

SIR ROGER BRADSHAIGH, 3<sup>RD</sup> BARONET, AND  
THE ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT OF WIGAN,  
1695-1747

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I

**A**MONG the Crawford MSS. deposited in the John Rylands Library is a collection of Bradshaigh papers which include correspondence and documents throwing light on the electoral management of the borough of Wigan during the period 1695 to 1747, when Sir Roger Bradshaigh, the third baronet, represented the town in parliament. The fullest evidence, that of the letters of Bradshaigh's fellow-member, Lord Barrymore, and of his legal adviser, Alexander Leigh, is for the Hanoverian period, from 1715 onwards, but there are copies of the polls at Wigan in the elections of 1695, 1701, 1702, and 1708, and a number of legal papers, which make it possible, with the help of the Kenyon MSS., to reconstruct an outline of electoral affairs before 1715.<sup>1</sup> Wigan, at the end of the seventeenth century, was "a pretty market town built of stone and brick": it had flourishing industries of brass and pewter manufacture, blanket and rug making and bell-casting.<sup>2</sup> In the first few

<sup>1</sup> For the bulk of the material used in this article I wish to thank Lord Crawford, who has not only given me permission to use the manuscripts deposited by him in the John Rylands Library, but has also kindly lent other relevant papers, including the letters of George Winstanley.

I am also indebted to Lord Kenyon for permission to use the Kenyon MSS. deposited in the Lancashire County Record Office (the printed Kenyon MSS. are in the Historical Manuscripts Commission Report, xiv. App. iv); to the Duke of Portland for the Portland MSS. deposited in the British Museum; to the Marquess of Cholmondeley for the Cholmondeley (Houghton) MSS. deposited in the Cambridge University Library; and to the Librarian of Wigan Public Library for various documents in his keeping.

<sup>2</sup> C. Morris (ed.), *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (1947), p. 185; Victoria County History, *Lancashire*, iv. 57-122. The parish of Wigan, which included, besides the borough, eleven townships, had a population of approximately 5,000 in the reign of George I. Bishop Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis*, Chetham Society (1845-50), ii, pt. 2, 242.

decades of the century, various local improvements were made or projected: an act was secured in 1720 for making the River Douglas navigable from the Ribble to Wigan, but work on the scheme was not begun until 1738, when it was completed within a few years; in 1726 acts authorized the improvement of the roads from Wigan to Warrington and to Preston.<sup>1</sup> Such improvements were for the benefit not only of the town, but of the surrounding coal mines. Probably the most famous of these, producing a very fine coal known as cannel, were owned by the Bradshaighs of Haigh. Haigh Hall, the Bradshaigh seat, lay about two miles north-east of Wigan in the township of Haigh, "a large and handsome building with fine gardens and plantations about it". The demesne lands totalled 500 acres in 1673, and, in addition, the Bradshaighs owned land elsewhere in the township, and land and houses in the borough of Wigan.<sup>2</sup>

The third Bradshaigh baronet attracts attention by the length of his parliamentary career and the apparent variety of his political allegiances. He sat as member for Wigan from 1695, when he was a minor, until 1747, when he was preparing, just before his death, to stand again.<sup>3</sup> His career has usually been described as Tory until 1715, and from then Whig; but such an analysis, on a rigid two-party basis, distorts his development.<sup>4</sup> In his first Parliament he was one of the extreme semi-Jacobite Tory opposition, following the lead of his guardian and fellow-member, Peter Shakerley, and the two members for Newton, Legh Bankes and Thomas Brotherton, but he

<sup>1</sup> R. Sharpe France, *Lancashire Acts of Parliament, 1415-1800* (1945), pp. 1 and 26; A. P. Wadsworth and J. de L. Mann, *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600-1780* (1931), p. 216 n.

<sup>2</sup> B.M. Add. MS. 24,120, fol. 141; A. J. Hawkes, "Sir Roger Bradshaigh 1628-84", *Chetham Miscellanies*, n.s., viii (1945), 61-3.

<sup>3</sup> Bradshaigh's pride in his long representation of Wigan is shown in his reply to Thomas Wootton's inquiry for his *Baronetage* in 1725: ". . . has sat in Parliament as a Member for that place ever since which is now above 32 years, this is more than can be said of any Gentleman of his age in England." B.M. Add. MS. 24,120, fol. 140. On his death *The Gentleman's Magazine* described him as "the oldest member in the house of commons", xvii. 103.

<sup>4</sup> D. Sinclair, *History of Wigan*, ii. (1882), 190; W. D. Pink and A. B. Beavan, *The Parliamentary Representation of Lancashire* (1889), pp. 230-3.

seems to have stood aside from the party conflicts at the end of the reign of William III. By 1706 he had diverged from Shakerley (and from his fellow-member, Orlando Bridgeman) on the Tack, and was reckoned a Government supporter. (In the division on tacking the Occasional Conformity Bill to a Money Bill and thus forcing it through the Lords, the moderate Harleyite Tories sided with the Whigs.) He continued as such after Robert Harley and his associates had left the ministry, voting even for the impeachment of Sacheverell.<sup>1</sup> After the change of ministry in 1710 he corresponded assiduously with those in authority, locally and centrally, and his advice to the new Chancellor of the Duchy on local appointments served to secure for his brother, Thomas, a Duchy living in Essex.<sup>2</sup> Bradshaigh's correspondence with Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, consists entirely of appeals for help in the form of office or more frequently of money. From June 1711 to August 1714 the letters formed an unremitting solicitation. In November 1711 he hoped for a place in the Victualling Office, and in December 1712 for Lord Fitzharding's place or any other vacant post. But persistently he begged for money: to pay debts under threat of execution of judgement during a parliamentary recess ("my house will be rifled, my self and family exposed" he wrote); to meet the expenses of a law suit "I have been long engaged in for the benefit of my corporation and to keep up my interest there"; to pay debts owing to Hoare's Bank, or to meet election expenses.<sup>3</sup> It is not clear how much

<sup>1</sup> This account of Bradshaigh's voting is based on the division lists described in R. Walcott's article, "Division Lists of the House of Commons, 1689-1715", *Bull. Inst. Hist. Res.*, xiv (1937), 25-36; E. S. de Beer, "Division Lists of 1688-1715, Some Addenda", *ibid.* xix, 65-6; and for the later period on the lists in W. Cobbett's *Parliamentary History* and on information from Mr. J. B. Owen. It is possible that Bradshaigh failed to support the Government on a disputed election in December, 1741, see W. Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*, iii, pt. ii, (1798), 582-3.

<sup>2</sup> Rylands, Crawford MSS., Lord Berkeley of Stratton to Bradshaigh, 28 October 1714, and undated letter, "Monday"; P. Morant, *History of Essex*, ii. (1816), 245.

<sup>3</sup> There are five letters from Bradshaigh to Oxford in the H.M.C. *Portland MSS.*, v. 18, 151, 327, 381 and 387, and a further twenty-two letters in the *Portland MSS.* in the British Museum. Fitzharding held two posts, a Teller-

in total he asked for, for the requests were not satisfied quickly, and were continuous and repetitive, but Oxford's "Account of money laid out of my own for the Queen at several times" included issues to Bradshaigh of £1,000 and £200.<sup>1</sup> Only one division list survives for the Parliament of 1710, that on the French Commercial Treaty, in which the Government was heavily defeated through the defection of the Whimsicals and many other Tories. Bradshaigh, however, voted with the Government on the unpopular motion, against Shakerley and Lancashire Whimsicals such as Richard Shuttleworth and Robert Heysham.

After the Hanoverian accession Bradshaigh was a constant supporter of the Government, voting for the Septennial and Peerage Bills, and after Walpole had secured power, for all the major Government measures including the Excise scheme. His status as a Government supporter after Walpole's fall was recognized by an invitation to the Cockpit meeting before the opening of the parliamentary session at the end of 1742.<sup>2</sup> Among Lancashire members, his voting aligned him with the Liverpool Government Whigs, Sir Thomas Johnson, Thomas Brereton and Richard Gildart, and with Sir Henry Hoghton, but against the members for the county and for the borough of Newton, to which the Leghs of Lyme nominated. This constant attachment to the Hanoverian Government did not secure him any office, although he seems to have had hopes between 1728 and 1730, but his reward in this period lay in the advancement of his sons.<sup>3</sup> In analyzing the votes on the Spanish Convention in 1739, *The Gentleman's Magazine* listed Bradshaigh among the Court supporters, and commented: "His sons in the Army and at Court." His second son, Charles, held a commission in the Guards from 1726, and by 1743 had secured the post of Gentleman Usher, not, as his father had asked of Walpole ship of the Exchequer and the Treasurership of the Chamber, reputed to be worth £2,000 and £1,400 a year respectively. J. Cartwright (ed.), *The Wentworth Papers* (1883), p. 309. <sup>1</sup>H.M.C. *Portland MSS.*, v. 480.

<sup>2</sup>B.M. Add. MS. 32,699, fols. 467-8. I owe this reference to Mr. J. B. Owen.

<sup>3</sup>Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 5 May, 22 December 1728; 18 May 1729.

in 1737, to the king, but to Princess Amelia. His youngest son, Richard, became a page to Queen Caroline at the age of twelve, and an ensign in the Guards in 1737.<sup>1</sup> This long parliamentary career, apart from its earliest years, is only inconsistent if looked at in the light of the antithesis between Whig and Tory; if the antithesis of Court and Country is substituted, Bradshaigh's career, at least from early in Anne's reign is consistent, and resembles that of other members, though not those representing Lancashire constituencies.

In spite of the considerable fortunes made later by the Bradshaighs in mining, Sir Roger's financial position never seems to have been easy. His grandfather's mining activities, especially the work on the Great Sough, had swallowed up "every shilling he could lay hands on", and his death and that of his son within three years, left the family finances strained. Sir Roger's grandmother lived until 1695, and was entitled to draw £200 a year from the estate, while his mother, after her husband's death, had by her marriage settlement the use of the demesne lands of Haigh, except the hall and the mines: the annual value of her jointure was estimated in 1673 at £460.<sup>2</sup> In 1714 Bradshaigh confessed to the Earl of Oxford that since his mother's death his circumstances had considerably improved.<sup>3</sup> In 1729 his legal man of business, Alexander Leigh, for the purposes of a marriage treaty, estimated his estates at "about £1,900 a year and that, in that Computation your Cannell Mines were rated at 1000", though admitting to Sir Roger that it was an under-estimate.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, some financial

<sup>1</sup> *The Gentleman's Magazine*, ix. 304; C. Dalton, *George I's Army, 1714-27*, ii (1912), 302; "The Army List of 1740", *Society for Army Historical Research*, Special no., iii (1931), pp. 4 and 13; C.U.L. Cholmondeley (Houghton) MSS. Corr., no. 2669, Bradshaigh to Walpole, 2 March 1736/7 (the signature appears to be "A. Bradshaigh" but the letter is endorsed on the back "Sir Roger Bradshagh"; E. Chamberlayne, *Magnae Britanniae Notitia*, editions of 1735 and 1743; B.M. Add. MS. 32,867, fol. 22, Richard Bradshaigh to the Duke of Newcastle, 22 August 1756, a begging letter.

<sup>2</sup> T. S. Ashton and J. Sykes, *The Coal Industry of the Eighteenth Century* (1929), p. 246; A. J. Hawkes, *op. cit.* pp. 18, 53 and 61-3.

<sup>3</sup> B.M. Portland MSS., Bradshaigh to Oxford, 26 — 1714.

<sup>4</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 2 January 1729/30. The dating of the letters in the Crawford MSS. is Old Style.

embarrassment continued, and Bradshaigh failed to observe one of the conditions of his own marriage settlement, converting £3,000 to his own use instead of to the purposes laid down. At his death, he owed, besides this £3,000, £7,000 or £8,000, and left a very small personal estate, which was claimed by Benjamin Hoare, a creditor presumably representing Hoare's Bank with which Bradshaigh dealt. The family estates, however, were settled at his eldest son's marriage, and in 1742 Sir Roger, having satisfied himself that the estate qualifying him to sit in Parliament could be of £300 annual value in law or equity, gave up Haigh to his son in possession.<sup>1</sup>

## II

Between 1695 and 1708 the second member for Wigan changed frequently, and although Bradshaigh himself was always safe with the highest number of votes, the candidate whom he supported was not necessarily successful. After the withdrawal of Shakerley in 1698, the Bridgeman interest strongly contested the elections. Between a quarter and a third of Bradshaigh's supporters failed to vote for the candidate he backed in 1701 and 1702 (Emmanuel How and Sir Alexander Rigby, his old opponent, respectively), and most of these gave their second votes to Orlando Bridgeman. But when, in 1708, two Bradshaighs stood, less than a seventh of Sir Roger's voters failed to vote for his brother, Henry. Unfortunately, this strong family combination broke down with Henry's death in 1712, and in the 1713 election a quarter of Sir Roger's voters failed to vote for George Kenyon whom he backed.<sup>2</sup> An influential Wigan

<sup>1</sup> H.M.C. *House of Lords MSS.*, n.s., viii. 284; Crawford MSS., "State of the Case touching the Statute that Sir Roger Bradshaigh gave along with his father unto Sir John Guise": this is undated but was clearly drawn up under the 4th baronet and probably before 1749; Will of Sir Roger Bradshaigh, P. C. C. Potter 199; Administration granted to Benjamin Hoare, Esq. 18 August 1747; Indenture of 12 August 1742 in Calendar of Crawford MSS.; Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 15, 29 May, 20, 26 June, 11 July, 8, 13, and 31 August 1742.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the copies of the polls in the Crawford MSS. and on that of 1713 among the Kenyon MSS., Lancashire Record Office. The second member was: 1695 Shakerley, 1698 Sir Alexander Rigby, 1701 (first Parliament) Orlando Bridgeman, 1701 (second Parliament) Rigby, 1702 Bridgeman, 1705 Emmanuel

voter explained to Kenyon, "as to yourself, I hear not any personal dislike, but only that Sir Roger should assume upon himself to impose one, without the town's consent".<sup>1</sup>

James, 4th Earl of Barrymore, who strongly contested the election of 1713, shared the representation with Bradshaigh from 1715 to 1747, with the exception of the Parliament of 1727, and died at the age of eighty in 1748, not having stood in 1747. His son, unlike Sir Roger's, followed him in the representation until 1760. Barrymore forms a strong contrast to Bradshaigh: he was an Irish peer, and from 1714 an Irish Privy Councillor, who had followed a military career, including service in Spain in the War of the Spanish Succession. He first sat in Parliament for Stockbridge in 1710, and represented it again in 1714 instead of Richard Steele.<sup>2</sup> His voting record was the opposite of Bradshaigh's, and the political views expressed in his letters were those of the country party. In 1717 he wrote, on the occasion of the quarrel among the Whig ministers:

. . . nobody has more thorough contempt for ministers and what is call'd men in greate offices then I have. I cannot remember they ever did the true service of their contrey, they minded indeed strength'ning themselves to carry on private picks [piques] and getting as much money as they cou'd, but I have observ'd that when such people fall out, now and then some good comes on't, soe it may prove now; for which reason I wou'd not be absent at this juncture. It may bee in a man's vote at this time to doe some good which perhaps may never bee again in his power.<sup>3</sup>

There is no trace in these letters of Jacobite sentiments, indeed in 1715 Barrymore wrote from Ireland: "I pray god wee may enjoy peace and quietness and not bee troubl'd with the Scotch who whenever they enter England doe not goe back empty",

How, 1708-12 Henry Bradshaigh, April 1713-15 George Kenyon. Rigby was of local origin, though a London merchant; he was a protégé of the Earl of Macclesfield. How held a household office under William III. His brother, Sir Scroop, had been involved with Sir John Guise (whose daughter Bradshaigh married in 1697) in a project before 1694, to make profit by finding out lands in Lancashire given to superstitious uses. H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.* p. 339. He was related to Lord Rivers through his mother. G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*.

<sup>1</sup> H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.* p. 453.

<sup>2</sup> J. Lodge, *The Peerage of Ireland* (1789), pp. 306-11; G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*.

<sup>3</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 27 April 1717.

but they are, perhaps, hardly the place to expect them.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, Barrymore, whom Horace Walpole referred to as the Pretender's General, was a close friend of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, a leading high Tory, and in February 1744 he was arrested on suspicion of high treason. Whether he was guilty, or whether he was, as one of his associates thought, "too wise a man to forget his life and fortune for any foreign prince", he was released.<sup>2</sup> In the 'Forty Five, however, the Jacobites invading Cheshire inquired where Barrymore was, and he and Williams Wynn, as far as can be judged, intended but failed to join the Pretender.<sup>3</sup> Barrymore inherited large estates in Cork, and had with his first wife a fortune of £10,000. His second marriage, secretly, in 1706, to the daughter of Richard, 4th Earl Rivers, brought him into contact with Lancashire and Cheshire affairs. Rivers, however, left many of his estates (including his wife's estate at Wardley in Lancashire) under trust to his cousin and the inheritor of his title, John Savage, a Roman Catholic priest, and after him to an illegitimate daughter. Barrymore at once challenged this settlement of lands in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, and Essex. The lands were not legally vested in him (to the use of John Savage and after him to Barrymore's daughter) until 1721, but he was already writing from Wardley at the beginning of 1715.<sup>4</sup> For practical purposes, Barrymore inherited the

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 18 October 1715. According to G.E.C. Barrymore was arrested on suspicion in 1715; no source is given, and no reference is made to the arrest of 1744. Barrymore was not one of the six members whose arrest was laid before the Commons in September 1715, and in November he signed an Irish Privy Council proclamation against the rebels. A. Boyer, *Political State of Great Britain*, x. 491-3.

<sup>2</sup> H. Paget Toynbee (ed.), *Letters of Horace Walpole*, i. 247; *Commons Journal*, xxiv. 591; H.M.C. *Puleston MSS.* p. 328. For Barrymore's views on Walpole's political exploitation of the threat from the Pretender in a debate on the size of the army see *ibid.* p. 319.

<sup>3</sup> J. P. Earwaker, *East Cheshire, past and present*, i (1877-80), 35; *Dictionary of National Biography* under Williams Wynn.

<sup>4</sup> G.E.C., *Complete Peerage* under Rivers; there are several letters from Bradshaigh to Rivers in 1706 informing him of the marriage in H.M.C. *Bath MSS.* i. 87-9; H. V. Hart Davis and S. Holme, *History of Wardley Hall, Lancashire* (1908). The trustees were the Earl of Oxford and the Duke of Shrewsbury. The act regulating the settlement was of 7 Geo. I. *The Statutes*



Rivers interest at Wigan. He lived not only at his Irish seat, but at the Rivers houses of Rock Savage, Marbury, and Wardley: the last of these had been the seat of the Downes, whose heiress Lord Rivers had married in 1679, and who had represented Wigan in the early seventeenth century. Barrymore was soon absorbed in Lancashire and Cheshire politics, and in 1739 declared to Bradshaigh that he was as well able as Lord Derby to spend £1,000 on the Lancashire county election.<sup>1</sup>

### III

A constant theme in the history of the borough of Wigan from the sixteenth century was the feud between the Corporation and the Rector. The Rector held an unusually powerful position in the town in that he was also Lord of the Manor, and in the early seventeenth century this had led to a dispute as to whether burgesses were made by the Corporation or by paying rent for burgages to the Lord of the Manor. This fundamental question was not raised in the eighteenth century, but there were disputes as to the right to hold the Easter Leet and to take tolls at the Ascensiontide fair: the holding of the Leet was of political as well as legal importance. In spite of an arbitration in 1662 these disputes tended to recur on the appointment of a new Rector. The manor was held by the Rector under the Lords of Newton in Makerfield, the Leghs of Lyme who had bought the barony in 1660. The advowson of Wigan had been bought by Sir Orlando Bridgeman in 1661, apparently with the object of creating a rural living for the Bishop of Chester, within whose diocese it lay: until 1707 it was held by successive Bishops of Chester, who thereby acquired special influence in the town.<sup>2</sup> In 1707, however, Sir

*at Large*, vol. v. Wardley and the Lancashire estates passed on the death of John, Earl Rivers in 1737, to Barrymore's daughter, who had married James Cholmondeley, brother of the 3rd Earl of Cholmondeley. By 1760 she had disposed of them to the Earl of Bridgewater. Hart Davis, *op. cit.* p. 65.

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 7 September 1739. Barrymore became a burgess of Wigan in 1712. Wigan Public Library, J. Burrows, *Calendar of Wigan Archives*, Miscellaneous Rolls, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> V.C.H. *Lancashire*, iv. 70-3; G. T. O. Bridgeman, *History of the Church and Manor of Wigan*, Chetham Society, n.s., v (1888-90).

John Bridgeman and his co-trustees, including Orlando Bridgeman, made a presentation which linked the divisions in Wigan with those of national politics. They chose a friend of the Leghs of Lyme, Edward Finch. Finch was the brother of Daniel, Earl of Nottingham, and of Heneage Finch who stood unsuccessfully for Wigan with Bridgeman in 1708.<sup>1</sup> Already the poll of 1702 had shown that Bridgeman's was in a precise sense the church party in Wigan: his voters included fifteen clerks (among them Edward Finch and his brother Henry, the Rector of Winwick, nearby), while Sir Roger's numbered only five.<sup>2</sup> The new Rector soon came into conflict with a number of his parishioners, particularly the wealthier ones, over the erection of an organ. For this purpose he pulled down a gallery built about 1685 by the Mayor and Corporation for their use. He had the support of the two churchwardens and some 327 of his parishioners, but the Corporation, headed by Sir Roger Bradshaigh, indicted the workmen and embarked on an expensive suit with the Rector: after two appeals the town was ordered in 1712 to pay costs and to keep "perpetual silence".<sup>3</sup> The Bridgeman-Finch rivalry with Haigh in politics combined easily with Sir Roger's and the Corporation's suit against the Rector. In 1713, when Nottingham and his followers were alienated from the Earl of Oxford, Sir Roger in his appeals to Oxford for help made great play with the threat of the Finch interest at Wigan. In September 1713 he wrote of his own and Kenyon's victory, "notwithstanding the opposition of Lord Barrymore and his friends the Finches. I have met with several letters sent from considerable persons above to their party friends here to do their utmost to throw me out."<sup>4</sup> Some of the edge of the ecclesiastical conflict was

<sup>1</sup> *D.N.B.* Finch was a considerable musician; he was a friend of Peter Legh of Lyme. Lady Newton, *The Lyme Letters* (1925), p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford MSS., copy of the 1702 poll.

<sup>3</sup> Sinclair, *op. cit.* p. 197. Lancashire Record Office, Kenyon MSS., Bradshaigh to the Mayor of Wigan, 7 February 1710/11, ". . . if the Towne Clark would be collecting of out burgesses it would help a little, for this is a verry chargable suite. I shall gett what I can here [London] amongst friends. Sir H. Houghton and my Lady Guise have contributed and my Lord Derby has promised as well as some others."

<sup>4</sup> H.M.C. *Portland MSS.*, v. 327.

removed with the resignation of Edward Finch in November 1713. The succeeding Rector, Samuel Aldersey, a relation by marriage of the Bridgemans, again came in conflict with the Corporation in 1714 over manorial rights, and, although the point was settled by a compromise which lasted throughout Aldersey's tenure, the Rector remained for Bradshaigh a disturbing influence in the town.<sup>1</sup>

Wigan's franchise was never determined by the House of Commons, but rested by prescription in the Mayor, Recorder, the eleven other aldermen and the two bailiffs, together with the burgesses both out and in. The in-burgesses were elected by the jury of the Court Leet and then sworn by the Mayor; the out-burgesses were sworn by the mayor *ex officio* without election by the jury, but both shared in the election of mayors and members of Parliament.<sup>2</sup> The only burgess lists surviving for this period are those in the Court Leet records when a poll was taken in the election of a mayor: in 1725 there were 115 in- and 143 out-burgesses.<sup>3</sup> The voting lists for the early eighteenth century parliamentary elections show that the total of voters varied between 150 and 180, and that the proportion of out-burgesses voting varied between a quarter and a third. The out-burgess voters, however, were more significant than their numbers suggest, for they were men of standing in the closely linked counties of Lancashire and Cheshire, and some had direct

<sup>1</sup> Aldersey had married a daughter of Dr. Henry Bridgeman, Dean of Chester, 1660-82. The Corporation yielded on the point of right, and Aldersey granted them a twenty-one-year lease, renewed in 1735, of the right to hold the Easter Leet and to take tolls at the Ascensiontide fair. Bridgeman, *op. cit.* pt. 3, p. 614.

<sup>2</sup> E. Baines, *The History of the County Palatine and Duchy of Lancaster*, ed. J. Croston, iv (1888-93), 255; Wigan Public Library, MS. book, *A Translation of Certain Wigan Borough Charters with observations on the Rights of the Corporation thereunder by William Clayton Town Clerk 1806-13*, pp. 32-5. This is the clearest account of the borough's constitution and its working; it is confirmed for the earlier period by the "Case relating to the Borough of Wigan with Tho. Reave's opinion 6 September 1725" in the Crawford MSS. The Corporation's powers to create out-burgesses, used in 1802 to throw off the Duke of Portland's influence, was not apparently recognized in the period before 1747.

<sup>3</sup> Wigan Public Library, Court Leet Rolls, No. 133, Mich. 1725.

influence in Wigan. In 1708 Bradshaigh was able to enlist the Hon. Langham Booth and the Hon. Cecil Booth, the son and brother respectively of the 1st Earl of Warrington; the Hon. Charles Stanley, son of the 8th Earl of Derby; Benjamin Hoghton, the brother of Sir Charles Hoghton, and, in 1713, Sir Henry Hoghton, who had recently succeeded his father, Sir Charles.<sup>1</sup> The out-burgess voters, moreover, linked Wigan politics with those of other constituencies in the two counties. A Cheshire contingent, influenced by Peter Shakerley, included his cousin John Booth, ironmonger at Warrington, and his brother, Laurence Booth, esquire, at Twemlow in Cheshire, together with Arthur Fogg, the son of the Dean of Chester, Robert Callis, and his son-in-law. This influence, however, was based on persuasion and was not wholly reliable.<sup>2</sup> Wigan was linked, too, with Liverpool: among the out-burgesses voting for Bradshaigh in 1708 were Sir Thomas Johnson, Richard Norris and William Squire. The first two represented Liverpool in Parliament, and all three were active in corporation affairs and in the economic development of the town and its hinterland. William Squire, who was Mayor of Liverpool in 1715, was a leading organizer of the Douglas Navigation scheme, while Norris was a party to a secret bargain with the undertakers entitling him to a third of the profits. At a later date, probably 1727, the number of Wigan voters from Liverpool was said to be eighteen.<sup>3</sup> There was a strong clerical element among the out-burgesses, including several former curates of Wigan Parish Church.

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., 1708 poll.

<sup>2</sup> H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.* pp. 450 and 451: in 1702 when Shakerley cast only one vote, for Bridgeman, all these followed him, but in 1713, when he voted for Bradshaigh and Kenyon, Callis followed him, but Fogg voted for Barrymore and Bridgeman. Dr. Arthur Fogg was the son of Laurence Fogg, Dean of Chester, 1692-1718. G. Ormerod, *History of Cheshire*, i (1882), 267.

<sup>3</sup> T. S. Willan, *River Navigation in England 1600-1750* (1936), p. 59. By 1746 Thomas Steers, the engineer of Liverpool's dock and an undertaker of the Douglas Navigation, was also a Wigan burgess. Crawford MSS., "List of Burgesses, 1746, to whom letters have been sent". Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, undated letter, "Thursday afternoon" apparently referring to the 1727 election. For the kind of arrangement about polling dates necessitated by this overlapping of Liverpool and Wigan burgesses, see *The Norris Papers*, edited by T. Heywood, Chetham Society (1846), p. 60.

The number of out-burgess clerks voting rose from eight in 1695 to sixteen in 1702, and then fell again to thirteen in 1708 and nine in 1713. The clerical group kept up after 1715, for in 1722 Barrymore urged Bradshaigh: "that in case the precept comes we cannot have the election this week because we have many clergymen that are voters that cannot attend now and will then, besides Mr. Shakerley".<sup>1</sup> In general, the out-burgesses were erratic in their voting: many voted only occasionally, others split their two votes between the rival interests or gave single votes, while comparatively few gave wholehearted support to the same interest at every election.

The in-burgesses, however, greatly out-numbered the out-burgesses who voted, and success at Wigan elections depended on the persuasion of between 100 and 140 voters, mostly tradesmen and craftsmen. This perhaps overstates the problem; although detailed knowledge and considerable tact were of great importance, the two pillars of electoral success were the mayor and the jury of the Court Leet. Between them they chose the in- and out-burgesses, and throughout the period the mayor and the jury were the two points of dispute. In 1712 a hostile observer commented: "I met Sir R. Bradshaigh a day or two ago; he intends to be in the country as he says, about a fortnight hence, and though I do not always give him credit, in this matter I do, because he is pretty watchful about his elections, and who is chose Mayor this next term may probably serve for the election the next sumer." The situation was unchanged when in 1733 Barrymore wrote to Bradshaigh: "who doe you think proper for a mayor, if that is not strenuously oppos'd I think the elections for members will not bee contested?"<sup>2</sup> The mayor was elected by all the burgesses, but in fact the choice was usually planned in advance by the dominant interest. Sir Roger Bradshaigh was Mayor in 1698, 1703, 1719, 1724, and 1729; his brother, Henry, in 1709, his

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, undated letter clearly referring to the election of 1722.

<sup>2</sup> H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.*, Roger Kenyon to Mrs. Kenyon, 6 September 1712; Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 7 August 1733, cf. George Winstanley to Bradshaigh, 5 May 1746; "You are sensible the election of parliament wholly depends of what is done at Michaelmass."

brother William, in 1712, and his son, Roger, in 1720, while Barrymore held the office in 1725 and 1734. Between these more eminent mayors the office tended to go to certain leading families in the town: the Baldwins, the Bankes, and the Fords, all pewterers, and later to the Holts. An exception in 1726 which proved dangerous to the established interest was Legh Master, a nephew of Peter Legh of Lyme.<sup>1</sup> By ancient usage the jury was sworn from such burgesses as lived in the town and paid scot and lot, excluding borough officials: in 1726 these were reckoned at forty-one and in 1739 at thirty-nine.<sup>2</sup> But periodic disputes arose as to whether jurymen were in fact properly qualified: the dispute over jurors reached its climax in 1725 when it emerged that the old rules had not been strictly observed. Disputes over the mayor and the jury were usually symptomatic of electoral conflicts: no dispute over Wigan's franchise went to the House of Commons, but disputes bearing on it were taken to the law courts, and this mingling of law and politics was characteristic of Wigan affairs.

At the two elections of 1713 (the first a by-election) and the election of 1715, various influences were invoked to sway the Wigan voters. In a general sense Wigan was within the Stanley sphere of influence, and the Bradshaighs, with the exception of a breach in the late seventeenth century, enjoyed the Earl of Derby's favour: in 1705 Sir Roger stood, unsuccessfully, as a Stanley candidate for the county. But Lord Derby's support could not guarantee success at Wigan.<sup>3</sup> A

<sup>1</sup> A list of mayors is in Baines, *op. cit.* iv. 257-8. On the Wigan pewterers see article by R. J. A. Shelley, *Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. xcvi (1945).

<sup>2</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 15 February 1725/6; Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 7 May 1739.

<sup>3</sup> H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.* p. 434; there is a copy of the county poll of 1705 among the Crawford MSS.; the candidates were Richard Shuttleworth, William Farington, the Hon. Charles Stanley, and Bradshaigh. Bradshaigh stood in opposition to Shuttleworth, W. W. Bean, *The Parliamentary Representation of the Six Northern Counties of England* (1890), p. 181. In 1708 Lord Gower solicited only George Kenyon's second vote at Wigan for Bridgeman, recognizing that "your obligations to my Lord Derby, are such that on his account you will serve Sir Roger Bradshaigh in the first place". H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.* p. 442. In 1695 Rigby claimed to have assurance of Lord Derby's friendship "under his hand", but he failed to get in at Wigan. *Ibid.* p. 384.

more immediate aristocratic influence was that of Richard Savage, 4th Earl Rivers, Vice-Admiral of Lancashire from 1702-12, who had sat for Wigan himself in 1681, and was a more active political figure than either the 9th or 10th Earls of Derby. Rivers was a patron of the Bradshaighs: Henry Bradshaigh had been one of his aides-de-camp in Spain, and was described in 1710 as under his power, and Sir Roger relied on his intercession with Harley. His influence at Wigan was undoubted: after Henry Bradshaigh's death in 1712, Sir Roger wrote to Oxford: "It is necessary to write this post to my Corporation to recomend a fitt person to serve them in his roome, and having had the approbation of my Lord Rivers on behalfe of Mr Kenyon, who is our Recorder and vice chancellor of the Dutchy of Lancaster, I have writt this post to his Lordship to recomend him to the Towne as soone as possible to prevent any other application."<sup>1</sup> A month after this letter Rivers died, and the Rivers interest was in confusion: but Kenyon met with no opposition in an election so near to the end of the Parliament.

For the General Election of 1713 Bradshaigh made his preparations early: his brother William was elected Mayor for the election year, while in London Bradshaigh canvassed for Kenyon the Bishop of Chester, the Chancellor of the Duchy (and through him the Lord Lieutenant to be), and the Lord Treasurer. When Kenyon's offer of his services had been accepted by the Corporation, his supporters began their activities in the locality. Shakerley used his influence; Dr. Richard Wroe, Warden of the Collegiate Church of Manchester, canvassed among the clerical out-burgesses; and John Sumner, the master at Wigan Grammar School, busied himself with the minutiae of management: a judicious small loan, a threat of the loss or a promise of the gain of a local office, and free drinks to compete with those offered by Barrymore's steward.<sup>2</sup> Barry-

<sup>1</sup> G.E.C.; Bean, *op. cit.* p. 460; H.M.C. *Portland MSS.*, iv. 579 and v. 18; B.M. *Portland MSS.*, Bradshaigh to Oxford, 9 July 1712.

<sup>2</sup> H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.* pp. 449-52: Wroe was George Kenyon's brother-in-law; he was a J.P., and an active politician in Lancashire. F. R. Raines, *The Rectors of Manchester and the Wardens of the Collegiate Church*, Chetham

more, in fact, with the help of the Rector and Bridgeman, gained 87 votes (22 out- and 65 in-burgesses) against Sir Roger's 126, and not only did he enlist those who had voted for Bridgeman and Finch in 1708, but he won over some who had voted for the two Bradshaighs then. Curiously enough, Bridgeman gained only 18 votes, probably because he was absent from the actual election.<sup>1</sup> It proved, as Bradshaigh complained to Oxford afterwards, a very expensive election owing to Barrymore's "great offers to voters and spending so much money in the towne".<sup>2</sup>

Barrymore's threat was pursued beyond the election, for he and Bridgeman petitioned against their opponents on the grounds that they were not properly qualified under the recent landed qualification act, which required a borough member to possess landed property of £300 annual value, above reprises. The tactics adopted by Bradshaigh and Kenyon, with the advice of their friends, Shakerley and Thomas Ashurst, strongly suggest that they were unable to meet the challenge squarely.<sup>3</sup> Fortunately for them the petition petered out: Bridgeman withdrew, and the committee was discharged on the technical ground that Barrymore had not actually signed the petition himself. The discharge, however, was not passed without two divisions of the House, and the whole proceedings indicate a certain hostility to Bradshaigh and Kenyon on the part of a

Society (1885), pt. ii, pp. 151-2. He had been the bishop's curate at Wigan, 1679-81. Hawkes, *op. cit.* p. 41. Sumner had been a sizar at Queen's College, Cambridge, B.A. 1686-7. J. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, pt. i (1922-7), vol. iv. In 1733 (after his death) he was described as one "who for many years was employed about the public affairs of the borough". Exch. K.R. Depositions by Commission, 7 Geo. II, Mich. 14, 1733. Interrogatories on behalf of Thomas Steers. I owe this information to Dr. T. S. Willan. It is not clear if Sumner was still the schoolmaster in 1713; he had been appointed in 1686, but a new master was appointed in 1692. Sinclair, *op. cit.* ii. 174.

<sup>1</sup> Kenyon MSS. 1713 poll; Crawford MSS., Thomas Ashurst to Bradshaigh, 30 October 1713.

<sup>2</sup> B.M. Portland MSS., Bradshaigh to Oxford, 20 September 1713.

<sup>3</sup> Shakerley's letters to Kenyon are in H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.*, pp. 454-5; for his ability as an organiser see T. S. Willan, *The Navigation of the River Weaver*, Chetham Society, 3rd ser., iii (1951), 10-11. Ashurst's letters to Bradshaigh are among the Crawford MSS. A reprise was a payment falling to be made yearly out of a manor or estate.



number of Lancashire and Cheshire Tories, including Richard Shuttleworth and John Ward, member for Newton.<sup>1</sup> Even the withdrawal of the petition did not end the trouble and expense caused by Barrymore's rivalry. Immediately after the parliamentary election, the legality of the mayoral election was challenged by 62 burgesses, including Sir Thomas Standish, Sir Edward Chisnall, both influential local figures, Bertie Entwistle (whose ejection from the Recordship and replacement by Kenyon Bradshaigh had secured in 1698), John Rigby, the late Lord Rivers' steward, and Robert Holt, whose name first appears in the poll of 1713. Their objection was that the late Mayor, William Bradshaigh, had not held the election in the usual place, the Town Hall, but in a house too small to hold all the legal voters.<sup>2</sup> The defence lay in counter-accusations that a riot, caused by Barrymore's supporters (Holt being among the suspects), had made the normal procedure impossible. Bradshaigh had to spend money on attornies, on securing the services of the eminent counsel, Serjeant Chesshyre, and on a Privy Seal licence to allow him and two Queen's Counsel to plead for the new mayor and the bailiffs against a Crown charge.<sup>3</sup> Towards the end of the parliamentary session he was in financial straits, and appealed to Oxford for ready money, citing "the great expense I shall be put to this terme in the defence of the several prosecutions against my friends in Wigan".<sup>4</sup>

The suits continued, and merged in the contest for the election of 1715, following on the death of the queen. Within

<sup>1</sup> *Commons Journal*, xvii. 493, 514, and 541.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford MSS., "Protest of some Burgesses, 3 October 1713". The replacement of Entwistle, championed by Sir Alexander Rigby and the Earl of Macclesfield, by Kenyon, backed by Shakerley and Bradshaigh, was an incident in the struggle in the borough between Rigby on one side and Shakerley and Bradshaigh; although the Lords Justices were suspicious of Shakerley, Bradshaigh managed, in some way not revealed, to make interest with William III in Kenyon's favour. *Cal. S.P.D. 1697*, p. 448; H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.*, pp. 423-4.

<sup>3</sup> Crawford MSS. Names of the Rioters at Wigan; affidavits taken 29 January 1713/14. On the back is a series of queries in Bradshaigh's hand, including "above how farr the evidence does reach against Mr. Holt, his son, Mr. Heys, Mr. Calvert and Thomas Walker . . .".

<sup>4</sup> B.M. Portland MSS., Bradshaigh to Oxford, 26 — 1714.

the county Barrymore gained support: Lord Derby, when approached by him (through Lady Colchester, widow of Lord Rivers' brother), promised his backing before he knew of Kenyon's intention to stand, and from November, in token of the alliance of the Finches with the Whigs, the Chancellor of the Duchy was Heneage Finch, newly created Earl of Aylesford. At a lower level among the election organizers in the town there were suggestions of a compromise whereby Kenyon should withdraw and Barrymore should repay his expenses.<sup>1</sup> At first Kenyon refused, though professing his willingness to sacrifice himself for the peace of the town. Bradshaigh's attitude is not revealed, but in December Kenyon sent to him, for his approval or correction, a letter to the mayor in which he withdrew his candidature, stating that he had been assured that upon his withdrawal "the Suits against the Corporation shall cease, and that it will be the meanes to give peace, and unity to the towne".<sup>2</sup> A public reconciliation between Bradshaigh and Barrymore took place, and their respective followers seem to have agreed to serve both their interests while they were united. In a later moment of recrimination Bradshaigh informed Barrymore: "I am sure notwithstanding the large sum which you gave Mr. Kenyon upon his declining to stand, if I had not appear'd verry heartily the morning of the election for your Lordship, you had not been chosen even at that time", and on the back of the copy of Kenyon's letter to the mayor is written in Sir Roger's hand (though at what date cannot be said), "but sold the towne for £300 to Lord Barrymore".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.*, p. 457: Rivers' elder brother, Thomas, died before his father; his wife was Charlotte, daughter of the 8th Earl of Derby.

<sup>2</sup> The original letter is in Wigan Public Library, and there is a copy among the Crawford MSS. The negotiation was a delicate one; Kenyon's accompanying letter to Bradshaigh showed suspicion of Barrymore, but Edward Beresford, a friend of Barrymore and of the Leghs of Lyme, gave warning of the need for trust in a gentleman's agreement: "for you cannot suppose him [Barrymore] to be free from difficulty in relation to his own party". Wigan Public Library.

<sup>3</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 14 February 1746/7; Bradshaigh to Barrymore, draft letter 17 November 1720.

## IV

This was the origin of the long partnership between Sir Roger Bradshaigh and Lord Barrymore at Wigan. For the period 1715 to 1747 there are in the Crawford MSS. two long series of letters, almost all to Sir Roger, the one consisting of some 200 letters from Barrymore, and the other of nearly 250 letters from Alexander Leigh. Leigh had been a campaigner for Barrymore in 1714, but after the alliance he seems to have given equal, if not prior, allegiance to Bradshaigh.<sup>1</sup> He was an attorney with a large clientele in Lancashire, and in 1733 he was steward or clerk of seventeen manorial courts, including Haigh, Wigan, and Knowsley: his activities strongly resemble those of the Liverpool attorney, of the same period, Isaac Green.<sup>2</sup> His interests extended to economic matters: he had an interest in enclosing, and was deeply involved in the Douglas Navigation project, and thereby concerned in the Lancashire coal trade.<sup>3</sup> Leigh was related to the Holts of Wigan by his marriage to Dorothy, daughter of Robert Holt, who was a moving spirit in the Douglas Navigation, together with his son, Edward. Robert Holt figures in Barrymore's letters as a friend constantly consulted (with Leigh) on borough affairs and undertaking Barrymore's disbursements in the town. During the 'thirties and early 'forties the Leigh and Holt families dominated the internal affairs of the borough.<sup>4</sup> Robert Holt was Mayor in 1730 and 1736, and his son, Edward,

<sup>1</sup> H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.* pp. 458-9, Deposition of William Low, 1714.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 1 May 1733: cf. R. Stewart Brown, *Isaac Greene, A Lancashire Lawyer of the Eighteenth Century* (1921).

<sup>3</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 2 February 1724/5. According to Whitehouse, writing in 1820, the whole work of the Navigation "was executed at the sole expense of one public-spirited individual, Alexander Leigh of Hindley, grandfather of Sir Robert Holt Leigh bt.", Chapters in Local History reprinted from the *Wigan Examiner*, 1946-7. There are a number of interesting letters from Leigh to Bradshaigh on the Navigation among the Crawford MSS.

<sup>4</sup> Crawford MSS. George Winstanley, discussing the borough's affairs in a letter to Bradshaigh, 12 October 1746, referred to "their high and mightinesses Leigh and Holt", i.e. Edward Holt, the son of Robert. In 1802 Leigh's grandson, who was created a baronet in 1815, sat for Wigan. Pink and Beavan, *op. cit.* pp. 237-8.

in 1741 and 1745, while Leigh held the office in 1727 and 1737. Leigh also held the office of Town Clerk from 1732 to 1735; his son, Robert, held it from 1735 to his death in 1741 and his nephew and former clerk, John Wiswall, succeeded. Sir Roger's relations with Leigh and the Holts were on the whole very close, and he confided much of the management of his interest to them while he was in London: Barrymore, too, constantly submitted to Leigh's advice and sent his circular letters to him unsealed for his approval. But occasionally Sir Roger seems to have found it best to tread carefully with the Holts. The kind of delimitation of spheres of influence is shown in the crisis over Ralph Baldwin in 1737-8. Ralph Baldwin, who had formerly been an opponent of Bradshaigh and Barrymore, was proving a nuisance to the ruling group in the mid-'thirties. Leigh, the Mayor, wished to disenfranchise him for contempt of the Mayor and Court Leet, but Baldwin was rumoured to have encouragement from Sir Roger. An interesting letter, signed also by Robert and Edward Holt and their ally George Browne, was sent from Leigh to Bradshaigh in November 1737; it was clearly a delicate form of pressure:

I have already said, and not without orders; that you are sure of the friendship and assistance of my father [i.e. father-in-law] and all his family, if you think that friendship worth preserving: and not only they, but severall others who are your friends, will freely subscribe to the assurance, upon the same condition: . . .

Time was, when those two [Ralph Baldwin and Nicholas Parr] were at the head of such an opposition, as it was imagined, you wou'd not have forgot; it wou'd in those days have been esteemed serving you, to have excluded 'em: but it seems as if their zeal at that time, to aid another person, who was for overturning your intrest, had recomended them to your particular esteem, after they were disappointed by the assistance of those persons of whom you seem to be now the most distrustfull.

It is in no man's power besides your own, to break that union which has for severall years happily subsisted amongst us; . . . It will be most unhappy, if you think your intrest, and that of the town, incompatible; for in that case, every man who acts upon honest principles must conclude that the publick ought first to be regarded. Many of your friends here, as well as I, think otherwise; and that a few of the substantiall inhabitants, who are peaceably disposed, may be elected burgesses, and your intrest remain still in the same security. . . . There is nothing of that kind [opposition] intended; nor will be, if you do not comitt the first act of desertion.

If he was prepared to support Leigh and the Holts, Bradshaigh was asked to write to his friends on the jury, including George Winstanley, to withdraw their support from Baldwin. Sir Roger apparently obliged, and at the Easter Leet when Baldwin again sought re-election the Holts defeated him and secured the election of six of their own supporters.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Holt and Leigh on one occasion interpreted the political opinion of the town to Bradshaigh: this concerned the Excise scheme in 1733. Bradshaigh had received a general letter from the town, and had written to Leigh and Holt to discover if it represented a genuine widespread attitude or had been inspired by his fellow member, Peter Bold. Leigh and Holt replied assuring him that it was not a manoeuvre on Bold's part, but that the proposal for it had been made publicly by the mayor, "wherein he was so generally seconded that in all appearance it was become necessary". The letter gives an indication of the constituents' attitude to their member, a combination of deference and discreet advice. After relating the general dissatisfaction, it continues:

You are so well acquainted with matters of this kind, that if our advice were fitt to be offer'd we are perswaded you want it not; much less any that we are capable of giving, in regard to your present conduct: but the manner wherein you require it, obliges us to be thankfull for your kind opinion of us. We are very sensible of your judgment to discern, what is likely to tend to *the advantage or disadvantage* of the subject; and see no reason why you shou'd not be govern'd by it—to expect otherwise wou'd be in a friend an actuall desertion; as it is endeavouring to lay you under a restraint of the worst kind, and bespeaks a suspicion that ought not to be entertain'd—we believe nothing of that sort was intended by any of your friends who subscrib'd the letter; and *the promise* you are pleased in your answer to make, that as soon as this scheme is open'd you'll communicate it to us, one wou'd think sufficient to take off the distrust of your adversaries: but it seems *otherwise*, for your letter, having pass'd thro' a great many hands, has suffer'd various *interpretations*; and that part of it that has given the greatest satisfaction to us is call'd *short and evasive* by the other side, and by them is laid hold of as an occasion to express their disaffection for its author: however as these are onely the small remnant of a party that in its altitude was not able to affect your intrest, we hope you need not fear their present power, nor any addition that can be made to it, by *misrepresentations* in your prejudice.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 29 November, 13 December 1737, and 18 April 1738.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Leigh and Holt to Bradshaigh, 26 February 1732/3.

While Leigh and the Holts did him service in the borough, Bradshaigh used his influence on their behalf. He served the cause of the Douglas Navigation actively, and kept watch, partly of course in his own interests as a colliery owner, on the schemes of Sir James Lowther in the late 'thirties, to "monopolize the Coal Trade upon this Coast", thereby cutting out those concerned in the Navigation.<sup>1</sup> Other services were more personal. In June 1739, Leigh suggested to Sir Roger that Edward Holt should be made a J.P., which would be "very agreeable" to his father, and would remedy a shortage of justices in the Wigan area, where they were anxious to benefit by the powers recently vested in justices for the better recovery of rents. Edward Holt appeared on a commission of the very next month.<sup>2</sup> Bradshaigh appears also to have given some assistance to both Roger and James Holt in their military careers.<sup>3</sup>

To a great extent Leigh and Holt formed the channel for appeals from the locality for Sir Roger's patronage: the places involved ranged from the Duchy office of Seal-Keeper to the Chancellor to a place in the Survey of Bridges, but the most common were those in the administration—the Excise, the Post Office, the Salt Office and the Window Tax.<sup>4</sup> The link between patronage and the management of the borough appears most clearly in the letters relating to the Post Office and the

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 5 December 1738, 6 and 22 April 1739, 21 July and 27 November 1739. The Douglas Navigation was a distinct element in Wigan electoral affairs; a Wigan electoral address of 1753, on behalf of Richard Barry, son of Barrymore, and Sir William Meredith, charged one of their opponents, Sir John Savile, with attempts to bribe the electorate, *inter alia*, "By advancing the commerce of the town in assisting Mr. Alderman Leigh in his Navigation project", of which the writer disapproved. Later in the same pamphlet, Leigh was described as having suffered losses by the Navigation, and as having been, until recently, "the chief agent to support the Country interest". Wigan Public Library.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Leigh to Bradshaigh, 12 June 1739: Edward Holt is included in the commission of 5 July 1739. I owe this information to the kindness of Mr. R. Sharpe France.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Leigh to Bradshaigh, 27 May, 23 September and 2 October 1737, and Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 11 December 1737. Leigh to Bradshaigh, 12 December 1740 and 1 September 1741.

<sup>4</sup> See the frequent references by George Winstanley to places obtained through Bradshaigh's good offices, especially 16 August 1745.

Window Tax. The Window Tax office in Wigan was held by Josiah Cocke, the landlord of *The Eagle and Child*: he had been a burgess since 1727 and was described by Barrymore as “a staunch friend at all times”. In 1733 Cocke was imprisoned in Lancaster gaol for debt: a number of influential people in the county were mustered in his support, including Sir Henry Hoghton, Thomas Brereton and Sir Thomas Lowther, and he was the subject of one of the very few letters extant from Bradshaigh to Walpole. This was a request that Cocke should be allowed to act by deputy (preferable his son-in-law, Richard Leigh) until his debts were paid, or, failing this, that the Mayor of Wigan, James Ford, might succeed him.<sup>1</sup> Some arrangement was made whereby Cocke kept his post, and early in 1734 Richard Leigh was appointed a Deputy in the Post Office.<sup>2</sup> Early in 1738 the question arose of a successor to Cocke in the Window Tax, and Alexander Leigh strongly recommended Ford to Sir Roger. He was recommended as a friend to the Bradshaigh interest, “when his indigent circumstances might have been retriev’d, if he wou’d have deserted it”, “and whose time, canot, according to the course of nature, for many years prevent your obliging another friend, after his death”; it was an employment, too, which Leigh believed “he is capable to execute; and which carrys along with it such an income, as will enable him to appear like a magistrate (when it falls to his lot) without the aid of his friends”. Already, when Ford had been Mayor in 1733-4, he had had to be assisted financially by Barrymore and Bradshaigh in carrying the office, but his loyalty justified the expense.<sup>3</sup> Leigh urged, in addition: “you have kept the place, in the family where it is, for a great many years; and by adding the post office to it (one wou’d think that) you have sufficiently express’d your desire to serve every person belonging to Mr Cocke that is capable of receiving

<sup>1</sup> Exch. K.R. Depositions by Commission, 7 Geo. II, Mich. 14, 1733. Cocke was sworn a burgess 30 September 1727 by Leigh as Mayor. Crawford MSS., List of Burgesses sworn 1725-46. Ibid. Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 11 December 1733. C.U.L. Cholmondeley (Houghton) MSS., Corr. no. 2080, Bradshaigh to Walpole, 30 November 1733.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 15 March 1733/4 and 3 March 1737/8. <sup>3</sup> Ibid. Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 8 June and 23 September 1733.

your favour . . . and you are sensible, that if it were not for the supply which Mr Ford has from the turnpike, he must be supported by the contributions of his friends".<sup>1</sup> Bradshaigh secured the post for Ford, who in 1740 was able to undertake the mayoralty.

Although there is no evidence about the content of the agreement which began Barrymore and Bradshaigh's partnership, its general nature emerges from the correspondence. Barrymore, though the older man, normally deferred to Bradshaigh's opinion on the management of Wigan, as befitted a newcomer to the town, and, by comparison, to the House of Commons; moreover, he was often in Ireland, either in Dublin for the Irish Parliament, or at his house, Castle Lyons in Co. Cork. His letters to Sir Roger contain constant assurances of his willingness to share equally in all expenses for the maintenance of their joint interest, whether it were presents for the mayor, treats for the burgesses, money for races, for a gaol, or for the building of a Town Hall between 1720 and 1725. The old Town Hall had become dilapidated and had been pulled down in 1718 by agreement between the Rector and the mayor, so that the Corporation had no proper meeting place. The total cost of the hall does not appear, but some of the detailed joint accounts survive, Barrymore's half on one of them being £133 15s. 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.<sup>2</sup> Treating was a constant charge at the leets and before elections: before the election of 1741 the Mayor, James Ford, reported to Bradshaigh:

We have gone thro' 4 publick houses of our friends, att which I found it necessary to spend more than I propos'd to have done att first, in order to keep them in temper and to send them away better satisfy'd; for there are some of so conscientious constitutions, that they cannot go to sleep, unless they have their skins full; and I hope that my Lord and your Honour will approve of what I have done. I have only 18s remaining of the 8 guineas, for the other 3 houses; which may make a supply a little necessary.<sup>3</sup>

Even after his alliance with Sir Roger, Barrymore had to face strong opposition from some of the in-burgesses, foremost

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 3 March 1737/8.

<sup>2</sup> The joint accounts are in Wigan Public Library.

<sup>3</sup> Crawford MSS., James Ford to Bradshaigh, 3 March 1740/1.



among whom was John Sumner, who informed Leigh in 1722 that "if the Devil stood Candidate (these were part of his terms) the greatest part of the town wou'd be for him rather than my Lord Barrymore". Bradshaigh, indeed, seems to have strained his own resources of influence in this election by his alliance with Barrymore, for even Leigh himself confessed: "I shou'd have been very silent in this (likely to be) troublesome contest if you had not signified your friendship for my Lord". Sumner and his associates planned to draw up an association for subscription in the town to restrain Bradshaigh from intermeddling in the choice of his fellow-member.<sup>1</sup> All the advantages of the alliance seemed to lie with Barrymore: in 1733 he admitted that "any opposition to you [Bradshaigh] must hurt mee infinitely more then you", and Bradshaigh himself was well aware of the strength of his position in the town.<sup>2</sup> In 1720, in response to Barrymore's request for a declaration of the alliance, he demurred at doing "a thing which must unavoidably hurt my interest in Wigan", and, in view of the public agreement at their reconciliation, wished to be excused from making such a declaration without the Corporation's consent. He insisted that if anyone stood in opposition only to Barrymore, "I ought not to be concern'd in that expence, for I flatter myselfe that nobody will oppose me singly", but protested that "I don't pretend to have such an interest in Wigan as to declare I will joyne or bring in any person whatsoever". Nevertheless, he believed that Barrymore would have only himself to blame if he failed. Barrymore's own frequent references to the rights and welfare of the Corporation are echoed here: "I must now acquaint your Lordship that if I would sell my interest in Wigan I have had verry considerable offers, but I assure you my opinion is, that if any thing is to be had upon such terms the Corporation is

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 6 and 25 February 1721/2, and undated letter. Alderman Ford, Leigh doubted, would "hardly be perswaded into his [Barrymore's] intrest, tho' yours go's along with it. Mrs. Ford has received so great an aversion against my Lord, that there's no hope of her being reconcil'd to him."

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 17 May 1733.

most intitled to it".<sup>1</sup> Despite a rumour in 1721 that Bradshaigh intended to stand with his son, the alliance with Barrymore continued. The reason may lie partly in the strength of the interest on which Barrymore had stood in 1713, but also in more personal bonds. In 1722 Barrymore found it expedient to refer before the assembled mayor, aldermen and other supporters to a report that "the reason of your [Bradshaigh's] joining with him at this time is because you owe him 4 or 500*l*. And he declar'd that he thought it but just to you that he shou'd let them have his assurance that you owe him no money at all, and that there have been no demands betwixt you for above two years past."<sup>2</sup> This may well have been strictly true, but between 1715 and 1719 Barrymore had made two loans to Bradshaigh. By April 1717 he was pressing for repayment and protesting: "I tooke your own time and method of paying it and very much to my disadvantage. If it had not been to serve you there's scarce a man I wou'd have lent money too on such terms. . . . I realy depended on the payment of the 100 and intrest for the rest": a postscript assured Bradshaigh that "as to the money between us 'tis a secret to everybody". A month later he was agitating for payment of £130 and for a better security for the whole loan than Sir Roger's life, insisting that he had promised sufficient security "even on your canell pitts. I assure you I had no bye end in lending the money but purely your service." No further loans are mentioned (save for an isolated reference in 1719) until 1739, when, after some difficulty, Barrymore lent Bradshaigh £198 19*s*., but in 1742 Bradshaigh owed him about £600 for which he wished to have additional security.<sup>3</sup>

Barrymore was able, occasionally, to use his position in Ireland for Sir Roger's advantage. In 1724 he urged on the Lord Lieutenant, Bradshaigh's brother's claims to a post in Ireland, suggesting one in the Customs worth £200 or £300

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Draft letter of Bradshaigh to Barrymore, 17 November 1720.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Leigh to Bradshaigh, 6 February 1721/2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 27 April, 7 and 14 May 1717; on the back of a letter from Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 16 January 1738/9; Leigh to Bradshaigh, 8 August, 1742.

a year. Through him Bradshaigh embarked in 1731 on a project for making a profit of nearly £1,000, by disclosing to the Government the existence of an Irish estate under a dormant forfeiture for which he would gain a reward, and in addition a larger profit on the sale.<sup>1</sup> The promotion of a Mr. Francis Knapp, Surveyor of the Stores in the Customs at Cork, was a constant concern of Barrymore's between 1734 and 1738, and as fresh offices fell vacant he held out to Bradshaigh or to any of his friends who could obtain one for Knapp, by Walpole's favour, the promise of a sum varying from 300 guineas to £500. Barrymore discussed at some length the nature of Walpole's influence over such appointments in Ireland, and in 1738 commented on Sir Roger's failure to persuade Walpole :

As to the greate mans interfareing the enclos'd will satisfie you he does and will doe, but if he has noe mind to doe it there's noe more to bee said. His method off interfareing is thus, he directs one off the Irish comissioners to write to his brethern there that he desires such a person may bee provided on such a vacancy when 'tis one, if 'tis not already one ; 'tis very true that noe order but upon very extrodinary occasions issues from the treasury, and 'tis alsoe as true that noe post off any significancy in that kingdom is dispos'd off without his approbation. . . . If the greate man will not serve his friends when it costs noething, he uses them hardly ; I wish matters ran within a few votes, you would bee better regarded.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless the partnership was by no means an easy one, and there was constant suspicion on Bradshaigh's part during the 'twenties. In 1723 Barrymore had to allay his suspicions as to the choice of burgesses, particularly that of Thomas Hesketh, by disclaiming all foreknowledge of it, and twice at least he protested that he did not care if he himself were re-elected or not. In 1722, and again in 1727, there was some confusion in informing the voters as to whether Bradshaigh joined his interest to Barrymore's, and after the election of 1727 the latter requested a formal renewal of their engagement,

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 19 October 1724 ; 1 and 8 December 1731, — October 1732 and 8 May 1733, and draft memorial 22 December 1731 ; *Calendar of Treasury Books and Papers*, ii (1731-4), 289.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Barrymore to Bradshaigh, undated letter, "Monday night 1738" : the reference is to the relative strength of Government and Opposition in the Commons.

and the inclusion of their respective sons. No trace of this survives, but by October 1732 Bradshaigh had made a clear declaration of the alliance in preparation for the next election.<sup>1</sup> Certainly the 'thirties do not show any of the suspicions which marked the 'twenties: some of the improvement may be attributed to the death in 1728 of George Kenyon, Barrymore's old opponent.<sup>2</sup>

Barrymore's letters to Bradshaigh reveal that they had two different sets of friends in Lancashire and Cheshire, both of whom had their importance in Wigan elections, but that it was difficult to make the two run in harness together to further the joint interest. Sir Roger's influence, at least until the 'forties, was the more important among the in-burgesses, but the amount of attention given to the persuasion of the out-burgesses was considerable. Both Bradshaigh and Barrymore during their respective mayoralties in 1724-5 and 1725-6 made large creations of burgesses, chiefly out-burgesses, from among their friends, far exceeding the numbers sworn by any other mayor between 1725 and 1746.<sup>3</sup> In the early 'twenties Bradshaigh's friends needed constant reassurance that he really joined with Barrymore, and even later they needed diplomatic handling. In 1727 several of Bradshaigh's Cheshire friends, who had votes at Wigan, refused to give a vote to Barrymore unless his electoral interest in Cheshire went to the Whig, Sir Robert Cotton. Barrymore wrote urging Bradshaigh to clarify the position, "for I wou'd not have wrote my circular letters or have engag'd in the controversy but on your assurance that those gentlemen wou'd bee for mee, and all your friends".<sup>4</sup> Barrymore's friends included men with similar political interests:

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 31 August 1727 and — October 1732.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 8 December 1728: Kenyon's death, Barrymore thought, "may bee noe small meanes to continue the present good disposition".

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. List of burgesses sworn 1725-46; Bradshaigh swore thirty-eight and Barrymore forty-six; the next highest number was thirteen under Bradshaigh in 1729-30.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 15 August 1727: Cotton voted for the Excise Scheme according to Cobbett's list; he sat for Lostwithiel 1741-7. J. P. Earwaker, *Local Gleanings*, i (1879-80), 418.

Thomas Hesketh of Rufford, who had stood successfully at Preston with Daniel Pultney in 1722 against Sir Henry Hoghton; Richard Shuttleworth, the county member; Sir John Bland, member for the county from 1713 to 1727, who had married into the Moseley family; Thomas Lister, the member for Clitheroe; Thomas Assheton of Ashley, a member of the High Tory Cheshire Club, and the Tory lawyer, Thomas Pigott, who lobbied with the poet John Byrom for the Tories in the parliamentary debate on the Manchester Workhouse in 1731.<sup>1</sup> Barrymore, on his part, had to reassure his friends without alarming or compromising Bradshaigh. Behind their mutual suspicions lay not only the former divisions at Wigan, but the complex of Lancashire and Cheshire politics as a whole. Despite a certain solidarity of the Lancashire gentry, regardless of religion or politics, the area had seen actual fighting during the Jacobite rebellion of 1715. Afterwards, some forty odd rebels had been executed in its chief towns, including five at Wigan, and perhaps a thousand were sentenced to transportation: a Shuttleworth was executed at Preston and a Townley and a Tildesley were taken to London for trial. While some families suffered, others profited: Sir Thomas Johnson, the Liverpool merchant, was paid £1,000 in 1716 for transporting prisoners to the colonies, and Sir Henry Hoghton was made a Commissioner of Forfeited Estates for his loyalty.<sup>2</sup> The area was one of strongly contrasted electoral interests and Wigan was in some degree affected by the divisions. In Lancashire county's representation there was a strong Tory and Country tradition, which kept Richard Shuttleworth in Parliament from 1705 to 1749, despite a challenge from Hoghton

<sup>1</sup> This club included also, Barrymore, Peter Legh of Lyme, Sir Richard Grosvenor of Eaton, and Amos Meredith of Henbury, father of Sir William Meredith, M.P. Wigan 1754-61, with Barrymore's son. Lady Newton, *The House of Lyme* (1917), p. 368. Richard Parkinson, *The Private Journal and Literary Remains of John Byrom*, Chetham Society (1854-7), vol. i, pt. ii.

<sup>2</sup> M. Blundell, *Blundell's Diary and Letter Book 1702-28* (1952); S. Hibbert Ware, *Lancashire Memorials of the Rebellion, 1715*, Chetham Society, vol. v (1845); Baines, *op. cit.* i. 330-3; *Cal. Treas. Papers, 1714-19*, p. 200; A. C. Wardle, "Sir Thomas Johnson and the Jacobite Rebels", *Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. xci (1939); G. C. Miller, *Hoghton Tower* (1948), pp. 197-9.

leading to a fierce contest in 1722.<sup>1</sup> Among the boroughs, Liverpool was a focus of conflict, owing to the activities of the Walpolian Thomas Brereton in the town and the neighbouring counties.<sup>2</sup> At Preston and in the county round it the strongest interest was that of Sir Henry Hoghton, whose family continued to support the dissenters longer than most of the Lancashire gentry. In 1734, reminding Walpole of a promise of office, Hoghton referred to "mine and my family's steadiness in all times to support the honest interest in this disaffected country [i.e. county]", and described bitterly the threats, intensified by the unpopularity of the Excise scheme, of Shuttleworth and the Earl of Derby to his interest at Preston.<sup>3</sup> At Newton, the nearest borough to Wigan, the ex-Jacobite Leghs of Lyme were entrenched, since it was a burgage borough, and by their nomination the extremist Tory, William Shippen, sat in the Commons from 1715 to 1743.<sup>4</sup>

## V

The 'twenties were a period of insecurity for the newly formed alliance at Wigan, and there were crises in 1722, 1724-6, and 1727. For the election of 1722 there was a threat from Thomas Crisp of Parbold, a Government supporter, who had been sheriff of the county in the rebellion.<sup>5</sup> Bradshaigh and Barrymore, however, were able to rally to their common interest, Sir Edward Chisnall, the Rector (influenced partly by a letter from Bishop Gastrell), Entwistle, and Shakerley, whose

<sup>1</sup> William Stout, *Autobiography*, ed. J. Harland (1851), p. 101; Baines, *op. cit.* iv. 337 and 346.

<sup>2</sup> Pink and Beavan, *op. cit.* pp. 197-8; H.M.C. *Egmont Diary*, i. 85-7; C.U.L. Cholmondeley (Houghton) MSS. Corr. nos. 2218, 2396b, 2919.

<sup>3</sup> G. C. Miller, *op. cit.* pp. 198-9; C.U.L. Cholmondeley MSS. Corr. no. 2146, Hoghton to Walpole, 2 April 1734.

<sup>4</sup> Lady Newton, *The House of Lyme*, pp. 165, 217 and 351.

<sup>5</sup> Crisp's petition to the Treasury for compensation for loss of sheriff's profits as a result of the rebellion was sponsored by Sir Thomas Johnson, *Cal. Treas. Papers*, 1714-19, p. 299. He sat for Ilchester in 1727. Walmesley, according to Leigh, was "so nearly allied in opinion as to religious affairs as well as politicks" to Crisp. Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, undated.

influence was still considerable.<sup>1</sup> Crisp soon desisted, but in his stead appeared Henry Furnese, a Londoner who had bought Lathom House during the disposal of various Stanley properties by the heiress, the Countess of Ashburnham, and Charles Mordaunt, a nephew of the Earl of Peterborough, who had acquired the manor of Halsall by marriage. Mordaunt was reported to be prepared to spend 500 guineas, and there was a danger that the Liverpool voters would default.<sup>2</sup> Mordaunt, however, retired, leaving Furnese supported by the regular electioneer, John Sumner and by John Walmesley. There was a certain hostility to Barrymore among the in-burgesses, and considerable time and energy were devoted to the persuasion of the in-burgesses at this election. Barrymore followed Bradshaigh's advice, and reported: "when I was last there I gave the burgesses twelve guineas to drink besides the other compliments of the bells musick etc. ; I treated the gentlemen at night and next day at dinner which cost eight pounds ; I send them this day, I mean the burgesses, to Mr Mayor to distribute, ten guineas, and a guinea to Mr Holt to give Mr Winstanley for the Haighe burgesses, which every body tells me is as much as our friends desire." His disgust with Sumner and his fellows was unbounded, since, as he reminded Bradshaigh, "most of them owe their power of voting to you and many of them their bread".<sup>3</sup> The election does not appear to have been contested to a poll.

Restlessness and intrigue in the borough led up to the crisis of 1724-6, which took the form of a dispute over the mayor and over the qualifications of jurors. Barrymore saw it as an attempt to overturn his interest in the Corporation completely, sponsored by those who had always opposed him, and who objected to Bradshaigh's alliance with him.<sup>4</sup> The chief opponents were Kenyon and Richard Atherton, whose money

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 6 February, 1721/2, Leigh to Bradshaigh, 6 February 1721/2. Bishop Gastrell was a constant opponent in the House of Lords of the Whig Government, *Not. Cest.*, ii, pt. ii, pp. xxx-xxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> V.C.H. *Lancashire*, iii. 193 and 252 ; Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 25 February, 1721/2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 20 February 1721/2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Barrymore to Leigh, 22 June 1724.

was thought to be about the town, with Thomas Willis and Sumner as their agents in Wigan.<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Hoghton's friends, to his concern, were a party to the opposition, and the Rector exerted himself to put pressure on his own tenants and to withdraw custom from tradesmen who supported Barrymore and Bradshaigh. The death of the Parish Clerk in 1726 gave Aldersey the opportunity to exercise his local patronage, and one of Barrymore's tenants was won over by the grant of the place to his wife's son-in-law.<sup>2</sup> During Bradshaigh's mayoralty in 1724-5, the opposition challenged the qualifications of some of his supporters to sit on the jury, and in spite of their taking leases of houses in the town, the case went against them at the Lancaster Assizes, on the grounds that jurors should pay scot and lot, as well as inhabit. Bradshaigh and Barrymore, on their side, challenged the legality of the election of some of the opposition. By the end of Bradshaigh's mayoralty there was a deadlock, and both sides agreed that there should be no writs or arrests.<sup>3</sup> The mayoral election of 1725 was disputed between Barrymore and Thomas Willis: Bradshaigh swore his ally mayor but Willis sued out a mandamus against him. By the end of the year Barrymore was regretting the expense of the legal proceedings, and reproaching Bradshaigh for his neglect of his own advice at Michaelmas, 1724: "all had been safe and wee had some hundreds off pounds more in our pocketts".<sup>4</sup> Early in December negotiations began between the two parties, and it became clear that a more dangerous influence than

<sup>1</sup> No Christian name is mentioned in the letters but this was clearly Richard Atherton of Atherton, who was an out-burgess. Wigan Public Library, Court Leet Roll 133. He was the grandson of Richard Atherton, M.P. Liverpool 1677-9, and died aged 26 in 1726. V.C.H. *Lancashire*, iii. 437. On the volte face of the Athertons in the 1722 county election see Baines, *op. cit.* iv. 337 and 346. Thomas Willis was elected an alderman with Barrymore at the Easter Leet 1723. Sinclair, *op. cit.* ii. 185.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 1 December, 3 August, 6 September and 6 October 1724; Leigh to Bradshaigh, 7 March 1724/5; 15 March 1725/6 and 22 May 1726.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* "Case relating to the borough of Wigan with Thos. Reave's opinion. 6 September 1725." There are many detailed letters from Leigh to Bradshaigh on this conflict.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 1 February 1725/6.



Atherton's lay behind the opposition, that of Lord Malpas, Sir Robert Walpole's son-in-law.<sup>1</sup> While Barrymore and Leigh negotiated with Kenyon and Willis on a local basis, Bradshaigh busied himself in London to alienate Malpas from his Lancashire supporters. Malpas was a danger to Bradshaigh as much as to Barrymore, for Willis, as Barrymore reported, "talk't much off Lord Malpass and Sir Robert Walpole's intrest and ask't mee what I thought you would doe; I told him I knew you to bee soe much Sir Robert's humble servant that if he desired you shou'd resign next election to Lord Malpass I was sure you would; he said then there can bee noe dispute, for Mr. Atherton gives it up; I told him four years was a greate while . . .". Later in the same month, when Bradshaigh was not having the success he had hoped for in London, Barrymore advised:

If you find Lord Malpass will not desist, as it appears to mee is not the design, since he tells you what you mention, try if he can bee prevail'd on to write a letter downe that he wishes the dispute was ended by a refference in which he will not in the least interpose, for he finds his best friends are against his meddleing in the matter; but as he promisst them, he will perform his word as far as the dispute concerning the last election is, but afterwards will not interfare any further; this will bee a damp in the contrey and a meanes to you to try what you may expect. If this point cannot be gain'd make a compliment off the matter to Sir R[obert] and give it up to him, and that you'l acquaint mee with your intentions which you are sure I will comply with.

I need not tell you that 'tis not your bussiness to have any contest where he's soe nearly concern'd; as for my selfe I shall doe pritty well, being perfectly easie at the worst that can happen. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Leigh advised Bradshaigh to treat the "great men" in London in their own way, and to let them think that he would stand aside in the next election, so that "the generality of our adversaries will rest satisfied with their imaginary conquest, and cease to tempt our friends from us".<sup>3</sup> Malpas remained a

<sup>1</sup> Lord Malpas, the heir of the 2nd Earl of Cholmondeley, married Walpole's daughter in 1723; he succeeded his father in 1733. G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*. He was related on his mother's side to Sir John Bridgeman. Bridgeman, op. cit. pt. iii, p. 628.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 12 December 1725 and 11 January 1725/6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Leigh to Bradshaigh, 4 February 1725/6.

sinister figure in the background of the negotiations, although by May, Willis was doubtful of the wholeheartedness of his support: in 1727 he sat for Ilchester, and nothing was heard of his threat at Wigan.<sup>1</sup>

The spring of 1726 was occupied in preparations for the Easter Leet and in careful calculations of the relative strength of each side on the jury. The Haigh burgesses had always been a *bloc* to be reckoned with, and Leigh was in favour of conceding to the opposition that persons not inhabiting the town could become jurors if they occupied their own lands there, for, as he pointed out to Bradshaigh, "your tenants lye contiguous enough to become occupiers of your lands on the other side Douglas". He was busy, too, arranging for outlying burgesses from Ince, York, and Newcastle, to come and occupy their lands, at least in appearance.<sup>2</sup> After much haggling over the composition of the jury, Barrymore adjourned the court without swearing a jury, to avoid the opposition's threat to renew legal proceedings. The summer was spent in taking legal opinions, in keeping friends united, in two cases by payment of 2s. 6d. a week, and in adjourning the court repeatedly until after the end of the legal term.<sup>3</sup> The number of in-burgesses qualified for the jury on each side ran very close but nothing more is heard of the law-suit, and there are indications that Bradshaigh and Barrymore were victorious in the borough. The new Mayor was Legh Master, the nephew of Peter Legh of Lyme and member for Newton from 1727 to 1747: he was an independent figure, but appears to have entered on some agreement with Bradshaigh and Barrymore.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lancashire Record Office, Kenyon MSS., Tho. Willis to George Kenyon, 13 May 1726.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 15 February and 15 March 1725/6. At the previous Easter Leet, Leigh had advised Bradshaigh that it was not worth the expense of bringing in the outlying burgesses. *Ibid.* 7 March 1724/5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Leigh to Bradshaigh, 17 April 1726.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 28 July 1727: at the poll for the election of the Mayor, Barrymore and Bradshaigh voted for Master, but Willis gave no vote. Wigan Public Library, Court Leet Roll no. 135. Legh Master acquired New Hall in the neighbouring parish of Winwick by marriage; he sat for Newton 1727-47. In December 1741 Williams Wynn wrote to Francis Price: "I think Mr. Lee of Lyme and others should insist on Lee Master attending his duty", i.e. in the Commons. H.M.C. *Puleston MSS.*, p. 324.

The next election came unexpectedly early, owing to the death of George I, and caught Barrymore on the wrong foot. The out-burgesses he had created to be a bulwark against Lord Malpas now seemed less reliable, and, though fairly confident of their support, he was driven to apologize to Bradshaigh: "I hope in those gentlemen I made burgess I have done you noe harm."<sup>1</sup> The threat came from Peter Bold, who had been encouraged by the mayor, and was supported by Willis, Kenyon, and William Clayton of Adlington. The Bold electoral interest in the county had lapsed after the death of Richard Bold, a county member, in 1704, during the minority of his son, Peter. It was now so far revived that Bold threatened to stand for the county because Shuttleworth had canvassed for Bradshaigh and Barrymore.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to the usual custom, the mayor could not be persuaded by Leigh to increase the number of Bradshaigh's friends, and adjourned the Court Leet hurriedly.<sup>3</sup> Barrymore met with difficulties not only from Bradshaigh's friends but from his own. His letter to Lyme, apologising for opposing Peter Legh's interest in the person of Bold, but justifying himself as the defender, received an unsatisfactory answer and he concluded that "there's treachery and underhand dealing somewhere". At a late stage, when Barrymore had made sure of the Chester contingent of voters and Thomas Pigott was taking care of the Manchester side, Legh Master came unexpectedly to Rock Savage with a compromise proposal. Bold was to be let in by arrangement at this election, but at the next Barrymore was to sit: in the meantime, the Corporation was to be free from alteration. Barrymore refused, but discovered that Master was so tied

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 7 July 1727.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Bold was of Bold Hall, V.C.H. *Lancashire*, iv. 406. He was M.P. Wigan 1727-34, and for the county 1736-41, on Sir Edward Stanley's succeeding to the earldom of Derby. He is described by Pink and Beavan as a Tory, *op. cit.* p. 85. Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, undated letter obviously of 1727. Before Barrymore had come over from Ireland, Leigh had suggested to Bradshaigh that Master should try how far Bold "stands inclin'd to come into termes for your security if my Lord Barrymore comes not over very soon". *Ibid.* 18 July 1727.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Leigh to Bradshaigh, 18 and 27 July 1727.

that he could not vote for either himself or Bradshaigh, and that if Bold came in without agreement all would be lost. A full account of this to Bradshaigh ended with a plea that "if you can perswade your friends to stick fast now the work is for ever over".<sup>1</sup> Barrymore, however, found it advisable not to contest the election, and at the last minute two agreements were drawn up: one of proposals by Bold to Barrymore, and the other signed by Legh Master.<sup>2</sup> The former, signed by Bold and Master and twenty out-burgesses, stipulated that Barrymore should stand down in favour of Bold, but that at the next election Bold and his supporters would assist Bradshaigh and Barrymore, and that nothing should be done in the meantime to weaken the latter's interest in the borough. In the event of a vacancy for or within the county during the next Parliament, the signatories would give Barrymore their interests. Master undertook to leave the Barrymore-Bradshaigh interest in its existing state at the end of his mayoralty, with the single exception of creating his brother an honorary burgess, and agreed to admit only those on the jury who had been on it at the previous Michaelmas and Easter Leets. Of the twenty signatories of the first agreement, ten had been made burgesses by Barrymore in 1725-6. Some of Barrymore's particular friends were in the list, which represented a large *bloc* of the Tory interest in the county: it included Richard Shuttleworth, Thomas Hesketh, Thomas Assheton, Thomas Townley, Sir Thomas Standish, Silvester Richmond, William Clayton of Adlington, and Thomas Kenyon.<sup>3</sup> The agreement was strictly fulfilled: Bold was returned as member; Legh Master created only one other burgess, his brother Streynsham Master, and in 1731, when a by-election occurred at Preston, "some gentlemen who thought themselves under engagements by what they

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 17 August 1727 and undated letter.

<sup>2</sup> The two agreements are among the Crawford MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Standish had voted for Bridgeman and Finch in 1708; Richmond and Clayton for Bridgeman in 1702. Richmond had been recommended by Barrymore to the Earl of Oxford for the stewardship of the Rivers manorial courts. B.M. Portland MSS. 29 July 1720. Thomas Kenyon was the second son of Roger Kenyon, brother of George Kenyon.

sign'd formerly at Wigan" offered to support Barrymore there, but he declined. The compromise served the interest of Barrymore and Bradshaigh in the long run: at the next election the signatories were held to their agreement, and Barrymore exulted that "the compromise has effectually answered our ends. I have often stil'd that dayes work the funerall off our opposers."<sup>1</sup> The election of 1727 strongly suggests that, given a mayor of their own persuasion, a *bloc* of out-burgesses could enforce its views. The letters of this year have few references to the attitude of the in-burgesses, though there was some hostility to Barrymore still, but the real difficulty of the joint interest was that they had an unco-operative mayor.<sup>2</sup> The links between the electoral affairs of Wigan and Liverpool emerged clearly in this election. Thomas Brereton (reputed to be an election agent of Lord Malpas) had been made a Wigan burgess in 1725 under Bradshaigh's mayoralty: in 1727 he threatened to deny Barrymore the eighteen votes at Liverpool, and boasted afterwards of his victory. In 1729, however, when Brereton stood for re-election at Liverpool, after gaining office, Barrymore assisted his opponent, the anti-courtier Sir Thomas Aston, and canvassed Robert Holt and the Wigan Town Clerk for the votes they exercised there: after the election he claimed to have contributed his mite to Brereton's downfall. The two clashed also in the politics of Chester, where Barrymore was a freeman from 1722.<sup>3</sup>

## VI

After 1727 there was a relaxation of tension, to which the death in 1728 of Kenyon, the Recorder, contributed. The filling of the vacancy offered an opportunity for division, for Barrymore backed his friend Thomas Pigott, while Bradshaigh

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 27 September 1731 and 23 September 1733.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Leigh to Bradshaigh, 18 August 1727.

<sup>3</sup> H.M.C. *Egmont Diary*, i. 87; Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 18 and 30 May 1729. Bradshaigh had not interested himself for Brereton in 1729. For Barrymore's views on Brereton's interference in Chester, see H.M.C. *Puleston MSS.* pp. 313-14.

favoured Thomas Ashurst, his adviser in 1713 and Vice Chancellor of the Duchy since 1727. In order to avoid a division in the borough Leigh did not show Barrymore's letter to the burgesses, who sent up a petition for filling the vacancy, leaving Bradshaigh to fill in the name. Barrymore acquiesced, assuring his partner that "Mr. Pigott is too much a man off honour and my friend to sollicit or sufferr his friends to make use of that as a handle to give you the least disturbance".<sup>1</sup> Both Leigh's and Barrymore's letters in the 'thirties contain frequent congratulations on the peacefulness and good temper of the borough. There was a drastic reduction in the number of burgesses created: in 1734 Barrymore wrote to Bradshaigh agreeing that "we have noe manner off need for more in or out burgesses".<sup>2</sup> Far from there being disputes over the mayoralty, the problem was to find suitable men willing to hold the office. Its expense seems to have been a real deterrent: in 1739 Thomas Bankes was only persuaded with extreme difficulty, after a promise to relieve him of the financial burdens by payments from Barrymore and out of the Corporation's rents. In 1741 Barrymore himself offered to hold the office "to prevent any slurr to bee thrown on it", while in 1742 five burgesses refused before a mayor was found. Particular care was taken in choosing a mayor for the election year of 1733-4.<sup>3</sup> The election of 1734 passed over surprisingly easily. In April 1733, sympathizing with Bradshaigh over an indisposition, Barrymore had observed: "as this hurly burly about the Excise is like to continue for some time I shou'd not have been sorry if your feet had been weak till 'twas over, you may guess at what I mean and that with no other view but your owne ease

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Williams, *Official Lists of the Duchy and County of Lancaster* (1901), p. 74. Ashurst stood unsuccessfully in 1727 at Liverpool, where he was also Recorder. Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 18 February 1728/9; Leigh to Bradshaigh, 20 and 31 December 1728.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Barrymore to Bradshaigh, undated "Saturday 1 o'clock", but clearly referring to 1734.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 29 May 1739: Bankes declared that "his family had suffer'd very much by that office". Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 19 September 1741, 25 August 1733, Leigh to Bradshaigh, 24 October 1742.

here after". When, later in the year, manoeuvres began for the election, Barrymore used his influence with the Tories to avert a contest at Wigan. He approached Sir Watkin Williams Wynn to use his interest with "the hott men that noe opposition might bee given at Wigan, but that wee may proceed according to our agreement", and was anxious that Bradshaigh should agree to Williams Wynn becoming a burgess, "with this view that I am positive he would come and vote for you and mee, and by that he might prevent the ill designs off others who would not differr with him in an affairr off that nature". In August he wrote encouragingly: "I have my agents with the hott men and keep a constant correspondence with them on our owne affairrs I have alsoe my advocates that ply them all to prevent the folly and expence off a contest at Wigan." By the end of September Barrymore had assurance from Pigott that he and Bradshaigh would meet with no opposition.<sup>1</sup> A curious cross current in this election concerned Sir Henry Hoghton, who was threatened by Shuttleworth's son at Preston. Hoghton had always been one of Bradshaigh's supporters, but Barrymore was also strongly attached to him: in 1733 he declared: "I owe him [Hoghton] soe many obligations for his favour at the last election att Wigan that, if it lyes in my power to serve him, I will at all risques, lett who's will bee angry or pleas'd".<sup>2</sup> There seems to have been a certain insistence on the rights of the in-burgesses in the later 'thirties: in 1738 a resolution of the Common Hall restricted the mayor's right to make honorary burgesses to two, not under the degree of esquire, on the grounds that recently large numbers of out-burgesses had been sworn to the detriment of the in-burgesses' rights; in 1741, too, Leigh questioned whether the jury would approve of a non-resident mayor, when Barrymore offered to stand.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 8 April, 17 May, 8 June, 7 August and 23 September 1733.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 7 August 1733.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Copy of the Order of 20 September 1738. There seem to have been periodic assertions of these rights, e.g. in 1691, 1703, and 1726. Ibid. Leigh to Bradshaigh, 8 and 11 September 1741.

## VII

The beginning of the next decade, however, saw the break-up of the combination of circumstances which had made for peace in the borough. In 1740 Robert Holt died, leaving his family, particularly Edward Holt and Leigh, at variance.<sup>1</sup> The next year Leigh's son, Robert, the Town Clerk, died, and a many-sided conflict arose, influential in-burgesses each pressing a favourite candidate. Altogether there were five candidates, and in view of the approaching parliamentary election the choice was postponed. Barrymore and Bradshaigh appear not to have interfered in the choice, in accordance with a declaration before the burgesses.<sup>2</sup> The contest added fuel to Edward Holt's quarrel with Leigh, and he wrote indignantly to Bradshaigh, marvelling that his brother-in-law, "whose great stake in the Navigation you are to manage the next session of Parliament, should dare to busy himself so much in the affair contrary to your inclination in making mischief amongst us". To both Leigh and Holt Bradshaigh returned soft answers, pointing out that he had refrained from interfering, realizing that he must disoblige one friend or another.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the new Town Clerk, Leigh's nephew John Wiswall, died in 1745. The fresh contest divided the borough; Holt and Leigh backed one Berry, and another influential group favoured John Pennington. Leigh and Holt secured a petition for Berry, but after complaints by Pennington's supporters a fresh petition in his favour was forwarded by Bradshaigh to the Duke of Newcastle.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 22 September 1740; Leigh to Bradshaigh, 7 August, 20 September and 6 October 1741.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Leigh to Bradshaigh, 10 April, 20 and 31 July 1741.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Holt to Bradshaigh, 11 August 1741. Holt objected to the Mayor's proceedings on the ground that "the better end of the Corporation" had not been consulted. Bradshaigh to Leigh and to Holt, copies or drafts of 15 August 1741.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Several letters from burgesses to Bradshaigh, complaining of the Mayor, Edward Holt's conduct in securing a petition in favour of Berry. Copy of Bradshaigh's letter to Newcastle (undated, Saturday evening) on behalf of John Pennington, who was appointed March 1745/6. George Winstanley to Bradshaigh, 13 June 1746.



A more serious disturbance of the *status quo* was caused by the death of the Rector, and the appointment in 1741, for the first time, of a Bridgeman: this was Dr. Roger Bridgeman, nephew of Orlando Bridgeman. He at once renewed the old dispute with the Corporation, and attempted to hold a Court Leet in spite of the mayor; a law suit between the Rector and the Corporation ensued, which was still pending in 1750. Leigh believed that the Rector aimed at dividing power with the Corporation, and at electing burgesses by his own authority.<sup>1</sup> The law suit introduced a new element into the borough's affairs, for it made the Corporation dependent on anyone who could and would assist them with the costs: this proved to be Barrymore and to a lesser extent, Leigh.<sup>2</sup> Aldersey had been Rector since 1714, and Thomas Ashurst had been Recorder since 1728, but both disappeared from the Wigan scene within two years. Early in 1743 Ashurst, by then over seventy, resigned the Recordship. Barrymore again favoured Pigott, but "the general bent", and the Mayor, John Markland, were for Richard Clayton of Adlington. Again, Bradshaigh and Barrymore (then in Ireland) do not seem to have interfered, and Clayton's name was sent by Bradshaigh to Newcastle as the Corporation's recommendation.<sup>3</sup>

The changed situation at Wigan in the mid-'forties is reflected in the only extensive evidence on this period among the Crawford manuscripts, the voluminous letters to Bradshaigh of George Winstanley.<sup>4</sup> Winstanley was a devoted follower

<sup>1</sup> Bridgeman, *op. cit.* pt. iii, pp. 628-32; Crawford MSS., Leigh to Bradshaigh, 25 April 1742.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Winstanley to Bradshaigh, undated, but apparently an afterthought to letter of 23 January 1746/7; 12 October 1746. A few years before, Barrymore had given £100 to the Corporation. 8 January 1746/7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Leigh to Bradshaigh, 2 January, 22 and 25 February 1742/3; B.M. Add. MS. 32,992, fol. 163, Bradshaigh to Newcastle, undated. Clayton was the grandson of a Liverpool merchant who had bought the manor of Adlington (Lancs.) at the end of the seventeenth century, and a brother of William Clayton who had supported Bold in 1727. He sat for Wigan 1747-54, and became Chief Justice of Common Pleas in Ireland in 1765. T. C. Porteus, *History of Standish* (1927), p. 219.

<sup>4</sup> There are forty-five letters from Winstanley, a few of 1744 and 1745, but the great majority from the summer of 1746 to February 1747. Much space is

of Bradshaigh, by whose favour he had in 1745 obtained a Window Tax post. He was of much lower social standing than Leigh, whom he seems to have replaced as an informant, and after his removal from Wigan in July 1746, he was dependent for news on others: his chief "correspondent's" informant was the barber who shaved Leigh and Holt.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the letters provide a detailed picture of an electoral interest, somewhat neglected and in decline. There is only one letter from Leigh to Bradshaigh after February 1743, and by 1745 they seem to have parted company. The single exception was a somewhat cool reply to Bradshaigh's appeal for support at the forthcoming election. Leigh, though prepared to uphold his promise to support Bradshaigh and Barrymore while their interests were united, felt a sense of injury both for the loss of Bradshaigh's friendship, and for his refusal to fulfil an agreement for the delivery of cannel.<sup>2</sup> The lack of such a confidential friend in the borough was serious, and Winstanley recognized that "Your Honour is at a great loss in not having a proper Substantial Mannaiger in Wigan, who shou'd be a Man of Sense and Substance".<sup>3</sup> This loss was made worse by Bradshaigh's lengthy absences from Wigan occasioned partly by illness: he was absent at a crucial time just before the Michaelmas Leet in 1745, and apparently throughout 1746 until his death in February 1747. Since 1742 his eldest son had been in possession of Haigh itself, and Bradshaigh had had little private business to bring him to Wigan in 1745. Moreover, he had ceased to write to his friends as formerly, "which gives people to believe and say you don't design to stand as member longer then this present Parliament". Altogether, by August 1746 Winstanley was speaking of the Haigh

given to Winstanley's fight against the assessment of his salary for Land Tax. His cousin, Thomas Winstanley, was given the curacy of Upholland in 1746, by Dr. Bridgeman in whose gift it lay. V.C.H. *Lancashire*, iv. 97.

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Winstanley to Bradshaigh, 14 September 1746.

<sup>2</sup> The letters from Leigh in February 1743 are friendly, which suggests that some may be missing. Winstanley's references to Leigh and Holt are hostile. Leigh's final letter is of 14 February 1746/7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Winstanley to Bradshaigh, 2 January 1746/7.

interest as in danger of extinction, and bewailing the ingratitude of the Wiganers.<sup>1</sup>

Bradshaigh's behaviour was in contrast to the activity of other interests preparing for the election. Though Barrymore himself did not intend to stand, his eldest son, Richard Barry, was a candidate, and his two younger sons were made burgesses in September 1746. But during the summer Richard Clayton began to make interest in Wigan and the neighbourhood: he treated the in-burgesses, promising several he would give them bonds to indemnify them from the law-suit in return for their votes, and made approaches to Legh Master and to the Liverpool voters. So great was both Leigh and Holt's dislike of this rival influence in the town, that Holt was reported to intend to stand against him. There were signs, however, that Barrymore intended to join his interest to Clayton's.<sup>2</sup> During this very active summer Bradshaigh had made no move, and it was left to Winstanley to suggest that he send to the Town Clerk for an up-to-date list of burgesses.<sup>3</sup> By a curious twist, the burgesses on whom Bradshaigh had to rely were those who had supported the Rector, since they alone were not under fear of the law-suit and thus financially dependent on Barrymore: to the bewilderment of some of the burgesses Bradshaigh's relations with Bridgeman were friendly.<sup>4</sup> The state of the Haigh influence is revealed by Winstanley's sending

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Winstanley to Bradshaigh, 16 August 1745, 17 August and 12 October 1746; undated letter probably of 1746: "Pray consider what a number of letters you sent the last year and what care I am sure was used in seconding them and all to no purpose for want of your personal appearance." Contrast Barrymore to Bradshaigh, 23 October 1724: ". . . believe you scarce think of London till you have made all sure." Winstanley begged Bradshaigh to send his son, Captain Charles Bradshaigh, down to uphold his interest. Undated letter.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Winstanley to Bradshaigh, 4 and 11 July, 3 and 29 August, 12 October 1746, 2 and 8 January 1746/7.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 12 October 1746. Pennington enclosed the list with a letter of 5 December 1746.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Winstanley to Bradshaigh, 16 August 1745; Bradshaigh had apparently taken up an equivocal attitude at the beginning of the law suit, and Barrymore had had to write asking for a contradiction of the rumour that "you and the rector have the same intrest in relation [to] the dispute with the Corporation". Ibid. 5 October 1743.

to Sir Roger a list of those "that would give single votes as long as the Docter [Bridgeman] and you are in friendship, viz. for the present or next election of Parliament".<sup>1</sup> Bradshaigh was able to secure the influence with the Liverpool voters of Thomas Brereton and Richard Gildart, Receiver of Land Tax in Lancashire, but his handling of the Wigan end was, according to Winstanley, unskilful: he made public his design of standing before he had tried his strength in the election of aldermen and burgesses, and long before he made the personal appearance, planned for May 1747, which was always of such value in this constituency. In his last letter before Bradshaigh's death, Winstanley expressed an opinion that neither Barrymore's nor Clayton's friends would give their second votes to him; this was not through inclination, but because they were tied by the costs of the law suit, and all would give two votes to Barrymore's interest.<sup>2</sup> The decline of the Bradshaigh position in Wigan electoral affairs, though not among the generality of the town, must be largely attributed to the withdrawal of detailed, active and personal management. Even Clayton, when eventually Bradshaigh announced his intention of standing, declared that had he known of this earlier he would not have stood.<sup>3</sup> How the election would have fared if Sir Roger had lived it is impossible to say: Barrymore's interest seems to have been impregnable, and the Recorder's place was influential; moreover, the very day after Bradshaigh's death Kenyon was solicited on Clayton's behalf by Peter Legh.<sup>4</sup> Sir Roger's heir was not apparently interested in politics, either to the extent of keeping up his father's interest in his lifetime, or of standing for Parliament himself later, and the Haigh influence, after a

<sup>1</sup> Crawford MSS., Winstanley to Bradshaigh, 16 August 1745 and 12 October 1746. In the former letter he enclosed a list of the jury with the influences to which they were subject.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Winstanley to Bradshaigh, 23 October 1746, 20 and 23 January 1746/7. Bradshaigh's letter to George Kenyon, asking for his support and referring to rumours that he did not intend to stand, is dated as late as 10 February 1746/7. Lancashire Record Office, Kenyon MSS.

<sup>3</sup> Crawford MSS., Winstanley to Bradshaigh, 9 January 1746/7.

<sup>4</sup> H.M.C. *Kenyon MSS.*, p. 491. Peter Legh to George Kenyon, 26 February 1746/7. Peter Legh had succeeded his uncle of the same name in 1744.

decline in the 'forties, ceased to be used by a Bradshaigh even before the extinction of the male line in 1770.<sup>1</sup>

A study of Bradshaigh's electoral management at Wigan in the eighteenth century bears out Sir Lewis Namier's comments on the narrow constituencies in *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*.<sup>2</sup> In particular, it illustrates that there was no keeping voters in this constituency without constant attention, and that where the foundations of an electoral interest lay in the nature of human beings there could be no unchangeable certainty. The study suggests, too, the need for a consideration of the electoral interests of Lancashire and Cheshire as a whole, and their ramifications.

<sup>1</sup> Winstanley regretted Roger Bradshaigh's passivity, more especially as his friendship with Lord Derby might have been useful; Leigh was referred to as "servant to Lord Derby". 2 and 9 January 1746/7. The date of the extinction of the male line is taken from A. J. Hawkes' revised genealogy.

<sup>2</sup> L. B. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, i (1929), 166-7 and 169.