

LONDON ELECTORAL HISTORY – STEPS TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

6.3 HISTORY OF ELECTIONS IN MARYLEBONE, 1837-1841

Note on conventions within all electoral tables

A vote for a candidate is shown as = 1
A null-vote for a candidate is shown as = 0
A vote which might or might not be given to any other candidate (in elections for more than one seat) is shown as = *

Example:

In the three-candidate general election in Westminster (1784), the possible vote codes are: Fox 001, Wray 010, Hood 100, Wray + Fox 011, Hood + Fox 101, Hood + Wray 110.

So the aggregate of votes for each candidate is represented by Fox **1; Wray *1*; and Hood 1**.

Although the parliamentary constituency of Marylebone was a creation of the Reform Act of 1832, it too acquired a distinctive political culture within a very few years.¹

St Marylebone and St Pancras were among a handful of large metropolitan parishes that had adopted the provisions of Hobhouse's Select Vestries Act of 1831,² thereby establishing the semblance of a ratepayer democracy.³ Annual elections to the vestry, together with the registration provisions of the Reform Act itself, helped to politicise the constituency, which shared the metropolitan culture of association, debate and ready campaigning. And frequent contests (as shown in Table 73) rapidly raised the electoral temperature. Thus in the decade and a half following the Reform Act, every general election and two by-elections went to a poll – an incidence of contests that was equalled in the metropolis only by London and Westminster.

Table 73
Contested parliamentary elections in Marylebone, 1832-52

Date of return	Votes cast	Estimated poll
12 December 1832	11,051	6,076
20 March 1833	5,887	5,887
9 January 1835	8,337	5,000
26 July 1837	11,240	7,057
3 March 1838	8,114	8,114
2 July 1841	16,102	8,234
31 July 1847	15,050	9,500
Total	75,781	49,868

Source: Summary tables in section 8; and LED.

The first parliamentary election in the new constituency in 1832 was won by local landowner Edward Portman⁴ and the Whig lawyer Sir William Horne,⁵ both being moderate Whigs. Together they defeated Sir Samuel Whalley,⁶ whose stance was more radical, and two advanced reformers, Thomas Murphy⁷ and Leslie G. Jones.⁸

After that, Portman's resignation in 1833 led to a by-election, at which a group of vestry-based independents, grouped within a grass-roots organisation known as the Barlow Street Committee, rallied to Whalley's cause. They successfully campaigned for his return for the vacant seat. The Barlow Street Committee (formed in 1832) was described by a conservative opponent as composed of 'petty shopkeepers and small rate-payers'. They favoured low rates and cheap local government.⁹ At the following general election in 1835, Whalley was again returned at the head of the poll. He and his colleague William Bulwer¹⁰ ousted the incumbent Sir William Horne and defeated Gilbert Young.¹¹ On this occasion, there were no conservative candidates. Instead the Whig moderates were ousted, having lost popular support over the controversial Poor Law Amendment Act of 1835 and having annoyed the radical rate-payers' lobby. The vestry radicals in Marylebone had gained powerful sticks, with which to belabour the moderate Whigs, and they did so accordingly. The twists and turns of local political alliances were recounted in all their complex details by Thomas Murphy, the defeated candidate in 1832 and 1833. For him and other advanced radicals, the Whig government was but a new form of

aristocratic ‘tyranny’. ‘Radicals, stand to your post’, he urged. ‘Tell the Tories, the Whigs, and Whig radicals, you will have none of them’.¹²

The Barlow Street Committee continued as potent force at the first parliamentary election of Victoria’s reign in 1837. Its members then ran Sir Benjamin Hall,¹³ alongside the incumbent Whalley. And they won a three-cornered struggle. Hall headed the poll, with Whalley in second place. He in turn had a secure, if unspectacular majority over Charles Shore,¹⁴ the conservative candidate, who was supported by the rival Marylebone ‘Loyal and Constitutional Association’: see Table 74. At the same time, the moderate Whigs, Young and Horne, had failed to rally sufficient support. Instead, they were pincered by the conservative John Shore on the one hand and the radical rate-payers on the other.

Table 74
Marylebone parliamentary general election, 1837: Vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PX1837, Poll ID 50

Date of return: 26 July 1837				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
BENJAMIN HALL	44	3,512	****1	2,195
SAMUEL WHALLEY	123	3,350	1****	2,115
Charles John Shore	109	2,952	**1**	1,932
Gilbert Ainslie Young	133	764	*1***	485
William Horne	57	662	***1*	486
Polled				4,480
Unpolled electors				7,090
Total LED cases				11,570

Note: The number polled is of those who polled in 1837 and survived to appear on the electoral register of 1841. The number unpolled includes some who were not on the electoral register of 1837.

Source: Craig; LED.

In due course, the Commons committee that sat on the petition against Whalley’s return found that he had insufficient estate to qualify him for election, and he was unseated.¹⁵ This decision led to a by-election in March 1838.

Thomas Perronet Thompson,¹⁶ an inveterate contester of elections,

may have been expecting a straight fight. But the reform-minded barrister William Ewart,¹⁷ still smarting after defeats at Liverpool and Kilkenny city, sought a seat commensurate with his status in reformist circles. Joseph Hume, the radical parliamentarian and Marylebone resident, made a careful assessment of the state of play.¹⁸ His local soundings convinced him not only that Thompson could not prevail but that, by splitting the reforming vote, his candidacy might hand the seat to the conservatives. And Hume's fears of a conservative revival proved to be correct. Undeterred, Thompson ploughed on to ignominious defeat. Charles Shore, Lord Teignmouth, avenged his defeat of the previous year and took the seat with an adequate if not comfortable majority. In less than eight months, the constitutionalists had turned a defeat by 398 votes into a majority of 404 votes: compare Tables 74 and 75.

Table 75
Marylebone parliamentary by-election, March 1838: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PX1838, P011 ID 51

Date of return: 3 March 1838				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
CHARLES SHORE	109	4,166	010	2,787
William Ewart	31	3,762	001	2,504
Thomas Perronet Thompson	114	186	100	133
Polled				5,423
Unpolled electors				6,147
Total LED cases				11,570

Note: The number polled is of those who polled in 1838 and survived to appear on the electoral register of 1841. The number unpolled includes some who were not on the electoral register of 1837.

Source: Craig; LED.

The by-election defeat of 1838 clearly took members of the Barlow Street Committee by surprise. At the general election of 1841, they played for safety by adopting Sir Charles Napier¹⁹ as a second 'gentleman reformer' candidate to run alongside Hall. These two stood against the constitutionalists' candidates, Benjamin Cabbell²⁰ and Sir James Hamilton.²¹ But Hall and Napier also faced a more outright

radicalism from the Chartists. They put forward one Villiers Sankey as their candidate.²² In the event, Hall and Napier were returned with secure majorities over the constitutionalists, while Sankey's tally was miserable (see Table 76).

Table 76

Marylebone parliamentary general election, 1841: vote codes and distribution of votes in Table PX1841, *POLL ID 52*

Date of return: 2 July 1841				
Candidate Name	ID	Votes received	Vote code	Number of records
BENJAMIN HALL	44	4,661	1****	4,661
CHARLES NAPIER	82	4,587	*1***	4,587
Benjamin Cabbell	19	3,410	***1*	3,405
James Hamilton	46	3,383	**1**	3,381
W. Villiers Sankey	102	61	****1	62
Polled				8,192
Unpolled electors				3,378
Total LED cases				11,570

Source: Craig; LED.

The Marylebone constituency thus saw swings between constitutionalists and rate-payer's reformism but seemed firmly immune to outright Chartism. That reality illustrated the difficulty facing the plebeian Chartists, who were pressing for constitutional reform from outside the national political system.²³ From the point of view of the radical rate-payers, however, their strategy of finding respectable candidates worked effectively enough. Marylebone became known for its independence, with contests between conservative constitutionalists, moderate Whig reformers, and radical rate-payers.

Notes

- ¹ This section owes much to B. Weinstein, 'Shopkeepers and gentlemen: the liberal politics of early Victorian London (unpub. Cambridge University Ph.D. thesis, 2006); published as idem, *Liberalism and local government in early Victorian London* (Woodbridge, 2011). The authors are very grateful to Benjamin Weinstein for his expert guidance through the thorny thickets of Marylebone politics.
- ² 1 & 2 William IV, c. 60 (1831). Campaigns to reform the vestry system had a long, if intermittent, history throughout the eighteenth century: see for a case-study, G. Williamson, 'The nature of mid-eighteenth-century popular politics in the City of Westminster: the select vestry committee of 1742 and the parish of St. George Hanover Square' (unpub. MA thesis, Hertfordshire University, 2008).
- ³ The franchise under the Select Vestries Act, almost as a test drive for the Reform Act of the following year, lay in £10 householders.
- ⁴ Edward Berkeley Portman (1799-1888), MP for Dorset, February 1823 – 1832; MP for Marylebone, 1832 – March 1833. His election address, which espoused key Whig principles while avoiding the perils of specific pledges, is available in E.B. Portman, *To the electors of the borough of Mary-le-bone: the substance of a speech ... at a meeting of the electors* (London, 1832). See also *Hist. Parl., 1820-32* and *ODNB*.
- ⁵ Sir William Horne (1774-1860), MP for Helston, 1812-18; MP for Bletchingley, February 1831 – 1831; MP for Newtown, Isle of Wight, 1831-2; MP for Marylebone, 1832-5; contested Marylebone, 1835; contested Marylebone, 1837. *ODNB* follows *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, iv, p. 235, in stating that he sat for Marylebone 1832-4, but according to the return he sat until 1835. See also *Hist. Parl., 1820-32*. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal; Stenton describes him as a Whig.
- ⁶ Sir Samuel St Swithin Burden Whalley (1800-83), contested Marylebone, 1832; MP for Marylebone, March 1833 – March 1838. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal; Stenton describes him as a reformer.
- ⁷ Thomas Murphy contested Marylebone in 1832 and again in March 1833.
- ⁸ Leslie Grove Jones (1779-1839), contested Marylebone, 1832. He was one of the first vestrymen elected in St Marylebone after the Select Vestries Act in 1831.
- ⁹ This contemporary verdict upon the Barlow Street Committee came from a hostile account by a conservative constitutionalist: see BL and electronic resource, James W. Brooke, *The democrats of Marylebone* (London, 1839), p. 34; and, for context, F.H.W. Sheppard, *Local government in St Marylebone, 1688-1835: a study of the vestry and turnpike trust* (1958).

- ¹⁰ William Henry Lytton Earle Bulwer (1801-72), contested Hertford, 1826; MP for Wilton, 1830-1; MP for Coventry, 1832-5; MP for Marylebone, 1835-7; MP for Tamworth, December 1868 – March 1871. See *Hist. Parl., 1820-32*. Stenton describes him as a Liberal.
- ¹¹ Gilbert Ainslie Young, barrister-at-law, contested Marylebone, 1835; contested Marylebone, 1837. He first appeared in the *Law List* in 1831. *Hist. Parl., 1820-32*. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal.
- ¹² T. Murphy, *Letter to the Radicals*, p.24.
- ¹³ Sir Benjamin Hall, Bt, Lord Llanover (1802-67), MP for Monmouth Boroughs, 1831 – July 1831; and 1832-7; MP for Marylebone, 1837 – July 1859. See M. Fraser, ‘Benjamin Hall, MP for Marylebone, 1837-9’, *National Library of Wales Journal*, 13 (1963-4), pp. 313-28; *Hist. Parl., 1820-32* and *ODNB*. Dod, McCalmont and Stenton all describe him as a Liberal.
- ¹⁴ Charles John Shore, Lord Teignmouth (1796-1885), contested Marylebone, 1837; MP for Marylebone, March 1838 – 1841. The minutes of Teignmouth’s election committee are at WAC, D. Misc. 87; and the accounts of his election expenses may be found at HLRO, HC/LB/1/31. Dod, McCalmont and Stenton all describe him as a Conservative.
- ¹⁵ *CJ*, 93, p. 295.
- ¹⁶ Thomas Perronet Thompson (1783-1869), contested Preston, 1835; MP for Kingston upon Hull, June 1835 – 1837; contested Stirling, 1837; contested Maidstone, 1837; contested Marylebone, March 1838; contested Tower Hamlets, 1841; contested Kingston upon Hull, 1841; contested Sunderland, August 1845; MP for Bradford, 1847-52; MP for Bradford, 1857-9. See L.G. Johnson, *General T. Perronet Thompson, 1783-1869: his military, literary and political campaigns* (1957). See too *ODNB*, which states that he contested Manchester in September 1839; and *BDMBR*. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal. Stenton describes him as a radical reformer.
- ¹⁷ William Ewart (1798-1869), MP for Bletchingley, July 1828 – 1830; MP for Liverpool, November 1830 – March 1831; MP for Liverpool, 1831-7; contested Liverpool, 1837; contested Kilkenny city, 1837; contested Marylebone, March 1838; MP for Wigan, March 1839 – 1841; MP for Dumfries, 1841-68. Ewart introduced a bill restricting capital punishment (1837); and successfully promoted the act establishing free public libraries (1850). See W.A. Munford, *William Ewart, MP, 1798-1869: portrait of a radical* (1960), and *ODNB*. Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal; Stenton describes him as a radical reformer. Ewart’s name is familiar as it was echoed by that

- of his celebrated godson, William Ewart Gladstone (1809-98).
- ¹⁸ Joseph Hume (1777-1855), MP for Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, January 1812 - 1812; MP for Aberdeen Burghs, 1818-30; MP for Middlesex, 1830-7; MP for Kilkenny, 1837-41; MP for Montrose Burghs, April 1842 - February 1855. See *Hist. Parl., 1790-1820*, iv, pp. 262-5; *Hist. Parl., 1820-32*, v, pp. 752-84; *ODNB*; *BDMBR*; J.B. Hume, *Joseph Hume: a memorial* (1855); and R.K. Huch and P.R. Ziegler, *Joseph Hume: the people's MP* (Philadelphia, Pa, 1985).
- ¹⁹ Sir Charles Napier (1768-1860), contested Portsmouth, 1832; contested Portsmouth, 1835; contested Greenwich, 1837; MP for Marylebone, 1841-7; contested Lambeth, August 1850; contested Great Yarmouth, 1852; MP for Southwark, November 1855 - 1860. See E.D.H.E. Napier, *The life and correspondence of Admiral Sir Charles Napier* (2 vols, 1862); H.N. Williams, *The life and letters of Admiral Sir Charles Napier* (1917); and *ODNB*. Dod, McCalmont and Stenton all describe him as a Liberal.
- ²⁰ Benjamin Bond Cabbell (c.1782-1874), contested St Albans, 1837; contested St Albans, February 1841; contested Marylebone, 1841; MP for St Albans, August 1846 - 1847; MP for Boston, 1847-57. See *ODNB*. Dod, McCalmont and Stenton all describe him as a Conservative.
- ²¹ Sir James John Hamilton, Bt (1802-76), MP for Sudbury, 1837 - December 1837; contested Marylebone, 1841; contested Marylebone, 1847. Dod, McCalmont and Stenton all describe him as a Conservative.
- ²² W. Villiers Sankey: author of three pamphlets listed in J.F.C. Harrison and D. Thompson, *Bibliography of the Chartist movement, 1837-1976* (Hassocks, 1978). Craig, 2nd edn, describes Sankey as a Chartist, while Dod and McCalmont describe him as a Liberal.
- ²³ For context, see M. Chase, *Chartism: a new history* (Manchester, 2007).