

THE WHIGS AND YORKSHIRE ELECTIONS, 1695 TO 1715

RICHARD HALL

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the University's requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts

June 1994

The University of Leeds

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Abbreviations

<u>B.I.H.R.</u>	Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.
B.L.	British Library.
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford.
<u>Calverley Diary</u>	<u>The Notebook of Sir Walter de Calverley, Bart.</u> Surtees Society, LXXVII (London, 1883).
<u>H.M.C.</u>	Historical Manuscripts Commission.
<u>NH</u>	Northern History.
NYCRO	North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton.
<u>Plaxton Letters</u>	The Letters of the Reverend G.E.Plaxton, ed. E.M.Walker, <u>Thoresby Society Miscellany</u> , <u>XXXVII</u> .
<u>Ralph Thoresby the</u> <u>Topographer</u>	W. A. Atkinson, <u>Ralph Thoresby the</u> <u>Topographer</u> , 2 vols. (London, 1871).
<u>Thoresby Diary</u>	J. Hunter, ed., <u>The Diary of Ralph Thoresby</u> , 2 vols.(Leeds, 1830).
<u>YAJ</u>	Yorkshire Archaeological Journal.
YAS	Yorkshire Archaeological Society.
<u>YASRS</u>	Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series.

Introduction

“Public Good is Public Good, and not the mistaken fancy of private men.”

- Benjamin Hoadley, Rector of St. Pauls.

The outstanding view that dominates the study of Augustan England is of party. As Professors Holmes and Speck wrote, ‘to the apolitical and uncommitted, the England of our period offered a singularly uncongenial habitat.’¹ From the vast collection of monographs, essays and articles, there would appear to be no room for manoeuvre beyond the confines of party machinations.

This would appear to be the case for the provinces as well as at the centre of politics. Much of the relevant historiography has pointed to the strength of party in the local arena.² The view that the years of the Triennial Parliaments were ‘years of mortal combat’ seems true for England as a whole.³ Once the influx of divisive issues during these years is added, it seems that a more independent argument would have little mileage.

However, was political life in England that clear-cut at this time? Was the strength of bi-partisan alignment all-encompassing? Or

¹ G. S. Holmes and W. A. Speck, The Divided Society, (London, 1967), p. 2.

² For example, see L. J. K. Glassey, Politics and the Appointment of J.P.'s, (Oxford, 1979); N. Landau, The J. P.'s, 1679-1760, (London, 1984); G. S. de Krey, A Fractured Society: the Politics of London in the First Age of Party, (Oxford, 1985)

³ G. S. Holmes, The Influence of the Peerage in English Parliamentary Elections, 1702-13, Oxford B.Litt, 1951, p. 8.

was there a place for local custom and consensus that would support the integrity of the locale? To what extent was 'the rage of party' forced upon the provinces by the central parties in search of support, and by historians?

The extent to which the Whig Party successfully organised in Yorkshire, against or alongside the strengths of local political obligation and prestige is the subject of this thesis. Yorkshire was a huge political constituency to organise across. It had a vast number of potential voters, and a large number of local interests that needed to be cultivated if a party was to make a headway. The Triennial Act meant that elections fell at least every three years, and so there was likely to be a high degree of political activity within the county. The study of politics in these years, at constituency level, provides opportunities to look at the nature of party. As such it is a useful subject for political analysis.

The Whigs had much potential for success in the county, due to the strengths of their landholdings, and their borough patronage. However, the county had a strong attachment to the Church of England. Although Ralph Thoresby, a local antiquarian, certainly saw society at large as divided by "the wretched distinctions betwixt High and Low Church"⁴, within Yorkshire, the Anglican Church held sway. Therefore, it should be possible to judge the cohesion of the Whigs and their strength in depth in a county where religion and the Succession were of huge import, and where the Tories ought to fare well. It will also be seen whether the rise and fall of various issues made a difference to the overall status of the Party in the shire, as opposed to the strength of local independent interests.

⁴ Thoresby Diary, vol. 1, p. 359.

The substance of this thesis will be an analysis of the organisation of the Whigs at the shire level, although at each stage the standing of the Party in the boroughs will be looked at briefly. This will take place within a chronological context and the discussion will fall into four sections. The first concerns the nature of Yorkshire politics from 1695-1702. It discusses local politics after the Glorious Revolution until the Accession of Anne, and the standing of the Whigs as opposed to the strength of any local consensus. The second chapter looks at the development of externally applied momentum, through the Junto, to Whig efforts at the shire level between 1702-07. The third involves an analysis of the 1708 shire pollbook, and discusses whether the local Whigs had developed a strong enough county-wide capability to carry the shire when the Junto were absent. The final chapter looks at the temporary nature of the Whigs position in Yorkshire, in the face of the huge pro-Sacheverell backlash against the Junto.

A Note on Dates.

As is customary, all dates in the text and footnotes are given in the Old Style of the Julian Calendar, and the new year is taken to begin on 1 January and not 25 March. Hence, a letter written on 22 January 1707 is cited as 22 January 1708, and so on.

Yorkshire, 1695-June 1702: From Consensus to Confusion.

"If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand."

- St. Mark, 3:25.

"it happeneth there is a Third Opinion of those, who conceive it would do as well, if the boat went even, without endangering the Passengers." - the Marquis of Halifax.

For Yorkshire, the period immediately following the Glorious Revolution was a time of co-operation in politics, with this unity based on the widespread support for William of Orange amongst the dominant landowners. The moderate antiquarian Ralph Thoresby noted that the events of 1688 had caused "such a general satisfaction and joy", a sentiment that is confirmed by the prominent gentry who noted that "union and good correspondence in this county of Yorke (sic.)" had facilitated "the good success of our cause in these parts."⁵ When the Succession and security of England were at question the county was almost unified and the vital nerve centre and regional focal point at York was at the hub of this regional consciousness. Speck has noted that Yorkshire was a microcosm of the country, in January 1689 it returned 16 Whigs and 14 Tories, with six constituencies apparently sharing the representation between the two parties. In the county at

⁵ Thoresby Diary, vol. 1, p. 191.

B. L. Add. 24475, f. 131. A letter dated Dec. 8th 1688 and signed by men who would later be classified as Whigs, such as Sir William Strickland, Sir William Robinson and Lord Thomas Fairfax, as well as a nominal Tory such as Lord Danby, and the moderate Tobias Jenkins.

large consensus rather than conflict was the priority.⁶ The loyal Address to William from York, soon after the Revolution in 1689, told of their “promise still to stand by your highnesse in defence of the Protestant Religion and the laws of the Kingdom...”⁷ This maintains the standpoint of so many in Yorkshire, that should the Succession come into question then the county would be found on the side of loyalty to Canterbury, not Rome.

However, as will be seen later in this thesis, this did not create a cohesive Whig outlook in the shire. To a large extent the make-up of political belief within Yorkshire was dominated by an Anglican strength in depth that promoted a Toryism linked to the Protestant Succession. As such the Tory John Dawnay, First Viscount Downe, led the other West Riding Justices in giving negative replies to the Lieutenants' questions on the repeal of the Test and Penal laws. This cohesive attitude was not matched by the Tory Sir John Kaye who despite supporting Downe on the repeal question would not declare for William at York. The need to secure harmony forced Danby to ask him to desist in the Election of February 1689 for fear of begetting “great heats and animosities” in the shire.⁸ But, as long as the nation and the Church were secure a consensus existed within shire politics, and other than the heats generated later by the Sacheverall crisis, any deviation from this consensus tended to be artificially or externally applied, such as the development of a Junto interest between 1702-8.

⁶ W. A. Speck, Reluctant Revolutionaries, (London, 1988), pp. 93-4.

⁷ Quoted in D. A. Scott, Dissenters, Quakers and politics in York, 1640-1700, (York D.Phil, 1992), p. 363.

⁸ See B. D. Henning, The Commons, (London, 1970), vol. 1, p. 469.

Prior to 1701 the dominant interests in the county were headed by the Earl of Danby, later Marquis of Camarthan and Duke of Leeds, in his role as Lord Lieutenant of all three ridings. As a Court Tory he had led the rising in the North against James and was a powerful figure into the 1690s. The other major interests lay in the North Riding with the moderate Exclusionist Boyles - the Earl of Burlington's family, and the nominally Tory Darcys - the family of the Earl of Holderness. However, during the Triennial period the position of both these families was weakened by deaths. Beyond these figures there was a paucity of great Lords who could dominate the political scene, as shown by the number of absentee landlords, such as the Dukes of Bolton, Devonshire and Somerset, and the Earl of Carlisle. Most of these men were Whigs who had major landholdings elsewhere that were more attractive or substantial than their Yorkshire estates. Thus, the role of more minor landowners, as a focus for local loyalties and political ambition, was crucial throughout the period 1695-1715. This gave families such as the Kayes, Fairfaxes, Dawnays and Ingrams a greater say. That these were all West Riding families gives an indication of the rising importance of this area as an economic and social entity, as well as in terms of political vitality.

This brief overview of pre-1695 politics points to a unity of interests matched by consensus at shire elections, for there had been no contest since 1679. This chapter will look at the extent to which there was any serious development of Whig Party consciousness in the shire after the passing of the Triennial Act and before the Accession of Anne in 1702, as opposed to the strength of moderation and co-operation in politics at the local level. For this was a period in high politics which saw the growing importance of several factors; firstly, the strength of the Junto as a political force deliberately searching for

a means to power; secondly, the incidence of the war against France, coupled to the deaths of the Duke of Gloucester and James the Second, with the subsequent recognition of the Pretender by Louis the Fourteenth and the Act of Settlement, all became political anvils upon which alliances were broken and forged. Indeed by 1702 the centre of politics was dominated by Whig and Tory. Did any sort of party, as opposed to county, consensus occur at the local level?

There were major mitigating factors acting against the development of party in the 1690s. Perhaps the most pervasive was the strength of conviction, both of the local gentry and the local corporations, of doing right by the county as opposed to supporting any one group. The polarisation of politics was minimal, thus at the 1690 and November 1695 shire elections no contest was held after it was agreed to back Sir John Kaye and Thomas, 5th Baron Fairfax, with the support of Camarthan. This was to carry over towards the end of William's reign aided by the lack of confrontational and ideologically opposed magnates, and by the cohesion of the minor gentry. The co-opting of Yorkshire into the mainframe of political strife did not occur until the Duke of Newcastle and the Earl of Wharton moved their political interests towards Yorkshire. For much of the period under question Gooder's comment that Yorkshire was 'barren of important figures', sits well with Carroll's statement that it was not until 1700 that would-be patrons started to buy-up sufficient burgage property to acquire electoral strength there.⁹ This lends credence to the idea that without the need to control, or the outside stimulus of a

⁹ A. Gooder, 'Parliamentary Representation of the County of York', YASRS 96, p. viii. R. Carroll, 'Yorkshire Parliamentary Boroughs in the Seventeenth Century', NH3, p. 80.

political magnate, political activity in the shire tended not to be too heated. Political and social connections merged, such that major figures were seen at treats together regardless of political hue, and sporting events were not yet hotbeds of political contention and division. Hence Sir Walter Calverley and Sir Walter Hawksworth, West Riding Tories “made a match for Cockings with my Lord Irwin and Mr. Ramsden”, the former being a Junto supporter. This underlines the strength of local allegiances within Yorkshire.¹⁰

Unity was aided by consensus within local government. For whilst Leeds remained strong at Court he held all three Lieutenancies and hence could influence the make-up of the Commissions of the Peace and the selection of candidates for elections. In September 1695 he wrote to Archbishop Sharp that “such members should be chosen as are well affected to the Church”¹¹, and the solid and popular county men Kaye and Fairfax were returned. In the local political scene the strength of the county consensus through Leeds was as vital as the minimal influence of Whigs such as Sir William Strickland and Sir Charles Hotham. Their role in the period 1702-10 was not matched by a development of party strength in the years 1695-1701.

As important here was the lack of partisan strife at the Assizes before the renewal of war at the end of William's reign. At the local commissions the unity of the benches did not allow for party mobilisation; for instance, Calverley noted the inclusion of party men like Bright, Moyser (Whig families) and Beaumont (a Tory name) and local moderate corporators like William Ellis and William

¹⁰ Calverley Diary, pp. 88, 93.

¹¹ Gloucester R.O., Sharp MSS., Box 4, Bundle K/27, Leeds to Sharp, 10 Sept. 1695.

Kitchingman of Leeds, to the Assizes of August 1698.¹² These were men who sanctioned the support for Kaye and Fairfax in 1695 and hoped for the same in 1698. Without any external mobilisation, politics as dictated by local officials was dominated by local needs. Thus, this period does not see any political in-fighting over offices such as that of High-Sheriff of the county, which encompassed the duties of shire Returning Officer, an electorally important role. To an extent there was a common identity of local rulers and a common local, ideological coherence that negated any tendency to party organisation. This common purpose was founded on the memories of local and national alerts during the Civil War and Glorious Revolution, two major factors still fresh in local minds.

Thus, as long as the gentry were consulted about elections, contests and political strife could be avoided and no group had the need or desire to organise two candidates. That this was good for the locality was pointed out by Lord Fairfax in 1697: "I know these taxes are heavy, and money is hard to get everywhere...(but) I cannot live upon the name of such an estate."¹³ The Land Tax affected everyone and minimising political activity was a boon for all. Later the war and the Land Tax would become a more divisive issue, but in the late 1690's this was not the case.

To a large extent the reasons behind such co-operation focused upon the need to be serviceable to the locality, a factor that carried over into Anne's reign. The good of the nation and of the locality

¹² Calverley Diary, p. 77.

¹³ Bodl., Fairfax Papers, 33 (vol.4), f. 77, Lord Fairfax to his Yorkshire steward, Bernard Banks, n.d. 1697 (hereafter this collection is cited as Bodl. Fairfax).

were entwined in the shire representatives, and men of different political hue were entrusted with the interests of the locale. Hence the Whig William Lowther wrote to Mr. Kirke at Leeds that “As for our Armie Bill, you may be assured that it will not want Sir John Kaye's nor my assistances..”¹⁴ The Standing Army issue is one that could possibly have forged a Court-Country dichotomy instead of a party one. However, most of the M.P.'s supported the Government's position on the issue, and only one Whig, Tobias Jenkins, did not. The other four recorded Yorkshire dissenters were all Tories.¹⁵ Thoresby noted that the Leeds Corporation supported additional subsidies “as may strengthen your Arms” by means of an Address to the King.¹⁶ This tends to support the view of the county that the safety of the country was a premium, and with relations with France still poor, many in Yorkshire may have felt insecure. Lowther may well have echoed the feelings of the Leeds Corporation when he supported the Bill.

Some local men went further. For instance, Sir William Chaytor wrote: “I wish all the members wives would unanimously petition for a divorceing bill to send all misses to forraign plantations an appropriate their exhorbitant expenses to pay for standing troops” (sic.).¹⁷ For others, such as the Tory Colonel, Robert Byerley, there was no need for a Standing Army, and he was sure that Boroughbridge

¹⁴ B.L. Stowe, 747 f.61, William Lowther to Mr. Kirke, 15 Feb. 1696.

¹⁵ I. Burton, P. Riley and C. Rowlands, ‘Parliamentary Parties in the reigns of William III and Anne: The evidence of division lists’, BIHR, Special Supplementary, 7, p. 50.

¹⁶ Ralph Thoresby the Topographer, vol. 1, p. 363.

¹⁷ NYCRO, Chaytor Papers, ZQH, 9/12/80, Sir William Chaytor to Sir Ralph Millbanke, n.d. (hereafter cited as Chaytor Papers).

would not send a petition in favour.¹⁸ There were some in the county who agreed with the view that England had been sold into Dutch bondage, and that:

Our Princes vast charge to defray,
We'll millions to Amsterdam send:
Huge Taxes we'll willingly pay
Till under our burthings we bend. (sic.)¹⁹

Such Jacobite satires were common since the Glorious Revolution which had apparently corrupted Church and State. However, within Yorkshire the threat from such beliefs was minimal.

Although in 1701 Sir Thomas Frankland wrote that parties “can scarcely be always call'd by the same name”²⁰, party in Yorkshire was not of overriding import when national security was at risk. At such times the shire tended to fall into line. Even Tories like Sir Arthur Kaye backed the Court view on this issue, only to fall back into the Tory Party fold at other times when national security was perceived as more secure. Outside of nationally sensitive issues, it was the needs of the locality, more than any Court-Country divide that were paramount. County cohesion was stronger than any political dichotomy at this time within Yorkshire.

¹⁸ NYCRO, Aldborough and Boroughbridge Election Papers, MIC 1203, Robert Byerley to ?, n.d..

¹⁹ Hull University Library, Constable of Everingham MSS., DD EV 68/248 p. 98, ‘A Protestant King’, see also DD EV 68/107, a collection of Poems, 1676-1873.

²⁰ NYCRO, Worsley of Hovingham Archive, 13/1/243, Sir Thomas Frankland to Thomas Worsley, 1 Apr. 1701 (hereafter cited as Worsley MSS.).

Support from the politicians for what the important local interests desired led the Mayor of Hull to tell the Archbishop of York that the Hull M.P.'s would follow the "publick concerne of the nations Interest.(sic.)"²¹ An M.P.'s position was a trust, especially in the important constituencies - Hull, York and the shire. This trust given by the represented to their representatives was important in the development of politics, even for the non-parliamentary boroughs - the most important of which were the West Riding corporations of Leeds, Halifax, Wakefield and Bradford as well as Sheffield and Doncaster. These towns relied on the shire M.P.s to support their interests and were not afraid of pushing their case. Moreover they could pool at least 600 freehold votes, which could more easily be transported the short distance to York to poll than could outlying voters. So despite the huge potential electorate of 12000, depending on the overall turnout these votes could equate to between one-fifth and one-twentieth of the total.

This voice was crucial and meant that Yorkshire's M.P.s had to look after local concerns. During the preparation of the Aire-Calder Navigation Bill in 1698, Godfrey Copley, M.P. for Thirsk, replied to Thomas Kirke at Leeds, sending a "list of Members of Parliament and they would consider what friends they can make.." ²² The major issues

²¹ Hull City Record Office, Borough Letters 1179, Mayor Nettleton to Archbishop Sharp, 11 June 1698.

²² For the numbers of non-parliamentary voters, see the later chapter on the 1708 Election. J. F. Quinn, The Parliamentary Constituencies of Yorkshire, from the Accession of Anne to the fall of Walpole, (Lancaster M.Phil, 1979) puts the electorate at 12000, a figure I concur with.

B. L. Stowe, 747 f. 84, Godfrey Copley to Thomas Kirke, 1 Jan. 1698.

that affected the locality were cross-party, low in divisive heat and common to most men. The willingness to co-operate at any level and the paucity of Church and Succession questions retarded any party development, and where such problems arose the county fell in loyally, without division. Hence, the consternation caused in 1696 by the plot against the King's person was met by an Address of loyalty from Leeds, and by Lord Irwin's riding to Doncaster at the head of 200 men to sign the Association.²³

Alongside this was the impossibility for single men to develop a county-wide interest in a shire the size of Yorkshire. Without external support in a county where the local, smaller gentry dominated, and without networks of allegiances, no party growth could be sustained. This was more so for the Whigs because they were not the strongest party among the freeholders, where the influence of the pulpit was as powerful as that of the Manor House. As the influence of the Church was strong, so was the interest of the minor Tory gentry such as the Listers of Halifax, the Kayes of Woodsome, the Beaumonts of Whitely and the Dawnays of Cowick. This gave the Tories a great natural strength in the populous West Riding which tied into the network of support the first three families of this group had developed. As important was this Riding's need for economic prosperity which opposed the higher taxes of the Whig's war.²⁴

²³ Ralph Thoresby the Topographer, vol. 1, p. 361-2; H.M.C. Var., App. VIII, p. 73-4.

²⁴ By 1710 the Tory Arthur Kaye was complaining to Richard Beaumont of the economic problems caused by the war. See Kirklees Archives, Whitely-Beaumont MSS., WBC/96, Sir Arthur Kaye to Richard Beaumont, 30 Dec. 1710.

It is clear that the Whigs had problems barring their growth. However they did have a strength in depth within the borough seats, a strength that ought to have been utilised if any overt attempt at party consensus was to be made. They dominated the seats at Scarborough through Lord Irwin and Sir Charles Hotham, both of whom had influence elsewhere, in the West Riding and East Riding respectively. At Malton William Palmes sat with his son-in-law Sir William Strickland, and they both had ties of kinship to William Maister and Sir William St. Quintin at Hull. Elsewhere at Aldborough, Beverley, Boroughbridge, Hedon, Knaresborough, Northallerton, Pontefract, Richmond, Ripon, Thirsk and York, the Whigs held one seat. Moreover with the growth of purchase they were likely to increase their strength in the seven burgage boroughs. Even in the freeman boroughs the Whigs held their own at this time, and their future electoral chances looked good at York, Beverley and Hedon. The possibilities for the development of Whig strength at the shire level would depend upon the value put upon such strength by the local Whigs themselves. Did the elections of the period foster any move towards development for them, or was the one shire seat enough? In fact was the one shire seat all that was possible despite their grass-roots strength?

The first controverted shire election for nineteen years, on 27th July 1698, was accompanied by the end of the local consensus, and gives the first sign of the wavering character of the Whig Lord Fairfax, who was to show faltering allegiance to his long term Parliamentary partner, Sir John Kaye. The problem for Fairfax lay in the fact that three candidates were standing, for the Second Viscount Downe, whose father had stood for Yorkshire, was staking his claim. Although superficially it looked as if two Tories faced one Whig, all three were on separate tickets and all three applied to the county on

local, individual terms, not party terms as such. In fact the Whigs could be grateful that the two Tories did not show any sign of cohesive action, for they lacked the manpower and logistics to promote one of their own to join Fairfax. No second Whig was mooted, in fact the standing of Downe probably surprised most men, especially the lackadaisical Fairfax who had never had to compete for a place and whose organisational talents were poor.

Fairfax's lax approach was highlighted by his appeals from Leeds Castle in Kent to his steward in Yorkshire, barely a month before the Election.

I wou'd gladly be down, for though I have writ to many
Gentlemen, yet not half that wou'd, but I want the directions
which is a great injury to me. But if you heare of any
murmurings upon that subject, let me know who they are that
I may rectify it. But I will hasten all I can.(sic.) ²⁵

Fairfax himself was slow to react to the changing circumstances and feared for his cause through some unmentioned rumours, perhaps concerning his possible juncture with the outsider Downe. Certainly Fairfax was perturbed about his position and had applied for single votes, but he still relied upon his steward to bolster his interest. Writing on July 7th, again from Kent, he reminded his estate manager, Mr. Banks, "Do not fail to be at the sessions and you must apply yourselves to the Gentlemen and Freeholders in my name."²⁶ His Lordship did not want to alienate anyone in a three-way contest and

²⁵ Bodl. Fairfax 33 f. 83, Lord Fairfax to Bernard Banks, 13 June 1698.

²⁶ Bodl. Fairfax 33 f. 85, Lord Fairfax to Bernard Banks, 7 July 1698.

kept his cards close to his chest, telling Calverley that he had “promised Sir John Kaye not to joyne with anyone (sic).”²⁷

Despite the attempts of Calverley, Kaye and Fairfax did not join, and likewise no attempt was made to run a joint Tory campaign by Kaye and Downe. The consensus that was a cornerstone of recent history was breaking down, but the Whigs were not an entity that could take advantage. In fact the Whig High Sheriff, William Lowther, was a prime mover in the development of a Fairfax-Downe axis. Calverley noted that Lowther accompanied Downe “to engage me to my Lord Downe's interest...” and moreover on July 2nd, Lowther “staid me at home (sic.)...” to prevent Calverley working for the Kaye-Fairfax interest.²⁸ That this was an unusual juncture was made more so by the previous protestations of independence by Fairfax, and by Lowther's role as vicar in the marriage of two very different interests. That Lowther and Kaye were neighbours at Pontefract and often gave mutual support to each others aspirations counted for little. Indeed in 1702 Lowther was told that it was hoped he would “discharge with integrity and endeavour...” his interest to Kaye's benefit. Perhaps the Tory Reverend Plaxton had a good idea of the make-up of this Whig when he said “(Lowther) is a fitt(sic.) companion only for himself.”²⁹ It may also be possible that the Whigs saw Downe as a more moderate Tory candidate than Kaye and decided to back him. Whatever the cause of this confusion it was given a more doubtful legality when Lowther closed the poll on the Saturday, the third day of polling. At

²⁷ Calverley Diary, p. 75.

²⁸ Calverley Diary, pp. 75-6.

²⁹ B.L. Stowe, 747 f. 154, Sir John Kaye to William Lowther, 11 Aug.

1702; Plaxton Letters, part 2, p. 71.

this point Fairfax and Downe were ahead, elected on joint interests according to Calverley, and the closure came as Kaye was expecting more supporters to arrive on the following Monday.³⁰

This election had proven confusing in terms of organisation, and independent interests were intrinsic to its outcome. There was no common local solidarity and certainly no party cohesion shown. Local Whigs could be quite happy at the result, for the minimum effort had secured a return in this first Triennial election. The Association and the trial of Fenwick had not tipped the scales to the Whigs advantage, and once again politics at the local level was dominated by the need to find two men who would support their locale. This was more so because the question of putting a farthing per pound on the export of wool was of great import to the local gentry and corporations in 1698. The safety of the woollen industry was paramount and the positive aura fostered by the peace of Ryswick was tainted by the threat to local exports, hence this was an issue upon which Halifax would petition Parliament.³¹

During the 1690s the development of Whig Party consciousness was negligible in Yorkshire. The Whigs were not a cohesive force in the county, although at Westminster their recorded votes do show a consistent line. Of course the strength of an allegiance was stronger at the centre where party was so much more pervasive and persuasive an influence, but the minimal strength of interest and the lack of strong party figures aided continual support for the status quo at this level.

³⁰ Calverley Diary, p. 75.

³¹ B.L. Stowe, 747 f. 109, 21 Feb. 1699, Thomas Frankland to ?

The next General Election saw similar results, which is perhaps more surprising given the changes in local government that were affected in 1699. In July of that year the Duke of Leeds lost his dominant position at Court and three Whigs replaced him in the Lieutenancies. That three men were chosen shows the difficulty in finding one secular interest that could span the county, but should these men be able to act together then the Whigs could only benefit. Important local men, Lord Burlington and Lord Irwin, were appointed to the West Riding and North Riding respectively, and the Duke of Newcastle extended his vast network of local influence by taking over in the East Riding and also as Governor of the garrison at Hull. At this point the outlook seemed extremely rosy. However as Glassey has pointed out, local appointment was 'a weapon to be used with judgement and caution'. There was no wholesale proscription of Tories amongst the deputy-Lieutenants. In the East Riding, for example, the Constables, Robert and Yarborough, kept their places.³² Likewise, in the West the ardent Tory Sir Bryan Stapleton kept his place. Such local positions were indicators of an individuals local worth and was why these Tories were retained. Moreover it meant the Whigs had to be guarded in their self-congratulations.

More importantly the strength of independent local feeling amongst the smaller landowners was too great to be ignored. In the summer of 1699, leaving nothing to chance and not wanting another contest, a proposal was accepted at York Assizes to nominate Fairfax and Kaye for the shire at the next election. However, it was reported that "there was so small a number concerned in it that the gentry have

³² L. Glassey, Politics and the Appointment of J.P.'s, (Oxford, 1979), p. 207;

H.M.C., Portland, 13th Report, App. II, p. 179.

reason to look against it as an affront to them all... it may well turn to my Lord Downe's advantage.”³³ That Lord Downe declined standing in February 1701 is irrespective of the fact that for a great number of the Yorkshire gentry the choice of who should represent them was expected to rest with the county as a whole, through them as a class. For the Whigs to bolster their status within the shire electorate they would have to remember this, and would have to improve their organisation and co-operation. This is, of course, assuming that the Whigs within the county wanted to make this kind of commitment and wished to replace the existing state of affairs, a marginal factor until the election of November 1701. In any case the election of February 1701 passed without a contest, and it appeared superficially that the consensus had returned.

The election of November 1701 marked a shift in the post-Restoration politics of Yorkshire, from consensus to conflict. This contest saw the emergence of Lord Irwin as a major player on the political stage, as he was to attempt to cash in on the political credit he had obtained in his positions as Lord-Lieutenant of the North Riding, Governor and M.P. for Scarborough, and Lord of the Manor of Leeds. His candidacy for the shire was neither forced upon him by the Whig Lords with whom he was associated, nor was it unappealing to them.³⁴ Irwin was a popular local dignitary and a staunch Whig, whose house at Temple Newsam near Leeds gave him a power base in the West Riding. Perhaps his greatest asset was that he provided a focal

³³ B.L. Spencer (Althorp) MSS., Halifax Papers, Box 1/C10, anon. to the Marquis of Halifax, 19 Aug. 1699; Lord Weymouth to Lord Halifax, 28 Aug. 1699.

³⁴ R. Walcott, British Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century, (Oxford, 1956), Appendix II, p. 202.

point for many of the lesser Whig gentry and other Whig M.P.s, for example through his ties with Sir Charles Hotham at Scarborough and through him to the East Riding gentry. Once he entered the fray in the summer of 1701 declaring to the Duke of Newcastle that he would “never betray my country”,³⁵ the possibility arose that his campaign could act as an anvil upon which to forge a strong network of Whig interest. This is all the more so because of the threats to national security spawned by the renewal of war, the death of Princess Anne's heir, Gloucester, and the recognition by France of the Pretender - all useful grist to the Whig mill.

Irwin was not without his detractors, most especially the clergy who declared against him as “having no religion”.³⁶ Although it is not clear that Archbishop Sharp acted against Irwin, it was reported to the latter that he “cannot there (Sheffield) depend upon ye benefitt of Clergy (sic.).”³⁷ Hotham reported further difficulties in the West Riding where there was opposition to an Address to the Crown made in September. Apparently “some Gentlemen... will show themselves as zealously against you as against the address. Pray get what hands you can to it..especially about Leeds and Halifax.”³⁸

However, Irwin had been busy for some time securing his interest, as he canvassed all the major landlords in Yorkshire between September and November. Moreover, he also called for support from the corporations and minor gentry. Friendship and personal ties based

³⁵ H.M.C. Portland, 14th Report, III, 180.

³⁶ Quoted in D.Rubini, Court and Country (London, 1968), p. 245.

³⁷ Leeds City Archives, Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/141, J. Kiplin to John Rhoades, 14 Nov.1701(hereafter cited as Temple Newsam MSS.).

³⁸ H.M.C. Var., VIII, 84.

on an established interest, for the promotion of political ends, were never as strong for any other figure in Yorkshire during the years of the Triennial Act. The Dukes of Bolton, Newcastle and Somerset, and the Earls of Burlington, Carlisle and Wharton all echoed the sentiments of the Marquis of Hartington, who said he would “attempt to make all the interest he can among the tenants.” This holds the implicit acknowledgement that for a non-resident peer, as most of those noted were, control of their tenants was difficult, depending upon the types of leases held, the convictions of the estate stewards who were to do the canvassing, and the unpredictable factor of bribery. Lord Fauconberg wrote that he “always let his tenants go as they please”, and even Burlington asked Irwin to excuse “those from the remotest part of Craven”. In such a huge constituency with such a huge unwieldy electorate, canvassing and pamphleteering were problems. However, that such a battery of Whig Lords were behind him was a huge boost.³⁹

Likewise, Irwin's local network of friends was at work for him. The Beverley M.P. Hotham canvassed the East Riding, and in delivering Newcastle's support noted that it was now “in our (the Whigs) power to make the nation happy.”⁴⁰ Irwin's help was also

³⁹ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/71, Thos. Pulleine (for Carlisle) to Irwin, 20 Aug. 1701; TNPO 10/4 T296, Wharton to Irwin, 21 Sept. 1701; TNPO 10/4 T297, Bolton to Irwin, 6 Sep. 1701; TNPO 10/4 T298, Hartington to Irwin, 31 Aug. 1701; TNPO 10/4 T321, Lord Downe to Irwin, 16 Nov. 1701; TNPO 10/4 T318, Burlington to Irwin, 13 Nov. 1701; TNPO 10/4 T319, Somerset to Irwin, 13 Nov 1701; TNPO 10/4 T320, Fauconberg to Irwin, 2 Nov. 1701; TNPO 10/4 T321, Newcastle to Irwin, 1 Oct. 1701.

⁴⁰ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/136, Sir Charles Hotham to Irwin, 13 Nov. 1701.

solicited to aid fellow Whigs; thus Hotham asked Irwin to make an interest for William Thompson at Scarborough on 22 November, after his own election. Most of the other Whig M.P.'s fell in behind Irwin, and their ability to canvass was an important asset. Sir William Hustler at Hull was "at your Lordships service", whilst Daniel Lascelles wrote to the Cleveland Gentry from Northallerton in September 1701⁴¹. Personal influence was used to the benefit of like-minded men and therefore the Party.

On this basis and given the strength of Whig feeling for Irwin, some sort of co-operation with Fairfax ought to have been forthcoming. However, Irwin's personal applications had been for single votes, and because of Fairfax's lack of zeal and the strength of the Tories within the minor gentry, it looked once more as though the Whigs would fail to carry both seats. Thoresby noted that "There seems to be a necessity to let your friends know that your Lordship (Fairfax) is willing to stand for the County." Once Fairfax decided to stand, he left it very late before soliciting the Whig Lords and he then only applied for single votes.⁴² The lack of a joint campaign by two well-known, respected local Whigs is perplexing and must be based on Fairfax's lax approach and the strength of the interest of Kaye. After ill-health forced him to desist, Kaye noted that "It would have been a hard contest."⁴³ He was right, for the lack of a concerted Whig effort, added to Kaye's substantial personal and estate interest, could have

⁴¹ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/155, Hotham to Irwin, 22 Nov. 1701; TNC 9/87, Hustler to Irwin, 4 Sept. 1701; TNC 9/109, Lascelles to Irwin, 25 Sept. 1701.

⁴² E.D.Neill, The Fairfaxes of England, (Albany, 1868) p. 44;

B.L. Add. 70501/131, Fairfax to the Duke of Newcastle, 15 Nov. 1701.

⁴³ B.L.Add. 24475 ff. 134-5, Sir John Kaye to Arthur Kaye, n.d..

proven costly for Fairfax and Irwin. A saving grace was the intervention of Whigs like Sir William Lowther of Pontefract against Kaye. Lowther, the father of the Whig who had supported Fairfax and Downe in 1698, was reported to have told Kaye that if he continued to vote as he had during the last session “he must expect none of his interest if he stood againe (sic.)...”⁴⁴

As the expense of the campaign mounted there was still no attempt to join forces. Irwin's interest accrued value as he moved through the county. Not only did he pay the local gentry's expenses at Malton and Scarborough, but he also paid the Corporation of Scarborough “for a lyst (sic.) of Commoners” to treat.⁴⁵ Individual fiscal strength was a huge bonus at election-time; however a joint campaign could have lessened the burden in such a huge constituency with so many interests to look after. Unfortunately no such common campaign was run. For example, Irwin gave to his local servants “as my Lord Fairfax did”, and this is indicative of the need to secure support on an individual level.⁴⁶ There was little desire to create a solid management of affairs by the two Whigs, both of whom were too concerned with their own positions. Any cohesion that did exist was forged by the Whig Lords, acting, as Quinn has stated, as whips for Irwin.⁴⁷ There was no overall strategy and no provision made for transporting voters to the poll.

At York the influence of the High Sheriff, Robert Constable, was important. However he was not canvassed by both Whigs together and

⁴⁴ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/71, Thos. Pulleine to Irwin, 20 Aug. 1701.

⁴⁵ Temple Newsam MSS., TN PO10/4.

⁴⁶ Temple Newsam MSS., TN EA13/55, Steward's expenses.

⁴⁷ See Quinn, Yorkshire, p. 421.

it was left to each candidate to apply to him. In June Lord Carlisle had received a letter from Irwin, Strickland and Hotham about the appointment of the Sheriff, perhaps complaining about the incumbent. By November the Whigs had accepted Constable and Hotham brought him to Leeds to see Irwin, but there is no record of Fairfax being present at their meeting.⁴⁸

This interpretation tends to read much into the state of mind of the individuals concerned. It was never mentioned by either Whig that this was to be an overtly party campaign and one must be careful of applying the notion of party to the whole of political activity at this time. Individual, independent strength was a powerful mover in the political realm. Also, both men were wary of the strength of Kaye and perhaps feared the prospect of the other joining with the Tory.

However the most forceful argument against a party campaign was the vacillatory attitude of Fairfax, for it was not until very late October that he definitely set himself to stand. This factor made for confusion because his dithering lead Newcastle, Somerset and Burlington to moot Thomas Watson Wentworth as a possible Whig candidate.⁴⁹ On the other hand, Irwin's bandwagon had much momentum and it would not have taken much effort to tie Fairfax to it. Fairfax's vacillation were indicative of his character under political stress and the ad hoc nature of the Whig campaign is indicative of poor planning and poor options.

This ad hoc nature was reflected at the borough level, where to a large extent politics in the 1690s turned upon already established

⁴⁸ Temple Newsam MSS., TN PO 9/18b; TNC 9/134, William Thompson to Irwin, 13 November 1701.

⁴⁹ Quinn, Yorkshire, p. 308.

interests. For instance at Beverley the Wartons and the Hothams shared the representation, and as long as the Corporation was treated well and did not have to face any expense, re-election was assured. Throughout the smaller burgh and freeman boroughs, where local independence was minimal, established influence held sway. For example Henry Guy controlled both Hedon seats. In the larger freeman boroughs, York and Hull, the needs of the locale, as personified in the corporation, overrode all else. Promotion to Parliament was from within the corporation and the support of this body was vital for re-election. Party organisation had to run second to the security of local needs such as those of the merchant class. Hence, Sir William Robinson at York and both Sir William Hustler and Sir William St. Quintin at Hull, though Whigs in Parliament, had to respond to their corporators whims. In November 1695 Mayor Sissons of Hull wrote: "wee have committed the concernes of our Corporation to the care of our representatives to Impart as occasion may require (sic)." ⁵⁰

It was only after the increased politicisation of the years following 1701 that there was a fight to build up an interest to secure a return. The game was still a two-way event between the borough and its representatives. However purchase had become a valuable tool. This was to be seen in the period 1702-08 to good effect for the Junto, as Wharton gained an interest at Richmond and Northallerton, and Newcastle moved into Aldborough and Boroughbridge, as well as consolidating his role as Governor of the Hull Garrison. As politics nationally became more partisan, these Whig Lords took a greater interest in Yorkshire.

⁵⁰ Hull City Record Office, 80, Coppie Book of Letters begun in Oct. 1694, Mayor Sissons to the Duke of Leeds, 16 Nov. 1695.

One of the first occurrences of this interest was the correspondence between the Hull M.P.'s and the Duke of Newcastle. In November 1701 they wrote with a status report;

At Beverley, the choice fell on Mr. Gee and Sir Michael Warton. At Scarborough on the same day Sir Charles Hotham and Mr. Thompson were elected, though Hungerford was sent down to oppose them. We hope we shall be elected on Wednesday next.⁵¹

This followed on naturally from the Whigs' support of Irwin, and the correspondence of these two Whig M.P.s with the Lord-Lieutenant, who had a natural interest in the county, was no surprise.

The chance to forge a more solid party block arrived quickly, for King William died in March 1702 and writs were issued for a Yorkshire election in July. It was soon made clear that a more genuine Whig approach would be made: "Severall of the members of our county... agreed to make an interest for Lords Irwin and Fairfax, who are resolved to join against any opposer."⁵² The Whigs were very quickly off the mark and their two strongest interests were clearly backed. The signs were also good because Irwin had already received welcome support from areas outside his estate base, for example John Kiplin wrote that the Sheffield gentry were increasingly "well pleased with his Lordships conduct in the present Parliament."⁵³ By March 25th Irwin was sending letters "into all parts of the Country", and by

⁵¹ H.M.C. Portland, 13th Report, II, 182.

⁵² Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/224, G. Hollings to John Rhoades, 21 Mar. 1702.

⁵³ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/141, 14 Dec. 1701.

April 1st he was countering moves by Kaye and was contacting the Corporation of Doncaster.⁵⁴

This initial strength was damaged by news from the Assizes, where the independent strength of the gentry was showing through. Irwin was informed on April 7th that when the news of his juncture with Fairfax reached the Assizes it was thought to be more to his advantage "if he stood on his own legges (sic.)..."⁵⁵ This was worrying information, for the likelihood was that the bulk of the gentlemen would give one vote to Kaye, whose interest on its own threatened to destroy the best laid plans of the Whigs.

Thus once again the two Whigs conducted solitary campaigns, hoping to recover enough second votes from Kaye's supporters. Much of their campaigning became dependant upon reacting to opposition undertakings. For instance, once Kaye had written to the Cleveland Gentry in April it was suggested that Irwin should do likewise. Even the proposed opposition interest between Lord Downe, Kaye and Sir Brian Stapleton could not create a unity of Whig action.⁵⁶ Party was stultified as individual gain was played for.

Worse for the prospects of the Whigs was the expectation that the accession of Anne would herald a vast rearrangement in local government. The Knaresborough M. P. Christopher Stockdale related central Whig fears concerning "great changes at Court (sic.)". It was also reported that "The High Sheriff of your County (Robert

⁵⁴ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/227, John Rhoades to Irwin, 25 Mar. 1702; TNC 9/230 Mr. Forster to Irwin, 1 Apr. 1702.

⁵⁵ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/231, John Blytheman to Irwin, 7 Apr. 1702.

⁵⁶ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/239, Thos. Lumley to Irwin, 18 Apr. 1702; TNC 9/240, same to same, 25 Apr. 1702.

Constable) is in London and I do not know what underhand dealings your opposers (the Tories) may have with him, therefore take care of your friends.⁵⁷ The Accession was expected to favour the Tories in the Commissions and it was probably feared that a joint Whig campaign would fail to curry favour. Whig success would have to be based on the individual strengths of their candidates and the support of bodies such as the corporations. Here again it was Irwin and Kaye who were the popular figures in the West Riding boroughs, especially at Leeds, and this may have played on Irwin's mind in not joining with Fairfax.

What is clear is that an election which initially boded well for Whig opportunity soon developed problems. As in the previous campaign, the individual strength of Kaye looked likely to force men to split between Irwin and Fairfax, and the former was never convinced that a joint campaign would spell success. Fairfax himself was never a very active politician and left the development of his interest to others and to the last minute, once he was convinced it was worth his while applying for votes. Moreover the sheer size of the constituency and the lack of a cohesive Whig attitude throughout the county caused problems. Although the Whig M.P.s worked for Irwin their local networks of interest were never fused into a more holistic establishment.

A myriad of local political convictions, from those of Junto supporters like St. Quintin to those of moderate Whigs like Robinson, were moderated by the needs of local communities and the desires of the local corporations. There was little opportunity for the

⁵⁷ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/241, Stockdale to Irwin, 28 Apr. 1702.

Hull University Library, Bossville MSS., DD BM 32/1, F. Armitage to G.

Bossville, 25 Feb. 1702.

development of a party dichotomy, along the lines of that being forged at Westminster, at this point in time. Local cohesion and a lack of ideological division had promoted consensus politics based on individual strengths for a long period. For a party to break through this would require great effort and a new build-up of influence, a factor more vital for the Whigs in a large, rural county.

The development of politics at the shire level between 1695 and 1702 had not suggested that the Triennial Act would make much difference. However, several new facets were emerging within the political stage. Firstly, the Junto Whigs through Wharton and his more moderate fellow Lord, Newcastle, were making an interest in Yorkshire by purchase. This was necessitated by the need to make themselves serviceable to the Government, for power was the prime mover and electoral dominance was the best means to power. To have a say in such an important area as Yorkshire was vital to Whig opportunities at the national level.

Also, the war as a recurring issue was about to take off again, giving the central politicians and especially the Junto a fulcrum for political action. At Westminster this aided the growth of party as it became the overriding issue, and through networks of interest this could be translated to any locality by staunch Whigs.

However, for this period the value placed in the honest interest to support the needs of the shire, and the strength of the Tories, made any Whig growth minimal. It was hard to find two Whigs to stand, and hard to focus a joint campaign as ad hoc replies to opposition actions were undertaken. With no strong, available magnate influence, county cohesion and a non-party line was the paramount factor in Yorkshire politics, demonstrated by the strong but individual campaigns of Irwin and the confusing state of party discipline.

A final twist in the development of Whig unity ends this initial phase of post-Revolution Yorkshire politics. For in June 1702, a month before the shire poll, Lord Irwin died (he had been ill enough to be removed from his Lieutenancy in May). The question now was what could the Whigs, and especially the Junto, do to recapture what momentum Irwin had generated and redirect it to their own use? The Whigs would have to rely on the unreliable Fairfax, or they would have to set up an outsider at very short notice. Either way they had to act quickly, to counter the loss of their major player, and lest another Tory entered the fray.

Yorkshire, June 1702 - December 1707: The Junto and The Illusion of
Whig Security.

"Whig. The name of a Faction."

- Samuel Johnson.

"Party is the madness of many for the gain of a few."

- Jonathan Swift.

In the period 1695-1701, the Whigs had found it difficult to make much headway in Yorkshire at the county level. There was little in the way of electoral strategy, and they relied on the local strengths of Lords Fairfax and Irwin. With many in the county looking for two representatives to look after their wider interests there was little need for party development. However, Irwin had created a significant, partisan appeal that could be used by other Whigs, for example by William Thompson at Scarborough. Moreover, his interest was the best that the party had. The almost assured return of Viscount Irwin would have guaranteed local Whigs a seat in the forthcoming Parliament. At the national level it would also have assured the Junto a return for one of its adherents. His death, one month prior to the 1702 election, with his campaign in full swing, was a blow.

As things stood in June 1702, with a month to go to the poll and facing Sir Arthur Kaye's solid interest, the Whigs had much to do. They had few options. Lord Fairfax was an obvious choice, for although his appeal was weakened by his lack of zeal, he did have a strength within the county. If he would not stand then the Whigs would have to promote a borough M.P., for example Sir William Strickland or Sir Charles Hotham. However, neither of their names was mooted - perhaps because they feared the cost of a shire campaign

or simply had no wish to vacate their borough constituencies. Should a Tory, such as Lord Downe, be persuaded to stand (perhaps alongside Kaye), then the Whig position would be that much more difficult. Without Irwin's vigour would the old status quo of consensus return?

The Junto Whigs had other ideas. On July the 9th Lady Gardiner informed Sir John Verney that, "Lady Russell writ to mee, to let me know of my Lord Hartington being invited into Yorkshir to stand in the name of my Lord Erwin (sic.)."⁵⁸ The Marquis of Hartington had stood as a Whig on the Cavendish interest in Derbyshire. However, he had lost his seat at the November 1701 election and the vacancy in Yorkshire could be regarded as fortuitous for him. To see Yorkshire as a Junto rescue seat would be folly given its huge size and independence. Moreover, despite the fact that the Cavendish interest in Yorkshire could be tied to the Wharton and Holles influences, Hartington was a relative unknown to the freeholders, and would have problems finding the amount of support that Fairfax could command.⁵⁹ The choice of Hartington was clearly a Junto manoeuvre and promotes several questions about the strength of Yorkshire Whiggery. To what extent would his choice create a Whig block in the shire as opposed to merely aiding the Junto cause in Parliament? Perhaps more importantly, could a Junto candidate forge a popularity that would match Kaye's, and secure a seat for the Whigs?

⁵⁸ Verney Letters of the Eighteenth Century, ed. Lady Verney (London, 1930), vol. 1, p. 110.

⁵⁹ The Duke of Newcastle recognised Hartington's poor position with relation to the Freeholders. See E. L. Ellis, The Organisation of the Whig Junto from its inception to 1714, (Oxford D.Phil, 1962), p. 44.

What soon became clear was that the Junto were willing and quick to mobilise for Hartington. With less than a month to the poll action had to be taken fast. On July the 11th the Junto stalwart Sir William Strickland wrote from London to the Third Viscount Irwin, "to beg your assistance for my Lord Marquis of Hartington for the County and for Sir Charles Hotham and Mr. Thompson at Scarborough...". The Viscount had the chance to show himself "...a true inheritor" in supporting Whig claims.⁶⁰ Strickland had not been slow in canvassing the young heir for his family's interest. Irwin later wrote to his estate steward, John Rhoades that, "(I am) Glad to hear the County has so great a respect for me."⁶¹ Strickland spent much of his time at Temple Newsam consolidating the support of Irwin for the cause. In fact he was still there on the 3rd of August when Rhoades complained to Thomas Worsley that, "Mr. Strickland is yet here and I cannot imagine the meaning of his stay... we are all weary of him."⁶²

This zealous shepherding had not detracted from the support Irwin gave and made Strickland's courtship of his influence worthwhile. Worsley noted to Rhoades at the time of the poll: "I thank you for, and Approve of my Lord Irwyns appearance att the head of his neighbours and friends that will come in for my Lord Hartington (sic.)." He also hoped that Irwin would "Afford my Lord Fairfax Another (vote)."⁶³ This gives further credence to the view that the

⁶⁰ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9a, Sir William Strickland to Lord Irwin, 11 Jul.

1702.

⁶¹ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9a, Lord Irwin to John Rhoades, 7 Oct. 1702.

⁶² Worsley MSS., 13/1/253, John Rhoades to Thomas Worsley, 3 Aug. 1702.

⁶³ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9a, Thomas Worsley to John Rhoades, 12 Jul.

1702.

Whigs campaign co-ordination was poor, for the role of Fairfax was not understood by local figures until the very last minute. For all their skills, the Junto did not make it clear who would stand. Perhaps they did not know themselves and thus local Whigs such as Worsley would merely be covering all the angles. It is interesting to note that Strickland was calling for support for Hartington only. Was pressure to be put upon Fairfax to desist in his favour? Or was it expected that Fairfax, who had neglected his interest this time, would not stand?

The Archbishop of York certainly believed that the Whigs were fielding a joint campaign:

My Lord Hartington comes hither this night in order to his appearing for one of the Knights of the Shire. He joins with my Lord Fairfax and Sir John Kaye stands by himself. It is thought my Lord Hartington will be chosen he having the Interest of all the great Lords that have estates here.⁶⁴

The great Whig Lords had been canvassed for Hartington. For example, his mother-in-law, Lady Russell, told her husband, the Earl of Rutland, "I am glad to hear from my daughter that you are inclined to favour Lord Hartington with your interest in Yorkshire."⁶⁵ However, several other factors were in play. Hartington himself was fearful of the paucity of his interest and was only persuaded to stand after he was assured that Thomas Watson Wentworth, who had an estate near

⁶⁴ B. L. Add. 29584, f.93, Archbishop Sharp to Viscount Hatton, 18 Jul. 1702.

⁶⁵ HMC. Rutland, 12th Report, App. V, p. 172.

Sheffield, would not be doing so.⁶⁶ By this time he must have been assured that Lord Fairfax likewise would not be standing, or his resolve would have been even more uncertain.

Fairfax's attitude perplexed many who "wonder Lord Fairfax has not intimated... his resolution to stand again, which many complain they cannot hear from his Lordship nor his agents here."⁶⁷ As ever Fairfax's position was in doubt, and it may well have been intimated by the Junto that Fairfax should desist in favour of Hartington, who was a more active Whig politician.

The election itself underlined the discipline and strength in depth of the Whigs who were at the centre of politics. Yorkshire was for them a peripheral interest in terms of their estate holdings. However, their rapid response to electoral problems in the county and subsequent promotion of Party interests would be valuable if maintained. The Dukes of Newcastle and Rutland, and the Earl of Wharton all co-operated in aiding and abetting Hartington's rising star. Moreover, the vital linchpin was the ability of supportive local Whigs to rally to the cause, to attempt to overcome the natural animosity towards an outsider and to work for a foundation of support for Hartington.

As Hartington was being imposed on the county, the views of the local, more independent men in the electorate could have proven crucial in a contest. Some men were happy with the Whigs' success,

⁶⁶ Devonshire MSS. at Chatsworth, Whilden Papers, William Grosvenor to John Whilden, 21 Jul. 1702.

⁶⁷ Devonshire MSS., Whilden Papers, William Grosvenor to John Whilden, 21 Jul. 1702.

and at the poll several made their animosity towards the Tory Party known;

in the midst of poleing, stood up a fellow who ball'd out as loud as he was able, I publish the banes of matrimony betwixt the Church of England and the Church of Rome... at last stood up another who forbad the banes the reason being requir'd, because reply'd he, the two Churches were so near a kin (sic.).⁶⁸

However, this was not the case across the whole of the shire. Thoresby noted that the Leeds corporation and several local dignitaries went to York to wait “of my Lord Fairfax and Sir John Kaye.” Moreover, there was “general discontent visible in the countenances and expressions of all persons”⁶⁹ when it was realised that Fairfax had withdrawn. It is clear that the West Riding corporations especially were not keen on having an unknown foist upon them. This was more so as they saw their interests dependent on a supportive M.P., as opposed to a politically partisan one. Despite Hartington's likely return, his interest lacked any foundation at the corporation level. The lack of any community of shire interest between Kaye and Hartington was annoying to some Yorkshiremen. A Mr. Stretton complained to Thoresby that during the 1702 session, “your two Knights are never on a side in any trying case: the Lord Fairfax and the other Knight (Kaye) would have agreed much better.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ B.L. Add. 27989, f. 12, Sir John Percival's Papers.

⁶⁹ Thoresby Diary, vol. 1, pp. 373, 377.

⁷⁰ Ralph Thoresby the Topographer, vol. 1, p. 15.

In relation to the locale, Hartington was out of his depth, and it seems clear that it was only by Fairfax's desisting and the vast magnate influence behind him that Hartington was returned. The county was prepared for a poll up until the point at which Fairfax stood down. He may have done this of his own accord or under duress, but it certainly secured a seat for the Marquis. The polling days came and went without a contest, and the return was made for the Tory, Sir John Kaye, and the Whig, Lord Hartington.

The occasion of central Whig intrusion into local territory did not forge any greater consensus of action by, or for, local Whigs. Traditional positions and responses were evident. For example, the mutually supportive interests of Kaye and the Whig William Lowther at Pontefract, previously not too strong, gave priority to the Kaye interest at the county level. In August, Kaye wrote to Lowther to thank him for "the sense of your favours."⁷¹ This nexus of support, added to the local strength of feeling towards the shire representatives, who were seen as representing the county at large, made fostering a party interest difficult. The fear for local interests turned many, such as Thoresby, away from supporting the Junto. Moreover, even staunch Whigs had guarded opinions of the Junto. Metcalfe Robinson, son of the York M.P. Sir William Robinson, regarded the Junto as "a very uncertain Establishment."⁷² The support of the locale was still of overriding import and made the refusals of Fairfax, Watson Wentworth and Downe to stand, crucial in Hartington's success.

⁷¹ B. L. Stowe 747, f. 154, Sir John Kaye to Sir William Lowther, 11 Aug. 1702.

⁷² Leeds City Archives, Vyner MSS., VR 6004/13541, Metcalfe Robinson to his Father, 5 Feb (1705?) (hereafter cited as Vyner MSS.).

There were other notable problems. Firstly, dignitaries like Hotham who were so prevalent in Irwin's campaigning a year before now had a more muted approach. For Hartington to secure his position it would be crucial to gain the trust of such powerful local dignitaries. Secondly, Yorkshire Whiggery lacked a major resident figure who could match the influence of the Tories, Kaye and Downe. Admittedly, the strength of the Kaye and Downe interest in the county was weakened by their personal divisions. However, that they could not stand together to win the seat that Irwin's death opened up, did not safeguard a seat for the Whigs. The likes of Hotham and Strickland were not confident enough, or lacked the enthusiasm to replace Irwin. The strongest local Whig figures were tied up in their constituencies and were happy to be so; for a strong, county-wide interest to be developed these men needed to be included.

Thus the Whig cause was left at the feet of the unreliable Fairfax or those of Hartington and the Junto. However, apart from Fairfax none of these men had any substantial sway in the West Riding - an important area for any interest to manage. That Hartington needed to know that Watson Wentworth and Fairfax would not stand points to the insecurity of the Whig position and the almost unassailable strength of Kaye. Now that Hartington had a foothold in the county it was up to him to strengthen his interest, and to strengthen the party links within the locale if he was to retain his position in three years time. It was necessary to reforge the ties broken when Irwin died.

Hartington did have a large advantage over Irwin if he was to create some foundation of support, for he was more of a natural politician. In November 1701 Hotham wrote to Irwin that

All your friends here (Westminster) beg you will not fail to order your affairs so as to be up the first day of Parliament; for if we lose our Speaker we shall lose everything and England into the bargain. ⁷³

He was not an energetic Parliamentary delegate, and the Junto had to press him to come down to London. The Whig hierarchy saw great value in the organisation of their supporters at Westminster. Newcastle wrote to Hotham in January 1702 that, "I wish all honest Gentlemen would diligently attend the Committees of Elections, for on that all seems to depend..."⁷⁴ Irwin did not enjoy parliamentary business and was more comfortable working in the locality. Hartington enjoyed the pressures of supporting the well-being of both his constituency and his party. If the Marquis could show himself an able promoter of Yorkshire's wishes, then he could overcome his appearance as an outsider.

A fact that emerged soon after the election was that Hartington could not utilise the Third Viscount Irwin as a focus for Whig unity. Irwin seemed favourable to Whig advances and looked like a valuable asset to Whig chances beyond 1702. But between 1702-6 he was firstly finishing his education at Cambridge, then he was abroad on a Grand Tour. Thus, his personal influence was to be negligible. Moreover, bad-blood existed between the Ingrams and the Lowthers concerning a right of way on Swillington Common. This was part of a feud that was

⁷³ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/136, Sir Charles Hotham to Lord Irwin, 13 Nov. 1701.

⁷⁴ Hull University Library, Hotham of South Dalton MSS., HO 13/4, Newcastle to Sir Charles Hotham, 7 Jan. 1702.

a decade old in 1705 and looked likely to drag on, as Lowther was talking of taking the complaint to the Commons. It took intervention by Hotham and Hartington to prevent a serious breach and the souring of local relations even further.⁷⁵ Whilst Lowther supported the Kaye interest at this time, he showed only occasional conformity to local Whig needs. The division with the Ingrams in the West Riding did not aid Whig chances in the county.

The waste of Irwin as an electoral asset, though no fault of his own, was a blow for a party so used to adherence to party discipline at the centre. However, he maintained a strongly Whig social circle. In 1704 the Viscount dined at Lord Halifax's house in London, "with a great many considerable people", and he also dined with the Yorkshire M.P.'s Hartington, Hotham, Strickland and St. Quintin.⁷⁶ The need for the local party to utilise Irwin's influence and maintain his favour was strong. Even if he was going abroad, his estate would be in the hands of his steward and it would not pay to offend his sensibilities. Later, Plaxton saw Strickland riding to victory in the 1708 election on the back of Irwin's West Riding interest. He wrote that the Leeds Corporation wanted to "Set Irwin on horseback and Strickland i'th saddle."⁷⁷ But, for these earlier years the role of Irwin was minimal. For the moment the focus that a major local figure like Irwin could give was missing and so the Whig position was pushed towards the Junto.

⁷⁵ Temple Newsam MSS., TNL 19/3040, Sir Charles Hotham to Richard Thornton, 6 Nov. 1705.

⁷⁶ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9a, Haccius to John Rhoades, 10 Apr. 1704.

⁷⁷ Plaxton Letters, p. 72.

The lack of a ready local leadership forced the Earl of Wharton and the more moderate Duke of Newcastle to take a greater hand wherever possible. This need was reinforced by the deaths of Irwin and later of the Earl of Burlington, especially as they were both replaced by minors. Despite the fact that the Court Whig Henry Boyle took control of the Burlington estates, and in 1708, the West Riding Lieutenancy, he was more interested in central politics than developing an interest in the shire. This meant that two possible resident Whig Lord Lieutenants were removed and pushed the Yorkshire Whigs towards the Magnates.

As Sachse points out, 'To be serviceable, and thereby posses the substance of power, was the prime consideration.'⁷⁸ The increased frequency of elections and the tussle for power at the centre forced the high politicians onto the local stage. It also forced the Junto to look for like-minded men in the constituencies and acted as a stimulus to party incursion into the provinces. This was exacerbated in Yorkshire at this time by the lack of major supportive figures and drew Newcastle and Wharton further into county politics. For Newcastle this was founded on his role as Lord Lieutenant of the East Riding and Governor of the Garrison at Hull, and also through the purchase of interest at Aldborough and Boroughbridge. By 1705 Newcastle had joined with the Wilkinson interest in these latter two constituencies and could nominate three M.P.s. His power was increased by his friendship with Harley, whose influence at Court later gained Newcastle the Lieutenancy of the North Riding from the Duke of Buckingham.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ W.L.Sachse, Lord Somers, (Manchester, 1975), p. 321.

⁷⁹ H.M.C. Portland, 13th Report, App. II, p. 189.

This influential official strength was bolstered by the increased attentions of Wharton. Ellis has noted that ‘Wharton's chief concern was to effect the return of the Junto Imperial Guard.’⁸⁰ This is something he worked at through purchase and canvass within Yorkshire, and through the medium of an efficient estate steward at Richmond, Matthew Smailes. Since 1700, he was supposed to have had a hunting lodge called Park Hall, at Healaugh in Swaledale; this would have given him a direct local influence in the North Riding - an important factor in electoral management.⁸¹ Before 1705, by means of purchase, Wharton increased his electoral control; he obtained 21 out of 250 burgages at Richmond, at a cost of £1204/9s/6d. By the time of the 1705 election he had spent an extra £89/10s on loans to the Corporation and £675 on treating. By the Hanoverian accession he had bought 58 burgages which must have almost tripled the original figure.⁸² The development of interest to secure political gains was clearly why Wharton had muscled in on the long standing struggle at Richmond between the Darcy, Yorke and Wyvil families. However, alongside the ownership of some Swaledale leadmines and an interest at nearby Northallerton, the Whig Lord had a solid base for future action. Indeed his strength of purpose was soon seen in the shire, for in May 1703 it was reported that: “I hear Lord Wharton has been in Yorkshire to strengthen the Brethren wch makes some fancy we may

⁸⁰ Ellis, The Organisation of the Junto, p. 521.

⁸¹ The Dalesman, vol. 10, no. 8, November 1948, p. 296.

⁸² See Quinn, Yorkshire, pp. 123-4.

Also York Minster Library, Hailstone Collection, Box 4.7, List of Burgages purchased by the Earl of Wharton by 1715 (hereafter cited as Hailstone Collection).

have a new Parliament (sic.).”⁸³ A new Parliament perhaps, but it was as likely that Wharton - ever a vigorous politician - was taking time in the Parliamentary recess to bolster the image of Hartington and the Whigs in Yorkshire society.

Long term strengths for Junto interests were also boosted by the growing stature of the Marquis of Hartington as a county M.P.. In just over a year of being elected he had been made a freeman of Beverley⁸⁴ and had treated the more important corporations of the County. For example, in August 1702 he gave the corporation of York “The sume of £10... to be distributed among the poor (sic.).”⁸⁵ Thoresby noted that at a treat in Leeds given by the Marquis he was offended by “some of the County... by their oaths and bumpers.”⁸⁶ It is clear that Hartington was quickly working to strengthen his own position in the local community, and from Thoresby's disgust that many of the Gentlemen of the shire were overtly and violently pro-Whig.

Hartington's position was to approach that of a secure tenure by his actions in Parliament. Here he supported local interests by piloting a bill through the Commons making for the public registration of conveyances and other securities in the West Riding. The preamble to this Act showed how valuable it would be to the locality; for the difficulties surrounding securities on loans and the like were blamed

⁸³ Cumbria Record Office, Levens Hall MSS., Lord Weymouth to Colonel James Grahme, 1 May 1703 (hereafter cited as Levens Hall MSS.).

⁸⁴ J. Dennett, ‘Beverley Borough Records, 1575-1821’, YASRS, 84, p. 192.

⁸⁵ York City Archives, House Book 40, 3 Aug. 1702, p. 126 (hereafter cited as House Book 40).

⁸⁶ Thoresby Diary, vol. 1, p. 442.

for obstructing the cloth trade and ruining many families.⁸⁷ Hartington must have been aware of the huge economic and political importance of the West Riding, and this bill can only have improved his local standing. When, in January 1704 and December 1704, he supported a bill to make the River Don navigable, he was once again gaining benefits for the county's economy and storing up good-will for himself.⁸⁸ The Marquis was very aware of the necessity of developing his own position for a possible re-election. He showed a positive appeal to the freeholders, especially those in the West Riding; many of these would have been directly affected by developments in the cloth trade.

This position as a promoter of local interests and especially of local economic needs was not harmed by his appearances in more national debates. For instance, in December 1705 he complained of the Occasional Conformity Bill that it was an attempt, "to ruine the Church: to divide Protes(tants) (sic.)".⁸⁹ In this he concurred with Strickland. For men who represented a predominantly Anglican county to support the established Church could only improve their standing. With Hartington proving a popular local politician, the outlook for the Whigs was excellent.

⁸⁷ See P. Hudson, 'From manor to mill: The West Riding in transition,' in M. Berg, Manufacture in Town and Country Before the Factory, (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 139-40.

⁸⁸ Commons Journal XV, 1702-05, pp. 201, 202, 217, 242, 290.

⁸⁹ 'An Anonymous Parliamentary Diary', ed W.A. Speck, Camden Miscellany XXIII, p. 44. This is now known to be the diary of the Northumberland M.P., Grey Nevill.

In fact, early in 1707, after Union with Scotland had been agreed, the Marquis noted that "I am very well pleased to find that I have new friends, since my desire is to be as serviceable as I can to every part of the county, as well as to represent it in general." He was going to wait on the county that summer and was pleased that the Union that he helped create was supported in Yorkshire. He also felt that it would be "particularly advantageous to the north."⁹⁰ The Union had probably been canvassed in Yorkshire for Hartington, whose position as a negotiator would have enhanced his standing in the local community. Indeed, when he was elevated to the Lords, on his father's death, as Duke of Devonshire, it was noted that "his loss will not easily be repaired."⁹¹ Hartington's sensitivity to local sensibilities had probably overcome most of the opposition to him on his first appearance for the shire.

This assiduous behaviour had stood him well at the 1705 election. Although there were reports that he was looking to stand again in Derbyshire, he declared early for the Whigs in Yorkshire.⁹² But despite his new-found popularity could he find someone to join him against Kaye? In May 1705 Thomas Watson Wentworth was reported to be standing alongside him.⁹³ In fact, as early as 1703, Watson Wentworth had written to Thomas Kirke of the Leeds Corporation that,

⁹⁰ Nottingham University Library, Mellish MSS., MeC 14/23, Hartington to (Robert) Mellish, 25 Mar. 1707.

⁹¹ Huntington Library, Stowe MSS., 57(1), p. 253.

⁹² H.M.C. Cowper, App. III (Coke MSS.), p. 22.

⁹³ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 183.

did I not find others allready (sic.) making interest I should think it too soon yet to trouble you... to beg the favour of your interest for this county when there shall be another Parliament called... I resolve to appear next election as a candidate for the shire...⁹⁴

This early candidature certainly bade well for the Whigs if this determination to stand could be harnessed to Hartington's popularity. By 1705 Edward Blackett for one was favourable to the joint campaign, stating that, "it will be but good manners to obey the Duke of Somerset's commands and give my Lord Hartington and Mr. Wentworth my interest."⁹⁵

Blackett was already in favour of Hartington who "last summer did engage me to his interest"⁹⁶, and the support given by the Duke of Somerset was indicative of growing Whig confidence in the shire. But would the Junto follow suit and support both men?

To an extent the role of Watson Wentworth in Parliament was not conducive to gaining him wholehearted party support. At Westminster he was often found voting against the Government, and as a teller on the Tory side.⁹⁷ In Yorkshire, he was involved in a feud with his cousin Lord Raby, over the estates of Wentworth Woodhouse which had been left to him. During the Whig Government of 1708, Raby's view of his cousin was that he "ever will be against the Court

⁹⁴ B. L. Add. 10039, f. 57, Thomas Watson Wentworth to Thomas Kirke, n.d..

⁹⁵ B. L. Add. 10039, f. 8, Edward Blacket to the Rev. Mr. Lodge, 19 Feb. 1705.

⁹⁶ B. L. Add. 10039, f. 8, Edward Blacket to the Rev. Mr. Lodge, 19 Feb. 1705.

⁹⁷ See Romney Sedgwick, The Commons, 1715-54, (London, 1970), vol. 2, p. 525; Commons Journal XVI, (1705-8), pp. 176, 188, 195, 197.

and Ministry, let them do what can for him.”⁹⁸ The picture that develops of Watson Wentworth is of an Independent Whig, perhaps even of a Country Whig, perennially in opposition. He was willing to look for a share in the representation of Yorkshire, based upon the interest of his estate in the south of the shire. But if Kaye’s interest was as strong in 1705 as it had previously been, then Watson Wentworth’s chances of achieving Junto support for his claims would falter against the need to secure Hartington’s return.

Locally, organisation was not brilliant. The election was called for the 23rd of May, however on the 17th of April it was complained that although Watson Wentworth “stirs apace in the county”, that “Lord Hartington does not yet come amongst us”, and neither did Kaye or Fairfax.⁹⁹ Once again within a month of the election confusion reigned and it was not clear who was standing. Moreover, for all Watson Wentworth’s early moves Fairfax’s name was still being mentioned. The Whig hierarchy had not got its act together, either because it was not sure who had the best chance, or because it was too busy organising for other elections to concentrate on Yorkshire. Despite the view of the Pontefract Tory, Sir John Bland, that “the Low Church Party, as they (the Whigs) call themselves, join together in all places...and have the assurance to say they are the persons that the Government approves of...”¹⁰⁰, the fact was that in Yorkshire the Whig Party was still divided in its intentions. Although the Tack and Occasional Conformity Bill had given the Whigs heart at Westminster,

⁹⁸ J.J.Cartwright, The Wentworth Papers, (London, 1883), p. 106.

⁹⁹ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/362, Richard Irwin to Lady Irwin, 17 Apr. 1705.

¹⁰⁰ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 170.

it did not affect Kaye's standing in the shire. Could the Whigs make any gains?

Bland felt that "'tis two to one that my Lord Hartington loses it in Yorkshire"¹⁰¹; in fact it was Watson Wentworth who lost ground. This may well have been down to Wharton, whose priority was Hartington's return. The Earl had informed Matthew Smailes at Richmond, as early as February 1705 that

I am informed there are great endeavours in the County against Lord Hartington and therefore I desire that you and all in whom I have any interest would be very diligent in making what votes they can for him singly.¹⁰²

From the outset Wharton was clearly aiming for Hartington's security - a security that would ensure him one supporter in the Commons. To this extent he instructed his bailiffs to "take care to gett (sic.) them (the voters) to the Election and to keep them there."¹⁰³

As Kaye's position was strong Wharton's actions were not unreasonable. Hartington's individual standing could not carry the election for two Whigs on its own, and Wharton may have felt that the candidature of either Fairfax or Watson Wentworth would have detracted from the Marquis' position and not that of Kaye. Kaye's interest had not suffered by association with the Tackers, and he was very far ahead on plumpers when Watson Wentworth withdrew on the second day of the poll. *The Postman* wrote on the 30th of May that,

¹⁰¹ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 183.

¹⁰² Hailstone Collection, Box 4.32, Wharton to Matthew Smailes, 9 Feb. 1705.

¹⁰³ Hailstone Collection, Box 4.32, Wharton to Matthew Smailes, 9 Feb. 1705.

“There was an expectation of a greater poll than has been known for many years... (but) the inequalities of the interests was soon discerned...”¹⁰⁴

Nationally the Whigs failed to secure a majority of seats¹⁰⁵ and in Yorkshire, where many boroughs were split, Whig gains were hard to come by. However, one of several notable Whig victories was the securing of a rescue seat at Northallerton for Robert Dormer, one of Wharton’s supporters. This was despite the fact that, “Three or four different interests are promoting against (him).”¹⁰⁶ After the death of Wharton Dunch, Wharton's nominee at Richmond, William Walsh, a friend of Lord Somers, was installed at a by-election in 1705. All this was achieved after withstanding a petition for meddling, and against the other interests of the Darcy’s and the Wyvil’s. At Richmond Wharton was ingratiating himself with the corporation, to the extent that in November 1706 he promoted Smailes as Under-Sheriff, ordering him to “engage... as I should approve.”¹⁰⁷ The growing strength and influence of a powerful Whig magnate was invaluable in securing the return of Junto followers such as Dormer and Walsh and bolstering the national Whig position.

¹⁰⁴ Parliamentary Representation of the County of York, p.142. The result of the poll was Kaye 1583, Hartongton 1331, Watson Wentworth 894.

The Postman #1407, 30 May 1705.

¹⁰⁵ W.A Speck, Tory and Whig, (London, 1970), Appendix D, p. 123.

¹⁰⁶ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/377, Thomas Worsley to John Rhoades, 30 Jun. 1705.

¹⁰⁷ Hailstone Collection, Box 4.32, Wharton to Matthew Smailes, 12 Apr. 1705. Chaytor Papers, ZQH 7/3/19, Mic 985, Wharton to Matthew Smailes, 20 Nov. 1706.

Elsewhere established interests secured returns for other Whigs, for example Hotham, Palmes, Robinson, St. Quintin and Strickland. In the freemen, as well as the burgage boroughs, there had been little contention. At Beverley Hotham and Moyser were returned with the approbation of the Warton interest.¹⁰⁸ At York, Robinson's position was secured by his promotion of the interests of the City, and his ability to respond to the welfare of the locale. For example, he looked into the possibility of a Court of Conscience being set up there.¹⁰⁹

Other seats required more diligence. At Scarborough Whig chances improved with the candidacy of Robert Squire, and it was reported that "Hungerford (a Tory) is outed by one vote and that by a stratagem.(sic.)"¹¹⁰ The joint campaign of Squire and William Thompson was a success in securing two seats. Sir William St. Quintin had to work harder for his safety at Hull. Although he wrote to the corporation in October 1704 declaring his service to the Mayor and corporation, he neglected to visit the Mayor when he returned to the town. Moreover, he supported the Duke of Newcastle's choice of Town Clerk, against the wishes of the Bench. It took some hard work in 1705 to restore his tarnished image, and his problems showed that no position could be taken for granted and no duties could be ignored.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Beverley Borough Records, p. 193.

¹⁰⁹ House Book 40, 16 Oct. 1703, p.157. Robinson was instructed by the York corporation "To write to some Members of Parliament" about the proposed Court.

¹¹⁰ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9a, John Rhoades to Lord Irwin, 23 Jun. 1705.

¹¹¹ Hull City Record Office, Corporation Letters, BRL 1195, 1199, 1200, 1214, Sir William St. Quintin to the Mayor, 29 Oct. 1704, 23 Jan./1 Mar. 1705; BRL 1215-6, same to same, 13/15 Mar. 1705.

Just as the strength and value of the corporations and their role in politics could not be taken for granted, nor could the Whig position in the shire. Despite the growing importance of the Whig magnates in mobilising for the cause, the overriding impression of the Whig effort is of the party swimming against the tide. Even after the Tack and the development of powerful interests in various areas of the county, they could not find two men to stand against Kaye with a reasonable chance of success. It is difficult to see how the Whigs could do more than attempt to secure one shire seat for themselves. Certain parts of Yorkshire were to become no-go areas. For instance, Ripon was fast being bought out by John Aislabie, and the Archbishop of York was insistent that no properties should “come into the hands of the opposite party.”¹¹²

A decade into the Triennial Act the Whigs were still no closer to creating a community of interest that would allow substantial gains at the shire level. National issues often inspired Tory gains, such as the Church in Danger. However, for the Whigs only the Succession seemed to invigorate their chances. John Rhoades was glad the Whig John Smith won the Speakership of the Commons, for he feared the High Churchmen “would have set us up together.”¹¹³ But whilst the security of individual interests was still paramount, and with few issues that would create enough pressure to unite such disparate estates, little could be done to hammer out a greater unity of operation. How the Whigs would cope against two strong and united Tory candidates was a problem. Worse still, it was an undiscussed problem.

¹¹² Vyner MSS., VR 244, Archbishop Sharp to John Aislabie, Jun. 1706.

¹¹³ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9a, John Rhoades to Lord Irwin, 31 Oct. 1705.

Fortunately for them their major bugbear of recent years, Sir John Kaye, died in the summer of 1706. This was a major opportunity for the Whigs to secure a second seat and immediately their electoral machinery was turned to the forthcoming by-election. As this was a by-election it would be easier to harness Whig support to any campaign; in a general election other seats would need attention.

On the 20th of August, Sir William Strickland wrote to the Duke of Newcastle that

My Lord Wharton and several of us have had consultations about the election... we hope my Lord Fairfax will stand, but if he refuse we resolve to ask Mr. (Conyers) Darcy, brother to the Earl of Holderness. ¹¹⁴

It appears likely that without the resolve of Wharton or Newcastle the Whig position would be in poor shape. As it was the Whigs were having to rely on the often unsure Fairfax or the inexperienced Darcy. At least Newcastle was informed that Darcy was “resolved to submit himself entirely to your Grace's disposall (sic).” But the question of organisation was critical, and the Duke of Somerset was reported to be waiting until he heard who was standing.¹¹⁵ That quick action based around a solid interest was required pointed to Fairfax.

¹¹⁴ Nottingham University Library, Portland (Holles) MSS., PW2.232, Sir William Strickland to Newcastle, 20 Aug. 1706 (hereafter this Collection is cited as Portland (Holles) MSS.).

¹¹⁵ Portland (Holles) MSS., PW2.37, Robert Darcy, 3rd Earl of Holderness, to the Duke of Newcastle, n.d. (1706).

The role of Fairfax became more important because of the fear of a Tory entering the fray. In April, John Aislabie had apparently resolved to stand against Hartington at the next Election "at the request of the gentlemen... (who) now oppose my Lord."¹¹⁶ This threat forced the Whigs to act fast. On the 17th of August, the Earl of Sunderland wrote to Newcastle that Wharton had asked him "to find Lord Fairfax and bring him to some resolution." Not only does this suggest Fairfax's usual irresolution but also the Whig need to secure this seat. Sunderland continued:

I find he is extremely willing to do whatever his friends would have him, but hopes they will not engage him in a great deal of trouble and expense without some reasonable prospect of success.

Again the trauma of a possible fight weighed heavy on Fairfax, however Newcastle was told that he "puts himself entirely in your hands", and "is very willing that you should declare in his name."¹¹⁷ The Duke of Newcastle was to be a pivotal figure, aided by Strickland and Fairfax's brother, Brian.

It was as well that Fairfax was engaged so soon, for by September rumours abounded that Lord Downe was going to stand. This time the Whigs did not shirk the challenge. The corporations of Leeds and York were canvassed for him, and at the latter he was persuaded to declare himself "publicly in Court, which he did, and

¹¹⁶ Kent Record Office, Chevening MSS., Sir John Cropley to Stanhope, 2 Apr. 1706.

¹¹⁷ H.M.C. Portland, 13th Report, App. II, p. 195.

found the City won for him.”¹¹⁸ Other local Whigs like Thomas Pulleine, steward to the Duke of Bolton, were active for the Whig cause. Pulleine wrote to the Duke of Somerset, to ask him to switch his interest from Darcy to Fairfax and also spent much time and money on treats for freeholders in Wensleydale, Colesdale and Bishopdale.¹¹⁹

Fairfax was as energetic in his own interest. He used Strickland’s East Riding home as a base to canvass that region and was unusually zealous there. In the North Riding Pulleine noted that, “I have put him into the best method I can and hopes he and his cosen has beene as Industrious in other parts (sic.).”¹²⁰ Fairfax himself could not be faulted for his efforts, as he kept up his energy for several months. The threat of Downe was very real for the Whigs, and Pulleine noted how he had to work very hard in the North Riding. However, he also complained of the obstinacy of several other Whigs; the Duke of Somerset would not declare for Fairfax, and the Earls of Carlisle and Wharton were reported as lethargic in their approach.¹²¹ Another local Whig noticed the ambivalent attitude of some Party stalwarts when he declared that it would not do to “espouse the interests of a High-Flyer” although “many worthy and pious Whigs

¹¹⁸ H.M.C. Portland, 13th Report, App. II, p. 197.

¹¹⁹ Portland (Holles) MSS., PW2.191, Thomas Pulleine to Newcastle, 21 Oct. 1706.

¹²⁰ Portland (Holles) MSS., PW2.194, Thomas Pulleine to Newcastle, 10 Nov. 1706.

¹²¹ Portland (Holles) MSS., PW2.194, Thomas Pulleine to Newcastle, 10 Nov. 1706.

did.”¹²² This dissent was very unusual for a disciplined Party and shows the lack of a community of Whig interest.

By January, the candidacy of Downe and the vacillations of some Whigs, lead John White to hope that enough freemen would support Fairfax to counter the greater number of gentlemen who were expected to follow the Tory.¹²³ However, as the poll approached the Whig hierarchy was behind the campaign, for Wharton enquired of Smailes that “I hope my Lord Fairfax goes on well and with successe (sic.).”¹²⁴ Thomas Worsley noted how Fairfax “stirs apace in this, (more) than any pryor (sic.) election”¹²⁵. The Whig case did not lack energy.

It is unsure whether or not there was a contest in January 1707. There is only one record of the vote, and that gave Fairfax 2504 and Downe 2407 votes.¹²⁶ This is recorded on the back of a piece of paper alongside other Yorkshire county poll results down to 1734. This means that it was recorded in or after 1734. Although there is no contemporary record of a contest, this source must have its basis somewhere. It also throws up some other queries; for example did Downe desist only 97 votes behind, or did the poll close with only 4911 voters having polled? This would be a small turnout, but it may match the feeling that it was too costly to travel to York to poll for a by-election when a general election was only a year away. Also many

¹²² Mellish Papers, MeC 14/44, Squiril (William Wrightson) to Joseph Mellish,

16 Jan. 1707.

¹²³ M. H. White, *Memoirs of the House of White of Walling Wells*, p. 20.

¹²⁴ Hailstone Collection, Box 4.32, Wharton to Matthew Smailes, 20 Nov. 1706.

¹²⁵ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 10, Estate Administration 1706-8, Thomas Worsley to John Rhoades, 2 Nov. 1706.

¹²⁶ Vyner MSS., VR 5781 (244/7), Election Papers.

may have felt that either candidate was suitable and thus their motivation to travel would have been lessened.

Whether a poll had taken place or not, even this one-off situation had thrown up difficulties for the Whigs. Although Newcastle worked hard for the cause, Wharton and Hartington were less involved. They may have expected Newcastle as the Lord Lieutenant of two ridings to take control, but with the strength of the Tories in the county should they have left the bulk of the work to Newcastle? The chances of the Kaye interest being devolved onto Downe was surely too great. As this was only a by-election the chances for repeated success at a general election depended upon the whole-hearted support for the Whig cause. The development of cohesion and preparedness still looked ad hoc.

Within six months the Whig cause at the shire level was severely shaken by the Whig-induced Act of Union and by the death of the Duke of Devonshire. Both Fairfax, who held a Scottish title, and Hartington, who became the Second Duke of Devonshire, were disqualified from the Commons. This double set back caused a double by-election which the Whigs were ill-prepared for. It also begs the question, why was Fairfax put up in August 1706, when some negotiations for Union had taken place, and when his Scottish title must have been known? However, the final proposals of the Treaty were still almost a year away and the disqualification not yet assured. Also, there was no assurance that a general election would not be called in 1707 on the basis of Union, instead of in 1708 as required by law. In this case a by-election would not have been needed, and this is the probable reasoning behind the choice of Fairfax. Moreover, the Whigs lacked candidates and Fairfax's interest was the best on offer. To call upon Strickland or Hotham would have forced a by-election in

another constituency, and so to choose Fairfax was the least line of resistance.

With the next by-election scheduled for December 1707 speed was of the essence. The constrictions with regard to possible candidates applied once again, as with six months to the next general election no secure M.P. would risk the cost of a shire poll. This also ruled out Watson Wentworth, who remained in his seat at Higham Ferrers and waited for the expected 1708 election. With no Hartington or Fairfax to call upon the only possibility was Conyers Darcy who was mentioned in 1706. He was supported by the Holderness and the Carlisle interests, and the Earl of Carlisle told Viscount Lonsdale that Darcy would act as "his friends approved of."¹²⁷ By April 1707 Darcy was canvassing support for the next general election, and this was important for the Whigs as neither of its two M.P.'s were disqualified yet. Darcy had received "encouragement from several gentlemen of that interest"¹²⁸ and appears to have been looking for a way into Parliament. It is also possible that the Tory section of his family was trying to court him, for his brother told Newcastle in 1706 that "my brother is likely to receive an obligation another way..."¹²⁹ Whether or not the other obligation was a Tory one, the Whigs showed little interest in this election. They did not back Darcy as they had Fairfax, nor did they attempt to look for a second candidate. With only a few months to the next triennial election both parties let the matter drop and Darcy and Lord Downe were elected unopposed.

¹²⁷ Cumbria Record Office, Lonsdale MSS., Lord Carlisle to Lord Lonsdale, 13 Dec. 1706.

¹²⁸ B. L. Add. 24470, f. 38, Conyers Darcy to Sir William Nevil, 6 Apr. 1707.

¹²⁹ Portland (Holles) MSS., PW2.37, the Earl of Holderness to Newcastle, n.d..

The by-election of January 1707 was the high-water mark of Whig strength and cohesion at the shire level in the Triennial period. Irwin's campaign of November 1701 was the greatest show of local strength by an important local figure. Fairfax's campaign was the greatest show of externally applied pressure for party ends. Although the bulk of the donkey work was done by Fairfax, at the centre it was Newcastle who was the focal point and was 'the most active influence in the return of a Whig knight.'¹³⁰ The Duke liased with the Junto at the centre and with his supporters in the county. The ability of the Whig peers to run provincial elections was noted by the Tory satirist Charles Davenant. He wrote that interest was developed "by My Lord W(harto)n, Mr. B--l (Henry Boyle) and some other great men of our Party... to show them (the Tories and the Freeholders) our power."¹³¹

In the elections of 1702, 1705 and the January 1707 by-election, the Whig peers had focused a great deal of attention upon Yorkshire. This strength of the Party was underpinned by Hartington's applications to the various corporations, and the zeal of Strickland and Pulleine in the by-election of 1706-07 helped forge stronger links between the Junto and the shire. However, important local M.P.s like Sir Charles Hotham, Sir William Robinson and even the Junto-inspired Hull M.P.'s, Sir William St. Quintin and Sir William Maister, had little or no role. Accepting that as M.P.s of important and demanding constituencies, and as merchants themselves, they would have had other worries, these men were still left out of Whig organisation.

¹³⁰ O. R. F. Davies, 'The wealth and influence of John Holles, Duke of Newcastle, 1694-1711,' Rennaisance and Modern Studies, X, (1965), p. 33.

¹³¹ C. Davenant, The True Picture of a Modern Whig...Reviv'd, (London, 1707), p. 6.

Clearly, the Junto were not interested in developing Party unity in Yorkshire, rather in gaining supporters in Parliament, and for most Whig M.P.s party consensus was the least of their problems.

By 1708 the Whigs still had no strong foundation of organisation to rely on should they fall from grace in the country at large. There was little long-term planning and worse still, a paucity of possible candidates. As the Junto had not provided for more than their own needs, the loss of Hartington in 1707 was a greater blow than losing Irwin in 1702. The Marquis provided a useful link between the county and the centre and was popular. How the party would cope without him in a General Election that would reduce the Junto's involvement and increase the Tory threat, was a problem. Could the likes of Strickland take on a bigger role or would the Whig Shire interest still rest with the Junto? Would the Junto-inspired illusion of security, forged in the years 1702-07, become a reality in terms of greater local party appeal?

The General Election of 1708: A Computer Analysis of Political
Uncertainty

"History is the essence of innumerable biographies."

- Thomas Carlyle.

"I do not believe in the collective wisdom of individual ignorance."

- Thomas Carlyle.

In Yorkshire, the period up to the 1708 General Election had seen Whig prospects rise and wane. Local Whig strength in the shire had been bolstered by the intrusions of the Junto into local politics, and moreover by the strength of the Marquis of Hartington as a shire M.P.. When the second county seat fell vacant in 1706, on the death of Sir John Kaye, the Whigs were in a good position to push the case of Lord Fairfax and secure a return. However, the disqualification of both representatives in 1707 left both Whig organisation and hopes damaged. As the number of candidates available to them was diminished, at this the second by-election in a year, the Party had to settle for one return in an uncontested election.

The disqualifications of Hartington and Fairfax lost the Whigs the best guarantees they had of at least one shire seat. However, the lack of candidates in December 1707, for a double by-election that fell so close to a general election, was not totally depressing for the future. The double by-election saw both parties following the least line of resistance, and reducing expenses, by not forcing a contest. By the time that the 1708 contest came around the Whigs would have more options, for they had a number of men who were respected in the county. For example, Sir William Strickland and Sir Charles Hotham were popular figures in the East Riding, and had connections with the

Ingram estates in the West. As these men were sitting M.P.'s they would be more willing to stand for the shire in the 1708 general election than in the previous by-election. Unlike the by-election, success would almost certainly guarantee three years in Parliament; it would also carry increased prestige.

These two men were also strong Junto lobbyists, and would undoubtedly receive the backing of the Whig Lords for any campaign. This was an important factor in any Whig effort to secure the election. As important was the ability of the Junto to leave the management of political affairs within the county to recognised lieutenants. As the Magnates would be able to spend much less time in the county during a general election than they had recently, more work would be required of the candidates.

The Junto would be even less involved in provincial organisation due to events at Westminster. For at the centre, the Whig star was rising as Harley's popularity waned. It was clear that the Junto had significant support in the Commons and was subsequently helping to keep the Godolphin ministry afloat - especially in the face of Tory attacks over the conduct of the war. The Whig hierarchy was by compulsion looking towards power, however their gains in terms of offices were few until February 1708. At this point the Whigs entered their greatest phase of political power in Anne's reign, with Boyle and Walpole replacing Harley and St. John in the Ministry. The Queen was reluctant to appoint the Junto, to whom she showed clear distaste, to power. However, a strength derived from further electoral success could tip the balance in their favour. With Wharton immersed in political machinations at the centre, further electoral gains in Yorkshire would depend upon the capabilities of Junto stalwarts like Strickland.

Another positive factor for Whig hopes was the attempted invasion by a Franco-Jacobite force in March 1708. The proximity of Scotland to Yorkshire, the widespread fear of Jacobitism, and the support within the county for the Protestant Succession - on the lines of 1689 - bolstered opposition to the invasion. On the surface the threat from the North could only improve Whig electoral opportunities. With Henry Boyle appointed as Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding, and with the Duke of Newcastle as Lord Lieutenant of both the North and East Ridings, the Whigs dominated local government at a time of national alert. In March 1708, Sir Rowland Winn sought support for his assiduous actions against a man, "not well affected to the government"; and the Duke of Newcastle let his deputies know "that their Lordships highly approve" of the arrest of the alleged Papist, Lord Langdale.¹³² In very few areas of Yorkshire was an invasion likely to be welcomed. Although the Doncaster Corporation was regarded as containing "all high flying Churchmen or Jacobites"¹³³, the fear of invasion primarily exacerbated county-wide fears about the Succession. Metcalfe Robinson, son of the M.P. for York, Sir William Robinson, wrote late in 1707 that the threat of Jacobitism ought "to open the Eiyes (sic.)... of the Landed (men)."¹³⁴ With the nation still at war with Catholic France, and with the Succession of overriding importance, the natural tendency of the

¹³² Leeds City Archives, Nostell Priory MSS., NP A4 (1625), Sir Rowland Winn to Henry Boyle, 18 Mar. 1708. G.S. Holmes and C. Jones eds., The London Diaries of Bishop Nicholson, (London, 1985), p. 467.

¹³³ Mellish Papers, MeC 14/35, G. Vicars, J. Thwaites and Mr. Hudson to J. Mellish, 10 Mar. 1708.

¹³⁴ Vyner MSS., VR 6004/13489, Metcalfe Robinson to his mother, n.d..

county towards consensus was likely to show through. The eyes of the substantial, independent freeholders would be focused upon the men best suited to support their needs. As such, the image of the party would need some work. But could the invasion threat be used to forge Whig success or at least cohesive action? Or had the Junto left the Whigs with a merely illusory strength in Yorkshire?

With the poll called for May 19th 1708, both the Whigs and the Tories had a month in which to organise their final campaigning after Parliament was prorogued. The priority for the Whigs was the organisation of their candidates to oppose the threat of Viscount Downe. Conyers Darcy had been canvassing for quite some time previous to his election in December 1707; his strength derived from the North Riding, around the major landholdings of his family, the Earls of Holderness. However, should the Tory Party be able to forge a joint interest in the West Riding, based upon the strengths of the Kayes and the Dawnays, the standing of the Whigs would be under threat. Despite the fear of a Jacobite invasion, Sir Arthur Kaye, son of the former Tory shire M.P. Sir John Kaye, and Viscount Downe, had a possibly insurmountable strength in the county. Fortunately for the Whigs, at the outset of the campaign, the old divisions between the two Tory families were still open, and it was not clear which of them would be standing.

This left the way open for the Whigs to set about building on their apparent initial unity. For in December 1707 Lord Wharton informed Matthew Smailes that he should, "speak to all my neighbours, friends and acquaintances, that they will be pleased to give their (sic.) votes for Sir William Strickland and Mr. Darcy."¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Chaytor Papers, ZQH 7/3/20, Lord Wharton to Matthew Smailes, ? Dec. 1707.

This constituted a very early acceptance of a joint campaign. Wharton had refused to give similar support to Hartington and Watson Wentworth in 1705, perhaps due to Wentworth's vacillatory Whiggism. Other Whig magnates such as the Earl of Carlisle were sure that the only way to beat the challenge of Lord Downe was for Darcy and Strickland to join. Carlisle wrote that Downe's friends "look upon my Lord as secure if they all stood singly."¹³⁶ Now a joint Whig ticket was endorsed by the hierarchy at an early date, and it was clear that the sooner the Whigs pushed on with their organisation the better. Thus Wharton also informed Smailes to press Sir Ralfe Milbanke of Richmond to take care of his friends and those of the Duke of Bolton at the poll. He told Smailes to "give leave to those friends, that I can get thither from your parts, to goe (sic.) along with him (Milbanke) to York..."¹³⁷ Clearly Whig politicians themselves were unlikely to be able to spend long periods in the county to strengthen the brethren, and the ability of respected local dignitaries to aid and abet their political hopes was crucial.

In December 1707 Strickland had decided to stand, thus pushing to its conclusion his support for the Junto in Yorkshire. He had acted as a link man between Newcastle and the county in the run up to previous elections, and his decision to stand was a bonus for a party devoid of important figures in the shire. Moreover, Strickland had strong interests working for him within the county. For example, on December 10th 1707, it was reported that Lord Irwin "cast to bait his hooks, with which he was to fish for Gudgeons, to vote for Sir William Strickland... (the) corporation of Leeds were to dine with him

¹³⁶ Quoted in Quinn, Yorkshire, p. 315.

¹³⁷ Chaytor Papers, ZQH 7/3/20, Lord Wharton to Matthew Smailes, ? Dec. 1707.

at the Swan.”¹³⁸ Strickland was using his contacts in the West Riding to test the ground for his campaign; his friendship with Lord Irwin would be vital in securing votes for him in that area. This was more necessary as his natural strength lay in the East Riding, and not in the more populous and electorally important West Riding. In November 1710, the Tory Reverend Plaxton wrote how Strickland was very popular in Leeds, based on his being “a man of sober parts, great oratory and profound judgement.”¹³⁹ If Strickland could ride his and Irwin's popularity in the West Riding, it would underline his county-wide appeal as a man who would respect the responsibilities of the shire M.P.'s role, and who could also secure a Whig return. Whether he could secure a double Whig return was another question. It is important to note that Irwin was not looking to support a Strickland-Darcy ticket.

The party situation was becoming more confused because of the entrance of the ever-vexatious Thomas Watson Wentworth, in January 1708. Wentworth had an almost suicidal urge to stand for and hopefully represent the county - a desire based on the interest generated by his Sheffield estates. He was an energetic canvasser, as the election of 1705 had shown. However, as in 1705, in 1708 he could not rely on the interest of the Whig Magnates within Yorkshire. On January 31st 1708, he wrote to the Leeds corporation: “Designeing to appeare att York to offer my service to the County att the next Election, (I) shud own it a great honour and favour to have the

¹³⁸ Plaxton Letters, p. 46.

¹³⁹ W. T. Lancaster, ed., Letters to Ralph Thoresby, (Leeds, 1912), Thoresby Society, vol. XXL, p. 217; Plaxton Letters, p. 47.

countenance of your vote and intrest (sic.).”¹⁴⁰ It was unlikely that Wentworth would secure enough votes for a return. In a contest that would feature Lord Downe, Sir William Strickland, Conyers Darcy and perhaps Sir Arthur Kaye, he lacked immediate appeal to the more independent freeholders, who looked to prominent local men to support them in Parliament; he also lacked party appeal for either side.

By early 1708 Mayor Milner of Leeds had noted that, “I think wee cannot civilly avoid waiting upon my Lord Irwin for Sir William Strickland, but wee need not bring ourselves under any positive engagement for a vote, neither is any promise required...”¹⁴¹ If the towns of the West Riding followed this corporation line for an independence in their representation, to safeguard their economic well-being, any outsider's interest, or party campaign could be scuppered. With the number of freehold votes in this area likely to be large, the Whigs would have reason to worry. This was especially so given that the Tories could rely on the likes of Sir Walter Calverley to strengthen their positions in the West Riding. Calverley acted for a joint Tory campaign, and treated his tenants as if such a campaign existed.¹⁴² Similar pro-Whig activism was not as obvious.

Defoe's comment about the unrepresented boroughs of Leeds, Sheffield and Bradford, was that “frequent elections having no influence here to divide people, they live in much more peace with

¹⁴⁰ Letters to Ralph Thoresby, p. 175.

¹⁴¹ YAS Archives, Ralph Thoresby's correspondance, 1704-09, vol. III, April 1708.

¹⁴² Calverley Diary, p. 119.

one another than in other parts.”¹⁴³ Although this underlines the point that in Yorkshire consensus was a powerful driving force, it does not do justice to the political sway and importance of the non-parliamentary boroughs. Strickland’s chances were very much tied into the beliefs of the freeholders of these West Riding towns. Collyer wrote in 1727 of the state of elections, that “large numbers of independent freeholders constitute an uncertain or hostile electorate.”¹⁴⁴ It would be the Whigs’ ability to pick up votes in the West, and among the independent corporations, that could gain them success.

As the poll moved closer, and with the candidacy of Sir Arthur Kaye now declared, the position of the two Whig candidates looked weaker. There is scanty evidence of joint canvassing, even though a joint success would depend on securing double votes. This should have been based upon Darcy’s strengths in the North and Strickland’s in the East, as well as through the support of the Magnates and local Whigs like Irwin. Even the local kinship and marriage ties between St. Quintin, Hustler, Palmes, Maister and Strickland could not provide a forum or focus for county-wide organisation. William Palmes did provide a seat for Strickland’s son at Malton in 1708. However, these prominent local Whigs did little to encourage the growth of a network of interest. Likewise, the prominent local figures, Sir Charles Hotham and Sir William Robinson, did not figure in overall party planning for the contest.

¹⁴³ See Holmes and Speck eds., *The Divided Society*, p. 45.

¹⁴⁴ Quoted in P. J. Nash, *Doncaster, Ripon and Scarborough, c.1640-1760.*, Leeds Ph.D 1983, p. 393.

This may well have been a legacy of the Junto's period of direct involvement. For as in 1701, 1702 and 1705, 1708 saw little in the way of well organised, cohesive joint canvassing, treating and popularising for the Whig cause. After the initial support gained from the Lords, the run up to the election saw little in the way of direct organisational effort. With the enormous size of Yorkshire, and the cost of widespread holistic campaigning so high, the Whigs fell into their usual pitfalls. The natural strength of the Tory Party meant that the Whigs would have to work so much harder to win both seats.

Strickland's position within the Whig party was respected much more than the young and inexperienced Darcy. However, Darcy did have substantial local influence through his family; he had also already represented the county. Unfortunately for both men, Lord Downe represented the interest of many in the county; his moderate religious convictions and overall conservatism reflecting the views of many freeholders. With his previous experience, the Whigs were up against it at the poll. A joint return was probably out of the question; it remained to be seen which of the two Whigs would be elected, or if Kaye could pull enough voters his way.

Perhaps Darcy did realise that he was up against it, for it was reported that he paid for 38 freeholders to travel the 77 miles from Sedburgh to York to vote for him.¹⁴⁵ Moreover this shows how close the poll was likely to be, for the cost of such an operation would surely only be worth taking if success was a possibility. The election was hotly contested and saw a huge turnout, as more than 9200 freeholders polled, casting well over 14000 votes. Thoresby noted that it was "so crowded in the Inn" that people had to sleep three to a

¹⁴⁵ Speck, Tory and Whig, p. 66.

bed.¹⁴⁶ The huge interest in this five-way contest made it clear that any serious challenge would need widespread support within Yorkshire.

The result of the poll saw Downe and Strickland elected, with Darcy a close third behind Strickland.¹⁴⁷ What is clear from the analysis was the huge importance of the West Riding, and that the support for the four main candidates is not easily defined in party or shire terms. Also, the unassailable strength of Lord Downe's position made any joint Whig victory out of the question. It soon became a question of which one, Strickland or Darcy, would be elected. The Tories were to be happy with the result, for the inexperienced Kaye had utilised his father's interest to gain support, and this provided hope for them for the future. On the Whig side, it was only his all-round popularity that ensured Strickland his return, after four days of polling.

Elsewhere, the Whigs were as successful as they had been in 1705. However, they faced more serious opposition in certain areas. This was especially so at Malton, where the incumbent William Palmes and his nominee William Strickland faced opposition from the moderate-Whigs Thomas Harrison and Thomas Worsley. The contest lead to a petition against Palmes and Strickland which complained of an illegal poll and an illegal bailiff, Nathaniel Harrison. A Whig dominated House of Commons rejected the plaintiffs' case and Palmes

¹⁴⁶ Ralph Thoresby the Topographer, vol. 2, p. 27.

¹⁴⁷ There is a huge discrepancy between the final figures arising out of the pollbook analysis, and those traditionally attributed to each candidate. I shall deal with this in the next section.

and Strickland were returned.¹⁴⁸ That a challenge in a Whig safe-seat came from two Whigs suggests a lack of party unity; perhaps local prestige and local needs outweighed party ends.

Meanwhile, other Junto followers in the county were returned unopposed. For example, Sir Charles Hotham at Beverley, Sir William Robinson at York, and Sir William St. Quintin and Sir William Hustler at Hull regained their seats. At Hedon William Pulteney emphasised his strength by being re-elected alongside his nominee Hugh Cholmley. At Richmond, the interest of the Earl of Wharton was allied to that of the Yorke family to ensure a return for Thomas Yorke and Wharton's nominee, Harry Mordaunt, despite a petition against the latter. Mordaunt was thankful that Wharton had "recommended me once more to your honest corporation."¹⁴⁹

Whig purchase of interest in many boroughs in the 1700s gave them an overall strength in the shire that the Tories could only match in a few places, for example Ripon. In other towns such as Scarborough and Knaresborough, the representation was shared. This gives a picture of the Whigs as a force in Yorkshire politics across the whole shire.

At Pontefract, it was complained that, "The Great Duke of Newcastle sent his myrmidions (John) Bright and (Robert) Monckton to the Election to manage it". A return was certainly secured for William Lowther, but the Tory Sir John Bland retained his seat

¹⁴⁸ See NYCRO, ZPQ 45, Malton Election Papers, Mic 1160; also Commons Journal, vol. XVI, 1708-11, pp. 8, 46-7.

¹⁴⁹ Hailstone Collection, Box 4.32, H. Mordaunt to Mathew Smailes, 25 Sept. 1708.

there.¹⁵⁰ Despite Newcastle's continued interference at Pontefract, and also his control at Aldborough and Boroughbridge, his role in this election was minimal in Yorkshire. With other elections to manage, especially those in Nottinghamshire, and with his role at the centre of Government widening, his influence in the county was left to his role as Lord Lieutenant and to his estate agents and friends, such as William Jessop.

The role of Newcastle and Monckton within politics in 1708 was more in line with the views of Lord Treasurer Godolphin. Godolphin was attempting to minimise the popularity and strength of the Junto, and may well have used Newcastle's successes to bolster his own position at the head of the Government. Monckton certainly fits this less Whiggish line, for he was active in trying to purchase extra estates in Yorkshire for the Courtier Lord Raby. According to Monckton these purchases, around Pontefract and Wakefield were, "in order to make votes there."¹⁵¹ This would certainly aid the Court as well as helping Raby to attack the interest of his cousin Watson Wentworth, whose claim to the Wentworth Woodhouse estate had lead to bad blood between them.

However, I have found no evidence to link the Court with any of the candidates in the 1708 shire election. It may well have been that Godolphin wanted the return of the more moderate Tory Lord Downe, perhaps alongside Wentworth; this would counteract the strengths of the Tory Kaye and the Junto man Strickland. The Court may have used its influence with Newcastle to gain whatever support it could for

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in Quinn, *Yorkshire*, p. 226, n. 10.

¹⁵¹ YAS Archives, Wentworth Papers, MS. 595, Robert Monckton to Lord Raby, 6 July 1708; also William Bromley to Lord Raby, 17 July 1708.

such a result. However, for anyone to back Wentworth in Yorkshire would have been foolhardy. It was very unlikely given his previous form that Downe would back Wentworth. It would not be easy to see why the Court should have backed the unreliable Wentworth, and the lack of available evidence points to the possibility that a Downe-Wentworth axis would have been covert, and unlikely to gain widespread support. Also, Sir Arthur Kaye had not stood before and there was nothing to suggest that the Court could not have bought him off if he had been elected. Given the local appeal of his family he was more likely to succeed than Wentworth.

Moreover, given the strength of the established Junto Whig influence in the shire, any attempt to promote an alternate Whig interest at short notice was not likely to succeed. Within Yorkshire, the issue of the invasion was more likely to affect the voting behaviour of the populace than the question of the Court versus the Junto. Public trust would rest on who could offer the best security for local interests at the centre, and the Court interest would be unlikely to profit. A study of the county pollbook will indicate the true extent of the Whigs dominance in Yorkshire and will also allow one to study several important points made by contemporaries.

Of primary interest for the Whigs was the question of their strength within the shire as a whole. Sir John Bland had boasted that, despite Kaye's late appearance, it was "in our power to bring in two for the county at any time, though they bribe to the tune of 20s. a man as they did now."¹⁵² Were the Whigs lucky to survive and could they survive the onslaught that an unfavourable issue would bring? Moreover, was it true that Kaye had been undone by the complicity of

¹⁵² Levens Hall MSS., Sir John Bland to Col. J. Grahme, 25 May 1708.

Lord Downe and his “folly and want of generosity” in accepting “the odd votes of Whigs”.¹⁵³ Given that the Tories had not campaigned as a team were the Whigs merely marking time before they lost their seat? Was there a platform for them to build upon?

The 1708 county Pollbook¹⁵⁴

The querying of the pollbook uncovered several major problems. A huge disparity was recorded in the total number of votes on the database, as compared to those recorded in the final tally at the front of the pollbook. The pollbook recorded the count as follows:

Lord Downe	4737
Sir William Strickland	3452
Conyers Darcy	3257
Sir Arthur Kaye	3136
Thomas WatsonWentworth	958
TOTAL	15540

Table 1: The originally recorded totals

The totals of votes recorded by the frequency count on the database were as follows:

¹⁵³ Bodl. Carte 230 ff. 225-6, Thomas Carte to his brother, 7 Apr. 1710.

¹⁵⁴ This section is based upon a microfilm copy of the pollbook. The original is at York Minster Library, Liber Miscellenea, Cat.22, Add MSS. 235. I am grateful to the Dean and Chapter of York Minster for their permission to use the 1708 pollbook.

Lord Downe	4347
Sir William Strickland	3402
Conyers Darcy	3206
Sir Arthur Kaye	2336
Thomas WatsonWentworth	1429
TOTAL	14720

Table 2: The totals from the analysis

The difference between the two vote totals was 820 - a large disparity that would have meant around thirty pages of the pollbook were missing. A manual count of the votes in the original also revealed that the results recorded in the front of the pollbook did not match what was recorded inside. As each candidate would have had his own agents monitoring the poll and subsequent count, this is perplexing and leads one to question the validity of the pollbook. This is more so because the votes for Kaye and Wentworth are so different; the former is down 800 and the latter up 471. With Downe also losing 390 votes, only the totals for the two Whigs are reasonably close to what is noted for them. If the pollbook used in the calculations was a very bad copy of an original, one could explain the disparities; the huge increase in Wentworth's total means that it cannot be an incomplete copy of an original. One saving grace is that the totals recorded in the front of the book are in the same hand as the rest of the information logged. Thus, the totals were not added later and this particular pollbook was not compiled by several different clerks. Baskerville has noted several problems that arise out of the use of pollbooks which focus upon

textual variation and errors. These were due to oral and aural confusion, copy and ascription errors at the time of compilation.¹⁵⁵ However, this would still not account for the massive differences recorded in this case.

Other independent witnesses also noted the result as in table 1; Browne Willis recorded them thus, and he probably got the result from the London *Postman* of May the 27th 1708.¹⁵⁶ It is possible that the pollbook is not the erroneous source and that the figures in the *Postman* are wrong; hence that the figures in the front of the pollbook were incorrect. This would mean that someone painstakingly copied out over 9000 entries and added the result without checking the count. Whatever the true reason behind the disparities, the information and analysis taken from the pollbook must be treated with care. It can only provide general indications concerning the areas from where each candidate took his support, and also concerning the general level of voter-awareness of a party contest.

The pollbook on its own can only provide a static model of the voterate.¹⁵⁷ It cannot be used to fully test the dynamic models of voter behaviour posited by Speck and Baskerville, which look at the coexistence of independence and influence within the voterate over a

¹⁵⁵ S. W. Baskerville, P. Adman and K. F. Beedham, 'Manuscript Pollbooks and English County Elections in the First Age of Party: A reconstruction of provenance and purpose, ' in *Archives*, XXI, 1991, p. 390.

¹⁵⁶ See Bodl. Willis MSS. 6, f. 156; also The *Postman*, 25-7 May 1708.

¹⁵⁷ The voterate was, and is, not the same as the electorate. It was unlikely that there was a 100% turnout of all the possible voters, the electorate. That fraction of the electorate that did poll is therefore regarded as the voterate.

number of elections.¹⁵⁸ However, if utilised alongside other sources, such as estate records, it would be able to expand our understanding of the behaviour of the voter, its relative independence and its links with landlord influence, and the roles of participation and deference.

The most striking facet of the analysis is the size of the voter that it reveals. The total number of voters and the split between each Riding is given in table 3.

Riding	Voters	% of total voters
East	1675	18.0
North	2650	28.5
West	4923	53.0
Other	41	0.5
TOTAL	9289	100

Table 3: Voters in each Riding

This shows the huge importance to a party of the West Riding. This is also shown by the number of votes cast in each riding.

Riding	Votes	% of total vote
East	2524	17.1

¹⁵⁸ See, W. A. Speck, W. A. Gray and R. Hopkinson, 'Computer analysis of pollbooks: A further report', BIHR XLVIII, 1975, pp. 64-90; also, S. W. Baskerville, P. Adman and K. F. Beedham, 'The dynamics of landlord influence in English County Elections, 1701-34: the evidence of Cheshire', in PH 12, partII, 1993, pp. 126-42.

North	4176	28.4
West	7970	54.1
Other	50	0.5
TOTAL	14720	100

Table 4: Votes cast in each Riding

This increase in the preponderance of the West Riding at the polls, in terms of votes cast, was because fewer of its freeholders plumped. Overall the situation was that 3858 voters, or 41.5 %, plumped for one candidate, whereas 5431 voters, or 58.5 %, polled for two candidates. The situation in each riding is given in Table 5:

Riding	Singles	Doubles	%Singles	%Doubles
East	826	849	49.3	50.7
North	1124	1526	42.4	57.6
West	1876	3047	38.1	61.9
Other	32	9	75.0	25.0
TOTAL	3858	5431	41.5	58.5

Table 5: Proportions of singles and doubles in each Riding

These totals question the Speck's view of 'the reluctance of the Freeholder to waste a vote by plumping.'¹⁵⁹ Speck was referring to the Elections of 1737 and 1742, but the results of the analysis of the 1708 election do show that a substantial number of men plumped. This was especially so for the Whig candidates. The number of plumpers for the

¹⁵⁹ Quoted in J. F. Quinn, 'Yorkshire elections in the age of Walpole', NH 22, 1986, p. 170.

Whigs, taken as a percentage of their total vote was twice that of the Tories.

Candidate	% Singles	% Doubles
Downe	16.1	83.9
Strickland	31.9	68.1
Darcy	36.7	63.3
Kaye	18.5	81.5
Wentworth	32.2	67.8

Table 6: Proportions of singles and doubles for each candidate

The above results lead one to question the nature of Whig unity at the poll. To many who voted for them, the Whigs were not a holistic unit. Between them Strickland and Darcy received 2265 singles, or 58.7 % of those cast. Singles made up a large proportion of their individual total votes. For a freeholder to plump, he must have been subject to his own whim, or to that of his landlord. In the former case there would be little that a party could do; however, if a landowner, especially one who favoured a particular candidate, had ordered his tenants to cast singles, then the unity of the party campaign must be questioned. In a joint campaign a party would have contacted certain landlords for joint votes. That a third of the votes for Strickland and Darcy were singles indicates the difficulties of organising across Yorkshire, and the lack of solid campaigning.

This is more so because the analysis of Wentworth's result reveals how his position was as perplexing as ever. As has been seen in the previous chapters, Wentworth's commitment to the Whigs was never total in Parliament. Although at the 1705 election he reputedly

stood with Hartington, he never enjoyed the Junto's full support. The 1708 pollbook shows that the voters were not sure how to place him either.

Vote	% of Wentworth's vote
Wentworth	32.2
Wentworth-Downe	51.2
Wentworth-Strickland	5.4
Wentworth-Darcy	9.0
Wentworth-Kaye	2.2

Table 7: Make-up of Wentworth's vote

The bulk of Wentworth's vote was through doubles with Downe. Whether this was due to an alliance with the Viscount, it is impossible to determine. Perhaps the Court was using some influence to promote these two men. Thomas Carte certainly believed that Downe had undone Kaye by accepting Whig votes.¹⁶⁰ But the appearance of Wentworth as a Tory to the bulk of his supporters will not have made a difference to the overall result. Downe was too far ahead before any of Wentworth's supporters gave him their second votes. In fact it was as likely that it was Wentworth who was receiving the second votes of some of Lord Downe's supporters who were unwilling to cast away their second votes, but who favoured none of the other candidates. However, the importance lies in the fact that Wentworth's presence did not detract from the Whig position at the poll. Had their campaign been solid in organisation he would not have made a huge difference.

¹⁶⁰ See note 22 above.

Yorkshire is such a large county that it would be impossible for any Eighteenth Century party to organise across it. This is shown by the spread of the votes for the two Whigs Strickland and Darcy. Overall their performance in terms of singles and doubles is shown in Table 8. This is called the pure Whig vote - freeholders who voted singly for Strickland or Darcy, or who voted for them as a double.

Area	Vote	% Vote	Voters	% Voters
County	6063	41.1	4394	47.3
East Riding	1281	50.8	939	56.1
North Riding	1848	44.3	1314	49.6
West Riding	2023	25.4	1441	29.3
Other	39	78.0	33	80.5

Table 8: Spread of the pure Whig vote

Treating singles and doubles separately the strength of their joint appeal can be judged.

Area	Strickland (as a %)	Darcy (as a %)	Str-Darcy (as a %)
County	29.2	31.6	39.2
East Riding	45.9	17.7	36.4
North Riding	23.8	35.5	40.6

West Riding	23.3	36.4	40.3
Other	23.5	58.8	17.6

Table 9: Make-up of the pure Whig voters

The overriding impression is that the organisation and level of joint support for the two Whigs was the same across the whole county. The amount of joint support was not high enough to counter the strength of Lord Downe, who was assured of his return by his county-wide popularity. Moreover, Strickland was running second to Darcy on Whig votes alone. It was Strickland's ability to gain second votes from supporters of Downe that secured his, as opposed to Darcy's, return.

Area	Str-Downe	Darcy-Downe
Yorkshire	727	399
East Riding	193	47
North Riding	305	169
West Riding	228	183

Table 10: Whig doubles with Downe (in numbers of voters)

Strickland received 727 votes jointly with the Viscount; Darcy only picked up 399. Clearly, the appeal of a Downe-Strickland ticket gave the latter more hope of success; this was especially so in the North and East Ridings where the difference in votes between Downe-Strickland and Downe-Darcy was the greatest.

The other possible permutations of votes, with Kaye or Wentworth, were close enough to make little difference. Thus, Strickland won his seat through his greater appeal to certain of

Downe's supporters. This is, of course, unless those who voted Downe-Strickland were supporters of the latter who favoured Downe with their second vote. In this case Strickland had enough support in his own right to defeat Darcy.

Table 8 shows how the Whig position as a whole was poor in the West Riding. The strength of the Tories in this area was phenomenal and backs up Colley's argument that the Tories did not gain their support from bucolic backwoods Squires alone.¹⁶¹ The pure Tory vote in the West Riding - either singles for Downe or Kaye, or doubles - was 3279 votes out of 7970 cast, or 41.1%. In terms of voters this was 1984 out of 4923, or 40.3%. In fact double votes for Downe-Kaye accounted for 32.5% of the total West Riding vote, a massive number of freeholders, and this emphasises the strength of Toryism in both the woollen and worsted areas. Hudson commented upon the growth of 'influential groups of yeoman freeholders', amongst the splintered freeholds of the worsted region.¹⁶² In the woollen areas the importance lay with the larger landholdings dominated by the minor gentry. For example Sir Walter Calverley dominated the area around Calverley. But why did the Tories do so well and the Whigs fare so poorly in the West Riding?

Prevalent within the Riding at this time was the spread of industry into the country. This was tied into local customs, co-operation, community and the strength of the family - the legacies of an older agrarian order. Families were usually unable to make ends meet by working the land alone, and anything that was perceived to affect their livelihoods would provoke a reaction. Hence, it may well

¹⁶¹ L. Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy*, (Cambridge, 1982), p. 22.

¹⁶² P. Hudson, From manor to mill, in M. Berg, *Manufacture*, p. 129.

be that opposition to the Whigs' war lead many to vote Tory. Although the war would have benefited the area through the production of uniforms, there was a wide perception that it lead to increased taxes.

The primary Whig weakness was reflected in the natural strength of the Anglican church, and by extrapolation the strength of the Tories, through custom and community. In the strong communities in Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, and Wakefield, the Whigs had traditionally lacked support. It is no surprise that the Sacheverell crisis unleashed such a backlash against the Whigs in the 1710 election. Finally, many of the minor gentry were sympathetic towards the Tories. Men such as Kaye, Calverley and Sir John Bland had much influence in the region. Despite Holmes' assertion that only around 18% of the West Riding gentry voted in 1708,¹⁶³ the strength of the influence of the Tory Gentry was great. This was more so than for some Whigs. For example, Lord Irwin's steward, John Rhodes of Temple Newsam, voted Downe-Strickland. Within Leeds, where Irwin was Lord of the Manor, Strickland received votes from 117 of the 194 freeholders. Although only 17 were in tandem with Downe, only 44 were doubles with Darcy; 58 of Strickland's votes were singles. Of course, Irwin could not control the votes of the more independent voters, but he must have recognised that Rhodes would poll for Strickland and Downe. If Whigs such as Irwin could not back the Whig line in the county, and if the Whig gentry could not exercise as much electoral sway as their Tory counterparts then there was little hope for a joint Whig return. Overall, given the traditional strengths maintaining the Tories level of support, there was little hope for the

¹⁶³ G. S. Holmes, The Electorate in the First Age of Party, (Lancaster, 1975), p.

Whigs to overcome the clannish continuity and community of interest that opposed them in the West Riding.

A study of the 1708 election and the pollbook shows superficial evidence of the factors influencing Eighteenth Century voters. Without looking at estate records nothing can be specific. But it is clear that several factors influenced the electorate; management, treating, paternalism, self-interest and custom were all vital. In the county at large, the pollbook suggests that the Whigs did have a possibility of maintaining their seat. However, it is clear that the onus for the security of the Whig position in the county rested on external matters. Especially important was the low level of political heat nationally; if an unfavourable issue arose, as it did in 1710, they would be in trouble. It must also be remembered that in 1708 the Whigs were riding on the back of a positive issue, the Jacobite invasion. That this did not strengthen their hand in the shire, with the Tory candidates showing no signs of unity, indicates how poor Whig possibilities were in the county.

Even if their organisation improved, given the huge Tory interest in the West Riding, they could not bank on a seat by right. The lack of a backlash against the local Tories, despite the invasion threat, shows that they were not perceived as a party that would support any threat to the established order in Church and State. The Sacheverell crisis showed the Tory's strength all too clearly, and the huge reaction against the Whigs in 1710 perhaps indicated that 1708 saw the county merely marking time, opting for consensus whilst the political climate was calm. It was they rather than the Whigs who should have felt more content with the 1708 result.

A contemporary, Jemy Singleton, had his own opinions on “The Elections Race”.¹⁶⁴ He believed that Strickland was “a batter’d fiery Stead (sic.)”, and that

He’s run his last his raceing days are done
and leaves his vertues to a hopeful son. (sic.)

Strickland’s racing days were not over yet, nor was his son to replace him as a possible shire candidate - although he did take over his seat at Malton. The comment on Darcy that, “sometimes he stumbles, oft he treads awry”, was probably applicable to the Whig Party. Their organisation was never solid, and their support was never united behind them. Of Wentworth, he wrote,

for a Northern plate he’s much too slow (sic.)
courage he wants, with Active speed and fire.

Wentworth was too slow for the Yorkshire election, for he was too much of an outsider. Singleton’s odds for him at 20-1 were probably too short, but his intervention ought not have troubled the other two Whigs, or lengthened their odds. The author also says that the High-Sheriff, Henry Iveson was not as neutral as he should have been, because of Lord Wharton’s intervention. Of Iveson, “the sole Arbiter”, it was said that his “courage fails and his poor hearts afraid”. This was apparently because of an attempt by Wharton to control the poll through his private interest. It would have been rather

¹⁶⁴ NYCRO, Dawnay Papers, ZDS/X/2, ‘ An epistle from Jemy Singleton to his Friend Tom Pullein about the Elections Race, anno 1708.’

rash of Wharton to do this, given the strengths of other interests in the county, and the sheer size of such a controlling operation. It also overstates his role in this election. However, such an assertion does underline the importance of gaining a favourable Sheriff in these elections, if indeed he was “the sole Arbiter.”

The Whigs needed to build upon their organisational strengths and develop their support in certain areas. The popularity of a local man was an essential factor in an election. Strickland was popular in 1708, and benefited from Tory weakness. However, in 1710, his popularity waned in the face of Tory unity, the growth of Kaye’s local standing and Sacheverell. How did the Whigs cope with the advent of a huge ideological backlash?

Yorkshire, 1709 - 15: The Whigs' Utterly Undone'.

"Religion, True or False, is and ever has been the centre of gravity in a realm, to which all other things must and will accommodate themselves."- Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

"I never vote for anyone. I always vote against."

- W. C. Fields.

During the election of 1708 the Whigs had fallen back on the capabilities of their local dignitaries, rather than relying on the strengths of the Junto. Perhaps Wharton's improving figure in Government circles after the Act of Union lessened his need to control provincial politics. Certainly by November 1708, when Wharton entered the Cabinet as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Whigs had reached their zenith in Anne's reign, with a clear Commons majority and a greater role in the Government.¹⁶⁵ With the great Whig Lords having achieved their aim of a share in the practice of power, having become serviceable through parliamentary strength, their personal involvement in politics outside of Westminster was likely to wane. With the next general election three years away, and with the Whig position looking reasonable in Yorkshire, Wharton may have felt happy about leaving political matters in the hands of Sir William Strickland and estate matters in those of Matthew Smailes. Strickland looked secure in his position as Knight of the shire, and Smailes was an able estate steward, moreover both were loyal to him. Without the personal involvement of the major Whig politician, would the Whigs

¹⁶⁵ Speck, Tory and Whig, Appendix D, p. 123. Speck gives the Whigs 291 seats as opposed to the Tories 222.

be able to hold onto the seat they won in 1708? Would Strickland be able to defend his position against Sir Arthur Kaye, or would the county propensity to Toryism resurrect itself?

What is clear is that from the general election of May 1708 until Sacheverell's trial in March 1710, Yorkshire county society was in harmony. Once again the economic interests of the shire were hugely important, and as usual they were a cross-party issue. One of the major questions was that of fixing the measurements of cloth, which forced the corporations and the M.P.s to act in unison. In March 1709 concerning the Cloth bill, Alderman Arthington of the Leeds corporation wrote to William Nevile at Leeds that "we gott our bill recommitted" and that with Sir William Lowther's aid Yorkshire gained, the "most serviceable bill... for our county manufactures." This issue had also caused petitions from Huddersfield and Wakefield.¹⁶⁶ Nine months later Aldermen Arthington and Thoresby of Leeds went "to speak to Sir William Strickland, Lord Downe and Mr. Lowther about the Cloth bill."¹⁶⁷ The economic interests of the West Riding could not be overlooked.

This unity within the shire in economic terms was carried over into the county at large. In October 1710, the York M.P. Sir William Robinson wrote some observations on political actions. He recommended that it was wise to "Avoid all occasions of being to violent (sic.) in any party."¹⁶⁸ Robinson was probably summing up the

¹⁶⁶ B.L. Stowe 748, f. 79, Cyril Arthington to William Nevile, 18 Mar. 1709.

¹⁶⁷ Thoresby Diary, vol. 2, p. 20.

¹⁶⁸ Leeds City Archives, Newby Hall MSS., NH 2913, 'Some Observations on my Retirement'. Robinson may have considered political retirement, but he

feeling of many in the county, for politics reduced to first principles in a large independent county was about serving the community, not private interest. Prior to the Sacheverell crisis party divisions though real were not overriding. Markham's comment that the York merchant community forged 'an agreeable society', is valuable.¹⁶⁹ Yorkshire society was agreed on the basics of local and national politics, and as long as its politicians looked after local needs their position was safe. Thus, at times of political quiet consensus returned to the shire.

This is admirably demonstrated by the nature of sport in society. The importance of sport as a local social cement was indicated by Sir William Robinson's desire to improve the racecourse at Clifton-Rawlings "at his own expense", and his donation of £15 a year to the corporation for a plate.¹⁷⁰ Throughout this period a substantial cross-section of the county had met at the races, which were not politically divisive. In August 1704, Fairfax, Lowther, William Jessop, Thomas Gascoigne and William Wrightson - a mix of Whig Tory and moderate - all subscribed to a local plate.¹⁷¹ Two years later the Duke of Newcastle was enquiring about the purchase of a "Philley foal" from

maintained his role as M.P. for York. These may well have been hints for his son Metcalfe.

¹⁶⁹ C.R. Markham, The Life of Robert Fairfax of Steeton, (London, 1885), p. 233.

¹⁷⁰ House Book 41, 1 Nov. 1708, p. 19.

¹⁷¹ NYCRO, Ripon Racing Papers, DC/RM, MIC 1318, Subscriptions for an annual plate at Ripon, 24 Aug. 1704.

James Darcy of Richmond, a man Wharton had railed against as a tacker.¹⁷² So the possibilities for cross-party collaboration were great.

Moreover, certain events could only increase the strength of local cohesion. The Gold Cup run at York after 1709 showed York's position as the North's social centre, and the races provided a focal point for county-wide unity. Thoresby noted such unity in August 1709:

These three days much gentry in town (Leeds), upon account of the races at Chapel-Town-Moor, where Lord Irwin's horse won the plate...¹⁷³

Such gatherings were socially and politically diverse, as were the celebrations and treating that followed Irwin's victory. There is no evidence that the races provided anything more than a forum for entertainment and perhaps the discussion of local matters. The Whigs, Lord Irwin and the Dukes of Devonshire and Rutland had matched their horses in trials, but the involvement of politics in sport was minimal.¹⁷⁴

However, at an ideological level Yorkshire society did have fault lines running through it. As such local cohesion was not likely to last if a major issue broke. Whilst some moderate men considered "the scurrilous distinctions of Whig and Tory" distasteful to "the

¹⁷² Portland (Holles) MSS., PW2.36b, James Darcy to William Jessop, 20 Aug. 1706.

¹⁷³ Thoresby Diary, vol. 2, p. 53.

¹⁷⁴ Temple Newsam MSS., TN EA12/16, Sport; TN EA13/55, Steward's Expenses.

wisest Briton”¹⁷⁵, others utilised such divisions to the full. One such was the Whig M.P. for Pontefract, Sir William Lowther, who complained to the Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding, Henry Boyle, that one of the four Justices in the borough was issuing troublesome warrants. This Justice was also “one of the Discontented Party”, and as a result Lowther was given an appointment to the next commission.¹⁷⁶ Boyle also wrote to Lord Irwin in 1709 to support his nominations for the next commission in the West Riding, however this was more bi-partisan.¹⁷⁷ To an extent party machinations worked to the benefit of the Whigs in the locality at this time because of the Whig strength at Court, and the position of Newcastle and Boyle as Lord Lieutenants of all three ridings.

However, despite the strength of the Whigs in local government, the threatened invasion by the Pretender in 1708 had exacerbated central and provincial Whig fears about the nature of religion in politics. Religion and the reactions of those in local office acted as a focus for cohesive Whig action in that the Deputy-Lieutenants and minor gentry were likely to unite if the spectre of Jacobitism, the threat to the Succession and the proximity of Scottish rebels to Yorkshire were raised.

The county as a whole was likely to back any Whig action that safeguarded the security of the locality and the Realm. Thus, when Whig proceedings against Dr. Sacheverell began in December 1709, the Whigs were in a comfortable position in Yorkshire. The Tory

¹⁷⁵ Chaytor Papers, ZQH, 9/18/102, Sir William Hustler to Sir William Chaytor, 15 Aug. 1710.

¹⁷⁶ See Glassey, Politics and the Appointment of J.P.'s, p. 188.

¹⁷⁷ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 10/98, Henry Boyle to Lord Irwin, 31 May 1709.

cause looked weak because of the divide between the interests of Downe and Kaye, the spectre of Jacobitism, and the apparent strength of Sir William Strickland throughout the county. The Whigs looked good for one seat at the next general election, which was expected in 1711.

Several factors rocked the Whig boat. First and foremost, the Sacheverell crisis had awakened fears of the Church in danger, to an extent that they overrode any worries about the Succession. Such an appearance of issues would favour the Tories, for the association of the Anglican Church and that Party was strong, and the pulpit was a powerful propaganda vehicle. In 1701 the popular Whig, Lord Irwin had found the Sheffield Clergy hostile to his campaign, in a period of religious calm.¹⁷⁸ With Yorkshire having over 750 parishes, the Whigs could do without the Clergy being averse to them.¹⁷⁹ The Church issue was likely to mobilise a huge turnout in favour of the Tories, and moreover against the enemy of established religion; in this case personified in the guise of the Dissenters and the Whigs.

Secondly, the overhaul of central Government, following the overthrow of Godolphin's Ministry by Harley, pointed towards an early dissolution. Harley, with a favourable political climate was sure to look for support in a newly-elected Parliament. This was of great import for the Whigs because an overhaul at the centre would undoubtedly infringe on their local dominance. Not expecting an election in 1710, the local Whigs would have supported the election of the Tories, William Turbutt and William Nevile to the expensive

¹⁷⁸ Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 9/141, J. Kiplin to John Rhoades, 14 Nov. 1701.

¹⁷⁹ See Quinn, Yorkshire, p. 321.

position of High-Sheriff between 1709-11. An election in 1710 would see this powerful local position out of their control.

Thoresby recognised the distress this would cause the Whigs, writing in October 1710,

William Nevile Esq., High-Sheriff, under the name of the Church, misrepresented the magistrates as Whigs to the Duke of Leeds, and consequently to Her Majesty; so that the royal fiat was recalled, and a person altogether insufficient, but more to their purpose was appointed.¹⁸⁰

Lord Raby likewise recognised that Queen Anne and the Tories now had full rein over local appointments “almost throughout England..¹⁸¹ The Whig position in the shire was not as convincing as it had appeared, and with an issue wholly detrimental to them affecting most peoples' perspectives, they had serious problems.

These were exacerbated by Wharton's long absence in Ireland and his downfall at Court, which kept him away from provincial affairs until 1710; and also by Newcastle marching out of step with the rest of the Whigs, whilst he drew closer to Harley. Whiggery as a positive ideological creed had been losing its appeal for the Duke for some time. As early as October 1708 the Junto were reportedly begging Newcastle, to “write... to Mr. Monckton and Mr. Peyton” about their indiscipline in the voting lobbies.¹⁸² Newcastle did not seem wholly lost to the Whig cause in August 1710, when he wrote to

¹⁸⁰ Thoresby Diary, vol. 2, p. 68 (note).

¹⁸¹ The Wentworth Papers, p. 135.

¹⁸² G.S. Holmes, British Politics in the Age of Anne, (London, 1987), p. 324.

Lord Somers that, "'tis a melancholy thing to see how dispirited the generality of Whigs are."¹⁸³ However, by September 1710 Lord Raby's brother, Peter, noted the hardening of Newcastle's irresolution to the Whig cause:

I met Mr. Monckton who was just come up to town to take care of his place and I find by his discourse, which he desired me to say nothing of, he'll be no Whig any longer... he assumes the Duke of Newcastle is of the same opinion.

Monckton would not risk his place as a Commissioner of the Plantations or "fly in the Queen's face for them (the Junto)."¹⁸⁴ The Junto's chances of holding onto Newcastle appeared poor.

This confusing picture of Newcastle's role in central politics was more clear-cut in Yorkshire, where his influence was on the wane. In fact he was to neglect the Whig position in the shire almost totally. The trimming of Newcastle and the absence of Wharton did not augur well for the Whig position in the county. The poor state of Whig confidence in the shire was revealed by the Loyal Addresses presented to the Queen in 1710, which for Yorkshire were dominated by Tory sentiment.

By November the 18th, neither Buckinghamshire nor Nottinghamshire, where the major interests of Wharton and Newcastle lay, had sent a Whig Address to the Queen. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that Yorkshire was lacking inspiration from the major Junto influences. Indicative of Tory confidence at this time, a

¹⁸³ B.L. Add. (Portland) 70502, f.356-7, Newcastle to Somers, 10 Aug. 1710.

¹⁸⁴ The Wentworth Papers, p. 142.

typical Address came from the Doncaster Corporation. This was backed by a plethora of important West Riding Tories, such as Lord Downe, Sir Brian Stapleton, Sir Arthur Kaye and Robert Byerley, and was introduced by the Duke of Leeds. It supported the "unquestionable sons of our Established Church." Such support for "the laws of God" was followed up by an Address from the High-Sheriff, Deputy-Lieutenants, Justices and clergy who met at the summer Assizes in York. This was a very important announcement by local officials, that Toryism and a defence of the Church against "impious and seditious principles", was the natural state of mind of many in the county. It also shows the strength of feeling and of Tory sentiment within the West Riding as a whole, and underlines the dominance of the Tories, shown in the 1708 election, in that area. With important local-government officials and corporators backing the Tory line, then Whig hopes for the upcoming elections were poor.

Moreover, these Addresses were heralding a major new phase in the political state of the shire. For the strength of feeling of the Tories and clergy against the apparent attack on Sacheverell, and by implication upon the natural harmony in Church and State, forced an attack upon traditional Whig shibboleths. Government was declared not to be founded upon the will of the people, but upon the laws of God. The Tories supported hereditary right, and denounced resistance to the Monarch. The loyal Tory Addresses, in supporting "the Rights of the Church, and the Prerogatives of the Crown", were enunciating an attitude within the county that was unspoken for much of the Triennial period. The fear of an attack on the sanctity of Church and State had elicited an overt demonstration of opposition by the Church Party within Yorkshire. All this attacked the Whig position based upon the Revolution of 1688; the views that Parliament had the right

to resist, and that Church and State were not an holistic entity, were criticised.¹⁸⁵ This holds with the view of Professor Holmes that the Sacheverell crisis saw ‘the noises of a party battle, epic in scale, echo stridently through every scene.’¹⁸⁶ For the first time in the Triennial period the Tories looked and acted united. If Lord Downe and Sir Arthur Kaye could join in battle against the Whigs, and if they could harness their huge natural base of support in the West Riding, then the Whigs were sunk. The Tory platform was more focused upon the prejudices of the locale, in terms of the Church issue, than the Whigs. If the Tory-clergy attack on the Whigs continued, and with several important local corporations backing the Church view, the position of the Whigs would begin to look untenable.

In political terms this was the opposite of the Association of 1696, which had been a show of unity in favour of William of Orange. Then the Whigs were in a secure position, now they were on the back-foot whilst the county rallied to the Church and Queen. The token Whig Counter-Address, introduced by the Duke of Bolton and presented by Sir William Lowther on 22nd of June, was indicative of the defensive Whig attitude. Within the county it was regarded as “false and scurrilous”¹⁸⁷; both in its support of the “Glorious success” of the Whig war, and of “the happy Union” of England and Scotland. It proclaimed the glory of “the Protestant Succession, Toleration and Union”, and warned against “the Tyranny of France (and) those who

¹⁸⁵ A Collection of all the Addresses that have been presented to Her Majesty since March 25th 1710, (London 1710), two parts. The Yorkshire Tory Addresses can be found in part I, pp. 19, 43, and part II p. 35.

¹⁸⁶ G. S. Holmes, The Trial of Doctor Sacheverell, (London, 1973), p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 642.

approve their Religion and Government.”¹⁸⁸ This was a Whig clarion call in support of Whig Protestant principles, suggesting that only a government founded on such ideals could escape the Jacobite threat. The Whigs were side-stepping the Sacheverell issue and concentrating on their own successes. They relied heavily on scare-mongering over the threat of France, and the dangers to the established position in Church and State, should the Church Party force a Jacobite Succession. However, the Whigs could not match the ferocity of opinion and support that the Tories had for their cause. Local government was clearly perceived to favour the Church; the Tory Addresses were an important announcement that Toryism, often implicit within county society, was now the major force in county politics. The Yorkshire Whigs were in grave danger of being hoist with the Sacheverellian petard of the Junto.

Clearly, four months before the 1710 general election, even before the dissolution, the Sacheverell crisis had renewed the divisions within Yorkshire society. Sir Thomas Frankland's hope of August 1709, that all parties “shall meet with olive branches”, was moribund in Yorkshire.¹⁸⁹ For much of the county moderation was impossible, and by 1711 Frankland merely promised that he would “never... engage in those heats and violence which have created these unhappy divisions.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸: A Collection of all the Addresses..., the Whig Counter-Address can be found in part I, p. 12.

¹⁸⁹ Levens Hall MSS., Bagot Papers, Sir Thomas Frankland to Colonel James Grahme, 20 Aug. 1709.

¹⁹⁰ B. L. Add. (Portland) 70227, f. 11, Sir Thomas Frankland to the Earl of Oxford, 25 Apr. 1711.

The run up to the General Election shows how divisions had grown, and also the weakness of the Whig position. The Reverend Plaxton was vehement in his assertion that only honest Tories, as the arm of God “can defend his Church.”¹⁹¹ A Tory canvass book of June 1710 indicates that many people felt the same. What becomes clear is the overwhelming amount of support for the Tories and the paucity of Whig direction. That this canvass was taken so long before the election suggests the feeling that a dissolution would come soon. Moreover, it indicates a continuation of the Tory strength of purpose that had been such a prominent feature of Sir John Kaye’s campaigns. This was not mirrored in 1710 by the Whigs, and without the strong Junto machinery that proved so useful in 1702-7, the Whigs were sure to suffer.

Local Tories were quick to rally to the cause of Sir Arthur Kaye. At Ripon, for example, John Aislabie held great sway with the freeholders and was attempting “to procure the Duke of Somerset’s interest” through Harley.¹⁹² This shows the feeling of the Tories that even Lords who were nominally Whig could be turned. It also completed the apostasy of Somerset from the Whigs, begun by his carefree approach to the by-elections of 1707. Without the corrective influence of the Junto Lords, the Whig position was in trouble. This was more so because a number of towns were very much pro-Tory. At Watlass, it was expected that “3 or 400 men” would be brought in to vote for Kaye from the surrounding region. Other towns like

¹⁹¹ Plaxton Letters, p. 85.

¹⁹² B. L. Add. 24612, f. 13, ‘Notes from a canvassing book during the Yorkshire Election’, 3 Jun 1710.

Middleham were reported to be 'Sacheverellian'.¹⁹³ That towns so distant to the polling station at York looked likely to send many freeholders to vote did not bode well for the Whigs.

Moreover, what support the Tory canvass unearthed for the Whigs was divided and unsure of itself. For example, Mr. Thornton of Redmire would support Lord Downe and Sir Arthur Kaye unless Conyers Darcy stood.¹⁹⁴ Whereas at Woodend the Freeholders were "all Low Church men thereabouts and engaged to Strickland and he hoped for Mr. Boyle..."¹⁹⁵ Support for the Whigs was divided between Strickland, Darcy and even Boyle, and in no way were the Whigs a unit. As in 1708 there appeared to be no semblance of a possible Whig juncture between Strickland and Darcy. Only around Carperby and "places adjacent all the Duke of Bolton's" were the Tories wary of Whig strength.¹⁹⁶

Whig hopes were poor and this was matched by poor planning and low confidence. Plaxton noted in January 1710 that: "Euroclydon (Wharton) is known in all places... He treated his party with Ale and with Oatcake on Fryday (sic.) last very wonderfully."¹⁹⁷ However, this was unusual, and by the summer a lack of co-ordination was a major problem. Peter Wentworth informed Lord Raby of a rumour that Boyle was to stand against Strickland, and as the summer progressed just who was standing was unsure.¹⁹⁸ More importantly the Tories

¹⁹³ B. L. Add. 24612, f. 14, 'Notes from a canvassing book..', 5/6 Jun 1710.

¹⁹⁴ B. L. Add. 24612, f. 14, 'Notes from a canvassing book..', 6 Jun 1710.

¹⁹⁵ B. L. Add. 24612, f. 15, 'Notes from a canvassing book..', 10 Jun 1710.

¹⁹⁶ B. L. Add. 24612, f. 14, 'Notes from a canvassing book..', 6 Jun 1710.

¹⁹⁷ Plaxton Letters, p. 85.

¹⁹⁸ The Wentworth Papers, p. 128

recognised the weak Whig position. As early as March 1710, Kaye was informed that “..it was impossible to keep in Sir William Strickland against Sir Arthur Kaye..”¹⁹⁹ This recognised the decay of the Strickland interest and embroidered on the belief of the Tories after the 1708 Poll that “’tis in our power to bring in two for the County at any time, though they bribe to the tune of 20s. a man...”²⁰⁰ Such Tory beliefs echoed a county-wide feeling in favour of them, and may have convinced the likes of Darcy that it was pointless standing.

The Whig reply was limited and late. On the 16th of April Thomas Watson Wentworth was reported to have declared against standing, and it was only on July the 26th that Strickland, finding Kaye and Downe soliciting votes, declared himself a candidate. By the time Parliament was dissolved, two months later, Kaye and Downe were offering themselves jointly to the county, and Strickland’s position as the sole Whig was looking beleaguered, with Boyle regarded as an unworkable candidate, and Darcy refusing to stand.²⁰¹

Organisationally the Whigs lacked energy and cohesion, even motivation. With the wind at their backs, the Tories worked fast and efficiently. The Whigs had all but given up when Viscount Irwin’s brother relayed Strickland’s complaint that, “if they (the Whigs) lose their election it is for want of my brother’s interest.”²⁰² Without the external impetus of the Whig Magnates, and lacking any ideological high-ground, it looked as if the Whigs would have to quit the contest in disarray. It was reported that all the Whigs could manage to do was

¹⁹⁹ B. L. Add. 24475, f. 137-8, John Stapleton to Sir Arthur Kaye, 28 Mar. 1710.

²⁰⁰ Levens Hall MSS., Sir John Bland to Colonel James Grahme, 25 May 1708.

²⁰¹ B. L. Add. 24475, f. 138, Sir William Strickland to ?, 26 Jul. 1710.

²⁰² Temple Newsam MSS., TNC 10/127, John Ingram to his Mother, 8 Aug. 1710.

to trump up “some lying story” to attempt to discredit the Tories as Jacobites.²⁰³ Harley was supplied promising reports that “Lord Downe and Sir Arthur Kaye are safe; Sir William Hustler will be out at Northallerton... and if any will stand for Hull both (St. Quintin and Maister) will be out.”²⁰⁴

Although Lord Somers informed Newcastle that without great care “we are utterly undone”²⁰⁵, Junto intervention was limited in the county and its boroughs. In August Wharton reported that Lord Fairfax was going to Yorkshire - possibly to strengthen the brethren.²⁰⁶ At the same time Devonshire was begging Newcastle to intervene against the unreliable Craven Peyton and Robert Monckton at Boroughbridge. The Earl of Sunderland noted that Peyton was “not... a proper man to come to Parliament... by your interest.”²⁰⁷ This was the extent of High Whig intervention, and to a large degree the election was merely an exercise in damage limitation. Two days before the shire poll, Thoresby was sure that all was lost for Strickland.²⁰⁸

At the contest Strickland was soon in great trouble. He faced “much rudeness and unchristianlike methods” from the populace, who shouted “No Rump, Rump, Whigg, Atheist, Hangdogg, Hairscutt.

²⁰³ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 613.

²⁰⁴ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 573.

²⁰⁵ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 217.

²⁰⁶ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 212.

²⁰⁷ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 217; B. L. Lansdowne 1236, ff. 255-6, Sunderland to Newcastle, 31 Aug. 1710.

²⁰⁸ B. L. Add. 5853, f. 88v, Ralph Thoresby to the Reverend John Strype, 16 Oct. 1710.

(sic.)”²⁰⁹ The public were keen to associate Strickland and the Whigs with the disorder of the Civil War, and the threat to the established order in Church and State. Worse still for Strickland, it was reported that he “is shamefully distained. I'm told there were a company of damn'd (sic.) priests that did him much evil.”²¹⁰ Almost to a man the Clergy vetoed all support for Strickland, and voted for the Tory candidates. Any Whig strength gained in the period 1701-8 was soon lost by the wholehearted opposition of the clerics.

The appearance of such a vociferous defence of the Church of England in 1710, showed the strength of the fears for its security. Despite the view of the Leeds corporation that they would give “one vote to Sir William Strickland, and the other either for Lord Downe or Sir Arthur Kaye”, Strickland's association with ‘Whig atheism’ cost him the election. He had no one who could bring in substantial numbers of voters for him, as Sir Walter Calverley did for the two Tories.²¹¹ Moreover, it was reported that very few voters plumped for Strickland, and as such he “was vastly outdone.”²¹² When the polls closed Strickland trailed far behind Downe and Kaye, who were both elected.²¹³

Thoresby himself was aghast at the situation that prevailed in the corporations and the county at large. The Sacheverell crisis had

²⁰⁹ York City Archives, Hammond's Diary.

²¹⁰ B.W. Hill, The Banks Family of Reresby Abbey, 1704-60, Lincolnshire Record Society Publications, XLV, Reverend Steer to Joseph Banks, 23 Oct. 1710, p. 13.

²¹¹ Thoresby Diary, vol. 2, p. 69; Calverley Diary, p. 526.

²¹² Thoresby Diary, vol. 2, p. 69.

²¹³ Bodl. Willis MSS., 9, f. 159. Willis records the result as Downe-6659, Kaye-6412, Strickland-2910.

split any previous consensus asunder, and he was left to rue the “wretched ferment that yet continues here (Leeds).”²¹⁴ Leeds was reported as still being in “a piteous state” two months after the county poll. Thoresby also noted how “a Gentleman of £400 per annum was barbarously slain near Hull, for arguing the Low Church.”²¹⁵ Clearly it was not very advisable to be a Dissenter or a Whig in certain areas.

This was made worse for the Party by the post-election attitude of the local Tories in office. Aislabie wrote to Harley on 27th of October to ask for “an instance of your favour in naming the next High Sheriff, and not to suffer it to come from any other hand.”²¹⁶ Thoresby cried out against those who “cannot bear that the governing part of the town as well as the generality of the Commoners should be moderate.”²¹⁷ The moderation and consensus politics that dominated Yorkshire before 1710 were destroyed, and with this died a bastion of Whig security. One of the basic premises of Yorkshire politics had been unanimity, and the need to select M.P.s who were not overly partisan. The incidence of a national issue had ended the shire’s independence. For the Whigs the cost was a wound that would take long to heal. Not until 1727, upon the death of Kaye did a Whig again represent Yorkshire.

Despite Harley's claim to Newcastle that “Lord Wharton has lost the elections... in all places where he set anyone up”²¹⁸, the Whigs did

²¹⁴ B. L. Add. 5853, f. 88v, Ralph Thoresby to the Reverend John Strype, 16 Oct. 1710.

²¹⁵ Ralph Thoreby the Topographer, vol. 2, pp. 39, 170.

²¹⁶ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 617.

²¹⁷ Thoresby Diary, vol. 2, p. 70.

²¹⁸ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p.223.

not fare too badly in the boroughs. Speck has put Whig losses in 1710 at 110 seats²¹⁹, but the damage in Yorkshire was minimal due to electoral control and local interests. Richmond, for instance, saw the joining of the Wharton and Yorke interests to secure both seats. At Hedon, the Pulteney interest secured the seats for William Pulteney and Hugh Cholmley, despite the campaign of the Tory, William Wickham. In most boroughs the status quo was paramount and representation was maintained, as in 1708. At Thirsk, Thomas Worsley had to concede that "if Mr. Bell persists, there's noe (sic.) hopes this turn", for it was no good "making a noise to noe (sic.) purpose."²²⁰ In spite of Tory optimism, the position of the Hull M.P.'s was secured by their conscientious attention to the locality.

In only a few places did the Party suffer. At Northallerton, the moderate Whig Sir William Hustler was defeated by the equally moderate William Raikes. Pontefract, however, was lost to the Counter-Addresser Lowther, as the Tory Borough Recorder, Robert Frank, was victorious with Sir John Bland.

An analysis of the 1710 Parliament, in the Hanover Papers of the Stowe Manuscripts in the British Library, gives the Whigs 14 M.P.s in Yorkshire. This list does not refer to Ripon and Knaresborough; at the latter Christopher Stockdale provided one more Whig success. However, Robert Monckton and Craven Peyton were at best classed as doubtful Whigs, not as Whigs as the compiler suggests. On the other hand Raikes and Gale were classed as Tory when a Whig tag would have suited better. In all the Whigs had either 15, or, counting Monckton and Peyton, 17, supporters in the Shire after the 1710

²¹⁹ Speck, Tory and Whig, Appendix D, p. 123.

²²⁰ Worsley MSS., ZON 13/1/311, Thomas Worsley to his son, 22 Sept. 1710.

Election. Given the nature of the High Church backlash in 1710, to lose two (or four) seats in the shire as a whole was a reasonable result.²²¹

At the county level the Whigs were in poor shape. Tory strengths and Whig dilemmas shaped subsequent politics. Sir William Strickland was now out of active, central politics, and on his return in 1716 he came in for Old Sarum. His son, although M.P. for Malton, was not of the same local stature and could not successfully challenge the Tory hegemony at the shire level. Likewise, when Richard Ingram replaced his deceased brother as Viscount Irwin, the political influence of his family turned to their Suffolk interests. The strongest resident Whig interest in the shire was that of its M.P.s. Unfortunately, the marriage and blood ties between Hustler, Maister, Palmes, St. Quintin and Strickland could not forge anything stronger. These men were concerned with disparate areas and did not have the collective strength to win over the shire. The more minor gentry, happy with their local positions as borough representatives, would not face defeat after 1710. It is perhaps unfortunate for the Whigs that none of these men were established as shire M.P.s before the Sacheverell election. Here the finger may be pointed at the Junto's intrusion, the disqualification of both Fairfax and Hartington and the unfortunate death of Irwin. All these factors left the Whigs bereft of possible candidates and confidence.

This paucity of established Whig figures in the county was matched by the growing confidence of certain Tory families. Richard Beaumont was quick to canvass Kaye and Downe about a possible office. Downe hoped that "Gentlemen of familys and merit will be now

²²¹ B. L. Stowe 223, ff. 453-6, 'An Analysis of the new Parliament in 1710'.

advanced.”²²², and Kaye thought that such Gentlemen would “justly challenge a regard from the Ministry.”²²³ The interest of Kaye, Downe, Beaumont and Calverley formed a strong Tory connection based in the West Riding. With few Whig families able to command such help or interest, the county looked set for a period of Tory dominance.

The truth in Gooder’s statement that Yorkshire lacked men of any great political weight was now shown in its entirety.²²⁴ The Tories could muster two strong figures backed up by a host of smaller gentry. The Whigs were ideologically moribund and bereft of even minor figures who would run for Parliament. When Aislabie informed Harley that the fall of Strickland was “the end of a Parliamentary bully; no more lopping of (sic.) heads and scandalous ministries”²²⁵, he was expressing the view of many in the county who wished to see political calm, peace and economic security. The corporations doubtless cared little who represented them, as long as their interests were protected. After a long period of war and subsequent political insecurity, they desired political calm “to put the nation upon a right fathom.”²²⁶ The Whigs, seen as Junto followers, were almost outcasts at the shire

²²² Whitely-Beaumont MSS., WBC 88, Viscount Downe to Richard Beaumont, 10 Dec. 1710.

²²³ Whitely-Beaumont MSS., WBC 96, Sir Richard Kaye to Richard Beaumont, 30 Dec. 1711.

²²⁴ A. Gooder, ‘Parliamentary Representation of the County of York’, YASRS 96, p.viii.

²²⁵ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. IV, p. 617.

²²⁶ Whitely-Beaumont MSS., WBC 96, Sir Richard Kaye to Richard Beaumont, 30 Dec. 1711.

level, and many echoed the sentiments of Kaye when he wrote: "I pray God keep us quiet from the attempts of those who are ever restless."²²⁷

Even nominal Whigs such as Sir Thomas Frankland, fearful of his position in the Government, looked to the new ministry to promote harmony above party.²²⁸ Frankland was correct in asserting that "whoever goes by the denomination of a Whig will probably not meet with much countenance."²²⁹ The fears of local Whigs did not help the cause within the shire and neither did the reported mis-management of his local interests by Wharton. In December 1710 Matthew Smailes wrote to the Earl: "... I thinke there has been noe great care taken in the letting or management of your Lordshipps houses in Richmond..."²³⁰ Wharton was 62 in 1710, and his enthusiasm and energy for the grass roots political fight was probably decreasing. Moreover, his Yorkshire interest may have suffered from his concentration on securing the Hanoverian Succession, and in combating the Tory Ministry. Likewise, the death of the Duke of Newcastle and the subsequent legal battle between Lady Newcastle and Thomas, Lord Pelham, deprived Yorkshire of another major Whig figure. Although Pelham solicited and won over the Wilkinson interest

²²⁷ Whitely-Beaumont MSS., WBC 100, Sir Richard Kaye to Richard Beaumont, 1 Jan. 1712.

²²⁸ See above notes 25-6.

²²⁹ Worsley MSS., ZON 13/1/322, Sir Thomas Frankland to Thomas Worsley, 26 Jan. 1712.

²³⁰ Quoted in Quinn, Yorkshire, p. 183, n. 242.

at Aldborough and Boroughbridge, he had little influence in county-wide politics.²³¹

Thus, the Whigs fared no better in the shire in 1713 and 1715. Many agreed with Peter Wentworth's assertion that "as we have no war, we don't care what Parliament we have, Whig or Tory."²³² On this basis the Tories were likely to hold onto their seats. The only threat to their position came from Conyers Darcy, and then only in 1715. At the previous election his name was mentioned as a possible candidate, but nothing arose from it and the Tories were returned unopposed. In 1714-5, Lord Fauconberg ordered his tenants to give single votes to Darcy, and there was talk of the Dukes of Devonshire and Somerset organising support for him.²³³ However, many within the county were happy to settle for representation by Downe and Kaye. In October 1714, Alderman Cookson of Leeds reported that his corporation, as well as the Gentlemen of Rotherham and Sheffield, would support them in a poll.²³⁴ This was despite rumours, said to have been started by Darcy, that Downe had supported a bill to allow the export of unmanufactured wool - which would adversely affect the West Riding's major industry - and that he was harbouring a Popish Prince.²³⁵

²³¹ NYCRO, Darcy Papers, Aldborough and Boroughbridge Election Papers, 1673-1830, ZUH, Mic.1203, Robert Wenman to Charles Wilkinson, 8 Jul. 1711.

²³² The Wentworth Papers, p. 43.

²³³ B.L. Add. 24475, f. 138, R. Harland to Sir Arthur Kaye, 5 Nov. 1714; f. 139, J. Midgely to Mr. Rosley, 9 Nov. 1714.

²³⁴ B.L. Add. 24475, f.138, William Cookson to Sir Arthur Kaye, 24 Oct. 1714.

²³⁵ B.L. Add. 24475, f. 139, Lord Downe to Sir Arthur Kaye, 14 Dec. 1714.

The Whigs did rattle the Tories to an extent in 1715. The question of the Succession was an emotive issue and if the Whigs could damn the Tories as Jacobites they would have a chance of success. The Earl of Carlisle hoped to pin the distribution of a Jacobite pamphlet on Kaye, in order "to expel him the house"²³⁶. Sir William Robinson expressed the Whig opinion that "the Tories in England are generally Jacobites."²³⁷ This attempted slur of Jacobitism by association, and the threat of Darcy's possible candidature did not affect the Tory position within Yorkshire. Darcy, probably recognising the inadequacy of his interest, stood for Newark instead, and the two Tories were elected unopposed. Consensus was the priority for the shire, especially with the Hanoverian Succession under threat, and despite Robinson's claim that "There will be all over the whole Kingdom a mighty contest and a great expense", in Yorkshire this was minimal.²³⁸

In fact, support for King George was as forthcoming from the Shire as it had been for William in 1689 and 1696. A county interest based on Anglican Toryism and support for order was prevalent. Hence, Thoresby was aghast when it was suggested that Leeds had supported the Pretender.²³⁹ Most of the Gentry were in accordance with Sir Walter Calverley, who "was at the proclaiming of the King at

²³⁶ H.M.C. Portland, 16th Report, App. V, p. 507.

²³⁷ Vyner MSS., VR 6002/13832, 26 Jul., 1715, Sir William Robinson to his wife.

²³⁸ Vyner MSS., VR 6001/13962, 23 Sep., 1714, Sir William Robinson to his wife.

²³⁹ Ralph Thoresby the Topographer, vol. 2, pp. 293-4.

Bradford”²⁴⁰, and his support for Hanover was indicative of the county's approach to the question of Succession.

Such positive county-wide support for George the First did not detract from the Whig-Tory divide in the boroughs in 1713 and 1715. York was thrown into turmoil by the opposition of Tobias Jenkins and Robert Fairfax. This drew the Earl of Carlisle and other local interests, such as those of the Robinson's and Thompson's, into the fray. Although the Whig Jenkins lost in 1713 he won in 1715.²⁴¹ Elsewhere, other traditional Whig strongholds saw Tory attack. For instance, it was reported from Richmond in 1713 that, "... the Lord Whartton puts in maior general Morigin (Mordaunt) and Mr. York stand but their is another that puts in aganst them (sic.)..."²⁴² Wharton overcame this threat to his position in the North Riding, but Pelham faced sterner opposition. At Aldborough and Boroughbridge, the Earl of Oxford was attempting to effect Tory gains on the interest of the Dowager Lady Newcastle. Oxford put up Paul Foley and John Dawnay against William Jessop and William Wortley at Aldborough, and these Tories won. At Boroughbridge, the Whigs had to work hard to secure a seat for Edmund Dunch. Pontefract was still lost to Lowther in 1713, despite his attempt "to have got a Whig mayor...". Sir John Bland added, "my friends have given him an entire defeat, and he does not stand a poll."²⁴³ In certain areas the Whigs had a much harder election this time than in 1710.

²⁴⁰ Calverley Diary, pp. 139-40.

²⁴¹ Markham, The Life of Robert Fairfax, pp. 257-8.

²⁴² Chaytor Papers, ZQH 9/9/24, Anne Peacock to Sir William Chaytor, 7 Sep. 1713.

²⁴³ H.M.C. Portland, 15th Report, App. V, p. 221 .

A comparison of a list of those elected in 1710 and the Worsley list of 1713, shows that the Whigs survived the onslaught quite well, and by 1715 were back in a strong position.²⁴⁴ At Hedon (despite a Tory petition in 1713), Hull, Richmond and Thirsk, two Whigs were returned in 1713 and 1715, as in 1710. At Beverley and Scarborough, the Whigs retained one seat. By 1715, the Whigs regained the two Aldborough seats lost in 1713 and also held two seats at Knaresborough, Northallerton, Ripon and York. In all the Whigs now had 19 seats to the Tories 11. It was no wonder that the Earl of Carlisle wrote that he could "have no reason to find fault with the Northern elections."²⁴⁵

Perhaps the greatest upset came at Ripon, where the staunch Tory, John Aislabie, turned coat. Speaker Onslow noted of Aislabie that

He began the world among the Tories, but left them at the latter end of the Queen's reign whilst they were in full power and he in employment. This ingratiated him very much with the Whigs...²⁴⁶

He took office under the Whigs, completing a total transformation of political ideals. A man who had supported the Attainder on Fenwick and the Standing Army in 1698, had in Anne's reign gone on to support the Tory line in the Sacheverell affair. In the period 1695-1710 he was a nominal Tory. In 1710, he was to support the Tory

²⁴⁴ B.L. Stowe 223, ff. 453-6, An analysis of the new Parliament in 1710; Sedgwick, The Commons, vol. 1, p.177.

²⁴⁵ H.M.C. Portland, 16th Report, App. V, p. 507.

²⁴⁶ Quoted in Sedgwick, The Commons, vol. 1, p. 409.

position over Sacheverell, and joined the October Club. However, the split came over the issue of the French Commercial Treaty in 1713, and Peace in 1714. By this time he was regarded as a Hanoverian Tory, in line with the Yorkshire Tory view of support for the Protestant Succession.²⁴⁷

Aislabie's local strength was great, and he was very popular. He dominated both seats by purchase and by 1715 he had bought at least 24 burgages. By treating the locality and looking after its interests, his position was unassailable.²⁴⁸ This was so much so that in 1715 when Aislabie switched his support from the Tory John Sharp to Lord Castlecomer, as his partner, the voters followed suit. One local dignitary complained of a letter, published on Lord Castlecomer's order, stating that Aislabie was to join the Whig Lord:

If it be so, there will be an end of all that friendship and good neighbourhood which this Town hath so long enjoyed and our neighbours at Richmond hath so long miswanted...²⁴⁹

The support of the corporation and town for the Aislabie interest, as a Tory and as a Whig, is indicative of the strength of support for a popular local figure, the strength of purchase as a political weapon,

²⁴⁷ See I. Burton, P. Riley and C. Rowlands, 'Political Parties...', BIHR Special Supplementary, 7, 1968, p. 50.

²⁴⁸ See K. Darwin, 'John Aislabie, 1670-1742', YAJ, 37, pp. 268-74.

²⁴⁹ Vyner MSS., VR244/7, Heneage Dering to (John Aislabie), 13 Aug. 1714.

and the need for consensus within the world that the voters inhabited.²⁵⁰

By 1715, and with the advent of the Hanoverian Succession, the status quo was returning to Yorkshire. At the borough level, purchase gave certain interests enough strength to control one or both seats, and with the defeat of the Jacobites and the introduction of the Septennial Act, this quelled much of Yorkshire's political activity. J.V. Becket is correct in asserting that the example of two weekly assemblies in York, one Whig and one Tory, showed how real party divisions were after Sacheverell. However, for the county as a whole, and in the important corporations of the West Riding and York itself, the party division was not wholly 'irreconcilable'.²⁵¹ It is probably true that the Hanoverian Succession strengthened local Whig ties. Sir William Robinson noted how the Yorkshire Whig M.P.'s met regularly at the 'Whisk Club' where, "all the Gentlemen meets at... to have supper and be merry."²⁵² These men probably discussed the political problems of the day at such clubs. However, it was the prerogative of more overt political clubs, such as the Kit Kat, to develop a greater party unity at the centre. In the shire, there is little evidence to suggest a diametrically opposed coffee-house culture, even at the

²⁵⁰ Vyner MSS., VR 240/3, 1708 and 1715 Pollbooks. In the 1708 poll the result was Aislabie 135, Sharp 116, Beckwith 42; In 1715, Aislabie 132, Castlecomer 109, Sharp 64. The pervasive influence of Aislabie secured the seats for the two Whigs.

²⁵¹ See J.V. Becket's introduction in C.Jones, ed., Britain in the First Age of Party, (London, 1985), p. 16.

²⁵² Vyner MSS., VR 6002/13854, Sir William Robinson to Metcalfe Robinson, 23 Feb. (1715).

social centre of the North, York. Such a culture did exist. For example, Thoresby writes of meetings at Garroways coffee-house in Leeds; and Sams in Pontefract was used by local dignitaries to discuss elections.²⁵³ However, York was not London. Although Sacheverell awakened party divisions, consensus and support for the Succession was paramount. Leisure contacts in Yorkshire were not permanently or irrevocably divided.

Consensus looked likely throughout the constituencies. This was especially so in the shire. Here, the period 1710-16 had been the nadir of the Whig position in the Triennial years. The effects of the Church issue in 1710 had negated all the good work done by the Magnates in the early years of Anne's reign, and by Strickland later. Moreover, the nature of the political consensus in Yorkshire was altered at the Sacheverell Election, which created a vice-like Tory grip on the shire seats, and this damaged the Whig position for almost two decades. The paucity of possible Whig candidates, the personal and ideological strength of the Tory Party, and the reversion to consensus politics were all prevalent features of post-1715 Yorkshire politics. With the decline in the influence of Wharton and Newcastle, Whiggery as a potent shire level force was defunct. By 1715, most corporators and freemen were happy to settle for a Tory consensus. The Whigs were left 'utterly undone'.

²⁵³ Ralph Thoresby the Topographer, vol. 1, p. 356.; Sheffield City Archives, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments, Bright Papers, Mic. MF98, Br 176, 18 Dec. 1699.

Conclusion: Whig failure?

"The only difference after all their rout, is that one is in and the other out."

- Charles Churchill

"I always voted at my parties call, And never thought of thinking for myself at all."

- Sir W. S. Gilbert.

Within Yorkshire in the period of the Triennial Act the Whigs were faced with huge difficulties. It was easy, given the nature of purchase and restricted franchises, for them to dominate or share borough representation. At the shire level, organisation had to be that much better and much more cohesive. One of the major difficulties was enunciated by Sir William Robinson:

(there is) a vast trouble in discharging the duty of a Parliament man, so many different interests to please, while in the place I serve for, so much is expected to be done for the citizens or friends during sessions of Parliament that one's never quiet...²⁵⁴

Once it was clear that local M.P.s were in constant demand from bodies such as corporations, their availability for party ends was diminished. At the shire level this meant that the Whigs were faced with a huge constituency and other pressures on their time. Whilst

²⁵⁴ Newby Hall MSS., NH 2913, Observations on his Retirement...by Sir William Robinson, 25 Mar. 1710.

they were strong in the boroughs, they lacked a cohesive unity across the county.

This draws a conflict with Addison, who stated that, "I find, however, that the knight (Sir Roger de Coverley) is a much stronger Tory in the country than in town, which, as he has told me, is absolutely necessary for the keeping up his interest."²⁵⁵ This would suggest more overt party actions in the shire than at Westminster, but it was much easier to act according to party principles in the political hothouse of London. The means of control for party chiefs was much stronger at the centre. Also, the development of party interest in Yorkshire depended on the popularity of certain figures in the county. This in turn depended upon the degree to which they could show an independent line in backing the county's interests.

The view of O'Gorman for the Hanoverian period, that 'The overriding strength of local considerations precluded the expression of any kind of "national" sentiment', could be said of Yorkshire prior to 1710. The Junto helped to superimpose national issues upon the locality, and in Yorkshire this cost them dear after 1710. O'Gorman's view of the electoral process as a 'complex and long-term dialogue with the community' rings true for what many in the county sought in the Triennial period.²⁵⁶ The most popular candidates, those whose support was county-wide were the Tories, Sir John Kaye and Lord Downe, and the Whigs Lord Irwin and Lord Fairfax. This was because the locality saw that positive representation depended on local men. For many party was not the be-all and end-all, unless one party cornered popular support on an issue of overriding importance.

²⁵⁵ Quoted in Speck, Tory and Whig, p. 33.

²⁵⁶ F. O'Gorman, Voters, Patrons and Parties, (London, 1989), pp. 5, 386.

The view of Beckett was that 'the feuds of Anne's reign were fought across the nation.'²⁵⁷ Whilst there is no doubt that issues like Sacheverell excited the populace, this view tends to negate the thought that the locality was separate from the centre. When added to Speck's view that 'The bulk of the electorate were... as firmly committed to the Tory or Whig side as were the Members of Parliament', there seems no doubt that any independence was trampled underfoot.²⁵⁸ Whilst I do not doubt that the pollbook evidence does show some support for this last view, I think it overplays the notion of party. Even among the higher echelons of county society where one would expect to find greater party unity the divide was not clear-cut. The local links between the Whig Lowthers and the Tory Kayes in the West Riding are testimony to this, as is the lack of party denomination at the races. It is dangerous to let the idea of party run away with the argument.

As far as Whig Party organisation was concerned, it is important to note that the Whigs never faced a joint Tory campaign before 1710 and their electoral chances were increased because of this. Before 1705 the Whigs never fielded a joint campaign, and their electoral strength in the shire was not tested by a contest. It was with the election of Lord Hartington that Whig organisation at the shire level grew. The Marquis built upon the strengths developed by Irwin in the support he gained from the Magnates. To this powerful base, he overcame the opposition to him as an outsider, and proved to be a strong parliamentarian and promoter of local issues. With the

²⁵⁷ J. V. Beckett, 'Introduction', in C. Jones ed., Britain, p. 16.

²⁵⁸ W. A. Speck, Tory and Whig, p. 114.

Grandeess directing the party in the locale, the appearance of the Whigs in Yorkshire was one of greater unity and inner strength.

This inner strength masked several major problems. Firstly, the Whigs were beset with a lack of candidates; they lost Irwin in 1702, Fairfax and Hartington in 1707. They were left with the poorly favoured Watson Wentworth, or with one of the Junto's lieutenants. By pushing the claims of Strickland and Darcy in 1708 the Whigs added further uncertainties. For Strickland and Darcy did not act as a team. Furthermore, they could not approach the level of support in the West Riding that was required to win a double seat in the election.

Irwin and Hotham, and Irwin and Strickland had forged a cross-county consensus that reached the West Riding. As the 1700s wore on the Whigs made little addition to this. Men such as Hotham and Robinson were not willing to take the risk and cost of an election campaign in the shire. Moreover, the common links of blood and favour that existed at a local level between men like Maister, Palmes, St. Quintin, Strickland and Hustler, did not aid party development in the shire. The lack of a county-wide network of interest meant that the focus for each Whig within the county was his own area of interest; in the county elections organisation depended upon the Junto.

The lack of a county-wide appeal and the strength of Tory sympathies in the West Riding made the Whig position untenable if an unfavourable issue arose. In 1708, at a time when the Whigs should have benefited from the threatened invasion by the Pretender, the party could only hold onto one seat. Neither Darcy nor Strickland made any headway in the West Riding, an area which was solidly Tory, despite the fact that the Tory candidates were not united. The community of interest in the county reflected a strong conservatism, that not even the power and clout of the Junto could affect. When the

Sacheverell crisis broke the Whigs were left high and dry. In fact the backlash against the Whigs was so strong that the Tories happily maintained their position at the county level, despite the Jacobite threat of 1715.

What is clear from a study of the Whig party in Yorkshire is that even the best organisation, built around significant local interests, could not overcome solid and determined local opposition. In periods of calm, the Junto could have success in the county; thus between 1695 and 1710 the Whigs had one sure county seat. However, this interest was nothing if faced with local indignation. This does tend to give the impression that the Whigs were simply marking time, that Toryism was the natural state of mind of the shire. High Whig intrusion during the Triennial period had done little to develop any long-term strengths. The local consensus after the Glorious Revolution that had promoted support for one Whig and one Tory, which had been disrupted by the Junto, returned under the Septennial Act. Unfortunately for the Whigs it was a Tory consensus that left little scope for them in shire politics.

Appendix: The 1708 Pollbook Database

The pollbook analysis was undertaken on an IBM 486 PC using the powerful relational database, Paradox 4.0. This database allows the user easy access to the information stored in it. The data in the pollbook itself is set-out in five main columns: voter's Name, Township, Riding, Hundred, Vote. The vote column is broken down into five sub-sections, one for each candidate, and each is given a number. Hence, Lord Downe is 1, Sir William Strickland is 2, Conyers Darcy is 3, Sir Arthur Kaye is 4, and Thomas Watson Wentworth is 5. Unfortunately there is no record of whether the Township column refers to the place of residence or to where the individual freehold was held. Had this information been included, the extent of Landlord influence would have been easier to determine, as opposed to the strength of communal and independent voting behaviour. Other information logged in the original fell into the voter's name column; these were clergyman, Gentleman, Esquire, Baronet and whether a voter was senior or junior. The convention undertaken in compiling the database was to include this after the freeholder's name in the following forms; ch for clergyman, gent for gentleman, Esq for Esquire, bt for Baronet, sr for senior and jr for junior. Any data required on the voting behaviour of these men can be accessed using the query forms of Paradox.

The database was set up along the lines of the original. The first column was Name, set out in alphabetical order by town; then Township, set out in alphabetical order as in the original; thirdly Riding, again as the pollbook dictated; finally Vote. This column recorded votes as doubles or singles, and assigned the following notations for the candidates; D for Downe, s for Strickland, d for Darcy, k for Kaye and w for Watson Wentworth. The candidates' votes

were recorded as in the original. Thus for example, a freeholder who plumped for Kaye was recorded as ---k; whereas a freeholder who polled for Strickland and Darcy was recorded as -sd--. Finally, some freeholder's places of habitation were either outside Yorkshire, or not being mentioned in the 'Index Villaris of Yorkshire', they were added at the end of the pollbook. This implies that the Township column did record place of dwelling and not necessarily where the freehold was located. These votes were noted in the same format as the rest but with the Riding column left empty.

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