

LONDON ELECTORAL HISTORY – STEPS TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

7.2 CANDIDATES AND THE CLASSIFICATION OF VOTING BEHAVIOUR

The key endeavour of much electoral analysis is to determine what kind of voter polled for what kind of candidate. The historian of the pre-reform electorate is fortunate in this respect in being able to know much more about almost every candidate¹ than at any time before the contemporary period.²

Nomination of candidates took place at the hustings, immediately prior to the call for a show of hands by the returning officer. Some who may have sought election nonetheless withdrew from the contest, either following a disappointing canvass or following the show of hands. For the purposes of the LED only those who carried on to the next stage of the electoral process, in eighteenth-century parlance those who ‘stood the poll’, are deemed to have been candidates.

Of those who stood the poll, some withdrew during the course of polling. Sometimes this would terminate the election, as when John Graham withdrew from the Westminster election of 1802, or when William Mellish withdrew from the Middlesex contest of 1820. In other cases the withdrawal of a candidate allowed others to continue the contest, although there was no mechanism for re-allocating those votes already given to the candidate who threw in the towel. Thus the withdrawal of William Pitt from the London election of 1784, after he had been nominated for a popular but uncertain seat without his consent, did not preclude a continuation of the contest between the remaining candidates. Even the death of John Hankey, the fifth candidate in the London contest of 1807, did not cause the poll to be terminated. Instead it continued, to the benefit of publicans and election printers alike, in order to determine the rank order of the four surviving candidates.³ This case differed from another even more unusual case, caused by the (out-

of-town) death of John Kirkman on the last day of polling, during the London election of 1780. Intelligence of this news did not reach the returning officer until after the declaration had been made. There was no precedent as to whether the deceased Kirkman should be returned, or whether the honour should fall upon John Sawbridge, the candidate in fifth place. In the event, Kirkman was named as MP but a new writ was immediately issued, at which Sawbridge was returned unopposed.

It was not necessary for candidates to agree to their nomination by signing nomination papers. Sir Francis Burdett only agreed to be put forward for Westminster in 1807 on the condition that nothing was required of him. Nor was it even necessary for candidates to be present at the election: at the Westminster election of 1774 Lord Percy was elected *in absentia*, while on active service in America.

Political history tends to be biased towards the successful: the *History of Parliament* has much to say about the careers of those who became MPs, but nothing of those who never won an election. A thorough study of electoral politics must nonetheless give some attention to failed candidates, whose contributions towards setting the political mood and agenda are discussed, as appropriate, in sections 5 and 6.

While many candidates contested only one parliamentary or local government election before defeat returned them to obscurity, there were some who fought more than one battle. Charles James Fox (*Candidate ID 35*), for example, was returned at every general election in Westminster between 1780 and his death in 1806. Other candidates contested elections in more than one constituency. Sir Francis Burdett (*Candidate ID 16*) was returned for Middlesex in 1802, and for Westminster in 1818 and 1820.⁴ The indefatigable John Wilkes (*Candidate ID 126*) contested different offices in different constituencies: he stood for MP in London in 1768, for MP in Middlesex in 1768, 1769, and 1784, and for lord mayor of London in 1772. By allocating a unique identity code to each candidate, the **Candidates** table ‘hard wires’ the record linkage of these candidates, allowing users to trace support for an individual candidate at different times and in different constituencies.

Conversely, there were sometimes two different candidates who shared a common name. There were two candidates called George Byng (*Candidate ID 17* and *Candidate ID 18*), father and son. Two candidates were called Samuel Hood (*Candidate ID 54* and *Candidate ID 55*); they were cousins. And two candidates were called Hugh Smithson (*Candidate ID 110* and *Candidate ID 111*); they, too, were cousins.

Meanwhile the second Smithson subsequently took the surname Percy, and his son Hugh Percy (*Candidate ID 91*) was elected MP for Westminster in 1774. Carrying on the family business another Hugh Percy, the son of *Candidate ID 91*, was returned unopposed at the Westminster by-election of October 1806. By allocating a unique code to each individual, the **Candidates** table allows users of the LED to individuate these pairs.

An additional complication occurred when one candidate contested different elections under different names, for example after gaining a knighthood or another distinction. Thus Benjamin Hall, MP for Marylebone 1837-59, was created a baronet in August 1838 and ended his days as Lord Llanover. Others held those courtesy titles accorded to the younger sons of English peers, or were, as Irish peers, eligible to stand for the Westminster legislature. Thomas Pelham Clinton (*Candidate ID 93*) was returned at the Westminster election of 1774 under that name but, when he contested the seat again in 1780, he was known as Lord Lincoln. These different ways of naming an individual candidate are recorded in the footnotes to the narrative of elections.

Votes given to a candidate are indicated in the *Vote* field of the LED in binary notation. The switch is either on or off: either a voter polled for a candidate, or he did not. Meanwhile, the possibility of electoral abstention, when an elector polled for none of the candidates, is covered by the *No Vote* field of the LED. Every act of voting can be dichotomised as being either 'for' or 'not for' each candidate, without reference to political parties.⁵ A vote is indicated by the digit 1, and lack of a vote by the digit 0. The electoral behaviour of a voter in a two-candidate by-election can thus either take the value 01 or the value 10. A single vote for Charles James Fox at the Westminster election of 1784 is indicated by the code 001, while straight votes for his Administration opponents Lord Hood and Sir Cecil Wray are indicated by the codes 110. Since voters in London parliamentary elections had up to four votes at their disposal, many combinations of votes among candidates were possible. For some purposes it may be easier to use the tick boxes for each candidate to find the totality of his support, rather than to enumerate in SQL all the possible combinations of votes that made up this support.

The vote codes contained in the LED are specific to each electoral contest: that is, a vote code 10 in one election does not mean the same thing as that code in another election. While vote codes can be aggregated to represent party structures, no further disaggregation is

possible. These vote codes thus represent the atoms of political behaviour recorded in the LED and shown in sections 5 and 6.

Candidates at elections throughout the period eschewed party labels as divisive. Indeed, party identifiers were not officially used until 1970. Nor were the shifting sands of eighteenth-century party allegiance in the House of Commons a secure foundation on which to allocate candidates to party groupings.⁶ The LED follows eighteenth-century usage in not classifying candidates by party, although users are, of course, free to aggregate candidates and to ascribe party labels to them. The account of the elections in sections 5 and 6 does, however, refer extensively to associations, lobbies, committees, and political groupings as identified by contemporaries in the context of electoral battles. It is also the case that some additional historical inferences about political allegiances have been made in sections 5 and 6, for purposes of interpretation. But the LED itself does not contain any such assumptions or inferences.

The full list of 133 individual candidates who appear in the LED for the years 1700-1852, and their aggregate tally of 67 contests, for which poll book data survive, are shown in Table 79.

Table 79
Candidates in LED election tables

Candidate Name	Election contest			Vote Code (Plumper)
	ID	Constituency & year	ID	
John William Anderson	1	London, 1796	41	000100
William Ashurst	2	London, 1710	26	01000000
Richard Atkinson	3	London, 1784	40	01
John Austen	4	Middlesex, 1710	12	0100
John Austen	4	Middlesex, 1715 (1)	13	0010
John Austen	4	Middlesex, 1715 (2)	14	1000
Henry Barker	5	Middlesex, 1715 (1)	13	0001
Henry Barker	5	Middlesex, 1715 (2)	14	0100
Scorie Barker	6	Middlesex, 1705	11	0100
Scorie Barker	6	Middlesex, 1710	12	1000
John Barnard	7	London, 1722	30	000001
John Barnard	7	London, 1727	33	000000001
James Bateman	8	London, 1710	26	00100000
William B. Proctor	9	Middlesex, 1747	16	0100
William B. Proctor	9	Middlesex, 1768 (1)	19	100
William B. Proctor	9	Middlesex, 1768 (2)	20	10
William B. Proctor	9	Middlesex (linked)	18	10010000
William Beckford	10	London, 1768	35	0001000
Edward Bellamy	11	London, 1724 (sheriff)	31	10
James Bertie	12	Middlesex, 1710	12	0010
James Bertie	12	Middlesex, 1715 (1)	13	1000
James Bertie	12	Middlesex, 1715 (2)	14	0010
Robert Bevan	13	London, 1847	48	000000100
John Bosworth	14	London, 1734	34	01
Frederick Bull	15	London, 1773	38	01
Francis Burdett	16	Middlesex, 1802	23	001
Francis Burdett	16	Westminster, 1818	62	100000
Francis Burdett	16	Westminster, 1820	64	100
George Byng	17	Middlesex, 1784	22	010
George Byng II	18	Middlesex, 1802	23	010
George Byng II	18	Middlesex, 1820	24	100
Benjamin Cabbell	19	Marylebone, 1841	52	00010
Benjamin Cabbell	19	Marylebone (linked)	49	0001000000000
John Cartwright	20	Westminster, 1818	62	000010
John Cartwright	20	Westminster, 1819	63	010
John Cass	21	London, 1710	26	00000001
John Cass	21	London, 1713	28	0010
John Cass	21	London, 1713 *	29	00000010

Candidate Name	Election contest		Vote Code (Plumper)
	ID	Constituency & year	
Francis Child	22	London, 1722	30 001000
Richard Clarke	23	London, 1781	39 01
Harvey C. Combe	24	London, 1796	41 000010
William Coningham	25	Westminster, 1852	67 0010
George Cooke	26	Middlesex, 1747	16 0001
George Cooke	26	Middlesex, 1750	17 10
George Cooke	26	Middlesex, 1768 (1)	19 010
George Cooke	26	Middlesex (linked)	18 01000000
Humphrey Cotes	27	Westminster, 1774	54 00001
William Crawford	28	London, 1837	46 00100
William Curtis	29	London, 1796	41 100000
George DeLacy Evans	30	Westminster, 1837	65 100
George DeLacy Evans	30	Westminster, 1841	66 100
George DeLacy Evans	30	Westminster, 1852	67 0100
William Ewart	31	Marylebone, 1838	51 001
William Ewart	31	Marylebone (linked)	49 0000000000001
John Eyles	32	London, 1727	33 10000000
Charles Farebrother	33	London, 1831 (3)	45 001
Charles Farebrother	33	London (linked)	42 0000000000
George J. Finch-Hatton	34	Westminster, 1852	67 1000
Charles James Fox	35	Westminster, 1780	55 100
Charles James Fox	35	Westminster, 1784	56 001
Charles James Fox	35	Westminster, 1790	58 100
Charles James Fox	35	Westminster, 1796	59 100
Charles James Fox	35	Westminster, 1802	60 100
James Freshfield	36	London, 1847	48 000000010
Alan Gardner	37	Westminster, 1796	59 010
Alan Gardner	37	Westminster, 1802	60 010
Richard Glyn	38	London, 1768	35 0010000
John Glynn	39	Middlesex, 1768 (2)	20 01
John Glynn	39	Middlesex (linked)	18 00001000
Peter Godfrey	40	London, 1713 *	29 00010000
Peter Godfrey	40	London, 1713	27 0001
Peter Godfrey	40	London, 1722	30 000010
Charles Goodfellow	41	London, 1724	32 10
John Graham	42	Westminster, 1802	60 001
George Grote	43	London, 1837	46 01000
Benjamin Hall	44	Marylebone, 1837	50 00001
Benjamin Hall	44	Marylebone, 1841	52 10000
Benjamin Hall	44	Marylebone (linked)	49 1000000000000

Candidate Name	Election contest		Vote Code (Plumper)
	ID	Constituency & year	
Thomas Hallifax	44	London, 1772	36 0010
James Hamilton	46	Marylebone, 1841	52 00100
James Hamilton	46	Marylebone (linked)	49 001000000000
Thomas Harley	47	London, 1768	35 1000000
James Harmer	48	London, 1840	47 001
Gilbert Heathcote	49	London, 1710	26 10000000
Robert Heysham	50	London, 1713	27 0010
Robert Heysham	50	London, 1713 *	29 00100000
Robert Heysham	50	London, 1722	30 100000
Richard Hoare	51	London, 1710	26 00000100
Richard Hoare	51	London, 1713	28 1000
Richard Hoare	51	London, 1713 *	29 00001000
John Cam Hobhouse	52	Westminster, 1819	63 100
John Cam Hobhouse	52	Westminster, 1820	64 001
Frazer Honeywood	53	Middlesex, 1750	17 01
Samuel Hood	54	Westminster, 1784	56 100
Samuel Hood	54	Westminster, 1788	57 10
Samuel Hood	54	Westminster, 1790	58 010
Samuel Hood II	55	Westminster, 1806	61 010
Richard Hopkins	56	London, 1724	32 01
Richard Hopkins	56	London, 1727	33 01000000
William Horne	57	Marylebone, 1837	50 00010
William Horne	57	Marylebone (linked)	49 0000000010000
John Horne Tooke	58	Westminster, 1790	58 001
John Horne Tooke	58	Westminster, 1796	59 001
Henry Hunt	59	Westminster, 1818	62 000001
Thomas Johnson	60	London, 1840	47 100
John Johnson	61	London, 1847	48 000001000
Thomas Kelly	62	London, 1831 (3)	45 010
Thomas Kelly	62	London, 1831 (linked)	42 0000000010
John Key	63	London, 1831 (1)	43 100
John Key	63	London, 1831 (2)	44 1000
John Key	63	London, 1831 (3)	45 100
John Key	63	London (linked)	42 1001000100
Douglas Kinnaird	64	Westminster, 1818	62 010000
Robert Ladbrooke	65	London, 1768	35 0100000
Warwick Lake	66	Middlesex, 1705	11 0010
George Lamb	67	Westminster, 1819	63 001
George Lamb	67	Westminster, 1820	64 010
Peter Laurie	68	London, 1831 (1)	43 001

Candidate Name	Election contest		Vote Code (Plumper)
	ID	Constituency & year	
Peter Laurie	68	London, 1831 (2)	44 0001
Peter Laurie	68	London (linked)	42 0011000000
George Larpent	69	London, 1847	48 001000000
John Leader	70	Westminster, 1837	65 010
John Leader	70	Westminster, 1841	66 010
Granville Leveson Gower	71	Westminster, 1749	53 01
Watkin Lewes	72	London, 1781	39 10
Watkin Lewes	72	London, 1796	41 010000
Richard Lockwood	73	London, 1722	30 000100
Richard Lockwood	73	London, 1727	33 00000010
William Lushington	74	London, 1796	41 000001
Henry Luttrell	75	Middlesex, 1769	21 100
Henry Luttrell	75	Middlesex (linked)	18 00000100
William Mainwaring	76	Middlesex, 1784	22 001
William Mainwaring	76	Middlesex, 1802	23 100
John Masterman	77	London, 1847	48 000010000
Murray Maxwell	78	Westminster, 1818	62 000100
William Mellish	79	Middlesex, 1820	24 010
Hervey Morres	80	Westminster, 1774	54 00100
George Murray	81	Westminster, 1837	65 001
Charles Napier	82	Marylebone, 1841	52 01000
Charles Napier	82	Marylebone (linked)	49 0100000000000
Roger Newdigate	83	Middlesex, 1747	16 0010
George Newland	84	London, 1710	26 00000010
George Newland	84	London, 1713	28 0001
George Newland	84	London, 1713 *	26 00000001
John Palmer	85	London, 1837	46 00001
Humphry Parsons	86	London, 1722	30 010000
Humphry Parsons	86	London, 1727	33 00001000
John Paterson	87	London, 1768	35 0000010
James Pattison	88	London, 1837	46 00010
James Pattison	88	London, 1847	47 010000000
James Paull	89	Westminster, 1806	61 001
William Payne	90	London, 1847	48 000000001
Hugh Percy	91	Westminster, 1774	54 10000
Micajah Perry	92	London, 1727	33 00010000
Thomas Pelham Clinton	93	Westminster, 1774	54 01000
Thomas Pelham Clinton	93	Westminster, 1780	55 001
William Pickett	94	London, 1796	41 001000
John Pirie	95	London, 1840	47 010

Candidate Name	ID	Election contest		Vote Code (Plumper)
		Constituency & year	ID	
John Roberts	96	London, 1773	38	10
George Rodney	97	Westminster, 1780	55	010
Samuel Romilly	98	Westminster, 1818	62	001000
Lionel de Rothschild	99	London, 1847	48	000100000
Henry John Rous	100	Westminster, 1841	66	001
John Russell	101	London, 1847	48	100000000
W. Villiers Sankey	102	Marylebone, 1841	52	00001
W. Villiers Sankey	102	Marylebone (linked)	49	0000100000000
John Sawbridge	103	London, 1784	40	10
Thomas Scawen	104	London, 1713	27	0100
Thomas Scawen	104	London, 1713 *	29	01000000
William Selwyn	105	London, 1734	34	10
John Shakespear	106	London, 1772	36	0001
John Villiers Shelley	107	Westminster, 1852	67	0001
Richard Brinsley Sheridan	108	Westminster, 1806	61	100
Charles John Shore	109	Marylebone, 1837	50	00100
Charles John Shore	109	Marylebone, 1838	51	010
Charles John Shore	109	Marylebone (linked)	49	0000000100010
Hugh Smithson	110	Middlesex, 1705	11	0001
Hugh Smithson	110	Middlesex, 1710	12	0001
Hugh Smithson	110	Middlesex, 1715 (1)	13	0100
Hugh Smithson	110	Middlesex, 1715 (2)	14	0001
Hugh Smithson II	111	Middlesex, 1747	16	1000
Charles Stanhope	112	Westminster, 1774	54	00010
John Thompson	113	London, 1727	33	00100000
Thomas Thompson	114	Marylebone, 1838	51	100
Thomas Thompson	114	Marylebone (linked)	49	0000000000100
William Thompson	115	London, 1831 (2)	44	0100
William Thompson	115	London (linked)	42	0000100000
John Thomas Thorp	116	London, 1831 (1)	43	010
John Thomas Thorp	116	London (linked)	42	0100000000
James Townsend	117	London, 1772	36	0100
John Townshend	118	Westminster, 1788	57	01
Barlow Trecothick	119	London, 1768	35	0000100
George Vandeput	120	Westminster, 1749	53	10
Robert Waithman	121	London, 1831 (2)	44	0010
Robert Waithman	121	London (linked)	42	0000010000
John Ward	122	London, 1710	26	00010000
John Ward	122	London, 1713	27	1000
John Ward	122	London, 1713 *	29	10000000

Candidate Name	ID	Election contest		Vote Code (Plumper)
		Constituency & year	ID	
Samuel Whalley	123	Marylebone, 1837	50	10000
Samuel Whalley	123	Marylebone (linked)	49	0000010000000
Whitaker Whitaker	124	Middlesex, 1769	21	001
Whitaker Whitaker	124	Middlesex (linked)	18	00000001
Samuel Whitbread	125	Middlesex, 1820	24	001
John Wilkes	126	London, 1768	35	0000001
John Wilkes	126	Middlesex, 1768 (1)	19	001
John Wilkes	126	Middlesex, 1769	21	010
John Wilkes	126	Middlesex (linked)	18	00100010
John Wilkes	126	London, 1772	36	1000
John Wilkes	126	Middlesex, 1784	22	100
Edward Williams	127	London, 1724 (sheriff)	31	01
John Williams	128	London, 1727	33	00000100
William Withers	129	London, 1710	26	00001000
William Withers	129	London, 1713	28	0100
William Withers	129	London, 1713 *	29	00000100
John Wolstenholme	130	Middlesex, 1705	11	1000
Matthew Wood	131	London, 1837	46	10000
Cecil Wray	132	Westminster, 1784	56	010
Gilbert Ainslie Young	133	Marylebone, 1837	50	01000
Gilbert Ainslie Young	133	Marylebone (linked)	59	0000001000000

Note: * indicates reconstructed poll data.

Source: LED.

Notes

- ¹ The main sources are the volumes of the *History of Parliament* and of *ODNB*, supplemented for the post-reform period by Stenton. Of 133 candidates in the **Candidates** table, only a handful were not MPs at some stage in their political careers.
- ² A. Roth, *Parliamentary profiles* (1966 onwards) has applied Namierite techniques to the contemporary House of Commons. Other relevant sources include R.J. Waller and B. Criddle, *Almanac of British politics* (8th edn, 2007).
- ³ Issuing new writs was among the routine preliminary business of a new parliament because in every election a number of candidates were returned for more than one constituency.
- ⁴ These are examples from those elections in the LED, not an enumeration of candidates' careers.
- ⁵ As shown in Corfield, Green, and Harvey, 'Westminster man'.
- ⁶ Brief biographical details of candidates are given in the notes to sections 5 and 6.