But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

1 Tim. 5.8 (quoted by Warrington in a letter, 28 December 1744).

On 5 June 1713 George Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington, accepted a bribe from the Lord Treasurer, the Earl of Oxford, to vote with the ministry over the Malt Tax bill. It was a difficult political summer for Oxford. Just four days earlier he had been faced with a crisis which taxed even his considerable powers of parliamentary management. A combination of disgruntled Scots and Whigs had severely pressed him by jeopardizing the Anglo-Scottish union, in a division which the Court won by only four proxy votes. With the Malt Tax bill due for discussion, Oxford, presumably after making estimates as to the likely outcome of the vote, stared defeat in the face. His solution to the crisis was a bold one, the offer of a bribe to Warrington. Equally, Warrington’s acceptance was an extraordinary decision, a complete apostasy of his Whig Revolutionary background. Since entering the upper house in October 1696 he had been notable for his political independence. Now, despite strong Whig pressure, he appeared ready to accept money to help preserve Oxford in power. His decision was critical; the bill scraped home by 76 votes to 74. Had Warrington cast his vote the other way the result would have been a tie, which, by the rules of the House of Lords, would have ensured that the negative side (in this case the Whigs) carried the

1 See J. Swarbrick, “Dunham Massey Hall”, Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, for 1925, xlii (1927), 73.
However, the decision did not herald a long-term shift in Warrington's political outlook. In mid-June Oxford's forecast for the French Commercial bill — another crucial test for the ministry which in the event was defeated in the Commons — was that Warrington could be regarded only as 'pro q[uey]'. Furthermore, under the subsequent government of George I, Warrington's political behaviour reverted to his oft-proclaimed position of a general support for Whiggery suffused with a strong independent line. His antipathy to central government and the views he held of how his family's desperate financial plight had resulted from his father's and grandfather's too enthusiastic involvement in national politics, led him sometimes to support, and at other times to oppose, the ministry. His later opposition was tied closely to the non-payment and eventual withdrawal of a pension granted by the Hanoverian régime. The evidence suggests that some explanation needs to be found for Warrington's political apostacy in June 1713, and this article will examine his long political career (from 1696 until his death), his financial troubles, and the reasons why he might have been prepared to trade his vote for money. Warrington provides a fascinating example of an

2 A full study of this crisis can be found in G. Holmes and C. Jones, "Trade, the Scots and the Parliamentary Crisis of 1713", Parliamentary History, i (1983). Oxford's Parliamentary management of the Lords will be analyzed in C. Jones, "The Scheme Lords, the Necessitous Lords, and the Scots Lords": the Earl of Oxford and the 'Party of the Crown' in the House of Lords, 1711-14", in Party and Management in Parliament, 1660-1784, (ed.) C. Jones (forthcoming). Two other peers had also proved crucial to the result on 5 June: Lord Dupplin, who was the only Scottish peer to vote for the ministry (as he was in the Union division on 1 June), but as Oxford's son-in-law and one of his dozen peers of 1711/12 he could hardly have been expected to do otherwise; and Lord Home who was absent with a hangover!

3 British Library, Loan 29/10/3: list of c. 13 June 1713 on the possible voting on the French Commercial Treaty bill.

4 This article has been made possible by the availability of two sets of manuscript papers. First, Warrington's correspondence with Oxford, 18 April 1713-10 June 1714, which survives in B.L., Loan 29/127/1, and second, the Booth family papers. Formerly at Dunham Massey, the family home near Altrincham in Cheshire, these were deposited in the John Rylands University Library at the request of Lord Stamford, who bequeathed the property to the National Trust in 1976. We should like to thank the National Trust and the staff of the Rylands Library, particularly Miss Glenise A. Matheson, Keeper of Manuscripts, for their help in enabling us to work on the Dunham Massey papers (hereafter D.M.P.). In this article we are primarily concerned with finance and politics. Readers interested in the house and gardens are referred to the
impoverished peer desperately trying to balance his accounts whilst steering an independent political course. It will be suggested that his acceptance of Oxford's bribe in June 1713 was at least in part a result of financial difficulties which were allowed on this one occasion to cloud his political judgment.

Warrington was a peer who, though he held office at neither central nor local government level, took sufficient interest in politics to be, by contemporary standards, a regular attender of the House of Lords. Yet he was not wealthy, and parliamentary service threw a heavy financial burden upon peers and bishops with slender or erratic incomes. A number of peers were so financially embarrassed by attending Parliament that they could only do so regularly because they received pensions from the Court or alternative funding from members of their own party. These peers were known as 'poor lords'. At times of political crisis when the attendance of as many peers as possible was crucial, great efforts were made by both political parties to encourage their respective 'poor lords' to attend. In such crises the Court or ministry of the day had an edge over their opponents because, through pensions or even offers of office, they had access to more regular and generous financial resources. Thus, in the last four years of Queen Anne's reign, Oxford was able to keep several nominal Whigs tied to his predominantly Tory ministry through their financial obligations. Such indebtedness was not a cast-iron bond, and if a political situation occurred where conscience or old

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relevant articles (by John Harris, John Hardy and Gervase Jackson-Stops, and J. F. Hayward) in Apollo (July 1978), and to Mr. Jackson-Stops' contributions to Country Life, 4 June, pp. 1562-5, 11 June, pp. 1664-8, 2 July, pp. 18-21, and 9 July 1981, pp. 106-9. Parts II and III of this series are mainly concerned with the activities of the 2nd Earl of Warrington, in particular with the architectural development of the house (11 June) and Warrington's various collections (2 July).

5 For the burden placed on a bishop with a net income of about £500 a year, for example, see The London Diaries of Bishop Nicolson of Carlisle, 1702-18, (eds.) C. Jones and G. Holmes (Oxford, forthcoming). Nicolson reckoned to spend between £100 and £200 a session, while Warrington calculated he spent £195 (see p. 23).

6 In the crisis years of 1713-14 when Whig finances were at a low ebb, the Junto unsuccessfully approached the Elector of Hanover for funds to try to wean away the poor lords from ministerial influence. E. L. Ellis, "The Whig Junto", (Oxford, D. Phil., 1961), p. 779; E. Gregg and C. Jones, "Hanover, Pensions and 'Poor Lords' 1712-13", Parliamentary History, i (1983).
party loyalties grew too strong, then the 'poor lord' or the Court Whig whose office and natural deference to the Court normally kept them cooperative might break loose and vote with the opposition. This usually took the form of a single gesture of defiance, and the errant peer soon returned to the fold. Some of the more unscrupulous peers, or those with flexible political principles, would use these times of crisis to try to extract additional financial benefit from the ministry. The peace with France and the question of the Protestant Succession in the last two years of Anne's reign placed a growing strain on this system, and eventually even one of the poorest of the 'poor lords', Willoughby of Parham, and one of the most deferential of the Whig courtiers, the Duke of Kent, abandoned the ministry for the Whig opposition. On the surface Warrington would seem to have been the ideal candidate for such financial pressure, but two factors placed him apart from the 'poor lords' and the Whig Court peers. First, although he was in monetary difficulties for much of his life, these were not on the same scale as those of the true 'poor lord' whose income from his estate (even assuming he had one) was often negligible. Second, the financial difficulties which Warrington inherited were, in his opinion, largely due to his predecessors' too close involvement in national, and particularly Court, politics. Thus while he had sufficient money to avoid going cap in hand to government, he was also intellectually and

For example, the conduct of the Earl of Cholmondeley, Court Whig Treasurer of the Household (and opponent of Warrington in Cheshire politics; see below, pp. 30-33), when he voted against the ministry over 'No peace without Spain' on 7 and 8 December 1711 (G. Holmes, British Politics in the Age of Anne (1967), pp. 227-8; C. Jones, "The Division that Never Was: New Evidence on the Aborted Vote in the Lords on 8 December 1711 on 'No Peace without Spain'", Parliamentary History, (forthcoming)). Cholmondeley was, however, a Whig at Court and a Tory in Cheshire.

Lord Hunsdon, for example, only promised to vote for the ministry on 8 December 1711 if they doubled his pension. What he actually acquired was a bounty of £1000 (Holmes, British Politics, pp. 385, 515).

The lands associated with the title Willoughby of Parham were reported to be worth a mere £100 a year. The 13th Lord was bailed out by Oxford in 1713 with a royal bounty of £400 but died within a month. His brother, the 14th Lord, preferred to accept financial support from the Junto (B. L., Add. MS. 17677 GGG, f. 229: L'Hermitage, 19/30 June 1713; Loan 29/127/5: Sir Roger Bradshaigh to Oxford, 20 September 1713; Calendar of Treasury Books, xxvii (1713), 137).
emotionally averse to involvement with the Court. Oxford, whose political antennae were perhaps the most finely tuned of any politician of his generation, probably discerned these differences. He realised that, apart from the one desperate gamble of June 1713, Warrington was not the type of man to be tied to the ministry by financial obligations.

The touchstone of a member of the House of Lords' political allegiance was his voting in divisions. Of the fifteen division lists which have survived from the period 1696-1713 Warrington was listed in only five. His record in these votes was mixed; in three he supported the Whigs and in two the Tories. In the other two areas of political activity which can be used to assess a peer's political inclinations Warrington's record was also inconsistent. Between 1699 and 1709 he signed five protests dissenting from votes in the Lords, three times with Tories and twice with a mixed group of Tories and Whigs, while between 1702 and 1715 on only one out of nine occasions in which he was involved in holding or leaving his proxy vote was a Tory concerned. It is significant, however, that in 1712, the nearest session to 1713 for which proxy evidence has survived, Warrington both left his proxy with and held the proxy of the Whig Junto member, Lord Halifax. Throughout the Oxford ministry, however, Halifax had kept in close contact by letter or by meetings with the Lord Treasurer. Oxford used him as a source of information on Junto strategy, while

11 A Register of Parliamentary Lists, 1660-1761, (eds.) D. Hayton and C. Jones, and its supplement (Leicester, 1979 and 1982). Warrington supported the Whigs over the attainder of Sir John Fenwick in 1696 (H. Horwitz, Parliament, Policy and Politics in the Reign of William III (Manchester, 1977), p. 336), the East India Company bill of 1700 (Public Record Office, C 113 37), and the impeachment of Dr. Sacheverell in 1710 (Holmes, British Politics, p. 433). He supported the Tories in the impeachment of Lord Somers in 1701, and over the first Occasional Conformity bill in 1703 (ibid.).

12 J. E. Rogers, Protests of the House of Lords (3 vols., Oxford, 1875), i. 135-87; House of Lords Record Office, Proxy Book, vii (unfoliated). Socially, what little evidence is available shows that in early 1710, at least, Warrington was mixing with Whig, Tory and Court peers in equal numbers (P. R. O., C 104/113, pt. 2: Lord Ossulston's diary [vol. iii, unfoliated], 27 February, 16 March 1710). In October 1711 Warrington told his uncle, George Booth, "I wish the whigs may be so strong, as that one vote would be of service to them; but I doubt it; however, I'll take care to have a proxy in town when the Parliament meets". (Gloucestershire R.O., Beaufort MSS., D 2700/100.5.2). We should like to thank the Duke of Beaufort for allowing us to quote from his papers and Andrew Federer for bringing this source to our attention.
Halifax tried to induce Oxford into some agreement with the Junto against the Tory extremists. This contact paid off in 1714 when the Junto and Oxford worked to help frustrate the ambitions of Lord Bolingbroke. Warrington's politically mixed record and his closeness to Halifax may have attracted Oxford's attention. Certainly on the surface Warrington, with his severe financial problems and professed Whiggish independence, ought to have proved fertile ground for Oxford in his attempt to build a non-party government of both Whig and Tory moderates. By 1713, however, it was clear that this ideal had founded in the treacherous seas of the Peace agreement at Utrecht, and it was to be dashed to pieces in 1714 on the rocks of the Protestant Succession. Nonetheless Oxford persisted in his attempt to keep certain nominal Whigs tied to his government, and his approach to Warrington in the summer of 1713 does not seem to have been made without good hope of success, despite Warrington's contrary claim. In the autumn of 1710, shortly after Oxford's accession to power on the fall of Godolphin, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer (as Harley then was) drew up an assessment of friend, foe and neutral in the Lords in preparation for the coming session. Warrington was listed as an opponent of the Tory ministry. Barely a year later, Oxford's attitude to Warrington had changed. He considered it worthwhile to include him on a canvassing list for the crucial vote on 7 December 1711 on 'No peace without Spain'. Warrington was not in the House on that day, but Oxford was sufficiently encouraged by his stance in 1712 to include him again on a canvassing list in February 1713 in preparation for the new session. On 6 April 1713, Russell Robartes, Whig MP for Bodmin, younger brother of the Earl of Radnor, and brother-in-law of Warrington, wrote to Oxford to convey Warrington's wishes that he was prepared to perform any service asked of him. Twelve days later Warrington himself wrote

13 "I did not ask off your Lordship, nor do I want it to buy my Bread: your Lordship promising it was a great surprise to me" (B.L., Loan 29 127/1: 10 June 1714).
14 B.L., Loan 29/10/19: list dated 3 October 1710.
15 B.L., Loan 29/10/14: lists dated 2 December 1711, 26 February 1713.
16 He had married Warrington's younger sister Mary in 1694. Though a clear Whig until late 1710, he became a staunch supporter of Oxford's ministry. This may have been partly due to his succeeding to his uncle's lucrative office of a Teller of the Exchequer in October 1710. We should like to thank Dr. Eveline Cruickshanks for this information.
to Oxford with the same message. Why he should have done so remains a mystery, and as Oxford's letters to Warrington do not seem to have survived, it is not possible to know if he was responding to an initiative from Oxford. All we know is that Oxford had regarded Warrington as a possible political ally. Warrington's next letter, written from his Cheshire home on 11 May, shows that there had been recent personal contact between the two men in London when Oxford had shown Warrington "such Great Civilitys" and had spoken "soe very obligingly concerning me". Warrington also apologised for leaving his "Proxy not to your likeing, which if I had apprehended, I would have been very cautious for". Thus the ground had been partly prepared for what proved to be Oxford's successful approach to Warrington on the morning of 5 June 1713. The central question, however, is whether Warrington responded positively because of a shift in his political loyalties or because he realised he was in a position to extract money from Oxford for his vote?

The 2nd Earl of Warrington inherited his family estates, centred on Dunham Massey in Cheshire, on the death of his father in 1694. He found them heavily encumbered by debt, which he attributed to his family's expenditure in the Protestant cause in the late seventeenth century. Sir George Booth, 1st Baron Delamer (1622-84), inherited his father's property in 1652 free of debt, but "by several chargeable public employments and undertakings for the public service, and by other extraordinary occasions, the said Sir George Booth hath contracted great debts which the ordinary revenue and casual fines ... will not ... discharge". Although debts of £9000 were covered by a parliamentary grant of £10,000, mortgages, bond debts and unpaid portions amounted to £29,274 in 1661. Private legislation was obtained to break the estate settlement, and enable Sir George to lease and sell certain properties. As a result 300 tenements were sold, but the situation remained difficult and called for further economies. Adam Martindale, resident chaplain to Delamer until he died in 1684,

17 B.L., Loan 29/155/3: Robartes to Oxford, 6 April 1713; 29/127/1: Warrington to Oxford, 18 April 1713. Robartes confirmed in a letter of 1 January 1714 (29/155/6) that he had been instrumental in bringing Warrington and Oxford together.

18 B.L., Loan 29/127/1: 11 May 1713. No official proxy records have survived for the 1713 session.
found his salary gradually reduced from £40 to only £15. At Delamer’s death the situation was critical because he had made no provision for portions. His son and heir, Henry (1652-94), was uncompromisingly Protestant, active in the Exclusion crisis (as a result of which he was removed from the Commission of the Peace and relieved of the post of Custos Rotulorum for Cheshire), imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1683 on suspicion of complicity in the Rye House Plot, and twice more on the grounds of high treason during the first year of James II’s reign. After being acquitted of trying to raise Cheshire on behalf of the Duke of Monmouth, he lived quietly on his estate until the Revolution. His activity in promoting the Prince of Orange’s cause in northern England marked him out for an important position, and in April 1689 he was made number two at the Treasury, and Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Cheshire. He only stayed at the Treasury for about a year because of mutual antipathy between himself and his superior, the Earl of Monmouth, as a result of which real power passed to Lord Godolphin. In recognition of past services, however, Delamer was created Earl of Warrington in 1690, and given a pension of £2000 p.a. together with a grant of all lands owned by Jesuits in six counties, reported to be worth £800 a year. Although he remained active in the House of Lords, he retired increasingly to his country estate, where he died on 2 January 1694.

The cost of this political activity was considerable. The first earl calculated his expenditure on four parliamentary elections for Cheshire as £1000, and his time in the Tower and trial as £2000. But this was only part of the trouble. He had been left to find

20 G.E.C., Complete Peerage, vol. xii, pt. 2, pp. 353-5; Calendar of Treasury Books, ix, pt. 2 (1689-91), 469-74; Huntington Library, California, HM 30659: Newsletter, 22 March 1689/90. As for the land in six counties, the only other evidence relating to this is from 1722. Warrington was asked by the Surveyor-General about a 31-year grant of land in Herefordshire and Monmouthshire made to his father in 1689. Warrington claimed that he knew nothing of the grant until he inherited the estate in 1694 when he was advised that “if I’d make any thing of it, it must be begun a new, it having been all on a wrong foot”. For various reasons he allowed the matter to drop: “I never had a shilling advantage from the grant” (D.M.P.: J. Pulteney to Warrington, 31 July 1722, Warrington to Pulteney, 3 August 1722).
£18,200 for his sisters' portions, and he had also paid £1150 for annuities for his brothers. In addition he was paying annuities of £1183 a year. Add to this £1050 for his father's funeral and for Coronation expenses, £440 lost in bad debts and £355 for the renewal of a lease, and his difficulties are apparent for an estate yielding just over £2000 rent annually. His debts may have totalled £50,000 by 1688.21 According to the second earl, the first earl's wife Mary, only surviving child and heiress of Sir James Langham of Cottesbrooke in Northamptonshire, had sold dressing plate to make ends meet when the first earl was in the Tower. Again she was desperately short of money in the winter of 1687-8, even borrowing from servants. No money was available for furnishing the family home of Dunham Massey, and the first earl could spare his wife only £400 pin money and £10 a year for each of her six children. The second earl claimed to remember his father weeping in the year before the Revolution at the greatness of his debts, and after his wife's death in March 1691 to have left off public display in order to save money. 22 Under the circumstances, his appeals to the government in the early 1690s to pay his pension from William III (only the first six monthly instalment was actually remitted) are hardly surprising.

When the first earl died he bequeathed an inheritance which was far from enviable. His estate income in 1694 was £2100 (plus fines and heriots), which was not large for a peer. Gregory King, the late seventeenth-century statistician, estimated the average income for the peerage at around £2800 in 1688, but modern commentators think that such a figure is too low, and that £6000 would be more realistic. 23 Warrington claimed that his family had recogni-

21 D.M.P.: "Notes of my father's concerning his debts", c. 1688. The second Lord Stawell was rumoured to have left debts of £60,000 in 1692. His half-brother, the 3rd Lord Stawell, was a 'poor lord' who received a bounty of £1000 from the ministry in November 1712. The debts had been accumulated by spending over £100,000 on rebuilding Low Ham, Somerset, the family seat, which was never finished. The trustees eventually had to sell most of the property (P.R.O. Ireland, Wyche, MSS. 1/63: W[illiam] B[all] to Sir Cyril Wyche, 8 December 1692; Holmes, British Politics, p. 388n; J. Collinson, History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset (Bath, 1791), iii, 495-6).
And when my father was made an earl, my grandmother wished he had been better advised, saying she knew what the estate could do, it was not adequate to that quality, and my father himself was so far sensible of it, that he forbore taking out his patent till King William gave him a pension along with it, though afterwards ill paid.

But the real problem was not so much the size of income as the extent of unavoidable commitments. The first earl died indebted to shopkeepers and tradesmen, undertakers and election managers, whilst servants' wages had been neglected, in some cases for many years. The second earl claimed that he was ready to forgive such a situation:

Although my father possessing the estate only 9 years 5 months had not time to endeavour the lessening the encumbrances my grandfather left on him, by reason of the great costs of his long imprisonment and trial just after he came to the estate, and soon after that his rising for the Revolution, which expenses, together with his provisions for my brothers and sisters, much increased the debt that fall on me.

However, the situation was compounded by the first earl's Will, which his son believed to have been a mistake, and which he attempted to conceal. This had been drawn up prior to the Revolution in case anything happened to the first earl at that time. It had not been changed, which the second earl believed to be a result of his father's careless habits. Unfortunately the Will added a further series of bequests to the existing mountain of debt. The second earl claimed to believe that servants had persuaded his father not to change the Will, and he poured scorn on the inventory drawn up in 1694. This totalled £9851, but was appraised, so he claimed, by "ignorant country men who knows not the value of furniture, plate, jewels or other things, and

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24 D.M.P.: "Draft of a letter to my brother H[enry] B[ooth] upon his frequent teasing me for not affecting to be popular by living in a splendid publick Manner", 13 July 1722 (hereafter 1722 letter). Warrington described his father as being "loaded with another coronet" upon his elevation to the earldom (Swarbrick, "Dunham Massey", p. 73).


26 D.M.P.: "Thoughts concerning my father's will, 16 October 1688".
accordingly set on many things excessively more than they were worth". 27

As a result of his doubts concerning the validity of the Will, the second earl apparently decided that he would be better served by suppressing it, even though it came to light within three weeks of his father’s death. In October 1696 his sister was trying to persuade him to reveal the contents of the Will, which was known to have been drawn up, but which the second earl claimed had disappeared. According to the first earl’s brother, Cecil, who brought a petition in the House of Lords in 1697, by concealment the second earl had avoided paying him a small annuity out of the settled estates, and had also “endeavoured to deprive his sister of part of her portion, and turned his two brothers for three years together to live on the charity of relations, though provided for by their father”. 28 The distrust in the family is apparent from the fact that Elizabeth, the eldest sister of Warrington, had been made guardian of the two younger brothers following their father’s death. She had brought them up at her own expense often, indeed, with considerable difficulty. In addition to this concealment, Warrington claimed to be unable to pay his sisters’ portions. The first earl had created a trust to raise the portions — of £5000 each — which were to be paid either at marriage or when Elizabeth and Mary reached the age of twenty-one. Warrington informed the chief trustee, Sir John Mainwaring, in June 1694 that his financial position made it impossible for him to pay, but he suggested a scheme whereby he would make instalment payments as a sign of his goodwill. The two daughters refused to accept such terms, and requested the trustees to use their powers to raise the money. In fact the trust was not executed, but in 1695 agreement was reached to allow Mary’s husband, Russell Robartes, to raise £1000 on the security of her unpaid portion. 29

27 D.M.P.: “A True and Present Inventory”.
28 H.M.C., House of Lords MSS., n.s., ii, 542-5; Cheshire R.O., Arderne MSS., DAR/A/61: E. Booth to J. Crewe, 5 October 1696. According to Cecil Booth’s petition, the fraud eventually came to light when Warrington quarrelled with one of his accomplices.
29 Cheshire R.O., Arderne MSS., DAR/A/61. To be fair, Warrington’s brothers and sisters were not unprovided for since they had benefitted in 1692 from the Will of Sarah, Duchess of Somerset, their maternal great-aunt. She bequeathed Little Ashley in Bradford, Wiltshire, to Langham Booth, together with £2000 to be invested in land, and £3000 to be invested in land for Henry
George Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington

Clearly Warrington was not a man to be trusted, although there can be little doubt that the financial difficulties in 1694 were acute. He had to find a jointure and six annuities totalling £933 6s 8d a year, tithe and rent charges of £74, interest payments of £1040 11s on a principal debt of £19,200, and £900 for annuities and interest of portions to his brothers and sisters. By his own calculations he had unavoidable commitments of £2948 a year, after taxes and incidental outgoings, from an income of £2100: “and moreover the maintaining all my father’s family, which by the Will he desired should be continued together in their several places; and at the same time no manner of provision for the maintenance, education or even buying bread for me his eldest son and heir, who must have been in a condition so much worse than nothing”. Nonetheless, once Warrington had been found out, he acted honourably. In 1698 he executed a trust to ensure that the £200 annuities to his younger brothers were paid, and he later claimed that after the Will had been adjudged to be valid “I performed all the contents of it, save the maintaining such of my father’s servants as I had dismissed”. It must have been hard going, however, and he looked back in 1722 to “the time I had not a shilling to live on... I would not wish my worst enemy to go through the straights I have left, to be driven to the like melancholy dilemma”.

To make matters worse, Warrington found the estate had been neglected. Dunham Massey Hall and outhousing were “in such rotten condition and very barely furnished with worn out goods as

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Booth. Both Elizabeth and Mary received plate, in addition to £3000 and £4000 respectively, which was to be invested for them at the age of twenty-one or at marriage (Wiltshire R.O., Ailesbury MSS., 1300 299A, B).

30 D.M.P.: “Debts of my Father’s when he made his Will, 16 October 1688”. The figures given here are derived from this document, which was several years out of date by the time Warrington inherited. However, there is little to suggest that the situation had altered in any great measure, although the second earl slightly exaggerates by making an allowance out of the rental for his mother’s jointure. Since she predeceased her husband, this was not payable. It implies that Warrington was concerned to show the estate in the worse possible light.

31 Cheshire R.O., Arderne MSS., DAR/A/61: Indenture 12 April 1698; D.M.P.: 1722 letter. Warrington’s view of his family’s sacrifice was shared by at least one other inhabitant of Cheshire, who agreed that “your family has run to the ruin of them selves, and soe noble an estate for the defence of their Country” (Cheshire R.O., Arderne MSS., DAR/A 61: [?] to [Warrington], 22 Jan 1708; see also same to [?Langham Booth], n.d.).
had been far more prudent for me never to have come lived in it, than attempted to keep it up". He later claimed that "Dunham was so decayed as forced me to rebuild it, for it could not have lasted safe another generation", while the buildings both at Dunham "and all our demesnes and farm houses were in the utmost disorder for want of repairs". Apart from the annual income, the only substantial sum that the second earl could call upon to repay debts and finance the building programme was the first earl’s personal estate of £ 4738. Other sums of money due to the family seem never to have been paid, in particular part of the portion of Warrington’s mother. When articles were drawn prior to her marriage to the first earl in 1670 she was promised a portion of £ 20,000 by her father Sir James Langham. The first half of this sum was to be paid within three months of the ceremony, and the rest within six months of Langham’s death. The first instalment was paid, but Sir James outlived his daughter, and in 1698 Warrington brought a Chancery suit to oblige him to pay over the rest. Apart from his own pressing financial difficulties Warrington was aware that Langham, though “very aged and infirm”, had recently remarried. According to Warrington he intended to repudiate the debt. The parties reached an out-of-Court agreement, but this was not the end of the affair. Langham died in 1699 but, according to Warrington, the money was neither paid within six months nor paid in full:

of this £ 10,000 I lost £3950 of the principal, and by the time of my receiving it I lost 14 years interest of £ 10,000, which at 5 per cent would have been £7000. So what in principal and interest I lost £10,950 agreed to be paid as part of my mother’s portion by her marriage articles.

If this claim was true, then clearly misfortune was added to improvidence.

Nonetheless, Warrington’s financial position was not unique. Landed families whose income failed to provide them with sufficient surplus with which to keep up their social position were not uncommon in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England. They could either live above their means and trust to complaisant creditors, or they could retrench their activities in an attempt to

33 H.M.C., House of Lords MSS., n.s., iii. 364-5.
34 D.M.P.: “Notes of my father’s concerning his debts”, c. 1688.
live within their income. Living with debt became easier during the seventeenth century because changes in the mortgage laws produced a long-term and secure form of borrowing without fear of foreclosure, at least while the interest on a loan was regularly paid. Even so, the policy adopted by a family largely depended on the individual heir involved, and his personal predilection either for a life of dissipation and expense, or for parsimony and retrenchment. Warrington represented the latter. Like his father and grandfather before him, he was a man of deeply-held religious scruples, but, unlike them, he was not prepared to tolerate indebtedness. It was his declared intention to restore the family finances, and he even told his brother that to borrow money would end his life.35

Such a decision may have been admirable, but he still had to find some way of carrying out his intentions. The obvious way for an impoverished gentleman to raise capital was to sell land, but this involved loss of status. Almost certainly, however, Warrington could not avoid this course, although the only evidence of his land market dealings is a claim made later in life regarding his estate to the effect that “I was necessitated to sell part of it”. The other possibility was marriage: “My incumbrances being greater than I could struggle with”, he later told his brother, “to make money (to ease me of some part) the chief view in marriage”.36 In 1694 he was said to be about to marry a Welsh heiress worth £3000 or £4000 a year. Three years later he was reported to have married a daughter of Lord Crew, an unfounded report since in 1699 he was negotiating to marry Madam Offley of Crew Hall.37 In 1701 his uncle, George Booth, was paid to negotiate a marriage treaty between Warrington and one of the two daughters of John Oldbury, a rich London merchant: “the marriage was to help the earl extricate himself from great encumbrances on his estate”. George Booth agreed to pay 1000 guineas to two agents responsible for bringing the match about, and it was arranged in March 1702. Warrington paid the money (with interest) in September, and he married Mary Oldbury, the elder of

36 D. M. P.: “The laws of nature oblige me to provide for my child before a cousin”; 1722 letter.
the two daughters, who was said to have a fortune of £40,000. The case did not end there, since Warrington discovered that his uncle had retained the money, and in 1711 Chancery upheld his claim that Booth should pay him back.³⁸ Such alliances between land and money, though gradually becoming more socially acceptable, were still rare; only 3 per cent of aristocratic men married daughters of wealthy merchants during the eighteenth century, and as late as the 1780s such matches could still be frowned upon. It is a measure of Warrington’s financial position that he should marry in the City rather than seek out the daughter of a fellow landowner. His wife is reputed to have assigned over her fortune to help with the payment of his debts, but if the marriage was successful as a financial transaction, it was far from happy at a personal level. Warrington complained on a number of occasions that he lacked the benefit of a frugal and discreet wife, and the partners actually came to live apart in the same house after the birth of their daughter in 1704. Warrington wrote a pamphlet in 1739 urging divorce on the grounds of incompatibility.³⁹

In spite of land sales and a lucrative marriage, more than twenty

³⁸ P. R. O., Powis MSS., 30/53/8/101: Henry Tate to John Oldbury, 4 August 1701 (information by courtesy of David Hayton); H. M. C., House of Lords MSS., n.s. x, 270-1. Details of the case are given in Gloucestershire R. O., Beaufort MSS., D2700/100.5.2, where it is stated that the portion was actually £24,000.

³⁹ R. Trumbach, The Rise of the Egalitarian Family (1978), p. 84; W. A. Speck, “Conflict in Society”, in Britain after the Glorious Revolution, (ed.) G. S. Holmes (1969), pp. 145-6; D. M. P.: 1715 letter, 1722 letter; D. N. B., ii, 841. Francis Herbert had married Oldbury’s younger daughter “said to be worth to him £60,000 sterling” (Post Boy, 24-26 February 1702, information by courtesy of David Hayton) but actually having only the same portion as her sister—£24,000 (Gloucestershire R. O., Beaufort MSS., D2700/100.5.2). In this latter source there is a letter from Warrington to his uncle, dated 30 October, 1711, setting out some of his complaints about his wife. In his opinion London was “not a suitable place to make a long stay in with one’s Family, when a wife is so far from taking care, or ordering any thing; that I believe she never bestowed one thought towards management of anything that’s mine... I have no hopes of an amendment; especially when the only commendable quality, viz. that she seemed good-natured, and easy in being advised, is turned to a sower dogged temper, whenever she’s told any thing that could make her appear like other ladies... its a black view to consider ones whole life must be worn out with one of no conversation nor any good quality, but being virtuous, in the narrow sense, that comprehensive word is used; tho’ sometimes she’ll have such discourse, where she’s free, as dont become a virtuous woman: and a little matter would bring on strong liquors...”
years after he inherited the estate Warrington’s financial position was still far from comfortable. By 1715 his wife’s portion and a frugal lifestyle enabled him to pay £43,358 of the principal—including mortgages, judgments, bonds, funeral charges and ordinary tradesmens’ bills—and £12,190 interest. Such a task had taken “a great deal of care and pains”. He had also managed to fit out the old chapel at Dunham Massey, install a library, and begin planting out formal avenues of trees through the deer park. He had also started buying furniture. Prior to 1694 only a few rooms had been furnished, and those not—in Warrington’s opinion—on a splendid scale. Celia Fiennes had found the furniture old-fashioned when she passed through in 1698.40 Thus by 1715 the balance sheet stood as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>£</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rents</td>
<td>2769</td>
<td>Rents</td>
<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fines (medium)</td>
<td>1419</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>409</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Annuities</td>
<td>1154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>4188</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>1866</td>
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<td>1866</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2222</td>
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</tbody>
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Even after two decades of retrenchment the earl still had 45 per cent of his income spoken for in advance, a reminder that the difference between gross and net for a landed gentleman could be of considerable significance. In addition, his housekeeping and stables at Dunham Massey accounted for £986, visits to London £195,41 wages and liveries £237, clothes, pocket-money and daughter’s clothes £221. Warrington does not mention that he received a gift of £100 for his daughter’s upkeep from Sir Edward


41 In 1710-11 and 1715, at least for the parliamentary sessions, Warrington had a house, probably rented, in the Haymarket (Cheshire R.O., Arderne MSS., DAR/A/61: Warrington to [?Sir John Crewe], 7 December 1710; Northumberland R.O., Blackett (Matfen) MSS., ZBL 191, Blackett’s ‘Newby’ Letterbook, iii [unfoliated]: [Sir Edward] to [Christopher Blackett], [?3 July] 1715); in 1716 he was living in Poland Street (H.M.C., Cowper MSS., iii. 117); in 1719 “at the Blew Posts in Duke Street, near Piccadilly” (D.M.P.: George James to Warrington, 24 January 1719); and in 1722 in Marlborough Street (B.L., Add. MS. 61496, f. 55 [formerly Blenheim MS. DI-33]: Warrington to [Sunderland], 18 April 1722).
Blackett. With all these outgoings he was left with just £600 for repairs to the hall, outhousing, park and demesnes, and for buying furniture. 42

Given the gravity of Warrington's position it would not have been entirely surprising if he had accepted money for his voting services in the House of Lords. Even so, his record of independence makes it seem, at least on the face of things, that he would have been unlikely to accept a cash sum for his vote. The explanation for his decision to accept Oxford's bribe in 1713 lies in his deeper convictions that his family had received shabby treatment for their service in the Protestant cause. This belief governed his whole attitude to politics. In 1715, responding to a request from his brother Henry that he live in a more popular and public manner, he wrote that: 43

at the rate our family had lived, and served the public, they could neither furnish the house with necessary goods, nor hardly keep the house itself up; nor lay up anything towards childrens' portions... From all which I infer that all this taken together is a very strong proof that our family has served the public to a greater degree, and made a greater figure than the estate at its best could hold out to do.

He believed courtiers had failed to appreciate his family's difficulties, and they had failed to reward his father in terms commensurate with the energy he had expended. As he reminded Henry in 1722, despite the activity of their father and grandfather in the Protestant cause, “how long did either of them continue in favour when they would not be servile courtiers?” For every person who increased his estate by court service, he added, ten “improve their estate more by constant frugal living at their own homes”. 44

42 D.M.P.: 1715 letter. Blackett was Warrington's uncle by marriage (his wife was Diana, Lady Delaval), and he and his wife regarded themselves as Warrington's daughter's grandparents, as the real ones were dead. The money, described as an allowance, was paid in half-yearly instalments, although no indication is given of whether it was paid other than in 1715 (Blackett Letterbook, as in note 41 above: [Blackett] to [Warrington], 16 [March], 18 September 1715).

43 D.M.P.: 1715 letter.

44 D.M.P.: 1722 letter. According to G. E. Mingay (English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century (1963), p. 78) government office, “for the most part... was of secondary importance to existing great landlords, although it helped them to expand their estates and rise to new levels of splendour and luxury”. While some landowners certainly made vast profit from office, for others the expense of
himself was determined to eschew government office, and to vote in Parliament as his conscience demanded, since he could see nothing to be gained by pandering to politicians. Although in later years Warrington was to claim that he came from unsullied Whig Revolution stock, his political stance in the Lords from the time of his coming of age shows that the epithet independent would be more appropriate. He wrote in a letter to Oxford, “[I] have never tied myself to any sort of persons, but considered Things to the best of my small reason”, although he did qualify this by adding that “it has always been my desire as I knew it my duty to do whatever were in my way as I thought for Her Majesties Service”.

The important point in June 1713 was that the ‘bribe’ was not a straight money-for-vote transaction, for what Oxford offered was no less than the outstanding arrears of Warrington’s father’s pension, granted by William III. In 1690 the first earl, or, as he then was, Lord Delamer, had been granted an annuity of £2000 payable quarterly “during pleasure”. Only the £1000 for the half year to Michaelmas 1690 had actually been paid, leaving a total of £6500 outstanding when the earl died in 1694. Oxford proposed that in return for Warrington’s vote on the Malt Tax bill the money should be paid. It is not possible to be sure whether Warrington would have supported the Malt Tax bill without Oxford’s intervention. His previous political record certainly led Oxford to the conclusion that he might be persuaded and that such a desperate last-minute approach would be successful. For his part, Warrington could temper the reality that he was being bought, with the thought that at least he was being bought with

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45 While accepting allegiance to Hardwicke and Newcastle, Warrington wrote that the government’s enemies “would remember what my family did towards preserving our liberties so happily secured under our present establish-ment”, while Newcastle wrote that “Your Lordship’s family had a great share in bringing about the late happy Revolution ... And your Own Principles are so well known” (B. L., Add. MS. 35989, f. 131: Warrington to Hardwicke, 28 December 1746; D. M. P.: Newcastle to Warrington, 9 October 1745).
46 B. L., Loan 29/127/1: Warrington to [Oxford], 11 May 1713.
47 D. M. P.: “Certificate, 2 June 1714, Arrears of Henry, Earl of Warrington’s pension”.

money already due to his family. This was certainly the interpretation that he chose to put upon the matter; he made it plain that had he wanted straight cash. Oxford's position was such on 5 June 1713 that "I believe your Lordship would gladly that morning have given double that sum and paid it down to have been sure of carrying that bill at that time." Only later was he to recognise that this was not how Oxford saw it:

I conceived when you promised me that Money, it was not so much for such a debt being due from the late King [to my father] that her Majesty was pleased to order me that sum, as that her Majesty would by some mark of her favour encourage me in serving her particularly on that present occasion.

Enlightenment apparently dawned on Warrington when Oxford failed to perform his side of the bargain. It had been arranged that the outstanding sum should be paid in instalments, and throughout the summer and autumn of 1713 Warrington pressed for payment of all or part of this sum. Oxford's inaction apparently reflected a belief that Warrington was untrustworthy, and, presumably, that he might be persuaded to conform by the expectation of receiving the money. Oxford was never one to dispense money when the expectation of return was small, and many of the pensions paid to peers were deliberately allowed to fall into arrears. However, with the new session of Parliament approaching, and no doubt foreseeing the difficulties ahead over the Succession, Oxford paid £1000 over to Warrington on 17 December 1713. Dissatisfied, Warrington in January 1714 demanded £4000 of the sum outstanding, and by March he had Oxford's promise for that sum. A month later Oxford was again dissembling, claiming that the bulk of the pension had been discharged and that only £1500 was outstanding. Warrington's tone in these letters takes on a note of hurt desperation, and in May 1714 he was prepared to accept £2000, at the same time assuring Oxford that he would support the ministry if his arrears were paid. He pointedly reminded Oxford that his support might be needed again. The final letter, dated 10 June 1714, tells

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48 B.L., Loan 29/127/1: 24 April 1714.
49 Holmes, British Politics, p. 388.
50 B.L., Loan 29/127/1: 10 April 1714.
51 Ibid., 13 May 1714.
GEORGE BOOTH, 2nd EARL OF WARRINGTON

Oxford that he had obtained a certificate from the Exchequer showing that the whole arrears he claimed were in fact due. The certificate, signed by Halifax, was dated 2 June. He also claimed to have approached the queen, who denied any knowledge of the matter.\footnote{Ibid., 10 June 1714; D.M.P.: “Certificate, 2 June 1714”.} Events, however, were soon to overtake both Oxford and the queen before any further action was taken on Warrington’s pension claim. Warrington’s reversion to an independent line following the episode of 5 June 1713 suggests that he had no intention of becoming a general pensioner of Oxford’s. He was clearly piqued that he had been duped, but his record does not suggest that he succumbed to Oxford’s carrot and stick tactics: further evidence, perhaps, that Warrington was concerned only with obtaining what was due to his family, not with selling his vote for cash.

Warrington did not abandon his quest for payment of the pension arrears when Oxford fell from power. In the early years of the Hanoverian régime he seems to have followed a pro-government line, in so far as it is possible to judge.\footnote{In 1724, for example, he sent his blank proxy to government supporters Westmorland or Haversham (P.R.O., S.P. 35/27, f. 12: Warrington to [?], 6 November 1721). For his general support see B.L., Add. MS. 61496, f. 10: Warrington to [Sunderland], 20 November 1719; P.R.O., S.P. 35/27, f. 12: Warrington to [?], 6 November 1721.} This may have had something to do with the continuing search for a settlement of his pension claims. In January 1719 it seemed that preparations were in hand for paying the sum outstanding, but nothing had been remitted three years later. Meanwhile Warrington appears to have applied for a pension in his own right to Lord Townshend, and a £1000 a year was granted to him from 25 March 1715. In January 1716 he received £468 16s (having had £31 4s fees paid at the Treasury and Exchequer). He was thus owed £500. On 25 March 1716, the pension was raised to £1500 a year. However, a year later Warrington claimed that £1000 was still owing to him, and he suggested that it would be best if he were paid quarterly. In March 1718 it was resolved that the pension should be paid quarterly, although it remained in arrears.\footnote{D.M.P.: George James to Warrington, 24 January 1719; Calendar of Treasury Books, xxxi (1717), 301, 304; xxxii (1718), 549; Cambridge University Library, Cholmondeley (Houghton) MSS. Corresp. 768, 770: Warrington to [Walpole], 9 February, 1 April 1717.} By the
end of 1719, when a whole year was due, Warrington refused to
attend Parliament until it was paid. In fact, from the time his
brother Langham joined the Walpole faction in the Commons in
1717, Warrington seems only to have attended the Lords in times
of crisis. While acknowledging Lord Sunderland's urgent sum-
mons to attend in 1719 (the Peerage bill came before Parliament in
December) by returning his proxy to Sunderland to fill in,
Warrington pointedly wrote: 55

I will follow it my self as soon as ever your Lordship pleases to order my
pension, of which a whole year will be due at Christmas; and if your
Lordship will be so kind to clear it to then, tho' a short time of advance
as to that one Quarterage, I shall very thankfully acknowledge your
Goodness.

Warrington's pension probably continued in arrears throughout
the 1720s — the government may not have liked his independent
political cast of mind. It was certainly in arrears in May 1729, at
which time it was terminated. Warrington pressed Walpole for
over a year for his arrears and for the pension to be renewed, but
almost certainly with little success. He thus went into political
opposition to the ministry, voting against the Pension bill in
March 1731, and eventually supporting the Tory candidates for
Cheshire at the general election of 1734 (see below). 56 Later in life,
in the 1740s and 1750s, his interest in politics declined, and
growing infirmity restricted his attendance at the Lords. He
informed Lord Delawarr in 1753 that he did not expect to come to
the House again, "for besides inward decays fell great upon me,

55 B.L., Add. MS. 61496, f. 10: Warrington to [Sunderland], 20 November
1719. Warrington, however, was not alone in having his pension unpaid. In 1719
Lord Abergavenny had been granted an additional pension of £200 to that of
£1000 granted in 1717 which he hoped would be "paid half yearly or at some
more certain manner than hetherto it has been; for after sending twentie times, I
shall receive but one quarter, when 4 are due; which makes the thing not so
beneficial as 'tis intended". Several months later he was still complaining that his
pension was "so ill paid that I am now five or six quarters behind; therefore [I]
treat your Lordship that I may at least fare as others do, who I hear are more
punctually paid" (Ibid., ff. 12, 23: Abergavenny to [Newcastle], 21 November
1719, Abergavenny to [Sunderland], 7 January 1720 (?1721]; Calendar of

56 Bodleian Library, MS. Add. D. 4, f. 114: warrant to Walter Chetwynd, 15
May 1729; Cambridge U.L., Cholmondeley (Houghton) MSS. Corresp. 1716,
1721: Warrington to [Walpole], 1 May, 3 June 1730; P.R.O., S.P. 36/22/140-1,
142-6: forecast and division on Pension bill, 2 March 1731.
and lameness seized my limbs last spring and still holding me without at all abating, confined me at home, allowing me only to hobble, I can't call it walking about". He seems, however, to have supported the ministry and to have received a secret service pension of £1500 a year from 1754 until his death in 1758.57

In the main, Warrington was a political independent disillusioned with politicians and generally determined to concentrate on building up his own estate. Partly as a result of the long years of financial stringency, and partly as a result of inheriting the bulk of his younger brother Langham's estate in 1724,58 Warrington was able to improve the house at Dunham Massey. By 1721 he had already carried out major alterations to the interior, and by 1735 had also built a range of domestic offices to form the kitchen courtyard. The house itself was remodelled in the 1730s, although in a piecemeal fashion of exterior cladding rather than anything more grand. He also began to furnish the building in greater magnificence, partly by buying plate on a considerable scale. Almost exclusively this came from Huguenot goldsmiths, and it is a mark of his religious piety that he patronised such traders and also gave large sums of charity (£150 a year or so) to French refugees. By 1754 the total weight of his plate came to 26509 1/2 ounces.59 By the time of his death in 1758 Warrington was a relatively wealthy man. He had £22,800 lent out at interest, including a mortgage of £5000 to his son-in-law the Earl of Stamford, two bonds of £1000, £10,000 3 per cent government annuities, £5000 Bank of England annuities, and £800 lent in the Ashton turnpike. This was more than enough to cover his various legacies of £9100, the £5000 bequeathed to charitable uses, and the £1000 set aside for his funeral and for the servants.60

57 D.M.P.: Warrington to Delawarr, 6 November 1753; B.L., Add. MS. 35987, f. 54: Warrington to Hardwicke, 22 August 1742; 35989, f. 131: same to same, 28 December 1746; 32734, f. 261: same to Newcastle, 16 March 1754; Lewis Namier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III (2nd ed., 1957), p. 222.
58 A. Boyer, Political State, xxvii (1724), 534, quoted in R. Sedgwick, House of Commons, 1715-54 (2 vols., 1970), i. 472.
60 D.M.P.: "The Legacies in my Will".
This success was only achieved, however, at the cost of continuing political decline as Warrington’s family lost much of its local influence in Cheshire. From the mid-seventeenth century the Booth family had maintained a major political rôle in the county, largely in opposition to the Cholmondeleys of Cholmondeley and Vale Royal. Lord Cholmondeley supported the Cheshire Tories, except in the general election of 1705, whereas the Booths inclined towards the Whigs. The first Earl of Warrington had exercised a considerable degree of control over local patronage, and followed a determined policy of infiltrating supporters into the Deputy Lieutenancies and the Commission of the Peace. This ended with his death, and by the early Hanoverian period Lord Cholmondeley, as Lord-Lieutenant, had become the fountainhead of both local and ministerial patronage. All the best places were reserved for the Whig supporters of his own family interest, although Warrington’s younger brother Langham held one of the two county seats from 1705 until 1710 and from 1715 until 1722. In the latter year he was badly beaten. According to Warrington, his brother’s agreement with the other sitting


62 This inclination was tinged with a strongly independent line because the first earl regarded the Whig Junto as having betrayed the ideals of the Revolution of 1688. This is clear from his tract The Interest of Whig and Tory (1694) (V. C. H. Cheshire, ii. 120).

63 Baskerville, pp. 9, 13-14, 21-2, 96.

64 Booth was unseated in the swing to the Tories at the general election of 1710, following the Sacheverell affair. He led the poll on the first two days, but on 27 October “about noon [the] Wirral hundred came in for them [the Tories] and turn’d the scales against us”. The following day “Booth and Crewe gave it up and went out of town though they had many to poll so the other were return’d—great noise about it. Sacheverell’s picture carried before us” (Bodleian Library, Eng. Misc. MS. e. 330, f. 88v: Diary of Mathew Henry, 1705-13 (we are grateful to Patricia Crawford for drawing our attention to his Diary)). According to Sir John Crewe “the Clergy Sa—Il mobb made such a riott, that we could not come to the Shire Hall without the Freeholders being struck and abused” (Cheshire R.O., Arderne MSS., DAR/D/79/55: J. Crewe to [?], 22 November 1710). There were other irregularities at the election, including the casting of “false and defective votes” (DAR/A/61: [Crewe] to “my Coz: Crewe to shew my Ld W——”, copy). For Warrington’s reaction see ibid., Warrington to [? Crewe], 7 December 1710.

65 Sedgwick, House of Commons, i. 202, 472.
member, the Tory Sir George Warburton, was abrogated by Warburton in order to open the county seat to Tory domination with Cholmondeley backing. Booth decided to stand anyway, "as the only means to support the whig interest from being wholly brought under".66 Booth's defeat can partly be attributed to his joining the Prince of Wales's party and Walpole in opposition to the ministry, which had weakened Warrington's influence at Court, but also to the Weaver Navigation bills, which he had supported from 1715 to 1721.67

The general election of 1722 saw the triumph of the Cholmondeleys in Cheshire. They backed the Tories, who achieved considerable success, capturing both county seats.68 For the Booths 1722 was probably the nadir of their fortune in local politics. Langham Booth was defeated, and a Booth was never again to sit for the county. This eclipse largely reflected the second


67 The battle over the navigation of the River Weaver was fought intermittently for over twenty years from 1699 until 1721, with the Booths and Cholmondeleys on opposite sides. Though personally opposed, Langham Booth believed in 1709 that if the gentlemen of the county presented a petition he could not refuse to deliver it to the Commons, but this attitude was one reason for his defeat in the 1710 election. A parliamentary bill of 1711 failed, but the scheme was revived in 1715 after Booth's re-election. This time he was a supporter, and the bill reached the committee stage, only to be shelved following a flood of opposition petitions. Booth himself sponsored the bill of 1719, and Warrington lobbied hard when it eventually reached the Lords in April 1720. He was easily outmanoeuvred, however, by the Cholmondeleys' representative in the upper house, Lord Newburgh (the Earl of Cholmondeley's younger brother and eventual successor) assisted by Lord Stanhope (Charles Cholmondeley of Vale Royal's brother-in-law) and the Dukes of Manchester and Argyle. However, the opponents of the scheme could only ensure its rejection by promising to bring in a further proposal which widened the base of support. The bill was defeated in the Lords by four votes, after a "hard struggle" (Cheshire R.O., Cholmondeley of Cholmondeley MSS., DCH/X/8, N[ewburgh] to [Cholmondeley], 2 April, 10 May [1720]; John Rylands University Library, Leigh of Lyme MSS.: S. Cholmondeley to [?Sir T. Aston], 10 May 1721). The Cholmondeleys introduced their own bill in 1721, which had no petitions entered against it, and passed both houses on 14 March. For the background see T.S. Willan, *The Navigation of the River Weaver in the 18th Century* (Chetham Soc., 3rd ser. iii (Manchester), 1951), pp. 10-21; Baskerville, pp. 114-8; *V.C.H. Cheshire*, ii. 122. Langham Booth's letters are given in Willan, pp. 146-54, and see also pp. 158-9: S. Cholmondeley to [?Sir T. Aston], 10 May 1721.

earl's virtual retirement from the local political scene. His younger brother Henry disliked this attitude, but Warrington defended himself in long letters of 1715 and 1722. In the latter of these, for example, he told Henry Booth that:

"our estate has been on the decline for above 70 years last past by popularity and serving to the public, and the consequences thereof. It's time then to think of preserving what's left, though I could like as well as anybody to live handsomely and be often full of company."

If Warrington's influence was much reduced, it was not entirely extinguished. In 1727 he told Lord Malpas, Cholmondeley's heir, that he had very little interest to manoeuvre in the forthcoming election, "being only a private inhabitant of the county, and as such have no inducement until I know all the candidates, to resolve who to interest myself for, or whether to meddle at all, having no desire to be thought considerable".

Even so, he was responsible for putting up Sir Robert Cotton to oppose the Cholmondeley interest and the sitting Tory members. There then followed a reconciliation between Warrington and Cholmondeley, and Cotton, backed by Malpas, was returned along with the Tory Charles Cholmondeley. Before the next election in 1734 Warrington had joined the opposition to Walpole, and Malpas, as the prime minister's son-in-law, had come to be regarded by the Whig gentry of Cheshire as their undisputed leader. By 1733 Malpas had succeeded as the third Earl of Cholmondeley, and he threw his weight behind Charles Cholmondeley, his cousin, and John Crewe, for the forthcoming election. Warrington at first supported his old protégé Cotton, but then his family split: his wife supported and campaigned for the Whig Cotton, while the earl inclined, albeit coolly, to Cholmondeley and Crewe.

Whether Warrington's move to the Tories can be explained in terms of personal pique at losing his pension is partly answered in an election address issued to his tenants in October 1733 in favour of the Tory candidate. It reiterated the oft-recorded independent line which he had thrown at Oxford twenty years before:

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69 D.M.P.: 1722 letter.
70 D.M.P.: Warrington to Malpas, 3 July 1727.
When I my self came first into Parliament, my resolution was to have a view to the good of the nation in my Votes, and it is my intention so to do, without regard to self interest, or who I may please, or offend thereby: and if I did not believe these two Gentlemen would act on the same principle, they should not have [my] assistance.

After a bitter and expensive contest, in which Crewe claimed to have spent upwards of £13,000, he and Cholmondeley were successful. The 1734 election was to be the last contest for the county seat for almost a hundred years, and Warrington was never again to be involved in local politics. He had emerged from the various contests with little influence, but with his family finances intact, and it must have given him wry pleasure to see his own attitudes justified by the fate of the Cholmondeleys. Lord Cholmondeley lost much of his prestige and influence on the fall of his father-in-law Walpole in 1742. By 1747, when two Tories were elected unopposed, the earl was bankrupt.

Warrington's policy had been generally consistent. He had avoided government and local service in order to concentrate on restoring his family's shattered finances, and, as he told Lord Malpas in 1727, he had never had any mark of public favour, "nor even obtained for others so little as a place of £60 per annum from the Ministry". As late as 1745 he was still complaining about his family's losses in government service, as grounds for objecting to having to provide arms for resisting Jacobite rebels. But whether, in the end, it was worth the effort, is more debatable. Warrington's hard work was to no direct positive end, because the only child of his unhappy marriage was a daughter, Mary. She married Harry Grey, 4th Earl of Stamford, in 1736, to whom she carried the Booth family estates following her father's death in 1758. Their son, the 5th Earl of Stamford, was created Earl of

74 Baskerville, pp. 211, 216; *V.C.H. Cheshire*, ii. 124.
75 Baskerville, pp. 253, 279. For details of Cholmondeley's bankruptcy see *The Horace Walpole Correspondence*, (ed.) W. S. Lewis (39 vols., 1937-74), xix. 339-43, 402-5 (where the sale of the family's London home in Arlington St. is noted); B.L., Add. MS. 32710, ff. 130-2: Cholmondeley to Newcastle, [January 1747]; Cheshire R.O., DCH/L/35: correspondence August 1745-June 1747, relating to Cholmondeley's debts.
76 D.M.P.: Warrington to Lord Malpas, 3 July 1727.
77 D.M.P.: Warrington to Newcastle, 29 September 1745 (copy).
Warrington in 1796. It is just possible that Warrington considered another form of estate devise popular in the eighteenth century when a daughter was involved, which was to leave the property to the nearest male relative, and give a substantial portion to the daughter. Henry Booth’s request for a more public lifestyle on the part of his brother may have reflected hopes of preferment in the estate. Certainly, in replying to him in 1722 Warrington mentioned a portion of £20,000 for his daughter. He was aware that to leave such a sum, plus his sister Mary’s unpaid £5000, from an estate which would be partly given over to paying a jointure to his widow, would be a considerable burden. Henry Booth relieved him of any qualms on the issue by dying first.

In retrospect the apostacy of June 1713 was an isolated event in the long political career of a man committed to the principle of political independence. Only on this one occasion did he apparently allow the hope of recovering money due to his family — money which would have helped to resolve a number of his acute financial difficulties — to dictate his political attitude. Oxford’s failure to perform, together with his inability to acquire a pension from the Hanoverian régime, convinced Warrington that his first instincts were correct, his father and grandfather’s experiences of courtiers as unscrupulous men who abandoned supporters when they became superfluous, were representative. If, in the later years of Queen Anne’s reign, he had revealed political opinions which could be interpreted as favouring the administration, he did not make the mistake again. Just once he rationalised political apostacy on the grounds of being able to recover a legitimate debt, which was not quite as bad as an outright bribe, but in the last resort it was hardly worthwhile. Warrington was to lose his family’s local political influence and to die in the knowledge that, although his estates were on a sound financial footing, they would pass out of his own family.

78 G.E.C., Complete Peerage, xii, pt. 2, p. 356; D.N.B., ii. 842. The barony of Delamer went to the nearest male relative, Warrington’s first cousin, Nathaniel Booth (1709-70), second son of his uncle Robert, Dean of Bristol (d. 1730).
80 D.M.P.: 1722 letter.
Sir George Booth, 1st Bt. m. Katherine Anderson (d. 1652)

William m. Vere Egerton (d. 1636)

Thomas (1620-32)

Sir George, 2nd Bt. (1622-84)

Nathaniel

1st Lord Delamer m. (1) Katherine Clinton (d. 1643)

(2) Elizabeth Grey (d. 1691) (daughter of 1st Earl of Stamford) Vere (d. 1717)

William (1648-62)

Henry m. (1652-94) 1st Earl of Warrington (1690)

Mary Langham (1652-91)

Robert (d. 1730) Dean of Bristol m.

George (d. 1726) (d. 1711)

Cecil (d. 1685) (Blackett)

Nevill (d. 1713)

Diana

Mary Hales

William Robert Cecil Nevill Blakett (1648-62) (d. 1726) (d. 1713)

James (b. 1671)

George m. (1675-1758) 2nd Earl of Warrington

Mary Oldbury

Langham (1684-1724)

Henry (d. 1697)

Elizabeth (d. 1741) m.

Robert (1699-1733) MP Bodmin 4th Lord Delamer

Nathaniel (1709-70)

Mary m. Harry Grey (1704-72) (1715-68)

4th Earl of Stamford

Mary (1737-1819)

5th Earl of Stamford

Earl of Warrington (1796)