-47: a study of O'Connellite politics and political education' (PhD thesis, T.C.D., 1978), p. 10.

²⁷ Jackson, *Ireland, 1798-1998*, p. 59.

²⁸ Jackson, *Ireland, 1798-1998*, p. 60.

²⁹ Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p. 62.

³⁰ Joseph Spence, 'Isaac Butt, Irish nationality and the conditional defence of the union, 1833-70', in D. G. Boyce & Alan O'Day (eds), *Defenders of the union: a survey of British and Irish unionism since 1801* (London, 2001), pp 66-7.

and an increasingly organised and vehement conservative Protestant response on the other. How did liberal Protestants in Waterford respond to the increasing sectarianism of Irish politics in this period? This thesis examines the responses of liberal Protestants in Waterford to these political developments, and attempts to offer a balanced and inclusive analysis of the diverse and often contradictory reactions of liberal Protestants in the late 1820s and early 1830s.

The basis of liberal Protestant support for Catholic emancipation in the 1820s was that it would remove the confessional element from Irish politics and lead to peace and prosperity. The only way this prospect could come about, to the satisfaction of liberal Protestants, would be if the Catholics proved willing to cooperate with liberal Protestants, and concede some degree of Protestant leadership in politics. Although the campaign for Catholic emancipation made demonstrations of unity among Irish Catholics indispensable before 1829, there existed different shades of opinion among Catholic leaders, and these became more evident in the early 1830s. Fergus O’Ferrall has pointed to the existence of a brand of liberal Catholicism, seeking liberal reforms without violent revolution, which found a wider audience and a readier response in the 1820s than the ideology of Young Ireland did in the 1840s.³¹ Thomas Wyse was one Catholic leader who remained liberal and unionist despite O’Connell’s calls for repeal, and he remained willing to cooperate with liberal Protestants into the 1830s. The existence of several active liberal Catholics in Waterford, including Thomas Wyse, was significant for liberal Protestants there, as these persons represented the main prospect for liberal Protestant aspirations to be realised. How was Wyse’s liberalism different to that of other Catholic leaders including Daniel O’Connell? What kind of support did he find in Waterford, and was this support extensive enough to return him to parliament when challenged both by dominant repealers and O’Connellites and by a revitalised Tory landed interest? What was the nature of Thomas Wyse’s relations with liberal Protestants? In what ways were their shared ambitions, the development of a non-sectarian form of politics, a realistic prospect in this period?

In the 1830s Irish Protestants were faced with the prospect of a campaign for a repeal of the union under Catholic leadership. The aims of the repeal campaign were ambiguous, but many repealers aimed at a repeal of the act of union and the

³¹ O’Ferrall, ‘The growth of political consciousness in Ireland’, p. 105.

establishment of a domestic parliament in Dublin. The majority of Irish Protestants in this period were unionists, if conditional ones, and when a campaign for repeal was launched in 1830, many Protestants rallied to government. The growth of Catholic influence in the 1820s, O'Connell's attacks on Irish Toryism and the Orange Order, and the growing sectarianism of Irish politics served to render the likelihood of substantial Protestant support for repeal remote.³² But in 1799 and 1800 many Irish Whigs had been opposed to the idea of union, and in the 1830s, when it was not a constant issue owing to intermittent and often vaguely directed agitation, it was not inevitable that the majority would oppose repeal. How did liberal Protestants in Waterford feel about the state of the union in the 1830s, and how did they respond to O'Connell's calls for repeal in the 1830s? How many among them were repealers and how many rallied to unionism and the government?

While repeal remained one of his political convictions, in the 1830s O'Connell tended to employ it as a means of goading the Whig government into passing reform legislation. Thus in the 1830s O'Connell aimed at gaining 'justice for Ireland', which included tithe reform and municipal and parliamentary reform.³³ This situation, in which repeal was often put on the backburner and reform was signalled as the main goal of the Catholic members of parliament, created a context in which there remained room for cooperation between Irish Catholics and Irish Whigs. Liberal Protestants in general wished for a permanent settlement of the tithe question and favoured moderate measures of municipal and parliamentary reform. But while Irish Whigs aimed at moderate reform within the existing political order, O'Connell aimed at 'the gradual demolition of Protestant ascendancy', and this put Irish Whigs on their guard.³⁴ While many sought varying degrees of reform, very few supported an overhaul of the existing political system, as this would lead to a diminution of their own political influence. This thesis is concerned with the ways in which liberal Protestants responded to the Whig government's measures of tithe and church reform, and municipal and parliamentary reform in the 1830s. How far were they willing to support divisive measures, such as the appropriation of church property, the poor law system or the extinction of the corporations? In what ways were they alienated by the opinions of

³² Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p. 40.

³³ Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p. 37.

³⁴ Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p. 40.

Irish Catholics on these issues? What room for cooperation between liberal Protestant and Catholics in Waterford remained by 1842? How far did these issues test the liberalism of the Waterford Whigs, and in what ways did their ideology develop in this period?

Answers to some of these questions will provide an image of liberal Protestantism in Waterford in the early nineteenth century, and will help to answer some of the big questions concerning Irish Protestantism. For example, how did liberal Protestants in Waterford define their relations with other groups and communities? What role did liberal Protestants consider they played in Irish society? How did they think about Ireland and 'Irishness', and what ideas defined their approach to notions of nationhood and nationalism in this period? Jennifer Ridden has pointed out that the Irish élite was divided, composed of different and competing interest groups, each of which developed distinct versions of British and Irish identity.³⁵ Two of these groups, the conservative Protestant ascendancy and the emerging Catholic political élite, have been studied extensively, but there has been little attention given to liberal Protestantism. While conservative Protestants attempted to 'crush opposition' using 'British power', and the Irish Catholics used opposition to Britain and to the Protestant religion as 'a lever for political change', liberal Protestants, according to Ridden, aimed at reforming the existing system, to make it inclusive of all major interest groups under 'an overarching British state'.³⁶ In the early nineteenth century, different and discordant concepts of nationhood were still being contested by different groups in Ireland, and it was never inevitable that an exclusive, and in many ways sectarian, identification of Catholicism with nationalism would become dominant by the end of the famine.

A thorough understanding of liberalism in Waterford in this period rests on the broader context of British and Irish politics. There are a number of very useful general studies of developments in British politics in this period, one of which is Norman McCord's *British history 1815-1906*, which gives a succinct but detailed account of

³⁵ Jennifer Ridden, 'Élite power and British political identity: the Irish élite in the "British world"', in Helen Brocklehurst & Robert Phillips (eds), *History, nationhood and the question of Britain* (Hampshire, 2004), p. 198.

³⁶ Jennifer Ridden, "'Making good citizens": national identity, religion and liberalism among the Irish elite, c.1800-50' (PhD thesis, University of London, 1998), pp 18-9.

the development of parliamentary politics in the context of wider developments.³⁷ There are a number of useful studies on British Whiggism and the development of liberalism in the nineteenth century which have been utilised here. H. T. Dickinson's article 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century' explores the ideological roots of British Whiggism, and W. A. Hay's *The Whig revival* offers an examination of the development of the Whigs as a potent parliamentary party in the early decades of the nineteenth century.³⁸ Jonathan Parry's work on nineteenth-century liberalism, *The rise and fall of liberal government in Victorian Britain* follows on from this early development to examine the approaches and attitudes of the Whigs, and later the Liberals, during the period of their political zenith.³⁹ None of these works, with the partial exception of Parry, consider the Irish context in this period. Parry analyses Irish developments in the context of British liberalism, but takes no account of the development of liberalism in Ireland during these years.

For the Irish context, some very useful general works include Alvin Jackson's detailed study of Irish politics between 1798 and 1998, which offers insights into the broad trends within Irish political history.⁴⁰ For a more detailed study of nineteenth-century Irish history, the most definitive account is perhaps offered by the various contributors of *A new history of Ireland, volume v*, which grapples with a wide variety of the most important political, social, economic and cultural issues affecting Irish life in this period.⁴¹ In the realm of parliamentary politics in this period, the most valuable accounts utilised in this thesis are those by Peter Jupp. His works on the government of Ireland and Irish members of parliament have been useful for gaining a political context against which to measure my own analysis of the activities of the Waterford Whigs in parliament.⁴² His studies of urban politics in Ireland during this period, as well as that on Irish parliamentary elections are possibly the best general analysis

³⁷ McCord, *British history, 1815-1906* (Oxford, 1991).

³⁸ H. T. Dickinson, 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century', in John Cannon (ed.), *The Whig ascendancy: colloquies on Hanoverian England* (London, 1981), pp 28-50; W. A. Hay, *The Whig revival, 1808-1830* (New York, 2004).

³⁹ Jonathan Parry, *The rise and fall of liberal government in Victorian Britain* (London, 1993).

⁴⁰ Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1708-1998: politics and war* (Oxford, 1999).

⁴¹ W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the union I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989).

⁴² Peter Jupp, 'Government, parliament and politics in Ireland, 1801-41', in Julian Hoppit (ed.), *Parliament, nations and identities in Britain and Ireland, 1660-1850* (Manchester, 2003), pp 146-68; 'Irish M.P.s at Westminster in the early nineteenth century', in J. C. Beckett (ed.) *Historical studies, vii* (London, 1969), pp 65-80.

available for this period, matched only by those of K. T. Hoppen.⁴³ In terms of local government and the politics of law and order in nineteenth-century Ireland, Virginia Crossman has provided perhaps the most useful studies.⁴⁴

The history of Irish Protestantism in the nineteenth century remains patchy. Most modern works on Irish Protestantism in this period have concentrated on certain aspects of Irish Protestant life, and few of these consider the development of liberal Protestantism in this period. Studies by D. H. Akenson, Desmond Bowen and Edward Brynn have examined the history of the Church of Ireland in the nineteenth century, and have examined the responses of Irish Protestants to issues such as evangelicalism, education, tithes and church reform.⁴⁵ These works have provided a detailed general history of the Church of Ireland and the issues affecting Irish Protestants in this period. But they have tended to view all Irish Protestants in this period as an unresponsive and even reactionary body, nor is there much analysis of liberal or reforming trends in Irish Protestantism outside the Church of Ireland. Martin McElroy has published an extremely useful and insightful article on the responses of landed Protestants to developments in Catholic politics in the 1820s and 1830s.⁴⁶ Jennifer Ridden has offered an interesting account of the aims and ambitions of Irish Protestants, as well as of Irish Catholics, during the 'age of reform'.⁴⁷

There are several very useful works that consider Irish Protestantism in urban centres in this period. The most definitive in scope and detail is probably Jacqueline Hill's study of development of Protestant political ideologies in Dublin between 1690

⁴³ Jupp, 'Urban politics in Ireland, 1801-1831', in Harkness and O'Dowd (eds), *The town in Ireland, Historical Studies*, xiii (Belfast, 1981), pp 103-123; 'Irish parliamentary elections and the influence of the Catholic vote, 1801-20', in *Historical Journal*, x, no. 2 (1967), pp 183-96; *British and Irish elections 1784-1831* (Devon, 1973); K. T. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832-85* (Oxford, 1984); 'Politics, the law, and the nature of the Irish electorate 1832-1850', in *English Historical Review*, xcii (1977), pp 746-76.

⁴⁴ Virginia Crossman, *Local government in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Belfast, 1994); *Politics, law and order in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 1996).

⁴⁵ D. H. Akenson, *The Church of Ireland: ecclesiastical reform and revolution, 1800-85* (New Haven & London, 1971); Desmond Bowen, *The Protestant crusade in Ireland, 1800-70: a study of Protestant-Catholic relations between the Act of Union and Disestablishment* (Dublin, 1978); Edward Brynn, *The Church of Ireland in the age of Catholic emancipation* (London, 1982).

⁴⁶ Martin McElroy, 'The local Protestant landed elite and the impact of O'Connellism, 1826-35', in *Irish history: a research yearbook* (Dublin, 2002), pp 65-74.

⁴⁷ Jennifer Ridden, 'Irish reform between the 1798 rebellion and the Great Famine', in Arthur Burns and Joanna Innes (eds) *Rethinking the age of reform, Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), pp 271-294.

and 1830.⁴⁸ Ian d'Alton has offered a useful account of Protestant politics in Cork in the early nineteenth century, and this is particularly significant for considering the distinct nature of urban Protestantism in the south of Ireland in this period.⁴⁹ Jennifer Ridden's work on the emergence of liberal Protestantism in Limerick city between 1800 and 1850 is also of particular importance to this study, as it is the only other work specifically concentrated on the development of liberal Protestantism in this period, despite the inapplicability of much of it to Waterford because of wide regional distinctions.⁵⁰ It is owing to these distinctions, as well as to the local orientation of many Irish Protestants in this period, as well as to the types of source material available, that this thesis concentrates on a particular place of study. An examination of liberal Protestantism in Waterford is offered in the hope that the distinctive nature of Waterford Protestantism will lead to a greater understanding of Irish Protestantism's regional distinctions and peculiarities.

As mentioned above, there has been a traditional focus in studies of early nineteenth-century Ireland on the development of Catholic politics and the emergence of Catholic nationalism. Thomas Bartlett's *The fall and rise of the Irish nation* has explored the development of Catholic Ireland in the eighteenth century, and has traced the Catholic question in British politics up to 1830.⁵¹ Similarly, C. D. A. Leighton has examined Catholic ideologies during the *ancien régime* in Ireland and has followed the changes in how Irish Catholics approached both the British government and Irish Protestants in the eighteenth century.⁵² In several seminal works Fergus O'Ferrall has traced the development of political education, the birth of democracy and the evolution of nationalism in Ireland, but all of these works have concentrated largely on developments in Catholic politics.⁵³ G. I. T. Machin has offered an analysis of the

⁴⁸ Jacqueline Hill, *From patriots to unionists: Dublin civic politics and Irish Protestant patriotism, 1660-1840* (Oxford, 1997).

⁴⁹ Ian d'Alton, *Protestant society and politics in Cork, 1812-1844* (Cork, 1980).

⁵⁰ Jennifer Ridden, "'Making good citizens': national identity, religion and liberalism among the Irish elite, c.1800-50" (PhD thesis, University of London, 1998).

⁵¹ Thomas Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation, the Catholic question 1690-1830* (Dublin, 1992).

⁵² C. D. A. Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant kingdom: a study of the Irish ancien régime* (London, 1994).

⁵³ Fergus O'Ferrall, *Catholic emancipation; Daniel O'Connell and the birth of Irish democracy 1820-30* (Dublin, 1985); *Daniel O'Connell* (Dublin, 1981); 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland, 1823-47: a study of O'Connellite politics and political education' (PhD thesis, Trinity College, 1978).

impact of the Catholic question on English politics in this period.⁵⁴ There are however two important works by O’Ferrall on the evolution of liberal Catholicism in Ireland, and these have been extremely useful for this study. His ‘Liberty and Catholic politics, 1790-1990’ offers a general study of the development of liberal Catholicism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, while part of his PhD thesis analyses the origins, nature and achievements of liberal Catholicism in Ireland between 1800 and 1847.⁵⁵ Robert Sloan has published a very useful article on ‘O’Connell’s liberal rivals’, which analyses the activities of several Irish liberals, including Thomas Wyse and William Smith O’Brien, in the early 1840s.⁵⁶

In terms of the history of Waterford, there are several significant and detailed studies in existence, the bulk of which are PhD theses. Brian Kirby’s examination of civic politics in Waterford city in the eighteenth century has provided a detailed context in which to set my own study of nineteenth-century politics.⁵⁷ Eugene Broderick’s study on the fortunes of the Church of Ireland in Waterford between 1819 and 1872 offers a great deal of useful analysis about the composition and concerns of Waterford Protestants in this period, although there is little analysis of the political ideologies of these Protestants. Neither is there an attempt to place the opinions of Waterford Protestants in an Irish or British context.⁵⁸ John Hearne’s analysis of the Waterford economy between 1780 and 1852 has been extremely useful in gaining a rounded image of economic and commercial developments in Waterford, especially in relation to the fortunes of the Protestant commercial élite in these years. While he does offer an analysis of corporate and electoral politics, Hearne is predominantly interested in the development of Catholic politics in the city, and little space is given to the evolution of Protestant politics in the same period.⁵⁹ Jennifer Boyle’s undergraduate thesis on Waterford Chamber of Commerce offers a useful history of this body in the early years of its existence, especially as the only published work on the chamber, Des

⁵⁴G. I. T. Machin, *The Catholic question in English politics from 1820 to 1830* (Oxford, 1964).

⁵⁵O’Ferrall, ‘Liberty and Catholic politics, 1790-1990’, in M. R. O’Connell (ed.), *Daniel O’Connell: political pioneer* (Dublin, 1991), pp 35-56; ‘The growth of political consciousness in Ireland, 1823-47: a study of O’Connellite politics and political education’ (PhD thesis, T.C.D., 1978).

⁵⁶Robert Sloan, ‘O’Connell’s liberal rivals in 1843’, in *I.H.S.*, xxx, no. 117 (1996), pp 47-65.

⁵⁷Brian Kirby, ‘Civic politics and parliamentary representation in Waterford city, 1730-1807’ (PhD thesis, N.U.I.M., 2002).

⁵⁸Eugene Broderick, ‘Waterford’s Anglicans: religion and politics, 1819-1872’ (PhD thesis, U.C.C., 2000).

⁵⁹J. M. Hearne, ‘Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852’ (PhD thesis, U.C.C., 2001).

Cowman's *Perceptions and promotions*, is unsatisfactory for serious academic scholarship.⁶⁰ Eamonn McEneaney has offered an accessible and interesting history of Waterford's mayors, and although it is rather too general to be of great use, an appendix listing mayors of Waterford from 1284 to 1996 has been very useful.⁶¹ As well as these, there are a number of valuable articles published in *Waterford, history and society*, the most significant of which are probably Kenneth Milne's 'The corporation of Waterford in the eighteenth century' and Thomas Power's 'Electoral politics in Waterford city, 1692-1832'.⁶²

The development of liberalism in Ireland has until recently been a much neglected topic in nineteenth-century studies, and there remains much scope for further research. Therefore, as suggested above, the secondary sources used in this study have come from wide range of studies. What little study has been given to the emergence of Irish liberal Protestantism has tended to be general in nature, and there is much scope for an examination of its origins, development and responses in this period. This study will highlight the fact that there was a range of reactions among Irish Protestants to local and parliamentary politics in these years, and that not all Irish Protestants, and not even all liberal Protestants, reacted in the same way to the political developments of the period. In the context of studies of Irish Protestantism, this study will give a greater definition to the regional and provincial differences in Irish Protestantism in this period, and hopefully provide greater insights into its political development. It will also provide an analysis of the reforming tendencies of some Irish Protestants during these years.

The limited number of available secondary sources on liberal Protestantism has meant that primary sources have been of great importance, and there is no shortage of extant primary sources available for such a study as this. The most significant manuscript sources relating to the activities of the political élite during these years are found within Waterford City Archives. The minute books of Waterford Corporation,

⁶⁰ Jennifer Boyle, 'The origins and development of Waterford Chamber of Commerce, 1787-1820' (Undergraduate thesis, T.C.D., 2006); Des Cowman, *Perceptions and promotions, the role of Waterford Chamber of Commerce, 1787-1987* (Waterford, 1988).

⁶¹ Eamonn McEneaney, *A history of Waterford and its mayors from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries* (Waterford, 1995).

⁶² Kenneth Milne, 'The corporation of Waterford in the eighteenth century'; Thomas Power, 'Electoral politics in Waterford city, 1692-1832', in Nolan and Power (eds), *Waterford, history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1992), pp 227-64 & 331-50.

(complete for this period) and Waterford Chamber of Commerce (almost complete) provide valuable insights into the everyday workings of these municipal bodies.⁶³ These minutes also reveal glimpses of the corporation's attitude to local commerce and their relations with the chamber, as well as their response to political developments such as parliamentary reform or repeal of the union. However, there is much that these minutes do not record, and in terms of analysing relations and power struggles within the corporation and the chamber, much must be inferred from other evidence, such as election addresses and the freeman petitions. Also available at this archive is a set of petitions to the freedom of Waterford city.⁶⁴ These are crucially important for an examination of the social and economic composition of the city electorate, the bulk of whom were freemen. But the fact that these petitions are undated poses some problems for anybody hoping to come up with reliable statistics, and the fact that, as a general rule, the petitions did not record the religion of the applicant poses other problems. Other official documents and papers such as the corporate leases provide specific details relating to political and economic life.

Local newspapers were of crucial importance to this study, and a complete set of all three contemporary newspapers may be found in Waterford Municipal Library. A further incomplete set is available in the National Library of Ireland. The *Waterford Mirror*, owned and edited by a liberal Protestant, Richard Farrell, was particularly significant for gaining an insight into liberal Protestant attitudes in Waterford in this period. The *Waterford Chronicle* (properly called *Ramsey's Waterford Chronicle* before 1824) for the beginning of this period was run by a liberal Protestant, James R. Birnie, but he was bought out in 1824 by the Catholic Barron family, and thereafter the newspaper became an effective mouthpiece for Catholic and O'Connellite politics.⁶⁵ The *Waterford Mail*, owned by Robert Fleury and edited by William Dart, was established in 1823 and remained a mouthpiece for conservative Protestant opinion throughout this period, though it was never as successful in terms of sales as the other two local newspapers.⁶⁶ There were no county newspapers in this period (the first

⁶³ Waterford Corporation minute books, 1770-1849 (W.C.A. MSS LA1/1/A/13-6); Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute books, 1804-44 (W.C.A. MSS WCOC 1/02; 2/01 & 3/01-2).

⁶⁴ Freeman list, 1700-1850 (W.C.A., database).

⁶⁵ *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 321.

⁶⁶ *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 321; J. S. Carroll, 'Old Waterford Newspapers', in *Decies*, xxii (1983), p. 55.

county newspaper, the short-lived *Munster Citizen*, was established in Dungarvan in 1852) and the city newspapers were read across the county and as far away as Wexford, Kilkenny and Cork. While the *Waterford Mirror* offers some glimpses of liberal Protestant attitudes in this period, it was (unsurprisingly) not so vituperative or overtly partisan in its columns as the other newspapers, and often more useful insights into political relations in the city may be gleaned from the scathing comments printed regularly in the *Waterford Chronicle*.

Various holdings of personal papers contain many letters penned by individuals active in Waterford politics in the early nineteenth century. Among the most important of these is the correspondence of Sir John Newport, which is divided between the National Library of Ireland and Queen's University Belfast.⁶⁷ Sir John Newport was the Whig representative for Waterford city between 1803 and 1832, and his letters to various figures in local and parliamentary politics provide a unique insight into the attitude of a leading liberal Protestant in Waterford during these years. The papers of Thomas Wyse, available in the National Library of Ireland, are an extensive and extremely useful source for examining Protestant-Catholic relations in Waterford, especially the developments that occurred over the course of the 1820s.⁶⁸ There is an especially good record here of the correspondence concerning the 1826 election in County Waterford, in which a liberal Protestant, Henry Villiers Stuart, and his election committee successfully challenged the sitting Tory member, Lord George Thomas Beresford. The published correspondence of Daniel O'Connell is also of huge importance in analysing liberal Protestant attitudes to O'Connell and his policies during these years.⁶⁹ However, my initial hopes in this field were dampened somewhat as there is little direct evidence here in terms of letters penned to O'Connell by Waterford liberal Protestants or vice versa, and O'Connell's correspondents in Waterford were almost uniformly Catholic. Therefore, this evidence must be complemented with other sources to gain a more complete insight. Other important collections of personal correspondence include the papers of Thomas Spring Rice, the John Matthew Galwey papers, and the Villiers Stuart papers, available in the National

⁶⁷ Newport papers (N.L.I. MS 796) & (Q.U.B., MS 7).

⁶⁸ Wyse papers (N.L.I. MSS 14,349; 15,005; 15,023; 15,024; 15,025 & 15,028).

⁶⁹ M. R. O'Connell (ed.), *The correspondence of Daniel O'Connell* (8 vols, Dublin, 1974-80).

Library of Ireland and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.⁷⁰ In particular the Villiers Stuart papers offer a unique insight into the workings of a large landed estate in nineteenth-century Ireland. Further correspondence, especially between Sir John Newport and other members of parliament and government, is available in the Fortescue papers, published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission.⁷¹

A number of contemporary pamphlets and printed material offered contextual evidence for this study. Among the most important were studies of the Catholic question. Those written by the liberal Protestant brothers Sir Henry and William Parnell between 1805 and 1819 proved the most enlightening, and have been used extensively in the early part of this thesis in analysing the roots of liberal Protestant support for Catholic relief in the nineteenth century.⁷² Disappointingly, there were no pamphlets written by Waterford Protestants in this period, but their attitudes might be glimpsed obliquely through other sources. Sir John Newport's *A slight peep into the church vestry system in Ireland* (1826) is concerned with the vestry reform, suggesting a positive attitude to Catholic participation in some areas of political and religious life.⁷³ Newport's *The state of borough representation of Ireland* (1832) is concerned primarily with the widespread abuses that occurred at the time of the union, and was written with a view to convincing contemporaries of the need for municipal and parliamentary reform.⁷⁴ There are various useful pamphlets written by Waterford Catholics in this period, which give the local context for national issues. Dr John Power, bishop of Waterford, wrote a series of letters in 1808 and 1809 on the royal veto, attempting both to garner support among the Catholic laity for the hierarchy's decision to oppose all suggestions for a veto, and to justify this position to Protestants in Waterford.⁷⁵ Along with his correspondence to Sir John Newport on the issue (part of the Newport papers in the National Library of Ireland) this offers the historian a unique insight into Protestant-Catholic relations during the veto controversy. Patrick

⁷⁰ Monteagle papers (N.L.I. MSS 13,353; 13,362; 13,370; 13,372 & 13,375); Galwey papers (N.L.I. MS 15,554); Villiers Stuart papers (N.L.I. MS 15,005) & (P.R.O.N.I. MS T3131).

⁷¹ H.M.C., *Fortescue MSS* (10 vols. London, 1892-27), vi-x.

⁷² Sir Henry Parnell, *A history of the penal laws against the Catholics; from the year 1689 to the union* (London, 1808 & 1825); William Parnell, *An historical apology for the Irish Catholics* (Dublin, 1807); *An inquiry into the causes of popular discontents in Ireland* (2nd ed., London & Dublin, 1805); *Maurice and Berghetta, or the priest of Rahery* (London, 1819).

⁷³ Sir John Newport, *A slight peep into the church vestry system in Ireland* (London, 1826).

⁷⁴ Sir John Newport, *The state of borough representation of Ireland in 1783 and 1800* (Dublin, 1832).

⁷⁵ Fidelis [Dr John Power] *Letters on the royal veto* (Waterford, 1809).

Morris's *Six letters, intended to prove that the repeal of the Act of Union and the establishment of a local legislature in Ireland are necessary to cement the connection with Great Britain* (1831), addressed to Sir John Newport, aimed at garnering liberal Protestant support in Waterford for repeal of the act of union.⁷⁶

For the parliamentary context, a different selection of primary sources was employed. *Hansard's parliamentary debates*, series one to three, proved of vital importance for gaining a complete analysis of the activities, attitudes and policies of the parliamentary Whigs from Waterford, and a database has been built of the speeches of Whigs Sir John Newport, Edward Lee, Henry Villiers Stuart and Sir Richard Musgrave during the period when these gentlemen represented the city and county.⁷⁷ The evidence of Waterford Protestants given before various parliamentary select committees and commissions was of great importance for examining how liberal Protestants in Waterford responded to various government policies and measures during these years. The most important available source here was probably John Musgrave's evidence given before the Commons select committee on the state of the poor in Ireland in 1830, which outlined Musgrave's ideas concerning land use, land ownership, poor relief and public works in Ireland.⁷⁸ The report of the commissioners of municipal corporations, published in 1835, revealed the abuses of Waterford Corporation, and was very useful for gaining an insight into local politics when used in conjunction with the daily reports published in the local newspapers.⁷⁹ The parliamentary reports and their appendices of evidence were also of great importance for gaining useful statistics about Waterford city and county during these years. For example, the first reliable survey of religious affiliation was undertaken by the commissioners of public instruction in 1835, giving the historian of Protestant Waterford dependable statistics on which to base their analysis.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Patrick Morris, *Six letters, intended to prove that the repeal of the Act of Union and the establishment of a local legislature in Ireland are necessary to cement the connection with Great Britain; and containing a short view of the trade, manufactures, and agriculture of Ireland; addressed to the right honourable Sir John Newport M.P.* (Waterford, 1831).

⁷⁷ *Hansard 1*, i-xli; *Hansard 2*, i-xx; *Hansard 3*, i-xlii.

⁷⁸ *First report of evidence from the committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (589), vii, 173.

⁷⁹ *The first report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 579.

⁸⁰ *First report of the commissioners of religious and other public instruction in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (45), xxxiii, 1.

Finally, there exists a range of contemporary publications on the history of Waterford itself, and these proved very useful for gaining a view of how Waterford city and county was viewed by its inhabitants in the early nineteenth century. Charles Smith's *The ancient and present state of the county and city of Waterford* (1795) offers a relatively detailed account of the history of Waterford up to the period directly before the one covered in this thesis, and contains several beautiful maps of the city and county (see map).⁸¹ Richard Ryland's *History, topography and antiquities of Waterford city and county* (1824) offers a fascinating if dated examination of the flora and fauna of the county, but it contains little on the politics of the period.⁸² Neither offers any real or reliable detail about political attitudes or the development of political ideas in this period. In the 1930s Canon Patrick Power published a diocesan history of Waterford and Lismore, but, as Brian Kirby had commented, 'the author seemed preoccupied in perpetuating a specific understanding of interdenominational relations written from a nationalist and Catholic standpoint', and as such is of little real value to this study.⁸³

Thus there is a wide range of primary sources available for a study such as this. There is little recognition in contemporary works on the development of Protestant political sentiment, and certainly no recognition of the importance of Waterford as a centre of Whig values during these years. This is one gap that this thesis will attempt to fill. There is however a mine of material in the way of private papers and personal correspondence, as well as parliamentary speeches, and there is certainly enough interesting material to warrant a study of liberal politics in Waterford. There are sufficient sources available to take a study of this kind further. For example, there is yet no biography of Sir John Newport, who was an important figure in British Whig politics during this period, and there is ample source material to support a more detailed study than it is possible to provide here. One of the weaknesses of the available source material is the lack of poll books or other means of gathering reliable statistical data on the numbers of liberal Protestants in Waterford in this period. While

⁸¹ Charles Smith, *The ancient and present state of the county and city of Waterford* (3rd ed., Waterford, 1795 & 2008).

⁸² Rev Richard Ryland, *The history, topography and antiquities of Waterford city and county* (Waterford, 1824).

⁸³ Canon Patrick Power, *Waterford and Lismore: a compendious history of the united dioceses* (Dublin, 1937); Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 5.

it is possible to examine the activities and attitudes of the leading Whigs in the city and county, support for their policies among a wider section of the population must be measured in other ways: in the success of these Whigs at election time, by the size and composition of Protestant meetings, or through comments made in the various city newspapers.

Using these sources, the following seven chapters attempt to answer some of the questions posed in this introduction. Chapter one considers the nature of early nineteenth-century Irish liberalism in the context of its eighteenth-century ideological roots, and goes some way to uncovering its Irish patriot and British Whig foundations. This chapter also considers the importance of Waterford as a thriving political and commercial centre with a history of good inter-denominational relations. The nature of the Protestant political élite in Waterford is considered, as is the history of its civic institutions. Chapter two is concerned with following the early development of liberal Protestantism in the local context. Owing to the exclusive nature of politics in this period, the main focus rests on Waterford's Protestant power-holding élite, and especially on the world of corporate politics. While some aspects of the corporate world had been weakened by eighteenth-century developments, the language of corporatism and the associated political privileges remained substantially intact.⁸⁴ Thus, the fostering of liberal values among members of Waterford Corporation, which challenged the traditional language of rights based on birth or service, is particularly significant here. A second theme considers liberal Protestant relations with local Catholics. An understanding of their stance on the Catholic question is central to any thorough understanding of liberal Protestantism in this period.

Chapter three considers the importance of the Irish Whigs in the parliamentary sphere. The activities of Waterford liberal Protestants in parliament are examined with a view to discerning their stances on the most important political question of the period, and the activities and voting patterns of Waterford M.P.s in these years suggest that liberal thought in Waterford reflected wider developments in the Irish and British spheres. Specific concentration is fixed on the parliamentary career of Sir John Newport, by far the most active, vocal and ideologically complex of the Waterford

⁸⁴ Jacqueline Hill, 'Corporatist ideology and practice in Ireland, 1660-1800', in S. J. Connolly (ed.), *Political ideas in the eighteenth century* (Dublin, 2000), p. 80.

Whig members in this period. Chapter four examines the nature of liberal Protestant support for Catholic relief in the early part of the century. It considers the challenges to this support posed by the veto controversy, but it also tracks the growing support for Catholic relief among the Protestant élite in Waterford. The participation of Irish liberal Protestants during the early stages of the campaign for Catholic emancipation had an important impact on the direction of Catholic politics. Liberal Protestants were wholly responsible for the introduction and progress of the question in parliament, and they contributed at local level by attending Catholic meetings, holding Protestant meetings, and petitioning parliament for Catholic relief.

After analysing the nature and evolution of liberal Protestantism in the early years of the century, the final three chapters consider the responses of liberal Protestants to political developments between 1826 and 1842. Chapter five considers the significance of liberal Protestant support for Catholic emancipation in the 1820s, especially during the parliamentary election for County Waterford in 1826. It also considers the changing nature of liberal Protestant support for Catholic emancipation in the context of developments in Catholic politics during the second half of the 1820s, and attempts to chart the increasingly marginal position of Irish liberal Protestants during these years. In these years, the existence of active liberal Catholics in Waterford was significant, as liberal Protestants depended on these Catholics to a great extent in their attempt to retain a leading role in Irish political life. Chapter six examines liberal Protestant reactions to developments in national and Catholic politics in the 1830s, specifically to the campaigns for the settlement of the tithe question and for a repeal of the union. It considers Protestant responses to the era of mass politics and Catholic activism, and the problems posed to the established order and élite identity by the advent of a nascent Catholic nationalism. Chapter seven attempts to chart liberal Protestant responses to the Whig reform measures of the 1830s, including the 1832 reform act and the poor laws, along with church and municipal reform. As the 1830s progressed the attitude of Irish liberal Protestants became more ambivalent in the face of growing pressure to reform what were viewed as the Protestant institutions in church and state, and the various reactions of liberal Protestants in the face of sweeping change forms the core of this final chapter.

Chapter one: Politics, religion and the origins of liberal Protestantism in Waterford.

Part one: The origins of nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism:

This chapter considers the development of liberal values among nineteenth-century Irish Protestants in the context of earlier ideological developments. The experience of Irish Protestants in the late eighteenth century, in the context of developing republican thinking, the French Revolution, the Volunteers and the United Irishmen set the stage for the development of liberal thinking in the nineteenth century. The British Whigs, who were closely observed by the opposition in the Irish parliament throughout the eighteenth century, also had an impact on Irish liberalism, but British Whiggism was altered in significant ways to fit Irish circumstances. The actions of the government itself, especially their support for granting Catholics some political rights from 1793, also had an impact on an Irish Protestantism that prided itself on its loyalty to the British crown and constitution. The languages of debate from the 1770s to the 1790s altered the character of Irish liberal Protestant ideas, especially when it came to notions of the ‘people’, parliamentary reform and the place of Catholics in the political sphere. J. C. D. Clark has based the formulation of nineteenth-century English liberalism securely in the 1820s, with the destruction of the theological premises of the *ancien régime*, and the articulation of a secular definition of liberalism.¹ But while Clark’s definition of English secular liberalism may preclude any study of eighteenth-century developments, it is significant that the roots of *Irish* liberal Protestantism may be found very much in eighteenth-century ideologies.

So where did the ideological roots of Irish liberals lie? Neither in Ireland nor in Britain was Whiggism ever ‘a rigid body of principles that dictated precisely how men should respond to every political issue’, the term ‘Whig’ in the eighteenth century was a flexible and often ambiguous one, used of almost all front-bench politicians, whether in government or opposition – men such as the marquis of Rockingham, Charles James Fox and Charles Grey – which poses considerable difficulties for the historian of

¹ J. C. D. Clark, *Revolution and rebellion: state and society in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 102.

Whiggism.² The Whigs in Britain appeared in the seventeenth century as opponents of the accession of James II and became the most loyal supporters of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The radical implications of the original concept of Whiggism, which viewed the relations between rulers and ruled as a social contract, was followed only by a minority of 'Commonwealthmen', while Whigs in government became increasingly oligarchic during the course of the proceeding century. The Whigs evolved into a party of government in the 1690s, and after 1714 were the only party of government. Irish Whigs followed their British counterparts in defending 'Revolution principles'.

The early Whig view of man was essentially a Lockian one: man was inherently selfish, but was capable of improvement if passion was controlled by reason.³ By the nineteenth century this was developing into a belief in progress, and the value placed on the ability to improve and the possibility of reaching a 'final perfection', both at personal and civic level, governed the approach of the Irish Whigs to Irish Catholics and dissenters.⁴ This was tempered by a strong belief in social order based on a hierarchal system of government, but Whigs fully understood that these principles of liberty and order often came into conflict.⁵ The Whigs aimed at creating a perfect balance between liberty and order through preserving a limited monarchy, with a system of representative government through the king, lords and commons, to safeguard social order from both tyranny and corruption. In Ireland, the nominal parliamentary 'independence' gained in 1782 was crucial to the development of Irish Whiggism, and this independence was romanticised (even before the act of union) by a political élite whose values centred on the idea of freedom through constitutional reform. The Whigs believed that their 'Tory' opponents, supportive of the divine right of kings and absolute monarchy, offered rule only by vested interests, and thus proved themselves incapable of ruling for the general benefit.

The Whig belief in 'disinterested' government, as the best way for all classes of society to be represented, led to support for a strong and equitable code of law. A code of law, if impartially applied, had the capacity to reform society and dispose of its

² H. T. Dickinson, 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century', in John Cannon (ed.), *The Whig ascendancy: colloquies on Hanoverian England* (London, 1981), pp 28-9.

³ Dickinson, 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century', p. 32.

⁴ Irene Collins, *Liberalism in nineteenth-century Europe* (London, 1957), p. 4.

⁵ Dickinson, 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century', p. 31

more divisive elements, through bringing all classes of persons to respect the liberty it engendered. Much of this passed into nineteenth-century Liberalism, which according to Jonathan Parry 'meant a political system in which a large number of potentially incompatible interests...were mature enough to accept an over-arching code of law which guaranteed each a wide variety of liberties'.⁶ Yet Whiggism in Britain and Ireland was an élite ideology. Those with 'independent' (i.e. landed) wealth were those best suited to lead the people, and property was both the qualification for, and the mark of, active citizenship.⁷ Until the nineteenth century, ownership of land and membership of corporations was more important, in political terms, than weight of numbers. Elemental faith in social hierarchy and the maintenance of social ranks disinclined the Whigs to consider the 'mob' as qualified for inclusion in the political nation, and Whig references to the 'people' inferred a much narrower proportion of the population. In Ireland this found much support among a portion of the propertied (largely Protestant) élite anxious to justify their leadership and provide stable government. Whig ideas of reform were based along representative rather than democratic lines, and neither in Ireland or Britain did Whigs support political initiatives which had the potential to undermine the hierarchal nature of society. Political equality would inevitably lead to demands for 'social levelling and economic egalitarianism', resulting in social revolution and civil war.⁸ This explains to a certain extent the disinclination of Irish Whigs to take up the causes of parliamentary reform and political rights for Catholics prior to the British government's attention to these questions in the early 1790s.

British Whiggism was given added validity by linking it back through history to the Glorious Revolution, which provided them with a firm basis for government by consent. To Whigs this meant limiting the power of the crown without conceding sovereignty to the citizens at large.⁹ The language of ancient constitutionalism provided a means by which Whigs could legitimise a political position that diverged in significant ways from the dominant modes of thought of the *ancien régime*. The language of ancient constitutionalism was employed by Irish Patriots, who blended it with languages of civic republicanism and conquest theory to give Ireland a historical connection to Britain that implied equality rather than inferiority. This language was

⁶ Jonathan Parry, *The rise and fall of liberal government in Victorian Britain* (London, 1993), p. 3.

⁷ Dickinson, 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century', pp 34-5; A. D. Kriegal, 'Liberty and Whiggery in early nineteenth-century England', *Journal of Modern History*, lii (1980), pp 253-78.

⁸ Dickinson, 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century', p. 35.

⁹ Dickinson, 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century', p. 38.

dominant up to the winning of nominal legislative independence in 1782 and beyond, and was inherited by nineteenth-century Irish liberal Protestants.

Irish Patriotism, championed in the 1740s and 1750s by Charles Lucas, who drew on the writings of Molyneux and Swift, had gained a broad base of both Catholic and Protestant support by the 1770s. Patriotism combined the concepts of rights and liberties with support for the country's interests. For some Irish Protestants, patriotism was compatible with the connection with Britain. The blending of the Irish patriot 'love of country' with a loyalty to the British government in Ireland was a central development of Irish Whiggism in the late eighteenth century. One of the achievements of Irish patriotism was to combine the most useful elements of classical language with an individualistic recognition that patriotism must also be based on self-interest, property and trade.¹⁰ The credentials of 'virtue' shifted during this period, in part under the influence of the increasingly assertive middle classes, and the eighteenth-century distrust of commerce was replaced by the belief that improved trade and commerce would in turn create a happier and more virtuous society.¹¹

Irish Whigs followed the patriot line in adopting a belief in balanced government, consisting of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy.¹² The British model of king, lords and commons, which had the capacity to fit this archetype, was believed to have been thrown out of balance by executive dominance. Irish Whig championing of parliamentary reform in the 1790s was aimed fundamentally at counterbalancing the interests of executive government. But as much as the Whigs feared absolute monarchy, Whiggism was an aristocratic creed in which 'the bulk of the population debarred from an active political role because they lacked the necessary independence'.¹³ The Whig notion of 'virtue', the classical republican view that all citizens had the capacity for 'liberty', was perceived to lie in the balanced constitution. Like their British counterparts, Irish Whigs believed that democracy was inherently unstable and 'would inevitably degenerate into anarchy'.¹⁴ It was only towards the end of the eighteenth century that Irish Whigs began to recognise the connection between

¹⁰ Stephen Small, *Political thought in Ireland, 1776-1798, republicanism, patriotism and radicalism* (Oxford, 2002), p. 102.

¹¹ Dickinson, 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century', p. 36.

¹² For a greater analysis of this topic, see Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, pp 13-47.

¹³ Jacqueline Hill, *From patriots to unionists: Dublin civic politics and Irish Protestant patriotism, 1660-1840* (Oxford, 1997), p. 14.

¹⁴ Dickinson, 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century', pp 30-1.

personal liberty and political participation, regardless of traditional rights. But in the 1790s, an Irish Whig tradition that placed much value on declarations of loyalty to the monarch came into conflict with an increasingly anti-monarchical republicanism. Lockean and Painite ideas of popular sovereignty and popular participation in politics, eventually incorporating social contract theory and the right to resist, remained inconsistent with the Whig ideals of mixed government and civic virtue.¹⁵ In the nineteenth century this was reflected in liberal Protestant reactions to the tactics of mass mobilisation so effectively employed by Daniel O'Connell during the campaign for Catholic emancipation.

The confessional nature of Irish politics served to forge a close link between the monarchy, the Protestant aristocracy and the established church.¹⁶ The Protestantism of the political élite in Ireland was intrinsic to their identity, and proclamations of loyalty to the crown went beyond mere rhetoric; they were fundamental to the Protestant self-image. Irish Protestants participated in an active culture of loyalty, through parades and pageants. When in July 1801 they decided to move a portrait of George III across the city from the Exchange to the Town Hall, the Protestants of Waterford held a 'splendid' procession, in which the corporation, cavalry and citizens paraded down the quay, which was lined with Louth militia.¹⁷ Despite the confessional nature of Irish politics, the arguments used by the Protestant élite in defence of their dominant position were essentially Erastian (i.e. not theological) in nature. Erastian arguments remained central to the Protestant defence of their rights and privileges down to emancipation in 1829.¹⁸

In parliament, an Irish Whig 'party' had developed in the 1780s with the Ponsonbys, a Protestant landed family from County Kilkenny, offering the potential nucleus of a sister party to the English Whigs. During the regency crisis in 1789 a Whig 'party' emerged, uniting the Ponsonbys with many parliamentary patriots, who supported the claims of the Prince of Wales to the regency. By 1790 Whig clubs had been established in the larger cities and towns. Those established in Dublin in June

¹⁵ But it is significant to note that while tensions existed between classical republican thinking and more radical ideas of republicanism and democracy in the late 1790s, both ideas stemmed from a Whig tradition; Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, pp 19-35.

¹⁶ C. D. A. Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant kingdom: a study of the Irish ancien régime* (London, 1994), p. 160.

¹⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 & 22 July 1801.

¹⁸ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 340.

1789 and in Belfast in February 1790 were generally middle class in character, but smaller clubs in other urban centres were largely dominated by aristocratic and landed interests. At this point Irish Whiggism was neither synonymous with nor entirely exclusive of Irish patriotism, and there was room for cooperation between proponents of both ideologies. An anonymous pamphlet entitled *A fair exposition of the principles of the Whig club* (1790) recognised the ‘motley and diversified’ nature of the Irish Whigs, noting their ‘various and contradictory’ opinions and pursuits, which existed to such an extent that the maxims of the Whig club were ‘ill understood, even by themselves’.¹⁹ The Irish Whigs advocated the reduction of government patronage, the exclusion of office holders from parliament and financial accountability.²⁰ This development was bolstered in the early nineteenth century by an evocation of this period of ‘independence’. In Waterford, as elsewhere in Britain and Ireland, there developed a cult of Charles James Fox, and memories of the apotheosis of the Foxite Whigs was blended with a romantic view of ‘Grattan’s parliament’ in Ireland to create a Whig myth utilised by liberal Protestants. Analyses from various sources of the ‘character’ of Fox were published relatively often in the *Waterford Mirror*, and a eulogy on his death contended that he, ‘the great ornament of the kingdom of England’, had so ‘excelled’ as a parliamentary leader as ‘his heart beat in accord to sentiments of liberty’.²¹

In 1793 the British government tackled the issue of political rights for Catholics. In Ireland public opinion was unprepared for any significant official shift on the Catholic question, and even the most radical Irish Protestants were by no means agreed on the subject. Those Protestants who were anxious to preserve the political *status quo* became distinctly apprehensive. But even in 1792 Irish Catholics had still made no explicit request for political rights, and the whole issue was so sensitive that it had yet to be openly debated in the Irish parliament. Once it became known that the British government was prepared to make political concessions to Irish Catholics, there was a strong incentive for the Irish parliamentary opposition to modify its position, as a failure to do so would place a future Catholic electorate wholly in the government’s debt. Some Irish Whigs including Henry Grattan realised that if Ireland was to

¹⁹ ‘An Irishman,’ *A fair exposition of the principles of the Whig club; with some cursory observations on a pamphlet entitled ‘Thoughts on a letter to Mr Conolly’* (Dublin, 1790), p. 10.

²⁰ S. J. Connolly, *The Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford, 1988), p. 590.

²¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 24 Sept. & 6 Dec. 1806.

maintain its traditional Protestant ascendancy, Protestants 'must acquire new strength by progressively adopting the Catholic body'.²² Jacqueline Hill has pointed out that the transformation of the Catholic question was one of the pressures which caused the break-up of the Patriot movement in the 1790s, but it also provided the catalyst by which liberal Protestantism could begin to define itself.

However, the evolution of liberal Protestantism in Ireland was tempered by the radicalism of the later 1790s. In 1795 the appointment of Lord Fitzwilliam as lord lieutenant created heightened expectations on the part of Catholics and liberal Protestants in Ireland. While there was evidence of 'much goodwill' towards Catholics on the part of some Irish Protestants, this was marked by 'a strong sense of caution'.²³ A Catholic relief bill was introduced into the Irish parliament, but the issue of Catholic political rights was so sensitive that, faced with the staunch opposition of the Irish Tories, many Whigs were reluctant to publicly support the measure. In 1795 the Orange Order was established, a loyalist society aimed at protecting the Protestant nature of the state. Anxiety on the part of many Protestants was also reflected in the huge numbers who enrolled in the (largely Protestant) yeomanry corps.²⁴ In parliament the Whig party, numbering ninety or more in the early 1790s, had slumped considerably by 1797.²⁵ Much of its potency as a viable political party was undermined by the secession in that year of many Whigs from parliament, including Henry Grattan, over the defeat of a parliamentary reform bill. James Kelly has argued that the secession of the Whigs in 1797 represented 'the ultimate acknowledgement by the middle ground of its failure to steer a middle course between the republican separatism of the United Irishmen and the intransigent conservatism of ascendancy Protestantism.'²⁶ Irish Whigs opposed the new definitions of democracy and republicanism defined by the French Revolution, and the new ideas being flouted about social contract theory and mass participation in politics. When rebellion did break out in 1798, the majority of Irish Whigs rallied to the authorities. In Waterford

²² It is interesting to note that Henry Grattan did not directly challenge or condemn Protestant ascendancy; Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 222.

²³ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 233.

²⁴ Over thirty thousand had enrolled by 1796, rising to nearly sixty thousand by 1798; Allan Blackstock, *An ascendancy army: the Irish yeomanry, 1796-1834* (Dublin, 1998), pp 197-8.

²⁵ Connolly, *Oxford companion*, p. 590.

²⁶ James Kelly, *Henry Grattan* (Dublin 1993), p. 35.

civic bodies were anxious to proclaim their loyalty to government and steered clear of associating themselves with the United Irishmen.²⁷

The impact of radicalism on emergent liberal thought in the 1790s centred on the place of Catholics in the political nation, and during the decade the Whigs came to support political rights for Catholics. In the nineteenth century the stance on Catholicism was perhaps the chief distinction between Irish Whigs and Tories. It was not the democratic element of 1790s republicanism that appealed to liberal Protestants, but the view that religious belief had little to do with capacity for citizenship and political inclusion. Irish liberal Protestantism remained hostile to republican ideas of democracy and never contemplated an unrestricted widening of the franchise. Liberal Protestant support for Catholic participation in politics stemmed in part from the notion of an overarching Christian state forming the basis of a non-denominational political language of citizenship.²⁸ Significantly, this was not participation for all Catholics, merely those Catholics who showed themselves capable of virtue and moral citizenship, and preferably those at the top of the social scale.

The excitement generated by the French Revolution sparked off a wide ranging debate about all aspects of the *ancien régime*, and champions of ‘the rights of man’ forced their opponents to formulate defences for the existing system. The tithe disputes and Rightboy activity of the mid-1780s led to a resurgence of enduring fears among Irish Protestants, prompting some conservative Protestants to lead an assault on Irish Catholicism. The notion of Protestant ascendancy gave some Irish Protestants a language with which to attack perceived threats to their social and political position. Although the origins of the term are disputed, Protestant ascendancy had gained much popularity and significance by the 1790s.²⁹ James Kelly understands the origins of the term to centre on the metamorphosis of the term ‘Protestant interest’, which until the 1780s, held little philosophical or ideological depth.³⁰ But a need to base their objectives in more potent language led to an eagerness in conservative Protestant

²⁷ Jennifer Boyle, ‘The origins and development of Waterford Chamber of Commerce, 1787-1820’ (Undergraduate thesis, T.C.D., 2006), p. 12.

²⁸ Jennifer Ridden, ‘Irish reform between the 1798 rebellion and the Great Famine’ in Arthur Burns and Joanna Innes (eds) *Rethinking the age of reform, Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), pp 285-6.

²⁹ Jacqueline Hill, ‘The meaning and significance of “Protestant ascendancy”, 1787-1840’ in *Ireland after the Union* (Oxford, 1989), pp 1-19; James Kelly, ‘The genesis of the “Protestant ascendancy”: the Rightboy disturbance of the 1780s and their impact upon Protestant opinion’, in Gerard O’Brien (ed.), *Parliament, politics and people; essays in eighteenth century Irish history* (Dublin, 1989), pp 93-127.

³⁰ Kelly, ‘The genesis of “Protestant ascendancy”’, p. 94.

circles to popularise the term 'Protestant ascendancy' after George Ogle, member for County Wexford, had used it in a parliamentary speech in February 1786. The popularisation of the term 'represented an important addition to the ideological arsenal of conservative Protestantism'.³¹

It was Richard Woodward, the bishop of Cloyne's *Present state of the Church of Ireland* (1787) that impacted most heavily on Protestant ideology and opinion. Woodward developed the definition of 'Protestant ascendancy', equating it with Protestant control of land, the preservation of Protestant domination of the existing constitution, church and state, and the maintenance of the British connection. The main thrust of his argument revolved around the concept that giving Catholics any further share of political power would fundamentally undermine the Protestant nature of the constitution.³² Woodward's pamphlet offered a manifestation of conservative Protestant ideals and provided Protestants with a justification of their traditional dominance and their opposition to granting further relief to Catholics. Woodward's pamphlet embarrassed many Irish Whigs, who saw it as 'an unwelcome revival of old religious animosities inappropriate to the enlightened 1780s'.³³ The *Dublin Evening Post*, representative of the liberal press at the time, came out strongly against Richard Woodward, publishing a series of rebuttals in January 1787, the main thrust of which attempted to reinvigorate the 'fraternal confidence' that had existed between members of the different creeds earlier that decade.³⁴ A result of this was that from the 1790s onwards, many Irish Whigs, including Edmund Burke, tended to use 'Protestant ascendancy' as a pejorative term.

Owing to the importance of the Catholic question for liberal Protestants in the nineteenth century, and in order to contextualise their support for Catholic claims, some examination of the penal laws and of their partial repeal in the late eighteenth century is necessary. The penal laws, enacted between 1695 and 1704, stemmed primarily from Protestant fears for the security of their position and wealth in Ireland, and from the belief that permanent restrictions on Catholics would protect this status.³⁵ Protestant fears stemmed from the belief that the Irish Catholic community supported

³¹ Kelly, 'The genesis of "Protestant ascendancy"', p. 103.

³² Kelly, 'The genesis of "Protestant ascendancy"', p. 113.

³³ Small, *Political thought in Ireland*, p. 156.

³⁴ *D.E.P.*, 20 Feb. 1787, in Kelly, 'The genesis of "Protestant ascendancy"', p. 122.

³⁵ Charles McGrath, 'Securing the Protestant interest: the origins and purpose of the penal laws of 1695', in *I.H.S.*, xxx, no.117 (1996), p. 26.

the Jacobite cause, and aimed at overthrowing England's Protestant monarchy and constitution.³⁶ Repressive legislation formed an integral part of the lives of all Catholics in the eighteenth century. Laws passed by the parliament of 1695 prevented Catholics from carrying arms, from owning horses valued at more than five pounds, and from gaining a Catholic education abroad.³⁷ Further laws made it illegal for Catholics to purchase land or retain leases for land lasting longer than fifteen years. The Catholic hierarchy was outlawed and all regular clergy were by law required to register their names. Catholics were barred from parliament, from all offices of civic, military and political trust or emolument, from sitting on grand juries and corporations, from acting as magistrates and from exercising the parliamentary vote. Catholics were effectively precluded from holding any offices of civil or political influence.

Although there is a general perception that the eighteenth century was an era of unparalleled suffering and poverty for Catholics, the reality was somewhat different. The Catholic hierarchy continued to tend to their flock, albeit in hiding. Very few Catholic priests registered their names in Dublin. As concerns ownership of land, Louis Cullen has argued that in fact, interest in land in fee was slight at this time.³⁸ Catholics could improve their position despite the restrictions by focusing on leasehold wealth, and there was a gradual growth of a class of Catholic gentlemen farmers, who made the most of buoyant economic conditions to consolidate their property.³⁹ In most of Ireland, restrictions concerning the economy and trade were quietly overlooked where Catholics were involved. In Waterford the corporation allowed Catholics to trade as early as 1704, when they discontinued the commercial restrictions applicable to Catholics.⁴⁰ The corporation's main concern was the city's prosperity, and they recognised that restrictions on Catholic trade would prove more damaging to the economy in the long term than the threat of Catholic prosperity. As a result of these factors, the eighteenth century witnessed the growth of a Catholic middle class, both in rural and urban Ireland.⁴¹ This emergence of an Irish Catholic middle class had significant ramifications in the nineteenth century.

³⁶ McGrath, 'Securing the Protestant interest', p. 30.

³⁷ McGrath, 'Securing the Protestant interest', pp 34, 39 & 42.

³⁸ Louis Cullen, 'Catholic social classes under the penal laws', p. 57.

³⁹ Cullen, 'Catholic social classes', p. 61.

⁴⁰ Eamonn McEaney, *A history of Waterford and its mayors from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries* (Waterford, 1995), p. 148.

⁴¹ Cullen, 'Catholic social classes', p. 66.

C. D. A. Leighton has argued that from the 1750s, Irish Catholicism increasingly identified itself with liberalism in order to make an effective approach to government and the Protestant classes.⁴² The mid-eighteenth century witnessed Catholic opinion being moulded into a political force, through representation in the form of the Catholic Committee. Set up in 1760 by Charles O'Connor, John Curry and Thomas Wyse, by the 1770s the Catholic Committee was acting as a body through which Catholic opinion could be channelled and as a pressure group in support of Catholic relief. Addresses of loyalty to both parliament and the king were a normal method of doing this, as was petitioning the British government. It was in part due to this campaigning that the Catholic question returned to the forefront of Irish and British politics in the late 1770s.

The impetus for Catholic relief in 1778 came largely from Britain. The 1778 act, the first major respite for Catholics from penal legislation, removed some of the restrictions on the purchase of landed property by Catholics. Catholics could now accept leases of up to 999 years or five lifetimes, and they could inherit land and leases. The terms of relief were open only to those who had taken the test oath (in place since 1774) and many took this oath in the months after the act was passed. The major incentive for the measure was Britain's entrenchment in hostile relations with both America and France, and Catholic relief would permit the recruitment of Catholic troops into the depleted armies fighting abroad.⁴³ Offering relief would also encourage Catholic loyalty, and this was part of a wider effort to incorporate Catholics into the British empire.⁴⁴ Irish relief occurred against the backdrop of the Quebec Act, which offered relief to Canadian Catholics. Another factor was the perceived intransigence of Irish Protestants, and the popularity of the Volunteer movement among Irish Protestants prompted government to play the 'Catholic card' to counterpoise the growth of an independent spirit among Irish Protestants.⁴⁵ This relief legislation was supported by a large section of Irish Protestants, but few Irish Whigs at this time would countenance any degree of political rights for Catholics.

⁴² Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant kingdom*, p. 160.

⁴³ Gerard O'Brien, *Catholic Ireland in the eighteenth century: collected essays of Maureen Wall* (Dublin, 1989), p. 127.

⁴⁴ Jacqueline Hill, 'Religious toleration and the relaxation of the penal laws: an imperial perspective, 1763-1780', in *Archivum Hibernicum*, xlv (1989), p. 101.

⁴⁵ Wall, *Catholic Ireland*, p. 115.

By 1782 the Irish Volunteers had introduced patriotism into mainstream politics and many of those in parliament who had opposed relief in 1778 were now willing to support a measure of Catholic relief. The main aim of Irish patriots at this juncture was the gaining of parliamentary 'independence', and support for Catholic relief was used to demonstrate to government that the whole population of Ireland was united behind the demand for a domestic parliament.⁴⁶ It was resolved to support a measure of Catholic relief at a meeting of the Volunteers in February 1782, sending the message to the British government that their 'divide and rule' policy would no longer work. The Catholic Committee was aware that Catholic support was a political football at this time, but with further relief on the cards, the committee presented well-timed addresses of loyalty. Luke Gardiner's relief act of 1782 proposed to grant Catholics the freedom to purchase land outright, the free exercise of religion and education, and permitted intermarriage between the denominations. Although only the first two clauses were finally incorporated into the act, the passing of relief represented significant change for Catholics in the areas of land ownership and freedom of religion.

The unanimity on political issues engineered in 1782 was not long-lived, and enduring perceptions and prejudices re-emerged in the 1780s. Catholic members of the Volunteers were distrusted by many Protestants due to their carrying of arms. Large scale agrarian disturbances in the south of the country did little to dispel this distrust. Friction between two factions of the Catholic Committee, led by Lord Kenmare and John Keogh, resulted in a split in 1791. The growing popularity of 'Protestant ascendancy' highlighted divisions among Protestants. Until 1792 there were very few Protestants in Ireland who supported granting a share of political power to Catholics. William Pitt's aims to permit the participation of Catholics in the electoral franchise met with little support in parliament, and another relief act in 1792 did little more than admit Catholics to the bar. William Parnell, a prominent liberal Protestant writing in 1807, pointed out that Irish Protestants had long suffered in apprehension of Catholic bigotry, and there existed a culture of fear of Catholic rebellion.⁴⁷ The 1793 Catholic relief act went a long way to granting Catholics a share of political influence. The impetus for relief came principally from the British government, but this granting of

⁴⁶ Wall, *Catholic Ireland*, p. 116.

⁴⁷ William Parnell, *An historical apology for the Irish Catholics* (Dublin, 1807), p. 139.

political rights to Catholics was part of a counter-revolutionary strategy in the expectation that this would reinforce their habitual deference.⁴⁸ The concessions were not to be accompanied by other concessions, such as parliamentary reform. Under the 1793 act Catholics were admitted to grand and petty juries; they could bear arms; they were allowed to take degrees in Trinity College, and to take lower commissions in the army and navy. The British government hoped that by allowing Catholic participation in the armed forces, Catholics would contribute significantly towards the war effort against France. Significantly, the act permitted Catholics the franchise; they now had a vote in parliamentary elections. It also allowed them to become members of guilds and corporations.

By 1793 many of the penal laws had been revoked, and the only remaining restrictions prevented Catholics from senior public, judicial and military offices, and from access to parliament. Although some Irish Whigs supported full Catholic participation in Irish politics from 1793 – increasingly termed ‘Catholic emancipation’ from 1794 – other Irish Protestants were deeply disturbed by the concessions. The admission of Catholics to political rights posed a more immediate challenge to urban Protestants than to the landed élite, but as Jacqueline Hill has pointed out, it is not surprising that those who lacked one of the badges of superiority under the existing system – landed property – should cling particularly strongly to another – religious affiliation’.⁴⁹ It was middle-class Protestants in towns such as Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Clonmel where the numbers of Protestants and Catholics were fairly evenly balanced, who found the new political demands of middle-class Catholics most challenging.⁵⁰ In such places, the concessions raised for the Protestant élite the spectre of Catholic control of local politics. But the political rights granted to Catholics in 1793 turned out to be disappointing in practice, particularly when measured against heightened expectations of the early 1790s. Though Catholics now held the parliamentary vote, in reality their new political influence passed into the hands of their landlords, and freeholders merely voted as their landlord intended. In towns the corporations of Ireland were still homogeneously Protestant and very few corporate offices were granted to Catholics. Some corporations passed by-laws to hinder

⁴⁸ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 229.

⁴⁹ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 226.

⁵⁰ David Dickson, “Centres of motion”: Irish cities and the origins of popular politics’, in Louis Cullen (ed.), *Culture et pratiques politiques en France et en Irlande XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1988), pp 109-10.

Catholics from gaining their freedom, and Catholics were 'powerless in the face of the tight control that the small cabal of municipal officers could exercise'.⁵¹ It was clear after 1793 that legal changes alone would not prove sufficient to guarantee the exercise of political rights.

The aim of the act of union between Britain and Ireland in 1801 was to secure the essential interests of both countries and to consolidate the strength and resources of the British empire.⁵² The act of union dissolved the Irish parliament and Ireland was to be represented at Westminster by one hundred Irish members, although the administration based in Dublin Castle remained intact. Brian Hill has pointed out that the arrival of these members bolstered the strength of the Whig opposition, as many of them 'had learned their Whiggism in the Rockinghamite atmosphere of the former Dublin parliament' and already had close ties with the Foxite Whigs.⁵³ The Church of Ireland was united to the Church of England. A time scale of twenty-one years was set for the phasing out of protective duties between Ireland and Britain. For the Irish élite, the act of union continued their monopoly of local government, all official jobs, the public service, the professions and higher education. Among conservative Protestants, union was expected to be viewed as a protective measure, welcome after the partial extension of political rights to Catholics in 1793. Yet many corporations, including Waterford Corporation, virulently opposed the legislation in 1799. Union with Britain was viewed not as a union of equals, but one in which Ireland was subordinate to Britain. This fared badly with Irish Protestants, who believed that Irish independence had been enshrined in the constitution of 1782.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Ireland's representation of 100 seats out of 650 damaged her political influence considerably. Anti-union arguments tended to invoke traditional privileges through a blend of the language of common law and contractual rights.⁵⁵

Waterford city was expected by the government to favour a union, but in fact reaction in the city was mixed, reflecting the national pattern. Among the landed

⁵¹ Kenneth Milne, 'The corporation of Waterford in the eighteenth century', in Nolan & Power (eds), *Waterford, history and society interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1992), p. 334.

⁵² 'The act of union (40 Geo. III c. 67) 2 July 1800', in O'Day and Stevenson (eds), *Irish historical documents since 1800* (Dublin, 1992), p. 6.

⁵³ Brian Hill, *The early parties and politics in Britain, 1688-1832* (London, 1996), p. 159.

⁵⁴ Patrick Geoghegan, *The Irish act of union: as study in high politics, 1798-1801* (Dublin, 1999), p. 117.

⁵⁵ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 261.

gentry, Tories William Congreve Alcock and Cornelius Bolton and the Whig Robert Shapland Carew came out most vigorously against the proposals for union, arguing that it represented a threat to their constitutional and civic liberty.⁵⁶ The freeman body was also divided. Dean Christopher Butson, an Englishman with 'an invidious sense of moral and colonial supremacy' was assigned the task of drumming up support for union, but out of the 350 names gathered, very few were natives of Waterford.⁵⁷ Waterford Corporation's address to the lord lieutenant, Marquis Cornwallis, delivered during his personal visit to Waterford in 1798 was conspicuous for failing to mention the proposed union, although Lord Waterford and Dean Butson faced down the corporation's silence with a declaration that Waterford was nearly unanimously in favour of the measure.⁵⁸

But once the act of union was passed it quickly became widely accepted. In September 1801 the *Waterford Mirror* remarked that the union seemed to be working; agriculture was increasing, disturbances were gradually subsiding, and even the absentee proprietors were spending more time on their country estates.⁵⁹ Interestingly, the Whig Sir John Newport went against prevailing Whig opinion and supported proposals for a union, outlining the commercial advantages that a closer bond with a richer country could bring.⁶⁰ Newport's goals in supporting union, including security for Irish Protestantism, the link with Britain, and Irish prosperity, were broadly similar to those of the anti-unionists, but he differed in his contention that these goals could no longer be achieved by the Irish parliament alone.⁶¹ It is also probable that Newport, who had championed political rights for Catholics since 1792, expected that a union would facilitate the abolition of the remaining penal laws. This was an expectation that also made many Catholics generally favourable to union. Many liberal Protestants in Waterford remained conditional unionists after the implementation of the measures in 1801, and many believed that the nature of the union between the two countries could be improved. In 1808 John Newport confessed that 'he was disappointed in the expectations which he had formed of the good to result to Ireland from the union'. Sir John admitted that he had expected Catholic emancipation to follow union, and that the

⁵⁶ Brian Kirby, 'Civic politics and parliamentary representation in Waterford city' (PhD thesis, N.U.I.M., 2002), p. 277.

⁵⁷ Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 276.

⁵⁸ Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 277-8.

⁵⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 7 Sept. 1801.

⁶⁰ Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 278.

⁶¹ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 264.

economic union, or lack thereof, had disappointed 'four-fifths of the people of Ireland'.⁶²

Liberal Protestants in nineteenth-century Ireland considered themselves to be Irish, which was understood as fully compatible with both Protestantism and 'Britishness' in this period. An identity based on their Irishness, Protestantism, liberalism and social prestige imbued Irish liberal Protestants with a sense of leadership in Irish affairs, and this identity underpinned their attempts to establish a legitimate political leadership in Ireland.⁶³ While maintaining close political and social ties with their British Whig counterparts, Irish liberal Protestants understood their role in political life as leaders of Irish society, presenting themselves 'as alternatives to the incumbent, oligarchic...Protestant ascendancy'.⁶⁴ In political terms liberal Protestants were those Protestants who sought full political rights for Irish citizens irrespective of their religion, as well as a gradual reform of many of the state institutions, including the Church of Ireland and the corporations. Nineteenth-century liberal Protestants included Henry Grattan, Sir Henry Parnell and William Parnell of Avondale in County Wicklow, Thomas Spring Rice of Mount Trenchard in County Limerick and Richard Bourke of Dublin. The career of Sir John Newport, Whig member for Waterford city between 1803 and 1832, offers a fine example of the practical manifestation of liberal Protestantism in Irish politics in this period.⁶⁵ Sir John advocated parliamentary and 'economical' reform as the key to creating an efficient, effectual, representative government that would undermine rule by 'vested interests' (see chapter three). At Westminster Newport gained a reputation as a leading Whig reformer, both on Irish and British issues, and contributed a remarkable record of parliamentary debate.

By the early nineteenth century Irish liberal Protestants had begun to publicly support the full inclusion of Roman Catholics in the political nation. Liberal Protestants believed that granting full political equality to Catholics would secure the Protestant nature of the church and state, as it would remove the major causes of unrest

⁶² *Waterford Mirror*, 4 May 1808.

⁶³ Jennifer Ridden, "Making good citizens": national identity, religion and liberalism among the Irish élite, c.1800-50' (PhD thesis, University of London, 1998), p. 7.

⁶⁴ Ridden, 'Irish reform between the 1798 rebellion and the Great Famine', p. 274.

⁶⁵ Sir John Newport, 1st baronet (1762-1843) was born in Waterford to a local Protestant banking family and was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Dublin. In 1782 he attended the Volunteer convention, supporting parliamentary reform and the secret ballot. Newport became an alderman on Waterford Corporation in 1777, he was called to the bar in 1785 and in 1786 he became recorder of Waterford.

in Ireland and extinguish Britain's ongoing problems with governing Ireland. Irish liberal Protestants believed that Catholic claims could be fully accommodated within the constitution without undermining its essentially Protestant nature. They advocated removing the final political restrictions on Catholics, granting them access to higher civil and military positions and to parliament. Liberal Protestants also aimed at remedying informal (or at least not legislative) Catholic exclusion from corporate offices, from the higher echelons of the yeomanry and from grand juries, as well as from many convivial societies. The dominance of corporate control over local politics in towns meant that Catholic participation there remained restricted and, despite their position in law, Catholics had very little direct influence in local politics. According to William Parnell, writing his *Historical apology for the Irish Catholics* in 1807, 'the most disagreeable' and probably the most enduring limitations placed on Irish Catholics were the 'testimonies of contempt' piled upon them 'by their [Protestant] fellow-countrymen'.⁶⁶ Liberal Protestants believed that Catholic inclusion in the political nation would secure the Protestant state as it would remove the Catholic question from politics. Parnell's motive in advocating political rights for Catholics was 'to give security to every Irishman in his property, both of which must be at risk, as long as any civil distinctions are inflicted on so numerous a body as the Irish Roman Catholics'.⁶⁷ Parnell contended that the Catholic religion was no longer a threat to the state and roundly blamed any continuing disaffection on a history of misgovernment.⁶⁸

It was in their approach to the Catholic question that nineteenth-century liberal Protestants diverged most significantly from eighteenth-century Whiggism. Few members of the Irish Protestant élite contemplated granting Catholics full political rights before the 1790s, and it was only with the British government's adoption of a policy of Catholic political rights in 1792 that some Irish Protestants were persuaded to support Catholic political inclusion. But by 1807 liberal Protestants were openly supporting full political equality for Catholics. William Parnell's pamphlet was not designed to rouse conservative Protestant reaction, but to placate them by arguing that confessional interpretations of history had been over-employed. By arguing that Catholic disaffection had been caused primarily by the government's maintenance of political distinctions between religious sects, Parnell hoped to make Irish Protestants

⁶⁶ Parnell, *Historical apology*, p. 141.

⁶⁷ Parnell, *Historical apology*, v.

⁶⁸ Parnell, *Historical apology*, pp 2-3 & 49.

'reconsider the *policy* of maintaining the present political inferiority of the Catholics'.⁶⁹ This approach contrasted with Protestant works opposing Catholic relief, including Sir Richard Musgrave's virulently anti-Catholic *Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland*, published only six years previously. It was also its stance on the Catholic question that distinguished Irish Whiggism from its British counterpart. While the Whigs were not averse in principle to some measure of Catholics political rights, neither Anglicans nor dissenters in Britain wanted 'a seemingly superstitious, bigoted Catholic religion' to play too great a role in Irish society.⁷⁰ But if British Whigs could get away with paying lip service to the notion of Catholic emancipation while offering lukewarm support, their ardour in supporting Catholic political equality was a marked feature of Irish liberal Protestantism.

Sir John Newport was a leading advocate of Catholic political equality, conceiving 'the restoration of their privileges to constitute the indispensable foundation on which the happiness of Ireland ...must rest'.⁷¹ Sir John believed that Catholic emancipation would pacify the country and stimulate social and economic growth. William Parnell's *An inquiry into the causes of popular discontents in Ireland* (1805) contended for Catholic rights on the basis of securing property in Ireland.⁷² This pamphlet was perhaps the most abrasive piece written by an Irish liberal Protestant in this period. While defending his moderate approach, Parnell counterattacked Irish Protestants, especially 'that class of three-quarters gentry, whose stupid violence has always been the curse of this country...[who] take every opportunity of keeping the public mind in a state of alarm and agitation'.⁷³ Catholic disabilities had given Irish Protestants 'a factitious pre-eminence' and had rendered them ostentatious and extravagant, as well as corrupted and dependent on government.⁷⁴

But it is important to emphasise the essentially conservative motives behind liberal Protestant support for Catholic emancipation. Many sported a barely disguised disgust of Roman Catholicism, and their sense of Protestant superiority in this respect

⁶⁹ Parnell, *Historical apology*, p. 122.

⁷⁰ Parry, *Liberal government*, pp 15-6.

⁷¹ Sir John Newport to Thomas Fitzgerald, 15 May 1810 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁷² William Parnell, *An inquiry into the causes of popular discontents in Ireland* (2nd ed., London & Dublin, 1805), v.

⁷³ Parnell, *Inquiry*, xi, xiv-xvi.

⁷⁴ William Parnell, *Maurice and Berghetta, or the priest of Rahery* (London, 1819), xxvii-xxviii.

continued intact. William Parnell specifically outlined in his *Inquiry* the perceived differences between a 'papist' and an Irish Roman Catholic: while a Catholic should be entitled to full political rights, a papist was 'equally repugnant to humanity and reason'.⁷⁵ What had changed since the 1790s was the perception of Catholics as a serious danger to church and state, and liberal Protestants supported full political rights for Catholics only as they believed it would remove the Catholic question from politics. Irish liberal Protestants saw the granting of political equality to Irish Catholics from a Protestant perspective. Catholic emancipation would be a boon granted primarily through Protestant benevolence and on Protestant terms. Irish liberals saw their creed as a guiding force in politics, which would secure 'liberty' for Catholics, but in turn would condition the form of relief. Some liberal Protestants including William Parnell viewed the question of Catholic political rights in terms of expediency, and few believed that Catholics had an inherent right to political equality.⁷⁶ The legacy of ascendancy rule was apparent in the Protestant belief that their concession was a prerequisite for success. Writing for a Protestant readership, Parnell was careful in his *Historical apology* to point out common ground between liberal and conservative Protestants. Parnell contended that all Irish Protestants had the same objects in view, namely the security of property for its current owners, an end to Catholic unrest and the curbing of the bigotry and intolerance of the Catholics. The only difference was that liberal Protestants pursued these objects 'by very different means'.⁷⁷

Irish Protestants were apt to regard Catholics as 'malleable material, to be fashioned according to Protestant interests', though even in the early years of the century the tone of political works by Catholics such as Denys Scully and Thomas Moore 'indicated that Catholics...were not the blank slate that many Protestants took them to be'.⁷⁸ Little did liberal Protestants imagine in 1800 that Catholic political rights would be demanded and granted on Catholic terms. While by 1800 Irish Catholics may have not been as 'malleable' as the liberal Protestants believed, they hoped that by portraying themselves as a loyal body and by maintaining crucial links

⁷⁵ Parnell, *Historical apology*, p. 4.

⁷⁶ Parnell, *Historical apology*, p. 123.

⁷⁷ Parnell, *Historical apology*, p. 126.

⁷⁸ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, pp 229 & 231; for analysis of the works of Denys Scully and Thomas Moore, see R. F. B. O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland: a study of O'Connellite politics and political education' (PhD thesis, T.C.D., 1978), chapter 3.

with liberal Protestants, they could eventually persuade government to concede full Catholic political rights. While a structured Catholic campaign for emancipation was lacking, at least until 1805, Catholics sent declarations of loyalty to the king and government. The Catholic gentry and middle classes were also careful to distance themselves from rural agitation and violence. In November 1808 a dwelling house was pulled down by Catholic ruffians at Dromana, the Villiers Stuart estate in County Waterford.⁷⁹ A Catholic, J. Roche of Woodstock, wrote to the Protestant agent of the estate, Sir William Jackson Homan, that he was horrified at the implications of scenes such as these for Protestant views of the Irish Catholics:

Let me assure you, Sir, that the well-disposed of our communion detest such wickedness as much as any other class of his Majesty's subjects in the United Kingdom...Ruffians and bad members may perhaps be found in every communion...but wherever they might be discovered, it would not be fair or candid to impute their crimes to the sincere Christian, much less so to the body at large.⁸⁰

The language is deferential, portraying the desire on the part of Irish Catholics to engender a reputation for peace and loyalty, and to convince Protestants such as Homan that they were deserving of full political participation.

At no time in this period did any Whig, Irish or British, challenge the belief that a property-based hierarchy was the natural order of society.⁸¹ It has already been illustrated that many liberal Protestants advocated Catholic political rights on the grounds that ending Catholic unrest would result in greater security of property for the current (Protestant) owners. William Parnell reflected dominant Protestant values in his concern for the security of property, believing it 'the origin of all industry, wealth and civilisation'.⁸² In his *Inquiry* Parnell was careful to distance himself from the idea that land ownership should be altered in any way: 'It is now too late to propose the plain remedy for the evils of confiscation in Ireland, restitution' and rather advocated the removal of religious distinctions to combat this insecurity. Whatever his politics, William Parnell belonged unequivocally to the Irish Protestant landed élite.

⁷⁹ Receipt from County Waterford Spring Assizes, 1826 (P.R.O.N.I., Villiers Stuart papers, MS T3131, H/4/1-8; available in W.M.L., m.f. roll 12).

⁸⁰ J. Roche to Sir William Jackson Homan, 20 Nov. 1808 (P.R.O.N.I., Villiers Stuart papers, MS T3131, G/2/1-145; available in W.M.L., m.f. roll 9).

⁸¹ Dickinson, 'Whiggism in the eighteenth century', p. 33.

⁸² Parnell, *Inquiry*, p. 7.

A potent intertwining of liberalism, Protestantism, Irishness and social prestige defined Irish liberal Protestantism in the early nineteenth century. Daniel O'Connell has often been accredited with politicising 'Ireland', but rather he defined an Irish identity based on nationalism and Catholicism. The terms 'Irish' and 'Catholic' came to be used almost interchangeably, and this idea came to dominate Irish notions of nationhood and national identity after the Great Famine. But in the early decades of the nineteenth century different definitions of Irish identity were still being contested. Liberal Protestants used their identity to argue that they were the best suited to lead political Ireland and the best placed to represent and deal with the grievances of the general population. Their very espousal of the Catholic cause made it possible for liberal Protestants to challenge the emerging exclusivity of Irish Catholic nationalism in the 1830s.

Part two: Society and politics in Waterford city and county c.1800

The history of urban Protestantism in the south of Ireland has been somewhat neglected by historians, but it is a particularly significant theme as Irish Protestantism 'was as much an urban as a landed phenomenon'.⁸³ Waterford was a large provincial city and a port where trade and industry had thrived throughout the eighteenth century. In 1800 Waterford city enjoyed a lively political life, and a significant minority of the active political élite were liberal Protestants. Liberal Protestants acted on the common council of Waterford Corporation and on the committee of Waterford Chamber of Commerce. Many of them acted as local magistrates and held corporate offices. Many maintained close relations with prominent Catholic families. In the county, where Protestants were more sparsely concentrated, there were several significant landed families with liberal leanings. While some of these gentlemen, such as the Powers of Clashmore, came from traditionally Whig families, liberalism in Waterford had sufficient influence to attract members of even the most conservative families. Sir Richard Musgrave, nephew and heir of the ultra Protestant Sir Richard Musgrave, author of *Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland* (1801), was a prominent liberal Protestant and supported repeal of the union in the 1830s (see chapter six). These liberal country gentlemen generally took great interest in their estates, in their tenants

⁸³ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 3.

and in agricultural improvements, as well as maintaining a sharp interest in electoral and developing Catholic politics. The reasons why such gentlemen were such enduring liberals forms one of the central questions of this thesis.

In 1834 there were about 3,647 Protestants in Waterford city and 4,258 in the county, representing 13.6% and 2.7% of the population respectively (see appendix A). Despite being in an acute minority, Waterford Protestants held a disproportionate share of the wealth and political power. As well as enjoying all political emoluments, holding a monopoly of corporate offices and living in the best areas of the city, they also held complete control of the mechanism of local government. Waterford Corporation, which was an exclusively Protestant body, also controlled the means by which citizens were granted the freedom of the city, which granted the right to vote at parliamentary elections. Therefore, these Protestants also indirectly controlled the outcome of parliamentary elections. The Catholic relief act of 1793 had made little impact in the city, and the vast majority of political influence remained in Protestant hands. In the county there was a similar concentration of political power in the hands of Protestants, who held the majority of lucrative positions in terms of social prestige, whether as magistrates, grand jurors or as leaders of the local yeomanry corps. The county electorate, composed mainly of forty-shilling freeholders, could be easily managed by their landlords, and control of the two parliamentary seats lay largely in the hands of two magnates, the Tory Lord Waterford and the Whig duke of Devonshire.

The corporation was the centre of local political influence in Waterford city. The common council of the corporation was composed of the mayor, two sheriffs, a recorder, eighteen aldermen and nineteen common councilmen.⁸⁴ The mayor, who was elected annually from among the aldermen, held a highly privileged position in the city. The mayor was head magistrate, presided in the city courts and sanctioned the making of by-laws. Two sheriffs were elected annually, from among the common councilmen. Elections to the offices of mayor and sheriff often passed without incident, and the mayor was usually unanimously voted into office. The mayor and the common council were vested with the power to appoint officials to the various corporate offices. These offices included those of recorder; town clerk; clerk of the

⁸⁴ *The first report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 579.

peace; chamberlain; president of the court of conscience; coroner; water bailiff; swordbearer; four sergeants at mace; high constable; second constable; ten petty constables; four market constables; potato weigher; fish house porter; beadle; assay master; inspector of markets; porter of the town hall; housekeeper; sessions crier and town clerk. The corporation also appointed the weighmaster and butter taster.⁸⁵

Waterford Corporation was exclusively Protestant and largely drawn largely from gentry families with landed and commercial interests in the city. This coterie included members of the Alcock, Barker, Bolton, Briscoe, Dobbyn, Hackett, Hassard, Moore, Morris and Newport, Reynett, Sargent, Skottowe and Weekes families. The positions of alderman and common councilman were held for life and new members were voted in only when a vacancy arose, when one of the serving members died or resigned. All control over the corporation itself was held within the common council. While some members were expounding the ideals of corporate independence at parliamentary elections, the different factions within the council jostled for dominance and manipulated the corporation's ancient rights and privileges 'to ensure that the corporation would become, in effect, the private fiefdom of a few well-placed gentry families'.⁸⁶ This defence of ancient rights was largely confessional, with the corporators invoking the right of conquest in order to preserve the Protestant nature of their establishment.⁸⁷ The freeman body could not exercise any corporate power, nor could it influence the composition of common council. Their only influence was at parliamentary elections, as they composed the bulk of the city electorate. Some Protestants on the common council aimed at reforming the exclusive nature of the corporation (see chapter two), but it is significant that such Protestants worked within the system, seeking change from within rather than embarking on any public challenge to the existing order.

Much of the common council's time was spent in monitoring and overseeing the accounts of Waterford Corporation.⁸⁸ This occurred at the main council meeting

⁸⁵ *The first report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 587.

⁸⁶ Brian Kirby, 'Civic identity and corporate politics in eighteenth-century Waterford', in Joost Augusteijn, Mary Ann Lyons & Deirdre McMahon (eds), *Irish research yearbook, number 2* (Dublin, 2003), p. 20.

⁸⁷ Kirby, 'Civic identity', p. 12.

⁸⁸ For examples see Waterford Corporation minute book, Sept. 1770 to June 1806 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

until smaller sub-committees were established after 1818. The meetings, which were held at the instruction of the mayor, were mostly concerned with paying various parties for their services and collecting monies owed to them. Payments gathered by the corporation included the rents of tenants living on corporation land, and the taxes and tolls payable for trading within the city of Waterford. The corporation also acted as a lay impropiator for tithes in three dioceses. The various corporate offices were filled on the decision of the council as vacancies arose. A further responsibility of the common council was to vote on freedom petitions. Applications were received from those citizens who wished to become freemen of the city. This status was granted by right of birth (son of a freeman); by right of marriage (son-in-law of a freeman); by right of apprenticeship (having served under a freeman for seven years) or by the 'special favour of the board'. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, these petitions grew in number, and in the early 1800s voting on these petitions increasingly preoccupied the common council. There were 227 admissions to freeman status for the 1790s, a comparatively low figure compared to the higher figures for the 1770s and 1780s, but the numbers rose enormously thereafter. In 1800 the corporation admitted 43 citizens to the freedom, 247 were admitted in 1801, and 451 in 1802 alone. Over 365 freedom admissions were granted within six months.⁸⁹

The early years of the century witnessed a struggle for dominance on the council between the Bolton, Alcock and Newport interests (see chapter two). Until 1818 the common council was dominated by a faction headed by William Congreve Alcock and Cornelius Bolton, and included figures such as James Hackett, Robert Backas and Edward Hobson, John Denis and Thomas Carew.⁹⁰ The majority of these gentlemen were conservatives and supported conservative Protestant William Congreve Alcock at parliamentary elections. Their outlook was confessional and anti-Catholic, believing that the 'whole body politic of the United Kingdom had been hallowed by its Protestantism'.⁹¹ The remaining political disabilities on Catholics only served to reinforce this attitude. A second faction on the common council, led by Sir John Newport, was composed largely of liberal Protestants. These liberal Protestants tended to support municipal and parliamentary reform, as well as full Catholic

⁸⁹ Freeman list, 1700-1850 (W.C.A., database).

⁹⁰ As in parliament, these factions were fluid, acting like pressure groups rather than political parties, and there was as much jostling for influence within these factions as between them.

⁹¹ Eugene Broderick, 'Protestants and the 1826 County Waterford election', in *Decies*, no. liii (1997), p. 48.

participation in politics. This faction included other members of the Newport family: William, Samuel and Sir Simon Newport, as well as William Weekes, James Ramsey, Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe and Thomas Scott, Sir Edmund Skottowe, John Wallace and Samuel King. Later, they were joined by Henry Alcock and Sir Benjamin Morris.

Competition within the corporation for political prestige overflowed into a rivalry at parliamentary elections, exacerbated by demotion of Waterford city to a single member constituency under the act of union. The early years of the nineteenth century witnessed William Congreve Alcock representing the traditional values of the corporation, with the Whig Sir John Newport symbolising liberal and reform views. In 1802 Sir John actively encouraged Catholics to apply for their freedom, while aggressively opposing many of the petitions forwarded by Alcock and Bolton over the issue of non-residency. Though part of his motivation here was to gain more votes for his own election campaign, Newport's advocating of Catholic rights gained him the support of the majority of Waterford's Catholic and liberal Protestant freemen. Based on an analysis of voting lists, Brian Kirby has placed the percentage of Catholic freemen at just under twelve percent in 1807, of which nearly ninety percent supported Sir John Newport (see below and chapter two).⁹² Sir John Newport's re-election on nine occasions between 1803 and 1832, only two of which were contested, indicates that there was strong popular support for him, and for liberal politics, in Waterford city.⁹³

The ideology of this political élite was blended with an identity of a particularly local nature, based on a pride of the city and its institutions. The 'Great Charter' issued by Charles I in 1626, which made Waterford city the centre of business and commerce in the south east, was often quoted as the basis for the corporation's traditional rights and privileges. The corporation had:

full power and authority to frame, constitute, ordain and make from time to time any laws, statutes, constitutions, decrees and reasonable ... necessary for the good rule and government of the city and county of the said city.⁹⁴

The charter of 1626 symbolised Waterford's civic autonomy, and by its very nature the charter reinforced the local nature of Waterford politics. By the early nineteenth

⁹² Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 354.

⁹³ B. M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 241.

⁹⁴ [Anon.], *The great charter of the liberties of the city of Waterford with explanatory notes, to which is added a list of the mayors, bailiffs and sheriffs of the city of Waterford from the year 1377 to the year 1806 inclusive* (Kilkenny, 1806), p. 18.

century, Waterford Corporation was running as a well-oiled political machine, effectively using a language of traditional rights and privileges to advance their own interests. The corporation also enjoyed good relations with the Irish administration in Dublin Castle. Waterford, throughout its long corporate history, had always stressed loyalty to the monarch and government, as the many addresses of that nature throughout the centuries attest.⁹⁵ This blending of unqualified loyalty to government with the espousal of the independence of civic rights and corporate privileges was similar to those of the larger Irish corporations at that time. Although Dublin Corporation was much larger and more sophisticated in its organisation, it served as a model of local government to which Waterford Corporation aspired.

In 1831 the electorate of Waterford city was made up of 1,300 citizens. This figure, representing over one fifth of adult males, was particularly representative for the period, although it does not take into consideration an unknown number of non-residents.⁹⁶ Although there were some freeholders in the city, the majority of the electorate was composed of freemen, at least until parliamentary reform in 1832. Freedom of the city of Waterford granted them the right to trade in Liverpool, Bristol and several other British ports (as well as Waterford) without having to pay taxes there.⁹⁷ Most significantly, it granted the right to vote at parliamentary elections. Compared to the forty shilling freeholders in the county, these freemen enjoyed an unparalleled degree of political freedom in their choice of candidate. The majority of freemen were Protestants. Dissenters had been entitled to freedom privileges since the repeal of the test and corporation acts in 1780, but few had applied for the freedom. The bulk of those who did were Quakers involved in trade. Catholics had been eligible to become freemen and enter the corporation since 1793, but only a small number had been granted their freedoms since that time. But Brian Kirby has highlighted the corporation's tradition of granting Catholics freedom as *civis re* (citizens in substance). This gave them certain rights as 'freemen in trade', something akin to the eighteenth-

⁹⁵ The annual addresses to the lord lieutenant were transcribed into the minutes; for examples see Waterford Corporation minute book, Sept. 1770 to June 1806 (W.C.A. MS LA1/1/A/14).

⁹⁶ The exact percentage is 20.25. The number of males over twenty is recorded in 1831 as 6,420; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 241; *Abstract of population returns for Ireland, 1831*, H. C. 1833 (634), xxxix, 200-1.

⁹⁷ It also released them from having to pay tolls in Waterford itself, but by the early nineteenth century, the collection most of these tolls had formally or informally ended.

century 'quarter brothers' in Dublin, but excluding them from political rights including the parliamentary vote.⁹⁸

When considering the economic and religious composition of Waterford's electorate in the early nineteenth century, the freedom petitions are a vital source. A database has been built containing all those freemen admitted to their freedom between 1800 and 1805. These dates have been chosen as these years witnessed a huge increase in the number of freedoms granted by the corporation. Analysis of these petitions reveals an impression of the social, economic and, to some extent, the religious composition of the city electorate in the early nineteenth century. It is important to note that out of the 864 extant petitions from those granted the freedom between 1800 and 1805, 314 (36.7%) do not note the specific eligibility of the petitioner (see table 1.1). The following analysis is based on the other 498 petitions (61.3%), and the findings are therefore indicative of the general pattern rather than representing percentages for the whole.

Table 1.1: Eligibility of those granted the freedom of Waterford city, 1800-05:

Identified eligibility of persons granted the freedom of Waterford city, 1800-05		
<i>Eligibility</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Birth	332	66.66
Marriage	75	15
Apprenticeship	85	17
'Special favour'	6	1.2
Total	498	100

Source: Freeman petitions (W.C.A., database).

Over sixty-six percent of the 498 petitioners were granted freedom by right of birth. As Henry Alcock pointed out in 1833, if a considerable majority of the freemen in former periods were Protestant, the majority of persons eligible by birth in this period must also have been Protestant.⁹⁹ This would reflect Kirby's figure for Catholic freemen of about twelve percent in 1807. A much smaller number were granted freedom by right of marriage (fifteen percent) or by apprenticeship (seventeen percent). According to these statistics, a very small number of petitioners (only six persons, representing 1.2

⁹⁸ Kirby, 'Civic politics', pp 13-4; Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, pp 31-2.

⁹⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Dec. 1833.

percent of the total) were granted freedom by special favour of the board.¹⁰⁰ But it has been frequently noted that in these decades the common council increasingly stretched its privileges when it came to granting freedom by special favour.¹⁰¹ Therefore, it is probable that a significant proportion of the 314 petitions stating no formal eligibility (36.7%) were granted freedom by special favour, and thus probably constituted a more significant percentage than the figures suggest. This was largely a result of the ‘packing’ of the electorate carried out by certain corporators in an attempt to control the outcome of parliamentary elections (see chapter two).

Table 1.2: Residence of freemen of Waterford city, 1800-05

Residency of persons granted the freedom of Waterford city, 1800-05		
<i>Residency</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Resident in city or environs	532	65.6
Non-resident	125	15.4
Unspecified	155	19
Total	812	100

Source: Freedom petitions; Waterford Corporation minute book (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

The petitions also offer a glimpse into the local nature of the electorate (see table 1.2). Over sixty-five percent of the 812 freedoms granted between 1800 and 1805 were to those who lived within the city or its environs. It is probable that many of those who did not specify their place of abode (19%) lived in or near the city. Many of the surnames indicate that these freemen came from local families, or were related to them through marriage. If these figures are indicative of the general pattern, the majority of the freeman electorate were men with social and financial concerns in the city, and were intimately interested in and influenced by local politics. Thirty-five of the 125 specified non-residents were from County Waterford and thirty-nine lived in

¹⁰⁰ The common council occasionally granted freedoms by special favour in cases when the applicant was eligible by other means. For example, Thomas Wyse was granted freedom of the city in 1829 by special favour, despite being already eligible by birth. Others were granted to political and ecclesiastical dignitaries, indicating that freedoms granted in this manner were conferred as a symbol of good relations with the corporation; Waterford Corporation minute book, 24 June 1829 (W.C.A. MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁰¹ Eugene Broderick, ‘Waterford’s Anglicans’; ‘Protestants and the 1826 County Waterford election’, pp 45-66; Thomas Power, ‘Electoral politics in Waterford city, 1692-1832’, in Nolan & Power (eds), *Waterford, history and society; interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1992), pp 227-64.

County Wexford. These freemen probably had financial or commercial interests in the city. Only nineteen of the 657 freemen with specified residence lived outside Waterford city or the surrounding counties, with eleven of these coming from Dublin and one from Britain (see appendix B, table B.1). A significant portion of the non-residents claimed eligibility by either birth or marriage, and it is reasonable to assume they came from or had connections with Waterford families.

Also of interest is the social composition of the city electorate at this time. An analysis of the occupations of those granted the freedom between 1800 and 1805 will provide some indication of the kind of men were being granted freedom and the kind of economic backgrounds from which they came (see table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Occupations of those granted the freedom of Waterford city, 1800-05:

Occupations of persons granted freedom of Waterford city, 1800-1805		
<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gentlemen	138	26.7
Merchants	34	6.6
Corporate officials	6	1.2
Professionals	33	6.4
Tradesmen	183	35.5
Retail	20	3.9
Farmers/Graziers	33	6.4
Military	61	11.8
Other	8	1.5
Total	516	100

Source: Freeman petitions; Waterford Corporation minute book (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

516 of the 812 petitions (64%) declared the occupancy of the petitioner, and therefore the analysis offers only an indication of the general pattern. The composition of the 516 freemen was dominated by tradesmen (35.5%), with the next highest group comprising gentlemen (26.7%). The abundance of tradesmen, together with thirty-four merchants (6.6%) and thirty-three professionals (6.4), indicates the strong economic and commercial character of the freeman body. The most numerous trades included cordwainers, weavers and coopers, and the 'professionals' category included fourteen clerks and five doctors (see appendix B, table B.2). As in Dublin, artisan classes in the early nineteenth-century Waterford 'were acquiring a more Catholic complexion' and

it is probable that a proportion of the artisans and tradesmen admitted were Catholics.¹⁰² Retailers, including shopkeepers and publicans made up a further 3.9% of the whole. These persons had strong local connections and business interests in the city. The majority of those that stated their occupation did so because they claimed the freedom by right of apprenticeship, and this may pervert the impression in favour of tradesmen. A majority of the 296 persons with no specified occupation (36%) claimed their eligibility through birth or marriage, and a percentage would have had intimate connections with the city also. The granting of freedoms in batches by council members in the early years of the century, often in return for parliamentary votes (see chapter two) meant that a significant proportion of those admitted into the electorate during these years came from further down the scale than would have been the case in the eighteenth century. This may have occurred to such an extent that the status conferred by freedom of the city lost its social cachet, at least in the short term.

138 of the 515 petitioners (26.7%) described themselves as gentlemen, and an examination of their surnames reveals that the majority came from local Protestant families, many of whom had commercial or landed interests in the city. Corporate officers undoubtedly had close political and financial interests in local politics and were members of the political élite. Merchants formed only 6.6% of the total, but they exercised considerable local clout. As many of the 296 persons with no specified abode claimed freedom either of birth or marriage, and it is not unreasonable to assume that a proportion of these were gentlemen, and so the proportion of those from further up the social scale may have been greater than the evidence suggests. The evidence indicates that a substantial portion of the electorate, perhaps forty or forty-five percent was relatively wealthy, with financial and commercial interests in the city.

An examination of the religious composition of the city electorate in these years must be tentative, as the vast majority of petitions failed to state the religion of the petitioner. Occasionally petitioners mentioned their loyalty to the established church, but this was seemingly in cases where the applicant was uncertain of his eligibility, and it was not the norm to record religious persuasion on the petitions. It is also probable that the Catholics who did apply for the freedom did not want to draw attention to the fact. But an impression can be gained from the surnames of the

¹⁰² Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 210.

petitioners. Brian Kirby has analysed admissions from 1750 to 1800, and has estimated that 142 out of 1,661 admissions (8.5%) granted during this time were to Catholics.¹⁰³ Fifty-one of these (36%) were admitted after 1793. But Kirby has noted that those admitted prior to the 1793 relief act (64%) were merely granted specific 'privileges in trade' rather than full civic freedom, which included the parliamentary vote. Thus the electorate remained relatively exclusive of Catholic freemen in 1800. Middle class Catholics, who came to the fore of Waterford politics in the 1820s and 1830s, including members of the Barron, Wyse, Aylward and Power families, were largely admitted after 1810. Until that time local politics was still very much the preserve of the Protestant élite. In the early nineteenth century, although the distinctions between (largely Protestant) citizens and non-citizens (including the bulk of the Catholics) no longer had much significance in the commercial sphere, Jacqueline Hill has argued that in terms of gaining citizenship and political influence, confessionalism was actually reinforced.¹⁰⁴ Despite the filtration of wealthy middle-class Catholics into the electorate, they had neither the influence nor, seemingly, the inclination before the 1820s to influence local politics in their favour.

The county electorate was predominantly made up of freeholders. Until 1829 the vote was held by fifty, twenty and ten pound freeholders, as well as by forty shilling freeholders. K. T. Hoppen has pointed out that although the franchise had long been based on various types of lease, owing to a presumption that leases made tenants independent, this was rarely the case in Ireland either before parliamentary reform in 1832 or after it.¹⁰⁵ The freehold vote was monitored by the landed proprietors, who essentially controlled the votes of their tenants, and thus held considerable political influence in the county. This situation changed dramatically in Waterford in 1826, but until that time this condition was taken largely for granted. Major proprietors in the county included Henry de la Poer Beresford, the second marquis of Waterford, William Cavendish, the fifth duke of Devonshire, Hayes St Leger, second viscount Doneraile and Lord Henry Stuart.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Kirby, 'Civic identity', p. 13.

¹⁰⁴ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 196.

¹⁰⁵ K. T. Hoppen, 'Politics, the law and the nature of the Irish electorate, 1832-50', in *English Historical Review*, xcii (1977), pp 753-4.

¹⁰⁶ Jack Burtchael, 'Nineteenth-century society in County Waterford, part iv', in *Decies*, xxxiii (1986), p. 16.

The Protestant élite in the city, centred in the corporation, had close links with many significant Protestant families in the county. The conservative principles of the majority reflected the ascendancy values of county magnates such as the marquis of Waterford and other members of the influential Beresford family seated at Curraghmore. The Beresfords held a durable influence in the city and county, and the Tory Lord George Thomas Beresford represented County Waterford at Westminster from 1814 to 1826 and again from 1830 to 1831.¹⁰⁷ The *Waterford Mail* represented conservative interests throughout this period. Liberal Protestants in the city were joined in the county by Robert Shapland Carew of Woodstown, John Nugent Humble of Cloncoskoran Castle, Edward Lee of Tramore and Richard Power of Clashmore. The *Waterford Mirror* and the *Waterford Chronicle* (until it was bought by the Catholic Barron family in 1824) represented liberal Protestant views in the city. In a declaration of their political standpoint, significant due to the rarity of such statements in the early years of the century, the editor of the *Waterford Mirror* claimed:

Being assured that the principles we have adopted are those which are ultimately best calculated for the happiness and prosperity of this country at large, and even of those who will now find fault with them; and having formed them after the most mature deliberation, we trust our firmness in maintaining them, without noticing any remarks that may at first be thrown out by the hasty and inconsiderate, will not be looked on with any disrespect.¹⁰⁸

Liberal Protestants in Waterford did have some grounds for optimism in the early years of the century. Good relations between Catholics and Protestants, as well as between Anglicans and Quakers, had endured throughout the eighteenth century, at least in economic and social terms, and there existed 'an openness of mind on matters religious and a willingness to change and adapt to circumstances'.¹⁰⁹ The eighteenth-century corporation had believed that a 'promotion of the city over their individual self-interest' was the best method for ensuring economic progress, and were prepared to overlook Catholic participation in the city's commerce to this end.¹¹⁰ Catholic religious practice was in general tolerated and St. Patrick's chapel off George's Street, dating from 1704, is one of Ireland's oldest surviving urban churches. The Church of

¹⁰⁷ Lord George Thomas Beresford was a younger brother of the Henry de la Poer Beresford, second marquis of Waterford. Beresford held parliamentary seats for Londonderry (1802-12), Coleraine (1812-14) and County Waterford (1814-26 and 1830-31). He was Colonel of the third regiment of dragoons between 1829 and 1839 and comptroller of the household between 1812 and 1830.

¹⁰⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 11 May 1801.

¹⁰⁹ McEneaney, *History of Waterford*, p. 149.

¹¹⁰ McEneaney, *History of Waterford*, p. 148.

the Holy Trinity, designed by John Roberts in 1793 at a colossal cost of £20,000 is the oldest Catholic cathedral in Ireland. Under these circumstances, it was not unreasonable for liberal Protestants to hope that the nineteenth century would witness a continuation of this toleration, despite the trouble of the 1790s.

Many Protestants in Waterford city were involved in another city institution, this one much younger than the corporation: Waterford Chamber of Commerce. The chamber provided a forum for debate among a diverse section of the political population. A group calling itself the 'body of merchants' began to meet on a regular basis in 1787, and minutes for these meetings exist for most of the 1790s. Although there is a mention of a guild of merchants in the Great Charter of 1626 – a tradition of guilds in Waterford had existed since medieval times – there is no evidence of any organised body of merchants throughout most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹¹¹ The formation of a chamber of commerce in the city at this time reflected a national trend, perhaps emerging in the new era of free trade, instituted by act of parliament in 1779, or as a reaction against local depression resulting from poor harvests in 1782 and 1784. The chamber of commerce was established independently and seemingly had no connection, formal or otherwise, with Waterford Corporation.

In June 1805 the body of merchants reorganised itself into the chamber of commerce and the adoption of new rules and regulations made it a much more disciplined and exclusive body. These new rules stated that 'no person [would] be deemed eligible to become a member of this body who is not a merchant, trader or banker'.¹¹² This was probably why Sir John Newport resigned his membership about this time, after relinquishing his partnership at the family bank.¹¹³ The formal consolidation of the body of merchants marked a defining milestone in Waterford's commercial history. The raising of the quorum from five to twenty members reveals how significant the chamber had become in the commercial life of the city.¹¹⁴ The purpose of the chamber was to promote the trade and prosperity of the city and to improve the port and communications networks. As well as this, Waterford Chamber of Commerce provided a forum through which part of city's economic élite could

¹¹¹ Boyle, 'Waterford Chamber of Commerce', p. 1.

¹¹² Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 7 June 1805 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02).

¹¹³ W. P. Burke, 'Newport's Waterford bank', in *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, iv (1898), p. 280.

¹¹⁴ Boyle, 'Waterford Chamber of Commerce', p. 14.

express their views. Waterford's economic élite was more socially and religiously diverse than Waterford Corporation. The liberal values expressed by this developing economic élite were to have a profound influence on Waterford politics in the nineteenth century.

The chamber was governed in a democratic fashion, according to the new rules introduced in 1805 to regulate its composition and conduct. All decisions were made by ballot, if demanded, and the majority decided. Coloured beans represented the votes: voting with a white bean representing an affirmative vote, a black bean representing a negative. As well as making membership more exclusive, the chamber also adopted a new clause resolving that any member who communicated any private issues discussed at meetings would 'be discontinued as a member'.¹¹⁵ This illustrates not only an increasing autonomy within the chamber itself, but also a growing confidence and self-assurance among the city's merchant class. Jennifer Boyle has pointed out that Waterford Chamber of Commerce 'reached a level of power within the city that other chambers did not attain', largely due to the extensive commercial power wielded by its members.¹¹⁶

The composition of the chamber, altered in 1805 to encompass only merchants and traders, was significantly broader than that of the corporation. Influential Anglican members included William Newport, the brother of Sir John, Henry Holdsworth Hunt, Thomas McCheane and Samuel King. Quaker merchants figured prominently, including members of the Jacob, Strangman, White, Grubb, Penrose, Courtenay and Ridgeway families. Although by the repeal of the test act in 1780 dissenters could participate in corporate politics, Waterford Quakers featured almost exclusively on the economic and commercial front. There were no Quakers on the common council of the corporation, and only about thirteen of the 812 persons who applied for the freedom of the city between 1800 and 1805 were Quakers.¹¹⁷ In contrast with this, in 1805 almost half of the members of the chamber belonged to the Quaker community. It would have been impossible to limit membership of the chamber to members of the established church, as some of the wealthiest merchant houses in the city belonged to Quakers.¹¹⁸ There was a small but vocal Catholic membership headed by the leading merchant

¹¹⁵ Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 7 June 1805 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02).

¹¹⁶ Boyle, 'Waterford Chamber of Commerce', p. 22.

¹¹⁷ But of course there may have been more petitioners who did not record their religious persuasion and whose name was not obviously of Quaker origin.

¹¹⁸ Boyle, 'Waterford Chamber of Commerce', p. 8.

Maurice Farrell, but in statistical terms, Catholics made little impact on the membership of the chamber of commerce before 1810.¹¹⁹ Out of the 141 debentures that were sold in 1815 for shares in the new chamber of commerce building, Catholic merchants bought only 9%, while Anglicans and Quakers bought 47% and 44% respectively.¹²⁰

By and large there was little overlap in membership between the chamber and the corporation, but there were several members of the chamber who were heavily involved in the local politics and administration of the city. Samuel King, who called the first meeting of the chamber in 1787, was then mayor of the city and long remained an influential member of the corporation. William Newport, along with his brother Simon and his cousin Sir Simon Newport, were members of both the chamber and the corporation. Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe and Thomas McCheane, prominent members of the chamber, also acted on the common council. Sir John Newport, an alderman on the common council since 1777, maintained close ties with the chamber throughout his parliamentary career. The corporation and the chamber initially seemed to work in harmony, but by the early nineteenth century these relations had completely disintegrated (see chapter two).¹²¹ Insofar as political standpoints may be ascertained, the chamber of commerce tended to reflect Whig values, and Sir John Newport's attentiveness to economic issues in parliament earned him the vocal support of the chamber. It is significant to note that, as in Dublin, the majority of corporators who were also involved in the chamber were representative of liberal opinion.

While discussing the growing significance of Waterford Chamber of Commerce during the early nineteenth century, it would be fruitful to consider the state of trade and commerce in the city at this time. The eighteenth century had been a period of unprecedented economic growth in Waterford and its hinterland, and this prosperity lasted until the end of the Napoleonic wars 1815. This has led Eamonn McEneaney to describe eighteenth-century Waterford as being characterised by 'a spirit of innovation and liberality' in economic terms.¹²² The mainstay of Waterford's commercial prosperity in these years was the provisions trade, which was primarily

¹¹⁹ Maurice Farrell was admitted in January 1806; Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 17 Jan. 1806 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02).

¹²⁰ J. M. Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852' (PhD thesis, U.C.C., 2001), p. 34.

¹²¹ Boyle, 'Waterford Chamber of Commerce', p. 23.

¹²² McEneaney, *History of Waterford*, p. 148.

directed at North America. Exports were largely composed of processed produce such as salted beef and pork, as well as biscuit and miscellaneous manufactured items. This led to the gradual growth of a broad manufacturing base in the city. While North America was a hugely important destination for the city's exports, with Waterford almost monopolising trade with the island colony of Newfoundland, trade with Britain was steady, and goods were exported to various continental destinations such as Bordeaux and Cadiz.

John Hearne has charted the fortunes of Waterford's economy throughout this period and his findings are significant. The last quarter of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed a directional and compositional change in the exports leaving the port of Waterford, largely due to the impact of the American and Napoleonic wars on the Irish economy.¹²³ The long-term result of this was a shift from the export of manufactured goods to America and Newfoundland to a heavy concentration on the export to British ports of unmanufactured goods, such as livestock, grain and flour.¹²⁴ This significantly eroded Waterford's broad manufacturing base, and the manufacture of tallow, lard, soap, hides and shoes declined sharply during these years. This was compounded by mounting levels of war-time taxation.¹²⁵ A significant exception to the decline of manufactures in Waterford city was the rapid growth of the meat-curing industry, and by 1818 nearly 250,000 fitches of bacon and ham were being exported annually, making up thirty-six percent of the city's revenue.¹²⁶ This processing was centralised in the city, providing employment for some of those affected by the erosion of the manufacturing base. The export of butter was also of growing importance and by the early nineteenth century was Waterford's principal export commodity.¹²⁷

Waterford's trade and commerce was controlled by a relatively small number of merchant families, many of whom concentrated heavily on particular commodities and certain trade routes. Therefore the alteration in the direction and composition of Waterford's exports in the early years of the nineteenth century had a significant impact on the fortunes of various merchant houses and families in the city. Some

¹²³ For further analysis see Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', pp 1-38.

¹²⁴ Exports of grain and flour, which experiences significant growth throughout this period, were boosted by legislation in the 1780s encouraging grain production.

¹²⁵ Hill, *From patriots to unionists*, p. 201.

¹²⁶ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 8.

¹²⁷ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', pp 10-1.

merchant houses suffered more than others, resulting in an alteration in the balance of commercial wealth and economic power in the merchant community. It was the Anglican merchants, who had dominated trade with the West Indies, who suffered most acutely when their trade was dislocated. It was also Anglican merchants who had dominated the salted meat industry. For example, the beef trade in the late eighteenth century had been controlled almost exclusively by the Anglican Newports, who exported mainly to transatlantic and continental markets, and the Catholic Longs who exported primarily to London. But it was Catholic merchants who largely came to control the export of live stock to Britain. The bacon trade came to be dominated by Catholic and Quaker merchants, and four merchant houses between them controlled over 86% of the city's bacon trade. Catholic merchant Thomas Farrell controlled 36%, the Penroses and the enterprise of Strangman, Courtenay and Ridgway (both Quaker houses) together controlled 33%, with the Anglican house of Wallace and Allen controlled 17%.¹²⁸ The newer butter and grain trades revealed little visible Anglican participation. Major Catholic merchants included Dominick Farrell, Thomas Farrell, James Wyse and Bartholomew Rivers.

While the Catholic merchant class enjoyed increased prosperity in these years, the Quakers proved to be by far the most durable and successful of Waterford's merchant community. Three of the most prominent merchant enterprises in the city belonged to Quakers – the Penrose family and the firms of Jacob, Watson and Strangman, and Strangman, Courtenay and Ridgway. Other prominent Waterford Quaker businesses included White's shipyard and later Jacob's bread and biscuit factory. In County Waterford the Malcolmson empire embodied the spirit of Quaker enterprise. Flour and cotton mills were established at Portlaw, with a model town for its workers, a school for their children and cardboard tokens were accepted as legal tender even in Waterford city. Later in the century the Neptune shipyard was added on the River Clodagh and the Malcolmsons controlled much of the shipping coming in and out of the city's port.

The Anglican merchants suffered most acutely as a result of these changes. Some Anglican families, such as the Newports and the Popes, withdrew from commercial activities altogether, some becoming commercial agents or going into banking. But some Anglican families did prove capable of carving a place for

¹²⁸ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', pp 21-7.

themselves in the new economic milieu. In the early years of the century, the most significant Anglican merchant houses in the city included the partnership of Wallace and Allen, and the companies of Hobbs, Alcock and Tandy. Other Anglican merchants came from the Reade, Richardson, Milward, Matheson and Denny families. By 1815 there existed in Waterford city a growing group of economically prosperous Anglican families who held close commercial ties with the Catholic and Quaker merchant communities and who became increasingly vocal in local politics. John Hearne has argued that the result of this was an emergence in the early years of the nineteenth century of two disparate groups within the Anglican community: a political élite with little real economic power and declining commercial status, and a cadre of more vibrant commercial families with growing economic power and close links to the emerging Catholic and dissenter middle classes.¹²⁹

Conclusion:

The origins of Irish liberal Protestantism had much in common with its British counterpart. In both places Whiggism was an aristocratic creed, and Irish Whigs belonged to the (Protestant) political élite. As in Britain, Irish Whigs aimed at implementing moderate if wide-ranging reforms, rather than attempting to alter or undo the fabric of society. The similar origins of Irish and British Whiggism were complemented by a complex social network in which close ties were fostered. But Whiggism in Ireland was distinctly altered by Irish circumstances. In a confessional society it was likely that Irish Whigs would develop a distinctively Irish stance on the Catholic question, and support for Catholic emancipation was a defining feature of liberal Protestantism in this period. The experience of the 1790s had a sobering effect on Irish Whiggism, and displayed its more conservative features and élite roots more perceptibly. The development of radicalism and republicanism in the 1790s alienated many Irish Whigs, but despite increasing difficulty in the 1790s to maintain a 'middle path' in Irish politics, the Irish Whigs did weather the storm and emerged in the early nineteenth century as a group challenging for a leading role in Irish politics.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Waterford city politics was dominated by Waterford Corporation. The corporation controlled all the official posts in the city, collected duties on all trade passing through the city, and had an indirect

¹²⁹ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852', p. 26.

influence on parliamentary politics through their control over the freedom of the city, which granted the parliamentary vote. The corporation was controlled by a cadre of conservative families who adopted the mentality of Protestant ascendancy to underpin their claim to leadership. Yet there existed within the corporation a small group of liberal Protestants with close connections to a growing economic élite in the city. The social and religious diversity of the economic élite, as illustrated through the membership of Waterford Chamber of Commerce, prompted some of them to support political equality for Catholics. It was these circumstances that make Waterford city and county a worthy vehicle of study for the growth of liberalism in this period.

A crucial development was the emergence and growth in the eighteenth century of a Catholic middle class, with advancing economic power and a developing desire for social recognition. Owing to the restrictions placed on them, prohibiting them from taking high official jobs and from sitting in parliament, and because participation in corporate politics, in terms of access to both the corporation and the parliamentary vote, was largely closed to them, the Catholic growth in economic prosperity was not matched by any political power. This grievance and the subsequent calls for emancipation became central not only to the history of the Catholic question in Ireland, but also to the history of Irish liberal Protestantism. In the following decades the ideologies of both liberal and conservative Protestants would undergo challenges and developments. As Waterford's Catholics came to hold a dominant influence over urban politics, the reactions of Waterford Protestants were varied, and it is these reactions that form the central analysis of this study.

Chapter two: Identifying the élite: liberalism and local politics, 1800 – 1820

This chapter aims to gauge the development of liberal values in Waterford in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. David Dickson has suggested that Irish towns, where a ‘critical mass’ of Protestants existed, witnessed greater difficulties in adjusting to the changing political climate than towns with a predominantly Catholic bourgeoisie and artisanry. In the former towns, including Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Clonmel, lively local politics and frequent divisions between freemen were more common.¹ Owing to the exclusive nature of politics in this period, the main focus rests on Waterford’s Protestant power-holding élite, and especially on the world of corporate politics. While some aspects of the corporate world had been weakened by eighteenth-century developments, the language of corporatism and the associated political privileges remained substantially intact.² Thus, the fostering of liberal values among members of Waterford Corporation, that challenged the traditional language of rights, was particularly significant. A second theme grapples with the relations of Waterford liberal Protestants with local Catholics, and a comprehension of their stance on the Catholic question is central to any thorough understanding of the evolving ideology of liberal Protestants in this period. Dickson has commented that in towns with large Protestant populations, such as Waterford and Cork, Protestants tended to close ranks in the face of a growing Catholic threat, and to give only minimal recognition to the wealthier Catholics after the 1793 relief act.³ In the light of early nineteenth-century developments in Waterford, this argument may need some reinterpretation.

In the early nineteenth century the Waterford élite was almost exclusively Protestant in composition, and the bulk of local power and influence rested in the hands of a number of Protestant families. These families belonged largely to the landed gentry, although some middle class merchants and professionals had become strongly involved in local politics by the early nineteenth century. In terms of prestige and patronage, Waterford Corporation was by far the most important institution in local

¹ David Dickson, ‘“Centres of motion”: Irish cities and the origins of popular politics’, in Louis Cullen (ed.), *Culture et pratiques politiques en France et en Irlande, XVI^e-XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1988), pp 109-10.

² Jacqueline Hill, ‘Corporatist ideology and practice in Ireland, 1660-1800’, in S. J. Connolly (ed.), *Political ideas in the eighteenth century* (Dublin, 2000), p. 80.

³ Dickson, ‘Centres of motion’, p. 122.

politics, and positions on the common council and corporate offices were widely coveted. A second body which became increasingly important in local politics in this period was Waterford Chamber of Commerce, which for obvious reasons was composed largely of merchants and tradesmen. The study of the politics of these bodies, as well as of other societies and voluntary bodies such as the Library Association or the Mendicant Asylum, reveals the interests and opinions of the Waterford élite in this period.

Part one: Liberalism and the corporate world:

In the early nineteenth century Waterford Corporation continued to dominate local politics, becoming more than ever a symbol of Protestant power and influence. The majority of the corporators – all of whom belonged to the established church – were politically conservative and anti-Catholic. They tended to use the language of corporate rights, blended with an ideology of Protestant ascendancy, to underpin their status as the power-wielding élite. This language could also be utilised to attack perceived undue or irregular privileges.⁴ This corporate identity had developed in the eighteenth century, when emphasis was placed on the organic origins of the corporation, combined with confessionalism and Lockean contract theory. Their rhetoric tended to invoke the Whiggish ideal of an independent corporate body, despite the continuing manipulation of corporate rights and privileges to ensure that the corporation remained a closed body to all but the most influential Protestant families.⁵ Despite the radicalism of the 1790s, Brian Kirby has pointed out that the corporation continued to admit relatively large numbers of Catholics to the freedom of the city, indicating that confessional relations between the Protestant élite and certain sections of the Catholic community were ‘not strained’ by the turbulent events of the 1790s.⁶ This developing identity was strengthened by a confidence in the ability of the corporation to successfully promote the interests of the city. Eamonn McEneaney has

⁴ Hill, ‘Corporatist ideology’, p. 79.

⁵ Brian Kirby, ‘Civic identity and corporate politics in eighteenth-century Waterford’, in Joost Augusteijn, Mary Ann Lyons & Deirdre McMahon (eds), *Irish research yearbook II* (Dublin, 2003), pp 10 & 20.

⁶ Brian Kirby, ‘Civic politics and parliamentary representation in Waterford city, 1730-1807’ (PhD thesis, N.U.I.M., 2002), p. 225.

pointed to a climate of enterprise, reflected in the many public and private buildings enterprises throughout the eighteenth century.⁷

This notion of corporate rights was particularly local in nature, and was based on the possession of various corporate charters granted to the city. The most important of these was the Great Charter, granted by Charles I in 1626 (in exchange for the princely sum of three thousand pounds). This charter was crucial to corporate self-definition in Waterford, as it offered an important sense of historical continuity, as well as providing a document from which so many of the perceived corporate rights were derived.⁸ This historically based definition of corporate privilege blended well with a confessional approach based on Protestant historical supremacy, and formed the basis for a corporate self-definition that persisted into the nineteenth century. The continued reliance on the Great Charter as a symbol of Waterford's civic autonomy indicates that the corporate élite viewed the city as an independent political centre, in which local loyalties and politics were paramount. The Great Charter allowed the corporation to make by-laws, enabling them to effectively control the composition and membership of both the common council (directly) and the freeman body (indirectly).⁹

The court of d'erne hundred, an assembly of freemen and councilmen forming part of the corporation, which had given the freemen direct influence in corporate affairs, had disappeared by 1724.¹⁰ A considerable narrowing of the borough franchise also occurred in the eighteenth century, justified through a blending of the penal laws and the New Rules, drawn up in 1672 (following those of 1660) in a systematic attempt to bring Irish corporate government more into line with its English counterparts.¹¹ By 1800 the common council of Waterford Corporation was undisputedly a self-electing body with full control over its membership. The commissioners who examined the workings of Waterford Corporation in 1833

⁷ Eamonn McEaney, *A history of Waterford and its mayors, from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries* (Waterford, 1995), pp 148-57.

⁸ Kirby, 'Civic identity', pp 9-10.

⁹ *First report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 593.

¹⁰ This court of d'erne hundred was referred to also as the court d'oyer hundred in the early nineteenth century. That it survived intermittently until 1724, despite curtailment in 1672 under the New Rules, indicates that it was a thriving body for at least part of its history; *Waterford Chronicle*, 18 Dec. 1833; Kirby, 'Civic identity', p. 11.

¹¹ Kenneth Milne, 'The corporation of Waterford in the eighteenth century', in William Nolan & T. P. Power (eds), *Waterford history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1992), p. 332.

commented: 'so complete is the exclusion of the freemen that they are not considered as forming part of the corporate body'.¹² Waterford Corporation was effectively the only organ of local government, one which used its influence to advance (or, as the common council argued, protect) corporate interests, as well as to exclude anyone viewed as a threat to those interests.

Throughout its history Waterford Corporation had been dominated by several factions, often based on familial networks, who competed among themselves for the lion's share of corporate patronage and control.¹³ The eighteenth century had witnessed domination by the Mason, Christmas and Paul factions. In the latter part of the century, influence passed into the hands of the Alcock, Bolton and Carew families.¹⁴ These families tended to come from a minor gentry background, for whom the advancements to be gained through corporate influence proved a strong temptation. The corporation also controlled (albeit indirectly) the city's parliamentary representation, with the dominant corporate families sharing the two city seats. The Carew faction had returned Robert Shapland Carew (1776-1800); the second seat was shared by Cornelius Bolton (1776-82), Henry Alcock (1783-97) and William Congreve Alcock (1799-1800), all members of the Alcock faction.¹⁵ The competition for dominance within the council was exacerbated by the demotion of the borough of Waterford city to a single member constituency after 1800. The union upset the balance of interests on the corporation, resulting in the removal of the powerful Carew family from the political equation.¹⁶

Despite the predominance of conservative Protestants on the corporation, there was a growing number who held increasingly liberal views on issues such as Catholic political rights and parliamentary reform. Many of those of a liberal and reforming persuasion formed a loose faction within the council, headed by Sir John Newport.¹⁷ These members began to challenge traditional forms of corporate patronage and

¹² *First report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 593.

¹³ See chapter one for information on the size and structure of Waterford Corporation.

¹⁴ Thomas Power, 'Electoral politics in Waterford city, 1692-1832', in Nolan & Power (eds), *Waterford history and society*, pp 229-40.

¹⁵ Kirby, 'Civic identity', p. 15.

¹⁶ J. M. Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852' (PhD. Thesis, U.C.C., 2001), p. 106.

¹⁷ The Newport faction attracted many former Carew supporters, as the two families were related through marriage, but the early nineteenth century marked the emergence of Sir John Newport, who had been active in the corporation since the 1770s, as an influential figure in local politics.

control that, due to firm oligarchic control, had remained largely unquestioned within the corporation since 1783.¹⁸ Of these members, by far the most influential was Newport himself, their leader; others included Sir Simon and William Newport, William Weekes and James Ramsey, Samuel King and Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe. These liberal Protestants were joined by others in the city and county of a similar persuasion, including Thomas Scott, Henry Holdsworth Hunt and John Allen in the city, and Sir John Nugent Humble, Rodolphus and Godfrey Greene, Robert Shapland Carew, Edward Lee of Tramore and Richard Power of Clashmore in the county. These men would be joined by others as the years progressed, including Henry Alcock and Sir Benjamin Morris in the city, and Henry Villiers Stuart and Sir Richard Musgrave junior in the county.¹⁹

While an unwieldy liberal faction did exist, emerging particularly at election times, there was little evidence yet for the existence of distinct 'party' politics. In the regular running of corporate business, there were few occasions where liberal members of the council differed from their conservative counterparts in ideological terms. The majority of the members of the council were interested predominantly in upholding their traditional privileges. Any mention of national politics, which occurred only a handful of times between 1800 and 1820, witnessed the council concerned with asserting loyalty to government and the monarchy, and upholding a façade of unity in local politics (although contested parliamentary elections were the obvious exceptions to this rule). In 1808, when William Congreve Alcock forwarded an address to the king, no party interests played a part in passing the motion to affirm the loyalty of Waterford to the Irish administration.²⁰ The corporators tended to agree on issues affecting corporation revenue, including leases, rents and tithes. This tendency was

¹⁸ Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 289.

¹⁹ Robert Shapland Carew senior of Castleborough, County Wexford (1752-1829): son of Shapland Carew and Dorothy Dobson, brother-in-law of Sir John Newport and Richard Power of Clashmore; M.P. County Wexford (1806-7). Robert Shapland Carew junior (1787-1856): educated at Eton and Oxford, M.P. for County Wexford (1812-34), created Baron Carew of Castleborough (1838), lord lieutenant of County Wexford (1831-56). Richard Power senior of Clashmore (c.1747-1814): son of John and Katherine Power; married daughter of Shapland Carew; M.P. for County Waterford (1796-1800, 1801-2 & 1806-14). Sir Benjamin Morris of Waterford city (1798-1875): son of George Morris Wall; ensign 25 foot; served in Gibraltar and West Indies (1815-33); sheriff of Waterford (1836 & 54); mayor (1845-7 & 1867-8); knighted (1836); R. G. Thorne, *The history of parliament: the House of Commons, 1790-1820* (5 vols, London, 1986), iii, 407 & iv, 876; Fredric Boase, *Modern English biography, containing many thousand concise memoirs of persons who have died since 1850* (Bristol, 2000 ed.), i, 543 & ii, 980.

²⁰ Waterford Corporation minute book, 1 Sept. 1808 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

reinforced by the local nature of politics, the bonds of kinship and community, and an adherence to corporate tradition.

Nevertheless, in the early years of the century, this small but vocal section of the political élite increasingly challenged particular aspects of corporate and traditional privilege, and it is significant that the earliest challenges came from within the corporation. A meeting of the common council in January 1801 witnessed attempts by Sir John Newport to regulate the granting of freedoms by the corporation. Newport moved that every resident merchant and manufacturer, as well as all those entitled to the freedom by the rights of birth, apprenticeship and marriage, should be entitled to the freedom of the city.²¹ This was an attempt to gain freedom status for all local residents with commercial interests in the city, as well as all those entitled by chartered rights. This new interpretation differed from the more exclusive interpretation of chartered rights held by many of the council. A number of those who were entitled to the freedom by right of birth, marriage or apprenticeship, but who had been denied by the corporation, were Catholics, despite the tradition of granting 'privileges in trade' to some Catholic merchants in the eighteenth century (see chapter one). Support for full political rights for Catholics was a marked feature of liberal Protestantism in this period, and Newport's promotion of freemen rights for Catholics had its origins in this.

Sir John's main aim was not to extend freemen rights as such, but to regulate those already in existence. Concentrating on petitions already received, he moved for a meeting to take the merits of the petitions into consideration. Significantly, Newport believed that this meeting should be a public one, 'in order that said persons so petitioning may have an opportunity of coming forward to prove the allegations of their said petitions'.²² Mayor Samuel King was a liberal Protestant, whom Newport knew would have been inclined to hold such a meeting. Interestingly, it was William Congreve Alcock who seconded Newport's motion, suggesting that the boundaries of party politics had not yet been delineated, and the vituperative views which would mould future relations were not yet dominant. With one eye on enhancing his own prestige in the city, Alcock may also have wanted to portray himself as a guardian of freeman's rights. There is no evidence that this meeting was held or that the resolutions were implemented, although many of those petitions which were afterwards rejected

²¹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 26 Jan. 1801 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

²² Waterford Corporation minute book, 9 Jan. 1801 (W.C.A. MS LA1/1/A/14).

were turned down on the grounds of non-residence.²³ Seemingly the liberal views held by some corporators were still very much in the minority.

However, within a year the temperament of local politics had altered, leading to much more astringent and indeed dramatic rivalries within the corporation. The context for this was a general election, called in June 1802. The sitting Tory member, William Congreve Alcock, was challenged by a Whig candidate, Sir John Newport. Alcock began a vigorous campaign in mid-July, and it was clear early on that he would use the influence of the corporation to augment his support. In turn Newport attempted to turn this influence to his own benefit, but the election of Samuel Morgan, an Alcock supporter and an anti-Catholic, as mayor in June 1802 diminished his chances considerably.²⁴ At this time the corporation began to grant peculiarly high numbers of freedoms to the city. This was significant as the freemen of the city possessed the right to vote at parliamentary elections, and made up the bulk of the city electorate. The majority of the freedom petitions were introduced by William Congreve Alcock himself, and seconded by his ally, Cornelius Bolton. These freedoms were granted in batches, the majority in January 1802 (186 admissions), and more in July (101 admissions), on the eve of the election:

Table 2.1: Admissions to freedom granted by Waterford Corporation, 1800-05

Admissions to freedom of the city, 1800-05	
<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of admissions</i>
1790-99	227
1800	43
1801	247
1802	451
1803	0
1804	64
1805	32

Source: Freedom petitions; Waterford Corporation minute book (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

In all, 247 freedoms were granted in 1801 and 451 in 1802. This contrasts vividly on the one hand with the 1790s, during which 227 freedoms were granted for the whole

²³ Waterford Corporation minute book, 26 Jan., 16 Feb. & 30 Mar. 1801 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

²⁴ Waterford Corporation minute book, 29 June 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14); McEneaney, *History of Waterford*, p. 233.

decade, and on the other with 1803, a year in which no freedoms were granted at all.²⁵ A considerable number of these freedoms were awarded by special favour.²⁶ ‘Special favour’ was a corporate privilege usually conferred only on visiting dignitaries or persons who had performed a great service to the city. By utilising this privilege more regularly, Alcock hoped to ‘pack’ the city electorate with his supporters. The rejection or stalling of other petitions for unspecified reasons was another ploy used by Alcock and Bolton to manipulate the composition of the electorate in their favour. The evidence suggests that freedoms were granted to those who would support Alcock in a parliamentary election and denied to those who would not.

The granting of so many freedoms by special favour during this time was viewed by some as a gross abuse of corporate privilege. At a dinner held in honour of Sir John Newport in August 1802, 205 persons toasted Sir John as the champion of reform, indicating that feeling against corporate abuse was fairly extensive.²⁷ But Newport could not oppose the granting of freedoms by special favour *per se*, as he had supported the granting of the freedom to all resident merchants and manufacturers only a year previously.²⁸ Thus, he was forced to oppose them only on the grounds of non-residence.²⁹ For support he could turn to the Great Charter, which stated that residence was a necessary pre-requisite for citizenship:

The citizens and inhabitants of the said city of Waterford, who are or shall be free of the said city, by right of birth, marriage or apprenticeship, and dwelling within the said city or county of the said city...and not otherwise, or by any other way...³⁰

But each motion forwarded by Newport against these freedoms was defeated by the common council, demonstrating the dominant influence of the Alcock-Bolton faction. Alcock’s motivation stemmed from a need to bolster electoral support for the upcoming election, but he could also have successfully argued that it was he who was

²⁵ It is fair to point out that the number of freemen admitted in the 1790s was rather low compared with the two preceding decades: 444 were admitted in the 1780s, and 574 in the 1770s. However, this marked a rise from a figure of 180 for the 1750s and 237 for the 1760s; Kirby, ‘Civic identity’, p. 13.

²⁶ Waterford Corporation minute book, 21 & 27 Jan., 6 & 19 Feb., 3 Mar., 29 June and 23 July 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

²⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Aug. 1802.

²⁸ The indication here is that if these applicants could not be admitted by right of birth, marriage or apprenticeship, they would have to be admitted by special favour, as the only other privilege available to the common council.

²⁹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 21 Jan. 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

³⁰ [Anon.], *The great charter of the liberties of the city of Waterford with explanatory notes, to which is added a list of the mayors, bailiffs and sheriffs of the city of Waterford from the year 1377 to the year 1806 inclusive* (Kilkenny, 1806), p. 68.

upholding freeman's rights, and that his introduction of the petitions was the implementation of Newport's motion of January 1801. Alcock recognised the advantages of employing Whiggish rhetoric in his election campaign, as his attack on Newport for employing 'corrupt and unconstitutional influence' suggests.³¹ This attack was justified by the fact that Sir John, in opposing these petitions, made an attempt to counter-attack Alcock's strategy to pack the electorate with one of his own. In February and June 1802, *mandamuses* of several petitioners were laid before the council.³² These probably belonged to Newport supporters whose petitions had been disposed of by the council. While he used the language of corporate and civic rights to argue for the eligibility of these petitioners, it is clear that Newport was attempting to pack the electorate with his own supporters. The majority of these *mandamuses* were disqualified.

Outside the relatively private council meetings (minutes of these meetings were not published until April 1838), Newport recognised the opportunity to carve a reputation for himself as a champion of freeman's rights. He launched a campaign for restricting the influence of non-resident freemen, and for the granting of freedoms to those eligible by corporate rights, contending that this was 'an integral part of any defence of civic independence'.³³ On 10 July 1802 Newport linked his election campaign with this campaign for civic independence, contending that it was time to end the subjection of freemen's rights to 'the yoke of individual or corporate monopoly'.³⁴ Newport also continued to obtain *mandamuses* for those petitioners whose freedoms had been denied by the corporation. An advertisement in the *Waterford Mirror* directed the petitioners to apply to Newport's law agent, William Hughes of Peter Street, to enable Newport to prepare the *mandamuses*:

in order that their rights may be immediately and fully secured to them by the regular course of law, pursuant to the statute 33d George III, if the same should be attempted to be withheld.³⁵

The advertisement did not explicitly state that those petitioners were expected to support Newport in the upcoming election, but it was implied. Newport attempted to

³¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Aug. 1802.

³² A *mandamus* was a judicial writ issued as a command to an inferior court, or ordering a person to perform a public or statutory duty.

³³ Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 294.

³⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 July 1802.

³⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 11 Jan. 1802.

establish himself not only as a defender of corporate (still largely Protestant) rights, but also as a champion of Catholic rights. The direct reference to the 1793 Catholic relief act is significant, as it revealed that a large portion of those who had been denied freedom by the corporation were Catholics. But the rhetoric of civic independence was blended less graciously with an attack on Alcock's 'illegal' attempts 'to subvert your chartered rights'.³⁶ Newport made it clear that if he could not garner sufficient influence to challenge Alcock from within the council, he would attempt to do it from without.

While Newport was attempting to mould the popular interest in his favour, his position within the corporation was being severely threatened. Simultaneously with the granting of Alcock's petitions, nothing short of a purge of Newport supporters was underway. Seemingly no aspect of civic patronage was free from factional interference. On 19 February Samuel King was removed from his corporate office as bookkeeper, and Thomas Scott was dismissed as coroner. Simon Newport, a cousin of Sir John, was removed from his office of master of the Leper Hospital and was ordered to hand over all common seal, deeds, leases and accounts.³⁷ Alcock supporters took over these offices; Michael Evelyn and Charles Samuel Tandy (who later became a liberal Protestant) were appointed law agents to the corporation, and John Roberts was appointed coroner.³⁸ The direct result of this jobbing was that Alcock gained further influence within the corporation at Newport's expense.

Matters came to a dramatic head at a council meeting on 23 July, the evening before the election. Alcock and Bolton continued their campaign of granting freedoms in batches. Sir John and his allies, Aldermen Sir Simon Newport, William Weekes and James Ramsey, made constant attempts to oppose the petitions, but their efforts were thwarted each time. As frustration mounted, they attempted to move for an adjournment of the meeting, but this was overruled. Newport and his allies then attempted to leave the council chamber. On finding the council door locked, in a fit of anger and frustration Sir John and the three aldermen proceeded to break open the door and escape.³⁹ Newport's objective was to prevent the meeting from continuing, thus

³⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 July 1802.

³⁷ There was in fact some evidence to suggest that Sir Simon was removed from his post on the grounds that he had failed to provide the council with a complete set of accounts; Waterford Corporation minute book, 19 Feb. 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

³⁸ Waterford Corporation minute book, 19 & 20 Feb. 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

³⁹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 23 July 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

precluding the further granting of freedoms before the election polls opened the next day. The following week, the four aldermen were summoned before the council on the charge that they had broken their aldermanic oaths in leaving the council chamber against the will of the mayor. Cornelius Bolton moved the charges against them, declaring:

before the business of the said council was near finished...[they did] withdraw themselves from the said council chamber contrary and in direct opposition to the positive orders and directions of the said mayor and contrary to their oaths of aldermen and members of this board and did then and there grossly insult the said mayor in the execution of the said offence.⁴⁰

The four gentlemen were summoned by the council to appear on 1 September to explain their conduct.⁴¹

Newport, frustrated by his failure to halt the granting of batches of freedoms by the council, announced heatedly on 6 July that 'if I am honoured by the truly respectable office of your representative, I will neither degrade it with servility, nor prostitute it to faction'.⁴² This was a clear blow at Alcock's conduct in dominating the common council. A few days later, Newport made a more explicit attack, contending that if he succeeded at the polls, the city would witness 'a final overthrow to the various efforts which have been illegally and ineffectually exerted to subvert your chartered rights'.⁴³ Alcock's reaction was to challenge Newport head-on. After pointing out – correctly – that Sir John's own 'pretension to any political consequence' originated in the participation in corporate politics, Alcock urged the electorate to consider Newport's arguments 'as the effusions of disappointed ambition, and the wanderings of a mind cankered with the lust of domination'.⁴⁴ Matters became so bitter between these candidates that a duel was held between the two candidates at Mullinbro, although 'matters ended to...mutual satisfaction' after the exchange of a shot apiece.⁴⁵

Despite the attempts of Alcock and Bolton to flood the electorate with Alcock supporters, Newport was optimistic at the opening of the polls on 24 July. In strange contrast to his long career in parliamentary opposition, Newport's first election

⁴⁰ Waterford Corporation minute book, 23 July 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

⁴¹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 23 July 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

⁴² *Waterford Mirror*, 7 July 1802.

⁴³ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 July 1802.

⁴⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 July 1802.

⁴⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 July 1802.

campaign was fought with the backing of both government and (essentially because of this) the powerful Beresford family in the county, headed by the marquis of Waterford. His 'very old' friendship with William Wyndham Grenville proved advantageous, as Grenville had garnered the support of the Addington government for Newport's campaign. Grenville urged the lord lieutenant, Lord Hardwicke, to support Sir John on the basis that he was 'attached to the union between Great Britain and Ireland, and an enemy to Jacobinism'.⁴⁶ In the city, Newport was becoming popular among both the Catholic and Protestant electorate, and attempted to gain their support through assurances of his interests in the prosperity of the city: 'united to it by birth, connexion and constant residence, those ties cannot be severed but with my existence.'⁴⁷

The polls opened on 24 July with the corporation deadlocked in strife and the city in a state of tension. The number of votes for each candidate remained close. Alcock's supporters were instructed to apply to the office of Michael Evelyn for their 'cocketts' of freedom.⁴⁸ Many Newport supporters who had gained their freedom through *mandamuses* were rejected, as their names did not appear on the corporation books.⁴⁹ At the final close of the poll Alcock had 471 votes to Newport's 440, and Alcock was duly elected the member for Waterford city.⁵⁰ Newport fully believed that he had lost the election owing to the flooding of the electorate with Alcock supporters and the denial of the vote to some Newport supporters, and the relatively small margin of thirty-one votes suggests that his opinion was accurate. Newport was still smarting on 14 August, when he announced that the poll:

could not be a majority of real electors, for franchises were withheld from those entitled, and an occasional right attempted to be transferred, by corporate influence, to persons utterly unconnected with the interests and prosperity of the city of Waterford.⁵¹

Newport submitted a petition to parliament against Alcock's return, on the grounds that many of Alcock's supporters had been illegally granted their freedom. In mid-August Sir John pledged to assert the rights of those freemen rejected at the polls 'until

⁴⁶ Lord Grenville to Lord Hardwicke, 8 Sept. 1801 (B.L., Hardwicke papers, MS 35,730).

⁴⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 July 1802.

⁴⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 July 1802; under English common law, a 'cocket' was a certified document given to merchants/shippers, as a warrant that their goods had been entered and his duties paid. In this context, 'cocketts' was used to denote a certificate proving that the holder was a freeman of the city, and that all his fees payable on entering the freedom had been paid.

⁴⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 9 Aug. 1802.

⁵⁰ B. M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 8.

⁵¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Aug. 1802.

their elective franchises are restored to them pure and unpolluted'.⁵² He continued to assert that in campaigning for personal recognition, he was also fighting for the civic independence of Waterford.

As well as failing to gain a parliamentary seat, Newport now stood to lose his position on the corporation, due to his impulsive actions the night before the election. In personal terms, the loss of his position as alderman would be the greater loss of the two, as a considerable amount of his local influence and prestige stemmed from this. This was a position Newport had held since October 1777, while he had yet to gain a parliamentary seat.⁵³ On 1 September the common council formally accused the Sir John Newport, Sir Simon Newport, William Weekes and James Ramsey of acting 'in express and direct opposition to the order and commands of the said mayor'.⁵⁴ The most serious charge made against the aldermen was that they had violated their aldermanic oaths, as well as their pledge of loyalty to the mayor.

The aldermen's defence was offered on 14 September. They denied that they had forcefully left the council chamber, stating 'we are incapable of such conduct'. The four aldermen allegedly left the council meeting because they had 'witnessed proceedings which appeared to us illegal and injurious to its [the city's] liberties, and franchises, which we have been sworn to serve and protect'. The meeting 'seemed to us to be held, merely for the purpose of serving William Congreve Alcock Esquire on the election to commence the following day'.⁵⁵ Newport contended that many petitioners were granted their freedom 'in direct contradiction' to the resolutions, passed in January 1801, stating that all potential freemen should be resident in the city. The freedom had been granted freely to non-resident Alcock supporters while it was denied to other residents (and potential Newport supporters) with proven rights to the freedom.⁵⁶ The four aldermen contended that rather than hindering the business of the city council, they had acted in defence of that council, as it had become clear that all council business had been suspended in favour of political manipulation. With the knowledge that his defence would be printed in the local newspapers, Newport asserted

⁵² *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Aug. 1802.

⁵³ If this date is correct, Sir John became an alderman at the age of fifteen. In 1802 Sir John confirmed this date, and so it would seem that he was made alderman at this time; Waterford Corporation minute book, 18 Oct. 1777 & 1 Sept. 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

⁵⁴ Waterford Corporation minute book, 1 Sept. 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14); *Waterford Mirror*, 25 Sept. 1802.

⁵⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 25 Sept. 1802.

⁵⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 25 Sept. 1802.

his support for corporate reform and registered his disgust at the actions of what he termed 'acts tending to subvert' the rights, franchises and constitution of the corporation.⁵⁷ This suggests that Newport was keen to rescue some popular support from a situation out of which he realised he would emerge the key loser.

After their defence was heard, Alcock proposed a motion that the four aldermen, by breaking their aldermanic oaths, had forfeited their offices. The decision went to a poll and, rather predictably, the council voted in favour of their dismissal. The four corporators not only lost their positions on the common council, they were also disenfranchised, effectively immobilising their political influence. Common councilmen William Congreve Alcock and Cornelius Bolton then proceeded to step neatly into the vacant aldermanic positions. The other two vacancies were filled by two Alcock supporters, Robert Lyon and Thomas Backas. That there were members of the council remaining who thought little of Alcock's recent actions was reflected in the fact that all four elections were objected to, though a majority proved themselves in favour of the new appointments.⁵⁸ The four new common councilmen chosen, Richard and Francis John Hassard, Richard Lee and James Henry Reynett junior, were all Alcock and Bolton supporters.⁵⁹ After these rather dramatic events, the common council continued on as normal. However, after the election, there was little need for granting freedoms at such steady pace, and the number of freedoms granted after July 1802 dropped off perceptibly, petering out completely by 1803 (see table 2.1).

Newport's time in the political wilderness continued only until May 1803. On 31 May, the common council received a *mandamus* commanding them to restore the four aldermen to their former positions in the corporation.⁶⁰ In December 1803 a parliamentary committee finally deemed Alcock's election as member for Waterford city 'illegal and defective'.⁶¹ The committee took into consideration only the votes of resident freemen and freeholders, and many of the votes of Alcock's supporters were 'disqualified solely on the grounds of non-residence', thus eroding Alcock's slender margin of thirty-one votes.⁶² The packing of the electorate with non-residents was ultimately to lose Alcock his seat, and Newport was declared the legal member.

⁵⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 25 Sept. 1802.

⁵⁸ Waterford Corporation minute book, 27 Sept. 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

⁵⁹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 6 Oct. 1802 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

⁶⁰ Waterford Corporation minute book, 31 May 1803 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

⁶¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 12 Dec. 1803.

⁶² *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Dec. 1803.

Shortly afterwards, Sir John announced in a letter to the freemen of the city that he had finally succeeded in securing them in their rights.⁶³ It is significant to note that this outcome proved that Sir John Newport did muster greater local support than his rival, and that his campaign for freeman's rights in the summer of 1802 must have been relatively successful.

Despite inauspicious beginnings, by 1803 the liberal faction on the corporation had regained their numbers, and their leader, Sir John Newport, represented the city in parliament. Newport's embryonic reputation as a reformer in parliament was reflected in a burgeoning prestige on the local front. Over the next three years, Newport managed to hold onto his seat during two further elections, one on the occasion of his being made chancellor of the exchequer for Ireland under the ministry of all the talents in March 1806.⁶⁴ Within the corporation, the smaller number of freedoms granted after Newport was reinstated represented the efforts of the liberal members to grant freedoms to all those who were eligible by chartered right, irrespective of political or religious opinions. Although it is difficult to come up with reliable statistics regarding the proportion of Catholic freemen in these years, it is probable that a significant portion of those admitted in the years up to 1820 were Catholic.⁶⁵ Peter Jupp has argued that there existed in Waterford city (and, for that matter, County Waterford) a 'Catholic interest' by 1807.⁶⁶ In contrast with those Catholics in the eighteenth century who were given specific 'rights in trade', these freemen were granted full freeman status under the terms of the 1793 relief act, and as such possessed the right to vote at parliamentary elections.

For the members of the corporation who supported Catholic emancipation, their campaign for religious equality (in political terms) was continually hampered by the periodic hardening of divisions among religious communities in the city. While sporadic and infrequent, local sectarian violence did continue to manifest itself in the

⁶³ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Dec. 1803.

⁶⁴ Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 10.

⁶⁵ Difficulties with exacting statistics from the freedom petitions, available in the Waterford City Archives, include: the majority of the petitions are undated, and the vast majority of the petitions do not mention the religion of the petitioner. However, some Catholics at least were admitted during these years, as many of those admitted professed Catholic surnames. By cross-referencing the petitions with the names appearing in the Waterford Corporation minute books, it is clear that the majority of these were admitted after 1793. For the number of Catholic freemen, Kirby has given a figure of just under twelve percent; Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 354.

⁶⁶ Peter Jupp, 'Irish parliamentary elections and the influence of the Catholic vote, 1801-20', in *Historical Journal*, x, no. 2 (1967), p. 186.

early years of the century. This was witnessed in the murder of John Scott, a Protestant yeoman and glassblower, near his home in October 1803.⁶⁷ This demonstrated to many members of the Waterford élite the dangers of allowing the Catholics any further political influence, and stiffened the resolve of those in the corporation straining to protect traditional corporate rights and privileges. The divisions between different sections of the Protestant community were strengthened further by the events surrounding the 1807 general election.

In May 1807 Sir John Newport, who had held onto his seat since 1803, found an election rival in the person of Cornelius Bolton of Faithlegg.⁶⁸ Bolton entered into an alliance with William Congreve Alcock, who in May entreated his supporters in the city to give their support to Bolton.⁶⁹ Unlike Alcock, whose family seat was in County Wexford (and indeed Alcock contested the County Wexford election in 1807), Bolton was a local landowner with commercial interests near the city.⁷⁰ He maintained considerable clout on the common council and was supported by the new government under the duke of Portland, who offered two thousand pounds for his campaign.⁷¹ Newport's interests were reflected in those of his brother-in-law, the Whig Richard Power of Clashmore, who was campaigning in the county. Newport also kept in close contact with liberal allies John Colclough and his brother-in-law, Robert Shapland Carew, whose campaigns were being challenged by William Congreve Alcock in County Wexford.⁷²

Throughout 1806 Newport had endeavoured to bolster his local influence, through the appointment of allies and political supporters to the many lucrative corporate offices (forty-two were listed before the parliamentary commissioners in

⁶⁷ However, it is fair to point out that atrocities of this kind in the city were rare, as was indicated by the reaction of the Protestant élite, who set up a relief fund for Scott's widow and children and put out a reward for the capture of the culprits; *Waterford Mirror*, 31 Oct. 1803.

⁶⁸ There had been two parliamentary elections in the city since 1803. The first, a by-election in March 1806, occurred due to Sir John Newport's promotion to chancellor of the Irish exchequer under the ministry of all the talents (see chapter three). Newport was challenged by William Congreve Alcock, but Alcock withdrew before the election on the grounds that he had had too little time to canvass for votes, and Sir John was returned uncontested. The second by-election of October 1806 witnessed Cornelius Bolton challenging the sitting member, but he also declined a contest at the last moment, and Sir John Newport was again returned uncontested; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 241.

⁶⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 May 1807.

⁷⁰ Cornelius Bolton owned an estate in Faithlegg, seven miles from the city. As well as this, he had founded a textile factory at nearby Cheekpoint, as well as a port and a hotel, and had opened a cobalt mine at Faithlegg. None of these ventures succeeded, and Bolton declared bankruptcy in 1819.

⁷¹ Jupp, 'Irish parliamentary elections', p. 188.

⁷² Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 242-4.

1833). He took heed of the marquis of Buckingham's advice to 'hold a very firm and tight hand' over both local and parliamentary affairs.⁷³ In the final months before the fall of the ministry of all the talents, Newport sought to bolster his position in the city through appointing political allies to official positions. In June 1806 Sir John nominated his friend Humphrey May, collector of Waterford, to a seat on one of the revenue boards. He further nominated Arthur Creagh, his brother-in-law, to succeed May as collector. William Hughes, one of Newport's election agents, was made collector of excise in December 1806.⁷⁴ Newport continued to seek Catholic support and nursed a close friendship with Dr John Power, the Catholic bishop of Waterford.⁷⁵ In this he was relatively successful, and in April 1807 a group of Waterford's principal Catholics formed themselves into a committee to support him in the upcoming election.⁷⁶ Also, Newport made sure that his parliamentary connections could be fully utilised in the event of an election. In January 1807 the marquis of Buckingham offered him a seat for the close borough of St Mawes in Cornwall, but Newport declined, pointing to his determination to stand for an 'independent' borough.⁷⁷ Brian Kirby has condemned Newport's actions during the 1807 election as hypocritical, citing his tirades against the influence of government officials at previous parliamentary elections.⁷⁸ But despite the growing aversion to jobbery in Whig circles, in local contexts patronage networks were still the qualification by which local influence was measured. Conviviality and the cultivation of social ties were another vital element in boosting local influence, which was well recognised by Newport, who commented in October 1806: 'I have feasted and complimented as almost to turn my brain'.⁷⁹ Newport's aim in 1807 was to hold onto his parliamentary seat by any means possible, and the nurturing of a network of support through the manipulation of local and parliamentary patronage was not (yet) viewed as inconsistent with an 'independent' campaign.

⁷³ The marquis of Buckingham to Sir John Newport, 5 July 1806 (N.L.I., Buckingham papers, MS 5,022).

⁷⁴ Kirby, 'Civic politics', pp 333-6.

⁷⁵ In 1813 Sir John Newport referred to Dr John Power as 'liberal, enlightened and conciliating', Sir John Newport to Dr John Power, 13 Apr. 1813 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362); Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 345.

⁷⁶ Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 344.

⁷⁷ The marquis of Buckingham to Sir John Newport, 13 Jan. 1807 (N.L.I., Buckingham papers, MS 5,022).

⁷⁸ Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 334.

⁷⁹ Brian Kirby, 'Civic identity', p. 17; Sir John Newport to William Eliot, 18 Oct. 1806 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7).

The polls opened on 23 May 1807 and the next twelve days witnessed a close battle between the two candidates. On 4 June Newport was declared member for the city by a margin of 132 votes.⁸⁰ Some insight into voting patterns is revealed by the list of voters printed in the *Waterford Mirror*. Newport was strongly supported among the local merchant community, including votes from members of the McCheane, Jacob and Pope families, but some Anglican merchants, including Henry Allen, did vote for Bolton. Bolton was strongly supported by corporation members, including members of the Hassard, Dobbyn and Dennis families, as well as by the Beresfords. Some of the more liberal members of the common council voted for Bolton, including William Milward and Edmund Skottowe, while others, including the town clerk Robert Cooke, voted for Newport. Support for Bolton was strong among the Anglican clergy, and the dean of the cathedral, Ussher Lee, voted for him. The vast majority of local Catholic and Quaker freemen voted for Sir John Newport. The list includes names of local Catholics who would become prominent in the campaign for Catholic emancipation in the years to come: Alexander Sherlock, Thomas Wyse senior, Joseph Anthony Leonard and Patrick Power, as well as members of the Barron, Galwey and Sheil families. Quaker support came from the Jacob and Penrose families.⁸¹ Based on these voting lists, Brian Kirby has placed the percentage of Catholic freemen at 11.9%. Of these, ninety-seven out of 109 (88.9%) voted for Sir John Newport.⁸²

Thomas Power has remarked that the 1807 general election was the first election in which the Catholic vote played a critical role, and that Catholic votes secured the outcome of the election.⁸³ Peter Jupp has agreed that in this instance the Catholic vote was used with 'singular and decisive effect'.⁸⁴ Indeed, Cornelius Bolton himself blamed his defeat on the activities of Catholic priests in offering spiritual rewards to induce freemen to vote against him.⁸⁵ Brian Kirby has disagreed, contending that 'Catholics clearly did not yet possess the numerical strength amongst

⁸⁰ Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 241.

⁸¹ It is noteworthy that a very small minority of Catholics did vote for Cornelius Bolton *Waterford Mirror*, 23 & 30 May; 1, 3, 6 & 11 June 1807.

⁸² Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 354.

⁸³ Power, 'Electoral politics in Waterford city', p. 253.

⁸⁴ Jupp, 'Irish parliamentary elections', pp 186-7.

⁸⁵ Cornelius Bolton to Sir Arthur Wellesley, 8 June 1807 (Apsley House papers, MS 38,568); quoted in Jupp, 'Irish parliamentary elections', p. 188; Cornelius Bolton to John Foster, 19 June 1807 (P.R.O.N.I., *Education facsimile 35. Elections*), quoted in Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 109.

the city's electorate to achieve such a feat'.⁸⁶ Kirby is accurate in pointing to the numerical weakness of the Catholic freemen in 1807. Numerically, the Catholic vote alone (at 109 voters) was incapable of controlling the outcome of the election, considering that Newport won by a margin of 132 votes.⁸⁷ Ninety-seven Catholics voted for Newport, representing 18.5% of Newport's tally. The remaining eighty percent were composed of Protestants.⁸⁸ However, when the Catholic vote was twinned with the liberal and popular (largely commercial) Protestant vote, it was enough to tip the balance in Newport's favour. Local politics in this period was still completely dominated by Protestant interests, and the Catholics recognised that in order to make an impact at the election, it was necessary to vote in conjunction with at least one section of the Protestant community. This was the first election in the city in which the aims of liberal Protestants and Catholics joined to affect a decisive victory over anti-Catholic opposition.

But Catholics in Waterford city were not the only ones to play a significant part in the general election of 1807. In County Waterford the principal Catholic gentry formed themselves into an election committee, and decided to use their political weight to influence politics in the city. In May 1807 they announced to the marquis of Waterford that they would not support the sitting Tory member, John Claudius Beresford, in the county unless he pledged his support for Sir John Newport in the city.⁸⁹ Although he did so, a look at the voting lists reveals that Lord Waterford was not particularly vigilant in ensuring this was carried out even among members of his family, as Lord George Thomas Beresford, Rev G. Beresford and Rev C. C. Beresford voted for Cornelius Bolton.⁹⁰ In reaction to the actions of the county Catholics, Bolton was forced to campaign for the support of the Anglican clergy (which he did with success), and from the militia and army units based in Waterford. The corporation's generous grants to the dean and chapter for restoration work to take place on the cathedral were a motivating factor.⁹¹ In the event the sitting members for County Waterford, John Claudius Beresford (Tory) and Richard Power (Whig), were returned uncontested.

⁸⁶ Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 355.

⁸⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 & 30 May; 1, 3, 6 & 11 June 1807.

⁸⁸ Kirby, 'Civic politics', p. 354.

⁸⁹ Lord Clancarty to Arthur Wellesley, 19 May 1807 (Apsley House papers, MS 38,568); quoted in Jupp, 'Irish parliamentary elections', p. 190.

⁹⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 & 30 May; 1, 3, 6 & 11 June 1807.

⁹¹ For example see Waterford Corporation minute book, 4 Dec. 1805 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/14).

The election in Waterford city and county was also influenced by the hostile electioneering in County Wexford. There William Congreve Alcock became engrossed in a vituperative campaign against his Whig rival John Colclough.⁹² On 1 June the *Waterford Mirror* reported that a duel had been arranged between the two candidates, resulting from a quarrel over the votes of the tenants of a Mrs Cholmondeley. Colclough, who essentially controlled the votes of these tenants, refused 'to deliver up' the second votes to Alcock, despite the fact that these two gentlemen were old friends.⁹³ At the duel, Colclough was shot in the chest and killed. The violence of the Wexford election resulted in rioting in Waterford city, although the prolonged contest in the city was another contributing factor to this unrest. Bolton attempted to capitalise on these disturbances, pointing out Newport's support among the Catholic 'mob', but to little practical avail.⁹⁴ The *Waterford Mirror* maintained that the riots had been triggered by 'idleness and drunkenness and other shameful traffic which too generally prevail on such occasions', rather than by any 'spirit of party' orchestrated by Newport's election committee.⁹⁵ Alcock won the second seat for County Wexford for want of a live rival, but he remained in such anguish at the death of John Colclough that 'he ended his own days in personal restraint and mental ruin'.⁹⁶ William Congreve Alcock died in 1813, having spent the remaining four years of his life in an insane asylum at Whitmore.⁹⁷

On his victory in Waterford city, Sir John Newport proclaimed to the freemen 'your virtuous, active, and persevering exertions have vindicated your freedom of choice, and established on an immovable basis the claim of Waterford to the proud title of an independent city.'⁹⁸ Sir John recognised that his victory had been effected by the support of liberal Protestants and Catholics, due to his defence of corporate reform and Catholic political rights. Calling it his 'day of triumph', Newport declared his return a

⁹² This election was contested by four persons: Abel Ram, William Congreve Alcock, John Colclough and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. However, by mid way through the contest, it was clear that Abel Ram would claim the first seat, and that Richard Brinsley Sheridan would fail to poll enough support. Thus the contest turned into a scrap for the second seat between Alcock and Colclough; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 18.

⁹³ *Waterford Mirror*, 2 Apr. 1808.

⁹⁴ Kirby, *Civic politics*, p. 353.

⁹⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 25 May 1807.

⁹⁶ The final results of the poll were Abel Ram 891; William Congreve Alcock 875; John Colclough 773 and Richard Brinsley Sheridan 729; Sheridan had pulled out of the contest before the duel between Alcock and Colclough took place; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 18.

⁹⁷ Thorne, *History of parliament*, iii, 55.

⁹⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 11 June 1807.

decisive victory over political factionalism and corporate monopoly. Corporate politics continued as ever, and factions within the corporation continued to create hostility and tension, but the parliamentary result in 1807 illustrated the growing strength of the liberal Protestant (and Catholic) vote in Waterford.

Part two: Liberal Protestantism and the Catholics:

The principle of religious equality was the defining feature of Irish liberal Protestantism in this period. While in England the *raison d'être* of the Whigs in the eighteenth century had been to criticise the extravagance, corruption and exclusiveness of the king's ministers, religious 'toleration' was the driving force of early nineteenth-century Irish liberalism.⁹⁹ Liberal Protestants believed that Irish Catholics were capable of moral reform and Christian religious knowledge without conversion. This principle was bolstered by a growing emphasis on rationality, the individual and moral responsibility.¹⁰⁰ This in effect led to liberal Protestant support for full Catholic participation in the political life of the country, or 'Catholic emancipation'. The 1793 relief act had given them some political concessions, including the parliamentary vote (see chapter one), but Catholics were still barred from the higher echelons of the civil, military and administrative services, and could not sit in parliament (as they were expected to take the Protestant oath of supremacy on taking a seat). Conservative Protestants remained staunchly opposed to (and afraid of) full Catholic emancipation, although they had to some extent come to terms with the Catholic vote. In 1807 Cornelius Bolton illustrated the necessity of taking the Catholic electoral interest into account, when he complained bitterly to John Foster that the few Catholics intent on voting for him had been 'hissed at hooted at in court and in the streets' by Sir John Newport's 'papist mob' in order to discourage them.¹⁰¹ That Bolton thought to complain about this indicates that the value of the Catholic vote had been recognised even by conservative Protestants.

⁹⁹ Jonathan Parry, *The rise and fall of Liberal government in Victorian Britain* (Yale and London, 1993), p. 73.

¹⁰⁰ Jennifer Ridden, "'Making good citizens": national identity, religion and liberalism among the Irish elite, c.1800-50' (PhD thesis, University of London, 1998), pp 19 & 48.

¹⁰¹ Cornelius Bolton to John Foster, 19 June 1807 (P.R.O.N.I., *Education facsimile 35. Elections*), quoted in Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 109.

There was strong support among liberal members of the Waterford élite for the granting of full political rights to Catholics. Edward Lee of Tramore reflected liberal Protestant opinion on the Catholic question:

The Roman Catholics are like other men; they know their rights – they feel their injuries; restore to them their long lost privileges, and they will be grateful to you for the act; until that is done I do not think that either England or Ireland is secure.¹⁰²

Many liberal Protestants in Waterford Corporation and Waterford Chamber of Commerce supported full Catholic participation in political life. A declaration of Waterford's liberal Protestants appeared in March 1808, stating their belief that all restrictions to Catholic participation in civil and political life should be removed:

[We] feel ourselves called upon respectfully but clearly to declare our decided conviction, that the longer continuance of those restrictive laws which debar our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects from a full participation in all those privileges which we enjoy would be unjust and impolitic.¹⁰³

The signatures included many of the leading Protestants of the city and county (see table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Protestants who signed the 1808 declaration in favour of Catholic relief

<i>Waterford Protestants who signed the 1808 Declaration</i>	
Duke of Devonshire	Edward Lee of Tramore
Duke of Ormond and Ossory	Rev James Marshall
Lord Ebrington	Rev Godfrey Massey
John Allen	Phineas Murphy
John Allen junior	Sir John Newport
James Anderson junior	Sir Simon Newport
Abraham Atkins	Simon Newport
Rev John Averell	William Newport
William Bell	R. Nicholson of Tramore
Arthur Birnie	W. Nicholson of Tramore
James R. Birnie	John Power of Kilfane
Robert Boardman	Richard Power of Clashmore
Edward Villiers Briscoe	Richard Power junior of Clashmore
Robert Shapland Carew	Richard Power of Kilfane
Godfrey Greene of Tramore	Robert Power of Clashmore
Rodolphus Greene	James Ramsey

¹⁰² *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Apr. 1808. Edward Lee (?1761-1822) was a barrister, educated at Trinity College Dublin and Mount Temple. Lee was member for Dungarvan (1797-1800) and (1801-2) and County Waterford (1802-6), as well as sheriff of County Waterford (1804-5). He was the brother of the ultra Protestant Ussher Lee, dean of Waterford Cathedral and a cousin of William Congreve Alcock. Patronised by the Beresfords, Lee took the side of government in parliament on all but the Catholic question; Thorne, *History of parliament*, iii, 399-400.

¹⁰³ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1808.

John Nugent Humble	Thomas Scott
Henry Holdsworth Hunt	Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe
Edward Kennedy of Johnstown	Rev James Smith
John Kennedy of Johnstown	Dr Thomas Wallis
Samuel King	George Weekes
William King	William Weekes
Simon Lampier	

Source: *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1808.

The majority of the signatories belonged to Waterford's political and social élite. A majority of those from the county were landed proprietors. Leading members of the Protestant gentry in the county who signed the declaration included Richard Power of Clashmore and his sons Richard and Robert (all of whom would serve as M.P.s for the county), John Nugent Humble, Robert Shapland Carew, Edward Lee of Tramore and Rodolphus and Godfrey Greene. Six signatories acted as grand jurors of either the city or county.¹⁰⁴ A majority of those from the city came from the merchant or professional classes, and many played an active role in the city's political life. Leading city liberals included the Newport family, Thomas Scott and Edward Villiers Briscoe. Members of the corporation who signed the declaration included James Ramsey, William Weekes, Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe and Samuel King. Signatures of members of the chamber of commerce included Henry Holdsworth Hunt, John Allen and his son John, and Phineas Murphy. James R. Birnie was a member of the chamber of commerce as well as proprietor and publisher of the liberal *Waterford Chronicle*.¹⁰⁵ Those listed included in some instances many members of the same family, including the Newports and the Powers of Clashmore, the Nicholsons of Tramore, and the Kennedys of Johnstown.

The 1808 Protestant declaration was a result of increased activity on the part of Waterford's Catholics over the preceding year. The succession to office of the ministry of all the talents, under the leadership of Lords Grenville and Grey, in February 1806 had heightened Catholic expectations throughout Ireland. In Waterford city this was augmented by the fact that their Whig representative, Sir John Newport, had been appointed chancellor of the Irish exchequer. A Catholic meeting was held in the city in April 1806 to prepare an address to the lord lieutenant, the duke of Bedford, congratulating him on his new post. The Waterford Catholics opportunistically

¹⁰⁴ These gentlemen were Henry Holdsworth Hunt, John Nugent Humble, Phineas Murphy, William Newport, Richard Power junior of Clashmore and Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe; *Waterford Mirror*, 29 Mar. 1806.

¹⁰⁵ *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 322.

commented that they hoped that the 'important consequences' of Bedford's administration would be 'to invigorate the admirable British constitution by introducing a loyal people to defend it as their own chief good'.¹⁰⁶ The *Waterford Mirror* remarked that 'both the language and sentiments [of the address] equally merit and must receive the warmest approbation from every real friend to the United Kingdom'.¹⁰⁷

A Catholic meeting was held in the city in March 1808 to gather support for a parliamentary petition prepared at a Catholic meeting in Dublin. The Waterford meeting was attended by men of 'respectability and property' and attracted much enthusiasm. A leading Catholic, Thomas Fitzgerald, stated that the Catholics of Waterford were 'unanimous in our attachment to our king and constitution – unanimous in our determination to shed our blood in their support'. The meeting unanimously resolved to adopt the Dublin petition 'for a participation of the full benefits of that inimitable constitution'. The mood of the meeting was optimistic, with Fitzgerald recognising 'the liberality of our Protestant brethren' manifesting itself throughout the country. The views of Sir John Newport were particularly applauded, and his support for the petition was requested; support which was duly granted. In a letter to Thomas Fitzgerald written shortly afterwards, Newport declared that full Catholic emancipation was 'indispensible' to prosperity, and considered it 'the greatest object of my political life'.¹⁰⁸ A resolution was passed that Newport's support 'will be considered by us as a new pledge of the unfeigned attachment and confidence which shall, we trust, ever subsist between him and his constituents'.¹⁰⁹

The Protestant declaration was signed in support of this petition over the following week, although it was probably organised before this. Edward Lee had been vocal in forwarding the idea since February, urging Protestants to forget 'all party considerations' in coming forward in support of Catholic claims.¹¹⁰ In a letter to the Protestants of Waterford, Edward Lee acknowledged the widespread support among liberal and 'disinterested' Protestants for the removal of Catholic disabilities:

I am fully convinced that there is nothing that would give more general satisfaction to the disinterested Protestants, and to the great body of the

¹⁰⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 26 Apr. 1806.

¹⁰⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 15 May 1806.

¹⁰⁸ Sir John Newport to Thomas Fitzgerald, 15 Mar. [1808] (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

¹⁰⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Mar. 1808.

¹¹⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Feb. 1808.

Catholics, or tend more to reconcile all parties, and to restore confidence between man and man...¹¹¹

The Waterford declaration was not unique, and other Protestant declarations had been signed in Tipperary, Galway, Queen's County and Belfast by the end of February.¹¹² A declaration from Kilkenny Protestants had appeared by 14 March.¹¹³ On 23 March the *Waterford Mirror* printed a Catholic address of thanks to Waterford Protestants, 'who, soaring above the prejudices of less enlightened times, have unanimously stepped forward in vindication of our rights and support of our claims'.¹¹⁴

In May 1806 the *Waterford Mirror* had reported positively on the Catholic meetings in the city, but commented that 'we should be glad to know why a *general* meeting of the citizens of Waterford has not been convened'.¹¹⁵ By 1808, Catholics were attempting to foster a common cause with the city's Protestants:

The cause of the Protestants is *ours* – the cause of the Catholics is *theirs* – to both, it is the safety of the land against the common enemy – it is the protection of the peasant as well as the noble, from pillage and slavery and death.¹¹⁶

Similarly, the Protestant declaration wished for the termination of 'those unhappy divisions which have too long enfeebled this island'.¹¹⁷ While the Protestants employed different terms, the object was the same: that Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants should unite in the common cause of their country.

Some liberal Protestants in Waterford remained active in their support for Catholics by writing letters to local newspapers. The earliest in this series of letters, written by Edward Lee and addressed to the citizens of Waterford, appeared in February 1808, but it had originally been written in 1793. This letter revealed that there was support from some members of the Protestant community in Waterford for full political rights for Catholics from an early date.¹¹⁸ The reprinting of it in 1808 indicated a return of the optimism of the early 1790s, expectant that a Catholic petition

¹¹¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Feb. 1808.

¹¹² *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Feb. 1808.

¹¹³ It is interesting that several Waterford Protestants, including William and Simon Newport, Richard Power of Dungarvan, Robert Shapland Carew and Edward Lee of Tramore also signed the Kilkenny declaration; *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Mar. 1808.

¹¹⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1808.

¹¹⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 15 May 1806.

¹¹⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Mar. 1808.

¹¹⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1808.

¹¹⁸ Edward Lee was one of the earliest supporters of Catholic emancipation in Waterford, *Waterford Mirror*, 3 Feb. 1808. Another early supporter of emancipation was Sir John Newport, who had campaigned vocally since 1792.

would shortly appear before parliament. It may also have been intended to symbolise the enduring legal restrictions under which the Catholics suffered, and the lack of change on this front despite the promises of union. Many of the topics broached in the letter still resonated with contemporary meaning in the decade after union:

How can you expect, unless you change the mind of men, that they [Irish Catholics] can forget their situation, and lend their assistance to support that constitution, of which they are not a part, and whose blessings they do not enjoy?¹¹⁹

The theme of fully admitting qualified Catholics to the existing constitution was one that continued to be utilised by liberal Protestants in the nineteenth century, and was especially meaningful while the wars with Napoleonic France were still raging, leading to the need for troops to defend the 'British constitution'. Lee ended this letter with an appeal to the citizens of Waterford 'to instruct their representatives in parliament to vote for the repeal of those obnoxious laws...which the majority of the Protestants and all the Catholics loudly call for'.¹²⁰ This message carried as much potency in 1808 as it had done in 1793.

In a contemporary letter addressed to the Protestants of Waterford, Lee made it clear that his feelings on the Catholic question had remained unchanged since 1793. His aim in this second letter was to drum up local Protestant support for the Catholic parliamentary petition about to be organised. Lee employed conciliatory language to garner Protestant support, arguing that while Catholics wished for the full removal of political disabilities, they did not 'wish to meddle or interfere with the Protestant religion...or the Protestant church establishment'.¹²¹ A third letter, addressed to the Catholics of Waterford, appeared in April when the Catholic petition was before parliament. This was largely taken up with a discussion of the veto question. Edward Lee supported the argument that some form of veto over the appointment of Catholic bishops should be placed in the king (see chapter four). His aim in doing so was 'to draw both sides into contact, to smooth their way as much as possible' in order that Catholic rights may be granted to the satisfaction of all parties. Conciliation and cooperation was imperative, as the failure of the British government to grant emancipation would:

¹¹⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 3 Feb. 1808.

¹²⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 3 Feb. 1808; the members of parliament for Waterford city in 1793 were Robert Shapland Carew (who supported Catholic claims) and Henry Alcock (who did not).

¹²¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Feb. 1808.

draw an eternal line of demarcation between our Catholic and Protestant subjects in Europe, and thus paralyze all our strength, and destroy our native energy, and that at a moment when almost the whole civilised world is in arms against us.¹²²

In illustrating to the Catholics the strength of liberal Protestant support for emancipation, Lee's aim was to create a common ground between Catholics and Protestants in the city. Indeed, there is much evidence to support the claim that such decided support for religious equality among liberal Protestants led to relatively harmonious Protestant-Catholic relations during these years, even during the prolonged controversy over the veto.

A letter printed in May 1808 and signed by 'Marcus' grappled with the ramifications of a Catholic relief bill for the established church. Discountenancing the belief that Catholic emancipation would lead to the 'ruin' of the established religion in Ireland, the writer argued that toleration would be 'the chief ornament and the best security of the establishment'. Without toleration, to be achieved through granting full political rights to Catholics, and 'strong and harmonious union', the writer believed that 'our doom is sealed – the sun of Britain's glory is set in eternal darkness'.¹²³ A second anonymous letter, signed 'Amicus Patriae', examined the claims of Catholics to full participation in 'civil privileges' on the grounds of policy (as opposed to principle), with a view to convincing his readers of the necessity for unity.

Are all its [Ireland's] children ready to defend their common country, and to deal out vengeance on the invading foe? Reverse the picture, and you will behold the unnatural and misshapen portrait of your native land.¹²⁴

The only way to unite the Irish people was to create a common interest between all communities, and in turn, the only way to do this was to 'raise' the Irish Catholic to 'his natural and proper level' beside the Irish Protestant.¹²⁵

However, it is important to point out the essentially conservative motives behind liberal Protestant support for Catholic emancipation. The concern of liberal Protestants did not centre on equality for Irish Catholics *per se*, but on the possibilities of creating peace and prosperity in Ireland without overturning the political and social structures that enabled the Protestant ascendancy to maintain their position.¹²⁶ It was

¹²² *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Apr. 1808.

¹²³ *Waterford Mirror*, 4 May 1808.

¹²⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 11 May 1808.

¹²⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 11 May 1808.

¹²⁶ Ridden, 'Making good citizens', p. 49.

their belief that the country's political and social problems, the problems caused by social unrest and continuing violence, were rooted in the continuing animosities between Catholics and Protestants, which in turn were caused by a political system which had failed to bestow full equality on qualified Catholics. It was significant that liberal Protestants supported the admittance of some Catholics into the existing system; those who were qualified under a certain set of criteria. Liberal Protestants contended that by granting Catholic emancipation, the government could effectively remove the Catholic question from politics altogether. This would in turn lead to better relations between the religious communities in Ireland, and would eventually lead to peace and prosperity. The declaration of Waterford Protestants in favour of Catholic claims, printed in March 1808, declared 'it is our first and most earnest wish that those unhappy divisions which have too long enfeebled this island should cease; that the line of demarcation, which has separated us from each other, should be obliterated'.¹²⁷ These Protestants (in contrast to their conservative coreligionists) believed that the 'British' constitution could be effectively enlarged to include Irish Catholics without undermining its essentially 'Protestant' nature:

Every Irish subject should, by his capacity to enjoy all the honours and privileges of the state, feel as he ought the inestimable value of our constitution: and that we should thus embody the whole strength of Ireland in defence of our common country.¹²⁸

Nevertheless, these Protestants viewed themselves as part of the political élite, and envisaged that this élite would remain essentially Protestant. Liberal Protestants considered Catholic participation in politics as bringing about a situation in which Protestant political power would be gradually (and willingly) shared with leaders of Catholic opinion. Their support for full political rights for Catholics stemmed from an attachment to a hierarchical political structure, in which leading members from all religious backgrounds could participate in the government of the country. Most liberal Protestants supported the participation of the Catholic upper and middle classes; those whom they believed had the capacity to grow into morally capable citizens within the existing (essentially Protestant) political system. This was illustrated in the comments of Sir John Newport at the Catholic meeting in the city March 1808, when he

¹²⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Mar. 1808.

¹²⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Mar. 1808.

addressed the Catholics ‘as high in rank, as opulent in fortune, as distinguished for integrity, and as firm in loyalty’ as the Protestant section of the community.¹²⁹ Never did their support for Catholics rights branch into a support for democratic politics, even among those who wished to make the electorate more representative.

There was a genuine fear, even among liberal Protestants, of Catholic political domination. This was blended with a belief that Catholic rights would be granted on Protestant terms, and that unrest and agitation would cease largely through Catholic gratification at being willingly admitted to equal political status. There was a genuine belief that Protestants had to grant Catholic emancipation (on Protestants terms), because if they failed to do so, the Catholics would eventually wrench it from them. Edward Lee aimed specifically at invoking this fear in his attempt to mobilise Protestant support for Catholic petition in 1808. Pointing out that a growing part of the property of the county was in Catholic hands, he contended that ‘power will ever follow property, as the day follows the night’. Lee believed that in order to prevent Catholic ‘power’ from undermining the Protestant position in Ireland, this power had to be harnessed, and there was ‘nowhere better to lodge this power as in the hands of those who are most interested to support the constitution under which they live’. Lee urged Irish Protestants to support Catholic claims not only to convince them of the enlightened and liberal nature of Irish Protestantism, but also to lay the Catholics ‘under everlasting obligations’ to the Protestant community.¹³⁰ Finally, it is possible that at least some Protestants supported Catholic emancipation in order to win popularity and influence in local politics, under the conviction that any motion on the Catholic question would be easily defeated in parliament by the (still predominantly anti-Catholic) English members.¹³¹

Part three: Waterford Corporation and Waterford Chamber of Commerce:

In the early nineteenth century one of the most enduring challenges to the political dominance of Waterford Corporation was offered by Waterford Chamber of Commerce, and the ways in which members of these bodies interacted offers some insights into the nature of the political élite in the city. While traditionalism and

¹²⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Mar. 1808.

¹³⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Feb. 1808.

¹³¹ Jupp, ‘Irish parliamentary elections’, p. 193.

protectivism marked the corporation during these years, Waterford Chamber of Commerce represented a much more diverse and progressive section of the political élite. By the early nineteenth century the chamber had become an important outlet for the views of Waterford's merchant community. Many of the Protestant members of the chamber supported full Catholic participation in politics. The 1808 Protestant declaration in support of Catholic relief included the names of seven merchants who were at that time members of Waterford Chamber of Commerce: the president Henry Holdsworth Hunt, Samuel King, William Newport, John Allen senior, John Allen junior, Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe and Phineas Murphy.¹³² Support for Catholic emancipation may have been influenced by the close relations with Catholic members of the chamber, including Maurice Farrell, William Aylward, Thomas Owen and Joseph Anthony Leonard.¹³³ Des Cowman, who has published the only history of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce to date, has pointed to the liberalism of the chamber in these years, and has gone as far as to contend that the chamber distinguished itself as an assailant of 'the forces of conservatism and complacency'.¹³⁴ But however progressive the chamber was in this period, the corporation maintained an ill-disguised reluctance to treat the chamber seriously.

Sir John Newport maintained particularly close contact with the chamber throughout these years, facilitated by the fact that his brother William played a particularly active role on the chamber's council. As the city's parliamentary representative, Newport was the main recipient of the chamber's memorials and requests, and a large number of letters were addressed to him during this period, dealing with a wide range of concerns. Sir John frequently visited Waterford to confer with the merchant body 'upon the most efficacious means of adding to its commerce, and promoting its prosperity'.¹³⁵ In October 1806 the *Waterford Mirror* recognised that Newport had been active in parliament in 'enlarging its [the country's] trade, animating its languishing manufactures, and invigorating its agriculture'.¹³⁶

¹³² *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1808; Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 4 June & 1 July 1805 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02).

¹³³ Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 4 June & 1 July 1805 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02).

¹³⁴ Des Cowman, *Perceptions and promotions: the role of Waterford Chamber of Commerce, 1787-1987* (Waterford, 1988), p. 17.

¹³⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 11 Oct. 1806.

¹³⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 11 Oct. 1806.

One of the more significant campaigns launched by the chamber aimed to rid Waterford port of the abuses perceived to be hampering trade, such as the selling or granting of offices (largely controlled by the corporation) to unfit persons, and misbehaviour and delinquency among port officials. The chamber claimed that archaic posts were no longer appropriate in the management of a modern competitive port.¹³⁷ In this, the activities of the chamber formed part of wider trend of 'economical reform', which was aimed largely at tightening the public service through the removal of abuses and sinecures (see chapter three). This campaign brought them into direct conflict with the corporation. In 1805 the chamber attempted to remove from office Richard Wilson, one of the officers of the revenue. The chamber built up a file of Wilson's irregular activities and accused him of corruption and bribery. Several memorials were written to both the collector of Waterford, Humphrey May (who turned a blind eye to both Wilson's activities and the chamber's memorials), and to the board of commissioners in Dublin. In 1806 Wilson was finally put on trial for corruption. He was found guilty and removed from office.¹³⁸ Next, Waterford Chamber of Commerce accused Humphrey May of continued abuses in collecting taxes on the boats coming downriver.¹³⁹ A campaign against Humphrey May, who had been appointed master of the port under the influence of Sir John Newport, had been launched in the 1796 when allegations of overcharging merchants for the clearing out of vessels led to a committee of ship owners being established to investigate the problem. While on this occasion the campaign ended in stalemate, the renewed campaign was successful, and May was forced to resign in October 1806.¹⁴⁰

When the Waterford Chamber of Commerce launched this campaign for a reform of abuses, the corporation tended to view their activities as an attack on traditional corporate rights and privileges. In 1807, when the chamber attempted to regularise the wages of the port officials, the corporation stepped in to reaffirm their right to control over Waterford port and harbour.¹⁴¹ The corporation was protective of its influence over the butter trade, maintained through control over the appointments to

¹³⁷ Jennifer Boyle, 'The origins and development of Waterford Chamber of Commerce, 1787-1820' (Undergraduate thesis, T.C.D., 2006), p. 15.

¹³⁸ Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 18 June, 6 July and 11 July 1805 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02); Cowman, *Perceptions and promotions*, pp 13-4.

¹³⁹ The collector of Waterford, also called the master of the port, was only supposed to collect taxes on imports of tobacco, wine and spirits, but seemingly May was involved in collected certain monies on cargo being exported also.

¹⁴⁰ Cowman, *Perceptions and promotions*, pp 14-5; Boyle, 'Waterford Chamber of Commerce', pp 11-3.

¹⁴¹ Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 9 Nov. 1807 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02).

the corporate offices of weighmaster and butter taster. The office was a lucrative one, with customs from butter amounting to about four hundred pounds per year in 1833.¹⁴² The evidence given before the commissioners in 1833 also revealed that the post was treated as a sinecure. Sir Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe had held the post of butter taster since 1813, but the work was carried out by his deputy Robert Curtis, as Skottowe lived in France.¹⁴³

The corporation and the chamber came into direct conflict when a dispute erupted over which of the two bodies was responsible for repairing the city streets. This was essentially a clash between the corporation's traditional rights and the chamber's asserted rights. Initially the chamber had not the resources, and the corporation not the inclination to take the lead on the issue. The chamber had appointed a committee of fifteen to look into the state of the quay as early as December 1806.¹⁴⁴ In August 1807, under pressure from the merchants, the corporation donated one hundred pounds towards repairing the quay. The chamber sent a letter thanking the mayor, but remarked on 'the total inadequacy of the sum', contending that at least five times that amount was needed. In October 1807, in an attempt to force the corporation to cough up further funds, the chamber (styling themselves the 'merchants and citizens') agreed to pay half of the cost out of its own resources.¹⁴⁵ By 1813 it had become apparent that the corporation could ill afford to continue to pay for the upkeep of the city's streets – in this the corporation had set themselves 'a nearly impossible task'¹⁴⁶ – and so they resolved to accept the chamber's offer of financial aid. In June 1813 they resolved:

that this board do...approve of and ratify the offer to cooperate with the citizens of Waterford in paving all or any of the streets and so guarantee to the citizens that their contributions shall be refunded to them if it be ultimately decided that the corporation be bound to repair those streets at their own expense...¹⁴⁷

It is worth noting here that the corporation viewed this resolution merely as a confirmation of the powers that were already invested in them, and an approval of the

¹⁴² *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Dec. 1833.

¹⁴³ Waterford Corporation minute book, 27 Feb. 1813 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15); *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Dec. 1833.

¹⁴⁴ Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 7 Jan. 1807 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02).

¹⁴⁵ Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 12 Aug. & 5 Oct. 1807 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02).

¹⁴⁶ Boyle, 'Waterford Chamber of Commerce', p. 1.

¹⁴⁷ Waterford Corporation minute book, 9 June 1813 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

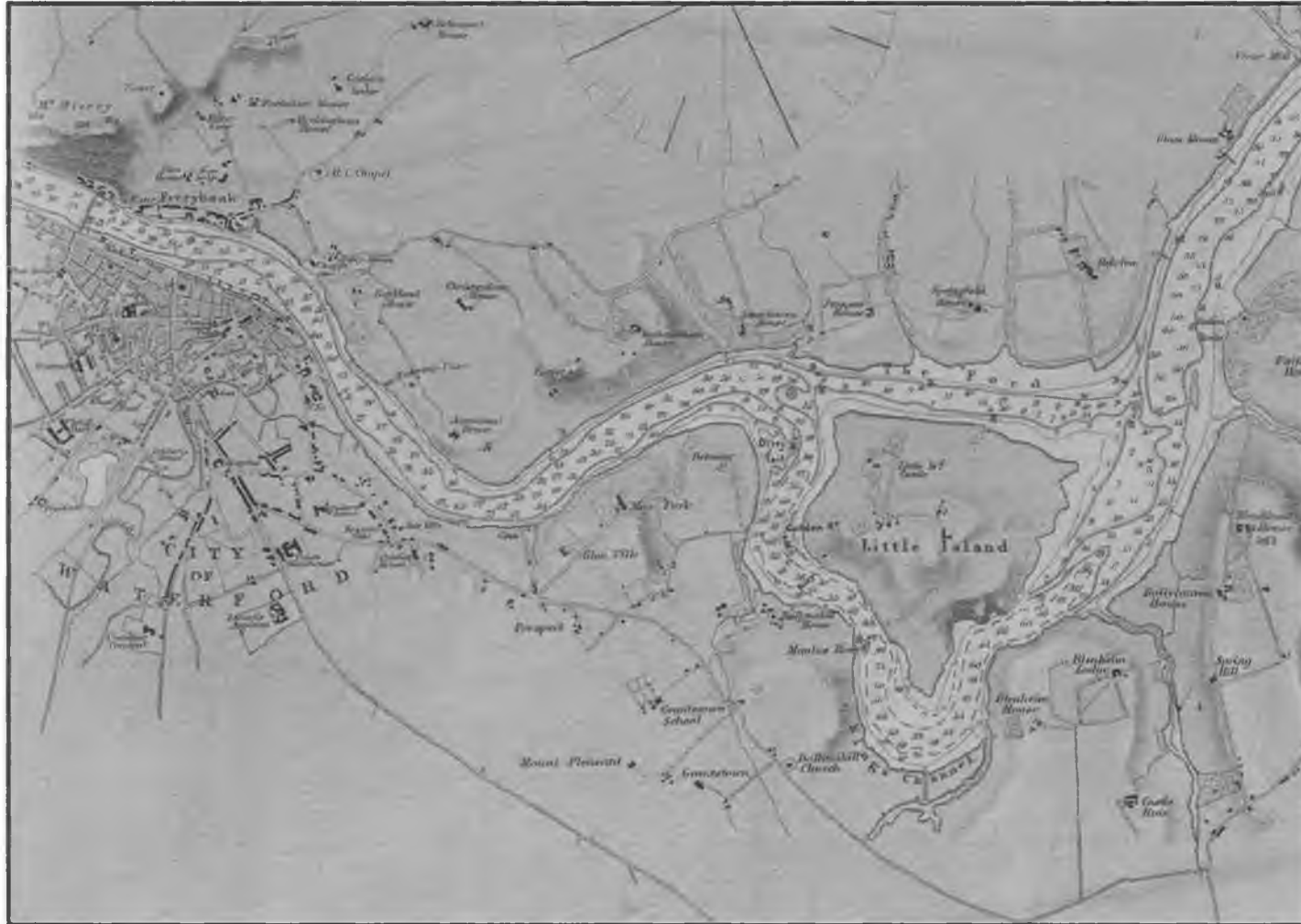


Plate 2: Extract from Frazer, G. A., 'Chart of Waterford harbour', 1848, printed 1861 (Waterford City Archives, MS M/PV/46).

chamber's offer to cooperate with the corporation on this matter. The language of corporate rights was employed to justify the corporation's position: 'it is the unanimous determination of this board to maintain inviolate the rights and privileges which have been handed down to them by their predecessors'.¹⁴⁸ The corporation could not have repaid the money to the citizens even if this had been decided upon, but the mention of it here was used as a way for the corporation to admit that it could not afford the upkeep of the streets without having to renounce any of their traditional privileges. In January 1813 the corporation made a concerted effort to meet with members of the chamber (now styling themselves a 'committee of merchants') to discuss the ramifications of an act of parliament for 'the paving, lighting, cleaning, watering and watching of this city'.¹⁴⁹ It is significant to note that Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe represented the corporation at this meeting, but he was also a member of the chamber of commerce. This represented a conciliatory gesture aimed at promoting cooperation between the two bodies. The *Waterford Mirror* was tentatively optimistic that the act might witness the two bodies approaching each other in a spirit of cooperation:

In the spirit of conciliation, and for the sake of our limbs, we trust it will prevent further litigation, and induce all parties to set cordially about discovering how we can best mend our case.¹⁵⁰

The corporation began to hand over substantial amounts of money for the resurfacing of the quays in September 1813, when the common council agreed that £1,250 would be given annually for the upkeep of the city streets and a new sub-committee was established to oversee the management and repair of roads. The cost was to be levied by grand jury presentments.¹⁵¹

But relations between the corporation and the chamber of commerce remained fraught, and in 1814 the two bodies clashed again, this time over a bill which would improve navigation of the River Suir. The chamber of commerce had been aiming to dredge the river and make it navigable for larger vessels for almost a decade. In 1806 a committee was appointed to consider the expense involved in making a stretch of river downstream, known as King's Channel (see plate 2), safe for navigation and

¹⁴⁸ Waterford Corporation minute book, 9 June 1813 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁴⁹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 22 Jan. 1813 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁵⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 21 Apr. 1813.

¹⁵¹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 4 Sept. 1813 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

application was made to Sir John Newport for parliamentary aid.¹⁵² By 1813 this objective had been widened to include the removal of all obstructions to shipping. A memorial was sent to parliament in an attempt to get a bill passed to fund the scheme. In June 1813 it was announced that the chamber had secured Dublin engineer Thomas Colbourne to survey the river around King's Channel. The chamber could then use Colbourne's report to apply to the directors of inland navigation for deepening the river. However, the corporation remained staunchly averse to this scheme, as the chamber was attempting to bypass the corporation in applying directly to the directors of inland navigation. The river and port were considered areas which came under the traditional auspices of the corporation, and the success of this measure would effectively undermine its chartered rights. When a bill was at length laid before parliament in March 1816, the corporation immediately established a committee to prepare a petition against it. The corporation resolved to 'take such steps as to them shall appear necessary for defending the corporation[']s rights against all encroachments attempted to be made on them by said bill'. The corporation was anxious that the committee was given powers to confer with the merchant communities in Clonmel, Carrick and New Ross on the subject.¹⁵³ In its haste to oppose the bill, the corporation little considered the local advantages that would be achieved by its passage.

On 1 April 1816 Waterford Chamber of Commerce reacted by appointing a committee to wait on Mayor Harry Alcock to request 'a friendly explanation' why they were opposed to a measure that would be 'so highly beneficial to the community at large and to this city in particular'.¹⁵⁴ A few days later this 'friendly' opposition became much more acrimonious, when the corporation published a report that directly challenged the chamber's motives in promoting the bill. The report inferred that the chamber was working against the best interests of the citizens, as the bill would 'greatly enhance the price of coals' and other taxes payable by the inhabitants.¹⁵⁵ In reaction the chamber published a letter in the local newspapers openly castigating the corporation and refuting these claims. The chamber contended if opposition from 'a few persons who may conceive themselves only entitled to interfere in such matters'

¹⁵² Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 22 Sept. 1806 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02).

¹⁵³ Waterford Corporation minute book, 26 Mar. 1816 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁵⁴ Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 1 Apr. 1816 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 3/01).

¹⁵⁵ Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 4 Apr. 1816 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 3/01).

was successful, the citizens of Waterford would forever deplore the loss of an opportunity 'of making this one of the best ports in the kingdom.'¹⁵⁶ This dispute was not about the bill itself, but over the contested control of the navigation into the port Waterford.

The navigation bill also aimed at reforming abuses connected to the port of Waterford. The chamber asserted that if the bill was passed, it would 'prevent valuable property in vessels and cargoes, being entrusted to men totally incompetent thro[ugh] ignorance or unworthy thro[ugh] repeated misconduct, of filling the important station.'¹⁵⁷ The attack was again aimed at the corporation, who controlled appointments to the pilotage of the port. The bill advocated the establishment of a board of local commissioners to maintain the harbour of the city. The prospective board would include twelve members of the chamber of commerce, seven members of the corporation and five merchants from Clonmel.¹⁵⁸ The chamber contended that the city's commerce would be better protected if placed in the care of an independent board of harbour commissioners, than if they remained in corporate hands to be used as 'a medium of undue patronage, or an engine of political influence'.¹⁵⁹ In attempting to establish a harbour board independent of corporate control, the chamber was going further than merely challenging the abuse of corporate privilege; it was attempting to diminish the dominant control of the corporation over local affairs by eroding its patronage network.

Waterford Corporation's response to this challenge was to seek a preservation of their corporate rights 'founded upon charters differing only in their antiquity from that which the chamber of commerce have lately sought for, and obtained', and to contend that the bill was 'ill-calculated to meet the objects for which it professes to have been framed'.¹⁶⁰ The main opposition to the establishment of a body of harbour commissioners centred on the contention that it would become a slave to the interests of Waterford Chamber of Commerce:

They [the corporation] are aware how strongly public prejudice leans against chartered monopolies, and cannot but feel surprised at the anxiety at which the

¹⁵⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Apr. 1816.

¹⁵⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Apr. 1816.

¹⁵⁸ *First report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 602.

¹⁵⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Apr. 1816.

¹⁶⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Apr. 1816; Waterford Chamber of Commerce had obtained a royal charter in 1815 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 18/01).

chamber of commerce seek to acquire for themselves those rights and unanimities which they have so long struggled against, while they were exercised by others.¹⁶¹

In a rather feeble effort to counter the force of the bill, the corporation entreated the citizens of Waterford to consider a new bill to regulate the 'internal and external police' or government of the city.¹⁶² An added incentive was that an earlier bill had been opposed by the chamber. This attempt to win over public opinion was doomed to failure, and is significant only in illustrating that the corporation was now forced to recognise the necessity of public support to underpin their leadership of political opinion in the city. The corporation acknowledged that, in the case of continued enmity between the two bodies, public hostility to the corporation would proliferate. Thus, in April 1816 they were forced to make a plea for conciliation:

As the corporation do still fondly hope that the differences which have existed between them and the...chamber of commerce may be amicably adjusted, they will not allow anything which had passed to betray them into an expression of censure or reproach.¹⁶³

The council complemented these words with actions, appointing a committee (including two members of the chamber: Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe and Edmund Skottowe) to meet a committee of the chamber to discuss the implications of the bill and to 'enter into such arrangements as to them shall seem meet'.¹⁶⁴

In the event, the navigation bill passed completely intact and the harbour commissioners were established later in the year. To Waterford Corporation, this represented an emasculation of their traditional privileges and of their status as leaders of the city. The renting to the harbour commissioners of quarters in the chamber's headquarters on King's Street was a further blow, as it became clear that the commissioners would be heavily influenced by members of the chamber. Financed by the bill, the dredging of the River Suir commenced in 1817 and was completed in 1818. This episode highlights the growing determination of Waterford Chamber of Commerce to carve out some control over local commercial affairs in this period.

¹⁶¹ There were five members of the corporation among the harbour commissioners, but this grumble illustrates that the collective corporate pride was wounded at the fact that the new harbour commissioners were dominated by members of the chamber of commerce; *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Apr. 1816.

¹⁶² This was the term 'police' in its eighteenth century usage, meaning the general government or administration of the city by the corporation; *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Apr. 1816.

¹⁶³ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Apr. 1816.

¹⁶⁴ Waterford Corporation minute book, 9 Apr. 1816 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

Certainly the chamber in Waterford was more vigorous than chambers in other Irish cities, and Jennifer Boyle has contended that it 'reached a level of power within the city that other chambers did not attain'.¹⁶⁵ Although Waterford Corporation were the main losers of this battle over control of the harbour, it would be going too far to contend that corporate power and influence was dented in the long term, and the corporation remained the dominant force in local politics for several decades to come.

The proliferation of local societies offers further insight into the interests of the Waterford élite in the early years of the century. During the 1830s the number of such societies aimed at aiding, clothing and educating the poor in Waterford city in the early nineteenth century was remarked upon relatively often. The House of Industry was a flexible institution which posed as a workhouse, hospital, prison and lunatic asylum. The donations to this institution, which were high until 1815, were spent mainly on maintaining the sick and infirm poor. The House of Recovery, founded in 1815 complete with a convalescent wing, was the first of its kind in Ireland and only the second of its kind in the empire. These institutions were funded by grand jury presentments and private subscriptions.¹⁶⁶ There was also the Leper Hospital and the Holy Ghost Hospital, which came under the patronage of Waterford Corporation. In 1820 a mendicity society was established to promote good moral conduct and social amity, which was only one of several charities established by private benevolence. In 1818 a Protestant orphan house was opened at Sion Hill to give relief to poor Protestant families in the city, while the Catholic orphans were sent to the Trinitarian Orphan House.¹⁶⁷ In 1830 Thomas Wyse remarked that 'abundant' relief for the poor in Waterford was available through these institutions, provided that they were effectively managed.¹⁶⁸

Evidence of increasing education and literacy levels among the middle classes was illustrated by the founding of a Library Society in 1819. Sir John Newport chaired the first meeting. As the city's representative, this immediately placed the new society in good standing. Membership was diverse from the society's inception, and the

¹⁶⁵ Boyle, 'Waterford Chamber of Commerce', p. 22.

¹⁶⁶ *Third report of evidence from the committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (665), vii, 619-23; Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (2 vols, London, 1837), ii, 686.

¹⁶⁷ *Third report of evidence from the committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (665), vii, 626; Lewis, *Topographical dictionary*, ii, 686.

¹⁶⁸ *Third report of evidence from the committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (665), vii, 627.

committee included Quakers William J. White, Francis Davis and Henry Ivie, as well as Anglicans Samuel King and Robert Marshall.¹⁶⁹ Thomas Scott of the *Waterford Mirror* and James R. Birnie of the *Waterford Chronicle*, Waterford's two liberal newspapers, were both members of the committee at various times. Interestingly, the membership was not gender restrictive, and women could become members alongside men, although their annual subscription was substantially less.¹⁷⁰ However, there is little evidence that many Catholics became members of this society. The Protestant flavour of the society is reflected in the fact that many of the books were decidedly Protestant in nature, such as Prideaux's *Connection of the Old and New Testament*, or Lelano's *History of Luther and Calvin*. More striking are the various works focusing on social betterment and moral conduct, as well as countless volumes relating to history and antiquities, such as Clarendon's *History of the rebellion*, Lyttleton's *History of the reign of Henry II* and Keating's *History of Ireland*, and a variety of works on subjects as wide-ranging as travel, medicine and gardening.¹⁷¹

Part four: The 'family compact' of 1818

In the winter of 1818 a pact was agreed between four members of the corporation. Sir John Newport and his brother William, the leaders of the liberal faction on the common council, entered into an agreement with the conservative Alcock faction, represented by Harry Alcock and James Wallace (see appendix C). Essentially, the uniting of these previously opposed interests gave them dominance over the common council and corporate interests, at the expense of Alcock's traditional allies, the Bolton faction. Harry Alcock pledged to support Sir John Newport as representative of Waterford city during his lifetime or for such time as he was 'capable of efficiently discharging the duties of that situation'.¹⁷² By entering into the agreement, the Newport and Alcock interests gained enough clout on the common council to divide amongst themselves the extensive patronage network through which they maintained their influence in the city. The method by which this was to be put into effect was set out in the agreement with particular clarity: the factions were to

¹⁶⁹ Library Society minute book, 15 Nov. 1819 (W.C.A., MS WCOC5/01).

¹⁷⁰ The subscription for men was ten guineas per year, it was only five for women; Library Society minute book, 15 Nov. 1819 (W.C.A., MS WCOC5/01).

¹⁷¹ Library Society minute book, 11 Jan. 1820 (W.C.A., MS WCOC5/01).

¹⁷² *First report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 593-4.

maintain their present influence, but future vacancies for positions, both on the common council and for corporate offices, which had not been formerly under either interest, would be shared alternately between the two. In regards to the granting of freedoms, it was agreed to act 'by the mutual consent of the contracting parties'.¹⁷³ The pact was signed by each of the four members, and witnessed by Samuel King (a member of the Newport faction) and Michael Evelyn (a member of the Alcock faction). The 'secret' nature of this pact is suspicious; when the corporation was subjected to a parliamentary inquiry in 1833 the town clerk, Richard Cooke, admitted that 'every member of the council was aware of the coalition', despite the fact that no allusion to it was entered into the minutes of the subsequent meetings.¹⁷⁴ While the first public reference to the existence of the compact was not made until 1824, in a letter to the *Waterford Mail*, the members of the council must surely have recognised the altered power structure within the corporation, as well as the modified mode of doling out corporate patronage.¹⁷⁵

By this agreement, Harry Alcock maintained his influence on the common council and increased his influence among actual and potential supporters by dispensing corporate sinecures and emoluments to them. The agreement essentially secured his family's clout at local level, but as well as this it represented an attempt to reinforce the political and social cohesiveness of a Protestant élite faced with the growing influence of the Catholic merchant middle class in the city.¹⁷⁶ In terms of local political influence, this agreement was of equal if not greater consequence to Sir John Newport. Not only did it secure greater support for him in the case of future contested parliamentary elections, it also lessened the likelihood of his seat being contested at all. The financial dimension of this especially attracted Newport, as two contested elections in 1802 and 1806, as well as petitioning against the return of William Congreve Alcock, had severely dented his finances, and he was never a particularly wealthy individual. It also gave him increased influence on the council, and greater control over corporate patronage. Newport was always interested in extending his political support, and political ambition led him in this instance to enter into a pact that has been regularly denounced as scandalously avaricious. But even the occurrence of

¹⁷³ *First report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H.C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 593-4.

¹⁷⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1833.

¹⁷⁵ *Waterford Mail*, 3 Apr. 1824.

¹⁷⁶ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 147.

the agreement at this time indicates that the Newport faction on the corporation had been growing increasingly influential, an advance no doubt aided by Sir John's election as mayor of the city in June 1818. It was perhaps this increasing influence that had attracted the formerly antagonistic Harry Alcock to enter into the bargain at all.

John Hearne has contended that the pact was nothing more than 'an attempt by Waterford's political élite to copper-fasten their power and influence against an increasingly powerful and influential economic élite'.¹⁷⁷ But as long as Sir John Newport maintained close relations with Waterford Chamber of Commerce, and while he continued to labour in the House of Commons forwarding measures aimed at commercial development in Ireland, the economic élite in Waterford city remained relatively satisfied. This political stroke on the part of Sir John Newport also seems inconsistent with his parliamentary reputation as a Whig reformer, and it is necessary to consider his 'positive' motives for entering into the alliance. What the agreement did in effect was to place the reformers on the council in a position in which reforms could be implemented quickly and effectively. The (now uncontested) position of Sir John as the city's parliamentary representative, as well as effective leader of the corporation was nothing short of a victory for liberal and reforming influences in the city. Indeed, the pact itself included a reforming agenda, the eleventh clause recognising the necessity of reducing the corporation's expenditure and the necessity of making the various institutions attached to the corporation more financially efficient.¹⁷⁸ But while this pact may have represented a triumph for the liberal Protestants in the city, it was hardly a triumph for liberalism. Although the compact conferred on Waterford liberals a leading role in corporate politics, it reinforced the exclusiveness of the corporation, and turned Waterford city effectively into a close borough. Sir John Newport was returned without a contest on five successive occasions between 1818 and his retirement in 1832.¹⁷⁹

That this agreement occurred as a direct result of the increased influence of the Newport faction is demonstrated by the activities of the corporation. Newport supporters had vigorously enhanced their numbers on the common council throughout 1818. Edward Villiers Skottowe and Edward Weekes became aldermen. Henry Holdsworth Hunt (a prominent figure in the chamber of commerce), Samuel Newport

¹⁷⁷ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 36.

¹⁷⁸ See appendix C.

¹⁷⁹ Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 241 & 317.

and William Weekes junior were elected to the positions of common councilmen.¹⁸⁰ In the winter of 1817 the council granted freedoms to several prominent Quaker and Catholic merchants. Quakers William Strangman, Joseph Strangman junior, Joshua Strangman Davies and John Pim Penrose, as well several members of the White and Jacob families, were admitted by right of birth. The prominent Catholic merchant Maurice Farrell was also admitted by right of apprenticeship on 13 October.¹⁸¹ These new freemen belonged to families with considerable commercial wealth, and the majority supported Sir John Newport's parliamentary endeavours. That so many such freedoms were granted over a short period of time indicates that Newport had recently gained increased control over the granting of freedoms, and the attendance at these meetings of Newport himself tends to reinforce this theory. In January 1818 Newport pressured the corporation into establishing a new committee of accounts in order to figure out how to 'speedily' reduce the corporation's expenditure.¹⁸² In February the salaries of many of corporate officials were reduced, including those belonging to officer of city works, superintendent of the peace, clerk to the chamberlain, inspector of city markets, secretary to the grand jury and receiver of the leper house. Other offices, such as that of city surgeon, were abolished altogether.¹⁸³ Of the corporate offices that remained intact, Newport supporters continued to be appointed. William Newport was instructed to continue as master of the Holy Ghost hospital. Two conservative members were removed from their offices as water bailiffs, and William Weekes junior became a sheriff of the city. In accordance with the compact, a committee was established with a view to introducing 'a system of greater economy and retrenchment of every kind'.¹⁸⁴ In 1833 the town clerk, Richard Cooke, remarked that this whole reformist agenda was 'occasioned' by the 1818 agreement.¹⁸⁵ But it is necessary to point out that the emerging leaders of the corporation continued to utilise traditional methods of furthering their influence. Although liberal Protestants came to dominate the council, the corporation continued to operate through the coveted patronage network, and jobbery continued unabated.

¹⁸⁰ Waterford Corporation minute book, 7 Feb., 6 Apr., 30 July, 18 & 27 Aug. 1818, (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁸¹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 29 Sept. & 13 Oct. 1817 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁸² Waterford Corporation minute book, 29 Jan. 1818 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁸³ Waterford Corporation minute book, 2 Feb. 1818 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁸⁴ Waterford Corporation minute book, 29 Jan., 7 Feb. & 29 June 1818 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁸⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1833.

Standing by the promise contained in the agreement with Harry Alcock, Newport first turned his attention to a review of the by-laws respecting the granting of freedoms. On 12 November 1818 a committee of six was appointed to 'prepare and frame proper bye-laws for the better regulation' of the granting of freedoms.¹⁸⁶ On 3 December, at a special meeting of council held especially to ordain the necessary by-laws, it was decided that the only valid legal claims to the freedom were the rights of birth, marriage and apprenticeship. The power of granting freedoms by special favour was put into disuse. The claimant had to be over twenty-one and resident within the city for over twelve months (although exceptions were made for those in the army and navy). The right of birth was valid only if the father of the claimant was free at the time of the claimant's birth.¹⁸⁷ These motions were passed and the new by-laws printed in the newspapers. It is fair to point out that in 1833, Richard Cooke contended that these new rules represented merely a reaffirmation of 'the ancient usages of the corporation' rather than the introduction of any new 'restrictions'.¹⁸⁸ Cooke's contention was accurate enough, but that such a reaffirmation was deemed necessary to reaffirm these 'usages' at all indicates that they were liable to be abused or ignored.

The liberal faction within the corporation was consolidated by the agreement of 1818. The irony of this case is that by increasing the closed nature of the corporation, Sir John Newport's disposal of patronage gradually led to increased participation by a wider section of the community. This increased participation was particularly noticeable among the commercial classes in the city. The corporation remained as protective as ever of its (real and perceived) traditional rights and privileges, but the balance of power within the common council had shifted in favour of the liberal Protestants. The Alcock faction, quietened by close relations with Newport and increased patronage, remained preoccupied with local matters. Sir John Newport's dominance over corporate affairs, consolidated by, and also symbolised by the agreement of 1818, ushered in the era of liberal Protestantism in Waterford.

Conclusion:

The first two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a significant growth of liberal values among the political élite in Waterford city, both within the dominant

¹⁸⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Dec. 1833.

¹⁸⁷ Waterford Corporation minute book, 3 Dec. 1818 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁸⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Dec. 1833.

corporate sphere and among a wider section of the commercial and middle classes. Support among liberal Protestants in the city for full civil and political rights for Catholics was robust, constant and relatively widespread. Local politics remained the main focus for the majority of Waterford's liberal Protestants, in so far as the corporation remained their 'private bailiwick' throughout this period.¹⁸⁹ Brian Kirby has indicated that municipal government in Waterford was shaped as much by local tradition as by royal charter.¹⁹⁰ At the heart of early liberal Protestantism in Waterford was a pride in the city, in its history and its ancient institutions, as well as a vigorous interest in local patronage and electoral politics. In their emphasis on representation of local demands and interests, and attachment to equity and the rule of law, Waterford Protestants reflected developing Irish political culture.¹⁹¹ Sir John Newport remained the city's parliamentary representative continually from December 1803 to his retirement in September 1832, and he developed extensive relations with liberal and Whig politicians throughout Ireland and Britain (see chapter three). Newport remained a leading figure in local politics, recognising that parliamentary support would be forthcoming only as long as he maintained his considerable local and corporate influence through control of corporate patronage. In terms of Newport's liberalism, his political stroke of 1818, which effectively eroded the influence of the opposition on the corporation, raises some inconsistencies. While the 1818 compact might be viewed as a triumph for the city liberals, it can hardly be called a triumph for liberalism. But ironically for liberal Protestants, it was the undermining of confessionalism and the rise of liberalism that initiated the eclipse of corporate values in the 1830s.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ McEneaney, *History of Waterford*, p. 181.

¹⁹⁰ Kirby, 'Civic identity', p. 11.

¹⁹¹ Brian Farrell, 'The paradox of Irish politics', in Brian Farrell (ed.), *The Irish parliamentary tradition* (Dublin, 1973), p. 21.

¹⁹² Hill, 'Corporatist ideology', p. 81.

Chapter three: Liberal politics and the parliamentary context: Waterford and Westminster, 1800-1820

This chapter seeks to place Waterford liberalism in the context of British parliamentary politics. An identity based on Protestantism and liberalism, as well as a brand of patriotism that blended a loyal Irish with a British self image, offered the Irish Whigs a common ground from which to work. This identity owed much to the liberal Protestant views of Ireland as both an equal country within the United Kingdom and as an essential part of the British empire. The Irish Whigs viewed the union as a means by which Ireland could share in the virtues of the constitution and secure essential reforms.¹ The activities and voting patterns of Waterford Whig M.P.s in these years suggests that Waterford liberal thought reflected wider developments in the Irish and British sphere. The support of the Irish liberal members in parliamentary divisions significantly boosted the voting power of the Whigs on certain key occasions, and while this had more to do with the fragility of the government than any political weight of their own, the kinds of issues on which the Waterford Whigs voted is revealing of their interests and motivations.² This chapter concentrates particularly on the parliamentary career of Sir John Newport, who has been referred to as one of ‘the real heroes’ in terms of parliamentary activity and clearly expressed political views.³

The relatively small Waterford Protestant community maintained a wide social, familial and political network. Familial ties, and their manipulation of the local patronage network (see chapter two), served to bolster their reputation within and without parliament. Sir John Newport was the brother-in-law of liberal Protestants Robert Shapland Carew senior and Richard Power senior.⁴ Waterford liberals also maintained close relations with Whigs in Ireland and Britain. Sir John Newport maintained close relations with several parliamentary leaders including William Wyndham Grenville, an old school friend, with whom he entered government as part

¹ Peter Jupp, ‘Government, parliament and politics in Ireland, 1801-41’, in Julian Hoppit (ed.), *Parliament, nations and identities in Britain and Ireland, 1660-1850* (Manchester, 2003), p. 151.

² Frank O’Gorman, *The emergence of the British two-party system, 1760-1832* (London, 1982), p. 61.

³ Peter Jupp, ‘Irish M.P.s at Westminster in the early nineteenth century’, in J. C. Beckett (ed.) *Historical Studies VII; papers read before the Irish Conference of Historians* (London, 1969), pp 79-80.

⁴ Holograph of John Newport’s last will and testament, executed and afterwards cancelled, 27 Jan. 1827 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7). The Carews were a family with strong liberal connections who represented Waterford city and County Wexford in parliament. They owned estates in County Wexford as well as in Woodstown in County Waterford.

of the ministry of all the talents in February 1806.⁵ Newport also maintained close working relations with several leading Irish Whigs, including Sir Henry Parnell, Thomas Spring Rice, George Ponsonby and William Conyngham Plunket.⁶ Furthermore, some of the Waterford Whigs including Richard Power junior and Sir John Newport, as well as the liberal Tory Edward Lee, promoted good relations with certain sections of the Catholic community, helping to boost their reputation at popular level.⁷ The public sphere in Ireland was growing more rapidly during in these years, with the spread of newspapers and improvement of communications.⁸ As a result, parliamentary business became increasingly well-known, and became a focal point for the expression of political opinion.⁹ A consequence of this was that Irish parliamentarians in this period cultivated closer ties with their constituencies than in earlier periods. For example, Sir John Newport was a constant advocate of M.P.s faithfully representing their constituents, commenting in April 1813 that ‘the public faith ought to be literally and faithfully kept’, and arguing again in May 1814 that ‘the motives of every gentleman [in the House of Commons] were supposed to be public, and their views equally directed to the general good’.¹⁰

The first imperial parliament of Great Britain and Ireland met in January 1801, with one hundred members representing Ireland. A majority of sixty-four members now sat for county seats, a reversal of the pre-union situation. Of thirty-three boroughs, for which there sat thirty-five members (Dublin and Cork returned two members each), fourteen could be considered ‘open’.¹¹ While two candidates continued to be sent to represent County Waterford at Westminster, the representation for Waterford city (considered an ‘open’ borough up to 1818) was halved after union. This created a more competitive atmosphere at election time, as while both liberal and conservative

⁵ The ministry of all the talents was a coalition ministry composed largely of Whigs and Grenvillites, headed by Lords Grey and Grenville. A considerably more pro-Catholics ministry than its predecessor, this ministry came to office in February 1806, and fell in March 1807 as a result of an attempt to introduce moderate Catholic relief.

⁶ Extant correspondence suggests that these parliamentarians worked closely together on a number of issues (N.L.I., Newport papers, MS 796).

⁷ These members of parliament all signed the 1808 Protestant declaration in favour of Catholic relief, *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1808.

⁸ Joep Leerssen, *Hidden Ireland, public sphere* (Dublin, 2002).

⁹ Jupp, ‘Government, parliament and politics’, p. 164.

¹⁰ *Hansard 1*, xxv, 544 (2 Apr. 1813) & xxvii, 1011 (25 May 1814).

¹¹ Peter Jupp, *British and Irish elections, 1784-1831* (Devon, 1973), p. 152; S. J. Connolly, ‘Aftermath and adjustment’, in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the union I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989), p. 5; the composition of Waterford’s electorate has been discussed in chapter one.

interests could be represented in the county, the city could be represented by only a single interest (see table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Members of parliament for Waterford city, 1801-20¹²

Members of parliament for Waterford city, 1801-20		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Members of parliament</i>	<i>Political leaning</i>
	<i>(1 seat)</i>	
1801-02	William Congreve Alcock	Tory
1802-03	William Congreve Alcock	Tory
1803-06*	Sir John Newport	Whig
1806-07	Sir John Newport	Whig
1807-1812	Sir John Newport	Whig
1812-18	Sir John Newport	Whig
1818-20	Sir John Newport	Whig

* William Congreve Alcock was unseated on petition, December 1803

Source: B. M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 241.

After Sir John Newport wrestled the city seat from William Congreve Alcock in 1803 (see chapter two), the city was continually represented by liberal interests until his retirement in 1832. In the county, the representation was largely controlled by the landed magnates. The liberal duke of Devonshire acted as a balancing force to the power of the conservative and anti-Catholic Beresfords of Curraghmore, and was largely responsible for returning a number of successful Whig candidates for County Waterford, as well as for the borough of Dungarvan (see table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Members of parliament for County Waterford, 1801-20

Members of parliament for County Waterford, 1801-20		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Members of parliament</i>	<i>Political leaning</i>
	<i>(2 seats)</i>	
1801-02	John Beresford	Tory
	Richard Power	Whig
1802-06	John Claudius Beresford	Tory
	Edward Lee	liberal Tory
1806*	John Claudius Beresford	Tory

¹² In terms of 'party' labels, I have followed the modern pattern, using the names 'Whig' and 'Tory' up to the early 1830s to denote loyalty or leaning towards different parliamentary groups. While Sean Connolly has pointed to the mid-1830s for the evolution of the labels 'Liberal' and 'Conservative', I have followed Brian Walker in employing these labels from 1832; S. J. Connolly, *The Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford, 1988), pp 546 & 590; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, xiv. See introduction for further details.

	Richard Power	Whig
1806-07	John Claudius Beresford	Tory
	Richard Power	Whig
1807-11*	John Claudius Beresford	Tory
	Richard Power	Whig
1811-12	William Carr Beresford	Tory
	Richard Power	Whig
1812-14*	William Carr Beresford	Tory
	Richard Power junior	Whig
1814-18*	George Thomas Beresford	Tory
	Richard Power junior	Whig
1818-20	George Thomas Beresford	Tory
	Richard Power junior	Whig
* by-elections: one member only changed		

Source: Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 241-2.

The Beresford interest continually returned members of their own family group. The second county seat was held continually by liberal gentlemen. Richard Power of Clashmore represented the county from 1801 to 1802 and again from 1806 to 1814, recapturing his seat from Edward Lee with the support of the duke of Devonshire and Lord Henry Stuart.¹³ Labelled a ‘thick and thin’ supporter of the Whigs in 1810, Richard Power senior was a supporter of Catholic emancipation and voted in favour of Catholic relief in 1808, 1811, 1812 and 1813.¹⁴ In 1812 Richard Power offered to step down in favour of his eldest son, but in the event, Richard Power junior did not take the seat until his father’s death in 1814. Richard Power junior, also returned under the influence of Devonshire, adopted his father’s Whig line in politics.¹⁵ He held the seat until 1830, attending parliament more regularly than his father, although he was equally silent in debate. Richard Power junior supported Catholic relief, voting in favour of Catholic claims in 1815, 1816 and 1817 (see appendix E, table E.1).¹⁶ Between 1802 and 1806 the seat was held by Edward Lee of Tramore. Edward Lee

¹³ *Waterford Mirror*, 24 Nov. 1806. The 1806 election in County Waterford was contested by John Claudius Beresford, Richard Power, Edward Lee and Cornelius Bolton. John Claudius Beresford and Richard Power were returned by 454 and 427 votes respectively, against Edward Lee’s 285 and Cornelius Bolton’s 5 votes; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 14. Lord Henry Stuart was the father of Henry Villiers Stuart (see chapter four).

¹⁴ R. G. Thorne, *History of parliament: the House of Commons, 1790-1820* (5 vols, London, 1986), iv, 876; *Hansard 1*, xi, 638 (25 May 1808); xx, 427 (31 May 1811); xxii, 1040 (24 Apr. 1812) & xxiv, 1077 (2 Mar. 1813).

¹⁵ The 1814 by-election was contested by Wray Palliser, but Richard Power junior won due to strong support for him among the Catholics and liberal Protestants; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 242; Thorne, *History of parliament*, ii, 691 & iv, 877.

¹⁶ *Hansard 1*, xxxi, 525 (30 May 1815); xxxiv, 678 (21 May 1816) & xxxvi, 440 (12 May 1817).

was one of the most vocal members on the topic of Catholic claims, and was recognised in Waterford as one of the leading figures in the parliamentary campaign for Catholic relief (see chapter two). He maintained good relations with local Catholic families, although he disagreed with them over the veto question (see chapter four).

Table 3.3: Members of parliament for the borough of Dungarvan, 1801-20

Members of parliament for Dungarvan, 1801-20		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Members of parliament</i>	<i>Political leaning</i>
	<i>(1 seat)</i>	
1801-02	Edward Lee	liberal Tory
1802-06	William Greene	liberal Tory
1806-20	George Walpole	Whig

Source: Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 214.

The borough of Dungarvan had about 190 electors in 1807 and 1,708 in 1831.¹⁷ Political influence lay however in the hands of the duke of Devonshire, and members for the borough were returned under his patronage. Edward Lee held the seat for a short time after union before he took the county seat in 1802. William Greene was returned under the aegis of the conservative marquis of Waterford, having professed hostility to the interest offered by Devonshire in 1795. Greene tended to vote with the Beresford party and supported the Pitt and Addington governments, but he broke away from the Beresford group to support Catholic claims in May 1805 (and it is due to this that he has been listed as a liberal Tory representative). In 1806 the seat passed uncontested into the hands of George Walpole, after the duke of Devonshire had retaken control of the borough from Lord Waterford.¹⁸ George Walpole was a British army officer who had had a distinguished career in the West Indies, and was generally listed as a 'British' member although he sat for an Irish constituency. Walpole was a constant supporter of Catholic claims, voting in favour of Catholic relief on every division between 1808 and 1817 (see appendix E, table E.1).¹⁹

¹⁷ Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 214.

¹⁸ Thorne, *History of parliament*, iii, 81. General George Walpole retained this seat despite general elections in 1807, 1812 and 1818. Only the 1807 election was contested. Walpole's opposition were Richard Keane, a local conservative landowner (at least he was conservative at this point), and Richard Power senior, who had lost the representation of County Waterford to Edward Lee a year earlier. Walpole retained the seat with 112 votes to Richard Keane's 70 and Richard Power's 7; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 214.

¹⁹ The years were 1808, 1811, 1812, 1813, 1815, 1816, 1817. General George Walpole (1758-1835) had witnessed great success in Jamaica putting down the insurrection of the Trelawny maroons in 1795, but

Peter Jupp has pointed out that while the reduced number of Irish representatives did give electoral politics a more competitive character after the union, there was no dramatic change in the social composition of the members elected. Of the 256 representatives elected between 1801 and 1820, one third was of aristocratic parentage and two thirds were from substantial land-owning families.²⁰ The Waterford representatives reflected the national pattern. Although both William Congreve Alcock and Sir John Newport had commercial interests in Waterford city, both held considerable (if not necessarily productive) landed estates, Alcock at Wilton in County Wexford and Newport at Newpark in County Kilkenny. The Beresford family was based at Curraghmore, the seat of the marquis of Waterford. Richard Power owned an estate at Clashmore, while Edward Lee was a landed proprietor based in Tramore (see map of County Waterford). Little change is not surprising, as Ireland's élite had not been altered by the political changes implemented by union. This élite used the union of the two countries to maintain their power and influence in Ireland, and there was not yet an alternative élite with enough social or political strength to challenge established families with large personal followings and financial security.²¹ Deference towards the landed aristocracy and gentry continued into the nineteenth century, and the return of landed gentlemen depended on the widespread acceptance of the claim that they were the natural representatives of their communities.²²

At no time in this period did Irish members attempt to form a cohesive 'Irish' party. Rather, the forerunners of the modern parliamentary 'parties' were political in their orientation and included both Irish and British members.²³ Frank O'Gorman has contended that between 1800 and 1815 the outlines of a stable and coherent party system were becoming visible, and the continued cry against 'party' was more of a protest against government by influence rather than against parliamentary groups

had defended them when the government decided to deport them to Nova Scotia. He retired from service in 1797, and was member for Derby between 1797 and 1806. He held the seat for Dungarvan between 1806 and 1820, but was forced to retire in 1820 due to chronic indebtedness; *D.N.B.*; lvii, 43. Due to the fact that this thesis has set out to explore *Irish* liberal Protestantism in this period, little space will be given to the political career of this gentleman.

²⁰ Jupp, 'Irish M.P.s at Westminster', pp 66-7.

²¹ Jennifer Ridden, "'Making Good citizens": national identity, religion and liberalism among the Irish élite, c.1800-50' (Ph. D. thesis, University of London, 1998), p. 13.

²² Connolly, 'Aftermath and adjustment', p. 6.

²³ For a definition of a political 'party', I have followed the lead of Frank O'Gorman: 'In British history a party is an organised group which pursues political power and thus political office. It endeavours to cultivate popular support for its beliefs and focuses its activities on parliament'; O'Gorman, *Emergence of a British two-party system*, viii.

promoting or opposing specific measures.²⁴ Thus the Irish members tended to work in tandem with their ideological counterparts in Britain. But there is little evidence to suggest that the Irish Whigs had much to do with parliamentary Tories, except to oppose such members whenever they could. For example, in May 1808 Sir John Newport referred to the appointment of the ultra Protestant Dr Patrick Duigenan to the Irish privy council as ‘a curse to the country’, as Duigenan had ‘declared himself hostile to the great majority of the Irish people’.²⁵

The majority of the Irish members tended to vote with the government, although the degree of continuity between successive governments between 1801 and 1827 made passive support of government a relatively easy policy to maintain (see table 3.4).²⁶ Often the rump of the Irish members was considered by government as a back-up source of votes for ministerial policy, the support of which was achieved through a manipulation of the patronage system.²⁷

Table 3.4: Political alignments of Irish M.P.s in the House of Commons, 1802-1818²⁸

Political standpoint of Irish members, 1802-1818					
	<i>Ministry</i>	<i>Opposition</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Doubtful</i>
1802	73	20		2	5
1806	72	13	15		
1807	57	40			3
1812	64	30		2	4
1818	72	27		1	

Source: Thorne, *History of parliament*, i, 160-277.

These statistics reveal that the majority of Irish members (between fifty-seven and seventy-three percent throughout the period) tended to support government. The trend continued under the Whig ministry of all the talents, when seventy-two percent of Irish members supported the coalition government. The majority of Irish members felt that

²⁴ O’Gorman, *Emergence of a British two-party system*, p. 61.

²⁵ *Hansard 1*, xi, 151 (11 May 1808). It is interesting that on this occasion, John Claudius Beresford defended Patrick Duigenan, contending that he supported the ‘freedom of speech’ in parliament.

²⁶ Connolly, ‘Aftermath and adjustment’, p. 7.

²⁷ Thorne, *History of parliament*, ii, 108.

²⁸ Under ‘ministry’ was included the government and government supporters, and apart from short-lived ministry of all the talents in 1806, all of these represented Pittites, Addingtonians, and ‘thick and thin’ government supporters. The ‘opposition’ included Whigs, Grenvillites and some more liberal Pittites. It also included the radical element that was growing in strength at this time, although it must be pointed out that radical influence was most effective in England, in the larger boroughs and towns; Thorne, *History of parliament*, i, 160-277.

supporting government was the most effective way of serving king and parliament. In Waterford, only the Beresford representative in the county voted dependably with government. The strong liberal element, represented by Sir John Newport in the city and Richard Power and his son in the county, voted dependably with the Whigs. The Waterford representation thus differed from the national pattern, having greater representation by Whig members than other constituencies.

While the bulk of Irish members tended to support ministerial policy, there was much fervent opinion on the Catholic question. While the bulk of the British members (as least up until about 1815) opposed granting full political rights to (Irish and British) Catholics, there was significant support for Catholic claims in several parts of Ireland. The support for Catholic claims among the Waterford commercial élite and landed gentry was demonstrated in chapter two. The bulk of Irish Whigs supported the question in parliament, and indeed support for Catholic claims has been viewed as the defining feature of Irish liberal Protestantism in this period.²⁹ There also existed in parliament a definite percentage of Irish members, including Edward Lee and William Greene, who voted with ministers on the bulk of issues but differed from them on the Catholic question. During the debates on the Catholic petition in May 1805, Edward Lee contended that he could not believe that the British connection with Ireland would ever be safe ‘while three millions of our [Catholic] fellow-subjects are held in political bondage’.³⁰

In general the Irish members were disappointingly insipid and there was little virtuosity in their politics.³¹ Over half the Irish members sitting in the first two decades of union made no recorded speech in the house, and even the contributions of those who did speak appear to have been largely insignificant. The attendance of Irish members was also notoriously poor – as many as twenty-five percent were unreliable³² – although issues of distance and hazardous travel must also be taken into account. Apart from Sir John Newport, who was recognised by both contemporaries and historians as a vigorous parliamentarian, none of the Waterford members were particularly active in parliament.³³ Edward Lee was the most vocal, speaking on

²⁹ Martin McElroy, ‘The local Protestant landed élite and the impact of O’Connellism, 1826-35’, in *Irish history: a research yearbook* (Dublin, 2002), p. 65.

³⁰ *Hansard 1*, iv, 960-1 (14 May 1805).

³¹ Jupp, ‘Irish M.P.s at Westminster’, pp 68-9.

³² Thorne, *History of parliament*, i, 107.

³³ F. B. Hamilton, *The picture of parliament, containing a biographical dictionary of the Irish members* (London, 1831), p. 59; Joanna Innes, ‘Legislating for three kingdoms: how the Westminster parliament

questions as varied as Catholic claims, the slave trade, banking matters and Irish elections, but neither William Greene, Richard Power senior, nor Richard Power junior made any recorded speech in the House of Commons between 1804 and 1820. General George Walpole made three speeches, in 1806, 1807 and 1817.³⁴ In this context the activities of Sir John Newport become all the more significant. Sir John Newport belonged to an enclave of active Irish Whig parliamentarians who possessed a 'similarity of single-mindedness and sobriety', including George Ponsonby, Henry Grattan, William Conyngham Plunket, Sir Henry Parnell and William Parnell.³⁵ Jupp has noted that Irish members who considered themselves staunch Tories were relatively few and far between in parliament, and of the Irish members it was the Whigs who were more numerous and more vocal in this period.

Relatively speaking, a considerable amount of parliament's time was absorbed discussing Irish problems, despite the fact that Irish members had a habit of complaining that Irish issues were being neglected. For example, in January 1812 Newport 'lamented that the general interests of Ireland were so neglected in the house'.³⁶ This habit indicates the particularly high expectations of the Irish members immediately after union.³⁷ These expectations were reflected in the degree of optimism about the strength of liberal politics in Ireland. In June 1807 the *Waterford Mirror* printed a list of the fifty-three Irish members in opposition to the duke of Portland's 'no popery' ministry:

If a line be drawn from Dublin due west to the Atlantic, to the south of that line, that is, in one-half of Ireland, there can be found only four county members adverse to the claims of the Catholics.³⁸

In Waterford city and county the continual return of a number of prominent supporters of Catholic claims, including Sir John Newport, Edward Lee and Richard Power senior, boosted the confidence of local liberal Protestants and led to the formation of a strong Whig power-base bolstered by long friendship and family ties.

In December 1803 Sir John Newport took his seat for Waterford city, after a petition had overturned the majority won by William Congreve Alcock in 1802 (see plate 3). Newport sat with the Whig opposition and apart from a short period in office

legislated for England, Scotland and Ireland, 1707-1830', in Julian Hoppit (ed.), *Parliament, nations and identities in Britain and Ireland, 1660-1850* (Manchester, 2003), p. 32.

³⁴ *Hansard 1*, vi, 780 (17 Apr. 1806); viii, 470 (21 Jan. 1807) & xxxvi, 523 (12 May 1817).

³⁵ Jupp, 'Irish M.P.s at Westminster', p. 70.

³⁶ *Hansard 1*, xxi, 287 (22 Jan. 1812).

³⁷ Innes, 'Legislating for three kingdoms', p. 34.

³⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 June 1807.

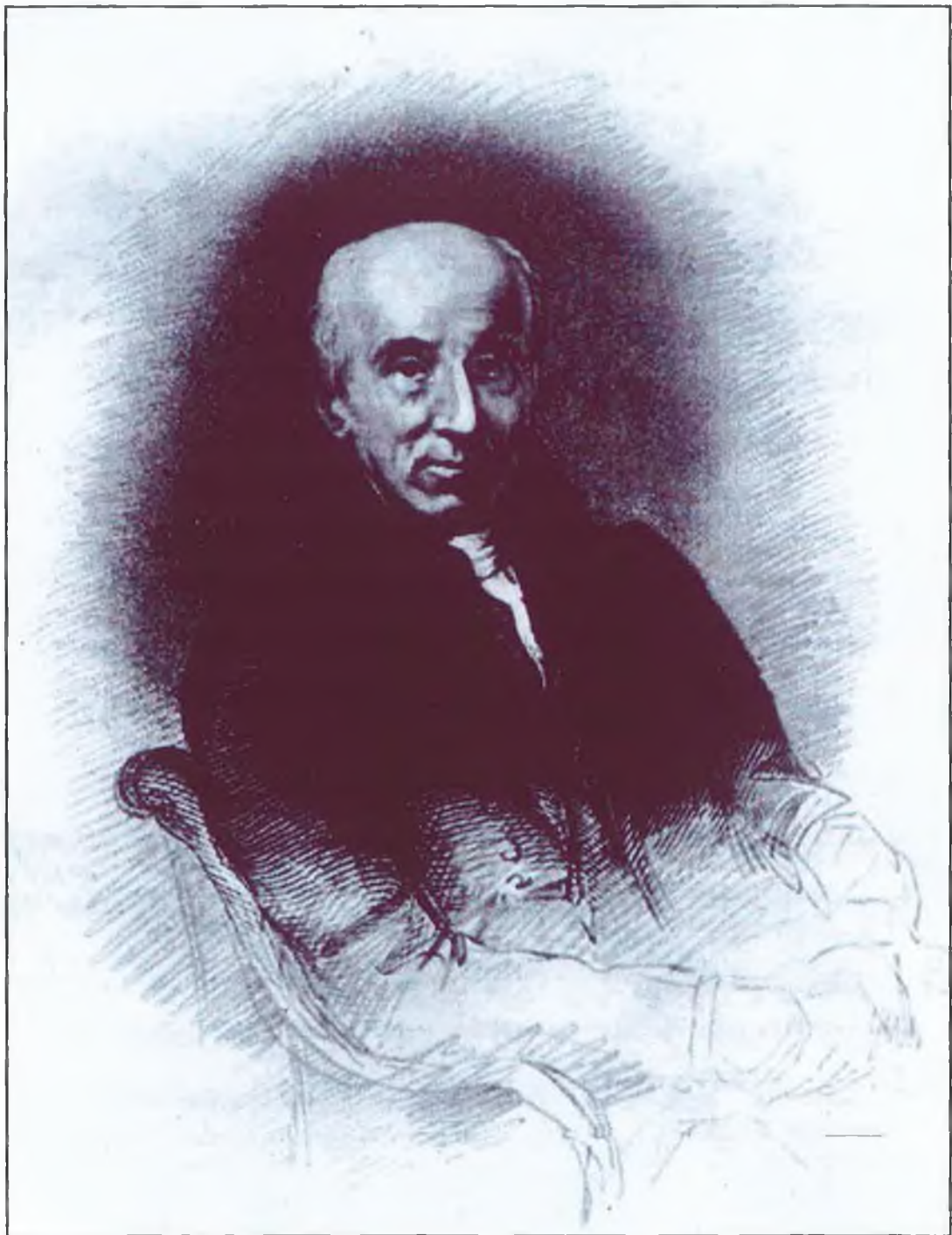


Plate 3: Cooper, Robert, 'Sir John Newport, first baronet', published 1826, stipple engraving of portrait by Stephen Catterson Smith (National Portrait Gallery, London, MS D5351).

under the ministry of all the talents, remained there for the remainder of his career. While Newport remained a liberal Protestant throughout his life, his relations with the Whigs evolved during the course of his early parliamentary career. In 1802 he had campaigned for the city seat with the support of government, due to both his support for the union in 1800 and his long and close friendship with William Grenville, who was at that time a member of William Pitt's ministry.³⁹ In parliament Sir John was allied with the Grenville party, who had moved into opposition by the end of 1803, and he told William Grenville in May 1804 that

I flatter myself most egregiously...in thus associating my judgement with yours, and I will readily own that I do take to myself no small pride that through life I can claim on most essential points that...identity of opinion.⁴⁰

Newport belonged to what R. G. Thorne has termed the 'new opposition' in the early years of the nineteenth century, as distinct from the 'old' or Foxite Whigs. This opposition group, made up of some of Pitt's former friends who were opposed to the Addington administration, formed around Lord Grenville, and in 1803 and 1804 this group played a major role in reviving the Whigs.⁴¹ 'Though small in numbers, they were formidable'.⁴² The 1802 general election returned twenty-five Grenvillites, which formed part of the 149-strong opposition. Of these Sir John Newport was the only Irish member. This indicates that Newport was not afraid of being in a distinct minority, a trait further revealed by his independent line in supporting union in 1800, when most Whigs remained indisposed to relinquishing the Irish parliament.

Sir John's oration was plain and sober in style, but he made up for this lack of flourish by energy and commitment. He gained the epithet 'the political ferret' due to his pursuit of successive ministers across a broad front of reform.⁴³ Sir John was fifty-eight in 1820, and by the time he retired in 1832, he was one of the only Irish parliamentarians who had experienced the patriotism and republicanism of the late eighteenth century. His experience led him to be more moderate in his liberalism than many younger politicians of a similar mindset, and he was certainly not a radical, as

³⁹ Thorne, *History of parliament*, iv, 663; It had also been due to this fortunate friendship with Lord Grenville that Newport had received a baronetcy in 1789.

⁴⁰ Sir John Newport to Lord Grenville, 18 May 1804 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7).

⁴¹ Peter Jupp, 'The aims and achievements of Lord Grenville', in John Bossy and Peter Jupp (eds), *Essays presented to Michael Roberts* (Belfast, 1976), p. 93.

⁴² Thorne, *History of parliament*, iii, 157.

⁴³ *D.N.B.*, xl, 674.

suggested by Edward Brynn.⁴⁴ Newport was particularly wary of democratic and demagogic politics, remarking in May 1814 that he ‘deprecat[ed] the influencing of the passions of the people, who never look beyond momentary gratification’.⁴⁵ In this Newport reflected mainstream Whig thinking. Though by 1815 they had recognised the uses of public opinion as a weapon against government, many Whigs remained distrusting of what they saw as ‘a fickle and turbulent populace’.⁴⁶

Sir John Newport consistently supported opposition politics between 1803 and 1820. In May 1810 he voted in favour of the Thomas Brand’s motion for a committee to consider parliamentary reform, agreeing that the constitution needed some ‘timely and judicious repairs’.⁴⁷ Newport’s name was one of sixty-eight members on a list of ‘friends of parliamentary reform’ printed shortly afterwards, about two thirds of whom had voted for Brand’s motion.⁴⁸ On several occasions Newport attacked members who refused to consider parliamentary reform. For example, in April 1814 Newport contended that

if any general measure was proposed...[those opposed to reform] opposed it on account of its generality; but if a specific measure was proposed, then the objection was that it was incomplete from not being sufficiently general.⁴⁹

During the 1810s, the Grenvillites slowly began to move away from the mainstream Whig opposition. In 1815 the Grenvillites disagreed with the Whigs over their war policy: the Grenvillites decided to support the government’s proposals to renew the war with France in 1815 while the Whigs did not. Sir John Newport took the Whig line in criticising the continuation of the war in May 1815, arguing that ‘the person of [Napoleon] Bonaparte should not preclude attempts to secure peace’ and voting against the proposal to grant a subsidy to the allied powers.⁵⁰ At this point Newport’s stance did not damage his personal friendship with Lord Grenville and ‘he chose to regard it as their sole difference of opinion’.⁵¹ The Grenvillites abstained from George Tierney’s censure motion of May 1818, an issue which the bulk of the Whigs supported. This in effect was a question of confidence in the government, in the guise

⁴⁴ Edward Brynn, *The church of Ireland in the age of Catholic emancipation* (London, 1982), p. 124.

⁴⁵ *Hansard 1*, xxvii, 995 (20 May 1814).

⁴⁶ W. A. Hay, *The Whig revival, 1808-1830* (New York, 2004), p. 66.

⁴⁷ *Hansard 1*, xvii, 141 (21 May 1810).

⁴⁸ Thorne, *History of parliament*, i, 202.

⁴⁹ *Hansard 1*, xxvii, 546 (26 Apr. 1814).

⁵⁰ *Hansard 1*, xxxi, 472-4 (26 May 1815).

⁵¹ Thorne, *History of parliament*, ii, 666.

of a proposal to form a committee on the state of the nation, but Tierney failed to make this clear to the opposition and the motion was rejected by 357 votes to 178.⁵²

The split finally came in December 1821, when the Grenvillites under the leadership of the duke of Buckingham merged with government. The Grenvillites followed government on the bulk of issues but continued to support Catholic relief. This was possible due to the ‘open’ system established by Lord Liverpool in 1812, by which the government and its supporters agreed to disagree on the Catholic question. Sir John Newport did not follow the Grenvillites into government, preferring instead to remain in opposition with the Whigs. In 1818, when the Whigs agreed to invite George Tierney to act as party leader in the House of Commons in the place of the deceased George Ponsonby, the Grenvillites refused to support the decision. Indeed for many Whigs also ‘his merits [only] marginally outweighed his defects’.⁵³ The invitation was signed by 106 Whigs including Sir John Newport, but not by the Grenvillites. Thus by 1818 Newport was identifying completely with the Whig opposition. A reason for this could be Lord Grenville’s own retirement, as the faction had always been united by strong ties of friendship.

An analysis of Sir John Newport’s speeches in the House of Commons gives an insight into his interests and concerns (see table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Speeches made by Sir John Newport in the House of Commons, 1804-20⁵⁴

Speeches given by Sir John Newport in the House of Commons, 1804-20				
<i>Session</i>	<i>Speeches</i>	<i>Irish topics</i>	<i>% Irish topics</i>	<i>Waterford topics</i>
1803-4	23	17	69.5	0
1805	24	21	87.5	3
1806	18	14	77.8	1
1806-7	21	20	95.2	0
1808	23	19	82.6	0
1809	19	17	89.5	2
1810	21	11	52.3	2
1810-11	34	28	82.4	2

⁵² Hay, *The Whig revival*, p. 96.

⁵³ *D.N.B.*, liv, 768.

⁵⁴ This table includes all major comments and speeches Sir John Newport made on a variety of British and Irish topics, but excludes several topics on which he merely asked questions, or did not contribute substantially to debate; see appendix D, table D.2 for a full list of topics to which Newport contributed. The section ‘Irish topics’ includes all issues that related to both Britain and Ireland, as well as to Ireland only.

1812*	34	18	82.4	2
1812-13	32	19	59.4	0
1814	38	26	68.4	1
1814-15	46	30	65.2	2
1816	47	32	68.1	0
1817	32	23	71.9	0
1818	30	15	50	0
1819	34	22	64.7	0
1819-20	22	13	59.1	0
Total	498	352	70.7	15
* data incomplete				

Source: *Hansard 1*, i-xli (1803-20); *Hansard 2*, i-iii (1820).

The sheer number of topics to which Newport contributed, 498 in sixteen years, reveals that he was a particularly active parliamentarian from the very outset of his career. The table also reveals that Newport spent the bulk of his efforts on Irish questions: the average ratio of time spent on Irish issues between 1804 and 1820 was 70.7 percent. Thus Sir John was very much an Irish politician, whose interests lay in managing and reforming government in Ireland. Furthermore, Newport's speeches on topics of an English or imperial nature tended to make distinct references to Ireland, or to support or question the extension of English policies and legislation to Ireland. For example, during a debate on the poor laws in England and Wales in 1807, Newport concentrated on the state of the poor in Ireland and the want of relief. In December 1814 Newport contributed to the debate on the war in America as he was concerned about the effectiveness of convoys in protecting imperial ships in Irish waters. In March 1817 Newport urged ministers to extend the seditious meetings bill to Ireland, banning secret societies there, particularly the Orange Order.⁵⁵

Throughout his career, Sir John consistently promoted the interests of his constituency, and Waterford featured in fifteen of his parliamentary speeches between 1803 and 1820. This approach reveals his relations with different social and political groups in the city. On seven out of the fifteen occasions, Newport was concerned about the state of commerce in Waterford and he presented four petitions from Waterford merchants, traders and commercial houses in these years. This indicates that Sir John was closely interested in the Waterford economy and that he promoted the interests of the city's commercial classes in parliament. In February 1809 Sir John presented a

⁵⁵ *Hansard 1*, viii, 921-2 (19 Feb. 1807); xxix, 653 (1 Dec. 1814); xxxv, 1131 (14 Mar. 1817).

petition from the merchants of Waterford opposing the corn distillery prohibition bill. Newport opposed the proposed prohibition on distilling spirits from corn as Waterford city, a port through which a large proportion of Ireland's grain was exported, would suffer due to a surplus of grain.⁵⁶ When John Foster criticised the petition as no grounds had been stated for opposing the bill, Newport defended his constituents: 'There were few parts of Ireland more competent to form a judgement of the quantity of grain on hand throughout the country than Waterford, as nearly one third of the whole grain was supplied from it'.⁵⁷ Another petition from the brewers of Dublin, Cork and Waterford presented in April 1811 prayed for the duties on malt liquors, rather than those on spirituous liquors, to be lowered.⁵⁸ In June 1814 Newport opposed some of clauses in the proposed peace treaty with France owing to the ramifications of such clauses for the fishing industry in Waterford.⁵⁹ Again in June 1815 Newport called for parliamentary protection against American encroachments into waters around Newfoundland, with which the Waterford fisheries were particularly concerned. In March 1815, on presenting a petition from the commercial houses in the city, Newport called for protective duties to be placed on foreign imports of grain, in order to protect the home market. On this occasion, when challenged, Newport contended that 'the city of Waterford was as much entitled to a respectful hearing as the city of London'.⁶⁰

The most vigorous support offered by Newport was for the political rights of the Catholic community in Waterford. Newport referred to the plight of Waterford Catholics on four occasions between 1803 and 1820 and presented two petitions to parliament. In February 1809, during a debate on grants to be made to various Irish institutions, Newport lamented that many bequests for helping the Catholic poor in Ireland were not applied by the commissioners of charitable donations and bequests. He referred to the particular hardship suffered by the Catholics of Waterford, contending that it was 'cruel, oppressive and unjust' to place obstacles in the way of charitable Catholics making provisions 'for the poor of their own religion'.⁶¹ In March 1810 Newport presented a petition from the Catholics of Waterford praying for a repeal of 'the political disabilities still imposed on them'. Newport supported the

⁵⁶ *Hansard 1*, xii, 1044 (23 Feb. 1809).

⁵⁷ *Hansard 1*, xii, 1045-6 (23 Feb. 1809).

⁵⁸ *Hansard 1*, xix, 760-1 (8 Apr. 1811).

⁵⁹ *Hansard 1*, xxvii, 237 (29 June 1814).

⁶⁰ *Hansard 1*, xxx, 96 (10 Mar. 1815).

⁶¹ *Hansard 1*, xii, 975-6 (22 Feb. 1809).

prayer of the petition, which argued that the removal of these disabilities was 'the best security for national independence'.⁶²

In February 1812 Newport came under attack from William Wellesley Pole for attending a Catholic meeting at Waterford. Wellesley Pole contended that the action was both incendiary and illegal. Newport responded that he believed it his duty as a parliamentarian to listen to the grievances of his constituents, and considered it the 'soundest policy' to urge the Irish Catholics to look to parliament for a redress of their grievances.⁶³ In April he presented the petition prepared at the meeting, noting that it had been signed by 'a very numerous, opulent and respectable body' of Catholics possessed of 'large and monied property'. Newport's aim here was to alter the parliamentary view of Irish Catholics as poor, uneducated and intemperate incendiaries.⁶⁴ These examples reveal that Sir John Newport enjoyed relatively good relations with his constituency throughout this period, particularly with commercial and Catholic groups in the city. That he especially promoted the interests of these groups is not surprising, as they reflect Newport's own political interests.

But while he spent a considerable portion (70.7%) on Irish questions, Sir John Newport spent only three percent of his time in parliament discussing Waterford issues. It is possible that Sir John was happy to leave the promotion of Waterford interests to the county members, especially to the vocal liberal Tory Edward Lee, who spent the bulk of his parliamentary speeches promoting Waterford as well as Catholic interests. In relative terms, Newport *was* active in promoting the interests of his constituency, but in terms of parliamentary activity Newport spent much more time on Irish questions, indicating that he considered himself a leading Irish Whig. It is more probable however that while Newport was very much an Irish representative, he considered himself part of a larger Whig parliamentary tradition. The amount of time spent promoting reform measures suggests that he also saw himself as part of a British Whig tradition, and his close relations with Whigs in England certainly support this analysis. Irish Protestant parliamentarians were necessarily interested in promoting an identity that was both Irish and British, and Newport's approach to his parliamentary career suggests that the Irish Whigs used a flexible approach to maintain close relations with both the British Whigs and the Irish Catholics. It is also possible that Sir

⁶² *Hansard 1*, xv, 651-2 (1 Mar. 1810).

⁶³ *Hansard 1*, xxi, 605-9 (4 Feb. 1812).

⁶⁴ *Hansard 1*, xxii, 494 (20 Apr. 1812).

John occasionally avoided mentioning his constituency in his speeches, in an attempt to appear as an 'independent' member and to avoid accusation of ulterior motives by government. This may have been a particularly sensitive area for Newport, whose very entry into parliament had been tarnished with rumours of packing the electorate in order to gain the seat. This indicates that Newport was pragmatic and wily politician, who used his parliamentary conduct to reinforce his identity as a forward-thinking and reforming parliamentarian.

An analysis of Sir John Newport's positions on several important questions indicates that he agreed with Whig policy on all of the most important and defining issues (for a list of these issues see appendix D, table D.2). Newport was an advocate of 'economical reform'. This policy, first proposed by Edmund Burke and forwarded by the Rockinghamite Whigs in the early 1780s, largely concerned a reform of the public service.⁶⁵ Newport headed the campaign for reforming the means by which the public money was accounted for and applied, by reforming the abuses in the revenue, and decreasing the expenditure of public money through the reform of offices, the abolition of sinecures and a reduction of the salaries of public servants. For example, in March 1807 Newport supported a resolution proposed by Henry Bankes, Whig member for Corfe Castle, to stop the granting of offices in reversion (i.e. the granting of an office to a successor or successors while the officeholder was still active) in Ireland and Britain, with a view to reducing public expenditure. Newport supported the resulting bills in 1807 and 1808, arguing that the granting of offices in this manner 'acted as a bar to reform'.⁶⁶ Criticising 'the wasteful manner in which the public money was expended', in April 1812 Newport moved that an account of expenditure in publishing government proclamations in Irish newspapers be laid before the house.⁶⁷

Sir John was especially interested in humanitarian issues and he consistently supported the abolition of the slave trade. In June 1806 Charles James Fox submitted a resolution 'that the slave trade is contrary to the principles of justice, policy and humanity'. Sir John Newport asserted that, whatever opinions may have prevailed in Britain on the slave trade, the general sentiment in Ireland was strongly in favour of abolition: 'So great was the detestation of that abominable traffic' in Ireland that

⁶⁵ R. K. Webb, *Modern England, from the eighteenth century to the present* (London, 1980), pp 97-8; for further information on Edmund Burke and economical reform, see Dennis Stephen Klinge, 'Edmund Burke, economical reform and the board of trade, 1777-80', in *Journal of Modern History*, li, no. 3 (Sept. 1979), pp 1185-200.

⁶⁶ *Hansard 1*, ix, 181 (24 Mar. 1807) & 669 (29 June 1807); x, 99 (25 Jan. 1808).

⁶⁷ *Hansard 1*, xxii, 1113-4 (29 Apr. 1812).

commercial men would 'forego the pecuniary advantage' of trading in slaves 'sooner than be parties to the rapine, robbery and bloodshed that stained our intercourse' with the West Indies.⁶⁸ In May 1815 Newport supported a bill for prohibiting British subjects and persons resident in Britain from lending capital 'or in other ways assisting' the colonial slave trade of other European countries. Newport believed this would be a small sacrifice in convincing these other countries that the British empire was sincere in its condemnation of the trade.⁶⁹

For Irish members the Catholic question was an issue of burning importance. In May 1805, during a debate on Charles James Fox's motion for the house to go into a committee on the Catholic question, Sir John Newport joined the liberal Tory Edward Lee of Tramore in supporting the motion. Edward Lee argued that:

I can never conceive the union of the two countries, or British connection, safe, while three millions of our [Catholic] fellow-subjects are held in political bondage. The strongest security you can give to the Protestant establishment, is to reconcile to it three millions of your fellow-subjects, who conceive that they are unfairly treated'.⁷⁰

Newport adopted a comparative approach, pointing to the history of Hungary as a model by which Ireland could be tranquilised. Complete freedom of religion was granted there in 1791, and all public and military offices were given to natural-born Hungarians 'without any respect to their religion'. The Catholic hierarchy in Hungary continued as strongly as ever. Newport challenged 'do you, a Protestant legislature, fear to submit your religion to a similar test?'⁷¹ Newport believed that securing political rights for Catholics would strengthen the Protestant church and state in Ireland. During a debate on the Catholic question in May 1810, Newport asserted that 'the establishment both of church and state must fall, unless the last of these galling restrictions be abrogated'.⁷² Sir John, like many other liberal Protestants, supported full political rights for Catholics, but not out of any special regard for the Catholic religion, and most perceived that the political élite would remain largely Protestant. Granting political rights to Irish Catholics would tie the Catholics more closely to the constitution and lead to peace and prosperity. In 1808 Newport challenged Robert Peel's suggestion that there was little popular support in Ireland for Catholic

⁶⁸ *Hansard 1*, vii, 600-1 (10 June 1806).

⁶⁹ *Hansard 1*, xxxi, 175 (5 May 1815).

⁷⁰ *Hansard 1*, iv, 961-3 (14 May 1805).

⁷¹ The motion was defeated by 336 votes to 124; *Hansard 1*, iv, 1060 (14 May 1805).

⁷² *Hansard 1*, xvii, 188 (25 May 1810).

emancipation: 'Persons might differ on the question respecting war or peace, but no man could doubt that the whole Catholic population of Ireland were desirous of being admitted to the franchises of the constitution'.⁷³ All Whig members from Waterford voted with Newport on the Catholic question (see appendix E, table E.1).

Linked into the Catholic question was Sir John's support for enlarging the parliamentary grant to St Patrick's College at Maynooth. In February 1807 the ministry of all the talents had decided to enlarge this grant from £8,000 to £13,000. The extra £5,000 was required 'for the erection of further buildings for the accommodation of students'. Newport urged that the grant to the Catholic seminary was preferable as 'every gentleman would admit that the Catholics could not, by being educated abroad, be rendered better subjects'.⁷⁴ Newport defended the enlargement of the grant in July 1807, after the talents had fallen from office, and urged the Tory government to keep the grant at £13,000 rather than lowering it to the proposed figure of £9,250. Newport conceived it 'to be of the utmost consequence that the Catholic priesthood should be educated in their native country and under the eye of government', especially in times of war. Newport believed that Irish Catholics would be better subjects if guided by domestically educated priests.⁷⁵ In May 1814 Newport again argued that Catholics educated in Ireland, under the eye of government, would be better citizens than those educated in Catholic colleges abroad.⁷⁶

Sir John Newport was also one of the foremost critics of the Orange Order in Ireland, as in his view it was based on principles incompatible with religious equality. In March 1807 Newport supported a bill for the suppression of the Orange societies in Ireland. On 17 March, when the bill was on the way to the House of Lords, Newport urged Lord Grenville to exert himself to have the bill applied to Ireland, as if it did not, the Orange Order would view it 'as a marked expression of favour' by government.⁷⁷ In June 1814 Newport presented a petition against the society, signed by both liberal Protestants and Catholics.⁷⁸ In November 1814 he moved for a return of all the addresses of the Orange societies, stating that he wished parliament would pronounce

⁷³ *Hansard 1*, xi, 36 (12 Apr. 1808).

⁷⁴ *Hansard 1*, viii, 938 (20 Feb. 1807).

⁷⁵ *Hansard 1*, ix, 824 (15 July 1807).

⁷⁶ *Hansard 1*, xxvii, 931 (17 May 1814).

⁷⁷ Sir John Newport to Lord Grenville, 17 Mar. 1807, in H.M.C., *Fortescue MSS* (10 vols, London, 1892-1927), vii, 465.

⁷⁸ *Hansard 1*, xxvii, 245-6 (24 June 1814).

definitively on the legality of such secret associations.⁷⁹ In March 1817, when Newport urged ministers to extend the seditious meetings bill to Ireland in order to put down the secret societies, he particularly referred to the Orange Order as being 'in hostility to three-fourths of their fellow countrymen' as well as being 'bound together by secret oaths, and by oaths of qualified allegiance'.⁸⁰

In terms of Irish policies Newport denounced coercive approaches to governing the country, believing that reforming the structure of government and parliamentary politics (in addition to Catholic emancipation) was the best means of conciliating the Irish population. In June 1804 Newport opposed the additional force bill, arguing that such an expedient could only be agreed to in case of emergency, 'which did not exist'.⁸¹ In February 1805 he opposed the continuation of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, stating that he had been taught to think that 'the most valuable privilege of our glorious constitution' ought not to be suspended 'but on the strongest grounds'. Rather, Newport contended that

It was of the first importance that the people of Ireland should be taught to feel that the imperial parliament was as tender of their privileges, and as vigilant with regard to their rights and liberties, as towards those of the people of England.⁸²

Sir John's answer to unrest and disaffection in Ireland was more empirical, based on the principle that it was the duty of parliament to institute a general inquiry into the state of the country. In May 1806 Newport moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal the Irish additional force act, arguing that since the act in relation to Britain had already been repealed, the act in Ireland should also be done away with, as 'all the objections to the act, as applicable to this country [Britain], applied with additional weight to the case of Ireland'.⁸³ This also reveals Newport's determination that Ireland should be treated as a country equal to Britain within the union. When Sir Arthur Wellesley proposed a bill 'for the suppression of insurrection in Ireland' in July 1807, Newport argued that such repressive legislation should have 'the shortest possible duration' as it admitted to the Irish administration the use of 'such extraordinary powers'.⁸⁴ Newport opposed this bill at every stage, proposing several amendments

⁷⁹ *Hansard 1*, xxix, 606-7 & 614 (29 Nov. 1814).

⁸⁰ *Hansard 1*, xxxv, 1131 (14 Mar. 1817).

⁸¹ *Hansard 1*, ii, 640 (11 June 1804).

⁸² *Hansard 1*, iii, 312-3 (8 Feb. 1805).

⁸³ Leave was granted to bring in the bill; *Hansard 1*, vii, 254 (19 May 1806).

⁸⁴ *Hansard 1*, ix, 751-2 (10 July 1807).

aimed at curtailing the more stringent applications of the proposed bill (each of which was rejected).⁸⁵ In May 1810 Newport supported William Wellesley Pole's motion for a bill to repeal the Irish insurrection and arms acts, but noted that he was 'sorry these measures were not resorted to before, as Ireland deserved all the benefits which British laws and the British constitution can bestow'.⁸⁶

Another example of Newport's Whig views concerned his opposition to large standing armies and huge military and naval expenditure. In January 1810 Newport opposed continuing the peninsular war, arguing that such extensive wartime taxes would be 'ruinous to our resources', especially when Spain was already 'abandoned' and many believed Portugal to be 'indefensible'.⁸⁷ Regarding the continuation of war with France in April 1815 and the prospect of 'exterminating' the French army, he contended that it was 'wild and unjust' to attempt to 'dictate to any nation what form of government it should adopt'.⁸⁸ Regarding Ireland, Newport thought it necessary to conduct an inquiry into the causes of unrest in order to ascertain a permanent remedy, rather than maintaining a large military establishment in the country.⁸⁹ Linked to this was Newport's support of the peace preservation bill in March 1817, which proposed to establish a civil police force in Ireland. Newport announced that he had never doubted

that the best boon the house could bestow on Ireland was a police, established on an efficient footing, instead of resorting to that military force, which was too much employed in that country, and which had outraged the feelings of its population to such a degree.⁹⁰

But Newport thought that the reduction of the military force in Ireland needed to be 'gradual and progressive', as any 'sudden abandonment of the policy hitherto acted upon' would result only in 'very bad consequences'.⁹¹

It has already been ascertained that Newport was very much interested in a blend of Irish and Whig concerns, but what of his actual parliamentary activities? In 1831 F. B. Hamilton described Sir John Newport as 'one of the most consistent, indefatigable, useful and best informed members in the house'.⁹² Joanna Innes has

⁸⁵ *Hansard 1*, ix, 909-11 (23-4 July 1807), 924-6 (25 July 1807) & 969-71 (27 July 1807).

⁸⁶ *Hansard 1*, xvii, 203-5 (30 May 1810).

⁸⁷ *Hansard 1*, xv, 213-4 (29 Jan. 1810).

⁸⁸ *Hansard 1*, xxx, 452-3 (7 Apr. 1815).

⁸⁹ *Hansard 1*, xxxii, 932 (27 Feb. 1816); xxxiii, 84 (8 Mar. 1816).

⁹⁰ *Hansard 1*, xxxv, 983 (11 Mar. 1817).

⁹¹ *Hansard 1*, xxxvii, 765-6 (3 Mar. 1818).

⁹² Hamilton, *Picture of parliament*, p. 59.

referred to him as one of the great Irish legislators of the early nineteenth century.⁹³ Analysis of his parliamentary speeches has revealed that Newport moved resolutions or proposed legislation on seventy-nine occasions between 1804 and 1820, the most important of which will be discussed below. This figure represents 22.2 percent of the total number of speeches (see above table 5 and appendix D, table D.1). Few members spent over twenty percent of their time in the house forwarding their own resolutions, and as such, Newport may be viewed as one of the great Irish parliamentarians of this period. But since Newport was in office for only eleven months out of these sixteen years and consequently few of his proposals were accepted by the commons, viewing Newport as a great 'legislator' is overly optimistic. Despite this, Newport's ideas had considerable influence in parliament among both government and opposition. Newport complained in January 1812 that several times his ideas had been 'stolen from him' by government ministers.⁹⁴ Thus Sir John Newport was clearly perceived as a competent politician by the government as well as by the opposition.

Sir John quickly proved himself a committed supporter of parliamentary and electoral reform within parliament as well as at local level. One of the earliest questions to which Newport gave his attention was the Aylesbury election petition and the resulting bill to prevent bribery at elections in the borough of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. In March 1804 Newport contended that 'the House [of Commons] should be happy to avail itself of such cases to throw open those [rotten] boroughs, and thus to advance towards that pure representation of the people'.⁹⁵ Freedom of election was an issue that Newport continued to support throughout his career. In March 1811 Newport supported a bill to prevent bribery at elections, despite several objectionable clauses.⁹⁶ In March 1813 Newport opposed a bill that was passing through the commons to alter the nature of the representation in the borough of Weymouth in Dorset, as the effects of the bill would be to lodge the return of members of that borough in thirty or forty persons. When in early April it was proposed to extend this bill to all English boroughs, Newport further opposed it on the grounds that it would

⁹³ Innes, 'Legislating for three kingdoms', p. 33.

⁹⁴ *Hansard 1*, xxi, 103-5 (9 Jan. 1812).

⁹⁵ *Hansard 1*, i, 1013-4 (23 Mar. 1804).

⁹⁶ This bill was rejected on its second reading by sixty-four votes to seventeen; *Hansard 1*, xix, 506-7 (25 Mar. 1811).

'greatly tend to the abridgement of the elective franchise' and place the control of boroughs more than ever in the hands of individuals.⁹⁷

While Newport believed that the removal of electoral abuses was crucial to attaining a representative parliament, he also judged that the duty to remove such abuses lay with parliament. During a debate on a bill to secure the freedom of election in the borough of Helston in Cornwall in April 1816, Newport contended that 'when a system of corruption was known to exist, the House [of Commons] were far from doing their duty if they did not with vigour apply some means for removing it'.⁹⁸ In February 1819 Newport urged that parliament should affect reform in all cases in which general corruption was manifest. While Newport supported representative rather than democratic reform, he believed that reform was paramount to securing the confidence of the people in parliament.

Though the house would not countenance the doctrines of annual parliaments and universal suffrage – though it rejected wild and visionary plans of reform, yet it owed to the country, and to those who looked with suspicion upon its conduct, to show that it was not reluctant to inquire into crime, and to punish the guilty.⁹⁹

When it was proposed to disenfranchise the rotten borough of Grampound in Cornwall in 1819, Newport contended that it was the duty of the house to conduct an inquiry 'to examine in what part of the country the greatest portion of the people ought to be represented'.¹⁰⁰ Newport agreed with the radical members of parliament that it was necessary to give greater representation to the growing industrial cities in the north. This was based on the belief that parliament, along with all other representative institutions, depended for its security on the support of the electors. Where Newport differed from the radicals was in the extent of proposed reform measures. In May 1809 he announced that he had 'no objection to the word reform, as applied to this mode of remedying abuses, satisfied as I am, that it is a safe and certain mode of preventing what is called anarchical reform'.¹⁰¹

Sir John remained concerned with humanitarian issues throughout his career. In April 1804 he moved for a committee to be established 'to revise the laws now existing in Ireland with respect to the maintenance of the poor'. Newport contended

⁹⁷ *Hansard 1*, xxv, 413 (30 Mar. 1813) & 646 (7 Apr. 1813).

⁹⁸ *Hansard 1*, xxxiii, 887 (3 Apr. 1816).

⁹⁹ *Hansard 1*, xxxix, 714 (26 Feb. 1819) & 920 (8 Mar. 1819).

¹⁰⁰ *Hansard 2*, i, 511 (19 May 1820).

¹⁰¹ *Hansard 1*, xiv, 720 (26 May 1809).

that since there were no laws for the support of the poor in Ireland (as in Britain), it was necessary for parliament to consider 'what legislative provision ought to be made' for employing the poor, supporting the aged and infirm poor, and maintaining orphans and foundlings. Newport's motion was carried without opposition and a select committee was appointed.¹⁰² In March 1805 Newport moved for leave to bring in a bill to establish separate pauper lunatic asylums in Ireland, as lunatics were confined to the same houses as the poor, a situation 'from which the most distressing inconveniences had frequently resulted'. Newport's proposal included four provincial asylums, each with room for 250 patients, located in central towns of the principal counties. The expense was to be levied by assessment and regular reports of the management and funds of the asylums were to be made to the judges of assize.¹⁰³ While many supported the bill in principle, it was withdrawn when strong opposition to the bill's proposals became apparent.¹⁰⁴

As well as gaining a name as a reformer, Newport quickly earned a reputation as one of the leading spokesmen on Irish finance and banking matters.¹⁰⁵ His maiden speeches in February and March 1804 focused on Irish finance. In December 1803 the chancellor of the exchequer, Henry Addington, had brought in a bill to continue the restriction on issues of cash by the bank of Ireland. This effectively prohibited the bank of Ireland from making cash payments, that is, 'from performing the promise embodied in its [the bank's] notes'. This restriction was imposed on the banks of England and Ireland to protect their gold reserves from an (internal or external) drain arising from the Napoleonic wars.¹⁰⁶ There was a widespread belief in parliamentary circles that the value of paper money in Ireland had greatly decreased in value, and that this resulted from the overproduction of such paper by private banks.¹⁰⁷ However, Sir John did not believe that the balance of exchange against Ireland was entirely attributable to the restrictions placed on the bank of Ireland. Rather, he blamed the state of trade between Ireland and Britain, and the fact that Irish revenue was continually drained from the country. Absentee rents, estimated at three million

¹⁰² *Hansard 1*, ii, 322 (26 Apr. 1804).

¹⁰³ Leave was given to bring in the bill; *Hansard 1*, iv, 66-7 & 206 (21 Mar. 1805).

¹⁰⁴ *Hansard 1*, iv, 206-8 (21 Mar. 1805).

¹⁰⁵ *D.N.B.*, xl, 674.

¹⁰⁶ G. L. Barrow, *The emergence of the Irish banking system, 1820-45* (Dublin, 1975), p. 8. The bill, which passed, prohibited the bank from paying cash for sums higher than twenty shillings, and it was accepted as relieving private banks in Ireland of similar obligations.

¹⁰⁷ *Hansard 1*, i, 1101-2 (20 Feb. 1804).

pounds annually, were being 'drawn from' Ireland. On top of this, there was an 'almost universal' disposition to hoard coin, and in many cases to bury it, due to widespread doubt about the permanent value of paper money, and thus an immense proportion of coin was being taken out of circulation almost immediately.¹⁰⁸

In March 1804 John Foster moved for a committee to inquire into this 'exorbitant' rate of currency exchange between the two countries. Newport was critical of legislative interference with the state of exchange in Ireland, contending that parliamentary discussion of the problem would only serve to excite hopes 'that could not be realised' and to expose grievances 'that did not admit of redress'.¹⁰⁹ Newport thought that the high rate of exchange owed much to the (real and perceived) 'present insecurity' of Ireland, stemming from threatened invasion, the necessary defence of the country against 'a foreign enemy' and 'internal commotions'.¹¹⁰ Reflecting his belief that a less coercive style of government should be adopted for Ireland, Newport was anxious that

nothing violent should be adopted, that the measures adopted on the subject ought rather to have a tendency to assist the natural course of things and to remove obstructions, than to give any new or unnatural direction to existing circumstances.¹¹¹

A committee was established, with Sir John Newport as one of its members.¹¹² The report, utilised by Sir Henry Parnell in a pamphlet on the subject, followed John Foster's line in arguing that the depreciation of Irish paper money arose from the directors of the bank of Ireland issuing more paper than was needed by the Irish economy.¹¹³ The inquiry proposed to remedy the situation by following the example of Scotland and assimilating the currencies of the two countries, making Irish paper money once again convertible (at par) to British paper money.

In 1805 Newport published a scathing report on the findings of this select committee. The object of Newport's *A letter...to take into consideration the circulating paper, the specie and current coin of Ireland* was to make public opinion aware that

¹⁰⁸ *Hansard 1*, i, 1104-5 (20 Feb. 1804).

¹⁰⁹ *Hansard 1*, i, 658-9 (2 Mar. 1804).

¹¹⁰ *Hansard 1*, i, 659 (2 Mar. 1804).

¹¹¹ *D.N.B.*, xl, 674; *Hansard 1*, i, 659 (2 Mar. 1804).

¹¹² The members of this committee included John Foster, Lord Archibald Hamilton, Lord Henry Petty, Lord Folkestone, Charles James Fox, William Pitt, Mr Grey, George Henry Rose, George Canning, Sir William Pulteney, Sir John Newport, John Claudius Beresford, Richard Brinsley Sheridan and James Brogden; *Hansard 1*, i, 662-3 (2 Mar. 1804).

¹¹³ Sir Henry Parnell, *Observations upon the state of currency in Ireland, and upon the course of exchange between Dublin and London* (Dublin, 1804), pp 1-7.

the parliamentary committee had failed to recognise what he believed were the real causes of financial distress in Ireland. These causes were attributed by Newport to the union between Britain and Ireland. Since 1801 Ireland's national debt had burgeoned without a parallel increase in the prosperity of the country. The number of absentee landlords, and therefore the amount of Irish money spent abroad, had increased. As a response to this, Newport proposed a gradual reduction of the Irish national debt: 'let Ireland be required to furnish no more than is necessary for her defence, internal expenses and the interests of her loans'.¹¹⁴ If this was instituted, the Irish revenue would be sufficient to allow the national debt to level off and the balance of trade to increase. However, Newport believed that in the long term an assimilated currency for the whole of the United Kingdom, leading to a full economic union with England would be of the greatest benefit to Ireland; 'it might be better policy for England to prevent our ruin now, than to ruin us first and afterwards take our debt upon her'.¹¹⁵

From 1804 Sir John became a leading critic of John Foster's Irish budgets, objecting to the high duties placed on goods imported into Ireland. While in fact Newport agreed with John Foster that 'there was an absolute necessity for raising taxes' in Ireland, Newport's approach was pragmatic: there was no point in imposing harsh taxes as this would work against raising revenue, leading to illicit dealing and smuggling. This was the reasoning behind his opposition to proposed duties on foreign timber, spirits and tobacco.¹¹⁶ Often his opposition to increased duties was justified by recourse to article fifteen of the act of union, which had established free trade between Ireland and Britain. Any tax which harmfully affected classes of persons in Ireland was judged as a violation of the union. Newport also attacked what he perceived as unjust duties by appealing to the Irish people. In March 1805 Newport criticised Foster's proposal to impose a duty on the import of foreign timber as it 'would reduce the consumption so much...and would render the cottages uninhabitable'. Newport contended that 'the want of domestic comforts at home' frequently encouraged the lower orders of the population 'to idleness and riotous conduct'.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Sir John Newport, *A letter from an Irish M.P. upon the report of the select committee of the House of Commons, appointed 2 March 1804, to take into consideration the circulating paper, the specie and current coin of Ireland; and also the exchange between that part of the United Kingdom and Great Britain* (London, 1805), p. 39.

¹¹⁵ Newport, *A letter...[on] the circulating paper, the specie and current coin of Ireland*, p. 40.

¹¹⁶ *Hansard 1*, iv, 15 (13 Mar. 1805) & 31-3 (15 Mar. 1805);

¹¹⁷ *Hansard 1*, iv, 31-3 (15 Mar. 1805).

Further insight may be gleaned from a consideration of the proposals contained in Newport's own budgets, forwarded in May 1806 and March 1807, during his time in office under the ministry of all the talents, a broadly Whig coalition under the premiership of Lord Grenville. Sir John Newport accepted the post of Irish chancellor of the exchequer in May 1806 after Henry Grattan had turned down the opportunity.¹¹⁸ On the introduction of his first budget in May 1806, Newport concentrated not on the proposed duties themselves but on the mode of their collection. Newport attributed the deficiency which existed in the revenue of Ireland 'to the want of arrangement which prevailed in the collection of its revenues'.¹¹⁹ On the duties themselves, Newport announced that in proposing new taxes, he had endeavoured 'to press as lightly as possible upon the necessaries of life, or upon those articles which might press severely upon the lower order of the people'.¹²⁰ Increased duties on sugar, iron and tea, leases and small bonds were attacked by John Foster, who believed they would fail to be productive, and certain duties, especially those on iron and sugar, were widely opposed in the house.¹²¹ Newport's 1807 budget similarly concentrated on ways of raising revenue through reforming abuses, on this occasion by cutting expenditure through a reform of the offices in the revenue department (see below).¹²²

In autumn 1807, after Viscount Howick had been elevated to the peerage as Lord Grey on the death of his father, George Ponsonby was invited to become leader of the Whigs in the House of Commons in opposition to the new government under the duke of Portland.¹²³ Newport, as a leading opponent of the government's Irish measures, became in turn the 'virtual leader of the Irish opposition' with special responsibility for Irish financial questions.¹²⁴ This not only increased Newport's reputation, it also increased his confidence and his determination to forward reform legislation for Ireland. However, the increased responsibility put a strain on his health, and in January 1807 Henry Parnell had to stand in for him in defending the Irish finance plan.¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ *D.N.B.*, xxiii, 372.

¹¹⁹ *Hansard I*, vii, 35 (7 May 1806).

¹²⁰ *Hansard I*, vii, 37 (7 May 1806).

¹²¹ *Hansard I*, vii, 43 (7 May 1806) & 331-4 (22 May 1806).

¹²² *Hansard I*, ix, 189-91 (25 Mar. 1807).

¹²³ Viscount Howick to Lord Grenville, 20 September 1806, in H.M.C., *Fortescue MSS*, viii, 347.

¹²⁴ Thorne, *History of parliament*, iv, 665.

¹²⁵ Thorne, *History of parliament*, iv, 665.

It has been acknowledged that despite the short period he remained in office (eleven months), Newport proved himself an effective minister.¹²⁶ His main aim during this time was to put in place an efficient system for the collection and administration of the revenue. This reform of the revenue was not essentially a new idea, as John Foster had moved for a select committee to be appointed for this purpose as early as June 1804.¹²⁷ On that occasion, Newport had agreed that such a measure would be 'of the most substantial benefit' and

highly gratifying to the people of Ireland, who would cheerfully pay taxes, as soon as they saw the acts for imposing them accompanied with a fair and accurate inquiry into all the abuses which prevented the due collection of the public revenue.¹²⁸

The select committee was appointed, and so when Newport came to tackle the problem two years later, a wealth of information was already available as to where the abuses lay.

Newport aimed at a reconstruction of the revenue boards, separating the customs and excise offices and creating a new board of commissioners whose job it would be to oversee the collection of the Irish revenue. The Irish chief secretary, William Elliot, advised Newport to put off the bill until the next session of parliament as he wished to have the opportunity of fully considering the details of the bill during the recess.¹²⁹ But Newport pressed ahead and in May 1806 was given leave to bring in a bill 'for regulating the revenue of customs and excise in Ireland'. It was proposed to divide the boards of customs and excise as 'the different boards had been found insufficient to transact the necessary business with the same accuracy as in this country [England], and their various departments were not sufficiently subdivided'.¹³⁰ The number of commissioners (first decided upon in 1704) was to be raised from twelve to fourteen.¹³¹ Newport also devised a new code of instructions, so that the reformed revenue boards would be aware of their role and would not impinge on the role of the treasury.¹³² It is not unlikely that Newport had a hand in convincing Lord Grenville to appoint a Catholic, a Mr. Therry, as one of the commissioners in July 1806.¹³³

¹²⁶ *D.N.B.*, xl, 674.

¹²⁷ *Hansard I*, ii, 841 (25 June 1804).

¹²⁸ *Hansard I*, ii, 842 (25 June 1804).

¹²⁹ William Elliot to Lord Grenville, 6 Apr. 1806, in H.M.C., *Fortescue MSS*, viii, 80-2.

¹³⁰ *Hansard I*, vii, 254 (19 May 1806).

¹³¹ Lord Grenville to William Elliot, 12 Apr. 1806, in H.M.C., *Fortescue MSS*, viii, 95.

¹³² Lord Grenville to William Elliot, 1 Aug. 1806, in H.M.C., *Fortescue MSS*, viii, 253.

¹³³ Lord Grenville to the duke of Bedford, 8 July 1806, in H.M.C., *Fortescue MSS*, viii, 227.

However, there is no evidence of a bill for a reconstruction of the revenue boards being introduced in 1806 or 1807, and it is possible that the ministry of all the talents fell from office before Sir John had a chance to introduce the bill. Alternatively, due to the unease of William Elliot about Newport introducing the bill without due time for consideration, it is possible that the Irish chief secretary was ultimately successful in convincing Newport of the need for deferral.

When Newport took office in 1806 it was expected that he would promote 'economical reform' through the abolition of sinecure offices. The lord lieutenant, the duke of Bedford, had urged Newport to do so as early as February 1806:

it is...material that the public should have some early judge of our sincerity in...reform...and in the recommended administration of the resources of the country, as far as may be practicable with the security and interests of the revenue'.¹³⁴

Certainly, the necessity of abolishing sinecures was a theme which Newport returned to again and again during his parliamentary career. In March 1813 Newport referred to sinecures as 'a burden upon the public' as they were so often conferred on 'unworthy' and 'undeserving' persons.¹³⁵ In May 1815 he argued for the necessity of abolishing sinecures not only to boost the revenue by ceasing to pay large salaries and emoluments, but also to improve the character of the public service:

Public services ought to be properly rewarded; but he would never suffer the public money to be squandered on individuals who performed no duties, merely for the purpose of aggrandisement and profit.¹³⁶

However, no such proposals were offered in 1806. It is possible that Newport decided to make the most of the opportunity to use the administration's patronage system to boost his own prestige, by procuring offices for his friends and supporters. For example, in June 1806 he was busy looking for a position for his ally Humphrey May, collector of Waterford, on one of the revenue boards.¹³⁷ Certainly Lord Castlereagh insinuated in 1815 that Newport, while in office, had granted money to his own colleagues.¹³⁸ Perhaps for all his reforming zeal when in opposition, the lures of office had an impact on Newport's actions while he was as chancellor of the Irish exchequer.

¹³⁴ The duke of Bedford to Sir John Newport, 29 Feb. 1806 (N.L.I., Newport papers, MS 796).

¹³⁵ *Hansard 1*, xxv, 393 (29 Mar. 1813).

¹³⁶ *Hansard 1*, xxxi, 452-3 (26 May 1815).

¹³⁷ William Elliot to Lord Grenville, 23 June 1806, in H.M.C., *Fortescue MSS*, viii, 197.

¹³⁸ It is fair to point out, however, that on this occasion Sir John Newport denied ever having done so *Hansard 1*, xxxi, 386 (24 May 1815).

In June 1806 Newport announced his plans for an Irish election bill, seeking to reform the process by which citizens were admitted (or not admitted) to freedom of corporate boroughs by regulating the amount of time the corporations were allowed for deciding upon freedom petitions.¹³⁹ This was an effort to regulate the parliamentary franchise through a reform of local abuses. The bill was ‘celebrated’ in Waterford, and the *Waterford Mirror* and the *Clonmel Herald* printed articles in support of it:

If anything can tend to give to the Irish representation its fair and reasonable influence in the imperial senate, it must be by re-establishing the electoral privileges in the numerous instances wherein they have been infringed, by opening again to the rightful claimants, those franchises of which in many instances they have been deprived.¹⁴⁰

The bill was criticised in parliament as ‘an assault on the Protestant interest’ in corporate boroughs, as it facilitated the admission of Catholics.¹⁴¹ It was also alleged that Newport brought forward the bill merely for his own benefit. While he announced that ‘the present bill called upon the corporations to do nothing but justice’, Newport was sufficiently aware of these allegations concerning his intentions to announce that in proposing this bill, he ‘was not actuated by any private or sinister motives’.¹⁴² But the very fact that he felt the need to justify his motives in forwarding the bill suggests that Newport’s activities in bolstering support through packing the electorate in Waterford city during the 1802 general election were well known. Opposition to the bill proved strong, and on 23 June Newport agreed to abandon it.¹⁴³

Sir John Newport’s interest in financial matters led him to be concerned with measures that would improve Ireland’s trade and economy, particularly with the state of the laws regarding the grain trade between Britain and Ireland. Newport promoted the establishment of free trade in corn between Ireland and Britain, introducing a corn intercourse bill in June 1806 aiming to ‘lay open the intercourse’ in all species of grain. Newport hoped that the establishment of free trade in grain would be ‘merely a prelude to that free interchange of every other commodity between the two countries,

¹³⁹ *Hansard 1*, vii, 772 (19 June 1806).

¹⁴⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Oct. 1806, printed from *Clonmel Herald*.

¹⁴¹ Thorne, *History of parliament*, iv, 664. Although Catholics had been able to claim admission to the freedom in boroughs since 1793, many corporations attempted to control admissions to freedom by regulating the oaths of office or by passing by-laws in a specific attempt to continue the Protestant numerical superiority on the corporations and in the freeman electorate. Newport’s aim was to reform the methods of granting freedoms in order to ensure that eligible freemen were not turned away on account of their religion.

¹⁴² *Hansard 1*, vii, 774 (19 June 1806).

¹⁴³ *Hansard 1*, vii, 790 (23 June 1806).

which was much to be desired'.¹⁴⁴ Supporters equally hoped that it would 'make a further and important step towards the completion of the union'.¹⁴⁵ Newport believed that the only way to prevent an 'undue' rise in the price of commodities in any part of Ireland was 'to remove every limit and obstruction in the way of its interchange'.¹⁴⁶ Leave was given to bring in the bill on 5 June and it was passed in July 1806.¹⁴⁷ The bill represented a triumph for both Newport and the ministry of all the talents.

The corn laws were an issue that interested Newport throughout his parliamentary career. In February 1812 Newport complained that the corn intercourse act was not being complied with in Liverpool or Bristol, and urged that this 'infraction' of the act be no longer permitted.¹⁴⁸ In June 1813 when Henry Parnell proposed an alteration to the corn laws, Newport contended that the trade in grain should be left 'perfectly free', but recognised that this would work better 'if everything else was free'.¹⁴⁹ The crux of Newport's argument here was that it was inefficient and damaging to place protection on manufactures but not on agriculture. Either free trade was to be fully implemented, or agriculture should enjoy the same protection as manufactures. In June 1814 Newport urged that the manufacturers 'had no right to call for protecting duties for themselves, if they were unwilling that other classes of his majesty's subjects should have equal protection'.¹⁵⁰

By May 1814 Newport was worried that the principles of free trade 'could not be fairly applied' due to the altered nature of international relations and the state of agriculture.¹⁵¹ Newport supported the government's plans to introduce duties on imported corn in order to protect the domestic market from competitively-priced 'foreign' imports.¹⁵² While Newport supported free trade between Britain and Ireland, justified by the act of union between the two countries, he believed that it was necessary to place a duty on corn imports to afford 'some efficient protection' to

¹⁴⁴ *Hansard 1*, vii, 514 (3 June 1806).

¹⁴⁵ Lord Auckland to Lord Grenville, 22 May 1806, in H.M.C., *Fortescue MSS*, viii, 151.

¹⁴⁶ *Hansard 1*, vii, 514-5 (3 June 1806).

¹⁴⁷ *Hansard 1*, vii, 520 (5 June 1806); *Waterford Mirror*, 2 & 19 July 1806.

¹⁴⁸ *Hansard 1*, xxi, 751-2 (12 Feb. 1812).

¹⁴⁹ *Hansard 1*, xxvi, 667 (15 June 1813).

¹⁵⁰ *Hansard 1*, xxvii, 1077 (6 June 1814).

¹⁵¹ *Hansard 1*, xxvii, 940 (20 May 1814).

¹⁵² These duties, known as the corn laws were passed by Lord Liverpool's Tory government in 1815. The corn laws were widely opposed and led to serious rioting in London and Manchester, resulting in the Peterloo Massacre; for more information on the corn laws see Bernard Semmel, *The rise of free trade imperialism: classical political economy, the empire of free trade and imperialism 1750-1850* (3rd ed., Cambridge, 2004).

British and Irish farmers against 'foreign agriculturalists'.¹⁵³ In February 1815 he supported a measure to extend the protection afforded to manufactures to agriculture, arguing that farmers could best contribute to 'the general prosperity of the empire' by being made 'independent of foreign countries'.¹⁵⁴ Sir John argued that Ireland deserved protection not only because Britain was 'bound in honour' to encourage Ireland's agriculture, but also because it was in Britain's interest to do so, as Ireland was the best customer for British manufactures.¹⁵⁵ Newport continued to support free trade between Ireland and Britain as he hoped for a true economic union between the countries, but he supported protecting the home market(s) against foreign imports at a time when the Irish market in particular was suffering due to the post-war economic recession.

This support for free trade in corn was part of Newport's plan for incorporating the economies of the two countries. Before 1815, Newport believed a full assimilation would prove the most beneficial to Ireland. In an unpublished pamphlet written in about 1810, Newport attempted to convince his fellow parliamentarians of the need for Ireland to create economic relations with Great Britain that would be advantageous to the Irish economy.¹⁵⁶ But after the end of the Napoleonic wars, when Ireland was experiencing a sharp decline in demand for agricultural produce, Newport became much more wary of full assimilation. In November 1814 William Fitzgerald, chancellor of the Irish exchequer introduced a series of bills proposing to assimilate British and Irish taxes. Newport opposed the measure, believing it would have the effect of 'crushing Ireland'. He contended that an assimilation of taxes would result in increased taxation but in decreased revenue.¹⁵⁷ But in May 1815 Newport vigorously opposed a bill proposing to place increased duties on goods moved between Britain and Ireland, denouncing it as 'impolitic and unjust'.¹⁵⁸ Newport seemingly favoured complete assimilation as long as it was beneficial to Ireland, but was much less enthusiastic when assimilation would mean increased hardship. This reveals once again that Newport was a pragmatic politician, and one who essentially had Irish interests at heart.

¹⁵³ *Hansard 1*, xxix, 1010-1 (23 Feb. 1815).

¹⁵⁴ *Hansard 1*, xxix, 1011-3 (23 Feb. 1815).

¹⁵⁵ *Hansard 1*, xxix, 1214-6 (3 Mar. 1815).

¹⁵⁶ Sir John Newport, 'Strictures on the debt, revenue and financial resources of Ireland, c.1810', p. 16 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,353).

¹⁵⁷ *Hansard 1*, xxix, 483-4 (23 Nov. 1814).

¹⁵⁸ *Hansard 1*, xxxi, 274 (19 May 1815).

In 1816 the Irish and British exchequers were consolidated and the administrative offices centralised. This change was heartily welcomed by Newport, who called it 'an act of justice to that country, and an act which, in his opinion, ought to have been resorted to long since'.¹⁵⁹ During the debates on the bill to consolidate the exchequers, he moved that no tax should apply to Ireland unless it applied to the whole of Great Britain.¹⁶⁰ This resolution, aimed at protecting Ireland from high taxation on articles not applied in Britain, was passed. Newport also opposed a clause in the bill creating a new office of vice treasurer in Ireland, seeing it as unnecessary and a waste of public funds. While he failed to convince parliament that the office was unnecessary, he did succeed in lowering the proposed salary from £3,500 to £2,000 a year.¹⁶¹ In May 1817 Newport moved thirteen resolutions on Irish finance, calling for a reduction of the tax burden 'with a view to the probable permanent increase of the Irish revenue, and to the continuance of a beneficial and cordial connexion between the two islands'. Newport believed that the continuation of high taxation in peacetime would lead to 'individual distress and national misfortune' which would ultimately result in the alienation of Irish affection and the weakening of the connection with Britain.¹⁶² These motions were rejected.

In May 1809 Sir Henry Parnell moved for the appointment of commissioners to inquire into the state of tithes in Ireland, believing the present system was in need of alteration. Newport, who had believed a tithe settlement to be one of the boons held out by William Pitt's government in 1800 in return for support of the act of union, called on Lord Castlereagh 'to find out some modifications to lighten the burden of the poor oppressed people of Ireland'. On this occasion Parnell's motion was rejected by 146 votes to 75.¹⁶³ In April 1810 Sir Henry Parnell forwarded a similar motion, this time accompanying it with several petitions from Ireland praying for a reform in the system of collecting tithes. Newport referred to the discontent that arose from the present system of tithe collection, urging that parliament 'should take care to strengthen Ireland, as Ireland was the vulnerable point [of the empire], and that strength was best to be produced by removing the discontents of its unfortunate

¹⁵⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 28 May 1816.

¹⁶⁰ *Hansard I*, xxxiv, 607-8 (20 May 1816).

¹⁶¹ *Hansard I*, xxxiv, 1047 & 1129-30 (11 June 1816).

¹⁶² *Hansard I*, xxxvi, 578-87 (15 May 1817).

¹⁶³ *Hansard I*, xiv, 792-800 (30 May 1809).

population'.¹⁶⁴ Newport supported a third motion to the same effect in June 1811, which was again rejected.¹⁶⁵

As his parliamentary career progressed, Newport became increasingly concerned about the 'state of Ireland' question, and continued to oppose the government's more coercive Irish policies. Rather than a large military establishment, Newport continued to recommend instigating inquiries into the roots of civil unrest in Ireland. In May 1816 he moved to establish such a committee:

we have armed the executive government with all the means requisite to suppress tumult, and punish outrage...we would now apply all our powers to a deliberate examination of the existing evils, and the causes from whence they originate.¹⁶⁶

According to Newport, it was impossible to apply an effective remedy without first discovering the real causes of disturbances. He contended that the problems lay largely in the misgovernment of the country; it was impossible to view the state of Ireland 'without reflecting on the errors in the government of that country at different periods'.¹⁶⁷ This was a claim that he expounded on several occasions, commenting for example in March 1816 that 'Ireland was now reaping the fruits of British injustice'.¹⁶⁸ Longstanding political and economic inequalities had resulted in the alienation of the people from their governing system.¹⁶⁹ The inference was that Ireland was continuing to be misgoverned. Newport's motion was rejected by 187 votes to 103.¹⁷⁰ In June 1817 another motion for an inquiry into the state and condition of the people of Ireland was rejected.¹⁷¹

Sir John Newport's career did not end in 1820, and the 1820s and early 1830s witnessed him pressing vigorously for unqualified Catholic relief and a wide variety of reforms (see chapters four and seven). Municipal reform in particular was an interest that remained with Newport throughout his life. On the eve of retirement in 1832, Newport published his influential *Borough representation in Ireland*, which included an inventory of the boroughs whose elective rights had been extinguished in 1800, and the names of the peers to whom sums of money were awarded 'as the purchase of

¹⁶⁴ *Hansard 1*, xvi, 678-9 (13 Apr. 1810).

¹⁶⁵ *Hansard 1*, xx, 587-8 (11 June 1811); see chapter six for further details on the tithe question.

¹⁶⁶ *Hansard 1*, xxxiv, 10-1 (26 Apr. 1816).

¹⁶⁷ *Hansard 1*, xxxiv, 11 (26 Apr. 1816).

¹⁶⁸ *Hansard 1*, xxxiii, 84 (8 Mar. 1816).

¹⁶⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 2 May 1816.

¹⁷⁰ *Hansard 1*, xxxiv, 75 (26 Apr. 1816).

¹⁷¹ *Hansard 1*, xxxvi, 1076 (19 June 1817).

those *miscalled vested rights*', as well as a list of those boroughs in which the parliamentary interest had been bought or sold since 1800.¹⁷² While the material was of historic rather than contemporary value, the themes of corruption and abuse maintained political significance into the nineteenth century. But while he remained a zealous supporter of electoral and parliamentary reform, it is ironic that throughout his career, Sir John Newport was himself one of those who benefited from the unreformed borough system, using local and government patronage to garner pensions and sinecures for himself and his political allies. One of the most noticeable aspects of Newport's political career is the divergence between his public rhetoric of reform in parliament and his private exertions to carve out a share of local political power and patronage.

Conclusion:

This chapter has examined the parliamentary activities and concerns of the Waterford Whig members in this period with a view to revealing the extent to which they reflected the national pattern, as well as to glimpsing their relations with other British and Irish Whigs. The Catholic question was the most important topic for Irish liberal members in this period, and there is a strong record of support for Catholic relief among Whigs in Waterford. In terms of activity, zeal and defined political principles, Sir John Newport was clearly the most significant Waterford member in this period. A study of his parliamentary interests and activities has revealed that Newport fitted snugly into the Whig vein, while his priorities lay with promoting Irish interests. But while he was politically aligned with the Whigs in parliament, Newport remained a pragmatic politician who was never beyond using political influence to forward his own agenda. Joanna Innes has noted that by the 1810s and 1820s, the enthusiasm of the Whigs in forwarding legislation was enough to provoke official action, and ministers 'seem to have concluded that since legislation looked likely to emerge one way or another, it had better be under their direction'.¹⁷³ Certainly Newport's proposals for financial reform, and inquiries into the state of the poor and education systems in Ireland seem to have provoked a government response. While Sir John Newport may not necessarily be one of the 'great legislators' of this period, it is

¹⁷² Sir John Newport, *The state of borough representation of Ireland in 1783 and 1800* (Dublin, 1832), p. 6.

¹⁷³ Innes, 'Legislating for three kingdoms', p. 33.

perhaps fair to agree with Peter Jupp that he was 'one of the real heroes' of the imperial parliament, at least for the Irish Whigs.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Innes, *Legislating for three kingdoms*, p. 33; Jupp, 'Irish M.P.s at Westminster', pp 79-80.

Chapter four: Liberal politics and the Catholic question in Waterford, 1808-25

Catholic emancipation was the most significant ongoing political question in Ireland between 1800 and 1829, both within parliament and on the local and national stage. Irish political culture underwent significant change in this period, forming patterns of modern political behaviour, and the development of Catholic politics in this period into a democratic and populist movement has been studied extensively.¹ Yet the significance of Protestant involvement in the struggle for Catholic emancipation has been often overlooked, beginning with the historian of the Catholic Association, Thomas Wyse.² The participation of Irish liberal Protestants at different stages of the quest for emancipation had an important impact on the direction of Catholic politics, at least before 1828. They were wholly responsible for the introduction and progress of the question in parliament, and they contributed at local level by attending Catholic meetings, holding Protestant meetings, and petitioning parliament for Catholic relief. The importance of liberal Protestants was especially significant in large urban centres, where the density of Protestants tended to be greater. In these larger cities and towns, they felt their position in society to be relatively secure, compared with the siege mentality often discernible in their rural co-religionists.

The activities of Waterford liberal Protestants during this time provide a vehicle by which the trends and developments that occurred in Irish Protestant politics may be examined. This chapter analyses the trends within Catholic politics in Waterford, with a view to analysing the relations between the Catholic body and their liberal Protestant 'friends'. Part one focuses on the trends within Catholic politics nationally, and examines the early years of the campaign for Catholic emancipation in Waterford. The veto controversy was very significant during the early years of the century not only in dividing the Catholic body and weakening it as an effective political force, but also in damaging relations between Catholics and their liberal Protestant supporters at both parliamentary and local level. Part two examines the growth of Catholic consciousness in the early 1820s, and aims to illustrate the

¹ Fergus O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland, 1823-47: a study of O'Connellite politics and political education' (PhD thesis, T.C.D., 1978), p. 6; O'Ferrall, *Catholic emancipation: Daniel O'Connell and the birth of Irish democracy, 1820-30* (Dublin, 1985); G. I. T. Machin, *The Catholic question in English politics from 1820 to 1830* (Oxford, 1964); Oliver MacDonagh, *The hereditary bondsman: Daniel O'Connell 1775-1829* (London, 1988).

² Thomas Wyse, *A historical sketch of the late Catholic Association of Ireland* (2 vols, London, 1829).

indispensability of liberal Protestant support during this period. Liberal Protestants believed themselves to be the leaders of the campaign for civil and religious liberty prior to the County Waterford election in 1826 and beyond. This section will analyse these opinions, as well as reactions to a much more confident and effective Catholic population, and to Daniel O'Connell's leadership of it.

Part one: The Catholic question and Protestant-Catholic relations, 1808-20

Chapter two focused on the emergence of Catholic politics in Waterford city in the years after union, and illustrated the nature and extent of liberal Protestant support in the city. This section traces the development of Catholic politics through the 1810s. In these years the politicised part of the Catholic population, composed largely of members of the gentry, the growing professional class and middle-class merchants and tradesmen, was politically cautious.³ The tone of their speeches, letters and petitions in the immediate post-union years was reserved, moderate and complimentary to crown and parliament. The first post-union Catholic meeting in Waterford was held in April 1806 to prepare a congratulatory address to the lord lieutenant, the duke of Bedford, on his Irish appointment. The tone of the address was cautious, 'humbly request[ing] your grace's permission to join the general congratulations'.⁴ Despite this, there was increasing anticipation among Waterford Catholics that their cause had the support of a growing section of the Protestant community. This anticipation was buttressed by declarations in this vein by the liberal press. In January 1812, the *Waterford Mirror* declared:

the Catholics of Ireland can never be sufficiently grateful to their Protestant brethren: – every day, every hour, bring additional proofs of Protestant liberality, and of the acknowledgement of Catholic gratitude.⁵

However, the failure of the emancipation campaign to make headway in the years immediately after union led to frustration and a sense of weakness on the part of the Catholics, creating support for a more strident political campaign. It was in part the grudging way in which solutions were offered in these years which made Irish

³ J. M. Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852' (PhD thesis, U.C.C., 2001), p. 104.

⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 26 Apr. 1806; leading Catholics Thomas Wyse, Thomas Fitzgerald and Richard Power O'Shee were appointed to present the address to the duke of Bedford; *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Apr. 1806.

⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Jan. 1812.

Catholics more independent and defiant.⁶ On a national level formal leadership passed into the hands of more dynamic leaders such as Daniel O'Connell. In Waterford these years witnessed the emergence of local political leaders and political organisation, which provided a framework for the Catholic Association in later years. The Catholic Board was established in Dublin in 1812, after the suppression of the Catholic Committee in 1811 under the convention act. The Catholic Board was a non-representative association, whose aim was to continue the campaign for the removal of all political disabilities placed on Catholics. An aggregate meeting in Dublin in March 1812 resolved to present an address to the prince regent and a petition to parliament praying for relief. This was swiftly followed by a Catholic meeting in Waterford, which accepted the petition and address and called for signatures from local Catholics.⁷ The Waterford Catholic petition was presented to Sir John Newport and the duke of Devonshire to be laid before the houses of parliament.

The Waterford meeting was one of the earliest meetings held in response to the Dublin aggregate meeting. There was a wave of Catholic activity throughout the country over the summer of 1812, but this occurred only after the Catholic Board called in June for counties and towns to hold meetings in order to forward local petitions to support the general one.⁸ The evidence therefore suggests that Waterford Catholics were active and politicised at an early date, and were more in tune with Catholic politics in the capital than almost anywhere else. Another Catholic meeting was held at St Patrick's Chapel in the city in August 1814, again for the purpose of petitioning parliament for emancipation. This meeting was famous in Waterford for the 'brilliant effusions of oratory' by Richard Lalor Sheil, with the *Waterford Mirror* commenting that they were 'proud' to call him 'a fellow-citizen'.⁹ The meeting returned thanks to the Protestant gentlemen 'who have this day honoured our meeting by their presence'.¹⁰ This presence was an indication of the level of interest among Waterford liberal Protestants in calling for religious equality, and in supporting their

⁶ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', pp 104-10.

⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Mar. 1812.

⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 24 June 1812; indeed Waterford held a second meeting in July 1812, chaired by Edmund Power of Ballydine, which as well as agreeing to the parliamentary petition prepared in Dublin, thanked the Waterford liberal representatives, Sir John Newport and Richard Power senior, for 'their uniform support' for Catholic relief; *Waterford Mirror*, 21 July 1812.

⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 & 8 Aug. 1814; it did not seem to matter to the newspaper that Richard Lalor Sheil hardly considered himself a Waterford 'citizen', his family having moved away from the city when he was eleven years old; W. T. McCullough, *Memoirs of the right honourable Richard Lalor Sheil* (2 vols, London, 1855), i, 1-10.

¹⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Aug. 1814.

Catholic brethren in the public sphere. The avoidance at the meeting of any discussion regarding 'securities' helped to strengthen bonds between the denominations, at least in the immediate term. These securities, more often than not referring to a royal veto on episcopal appointments or state-payment of the clergy caused great division at all levels of the community (see below). Whereas contemporaneous Catholic meetings elsewhere, in Cork and Kerry for example, adopted resolutions using language clearly hostile to any form of securities, the Waterford meeting resolved to adopt the petition forwarded by the general meeting in Dublin.¹¹

The 1810s witnessed the emergence of a Catholic leadership in Waterford city. Among these leaders was Thomas Wyse senior, a local merchant, landowner and city magistrate with a house at the Manor of St John in the liberties of the city. The Wyses were a wealthy Catholic family who had 'been associated always with Waterford city and its environs'.¹² John Matthew Galwey of Duckspool near Dungarvan came from the growing, wealthy Catholic merchant and business class. Connected to the Catholic Barron family through marriage, Galwey was a wine merchant, ship owner, land agent and land owner.¹³ The Barron family was a wealthy and well-rooted Waterford Catholic family, many of whose members became prominent in local and national politics. Henry Winston Barron of Ballymacaw, son of Pierce Barron of Ballyneal, 'occupied a prominent place as a politician in County Waterford for many years'.¹⁴ William Barron of Carrigbarahane was a prominent member of the Catholic gentry, and acted as a justice of the peace from 1803.¹⁵ Richard Power O'Shee of Gardenmorris heavily involved himself in Catholic politics at county level. These gentlemen brought a proprietorial element into Waterford Catholic politics (see map of County Waterford).

Equally (and increasingly) active in local politics were members of the Catholic middle class, primarily merchants and businessmen. The merchant Joseph Anthony

¹¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 29 Aug. & 19 Sept. 1814.

¹² Matthew Butler, 'Glimpses of Waterford', 3 Apr. 1947 (N.L.I., MS 5,697); J. J. Auchmuty, *Sir Thomas Wyse, 1791-1862: the life and career of an educator and diplomat* (Westminster, 1939), p. 14; *Waterford Mirror*, 29 Mar. 1806. The firm Wyse and Quan, situated on the Quay, ran a successful trade in provisions, and Thomas Wyse also acted as land agent to the O'Callaghans, absentee landowners in County Waterford; *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 321.

¹³ *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 265.

¹⁴ Butler, 'Glimpses of Waterford', 5 Jan. 1948.

¹⁵ Butler, 'Glimpses of Waterford', 17 Nov. 1847.

Leonard was a freeman of the city, as well as a member of the chamber of commerce.¹⁶ His kinsman John Leonard of the Mall, who sat on the Waterford Catholic rent committee from its establishment in May 1824, was also a wealthy merchant, affluent through trading with ports in Spain.¹⁷ John Fitzpatrick of the Mall, an auctioneer, became secretary of the Waterford Catholic rent committee.¹⁸ Thomas Meagher of Ballycanavan in the barony of Gaultier was a ship owner who had made his fortune servicing the transatlantic trade. Having spent much of his early life in Newfoundland, Meagher transferred his business empire to Waterford in 1818 in response to the economic depression in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars.¹⁹ Dr Thomas Hearn, a physician in King's Street acted as secretary at many of the early Catholic meetings in the city.²⁰ John Archbold, a wine-merchant of Bailey's New Street, Roger Hayes, a barrister of King's Street and Alexander Sherlock, whose family owned property in the city, were prominent Catholics who also played a central part in city politics during this period.²¹ Thomas Fitzgerald was another active Catholic who chaired many of the early meetings in the city, and was among those chosen to present the Catholic address to the lord lieutenant, the duke of Bedford, in 1806.²² Among the clergy Dr John Power, appointed bishop of Waterford in 1804 after the death of Dr Thomas Hussey, was a leading figure and exerted great influence on poorer Catholics. Despite this involvement, Catholic politics in Waterford was led by a nucleus of lay, middle-class activists.²³

Waterford Catholic leaders were also active in national politics, and several regularly attended meetings of the Catholic Board. These meetings were chaired at different times by Waterford Catholics Thomas Wyse senior and Philip Barron, as well

¹⁶ Joseph Anthony Leonard, son of James Leonard, became a freeman of the city in April 1805; Freeman petitions; Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 4 June 1805 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02).

¹⁷ *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 321; *Waterford Mirror*, 26 July 1817; 17 Mar. & 14 July 1824.

¹⁸ *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 320; *Waterford Mirror*, 21 Aug. 1824.

¹⁹ Thomas Meagher junior joined his father at his home in Ballycanavan a year later in 1819. This is not the Thomas Francis Meagher of Young Ireland fame, but his father; Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 111; see also John Mannion, 'Migration and upward mobility: the Meagher family in Ireland and Newfoundland, 1780-1830', in *Irish Economic and Social History*, xv (1988), pp 65-6.

²⁰ *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 319; *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Mar. 1808.

²¹ Butler, 'Glimpses of Waterford', 2 Mar. 1944; *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 321.

²² *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Apr. 1806 & 14 Mar. 1808.

²³ It is also worth pointing out that both the contemporary Thomas Wyse and the historian Fergus O'Ferrall have argued that Catholic priests did not possess enough local clout to alter the direction of popular politics at any stage in the Catholic emancipation campaign; Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 283-84; Fergus O'Ferrall, "'The only lever'? The Catholic priest in Irish politics 1823-29", in *Studies: an Irish quarterly review*, vxx (1981), pp 311-12.

as liberal Protestant Edmund Power of Gurteen.²⁴ Thomas Fitzgerald was present at a meeting in November 1814, when plans were being discussed for the agitation of the Catholic cause after the dissolution of the Catholic Board. While the general tone of the meeting was cautious, Fitzgerald argued for a more vigorous approach, recommending 'less talking and more action than the late Board pursued'.²⁵

The early years of the nineteenth century witnessed active support for the Catholic question on the part of Waterford liberal Protestants, as the 1808 Protestant Declaration in favour of the removal of all political disabilities attests.²⁶ The greater part of liberal Protestant activity was focused on the parliamentary struggle for Catholic relief, and both meetings and petitions focused primarily on forwarding the Catholic cause in the House of Commons. Even the letters by liberal Protestants published in the local newspapers were aimed at drumming up Protestant interest in parliamentary petitions calling for Catholic relief (see chapter two).²⁷ In January 1812 a substantial number of Waterford's local Protestants subscribed to a general Protestant petition in favour of Catholic claims.²⁸ The *Waterford Mirror* commented that 'we have heard that the sheets of parchment already filled with Protestant names would cover an acre of ground'.²⁹ Compared with other places in Ireland, relations between Catholic activists and liberal Protestants in Waterford were relatively positive in these years, as these repeated gestures of fellow-feeling illustrate.

During the County Waterford election in 1812, Catholic supporters of the liberal Protestant candidate, Richard Power senior, held a dinner in his honour. This dinner was attended by citizens of all denominations, and presided over by the Catholic Richard Power O'Shee. The dinner

hailed the day which was to unite Catholic and Protestant rank and character at the social board, as the harbinger of that happy morn which shall give birth to universal peace, and confer religious freedom on all denominations of the people of Ireland.³⁰

It is significant that at this point in the campaign for Catholic relief, both Catholics and Protestants still envisaged that Catholic emancipation would be secured mainly for

²⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 May 1814, 2 May 1818, 18 Nov. 1823 & 24 Jan. 1824.

²⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Nov. 1814.

²⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Mar. 1808.

²⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 May & 21 Sept. 1807, 3 & 20 Feb., 5 Mar., 30 Apr. & 11 May 1808.

²⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Jan. 1812.

²⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Jan. 1812.

³⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 21 Oct. 1812.

wealthy Catholics who formed part of the rank and character of the country. Liberal Protestant support for Catholic relief was based on the conservative motives that such relief would secure the Protestant position, rather than envisaging a political ascendancy in which Protestant control was diminished (see chapters one and two). In the event, the election was a straightforward affair, with the sitting members Richard Power senior (Whig) and Sir William Carr Beresford (Tory) being returned uncontested.³¹

During a by-election in County Waterford in April 1814 Catholics and Protestants again pooled their resources to return a liberal Protestant, in this case Richard Power junior, rather than the anti-Catholic nominee of the Beresfords, Wray Palliser.³² The strength of this support was illustrated by the fact that Richard Power junior won the election by sixty votes after a fourteen-day poll.³³ Richard Power junior recognised this effort in his address of thanks to his supporters, contending that his election was ‘the signal triumph of the cause of independence, obtained by the active and steady perseverance of your exertions’.³⁴ The preparation for a second by-election in May 1814 witnessed a county meeting, organised by the liberal Protestant and Catholic gentry, who attempted to find a candidate to challenge the anti-Catholic candidate, Lord George Thomas Beresford. The meeting determined ‘that the representation of this county shall not be the appendage to the patronage of an individual’.³⁵ In this instance, however, no candidate could be found and Lord George was elected without opposition.³⁶

Leaders of political opinion, both Protestant and Catholic, showed a disposition to work together in other areas also. In June 1814 a meeting was organised in the city by the leading Protestant and Catholic gentry to prepare a petition to parliament supporting the total abolition of the slave trade.³⁷ At this meeting the parliamentary

³¹ B. M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 242.

³² This by-election was held due to the death of the sitting member Richard Power senior; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 24.

³³ Richard Power junior was nominated by Protestant Humphrey May and seconded by Catholic Richard Power O’Shee; Richard Power junior polled 864 votes to Wray Palliser’s 804; *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Apr. & 11 May 1814.

³⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 May 1814.

³⁵ The individual referred to here was the marquis of Waterford, head of the Beresford family; *Waterford Mirror*, 21 May 1814.

³⁶ Lord George Thomas Beresford was nominated by his political ally Wray Palliser; *Waterford Mirror*, 28 May 1814; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 242.

³⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 29 June 1814. The slave trade in Britain had been abolished in 1807; this was a further bill to halt the lending of capital to slave traders in other European countries and the colonies

petitions were adopted 'with a degree of hearty acclamation that we have seldom equalled at the most popular of our public meetings'.³⁸ As well as illustrating the strong support for the abolition of the slave trade in Waterford, this report suggests that the leaders of the different denominations were more comfortable working together on questions that did not incorporate a religious dimension. The cooperation on issues such as this one suggests that Waterford Protestants and Catholics wished to avoid, at least in public, subjects which may have resulted in schism. This is suggested also by their reluctance to discuss the issue of securities at the Catholic meeting in August 1814, and may have stemmed from a common impression of a history of good relations between the denominations in the city.

Despite the evidence that a great sense of cooperation existed between religious denominations at this time, there also existed in Waterford a historical sense of division. This was perhaps not so pronounced in Waterford city as elsewhere, but sectarianism was, and certainly became, an important factor in Waterford politics. This was highlighted by a relatively small but staunch anti-Catholic group of conservative Protestants centred in the city, many of whom were members of Waterford Corporation. Catholic relations with liberal Protestant members of (largely Protestant) local institutions in Waterford, and especially with the corporation, were closer than in other towns during this period (see chapter two). But as the campaign for Catholic emancipation progressed, the exclusive politics of Waterford Corporation served to augment discontent among middle-class Catholics in the city, and this discontent became a symbol for a much wider set of social and economic grievances, including admission to local political and civic bodies.³⁹ Liberal Protestants were in the unenviable position of treading the fine line between supporting Catholic claims and Catholic inclusion into local and national politics, and alienating conservative opinion by undermining their privileged position in society.

These conservative corporation men were joined by several ultra-Protestant clergymen, including Rev Ussher Lee. Rev Ussher Lee was the dean of the Protestant Cathedral in the city, as well as rector of St Olave's parish church.⁴⁰ He was the brother of liberal Protestant Edward Lee, but the siblings differed widely on the subject

belonging to them; *Hansard 1*, xxxi, 168-77 (5 May 1815). There is no evidence that Sir John Newport presented the petition in the House of Commons.

³⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 2 July 1814.

³⁹ Hearn, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p 136-7.

⁴⁰ *Pigott's Directory 1824*, pp 137-8.

of Catholic relief. While Edward Lee was an active campaigner for Catholic emancipation (see chapter two), Ussher Lee remained actively opposed to admitting to Catholics any share of political power. This was a position he maintained throughout his life, becoming a leading member of the Waterford Conservative Society in 1840.⁴¹ A second, but by no means exclusive group in the county acted under the auspices and patronage of the marquis of Waterford. These Protestants based their anti-Catholic politics on the argument that granting religious equality would undermine the Protestant nature of the constitution and lead to the weakening of the link with Britain. Furthermore, Catholics could not be trusted due to their divided loyalties, temporally to the British crown and spiritually to the see of Rome. In the long term, the internal divisions within the Protestant community in Waterford weakened the (real and potential) influence of the liberal Protestants there.

Conservative members of the Protestant élite were not the only anti-Catholic Protestants in Waterford. It has been argued that Protestants from the lower levels of society were often the most resistant and irreconcilable to Catholic relief, not due to any lack of education but rather because it was this section of society that had the most to lose if Catholic emancipation was to be granted.⁴² It has been noted that the symbols of Protestant superiority, such as the Williamite celebrations in July, continued to be celebrated by the lower classes of Protestants, along with the Orange Order, but not among the more respectable classes of Protestants.⁴³ For lower class Protestants, their Protestantism was the defining factor of their perceived status in society, and if emancipation were to be granted there would be nothing to distinguish them from their more numerous Catholic counterparts 'save the sense of superiority of Protestantism itself'.⁴⁴ It was the existence of such groups of Protestants that resisted closer Protestant-Catholic relations, both in Waterford and on a national level, and nourished the historical sense of suspicion and cynicism on the parts of both Protestants and Catholics.

⁴¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 June 1840.

⁴² Jacqueline Hill, 'The Protestant response to repeal; the case of the Dublin working class', in F. S. L. Lyons and R. A. J. Hawkins (eds), *Ireland under the union: varieties of tension* (Oxford 1980), pp 35-68; Hill tackles this question in Dublin city in the 1840s, but there is no evidence to suggest that these prejudices of the Protestant working classes were confined to either time or place.

⁴³ Jacqueline Hill, 'National festivals, the state and 'Protestant ascendancy' in Ireland, 1790-1829', in *I.H.S.*, xxiv, no. 93 (May 1984), p. 39.

⁴⁴ Hill, 'The Protestant response to repeal', p. 65.

In this context the active support for Catholic relief on the part of liberal Protestants was particularly significant. But liberal Protestant support for Catholic emancipation stemmed not from any sympathy towards Catholicism itself – indeed many Protestants felt a sincere distrust of ‘popery’ – but from the belief that emancipation would make Ireland more secure, by firmly attaching the Catholic propertied classes to the constitution.⁴⁵ In March 1813 Robert Shapland Carew junior, Whig member for County Wexford, explained to the House of Commons the foundation of his support for Catholic claims:

It cannot be for our interest, when every energy should be exerted in resistance to the attacks of our common enemy, that the right arm of the empire should be paralysed by the incapacities under which the majority of the population of Ireland suffer. You cannot expect an equal zeal but from an equal interest – you cannot look to an adequate effect from an inadequate cause. Give to the Catholics of Ireland but a common cause, and a common interest, and in this hour of danger, Ireland will not be your vulnerable point.⁴⁶

Carew’s justification for supporting Catholic claims in parliament stemmed from the belief that Ireland and the empire would profit from the removal of agitation and aggression caused by the laws disabling full Catholic participation in political life. Giving Catholics a full stake in the British constitution would make them better citizens and give them a common interest in defending the empire.

The veto controversy, resurfacing as it did with unexpected ferocity in 1808, had significant effects on Catholic-Protestant relations throughout Ireland. One of the effects of the veto controversy was to drive a wedge between Catholic activists and their local and parliamentary supporters for nearly fifteen years. In 1782 Irish members of parliament sympathetic to Catholic relief had first raised the question of giving the king the right to veto the appointment of individuals to Catholic bishoprics. William Pitt’s plans at the time of union for the settlement of the Catholic question had incorporated a similar idea of a veto. In 1799 four archbishops and six bishops had passed resolutions accepting Pitt’s hypothetical proposals, under the pretext of a

⁴⁵ S. J. Connolly, ‘The Catholic question, 1800-12’, in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the union I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989), p. 39.

⁴⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Mar. 1813; an abridged version of the same speech appears in *Hansard 1*, xxiv, 940 (1 Mar. 1813). Robert Shapland Carew junior (1787-1856) son of Robert Shapland Carew (member for Waterford city 1776-1800 and County Wexford 1806-7) and brother-in-law of Sir John Newport. Carew followed a Whig line in parliament, supporting Catholic relief, and government treated him as an opponent, attempting to unseat him in 1818; R. G. Thorne, *The history of parliament: the House of Commons 1790-1820* (5 vols, London, 1986), iii, 407; Thomas Power, ‘Electoral politics in Waterford city, 1692-1832’, in William Nolan & Thomas Power (eds), *Waterford, history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1992), pp 229 & 262.

⁴⁷ See speech by John Cox Hippisley in *Hansard 1*, xvii, 47 (18 May 1810).

Catholic relief bill at the time of union. The state veto of church appointments was a power already enjoyed by most (Protestant) European monarchs ruling over substantial Catholic populations and by the British monarch over Catholics in Quebec.⁴⁷ However, the agreement lapsed when such a relief bill failed to materialise in the aftermath of union.⁴⁸

In the spring of 1808 the question of veto was brought up once again by the Catholic aristocrat, the earl of Fingall, during discussions for a Catholic petition to parliament. Dr John Milner, the Irish hierarchy's agent in London, met with George Ponsonby, the leader of the Irish Whigs in the House of Commons, to discuss the possibility of a veto being accepted.⁴⁹ During the debate in the House of Commons on a petition for Catholic relief, Henry Grattan and George Ponsonby also set out a plan for a royal veto, detailing how the names of candidates for Irish bishoprics would be submitted to the lord lieutenant before being sent to Rome for confirmation.⁵⁰ But when Henry Grattan's motion for the house to go into a committee on the petition was rejected by the Commons in May 1808, Dr Milner disowned George Ponsonby's proposals, and although he remained open to the principle of veto throughout 1808, he wrote a letter stating that nothing to that effect had been agreed by the two of them.⁵¹ C. D. A. Leighton has pointed out that the initial hostility towards proposals for a veto in 1808 had more to do with attacking the Catholic 'aristocratic party' headed by the earl of Fingall than any opposition to a veto in principle. However, when the episcopal bench formally rejected the proposals (see below), the Catholic laity quickly followed the bishops' (admittedly indecisive and probably unintentional) lead.⁵² Pamphlet literature on the subject mushroomed, dividing the public body much more definitively on the subject.⁵³

It was clear even in these early stages that the divisions caused by the controversy were reverberating through Irish society, internally dividing both the

⁴⁸ Connolly, 'The Catholic question', p. 36.

⁴⁹ Dr John Milner to George Ponsonby, undated [1808] (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362); Connolly, 'The Catholic question', p. 36.

⁵⁰ *Hansard 1*, xi, 608-9 (25 May 1808).

⁵¹ Connolly, 'The Catholic question', p. 37; Brendan Clifford, *The veto controversy* (Belfast, 1985), pp 28-30.

⁵² C. D. A. Leighton, 'Gallicanism and the veto controversy: church, state and Catholic community in early nineteenth-century Ireland', in R. V. Comerford, Jacqueline Hill & Colm Lennon (eds), *Religion, conflict and coexistence in Ireland* (Dublin, 1990), pp 137-8.

⁵³ An analysis of some of these pamphlets by Catholic writers can be found in Clifford, *The veto controversy*.

Catholic and Protestant bodies as well as damaging inter-denominational relations.⁵⁴ The dispute was a socially fragmented one, and affected only those within the political culture. The leaders of those opposed to a veto (anti-vetoists) came predominantly from the middle classes, and wielded strong popular (and almost exclusively Catholic) support. The leading figure to emerge from the anti-vetoist camp was Daniel O'Connell, and it was his part in the ongoing controversy that set the stage for him as the leader of popular Catholic opinion.⁵⁵ Those who were willing to concede securities in the form of a veto in return for Catholic relief (vetoists) comprised both Catholics and liberal Protestants. Catholic vetoists included many liberals such as Thomas Moore, Arthur O'Leary, Richard Lalor Sheil and Thomas Wyse. In parliament, the majority of pro-Catholic members felt that some sacrifice would have to be made on the part of the Catholics in order for any relief bill to pass successfully through both houses of parliament. In May 1805 Edward Lee announced to the House of Commons that he could 'see no reason why the Catholics should not come prepared to concede some of their prejudices, when they call upon us to concede ours'.⁵⁶ When the majority of lay and clerical Catholics came out in symbolic force against any security based on a veto of their bishops (see below), they alienated many of their Irish Protestant supporters in parliament, as well as sundering Irish Catholics from their English parliamentary allies.⁵⁷

Leighton has argued that the opposition to a veto stemmed from political rather than theological considerations, and centred on the perceived interference of what was termed the 'Protestant ascendancy' in an area of Irish life that had formerly been free of it.⁵⁸ The opposition to both a veto and a system of domestic nomination (which by no means all anti-vetoists were opposed to) stemmed not from an objection to placing greater power in the hands of the British government, but from a fear that either system would create a situation which would give greater influence to the political élite in Ireland, and more particularly to the 'Protestant ascendancy' at local as well as national level.⁵⁹ In September 1808 the majority of the episcopal bench agreed on a series of resolutions rejecting proposals for a veto. On 30 September the Catholic

⁵⁴ Thomas Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation: the Catholic question, 1690-1830* (Dublin, 1992), p. 268.

⁵⁵ Fergus O'Ferrall, *Daniel O'Connell* (Dublin, 1981), pp 30-1.

⁵⁶ *Hansard 1*, iv, 963 (14 May 1805).

⁵⁷ Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation*, p. 291.

⁵⁸ Leighton, 'Gallicanism', p. 138.

⁵⁹ Leighton, 'Gallicanism', pp 139-48.

archbishop of Dublin, Dr John Troy, stated in a letter to Sir John Newport that he believed it was 'inexpedient' to change the policy of appointing bishops with a government hostile to Catholic claims.⁶⁰ Newport's initial reaction was to attempt to prevent a divergence of opinion between the majority of the Catholics and Protestant supporters of Catholic relief over the question of veto. His answer to Dr Troy divulged his anxiety at the way in which the opposition of the bishops to veto was made public, believing that:

the consequences will be most injurious in retarding the progress which we had made so rapidly and decidedly during the last sessions of parliament in disposing the public mind to admit the completion of the most signal benefit which the United Kingdom can experience.⁶¹

Henry Grattan's motion in 1808 was defeated by 153 votes, compared to the rejection by 212 votes of a similar motion forwarded by Charles James Fox in 1805. These figures, compared to the corresponding figures for 1805, indicate the growing support for the Catholic question in parliament.⁶² Sir John Newport, not wishing for a decline in parliamentary support for Catholic relief, questioned whether it would not be desirable to leave the question open to consideration at a fitter and more favourable opportunity.⁶³ Newport's main anxiety at this point was the deteriorating relationship between the Catholic body and their Protestant parliamentary supporters. Other parliamentary supporters of Catholic relief were similarly anxious. George Ponsonby revealed to Sir John Newport his apprehension that public opinion on the question of veto was turning against them. Ponsonby sought the arrest of the progress of the debate in parliament lest the good opinion held by the Catholic body of their parliamentary friends should diminish further.⁶⁴ The vetoist Edward Lee wrote a letter to the Catholics of Waterford in April 1808, urging them to give up 'one single point' in order to remove all obstacles to the granting of Catholic relief and to 'restore peace and happiness to this distracted land'.⁶⁵

Sir John Newport supported unqualified Catholic emancipation and as such opposed the principle of securities. He believed the apprehension of Irish Protestants

⁶⁰ Dr Troy to Sir John Newport, 30 Sept. 1808 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁶¹ Sir John Newport to Dr Troy, 5 Oct. 1808 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁶² *Hansard 1*, iv, 1060 (14 May 1805) & xi, 638 (25 May 1808).

⁶³ Sir John Newport to Dr Troy, 5 Oct. 1808 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁶⁴ George Ponsonby to Sir John Newport, 20 Sept. 1808 (N.L.I., Newport papers, MS 796).

⁶⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Apr. 1808.

on the subject of papal interference to be 'most unfounded'. In a letter to Philip Meadows Taylor of Liverpool, Newport contended that he viewed

the subject of removing civil disabilities from the Roman Catholics [was not one]...into which in question of pledges or securities ought properly to enter...considering the right to equal capacity and privileges to be primarily inherent in all the subjects of the realm.⁶⁶

Sir John viewed the vesting of government with full control over episcopal appointments (in the form of a veto) as a 'most serious injury both to Catholic and Protestant', serving to alienate Catholic opinion from their Protestant supporters.⁶⁷ Yet Newport was essentially a pragmatist, and understood that some form of sacrifice would be necessary to smooth the passage of any relief bill through parliament. Some form of securities was necessary 'to allay Protestant jealousies' both in Britain and Ireland.⁶⁸ Newport and his parliamentary colleagues, Henry Grattan and Sir Henry Parnell, worked towards what they believed to be 'reasonable' and 'attainable' under existing circumstances: the granting of 'the greatest and most valuable constitutional privileges with the fewest exceptions'.⁶⁹ Under these circumstances, Newport advocated a system of domestic nomination (see below). His main aim was to conciliate Catholic opinion while augmenting the number of members favourable to relief. But despite these efforts, Sir John Newport's very membership of the Irish Protestant élite divided him from Catholic thinking in Ireland, which opposed the Protestant élite's interference in Catholic ecclesiastical affairs.⁷⁰

In 1809 the parliamentary vetoist Sir John Cox Hippisley (a staunch if uncompromising and often exasperating supporter of Catholic claims) circulated details of a new scheme for solving the veto dispute.⁷¹ The scheme, outlined in the House of Commons in May 1810 was based on the notion that Catholics were obliged to accept securities against foreign interference in their ecclesiastical affairs as a sacrifice for emancipation.⁷² While Leighton has pointed out that both vetoists and anti-vetoists in Ireland incorporated a Gallican strain into their arguments for and against a veto, many Protestants, especially in England believed the Irish Catholics'

⁶⁶ Sir John Newport to Philip Meadows Taylor, 12 Mar. [1812] (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁶⁷ Sir John Newport to Philip Meadows Taylor, 12 Mar. [1812] (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁶⁸ Sir John Newport to [?Thomas] Scott, undated [1810] (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁶⁹ Sir John Newport to [?Thomas] Scott, undated [1810] (N.L.I. Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁷⁰ Leighton, 'Gallicanism', pp 148-50.

⁷¹ Connolly, 'The Catholic question', p. 38.

⁷² *Hansard I*, xvii, 31-85 (18 May 1810); *D.N.B.*, xxvii, 307.

refusal to accept a veto was proof that they supported the pope's right to interfere in Irish ecclesiastical appointments.⁷³ The Whigs, themselves not averse to securities in some form, proposed that Irish Catholics declare that they believed that 'the maintenance of the civil and religious establishments of this kingdom may be made consistently with the strictest adherence on their part to the tenets and discipline of the Roman Catholic religion'.⁷⁴ Hippisley's motion was denounced by anti-vetoists in Ireland as containing veto in all but name, as a commission of lay Catholics would still place increased control in the hands of a Protestant élite which could exert influence over them.

In May 1810 a scheme of domestic nomination was proposed by the Catholic laity, but it was rejected by the episcopal bench.⁷⁵ This scheme was only one of several recommended at this time, all of which aimed at making the appointment of bishops in Ireland a domestic matter. While these proposals varied as to the degree of control and influence given to both the episcopal bench and the diocesan clergy, all were advanced with the intention of reducing the role of the pope.⁷⁶ The proposal of the Catholic laity was supported by Henry Grattan in parliament, but speeches by pro-Catholic members criticising the Irish Catholics for their attacks on proposals for a veto weakened the Catholic case considerably. Sir John Cox Hippisley, even while attempting to convince parliament of the loyalty and temperance of the Irish Catholics, recommended that many Catholics 'desist from their flippant, ill-directed attacks on their firmest friends', warning them 'not to outstrip their adversaries in the race of calumny'.⁷⁷

What was noteworthy about the failure of Hippisley's proposal in the Commons in 1810 was not the force of opposition to it, but the fact that anti-Catholics in parliament showed relatively little interest in the proceedings. At this point, it was the existing supporters of Catholic claims who insisted that the veto must form part of any future relief measure.⁷⁸ As well as believing that securities would enhance support in parliament for Catholic relief measures, for many liberal Protestants some form of securities was desirable in itself. In April 1812 Maurice Fitzgerald, the knight of

⁷³ Leighton's argument centres on the idea that Gallicanism in Ireland was a fractured ideology employed mainly to support political rather than theological arguments, and it was only due to its fractured and essentially Erastian nature that elements of it were widely acceptable to (and accepted by) Irish Catholics; Leighton, 'Gallicanism', pp 134-58.

⁷⁴ Connolly, 'The Catholic question', p. 38.

⁷⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 16 May 1810; Connolly, 'The Catholic question', p. 38.

⁷⁶ Leighton, 'Gallicanism', pp 151-3.

⁷⁷ *Hansard 1*, xvii, 84 (18 May 1810).

⁷⁸ Connolly, 'The Catholic question', p. 39.

Kerry, presented to the House of Commons a Protestant petition in favour of Catholic emancipation.⁷⁹ While many Irish Protestants signed the petition (see above), Maurice Fitzgerald noted in his speech that ‘a large proportion declined affixing their signature’, because they ‘did entertain that it would be proper...to include conditions and securities’.⁸⁰ Liberal Protestants believed that qualified emancipation would tie the Irish Catholics more strongly to the constitution and the state, and lessen the influence of the pope. This exposed the uneasy relationship between Irish Catholics and the parliamentary supporters of Catholic claims.

The development of the veto controversy did not immediately undermine Protestant-Catholic relations in Waterford. Perhaps the most revealing evidence is found in the correspondence between Sir John Newport and Dr John Power, Catholic bishop of Waterford and Lismore, which offers insights into the changing nature of Catholic-Protestant relations during this time.⁸¹ While Sir John Newport busied himself with attempting to bridge the widening gap in public opinion by proposing solutions he hoped would be acceptable to all parties, the initial reaction of Dr John Power was also flexible on the notion of a royal veto, and he remained optimistic and confident in Sir John Newport’s ability to rally support for Catholic relief in parliament.⁸² But the decision of the Catholic hierarchy not to support parliamentary proposals for a veto and the strength of lay Catholic opposition to any form of veto induced Dr Power to alter his opinion. In a series of letters, published in Waterford under the pseudonym of ‘Fidelis’ in 1809, Dr Power made his opinion clear: ‘as fellow citizens and neighbours I respect and esteem them [Irish Protestants] as much as any other set of men....But I will not trust them with the concerns of my religion’.⁸³ Dr Power’s opinion of his Protestant fellow citizens was indicative of the liberal disposition among a portion of the Catholic clergy at this time, and while he may have come out publically in opposition to any notion of the veto, the tenor of his opposition remained temperate:

⁷⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Apr. 1812; *Hansard 1*, xxii, 481-4 (20 Apr. 1812).

⁸⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Apr. 1812; *Hansard 1*, xxii, 482 (20 Apr. 1812).

⁸¹ Dr John Power (1765-1816), a native of Waterford and educated at Louvain, was consecrated bishop of Waterford in 1804 after the death of Dr Thomas Hussey. He founded St John’s College in Waterford city, a small college for the training of priests, and formally opened the Christian Brother’s school at Mount Sion, founded by Edmund Rice, in May 1804. Power was widely respected in Waterford, and his funeral was attended by huge crowds, including the Anglican bishop and many Church of Ireland clergy; Patrick Power, *Waterford and Lismore: a compendious history of the united dioceses* (Cork, 1937), pp 35-6 & 299.

⁸² Dr John Power to Sir John Newport, 18 Apr. 1808, in H.M.C., *Fortescue MSS*, ix, 195.

⁸³ ‘Fidelis’ [Dr John Power], *Letters on the royal veto* (Waterford, 1809), p. 3.

Let me not be told that the resolutions of the bishops and other recent occurrences will alienate our friends, or lessen their zeal in our cause. I think better of them. Our cause is theirs – it is the cause of Ireland.⁸⁴

In April 1812 a motion for going into a committee on Catholic claims was rejected in the House of Commons by a (much reduced) majority of 300 votes to 215. A similar petition in May 1811 had been rejected by 146 votes to 83, and the increased numbers who voted in 1812 points to the re-emergence of interest in the Catholic question in parliament.⁸⁵ Catholic confidence surged, and this optimism was confirmed when in the summer of 1812 a new ministry was formed under Lord Liverpool. The new government decided that the Catholic question would in future remain an ‘open’ one, and the new ministry included several known supporters of emancipation including the Irish lord lieutenant, the duke of Richmond, and Lord Mulgrave.⁸⁶ In June 1812 George Canning’s motion calling for the establishment of a committee to inquire into Catholic claims was passed by 235 votes to 106, and Henry Grattan began to draw up a Catholic relief bill.⁸⁷ The bill passed its second reading on 13 May 1813 by 245 votes to 203, and went through a committee of the whole house.⁸⁸ However, so far the vote had been for the principle of relief only. On 24 May the speaker Charles Abbot proposed an amendment to the bill, deleting the clause that allowed Catholics to sit in parliament.⁸⁹ The anti-Catholic members flocked to Westminster and the amendment was carried by 251 votes to 147.⁹⁰ Without this clause the bill was largely redundant, it being ‘neither worthy of the acceptance of the Catholics, nor of the further support of the friends of concession’, and was consequently withdrawn.⁹¹ A further setback to the Catholic cause came in June 1814, when the Catholic Board dissolved itself due to increased pressure from Dublin Castle.⁹² Various members such as Hugh Fitzpatrick and the Magee brothers of the *Dublin Evening Post* had been

⁸⁴ Power, *Letters on the royal veto*, p. 23.

⁸⁵ *Hansard I*, xx, 427-8 (31 May 1811) & xxii, 1039-41 (24 Apr. 1812).

⁸⁶ For a more detailed examination into the nature of the Catholic question remaining an ‘open’ one, and the government’s understanding of this, see R. W. Davis, ‘The Tories, the Whigs and Catholic emancipation’, in *English Historical Review*, xcvi (1982), pp 89-98; G. I. T. Machin, ‘Canning, Wellington and the Catholic question, 1827-1829’, in *English Historical Review*, xcix (1984), pp 94-100.

⁸⁷ *Hansard I*, xxiii, 710 (22 June 1812); for a full list of divisions on the Catholic question, see appendix E, table E.3.

⁸⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 19 May 1813; *Hansard I*, xxvi, 171 (13 May 1813) & 246-9 (19 May 1813).

⁸⁹ *Hansard I*, xxvi, 312-22 (24 May 1813).

⁹⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 31 May 1813.

⁹¹ *Hansard I*, xxvi, 361-65 (24 May 1813).

⁹² *Waterford Mirror*, 15 June 1814.

prosecuted for libel, and meetings were broken up as they were seen as being in breach of the convention act.⁹³

In March 1813 Sir John Newport proposed to Dr John Power a scheme centred on the idea of a form of domestic nomination. Newport favoured the establishment of a body of Irish commissioners with the power to appoint bishops, made up of Catholic ecclesiastics and one lay commissioner appointed by the church.⁹⁴ While he was initially willing to listen to the proposal, as it was not inconsistent with Catholic doctrine, Dr John Power made it clear that the clergy and laity were increasingly opposed to any proposal of securities: 'emancipation on such terms they would consider not as the abolition of persecutory laws, but as the substitution of one more hateful and tyrannical than all the others put together.'⁹⁵ That same month Dr Milner wrote to Sir John Newport, arguing that while he believed in the 'reasonableness' of Henry Grattan's Catholic relief bill, he was surprised at the further securities asked of the Catholic hierarchy.⁹⁶ Newport's response to the question of veto, in attempting to conciliate Catholic lay and clerical opinion in the face of mounting public hostility, and to prevent a schism between Catholics and liberal Protestants, had proven to be anything but successful by 1813.

As the divisions within the Irish Catholic body became more pronounced, the anti-vetoists became much more explicit in their opposition to any form of securities. By December 1813 Dr John Power had become publicly hostile to vetoist opinion in Waterford, publishing a letter in the *Waterford Mirror* under the pseudonym 'Justinus'.⁹⁷ Power denounced Sir John Newport's suggestion of domestic nomination as another way for the crown to 'interfere', for the commission would act as yet another arm of government.⁹⁸ He expressly stated that he had formerly been of a different opinion, but that he had been convinced 'of the folly and madness of trusting the management of the spiritual concerns of our church even to the Catholic servants of a Protestant king', as their interference would be 'to the ruin of our religion'.⁹⁹ By

⁹³ S. J. Connolly, 'Union government, 1812-23' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the union I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989), p. 50.

⁹⁴ Sir John Newport's letter to Dr John Power is not extant, but the plan is referred to in Dr Power's reply; Dr John Power to Sir John Newport, 25 Mar. 1813 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁹⁵ Dr John Power to Sir John Newport, 25 Jan. [1813] (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁹⁶ Dr Milner to Sir John Newport, 6 Mar. 1813 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁹⁷ Dr John Power to Sir John Newport, 3 Jan. 1814 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

⁹⁸ While Dr John Power did not explicitly name Sir John Newport in the letter, the allusion would not have been lost on Newport, as Dr Power sent the letter to him.

⁹⁹ 'Justinus' [Dr John Power], 14 Dec. 1813 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

the end of 1813 Power was vigorously opposed to any proposals for a veto, even those involving domestic nomination, as it would give the Protestant élite in Ireland an influence over the government of the Catholic church in Ireland.

As well as disagreeing with local Protestant vetoists in principle, Dr John Power provoked Sir John Newport's personal antipathy in January 1814 when he quoted without consent from a private letter forwarded to him by Newport. The letter, sent from William Roscoe, a historian from Liverpool, to Philip Meadows Taylor, a Liverpool merchant, stated that Roscoe believed it 'preposterous' for a sovereign to have ecclesiastical power over Roman Catholics.¹⁰⁰ The divisive nature of securities, as well as Power's inconsiderate act in quoting the letter, forced Sir John Newport to break the bonds of friendship with prominent Catholic leaders in Waterford. Newport at this point became disillusioned with the prospect of emancipation for the Catholics:

In consequence [of divisions on the question of veto] I am compelled to view the great object of my life, the freedom of my Catholic countrymen as connected with the peace and happiness of Ireland, placed at such an immediate distance as rendered its attainment during my life I fear nearly hopeless.¹⁰¹

This disillusionment stemmed from Sir John's long held assumption that the government would only grant relief if the Catholics showed themselves to be loyal, temperate and virtuous citizens. In April 1813 Newport had written to Dr John Power to 'persevere, calmly persevere in this course and we cannot fail of success'.¹⁰² But the growing hostility of the Catholic clergy and laity and the move towards a more confrontational stance with government undermined Newport's attempts at conciliation and integration, and he became disenchanted with the progress of the question in parliament.

The adamant opposition to any form of veto offered by the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland, even after rescripts from Rome in 1814 and 1816 found the proposals satisfactory, only served to widen the divisions between Catholics and their parliamentary supporters. Apprehension on the part of Irish liberal Protestants stemmed from their perception that the Catholics' opposition to veto stemmed from their attitude to the state, that their loyalty to the crown was qualified by certain

¹⁰⁰ Sir John Newport to Dr John Power, 4 Jan. 1814 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

¹⁰¹ Sir John Newport to Dr John Power, 4 Jan. 1814 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

¹⁰² Sir John Newport to Dr John Power, 13 Apr. 1813 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

reservations, and that the Catholics therefore withheld from it a certain but crucial degree of legitimacy.¹⁰³ Sir John Newport, who supported the principle of unqualified emancipation, believed that the Catholics 'should do everything they can' to reconcile themselves to the government.¹⁰⁴ But by May 1816 Newport had altered his stance on the issue of securities and decided to support Sir John Cox Hippisley's motion for a committee to consider the laws respecting the regulation of the Catholic subjects in ecclesiastical matters. Newport announced that while he had opposed a similar motion in 1810, he would support this one as it would not 'impede the success of Catholic claims, and it would, perhaps, accelerate that success by the impression which it might make on the minds of some gentlemen'.¹⁰⁵ The Catholic stance on the veto had alienated some of their most dedicated supporters, including Henry Grattan and Sir John Newport, and by 1815 most pro-Catholics in parliament agreed that some form of securities was essential to any measure of Catholic relief.

In 1815 the Irish Catholics produced a petition calling for unqualified emancipation, but Henry Grattan refused to present it. Instead, Sir Henry Parnell was entrusted with it, and Henry Grattan presented a second petition which was worded so as to leave the way open for some form of securities to accompany a measure of relief. During the debate on Parnell's motion for a committee to be established to consider Catholic claims, Grattan announced that he 'condemn[ed] the application for unqualified concession'.¹⁰⁶ Both petitions were defeated. Likewise in 1816, two separate petitions were prepared but both were rejected in the Commons.¹⁰⁷ After the treaty of Vienna in 1815, which agreed a peace between Britain and France the government's need to conciliate the Irish Catholics was less pressing an issue, and traditional doubts and anxieties began to reassert themselves. In May 1817 Henry Grattan moved for a committee to consider Catholic claims, but the motion was defeated by 245 votes to 221.¹⁰⁸ In 1819 a similar motion, again proposed by Henry Grattan was rejected by 243 votes to 241.¹⁰⁹ The liberal members from Waterford voted in favour of these motions on each occasion (see appendix E, table E.1).

¹⁰³ Connolly, 'Union government', p. 54.

¹⁰⁴ Sir John Newport to Philip Meadows Taylor, 12 Mar. [1812] (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

¹⁰⁵ *Hansard 1*, xxxiv, 878 (28 May 1816).

¹⁰⁶ *Hansard 1*, xxxi, 523 (30 May 1815).

¹⁰⁷ *Hansard 1*, xxxiv, 9-11 (26 Apr. 1816), 512 (15 May 1816), 676-8 (21 May 1816).

¹⁰⁸ *Hansard 1*, xxxvi, 438 (9 May 1817).

¹⁰⁹ *Hansard 1*, xl, 79 (3 May 1819).

However, Sean Connolly's argument that Catholic politics hit an all-time low during these years may be somewhat overstating the case.¹¹⁰ At the level of Catholic politics nationally the Catholic Board continued to meet, albeit spasmodically. Daniel O'Connell was busy carving a position for himself as leader of popular Catholic opinion and introducing a more aggressive approach to the campaign for Catholic relief. At local level, 1817 began vigorously for Catholics in Waterford. In March 1817 a Catholic meeting was held at St Patrick's Chapel to prepare a petition to parliament praying for relief. Several liberal Protestants attended this meeting, prompting the *Waterford Mirror* to comment that 'we were delighted at this symptom of conciliation and returning unanimity'.¹¹¹ This comment was especially significant in the context of the division over veto proposals that had racked relations in the city since 1808. The petition adopted, while rejecting any notion of a royal veto, 'cheerfully concur[ed] with the plan of domestic nomination'.¹¹² In 1818, despite a lull in activity on the part of Irish Catholics, it was clear that the issue of Catholic relief was never far from the minds of either Protestants or Catholics. The general election in June 1818 saw some of the sturdiest anti-Catholics 'thrown out', while the majority of the new members were favourable to emancipation. There was a general mood of optimism and 'sanguine expectations' on the opening of the new session.¹¹³ The number of members voting on the question in the House of Commons, 466 in 1817 and 484 in 1819 also suggests an increasing interest in the Catholic question during these years.

The year 1819 was significant for Catholic politics in Waterford, witnessing a succession of meetings aiming to bring the Catholic question once more to the forefront of politics. Optimism was high and it was generally believed that the majority of Irish members in parliament supported Catholic claims. Catholic political consciousness had been growing, fostered by meetings and a spreading knowledge of the political process, and by this time a significant Catholic interest was evident in most constituencies.¹¹⁴ A large Catholic meeting was held in Waterford in February 1819 for the purpose of preparing a petition to parliament.¹¹⁵ This meeting was numerously attended by leading local liberal Protestants including William Newport,

¹¹⁰ Connolly, 'Union government', pp 54-6.

¹¹¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 24 Mar. 1817

¹¹² *Waterford Mirror*, 9 Apr. 1817.

¹¹³ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Sept. 1818, quoted from *The Globe*.

¹¹⁴ Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation*, pp 269 & 297; Peter Jupp, 'Irish parliamentary elections and the influence of the Catholic vote', in *Historical Journal*, x, no. 2 (1967), pp 194-6.

¹¹⁵ *Waterford Chronicle*, 28 Jan., 4 & 27 Feb. 1819.

the nephew of Sir John, who assured the Catholics of his wish ‘to see common justice administered to all men’.¹¹⁶ Lord George Thomas Beresford and Sir John Newport were entrusted with presenting the petition, but Lord George declined, contending that it was ‘impossible...to form judgement on the subject [of Catholic relief] until I shall hear a specific proposition made to parliament’.¹¹⁷

After years of local Protestant activism in favour of Catholic relief being blunted due to the deep schism over proposals for a veto, in 1819 liberal Protestants in Waterford resumed their activities. In January 1819 a requisition appeared in the *Waterford Chronicle* calling for a Protestant meeting with the aim of petitioning parliament in favour of Catholic emancipation.¹¹⁸ The meeting, chaired by Sir John Newport (who in 1819 was mayor of Waterford as well as its parliamentary representative), was a ‘large and highly respectable assemblage’ with up to three hundred Protestants in attendance.¹¹⁹ Sir John Newport continued his efforts at compromise and his speech on this occasion referred to the unanimity between the denominations as being of ‘vital importance’ to the success of the Catholic question in parliament.¹²⁰ The petition, stated to have stemmed from ‘the silent and but forcible operation of rational conviction’ on the part of Waterford Protestants, as well as from ‘habits of kindly feeling’ towards their fellow Catholics, was signed by a large number of Protestants. This growth of support was not lost on contemporaries, with Major Beresford Gahan, a prominent liberal Protestant, commenting that Protestants who had formerly opposed Catholic claims were now coming out in support of them.¹²¹

Table 4.1: Waterford Protestants who signed the requisition for a Protestant meeting in Waterford city, 15 January 1819

Waterford Protestants who signed the requisition for the Protestant meeting in 1819	
Harry Alcock	H. A. Bayly
Robert Shapland Carew	M. T. Paterson

¹¹⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 4 Feb. 1819.

¹¹⁷ Lord George Thomas Beresford had voted against Catholic relief on every previous division in parliament, including on the motion of George Canning in 1812, and he continued to do so right up until the duke of Wellington’s government introduced a relief bill in 1829; *Waterford Chronicle*, 9 Mar. 1819.

¹¹⁸ *Waterford Chronicle*, 19 Jan. 1819.

¹¹⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 21 Jan. & 9 Mar. 1819.

¹²⁰ *Waterford Chronicle*, 21 Jan. 1819.

¹²¹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 16 & 21 Jan. 1819.

Robert Shapland Carew junior	Francis Penrose
William Newport	Samuel Crosthwait
Samuel Morgan	John Burchall
Francis John Hassard (recorder)	George Ivie
Alexander Alcock	John Allen
Joshua Paul	Robert Fleury
Simon Newport	Henry Ivie
Samuel King	John Daly
William Gunn Paul	J. K. Bracken
Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe	John Perkins
Thomas King	William Hammond
Thomas Carew	M. J. Turner
Humphrey Denis	Richard Cherry
John Denis	Pim Nevins
Henry Alcock	Richard Pope
James Hackett	William Marchant Ardagh
Samuel Newport	Thomas McCheane
James Anderson	William Bell
Thomas Cooke	Alexander Pope
Henry McDougall	Robert G. Scott
Robert Cooke	Alexander Richard Pope
Edward Villiers Briscoe	Peter Walsh Jr
James Alcock	Charles Trouton
Michael Evelyn	Isaac Kingston
Charles Samuel Tandy	David Jones
Alexander Mann Alcock	Henry Downes
Adam Rogers	Thomas Prossor
Edmund Skottowe	Frederick Scott
Rev James Marshall	Henry Scott
William Milward	Beresford Gahan
Simon Lampier	Henry Holdsworth Hunt
Samuel Sprigg	Thomas Scott

Source: *Waterford Chronicle*, 19 Jan. 1819.

While there is no extant list of the signatories of the petition itself, there is a surviving list of the gentlemen who signed the requisition for the meeting (see table 4.1). While it cannot be said with certainty that all those who signed the requisition for the meeting signed the petition itself, it is probable that many of them did. There was a great overlap in the names that appeared on the 1819 requisition and the 1808 Protestant declaration in favour of Catholic claims, with twelve names appearing on

both.¹²² Other signatories such as Thomas Carew, Samuel Newport and Thomas King were the younger kinsmen of those who signed the declaration in 1808. This reveals a consistent and enduring support for Catholic relief among a certain section of the Protestant community in Waterford. Also, an inspection of the names appearing on the requisition reveals that the issue of Catholic claims attracted wider support among Waterford Protestants in 1819 than in previous years. While forty-five Protestants signed the 1808 declaration, in 1819 sixty-eight signed the requisition, and the number of persons who signed the actual petition was probably much greater. The most important figures who signed the requisition in 1819, but who had refrained from signing declarations of support in the past, were Harry Alcock, Francis John Hassard (recorder of Waterford), Michael Evelyn and James Hackett, who were leading members of the conservative faction in the corporation.¹²³ Another convert was Robert Fleury, the proprietor of the conservative *Waterford Mail*. There is also evidence that the appreciative and conciliatory tone used by Catholics towards their Protestant friends continued through these years. A meeting was held on 2 February 1819 to prepare (alongside a parliamentary petition) an address of thanks to those Protestants ‘who have so liberally and generously come forward in our behalf’.¹²⁴

While Catholic politics did not necessarily follow the lead of liberal Protestants at local level, Irish Catholics still relied on them to forward their cause in parliament. In March 1819 Sir John Newport presented the petition from Waterford Protestants calling for Catholic relief, which represented

the free and spontaneous prayer of the Protestants of Waterford that those laws which, in turbulent and dangerous times were imposed on the Catholics, should be removed, as the necessity for them no longer existed.¹²⁵

The petition was supported by Robert Shapland Carew junior, Whig member for County Wexford (as well as one of the gentlemen who had signed the requisition). Carew bore testimony to the ‘great and beneficial’ change in public opinion in favour

¹²² These persons were John Allen, James Anderson, Edward Villiers Briscoe, Robert Shapland Carew, Henry Holdsworth Hunt, Samuel King, Simon Lampier, Rev James Marshall, Simon Newport, William Newport, Thomas Scott and Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe; *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1808 & 19 Jan. 1819.

¹²³ This support is significant when considered in the context of the compact of Dec. 1818, signed between the Newport and Alcock factions in Waterford Corporation (see chapter two). Seemingly after the compact was signed, the Alcock faction, to which the Hassard family also belonged, no longer actively opposed Catholic relief, but rather became active in support of it, though this was not an essential part of the agreement.

¹²⁴ *Waterford Chronicle*, 4 Feb. 1819.

¹²⁵ *Waterford Chronicle*, 9 Mar. 1819; it was also Sir John Newport who had received the requisition for the meeting, he being mayor of Waterford during 1818-19.

of Catholic relief, referring to former anti-Catholics who had changed their stance in favour of emancipation.¹²⁶ The parliamentary debate on the Catholic question ended on 3 May 1819 when Henry Grattan's motion that a committee be appointed to consider Catholic claims was passed by 243 votes to 241, with fifty-seven Irish members voting in the majority.¹²⁷ The *Dublin Evening Post* reported that the number of votes from Irish members was 'a tolerable proof that the Protestant mind of the people is favourable to Catholic emancipation', adding that the Protestant ascendancy was 'vexed and mortified'.¹²⁸ After the loss of the question in the House of Lords in June 1819, there was little Catholic activity until November when Catholic meetings in Dublin were organised to prepare a petition for presentation during the new session of parliament opening that month. Thus a decade which saw little actual progress on the Catholic question, and deepening divisions within the Catholic body as well as between members of the different denominations in Ireland, ended on a rather positive note for Catholic and liberal Protestant relations in Waterford and elsewhere.

Part two: Liberal Protestants and the Catholic question, 1820-25

Liberal Protestants, as part of the Irish political élite, expected the future of that élite to remain essentially Protestant. While they were staunch and enduring supporters of Catholic relief, this support was based on the belief that by granting political freedom to all subjects they could reconcile the greater number of the Irish people to the (essentially Protestant) state, secure the British connection and, in the long term, ensure peace and prosperity. Their belief (which they also shared with conservative Protestants) in a hierarchical society and a strong distrust of notions of Painite democracy made them averse to any sort of mass participation in politics, supporting rather a gradual influx of educated and enlightened Catholics into the political élite. In reality emancipation would only affect a small proportion of the Catholic population, and Irish liberal Protestants did not necessarily share the Catholic view that it was a symbol of the government's resolve to tackle a much wider array of grievances. Liberal Protestants viewed Catholic emancipation as a boon which would be granted

¹²⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 9 Mar. 1819.

¹²⁷ A list of this division is not included in *Hansard's parliamentary debates*, but based on their consistent support for similar motions in the past, it is probable that Sir John Newport, Richard Power junior and General George Walpole voted in the minority on this occasion also; *Waterford Chronicle*, 8 & 13 May 1819; *Hansard 1*, xl, 79 (3 May 1819).

¹²⁸ *D.E.P.*, 11 May 1819.

on Protestant terms. The issue of the royal veto made clear to all the divergence in opinion between the majority of Irish Catholics and their parliamentary supporters. This, and the rising to prominence of Daniel O'Connell through the Catholic debate on the veto, determined the approach of future relations between Catholics and liberal Protestants in the 1820s.

We now turn to the activities of Catholics and liberal Protestants in Waterford during the early 1820s, revealing the enduring support of liberal Protestants for Catholic relief and their reactions to challenges posed by developments in Catholic politics. Thomas Wyse, writing his *Historical sketch of the late Catholic Association* in 1829, argued that Irish Protestants seemed indifferent to the plight of the Catholics until forced into action by Catholic activities in 1826. Wyse contended that for Irish Protestants:

The relics of old prejudices, the little inclination actively to interfere in concerns which did not immediately affect himself; the disfavour which usually accompanies voluntary displays of devotion to the popular cause, were very powerful drawbacks upon his zeal and exertions.¹²⁹

Though Wyse touched on some factors of great significance in describing the liberal Protestant mindset, his interpretation was severe, belittling the part played by liberal Protestants in Catholic politics.¹³⁰ But liberal Protestants in Waterford during this period were more active in local and national politics than Wyse contended, and they saw themselves as occupying a central and indeed an essential position in the campaign for Catholic emancipation. The fact that Irish liberal Protestants campaigned for Catholic relief for reasons different from the majority of Catholics should not lessen the significance of their campaign on the progress of the Catholic question, at least in the early 1820s. At every stage of development, Catholic spokesmen for their cause named the part played by Protestants as indispensable to its success. As late as February 1829, when the Catholic Association dissolved itself for the final time in the wake of a bill for its suppression, the Catholics gave thanks to the 'cordial' support offered by liberal Protestants 'which have mainly led to the successful issue of their exertions in favour of the sacred cause of civil and religious liberty'.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, ii, 2.

¹³⁰ It is useful however to bear in mind Wyse's own objectives here: one of Wyse's aims in writing the *Historical sketch* was to examine, and to some degree celebrate, the development of Irish Catholic political consciousness and confidence in this period.

¹³¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Feb. 1829.

Waterford liberal Protestants were among the most active in the country in supporting the claims of their Catholic countrymen, and it was argued that Waterford had 'thus stepped forward amongst the foremost in the generous race of enlightened liberality'.¹³² At local level, Protestant meetings organised to petition parliament in favour of Catholic claims were held at times when the Catholic question was expected to be debated in parliament, or when there was much Catholic excitement at local level. The requisition for a Waterford Protestant meeting in January 1819 (see above) was significant as it revealed widespread and growing support for Catholic emancipation in the region. The respectable and reserved nature of the Protestant meetings (and by extension Protestant supporters of Catholic claims) was alluded to: 'this manifestation of public opinion has not been the result of any extraordinary excitement, but has spontaneously and unostentatiously emanated from the silent but forcible operation of rational conviction'.¹³³ Among the most active and enduring supporters of Catholic relief in Waterford were William Newport, the nephew of Sir John, Thomas Scott of King's Street and Edward Villiers Briscoe; corporation members Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe and Samuel King; and merchants Henry Holdsworth Hunt and John Allen.¹³⁴ These gentlemen were among the earliest supporters of Catholic relief in the city, and continued to be active into the 1820s. There were also enduring supporters of Catholic relief in County Waterford, including

¹³² *Waterford Chronicle*, 16 Jan. 1819.

¹³³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 16 Jan. 1819.

¹³⁴ William Newport was the nephew and heir of Sir John and a member of Waterford Corporation, and was heavily involved in supporting Catholic relief before his early demise in 1835; *Waterford Mirror*, 2 Sept. 1835. Thomas Scott was a partner in the local bank of Scott, Ivie and Scott before becoming a senior agent of the Bank of Ireland in Waterford. A close friend of Sir John Newport, Scott remained an enduring supporter of liberal politics, contributing to the Catholic rent in 1828 and actively canvassing for Thomas Wyse in Waterford city in 1833 and 1835; W. P. Burke, 'Newport's Waterford bank', in *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, iv (1898), p. 280; *Waterford Mirror*, 24 Nov. 1828, 2 Jan. 1833 & 19 Jan. 1835. Edward Villiers Briscoe signed the Protestant declaration in favour of Catholic relief in 1808 and signed a similar requisition in 1819; *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1808 & 16 Jan. 1819. Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe was a member of both Waterford Chamber of Commerce and Waterford Corporation (until he resigned in 1834) and was instrumental in promoting good relations between the two bodies. Skottowe consistently promoted Catholic relief; Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 6 July 1805 & 4 Sept. 1813 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02). Samuel King was a prominent liberal member of both Waterford Chamber of Commerce and Waterford Corporation, and was mayor in 1801 and 1820. King witnessed the compact signed between Sir John Newport and Harry Alcock in 1818; Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 4 June 1805 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02); Eamonn McEneaney, *A history of Waterford and its mayors from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries* (Waterford, 1997), p. 233; Hearn, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 146. John Allen ran the Anglican merchant house of Wallace and Allen and was a member of Waterford Chamber of Commerce; Hearn, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 21. Henry Holdsworth Hunt was a member of Waterford Chamber of Commerce and Waterford Corporation, and was mayor in 1826; Waterford Chamber of Commerce minute book, 1 July 1805 (W.C.A., MS WCOC 1/02); McEneaney, *A history of Waterford*, p. 233.

Sir John Nugent Humble, Sir Richard Musgrave, his brother John Musgrave, William Samuel Currey and Henry Villiers Stuart.¹³⁵ The issue of Catholic relief was supported in parliament by the liberal representatives of the city and county.

Table 4.2: Members of parliament for Waterford, 1820-26¹³⁶

Members for parliament for Waterford, 1820-26			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Representative</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Political standpoint</i>
1820-22	Sir John Newport	Waterford city	Whig
	Richard Power junior	County Waterford	Whig
	George Thomas Beresford	County Waterford	Tory
	Augustus William James Clifford	Dungarvan	Whig
1822-26	Sir John Newport	Waterford city	Whig
	Richard Power junior	County Waterford	Whig
	George Thomas Beresford	County Waterford	Tory
	George Lamb	Dungarvan	Whig

Source: Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 214 & 241-2.

Sir John Newport, whose claim to the city seat had been secured by the 1818 compact with Harry Alcock, continued to represent Waterford city and was returned uncontested at elections in 1820, 1826 and 1830 (see table 4.2). Following the established pattern, between 1820 and 1826 the two county seats were held by a Tory Beresford nominee and a Whig returned by the duke of Devonshire. Lord George Thomas Beresford and Richard Power junior, who had both held their seats since 1814

¹³⁵ Sir John Nugent Humble of Cloncoskoran Castle was an enlightened and popular landlord, deputy lord lieutenant of County Waterford, a justice of the peace and a grand juror. Humble chaired popular representation meetings in the county in 1831 and 1832, as well as the Drumfineen anti-tithe meeting in 1832. He became a baronet in 1830 and died in 1834; Sir Richard Musgrave of Tourin (1790-1859) third baronet, son of Christopher Frederick Musgrave and nephew of Sir Richard Musgrave (first baronet), succeeded to the title in 1826 and sat for County Waterford (1835-37) as a repeal member; Frederic Boase, *Modern English biography: containing many thousand concise memoirs of persons who have died since 1850* (6 vols, Bristol, 1892-1921; reprinted 2000), ii, 1059. Sir Richard's brother John Musgrave acted as deputy county sheriff in 1830 and county sheriff in 1837 and 1838. An enduring supporter of parliamentary reform, John Musgrave was invited to stand for County Waterford in 1829, but he declined the offer; John Musgrave to the society of friends of civil and religious liberty, 27 Aug. 1829 (N.L.I., Wyse papers. MS 15,023). William Samuel Currey was agent for the duke of Devonshire's Waterford estates based at Lismore Castle. He was the tithe collector for twenty parishes in County Waterford, as well as a justice of the peace and a grand juror. Currey acted as county sheriff in 1833; *First report of the select committee on the state of Ireland*, H. C. 1825 (129), viii, 301. Henry Villiers Stuart (1803-74), the son and heir of Lord Henry Stuart, married Theresia Pauline Ott of Vienna in 1826 and bore a son, Henry Windsor Villiers Stuart, in 1827. Henry Villiers Stuart became first Baron Stuart de Decies in 1838; *D.N.B.*, liii, 158; see chapter five for further details of Stuart's political career.

¹³⁶ There was no general election in 1822, but a by-election was held in Dungarvan on the resignation of Captain Augustus William James Clifford, in which George Lamb took the seat uncontested under the patronage of the duke of Devonshire; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 214.

continued to do so after 1820. In 1826, for the first time the county seats were held by two Whigs, Richard Power junior and Henry Villiers Stuart (see below). The borough of Dungarvan was represented by Captain Augustus William James Clifford between 1820 and 1822, when it passed into the hands of George Lamb who held the seat until his death in 1834.¹³⁷

During the 1820s frustration and disillusion among Irish Catholics over the slow development of the Catholic question in parliament led to the evolution of a more aggressive approach, directed by Daniel O'Connell. The Catholic Association, established in Dublin in May 1823, had much broader aims than the former Catholic Board. A simultaneous strategy of collecting a penny a month subscriptions, commonly known as the Catholic rent, was a major turning point, creating huge lay and clerical support for the association. Thomas Bartlett has commented: 'united as never before, priests and people turned the Catholic campaign for the first time into a mass movement'.¹³⁸ The Catholic Association was a major factor in creating and advancing a Catholic political consciousness throughout the country.

In Waterford this new and more inclusive brand of Catholic politics was complemented by the emergence of an array of Catholic leaders who aided the establishment of a country-wide network of committees to collect the Catholic rent. These leaders included Thomas Wyse junior, who returned from Europe in August 1825 and quickly immersed himself in local and national politics, and Nicholas Mahon Power of Faithlegg, a prominent member of the Catholic gentry who had acquired the former Bolton residence in 1820.¹³⁹ The Barron family took over the proprietorship of the *Waterford Chronicle* from liberal Protestant James R. Birnie in 1824, turning it into a dependable propaganda machine for Catholic and O'Connellite politics.¹⁴⁰ Other Catholic leaders from the gentry included Patrick Power of Tinhalla near Carrick-On-Suir, Patrick Power of Bellevue, William Power of Dunhill and Pierce George Barron

¹³⁷ Augustus William James Clifford (1788-1877), a naval officer and politician, was the illegitimate son of the fifth duke of Devonshire and half-brother of the contemporary sixth duke. A Whig in politics, Clifford represented Devonshire's pocket boroughs of Bandon (1818-20 & 1831-32) and Dungarvan (1820-22). He was knighted in 1830 and created a baronet in 1838; *D.N.B.*, xii, 82-3; George Lamb (1784-1834) was the half-brother of Viscount Melbourne and probably the illegitimate son of George IV. In 1822 he was returned for Dungarvan under the influence of the duke of Devonshire. Lamb was relatively radical, supporting triennial parliaments, the abolition of corporate boroughs and unqualified Catholic emancipation.; *D.N.B.*, xxxii, 268-9.

¹³⁸ Bartlett, *The fall and rise of the Irish nation*, p. 331.

¹³⁹ Auchmuty, *Sir Thomas Wyse, 1791-1862*, p. 68-71; Butler, 'Glimpses of Waterford', 3 Apr. 1944.

¹⁴⁰ *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 321; J. S. Carroll, 'Old Waterford newspapers', in *Decies*, xxii (1983), p. 55.

of Belmont near Cappoquin (see map of County Waterford). These gentlemen were joined by professional and business men from the city including William Hearn, a grocer and tea-dealer who became secretary to the Waterford Catholic rent committee in 1824.¹⁴¹ Thomas Meagher junior, son of Thomas Meagher, William Ardagh, a wine and corn merchant with premises on the Quay and Patrick Farrell, son of Catholic merchant Dominick Farrell, played an equally prominent part in local politics. The Catholic clergy also began to play an increasingly prominent part in local politics. Rev Thomas Hearn, a proficient speaker and ‘a brilliant ecclesiastic’ who had been educated at Louvain, was prominently involved in local Catholic politics in the 1820s.¹⁴² Rev John Sheehan, parish priest of St Patrick’s in the city has been described by a leading Catholic historian as ‘the most outstanding clerical political activist in Waterford during the O’Connell era’.¹⁴³ Dr Patrick Kelly, bishop of Waterford and Lismore between 1822 and 1829, was an equally significant leader, and Thomas Wyse contended in 1829 that Dr Kelly above all others ‘had a true sense of the sufferings and wrongs of the Catholics’.¹⁴⁴

In the 1820s both Catholic and Protestant meetings in Waterford tended to follow the lead of the capital. A ‘numerous and respectable’ meeting of Waterford Catholics, chaired by Nicholas Mahon Power of Faithlegg, was held in April 1821 to prepare a parliamentary petition in support of William Conyngham Plunket’s qualified relief bill being debated in the House of Commons.¹⁴⁵ Many Catholic petitions hostile to the securities contained in the relief bill were pouring into parliament, and Catholics in Waterford were far from unanimous in considering how to respond to the proposed securities.¹⁴⁶ At a meeting held in Dublin on 20 March 1821 the Catholic hierarchy had declared themselves rigidly hostile to any measure of veto and petitioned parliament to

¹⁴¹ *Pigott’s Directory 1824*, p. 320.

¹⁴² Rev Thomas Hearn was parish priest in the barony of Gaultier between 1801 and 1837 and later vicar-general under Bishop William Abraham; Power, *Waterford and Lismore*, pp 139 & 197; Butler, ‘Glimpses of Waterford’, 11 April 1947.

¹⁴³ O’Ferrall, ‘The growth of political consciousness in Ireland’, p. 365.

¹⁴⁴ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, vol. i, 282; Dr Patrick Kelly, bishop of Waterford and Lismore (1822-29): a native of Kilkenny city, Dr Kelly was transferred from Richmond, Virginia in the United States in 1822 on the death of Dr Richard Walsh. Educated in Lisbon, Dr Kelly was a vigorous bishop and governed the diocese with ‘energy and decision’. During the 1826 election he was particularly active in rallying the freeholders to vote for Henry Villiers Stuart; Power, *Waterford and Lismore*, p. 37.

¹⁴⁵ *Waterford Chronicle*, 5 Apr. 1821. The proposed bill, entailing qualified Catholic relief, was complete with securities in the form of an oath that it was ‘expedient’ that government should have a veto in the appointment of Catholic bishops. It had been introduced in the House of Commons on 16 March, and had in fact been accepted by the house on 2 April 1821 by 216 votes to 197; *Hansard 2*, iv, 1269-315 (16 Mar. 1821) & 1548 (2 Apr. 1821).

¹⁴⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 7 Apr. 1821.

that effect.¹⁴⁷ On 29 March a meeting of the Catholic clergy of Waterford had followed their lead, passing resolutions against any securities that would affect the independence of the Irish Catholic church.¹⁴⁸ The Waterford meeting likewise centred on the discussion of the proposed securities. Most Waterford Catholics accepted the resolutions passed by their clergy. Thomas McMahon deplored the return of the veto, calling it the 'engine of destruction to the Catholic religion'.¹⁴⁹ A speech by the Catholic Richard Walsh symbolised the strength of liberal feelings among some Catholics in Waterford, contending that it was only through the extinction of religious 'bigotry' and division that Ireland would find 'national concord'. Urging them to remain focused in the face of 'hope deferred', Walsh reminded Irish Catholics of the importance of Protestant support for their cause:

Protestant advocacy stands out [as] pre-eminently conspicuous as the most effective lever that has raised us from prostration. This should never be forgotten by Catholic gratitude: neither should we overlook, in reviewing our wrongs, the honourable and voluntary sacrifices that have been made of Protestant prejudice. May I hope that Catholic prejudices are equally appeaseable.¹⁵⁰

Although he opposed the proposed securities, Richard Walsh urged good behaviour, reminding them of the recommendations of liberal Protestants to temperance. Indeed Richard Walsh may have recalled Sir John Newport's comments to Dr John Power in April 1813 which urged the Catholics 'persevere, calmly persevere in this course and we cannot fail of success'.¹⁵¹ There was wide support in Waterford city for Walsh's views and the speech was greeted by loud cheers and applause.¹⁵²

Liberal Protestants regularly attended local Catholic meetings, giving significant if silent support to their Catholic fellow-subjects. At national level liberal Protestants attended aggregate meetings, for example in April 1821 and June 1823, and

¹⁴⁷ *Waterford Chronicle*, 29 Mar. 1821.

¹⁴⁸ *Waterford Chronicle*, 31 Mar. 1821.

¹⁴⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 5 Apr. 1821.

¹⁵⁰ *Waterford Chronicle*, 7 Apr. 1821. Richard Walsh was a liberal and later a repealer, who became very active in local politics from the mid-1820s. While he was a critic of Waterford Corporation, Walsh remained a keen supporter of Sir John Newport, and was himself elected onto the reformed corporation for the south ward at the elections in 1842. Walsh also acted as chairman of the Waterford Catholic rent committee, as well as being a member of the Mendicant Asylum.

¹⁵¹ Sir John Newport to Dr John Power, 13 Apr. 1813 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,362).

¹⁵² *Waterford Chronicle*, 5 Apr. 1821.

also in April and June 1825.¹⁵³ There are many examples of liberal Protestants attending and taking part in Waterford Catholic meetings in the 1820s. In February 1819 a speech by William Newport pointing to his own and his family's support for Catholic claims was warmly applauded at one such meeting.¹⁵⁴ Liberal Protestants attended but took no part in Catholic meetings in April 1821 and in March 1824.¹⁵⁵ In August 1825 a public dinner was held for Daniel O'Connell in the city, which many notable Protestant leaders attended. Toasts were made to Sir John Newport as well as to Major Beresford Gahan, a local Protestant who was establishing a position for himself as leader of what he called Waterford's 'independent' interest in opposition to the corporation (see below).¹⁵⁶ This involvement suggests that liberal Protestants continued to be heavily involved in the campaign for Catholic emancipation in Waterford in the early 1820s.

The Catholic Association was established as a non-representative society which operated within 'the most exact obedience to every letter of the law', and its membership was open to all denominations.¹⁵⁷ Its explicit aims included the general management of Catholic affairs and the forwarding of the campaign for Catholic emancipation through petitions and addresses to parliament. An implicit aim of the association was 'the propagation of liberal feeling amongst all classes and persuasions' through the removal of all political distinctions as regarded religion.¹⁵⁸ Daniel O'Connell told a Catholic Association meeting in November 1824 that 'the Catholic Association was not Catholic or Protestant exclusively, but expressed the feelings of Irishmen, in the combined sentiments of Catholics and Protestants.'¹⁵⁹ Many liberal Protestants joined the Catholic Association during the early years of the 1820s. At nearly every Catholic Association meeting up until its first dissolution in 1825 there was some mention of Irish Protestants joining the association, attending the meetings or donating funds to the Catholic rent.¹⁶⁰ Henry Villiers Stuart of Dromana in County Waterford joined the association as soon as he came of age in December 1824, by

¹⁵³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 10 Apr. 1821 & 19 June 1823, *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Apr. & 18 June 1825; while the attendance of liberal Protestants was referred to, unfortunately no names were printed on any of these occasions.

¹⁵⁴ *Waterford Chronicle*, 4 Feb. 1819.

¹⁵⁵ *Waterford Chronicle*, 7 Apr. 1821; *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Mar. 1824.

¹⁵⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Aug. 1824.

¹⁵⁷ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i. 346.

¹⁵⁸ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i. 346.

¹⁵⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Nov. 1824.

¹⁶⁰ For example, liberal Protestant R. N. Kelly chaired a meeting in August 1824; *Waterford Mirror*, 21 Aug. 1824.

sending a subscription of twenty pounds.¹⁶¹ Stuart's liberal principles were 'dilated, in terms of highest eulogy' by Richard Lalor Sheil, with Pierce George Barron of Belmont also bearing testimony to his liberal character.¹⁶² Earlier in the year, two Protestant ladies had sent subscriptions, but while the association may have been open to any religious denomination, the ladies were told on this occasion that only men were eligible for membership.¹⁶³

The Waterford Catholic rent committee was established as a local branch of the Catholic Association in March 1824.¹⁶⁴ Waterford city was one of the earliest places to respond to the Catholic rent report that had been published in February.¹⁶⁵ By May 1824 the rent committee in Waterford had managed to raise forty pounds in subscriptions, and William Winston Barron, the chairman of the committee, calculated that they should be able to raise about five hundred pounds per year in the city alone.¹⁶⁶ On top of this the committee had printed three thousand copies of an address to the Catholics of Waterford, explaining the objects of the rent and requesting their support. By July Waterford had collected over seventy-six pounds, and by September the collection of the rent had been adopted in twelve county parishes as well as all city parishes.¹⁶⁷ By December 1824 local Protestants were joining the association.¹⁶⁸ In a letter to the Waterford Catholic rent committee, the liberal Patrick Walsh of Belline in the county remarked: 'As a Protestant and Irishman, I feel I have *as yet* but feebly done my duty....I sincerely trust in God we may live to see our country restored to her national glory'.¹⁶⁹ In praising the collection of the Catholic rent, Dr James Warren Doyle singled out Waterford as among the foremost counties in that regard, stating that Waterford throughout history had 'been conspicuous in seeking to obtain or to preserve civil liberty of conscience – the only sure foundation of true piety and social welfare'.¹⁷⁰ This evidence reveals that Waterford was in the vanguard of the Catholic struggle for emancipation, even before the famous election campaign of 1826.

¹⁶¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 8 Dec. 1824.

¹⁶² *Waterford Mirror*, 13 Dec. 1824.

¹⁶³ *Waterford Mirror*, 12 June 1824.

¹⁶⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Mar. 1824.

¹⁶⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 21 Feb. 1824.

¹⁶⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 15 May 1824. A kinsman of Henry Winston Barron, William Winston Barron was noted O'Connellite and later a repealer in the city.

¹⁶⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 July & 4 Sept. 1824.

¹⁶⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 4 Dec. 1824.

¹⁶⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 4 Dec. 1824.

¹⁷⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 21 Aug. 1824.

Both liberal Protestants and Catholics understood that the most significant support for Catholic claims given by Irish Protestants in this period was that offered in parliament. This should not diminish the support of many liberal Protestants in the local arena, but until Catholic emancipation was granted in 1829, Catholics were wholly dependent on their parliamentary allies to promote their interests in the House of Commons. Waterford's liberal representatives Sir John Newport, Richard Power senior, Richard Power junior and George Walpole offered unwavering parliamentary support for Catholic relief in the years up to 1820 (see chapter three). This support endured into the 1820s, and up to 1826 Sir John Newport voted alongside Richard Power junior and (from 1822) George Lamb in favour of the successive relief bills (see appendix E, table E.1).¹⁷¹ During the parliamentary debate on William Conyngham Plunket's qualified relief bill in 1821, which these members supported, there was little parallel Catholic activity in Ireland, suggesting that these liberal Protestants continued to act independently of Catholic politics.¹⁷² This parliamentary support, which continued right up to 1829, had a significant impact on convincing ambivalent members of the House of Commons to support Catholic emancipation.

During the debate on the Catholic relief bill in March 1821, Sir John Newport outlined the importance to him of the Catholic question: 'it had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength'.¹⁷³ Sir John thought it 'not very creditable to this Protestant country' that it should exhibit such 'intolerance', while other Catholic countries 'set it such an example of enlightened liberality'.¹⁷⁴ In February 1825 Sir John called the Catholic cause 'the cause of the empire', believing peace and prosperity to be intrinsically connected to the question of Catholic relief.¹⁷⁵ Henry Goulburn's coercive bill for suppressing unlawful societies in Ireland, which was passed in the House of Commons in February 1825, was strongly opposed by Sir John Newport, Richard Power junior and George Lamb.¹⁷⁶ Lamb contended that the right of subjects to meet for the

¹⁷¹ Unfortunately, there are no available division lists for 1823, so we can only assume that the votes of these members remained consistent with the years in which division lists are available. In 1821 and 1825, all three of Waterford's liberal representatives voted for the Catholic relief bill (see appendix E, table E.1).

¹⁷² This relief bill passed the House of Commons on 2 April 1821 by 216 votes to 197, but it was rejected by the House of Lords on 17 April by 159 votes to 120; *Hansard 2*, iv, 1548 (2 Apr. 1821) & v, 356 (17 Apr. 1821).

¹⁷³ *Waterford Mirror*, 29 Mar. 1821.

¹⁷⁴ *Hansard 2*, iv, 1477 (27 Mar. 1821).

¹⁷⁵ *Hansard 2*, xii, 441 (15 Feb. 1825).

¹⁷⁶ This bill, introduced on 10 February and passed on 25 February 1825, altered the convention act of 1793 to make both the Orange Order and the Catholic Association in Ireland illegal. Sir John Newport,

redress of grievances would be violated if the bill was passed. Lamb defended the Catholic Association from attacks made upon it, asserting that he 'could not find anything in the language used by its members half so violent as that which had been used regarding it by several members of that house'.¹⁷⁷ In presenting over ten petitions against the bill, Sir John Newport agreed that the suppression of the association would only create disunion and discontent.¹⁷⁸ After the bill's passage Newport told John Fitzpatrick, secretary to the Waterford Catholic rent committee, that 'as a subject of a free country, and anxious to uphold the spirit of the constitution, I can never cease to regret [the] recent proceeding of the legislature'.¹⁷⁹

But the Waterford Whigs continued to believe that in order to convince wavering members of parliament to support the Catholic relief bills, they were dependent on the good behaviour of the Irish Catholics. In July 1819 the *Dublin Evening Post* agreed that the growing support of Protestants in general for Catholic claims was a consequence of the good temper shown by the Catholics themselves, and that this factor more than any other contributed to the augmentation of support in parliament.¹⁸⁰ At a County Waterford Protestant meeting in favour of Catholic claims, chaired by Sir Richard Musgrave in February 1825, William Samuel Currey announced that he believed that 'prudence on the part of the Catholics would...secure the success of the question within a short period'.¹⁸¹ In parliament Sir John Newport attempted to convince wavering members to oppose Henry Goulburn's bill to suppress the Catholic Association in February 1825 by arguing that the society was directly responsible for the peaceful condition of Ireland.¹⁸²

In the absence of contested elections in any of the Waterford constituencies, there was little opportunity before 1826 to harness any kind of electoral influence based on the Catholic freehold or freeman vote.¹⁸³ Despite this, there were interesting developments during these years with respect to the emergence of an 'independent'

George Lamb and Richard Power junior voted against the measure on 15, 21 & 25 February; *Hansard* 2, xii, 168 (10 Feb. 1825), 521 (17 Feb. 1825), 612 (21 Feb. 1825) & 710 (25 Feb. 1825).

¹⁷⁷ *Hansard* 2, xii, 352 (14 Feb. 1825) & 629 (22 Feb. 1825).

¹⁷⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 21, 23 and 28 Feb. 1825; *Hansard* 2, xii, 541 (18 Feb. 1825) & 647 (24 Feb. 1825).

¹⁷⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1825.

¹⁸⁰ *D.E.P.*, 1 July 1819.

¹⁸¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Feb. 1825.

¹⁸² *Hansard* 2, xii, 647 (24 Feb. 1825).

¹⁸³ There were no contested elections in either Waterford city or the borough of Dungarvan between 1820 and 1830. There were two contested elections in County Waterford, one in 1826 and one in 1830 (see chapter five); Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 214 & 241-2.

Protestant group. This trend would have a significant impact on events as they unfolded in the run up to the 1826 election. Early in 1824 there were rumours that parliament would be dissolved. In March 1824 a letter addressed to the electors of Waterford city appeared in the *Waterford Mirror* written by a liberal Protestant, Major Beresford Gahan.¹⁸⁴ This was an attempt by Gahan to establish what he termed an ‘independent’ interest in the city in opposition to Waterford Corporation. He stated that it was time the electors ‘recover[ed] those rights of which...you have been at some former time deprived by the encroachments of your corporation’.¹⁸⁵ This was an allusion to the unproven but widely believed contention that applicants to the freedom had in the past been rejected on the grounds that they had refused to vote for a particular electoral candidate, or even on the grounds of their religion. Although it is not stated, he may also have had in mind a restoration of the court of d’oyer hundred, which in the eighteenth century had given freemen a voice in civic government. Gahan urged Waterford’s electors to demand from their member a ‘devotedness’ in regaining their civic powers: ‘your object is to open both your borough and your corporation – not merely to *change their masters*’.¹⁸⁶ In the context of the 1818 compact Sir John Newport, who had pledged himself to reforming the corporation as early as 1803 (see chapter two), was now criticised as the leader of the corporate clique, from whom Beresford Gahan demanded a pledge to restore freemen’s rights. Another letter, signed by ‘A Looker-On’, went further than Gahan, demanding that the corporation be completely dissolved.¹⁸⁷ A notice appeared in July 1824 requesting the ‘independent’ interest in the city to keep themselves ‘disengaged’ until the dissolution of parliament, and to look to the registration of freeholders in the time approaching the election.¹⁸⁸ By the mid-1820s many in Waterford had come to believe that Sir John Newport’s connection with Waterford Corporation ‘hampered’ his ability to honestly represent the views of the city, especially after he had entered into the compact with the conservative faction in 1818.

¹⁸⁴ Major Beresford Gahan was a local reformer who maintained close relations with leaders of Catholic opinion. As well as giving subscriptions to the Catholic rent, Gahan attended the meeting in 1838 to establish the Waterford Precursor Society, as well as supporting Henry Winston Barron in his election campaign. Later, Gahan became a repealer, and spoke out in favour of a domestic legislature in the 1830s.

¹⁸⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Mar. 1824.

¹⁸⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Mar. 1824.

¹⁸⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 22 Mar. 1824.

¹⁸⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 July 1824.

Rumours that an alternative liberal candidate would be found to challenge him invoked addresses from Sir John's supporters reminding electors of his efforts at reform, 'the very thing he and his friends have been screeching for during the last quarter of a century'.¹⁸⁹ A meeting of the friends of Sir John Newport was held in March 1824 at Waterford Chamber of Commerce to prepare a pledge support for him as a candidate.¹⁹⁰ Interestingly, one of his most vocal supporters on this occasion was Thomas Meagher, one of the city's leading Catholic spokesmen, and the pledge of was signed by over 150 Waterford Catholics.¹⁹¹ On Newport's return to Waterford from Westminster in July 1824, a canvass was begun immediately by his election committee, but petered out when an opposing candidate failed to materialise. At a public dinner held in honour of Daniel O'Connell at the town hall in August 1824, O'Connell himself toasted health and longevity to Sir John, stating that 'as long as he was in parliament, he had never given a vote that was not honest'. O'Connell urged Waterford Catholics to lend their support to Newport at the next elections as he was always present in parliament when there was a dearth of Irish members, and throughout his career he had remained doggedly interested in forwarding Irish questions.¹⁹² This support of the Waterford Catholics augmented, or at least consolidated, Sir John's standing among the city electors, and the 1826 election witnessed his uncontested return for the city.

The 1820s also witnessed the period of Sir John Newport's supremacy within Waterford Corporation. In 1835 the commissioners' report on Irish municipal corporations described Waterford Corporation as a closed and corrupt Anglican clique running an unbridled and self-perpetuating monopoly.¹⁹³ It has been contended also that it was viewed by the Catholic middle classes of Waterford as a bastion of Protestant power and ascendancy.¹⁹⁴ But there is evidence that there were consistent if modest efforts at reform among some members of the corporation throughout the 1820s. The impetus seems to have come from both within the corporation and from outside pressure

¹⁸⁹ Letters in support of Sir John Newport were written by 'An Independent' and 'An Old Clock'; *Waterford Mirror*, 24 Mar. 1824.

¹⁹⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Mar. 1824.

¹⁹¹ Thomas Meagher, often referred to in contemporary sources as Thomas Meagher junior (as his father was also Thomas), was a prominent local leader in the emancipation and repeal campaigns, and became the first Catholic mayor of Waterford in 1842 after the implementation of the municipal corporations act (see chapter seven). He was the father of Thomas Francis Meagher, the future Young Irelander.

¹⁹² *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Aug. 1825.

¹⁹³ *The first report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 579-617. It is essential to point out however that this commission was aggressively Whig in its approach, and very unsympathetic to 'unreformed' corporations. Hence, its report cannot be considered entirely objective (see chapter seven).

¹⁹⁴ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852', pp 37-8.

to remove some of the more offensive abuses. These attempts at internal reform were in part a result of the augmentation of influence of the liberal element within the corporation after 1818, but they were also in part recognition on the part of some corporators that it was necessary to placate increasingly-hostile popular feeling in the city. However, there was little evidence of any recognition of this reforming strand in the press at this time.

In December 1821 the common council passed a motion to remove Francis John Hassard from his post as recorder of Waterford, because

the duties of said office should always be performed by a person of known integrity and skill who will possess the confidence of the public and that the said office should not be considered as a source of income to an absentee who performs the duty by deputy.¹⁹⁵

The inference was that Francis John Hassard possessed neither integrity nor skill, on top of the fact that he treated the office as a sinecure. The council's resolutions explicitly stated that they had 'not been influenced by any personal or capricious motives' but by a conviction that the office was no longer considered merely as a source of patronage.¹⁹⁶ The evidence suggests that Francis John Hassard did regard the office as a possession, forwarding claims based on the fact that members of his family had long held the office.¹⁹⁷ Charles Samuel Tandy, law agent for corporation, defended the move to remove Francis John Hassard on the basis that he had not been resident in the city for over five years.¹⁹⁸ However, in 1833 William Henry Hassard stated before the commissioners on municipal corporations that he believed that his brother, Francis John Hassard, had been removed in order 'to carry into effect the substance of the terms' of the compact agreed between Sir John Newport and Harry Alcock in 1818. Francis John Hassard was an ally of Cornelius Bolton, whom the compact was designed to exclude. A meeting of citizens to choose a new recorder was called for 18 December 1821 'in order to give the citizens of Waterford an opportunity for expressing their opinion'.¹⁹⁹ This meeting attracted many of Waterford's leading middle class Catholics, and the tone of the meeting was unfavourable to the corporation. The citizens were opposed to the corporation predetermining who would be granted the office of recorder, to the

¹⁹⁵ Waterford Corporation minute book, 1 Dec. 1821 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁹⁶ Waterford Corporation minute book, 1 Dec. 1821 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁹⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Dec. 1821.

¹⁹⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1833.

¹⁹⁹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 1 Dec. 1821 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15); *Waterford Mirror*, 15 Dec. 1821.

exclusion of any other who might offer himself. Thomas Wyse senior spoke of the desirability of placing the office of recorder beyond corporate influence, even suggesting that the office should be placed directly under the influence of the crown.²⁰⁰ While these resolutions were passed, no successor to the post of recorder was chosen. The resolutions were followed by an address from Mayor William Murphy, who made it clear in no uncertain terms that it remained the duty and the privilege of the corporation to exercise the power of dismissing (and, by inference, appointing) the recorder of the city.²⁰¹ The corporation, while willing to make tentative steps towards reform internally, disliked having their privileges questioned by the citizens at large. It was revealing of the public hostility to the corporation that what was regarded essentially as a reform measure by the corporation was viewed by the middle classes in the city as an attempt to control and extend corporate patronage.

In May 1824 the corporation took steps towards improving the handling of freedom petitions. The corporation had already established a freedoms committee in November 1818, as it was considered that the petitions were taking up too large a portion of the council's time.²⁰² In 1824 it was decided that all petitions would be lodged with the town clerk. This not only further eased the pressure on the common council's time, it also made the process of petitioning for freedoms much simpler and more manageable. A register of the petitions of all applicants was established, which included remarks on whether or not the applicant was admitted.²⁰³ The town clerk was 'instructed to give necessary information to any individual of the claimants who may think himself aggrieved'.²⁰⁴ The council explicitly referred to the resolutions passed in 1818 which had regulated the procedures for admitting applicants (see chapter two) and resolved that these resolutions should be published in the local newspapers. There is no evidence to suggest that the impetus for reform came on this occasion from anywhere but from the within the council. The only reference to this in the newspapers was the appearance on 10 May of the resolutions of 1818, and an address from the corporation instructing

²⁰⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1821.

²⁰¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1821. While no new recorder was appointed at the meeting, it seems that the Hassard family remained in possession of the office, as it was revealed in 1833 before the municipal commissioners that William Henry Hassard, brother of Francis John, had been recorder since 1830, having acted as deputy since 1825; *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1833.

²⁰² Waterford Corporation minute book, 26 Nov. 1818 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

²⁰³ Freemen were admitted by right of birth, apprenticeship and marriage, and occasionally (after 1818) by special favour of the common council; see chapters one and two for further details.

²⁰⁴ Waterford Corporation minute book, 4 May 1824 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

claimants to lodge their petitions with the town clerk.²⁰⁵ This suggests that the liberal faction in the corporation continued to promote reforming strategies after they were placed by the compact of 1818 in a position of greater influence on the common council.

The composition of the grand juries of Waterford city and county illustrates the degree to which a liberal ideology had manifested itself at local level. By 1824 there were five Catholic members of the city grand jury: Thomas Meagher, John Leonard, John Archbold, William Aylward and Richard Fogarty.²⁰⁶ Just over a year later, Thomas Fogarty, a merchant of King's Street, had also become a grand juror in the city.²⁰⁷ In the same year Richard Power O'Shee of Gardenmorris and Pierce George Barron of Belmont were sitting on the county grand jury. By 1826 three other prominent Catholics had joined them: Thomas Wyse senior of the Manor of St John, John Matthew Galwey of Duckspool and Henry Winston Barron of Ballymacaw.²⁰⁸ These gentlemen served as magistrates alongside some of the leading liberal Protestants including Richard Power junior of Clashmore, Sir Richard Musgrave of Tourin, Robert Shapland Carew of Woodstown and John Nugent Humble of Cloncoskoran Castle. In the city liberal Protestant grand jurors included Thomas Scott of King's Street, Major Beresford Gahan, Henry Holdsworth Hunt and corporation members William Weekes and William Milward. This membership gave the grand juries in both city and county a progressive hue, and a parliamentary commission report printed in June 1826 pronounced a positive assessment of the method of choosing sheriffs and juries in Waterford:

The great trust of empanelling juries, grand and petit, appears to have been discharged incorruptly and impartially [in Waterford], as between the corporation and the inhabitants and without any control or interference of those who possess the leading interest in the corporation.²⁰⁹

The degree of interaction and cohesion between Catholics and liberal Protestants during these years may be measured not only through meetings directly affecting Catholic relief. A variety of local meetings, on topics such as poverty, the slave trade, parliamentary reform and local commerce witnessed Waterford Catholics and Protestants working together in a much more practical and organised way than in the past. Evidence suggests that the differing denominations in Waterford worked far

²⁰⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 May 1824.

²⁰⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Mar. 1824.

²⁰⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 July 1825.

²⁰⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Mar. 1824 & 13 Mar. 1826.

²⁰⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Mar. 1824, 27 July 1825 & 5 June 1826.

more harmoniously on topics that did not directly involve contentious political or religious opinions. The city's excellent record of societies aimed at aiding the poor – Thomas Wyse contended in 1830 that such societies were 'abundant' in Waterford – was a testament to this.²¹⁰ In December 1824 a meeting was called in County Waterford to consider the best means of implementing plans set out by James Cropper, a social reformer from Liverpool, for securing the employment of the labouring classes in Ireland. This meeting attracted not only wealthier Catholics and Protestants including Catholics Pierce George Barron and Henry Winston Barron, and liberal Protestants Sir Richard Musgrave, John Musgrave, Sir William Jackson Homan, John Nugent Humble and the Quaker David Malcolmson of Clonmel, but it also provided an arena in which conservative Protestants, including Lord George Thomas Beresford and William Christmas, could act in unison with both Catholics and their liberal co-religionists.²¹¹ A committee of twenty established at the meeting forwarded resolutions to establish a joint stock company in Waterford, to be raised in shares of fifty pounds. This company would support the local manufacture of cotton, linen and woollen goods. The committee established to organise the subscriptions was composed of both Protestants and Catholics, working together to promote local trade and industry among the lower classes.²¹²

Conclusion:

The Catholic question remained the most significant ongoing political issue in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, but it was a question that had the potential to divide opinion as much as to unite it. While there was a growing section of the Protestant community in Waterford city and county who supported Catholic relief, this support was both qualified and independent of Catholic leadership. The veto

²¹⁰ *Third report of evidence from the committee of the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (665), vii, 626.

²¹¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Dec. 1824; William Christmas was a conservative Protestant, who nominated Lord George Thomas Beresford at the election for County Waterford in 1826. Christmas represented Waterford city in parliament between 1832 and 1835 and campaigned against the repeal of the union in the 1830s. Christmas also opposed bills to reform the established church in 1833 and 1834, although he also opposed the coercion bill in 1834.

²¹² This committee included conservative Protestants Lord George Thomas Beresford, William Christmas and William Samuel Currey, liberal Protestants Richard Power junior, Sir William Jackson Homan, Sir Richard Musgrave, John Musgrave and John Nugent Humble, and Catholics John Patrick Galwey, Pierce Hely, Henry Winston Barron and Richard Power O'Shee; *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Dec. 1824.

controversy revealed the fragility of relations between Irish Catholics and their liberal Protestants supporters both in parliament and at local level. Liberal Protestants continued to support Catholic claims on their own terms and viewed their part in the campaign for Catholic emancipation as an essential, integral and indispensable one. These Protestants viewed Catholic relief as a boon that would be granted on their terms, and continued to believe that the most beneficial way in which the Catholics themselves could promote their cause was by behaving in a loyal, temperate and deferential manner to both Irish Protestants and the British government. But despite the differences of opinion that became apparent during the dispute over the veto question, liberal Protestants in Waterford remained active and vocal in promoting the Catholic question, and there existed a high degree of cooperation and a willingness to create and sustain improved relations among both Catholics and liberal Protestants. In parliament, the pro-Catholic members offered consistent and enduring support for Catholic relief. Despite the more aggressive strategies forwarded by the Catholic Association from 1824, there was little reason to suggest before 1825 that the impetus for Catholic relief would pass so completely into Catholic hands within the next five years.

Chapter five: Liberal Protestants and the development of Catholic politics, 1826-32

Waterford has at all times given the tone to the political feeling of the south of Ireland, and roused it by its example to struggle for the regeneration of Ireland.¹

As the above quotation suggests, Waterford was one of the leading counties in promoting Catholic politics between 1826 and 1832. Fergus O’Ferrall has described Waterford as being in the van of the Catholic struggle in the 1820s.² John Hearne has commented that by early 1830s Waterford Catholics in Waterford had evolved into an effective and highly organised political force.³ The extension of Catholic political consciousness and political education, owing to the activities of the Catholic Association at national level and a group of active Catholic leaders at local level, was revealed with particular clarity in Waterford. The 1826 general election in County Waterford was heralded as an example of the power of the Catholic freehold vote and served as a blueprint for Daniel O’Connell’s campaign during the 1828 by-election in County Clare. But there also existed in Waterford enduring support for Catholic relief among a wide and growing section of the Protestant community. Chapter four illustrated the close relations that existed between the denominations in Waterford city and county up to 1825, despite the latent discord revealed by the veto controversy. This willingness on the part of both Catholics and liberal Protestants in Waterford to cooperate was a marked feature of the county election campaign in 1826, and an analysis of these relations forms the first part of this chapter. The second section considers the responses of liberal Protestants in Waterford to developing Catholic politics in the late 1820s. The brand of democratic politics promoted by Daniel O’Connell and the Catholic Association was distrusted by the majority of Irish liberal Protestants, who had viewed Catholic emancipation as a boon that would be bestowed on Protestant terms, and who expected the future political élite in Ireland to remain an essentially Protestant one. The altered nature of relations between Irish Catholics and their Protestant supporters in the aftermath of the County Clare by-election in 1828 is

¹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 15 Dec. 1832.

² Fergus O’Ferrall, ‘The growth of political consciousness in Ireland, 1823-47: a study of O’Connellite politics and political education’ (PhD thesis, T.C.D, 1978), p. 355.

³ J. M. Hearne, ‘Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852’ (PhD. thesis, U.C.C., 2001), p. 132.

examined. The third part of this chapter considers the origins and nature of liberal Catholicism in Waterford in this period, and considers the significance of liberalism (as distinct from nationalism) among Waterford Catholics in the context of the 1830s.

Part one: Liberal Protestants and the 1826 County Waterford election

One of the most significant events in Waterford politics in the 1820s was the 1826 parliamentary election for County Waterford. This election campaign has been described by historians of Catholic Ireland as one that was envisaged and executed essentially by the Catholic Association and the Catholic clergy, and it has been traditionally recognised as signalling a shift towards populist and democratic politics. Alternatively, divisive and sectarian elements of the campaign have been cited to promote the argument that the 1826 election in County Waterford was the turning point for liberal Protestants, away from Catholic and national politics and towards a more conservative and reactionary political ideology.⁴ In fact there is evidence that the 1826 election campaign was viewed by contemporaries in Waterford as a golden opportunity for cooperation between Catholics and liberal Protestants, and for surmounting denominational distinctions and sectarian divisions. The campaign was one that owed its success more to local efforts than to the metropolitan guidance of the Catholic Association.⁵ Despite some sectarian ruptures among the lower classes of Catholics, the degree of interaction and cooperation increased as the campaign mounted. Waterford liberal Protestants viewed their role in the campaign as a leading one, and at no point during, before or after the election was there any significant diminution of support for Catholic emancipation, stemming from a suspicion of Catholic political assertiveness, or any general shift towards more conservative or reactionary politics. The emergence of an exclusive Irish 'nation' based on the twin concepts of nationalism and Catholicism was in no way inevitable in 1826.

The idea to depart from tradition and contest both county seats at the next general election was proposed as early as December 1824, and from the outset the focus lay on the liberal Protestant Henry Villiers Stuart of Dromana. Local interest in Henry Villiers Stuart, the son and heir of Lord Henry Stuart, was intense from the

⁴ Thomas Wyse, *Historical sketch of the late Catholic Association* (2 vols, London, 1829), i, 263-92; Eugene Broderick, 'Protestants and the 1826 Waterford County Election', in *Decies*, liii (1997), pp 45-66.

⁵ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 263-92.

moment he made Dromana his principal residence on coming of age.⁶ In December 1824 during a speech at a Catholic Association meeting in Dublin, Richard Lalor Sheil mentioned that Stuart had agreed to offer himself for County Waterford at the next election in order to rescue the constituency from the dominion of the Beresfords.⁷ Daniel O'Connell was interested by the idea, declaring that 'the blush of shame would burn upon the cheeks of the Waterford Catholics, for having pliantly bent their necks to the Beresford yoke for near half a century', adding that with Catholic support Stuart could 'wipe off the disgrace that had long stained their county' by undermining the Beresford interest there.⁸ At local level, the incident that provided the impetus for challenging the sitting member, Lord George Thomas Beresford, occurred in February 1825, when twenty-two liberal Protestants from the county requisitioned the high sheriff, William Christmas, for a meeting to prepare a Protestant petition to parliament in favour of Catholic claims.⁹ William Christmas, a conservative Protestant and an ally of the Beresfords, declined the requisition, contending that he feared for the tranquillity of the county.¹⁰ Two days later, twelve county magistrates overrode Christmas's decision and organised a Protestant meeting for later the same week.¹¹ These magistrates, including the Whig county member, Richard Power junior, were all liberal Protestants who were well regarded in the county (see table 5.1).

Table 5.1: County magistrates who supported holding a Protestant meeting in County Waterford, February 1825:

County magistrates who supported holding a Protestant meeting in County Waterford, 1825	
Richard Power junior	Francis Drew
Sir Richard Musgrave	George Holmes Jackson
John Nugent Humble	Richard Ussher
Sir William Jackson Homan	Pierce Hely
Robert Power	John Musgrave

⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 July 1824.

⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 Dec. 1824.

⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Dec. 1824.

⁹ All but one of the magistrates had signed the original requisition, only Richard Ussher had not. The original requisition bore twenty-three signatures. Alongside the eleven names above appeared the names of Edmund Power, Richard Butler Hamilton Lowe, Barry Drew, Tankerville C. Drew, John Hudson, Henry Witham, John Odell, Henry Bolton, James Gee, Thomas Poole, George Bennett Jackson and Thomas Jackson; *Waterford Mirror*, 5 Feb. 1825.

¹⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 5 Feb. 1825.

¹¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 7 Feb. 1825.

This list and the original requisition were significant as it revealed widespread support for Catholic claims among the Protestant gentry in the county (as well as in the city).¹²

The declared aim of the Protestant meeting, chaired by Sir Richard Musgrave of Tourin, was to promote civil and religious liberty, as this was the best means of achieving peace and prosperity in Ireland. John Nugent Humble of Cloncoskoran Castle was optimistic, believing the current period to be most favourable for considering Catholic relief. A petition calling for unqualified emancipation was unanimously adopted and entrusted to the duke of Devonshire to present in the House of Lords, and Richard Power junior and Lord George Thomas Beresford in the House of Commons (a trust that Lord George declined).¹³ Sir John Newport, member for Waterford city, and George Lamb, member for Dungarvan, were asked to support the petitions in parliament. The tone of the meeting revealed that the attending liberal Protestants considered themselves to be indispensable allies in forwarding the campaign for Catholic relief at local level. This meeting occurred in the context of considerable Catholic activity at both local and national level, and liberal Protestants understood their own activities, and Protestant petitions in favour of Catholic claims, as essential components in the parliamentary struggle for Catholic relief. William Samuel Currey urged 'prudence' on the part of the Catholics as paramount for securing the success of the Catholic question 'within a short period'.¹⁴ Liberal Protestants believed that the Catholics should confirm themselves to be loyal, obedient and temperate (but not necessarily assertive or independently-minded) citizens in order to strengthen support for their cause in parliament. A second meeting held by the city Protestants agreed upon a parliamentary petition praying for the 'total' removal of the disabilities affecting Catholic subjects.¹⁵

A Catholic meeting held in County Waterford in June 1825 agreed to hold a public dinner 'in testimony of our gratitude and esteem' for the twelve magistrates who in February 'so nobly and liberally came forward on our behalf' in calling the Protestant

¹² Widespread support for Catholic claims in Waterford city was reflected in the 1808 and 1819 declarations; *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1808 & 19 Jan. 1819.

¹³ In the event the petition was introduced by Richard Power junior on 1 March 1825; *Waterford Mirror*, 5 Mar. 1825.

¹⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Feb. 1825.

¹⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 26 Feb. 1825.

meeting. It was resolved that confidence in the liberality and support of both landed Protestants and the Protestant clergy remained 'unshaken'.¹⁶ This dinner created much excitement in the Waterford city and county, occurring as it did at a time of great inter-denominational activity. A meeting of Protestant peers had just met in Dublin to promote Catholic emancipation, and a new Catholic Association aimed at a national association combining Irishmen of all religious persuasions.¹⁷ The eleven Catholic stewards chosen for the event came from among the richest in rank and wealth in the county.¹⁸ Most of the Protestant and Catholic wealth of the city and county attended, including the Whig representatives Sir John Newport, Richard Power junior and Robert Shapland Carew junior, member for County Wexford.¹⁹ John Nugent Humble declared that in calling the Protestant meeting the magistrates had had the best interests of the country at heart, and he was optimistic that a new era of inter-denominational cooperation had begun.

I am happy to say, the clouds of prejudice are fast disappearing, and...the day is not far distant when the just and honest demands of millions will prevail over the self-interests and influence of a few placemen.²⁰

Religious tolerance was a hallmark of the dinner, and the *Waterford Chronicle* declared that it hoped that 'the most kindly sentiments in which it originated may long continue to prevail here amongst the members of every religious persuasion'.²¹

At this dinner it was suggested that Henry Villiers Stuart should offer himself as a candidate for the second county seat at the next general election.²² Although Stuart himself was not present, as he was travelling in Europe, his agent Sir William Jackson Homan (one of the county magistrates for whom the dinner was being held) declared that selecting Stuart as a county representative would be an advantage to the 'independent interest' in the county.²³ Although this was the first time the suggestion

¹⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 June 1825.

¹⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 2, 9 & 16 July 1825.

¹⁸ The stewards were Richard Power O'Shee of Gardenmorris (chairman), Patrick Power of Bellevue, Alexander Sherlock of Killaspy, Pierce George Barron of Tramore, John Matthew Galwey of Duckspool, Francis Wyse of Rathcullaheen, Pierce Barron of Castletown, John Leonard, Roger Hayes, John Archbold and John Fitzpatrick (all of Waterford city), and (the only non-resident) Philip Barron of Durrow; *Waterford Mirror*, 23 July 1825.

¹⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 Aug. 1825.

²⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 Aug. 1825.

²¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 Aug. 1825.

²² The first seat was to be contested by the sitting liberal member, Richard Power junior.

²³ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 Aug. 1825; Sir William Jackson Homan (1771-1852) was created a baronet in 1801, and was a county grand juror. Jackson lived at Cappoquin in county Waterford, and remained agent to the Villiers Stuart family throughout his life; Frederic Boase, *Modern English biography*:



Plate 4: 'A portrait of Henry Villiers Stuart', [artist unknown] c.1830, oil painting, in P. C. Power, *History of Waterford city and county* (Dublin, 1990), p. 330.

had been made publicly, rumours had been circulating for some time. A few weeks previously Sir William Jackson Homan had printed an address in the Waterford newspapers requesting the friends of Henry Villiers Stuart to hold themselves disengaged until such time as Stuart returned to the county.²⁴ Although this notice did not explicitly state that Stuart had decided to stand as a candidate, there was a tacit understanding that it was a distinct possibility.

Less than two weeks after the dinner, the election address of Henry Villiers Stuart appeared in the newspapers.²⁵ This was the earliest address to appear and no other candidate put forward an address at this time. While the address was longer and more explicit than most, its form and tone was typical of that employed by liberal Protestants in this period, opening with a declaration of strong attachment to the British constitution. Stuart's approach to Catholic relief also reflected liberal Protestant thinking. The granting of Catholic emancipation was the measure 'best calculated' to uphold and strengthen the constitution and render Ireland and the empire peaceful, safe and secure. Therefore, Catholic emancipation was the aim of his 'constant and most strenuous exertions'.²⁶ While this language in itself did not reflect any new departure, the address created great excitement among supporters of the 'independent interest' in County Waterford.

Henry Villiers Stuart at twenty-one was a young, zealous and liberal Protestant of substantial rank and wealth, and he excited such passions as to become something of a local hero (see plate 4). The liberal and Catholic press of the time reported his popularity in effusive terms, and Stuart was considered second in popular imagination only to Daniel O'Connell. During the active canvass assumed by Stuart in August 1825, the local newspapers reported his progress through the county and surrounding area with almost fanatical fervour. In Carrickbeg he met with crowds of supporters crying out for 'no Beresford interest'.²⁷ On his arrival at Waterford his carriage was pulled through the city by his supporters for almost a mile, only ceasing when one ardent supporter fell under the wheel of the carriage and was killed. On arrival at Tramore he excited many a young lady with his appearance, all of whom waved at him with their 'lily white hand[s]'. The *Waterford Mirror* was jovial enough to comment: 'Ambition and

containing many thousand concise memoirs of persons who have died since 1850 (6 vols, Bristol, 1892-1921; reprinted 2000), i, 1519.

²⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 8 June 1825.

²⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Aug. 1825.

²⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Aug. 1825.

²⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 Aug. 1825.

patriotism may mark his character, but we should not guess them to be his only passions!²⁸

In August 1825 Stuart visited the home of Nicholas Mahon Power, a prominent local Catholic, where he entered into a treaty of alliance with Richard Power junior, the second liberal Protestant candidate.²⁹ This alliance was to be both 'offensive and defensive' aimed at countering any attack from the Beresford interest.³⁰ A public dinner held in November by the 'friends of civil and religious liberty' was attended by liberal Protestants Sir Richard Musgrave, Sir John Newport, John Nugent Humble, Sir William Jackson Homan and Robert Shapland Carew junior, along with Catholics Thomas Wyse, Rev John Sheehan, John Matthew Galwey and Richard Power O'Shee. The attendance of these gentlemen revealed the ongoing cooperation between Catholics and liberal Protestants in supporting both liberal candidates.³¹ The duke of Devonshire was solicited for support, but he declared that while he would continue to promote the interests of one seat, that of Richard Power junior, he was unconcerned about the other.³² When requested by the Beresfords to oppose the Stuart-Power alliance by supporting Richard Power junior and Lord George Thomas Beresford, Devonshire again asserted that the second seat was none of his concern. But while there is no further evidence to support the claim, Thomas Wyse insisted in his *Historical sketch* that while Devonshire refused to interfere with the rights of his £50 freeholders, he expected his forty-shilling freeholders to refrain from voting for Beresford.³³

But the expected dissolution of parliament did not occur in the summer of 1825 and the campaign was drawn out until June 1826. If the election had taken place in October 1825 as expected, Thomas Wyse believed that Henry Villiers Stuart would have been victorious, as he had ensured a majority of votes on the registry books.³⁴ The postponement gave the Beresfords time to rally their supporters. In the newspapers the coverage of the election receded, but active canvasses continued on the ground. In 1825 enthusiasm for Stuart had been confined to the middle and upper classes of county society. But the postponement of the dissolution until 1826 and the prolongation of the

²⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Aug. 1825.

²⁹ The liberal Protestant Richard Power junior of Clashmore and the Catholic Nicholas Mahon Power of Faithlegg were unrelated, coming from two separate Power families, and from opposite ends of the county (see 'Map of County Waterford', facing p. 1).

³⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Aug/ 1825.

³¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 5 Nov. 1825.

³² *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Sept. 1825.

³³ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 270.

³⁴ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 269.

canvass created heightened expectations in all quarters, igniting the interest of the (predominantly Catholic) forty-shilling freeholders.³⁵

During the autumn and winter of 1825, Stuart's election committee considered the use of new and more innovative tactics for rallying electoral support, centring upon appeals to the people and challenging the belief in the right of landlords to control the votes of their freeholders. This committee contained both Protestants and Catholics, the most prominent of whom were Thomas Wyse (chairman), Sir Richard Musgrave and his brother John Musgrave, John Odell of Carriglea and John Nugent Humble of Cloncoskoran Castle.³⁶ A Catholic meeting, held in Waterford city on 25 September, called on the forty-shilling freeholders in the county 'to assist and to aid, by every...constitutional means in their power, the efforts [being made] at present for the real independence of the county.'³⁷ The freehold franchise was still generally regarded as the political property of the landlords, and by making 'all future appeals...to the people' Stuart and his election committee were using a novel and potentially explosive strategy.³⁸ In an address to the electors, Stuart stated that the representation of the county was no longer a question of an individual gaining a seat, but rather:

the criterion which will decide whether the elective franchise be of any avail to the state – whether the people can be drawn to the hustings contrary to their inclinations and wishes, knowingly and wittingly to promote the return of a member to misrepresent them in parliament.³⁹

As 1825 stretched into 1826, forty-shilling freeholders across County Waterford were rallied by Stuart's election committee to the cause of 'independence'. The role played by Daniel O'Connell in the 1826 election campaign in County Waterford was minimal up to this point and beyond, and he was of little assistance to those organising the election

³⁵ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, vol. i, 268.

³⁶ All these gentlemen were liberal Protestants apart from Thomas Wyse. Catholic members included John Matthew Galwey (treasurer), Francis Wyse (secretary), Henry Winston Barron and Alexander Sherlock; *Waterford Mail*, 2 Nov. 1825; Hearne, 'Waterford: economy. Society and politics', p. 116; Broderick, 'Protestants and the 1826 Waterford County election', p.61; O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland, p. 372. John Odell of Carriglea was a liberal Protestant landowner and a county grand juror. Odell proved a consistent supporter of liberal politics, nominating Henry Villiers Stuart in 1826 and was one of the signatories to a letter written to Richard Power junior in 1830 thanking him for his exertions in representing the county in parliament; *Waterford Mirror*, 24 June 1826, 20 Mar. & 8 Sept. 1830.

³⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Sept. 1825.

³⁸ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 270; Broderick, 'Protestants and the 1826 County Waterford election', p. 52.

³⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 8 Oct. 1825.

campaign.⁴⁰ While O'Connell did act as counsel to Henry Villiers Stuart, he had refused Thomas Wyse's suggestion to encourage the forty-shilling freeholders to vote independently of their landlords, and indeed had not even registered his own freehold vote in the county.⁴¹ G.I.T. Machin has contended that it was only after the victory at Waterford that the Catholic Association 'made amends for its inactivity' by backing (eventually successful) Whig candidates in Louth, Westmeath and Monaghan.⁴²

A Catholic meeting held on 4 November 1825 was regarded as one of the largest and most respectable meetings ever to have taken place in the city. Several speeches were made by liberal Protestant gentlemen and Henry Villiers Stuart, Sir John Newport and Sir William Jackson Homan were 'particularly applauded'.⁴³ Both liberal Protestants and Catholics agreed to support a petition to parliament calling for unqualified emancipation. This reveals a considerable degree of cooperation, as Francis Burdett's 1825 relief bill with its attached 'wings' had produced a certain amount of disagreement between the denominations as well as within the Catholic camp.⁴⁴ In April 1825 a bill aimed at 'regulating' the elective franchise in Ireland had been brought in alongside Burdett's Catholic relief bill, which if passed would effectively disenfranchise the forty-shilling freeholders in Ireland. The relief bill itself contained a clause giving government a veto on episcopal appointments.⁴⁵ Some Irish Whigs in parliament, including Sir John Newport and Sir Henry Parnell, had decided to support this bill in return for Catholic emancipation.⁴⁶ The potential friction caused by these proposed 'securities' prompted eighteen local Catholics to plan a Waterford aggregate meeting for January 1826.⁴⁷ The meeting was attended by local liberal Protestants including Robert

⁴⁰ As early as June 1825, Daniel O'Connell had promised John Matthew Galwey that he would attend the upcoming election. While he was certainly at the actual election, and was even nominated for election (which he declined), O'Connell played little part in the actual canvassing; he did not even arrive in the county until 18 June, four days before the election; *Waterford Mirror*, 21 June 1826; Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 277.

⁴¹ Peter Jupp, *British and Irish elections, 1784-1831* (Devon, 1973), p. 168; Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 116; Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 99. However, Peter Jupp has pointed out that Thomas Wyse may have consciously played down the role played by Daniel O'Connell, as he was at odds with him at the time; Jupp, *British and Irish elections*, p. 61.

⁴² G. I. T. Machin, *The Catholic question in English politics, 1820-30* (Oxford, 1964), p. 84.

⁴³ *Waterford Mirror*, 5 Nov. 1825.

⁴⁴ See for example Daniel O'Connell's letter addressed to the Catholics of Louth, in *Waterford Mirror*, 14 & 26 Nov., 17 Dec. 1825.

⁴⁵ *Hansard* 2, xii, 1156 (23 Mar. 1825).

⁴⁶ *Hansard* 2, xii, 1252 (28 Mar. 1825); xiii, 247 (26 Apr. 1825).

⁴⁷ Those who signed the requisition were: Dr Patrick Kelly, Rev John Sheehan, Rev William Abraham, Henry Winston Barron, Michael Kenney, William Winston Barron, Edward Wall, Richard Power of Mahon Lodge, Pierce George Barron, Alexander Sherlock, John Archbold, John Leonard, Thomas

Power of Whitechurch.⁴⁸ The meeting resolved ‘to emancipate the County Waterford from the domination of an intolerant [Beresford] family’.⁴⁹ Again the Catholics were called on to oppose the wishes of their landlords and vote for both liberal Protestant candidates. By February 1826 even the national press was keeping a close eye on the Waterford campaign, *The Patriot* commenting that ‘the Waterford election is to decide the character of the forty-shilling freeholders’, an event they awaited ‘with some anxiety’.⁵⁰ An election campaign, in which the forty-shilling freeholders were advised to follow an ‘independent’ line against their landlords, had the capacity to excite national passions, and the outcome of the election had the potential to affect public feeling against the Catholic relief bill and its appendages.

Lord George Thomas Beresford did not waste the time afforded by the protraction of the canvass. His earliest election address had appeared in October 1825. Structured as a reply to the canvass of his ‘juvenile antagonist’, the language of the address revealed conservative Protestant concerns. Lord George argued that the election:

would determine whether property is to have its due weight, and whether the long cherished relations of landlord and tenant are to exert their fair and legitimate influence, or whether the political obedience of the Roman Catholic freeholder is due to his spiritual guide – and whether the county of Waterford is to put forth its strength in the dignity of independence, or to crouch to a coalition hatched and held together by a few demagogues, unconnected with your county, who claim that toleration they never practised.⁵¹

The address indicated that conservative Protestants believed (or at least pretended to believe) that the extent of enthusiasm among the freeholders in the county was an effect of the rousing tactics of the Catholic priests and the ‘demagogic’ Catholic Association rather than of a closely-knit group of local middle and upper class Catholics and liberal Protestants. Lord George largely aimed at garnering Protestant support, but an address centred on the hallowed position of the landlord could not fail to excite already-heightened tensions in the county. The Catholics freeholders were insulted and alienated

Meagher junior, Eugene Condon, Roger Hayes, John Burke, John Power and John Fitzpatrick; *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Dec. 1825.

⁴⁸ Robert Power of Whitechurch was a nephew of Sir John Newport and the younger brother of Richard Power junior, both Whig members for Waterford. Robert Power also represented County Waterford from 1831-32, having lost a contested election in the borough of Dungarvan in 1807. Power served as county sheriff in 1834 and county high sheriff in 1836, as well as a county grand juror; B. M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), pp 214 & 242.

⁴⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 7 Jan. 1826.

⁵⁰ *The Patriot*, quoted in *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Feb. 1826.

⁵¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 22 Oct. 1825.

by inferences that they were merely the unquestioning followers of spiritual guides and demagogues. Opponents of Beresford painted him as an advocate of intolerance and a self-interested bigot who feared any diminution of his landed and Protestant interest.⁵² Neither did it go unnoticed by contemporaries that Lord George was being forced into using language not usually employed by conservative Protestants. Thomas Wyse noted, at a public dinner for Richard Power junior in November 1825, that he had never known a Beresford to enter into any discussion of 'constitutional rights'.⁵³ It was evident that the strength of support for the Whig candidates had forced the conservative Protestants into considering new and more resourceful methods to defend their position.

Several addresses appeared in the Waterford newspapers from freeholders declaring allegiance to their landlords, including one in November 1825 addressed to the marquis of Waterford.⁵⁴ This was followed in February 1826 by an address to Viscount Doneraile, who had declared for Lord George Thomas Beresford the previous September.⁵⁵ But shortly afterwards, public outcry contended that many of the signatures appearing on the addresses had been obtained for different purposes. By 27 February 1826, forty-five tenants of Viscount Doneraile disavowed parts of the address, asserting that they never pledged their support for Lord George and declaring their determination 'not to vote for the elevation of any man who would vote for our degradation'.⁵⁶ In August 1825 when Patrick Hayden, a merchant of Carrickbeg, was solicited for his support by Lord George, Hayden replied that:

I have the greatest respect for your family, but, my Lord, I consider your application to any independent Catholic as little short of a personal insult, for you and all your family have joined in abusing, insulting and calumniating us...It is to you, my Lord, and to the posture of your family...that the wretched state of this country is to be attributed.⁵⁷

Public dinners for Lord George Thomas Beresford attracted hostility from an enthusiastic populace. The *Waterford Mirror* reported in October 1825 that an antagonistic crowd had accompanied the conservative candidate through the city with

⁵² *Waterford Mirror*, 2 Nov. 1825.

⁵³ *Waterford Mirror*, 5 Nov. 1825.

⁵⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Sept. & 2 Nov. 1825, 20 Feb. 1826.

⁵⁵ Hayes St Leger, the third Viscount Doneraile owned vast estates in County Cork, as well as lands in the barony of Decies within Drum in west County Waterford; Jack Burtchael, 'Nineteenth-century society in County Waterford, part four', in *Decies*, xxxiii (1986), p. 16.

⁵⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 25 & 27 Feb. 1826.

⁵⁷ Extracts from the diary of Patrick Hayden are published in Anthony McCan, 'Waterford elections, 1826-30', in *Irish Family History*, xii (1996), pp 111-13.

shouts of 'Stuart forever'.⁵⁸ Tension peaked in March 1826 when Lord George, *en route* to the home of his conservative ally Dr Thomas Briscoe, was chased, 'hooted, reviled and pelted' for over a mile through the city by a crowd of 'angry Stuarts', who then besieged the home of Dr Briscoe while Beresford was inside.⁵⁹ The conservative mayor, John Snow, acted swiftly, reading the riot act and quickly dispersing the mob. Waterford Corporation published an address of thanks to the mayor for his conduct, blaming the incident on 'designing individuals' contriving to make the city 'an arena for displaying the most furious passions'.⁶⁰ Lord George experienced more trouble when his kinsman John Claudius Beresford attempted to address his freeholders at Portlaw. The freeholders there were no longer 'the same men whom at former elections he [John Claudius Beresford] had duped....They were no longer ignorant of 1798'.⁶¹ The strength of opposition to Lord George reveals the lengths to which lower-class (predominantly Catholic) passions had been excited by Henry Villiers Stuart's election committee. But such overt hostility from the mob may in fact have worked in Beresford's favour, rallying support from middle and upper class Protestants. Many Protestants were wary of the millenarian expectations of the Catholic masses, with their distinctly anti-Protestant implications.⁶² In the context of the extension of political education among the Catholic lower classes, as a result of the activities of Stuart's election committee at local level and the Catholic Association at national level, these Protestant fears stemmed from more than traditional prejudices and vivid imaginings.⁶³

Parliament was finally dissolved on 3 June 1826 and the following week updated election addresses were published in the Waterford newspapers. Beresford's address evocatively blamed 'a few itinerant orators, emanating from a scarcely legal [Catholic] association' and 'a portion of the Roman Catholic clergy subservient to its views' for 'erecting a spiritual despotism upon the ruins of civil and religious

⁵⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 12 Oct. 1825.

⁵⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 4 Mar. 1826.

⁶⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 11 Mar. 1826; Eamonn McEaney, *A history of Waterford and its mayors from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries* (Waterford, 1997), p. 233.

⁶¹ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 273; During the 1798 rebellion John Claudius Beresford had commanded a yeoman battalion which fought with a particular ferocity, and had often acted with more vigour than justice or humanity. Lord George himself was too young to play any part in the rebellion, being only seventeen in 1798; R. G. Thorne, *The history of parliament: the House of Commons, 1790-1820* (5 vols, London, 1986), iii, 188 & 186.

⁶² Broderick, 'Protestants and the 1826 Waterford County election', p. 54.

⁶³ For more information on developing Catholic politics and political education in the 1820s, and especially of the development of Catholic politics in Waterford, see O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', pp 355-403.

liberty'.⁶⁴ This attempt at rousing Protestant antipathy to mob rule again played into the hands of Henry Villiers Stuart, as the Catholic freeholders felt increasingly alienated from the landed interest. In contrast, Stuart's election address was liberal and enlightened in tone, promising his support for civil and religious liberty and urging the freeholders to choose 'a fit person as the organ of their sentiments.'⁶⁵ Local interest was intense, and meetings at Dungarvan, Lismore and Waterford witnessed both Catholics and liberal Protestants supporting the return of two liberal candidates.⁶⁶ On the arrival of the candidates in Waterford city on the eve of the election the crowds were so huge that they 'made the quay more like the fabled fields of Elysium than the principal street of a considerable seaport'.⁶⁷

The election began on 22 June 1826 and lasted for eight days. From the outset Richard Power junior led the poll, with Henry Villiers Stuart close behind him and Lord George Thomas Beresford trailing in third place. After three days of polling Lord George declared that he 'would poll to the last', but the following Thursday, 29 June, he was forced to admit defeat.⁶⁸ The final poll was as follows:

Table 5.2: Poll at the County Waterford election in 1826

Poll at the County Waterford election in 1826			
Day	Gross number of votes		
	Power	Stuart	Beresford
Day 2	236	227	160
Day 3	533	506	216
Day 5	807	758	411
Day 6	1,021	967	458
Day 7	1,172	1,112	501
Day 8	1,317	1,248	519

Source: *Waterford Mirror*, 24, 26, 28 June & 1 July 1826.

Power polled 1,317 votes to Stuart's 1,248, and only 519 votes went to Beresford (see table 5.2). It was widely accepted that it had not been necessary to poll all of Stuart's freeholders, and so many of Beresford's freeholders had voted against him that 'the battle was fought with the forces of the enemy'.⁶⁹ On 29 June 1826 Power and Stuart

⁶⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 June 1826.

⁶⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 June 1826.

⁶⁶ Daniel O'Connell was present at all of these meetings; *Waterford Mirror*, 21 June 1826.

⁶⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 24 June 1826.

⁶⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 July 1826.

⁶⁹ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 278.

were declared the victors, and the newspapers reported that 'the joy of the popular party knew no bounds'.⁷⁰ The two new Whig members were carried in chairs around the city by huge crowds of celebrating supporters. The election had witnessed what Thomas Wyse called a 'revolution': the voting of forty-shilling freeholders *en masse* for a second Whig candidate against the directions of their landlords.⁷¹ Later historians have argued that these developments were a product of the wider growth of Catholic political consciousness resulting from the activities of the Catholic Association and the Catholic clergy.⁷² While this is essentially true, such apprehension and excitement among the freeholders could not have been aroused without the active and enduring part played by Henry Villiers Stuart and his election committee at local level. The 1826 County Waterford election became the blueprint with which Daniel O'Connell would ensure his success in the County Clare by-election in 1828.

In Waterford, the election was marred by Lord George Thomas Beresford's allegations that the Stuart party had 'grossly violated' the freedom of election 'by intimidation and threats of ecclesiastical censures of excommunication used by the Catholic clergy'.⁷³ While local Catholic clergymen such as Bishop Patrick Kelly and Rev John Sheehan, who had canvassed for Stuart with Thomas Wyse in the Comeragh mountains, were heavily involved in campaign, their involvement was predominantly political, and it is unlikely that accusations of the abuse of their spiritual position were accurate, despite the continual attacks of the conservative *Waterford Mail*.⁷⁴ In March 1827 Henry Villiers Stuart told parliament that the Catholic clergy in Waterford had given instructions to the freeholders 'to be guided in giving their votes by the dictates of their conscience', but that no threats or other kinds of inducement were offered.⁷⁵ Thomas Wyse claimed that the activities of the Catholic priests at the election had been stimulated by the excitement of the freeholders rather than vice versa: the priests could support the freeholders but they could not direct them.⁷⁶ But the active

⁷⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 July 1826.

⁷¹ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 262.

⁷² O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', pp 355-403; Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', pp 112-20.

⁷³ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 June & 5 July 1826.

⁷⁴ Hearne has contended that Dr Patrick Kelly was 'a major influence on the younger priests'; Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 112; O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', p. 372; *Waterford Mail*, 17 Dec. 1825, 13 May & 3 June 1826.

⁷⁵ *Hansard*, xvi, 874-5 (5 Mar. 1827).

⁷⁶ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 282-4; the same argument has been made more recently by Fergus O'Ferrall, "'The only lever...?' The Catholic priest in Irish politics, 1823-29', in *Studies: an Irish quarterly review*, lxx (1981), pp 317-8.

canvassing of priests such as Rev John Sheehan did cause discomfort for some of Stuart's supporters. In May 1826 Henry Winston Barron, a Catholic agent for Stuart, confessed to Thomas Wyse that 'I do not think this is a legitimate or constitutional way of carrying on an election'. Barron added however that they were 'not placed in a legitimate or constitutional position' and thus were forced to 'make use of other means'.⁷⁷ On his retirement from the contest Beresford declared that he would petition parliament against Stuart's return, rather pathetically contending that many of Stuart's voters should have been disqualified for wearing 'cockades, ribbands and other marks of distinction' to the polls.⁷⁸

In 1829 Thomas Wyse asserted that the immediate causes which produced the events of the 1826 election in County Waterford had no connection with the proceedings of the Catholic Association: 'they neither arose out of its suggestion nor were much advanced by its assistance'.⁷⁹ But neither did he credit the activities of the liberal Protestants of Waterford city and county. Thomas Wyse believed the main factors that led to the events of 1826 in Waterford centred on luck, and on 'the inherent spirit of the people themselves'. The minds of the people had been prepared by local activities such as local Catholic meetings, the denominational census, completed in Waterford by Bishop Patrick Kelly, and the Catholic rent.⁸⁰ Yet the evidence reveals that the activities of liberal Protestants, both independently and in concert with local Catholics, were just as significant in 'preparing' the minds of the freeholders. The Protestant meetings, the Protestant petitions to parliament in favour of Catholic emancipation, and the letters written by liberal Protestants printed in newspapers advocating support for 'an independent interest' convinced the Catholic freeholders of widespread Protestant support for their cause.

Both Catholics and liberal Protestants regarded each other as valuable allies in the campaign against the influence of the Tory interest, and while the Catholic clergy played a part, the ardour of the freeholders was harnessed primarily through the strength and solidarity of the election committee. It was the willingness on the part of both Protestants and Catholics to stand 'side by side, worthy of equality and owning no

⁷⁷ Henry Winston Barron to Thomas Wyse, 22 May 1826 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

⁷⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 June 1826.

⁷⁹ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 262. One must consider this argument in the context of 1829, at which time Wyse was at odds with O'Connell and the association; Jupp, *British and Irish elections*, p. 168.

⁸⁰ Thomas Wyse praised Dr Patrick Kelly in 1829 for being the first to begin, and the only one to complete his portion of the denominational census suggested by Richard Lalor Sheil; Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 253 & 278.

distinction but what had been interposed by the artificial distinction of the laws' that imbued the campaign in Waterford in 1826 such popular fervour.⁸¹ The activities and support of local liberal Protestants were essential to the success of the election, and they remained convinced throughout of their indispensable role in the local leadership of both the election itself and of the larger issue of Catholic relief. Although the 1826 County Waterford election has been heralded as a turning point in Irish Catholic history, there was little evidence to suggest to Irish liberal Protestants that the emergence of an independent, exclusive, assertive and politically self-sufficient Irish Catholic nation was an inevitable development in the summer of 1826.⁸²

Part two: Liberal Protestant responses to Catholic politics, 1826-29:

The immediate aftermath of the 1826 election witnessed great celebration in Waterford and in the rest of the country, despite the enormous debts accumulated by the successful candidates.⁸³ But after the election the common ground between Catholics and liberal Protestants began to be eroded in the context of the growing confidence and heightened expectations of the Irish Catholics, and relations became fragile. There was a definite change in the tone of the support of liberal Protestants for Catholic emancipation after the County Clare by-election in 1828, and in the later 1820s liberal Protestants felt themselves increasingly at odds with an increasingly assertive Catholic body. There were liberal elements within this Catholic body with which they were more comfortable, but on the whole liberal Protestants were alienated by the populist and democratic politics promoted by O'Connell, whom they came to view as a demagogue. With some accuracy, some Protestants came to regard O'Connell's activities as a series of attempts to erode Protestant political power and displace Protestants from their dominant role in Irish society and politics.⁸⁴ Although they remained publicly supportive right up to the granting of Catholic emancipation in April 1829, these fears revealed the conservative core of liberal Protestantism. But this change did not occur overnight, and relations between certain Catholics and Protestants in Waterford remained cordial.

⁸¹ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 242.

⁸² Hearne has contended that the election heralded 'the democratisation of Irish elections', Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 120.

⁸³ Election expenses of £3,000 were still outstanding at the beginning of 1829; Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 120.

⁸⁴ Broderick, 'Protestants and the 1826 Waterford County election', p. 65.

Immediately after the 1826 election there was little evidence of a change in how Waterford liberal Protestants viewed their role in the struggle for emancipation, and there was great optimism regarding strength of parliamentary support for Catholic relief. The 1826 general election had witnessed the return of liberal representatives for all four of the Waterford seats (see table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Members of parliament for Waterford, 1826-30⁸⁵

Members for parliament for Waterford, 1826-30			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Representative</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Political standpoint</i>
1826-30	Sir John Newport	Waterford city	Whig
	Richard Power junior	County Waterford	Whig
	Henry Villiers Stuart	County Waterford	Whig
	George Lamb	Dungarvan	Whig
1830	Sir John Newport	Waterford city	Whig
	Richard Power junior	County Waterford	Whig
	George Thomas Beresford	County Waterford	Tory
	George Lamb	Dungarvan	Whig

Source: Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, 214-5 & 241-2.

Sir John Newport held onto his seat for Waterford city, Richard Power junior and Henry Villiers Stuart were returned for County Waterford, and the borough of Dungarvan continued to be represented by George Lamb. The Beresford interest, removed from the city in 1807 when Sir John Newport beat the conservative candidate Cornelius Bolton at the polls (see chapter two), had now been diminished in the county. This was viewed by liberal Protestants as a triumph for the Catholic cause. This new confidence was cemented in November 1826 when Lord George Thomas Beresford, despite threatening to prosecute Stuart for the approach employed by his election committee, as it was 'so novel in its nature, so alarming in its extent, and so unprecedented in its abuse', relinquished his intention of doing so after the failure of a parliamentary petition to unseat him.⁸⁶

The close relations forged between leading Catholics and liberal Protestants on the election committee continued after the excitement of the election had died down. At national level the Catholic Association continued to receive the cooperation of

⁸⁵ The 1830 election results shown here represent the by-election held in the county in March 1830, after the resignation of Henry Villiers Stuart (see below); Walker, *parliamentary election results*, p. 40.

⁸⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 5 July & 22 Nov. 1826.

Waterford liberal Protestants including Henry Downes, a distiller of Thomas Street and one of the signatories of the 1819 requisition. Henry Villiers Stuart contributed to a fund established to aid those forty-shilling freeholders who had voted against their landlords at the 1826 election, which had occurred in Louth, Monaghan and Westmeath, as well as in Waterford.⁸⁷ Support for Henry Villiers Stuart in Waterford city and county remained strong, so much so that the *Waterford Mirror* confidently stated in August 1827 that ‘the prevalent opinion is that Mr Stuart will never, as long as he chooses to be a candidate, be superseded by a member of the Beresford family’.⁸⁸ The liberal Protestant Sir Richard Musgrave was actively involved in aiding the forty-shilling freeholders of the county, and was instrumental in urging a county landlord, John Pierce Smith, to supply ninety pounds worth of oatmeal for their relief in February 1828.⁸⁹ Daniel O’Connell’s praise for Sir Richard, calling him ‘the kindest of landlords, the purest of magistrates, and the most affectionate friend’ revealed the close relations still enjoyed by Catholics and liberal Protestants.⁹⁰

However, by the end of 1826 it had become apparent that Catholic politics had to a great degree come under the control of the Catholic Association and its local branches. A local branch and a Catholic rent committee had been established in Waterford by February 1824.⁹¹ Despite this, Waterford liberal Protestants continued to regard parliament as the most important arena for forwarding Catholic claims, and this was here that liberal Protestant support continued to be indispensable. Through their role as the parliamentary allies of civil and religious liberty, Irish liberal Protestants continued to regard themselves as essential advocates in the campaign for Catholic emancipation. Sir John Newport and Henry Villiers Stuart reaffirmed their support for Catholic claims in August 1826, stating to the Catholic Association their readiness to support parliamentary petitions for Catholic relief.⁹²

When parliament reassembled in November 1826, the Waterford members were among the foremost advocates of emancipation. In February 1827 Henry Villiers Stuart

⁸⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 & 26 Aug. 1826, 14 July 1827 & 7 May 1828; W. T. McCullough, *Memoirs of Richard Lalor Sheil* (2 vols, London, 1855), i, 289-310; Wyse, *Historical sketch*, i, 290.

⁸⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 25 Aug. 1827.

⁸⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Feb. 1828.

⁹⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 9 Jan. 1828.

⁹¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Feb., 6 & 10 Mar. 1824; O’Ferrall, ‘The growth of political consciousness in Ireland’, p. 356.

⁹² *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Aug. 1826; it is interesting to consider whether these representatives, focused as they were in faithfully representing the concerns of their constituents, would have introduced parliamentary petitions against Catholic claims.

presented petitions from 'sundry bodies' of Irish Catholics.⁹³ When presenting one such petition from the bishop and clergy of Waterford, Stuart contended that the Catholic question was 'bound up' with 'the dearest interests' of his constituents. Stuart pointed to the 1826 general election as proof of 'how deeply interested are the feelings of every class of Roman Catholics in the question of their emancipation'.

The Catholics have shown they know their rights, and knowing dare assert them....even the lowliest of them have, for the sake of emancipation from the political disabilities under which they labour, been content to incur the weight of their landlord's heaviest displeasure; they have dared to brook his anger, and the poverty and oppression incident to it...⁹⁴

Stuart argued that a continued refusal to grant political equality to Irish Catholics would result in the increased influence of the Catholic church in Ireland, but that granting emancipation would result in the Irish attaching their loyalty to 'a British rather than a Catholic feeling'.⁹⁵ But while he remained an advocate of Catholic relief, even Stuart was alarmed at the potential power of the freehold vote. In March 1827 Stuart announced that he was 'favourable to the fair influence of the landlords over their tenantry, though he was not an advocate for an absolute control'.⁹⁶ Sir John Newport based his support on the same arguments used by liberal Protestants in the past: that emancipation would 'restore peace and tranquillity to Ireland' and provide for the security of the country. The act of union 'would be more fully cemented, and the benefits resulting from it rendered doubly valuable to both countries' by emancipating the Irish Catholics.⁹⁷ Sir John believed it essential 'to give all the people of Ireland' the same interest in the constitution 'which was at present possessed by only some of them'.⁹⁸ Despite their support, in March 1827 Sir Francis Burdett's motion on Catholic claims was rejected by 276 votes to 274 (see appendix E, table E.3).⁹⁹

Henry Villiers Stuart announced in February 1828 that 'his opinion of any government must depend on the measures which they would pursue with respect to the Catholic question'.¹⁰⁰ Compared with other Irish members, Stuart was a relatively vocal representative, speaking on a handful of occasions between 1826 and 1830. His main

⁹³ *Hansard* 2, xvi, 417 (12 Feb. 1827).

⁹⁴ *Hansard* 2, xvi, 417 (12 Feb. 1827).

⁹⁵ *Hansard* 2, xvi, 420 (12 Feb. 1827).

⁹⁶ *Hansard* 2, xvi, 875 (5 Mar. 1827).

⁹⁷ *Hansard* 2, xvi, 900 (6 Mar. 1827).

⁹⁸ *Hansard* 2, xvii, 502 (2 May 1827).

⁹⁹ Sir John Newport and Richard Power junior, Henry Villiers Stuart and George Lamb voted in the minority; *Hansard* 2, xvi, 1009-13 (6 Mar. 1827).

¹⁰⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 9 Feb. 1828.

interest lay in promoting the Catholic question and he spent the bulk of his time and energy on this topic. The language used by him and other Irish Whigs in supporting Catholic claims remained consistent, resting on the conviction that Ireland's ills ultimately stemmed from the divisions resulting from the disqualifying laws placed on Catholics. Sir John Newport announced in February 1828 that:

During a long course of years, he had attentively considered this subject [Catholic emancipation], and he was more and more convinced that there would be no tranquillity for Ireland, or safety for the British empire, until this act of strict justice was done.¹⁰¹

During the debate on the Catholic question in May 1828, both Sir John Newport and Henry Villiers Stuart argued the question in terms of expediency, with Stuart employing the usual tone: 'Let Englishmen and Irishmen be placed on the same footing...and they would all be bound to the constitution by an equality of affections and interests'.¹⁰² This reflected the enduring support of liberal Protestants for Catholic emancipation, but the consistency of the language used both before and after the 1826 election reveals, albeit implicitly, their view that political equality would not entail a politicisation of the freeholders or endanger the essentially Protestant nature of the political élite.

The consistent and enduring support on the part of many liberal Protestants should not mask the emergence during these years of a more assertive Catholic body that was becoming increasingly independent of Protestant influence. This emerging independence was perceptible by July 1826, when a letter of Daniel O'Connell declared that it was upon the Irish Catholics that 'the labour and the danger and all the penalty of the struggle must fall'.¹⁰³ By casting the role of the liberal Protestants as dispensable, O'Connell effectively diminished their influence as leaders of opinion at local level. To Irish Protestants, O'Connell appeared to increasingly refer to Irish Catholics exclusively as the 'people of Ireland', and this was a source of much insecurity on their part.¹⁰⁴ In Waterford this new Catholic confidence was bolstered by the foundation of the Waterford Protecting Society in August 1826, the aim of which was to provide support for suffering forty-shilling freeholders in County Waterford who had voted against the Beresford interest. This was to be done through collecting the new Catholic rent. This society was established as an independent body, unidentified with the Catholic

¹⁰¹ *Hansard* 2, xviii, 119 (6 Feb. 1828).

¹⁰² *Waterford Mirror*, 14 May 1828.

¹⁰³ *Waterford Mirror*, 15 July 1826.

¹⁰⁴ Fergus O'Ferrall, *Daniel O'Connell* (Dublin, 1981), p. 48.

Association, and in order to aid local forty-shilling freeholders more efficiently, the committee decided not to send collected funds to Dublin.¹⁰⁵ The committee of twenty-one established for the administering of this relief fund was made up entirely of Catholics, including Thomas Wyse, Rev John Sheehan, Thomas Meagher and Alexander Sherlock. Although this body was quickly subsumed into the growing national network of local Catholic associations, the independent spirit in which it was established pervaded the local Catholic consciousness to a significant degree. Several memorials were sent by the Waterford Protecting Society to the Catholic Association in Dublin praying for financial relief for the Waterford freeholders. In early September 1826 the Catholic Association voted to send four hundred pounds to the association in Waterford for that purpose.¹⁰⁶ This was not sufficient to cover the extensive expenses, however, and less than two months later the society was applying for a further three hundred pounds.¹⁰⁷

In December 1826 the collection of the Catholic rent was adopted in the parishes of Killea and Passage East, and there was widespread accord among Catholics that agitation for Catholic relief should be sustained.¹⁰⁸ At a meeting of the Waterford Catholic rent committee in September 1827, a sub-committee was appointed to consider the best means of obtaining the freedom of the city for poor Catholics. A fund was established to procure the freedom for those Catholics who were eligible but who were unable to afford the costs. The second aim of the committee was 'to enforce the rights of those who may be refused admission to...[the freedom] upon any grounds not warranted by law'.¹⁰⁹ These developments, coupled with the national developments such as simultaneous meetings and Richard Lalor Sheil's idea for a denominational census, resulted in the growth of a Catholic consciousness that was both more assertive and more independent than before 1826.

In the aftermath of the 1826 election, the expenses incurred remained a major problem and a debts committee operated throughout the final years of the 1820s to receive applications for relief and to pay off the election debts. Henry Villiers Stuart's

¹⁰⁵ There was some disagreement whether to establish the society as a branch of the Catholic Association or to create an autonomous body, and eventually Wyse's suggestion that the society should be independent was agreed; *Waterford Mirror*, 12 Aug. 1826.

¹⁰⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 4 Sept. 1826

¹⁰⁷ *Waterford Chronicle*, 1 Nov. 1826.

¹⁰⁸ The meeting at Killea to establish the rent was chaired by Rev Thomas Hearn; *Waterford Mirror*, 18 & 27 Dec. 1826.

¹⁰⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 22 Sept. 1827.

election expenses reached over £10,000 and it was estimated that there was still £8,200 outstanding at the beginning of 1829.¹¹⁰ The debts committee was a skeleton structure of Stuart's original election committee. Although led by liberal Protestants Sir Richard and John Musgrave, the committee was almost entirely made up of Catholics including Thomas Wyse, John Matthew Galwey, Pierce George Barron and Robert Longan of Dungarvan. While election expenses, including the paying of election agents and publicans for their services, were high because of the extent and nature of the canvass, this was compounded by petitions for compensation filed by tenants who were suffering the consequences of having voted for Stuart at the polls. The anxiety caused by these expenses caused riots at Ballybricken in the city in September 1826.¹¹¹ In August 1826 John Matthew Galwey proposed setting up additional subscriptions to aid the freeholders as 'our friends are so low'.¹¹²

Applications for aid had begun to flow in as early as May 1826, many penned by liberal landlords and Catholic priests pleading for aid for the poorer freeholders in their parishes.¹¹³ In September 1826 the main issue for the committee was the protection of the forty shilling freeholders who had voted against Lord George Thomas Beresford. Although it is difficult to ascertain the exact numbers of tenants evicted in the aftermath of the election, the forty shilling freeholders of the marquis of Waterford were certainly threatened with eviction if they failed to vote for the conservative candidate, and in a letter to Thomas Wyse in September 1826, Roger Hayes referred to widespread 'persecution' of the forty-shilling freeholders in the county.¹¹⁴ But the forty-shilling freeholders were not the only ones to suffer for their support of the liberal interest. James Wynne, an election agent who had induced the tenants of the Beresfords' ally, Wray Palliser, to vote for Henry Villiers Stuart, complained to Thomas Wyse in November 1828 that Palliser had prevented him from procuring permanent employment ever since.¹¹⁵

The payment of the election expenses was an ongoing headache for the committee over the next four years. One creditor, Patrick Power of Ballybricken sent

¹¹⁰ Memorandum of Thomas Wyse regarding outstanding expenses incurred at the 1826 election (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,028).

¹¹¹ Roger Hayes to Thomas Wyse, 20 Sept. 1826 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹¹² John Matthew Galwey to Thomas Wyse, 24 Aug. 1826 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹¹³ John Pierce Smith to Thomas Wyse, May 1826 and Rev W. Cantwell to Thomas Wyse, 30 Aug. 1826 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹¹⁴ John Power to Thomas Wyse, 18 Apr. 1826; Roger Hayes to Thomas Wyse, 20 Sept. 1826 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹¹⁵ James Wynne to Thomas Wyse, 25 Nov. 1828 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

Thomas Wyse over twenty-five letters between August 1827 and May 1829 applying for monies owed to him.¹¹⁶ But many of the applicants for relief were not poverty stricken freeholders but middle class Catholics who had provided amenities for the freeholders during the election.¹¹⁷ The failure of Henry Villiers Stuart to concern himself with the payment of these expenses contributed significantly to a decline in his popularity in the period after the election. There is evidence to suggest that for a time the committee pretended that subscriptions spent aiding the freeholders in the county were in fact charitable donations from Stuart, but this smokescreen did not last, as it became apparent that Stuart had left for Westminster and had referred all his accounts to his agent, Sir William Jackson Homan.¹¹⁸ In August 1826 the committee began to receive impatient and more critical calls for reimbursement. One such letter from Patrick Hayden read: 'Mr Stuart intended allocating a sum for charity after the election, one shilling of it was not obtained [sic] for the starving poor here, nor did they ever receive any part of the charity distributed in other places'.¹¹⁹

Many of the Catholic members of the debts committee were also leading members of the Waterford Protecting Society, and there existed a relatively fluid relationship between the two groups. On receiving applications from parish clergy Thomas Wyse recommended the immediate formation of a parish association, not only to examine all cases of distress in the area but also to create a network for the collection of the Catholic rent.¹²⁰ Roger Hayes, a prominent Catholic barrister, kept Thomas Wyse and the debts committee abreast of the dealings of the Protecting Society. However, Hayes became increasingly frustrated as the applications for relief met with little reaction and often the Protecting Society had to postpone its meetings due to a lack of attendance.¹²¹ The funds that were collected were quickly soaked up, with Roger Hayes dismally reporting to Thomas Wyse in October 1826 that 'the whole of the funds have been signed away by [Alexander] Sherlock and others'.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Thomas Wyse continued to ignore Patrick Power's increasingly desperate applications, indicating that the committee believed there were other creditors in more urgent need of aid (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS. 15,023).

¹¹⁷ John Matthew Galwey to Thomas Wyse, 7 June 1826; R. J. O'Brien to Thomas Wyse, 7 June 1826 & Dominick Farrell to Thomas Wyse, 31 Oct. 1826 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹¹⁸ Pierce George Barron to Thomas Wyse, undated (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹¹⁹ Patrick Hayden to Thomas Wyse, 18 Aug. 1826 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹²⁰ Thomas Wyse to John Pierce Smith, 11 Aug. 1826 & Rev W. Cantwell to Thomas Wyse, 23 Aug. 1826 (N.L.I., Wyse papers. MS 15,023).

¹²¹ Roger Hayes to Thomas Wyse, 20 Sept. 1826 & Oct. 1826 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹²² Roger Hayes to Thomas Wyse, Oct. 1826 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

These problems were compounded when a potentially damaging public fracas occurred late in 1827 over the supposed disappearance of monies placed in the hands of John Matthew Galwey. In October 1827 a deputation of anxious creditors waited on Henry Villiers Stuart at Dromana in an attempt to coax him into aiding them with the subscriptions they believed to be in Galwey's hands.¹²³ The deputation contended that Galwey had acknowledged receipts for over eight hundred pounds, but it quickly became apparent that the money was no longer available for the payment of election debts.¹²⁴ Galwey claimed he had already overpaid these subscriptions and placed his accounts before the debts committee for inspection. Although there is no direct evidence to suggest where the monies went, it was inferred by Thomas Wyse that part of the subscription had been used to pay off Galwey's own expenses incurred by the election rather than being forwarded to the freeholders. Wyse argued that the money was placed with Galwey not by the debts committee but by 'a certain number of gentlemen', and that he had acted as their private banker. In December 1828 Wyse stated that at the time he had urged Galwey to order a public requisition to transfer the funds into the hands of the committee, but that his proposition had been refused.¹²⁵ But the debts committee's disinclination to hold up their records to close inspection further diminished public confidence in them, and discontent over outstanding debts continued into 1829.

A final settlement of the election expenses was prepared in January 1829. It was considered by the committee that four thousand pounds would be needed for paying off the last of the expenses, and an application for two thousand pounds of this was made to Henry Villiers Stuart. A further one thousand pounds was requested from Richard Power junior, as there was no record of him having paid his own election expenses. A proposal was put forward for collecting the last one thousand through individual subscriptions. A final £307 in the hands of Galwey was handed over to the committee, who were given powers to dispose of it effectively.¹²⁶ In June 1829 Power declined paying the one thousand pounds, contending that he had only been eligible for legal expenses, which had already been paid.¹²⁷ Finally in August 1829 Stuart sent Sir Richard Musgrave an order for two thousand pounds to pay off the outstanding

¹²³ Patrick Power to Thomas Wyse, 31 Oct. 1827 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹²⁴ Thomas Wyse to Patrick Power, 31 Oct. 1827 (N. L. I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹²⁵ Resolutions passed at the final meeting of the debts committee, 17 Nov. 1827 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,028); Thomas Wyse to Sir Richard Musgrave, 21 Dec. 1828 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹²⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 13 Jan. 1829.

¹²⁷ Richard Power to Thomas Wyse, 8 June 1828 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

debts, stipulating that he expected that thereafter ‘each creditor...[would] exonerate him from further claim’.¹²⁸ Although there was some internal disagreement between Musgrave and Galwey over the wording of the resolutions passed at a meeting of creditors, the financial affairs of the election were finally adjusted by the end of 1829.¹²⁹

Increased assertiveness on the part of Waterford Catholics, in the context of growing political consciousness at national level, had profound implications for the relations between liberal Protestants and the Catholic body. While publicly maintaining close relations – indeed in December 1828 Thomas Wyse told Sir Richard Musgrave that ‘I think the basis of all union depends upon the most perfect frankness in public matters’¹³⁰ – these groups were slowly growing more independent of one another. For example, when leading liberal parliamentarians including Sir John Newport, Henry Villiers Stuart and Richard Power junior disagreed with Daniel O’Connell in February 1828 over the propriety of repealing the subletting act, O’Connell was not averse to questioning in argumentative terms their commitment to Catholic claims.¹³¹ The subletting act of 1826, which prevented the subdivision and subletting of farms, was passed to tackle the important issue of subdivision of land in Ireland. While O’Connell urged members of parliament to support the repeal of the act, because of the eviction of many under-tenants, many Irish Whigs were not opposed to the principle of the act, believing reform rather than repeal would be most beneficial. Stuart was defiant in answering O’Connell’s attack, outlining his independence from Catholic influence in no uncertain terms:

You have, it is plain, persuaded yourself into the belief, that having had your assistance at the late election for Waterford, I was thenceforward bound, on all occasions, to adopt your views and opinions as my own, and because I dare to think for myself – because I will not truckle blindly to your doctrines, your disappointment vents itself forth in a charge of “base ingratitude”, and you will threaten to transfer your countenance from myself to the noble lord who was lately my opponent upon the hustings.¹³²

Stuart openly refused to be awed ‘into tame submission’ by O’Connell and strongly asserted that he would be led rather by issues affecting public interest and the welfare of

¹²⁸ Sir Richard Musgrave to Thomas Wyse, 14 Aug. 1829 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹²⁹ Sir Richard Musgrave to Thomas Wyse, 19 Dec. 1829 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹³⁰ Thomas Wyse to Sir Richard Musgrave, 19 Dec. 1829 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,023).

¹³¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Feb. 1828.

¹³² The ‘noble lord’ referred to was Lord George Thomas Beresford; *Waterford Mirror*, 19 Mar. 1828.

Ireland.¹³³ Although this dispute did not in itself lead to the ending of cooperation between liberal Protestants and Catholics in Waterford, the fact that Catholics were becoming less deferential to their Protestant supporters had significant ramifications for the future of Catholic-Protestant relations.

The tensions in these relations surfaced after the County Clare by-election in July 1828. The election in which Daniel O'Connell famously became the first Irish Catholic to be elected to the House of Commons has been too often studied to warrant another narrative here, but the reactions of the liberal Protestants to the emergence of an independent, assertive and politicised Catholic 'nation' have been somewhat neglected.¹³⁴ While civil and religious liberty for all classes of people in the British empire had always been the nucleus of Irish liberal Protestant support for Catholic emancipation, as a part of the Protestant political élite they had always been suspicious of populist and democratic politics. O'Connell's unambiguous crusade to politicise the nation's numerically powerful lower classes on the basis of their Catholicism had an alienating effect on liberal Protestants everywhere. While the years 1826 to 1828 were difficult ones for liberal Protestants, the real crisis came in the aftermath of the Clare election, when it became apparent that they had failed to maintain the parliamentary leadership of the Catholic cause.¹³⁵ By December 1830, Samuel Meade Hobson, a liberal Protestant barrister of William Street in the city, declared to Sir John Newport that 'we have nothing to complain of in this country, but of O'Connell' and believed that if O'Connell's influence was removed 'we should be more prosperous and tranquil this year in Ireland than in any former year of my times'.¹³⁶

Daniel O'Connell's decision to stand for election did not in itself arouse the opposition of liberal Protestant opinion, but his choice of opponent did raise some questions in their minds as to the nature his ambitions. This decision was based on a resolution passed by the Catholic Association which determined to contest every election in which a candidate loyal to Wellington's ministry was standing. William Vesey Fitzgerald was generally a government supporter and voted against the repeal of

¹³³ *Waterford Mirror*, 19 Mar. 1828.

¹³⁴ See for example Fergus O'Ferrall, *Catholic emancipation: Daniel O'Connell and the birth of Irish democracy, 1820-30* (Dublin, 1985); Oliver MacDonagh, *The hereditary bondsman: Daniel O'Connell 1775-1829* (London, 1988); Machin, *The Catholic question*.

¹³⁵ Eugene Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans: religion and politics, 1819-72', (PhD thesis, U.C.C., 2000), pp 186-8.

¹³⁶ Samuel Meade Hobson to Sir John Newport, 9 Dec. 1830 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7).

the test and corporation acts in 1828.¹³⁷ However, Fitzgerald was considered by his contemporaries to be a liberal and enlightened landlord, and was a supporter of Catholic claims, voting for Catholic relief in 1825 and 1827.¹³⁸ Indeed during the by-election the national press described Daniel O'Connell and William Vesey Fitzgerald as 'two liberal rivals'.¹³⁹ However, the language used by O'Connell in his campaign against Fitzgerald immediately put liberal Protestants on guard. Fitzgerald was called 'a real minion of Orange ascendancy' and 'the most bigoted of our enemies'.¹⁴⁰ Although O'Connell's campaign addresses were addressed to both Catholics and Protestants, the jarring and abrasive anti-government rhetoric, designed to appeal to the Catholic freeholders, was disturbing to Protestant ears. Sir John Newport had always been wary of O'Connell's demagogic strategies, and in 1829 he denounced his projects for politicising the Catholic masses as 'wild, mischievous, [and] insane'.¹⁴¹ O'Connell's decision to stand against a liberal Protestant prompted Protestant supporters of Catholic claims to recognise that the battle was quickly becoming a Catholic one, and one in which the Protestants were expendable. This significantly challenged their traditional perception of themselves as political leaders and reinvigorated fears for the future security of their political and social position. The diminution of confidence on the part of these Protestants was reinforced when O'Connell won the election with a landslide victory on 3 July 1828.¹⁴²

After the County Clare by-election there was a subtle change in the nature of liberal Protestant support for Catholic emancipation, dictated by the uncertainty and circumspection felt by Irish Protestants in the face of an assertive and assured Catholic body. This circumspection was revealed in Waterford in the retirement of liberal Protestants from local politics, or at least from many activities concerning the Catholic question. Waterford meetings of the friends of civil and religious liberty had been distinguished over the last two decades for the degree of interaction displayed by Protestants and Catholics, but a meeting in July 1828, resolving to support Daniel O'Connell in County Clare and to establish liberal clubs in Waterford city and county,

¹³⁷ *Hansard* 2, xviii, 783 (28 Feb. 1828).

¹³⁸ *Hansard* 2, xiii, 559 (10 May 1825); xvi, 1012 (8 Mar. 1827); *Waterford Mirror*, 5 & 7 July 1828.

¹³⁹ The phrase came from an article originally printed in the conservative *Dublin Evening Mail*. In the same article, the *Mail* urged a conservative candidate to 'slip in', his return secured due to the fact that the liberal votes would be divided by two candidates; *Waterford Mirror*, 28 June 1828.

¹⁴⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 21 & 28 June 1828.

¹⁴¹ It is interesting to note that Sir John Newport and liberal Catholic Thomas Wyse remained political allies during this time; Sir John Newport to Thomas Spring Rice, undated [1829] (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,370).

¹⁴² *Waterford Mirror*, 5 July 1828.

was apparently an exclusively Catholic affair.¹⁴³ Inactivity on the part of Waterford Protestants was so manifest by the autumn of 1828 that it was causing concern in some quarters. At a Munster provincial dinner at Clonmel in August 1828, Richard Lalor Sheil noticed that many Protestants, including Sir John Newport and Sir Richard Musgrave, had declined to attend.

...it is a matter that deserves attention, that when the Catholic was on the ground the Protestant took him by the hand to raise him up, but now that he stands erect, when, thank God, we no longer require their aid, they stand aloof on their own dignity. If we have committed a fault towards them it is an excess of gratitude. I will make an offering of our best thanks to all those who have given us their support, but it shall be distinct from the tribute we pay to the Protestants that have come amongst us, the genuine friends of civil and religious liberty, who act not as Protestants, but as citizens.¹⁴⁴

As well as a recognition of the weakening of Protestant public support for the Catholic cause, this was also a defiant challenge to all those who 'stood aloof' at such a crucial stage. This was not a new departure for Sheil, who as early as January 1827 had been trying to 'awaken in the Irish Protestants a just sense of their [Catholics'] condition'.¹⁴⁵ But if anything Sheil's aggressive tone served to further alienate liberal Protestant opinion from dominant Catholic attitudes. In September 1828 Sheil again remarked at a meeting of the Catholic Association: 'the Protestants are every day becoming more alienated by our display of power...thank God we can dispense with their assistance and teach them that they depend upon us far more than we depend upon them'.¹⁴⁶ Sheil understood quite well that this provocative approach would aggravate rather than placate the liberal Protestants, but his assertions certainly contained a kernel of truth: liberal Protestant support was no longer essential to the success of Catholic politics at local level. Developments in Catholic politics and political education the 1820s, crowned by the success in Clare in 1828, had created an assertive Catholic body that scorned rather than bewailed the loss of favourable Protestant opinion.

In general there was little inclination on the part of liberal Protestants to refer openly to their altered opinions and growing insecurities, and this change in opinion was if anything more conspicuous by the absence of any public expression of it. A letter of John Hely Hutchinson, Whig member for County Tipperary, to the Catholic Association

¹⁴³ The meeting was chaired by Thomas Wyse and witnessed speeches from Catholics Patrick Morris and Tobias Kirby; *Waterford Mirror*, 7 July 1828; *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Aug. 1828; O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', pp 390-1.

¹⁴⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Aug. 1828.

¹⁴⁵ McCullough, *Memoirs of Richard Lalor Sheil*, i, 332.

¹⁴⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 3 Sept. 1828.

in August 1828 was an interesting exception from almost complete silence on the part of Irish liberal Protestants. This letter, read at a Munster provincial meeting on 25 August, contended that:

However respectable and numerous that portion of his Majesty's Catholic subjects in this part of the empire are...I must deny that they are exclusively my constituents – am I...to understand that the Protestants are as nothing in the scale; or am I to be told again, as I was on a former occasion, that the Protestants are as an incubus, hanging over and wasting the energies of the Catholic population? I ask do the Catholics require more than an equal participation of civil rights with their Protestant fellow subjects?¹⁴⁷

Couched in language polite yet resolute, Hutchinson's remarks implicitly recognised the growing insecurity of Protestant opinion in the face of an increasingly independent Catholic body. The letter directly addressed the crucial point for Irish Protestants: the perception that liberal Protestants were increasingly regarded by the Catholics as secondary and expendable supporters of Catholic emancipation in Ireland. While conservative Protestants and Orangemen had for several years been addressed with abhorrence by Catholic spokesmen, it was now becoming more common to consider all Protestants as reactionary and to view concepts of nationhood and community in confessional terms. Hutchinson's letter represented a recognition of this by liberal Protestants.

While liberal Protestants in some quarters felt marginalised by increasing Catholic dominance in local politics, some might have been attracted to the right by a parliamentary development that Brian Hill has termed 'liberal Toryism'. In the 1820s there was a general change in direction on the part of Liverpool's Tory government. This was marked by the official absorption of the Grenvillite party, formerly sympathetic to the Whigs, into the government in December 1821.¹⁴⁸ It was consolidated by the appointments of Robert Peel to the home office and George Canning to the office of foreign secretary in 1822, and the government appointments of Frederick John Robinson (later Viscount Goderich) and William Huskisson, who were supported by the pragmatic Lord Liverpool. Peel among others was convinced of the need 'for an administration more in tune with the wishes of the people', and set about implementing legal reforms and freer trade. Although few 'liberal Tories' contemplated major parliamentary readjustment, many shared Peel's fears that some form of parliamentary reform was

¹⁴⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Aug. 1828.

¹⁴⁸ Thorne, *History of parliament*, i, 276.

inevitable.¹⁴⁹ While Brian Hill has called the liberalism of this phase of the Liverpool government 'a fragile growth grafted on to deep-rooted conservatism', it might have been enough to tempt some disillusioned Irish liberals.¹⁵⁰ However, there is little evidence that many Waterford liberal Protestants abandoned their Whig principles and embraced liberal Toryism, although some did come under increasing suspicion on the part of Irish Catholics.

In Waterford the increased sense of caution felt among liberal Protestants was reflected in the response of James Wallace, a member of Waterford Corporation, to the advances of the newly formed Waterford Liberal Club. The aims of the club, established by Thomas Wyse in July 1828, included the removal of all obstacles preventing Catholics from sitting on Waterford Corporation, the removal of corporate abuses and the extension of the corporate franchise.¹⁵¹ At its first meeting, the new club solicited Sir John Newport and James Wallace to send a memorial to the lord lieutenant, the marquis of Anglesey, entreating him to dispense with the anti-Catholic oaths required to be taken on entering any corporate office. Sir John Newport supported the objects of the club, but thought them overambitious and pointed to the 'formidable' difficulties in surmounting the traditions of the corporation. Sir John wondered 'whether any means less than legislative interference' would remove the 'unwarrantable and most unjust restrictions'.¹⁵² Alternatively, James Wallace's reply was polite but firm, explicitly stating his opinions concerning the liberal club which symbolised for him developing Catholic confidence and aggression:

I hope it will not be considered ungracious on my part, to take this opportunity of assuring the Waterford Liberal Club that I am not ambitious of being classed with the liberal Protestants of the present day, and that I have not the slightest intention of promoting the objects which the club so openly avow they have in view with respect to the corporation of the city.¹⁵³

Despite his status as a conservative Protestant, Wallace reflected the stance of a growing number of Waterford Protestants at the time, who had become much more concerned with protecting their own position and status in society. Many Protestants in

¹⁴⁹ Brian Hill, *The early parties and politics in Britain, 1688-1832* (London, 1996), pp 182-3.

¹⁵⁰ Hill, *The early parties and politics in Britain*, p. 183.

¹⁵¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 26 July 1828.

¹⁵² *Waterford Mirror*, 19 & 23 July 1828.

¹⁵³ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 July 1828. James Wallace was a conservative member of the corporation, as well as collector of customs for the city and a director of inland navigation. Wallace was an ally of the Alcock faction on the common council, having signed the compact of 1818 with Sir John Newport, William Newport and Harry Alcock, and he also opposed corporate reform in 1828; *Pigott's Directory 1824*.

Waterford began to look to the corporation as a symbol of Protestant security in a city whose Catholics were becoming increasingly assertive.

Liberal clubs had been established in both Waterford city and county in July 1828. The idea for a network of county liberal clubs belonged to Thomas Wyse and the blueprint for such a club in Waterford had been discussed as early as 1826.¹⁵⁴ This plan for a network of clubs, radiating from a national club based in Dublin, would provide 'a uniform, universal, permanent system of enlightened and energetic cooperation'.¹⁵⁵ The internal workings of the club were democratic in theory, with members being voted in by the subscribers. However, Thomas Wyse envisaged the membership of these clubs to be relatively middle class, identifying the clergy, gentry, churchwardens and respectable farmers as the most likely members.¹⁵⁶ In one address to the club, Thomas Wyse declared:

we abhor exclusions, monopolies and oppressions of all kinds...we are foes to all ascendancies, whether Catholic or Protestant which sets up the false interests of the few at the expense of the just interests of the many.¹⁵⁷

Liberalism for Thomas Wyse involved the participation of a wide section of all citizens in local government.¹⁵⁸ The club held regular meetings from July 1828 and took up local issues, concentrating on the position of Catholics in political life. The club was predominantly Catholic, although the Protestant Sir Richard Musgrave served as its first president. Other notable members included Thomas Wyse (secretary), Alexander Sherlock (treasurer) and Rev John Sheehan, who had written the rules and regulations of the Louth club.¹⁵⁹ Other members included John Matthew Galwey, Francis Wyse (brother of Thomas Wyse), Henry Winston Barron, Pierce George Barron and William Power of Dunhill.¹⁶⁰ Fergus O'Ferrall has pointed to the direct connection between the collection of the Catholic rent and the growth of local clubs, indicating that all rent collectors became *ex officio* members of the club.¹⁶¹ Until emancipation in April 1829, these Catholics were interested principally in maintaining

¹⁵⁴ O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', p. 387.

¹⁵⁵ Thomas Wyse to Edward Dwyer, 30 July 1830, in Wyse, *Historical sketch*, ii, appendix xxv, cxlv.

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Wyse to Edward Dwyer, 30 July 1830, in Wyse, *Historical sketch*, ii, appendix xxv, clii-cliii.

¹⁵⁷ Address of Thomas Wyse (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,030).

¹⁵⁸ O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', p. 390.

¹⁵⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 6 Aug. 1828, and O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', p. 389.

¹⁶⁰ *Waterford Chronicle*, 6 Aug. 1828.

¹⁶¹ O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', p. 388.

unity in Catholic politics and in sustaining a candid working relationship with Irish Protestants.

While there was a decided reaction among Protestants against this new independent Catholic culture, there was by no means a wholesale abandoning of the Catholic cause by its parliamentary supporters. The vast majority of Irish Whigs who had supported Catholic claims in parliament continued to do so right up until emancipation was granted by the Tory government. All four Waterford members voted in favour of the 1829 relief bill, and Henry Villiers Stuart and Sir John Newport were particularly vocal in the parliamentary debate on the Catholic question.¹⁶² Stuart continued to support unqualified emancipation, urging that the relief bill should not be 'clogged with securities'.¹⁶³ But while Stuart balked at the proposed disenfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders, Sir John Newport was more pragmatic. While in principle he opposed any further restriction of the franchise, Sir John was willing to make the 'great sacrifice' in order to obtain 'a great public good'.¹⁶⁴ By no means all liberal Protestants altered their opinion that Catholic emancipation would lead to the ending of inter-denominational division in Ireland. On the presentation of an anti-Catholic petition from the County Waterford Brunswick club, Stuart argued that the opinion of the Beresfords and their allies did 'not represent the sentiments of the great bulk of the Protestants of that county'.¹⁶⁵

Since 1826 Henry Villiers Stuart had become a symbol of progressive liberalism amongst Protestants in Waterford. While Irish Protestants in general had refrained from joining the Catholic Association after it was re-established in July 1825, Stuart remained a member and was vocal in his support of the society. He sent a subscription of twenty pounds in November 1828, soliciting the bishop of Waterford, Dr Patrick Kelly, to 'give me leave, at this anxious moment, when Catholic emancipation seems actually suspended in a balance, to add whatever weight may

¹⁶² *Hansard* 2, xx, 893-5 (6 Mar. 1829).

¹⁶³ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Feb. 1829.

¹⁶⁴ *Hansard* 2, xx, 828-9 (6 Mar. 1829) & 863 (6 Mar. 1829).

¹⁶⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Mar. 1829. A conservative reaction to the activities of the Catholic Association and the establishment of the Liberal Clubs around the country, the Brunswick Constitutional Club was established in Dublin on 14 August 1828. Its aim was to impress on government the hazard of granting political equality to Catholics, although it was forbidden to insult the Catholics on pain of expulsion. A Brunswick Club was founded at Tallow in County Waterford on 31 August. One member, George Holmes Jackson, had signed the requisition for a county meeting in 1825, but had changed his mind after the experience of the 1826 election. The club was viewed with hostility by the Waterford Catholics, but they did not believe it to constitute a serious threat; Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans', pp 177-85.

attach to my decided and unequivocal support of that great question'.¹⁶⁶ Stuart's letter elicited loud applause when it was read at a meeting of the Catholic Association on 20 November, and O'Connell described him as 'independent, patriotic and public spirited'.¹⁶⁷ Stuart even supported the association in the House of Commons, arguing against its dissolution in February 1829.¹⁶⁸ Continuing unqualified support for the Catholic question was not the reaction of many Irish Protestants in the face of a threatened erosion of their power and security, but Stuart represented a minority of liberal Protestants who were progressive and decisive in their continued support for Catholic claims. Sir Richard Musgrave was another whose support for unqualified Catholic relief endured through the late 1820s. Sir Richard remained actively involved in Catholic politics in Waterford, acting as the president of the Waterford Liberal Club and playing a leading role on both Stuart's election committee and the debts committee. Musgrave was also one of the few liberal Protestants who vocally supported the repeal of the act of union in the 1830s (see chapter six).

As optimism that the Catholic question would finally be settled burgeoned in the spring of 1829, so did liberal Protestant activity in support of Catholic claims. A grand liberal Protestant meeting in Dublin on 20 January 1829 forwarded a Protestant declaration in support of Catholic emancipation. This meeting witnessed the cooperation of leading Protestant and Catholic spokesmen and produced a general Protestant petition to parliament calling for Catholic emancipation.¹⁶⁹ On 21 February 1829 an appeal was made by the *Waterford Mirror* to the Protestants of Waterford to sign the petition: 'it is with confidence expected that the Protestants of Waterford will not be the last in the race of justice, liberality and good feeling to forward the success of their Roman Catholic brethren in the great cause'.¹⁷⁰ When presented to parliament it was claimed that the petition had received numerous and very respectable signatures.¹⁷¹ A meeting of Waterford freemen, freeholders and householders to prepare an address to the marquis of Anglesey, the former lord lieutenant who had been recalled on 30 December 1828, also witnessed a high level of inter-denominational cooperation. The appearance of Sir John Newport to chair the meeting 'produced a most enthusiastic scene'. The committee appointed to draw up the address

¹⁶⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 5 Nov. 1828.

¹⁶⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 24 Nov. 1828.

¹⁶⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Feb. 1829.

¹⁶⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 7 & 24 Jan. 1829.

¹⁷⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 21 Feb. 1829.

¹⁷¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1829.

included three liberal Protestants, Samuel Newport, Thomas Scott and Robert Shapland Carew junior, and two Catholics, Thomas Wyse and Rev John Sheehan.¹⁷²

But liberal Protestant (and Catholic) optimism was knocked when Henry Villiers Stuart announced his retirement from the representation of the county in October 1829. Stuart stated that he was resigning due to ill health, announcing that he preferred 'the private station' to a 'post of honour', at the hazard of 'turning an independent county into a rotten borough', although financial difficulties may have played its part.¹⁷³ Lord George Thomas Beresford immediately put himself forward as a candidate, taking on elements of Whig language in his election address. Lord George referred to County Waterford as 'an independent county' and accused his (temporary) Catholic opponent Henry Winston Barron of attempting to turn the constituency into a 'close borough'.¹⁷⁴ After casting around for an agreeable candidate, the 'independent' interest agreed upon John Barron, who possessed the confidence of liberal Protestants, including brothers Sir Richard and John Musgrave, who aided his extensive canvass alongside Daniel O'Connell.¹⁷⁵ However, due to internal divisions between liberal Catholics and O'Connellites, and Lord George's declaration that he would finally adhere to the principles of the emancipation bill (since it had been proposed by the government), the majority of the county's Catholic gentry voted for the conservative candidate.¹⁷⁶ Lord George Thomas Beresford regained the seat with little difficulty by 461 votes to 318.¹⁷⁷ Three years after the famous liberal victory of 1826, the second seat for County Waterford was returned with relative ease to the Beresford interest, at least until Lord George's retirement in 1831.

In his *Historical sketch*, Thomas Wyse painted an unsympathetic portrait of Irish liberal Protestants in 1829, contending that they had at all times been hampered by old prejudices and that they had little inclination much of the time to interfere in concerns which did not immediately affect themselves, to the point that they 'assumed

¹⁷² *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Jan. 1829.

¹⁷³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 20 Oct. 1829.

¹⁷⁴ *Waterford Chronicle*, 3 Nov. 1829.

¹⁷⁵ *Waterford Chronicle*, 5 & 19 Jan. 1830. Liberal Protestant Sir Richard Musgrave was originally requested stand for the county, but he turned down the offer. Catholic Henry Winston Barron offered himself as a liberal candidate, but he withdrew after he failed to win the confidence of either Daniel O'Connell or Catholic opinion in the county; *Waterford Chronicle*, 20 Oct. & 10 Dec. 1829. However, some Catholics and liberal Protestants did support him, as his retirement split the liberal group in the county.

¹⁷⁶ Donal McCartney, 'Electoral politics in Waterford in the early nineteenth century', in *Decies*, xx (1982), pp 45-7.

¹⁷⁷ Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 40 & 242.

the patronising air of masters; set up their protection as an object of competition to contending parties; [and] volunteered superciliously their counsels'.¹⁷⁸ Many liberal Protestants did share with their co-religionists from all levels of the social scale an implicit but enduring view of their own superiority, and Catholic perceptions of this were not wholly imagined. But it was significant that the trend excluding Protestant participation in the Catholic struggle had evolved to a sufficient degree by 1829 to allow Thomas Wyse to reasonably argue that the Protestant part played in the emancipation campaign had never been of consequence. Nevertheless, Wyse's own objectives in writing a history of the Catholic campaign for emancipation at a time when Catholic confidence and elation was at an all time high must also be taken into consideration.

While liberal Protestants may have felt alienated or excluded from local politics by the mass mobilisation of the emancipation campaign, electoral politics was one area in which they continued to exert their influence. The strong record of liberal representation in the city and county continued after emancipation. During the 1830 election in Waterford city there was little organised opposition to the sitting member Sir John Newport, although Protestants Henry Alcock (Whig) and William Christmas (Tory) were suggested as possible candidates.¹⁷⁹ However, Sir John Newport had the support of a wide section of the liberal Protestant and Catholic portion of the electors, as well as of Daniel O'Connell, and by 21 July 1830 the *Waterford Mirror* commented that 'the idea of opposing Sir John Newport in this city appears to have very nearly died away'.¹⁸⁰ Both the liberal Protestant *Waterford Mirror* and the Catholic *Waterford Chronicle* rallied in support of Newport, the *Waterford Chronicle* commenting in August 1830 that William Christmas, at that point Sir John's most likely opponent was 'a bad public speaker... a bad politician... [and] the opponent of every opinion that is liberal in politics, exalted in philosophy and estimable in patriotism'.¹⁸¹ As a result Sir

¹⁷⁸ Wyse, *Historical sketch*, ii, 2-8.

¹⁷⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 July, 5 & 9 Aug. 1830; Henry Alcock was an alderman on Waterford Corporation, and was mayor of the city in 1830 and 1832, as well as a grand juror and a justice of the peace in the city. A liberal Protestant, Alcock chaired a reform meeting in the city in 1832, and attended anti-tithe and public health meetings in 1832.

¹⁸⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 21 July 1830. The only reason why a section of the electors sought to oppose Sir John Newport was because of his close connection with Waterford Corporation; *Waterford Chronicle*, 7 Aug. 1830.

¹⁸¹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 5 Aug. 1830. *Ramsey's Waterford Chronicle*, owned by liberal Protestant James R Birnie, was sold to the Catholic Barron family in 1824. The newly-named *Waterford Chronicle* became a loyal supporter of O'Connell and an important propaganda machine for local and national

John Newport was returned uncontested on 5 August. His nomination by liberal Catholic Thomas Wyse and liberal Protestant Robert Shapland Carew junior reflected the fact that Sir John continued to appeal to a broad section of the constituency (see below for an analysis of the 1830 county election).¹⁸²

Both the city and county witnessed the return of liberal Protestants during the 1831 general election. In Waterford city Sir John Newport was once again returned unopposed. Like other Whigs, Sir John campaigned on a platform of parliamentary reform, calling it 'the great work of national regeneration'.¹⁸³ The *Waterford Chronicle* rallied to Newport, contending that all 'respectable and virtuous' citizens would vote for 'Newport and reform', and that 'the glorious independence of your "untouched city" remains pure and untainted'.¹⁸⁴ Opposition was offered by the Tory William Christmas, but a poll was averted on the day of the election due to the overwhelming majority for Sir John.¹⁸⁵ That Newport's only opposition came in the form of a Tory candidate reveals his ongoing popularity among Catholic as well as Protestant electors. This is indicated by the fact that Newport was again nominated and seconded by Catholic Thomas Wyse and liberal Protestant Robert Shapland Carew junior.¹⁸⁶ The city's first Catholic, O'Connellite and repeal candidates did not appear until the general election of 1832, after Sir John had retired.

In County Waterford representation passed from the hands of one Tory (Lord George Thomas Beresford) and one repealer (Daniel O'Connell) into the hands of two liberal Protestants, Sir Richard Musgrave of Tourin and Robert Power of Whitechurch. These gentlemen enjoyed popularity among a broad cross-section of the county electorate, and Sir Richard, as a Protestant repealer, especially enjoyed the support of the Catholic middle classes. Although initially reluctant to stand, Sir Richard campaigned on a platform of reform, and it is interesting in that he did not make more of his support for repeal. Owing to the fact that it was an intermittent issue, Sir Richard may have avoided the mention of repeal on this occasion as he realised he would risk alienating a considerable portion of the Protestant vote (see chapter six).

Catholic and O'Connellite politics; *Pigott's Directory 1824*, p. 321; J. S. Carroll, 'Old Waterford newspapers', in *Decies*, xxii (1983), p. 55.

¹⁸² *Waterford Chronicle*, 7 Aug. 1830.

¹⁸³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 28 Apr. 1831.

¹⁸⁴ *Waterford Chronicle*, 3 May 1831.

¹⁸⁵ Newport was declared duly elected when the traditional show of hands showed only three for William Christmas; *Waterford Chronicle*, 7 May 1831.

¹⁸⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 7 May 1831.

Robert Power of Whitechurch announced he would only stand in conjunction with Sir Richard, and it is possible that these gentlemen realised that their appeal would be most potent if they pooled their popularity and avoided contentious issues.¹⁸⁷ This is supported by the Whiggish tone of their addresses of thanks to the electors.¹⁸⁸

While the return of these candidates marked a triumph for county liberals, their success came thanks to the weakness of the O'Connellite candidate, Henry Winston Barron. After the humiliating collapse of his electoral fortunes in 1830, when he had proved so unpopular that the 'independent' interest had decided to support his younger brother John Barron, Henry Winston Barron fared little better in 1831, when his opinions 'collided' with many liberal Protestants in the county.¹⁸⁹ At a county meeting it was unanimously decided to support the two liberal Protestant candidates.¹⁹⁰ The sitting Tory member, Lord George Thomas Beresford, retired in the face of solid opposition, an event which the people of Waterford celebrated by burning him in effigy.¹⁹¹ The return of Sir Richard Musgrave and Robert Power for the county reveals not only the determination of some liberal Protestants not to relinquish their traditional role in local and national politics without a fight, it also indicates the enduring support for liberal Protestant candidates among the county electorate.

Liberal Protestant activity between the Clare election in July 1828 and the granting of emancipation in April 1829 probably stemmed as much from pragmatic motives as from magnanimous support for religious equality. Liberal Protestants were becoming acutely aware of their increasingly precarious position in Irish society and of the threat that a numerically superior, independent, assertive and politicised Catholic body could pose to the security of this position. Their justification for the leading role which they had always taken in society was fundamentally centred on their support for civil and religious equality, combined with their status as members of the enlightened, educated and propertied political élite. Once the impetus for Catholic relief had shifted to mass mobilisation, liberal Protestants were prompted to re-evaluate their own role in Irish society. Activities in support of Catholic emancipation were based in part on an unwillingness to be ousted from this position: for them it was as much a fight to retain their own status as leaders of society as it was to gain emancipation for the Catholics.

¹⁸⁷ *Waterford Chronicle*, 7 May 1831.

¹⁸⁸ *Waterford Chronicle*, 14 May 1831.

¹⁸⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 7 May 1831.

¹⁹⁰ *Waterford Chronicle*, 7 May 1831.

¹⁹¹ Lord George's retirement may also been due to declining health, and his death was reported only three days later; *Waterford Chronicle*, 12 May 1831.

The 1820s was a difficult decade for Irish liberal Protestants. After 1826 these Protestants were increasingly troubled by growing political consciousness in general and by the political mobilisation of the Catholic forty-shilling freeholders in particular. Eugene Broderick has pointed to a falling off of liberal Protestant support for Catholic politics during these years.¹⁹² While Waterford Protestants certainly felt excluded by the democratic brand of politics promoted by the Catholic Association, and while the impetus passed into Catholic hands to a great degree, many liberal Protestants continued to support political relief for Irish Catholics. As would become increasingly clear, the liberal Protestants did become expendable after emancipation was granted, but this was by no means inevitable in 1826 or even in 1828. Liberal Protestants continued to believe that if they remained central to the struggle they would have some control over the terms on which emancipation was granted. When the political momentum did pass to the Catholics and the events of the summer of 1828 forced the duke of Wellington's conservative government to concede Catholic emancipation, liberal Protestants were effectively alienated and isolated. But some liberal Protestants were reluctant to willingly relinquish their traditional position and role in Irish society, and this is revealed in the world of electoral politics. Liberal Protestants such as Sir John Newport, Sir Richard Musgrave and Robert Power continued to promote Irish Whig values, and their return to parliament in the years after emancipation attests to the continuing support for them among a broad section of the electorate in both the city and county. The ways in which Waterford liberal Protestants responded to developments in Catholic politics in the 1830s will be explored in the following chapter.

Part three: The development of liberal Catholicism in the 1820s

Liberal Protestant relations with Irish Catholics and their reactions to developments in Catholic politics in the later 1820s cannot be fully appreciated without also considering relations between different sections of the Catholic community in this period. The presence of liberal Catholics in Waterford, with whom liberal Protestants could cooperate, was of crucial importance for the survival of their prospects in the 1830s. By the 1820s Daniel O'Connell had become the undisputed leader of Catholic

¹⁹² Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans', p. 186.

Ireland and by the later 1820s he was beginning to mould a sense of Irish identity that was based on nationalism and Catholicism. But while O'Connell was celebrated among the lower classes of the Catholics, not all Catholic leaders agreed with him on every issue. Thomas Wyse was one Catholic who differed from O'Connell, not necessarily over how Catholic politics should be advanced (indeed they agreed on many topics regarding the political education of the Irish Catholics, including a nationwide network of Catholic associations and liberal clubs) but rather over how Irish Catholics should relate to Irish Protestants and the British government. In a sense all Catholic politics were essentially 'liberal' as long as the emphasis was on emancipation, but after O'Connell launched the campaign for the repeal of the union in January 1830, some Catholics remained liberal, while a majority became repealers. The development of liberal Catholicism in the 1830s formed the foundation of a loose liberal-unionist party in parliament which would oppose the O'Connellites in the early 1840s.¹⁹³

The response of Irish Catholics to the survival of the confessionalism of the eighteenth-century *ancien régime* into the nineteenth century was to enter into an alliance with liberalism. The aims of liberal Catholics in the early nineteenth century was part of a developing strategy by Irish Catholics to find long-term accommodation within the existing (Protestant) order, by abandoning intransigence and making an effective approach to the Protestant body.¹⁹⁴ This was the aim of Wyse's *Political catechism, explanatory of the constitutional rights and civil disabilities of the Catholics of Ireland* published under the auspices of the Catholic Association in 1829. This work revealed a fully-fledged liberalism, reflecting many opinions of Irish liberal Protestants to a great extent including a faith in progress, a belief in political and religious toleration, a historicist view of contemporary politics and, most significantly, an overt attachment to the British state. Wyse argued for the loyalty of Irish Catholics, and their capacity to become full citizens under the British constitution.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Robert Sloan, 'O'Connell's liberal rivals in 1843', in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxx, no. 117 (1996), p. 48.

¹⁹⁴ C. D. A. Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant kingdom: a study of the Irish ancien régime* (London, 1994), p. 160.

¹⁹⁵ Thomas Wyse, *Political catechism, explanatory of the constitutional rights and civil disabilities of the Catholics of Ireland* (London, 1829); For more on liberal Catholicism, see O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', pp 101-57; Elizabeth Heggs, 'Liberal Catholic ideology: an exposition of the *Political catechism* by Thomas Wyse', in *History Studies: University of Limerick History Society Journal*, viii (2008), pp 17-28.

Identification with liberalism gave these Catholics an ideological foundation to their campaign for full inclusion in the state.

Up until emancipation all leading Catholic spokesmen were agreed on the importance of maintaining an appearance of unity, in order to convince both Irish Protestants and the British government of the expediency of granting Catholic emancipation. But even before emancipation was granted there were divisions within Catholic opinion, and some liberal Catholics were wary of the activities promoted by O'Connell. O'Connell was a Catholic leader who was 'liberal' in many important ways, but his liberalism was 'different and more advanced' than other contemporary liberal Catholics, and his political ideas went much further than others were willing to go.¹⁹⁶ As Oliver MacDonagh has pointed out, O'Connell 'swam in the mainstream of British parliamentary radicalism'.¹⁹⁷ The advanced nature of O'Connell's liberalism and his tendency towards radicalism produced fractures within liberal Catholicism even before the dissolution of Catholic political unity after 1829. The launch of O'Connell's campaign for a repeal of the act of union in January 1830 also produced friction among liberal Catholics.¹⁹⁸ Richard Lalor Sheil had problems with O'Connell's approach to politics and they were politically estranged for some time before tentatively reuniting to pool their ideas in 1823.¹⁹⁹ Equally, Daniel O'Connell and Thomas Wyse failed to see eye to eye on many political issues. This friction stemmed as much from a squabbling for political influence than from ideological disparity, but this should not diminish the fact that some Catholic leaders were personally unhappy with the monopoly of leadership held by O'Connell, and his tendency towards demagoguery and mass politicisation. After emancipation, the unity sustained by the campaign began to dissolve and the various strands of Catholic opinion diverged. These tensions had significant ramifications for the future of liberal Catholicism in Ireland.

The 1830 general election was the first since Catholics had been made eligible to sit in parliament. For Irish Catholics this general election had the potential to repeat the successes of the 1828 Clare by-election but on a much grander scale. The 1830 election in County Waterford revealed developments in Catholic opinion and in the

¹⁹⁶ O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', p. 143.

¹⁹⁷ Oliver MacDonagh, 'The contribution of O'Connell', in Brian Farrell (ed.), *The Irish parliamentary tradition* (Dublin, 1973), p. 166.

¹⁹⁸ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 11 Jan. 1830.

¹⁹⁹ McCullough, *Memoirs of Richard Lalor Sheil*, i, 205.

nature of relations between Catholic leaders in the aftermath of emancipation. The initial run up to this election witnessed the canvassing of three candidates: the sitting (Protestant) members Lord George Thomas Beresford (Tory), Richard Power junior (Whig) and one Catholic candidate, Daniel O'Connell.²⁰⁰ O'Connell focused his campaign on the issue of reform: 'I am a decided, a radical reformer [sic] of every abuse, legal, judicial, parliamentary and political', and he boasted a successful canvass based on broad Catholic support.²⁰¹ At a meeting of the independent electors held in late July for ensuring the liberal representation of the county, the sitting liberal member Richard Power junior stood down in favour of O'Connell, asserting that 'Mr O'Connell's election...is now placed beyond the chance of disappointment'.²⁰² It is possible that Richard Power junior's retirement reflected a broader shift in liberal Protestant opinion away from the mass politics of O'Connell and a disinclination to be directly associated with O'Connellite politics. It may also have been reluctance on the part of the liberal Protestant candidate to spend his preserves of energy and resources fighting a contest in which he would have been far from sure of success. Despite this, the retirement of Richard Power junior created a situation in which the conservative Protestant candidate would be returned uncontested. This immediately caused alarm among the 'independent' constituents and a series of calls were made for a candidate to step to challenge Lord George Thomas Beresford.²⁰³

On 12 August 1830 the election address of Thomas Wyse appeared in the Waterford newspapers. Wyse had previously made it known that he was interested in contesting the county election.²⁰⁴ His canvass was explicitly aimed at removing the Beresford influence from the county and ensuring two county seats for the liberal candidates:

Influenced by no views of personal ambition, obeying the urgent call of many of the most influential interests of the county and the honest voice of an indignant people, I come forward to assert your independence in the absence of others more capable and better entitled to your support.²⁰⁵

However, O'Connell and a number of influential Catholics in the county including Henry Winston Barron, Dominic Ronayne and John Matthew Galwey viewed Wyse's

²⁰⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 21 & 29 July 1830.

²⁰¹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 29 July 1830.

²⁰² *Waterford Chronicle*, 31 July 1830.

²⁰³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 5 & 7 Aug. 1830.

²⁰⁴ J. J. Auchmuty, *Sir Thomas Wyse, 1791-1862: the life and career of an educator and diplomat* (Westminster, 1939), p. 138-9.

²⁰⁵ *Waterford Chronicle*, 12 Aug. 1830.

canvass not as a challenge to the conservative candidate but as a direct challenge to O'Connell, stemming from personal pride and political rivalry.²⁰⁶ This rivalry probably worked both ways; J. J. Auchmuty later contended that O'Connell was aware of Wyse's interest in the county seat and consequently chose to impose himself on the constituency.²⁰⁷ The O'Connellite *Waterford Chronicle* seized the opportunity to launch a negative publicity campaign against Wyse, portraying his campaign as a direct threat to O'Connell's leadership of Catholic opinion.²⁰⁸ On the second day of the election before polling began, Daniel O'Connell forced Thomas Wyse to make a decision that would affect the outcome of the election. O'Connell announced that he would rather retire from the contest than 'excite the angry or unpleasant feelings in the county of Waterford'.²⁰⁹ He did this with full knowledge that Wyse had pledged that he would not interfere with O'Connell's return.²¹⁰ This was essentially a call for Wyse to retire and Wyse understood well that O'Connell was testing his loyalty to O'Connell and to the Waterford Catholics. After a short silence Wyse announced his retirement from the contest. Daniel O'Connell and Lord George Thomas Beresford were returned without a poll.²¹¹

In offering a vindication of his actions during the election, Wyse provides an insight into his attitude towards Daniel O'Connell at this juncture. In an address to the electors of Waterford published on 21 August 1830, Wyse reaffirmed his intentions to stand in conjunction with O'Connell rather than against him: 'I was convinced, that (if united) you were enabled to return two popular members'. Wyse understood that O'Connell's offer to withdraw was attempted 'on the ground of disunion among the independent interest' and his own resignation reflected (among other things) an anxiety not to divide the liberal vote.²¹² The political division created between the divergent ideological strands among Irish Catholics might be viewed here as Wyse's liberal Catholicism came into direct conflict with the more populist strain of

²⁰⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 21 & 31 Aug. 1830. Dominic Ronayne was an O'Connellite and a repealer. Ronayne contested the seat for Dungarvan against George Lamb in 1830 but polled only fifty votes (to Lamb's 370). He was successfully returned for the borough of Clonmel in County Tipperary in 1832 and 1835. Ronayne doggedly followed O'Connell's political lead, nominating John Barron at the 1830 by-election for County Waterford in 1830 and supporting Ebenezer Jacob in the 1834 election for Dungarvan and William Villiers Stuart in during the 1835 County Waterford election (see above and chapter six). Dominic Ronayne died in 1836; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 215 & 261

²⁰⁷ Auchmuty, *Sir Thomas Wyse*, pp 126-7.

²⁰⁸ *Waterford Chronicle*, 14 Aug. 1830.

²⁰⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 14 Aug. 1830.

²¹⁰ This was mentioned by Wyse in his address to the electors, *Waterford Chronicle*, 21 Aug. 1830.

²¹¹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 14 Aug. 1830.

²¹² *Waterford Chronicle*, 21 Aug. 1830.

O'Connellism. However, despite the personal clash with O'Connell Wyse was not ready at this point to publicly break with him. He realised the potency of the influence O'Connell wielded over such a proportion of the electorate, and in his vindication one can view him attempting to craft the unity among Irish Catholics that had been utilised so effectively before emancipation. In the event Thomas Wyse was returned for County Tipperary alongside Francis Aldborough Prittie, unfortunately (for liberal Protestants) beating the sitting member, the liberal Protestant John Hely Hutchinson, by forty votes (see above for analysis of the 1830 general election).²¹³

The 1832 general election was the first election since the reform act had been passed by the Whig ministry in June. The reform act had augmented the representation of Waterford city to two seats, as well as significantly altering the composition of the electorate in the city. There were now 1,241 registered electors in the city, 641 of whom were £10 householders and 548 of whom were freeholders. While the £10 householders formed the basis of Whig and repeal support, the freeholders tended to vote for the conservative and landed element.²¹⁴ There was much optimism among the popular and independent interest that the results of the general election would symbolise a new era in parliamentary politics, and the retirement of Sir John Newport after twenty-nine years also promised an interesting contest. For liberal Protestants, many looked to liberal Catholics for a continuance of the cooperative atmosphere of the 1820s. The 1832 election was significant as it was the first at which the campaign for repeal took centre stage. By 1830 it was clear that a majority of Irish Catholics were questioning the successes of the union with Great Britain, 'though the means of resolving the tensions between the state and the Catholic democracy remained unclear'.²¹⁵ The first campaign for repeal of the union, lasting intermittently from 1830 to 1834, was a broad and pragmatic campaign that was designed to appeal to a wide portion of the population.²¹⁶ The plan for repeal was ill defined: 'the repeal of the union is nothing more than the restoration of the parliament of 1782, with the glorious principle of Catholic emancipation and the principle of reform applied to it'.²¹⁷ The

²¹³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 14 Aug. 1830; *Tipperary Free Press*, 25 Aug. 1830. The final poll stood at Francis Aldborough Prittie 757, Thomas Wyse 577 and John Hely Hutchinson 537; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 44.

²¹⁴ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 127.

²¹⁵ Brian Girvin, 'Making nations: O'Connell, religion and the creation of political identity', in M. R. O'Connell (ed.), *Daniel O'Connell: political pioneer* (Dublin, 1991), p. 14.

²¹⁶ K. B. Nowlan, 'The meaning of repeal in Irish history', in G. A. Hayes-McCoy (ed.), *Historical studies iv*, p. 5.

²¹⁷ *Waterford Chronicle*, 15 Dec. 1832.

failure to define aspects of the policy, such as land reform or education, weakened the O'Connellite position in the eyes of the government, but this lack of definition also imbued the campaign with a romantic and popular appeal.²¹⁸ The government and parliament paid little heed in the early 1830s, but the campaign had a momentous effect on local election politics and often fuelled local rivalries.

The decision of the majority of Waterford Catholics to support O'Connell's campaign for repeal alienated a significant portion of the local Protestants, even those liberals who had supported unqualified Catholic relief in the past. The majority of the Protestant propertied élite, both liberal and conservative, viewed the act of union as a security which prevented the further erosion of a political order in which they had such a vested interest.²¹⁹ Sir John Newport remained consistently hostile to any plan of repeal, announcing in March 1830 that:

whatever might have been his opinion of the union formerly, he was convinced that the repeal of the act now would be productive of the most mischievous effects. Ireland was now tranquilised and prosperous by the removal of all political disabilities, and it was most desirable that no subject of agitation should be induced there.²²⁰

The 1832 general election in Waterford city was the earliest in which a clear and defined divergence of opinion between O'Connellite and repeal politics and the liberal Catholicism of others. It was also the most bitterly contested of all general elections in Waterford in the 1830s, with the public press becoming a powerful component of electioneering tactics. By 3 November 1832, four candidates had begun to canvass in Waterford city. Three were Catholics: Henry Winston Barron, Roger Hayes and Thomas Wyse, and the fourth, William Christmas, was a conservative Protestant.²²¹ Barron supported repeal but explicitly stated that he was opposed to any alteration through violence as well as (more confusingly for the electors) a complete separation from Britain.²²² Hayes was also an O'Connellite and a repealer, and he and Barron

²¹⁸ Nowlan, 'The meaning of repeal', p. 5.

²¹⁹ Martin McElroy, 'The local Protestant landed elite and the impact of O'Connellism, 1826-35', in Joost Augusteijn & Mary Ann Lyons (eds), *Irish History: a research yearbook* (Dublin, 2002), p. 70.

²²⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Mar. 1830.

²²¹ Roger Hayes was a barrister of Waterford city. An O'Connellite, Hayes had been heavily involved in collecting money to fund O'Connell's campaign in County Clare in 1828, and was a member of the Waterford Catholic rent committee. Hayes had actively supported the election campaign of Henry Villiers Stuart in 1826, and joined the Waterford Liberal Club in 1828. Hayes was also appointed deputy sheriff for Waterford city in 1830.

²²² Henry Winston Barron later turned away from repeal and embraced more liberal politics. The seeds of independent thought are identifiable here; *Waterford Chronicle*, 6 Nov. 1832.

formed a loose alliance of interests. Hayes's address concentrated heavily on the popular aspects of his candidacy:

In resorting to me they have rejected the exploded absurdities of birth and fortune, and they thus early demonstrate the salutary effects of the late measure of reform, which has enabled the people to select their own representatives.²²³

Between them, Barron and Hayes wielded significant popular support and it was reported that they and a 'strong body of repealers' had commenced a canvass.²²⁴ Christmas stood for the conservative and Protestant interest. In his address he advocated moderate reform, but asserted that his key interest was the protection of existing interests. On the issue of repeal his approach was much more politically rigorous than O'Connell's:

It appears to me that any modification of a separate legislature – or...any measure short of total repeal – presents insurmountable difficulties, and that a total repeal would not only be fraught with injury to the best interests of Ireland, but would be a permanent source of weakness to the entire empire.²²⁵

Christmas had little attraction for the wider population but he wielded considerable support in the corporation and among Waterford's (relatively large) Protestant middle-class. But it was Thomas Wyse's decision to contest this election, rather than seek re-election in County Tipperary, which immediately heightened tensions in the constituency.²²⁶ Wyse decided to stand on an independent Catholic platform, supporting extensive reform but avoiding the issue of repeal. His disinclination to support repeal added to the growing ideological divisions between himself and O'Connell, and largely shattered his popular appeal. Thus he was forced to rely on the support of a relatively small body of liberal Catholics and Protestants in the constituency.

The O'Connellite *Waterford Chronicle* was uncompromising in using its columns for electioneering purposes. Supportive of Barron and Hayes, the *Waterford Chronicle* launched into a diatribe against Wyse in late October 1832 that lasted throughout the election and beyond. With the *Waterford Mail* supporting the conservative William Christmas, it was left to the *Waterford Mirror* to support Thomas Wyse. While the liberal Protestant *Waterford Mirror* had always prided itself

²²³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 3 Nov. 1832.

²²⁴ *Waterford Chronicle*, 15 & 24 Nov. 1832.

²²⁵ *Waterford Chronicle*, 3 Nov. 1832.

²²⁶ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 127.

on an objective coverage of events, it did tend to lean towards Wyse due to a local rivalry with the Barron family, who owned the *Waterford Chronicle*. There was much national speculation over this contest also, with the *Dublin Evening Post* and the *Freeman's Journal* coming out in support of Thomas Wyse.²²⁷

On 18 October 1832 Wyse publicly avowed his intention of standing for the city. He claimed to come forward as a candidate for his native city in consequence of an invitation which contained the signatures of many of the most important political and commercial figures in the city.²²⁸ An archetypical example of liberal Catholic ideology in this period, Wyse's address supported extensive reform at local and legislative level, abolition of vestry cess and tithes, and 'the universal diffusion of knowledge'.²²⁹ However, Wyse avowedly avoided giving any promise of support for O'Connell's plans for repeal. He had avoided stating publicly his opinions on repeal since 1830, a stance that had cost him much popular support in County Tipperary.²³⁰ But in 1832 he was forced into giving his opinion on the matter. O'Connell inspired a deputation from the Waterford branch of the National Political Union to wait on Wyse, which demanded to know whether he would adopt O'Connell's plan for repeal.²³¹ On 10 November 1832 Wyse was obliged to concede that he recognised 'the principle of repeal', but that he abhorred any threat to the union between Britain and Ireland.²³² Instead of following O'Connell's lead, Wyse forwarded his own plan for repeal based on a federal model in which a domestic parliament in Dublin and an imperial parliament in Westminster would work together to govern Ireland more effectively.²³³

The *Waterford Chronicle* did not miss this opportunity to criticise Wyse, commenting on 10 November 1832 that 'this never ending whining about the dread of separation is really bad taste'.²³⁴ These attacks were reinforced when O'Connell referred to Wyse's plan of 'floating parliaments' as 'mongrel' and 'worthless', and

²²⁷ *Waterford Chronicle*, 3 & 13 Nov. 1832. The *Freeman's Journal* supported Thomas Wyse as a candidate, but disagreed with his ideas on repeal, believing he should align himself with Daniel O'Connell; *Waterford Chronicle*, 13 Nov. 1832.

²²⁸ *Waterford Chronicle*, 18 Oct. 1832.

²²⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 29 Oct. 1832.

²³⁰ Michael Slattery to Thomas Wyse, 19 Nov. 1830; Stephen Coppinger to Thomas Wyse, 26 November 1830 & Dr William Abraham to Thomas Wyse, 27 Nov. 1830 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,024); *Tipperary Free Press*, 20 Oct. & 11 Dec. 1830, 11 May 1831.

²³¹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 30 Oct., 8 & 13 Nov. 1832; The National Political Union was founded in Dublin in November 1831 with the aim of promoting repeal of the act of union. The Waterford Political Union was established at the same time, and had broadly the same (predominantly O'Connellite) composition as the Independent Club, established in 1830.

²³² *Waterford Chronicle*, 10 Nov. 1832.

²³³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 30 Oct. 1832.

²³⁴ *Waterford Chronicle*, 10 Nov. 1832.

pointed out that he had failed to take the pledge of repeal.²³⁵ On 22 November Wyse publicly detached himself and his politics from those of O'Connell. Wyse wrote a letter to the local press stating that he 'recoiled from the idea of taking any pledge' and that he refused to be 'led away by the demagogue'.²³⁶ Wyse's refusal to pledge his unqualified support for repeal led directly to a split in liberal vote in the city. While this event reflected Wyse's characteristic stubbornness, his determination to retain an independent line despite O'Connell's domination of Catholic politics also revealed his fortitude and his faith in liberalism. But unfortunately for Wyse, in 1832 this decision meant certain defeat.

Support in Waterford for Thomas Wyse and liberal Catholic politics came from a variety of sources. In October 1832 Alexander Sherlock, a leading Waterford Catholic publicly announced his support for Wyse.²³⁷ Other liberals and moderates who came out in support of Wyse included liberal Protestant Thomas Scott and Catholics William Aylward, John Archbold and Thomas Fogarty, as well as his brother Francis Wyse.²³⁸ Although it is difficult to produce reliable figures, it is probable that the bulk of liberal Protestants in the city voted for the liberal Catholic candidate. In the years after emancipation, liberal Catholics were the main prospect for liberal Protestants in Waterford, and these Protestants were dependent on liberal Catholics if their goal of developing a non-sectarian form of politics was going to be successful. This group of liberal Protestants and Catholics formed a significant ideological opposition to the dominant opinions expressed by Barron, Hayes, O'Connell and the *Waterford Chronicle*.

Throughout early December 1832 popular opinion turned more acutely away from Wyse, spurred on by the propaganda of the *Waterford Chronicle*. After Thomas Wyse's canvass of Ferrybank in the liberties of the city, the *Chronicle* claimed that sixty-one out of sixty-five electors in that parish had already pledged themselves to Barron.²³⁹ The impetus had passed into the hands of the repealers and a large repeal meeting was organised in the city for 8 December. This meeting resolved to support Barron and Hayes in opposition to Wyse and Christmas.²⁴⁰ The election itself began

²³⁵ *Waterford Chronicle*, 6 Nov. 1832.

²³⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 22 Nov. 1832.

²³⁷ *Waterford Chronicle*, 16 & 23 Oct. 1832.

²³⁸ *Waterford Chronicle*, 18 & 20 Dec. 1832.

²³⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 1 Dec. 1832.

²⁴⁰ *Waterford Chronicle*, 13 Dec. 1832.

on 15 December, with the *Chronicle* reporting that Wyse's nomination was greeted by 'hisses and groans'.²⁴¹

Despite the *Waterford Chronicle*'s depiction of Wyse's unpopularity, there is evidence to suggest that his supporters were more numerous than has been supposed. In March 1830 Dr William Abraham was consecrated Catholic bishop of Waterford and Lismore, against the wishes of the popular party, who had favoured Dr Nicholas Foran. Abraham was a close confidant of Wyse, and sided politically with him over O'Connell and repeal.²⁴² By 1832 Abraham enjoyed growing influence with popular Catholic opinion in the county, and may have convinced some electors to support Wyse at the polls. John Hearne has contended that O'Connell's actions towards Wyse at the hustings in 1830 had won him few friends in Waterford.²⁴³ The *Waterford Mirror* reported that several of Thomas Wyse's supporters were 'insulted on their passage up to court'. One gentleman had his face cut and his clothes ruined when he was trampled on by unidentified aggressors. On top of this, some supporters of Thomas Wyse had their windows smashed and the *Waterford Mirror* commented that 'a great deal of wrathful excitement was abroad'. When the supporters of Thomas Wyse went to the polls, they went under the protection of the sixth dragoons. The depiction revealed by the *Waterford Mirror* was one of middle class respectability being set upon by an exasperated populace.²⁴⁴

The figures below illustrate the outcome of the four-day poll. Barron led the poll from the beginning, but the final figures for each day showed Hayes, initially second, slipping into third position on the third day, with Christmas leapfrogging him. Wyse was the least popular candidate almost from the beginning (see table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Results of the poll at the Waterford city election in 1832

Results of the poll in Waterford city in 1832				
Date	Candidate			
	Barron	Christmas	Hayes	Wyse
16 Dec	138	71	120	77
17 Dec	321	149	277	137

²⁴¹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 18 Dec. 1832.

²⁴² McCartney, 'Election politics in Waterford', p. 48. Dr William Abraham was bishop of Waterford and Lismore between 1830 and 1837; Dr Nicholas Foran was eventually appointed bishop of Waterford and Lismore in 1837. Foran supported Father Matthew's temperance movement, and was greatly interested in the state of the poor in Waterford.

²⁴³ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852', p. 125.

²⁴⁴ Unfortunately none of these supporters were referenced by name; *Waterford Mirror*, 19 Dec. 1832.

19 Dec	543	508	442	322
Total	570	570	453	379

Source: *Waterford Mirror*, 19 & 22 Dec. 1832 and *Waterford Chronicle*, 20 Dec. 1832; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 55.

On 19 December 1832 the poll was closed and the repealer Henry Winston Barron and the conservative William Christmas were declared duly elected. The O'Connellites had failed in their goal of returning two repealers to parliament. The *Waterford Chronicle* immediately blamed the failure of Roger Hayes to procure a seat on a devious coalition between Christmas and Wyse.²⁴⁵ There is no evidence to support this claim – indeed Thomas Wyse and William Christmas publicly denied it on 29 December – but it was one that had an impact on popular opinion in Waterford city. In the longer term the failure of the repealers to return two candidates was blamed on the decision of Wyse to contest the election, thus splitting the liberal vote.²⁴⁶ But the most significant aspect of this election remains that it highlighted the fact that there was a nucleus of conservative Protestant opinion in the city that was sufficient to threaten any Catholic candidate, especially if the Catholic vote was divided.²⁴⁷ Another feature that became clear during the 1832 election in Waterford city was the indomitable influence of O'Connell over local election politics. If any candidate, whether Catholic or liberal Protestant, campaigned independently of O'Connell's politics, they stood to lose the support of a broad section of the popular vote. Wyse's failure to create support for his opinions in the face of O'Connellite opposition ensured him last place in the election poll, and excluded him from parliament until 1835.²⁴⁸

In the 1830s Wyse emerged as a unionist and a reformer, aiming at moderate reform of the existing political order. His ability to garner electoral support for his liberal ideas in Waterford was indicative of the strength of liberal Catholicism there. In 1830 Wyse failed to garner sufficient support to challenge the dominance of O'Connell in County Waterford, and was subsequently forced to abandon a contest. In 1832 he failed to harness sufficient support among the freemen in Waterford city to beat either the repeal or conservative candidates. The main reason for this defeat was

²⁴⁵ *Waterford Chronicle*, 20 Dec. 1832.

²⁴⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 22 Dec. 1832 & 13 Dec. 1834.

²⁴⁷ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852', p. 128.

²⁴⁸ Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 317; Fergus O'Ferrall has pointed out the irony of the fact that it was the novel power of the local political machinery fathered by Thomas Wyse in the 1820s that aided his exclusion from parliament in the 1830s; O'Ferrall, 'The growth of political consciousness in Ireland', p. 403.

his failure to take O'Connell's pledge to vote for repeal when it was brought forward in parliament. This suggests that the majority of Catholics supported Henry Winston Barron and repeal, and the majority of Protestants supported the conservative interest. Wyse managed to find support only among liberal Protestants and some moderate Catholics. This reveals the limitations of Wyse's brand of Catholic liberalism in this period. While liberal Catholicism was more prominent in Waterford than in many other places – and indeed Wyse headed the poll in the 1835 city election, and remained the representative until 1847 – nevertheless in the early 1830s, liberal Catholics and liberal Protestants did not create an alternative ideology with sufficient support to challenge O'Connell's increasingly dominant form of Irish nationalism. Liberal Catholics were not sufficiently numerous in Waterford in the 1830s to allow liberal Protestants to carve out a really non-sectarian liberal reformist agenda.

Chapter six: The rise of Catholic Ireland: responses of Waterford's liberal Protestants in the 1830s

This chapter focuses on the ways in which liberal Protestants in Waterford responded to Catholic politics in the 1830s. Eugene Broderick has viewed this period as one of decline for Waterford Protestants.¹ The 1830s were indeed difficult years for Irish liberal Protestants, and their responses to developments in the 1830s were far from straightforward. The main theme of this chapter considers Protestant responses to the era of mass politics and Catholic activism, and the problems posed to the established order and élite identity by the advent of a nascent Catholic nationalism. Parts one and two examine the liberal Protestant response to the campaigns for repeal of the union and the abolition of tithes. The final section considers the liberal Protestant response to Thomas Wyse's schemes for national elementary education in Ireland.

The vindication for the leading role which Irish liberal Protestants had always taken in society centred on their support for civil and religious equality, combined with their status as members of the enlightened, educated and landed political élite. But in the 1830s Irish Protestant society found it increasingly difficult to effect a useful and viable political organisation.² When emancipation was granted on Catholic terms and the impetus passed into the hands of the Catholics, liberal Protestants were forced to reevaluate their own role in Irish society. This was compounded by a Catholic perspective that viewed any Protestant claims to the leadership of Irish political opinion as an indication that they continued to justify these claims on the basis of an inherent superiority. In 1830 Daniel O'Connell urged the Protestant to forget his 'totally unfounded' claim to superiority, arguing that 'the Catholic has nothing farther to require from the Protestant'.³ In the 1830s the failure of liberal Protestants to pledge unqualified support to O'Connell's strategies, or to offer an alternative leadership that appealed to popular opinion, were significant factors in the erosion of the liberal Protestant argument for national leadership. Alexander Nimmo remarked to Maurice Fitzgerald, the knight of Kerry, as early as September 1828 that 'your liberal

¹ Eugene Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans: religion and politics, 1819-1872' (*PhD thesis*, U.C.C., 2000), p. 410.

² Ian d'Alton, 'A contrast in crises: southern Irish Protestantism, 1800-43 and 1885-1910', in A. C. Hepburn (ed.), *Historical studies VII: minorities in history* (London, 1978), p. 73.

³ *Waterford Mirror*, 4 Oct. 1830.

Protestants look rather foolish between the parties at present and must be rather puzzled, I think, as to what you are to do in the future'.⁴

Since 1800, the persons involved in local politics in Waterford city had altered to include a younger generation of individuals. By 1830 Sir John Newport was seventy-four, and in 1832 on the eve of the first elections to the reformed parliament he retired from the representation of Waterford city. City liberals Sir Edmund Skottowe, Thomas Scott and William Newport (the nephew and heir of Sir John) had all died by the mid-1830s.⁵ Sir John Nugent Humble, Richard Power junior of Clashmore and John Musgrave senior of Cappoquin had died by 1837.⁶ Other liberal Protestants including Edward Lee, Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe and Henry Holdsworth Hunt had largely retired from public life by 1830. While they were influenced by a tradition of liberality and cooperation in Waterford, a younger generation of individuals responded to local and national issues in differing ways. In the city, figures such as Henry Alcock, Sir Benjamin Morris, Major Beresford Gahan and Rev Thomas Clarke emerged as leading liberals.⁷ Newport's retirement, along with the second city seat secured by the 1832 reform act (see chapter seven), invited competition in electoral politics in the city. In the county, brothers Sir Richard and John Musgrave of Tourin, William Villiers Stuart of Dromana, Sir Richard Keane of Lismore and

⁴ Alexander Nimmo to Maurice Fitzgerald, 21 Sept. 1828, quoted in Martin McElroy, 'The local Protestant landed elite and O'Connellism, 1826-35', in *Irish history: a research yearbook* (Dublin, 2002), p. 70.

⁵ See obituaries in *Waterford Mirror*, 29 Oct. 1834 (Sir Edmund Skottowe), 19 Jan. 1835 (Thomas Scott) & 2 Sept. 1835 (William Newport).

⁶ See obituaries in *Waterford Mirror*, 19 Mar. 1834 (Richard Power junior), 15 Jan. 1834 (Sir John Nugent Humble) & 18 Nov. 1837 (John Musgrave).

⁷ Henry Alcock was a member of Waterford Corporation, a chief magistrate and a justice of the peace in Waterford city. He was mayor of Waterford city in 1830 and again in 1832. A liberal Protestant reformer and a supporter of Daniel O'Connell, Henry Alcock publicly supported liberal Protestant Henry Villiers Stuart in 1826 and liberal Catholic Henry Winston Barron in 1837 and 1838. Sincerely interested in the state of the poor in Waterford, Alcock was a director of the Waterford Mendicant Asylum and attended anti-tithe meetings in 1832, a public health meeting in 1832, a cholera fund meeting in 1837 and signed a petition in favour of outdoor relief in 1840. He joined the Labourer's Friend Society in 1836. Henry Alcock was equally interested in political reform, chairing reform meetings in Waterford city in 1832 and 1835, and attending an independent electors meeting in 1837, an equality with Great Britain meeting in 1836 and a pro-Whig government meeting in 1835. Sir Benjamin Morris was a local director of the Waterford National Bank. He acted as a justice of the peace for Waterford city and was deputy lord lieutenant of the city in 1838. Elected onto the common council of Waterford Corporation in 1834, Morris was one of the more liberal members and one of the only liberal Protestants to be elected onto the reformed council in 1842. A founding member of the Waterford Liberal Club in 1839, Morris was also a member of the Waterford Precursor Association from 1838 and attended repeal meetings in 1841. Despite being favourable to repeal, Benjamin Morris was also a strong supporter of Thomas Wyse, nominating him for election in 1837 and 1839. Rev Thomas Clarke was a radical and a repealer, and became heavily involved in popular and O'Connellite politics in Waterford city in the 1830s.

William Greene of Kilmanahan came to dominate the political scene.⁸ Irish liberal Protestants responded to political developments in the 1830s in a variety of ways, and there existed at all times a spectrum of opinion concerning the political questions of the day.

Part one: Responses of liberal Protestants to the campaign for repeal

After emancipation, Daniel O'Connell did not neglect the fact that popular agitation could prove an important weapon in forwarding his political agenda. Despite taking offence when he was publicly labelled a demagogue in 1831, O'Connell recognised that popular agitation was essential for forwarding any parliamentary policy that failed to muster the support of a large section of English members.⁹ Rallying popular support was O'Connell's main aim when he embarked on the campaign for a repeal of the act of union between Britain and Ireland in 1830. The campaign for repeal was one which was deliberately vague in its objectives, and neither O'Connell nor other repealers wished to wrangle over its implications. In this way, O'Connell could use it as a rallying call to appeal to as wide as possible a section of the Irish population: 'repeal is our watchword and our cry'.¹⁰ The ambiguities of what repeal would mean for the relationship between Britain and Ireland had strong implications for Irish Protestants, and it was by no means inevitable that liberal Protestants would oppose repeal in 1830. Because of the ambiguous language with

⁸ William Villiers Stuart was county sheriff in 1833, and was returned to parliament for County Waterford in 1835 on the independent interest. The younger brother of Henry Villiers Stuart, William Villiers Stuart was a liberal Protestant reformer, interested in the education of the lower classes, the abolition of tithes and church rates, corporate reform, reform of the established church and the introduction of some kind of poor law system for Ireland. In parliament he supported Sir Richard Musgrave's plans for poor relief in 1835 and introduced the navigation of River Suir bill in 1836. Sir Richard Keane (1780-1855): second baronet, was born in Lismore, County Waterford. Keane was Lieutenant Colonel in the Waterford Militia from 1804 to 1855 and succeeded to the baronetcy in 1829. Sir Richard Keane was a liberal Protestant reformer and a supporter of liberal Protestant Henry Villiers Stuart. A justice of the peace for Waterford County, Sir Richard chaired a reform meeting at Dungarvan in 1831 and attended a reform meeting in Dublin in 1840. He supported grand jury reform and attended a county meeting on the state of Ireland in 1836. Sir Richard chose not to sign the declaration against a repeal of the act of union in October 1830 (see appendix G), but he refrained from voting for O'Connell's rejected motion for a select committee to consider repeal in 1834; *Hansard* 3, xxiii, 287 (29 Apr. 1834); Frederic Boase, *Modern English biography: containing many thousand concise memoirs of persons who have died since 1850* (6 vols, Bristol, 1892-1921; reprinted 2000), ii, 167. William Greene of Kilmanahan (probably the son of Nuttal Greene, an elder liberal Protestant from the county) supported the candidacy of liberal Protestant John Power of Gurteen in 1837. Greene joined the Waterford Liberal Club in 1839 and the National Association in 1840; *Waterford Mirror*, 6 May 1839 & 13 June 1840.

⁹ Daniel O'Connell was called such in the House of Commons by Sir James Graham, first lord of the admiralty on 18 February. Graham apologised for his use of the term on 21 February, *Waterford Mirror*, 26 Feb. 1831; *Hansard* 3, ii, 715 (18 Feb. 1831) & 782-3 (21 Feb. 1831).

¹⁰ Letter of Daniel O'Connell to the editor of the *Pilot*, in *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Oct. 1832.

which repeal was promoted in the 1830s, and because it was not a constant issue (as it was promoted as an alternative only if reforms proved inadequate) there was some ground for cooperation with Catholics in these years.

When repeal was first sounded in 1830, it engendered little Protestant support. This was a significant development, as in 1800 the majority of Irish Whigs had opposed the union. But by 1830, a majority of Irish Whigs preferred union with Britain to a form of domestic legislature in which Catholics would be dominant. This was a defensive move aimed at protecting the Protestant position. As Martin McElroy has pointed out, the 'end of deference' at elections and increasing Catholic power under the leadership of Daniel O'Connell appeared to Protestants 'to signal the breakdown of the accepted social and political structures in Ireland'.¹¹ The union would provide security for Irish Protestants and prevent the further breakdown of this established order. Sir John Newport lost no time in denouncing repeal as an acceptable policy. In a speech to the House of Commons in March 1830, Newport claimed that whatever might have been his opinion of the union formerly, he was now convinced that repealing the act of union would have grave consequences for the state of Ireland.¹² However, there was some support in Protestant circles for repeal. Significantly, Protestant repealers supported repeal of the union from a liberal Protestant perspective. That they were successfully able to do this was primarily due to the ambiguities of the repeal campaign in the 1830s.

Despite their opposition to repeal, liberal Protestants (and indeed some conservative Protestants) remained conditional unionists, and many believed that the union was in need of improvement. Many Irish Protestants believed that the union had failed to consolidate the security of the empire or to allow Irishmen to share fully in the benefits of imperialism.¹³ They believed that the promise of the union had not been met and that 'England still governed Ireland on divide-and-rule principles'.¹⁴ These Protestants thought that a modification of the union was necessary to ensure greater prosperity for Ireland. These unionists had much in common with Protestant repealers. Both parties aimed at establishing peace and prosperity in Ireland; they differed merely

¹¹ McElroy, 'The local Protestant landed elite and O'Connellism', p. 70.

¹² *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Mar. 1830.

¹³ Joseph Spence, 'Isaac Butt, Irish nationality and the conditional defence of the union, 1833-70', in D. G. Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds), *Defenders of the union: a survey of British and Irish unionism since 1801* (London, 2001), p. 82.

¹⁴ Spence, 'Isaac Butt, Irish nationality and the conditional defence of the union', p. 79.

on the means by which this was to be implemented. When liberal Protestants embraced unionism in the 1830s, this did not necessarily mean they relinquished their national outlook as Irishmen. Many liberal Protestants continued to believe that unionism was fully compatible with an Irish identity, and that conditional unionism complemented a national outlook.

Throughout the 1830s leading repealers persevered in their attempts to gain Protestant support for repeal. This was the aim of Patrick Morris, a prominent Waterford Catholic who wrote a series of letters in favour of repeal in 1831. These letters were addressed to the city's parliamentary representative, Sir John Newport, as an attempt to convince him and other liberal Protestants that repeal would work in Ireland's favour. Morris's argument for a domestic legislature was as silent on detail as O'Connell's, but it is significant that the ambiguities surrounding repeal created a context in which liberal Protestant support continued to be solicited. In July 1833 O'Connell urged Irish Protestants to sign petitions against the union, arguing that only working together would ensure success: 'The Protestants of Ireland have it now in their power to *restore a domestic parliament*. Let them but join the rest of the Irish people and the thing is done'.¹⁵ However, O'Connell expressed increasing exasperation at what he came to regard as the political stubbornness of the Protestant community. He continued to solicit Protestant support for repeal throughout the 1830s, though it is probable that these appeals became increasingly rhetorical as it became apparent that the majority of Irish Protestants supported the maintenance of the union. On top of this, the significant numerical inferiority of Protestants in most parts of Ireland meant that the importance of their support diminished according to political circumstances.¹⁶ Eugene Broderick has pointed out that these years 'witnessed an intensification of the forces whereby Irish nationalism continued to be identified with the Catholic people of the country'.¹⁷ This had a significant impact on the shift towards unionism on the part of Irish liberal Protestants.

Despite O'Connell's repeated calls for Protestant support, the nature of the campaign for repeal alienated many. Some liberal Protestants argued that the benefits of emancipation, promising peace and prosperity in Ireland, had been relinquished due

¹⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 July 1833.

¹⁶ Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans', p. 193.

¹⁷ Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans', p. 192.

to the campaign for repeal. Sir John Newport thought it 'most desirable that no subject of agitation should be introduced' in Ireland after emancipation.¹⁸ A letter, signed with the pseudonym 'X', written in November 1830 contended that Ireland could yet experience the greatest of benefits from the passing of Catholic emancipation, 'but for the conduct of men who aggregate to themselves alone the merit of patriotism'.¹⁹ This revealed the resentment of liberal Protestants who had always supported Catholic inclusion in the political nation, but who were now witnessing the usurpation of their own role by Catholic leaders who promoted an increasingly exclusive notion of 'patriotism'. A letter from 'Omicron' deplored O'Connell's tendency to repeat 'old stories of Protestant oppression and Catholic grievances' through his attempts to rally the Irish people.²⁰ There was a fear among Waterford Protestants that the repeal campaign would re-open sectarian wounds and serve to divide Protestant from Catholic, as well as a barely disguised belief that O'Connell would go as far as to actively advance old grievances in order to strengthen popular support for his campaign.

The repeal campaign in Waterford gained widespread support among local Catholics. In November 1830 a repeal meeting was held in the city at which about two thousand local Catholics were present. The speakers included James Delahunty, James Nash and men by the names of Plunket and Lynagh.²¹ In November 1831 the Waterford Political Union was formed, aimed at the repeal of the union. It broadly followed the objectives laid out by the National Political Union, established contemporaneously by O'Connell in Dublin. The Waterford society was formed by local Catholics John McGrath, John Valentine Nugent and James Nash, John Quigley, William Finn and a man by the name of Cosgreve.²² The popular element of the repeal

¹⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Mar. 1830.

¹⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 24 Nov. 1830.

²⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 22 Sept. 1830.

²¹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 16 Nov. 1830. These gentlemen were by and large little known in political circles. James Delahunty was a Catholic repealer from Waterford city. Delahunty was instrumental in establishing the O'Connell fund in the city in the 1830s and joined the Waterford Liberal Club in 1839. He was involved in a meeting of the independent electors in 1837 and repeal meetings in 1830 and 1841. Delahunty also helped to organise parish repeal meetings in 1840. He was elected as alderman to the reformed corporation for the centre ward in 1842. James Nash supported Henry Winston Barron during the 1832 general election and attended a city reform meeting in 1831. Nothing is known of either Mr Plunket or Mr Lynagh, and it is possible that they were non-residents or visitors to Waterford.

²² John McGrath chaired the meeting establishing the Waterford Political Union meeting in November 1831. He also attended a meeting of independent electors in 1837. John Valentine Nugent led the campaign against vestry cess in Waterford city in the early 1830s before emigrating to Newfoundland in 1833, where he became heavily involved in politics. Nugent was also reported to have attended a

campaign deterred many liberal Protestants from supporting repeal. The majority of Waterford Protestants vocal on repeal registered alarm at the prospect of continuing agitation on the part of the (predominantly Catholic) lower classes. This alarm was connected to a deep-seated fear of the democratic strain in Catholic politics and the threat that it posed to security of property and political power. Many Protestants recognised this issue as one that, if successful, would open the flood gates of political power for Catholics. Even those liberal Protestants who favoured complete equality in political and social matters feared a Catholic ascendancy, and the residual feeling of superiority which had never been fully extinguished resurfaced once again.

This fear was compounded by the complexion of the repeal campaign in Waterford. Although the *Waterford Mirror* claimed that Catholic repealers in the city were composed of 'many of the prominent characters in the late struggle for Catholic emancipation', there is little evidence that many of these men took part in the founding of the repeal association in Waterford. Only Henry Winston Barron and Roger Hayes attended the Friends of the Waterford Political Union dinner held in November 1831.²³ Those Catholics vocal at meetings and involved on committees in the early 1830s seem to have been drawn from further down the social scale, and there was little mention of the local Catholic gentry's involvement (apart from those representing the city in parliament). This tends to fit J. H. Whyte's contention that 'repealers came from a lower social stratum' of society'.²⁴ Although Whyte was primarily speaking about repeal members of parliament, and despite the fact that his thesis was attacked by Henry Blackall for using too narrow a definition of the term 'aristocracy' in his analysis, there is evidence to suggest, in Waterford at least, that this also extended to the campaign's supporters on the ground.²⁵ It is probable that while many Catholics including John Matthew Galwey and Henry Winston Barron wished to maintain close relations with Daniel O'Connell, they also aimed at sustaining a cooperative attitude with local liberal Protestants. This possibly accounts for their unwillingness to make a public show of their support for repeal in the local arena.

simultaneous Catholic meeting in St Patrick's parish in Waterford city in 1828. James Nash actively promoted parliamentary reform at local level and was a supporter of Henry Winston Barron. John Quigley also attended a meeting of independent electors in December 1834. Little is known about William Finn except that he supported Henry Winston Barron in politics. Nothing more is known of the gentleman by the name of Cosgreve.

²³ *Waterford Mirror*, 12 Nov. 1831.

²⁴ J. H. Whyte, 'O'Connell and the repeal party', in *I.H.S.*, xi, no. 44 (1959), p. 301.

²⁵ Henry Blackall, 'Correspondence: O'Connell and the repeal party', in *I.H.S.*, xii (1960), p. 139.

In October 1830 a meeting was held in Waterford city to prepare a petition against the act of union. Although the *Waterford Mirror* reported that ‘the meeting was nearly as much divested of old religious prejudices as the great meeting which we had in the spring against the “infernal taxes”’, it was apparent from the report of speeches that there was very little, if any, local Protestant involvement. All the speeches were made by local Catholics, including William Winston Barron and Patrick Morris.²⁶ This was true of the majority of repeal meetings held throughout the decade, including one of particular significance held at Ballybricken in Waterford city in October 1840 which attracted huge crowds, as well as trades and temperance bands, but not a single Protestant.²⁷ In November 1830 a letter was printed in the *Waterford Mirror* from Rev Charles Boyton of Dublin, a popular leader of conservative Protestant opinion, referring to the dearth of Protestant activity at repeal meetings:

No person of rank, among those who are presumed to speak the opinions and to enjoy the confidence of the middle and lower classes of the Protestants, and of the great body of resident proprietary of Ireland, has been invited to share in the proceedings of the proposed meeting.²⁸

Though many Protestants avoided attending these meetings in principle, as they opposed repeal, such political displays by the Catholics did nothing to allay Protestant fears that Catholic leaders would utilise exclusively Catholic politics in the creation of a national identity, with the effect of destroying the privileged political and social position of Irish Protestantism.

Opposition to repeal was an issue on which most Irish Whigs and Tories could agree. For many Irish Protestants, Catholic emancipation was intended as ‘the last concession’ to Irish Catholic agitation, rather than a stepping stone to repeal and what was perceived as the destruction of the established church.²⁹ While the harsh and anti-Catholic language utilised by the Orange Order and other Protestant societies continued to disgust liberal Protestants in the aftermath of emancipation, by the early 1830s developments in Irish Tory ideology had sparked liberal Protestant interest.³⁰ The early 1830s witnessed a conservative Protestant reaction to Whig reform measures, especially after Daniel O’Connell and the Irish party in parliament had

²⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 16 Oct. 1830.

²⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 31 Oct. 1840.

²⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 3 Nov. 1830.

²⁹ Peter Gray, ‘Wellington and the government of Ireland, 1832-46’, in C. M. Woolgar (ed.), *Wellington studies III* (Southampton, 1999), pp 204-5.

³⁰ McElroy, ‘The local Protestant landed élite and O’Connellism’, p. 68.

joined the Whigs in alliance in 1835.³¹ As a parliamentary Conservative party developed from the mid-1830s, extra parliamentary bodies were founded in recognition of the need 'to appeal to men of all classes' and to direct Irish Tory attention away from a culture of resignation which had been exacerbated by political developments in the 1820s and 1830s.³² This effort was largely concentrated on a defence of the political *status quo*, and in the case of Ireland, with a defence of the established church and the act of union. The main purpose of these societies was to create a climate of opinion both in Ireland and Britain favourable to the established church and hostile to demands for repeal of the union.³³

One method by which Irish conservative Protestant leaders did this was by associating their unionist cause with a Protestant patriot tradition dating back to the eighteenth century.³⁴ After 1832, they also utilised the discarded Whig rhetoric of the eighteenth century grounded in the glorious revolution of 1688 and the Protestant succession, to create a sense of Irish Protestant nationhood.³⁵ This was necessary to justify a broad definition of Irish nationality, to disturb the growing belief that 'only a Catholic could be a true Hibernian'.³⁶ This created a common ground with liberal Protestants, who felt themselves increasingly alienated from national and popular politics. The 1830s witnessed some liberal Protestants identifying much more closely with a Protestant Toryism that supported the Protestant interest in church and state.³⁷ For example, at the 1832 general election for Waterford city, Sir John Newport gave his second vote to his long-time political foe, conservative Protestant William Christmas, rather than voting for Henry Winston Barron, 'a pledged repealer and O'Connellite'.³⁸

A Protestant anti-repeal meeting was held in Dublin in October 1830, convened by the duke of Leinster. This meeting agreed upon a Protestant declaration, which asserted support for the British connection and an opposition to the repeal agitation,

³¹ G. A. Cahill, 'Some nineteenth-century roots of the Ulster problem, 1829-1848', in *Irish University Review: a journal of Irish studies*, i, no. 2 (1971), p. 218.

³² Spence, 'Isaac Butt, Irish nationality and the conditional defence of the union', pp 67-8.

³³ Cahill, 'Nineteenth-century roots', p. 218.

³⁴ Spence, 'Isaac Butt, Irish nationality and the conditional defence of the union', p. 68.

³⁵ Cahill, 'Nineteenth-century roots', p. 234.

³⁶ Spence, 'Isaac Butt, Irish nationality and the conditional defence of the union', p. 79.

³⁷ Oliver MacDonagh, 'The age of O'Connell', in Vaughan, W. E. (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the union I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989), p. 166.

³⁸ Sir John gave his first vote to his political ally Thomas Wyse; Sir John Newport to Thomas Spring Rice, 22 Dec. 1832 (N.L.I., Montegale papers, MS 13,375).

which many Waterford Protestants signed.³⁹ The persons who signed the declaration tended to come from the upper and lower tiers of society, but relatively few came from the middle classes. In Waterford in particular, a relatively high percentage came from the gentry class.⁴⁰ Liberal Protestants who signed the declaration included Henry Alcock, William Marchant Ardagh, Henry Amyas Bushe, Robert Shapland Carew, William Samuel Currey, John Nugent Humble, George Holmes Jackson, Samuel King and Sir John Newport (see appendix G). But few of these Protestants were willing to get involved in the repeal or anti-repeal campaigns at local level. When Daniel O'Connell founded the Irish Volunteer Society for Repeal in January 1833, several Waterford Protestants including Robert Shapland Carew junior and Sir John Newport avoided attending the meeting, despite having been individually invited to do so. Rather, liberal Protestants attempted to maintain a well-trodden 'middle path' through which they hoped to alienate neither the Catholics nor conservative Protestants, but in the context of increasing assertiveness from both groups, generally retreated from active politics altogether.

A dearth in speeches and writings of Waterford liberal Protestants openly denouncing repeal does not mean that it is impossible to reconstruct an image of the widespread revulsion in Protestant circles at the implications of the repeal movement. In August 1834, at a dinner in Waterford held in honour of Daniel O'Connell, the Catholic Alexander Sherlock announced that the lord lieutenant of County Waterford, Henry Villiers Stuart (a liberal Protestant and a supporter of the union), had refused to grant him the positions of both grand juror and deputy lieutenant of County Waterford due to the fact that he (Sherlock) was a prominent repealer.⁴¹ Though there were ten Catholics on the county and city grand juries by 1834, only four of them were repealers (William Aylward, Piers George Barron, Henry Winston Barron and John Matthew Galwey) and three qualified their support for the issue.⁴² While it is unknown

³⁹ *Waterford Mail*, 3 Nov. 1830.

⁴⁰ P. B. Phair, "'Declaration' against repeal of the union, 1830", in *Irish Ancestor*, xiii (1981), p. 18.

⁴¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Aug. 1834.

⁴² These Catholics included including John Archbold, George Wyse, Richard Fogarty, Joseph Nash, Daniel Dunford and William Aylward on the Waterford city grand jury and Piers George Barron, John Matthew Galwey, Henry Winston Barron and Nicholas Mahon Power on the county grand jury; *Waterford Mirror*, 20 March 1830 & 5 March 1834. William Aylward did become involved in the repeal movement but not until 1840. John Matthew Galwey represented County Waterford as a repeal MP between 1832 and 1835 but failed to vote for repeal in 1833, incurring the wrath of Daniel O'Connell. Henry Winston Barron represented Waterford as a repeal M.P. between 1832 and 1835 but

whether or not Dublin Castle issued Henry Villiers Stuart with instructions about appointments to the magistracy, they certainly may have influenced appointments less directly. Sherlock remarked with venom that in County Waterford 'every means that Whig ingenuity could devise has been resorted to' to restrain the Irish gentry from supporting repeal.⁴³ Through indirect evidence such as this, Protestant distaste for repeal is suggested.

Both the liberal and conservative elements of Waterford Corporation were anxious to make government aware of their opposition to any alterations to the legislative union. They were certainly alarmed at the prospect of repeal. In February 1831 an address was sent to the lord lieutenant, the marquis of Anglesey, expressing the corporation's 'unqualified reprehension' at the 'mischievous agitation' for repeal. The corporation however, was less worried about repeal in itself than in the methods resorted to in agitating the question. The question was promoted 'by exciting the worst passions of the lower order of the people, fomenting commotion, engendering animosity against Great Britain and endangering the very foundation of civil society'.⁴⁴ These Protestants also feared the threat that popular politics posed to their position as leaders of civic politics in the city. Three years later, the corporation again anxiously expressed their opposition to repeal. In an address to William IV, Waterford Corporation emphasised their loyalty, calling the union 'that great bond of our national strength and safety'. In this address, repeal was assessed as a direct threat to political and social improvement. It was contended that 'excitement must in its continuance seriously impede the progressive improvement of Ireland'.⁴⁵

On 2 November 1830 William IV advocated, in his speech to parliament, a check to anti-unionism in Ireland.⁴⁶ Daniel O'Connell, debating amendments to the speech in the House of Commons, advocated a repeal of the union.⁴⁷ This provided Irish Protestant members with an opportunity to state their opinions on the matter (see appendix F, tables F.1-F.3 for a list of Waterford members in the 1830s). Lord George Thomas Beresford, the conservative member for County Waterford presented a

eventually decided in favour of the union, representing the city on a liberal platform between 1835 and 1841; B. M. Walker *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), pp 317-8.

⁴³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 16 Oct. 1832.

⁴⁴ Waterford Corporation minute book, 18 Feb. 1831 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

⁴⁵ Waterford Corporation minute book, 12 Feb. 1834 (W.C.A. MS LA1/1/A/15).

⁴⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Nov. 1830.

⁴⁷ *Hansard* 3, i, 98-115 (2 Nov. 1830).

petition from Carrickbeg calling for repeal, but announced that he did not concur with the measure.⁴⁸ The conservative member for Waterford city, William Christmas, declared to parliament in March 1834 that despite widespread distress in Ireland, he agreed with Irish liberal Protestants that repeal was not the proper remedy.⁴⁹ The following month Christmas announced that 'the property, intelligence and wealth of the country' was against repeal, believing it would 'be attended with the most unhappy consequences to both countries'.⁵⁰

Sir John Newport agreed that 'the repeal of the union would be attended by consequences the most deplorable to Ireland'.⁵¹ In November 1830 Newport declared to John David La Touche, a Dublin merchant, his opposition to the campaign for repeal:

Whatever might have been the merits or demerits of the original measure, its repeal, after thirty years continuance would, I am well convinced, ensure results to our unhappy country even more calamitous than those of the melancholy years which preceded its enactment.⁵²

Sir John contended that many of the grievances generally attributed to the union had in fact been caused by previous misgovernment and by pre-existing abuses from before the union had taken effect in 1801.⁵³ Newport remained a sturdy advocate of the union until the end of his parliamentary career in 1832. His views were supported by some Protestants in Waterford. One writer, using the pseudonym 'Z', remained unconvinced that Ireland's grievances were the direct result of either the legislation of the imperial parliament or the commercial connection between the two countries.⁵⁴

But not all liberal Protestants identified themselves with unionism in this period. Some Waterford Protestants found a way to support repeal and to become accepted by middle-class Catholic leadership without rousing the opposition of other Protestants. They included William Villiers Stuart, Sir Richard Keane, William Greene and Sir Richard Musgrave. William Villiers Stuart was the younger brother of Henry Villiers Stuart, voted into parliament *in absentia* by the independent interest in County

⁴⁸ *Hansard* 3, i, 583 (19 Nov. 1830); *Waterford Mirror*, 24 Nov. 1830.

⁴⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 3 Mar. 1834.

⁵⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 19 Apr. 1834.

⁵¹ *Hansard* 3, i, 584 (19 Nov. 1830).

⁵² Sir John Newport to John David La Touche, 8 Nov. 1830, in *Waterford Mirror*, 13 Nov. 1830.

⁵³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 25 Nov. 1830.

⁵⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 2 July 1831.

Waterford in September 1835.⁵⁵ At a county meeting in January 1836 held to prepare an address of thanks to the lord lieutenant, the earl of Mulgrave, William Villiers Stuart questioned the success of the union for Ireland. If Great Britain and Ireland were ruled by the same parliament and the same sovereign, he questioned why Ireland, compared to Britain, was in such an incongruous condition. Stuart attributed the state of Ireland to the 'state of inquietude and excitement' resulting from a misgovernment of the country that had perpetuated dissensions between the different classes and sects. At this point however, Stuart was prepared to put his trust in the Whig government, which was 'the first administration that has ever ruled Ireland without acting upon the plan of balancing one party against the other'.⁵⁶ In a speech before the House of Commons in January 1837, Stuart made it clear that reform in Ireland should be on a par with British reform:

As an Irishman, deeply interested in her prosperity and having a deep stake in the country with which he was connected, and by which he must rise or fall, he would entreat them...not to deprive his poor unhappy country of her fair share of the privileges which other portions of the empire enjoyed.⁵⁷

In March 1839 Stuart supported Daniel O'Connell's motion for a full implementation of the union.⁵⁸ The implication was that if the British legislature continued to fail to tackle Irish grievances and to implement the union to the utmost degree, then the only alternative would be some form of repeal. It is interesting that the ambiguities of the repeal campaign in the 1830s allowed both Protestant repealers and Protestant unionists to employ similar rhetoric when talking about reform and repeal. While William Villiers Stuart held up repeal as the only answer to parliament's failure to implement reform legislation, his language was similar to that used by his unionist brother Henry Villiers Stuart (by then Baron Stuart de Decies), who in 1839 urged the House of Lords to consider reform or else 'the people would inevitably be drawn to repeal and the destruction of the established church'.⁵⁹

Sir Richard Keane was a liberal Protestant landowner from Lismore who represented County Waterford between 1832 and 1835 on the independent interest. Keane's liberal Protestantism urged him to promote Protestant cooperation with

⁵⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Sept. 1835.

⁵⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 2 Jan. 1836.

⁵⁷ *Hansard* 3, xxxvi, 28 (31 Jan. 1837).

⁵⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 4 Mar. 1839.

⁵⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 July 1839.

Catholics to forward common goals, and he named himself a conditional repealer at a County Waterford meeting in January 1836.⁶⁰ Keane was able to retain the support of both Catholics and Protestants largely by remaining generally quiet on divisive issues in parliament, and focusing his occasional speeches on County Waterford interests. At a great reform meeting in 1840 Sir Richard optimistically announced that 'Irish reformers' (i.e. repealers) had the wide support of parliamentary liberals, the people and 'the people's clergy'.⁶¹ Sir Richard believed that Irish liberals and repealers should present a common front to strengthen their political hand. That Keane continued to promote this idea, despite opinion in Catholic quarters that Irish Protestants were expendable in popular campaigns, revealed the determination of some Irish Protestants not to give up their leading role in Irish society without a fight.

William Greene of Kilmanahan was a young liberal Protestant who appeared on the local scene for the first time in the late 1830s. In January 1839 O'Connell hailed William Greene's advent amongst them, cheered 'not only by the aid we derive from your talents and love of fatherland but as an illustrious example to the Protestant youth of Ireland, how to serve their country'.⁶² John Power of Gurteen, liberal Protestant member for County Waterford in 1839, eulogised William Greene as 'a fit successor' to Henry Villiers Stuart.⁶³ In May 1839 Greene helped to found a second Waterford Liberal Club to aid in the registration of voters.⁶⁴ In June 1840 he joined the Loyal National Repeal Association, which had been established in Dublin in April to promote repeal of the union.⁶⁵ Greene stated that he had been 'long convinced of the utter hopelessness...of obtaining equal rights for Irishmen from the imperial legislature', and that he could not conceive how 'any man with a spark of national spirit in his heart' could fail to 'swell the ranks of the repealers'. Daniel O'Connell was pleased to welcome a 'Protestant gentleman of fortune and talents' into the Repeal Association.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 2 Jan. 1836; Angus MacIntyre, *The Liberator: Daniel O'Connell and the Irish party, 1830-47* (London, 1965), p. 96.

⁶¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 Jan. 1840.

⁶² *Waterford Mirror*, 21 Jan. 1839.

⁶³ *Waterford Mirror*, 12 Jan. 1839.

⁶⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 May 1839.

⁶⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Apr. & 13 June 1840.

⁶⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 June 1840.

Sir Richard Musgrave of Tourin declared his support for repeal in a letter to the *Pilot* as early as November 1830:

It is my humble opinion that the repeal of the union is necessary for the welfare of Ireland, and that the danger of civil commotion and separation is much greater under the present system than if we had a domestic legislature.⁶⁷

Musgrave believed that after thirty years of government from Westminster, it had been proven that the imperial parliament would never make laws in the best interests of Ireland. If Ireland had been governed from Dublin, issues such as the long campaign for Catholic emancipation and the growing national debt would never have been allowed to become such confrontational issues. The *Pilot* was quick to champion Sir Richard Musgrave as the liberal advocate of repeal, but was at pains to point out that he and other repealers acted from strong conviction, rather than a blind loyalty to Daniel O'Connell: 'far from being the servile followers of O'Connell...they have often differed from him, and would again if they thought him in error'.⁶⁸ Sir Richard Musgrave publicly supported repeal without compromising either his liberal credentials or his Protestant identity. He did this through focusing on the local context in Waterford and on his close working relations with both Catholics and liberal Protestants there. In a letter to a Leinster repeal meeting in October 1840, Musgrave argued that in continuously failing to consider repeal, parliament had 'treated Irishmen as an inferior race' and had justified the demand for repeal.⁶⁹ By employing the term 'Irishmen', Sir Richard demonstrated that his understanding of Irish nationalism was expressly inclusive of Irish Protestants.

It is significant that these Protestants continued to support repeal of the union from a liberal Protestant perspective. That they were successfully able to do this was primarily due to the ambiguities of the repeal campaign in the 1830s. Sir Richard Musgrave agreed with Thomas Wyse and Patrick Morris that establishing a domestic legislature was the most sensible way of tackling Ireland's grievances and creating confidence in government: 'The only security for the stability of our connection with Great Britain must arise from a conviction on our part that we are well governed'.⁷⁰ Sir

⁶⁷ *Pilot*, 10 Nov. 1830.

⁶⁸ *Pilot* article printed in *Waterford Chronicle*, 16 Nov. 1830.

⁶⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Oct. 1840. The parliamentary session had ended in August with no discussion of the repeal question in the House of Commons and a single short discussion in the Lords; *Hansard* 3, liii, 1140 (30 Apr. 1840).

⁷⁰ *Waterford Chronicle*, 30 Oct. 1832; *Pilot*, 10 Nov. 1830.

Richard Musgrave believed that repeal would be the most realistic means of establishing political stability and peace in Ireland and maintaining the British connection. Part of this support for repeal undoubtedly stemmed from the experience of the late 1820s, which had seen liberal Protestant politics sidelined in the face of burgeoning Catholic confidence and assertiveness. This support was in part an attempt to challenge the growing exclusivity of emergent Catholic nationalism, and revealed that some liberal Protestants would not easily relinquish their leading position in Irish society.

Before moving on to the next section, it will be useful to consider the nature of Waterford liberal Protestant relations with Daniel O'Connell in the 1830s. In terms of electoral politics, the evidence available in O'Connell's correspondence is revealing of his attitude to liberal Protestant support in these years. Daniel O'Connell's main correspondent on political affairs in Waterford was the Catholic priest, Rev John Sheehan, although he wrote on several occasions to Thomas Wyse, Dominic Ronayne and John Matthew Galwey.⁷¹ Thus in the 1830s O'Connell's main correspondents in Waterford were Catholics and there is little evidence that he corresponded directly with Waterford Protestants. However, throughout the 1830s O'Connell continued to recognise the necessity of harnessing (or at least appearing to harness) Protestant support for his strategies, in order to boost his parliamentary reputation. In December 1834 Lord Rossmore told him that 'the strongest and most successful argument the enemies of Ireland use is that "the party who support in the house are almost to a man Catholic"'.⁷² O'Connell's relations with Waterford liberal Protestants remained pragmatic, and his approach to them remained political rather than personal. His correspondence reveals that while he enjoyed good relations with some liberal Protestants in Waterford, mainly due to their support for him, he criticised others for following an independent political line.

In July 1830 Sir Richard and John Musgrave canvassed for O'Connell in County Waterford, prompting Dominic Ronayne to call them 'honest and consistent'.⁷³

⁷¹ See M. R. O'Connell (ed.), *The correspondence of Daniel O'Connell* (8 vols, Dublin, 1974-80), iv-vi.

⁷² Lord Rossmore to Daniel O'Connell, 13 Dec. 1834, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, v, 229-30.

⁷³ Dominic Ronayne to Daniel O'Connell, 12 July 1830, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 188. O'Connell was returned for County Waterford in 1830, and represented the county alongside Lord George Thomas Beresford until the 1831 general election; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 44.

Conversely, the liberal Protestant Richard Power of Clashmore was viewed in a less favourable light. In April 1831 Ronayne told O'Connell that Power was prepared to stand for the county in conjunction with O'Connell at the upcoming election, but he urged caution:

This *may* be very desirable but you must be extremely cautious of committing yourself with them [the liberal Protestants] for, though political necessity may force that party into a coalition with you, they hate you if possible more than the Beresfords do...⁷⁴

That same day, Rev John Sheehan promised O'Connell that his return for County Waterford was secure, as he had the support of liberal Protestants Sir Richard and John Musgrave 'and no man dares oppose their wishes in this county'.⁷⁵ Sir Richard Musgrave rejoiced with O'Connell in the poor prospects of Lord George, telling him that Beresford was so unpopular that 'he cannot appear at the hustings'.⁷⁶ In the event O'Connell was returned for County Kerry, and liberal Protestants Sir Richard Musgrave and Robert Power were returned for County Waterford without a contest (see chapter five).⁷⁷ At the same election O'Connell supported the return of George Lamb, the liberal brother of Viscount Melbourne, for the borough of Dungarvan, over that of the Catholic Henry Winston Barron, as he recognised Lamb's ability to harness widespread popular support.⁷⁸ O'Connell also railed for the removal of 'terrible Tories' from high positions in local government. In April 1831, when the conservative county high sheriff, Henry Conor Gumbleton, refused to convene a county reform meeting, O'Connell urged that if Gumbleton persevered in refusing to convene reform meetings, a 'gentleman of high character' such as John Musgrave or Henry Villiers Stuart should be appointed in his place.⁷⁹

In parliament O'Connell continued to recognise the importance of Irish Whig support. In June 1829 Henry Villiers Stuart invoked the personal antipathy of O'Connell when he resigned from the representation of County Waterford, apparently

⁷⁴ Dominic Ronayne to Daniel O'Connell, 6 Apr. 1831, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 300.

⁷⁵ Dominic Ronayne, Rev John Sheehan & Roger Hayes to Daniel O'Connell, 30 Dec. 1831, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 301.

⁷⁶ Daniel O'Connell to Lord Duncannon, 24 Apr. 1831, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 303-4.

⁷⁷ Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 47 & 49.

⁷⁸ Daniel O'Connell to Lord Duncannon, 29 Apr. 1831, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 309-11.

⁷⁹ Daniel O'Connell to Lord Duncannon, 27 Apr. 1831, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 82.

due to financial difficulties.⁸⁰ O'Connell continued to be willing to work with Irish Protestant members on matters of mutual concern. In September 1831 the two gentlemen formed a deputation to discuss the Irish reform bill with Lords Althorp and Russell.⁸¹ Interestingly, the duke of Devonshire came to be viewed with contempt by O'Connell, despite his past support for emancipation. This may have had something to do with his *volte face* in the 1830s away from reform politics. In January 1830 Dominic Ronayne rejoiced that Devonshire had given up all claims to the boroughs of Dungarvan, Tallow and Bandon, remarking that 'this is some evidence of the value of agitation'.⁸² In January 1835 O'Connell urged the Catholic John Matthew Galwey to put his 'shoulders to the wheel' in helping to help 'the *scoundrel* nominees' of the duke out of Dungarvan.⁸³ Devonshire's change of political loyalties in these years may also have affected the political opinions of his land agent, William Samuel Currey, who was castigated in January 1835 for his 'improper and indifferent conduct' in failing to prevent a contest between the Catholic John O'Connell and the conservative Protestant T. B. C. Smith at Youghal.⁸⁴

This pragmatic attitude to Irish liberal Protestants continued throughout the 1830s. When liberal Protestants in Waterford supported Catholic and O'Connellite strategies, they were hailed as indispensable supporters, but when they failed to provide such support, they were castigated as minions of the administration and enemies of Ireland. When in March 1833 Sir Richard Keane, Whig member for County Waterford, supported the government's coercion bill, O'Connell described him as 'treacherous to the last degree' (see chapter seven).⁸⁵ In December 1837 Rev John Sheehan urged O'Connell to attempt to hinder the appointment of Sir Richard as high sheriff of the county:

From the party professing to act upon liberal principles a worse or more unpopular selection could not be made. I am convinced that in heart a greater

⁸⁰ David Mahony to Daniel O'Connell, 12 June 1829, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 75-9.

⁸¹ Daniel O'Connell to Patrick Vincent Fitzpatrick, 21 Sept. 1831, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 353-4.

⁸² Dominic Ronayne to Daniel O'Connell, 17 Jan. 1830, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 120-1.

⁸³ Daniel O'Connell to John Matthew Galwey, 8 Jan. 1834, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, v, 92.

⁸⁴ Rev John Sheehan to c/o John O'Connell, 7 Jan. 1835, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, v, 250; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 324.

⁸⁵ Daniel O'Connell to Patrick Vincent Fitzpatrick, 11 Mar. 1833, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, v, 16-7.

enemy of popular rights, a greater Orangeman than Sir Richard does not exist.⁸⁶

While several prominent Waterford Protestants had joined the Catholic Association and contributed to the Catholic rent, there is little evidence to suggest that any more than a handful joined the various O'Connellite societies in the 1830s. Sir Richard Musgrave did play an active role in the Liberal Club when it was established in the county in 1828 (see above), and acted as the club's first president. This was largely due to his close relations with Thomas Wyse and county Catholics in the immediate aftermath of the 1826 county election (see chapter five).⁸⁷ There was however, some liberal Protestant involvement in the short-lived Precursor Society, established by O'Connell in 1838. O'Connell established this society after he had become disillusioned with the extent of the Whig government's reform measures, and made strenuous efforts to revive agitation in Ireland.⁸⁸ In November 1838 a dinner was held in honour of O'Connell in Waterford city, which was chaired by liberal Protestant Sir Benjamin Morris.⁸⁹ When a Waterford branch of the society was established on 27 November, both Morris and Major Beresford Gahan became active members.⁹⁰ In May 1839 another Liberal Club was established for both the county and city of Waterford, with the aim of increasing the registry of 'liberal' voters in the county. Although dominated by O'Connellites and containing a significant Catholic clerical element, Sir Benjamin Morris and William Greene were among those who attended the first meeting.⁹¹ But despite the activities of these several liberals, there is little evidence that many Waterford Protestants paid much heed to these various societies. There was little liberal Protestant interest in the National Repeal Association when it was established in April 1840, and the only Waterford Protestant member on record as a member was William Greene of Kilmanahan (see above).⁹²

In January 1835 Rev John Sheehan assured O'Connell that the representation of the city was safe from the hands of the conservatives, as the liberals in the city,

⁸⁶ Rev John Sheehan to Daniel O'Connell, 19 Dec. 1837, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, vi, 109-12.

⁸⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Aug. 1828.

⁸⁸ O'Connell (ed.), *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, ii, 147.

⁸⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Nov. 1838.

⁹⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 & 15 Dec. 1838.

⁹¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 May 1839.

⁹² *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Apr. & 13 June 1840.

including several Quakers were 'doing their duty nobly'.⁹³ Although there is no evidence of who these Quakers may have been, it is possible that among them were Robert Jacob and Francis Davis, who had opposed the corporation during the visit of the parliamentary commissioners in December 1833 (see chapter seven). In November 1837 Rev John Sheehan urged O'Connell not to allow the support of liberal Protestant Henry Alcock to go unrewarded, contending that 'I am more deeply indebted to Alcock on public grounds than to any other man in Waterford'.⁹⁴ This evidence suggests that O'Connell and Catholic leaders in Waterford were happy to work with liberal Protestants when those Protestants provided support for Catholic politics, but that in other cases, when they did not live up to the expectations placed on them by Catholics, these Protestants were criticised as members of a political 'party' that wished only to protect their own interests. This suggests that O'Connell, aware of the necessity of doing so, welcomed liberal Protestant support when it was forthcoming, but made little real effort to harness Protestant support in Waterford in these years.

Part two: liberal Protestants and the tithe question:

Grievances over tithes and the resulting unrest illustrated to Irish Protestants perhaps more than anything the instability of their position in Irish society. After Catholic emancipation in 1829, liberal Protestants in Waterford continued to use the language of equality and were optimistic that religious differences could become a thing of the past. John Musgrave of Cappoquin, the liberal brother of the repealer Sir Richard Musgrave, stated in 1830 that the effects of emancipation were being 'very remarkably' felt in the improved state of society and condition of the people.⁹⁵ But throughout the 1830s, the assessments levied on the Catholic population for the maintenance of the established church and its clergy continued to cause great unrest in Ireland and proved a divisive issue everywhere.

The tithe was a tax of ten percent on agricultural produce levied on the occupiers of the land to pay for the livings of clergymen of the established church. The clergyman could collect the tithe himself, using a tithe proctor, or he could sell his

⁹³ Rev John Sheehan to Daniel O'Connell, 14 Jan. 1835, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, v, 258-9.

⁹⁴ Rev John Sheehan to Daniel O'Connell, 9 Nov. 1837, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, vi, 96-7.

⁹⁵ *First report of evidence of the select committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (589), vii, 71.

tithe to a tithe farmer, who then became a lay impropiator. By the 1830s many tithes were impropriate. In 1832 £109,000 was collected in impropriate tithes.⁹⁶ In the diocese of Waterford in the same year, twelve percent of the tithes that had been compounded went to lay impropiators (a relatively small percentage), while in the adjacent diocese of Lismore, twenty-three percent of the £16,104 composition tithe was collected by lay impropiators.⁹⁷ Tithe composition was a conciliatory measure introduced in 1823 that gave parishes the option of doing away with the contentious yearly valuations (see below). In Waterford, as in other places in the south of Ireland, tithes were levied on potatoes as well as grain, hay, rape and flax.⁹⁸ This increased the burden on small and subsistence farmers with small tracts of land. In 1831 Edward Ruthven, the O'Connellite member for Dublin city, moved for leave to bring in a bill to exempt tenants of less than two acres of land from paying tithes on potatoes. The motion was rejected by 133 votes to 1.⁹⁹ Waterford Corporation was the lay impropiator of nearly three thousand pounds a year in tithes, from fifteen parishes in the dioceses of Waterford (two parishes), Ossory in County Kilkenny (twelve parishes) and Cloyne in County Cork (one parish).¹⁰⁰

Up to the early 1830s, agitation sought to regulate the tithe rather than press for its total abolition.¹⁰¹ The crux of the grievance for many was not the sum levied, but the mode of collection. As early as 1808 Rev Henry Bate Dudley, an established church clergyman, recommended a commutation of tithes in order to alter the mode of collection, as it spread 'a spirit of religious dissension' injurious to the clergy of the established church. Both clergymen and lay impropiators were inclined to use tithe proctors. Tithe proctors had a reputation for being particularly harsh in their collections and were widely reviled by the Irish tenantry. This was owing to the fact that many proctors kept a percentage of the tithe for the pains taken in collecting it, and therefore had a vested interest in the amount collected. When interviewed by the select committee of the House of Lords on the state of Ireland in 1825, Major Richard

⁹⁶ S. J. Connolly, *Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford, 1988), p. 543.

⁹⁷ *Second report from the select committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the collection and payment of tithes in Ireland... 1831*, H. C. 1831-32 (663), xxii, 265.

⁹⁸ *Second report from the select committee on tithes in Ireland*, H. C. 1831-32 (508) xxi, 599.

⁹⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Feb. 1831; *Hansard* 3, ii, 906-16 (22 Feb. 1831).

¹⁰⁰ Waterford Corporation minute book, 7 Apr. 1835 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁰¹ Michael O'Hanrahan, 'The tithe war in County Kilkenny, 1830-1834' in William Nolan & Kevin Whelan (eds), *Kilkenny history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1990), p. 482.

Willcocks, inspector of police for Munster, contended that the tithe proctors, and the 'peculiar severity' of some of them in valuating and collecting tithes, were the main cause of the spirit of insurrection.¹⁰² It was agreed by others that the main cause of the disturbances relating to tithes was opposition to the tithe proctor rather than to the clergy.¹⁰³

Grievances over tithes had a long history and opposition to their payment by no means began in the 1830s. Agrarian movements in the eighteenth century, such as the Whiteboys in the 1760s and the Rightboys in the 1780s had focused on the tithe as one of their main grievances.¹⁰⁴ In the 1820s the ongoing divisions produced by this issue had forced the government to pass legislation in an attempt to soothe hostility. The tithe composition act of 1823 was a conciliatory measure which abolished the contentious yearly valuation of crops, allowing the clergyman and parishioners to negotiate a fixed biannual payment at a special vestry. This act initially proved a popular one.¹⁰⁵ But this act failed to remove the major grievance associated with the tithe, as the tax was still levied on both the owners and occupiers of the land and the mode of collection remained the same. John Musgrave of Tourin commented in 1830 that one of the major problems to arise from the act was that 'improper persons' were continually appointed as tithe commissioners and churchwardens, which perpetuated dissatisfaction among the tenantry.¹⁰⁶ Under the tithe composition act, tithes were now payable on pasture as well as arable land. Large farmers and graziers were thus added to the ranks of tithe opponents, and 'the legion of small farmers and cottiers had now more powerful allies and leaders' including some members of the established church.¹⁰⁷ On top of this, the application of the 1823 act was optional rather than compulsory, and by 1830 only half of all parishes in Ireland had been compounded.

¹⁰² *State of Ireland: minutes of evidence taken before the select committee appointed to inquire into the disturbances in Ireland... 1824*, H. C. 1825 (20), vii, 51.

¹⁰³ *State of Ireland: minutes of evidence taken before the select committee appointed to inquire into the disturbances in Ireland... 1824*, H. C. 1825 (20), vii, 78 & 192.

¹⁰⁴ Connolly, *Oxford companion*, pp 487 & 591; James Kelly, 'The genesis of "Protestant ascendancy": the Rightboy disturbances of the 1780s and their impact upon Protestant opinion', in Gerard O'Brien (ed.), *Parliament, politics and people; essays in eighteenth century Irish history* (Dublin, 1989), p. 101. It is significant that both sources mention agrarian unrest in County Waterford.

¹⁰⁵ O'Hanrahan, 'The tithe war in County Kilkenny', p. 484.

¹⁰⁶ *First report of the select committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (589), vii, 73.

¹⁰⁷ Patrick O'Donoghue, 'Causes of opposition to tithes, 1830-38', in *Studia Hibernica*, v (1965), p. 17.

Resentment against tithes in the early nineteenth century was not essentially sectarian, and was complained of by landholders of all denominations.¹⁰⁸ Major Thomas Powell, inspector of police for Leinster commented in 1824: 'the only subject on which all the people in Ireland seem agreed upon [was that] they have no wish to pay tithes'.¹⁰⁹ When presenting two petitions from County Waterford for the abolition of tithes in February 1832, Daniel O'Connell was at pains to point out to the House of Commons that 'the petitions are not from any particular class or sect. They are numerous and respectably signed by Protestants as well as Catholics'.¹¹⁰ Hostility to paying tithes intensified in 1830 against a background of economic depression owing to poor harvests. Catholic emancipation had raised the expectations of the Catholic peasantry and this was a significant reason why opposition escalated at this point. The so-called 'tithe war' began in Graiguenamanagh in County Kilkenny in October 1830 when Rev George Alcock attempted to distrain cattle belonging to a number of tenant farmers who had refused to pay their tithes. This campaign against the payment of tithes spread across the county, with incidents occurring at Gowran, Woolengrange and Carrickshock. In June 1831 Newtownbarry (now Bunclody) in County Wexford was the scene of outrage when the yeomanry fired on a crowd gathered to prevent the sale of distrained cattle, killing fourteen people. The agitation spread across the southern counties of Carlow, Wexford and Cork as well as up into Queen's County.¹¹¹

Considering that County Waterford was surrounded by the counties of Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Cork, all of which were experiencing extensive unrest caused by open resistance to tithes, there was a relatively low level of agitation there. The average rate of tithe in County Waterford, as calculated by Richard Griffith in 1832 was 2s 1¼d per acre. This was the highest rate in Munster, which averaged at 1s 2½d per acre, in spite of the unexceptional quality of land in the county.¹¹² While Richard Willcocks's analysis in 1824 that the Waterford people were 'not so stubborn in their bad habits' as elsewhere was unconvincing, his assessment of the low level of atrocious crimes in this county was accurate. County Waterford did have a long history of relative peace, a fact recognised at all levels of society in the early nineteenth

¹⁰⁸ O'Hanrahan, 'The tithe war in county Kilkenny', p. 482.

¹⁰⁹ *Minutes of evidence before the select committee from the House of Lords on the state of Ireland*, H. C. 1825 (200), vii, 108.

¹¹⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 Feb. 1832; *Hansard* 3, x, 66 (8 Feb. 1832).

¹¹¹ Connolly, *Oxford companion*, p. 543; O'Hanrahan, 'The tithe war in county Kilkenny', pp 485-91.

¹¹² *Report from the select committee on tithes in Ireland*, H. C. 1831-32 (508), xxi, 602.

century. In 1825 William Samuel Currey, liberal Protestant agent and tithe collector for twenty Waterford parishes under the duke of Devonshire, admitted that he could remember no outrages in County Waterford between 1817 and 1825 'that could amount to anything like systematic irregularity'.¹¹³ In parliament in June 1833 Henry Winston Barron referred to County Waterford as 'proverbially a quiet one', although he did admit that there was extensive unrest over the means by which tithes were collected.¹¹⁴

As well as this, there was a willingness on the part of liberal Protestant landlords to play a leading role in tithe composition. In the diocese of Waterford, forty-two out of sixty-six parishes had been compounded by 1832.¹¹⁵ In December 1830 the vicarial and rectorial tithes of the parish of Dunhill were compounded when Dean Ussher Lee accepted an annual composition of £210. In Sesquinan near Lismore, Sir Richard Musgrave supervised an agreement between Rev Piers Smyth and his parishioners for a composition of £200 per year for his vicarial tithes.¹¹⁶ A valuation of the tithe composition for County Waterford in 1830 was £19, 75s 6d on just over 490 ploughlands, which worked out at a levy of £40 4s per ploughland.¹¹⁷

But there were several outrages committed in County Waterford in the 1830s. Each of these served as a tangible reminder to Irish liberal Protestants of the instability of Irish society and of the capacity of rural lower-class agitation to threaten the interests of the landed élite. By 1831 there had been outrages committed in nine parishes, clustered in the three districts of Tramore, Dungarvan and Carrickbeg (see map of County Waterford). In two such parishes near Carrickbeg (where tithes were compounded) threatening notices had been posted threatening harm to anyone who paid tithes or aided in the collection of them.¹¹⁸ A similar notice posted in the united parishes of Kilbeacon, Killahy and Rosinan just over the county border in County Kilkenny in July 1833 railed against the arrival of Tithe Commissioner Daly – a 'half-starved whiskered Connaght man' – to place the tithes there under composition. The notice threatened that if any person acted as tithe proctor – 'some second Butler' –

¹¹³ *First report of the select committee on the state of Ireland*, H. C. 1825 (129), viii, 301.

¹¹⁴ *Hansard* 3, xviii, 390 (6 June 1833) & 641 (12 June 1833).

¹¹⁵ *Second report from the select committee on tithes in Ireland*, H. C. 1831-32 (508), xxi, 598.

¹¹⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 4 & 27 Dec. 1830.

¹¹⁷ *First report of evidence from the committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (589), vii, 83.

¹¹⁸ *First report from the select committee on tithes in Ireland*, H. C. 1831-32 (177), xxi, 230.

for such a monster of a man, we, Captain Rock and council do hereby pledge ourselves to pay the sum of five hundred pounds that we may have the gratification of rioting in his blood, of pulling him limb from limb...¹¹⁹

The summer of 1832 witnessed a flurry of activity across County Waterford to petition against the tithe system. Meetings were held in Tramore, Drumfineen, Portlaw, Kilmacow and Waterford city.¹²⁰ The county magistrates were forced to hold a meeting in the barony of Gaultier in March 1833 to swear in a number of special constables, after two acts of outrage had been committed in the area. A subscription was established to enable the magistrates to offer a reward for the apprehension of the perpetrators.¹²¹ This followed a county meeting of magistrates in February 1833 which had agreed that 'energetic measures' needed to be taken against the formation of illegal armed associations in the county known as the Gows and the Paulines.¹²² At the Waterford quarter sessions in March 1833, over 1,700 persons were arraigned for failure to pay their tithe arrears from 1831.¹²³

In early 1833 Waterford Corporation recognised the impossibility of collecting their tithes in many parishes in the dioceses of Waterford and Ossory. A committee report of February 1833 recommended a reduction in the salaries of corporate officers to balance 'the general refusal to pay tithe rents'. In consequence the mayor's salary was reduced from £276 18s 5d to £230 per year, the sheriffs giving up just under twenty pounds and the recorder over seventy-six pounds per annum.¹²⁴ In August 1833 the corporation made an attempt to compound the tithes of the parish of Knockmourne in the diocese of Cloyne. At a meeting held to negotiate the terms of the composition, the corporation's representatives Henry Ivie and Michael Evelyn were anxious to appear that they were acting only in the best interests of the tithe payers: 'it is the desire of the corporation of Waterford to compound for the said tithes on fair and

¹¹⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 July 1833. Calling the tithe commissioner a 'second Butler' was probably a reference to the Protestant Butler earls of Ormond, who were based at Kilkenny Castle.

¹²⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 9 & 18 July, 1 Aug., 3 Sept. & 8 Oct. 1832.

¹²¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 16 Mar. 1833.

¹²² *Waterford Mirror*, 25 Feb. 1833. This was in fact little more than a family feud between the McGrath and McPoole families over the marriage portion of a daughter of McPoole due to marry a son of McGrath. Up to four hundred family members were engaged in the faction fighting, of which several were killed. This feud had the injurious effect of discouraging local farmers from going to market; *Report of commissioners for the poor laws in Ireland, appendix F*, H. C. 1836 (38), xxxiii, 196; P. C. Power, *History of Waterford, city and county* (Dublin, 1990), p. 126.

¹²³ *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Mar. 1833.

¹²⁴ Waterford Corporation minute book, 27 Feb. 1833 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

liberal terms for the owners or occupiers of the land in the parish'.¹²⁵ It is noteworthy that the corporation in this instance avoided the language of rights and privileges. This was recognition of their isolated position in the face of popular hostility and a tacit acknowledgment that an evocation of the Protestant ascendancy would only incite more energetic opposition.

On top of this there were several tithe affrays in the county. In July 1833 a bailiff, Thomas Joseph Fitzgerald and his party were followed by a horde of people from Mullinavat in County Kilkenny, where several cows had been distrained. The crowd was armed and Fitzgerald was injured when he was hit across the head with a stone.¹²⁶ In October 1833 a cabin was purposely set on fire on the Dromana estate after the appearance of a particularly horrific Whitefoot notice.¹²⁷ In 1836 six parishes in County Waterford were referred to as 'disturbed' by the parliamentary report on poor laws in Ireland.¹²⁸ On the eve of parliament passing the tithe rentcharge act in 1838, a sale near Ballycanavan of nine cows which had been distrained under military protection had to be aborted when no bidding was obtained. The subsequent tithe sale in Waterford city, which attracted huge crowds, was also boycotted. Several months later, after the cows had eventually been sold, all nine were 'rescued' by a crowd of up to 1,500 persons armed with stones, which they proceeded to throw at the police, severely injuring several of them.¹²⁹ These several violent affrays revealed the heightened sensitivity on the part of tenantry everywhere, and the undercurrent of hostility among the Waterford peasantry to the system of tithes.

The responses of liberal Protestants to these outrages and to the legislative attempts to alter the tithe system is revealing of their approach to politics in post-

¹²⁵ Waterford Corporation minute book, 31 Aug. 1833 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15). Henry Ivie of Henrietta Street in Waterford city was an Anglican member of Waterford corporation and a city magistrate. Ivie died in 1838. Michael Evelyn was a prominent conservative Protestant in the city.

¹²⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 July 1833. Thomas Joseph Fitzgerald was a grand juror for County Waterford and was deputy sheriff for the county in 1830 and high sheriff of the county in 1834. Fitzgerald was a liberal in politics, supporting liberal Protestants parliamentary candidates Henry Villiers Stuart, Robert Shapland Carew junior and Richard Power junior throughout the 1830s.

¹²⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 12 Oct. 1833. The Whitefeet were a secret society like the Rockites or the eighteenth-century Whiteboys, who were active largely in County Kilkenny in the 1830s. More often than not the name Whitefoot was linked to any tithe unrest in the area, whether or not the perpetrators actually belonged to a secret society.

¹²⁸ These parishes were Lismore & Maccollop, Modelligo, Seskinane, Whitechurch & Lacoran, Killmacomb & Modelligo and Rathcormack & Fewes. Seventeen further parishes were listed as undisturbed; *Report of the commissioners on poor laws in Ireland, appendix E*, H. C. 1836 (37), xxxii, 252-7.

¹²⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 3 Feb., 4 & 9 June 1838.

emancipation Ireland. When open hostility to tithes flared up early in 1831, southern Protestants everywhere were alarmed. This alarm was triggered by a deep-rooted fear which viewed the opposition to tithes as directly linked with a threat to the sanctity of property. In January 1831 the conservative *Kilkenny Moderator* encapsulated this anxiety when it reported:

the *immediate* outcry of these people is against *tithes*, but there is no doubt whatever that the collection of *rents* will soon be found as difficult and perilous a process as the enforcement of tithe claims, should this alarming spirit become a little more diffused.¹³⁰

While many Protestant farmers agreed with their Catholic counterparts on the tithe question, the Protestant landed gentry were universally opposed to the resulting violence and agitation. This stemmed from a fear that the opposition of the lower classes to tithes would extend itself into a general cry against the landed and political structure that formed the basis of all Protestant power in Ireland. Sir John Newport believed that agitation against tithes represented a 'serious danger' to the established church and that 'our rulers in church and state ought to seek out an immediate remedy'.¹³¹ This opinion was also held by many members of the Catholic political élite. In June 1836 Henry Winston Barron, liberal member for Waterford city urged the House of Commons to produce a final settlement of the tithe question, as 'Protestants as well as Catholics were horror-struck by the evils to which it had given rise'.¹³²

On the part of government, attempts to solve the problems relating to the tithe system were made in every session of parliament. The plan to convert the tithe into a land tax, which was eventually embodied in the tithe rentcharge act of 1838, was put before parliament by Edward Stanley as early as 1832 and formed the government's main objective in future tithe bills.¹³³ In July 1832 Stanley proposed the ministerial plan for a bill to make the tithe composition act compulsory in Ireland. The bill, passed in August 1832 'heralded the beginning of the process whereby the landlord and not the tenant was to be made liable for tithes'.¹³⁴ In August 1833 a tithe arrears bill, known as the 'church million act' was passed to aid members of the clergy in financial

¹³⁰ Printed in *Waterford Mirror*, 3 Jan. 1831.

¹³¹ Sir John Newport to Thomas Spring Rice, 19 June [1830] (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,370).

¹³² *Waterford Mirror*, 6 June 1836; *Hansard* 3, xxxiii, 1337-8 (2 June 1836).

¹³³ *Waterford Mirror*, 11 July 1832.

¹³⁴ *Hansard* 3, xiv, 95 (5 July 1832), 1156 (6 Aug. 1832) & 1399 (15 Aug. 1832); O'Hanrahan, 'The tithe war in County Kilkenny', p. 503.

distress, by issuing monies from the consolidation fund.¹³⁵ However, the majority of the government's tithe bills devised between 1833 and 1838 were defeated in parliament owing to the inclusion of an appropriation clause, which if passed would employ surpluses of church revenues for secular purposes (see chapter seven). This clause was the most sensitive point in the tithe bills for both the Whigs and the Tories, and it was energetically opposed by the House of Lords. The appropriation clause was finally abandoned in 1838 to smooth the passage of the tithe rentcharge bill.¹³⁶

The responses of liberal Protestants in Waterford to tithe legislation were generally positive. The majority agreed that the system was productive of many grievances and was in need of reform or abolition. In 1825 William Samuel Currey had told a parliamentary committee on the state of Ireland that the tithe composition act of 1823 was 'always beneficial where adopted', and that it should form the basis of any reform of the system.¹³⁷ Currey was aware that the mode of tithe collection was a serious source of complaint and he believed the tithe system should be made more acceptable by purging it of its most contentious aspects. Grievances could be mitigated by letting tithes to 'considerate' individuals at low rates, who would act as the tithe collectors. Both the tithe proctors and the clergy should be made more accountable in terms of how tithe money was spent, as this would not only tend to cut down on the number of abuses that occurred, it would also make the tithe payers more amenable to consent if they could see exactly how tithes were being applied.¹³⁸ John Musgrave of Tourin believed that the tithe was 'an unjust mode of assessment' as it led to inequality.¹³⁹ Rev Thomas Clarke, a radical Baptist clergyman from Waterford city, was more pessimistic, remarking in February 1832 it was 'impolitic' to address the ministry to deal with the tithe question in an unreformed House of Commons.¹⁴⁰

By November 1831 Sir John Newport had come to believe that the tithe composition act of 1823 had failed to mitigate the evils of tithe collection:

still is the peasant Catholic and dissenter brought into annual contact with the parochial clergyman of another faith and the result is that in whole districts of

¹³⁵ *Hansard* 3, xx, 341 (5 Aug. 1833) & 812 (21 Aug. 1833).

¹³⁶ Edward Brynn, *The church of Ireland in the age of Catholic emancipation* (London, 1982), p. 325.

¹³⁷ *First report of the select committee on the state of Ireland*, H. C. 1825 (129), viii, 302.

¹³⁸ *First report of the select committee on the state of Ireland*, H. C. 1825 (129), viii, 301.

¹³⁹ *First report of evidence from the committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (589), vii, 83.

¹⁴⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 15 Feb. 1832.

[the] country the incumbents now obtain nothing but by means utterly subversive of peace, charity and every social feeling.¹⁴¹

The central principle for Sir John was that provision for the clergy should be divested of its 'exclusive character' and the inequalities of allotment reformed.¹⁴² In parliament in October 1831 Newport contended that if the 1823 tithe composition act had been 'more generally agreed to' many of the problems and inconveniences of collecting tithes 'would have been obviated'.¹⁴³ Initially Newport thought that the government's plans to convert the tithe into a land tax were 'totally out of the question' and that landlords could not feasibly collect the tithe 'or its substitutes'.¹⁴⁴ He believed that a great proportion of Irish landlords would object to mixing tithe payment with rent 'for fear of placing the whole amount in danger'. He was quick to point out however that he himself would gladly make such a sacrifice 'for the public peace'.¹⁴⁵

But by November 1833 Newport had come to believe that converting the tithe into a land tax was 'the only way tithe commutation can be efficaciously completed', but that this tax should be supplemented by revenue appropriated from church property.¹⁴⁶ Sir John did admit, however, that there was room for corruption in converting the tithe into a rent charge, owing to the 'extraordinary tenure of land in Ireland and their infinite variety'.¹⁴⁷ As well as supporting Whig attempts to quell unrest, Sir John Newport promoted his own strategy for solving the question, centred on reform through a fair valuation of benefices by the board of first fruits. This was coupled with his campaign to reform the whole system respecting the first fruits fund, including a complete revaluation of all benefices (see chapter seven).¹⁴⁸ Other parliamentary representatives were equally interested in finding a solution. In an address to the electors of Waterford in October 1835, William Villiers Stuart included the settlement of the tithe question as one of his main priorities on entering Westminster. He contended that only Protestant property should be taxed for the

¹⁴¹ Sir John Newport to Lord Grey, 3 Nov. 1831 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7).

¹⁴² Sir John Newport to Thomas Spring Rice, 10 Jan. 1832 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,372).

¹⁴³ *Hansard* 3, viii, 135-6 (6 Oct. 1831).

¹⁴⁴ Sir John Newport to Thomas Spring Rice, 3 Jan. 1832 (N.L.I. Monteagle papers, MS 13,372); Sir John Newport to unknown recipient, June 1832 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7).

¹⁴⁵ Sir John Newport to Lord Ebrington, 16 Aug. 1833 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7).

¹⁴⁶ Sir John Newport to Marquis Wellesley, 11 Nov. 1833 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7); Sir John Newport to Thomas Spring Rice, 6 Dec. 1833 (N.L.I., Monteagle papers, MS 13,375).

¹⁴⁷ Sir John Newport to Charles Henry Coote, 6 Jan. 1834 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7).

¹⁴⁸ *Hansard* 2, xxiv, 838-59 (18 May 1830); *Waterford Mirror*, 24 May 1830; 19 & 21 Mar. 1831.

maintenance of the Protestant church.¹⁴⁹ In parliament in June 1836, Stuart announced that while he would give his general support to the government's measure for solving the problem of tithes in Ireland, he would not give his unqualified approbation to a measure 'which imposed upon the Catholic landlords the necessity of contributing to the maintenance of a church from which they derived no benefit'.¹⁵⁰ This gained him widespread support among the Waterford (predominantly Catholic) lower classes.

In the event, the tithe rentcharge act passed in 1838 finally removed the most acerbic of the grievances relating to tithes. This act converted the tithe (reduced by one quarter) into a rent-charge payable by the head landlord, effectively removing the distresses caused by tithe valuation and collection.¹⁵¹ William Villiers Stuart and John Power of Gurteen, the liberal Protestant members for County Waterford, voted in favour of the measure, as did Cornelius O'Callaghan, the O'Connellite member for Dungarvan.¹⁵² This act and the abolition of arrears of tithes due since 1834 largely ended tithe agitation, and the country 'gradually returned to a state of tranquillity'.¹⁵³ While most liberal Protestants had supported reforming or even abolishing the tithe system, the agitation and sporadic outrages had made Waterford Protestants acutely aware of the dangers that widespread hostility and mass opposition could pose to the established order. While Daniel O'Connell himself made no effort to exploit the crisis over tithes, as his influence was 'ever on the side of existing social structures', the unrest deeply disturbed the early-nineteenth century Protestant mindset.¹⁵⁴ This, added to the undermining of the Protestant position by the repeal campaign, tended to increase rather than diminish Protestants fears for their place in the established order in the years after emancipation.

Part three: liberal Protestant interests in education

For a society rent by religious and political division, education was an issue of central importance.¹⁵⁵ In the course of the nineteenth century elementary education

¹⁴⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Oct. 1835.

¹⁵⁰ *Hansard* 3, xxxiii, 1332 (1 June 1836).

¹⁵¹ O'Hanrahan, 'The tithe war in County Kilkenny', p. 481.

¹⁵² Henry Winston Barron and Thomas Wyse, members for Waterford city did not vote in any of the divisions; *Hansard* 3, xliii, 1209-20 (2 July 1838); xliv, 372-3 (19 July 1838) & 693-5 (26 July 1838).

¹⁵³ Connolly, *Oxford companion*, p. 543; O'Hanrahan, 'The tithe war in County Kilkenny', p. 504.

¹⁵⁴ MacDonagh, 'The age of O'Connell', p. 168.

¹⁵⁵ John Coolahan, 'Primary education as a political issue in O'Connell's time', in M. R. O'Connell (ed.), *O'Connell: education, church and state, proceedings of the second annual Daniel O'Connell workshop* (Dublin, 1992), p. 87.

became increasingly important for liberals, both in Ireland and Britain, and in this Waterford was no exception. This section seeks to evaluate the interest shown in schools and in education by the liberal Protestant élite in Waterford during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. It evaluates the importance of Protestant patrons for many of the Kildare Place schools in the county, and the response of liberal Protestants to mounting accusations of proselytism on the part of that society. It also focuses on the efforts of Thomas Wyse to establish a permanent non-denominational board of education from 1831 and on the liberal Protestant response to these efforts. The majority of liberal Protestants supported Wyse's plans, revealing their concern 'to shape the Irish populace in ways that they believed would produce a cohesive society' rather than one that was divided by sectarianism.¹⁵⁶

The sectarian strife over the issue of education in Ireland reflected English problems with the issue. In England (as in Ireland) religious education, based on the study of the bible, was viewed by the majority of people as the most important topic in the expansion of schooling.¹⁵⁷ But the role of the state in education in England was if anything more sensitive than in Ireland. The Church of England opposed any parliamentary scheme that they viewed as depriving the church of its traditional role of superintending national education. On the other hand, dissenting distrust of Anglican control of education stemmed from the current controversy over the Tractarian movement and fears of 'Romish tendencies' in high-church Anglicanism.¹⁵⁸ By the 1830s various groups including the radical Central Society of Education (1836) were calling for state-funded elementary education, but the issue remained a sensitive one. The failure of governments to introduce secular education reform schemes for England in 1839 and in 1843 indicated that there was little public support for secular education, and that 'no system would be acceptable to parliament that did not assign a leading role to the established church'.¹⁵⁹ Sectarian rivalries prevented an agreed national education policy between the 1830s and the 1860s, and in England a system of national education was not introduced until 1870. This was nearly forty years after a national system of elementary education was introduced in Ireland. D. H. Akenson has pointed to a 'remarkable appetite' on the part of the Irish people for education, a long

¹⁵⁶ Jennifer Ridden, "'Making good citizens": national identity, religion and liberalism among the Irish elite, c.1800-50' (*PhD thesis*, University of London, 1998), pp 85-6.

¹⁵⁷ Norman McCord, *British history, 1815-1906* (Oxford, 1991), p. 119.

¹⁵⁸ Norman Gash, *Aristocracy and people: Britain 1815-65* (London, 1979), pp 178 & 227-8.

¹⁵⁹ Gash, *Aristocracy and people*, p. 227.

history of attempts by the Irish government to introduce a system of education in Ireland, and the strength of the Catholic clergy and laity to accept a non-denominational system of education as the main factors why an Irish system of national education was implemented so comparatively early.¹⁶⁰

There were various kinds of elementary schools in Waterford city and county in the early nineteenth century, almost all of which were fee-paying. The 1812 report of the board of education estimated the number of schools in Waterford city and county at 185, twenty-six of which were Protestant and 159 Catholic. Out of over eleven thousand pupils attending school at this date, only one thousand were Protestants (9.1%).¹⁶¹ By 1825 the number of schools had risen to approximately 245, now with over twelve thousand Catholic pupils and estimations of between 1,163 and 1,445 Protestant pupils.¹⁶² There was a relatively high demand for elementary education in Ireland at this time and by the mid-nineteenth century this was reflected in a high level of literacy among the lower orders of society. The 1812 report commented 'that the lower class of the people in Ireland are extremely anxious to obtain instruction for their children, even at an expense, which though small, very many of them can ill afford'.¹⁶³

In Waterford city the Corporation Free School, known by the nineteenth century as the Latin School, had been in existence at least since the 1560s, and came under the financial patronage of the corporation. By 1824 there were sixty students enrolled at the Latin School, three of whom were Quakers and seven of whom were Catholics; the rest belonging to the established church.¹⁶⁴ The corporation offered four boys per year free education at the school.¹⁶⁵ There was Bishop's Foy's school for Protestant boys in Lady Lane and a comparable school for Protestant girls known as the Girls' Blue School. An Irish Christian Brothers school had been established in Waterford by Edmund Rice in 1804 and by 1830 there were between six and seven

¹⁶⁰ D. H. Akenson, 'Pre-university education, 1782-1870', in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the union I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989), pp 529-30.

¹⁶¹ *Fourteenth report of the board of education*, H. C. 1812-13 (21), vi, 221, p. 9.

¹⁶² This report gives the returns of both Protestant and Catholic clergy; the number of schools estimated by the protestant clergy is 246, while the Catholic clergy estimate the figure at 243. The higher number of 1,445 Protestant pupils is given by the Protestant clergy, the lower number by the Catholic clergy; *First report of the commissioners on education in Ireland*, H. C. 1825 (400), xii, 645.

¹⁶³ *Fourteenth report of the board of education*, H. C. 1812-13 (21), vi, 221, p. 5.

¹⁶⁴ Michael Quane, 'Waterford Corporation free school', in *Journal of the Waterford Historical and Archaeological Society*, lxiv (1959), p. 97.

¹⁶⁵ Waterford Corporation minute book, 4 Oct. 1836 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

hundred boys attending the school at Mount Sion. The Presentation and Ursuline sisters had also established schools for poor girls by the early nineteenth century.¹⁶⁶ There were up to five Catholic schools in Stephen Street, at least one of which was attended by Protestant children.¹⁶⁷ In the county, the early nineteenth century saw the spread of Christian Brothers' and Presentation schools to Dungarvan, Lismore and Cappoquin, as well as to Clonmel in County Tipperary.¹⁶⁸ There also existed a number of private schools, often patronised by the local landlord, and an unknown number of hedge schools.

In the county, the number of schools in connection with the Kildare Place Society grew rapidly, especially in the early 1820s. Established in 1811, the Kildare Place Society declared itself a society aimed at promoting non-denominational elementary education for the poorer classes on a nation-wide basis. It was non-denominational in that literary and moral instruction were to be kept strictly separate from the study of dogmatic religion, which was to be taught by clergymen of the respective denominations.¹⁶⁹ The society was supported by government, whose grant of £6,980 in 1814 had risen to over £30,000 by 1831.¹⁷⁰ It was supported by the clergy of the established church, and in the early years by a majority of the Catholic clergy and laity. In the 1820s it came under increasing attack as a proselytising society, and indeed the society did begin in 1820 to allocate part of its income to the schools of various proselytising societies.¹⁷¹ These attacks were not new, but they became an issue for Irish Catholics in times of heightened sectarian tension, such as during the 'Protestant crusade' of the 1820s.¹⁷² With Protestant proselytising societies using elementary schools to proselytise the Irish Catholic peasants, it is not surprising that many Catholics became increasingly suspicious of the Kildare Place Society.

¹⁶⁶ *Third report of evidence from the committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (665), vii, 626; Power, *History of Waterford*, pp 129-31.

¹⁶⁷ Quane, 'Waterford Corporation Free School', pp 97-8.

¹⁶⁸ Power, *History of Waterford*, pp 130-1.

¹⁶⁹ Akenson, 'Pre-university education', p. 528.

¹⁷⁰ Thomas Power, 'Schools in connection with the Kildare Place Society in County Waterford, 1817-40', in *Decies*, xvii (1981), p. 5.

¹⁷¹ Akenson, 'Pre-university education', p. 528.

¹⁷² This was a proselytising mission launched by Protestant societies including the London Hibernian Society (1806), the Religious Tract and Book Society (1810) and the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the Medium of the own Language (1818); S. J. Connolly, 'Mass politics and sectarian conflict, 1823-30' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the union I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989), p. 78.

Between 1817 and 1840 almost thirty schools in County Waterford were connected with the Kildare Place Society. In some instances this meant that they received funding from the society and in others the curriculum was followed and the school books used. These schools were attended in the early years by both Protestant and Catholic children, but by the 1820s and early 1830s the number of Catholic children attending the schools had slumped considerably.¹⁷³ On top of this, there were by 1825 five schools connected with the Association for Discountenancing Vice. This association, established in 1792, aimed at instructing children, primarily those of the established church, through the study of the bible. Despite accusations of proselytism, this society was too limited in its operations to invoke extended criticism. Four of these five schools were patronised by clergymen of the established church, for example the ultra Protestant Rev Charles Fleury superintended the school at Killea.¹⁷⁴ By 1825 over fourteen schools connected to the Kildare Place Society had applied to parliament for monetary aid. These included at least six schools with liberal Protestant patrons (including John Musgrave, Robert Shapland Carew junior, Richard Power junior and George Holmes Jackson) none of which were attached to the Association for Discountenancing Vice.¹⁷⁵

Most of the schools attached to the Kildare Place Society were patronised by local landlords, and on looking through a list of the schools it is apparent that many liberal Protestants in the county took an interest in their local Kildare Place school.¹⁷⁶ For example, William Samuel Currey patronised a school at Dungarvan. The duke of Devonshire was a supporter of the Munster Hibernian School Society, a branch of the London Hibernian Society, and partially financed schools at Lismore and Dungarvan. Sir John Nugent Humble patronised the school at Cloncoskoran; Robert Shapland Carew junior acted as patron for the school at Woodstown, John Musgrave patronised the school at Ballintaylor near Dungarvan, and Sir Richard Keane and Richard Power junior were patrons of schools at Cappoquin and Clashmore respectively. The leading

¹⁷³ Power, 'Schools', pp 5-10.

¹⁷⁴ The five schools at Killea, Kilmeaden, Passage, Kilwatermoy and Lismore received £12 each from the society. Rev Henry Archdall patronised the school at Kilmeaden, Rev Richardson at Passage and Kilwatermoy school was superintended by the dean of St Patrick's; *First report of the commissioners on education in Ireland*, H. C. 1825 (400), xii, 30-31 & 412.

¹⁷⁵ The six schools were at Ballintaylor, Lismore, Kilgobnet, Woodstown, Clashmore and Clonea; *First report of the commissioners on education in Ireland*, H. C. 1825 (400), xii, 645.

¹⁷⁶ Power, 'Schools in connection with the Kildare Place Society in County Waterford', p. 16.

Catholic Henry Winston Barron acted as patron for a school at Mount Barron near Ardmore between 1821 and 1829.

Although there is little evidence that reveals the ideological outlook behind this patronage, it is possible that some patrons hoped to further the Protestant religion among Catholic children. It is difficult to believe that Rev Charles Fleury, an established church clergyman and a member of the Waterford Protestant Conservative Society, had no interest in proselytising Catholic children. Schools at Villierstown and Dungarvan were excluded from funding in 1826 for failing to comply with the society's guidelines which stated that literary and moral matters were to be kept separate from the study of dogmatic religion. In the 1820s the Catholic clergy, who increasingly accused the Kildare Place Society of offering an essentially Protestant education rather than reading the scriptures without note or comment, opposed established schools at Ballinatrav and Cappoquin and the founding of new schools at Ballyquin and Ballycanavan. The opposition was so fierce that in three out of these four cases, the schools did not survive.¹⁷⁷ However, there was such an active interest among liberal Protestants in this part of Ireland in elementary education that it is credible to believe that some patrons had more liberal views than that of proselytism. Some liberal patrons disagreed with the society's blatant abandoning of its formerly neutral stance after 1820: the school at Ballintaylor was struck off the society's list in 1824 because the liberal patron John Musgrave refused to have the school run according to the guidelines laid out by the society.¹⁷⁸ While there is no evidence to suggest why this occurred, Musgrave told the commissioners inquiring into the state of the Irish poor in 1835 that he had not experienced difficulty in preventing the discussion of sectarian or religious controversies in the schools patronised by him: 'I tell people if they wish to read the scriptures they can do so; but I do not insist upon it'.¹⁷⁹

Hence in the 1820s and 1830s there was an active interest among the liberal Protestant élite in Waterford in forwarding education among the poorer classes. The liberal Protestant view of education was based on the recognition that individuals were rational, moral and politically capable beings. Jennifer Ridgen has argued that the experiment of national schools in the 1820s was a demonstration of the process by

¹⁷⁷ Power, 'Schools in connection with the Kildare Place Society in County Waterford', pp 11-12.

¹⁷⁸ Power, 'Schools in connection with the Kildare Place Society in County Waterford', p. 8.

¹⁷⁹ *Report of the select committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H.C. 1835 (667), vii, 83.

which liberal concepts were incorporated into social policy, the main object being 'to re-cast Irish social relations in order to re-establish their own legitimate leadership'.¹⁸⁰ While non-denominational education aimed at facilitating the social integration of Protestants and Catholics in Ireland, many liberal Protestants also thought that patronising local schools was a way of retaining a profile as leading figures in society.¹⁸¹ This support for non-denominational education on the part of these Protestants was also linked into their growing dependence on liberal Catholics such as Thomas Wyse for keeping their hopes for a non-sectarian form of politics alive. Activists such as Thomas Wyse offered liberal Protestants their main prospect for survival in these years, and it is not surprising that they supported his parliamentary efforts at introducing a permanent national board of education. In a climate of sectarian tensions over the proselytising missions of the Protestant evangelicals, elementary education had become a battleground and denominational rivalries were intense.¹⁸² That so many liberal Protestants supported non-denominational education in the context of such division was a testament to the strength of their liberal values as well as to their determination not to relinquish their leading position in Irish society.

When Thomas Wyse began to promote his ideas for a national system of elementary education in 1830, there was strong local support for his campaign. By 1831 many of the Catholic clergy were prepared to support a system under a national board of education rather than suffer the continued financial patronage by government of the Kildare Place Society, against which they petitioned on several occasions.¹⁸³ Further petitions against the society's use of funds were forwarded by lay petitioners from Tramore and Waterford in February 1831 and from Faithlegg in August 1831. These were presented by Sir John Newport and Thomas Wyse in parliament and were supported by Sir Richard Musgrave and Daniel O'Connell.¹⁸⁴ The duke of Devonshire presented to the House of Lords a similar petition from Dungarvan in August 1831.¹⁸⁵

Thomas Wyse had been interested in Irish education for some time and decided to forward plans for a national system of elementary education as soon as he gained a seat in parliament for County Tipperary in 1830. Thomas Wyse opposed

¹⁸⁰ Ridden, "Making good citizens", p. 80.

¹⁸¹ Akenson, 'Pre-university education', p. 532.

¹⁸² Coolahan, 'Primary education as a political issue', p. 88.

¹⁸³ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Mar. 1830 & 9 July 1831.

¹⁸⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 19 Feb., 1 & 22 Aug. 1831; *Hansard* 3, v, 587 (2 Aug. 1831).

¹⁸⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Aug. 1831.

denominationalism, as for him the separation of religions in education recognised an 'inherent incompatibility' that he did not credit.¹⁸⁶ Wyse believed that half the animosities separating the sects in Ireland arose from ignorance of one another, and contended 'it will be a vain task to preach the union of manhood, if we continue to teach separation'.¹⁸⁷ For Wyse the duty and function of religion and morality was to engender patriotism. The notion at the root of his education plans was that 'nationalism, not sectarianism, should be the first article of our common charter'.¹⁸⁸ Religious guidance should be given by the respective clergy rather than the schoolmaster, and elementary schools should be divested of their denominational character.

Although Thomas Wyse has been generally regarded as the defender of Irish non-denominational education in these years, Jennifer Ridden has contended that the origins of the ideas for a national, non-denominational system of education were forwarded by Thomas Spring Rice, who was instrumental in the findings of the House of Commons' select committee's report of 1828.¹⁸⁹ In fact the 1828 report supported opinions expressed in the 1812 and 1825 reports, and Thomas Wyse in turn built on this.¹⁹⁰ The significance does not lie in the origin of these ideas in themselves but the fact that they originated in the Irish liberal milieu. The import lies rather in the fact that both Protestant and Catholic liberals were working towards a common goal in this area of Irish social policy, supported from 1830 by a Whig government favourable to reform. As Thomas Wyse told Dr James Warren Doyle, Catholic bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, in November 1830:

I have every confidence that the new administration, liberal and energetic to a degree we could scarcely have hoped a few years...since, will direct their

¹⁸⁶ Thomas Wyse, *Education reform; or the necessity of a national system of education* (London, 1836), i, 266.

¹⁸⁷ Wyse, *Education reform*, i, 266-72.

¹⁸⁸ Wyse, *Education reform*, i, 266-72.

¹⁸⁹ Ridden, "Making good citizens", pp 106-11.

¹⁹⁰ *Report from the select committee on education in Ireland reports*, H. C. 1828 (513), iv, 3. The 1812 report defended a plan 'uniting a careful attention to moral and religious principles, with an evident purpose of respecting the peculiar tenets of different sects of Christians' with an aim at 'eventually obviat[ing] any prejudices that might have been entertained against them'; *Fourteenth report of the Board of Education*, H. C. 1812-13 (21), vi, 221, p. 6.

immediate attention to the urgent wants of our country, and particularly to the wants of education.¹⁹¹

Thomas Spring Rice worked together with Thomas Wyse and Richard More O’Ferrall in preparing the 1831 education bill, as well as on select committees on education from 1835 to 1837.¹⁹²

Thomas Wyse’s plan for a non-denominational system of education in Ireland, submitted in December 1830, was bolder in scope than the 1828 select committee report.¹⁹³ It was very similar in structure and style to the bill eventually brought in by Edward Stanley in September 1831, despite Jennifer Ridden’s contention that Thomas Wyse’s role in preparing the bill was peripheral.¹⁹⁴ In the event, Wyse’s motion on Irish education was deferred in April 1831 to make way for discussion of the great question of parliamentary reform.¹⁹⁵ Thomas Wyse continued to promote his ideas concerning education, arguing against the grant to the Kildare Place Society and forwarding his own plans for a national system of education.¹⁹⁶ The initial response to Wyse’s education bill was positive. The *Dublin Morning Post* approved generally of it, commenting that ‘it is the first time that the question of “national education” in Ireland has been brought in a tangible, practicable and efficient form before the legislature’.¹⁹⁷ The *Freeman’s Journal* viewed it as an important step ‘towards discountenancing those melancholy prejudices and dissensions, which planted in youth, have produced in after years abundant harvests of mischief, uncharitableness and crime’.¹⁹⁸ No government opposition was expected when the bill came before parliament. However, the Irish Protestant clergy were generally ill-disposed to the explicit non-denominationalism, with both the synod of Ulster and the clergy of the established church passing resolutions against the implementation of the national board in January 1832.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹¹ Thomas Wyse to Dr J. W. Doyle, 30 Nov. 1830, in W. M. Wyse (ed.), *Notes on education reform in Ireland during the first half of the nineteenth century: compiled from speeches, letters, etc contained in the unpublished memoirs of Sir Thomas Wyse* (Waterford, 1901), p. 15.

¹⁹² *Reports of select committee on education in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (630), xiii & H. C. 1837 (485), ix.

¹⁹³ Oliver MacDonagh, ‘The economy and society’, in Vaughan, W. E. (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, v: *Ireland under the union I, 1801-1870* (Oxford, 1989), p. 233.

¹⁹⁴ Wyse, *Notes on education reform*, p. 21; Ridden, “Making good citizens”, p. 113.

¹⁹⁵ *Tipperary Free Press*, 6 Apr. 1831.

¹⁹⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 & 8 Aug.; 17 Sept. 1831; *Hansard* 3, vi, 777 (29 Aug. 1831) & 1277-8 (9 Sept. 1831).

¹⁹⁷ *Dublin Morning Post*, 16 Nov. 1831.

¹⁹⁸ *Freeman’s Journal*, 14 Nov. 1831.

¹⁹⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Jan. & 13 Feb. 1832.

The premise of Thomas Wyse's education bill of 1831 was to provide a system of government-sponsored, non-denominational education. Wyse railed against the Kildare Place Society, contending that it could 'never become national'.²⁰⁰ The new system would attempt to diffuse education among all classes and sects without religious distinction. Religious and dogmatic education would be taught by the clergy of the respective religions, at a special time set aside for it, and thus would be kept inviolably separate from literary and moral education.²⁰¹ While religious education was important – Thomas Wyse believed that 'all education should repose on religion...instruction without it may lead to knowledge, but cannot lead to virtue' – it was crucial that it was not allowed to produce religious discord.²⁰² The board of national education would contain both Protestant and Catholic commissioners, including both laymen and clergy from each of the four provinces. This board, whose president would be the minister for public instruction, would be subject to parliamentary inspection. Two thirds of the costs of building schools, providing equipment, paying salaries and so on would be provided out of public funds. Wyse believed that the joint contribution of both government and the people would lead to the formation of a bond, both having stakes in the success of the measure.

As it happened, parliament was dissolved before the education bill reached its second reading and Wyse himself lost his seat at the general election in 1832, remaining out of parliament until 1835.²⁰³ However, a temporary national board of education was established by Lord Grey's government in October 1831 which followed Wyse's outline very closely. Edward Stanley's bill to make the board a permanent one was lost in the House of Lords in March 1832 by eighty-seven votes to 125.²⁰⁴ During this time, Thomas Wyse continued to correspond with Stanley on Irish education and on the workings of the national board, as well as writing two volumes on education reform.²⁰⁵ The immediate response of the Catholic hierarchy to the new

²⁰⁰ [Thomas Wyse] *Speech of Thomas Wyse...May 19, 1835 on moving for leave to bring in a bill for the establishment of a board of national education...in Ireland* (Dublin, 1835), p. 55.

²⁰¹ Akenson, 'Pre-university education', p. 533.

²⁰² Wyse, *Speech of Thomas Wyse*, pp 20-21.

²⁰³ Thomas Wyse contested the Waterford city election in 1832, but lost out at the polls to Catholic repealer Henry Winston Barron and conservative Protestant William Christmas after he failed to take Daniel O'Connell's repeal pledge. In 1835 he was returned for Waterford city alongside Henry Winston Barron; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 317.

²⁰⁴ Interestingly, the duke of Devonshire voted against the measure; *Hansard* 3, xi, 648 (22 Mar. 1832).

²⁰⁵ Wyse, *Education reform*; *Waterford Mirror*, 16 & 21 Jan. 1832; Wyse, *Notes on education reform*, p. 35.

national board was positive, although the provisions for the separate teaching of religious education proved divisive. John MacHale, the Catholic archbishop of Tuam from 1834, headed the campaign against the new system, but Daniel Murray, Catholic archbishop of Dublin approved of the policy.²⁰⁶ Despite numerous petitions against the system in December 1836 and January 1837, in February 1839 the Catholic hierarchy eventually expressed their general approval of the measure, despite some internal disagreement.²⁰⁷

On his return to parliament in 1835 as the liberal member for Waterford city, Thomas Wyse immediately set about giving the national board of education permanent roots in legislation. Wyse contended that so long as the board retained its temporary character, 'it is still no more than an experiment'.²⁰⁸ On 19 May 1835 he was given leave to bring in a bill to do this. The object of the 1835 bill was to remove the defects, extend the powers and render the operations of the national board certain and their duration permanent. At this point Wyse also forwarded a plan for second and third level education, centred on county and provincial academies. In June 1835 Wyse succeeded in establishing a select committee to inquire into Irish education.²⁰⁹ This committee was continued in 1836 and 1837, creating a tome of very useful material on education in Ireland. The interest of liberal Protestants remained alive during these years. Sir Richard Musgrave sat on the committee from 1835 to 1837, and Thomas Spring Rice retained a leading role.

In terms of the number of pupils enrolled, the board of national education was largely successful. By 1835 there was a state system of education in place, with over 1,300 schools educating nearly 200,000 children.²¹⁰ By 1845 the number of schools had reached 4,000, with over 400,000 pupils in attendance. This plan was essentially the offspring of a liberal élite attempting to forward their ideology of progress and enlightenment through education. However, in terms of its original objectives, the national schools system failed in the long term. By 1850 the system was effectively denominational, as commissioners had failed to encourage interdenominational applications for school management. The majority of the schools' managers, especially

²⁰⁶ See letters on education in *Waterford Mirror*, 14 May 1832, 27 Oct. 1837, 5 Nov. & 24 Dec. 1838.

²⁰⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Dec. 1836, 7 Jan. 1837 & 9 Feb. 1839.

²⁰⁸ Wyse, *Speech of Thomas Wyse*, p. 18.

²⁰⁹ *Hansard* 3, xxviii, 1130-2 (24 June 1835).

²¹⁰ Franc Sadleir, *National schools of Ireland defended in a letter to the Rev Dr Thorpe, minister of Belgrave chapel* (Dublin, 1835), p. 22.

of Catholic and Presbyterian schools, were members of the clergy, and there was little social interaction among the pupils, largely due to the scarcity of Protestants in the south and west.²¹¹ The 'secularism' of the model was objectionable to elements of all the major religions. While a portion of the Catholic clergy led by John MacHale remained opposed to the system, it was the withdrawal of support by the established and dissenting clergy over the issue of religious teaching, and the establishment of the Protestant Church Education Society in 1839, that essentially turned the system into a state-funded Catholic education system in the long term.²¹² Despite this, the plan proposed by Wyse and forwarded by government in 1831 became a model for liberal experiments elsewhere and it remained 'a revolutionary experiment in state planning, management and secularity'.²¹³

Conclusion:

The 1830s was a decade that witnessed significant developments both in Irish politics and in relations with Britain. The Protestant political élite came to terms with the challenges of mass politics and Catholic political power in the 1820s and 1830s with great difficulty.²¹⁴ The liberal Protestant responses to the repeal campaign illustrated the fragility of their liberalism when challenged with new notions of Irish identity that threatened to undermine their privileged political and social position as the ruling élite. While liberal Protestants almost unanimously recognised the need for institutional reform, the campaign against tithes in the early years of the decade demonstrated to the Protestant élite their powerlessness to press policies in the face of widespread opposition. Perhaps more than anything until the great repeal meetings in the early 1840s, the large and seemingly spontaneous gatherings of the poorer classes in opposition to the valuation and collection of tithes represented a tangible threat to the established order. Liberal Protestants faced these changes with mounting anxiety and responded in a variety of ways. A majority became more convinced (if conditional) unionists, and some found common ground with a revitalised Irish Toryism from the mid 1830s.²¹⁵ Many found it easier to refrain from any public expression of their position than to face attacks from an increasingly hostile and

²¹¹ Akenson, 'Pre-university education', pp 533-6.

²¹² Ridden, "Making good citizens", p. 85.

²¹³ MacDonagh, 'The economy and society', p. 234.

²¹⁴ McElroy, 'The local Protestant landed élite and O'Connellism', p. 73.

²¹⁵ MacDonagh, 'The age of O'Connell', p. 166; for a history of Irish Toryism in this period, see Spence, 'Isaac Butt, Irish nationality and the conditional defence of the union', pp 65-89.

assertive Catholic body. Other liberal Protestants became repealers, and managed to accept the new political reality and support repeal without compromising their identity either as Protestants or liberals.

But it would be erroneous to overlay the social divisions caused by political developments in the 1830s, at least among the upper echelons of society. At purely social gatherings, such as at annual balls or local charity meetings, Waterford's Protestants and Catholics continued to enjoy cordial relations.²¹⁶ Kevin Nowlan has likewise pointed to electoral arrangements as a 'great neutral area' where Whigs and O'Connellites could meet.²¹⁷ The issue of education was also one which provided some common ground upon which liberal Protestants and Catholics could cooperate. But the evolution in Irish Protestant identity in this decade can only be truly measured by including analysis of their responses to the British political context. The advent of Whig government and the resulting expectations concerning reform policies for Ireland had as significant an impact on Irish Protestants as on Irish Catholics, and it is to the responses of liberal Protestants to these policies that we now turn.

²¹⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Mar. 1836 & 1 Feb. 1837: the references chosen here are to a Waterford meeting of the Labourer's Friend Society which middle class Protestants and Catholics of all hues attended, and a ball given by the marquis of Waterford, illustrating the social integration of the upper echelons of society.

²¹⁷ K. B. Nowlan, 'The meaning of repeal in Irish history' in G. A. Hayes-McCoy (ed.), *Historical studies iv*, p. 7.

Chapter seven: Whig reform measures and the fortunes of Protestant liberalism in Waterford, 1832-1842

During the 1830s, Irish Protestants were forced to come terms with a new political landscape in which Catholic public opinion was increasingly important. This chapter examines how liberal Protestant ideas about their role in Irish society developed in the context of parliamentary reform measures that increasingly impinged on their traditional role in Irish society and politics. In the 1830s many Irish Protestants continued to identify themselves (as did some Irish Catholics) as unionist, imperial and national, but this outlook came under increasing pressure as the 1830s progressed.¹ The accession of the Whigs to power in November 1830 resulted in celebration and optimism among both Catholics and liberal Protestants in Ireland. Yet the attitude of Irish liberal Protestants became more ambivalent in the face of measures aimed at reforming what were viewed as the Protestant institutions in church and state. While moderate parliamentary reform was supported in the early 1830s, many Irish Protestants dreaded the potential of a parliament reformed along radical lines. Church reform bills threatened the temporalities of the established church, and raised significant questions about the appropriation of church property and the inviolability of private property. Municipal reform threatened to remove Irish Protestants from their positions of influence in the towns, thereby augmenting Catholic control in urban areas. While liberal Protestants remained publicly committed to the reform of abuses in the Irish system, many of them had difficulty reconciling their conflicting interests. This had important implications for the future of an identity that was inherently an élite ideology and one that was used primarily to justify their leading role in Irish society.²

Part one: The reform act of 1832

In the aftermath of Catholic emancipation, there was strong feeling in Waterford that further political changes were necessary. Writing to Daniel O'Connell in April 1830, Rev John Sheehan, a Catholic priest and leader of Waterford popular opinion, argued that if no further reforms were implemented 'we should have as bad

¹ Joseph Spence, 'Isaac Butt, Irish nationality and the conditional defence of the union, 1833-70', in D. G. Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds), *Defenders of the union: a survey of British and Irish unionism since 1801* (London, 2001), p. 66.

² Jennifer Ridden, "'Making good citizens": national identity, religion and liberalism among the Irish élite c.1800-50' (*PhD thesis*, University of London, 1998), p. 7.

and as vicious an oligarchy as ever crushing the energies of the people'.³ Waterford Catholics believed that parliamentary and municipal reforms were necessary to wrestle control of local institutions from an entrenched Protestant élite. Liberal Protestants likewise continued their campaign for reform, albeit independently of the Catholics. In the short period between the passing of the emancipation act in April 1829 and the accession of the Whigs in November 1830, liberal Protestants in parliament continued to promote reform measures. When it was announced that the Whig government would introduce a measure of parliamentary reform in March 1831, interest in Waterford intensified. Writing to the *Waterford Mirror* in January 1831, a local Protestant styled 'An Unionist' stated that many liberal Protestants, while opposing O'Connell's campaign for repeal of the union, nevertheless felt themselves bound 'to promote the cause of parliamentary reform'.⁴

But while the general consensus was that some reform was imperative, there was widespread disagreement among Protestants 'as to what constitutes reform'.⁵ While some Waterford Protestants were wary of the vote by ballot and what they thought was a too frequent recurrence of elections, others agreed, in theory at least, with Thomas Wyse's espousal of sweeping reform of all abuses, which he advocated at a reform meeting in Tipperary:

Let there be reform, and promptly, wherever there be abuses – reform in the state, reform in the church, reform in the corporations, reform in grand juries, but above all, reform in parliament, whence all other reforms must finally flow, not only to this but to every portion of the suffering community.⁶

Certainly Sir John Newport supported extensive reform, announcing in February that while he still had not made up his mind as to the propriety of voting by ballot, he believed that unless parliamentary reform was carried 'the country could not expect to derive any real benefit' from the act of union.⁷

In January 1831 Sir John presented a petition from Waterford Corporation in favour of electoral reform.⁸ This petition sought to alter the present situation in which

³ Rev John Sheehan to Daniel O'Connell, 17 Apr. 1830, in M. R. O'Connell (ed.), *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell* (8 vols, Dublin, 1974-80), iv, 150-1.

⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Jan. 1831.

⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 17 Jan. 1831.

⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 31 Jan. 1831.

⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 9 Feb. 1831.

⁸ Waterford Corporation minute book, 18 Jan. 1831 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

the votes of a large and, in point of number, influential portion of the constituency of the city of Waterford may in the event of a contested election be purchased by the highest bidder or be controlled by the influence of a few individuals.⁹

Chapter two revealed a growing liberal element within Waterford Corporation which gained political supremacy after 1818, and it is not unreasonable to assume that these liberals had a hand in this public evocation of support for parliamentary reform. But Protestant support for reform measures was always tempered by a perpetual surveillance and defence of their own position in society. For some members of the corporation, this apparent support for reform may have been an effort to secure an electorate independent of the growing influence of the popular Catholic party in the city. That the corporation proposed an £8 household franchise and a £10 freehold franchise to ensure that 'a highly respectable constituency would be formed' (as opposed to a £10 household franchise that was actually adopted) supports this analysis, as this would continue to exclude the majority of Catholic and poorer Protestant voters in the city.

The government's plans for parliamentary reform proposed to juggle the representation of parliament, cutting the number of seats from 658 to 596, and giving Ireland a further three seats.¹⁰ Sir John Newport spoke of the government's proposals in glowing terms, stating that he thought it

the most noble offer which had ever been submitted to parliament, as it completely identified the House of Commons with the people, and so consolidated all the interests of the empire....It was the best plan which could be devised for preventing revolution.¹¹

Throughout the campaign for parliamentary reform, some liberal Protestants increasingly believed it necessary that members should be answerable to their constituents, and that the composition of the House of Commons should reflect the interests of the people to a greater extent. Various meetings in favour of parliamentary reform were held in Waterford city and county in the ensuing months. A meeting in the city in March 1831 was chaired by the liberal mayor, Sir Edmund Skottowe, and was attended by many leading liberal Protestants including Thomas Scott, Robert F. Sargent and Samuel King, Robert Shapland Carew, John Harris and William Marchant

⁹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 18 Jan. 1831 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

¹⁰ *Hansard* 3, ii, 1061 & 1082 (1 Mar. 1831).

¹¹ *Hansard* 3, ii, 1154 (2 Mar. 1831); *Waterford Mirror*, 7 Mar. 1831.

Ardagh, Robert Power junior of Clashmore, member for County Waterford, and John Alcock.¹² These gentlemen attended alongside leading Catholic reformers, among them Henry Winston Barron, James Esmonde and John Archbold, James Delahunty, Robert Curtis and William Aylward.¹³ In a stirring speech John Alcock, the son of the late Alderman Thomas Alcock, condemned ‘the selfish anxiety with which a corrupt oligarchy sought to maintain their usurped power – a power dangerous to the crown and to the people’. The resolutions passed echoed Sir John Newport’s parliamentary speech in expressing ‘a sincere belief that these measures would alone prevent a violent revolution, destructive of life and property’.¹⁴

A similar meeting was held in County Waterford in April 1831, despite the fact that a first requisition, bearing fifty-eight signatures, had been refused by the conservative Protestant high sheriff, Henry Conor Gumbleton, who claimed that he could not comply consistently with what he considered his public duty.¹⁵ The *Waterford Chronicle* pointed out that Gumbleton’s refusal to call a meeting ‘has only had the effect of creating a still stronger feeling in its favour’.¹⁶ A second requisition appeared on 4 April, signed by over twenty county magistrates including liberal Protestants Sir Richard Musgrave and John Musgrave of Tourin, Richard Power junior of Clashmore and Robert Power of Whitechurch, Robert Shapland Carew of Woodstown, as well as city liberals Simon Newport, Dr Matthew Poole and the mayor, Sir Edmund Skottowe.¹⁷ The *Waterford Chronicle* alluded to the widespread interest in

¹² Sir Edmund Skottowe was an alderman on Waterford Corporation and a grand juror for Waterford city. He was a leading advocator of parliamentary reform, attending and chairing meetings in 1830 and 1831. He died in 1834. Robert F. Sargent was equally interested in promoting parliamentary reform, signing requisitions for meetings in the city and county in 1831. John Harris was an alderman on Waterford Corporation from 1832 and mayor in 1837, as well as a grand juror for Waterford city. Harris was active in support of a wide array of issues, including parliamentary reform, poor relief, social welfare and local trade. William Marchant Ardagh was an alderman on Waterford Corporation and mayor in 1838, as well as valuator of Waterford from 1832. A supporter of Henry Winston Barron, Ardagh was interested in the improving the social and commercial standards in Waterford, promoting the Waterford loan fund, the building of a railway between Waterford and Limerick and attending a labourer’s friend meeting in 1836. John Alcock was a firm supporter of parliamentary reform, and it was possibly he who acted as second to Henry Winston Barron in a duel against Lord George Thomas Beresford in 1829; Eamonn McEaney, *A history of Waterford and its mayors from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries* (Waterford, 1995), p. 233.

¹³ *Waterford Mirror*, 9 Mar. 1831.

¹⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 12 Mar. 1831.

¹⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 19 Mar. 1831.

¹⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 2 Apr. 1831.

¹⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 4 Apr. 1831.

reform, announcing that gentlemen 'even from the most remote districts' meant to attend the meeting.¹⁸

On taking the chair, Sir Richard Musgrave took pains to point out that, despite the views of the high sheriff, the meeting had not been called for party purposes. Robert Power of Whitechurch, liberal member for County Waterford, told the meeting that he thought the measure of reform now proposed was 'absolutely necessary' and supported government's intentions of granting substantial householders the vote. John Musgrave read the petition in favour of reform, and was supported in a long speech by the Catholic Henry Winston Barron. An ulterior motive of this meeting was to devise a plan to oust Lord George Thomas Beresford, who opposed reform, from his county seat (which he had regained at the 1830 by-election) at the next general election. In the opinion of the O'Connellite Dominic Ronayne, Lord George would lose many of his former supporters at the next election; some because he was no longer a ministerial candidate, but others because of his refusal to support parliamentary reform.¹⁹

In parliament, the second reading of the 1831 reform bill took place on 21 March. During the debate, Henry Villiers Stuart, now member for the borough of Banbury, announced that he would vote against the bill.²⁰ His reasons for doing so give an insight into the mindset of Irish liberal Protestants in this period. The borough of Banbury was one in which the members of the corporation, threatened with extinction, were its only constituents. Henry Villiers Stuart believed that a member should vote consistently in the interests of his constituents, and thus he supported them in 'defending their privileges'. In doing so he sacrificed his own 'private feelings', stating that 'his vote he would give to his constituents, but his opinions were his own'. Stuart would also step down from the representation of Banbury at the earliest available opportunity.²¹ Thus for Henry Villiers Stuart, it was more important to stand by his liberal principles in reflecting the views of his (conservative) constituents, than to vote for a measure of which he truly approved.

¹⁸ *Waterford Chronicle*, 5 Apr. 1831.

¹⁹ Dominic Ronayne to Daniel O'Connell, 6 Apr. 1831, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 299-301.

²⁰ The borough of Banbury was controlled by Henry Villiers Stuart's cousin, Lord Bute. As he had retired from the representation of County Waterford on the grounds of financial distress, it is possible that Stuart accepted the seat for similar reasons; David Mahony to Daniel O'Connell, 12 June 1829, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, iv, 75-9.

²¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 26 Mar. 1831.

The 1831 reform bill was supported by Daniel O'Connell, Thomas Wyse, George Lamb (Whig member for Dungarvan) and Sir John Newport, but opposed by Lord George Thomas Beresford.²² Sir John Newport agreed with Thomas Spring Rice that the passing of a parliamentary reform measure would be the surest means of allaying agitation for the repeal of the union, as well as being the surest means of 'supporting the Protestant religion'.²³ But on 18 April the principle of the reform bill was 'virtually' defeated when a division on Lord John Russell's motion to diminish the representation of England and Wales went against government. The *British Courier* declared that the dissolution of parliament was all but inevitable. Accordingly, news reached Waterford on 27 April that parliament had been dissolved.²⁴

While both Irish Catholic and liberal Protestant members supported parliamentary reform, the reasons behind liberal Protestant support for parliamentary reform differed fundamentally from those of the O'Connellites. In a letter addressed to the people of Ireland in June 1831, O'Connell urged them to support reform:

The people of Ireland have never yet been identified with the government or the constitution....England has hitherto governed Ireland by a faction, through a faction and for a faction. It is time that she should be governed through the people and for the people.²⁵

Irish Protestants identified strongly with the British constitution, and their main aims for reform were to consolidate the union with Britain. O'Connell's views of the Irish 'people' were not inclusive of all Irish Protestants – who made up the 'faction' referred to by O'Connell – and this language served only to alienate the liberal Protestants.

During the 1831-32 session of parliament all four liberal Protestant representatives for Waterford, Sir John Newport for Waterford city, Robert Power and Sir Richard Musgrave for County Waterford, and George Lamb for Dungarvan, supported parliamentary reform, and they were backed strongly in their constituencies. The beginning of the session was passed in frustration for the Irish members, as the English Reform bill was debated at length. In August a reform meeting, attended by liberal Protestants Sir Edmund Skottowe, Thomas Scott, William Marchant Ardagh, Richard Pope, William Newport, Robert Shapland Carew, John Alcock and George

²² *Waterford Mirror*, 25 Apr. 1831.

²³ *Hansard* 3, iii, 1134 (29 Mar. 1831); *Waterford Mirror*, 26, 28 Mar. & 2 Apr. 1831.

²⁴ *Courier*, quoted in *Waterford Mirror*, 23 & 27 Apr. 1831.

²⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 June 1831.

Ivie was held in the city 'to express their anxiety at the delays that have occurred in passing the reform bill'.²⁶ In September, after the English and Welsh reform bill passed in the commons, a letter from 'A Looker On' appeared in the *Waterford Mirror*, arguing that the Irish reform bill should 'be equal' to the English. While he wished for meaningful reform, the writer also exhorted: 'may [those who wish for reform only to make way for revolution] have no part in remodelling it'.²⁷ There was widespread anxiety that among Irish Protestants that reform along radical or democratic lines might introduce widespread changes that would alter the complexion of parliament and thereby undermine their social and political position.

In October 1831 a meeting of the citizens of Waterford was held in the town hall for the purpose of addressing King William IV on the failure of government to carry the Irish reform bill before the close of parliament.²⁸ The *Waterford Chronicle* announced it 'was a glorious day for Waterford':

Never before did the *urbs intacta* see such a sight within its walls: men of every party and religion – Catholics, Protestants and Presbyterians, orangemen, unionists and repealers, all buried their former feuds in oblivion, and came forward as one man...²⁹

The meeting was chaired by the liberal Protestant mayor, Henry Alcock. A committee of nine appointed to frame the address was made up of a majority of Protestants, including Thomas Scott, Edmund Skottowe, William Marchant Ardagh, Dr Matthew Poole, Adam Rogers, Captain Simon Newport and the Baptist minister Rev Thomas Clarke.³⁰ Dr Matthew Poole, who announced that 'all his life he had been in favour' of reform, spoke alongside Catholic activists George Wyse, Nugent O'Reilly and James Nash. William Marchant Ardagh implored the gathering to 'join our appeal to that of the entire nation, and let the voice of an united people speak trumpet-tongued to the enemies of freedom'.³¹ The second resolution proposed and seconded by Dr Matthew Poole and Captain Simon Newport respectively, read:

²⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 11 Aug. 1831. Richard Pope was an alderman on Waterford Corporation and a grand juror for the city. William Newport was the nephew of Sir John, and a common councilman on the corporation. He died in 1835.

²⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Sept. 1831.

²⁸ The Irish reform bill of 1831 progressed to its second reading in July but progressed no further; *Hansard* 3, iv, 1023 (11 July 1831).

²⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 22 Oct. 1831. *Urbs intacta*, which translates as 'the untaken city' was the motto of Waterford city, and reflected the pride felt by many citizens in the history of their city.

³⁰ The Catholics on the committee were Nugent O'Reilly and George Wyse.

³¹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 22 Oct. 1831.

Feeling a deep anxiety in the well being of the state, we are not without the most serious and well-founded apprehensions, that if this great measure of relief and justice be not speedily passed into a law, hope may be succeeded by despair, and the people may be induced to resort to measures involving the peace, prosperity, and stability of the empire.³²

As a symbol of solidarity in support for parliamentary reform, the meeting was a huge success, causing Captain Simon Newport to comment proudly that though he had attended many meetings in the city, he had never seen 'so great a concourse of the wealth, respectability and intelligence of the city of Waterford assembled together'.³³

The city meeting was quickly followed by an equally impressive county meeting, chaired by liberal Protestant Sir Richard Keane, at which a significant number of liberal Protestants gathered, including Sir John Nugent Humble, Sir Richard Musgrave, Sir William Jackson Homan, Robert Power of Whitechurch and William Villiers Stuart of Dromana.³⁴ At this meeting Sir Richard Musgrave remarked that he was glad to see that every class of people supported reform, and that support for the measure was 'now as great as at the last election'. Robert Power promised his continued exertions in parliament 'to render the reform bill for Ireland as enlarged, liberal and beneficial a measure for the country' as possible. In his first public speech, William Villiers Stuart regretted that 'a wretched majority of forty-one [in the House of Lords] had the temerity to raise the banners of Toryism, and declare war on the entire nation'.³⁵ The address to the king adopted at the meeting bore the mark of liberal Protestantism, stating that

the reform bill was viewed as a measure which tended to promote the peace and prosperity of the empire and to direct the hopes of all men to the imperial parliament, as the source from whence they were to obtain relief...³⁶

The following week a letter by 'A Friend to Reform' appeared in the *Waterford Mirror* promoting extensive parliamentary reform. However, this writer argued that if he thought that reform would lead to repeal – repeatedly referred to as 'revolution' – he would abstain from voting for any kind of reform at all.³⁷ The attitudes of some liberal Protestants to reform thus differed fundamentally from that of Daniel O'Connell, if not

³² *Waterford Mirror*, 22 Oct. 1831.

³³ *Waterford Chronicle*, 22 Oct. 1831.

³⁴ One notable absence was that of Henry Villiers Stuart, who had just departed for Dublin to receive the commission of lord lieutenantancy of County Waterford, *Waterford Chronicle*, 29 Oct. 1831.

³⁵ *Waterford Chronicle*, 29 Oct. 1831.

³⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 29 & 31 Oct., 2 Nov. 1831.

³⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 26 Oct. 1831.

the majority of Irish Catholics. While for him reform was seen as merely a stepping stone to repeal, many liberal Protestants advocated a reform as a means of improving, rather than undermining, the present political system.

The proposed Irish reform bill did not engender undivided support in Ireland. In January 1832 the National Political Union organised petitions against parliament's plans for the Irish reform bill, which they thought too limited.³⁸ Thomas Wyse was equally discontented:

We are told that we are part of an united empire, when taxes are to be imposed or soldiers levied. When benefits are to be conferred, or rights restored, why should we be carefully separated from the rest of the nation?

Wyse believed that the proposed bill would 'sacrifice Ireland to Toryism' by retaining a high voting threshold and thereby disqualifying the majority of Catholics.³⁹ He told members of the Clonmel Independent Club that a reform bill which did not recognise Ireland's right to equal privileges with England 'will not long receive or deserve that name'.⁴⁰ However, Waterford Corporation adopted petitions to parliament in favour of the proposed reforms.⁴¹ The extent of the reforms, while disappointing to many Catholics, was happily accepted by the corporation.⁴² By supporting this measure of reform, the corporation could portray the image of an open and responsive body that was little troubled by change, but as well as this they could rest easy in the knowledge that the measure was not one that significantly undermined the corporation's role or position in the city.

On 17 January 1832 Edward Stanley was given leave to bring in an Irish reform bill. Government announced that the bill was 'to do by Ireland as we do by England'.⁴³ Sir John Newport believed that the Irish reform bill 'ought to stand upon its own basis', as only by tackling Ireland's distinctive problems would any real benefit be derived.⁴⁴ In late February the *Waterford Mirror* printed a Waterford petition for additional parliamentary representation for Ireland. In quite threatening terms, the petition urged parliament to attend to this, as if they did not 'a total want of

³⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 2 Jan. 1832.

³⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 4 Jan. 1832.

⁴⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Jan. 1832.

⁴¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Jan. 1832.

⁴² Waterford Corporation minute book, 3 Jan. 1832 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

⁴³ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Jan. 1832.

⁴⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Jan. 1832.

confidence in the government and the parliament will ensue, and...a desire for a separation between the two countries must be the consequences'.⁴⁵ A large reform meeting was held in Waterford city at the end of May 1832. The meeting proved a great attraction, with a parade of tradesmen drawing huge crowds from all over the city.⁴⁶ The meeting was chaired by the liberal mayor, Henry Alcock, and although several other local Protestants attended, the meeting was dominated by Catholic speakers and the committee selected to propose the resolutions, apart from Baptist minister Rev Thomas Clarke, was composed entirely of Catholics.⁴⁷ But in the context of the intermittent campaign for repeal, it is possible that some liberal Protestants absented themselves from city politics. While the repeal campaign may not have been at the forefront of politics at this particular moment in time, the activities of local Catholics in supporting repeal may have had an alienating effect on local Protestant opinion. Even if the reform bill itself posed no tangible threat to their position and influence in society, the gathering of huge crowds of the Catholic-led lower classes in support of it certainly posed a symbolic one.

The second reading of the Irish reform bill passed on 25 May 1832 by 246 votes to 130, with Sir Richard Musgrave, Robert Power, and George Lamb voting in the majority.⁴⁸ On 18 June O'Connell presented several petitions from Waterford in favour of an extended franchise under the new reform bill. Sir John Newport criticised a petition from the Irish Protestant Conservative Society calling for the franchise to be restricted to £30 householders, rather than setting it at £10 as in England.⁴⁹ But on the same day, O'Connell's motion to lower the property qualification in Ireland to £5 was lost by a large margin of 133 votes. Both Sir Richard Musgrave and Robert Power voted in favour of the motion.⁵⁰ The Irish reform bill was finally passed by the House of Commons 19 July, and although the House of Lords was expected to oppose several clauses, optimism among the Irish Whigs was high. The Irish act was much more conservative and limited a measure than the English act, and electoral influence remained in similar hands after 1832 as before. Under the new act, all non-resident

⁴⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 25 Feb. 1832.

⁴⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 May 1832.

⁴⁷ The committee was composed of Thomas Wyse, Henry Winston Barron, Alexander Sherlock, Nugent O'Reilly, John Valentine Nugent, Dr William Connolly, James Esmonde, John Quigly, George Wyse and Rev Thomas Clarke; *Waterford Mirror*, 23 May 1832.

⁴⁸ Sir John Newport acted as a teller on this occasion; *Hansard* 3, xiii, 175-8 (25 May 1832).

⁴⁹ *Hansard* 3, xii, 768-9 (18 June 1832).

⁵⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 June 1832.

freemen and freeholders were disqualified from voting, along with all honorary freemen granted their freedom after 1831; all Catholic qualification oaths were abolished; and the borough household qualification was set at £10. Most importantly for Waterford, a second seat was granted to the city, doubling its representation in the commons. In August a county meeting was requisitioned to give thanks to county members, Sir Richard Musgrave and Robert Power, for their continued support for a reformed parliament, which had 'given general satisfaction' to constituents.⁵¹

In September 1832, before the first general election to the reformed parliament, Sir John Newport announced his intention to retire from the representation of the city due to advanced age and infirmity. Indeed, he was now over seventy and had long suffered with respiratory illnesses. Newport reasoned that now Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform had been implemented, his work was complete: reform 'has been, from the earliest period of a very long life, the primary object of my unceasing anxiety'.⁵² However, it is not unreasonable to think that Sir John also had a sense that if he did put himself forward as a candidate, his long-held seat for the city would be less secure in the new reformed atmosphere of 1832. The expense of a contest, should an opposing candidate be found, would have been unwelcome, and thus he retired in September 1832, several months before parliament was dissolved.⁵³ When Sir John Newport retired at the end of a long parliamentary career, he did so as much with a feeling of disquiet for the future as with a sense of satisfaction of having finally fulfilled his dearest ambitions.⁵⁴

While some liberal Protestants, including Henry Alcock, had appeared alongside the Irish Catholic members in supporting the reform bill in 1832, the tithe and repeal campaigns continued to exacerbate existing divisions between Protestants and Catholics. In March 1833 the Whig government passed a coercion bill aimed at quelling rural agitation in Ireland. Although this bill was denounced by Daniel O'Connell as 'a measure of atrocious tyranny', several liberal Protestant members

⁵¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 August 1832.

⁵² *Waterford Mirror*, 24 September 1832.

⁵³ *Waterford Mirror*, 24 September 1832; parliament was dissolved in early December 1832 and an election was held in Waterford city on 21 December; Brian Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1802-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 55.

⁵⁴ Sir John Newport did not rest easy in retirement and wrote constantly to friends in government urging them to implement measures that would improve the state of Ireland: see for example Sir John Newport to Thomas Spring Rice, 22 December 1833, in N.L.I., Monteaagle papers. MS 13,375.

supported the main provisions of the bill. Among these were Sir Richard Keane, member for County Waterford, and George Lamb, member for Dungarvan.⁵⁵ As a result of his vote, Sir Richard Keane was described by an angry and frustrated O'Connell as 'treacherous to the last degree'.⁵⁶ Sir Richard had supported Catholic emancipation, parliamentary reform and repeal of the union, but this vote for the coercion act symbolised his fear of popular unrest. This was put into greater relief when the two Catholic city representatives, Henry Winston Barron and Thomas Wyse, and the Catholic member for the county, John Matthew Galwey, voted against the measure.⁵⁷ Sir Richard Keane's belief that coercion was necessary to stem unrest in Ireland reflected the thinking of a wider section of the Protestant landed élite.

The support of some liberal Protestants for additional parliamentary reform continued throughout the 1830s. In August 1835 a meeting was held in Waterford city, chaired by liberal Protestant Henry Alcock, to prepare an address of loyalty to the lord lieutenant, Lord Mulgrave. The address stated in no uncertain terms the continuing support in Waterford city for parliamentary reform.⁵⁸ In January 1836 Daniel O'Connell established a Reform Registry Association in Dublin. Although many of those who attended were Catholics, William Villiers Stuart, then member for County Waterford, made an appearance.⁵⁹ William Villiers Stuart was a particularly staunch opponent of traditional abuses and spoke strongly in favour of church and municipal reform. Like Sir Richard Musgrave, William Villiers Stuart enjoyed the confidence of the Catholics and was able to view his own position in society as compatible with an approach to reform that witnessed him working closely with O'Connell and the leaders of popular opinion.

In January 1840 a great reform meeting was held in Dublin. Sir Richard Keane attended, remarking that the Irish reformers had the support of the parliamentary liberals, the people and the Catholic clergy. Keane urged that 'the destinies of the British Empire were in the hands of the liberal constituency of Ireland, and it was the duty of every man who did not forget he had a country to assist them with heads, hands

⁵⁵ *Hansard* 3, xvi, 874 (19 Mar. 1833).

⁵⁶ Daniel O'Connell to Patrick Vincent Fitzpatrick, 11 Mar. 1833, in O'Connell *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, v, 16-7.

⁵⁷ *Hansard* 3, xvi, 529 (12 Mar. 1833).

⁵⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 22 Aug. 1835.

⁵⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 & 20 Jan. 1836.

and pockets'.⁶⁰ William Villiers Stuart's support for O'Connell's Reform Registration Association and Sir Richard Keane's support for further reform in Ireland reflected the fact that some liberal Protestants did not cease in their support for further reform in the 1830s, despite the perceived threats to the Protestant church and state posed by the tithe and repeal campaigns. This continued support for reform among liberal Protestants in the 1830s was further revealed in the campaign for church reform.

Part two: Liberal Protestants and the reform of the Church of Ireland:

By 1830 the Church of Ireland was recognised by even those most indisposed to reform as being in dire need of improvement. Although there had been considerable internal reform of abuses such as non-residency and pluralities during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, led by reformers such as William Stuart, archbishop of Armagh, and Charles Brodrick, archbishop of Cashel, there was much left for the Whigs to tackle when they went into government in November 1830.⁶¹ The system of tithes had produced widespread agrarian unrest in the 1830s and government proposals met with little support on the ground until the tithe rentcharge act of 1838 (see chapter six). Yet measures of church reform in the 1830s added to a sense of insecurity on the part of Irish Protestants, most of whom viewed the security of the established church as tantamount to political security. The responses of liberal Protestants to measures of church reform revealed much about their attitudes to reform and to the British government.

By 1830 Sir John Newport had proved himself a champion of church reform, maintaining a consistent approach at a time when the Irish church question was being generally avoided by government. It was possibly Sir John's hard-line approach to church reform that led some to mistakenly brand him not only a radical, but a dissenter also.⁶² On 4 March 1830 Newport proposed 'a comprehensive investigation' of clerical

⁶⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 Jan. 1840.

⁶¹ For analysis of internal church reform from 1800 to 1830, see D. H. Akenson, *The Church of Ireland: ecclesiastical reform and revolution, 1800-85* (London, 1971), chapters ii & iii; Edward Brynn, *The Church of Ireland in the age of Catholic emancipation* (London, 1982), pp 88-135; and Kenneth Milne, 'Principle or pragmatism: Archbishop Brodrick and church education policy', in Alan Ford, James McGuire & Kenneth Milne (eds), *As by law established: the church of Ireland since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995), pp 187-94.

⁶² Contemporaries such as Charles Butson, dean of Waterford, mistakenly believed Newport was a dissenter, see Charles Butson to Henry Addington, 17 Mar. 1795 (Sidmouth MSS), quoted in R. G. Thorne, *The history of parliament: the House of Common*, iv, 663; more recently Edward Brynn, in his

salaries, pluralities and parochial unions, with a view to ascertaining their value and considering their possible dissolution. On forwarding the motion, Newport contended that 'the best friend of the established church... was he who seeing abuses, exposed and denounced them: and not he who, knowing of their existence, endeavoured to uphold them'.⁶³ This was a gibe at those churchmen and their parliamentary friends who had denounced Newport as an enemy of the established church in his reform attempts in the 1810s and 1820s. On 18 May 1830 Sir John moved for a reform of the board of first fruits.⁶⁴ Despite being supported by Thomas Spring Rice, George Lamb and like-minded liberals, the motion was defeated by ninety-four votes to sixty-five.⁶⁵ However, the government responded by establishing an ecclesiastical commission to inquire into unions, non-residence and the payment of clerical salaries. Presided over by the conservative Archbishop John George Beresford, this commission was not expected to have a strong reforming tendency, and the first report issued in 1831 aroused little excitement.

In March 1831 Sir John Newport proposed another motion focused on reforming the board of first fruits.⁶⁶ Newport described the fund as 'totally inadequate' to meet the needs of the established clergy. Disagreeing with the policy of supplementing the fund by parliamentary loans, which were repayable by a tax on occupiers of land, Sir John argued that deficiencies in the fund should no longer be repayable by taxing the body of the people. He moved for a new valuation of the Church of Ireland revenues. After some debate Newport withdrew his resolution, instead moving an address to the king 'to take the advice of the law officers of the crown as to a revaluation'. This resolution was agreed to.⁶⁷ Thomas Wyse, who agreed with Sir John that the system was in desperate need of reform, was happy to observe 'a disposition to amend the system' in parliament.⁶⁸ Three months later, the returns of

work on church reform, referred repeatedly to Newport as a radical in parliament; see Brynn, *Church of Ireland*, pp 116 & 124.

⁶³ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 & 10 Mar. 1830.

⁶⁴ *Hansard* 2, xxiv, 838-45 (18 May 1830); Brynn, *Church of Ireland*, pp 231-2. First fruits were a form of medieval tax on agricultural produce which went towards the upkeep of the clergy. After first fruits were abolished in England in 1704, there was a campaign in Ireland for their abolition, resulting in the establishment of the board of first fruits. The board's purpose was to fund the building and repair of established churches and glebes, but was in need of reform by the nineteenth century; S. J. Connolly, *The Oxford companion to Irish history* (Oxford, 1988), p. 195.

⁶⁵ *Hansard* 2, xxiv, 858-9 (18 May 1830); *Waterford Mirror*, 24 May 1830.

⁶⁶ *Hansard* 3, iii, 407-19 (14 Mar. 1831).

⁶⁷ *Hansard* 3, iii, 428-9 (14 Mar. 1831); *Waterford Chronicle*, 19 & 21 Mar. 1831.

⁶⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 19 Mar. 1831.

first fruits in Ireland were published, containing a detailed statement of the wealth of the established church.⁶⁹

In Waterford city the established church was coming under increasing pressure from members of the Waterford Householders Club, in the form of a concerted attack on the vestry system. The vestry system, as established by the 1827 vestry act, permitted annual vestries to determine the annual tax, or cess, for the maintenance of the fabric of the established church. Sir John Newport was one of the most vocal critics of vestry cess, and in 1827 had been instrumental in promoting legislation granting the Catholics a vote on certain issues at vestries.⁷⁰ Waterford Catholics, led by John Valentine Nugent, attended all vestries held in the city with the aim of upsetting the annual valuations for church cess.⁷¹ A rigid interpretation of the law by the popular party led to the vestry meetings becoming convoluted, to the point that these Catholics enjoyed some successes.⁷² In May 1831, in a scathing attack on the vestry system at a meeting of the Waterford Householders Club, John Valentine Nugent contended that it was as difficult for the church party in Waterford to convene a legal vestry as for 'a camel to get through the eye of a needle'.⁷³ The opposition to vestry cess in Waterford was effective. Little cess could be collected in the city, and in October 1831 churchwardens were forced to make an appeal at the quarter sessions in an attempt to recover large sums due to the church from 1830.⁷⁴

Local Protestants tended to avoid vestry meetings, perceiving their tendency to divide local society. For example, only seven Protestants in total, including clergymen, attended the vestry for the united parish of Trinity held in the city on 4 July, while members of the Householders Club mustered in great numbers.⁷⁵ This tendency was held up by the club as proof of widespread opposition to the whole system:

The total absence of the respectable portion of the Protestant parishioners from our late vestries proves, to the clearest demonstration, that the levying of those obnoxious taxes is as repugnant to the feelings of the

⁶⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 June 1831.

⁷⁰ Eugene Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans: religion and politics, 1819-1872' (PhD thesis, U.C.C., 2000), pp 119-20.

⁷¹ John Valentine Nugent was the foremost leader in the campaign against vestry cess in the early 1830s, as well as being prominent in the campaign for vestry cess in the late 1820s. Nugent emigrated to Newfoundland in 1833, and became a noted figure in politics there.

⁷² Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans', pp 121-2.

⁷³ *Waterford Mirror*, 25 May 1831.

⁷⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 Oct. 1831.

⁷⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 July 1831. This was true also in 1832; *Waterford Mirror*, 25 Apr. 1832.

Protestant as to those of his Catholic brethren, and that the continuation of these iniquitous imposts is entirely to be attributed to a few miserable dependents of the establishment.⁷⁶

But while local Protestants wanted little to do with the system of holding vestry meetings for determining church cess, neither did they want anything to do with the Waterford Householders Club, which they perceived merely as a means by which the popular party could cause trouble in the city. As far as liberal Protestants were concerned, the club, devoid of gentry leadership, was nothing more than a system of creating agitation in local politics. When asked to join the club in June 1831, an unnamed local Protestant answered that 'he did not wish to have anything to do with such a gang of fellows'.⁷⁷

In August 1832 a royal commission under the chairmanship of Richard Whately, archbishop of Dublin, was established to inquire into ecclesiastical revenue and patronage. The commission included Whigs Sir John Newport and Sir Henry Parnell, as well as eight others 'whose views were certain to upset many churchmen'.⁷⁸ The work of this commission extended over much of the 1830s, with four reports printed between 1833 and 1837.⁷⁹ The commission did tend to invoke the distrust, if not outright opposition, of many churchmen. The church hierarchy was 'decidedly less enthusiastic at the prospect of church reform under Whig direction' than it had been under conservative governments up to 1830.⁸⁰ In February 1833 Lord Althorp introduced a bill to amend the laws relating to church temporalities in Ireland. This bill sought a more efficient allocation of the church's resources by reducing the number of Irish bishoprics, revoking the right of churchwardens to levy for vestry cess and allowing tenants on episcopal lands to purchase their holdings at a fixed annual rent.⁸¹ About the same time, Rev Thomas Clarke, a radical Baptist and a repealer, sent a memorial from Waterford to William IV praying for a reform of church temporalities in the diocese of Waterford and Lismore.⁸² Church reform now took centre stage both inside and outside parliament, witnessed by debates on church reform in the

⁷⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 29 June 1831.

⁷⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 29 June 1831.

⁷⁸ Brynn, *Church of Ireland*, pp 233-6.

⁷⁹ Sir John Newport did not remain on the commission for very long, as he retired from parliament at the next general election in December 1832.

⁸⁰ Brynn, *Church of Ireland*, p. 237.

⁸¹ Connolly, *Oxford companion to Irish history*, p. 93.

⁸² *Waterford Mirror*, 16 Feb. 1833.

Commons, meetings of the Protestant hierarchy in Ireland, and many petitions being organised and presented to parliament.⁸³

Many liberal Protestants continued to support some measure of church reform. On his retirement from parliament in December 1832, Sir John Newport believed as strongly as ever that both the church and state should be 'unsparingly' reformed.⁸⁴ In January 1833 he wrote to Lord Althorp, arguing that the success of the government's reform measures would depend mainly upon an extensive reform of the established church.⁸⁵ In March 1832 Sir Richard Musgrave had argued for a permanent settlement of the tithe question as this was 'the only way to sustain the Protestant church' in Ireland.⁸⁶ While this may have been a tactic to encourage Irish Tory support for the government's tithe bill, the future security of the Church of Ireland was as important an issue for Irish Protestants as putting an end to unrest over the tithe question. In February 1833 Sir Richard Keane announced that he was 'delighted' that the government had introduced a church temporalities bill, as such measures had the potential to 'convert Ireland into a tower of strength'. Keane believed that church reform would secure the confidence and the gratitude of the Irish people, and 'serve as a keystone of peace and good order throughout Ireland'.⁸⁷

The church temporalities bill proposed to institute an annual tax, payable by the clergy of the established church, as a substitute for the board of first fruits which was to be abolished. The number of dioceses was reduced, and the government also considered it 'expedient' to abolish compulsory assessment by exclusive vestries.⁸⁸ The bill was strongly supported by the Irish Catholics and the radicals in parliament, but opposed by the majority of conservatives and churchmen in both England and Ireland.⁸⁹ William Christmas, conservative member for Waterford city, objected to the bill as sufficient provisions had not been made for the Protestant curates.⁹⁰ The bill was finally read a third time in the commons on 8 July, and was passed by 274 votes to ninety-four. No Waterford members voted on the bill, either for or against.⁹¹ This may

⁸³ *Waterford Mirror*, 18, 23 & 27 Feb., 2 & 4 Mar. 1833.

⁸⁴ Sir John Newport to Thomas Spring Rice, 22 Dec. 1832 (N.L.I., Newport papers, MS 796).

⁸⁵ Sir John Newport to Lord Althorp, 13 Jan. 1833 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7).

⁸⁶ *Hansard* 3, xi, 173-4 (13 Mar. 1832).

⁸⁷ *Hansard* 3, xv, 615 (12 Feb. 1833).

⁸⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 16 Mar. 1833.

⁸⁹ Brynn, *Church of Ireland*, pp 274-6.

⁹⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 May 1833.

⁹¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 July 1833.

have been due to their uneasiness about the ramifications of the bill for the established church, but more likely it was due to the lateness of the session, at which time many Irish members had already returned to Ireland. The church temporalities bill received the royal assent in late August 1833.⁹² The act made 'drastic changes' to the structure and temporalities of the Church of Ireland.⁹³ Two of the four archbishoprics were demoted into bishoprics and a further ten bishoprics were suppressed and amalgamated into the nearest bishoprics. The bishopric of Waterford and Lismore was fused with that of Cashel and Emly. The board of ecclesiastical commissioners for Ireland was established, which took over control of the board of first fruits.⁹⁴

The most controversial aspect of the introduction of this bill for Irish liberal Protestants came in the form of an (eventually discarded) appropriation clause, promoted by Lords Russell, Althorp and Duncannon, which if passed would see any superfluous revenues of the church applied to uses such as relief of the Irish poor and education for the poorer classes. Any attempt to put church revenues or other church property to lay uses was seen as an infringement on traditional property rights. The position of liberal Protestants in Ireland on the question of appropriation was ambivalent. Thomas Spring Rice seemed to support the proposal, but his approach was tempered by profusions of loyalty for and confidence in a future reformed church: 'With respect to surplus the just appropriation is to provide for the Christian education of our people.'⁹⁵ But some liberal Protestants did support the principle of appropriation. For example Sir Richard Musgrave was convinced that 'the people never would be satisfied' unless they saw a more equal appropriation of the church property.⁹⁶ In May 1834 Sir Henry George Ward, the radical member for St Albans, moved a series of resolutions promoting appropriation.⁹⁷ After an extensive debate, Ward's motion was rejected by 396 votes to 120, but not before it had acted as a catalyst for a schism in the ministry and four members of the cabinet had resigned.⁹⁸ While Ebenezer Jacob,

⁹² *Waterford Mirror*, 3 & 19 Aug. 1833.

⁹³ Kenneth Milne, *The Church of Ireland: a history* (1st ed., Dublin, n. d.), p. 48. For an extensive analysis of the relations between government and church leaders at this time, see Brynn, *Church of Ireland*, pp 250-73.

⁹⁴ Brynn, *Church of Ireland*, pp 287-9.

⁹⁵ Thomas Spring Rice to the duke of Northampton, 26 June 1834, quoted in Brynn, *Church of Ireland*, pp 308-9.

⁹⁶ *Hansard* 3, xv, 173-4 (13 Mar. 1832).

⁹⁷ *Hansard* 3, xxiii, 1368 (27 May 1834).

⁹⁸ *Hansard* 3, xxiv, 86 (2 June 1834). These ministers were Edward Stanley, secretary for the colonies, Sir James Graham, first lord of the admiralty, the duke of Richmond, postmaster general, and the earl of

the O'Connellite member for Dungarvan, voted for Ward's motion, the other members for Waterford refrained from voting.

On the opening of parliament in March 1835, Lord John Russell (now in opposition) moved for the appropriation of surplus revenue of the established church for other purposes. The Waterford members Thomas Wyse, Patrick Power of Bellevue and Michael O'Loughlen (all Catholics) supported the measure, and the Catholic Henry Winston Barron and liberal Protestant Sir Richard Musgrave 'paired off for the motion'.⁹⁹ But Sir Richard's views did not reflect those of the majority of Protestants in Waterford. In November 1835 the clergy of the diocese of Waterford issued an address to the primate, Archbishop John George Beresford, thanking him for his concerted effort in opposing church reform. The tone was verbose, but this inflated language was a reflection of the increasing insecurity of Waterford churchmen in the face of continued efforts at church reform.¹⁰⁰

Despite these growing insecurities, some liberal Protestants remained favourable to some form of church reform. In June 1836 William Villiers Stuart announced to parliament that while he would support measures aimed at solving the tithe dispute and reforming the established church in Ireland, he could not support any measure placing on Catholic landlords the necessity of contributing to the maintenance of 'a church from which they derived no benefit'.¹⁰¹ In June 1840 Stuart offered a rare insight into his own liberal mentality:

He belonged to the established religion, and should be anxious to see it prosper; but, at the same time, he did not forget that he sat in that House the representative of a constituency, the majority of which were of another persuasion, and if in the part he then took was displeasing to his constituents, he should have no hesitation in resigning the seat in which their confidence had placed him.¹⁰²

Stuart acknowledged that many of his (predominantly Catholic) constituents supported more wholesale reform than he was prepared to countenance, and while he supported

Ripon, lord privy seal; *Hansard* 3, xxiv, 10 (2 June 1834); Angus MacIntyre, *The Liberator: Daniel O'Connell and the Irish party, 1830-47* (London, 1965), pp 129-31.

⁹⁹ Sir Richard Musgrave paired off with a member who opposed the measure; *Hansard* 3, xxvii, 969-74 (7 Apr. 1835); *Waterford Mirror*, 8 & 11 Apr. 1835.

¹⁰⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Nov. 1835.

¹⁰¹ *Hansard* 3, xxxiii, 1332 (1 June 1835).

¹⁰² *Hansard* 3, lv, 334 (30 June 1834).

church reform in principle, he would rather resign his seat than vote for measures that would destroy the church.

Insecurity increased among Waterford churchmen over following years. In November 1837 a 'serious riot' took place in the Protestant cathedral in the city, interrupting a service.¹⁰³ The resulting investigation uncovered that a controversial sermon on 'the novelty of the church of Rome' by the vicar of Enniscorthy, Rev Denis Browne, had been organised, to which both Protestants and Catholics had been invited. Although accounts differed as to the intensity of the so-called riot, it was admitted that the Catholics present became 'violent and noisy' when the sermon began, and that the speaker was forced to end the sermon when the 'hooting and hissing' reached fever pitch. Such sermons in Waterford, or at least, riotous reaction to them, were uncommon. Liberal Protestant Dr Matthew Poole expressed his surprise that the sermon should have resulted in such public turmoil, acknowledging that he knew of 'no occasion in forty years' of Protestant worship being interrupted by Catholic opposition.¹⁰⁴ This episode highlights the increasing assertiveness of Waterford Catholics in publicly opposing theological arguments for Protestant superiority. Some liberal Protestants in the city were concerned not to be classed with those Protestants who had sent the memorial to parliament. Liberal Protestant Major Beresford Gahan stated that he was of the opinion that 'the majority of Protestants in the city disapproved of having such a sermon as had occasioned the disturbance and also dissented from the imputations that had been thrown out against their Catholic brethren'.¹⁰⁵ Several Protestants, represented by the Rev Richard Ryland, wrote specifically to disavow any intentions of insulting Waterford Catholics.¹⁰⁶ By this time, liberal Protestants in the city recognised the potency of concerted Catholic opposition to any public assertion of Protestant superiority, and recognised the need to keep up at least an appearance of friendly relations with the city Catholics.

¹⁰³ *Waterford Mirror*, 16 Dec. 1837.

¹⁰⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Jan. 1838.

¹⁰⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Jan. 1838.

¹⁰⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Jan. 1838. Rev Richard Hopkins Ryland was chancellor of Waterford from 1829 to his death in 1866. Prebendary of Mora in Lismore cathedral from 1841 until 1866, Ryland wrote *The history, topography and antiquities of the county and city of Waterford* (1824); Frederic Boase, *Modern English biography: containing many thousand concise memoirs of persons who have died since 1850* (6 vols, Bristol, 1892-1921; reprinted 2000), vi, 522.

In June 1840 a meeting of the Waterford Protestant Conservative Society took place in the city.¹⁰⁷ The society was the local branch of the Irish Protestant Conservative Society, which had been established in Dublin in February 1832 with the aim of directing Irish Protestant attention 'away from the culture of resignation'.¹⁰⁸ This society aimed at coordinating Protestant activities, including the collection of voluntary payments to the clergy of the established church in lieu of tithes, directing action against Catholic agitation and demonstrating to British public opinion 'the size and cohesion of the Protestant interest in Ireland'.¹⁰⁹ While supported by some British Tories, including the duke of Wellington, the society was encouraged to obscure its Orange character in order to rally support in Britain.¹¹⁰ At that time, there were no branches established outside Dublin, though the *Waterford Mail* articulated its views and the society imbued Waterford Protestants 'with a greater sense of confidence'.¹¹¹

The meeting in 1840, the earliest of its kind reported in the *Waterford Mirror*, was attended largely by clergymen of the established church, including ultra Protestants Dean Ussher Lee, Archdeacon James Kennedy and Rev Henry Fleury.¹¹² The attendance of some lay Protestants revealed the changing loyalties of Irish liberals at this time. Some liberal Protestants continued to be repelled by what they perceived to be the purely Protestant focus of Irish Tories, and few liberal Protestants renounced their former principles and metamorphosed into conservatives.¹¹³ But other liberal Protestants did move towards a closer identification with their conservative co-religionists, finding common ground in their opposition to the repeal campaign as well as in their fears for the future security of the Church of Ireland. Some may have been attracted by a revitalised Irish unionism, propagated by Tories including Rev Charles Boyton and Isaac Butt, which aimed at promoting a sense of Protestant national identity to act as a bulwark against O'Connell's emergent Catholic nationalism.¹¹⁴ No

¹⁰⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 June 1840.

¹⁰⁸ Spence, 'Isaac Butt, Irish nationality and the conditional defence of the union', p. 66.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Gray, 'Wellington and the government of Ireland, 1832-46', in C. M. Woolgar (ed.), *Wellington studies III* (Southampton, 1999), p. 209.

¹¹⁰ Gray, 'Wellington and the government of Ireland', p.210.

¹¹¹ Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans', pp 207-8.

¹¹² Rev Henry Fleury, the son of Rev George Louis Fleury, archdeacon of Waterford, was educated at Trinity College Dublin and was rector of the united parishes of Faithlegg, Kill St Nicholas and Crook until his death in 1861. Fleury was registrar of the diocese of Waterford and Lismore for many years, and was chancellor of Lismore between 1834 and 1861; Boase, *Modern English biography*, v, 314.

¹¹³ G. A. Cahill, 'Some nineteenth-century roots of the Ulster problem, 1829-48', in *Irish University Review: a journal of Irish studies*, I, no. 2 (1971), p. 224.

¹¹⁴ Spence, 'Isaac Butt, Irish nationality and the conditional defence of the union', pp 66-7.

liberal Protestants active in Waterford politics attended the meeting of the Waterford Protestant Conservative Society, suggesting that even if they were becoming more protective of their traditional role in Irish politics and society, they were not yet ready to enter a public alliance with Irish Toryism. But Protestants John Newport (a nephew of Sir John) and Thomas Harris did attend the meeting.¹¹⁵ These gentlemen belonged to families whose members had long been active in liberal politics (in this case Sir John Newport and John Harris) and their participation here reveals the fears for the future of Irish Protestantism felt by many Protestants at this time, both liberal and conservative.

The issue of church reform was a divisive one for both the British government and Irish Protestants in this period. As 'a major vested interest with extensive powers and privileges', the established church in Ireland was especially vulnerable to parliamentary demands for retrenchment.¹¹⁶ Many Protestants became increasingly concerned for the future of the established church, especially regarding the issue of appropriation, and it has been argued that the parliamentary campaign for the disendowment of the established church made Protestant fears 'reasonable and understandable'.¹¹⁷ However, some liberal Protestants did offer enduring if conditional support for church reform during the 1830s. But this 'moderate and reasoned response' to church reform in an atmosphere of increasing hostility to Protestant institutions ultimately ignored the political reality.¹¹⁸ This enduring support for reform measures, even when such reforms threatened Protestant security in church and state, is also revealed in the campaigns for poor relief and municipal reform.

Part three: Poor relief and reactions to the Irish poor laws:

The problem of Irish poverty was one of the most pressing social problems of the early nineteenth century. Before the introduction of an Irish poor law in 1838, there was no statutory system of poor relief in Ireland. There was instead a variety of voluntary welfare institutions established across the country, the initiative lying largely with wealthy philanthropists and religious organisations. Waterford was noted for being a city particularly interested in looking after its poor, a report of commissioners

¹¹⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 27 June 1840.

¹¹⁶ Brynn, *Church of Ireland*, p. 223.

¹¹⁷ Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans', p. 115.

¹¹⁸ Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans', p. 142.

on the poor laws remarking in 1836 that 'it is but justice to state that the inhabitants of this city are pre-eminent for their disposition to relieve the necessitous wants of their poor'.¹¹⁹ There were several institutions for the relief of the poor in the city, run by both private and municipal bodies. There was a house of industry, a dispensary and a house of recovery (generally known as the fever hospital), all of which were funded by voluntary subscription and presentments from the city grand jury. The house of industry served as a hospital, poorhouse, prison and asylum. The Leper Hospital and the Holy Ghost Hospital, the oldest establishments of the kind in the city, came under the auspices of Waterford Corporation.¹²⁰ A Mendicity Society was managed largely by leading Anglican and Quaker philanthropists. In County Waterford, there was a relative scarcity of institutions for relieving the poor. By 1835 there were seven dispensaries and two fever hospitals at Dungarvan and Lismore. All were funded jointly by voluntary subscription and grand jury presentment.¹²¹ But Waterford remained one of the only counties in Ireland with no infirmary.¹²²

Parliament recognised the need to legislate for the relief of the Irish poor, but had long put off tackling the problem. Ministers were disinclined to take decisive action on this front until the problems caused by the English system of poor laws were resolved.¹²³ But by the 1830s a lot of time and effort had been spent gathering huge volumes of evidence on the state of the Irish poor. The most impressive of these were the reports of the royal commission, established in 1833 to investigate the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland, chaired by Richard Whately, the Protestant archbishop of Dublin. These activities allowed government to justify putting off the introduction of legislation for poor relief until the commission had issued its final report. But it also created the context in which other members of parliament could forward their own legislation for poor relief. Although the majority of these motions and bills were rejected, the nature of their proposals offers an insight into the mindset of certain members of parliament at this time. This section does not aim to give a complete

¹¹⁹ *Reports of commissioners: poor laws (Ireland), appendix C*, H. C. 1836 (35), xxx, 104.

¹²⁰ *Third report of evidence from the committee of the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (665), vii, 619-26.

¹²¹ These dispensaries were at Ballyduff (established in 1832), Bunmahon (1830), Cappoquin (1824), Clashmore (1824), Dunmore and Passage (1825), Kilmacthomas (1828) and Kilmeaden and Drumcannon (1822). The fever hospitals were established at Dungarvan in 1817 and Lismore in 1815; *Reports of commissioners: poor laws (Ireland), appendix B*, H. C. 1835 (369), xxxii, pp 97-9 & 153.

¹²² *Third report of evidence from the committee of the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (665), vii, 622 & 625.

¹²³ Virginia Crossman, *The poor law in Ireland, 1838-1948* (Dundalk, 2006), p. 7.

history of the introduction of the poor laws into Ireland, but to examine the roles played by liberal Protestants in Waterford in promoting poor law reform and to analyse their responses to the different initiatives proposed in the 1830s for the relief of the Irish poor.¹²⁴

The early 1830s 'was a period when public attention was very generally and very earnestly directed to the condition of the poor and to the operation of the law providing for their relief'.¹²⁵ However, there was widespread disagreement as to what form a provision should take. A meeting of householders, held in Waterford city in June 1831, adopted a petition supporting a modified system of poor laws for Ireland, one that would levy a tax on absentee proprietors.¹²⁶ This meeting, chaired by liberal Protestant Edmund Skottowe, was attended by Catholics, Anglicans and a considerable number of Quakers. Yet this meeting occurred in the context of deep political division over the question of repeal of the union, and there remained intense feeling amongst the Catholics present against the established church. Thomas Wyse's support for the restoration to the poor of a portion of church taxation in Ireland (essentially appropriation) was greeted with much cheering on the part of the Catholics at the meeting. When an unexpected resolution was pressed denouncing the wealth of the established church, there was a bitter reaction among Protestants, and the Anglican clergymen left the meeting.¹²⁷

In September 1831 Sir Richard Musgrave and James Grattan (a liberal Protestant repealer and member for County Wicklow) obtained leave to bring in a bill for the relief of the Irish poor.¹²⁸ Sir Richard argued that the only way of ensuring peace and prosperity in Ireland: 'was immediately to adopt some efficient measure for the relief...of the people'.¹²⁹ This bill did not intend to give the Irish poor a right to relief, as in England, but aimed at providing support for destitute paupers and the aged and infirm poor.¹³⁰ The bill did not progress, and it was soon decided to send it to

¹²⁴ For a general and comprehensive account of the introduction of the Irish poor law, see Crossman, *The poor law in Ireland* and John O'Connor, *The workhouses of Ireland: the fate of Ireland's poor* (Dublin, 1995).

¹²⁵ George Nicholls, *A history of the Irish poor law, in connection with the condition of the people* (London, 1856), p. 118.

¹²⁶ This petition was the same as the one presented to parliament by Sir John Newport (see above).

¹²⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 15 June 1831.

¹²⁸ *Waterford Chronicle*, 8 Sept. 1831; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 246.

¹²⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 19 Mar. 1832.

¹³⁰ *Waterford Chronicle*, 6 Sept. 1831.

Ireland 'for consideration' rather than attempt to force it through parliament.¹³¹ While out of parliament (between 1832 and 1835), Sir Richard Musgrave continued his campaign to drum up support for a poor relief system in Ireland. In April 1833 the *Waterford Mirror* printed his 1831 relief bill, commenting that the state of the poor in Ireland required the interference of parliament.¹³² Sir Richard believed that Irish landed proprietors had a responsibility for relieving the poor in times of distress. This approach was not one that was widely supported by liberal Protestants, the majority of whom were landowners, as it would result in a heavy financial burden on their part.

John Musgrave of Tourin, the brother of Sir Richard, had given evidence before a parliamentary committee inquiry into the state of the poor in Ireland in 1830. Confronted with the problem of poverty in Ireland, John Musgrave promoted the notion of peasant proprietorship. In northern Norway and Sweden the peasants lived a 'most comfortable' existence on very small pieces of land, but the distinction was that they owned their land rather than rented it.¹³³ Proprietorship would give the Irish peasant a much stronger interest in improving the farm and would act as a deterrent against subdivision. Like his brother, John Musgrave believed that estates could be improved without the lower classes suffering through placing the bulk of assessments, including grand jury and parochial rates, on the proprietors.¹³⁴ He called particularly on absentee proprietors to contribute to the maintenance of Ireland's poor.¹³⁵ John Musgrave's plan incorporated a design for aiding the able poor as well as the infirm poor. Adequate relief could be provided by increasing employment for labourers through a system of public works. The plan centred not on sweeping aside the present system, but by improving it and removing its inherent abuses. All public works would be executed by contract, and all labourers would be paid in money wages rather than in kind.¹³⁶ John Musgrave had every right to be satisfied the following year when a new board of public works was constituted.

¹³¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 19 Sept. 1831.

¹³² *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Apr. 1833.

¹³³ *First report of evidence from the select committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (589), vii, 70.

¹³⁴ *First report of evidence from the select committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (589), vii, 72.

¹³⁵ *First report of evidence from the select committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (589), vii, 84.

¹³⁶ *First report of evidence of the select committee appointed to take into consideration the state of the poorer classes in Ireland*, H. C. 1830 (589), vii, 84-6.

In January 1831 William Morris of Newtown in the city, described by the *Waterford Mirror* as ‘a most liberal Protestant’, was anxious to be called before the select committee on the Irish poor, as he had many ideas about how poor relief could best be effected in Ireland.¹³⁷ In March 1832 Patrick Leahy, a Catholic civil engineer and surveyor based in Clonmel and Waterford, proposed a plan of employment for the Irish poor that was centred on a land reclamation scheme.¹³⁸ This would provide employment for an underemployed population, while making new tracts of land suitable for agriculture.¹³⁹ On the other hand, a letter of ‘J. L. C.’, printed in the *Waterford Mirror* in May 1833, opposed the introduction of poor laws to Ireland as they would act as a bar to industry, as well as being a heavy and unpopular burden. This writer believed that in Ireland, private charity was sufficient for the relief of the poor.¹⁴⁰ But many liberal Protestants remained ambivalent on the best mode of poor relief for Ireland. On 27 July 1831 Sir John Newport confidently asserted that ‘a modified system of poor laws was necessary’, but he remained unsure what kind of system would be best suited to Ireland.¹⁴¹

Back in parliament, in March 1835 Sir Richard Musgrave was given leave to bring in a bill to relieve the poor in Ireland.¹⁴² This was strongly based on the earlier bill of 1831, but this time it incorporated plans to provide relief for the able-bodied as well as the infirm poor.¹⁴³ Support for the able-bodied poor was based on the promotion of a system of public works. Sir Richard was adamant that ‘means should be taken to secure future employment for able-bodied labourers’. There were ‘ample means’ of providing employment in Ireland ‘by instituting a steady and vigorous course of improvement’.¹⁴⁴ When the bill received its second reading on 8 July, Sir Richard argued that a measure of poor relief for Ireland was ‘absolutely indispensable’. But he opposed the application of the English system to Ireland. ‘No person would

¹³⁷ Unfortunately there is no further evidence to suggest the nature of Morris’s ideas about the poor law; *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Mar. 1830; William Morris to Thomas Wyse, 21 Jan. 1831 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,024). William Morris of Newtown, who died in 1834, was probably a relative of the liberal Protestant Sir Benjamin Morris.

¹³⁸ For a complete history of Patrick Leahy and his family, see Brendan O’Donoghue, *In search of fame and fortune: the Leahy family of engineers, 1780-1888* (Dublin, 2006).

¹³⁹ *Waterford Mirror*, 3 Mar. 1832.

¹⁴⁰ The identity of this writer, as well as his religion, remains unknown; *Waterford Mirror*, 11 May 1833.

¹⁴¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 1 Aug. 1831 & 19 Oct. 1831

¹⁴² *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Feb. 1835.

¹⁴³ *Hansard* 3, xxvii, 202 (24 Mar. 1835).

¹⁴⁴ *Hansard* 3, xxxi, 226-30 (9 Feb. 1836).

propose for that country a system similar in all respects to that of England'.¹⁴⁵ Sir Richard contended that some attempt should be made to improve the system of public works and other means for employing the poor before 'the experiment of workhouses was tried'.¹⁴⁶

Many who opposed Musgrave's bill did so on the grounds that a more extensive and more permanent system of poor relief was necessary.¹⁴⁷ But he had introduced the bill in the hope that merely 'by permitting its introduction' parliament had 'sanctioned the principle that the interference of the legislature was necessary'.¹⁴⁸ John Musgrave agreed that he and his brother could not hope for more than to get the bills printed, 'but even their consciousness will be a precedent for further reforms'.¹⁴⁹ The bill was read a second time, and was ordered to go into sub-committee in two weeks, but it progressed no further in the session of 1835. Sir Richard's bill did gain the support of some Waterford Protestants. When addressing the Waterford electors after his success in a by-election in September 1835, William Villiers Stuart stated that he would support Sir Richard Musgrave's bill as a significant milestone in the social improvement of Ireland.¹⁵⁰

In February 1836 Sir Richard Musgrave moved for leave to bring in another bill for the relief of the Irish poor in certain cases. This was based strongly on his bill of 1835, and was introduced as an alternative to William Smith O'Brien's poor relief bill. Again Musgrave favoured a system of public works rather than a system of workhouses:

it was the duty of parliament to insist on the employment of the poor of Ireland on their own soil. There were ample means in Ireland for the employment of the poor; if these were once brought into play there could be no doubt that increase of employment would lead to increased security.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ *Hansard* 3, xxxi, 226-30 (9 Feb. 1836).

¹⁴⁶ *Hansard* 3, xxxi, 226-30 (9 Feb. 1836).

¹⁴⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 July 1835.

¹⁴⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 July 1835.

¹⁴⁹ John Musgrave to Thomas Wyse, 31 Mar. 1835 (N.L.I., Wyse papers, MS 15,025).

¹⁵⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Oct. 1835. A by election was held in County Waterford due to the death of the liberal Catholic Patrick Power of Bellevue in August; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, p. 319; *Waterford Mirror*, 26 Aug. 1835.

¹⁵¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 15 Feb. 1836.

More interestingly, Sir Richard, like his brother John, now recommended improving the distribution of landed property in Ireland, as the insecure nature of land tenure there prevented large scale improvement.¹⁵²

However, Musgrave's bill failed to stimulate widespread support at a time when many members expected government to bring forward its own poor relief bill.¹⁵³ After months of badgering government, George Poulett Scrope moved on 4 May for the introduction of poor laws in Ireland.¹⁵⁴ This was little more than a ploy to gain the attention of government, as he withdrew the motion in order to await the reaction; a strategy shared by Sir Richard Musgrave.¹⁵⁵ When Musgrave's poor relief bill was about to go into committee on 8 June, he announced that he would withdraw his bill if government brought forward its own plan. When Lord Morpeth affirmed that the subject was currently under discussion in the cabinet, Musgrave's bill was ordered to go into committee in six months time, and was effectively rejected.¹⁵⁶

The final report of the royal commission, headed by Archbishop Richard Whately, which had been established in 1833 to inquire into the state of the poor in Ireland, appeared in 1836. This report recommended a wide-ranging programme aimed at developing the Irish economy. Proposals for how this could be effected included state-assisted migration schemes, the establishment of model schools, land reclamation schemes and the establishment of county boards.¹⁵⁷ While Waterford liberal Protestants including Sir Richard Musgrave, William Samuel Currey, William Villiers Stuart, William Morris and the Quaker Joshua William Strangman contributed to the evidence collected by filling out questionnaires and attending public hearings, the only Waterford Protestant to give evidence before the commission was John Musgrave, who rejected any system of relief based on the English model, advocating instead a plan based on a system of public works (see above).¹⁵⁸ Significantly, the report rejected the suggestion that a system of poor laws based on the English model (which had been reformed in 1834) could be effectively applied to Ireland. This report was

¹⁵² *Hansard* 3, xxxi, 226-30 (9 Feb. 1836).

¹⁵³ *Waterford Mirror*, 20 Feb. 1836.

¹⁵⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 23 Apr. 1836.

¹⁵⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 9 May 1836.

¹⁵⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 13 June 1836.

¹⁵⁷ Nicholls, *A history of the Irish poor law*, pp 134-8.

¹⁵⁸ *Reports from commissioners: poor laws (Ireland), appendices C and D*, H. C. 1836 (36-7), xxxi, 104 & 252; *Report of the select committee on the state of the poor in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (667), vii, 78.

accompanied by mounting press attention to poor relief in Ireland.¹⁵⁹ A meeting in Carrick-On-Suir, chaired by Patrick Hayden of Carrickbeg, organised a petition in favour of a modified system of poor laws for Ireland.¹⁶⁰ It was largely the Irish landowning class that opposed the introduction of the English system, as it would be they who would be levied at the highest rates.

In February 1837 Lord John Russell submitted to parliament the government's proposed plan for a poor relief system in Ireland, which was based on a workhouse system similar to that in place in England and Wales.¹⁶¹ The bill would establish a central authority, the poor law commission, as a semi-permanent body of state, which would oversee the implementation of the system throughout Ireland. The country would be divided into unions composed of electoral divisions, with a board of guardians elected for each union. Workhouses would be established in each union and a poor rate would be levied to support the system.¹⁶² The 'workhouse test' acted as a test of destitution, but in Ireland 'all applicants whatever their circumstances were required to enter the workhouse'. Unlike in England and Wales there was no law of settlement, which meant that applicants could apply to any board of guardians for relief rather than just the nearest one. This had significant ramifications for urban areas such as Waterford, to which many impoverished persons from rural areas might flock. The poor law commissioners were invested with greater powers over local issues than in England, which reflected the government's opinion that little confidence could be placed in the diligence or the competence of local administrators in Ireland.¹⁶³ This more than anything prompted the opposition of many liberal Protestants, who became more and more aware that their exertions were neither recognised nor commended. However, before the poor law bill had emerged from committee, the death of William IV and the succession of Victoria meant that parliament was immediately prorogued and a general election called.

¹⁵⁹ See letters from the *Pilot* and *Cork Constitution* reprinted in *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Dec. 1836 & 25 Jan. 1837, and a series of letters on the topic by William Sharman Crawford and Dr Daniel Murray; *Waterford Mirror*, 7 & 28 Jan. 1837.

¹⁶⁰ *Waterford Mirror*, 8 Feb. 1837. Patrick Hayden of Carrickbeg was a liberal Protestant who supported a reform of the tithe system, parliamentary reform, vote by ballot and a modified system of poor laws for Ireland. He was a grand juror for Waterford city from 1827.

¹⁶¹ *Hansard* 3, xxxvi, 453-78 (13 Feb. 1837); *Waterford Mirror*, 4, 18 & 20 Feb. 1837.

¹⁶² O'Connor, *The workhouses of Ireland*, p. 68.

¹⁶³ Crossman, *The poor law in Ireland*, pp 10-1.

On the opening of the new session in December 1837, Lord John Russell was quick to introduce another Irish poor law bill, a mirror image of the last bill.¹⁶⁴ Henry Winston Barron emerged as a strong supporter of the government's plan for an Irish system of poor laws. In a letter to the *Dublin Evening Post* in January 1838, Barron outlined why he differed 'very strongly' from O'Connell – who was 'fundamentally opposed' to a poor law – on the poor law question.¹⁶⁵ Like James Warren Doyle, bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, and George Poulett Scrope, Barron was anti-Malthusian in that he believed government interference necessary, at least in the case of Ireland.¹⁶⁶ The poor law was 'a useful and necessary step' and it would raise the social and moral character of the Irish people. While he considered that living in workhouse conditions would be better than starving to death, Barron disliked the notion of introducing employment into the workhouses, as this would interfere with the local economy.¹⁶⁷

In January 1838 a Waterford meeting was held to discuss the proposed poor law system.¹⁶⁸ The radical Baptist minister, Rev Thomas Clarke believed that a poor law system would counteract Ireland's natural advantages, weighing down the middling classes with a heavy poor rate. Liberal Protestant Charles Samuel Tandy opposed the plans for the introduction of an Irish poor law, favouring instead an improved system of voluntary contributions.¹⁶⁹ Alderman William Milward did support the proposed system of poor laws, but he worried about the consequences of a failure to include a clause of settlement, which would provide that the poor could only be relieved in the union in which they resided.¹⁷⁰ Milward worried that such a poor law without an attached clause of settlement would result in an influx of the rural poor into

¹⁶⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 Dec. 1837.

¹⁶⁵ MacIntyre, *The Liberator*, p. 209; Crossman, *The poor law in Ireland*, p. 13.

¹⁶⁶ MacIntyre, *The Liberator*, p. 203.

¹⁶⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 8 Jan. 1838.

¹⁶⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 15 Jan. 1838.

¹⁶⁹ Charles Samuel Tandy was the law agent for Waterford Corporation. As well as giving evidence before the commissioners on municipal corporations in 1833 (see below), Tandy remained active in promoting a system of poor laws for Ireland based on the Scottish system of voluntary subscriptions, and criticised government measures that failed to incorporate a clause of settlement. Tandy was also particularly involved in the social welfare and local trade, supporting the plan for a Waterford-Limerick railway in 1836.

¹⁷⁰ William Milward was an alderman on Waterford Corporation and was most active in supporting some measure of relief for the Irish poor. As well as arguing in favour of a modified system of poor laws for Ireland, Milward attended poor relief meetings in 1837 and 1840 and joined the Labourer's Friend Society in 1836. Milward was a member of the Waterford political élite, acting as grand juror for the city and attending Sir John Newport's house at Newpark during the visit of the lord lieutenant, Viscount Ebrington, in September 1839.

the towns, and that the responsibility for aiding these poor would fall ultimately on the heads of the ratepayers in the towns. The meeting revealed deep divisions among local leaders over the question of poor relief, symbolised by the adoption of two separate petitions. The first, forwarded by the committee established for that purpose and favouring a system of poor relief, but advising caution as to the particulars of any system of poor laws, was signed by nineteen persons. The second, forwarded by the liberal Protestant Charles Samuel Tandy, the Baptist Rev Thomas Clarke and Catholic Alexander Sherlock, and opposing the government's bill, was signed by fifteen persons.¹⁷¹ It was significant that division did not occur along party or confessional lines, as was the case with church reform, and to some extent municipal reform. Liberal Protestants were as divided on the question of an Irish poor law as their Catholic and parliamentary counterparts.

The government's poor law bill finally passed the House of Commons on 30 April 1838 by 234 votes to fifty-nine. William Villiers Stuart, the liberal Protestant member for County Waterford voted in favour of the measure, alongside the Catholic M.P.s for Waterford city, Thomas Wyse and Henry Winston Barron.¹⁷² The bill received the royal assent in August 1838.¹⁷³ This system virtually ignored the recommendations of the 1835 royal commission and its huge body of statistical evidence, as well as the wishes of a substantial portion of the Irish political élite. Irish Protestants were at best ambivalent and at worst divided over the system that was best suited to Ireland. There is little evidence that many of them recommended the English system. Sir John Newport remained undecided as to the best method of relieving Irish poverty. Sir Richard Musgrave promoted relief plans based on county boards and systems of public works, but could do little when the government forwarded its own plans based on the English workhouse system. It is also possible that by the late 1830s, while many liberal Protestants continued to be anxious to relieve poverty in Ireland, they were becoming more reluctant to voice their opinions in public.¹⁷⁴

Despite this, there is evidence to suggest that the interest shown by Waterford liberal Protestants in poor relief in the 1830s continued under the poor law system. In

¹⁷¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 3 & 24 Feb. 1838.

¹⁷² John Power of Gurteen (liberal Protestant member for County Waterford) and Cornelius O'Callaghan (Catholic member for Dungarvan) did not vote on the measure; *Hansard* 3, xlii, 715-7 (30 Apr. 1838).

¹⁷³ *Waterford Mirror*, 15 Aug. 1838.

¹⁷⁴ MacIntyre, *The Liberator*, p. 223.

early 1839, a series of meetings were held in Waterford to implement the new legislation. Waterford union was divided into twenty-five electoral divisions, with forty-five poor law guardians. Ten of these guardians came from the city, which lay at the centre of the union, twenty-five guardians were chosen from one of each of the other divisions, and the final ten were *ex-officio* magisterial guardians.¹⁷⁵ The new poor law guardians included liberal Protestants John Harris, Dr Matthew Poole, William Milward, Michael Dobbyn and Laurence Strange. Liberal Protestants Samuel King, Henry Alcock, William Morris and Sir Benjamin Morris were appointed *ex-officio* guardians alongside Catholics Piers George Barron, John Power O'Shee, George Meara, Maurice Ronayne, John H. Jones and Nicholas A. Power and conservative Protestant William Christmas.¹⁷⁶ The new board of guardians reflected a wide spectrum of religious and political views, and the presence of several prominent liberal Protestants among the new guardians suggests that they certainly retained a profile here. In the county, Sir Richard Musgrave and William Villiers Stuart acted as poor law guardians, and Stuart became a leading guardian for the Dungarvan union in the early 1840s.¹⁷⁷ However, there was little contemporary comment on the election of these guardians from either the Protestant or Catholic press in Waterford and it is therefore difficult to distinguish with any certainty the views of liberal Protestants on the new system.

Thus, it is not unreasonable to suggest that liberal Protestants in Waterford remained concerned with the problem of poverty, and remained willing to cooperate with both Catholic and conservative Protestants on this issue into the 1840s. In June 1840, a meeting was held in the city to consider the best means of providing cheap food for the starving poor in the city. The meeting was attended by liberal Protestants Captain Simon Newport, Charles Samuel Tandy, James Wallace, Major Beresford Gahan and Alderman William Milward, as well as prominent Catholics Rev John Sheehan, John Joseph Aylward, John Barden, Arthur Doyle and Nugent O'Reilly.¹⁷⁸ Major Beresford Gahan spoke to all when he urged that 'this is a time when we are all imperatively called upon to do what lies in our power, in every way we can, to relieve the distress of the people'. Charles Samuel Tandy 'conceived that employment was a

¹⁷⁵ *Waterford Mirror*, 30 Mar., 29 Apr. 1839.

¹⁷⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 6 May 1839.

¹⁷⁷ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 & 27 Feb. 1839; *Return of estimates for erecting poorhouses in Ireland*, H.C. 1843 (616), xlvi, 153, pp 209-24.

¹⁷⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 10 June 1840.

more advantageous means of extending charity than any other'. Alderman William Marchant Ardagh suggested that a loan be established as well as a subscription to provide cheap food for the poor, as had been carried out with success in the past.¹⁷⁹ Despite the challenges to liberal Protestantism in the 1830s, the prominence of liberal Protestants on the issue of poor relief suggests that elements of this ideology did survive the 1830s relatively intact.

Part four: Reactions of Waterford Protestants to plans for municipal reform:

In the 1830s Waterford Corporation provided sanctuary for an increasingly besieged Protestant élite in Waterford, and the corporation became for many Protestants a symbol of their political power. But as the 1830s progressed, municipal reform assumed an importance on both the local and parliamentary stage. In parliament, municipal reform for Ireland was discussed in every session from 1833 to 1840, and was supported by a significant number of Irish members. In Waterford most reform minded individuals, including some Protestant corporators, admitted the need for reform. But for Irish Protestants there was a vast difference between admitting the need for reform and supporting the final measures passed by parliament. While liberal Protestants admitted the need for municipal reform in principle, most preferred internal reform on their own terms, as any 'popular' reform measures would necessarily result in a diminution of their own privilege and prestige. In parliament, many Irish Whigs were hesitant about openly supporting a measure by which Daniel O'Connell and his party would be the chief beneficiaries.¹⁸⁰

A special commission was established by the House of Commons in February 1833 to inquire into municipal corporations in Ireland with a view to reform.¹⁸¹ This commission was dominated by reform-minded Whigs and O'Connellites, and the 1835 report was aggressively Whiggish in its unanimous and scathing condemnation of the whole corporate system.¹⁸² When commissioners William Hanna and Maurice King arrived in Waterford to interview members of the corporation in December 1833, the corporation was determined to be as cooperative as possible, having been organising

¹⁷⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 11 June 1840.

¹⁸⁰ MacIntyre, *The Liberator*, p. 227.

¹⁸¹ The same committee was appointed to inquire into corporations in England, Wales and Ireland; *Hansard* 3, xv, 645-55 (14 Feb. 1833).

¹⁸² MacIntyre, *The Liberator*, p. 232.

the necessary documents since October.¹⁸³ The proceedings were a source of much local interest, and were attended by local Protestants William Christmas, Sir Edmund Skottowe, Henry Downes, Alderman Henry Alcock, James Wallace, Francis Davis and Dean Ussher Lee, as well as by local Catholics Sir Henry Winston Barron and Rev John Sheehan.¹⁸⁴ The *Waterford Mail*, representative of the conservative interest in the city, retained public confidence in the corporation: 'The result, we expect, will prove as satisfactory to the public as can be desired, from the well-known character of the independent gentlemen connected with the corporation'.¹⁸⁵

The proceedings of the commissioners were monitored closely by a committee of citizens, formed in 1831 and represented by Quakers Robert Jacob and Francis Davis, and Catholics Roger Hayes, Rev John Sheehan and Thomas F. Carroll.¹⁸⁶ The membership of this committee is significant, as it reveals that there were politicised Quakers in the city who supported the popular interest. This reflects Rev John Sheehan's contention in January 1835 that there were several Quakers in the city who were 'doing their duty nobly' in the liberal interest (see chapter six).¹⁸⁷ This was an important development, as the early chapters have revealed that there was little Quaker activity in local politics in the 1810s and 1820s, and this suggests that O'Connell's strategies in the 1820s politicised other groups as well as the Catholic population. This 'citizen interest' had collected 'a vast portion of useful and valuable information' on the rights of citizens and more especially on the public charities in the city. This citizen interest was chiefly Catholic in composition, strongly anti-corporation and supportive of reforms that would make local politics much more representative. Francis Davis argued that sufficient provision should be made for the introduction of 'respectable citizens' to their freedom. The exclusive power held by the common council for filling up vacancies in their body should be abolished and replaced by a system giving all

¹⁸³ Waterford Corporation minute book, 1 Oct. 1833 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15); *Waterford Mail*, 11 Dec. 1833.

¹⁸⁴ *Waterford Chronicle*, 10 Dec. 1833.

¹⁸⁵ *Waterford Mail*, 7 Dec. 1833.

¹⁸⁶ Francis Davis was a Quaker brewer and merchant and a member of Waterford Chamber of Commerce. As well as attempting to draw attention to corporate abuses, Davis was interested in the plight of the Irish poor, belonging to the Mendicant Asylum and attending poor law meetings in 1836 and 1839. Robert Jacob was also a Quaker merchant, but was little involved in local politics. Rev John Sheehan, Nugent O'Reilly, Thomas F. Carroll and Roger Hayes were all Catholic repealers; *Waterford Mail*, 28 Dec. 1833.

¹⁸⁷ O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, v, 258-9.

freemen the right to vote for representatives on the corporation.¹⁸⁸ Davis contended that these changes should be of the kind that 'every free country ought to possess'.¹⁸⁹ While during December 1833 this committee of citizens provided a channel through which reforming tendencies outside the corporation could be expressed, there is no evidence to suggest whether the committee continued to exist after the parliamentary commissioners departed, or whether this committee was affiliated with any national body or to the Catholic Association. However, its diverse membership and its interests would suggest that it was a local body specifically constituted to provide external pressure on the corporation during the visit of the parliamentary commissioners.

The committee of citizens provided a channel for popular anti-corporation feeling and their presence created a charged environment. The committee was particularly interested in the method of granting freedoms, as popular opinion was convinced that the corporation had often decided against applications on the basis of religion. The Catholic Roger Hayes questioned the ultra Protestant Alderman Michael Evelyn about the refusal of the corporation to grant freedoms to prominent city merchants, Daniel Dunford and Michael Power, on the grounds that they were Catholics.¹⁹⁰ Michael Power told the inquiry that in 1806 he had been offered his freedom by Sir Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe on the condition that he voted for Sir John Newport at election time; an offer which was promptly turned down. When in 1818 Michael Power had asked Sir John to admit him to the corporation, his answer had been that Sir John already 'had his batch made'.¹⁹¹ Michael Evelyn countered this claim with a contention that the corporation had refused to admit these citizens on the grounds that they were political incendiaries; a contention that both Power and Dunford emphatically denied. Alderman Evelyn was eventually forced to admit that some citizens who should have been admitted were not, but argued that one of the

¹⁸⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Dec. 1833.

¹⁸⁹ These suggestions centred on the idea that corporation members should not be elected for life, thus creating a much more open, accessible and representative body; *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Dec. 1833.

¹⁹⁰ Daniel Dunford was a wine and spirit merchant; and although active in local liberal politics there is no evidence to suggest that he was involved in 'exciting the minds of the lower orders at any time'. Michael Power was a merchant engaged in the corn and provisions trades, and was a member of the city Grand Jury in 1830. Michael Power, denying the charge of being a political incendiary, explicitly denied attending political meetings of any kind. There is no evidence to suggest that he ever did.

¹⁹¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Dec. 1833.

present difficulties occurred in drawing 'a proper line of distinction' between those who should be admitted and those who should not.¹⁹²

Mayor William Hobbs was also obliged to admit that in some cases the corporation had thrown 'difficulties' in the way of Catholics claiming their freedom.¹⁹³ The statistics given before the commission supported this view. Of the 1,314 citizens granted their freedom between 1796 and 1826, only 305 (23%) were Catholics. Alderman Henry Alcock was quick to point out, however, that 'if a considerable majority of freemen at former periods were Protestants, the majority of persons now entitled to their freedom [by birth] must be Protestants', despite the fact that a large majority of the population was Catholic.¹⁹⁴ In this way Henry Alcock placed the problem in the corporation's constitution and detached some of the blame from its personnel.

At the end of the inquiry, even the conservative *Waterford Mail* admitted that 'enough had been elicited to prove that a reform is necessary'. A number of the 'more enlightened' members of the corporation had 'expressed themselves to that effect'.¹⁹⁵ These gentlemen, including the mayor William Hobbs, sheriffs Michael Mortimer and Alexander Richard Pope, the recorder William Henry Hassard, Aldermen John Harris and Henry Alcock and common councillor Dr Matthew Poole. Mayor William Hobbs and Alderman Michael Evelyn argued for the necessity of admitting all those involved in local trade to their freedoms 'as a matter of right'. The declaration of such a proportion of the corporators of the necessity of reform reflected the growing influence of the liberals on the corporation since 1800. Liberals and reformers in the corporation had been aiming at reforming and widening the corporate franchise for nearly thirty years, and as far back as 1802 Sir John Newport had advocated a wider freeman franchise based on residency.¹⁹⁶ It is significant that these corporators were now viewing the right to freedom as being linked to trade rather than to the matter of

¹⁹² *Waterford Chronicle*, 19 & 24 Dec. 1833; *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1833.

¹⁹³ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1833.

¹⁹⁴ *Waterford Mirror*, 28 Dec. 1833.

¹⁹⁵ William Hobbs was an alderman on Waterford Corporation and mayor in 1833. Hobbs was little involved in local politics, but he did attend a meeting in favour of poor relief in 1834. Michael Mortimer was a member of the board of Harbour Commissioners as well as a common councilman on Waterford Corporation. Alexander Richard Pope was a churchwarden in 1831, whose job it was to collect vestry cess.

¹⁹⁶ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1833. On this point they agreed with the leader of the anti-corporation lobby; brewer and merchant Francis Davis; *Waterford Mirror*; 23 Dec. 1833.

religion (see chapter two). The liberal Alderman Henry Alcock went as far as to argue that the corporation needed reforming in order to gain popular support and confidence, as 'without confidence no body, whether national or corporate, can successfully subsist'.¹⁹⁷

The commissioners' report revealed that by 1833 none of the offices held under the corporation were held by Catholics, with the exception of several petty and market constables. Flagrant abuses were being carried out by the holders of corporate offices while the corporation turned a blind eye. For example, the post of butter taster was held by Sir Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe (a liberal Protestant) who was continuing to receive the salary and emoluments of the office despite the fact that he had been living in France for the previous five or six years, and even when resident had had his duties performed by a deputy. As deputy butter taster, Robert Curtis fulfilled all the duties of the office for a fraction of the salary.¹⁹⁸ The debts of the corporation were another source of regret. The corporate debt in 1833 amounted to more than £63,000, most of which had been incurred since 1807. Most of the debt had been incurred by legal expenses, purchasing property and paying the wages of corporate officers. The *Waterford Chronicle* argued that the corporation were guilty of the 'grossest – most wilful extravagance and misapplication'.¹⁹⁹ The mismanagement of funds was not an abuse confined solely to Waterford, and it is fair to point out that a substantial amount had been spent on local improvements and on building a new town hall.²⁰⁰

By far the most significant factor which both contemporary reformers and subsequent historians found most indicative of the scandalous and exclusive nature of corporate politics in Waterford was the compact of 1818, signed by liberal and conservative factions of the corporation in order to control the corporation's patronage system and the city's parliamentary seat (see chapter two). The town clerk Robert Cooke told the commissioners that every member of the council had been aware of the compact made to exclude the Bolton party, although the agreement was never

¹⁹⁷ Rev John Sheehan to Daniel O'Connell, 9 Nov. 1837, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, vi, 96-7; *Waterford Chronicle*, 28 Dec. 1833.

¹⁹⁸ *Waterford Mirror*, 14 Dec. 1833.

¹⁹⁹ *Waterford Chronicle*, 21 Dec. 1833.

²⁰⁰ *First report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 615; J. J. Webb, *Municipal government in Ireland: medieval and modern* (Dublin, 1918), p. 201.

explicitly mentioned in council.²⁰¹ The *Waterford Chronicle* was disgusted to think that ‘in order to carry into effect the terms of the agreement between the counteracting parties, it was thought necessary to dismiss their opponents from office’ naming Sir Francis Hassard, William Henry Hassard and Henry Bolton as three office holders who lost their positions due to the ‘selfish, tyrannical and narrow-minded feelings’ of the corporation.²⁰² Despite the earlier justifications for the compact in 1818, the political landscape had altered by 1833 and the ‘clandestine treaty’ had become a symbol of corporate abuse around which all reformers could rally.²⁰³ The compact had come to symbolise the closed and exclusive nature of the unreformed corporation and was more potent in exciting public hostility than any reference to restrictions to the freedom. The *Waterford Chronicle* rallied to the committee of citizens, contending that

one of the chief changes desirable in the present order of things is the change of secrecy for publicity; neither mystery, nor apprehension, nor suspicion, should be permitted to hang over the proceedings of the corporation, and this reformation must spring from a new system of election.

The *Waterford Chronicle* contended that a reformed corporation would prove ‘a real and substantial blessing’ to the city and its inhabitants.²⁰⁴

Both liberal and conservative Protestants were shaken by the inquiry. The main argument promoted by corporation members indisposed to reform – and even by some reformers – was that many of the most flagrant abuses had already been removed by 1833. This argument in fact held a good deal of water, as the by-laws pushed through in 1819 and 1831 attest. The *Waterford Mail* accurately pointed out that much of the ‘mismanagement’ was ‘attributable to the predecessors of the present members in council, who, in the year 1830, broke up the family compact which had existed, and have since managed the funds justly and independently’.²⁰⁵ Even the inquiry report, appearing in 1835, remarked that the ending of the compact in 1830 had ‘restored the corporation to somewhat of a constitutional character’.²⁰⁶ While many liberal

²⁰¹ *Waterford Mirror*, 18 Dec. 1818.

²⁰² Each of these men was a member of the formerly influential Bolton faction. It should be pointed out however that Sir Francis Hassard was non-resident, living in Dublin and having the duties of recorder carried out by a deputy. The corporation’s (liberal Protestant) lawyer Charles Samuel Tandy contended that Sir Francis was never called upon to resign; *Waterford Chronicle*, 19 Dec. 1833.

²⁰³ The *Waterford Chronicle* referred to the compact as such on 19 Dec. 1833.

²⁰⁴ *Waterford Chronicle*, 28 Dec. 1833.

²⁰⁵ *Waterford Mail*, 28 Dec. 1833.

²⁰⁶ *First report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 593.

Protestants had long supported corporate reform, the admission of the need for reform on the part of other, more conservative corporators in 1833 may have been part of a tactic aimed at protecting their political influence. For example, the *Waterford Mail* commented at the close of the inquiry that ‘we trust that all good men of all parties will cooperate in bringing about a reformation that will do injustice to none’.²⁰⁷ While it is possible that this admission of the need for reform reflected a growth of liberal values among members of the corporation since 1800, it is more reasonable to suggest that part of the motivation for supporting moderate reform on the part of conservative corporators may have been an attempt to sooth the calls for what were perceived as radical reforms by the popular party.

Arguments proffered by the conservative *Waterford Mail* as to the smooth running of the contemporary corporation, even if fairly accurate in certain parts, were generally unconvincing. Commenting on the compact of 1818, the *Waterford Mail* contended rather pathetically that ‘there is no doubt cause for strong complaint, but it is not fair to visit the present generation with the odium that is due to men, whose memories have long since mouldered away in the same grave with themselves’.²⁰⁸ Rather than mouldering away in their graves, Sir John Newport and Alderman James Wallace (two of the four Protestants who signed the 1818 compact) were both active members of the corporation at the time of the inquiry, and remained so until 1834, when they both resigned.²⁰⁹ Sir Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe and Henry Bolton also resigned early in 1834, suggesting a departure of most non-resident members at this time.²¹⁰ In this way, the corporate inquiry of 1833 and the accompanying media attention acted as a catalyst for reform within Waterford Corporation, even before the passing of parliamentary legislation.

However, this reform went largely unrecognised by the popular party in the city. Most Catholics considered that all corporation members sailed in the same abuse-riddled boat. While a majority of the city electorate had long supported Sir John Newport in many dimensions of political life, he was now attacked with increasing

²⁰⁷ *Waterford Mail*, 28 Dec. 1833.

²⁰⁸ *Waterford Mail*, 28 Dec. 1833.

²⁰⁹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 5 Nov. 1834 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

²¹⁰ Waterford Corporation minute book, 14 Jan. & 24 Feb. 1834 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

regularity as belonging to the reactionary clique within the corporation.²¹¹ Sir John had long used his position of corporate privilege to campaign for reform of corporate abuses, but with the intention of retaining the system of privilege itself. But in the 1830s, as far as Catholics were concerned, most were seeking to overturn this world of privilege, and it was this use of privilege and the jobbery connected to the various corporate offices controlled by the Newports that ultimately undermined Sir John's reputation as a reformer in the city.²¹² In a context in which other liberal Protestants, including the Quakers Robert Jacob and Francis Davis in the city and the Musgraves in the county, were campaigning for reform alongside local Catholics, Sir John's approach probably appealed to few ardent reformers by the late 1830s.

After the parliamentary commissioners had completed their inquiry into Irish municipal corporations, reformers waited for the government to bring forward a municipal reform bill. This resulted in frustration for many as the question of the Irish corporations became 'a pawn in the overall strategies of government and opposition'.²¹³ In February 1834 the Conservative ministry under Sir Robert Peel promised that they would bring in a bill to reform Irish corporations, but Daniel O'Connell was probably correct in thinking that the government 'merely intend[ed] to delude'.²¹⁴ This is supported by the fact that the reports of commissioners promised in February and again in November 1834 were not printed until 1835, when a reform bill was finally introduced by a reconstituted Whig ministry under Viscount Melbourne.

The 1835 report on municipal corporations was notable for its marked Whiggish approach to municipal reform. In respect to Waterford, one area the commissioners felt was in need of particular reform was that of the corporate franchise. Before 1818 the corporate franchise was 'greatly restricted'. In 1818, it was

then regulated by the leaders of the corporation, who admitted whom they pleased, and frequently threw difficulties in the way of those whom they

²¹¹ These attacks were the continuance of periodical attacks on the exclusivity of Waterford Corporation, see for example letters printed in March 1824 (see chapter four); *Waterford Mirror*, 17 & 22 Mar. 1824.

²¹² This argument has been made by C. D. A. Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant kingdom: a study of the Irish ancien régime* (London, 1994), pp 132-3.

²¹³ MacIntyre, *The Liberator*, p. 227.

²¹⁴ Daniel O'Connell to Patrick Vincent Fitzpatrick, 26 Feb. 1834, in O'Connell, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell*, v, 107-8.

thought not likely to support their political views, even although they were entitled to admission as a matter of right.²¹⁵

On the status of freemen in Waterford city, the commissioners reported: 'so complete is the exclusion of the freemen that they are not considered as forming a part of the corporate body'. This contention is somewhat surprising, as freemen were unrepresented on the majority of corporate councils at this time.²¹⁶ Indeed, Waterford was one of the few large towns to admit Catholics to freedom in the eighteenth century, and earlier efforts at reform went entirely unmentioned.²¹⁷ However, the commissioners were forced to admit that 'it does not appear that there is at present any disposition to exclude Catholics from the council'. They also noted that after the passing Catholic emancipation in 1829, 'the first two vacancies...were filled up by Catholics'.²¹⁸

The report suggested that vacancies on the common council should be filled by election from among the citizens or inhabitants, that all freemen should be admitted to vote at such elections, and that election to the common council should not be for life, but for 'a certain number of years'.²¹⁹ This mirrored to a remarkable degree the plan of reform set out by the committee of citizens during the inquiry in 1833, and revealed common ground between the Whig commissioners and (mainly Catholic) reformers in Waterford. While many liberal Protestants in Waterford conditionally supported a form of municipal reform, their preferred approach, involving gradual reform of the city's representative system, differed in scope and extent from the plans set forth by both the Catholic and parliamentary leaders, who envisaged a complete abolition of the Protestant corporation and a replacement of it by a popularly elected, Catholic-dominated corporation.

In the event, Ireland had to wait a further five years before parliament passed a measure of corporate reform. The pro-Catholic John J. Webb wrote in 1918 that the municipal reform act of 1840 marked the 'beginning of a new epoch' in Irish politics,

²¹⁵ *First report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 592.

²¹⁶ Webb, *Municipal government*, p. 174.

²¹⁷ Brian Kirby, 'Civic politics and parliamentary representation in Waterford city, 1730-1807' (PhD thesis, N.U.I.M., 2002).

²¹⁸ *First report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 617.

²¹⁹ *First report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the municipal corporations in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (27), xxviii, 616.

but for Irish Protestants it marked the end of an old one.²²⁰ In the event the municipal reform bill was 'a most limited and conservative measure', taken almost directly from the English municipal corporations act of 1835.²²¹ The bill removed control of municipal politics from the self-elected bodies and placed it in the hands of a much broader body of inhabitants. Under the act Waterford was included with nine other towns under 'Schedule A' whose corporations were 'continued but modified'.²²² All other corporations were abolished. The new common council was vested with the power to levy a borough rate for borough purposes, and municipal franchise was vested in the £10 householder.²²³ However, the act was virtually silent as to the rights and privileges of the new corporations and many traditional privileges remained in place unless affected by the terms of the act.²²⁴

In August 1835 Waterford Corporation prepared a petition to the House of Lords praying for the postponement of the proposed municipal reform bill.²²⁵ While members recognised that a reform of Irish corporations was required, they viewed the proposed measure as 'a total subversion of the existing municipal institutions', substituting the present system for one 'far more arbitrary'.²²⁶ When it became increasingly clear that municipal reform would be passed, making elections to the corporations much more representative, those Protestants holding corporate offices realised that they would shortly be out of employment. In December 1837 Richard Cooke, the Waterford town clerk, recognised that it was intended to remove him from office should reform be passed and that he would be forced 'to accept anything that may offer itself'. In this vein, Cooke implored the now elderly Sir John Newport to find a place for him in the department of the Irish exchequer, for which Newport was then acting as comptroller.²²⁷

²²⁰ Webb, *Municipal government*, p. 238.

²²¹ MacIntyre, *The Liberator*, p. 227; George Vanston, *The law relating to municipal boroughs under the Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Acts, 1840-88* (Dublin, 1907), v.

²²² Charles Haig, *The municipal corporations of Ireland, with a commentary* (Dublin, 1841), p. 1.

²²³ Haig, *The municipal corporations of Ireland*, p. 5.

²²⁴ Webb, *Municipal government*, p. 251.

²²⁵ The committee of five established to prepare this petition was composed of Alexander Mann Alcock, Thomas Carew, Michael Evelyn, William Henry Hassard and John Harris (a mixture of liberal and conservative Protestants); Waterford Corporation minute book, 24 Aug. 1835 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

²²⁶ Waterford Corporation minute book, 24 Aug. 1835 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

²²⁷ Richard Cooke to Sir John Newport, 19 Dec. 1837 (Q.U.B., Newport papers, MS 7).

On the eventual passing of the municipal reform bill in 1840 the *Waterford Mail* commented that ‘the destructive influence of the enemies to our Protestant institutions [in the House of Commons] has been successful, and the original bill was carried...without any alteration’.²²⁸ It is significant to note that conservative Protestants were still approaching the question in confessional terms, and viewed the measure merely as one aimed at attacking Protestant privileges. Many conservative Protestants might have agreed with Rev Charles Minchin, who told the Dublin Protestant meeting of February 1839 that ‘whatever reform we have, let it be essentially Protestant in nature, anything else we will oppose to the death!’²²⁹ The *Waterford Mail* urged Irish Protestants to unite in opposition to this bill by petitioning the House of Lords against it.

It remains for the Protestants of Ireland to say whether they will submit, without a struggle, to be delivered into the toils of the enemy, or by exerting themselves *en masse* [to] petition the upper house of parliament to abolish the Irish corporations altogether, placing all parties on an equal footing, instead of giving, as the case will be...the ascendancy to an intolerant and all grasping faction.²³⁰

Conservative Protestants had become so insecure that some favoured a total abolition of corporations rather than witnessing them become weapons in the hands of the Catholics. While they continued to support municipal reform in principle, liberal Protestants also worried about the implications for Irish Protestants of the new Catholic-dominated corporations.

The 1840 municipal reform act was to come into operation one year after the poor law commissioners had declared the poor rate. One year was deemed necessary to organise the elections and fulfil the qualification lists for voting, which was based on the £10 householders, as qualified by the poor rate.²³¹ Candidates for municipal office had to be freemen – now termed ‘burgesses’ – with property of £1,000 a year above debts. Ministers of all religions, profitable officeholders and bankrupts were

²²⁸ *Waterford Mail*, 29 Feb. 1840.

²²⁹ Irish Corporations, *An epitome of the case of Irish corporations, intended for the perusal of Protestants generally, and especially submitted to the dispassionate judgement of the members of the imperial legislature* (Dublin, 1839), p. 106.

²³⁰ *Waterford Mail*, 29 Feb. 1840.

²³¹ It was deemed that occupation could take place without personal residence, which opened up the franchise to many tradesmen and merchants who lived outside the city, but whose businesses were located there; Haig, *The municipal corporations of Ireland*, pp 6-14.

excluded.²³² Waterford was divided into five wards.²³³ Eight members were to be elected for each ward by the newly-termed burgesses. The two candidates who received the highest number of votes became aldermen, and the next six with highest number of votes became common councillors. Within the new council, matters were to be decided by a system of open voting.

A meeting was held in Waterford city on 12 October 1842 to make arrangements for the municipal elections. There was significant Protestant interest in these elections; among those present at the elections were observed 'several Protestant gentlemen of liberal politics, as well as some gentlemen of conservative principles', although the conservative Protestants proved silent witnesses.²³⁴ This perhaps signified a resignation in the face of consistent reforms. While some would not have wished to surrender their formerly dominant social and political position without a fight, these Protestants may have also felt alienated from popular politics, as many Catholics aimed at toppling the political order in which these Protestants had such a vested interest. Elections took place in each of the five wards on 26 October 1842.²³⁵ The majority of the new council were merchants and middle class tradesmen, with the formerly prominent gentry now significantly under-represented (see appendix H, table H.2). In November 1842 the *Waterford Chronicle* reported that 'for wealth and respectability we contend our new body is not a whit inferior to the old – probably the balance is in favour of the present'.²³⁶ In terms of wealth, the merchant-dominated council did rival the unreformed gentry-led corporation, but in terms of respectability the *Waterford Chronicle* was overly optimistic. There were only five 'gentlemen' on the reformed corporation, significantly fewer than on the council it had replaced.²³⁷

Nine out of the ten aldermen elected were Catholics, among them six repealers.²³⁸ The final alderman, liberal Protestant Sir Benjamin Morris, was elected

²³² Webb, *Municipal government*, p. 247.

²³³ These wards were the Tower ward, Centre ward, Custom House ward, West ward and South Ward; Waterford Corporation minute book, 26 Oct. 1842 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/15).

²³⁴ *Waterford Chronicle*, 15 Oct. 1842.

²³⁵ Unfortunately there is no evidence to suggest whether these elections were contested, and the local press, unusually, had little to report on the matter.

²³⁶ *Waterford Chronicle*, 1 Nov. 1842.

²³⁷ This term was used in the original source, and there is little evidence to suggest that basis for this identification beyond the fact that they were men of substantial means who were neither merchants nor professionals; Waterford Corporation minute books, 26 Oct. 1842 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/16).

²³⁸ The six repealers were Thomas Meagher junior (who was voted in as mayor), James Delahunty, Alexander Sherlock, Nugent O'Reilly, William Aylward and Owen Carroll. The final three were

for Tower Ward. Sir Benjamin, who enjoyed good relations with local Catholic leaders and was heavily involved in popular politics, was the only alderman who had sat on the unreformed corporation (as a common councillor). The common councillors were almost exclusively Catholic and a majority were O'Connellites and repealers. The only Protestants were Henry Downes and James Dobbyn (see appendix H, table H.1). Among the more interesting elections was that of Rev Thomas Clarke, Baptist minister, repealer and vociferous representative of popular opinion in the city.²³⁹ The dominance of the Protestant gentry on the common council of Waterford Corporation had finally been broken. John Hearne has gone as far as to say that the municipal reform act of 1840 'helped sever the political umbilical cord which had connected urban politics with the imperial policies of Westminster'.²⁴⁰ Protestants were now unrepresented on the city council but for Sir Benjamin Morris, who had managed to claim popular Catholic as well as liberal Protestant support. Municipal reform 'allowed Waterford's [Catholic] middle class to at last convert wealth into political power'.²⁴¹

Conclusion:

In the 1830s Waterford liberal Protestants responded to the changing political landscape in a variety of different ways. The Whig reform measures of the 1830s forced Irish liberal Protestants to re-examine their own position among Ireland's élite to as great a degree than the concurrent repeal campaign and the ongoing agitation over tithes. Part one of this chapter revealed that there was widespread support among liberal Protestants for parliamentary reform, and the Waterford Whig members supported the 1832 reform bill in parliament. Some Protestants such as Henry Alcock appeared alongside Catholics at local reform meetings, but others avoided publicly expressing their views. This may have had something to do with the increasing domination of local politics by Catholics, and the divergences of interest between many Catholics and some liberal Protestants over the concurrent (if intermittent) campaign for repeal (see chapter six). After 1832 some liberal Protestants, including

Thomas Murphy (a supporter of Thomas Wyse), Laurence Forrestal and David Condon (a supporter of Thomas Wyse); Waterford Corporation minute book, 26 Oct. 1842 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/16).

²³⁹ Waterford Corporation minute book, 26 Oct. 1842 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/16); Rev Thomas Clarke certainly thought of himself as a popular local leader, and even considered putting himself forward for the representation of Waterford city in the 1837, although this was probably only to give himself a platform from which to propound his views; *Waterford Mirror*, 24 July 1837.

²⁴⁰ J. M. Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852' (*PhD thesis*, U.C.C., 2001), pp 153-4.

²⁴¹ Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics', p. 154.

Henry Alcock and William Villiers Stuart, continued to support further reform and these gentlemen, like the repealer Sir Richard Musgrave, continued to be willing to work closely with local Catholics on matters of mutual concern. Other liberal Protestants, however, believed that the reforms introduced in 1832 were sufficient. Sir John Newport retired from the representation of the city in 1832 on the basis that his political ambitions were fulfilled, but it is possible that he was anxious that an election contest in the reformed atmosphere of 1832 may have resulted in a failure to hold onto the seat. Sir Richard Keane supported parliamentary reform but was wary of other forms of political agitation, and his support for the Whigs' coercion bill in 1833 resulting in his being castigated by O'Connell.

Liberal Protestants in Waterford also reacted to the issue of church reform in different ways. While some liberal Protestants recognised the need for reform of the church, others became increasingly concerned about the future of the church in the face of Catholic pressure. There is little evidence to suggest the nature of these anxieties on the part of Waterford liberal Protestants, but the dearth of sources suggests that some may have felt alienated from popular politics and may have become less willing to voice their opinions in public. Other Protestants such as John Newport (the nephew of Sir John) and Thomas Harris moved into a public alliance with conservative Protestantism, becoming members of the Waterford Protestant Conservative Society. But other liberal Protestants offered enduring if conditional support for the principle of church reform. Sir John Newport, Sir Richard Keane and Sir Richard Musgrave supported parliamentary efforts of church reform, and Newport and Musgrave even supported the divisive principle of appropriation. Beresford Gahan publicly disassociated himself from conservative Protestants in 1838, and William Villiers Stuart continued to support church reform in parliament into the late 1830s. This evidence departs in some ways from that of Eugene Broderick, who has suggested that in the 1820s, liberal Protestants, forced into a choice between 'the Catholic cause and Brunswickism', ceased to openly support reform, and moved into a closer identification with conservative Protestantism.²⁴²

Just as divisive an issue as church reform was the government's efforts at implementing a system of poor relief in Ireland, and again liberal Protestants

²⁴² Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans', pp 188 & 410.

approached the issue of poor laws in a variety of ways. Many Waterford Protestants including William Villiers Stuart and Joshua William Strangman proved willing to aid the Whately Commission in its collection of a huge tome of evidence between 1833 and 1837. The brothers Sir Richard and John Musgrave were extremely anxious to implement a system of poor laws in Ireland, and their ideas provide a definitive insight into the mindset of some liberal Protestants in these years. Both gentlemen rejected the English system based on the workhouse model, promoting instead a system based on public works. Other liberal Protestants including William Morris, Charles Samuel Tandy and Rev Thomas Clarke proved anxious to implement some system to improve the lot of the Irish poor, but there is little evidence to suggest that many, apart from Alderman William Milward, agreed with the Catholic Henry Winston Barron in advocating the English system. William Villiers Stuart did vote in favour of the poor law bill passed in 1838, but as he had formerly supported Sir Richard's Musgrave's poor relief bills, it is credible that he believed some measure of relief was better than none whatsoever. The issue of poor relief was one in which liberal Protestants retained a local profile, and liberal Protestants including Samuel King, Sir Benjamin Morris and Henry Alcock continued to act as poor law guardians and involve themselves in local efforts at poor relief in the 1840s.

The campaign for municipal reform was perhaps the most revealing in terms of liberal Protestants reactions to Whig reform measures in this period, as it brought liberal members of Waterford Corporation into public opposition with reformers in the city. The reports of evidence given before the parliamentary commissioners in December 1833 reveal that there existed a reforming strand within the corporation itself, and that these reformers had been attempting to build on earlier efforts at reform (see chapter two). As well as this, by 1833 the necessity for some kind of reform was admitted by all but the most trenchant conservatives on the common council, and even the *Waterford Mail* suggested that moderate reform would soothe Catholic and reforming opinion in the city rather than a public attachment to old principles. But the main point of significance here is that liberal Protestants in the corporation used their positions of corporate privilege to campaign for the reform of some existing abuses, but they did this with a view to maintaining the present system intact. Some liberal Protestants, including Sir John Newport and Nicholas Britiffe Skottowe continued to use the corporate patronage system to their own financial and political benefit. The

activities of a committee of citizens were significant as it revealed the presence of a Quaker element among the city reformers. This had important implications for the development of liberal Protestantism in the city, as Robert Jacob and Francis Jacob joined both lay and clerical Catholics in calling for an overthrow of the traditional system of corporate privilege.²⁴³ Finally, the municipal reform bill of 1840 was the most important in terms of undermining Protestant control of local politics in Waterford city. The elections to the reformed corporation in October 1842 witnessed the return of many Catholics who had been influential in local politics for the last decade. The only Protestant to gain a position as alderman, Sir Benjamin Morris, was a liberal who had been closely affiliated to Catholic and popular politics in the city.

²⁴³ Leighton, *Catholicism in a Protestant kingdom*, pp 132-3.

Conclusion:

Liberal Protestantism throughout this period was an élite ideology. Liberal Protestants viewed themselves as leaders and as educators, morally superior to the lower orders of society. Linked into this was the Irish liberal Protestant view of themselves as both Irish and British without contradiction. That they were fully Irish as well as British justified to them their right to play a leading role in Irish society under the union. Liberal Protestants viewed their outlook as a progressive and inclusive ideology that could solve Ireland's problems through a gradual removal of abuses. But Irish Protestant identity and the role played by Protestants in Irish society were fundamentally and permanently altered in the first forty years of union. By 1840 their role as a political ascendancy had been successfully challenged, and during the 1830s many Irish Protestants had taken on the psychology of 'a minority on the defensive'.¹ So what light has this thesis shone on the development of liberalism among the Protestant élite during this period? For what reasons did this ideology emerge, and what were the aims and ambitions of liberal Protestants in Waterford? What was the nature of relations between liberal Protestants and other political groups and communities? Despite liberal Protestant support for civic and religious freedom and the removal of religious distinctions in Irish society, by 1840 the confessional basis of political identification had become highly accentuated. But what were the reasons this ideology ultimately failed as a viable political force?

Chapter one revealed that the origins of Irish liberal Protestantism had much in common with its British counterpart. Irish Whigs reflected the English Whig belief in the importance of a stable society, education and civic virtue. In both places Whiggism was an aristocratic creed, and in Ireland, Whigs belonged to the (Protestant) political élite. As in Britain, Irish Whigs aimed at implementing moderate if wide-ranging reforms, rather than attempting to alter or undo the fabric of society. Most Whig reformers did not go so far as contemplating a redistribution of land or an undoing of the Irish Protestant political élite. The similar origins of Irish and British Whiggism were complemented by a complex social network in which close ties were fostered. However, Irish Whiggism was altered by Irish circumstances. Patriotism and the glorifying of the Irish parliament lent Irish Whiggism a distinctly Irish flavour, and in

¹ R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988), p. 303.

a confessional society it was likely that Irish Whigs would develop a distinctively Irish stand on the Catholic question. Their support for Catholic emancipation was stronger in general than among the English Whigs, and was a defining feature of liberal Protestantism in this period. The experience of the 1790s had a sobering effect on Irish Whiggism, and highlighted its more conservative features and élite roots more perceptibly. The development of radicalism and republicanism in the 1790s alienated many Irish Whigs, and the failure of the Volunteers and other eighteenth-century attempts to undercut the religious and confessional basis of Irish society had a chastening effect on Irish liberal Protestants, in terms of what they believed it reasonable to achieve. However, despite increasing difficulty in the 1790s to maintain a 'middle path' in Irish politics, the Irish Whigs did weather the storm and emerged in the early nineteenth century as a group challenging for a leading role in Irish politics. The second part of chapter one revealed that Waterford, with a history of strong relations between the different denominations and a buoyant Catholic middle class, was an important centre for liberal values in the early nineteenth century.

Chapter one also examined the reactions of Waterford Protestants to the act of union. In 1799 and 1800 the majority of Waterford Protestants had opposed the proposed measure of union. The union profoundly affected local politics in Waterford city when the representation was halved to one seat. As in the county, down to 1800 parliamentary representation had been carved out between two Protestant factions, in this case the Carew and Alcock families. After union, the single city seat was fought over by the rival Protestant groups, and elections in 1802 and 1807 were among the most bitterly contested of the early part of the century (see chapter two). The seats in County Waterford and the small borough of Dungarvan remained unaltered, and they remained under the traditional control of the landed magnates. Sir John Newport came out strongly in favour of the union, although many other liberal Protestants did not. Any overt hostility to the union among Protestants in Waterford quickly dispersed after the measure was implemented, but many liberal Protestants remained conditional unionists, and believed that that state of the union between Britain and Ireland could be improved. Sir John Newport believed that the union should work more in Ireland's favour and, as noted in chapter three, his parliamentary career was in part devoted to gaining better conditions for Ireland under the act of union.

Chapter two analysed the growth in liberal values among the Protestant political élite in Waterford city between 1800 and 1818. There was a significant

growth in liberal opinions among members of Waterford Corporation, to which the early attempts at corporate reform attest. The growth of liberalism in this sphere culminated in the compact of 1818, which witnessed liberal Protestants on the corporation employing illiberal means to harness greater local support. This compact secured greater liberal command on the common council and over the corporation's patronage network, and full control over the city's parliamentary seat. The growth in influence of the Chamber of Commerce in these decades was significant, as this boasted a significant liberal membership, and their bid for influence in the 1810s against what was perceived as the traditional influence of the corporation was relatively successful.

Chapter two also examined early liberal Protestant stances on the Catholic question in Waterford. The early years of the century witnessed a growth in public support among Waterford Protestants for Catholic relief, as the 1808 Protestant declaration, the letters by various liberal Protestants written to win local support for Catholic petitions, and the votes of Waterford's parliamentary representatives in favour of Catholic relief attest. Support for Catholic relief and the removal of political disabilities based on religious distinctions was the most important and defining feature of Irish liberal Protestantism in this period. Liberal Protestants viewed their role in Irish society as a leading one, and believed that Catholic relief would be granted on Protestant terms. This was linked into an innate conviction in the superiority of Protestantism and the belief that, once freedom had been granted, Catholics would participate within a political framework that would remain essentially Protestant.

Chapter three examined the activities of Waterford liberal Protestants in the parliamentary context between 1800 and 1820. An analysis of parliamentary interests of the Waterford Whigs reveals that the Catholic question was the most important parliamentary question for them in these years. These representatives sat with the Whigs in parliament, believing that the English Whigs, if not English public opinion, were generally favourable to a settlement of the Catholic question. The majority of Irish M.P.s in the early nineteenth century tended to vote with the government of the day, as many believed this was the most effective way of showing their loyalty to the king and constitution. In this context, the significance of the leading role played by Sir John Newport in parliamentary politics is revealed. Newport's interest in Waterford affairs was important for liberal Protestants there, as it provided an opportunity by which their interests could be represented and also kept them in tune with

developments in British Whig politics. Chapter three revealed that Sir John Newport viewed himself very much as an Irish politician, and spent the bulk of his time in parliament on Irish questions. As well as this, Newport considered himself part of a wider Whig tradition, and was one of the most important promoters of an Irish Whig programme in this period.

Chapter four turned to examine the Catholic question in Waterford between 1808 and 1825, and the nature of liberal Protestant support for Catholic relief. Certainly, the Catholic question remained the most important political issue for Waterford liberal Protestants up to 1825. Support for Catholic emancipation among Waterford liberal Protestants stemmed from the belief that emancipation would solve the tensions and heal the divisions in Irish society by removing the Catholic question from politics. This would in turn lead to peace, prosperity and economic improvement by tying Irish Catholics more closely to the British constitution. However, many liberal Protestants in Waterford did believe it advisable to accompany a Catholic relief bill with some measure of security, and the fact that most of those in parliament who were vocal on the issue of securities were pro-Catholics reveals that the stance of Waterford liberal Protestants on this issue was indicative of the general pattern. This was linked into their aims for Catholic relief, which were based on the belief that emancipation would remove the confessional element from Irish politics. Waterford liberal Protestants envisaged that control of Irish politics would remain to a large extent in Protestant hands, and therefore believed that Catholics should be prepared to concede some degree of Protestant leadership in the event of emancipation. Many liberal Protestants retained a suspicion of 'popery', and were distrustful of the increasing importance of Catholic priests in local politics. Part of this was the (real and imagined) threat of Catholic political supremacy. Despite the fragility of Catholic-Protestant relations in these years, liberal Protestants remained active in support of Catholic relief in Waterford, as the 1819 Protestant declaration in favour of Catholic relief attests.

Chapter five revisited the crucial County Waterford election of 1826 and examined the part played in it by liberal Protestants. Liberal Protestant and Catholic relations in Waterford remained close into the 1820s. Liberal Protestants including Sir Richard Musgrave, John Nugent Humble and William Jackson Homan acted on the election and debts committees, and a number of the various elections agents were liberal Protestants. The significance of the election candidate, Henry Villiers Stuart, as a figure of hope and an icon for Irish liberal Protestantism should not be

underestimated. There were few Protestants in County Waterford who could have maintained such popular appeal and such good relations with Catholics over an extended election campaign. The rhetoric utilised by the election committee and the close relations between Catholics and liberal Protestants during the campaign seemed to augur well for the strength and endurance of these relations. Initially, the part played by liberal Protestants in the 1826 County Waterford election resulted in a boost for many Protestants there, and the good relations between liberal Protestants and Catholics continued in the short term.

In the late 1820s, when the political impetus passed into Catholic hands, Waterford liberal Protestants became wary of the implications for Protestant political control. In these years some liberal Protestants in Waterford were ambivalent about outwardly supporting the Catholic Association and its leaders, and were disinclined to become too involved in the local branches of the association or to contribute to the Catholic rent. As soon as the Catholics claimed emancipation not as a Protestant boon but as a natural right, they alienated liberal Protestant feeling. Some liberal Protestants felt marginalised and alienated by the Catholic Association's harnessing of popular opinion in 1824 and their increasing control over local politics from 1826. This sense of marginalisation on the part of some liberal Protestants was linked into Catholic views of liberal Protestants. It became increasingly clear that many Catholics viewed the Protestant as expendable in the campaign for emancipation after 1828. At one moment liberal Protestants were hailed as indispensable allies in the campaign for Catholic emancipation; at the next they were denounced as indifferent and superfluous allies, if not hostile enemies to Catholic freedom.²

But because support for Catholic emancipation was such a fundamental and defining feature of liberal Protestant identity, many had difficulty in justifying a renunciation of support for Irish Catholics. Some continued to argue that emancipation would result in the removal of religious distinctions and, consequently, peace and prosperity for Ireland, but the divisions caused by these developments compromised this argument. As well as this, up to 1829 the parliamentary role played by liberal Protestants continued to be crucial to Irish Catholics, and there was no falling off of support among the Waterford members for Catholic emancipation. Neither was there a complete abandonment of support at local level, and some Waterford Protestants, such

² Thomas Wyse, *An historical sketch of the late Catholic Association of Ireland* (2 vols, London, 1829), ii, 6.

as Sir Richard and John Musgrave and Henry Villiers Stuart, continued their efforts at promoting support for emancipation. This suggests that whatever challenges the development of the emancipation campaign posed for liberal Protestants in Waterford, there was no wholesale abandonment of liberal principles.

Chapter five has also revealed the importance of a small group of liberal Catholics in Waterford in this period, willing to defy O'Connell's call for repeal of the union. The career of Thomas Wyse in particular reveals that different and often conflicting ideologies existed among Irish Catholics in this period. In the 1830s Thomas Wyse emerged as a unionist and a reformer, aiming at moderate reform of the existing political order. The presence of liberal Catholics in Waterford was significant for liberal Protestants, because if they were to fulfil their ambitions in creating a non-sectarian form of Irish politics, or even to maintain a profile in Irish political life, these were the people with whom liberal Protestants would have to work. At a time when liberal Protestants were increasingly alienated by O'Connell's campaign for repeal and the promotion of an increasingly democratic and nationalist strain of politics, many liberal Protestants in Waterford supported Wyse as he challenged dominant Catholic ideology and avoided demagoguery. Thomas Wyse enjoyed good relations with liberal Protestants in Waterford, and they worked closely together during the 1826 County Waterford election. The cooperation continued in the early 1830s, with Wyse and several liberal Protestants working together in local societies, especially the Waterford Liberal Club, founded in 1828. In the 1830s most liberal Protestants supported Wyse's brand of Catholic politics, and their unionism gave them common ground from which to work. However, while liberal Catholics were more numerous in Waterford than elsewhere in this period, they were never numerous enough in the 1830s or 1840s to allow liberal Protestants to carve out a truly non-sectarian, liberal reformist agenda.

Chapter six evaluated the range of liberal Protestant responses to Catholic politics in the 1830s. When O'Connell launched his campaign for repeal of the act of union in 1830, the majority of many liberal Protestants rallied to the union as a source of protection. Many Waterford Protestants signed the national anti-repeal declaration of November 1830. The context for this was a general disillusionment that their aims for emancipation – the removal of the confessional aspects from Irish politics – had not been fulfilled, and a growing wariness of the reformist agenda of O'Connell and the Irish Catholics. For many Waterford Protestants their inclination towards reform and their suspicions of Catholic political aspirations proved irreconcilable. A few liberal

Protestants, however, including Sir Richard Musgrave, Sir Richard Keane and William Villiers Stuart, came out in favour of repealing the act of union. The intermittent nature of the repeal campaign in the 1830s meant there was still some room for cooperation between O'Connell and the Irish Whigs in parliament. These liberal Protestants recognised the necessity of maintaining popular appeal if they were to have any chance of maintaining their political clout at local level, but it is interesting that these Protestants supported repeal for essentially liberal reasons. Their support remained qualified, in the same way that most liberal Protestant support for union was conditional.

Chapter six also analysed the different ways in which Waterford liberal Protestants approached the problem of tithes. In the 1830s the majority of liberal Protestants in Waterford recognised the necessity of reforming the tithe system, but there was seemingly little general agreement on what form such a measure should take. The responses of Waterford liberal Protestants to parliamentary legislation passed in the 1830s was seemingly positive, as the agitation over the system of tithes made many of them acutely aware of the dangers that widespread hostility could pose to the existing political structure. Unfortunately, a dearth of sources depicting the liberal Protestant stance on the tithe question means that any general statement of their approach to tithe reform in these years is problematic, and scholarship could certainly benefit from a more detailed analysis in this respect. The final part of chapter six examined liberal Protestant approaches to education in the 1830s, and revealed the extent of liberal Protestant patronage over county schools in this period. These liberal Protestants tended to support Thomas Wyse's strategy for implementing a permanent system of non-denominational elementary education in these years. Again, however, the limited nature of available sources made any in depth analysis of the views of Waterford liberals on education problematic, although the political dependence of liberal Protestants on liberal Catholics, such as Thomas Wyse, to maintain a profile in local politics in the 1830s (see chapter five) would suggest that many of them would have supported his parliamentary strategies in these years.

An important development for Irish liberal Protestants in this period was the revitalisation of Irish Toryism. The liberal Toryism of the Liverpool government in the 1820s may have attracted the support of some disillusioned Irish Whigs, but there is little evidence that many liberal Protestants in Waterford worked with the liberal wing of the Tories in these years. Political developments in the 1830s triggered an Irish Tory

reaction, resulting in the growing importance of Protestant societies such as the Protestant Conservative Society and the Orange Lodges. In the mid-1830s some Irish Tories began to promote a sense of Irish Protestant nationhood that was unionist, imperialist and national. The promotion in the 1830s of a more inclusive and less explicitly anti-Catholic identity was one that appealed to some liberal Protestants, who were becoming increasingly alienated from both Irish Catholic and British opinion. At least some liberal Protestants in Waterford acquired 'a deeper sense of their Protestantism' and move into closer relations with conservative Protestants, as the establishment of the Waterford Protestant Conservative Society in the city in 1840 attests.³ This was linked into the marginalisation of liberal Protestants from popular politics and the lack of real effort on the part of Daniel O'Connell (in the 1830s at least) to harness Protestant support in Waterford for his various political policies.

Chapter seven examined the variety of ways in which Waterford liberal Protestants responded to the Whig government's reform measures in the 1830s. The accession of the Whigs to power in November 1830 was initially welcomed by liberal Protestants in Waterford, and many believed that the long-sought after measure for parliamentary reform would finally be implemented. But Waterford liberal Protestants differed over the extent that such reform should take. Although O'Connell and many Catholics were disappointed in the Irish reform bill passed in 1832, a majority of Waterford liberal Protestants were content with the extent of the reforms. A few, including Henry Alcock and William Villiers Stuart, continued to support further parliamentary reform throughout the 1830s. By the early 1830s, many liberal Protestants supported some reform of the established church. But as it became clear that government measures of reform would undermine the social and political position of Irish Protestants, many liberal Protestants became wary of lending the government their unconditional support. These reservations over the extent of the government's reform measures were not easily reconciled with the former pro-reform stance, and many liberal Protestants experienced difficulties in resolving these conflicting interests. However, some liberals, such as Sir Richard Musgrave, fully embraced Whig reform measures, supporting controversial issues such as church appropriation. The continued willingness on the part of these liberal Protestants to support political reform

³ Eugene Broderick, 'Waterford's Anglicans: religion and politics, 1819-1872' (PhD thesis, U.C.C., 2000), p. 410.

might have been an attempt to conciliate liberal Catholic opinion in Ireland, but it was also linked to their traditional reliance on social and political stability.

Neither did the government's proposals to implement an Irish poor law obtain the support of all Waterford liberal Protestants. Sir Richard and John Musgrave adopted relatively progressive approaches, advocating relief for the able poor through a system of public works. Few liberal Protestants seem to have supported the extension of the English system in Ireland, but this is a subject worthy of further study. It is probable that the research currently being undertaken on the Irish poor laws will give greater clarity and definition to this question. After the implementation of the poor law system in 1838, this was one area in which liberal Protestants could maintain a public profile as poor law guardians. That they were able to maintain this profile was surprising when compared with the complete rejection of liberal Protestant representation during the elections to the reformed corporation in 1842.

By the 1830s the issue of municipal reform had extensive support among many liberal Protestants in Waterford city, and the liberal element in the corporation had long been attempting to implement moderate corporate reform. These liberal Protestants, who aimed at moderate yet wide-ranging reform of the existing system, came into increasing conflict with a more progressive reforming element in the city, which aimed at the complete abolition of the corporate system and its replacement with a new model. The existence of Quakers among those railing for this kind of reform points to the existence of an advanced liberalism in the city in the 1830s, but unfortunately little evidence has yet been uncovered to develop this argument. This progressive campaign for repeal alienated many liberal Protestants and placed the impetus for extensive reform in predominantly Catholic hands. This was reflected by the almost total domination by Catholics of the reformed corporation. Municipal reform effectively removed Protestant control over city politics, and completed the sense of marginalisation and alienation among liberal Protestants that had been in train since the late 1820s. The ultimate irony for liberal Protestants was that it was the campaign for religious toleration and political equality, promoted by them, that facilitated the rise of Catholic assertiveness and the eclipse of their identity and value system in the 1830s.

This thesis is one of the only studies yet produced on Irish liberalism between 1800 and 1840. It has examined the distinctive origins of liberal Protestantism in Ireland, and has revealed the development of this ideology in one of the most

important centres of liberal ideas in this period. Most studies of liberal Protestants in Ireland have concentrated primarily on their attitudes to Catholic emancipation in the 1820s, and few consider the other elements that made Irish liberalism distinctive in this period. Liberal Protestants responded to political developments in the 1830s in various ways, a fact that few historians have taken into consideration. Eugene Broderick has hinted that liberal Protestants in Waterford in the 1820s all responded in a similar way, taking refuge in a Protestantism defined by evangelicalism and Toryism. In fact there is little evidence that this occurred, beyond the fact that some liberal Protestants in Waterford did retire from local politics after emancipation had been granted. But this may equally have had to do with the advanced age of these Protestants, as in the cases of John Nugent Humble and Sir John Newport. Or perhaps the domination of local politics by Catholics made them more reluctant to voice their Whig notions in public. Others, such as Sir Richard Musgrave and Richard Power, remained active in politics in the 1830s and some, as in the case of Sir Richard, became repealers. These Protestants continued the liberal Protestant tradition of working towards reform and retaining good working relations with Catholics.

But this thesis is compatible with studies pointing to the failure of liberal Protestantism to succeed as a viable political force in this period. Despite a short period of influence (and perhaps dominancy) in the 1820s, Irish liberal Protestants became expendable to both Irish Catholics and the British government in the 1830s. In Waterford, the popular support claimed by liberal Protestants up to 1826 was enjoyed by local Catholic leaders in the 1830s. Alternatively, Jennifer Ridden has contended that 'even in the sectarian atmosphere of the early 1840s there was still room for a middle path which avoided the denominational allegiances of both repealers and conservatives'.⁴ However, while liberal Protestantism was not an entirely spent force by 1840, little potential for national leadership remained. There did exist in Waterford active liberal Protestants and repealers who retained popular support, and there were other liberal Protestants who found it impossible to reconcile their conflicting interests and failed to maintain a public profile, but by 1840 there no longer existed a group of active and assertive liberal Protestants, working together, who had the potential to act as leaders of their society. Part of the reason for this was the absence of an enduring

⁴ Jennifer Ridden, 'Irish reform between the 1798 rebellion and the Great Famine', in Arthur Burns & Joanna Innes (eds) *Rethinking the age of reform, Britain 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 292.

group of liberal Catholic unionists with sufficient influence to harness liberal Protestant support.

This thesis also offers a further slant on the nature of Protestant-Catholic relations in Waterford. Too often has Irish history in this period been viewed in terms of binary oppositions, when in fact there existed a gradient of opinion among both Catholic and Protestant leaders. Here, an example of one brand of liberal Catholicism has been examined. Liberal Catholics in Waterford maintained close relations with some liberal Protestants in the 1840s, and the return of two liberal Catholics to parliament in 1835 suggests that they wielded considerable local influence. There also existed a gradient of opinion among liberal Protestants, who responded to the challenges posed in the 1820s and 1830s in various ways. This study gives greater definition to what is known about the history of political Protestantism in Waterford in this period, and gives greater meaning to the political power struggles in the city and county. The nature of liberal Protestant activities and support during the 1826 County Waterford election has been revisited, and the evidence challenges contention that the entire campaign was organised and led by Catholics.

The implications of these findings for the study for Irish liberalism and Irish Protestantism are manifold. Most importantly, this study has put Waterford on the map as one of the most significant centres of liberal thought in this period. Especially in the city, liberal Protestants played an important role in local politics up to 1842 and beyond. As mentioned above, this thesis has revealed the necessity of revising the notions of political relations in Waterford in the nineteenth century. While Catholic leaders there, such as Thomas Meagher and Edmund Rice, have been memorialised and eulogised, there have been few memorials to the local Protestants who played such a central role in the promotion of Catholic emancipation in the 1820s, apart perhaps from Henry Villiers Stuart. Certainly Sir John Newport deserves recognition as one of the most important figures in the history of Waterford politics, and as a major figure in Irish parliamentary history. Also, a revision of the nature of relations between different political groups in Waterford has been necessitated by this study. Rather than a clash of confessional interests, the history of local and electoral politics in this period was one in which there was a gradient of political opinion on all sides, and any study of Waterford politics in this period would be wise to consider this.

In terms of Irish history, this thesis offers greater depth and context to the study of liberalism in this period. There are few works that have concentrated to any

significant degree on the development of liberalism in this period, among which those by Fergus O’Ferrall and Jennifer Ridden stand out as the most important.⁵ This study also adds greater depth and clarity to what is known about Irish Protestantism in this period. It would be interesting to see if the gradient of political opinion held by Waterford Protestants was indicative of the general pattern, and although Waterford did stand out as an important liberal centre in this period, it is probable that such a gradient of opinion existed among Protestants across the country. This study also highlights the necessity of studying nineteenth-century Irish Whiggism in a British context. The study of the origins and early development of British Liberalism would benefit from a study of Irish political developments.

This thesis has attempted to analyse the origins and development of Irish liberalism in Waterford between 1800 and 1842, but it is by no means an exhaustive study of Waterford politics, liberalism or Protestantism in this period. There exist many avenues for further research for both local and academic historians. Perhaps the most obvious gap in scholarship of this period is the lack of any biography of Sir John Newport. This thesis has revealed the central and enduring role played by Sir John in both local and parliamentary politics in this period, and historians would benefit from such a study. Finally, this thesis has concentrated on the development of liberalism in a particular area, and there is much scope for the further study of Irish Whiggism in other places. This may reveal regional variations, and the differences between liberal Protestantism in the north and south of Ireland and the British Whigs. This may lead to a general survey of Irish liberalism in this period, which still remains to be written.

⁵ R. F. B. O’Ferrall, ‘The growth of political consciousness in Ireland, 1823-47: a study of O’Connellite politics and political education’ (PhD thesis, T.C.D., 1978); Jennifer Ridden, ‘“Making good citizens”: national identity, religion and liberalism among the Irish élite, c.1800-50’ (PhD thesis, University of London, 1998).

Appendices:

Appendix A

Table A.1: Religious denominations (by percentage) in Waterford city, 1834

Religious denominations Waterford city by percentage, 1834	
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Catholics	86.4
Anglicans	12
Other Protestants	1.6
Total	100

Source: *First report of the commissioners of religious and other public instruction in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (45), xxxiii, 1

Table A.2: Religious denominations (by percentage) in County Waterford, 1834

Religious denominations in County Waterford by percentage, 1834	
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Catholics	97.2
Anglicans	2.6
Dissenters	0.2
Total	100

Source: *First report of the commissioners of religious and other public instruction in Ireland*, H. C. 1835 (45), xxxiii, 1.

Appendix B:

Table B.1: Residency of persons granted the freedom of Waterford, 1800-1805

Residency of persons granted the freedom of Waterford, 1800-05		
<i>Residency</i>		<i>Number</i>
City and environs	Waterford city	514
	Liberties of Waterford	18
Nearby counties	Waterford	35
	Wexford	39
	Kilkenny	7
	Tipperary	6

	Cork	1
Other counties	Dublin	11
	King's County	3
	Clare	1
	Donegal	1
	Laois	1
	Leitrim	1
Britain		1
Specified non-resident		18
Not specified		155
Total		812

Source: Freedom petitions (W.C.A., database).

Table B.2: Occupations of persons granted freedom of Waterford city, 1800-1805

Occupations of persons granted freedom of Waterford city, 1800-1805			
<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number</i>
Gentlemen	138	Turners	3
Corporate officers	6	Carpenters	10
Merchants	34	Cabinetmakers	4
Military	61	Stonecutters	4
Clerks	14	Miller	1
Doctors of Physic	5	Woolcomber	2
Surgeons	3	Masons	2
Apothecaries	3	Clock/watchmakers	2
Attorneys/Counsel at law	6	Skinners	3
Architect	2	Tanners	1
Painters and glaziers	6	Victuallers	2
Cordwainers	41	Bakers	1
Tailors	7	Brewers	1
Clothiers	2	Distillers	1
Hosiers	1	Glassblowers	1
Hatters	4	Musicians	3
Drapers	1	Printers/Bookbinders	3
Cloth manufacturers	6	Chandlers/Couriers	8
Weavers	21	Mariners	5
Dyers	2	Farmers	31
Coopers	16	Graziers	2
Braziers	3	Shopkeepers/Grocers	10
Silversmiths	2	Innkeepers	2
Pewterers	1	Publicans	7
Ropemakers	6	Tobacconists	1
Nailers	3	Other	8

Slaters	2	Not specified	296
Sadlers	2	Total	812

Source: Freedom petitions (W.C.A., database).

Appendix C

The compact signed between members of the Alcock and Newport factions on the common council of Waterford Corporation, 7 February 1818¹

In the first place, Mr Alcock and his friend pledge themselves to support Sir John Newport for the representation of the city of Waterford, during the lifetime of the said Sir John Newport, or for such time as Sir John Newport shall consider himself capable of efficiently discharging the duties of that situation. At the expiration of either event Mr Alcock to be supported by every exertion of the Newport family, and their friends, in the future representation of said city, during the life of said Mr Alcock, and in the promotion of which Mr William Newport pledges himself that his sons shall concur. And if it should happen that Mr Alcock shall die before he is entitled to represent said city, or to become a candidate according to the tenor and spirit of this agreement, then the said James Wallace shall nominate the candidate who shall be supported for the representation of said city for life, on the joint interest of both parties. And after the death of said Harry Alcock, or such other representative, the Newport family to nominate the next candidate for a period of five years, then the other contracting party and their successors to nominate for the next five years, and so on alternately forever.

Second. It is agreed that the present vacancy, occasioned by the death of the late Simon Newport Esq., in the council, shall be filled by the recommendation of said Harry Alcock, and on future occasions the Alcock party to fill up their own vacancies of councilmen, and the Newport family to fill up their own and the Bolton's; also the first vacancy in Bolton's aldermen to be filled by lot, and second to be filled by the unsuccessful party on that occasion, and the third to be determined by lot. And it being the intention of the contracting parties that the number of aldermen on either side shall be as equal as possible on all future occasions, the odd members shall be filled alternately.

Third. The contracting parties to elect alternately to the office of mayor, the next election being in the Newport party, and each party to nominate one of the sheriffs annually.

¹ Printed in J. M. Hearne, 'Waterford: economy, society and politics, 1780-1852' (PhD thesis, U.C.C., 2001), pp 143-6.

Fourth. The present salary attached to the master of the Leper Hospital to be abolished, and the ancient salary of £6 13s 4d only to be annexed to it. All the office held by the Bolton party during the pleasure of the corporation, or of which they can be legally deprived, to be withdrawn from them, and the salaries reduced where places cannot be withdrawn, and to be placed in their respective classes, and filled up according thereto.

Fifth. The Newport party to fill up the present vacancy of master of the Holy Ghost Hospital at its present salary of £6 13s 4d. The Alcock party to nominate to the mastership of the Leper Hospital on the removal of the present master, at the salary of 6 13s 4d.

Sixth. The church livings to be disposed of in a separate class, and the first appointment which may occur to be disposed of by lot; it being also understood that whenever a vacancy shall occur in the unions now held by the Rev Mr Wallis, the vicarage of Rathpatrick shall be separated from them, and united to that of Kilculliheen.

Seventh. The Newport party to nominate alderman King to the situation of chamberlain when it shall become vacant by the death of Mr Murphy. Mr Wallace, Mr Alcock or their representatives to nominate to that office on Mr King's death.

Eighth. The office of weighmaster to be held by a member of each family, and the vacancies to be filled up by the family to which the deceased weighmaster belonged.

Ninth. On the death of Mr R[obert] Cooke, the office of salt and coal master to be separated from the office of town clerk and clerk of the peace, and each to be placed in the respective classes; each party to nominate one of the water bailiffs, it being the intention that this office shall be divided.

Tenth. All offices under the corporation (except those already named, and the recordership, which is reserved for further consideration) to be arranged under four distinct heads, or classes, according to their respective value or annual income. The first nomination in each class to be determined by lot, and the vacancies to be separately filled in each class by rotation, on all future occasions. The entire arranged above specified to be applicable to all places that may be at any future time be created.

Eleventh. It being absolutely necessary that the corporation expenditure should be reduced within its income, the contracting parties pledge themselves to use their utmost exertions to accomplish that object as speedily as possible; and also to concur in rendering the Leper Hospital, as far as practicable, efficient for the accommodation of the maimed and diseased of the city of Waterford and its liberties, under the inspection of a committee to be mutually named, but to act under the authority of the master.

Twelfth. No corporation property to be let, or otherwise disposed of, save by public auction, except in cases where the contracting parties may find it eligible for public purposes alone to deviate from this rule.

Thirteenth. All acts relating to the making of freedom, or in any way touching the government of the corporation and the city, to be done by the mutual consent of the contracting parties, so far as the same is not herein provided for.

Fourteenth. All matters of difference, if any should arise at any future period, between the contracting parties, or their successors, to be at all times hereafter adjusted by two friends to be appointed, one on each side, and these four to have the power of calling in an umpire to their assistance, and their decision to be final. And if either party should refuse to abide by such decision, or shall, without previously submitting his case to such decision, depart from the agreement, that the party shall be considered to have forfeited their honour, and thereby to have absolved their friends in council from all future support of that interest of party. The parties have hereunto annexed lists of their respective friends in council, and to the due performance of this agreement have mutually pledged their faith and honour in the most solemn manner as gentlemen, in the day and year first written.

Signed in the presence of:

Samuel King

Michael Evelyn

Signed:

Sir John Newport

William Newport

Harry Alcock

James Wallace

First class. Water bailiff, two officers. Weighmaster, two officers; one in each family, to fill their own vacancies as they may occur. Hospitals already provided for, but on future occasions vacancies to be filled alternately.

Second class. Church livings and master of the school to be filled by alternate recommendations.

Third class. All other officers not provided for in this general agreement, and exceeding £30 annually, to be filled alternately.

Fourth class. All other officers of £30 annually and under, to be filled in like manner. The first vacancy in each class by lot, the second by the party who was unsuccessful.

Appendix D:

Table D.1: Topics brought forward by Sir John Newport in the House of Commons,

1804-20

Number of topics forwarded by Sir John Newport, 1804-20			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>
1804	1	1813	3
1805	6	1814	6
1806	10	1815	7
1807	7	1816	5
1808	4	1817	4
1809	2	1818	3
1810	5	1819	5
1811	3	1820	0
1812	8	Total	79

Source: *Hansard 1*, i-xli (1803-20); *Hansard 2*, i-iii (1820).

Table D.2: Topics on which Sir John Newport spoke in the House of Commons, 1804-20

Topics on which Newport spoke in the House of Commons, 1804-20			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Country concerned</i>
1804	20 Feb	Irish bank restriction bill	Ireland
1804	2 Mar	Irish exchange and currency	Ireland
1804	9 Mar	Irish duties bill	Ireland
1804	13 Mar	Irish duties bill	Ireland
1804	23 Mar	Aylesbury election	Britain
1804	28 Mar	Irish militia offer bill	Ireland
1804	11 Apr	Irish militia augmentation bill	Ireland
1804	12 Apr	Payment of Irish civil offices at par	Ireland
1804	13 Apr	Irish militia offer bill	Ireland
1804	13 Apr	Aylesbury election	Britain
1804	16 Apr	Irish militia augmentation bill	Ireland
1804	29 Apr	Poor of Ireland	Ireland
1804	4 May	Aylesbury election bill	Britain
1804	9 May	Aylesbury election: prosecution	Britain
1804	6 Jun	Irish election bill	Ireland
1804	7 Jun	Slave trade	Britain
1804	8 Jun	Irish linen trade	Ireland
1804	11 Jun	Additional force bill	Ireland
1804	20 Jun	Irish budget	Ireland

1804	20 Jun	Corn trade bill	Britain & Ireland
1804	25 Jun	Revenue of Ireland	Ireland
1804	2 Jul	Civil list	Britain
1804	4 Jul	Irish additional force bill	Ireland
1805	8 Feb	Irish Habeas Corpus suspension bill	Ireland
1805	14 Feb	Irish Habeas Corpus suspension bill*	Ireland
1805	5 Mar	Property tax bill	Britain & Ireland
1805	13 Mar	Irish budget	Ireland
1805	15 Mar	Irish budget*	Ireland
1805	18 Mar	Irish excise duties bill	Ireland
1805	18 Mar	Irish Revenue bills	Ireland
1805	21 Mar	Irish lunatics bill	Ireland
1805	29 Mar	Irish militia enlisting bill	Ireland
1805	2 Apr	Irish militia enlisting bill	Ireland
1805	3 Apr	Irish union commissioners	Ireland
1805	4 Apr	Irish lunatic asylums bill*	Ireland
1805	26 Apr	Irish loan	Ireland
1805	29 Apr	Proceedings respecting Lord Melville	Britain
1805	30 Apr	Stipendiary curates bill	Britain
1805	3 May	Irish silver tokens bill	Ireland
1805	7 May	Irish election bill	Ireland
1805	8 May	Irish stamp duties	Ireland
1805	10 May	Corn regulation bill	Britain & Ireland
1805	14 May	Roman Catholics petition	Ireland
1805	21 May	Irish secret service money	Ireland
1805	24 May	Dublin paving bill	Ireland
1805	5 Jun	Non-residence of Irish clergy	Ireland
1805	17 Jun	Irish commissioners of compensations	Ireland
1806	14 Apr	Irish house duty bill	Ireland
1806	14 Apr	Irish bank notes duties bill	Ireland
1806	15 Apr	Waterford writ*	Waterford
1806	7 May	Irish budget	Ireland
1806	8 May	Irish budget	Ireland
1806	16 May	Barracks	Britain
1806	19 May	Irish revenues collection bill	Ireland
1806	19 May	Irish additional force repeal bill	Ireland
1806	22 May	Irish customs duty bill	Ireland
1806	3 Jun	Affairs of India	Empire
1806	3 Jun	Corn intercourse bill	Britain & Ireland
1806	5 Jun	Corn intercourse bill	Britain & Ireland
1806	9 Jun	Linen drawback bill	Ireland
1806	10 Jun	Slave trade	Britain
1806	17 Jun	American intercourse bill	Britain
1806	19 Jun	Irish election bill	Ireland
1806	23 Jun	Irish election bill	Ireland

1806	1 Jul	Irish quit rents bill	Ireland
1807	12 Jan	Irish election bill	Ireland
1807	21 Jan	Londonderry election petition	Ireland
1807	21 Jan	Navy estimates	Britain & Ireland
1807	2 Feb	Irish treasury bills	Ireland
1807	19 Feb	Poor laws bill	Britain
1807	20 Feb	Irish miscellaneous services	Ireland
1807	24 Mar	Offices in reversion	Britain & Ireland
1807	25 Mar	Irish budget	Ireland
1807	15 Apr	Change of administration	Britain & Ireland
1807	20 Apr	Irish churches and glebe houses	Ireland
1807	26 Jun	Lord commissioner's speech	Ireland
1807	29 Jun	Offices in reversion bill	Ireland
1807	6 Jul	State of the nation	Ireland
1807	10 Jul	Irish insurrection bill	Ireland
1807	13 Jul	Parochial schools bill	Ireland
1807	15 Jul	Roman Catholic college at Maynooth	Ireland
1807	21 Jul	Parochial schools bill	Ireland
1807	23 Jul	Irish insurrection bill	Ireland
1807	25 Jul	Irish insurrection bill	Ireland
1807	31 Jul	Irish Protestant church	Ireland
1807	4 Aug	Irish arms bill	Ireland
1808	25 Jan	Offices in reversion bill	Britain & Ireland
1808	3 Mar	Motion respecting Mr John Giffard	Ireland
1808	7 Mar	Mutiny bill	Britain & Ireland
1808	8 Mar	Greenwich Hospital & Naval Asylum	Britain
1808	6 Apr	Pauper lunatics	Ireland
1808	7 Apr	Offices in reversion bill	Britain & Ireland
1808	12 Apr	Roman Catholic petition	Ireland
1808	13 Apr	Irish Protestant charity schools	Ireland
1808	26 Apr	Irish clergy residence bill	Ireland
1808	26 Apr	Petition of the East India Company	Empire
1808	17 Apr	The cultivation of flax in Ireland	Ireland
1808	27 Apr	Irish spirit drawback bill	Ireland
1808	29 Apr	Maynooth College	Ireland
1808	5 May	Maynooth College	Ireland
1808	11 May	Dr. Duigenan	Ireland
1808	13 May	Life annuity plan	Britain
1808	16 May	First fruits in Ireland	Ireland
1808	18 May	Criminal law	Ireland
1808	19 May	Sugar distillation	Britain & Ireland
1808	30 May	Bank of Ireland	Ireland
1808	3 Jun	Sugar distillation	Britain & Ireland
1808	8 Jun	Irish budget	Ireland
1808	8 Jun	Curates residence bill	Ireland

1809	17 Feb	Embezzlement of public money	Britain & Ireland
1809	22 Feb	Irish grants*	Ireland
1809	23 Feb	Corn distillery prohibition bill*	Britain & Ireland
1809	27 Feb	Corn distillery prohibition bill	Britain & Ireland
1809	21 Mar	Irish malt and spirit duties bill	Ireland
1809	22 Mar	Irish flax-seed bounty bill	Ireland
1809	23 Mar	Irish flax-seed bounty bill	Ireland
1809	23 Mar	General Clavering	Britain & Ireland
1809	28 Mar	Inland navigation in Ireland	Ireland
1809	1 May	Dutch commissioners	Empire
1809	15 May	Irish distilleries regulation bill	Ireland
1809	24 May	Irish grand jury laws bill	Ireland
1809	24 May	Irish budget	Ireland
1809	24 May	Irish distilleries regulation bill	Ireland
1809	26 May	Reform bill	Britain
1809	30 May	Frauds in the Irish revenue	Ireland
1809	30 May	Irish tithes	Ireland
1809	2 Jun	Third report on the finance committee	Ireland
1809	9 Jun	Irish revenue regulation bill	Ireland
1810	10 Jan	Committee of Supply	Empire
1810	31 Jan	Finance committee	Britain
1810	13 Feb	Corn distilleries	Britain
1810	15 Feb	Embezzlement bill	Britain & Ireland
1810	22 Feb	Corn distillery prohibition bill*	Britain & Ireland
1810	26 Feb	Lord Wellington's Annuity bill	Britain
1810	1 Mar	Petition of the Catholics of Waterford*	Waterford
1810	1 Mar	Distilleries of Ireland	Ireland
1810	13 Apr	Tithes in Ireland	Ireland
1810	1 May	Sicilian subsidy	Empire
1810	1 May	Privately stealing bill	Britain
1810	3 May	Late treasurer of the post office in Ire	Ireland
1810	9 May	London petition for parl. Reform	Britain
1810	21 May	Brands' reform motion	Britain
1810	24 May	Sir George Shee	Ireland
1810	25 May	Roman Catholic petitions	Ireland
1810	30 May	Irish insurrection act	Ireland
1810	30 May	Irish budget	Ireland
1810	6 Jun	The release of Sir Francis Burdett	Britain
1810	13 Dec	Limerick writ	Ireland
1810	21 Dec	State of the nation; the king's illness	Britain
1811	4 Jan	Army and navy: public money	Britain
1811	17 Jan	Regency bill	Britain
1811	3 Feb	Lord Commissioner's speech	Britain
1811	22 Feb	Wellesley Pole's circular letter to RCs	Ireland
1811	28 Feb	Irish distilleries	Ireland

1811	1 Mar	Select committee on commercial credit	Britain
1811	5 Mar	Irish public business	Ireland
1811	8 Mar	Distilleries	Britain & Ireland
1811	8 Mar	Commercial credit	Britain
1811	11 Mar	Mutiny bill: Catholic soldiers	Britain & Ireland
1811	18 Mar	Commercial credit bill	Britain & Ireland
1811	19 Mar	Public income & expenditure of Ireland	Ireland
1811	25 Mar	Election bribery bill	Britain
1811	25 Mar	Irish miscellaneous services	Ireland
1811	3 Apr	Distillery bill	Ireland
1811	8 Apr	Sierra Leone	Empire
1811	8 Apr	Dwelling house robbery bill	Britain & Ireland
1811	25 Apr	Petition of Dublin, Cork and Waterford brewers*	Ireland
1811	26 Apr	Irish stage coaches bill	Ireland
1811	9 May	Distilleries	Britain & Ireland
1811	9 May	Irish militia families bill	Ireland
1811	14 May	British and Irish militias interchange bill	Britain & Ireland
1811	15 May	Public education in Ireland	Ireland
1811	16 May	Irish brewers petition; duties on spirits	Ireland
1811	16 May	Irish newspapers	Ireland
1811	20 May	Irish budget	Ireland
1811	24 May	Petition from Waterford on the bankruptcy laws*	Waterford
1811	24 May	Irish newspapers	Ireland
1811	27 May	British and Irish militia interchange bill	Britain & Ireland
1811	30 May	Increase of allowance of Irish lord lieutenant	Ireland
1811	5 Jun	Cotton manufacturers petitions	Britain
1811	11 Jun	Kent petition on parliamentary reform	Britain
1811	11 Jun	Repeal of the Irish Convention act	Ireland
1811	11 Jun	Irish tithes	Ireland
1812	9 Jan	Public income and expenditure of Ireland	Ireland
1812	9 Jan	Resolution respecting orders & notices	Britain
1812	22 Jan	Distillery bill	Britain & Ireland
1812	23 Jan	Inferior ecclesiastical courts	Britain
1812	23 Jan	Duties on legacies for charitable purposes	Britain & Ireland
1812	29 Jan	Population of Ireland	Ireland
1812	29 Jan	Police magistrates	Britain
1812	31 Jan	Bankrupt M.P.s	Britain & Ireland
1812	31 Jan	Police magistrates	Britain & Ireland
1812	4 Feb	State of Ireland*	Ireland
1812	12 Feb	Corn intercourse act	Britain & Ireland
1812	6 Mar	Mutiny bill	Britain & Ireland
1812	9 Mar	Frame work bill	Britain & Ireland
1812	9 Mar	Irish miscellaneous services	Ireland
1812	13 Mar	Grain distillation in Ireland	Ireland
1812	23 Mar	Maynooth College	Ireland

1812	25 Mar	Sicilian subsidy	Empire
1812	26 Mar	Gold coin and bank note amendment bill	Britain & Ireland
1812	8 Apr	Scarcity of provisions in Ireland	Ireland
1812	8 Apr	Exportation of Irish spirits	Ireland
1812	8 Apr	Duty on Irish spirits	Ireland
1812	9 Apr	Martinique sugars	Empire
1812	9 Apr	Exportation of Irish spirits	Ireland
1812	9 Apr	Irish finance committee	Ireland
1812	10 Apr	Irish militia	Ireland
1812	10 Apr	Gold coin and bank note amendment bill	Britain & Ireland
1812	15 Apr	Public defaulters	Britain & Ireland
1812	16 Apr	Dublin petition against Catholic claims	Ireland
1812	17 Apr	The princesses annuity bill	Britain
1812	17 Apr	Gold coin and bank note amendment bill	Britain & Ireland
1812	20 Apr	Petition of Roman Catholics of Waterford*	Waterford
1812	20 Apr	Gold coin and bank note amendment bill	Britain & Ireland
1812	21 Apr	Irish corn distillation prohibition bill	Ireland
1812	29 Apr	Expense of publishing proclamations	Britain & Ireland
		(data for 1812 incomplete)	
1813	11 Feb	Breach of act of union with Ireland	Ireland
1813	12 Feb	Local tokens bill	Ireland
1813	24 Feb	Petitions on Catholic claims	Ireland
1813	1 Mar	Roman Catholics	Ireland
1813	4 Mar	Princess of Wales	Britain
1813	9 Mar	Roman Catholics	Ireland
1813	23 Mar	State of education in Ireland	Ireland
1813	29 Mar	Sinecure offices bill	Britain
1813	30 Mar	Weymouth election bill	Britain
1813	31 Mar	British budget	Britain
1813	1 Apr	Weymouth election	Britain
1813	2 Apr	Sinking fund	Britain
1813	6 Apr	Light house duties	Ireland
1813	7 Apr	Weymouth election bill	Britain
1813	9 Apr	Bill to alter punishment of high treason	Britain & Ireland
1813	13 Apr	Maynooth College	Ireland
1813	13 Apr	Irish miscellaneous services	Ireland
1813	14 May	Irish loan and new taxes	Ireland
1813	19 May	Irish finance	Ireland
1813	20 May	Irish malt duties bill	Ireland
1813	21 May	Admiralty registrar's bill	Britain
1813	24 May	Roman Catholic relief bill	Ireland
1813	25 May	Irish fire arms bill	Ireland
1813	28 May	Irish fire arms bill	Ireland
1813	31 May	Affairs of East India Company	Empire
1813	2 Jun	Affairs of East India Company	Empire

1813	11 Jun	Irish budget	Ireland
1813	11 Jun	Affairs of East India Company	Empire
1813	14 Jun	Affairs of East India Company	Empire
1813	15 Jun	Corn laws	Britain & Ireland
1813	16 Jun	Affairs of East India Company	Empire
1813	17 Jun	Irish distilleries	Ireland
1814	30 Mar	Lord Morpeth's address	Britain
1814	31 Mar	Gold coin bill	Ireland
1814	31 Mar	Fees of courts of justice	Britain & Ireland
1814	6 Apr	Spirits intercourse	Britain & Ireland
1814	22 Apr	Lord Morpeth's address	Britain
1814	26 Apr	Election expenses bill	Britain
1814	5 May	Corn laws	Britain & Ireland
1814	9 May	Election expenses bill	Britain
1814	12 May	Orders of the House of Commons	Britain
1814	13 May	Corn laws	Britain & Ireland
1814	17 May	Roman Catholics	Ireland
1814	17 May	Corn trade	Britain & Ireland
1814	20 May	Corn trade	Britain & Ireland
1814	25 May	Corn exportation bill	Britain & Ireland
1814	1 Jun	Petition on Irish spirits	Ireland
1814	6 Jun	Petition of London clockmakers	Britain
1814	6 Jun	Corn laws	Britain & Ireland
1814	7 Jun	Fees of courts of justice	Britain & Ireland
1814	14 Jun	Army prize money bill	Britain
1814	15 Jun	Fees of office	Britain & Ireland
1814	15 Jun	Gaol fees abolition bill	Britain & Ireland
1814	20 Jun	Spirits intercourse bill	Britain & Ireland
1814	23 Jun	Bill for better execution of the laws in Ireland	Ireland
1814	24 Jun	Petition vs. Orange Order	Ireland
1814	28 Jun	Fees of courts of justice	Britain & Ireland
1814	29 Jun	Peace treaty with France*	Britain
1814	1 Jul	Irish budget	Ireland
1814	22 Nov	Bill for securing the liberty of the subject	Britain
1814	23 Nov	Fees of courts of justice	Britain & Ireland
1814	23 Nov	Irish taxes	Ireland
1814	23 Nov	Irish superintending magistrates bill	Ireland
1814	25 Nov	Irish peace preservation bill	Ireland
1814	25 Nov	Committee of supply: Sicily	Empire
1814	28 Nov	Army estimates	Britain & Ireland
1814	29 Nov	Irish bleaching powder bill	Ireland
1814	29 Nov	Orange Association in Ireland	Ireland
1814	1 Dec	Conduct of the war in America	Empire
1814	1 Dec	Motion of adjournment until February	Britain
1815	9 Feb	Commissioners of accounts in Ireland	Ireland

1815	14 Feb	Courts of justice	Britain & Ireland
1815	16 Feb	Fees in courts of justice	Britain & Ireland
1815	20 Feb	Irish taxes	Ireland
1815	21 Feb	Courts of justice	Britain & Ireland
1815	23 Feb	State of the corn laws	Britain & Ireland
1815	28 Feb	Continuing militia in time of peace	Britain & Ireland
1815	1 Mar	Corn laws	Britain & Ireland
1815	3 Mar	Corn laws	Britain & Ireland
1815	8 Mar	Corn laws bill	Britain & Ireland
1815	10 Mar	Petitions on corn laws*	Britain & Ireland
1815	13 Mar	New taxes	Britain
1815	17 Mar	Miscellaneous services	Ireland
1815	22 Mar	Miscellaneous services	Ireland
1815	22 Mar	Motion respecting aliens	Britain
1815	7 Apr	Prince Regent's message on events in France	Empire
1815	20 Apr	Irish law-offices fees bill	Ireland
1815	20 Apr	Property tax	Britain & Ireland
1815	21 Apr	Treaty of Vienna	Empire
1815	21 Apr	Property tax bill	Britain & Ireland
1815	25 Apr	Property tax bill	Ireland
1815	27 Apr	Committee of grand jury presentments	Ireland
1815	28 Apr	Irish taxes	Ireland
1815	1 May	Petition on property tax	Britain
1815	5 May	Property tax bill	Britain & Ireland
1815	5 May	Foreign slave trade bill	Empire
1815	11 May	Irish malt duties bill	Ireland
1815	19 May	Irish customs duties bill	Ireland
1815	24 May	Grant to Lord Melville	Britain
1815	26 May	Irish law offices fees bill	Ireland
1815	26 May	Subsidies to allied powers	Empire
1815	30 May	Roman Catholic question	Ireland
1815	1 Jun	Bathing in the Thames	Britain
1815	5 Jun	Committee of supply	Ireland
1815	5 Jun	Bathing in the Thames bill	Britain
1815	7 Jun	Master of the rolls in Ireland	Ireland
1815	7 Jun	Stamp duties on newspapers	Britain & Ireland
1815	8 Jun	Mendicity of the metropolis	Britain
1815	8 Jun	Stamp duties on newspapers	Britain & Ireland
1815	9 Jun	Ordnance estimates	Britain
1815	12 Jun	Convention with king of the Netherlands	Empire
1815	13 Jun	Illicit importation of slaves into colonies	Empire
1815	15 Jun	Newfoundland fisheries*	Britain & Ireland
1815	15 Jun	Petition of Lord Elgin	Britain
1815	15 Jun	Loan to Liverpool Corporation	Britain
1815	16 Jun	Irish budget	Ireland

1816	22 Feb	Fees paid to clerks of judges in Scotland	Britain
1816	23 Feb	Petition of Lord Elgin	Britain
1816	27 Feb	Army estimates	Britain & Ireland
1816	29 Feb	Petitions against property tax	Britain & Ireland
1816	1 Mar	Irish farms recovery bill	Ireland
1816	8 Mar	Army estimates	Britain & Ireland
1816	13 Mar	Motion respecting military guards	Britain
1816	14 Mar	Bank of England	Britain
1816	14 Mar	Irish elections	Ireland
1816	15 Mar	Irish farms recovery bill	Ireland
1816	15 Mar	Army estimates	Empire
1816	20 Mar	Discontinuation of the war malt tax	Britain & Ireland
1816	27 Mar	Military officers accepting offices	Britain & Ireland
1816	28 Mar	Committee on state of agriculture	Britain & Ireland
1816	29 Mar	Butter and cheese trade	Britain
1816	29 Mar	Bank loan bill	Britain
1816	29 Mar	Navy estimates	Empire
1816	1 Apr	State of Ireland	Ireland
1816	1 Apr	Navy estimates	Empire
1816	3 Apr	Helston election bill	Britain
1816	3 Apr	Offices of the secretaries of state	Britain
1816	4 Apr	State of Ireland	Ireland
1816	4 Apr	War duties on malt	Britain & Ireland
1816	8 Apr	Ordnance supplementary estimates	Britain & Ireland
1816	9 Apr	Committee on the distressed state of agriculture	Britain & Ireland
1816	25 Apr	Transit duties on foreign linen	Britain & Ireland
1816	26 Apr	Clerk of the pleas in Ireland	Ireland
1816	26 Apr	State of Ireland	Ireland
1816	29 Apr	Wool trade	Britain & Ireland
1816	29 Apr	Irish election bill	Ireland
1816	29 Apr	Irish clerk of the pleas fees bill	Ireland
1816	1 May	Cash payments of the Bank of England	Britain
1816	9 May	Leather tax	Britain
1816	16 May	Saving banks bill	Britain & Ireland
1816	20 May	Soap excise bill	Britain
1816	20 May	Consolidation of English and Irish exchequers	Britain & Ireland
1816	22 May	Tithes	Ireland
1816	22 May	Illicit distillation	Ireland
1816	22 May	Motion for bill to repeal the usury laws	Britain & Ireland
1816	27 May	The budget	Britain & Ireland
1816	28 May	Roman Catholic securities	Ireland
1816	28 May	Alien bill	Britain & Ireland
1816	30 May	Petition of Irish Catholic bishops and clergy	Ireland
1816	7 Jun	Elgin marbles	Britain
1816	10 Jun	Public revenues consolidation bill	Britain & Ireland

1816	13 Jun	Orange Societies	Ireland
1816	14 Jun	Public revenues consolidation bill	Britain & Ireland
1817	13 Feb	Saving banks bill	Britain & Ireland
1817	14 Feb	Irish saving banks bill	Ireland
1817	26 Feb	Petitions against suspension of Habeas Corpus	Britain
1817	3 Mar	Seditious meetings bill	Britain & Ireland
1817	5 Mar	Scarcity of provisions in Ireland	Ireland
1817	11 Mar	Fees in courts of justice	Britain & Ireland
1817	11 Mar	Irish peace preservation bill	Ireland
1817	13 Mar	State of trade and manufactures in Britain	Britain
1817	14 Mar	Seditious meetings bill	Britain
1817	28 Mar	Seditious meetings bill	Britain
1817	24 Apr	Registry of freeholds in Limerick	Ireland
1817	25 Apr	Committee on salt duties	Britain
1817	28 Apr	Issue of exchequer bills for purposes of relief	Britain & Ireland
1817	1 May	Usury laws repeal bill	Britain & Ireland
1817	2 May	Irish grand jury presentments	Ireland
1817	5 May	Abolition of sinecures	Britain & Ireland
1817	7 May	Breach of privilege: Rev Thomas Thirlwall	Britain
1817	7 May	Alien proprietors of bank stock	Britain
1817	13 May	Forfeited recognisances in Ireland	Ireland
1817	14 May	Irish grand jury presentments	Ireland
1817	15 May	State of the Irish finances	Ireland
1817	19 May	Lottery bill	Britain & Ireland
1817	22 May	Window and carriage tax in Ireland	Ireland
1817	23 May	Irish insurrection bill	Ireland
1817	3 Jun	Pr. regent's message respecting Lord Colchester	Britain
1817	5 Jun	Prince Regent's message respecting seditious meetings	Britain
1817	6 Jun	Civil service compensation bill	Britain & Ireland
1817	13 Jun	Irish insurrection act continuance bill	Ireland
1817	17 Jun	Newfoundland trade	Britain & Ireland
1817	19 Jun	State of Ireland	Ireland
1817	23 Jun	Habeas Corpus Suspension bill	Ireland
1817	26 Jun	Habeas Corpus Suspension bill	Ireland
1818	25 Feb	Privately stealing in shops bill	Britain & Ireland
1818	2 Mar	Irish courts of justice	Ireland
1818	8 Mar	Army estimates	Britain & Ireland
1818	9 Mar	Indemnity bill	Britain
1818	11 Mar	Indemnity bill	Britain
1818	12 Mar	Indemnity bill	Britain
1818	13 Mar	Indemnity bill	Britain
1818	17 Mar	Saving banks	Britain
1818	10 Apr	Country bankers notes bill	Britain & Ireland
1818	10 Apr	Surgery regulation bill	Britain & Ireland
1818	10 Apr	Employment of the poor	Britain & Ireland

1818	10 Apr	Royal burghs of Scotland	Britain
1818	13 Apr	Prince Regent's message: marriage of royal dukes	Britain
1818	16 Apr	Prince Regent's message: marriage of royal dukes	Britain
1818	17 Apr	Copyright bill	Britain
1818	17 Apr	Cotton factories bill	Britain
1818	17 Apr	Irish miscellaneous estimates	Ireland
1818	20 Apr	The budget	Britain & Ireland
1818	21 Apr	Repeal of the window tax in Ireland	Ireland
1818	22 Apr	Contagious fever in Ireland	Ireland
1818	27 Apr	Education of the poor bill	Britain
1818	29 Apr	Irish grand jury presentments bill	Ireland
1818	29 Apr	Loan bill	Britain & Ireland
1818	13 May	Irish assessed taxes	Ireland
1818	14 May	Commissary courts in Scotland	Britain
1818	19 May	Lottery	Britain & Ireland
1818	20 May	Statute law of Scotland	Britain
1818	22 May	Alien bill	Britain
1818	27 May	Bankrupt laws amendment bill	Britain & Ireland
1818	27 May	Commission to examine the English courts of justice	Britain
1819	9 Feb	Irish grand jury presentments bill	Ireland
1819	16 Feb	Security of the lives of seamen	Britain & Ireland
1819	18 Feb	County Cork election petition	Ireland
1819	19 Feb	Grand jury presentments: committee appointed	Ireland
1819	19 Feb	Claims of British subjects on France	Britain
1819	24 Feb	Complaint against Mr Wyndham Quin	Ireland
1819	26 Feb	Penryn election	Britain
1819	1 Mar	Penryn election	Britain
1819	5 Mar	Limerick election: petition of Thomas Spring Rice	Ireland
1819	8 Mar	Penryn election	Britain
1819	15 Mar	Complaint against Mr Wyndham Quin	Ireland
1819	23 Mar	Statute law of Scotland in desuetude	Britain
1819	29 Mar	Complaint against Mr Wyndham Quin	Ireland
1819	2 Apr	Barnstaple election	Britain
1819	5 Apr	Bank of England committee: cash payments bill	Britain
1819	5 Apr	Claims on France bill	Britain
1819	6 Apr	Bank or Ireland cash payments bill	Ireland
1819	6 Apr	Clerk of the peace in Ireland	Ireland
1819	6 Apr	State of disease in Ireland	Ireland
1819	22 Apr	State of the established church in Ireland	Ireland
1819	27 Apr	Children in factories (Ireland) bill	Ireland
1819	30 Apr	Illicit distillation in Ireland	Ireland
1819	5 May	Partnerships in Ireland bill	Ireland
1819	5 May	Repeal of the window tax in Ireland	Ireland
1819	7 May	Illicit distillation in Ireland, townland fees	Ireland
1819	10 May	Barnstable bribery bill	Britain

1819	13 May	Foreign enlistment bill	Empire
1819	17 May	Barnstaple bribery bill	Britain
1819	20 May	Bank affairs: article from the <i>Courier</i>	Britain
1819	20 May	Illicit distillation in Ireland	Ireland
1819	26 May	Grand jury presentments in Ireland	Ireland
1819	2 Jun	Court of chancery in Ireland	Ireland
1819	8 Jun	Public income and expenditure	Britain & Ireland
1819	9 Jun	The budget	Britain & Ireland
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1820	4 May	Court of exchequer in Scotland	Britain
1820	5 May	Droits of the crown	Britain
1820	11 May	Exchequer bills	Ireland
1820	12 May	Agricultural distress	Britain
1820	15 May	Barons of the exchequer in Scotland	Britain
1820	17 May	Civil list bill	Britain & Ireland
1820	19 May	Grampound disenfranchisement bill	Britain
1820	25 May	Drogheda lections	Ireland
1820	31 May	Agricultural distress	Britain & Ireland
1820	6 Jun	Army and Ordnance estimates	Britain & Ireland
1820	6 Jun	Irish paupers	Ireland
1820	9 Jun	Irish protecting duties	Ireland
1820	28 Jun	Education of the poor	Britain
1820	28 Jun	Disturbance in Ireland	Ireland
1820	30 Jun	Irish court of chancery bill	Ireland
1820	5 Jun	Irish tithes bill	Ireland
1820	6 Jul	Excess of spirits bill	Britain & Ireland
1820	10 Jul	Barrack agreement	Britain
1820	11 Jul	State of Westminster Abbey	Britain
1820	12 Jul	Sale of Spirits bill	Britain & Ireland
1820	14 Jul	Irish distillery acts	Britain & Ireland
* Waterford mentioned			

Source: *Hansard 1*, i-xli (1803-20); *Hansard 2*, i-iii (1820).

Appendix E:

Table E.1: Votes of Waterford Whig members of parliament in favour of Catholic relief, 1808-21

Votes of Waterford liberal MPs in favour of Catholic relief, 1808-21*								
Member	1808	1811	1812	1813	1815	1816	1817	1821
Sir John Newport	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Richard Power senior	√	√	√	√	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.
Richard Power junior	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	n.m.	√	√	√	√
George Walpole	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

George Lamb									√
* The above data is taken only from the years for which division lists are available; n.m.: not a member of parliament at this date									

Source: *Hansard* 1, xi, 638 (25 May 1808), xx, 427 (31 May 1811); xxii, 1039 (24 Apr. 1812); xxiii, 710 (22 June 1812); xxxi, 524 (30 May 1815); xxxiv, 676 (21 May 1816); xxxvi, 438 (9 May 1817); xl, 79 (3 May 1819); *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Dec. 1821.

Table E.2: Votes of Waterford Whig members in favour of Catholic relief, 1825-9

Votes of Waterford Whig members in favour of Catholic relief, 1825-29*				
Member	1825	1827	1828	1829
Sir John Newport	√	√	√	√
Richard Power junior	√	√	√	√
Henry Villiers Stuart	n.m.	√	√	√
George Lamb	√	√	√	√
* The above data is taken only from the years for which division lists are available; n.m.: not a member of parliament at this date				

Source: *Hansard* 2, viii, 1123 (18 Apr. 1823); xii, 840 (28 Feb. 1825); xvi, 1009 (6 Mar. 1827); xix, 675 (12 May 1828); xx, 894 (6 Mar. 1829); *Waterford Mirror*, 10 Dec. 1821.

Table E.3: Divisions on motions for Catholic relief in the House of Commons, 1805-29

Divisions on motions for Catholic relief in the House of Commons, 1805-29			
Year	For motion	Against motion	Outcome
1805	124	336	Rejected
1808	128	281	Rejected
1810	109	213	Rejected
1811	83	146	Rejected
1812	215	300	Rejected
1812	235	106	Passed
1815	147	228	Rejected
1816	141	172	Rejected
1817	221	245	Rejected
1819	243	241	Passed
1821	227	221	Passed
1823	111	313	Rejected
1821	227	221	Passed
1823	111	313	Rejected
1825	247	234	Passed
1827	274	276	Rejected
1828	272	262	Passed

1829	348	160	Passed
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Source: *Hansard 1*, xi, 638 (25 May 1808); xx, 427 (31 May 1811); xxii, 1039 (24 Apr. 1812); xxiii, 710 (22 June 1812); xxxi, 524 (30 May 1815); xxxiv, 676 (21 May 1816); xxxvi, 438 (9 May 1817); xl, 79 (3 May 1819); *Hansard 2*, iv, 1030 (28 Feb. 1821); viii, 1123 (18 Apr. 1823); xii, 840 (28 Feb. 1825); xvi, 1009 (6 Mar. 1827); xix, 675 (12 May 1828); xx, 894 (6 Mar. 1829); *Waterford Mirror*, 11 June 1810.

Table E.4: Divisions on Catholic relief bills in the House of Commons, 1821-29

Divisions on Catholic relief bills in the House of Commons, 1805-29			
<i>Year</i>	<i>For bill</i>	<i>Against bill</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
1821	216	197	Passed
1825	248	227	Passed
1829	320	142	Passed

Source: *Hansard 2*, iv, 1548 (2 Apr. 1821); xiii, 558 (10 Mar. 1825) & xx, 1536 (30 Mar. 1829).

Table E.5: Divisions on Catholic relief bills in the House of Lords, 1821-29

Divisions on Catholic relief bills in the House of Lords, 1805-29			
<i>Year</i>	<i>For bill</i>	<i>Against bill</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
1821	120	159	Rejected
1825	130	178	Rejected
1829	213	109	Passed

Source: *Hansard 2*, v, 356 (17 Apr. 1821); xiii, 662 (17 May 1825) & xxi, 694 (10 Apr. 1828).

Appendix F:

Table F.1: Parliamentary representatives for Waterford city, 1830-40²

Members of parliament for Waterford city, 1830-40		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Representative*</i>	<i>Political leaning</i>
1830-31	Sir John Newport	Whig
1831-32	Sir John Newport	Whig
1832-35	Henry Winston Barron	Repealer

² In terms of 'party' labels, I have followed the modern pattern, using the names 'Whig' and 'Tory' up to the early 1830s to denote loyalty or leaning towards different parliamentary groups. While Sean Connolly has pointed to the mid-1830s for the evolution of the labels 'liberal' and 'conservative', I have followed Brian Walker in employing these labels from 1832; Connolly, *Oxford companion*, pp 546 & 590; Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, xiv.

	William Christmas	Conservative
1835-37	Thomas Wyse	Liberal
	Henry Winston Barron	Liberal/Repealer
1837-40	Thomas Wyse	Liberal
	Henry Winston Barron	Liberal/Repealer
*The constituency of Waterford city was represented by one member until 1832 and two members thereafter		

Source: Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 215, 241-2, 277 & 317-19.

Table F.2: Parliamentary representatives for County Waterford, 1830-40

Members of parliament for County Waterford, 1830-40		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Representative</i>	<i>Political leaning</i>
1830-31	Lord George Thomas Beresford	Tory
	Daniel O'Connell	Repealer
1831-32	Sir Richard Musgrave	Whig/Repealer
	Robert Power	Whig
1832-35	John Matthew Galwey	Repealer
	Sir Richard Keane	Liberal/Repealer
1835	Patrick Power	Liberal
	Sir Richard Musgrave	Liberal/Repealer
1835-37	William Villiers Stuart	Liberal
	Sir Richard Musgrave	Liberal/Repealer
1837-40	William Villiers Stuart	Liberal
	John Power	Liberal

Source: Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 215, 241-2, 277 & 317-19

Table F.3: Parliamentary representatives for Dungarvan, 1830-40

Members of parliament for Dungarvan, 1830-40		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Representative</i>	<i>Political leaning</i>
1830-31	George Lamb	Whig
1831-32	George Lamb	Whig
1832-34	George Lamb	Whig
1834-35	Ebenezer Jacob	Liberal
1835-37	Michael O'Loghlen	Liberal
1837-40	Cornelius O'Callaghan	Liberal

Source: Walker, *Parliamentary election results*, pp 215, 241-2, 277 & 317-19

Appendix G

Persons from Waterford city and county who signed the declaration against repeal of the act of union in October 1830³

Persons from Waterford who signed the declaration against the repeal of the union, October 1830			
<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>
Alexander Alcock	Waterford	Rev William Frazer	Waterford
Henry Alcock	Waterford	John P. Fuge	Ballyclinane
J. H. Alcock	Cappoquin	Richard Fuge	Kilmeedy
John Anderson	Dungarvan	William Fuge	Rocklodge
Thomas Anthony	Dungarvan	John Matthew Galwey	Duckspool
Rev Henry Archdall	Seskinane	Henry Thomas Gee	Lisarow
Patrick Mallon Ardagh	Waterford	James Paul Gee	Lisarow
Rev S. B. Ardagh	Waterford	John Gee	Ardmore
William Marchant Ardagh	Waterford	John Green	Dungarvan
Henry Bagge	Dungarvan	Richard Hassard	Waterford
James Bagge	Ardmore	B. Hearne	Ballythomas
Simon Bagge	Ardmore	David Hearne	Shanakill
Robert Baker	Dungarvan	John Hearne	Ballythomas
Pierse George Barron	Belmont	John B. Hearne	Dungarvan
William Henry Barron	Dungarvan	John D. Hearne	Shanakill
Philip Batty	Delvin	John Thomas Hearne	Dungarvan
Beresford Boate	Cappoquin	Thomas Hearne	Ballynamuck
George Boate	Duckspool	William Lacken Hobbs	Dungarvan
Charles Boyer	Waterford	John Hudson	Dungarvan
Dr Richard Briscoe	Waterford	Richard G. Hudson	Dungarvan
Henry Amyas Bushe	Lismore	John Nugent Humble	Cloncoskoran
Robert Shapland Carew	Woodstown	Robert C. Holdsworth Hunt	Waterford
William Christmas	Whitfield	Robert Holdsworth Hunt	Waterford
Richard Cooke	Waterford	George Bennett Jackson	Glanbeg
William Samuel Currey	Lismore	George Holmes Jackson	Glenmore
Adam Daffin	Tullymore	George H. Jackson	Glenmore
Thomas Davison	Knockboy	Edward Kennedy	Dungarvan
Bartholomew Delandre	Dungarvan	Maurice Charles Kennedy	Dungarvan
Rev Stephen Dickson	Dungarvan	J. W. Kettleworth	Hammondville
John Dougal	Tullymore	Samuel King	Waterford
Barry Drew	Lismore	Rev James Lawson	Waterford
Barry Drew junior	Lismore	William Mackesy	Clashmore
Francis Drew	Macollop	C. Maunsell	Derriheen

³ This list is taken from Phair, "Declaration against repeal of the union, 1830", pp 18-36, but Phair's list is incomplete, covering surnames beginning with letter A to M only. Unfortunately a search of the National Archives for the original document uncovered nothing. Thus it is probable that more liberal Protestants from Waterford opposed the union than are listed here, but unfortunately there is no extant record of their names.

Robert Elliot	Dungarvan	John Maunsell	Derriheen
James Fallon	Dungarvan	Burton Moore	Kilmacthomas
James Fallon	Dungarvan	Christopher Moore	Kilmacthomas
Lewis Fitzmaurice	Cappoquin	William Moore	Waterford
William Fitzmaurice	Cappoquin	William Moore	Waterford

Source: P. B. Phair, "Declaration against repeal of the union, 1830", in *Irish Ancestor*, xiii (1981), pp 18-36.

Appendix H:

Table H.1: Persons returned in the first elections to the reformed corporation, October

1842

Election to the reformed corporation, October 1842			
<i>Ward</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Number of votes</i>	<i>Religion</i>
Tower Ward	Thomas Meagher	56	Catholic
	Sir Benjamin Morris	56	Protestant
	Michael Hart	52	Catholic
	Patrick Keane	50	Catholic
	John Francis Dunford	49	Catholic
	Roger F. Sweetman	47	Catholic
	James Dobbyn	45	Protestant
	James J. Smith	41	Catholic
Centre Ward	Thomas Murphy	67	Catholic
	James Delahunty	63	Catholic
	Jeremiah O'Brien	59	Catholic
	Henry Galwey	58	Catholic
	Edmund Walsh	58	Catholic
	Patrick Tobin	57	Catholic
	Patrick Keily	57	Catholic
	Edward Cummins	57	Catholic
Custom House Ward	Alexander Sherlock	127	Catholic
	Nugent O'Reilly	123	Catholic
	Dr Patrick Sheehan	119	Catholic
	Sylvester Phelan	116	Catholic
	Edmund Thomas Power	116	Catholic
	Robert Fleming	113	Catholic
	James Kenny	113	Catholic
	Robert Curtis	76	Catholic
West Ward	William Aylward	79	Catholic
	Laurence Forrestal	70	Catholic
	John Joseph Aylward	69	Catholic
	Michael Phelan	67	Catholic

	Josiah Williams	63	Catholic
	Henry Downes	60	Protestant
	Edward Netterville Barron	59	Catholic
	John Dowley	57	Catholic
South Ward	David Condon	97	Catholic
	Owen Carroll	91	Catholic
	Patrick Dalton	90	Catholic
	James Kenny	89	Catholic
	Rev Thomas Clarke	80	Baptist
	Robert Nicholson	80	Catholic
	Joseph Dunford	78	Catholic
	Richard Walsh	75	Catholic

Source: Waterford Corporation minute book, 26 Oct. 1842 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/16).

Table H.2: Occupations of those elected to reformed corporation, October 1842:

Occupation of members of reformed corporation	Number elected
Merchants	16
Gentlemen*	5
Barristers/solicitors	4
Proprietors	2
Apothecaries	3
Doctors	1
Grocers	2
Tobacconists	1
Draper	1
Baker	1
Broker	1
Chandler	1
Woollen manufacturer	1
* term used in original manuscript	

Source: Waterford Corporation minute book, 26 Oct. 1842 (W.C.A., MS LA1/1/A/16).

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