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**Once Proud Burghs: Community and the Politics of Autonomy,  
Annexation and Assimilation - Govan and Partick  
c. 1850-1925**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis seeks to provide a qualitative and comparative account of politics and power in two densely-populated Scottish suburban communities: the former Police Burghs of Partick and Govan. These are communities whose rich urban history has been relatively underexplored by dint of their proximity to Glasgow and the fact that they were formally outside the city boundaries until 1912. The study aims to redress the balance in the burghs' favour, making a substantial qualitative, analytical contribution to the wider historiography of political change in the British Isles, while simultaneously adding a comparative empirical case study to the conceptual debate over centralism *versus* localism.

Foremost among the historiographical concerns addressed are civic nationalism and local self-government, class politics, the rise of Labour, including 'Red Clydeside', and the interlinked electoral demise of Liberalism. This qualitative study of political change in two populous and pioneering 'locally self-governed' communities therefore goes beyond merely chronicling Partick's and Govan's creation as burghs, their subsequent development and annexation to Glasgow. Rather, it examines the dynamics of ideological and party-political change in two significant urban localities from the mid-Victorian period up to the arrival of near-democratic electoral politics after the First World War. Close attention is therefore paid throughout to political rhetoric in relation to the local experience of ideological, institutional and electoral change.

The central contention of this work is as follows. Partick's and Govan's political and administrative development from the 1850s to the 1920s is best understood within the wider ideological context of the rise and fall of 'local self-government'. 'Local self-government' was a mid-nineteenth century *bourgeois* Liberal solution to the myriad problems associated with urban industrial life in the Scottish context. In Govan's and Partick's cases, 'local self-government' was in large part sustained by the promotion of local civic nationalism, albeit this phenomenon persisted in the Scottish context until at least the 1975 local government reorganisation: long after the burghs and the legislative framework that allowed their creation were extinguished. By 1912, when the burghs were absorbed into Greater Glasgow, the ideology of 'local self-government' had been gradually eroded by large-scale 'municipal socialism' combined with 'national efficiency'. In broad-brush terms, it is argued here that the transition between these dominant ideals mirrored, and in some ways pre-figured, the rise of Victorian Liberalism and its eventual eclipse by independent Labour. These developments and the political conflict which accompanied

them are traced throughout the study with careful analysis of the political discourse from various ‘players’ in both communities from the formation of the burghs until their annexation, and even beyond, to the electoral politics of the early post-1918 period. It is shown that notwithstanding its intrinsic merits in theory, ‘local self-government’ as practised in Partick and Govan was often undermined by hypocrisy and self-interest from the burghs’ civic leaders. Analysis of the political culture and traditions of anti-landlordism in the former burghs also sheds new light on the phenomenon of ‘Red Clydeside’.

Partick and Govan were shipbuilding boom towns from the mid-nineteenth century and throughout the years examined in this study. While both communities experienced rapid industrialisation and demographic growth in the mid-nineteenth century, the latter burgh was more populous and proletarian than the former. The implications of this for their comparative political development were significant, as is outlined below. Both communities’ rapid rise in the mid-nineteenth century prompted them to adopt the ‘populous place’ provisions of the 1850 and 1862 General Police Acts (respectively) to become quasi-autonomous police burghs, a distinctively Scottish form of municipality. Both communities jealously maintained their independence from the neighbouring city of Glasgow through several aggressive ‘annexation’ attempts until they finally amalgamated with the city in 1912. By 1904, the burghs had grown so fast that they were two of only nine Scottish towns and cities (including Glasgow and Edinburgh) whose population exceeded 50,000. As major urban centres by the 1900s, their political development clearly merits more than parochial interest.

The thesis is divided into two complementary sections. The first considers the development of key themes in the burghs’ civic life, including the Liberal ethos of local self-government, industrial paternalism and the emergence of class-based politics. This begins with an examination of the reasons why Partick and Govan adopted the General Police Acts in 1852 and 1864 respectively, followed by an appraisal of the municipal policies pursued in both burghs’ formative years. There is especial focus on Partick, as one of Scotland’s first ‘populous place’ burghs. The focus then moves on chronologically to consider the ways in which both burghs responded to a number of critical episodes in the late 1860s and 1870s, with reference to what the community leaders perceived as threats to their existence emanating from outside and inside the burgh boundaries.

From the mid 1880s until the 1912 annexation, the Burgh Halls became theatres of partisan and ideological conflict. The 1886 Home Rule crisis triggered a split in the ranks

of the local Liberal Party, which among other things had the effect of introducing openly party politics to the municipal scene. The later municipal chapters examine the competing visions of the nature, purpose and extent of municipal power proffered by Liberal, Liberal Unionist, Conservative and Labour councillors, in addition to identifying tensions regarding temperance and sectarianism. This is followed by a longer term analysis of the reasons why both communities amalgamated with Glasgow in 1912, including discussion of annexation in the context of wider ideological debates about ‘municipal socialism’ and ‘national efficiency’ against the formerly prevailing ethos of local self-government.

The second and final section of the thesis considers parliamentary politics from the burghs’ 1885 formation into county divisions of Lanarkshire, each returning one MP to Westminster. This includes scrutiny of the extent to which both communities deserved their reputation as ‘strongholds’ of Liberalism in the period before 1914. Consideration is given to the Home Rule split and its implications, and to the extent to which Labour was able to dent the dominance of the Liberals and Unionists before the war. Here, as with the earlier municipal analysis, much consideration is given to paternalism and sectarianism. Neil Maclean’s precocious victory in Govan in 1918 owed much to the community’s more proletarian character than Partick, and to Labour’s emerging ability to transcend sectarian boundaries there; an ability which had been evidenced in local municipal and parliamentary politics since the 1880s, well before the upheaval of annexation and the cataclysm of war.

The specific focus of this study does not detract from its general contribution to historiography as outlined above. Nevertheless, it is conceded that the emphasis on municipal and parliamentary politics, especially electoral discourse, is overwhelmingly and necessarily qualitative in approach. In consequence, the war years are discussed only briefly, due to the associated abeyance of municipal and parliamentary contests from 1911 until 1918. And as this is not a social or economic history of the former burghs, it is not intended to be read as either, still less to substitute for them. Rather, the thesis forms a substantial contribution to academic historiography by remedying the near invisibility, certainly obscurity, of two populous Clydeside communities, whose experiences from the 1850s until the 1920s, reveal much about the dynamics and discourse of political change, not just in Scotland but more generally.

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This thesis would quite literally not have been possible without access to the Glasgow City Archives and the Glasgow Collection at the wonderful Mitchell Library. I am very grateful for the assistance, encouragement and affability of the Mitchell's archivists, librarians and support staff. If they were sometimes worried I had no home to go to, they hid it well.

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My parents John and Rosaleen, sisters Karen and Claire, and many other family-members will be delighted this project is finally over. It is impossible to do justice to their pervasive influence, love and support here, but I am grateful for all the unquantifiable ways in which they have sustained me and kept my feet on the ground through the years.

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My late friend Joanne McCarthy made me promise to finish this work, at a point when she had immeasurably more difficult preoccupations of her own to deal with. I only wish she could be here to celebrate its completion with me. This thesis is warmly dedicated both to her memory, and to those of my uncles Frank and Billy, who died during the latter stages of its completion.

### **Author's Declaration**

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

Michael George Pugh

## **Abbreviations**

### **Organisations and Titles**

GUA	Glasgow Unionist Association
GWSS	Glasgow and West of Scotland Women's Suffrage Societies
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
JP	Justice of the Peace
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
MP	Member of Parliament
NAVSR	National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights
SCWS	Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Society
SLP	Scottish Labour Party
UIL	United Irish League

### **Archive, Library and Publication Shorthand**

AB	Annexed Burghs
AUP	Aberdeen University Press
CUP	Cambridge University Press
EUP	Edinburgh University Press
GCA	Glasgow City Archives
GMB	Govan (Burgh) Minute Books
GUL	Glasgow University Library
ML	Mitchell Library
MUP	Manchester University Press
NL	National Library
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
OUP	Oxford University Press
PMB	Partick (Burgh) Minute Books
SC	Special Collections

SCP	Scottish Cultural Press
SLA	Scottish Library Association
SLH	<i>Scottish Labour History</i>
WHR	<i>Women's History Review</i>

#### **Newspapers and Periodicals (Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century)**

DR	<i>Daily Record</i>
ET	<i>Evening Times</i>
GC	<i>Govan Chronicle</i>
GEN	<i>Glasgow Evening News</i>
GH	<i>Glasgow Herald</i>
GP	<i>Govan Press</i>
NBDM	<i>North British Daily Mail</i>
PA	<i>Partick Advertiser</i>
PG	<i>Partick Gazette</i>
PIJ	<i>Partick Illustrated Journal</i>
PMP	<i>Partick and Maryhill Press</i>
PO	<i>Partick Observer</i>
PS	<i>Partick Star</i>

**Note to readers:** The minutes of the burghs of Partick and Govan are used extensively in the text of this thesis, especially in chapters 2-4. Their complete references are as follows. For Partick: ML/GCA/AB/H-Par-1 (volumes 1-8), and ML/GCA/AB/H-Par-2 (volumes 1-3). For Govan: ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov-2 (volumes 1-11). For conciseness, these sources appear in the footnotes as PMB and GMB, respectively, followed by the date of the particular meeting and the page numbers in the relevant volume (except for the final burgh meetings in 1912). Approximate dates covered in each volume are noted in the bibliography next to the full reference.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction and Overview**

[I] use ‘Glasgow’ and ‘Clydeside’ as virtual synonyms. Careful readers will protest against this slapdash practice; my defence is that I merely follow contemporary ways.

Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2001 [1983] ), p. 2.<sup>1</sup>

Examining political change through the lenses offered by local and regional case studies is emphatically not a footling historical enterprise. Local studies can matter as much as national ones, whether they serve to complement, reinforce, contradict or add fresh nuance to analyses of wider trends, be these ‘Scottish’, ‘British’ or beyond. This study considers the political development of two populous districts of the wider Glasgow conurbation. Partick and Govan were separate municipal jurisdictions from 1852 and 1864 respectively, until their annexation by the city in 1912.<sup>2</sup> Given their thematic preoccupations and the constraints of word length, historians of ‘Glasgow’ and ‘Clydeside’ may be forgiven for conveniently conflating those two nouns with a brief caveat, such as that offered by McLean above. Still, there is much to be gained from delving beneath these shorthand geographical generalisations in order to better appreciate the political development of smaller communities near larger cities in their own right, and the ways in which they helped shape the political culture of the wider conurbations of which they formed a substantial part.

From the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries, municipal Glasgow was surrounded by nine quasi-independent burghs of varying longevity, acreage and population, greatly impeding its civic leaders’ strategy of territorial expansion and consolidation. Govan and Partick were by far the most populous and viable of these burghs, as well as the longest successfully to resist annexation.<sup>3</sup> Thus, to omit the separate political development of pre-1912 Govan and Partick from detailed historical consideration

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<sup>1</sup> I. McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2001 [1983]), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See table 1.1 and maps in appendices for more detail. The burghs are not always mentioned in the same order throughout the thesis, so as not to imply one was more important than the other.

<sup>3</sup> See chapter six for fuller details on the burghs surrounding Glasgow between 1852 and 1912.

of ‘Clydeside’ or ‘Glasgow’ is effectively, if inadvertently, to imply that their political history began with annexation to the city. This does no credit to the former burghs, nor, in a peculiar way, to the city which struggled for decades to annex them. Historic Scotland’s Scottish Burgh Survey recently published a volume on the archaeology and development of Govan, which noted the need for new research on the development of the burgh from its inception in 1864 until its 1912 abolition.<sup>4</sup> Highlighting especially the need for ‘more research on politics and power’ in Govan, the Burgh Survey’s authors averred that: ‘up until 1912, Govan’s history is distinctly blurred, because it was not part of Glasgow and so fell outside the remit of the city’s historians’.<sup>5</sup>

Partick, Govan’s neighbour on the north bank of the Clyde, has been similarly disadvantaged in its treatment by posterity, and this study helps substantively to redress the balance in both erstwhile burghs’ favour.<sup>6</sup> The rapid industrialisation and demographic growth experienced by both communities as they developed from the 1850s until their annexation meant that, by the turn of the century, they each ranked among only nine Scottish communities, including Glasgow and Edinburgh, with populations over 50,000.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See C. Dalglish, and S.T. Driscoll *et al.*, *Historic Govan: Archaeology and Development*, (Edinburgh: Historic Scotland, 2009), p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> The most influential antiquarian accounts of both burghs’ history are as follows. For Partick: J. Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences Relating to Partick* (Glasgow: Hugh Hopkins, 1873); C. Taylor, *Partick: Past and Present* (Partick: Wm. Hodge, 1902); W. Greenhorne, *History of Partick, 550-1912* (Partick: John Tomlinson, 1928). For Govan: T.C.F. Brochie, *History of Govan*, (Govan: Old Govan Club 1938 [1905]) and Various Authors, *Transactions of Old Govan Club 1913-1934*. More recent and detailed works in the antiquarian tradition include: A. Smart, *Villages of Glasgow: North of the Clyde* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1996), pp. 75-100 and her *Villages of Glasgow: South of the Clyde* (Edinburgh: John Donald, Edinburgh, 2002 [1996]), pp. 130-154. An untypically academic study of Govan can be found in C. Campbell, ‘The making of a Clydeside working class: shipbuilding and working class organization in Govan’, *Our History*, 78, (1986). A notable, albeit unpublished, exception to the antiquarian trend for Partick is R. Irving, *The Burgh of Partick* (University of Strathclyde, Unpublished B.A. dissertation, 1975). I.R. Mitchell’s *This City Now: Glasgow and Its Working Class Past*, (Edinburgh: Luath, 2005) and its chapters on both former burghs (pp. 27-37 for Govan and 67-79 for Partick) is notable as an accessible yet comparatively subversive approach to non-academic, which phrase is not meant pejoratively, local history. Its author developed the volume from a series of lectures originally written for the Workers’ Educational Association, and his empathy for the ‘working class’ of his title is matched only by a text rich in literary allusion.

<sup>7</sup> M. Atkinson, *Local Government in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1904), p. 81.

Eliding for now the legitimate debate over the extent to which Govan's and Partick's population density was contingent on their proximity to Glasgow, which is a persistent *motif* of the thesis, especially in chapters three to six, it is remarkable that, with a few honourable exceptions, their history has hitherto been left largely to the efforts of antiquarians. Govan's foremost antiquarian's outlook serves as a salutary reminder of the drawbacks of relying upon such works in the absence of detailed academic analysis such as this study offers.

The authors of the *Burgh Survey* note that journalist and antiquarian T.C.F. Brochie's 'assertively "Booster"' account of Govan, written from a pro 'independence' perspective, has distorted historical understanding of the realities of local community life.<sup>8</sup> During a long, varied, career, Brochie accumulated many accomplishments, and honours, including the editorship of the *Govan Press* and the *Glasgow Evening Times*, before his 1910 appointment as Superintendent of the Glasgow Corporation Art Galleries and Museums.<sup>9</sup> His 1905 *History of Govan* was the first attempt at a synthesis of the community's history from antiquity to the burgh's heyday. The work's obsequious dedication to the burgh's provost, magistrates and town councillors tacitly attested to its author's pro-independence agenda.<sup>10</sup> Brochie was instrumental, after the burgh's 1912 demise, in establishing the generally antiquarian and nostalgic *Old Govan Club*.<sup>11</sup>

Although it is not claimed here that either former burgh was somehow representative of Scotland overall, if this can be claimed of any community, their history surely merits more sustained academic scrutiny than it has generally attracted to date. A comparative analysis of the political development of the two former burghs can do more, however, than merely substitute academic analysis for antiquarian whimsy: it can shed fresh light on a number of longstanding historiographical and conceptual debates. Foremost among these concerns are civic nationalism and local self-government, centralism *versus* localism, class politics, the rise of Labour, including 'Red Clydeside', and the interlinked electoral demise of Liberalism. This qualitative study of political

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<sup>8</sup> Dalglish and Driscoll *et al*, *Historic Govan*, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> S. Murphy, 'The Story of "The Govan Press." An Historical Retrospect', *Transactions Old Govan Club [hereafter TOGC]*, 1920 2:2 pp. 52-64 at p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> Brochie, *History of Govan*, unpaginated dedication in frontmatter.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, [1938 edition], *foreword*.

change in two populous and pioneering ‘locally self-governed’ communities therefore goes beyond merely chronicling their emergence, rise and annexation to Glasgow.

Rather, it locates their political and administrative development over more than half a century within the wider ideological context of the rise of local self-government as a solution to the problems associated with urban industrial life, followed by its gradual eclipse by large-scale ‘municipal socialism’ combined with ‘national efficiency’. In broad-brush terms, it is argued here that the transition between these dominant ideals mirrored, and in some ways pre-figured, the rise of Victorian Liberalism and its eventual eclipse by independent Labour. These developments and the political conflict which accompanied them are traced throughout the thesis with careful analysis of political discourse from various ‘players’ in both communities from the formation of the burghs until their annexation, and even beyond, to the electoral politics of the early post-1918 period.

The overall focus of the study is Govan’s and Partick’s municipal and parliamentary politics throughout their years of burgh status and the decades immediately after this. It begins by examining the transformation of both communities into burghs under distinctively Scottish permissive legislation. This involves detailed examination of the burgh leaders’ self-presentation, with some justification, as pioneering urban reformers, combined with an evaluation of the extent to which the reality lived up to the rhetoric in the early decades of municipal autonomy. This is followed by analysis of how, in response to the existential ‘threats’ posed by Glasgow’s attempts to absorb the burghs in the late 1860 and early 1870s, the burghs adopted a more strident tone in their assertions regarding the virtues of local self-government. The thesis then examines the relative municipal and parliamentary fortunes of the Liberals, Liberal Unionists, Labour and Conservatives from the eve of the 1886 Home Rule elections until the last pre-war general elections and the demise of the burghs themselves. It explores the ways in which a mass, but still not democratic, electorate responded to an increasingly polarising party system, as the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists cooperated against the Liberals, who cooperated not at all with the fledgling Labour party. Thus, the Govan and Partick constituencies written off by the local press in 1885 as Liberal, even radical ‘strongholds’, are shown in chapter seven as seats altogether more interesting. When electoral politics resumed after the First World War with a near-democratic franchise (of which more is said in the next section of this chapter), Govan and Partick, now reconstituted as parliamentary divisions of Glasgow, did not fall into political torpor. The broad-brush of the overarching thesis does not obscure the finer details involved in Govan’s firm embrace of Labour at elections from

1918 to 1924 and afterwards, contrasting with Partick's decidedly more promiscuous electoral interactions. The constituency was won by Coalition Liberal, National Liberal, Labour and Unionists at successive elections, a swift turnaround of political personnel which is analysed in detail in chapter eight.

In what follows, the major theoretical premises, methodology and sources for this study are overviewed with particular reference to the historical debates noted above. The social composition of the burghs during their decades of independence is considered, setting the scene for the discussion of their political development that dominates the body of the thesis. This demographic context is interwoven with a discussion of the role played by the concepts of community, class and paternalism in the thesis-proper. Lastly, the chapter structure of the thesis is summarised.

## **Key Themes**

### Local Self-Government: 'Invitation to empowerment' or an abdication by the central state?

The competing merits of centralism and localism have long preoccupied policy-makers, political thinkers and historians. Graeme Morton places nineteenth-century Scottish local government firmly at the centre of his theories of the importance of civil society in promoting civic nationalism. The local state, he argues, provided an essential outlet for the patriotic passions of Victorian Scots, keen neither to break-up, nor devolve power from the Westminster state, but to make the Union settlement of 1707 deliver for Scotland.<sup>12</sup> Thus:

We are left with a conception of the central state that was in effect in balance with the individual and local self-government. Although central government always had ultimate power over the local state, for the actual day-to-day governing of society – and the favoured preference of the liberal bourgeoisie – it was the local state that won out and this should not be ignored.<sup>13</sup>

This meant that, at least until the 1880s, 'governing Scotland was a local affair for the town councils and the middle class.'<sup>14</sup> Morton's conceptual framework emphasised that the 1707 Union preserved Scotland's distinctive system of local government alongside

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<sup>12</sup> G. Morton, 'Scottish Rights and "Centralisation" in the mid-nineteenth century'; *Nations and Nationalism*, 2:2, (1996), pp. 257-79 at pp. 260-1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 260.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 263.

the Kirk, Scots Law and separate education.<sup>15</sup> Yet Scottish local government was not preserved in aspic: from 1833 it became increasingly, if grudgingly, democratically accountable.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, many of the nation's emerging suburban communities and more remote localities found themselves occupying an anomalous position outside the jurisdiction of the ancient burghs.<sup>17</sup> The immediate, if not entirely coherent, solution was the passage by Westminster of a series of laws which became known as the General Police Acts.<sup>18</sup> The key provisions and implications of such legislation are analysed at length in chapter two, but for present purposes, it is important to consider Morton's characterisation of what was essentially permissive legislation enabling local citizens to petition their sheriff for the right to establish a municipality of their own. The creation of such civic entities represented, in Morton's words: '*a response by the people to an invitation to empowerment from the centre.*'<sup>19</sup>

While there is much to recommend this high-minded interpretation of the philosophy animating the General Police Acts and the numerous Scottish communities that adopted them, it needs significant qualification in light of the research for this study. Certainly, as is seen in chapters three to seven of this thesis, Govan's and Partick's municipal leaders often drew on the ideology of local self-government in their efforts to maintain civic independence. However, as is also seen in chapters two to six, 'the people' who took up central government's 'invitation' were seldom representative of the

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<sup>15</sup> G. Morton, 'Civil Society, municipal government and the state: enshrinement, empowerment and legitimacy. Scotland, 1800-1929'; *Urban History*, 25:3 (1998), pp. 348-367 at p. 355. For a full elaboration of these ideas, see also his monograph: *Unionist Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830-1860*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> Morton, 'Civil Society', p. 355.

<sup>17</sup> For useful background on this situation, see 'The Police Bill' in *Scotsman*, 18 May 1850.

<sup>18</sup> For a comprehensive account of the development of the General Police legislation in all its iterations, the following, encyclopaedic sources were consulted. R.M. Urquhart, *The Burghs of Scotland and the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act 1833; The Police of Towns (Scotland) Act 1850; The General Police & Improvement (Scotland) Act 1862 – An Introductory Note* (Motherwell: SLA, 1992) ; R.M. Urquhart, *The Burghs of Scotland and the Police of Towns (Scotland) Act (1850)*, (Motherwell: SLA, 1989); R.M. Urquhart, *The Burghs of Scotland and the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act (1833)* (SLA, 1991) & R.M. Urquhart, *The Burghs of Scotland and the General Police and Improvement (Scotland) Act 1862 ("The Lindsay Act") (25 & 26 Vict. C. 101), Part I* (SLA, 1991), vols. I & II.

<sup>19</sup> Morton, 'Civil Society', p. 355, original emphasis. There were loose parallels here with the 'Big Society' advocated by Prime Minister David Cameron, whose Conservative – Liberal coalition government assumed office in May 2010, discussion of which lies beyond the chronology and scope of this study.

communities they claimed to serve, not least due to a restrictive municipal franchise, as is detailed in chapter two and touched on throughout chapters three to six. As noted above, Morton himself acknowledged that local self-government was an essentially middle-class pursuit. Notwithstanding the genuine, and at time of writing unresolved, tension between centralism, localism and efficient administration discussed most fully in chapter six, the central state's 'empowerment' of local authorities under such statutes can also justifiably be read as an abdication of responsibility for provision of uniform local services and citizenship rights resulting, in 2010 parlance, in something of a 'postcode lottery'. This is reflected in the discussion of the annexation debates throughout the municipal chapters of the thesis, but especially in chapter six, which takes a long view of this and related issues.

To accept Morton's arguments about the significance of the local state in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century Scottish context is not naively to suppose that this somehow resulted in the delivery of myriad municipal utopias. Nor is it suggested here that Morton supposes this either. Indeed, as is discussed in chapters five and six, even Govan and Partick politicians who preferred municipal independence to amalgamation with Glasgow as a matter of principle were in practice willing to contemplate the former option, if the economies of scale flowing from large scale municipal government could somehow be balanced with concessions to local autonomy. Nor were Labour activists, probably the most vehement advocates of their burghs' amalgamation with the city, entirely lacking in appreciation of the benefits of councillors making decisions literally, if not always ideologically, closer to those they represented.

With these caveats, Morton's insights into the relationship between nationalism and localism in the Scottish context are particularly germane to this study of politics in Partick and Govan from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. From about 1840, what were then picturesque villages experienced a particularly local version of the industrial revolution, precipitated by the development of shipbuilding and accompanied by dizzying rates of population growth, so that by the 1850s, both communities were forced to consider accepting the Westminster state's 'invitation' to assume responsibility for local self-government. Both therefore became police burghs, a peculiarly Scottish version of municipality, and jealously guarded this quasi-independent status until they were finally

amalgamated with Glasgow in 1912. A distinctive sense of local identity from the city, of being in Glasgow but not entirely of it, persisted in both burghs at least until the 1950s.<sup>20</sup>

This study examines the dynamics of local municipal and parliamentary politics from the time both communities achieved police burgh status until the decades immediately after their annexation. Attention is focused on a number of key themes in the burghs' political development. The first such theme is an evaluation of the overarching influence of the notion of local self-government relative to more pragmatic, self-protective preoccupations of the local elites. This is accompanied by consideration of the ways in which the burghs' invariably precarious and always qualified autonomy was consolidated and reinforced through the development of civic rituals, philanthropy and the provision of public amenities. Civic identity was most sharply defined when it was perceived to be under threat, hence particular attention is given to the ways in which the burghs distinguished themselves from the city of Glasgow, and to the Fenian panics of the late 1860s and 1870s. The development of party politics in the municipal chamber and in the parliamentary arena is also considered, alongside related concerns like sectarianism and temperance. Above all, the resilience and legacy of Partick and Govan as burghs needs to be explained. Burgh status took place when Liberalism was in the ascendant, but when the communities merged with Glasgow, the Party's prospects both locally and nationally were markedly bleaker.

### Liberal Decline and the Rise of Labour

The Liberals' rise and decline remains a matter of intense historical debate, as does the rapid and related rise of Labour.<sup>21</sup> Liberal collapse set the scene for Conservative dominance of British national government, with the party holding office either alone, or as dominant coalition partners, for 53 years between 1924 and 1997.<sup>22</sup> David Marquand has

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<sup>20</sup> J. Cunnison & J.B.S. Gilfillan, eds., *The City of Glasgow, The Third Statistical Account of Scotland* (Glasgow: Collins, 1956), p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> Thorough summaries of the Scottish and British historiography can be found in J.J. Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow, 1896-1936: Socialism, Suffrage, Sectarianism*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), pp. 1-27 and C.M.M. MacDonald, *The Radical Thread: Political Change in Scotland. Paisley Politics, 1885-1924*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), pp. 13-35. See also, G.R. Searle, *The Liberal Party: Triumph and Disintegration, 1886-1929* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001 [1992]), p. 1, and M. Kinnear, *The Fall of Lloyd George: The Political Crisis of 1922* (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 28; I. Packer, 'The land issue and the future of Scottish Liberalism in 1914', *SHR*, 75 (1996), p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> J. Brown, 'The state of British political history', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40, (2005), p. 198.

commented that the rivalry between ‘progressive’ British parties made Conservative success possible: ‘the two-party system which took shape in the 1920s had always been a better friend to the British right than to the British left’.<sup>23</sup> If this was indeed the case, the outcome of five days’ wrangling in the aftermath of the indeterminate outcome of the 2010 general election: the Conservative – Liberal Democrat coalition government raised fresh and yet somehow perennial questions about the ideological legacy of the former Liberal Party.<sup>24</sup> In September 2010, Deputy Prime Minister and Liberal Democrat Leader Nick Clegg sought to reassure the party’s activists that ‘we will never lose our soul’.<sup>25</sup>

Such remarks hardly acknowledged the deep historical ambiguities of Liberal ideology. It is too soon to tell how long the new alliance will last, but both parties’ leaders’ insistence that they have no plans to formally merge at least invites comparisons with earlier instances of Conservative-Liberal cooperation. According to Clegg, ‘Lib Dems and Conservatives are and always will be separate parties with distinct policies and histories. But for this Parliament we work together’; an assertion that was technically correct, given that the Liberal Democrats had been formed in the late-1980s. This rather overlooked the complexities of the earlier Liberal party’s tumultuous history. It also remains to be seen whether the coalition government formed in 2010 will develop on lines paralleling the story of the Liberal Unionists and their eventual merger with the Conservatives, the local experience of which is detailed in chapter seven.<sup>26</sup>

How did the historic ambiguities of Liberal ideology play out in the electoral contests considered in this study? Many radical Liberals saw common ideological cause with their moderate Labour counterparts, as is detailed in chapters seven and especially eight of this thesis, in line with the phenomenon that Catriona MacDonald evocatively characterises as the ‘radical thread’ in her study of Paisley politics from 1885 to 1924.<sup>27</sup> Yet MacDonald is careful to acknowledge that the ‘radical thread had many strands’, and could just as easily

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<sup>23</sup> D. Marquand, *The Progressive Dilemma*, (London: Phoenix, 1999 [1991]), pp. viii and *passim*. It should be noted that Marquand’s ‘Progressive Dilemma’ thesis had been questioned long before the events of May 2010. See for instance J.J. Smyth, ‘Resisting Labour: Unionists, Liberals and Moderates in Glasgow Between the Wars’; *The Historical Journal*, 46 (2003), pp. 375-401 at p. 375 and later discussion in this chapter.

<sup>24</sup> *The Guardian*, 12 May 2010.

<sup>25</sup> *Glasgow Herald [Hereafter GH]*, 21 September 2010.

<sup>26</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 September 2010.

<sup>27</sup> MacDonald, *Radical Thread*, *passim*.

become interwoven with the political right.<sup>28</sup> Chapter seven's analysis of the ideological exodus of radical Govan and Partick Liberals into the ranks of Liberal Unionists, who at first tacitly then formally aligned themselves with the Conservatives, is in sympathy with MacDonald's analysis. James Smyth has persuasively argued that Marquand's counterfactual obsession with the elusive prospect of a tangible 'progressive alliance' betwixt Labour and the Liberals rather misses the point that, during the interwar years, politics was increasingly polarised between social democratic forces, in the shape of what can for now be loosely-termed 'Labour', and more reactionary forces in the form of the Conservative / Unionist party and their classical Liberal camp-followers.<sup>29</sup> In Glasgow's City Chambers, anti-Labour forces combined under the ostensibly non-party political 'Moderate' then 'Progressive' banner.

The analysis in chapter eight of this thesis does not dispute Smyth's broader point about partisan polarisation, although it does qualify it to the extent that in the early-1920s, Partick had parliamentary and municipal candidates, such as John Izett and Alexander MacCallum Scott, who with different motivations and levels of sincerity found it difficult to reduce their personal philosophies to any single party-political identity. Scott's political diaries, which are examined in that chapter, revealed a local Liberal parliamentary candidate's belief in the potential of a progressive alliance matched only by his despair for the prospects of Liberalism. Again, and as is acknowledged in the context of that discussion, perhaps the real theme of Scott's diary is denial about the increasingly bystander role facing the Liberals in the battle between socialism and Unionism, not the credibility of Marquand's preferred solution to his 'progressive dilemma'. Partisan polarisation was a real factor in interwar electoral politics, but this study highlights that this emerged through a somewhat uneven process, and needs to be understood in the context of countervailing impulses in an increasingly fragmentary Liberal ideology.

Retrospectively, the discussion of Liberal Unionism and its local implications from 1885 until at least 1900, given in chapter seven, more than hints at the increasingly stark political choices to face electors in the 1920s. Two brief examples from both burghs illustrate this. James Parker Smith, Liberal Unionist MP for Partick from 1890 until 1906, was skilful in positioning himself as a friend of the working classes without committing himself to doing much to further their lot in Parliament: for instance by his ostensibly

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 282.

<sup>29</sup> Smyth, 'Resisting Labour', pp. 375-401.

principled abstention on rather than active support for the eight-hour day. (As discussed in chapter seven, Parker Smith claimed it was not his place to regulate others' hours of work.) Robert Hunter Craig won election as Govan's MP in 1900 based on Gladstone's Newcastle Programme, a radical manifesto that in many ways foreshadowed the social democratic, but not socialist, campaigns of successful Labour candidates after the war. This study offers much qualitative analysis of the often overlapping but increasingly conflicting ideological impulses in late-nineteenth century Liberalism, linking this to post-war developments and situating them in the context of wider Scottish and British patterns.

On a longer view, there are real questions about the consistency with which two-party politics was entrenched in different nations, regions and localities. There is the temptation to regard English political developments as representative of the whole United Kingdom. John Brown remarks: 'sometimes it seems as if Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have been consigned to separate categories from British history, as somehow not fully component parts of a unitary state.'<sup>30</sup> The debate on the ideological trajectory and fortunes of the Liberal Democrats' predecessor-party, the Liberals, remains central to any serious analysis of twentieth century British politics, and Geoffrey Searle identified the Scottish dimension as 'crucial' to understanding the ideological volatility of the 1920s.<sup>31</sup> Despite the impact of the 1920s on all major parties, Scottish scholarship had until the 1990s often fixated on Labour, not least of all 'Red Clydeside', which is considered below. Yet, for the rise of Labour to be fully understood, much more research is needed into the inextricably related fortunes of the Liberals. Iain Hutchison recently emphasised the 'superabundance' of material on Labour politics in Scotland, compared with a corresponding paucity for the Liberals and Conservatives.<sup>32</sup> Path-breaking studies by William Walker, on Winston Churchill's 1922 rejection by voters in Dundee, and by Stuart Ball, on Asquith's 1918 defeat in East Fife, are useful 'snapshots' of Liberalism in crisis.<sup>33</sup> But the influence of

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<sup>30</sup> Brown, 'British political history', p. 197.

<sup>31</sup> G.R. Searle, *Country Before Party: Coalition and the idea of 'National Government' in Modern Britain, 1885-1987*, (London: Longman, 1995), p. 284. See also S.R. Ball, 'Asquith's decline and the general election of 1918', *SHR*, 61, (1982), p. 61, and I.G.C. Hutchison, 'Scottish Unionism between the two World Wars'; C.M.M. MacDonald (ed.), *Unionist Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1998), pp. 73-99 at p. 85.

<sup>32</sup> I.G.C. Hutchison, *Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 175-6.

<sup>33</sup> W.M. Walker, 'Dundee's disenchantment with Churchill: a comment upon the downfall of the Liberal party', *SHR* 49, (1970), pp. 85-108; Ball, 'Asquith's Decline', pp. 44-61; R.

these studies owes as much to their rarity as to their undoubted merits. Ample space remains in Scottish historiography for studies tracking the loyalties of selected constituencies through a series of elections, notwithstanding setbacks in the careers of political luminaries.<sup>34</sup> Recent Scottish work by MacDonald (for Paisley from 1885 to 1924) and Smyth (for Glasgow from 1896 to 1936) has demonstrated the rich comparative detail that in-depth local studies can provide.<sup>35</sup>

This thesis also takes cognisance of the more recent work of James R. Moore on politics in late-Victorian Manchester, which highlighted the persistence of Liberalism in suburban communities. The author found that the continuing influence of Liberalism in Manchester's middle-class southern suburbs into the twentieth century undermined assumptions that Liberalism was inevitably doomed following the arrival of class politics.<sup>36</sup> While this thesis supports the local focus of Moore's work, its conclusions are not applicable to Partick's and Govan's experience in the same period. The reasons for this difference hinge largely on the fact that, as will be seen, Partick and Govan were not predominantly middle class suburbs, despite the disproportionate power of their industrial elites. While the question of class will be picked up again shortly and illuminated by census statistics, it is important first to consider the other contribution that this research makes to the historiography of 'Red Clydeside' and Labour's subsequent success in the Glasgow area.

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Kelley, 'Asquith at Paisley: the content of British Liberalism at the end of its era', *The Journal of British Studies*, 4 (1964), pp. 133-59.

<sup>34</sup> Such a study has recently been done for Cornwall. See G. Tregidga, 'Turning of the Tide? A Case Study of the Liberal Party in Provincial Britain in the late 1930s', *History*, 92, (2007), pp. 347-366.

<sup>35</sup> MacDonald, *Radical Thread*, *passim*; Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, *passim*. Other important studies of local politics for the English context include: M. Savage, *The Dynamics of Working-Class Politics: The Labour Movement in Preston, 1880-1940*, (Cambridge: CUP), B. Lancaster, *Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism: Leicester working-class politics, 1860-1906*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987), N. Collins, *Politics and Elections in Nineteenth-Century Liverpool*, (Cambridge: Scholar Press, 1994), T. Griffiths, *The Lancashire Working Classes c. 1880-1930*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001). This is not an exhaustive list.

<sup>36</sup> J.R. Moore, 'Liberalism and the Politics of Suburbia: electoral dynamics in late nineteenth-century South Manchester', *Urban History*, 30, 2 (2003), CUP, pp. 225-50 at p. 20. See also the monograph, J.R. Moore, *The Transformation of Urban Liberalism: Party Politics and Urban Governance in Late Nineteenth-Century England*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

## ‘Red Clydeside’, the Burgh Legacies and the Rise of Labour

The precise nature, causes and long term consequences of ‘Red Clydeside’ have generated a wealth of historiography.<sup>37</sup> The debate between those historians who see in ‘Red Clydeside’ the failure of a ‘revolutionary conspiracy’ on behalf of a united Scottish proletariat, such as Marquand, and those, like Iain Maclean, who saw it only as a directionless and factionalised cadre of sectional interests, has itself become polarised.<sup>38</sup> R.J. Morris has convincingly argued that both such interpretations are fundamentally flawed, the former for being too simplistic and the latter for mistaking political hyperbole for historical ‘myth’.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, this thesis envisages ‘Red Clydeside’ as a loose and tacit coalition of sectional interests bound together by the socio-economic privations of war on the home front, and informed by convergent moral and political philosophies in the forms of Christianity and Socialism.<sup>40</sup>

This thesis is not directly concerned with the search for encapsulating quite what ‘Red Clydeside’ meant beyond the above working definition, but it makes a significant contribution to the debate by adding to the longer-term explanation of Labour’s success at Glasgow parliamentary elections in the 1920s, particularly 1922. This is because both former burghs were at the epicentre of key industrial and housing struggles, particularly the strike at Govan’s Fairfield shipyard in August 1915, and the rent strike of October to November the same year.<sup>41</sup> Govan’s election of Neil Maclean as its first Labour MP in

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<sup>37</sup> The most provocative of such works is almost certainly McLean’s *The Legend*, which is sympathetic to the arguments given in C. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes – Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1998, [1981]). Other notable contributions include I. Donnachie, C. Harvie and I.S. Wood, *Forward! Labour Politics in Scotland, 1888-1988* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), A. McKinlay and R.J. Morris (eds), *The ILP On Clydeside – 1893-1932: from Foundation to Disintegration*, (Manchester: MUP, 1991) and R. Duncan and A. McIvor (eds), *Militant Workers: Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde, 1900-1950* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1992). The latter volume contains T. Brotherstone’s excellent and appositely-titled essay: ‘Does Red Clydeside Really Matter Any More?’ (pp. 52-81).

<sup>38</sup> See for instance Marquand, *Progressive Dilemma*, pp. 40-45 and McLean, *The Legend*, p. 2 and *passim*.

<sup>39</sup> R.J. Morris, ‘Introduction’; McKinlay and R.J. Morris, *The ILP On Clydeside*, pp. 5-16.

<sup>40</sup> This definition is derived from an attempt at interpretive synthesis of the ‘traditional’ and ‘revisionist’ historical perspectives on ‘Red Clydeside’ – inspired by the Morris essay above cited - in M.G. Pugh, ‘Before the Watershed: Red Clydeside and the 1918 General Election’ (unpublished BA dissertation, Glasgow Caledonian University, 2000), pp. 11-16.

<sup>41</sup> Harvie, *No Gods...*, p. 17.

1918 precociously anticipated Labour's 1922 electoral watershed in Glasgow, when ten of the city's fifteen parliamentary divisions (again, including Govan, which re-elected Maclean) went Labour.<sup>42</sup> It would be unfair to assert that the existing historiography fails to note the role played by Govan's and Partick's inhabitants in these disputes, yet what seems to be missing, and what this thesis provides, is a longer view of the political culture of both communities prior to their formal union with the city.

After all, it would be distinctly odd if working-class residents in both former burghs became suddenly radicalised only during wartime. If readers of this thesis were unfamiliar with the notion of 'Red Clydeside', they would, having read the analysis of municipal politics in chapters four to six, scarcely be surprised that working-class scepticism about the promises of employers and the integrity of landlords, evident from at least the 1880s in both communities here studied, were *intensified* during, but not simply *triggered* by the privations of total war. As was discussed earlier in this introduction, chapter six of this thesis explains the role that working-class disaffection with the burghs, expressed especially at municipal elections, played in the demise of the burghs, situating this in the wider ideological context of the ascendancy of municipal socialism. Thus, this thesis can add a qualitative prologue to the discussion of wartime unrest and subsequent electoral change.

If readers would indulge a brief counterfactual speculation, had the burghs not been annexed in 1912, then the Fairfield dispute and the rent strikes likely would still have occurred and been seen as part of the wider Clydeside unrest, since annexation did not alter physical geography. As even 'Red Clydeside's most infamous skeptic, Iain McLean, recognises, the rent strikes were the most instrumental element of the struggles, to the extent that they resulted in legislative change in the forms of: the 1915 Rent Restriction Act, the 1919 Addison Act, which introduced council housing, and John Wheatley's 1924 Housing Act. This was remarkable not only because the rent strikes were overwhelmingly a female-led initiative, as perhaps epitomised in the person of Govan's councillor Mary Barbour, but also because their goals were achieved despite deep sectarian divisions among the Glasgow working class.<sup>43</sup> The same could be said of Neil Maclean's election to

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> J.J. Smyth, 'Rents, Peace, Votes: Working-Class Women and Political Activity in the First World War'; Breitenbach, E. & Gordon, E., *Out of Bounds: Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1992), [pp. 174-197], p. 174; McLean, *The Legend*, p. 2.

parliament in the Labour interest against one of the Coalition 'Coupon' candidates, a group which had been so successful elsewhere in Glasgow.

Here again, this thesis provides useful background historical context. As is seen in chapters five and seven, Govan socialists were able to build bridges across the sectarian divide, as evidenced in the careers of councillors Matthew Coyle and James S. O'Donnell, who were elected as Catholic Socialists six years before John Wheatley became the first such creature in Glasgow's City Chambers. This is contrasted with the experience in Partick, where, as seen in chapters five, seven and eight, the Orange Order played an unusually assertive, and compared to Govan, effective, political role in support of anti-Labour candidates, whether these were Unionists or Liberals. Thus the study shows that analysis of the 'Glasgow' experience of the rise of Labour and the decline of Liberalism, as well as the role of sectarianism in elections, can, and ought to be, based on a more differentiating approach than purely 'regional', let alone 'national' research allows. That is to say that 'regional' and 'national' accounts of political change need to be complemented with more local studies, not to advocate that the former can substitute for the latter.

It is also important to explain the approach taken in this thesis to the First World War. From chapters five to eight, the focus is overwhelmingly upon political discourse in electoral contests, be these municipal or parliamentary. It has simply not been possible to enter into a detailed discussion of the impact of the war on political life in Govan and Partick, given this focus and the sources and methods employed. This omission should not be taken to imply that somehow the war did not matter in explaining the decline of the Liberals and the rise of Labour, or that in Iain McLean's account, Labour's electoral success in the 1920s was 'a different play' from the 'war time drama'.<sup>44</sup> As is hopefully clear from the approach taken to the wartime unrest of 'Red Clydeside' above, the analysis of electoral politics in the former burghs from 1918-24 is predicated on the assumption that the war had major implications for this, as well as wider Scottish and British politics. The extent to which the war is mentioned only in passing in chapter eight is more a reflection of the political debates considered at elections covered therein, than of myopia on the part of this author.

Closely connected to the role of the war in precipitating electoral change is the 'Franchise factor' and the extent to which this militated against Labour before and after

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<sup>44</sup> McLean, *The Legend*, p.2.

1918.<sup>45</sup> This thesis makes a number of points about the operation of the municipal franchise (from the 1850s) and parliamentary franchise (from 1885 until 1918 and after) as experienced in Govan and Partick. While this particular aspect of the thesis does not add much that is ‘new’ to the debate here, it does reinforce the impression that unskilled working class males were systematically excluded from electoral politics before the war, as is seen in chapters seven and eight. In addition, chapters four and five demonstrate the unabashed attempts of the burgh leaders, especially Govan’s, to concentrate working-class electors within carefully-drawn ward boundaries in order to circumscribe their voice in the Burgh Halls. The analysis shows that this was related, as with so many of the burghs’ policies, to the contradictions of Victorian Liberalism as these were played-out in the theatre of local self-government. Chapters five, six and seven also pay frequent testimony to the resentment that many radical Liberal *and* Labour activists felt towards such inconsistencies, again foreshadowing many of the difficulties the Liberals faced in soliciting working-class support in the post-war period. Having considered the key historiographical contributions offered by this work, discussion now turns to the key concepts underpinning its analysis.

### **Theoretical Premises and Approaches**

This thesis employs a variety of theoretically ‘loaded’ concepts, despite its largely qualitative, empirical approach. The concepts of ‘community’, ‘class’ and ‘paternalism’ recur throughout, so it is necessary to explain their contribution to the analysis.

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<sup>45</sup> A far-from-exhaustive flavour of the heated and protracted historiographical debate on this issue can be found in: N. Blewett, ‘The Franchise in the United Kingdom 1885-1918’, *Past and Present* [32] 1965, pp. 27-56; H.C.G. Matthew, R.I. McKibbin and J.A. Kay, ‘The Franchise Factor and the Rise of the Labour Party’, *English Historical Review* [91: 361], 1976, pp. 723-752 and M. Childs, ‘Labour Grows Up: The Electoral System, Political Generations and British Politics 1890-1929’, *Twentieth-Century British History*, [6:2], 1995, pp. 123-44. A more recent internationally-comparative perspective on franchise reform as ‘strategic decisions by the political elite’ to ‘prevent widespread social unrest and revolution’ is found in D. Acemoglu and J.A. Robinson, ‘Why did the West Extend the Franchise? Democracy, Inequality and Growth in Historical Perspective’, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, [115: 4], 2000, pp. 1167-1199 (quote from abstract at p. 1167).

## ‘Community’ and ‘local identity’

Attempts to encapsulate and refine the essence of ‘community’ have long been something of an intellectual pastime for social and political theorists.<sup>46</sup> This thesis does not seek to add to the wealth of such definitions, but it does draw upon various theoretical concepts in order to make sense of local identity in Govan and Partick, as this is refracted through the surviving historical sources and political and antiquarian rhetoric. The analysis in the following certainly finds resonance with Gerard Delanty’s observation that ‘the modern discourse of community has been dominated by a theme of loss’.<sup>47</sup> Even as the burghs fought, not quite literally, to maintain their autonomy from the 1860s until 1912, they looked back to an idealised antique past that swiftly became conflated with their much more recent recognition as municipalities by the central state. Thus, as is seen especially in chapters four, five and six, it was frequently implied that the end of the burghs might somehow entail the oblivion of the much older communities they claimed to embody.

Anthony Cohen offered a number of insights in response to the question “Why do communities respond assertively to encroachment upon their boundaries?”<sup>48</sup> The most pertinent of these to this thesis was his notion that the perception of an external ‘threat’ is always strongest when the community’s sense of self is uncertain. Such a collective sense of self or ‘way of life’, writes Cohen:

is always tenuous when the physical and structural boundaries which previously divided the community from the rest of the world are increasingly blurred. [The community] can therefore easily be depicted as under threat: it is a ready means of mobilizing collectivity. Thus, one often finds in such communities the prospect of change being regarded ominously, as if change inevitably means loss.<sup>49</sup>

Such notions of ‘loss’, ‘mobilisation of collectivity’ and ‘the threat of change being regarded ominously’ are most obviously relevant to the discourse surrounding burgh autonomy versus ‘annexation’ or ‘amalgamation’; terms which this thesis uses interchangeably but with caveats where their usage departs from the language of original

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<sup>46</sup> A useful summary of the development of the concept can be found in V. Azarya, ‘Community’, in A. Kuper and J. Kuper (eds), *The Social Science Encyclopaedia* (London: Routledge, 1985), pp. 135-7. See also MacDonald, *Radical Thread*, pp. 36-9.

<sup>47</sup> G. Delanty, *Community*, (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 15. Delanty elaborates this idea over pp. 15-17.

<sup>48</sup> A.P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, (London: Routledge, 1998 [1985]), p. 109.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

sources.<sup>50</sup> Yet Cohen's ideas are also instructive of the response of Liberal activists to their party's decline after the burghs were annexed. The terms 'burgh', 'town' and 'community' are also used interchangeably in this chapter and throughout the thesis. Although this is mainly for the sake of improving readability, it also reflects the study's working hypothesis that Partick and Govan were as much organic communities as legal and administrative entities.

Throughout the thesis, but especially in chapters four, five and six, Govan and Partick, among the other burghs and neighbourhoods surrounding Glasgow, are often also referred to as 'suburbs'. This reflects the language of much of the source material, including documents produced by the city and the burghs during the annexation battles. Nevertheless, it is not hair-splitting to acknowledge that there are conceptual albeit not practical difficulties inherent in applying the term to communities so populous and arguably self-sufficient as pre-1912 Govan and Partick, irrespective of their proximity to Glasgow. As is seen in chapter six, there was the tendency of the city fathers to see the 'suburbs' as parasites on their body politic, whilst Govan and Partick pointed to their historically separate identities, depicting Glasgow as an oppressive, territorially-insatiable local leviathan. This is not the place to embark on a full-scale effort to trace the origins, etymology and varieties of suburbia. Instead, the problematic nature of the term as applied to these communities is acknowledged, as is Roger Silverstone's assertion that the physical and metaphorical marginality of suburbs should not be overlooked when writing their histories. Govan's and Partick's experience in the following chapters seems in many ways to reflect Silverstone's characterisation of suburbs as 'always on the edge, always defined by what the city and the country [were] not'.<sup>51</sup> Of course, and as is seen throughout the thesis, Govan's and Partick's characterisation as 'other' than the city was invariably a matter of self-definition more than external labelling. How, then, was this sense of otherness given politico-legal legitimacy?

If the longstanding village settlements from which the burghs took their names constituted what Ferdinand Tönnies would have called the *Gemeinschaft*, loosely translating as the cosy, associational aspect of community identity, there is a real sense in which the adoption of the General Police legislation, discussed in detail in chapter two,

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<sup>50</sup> There is also an overarching discussion of such terminology in chapter six.

<sup>51</sup> R. Silverstone, 'Introduction', R. (ed) *Visions of Suburbia*, (London: Routledge, 1997) p. 5.

represented both towns' respective *Gesellschaft*, or legal-rational constitution.<sup>52</sup> Both forms of association were in some ways mutually reinforcing, as Tonnies had argued on the grander scale of nations and nationalism. A persistent theme of this thesis is the continued efforts of leaders in both burghs to foster a sense of continuity between the police burghs formed in the mid-nineteenth-century and their ancient village antecedents. This study is, additionally, premised on the basis that Govan and Partick, which could trace their posterity as human settlements to at least the Viking age, were communities before, during, and after their respective police burgh incarnations.

As is demonstrated throughout this study, both former burghs were both real and 'imagined' communities.<sup>53</sup> That is to say that before, during and after the period covered in this study, there was among Govanites and Partickonians a sense of shared local identity that went beyond the literal boundaries of the territory they physically occupied on the banks of the River Clyde. In view of this, Benedict Anderson's notion of 'print communities' in the development of modern nation-states, loosely adapted for the local state, has also proved instructive for understanding the role played by newspapers in reinforcing a sense of separate municipal identity.<sup>54</sup> When face-to-face social interaction with more than a handful of fellow Govanites and Partickonians was impossible, local newspapers could play a critical role in creating, re-creating and mediating a sense of community. Notwithstanding wider criticisms of the 'print community' concept as an explanation of nationalism, deriving from the historical existence of recognisable nation states centuries before the invention of the printing press, it is clear from this research that local newspapers played a major role in the consolidation of Govan and Partick's sense of mutual distinctiveness, even 'otherness' – from Glasgow. This is especially demonstrated in chapters four, five and six. Before summarising the evolutionary development of local identity traced through this thesis, it is useful briefly to consider some of their more objectively quantifiable demographic characteristics.

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<sup>52</sup> This is a necessarily simplified use of the ideas discussed in F. Tonnies [English translation edited by J. Harris, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft [Community and Civil Society]*, (Cambridge University Press, 2001 [1887]), pp. 15-52. For an interpretive summary see also Z. Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World*, (London: Polity, 2001), pp. 9-15.

<sup>53</sup> For a fuller discussion of the early history of both places, see Dalglish and Driscoll *et al.*, *Historic Govan*, pp. 28-50. For an elaboration of Benedict Anderson's seminal thesis, see *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1999 [1983]).

<sup>54</sup> See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, especially pp. 37-46.

As is shown in table 1.2, both burghs' population growth can fairly be characterised as exponential between 1851 and 1881.<sup>55</sup> Partick had just over 3,000 inhabitants on the eve of its petition for burgh status, and by the next census in 1861, this had more than doubled to over 8,000. In 1881 the rate of proportionate increase had slowed slightly so that the burgh had over 27,000 inhabitants. Govan's growth throughout the same period was even more startling: the soon-to-become burgh had just under 8,000 inhabitants in 1861, more-than-doubling to 19,000 in 1871, then increasing by a rate of 150 per cent to nearly 50,000 in 1881. From 1891 until the eve of annexation in 1911, the burghs continued to grow substantially in population, albeit at a lesser pace than before. Thus the years 1891, 1901 and 1911 saw Govan with roughly 61,000, 82,000 and 90,000 inhabitants, respectively, whilst Partick in the same years boasted 37,000, 54,000 and 67,000. Whilst Partick was the elder of the sibling burghs, Govan was clearly by far the most populous of the two. They were by far the most populated of the police burghs surrounding Glasgow, almost certainly explaining the deference shown to them by other burghs during the anti-annexation campaigns that they coordinated from 1868 onwards.

Govan and Partick may have aspired to civic nationhood, but from whence did their actual inhabitants derive? Table 1.6 details the birthplaces of burgh residents at censuses from 1881 to 1911 inclusive.<sup>56</sup> Throughout these four decades, the proportion of residents in both burghs born within the county of Lanark, in which both communities were located, did not fall below 53 or rise above 63 per cent. It was notable that in 1881 and 1891, respectively only 32 and 37 per cent of Govan residents had been born in Scotland, compared to 78 and 86 per cent for Partick at the same censuses. Govan's 'Scottish born' figures contrasted especially with Glasgow's, which for 1881 was 83 per cent and for 1891 85 per cent.<sup>57</sup> Both burghs had significant levels of Irish-born inhabitants, peaking at 18 per cent for Partick and 14 for Govan in 1881, before falling to 14 and 9 per cent respectively in 1891, 12 per cent in each in 1901 and around 8 in each in 1911<sup>58</sup>. The comparable figures for Glasgow were 13 per cent in 1881, 11 per cent in 1891, 9 per cent

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<sup>55</sup> See pp. 35-40 for all tables discussed in this chapter. All census statistics are taken from enumerators reports reproduced at Online Historical Population Reports, <<http://www.histpop.org>> (accessed at various dates until 12 May 2011).

<sup>56</sup> Figures are approximated in the text but not in the tables.

<sup>57</sup> C.W.J. Withers, 'The demographic history of the city'; Fraser and Maver (eds), *Glasgow, Volume II* (Manchester: MUP, 1996), p. 149.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

in 1901 and 7 per cent in 1911; both burghs, but especially Partick, attracted higher relative concentrations of Irish migrants than the city. The implications of such a significant minority for local politics are, not surprisingly in this context, a recurrent theme of the thesis. Less significant but still noteworthy were the number of local speakers of what the census-takers presumed to be Scots–Gaelic. (Given the high levels of Irish migration to the burghs, it cannot be ruled out that some of these were in fact speakers of *Irish* Gaelic.) While there were never more than twenty individuals speaking only Gaelic in this period, there were significant numbers of bilingual speakers of English and Gaelic, to the extent that in 1881 over 400 Partickonians and almost 1,500 Govanites spoke Gaelic. 1891 saw Partick with 1,200 Gaelic speakers to Govan’s 3,000, whilst by 1901, Govan had almost 3,500 Gaels to Partick’s 1,500.<sup>59</sup> In this context, the doomed 1885 Partick parliamentary campaign of radical Liberal Highlander John Murdoch, detailed in chapter seven, is more readily explicable. The census statistics are picked up again in the subsequent discussion of social class, but what can this thesis tell us about the more qualitative experience and evolution of local identity in the burghs?

As is persistently demonstrated throughout this study, such community identity was never a static phenomenon, and to attempt to summarise or categorise it would be a futile exercise in false-essentialism. However, it is worth briefly reflecting here on the most significant qualitative ways in which local identity in the burghs evolved from the time both communities adopted self-government to their amalgamation with the city. In chapter two, attention is paid to the far from harmonious interactions between the ‘original’ villagers of Govan and Partick and middle-class ‘incomers’ in the 1840s and 1850s. The campaigns to adopt the General Police Acts in both communities as they faced the problems associated with industrialisation and demographic growth met with at least a degree of resistance from established residents, particularly in Govan, where there was an 11-year delay in the community’s attainment of burgh status between 1853 and 1864.

Somewhat paradoxically, the middle-class advocates of local self-government were themselves denounced by more proletarian locals as impertinent meddlers in community affairs. Conversely, the leading lights of the movements to secure burgh-status in each community were often condescending to the villagers, who they typically represented as

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<sup>59</sup> In Withers’ relatively recent study, the concentration of Gaelic speakers to the west of the city, especially the north-west and including Govan and Partick, is strongly emphasised. See C.W.J. Withers, *Urban Highlanders: Highland-Lowland Migration and Urban Gaelic Culture, 1700-1900*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 1998), *passim* and p. 151, respectively.

delinquent, drunken and dirty. Significantly, the successful advocates of Partick's securing burgh-status were able to balance their recriminations against apathetic neighbours with the shadowy figure of a drunken, half-Irish, shillelagh-waving hostage-taker who allegedly brought to the village to a standstill in the mid-1840s. Perhaps this projection of the problems that local autonomy was intended to solve onto a real or imagined bogeyman made it easier to represent these problems as a notionally external threat rather than a source of internal dissension.

In the first decades of their development as fledgling municipalities, Govan and Partick attempted to combine their pioneering efforts at tackling problems of public health and public order with an attempt to foster a sense of continuity and tradition, not least by precociously, if not pretentiously, adopting the trappings of more traditional burghs, such as styling their leaders as 'Provosts' rather than chief magistrates in the correct legal formulation, acquiring civic coats-of-arms, and by building town halls. This is discussed in chapter two. By the late-1860s, the now burghs were forced into defensive politico-legal strategies in the face of a concerted effort by Glasgow's civic leaders and other city elites to subsume their territory within its parliamentary and, by inevitable implication, municipal bounds.

Whether amalgamation with the city was really the threat that the burgh leaders perceived it to be is clearly debatable. But it is undeniable that Govan's and Partick's burgh elites took great pains to consolidate their legitimacy by claiming historical continuity with the ancient antecedents of their burgeoning industrial communities. The almost contemporaneous and objectively more literal threat posed by the 1868-9 and 1875 Fenian panics provided the burghs with an opportunity to assert their loyal, aggressively masculine and (in their view) efficient policing capacity in contrast to what they perceived and presented as an effeminate and feeble city. All this is discussed in chapter four where, again, it is also highlighted just how complex and convoluted the burghs' self-assertions of identity could be, especially where Irish migrants to the burghs were concerned.

As municipal politics became increasingly partisan from the 1880s, and marked by open divisions among councillors as to whether community identity necessarily required municipal independence rather than union with the city, various initiatives were promoted by the burgh leaders and like-minded philanthropists to promote community cohesion, and this is discussed at some length in chapter five. In the wider discussion of the case for and against civic autonomy *versus* amalgamation with Glasgow, provided in chapter six, a central concern is the extent to which neighbourhoods surrounding the city, especially

Govan and Partick, formed part of a ‘community of interest’ with the city, necessitating larger-scale centralised administration. These nuances of local identity are discussed with reference to Eric Hobsbawm’s concept of ‘invented tradition’ and Anderson’s contrasting formulation of ‘simultaneity’, in order to appraise the extent to which the burgh leaders’ frequent recourse to this was calculated, genuine or a mixture of both.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, but still importantly, local identity politics was not restricted to the town halls, but was expressed in sometimes, though not always, subtler ways at parliamentary elections for the burgh seats, as is a recurrent theme of chapter seven. There, a key concern is the extent to which the political identity of pre-1914 Govan and Partick was tied up with Liberalism, even radicalism. Even after the abolition of the burghs and the interruption of total war, the rhetoric of community identity played a key, if not always decisive, role in electoral contests, as is detailed in chapter eight. Of course, community identity often became entangled with social class, and it is important also to consider the role that this plays in the study.

### ‘Class’

Throughout this thesis, there are frequent references to the social class of protagonists. The approach adopted throughout has been to use class-related terms as they arise in the source material, whether explicitly or implicitly. Akin to the approach taken to community, the thesis pragmatically takes as given the existence of social class as a real and important factor in explaining Govan and Partick’s political development, not to mention politics more generally. However, rather than getting entangled in conceptual discussions bordering on the theological, class terminology is analysed as it arises in the sources in what is hopefully a nuanced and reflexive manner. To acknowledge the explanatory importance of class in political change is not to privilege it over other factors or to attribute to it uniformly deterministic qualities, relegating real historical personalities to the role of ciphers. In their dramatically-titled and provocative *The Death of Class*, sociologists Pakulski and Waters have written of ‘the Heisenbergian character of class, its

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<sup>60</sup> See E. Hobsbawm, ‘Introduction: Inventing Traditions’; E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992 edition), pp. 1-14 at p. 1 and Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 24-7.

tendency to disappear when one tries to observe it'.<sup>61</sup> Yet class remains a recognisable factor in political life, both in terms of levels of political participation and of voting behaviour, as recent international research has illustrated.<sup>62</sup>

Class was by no means invisible in the sources examined in research for this study, which provides extensive qualitative evidence of social class as a frequent theme of political rhetoric in Govan and Partick. Class terminology was usually an explicit, sometimes tacit, factor in mid-nineteenth century debates about the creation of the burghs, during the formative years of their municipal administration, in the long-running annexation debates between the burghs and the city and within the burghs themselves, and certainly in parliamentary elections. But there was also quantitative evidence, albeit to an extent indirect, of social stratification, even polarisation, within the burghs throughout the timescale covered here. As Smyth notes, housing conditions in an area can provide a good, if imperfect, indicator of class composition and, to a degree, predict its political loyalties.<sup>63</sup> Table 1.3 provides a comparison of percentage proportions of houses of small and large sizes in both burghs from 1871 until 1911.

Specifically, the percentage of inhabitants dwelling in properties of one and two rooms were compared with properties of seven rooms or more, on the premise that working-class inhabitants were more likely to live in over-crowded circumstances than were affluent members of the middle class. Of course, it cannot be taken as read that all one- and two- room dwellings were multiple-occupancies, but it is reasonable to surmise that they were more likely to be in such populous communities as Govan and Partick in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. From these figures, Partick emerges as significantly more middle-class than Govan, given that from 1881 until 1901, the former burgh tended to have a third more dwellings of seven rooms and upwards. Significantly for the decades after annexation, and especially for the intensification of class politics during and after the 1914-18 war, Partick began to 'pull away' from Govan on this indicator of affluence, such that in 1911 the former burgh had almost six times as many large homes as the latter. At the other end of the social scale, it is difficult to draw clear distinctions between the burghs in terms of single-room dwellings across the same period,

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<sup>61</sup> J. Pakulski and M. Waters, *The Death of Class*, (London: Sage, 1996), p. 8. Heisenberg (1901-76) was a German pioneer of Quantum Physics.

<sup>62</sup> M. Cainzos and C. Voces, 'Class Inequalities in Political Participation and the "Death of Class" Debate', *International Sociology*, May 2010 [26:3], pp. 338-418.

<sup>63</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, pp. 30-1.

but the figures for two-room dwellings suggest a different story. Between 1881 and 1911, these figures for Govan remained relatively stable at between 53 and 60 per cent. Meantime those for Partick lagged behind Govan by an average of thirteen percentage points for every year from 1891. The gulf was much wider for 1881, when 22 per cent of Partick dwellings had two rooms compared with almost 54 in Govan. This seems to bear out the qualitative accounts, discussed in chapters two and three, of Govan's industrial transformation taking place at whirlwind pace compared to Partick and elsewhere.

Another loose quantitative indicator of social class can be found in census figures for the occupied population working in industry between 1881 and 1911, as is shown in table 1.4. Here, for each census-year, it can be seen that the burghs were not too far apart in terms of the proportion of their workforce involved in urban industrial pursuits. Nevertheless, it was clear by 1901 and even more so in 1911, that Govan was the most intensely-industrial and - in literal Marxian terms, proletarian - of the two burghs. In 1901, 45 per cent of Govan's workforce was engaged in industry compared to 38 for Partick. In 1911, the figures for which excluded the unemployed, explaining the apparent doubling of both burghs' industrially-occupied populations; 86 per cent of Govan workers were engaged in industry against just-under 75 of Partick's.

Again, Govan's evidently more working-class profile goes at least some way towards its significantly more Labour-friendly electorate from the turn of the century and especially from 1918. It is also evident from the figures for 1911 that Govan's women were a third more likely to work in industrial occupations than their Partick counterparts, again reinforcing the burgh's proletarian demography. Turning to table 1.5, which shows the level of involvement in shipbuilding among the burghs' population engaged in industry, it is clear that the popular perception of late-nineteenth into twentieth century Govan and Partick as 'shipbuilding communities' was justified. At each census from 1881 to 1911, shipbuilding always accounted for between a fifth and a quarter of the population involved in industry. Considering that the various census categories given for those working in 'ships and boats' did not include allied occupations such as boiler-making, these figures almost certainly under-estimate the true extent of the local economies' reliance on this industry. The figures in this table also highlight that shipbuilding, at least as it is narrowly defined for the purposes of this table, lived up to its popular image as an overwhelmingly masculine occupation.

The issue of class raises the related issue of the extent to which the social cleavages alluded to in the figures discussed above, and which recur in the rhetoric of class conflict

as it recurs in various forms throughout the thesis, could be glossed over by the local elites, and if so, how? This is to raise the spectre of ‘paternalism’. What role does this concept play in the analysis to follow?

### ‘Paternalism’

Paternalism, to use John Foster’s formulation, derived from attempts by industrialists, since the early phases of the industrial revolution, ‘to bind the... Labour force to the ... employer class’.<sup>64</sup> Given its focus on burgh and parliamentary politics, rather than local corporate governance, this thesis does not attempt to explore paternalism in terms of company records and so forth, but rather to highlight its significance as a background factor in the creation of the burghs and in the development of local political culture throughout their civic autonomy. The definition of paternalism employed in this study requires an adaptation of the insights of selected historical case-studies, as is now explained.

A useful starting-point in the quest for such a definition was G.M. Norris’s ‘essential characteristics of paternalistic capitalism’, summarised as:

- 1) The existence of a personally identifiable ownership class with a shared background and ideology.
- 2) The occupation of political power by members of the same class.
- 3) Involvement by this class in alleviating the deprivations suffered by the lower orders as a result of the capitalist system.
- 4) The underpinning of this social hierarchy by an ideology emphasising local ties.<sup>65</sup>

Until at least the late-1880s when the Home Rule split and Labour’s limited in-roads into both burghs’ ward committees and (to a slower extent) burgh halls began to challenge the dominance of Liberal employers and their allies, Govan and Partick’s politics can be seen to meet Norris’s criteria for paternalism, as is shortly explained. There was also a broad, if inexact, analogy with the Govan and Partick experience pre-1912 and Morris and Smyth’s study of Prinlaws, an industrial suburb of the burgh of Leslie in Fife. There the “owners” ensured that Prinlaws remained a little “kingdom”, separated in the minds of its inhabitants and in its local government from the local burgh by the pillars which stood on its boundary

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<sup>64</sup> J. Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), p. 33.

<sup>65</sup> G.M. Norris, ‘Industrial Paternalist Capitalism and Local Labour Markets’; *Sociology* (1978) 12:3 pp. 469-489 at p. 474.

with Leslie'.<sup>66</sup> Of course, Govan and Partick had legal boundaries with the city, so no pillars were required, except perhaps in the metaphorical sense. Oddly enough, it is from a study of paternalism in a relatively insular and rural, rather than populous, more-fluid, urban-industrial context, that the approach followed in this study finds its clearest parallels.

Howard Newby *et al*'s work on paternalistic class control in rural England averred that rural employers recognised that if their workers came to identify with, rather than resent, the socio-economic system that subordinated them, there was likely to result a degree of social stability that would facilitate their own economic interests in the long run.<sup>67</sup> These authors' work draws on and adapts the late Lewis Coser's notion of 'greedy institutions' to the government of English villages.<sup>68</sup> It is useful to briefly revisit what Coser thought 'greedy institutions' tried to do.

Organized groups are always faced with the problem of how best to harness human energies to their purposes. They must concern themselves with mechanisms which insure that people will be sufficiently motivated to be loyal even in the face of competing appeals from other sources within the wider social structure.<sup>69</sup>

While Coser, and in turn Newby and his colleagues, were writing about relatively 'self-contained' and 'total' social situations with populations who were likely nodding acquaintances, as distinct from the populous and busy burghs bordering on a growing city considered in this study, this need not preclude the qualified use of the notion in the chapters that follow. In the English rural study, it was argued that paternalism operated, and was mediated, in large part through local (village) government. Paternalism took the form of what Newby himself termed 'tension management' in the exercise of traditional authority to ameliorate class conflict whilst reinforcing a sense of dependence, if not loyalty from the lower orders toward their social superiors.<sup>70</sup> It was also observed that the legitimacy of the villages as 'greedy institutions' began to break down in the face of local

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<sup>66</sup> B. Morris and J. Smyth, 'Paternalism as an Employer Strategy, 1800-1960'; J. Rubery and F. Wilkinson eds., *Employer Strategy and the Labour Market*, (Oxford: OUP, 1994), pp. 195-225 at p. 197.

<sup>67</sup> H. Newby, C. Bell, D. Rose and P. Saunders, *Property, Paternalism and Power: Class and Control in Rural England*, (London: Hutchinson, 1978), pp. 26-7.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

<sup>69</sup> L.A. Coser, *Greedy Institutions: Patterns of Undivided Commitment*, (New York, New York: Free Press, 1974), p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> Newby *et al*, *Property, Paternalism and Power*, pp. 29-31.

government reorganisation.<sup>71</sup> Notwithstanding the differences of particularity, size and scale, there are clear parallels with Govan's and Partick's municipal development from the mid-nineteenth century until their annexation.

In a real sense, and notwithstanding the initiatives of particular local enterprises which are not the focus of this study, burgh status afforded local industrial elites a sort of *de facto* 'public liability' version of paternalism which could, depending on their inclination, either underwrite or substitute for their own firms' paternalistic endeavours and, better still, at public expense. How did this work? At an early stage in their development as burghs, both communities adopted the trappings of more traditional civic entities, especially civic coats of arms with mottoes promoting the importance of work, thereby seeking explicitly to identify the interests of the workers who were in Partick allegedly 'enriched' by work, and in Govan, much more spookily, 'nothing' without work.<sup>72</sup>

As is seen throughout the municipal chapters, the burghs were notorious for their regressive local taxation, which meant that the local workers effectively paid for the municipal services from which their employers benefitted both as individuals and as representatives of their businesses. The employers' interests further benefitted from the security afforded by local policing, among other services. The burgh leaders were keen to use municipal funds for poor and unemployment relief in a fashion that reinforced inhabitants' reliance on their socio-economic superiors and discouraged the lower orders from, pardon the pun, rocking the municipal boat. Note for instance the use of Partick's burgh funds, augmented by public subscription, to pay two shillings each to the local poor on the occasion of Prince Albert in 1863, discussed in chapter three. Also note, much more tellingly, shipbuilder William Pearce's use of his seat on Govan burgh board in 1878 to secure the principle that unemployment relief be disbursed to the 'deserving poor only'; see chapter seven. While notions of the 'deserving poor' were hardly unique in the nineteenth-century, it is surely significant that the major local employer used his municipal office to ensure trade unionists and their families were firmly classed as 'undeserving'.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, p. 31.

<sup>72</sup> R.M. Paul, *Partick Anecdotes*, (Glasgow: Retroprint, 1998), p.7; Brochie, *History of Govan, frontispiece*. The mottos were rendered in Latin as '*Industria Ditat*' and '*Nihil Sin Labore*' respectively.

In addition, the encouragement and provision of public parks, celebratory parades, libraries, pipe bands and the like, detailed in chapter seven, again allowed local employers and their allies in the burgh halls to have their cake and eat it (often literally given their predilection for ‘cake and wine’ receptions). These gifts from the burgh purse or solicited philanthropy could be used to reinforce the industrial ethos of the burghs. In sum, while this thesis does not present extensive evidence of paternalistic practices in industry, it frequently shows that the burgh leaders aspired to secure for their communities the sense of legitimacy rooted in tradition that typified ‘greedy institutions’, even if their success in so doing was circumscribed by internal opposition, a dynamic local population and proximity to a city with an increasingly countervailing ethos in the shape of ‘municipal socialism’.<sup>73</sup> Having elaborated the theoretical bases from which the thesis proceeds, it now remains to consider its key sources of evidence and chapter outline.

## Sources

For the early municipal chapters, extensive notes were taken from the minute books, written in manuscript by the Town Clerks of the burghs of Partick and Govan, now held at the Glasgow City Archives in the city’s Mitchell Library. These copious folio volumes offered extremely detailed information on the legal and administrative aspects of burgh life, but, in general terms, shed little light on the political, ideological and economic motivations of the municipal representatives. Once the year 1869 was reached, it became clear that newspaper reporters from Glasgow publications were permitted to attend burgh meetings, and this exhaustively detailed approach was, thankfully, no longer necessary. From 1870 onwards, a theoretical sampling strategy was applied, whereby all remaining volumes down to 1912 were perused for records which ‘stood out’ from the regular material: for instance the 1875 reports of the Partick riots, or the 1876 report by Govan’s Parliamentary Bills Committee detailing what it perceived as Glasgow’s aggressive policy pursuing ‘annexation’.<sup>74</sup> Otherwise, notes were only taken from the meetings immediately before and after the annual elections. Throughout the burghs’ years of independence,

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<sup>73</sup> A cogent analysis of the emergence of the term, its policy implications and evolving attitudes in response to it, is contained in W.H. Fraser, ‘Municipal Socialism and Social Policy’; R.J. Morris and R. Rodger eds., *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914*, (London: Longman, 1993), pp. 258-80. The relevance of these ideas to the annexation debates are considered in chapter six of this thesis.

<sup>74</sup> For a discussion of the principles of theoretical sampling, see B.G. Glaser and A.L. Strauss, ‘Theoretical Sampling’; N.K. Denzin, *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2006 [1970]), pp. 105-114.

however, these records revealed frustratingly little about the politics and personalities at stake in such elections.

Fortunately, local newspapers, which became erratically available in the mid-1870s and consistently from the 1880s onwards, offered a much more vivid and colourful picture of local political personalities and issues from then on. A vital source for much of the following analysis was the *Govan Press* (running from 1880-1985, with microfilm extant 1885-1985). This represents the most consistently available publication dealing with either Govan or Partick for the period covered in this thesis.<sup>75</sup> Given the importance of this source, it is worth taking cognisance of some key contextual information on the paper, and its shorter-lived sister publication, the *Partick and Maryhill Press* (1881-1917, microfilm extant 1892-1917). The most reliable evidence points to the launch date 16 October 1880, although there is some suggestion of 1878<sup>76</sup>. The *Govan and Partick Press* was the initiative of John Cossar (1841-1890), a master printer born at Elsridgehill near Biggar. Aged 29, he had founded the *Carlisle Chronicle and Strathclyde Advertiser* before moving to Govan. There, his first foray into the local newspaper market was the *Govan Chronicle* (1876-8), co-founded with a Mr Fotheringham, who dropped out of the firm in 1878, shortly before the paper foundered. From July 1876 his firm also printed the *Partick Observer*, but by the end of the same year insufficient sales saw it fold.

Despite the failure of these early ventures, Cossar remained determined that Govan, with its mushrooming population, needed a local newspaper distinct from those serving Glasgow. He invested time in many of the community's institutions, from its Masonic Lodges to the Govan Musical Association. The *Govan and Partick Press* was originally priced at a halfpenny. At first printed on four pages, it also covered the neighbouring burgh of Kinning Park. Six months later, a separate *Partick and Maryhill Press* (1881-1917) was issued and the original newspaper was re-styled *The Govan Press*, covering Govan and Kinning Park only. From September 1885 the price increased to one penny and the content filled eight pages. When Cossar died, the running of his printing company was taken over by his widow, Jane Cossar. She ran the growing firm successfully into the 1920s, only gradually ceding control to her sons Andrew and Tom.

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<sup>75</sup> North, John S., ed., *The Waterloo Directory of Scottish Newspapers and Periodicals, 1900-1900*, 2 vols (Waterloo: North Waterloo Academic Press, 1989) volume 1, pp. 697-8; Murphy, 'The Govan Press', pp. 52-64.

<sup>76</sup> *The Govan Press* <http://www.govanpress.co.uk> accessed 11/3/10.

The Victorian and Edwardian *Govan Press* and its sister weekly publications were intended to be respectable ‘family newspapers’. Their editorial policy firmly, if not stridently, promoted the suburban burghs’ municipal independence from Glasgow. Proceedings in the burgh’s police courts filled many a column-inch, but this was not the paper’s sole preoccupation. Coverage of Govan’s municipal politics and administration was often constructively critical, despite the paper’s fundamental faith in local self-government. Local sporting events, especially football, were covered, but attention was also given to church affairs, poetry and literary extracts, in addition to reviews of concerts, recitals and plays. The *Govan Press* long outlived the burgh it served. In 2006, against the backdrop of attempts at community ‘regeneration’, the title was revived for a new online venture which, although not strictly a continuation of the nineteenth-century publications, proclaimed itself established 1878.<sup>77</sup>

Whilst the *Govan Press* and its sister publications dominated coverage of local affairs from the 1880s onwards, it should be noted that there were other, less successful local newspapers set up in both communities.<sup>78</sup> Wherever possible, these have also been accessed to gain an alternative perspective on local affairs. These publications were the one surviving and inaugural issue of the *Partick Illustrated Journal* (1854-5), the *Partick Advertiser* (1875-6), and the *Partick Star* (1892-1901). The ILP-run *Partick Gazette* (1912-1923, extant 1913-1920) was also consulted during the research for chapter eight. Of course, Glasgow’s own newspapers often reported the affairs of Govan and Partick, especially after 1869, when the question of annexation began to be contested. Accordingly, various Glasgow publications were consulted during the research for this thesis, including the *Glasgow Herald*, and the *North British Daily Mail*.

## Conclusion

Overall, this study aims to disentangle Govan’s and Partick’s municipal and parliamentary politics from the Glasgow scene, pointing up what was distinctive in both communities but also recognising the ways in which developments in the former burghs and the city overlapped. It is hoped that by detailing these suburbs’ political experiences, the wider perspective on political change can be made even sharper. The key questions to be

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> See North, *Waterloo*, pp. 696-8 and 1008-9.

resolved in the following chapters are as follows. First: why and how did Partick and Govan achieve municipal autonomy in the mid-nineteenth century? Second: how and why did they maintain their independence from Glasgow for so long? Third: how did municipal and parliamentary politics develop in Govan and Partick before and after annexation? Fourth: what are the wider conclusions may be drawn from this study? As the foregoing discussion has shown, these are questions more complex than they at first appear. There now remains to outline the chapter structure of the thesis, before delving into the historical evidence in order to address these issues.

## **Chapter Outline**

This thesis is structured in two distinct, albeit complementary sections: the first considers municipal politics whilst the second relates the parliamentary dimension. This division arises, at a prosaic level, from the institutional distinction between Westminster politics and burgh hall politics, and to allow for a comparison between municipal and parliamentary elections and the policies and personalities involved. Nevertheless, as is hopefully demonstrated in what follows, these often overlapped. The analysis in both sections proceeds along broadly chronological, but also thematic lines.

Chapter two considers the causes of Partick's and Govan's adoption of the General Police Acts in 1852 and 1864 respectively, emphasising that whilst in both cases this embodied a practical and self-protective response to the social problems associated with rapid industrialisation, urbanisation and population growth, it also reflected the mid-nineteenth century ethos of local self-government.

Chapter three gives an analytical overview of the new burghs' initial attempts to tackle the problems of public health and public order that had precipitated their creation. Particular attention is focused on the Partick experience, given that the community was one of the first to adopt the 'populous place' provisions of Scotland's 1850 General Police Act.

Chapter four considers the manner in which leaders of the two burghs responded to key external and internal 'threats' from 1865 to 1885. Although there is no continuous local newspaper coverage to draw on for this period, detailed municipal papers relate the commissioners' perceptions of Glasgow's first attempts at annexing the suburban burghs, and this has been cross-referenced with Glasgow newspaper coverage. Similarly, the Fenian panics of the 1867-8 and 1875 resulted in detailed accounts in the Govan minute books, which were also cross-referenced with Glasgow newspaper sources. The mid to late 1870s saw a brief flowering of a number of Partick and Govan newspaper titles which

provided patchy, though tantalising evidence that the policy pursued by the commissioners was beginning to encounter sustained ratepayer resistance, at least at Ward Committee level.

Chapter five considers municipal politics from the mid 1880s down to annexation in 1912. The 1886 Home Rule split had led Govan and Partick commissioners and aspirants for municipal office openly to align themselves with party political interests. This, combined with the continuous local newspaper record from 1885 onwards, allowed for the detailed analysis of the policies and personalities of Liberal, Unionist and Labour councillors and candidates, as well as their relation to divisive issues like temperance and sectarianism, in addition to their views on whether the burghs should remain independent or amalgamate with Glasgow. This chapter also reflects on the ways in which the provision of local amenities and the invention of civic traditions were used by successive burgh leaders in an attempt to consolidate a sense of distinctive civic identity separate from Glasgow.

Chapter six gives a longer view of the causes of both burghs' eventual demise as independent municipalities. Drawing extensively on archival sources and newspaper coverage, it traces the declining persuasive power of local self-government in comparison to 'municipal socialism' and 'national efficiency'. The analysis then moves to the parliamentary sphere in section two.

Chapter seven considers election rhetoric in the Govan and Partick Divisions of Lanarkshire, formed in 1885. Notwithstanding widespread popular (or at least newspaper) assumptions that both communities represented strongholds of Liberalism, the several general and by-election campaigns experienced in both communities down to December 1910 presented a complex, often counterintuitive picture. For instance, Govan was won by a Conservative candidate against the Liberal tide in 1906, whilst Partick, widely expected to return its long-serving Liberal Unionist MP at the same general election, replaced him with a Liberal.

Chapter eight considers parliamentary politics in the re-configured Partick and Govan divisions of Glasgow, giving particular attention to the fortunes of the Liberal party after the demise of the burghs in which it had hitherto laid claim to almost hegemonic power. Here, the insights gleaned from the earlier chapters regarding the decline of paternalism, in addition to the erstwhile burghs' contrasting experience of sectarianism, especially Orangeism, and Labour organisation are used to help explain why Govan could

elect a Labour MP four years before the Red Clydeside watershed. Such considerations, alongside the ambiguities inherent in radicalism also help, partially, to explain why Partick's parliamentary representation remained decidedly inconsistent throughout the early interwar period. In 1918 it re-elected a Coalition Liberal, who was succeeded in 1922, 1923 and 1924 by an Independent (Lloyd George) Liberal, a Labour representative and a Unionist, respectively. Meanwhile, Govan re-elected Maclean well beyond the chronological scope of this thesis, a fact that owed much to Govan's more proletarian character than Partick, and to Labour's precocious ability to transcend sectarian boundaries there.

The overall conclusion to the thesis revisits the questions posed above and summarises the key findings of each chapter, re-engaging with the historical and conceptual debates elaborated in this introductory chapter. It is shown that this account of Govan and Partick's political experience, hitherto under-explored in academic historiography, has gone beyond substituting for antiquarianism to provide a useful, comparative analytical account which adds fresh nuance to debates on the decline of Victorian Liberalism, the rise of independent Labour and partisan polarisation, at least in the Scottish context. It also helps to illustrate the interplay and relative fortunes of local self-government, civic nationalism and municipal socialism by tracing their institutional, rhetorical and electoral expression in two populous localities. The limitations of the research and areas for possible future work are also identified.

**Table 1.1: ‘Suburban’ Burghs Surrounding Glasgow, c. 1850-1912**

Name	Year of Incorporation	Year of Annexation	Population at Incorporation
Partick	1852	1912	6,670
Maryhill	1856	1891	4,000
Govan	1864	1912	9,000
Hillhead	1869	1891	3,654
Kinning Park	1871	1905	7,214
Crosshill	1871	1891	c. 3,000
Pollokshields	1875	1891	2,104
Govanhill	1877	1891	9,636
Pollokshields East	1880	1891	4,360

**Note:** This information is abstracted from chapter six and tables 2.1 and 2.2 at the end of chapter two to provide a quick indication of the relative longevity and initial population of these burghs.

**Sources:** Urquhart, *Police of Towns (Scotland) Act 1850*, pp. 246-9 and Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 157.

**Table 1.2: Total Population of the Burghs of Govan and Partick, 1861-1911**

Burgh	Govan			Partick		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1851	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	1,607	1,524	3,131
1861	3,998	3,644	7,697	4,129	4,054	8,188
1871	10,109	9,070	19,179	9,155	8,536	17,691
1881	25,441	23,985	49,426	13,692	13,702	27,394
1891	30,942	30,421	61,363	18,768	18,670	36,538
1901	42,174	40,000	82,174	26,754	27,544	54,298
1911	45,711	44,014	89,725	39,468	34,380	66,848

**Note:** Partick 1851 figures taken from 1861 *Census Report (Scotland)* for ‘Partick Town’; 1861 Govan figure taken from 1861 *Census Report (Scotland)* for ‘Govan Town’. Neither notional ‘town’ appeared coextensive with the boundaries of the Police Burghs created afterwards, hence their larger populations at adoption of the General Police Acts in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 (see this thesis pp. 47-9)

**Sources:** *Census Reports (Scotland)*, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911.

**Table 1.3: Percentage of Occupied Houses of Different Sizes in Burghs of Govan and Partick, 1871-1911**

Govan				Partick		
	1 room	2 rooms	7 or more rooms	1 room	2 rooms	7 or more rooms
1881	29.3	53.6	0.9	21.8	22.1	1.5
1891	28.4	53.4	0.6	29.2	39.8	0.9
1901	23.5	55.5	1.7	23.7	41.2	2.6
1911	16.3	59.3	1.1	11.0	46.3	6.0

**Note:** The comparison of 1, 2 and 7-upwards room dwellings is used here as a loose indicator of social polarisation, on the basis that working class families were more likely to live in over-crowded conditions.

**Sources:** *Census Reports (Scotland)*, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911. Figures rounded to one decimal place.

**Table 1.4: Occupied Population Working in Industry, 1881-1911**

Govan							Partick						
Year	Total Males Occupied in Industry	As % of Male Population aged 10 and up	Total Females Occupied in Industry	As % of Female Population aged 10 and up	Total Population Occupied in Industry	As % of Population aged 10 and up	Total Males Occupied in Industry	As % of Male Population aged 10 and up	Total Females Occupied in Industry	As % of Female Population aged 10 and up	Total Population Occupied in Industry	As % of Population aged 10 and up	
1881	13,012	50.8	2,558	10.6	15,570	31.4	6,777	36.2	1,475	10.7	8252	30.1	
1891	14,828	47.6	3,906	12.8	18,734	30.4	8,487	47.4	2,089	11.1	10,576	28.9	
1901	20,233	68.3	5,560	20.2	25,793	45.1	12,957	43.6	2,934	13.8	15,891	38.4	
1911	26,584	89.2	6,849	76.8	33,443	86.3	17,500	81.9	4,300	55.5	21,800	74.9	

**Note:** Figures for both burghs not available until 1881, except Govan's for 1871. These have been excluded as a comparison is not possible. The 1881-1901 data is based on those censuses' occupational category 'Class V', taken to represent generally urban, industrial pursuits. Figures for 1911 have been calculated by the author based on the revised list of occupations adopted for that census. This involved the aggregation of figures for occupations 15 to 54, excluding occupations 1 (Civil Service) to 14 (Road Transit). A further caveat to the 1911 figures is that unoccupied members of the population have been excluded from the occupational figures, as distinct from those for 1881 to 1901 which included all inhabitants aged 10 years and over, thereby artificially inflating the percentage values compared to earlier decades. Percentages rounded to one decimal place.

**Sources:** *Census Reports (Scotland)*, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911.

**Table 1.5: Population Working in Ship and Boat Building, 1881-1911**

Govan							Partick					
Year	Total Males Occupied in Shipbuilding	As % of Male Population Occupied in Industry	Total Females Occupied in Shipbuilding	As % of Female Population Occupied in Industry	Total Population Occupied in Shipbuilding	As % of Population occupied in industry	Total Males Occupied in Shipbuilding	As % of Male Population Occupied in Industry	Total Females Occupied in Shipbuilding	As % of Female Population Occupied in Industry	Total Population Occupied in Shipbuilding	As % of Population Occupied in Industry
1881	3,138	24.1	3	0.1	3,141	20.0	2,108	31.0	0	0	2,108	25.6
1891	4,631	31.2	1	0.0	4,632	24.7	2,475	29.2	0	0	2,475	23.41
1901	5,476	27.0	30	0.5	5,506	21.3	3,616	27.9	0	0	3,616	22.7
1911	10,235	38.5	96	1.4	10,380	26.1	7169	33.5	36	0.5	7,205	24.7

**Note:** 1881 figure based on occupation 'Class V, Order 13'. 1891 figures based on occupation category X, class 8 ('Ships and Boats'). The data for 1901 is based on 'Sub-Order 13' of 'Occupational Class V', whilst that for 1911 is based on 'Industry 18'. As with table 1.4, unoccupied members of the population have been excluded from the figures for 1911. Percentages rounded to one decimal place.

**Sources:** *Census Reports (Scotland)*, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911.

**Table 1.6: Birthplaces of Residents of the Burgh, expressed as % of total burgh population, with Number of Gaelic Speakers, 1881-1911.**

Partick	Gaelic Speakers	404	1,208	1,535	Unknown
	Foreign Countries [sic]	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.74
	British Colonies or Dependencies	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.58
	Ireland	18.4	14.0	12.0	8.7
	England and Wales	2.4	2.4	4.1	4.5
	Scotland	77.6	85.6	82.5	85.5
	Outside Lanarkshire	57.1	37.6	45.9	27.0
	County of Lanarkshire	52.9	62.4	54.0	58.6
	Gaelic Speakers	1,483	3,035	3,397	Unknown
	Foreign Countries [sic]	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.61
Govan	British Colonies or Dependencies	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.46
	Ireland	14.0	9.4	11.5	8.3
	England and Wales	2.6	3.8	3.5	3.8
	Scotland	31.9	37	84.0	86.8
	Outside Lanarkshire	42.5	37.1	44.6	36.7
	County of Lanarkshire	57.5	62.8	55.4	62.3
Birthplace and Gaelic Speakers by year		1881	1891	1901	1911

**Note:** The 1901 and 1911 figures from the category 'Other Places' have been aggregated with the Category 'Foreign Countries' for convenience. The number of Gaelic speakers is an aggregate of the vast majority speaking Gaelic and English, with the comparatively miniscule (rarely more than ten) numbers speaking Gaelic only. This is simply to give a broad indication of the incidence of (presumably Scottish Highland) Gaelic culture among inhabitants of the burghs.

**Sources:** *Census Reports (Scotland)*, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Combination for Self-Protection?**

#### **The Transition to Police Burgh Status:**

**1852 and 1864**

Perhaps in no part of St. Mungo [Glasgow] has greater advance been seen than in these two places. The burghs of Govan and Partick have been long in existence. The history of one is collateral with that of the other. Although they do not yet form an integral part of Glasgow proper, yet very soon I hope to see them incorporated. A few years ago, where houses stand were green meadows, with here and there a small villa. But the villas have become many, and the houses of the working classes still more, while the pleasant places along which the youth of the time rambled in the quiet evenings are only remembered by men and women of riper years. The chief amusement of my comrades at that time was to pick up stones and try to throw them from the south to the north side of the Clyde, an effort in which they generally succeeded.

Andrew Aird, *Glimpses of Old Glasgow*, 1896.<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

This chapter evaluates the distinctively Scottish legislative framework which allowed Partick (in 1852) and Govan (1864) to secure police burgh status, thereby achieving a significant degree of political and administrative autonomy. To explain why both former village communities sought this status, it is necessary to consider the challenging circumstances they faced due to the rapid urbanisation and population growth associated with the development of shipbuilding and ancillary industries on the banks of the nearby River Clyde. Appreciating the difficulties caused by the resulting abrupt demographic change is crucial to any understanding of both communities' creation as burghs, and their development until their eventual amalgamation with Glasgow in 1912.

As will be seen, the adoption of the apparatus and powers of local government was undeniably a matter of pressing practical necessity for both communities. This followed the demonstrable inadequacy of *ad hoc* attempts at local government based on middle-class voluntarism, rather than legal mandate, before burgh status was attained. The twin threats of disease and crime, together with the inability of civic-minded middle-class citizens to compel their wealthy, but apathetic neighbours to help defray the cost of local improvements such as lighting and drainage, would eventually lead both communities, as 'populous places' to invoke the General Police Acts and become virtually autonomous

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<sup>1</sup> A. Aird, *Glimpses of Old Glasgow*, (Glasgow: Aird and Coghill, 1896), p. 117.

burghs, with most of the trappings of municipal administration.<sup>2</sup> Yet this analysis also emphasises that the move to burgh status in both communities can only be fully understood with reference to the broader contextual influence of mid-nineteenth century Liberal notions of local self-government and the theoretical framework of Scottish civic nationalism elaborated by Graeme Morton.<sup>3</sup>

The chapter is structured as follows. First, it provides an account of the rapid population growth and industrialisation occurring in both communities in the first half of the nineteenth-century, creating serious problems of public health and civil disorder. Second, it seeks to outline the legal mechanisms by which both towns became legally-constituted police burghs, and to give an indication of the background to and significance of this legislation in the wider context of Scottish and British local government in the Victorian era. Third, the chapter seeks to provide an account of the manner in which both burghs embarked on their municipal development. It is also emphasised that the erection of Partick and Govan into relatively autonomous burghs in close proximity to the city of Glasgow, whose Town Council had legitimate ambitions to enlarge its municipal territory, made future conflict over jurisdiction and political legitimacy virtually inevitable.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, as chapters four, five and six of this thesis make clear, the burghs' resistance to the city's attempts at amalgamation became a recurring theme, if not *quite* the *raison d'être* of both communities for the remainder of their independent municipal existence.

### **From Villages to Towns: Industrial and Demographic Change**

The population growth experienced in Partick and Govan in the mid-nineteenth century was startlingly swift. In Partick's case, the population of the former village had increased almost fivefold between 1820 and 1851, the year before the formation of the burgh (1,235

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<sup>2</sup> The statutes relevant to Partick and Govan were, respectively, the Police of Towns (Scotland) Act, 1850 (13 & 14 Vict. cap.33) and the General Police (Scotland) Act 1862 (26 Vict. cap. 101) – also known as the 'Lindsay Act'. For the sake of brevity, the terms 'Burgh' and 'Police Burgh' will be used interchangeably in what follows, and the above acts will be referred to, collectively as the 'General Police Acts'.

<sup>3</sup> See Morton, 'Scottish Rights...', p. 259. The importance of Scottish local government in the context of nationalism is more fully elaborated in his *Unionist Nationalism*, pp. 35-48.

<sup>4</sup> I. Maver, *Glasgow*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 2000), p. 99 and I. Sweeney [aka and hereafter Maver], *The Municipal Administration of Glasgow, 1833-1912: Public Service and the Scottish Civic Identity* (University of Strathclyde, Ph.D. Thesis, 1990), p. 126; Cunnison and Gilfillan, *The City of Glasgow*, p. 44.

souls in 1820, compared with 5,043 in 1851).<sup>5</sup> At its 1864 formation into a burgh, Govan's population was computed at 9,058.<sup>6</sup> This growth had been even more remarkable and swift, considering that in the *New Statistical Account* of 1840, the enumerator, Church of Scotland Minister the Rev. Dr Matthew Leishman, estimated that the district's population then barely exceeded 2,500 souls, most of whom dwelled in thatched cottages on or near the original village's Main Street.<sup>7</sup>

Later, it was reckoned that Govan's rapid growth in terms of 'population, trade and importance' represented 'probably the most notable example... to be found in the United Kingdom', rivalling comparable examples of urban development in the United States and Australia.<sup>8</sup> This perception was shared by the Liberal Cabinet minister, William Edward Forster. When he visited Govan Parish in 1882, Forster was Chief Secretary for Ireland, and a former Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education, who had earlier served as Under Secretary for the Colonies in Prime Minister Lord John Russell's administration.<sup>9</sup> (It should be clarified that the parish boundaries were not co-extensive with the new police burgh, and also encompassed the burgh of Partick and its environs on the north bank of the river Clyde.) He hailed 'the most populous parish in the British Isles' at the time.<sup>10</sup> Such quantitative benchmarks - while undeniably important - can only go so far in illustrating population change and urbanisation.

Luckily, a more vividly qualitative impression emerges from local commentaries. For instance, Matthew Leishman's biographer and grandson James Fleming Leishman observed that in the 1840 *Statistical Account* shipbuilding was not even mentioned by his

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<sup>5</sup> Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, p. 114. The rate of growth continued exponentially into the 1870s (10,917 in 1861 and 17,693 in 1871), almost certainly precipitated by the construction of Tod and MacGregor's docks and numerous other public works in Partick and Whiteinch, which fell inside the burgh boundary.

<sup>6</sup> Brothie, *History of Govan*, p. 189.

<sup>7</sup> M. Leishman, 'The Parish of Govan', *New Statistical Account of Scotland: Lanarkshire* (Volume 6), (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1841), pp. 668-718.

<sup>8</sup> Brothie, *History of Govan*, p. 182.

<sup>9</sup> A. Warren, 'Forster, William Edward (1818-1886)', *ODNB*, OUP, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9926>], accessed 3/8/2010.

<sup>10</sup> J.F. Leishman, *Matthew Leishman of Govan and the Middle Party of 1843: a Page from Scottish Church Life and History in the Nineteenth Century*, (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1921), pp. 175-6.

grandfather. However, by the end of the illustrious minister's life it had transformed the landscape and population of his parish beyond recognition, posing a serious headache in meeting the spiritual needs of his vastly-expanded Church of Scotland congregation.<sup>11</sup>

Writing to his sister in 1872, Leishman reflected that:

[w]hen you and I came to Govan in 1821, it did not contain over 1'000 inhabitants; now (in July 1872) it contains over 26'000. [Now] how best can I provide for the spiritual wants of my overgrown parish?<sup>12</sup>

In March 1872, the average attendance at Leishman's Sunday School was 1'217.<sup>13</sup> James Fleming Leishman could recall witnessing his grandfather marry thirty couples in one evening, such were the arduous demands placed on him by his burgeoning population. On one Sunday in 1866, there were 130 proclamations of marriage in the parish. Perhaps unsurprisingly in the circumstances, Leishman pressed to have new *Quoad Sacra* parishes built in Govan, and twelve of these had been completed by his death.<sup>14</sup> Matthew Leishman had been leader of the Middle Party in the Church's Disruption in the 1840s, and was noted for his perspicacity and insight. He became convinced that the rapid and inexorable pace of change in the former village of Govan, and, by implication its northern neighbour, Partick, would inevitably result in their integration with Glasgow:

There can be *no doubt that this village will very soon be a suburb of Glasgow*. Since I came to the Parish, the population has increased to about 70,000. The church and the situation on which it stands have long been admired, and as the place in which I am resolved to live, labour and die, *I am fully prepared to sympathise with those who speak most strongly in commemoration of everything connected with it... But with public works of different kinds encroaching and gathering around us, its rural beauty is already irretrievably injured. The country church surrounded by green fields must soon be merged in the crowded manufacturing suburb of a great city. It is evident that in a short time, up to Glasgow Bridge, the Clyde on both sides will be lined with public works or buildings*, just as the Thames now is between Blackhall and Westminster Bridge.<sup>15</sup>

Thus Govan's industrial and demographic change had left visible scars on the local landscape. In Partick's case, however, it appeared that even as late as 1873 the original old

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 176.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in *ibid*.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp. 210-211.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 177.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 178 (emphasis added).

village remained largely intact. Still, this visible continuity with the pre-industrial times thinly veiled massive demographic and cultural upheaval - the effects of which could still be felt keenly by the older inhabitants. To the old village's north and west 'had arisen a new Partick, with flourishing manufactories and a large population.'<sup>16</sup> In the old village itself, there were new inhabitants who 'were strangers' to James Napier, a native who had returned to Partick after a twenty year absence, with 'manners and customs very different from those of [his] early days' in Partick. Napier continued:

[M]any of those *new town-folk I had found had little or no interest in, nor knowledge of the old village, except as a dwelling-place for the poorer class of workpeople*. Indeed, I met with some who had resided for years in the *new portion* who had *never even been in the old village, never seen the Old Bridge and Knowe, nor knew the locale of the Kilbrae and Castle Green, places of note to every inhabitant of Partick and the neighbourhood fifty years ago*.<sup>17</sup>

This quote epitomised what was to become a recurrent theme in antiquarian accounts of the impact of industrialisation and urbanisation: specifically the perceived displacement of natives from their sense of place and provenance, conveyed in often elegiac terms. While Napier exhibited a somewhat ambivalent attitude to denizens of the 'new portion' of his community, his future colleagues on the burgh commission and their Govan counterparts would soon favour an approach to local history which played up a shared civic identity for Partickonians and Govanites, defined in opposition to Glasgow. This will become clear in chapters 3, 5 and 6 of this thesis, but for now it is important to emphasise just how jarring and unsettling the rapid urban transformation of both communities appeared to contemporary eyes. In 1857, Dr John Strang, sixth City Chamberlain of Glasgow and author, among numerous other works, of *Glasgow and its Clubs*, remarked that 'at this hour, the landscape-painter's occupation about Partick is gone. The village is now a town'.<sup>18</sup> Strang's pen-portrait of Partick was almost Elysian in its cadences and is worth quoting at length:

Among the many rural villages which at one time surrounded Glasgow, perhaps none surpassed Partick in beauty and interest. Situated on the banks of a limpid and gurgling stream [the Kelvin], which flowed through its centre; and beautified, as it was of yore, with many fine and umbrageous trees; and above all, ornamented

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<sup>16</sup> Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, p.i.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid (emphasis added).

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 155. For Strang's biography, see J. Maclehose, 'John Strang' in *Memoirs and Portraits of 100 Glasgow Men*, vol. II, (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1886), chapter 90.

with a hoary old castle, with whose history many true and many more fabulous tales were associated; and when to these were added its dozen or two of comfortable and clean cottages, and its picturesquely planted [flour] mills [...] all combined to render this locality one of the most favourite of suburban retreats. It was, in fact, the resort of every citizen who enjoyed a lovely landscape, an antiquarian ramble, or a *mouthful* of fresh air – to which might be superadded, the certainty of getting a *mouthful* of something better, provided that the visitor should have ever heard of the good things available within its ancient “Bun-and-Yill-House” [roughly equivalent to a public house]. *Such was Partick during the latter part of the [eighteenth] century; and even after the commencement of the one which has produced so many metamorphoses it still retained its rural character and its smokeless atmosphere.*<sup>19</sup>

However, the landscape changed quickly:

[A]t length utilitarianism, that foe to beauty and the picturesque, marched westward from the city. The steam-engine became a necessary accessory to the flour and corn mills, and, thereafter to many other public factories. The few one-storey cottages that spotted the slopes of the Kelvin, or surrounded the ancient Castle, could not meet the requirements of the hundreds of houseless ship-builders and other citizens, drawn from a distance to the extensive establishments which increasing capital and enterprise had there erected. The ground on which these cottages stood soon became too valuable to be occupied by such humble dwellings, which were ere long supplanted by more formidable, though less picturesque tenements; while the once-honoured though ruinous-gabled castle was, some years ago, converted into a quarry.<sup>20</sup>

In Govan’s case a similar, albeit starker shift from rustic to urban imagery occurred. Hugh MacDonald, a resident of Glasgow’s Bridgeton district who rose from humble beginnings to become sub-editor of the *Glasgow Citizen*, gained fame for his series of articles on *Rambles Round Glasgow*, published as a book in 1854 and reprinted several times to meet popular demand – lasting well into the twentieth-century.<sup>21</sup> In many ways, MacDonald’s writing represented a sort of pioneering environmentalist travelogue. Writing in 1851, the Rambler described Govan as a ‘picturesque... rural village’.<sup>22</sup> He continued:

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<sup>19</sup> J. Strang, *Glasgow and its Clubs: Glimpses of the Condition, Manners and Oddities of the City During the Past and Present Centuries*, (Glasgow: John Tweed, 1864), pp. 395-6 (original emphasis except in final sentence).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 396.

<sup>21</sup> H. MacDonald, *Rambles Round Glasgow: Descriptive, Historical & Traditional*, (Glasgow: John Smith & Son Ltd.. 1910 [1854]), pp. vii-viii.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 288.

The village of Govan, like most other old townships, is a long straggling congregation of houses, having been permitted apparently to “hing as it grew,” each individual proprietor “biggin” [building] where it best pleased himself, and without the most distant regard for the opinion or convenience of his neighbour. It is, in fact, the most curious and eccentric little townie that we know, and always wears, to our fancy, a kind of half-fou [half-drunk] aspect. [...] It has a predominance of thatched houses, too, as if in its sturdy independence it was determined to retain its straw bonnet in defiance of the innovating slate.<sup>23</sup>

By 1864, the ‘little townie’ had begun to transform irreversibly and, unlike Partick, unrecognisably. The old thatched cottages near Main Street were peremptorily demolished to make way for sandstone tenements. In his 1905 *History of Govan*, T.C.F. Brotchie, making reference to the much-earlier MacDonald book, observed:

Truly, “the scene has changed”! *A densely-populated industrial town has taken the place of the ancient village and well-nigh obliterated every trace of it.* The pleasantly-wooded country villas which once adorned the river banks from Plantation to Linthouse are all gone. The few that linger are for the most part to be found, after diligent search, imbedded [*sic*] in the public works – some doing duty as offices, others as store-rooms for scrap-iron, their finely-facaded, old greystone faces looking strangely out of place ‘midst their matter-of-fact surroundings... *Of theekit (thatched) houses, once upon a time the feature of rural Govan, a few linger on... buried in the midst of tall and sober-coloured tenements, whose raking height and barrack-like structures... prevent a glimpse of sunshine cheering the old-world cottage with its warmth.*<sup>24</sup>

Brotchie rhetorically asked, ‘why have these changes come about?’<sup>25</sup> This was a good question. It is difficult to dispute Brotchie’s contention that economic change revolving around the development of shipbuilding and ancillary industries was the prime mover underpinning social and political developments in Govan and Partick.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, this thesis takes a markedly more critical view of Govan’s municipal development than Brotchie’s worldview would have allowed. By the time it assumed burghal status in 1864, only a single silk factory remained of Govan’s original ‘village’ industries of handloom-weaving agriculture and coal-mining.<sup>27</sup> These bygone industries had been replaced by ‘one of the great workshops of the world... within whose boundaries

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Brotchie, *History of Govan*, p. 181 (emphasis added).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 182.

it is impossible to get beyond the sound of the hammer.’<sup>28</sup> Brotchie elaborated that: ‘from early morn till late at night [could be heard] the continuous hum of industry’.<sup>29</sup> Around the town’s five shipyards – four of which, apart from the ‘old yard’ counted among the world’s largest - was spun a complex web of related industries.<sup>30</sup> These comprised: John Elder & Co. (later Fairfield Shipping Co., Ltd.), Robert Napier and Son, Harland & Wolff, Alexander Stephen & Son (Linthouse Shipyard) and McArthur & Alexander’s original ‘old yard’ In addition to ‘every branch of the iron and metal trades’, the town’s factories also employed thousands in the preparation of flour, bread, starch, silk and wool, hair, cabinets and chairs, matches, as well as file-cutting, saw-milling, block-making, the manufacture of nautical instruments, boat-building and tarpaulin-making.<sup>31</sup> Partick was almost as busy a hive of industry.

Before the impact of industrialisation was felt in Partick, the village had been chiefly associated with its ‘great flour mills’, driven by water power from the River Kelvin. Of course, it was the widening and deepening of the River Clyde by Glasgow Town Council in their guise as Clyde Trustees which made the development of shipbuilding in Partick and Govan possible, and this was to become a bone of contention in the context of the city’s attempts to annex the burghs, considered in chapter six.<sup>32</sup> By the time of the burgh’s incorporation into Glasgow in 1912, this had changed dramatically. Whilst grain remained important to Partick’s economy, shipbuilding was now vital. To the south of Dumbarton Road, on and around the banks of the Clyde, could be found three shipyards (Clydehaugh, Clydeholm and the Partick Shipbuilding Yard), saw mills, public houses, flour mills and a timberyard.<sup>33</sup> Partick’s civic motto was *Industria Ditat* – ‘we are enriched through industry’<sup>34</sup>, while Govan’s was *Nihil Sine Labore* – ‘nothing without

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 183.

<sup>30</sup> Cited in Author(s) Unknown, ‘Introduction’ to *The Govan Story Website* <<http://www.thegovanstory.com/introduction.php>>, accessed 30/3/2005.

<sup>31</sup> Brotchie *History of Govan*, p. 183.

<sup>32</sup> Aird, *Glimpses...* p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Paul, *Partick Anecdotes*, p.7.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

work’.<sup>35</sup> These mottos, accompanied by civic coats of arms, were adopted early in each burgh’s development, and convey a great deal about their industrial origins and ethos, as well as the ambitions of their civic leaders. It is also important to note that the industrial wealth alluded to in the mottos was not shared equally throughout each community. The implications of inequality for local politics were profound, as will be seen throughout this thesis. At this point, however, it is necessary to consider the ‘trigger’ factors that led to both towns’ application for burgh status, and to summarise the legal mechanisms that made the transition possible.

### **Acting Up: The Shift from Voluntary to Legally Constituted Local Government**

How was the shift from voluntary to statutorily-sanctioned local government perceived by local commentators? Brochie remarked that before the adoption of the 1862 General Police Act ‘there was no legally constituted body within Govan who [*sic*] in any way represented the public interest of the inhabitants’.<sup>36</sup> One Partick antiquarian later observed that there too, the adoption of the 1850 General Police Act meant that ‘the necessity for combination for self-protection... was being recognised’.<sup>37</sup> In order to fully appreciate the sense of urgency that attached itself to re-creating the former villages as burghs, it is necessary to understand the nature of the voluntary arrangements that had been put in place in both districts in the 1840s and 1850s. The adoption of the General Police legislation, as historian Robert Irving emphasised, would ‘bring the era of local government by voluntary subscription to an end’.<sup>38</sup> On that note, Partick could claim to be in the vanguard of Scottish ‘populous place’ communities adopting the 1850 Act, and to have been the first Lanarkshire neighbourhood to do so.<sup>39</sup> (See tables 2.1 and 2.2 at the end of this chapter for more contextual data.) From local accounts of events preceding Partick’s incorporation as a burgh, it is clear that concerns about public order were paramount in precipitating the first steps towards collective administration of local affairs. In early twentieth-century antiquarian William Greenhorne’s account of events in 1843, it is recounted that:

a stout semi-Irishman, during a drunken-spree, went through the village challenging any Irishman to fight. Upon this a band of Irishmen armed with shillelaghs

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<sup>35</sup> Brochie, *History of Govan*, frontispiece.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 177.

<sup>37</sup> Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 135.

<sup>38</sup> Irving, *Burgh of Partick*, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Urquhart, *Police of Towns (Scotland) Act (1850)*, p. 247.

[fighting-sticks] turned out and literally took possession of the village, threatening and striking every person they met.<sup>40</sup>

Once the immediate threat had passed, the villagers applied to the sheriff for a contingent of police-men from neighbouring Anderston to patrol the village for 'a time', whilst the inhabitants agreed to take turns keeping a night watch.<sup>41</sup> At this stage, Partick had no force of its own: a remarkable state of affairs, given its burgeoning population. The early enthusiasm for this vigilance quickly wore off, and a few men were hired to keep watch.<sup>42</sup> The following year, in the wake of 'several acts of violence' near a recess at the end of the then bridge over the Kelvin, close to Gilmorehill - the present-day site of Glasgow University - some of the 'public-spirited' residents combined to set up a few lamps on the road.<sup>43</sup> The success of this project ensured its expansion into a scheme whereby contributors would pay sixpence per pound of rental, and elect a committee to administer this. Working-class residents were not asked to contribute to the scheme, even at a differential rate, thus throwing the degree to which the committee could claim to represent all of Partick's inhabitants into doubt.

One member of the committee ruefully remarked that 'as usual, the willing workers got the work to do.'<sup>44</sup> The committee was far less successful, however, in combating the 'no less serious evil' posed by the lack of effective drainage and sewers around the village. It quickly became clear that the existing voluntary subscription scheme would be inadequate to resource any improvement to this life-threatening situation. The committee therefore promptly approached more powerful administrative bodies that might have been equipped to deal with problems of public health, with mixed success. Writing in 1930, acclaimed former Glasgow Medical Officer of Health, Archibald Kerr Chalmers, observed that by the mid-nineteenth century, the 'teachings of the epidemic years' of the early part of the century 'were already bearing fruit' in Glasgow.<sup>45</sup> This improvement he attributed

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<sup>40</sup> Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 135.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid and Maver, *Municipal Administration*, pp. 129-30.

<sup>42</sup> Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 135.

<sup>43</sup> Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, p. 115.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Chalmers, *Health of Glasgow*, pp. 8-9. For more information on Chalmers himself, see B.M. White, 'Chalmers, Archibald Kerr (1856-1942)', *ODNB*, September 2004 [<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/59864>] accessed 4/8/10.

especially to the reforms in burgh administration, such as those facilitated by the General Police Acts, had proved more effective in tackling problems than *dictats* from on high. How, in this context, did Partick become a burgh?

In the first instance, a letter-writing campaign was initiated by James Napier - a future Partick burgh 'Bailie', or, more accurately, junior magistrate - over the objections of some anonymous members of the committee, who were more concerned about the damage it might do to the reputation of Partick and its property and land values.<sup>46</sup> It is clear from the terminology used by Napier, that his efforts were more or less overtly guided by considerations of enlightened self-interest for himself and other more affluent residents, not generalised humanitarian good will. This was evidenced in his carefully-worded allusion to the 'better classes, as they are termed' of 'wealthy' people and his scathing description of the working-class villagers whose errant ways and 'filth' - even extending to the heinous crime of Sabbath-breaking - could only be improved by 'compulsion'.<sup>47</sup> Yet it is difficult to avoid the impression that Napier also looked askance at the ignorance of middle-class incomers who tended to bury their heads in the sand regarding the neighbourhood's insanitary state. Napier's relationship with the burgh's rising industrial elite appeared somewhat ambivalent.<sup>48</sup> The following extract from one of his letters to the press highlights his and like-minded residents' concerns about the cumulative effects of villagers' unhygienic practices, raising the spectres of dysenteric fever, cholera and other morbid conditions.

The strong desire which now exists among *the better classes, as they are termed*, to get away from the crowded city after the business of the day is over, ... [represents] a seeking after a more healthy and pleasant situation to raise their families and spend their leisure hours, [but is often accompanied by] a *very great ignorance of the requisites for health...* *There seems to be only one rule to guide them, namely to get out a certain distance from the city and to the west; but should the conditions of the locality be healthy naturally, or made so artificially, is, if at all considered, only secondary. Hence we see fine mansions built in the vicinity of a filthy village, where not a yard of the streets is drained, and all the waste waters are allowed to accumulate and stagnate before the doors - where open ditches and burns are made to serve the purpose of common sewers, giving off a constant stench. The reader will see an eminent instance of this by taking a walk out to, and through,*

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<sup>46</sup> Irving, *Burgh of Partick*, pp. 4-5 and Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, pp.121-2.

<sup>47</sup> Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, pp. 116-7.

<sup>48</sup> See also pp. 68-9.

Partick, where a new town is rising round a village the most filthy and undrained [*sic*] to be met within the island.<sup>49</sup>

An appeal was made to the General Board of Health in London, which replied in early November 1851, to the effect that it had no authority to intervene in public health matters anywhere in Scotland.<sup>50</sup> It is not clear why this avenue was pursued when the Board of Supervision in Edinburgh, with its medical role and growing interest in public health, might have been more appropriate.<sup>51</sup> This last board operated under the Poor Law, however, and an approach was made to the Inspector of the Poor for Govan Parish, who replied that he had a statutory duty to respond to the concerns of the residents and asked to meet with the residents to ‘take instructions’.<sup>52</sup> At a meeting in a Partick school-room on 12 November 1851, a group of concerned inhabitants discussed the above responses and decided to consider the feasibility of securing consent and finance from ‘all parties’ for the construction of sewage facilities. This was, for reasons obscure, deemed preferable to involving the parish authorities. It transpired, however, that there was ‘no probability’ of such unanimous consent being obtained from proprietors, and that therefore the most expedient alternative recourse was to invoke the provisions of the General Police Act in the district. A motion to initiate this was moved and unanimously passed. Before discussing the transformation of Partick and Govan into police burghs, it is important to consider the relevant legislation in its historical context, before exploring its rationale and the ‘steps’ required to progress its adoption by a town.

### **The General Police Acts: A Legislative Framework for Local Self-Government**

Before 1832, local government in Scotland’s thirty-three counties (as distinct from Scotland’s more traditional burghs – discussed in the legal glossary) was conducted at a relatively remote distance by the Commissioners of Supply.<sup>53</sup> The closest representatives

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<sup>49</sup> Napier, ‘The Sanitary Condition of Partick’, letter to the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, 4 June 1851, reprinted in Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, p. 116 (emphasis added).

<sup>50</sup> Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, p. 122; Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, pp. 136-7 & Irving, *Burgh of Partick*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>51</sup> For an appraisal of the role and responsibilities of this board, see S. Blackden, ‘The Board of Supervision and the Scottish Parochial Medical Service, 1845-95’, *Medical History*, 30 (1986), pp. 145-172.

<sup>52</sup> Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, pp. 116-7.

<sup>53</sup> Urquhart, *Introductory Note*, p. 2. For a fuller account of the role and duties of the Commissioners of Supply and Justices of the Peace in this period, see A.E. Whetstone,

of county-level administration were the Justices of the Peace (JPs) who, despite holding the same formal powers and authority as their English counterparts since 1707, had limited prestige and influence.<sup>54</sup> As an early twentieth-century scholar of Scottish local government reflected of the mid-Victorian heyday of police burgh creations:

Then county government was entirely in the hands of the county gentlemen, and the bulk of the inhabitants had no voice whatever in its direction. Moreover, even the then existing county bodies had no powers with regard to public health, lighting or paving. And the natural result was that all the villages wanted to be made into burghs, with the right to provide these things for themselves.<sup>55</sup>

Industrialisation and urbanisation did not occur at a uniform pace, and therefore improvements might be urgently required in one area but not in its neighbour.<sup>56</sup> This made it difficult for Scotland's central government institutions - in the form of the Lord Advocate and Solicitor General - to devise an overall approach to local government and schemes of improvement. From 1771 onwards, a variety of larger and established burghs found it necessary to obtain for themselves 'police' powers, through the passage of individual acts of parliament, pursued at the behest of the local Magistrates and Council, with residents' support.<sup>57</sup>

The term 'police' derived from the Latin *politia* or Greek *politeia*, and had a much wider meaning than its contemporary connotation.<sup>58</sup> Police Acts could create local authorities and empower them to deal with various matters. These included: crime and punishment, water supplies, paving, lighting and maintenance of streets, sewers, drainage and cleansing, nuisance control and general public health. Communities could opt to cherry-pick from the Act's clauses to deal with only a few such issues if they deemed these most relevant to their area. By 1832, such acts had been secured by Glasgow in 1800,

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*Scottish County Government in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1981), pp.89-94 and 49-58, respectively.

<sup>54</sup> Urquhart, *Introductory Note*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>55</sup> Atkinson, *Local Government*, p. 74. Atkinson's personal career and her wider analysis of Police Burghs are discussed more fully in chapter 6 of this thesis.

<sup>56</sup> J.F. McCaffrey, *Scotland in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 17.

<sup>57</sup> Urquhart, *Burgh Police (Scotland) Act (1833)*, p. 5. See also T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation, 1700-2000*, (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 338.

<sup>58</sup> Urquhart, *Burgh Police (Scotland) Act (1833)*, p. 2.

Edinburgh in 1805, Inverness in 1808, Dumfries, Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Perth in 1811, Dingwall and Dundee in 1824, followed by Aberdeen in 1829.<sup>59</sup> Such local acts were also secured by the following burghs of regality and barony which later became parliamentary burghs: Greenock in 1801, Port Glasgow in 1803, Paisley in 1806, Kilmarnock in 1810, Peterhead in 1820, Airdrie in 1821 and Leith in 1827. Similar legislation was also adopted by the following burghs of barony: Borrowstoneness (Bo'ness) in 1816, Calton, Lanarkshire in 1819, Alloa in 1822, Bathgate in 1824, Dalkeith in 1825 and Anderston in 1826.<sup>60</sup>

As Urquhart put it, 'to adopt a system of police was to launch a not unambitious programme for the progress and future well-being of a town.'<sup>61</sup> These bespoke local police acts did not come cheaply or conveniently, and their highly individualised nature posed problems of consistency and uniformity.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, many of the acts, including those of Edinburgh, Dumfries, Calton, Dalkeith and Bo'ness were either of finite duration or failed to incorporate sufficient flexibility to deal with unforeseen local problems.<sup>63</sup> Yet the growing popularity of bespoke police acts was a testament to a real and increasingly urgent need for communities to become empowered to find local solutions to local difficulties.

By the early 1830s, it was becoming increasingly apparent that a General Police Act, which could be implemented by communities across the whole of Scotland, would prove far more effective, and much less costly in terms of parliamentary time and local expense, than the existing patchwork of local acts. A sub-committee reporting to the 1831 Convention of Royal Burghs claimed unanimous support among its members for a General Police Act to be passed as quickly as possible, due to its 'great utility' in removing obstacles to municipal progress.<sup>64</sup> The overwhelming Whig victory in the landmark 1832

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Calton and Anderston were annexed to Glasgow - along with the Barony and Gorbals districts - in 1846, as is discussed in chapter 6 of this thesis, p. 177. As is made clear in that chapter, these districts were distinctive from the several Police Burghs surrounding the city by 1880.

<sup>61</sup> Urquhart, *Burgh Police (Scotland) Act (1833)*, p. 5.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

General Election had revived interest in and added impetus to the cause of parliamentary and municipal reform: especially in Scotland.<sup>65</sup>

Passed by Parliament with the support of both government and opposition, the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act of 1833 embodied the liberal notion that the inhabitants of a town should be empowered to identify their own local concerns and priorities and to decide, through their representatives, how much funding should be devoted to these.<sup>66</sup> This legislation was pioneering in the United Kingdom context: both for the wide range of issues it allowed localities to deal with, and for the degree of local discretion and flexibility it entailed, by contrast to later English public health laws.<sup>67</sup> Yet the Scottish legislation seemed more effective in principle than in practice, due to significant defects in its design. A restricted franchise, alongside new burgh commissioners with restricted powers – particularly in relation to assessment and borrowing – coupled with a lack of ability to enforce decisions relating to public health and nuisances, meant that the burden of expectation on police burghs outweighed their capacity to deliver the improvements they and local voters might have wished. Even Scotland's larger towns found themselves unable to fund major schemes for water, sewerage and drainage.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, the selective (minimum £10 rental) franchise in the new police burghs meant that such improvements that were carried out tended to be focused on streets whose needs were not, objectively speaking, a priority.<sup>69</sup> New towns such as Johnstone and Galston were excluded from the legislation.<sup>70</sup> After limited attempts to reform the act in 1847 and 1850, the need for a new General Police Act granting more extensive and wide-ranging powers to burgh commissioners became obvious.

Of course, it has to be borne in mind that the local autonomy granted under the successive police acts was never absolute. It was qualified by a United Kingdom

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<sup>65</sup> Urquhart, *Lindsay Act*, vol. I, p. 1

<sup>66</sup> Urquhart, *Burgh Police (Scotland) Act (1833)*, pp. 99-100. See also McCaffrey, *Scotland...*, p. 27.

<sup>67</sup> For more comparative detail, see J. Prest, *Liberty and Locality: Parliament, Permissive Legislation and Ratepayers' Democracies in the Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), pp. 188-9.

<sup>68</sup> Urquhart, *Burgh Police (Scotland) Act (1833)*, p. 99.

<sup>69</sup> McCaffrey, *Scotland...* p. 28.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

constitution under which sovereignty was - and at the time this thesis is being written remains - vested in the Westminster Parliament. It remains a truism that power devolved is power retained by central government. More prosaically, the enabling role of the sheriff under the acts invoked in Partick and Govan meant that police burghs exercised only delegated authority within tight legislative constraints.<sup>71</sup> Rates (assessment) could only be raised for statutorily approved purposes, although in practice burgh commissioners had few qualms in burying requests for 'voluntary' contributions in aid of special projects on the demand letters sent to households for local taxation purposes.<sup>72</sup> The subordination of police burgh to county government could also get in the way of rational administration. For instance, Kinning Park, a neighbourhood on Govan's eastern boundary, became a police burgh in its own right in 1871; its location in Renfrewshire meant that any attempt to unite it with the burgh of Govan in Lanarkshire was doomed to fail.<sup>73</sup> In other words, the legislation did not anticipate communities straddling county boundaries. Unlike older forms of municipality, police burghs had no discretionary powers or 'common good', and until 1900 their elected representatives were not legally entitled to call themselves provost, bailie or councillor.<sup>74</sup> As will be seen throughout this thesis, Partick's and Govan's representatives were seldom content to be referred to as chief magistrates, magistrates and commissioners, in the legally accurate style. Irene Maver has highlighted that the use of the titles of Scotland's traditional burgh leaders by the *arriviste* police burgh representatives was clearly calculated to project a comparable sense of legitimacy.<sup>75</sup> As she explains, the term 'provost': 'conferred gravitas and suggested a sense of history to fledgling communities'.<sup>76</sup> The adoption of such titles, alongside municipal coats of arms

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<sup>71</sup> Atkinson, *Local Government*, , p. 78.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 132.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p. 80.

<sup>75</sup> See I. Maver, 'The Rise and Fall of the Scottish Provost: Civic Leadership and Burgh Identity between the Seventeenth and Twenty-first Centuries'; *Review of Scottish Culture*, 20 (2008), pp. 80-103 – especially at pp. 92-3.

<sup>76</sup> I. Maver, 'The Scottish Provost Since 1800: Tradition, Continuity and Change in the Leadership of 'Local Self-Government'; J. Garrard (ed.), *Heads of Local State: Mayors, Provosts and Burgomasters since 1800*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 29-46. Quote at p.36.

and custom-built town halls also ‘conferred a tangible sense of municipal authority.’<sup>77</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm’s notion of ‘invented tradition’ provides a useful conceptual context in which to consider these and other civic traditions in nineteenth-century police burghs. He defined the notion as:

A set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.<sup>78</sup>

There were also practical restrictions inherent in the status of police burghs compared to their more established counterparts. Notably, larger police burghs like Govan and Partick only secured the right to act as a licensing court for public houses in 1903; before then such powers were reserved to the county government - albeit this did not prevent both communities’ commissioners campaigning on temperance slogans – as chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis highlight. The technical shortcomings of police burghs should not, however, detract from an appreciation of their broader ideological significance and practical necessity.

Despite its flaws, the 1833 Act had at least conceded the principle of local autonomy and was, by the standards of its time, a ‘liberal and enlightened measure’.<sup>79</sup> The same was true of its 1850 replacement. The decade from then until 1862 was, as Urquhart noted, ‘an unsettled period in British [parliamentary] politics’.<sup>80</sup> It saw three general elections, six changes of government - including two administrations with unstable majorities in the House of Commons, the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny and the resurgence of the Irish question. The Liberals held a clear majority among Scottish MPs, but faced a growth in support for nationalist sentiment and growing discontent over the limited time given to Scottish affairs at Westminster.<sup>81</sup> Graeme Morton has written about conceptual misunderstandings that can arise from the absence of a mid-Victorian Scottish nationalism focused on demands for a Scottish Parliament let alone independence. Instead,

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<sup>77</sup> I. Maver, ‘The Rise and Fall of the Scottish Provost’, p. 92.

<sup>78</sup> Hobsbawm, ‘Inventing Traditions’, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Urquhart, *Burgh Police (Scotland) Act (1833)*, p. 100.

<sup>80</sup> Urquhart, *Lindsay Act*, vol. I, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2.

he argues that it is essential to appreciate the ‘complexity of mid-Victorian government’ and its increasingly ‘decentralised’ nature in Scotland - especially in urban communities.<sup>82</sup> This, he argues, meant that Scottish nationalism was at this juncture focused not on breaking up the Westminster state forged after 1707, but on the development of ‘civil society’ and what has been termed ‘civic nationalism’.<sup>83</sup> The full detail and wider ramifications of these ideas lie outside the scope of this thesis, but they do provide a useful theoretical backdrop to the creation and development of urban communities like Partick and Govan. Put simply, such municipalities were forged and thrived under a Liberal ideology of local self-government which, overall, preferred local solutions to local problems based on local knowledge.<sup>84</sup>

Whilst it would be unfair to claim that Scottish municipal affairs had been ignored entirely by Westminster in the 1850s, most new legislation focused on established burgh communities, rather than on the more recent innovation of police burghs.<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, it was clear, by the end of the decade, that the notion of a system of police as manifested in the 1833 act had gained widespread acceptance, and even popularity.<sup>86</sup> The path to a new, more empowered and accountable form of local government had been broken, although much remained to be done. An improved Police of Towns (Scotland) Act (1850): had been adopted, wholly or partially by many communities by 1860. The communities who adopted it included fifty-two towns, twenty-one royal burghs, fourteen burghs of barony or regality and thirteen ‘populous places’. Partick had adopted the act as a ‘populous place’. Its eventual replacement, the General Police and Improvement (Scotland) Act of 1862, although the most significant piece of Scottish legislation passed by the administration of Prime Minister Palmerston, was largely passed due to the efforts and enterprise of Provost William Lindsay of Leith Burghs, from whom it took its nickname.<sup>87</sup> As a magistrate in

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<sup>82</sup> Morton, ‘Scottish rights...’, p. 258.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, p. 259.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 260.

<sup>85</sup> Urquhart, *Lindsay Act*, vol. I, pp. 2-4. Morton discusses the 1853 demands of the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights (NAVSR), which stopped well shy of full national independence in ‘Scottish rights...’, pp. 263-76 and in *Unionist Nationalism*, pp. 133-55.

<sup>86</sup> Urquhart, *Lindsay Act*, vol. I, p. 5.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

Leith, Lindsay had become dissatisfied with his burgh's powers to address public health and working-class housing, as granted under the existing legislation. He was greatly impressed with the flexible arrangements set out in the new English Local Government Act (1858), which allowed individual towns to seek Provisional Orders to adapt the terms of the act to suit their own particular circumstances and difficulties in a proactive fashion.<sup>88</sup> Although more effective than its older Scottish equivalents, this legislation was undoubtedly influenced by practices north of the Border. Historian John Prest has emphasised that before 1858, England had been 'groping its way towards the permissive system' already open to Scottish communities.<sup>89</sup>

At all events, the new English measure inspired Lindsay to develop the idea of legislation to collate and consolidate all existing powers relating to police and sanitary issues in Scottish burghs, whilst taking account of new developments in policing, public health and sanitation, and being sufficiently flexible that it might be revised in light of municipal 'experience'.<sup>90</sup> Throughout 1859, he wrote and lectured extensively in support of his proposal.<sup>91</sup> Lindsay was fortunate to have the ear and encouragement of his friend, and former employer (as a parliamentary agent), James Moncrieff, MP for Edinburgh and now Lord Advocate.<sup>92</sup> On his appointment as provost of Leith in November 1860, Lindsay formally approached the Lord Advocate with his case for a new General Police act. At Moncrieff's suggestion, Lindsay wrote to all civic heads in Scotland seeking their support in this endeavour, and emphasising the advantages, convenience and savings offered by a consolidated act.<sup>93</sup> After being inundated with supportive replies, Lindsay went on to produce a draft bill at considerable personal expense, made possible by his resources as a wealthy shipwright.<sup>94</sup> In late 1861 his draft was circulated to every burgh in Scotland for

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<sup>88</sup> For a full, albeit concise account of Lindsay's life and career, see J. Campbell Irons, *Leith and Its Antiquities from the Earliest Times to the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, Vol. II (Edinburgh: Privately Published c. 1896), pp. 531-4.

<sup>89</sup> Prest, *Liberty and Locality*, p. 46.

<sup>90</sup> Urquhart, *Lindsay Act*, vol. I., pp. 13-14.

<sup>91</sup> *Scotsman* 25 June 1859.

<sup>92</sup> Urquhart, *Lindsay Act*, vol. I, p. 13-4.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 16-17.

consultation, and the Lord Advocate was able to secure government support for this in Parliament.<sup>95</sup> After revision by the Crown Agent, this was introduced to the House of Commons in March 1862, after which it was again sent out to the burghs for further consultation. Progress through the Commons was relatively smooth, although the bill did encounter friction in the Lords, and an act was soon passed. The degree of consultation to which this legislation had been exposed was remarkable, even by modern standards, but the corollary of this was that the resulting act and its accompanying amendments fell short of Lindsay's vision of 'perfection'.<sup>96</sup> Nonetheless, the flexibility embodied in the new act provided a mechanism for revisions to be made as the need arose. Lindsay's advice was much sought after by Scotland's burghs as they proceeded to implement the act, and right up to the 1880s, he was involved in the its amendment and revision.<sup>97</sup> In all this, he also made a highly significant contribution to what would eventually become the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act, 1892. In recognition of his services, a marble bust of Lindsay, together with a copy of the act he had inspired, was placed in the Town Hall in Leith, paid for by the burghs of Scotland and a number of private subscribers.<sup>98</sup>

Lindsay's Act seemed to secure and strengthen the ethos of the previous General Police legislation. Burgh commissioners would now be *ex officio* police commissioners.<sup>99</sup> By the 1890s, most burghs would be managed by full-time appointed officials and the 'Town Hall establishment' was here to stay.<sup>100</sup> 185 towns, including 84 which were not burghs would take advantage of the act to improve local conditions, and throughout Scotland, in the words of historian J.F. McCaffrey, there emerged a 'typical Victorian urban landscape of baronial town halls and regular paved streets lined with rows of stone tenements, shops and pubs.'<sup>101</sup> Indeed, Partick's commissioners quickly traded in the 1850

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, vol. II, p. 433.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> McCaffrey, *Scotland...*, p. 185.

legislation for the Lindsay Act, and Govan was created a burgh under same.<sup>102</sup> Urquhart has persuasively argued that the Lindsay Act ranks alongside other Scottish legislative landmarks in the Victorian era, especially those in public health and education. It led to the formation of 74 brand new burghs, whose size ranged from that of Kingussie, at 700, to Clydebank, at 10'000.<sup>103</sup>

Even under the 1862 act, there remained significant variations in the extent to which police powers were taken up in communities across Scotland. 'Populous places' such as Partick and Govan took full advantage of the powers offered under the legislation, and became burghs for the first time. Yet it was possible, and indeed, common, for the jurisdiction of existing traditional burghs and new police burghs to overlap - as was the case in Dumfries and Maxwelltown.<sup>104</sup> It is important, however, to bear in mind that the powers afforded to a police burgh were far more extensive than those of the traditional burghs with which they might co-exist, under all of the General Police Acts between 1833 and 1862. There were still problems of accountability, given that the municipal franchise under the police acts was extended only to householders of £10 and above in communities containing a minimum of 700 inhabitants.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, this was congruent with the prevailing notions of 'property-owning' democracy abounding at the time.

The emerging 'town hall mentality' highlighted by Urquhart and McCaffrey was much-mocked in the Glasgow journal, *The Bailie*. The publication was moderately Liberal from its founding in 1872, but became Liberal Unionist in 1886; by the time it ceased printing in 1926, it was fervently anti-socialist.<sup>106</sup> Its columnists grew 'quite apoplectic' at the thought of residents from burghs surrounding Glasgow, such as Govan and Partick, benefiting from the city's municipal amenities, such as West End Park, without

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<sup>102</sup> Urquhart, *Lindsay Act*, vol II, p.452.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p. 432.

<sup>104</sup> Urquhart, *Burgh Police (Scotland) Act (1833)*, p. 2.

<sup>105</sup> *Scotsman*, 18 May, 1850. The property qualification for electors was revised downward in later legislation, but persisted into the twentieth-century. See Atkinson, *Local Government*, p. 31.

<sup>106</sup> See I. Maver, 'The Bailie (1872-1926)'; L. Brake and M. Demoor General Editors, *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, (London: British Library Publishing Division, 2010 forthcoming edition), unknown pagination.

contributing towards their upkeep.<sup>107</sup> The delusions of grandeur and potential for ridicule that could be discerned amongst the personnel of the new police burghs was captured in the character of ‘Jeems Kaye’, a fictional correspondent in a *Bailie* sketch that ran from 1876 until the late 1880s and was eventually compiled in the book, *Jeems Kaye: His Adventures and Opinions* (1883), followed by further editions in 1886 and 1888.<sup>108</sup>

The real author of the columns was Archibald Macmillan, a commission agent whose business was in Glasgow but resided on the Ayrshire coast, whilst writing prolifically for several periodicals. A resident of Strathbungo - a real district on the south-side of Glasgow, but never in reality a police burgh - Kaye was a coal-merchant, who, typically for a self-made ‘good citizen’, became heavily involved in local politics. (It is likely that the fictionalised Strathbungo was a thinly-disguised version of the real-life burgh of Crosshill, on the south side of the city.) Kaye served as a juryman and school board member, an enumerator in the census of 1881, a corporal in the Royal Volunteers (in which guise he met Queen Victoria, who knighted him), a canvasser and, later, an unsuccessful candidate in parliamentary elections. By the end of his long career, he was styled: ‘Lieutenant Colonel Sir Jeems Kaye, provost of Strathbungo’.<sup>109</sup> As a *Bailie*, he represented Strathbungo at the 1888 Glasgow Boundary Commission, successfully defending his burgh from Glasgow’s expansionist grasp.<sup>110</sup> Kaye’s testimony to the commission incorporates topical and recognisable allusions to the often parochial sense of local civic pride that permeated police burghs, as well as their attractiveness to would-be commuters fleeing the stresses of city-life.

“What are you (Strathbungo) noted for?”

“The finest park in Scotland, the Crossmyloof bakery, the only place in the three kingdoms whaur ye will see a baronet selling coals by the hunnerwecht...”

“You don’t wish to be annexed to Glasgow?”

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<sup>107</sup> M. Burgess (1998), *Imagine a City: Glasgow in Fiction*, (Argyll), p. 60.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*.

“Annexed tae Glesca? I should think no. The Glesca folk come rinnin’ oot tae us lookin’ for hooses. Ye never here o’ Strathbungonians wanting tae flit intae Glesca.”

[Eventually]

The Chairman said, “Whatever we do with Crosshill and Govanhill, and all these mushroom burghs... Stra’bungo must be free.”

“An’ unfettered”, says I.

“An’ unfettered”, says he.

“Free as the ostriches or the eagles that soar in the heavens”, says I.

“As free as them”, says the Chairman.

... So we adjourned, an’ that’s the way Stra’bungo wis saved.<sup>111</sup>

This, unmistakeably, was a satirical take on police burghs and their leaders - written several decades after Partick and Govan achieved their independence. Yet, as will be seen in the remaining municipal chapters of this thesis, there was much insight in the jests. Returning to the mid-nineteenth century, it is necessary to summarise the nuts and bolts of the General Police legislation and the manner in which it could be invoked. The basic procedure remained unchanged for the rest of the century, despite the passage of various new police acts, and was derived from the mechanism to set up police commissioners in Scotland’s Royal Burghs.<sup>112</sup> The transformation of a community into a police burgh, according to an 1850 *Scotsman* report, could be effected through a ‘simple and inexpensive procedure’.<sup>113</sup> As already noted, the General Police Acts were devised such that localities did not have to adopt all of their provisions in a ‘one size fits all’ manner; rather communities could separately invoke those sections of the act which were

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<sup>111</sup> A. Macmillan, *Jeems Kaye: His Adventures and Opinions*, (Glasgow: W.R. Holmes, [1883]1903), pp. 255-7. There were loose parallels between the Kaye character and ‘Adam Wayne’, the fictional ‘Provost of Notting Hill’ who fights to defend his borough against attempts to force a road through it in G.K. Chesterton’s futurological novel *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, (Oxford: OUP, 1994 [1904]), albeit Chesterton’s dystopian vision bears no relation to Macmillan’s gentler satire.

<sup>112</sup> Atkinson, *Local Government*, p. 72.

<sup>113</sup> Adapted from *Scotsman*. 18 May, 1850.

most relevant to their individual predicament; for instance the public health provisions. The *Scotsman* recapitulated the rationale for the legislation as being a concern:

[that] the apathy as to public improvements, and matters of public health and decency, that so undeniably and unfortunately exists in and disgraces minor towns in Scotland, has hitherto always found a ready and too sufficient excuse in the difficulty and insufferable expense attendant on any effort to obtain a local Act of Parliament promoting and enforcing measures of public order, health and cleanliness; while the hopelessness of attempting to carry out such measures without legal assistance and countenance – when every obstinate and impracticable individual can defeat the good intentions and wishes of his neighbours often by mere dogged resistance, without the trouble of active exertion – has often been fatally experienced... A majority of householders... will henceforth have the power of compelling the minority of obstructives to be orderly, cleanly and respectable in spite of themselves.<sup>114</sup>

To invoke the police burgh protocols of the act in an urban area, the following conditions and procedures had to be satisfied by respectable men of property:<sup>115</sup>

- 1) Population should exceed 3,000 residents
- 2) A petition signed by a minimum of 21 householders (of £10 rental and above) should be transmitted to the county sheriff, stating the reasons why they sought to invoke the act, and empowering the sheriff to convene a meeting of householders – to be advertised in advance – to decide whether or not to proceed.
- 3) A poll would be taken at the meeting and the result, to be declared by the sheriff, would be legally binding.
- 4) If the poll showed residents to be in favour of forming a burgh, then this would be implemented; if the residents rejected the proposals, at least two years must elapse before the same district could re-apply.
- 5) A further meeting would then be convened by the sheriff to elect the burgh commissioners, who would immediately assume responsibility for implementing the Act in their locality.

Partick met, and indeed exceeded these requirements in 1852, with 63 householders signing the petition to the Sheriff of Lanarkshire.<sup>116</sup> The district's population was more than 2000 souls in excess of the minimum requirements of the act, and the eloquent petition described the problems in the district related in the foregoing paragraphs, and asserted that the financial burden imposed by the existing voluntary arrangements for maintaining local order was 'at present very unequally borne'. The residents present at the

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid. See also Maver, *Municipal Administration*, pp. 130-133.

<sup>115</sup> Adapted from *Scotsman.*, 18 May 1850. See also Atkinson, *Local Government*, pp. 73-4.

<sup>116</sup> Extract from Petition to the Sheriff of Lanarkshire in PMB Vol. 1.

meeting voted unanimously in favour of adoption, and a further meeting was called to nominate and elect the burgh commissioners.

The adoption proceedings in both burghs were presided over by Sir Archibald Alison, Sheriff of Lanarkshire, a staunch Tory, historian and jurist. Originally from Edinburgh and intimately connected with that city's cultural life, Alison found his adopted home city of Glasgow to be 'apocalyptic' by comparison.<sup>117</sup> (Until his death in 1867, he would reside at his grace-and-favour mansion in then-leafy Possilpark.) On his appointment as sheriff by Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel in 1835, he felt as though he had moved to a new country, rather than a mere forty miles away.<sup>118</sup> A prolific author of several works of history – particularly on the French Revolution (on which he published ten volumes between 1833-42), and contributor of over fifty articles to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Alison consistently espoused high Tory themes, rejecting Malthusian doctrines on population, the banking school of economics, and, most significantly for present purposes, the ideals embodied in the French Revolution.<sup>119</sup> Immortalised in fiction by Benjamin Disraeli as 'Mr Wordy' in *Coningsby*, Alison, like Edmund Burke, laid the principal blame for the downfall of the *Ancien Régime* at its own door. Unlike Burke, he thought that, rather than being insufficiently willing to accommodate the demands of the 'mob', in order to placate it, the true weakness of the ruling class was its failure to face down popular protest. He drew parallels between this and the behaviour of the Whig administration after 1832, bemoaning the 'cupidity of the Liberal swarm'.<sup>120</sup> Yet it would be foolish to reduce Alison to such a one-dimensional caricature.

This, after all, was the man whose paternalistic compassion for the poor, coupled with his eye for statistical detail had commended his observations for citation by Frederick Engels in his *Condition of the Working Class in England*.<sup>121</sup> He was highly critical of the effects of mass-urbanisation and the factory system, condemning the 'vast accumulation of wealth in a few hands', resulting in a 'vast and indigent population' who were prey to all

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<sup>117</sup> McCaffrey, *Scotland...*, p. 16.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid & Macle hose, *Memoirs & Portraits*, chapter 1.

<sup>119</sup> M. Fry, 'Alison, Sir Archibald, first baronet (1792-1867)', *ODNB*, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/349>, accessed 4 Sept 2005].

<sup>120</sup> M. Michie, *An Enlightenment Tory in Victorian Scotland: The Career of Sir Archibald Alison*, (Tuckwell: East Linton, 1997), p. 168.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, p. 124.

manner of ‘wickedness’ and vice.<sup>122</sup> He heartily agreed with Adam Smith’s aphorism that ‘God made the country but man made the town’.<sup>123</sup> For all that he denounced Liberal industrialists and (in his view) the dangerous innovations of their parliamentary allies, Alison was known to favour a balanced, corporatist model of local government.<sup>124</sup> He feared that recent municipal reforms had undermined this principle, and that ‘we have taken filth out of the gutter to perform our ablutions’, by extending the municipal franchise to £10 ratepayers, who might use their newfound votes to undermine the role of ‘property and knowledge’.<sup>125</sup> He also worried that power was better wielded by a single, accountable individual, rather than by ‘promiscuous’ bodies exercising only a nebulous collective responsibility.<sup>126</sup> Although it is clear that Alison would not have favoured the form of local government afforded by the General Police Acts, it would not be unreasonable to surmise that he would have been rather more sanguine about the opportunities the legislation offered to mitigate urban squalor and strengthen the forces of law and order in a community. Nonetheless, there was early evidence that Alison’s misgivings about local government by enthusiastic amateurs were well-founded.

There is an odd omission from the local histories of Partick produced around the turn of the twentieth-century, concerning their dignified, respectable and yet touchingly humble accounts of proceedings at this meeting.<sup>127</sup> A charitable interpretation of this would be to attribute this to a lapse of memory on Napier’s part. Napier, after all, was a protagonist at the meeting but did not write about it until 1873. Napier’s lapse could have been compounded by oversights in the researches of Taylor and Greenhorne.<sup>128</sup> A more sceptical interpretation would place the omission from Napier’s account in the context of the omnipresent threat of the burgh being subsumed by Glasgow, and the need to place the

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p. 111.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, p. 169.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, pp. 168-9.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p. 173.

<sup>127</sup> See Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, pp. 125-6; Taylor, *Past & Present*, pp. 90-1 (published 1902) & Greenhorne, *History of Partick* (published 1928).

<sup>128</sup> This is the interpretation tentatively ventured by Irving, in a footnote in *Burgh of Partick*, p. 7.

dealings of Partick's civic fathers, at every stage of the burgh's life, in the best possible light, so as to convey a sense of magisterial, statesmanlike competence. What was this omission?

Under the terms of the recently-adopted act, the residents had agreed to elect twelve burgh commissioners at the public meeting on 4 August, 1852.<sup>129</sup> Twelve commissioners were nominated unopposed, and declared by the sheriff to have been duly-elected; yet, strangely, many additional nominations were accepted by the sheriff, until an alert resident protested that the new burgh's quota of elected officials was now full. Sheriff Alison acknowledged this to be the case, and the original twelve nominees were confirmed as commissioners for the burgh, and it was also resolved that they should meet within a week to begin dealing with the problems that had led to their elevation.

A fair reading of the account in the minute-book would suggest that the sheriff had perhaps lapsed into a state of bored acquiescence, brought on by a long day of official business and topped-off by a long meeting dominated by earnest, do-gooding Partickonians who simply got carried away by the excitement of what must to them have felt like an enormously significant moment in the life of their community. There is a hint of farce to be discerned here, which may have caused a little embarrassment to Napier, in the light of the annexation debates, but there was little that might have been used in a damaging propaganda campaign against the burgh or its founding fathers. Yet it seems difficult to escape the impression that the incident's omission from Napier's account, if not from those of Taylor and Greenhorne, was more than accidental. Setting aside such speculation for the moment, how did the shift to burgh status in Govan, just over a decade later, compare?

It is difficult to alight on a single event or series of crises that precipitated the adoption of the General Police Act in Govan, such as had been the case in Partick. Rather, there seems to have been a recognition by members of Govan's industrial elite, that local government could have tangible benefits for economic activity, by improving and maintaining relevant infrastructure, as well as contributing to the health and therefore the productivity of the local workforce. The dignity and authority of municipal office could also prove invaluable in cementing and legitimising the paternalistic control of local elites over community affairs, as is highlighted throughout this thesis.

The necessary petition to Sheriff Archibald Alison drew his attention to the rapid expansion of population and size that the town was undergoing, raising problems of over-

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<sup>129</sup> PMB, 4 August, 1852.

crowding and poor sanitation. These raised the threat of small-pox and fever. The petition also elaborated residents' concerns regarding unsatisfactory watching and lighting in the district.<sup>130</sup> Alison, who probably by now regarded such proceedings with considerable *ennui*, delegated Sheriff-substitute Strathern to officiate at the required meetings with residents, and by unanimous agreement, 'the good ship Govan' was launched on its municipal career.<sup>131</sup> Prior to adopting the Lindsay Act, like Partick, Govan had for a time wrestled with its problems through the good offices of the Feuars' Committee and the subscription schemes overseen by it.<sup>132</sup> From Brothie's account, it appears that there was some resistance among established Govanites to their community's adoption of the act, which was perceived as an alien imposition by affluent incomers.<sup>133</sup> However, the extent of this resistance is impossible to quantify. There had been attempts to invoke the 1850 Act in Govan during the 1850s, but these had failed to gain sufficient residents' support to gain the blessing of the Sheriff.<sup>134</sup> The 1853 attempt foundered after residents voted unanimously in favour of voluntary assessment for watching and lighting.<sup>135</sup> A journalist present at the public meeting observed that it was well attended, especially by the working classes.<sup>136</sup> Some 'severe remarks' were made regarding the recent experiences in the new burgh of Partick, where crime was alleged to have increased and 'several parties [...] now regretted [having] anything to do with a police bill [*sic*]'.<sup>137</sup> The 1856 attempt was also overwhelmingly rejected by residents after a packed and stormy meeting where, among other idiosyncratic arguments against adopting the act, Sheriff Alison's opening remarks from the chair about the deficiency of policing throughout the United Kingdom were

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<sup>130</sup> 'Memorial to the Commissioners of the Burgh and its Police' in GMB, Vol. 1 frontmatter. A more legible and easily-accessible extract from the petition is found in Brothie, *History of Govan*, p. 170.

<sup>131</sup> Brothie, *History of Govan*, pp. 171-4.

<sup>132</sup> GMB, Vol. 1, *passim*.

<sup>133</sup> Brothie, *History of Govan*, pp. 280-1.

<sup>134</sup> *GH*, 14 January 1853, 21 April 1856 and 27 June 1856.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, 14 January 1853.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*.

misconstrued or misrepresented from the floor as impertinent meddling in local affairs.<sup>138</sup> There followed recrimination from an anonymous Govan resident in the *Glasgow Herald* letters page. The letter, entitled 'Lawlessness at Govan', complained of housebreaking, unattended cattle wreaking havoc, and even antisocial behaviour from 'knots of unruly and insolent lads and boys, who, when not fighting amongst themselves, are often occupied in insulting respectable people passing by. This sort of thing is so common now, that ladies even are not exempt.'<sup>139</sup>

Brotchie characterised the 1850s and 1860s opponents of burgh status, as 'a good many old-fashioned folks', whereas supporters are characterised as the 'progressive party'.<sup>140</sup> One of the more enthusiastic members of the latter persuasion was 'old Jamie Robertson' who was 'deid on for haen the veelage made a burra [sic]'.<sup>141</sup> In the weeks leading up to the adoption meeting in 1864, Robertson would accost passers-by and demand an answer to the query: 'burgh or no burgh?' If the 'wrong' answer was given, the result would be a slap or a kick 'to some exposed part of the anatomy'. Robertson's alleged antisocial behaviour appears to meet with Brotchie's approval and perhaps encapsulates the presumed 'spirit' of the new burgh. The strange, invariably engineered, convergence of modernist discourses and antiquarian myths was to become a recurring theme in both burghs throughout their years of municipal independence.

## Conclusion

If the histories of Partick and Govan were, as Aird observed, 'collaterally linked' by the River Clyde, then this connection grew stronger than ever as shipbuilding and related industries sprang up on its banks. The accompanying rapid, and in Govan's case, unparalleled, population growth as workers arrived to service the new industries posed severe difficulties for public health and law and order in the former rustic villages. In both emerging towns, it became rapidly apparent that civic voluntarism alone could not solve such problems. As a result, both Partick and Govan moved swiftly to take advantage of the General Police Acts of 1850 and 1862, respectively. Partick, especially, was a literal early-adopter of the General Police legislation. These laws offered populous urban communities a chance to take on wide-ranging responsibility for their own affairs and expenditure. This

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 21 April 1856.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 27 June 1856.

<sup>140</sup> Brotchie, *History of Govan*, pp. 280-1.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

should not, however, be read as a straightforward concession to local democracy: the burgh commissioners would be accountable only to a limited franchise of ratepayers, contingent on property values, as was the case in Scotland's more established burghs.

This discussion has emphasised that the communities' shift to legally-sanctioned, relatively autonomous local government occurred against a complex ideological backdrop and that it is too simplistic to explain the transition away as mere 'combination for self-protection', as local antiquarians later suggested. The enactment of the 1850 and 1862 legislation in Partick and Govan was driven by urgent necessity, but soon evolved into something more ambiguous. As will become clear as this thesis continues, the mid-Victorian Liberal ethos of local self-government, whatever its undoubted merits, could also create spurious justifications for the self-perpetuation and insularity of local elites determined to control the local population. In that context, the glancing references to drink and the Irish in some of the accounts discussed in this chapter seem to presage the later local difficulties around sectarianism and temperance. The next chapter discusses the formative measures taken by Govan's and Partick's early civic leaders to secure public health and public order, as well as appraising the manner in which they embarked on their administrative duties.

**Table 2.1: ‘Populous Place’ Police Burghs created under 1850 General Police Act**  
**(Source: Urquhart, *Police of Towns (Scotland) Act 1850*, pp. 246-9)**

<b>Name of Burgh</b>	<b>County Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Year of Adoption</b>	<b>Population at Adoption</b>
Partick	Lanark	1852	6,670
Lockerbie	Dumfries	1852	1,569
Coupar Angus	Perth	1853	2,004
Wishaw	Lanark	1855	3,373
Maryhill	Lanark	1856	4,000
Johnstone	Renfrew	1857	5,872
Gourock	Renfrew	1858	2,194
Dalbeattie	Kirkcudbright	1858	1,551
Lochgilphead	Argyll	1859	1,703
Tranent	Haddington	1860	2,257
Newton-Stewart	Wigtown	1861	2,535
Prestonpans	Haddington	1862	2,080
Whitburn	Linlithgow	1862	1,362

**Table 2.2: ‘Populous Place’ Police Burghs Created under 1862 ‘Lindsay’ Act (Source: Urquhart, *Lindsay Act*, pp. 440-457)**

<b>Name of Burgh</b>	<b>County Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Year of Adoption</b>	<b>Population at Adoption</b>
Invergordon	Sutherland	1863	1,112
East Linton	Fife	1863	835
Prestonpans	Fife	1863	1,577

<b>Name of Burgh</b>	<b>County Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Year of Adoption</b>	<b>Population at Adoption</b>
Tranent	Fife	1863	2,257
Lossiemouth and Branderburgh	Elgin	1864	2,285
Dufftown	Banff	1864	1,249
Broughty Ferry	Forfar	1864	3,513
Crieff	Perth	1864	3,903
Millport	Bute	1864	1,104
Elie, Liberty and Williamsburg	Fife	1864	706
Armadale	Linlithgow	1864	2,504
Govan	Lanark	1864	9,000
Galston	Ayr	1864	3,228
Lockerbie (second adoption in full)	Dumfries	1864	1,709
Moffat	Dumfries	1864	1,463
Cove and Kilcreggan	Dumbarton	1865	878
Kinross	Kinross	1865	2,083
Leslie	Fife	1865	3,607
Bonyrigg	Edinburgh	1865	898
Bathgate	Linlithgow	1865	4,827
Motherwell	Lanark	1865	2,925
Kingussie	Inverness	1866	676
Callander	Perth	1866	1,271

<b>Name of Burgh</b>	<b>County Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Year of Adoption</b>	<b>Population at Adoption</b>
Lasswade	Edinburgh	1866	1,258
Penicuik	Edinburgh	1866	2,157
Cumnock and Holmhead	Ayr	1866	2,903
Eyemouth	Roxburgh	1866	1,721
Beith	Ayr	1867	3,707
Woodside	Aberdeen	1868	4,290
Dunoon	Argyll	1868	3,756
Stewarton	Ayr	1868	3,299
Innerleithen	Dumfries	1868	1,605
Hillhead	Lanark	1869	3,654
Dunblane	Perth	1870	1,921
Bridge of Allan	Stirling	1870	3,055
Tillicoultry	Clackmannan	1871	3,745
Crosshill	Renfrew	1871	c. 3,000
Kinning Park	Renfrew	1871	7,214
Grangemouth	Stirling	1872	2,569
Rattray	Perth	1873	2,161
Darvel	Ayr	1873	1,729
Newmilns and Greenholm	Ayr	1873	3,028
Milngavie	Stirling	1875	2,044

<b>Name of Burgh</b>	<b>County Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Year of Adoption</b>	<b>Population at Adoption</b>
Fort William	Inverness	1876	1,104
Tobermory	Argyll	1876	1,196
Alva	Stirling	1876	4,961
Lochgelly	Fife	1876	2,601
Pollokshields	Renfrew	1876	2,104
Largs	Ayr	1876	3,079
Denny and Dunipace	Stirling	1877	4,081
Govanhill	Lanark	1877	9,636
Ladybank	Fife	1878	1,072
Dalkeith	Edinburgh	1878	6,711
Pollokshields East	Renfrew	1880	4,360
Rothies	Elgin	1884	1,362
Loanhead	Edinburgh	1884	3,244
Banchory	Kincardine	1885	983
Cockenzie and Port Seton	Fife	1885	1,578
Saltcoats	Ayr	1885	5,096
Clydebank	Dumbarton	1886	9,998
Aberfeldy	Perth	1887	1,469
Newport	Fife	1887	2,548
Buckie	Banff	1888	5,836
Tayport	Fife	1888	2,829

<b>Name of Burgh</b>	<b>County Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Year of Adoption</b>	<b>Population at Adoption</b>
Aberchirder	Banff	1889	1,222
Keith	Banff	1889	4,622
Portsoy	Banff	1889	2,060
Stonehaven	Kincardine	1889	4,497
Carnoustie	Dundee	1889	4,134
Kilwinning	Ayr	1889	3,835
Doune	Perth	1890	940
Cowdenbeath	Fife	1890	4,249
Girvan	Ayr	1890	4,075
Ballater	Aberdeen	1891	983
Dollar	Clackmannan	1891	1,807
Buckhaven, Methil and Innerleven	Fife	1891	6,247
Markinch	Fife	1891	1,350

### **Chapter 3**

‘For the improvement and benefit of the locality’:  
Early Burgh Administration,  
c.1852-1864

[T]he question of rational expense need never be discussed when the welfare of a community is at stake, and there is no such thing as a cheap municipal blessing.

Charles Taylor, *Partick Past and Present* (Glasgow: William Hodge, 1902).<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction**

This chapter considers the key decisions taken in the new burghs of Partick and Govan in their early municipal development. Partick was the pioneer among Scotland’s ‘populous place’ police burghs, as can be seen in table 2.1 at the end of the previous chapter. As such, its response to the challenges of urban administration in the mid-Victorian period merit detailed historical consideration. For this reason, and because Partick had a 12-year ‘head-start’ on Govan, which only became a burgh in 1864, the former community will feature more heavily in this chapter than the latter. This analysis suggests that other burghs, not least Govan from 1864, were able to learn much from Partick’s successes and failures. Special attention is given to the commissioners’ key statutory responsibilities of financial management, public order, public health and buildings. The creation of the burgh of Partick in 1852, as suggested in the previous chapter, involved a mixture of progressive and self-protective motives on the part of local notables; this duality remained evident in the commissioners’ policy decisions in the 1852-64 period. Their deliberations and decisions throughout are set in a wider comparative context, especially in relation to developments in Glasgow.

The source base for what follows is heavily reliant on official municipal records and later antiquarian accounts of community life, which makes an overall survey of local politics problematic. Where the municipal records illuminate aspects of social life, these will be drawn out, with the caveat that local issues and incidents of note, such as the controversy over the stepping stones over the River Kelvin discussed later in this chapter, tended to draw the attention of the commissioners only when their official intervention was required. Thus, the burgh records view such issues in narrowly administrative and legalistic terms. The reliance on burgh minutes in this chapter reflects the absence, with

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Taylor, *Partick Past and Present* (Glasgow: William Hodge, 1902), pp. 88-9.

one tantalising exception, of local newspapers for Partick and Govan until the mid-1870s onward.

The exception is the 1854 inaugural, and apparently only edition of the *Partick Illustrated Journal*, which also purported to cover events in Govan, Hillhead and Kelvinhaugh. In this single edition, published by Archibald Ferrie, a bookseller and stationer with premises at Partick's Windsor Place, can be found commentary on a variety of local concerns.<sup>2</sup> These included the dangers of cholera and the importance of good drainage, local assessment and value for ratepayers' money compared with other communities, crime rates, the election of new commissioners, the vexed matter of the Kelvin crossing, reports on the state of the shipbuilding trade and the work of local religious and charitable organisations, alongside a variety of advertisements for local goods and services.<sup>3</sup> These advertisements can themselves bear unwitting testimony to class differences in the community. For example, an advertisement for future police commissioner Daniel McFie's, grocery store at 1 Hamilton Place emphasises his adherence to 'Glasgow prices', thereby indicating that the cost of living in Partick may have been somewhat higher than in the city. The publication's first editorial column at once highlights the potential uses of newspaper sources for the social and political historian, and delineates the sort of vivid detail that tends to be absent from the municipal records that this chapter has to rely upon: 'Our aim will be to afford a medium for the *effective discussion of local matters and to furnish a record of local events.*'<sup>4</sup>

### **The Structure and Membership of the Initial Police Boards**

In her study of Paisley politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, historian Catriona MacDonald identified elite networking to be a significant influence there.<sup>5</sup> Nor was this pattern restricted to police burghs. In his study of Glasgow's 'Tobacco Lords', the wealthy mercantile elite of the mid-eighteenth century, historian Tom Devine discerned the operation of a

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<sup>2</sup> Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> *Partick Illustrated Journal* [hereafter *PIJ*], 1 September 1854 (emphasis added).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, emphasis added.

<sup>5</sup> MacDonald, *Radical Thread*, *passim*.

small, tightly-knit group linked by partnership connections, marriage alliance and kinship loyalties. Within the community itself, control was retained by an inner elite whose friends and relatives provided the provosts, councillors and bailies who ruled the town throughout the period.<sup>6</sup>

This thesis does not attempt a near-comprehensive analysis of Partick and Govan's municipal office-bearers and prominent citizens, unlike those undertaken for the city of Glasgow by Irene Maver and Richard Trainor for the same period.<sup>7</sup> The rationale for the more qualitative approach to elite biography followed in this thesis was elaborated in chapter 1. Nevertheless, it is clear that from their incorporation as burghs until their absorption into Glasgow, Partick and Govan's municipal leaders often shared business and family links. Further, both communities' proximity to the city often made for significant overlap between the local establishment and city worthies; in many notable cases, prominent Partickonians and Govanites had business interests in the city whilst residing in their police burgh. Also, it was not uncommon for leading residents to gain municipal office in the city after holding the same in Partick or Govan.

Local building contractor and property magnate Hugh Kennedy typified and exaggerated such patterns. Kennedy held the rank of provost from 1878-83, and was eventually succeeded by his son William. However, his early career surely benefitted from close business and personal links with two of Partick's first municipal leaders. The burgh's first provost, David Tod, had been prepared to act as financial guarantor for Kennedy's work for the Clyde Trustees, and in 1854 Kennedy married Agnes Hunter, daughter of commissioner and local timber-merchant, Moses Hunter.<sup>8</sup> In 1883, his many financial backers included fellow commissioner John White, the burgh's second provost.<sup>9</sup> Kennedy's business career encompassed both public works and private house-building. Kennedy built numerous three or four storey tenements – typically containing three rooms and a kitchen – to house the burgh's growing population, and tenants ranged from skilled

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<sup>6</sup> T.M. Devine, *The Tobacco Lords* (Edinburgh John Donald, 1975), p. 171.

<sup>7</sup> See Maver, *Municipal Administration*, pp. 851-984 and R.H. Trainor, 'The Elite'; W.H. Fraser and I. Maver eds., *Glasgow Volume II: 1830-1912* (Manchester: MUP, 1996), pp. 227-64.

<sup>8</sup> N.J. Morgan, 'Hugh Kennedy'; A. Slaven and S. Checkland (eds.), *Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography, 1800-1900*, Volume 2 (Aberdeen: AUP, 1990), pp.141-143. See also Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 912.

<sup>9</sup> Morgan, 'Kennedy', p. 142.

artisans to white collar workers and professionals.<sup>10</sup> Kennedy's convenership of the burgh's Dean of Guild Court did not appear to raise allegations of a conflict of interest, given his business connections, albeit it is doubtful this would be the perception of readers in 2010. His residential property empire was not restricted to Partick, and his dwellings were to be found in Glasgow's emergent middle-class suburb of Crocmyloof by the time of his death in 1895. After standing down as Partick's provost in 1883, he was appointed Deacon Convener of Glasgow Trades House, with *ex officio* membership of the Town Council, representing the Incorporation of Wrights.<sup>11</sup> Partick's and Govan's early municipal leaders – listed in tables 3.1 and 3.2 at the end of this chapter - bore many of the characteristics of a fraternal club. Of course, this was to become a recurrent theme in municipal elections. Indeed, the perception that both communities' municipal leaders were effectively a self-serving elite persisted up until amalgamation with the city in 1912, as chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this thesis demonstrate. For present purposes, however, it is important to consider the structure of both burghs' new police boards (see figure 3.1).

After adopting the General Police Act, qualified local residents in both Govan and Partick were able to elect their new police board or commission, which would form, in effect, each town's municipal government. The police boards or burgh commissions had twelve seats, comprising a senior magistrate of police (or 'provost'), two junior magistrates of police (or 'bailies'), as well as nine ordinary commissioners.<sup>12</sup> After the first commissioners were elected *en bloc* at a meeting of eligible householders, four commissioners would 'retire' each August, but would be eligible for re-election if they so desired. The annual elections of new commissioners for Partick are discussed in detail in the next chapter. For present purposes it is important to note that although all the elections in Partick were contested during this period, with some incumbent commissioners being unseated, there was no record of debate or policy distinctions between candidates, or even of the tally of votes cast. In the event that a commissioner or magistrate resigned more than a few months in advance of the annual elections in August, or declined to accept his

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 912. Ronald Johnston notes that from 1870-1928, almost half of the Incorporation of Wrights' members lived in Partick and other suburbs, suggesting that 'middle class identity was increasingly becoming bolstered by spatial as well as network factors'. R. Johnston, *Clydeside Capital, 1870-1920: A Social History of Employers*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), p. 96.

<sup>12</sup> Minute Book of the Burgh of Partick [hereafter PMB], 1852, Glasgow City Archives (GCA), (H-Par 1, Vol. 1), *passim* and Govan Feuars' Committee and Police Burgh Minute Book [hereafter GMB], GCA (H-Gov-1, Vol. 1), p. 3.

election after the result had been proclaimed by the Sheriff of Lanarkshire, it fell to his colleagues to select a successor pending the next annual elections. For instance, when James Napier resigned in 1860, the remaining commissioners selected Archibald Gilchrist, an engine works manager and partner at Barclay and Curle's shipyard in the burgh's Whiteinch neighbourhood, almost certainly reflecting a desire to fill Napier's place with a fellow representative of local industry and commerce.<sup>13</sup> Gilchrist had risen from humble origins as an innkeeper's son and he eventually represented the Incorporation of Hammermen as Deacon Convener on Glasgow Town Council.<sup>14</sup> His politics were Conservative and he was a founder member of Sandyford Established Church. Despite his rising wealth, embodied in ownership of desirable residences at Glasgow's salubrious Sandyford Place and, latterly, Dunoon Castle House in Argyllshire, Gilchrist was renowned for his plain-speaking un-pretentious ways.<sup>15</sup> When he acquired his second home, his friends jokingly nicknamed him 'Sir Archibald'.<sup>16</sup> Gilchrist's career reflected the increasing importance of shipbuilding for Partick's economy and still-burgeoning population.

During the 1850s and 60s a number of shipbuilding concerns opened or expanded their operations within the burgh, and the Whiteinch yard was among the most important of these. Between 1851 and 1861, the population of Partick doubled from 5043 to 10,917, boosted by shipbuilding and ancillary trades.<sup>17</sup> There were practical as well as associational reasons for decisions like the appointment of Gilchrist. In addition to fulfilling the conditions required for the municipal franchise, candidates for the Police Board required sufficient means to be able to forego earnings in the time they spent on municipal business, which was unpaid with no recompense for expenses incurred.<sup>18</sup> At the annual elections for commissioners in August 1855, James Craig, a ratepayer from

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<sup>13</sup> PMB, 16 October 1860, pp. 210-211; P. Gifford, *Men of The Clyde*, (Glasgow: unknown imprint, 1995), p. 103.

<sup>14</sup> Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 896.

<sup>15</sup> *GH*, 9 January 1900 (obituary).

<sup>16</sup> *The Bailie*, 20 October 1875.

<sup>17</sup> Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 129.

<sup>18</sup> Salaries for Scottish councillors were only introduced in 2006, although this replaced a contentious system of allowances which had become established in the intervening period. See 'Councillor Salary Plan Published', <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/4652126.stm> (accessed 17/8/2010) for more information.

Partickhill was inspired to thank the commissioners for their ‘gratuitous and able services to the burgh’, a sentiment affirmed by acclamation of all present.<sup>19</sup> Yet Partick citizens of more modest means could not offer such services had they wanted to, even assuming they met the £10 rental qualification. How did those who were able to secure election organise themselves?

The Police Board would subdivide into three crucial standing committees, reflecting their main statutory responsibilities (see figure 3.1, over).<sup>20</sup> Each committee had 4 members, with two representing a quorum. These committees would report their deliberations and recommendations to the full board, usually at the quarterly meetings mandated under the Police legislation, but sometimes at additional meetings if circumstances required this. In most cases the committees were not empowered to take action or enter into agreements with contractors and third parties without first securing the assent of the full board. The Finance Committee was chaired *ex officio* by the provost, whereas the other two committees would comprise any four members of the board. The other standing committees were Watching, Lighting and Street Cleaning, and Sewage, Drainage and Nuisances. There was also a buildings committee, which took on increasing importance as the burgh’s population stimulated demand for housing.

From time to time *ad hoc* committees were set up to deal with particular issues, for instance to consider designs for a Burgh Hall and jail cells. The work of the twelve elected commissioners was supported by the work of the Town Clerk, the Treasurer and the Superintendent of Police. Other important appointed positions were those of Medical Officer of Health (MOH), burgh surveyor, auditors of the burgh accounts and, more prosaically, lamplighters and street cleaners or scavengers. These last two posts were usually combined in the interest of economy. The new commissioners were keen to assert their legitimacy by using titles associated with more traditional burghs, such as ‘provost’ and ‘bailie’, although they were not legally entitled to use these, or other municipal trappings such as coats of arms, until 1900.<sup>21</sup> Partick’s fledgling commissioners were by no means averse to self-congratulation and mutual flattery. For instance, the burgh’s first twelve commissioners made it a high priority to rename local streets in their own honour;

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<sup>19</sup> PMB, 6 August 1855, pp. 105-8.

<sup>20</sup> PMB and GMB 1852-1864, *passim*.

<sup>21</sup> See Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 132.

no objections to this proposal were minuted.<sup>22</sup> As Robert Irving later observed, this evidenced a ‘singular lack of imagination’ on the commissioners’ part.<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 3.1: General Structure of Partick and Govan Police**

**Boards c. 1852-65**

12 Commissioners elected by local ratepayers:-

Chief Magistrate of Police (‘Provost’)

2 x Junior Magistrates of Police (‘Bailies’)

9 x Commissioners of Police (‘Councillors’)

Main Appointed Officials:

Clerk to the Board (also served as registrar)

Treasurer and Calculator / Collector

Superintendent of Police, Procurator Fiscal and Inspector of Nuisances (combined role)

Medical Officer of Health and Surgeon of Police

Standing Committees (4 members, 2 Commissioners constituting a quorum):

Finance (chaired, *ex officio* by Chief Magistrate)

Watching and Lighting

Sewage, Drainage and Nuisances

Buildings

**And** miscellaneous *ad hoc* committees, deputations and appointments as required

(Source: Partick and Govan Burgh minute books, 1852-64 and 1864, respectively, *passim*.)

<sup>22</sup> PMB, 14 Feb 1853, p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> Irving, *Burgh of Partick*, p. 10.

In this context, it is worth reflecting briefly on the personal backgrounds of both burghs' inaugural commissioners, and their respective positions in their communities. Partick's first commissioners were chosen at the burgh's inaugural meeting of 4 August 1852, but who were they? What was their standing in the community and what interests did they represent? It is worth noting that some commissioners have left more vivid and detailed documentary 'footprints' than others. This will become clear from the varied amounts that can be said about each in the biographical appendix. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 give outline biographies of the first police commissioners in Partick and Govan. Partick's first commissioners were evidently sufficiently affluent to be able to spare time for their public duties. Provost Tod and Bailie Inglis were local shipbuilders, and it is not difficult to conceive that their new status as leaders of the burgh provided them with a useful means of consolidating their economic power in the community. When Inglis left the Board in 1877, he was a Bailie, yet in the intervening period he had served on Glasgow Town Council as a Deacon for the Incorporation of Hammermen (1858) and Deacon Convener of the Trades House (1861-3), in addition to fulfilling the role of a Clyde Trustee (1872-5).<sup>24</sup> He evidently enjoyed good connections with Glasgow business circles. Yet Partick's first civic leaders were not all, or even predominantly industrialists, although significantly the first provost and magistrates all were. One in particular epitomised the modernising aspects of the General Police legislation, and the struggle to overcome complacency regarding public health problems. James Napier's life and career in many ways reflected Partick's rise from humble village to emergent industrial powerhouse, and all the inherent ambiguities that entailed.

An industrial chemist, bibliophile, antiquarian and archetypal *lad o' pairs*, he was born in 1810 in the then village of Partick to a jobbing gardener and his seamstress wife.<sup>25</sup> His parents' penury forced him into work at the age of 12, first as a hand-loom weaver and then in the dye trade at Gilchrist's, where he rose to the rank of foreman by the age of 18, after continuing his education at night school. At 21, he married Christina McIndoe and their home became a place of discussion and education with 'kindred spirits'.<sup>26</sup> In 1833,

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<sup>24</sup> See Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 909 and the biographical appendix to this thesis for more information.

<sup>25</sup> A. McConnell, 'Napier, James (1810–1884)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19757>>, accessed 25 Feb 2006.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

he was dismissed for advocating the unionisation of his workplace. However, he was taken back on rather swiftly: a testament to his skills. He soon came to the notice of leading experts in the chemical industry, who encouraged and sponsored his researches at various factories throughout the United Kingdom, with the result that he broke ground in the use of electro-metallurgical methods in the extraction of copper, and made what appears to have been a respectable fortune.<sup>27</sup> He returned to his birthplace in 1852, just in time to apply his formidable campaigning skills to assist its quest for recognition as a police burgh. Parallel to his work for the new burgh, he continued to pursue his myriad interests, particularly his passions for local history and scientific education. Napier's press campaign for better sanitation and public health in Partick, considered in the previous chapter of this study, alongside his trade union sympathies, suggested a certain discomfiture regarding the condition of the working classes and the inertia of their supposed social betters.

In the course of this campaign he provoked the antipathy of landlords who feared that it would adversely affect their property values. Some even went so far as to accuse him of lying.<sup>28</sup> His unease, verging on contempt, towards the behaviour of members of his own adopted class, is manifest in the following extract, worth quoting at length, from his 1851 letter to the editor of the *Glasgow Saturday Post*:

If there is anything that can account for the respectable and wealthy citizens locating themselves quietly in the neighbourhood of Partick, as it now exists, it is *ignorance*. For a powder magazine and a blast furnace fitted up contiguous to each other at the foot of Partickhill would not be more dangerous nor destructive to life than are the streets, the houses and burns of that village. *That the wealthy should congregate around these reeking sinks of filth is not the least astonishing feature of the present age of improvement – showing that the poor are not the only parties to blame, neither are they, thanks to some of the laws of Nature, the only parties who suffer, for the consequences of filth are widespread. [... Were] the money party compelled to do their duty – for nothing short of compulsion will affect that quarter – to drain their lands and provide means of cleanliness, the village of Partick... could be made what Nature has designed, the most pleasant and healthy locality in the country, instead of producing, as it generally does, the first and most fatal fruits of all our epidemics. Were the proverb true that fools learn in the school of experience, we would be looking now for the fruits of such extensive and expensive schooling as this village has gone through. But the proverb is a fallacy; it is only*

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. His wealth at death was calculated at £17,084 6s. 8d.

<sup>28</sup> Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 136.

*the wise who learn by experience – fools never learn. Let the inhabitants of Partick and neighbourhood apply this test of character to themselves.*<sup>29</sup>

It was no coincidence that Napier singled out Partickhill as being in particular danger in this passage. In a 1990 architectural survey of Glasgow, Williamson, Riches and Higgs succinctly observed that: ‘Partick is bounded to the north by the affluence of Partickhill and to the south and east by the Clyde and the Kelvin, the sources of its prosperity.’<sup>30</sup> This statement rather neatly sums up the social and economic eminence of Partickhill’s residents in relation to the (literal) lower orders of the burgh in the late nineteenth century. In a later epistle to the *North British Daily Mail*, in which he had employed his scientific skills in order to elaborate the quantity and nature of local cesspools and the like, Napier concluded with a pointed warning to wealthy residents. If cleansing, drainage and common sewers were not provided, then: ‘[those] wishing to build or make houses in this quarter will pause before they run the risk of dwelling in the midst of such questionable materials for comfort and health, *where retiring from business will be followed certainly and shortly with retiring from life.*’<sup>31</sup> Napier’s words demonstrate vividly that the early decisions taken by the Partick commissioners were much more important than their arid bureaucratic traces might suggest. What were these decisions?

### **Imposing Order: The Partick Commissioners’ Early Activities**

Partick’s commissioners lost little time in organising themselves to tackle the problems which had led to their elevation. The first formal burgh meeting, at noon on 9 August, was held in a ‘humble room’ on Dumbarton Road, with George Buchanan in the chair.<sup>32</sup> All of the commissioners, apart from Robert Kaye, who had sent his apologies, were present.<sup>33</sup> Shipbuilder David Tod was nominated by commissioner James Thomson, whose occupation remains unknown, and seconded by Napier as senior magistrate of police (or

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<sup>29</sup> J. Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences Relating to Partick*, (Glasgow: Hugh Hopkins, 1873), p. 117. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>30</sup> E. Williamson, A. Riches & M. Higgs, *The Buildings of Scotland: Glasgow* (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 369.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 121. Emphasis added.

<sup>32</sup> Taylor, *Partick*, p. 90; PMB, 9 Aug 1852. PMB, p. 19.

<sup>33</sup> PMB, 9 August 1852, p. 19.

‘provost’); the motion was carried unanimously. Tod, born at Scone, Perthshire in 1795, was the leading partner in the shipbuilding firm of Tod and McGregor, which employed almost 1,000 men around the time of the burgh’s formation.<sup>34</sup> He lived at the appropriately-named Iron Bank House in leafy Partickhill. His obituary notice in the *Transactions of the Institute of Engineers and Shipbuilders in Scotland* depicted him as an extremely skilful engineer and designer, during whose stewardship, ‘the firm never had a lawsuit, a case of reference or a disputed account’.<sup>35</sup> Tailor Robert Paterson nominated John Buchanan - either a cotton-spinner or a wine and spirit merchant - as junior magistrate of police. This nomination was seconded by iron-founder John Walker and carried unanimously. Later in the proceedings, Thomson moved that there be a motion of ‘high appreciation’ for Buchanan’s ‘great and continued exertions for the improvement and benefit of the locality’ – specifically his efforts in support of adoption of the General Police Act. This was also unanimously agreed.<sup>36</sup> Ralston nominated timber merchant Moses Hunter as junior magistrate of police, with the nomination seconded by Walker and carried unanimously.

The key positions of clerk to the commissioners (*de facto* Town Clerk), Treasurer and Superintendent of Police then had to be filled. Matthew Walker, a ‘writer’ (solicitor) living at Douglas Street, was nominated as clerk by Paterson, seconded by Napier and elected unanimously. He accepted office, at a salary of £50 per annum, at the next meeting held on 17 August.<sup>37</sup> Gavin Paisley of Windsor Place, an agent in Partick of the City of Glasgow Bank, was nominated as Treasurer and Collector for the burgh by Hunter, seconded by Ralston.<sup>38</sup> He also accepted his appointment and agreed to find £200 security against potential fraud. In order to allow rates of assessment to be set, Commissioner Hunter then moved that a committee including himself, chaired by Tod, and including

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<sup>34</sup> Gifford, *Men*, pp. 279-80; PMB, 9 August 1852, p.19; Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 153; Post Office Glasgow Directory for 1852, 1853, 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Publication, (Glasgow: William Mackenzie, 1864), hereafter POD 1852; 1851 Census Enumerator’s Book for Partick, p.39 of Roll 646 / 627A, hereafter 1851 Census.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Gifford, *Men*, p. 280.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 20-1.

<sup>37</sup> Meeting of 17 August 1852, PMB, p. 22; R. Irving, *The Burgh of Partick* (University of Strathclyde, Unpublished B.A. Dissertation, 1975), p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> PMB 17 August 1852, pp. 20-2.

Napier, Thomson and Shanks, take steps to procure a plan of the burgh.<sup>39</sup> This was to be drawn up by Mr Kyle, who became burgh surveyor.<sup>40</sup> In terms of temporary accommodation for meetings of the commissioners, it was agreed that these would be held in Partick Academy, until a more fitting site could be found.<sup>41</sup> The commissioners were legally required to meet on at least a quarterly basis (in February, May, August and November) but additional meetings were often needed. Only from 1864 on would they feel it necessary to meet monthly.<sup>42</sup>

It is remarkable how sanguine the first Partick commissioners were regarding each others' proposals at these early meetings. It is reasonable to infer that substantive decisions were taken in advance of formal meetings, which were used as something of a rubber stamping exercise. It seems unlikely, if not impossible, that such unanimity of purpose arose entirely by chance. The appointments of Walker and Paisley almost certainly were borne of some, or all, of the commissioners' dealings with these men in a commercial capacity. It does not appear that any other candidates were considered for these posts. Hugh Kennedy would almost certainly have encountered Paisley, whose premises as the agent of the City of Glasgow Bank were near his own at Windsor Place; Paisley represented the bank to prospective tenants of commercial and residential properties comparable to those advertised by his neighbour.<sup>43</sup> Paisley, who also represented the local interests of the North British Insurance Company, was evidently a busy man.

The second meeting, chaired by Chief Magistrate Tod, organised the commissioners into standing committees to tackle Partick's municipal finances, public order and public health, under the terms of the General Police legislation.<sup>44</sup> Each committee would have four members, with two required for quoracy.<sup>45</sup> The finance committee was convened by Tod, again apparently *ex officio*, with Buchanan, Hunter and

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 9 Aug 1852, p. 20.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid 17 August 1852, p. 22.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 9 Aug 1852, pp. 20-1.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 10 December 1863, pp. 270-2.

<sup>43</sup> *PIJ*, 1 September 1854.

<sup>44</sup> *PMB*, 17 August 1852, pp. 21-2.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

Ralston as members. The committee for watching, lighting and street cleaning had Richmond as its convener, with Walker, Thomson and White as its members. The committee for sewage, drainage and nuisances was convened by Napier, joined by commissioners Kaye, Paterson and Shanks. The analysis now turns to the major decisions and activities of Partick's Police Board in its first decade of existence; their four main areas of responsibility will be considered.

### **Finance and Local Taxation**

As was seen in the first chapter of this study, one of the major imperatives in the creation of Partick as an administrative community in 1852 was the inadequacy of voluntary subscription to fund direly needed local improvements. Against this backdrop, it is scarcely surprising that ensuring stable and secure municipal finances was a major preoccupation of the new commissioners. While decisions were awaited on rates of local assessment, the commissioners required ready cash for a variety of expenses. These included the repayment of almost £600 liabilities of the voluntary police committee and nearly £1,000 fees incurred in the creation of the burgh itself, as well as payment for the urgently needed burgh plan, the construction of police and court buildings and municipal rooms, and the fitting-up of street lamps.<sup>46</sup> On behalf of the burgh, Treasurer Paisley secured a £2,000 loan at four per cent interest from the City of Glasgow Bank. Before committing itself to this arrangement, the Police statute required the burgh to notify ratepayers of its intention to borrow the funds; such notice was duly given in adverts placed in the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Reformer's Gazette* newspapers.<sup>47</sup> This reflects the fact that significant municipal income had already been obtained. The first burgh accounts, prepared by Paisley for the period 6 October 1852 to 12 July 1853 indicate that £537 17s 3 & ½d had been raised in local assessment, with £63 16s 2d outstanding.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the absence of a proper burgh plan had not deterred the collection of assessment revenues in the interim.

After the burgh plan had been drawn up, a more permanent assessment regime was implemented from late 1853, when the rate was set at one shilling per pound, payable on

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 18 April 1853, p. 141.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. The notices were published in these newspapers' editions of 23 April, reproduced in the burgh minutes.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 9 May 1853, p. 42.

23 December.<sup>49</sup> Any appeals were to be lodged with the clerk by 19 November, to be ruled upon from Saturday 26 November. The bill book of assessment would be available for public inspection until the appeals were decided. Rates continued to be set at one shilling per pound of rental for the rest of the period considered in this chapter, and the procedures for fixing and collecting the rates changed little.<sup>50</sup> One minor change occurred in late 1860, when the burgh's financial year was shifted to run from May to May, rather than from March to March as it had done for the previous eight years.<sup>51</sup> From autumn 1857, the burden of local taxation was increased for ratepayers whose drainage was provided by the burgh; the extra assessment within the drainage district would be levied at two pence per pound of rental for the rest of the period covered by this chapter.<sup>52</sup> Two immediate inferences can be drawn from the levying of assessments. First, these can be regarded as a regressive tax, with less wealthy citizens paying a higher proportion of their income than their richer neighbours. Second, the fact that drainage rates applied only within the special drainage district indicates how slowly the sewers were being constructed in Partick. However, by 1858 Treasurer Paisley was pleased to inform his elected masters that the assessable rental of the burgh had 'considerably increased' in line with the expansion in population associated with the growth of shipbuilding, especially in the Whiteinch quarter where Barclay and Curle's yard had recently opened.<sup>53</sup> In 1862, the Treasurer requested that unspecified 'irrecoverable arrears' from the previous financial year be written off, indicating that at least some Partick residents struggled to pay the rates.<sup>54</sup>

The following commentary from the *Partick Illustrated Journal* contended that local ratepayers received good value for money compared with their counterparts in Johnstone, Renfrewshire, a rural community on the south side of the Clyde which continued to watch and light itself by voluntary arrangement.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 20 September 1853, p. 65.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, *passim*.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 10 Oct 1860, pp. 209-10.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 12 October 1857, p. 151-2 and *passim*.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 6 September 1858, pp. 172-3.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 6 September 1862, pp. 249-50.

‘[I]t would appear that some wise men in Johnstone have made the “discovery” that the inhabitants of Partick have been made to “pay for their Whistle” in adopting the Burgh Act. There has been formed in Johnstone a voluntary Lighting and Watching Committee, who, in publishing their report, state, that Johnstone, with a population of 6,500, has been lighted, watched and drained at a cost of from 3d to 4d per pound on the rental, while the people of Partick, with a population of 2,000, and the Burgh Act, are made to pay 1s. *We are not advocates of a high rate of assessment*, but if we correct the blunder of the Johnstone committee and compare the results of the two systems, *we think the rate-payers of Partick will agree with us when we assert that all the advantages are in favour of Partick*. The population of Partick is estimated at from 8,000 to 10,000, and if we take the medium, 9,000, we have 2,500 inhabitants more than Johnstone. In Johnstone the lighting is mean and frequently complained of, while Partick is well-lighted with about 200 lamps. In Johnstone, there is one constable with an occasional assistant, and criminal cases are taken before the monthly Justice of Peace Court held in Paisley, while in Partick there are thirteen watchmen – a daily court is held, where criminals are instantly dealt with, and the Superintendent acts as Fiscal. *In Johnstone little attention is paid to the cleansing and drainage of the place, while in Partick, sewers have been carried through almost every street.*<sup>55</sup>

The anonymous author of the above commentary evidently had a middle-class background, and even as early as 1854 there is evidence of a sense of civic pride, perhaps even prickliness in what is written. Given the lack of comparable sources, it is difficult to ascertain how far the sentiments in this extract were shared by other inhabitants of Partick in this period. There is evidence, however, that the commissioners were keen to secure the deference of poorer inhabitants of the burgh through the judicious use of municipal funds. For instance, the burgh minutes for 14 May 1858 record that ‘a number of poor persons who had not, [through] ignorance’ taken the chance to appeal against assessments which they could not afford, but had since been in touch with several of the commissioners would, after all, have their appeals held and relief granted if an *ad hoc* committee found this appropriate.<sup>56</sup> The farmers of the burgh had also been allowed to pay assessment at two thirds of the usual rate, on the grounds that their lands did not benefit from services such as street lighting and cleaning.<sup>57</sup> In February 1863, the burgh planned to mark the wedding of the Prince of Wales with a special display of gas lamps around the police buildings.<sup>58</sup> As ‘the poor within the burgh should not be overlooked’ at this time of celebration, it was resolved that two shillings each would be paid to local inhabitants on

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<sup>55</sup> *PIJ*, 1 September 1854, emphasis added.

<sup>56</sup> *PMB*, 14 May 1858 pp. 161-2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, meeting of 10 May 1858, p. 160.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, meeting of 9 February 1863, pp. 255-6.

the poor roll for Govan Parish and that ‘other’ poor people not on the roll were to be given a farthing (1/4 *d*). This largesse was to be paid from a poor fund in the burgh bank account; if this proved insufficient, then around £20 would be raised by public subscription. Another major driving force in the creation of the burgh had been the need for a professional, locally accountable police force. The next section examines the development of this aspect of Partick’s civic life.

### **Policing and Public Order**

Immediately upon its appointment in early August 1852, the new watching and lighting committee was tasked, alongside Provost Tod, with finding someone suitable for the combined roles of superintendent of police and procurator fiscal. They approached Captain Smart of Glasgow police to recommend suitable candidates from his own force. The next meeting of the commissioners, held on 24 August, considered the level of remuneration for this key post.<sup>59</sup> It was set at a maximum of £80. ‘In the event’ that Smart could not recommend someone who would accept this salary, the commissioners would advertise the post, but this did not prove necessary.<sup>60</sup> Thomson stated that he, White and the clerk had consulted Chief Constable Smart, and had since received three names of suitable candidates from him; these men were invited to apply for the post.<sup>61</sup> The clerk was to inform the applicants that they would receive no additional salary for exigencies of the posts not specified in the offices of superintendent of police and procurator fiscal, but within the terms of the Police Acts. The experience of the next ten years would suggest that the decision to concentrate so many vital responsibilities on one individual, with little or no additional salary or support, was a false economy.

At any rate, the next meeting of the commissioners, held on 7 September, considered the applications of Paul McColl and Isaac Goodfellow, who had both been nominated by Smart.<sup>62</sup> Both candidates were held to be ‘eminently qualified’, but no indication was given in the minutes of the grounds for Goodfellow’s rejection, or McColl’s

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 24 August 1852, p. 23.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 7 September 1852, p. 24.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 27 August 1852, pp. 23-4.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 7 September 1852, p. 24.

advantages. It is unclear who Smart's third nominee was. In any case, the commissioners unanimously decided to appoint McColl on a salary of £75 per annum. He was reminded immediately on his acceptance of the post that he would have to take on any other roles that the commissioners saw fit, under the terms of the General Police Act, with no possibility of additional recompense. He was allowed to recruit seven constables – no more than that – to be deployed by within the burgh as he thought best for 'protection of the peace'. He was also immediately and unanimously appointed as Partick's inspector of nuisances. Clearly the commissioners wished to keep rates as low as possible. The phrase 'no additional salary' appears twice in the minutes for this meeting; economy evidently was a priority of the new commission. At the same meeting, the watching and lighting committee was instructed to appoint a lamplighter. The committee was also, in consultation with Superintendent McColl, to seek temporary police accommodation and to arrange the construction of more permanent cells and offices. At the previous meeting on 1 September, the commissioners had decided to consult on new bye laws dealing with the regulation and removal of nuisances in the burgh.<sup>63</sup>

In August 1853, the constables were granted an additional shilling per week, and the superintendent's salary was increased to £90 per annum, in recognition that his workload as procurator fiscal was now significantly greater than had been anticipated at the time of his appointment.<sup>64</sup> In April 1854, the Superintendent requested another advance on his salary, which the commissioners refused, instead increasing his salary to £100.<sup>65</sup> From this point consideration was also given to increasing the wages of the constables by sixpence per week, although no immediate decision was made. McColl's increased salary satisfied him only briefly; by May 1855 he approached the commissioners again, this time to request three month's advance salary, which he proposed to repay at the rate of £1, 5s per month.<sup>66</sup> This request was dismissed by the commissioners, by a one vote majority, and even those in favour would have insisted on repayment within the year.<sup>67</sup> The following March, yet another application from McColl for a rise in salary was

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 1 September 1852, p. 25.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 11 August 1853, p. 60.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 4 April and 12 May 1854, p. 78 and pp. 80-81, respectively.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 14 May 1855 p. 97.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 23 May 1855 pp. 98-9.

heard; a ‘large majority’ of the commissioners voted to grant him an increase of £20 per annum, to take effect from 1 April.<sup>68</sup> In February 1858, McColl was assigned the additional duty of surveyor of buildings within the burgh, as many were deemed to be in a condition ‘dangerous’ to the inhabitants.<sup>69</sup>

Further changes to Partick policing were imminent. The first inspection of the City of Glasgow Police Force was conducted on 5 June 1858, by Colonel Kinloch, Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland.<sup>70</sup> The Partick commissioners would have been aware of this, its successful outcome and associated prestige when they discussed whether their own burgh should apply for a grant for watching, lighting and police from central government under section 66 of the Act to render more effectual the Police in Counties and Burghs in Scotland (1857).<sup>71</sup> Having resolved to do this with only one commissioner, Shanks, dissenting (no reasons for this were recorded), the discussion then moved to a re-structuring of the Partick constabulary. It was decided that there would now be several classes of constable in Partick.<sup>72</sup>

Figure 3.2: Structure of Partick Burgh Police from  
1858-61

- 1) 2 sergeants paid 21 shillings per week
- 2) 3 constables paid 19 shillings per week
- 3) 4 constables paid 19 shillings per week
- 4) 4 constables paid 17 shillings per week
- 5) 4 constables paid 16 shillings per week

Source: PMB, 14 June 1858, pp. 162-3.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 10 March 1856 pp. 116-8.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 16 Feb 1858, p. 159.

<sup>70</sup> D. Grant, *The Thin Blue Line: The story of the City of Glasgow police*, (London: John Long, 1973), p. 36.

<sup>71</sup> PMB, 7 and 14 June 1858, pp. 161-3.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 14 June 1858, pp. 162-3.

This new structure was similar to that which pertained to the uniform division of the city's much larger force, although the Partick constabulary was tiny by comparison and, overall, slightly less well-paid.<sup>73</sup> For the first time, however, Partick's police would now be paid for overtime. A motion to delay the pay increases, proposed and seconded by commissioners Kaye and Shanks was soundly defeated. The salary of the Superintendent of Police and Procurator Fiscal would now be raised to £150 per annum, on condition that he and his family continued to live in their tied accommodation in the police buildings, on which he would now pay £20 per year in rent. This motion was carried by a margin of one vote, but, aside from the movers of the dissenting amendment to leave the superintendent's salary unchanged, there is no record of the other dissenters' identities. The opposition to McColl's increase was lead by Campbell King, a Glasgow businessman and resident of affluent Jordanhill, first elected in 1854, alongside Alexander Wright, a local grocer and spirit merchant first elected in 1855.<sup>74</sup> King, especially, appears from the burgh minutes to have been even more cautious about spending burgh funds than his thrifty colleagues.

Until about 1860, despite his frequent requests for additional salary, McColl appeared to be coping well with his onerous duties. His force bore up well to external scrutiny, with Colonel Kinloch's first annual inspection finding that it had been kept in a state of efficiency for the year ending 12 March 1859.<sup>75</sup> On 8 August the same year, a representative of Her Majesty's Treasury requested a certified copy of the burgh accounts, in order to verify 'the actual sum disbursed' for police pay and clothing in the past year.<sup>76</sup> This appears to have been a routine request under the grants and inspection regime the burgh had signed up to in 1858, and the clerk complied. Kinloch's next annual inspection report found the police fine books and offices to be in good order and indicated his approval.<sup>77</sup> However, when McColl was asked to attend the commissioners' meeting on

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<sup>73</sup> Grant, *Thin Blue Line*, p. 36.

<sup>74</sup> PMB, 4 August 1854 pp. 85-6 and 6 August 1855 pp. 105-108.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 6 July 1859, p. 185.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 8 August 1859, p. 185.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 14 February 1860, pp. 196-7.

14 February 1860, to discuss lighting and other routine matters, it transpired he had gone home. At this stage, the meeting expressed its dissatisfaction at McColl's conduct, for this was not his first such absence without leave. This was to be relayed to him by the clerk. At the next meeting, in typically verbose fashion, the commissioners issued a more severe reprimand.<sup>78</sup>

Mr McColl, having been called before the meeting by the senior magistrate... [it was stated] that the Commissioners present were unanimous in opinion that he was not paying proper attention to his duties as Superintendent of Police and Inspector of Nuisances and urged upon him the necessity of being more diligent in attention to these duties to be displayed by him in future.

Six months on, McColl was again called before the commissioners to face these and even more serious accusations - specifically fraud. Something of a showdown ensued, during which McColl admitted to having kept £64 in police fines for personal use, rather than passing them to the Treasurer.<sup>79</sup> The commissioners swiftly decided that, since McColl had:

been careless & inattentive to and negligent of his duties, *much to the injury and discredit of the Burgh*, and therefore resolved and do hereby resolve unanimously that he should now cease to be Superintendent of Police and Inspector of Nuisances for the Burgh of Partick.<sup>80</sup>

The commissioners' outrage was as clear as Clerk Walker's prose was opaque. Despite their ire, they seem to have relented somewhat by allowing McColl the dignity of resigning of his own accord, as if he had any choice in the matter.<sup>81</sup> It appears that the commissioners were able to recover most or all of the missing funds, as they instructed Treasurer Paisley to pay the disgraced ex-superintendent, who claimed that his family were in 'extreme want' £5 as his pay for his last month of employment. They would not be so generous to his replacement, whose salary they set at £120 per annum, including payment for the roles of procurator fiscal and inspector of nuisances. Only commissioner King dissented from this decision, partly on procedural grounds, which appeared to irk the other commissioners.<sup>82</sup> The clerk was instructed to advertise the vacant post. Meantime, the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 27 March 1860, pp. 197-9.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 19 November 1860, pp. 210-211, emphasis added.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 26 November 1860, pp. 213-4.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 3 December 1860, pp. 214-5. Campbell King's background is from *ibid*, 4 August 1854 pp. 85-6 and 6 August 1855 pp. 105-108.

role of acting superintendent was performed by Constable William Mitchell; as a reward for this he was to be promoted to the rank of sergeant, first class at the weekly salary of £1, 2 shillings.<sup>83</sup> No reason was given as to why neither of the existing sergeants was approached to fill McColl's post pending the appointment of a permanent replacement, but the minutes do not suggest that any other officers had been involved in corruption.

This thesis does not suggest that McColl's behaviour was either representative or unique among mid-Victorian police officers, but the scandal and the commissioners' shocked reaction to it can be taken as one instance of a wider historiographical point made by James Moore and the late John Smith in their 2007 work on the phenomenon of corruption in urban politics. They noted that corruption in the local state remains a relatively under-studied issue, and that this is especially surprising, given that: 'for most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, local public and political institutions were far more important in everyday life than distant events at Westminster.'<sup>84</sup> This assertion is borne out both by the McColl case and by the much more serious Colquhoun scandal discussed in the biographical appendix. In any event, corruption is not an absolute concept. As far as can be ascertained, there were no legal or moral objections voiced regarding the conflict of interest inherent in Hugh Kennedy's chairmanship of Partick's buildings committee or Dean of Guild Court before he became provost.<sup>85</sup>

After making 'minute enquiry' into the character and qualifications of several applicants for the post of superintendent, a shortlist of six was prepared by mid December.<sup>86</sup> All but one of the applicants currently held posts in west Scotland, and two front runners swiftly emerged: Andrew Edwards from the county police in Paisley, Renfrewshire, and James Dobie, superintendent at Renfrew. Edwards was chosen by a 'large majority' of the commissioners, and, like his predecessor, was to combine the role with the offices of procurator fiscal and inspector of nuisances. On accepting his

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 19 December 1860. pp. 216-7.

<sup>84</sup> J.R. Moore and J. Smith, 'Corruption and Urban Governance' in their edited collection *Corruption in Urban Politics and Society, Britain 1780-1950*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 5. The assertion about the importance of the local state parallels Morton's arguments, discussed elsewhere in this thesis.

<sup>85</sup> PMB, 14 April 1876, pp. 40-3. See also, Morgan, 'Hugh Kennedy', p. 143.

<sup>86</sup> PMB, 10 December 1860, pp. 215-6.

appointment, Edwards was asked to provide £100 security to the commissioners, who were mindful of the McColl debacle. Further consideration was given to the structure of the force, which was made more compact, almost certainly to offset the increases in salary.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 19 Dec 1860 pp. 216-7

Figure 3.3: Structure of Partick Burgh Police from 1861-4

1 sergeant paid £1 2 shillings per week

2 sergeants paid £1 1 shilling per week

3 constables paid 19 shillings per week

3 constables paid 18 shillings per week

3 constables paid 17 shillings per week

(Source PMB, 19 Dec 1860 pp. 216-7)

This appears to have been yet another false economy, as Edwards soon felt it necessary to request that the Watching and Lighting Committee, now more often referred to as ‘the Police Committee’ hire additional constables.<sup>88</sup> The new police chief became as persistent in his requests for more men as his predecessor had in his pleas for money, but with limited success. Initially, he was granted only one extra constable.<sup>89</sup> A spate of housebreakings in the burgh in autumn 1863 added credibility to Edwards’ warnings that his men were spread too thinly to police Partick adequately.<sup>90</sup> Even then, the Police Committee was permitted, not directed, to allow the appointment of two constables for the duration of winter, *if* they deemed this necessary. On 4 November 1863, the committee appeared to have decided against the request and in favour of additional lighting in the affected areas.<sup>91</sup> Yet two weeks later they relented, allowing Edwards to employ two additional constables till the spring.<sup>92</sup> By mid April 1864, the commissioners had resolved

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 16 July 1863, pp. 257-8.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 10 August 1863, p. 258.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 14 October 1863, pp. 266-8.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 4 November 1863, p. 269.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 16 November 1863, p. 270.

to extend the three new constables' appointments indefinitely.<sup>93</sup> Yet if they had learned about the dangers of having too few officers on the beat, they remained keen to add to the superintendent's workload. In February 1864, Edwards was appointed inspector of lodging houses in Partick, with no further pay, but the role of surveying dangerous buildings in the burgh was at least given to a qualified architect, John Smith.<sup>94</sup> Speaking of lodgings, a tenement was to be obtained for the constables to live in, on the recommendation of Colonel Kinloch.<sup>95</sup> Leaving bureaucratic battles and internal difficulties aside, what sort of cases did the Partick police have to contend with? The police returns for 1853-4 provide an indication of this.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 11 April 1864, pp. 278-9.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 8 February 1864, pp. 273-5 and 11 April 1864, pp. 278-9.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 8 February 1864, pp. 273-5.

Figure 3.4: POLICE RETURNS – April 1853, to April, 1854

<u>Category of Offence</u>	<u>Number of</u>
<u>Cases</u>	
Drunkenness, Disorderly, and Assault,	463
Embezzlement, Fraud and Imposition,	42
Nuisances and Contraventions,	285
Examined as to Theft, not brought before the Court,	21
Drunk and Unable, dismissed by Superintendent, and for Protection,	189

Source: *Partick Illustrated Journal* 1 September 1854

It is clear that alcohol-related cases dominated the dealings of Partick's Police Court, even at this early stage of the burgh's history. The early burgh minutes demonstrate lines being drawn between adherents of the temperance movement and the drink trade, or at least its clientele. This presaged the political battles over licensing, limitation and prohibition that would soon dominate Partick for the rest of its municipal career, and even

beyond the 1912 amalgamation with Glasgow. At this point, however, the commissioners had little power to curb the trade in drink, even had they wished to do so. In April 1853, the commissioners considered a petition from the teachers of Partick Sabbath School Union, complaining about the:

intemperance of the inhabitants of the Burgh and strangers frequenting the same, particularly upon the Sabbath day, and calling the attention of the Magistrates to the number of Public Houses within the Burgh and Craving them to diminish the number of licensed houses at the ensuing term for granting licenses. Which petition having been read over was unanimously received and the Clerk was instructed to *explain to the petitioner that the Magistrates had not the power of granting license for the Burgh, but that they would exercise their authority under the Statute to suppress the [disturbances]*.<sup>96</sup>

Alcohol was one potential threat to the inhabitants of Partick, but it was not the only one. The discussion now turns to the measures taken by the commissioners to improve public health in their young burgh.

### **Public Health**

The spectres of Asiatic cholera and dysentery had loomed large over the creation of Partick as a burgh, when such diseases were mistakenly associated with the notion of miasma, rather than their scientific cause, tainted water.<sup>97</sup> Once again, the abortive local newspaper succeeded in evoking the urgency, complexity and scale of the task facing the new commissioners as they sought to improve sanitation and public health.<sup>98</sup> These improvements were essential, given that local conditions were quite literally comparable to those in what early twenty-first century readers would regard as those in ‘developing’ countries. Cholera, the *Partick Illustrated Journal reported*, had:<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> PMB, 18 April 1853, p. 41 (emphasis added).

<sup>97</sup> NHS Choices, ‘Conditions: Cholera’, <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cholera/Pages/Definition.aspx> (accessed 14/8/2010); NHS Choices, ‘Conditions: Dysentery’, <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Dysentery/Pages/Introduction.aspx> (accessed 14/8/2010). Miasmatic models of disease are elaborated in R. Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present* (London: Fontana, 1999 edition), p. 10 and *passim*.

<sup>98</sup> *PIJ*, 1 September 1854.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, (emphasis added).

for so many months been hanging over our country like a sword unsheathed, keeping men in awe, and filling them with terror, is again in our midst. During the past month in our neighbourhood, we have had stern lessons of what a scourge it is, and some faint idea of what a calamity its continuance may become. Although this disease may baffle the skill of the wisest, its repeated visits have been too carefully noticed, not to carry conviction to every mind, that with rare and marked exceptions, *it seeks out its objects among the degraded, the filthy, and the reckless – that it rages where cess-pools and sewerages are allowed to send forth their noxious vapours, and where human beings are crowded in houses dingy and unventilated. Then is it possible to remove this plague? Or when removed, to keep it away? Most certainly, but only on the supposition, that another question may be answered in the affirmative. Is it possible to remove those nuisances which unite and foster it? The task is a difficult one, no doubt, which the sanitary reformer has to perform; and while much has been accomplished of late in Partick and Govan, still there is much to be done. Let diligence be doubled. The dung-hill and the cess-pool still demand attention.*

As was seen in chapter two, the commissioners were at least grudgingly aware that such diseases were no respecters of social status, regardless of their dubious equation of physical disease with moral danger. As W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver explained with reference to developments in Glasgow around this time, cholera outbreaks had ‘become inextricably linked with the need to cleanse and purify the deleterious urban environment, both literally and figuratively’, contributing to the growing pressure to improve the city’s water supply.<sup>100</sup> As chapter 1 of this thesis discussed, the more extensive powers available under ‘populous places’ provisions of the 1862 ‘Lindsay Act’, under which Govan attained police burgh status, also reflected contemporary concerns about public health.<sup>101</sup> The discussion here does not seek to comprehensively describe the design and progress of every sewer and drainage ditch laid in Partick, but to offer some insights into the way in which these projects were commissioned and coordinated. Housing could also very reasonably be considered a vital aspect of public health in the burgh, but this will be discussed in the section on buildings.

On 7 January 1853, befitting his passion for public health, James Napier suggested that the burgh appoint a Surgeon of Police and MOH.<sup>102</sup> The Police Statute under which the burgh had been created permitted, but did not require that someone be appointed to this post; thus the commissioners demonstrated a degree of enlightened thinking in making

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<sup>100</sup> W.H. Fraser and I. Maver, ‘Tackling the Problems’; W.H. Fraser and I. Maver (eds.), *Glasgow, Volume II: 1830-1912*, (Manchester: MUP, 1996), p. 406.

<sup>101</sup> See chapter 2, *passim*.

<sup>102</sup> PMB 7 January 1853, pp. 35-6.

such an appointment.<sup>103</sup> Three local surgeons were considered for the appointment, and after a process of elimination by commissioners' vote, Doctor James Paterson was chosen. In the continuing absence of a designated Secretary of State for Scotland, the Police Statute required that the commissioners' choice should be ratified by one of Her Majesty's principal secretaries of state: Home Secretary Lord Palmerston did the honours.<sup>104</sup> Within months of his appointment, the new MOH asked the commissioners to consider contingency arrangements in the event of a cholera outbreak in or near the burgh.<sup>105</sup> At first, the commissioners were delighted to do this, resolving to 'enforce cleanliness among the inhabitants of the burgh and cause all nuisances to be removed without delay'. When it became clear that the problem required more than declarations of intent and ambitions toward social control, their position became more evasive. In October 1853, a deputation from Govan Parochial Board, comprising Mr John Wilkie, one Dr. Stewart and Mr James Kirkwood, appeared before the Police Board to confer with the commissioners about designating a temporary cholera hospital for Partick.<sup>106</sup>

Despite the increasingly serious prospect of an outbreak, the commissioners were reluctant to sacrifice their new police buildings, which the deputation thought were the only suitable premises in the burgh. The commissioners adjourned their meeting for one day to give the matter 'serious consideration'. Having done so, they decided that they would prefer to procure and adapt an 'old building at the end of Kelvin Street' for the hospital, but if cholera arrived before this could be done, 'a portion of' the police offices' could be used as a last resort.<sup>107</sup> An arrangement could not be reached with the owner of the Kelvin Street building, and the commissioners were forced to abide by their agreement to yield some of the police rooms in the event of outbreak, but they entreated the parochial board to build a proper hospital in the burgh as soon as possible.<sup>108</sup> This wish would not

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<sup>103</sup> The bureaucratic backdrop to the role of the M.O.H. in Scotland is considered in Blackden, *Board of Supervision, passim*. For a broader (UK-wide) contextual discussion of the role of the M.O.H., see also D. Porter, *Health, Civilization and the State: A History of Public Health from Ancient to Modern Times* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 137-9. See also Fraser and Maver, 'Tackling the Problems', p. 404.

<sup>104</sup> PMB, 14 February 1853, p. 37.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 20 September 1853, p. 65.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 17 October 1853, p. 66.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 18 October 1853, pp. 68-9.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 21 October 1853, pp. 69-70.

be granted till 1877, when the Knightswood Joint Infectious Diseases Hospital opened, to the north-west of the burgh.

Leaving the treatment of infections aside, what did the commissioners actually do to prevent them in the first place? The lack of proper cleansing and drainage in the burgh was an issue given high priority by the commissioners, but the planning and laying of sewers was far from a straightforward task. In June 1853, the commissioners agreed to proceed with plans to form three main sewers in the burgh.<sup>109</sup> After some initial muddle over who should be awarded the contracts for the sewers, two of the projects were handed over to Hugh Kennedy, a future commissioner, and the remaining one was given to another builder, Robert McFarlane.<sup>110</sup> The minutes give the clear impression that far more extensive works would be required in the longer term. These sewers were to make use of existing running water in Partick, such as the Hayburn, which would discharge into the river Kelvin until this met the Clyde. This far from satisfactory arrangement would continue until annexation by Glasgow in 1912, although it was still a major improvement on the situation before the Burgh's formation. Between 1854 and 1872, average mortality per thousand heads of population in the burgh had fallen from 34.5 to 21.<sup>111</sup> However, this improvement is also attributable to the introduction of the Glasgow Loch Katrine water service in 1859.<sup>112</sup> Prior to this, Partick relied on the river Kelvin (into which sewage was discharged) and a variety of private wells of doubtful wholesomeness. Throughout the first decade or so of the burgh's existence, its sewage system developed in a piecemeal fashion, with constant requests by proprietors for drainage on their lands and disputes over whether drains built on private land should be adopted by the municipality.<sup>113</sup> The superintendent, in his capacity as inspector of nuisances, regularly dealt with complaints regarding ashpits and illegal piggeries in the burgh, and his constables were expected to report any such nuisances to him.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 29 June 1853, p. 49.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 20 September 1853, p. 64.

<sup>111</sup> Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, p. 126.

<sup>112</sup> Taylor, *Partick Past and Present*, p. 89.

<sup>113</sup> PMB, 1852-64, *passim*.

<sup>114</sup> See for instance *ibid*, 4 November 1857, pp. 154-5.

Another sanitation issue presented itself in 1858, when a number of Partick's butchers made representation to the commissioners for the building of a public slaughterhouse.<sup>115</sup> There had been at least one instance of unlicensed slaughter of sheep and cattle in Partick in 1856.<sup>116</sup> The persistence of private slaughterhouses in Victorian urban Britain posed a number of threats to public health, from congesting the streets with livestock and piles of rotting meat to the risk of contaminating the local food supply with diseased meat.<sup>117</sup> The sanitary committee reported that the only appropriate site for such a building was on the old bridge near Kelvin Way; this land could be obtained for £600, and the construction was estimated to cost a further £250.<sup>118</sup> The decision about the proposed slaughterhouse was remitted to a special meeting on 28 February 1859. At this meeting, where commissioners Archibald Auld and John Walker spoke against the proposal, the decision was delayed for further consideration, since there were insufficient funds for the project in the burgh purse.<sup>119</sup> The issue was broached again in 1862, when it was decided that any slaughterhouse should be suitable for use by all butchers working within the burgh.<sup>120</sup> Finally, in March 1864, the commissioners secured the agreement of a public meeting of ratepayers for a slaughterhouse to be built in the burgh; the design of this was intended to avoid any unpleasant noises and smells distressing the inhabitants.<sup>121</sup>

In the United Kingdom context, by building a public slaughterhouse at this time, Partick's commissioners again demonstrated remarkable foresight and a departure from the *laissez-faire* ethos of their age, considering that, as Ian MacLachlan has shown, London entered the twentieth century with hundreds of private slaughterhouses still open.<sup>122</sup> That said, the Partick commissioners' task was made easier because local butchers supported the

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 8 November 1858, p. 175.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 10 March 1856, pp. 116-8.

<sup>117</sup> See I. MacLachlan, 'A bloody offal nuisance: the persistence of private slaughterhouses in late-nineteenth century London', *Urban History* 34:2 (2007), pp. 227-54.

<sup>118</sup> PMB, 21 February 1859, pp. 176-7.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 28 February 1859, pp. 178-9.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 17 March 1862, pp. 238-9.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 22 March 1864, pp. 276-7 and *GH*, 9 February 1864.

<sup>122</sup> MacLachlan, 'Bloody offal nuisance', p. 254.

municipal regulation of their trade, as distinct from their London counterparts who consistently lobbied against this.<sup>123</sup> In a more local context, it should be noted that the Partick commissioners were, in one sense, just ahead of Glasgow Town Council, which gained control over the city's slaughterhouses and markets by Act of Parliament in 1865.<sup>124</sup> To be fair, the city had for centuries displayed a tradition of municipal regulation of trade within its boundaries, and city slaughterhouses had been available within markets owned and controlled by the city from 'time immemorial'. Against this backdrop, it would be astounding had the Partick commissioners not been influenced by the city's positive example.<sup>125</sup> In any case, the slaughterhouse was not the only controversial building project in Partick's early civic development.

## **Buildings**

The commissioners continued to meet in Partick school rooms pending the completion of the police buildings.<sup>126</sup> Two temporary cells were built there to allow the commissioners to fulfil their police jurisdiction in the meantime. The new buildings would be one storey in height with a clock tower. There is evidence in the burgh minutes that the commissioners were resolute in their determination to prevent potential slum dwellings being built in their community, to the extent of taking legal action against local developers who flouted building regulations embodied in the General Police Act.<sup>127</sup> Following a variety of instances, perhaps most notoriously in Castlebank Street, where the burgh had to intervene to compel private landlords and homeowners to causeway the roads outside their property, a general edict was issued to all proprietors to maintain their lands in good order.<sup>128</sup> This would include the laying of ashes on lanes where buildings had not been erected. The buildings committee also kept a wary eye on the state of other buildings in the burgh, for instance stating its concern about the 'dangerous' condition of the south and

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid, *passim*.

<sup>124</sup> J. Bell and J. Paton, *Glasgow: Its Municipal Organisation and Administration* (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1896), pp 284-6.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p. 279.

<sup>126</sup> PMB, 4 March 1853, pp. 38-9.

<sup>127</sup> See for instance the case of John Houston, who sought to build a tenement the Commissioners considered too high for its location and detrimental to public health in *ibid*, 11 June 1855, pp. 100-101, 18 June 1855, pp. 102-3, 19 September 1855, p. 113 and 12 October 1855, pp. 114-5 and 21 June 1856, pp. 120-1.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 14 July 1856, pp. 121-2.

north gables of a tenement on Wilson Street. In 1857 the commissioners sought the devolution of powers granted to the parochial board under the Nuisance Removal Act (1855) but the parish retained responsibility for administering the Act outwith the burgh boundaries.<sup>129</sup>

In late 1853, the commissioners were asked to intervene in a dispute between a movement of local residents and Mr Wilson, a local mill-owner. The stepping stones over the Kelvin near the slit mills had fallen into disrepair, reflecting their popularity as a thoroughfare with locals who believed that this was part of their right of way.<sup>130</sup> The inhabitants had sent a deputation to the commissioners asking that the burgh pay to replace the stones with a narrow bridge; the commissioners declined to do so. Undeterred by this, the inhabitants formed a committee to raise funds for the proposed bridge and to retain counsel to secure their legal right to build this. The legal battles continued as late as 1863.<sup>131</sup> The struggle over the Kelvin crossing became something of an annual fixture for the next decade, until, finally in 1865, the burgh adopted another bridge built nearby, on condition that the inhabitants drop their claims on the former crossing.<sup>132</sup> The new crossing, however, was ultimately swept away by floods in December 1876. The campaign for a permanent crossing became something of a popular movement locally, with its activities accompanied by the village band and colourful banners. As Napier explained, there:

was many a spirited struggle to maintain the right-of-way over the steps at the foot of the Castle Brae. The steps were generally much displaced by the floods in winter. The proprietor of the Slit Mills objected to any stones being used for steps but the common boulders found in the bed of the river, which were insufficient. Early in summer measures were taken by the villagers to procure stones and work them into form, and on an appointed day, immediately after daybreak, the stones were taken to the place, and the whole steps were set and arranged for easy passage before the opposing party had time to obtain an interdict. These were periods of considerable excitement to the youth of the village, and often attended with risk, as several times physical force was tried to prevent the laying of steps. We are now glad to see in place of the steps a substantial bridge...<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 27 April 1857, pp. 134-6.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 20 September 1853, pp. 64-5; *PIJ*, 1 September 1854.

<sup>131</sup> *Scotsman*, 11 September 1863.

<sup>132</sup> Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 47.

<sup>133</sup> Napier, *Notes and Reminiscences*, p. 145.

This was not the only controversial issue concerning transport within and through the burgh. The commissioners also had an important role to play in the development of roads and railways within their jurisdiction. From October 1853 the commissioners entered into negotiations with the parochial board in order to gain control of funds dispensed by the Statute Labour Trust for the construction and maintenance of key roads in Partick.<sup>134</sup> From 1859, Partick Burgh Treasurer Paisley was appointed collector of statute labour money in Govan Parish north of the Clyde.<sup>135</sup> In January 1854, representations had been made to the commissioners by two railway companies: the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway Company and the Caledonian Railway Company, regarding their respective proposals to project lines of railroad through the burgh, thus connecting Partick and Whiteinch to Glasgow.<sup>136</sup> After discussing the matter, the commissioners favoured the Caledonian Company's proposal which they felt would be less likely to depreciate property values in the burgh, particularly villas. They instructed the magistrates to petition parliament to this effect.

### **Early Activities of the Govan Commissioners**

Having addressed the early municipal undertakings of Partick, it is now possible to consider how these compared to those of Govan twelve years later. As with the older burgh, Govan's first police commissioners were largely drawn from the leading lights of the local economy. At the first formal meeting of the Govan burgh commission, held on 6 June 1864, Morris Pollok was elected 'provost' unanimously, after his nomination by John Hinshelwood.<sup>137</sup> Pollok had been first signatory to the petition for police burgh status. There, he gave his address as the 'Govan Factory'.<sup>138</sup> This was, in fact, the Govan Silk Mill, a somewhat Dickensian enterprise and the last vestige of the new town's former village economy.<sup>139</sup> The mill employed 250 men, women and children, but was infamous

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<sup>134</sup> PMB, 17 October 1853, p. 66.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 21 February 1859, pp. 176-7.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 11 January 1864, pp. 272-3 and 8 February 1864, pp. 273-5.

<sup>137</sup> GMB 6 June, 1864, p. 29. For more on Hinshelwood, see biographical appendix.

<sup>138</sup> Brotchie, *History of Govan*, p. 171.

<sup>139</sup> R. MacKenzie, 'Govan Sixty Years Ago'; Old Govan Club Transactions, hereafter OGCT Part 2, Vol. 4, 1927-8. pp. 7-8.

for its low wages and long hours (up to 11 a day for children).<sup>140</sup> Pollok resided in a mansion adjacent to his factory.<sup>141</sup> He had inherited the factory from his father and namesake, who had founded what would be Scotland's 'first and only' silk-throwing mill in 1824.<sup>142</sup> Morris Pollok the elder had earned a reputation as a 'bit of a character', who wore his hat full of silk samples and rose early in the morning, the better to survey the flats of his foremen and sally forth to berate those who overslept.<sup>143</sup> The younger Pollok, however, affected a less authoritarian style than 'the old man'. John Hinshelwood, his proposer for the civic chair, was the senior partner in John Hinshelwood & Company, Shipping and General Forwarding Agents.<sup>144</sup> His buses were at this point the 'only conveyance between Govan and Glasgow'.<sup>145</sup>

Commissioner Andrew Fowler, was proposed and seconded as junior magistrate by commissioners Thomson and Wishart, and unanimously elected. Fowler was distinguished by the fact that he was a serving Glasgow Town Councillor who had served as a Bailie from 1858-60, and had from 1842-44 served as Deacon Convener for the Incorporation of Gardeners.<sup>146</sup> The business address for his firm of nurserymen, florists and seedsmen was in Glasgow, but the widower ran the firm from his Govan home at Cessnock House, whose nine rooms he shared with his adult son and daughter and their servant. Workers dwelled in the surrounding lodges. Fowler was born in 1795 at Crail, Fifeshire and died in 1865, leaving vacant seats for Glasgow Town Council's 5th ward and his Govan Junior Magistracy. Fowler's early career on the Town Council saw him associated with the

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<sup>140</sup> G. Clarke, 'The Silk Industry in Govan'; OGCT Part 2, Vol. 4, 1928, p. 21. See also Simpson, *A History of Govan*, (Govan: Govan Fair Association, 1981), p. 10.

<sup>141</sup> Simpson, *History of Govan*, p. 8.

<sup>142</sup> Clarke, 'Silk Industry...'; OGCT Part 2, Vol. 4, 1928, p. 20. Its unique status would pertain until the 1870s.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>144</sup> POD 1864.

<sup>145</sup> Adam, R. 'A Walk Through Govan Fifty Years Ago'; OGCT Part 2, Vol. 4, 1927-8, pp. 10-17 at p. 10.

<sup>146</sup> Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 893.

Conservative-Evangelical Alliance, but he swiftly identified with Liberal causes, such as Italian independence.<sup>147</sup>

The Govan commissioners appear from the outset to have been a more fractious body than their Partick counterparts from 1852. Whether this perception simply reflects a greater openness and willingness to document disagreement is unclear, but an early and significant source of contention in the burgh was the appointment of a superintendent of police and the structure of the force which would report to him. The first meeting of the commissioners set up a subcommittee to explore the relative merits of amalgamating with the County of Lanarkshire's police force, as against establishing an independent force for the burgh. This subcommittee reported in favour of an independent Govan constabulary, and this was unanimously approved at the Commission's next meeting.<sup>148</sup> In essence, the commissioners preferred the option of an independent force because this would be directly accountable to themselves, and considerably cheaper for ratepayers than the alternative. So it was decided to advertise for a Superintendent of Police as soon as possible. The clerk was instructed to advertise for a superintendent at a maximum salary of £80 per annum, in addition to £20 for the role of Procurator Fiscal and £15 for Inspector of Nuisances.<sup>149</sup> In filling the combined post, the Govan commissioners appear to have been most conscientious in recording their deliberations, especially compared to the founding commissioners of Partick.

At the meeting of 4 July 1864, a shortlist of applicants for the post of superintendent was presented.<sup>150</sup> In the intervening period, deputations of commissioners had visited Paisley, Johnstone and Port Glasgow in search of character references. Based on the views of various commissioners who had participated in these, the choice was narrowed to Young (then Depute Chief Constable for the County of Renfrew) versus Alex Gunn. Neither candidate was present at the vote. The original sub-committee had argued that Young was 'best qualified' and recommended him to the commissioners, who elected him by seven votes to five. He was then introduced to the commissioners at their next

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> GMB, 13 June 1864, p. 32 and report of Committee As To Amalgamation With County Police, GMB, 6 June 1864, p. 31.

<sup>149</sup> GMB, 13 June 1864, p. 32.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 4 July 1864, pp. 37-8.

meeting, on 11 July.<sup>151</sup> He was also appointed procurator fiscal and inspector of nuisances, with the remuneration previously mentioned.

After appointing their new superintendent, the commissioners set about debating how many classes of police officers there should be and what wages they should receive. Three proposals were offered and two rounds of voting were required to settle the issue, although no record was kept of the debate. Commissioner Thomson's proposal that there be three classes of police won the day. This episode is mentioned here only insofar as it highlights the willingness of the Govan commissioners to air their differences in public, as contrasted with their Partick counterparts. There was even vigorous disagreement on the uniform to be worn by Govan policemen, which would take the form of frock coats and hats with the letter G, for Govan, embroidered on the lapels; much of the discussion focused on cost and contracts. This apparel was closely modelled on the uniform of the Glasgow force.<sup>152</sup> Mr James Bowes, an accountant of the City of Glasgow Bank in Govan, was appointed Treasurer and Calculator of the burgh, with security set at £500 and his salary set at three per cent of the amount of assessment raised – an early form of performance-related pay. He was instructed to overdraw £500 from the bank which employed him, to fund the early activities of the burgh pending assessment revenues.

Key standing committees were established on similar lines to those in Partick, each with five members, three representing a quorum. The Assessment and Finance Committee was chaired *ex officio* by Pollok, and included commissioners Fowler, Cruickshank, Dobie and Reid. The Watching and Lighting Committee, with Morrison as Convener, also included Cruickshank, McKean, Wishart and Hinshelwood. The Cleansing and Drainage Committee had Hutcheson in the Chair, and also included commissioners Weir, Thomson, Pollok and Fowler. An *ad hoc* committee comprising the magistrates and Morrison was set up to seek sites for police buildings and to visit the equivalents at Maryhill and Partick. Their task was made somewhat easier by a proposition by Hinshelwood, who was evidently something of a wealthy landlord. He offered the burgh accommodation for a lock-up, offices for the police and commissioners and the use of a small hall for use as a temporary police court at £55 rent for two years. This was swiftly accepted.

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 11 July 1864, pp. 38-40.

<sup>152</sup> Grant, *Thin Blue Line*, p. 36.

## Conclusion

The early civic leaders of Partick and Govan were evidently drawn from the industrial and commercial elites in both towns. It is undeniable that their activities for the ‘improvement and benefit’ of their localities coincided strongly with their own commercial interests, not least of all the safety of their property. The Partick commissioners’ apparent far-sightedness in appointing a MOH for their new-formed burgh was undermined by their reluctance to set aside part of their office accommodation for use as an emergency cholera hospital, as well as their over-tentative approach to sanitation and drainage. Although the network of sewers laid in the burgh’s formative years was impressive relative to the open sewers used before 1852, the continued use of the River Kelvin as both a source of drinking water and a means of conveying sewage out of the burgh was remarkably myopic. This can be explained in large part by the commissioners’ general reluctance to stretch the municipal finances or to increase the burden on wealthier residents by adopting a more progressive system of assessment. The sequence of events leading to the eventual dismissal of one superintendent of police may be explicable in terms of Paul McColl’s personal greed, but the Partick commissioners’ overall approach to pay and conditions for their constables testified to an inability to learn from experience. This was borne out in the way in which they overloaded McColl’s successor and were slow to heed his advice about the need for more men on the beat.

The Partick commissioners, however, did seem to have been admirably progressive in their approach to buildings and planning, as evidenced in its willingness to challenge unsafe construction in the courts if necessary, and in the establishment of the municipal slaughterhouse. Even in the early stages of independent administration, the Partick commissioners aspired to gain control over the licensing of public houses and the consumption of alcohol by inhabitants. The Govan Police Board was still in its infancy by the time the other police burgh embarked on its twelfth year, but it is interesting to note the extent to which the early meetings and resolutions of the Govan commissioners were marked by open debate and dissent, compared to their counterparts from the formative years of municipal Partick. Yet they emulated their neighbours in the appointment of an MOH, and a locally-accountable police force. None of these initiatives, however, should be taken to suggest that either burgh had conquered the problems which had led to their creation in this early period. As is discussed in the remaining municipal chapters of this

thesis, both communities' capacity to tackle the challenges of urban administration remained subject to criticism all the way down to their annexation to Glasgow in 1912. Indeed, the city's ability to apply its considerable economies of scale to its own problems presented many Partick and Govan citizens with a compelling alternative vision of what larger-scale local government could achieve in improving the quality of urban life. The next chapter considers both burghs' municipal development in the 1860s and 1870s, a period in which they assumed an increasingly defensive stance regarding their civic independence, when this was challenged both by the city and by the communities' internal critics.

**Table 4.1**

**Partick Police Board, 1852**

Name	Office	Birthplace	Occupation	Residence
David Tod	Chief Magistrate / 'Provost'	Scone, Perthshire	Shipbuilder	Ironbank
John Buchanan	Junior Magistrate / 'Bailie'	Paisley	Wine & Spirit Merchant / Cotton Spinner	Dowanhill
Moses Hunter	Junior Magistrate / 'Bailie'	Barony (district of Glasgow)	Timber Merchant	Hamilton Crescent
Robert Paterson	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Clackmannanshire	Tailor & Clothier (proprietor)	Partickhill
Alexander C. Shanks	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Boot & Shoemaker (proprietor)	Unknown (business address given in 1852 petition)
John Walker	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Iron Founder?	Castlebank Street

Name	Office	Birthplace	Occupation	Residence
James Napier	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Partick	Retired Industrial Chemist	Hamilton Place
Robert Kaye	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Merchant	Partickhill
John White	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Mill Owner	Scotstoun Mills
George Richmond	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Teller, Royal Bank of Scotland	Partickhill
David Ralston	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Iron Merchant	Unknown
James Thomson	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Officials	-----	-----	-----	-----
Gavin Paisley	Treasurer and Collector	n/a	n/a	Windsor Place
Matthew Walker	Clerk	n/a	n/a	Douglas Street
Paul McColl	Superintendent of Police, Procurator Fiscal and Inspector of Nuisances	n/a	n/a	n/a

Name	Office	Birthplace	Occupation	Residence
Dr Robert Patterson	Medical Officer of Health	n/a	n/a	n/a

**Table 4.2**

**Govan Police Board, 1864**

Name	Office	Birthplace	Occupation	Residence
Morris Pollok Jr.	Chief Magistrate / ‘Provost’	Govan?	Silk Mill Owner	Govan Silk Mill (in a mansion)
Andrew Fowler	Junior Magistrate / ‘Bailie’	Crail, Fifeshire	Co-owner of firm of seedsmen, nurserymen and florists	Cessnock
William Cruickshank	Junior Magistrate / ‘Bailie’	Unknown	Merchant	Huntly Lodge, Ibroxholm
Alexander Thomson	Commissioner / ‘Councillor’	Unknown	Farmer	Fairfield Farm
James McKean	Commissioner / ‘Councillor’	Unknown	Grocer	Unknown
Peter Hutcheson	Commissioner / ‘Councillor’	Unknown	Gardener	Unknown

Name	Office	Birthplace	Occupation	Residence
George Wishart	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Unknown, but had been active in Govan Feuars' Committee	Unknown
Thomas Reid	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Govan	Partner in Family Dye- Works	Cessnock Bank
John Hinshelwood	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Shipping Agent and Bus Company Owner	Unknown
John Morrison	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Partner, Jas Black & Co.	Unknown
William Weir	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Partner, William Weir Bros. & Co.	Longland's Lodge
John Dobie	Commissioner / 'Councillor'	Unknown	Shipbuilder	Govan House
Officials	-----	-----	-----	-----
James Bowes	Treasurer and Calculator	n/a	n/a	n/a
Robert Carswell	Clerk	n/a	Writer	n/a

Name	Office	Birthplace	Occupation	Residence
David Young	Superintendent of Police, Procurator Fiscal and Inspector of Nuisances	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dr. James Barras	Medical Officer of Health	n/a	n/a	n/a

## **Chapter 4**

### **‘On the defensive’: Existential Threats and Emergent Burgh Identities, c.1865-1885**

And now that Govan, which was always independent of Glasgow, has established its own municipal personality, in a manner approved by the Imperial Parliament – when it has overcome the preliminary difficulties and borne the heat and burden of municipal constitution and organisation – has erected, at great expense, courthouses, and police chambers and public halls – and established a Police system which [...] Her Majesty’s Inspector of Police, has once again and publicly reported to be a model for all police burghs in Scotland – a Glasgow Corporation clique must needs annex Govan to the City.

‘MUNICEPS’, Govan, 30 May 1868<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction**

This chapter considers a transitional phase in Partick’s and Govan’s development, during which both burghs sought to effect a shift from being seen as purely legal and administrative organisations, created for specific purposes under the General Police Acts, to become established civic entities imbued with a sense of provenance, legitimacy and purpose in their own right. As will be seen, at this early stage of municipal development, the burghs began to define themselves in opposition to internal and external opponents; indeed their leaders tended to argue that they were *forced* into a defensive posture by developments beyond their control. The ethos of local self-government, under which the police burghs had been established, began to be challenged by notions of ‘municipal socialism’, which emphasised the merits of municipal administration on a grander and more comprehensive scale than the relatively compact police burghs could ever hope to offer.<sup>2</sup> Around the same time, Partick and Govan, along with other suburbs around Glasgow, soon faced the prospect of annexation to the city. The threatened early extinction of municipal independence forced both communities’ leaders to reflect upon the ideological basis of their relative autonomy, and to try to justify their separate existence. These justifications were at first based on essentially technocratic arguments over the relative merits and costs of municipal amenities in the suburbs compared to the city, but soon broadened into conceptual arguments about the alleged empowering role of local self-government in contributing to wider national life.

Against this backdrop, it is argued that the burghs’ responses - Govan’s especially - to the Fenian panics of the late 1860s and mid 1870s embodied something more than a

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<sup>1</sup> Letter to the editor of the *North British Daily Mail* [NBDM] published 1 June 1868.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Municipal Socialism’ is discussed in more detail in chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis, *passim*.

local response to an apparent United Kingdom-wide crisis. The burghs seized on the crisis as an opportunity to demonstrate the adequacy and efficiency of their local police forces, whilst also seeking to confound any perceptions of disloyalty among the communities' unusually large population of Irish migrants. The symbolic power of the local police forces remained central to the case for the burghs' continued autonomy until 1912, as will be seen as this thesis continues. Despite the patchy nature of local newspaper coverage during the period covered in this chapter, there was evidence that the activities of the burgh leaders were beginning to be challenged both at the annual elections and in the local newspapers' letters and editorial pages. This analysis considers the emergence of these themes, thus providing an important chronological and theoretical link to the developments and debates considered in chapters five and six. In short, the rhetorical dividing lines drawn in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, both between the burgh leaders and the city fathers, and between the burgh leaders and their internal critics, set the pattern for the debates that dominated the burghs for the remainder of their independent existence.

With three notable exceptions from the mid 1870s, the *Govan Chronicle*, 1876-8, the *Partick Observer*, 1876-8, and the *Partick Advertiser* (1874-6) discussed in chapter one of this thesis, the period covered by this chapter is not well-served by surviving local newspapers (as distinct from Glasgow newspapers, especially the *Herald* and the *North British Daily Mail*, which are used here where appropriate). Where these are available, they present a far livelier image of burgh life than is afforded by the more legalistically arid burgh minute-books. For this reason, alongside the present focus on critical incidents in what was essentially a period of consolidation for the burghs, there is less of a focus in this chapter on the historical reputations of leading protagonists than there is in those which follow. This approach is borne of necessity, and should by no means be taken to imply that Partick's and Govan's municipal leaders of the 1860s, 1870s and early 1880s were politically homogenous or socially monolithic. Indeed, given the interconnections between religion and politics in this period – especially in terms of the divide between moderate, radical and evangelical Liberals in Glasgow and elsewhere in the United Kingdom – it is almost certain that such divisions were to be found among the burgh leaders.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, however, there is insufficient local data to confirm this

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<sup>3</sup> For elaboration of the divisions within Glasgow's mid-Victorian Liberals, see J.F. McCaffrey, 'Political Issues and Developments'; W.H. Fraser & I. Maver eds, *Glasgow*, Volume 2 (Manchester: MUP, 1996), pp. 186-226 at pp. 198-200. For an English comparison, see M. Roberts, *Political Movements in Urban England, 1832-1914*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 82-84.

assumption. Similarly, the limitations of the surviving sources means that, with a few notable exceptions, there is little to be said in this chapter about rhetoric and debate in the annual municipal elections. This is frustrating, given that the burgh minutes which merely named the candidates and votes polled, and the more colourful but only sporadically-surviving local newspapers suggest that these were invariably keenly-fought. The chapter deals first with the Fenian panics and what they revealed about local politics, before moving into a discussion of the early annexation ‘battles’ and their central role in the formulation of local civic identity. Lastly, attention is given to the emergence of internal criticism of burgh management, from selected ward committee meetings and council candidates, as reported in the nascent local press.

### **The Fenian Panics**

As has been discussed in the previous two chapters, appeals to public order were a central plank of the case for adopting the Police Statutes in both Partick and Govan. In the last-named community, the shadowy figure of an inebriated interloper of Irish descent had been used to encapsulate the dangers inherent in the absence of an effective police force.<sup>4</sup> If past is indeed prologue, then it is difficult to escape the sense that the *shillelagh*-bearing hostage-taker’s antics of the 1840s in some sense pre-figured events in both communities in the 1860s and 1870s. Now that the burghs had been constituted, with their own locally-accountable police forces, the communities’ civic leaders were keen to demonstrate that they could now deal with disturbances – threatened or actual – without recourse to aid from the city. In this context, the strategy adopted by Govan’s and Partick’s municipal leaders in the face of what was regarded as a national emergency can be regarded as emblematic of the new burghs’ overall approach to policing and public order. Moreover, it revealed much about the ambivalent attitudes of the local industrial elite towards the burghs’ large and growing Irish populations. Govan, especially, had made a great deal of its preparedness to deal with threatened Fenian ‘disturbances’. Calum Campbell highlighted the 1867 recruitment of 900 special constables – the circumstances surrounding which will shortly be elaborated - as a blatant show of ‘armed force, employer power and ethnic superiority’ within the burgh.<sup>5</sup> Against the backdrop of another Fenian panic in 1875, the newly-established *Govan Chronicle* ran an editorial boasting that Govan and other suburban burghs were ‘quite equal to the management of their own affairs’ and

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<sup>4</sup> See pp. 35-6.

<sup>5</sup> Campbell ‘Clydeside working class’, p. 18.

did not require assistance from ‘Granny’ Glasgow.<sup>6</sup> The ‘Granny’ soubriquet’s implications of fussy femininity and frailty were deliberately calculated to contrast with the robust self-image burgh leaders were attempting to promote. These connotations were reinforced in an 1876 report by Govan’s Parliamentary Bills Committee, which argued among other things that the operation of police burghs contributed to the ‘manliness’ of the United Kingdom overall.<sup>7</sup> What were the events that gave rise to such rhetorical exuberance?

At the end of a long meeting at Govan in late 1869, dominated by a proposed extension of Glasgow’s municipal boundaries to incorporate Govan, Partick and other suburban burghs encircling the city, Commissioner George Ledingham claimed that it:

had occurred to him that the Glasgow Corporation had taken a leaf out of the book of the Yankees; in fact they were proposing to do with Govan what the Fenians in America were trying to do with Canada. It was just Fenianism under another name; and the inhabitants were bound to resist the proposal to the utmost.<sup>8</sup>

The ‘Fenians’ or Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) were an armed conspiracy with the goal of an independent Irish republic. According to historian Mairtin O’Cathain, they were ‘backed by battle-hardened Irish-American soldiers, continental military advisers, sympathisers in an infiltrated British Army, thousands of [members] in Scotland, Wales and England, and a nationwide organisation in Ireland’.<sup>9</sup> The ‘Yankee’ reference alluded to the participation by Fenians on the northern side of the United States Civil War, whilst the Canadian reference was to an unsuccessful Fenian attempt to invade Canada or, depending on one’s viewpoint, to liberate it from British oppression.<sup>10</sup> Meantime, Glasgow Town Council peacefully petitioned Parliament for a lawful extension of its municipal boundaries. If Ledingham’s extreme comparison reads somewhat ridiculous today, it likely provoked a similar response from many observers at the time. Yet from the perspective of Govan’s, if not Partick’s police commissioners, both Fenianism and

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<sup>6</sup> *The Govan Chronicle*, 21 August 1875.

<sup>7</sup> Report of Govan Parliamentary Committee, March 1876, H-Gov-2-3, p. 19 [427 in bound volume].

<sup>8</sup> *NBDM*, 20 October 1869.

<sup>9</sup> M. O’Cathain, *Irish Republicanism In Scotland 1858-1916: Fenians in Exile*, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), p. 44.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

Glasgow's expansionist ambitions represented threats to the suburban burghs. In a sense, the Fenians presented a threat to public order within and far beyond the burgh boundaries, but the city threatened the burghs' very existence. The commissioners therefore seemed to relish the opportunity presented by the Fenian furore to demonstrate their control over their respective communities, thus reinforcing their claims to effective self-government. Yet this was not all that was at play.

In late 1867, Govan and Partick were suffering from the deepest economic depression of the decade, and the former burgh had seen employers win a lock-out.<sup>11</sup> In this context, as Calum Campbell emphasised, the commissioners' first display of anti-Fenian triumphalism seems highly calculated. Campbell went so far as to suggest it appeared that the Govan commissioners had 'manufactured a deliberate sectarian confrontation'.<sup>12</sup> Although there is an element of truth in this interpretation, it oversimplifies the reality, for Govan and Partick were far from the only Scottish communities to prepare for Fenian disturbances in 1867.<sup>13</sup> O'Cathain emphasises that for all the hallmarks of a 'moral panic' manufactured by the press and administrators throughout Scotland and beyond, 'real anxiety about Fenianism existed' in the mid to late 1860s.<sup>14</sup> Yet considering that the goal of Fenians drilling at various locations in Scotland was to engage in an *Irish* rising, there was clearly 'no direct threat to Scotland'.<sup>15</sup> The same analyst likened Fenian panic to an 'emotional contagion', elaborating that in the 1860s and early 1870s, the cry that 'the Fenians are coming' would not have been greeted any differently than the cry that 'the Germans are coming' during the 1914-18 or 1939-1945 conflicts.<sup>16</sup>

Somewhat paradoxically, the fact that fear of Fenian disturbances was widespread throughout Scotland serves to amplify Campbell's point. It was not so much that the 1867

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<sup>11</sup> Campbell, 'Clydeside Working Class', p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> *NBDM* 31 December 1867.

<sup>14</sup> O'Cathain, *Irish Republicanism*, p. 53. See also E.W. McFarland, 'A reality and yet impalpable: the Fenian panic in mid-Victorian Scotland', *SHR*, LXXVII, 2, No. 204 (October 1998), pp. 199-223 at p. 208.

<sup>15</sup> O'Cathain, *Irish Republicanism*, p. 54.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

crisis was *manufactured* by the Govan commissioners, but that they seized on it as a means of demonstrating the burgh's ability to maintain public order within the municipal boundaries, while drawing attention to the physical prowess and respectability of its police force and 'loyal' citizens. In December 1867, the Govan commissioners, with Sheriff Henry Glassford Bell's blessing, recruited over 900 special (voluntary) constables and obtained a supply of revolvers from the Home Office. Conservative Home Secretary Gathorne Gathorne-Hardy, assenting to the Govan police using 'precautionary measures' in the event of an attack or emergency, did so on the basis that the burgh had a population close to twelve thousand, of whom 'a considerable proportion... would be doubtless most susceptible to Fenian influence and impressions'.<sup>17</sup> Bailie John Hinshelwood, acting as chief magistrate while Provost William Cruickshank convalesced at Malvern, delivered the closing remarks at a packed meeting for the swearing-in of the new special constables by Sheriff Bell on 27 December 1867. Sheriff Bell himself had already spoken at great length about the need for special constables to be recruited throughout the county, stating that if men wished to volunteer: 'it is of no consequence to me whether they are Scotchmen or Irishmen, or whether their religion be Protestant or Roman Catholic'.<sup>18</sup> Hinshelwood's remarks, formally addressed to the Sheriff but doubtless intended for a much wider audience, were far less measured - ending with a somewhat blood-thirsty flourish. He implied that Govan was dealing with the Fenians on behalf the Scottish nation itself:

You will have been very satisfied by the recent visit that *the burgh of Govan is not only thriving, but loyal to the core*; and I believe that that loyalty will not evaporate in mere enthusiasm, but will take the form of *practical action* in the *organisation and discipline of a permanent local force of special constables*. I may add that *although the burgh appears last among the suburbs in swearing in constables for the county, it was among the first in quietly swearing in and arming with batons a local special force, and with the aid of our vigorous Superintendent of Police and his stout constables, who can be armed to the teeth if necessary, let us hope that we may be able to lead quiet and peaceable lives if possible; and when impossible, that we may give all Fenians a touch of the auld Scottish thistle, and remind them that no one may assail it with impunity*.<sup>19</sup>

As Campbell argued, it is reasonable to presume, but impossible to prove that most of the recruits were drawn from the 'foremen and Masonic loyalists in the yards', given that their first parade took them down the 'Irish Channel', which was the nickname for the

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<sup>17</sup> GMB 11 November 1867, pp. 226-30 – letter from Home Secretary Hardy to Govan Commissioners, 15 October 1867.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in *NBDM*, 31 December 1867.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, emphasis added.

slum streets in the centre of Govan.<sup>20</sup> In the event, there was no Fenian rioting in Govan in 1868, although Partick was less fortunate. Partick's commissioners had also obtained weapons from the Home Office and recruited special constables, although the burgh minutes were strikingly matter-of-fact about all this. Only 263 specials were recruited, and there was none of the melodrama, sense of occasion or protestations of loyalty evinced by the Govan commissioners.<sup>21</sup> There was actually rioting in the burgh of Partick. Yet all that burgh's minutes had to say on the matter was that the Buildings Committee had examined accounts submitted by various individuals alleging that their property had been damaged by 'the mob in the riots which took place lately within the burgh' and would deal with each claimant in turn.<sup>22</sup> Such an offhand approach to recording such incidents, with no attached newspaper clippings (inclusion of these in the minute-book was a frequent habit of their Govan counterparts), almost gives the impression that rioting was a routine event in Partick. The low-key approach towards the Fenian excitement in Partick makes a marked contrast with that taken in Govan, again reinforcing the impression that the commissioners there had something more than the immediate crisis on their minds.

Seven years later, in the wake of further sectarian disturbances in Partick, more special constables were recruited in Govan.<sup>23</sup> This time, it was made explicit that the commissioners regarded the burgh's shipyards as an ideal source of recruits. A written request was sent to a number of the burgh's shipbuilding firms asking for them each to identify 50 'men of good character and physique' resulting in the swearing in of 173 specials a few days later.<sup>24</sup> This time, a great show of 'impartiality' was made, with the yard owners being urged not to put forward Orangemen or Home Rulers, on the grounds that 'armed and hot-headed Home Rulers and Orangemen would be even worse than no Special Constables at all.'<sup>25</sup> It is reasonable to speculate that this approach was shaped by the burgh's experiences in 1867, although it is possible that these claims of even-handedness were more a reflection of shrewd public relations than the genuine wishes of

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<sup>20</sup> Campbell, *Clydeside Working Class*, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> PMB, 11 November 1867 - 13 February 1868, pp. 33-9, *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 13 January 1868, pp. 35-7.

<sup>23</sup> GMB, 12-15 August 1875 pp. 334-40.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

the commissioners. At the swearing-in ceremony, acting chief magistrate Archibald McLean was notably more circumspect in his language and tone than Hinshelwood had been in 1867, but once again the threads of public order and respect for the burgh were rhetorically intertwined. McLean appealed:

with confidence to the loyalty *and good sense of the inhabitants of every class*, as the *best safeguard for the peace and security of Govan*. [...] Recent disturbances in a neighbouring burgh – the result of turbulent feelings such as blot every cause and every name with which they are associated – must suggest to the law-abiding citizens of Govan the imperative necessity of precautionary and repressive measures against all menace or occasion of disorder on the part of evil-disposed persons. The Provost and Magistrates, acting in concert for this purpose with the Sheriff of the County, will support the law and protect the peace and the lieges, by persuasive arrangements as far as possible, and by force if necessary. They trust that the general prevalence of neighbourly feeling will ensure peace and good order in the burgh. The Provost and Magistrates enjoin all good citizens to aid the police and special constables in the discharge of their duty, and to avoid crowds, processions and party [i.e. sectarian] cries. They invite the burghers of Govan, irrespective of creed and country, to unite in a noble rivalry of respect for the law and obedience to local authority.<sup>26</sup>

Here, it is worth considering Irish migration to Govan and Partick in view of wider historical debates.<sup>27</sup> As John Foster, Muir Houston and Chris Madigan recently noted, there is general agreement that Irish migration to Britain was significant in two major respects.<sup>28</sup> First, it contributed to a fundamental shift in the character of mass politics in the mid-nineteenth century, whereby divisions on religious, ethnic and community lines become increasingly marked. Second, the steady flow of unskilled Irish migrants was correlated with late nineteenth-century industrialists' predisposition towards labour-intensive technology. Still, there remains disagreement on: the extent, character and motivations for active discrimination in the host community, explaining why Britain experienced an uneven experience of ethnic conflict and, thereafter, the factors leading to the migrants' eventual assimilation or integration. Foster *et al*, noting the problems of quantification of the relative and absolute numbers of Protestant and Roman Catholic Irish migrants to the United Kingdom arising from the absence of British census data on

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in *GH*, 14 August 1875 – emphasis added.

<sup>27</sup> There is an excellent overview of historiography on Irish immigration and politics in T. McBride, *Irish Political Identity in Glasgow, 1863-91*, (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2002), pp. 1-32.

<sup>28</sup> J. Foster, M. Houston and C. Madigan, 'Distinguishing Catholics and Protestants among Irish Immigrants to Clydeside: A New Approach to Immigration and Ethnicity in Victorian Britain', *Irish Studies Review*, 2002 [10:2] pp. 171-92 at p. 171.

religious affiliation, and the destruction of most pre-1901 census data for Ireland, attempted a novel solution in two papers on Irish migration to Clydeside communities.<sup>29</sup> This involved sampling names from the British census which were identified as having a high probability of being associated with Protestantism or Catholicism.<sup>30</sup> The authors acknowledge in both such studies that their approach is not foolproof; however, they are to be commended for attempting it, notwithstanding the drawbacks. Both studies are especially germane to this thesis. Why? The first includes among its case studies Partick, Govan and Linthouse - which became part of the burgh of Govan in 1901, as is elaborated in chapters five and six - while the second considers Govan in contrast to the neighbouring burgh of Kinning Park.<sup>31</sup> What did the findings suggest about the Irish migrant experience in Govan and Partick, and how do they relate to the more qualitative evidence presented in this thesis?

In their 2002 study, Foster *et al* found no evidence of the systematic, stable exclusion of all but co-religionists from unskilled employment in particular Glasgow firms.<sup>32</sup> Where Ulster migrants sought to introduce such sectarian practices on Clydeside, they were ‘challenged... not stabilised’.<sup>33</sup> The language and practice of the emerging new unionism, with its appeals to solidarity and class unity was held to have been highly influential in this regard, in contrast to the restrictive sectarian practices of Belfast trade unions.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, the group’s Govan sample – of Catholic and Protestant forenames of individuals resident in Plantation Street – indicated that Govan was much less

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 172; J. Foster, M. Houston and C. Madigan, ‘Sectarianism, Segregation and Politics in Clydeside in the Later Nineteenth Century’; M.J. Mitchell (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Irish in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1998), pp. 65-96 at p. 68.

<sup>30</sup> Foster *et al*, ‘Distinguishing...’, p. 173 and ‘Sectarianism...’, pp. 66-7.

<sup>31</sup> Foster *et al*, ‘Distinguishing...’, p. 174 and ‘Sectarianism...’, p. 65. (In their second study, the authors incorrectly assume Kinning Park had seceded from Govan to become a burgh in its own right at its erection in 1871. In fact, not only was it never under Govan jurisdiction: it was part of the County of Renfrew, whereas Govan was in Lanarkshire. For more on Kinning Park and a wider discussion of the impact of county lines on Police Burgh formation, see chapter 6, *passim*.)

<sup>32</sup> Foster *et al*, ‘Distinguishing...’, p. 187.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. For an elaboration of the ‘new unionism’, see W. Kenefick, *Red Scotland! The Rise and Fall of the Radical Left, c. 1872-1932*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 2007), pp. 39-47 and *passim*; Roberts, *Political Movements*, pp. 129-30.

‘religiously mixed’ than other Clydeside districts.<sup>35</sup> This *de facto* ‘residential segregation’ was re-examined in the group’s second study, using a similar methodology to analyse patterns of residence in Govan and Kinning Park over the period 1861-1901.<sup>36</sup> The new study found that while the trend of ‘residential segregation’ persisted in Govan through the four decades considered, there were indications of a ‘levelling off’ in the 1880s and even a slight decline in the trend for the 1890s.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the authors averred that Govan’s residential Catholic / Protestant divide differed quantitatively and qualitatively from the contemporary picture in Belfast.<sup>38</sup> They reaffirmed that their first study showed no evidence of ‘more discrimination against Catholics than Protestants,’ and that Protestants were statistically more likely than Catholics to settle in Partick.<sup>39</sup>

In qualitative terms, the authors briefly consider both the Govan commissioners’ anti-Fenian rhetoric and the ‘sophisticated class discourse’, to which shipbuilder and former Govan commissioner William Pearce was forced to resort in his campaign to become Govan’s first MP in 1885.<sup>40</sup> There is merit in the group’s suggestion that these developments betokened recognition by the local establishment of the dangers inherent in stirring up sectarianism and class-consciousness. Certainly, the qualitative analysis in chapter five of this thesis adds weight to the impression that the shared experience of strikes and lockouts by Catholics and Protestants contributed significantly to the success of socialist candidates in both burghs from the 1890s onwards, as in Glasgow.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, the remainder of this thesis highlights the influence of the Orange Order in Partick as much more significant than in Govan and other Glasgow divisions from the 1880s until the 1920s.<sup>42</sup> This is not to suggest that the Order was not active in Govan; indeed there is evidence that it was well-established in the burgh by 1876, when a sixth ‘annual festival’

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, pp. 183, 187

<sup>36</sup> Foster *et al*, ‘Sectarianism...’, pp. 65-6.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 66.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 67.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, pp. 91-4. Pearce’s personal profile and campaign rhetoric are discussed in chapter seven of this thesis, pp. 224-7.

<sup>41</sup> See pp. 154-61.

<sup>42</sup> See pp. 235-7, 246, 279 and 285-87.

was held.<sup>43</sup> John Ferguson (1836-1906) was a personality who encapsulated the potential for class identity to transcend sectarian divisions.<sup>44</sup> The Protestant, Ulster-born orator and journalist converted to Irish Nationalism shortly after his arrival in Glasgow in 1860, and was an instrumental campaigner for Home Rule from the 1870s until his death in 1906. In 1888, he co-founded the Scottish Labour Party (SLP). Ferguson's career and local influence is further considered in chapter five, but it is interesting to note that he was chairing Home Rule meetings in Govan at least by the mid 1870s, laying the groundwork for later political change.<sup>45</sup> It should be noted that there is no way to confirm or refute whether the poor, un-enfranchised Irish Govanites or Partickonians supported the Fenians. As historian Neil Collins wrote of Liverpool – an urban centre with Irish migration on a similar scale to Glasgow – the antipathy of the Catholic hierarchy and the IRB's secretive nature meant Fenianism could not be a mass political movement.<sup>46</sup> Although there was significant evidence of sectarian conflict in Govan and Partick from the 1870s up to the 1920s, the overall picture in both burghs seems benign in comparison to that elaborated in Alan Campbell's extensive study of Lanarkshire mining communities.<sup>47</sup> Whilst Campbell presents extensive press and oral history evidence of sectarian violence, his work also emphasises that assumptions about the 'Orange' or 'Catholic' vote, respectively, can be overly deterministic.<sup>48</sup> Still, as is seen in chapters five, seven and eight of this thesis, Partick's 'Orange vote' was of a more concentrated and emphatically anti-socialist character than elsewhere in Scotland. This, however, is to anticipate matters.

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<sup>43</sup> *Partick Observer [PO]*, 21 October 1876.

<sup>44</sup> Extensive consideration of Ferguson's life and contribution to Irish and Labour politics can be found in the following. E.W. McFarland, *John Ferguson, 1836-1906: Irish Issues in Scottish Politics*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2003) and J.J. Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow, 1896-1936: Socialism, Suffrage, Sectarianism*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), *passim*; McBride, *Political Identity*, pp. 106-141 and *passim*; T. McBride, *The Experience of Irish Migrants to Glasgow, Scotland, 1863-1891: A New Way of Being Irish*, (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), chapter 3 and *passim*. (The latter monograph is derived from McBride's original thesis.)

<sup>45</sup> *Partick Advertiser* [hereafter *PA*], 1 January 1876.

<sup>46</sup> Collins, *Nineteenth-Century Liverpool*, p. 155.

<sup>47</sup> A. Campbell, *The Scottish Miners, 1874-1939, Volume 1: Industry, Work and Community*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 317-4.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 354-5.

Whilst Fenianism proved the most dramatic and universally understood ‘threat’ to Govan and Partick in this period, a great deal more of both burghs’ time and resources were devoted to guarding against the comparatively mundane territorial ambitions of the City of Glasgow. Accordingly, this discussion now turns to the first attempts by Glasgow to annex the burghs, and to the burghs’ own defensive strategies, with especial emphasis on their rhetorical appeals to local self-government, efficient administration and the electoral self interest of the Liberal party in parliamentary terms.

### **The Early ‘Annexation’ Battles**

In March 1868, just two months after Govan’s first special constables had put on their show of force, a letter from ‘Junius Junior’ was published in the *North British Daily Mail*, a radical newspaper, aligned with the evangelical pro-temperance wing of the Liberal Party, which frequently had its columns excerpted into the burgh minutes, especially after the Fenian panic.<sup>49</sup> The author’s real identity remains unknown, but whoever they were clearly believed him - or herself - to be a candid friend of the commissioners; they disclosed a personal attachment to Govan and the letter was date-marked from the burgh. It concerned a proposal adjoined to the Reform Bill going through Parliament. The proposal would incorporate Govan and Partick, in addition to the districts of Hillhead and Pollokshields, into an expanded Glasgow parliamentary constituency returning three MPs. In addition to altering the representation of Glasgow in the interest of the Conservatives, as opposed to the Liberal party, ‘Junius Junior’ argued that the proposals would lead to a ‘process of political absorption [...] openly declared by the civic authorities of Glasgow as a preliminary step to the municipal annexation of Govan and Partick to Glasgow.’<sup>50</sup> The writer went on to rebuke the burgh’s residents, and presumably the commissioners too for their ‘culpable ignorance of the bearing of the bill upon themselves, or a conscious indifference about it so senseless and reckless that one might be tempted to characterize it as idiotic in the extreme.’<sup>51</sup> As the author was clearly close to, if not actually one of the commissioners, the letter represents their ‘line’ on the issues involved, and is worth quoting at considerable length.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *NBDM*, 7 March 1868.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

Do the Govanites, instead of their present police rates of tenpence halfpenny [per] pound on rental, desire to be burdened with the city police rate, stature labour rate, sanitary rate, public parks rate, prisons rate, registration of births rate, houses of refuge rate, and city improvement rate, not to speak of the new court houses rate, sewage improvement rate, and the whole clamjamphry of rates which Parliamentary schemers are designing to lay upon the shoulders of the groaning city ratepayers, till the city, already overburdened with assessments, is like to rise in open revolt against the intolerable weight of taxation? The Govan and Partick people, at least many of them, retired to these “suburbs” because they wished to escape from the city. If they look back they will find it “salt” indeed. They understand the difference between five per cent and twelve per cent on the rental. An appeal to their political spirit may fail to rouse their attention to the bill and its consequences, but I have great faith in an appeal to their pockets.

‘Junius’ also discussed the potential implications of the reforms for the two main political parties. In doing so, he revealed much about the party-political complexion of Govan and Partick in this period, when the burgh commissioners were never openly partisan (although they were far from monolithic). But the question of Govan and Partick’s ‘independence’ could never be fully understood as a purely party political issue. ‘Junius’ noted that many Conservatives resident in Govan and Partick feared that their party was abandoning their towns to the putative city constituency with the ulterior motive of reducing Liberal representation in the county of Lanark. He elaborated in a manner which also implicitly acknowledged the differing franchises operating in towns and cities:<sup>53</sup>

Let the burgh of Govan retain its independence of Glasgow under the bill, and it will be a felt power. If embraced within the Parliamentary boundaries of Glasgow, it will simply be a drop in that electoral sea. When nature does not bestow upon her creatures strength, she protects them by bestowing cunning instincts. I am disposed to think that the bill, in so far as Glasgow and its “suburbs” is [sic] concerned, is an ingenious Conservative device. “Let us abandon Glasgow to the Liberals. She is already lost to us. Throw in Govan and Partick, and lull suspicion by giving the two a third member, and let us retreat to the county.”

A special meeting of commissioners to formulate a response to the Reform Bill was held on 19 March.<sup>54</sup> As was their wont, they formed a committee to co-ordinate the burgh’s opposition; Partick did likewise, although its response was slower than Govan, which seemed much more proactive in all this.<sup>55</sup> A public meeting had been held in Govan’s Burgh Hall on 13 March, where at the end of much rhetoric in favour of

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, The wider implications and context to the 1868 Reform Act are elaborated in I.G.C. Hutchison, *A Political History of Scotland 1832-1924: Parties, Elections and Issues*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), pp. 132-4 and McCaffrey, *Scotland...*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>54</sup> GMB, 19 March 1868, pp. 253-4.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 9 March 1868, p. 251; PMB 13 July 1868, p. 47.

municipal and parliamentary ‘independence’, two individuals dared to suggest that working class voters in the burgh might benefit from being taken into the City’s parliamentary, if not municipal boundaries.<sup>56</sup> It is clear that such objections were not quite in keeping with the overall tone of the meeting, and there is the clear impression that Provost Cruickshank, who chaired the meeting, would rather not have heard them at all.

At this stage a person at the back of the hall *reminded working men that if they resisted being swallowed up in Glasgow they would be thrown into the county and deprived of a vote.* An earlier speaker said that was the very thing he had intended to say at an earlier stage, had time been given. *The Provost, who had invited remarks after the earlier resolutions were moved and seconded, said the objector was now out of order, as he should have spoken at the time.*<sup>57</sup>

From this point onwards, Govan’s and Partick co-ordinated their opposition to the boundary extension. This cooperation entailed the preparation of petitions for both burghs which gave various objections to the proposed boundary change before demanding either that Govan and Partick be grouped with Maryhill, Hillhead, Dowanhill, and Pollokshields, alongside other suburban districts, into a new parliamentary constituency.<sup>58</sup> At this point it was not uncommon for Partick’s and Govan’s leaders, and increasingly the popular press, to refer to themselves as ‘sister’ burghs.<sup>59</sup> They also sent joint deputations to London to persuade Liberal MPs and then peers to oppose the Bill. The shared expense of this for both burghs, to be recouped from the rates, was about £260.<sup>60</sup>

The joint deputation to Parliament by key figures from both burghs went down to London armed with a tightly-argued joint memorandum elaborating various claims of the two communities to have always been separate and distinct from the city. In this endeavour, the burghs did not lack friends in high places. Most notably, Liberal Home Secretary Henry Austin Bruce, MP for Renfrewshire, owned property in both Partick and the city.<sup>61</sup> Irene Maver notes that Bruce’s very parliamentary seat was at stake in the

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<sup>56</sup> *Glasgow Morning Journal*, 14 March 1868.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, emphasis added.

<sup>58</sup> Joint Memorandum for the Burghs of Govan and Partick regarding the Representation of the People (Scotland) Bill 1868, GMB, circa June 1868, pp. 271-81.

<sup>59</sup> See for instance GMB 19 March 1868, pp. 253-4.

<sup>60</sup> PMB 14 Sep 1868 pp. 58-9.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 1 March 1870, pp. 124-7.

annexation dispute: ‘the Liberals did not intend to sacrifice one of their star politicians to satisfy the parochial ambitions of Glasgow’s councillors’.<sup>62</sup> Bruce’s forthright criticisms of the annexation policy were cited in the Partick municipal minutes, including his remarks that:

He was a larger ratepayer in Glasgow than in Partick, and he had taken no part in any of the ward meetings held in the city; but he had been much struck by the silly, but the amazingly popular statement made, that the Glasgow merchants resided outside of the city for the purpose of avoiding the Glasgow taxes. Any schoolboy could calculate that the cost of going to and from the suburbs would be more than any saving that would be on the taxes...<sup>63</sup>

After the annexation proposals were defeated, Bruce chided the Town Council, ‘you asked too much and got nothing’.<sup>64</sup> He continued that he hoped this reverse would teach the city a valuable lesson:

to manage with the work they have. *Let not the ratepayers’ money be squandered in useless parliamentary struggles but let Town Councillors set themselves to the great work of social and sanitary reform that was staring them in the face, and allow the burghs to do their work – to the result of which they could point with satisfaction, and as being satisfactory to their people.*<sup>65</sup>

Notwithstanding his obvious self-interest in the police burghs’ survival, Bruce’s remarks testified to the ethos of local self-government, which still thrived. Maver additionally highlights that the creation of the police burgh of Hillhead in May 1869 should, at least in part, be considered as a pre-emptive move to forestall Glasgow’s territorial consolidation.<sup>66</sup> In addition, a number of influential serving Glasgow councillors opposed expansion. The radicals James Moir (who lived on Partick’s Broomhill Avenue) and James Martin, both former Chartists, believed that the popular will in the burghs was firmly against annexation; moreover, they discerned a lust for power among the city’s municipal leaders, and financial avarice among the town clerks.<sup>67</sup> As a Glasgow councillor, Moir took a particular interest in policing and sanitary matters which echoed

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<sup>62</sup> Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 145.

<sup>63</sup> PMB, 1 March 1870, pp. 124-7.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, emphasis added.

<sup>66</sup> Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 142.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

the spirit of the General Police Acts.<sup>68</sup> Conservative Glasgow Town Councillor John Mitchell, a long-time Govan resident, defended the rights of his home-town against the city's ambitions.<sup>69</sup> Glasgow Town Councillor William Collins, a municipal economist, but dedicated pro-temperance Liberal, averred that the extension plans wasted time and money; he was not alone in this position.<sup>70</sup>

Below the commissioners' joint memorandum, just above the signatures of the respective town clerks and members of each burgh's committee against annexation, was the following *précis* of Partick and Govan's case to be kept separate from Glasgow's parliamentary and municipal boundaries. The fourth point is perhaps the most significant of the commissioners' claims, especially the notion that the burghs were 'well-defined, legally constituted and organized'. By 1876, this particular argument became intertwined with the ideological doctrine of 'local self-government', which was heralded as a cornerstone of British liberty. The *précis* read:

- 1) Because the present Parliamentary Area of the city of Glasgow contains a population of 450,000.
- 2) Because the Burghs of Partick and Govan contain each a Population of 18,000 - jointly not less than 36,000.
- 3) Because the Town Council of Glasgow profess that it is for the common interest of the city and of these Burghs that they should be annexed, this is not only opposed to the wishes of the Burghs themselves, as expressed at public meetings, and to their municipal interests, but to the solemn Resolution of the Town Council of Glasgow itself, in Public Meeting, on 27th February, 1868.
- 4) Because the Burghs of Partick and Govan *are well defined, legally constituted and organized, and form no part of the city which desires to annex them for municipal purposes of its own.*<sup>71</sup>

The commissioners (and the letter-writers who appeared to speak on their behalf) cleverly constructed a narrative presenting Partick and Govan as communities that had always been separate from the city now threatening their separate status. A particularly vivid instance of this was to be found in 'Municeps' letter to the editor of the *North British Daily Mail*, where it was averred that:

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<sup>68</sup> W.H. Fraser, 'Moir, James (1806-1880)', *ODNB*, (OUP, May 2006) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/62705>>, [accessed 9/9/10].

<sup>69</sup> Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 142.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Joint Memorandum... June 1868, GMB pp. 271-81. Emphasis added.

*Govan has a history which stretches as far back into the centuries as that of Glasgow itself; and an existence as independent of Glasgow as of [the Royal Burgh of] Rutherglen.*

Municeps continued:

*But Govan also has been extending itself on all sides, and has been following the natural law of progression in towns to the westward. It will soon approach Renfrew, and it will then be as reasonable on the part of Govan to propose the municipal connection of Renfrew to itself because both are “de facto connected,” as it is for Glasgow to demand at present the incorporation of Govan with the city. [But Govan] has now a municipal constitution and civic organisation as distinct from and independent of Glasgow as Glasgow is from Edinburgh.*<sup>72</sup>

As with the mysterious ‘Junius Junior’, it is likely but impossible to confirm that Municeps was a close associate of the Govan commissioners or Town Clerk Wilson. It is somewhat inconsistent of the author to suggest the annexation of Renfrew by Govan, although the suggestion seems to be made in irony rather than in earnest. The contention that Govan was as different and independent from Glasgow as Glasgow was from Edinburgh strains credibility, given that the two cities were long-established, and located on different coasts of Scotland. Govan’s urban development, although remarkable, had taken place only over the past few decades. There is therefore the impression that Municeps suffered from delusions of grandeur about his cherished burgh. Appeals to antiquity are unlikely to have contributed as much to the eventual defeat of the Glasgow boundary extension proposals as the commissioners’ skilled campaign to persuade with Liberal MPs and peers of their case. Nevertheless, as is made clear in chapter six of this thesis, the determination of the burgh leaders to promote a sense of ancient provenance and legitimacy continued for the remainder of their municipal independence.<sup>73</sup>

Among numerous parliamentarians ‘energetically’ lobbied by the Partick and Govan’s joint deputation were Liberal leader and soon-to-be Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone and Conservative Home Secretary Gathorne-Hardy.<sup>74</sup> The joint deputation was spurred on by the presence at Westminster of a rival deputation from Glasgow Town Council, led by soon-to-be-knighted Lord Provost James Lumsden junior himself. Lumsden was a moderate Liberal and firm proponent of Glasgow’s 1866 City Improvement Trust, sanctioned by Parliament to remove overcrowded dwellings in the old

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<sup>72</sup> *NBDM*, 1 June 1868. Emphasis added.

<sup>73</sup> See pp. 201-3.

<sup>74</sup> Note from joint deputation in GMB circa 9 June 1868, p. 296.

city centre around Glasgow Cross.<sup>75</sup> He would not have been unaware of the potential for new rating revenue inherent in the expansion of the city's municipal boundaries, meaning that the burgh leaders' allegations of Glasgow avarice had some truth in them, irrespective of the wider debates about the pros and cons of expansion.<sup>76</sup> In any event, the police burgh delegates were confident of success on this occasion, because all the Liberal MPs approached had pledged their support, apart from Glasgow's independent radical MP Robert Dalglish. Yet the deputation was still worried by the absence from Westminster of many MPs on whose support they had counted. The briefing papers, petitions and statistics presented to all those they lobbied were actually used in the ensuing debate. Although it is impossible to provide a full account of the key Reform Committee debate here, it is instructive to note a few of the points made by Liberal-inclined members in defence of the two communities.

William Graham, the Glasgow Liberal MP, with only a hint of irony, warned that increasing the city's parliamentary representation could result in the election of a man of 'very extreme opinions', such as a Roman Catholic or a trade unionist.<sup>77</sup> John Stuart Mill, better known to posterity as a radical philosopher in defence of individual liberty, was approaching the end of his brief term (1865-8) as MP for Westminster. He made a short intervention in the debate to the effect that 'he did not see why considerable populations, who ought to have representatives of their own, if they were entitled to be placed on the burgh franchise, should be merged into one great town, where the value of the franchise became almost lost to them.'<sup>78</sup> Perhaps he thought that if Govan and Partick were absorbed into Glasgow their inhabitants would fall prey to the 'tyranny of the majority'.<sup>79</sup> The Birmingham MP John Bright, a leading campaigner for parliamentary reform, among

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<sup>75</sup> Maver, 'Municipal Administration', p. 917; W.H. Fraser & I. Maver, 'The Social Problems of the City'; W.H. Fraser & I. Maver eds., *Glasgow*, Volume 2, (Manchester: MUP, 1996), pp. 352-93 at p. 365.

<sup>76</sup> These debates are elaborated in chapter 6 of this thesis, *passim*.

<sup>77</sup> *NBDM*, 9 June 1868.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>79</sup> J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, (Kitchener, Ontario: Batoche, 2001 [1859]) pp. 8-9. He also devoted a chapter to the role of local government: J.S. Mill, 'Local Representative Bodies'; *Considerations on Representative Government*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1867 [1861]), pp. 286-307.

other Liberal causes, argued that municipal independence was granted on the basis of the views of a ‘certain majority of the population’ and that to add a large population

to the municipality of Glasgow who did not wish to be so added, whose franchise would be injured thereby, and whose taxation would be enormously increased. To deal in this manner with a large population was contrary to the ordinary practices of [The House of Commons], and it was calculated to destroy the confidence which people in all parts of the country ought to have in Parliament. (Hear, hear.)<sup>80</sup>

Although there was merit in Mill’s and Cobden’s principled arguments, it is questionable how knowledgeable they were about the intricacies of burgh policy. Cobden’s remark about taxation could have been lifted from the police burghs’ propaganda on the ratings system, which was somewhat misleading.<sup>81</sup> When Conservative Lord Advocate Edward Strathearn Gordon argued that Govan, Partick and the other suburban burghs were really part of the city, this assertion was met with cries of ‘No.’<sup>82</sup> When the committee finally divided on schedule A of the Reform Bill, which defined the boundaries of the city, the result was 86 for and 91 against. The Partick side of the deputation reported gleefully to its colleagues about the Glasgow deputation’s ‘disappointment, which they could not disguise’, over the outcome.<sup>83</sup> Both burghs’ decision to restyle their *ad hoc* Parliamentary Boundary Committees as standing ‘Parliamentary Bill’ or ‘Law’ committees (the terms were used interchangeably in both burghs’ records) reflected their expectation of further attempts to take Govan and Partick into the city’s municipal and parliamentary boundaries.<sup>84</sup>

These fears were soon vindicated, for in October 1869 the Town Council invited deputations from Partick and Govan, as well as the other suburban burghs, to the City Chambers to discuss the merits of expanding the city’s municipal boundaries.<sup>85</sup> Partick went first, followed by Govan.<sup>86</sup> The two burghs’ Parliamentary Committees and their

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<sup>80</sup> *NBDM*, 9 June 1868.

<sup>81</sup> The broad lines of this debate infuse chapter six, *passim*.

<sup>82</sup> *NBDM*, 9 June 1868.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Report by the Committee on the Boundaries Question’, PMB 13 July 1868, pp. 48-50

<sup>84</sup> See for instance note in GMB circa 13 July 1868, p. 299.

<sup>85</sup> Adapted from PMB 9 Oct 1869 pp. 110-12.

<sup>86</sup> GMB 19 October 1869 pp. 1-6.

Maryhill counterparts had met to formulate an agreed line: this was that they were opposed to any form of ‘annexation’ by the city. When Partick’s delegation was received by the Town Council, the Lord Provost listed a number of arguments for the community being taken into the city’s municipal boundaries. These were that:-

- There would be uniform policing arrangements, centrally controlled.
- Partick would be represented on the Town Council
- Stipendiary Sheriff Substitutes could be appointed to preside over police courts in various districts, including Partick.
- Assessments would be ‘in favour of the Burgh’ with rentals under £10 being charged half of those above this threshold (so progressive local taxation).
- The city had acquired expensive land from the burgh to extend the West End Park and that it was likely that public roads, tolls and bridges within the burgh would be taken over by the city, which would be expensive.
- It was unfair that Partick and other districts’ residents’ had the freedom of the city’s roads and thoroughfares without paying for their upkeep.
- It was essential to have a general Sewage Scheme to purify the Clyde and Kelvin.
- What might be read as a vague threat that the city’s outlying districts could be charged higher rates for water and gas.<sup>87</sup>

In turn, the Partick committee claimed that the only definite proposals made in the Lord Provost’s remarks were those relating to taxation. Partick’s delegation was led by Provost Robert Hunter, who responded to the effect that:-

- The Partick committee would submit its own evidence to Parliament against ‘annexation’.
- The inhabitants of Partick were ‘quite satisfied’ with burgh affairs as presently managed.
- The watching, lighting and drainage of the burgh were better attended to, in the opinion of residents, outside the city’s control
- There were no objections from the commissioners to paying towards roads and tolls, and that they had already adopted several streets within their burgh.
- Regarding sewage, the Partick commissioners would happily contribute proportionately from assessment for that purpose.<sup>88</sup>

Govan’s deputation to Glasgow included the outspoken Commissioner Ledingham, who, as highlighted earlier in this discussion, would shortly denounce the Town Council’s plans as ‘Fenianism’.<sup>89</sup> This suggests that the encounter was not entirely convivial. The Govan minutes afford a more detailed account of the discussion than their Partick counterparts, as was so often the case. The Lord Provost’s response to Reid moved beyond

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<sup>87</sup> Adapted from PMB 9 Oct 1869 pp. 110-12.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> GMB 19 October 1869 pp. 1-6 (H-Gov-2 vol. 2)

such vital but technocratic arguments to espouse a harmonious ‘union’ between the city and its suburbs.<sup>90</sup> Yet the Lord Provost could not resist highlighting the dependency of the burghs on the city for their cherished economic dynamism.<sup>91</sup> This was accurate, but, given the context, rather impolitic and almost certainly counterproductive.

Govan’s response was handled by then Provost Thomas Reid. Reid was a partner in the family dye-works, who despite a staunchly anti-annexationist stance during his chief magistracy of the burgh in 1869-72, would later serve on the Town Council in the capacity of Deacon Convener for the Incorporation of Dyers.<sup>92</sup> By then, the family firm had moved to Burnbrae, near Milngavie, Dunbartonshire, and Reid himself had moved his residence from Govan to the altogether more picturesque estate of Kilmardinny, Milngavie. Reid maintained several lucrative business interests in addition to the family firm; most notably the chairmanship of Nobel’s Explosives Co., Ltd. Around the time of the former Provost’s move to Kilmardinny, one satirist offered a jaundiced perspective on Reid’s Govan political career, and on the overall relation of the suburban burghs to the city:<sup>93</sup>

I fancy [Reid’s] first appearance in a public capacity was when he perched on the dizzy height of the Provostship of a small suburban burgh. I know that he certainly did hold that position of distinguished eminence for a number of years, and that while in it he fought tooth and nail to retain the individual existence of his pet burgh. So long as it was independent he was Somebody, but if it were absorbed into the municipal boundaries of the great City he would be Nobody. For as yet he had not dreamed Civic eminence [as Deacon Convener].

And there was another reason.

His works – for he was now principal partner – were in this suburban burgh, and everybody knows that the public burdens of a small borough are lighter than those of a large City. To be in this suburban burgh was to be of the City, but not in it. Sitting at the City gates, as it were, our friend could derive all the benefits of the City markets, the roads, bridges, and other conveniences of traffic without contributing his quota towards maintaining them. [...] No wonder, therefore, he resisted all overtures for amalgamation with the Civic municipality.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. These remarks are quoted in full in chapter 6, p. X.

<sup>91</sup> These arguments are discussed, taking the longer view, in chapter 6, *passim*.

<sup>92</sup> Maver, ‘Municipal Administration’, p. 953; *GH*, 5 July 1900 (obituary); N.J. Morgan, ‘Thomas Reid’; A. Slaven and S. Checkland (eds.), *Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography, 1800-1900*, Volume 1 (Aberdeen: AUP, 1990), pp. 395-8.

<sup>93</sup> *Fairplay*, ‘Clydeside Cameos No. XVII: A Bear’, 25 April 1884.

This passage epitomised the anti-suburban burgh position in the annexation debates until 1912. Yet, the burghs would retain their independence for several decades beyond 1869. This was at least in part because Reid responded to the city in a more subtle fashion than his Partick counterpart had done a week or so earlier, albeit his dealings with the city were characteristically gruff. His deputation had already made clear that its participation in the meeting did not signify acquiescence with the Town Council's plans, and that they wished it noted that they had not been told whether remarks at this meeting would later be used in parliamentary proceedings that would almost certainly follow. In that context, Provost Reid stated that he and his committee did not need to 'defend themselves formally', and so he would not respond to the Lord Provost's points in any detail.<sup>94</sup> Instead, he prayed in aid of economist members of the Town Council, such as William Collins, who had expressed misgivings about the dangers of excessive centralisation.<sup>95</sup> After more fraught discussions about local taxation, the meeting broke up. Once again the parliamentary committees from Govan, Partick and Maryhill met, and the outcome, as reported in the Govan minutes, was that:

[The] Representatives were firmly persuaded that it was the duty of the [several] Burghs to resist the threatened aggression upon their Municipal Institutions, Territory and Independence.<sup>96</sup>

At a meeting in Govan later in October, Bailie Wilson made remarks that more fully elaborated the notion of 'aggression' and are worth quoting at length insofar as they encapsulate the rationale frequently given for the suburban burghs' – Govan and Partick especially – to annexation for decades to follow.

Their municipal extension scheme is a scheme of selfish aggrandisement at the expense of their neighbours. They do not say to us, is it your wish to join Glasgow? We are willing, if you so desire it, to incorporate you in an extended municipality. They do not even pretend that their government is superior. They simply say it is our determination to annex you, and, advantage or disadvantage to you we will annex you. We will impose upon you, whether you are willing or unwilling to receive them, institutions in the benefit of which from distance and otherwise you cannot participate. We will impose upon you our taxation, whatever that may be, or however it may hereafter arise, we will deprive you of self-government, we will govern the city and all the neighbouring districts over an area of nearly 50 square miles, and with a population of upwards of half a million and

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<sup>94</sup> GMB 19 October 1869 pp. 1-6.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. Reid's response, quoting Councillor William Collins out of context, is elaborated in chapter 6, p. 125.

<sup>96</sup> GMB, 19 October 1869 pp. 1-6, emphasis added.

rising annually, and we will govern it from a common centre by a complicated network of officialism, committees, departments and red tape. But the city is not without plausible reasons, or so-called reasons, for the proposed municipal extension. The city first assumes our community of interests with them and then argues from this assumption in favour of municipal annexation. We most emphatically deny their right to make such an assumption.<sup>97</sup>

The rhetoric from Govan escalated further in March 1870, when the Town Council was accused of using ‘war tactics’ against the burghs in the way they allegedly manipulated parliamentary procedure to their advantage in the interests of getting their private municipal extension bill passed.<sup>98</sup> The burgh and its allies thus resorted to ‘defensive’ stratagems of their own.<sup>99</sup> Although this was successful, and the extension bill was thrown out by 143 votes to 102, it was noted that the Town Council did not accept their bill’s rejection ‘with a becoming deference to the wisdom and dignity of the Imperial Legislature’.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, the Town Council had reappointed its committee on municipal extension. For Govan and Partick, this meant only one thing. ‘The existence of that Committee is a standing menace to the independence of the Suburban Burghs’, and therefore the Parliamentary Committees urged the creation of a ‘permanent union of the Suburban Burghs as a defensive alliance’.<sup>101</sup> The operation and gradual erosion of this alliance is elaborated in chapter six of this thesis, as is the fact that Partick’s firm anti-annexationist stance was slightly moderated in 1872, when the burgh ceded the lands of Gilmorehill, soon to form the new home of Glasgow University, to the city.<sup>102</sup> In 1875, as is discussed elsewhere in this thesis, Partick even explored the potential of merging with the nearby police burghs of Maryhill and Hillhead, albeit the idea was abandoned due to prohibitive legal costs and a lack of unanimity on the burgh board.<sup>103</sup> This seemed to suggest that the Partick commissioners’ ideological commitment to small-scale local self-government was slightly more equivocal than their rhetoric suggested. If the Fenians and Glasgow Town Council represented, in the burgh leaders’ eyes, external threats to their

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<sup>97</sup> *NBDM*, 20 October 1869.

<sup>98</sup> *GMB*, 14 March 1870 pp. 25-30

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> See chapter 6, *passim* for the fortunes of the ‘alliance’.

<sup>103</sup> *GH*, 10 July 1875. See also chapter 6, p. 190.

municipal independence, the 1870s saw the emergence of internal dissent and constructive criticism which, although not threatening, *per se*, also evoked a defensive response.

### **The Ward Committees and the Local Press: Holding the Commissioners to Account?**

The analysis now turns to the activities of the ward committees and the associated role of the emerging local press in publicising these and holding the commissioners in both burghs to account over policies and their implementation. Ward committees were voluntary, semi-official, self-selected bodies of ratepayers which took to do with the selection of municipal candidates and the scrutiny of sitting commissioners or councillors.<sup>104</sup> These bodies were (at least formally) politically neutral, and saw their role as drawing representatives' attention to problems arising in the relevant ward. From time to time ward committees attempted to assert themselves over the elected members and council officials, for instance by demanding access to minutes of meetings and the use of council rooms for their own sessions, but councillors in Glasgow and (as will be seen in chapter five of this thesis) Govan and Partick jealously guarded their own role and legitimacy in developing local policy. The ward committees met regularly throughout the year to discuss local issues, but they came into their own in the run-up to the annual municipal elections. Bell and Paton, writing in 1896, offered an illuminating overview of the ward committees' pre-election 'state of bustling activity'.<sup>105</sup> After the municipal aspirants had given their election addresses, and the sitting councillors had discussed their stewardship, they faced:<sup>106</sup>

strenuous judges both in and outside of the Ward Committees, who look with jealous eyes and inquisitive minds on the doings of their representatives. At these electoral meetings, therefore, the whole of the representatives are expected to give some account of their year's activity in the public service. In the more lively wards the occasion is one during which some electoral steam may be blown off in the form of playful but diverting interruptions; and the speakers must be prepared to meet the interrogations of hecklers whose question are not invariably either soothing or pertinent.

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<sup>104</sup> A useful summary of the Ward Committees role and operation from a Glasgow perspective, albeit with relevance to the general position, can be found in Bell and Paton, *Glasgow*, pp. 66-7.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

‘Soothing’ or not, ward committees afforded an opportunity for the cross-examination of incumbents and candidates which, when recorded in the local newspapers, can make for intriguing insights into ratepayers’ perceptions of the conduct of municipal affairs. As will be seen here and in chapter five, such questioning was often more pointed, relevant and critical than local politicians would have wished. The limited survival of the local press for the period covered in this chapter gave a glimpse of the potential of ward committees at their most focused. It should be noted, however, that the surviving newspapers from the mid-1870s do provide evidence both of scrutiny of burgh affairs and the promotion of a sense of local identity. Although the remainder of this discussion draws from the *Govan Chronicle*, it is worth noting that its sister paper, the *Partick Observer*, was heavily critical of local fire brigades with shiny fire engines and a deficient water supply, who could but ‘watch in the interests of the authorities’ while homes blazed and lives were lost.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, the heaviest barb was reserved for the Glasgow Water Commissioners who, reluctant to share their amenity with the burghs without recompense, ‘smiled sardonically at the misfortunes’ of their neighbours.<sup>108</sup> Noting the imposition of fines for swearing in late 1875, the *Partick Advertiser* proudly noted that ‘the Police Commissioners of Partick have... the moral as well as the social weal of the burgh at heart’.<sup>109</sup> The paper also proudly recorded the first international football match, held at the West of Scotland Cricket Grounds within the burgh in March 1876.<sup>110</sup>

Late June 1876 saw a meeting of Partick’s 2nd Ward Committee.<sup>111</sup> The gathering’s primary purpose was to select and endorse candidates to contest the ward’s seats on the commission at the forthcoming municipal elections. In earlier years and different circumstances, it would have been expected that incumbent commissioner Alexander Colquhoun Shanks, a local house-factor who had been on the board since 1854, would be re-nominated by acclamation. This time Shanks faced a much rougher ride. On the proposal of his nomination, John Walker, one of the assembled ratepayers, averred that he and many fellow ratepayers ‘had quite enough of house-factors connected with the

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<sup>107</sup> *PO*, 16 September 1876.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *PA*, 13 December 1875.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 March 1876.

<sup>111</sup> *GH*, 24 June 1876.

board already'.<sup>112</sup> This comment drew supportive noises from many of in the audience. After Commissioner Shanks had given an account of his work on the commission, at the chair's invitation, Mr Walker rose from his seat in the audience, advancing to the foot of the speaker's platform and shaking his finger at Shanks, demanding to know 'what right the commissioners of Partick had to assist Crosshill to fight Glasgow in [the] question of No Man's Land'.<sup>113</sup> The heckler was quickly called to order, and another elector moved that all questions be held over until the next speaker, Bailie Anthony Inglis, had been heard. Inglis, a prominent shipbuilder whose biography is discussed elsewhere in this thesis, also represented the second ward, but did not face re-election until next year, was received with less hostility.<sup>114</sup> Yet this did not prevent a large majority of the assembled electors voting for 'a change' in the ward's representation when Shanks' nomination was put to the vote. Although Shanks soldiered on to the election, he was narrowly defeated by David Turnbull Colquhoun, a radical Liberal lawyer. Colquhoun quickly established himself as a dissenting, working-class friendly, voice on the commission, campaigning for the introduction of free public libraries and greater efficiency in the use of ratepayers' money.<sup>115</sup>

The deliberations of the second ward committee and the ensuing electoral contest represented something more significant than the termination of Shanks' career as an obscure municipal politician. These events occurred near the beginning of ten years when local politics in Partick and Govan grew more openly contentious, if not quite partisan. They encapsulated a number of ways in which municipal politics in the police burghs under study was changing. The ward committee reports provide indirect and sometimes first-hand evidence of working-class views on burgh affairs for the first time since both burghs were founded. It should be noted that an important motivating factor in the division of the burghs into wards was to effectively corral working class representation in the wake of the 1868 franchise extension. When Sheriff Bell was bound by a technicality to deny the Govan commissioners' unanimous request for their burgh's division into wards in

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. The 'No Man's Land' or Crosshill disputes are also considered in chapter six of this thesis, pp. 189-190.

<sup>114</sup> See p. 68 and his entry in the biographical appendix.

<sup>115</sup> PMB, 14 August 1876, pp. 40-3; PA, 24 April 1875. Colquhoun's reputation was later tarnished by a major embezzlement scandal. (See entry in biographical appendix.)

1869, he expressed personal regret, sharing the commissioners' fear that 'the non-division into Wards will materially affect the character of the ensuing election by placing it virtually in the hands of the classes recently enfranchised'.<sup>116</sup>

Even as late as 1875, the *Partick Advertiser* reported that the burgh's electoral roll had not been updated since 1873, ostensibly, but probably disingenuously to save municipal funds.<sup>117</sup> At the 1891 census, Govan's municipal wards were populated as follows: first 21,651, second 9,554, third 7,715 and fourth 22,443.<sup>118</sup> Partick's wards were more equitably drawn as follows: first 8,504, second 7,791, third 10,956 and fourth 9,287.<sup>119</sup> Even in 1901, Govan's re-drawn wards varied in population from just under 10,000 in the case of the third and fourth wards, to 18,388 in the case of the second and 16,069 for the fifth. Evidently the burgh officials had taken Sheriff Bell's fears about working class democracy to heart. As political analyst Michael Freeden has elaborated, nineteenth-century Liberals tended to fear the 'uneducated masses', viewing equality as 'politically destabilising, even pernicious'.<sup>120</sup>

As is developed in chapter five, the ward committees remained an important forum for the expression of ratepayers' dissatisfaction in both burghs until 1912. Of course, it is only through the medium of the surviving local newspapers that vivid details of ward committee activity survive, and the role played by an emerging local press in highlighting deficiencies in burgh administration was at least, if not more important. In 1876, the *Govan Chronicle* was keen to refocus ratepayers' attention on the problems that the Police Statutes, and more specifically the creation of Govan and Partick as burghs, had been intended to tackle. At Govan in 1864, campaigners for erection as a burgh used placards with four capital Ds:

These on closer inspection turned out to be the initials of the words Dirt, Darkness, Disturbance and Disease, and the electors were earnestly called upon to vote for the formation of Govan into a Burgh as the only and true panacea for those glaring existing evils. This time the application succeeded, and Govan was made into the

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<sup>116</sup> GMB, 12 May 1869, pp. 372-4.

<sup>117</sup> PA, 10 July 1875.

<sup>118</sup> Online Historical Population Reports, <<http://www.histpop.org>>, 12 May 2011.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> M. Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998 edition), p. 160.

Burgh it now is, and sufficient length of time has elapsed to test fairly whether the promised reform in the matter of the four D's has been carried out.<sup>121</sup>

In 1876, the new weekly took it upon itself to audit the performance of Govan's municipal leaders, and in doing so it drew comparisons between Govan, Partick and other suburban burghs.<sup>122</sup> The paper also placed its judgements in the wider context of the police statutes and both burghs' 'parliamentary' activities – in other words their efforts to resist amalgamation with Glasgow. In terms of 'Darkness', it was conceded that Govan was well lit and probably better so than many other 'towns' – a word the newspaper used unselfconsciously as a synonym for the police burghs. The local police were acknowledged, albeit grudgingly, to be of sufficient numbers and effectiveness to keep 'Disturbance' pretty much at bay. This, somewhat equivocal endorsement of local policing was perhaps explained by an editorial in November the same year. Entitled 'Criminal Govan', this in essence found the burgh to be a 'haunt of criminals' which could not claim to be better than Glasgow (nor, it should be noted, did they think it any worse), averring that fines and similar sanctions were ineffective; the burgh should consider introducing flogging instead.<sup>123</sup> It was also significant that this editorial considered drink to be 'at the foot [as in root] of' all crime in the burgh, detailing the difficulties the authorities encountered when attempting to close down 'Shebeens' or Irish drinking dens.<sup>124</sup> Another editorial of the same paper cited parliamentary returns quantifying drunkenness in Govan as higher than in other burghs around Glasgow, even exceeding the figures for the city of Edinburgh.<sup>125</sup> The same editorial, in an inkling of things to come, went on to urge licensing reform, declaiming that: 'The thought that so much drunkenness exists in the district, and that the two burghs are becoming notorious for their bacchanalian orgies must afford food for painful reflection to all right-minded inhabitants, be they temperance or temperate men.'<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> *The Govan Chronicle and Partick Observer [hereafter GC]*, 19 February 1876.

<sup>122</sup> *GC*, 24 June 1876.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, 11 November 1876.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 16 December 1876.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*.

Going back to the *Chronicle's* earlier audit of the 'four D's', where 'Disease' was concerned, Govan's hospital provision was lauded as meeting the 'most enlightened requirements of the day'.<sup>127</sup> Nevertheless, the editors did not pull their punches on the matter of 'Dirt', stating that: 'if Govan, prior to being made a burgh, was the least degree worse than it is now, it must have been very bad indeed.'<sup>128</sup> Urgent action was exhorted, but the editorial went on to dissect the commissioners' selective approach to implementing the sanitation provisions of the (1862) Police Statute. It was noted that relevant clauses of the legislation placed an imperative rather than permissive regime on burghs, but that the local commissioners behaved as though enforcing cleanliness was some form of optional luxury, leaving sanitation a 'dead letter' for Govan.<sup>129</sup> This was contrasted with Partick, whose streets were described as being in 'good order', in addition to the smaller neighbouring police burgh of Kinning Park whose cleanliness was 'admirable'.<sup>130</sup>

Why, then, was Govan found to be in such a remedial state? It is worth quoting the editorial's explanation at some length, for it highlights apparent pressure on the commissioners from the ratepayers over sanitation, in addition to further exposing inconsistencies in the exercise and application of the powers devolved to them by Parliament. The following extract begins with a handwringing, more-in-sorrow-than-in-anger tone, before becoming increasingly vitriolic.<sup>131</sup>

the evil has arisen from the default of the Commissioners, and that body alone must bear the blame, and highly reprehensible and blameable they are in this respect. Clearly it would have been far more to the purpose of that august body in place of squandering much money and valuable time in the interest of Crosshill – which did not concern us – had applied the one and devoted the other to putting into proper repair and thoroughly cleansing our streets, and not waited till public indignation was roused, and communication after communication published in our columns, when, only they appeared to come upon a sense of duty laying upon them, and prepared to put the streets into proper order, and thus remove from the burgh the stigma of having the dirtiest and most dangerous streets in the west of Scotland.

After criticising the commissioners and their surveyor, Mr Dunlop, for recently claiming to have obtained powers of compulsion in sanitary matters, when these had been embodied in

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 24 June 1876.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

the General Police legislation since 1850, the editorial went on to observe: the Sanitary Committee ‘took great credit for their exertions *now*. Always *now*. [...] We are not sanguine as to this sudden and enforced activity.’<sup>132</sup>

It was fitting, and very likely with deliberate and pointed insight, that the editorial excoriated the burgh of Govan’s failings in dealing with one of the key problems it had originally been created to address. The commissioners’ allegedly unbecoming haste to remedy their sanitary shortcomings was not just a matter of appeasing angry ratepayers and editorialists, but, in a very real sense, a means of justifying the burgh’s continued administrative separation from Glasgow. In short, the sanitation scandal posed an existential threat to Govan as a burgh; if sanitary matters were worse or no better than they had been in 1864, what was the point of municipal autonomy? The symbolic, as well as practical, importance of sanitary matters can be seen from Govan’s Parliamentary Committee’s report on the ‘annexation’ disputes, which was published in March 1876 and later serialised in the *Chronicle* itself. This document was Govan’s self-styled ‘Confession of Corporation Faith’, and made frequent reference to sanitation.<sup>133</sup> The following extract gives a fair representation of its overall tone of wounded, if obstinate, indignation:

The [Govan Police] burgh was created, originally, for purposes exclusively of municipal government and administration. The sphere of its authority is determined by its burghal boundaries. Its policy is local. Its spirit pacific. No Parliamentary addition to its municipal powers has been suggested. No Parliamentary improvement has been desired. No Parliamentary aggression upon external authority has been attempted or imagined. Nevertheless, during the past 8 years, the offensive policy of the Glasgow Corporation has repeatedly placed the Corporation of Govan on the defensive.<sup>134</sup>

Govan was neither a ‘Corporation’ in the Glasgow sense, nor a religion, but a key assertion in this document was that Govan’s sanitary policies were ‘not less efficient’ than those obtaining in Glasgow.<sup>135</sup> It would therefore have been extremely embarrassing for this municipal propaganda to be undermined by inconvenient truths reported in a local newspaper. The state of the streets was clearly a serious issue, but one municipal debate

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Report of Govan Parliamentary Committee [Responding to Recent Glasgow Annexation Proposals], from GMB 10 March 1876, pp. 409-427, *passim*.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, at p. 409.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, at p. 419.

on this was leavened by wit, when it was suggested that the reason Helen Street's residents kept their frontages messy was so that they could be annexed to the city.<sup>136</sup>

The *Govan Chronicle*'s allusion to the Crosshill controversy was a telling indicator of editorial exasperation, coming from a weekly which continued to endorse Govan and the other suburban burghs' independence from the city. The paper frequently gave rallying calls against 'Glasgow, whose omnivorous and insatiable maw is ever-ready to pounce upon the neighbouring boroughs [*sic*] and absorb them.'<sup>137</sup> Electors in at least one of Govan's municipal wards had expressed their displeasure at the use of ratepayers' money to support the efforts of this affluent district to maintain its status, gained only in 1871, as a police burgh. Govan, Partick and various other burghs in the 'defensive alliance' or against Glasgow discussed above, were keen to protect Crosshill. This was on the basis that its amalgamation into the city would swiftly result in a domino-effect leading to the acquiescence of Parliament in the expansion of Glasgow's boundaries to encompass the remaining eight suburban burghs, not least Govan and Partick. This led them to go beyond mere moral support for the smaller burgh, and well outside their statutory powers, to fund Crosshill's legal activities. The presumed right of the police burghs to contribute to the Crosshill 'defence fund' was tested in the County of Lanarkshire's Sheriff Court in May 1877, when Sheriff Guthrie ruled that the police burgh of Hillhead, which had been founded in 1869, had acted outwith its statutory powers in order to contribute.<sup>138</sup> The *Govan Chronicle* acknowledged that this ruling invalidated all efforts by the suburban burghs to work together to preserve their autonomy, but claimed that the logic of the court ruling also meant, by extension, that the city had no right to spend its own ratepayers' money on 'unsuccessful municipal aggression'.<sup>139</sup> It can only be assumed that the editorial did not mean to endorse *successful* 'aggression'.

For its part, Govan's Parliamentary Committee, recounting the Crosshill dispute in its 1876 'Confession' memorial, argued that it was in fact 'constrained' to intervene at ratepayers' expense because of disingenuous strategies on the part of the city.<sup>140</sup> Whilst

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<sup>136</sup> *GC*, 15 January 1876.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 12 May 1876.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 19 May 1877.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>140</sup> See Govan Parliamentary Committee, Report..., p. 418, original emphasis.

the Crosshill dispute is considered elsewhere in this thesis, it is worth noting that Govan's and Partick's commissioners staunchly defended the use of rating income for parliamentary and legal proceedings on the grounds that the machinations of the Town Council represented an 'insidious' threat to the police burghs which had to be firmly defended against by the alliance.<sup>141</sup> As well as attempting to justify the Govan and Partick commissioners' reasons for intervening in the Crosshill issue, the 1876 report revealed much about the municipal self-image of both burghs. Given their own much-vaunted indignation at being treated as districts of Glasgow, it was rather ironic – even hypocritical – that Govan's and Partick's municipal leaders implicitly regarded themselves as superior to the other 'Confederated' burghs. Throughout the above extract they were content to brand their defensive band of burghs as 'Govan and Partick, &c.'<sup>142</sup>

If Partick's streets and sewers were in better shape than Govan's in the 1870s, this did not mean that this burgh's commissioners were exempt from questions and criticisms of their actions: quite the reverse. Newly-elected commissioner David Turnbull Colquhoun appeared to consider himself something of a 'new broom' in the burgh chambers, raising questions over aspects of administration where wealthier residents appeared to have benefited disproportionately from burgh improvements at the expense of poorer ratepayers. The first such issue quickly took on the dimensions of a scandal. Appropriately enough, this concerned sewers and who should have paid for them under the Police Statutes. On the surface, this was a rather dull, technical and legalistic matter, but one that raised serious questions about the fairness and competence of burgh administration. Commissioner Colquhoun was not afraid to provoke the enmity of many of his new colleagues, including ex-Provost George Thomson, in exposing the inequitable levying of a 'Special Sewer Rate' on tenants on the burgh instead of occupiers, a practice which ought to have been discontinued after the 1862 Lindsay Act superseded the 1850 General Police Act under which the burgh was founded. When Colquhoun, who had been appointed to the burgh's finance committee shortly after his election, raised the matter of the special rate at a board meeting in mid October 1876, the atmosphere turned decidedly frosty.

Colquhoun had come prepared, having done extensive research in Treasurer Paisley's records showing that since 1866 owners in the burgh had 'not paid a single

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, *passim*.

farthing' of the Special Sewer Rate, which must have been an oversight of commissioners 'ignorant or forgetful' of the change in the law.<sup>143</sup> Thomson vehemently denied that owners had not been paying their share, whilst Hugh Kennedy stated that all present were serving ratepayers to the best of their ability and if it were proven that they had acted illegally, he would be the first to relieve them of the expense. Thomson moved that acts of legal interpretation were not for the commissioners but for 'eminent counsel'. When the matter was put to the vote, the motion to seek legal opinion was carried by seven votes to two. Colquhoun and Commissioner Hendry's were the only dissenting voices. Hendry was a lawyer and recently-elected commissioner, who had come to Partick as an agent of the National Bank of Scotland and was now an active member and future Convener of the burgh's Finance Committee.<sup>144</sup> Interestingly, no one present, including Colquhoun himself, suggested offering the affected ratepayers a rebate if his charges were upheld. An anonymous Colquhoun-admiring 'Householder', writing to the editor of the *Govan Chronicle* in a letter printed the following week, gave this colourful description of the meeting.

[W]e cannot but admire the courage [of Colquhoun] in braving the indignation and petty spleen of a board almost exclusively composed of the landlord and factor interest, such indignation and spleen being clearly shown on their part in the discussion on Friday night. As everybody expected the opposition was led by ex-Provost Thomson, and as everyone expected he carried a majority of his colleagues with him, as that gentleman has a wonderful knack of dragging them after him in whatever direction he is inclined to go. Mr Thomson opened his speech with what can not unfairly be construed as a sneer at Mr Colquhoun, for being "one versed in law and having paid the assessment for a couple of years without objecting or taking any notice of its alleged illegality". Perhaps it may help Mr Thomson to a solution of the problem that is perplexing him, when I inform him that Mr Colquhoun has his own personal interest to look to now. He was sent to the board by the tenants of the 2nd ward to look after their interest [and] they have every reason now to be thankful their efforts were crowned with success.<sup>145</sup>

Another anonymous letter dated 18 October from 'Young Partick' on the same page, went even further in its condemnation of the commissioners.<sup>146</sup> It too praised Colquhoun for bringing the scandal to light, before castigating ex-Provost Thomson

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<sup>143</sup> GC, 21 October 1876.

<sup>144</sup> PMB, 9 June 1884. The *GH* explained the issues in much more measured, but substantively similar terms on 21 October 1876.

<sup>145</sup> GC, 21 October 1876.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

especially for his ‘strange’ and ‘unaccountable’ conduct in running burgh affairs, and for ignoring the legal advice of two successive town clerks when this did not suit him. His arguments in favour of the special sewer rate were derided as ‘childish’ and he was leader of the burgh’s ‘*misrepresentatives*’ or ‘representatives of the landlords’ of the burgh. He was also mocked for being unsure of his ground as to whether or not the ratepayers were liable for the upkeep of sewers built since the 1850s. The letter ended with a rallying call for the burgh’s electors, which would have resonated with the rent strikers of the burgh during the first war, discussed in chapter eight of this thesis:

Spurn you them, should they [i.e. commissioners who were also landlords or close to landlords] have the effrontery to solicit your suffrages. We have had more than enough of landlordism prevailing at the commission. Every dog has his day. They have had theirs now for years. Be on the alert, you may possibly have an early opportunity in public meeting to discuss the commissioners’ conduct. Be prepared to turn out in your hundreds, and show that you are descendants of the plucky Partickonians of bygone days.<sup>147</sup>

As the ‘Householder’ had predicted, Colquhoun’s interpretation of the law was upheld by independent counsel. The commissioners now admitted that they were honour-bound to stop levying the special sewer rate, and Thomson conceded that Colquhoun’s interpretation of the evidence was correct. Nonetheless, commissioner Peter McKissock maintained that Colquhoun’s remarks that home owners had not paid a single farthing towards sewer building was inaccurate and objectionable considering that only £450 was still owed. Colquhoun withdrew this remark and the discussion moved on to recriminations over the expense of going to law. Colquhoun, seconded by Hendry, moved for the immediate rescinding of the special sewer rate, but Provost Ferguson moved that rates be imposed as notified earlier in the year, which was carried by six votes to three. Colquhoun appealed the matter to Sheriff Galbraith, who acknowledged the accuracy of his interpretation, although he took pains to acknowledge that as a ‘fluctuating body’ the commissioners could not be held accountable for the actions of their predecessors in office.<sup>148</sup> A further letter to the editor took Bailie Kennedy to task for voting against the immediate exemption of tenants from the special sewer rate, stating that if he did not change his stance, its author would: ‘take an early opportunity of contrasting his actions with his words’.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid. See pp. 284-5 for further detail on the rent strikes.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, 28 October 1876.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

Both burghs' ward committees also often played a more prosaic role in relaying the concerns of ratepayers within their wards to the commissioners. For instance, Govan's First Ward Committee sent a deputation to the burgh chambers in late 1883 to complain about the state of Helen Street, which formed part of the ward.<sup>150</sup> For Partick, although the sampling of burgh minutes taken for this chapter does not include evidence of this sort of ward committee deputation, the records examined do show several instances of less formal 'ratepayer' deputations about issues such as the Kelvin and Clyde right of way. Additionally, other interest groups, not least the Partick Landlords and House Factors' Association, were hardly reticent in approaching the commissioners.<sup>151</sup> There was also what commissioner Storrie described as 'underground grumbling' about the level of policing in the burgh being insufficient.<sup>152</sup> Although the ward committee members were usually obscure compared to the commissioners they attempted to scrutinise, their meetings occasionally attracted attention from newspapers in Glasgow, especially when they questioned the *raison d'être* for the burghs' autonomous existence separate from the city. One notable instance of this occurred at a pre-election meeting of ratepayers hosted by Partick's Third Ward Committee at Whiteinch in July 1875. Referring to the Crosshill controversy, ward chairman Thomas Donald displeased commissioners Alexander Storrie and Thomas Wingate, who were present as representative of the ward, by stating that 'he failed to see where the grievance would exist if Partick were annexed to Glasgow'. The report continued in a manner epitomising the classic annexationist case:

If he resided within the municipal boundary of Glasgow he would be one of those who were in favour of having all the burghs incorporated without delay. When he went to the West-End Park he felt that there was something anomalous in the Partick people, for instance, being allowed to take full advantage of it without paying a farthing for its maintenance. He thought the incorporation of all the burghs within a radius of five or six miles of Glasgow was only a question of time, and he conscientiously believed that such an arrangement would simply be a measure of justice. He desired to know from the Commissioners what, if any, would be the grievance of which the suburban burghs would have to complain were such an incorporation to take place? Commissioner Storrie said one result [...] would be that the people in Partick would require to pay 1s 3d a pound more of taxation.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> GMB, 10 December 1883, pp. 421-6.

<sup>151</sup> See for instance PMB, 11 December 1882 and 8 January 1883, pp. 159-63 and 164-7, respectively.

<sup>152</sup> GH, 10 July 1875.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

For all that Partick's streets appeared to be better maintained than Govan's, it is worth bearing in mind that some of the local ratepayers were so unhappy with their burgh's administration that they felt the need to establish a 'Tenants' Vigilance Association' to keep a beady eye on the commissioners' activities.<sup>154</sup> This organisation had its origins in the Special Sewer Rate controversy, when the ratepayers who had demanded a public meeting on the issue conceded that their immediate complaint had been resolved, but they nevertheless felt that continued scrutiny of the commissioners on behalf of local tenants, as distinct from property-owners, was a good idea. Its first meeting was on November 7 at the Joiners' Hall on Bridge Street. Acknowledging the creation of this association, the *Chronicle* seemed to consider that it had opened a Pandora's Box of complaints from less wealthy ratepayers in Partick, and perhaps sowed the seeds of similar discontent in the other suburban burghs. Revisiting various aspects of burgh administration about which it had been critical earlier in the year, it now went out of its way to praise the commissioners and reassure ratepayers that their interests were being looked out for:

Our columns have lately contained severe strictures on the conduct of commissioners anent the sewer rate; yet we have no doubt that though the public may be quick to find fault, they may not be slow to acknowledge, much active work is being done, without any great noise being made.<sup>155</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The period 1865-1885 was evidently a busy one in the development of the new police burghs, despite the paucity of surviving newspaper records. From the available evidence it is clear that there had been a shift in emphasis by the burgh leaders who were no longer content simply to administer their communities within the terms of the General Police Acts. If the ethos of local self-government had been a relatively implicit, background factor in the creation of the burghs, the annexationist threat presented by the city of Glasgow swiftly forced Govan and Partick to use it as a rallying-cry for the preservation of their municipal independence. The Fenian panics were not manufactured by the Commissioners to boost the image of their respective burghs, but the crises of the late-1860s and mid-1870s offered the burghs a golden opportunity to showcase the 'loyalty' of their citizens, downplaying local sectarian divisions, and elevating the profile of the local police forces. In short, the burghs – especially Govan – sought to demonstrate that the

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<sup>154</sup> GC, 4 November 1876

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 2 December 1876.

safety of the nation, not just the local community, deserved to be entrusted to them, irrespective of their *parvenu* status as police burghs. While the burgh leaders had been successful in rebuffing the city's annexationist overtures at the first few times of asking, and at forging an alliance to deter future such attempts, they had done so in a manner which betrayed the financial incentives – especially reduced rates – that the burghs' wealthier citizens could derive from continued local self-government. Conversely, the emerging local press, and the constructively critical role of the new ward committees highlighted an alternative perspective on the consequences of municipal autonomy. The emerging picture was of burghs which were some way from dealing convincingly with the problems that had led to their creation, and of municipal leaders keen, generally, to ensure that the financial burdens of local improvement were disproportionately borne by the less wealthy ratepayers, who themselves became increasingly unwilling to accept this situation.<sup>156</sup> As is seen in chapter five and six, these tensions became *leitmotifs* of the remaining years of Partick's and Govan's respective municipal independence.

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<sup>156</sup> There was a loose parallel here with Leicester, where the local working-class of the 1870s and early 1880s was 'never a totally passive component of the Liberal alliance'. B. Lancaster, *Radicalism, Cooperation and Socialism: Leicester working-class politics, 1860-1906*, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987), p. 82.

## **Chapter 5**

### **‘A broad and generous conception of municipal government’? Local Politics and Civic Identity c.1885-1912**

An Old Govan worthy [explained half-jokingly that] just inside the [Burgh] Board-room door there was a barrel of tar, and as each new member came in, a man stationed there for the purpose dipped a stick in the tar and gave him a whack as he passed, so that they were all tarred with the same brush. Whether that was the right explanation or not I am unable to say, but the fact remains that to elect a working man simply because he is such without taking into account his mental outfit will not supply the desired article.

James Purdie, *Old Govan Club*, lecture, 13 December 1917.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction**

This chapter considers municipal politics in Govan and Partick from about 1885 until both burghs were finally amalgamated with Glasgow in 1912. Due to the limited availability of local newspapers in the 1880s, most of the discussion relates to the years 1890-1912. Essentially, the chapter explores the emergence of partisan polarisation in the local governance of Govan and Partick and the debates which surrounded this. It goes on to examine the implementation and reception of some high-profile local strategies intended to promote community cohesion during the same period. This discussion draws on municipal election rhetoric, as reported in local newspapers in both burghs during a period when the councils came increasingly to be seen as ‘political’ rather than benignly aloof administrative bodies. This political dimension included but was not limited to the introduction of partisanship, as incumbent councillors and candidates to replace them came over time to be identified with particular factions and interest groups. It also led to mounting polarisation over issues like temperance, sectarianism, local taxation, and the provision and financing of public amenities. Most important of all was the question of whether the burghs’ independence from Glasgow was necessary, desirable or even sustainable.

The chapter therefore considers the attitudes of local politicians towards the annexation or amalgamation debates, although a fuller analysis of this and the terms under which Govan and Partick ultimately relinquished their independence will be left for chapter six. Of course, local politics was not something confined to

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<sup>1</sup> J. Purdie, ‘Reminiscences of the Municipal and Political Life of Old Govan’; *TOGC*, 4:1, 1918, pp. 10-20 at pp. 18-19.

elections, burgh hall and ward committee meetings. Relationships of power were also evident in local newspaper coverage and the invention of civic traditions and set-piece ceremonial events. These decades saw the politics of both communities become torn between ‘establishment’ interests at the heart of the burgh leadership and more radical elements. The former sought to consolidate their rule and preserve the integrity of the local autonomy. Meanwhile, campaigners from the left wing of the Liberal party and, increasingly, Labour activists and councillors, wanted their communities to become more proactive and interventionist regarding social, economic and infrastructural problems. As will be seen, party labels and other markers such as religious affiliation were not always accurate predictors of behaviour. The analysis highlights that none of these factions was monolithic, and, just as the ‘establishment’ showed a capacity to build support among the working classes, many radicals secured reputations for pragmatism in office. Significantly, both groups displayed much more nuanced and contingent attitudes to the case for ‘annexation’ than might be supposed.

### **‘A totally new factor’? The introduction of ‘Party’ Politics to the Town Halls**

#### **I: Liberal and Unionist Identification**

In 1890 the *Govan Press* described the identification of Partick commissioners and candidates for election according to Liberal and Unionist labelling as a ‘totally new factor’ in local politics, with roots in the 1886 Home Rule ‘disruption’ in the parliamentary arena.<sup>2</sup> Yet this was not altogether accurate, for trade unionists and socialist activists had for some time been vocal at the level of ward committees and occasional public meetings.<sup>3</sup> As this chapter and the later parliamentary ones persistently demonstrate, the identification of a ‘Labour’ candidate in this period was an exercise fraught with definitional difficulties. The approach adopted here

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<sup>2</sup> *GP*, 25 October 1890.

<sup>3</sup> This was comparable to the pre-1914 situation on Glasgow Town Council, where there were recognised, but informal groupings of Liberal, Liberal Unionist and Conservative inclined councillors. See J.J. Smyth, ‘Resisting Labour: Unionists, Liberals and Moderates in Glasgow Between the Wars’, *The Historical Journal*, 46 (2003), pp. 375-401 at p. 11. A similar process of ‘politicisation’ occurred in the politics of Manchester and Leicester after the Home Rule split – see J.R. Moore, *The Transformation of Urban Liberalism: Party Politics and Urban Governance in Late Nineteenth-Century England*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 77-122 – especially p. 77.

and in the later chapters is to follow the labelling of candidates by the local press, which usually made clear whether a candidate was backed by the Independent Labour Party (ILP), the Trades Council, or the SLP. Where candidates from outside the *party political* Labour movement but with connections to the broader (small 'l') labour movement, such as John Conlon and his patron William Pearce, are discussed, such distinctions are clarified in the text. In broad terms, however, James Smyth's observation for Glasgow's municipal politics that, whether by building alliances or acting alone, 'it was the ILP which provided the thread of continuity in Labour's electoral campaigns from the 1890s' can also be applied to Govan and Partick's politics before 1912.<sup>4</sup> As R.J. Morris bluntly put it: 'the ILP was the cement' which bound the fragments of working class organisation.<sup>5</sup> Here and in the remaining chapters of this thesis, following Smyth's convention, the term Labour is used as 'shorthand' for candidates associated with the party-political Labour movement.<sup>6</sup> From at least 1884, Labour candidates were contesting and performing creditably in Govan's annual elections, albeit without actually securing seats.<sup>7</sup> The 1880s Labour campaigns had focused on arguments about working-class ratepayers being taxed disproportionately relative to their means, the predominance of landlord and employer interests on the board, and the need for workers to set aside sectional and sectarian differences in order to ensure their interests were represented.<sup>8</sup> These would become running rhetorical themes throughout the remaining years of Govan's and Partick's municipal independence, reflecting the continuing class and ideological divisions which had been developing

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<sup>4</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, pp. 6-7. See also, C. Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough'; Donnachie, I., Harvie, C., and Wood, I.S., *Forward! Labour Politics in Scotland 1888-1988*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), pp. 7-29 at pp. 7-13; McCaffrey, *Nineteenth Century*, pp. 95-7 and Kenefick, *Red Scotland!* p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> R.J. Morris, 'Introduction'; McKinlay, A., and Morris, R.J., eds., *The ILP on Clydeside, 1893-1932* (Manchester: MUP, 1991), pp. 1-20 at p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *GP*, 31 October 1885; *PMB* 9 November 1885 pp. 344-9. The patchy local newspaper survival makes it difficult to pinpoint the arrival of the first such candidates on the scene. Lancaster's work on Leicester in the 1880s and 1890s highlights a similarly 'interrupted and spasmodic' pattern of growth in Labour support, despite the fact that the party went on to win the parliamentary seat in 1906. See *Radicalism*, p. 85.

<sup>8</sup> See for instance the *GP* election coverage for 31 October and 7 November 1885.

in both communities since their formation. Partick's 'historic' 1890 municipal elections served vividly to highlight continued perceptions from trade union and radical quarters that the community's municipal representatives were in reality a self-serving, effectively self-selecting and secretive clique, insulated from accountability by a generally apathetic local electorate.<sup>9</sup> If Labour activists had openly contested municipal elections under a party banner, the Liberals and Unionists had not.

The 1886 Home Rule crisis had, however, disrupted the tacit balance of municipal representation between commissioners with Liberal and Conservative sympathies, as many erstwhile Partick Liberals defected to Liberal Unionism. This paralleled the position in Glasgow, where many prominent Liberals transferred their allegiance virtually overnight.<sup>10</sup> This, the *Govan Press* contended, had left only one or two representatives who could fairly be identified as Liberals by 1890.<sup>11</sup> The Partick Liberal and Radical Association was no longer willing to accept such marginal status in the council chamber. Its members believed that their share of the parliamentary vote ought to justify their holding around half of the council seats and 'at least a provost or a bailie'.<sup>12</sup> They could not rely for the balance to be redressed by natural wastage, due to the practice of retiring incumbent councillors effectively naming their own replacements.<sup>13</sup> They therefore decided openly to contest carefully selected wards on party grounds, campaigning with a promise to increase transparency in municipal affairs.

The cornerstone of their strategy was to unseat John White, the owner of Scotstoun Mills, who had served as the burgh's second 'provost' between 1857 and 1860 and then, unusually for those who had retired from the burgh's highest office,

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 11 October 1890.

<sup>10</sup> McCaffrey, 'Political Issues...', p. 211. For a detailed account of the development of Liberal Unionist organisation in and around Glasgow in 'The Origins of Liberal Unionism in the west of Scotland'; *SHR*, 50 (1971), pp. 47-71. See also, C. Burness, *Strange Associations: The Irish Question and the Making of Scottish Unionism, 1886-1918*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2003), p. 47 and I.J. Cawood, *The Lost Party: Liberal Unionism, 1886-1895*, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leicester, 2009), p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> *GP*, 25 October 1890.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

as an influential magistrate and councillor. Although born in Glasgow's Tradeston district sometime before 1825, White had moved to Partick as a youth, taking over the family business of several generations.<sup>14</sup> He was the first and now lifetime President of Partick Burns Club, which, alongside his involvement in the subscription campaign for the Wallace Monument at Stirling, suggested an involvement in Freemasonry.<sup>15</sup> Given the ex-provost's status as the patriarch of probably the oldest milling family in the Glasgow vicinity, White was in many ways a living symbol, both of Partick's ancient heritage, and its separate municipal identity from the city.<sup>16</sup> The premise of challenging him was that if the Liberals could defeat their strongest 'Unionist' opponent, they could unseat the others in a leisurely manner at subsequent elections.<sup>17</sup> White's son and namesake John White junior was elected to the board in 1892, and rose to become provost in his own right in 1905. Reflecting an evident dynastic inclination amongst the burgh elite, his provostship followed that of William Kennedy, son of former Provost Hugh Kennedy. Govan, by contrast, had less blatant examples of family ties among burgh leaders, although its last Provost David Pollok McKechnie (1908-12) was the son of 1870s commissioner John McKechnie.<sup>18</sup>

White's nemesis, timber merchant James Miller, successfully portrayed the former provost as a symbol of all that was wrong with the burgh administration, to the extent that Miller rather than White secured the nomination of the 1st Ward Committee, which in any other year would have been White's by acclamation.<sup>19</sup> Miller said he had been 'pressed' into standing not through personal ambition, but because burgh business was conducted in 'such closeness and secrecy' that ratepayers had 'no insight into our own affairs'.<sup>20</sup> Former Provost White, for his part, made much of his opponent's frank admission to know little of municipal

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<sup>14</sup> *Bailie*, 18 November 1891.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid* and *GH*, 16 September 1897.

<sup>16</sup> *Bailie*, 18 November 1891.

<sup>17</sup> *GP*, 25 October 1890.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 8 July 1907.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 25 October 1890.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*.

matters, portraying him as ill-equipped for the exigencies of office. White claimed to be sanguine regarding the increased interest in municipal affairs his opponent had generated, based on higher than usual attendance at the annual ward committee meeting, but said he 'deprecated' attempts to bring party politics into the municipal arena. He averred that his opponent and his supporters 'might as well believe in the flatness of the earth as in Home Rule' for all it had to do with Partick's municipal position.<sup>21</sup> Yet White's argument that national politics was irrelevant to municipal life was somewhat contradicted when he went on to accuse Liberals in Parliament of 'blocking' a recent Scottish gas bill, leading a heckler to interject that at least the Liberals 'didn't block the Home Rule bill'.<sup>22</sup> It is also significant that Miller's associates specifically targeted Irish ratepayers, urging them to punish White for his opposition to the same legislation.<sup>23</sup> Yet there was more local substance to Miller's candidacy than the barbs traded about parliamentary politics might suggest. 1st Ward Committee Chairman, Joseph Bowie appealed to the ratepayers on Miller's behalf at a meeting in Douglas Street Masonic Hall. He said:

If anything should spur [the ratepayers] on to action, it should be the character of the forces arrayed against them - all the aristocrats, and would be aristocrats, and their hangers-on - who were doing all they could to return their opponent [White]. But their labour would be vain if the ratepayers were but true to themselves. (Applause.) They had the power if they would exercise it. Let them not say that the issues were too small and the result would not be great. It was only a municipal election. They should remember the principle at stake - the principle of self-government - and by working actively on contests like this they would be training themselves for the exercise of the greater franchise soon to come. (Applause.)<sup>24</sup>

This was a deft re-claiming of the language and ideology of local self-government from an institution that had previously claimed to embody it. Thus, the burgh board had become 'aristocrats and would be aristocrats' whose power could be broken if only the ratepayers would rise up and exercise their democratic rights. Moreover, a direct connection was being drawn between municipal and

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *GP*, 1 November 1890.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

parliamentary politics, with the former being presented as a ‘training’ ground for the latter, both for the ratepayers and their representatives. The reference to the ‘greater franchise still to come’ was, most obviously, a reference to the looming general election campaign, but also obliquely alluded to the case for broadening the municipal and parliamentary franchises. Miller himself argued that his self-confessed lack of insight into the burgh administration was a result not of ignorance but of the council’s alleged secrecy, and that his opponent’s strength lay not in ability but in personal prestige. White’s supporters rejoindered by presenting their candidate as a man who:

[had] spent his lifetime in your midst, is a large employer of labour in the burgh, is a considerable ratepayer, and has been identified with the growth and progress of the district, in the welfare of which he has always taken a deep interest. He has faithfully served the ratepayers of Partick [...] and is thoroughly conversant in all municipal affairs.<sup>25</sup>

Such rhetoric echoed the paternalistic formula, invariably echoed in local parliamentary contests (as is seen in chapters seven and eight), of presenting the candidate as a man of experience, substance and seniority, with legitimate claims to the loyalty of the voters.<sup>26</sup> Yet this was not all there was to White’s candidacy, and he could not easily be caricatured as reactionary. For instance, he claimed he was not opposed to reviewing the burgh’s rating arrangements in favour of a more progressive regime, although that this would require parliamentary legislation.<sup>27</sup> Of course, it had to be asked why he had not attempted to progress this reform earlier in his long municipal career. He was, unsurprisingly given his business interests and long association with the burgh, opposed to any attempt to amalgamate it with Glasgow.

Although the *Govan Press* noted there was no immediate prospect of annexation, it reported insinuations from unnamed sources that the candidates advocating ‘reform’ were really an ‘anti-Partick party’ remotely manipulated by shadowy Glasgow puppeteers seeking to whet local appetites for annexation.<sup>28</sup> One

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<sup>25</sup> *GP*, 1 November 1890.

<sup>26</sup> The concept of paternalism as a working hypothesis for this thesis is outlined in the introduction, pp. 19-20.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 October 1890.

un-named local candidate had been accused of ‘basing his claim to support only on his desire to promote the welfare of the public (an easy cry), and keeping in the background his views as to the duties of Partick to destroy itself’.<sup>29</sup> It was claimed that these supposedly subversive elements feared to use the word ‘annexation’ openly in their literature and speeches, because the Partick people were too well-versed in annexation to take it seriously: instead, such candidates allegedly preferred to call themselves ‘economists’ or ‘professionalists’.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the vitriol in that analysis, it was true that the discourse surrounding annexation had, by this point, become more nuanced and diverse than hitherto. The *Govan Press* seemed correct in its assessment that ratepayers were familiar with the broad outlines of the debates, and their associated semantics. In 1894, Bailie John MacLeish, who expressed himself undecided on the issue, made this point with good humour, when discussing what he referred to as ‘the question of unification, federation, or annexation, or any other "ashun" they like to make it.’<sup>31</sup> He had, of course, omitted the term ‘amalgamation’, for which one heckler substituted ‘vexation’.<sup>32</sup>

The central contention of the *Govan Press* back in 1890, however, was that the grasping city had no hope of directly winning the support of the Partick citizenry for amalgamation, unless an ‘opposition party’ could infiltrate the council and use their position to manipulate public sentiment in favour of joining the city.<sup>33</sup> The editorial line on this conspiracy theory was that since the reformers’ programme conflicted on whether to join with the city or make better use of the existing municipal structures, and that they would ‘struggle’ to find candidates credible enough to take on the sitting commissioners, it would not succeed, at least in the short term.<sup>34</sup> It would, the paper declaimed, be ‘enough for Partick [and

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 20 October 1894.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 11 October 1890.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

presumably Govan also] to rectify items of detail in its government when its *status* as an independent body is finally recognised and secured.’<sup>35</sup>

The idea of an annexationist fifth column in either burgh was somewhat implausible, and many representatives’ views on the issue shifted as their careers progressed – not always due to opportunism. For instance, in Govan’s 4th ward, commissioner Robert Anderson Wightman, in his 1890 election address, declared that being a commissioner in a ‘flourishing, prosperous’ police burgh was a greater honour than to be a councillor in the ‘decaying old city’ of Glasgow.<sup>36</sup> Yet, by 1893, he had come round to the case for annexation, if only as a means to the end of using the economies of scale that would flow from an expanded conurbation to defray the cost of initiatives like public parks, libraries and free ferries across the River Clyde.<sup>37</sup> Wightman’s remarks summed up what might be understood as the local ‘establishment’s’ view of Govan and Partick in contrast to the city, but there were more negative interpretations of the nature of municipal ‘independence’ circulating in both communities. Partick’s 2nd Ward Committee Chairman John Wylie, speaking in support of the nomination of County Councillor Dr James Wilson to the board, lamented the paucity of able and enthusiastic aspirants to municipal office.<sup>38</sup> Throughout the 1890s, Wylie was a persistent critic of the commissioners’ talent for spending ratepayers’ money on what he regarded as ‘extravagant’ and whimsical schemes unauthorised by the General Police Acts – including deputations to London, Royal visits to the burgh – such as that of Princess Beatrice in 1888 - and miscellaneous activities that would, at the time this discussion is being written, be considered part of the burgh’s public relations or marketing strategy.<sup>39</sup> Writing in 1897 to the *Partick Star*, a paper which he preferred vastly to the Cossar-owned alternatives he feared would ‘suppress or garble’ his meaning, he contended that if his criticisms seemed footling, it was often forgotten that his contemporaries heard ‘a very great deal’,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 4 November 1893.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 1 November 1890.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 3 November 1888.

about the difficulty which some people have in paying their police rates, and the cruel and expensive manner in which payment is sometimes enforced [upon] poor people who are living from hand to mouth. Well, after these poor mortals have been harassed, annoyed, and perhaps arrested for the payment of these taxes, they are handed over to [Police] Captain Hamilton to enable him to take a trip to London or augment his handsome salary. [...] Our Commissioners appear to forget that it is their duty to be just to their constituents before they are generous either to themselves or to their overpaid officials. Few things have amused me more than the extravagance and [mutual] loyalty which have recently been manifested by the Govan Commissioners. No wonder that one of your contemporaries [almost certainly The Govan Press] said recently that “Govan is almost funny this weather”.<sup>40</sup>

Back in 1890, drawing attention to the ‘low education and intellectual status’ of some (un-named) incumbent commissioners, he had written:

There were at the present moment a number of members who could not make respectable members of a third rate Mutual Improvement Society. Some of them had only two qualifications, that they were willing to spend the public money lavishly so that they could get handles to their names, and another which was proved disgraceful and abominable in the election of their present Provost - that some of them would vote blindly and solidly, not for the ratepayers but for the section to which they belonged. When some of these illiterate individuals became magistrates - as some of these did - and even aspired to the provostship, when they became clothed in a little brief authority they played such fantasies as would make the very angels of heaven weep.<sup>41</sup>

The new provost whose election Wylie considered so ‘abominable’ was the ‘annexationist’ Neil McLean, who had unexpectedly stood against Bailie James Kirkwood – the latter had been widely regarded as the obvious choice at that time.<sup>42</sup> It was understood that Marr had enticed McLean into standing, and had given him his casting vote to ensure Kirkwood’s defeat. *The Bailie*, admittedly not a Glasgow magazine known for its sympathetic stance on the suburban burghs, had described the unseemly ructions surrounding McLean’s election as ‘an abundance of sport for the Philistines’, taking a dim view of the new Govan provost and his apparently unprincipled and opportunistic grasping after high municipal office.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *The Partick Star* [hereafter P.S.], 25 August 1897.

<sup>41</sup> *GP*, 1 November 1890.

<sup>42</sup> GMB, 18 October 1889 and *The Bailie*, 27 November 1889.

<sup>43</sup> *The Bailie*, 27 November 1889.

All his official life [McLean] had been opposed to Bailie Marr; he had been returned to the Commission by the Fourth Ward electors in order that he might support Bailie Kirkwood for the Provostship; and, when, at the eleventh hour, the Chief Magistracy was held out for him, he eagerly grabbed at it, forgetting, or ignoring, all that had been previously said on the subject. The new Provost is a Free Church Elder; he conducts Gospel meetings every Saturday evening; he is a strong, nay, he may even be termed a bigoted, teetotaller. And yet he chose, with all this, to show that, to his mind, consistency was not always to be looked for in a public man, just as he depended for his success, and that in a marked degree, on the votes of publicans.<sup>44</sup>

Despite its many misgivings about McLean's character, and inconsistency regarding temperance, *The Bailie* hoped he might 'chance to be the last Provost of Govan'.<sup>45</sup> It was soon disappointed. Both Marr and the more straightforwardly pro-temperance Kirkwood went on to hold the civic chair, but Wylie - a Kirkwood admirer - identified Wilson's opponent, house factor, Bailie John Hinshelwood Marr, as someone who embodied everything he despised about the character of the dominant burgh 'clique'. He claimed Marr would never have secured election to the board to begin with, but for an apathetic, alienated electorate.<sup>46</sup> Wylie alleged that Marr, while claiming to be a total abstainer, was 'nothing more than a publican in disguise' whose 'whigmaleerie pigheaded policy' on various matters, but especially in resisting annexation, had cost ratepayers 'many thousands of pounds'.<sup>47</sup> Election literature for Dr Wilson included claims that he would 'teach the old man' (presumably Marr) 'how to write' and get on with municipal business rather than 'stand a round at Russell's bar'.<sup>48</sup> He elaborated that if Wilson were elected, Marr would be relegated to the 'obscurity from which he should never have emerged'.<sup>49</sup>

This was one view of Marr, but the remainder of his long municipal career offers ample evidence that his political persona and abilities were somewhat

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> *GP*, 1 November 1890.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

underestimated by critics and opponents. He was evidently a polarising figure, with interpretations of his character and behaviour ranging from those espoused by Wylie and his associates to a 1901 *Govan Press* commentator who described him as the ‘financial genius of the Town Council’ and the ‘backbone of every great movement for the betterment of the burgh’.<sup>50</sup> The 1901 municipal elections saw Marr widely tipped as provost, provided he could defend his seat against a combined ILP and temperance candidate: this he managed successfully. Indeed, Marr was not unanimously opposed by socialists in the burgh: for instance he had the support of Matthew Coyle, a Roman Catholic temperance campaigner and Labour activist, who would later stand successfully for the council himself.<sup>51</sup>

Marr, who had been an early exponent of differential rates and other measures attractive to working class ratepayers, finally resigned as provost in 1904.<sup>52</sup> He was keen to characterise himself as a ‘working man’ with ‘nothing else than the interests of working men at heart’.<sup>53</sup> Marr’s valedictory speech was commemorated by T.C.F. Brochie in fiction. His piece, ‘The Parting of the Ways’, related a bittersweet encounter at a crossroads between ‘Rest and Peace’ and ‘Labour’. The metaphorical conversation was between ‘Baron de Govan (a stalwart knight of labour)’, who represented the Govan workers, and the barely disguised ‘Provost M—r’. Their exchange read:

The Baron – “Well, Provost, we’ve come to the parting of the ways at last, and I must say that it has been a very pleasant journey to me.” Provost M—r – “It seems short, looking back, yet (thinking) we have travelled a long road.” The Baron de Govan – “We have, and the fact is, Provost, I don’t know how I could have managed without your help. You’ve been simply invaluable.” Provost M—r – “It was a pleasure to me, Baron, to do what I could to help you.” The Baron de Govan – “I trust the rest of your walk will prove pleasant – I’m sure it will. Goodbye, Provost, and (pauses) God bless you.” – turns and resumes his weary way up the hills o’ labour.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 25 October 1901.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 1 November 1901.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 24 October 1896 and 14 October 1904.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 14 October 1904.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 14 October 1904. The ‘Noble Knight of Labour’ made frequent cartoon and verse appearances in the *Govan Press* during the early 1900s. See Appendix 2 for some examples.

The deference of the Knight towards Marr was telling: Brotchie was evidently keen to promote the impression that Govan's workers and their employers were joined in a common endeavour; and that the community's civic leadership - symbolised here by the Marr character - was an essential factor in local prosperity. As the Knight remarked, he 'couldn't have done it' without Provost Marr's help. Yet this whimsy signalled a deeper turning point than the resignation of a provost: it also, perhaps unintentionally on the part of its author, represented a sense that the deference of the workers to their employers, and their loyalty to the burgh, could no longer be assumed. Although the Knight's path up the 'hills o' labour' was almost certainly intended by Brotchie only to show that work was available in the burgh, it would not be too long before ratepayers turned increasingly to Labour with a capital 'L', and increasingly towards annexation, at the expense of the 'help' offered by Provost Marr and his successors. The decisive break was still a few years off, but there had been straws in the wind since at least the 1870s, as was seen in chapter four. As Provost Marr's career suggested, there had long been something of an ambiguity in many 'progressive' Liberals' approach to the working classes, irrespective of their shared disdain for the landlord interest.

This ambivalence was vividly demonstrated in November 1893, when Wylie, Marr's persistent critic, contributed a letter to the *Govan Press*. This was rhetorically entitled 'Would direct labour representation be any benefit to the community?'<sup>55</sup> His answer was emphatically negative, on the grounds that such representation was 'unsound on principle', and 'few working men [had] either the time or the ability to serve on public boards'. Wylie elaborated that working-class men had 'ambitious and selfish motives', which would impose a 'gross injustice on the ratepayers'; presumably by imposing progressive taxes and similar measures.<sup>56</sup> Warming to his theme, he averred that working-class representatives in Parliament and on other municipal boards had a similar propensity towards factionalism and division as 'Irish party MPs'.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 18 November 1893.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

## II: 'Labour' Identification

The association of pejorative connotations with working-class and Irish politicians was hardly new, but such assertions were somewhat ironic coming from a Liberal, given recent developments. Perhaps more counterintuitive to readers of this thesis is the fact that the first supposedly working-class commissioners in Govan were not connected to the party-political Labour movement. Andrew Williamson was elected to represent the 1st ward in 1881, succeeding William Pearce, while John Conlon – who was, coincidentally, born in Ireland – was elected to represent the same ward in 1883.<sup>58</sup> The election of both men to a board on which hitherto the only exception to the domination of employers and factors was the occasional shopkeeper, caused 'something of a shock', even if neither could be considered a socialist.<sup>59</sup> Bailie Williamson's long municipal career was terminated in 1905 by a socialist challenger, but the defeat of one of the more enlightened councillors was not widely regarded as the local Labour party's most glorious achievement.

The main, if somewhat obscure and unconvincing, reason given by Williamson's ILP opponent, William Munro, for standing, was the former's perceived lack of enthusiasm for a local right of way through lands owned by Fairfield shipyard.<sup>60</sup> An un-named ex-commissioner, writing to the *Govan Press*, was dismissive of Munro's campaign against Williamson, claiming that 'incomers of the ILP and socialist type' had not previously been known for their advocacy of the right of way.<sup>61</sup> The mysteriously anonymous retired local politician also accused Munro of keeping 'bad company'.<sup>62</sup> The implication here was that the ILP candidate's associates were responsible for spreading rumours that Williamson had abused his position on the Elder Library's management committee to ban Tom Paine's *The Age of Reason* from its shelves.<sup>63</sup> The burgh librarian strenuously

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 1 May 1903. Pearce's profile is elaborated in chapter seven, pp. 224-7.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 1 May 1903.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 27 October 1905.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 27 October 1905.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 27 October 1905.

denied that there was any truth to the allegation, and the ex-commissioner asserted that Williamson, whom he regarded as ‘practically a trade unionist’, was more broad-minded than his opponents would credit.<sup>64</sup> He certainly shared Labour’s concern that the council needed to be more transparent in explaining its decisions to the ratepayers, and to take a much more active role in addressing local poverty.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, he was defeated, and one of his supporters, writing as a ‘Grieved Govanite’, alleged that his replacement had ascended to the council on a ‘ladder of lies’ and misrepresentation after an allegedly unseemly display of ‘electoral ingratitude’ towards a fellow working man.<sup>66</sup>

Labour candidates contested wards in both communities from the 1880s up until annexation, but the Govan contenders were markedly more successful than their Partick counterparts, who achieved comparatively modest success. Indeed, when Partick’s 1st Ward elected James Conley in 1899 as one of its municipal representatives, the Boilermakers’ trade union delegate stood out both for the very fact of his election (which was uncontested) and for his subsequent pragmatic pursuit of progress and moderate reform.<sup>67</sup> It was not long before he was touted as a prospective parliamentary candidate.<sup>68</sup> Labour certainly made greater inroads in Partick in the burgh’s final decade of autonomy. In 1902, Conley was re-elected to the council and achieved the rank of bailie, in which role he was succeeded by another Labour councillor, Robert Rae.<sup>69</sup> As the *Govan Press* somewhat condescendingly made clear, he had gained this distinction by not rocking the municipal boat.

Bailie Rae, without abjuring his opinions, sought, instead of the enmity, to gain the esteem and approval of his colleagues, and has succeeded quite so

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 20 October 1905.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> PMB, 9 November 1899 pp. 154-5.

<sup>68</sup> *GP*, 29 August 1902.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 6 November 1908.

well as to make it quite apparent that it is quite possible for a Socialist openly hostile to his associates as well as to their opinions [to thrive].<sup>70</sup>

This, the paper argued, distinguished him from his recently-defeated former colleague, George Kerr, who it suggested:

might have learned a lesson in demeanour from the policy of the Liberals and Socialists and Trade Unionists in the House of Commons who do not personally fall foul of and vilify each other or those opposed to them in their opinion, such as the Conservatives, but fraternise with them in every possible way while retaining their convictions. There would be no living together for them if they taunted one another with being enemies of one class or another, and if they showed themselves unable to see any redeeming feature in anyone who happened to think differently from them.<sup>71</sup>

Kerr only served on Partick's Town Council from 1906-8, but secured election for Glasgow Town Council's Cowlairs Ward in 1914, and served as a Bailie in the 1920s.<sup>72</sup> It is reasonable to speculate that the tendency of socialist municipal candidates to do better in Govan, especially after 1900 when they won several seats, owed much to the co-ordinating influence of the Govan Trades Council, allied to a growing sense of class solidarity transcending sectarian divisions.<sup>73</sup> Although Matthew Coyle was probably the most prominent example of this phenomenon, it is significant that as early as 1893, bodies like the Home Rule-supporting Irish National League were co-operating with local trade unionists to pursue the election of jointly-agreed municipal candidates espousing policies of

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid. Savage's study of Labour politics in Preston, where Labour did not win its first council seats until 1904-6, also highlights a tendency for Labour activists to ally with Liberals against town hall and parliamentary Conservatives. See *Dynamics*, p. 147.

<sup>71</sup> *GP*, 6 November 1908.

<sup>72</sup> *Bailie*, 12 December 1923.

<sup>73</sup> The coordinating role of Govan Trades Council reflected, and was almost certainly influenced by its counterparts in Glasgow. See J.J. Smyth, 'The ILP in Glasgow, 1906-1906: The Struggle for Identity'; A. McKinlay and R.J. Morris eds., *The ILP on Clydeside, 1893-1932: from foundation to disintegration* (Manchester: MUP, 1991), pp. 20-56, especially at pp. 33-45. It is likely that Govan delegates met with their Glasgow counterparts regularly. Certainly Glasgow and Govan delegates were present at the final SLP Conference in 1894. See W.H. Fraser, *Scottish Popular Politics from Radicalism to Labour*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2000), p. 131. Contrastingly, Aberdeen had elected two Labour representatives, under Trades Council auspices, as early as 1885. See C.H. Lee, 'Local Government'; W.H. Fraser and C.H. Lee (eds.), *Aberdeen 1800-2000: A New History*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), pp. 236-64 at p. 258.

moderate Fabian socialism.<sup>74</sup> They were even able to secure the support for this programme of incumbent 3rd Ward commissioner – James Conway – seeking re-election to the board. Such developments can justifiably be regarded as laying the groundwork for Labour’s later municipal and parliamentary advances in Govan and Glasgow.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, the consistency with which such candidates espoused pragmatic, incremental approaches to municipal socialism made it somewhat difficult for their detractors to discredit them. It was by no means a given that Labour activists were ideologically-inclined to annexation with Glasgow, at least not if local politics could be made – and be seen - to work. Without wishing to over-generalise here, it is worth bearing in mind William Kenefick’s point that Scottish workers ‘generally defined their interests in terms of locality or region’, making them wary of large-scale bureaucratic structures, at least in the context of trade union development.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, one of the *Govan Press*’s most vicious satires on socialist candidates hinged on what it perceived as their pedantic obsession with the minutiae of town hall procedure, rather than any incipient revolutionary inclinations.

For example, the paper frequently mocked the ILP’s demand for ‘sectional committees’ – meaning dedicated committees to deal with particular aspects of burgh administration like finance and sanitation - rather than the rather nebulous committees of the whole board. This had been *de rigueur* in Govan from 1889 when they were proposed by then Bailie Marr, until 1907.<sup>77</sup> The central advantage of sectional committees from the Labour perspective was that they would be open to the press, unlike committees of the whole board which, from their perspective, promoted secrecy and collective irresponsibility.<sup>78</sup> In 1907, the *Govan Press* carried a satirical report on the debate in the burgh’s non-existent ‘8th Ward Committee’.<sup>79</sup> It depicted small-minded Labour activists complaining about the

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<sup>74</sup> *GP*, 28 October 1893.

<sup>75</sup> Foster *et al*, ‘Distinguishing...’ p. 185; Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, p. 7 and *passim*; Campbell, C. Campbell, ‘Clydeside Working Class’, *passim*.

<sup>76</sup> Kenefick, *Red Scotland!* p. 8.

<sup>77</sup> *GMB*, 11 November 1889, pp. 43-4 and *passim* until 8 November 1907 pp. 389-95.

<sup>78</sup> *GP*, 1 November 1907.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 18 October 1907.

rates and their ignorance of proceedings in the burgh chambers. When a heckler demanded that the unfortunately named Ward Chairman, Peter Girney, whose surname was close to a Scots word implying a melancholic demeanour, ‘read the *Press*’ to enlighten himself, he proudly responded that he did not read the *Press*: ‘indeed he would go further and would say he never read anything at all! No, he was a man who did his own thinking.’<sup>80</sup> After insisting only sectional committees would open council business to the light of day, defeating the ‘deep-rooted evil’ of secrecy, the whole meeting trooped out to a local tavern.<sup>81</sup> As should be clear from the discussion previously, this was clearly an unfair stereotype of Labour candidates and activists, betraying a serious, if comic, representation of their by no means monolithic attitudes to temperance.<sup>82</sup>

As has already been alluded to, 1890 was hardly a breakthrough year for Labour candidates in either burgh. In the Plantation neighbourhood constituting Govan’s 4th Ward, then Commissioner John MacLeish, a self-proclaimed ‘independent’ representative enjoying the support of local Liberals and a reputation for an ‘active’ and ‘efficient’ approach to municipal affairs – especially sanitation – was able to brush aside an incipient Labour challenge at ward committee level with such ease that he was returned to the board uncontested.<sup>83</sup> The prospect of Labour opposition had been raised because some of the ratepayers argued that, irrespective of MacLeish’s vaunted energy on sanitary matters, Govan still did not have water as clean as that provided in the city: a problem that could only really be resolved with annexation.<sup>84</sup> MacLeish denied this and complained that the city water rates as applicable to Govan were too expensive, and that the way forward was for Govan to set up its own gas and water company.<sup>85</sup> MacLeish’s was an idealistic

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> For useful background on the intersection of temperance with Labour and Liberal politics, see I. Sweeney [Maver], ‘Local Party Politics and the Temperance Crusade: Glasgow, 1890-1902, *SLH*, 1992, Vol. 27, pp. 44-63.

<sup>83</sup> *GP*, 1 November 1890.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 October 1890.

<sup>85</sup> Attempts by Govan, Partick and allied burghs to provide such amenities independently of Glasgow are discussed in chapter 6, pp. 205-6.

conception of municipalism: owing much to the Liberal ideal of local self-government which was increasingly subject to challenge. In his 1890 election address, he explicitly connected municipal politics both to the Home Rule question and elevated the status of the commissioners almost to the status of philosopher-kings.

It appeared to him that the Commission Board of Govan was, practically speaking, the people's Parliament. It was the place where they could have a little feeling of Home Rule, and where they could make their words and wishes known. To take a place at that board required certainly a very considerable amount of time and attention, in order to think out the questions that came before them.<sup>86</sup>

One sycophantic member of MacLeish's ward committee remarked that it 'took a philosopher to be a commissioner', and that MacLeish's putative Labour opponent – a mysterious Mr Niven - was not up to the mark.<sup>87</sup> MacLeish was indeed philosophical about the board on which he now served, equivocating on the morality of the recent annexation 'fights' which he had observed first-hand, and questioning whether the then complement of 12 commissioners could run a community of Govan's size and population.<sup>88</sup> By 1894, MacLeish, then a magistrate, was arguing for a local plebiscite on amalgamation.<sup>89</sup> MacLeish, during his early years on the board, was recognised as something of an 'innovator' in pursuit of transparency – for instance drawing the ire of Commissioner Duncan Jenkins with a scheme to publicise the attendance records of the commissioners at meetings, which Jenkins and many other commissioners regarded as their own personal business.<sup>90</sup>

Jenkins, incidentally, was a political protégé of no less than the late Sir William Pearce, the burgh's first MP. Employment as Pearce's personal coach-driver (and stable superintendent at the Fairfield shipyard until his death in 1894, when he was succeeded by his son) proved something of an advantage when

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<sup>86</sup> *GP*, 1 November 1890.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 1 November 1890.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 18 November 1890.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 20 October 1894.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 10 October 1890.

Jenkins set up his own coach-hiring firm at Govan Cross, and it quickly became the leading such firm in the burgh. In the 1860s, Jenkins came to Pearce's attention as one of the drivers of the yellow horse-drawn omnibuses then constituting the main mode of transport between the burgh and Glasgow, before tramway cars took over from 1871.<sup>91</sup> In 1886, he accepted the nomination of the 1st ward committee to stand for the board, securing election on an 'economy' platform. MacLeish had mildly responded to Jenkins that even the House of Commons kept attendance records. Jenkins had become less radical in his later years on the board, in marked contrast even to the late 1880s, when he spoke pithily against landlords on the board favouring their own neighbourhoods at the cost of the wider community and he had argued, alongside Williamson, for differential rating arrangements.<sup>92</sup> He had questioned the tendency of the commission to go in for symbolism and ceremony over substance, with particular reference to the purchase of horses and uniforms for the burgh's mounted police.<sup>93</sup> Jenkins alleged that these 'kilties and horsemen' served no purpose other than to impress at the annual inspection of the burgh police.<sup>94</sup> As late as 1903, there was the lingering suspicion that policemen were practising for display purposes on burgh time at the ratepayers' expense.<sup>95</sup> Yet the official response was consistently along the lines that the dedicated constables had to train – athletically or musically as appropriate – in addition to their regular duties, and that their sporting endeavours redounded to the benefit and reputation of the wider community.<sup>96</sup>

There were, of course, other issues of political controversy. In Partick's 3rd Ward in 1890, Alexander Jeans, Liberal champion of what he called the 'party of progress' opposing Bailie Walter Hubbard, promised that, if elected, he would 'energetically direct the attention of the Board to questions of social reform, such as recreation grounds, opening of school playgrounds, popular concerts, public baths

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<sup>91</sup> J.F. McFadyen, J.A. Houston and W. Munro, 'Personal Recollections of Govan', *Transactions of Old Govan Club [hereafter TOGC]* [4:3] (1926), p. 99.

<sup>92</sup> *GP*, 3 November 1888.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 October 1903.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 October 1887.

and cottage gardens.<sup>97</sup> These issues, which will be considered shortly, were not the sole preserve of Liberal candidates for the board. They overlapped considerably with the demands of Labour candidates: indeed Jeans thought working men's representation on the board desirable, albeit he did not favour remunerating this from burgh funds, even the police fines.<sup>98</sup> In line with the position then obtaining at Westminster, burgh commissioners – and from 1900, town councillors – were not paid for their work, posing a serious obstacle for candidates lacking independent means. Certainly, a recurrent theme in many councillors' election addresses was the complaint that burgh work was onerous and time-consuming; several even quit, citing the negative impact of this on their business interests.<sup>99</sup>

### **'Demons of Intolerance'? Sectarianism, Temperance and the 'Missing' Political Women**

One letter-writer to the *Govan Press* editor, evidently pleased with the political demise of ex-Provost White, expressed the hope that this was one of a number of signs that a 'commendable charity and brotherliness is beginning to animate the bosoms of men hitherto separated from social intercourse by distorted views of life and duty, by sectarianism and narrowness of heart', triumphing over the 'demon of intolerance' which usually prevented working voters from recognising their true common interests.<sup>100</sup> Its author was Will Dickson, an active radical Liberal former Partick commissioner (from 1887 until his defeat in 1893) and future Govan councillor (from 1901 until his resignation in 1906), whose literary and charitable endeavours had more of an impact than his municipal career in either burgh.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> For instance, in 1875 Partick's Bailie Alexander Campbell, resigning, noted that his was the 'most onerous and responsible judicial post' open to a layman. Since 1874, he noted that there had been 161 magistrates' courts held, 2,116 cases disposed of and 3,295 persons disposed of – *PA*, 5 June 1875. In 1885, Commissioner Rogers of Partick resigned claiming that he was 'too busy with business'. Presumably the pun was accidental. *PMB*, 14 December 1885 pp. 350-5.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 8 November 1890.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 10 January 1908; *PMB*, 11 July 1887, pp. 132-5 and 9 November 1893, pp. 59-60; *GMB*, 8 November 1901, pp. 249-55 and 8 October 1906 pp. 260-9.

Born in 1848 at Mile-End in the east end of Glasgow, Dickson was a successful grocer who had been drawn to the cause of temperance through his involvement in the United Presbyterian Church. He had served as a Sunday school superintendent in Skelmorlie, Ayrshire, before coming to live in Partick's peripheral Whiteinch neighbourhood and, eventually to Linthouse shortly before that neighbourhood's annexation to Govan, which will receive further attention later in the present chapter. Under the pseudonym 'Amateur Vagrant', Dickson had written eyewitness accounts of poverty in Glasgow and its suburbs, which were published in the *North British Daily Mail*. His preoccupation with what he regarded as the 'lapsed masses' was virtually lifelong, and he started a 'Bare Foot Fund' for the poor which gradually began to specialise in supporting tuberculosis victims, until it collapsed from a lack of donations in 1907. Dickson also held the distinction of being captain of Scotland's first organised ambulance corps, which was associated with Tod and Stephens' Linthouse shipyard. It was significant that in both burghs, Dickson lived in peripheral neighbourhoods where he battled to restrict alcohol consumption. In this he was much more successful in Linthouse, where his membership of Lanark County's Landward Committee, which managed the neighbourhood's affairs before it joined the burgh of Govan and his membership of the Licensing Vigilance Committee, were instrumental both in securing amalgamation with the burgh and preventing the establishment of licensed premises near his new home. He died in 1908.

Dickson's hopes that the 1890 upheavals represented the beginning of the end of sectarianism and the start of working-class solidarity were somewhat optimistic, particularly in Partick's case. Yet it was undoubtedly true that the municipal leaders of both communities had entered a phase where they could no longer evade public scrutiny and, in some cases faced the ultimate sanction of ejection from the board. Govan and Partick politics had by 1890, then, been penetrated by the Labour Party, the Liberal Party, the Liberal Unionist Party, the Conservative Party, and the 'progress and reform party', but matters were to become even more complex as the 1890s wore on. In 1892, following an election in which only the first and second of four Partick wards were contested, the *Partick and Maryhill Press* asserted that there had been no substantial change in the municipal representation: 'the old order of things [had] received the *imprimatur* of public assent, and the business of the Burgh [could] be expected to move forward with its accustomed regularity and smoothness'.<sup>102</sup> The *status quo* would be shaken up only if a

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<sup>102</sup> *Partick and Maryhill Press* [hereafter *PMP*], 5 November 1892.

‘burning question’ should arise, to be answered by a charismatic leader.<sup>103</sup> Otherwise, municipal elections such as that referred to would excite only close friends and colleagues of the candidates.

In 1893, a palpable manifestation of sectarian intolerance manifested itself in Partick’s Whiteinch neighbourhood, which had grown so populous that it had been formed into a new, separate 5th Ward. This was the first election for three commissioners to represent the ward, increasing the number of seats at the board from twelve to fifteen.<sup>104</sup> The seats were contested by six candidates – three ‘progressives’ and three Conservatives bluntly described by the local press as ‘Orange’ candidates, but who, still more confusingly, described themselves as ‘working men candidates’.<sup>105</sup> The progressive candidates Robert D. Brown, John C. Tyre and George Green won all three seats with 535, 486 and 484 votes respectively, but with their rivals Joseph Dickson, Samuel Sloan and Thomas Finlay securing 317, 289 and 230 votes, there was the sense that had one of them stood aside before polling to prevent splitting their support, they may have secured at least one seat. In this context, the *Partick Star*’s declaration that the Orange candidates had been dealt a ‘rude check’ reads somewhat complacent.<sup>106</sup>

Nevertheless, Orangeism seemed much more entrenched in Partick than in Govan. By 1904, Govan boast among its councillors Matthew Coyle, a Roman Catholic socialist, blacksmith and poet. Under the pseudonym ‘The Smiddy Muse’, he had contributed to the *Govan Press* and various other local publications. He was also a Boilermakers’ trade union leader, and football club president.<sup>107</sup> Coyle died in 1906, but his brief municipal career remains significant. Despite his Irish Catholic background, his football and temperance connections - including the presidencies of Govan Hibernians and Dean Park – made him an unexpected ally of Provost John Anthony. Indeed, it was Coyle who heralded Anthony as ‘Govan’s Grand Young Man’ when he assumed the civic chair in 1904. Given Anthony’s position on the board of Rangers, a Govan-based football club with grounds in

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> PMB, 9 November 1893, pp. 59-60.

<sup>105</sup> See *GP*, 11 November 1893, *PMP*, 11 November 1893 and *PS*, 8 November 1893.

<sup>106</sup> *PS*, 8 November 1893.

<sup>107</sup> *GP*, 23 November 1906 (obituary). Coyle’s work as ‘The Smiddy Muse’ was also noted in Murphy, ‘Govan Press’, p. 64.

the Ibrox neighbourhood, whose supporters were not renowned for cordial relations with the Catholic Irish, the bonhomie of both men might at the very least suggest that assumptions regarding the malign influence of sectarianism in Govan can be overly deterministic. Their commonalities of age – both were in their forties – combined with their shared temperance and leisure interests evidently facilitated a mutual regard crossing the barriers of religion, class and politics.

That a prominent local Irish Catholic was able to embrace socialism and trade unionism, rather than Liberalism, seems, with the benefit of hindsight, indicative of the potential for Labour to succeed electorally in a district where first impressions would suggest it was doomed. Coyle's accomplishments more broadly prefigured the realignment of Irish Catholic voters from Liberalism to Labour after 1922, discussed in chapter eight.<sup>108</sup> Nor was Coyle's election an aberration. In 1906, Govan's 3rd Ward elected thirty year-old James S. O'Donnell, another Catholic Socialist, active in the local Catholic Saint Vincent de Paul society, the United Irish League (UIL), the Donegal Reunion Committee, the local dramatic club and, latterly, the 4th Ward Committee, for which he acted as Treasurer.<sup>109</sup> The election of both men was remarkable, given that John Wheatley was elected Glasgow's first Catholic *socialist* councillor only in 1912; albeit he had previously been a County Councillor for Shettleston under Lanarkshire jurisdiction.<sup>110</sup> Smyth highlights both Wheatley's influence in establishing the Catholic Socialist Society, aiming to convince his co-religionists that their future lay with Labour, as well as acknowledging the 'tacit consent' he received for such activities from the local Church hierarchy.<sup>111</sup> This contrasted markedly with the position in Leeds, where a similar initiative foundered after condemnation by the local Bishop.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> See pp. 285-6.

<sup>109</sup> *GP*, 8 July 1907. The UIL was instrumental in maintaining a sense of ethnic identity in many British communities with large Irish immigrant populations. See for instance T. Griffiths, *The Lancashire Working Classes c. 1880-1930*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001), p. 276.

<sup>110</sup> Fraser, *Popular Politics*, p. 151; Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, p. 67. The first Catholic member of Glasgow Town Council was elected in 1893.

<sup>111</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

Despite the excitement of Partick's 1890 municipal elections, the ensuing decade saw the burgh's wards contested only intermittently, whereas Govan saw at least one seat contested annually as a matter of course.<sup>113</sup> 1893, however, was a notable exception to Partick's relatively sedate electoral patterns. Liberal James Miller, who had, as was noted, in 1890, defeated John White senior in the old 1st Ward, retired by rotation, and chose to contest the 2nd Ward against the Unionist Thomas Logan, who defeated him by just 26 votes.<sup>114</sup> The *Partick Star* attributed Logan's unexpected victory to the efforts of his 'army' of canvassers.<sup>115</sup> The new 1st ward seat was taken by former ward committee chairman Joseph Bowie, another Liberal, who had been instrumental in promoting Miller's candidacy the previous year.<sup>116</sup> The emphatic victory of 4th ward commissioner George Gardner, a Unionist and staunch anti-annexationist, against 'non-political annexationist' Charles Henry Seligmann, was held to 'show conclusively' that Partick's residents were content with continued municipal autonomy.<sup>117</sup> This was questionable, not least in light of the support for progressive candidates in the 5th ward; they did not oppose joining the city on principle. For much of the 1890s, Partick's municipal elections were relatively quiet compared to Govan; indeed the 1894 elections were entirely uncontested.<sup>118</sup> Of course, historian John Kemp's proviso regarding Dundee's politics in the same period – 'uncontested elections did not necessarily reflect satisfaction with the council' – also applies here.<sup>119</sup>

If the elections of 1890 and 1893 were the most dramatic of Partick's municipal contests that decade, the relative calm that followed was not without undercurrents of tension. Nor was 'intolerance' in either burgh restricted to the obvious sectarianism of the Orange Order and its rare open interventions in municipal life. There was also the

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<sup>113</sup> GMB and PMB, November 1890 – November 1900, *passim*.

<sup>114</sup> *P.S.* 8 November 1893.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *GP*, 11 November 1893, *PMP*, 11 November 1893 and *P.S.*, 8 November 1893.

<sup>118</sup> PMB, 8 November 1894 pp. 141-2.

<sup>119</sup> J. Kemp, 'Red Tayside? Political Change in early Twentieth Century Dundee'; L. Miskell, C.A. Whatley and B. Harris eds., *Victorian Dundee: Image and Realities*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), pp. 151-68 at p. 154.

temperance issue to consider. As was seen earlier in this thesis, the drinks trade was a focus for social division in both communities, and this had become more marked in the 1870s and 1880s, albeit only intermittently becoming a factor in municipal elections, as in the 1889 criticism of then Bailie Marr, discussed above. The 1890s, however, saw an intensified focus on questions of temperance and licensing, with such issues becoming something of a litmus test for municipal candidates. By 1894, most, if not all commissioners and candidates had to state their position on such issues and account for their record on licensing, to the extent that it became commonplace for local journalists to report not on the fortunes of Liberals, Unionists and Labour, but of the ‘Temperance Party’, which seemed to dominate the burgh boards.<sup>120</sup>

Of course, there was no such party in the literal sense, but in the expectation that every municipal candidate in both burghs had to take a position on the drinks trade – invariably a critical one – had this party existed, Govan and Partick might have been fairly regarded as one-party statelets. Although support for prohibition and licence-restriction was most commonly associated with the Liberal party, it was by no means its exclusive preserve, with even some local Conservatives rallying to the cause. In the Glasgow context, Maver emphasises that temperance was an issue over which ‘political differences were submerged’ as alliances of convenience were formed for and against.<sup>121</sup> All this belied suggestions in the *Govan Press* that the temperance issue was really a flag of convenience for Liberal candidates seeking to become councillors through subterfuge.<sup>122</sup> Labour candidates tended to advocate municipalisation of the drink traffic as an alternative to what one activist aptly called the ‘two pillars of hypocrisy’ of the publican and temperance position. Nor were Labour activists alone in being wary of extremism regarding drink. ‘Justice Bridlehouse’, a regular if idiosyncratic radical Liberal contributor to the *Govan Press*, asked ‘why, then, should the wine drinkers on our boards be more intolerant to the water drinkers now than were the wine drinking heathen servants of the Babylonish King to the temperate ones in the days of Daniel?’<sup>123</sup> Labour and ILP candidates also advocated ‘complete public control’ over licensing, in the form of a local veto, as JPs and burgh licensing courts were felt to be too narrowly constituted to be really

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<sup>120</sup> See for instance *GP*, 10 November 1894.

<sup>121</sup> Maver, ‘Temperance Crusade’, p. 46.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, 21 October 1893.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, 8 October 1887.

representative of the community.<sup>124</sup> *The Partick Star* also reported on the possibility of applying the ‘Gothenburg System’ to both burghs.<sup>125</sup> This would have entailed the restriction of licenses for brewing, distilling and selling alcohol to a single company run as a trust, with the overwhelming bulk of the profits reinvested in the community.<sup>126</sup> Schemes on such lines were adopted in small communities in Fife and the Scottish Lowlands, but no such initiative was adopted in Partick or Govan.<sup>127</sup>

As has been highlighted, temperance was not an exclusively Liberal cause. Some of Govan’s Conservative councillors were noted for their temperance rhetoric and activism. For instance, Duncan Jenkins was a ‘staunch Conservative’, but had been a teetotal Good Templar since 1870.<sup>128</sup> Another example was the late Sir William Pearce’s political apprentice, Bailie ‘Honest’ John Conlon. Conlon was a former Glasgow policeman, who had established a sound reputation for temperance and administrative economy after changing careers, moving to Govan and rising to become head timekeeper at the Fairfield works and distinguishing himself on the 1st Ward Committee.<sup>129</sup> One of his municipal contemporaries later recalled that Conlon was ‘one of the wittiest men who ever sat at the Commission Board’.<sup>130</sup> The onetime Chief Templar of a local lodge and Lanarkshire JP scandalised political colleagues and ratepayers alike when it emerged that, immediately following his 1897 resignation from the Board and his membership of the Good Templars, he had applied for a public house licence in Shettleston, outside the burgh.<sup>131</sup> In what

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, 24 October 1896.

<sup>125</sup> *PS*, 4 May 1895. The philosophy and operation of such schemes is elaborated in D.W. Gutzke, ‘Gothenburg Schemes / Disinterested Management’ in J.S. Blocker, D.M. Fahey and I.R. Tyrell eds., *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: An International Encyclopaedia*, Volume I, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), pp. 274-75.

<sup>126</sup> *P.S.*, 4 May 1895.

<sup>127</sup> A useful account of the scheme’s history in Scotland can be found in M.A. Mulhern, ‘“A Bridge from the worse to the better”: the Gothenburg Public House in Scotland’; *Review of Scottish Culture*, Vol. 18, 2006, pp. 107-127.

<sup>128</sup> *GP*, 24 January 1894 (obituary).

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*, 1 May 1903 (obituary).

<sup>130</sup> W.N. Smith, ‘Glimpses of Old Govan’, *TOGC* [3:1] (1917), p. 9.

<sup>131</sup> *GP*, 28 October 1893 and 1 May 1903 (obituary). The ideology and operation of the Good Templars is elaborated in D.M. Fahey, ‘Good Templars / IOGT’; Blocker et al eds., *Alcohol and Temperance*, Volume I, pp. 268-72.

might be read against the grain as a tacit concession of the case for remuneration of municipal representatives, Conlon declared that none of those accusing him of hypocrisy would lend him financial help, and that he was growing too old to continue working at Fairfield.<sup>132</sup> Conlon was not the only Govan or Partick commissioner to come under heavy pressure from temperance campaigners, but his career, or at least its denouement seems spotlighted some of the more absurd aspects of an issue that had become the focus of as much cant and humbug as motherhood and apple pie. By the early 1900s, some burgh politicians attempted to take a more straightforward approach to the issue.

In 1905, Liberal Bailie John Fortune was heavily defeated in the 3rd ward after granting a licence application despite his ardent temperance stance. He responded that licence applications ought to be considered on the grounds of individual merit, not ideology.<sup>133</sup> Perhaps coincidentally, this echoed the admonition of the *Govan Press* at the time of his first election to the board in 1894 as one of a number of temperance candidates. The paper, while congratulating Fortune and the others on their success, warned that they could not govern as a single interest pressure group, but must display a ‘broad and generous conception of municipal government’, being mindful that ‘administration of the law does not admit alteration of it’.<sup>134</sup> In casting his vote for the licence, he emphatically ‘repudiated the right of any *individual* or clique to pre-judge cases’ coming before the court’.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, he maintained that in a wider context, Govan was a relatively dry community, with only **one** licence per 733 of population, compared with a Scottish average of one for every 366 souls.<sup>136</sup> He also questioned the notion that higher death rates could reasonably be attributed to alcohol alone. His challenger, County Councillor John Campbell, made clear that he felt ratepayers had been ‘let down’ by ‘the chief of the Good Templars, the hope of the Rechabites and a stalwart in the temperance community.’<sup>137</sup> The candidate denied being a ‘tool’ of Provost Anthony, who was almost certainly the ‘individual’ darkly alluded to by the beleaguered bailie.<sup>138</sup> Anthony, chairman of Govan

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<sup>133</sup> *GP*, 20 October 1905.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, 10 November 1904.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, 31 November 1905 (original emphasis).

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 20 October 1905.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 27 October 1905.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*.

Liberal and Radical Association and a Free Churchman, was a lifelong temperance advocate and chairman of the Govan YMCA Temperance Association, identified as one of the ‘Temperance Party’s leading lights ever since his election to the board in 1893.<sup>139</sup> He was noted for his tolerance towards most who disagreed with him on politics or religion.<sup>140</sup> Although staunch on the drinks question, he was sanguine about the likelihood of eventual amalgamation with Glasgow: in 1894 he was re-elected to the board after declaring himself to be ‘pro-Annexation’.<sup>141</sup> He was nevertheless careful to temporise on the issue, citing his admiration of the rhetoric of Joseph Chamberlain on the benefits of localism.<sup>142</sup>

Anthony had a rather doctrinaire, uncompromising view of what was required of a pro-temperance commissioner. He was therefore unlikely to have sympathised with his defeated colleague, Fortune. As early as 1894 he had spoken out against the ‘hypocrisy’ of colleagues who voted to fund civic banquets from the rates, and alleged that the habit of laying-on such feasts for influential dignitaries – like Her Majesty’s Inspector of Police – was tantamount to bribery.<sup>143</sup> When his own attendance at such banquets was criticised at a 1903 ward committee meeting, he unapologetically denied that this was inconsistent with his teetotalism.<sup>144</sup> The Govan Commissioners’ ‘banqueting mania’ became grist to the mill of socialist candidates.<sup>145</sup> A source of especial irony was the holding of a banquet and cake and wine reception for representatives of ‘South Govan’, better known as Linthouse, an adjacent neighbourhood annexed to the burgh in 1901 as its new 7th ward.<sup>146</sup>

Linthouse had by 1901 undergone the transformation from sylvan hinterland at the southern border of the burgh to populous residential quasi-suburb.<sup>147</sup> Paralleling Govan’s

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 4 November 1904.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 14 November 1896.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 20 October 1894.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 27 October 1894.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 23 October 1894.

<sup>145</sup> See for instance the election address of James Gibb, the defeated 1st Ward ILP candidate in 1906: *ibid*, 26 October 1906.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 2 August 1901.

<sup>147</sup> McFadyen et al, ‘Personal Recollections’, p. 99.

1864 recognition as a police burgh, Linthouse's more influential residents successfully argued that the remote management of the community by the Landward Committee of the County of Lanark was insufficient for the needs of a burgeoning population – 5,600 at amalgamation.<sup>148</sup> The absorption of this district into the burgh had wider implications for Govan's relations with Glasgow, which will be elaborated in the next chapter. For present purposes it should be noted that Linthouse, on joining Govan, was lauded by the *Govan Press* for its 'heroic resistance to the drinks trade' and corresponding lack of public houses or 'luring taverns' with their 'attendant revelry and applause'.<sup>149</sup> The new ward was characterised as a 'virtuous bride' for the burgh, so perhaps a nuptial feast was in order, even if it embodied an element of farce for the burgh's critics.<sup>150</sup> Bailie William Munro, who represented the district after it became Govan's 7th ward, was later to give a somewhat rose-tinted account of relations between the council and the workers in the decade before amalgamation with Glasgow:

There were 21 representatives, all men of the town working at their trade or keeping shop in our midst. The meetings of the council were held in the evening and working men could attend. Any ratepayer in those days who had a grievance had no difficulty in getting into touch with one of them, and our domestic quarrels were as a rule easily overcome. Now [he was speaking in 1926] we are only the outside fringe of a big city.<sup>151</sup>

From the adoption of the Police Statutes until annexation, all Govan and Partick representatives were indeed men, for even although women were admitted to the Scottish municipal franchise in 1882, they were not permitted to stand as council candidates before 1907.<sup>152</sup> Leah Leneman has emphasised that this period was a transitional phase in the 'politicisation' of women in the Scottish context.<sup>153</sup> More locally, only after annexation did women, such as future Govan councillor Mary Barbour, play an open, leading role in

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<sup>148</sup> Dalglish and Driscoll, *Historic Govan*, p. 101.

<sup>149</sup> *GP*, 2 August 1901.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 16 August 1901.

<sup>151</sup> McFadyen et al, 'Personal Recollections', p. 102.

<sup>152</sup> C. Game, 'Twenty-nine per cent Women Councillors after a mere 100 Years: Isn't it Time to Look Seriously at Electoral Quotas?' *Public Policy and Administration*, 2009 [24:153], pp. 153-74 at p. 1.

<sup>153</sup> L. Leneman, *A Guid Cause: the Woman's Suffrage Movement in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Mercat, 1995 edition), p. 32.

municipal life, whether through standing successfully for election or participating in the work of the ward committees.<sup>154</sup> The only pre-1912 exception to this apparent female reticence in seeking municipal office was the pro local liquor veto candidacy of a Mrs Jane Gemmill for Partick's 4th ward in 1907.<sup>155</sup> Although unsuccessful, Gemmill gained a respectable 427 votes, about one fifth of the ward poll.<sup>156</sup> Despite an essentially single-issue candidacy, she did argue that, if elected, women could give more 'detailed' consideration to social problems than male councillors.<sup>157</sup> This comment could be read either as proto-feminist or as tacit acceptance that the contribution of female elected officials was constrained by gendered differences. Yet gaining municipal office was only one avenue by which some women could achieve real social and political power, or at least influence, in pre-1912 Govan and Partick.

Isabella Elder, widow of John Elder, did play a prominent role in community life after her husband's death, as will be seen, but it has to be noted that her influence, almost akin to an uncrowned queen of the burgh, was exceptional, predicated on inherited wealth. Elder did, however, stand – evidently unsuccessfully – for the Govan Parish School Board in the 1885 School Board Elections.<sup>158</sup> School boards offered women a rare opportunity to influence public policy before they could be elected as councillors or Parliamentarians.<sup>159</sup> Dinah Pearce, wife of Sir William, was also elected to the School Board.<sup>160</sup> Jane McDermid explains that women like Elder and Pearce were 'perceived as partners in philanthropy with their businessmen husbands' in their School Board

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<sup>154</sup> Barbour, alongside other women activists, was instrumental in the 1915 Rent Strikes, discussed in chapter 8, pp. 283-9.

<sup>155</sup> *PMP*, 1 November 1907.

<sup>156</sup> *PMB*, 7 November 1907, pp. 56-7.

<sup>157</sup> *PMP*, 1 November 1907.

<sup>158</sup> *GP*, 25 April 1885. Her policies included the promotion of temperance, in addition to an emphasis in home economic lessons for girls. The same year, she established in Govan the School for Domestic Economy, and paid for its upkeep. See J.C. McAlpine, *The Lady of Claremont House: Isabella Elder, Pioneer and Philanthropist* (Glendaurel: Argyll Publishing, 1997), p. 199.

<sup>159</sup> J. McDermid, 'Blurring the Boundaries: School Board Women in Scotland, 1873-1919'; *WHR*, [2010, 19:3], pp. 357-73 at p. 369 and *passim*.

<sup>160</sup> McDermid, 'Blurring the Boundaries', p. 358.

endeavours.<sup>161</sup> Mrs Pearce argued that her election, alongside Miss Helen Ferguson, had established the principle of female representation on public bodies.<sup>162</sup>

Although both of Govan Parish's first women members resigned in 1886, subsequent elections resulted in two of the school board's fifteen seats being held by women. McDermid's article usefully identifies these women school board members, and while it cannot, through paucity of sources, reveal much about their individual backgrounds, nevertheless situates them in a wider comparative context which 'seems to show that the usual number of women on larger school boards was two'.<sup>163</sup> Other limited evidence of women active in local politics can be found in an 1897 *Glasgow Herald* report of the Partick, Hillhead and West Kelvinside Women's Liberal Association, held in the Burgh Hall, which appeared to take the form of a general update on the electoral prospects of the party's male parliamentary candidates, aside from a resolution to support the enfranchisement of women.<sup>164</sup> The same year, Govan Parish Council, which covered both burghs chronicled in this study, expressed itself agnostic on the question of parliamentary enfranchisement of women on the ground that this fell outside its statutory remit.<sup>165</sup> Nevertheless, the Parish Council did have two female members, a Mrs Greenless and a Miss Burnett, from the late 1890s.<sup>166</sup> As far as can be ascertained from a review of minutes published in the Glasgow press, they confined their interventions at meetings to advocating better medical care for children, especially in the form of cottage hospitals.<sup>167</sup> The Cooperative Women's Guild had by 1900 established vibrant branches in Govan, Partick, Scotstoun and Whiteinch.<sup>168</sup> Although this organisation vigorously expressed its support for female enfranchisement both at Westminster and in the municipal chamber, it

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, p. 359.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid and pp. 368-9.

<sup>164</sup> *GH*, 2 February 1897.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 3 April 1897.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 28 April 1898.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 27 May 1898.

<sup>168</sup> Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Society, Cooperative Women's Guild, Minute Books 1893-1913, ML/GCA/CWS1/39/1/1-5, meetings of 8 May 1899 and 5 May 1900.

did not propose candidates for municipal office in Govan and Partick before annexation.<sup>169</sup> A search of Scottish newspapers digitised by the British library for this period did not provide evidence of any activity in the Burghs by the Conservative women's movement known as the Primrose League, although it is impossible to rule this out.

Even under the vast shadow cast by Mrs Elder, one other Govan woman stands out for her important, if somewhat lower-key role in public life before 1912. Jane Cossar's behind-the-scenes success in running her late husband's firm for decades after his death arguably made her at least as influential as 'The Lady of Claremont House', albeit there were no physical monuments to her work. To be sure, in Govan and Partick almost all provosts' wives played the role of quasi-official burgh hostess, but the suspicion remains that more 'ordinary' female Govanites and Partickonians would have played some sort of political role. After all, Elspeth King's aptly titled *Hidden History* of Glasgow women notes the attendance of more than 600 Partick women, along with their husbands, at an 1839 meeting of the Partick Universal Suffrage Society.<sup>170</sup> It is difficult to believe – but, on the basis of the research for this thesis, impossible to prove – that such activism could vanish until the days of 'Red Clydeside'. In 1907, *The Govan Press* posed the rhetorical question: 'Should women enter public life?'<sup>171</sup> The rhetorical answer, partly in verse, reads unsurprisingly chauvinistic, but – perhaps less unsurprisingly – the conclusion is eventually reached that a token female or two on the council might be a positive development – so long as they fitted the paternalistic, if not patriarchal profile of the burgh establishment. Given the lack of representation of women in Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian Govan and Partick politics (and therefore in this study), the article is worth quoting at length, albeit not for its literary quality.

Should damozels not share the weight of State and Municipal government?

[...]

Should women enter municipal life?

[...]

Yes, gentlemen, let us see to it that one or two good sensible women are elected to our Councils. Women who have borne the burden and heat of the day, and have leisure to decide for the good of their sisters.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid, meeting of 18 May 1907.

<sup>170</sup> E. King, *The Hidden History of Glasgow's Women – The new Factor*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1993), p. 65.

<sup>171</sup> *GP*, 1 November 1907.

Their presence on the public boards will have a purifying influence and will impart a good moral tone to municipal life.<sup>172</sup>

### **‘Oases of pleasure in deserts of toil’: the Provision of Parks, Libraries and Swimming Baths**

Notwithstanding this journalistic concession to the case for female involvement, if not equality with men in municipal affairs, the last decades of Govan’s and Partick’s independence saw both communities continue to promote an aggressively masculine and muscular public image. From the 1880s until annexation and afterwards, the Govan Police participated in sporting events across the country, and had a renowned Police Pipe Band.<sup>173</sup> Of the annual tug-of-war between Govan’s and Glasgow’s Police forces, Maver highlights: ‘this modern form of combat suggested much about Govanite determination to demonstrate the burgh’s independence’ from the city.<sup>174</sup> Perhaps in case the projection of strength and prowess embodied in the police sports days was too subtle for some residents, a special alternative event was inaugurated. This was the ‘Supplementary Sports and Public Works Tug of War Competition’ held to mark Mrs Elder’s opening of a new dedicated police recreation ground and gymnasium in 1894.<sup>175</sup> This was not an elite competition and was for local people only, with police involvement generally restricted to organisation and marshalling.

There were twenty-nine events and over 400 competitors of both genders, including children and adults. For all the evident enjoyment derived from the occasion by spectators and participants alike, many of the fixtures seemed blatantly contrived to reinforce the sense of Govanites’ reliance on local municipal services, and the connections between the burgh and local employers. For instance, there was a firefighters’ race, a policemen’s race, a cleansing employees’ race and a lamplighters’ race. The police and firemen competed in uniform, and the lamplighters had to carry their ladders in their race. Later, the Public Works Tug of War matches included almost every local employer of note. Fairfield

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> For a discussion of the Govan Police Band and Police Sports days in comparative context, see I. Maver, ‘The Social and Associational Life of the Scottish Workplace, 1800-2000’; *A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology*, Vol. 7, 2008, pp. 500-22 at pp. 510-11.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, p. 514.

<sup>175</sup> *GP*, 29 September 1894.

Shipworkers won the final against Allan Line Labourers, and all events were well-attended by spectators. Prizes were donated by local businesses, and Mrs Elder was given a solid silver key to the gymnasium, which she was invited to use whenever she felt like visiting. Although the *Govan Press* coverage of this rather unusual sports day was positive, it did acknowledge that many events resulted in farce, like the walking ‘race’, which degenerated rapidly into a running race, and a skipping competition where girls’ ropes frequently became entangled due to lack of space.

The importance of outdoor recreation had been recognised in both burghs in the 1880s, and both soon acquired their own public parks. At this point in the discussion, it is worth considering the donation of Govan’s Elder Park and the origins of Partick’s Victoria Park – both of which were opened amid great ceremony in the mid-1880s. The focus here is more on the political implications and symbolism tied up in both parks than on other considerations.<sup>176</sup> As its name suggests, Govan’s Elder Park; consisting of 37 acres of land in Fairfield to the west of the burgh; was donated by Mrs Elder, to honour the memory of her late husband, shipbuilder and onetime Govan commissioner John Elder. Among the eleven stipulations made in her deed of gift to the burgh were the insistence that the park be used for ‘no purpose’ other than ‘healthful recreation, by music and amusements’ that it should incorporate at its east end a ‘reading room or museum and hall’, that no games should be played in the park at any time, and also that the burgh should arrange for music to be played in the park twice-weekly from May to August.<sup>177</sup> The park’s bandstand bore emblems of shipbuilding, music and art, and the park would shortly be graced with a statue of John Elder, paid for by public subscription; this would be joined by that of Mrs Elder after her death.<sup>178</sup>

The opening of the park and its formal handover to the burgh commissioners was arranged for Saturday 27 June 1885, with the Earl of Rosebery, then a rising star of the Liberal party in its last days of pre-Home Rule unity, engaged to hand the park over in Mrs

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<sup>176</sup> For an understanding of the wider urban movement for outdoor recreational spaces, and especially of developments in Glasgow which would have influenced Govan and Partick, see I. Maver, ‘Glasgow’s public parks and the community, 1850-1914: a case study in Scottish civic interventionism’, *Urban History*, 25, 3, (1998), pp. 323-347. This article notes that Govan and Partick’s public parks were taken over by the city in 1912 (at p. 341).

<sup>177</sup> A. Craig, *The Elder Park, Govan: An Account of the Gift of the Elder Park and of the Erection and Unveiling of the Statue of John Elder*, (Glasgow: Maclehose and Sons, 1891, for private circulation.), pp. 43-5.

<sup>178</sup> Craig, *Elder Park*, p. 46; *GP*, 28 June 1888 and 25 May 1906.

Elder's name.<sup>179</sup> The ceremony was preceded by a Trades' procession and a Sunday school procession. The programme for the former display entailed a *tour de force* of the burgh's economic infrastructure and associational culture. There is insufficient space here to give a full account, but it included representatives from the Govan police on horseback, railway companies, the Govan Weavers' Society, the Free Gardeners, chain makers, biscuit makers, cabinet makers, John Cossar of the *Govan Press* (accompanied by a working printing machine), plasterers, boilermakers, iron shipbuilders, the Fire Brigade, the Ancient Order of Shepherds, brass-founders, blacksmiths, engineers, bakers, saw-millers, shipwrights, the Ancient Order of Foresters, the Independent Order of Oddfellows and St Andrew's Ambulance Association, in addition to various other firms.<sup>180</sup> In case the symbolic connection of all this industry and respectability to municipal autonomy was too subtle, the rear of the Trades' procession was brought up by the body of Govan's police constables on foot, so that the entire parade was bookended by uniformed representatives of the burgh. The Sunday School procession culminated in the delivery to Mrs Elder of an address worth quoting at some length, to the extent that its content was revealing about the influence exerted by this local benefactress, and of the silk-covered steel quality of paternalism generally. After greeting her with 'deep respect', the address inscribed on vellum and bound in Morocco leather continued,

Grown up people today are speaking much of your gift to our town. But it will be a gift to us children longer than to them, and we feel bound to thank you for it in our own words [this seemed rather disingenuous of the adults who presumably wrote the address].

This continued:

No name is better known to us than that which made the great yard at Fairfield. Many of our homes depend upon it. Your own name also we hear spoken of very often. It has been told us how much you helped our minister in his wish to build a beautiful great Church, where not only our fathers and mothers but we children after them may all be taught of the Lord. We have here another proof of your kindness. It is a broad and lovely playground. We have watched with wonder while it was being made ready. We have looked forward with pleasure to games and gladness in it. We have come here today to show how much we honour your care for our happiness, and we are sure all Govan children join in our words. Long after this when these crowds are gone away, and when we look upon the Park with aged eyes, we will remember what took place today, and we will tell other children how generously this park was given.

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<sup>179</sup> Craig, *Elder Park*, p. 49.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 51-2.

Madam, our short words fail to thank you as we should, but from our hearts we thank you.<sup>181</sup>

Thus, it was acknowledged that without the enterprise and ability of the late Mr Elder, many of Govan's children would be homeless, but his widow had provided them with a playground through her wondrous generosity. Viewed through such a narrow lens, the sentiments of gratitude and indebtedness on display here were understandable. Then Provost Alexander Campbell, in accepting the park on behalf of the community, noted that although Govan was by then the 'sixth largest town in Scotland', it lacked the status of a Royal Burgh and could not reciprocate by making Mrs Elder a Burgess.<sup>182</sup> The sycophancy intensified when Provost Campbell remarked,

The Park will, I have no doubt, some day be the centre of Govan, and a benefit not only to us all but to the thousands yet unborn, who will rise up to call the name of Elder blessed – (cheers) – for we all know that the feeling uppermost in your own mind in deciding upon this mode of benefitting the people of Govan was to carry out the noble ideas of your departed husband to raise the working classes in the social scale, not only by improving their morals, but by promoting their bodily health and by purifying and elevating their thoughts in directing them towards the good and beautiful both in nature and religion. (Cheers.)<sup>183</sup>

The Elder Free Library was eventually opened, amid similar fanfare in September 1903, by the Scots American millionaire, robber-baron and philanthropist Dr. Andrew Carnegie.<sup>184</sup> He was received at Glasgow's St Enoch railway station by Provost Marr and his fellow magistrates in their robes of office. His route to the site of the library building - on the grounds of the park as per Mrs Elder's 1885 Deed of Gift - headed a procession similar in size and character to that of the park's 1885 opening ceremony. The *Govan Press* characterised Mrs Elder's latest gift as 'an oasis of pleasure in the desert of toil'.<sup>185</sup> Somewhat unflatteringly, it reported one anonymous bystander's observation that Carnegie

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<sup>181</sup> Reprinted in *ibid*, pp. 67-8.

<sup>182</sup> Quoted in *ibid*, p. 73.

<sup>183</sup> Quoted in *ibid*, p. 77.

<sup>184</sup> *PMP*, 11 September 1903. See also G. Tweedale, 'Carnegie, Andrew (1835–1919)', *ODNB*, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32296>>, accessed 13 August 2010. Carnegie's own philanthropy was instrumental in persuading numerous Scottish burghs to adopt the 1853 Public Libraries Act. See J.C. Crawford, 'The Scottish Library Scene' in, A. Black and P. Hoare eds., *The Cambridge History of Public Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Volume III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 235-53 at pp. 241-3.

<sup>185</sup> *GP*, 11 September 1903.

resembled “a jovial old farmer”, but added ‘and so he was, but only much more “distingueé”’.<sup>186</sup> In thanking the burgh and Mrs Elder for inviting him to perform the ceremony, Carnegie characterised the endeavours of the burgh’s capitalists and employees as a noble endeavour which would result, ultimately, in nothing less than world peace. This would have been taken, and was almost certainly intended, as a validation of local Liberal industrialists and their burgh. So large was the crowd of well-wishers that he asked for his remarks to be reproduced verbatim in the local press, fearing that even if he shouted, only one in ten people present would be able to hear him. Moved to Utopian fervour, he declared that,

We only hate those we do not know – that is a maxim particularly true in this regard. The travelled man sees only good people in all nations; no nation has all the virtues, and none are without many. We find the philanthropist in all lands, we find the minister, we find the preacher and the teacher, and we find sacred books in all lands ethically similar to our own, all advocating an adherence to the virtues, and denouncing the vices of human nature. And these workmen that I saw today, as they stand clanking their busy rivets up, we must view them in another light – they too are helping in the work of civilisation – capitalist and workmen engaged in the great work of drawing the world together into one common brotherhood. And as we get to know each other, depend upon it, my friends, war shall cease among men.<sup>187</sup>

Carnegie left the burgh to the strains of ‘Will Ye No Come Back Again?’, but although he appeared not to have done so, he was not the last renowned visitor to the burgh. In October 1905, ‘General’ William Booth of the Salvation Army had drawn large crowds, giving an address urging the townsfolk to resist the ‘Devil’s Traps’ of temptation, presumably including public houses.<sup>188</sup> There was great disappointment in the burgh in 1904 when Booth had been unable to incorporate a visit into his motorcar speaking tour from Land’s End to Aberdeen, but this time he was able to stop by, despite having only recently returned from a trip to the site of present-day Israel. Booth’s Govan address was attended by many local industrialists and politicians of all persuasions, including several town councillors, the community’s Liberal MP Robert Hunter Craig and his Conservative rival Robert Duncan, as well as the Labour candidate, John Hill.<sup>189</sup> Booth’s ability to attract so many of the local great and good testifies both to his popular (and populist)

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> *GH*, 4 July 1887.

<sup>189</sup> *GP*, 13 October 1905.

appeal, and to a personal philosophy, which – notwithstanding an emphasis on eternal punishment for those who died unconverted to Christianity – allowed for an ‘unusual degree of social pity’ whilst recognising environmental causes of poverty.<sup>190</sup>

The praise heaped upon Mrs Elder for both her gifts to Govan might have been mistaken for tributes paid to a deity, but Partick’s Victoria Park was named for the real monarch, who had given permission for her name to be used in recognition of the Golden Jubilee of her reign.<sup>191</sup> In return for the honour that Partick had bestowed on her, the Queen had announced a knighthood for Maclean.<sup>192</sup> The Royal presence was only known to have graced the burgh once – in 1888 - and then only in passing on its way to a private reception at Queen Margaret College for the education of women, an institution which owed much to Mrs Elder’s philanthropy and advocacy.<sup>193</sup> The commissioners were keen to play their part in ensuring Her Majesty’s ‘comfort and protection’ as she flitted through their town.<sup>194</sup> She survived unscathed. The Victoria Park, built on lands feued from James Gordon Oswald, on whose family’s expansive Scotstoun Estate much of the burgh’s western Whiteinch, Scotstoun and Knighstwood quarters had been built, was opened by Provost Sir Andrew Maclean on 2 July 1887.<sup>195</sup> As distinct from Elder Park, Victoria Park was funded from a special assessment, levied on all ratepayers, of one penny in the pound.<sup>196</sup> This meant that the cost of the park was borne disproportionately by poorer ratepayers, and its location on about 30 acres in Whiteinch, hardly the centre of the community, seemed suspiciously convenient for the burgh’s more affluent denizens in the

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<sup>190</sup> See F. Prochaska, “Booth, William (1829–1912),”; ODNB, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31968>> (accessed 14/8/10) at p. 2. The ILP’s Keir Hardie visited the Burgh the same month, as is discussed in more detail in chapter 7, p. 250.

<sup>191</sup> *GH*, 4 July 1887.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> McAlpine, *The Lady*, pp. 85-104.

<sup>194</sup> *PMB*, 13 August 1888 pp. 235-6

<sup>195</sup> For background on the Oswald family, see J.G. Smith and J.O. Mitchell, *Old Country Houses of the Old Glasgow Gentry*, (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons Ltd., 1878 edition), at chapter LXVII (Scotstoun).

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 September 1885, pp. 325-8.

villas of nearby Partickhill and Jordanhill.<sup>197</sup> It is worth noting that both Govan's and Partick's annual pre-election ward meetings for the remaining years of their independence were punctuated by demands for additional parks more conveniently located for residents at the opposite end of either community.<sup>198</sup> The clearing of a disused quarry on the lands to be used for the park, which, incidentally, led to the discovery of fossilised trees from the Carboniferous Era, was largely performed by unemployed workmen in the burgh.<sup>199</sup>

This initiative should not, however, be interpreted as a proto-Keynesian attempt to maintain full-employment in the burgh during a downturn in the demand for ships. Indeed, at a public meeting of the 'Labour League' against the park, it was argued that the whole endeavour was wasteful of burgh resources, with the tools paid for at ratepayers' expense and the stones mysteriously disappearing without profit to the burgh, notwithstanding serious doubts as to whether the wages received by the stonebreakers were any higher than the men would have got from the burgh's Unemployment Relief Committee.<sup>200</sup> In addition, the burgh minutes themselves suggest that contractors were paid much more swiftly than the stonebreakers.<sup>201</sup> Still more substantively, the 'Labour League' objected to the commissioners' 'high handed' decision to progress the laying of the park without proper public consultation, thereby imposing new taxation 'without consent'.<sup>202</sup> It was also suggested that Oswald had profited too lavishly by his transaction with the Partick commissioners.<sup>203</sup> Why, it was asked, could the commissioners not have elicited private philanthropy in emulation of their Govan counterparts? It was even suggested that the whole issue of the park represented a 'test case' for annexation, or at the very least highlighted the need for working men on the board to check the spendthrift tendencies of the 'landlord element'.<sup>204</sup> Not all present at the protest meeting agreed on the need for

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<sup>197</sup> *GP*, 31 October 1885.

<sup>198</sup> See for instance *ibid*, 24 October 1893 and 21 October 1904.

<sup>199</sup> *PMB*, 14 December 1885, pp. 350-5.

<sup>200</sup> *GP*, 31 October 1885.

<sup>201</sup> *PMB*, 14 December 1885, pp. 350-5.

<sup>202</sup> *GP*, 31 October 1885.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid*.

annexation, with one blacksmith and Trades Council member taking a dim view of the city's taxation regime.<sup>205</sup> It was eventually agreed that some wards would be contested on the parks issue, albeit none of the Labour candidates was successful.<sup>206</sup>

Provost Sir Andrew Maclean was a staunch Liberal and teetotaler, who had risen from humble origins in Lochwinnoch, Ayrshire to become co-owner of the Whiteinch-based shipbuilding firm Barclay and Curle. Only weeks before the opening ceremony, John Ferguson, Maclean's immediate predecessor in the civic chair, but also his business partner and close personal friend, died.<sup>207</sup> Like Maclean, Ferguson, originally from Greenock, Renfrewshire, had risen from humble origins to the commanding heights of industry, sustained along the way by a profound belief in Liberalism and total abstinence.<sup>208</sup> The late ex-Provost had, as Convener of the burgh's Parks Committee, been instrumental in the development of Victoria Park. He had donated the bandstand and flagpole at personal expense, and had, somewhat touchingly been looking forward to presiding over a miniature regatta on the park's combined (depending on the season) yachting pond and skating rink.

Ferguson's death meant that the opening ceremony was postponed for one week, and this occasioned an anguished, verging on the absurd poem by alleged local bard James Chapman. This was presumably intended to portray Ferguson as a Moses-like figure who never quite got to lead his people to their promised miniature boating pond. It does, however, convey something of the burgh's still-prevailing paternalistic ethos, hailing a deceased: 'Provost and councillor, father and friend.'<sup>209</sup> The opening of the new park was only slightly lower-key than the opening of Govan's Elder Park: indeed Mrs Elder herself was one of the many dignitaries present on the day.<sup>210</sup> Although there was no official public holiday, the *Glasgow Herald* – with just the merest hint of irony – observed that the whole burgh appeared to have got into the spirit of the occasion. Partick's streets presented a 'gay spectacle as here and there lines of flags spanned the streets, while the buildings

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 18 June 1887 (obituary).

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> *GP*, 18 June 1887.

<sup>210</sup> *GH*, 4 July 1887.

were prominently, if not artistically adorned with bunting.<sup>211</sup> For the burgh commissioners and their guests, the festivities began with a cake and wine reception in the Burgh Hall.<sup>212</sup> Then there was a procession to the park itself, along the burgh's main thoroughfares. This was on similar lines to Govan's procession two years before, with the police forming the advance guard for the official carriages bearing Provost Maclean with Bailies Dansken and Alexander, ex-Provost White, Alexander Craig Sellar, Partick's first dedicated MP, Mrs Elder and others. The procession was also run on similar lines to the Govan version, and contained over 2,000 participants, and included representatives of various local businesses, burgh services and voluntary associations, including the burgh Fire Brigade with an engine and two hoses in train.

After the singing of the joyful 100th Psalm, Provost Maclean offered a long tribute to Queen Victoria and the achievements of her reign. Somewhat poignantly, Bailie Alexander Storrie noted that he could personally remember a time when Whiteinch had only 'one little house', without neighbours for a two-mile vicinity.<sup>213</sup> The formal proceedings were brought to a close by the community's representative at Westminster, Alexander Craig Sellar, who said:

he had seen a good many of the jubilee festivities during the past ten days, but none had been more hearty, interesting, nor agreeable than that in which they were participating. *For what were they doing? They were inaugurating a beautiful and valuable permanent institution. Partick was increasing yearly in population. As Glasgow had overlapped Partick, so Partick was overlapping Whiteinch. And they required a recreation ground to furnish this generation and generations to come with air and exercise and recreation. Referring to the increasing prosperity of the burgh, he remarked that while the park was now in the country it would before many years were over be surrounded by buildings. The people had to be congratulated on their Victoria Park. The name was a most happy and suitable one [...].*<sup>214</sup>

Another dividing line in the leisure amenities in both communities was the question of the desirability of municipal swimming baths. Although Partick's commissioners had considered making such a provision in the late 1880s, and public consultation was held on the issue, no consensus was reached.<sup>215</sup> Many working class Partickonians and Labour

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> *GP*, 1 December 1888.

activists wanted baths, but class was not the determining factor for either position. At the public meeting held in late November 1888 to discuss the question, a majority voted in favour of proceeding with some scheme, but the abstentions outweighed the majority, and in any case, the vote was not legally binding. Reservations about the scheme centred on cost and location: should the burgh build the baths on new land, or use part of Victoria Park? Although the latter option was preferable since the land concerned was already burgh property, the location was thought inconvenient for many in the burgh. There was also the suggestion that, at a point where annexation looked inevitable, it might be better to wait for the city to build baths when it took over.

Provost Maclean was very keen for the burgh to have its own baths, not least because he had learned to swim in a burn (small river) as a child, but observed that there were no clean bodies of water in the burgh: he did not like the idea of children swimming in the 'inky Clyde'.<sup>216</sup> Although Maclean secured unanimous support from his fellow commissioners to explore the possibility of baths, the project swiftly became bogged down in consultation at ward committee level and the lukewarm response at the November 1888 public meeting, where only 33 ratepayers from a turnout estimated between 80 and 100 were prepared to raise their hand in favour of 'strengthening the commissioners' hands' to continue.<sup>217</sup> There had also been mixed feedback on the issue at ward committee meetings in the run up to the annual elections. Provost Maclean was determined to press ahead, but the board soon voted to rescind its July motion 'in view of the difficulties, and of the feeling in the Burgh' against the scheme.<sup>218</sup> The issue arose intermittently in subsequent elections, especially in the early 1900s, but Partick did not get municipal baths until long after its annexation.

In Govan, the position was different in that the burgh eventually opened baths on Summertown Road in 1901, after a long period where the burgh encouraged local swimming clubs and bathers to go out of hours and use school facilities on the outskirts of the community, such as in Bellahouston.<sup>219</sup> The need for dedicated burgh baths arose

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> *PMB*, 9 July 1888, pp. 232-4; 10 September 1888, pp. 238-43; 19 November 1888, p. 265 and 26 November 1888, p. 266.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid, 4 December 1888.

<sup>219</sup> *GP*, 21 October 1893.

persistently at the annual elections, and even Bailie Wightman admitted the lack of such facilities was ‘discreditable’ in such a large urban community.<sup>220</sup> In 1897, one ward committee chairman observed ruefully that the burgh ought to have taken advantage of a slump in the building trade over the previous few years to build the baths, along with a new public hall and library, at a quarter discount.<sup>221</sup> This did not stop Bailie William Smith from warning against new baths on the grounds of increased rates as late as 1899.<sup>222</sup>

When the baths finally opened in September 1901, the facilities were described by outgoing Provost Kirkwood as ‘the envy of Scotland’ and the ceremony was followed by a diving demonstration, races and synchronised swimming before the general public were admitted.<sup>223</sup> Much of the entertainments were provided by the burgh’s successful Fairfield Swimming Club, whose insistent campaigning for a ‘home’ venue had been instrumental in finally persuading the commissioners to provide one in 1898.<sup>224</sup> Although Kirkwood presented the baths as something of a ratepayers’ bargain, Bailie Fortune who convened the Baths Committee somewhat undermined the fanfare by conceding that it would appear ‘surprising’ to outsiders that Govan had only just acquired its own baths.<sup>225</sup> Yet throughout the remainder of the burgh’s independence, the baths ran at a loss, perhaps because they were aimed more at elite athletes than the furtherance of general hygiene: public wash-houses were not part of the design.<sup>226</sup> By 1903, one 5th ward committee member satirically suggested it would be more profitable to convert the baths into a municipal bakery.<sup>227</sup> Moreover, as Bailie Fortune himself admitted, Govanites – who were already paying for the baths through their rates – had to pay to enter. This, he conceded, was inimical to mass participation in a ‘working class community’ like Govan.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid, 24 October 1896.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid, 23 October 1897.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 20 October 1899.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 13 September 1901.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, 23 October 1898.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> See for instance *GP*, 24 October 1902 and 24 October 1903.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 16 October 1903.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

In this context, it was hardly surprising that the slogan ‘Free Baths’ became something of a rallying call for Labour council candidates before annexation.<sup>229</sup> Councillor John Kemp, a socialist employed as a glazing company representative with extensive Masonic connections, and a former nominee of the Scottish Traders’ Defence Association, had been elected in 1904 alongside Councillor Coyle.<sup>230</sup> Kemp’s address to electors in Govan’s 4th ward set the baths question in a broader moral and ideological context. The *Govan Press* reported it thus:

[H]e believed that the true function of a town council was to do everything in its power to better the conditions of the people, and to use every means in their power to see that the citizens were entitled to breathe a pure atmosphere; and to watch that the working men were not compelled to live in conditions detrimental to their own health and to the health of their families. (Applause.) Public baths and public institutions were all very well in their own way, but they only touched the fringe of great problems with very little result. (Hear hear.)<sup>231</sup>

Here was evidence of a much more extensive vision of municipal government than the Clydeside police burghs had so far realised in their years of independence. Kemp wanted the council to immediately adopt a more interventionist approach to dealing with unsanitary dwellings in the burgh, but despite the tenor of his rhetoric suggesting a philosophy of local government more in keeping with what the city could provide, he dismissed annexation as an ‘absurd prospect’ at that time.<sup>232</sup> Prominent among the other ‘public institutions’ Kemp alluded to was Govan’s new town hall, designed by the architects Thomson and Sandilands at a cost of about £60,000, completed in 1899 and formally opened by Provost Kirkwood in 1901.<sup>233</sup>

Kirkwood, it is worth noting at this point, was a wealthy Ayrshire-born stockbroker and popular local figure, first elected for the 3rd ward in 1884 and consistently elected

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<sup>229</sup> See for instance *ibid*, 6 October 1906 and 6 November 1908.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid*, 4 November 1904.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid*, 28 October 1904 (emphasis added).

<sup>232</sup> *GP*, 21 and 28 October 1904.

<sup>233</sup> Author unknown, ‘Govan Town Hall’, [www.theglasgowstory.com](http://www.theglasgowstory.com), accessed 7/6/2010. The symbolic importance of town halls was discussed in chapter 2, p. 43.

thereafter, usually unopposed.<sup>234</sup> Even before he became Govan's actual provost in 1892, he was known locally as the 'Provost of Bellahouston', due to his prominent role in that neighbourhood's social and sporting life: presiding over the local lawn tennis and bowling clubs. His skills as a *racounteur* and amateur dramatist were frequently in demand, but he had a more serious side: in addition to his own private philanthropy, he served as chair of the William Pearce Memorial Fund, trustee elder and treasurer of Bellahouston Parish Church. A Unionist in politics, he was also a Freemason, Shepherd and Gardener. He was not dogmatic against annexation.<sup>235</sup> On the occasion of his Silver Wedding Anniversary, which was marked by the burgh, the *Govan Press* praised his 'kindly rule' and skill as a 'peacemaker' in placating the diverse interests at a board around which now sat 18 commissioners.<sup>236</sup> Although he had ostensibly moulded the commissioners into a 'happy family', the paper conceded that 'he can be a Bismarck at times, and there is no mistaking his intention when he puts his foot down'.<sup>237</sup>

After the new Public Hall's foundation stone was laid amidst great ceremony, the *Govan Press* elaborated the symbolic importance of the new building as follows.

Govan has had many bright days in her career, many days when events took place within her walls [*sic*] which led to the making of municipal history. Not one, however, of these past days can compare in point of interest and significance with that of Saturday last, when the foundation stone was laid of the New Public Halls and Municipal Buildings being erected at Summertoun road. It is, as it were, the last stage in the development of the burgh, and it has been the means of arousing the burghers to a new and keener sense of municipal responsibility and privilege. We have seen, as we do not see in the drab days of the common round, the greatness of this hive of industry made palpable.<sup>238</sup>

Provost Kirkwood had been accused of 'hoodwinking' ratepayers over the new hall's real cost; the outlay on the project was often used to refuse a rate reduction, and it was, perhaps predictably, argued that their location was too far east for many ratepayers to make use of them.<sup>239</sup> The original Orkney Street burgh buildings, opened in 1867, were re-cycled as

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<sup>234</sup> *GP*, 29 November 1890.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid*, 27 October 1894.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid*, 6 April 1895.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid*, 23 September 1898.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid*, 24 and 31 October 1896.

the burgh's police headquarters, extended to the south to house the Fire Brigade.<sup>240</sup> Partick's commissioners had, as far back as 1872, acquired an elegant Burgh Hall designed by William Leiper in Franco-Scottish style.<sup>241</sup> The hall's design was exhibited at the 1867 Paris exhibition as an exemplar of 'The Progress of British Architecture'.<sup>242</sup> As the burgh's Whiteinch neighbourhood grew more crowded, a somewhat less ostentatious Lesser Burgh Hall was opened there in 1894.<sup>243</sup> Provost Kirkwood and his chameleon-like successor, John Marr, were noted for their skill in dealing with an increasingly diverse group of municipal colleagues.<sup>244</sup>

## Conclusion

Yet, as the new century dawned, their successors and Partick counterparts faced the unenviable task of leading colleagues with fundamentally different conceptions of the nature, purposes and extent of the council's powers. Partick's municipal politics had been somewhat less volatile than those in its larger sibling burgh. Although its council chamber was by no means monolithic, its final years as a burgh were almost sedate in comparison to Govan's. In both communities, the years 1885-1912 had seen various attempts by the commissioners and sympathetic philanthropists to consolidate a sense of identity separate from Glasgow. There was a growing sense, highlighted by radical Liberal candidates, and even more so by pragmatic socialists, that many of these initiatives and all the accompanying fanfare failed to address real social and environmental problems arising from deep-seated structural inequalities in both burghs. In this context, it is significant that hopes, fears, anticipation and ambivalence about annexation with Glasgow remained a persistent feature of public discourse in both burghs in this period. By 1911, it had become increasingly evident that a *truly* 'broad and generous conception of municipal government' could not be realised in either Govan or Partick, given the constraints of the General Police legislative framework and the narrow interests and factionalism of their respective town

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<sup>240</sup> Dalglish and Driscoll, *Historic Govan*, pp. 105-6.

<sup>241</sup> Author unknown, 'William Leiper' (1839-1916), *Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, 1840-1980, <<http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk>>, (accessed 7/6/2010).

<sup>242</sup> Author unknown., 'Partick Burgh Hall', <TheGlasgowStory.com> (accessed 7/6/2010).

<sup>243</sup> *PS*, 26 September 1894. See also Author unknown, 'Whiteinch Town Hall', <The Glasgow Story.com> (accessed 7/6/2010).

<sup>244</sup> *GP*, 6 April 1895.

halls. The final municipal chapter takes a longer view of the legal and ideological struggles leading ultimately to the burghs' annexation and the creation of 'Greater Glasgow'.

## **Chapter 6**

‘Centralisation has its draw backs as well as its advantages’: the Rhetoric and Reality of ‘Annexation’, c. 1869-1912

It is true that your representative at Westminster neglects your interests and looks after his own. But if you place your interests in the hands of your wealthy fellow townsman – your own employer, perhaps, or the landlord of the tenement-house in which you live – will he prefer your interest to his own in the local governing body? He will not; and the gain of efficiency in decentralisation will only mean greater efficiency of the governmental machinery for keeping down the worker.

George Bernard Shaw, *The True Radical Programme*, 1887.<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

This chapter considers the key conceptual and practical arguments presented for and against amalgamation over the latter period of both burghs’ municipal independence. This includes an exploration of the language of the ‘annexation’ debates and its associated contradictions and nuances, competing notions of what it meant to be a community, and of the optimal balance of power between neighbourhoods and town halls. Party politics remained an important background factor in the debates, with Unionist, Liberal and Labour protagonists presenting competing analyses of the performance and legitimacy of both burghs, and of the city’s expansionist aims. In this context, considerations of the overall effectiveness, accountability and cost-effectiveness of burgh, as opposed to city, administration were often to the fore.

Such utilitarian judgements go a long way towards explaining annexation, but not wholly. It has been a persistent theme of this thesis that several commentators on Partick’s and Govan’s municipal affairs, from the 1840s to the early 1910s and later, had conveyed a sense of uncertainty about the viability of both burghs’ independent status. Several who were sympathetic to the police burghs regarded their physical and legal integration into the city as inevitable; yet Partick retained its separate administration from the city for 60 years and Govan for nearly 50. In that light, it is important to consider not just why Govan and Partick amalgamated with the city in 1912, but how and why they managed to hold out for so long. The answer, it is argued here, lies as much in the police burgh leaders’ abilities to forge a sense of genuine community as in their undeniable capacity for legal and constitutional conflict. Nevertheless, over time, the city fathers’ vision of a broader

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<sup>1</sup> G.B. Shaw, *The True Radical Programme*, Fabian Society tract No. 6, 1901, p. 4. Obtained from the LSE Library, *Fabian Tracts*, 1884-1901, [http://www2.lse.ac.uk/library/archive/online\\_resources/fabianarchive/victorian.aspx](http://www2.lse.ac.uk/library/archive/online_resources/fabianarchive/victorian.aspx) accessed 08/08/10.

community with a less divisive, if not egalitarian ethos, proved more persuasive to working-class ratepayers, and the burghs were finally absorbed. The term ‘municipal socialism’ encapsulated this appeal.<sup>2</sup> ‘Municipal socialism’ had originally been developed from the mid-nineteenth century onwards in the context of attempts by the city fathers to curb the appeal of class politics by ameliorating social problems; it was not socialist in the sense that socialist activists would have recognised.<sup>3</sup> However, by the early 1900s, as James Smyth has explained, Labour and ILP candidates chose not to reject ‘municipal socialism’ but to ‘inject it with a fresh perspective and credibility’, with a renewed focus on what local, democratically-accountable communities could achieve in terms of public services.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter deals thematically with the main arguments for annexation, burgh independence and the Chamberlainite compromise position of municipal federalism, also referred to as ‘divisional management’. The chronological focus is mainly on the years 1888 to 1912, albeit some evidence is taken from the annexation disputes of the 1860s and 70s – already discussed in chapter four of this thesis - to highlight continuity and change in the burghs’ joint and individual responses to the annexation ‘threat’.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Annexation Saga c. 1832-1912: an overview**

This is not the place to elaborate the history of Glasgow’s pattern of territorial enlargement during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; Irene Maver has written extensively on its scope, extent and causes.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, it should be appreciated that this was the environment in which Partick and Govan ‘fought’ for but ultimately conceded their

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<sup>2</sup> A cogent analysis of the emergence of the term, its policy implications and evolving attitudes in response to it, is contained in Fraser, ‘Municipal Socialism...’, pp. 258-80. The origins, development and ambiguities inherent in the term are also elaborated in I. Maver, ‘Glasgow’s Civic Government’; W.H. Fraser and I. Maver (eds.), *Glasgow Volume II: 1830-1912*, (Manchester: MUP, 1996), pp.441-85. See especially pp. 443, 468, 472, 474 and 476.

<sup>3</sup> Fraser and Maver, ‘Tackling the Problems’, p. 443.

<sup>4</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, pp. 68-9.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter 4, pp. 125-127.

<sup>6</sup> See I. Maver, *Glasgow*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000, pp. x-xx. For a more detailed analysis see also I.E. Sweeney [a.k.a. and hereafter Maver], *The Municipal Administration of Glasgow, 1833-1912: Public Service and the Scottish Civic Identity*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Strathclyde University, 2000, pp. 125-224.

municipal independence, and the following discussion should be understood against the backdrop of this broad chronology. In 1846, the need for greater cohesion in policing structures made the city's municipal boundaries co-extensive with its parliamentary demarcation, and the former Burghs of Barony: Calton and Anderston were annexed, alongside the territory known as the Gorbals.<sup>7</sup> Before the Reform Act of 1868 was passed, Govan and Partick had taken advantage of the General Police Acts to become police burghs. As was discussed in chapter four, they, alongside other suburban burghs, were able successfully to resist incorporation into an enlarged parliamentary constituency, which, had it occurred, was felt would almost certainly have led to the swift consolidation of the city's municipal boundaries to the detriment of the suburbs.<sup>8</sup>

In 1870, Glasgow promoted its own municipal extension bill, which fell victim to the lobbying of the surrounding burghs, co-ordinated especially by Govan's Parliamentary Bills Committee. The city seemed to have been held at bay, apart from a few acquisitions in 1870. These included the purchase of part of Partick's eastern territory by Glasgow Town Council for the College (Glasgow University) when it de-camped from its historic High Street premises, the north-eastern district of Springburn and the south-east's Alexandra Park.<sup>9</sup> By 1886, the city fathers found themselves surrounded by nine police burghs: Partick and Maryhill (the latter created in 1856), Govan (1864), Hillhead (1869), Kinning Park (1871), Crosshill (1871), Pollokshields (1875), Govanhill (1877) and Pollokshields East (1880).<sup>10</sup> Govanhill's erection as a police burgh occurred after a long legal and political tussle for the relevant territory – which became notorious as 'No Man's Land' - between Glasgow and the tiny burgh of Crosshill.<sup>11</sup> Crosshill was supported in its claims by the 'defensive alliance' of suburban burghs dominated by Govan and Partick, as

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<sup>7</sup> This summary is derived from W.B. Anderson, 'The extension of the municipal boundaries of Glasgow, 1800-1912'; *Transactions of the Old Glasgow Club*, 1918-1919, (1:4), pp. 9-15. Although an interesting piece, this does contain factual inaccuracies regarding the geographical size of Glasgow and related points. A more accurate account of developments can be obtained from Maver, 'Glasgow's Civic Government', *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> See Maver, *Municipal Administration*, pp. 115-117.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 150.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 157.

<sup>11</sup> For a full discussion of the 'No Man's Land' wrangle, see Maver, *Municipal Administration*, pp. 152-6.

was seen in chapter four of this thesis.<sup>12</sup> Crosshill and Govanhill were unable to amalgamate, due to their geographical location in separate counties: Renfrew and Lanark, respectively. Indeed, it was Crosshill's attempt to secure Parliamentary sanction to incorporate Govanhill's as-yet-un-named territory into its own, by transferring it to the jurisdiction of Lanarkshire, which provoked the dispute with the city in this first place.<sup>13</sup> In the mid-1870s, Partick, Maryhill and Hillhead had even briefly explored the feasibility of municipal merger, to create a super-burgh.<sup>14</sup> Bailie James Napier, who had been so instrumental in the original creation of Partick as a police burgh, was especially supportive of a scheme. The *Partick Advertiser* reflected his views that:

If the three burghs were amalgamated and the districts between us and the [Forth and Clyde] canal were incorporated with them, a burgh would be formed of such a size, rental and population as would be convenient to manage, being not so large as to be beyond the power of personal supervision by the gentlemen elected by the ratepayers, and yet large enough to employ the best talent that could be got in paid officials.<sup>15</sup>

Although the Partick, Hillhead and Maryhill commissioners had passed motions supporting the proposed amalgamation, there was internal dissent and the proposals failed to gain the necessary public support at ward committee and special meetings.<sup>16</sup> In any event, apart from the question of scale, the arguments about the utility of centralisation were even more applicable to the case for amalgamation with the city.<sup>17</sup> There is more to say about the practical and theoretical problems posed by the variable acreage and population of the city's surrounding police burghs in what follows. For present purposes, a few more points of background should be considered.

In 1886, many of wealthy residential Kelvinside's residents, led by landowner James Brown Fleming, attempted to have their neighbourhood, along with the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, pp. 132-3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp. 151-2.

<sup>14</sup> *PA*, 17 April 1875.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> *GH*, 10 July 1885 and *PMB*, 11 August 1875, p. 360-1.

<sup>17</sup> See for instance the pro-Glasgow views expressed by Whiteinch Ward Committee chairman Thomas Dunlop, reported in *GH*, 10 July 1885.

neighbouring police burgh of Hillhead, taken over by the city.<sup>18</sup> Although the relevant legislation was passed by the House of Commons, it was thrown out by the House of Lords, which affirmed the principle that annexations could only occur with the consent of the local authority – in this case, Hillhead – laid claim to. This ruling was a source of glee for the burgh of Hillhead's commissioners, whose campaign of resistance had been aided and abetted by Govan, Partick and the other suburban burghs. Undeterred, the city fathers applied successfully to Parliament for the appointment of a Boundary Commission in 1887: this was tasked with reviewing the city and its surrounding districts to consider their competing claims to jurisdiction with a view to reaching a sustainable settlement. Detailed consideration of the substantive evidence relating to Govan and Partick's involvement in this follows later in this chapter, but for present purposes it needs noting that although the city's subsequent bill to annex all the surrounding police burghs and suburban areas was, perhaps predictably rejected by the Lords, the Commission's recommendations marked a significant moral victory for Glasgow. These were that:<sup>19</sup>

- 1) The city should be extended to include the whole continuous urban area of which it formed the centre.
- 2) This should include all police burghs created around the city since 1850, in addition to the built up areas of the counties of Lanark and Renfrew, and neighbouring lands likely to be built on in the foreseeable future.

From 1890 onwards, the city adopted a markedly more conciliatory approach to its attempts to expand its bounds, proceeding by negotiation rather than coercion. The collapse of the City of Glasgow Bank in 1878 almost certainly undermined the confidence of many county districts to go-it-alone as police burghs; indeed, the southside neighbourhoods of Langside and Shawlands abandoned their contemplation of adopting the relevant legislation in the aftermath of the financial crisis.<sup>20</sup> Although the city's newfound emollient approach proved more successful than the earlier confrontations, this had mixed results and did not secure all the desired territory overnight. In 1891, the burghs of Hillhead and Maryhill had been amalgamated alongside the districts of Kelvinside, Ruchill, Possilpark, North Springburn, and various other lands on the north side of the river Clyde. The southside burghs of Crosshill, Pollokshields, Pollokshields

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<sup>18</sup> For a full discussion of the Kelvinside and Hillhead imbroglio, see Maver, *Municipal Administration*, pp. 159-177.

<sup>19</sup> Anderson, 'Extension', pp. 13-14.

<sup>20</sup> Maver, 'Glasgow's Civic Government', p. 467.

East and Govanhill alongside the neighbourhoods of Polmadie, Queen's Park, Langside, Shawlands and Crossmyloof were incorporated the same year.<sup>21</sup> While this added 5,760 acres to the city, the burghs of Partick, Govan and the latter's neighbouring burgh Kinning Park remained outside the enlarged boundaries. In 1896, the impression that Partick and Govan could not remain outside forever was foreshadowed both by the city's acquisitions of Govan's adjoining lands of Bellahouston Park, Craigton and of Craigton Cemetery. 1899 saw the annexation of a small area between the city boundaries and the burgh of Rutherglen, whose anomalous position in the county of Lanark meant that it had not been effectively policed, and became notorious as a 'gathering ground of roughs and hooligans'.<sup>22</sup> After annexation this became the significantly more salubrious Richmond Park, named after the city's Lord Provost David Richmond. The outlying districts of Riddrie, Blackhill and Provanmill were 'hoovered' up at the same time. These districts were later used for post second war housing schemes, and the latter two remain notorious for their high unemployment and multiple deprivation.<sup>23</sup>

A more substantial prize for the city came in the shape of the burgh of Kinning Park, which joined the city by negotiation in 1905 - much to the consternation of pro-independence councillors in Govan and Partick, who were facing increasingly intense internal and external pressure to justify their burghs' hold-out status. 1909 saw the city purchase lands extending from Bellahouston Park to the town of Paisley. The 1912 Glasgow Boundaries Act was passed against the official objections of two remaining large police burghs, although, as this discussion makes clear, the councils' stance did not reflect the wishes of most ratepayers. The 1912 Act also dealt with the smaller southern burgh of Pollokshaws in addition to the districts of Cathcart, Thornliebank, Tollcross and Shettleston among others, meaning that the city now covered an area of 20,027 acres.

The city had increased its geographical extent by one and half times its former size, even though the Royal Burgh of Rutherglen remained independent. By 1918, Glasgow covered over 19 thousand acres, had a population of over one million souls and an annual

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<sup>21</sup> Anderson, 'Extension', p. 14.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> North Glasgow Community Health and Care Partnership, *Development Plan 2007-2010*, <<http://library.nhsggc.org.uk/mediaAssets/CHP%20North%20Glasgow/Full%20Development%20Plan%202007%20Final.pdf>> accessed 17/8/2010.

rateable income of £7,307,672 10s 11d.<sup>24</sup> The discussion now turns to the case for and against the unification of Govan and Partick with Glasgow, placing particular emphasis on both communities' responses to the prospect of amalgamation from the 1880s until 1912.

### **Stretching local autonomy too far?**

In her pioneering 1904 study of *Local Government in Scotland*, Mabel Atkinson, political scientist and protégé of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, took a long, constructively critical view of Glasgow's relationship with its surrounding suburban police burghs. During what turned out to be Govan's and Partick's final decade of independence, and with particular reference to the position around Glasgow, she noted that the General Police Statutes had been:

[...] used for a purpose which [they were] never intended, by the suburbs of large towns. These, not really isolated communities at all, but dependent in every way upon the cities on whose fringes they sprang up, used the police burgh procedure in order to avoid the heavy rates which incorporation into the city boundaries would have entailed [...] And once constituted, a British local authority is not easily extinguished, although the circumstances which called it into existence may have absolutely changed. [...] The suburbs of Glasgow, instead of being included, as would properly have been the case, within the extended boundaries when from time to time the city passed its former limits, got themselves erected into police burghs, until Glasgow was almost surrounded by a ring of nine parasitic little authorities, each with its own apparatus of administration, its own council and chief magistrate, its own officials, its own buildings. There was a long fight over their absorption...<sup>25</sup>

Atkinson's analysis is interesting for a number of reasons. First, hers was a groundbreaking attempt at a systematic overview of the institutional structures of Scottish local government, aimed both at Scottish lay readers and future foreign students of comparative local government. She was particularly irked by 'English ignorance' of Scottish town hall affairs, and felt that the subject would be of interest to scholars worldwide.<sup>26</sup> Second, Atkinson was a pragmatic socialist and feminist whose work made a strong case for reform of local government's systems and structures to make a better

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<sup>24</sup> Anderson, 'Extension', p. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Atkinson, *Local Government in Scotland*, , p. 76.

<sup>26</sup> Atkinson, *Local Government*, p. 2. Atkinson was herself born in England – in rural Northumberland - on 22 May 1876. She died in 1958, in South Africa, where she had been a leading educator of non-Europeans. For more information, see Innes, S. 'Atkinson, Mabel (1876–1958).' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., edited by Lawrence Goldman. Oxford: OUP <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69907> (accessed 28/7/2010).

mechanism for ‘step to step’ reform of social conditions.<sup>27</sup> Atkinson was, and in many ways remains, precocious for the character and scope of the reforms she advocated, as her preoccupation with local government a few years before women were allowed to stand for municipal office - in 1907 - might suggest. For instance, she advocated that councils should be run by a ‘central committee or cabinet’ and considered the merits of a putative local income tax (which she dismissed, with caveats, as ‘unworkable’ in the Scottish context).<sup>28</sup> As a Fabian, her main preoccupation was the need to adapt local government to the ‘newer and more complex organisation of industry and society’.<sup>29</sup> Thus, ‘the work of our local bodies [grew] everyday more important’ because,

[w]ithout being adherents of socialistic doctrines in their extreme or utopian forms, thoughtful men are coming to see that co-operation and co-operative action are to be of far greater importance in the future than the immediate past. And this comes about, not from the spread of lofty ideals of the brotherhood of man, but simply as the result of economic changes. The evolution of industry from the domestic workshop to the factory system involves a similar change in education, in means of communication, in the provision of such necessities of life as water and gas.

As Atkinson’s research supervisor, Sidney Webb, who was around this time active on London County Council, made clear, local government had by the early 1900s become a key ideological battleground for Fabians who sought to appropriate the rhetoric of ‘National Efficiency’ from Liberals and Conservatives.<sup>30</sup> He averred:

The freedom that [the working elector] now wants is not individual but corporate freedom – freedom for his Trade Union to bargain collectively, freedom for his co-operative society to buy and sell and manufacture, freedom for his municipality to supply all the common needs of the town, freedom, above all, from the narrow insularity which keeps his nation backing, “on principle,” out of its proper place in the comity of the world. In short, the opening of the twentieth-century finds us all, to the dismay of the old-fashioned Individualist, “thinking in communities.”<sup>31</sup>

Webb’s student Atkinson had devoted a great deal of thought to Scotland’s police burgh communities. While she was sanguine – ‘we can say that there is a system [of local

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<sup>27</sup> Atkinson, *Local Government*, p. 400.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, pp. 396 and 320.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 400

<sup>30</sup> S. Webb, ‘Twentieth Century Politics: A Policy of National Efficiency’, Fabian Society tract No. 108., 1901. Obtained from the LSE Library, *Fabian Tracts*, 1884-1901, [http://www2.lse.ac.uk/library/archive/online\\_resources/fabianarchive/victorian.aspx](http://www2.lse.ac.uk/library/archive/online_resources/fabianarchive/victorian.aspx) accessed 18/8/2010.

<sup>31</sup> Webb, ‘Twentieth Century Politics’, pp. 3-4.

government] and not chaos’ – about the original intentions of the General Police Acts, she worried about the patchwork and uneven outcome of their adoption by communities of varying shapes, sizes and populations, in addition to their tendency to cling to independence when their unification to a larger conurbation made more sense.<sup>32</sup> ‘Gaps, anomalies and redundancies’ remained to be addressed, and some, particularly smaller burghs in the vicinity of larger towns and cities were characterised by her as a ‘blot on the general character of Scottish administration’.<sup>33</sup> Govan and Partick merited (if that is the appropriate term) several mentions in the 1904 volume – rarely in a positive light. Atkinson’s readers were left in little doubt that for practical purposes, Govan, Partick and their soon-to-merge compatriot Kinning Park were ‘indistinguishable by the ordinary man from the rest of the city’.<sup>34</sup> In that context, she reflected on the 1902 Ibrox football disaster, where around 550 spectators were injured and 28 killed when a stand collapsed during a Scotland vs. England international tie.<sup>35</sup> Atkinson noted that Glasgow Town Council was widely blamed for failing to inspect the stadium, despite its having ‘no jurisdiction at all in the matter’, since the stadium was in Govan.<sup>36</sup>

On the broader question of the ideal balance between local autonomy, effective administration and accountability to citizens, Atkinson, who favoured quasi-federalism in local government, was characteristically insightful:

In both directions the police burgh procedure seems to stretch local autonomy too far. The inhabitants of a locality have not the sole right to govern it as they please; we ought not to permit either a crowded area to refuse to have the town government suited to its circumstances because it dislikes the expense, nor ought we to allow a small area to set up a special body for its own administration because it desires the honour of being a burgh. Doubtless the wishes of the inhabitants ought to be most seriously considered in any question of this kind, but they are not the sole determining factor.<sup>37</sup>

The issue of just how far local autonomy could go had been at the heart of the annexation debates since at least late 1869, when then Govan Provost Thomas Reid mischievously

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<sup>32</sup> Atkinson, *Local Government*, p. 395.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 395-6.

<sup>34</sup> Atkinson, *Local Government*, p. 77.

<sup>35</sup> *GH*, 7 April 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Atkinson, *Local Government*, p. 77.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 75-6.

quoted Glasgow Councillor William Collins, a Liberal and future Lord Provost, during a meeting with Glasgow's Lord Provost James Lumsden, junior. Rebuffing the city's overtures to Govan and the other confederated police burghs, Reid appeared to believe Collins' words represented something of a rhetorical silver bullet to the case for annexation. The quotation was as follows:

Centralisation has its draw backs as well as its advantages. And one of the draw backs is the difficulty of maintaining over too widely an extended area that thorough supervision which is so necessary to secure economical management.<sup>38</sup>

Collins' remarks were hardly as unequivocal as Reid appeared to think. Nor did they represent a ringing endorsement of the suburban burghs' continued autonomy. Rather, they were a reflection on the difficulty of balancing local feeling with effective administration and local democracy throughout a large urban area. These were not new questions in the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; indeed they troubled the ancient Greeks, and remained hardy perennials of local government theory and practice even as this thesis was being researched.<sup>39</sup> For instance, a 2007 report on local government reform commissioned by the David Hume Institute advised that any structural changes needed to identify a balance of central and local power somewhere between the extremes of 'maximally centrist' and 'maximally localist' approaches.<sup>40</sup>

On the international stage, the European Union's founding principle of subsidiarity – that decisions should be taken at the most local level consistent with effective administration – was re-affirmed in the 2008 Lisbon Treaty; also, in 1985 the Council of

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<sup>38</sup> Quoted in GMB, 19 October 1869.

<sup>39</sup> Of course, there remain serious difficulties inherent in comparing the modern nation-state with the classical world. For a discussion of these, see for instance M. Hansen, 'Was the *Polis* a state or a stateless society?'; T.H. Nielsen (ed.), *Even More Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis*, Papers from the Copenhagen *Polis* Centre, No. 6, (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002) pp.17-49.

<sup>40</sup> J. Gallacher, K. Gibb and C. Mills, 'Re-thinking Central-Local Government Relations in Scotland: Back to the Future?', David Hume Institute (Edinburgh) Occasional Paper 70, January 2007, pp. 49-54. An earlier reflection on this dilemma is K. Newton, 'Is small really so beautiful? Is big really so ugly? Size, effectiveness and democracy in local government'; *Political Studies*, 30:2 (1982), pp. 190-206. See also S. Goss, *Making Local Government Work: Networks, Relationships and the Management of Change*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 31-3; A. Cochrane, *Whatever Happened to Local Government?* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), pp. 29-36; A. Midwinter, *Local Government in Scotland: Reform or Decline?*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 136-141.

Europe issued a Charter of Local Self-Government.<sup>41</sup> When Govan's former Provost George Ferguson stood for Parliament in the Liberal Unionist interest in 1895, he warned against what he saw as the danger of Home Rule leading to over-centralisation at the expense of local government, thereby presaging post-1999 discussions about 'double-devolution' in the Scottish context. Indeed, by 2010 leading figures in the Conservative-Liberal UK coalition government, as well as those from its Labour predecessor, were using the language of 'double devolution'. This referred to central government granting greater discretion to local authorities, but further envisaged local authorities withdrawing from the provision of local services, whether through 'contracting-out' to private enterprise or by passing responsibilities to the voluntary sector.<sup>42</sup> Had they been able to time-travel, many Govan and Partick commissioners would likely have approved of such developments, although a full normative discussion of the supposed merits of returning to Victorian practices lies outside the scope of this thesis. Between 1870 and 1912, the city and the burghs, to varying degrees and at different junctures, demonstrated an awareness of the need to situate their cases for and against annexation, or indeed for quasi-federal compromise positions, in this sort of theoretical and rhetorical context.

In other words, when invective was removed, these concerns marked the discursive parameters of the annexation debates, or the wider ideological canvass on which the rival visions of local government were painted. Certainly, Lord Provost Lumsden showed an early awareness of this in his remarks to his Govan counterpart in 1869. Here, he painted a picture of Govan's relationship with Glasgow combining hard economic and historical realities with an altogether softer idealism:

Govan was to all intents and purposes an integral part of Glasgow. Its inhabitants were Glasgow Citizens. It owed its prosperity to its proximity to the City and to the improvement of the Harbour of Glasgow and the Clyde without which the Public Works of Govan – Shipbuilding yards and others would not have been possible. By Municipal extension it was proposed that those who shared common benefits should

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<sup>41</sup> A useful discussion of subsidiarity in terms of the Lisbon Treaty can be found in I. MacIver, 'The Subsidiarity Protocol in the Treaty of Lisbon'; Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing [08/21] (24 April 2008), <<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/briefings-08/SB08-21.pdf>> accessed 18/8/10. See also The European Charter of Local Self-Government, CETS No. 122 (Strasbourg), 15 October 1985. <<http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/122.htm>> accessed 18/8/10.

<sup>42</sup> *First Online*, 'Tory Call for Double Devolution', 11/7/2008 <http://www.lga.gov.uk> (accessed 2/7/10); 'More Power to the People, urges (David) Miliband', <[www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk)>, 21/2/2006 [accessed 2/7/10].

bear the burden of supporting them. The interests of Govan would be represented in the Common Council of the extended City and the Union would be mutually advantageous to the Suburban Burghs and the City.<sup>43</sup>

In 1876, as discussed in chapter three of this thesis, Govan's Parliamentary Bills Committee began to articulate an alternative conception of local government on the outskirts of Glasgow, rather than simply contesting the city's claims to offer more effective and efficient administration on a point by point basis. Govan's 1876 memorandum ended by quoting an unnamed authority on the merits of peculiarly local forms of self-government: 'the idea of a perfect government could be reduced to very simple terms, and that the institutions of the country should strictly correspond with its local divisions, those divisions being made on the principle of *convenient adaptation to the local circumstances of the population*.'<sup>44</sup> This mysterious commentator was almost certainly influenced by the sentiments later articulated in Liberal Unionist MP and former mayor of Birmingham Joseph Chamberlain's 1885 'Radical Glasgow' speech, in which he declared:

I would like to see no parish, no village without some kind of local authority. I do not want to crush out the germs of local life, however small and insignificant they may appear to be. I want to foster them and to promote the political education of the people. Then I want to see local authorities with wider areas and larger functions to deal with local matters in districts and in counties, and in this way I should expect to find the whole country covered with a network of popular representative bodies able to protect the rights of the people and to care for their most intimate interests.<sup>45</sup>

Earlier in their 1876 report, the Govan commissioners had expressed concern that if the city's expansionist goals were achieved, this would constitute an 'unconstitutional policy of colossal amalgamation and centralisation, in room of distributed and localised municipal government', resulting in an increase of territory and population 'so gigantic... as to appear like an accession of territory by a powerful state' than a 'mere alteration of boundary by an aggressive burgh'.<sup>46</sup> Again quoting their enigmatic constitutional

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<sup>43</sup> GMB, 19 October 1869.

<sup>44</sup> Report of Govan Parliamentary Committee [Responding to Recent Glasgow Annexation Proposals], from GMB 10 March 1876, pp. 409-427.at p. 427. The authority quoted could well have been Joseph Chamberlain, who was mayor of Birmingham from 1873 until his election as one of that city's MPs in 1876.

<sup>45</sup> *GH*, 16 September 1885. For a full discussion of the context of this speech and the wider implications of such federal schemes, see also Maver, *Municipal Administration*, pp. 179-182.

<sup>46</sup> Govan Parliamentary Committee, GMB, p. 426.

authority, Govan's independence was, without apparent irony, characterised as nothing less than an essential building block of British constitutional freedom:

Municipal government is, in fact, the real basis of popular liberty; and no circumstance is so calculated to maintain the self-governing spirit of a people as the constant and habitual practice of managing their own local affairs through persons of their own selection. The process may be troublesome, and perhaps even cumbrous, but it keeps alive a vigorous and wholesome spirit of social independence that makes a manly nation which cannot be oppressed.<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, there was a sense in which Govan and Partick now increasingly had to defend their autonomy on a rhetorical battleground chosen by their opponents, notwithstanding the flair with which they were able to do so. When the Glasgow boundaries again became a live issue in the late 1880s and into the 1890s, the two 'sibling' burghs began to diverge in terms of the jealousy with which each regarded its independence. Whilst Govan remained obdurate in its refusal to countenance any form of absorption into the city, Partick showed itself more willing to discuss terms, albeit in a heel-dragging, awkward manner. Govan demanded absolute autonomy whereas Partick wanted to retain a measure of independence within an enlarged metropolitan municipality run on federal lines. How did both burghs tackle the challenge posed by the 1888 Boundary Commission and its aftermath?

### **'Community of interest'?**

In 1887, Glasgow Town Council denied the burghs' imputations of aggression and imperialism in its attempts at boundary expansion as follows.

The opponents of the inclusion within the city of the whole of its suburbs represent the action taken by the Magistrates and Council as aggression upon neighbouring towns. A glance at the map, and still more an inspection of the suburbs, is sufficient to show that this is not the case, and that all that is involved in the extension of the boundaries of the city is the equalisation of privileges and obligations, and the establishment of community of interest and feeling among all the inhabitants.<sup>48</sup>

The 1884 Burgh Police (Scotland) Bill would, had it become law in its original formulation, allowed for the union of the governing bodies of contiguous burghs by mutual

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov-35-12-1/Case for the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Town Council of The City and Royal Burgh of Glasgow, [hereafter Case for Glasgow], (Edinburgh, Neill and Company), 1887, p. 50.

consent.<sup>49</sup> By 1891, the Govan commissioners made much of the principle of mutual consent, which, they argued, several representations made by Glasgow had failed to dislodge from successive drafts of the Bill, which never reached the statute book. Since the late-1860s, Govan's and Partick's municipal leaders had strenuously denied the city fathers' assertions that the two burghs were essentially mushroom outgrowths of Glasgow. This idea was perfectly encapsulated in the long subtitle to Glasgow's 1887 submission to the Boundary Commissioners: 'setting forth the grounds on which they urge that the boundaries of the city should be extended so as to include the whole urban population of Glasgow and its suburbs, for all purposes of municipal, police and sanitary administration'.<sup>50</sup> The seemingly innocuous phrase 'community of interest' was understood by Govan and Partick as twin rhetorical daggers pointed at the heart of their administrative autonomy. There was much meaning wrapped up in those three words, 'community' implying that Govan's and Partick's separation from the city was an artificial one, and 'interest' suggesting that they could not escape interdependence with their larger neighbour. Both burghs' testimony to the boundary commission, in line with their earlier representations against annexation, sought therefore to construct rhetorical shields to withstand the killer phrase. In other words, they felt the need to justify both their ancient provenance as communities separate from the city, in addition to presenting themselves as viable municipalities able to survive, if not thrive, without relying on the city's utilities. It is useful to elaborate the main arguments encapsulated in the compound notion of 'community of interest' here.

Taking first the 'community' aspect of the *portmanteau* phrase, Govan and Partick, distinctively among the suburban burghs, were able to boast that they were 'not the mere suburban overflow of Glasgow'.<sup>51</sup> In 1876, the Govan Parliamentary Committee, recently formed to guard against annexation attempts, began to perceive an attack on the city's ancient origins as an excellent form of pre-emptive self-defence. Thus, it averred that Govan 'appeared in history at a time when Glasgow, now so inflated with imperial pretension, was a mere episcopal town or village of comparative insignificance,

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<sup>49</sup> Petition of Govan Magistrates and Commissioners to the House of Lords against the Glasgow Boundaries Bill (1891), ML/GCA/AB1/143, p. 313.

<sup>50</sup> Case for Glasgow, 1887, *frontispiece*.

<sup>51</sup> Govan Parliamentary Committee, 1876, p. 421.

comprehended within the district of the Royal Burgh of Rutherglen'.<sup>52</sup> The report elaborated that,

The village of Govan, or Meikle [big] Govan, as it was emphatically designated – was classed among the largest in the kingdom in the sixteenth century; and it has since increased contemporaneously with Glasgow, and from the same causes. Whatever may be predicable of other Burghs or Districts, as to their purely “suburban” and “residential” character, is distinctly inapplicable to Govan, which has always had, and now peculiarly possesses, centres of manufacturing industry not dependent on Glasgow, but upon Lanarkshire and the Clyde, and on local resources, energy, capital, and enterprise.<sup>53</sup>

From the time of this report onwards, the proclamation of Govan’s genuinely ancient provenance, and arguably legitimate claims to rival the city’s claims to episcopal and royal favour, became a commonplace of the burgh’s case in every subsequent annexation fight. The attempt to identify the police burgh created in 1864 with the settlement founded during the Viking age was an undeniably political project, designed to imbue the burgh with a sense of historic continuity and destiny. Nevertheless, more dispassionate observers have acknowledged an uncanny connection between the original community and its later industrial incarnation. As Dalglish and Driscoll *et al* explained in 2009:

Govan is a remarkable place. Over the centuries it has enjoyed two periods of great importance. The recent era of significance, when the name Govan was synonymous with Clyde-built ships, is the most familiar. But a millennium earlier, Govan forged a reputation from different raw materials: royal power and religious belief. During and after the Viking Age, Govan developed into a centre of political authority, utilising the ancient religious foundation as a platform for a revitalised British kingdom. Superficially, it may seem that few connections exist between medieval and industrial Govan, but upon closer analysis it can be seen how the ancient organisation of the settlement influenced its subsequent development. [...] Modern Govan’s strong community identity may owe something to this deeply grounded sense of place.<sup>54</sup>

As far as can be ascertained, the *Govan Press* and its writers were sincere in their espousal of a similar sense of what might be termed Govanite destiny. For instance, in May 1895 the paper reported that a recently elected councillor had not had much time to make his mark upon the ‘ancient and famous Burgh of Govan’.<sup>55</sup> That this was in all

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Dalglish and Driscoll *et al*, *Historic Govan*, p. xv.

<sup>55</sup> *GP*, 25 May 1895.

probability a throwaway phrase seems to indicate that the conflation of ancient, industrial and police burgh Govan was unquestioned by the reporter and, by implication, his readers. Brotchie and the local paper's other cartoonists frequently juxtaposed mediaeval and industrial imagery to reinforce the continuity between ancient and modern Govan, and the personification of Govan workers by 'Baron de Govan' the 'noble Knight of Labour' was a sophisticated way of encouraging Govan's workers to invest in this shared mythology.<sup>56</sup>

In terms of mythology, Benedict Anderson has written about the power of 'simultaneity' in binding communities together over and above more mundane considerations of legal and administrative jurisdiction.<sup>57</sup> This is a useful concept in seeking to understand the connections made by Govan's 'establishment' between their burgh and its ancient antecedents in the context of the annexation battles. Specifically, Anderson emphasises the emotional and sentimental links often made by members of a community between events, persons or organisations that those outside the collective would not regard as causally or logically connected.<sup>58</sup> Although an intellectual near-neighbour of Eric Hobsbawm's arguments about the 'invention of tradition', which were certainly useful for making sense of the importance attached by both burghs to parades and symbolism, simultaneity emphasises the more emotional side of the symbolic construction of community, rather than the deliberate manipulation of ritualistic imagery.<sup>59</sup> To be sure, the civic leaders of both communities seldom shied away from this more calculated approach either, but this has been discussed earlier in the thesis, where it has greater salience. There was something rather unselfconscious – despite the obvious affectation – in William Greenhorne, Partick's antiquarian historian's later assertion that 'the dreadful

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<sup>56</sup> See appendix 2 for examples.

<sup>57</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 24-7.

<sup>58</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 24-7. This concept is also, briefly, applied to Partick in M.G. Pugh, *Liberal Decline: The Case of Partick*, (M.Phil. thesis, Glasgow University, 2004), pp. 12-14.

<sup>59</sup> See Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', pp. 1-14. See also A.P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, (London: Routledge, 1998 edition), pp. 98-104.

fate [of annexation] has overtaken the Balmoral [i.e. Partick] of the Kings of Strathclyde', which also seems to bear out the notion of simultaneity.<sup>60</sup>

Like their neighbours in Govan, the guardians of Partick's municipal independence from the 1880s until annexation also enjoyed giving history lessons to the city and any influential figures willing to listen. This was typified in its insistence in 1887 that,

The village of Partick is believed to have had an existence so far back as about the second century, and it is certain that it was known as a village several hundred years ago. Originally, the name applied to the large tract of land extending from Yoker on the west, to Gilmorehill or the river Kelvin on the east. Upwards of a century ago it was possessed of several public works and a number of famed mills, affording employment to the people resident in the village, which was distant about two miles from Glasgow. It was thus a separate and distinct community from Glasgow, and in no sense owed its origin to proximity to that city.<sup>61</sup>

The Partick commissioners appeared no less sincere in making such arguments than their Govanite counterparts. The implication was that no matter how geographically close the burgh was to the city, it was and always had been a separate community from Glasgow, and should, in the commissioners' view at least, be respected as such. This argument was made emphatically in the case Partick made with the suburban burghs except Govan in 1887: 'In the case of all these burghs, the growth in building and population started from a separate nucleus, and their boundaries were not laid down in an arbitrary way, but represent in most cases the natural divisions between essentially separate communities'.<sup>62</sup> Yet 'community of interest' was a case for annexation which could not be dismissed simply because a burgh had shown itself simply to be a separate *community*.

The 'interest' dimension to the 'community of interest' amalgam neatly embodied the powerful points made by the city that its surrounding districts shared a collective 'interest' in vital assets and utilities like water, gas, roads, tramways and its City Improvement Scheme, among various other trusts, their costs should be borne equally by

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<sup>60</sup> Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 155. This volume's full title, '*History of Partick, 550-1912*' somewhat self-defeatingly implies that Partick's centuries of history as a community ended with the annexation of a burgh that lasted a mere 60 years.

<sup>61</sup> Case for the Magistrates and Commissioners of the Burgh of Partick In Regard to the Proposal to Extend the Municipal Boundaries of Glasgow, (Glasgow: K. & R. Davidson, 1887), p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov-35-12-1/General Case for the Magistrates and Commissioners of Police of the Burghs of Partick, Maryhill, Hillhead, Crosshill, Kinning Park, Govanhill and Pollokshields [hereafter Case for the Burghs, 1887] in opposition to the proposal to extend the municipal boundaries of Glasgow, (Glasgow: Aird and Coghill, 1887), p. 3.

all who benefited by them.<sup>63</sup> As the city's 1887 submission to the Boundary Commission put it: 'a large proportion of the wealthier citizens reside in the suburbs, and enjoy the advantages of connection with the city, while they are free from its taxation.'<sup>64</sup> Moreover, after municipal extension, these bodies would become more democratically accountable to a larger group of ratepayers. Clearly, taxation was inextricably linked to this debate, but leaving these considerations briefly aside, it is remarkable how audaciously the Govan and Partick representatives sought to turn the shared interest argument on its head, making a virtue both of their own earlier contention that smaller-scale local government was preferable, and insinuating that Glasgow was unable to cope with its immense municipal responsibilities.

For the purposes of efficient Municipal Government Glasgow is already too large, and greatly exceeds the limits of economical management. The transference of the Police and Sanitary regulation of the Police Burghs and Districts proposed to be annexed to the Town Council and Board of Police of Glasgow, which is already overburdened with duties, would, as shown by previous extensions, not only lead to these matters being less efficiently attended to, but would greatly increase the cost thereof. In addition to the usual duties connected to the Government of its great population, the town council have numerous other duties of a most onerous description. They have the management and control of the works by which the City is supplied with Water and Gas, and a City Improvement [slum clearance and re-building] Scheme, involving the expenditure of almost two millions sterling, besides various other trusts embracing large and important interests, and requiring much time for efficient administration which has not yet in public opinion been attained.<sup>65</sup>

The dismissal of slum-clearance as an irrelevance by the Partick commissioners in the above extract was a reflection of their more limited vision of what constituted 'efficient' local government compared to the city, and ought not to be taken as an indication that Partick lacked slums dwellings. Indeed, even in 1912, the *Partick and Maryhill Press* acknowledged that the soon-to-be-defunct burgh brought its own slums into the city's embrace.<sup>66</sup> It was further asserted that the real aims of the city in seeking expansion were to 'secure a larger taxable area' and 'the sentimental feeling that Glasgow should be the second City of the Empire' than from 'any real inconvenience or injustice arising from the

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<sup>63</sup> Case for Glasgow, 1887, pp. 46-51 and *passim*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Govan against Boundaries Bill in House of Lords, 1891, p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> See 'Sins and Slums', *PMP*, 8 November 1912.

independent administration' of the burghs and districts concerned.<sup>67</sup> As has been discussed elsewhere in this thesis, this was a familiar argument from the police burghs since the 1860s.<sup>68</sup> This was certainly not the Glaswegian understanding of the position, with the city's municipal representatives arguing that they had, at vast expense, 'provided for the city and its suburbs an abundant supply of water and gas, public parks, museums and galleries of art, and every police and sanitary appliance'.<sup>69</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the Govan and Partick commissioners were seldom keen to acknowledge their reliance on Glasgow's amenities. In their response to the 1887 Glasgow case, Partick's commissioners, in conjunction with their counterparts in Maryhill, Hillhead, Crosshill, Kinning Park, Govanhill and Pollokshields, offered an alternative perspective. (Govan preferred to respond on its own, since, as is discussed later in this chapter, it differed from Partick *et al* on the question of 'divisional management' or municipal federalism.) On the question of water supply, these suburban burghs provided detailed evidence of their contribution to the city's water costs, noting that their ratepayers paid more *per capita* than their Glasgow counterparts without the benefit of representation on the Corporation Water Board.<sup>70</sup> Whilst this argument was clearly something of a double-edged sword, given the obvious solution to such disenfranchisement, the suburbs were on marginally firmer, if undeniably petulant, ground when they declared that,

The Corporation of Glasgow takes all the credit to itself of the Loch Katrine supply, when as a matter of fact that supply is largely supported, and is only rendered possible, by the taxation of inhabitants of the Burghs and other districts outside the City.<sup>71</sup>

In its own, separate, submission to the same boundary enquiry, Govan also accused the Corporation of dealing unfairly with consumers outside the city's municipal boundaries, but further alleged that since the city took over the former Gorbals Gravitation Water Company in 1855, it had broken statutory agreements to offer equitable rates to all

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<sup>67</sup> Govan against Boundaries Bill in House of Lords, 1891, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> See pp. 123-4.

<sup>69</sup> Case for Glasgow, 1887, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 14-5.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

customers on the south side of the river Clyde.<sup>72</sup> Partick, Maryhill and Hillhead were at pains to point out that they had been so disgruntled by the municipalisation by Glasgow of two former private gas companies, establishing a monopoly of supply and instituting higher prices for customers beyond the city boundaries, that they had in 1871 set up their own Partick, Maryhill and Hillhead Gas Company.<sup>73</sup> This was soon to be taken over by the Corporation Gas Trust under the Glasgow Corporation Gas Act (1891), reflecting the annexation of Maryhill and Hillhead, resuming the city's monopoly of supply and, above all, adding to the air of inevitability pervading the prospect of Partick's annexation to the city.<sup>74</sup>

In terms of tramways, the burghs argued they had no relevance to the annexation question, since all relevant by-laws in Glasgow and the burghs did not 'materially differ', and had to be approved by the sheriff of the relevant county: 'no practical inconvenience' arose from the tramways issue that could be solved by annexation.<sup>75</sup> Yet, in Govan, Labour and radical candidates frequently expressed their unhappiness with the local arrangement whereby the burgh had purchased the Vale of Clyde Tramway Company by means of a 'sinking fund' which would result in the burgh owning the firm outright in 1913.<sup>76</sup> Meantime, the firm was leased to the Glasgow Tramway Company. It was frequently asked why the Burgh had not simply purchased the company outright.<sup>77</sup> Somewhat ironically in that context, the suburbs also poured scorn on the city's habit of deficit-financing its improvement and sanitation schemes whilst proclaiming their own ostensibly more efficient and cost-effective approach to such problems. This was reminiscent of the fictitious Jeems Kaye's response to a boundary commissioner when

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<sup>72</sup> ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov-35-12-1/Statement of the Provost, Magistrates and Commissioners of Police of the Burgh of Govan [to the 1887 Boundary Commissioners], (Govan: John Cossar, 1887), pp. 22-3.

<sup>73</sup> Case for the Burghs, 1887, p. 16.

<sup>74</sup> A. Aird, *Glimpses of Old Glasgow*, (Glasgow: Aird and Coghill, 1894), p. 134.

<sup>75</sup> Case for the Burghs, 1887, p. 16.

<sup>76</sup> *GP*, 22 October 1910.

<sup>77</sup> The Town Council took the decision in principle to municipalise and electrify its own tramways in 1891, in the wake of concerns that allowing private enterprises to generate electricity could result in competition with the municipal gas supply. Further, the electric tram cars became a tangible symbol of 'municipal socialism'. For more information, see Fraser and Maver, 'Tackling the Problems', pp. 428-30.

asked if his beloved Strathbungo bore any public debt: “Nane. We pay for everything as we go along.”<sup>78</sup> The suburban burghs’ collective attitude to slum clearance in Glasgow and the activities of the City Improvement Trust were, in essence, that this was not their problem.<sup>79</sup>

The Magistrates and Commissioners of the Burghs have, as well as Glasgow, expended considerable sums in the improvement of their respective Burghs, but, as a rule, they have met the cost of these as they arose, instead of leaving the burden of them to be met at an indefinite future time. They have, as has already been stated, fully met all sanitary necessities in the erection of hospitals and the adoption of other sanitary measures.<sup>80</sup>

Thus the burghs made a virtue of their piecemeal, patchwork approach to improving infrastructure and amenities within their own boundaries. In its own 1887 case which, like the burghs’, would remain substantively unchanged until 1912, the city sought to place the burghs’ claims about high and ever-escalating Glasgow rates in a wider perspective.<sup>81</sup>

Experience has shown that as the suburban police burghs become established, and provide themselves with what is needed even for their own police and sanitary administration, the taxation for these purposes necessarily grows; and there is good reason to believe that ere long it will in every one of those burghs become equal to, if it does not even exceed, that in the city. In some burghs it is believed that the taxation even exceeds that in the city. In so far as it ever is less in any of these burghs the difference is more than accounted for by the fact that the burgh has not provided, or has only partially provided, such police and sanitary appliances as every part of a town population should possess, and that it enjoys privileges while it escapes obligations which should be common to the entire community.

In other words, the burghs’ much-vaunted lower rates were at best a false economy or at worst an expression of reckless disregard for public health and good government. Even as late as 1911 the burghs’ dependence on city infrastructure was as undeniable as their claims to sanitary efficiency were dubious. Thomas Stothers was a *Govan Press* reporter who had moved to Hamilton and established his own printing company. Its *Glasgow, Renfrewshire and Lanarkshire Xmas and New Year Annual* noted that ‘Partick is supplied by Glasgow with gas and water and shares also in the city’s drainage scheme, but

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<sup>78</sup> Macmillan, *Jeems Kaye*, pp. 255-7.

<sup>79</sup> Case for the Burghs, 1887, p. 16.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Case for Glasgow, 1887, p. 50.

it provides its own electricity.’<sup>82</sup> The same volume noted that while Govan was a ‘well-equipped burgh, being possessed of all that is now considered to form part of the equipment of a modern community’, it was ‘party to [Glasgow’s] great scheme for the purification of the Clyde’.<sup>83</sup> As has been seen, the costs of municipal administration within the city boundaries compared to the burghs, and their implications for local taxation, were rarely far from the surface of the annexation debates. It is important at this point to reflect on the key arguments between Glasgow and the suburban burghs over these issues, before exploring in more depth Partick’s and Govan’s claims to be viable, naturally-occurring communities.

In February 1911, former Glasgow Town Councillor John Dallas addressed the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow regarding the latest proposed extension of the city boundaries.<sup>84</sup> Dallas’s political sympathies were firmly with the Unionist camp, and he was associated with the Ratepayers’ Federation Ltd., a forum for business interests critical of municipal extension.<sup>85</sup> His main theme was the economic impact of the proposed extension, and he argued that the logical consequence of wealthier ratepayers escaping the city to avoid its taxation was that they did not deserve to benefit from the city’s considerable assets; at least not without providing some form of ‘*quid pro quo*’.<sup>86</sup> Further, he argued that the onus was on the city fathers to demonstrate to its existing ratepayers that they would get a better deal from the extension than those about to be annexed: ‘the [existing Glasgow] ratepayers are already heavily burdened, and have a right to demand that their needs should be considered before any scheme of outside annexation.’<sup>87</sup> Dallas presented a detailed economic analysis of the 1891 extension scheme, after which he concluded that the cost of the city’s municipal administration increased greatly after expansion. The cause of this was, he declared, ‘in the main, the demands of the annexed

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<sup>82</sup> ‘Partick: Present and Past’; *Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire Xmas and New Year Annual [hereafter Stothers’ Annual]*, (Hamilton: Thomas Stothers, 1911), p. 162.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Govan’s State and Equipment’; *Stothers’ Annual*, pp. 250-2.

<sup>84</sup> J. Dallas, ‘Extension of City Boundaries’ [lecture originally given 8 February 1911]; *Proceedings of the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow*, 17, 1910-11, pp. 34-54.

<sup>85</sup> Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 881 [biographical appendix].

<sup>86</sup> Dallas, ‘Extension’, pp. 36-7.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, p. 54.

territory'.<sup>88</sup> He did not think the proposed annexation of Govan, Partick, Pollokshaws and Rutherglen would provide the Glasgow ratepayers with a better deal, as he vividly, if lengthily, elaborated:

The assessable valuation of Glasgow is about six millions as against an assessable valuation of a million in the area proposed to be annexed [...] and hence it follows that the ratepayers of the parent city, in their provision of communal necessities, will be forced to pay six-sevenths of the sinking funds, not only on new capital expenditure but on old capital expenditure, whether in the old or new area. Glasgow will have to pay six-sevenths of the sinking funds [accounts to pay off accumulated corporate debts] on existing Capital Debt in Partick, Pollokshaws, etc., and also on new capital expenditure within that area, while continuing to pay six-sevenths of the sinking funds and interest charges [on existing City debts]. In this way, the ratepayers of Glasgow have not only to bear their own burdens but have to meet the expenditure incurred in all the outside areas at a ratio of six to one. Surely this is not an equitable or commercial arrangement! To better illustrate this point, let us consider for a moment that Partick wants a hall at a cost of £7,000. The contribution of Glasgow would amount to £6,000. The cost of outside areas other than Partick would probably amount to £650, and Partick's contribution to their own hall would amount to £350. But if Glasgow, for the benefit of its own citizens, desires to have a public wash-house at a cost of £7,000, there Partick's contribution comes out at the same figure, namely, £350 against Glasgow's £6,000. Are the people of Glasgow prepared to provide communal necessities on such a basis?<sup>89</sup>

Dallas claimed that while the city's rates for householders above £10 rental had risen by 42%, and householders below £10 rental by 31.83%, the average increase for all Govan ratepayers in the same period (1891-1911) was 40% and 30% for Partick.<sup>90</sup> Dallas's analysis can be read as unwitting testimony of the likely benefits to outlying districts deriving from annexation, at least as far as pooled resources and municipal economies of scale were concerned. Yet the city did not let its former councillor's assumptions go unchallenged before Parliament. Glasgow's own submission of briefs and proofs, to facilitate the traffic of the 1912 Glasgow Boundaries Bill through the House of Commons, strongly suggested that Dallas' claims about the causes of increased rates in Glasgow since 1912 were somewhat skewed, particularly by his failure to note that rates in the burghs had increased by a comparable proportion to the increase within the city.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, pp. 48-9.

<sup>90</sup> Glasgow Brief and Proofs, 1912, p. 125.

<sup>91</sup> House of Commons, 1912: Glasgow Boundaries Bill: Brief for Counsel for the Promoters (the Corporation of the City of Glasgow); GCA/A3/1/255 – Glasgow Boundaries Bill, 1912, Brief and Proofs, House of Commons, Vol. II, (pp. 1-171), p. 125.

Furthermore, the city fathers directly challenged the basis of Dallas's calculations, which threatened to sway the House of Lords against annexation. The council noted that,<sup>92</sup>

- 1) Dallas' apportionments of administrative costs between the city and areas proposed to be annexed were arbitrary (indeed, he had himself conceded that separate accounts were not kept for the city and the burghs and neighbourhoods annexed in 1891),
- 2) that he had not accounted for two decades of wage inflation,
- 3) that he failed to acknowledge the city's increased effectiveness in terms of watching, cleansing and lighting among other services throughout its entire territory, and
- 4) that his estimate of a notional 'normal' increase in rates in a counterfactual position where annexation had not occurred in 1891 was unreasonably low, whereas he had used 1908-9 – the peak year for the city's rates – to provide an exaggerated and misleading comparison.

A much less abstract advantage of annexation for less wealthy Govanites and Partickonians was the fact that the city operated a system of differential rating, making a marked contrast with the sibling burghs' practice, unchanged since their foundation, of charging the same rates regardless of ability to pay. In that context, it was significant that the figures reported for Glasgow showed that wealthier ratepayers carried a heavier share of the burden than those paying less than £10 in rent. In fairness, Govan and Partick did provide for limited rate relief on the by-no-means-automatic ruling of a dedicated appeals court, but this was exactly the sort of paternalistic, practice that many local citizens wanted to escape through annexation. The humiliation of seeking rating relief was compounded by the applicant's disenfranchisement from municipal elections for the year concerned, begging the question just how many Govan and Partick inhabitants were thus needlessly denied a voice in the running of their communities.<sup>93</sup> The unrealised impact of their municipal votes on the fortunes of Labour, not to mention the timing of annexation itself, remains a tantalising counterfactual. It is difficult to avoid interpreting the effective loss of local citizenship entailed in accepting rating relief as a form of social control and, by implication, self-perpetuation, by the burgh elites. Given that in 1912, 8,600 dwellings in the burgh were valued below £10, a substantial proportion of Govan ratepayers were paying over the odds compared to their city counterparts.<sup>94</sup> The 1905 decision by a

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<sup>92</sup> This is paraphrased from a letter on behalf of the City of Glasgow, responding to John Dallas, 4 April 1912, Proofs, Statements, Agreements &c. [relating to Glasgow Boundaries Bill], House of Lords, Volume VIII, GCA/A3/1/260, pp. 1615-1627.

<sup>93</sup> Glasgow Boundaries Bill: Minutes of Evidence, H-Gov-35-37, p. 649.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p. 653.

majority of Kinning Park ratepayers to support amalgamation, reflected the same sense of inequity, and, with hindsight, this was a straw in the wind for developments in Partick and Govan seven years later.<sup>95</sup>

Socialist and radical candidates tended to be more constructive in their approach to these problems, rather than dwelling on past grievances. For instance, Govan Town Councillor John Sharp Taylor, elected in 1911 on an ILP and annexationist platform, had been invited to testify during the House of Lords' committee on the boundaries question. Taylor who died aged thirty-one in July 1916, was one of Scottish Labour's lost leaders, who, had he lived would almost certainly entered Parliament in 1922.<sup>96</sup> After annexation, Taylor was elected one of Govan's Glasgow Town Councillors, and he also acted as the ILP's energetic organising secretary in the city.<sup>97</sup> Before annexation, Taylor reflected that his town was inferior to the city in terms of public health, and that amalgamation could remedy this: 'we want open spaces and children's playgrounds in Govan, and we are not likely to get them until we are linked up with the larger scheme.'<sup>98</sup> He was unfazed by the old notion that annexation would mean an upward spiral of local taxation. Indeed, Taylor suggested that most Govan ratepayers would gain considerably from union with the city: 'In a Glasgow stair in which there are two tenants on each landing, the advantage in favour of the City is 3/- per tenant which is equivalent to about 2d per £ on a rental of £10, or 4d per £ on a rental of £20.'<sup>99</sup> As was discussed earlier in this thesis, differential rating was occasionally mooted in Govan's and Partick's years of municipal independence, but never actioned, making the policy a significant inducement for their working-class ratepayers to support annexation. But of course, this did not mean that the burghs' wealthier residents and 'establishment' councillors had always based their faith in local self-government on financial self-interest, or that these beliefs were unwavering.

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<sup>95</sup> Maver, *Municipal Administration*, pp. 190-1.

<sup>96</sup> See A. McKinlay and M. Black, 'Never at Rest': The Diary of John S. Taylor, 1885-1916'; *SLH*, 29, 1994, pp. 51-61 at 53.

<sup>97</sup> *Forward*, 15 July 1916 (obituary). See also Patrick Dollan's scrapbooks, vol 2, pp. 61-65.

<sup>98</sup> Glasgow Boundaries Order, 1912 – Govan: House of Lords Committee: Witness Precognitions; Proofs, Statements, Agreements &c..., GCA/A3/1/260, pp. 743-5.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, p. 745.

Whilst Govan's official response to Glasgow's overtures in 1888 and 1890 was to refuse to negotiate, Partick's response was much cannier, contemplating amalgamation subject to conditions on rating and the structure of the expanded municipal government. It is virtually impossible to gauge the extent to which this stance was one of genuine principle or tactical positioning, but the written and oral evidence arising from it remains interesting. In 1888, the Partick commissioners' hesitancy over whether to build public baths or wait for annexation (discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis) perhaps indicated that they thought the end of their municipal independence was inevitable. If this was the case, then it is quite possible that their demands, alongside the other burghs excepting Govan, for incentivised rating and a form of divisional management represented not brinkmanship but a pragmatic attempt to secure the best terms possible for entry to an enlarged municipality. However, the determination with which Partick maintained its demands even as Hillhead, Maryhill, Crosshill, Pollokshields, Pollokshields East and Govanhill yielded, meant that the city reluctantly terminated its negotiations with Partick and excluded it, alongside Kinning Park from the 1891 annexation bill.<sup>100</sup> In other words, Partick and Kinning Park had maintained their independence by negotiating with the city with strong reservations, just as Govan had done by its outright refusal to countenance annexation.

The city had explained that it could not make special arrangements for Partick in terms of reduced rates and increased local autonomy, which it had ruled out for other districts.<sup>101</sup> Throughout the 1890s, Partick stuck to its trinity of conditions in any annexation discussions with Glasgow: divisional management, the burgh to be assigned two municipal wards in exchange for joining the city, and, of course, rate reduction by 20% for a minimum of 5 years from annexation.<sup>102</sup> In addition, the burgh's minutes, when discussing such matters, increasingly used terms like 'unification' instead of annexation.<sup>103</sup> When Govan and Partick were finally annexed in 1912, the rating concession was indeed granted, indicating that in the final analysis, both burghs were willing to abandon their

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<sup>100</sup> Letters from Glasgow Town Clerk Marwick to Partick Town Clerk Donaldson, 11 and 18 November 1890 GCA/A3/1/143, pp. 506 and 30, respectively.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 506.

<sup>102</sup> PMB, 17 September 1890 pp. 371-2 and 10 September 1894, pp. 122-8

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 22 October 1894 pp. 136-140.

lofty rhetoric for what Maver described as ‘hard cash’.<sup>104</sup> Did this mean that the shift in Partick’s rhetorical emphasis from local self-government before 1888 to divisional management thereafter was merely an exercise in smoke and mirrors, cloaking their crude financial concerns?

This has always been a matter of interpretation. In 1887, the suburban burghs, led by Partick whilst Govan opted to fight its corner alone, claimed that they were not entirely opposed to amalgamation in any form, but that they found Glasgow’s position unacceptable:

Had the proposition made by the city been one for establishing a real system of divisional local government, with a federal relation between the divisions, and not [...] a system which perpetuates all the worst features of the present centralised system, the proposal might have received favourable consideration from the authorities of the Burghs. Such a scheme would have conserved the effective divisional management which the Burghs at present possess, would not have interfered to any serious extent with the present incidence of taxation, and might have been carried into effect without any serious interference with existing financial arrangements. While the Magistrates and Commissioners do not consider that there exist any strong or pressing reasons for the alteration of the status quo, they do not believe that such a scheme, if proposed by Glasgow, would have met with the same general opposition as they feel compelled to offer to the present scheme.<sup>105</sup>

It is easy to read this statement as evidence that the burghs were behaving disingenuously, and that their primary concern was their respective bottom lines. Yet it is quite possible that the authors genuinely believed their burghs to be better run than the city, or at least more economically. The 1887 *Case for the Burghs* was not the United States Declaration of Independence, but – at the risk of seriously overstating the importance of Glasgow’s suburban burghs – it is worth recalling that the more illustrious document represented a comparable, if markedly more successful attempt to transmogrify prosaic economic grievances into appeals to higher ideological principles.<sup>106</sup> In short, the burghs’ preoccupation with protecting their income need not be taken to imply insincerity regarding their belief in local autonomy. The sincerity of the municipal federalists aside, annexationist councillors in Partick were far from sanguine about the prospects of

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<sup>104</sup> Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 181. See also Irving, *Burgh of Partick*, p. 22.

<sup>105</sup> Case for the Burghs, 1887, p. 27.

<sup>106</sup> For an overview of various interpretations of the Declaration, see J.N. Racklowe, (ed.), *The Annotated U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 2009), pp. 73-103.

divisional management being used to dilute the benefits of a newly unified, consolidated, municipal administration. They saw centralisation as a far safer scenario than the *status quo*.<sup>107</sup> When Govan and Partick amalgamated with the city in 1912, the terms of the city's enlargement allowed the issue of divisional management to be resurrected after 1917, albeit the 1914-18 conflict put this in infinite abeyance.<sup>108</sup>

In its last decade of independence, Govan had shown its aversion to centralisation and annexation to be much less staunch than its rhetoric would suggest: it all depended who was doing the centralising and annexing. In 1900, the burgh succeeded in annexing Linthouse (as was touched on in chapter 5 of this thesis). However, the celebration of this new acquisition was hypocritical not only for its Bacchanalian character, but because the burgh had exploited judicial procedure to gain administrative control of a neighbourhood which was at best ambivalent about joining Govan. Moreover, the town councillors unwittingly stored up trouble for themselves by creating a new ward which quickly became dominated by ratepayers and councillors unhappy with Govan administration and favouring the entire burgh's amalgamation to the city. After much discussion at public meetings of alternative options to ensure working and sustainable public health for their rapidly-expanding neighbourhood, Linthouse's leading residents narrowed the choice down to annexation by Govan or Glasgow.<sup>109</sup> The Landward Committee of Lanarkshire County Council represented the only form of local government for a neighbourhood which had grown in population since 1895 from less than 900 to almost 9,000, and the County was legally prohibited from raising sufficient taxation to adequately cleanse, scavenge and drain the growing suburb.<sup>110</sup>

The city proved a keen suitor, offering a 20 per cent rate reduction over 5 years, but only on the condition that Linthouse ceased negotiating with Govan.<sup>111</sup> This was to spare the city the hassle of promoting its own annexation measure in Parliament in competition

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<sup>107</sup> House of Lords, Session 1912: Proofs of Partick Witnesses, GCA/A3/1/260, p. 775.

<sup>108</sup> Glasgow Boundaries Bill, 1912: House of Lords: Proceedings and Evidence, GCA/A3/1/264, p.14. See also Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 181.

<sup>109</sup> *Glasgow Evening News* [hereafter *GEN*], 24 May 1900.

<sup>110</sup> *GEN*, 1 May 1900; *GP*, 20 October 1899.

<sup>111</sup> *GEN*, 24 May 1900.

with one from Govan.<sup>112</sup> Govan fought harder, seeking to entice the Linthouse residents with the promise of halved police rates (amounting to a saving of 7d in the £) over the next decade.<sup>113</sup> A plebiscite of Linthouse county ratepayers was held on the question, under the auspices of the sheriff. The result was that 286 voted in favour of joining Govan, 184 Glasgow and 163 for the *status quo ante*.<sup>114</sup> Although Sheriff Robert Berry declared this poll to have been inconclusive of local feeling on the issue, he did rule that Linthouse be annexed to Govan, if perhaps only for the expediency of keeping the neighbourhood within the county.<sup>115</sup> When the decision was announced, the *Govan Press* gushed that Govan would soon lick the district's streets and drives into shape, whilst residents might notice the burgh's allegedly more interventionist style of policing, albeit there would be almost no crime in an area entirely lacking in public houses.<sup>116</sup> These observations came under the apparently unintentionally ironic headline 'Our Annexed Territory'.<sup>117</sup> As the 'special report' elaborated,

in the course of a fortnight we shall have lengthened our cords and strengthened our stakes as a community. By that I mean we shall have taken possession of our annexed territory. South Govan is a portion of respectable suburbia to which working men and their families have hastened in their hundreds. In other words, they have given it a habitation and a name.<sup>118</sup>

It was also noted that, under the management of the Landward Committee, the Linthouse people had experienced a small inkling of 'Govan management' and, somewhat unconvincingly given the equivocal result of the poll, that they must have been positively impressed by it. Still further indications of a lack of municipal self-awareness came with the paper's remark that the 'Cooperative Colony' – more accurately the Scottish Cooperative and Wholesale Society's factory complex at nearby Shieldhall, was too far

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> *NBDM*, 28 June 1900.

<sup>115</sup> *GH*, 15 March 1901.

<sup>116</sup> *GP*, 2 August 1901.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

west to annoy, or presumably subvert, Govan's new burghers.<sup>119</sup> Given that the SCWS works were both the main employer in Linthouse and the main reason for the neighbourhood's rapid growth leading to the need to annex it at all, this suggested a somewhat garbled understanding of the reality.<sup>120</sup> In 1911, Govan's recently elected Bailie John Reid, who had represented Linthouse, now the burgh's 7th Ward, since 1905, was himself foreman chairmaker at Shieldhall.<sup>121</sup> In his testimony to the House of Lords committee considering the 1911 Boundaries Bill, he noted that the burgh had never made good its promises to Linthouse, which had never been greatly in favour of joining Govan: rates had increased and improvements had been effected elsewhere in the burgh.<sup>122</sup> From 1909, regular public meetings had been held in the ward agitating for annexation with Glasgow, and in 1911 all the ward's council seats were held by pledged amalgamationists. Reid also highlighted many of his council colleagues' hypocrisy regarding Glasgow's annexationist ambitions.

When Kinning Park opted for Union with the City in 1905, against petitions of objection from Govan and Partick among many other interested parties, the *Govan Press* also showed its position on annexation to be more than a little inconsistent.<sup>123</sup> Brotchie's inevitable celebratory poem employed his by-now typical technique of depicting the city with the dual identity of the kindly, albeit ineffectual, Saint Mungo and a ferocious lion. It was not always clear which persona was supposed to represent the reality of Glasgow's municipal life: the aggressor or the clergyman. Nevertheless, in 1905, Brotchie suggested that the Kinning Park amalgamation could not possibly be based on the former burgh's informed consent; it must have been the city's dupe, like a lamb to the slaughter.

[W]e've a sad example before us  
 In the fate that befel Kinning Park;  
 For now she is biting her fingers,  
 She thought annexation a lark!  
 At the lion-like roar of St Mungo  
 She obeyed and went like a lamb.

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Proofs, Statements, Agreements &c., GCA/A3/1/260, pp. 625-669.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, p. 625.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, pp. 627-3.

<sup>123</sup> Glasgow Corporation General Order [Annexation of Kinning Park], 1905, Drafts, Vol. II, GCA/A3/1/231, p. 556.

To the slaughter of her independence,  
And she trembles for what's to come.

But we hear the roar of the lion  
And the roll of the mighty drum,  
And we sit us down in our Burgh,  
And we say, well, let 'em all come.  
For the saint (Mungo) with his lion skin covering  
We care not one single jot  
And his statistics are only relations  
Of the Quixote, Sir Thomas de Rot!<sup>124</sup>

Was the city really tilting at windmills? In fact, many Kinning Park residents who had been opposed to annexation in 1905 had, by 1912, relented in the face of the real experience of city administration. For instance, the former burgh's ex-Provost Thomas McMillan, who had set his face against the wishes of most of Kinning Park ratepayers who voted in favour of amalgamation at the 1904 ward poll.<sup>125</sup> As a shop-owner in Govan, McMillan urged amalgamation, which he now realised had been a boon for Kinning Park. David Pollok McKechnie, who turned out to be Govan's last Provost, gave testimony to the House of Commons committee on the boundaries bill in May 1912; one could be forgiven for thinking his lines had been scripted by the city fathers to satirically undermine the case for Govan's continued autonomy.

After conceding that his home address was in Glasgow (meaning that he would have benefited from services he deemed unnecessary for those he represented in Govan) and that his business address was in Dublin (not Govan), McKechnie was asked a number of straightforward, if leading, questions by the city's parliamentary counsel.<sup>126</sup>

*I do not want to make any complaint of your burgh. I have no doubt you are managing it well – but is it a fact your people use the libraries of Glasgow, do they not? I would not doubt it.*

*And the wash-houses? Yes, I believe they do.*

*And as a fact, it is quite recently that you have in Govan passed a resolution agreeing that public circulating libraries and wash-houses should be erected? That is so, but I am not a great believer that the wash-houses are a good thing.*

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<sup>124</sup> *GP*, 27 October 1905.

<sup>125</sup> House of Commons, Session 1912: Glasgow Boundaries, Proof of Thomas McMillan, GCA/A3/1/255, pp. 289-90.

<sup>126</sup> Glasgow Boundaries Bill: Minutes of Evidence, H-Gov-35-37, pp. 647-9.

*You are not a believer in washing?* Yes, I am, but we have plenty of facilities otherwise. All the tenement properties have good wash-houses provided.

The question and answer session continued in this vein, with McKechnie conceding that the city was vastly superior to Govan in its administrative provisions and efficiency, and that the police burgh was not self-sufficient for water, gas and drainage. McKechnie appeared untroubled by this, surely bolstering the annexation case. Indeed, McKechnie's fictitious counterpart was actually more eloquent when he faced the 1887 Boundary Commission. When asked if Strathbungo was a "happy and united community", Jeems Kaye replied "Oh, extra'ornar'. We are like a band o' brithers."<sup>127</sup> Smyth notes that by 1912, the case for Glasgow's extension was 'unanswerable'.<sup>128</sup> McKechnie's performance could be taken as proof of this analysis. The position between Govan, Partick and Glasgow had parallels in James Moore's work on Manchester, where he noted 'few suburbs were built with entirely adequate sewerage, transport, schools or recreational facilities', whilst 'local landlords were frequently perceived as resisting public improvements and political modernisation in order to protect their own interests'.<sup>129</sup>

By early November 1912, both Partick and Govan had held their final burgh meetings, and been formally absorbed into Greater Glasgow.<sup>130</sup> The Govan burgh minutes record that there was a sense this was a 'special' meeting, and in a rather Jeems Kaye-esque touch, the Bailies offered to pay to keep their official desks and chairs.<sup>131</sup> Their Partick counterparts seemed to have a greater sense of occasion, and whilst the burgh organist played 'Lochaber no More', Thomas Brown laid aside his robe and chain, remarking: 'There they lie, the abandoned habits of the Provost of Partick, taken from him by Act of Parliament.'<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Macmillan, *Jeems Kaye*, pp. 255-7.

<sup>128</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, p. 67.

<sup>129</sup> J.R. Moore, 'Liberalism and the Politics of Suburbia: electoral dynamics in late nineteenth-century South Manchester'; *Urban History*, 30, 2 (2003), CUP, pp. 225-50 at pp. 249-50.

<sup>130</sup> *GP*, 25 October 1912; *PMP*, 8 November 1912.

<sup>131</sup> GMB, 31 October 1912.

<sup>132</sup> Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 155. The Burgh minutes for this final meeting – PMB, 1 November 1912, were much more perfunctory than Greenhorne's elegiac account and the one given in the *PMP*, 8 November, 1912.

## Conclusion

As was elaborated earlier in this thesis, particularly in chapter five, the patchwork and inefficient state of such important amenities in Govan and Partick added increasing impetus for annexation over time. This was especially the case from the Labour alliance standpoint, which gained traction in both burghs, Govan especially, in the 1890s and early 1900s. The 1911 elections saw annexationist candidates triumph in both burghs' annual elections – even to the extent of unseating presumptive and sitting provosts and bailies.<sup>133</sup> On the long view, it is difficult to identify any significant qualitative or quantitative difference in the relative standards of municipal administration in Govan and Partick compared to Glasgow that had not been at play during earlier annexation battles. There was, however, the sense that 1911 constituted a tipping point. The continued population growth in the city and overspill into the burghs presented the annexationists, and especially socialist advocates, with a more receptive audience, many of whom had experienced differential rating in the city and would have resented paying more proportionately of their hard-earned income for less in terms of municipal provision.<sup>134</sup>

The 1900 annexation of Linthouse by Govan was clearly unprincipled and inconsistent with the burgh's ideology of local self-government. Yet, much more damningly, the burgh proved adept at disgruntling its prized new citizens with unfairly high rates and a standard of administration arguably no better than the benign neglect they had suffered under the Landward Committee. The annexation of a district so dominated by the Cooperative movement and its ethos was also undermining of the burgh's independence, forming a staging post for activists and eventually councillors who were able effectively to articulate an alternative, less insular and more open, egalitarian, inclusive and - more importantly - *effective* vision of local government than that offered by Govan. Partick's apparently sincere conversion to federal local government or divisional management from 1888 onwards barely disguised some of its leading citizens' vain hope that they could tighten their grip on the advantages of association with the city whilst retaining control of their own tenants and employees under a veil of subsidiarity. Both burghs had long proclaimed their histories of separate, if related, development from

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<sup>133</sup> *GP*, 10 November 1911.

<sup>134</sup> The 1911 census showed that Partick gained 960 citizens by migration between then and 1901, whereas Glasgow lost 82,638 in the same period. Govan had lost 8,993. <<http://www.histpop.org>>, accessed 12/5/2011.

Glasgow in aid of their miscellaneous arguments that they shared no ‘community of interest’ with the city. But ultimately, Greater Glasgow flourished by preaching the benefits of ‘municipal socialism’; a more cosmopolitan, collectivist and humane conception of community; with which the former burghs could not credibly compete.

Nevertheless, the socialists of Govan and Partick were suffered no illusions that they were entering a municipal utopia. As recently as October 1911, sitting Labour city councillor Hugh Lyon had written for *Forward* a scathing account of a municipality he characterised as ‘the finest club in Glasgow’, itemising several allegations of corruption and ineptitude against his fellow councillors and their officials, up to and including the Lord Provost.<sup>135</sup> In their new incarnations as municipal wards of Greater Glasgow, the former burghs were not noted, overall, for their socialist fervour at the 1912 elections. In Govan, for instance, outgoing Provost James Kirkwood topped the Plantation Ward poll as a Unionist notwithstanding a lacklustre, Jeems Kaye-esque appeal to electors on the basis that: ‘Residing, as I do, in the immediate neighbourhood of Plantation, and passing through it every day on my way to business, I can claim an intimate acquaintance with its requirements, which, I need hardly say, would have my especial care.’<sup>136</sup> Emmanuel Shinwell, later of ‘Red Clydeside’ fame, came bottom of the poll for the same ward, as did George Kerr, the former Partick councillor contesting for the seat ultimately won by former Provost Thomas Stark Brown, also a Unionist.<sup>137</sup>

Reflecting on these first post-amalgamation elections, *Forward* noted that of the councillors sent to George Square by the abolished burghs, only John Wheatley, John S. Taylor and possible John Izett were ‘any use’ to the socialist cause.<sup>138</sup> Even new Govan Ward Councillor Whitehead, a trade union secretary who, it lamented, was too preoccupied with the rights of retired Govan Burgh officials as distinct from the plight of workers in general.<sup>139</sup> Yet, the journal reflected, there was ‘hope’ that Whitehead in particular and Glasgow’s politics more generally, could develop on progressive lines.<sup>140</sup> The final

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<sup>135</sup> *Forward*, 21 October 1911.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 9 November 1912.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 23 November 1912.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*.

chapters of this thesis consider electoral developments in the burghs after their 1885 recognition as parliamentary divisions, assessing the extent to which such hopes were justified prior to annexation and realised thereafter.

## **II: Parliamentary Politics**

## **Chapter 7**

### **‘Strongholds of Liberalism, if not of radicalism’? Parliamentary Politics, c.1885-1910**

One of the last acts of [Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone’s 1880-1885] government was to take away from a number of faded and de-populated cities and boroughs their superfluous representatives, and to quicken into political life a number of populous towns...

*The Govan Press*, 5 December 1885.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction and Context**

This chapter explores parliamentary elections in Partick and Govan during campaigns in the 1880s, the 1890s and the first decade of the 1900s. Between them, both constituencies underwent fifteen parliamentary elections during the period covered in this chapter, which is structured in three parts. The first considers the elections from 1885-1890, the second those from 1892-1900, and the third the elections of 1906-1910. The focus is primarily on rhetoric and the approach is as much thematic as it is chronological; an exhaustive analysis of all fifteen elections is not possible within the space constraints here. Partick and Govan became parliamentary constituencies in their own respective rights in 1885, following the previous year’s Reform Act, also known as the Third Reform Act or the Representation of the People Act (1884), and the accompanying Redistribution of Seats Act (1885).<sup>2</sup> From 1885 until 1918, both districts were to remain single-member divisions of the county of Lanark. In 1885, Partick and Govan were among many British towns gaining the right to send a representative to Westminster for the first time in their history.

The new Govan and Partick divisions were identified by political historian Michael Dyer as key ‘industrial burghs of central Scotland’, so there was some justification for the *Govan Press* regarding Govan and Partick as populous towns and commercial centres despite their actual designation as mere county divisions, especially given their ranking among the top ten most populous places in Scotland.<sup>3</sup> Of course, there was disappointment in Glasgow that the suburbs had been kept separate from the city for the purpose of parliamentary elections, not least due to the lost opportunity this represented to foreshadow

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<sup>1</sup> *GP*, 5 December 1885.

<sup>2</sup> F.W.S. Craig, *British Electoral Facts 1832-1987*, (Dartmouth: Parliamentary Research Services, 1989), p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> M. Dyer, *Men of Property and Intelligence: The Scottish Electoral System prior to 1884*, (Aberdeen: SCP, 1996), p. 108.

the city's municipal expansion.<sup>4</sup> Govan and Partick previously comprised the mainstay of the former county constituency of Lanarkshire North. At successive elections since its creation (during the redistribution following the Second Reform Act in 1869), this seat had returned Liberal representative Sir Thomas Edward Colebrooke.<sup>5</sup> Colebrooke, now Lord Lieutenant of the County, was a veteran Liberal parliamentarian who had previously represented the now-defunct single-member constituency of Lanarkshire from 1857 until its reconfiguration in 1869 into two single-member seats. In 1885 he stood down as an MP; it is tempting to speculate that this was because he recognised that a new chapter in Liberal party and county politics was beginning.

The 1884 Reform Act's significance went beyond the creation of populous places into parliamentary seats. In Dyer's words, it was associated 'with a fundamental change in British, and especially Scottish, electoral culture caused by the creation of a mass electorate, leading to a new alignment of voters, and a decisive shift away from a focus on peculiarly local matters to the appeals of national leaders and party programmes'.<sup>6</sup> Although this is not the place to elaborate the arcane complexities of the differential voting qualifications between county and burgh constituencies which persisted until 1885, it is important to consider the impact of their abolition, in addition to the injustice they had caused to more proletarian voters. When Prime Minister Gladstone, highlighting the worst problems associated with this anachronistic distinction, pointed to the absurdity of Glasgow artisans quite literally losing their votes as they moved down-river in search of work, he almost certainly had Partick and Govan in mind.<sup>7</sup> In April 1884 Liberal MP Henry Broadhurst, a former stonemason, made this point in more detail:

[H]e had received a letter from the secretary of the Shipwrights' Association in the Clyde district, in which some interesting facts were revealed. In the districts of Govan and Partick there were 94,000 inhabitants, the majority of whom were skilled mechanics. Of this population, 19,442 persons exercised the municipal franchise; but only 3,426 persons had a voice in the political affairs of the country.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Belfast News-Letter*, 1 January 1885.

<sup>5</sup> M. Stenton, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament* Volume 1, (Hassocks: Harvester, 1976), pp. 85-6.

<sup>6</sup> M. Dyer, *Capable Citizens and Improvident Democrats: The Scottish Electoral System 1884-1929*, (Aberdeen: Scottish Cultural Press, 1996), p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> This is paraphrased from *Hansard* by M. Dyer in his *Capable Citizens*, p. 7.

That was through no fault of their own, but was due to the shifting character of their employment, occasioned by the removal of large firms to cheaper land.<sup>8</sup>

The unfathomable impact of the equalisation of the burgh and county franchises made it difficult to predict the outcome of elections in Govan and Partick, although the same could probably be said for most constituencies at that time. A further, more local, complication was that the new Govan and Partick constituency boundaries were not congruent to the existing police burgh boundaries.<sup>9</sup> The Govan division also encompassed the neighbouring district of Govanhill for parliamentary purposes. The Partick seat included Whiteinch, which, despite frequent misconceptions in the Glasgow press over many years to come, had been part of the police burgh since its creation, although this division's territory did not stop there. It also enveloped the outlying burghs of Hillhead and Maryhill, in addition to the district of Possilpark. None of these confounding factors, however, prevented the Liberal-inclined *Govan Press* from predicting Liberal victory in both new constituencies, on the rather unscientific basis that the old Lanarkshire constituencies consistently elected Liberal parliamentarians. '[W]e should say that when the votes come to be counted [...], it will be found that the two divisions, which have all along been looked on as strongholds of Liberalism, if not of radicalism, have elected to St Stephen's [the House of Commons] two staunch supporters of Mr Gladstone'.<sup>10</sup> In the event, the results, both for 1885 and even more so in the several contests thereafter, were to prove more complex and, as will be seen, Liberalism and radicalism were hardly homogenous creeds. In addition, politicians' 'staunch' beliefs could lead them in surprising directions in the face of changing circumstances. How resilient would both supposed Liberal 'strongholds' prove in the face of the twin challenges of a new coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists on the right and Labour, especially the ILP, on the left?

### **Lions and Lambs: The Elections of 1885, 1886, 1889 and 1890**

At the outset of the 1885 General Election campaign, the *Govan Press* predicted that its eponymous constituency's parliamentary representation would 'not be determined on

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<sup>8</sup> House of Commons Debate, *Hansard*, 3 April 1884, Volume. 286, column 1554. These remarks are also paraphrased in Dyer, *Capable Citizens*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *GP*, 5 December 1885.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

purely party grounds'.<sup>11</sup> This was no exaggeration. Surprisingly, Govan's first parliamentary election in 1885 was won by a self-styled radical labour candidate. Perplexingly, this was the Conservative Englishman, William Pearce, Chairman of the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company - by far the largest employer in the burgh - and a Govan police commissioner from 1871-81.<sup>12</sup> Born in Kent in 1833, Pearce trained as a naval architect at Chatham, where in his mid-twenties he oversaw the construction of *HMS Achilles* – the Admiralty's first iron-built ship.<sup>13</sup> In 1864, he moved north to replace John Elder (who had just founded Randolph and Elder) as manager at Robert Napier's Govan yard, aged 31. John Elder's death in 1869 gave Pearce a partnership, and leading influence over the recently re-constructed firm of John Elder and Co. He used this influence to expand the business and diversify into transatlantic steamships and Admiralty contracts. In 1878, Pearce became sole partner of a firm acclaimed as 'the most notable shipbuilding and engineering establishment in the world'.<sup>14</sup> His entry into the political arena was somewhat slower than his commercial progress, and his involvement in burgh affairs during the 1870s was evidently calculated to protect his business interests. For instance, in 1878 he was keen to ensure that any unemployment relief disbursed by the burgh be given to the 'deserving poor' – specifically non trade union members and their families – only.<sup>15</sup> Other political and associational roles included his service as an Honorary Colonel of the Second Volunteer Battalion of the Highland Light Infantry, and involvement in Freemasonry culminating in appointment as Provincial Grand Master of Glasgow.<sup>16</sup> He had homes at Govan, Glasgow, the Clyde Coast and in Middlesex. He owned a steam yacht and had a reputation as a lavish entertainer. He served on several Royal Commissions and was appointed Baronet in 1887 for services to shipbuilding, especially Naval building. In 1884, one satirist noted that 'Billy Drill' (Pearce)'s 'oleaginous'

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 28 November 1885.

<sup>12</sup> GMB November 1871 to November 1881, *passim*. His duties included chairmanship of the Parliamentary Bills Committee, suggesting sympathy for the commercial benefits, if not the ideology of local self-government.

<sup>13</sup> A. Slaven, 'Sir William Pearce'; A. Slaven and S. Checkland (eds.), *Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography, 1800-1900*, Volume 1 (Aberdeen: AUP, 1990), pp. 229-30.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 229.

<sup>15</sup> GMB, 5 December 1878, pp. 340-8.

<sup>16</sup> Slaven, 'Pearce', p. 230.

persona belied a ‘rough skin under his smooth coat’ and a fierce tongue for employees who did not meet his exacting requirements.<sup>17</sup>

Mere months before the 1885 poll, Pearce, married to Dinah Elizabeth Pearce, stood accused of an illicit affair with a twenty-year old unmarried woman – a Miss Francis.<sup>18</sup> Although he vigorously denied the allegations, reproduced in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, even to the point of threatening legal action, he was prepared to pay his alleged mistress £200 a year and £5,000 if she married – in addition to £1,200 already paid.<sup>19</sup> Conveniently for Pearce’s commercial and political interests Miss Francis did marry in October 1885, clearing the way for Pearce’s Govan campaign, which will shortly be considered.<sup>20</sup> At his death – probably of a heart attack - in 1888, Pearce’s estate was valued at over one million pounds sterling - equivalent to almost sixty millions in 2010 values. A statue was erected in his honour, by public subscription, at Govan Cross, where his figure looms large over the heart of the community even at time of writing (2010).<sup>21</sup>

Pearce’s 1885 election address was derided by his Liberal opponent, Bennet Burleigh, who observed at a public meeting in Plantation that ‘There was no Tory [sic] candidate coming forward’. Instead:

A piebald creature was coming forward as a Labour candidate or a Tory democrat. (Laughter.) There was an attempt to get the Parnellite lion to lie down with the Tory lamb. (Laughter.) He supposed lions and lambs lay down together, but the lamb was generally inside the Lion. (Great laughter.) Mr Pearce was, unfortunately, unwell, and would not be able to appear before the electors until the election day – (a voice – “He disna want to be [here]”) – and Mr Burleigh sincerely condoled with him in his unfortunate position. Commenting on Mr Pearce’s address, Mr Burleigh said it was a deliberate perversion of fact to say that he was a labour candidate. Mr Pearce’s remarks on free education stigmatised the poor at the very threshold of life.<sup>22</sup>

The ‘Parnellite lion’ reference was to Charles Stewart Parnell, then leader of the Irish nationalist group of MPs. Parnell had recently urged Irish voters to abandon the Liberal

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<sup>17</sup> *Fairplay*, 25 January 1854.

<sup>18</sup> McAlpine, *The Lady*, pp. 73-8.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 77.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> Slaven, ‘Pearce’, p. 230; Dalglish and Driscoll, *Historic Govan*, p. 115.

<sup>22</sup> *GP*, 28 November 1885.

party in order to strengthen his faction's influence in the House of Commons, in order to promote Home Rule. Govan's strong Irish working-class population was clearly expected to be a decisive force in elections in the new constituency. The *Govan Press* unpacked Pearce's appeal, which appeared to be based on a somewhat counterintuitive combination of employee deference, the opportunism needed to be able to claim the capacity to reconcile diverse religious and sectarian interests, and a tendency to draw on the support of publicans and anti-disestablishment Liberals:

The largest employer of labour in the locality, he is certain to receive support from many who are not particularly staunch in the matter of political conviction, and who can understand the bread and butter argument better than any other. Orangemen will, of course, go in for Mr Pearce, and so will the Parnellites in the constituency, for the edict has gone forth from the uncrowned King of Ireland that the Liberals, in spite of all they have done for Ireland, must be crushed, so that the balance of power may be in Mr Parnell's hand.

The paper continued:

It may alienate some who might otherwise support Mr Pearce; those Churchmen, for example, who are not satisfied with Mr Gladstone's promise that the Church question will not be settled in any way in the coming Parliament. Mr Pearce will also receive the support of the publicans, who have issued a defence manifesto as well as the Church. The Tories could not have got any candidate so strong as Mr Pearce is, on all grounds, and it will require much political firmness and fighting on the part of Liberals to successfully oppose him, and with two rival Liberal antagonists in the field, many seem to think that he will not be easily beaten, and his supporters have a "Triumphant Hope" to use Lord Salisbury's words, that by the help of Churchmen, Orangemen, Catholics, Parnellites and the body of his own workmen he may carry the seat.<sup>23</sup>

Meantime in Partick, what had at first looked almost certain to be the coronation of the at-first uncontested Liberal Candidate, Alexander Craig Sellar, became something altogether more interesting and less predictable. Colourful alternative candidates emerged in the respective shapes of Conservative Lord (a courtesy title) Henry Gordon Lennox and John Murdoch, a rival Liberal. Murdoch bore a particular grudge against Sellar, a member of the Scottish Bar and former legal secretary to the Lord Advocate for Scotland, until recently the Liberal MP for Haddington Burghs, East Lothian, which had just become defunct. He had held the seat since 1882. Sellar's father Patrick (1780-1851) had earned notoriety as the factor of the Sutherland Highland estates. He was responsible for some of the most notorious forced evictions of small tenants at Strathnaver after which he faced

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

trial on charges of acts of gross inhumanity, including culpable homicide.<sup>24</sup> Although acquitted on all charges, he had already come to personify the most sinister aspects of the clearances in the popular imagination.<sup>25</sup> This was all-too-apparent in the rhetoric of Murdoch, which, despite an election platform including support for local vetoes on liquor licensing, three-year parliaments, and a primitive version of legal aid, was overwhelmingly, even obsessively directed against his Liberal opponent as much as in favour of land reform.<sup>26</sup> Murdoch's family had roots in Strathnaver and he always wore the kilt on his campaign appearances to ensure identification as a Highlander. His candidacy, on the face of it, should be intriguing to posterity, given the significant numbers of Highland migrants in Partick, in addition to the rhetorical if not real parallels between land factors and house factors in this community.<sup>27</sup> However, Murdoch was dismissed by the local press as a crank with a vendetta. The compiler of the *Govan Press*'s 'Partick Pot-Pourri' column noted, seemingly without irony, how tiresome it must be for Sellar to be challenged by a man of 'such marked inferiority of culture and tone as the Highlander', going on to describe him as 'bitter and prejudiced', while possessing a 'goodly stock of intolerance and bigotry', and 'obstinacy'.<sup>28</sup> It was 'ridiculous' to hold Sellar responsible for the alleged deeds of his father. Despite fears that his involvement would split the Liberal vote and thus deny Sellar victory, Murdoch polled only seventy-four votes.<sup>29</sup> Still, Murdoch's candidacy, with its anti-landlordism, resonated with the

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<sup>24</sup> E. Richards, 'Sellar, Patrick (1780-1851)', *ODNB*, OUP, 2004  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/25055> accessed 23/12/09.

<sup>25</sup> For a fuller account of Patrick Sellar's legacy and reputation, see E. Richards, *Patrick Sellar and the Highland Clearances*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1999), especially pp. 5-7, 352-69 and 369-83. I.G.C. Hutchison notes that the candidates fielded by the Conservatives around Glasgow – including Pearce and Lennox - in 1885 were 'hopelessly inappropriate' to local circumstances in their respective constituencies. Given Pearce won and Lennox came close to doing so, this was something of an over-generalisation. See *Political History*, p. 199.

<sup>26</sup> *GP*, 28 November 1885.

<sup>27</sup> According to the 1891 census, Partick had 3,456 Highland-born persons. See C.W.J. Withers, *Urban Highlanders: Highland-Lowland Migration and Urban Gaelic Culture, 1700-1900*, (East Linton: Tuckwell, 1998), pp. 110 and 220.

<sup>28</sup> *GP*, 28 November 1885.

<sup>29</sup> All Parliamentary results in this chapter are taken from F.W.S. Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results 1885-1918*, (Dartmouth: Parliamentary Research Services, 1974 edition), p. 590 (Govan) and p. 594 (Partick). See appendix 3 for full results.

emerging themes in municipal politics discussed in chapter five. He had founded *The Highlander* (1873-81), a journal campaigning for Gaelic rights, served as Secretary of the Scottish Land Restoration League, and went on to chair the first meeting of the SLP in 1888.<sup>30</sup>

Lord Lennox posed a more serious threat to Sellar's election campaign. Lennox, a close friend and confidant of former Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, was no political novice, and had held junior ministerial office in every Conservative government since 1852, until he resigned as Commissioner of Works in the wake of the Lisbon Tramways scandal of 1874. Lennox was a director of the company concerned and resigned on principle not through personal guilt.<sup>31</sup> He had represented Chichester in the House of Commons since 1846. His adoption as Conservative party candidate in Partick was far from smooth, and there was great uproar and disruption at his early campaign meetings, for instance in Possilpark.<sup>32</sup> The *Govan Press* editorialists remarked that 'Lord Henry Lennox will fight well if he beats a man of Mr Sellar's experience and power in a constituency which few Tories would have the courage to invade'.<sup>33</sup> Lord Lennox was not expected to benefit from the votes of Liberals opposed to Church disestablishment, since Prime Minister Gladstone had promised not to legislate on this issue in the coming parliament, assuming his government were re-elected.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, it was noted that Sellar had been adept at maintaining his 'hold [over] all of the various sections of Liberals in the constituency'.<sup>35</sup> The Conservative and mainstream Liberal candidates were heralded in song as they went about their campaign business. The Conservative song was penned by Henry McAnnally, the 'Partick Poet'<sup>36</sup>:

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<sup>30</sup> C.W.J. Withers, Charles W. J. Withers, 'Murdoch, John (1818–1903)', *ODNB*, OUP, Sept 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53158>>,( accessed 10 June 2010).

<sup>31</sup> See last paragraphs of F.M.L. Thompson, 'Lennox, Charles Gordon (1791-1860)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/16453>> accessed 23/12/09.

<sup>32</sup> *GP*, 28 November 1885.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 12 December 1885.

To use the franchise is our right,  
And he our candidate is quite  
In harmony with those  
Who would revive declining trade,  
And heal the wounds by others made,  
And leave us many woes;  
And as starvation nestles here-  
Where plenty was of late –  
Our duty is to persevere  
And fight for better fate.

The Liberal counterblast was written by an anonymous “Whiteinch Rhymer”:

Invading Partick’s realms  
The Tory Lennox came  
To darken freedom, and to bring  
Disaster on our name!

It shall not be! Craig Sellar cried;  
It shall not be! The rads replied!  
By the power great Gladstone gave us  
Our votes shall dissipate their dream!  
We’ll all our dearest rights redeem-  
We’ll drive them back for ever!<sup>37</sup>

This was a parody on the lyrics to ‘Lord Nelson’, but it is nevertheless remarkable how lacking the lyrics were in terms of policy discourse, as compared to the Conservative song. Still, the quality or otherwise of campaign songs did not determine the election outcome, and Sellar won the seat by 3,726 votes to Lennox’s 3,385. The outcome was much closer than had been anticipated, and the Conservative interest had certainly not been

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

‘driven back forever’ so far as Partick was concerned. The following February, the Partick Conservative Association reflected that it had done very well considering Lord Lennox’s late candidacy and chaotic campaign; the potential to capture the seat might not elude a more focused and determined effort next time around.<sup>38</sup> In Govan the situation obtaining in Partick was reversed, with the Conservative candidate, Pearce, defeating Liberal Bennet Burleigh by 3,677 votes to 3,522, and radical Liberal David George Hoey securing a mere eleven votes. Hoey, was a newly-enfranchised Govanite whose hopes of becoming the official Liberal candidate had met with short shrift from the local Liberal establishment, one anonymous member of which had claimed ‘We who have always had the franchise are best able to [choose a candidate]’ than those just-qualified.<sup>39</sup> It was clear that neither constituency could be assumed to be a Liberal stronghold, and, unknown to the 1885 protagonists, the rigours of another general election campaign were just six months away.

The conversion of Prime Minister Gladstone to the cause of Home Rule for Ireland after the 1885 general election resulted in a Parliament where the Parnellite MPs held the balance of power. The ensuing political crisis had far-reaching implications for United Kingdom and Irish politics, and Govan and Partick were hardly immune.<sup>40</sup> The defeat of Gladstone’s first Home Rule bill in the House of Commons precipitated a swift dissolution of Parliament and a snap general election.<sup>41</sup> The Home Rule crisis also led to the defection from the Liberal ranks of several parliamentarians, most notably Lord Hartington and Joseph Chamberlain, who voted against the bill with the Conservatives, standing as Liberal Unionists when the election was declared. Partick’s recently-elected Liberal MP,

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<sup>38</sup> *GH*, 18 February 1886.

<sup>39</sup> Purdie, ‘Reminiscences...’, pp. 10-11. Here were parallels with James Keir Hardie’s 1888 decision to stand as an independent labour candidate following his rejection as prospective parliamentary candidate by the mid-Lanark Liberal Association ahead of their constituency’s 1888 by-election. See K.O. Morgan, *Hardie (James) Keir (1856–1915)*, *ODNB*, OUP 2004; online edn, Jan 2011 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33696>, accessed 22 April 2011]

<sup>40</sup> As Burness neatly put it, Gladstone’s conversion to Home Rule ‘catapulted the Irish issue to the forefront of politics, shattering Liberal unity and prompting the emergence of a new political grouping: Liberal Unionism’. *Strange Associations*, p. 44. Cawood notes that the Home Rule split marked a rupture ‘perhaps unique in British political history’, *Lost Party*, p. 5. See also McCaffrey, *Nineteenth Century*, pp. 83-4. For an example of an interpretation emphasising that the Home Rule crisis ‘cannot be fully denied, but should also not be exaggerated’, see A. Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History 1800-2000*, (London: Phoenix, 2003), pp. 76-8 at p. 77.

<sup>41</sup> Burness, *Strange Associations*, p. 44.

Craig Sellar, had acted as Liberal Unionist Whip in the House of Commons, gleefully announcing the results of the fateful Commons division.<sup>42</sup> In Govan, despite recent proclamations from the local United Liberal Council that tensions between representatives from lower Govan and the rest of the members had been resolved, resulting in a friendly atmosphere, the local party was caught on the back-foot by the election announcement.<sup>43</sup> They wasted valuable time in finding a viable candidate to contest the seat, after first unanimously selecting John Wilson of Hillhead House, who declined on health grounds, before petitioning the Liberal Party's Central Council to re-invite military correspondent and former soldier Bennet Burleigh, last year's candidate, on the condition that he supported Gladstone's Home Rule policy.<sup>44</sup> Although Burleigh had apparently indicated his willingness to stand, the local party ultimately chose Thomas Alexander (T.A.) Dickson, former MP for Tyrone, as its champion. The *Govan Press*, appraising both parties' prospects in Govan before the Liberal candidate was chosen, averred that:

The contest this time is likely to wear a decidedly different aspect from that it bore at the last election, from the fact of the defection of the most wealthy and influential of the Liberal party, and from the naturally changed attitude of the Irish party. Each party appears to feel assured of victory and eager for the fray. Certainly the Tories have the advantage of a few days in making their arrangements. They may be said to be now armed cap-a-pie [to the hilt], under their appointed leader, awaiting the onset, while the members of the Liberal party are not yet armed, are not headed by their champion, nor are they marshalled or ready for the fray. It will be a dour contest, however it may eventuate, and hard knocks are sure to be got during the fray.<sup>45</sup>

One Govan radical later recalled that the Home Rule split was 'not an entirely unmixed evil' since it meant that most of the local establishment Liberals who had hitherto been a 'clog on progress' left to become Liberal Unionists.<sup>46</sup> Yet the same commentator admitted that while the Liberals remained 'torn apart by internal difficulties', the Conservatives, who had in Pearce 'a man of undoubted popularity' whose abilities were 'unquestioned'.<sup>47</sup> T.A. Dickson, meanwhile, 'suddenly appeared' to contest the seat, but

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<sup>42</sup> *GP*, 19 June 1886.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 5 and 12 June 1886.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, 12 June 1886.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>46</sup> Purdie, 'Reminiscences...', p. 13.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*.

was ‘looked upon coldly’ by local Liberals who would have preferred a local unity candidate.<sup>48</sup> The UIL was far more effective in campaigning for him than the Liberal machine itself, whilst the Conservative organisation was a well-oiled machine.

Meanwhile, Partick’s Gladstonians found that their former champion, Sellar, had abandoned them, and their great leader, for the Liberal Unionist cause. On the face of it, this suggested he faced humiliation at the coming poll. As the *Govan Press* editorialised:<sup>49</sup>

The bulk of Mr Craig Sellar’s supporters in the recent election are now completely estranged from him in consequence of the prominent and enthusiastic part he took in opposing his late chief. The fact published in all the papers of [him] having been the first to reach the telegraph office and to shout out “We beat them by 30” in triumphant tones, is likely to militate very strongly against his prospects of success at the coming election. The Partick and Whiteinch Labour associations are looking about for a suitable Gladstonian candidate to oppose Mr Sellar, and they feel pretty jubilant, because if they do have defections from their own ranks, they feel certain of being more than recouped by the support of the Irish, whom they had to oppose at the last election.

The Central Liberal Council had instructed all local Liberal associations whose candidates had opposed Home Rule to vote promptly on whether they approved of their representatives’ actions.<sup>50</sup> This seemed somewhat moot, especially in Sellar’s case. Additionally, Conservative tactician Lord Randolph Churchill, working in concert with leading Liberal Unionists, had ensured that Liberal Unionist candidates should not be opposed by their local Conservative parties, in order to ensure straight fights between them and the Gladstonians.<sup>51</sup> The *Govan Press* reported on a meeting for ‘the Maintenance of the Union’ in Partick’s lesser Burgh Hall, which was attended by 130 men, including Bailie David Turnbull Colquhoun, who himself bore supportive letters of apology from Provost Sir Andrew Maclean, former President of the local Liberal Association and ex-Provost Thompson.<sup>52</sup> In light of this development, the *Govan Press* acknowledged: ‘[h]owever it may go, the atmosphere seems to be very hazy so far as Mr Sellar’s prospects with the constituency are concerned’.<sup>53</sup> There was further uncertainty as to whether

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 26 June 1886.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 12 June 1886.

Conservative-inclined voters would support Sellar unanimously in light of his positive position on disestablishment.<sup>54</sup> There was virtually unanimous condemnation of Sellar's actions among Liberals voting in their local associations in Partick, Whiteinch and Maryhill, but not in Possilpark, a district which the *Govan Press* reporter thought seemed 'to have a considerable element of moderate Liberalism mixed with its radicalism'.<sup>55</sup> Although rare for any Liberal association, the opposition to Home Rule in Possilpark was not thought to be shared by the neighbourhood's 'lower or working strata', which seems to suggest a strong Irish presence in the other districts.<sup>56</sup> Weeks before polling and even before nominations had closed, the *Govan Press* editors made clear their position on Home Rule, along the way perhaps suggesting a subtle disconnection between this and their vaunted views on the sanctity of local self-government:

[Gladstone] declares Ireland to be made loyal by granting to her at once the full rule of her own affairs. Not by provincial councils but by a national Parliament, which may or may not itself institute local councils, and may devolve provincial and rural and municipal affairs to them. [...] The policy of the self-styled Unionist Committee, of which Mr Craig-Sellar, by the way, is Whip – strange development of Liberalism is it not? – is to grant government to the Irish people in name but to withhold it in fact. Ireland to-day has no municipal government, as we understand the term, therefore give them municipal government and call it Home Rule. That is what the Unionists say is likely to satisfy the Irish sentiment. [...] The Bill rejected by the House of Commons is a just measure of large conception, and sooner or later must become law. Let the electors vote for it now, and whether he return with a majority or now, by his very introduction of the measure, history will describe Mr Gladstone as by that act the pioneer of the principles of peaceful paction (*sic*) between persons and populations, provinces and principalities, the wide world o'er.<sup>57</sup>

When it was announced that Sellar would be opposed by Gladstonian Liberal accountant Robert McLean, the *Press* editorialised that he deserved and would likely secure a large majority.<sup>58</sup> Further opprobrium was heaped on Sellar, of whom it was remarked: '[p]erhaps there is no member who has more seriously disappointed the hopes of

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 3 July 1886.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 12 June 1886.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>57</sup> *GP*, 19 June 1886.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, 26 June 1886.

genuine Liberals than the once singularly popular member for the Partick division'.<sup>59</sup> The mysterious 'Justice Bridlehouse', compiler of 'Partick Pot-Pourri' and, by his own admission, a retired local politician, noted that Sellar's chances of being returned rested on the support of his former opponents, a position which no one could have predicted.<sup>60</sup> Bridlehouse claimed that even if the Liberal Unionist candidate were defeated, he ought to take comfort in the fact that the local Liberal Association had disintegrated around him, to the extent that its 'able and energetic' secretary, D.S. Riddoch, together with his colleague Alex Russell, had quit.<sup>61</sup> This, it was averred, tongue only partially in cheek, was a 'crushing blow' for the local Liberal organisation, which it was unlikely to survive.<sup>62</sup> Their departures were followed by the resignation of the Association's Honorary President James Parker Smith, squire of Partick's well-heeled Jordanhill neighbourhood, also in opposition to the decision to oppose Sellar's candidacy.<sup>63</sup> Parker Smith had been considered as a candidate by the Liberals the previous year.<sup>64</sup> There was little doubting Sellar's strong support from much of the local Liberal and Conservative establishment, but as the sinisterly-named 'Ancient Pistol' somewhat bumptiously observed in a letter to the *Press*, this did not necessarily translate into working class support.

The masses are beyond his reach, and remain true to their leader, the G.O.M. Mr Sellar may get the Orangemen, but they are a very unimportant factor in this struggle. The masses are like one man in favour of Mr Gladstone, and whoever had the temerity to oppose him after trailing his name at the last election would be as well to make his last political will and testament, for the place which he has represented shall know him no more in the future.<sup>65</sup>

The reference to the role of the Orange Order was striking, although it is frustratingly difficult to quantify with precision. According to William Marshall, Partick hosted one of the three largest Orange jurisdictions ('districts') in Scotland; the

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 3 July 1886.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

others were Govan and Greenock, also Clyde shipbuilding towns.<sup>66</sup> Membership figures are notoriously difficult to obtain or verify, but by the late-nineteenth century, Partick's main Orange district had eighteen lodges operating under its wing, with an additional seven lodges run by a rival Orange Society.<sup>67</sup> Most, but not all of these Orange lodges met within the confines of the constituency, although some met in neighbouring Anderston.<sup>68</sup> By 1889, the Orangemen of Whiteinch had become numerous enough to form their own district. There are strong indications that the ranks of both Orange districts in the former burgh had grown markedly by the end of the war, and that the 1920s were a time of marked growth for the order across Scotland. For instance, a women's lodge was inaugurated for Whiteinch in 1922.<sup>69</sup> Partick's economy was based around shipbuilding and engineering, sectors with strong links to Ulster Protestantism. Elaine McFarland highlights that, insofar as any breakdown is possible, many officeholders in Partick's Orange districts were engineers and boiler-makers: members of the skilled working class.<sup>70</sup> I.G.C. Hutchison notes that Partick's shipyards were 'staunchly Orange', betokening unusual electoral influence.<sup>71</sup> Joseph Melling notes that skilled (usually Protestant) labourers from Ulster continued to migrate to Partick during the war, to make good labour shortages.<sup>72</sup> They almost certainly relied on local connections to secure employment,

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<sup>66</sup> W. Marshall, *The Billy Boys: A Concise History of Orangeism in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Mercat, 1996), p. 41. See also E.W. McFarland, *Protestants First: A Concise History of Orangeism in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1990), p. 74.

<sup>67</sup> Marshall, *Billy Boys*, p. 41. For discussion of the difficulties of obtaining lodge membership records and related material, see pp. xv-xvii of same.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, pp. 41-2.

<sup>69</sup> *PG*, 7 January 1922.

<sup>70</sup> McFarland, *Protestants First*, p. 83.

<sup>71</sup> I.G.C. Hutchison, 'Glasgow Working-Class Politics'; R.A. Cage ed., *The Working Class in Glasgow, 1750-1914*, (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 98-141 at p. 129.

<sup>72</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, p. 23. McShane and Smith, *No Mean Fighter*, p. 74.

accommodation and social recreation.<sup>73</sup> The Order was well placed to facilitate such contacts, boosting its membership as a result.<sup>74</sup>

Henry McNally, the Partick Poet, seemed to have undergone a damascene ideological conversion within six months, for now his talents were deployed in favour of the Gladstonian Liberal candidate:<sup>75</sup>

Be sure, O men, for truth to vote,  
And not for quibbling low and mean;  
Craig Sellar basely turned the coat  
That on him never should have been.  
He is a Tory in disguise,  
And only worthy of disdain;  
Detest all treachery, be wise,  
And vote for heroes like McLean[...]

Meantime at Govan, sitting MP William Pearce had his own recent history to play down in his quest for re-election: especially his disingenuous claims to have been the candidate who could best represent labour interests in the district; claims which he now failed to repeat. In late June 1886, the *Govan Press*, which was no advocate of Conservatism, ran an editorial drawing readers' attention to his previous 'labour' stance. 'Has he discovered that it was a bad card to play, or has he found that his pretensions to represent Labour were too transparent to be defended?'<sup>76</sup> In the same edition, a letter from the heroically self-named 'JUSTICE DIO' [Justice Today] was printed, highlighting the inconsistencies inherent in Pearce's former election platform.<sup>77</sup> This is worth quoting at considerable length, for although clearly partisan in the Liberal interest, it sheds light both

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<sup>73</sup> Melling, *Rent Strikes*, p.23. See also his 'Scottish industrialists and the changing character of class relations on the Clyde' in Tony Dickson (ed.), *Capital and Class in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1982), pp. 61-142 at p. 92.

<sup>74</sup> Marshall, *Billy Boys*, p. 106.

<sup>75</sup> *GP*, 3 July 1886.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 26 June 1886.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, emphasis added.

on the contradictions of Pearce's 1885 rhetoric but, more importantly, on some of the key grievances that were festering among working class Govanites at this time:

I would like very much to find out by what mysterious process Mr Pearce is entitled to represent labour in the House of Commons. Being, as he is, a man who lives by trafficking in the labour of others, it seems to me to imply a contradiction in terms to speak of him as a labour representative, but perhaps he knows best. At the late election, he made much of his membership of the Commission upon the Depression in trade. Perhaps, if asked during his present candidature, he might enlighten us as to the nature and results of his labours on that Commission. I wonder what his riveters thought of him as a Labour representative when they were forced to strike against the rates he allowed them for their work, which they, in some instances termed "starvation rates".

After stating that Pearce's voting record in the House of Commons was 'as much at variance' with Labour MPs as 'it was possible to be', the letter went on that.

The fact is that Mr Pearce is a representative of the class to which he belongs – the class which was naturally with the working class, which enriches itself upon its spoils and degrades, distresses and maligns it on every occasion. Besides this, Mr Pearce is a Conservative, and as such an opponent of the enfranchisement of the workmen, which was accomplished by Mr Gladstone in spite of the opposition of the Tories. He is a Unionist simply because, like the whole of his party, he is opposed to progress or the growth and creation of free and representative institutions [...] But the workmen of Scotland are on their guard, and will be careful in the future how they accept a Labour candidate on approval.

Pearce was also castigated in verse by local poet Phillip Henry Taylor.<sup>78</sup>

Candidates appeal  
Give me your votes  
The Tory cries;  
I'll bring pound notes  
Down from the skies;  
I'll be a friend to the working man  
I'll bring joy and pleasure in  
To the hearts of the employers  
If they swarm around like forest bees  
And stand for me through thick and thin.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 3 July 1886.

As with the previous extract, the first stanza of the rhyme portrayed Pearce as a Janus-faced opportunist whose true interests lay with his own elite employer cadre. The second portrays ‘the workman’, who represents working class voters, as wise enough to see through Pearce’s alleged charade, while the third portrays the Liberal candidate – ‘Tyrone Man’ as a promoter of equality, keen both to ensure that the workers enjoyed the reward of their labour as well as to support Home Rule. The last ‘electors answer’ stanza shows them as willing to stand with the Liberal candidate and strike fear into the heart of the Conservative, or as the poet, like many writers then and now lazily and inaccurately labelled such candidates, ‘the Tory’. Taylor’s creative output during the 1886 election seemed to be prolific, and the same edition of the *Govan Press* printed the lyrics of his election song ‘Men of Govan’.

Men of Govan, firmly stand,  
With rods of iron strong in hand,  
To dispense that shameful hand  
Of Tory Lordlings, merchant squires,  
Who doth upon the workman frown,  
Who tramps the eager toiler down  
Into the depths of dirty mires.

Another verse read:

Liberals all prepare for fight,  
The cause of justice o’er is right,  
Oh, press down with all your might,  
Those monarchs of the fertile soil  
Who doth o’er trifles dream and rave,  
Who try the freeman to enslave,  
And binds poor Paddy in chains of toil.

The explicit identification of Govan workers with their Irish counterparts was no accident, and could only have been intended to resonate with local workers, many of whom would have relatives in Ireland. The reference to ‘poor Paddy’, although seemingly earnest, does appear patronising, if not outright xenophobic. The reference to ‘Tory Lordlings, Merchant squires’ in the first stanza points at the new (uninherited) wealth of

Pearce and many of his fellow members of the local industrial elite. Of course, there were many wealthy Liberal industrialists in Govan and Partick, and an interesting alternative perspective on the Liberal versus Unionist dispute was offered after the election in a letter by a self-described 'Partick Liberal'.<sup>79</sup> Entitled 'Why Partick Voted Tory' and written with especial reference to Partick and Whiteinch, the author answers his (or possibly her) own question in terms that could now be explained with reference to paternalism. The author noted that many current and former local civic leaders, including present and ex Provosts, had spoken against Home Rule: most notably Provost Maclean, the senior partner in the shipbuilding firm Barclay Curle and Co. Ltd. As he was the dominant employer in the Whiteinch district where the yard was located, the author found it deeply sinister that Maclean had both let it be known that he supported Sellar and that he had invited him into the yard to address the employees at a meeting where five other local employers of labour were on the platform. He asserted that the workers in the districts were up to their necks in debt due to wages which fell:

under the line which separates independence from practical servitude and under this system of espionage, and covert threatening veiled in smiles, with no other corner in the district where work was to be had if it was lost here, what course was left to men with starving families, men whose independence has been sapped by years of privation and stinted living, but to knuckle down and barter for their birthright for a crust of bread. [...] Shame on the men who use their independence to coerce a hungry man, and frighten him into courses he at his heart detests. Craig Sellar is hated as the devil is hated, and owes his majority to Toryism, and the most contemptible meanness on the part of the men who if "honour bright" guided them, would scorn to use their power for such ignoble ends.<sup>80</sup>

The writer continued in this vein, comparing the Partick industrialists to an anonymous Southside employer who refused to allow candidates Pearce and Dickson access to his works on the grounds that it was not his place as an employer to seek to influence his workers' votes. But the 'Partick Liberal' was not shy about naming and shaming one particular employer:

Perhaps young Mr Wylie of the Whiteinch Paper Mill will give us his reason for taking Mr Craig Sellar into his counting house, and personally going round his workmen and canvassing for the new Tory MP. Does he not get enough out of the bodies of his workers that he must needs gain possession of their minds and souls as well? Oh bribery, Oh corruption. "O Tempora, O Mores!" God forgive this

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 17 July 1886.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

division, and help the 2,944 brave and true men to preserve alive the principles of Liberalism in our midst.<sup>81</sup>

These allegations were contested by D.S. Riddoch, the former Secretary of the Partick Liberal Association, who demanded that the writer identify himself, and insisted that the meetings referred to had been by card admittance only; that is to suggest that attendance by employees was on a voluntary basis.<sup>82</sup> Yet Riddoch did not address the wider claims made by the letter-writer. The 1886 campaign was clearly an acrimonious one, and Pearce found himself accused of slandering Gladstone himself after insinuating that the 'G.O.M.' had been selling baronetcies to shore up parliamentary support ahead of the vote on Home Rule. These charges were serious enough to draw a sharp telegraphed response from the Prime Minister himself: 'Hope the good cause may triumph at Govan over the falsehood you report to me, which is the worst and blackest of all made known to me. – GLADSTONE.'<sup>83</sup>

Pearce and Sellar did not hold the corner on paternalism or the support of local worthies. For instance, ex Provost James Wilson had attended a public meeting in support of Dickson in Govan.<sup>84</sup> In any case, as the 'Partick Liberal' had suggested, Sellar had secured re-election by 3,745 votes to Liberal Robert Allan MacLean's 2,944, 'brave and true' or not. Likewise, in Govan, Pearce secured re-election against Dickson by 3,574 votes to 3,212. Both supposed Liberal strongholds had fallen early in their history as separate constituencies, but then it depended what Liberalism should be understood to entail. Speaking at a dinner held in his honour in 1887 at the Grand Hotel in Glasgow by Partick's Liberal Unionists, Sellar claimed that the present Conservative government, which he and his fellow Liberal Unionist parliamentarians provided with a majority, had a 'satisfactory programme of domestic legislation' appealing to many Liberals, and that he and his colleagues regarded the new administration as a 'Committee on Public Safety'.<sup>85</sup> In both constituencies, especially Govan, the majorities for the Unionist candidates were convincing but narrow. They could conceivably be overturned.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 10 July 1886.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 3 July 1886.

<sup>85</sup> *The Aberdeen Journal*, 24 May 1887.

The deaths in office of Pearce in 1888 and Sellar in 1890 provided the Gladstonian Liberals with a chance to recapture both constituencies from the Liberal Unionists. At the Govan by-election, called for January 1889, the Liberals this time adopted John Wilson, who was opposed by Liberal Unionist Sir John Pender, who had previously represented Totness in Devon, and then Wick Burghs in the North of Scotland.<sup>86</sup> Wilson had evidently recovered from the ill-health that forced him to decline the Gladstonians' nomination to contest the seat in 1886. Born to a Paisley grocer, Wilson had established the steel tube manufacturing firm of John Wilson and Son, with premises in Glasgow and Govan.<sup>87</sup> He was firmly pro-temperance and free state education, by compulsion if required. His other radical passion was the taxation of land values. Pender, born in Bonhill, Dunbartonshire, was a prosperous textile merchant and telegraph entrepreneur before embarking on his political career. He was a staunch supporter of local self-government, not least in the Irish context.<sup>88</sup> This was relevant, as the Govan by-election was in many respects a recapitulation of the 1886 campaign, with Pender emphasising the need to protect the integrity of the United Kingdom and Wilson seeking to appeal to the working classes on the grounds that he was better-placed than his rival to protect workers' interests. As in the previous contest, both candidates sought to draw links between national policy and the local economy. For instance, Pender, speaking to working men at Plantation on 10 January 1889, emphasised his own credentials as a former industrial apprentice, and lifelong Liberal.<sup>89</sup>

I began life as a working man myself. I have climbed up the ladder. In every step I have taken in climbing up that ladder I have more or less benefited my fellow working men. I come before you today because I have still a deep interest in the working men of this country, and if I am returned as your representative you will find that in Parliament I will stand by the best interests of the working men. (Cheers.) The working men go hand in hand in securing the great prosperity of the country. I wish to maintain that prosperity. I wish them to be benefited by that prosperity. I have been a Liberal all my life. (Cries of "Never," and cheers.) I walked as a boy in the early reform processions in Glasgow. I served as an apprentice, I believe, very near the place where I am addressing you now – in the Park Holm Works. I was there for two or three years of my early life and I shall

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<sup>86</sup> A. McConnell, 'Pender, Sir John (1816-1896)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/21831> accessed 23/12/09.

<sup>87</sup> M. Stenton and S. Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament*, Volume 2, 1886-1918, (Hassocks: Harvester, 1978), p. 377.

<sup>88</sup> Stenton and Lees, *Who's Who of MPs*, Volume 2, p. 284.

<sup>89</sup> *GH*, 10 January 1889.

never forget those early days – those early associations. (Cheers.) It is for this reason that I have come before you today. I have taken my part as a Liberal in the growing trade of the country, and I tell you, men of Plantation, that if you desire to have plenty of work – (“Oh, oh”, hooting and cheers.) – and good wages, you must stand by the flag; you must stand by the Union Jack [sic]. (Cheers.)

He went on that, with yards in Govan facing competition from Germany and Italy, this was not the time to break up the Union, nor to throw out the Conservative government. Hence, he averred, the Unionist cause and the interests of working men were at one. Skilful as this appeal appeared, Sir John did not own or serve on the boards of any local works, perhaps diluting the deference that his predecessor benefited from. In addition, his Gladstonian opponent and his associates were keen to undermine his industrial expertise. At a meeting of Wilson’s supporters in Dixon Hall, Govanhill, Sir William Collins had this to say about Pender, after praising Wilson for a lifelong commitment to social reform:

There were two gentlemen soliciting their suffrages [...]. Perhaps it would not be out of the way for him to refer to Sir John’s qualifications, or rather disqualifications. (Cheers.) In the first place, Sir John was not connected with any of the Clyde industries, at least directly, and if the companies with which he was connected had given orders to Clyde Shipbuilders he [... believed...] that this was being done in the interest of the companies and not for any special love of the working men on the banks of the Clyde.

Ex-Lord Provost Collins was a leading temperance campaigner, and his networking skills seemed to be working in Wilson’s favour, going by Pender’s somewhat dubious suggestion at Napier’s Yard on 11 January that: ‘the great and powerful organisation of teetotalism [...] whose object was to make men sober, law-abiding subjects, to raise them in the social scale, to enable them to set a good example to their fellow men’ was presently being used ‘for the purpose of destroying that empire which was the admiration of the whole world’.<sup>90</sup> In the same address, Pender also made the divisive claim that Glasgow and its suburbs had flourished through efforts ‘not by the Irish element, but by Scottish blood and Scottish energy.’<sup>91</sup> He even went so far as to claim, on grounds unclear, that New York City provided an instructive example of ‘how the Irish had destroyed every industry’.<sup>92</sup> Within a week, Pender was being ridiculed by his opponent for his publicly-expressed desire to found, at his own expense, a colony of Highlanders in Canada, where they would have ‘elbow room’, presumably as a solution to the land question. This,

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 12 January 1889.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

Wilson described as an ‘outrage upon common decency’.<sup>93</sup> By this point it is almost certain Wilson would have been aware of the *North British Daily Mail*’s allegation that Pender had been importing Belfast Orangemen to boost attendance at his meetings in poorer districts, creating an impression of working-class support.<sup>94</sup> Wilson’s own appeal to the voters was generally framed more positively – albeit patronisingly – urging that they should ‘remember the man who gave them a vote and they should do their duty by the “Grand Old Man”’.<sup>95</sup> When the votes were counted, Wilson had reclaimed Govan for the Liberals by a majority of over a thousand votes (he got 4,420 votes to Pender’s 3,349).<sup>96</sup> Would the Liberal Unionists’ nemesis be repeated at Partick’s by election a year on?

Although the sudden illness and death of Sellar took both parties in Partick by surprise, they were not caught unprepared.<sup>97</sup> It had recently been agreed, by a joint meeting of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists, that the Liberal Unionists had earned the right to contest the seat at the next general election with ‘every assistance’ from local Conservatives. Similarly, the Gladstonian camp was early-on thought likely to nominate Sir Charles Tennant, owner of Glasgow’s infamous St. Rollox chemical works, as its champion, despite various alternative names being linked with the constituency. Nevertheless, formal nominations were delayed until after Sellar’s funeral. Within a few days, at former Partick Bailie David Turnbull Colquhoun’s chambers at St Vincent St, Glasgow, the Liberal Unionists had unanimously nominated James Parker Smith of Jordanhill as their candidate.<sup>98</sup> In his first election address, delivered swiftly afterwards, Parker Smith professed the standard Liberal Unionist formula that he had been a lifelong Liberal but in recent years, this had become subordinate to the maintenance of the Union with Ireland, and he affirmed that Ireland’s problems could be solved through land reform and the application of ‘local self-government’ similar to that pertaining in Scotland and England.<sup>99</sup> He also favoured local vetoes over licensing and was against Church

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 17 January 1889.

<sup>94</sup> *NBDM*, 5 January 1889; Cawood, *Lost Party*, p. 241.

<sup>95</sup> *GH*, 15 January 1889.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 19 January 1889.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 18 January 1890.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 22 January 1890.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

disestablishment. The same day, the local United Liberal Council unanimously adopted Sir Charles Tennant to fight the by election in their interest.<sup>100</sup> His election address was issued on 23 January 1890, and in it he claimed to be a ‘staunch’ Liberal after his father and grandfather, who had taken a ‘deep interest’ in Liberal causes in Glasgow; he would desert neither their principles nor Gladstone himself.<sup>101</sup> He confirmed his support for the current Liberal programme, which he believed embodied the timeless articles of the Liberal ‘faith’, especially ‘political and religious equality’ and ‘the greatest good of the greatest number’.<sup>102</sup> ‘One man one vote’ and church disestablishment and disendowment were for him the paramount elements of this programme, but he also endorsed Irish Home Rule as a ‘sound and well-ordered measure’.<sup>103</sup> If elected, social issues would receive his ‘earnest attention’, and he was particularly in favour of strengthening the powers of county councils to entrust them with responsibility for the police and licensing matters.<sup>104</sup>

At a combined meeting of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists in Maryhill Burgh Hall, Parker Smith claimed that this election would be ‘not like those which might have gone before’.<sup>105</sup> This was an exaggeration, given that the mainstay of his election speeches concerned arguments against Home Rule. Although Parker Smith’s oratory was more measured than Pender’s had been at Govan the previous year, the emphasis was still on the ‘disloyal majority’ in Ireland, and the need to protect the empire from the threat to its integrity allegedly posed by Home Rule. Parker Smith did, however, skilfully adapt John Stuart Mill’s stance on the protection of minorities; in this case the ‘loyal’ Irish minority; into a defence of the status quo in that country.<sup>106</sup> Gladstone himself intervened in Partick by writing to endorse Tennant’s candidacy, claiming that he himself had urged the latter to stand. Parker Smith seized on this endorsement as evidence of arrogance and high-handedness, claiming that his own campaign relied not on outside ‘influence’ or

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 23 January 1890.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 25 January 1890.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

endorsements, but on the ‘conviction of the voters’.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, he made it a talking point for the rest of the campaign that in his letter Gladstone had given not ‘two words’ to mark the passing of Mr Sellar; indeed to dip into the *Glasgow Herald’s* coverage of his campaign appearances, one could be forgiven the impression that his rival was not Tennant but Gladstone himself.<sup>108</sup>

Historian Ian S. Cawood has considered the 1890 Partick by-election as part of a wider study of the history of Liberal Unionism, in which he notes both the organisational skill of the local Liberal Unionist Association and their candidate’s skill in attracting support from local Liberals and Conservatives.<sup>109</sup> There was at least circumstantial evidence that Parker Smith was prepared to sup with sectarianism in the pursuit of political power. He met with a deputation from the local Orange Order, the substance of which was not reported since it was held in private in the Burgh Hall.<sup>110</sup> The *Scotsman* reported that he had apologised to the Orangemen for ‘unguarded’ remarks he had made against them in 1886, and was evidently keen to build bridges in the pursuit of electoral success.<sup>111</sup> In a campaign that seemed to leave nothing to chance, Parker Smith also portrayed himself as ‘sound’ on temperance – i.e. in favour of prohibition.<sup>112</sup> Evidently drink was one issue which crossed the veil between municipal and parliamentary politics. Parker Smith grew so confident as to claim that his welcome reception at meetings throughout the constituency’s various districts struck him as an ‘omen of victory’.<sup>113</sup> Interestingly, UIL president T.P. O’Connor MP, who attended one of Tennant’s final campaign appearances, claimed that in 1885 the Partick Liberals had chosen Sellar as their candidate over Parker Smith because the former was held to be an ‘advanced’ (i.e. radical) Liberal compared to his ‘reactionary’ opponent.<sup>114</sup> As the example of Joseph Chamberlain himself suggests,

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> See for instance *GH*, 30 January 1890.

<sup>109</sup> Cawood, *Lost Party*, p. 52.

<sup>110</sup> *GH*, 25 January 1890.

<sup>111</sup> *Scotsman*, 31 January 1890.

<sup>112</sup> See Cawood, *Lost Party*, p. 52.

<sup>113</sup> *GH*, 25 January 1890.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 3 February 1890. For a discussion of Parker Smith’s failed 1886 campaign to become Paisley’s Liberal Unionist MP, see MacDonald, *Radical Thread*, pp. 87-90.

radicalism was never a one-way street to the ideological left-wing.<sup>115</sup> Catriona MacDonald has also emphasised that many Liberal Unionists couched their objections to Home Rule in radical rhetoric.<sup>116</sup> Parker Smith ultimately defeated Tennant by the relatively narrow margin of 4,148 votes to 3,929. If Partick could still be considered a Liberal stronghold, it was of a markedly different character to that envisaged by the Gladstonian *Govan Press* editors five years earlier.

### **Trials of strength: The Elections of 1892, 1895 and 1900**

Within months of their narrow 1890 by election defeat, the Partick Liberals selected Charles Tennant's son, Edward P. Tennant, as their parliamentary candidate for the next general election. Tennant the younger acknowledged that he was something of a 'stranger' to the division, but he hoped that he could prepare to fight a 'winning battle' for a seat he felt to be 'on fire' whilst other constituencies were still in a state of 'quietude and somnolency'.<sup>117</sup> Tennant's early adoption, with an election still likely over a year off, seems to indicate that the Partick Gladstonians were learning lessons from their previous defeats and disarray. During the long build-up to the general election campaign, one sympathetic commentator declared that the present Liberal programme marked Tennant

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Parker Smith had also stood unsuccessfully as a Liberal at West Renfrewshire in 1885 (ibid, p. 87).

<sup>115</sup> Chamberlain's alignment with the Liberal Unionists has long inspired conflicting interpretations and undermined suggestions that the party's formation represented only a 'revolt of the Whigs'. See for instance G.L. Goodman, 'The Revolt of the Whigs'; *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1959), pp. 173-189, especially at pp. 179-182, where it is argued that Chamberlain was forced to join the new party only after the failure of strategic posturing designed to undermine Gladstone and seize the Liberal leadership. Therefore, Goodman argues, the radical element in Liberal Unionism was but an aberration in the pattern of Whigs aligning to Conservatism. More recent commentators, however, have challenged this interpretation. Burness, in addition to providing a useful survey of the Scottish historiography on this question, notes that 12 of the Scottish Liberal MPs voting against Home Rule were radicals. See *Strange Associations*, pp. 46-50. Cawood's recent detailed survey of Liberal Unionist Party ideology and association concludes that the radical content of Liberal Unionism later exercised a moderating influence on Conservative (or in Scotland, Unionist) Party ideology up to and including the Premiership of Harold Macmillan. See *Lost Party*, p. 286.

<sup>116</sup> MacDonald, *Radical Thread*, p. 85.

<sup>117</sup> *GH*, 9 July 1890.

and his would-be parliamentary colleagues out as ‘advanced’ Liberals, but he implicitly rejected the notion that this crossed the boundary from radicalism to socialism.<sup>118</sup>

The Liberal electors in Partick had their own programme, and [it suggested they were] pretty well advanced Liberals. But they did not say that they had got to the end of their creed. They believed in growth. They believed in the permanence of great principles, but they believed that these principles required ever new application, according to the advancing intelligence [enfranchisement] and the advancing needs of the community. (Applause.)

Parker Smith, for his own part, declared his confidence of retaining the seat, whenever the poll was called.<sup>119</sup> When the 1892 election was held through the summer, Parker Smith held his seat by 5’005 votes to his opponent’s 4’278, following a campaign which, like the previous two, had been dominated by the Irish issue. No new battle lines had been drawn, but the Partick Liberals did appear more comfortable in their radicalism than before; not that this helped them win the seat.

How did Govan’s experience in 1892 compare? John Wilson, the sitting MP, was re-nominated by the local Liberal and Radical Association following a somewhat searching ‘interview’ by a deputation by its executive committee.<sup>120</sup> Before his re-adoption was moved, he had to satisfy the deputation as to his stance on a Merchant shipping bill thought to be prejudicial to Merchant Seamen in the Plantation district - he had attempted to ‘block’ this in Parliament, the proposed eight-hour working day for miners - he was prepared to support this if he was so guided by ‘the country’, the taxation of ground rents and feu duties -he was in favour, in addition to payment of MPs - he favoured a compromise position on this. After stating his own confidence in Mr Wilson, Purdie noted that it seemed certain there would be a Labour candidate in Govan, based on his intelligence of an organisation he called the ‘Labour Army’. He acknowledged that there was a rumour extant that he himself would be their candidate, but there was ‘no fear’ of this. Purdie believed that this organisation had sufficient funds to contest the seat, and suggested that the organisation acted as some sort of Conservative *agent provocateur*, for he feared that ‘if its history were known it would be found to have emanated from the Carlton Club, London’.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 11 November 1891.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 2 April 1891.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 22 April 1891.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

Although, in the event, only the Liberal and Conservative parties fielded candidates at the election, it was significant that the Liberal candidate had now at least to pay public lip-service to working-class interests, instead of being able to rely upon the deference that might previously have been expected by a sitting parliamentarian. There was the sense that representing the Govan Liberals had become conditional upon furthering the lot of the workers. For all that the Conservative Pearce had posed as a 'Labour' candidate in 1885, this manoeuvre came *after* his nomination and was dropped when he sought re-election. Wilson, by contrast, had already won the seat for the Liberals and might not have expected such a grilling. It remained to be seen what might happen if a Liberal candidate failed to satisfy the radicals; but this was, for now, a remote prospect. Since the Liberal Unionist candidate had failed in 1889, the Conservative party was given a chance to reclaim Govan for the right.

The Conservative candidate, Nathaniel Spens, was derided as a London carpetbagger by his Liberal opponent.<sup>122</sup> He was introduced to local Conservatives and Liberal Unionist supporters as a legal expert on labour, trade and commerce.<sup>123</sup> Spens himself acknowledged that although a 'Scotsman' and a 'Lanarkshire man by birth, by education and by residence', his business interests had taken him away from his roots and he would not have been so impertinent as to contest the seat had it not been 'impossible' to find a qualified local candidate.<sup>124</sup> This remark proved as much a hostage to Wilson's campaign rhetoric as Spens' residency.<sup>125</sup> In accepting his nomination, he explicitly acknowledged that the dividing lines between the 'Unionists' and Liberals in this election were substantively identical to those fought throughout the last decade, but what the meeting's chairman, Richard Barnwell, called 'the question of labour in relation to capital' was taking on near-equal importance to the Irish question.<sup>126</sup> In this light, Spens' appeal to the electors sought to connect the two issues thus.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 19 March 1891.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 19 February 1891.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 22 April 1891.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 19 February 1891.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

[T]he policy of the [Liberal party was] a policy of disorder and destruction. (Cheers.) It was a policy of setting sect against sect; of setting nation against nation; of setting class against class; and he ventured to think that the meeting would agree with him that the road of that policy was the road to anarchy and dissolution of this great Empire. (Cheers.) It was a policy of setting class against class, and trying to make working men believe that their interests were not bound up with the prosperity of their masters and of the country at large. With a good sense, and with good workers, he would enter upon the contest with every hope that the Govan Division would assist him in saying they were on the side of what was right and true and good and sound, and that in this respect, they shared the opinion of other divisions of Lanarkshire.

Here was a clever equation of Home Rule to anarchy and labour reform to class war. There was also the rhetorical division of workers and voters into those who were ‘good’ and those who wished to disrupt the supposedly natural order of affairs. The drawing of such distinctions was taken even further when Spens suggested that the votes of Irish migrants could rightly be ignored in favour of ‘loyal’ voters, who would, but of course, have voted Conservative or Liberal Unionist:

In 1886 the vote of Lanarkshire was 50,311 upon the Unionist side and 50,925 upon the other side. If from that 50,925 they took away the Irish vote, which was given solidly for the other side, the vote of Lanarkshire was for the Union and the Unionist party. (Cheers.) He trusted that the Govan Division, by their vote on the next occasion, would show that they supported the policy which was so dear to them all. (Cheers.)<sup>128</sup>

This was what might now be termed a ‘core vote’ strategy, though quite how Spens expected it to work, given the arithmetic he had explained, was quite unclear. Wilson took particular exception to his opponent’s claim that Liberty was the gift of all but no one should be free at another man’s expense. In contesting this argument, he put forward radical Liberal arguments that were not incompatible with socialism, albeit in a way that gave redistribution of wealth lower priority than Home Rule.

[H]is reply [to Spens] was that there were certain parties who considered that they were the favourites of heaven; that the rain which falls from the clouds, the birds that fly in the air, the fish that swim in the sea were theirs. He [Wilson] said these things were the gift of heaven and belonged to the people. (Cheers.) The Liberal party would never be satisfied until that Liberty to which reference had been made was extended yet more widely. But the work of reform must begin with the Irish people, and after that attention would be given to measures of which this country was in need. (Cheers.)<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

When the election was finally held, Spens was defeated by 1,000 votes. Within months, ILP leader James Keir Hardie, recently elected Britain's first socialist parliamentarian at West Ham, London, addressed the Govan branch at a meeting in Broomloan Hall.<sup>130</sup> He noted that Govan's appearance had changed beyond recognition from the green fields in which he had played as a child, becoming 'hideous' from industry.<sup>131</sup> Although Hardie agreed with the Liberals that Home Rule was important, he averred that the industrial 'evil was here and now, and the remedy must be here and now also.'<sup>132</sup> He went on to speak at length about the need for reduced working hours in Govan yards, praising one, unnamed yard which was already experimenting with a reduction in order to reduce the need for lay-offs by spreading work over time. The stage was set for a more assertive Labour role in Govan, if not yet Partick's parliamentary politics. 1895 would represent the new party's first 'trial of strength' (its own phrase) in either constituency in an election otherwise dominated, like those preceding it, by Irish and constitutional issues.<sup>133</sup>

The local ILP branch swiftly decided that it would contest the seat, and shortly thereafter settled on Alexander Haddow as its candidate.<sup>134</sup> The Gladstonian-inclined *Govan Press* provided the following, highly complimentary pen-portrait of candidate Haddow, a highly-able platform performer from humble beginnings and modest means (his elections expenses were being paid by subscription-list).<sup>135</sup>

As a speaker, he is superior to both Mr Wilson and Mr Ferguson [the Liberal Unionist], and he possesses the art of captivating an audience whether they will it or not. Those he fails to captivate suffer for it, for he has the knack of giving stinging replies to those who interrupt him. He is not a dressy man, nor a vain man, for he has never had his photographs taken; and when he goes on to a platform he is the same almost as he had newly come from Parkhead Forge where he works. He is well read up, and when he is speaking the quotations from various books pour

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<sup>130</sup> *GH*, 22 September 1892.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.* Hardie's stepfather David Hardie had been employed at a Govan shipyard until 1866, when he was laid off during a strike. He then found work in Lanarkshire coalmines and left the burgh, taking ten year-old James Keir with him. (See Morgan, Hardie, *ODNB*).

<sup>132</sup> *GH*, 22 September 1892.

<sup>133</sup> *GP*, 6 July 1895.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 and 13 July 1895.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 July 1895.

from his mouth like water from a spring. When he is asked a question he answers it without a moment's hesitation, and it is sharp and to the point.

For all his impressive abilities, Haddow was realistic about his prospects in this election. His principal object in standing was to 'split the Liberal and Tory vote'; this had been the Govan ILP's strategy since before he was named as their candidate.<sup>136</sup> When asked which party, Liberal or 'Unionist', he wished to 'hurt' most, he thought this a good question: 'My answer is – both.'<sup>137</sup> Of course, he and his party also wanted to take advantage of the opportunity offered by an election campaign to air their policies 'at a time when the electors are ready to listen'.<sup>138</sup> Twelve ILP members voted against his adoption, but the overwhelming majority were supportive.<sup>139</sup> At a well-attended open air meeting at Govan Cross, Haddow emphasised that he wished to conduct a 'fair and gentlemanly' campaign without personal invective, although he described working class voters who supported the other parties as 'political blacklegs', behaving contrary to their own interests.<sup>140</sup> He supported disestablishment, making favourable comparisons with the United States model of having no state church. Yet he prioritised 'dealing with the factors' over this.<sup>141</sup> Although he supported the local veto on liquor licensing, he felt that in order to be effective, this must go in hand with municipalisation of the traffic in alcohol. He claimed that although there was much of benefit to workers in Gladstone's innovative 1891 'Newcastle Programme', the Liberal party could not be trusted to honour those radical commitments. He felt that the 'claims of labour' ought to be prioritised over abstract constitutional questions such as Home Rule and House of Lords reform. In addition, he felt that the abolition of mining royalties was of questionable benefit and relatively low importance. Revealingly and with a touch of humour, Haddow shed light on the lack of a Labour candidate in the neighbouring constituency. When asked why the ILP did not

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 6 and 13 July 1895.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 13 July 1895.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 6 July 1895.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 13 July 1895.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

stand in Partick, he said: ‘the Liberal party [were] very generous in offering seats where there was no chance. Let them try Partick themselves.’<sup>142</sup>

Meantime, Govan’s sitting MP John Wilson drew criticism for claiming that no parliamentarian ‘had more sympathy for labour’ than he.<sup>143</sup> This remark, made in a speech at Govan Burgh Hall, drew a mixture of applause and laughter. When he claimed to have done ‘all he could’ to progress labour interests during the previous two parliaments, and would give his ‘earnest endeavours’ to continue this in future, someone shouted ‘Nothing’ – presumably meaning that he exaggerated the scale of his efforts.<sup>144</sup> He then faced severe questioning for his vote in favour of a marriage allowance for the Duke of Coburg at taxpayers’ expense. He also drew ridicule for his temporising stance on the eight-hour day, which he said he would support ‘all round’, but for the fact that as an employer he had to be mindful of its impact on foreign trade.<sup>145</sup> At this point, another heckler interjected: ‘That’s not the question; name your own hours.’<sup>146</sup> Uproar followed, and someone exclaimed: ‘Keir Hardie in disguise’, presumably in jest.<sup>147</sup> Although it is reasonable to surmise that the heckling emanated from a minority of ILP supporters, and was quite possibly co-ordinated, the tone of this meeting was still markedly less deferential than those held at previous elections in the burgh. James Wilson, who emphatically supported his parliamentary namesake, observed wistfully that he had been Provost of Govan for nine years and was ‘sad’ to witness a meeting like this, strongly suggesting that the change in tone was not restricted to the ILP attendees.<sup>148</sup> Wilson was not the only former Govan Provost involved in the 1895 campaign, for his successor George Ferguson was now the Liberal Unionist candidate to represent the division.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. 6 July 1895.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

Ferguson was a distiller by trade, and had graduated first from Glasgow High School and then the local University.<sup>149</sup> His residence at Trinidad Villa, Ibrox was completely disguised from the road by trees; it contained an extensive library including many rare and valuable volumes. He was also active on the Lanarkshire County Council, vice chair of the St Andrew's Ambulance Association and chair of the Samaritans' Home for Women. The *Govan Press* sketch-writer declared that his only fault was a penchant for golf. In policy terms, Ferguson opposed Home Rule - hardly unexpected, this, from a Liberal Unionist.<sup>150</sup> Yet his objections were more nuanced than the typical talking points of his local Liberal Unionist predecessors in Govan or Partick.<sup>151</sup>

Ferguson contended that Home Rule was something much more 'dangerous and complicated' than its advocates were willing to admit. Most especially, he feared that the creation of subordinate legislatures throughout the United Kingdom could only increase the dominance of Westminster, which would become the 'Imperial Parliament', thereby defeating the de-centralising ends devolution was intended to achieve.<sup>152</sup> This perspective resonates with early twenty-first century debates over the 'English Question' and asymmetrical devolution.<sup>153</sup> Almost certainly reflecting his experience heading the burgh and serving on the County Council, he suggested instead that Westminster could be relieved of the burden of private legislation, perhaps by the creation of 'some court in certain localities' to deal with this. Additionally, the powers of county and parish councils might be augmented for the better management of local affairs. On a later occasion, he intriguingly declared that Scotland 'practically had Home Rule in the shape of the legislation that had been lately passed for local government [in other words, the General

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid, 20 July 1895.

<sup>150</sup> Moore notes that in South Manchester, by 1895, the local Liberal Unionists were regarded as 'adjuncts' of the local Conservative party, and recited 'rather tired anti-Home Rule arguments', despite which they won the seat. As will be made clear in the main text above, Ferguson's Liberal Unionism was of a much more nuanced character than his South Manchester counterpart, the Marquis of Lorne, albeit unlike the latter candidate, he lost. See Moore, 'Liberalism and the Politics of Suburbia', p. 238.

<sup>151</sup> Of the wider Scottish context in 1895, Hutchison notes that the radical element in Liberal Unionism had by then led to a 'reappraisal' of policies, especially on social issues. Therefore it is not claimed that Ferguson was unique in the policies he proposed. See *Political History*, pp. 203-5.

<sup>152</sup> *GH*, 12 January 1895.

<sup>153</sup> See for instance R. Hazell, 'The English Question'; *Publius* (2006) 36 (1): pp. 37-56.

Police Statutes]’.<sup>154</sup> This was the decade where the *Govan Press* unselfconsciously reported burgh proceedings as those of Govan’s ‘Civic Parliament’.<sup>155</sup> Ferguson was no knee-jerk reactionary, although he did ‘hope that whatever was done, the empire would be maintained as it was’.<sup>156</sup> He was also clear that the Gladstonian Liberals were ‘no longer a homogeneous party’.

For all his relatively reforming instincts, Ferguson too faced scorn from local radicals. One letter to the *Govan Press* by the anonymous ‘Linthouse’ highlighted the ex-Provost’s failure to discuss Land Reform and his support for Joseph Chamberlain’s pension scheme, stating that by the time the Liberal Unionists’ proposed incremental reforms took effect, the electors would be ‘food for worms’. ‘What we want is relief now. The grave will hide our troubles long before Unionist legislators of the Chamberlain and Ferguson type can help us.’<sup>157</sup> Govan’s 1895 polling date coincided with the local Govan Fair public holiday, and there was concern in some quarters that there could be ‘rowdyism’ requiring police intervention at the end of a campaign which had ‘caused excitement, free-thinking and free-acting among the working classes.’<sup>158</sup> In the event, the *Govan Press* reported, ‘the burgh was almost deserted for a day or so while workers and their families went “down the water”’.<sup>159</sup> It cannot be discounted that the coincidence of this holiday with the local poll could have suppressed the Labour vote. Haddow was predicted to garner anything between 200 and 1,000 votes, but actually received 430. Wilson narrowly held onto the seat by 4,290 votes to Ferguson’s 4,029.

How did the Partick position compare? As has been noted, the ILP did not think its prospects of success in less-proletarian Partick justified the expense of contesting the division, which again re-enacted the Gladstonian Liberal versus Liberal Unionist feud. This was the second time sitting MP James Parker Smith defended the seat, this time against the opposition of William Lyon Mackenzie, an Edinburgh advocate.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> *GH*, 5 July 1895

<sup>155</sup> See for instance *GP*, 13 July 1895.

<sup>156</sup> *GH*, 12 January 1895.

<sup>157</sup> *GP*, 13 July 1895.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, 20 July 1895.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>160</sup> *GH*, 2 July 1895.

Mackenzie's election address noted that he had been the unanimous choice of the Partick United Liberal Council, and emphasised the need for Home Rule for all constituent nations of the United Kingdom.<sup>161</sup> He also proposed reform of the House of Lords, further franchise reform and payment of MPs, church disestablishment and disendowment, land reform and taxation, support for some form of employer liability and old age pensions, in addition to reform of mining royalties and better industrial relations. In short, he proffered Gladstone's 1891 Newcastle Programme. Parker Smith held the seat by 5,551 votes to his opponent's 4,344.<sup>162</sup> In remarks celebrating his victory, Parker Smith claimed that this had been a 'stiff fight' for a 'good cause'. He then drove round the constituency, followed by a drum and fife band carrying the Union flag and displaying Unionist colours.<sup>163</sup>

In 1900, Parker Smith faced yet another pro Home Rule challenge from a Gladstonian candidate. This time, his opponent was Robert Lambie, whose nomination by the United Liberal Council which would pay his election expenses by subscription. His challenge to Parker Smith, who had acted as a junior minister in place of a more senior Unionist minister fighting in the Second South African or Boer War, was described as 'vexatious', and by implication unpatriotic, by D.S. Riddoch, now secretary of Partick Liberal Unionist Association.<sup>164</sup> He claimed that this sort of behaviour was 'in keeping with the traditions' of the Partick Home Rulers and would 'have the same ending' as in previous contests.<sup>165</sup> Nevertheless, he urged his fellow Unionists to ensure that they took 'special care' in registering to vote, 'owing to the enormous increase of voters in this constituency'.<sup>166</sup> Lambie, who was supported by John Wilson who had just stood down as MP for Govan, questioned both the Boer War and the government's preparedness to fight it, but was sufficiently pragmatic to concede that the focus should now be on the peace settlement.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 8 July 1895.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 26 July 1895.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 15 September 1900.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 22 September 1900.

Lambie was dismissive of those who questioned his patriotism for challenging a serving minister: 'Patriotism belonged to no party and in foreign affairs policy should be above authority.'<sup>168</sup> He favoured the federalisation of Britain's colonies for defensive not aggressive purposes; perhaps in a natural extension of the notion of 'Home Rule all Round'. The rest of his policies, such as support for local vetoes, the extension of workmen's compensation and taxation of land values, were in keeping with the Newcastle programme, although like John Wilson, he supported women's votes for parliamentary elections. Although Gladstone had died, Lambie was heckled over continuing public perceptions that the Liberals faced a crisis of leadership. He was asked whether, if elected, he would follow Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman, former Prime Minister Lord Rosebery, or William Harcourt; he replied 'Bannerman, with the greatest of pleasure', but when the heckler insisted that he had no support in the country, he became defensive. 'Do you think I am here to be taught by you [the elector], sir? The Liberal party elects its leader and I have yet to learn who selects the Tory leader.'<sup>169</sup>

Although Parker Smith maintained his usual arguments against Home Rule - the *Glasgow Herald* observed that his views on this and imperial matters were now 'too well known to need recapitulation' - he still affected a more conciliatory position on issues of particular concern to working-class voters.<sup>170</sup> For instance, he claimed not to oppose an eight-hour working day, somewhat disingenuously asserting that it was not his place as a politician to interfere in other people's work, as he himself worked longer hours, especially whilst campaigning.<sup>171</sup> Similarly, he expressed sympathy for tenants of unreasonable house factors who expected missives to be signed well in advance of tenancies taking effect or needing renewal, but insisted that he did not see how legislation could help with this; 'it was practically in the hands of the tenants themselves to get what they wished carried out'.<sup>172</sup> He did, however, favour increasing the coverage of the Workmen's Compensation Act.<sup>173</sup> Whether or not Parker Smith's interest in these issues was genuine,

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 27 September 1900.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 4 October 1900.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 12 October 1900.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 4 October 1900.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 6 October 1900.

their inclusion in his re-election appeal must have reflected the demands of a significant portion of local electors.

Indeed, on the eve of polling, the *Glasgow Herald* noted that, whilst working-class electors did not dominate the constituency, their increased numbers created doubt over the continuation of Parker Smith's hitherto 'firm hold' on the seat.<sup>174</sup> Thus, he and his Unionist followers had 'left nothing undone which could turn the opinion of this new section in their favour.'<sup>175</sup> When the results were declared, Parker Smith had defeated Lambie by 6,950 votes to 4,717.<sup>176</sup> The victorious MP noted his delight that all his Partick campaigns had been fought on the basis of policies he 'really believed in'; at earlier elections the issue had been preventing Home Rule, now it was defending the empire.<sup>177</sup> Appropriately enough, he was played out to the national anthem after giving his fourth victory speech.

What was the situation in Govan? As in Partick, the ILP did not deem it useful to field a candidate, so the contest was again between pro and anti-Home Rule Liberals. As Wilson had stood down as MP, the voters were offered new candidates in the respective shapes of Liberal Robert Hunter Craig and Liberal Unionist Robert Duncan. The latter was an engineer and shipbuilder who was principal partner of his firm. He was the proprietor and editor of the literary unionist magazine, *Britannia*, seeing the promotion of 'national unity' as his life's goal and Balfour, Chamberlain and Rosebery as visionary leaders.<sup>178</sup> His rival was a local boy made good, born in Partick. He was founder and owner of a firm of steel importers, as well as a director of the Scottish Temperance Assurance Company Ltd.<sup>179</sup> Hunter Craig's election address was essentially a re-tread of the Newcastle programme, and thus difficult to distinguish from those of Liberal candidates in the 1890s. He did, however, emphasise both his local roots and his assertion that an election held now – before the electoral roll could be updated - would effectively

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 12 October 1900.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> *GP*, 19 January 1906.

<sup>179</sup> Stenton and Lees, *Who's Who of MPs*, Volume 2, p. 81.

disenfranchise ‘many thousands’ of voters in Govan and throughout the country, amounting to about a fifth of the overall electorate.<sup>180</sup> In keeping with the Newcastle programme, Home Rule was placed lower down the Liberal wish-list than it had been in the 1880s. In summary, Hunter Craig promised to give his ‘best attention’ to electors’ problems if they would ‘maintain their allegiance’ to his party.<sup>181</sup>

Meantime, Duncan, his Liberal Unionist rival, made his first campaign appearance at his own works, Messrs Ross and Duncan Engineers, Whitefield Road.<sup>182</sup> This was officially by the invitation of his own workers, which suggests more than a whiff of paternalistic deference. At the outset, he claimed that he would maintain ‘friendly relations’ with any employee who voted against him, and was keen to reassure them that arrangements had been made to protect his company’s operations, and by extension their jobs, should he go to Westminster. In policy terms, although he opposed Home Rule within the United Kingdom, he did not rule out some form of colonial federalism elsewhere in the Empire, for colonies should not be regarded as ‘mere appendages’ of the mother country. He was not opposed to curbing the trade in drink, and had no firm views on extending workmen’s compensation.

On the drink issue, he faced accusations of implied hypocrisy having spoken of the need to regulate working men’s clubs, which one heckler helpfully suggested were better known as ‘shebeens’. Duncan belonged to such a club himself; but he insisted his was a real club, not a drinking den, and as such was open to inspection. He also stated that engineers should be given greater recognition in their workplaces, and ‘getting their opinions heard’.<sup>183</sup> Duncan pithily dismissed the Liberal party as the ‘party of slackness, of feeble heads and muddled brains’.<sup>184</sup> One of Duncan’s final campaign meetings, at the New Halls in Plantation, was addressed by Andrew Bonar Law, Conservative candidate for Glasgow Blackfriars, who declared that he was at the meeting of a ‘winning candidate’.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> *GH*, 26 September 1900.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, 27 September 1900.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 6 October 1900.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, 10 October 1900.

<sup>185</sup> *GH*, 11 October 1900. Bonar Law’s background and Liberal Unionist connections are elaborated in Burness, *Strange Associations*, p. 152.

The future Prime Minister attempted to answer an unnamed local commentators confusion as to why ‘any working man could be what he called a Tory, but what [Bonar Law] would call a Unionist’, especially in ‘large urban centres of population’ like Govan and Partick. Bonar Law’s analysis was that the Liberals had spent decades ‘tinkering with the machinery of the constitution’, while the Conservatives or ‘Unionists’ had used the imperfect existing machinery to pass factory acts, workmen’s compensation legislation and public health measures, in addition to providing education.

Interesting and perceptive as these remarks may have been, Bonar Law had incorrectly predicted the election outcome. The victorious Hunter Craig declared that ‘he rejoiced to think that Liberalism had again triumphed in Govan.’<sup>186</sup> Yet the margin separating victory from defeat had been narrow, with the Liberals gaining 5,744 votes to the Liberal Unionists’ 5,580; less than two-hundred votes of a difference.<sup>187</sup> Duncan attributed the narrowness of his defeat to an early polling date compared with many other constituencies, and Hunter Craig’s opposition to the Boer war; he was thus prepared to contest the seat again in 1906.<sup>188</sup> The next phase of Govan and Partick’s parliamentary history was to be one characterised by the fluctuating fortunes of the Liberal party and the Conservative and Unionist alliance; what would be the impact of the Labour party which was growing in strength in both divisions?

### **Swings of the Pendulum? The Elections of 1906, January and December 1910, and 1911**

The 1906 general election proved surprising in its outcomes for both the Govan and Partick divisions. In the former, Conservative Robert Duncan managed narrowly to capture the seat from his new Liberal opponent, Harry S. Murray, while Labour candidate John Hill came a by-no-means distant third to the rival Liberal candidate. The combined Liberal and Labour vote of 64 per cent could be read, on the face of it, as evidence of a clear progressive majority, raising the tantalising counterfactual of what might have transpired had Labour stood aside. In Partick, Home Rule Liberal Robert Balfour brought Parker Smith’s dominance of the division’s politics to an end. The 1906 election occurred

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<sup>186</sup> *GH*, 12 October 1900.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> *GP*, 5 January 1906.

following a huge increase in the size of Partick's electorate. By 1911, the burgh's population reached 66,848, making the town one of the ten largest urban communities in Scotland, far outpacing much older royal burghs such as Perth and Stirling.<sup>189</sup> Under the restricted pre-1918 parliamentary franchise, the Partick Division by 1913 had the largest number of electors in Scotland (25,018).<sup>190</sup> Despite the additional working class voters, Labour decided not to contest the seat. What were the arguments of the local campaigns? In Govan, Harry S. Murray remained true to the Gladstonian principle of 'Home Rule All Round', but notably did not prioritise this in his first campaign speech, where he prioritised free trade and criticised the record of the recently-collapsed Unionist government under Arthur James Balfour; this had been replaced by Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman's Liberal government, which now sought its own mandate from the country.<sup>191</sup>

Robert Duncan, the Liberal Unionist candidate fought this election on similar grounds to his earlier Govan campaign. He drew criticism from hecklers pointing up the logical inconsistency between his support for free trade and his willingness to shut engineers out of his firm during industrial disputes. He was also accused by Tom Flannery, presumably an Irishman, who, despite being drowned out mid-question, appeared to suggest that Duncan was keen to stir up rivalry between Irish and Scottish workers at his yard's gates.<sup>192</sup> Duncan was steadfast in his support for a repeal of the Unemployed Workmen's Act, despite accusations that this would 'pauperise' workers; yet this was balanced by his more labour-friendly stance, following on from the recent Taff Vale decision, of favouring the legal protection of Trade Union monies during industrial disputes. He denied that his opposition to the local veto extended to the extreme of wishing alcohol to be sold to children.

If the Liberal campaign was anything to go by, there were dark undertones to the free trade issue, with heckling about using protectionism as a way to 'keep out the foreigner', in addition to shouted requests to 'ship the Chinese [labourers] home again'. Murray would not condone the former approach, which he called 'unchristian' and the

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<sup>189</sup> W. Greenhorne, *History of Partick*, p. 154.

<sup>190</sup> National Library of Scotland [NLS], Edinburgh, Archives of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Association [SCUA], Miscellaneous Files of Sir Lewis Shedden [SF] relating to constituencies of the City of Glasgow (1939), Acc. 10424/12 (iii), p. 5.

<sup>191</sup> *GH*, 6 January 1906.

<sup>192</sup> *GP*, 12 January 1906.

latter, which he felt to be unjustifiable ‘summary action’.<sup>193</sup> However, he was not averse to making xenophobic statements from the platform, for instance pointing out that for all that the 1900 election had been fought by Unionists on patriotic grounds, ‘the heathen Chinese had been introduced into South Africa [...] a funny kind of patriotism that, surely, commented Mr Murray amid laughter’.<sup>194</sup> Yet Murray was an employer himself, and Labour candidate John Hill took pains to question him on the rates he paid and his use of piece-workers. Interestingly, the *Glasgow Herald* reported these as ‘personal matters’ for the Liberal candidate, rather than legitimate campaign questions. Murray responded that his firm’s rates were comparable with others paid in the district, and he further contended that there had been no strikes or serious disputes with his workers for thirty years.<sup>195</sup> Murray’s business interests had already caused his withdrawal as a parliamentary candidate at Roxburghshire in 1898.<sup>196</sup> He represented the Border Burghs on the Liberal Party’s National Executive Council, and had been a member of Galashiels Town Council and a Colonel in his county’s volunteer regiment. He was ‘emphatically’ a supporter of the liquor trade veto.<sup>197</sup>

Asked by a heckler if he supported labour representation in parliament, in principle, he replied that he ‘certainly’ did. The heckler then, referring to constituencies won by Labour elsewhere, retorted: ‘You will have to whether you like it or not; remember Merthyr Tydfil [the Welsh iron and coal-mining constituency recently won by Keir Hardie]’.<sup>198</sup> Murray was keen to differentiate his brand of liberalism from socialism, which he dismissed as a nebulous creed.

Mr Hill talked about socialism as a remedy for all evils. What, precisely, socialism was it was very difficult to say. Mr Hill talked about liberty, equality and fraternity. That was a very fine sentiment. But already Britain had got Liberty. Equality, such as was meant in the phrase, the country had not and would never have because there was nothing in nature, to his mind, that was equal. There was no equality in the whole wide world. There was nothing to teach the people that

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<sup>193</sup> *GH*, 6 January 1906; *GP*, 19 January 1906.

<sup>194</sup> *GP*, 19 January 1906.

<sup>195</sup> *GH*, 9 January 1906.

<sup>196</sup> *GP*, 19 January 1906.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

absolute equality, in the sense that Mr Hill meant it, was a good thing. (Hear, hear and cheers.)<sup>199</sup>

John Hill, the Labour candidate, was a ship-plater who had risen to become an organising delegate of the influential Boilermakers' and Iron and Steel Shipbuilding Society.<sup>200</sup> Reflecting his own assiduousness and the increasing respectability and profile of labour representatives more generally, he had served as a member of Govan Parish Council, whose finance committee he convened. He was also a member of Govan's Distress Committee constituted under the Unemployed Workman's Act. He presided over White Street Congregational Church and was a Freemason. He distilled his appeal to the electors by noting that, since Govan had a working-class population of ninety per cent, it ought to have a working-class representative in Parliament.<sup>201</sup> Two letters to the editor of the *Govan Press* highlighted the elevated socio-economic positions of the Labour and Liberal candidates, pointedly questioning the extent to which they could legitimately claim to represent local workers, should either secure election. 'Truth' wrote that both:

Liberal and Tory candidates are employers of Labour and have the same interests at stake, which interests are diametrically opposed to that of labour. If an employer's interests are opposed to ours in business what reason have we for supposing that his interests and the workers' are not opposed in politics? His calling himself a Liberal or Tory does not alter the fact that he is an employer. No. The Liberal candidates tell us they are the enemies of privilege and monopoly and [are] the true friends of the workers. But past events prove that those statements are untrue.<sup>202</sup>

Similarly, one C. Hoey, noted that when 'it comes to a big industrial struggle, a fight for wages, what do you find? The Liberal and Tory capitalists sink their differences and fall into line to fight the workers. They do not ask you then if you are a Liberal or a Tory; no, you are only workers.'<sup>203</sup> He went on accusing both non-Labour candidates of paying low wages to their own workers. 'I wonder what the Govan shipyard workers think of that. Talk of Protection! Yes, we do need protection from that gentleman and his class. A plague on both parties. Give Labour a chance and send in Mr Hill.'<sup>204</sup> Three similar

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> *GH*, 9 January 1906.

<sup>202</sup> *GP*, 19 January 1906.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid. (It has not been ascertained if this was a relative of the radical Liberal D.G. Hoey.)

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

missives followed. When the votes were finally counted, no party could claim more than half of the votes cast: the Liberal Unionists had won with 5,224, marginally ahead of the Liberals with 5,096 and Labour with 4,212.<sup>205</sup> Evidently, the Liberals' failure to reach an accommodation with Labour in previous years, whether nationally or locally, had cost them dear. Govan Provost John Anthony, a Murray supporter, had earlier urged Liberals 'not to say one word derogatory' about Hill or Labour, recognising the threat he and his supporters now posed to Govan's reclamation as a Liberal seat.<sup>206</sup> In the year that the Labour Party was officially formed, one self-styled 'Observer' writing to the *Govan Press*, noted that 'Labour has come into its own'.<sup>207</sup> Yet there was still no Labour candidate in Partick, a seat the *Govan Press*, which no longer covered the district, noted was an 'important' constituency where the voters had to consider clearly-defined issues.<sup>208</sup>

There was little new to be said about Parker Smith's policy positions. He remained a hugely popular local speaker, with overflow arrangements and additional meetings having to be laid on at some of his appearances.<sup>209</sup> He faced difficulties over his support for protectionism, with many constituents considering that this would increase their general cost of living.<sup>210</sup> His free trade Liberal opponent, Robert Balfour, had allowed his agent to circulate in the constituency a leaflet listing some of the sitting MP's more contentious votes during a long parliamentary career.<sup>211</sup> Balfour, a Fifeshire-born merchant, was an expert on shipping and finance, making him well-placed to win the Partickonian affinity. Balfour admitted that being a 'fresh' parliamentary candidate offered advantages to those, such as himself, running against long-serving incumbents. In the course of defending the recently-formed Campbell Bannerman administration, he declared that as a self-declared 'Maryhill boy', the Prime Minister had something of a claim on the Partick division of which that district now formed a significant part. Parker Smith evidently smarted from the

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid, 26 January 1906.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 19 January 1906.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 26 January 1906.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> *GH*, 10 and 11 January 1906.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, 12 January 1906.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid, 13 January 1906.

attack on his record, and he declared that he would make no personal comments on the character of his opponent, who was a reputable businessman. However, he could not restrain himself from the observation, received with hisses, that if Balfour had used the same methods in business that he had 'sanctioned' in politics, it was doubtful that his firm would maintain its reputation.

Such remarks, coupled with the observation that local voters had known Parker Smith and his family for sixteen years, seemed increasingly valedictory. The scale of the Unionists' electoral difficulties was conceded in a letter to the editor of the *Glasgow Herald* from James McFarlane, a Parker Smith supporter from the Division's douce Dowanhill neighbourhood, urging Partick electors to return their MP as part of an 'effective opposition' to the Campbell Bannerman government.<sup>212</sup> When conceding defeat before a rally of his supporters who regaled him with 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow', he drew attention to what he felt to be an unnecessarily 'personal' campaign, and that he had 'fought to stem the flowing tide, but the tide had proved too strong for them both in Partick and in other parts of the country.'<sup>213</sup> The victorious Balfour acknowledged his supporters at Partick Cross and Whiteinch when the results were declared. He would remain Partick's MP until 1922, matching Parker Smith's record.

In 1910, the year which began and ended with two general elections arising from the opposition to Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George's 1909 'People's Budget' from the Conservative and Unionist-dominated House of Lords, both Partick and Govan remained Liberal constituencies at both elections. In Partick, Balfour twice defeated Liberal Unionist Candidate Archibald White Maconochie; who had been MP for East Aberdeenshire from 1900 until he was defeated in 1906. Although both polls saw the two candidates separated by narrow margins, the December 1910 turnout was a little higher than that for the January contest and the result was even closer. The January

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 25 January 1906.

<sup>213</sup> *GH*, 26 January 1906. Hutchison notes that this general election saw Scotland swing 'sharply' back to Liberalism, and that this position remained virtually unchanged in both 1910 polls. The experience in Partick, but not Govan, thus fell in with the national picture before 1914. See Hutchison, *Political History*, p. 218. Savage similarly notes the influence of the 'shifting character of national (United Kingdom) politics' in laying the groundwork for Labour success at Preston after 1906, whilst also emphasising the need to consider local factors. Savage, *Dynamics*, p. 148. Lancaster's study of Leicester also notes that there, Liberal organisation in working-class neighbourhoods was becoming increasingly eclipsed by that of Labour, culminating in the constituency's 1906 election of James Ramsay MacDonald as its MP. Lancaster, *Radicalism*, p. 182.

results were 10,093 votes for Balfour against 9,522 for Maconochie; the December results were 10,535 for Balfour against 10,190 for Maconochie. As there was, again, no Labour candidate, it is only possible to speculate what the impact of such a candidate's presence might have been in such close contests; even a few hundred votes for Labour at the expense of the Unionists might have handed victory to the latter. It was likely for this reason that, although, 'strong' in Partick, Labour threw its lot in with the Liberals and their candidate Robert Balfour.<sup>214</sup> How did the campaign rhetoric develop in Partick at both elections, aside from the general debate about the merits of the budget?

On the eve of polling in January, Maconochie received telegraphic well-wishes from former Conservative Prime Minister Balfour and from the Liberal Unionist leading light Joseph Chamberlain.<sup>215</sup> Balfour admonished the Partick electors, who had in 1906, to his mind, failed 'to realise how vital to Imperial and national prosperity are the causes for which you are fighting'.<sup>216</sup> He now, however, looked 'forward with confidence to the [...] return of the division to its former allegiance of Unionism.' Given that Partick was now the largest constituency in Scotland in terms of its number of electors - with 23,300 on its roll - it clearly carried some prestige for the party which could claim victory there.<sup>217</sup> Maconochie faced accusations that, while MP for East Aberdeenshire, he had failed to declare his interest as shareholder in a company that profited from the Second South African War.

No less a luminary than Daniel Macaulay Stevenson, soon to serve as Glasgow's Lord Provost, wrote to the *Glasgow Herald's* letters page that Maconochie's commercial interests would have prevented 'any honourable man' from seeking election.<sup>218</sup> Maconochie had expressed some rather convoluted positions on the campaign trail; for instance he agreed with women's enfranchisement based on the property qualification, but did not favour 'one man one vote'.<sup>219</sup> In a similar contortion he condemned the Liberal government for its record on unemployment, yet admitted that as an employer he had laid

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<sup>214</sup> *GH*, 26 January 1906.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid*, 25 January 1910.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid*, 12 January 1910.

off 1,000 men, ‘but he wanted them back’.<sup>220</sup> He had also declared that ‘as an employer of labour his interests were bound up with his men’, and parlayed this into a defence of trade protectionism as a defence against ‘unfair foreign competition’.<sup>221</sup> He also insinuated that there would have been significantly less unemployment in Partick over the past few years had the government been more willing to engage in a naval shipbuilding race with Germany.<sup>222</sup> Robert Balfour had responded that this ‘scare’ was ‘unfortunate and unpatriotic’, contending that the Liberal government had made more than adequate preparations for naval defence.<sup>223</sup> How did the Partick debates during the December 1910 general election, called following the collapse of the conference on reform of the House of Lords, compare?<sup>224</sup>

When Maconochie was re-adopted as the Partick Liberal Unionist candidate, he argued that now was the time for the electors to make a stand for the ‘supremacy of the people’ against Liberal ‘demagoguery’.<sup>225</sup> He described the election as being ‘of a hurricane nature, unfairly forced upon the country at short notice.’<sup>226</sup> When Balfour was re-adopted by the Liberal Association, he was warmly introduced by former Glasgow Lord Provost Sir Samuel Chisholm, who noted that the local Liberal MP had now twice been elected to represent a seat ‘long regarded as a private preserve of the Tory party’.<sup>227</sup> Balfour himself spoke of the need for his party to gain a mandate from the voters to ‘rebalance’ the United Kingdom’s constitution away from landed interests inimical to the ‘working man’.<sup>228</sup> He again opposed protectionism. If there was little new here, the

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 7 January 1910.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 11 January 1910.

<sup>224</sup> The classic, if now regarded as somewhat *passé*, account of the Budget crisis is contained in G. Dangerfield, *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997 [1935]), pp. 37-68 (‘Their Lordships Die in the Dark’). A more recent, if less colourful account can be found in B.K. Murray, ‘The Politics of the “People’s Budget”’, *The Historical Journal* (1973), 16, pp. 555-570.

<sup>225</sup> *GH*, 25 December 1910.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, 10 December 1910.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid, 25 December 1910.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 30 November 1910.

regurgitation of long-running controversies was not confined to the Liberals. Maconochie raised the issue of Home Rule, which remained high on the Liberal agenda, albeit having recently taken a lower priority to the budget and Lords reform. Maconochie, showing little knowledge of the previous quarter century of political and electoral history, declaring that the Home Rule issue ‘was greater than any which had previously been known in the history of the country’.<sup>229</sup> Balfour responded that ‘Home Rule was a very good thing’, emphasising that it should be implemented not just in Ireland but in the United Kingdom’s other constituent nations; he ‘did not find any evil’ in countries federal constitutional structures such as the United States, Canada, Australia and South Africa.<sup>230</sup> On the issue of Lords reform, Maconochie favoured the referendum approach to resolving the issue, and felt that in the use of such an instrument, ‘out of the present turmoil would come good for the people’.<sup>231</sup> Balfour did not support the use of a referendum, as he argued that the will of the people had already been expressed but had been subverted by the unelected upper house. Balfour’s eventual victory bucked local and Scottish trends, with the *Glasgow Herald* noting that the Partick Liberal vote was stronger than that in Govan and North West Lanark, which was surely a testament to the popularity of the sitting MP.<sup>232</sup>

How did developments in Govan compare? The three-cornered January 1910 contest in Govan was more complex than Partick’s two-horse race. Robert Duncan, the sitting Conservative MP who had wrested the seat from the Liberals by a mere 128 votes in 1906, stood for re-election against Liberal candidate William Hunter and Labour candidate James Thomas Brownlie. Hunter commenced a strenuous campaign in favour of the Budget and Lords reform.<sup>233</sup> Brownlie was a prominent organiser in the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and, according to the *Glasgow Herald*, a ‘fluid and convincing speaker’ who was able to attract ‘enthusiastic’ crowds.<sup>234</sup> When the results were declared, Hunter had won with a convincing plurality. He received 6,556 votes against

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid, 5 December 1910.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid, 6 December 1910. This was decades before the 1948 introduction of *Apartheid* in South Africa.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, 7 December 1910.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, 14 December 1910.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 5 January 1910.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

Duncan's 5,127 and Brownlie's creditable 3,545.<sup>235</sup> Hunter declared that his 'magnificent' victory meant Govan 'had returned to its old faith in Liberalism' and a heckler declared 'we are going to keep it'.<sup>236</sup> All this rather ignored that well over half the votes cast had been against the Liberals.

Duncan's losing campaign had focused on the three key issues of tariff reform, land taxes in the budget, and the naval race with Germany.<sup>237</sup> He was staunch in his defence of the House of Lords' actions in voting down the budget, claiming that had they not exercised this right, the voters would have asked "'What are you really there for?'"<sup>238</sup> He had claimed that the budget would jeopardise jobs, but this was rubbished by his Liberal opponent.<sup>239</sup> Hunter's appeal was primarily based on the Liberal government's record of domestic reforms and the need to further these by passing the 1909 Budget, although he also emphasised that Home rule need not imply separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom.<sup>240</sup> Labour candidate Brownlie accused Hunter and the Liberals of having only 'one string to their bow', namely the budget.<sup>241</sup> His appeal included opposition to the tax on tobacco (supported by Hunter), which he saw as 'one of the necessities of life for millions of the working classes', and support for the 'old Radical dogma of the unsexed breakfast table' – apparently a hint at votes for women.<sup>242</sup> Less obscurely, he had earlier explained that his priority was in reducing unemployment, particularly in the case of workers being made superfluous through the introduction of new machinery.<sup>243</sup> He averred that unemployment 'would never be solved either through the budget or by tariff

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid, 6 January 1910.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> He said that these were the 'three great questions' which appeared more interesting to the electors than others. *GH*, 22 January 1910.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, 8 January 1910.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, 1 January 1910.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid, 24 January 1910.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 17 January 1910.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, 14 January 1910.

reform'.<sup>244</sup> He also favoured free universal education from school up to university level.<sup>245</sup> Following his election as Govan's MP, Hunter was appointed Solicitor General for Scotland, requiring him to face a by-election in the constituency in April 1910; he was returned uncontested. He faced a further ordeal in December 1910: a straight fight with new Conservative challenger George Balfour. Labour decided not to field a candidate, although a subcommittee had been convened to consider this possibility.<sup>246</sup> On a tactical level, it was clear that a Labour candidacy could unintentionally split the 'progressive' vote and risk a Conservative victory. Hutchison suggests it is likely that Labour probably sat it out due to organisational weaknesses, whilst noting that this made a 'striking' contrast with the party's success in winning the re-configured seat in 1918.<sup>247</sup> A similar position obtained in the Glasgow divisions of St. Rollox and Tradeston.<sup>248</sup>

Hunter's election address, made on the occasion of his formal re-nomination by Govan Liberal and Radical Association, at the Gladstone Memorial Institute, defended the record of the Liberal government in which he now served as a minister.<sup>249</sup> He expressed disappointment at the collapse of the conference on reforming the veto powers of the House of Lords which had led to the present general election being called. Like Robert Balfour, his Partick counterpart, he questioned the utility of public referenda to settle constitutional questions.<sup>250</sup> George Balfour was introduced as the 'Unionist' candidate at a crowded meeting, chaired by former Provost James Kirkwood. His address connected the Liberal policy on House of Lords reform with an alleged ulterior motive to promote Home Rule for Ireland. He also suggested that the Liberals would seek to reverse the recent Osborne Judgement requiring employees to 'contract in' to a trade union as opposed to

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid, 12 January 1910.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 26 November 1910.

<sup>247</sup> Hutchison, 'Working-Class Politics', p. 119.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid. At the 1911 Govan by-election, the ILP concluded that a candidate of its own would fail, although it would have been more optimistic had a trade union nominee stood with Labour backing. (Ibid, p. 120.)

<sup>249</sup> *GH*, 25 November 1910.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, 3 December 1910.

‘contracting out’. He claimed that he would only support such a reversal if the voters and trade unionists demanded it.

Balfour emphasised what he perceived as a need to ensure that British subjects emigrating to the colonies should be bound by not merely by sentiment by ‘ties of Empire rendering them inseparable from the Mother Country’, although he was vague as to how this might be achieved.<sup>251</sup> He defended the House of Lords while conceding that the Commons, as the elected chamber, should dominate. He supported tariff reform, but his appeal’s audacious peroration was to the effect that the Liberal party had lost touch with its values, which he contended now reposed with his own party. ‘In conclusion he asked [the voters] to rally round the real Liberalism and say emphatically that the Unionist and Conservative Party now stood for the old Liberal Party, and that they stood for the old Liberal policy of true peace, retrenchment, and reform. (Applause.)’<sup>252</sup> He repeated these arguments throughout the campaign, for instance at Govan’s New Electric Theatre on 1 December, this time claiming that the Conservatives were the ‘True Liberal Party’.<sup>253</sup> When the votes were counted, Hunter had retained the division by 8,409 votes to Balfour’s 6,369.<sup>254</sup> Although defeated, Balfour claimed to be heartened by the number of votes he received, which represented the biggest poll that had ever been given to any Unionist candidate’ in Govan, and, somewhat disingenuously reflecting that he would rather have gone to Parliament representing an absolute majority of the people’ or not at all.<sup>255</sup>

Balfour made a final attempt to become Govan’s MP the following year, when Hunter was elevated – perhaps ironically - to the House of Lords following his appointment as a Senator of the College of Justice in late 1911. He was, however, defeated by Liberal Daniel Turner Holmes, born in Irvine, Ayrshire: a literary academic

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 26 November 1910.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid, 1 December 1910.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid, 14 December 1910.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

and schoolteacher who had married Margaret Edie, daughter of a former Paisley provost.<sup>256</sup> Prior to his election as MP for Govan, he had published volumes entitled *A Scot in France and Switzerland* and *Literary Tours in the Highlands of Scotland*. He was a long-serving Liberal activist in the west of Scotland and retained the seat until the first post war General Election in 1918, which brought an irreversible change to Liberal fortunes in Govan. The 1911 by-election campaign focused primarily on the Liberal government's 1911 National Insurance Bill, which Balfour opposed and Holmes defended, in addition to Home Rule which remained on Prime Minister Asquith's agenda.<sup>257</sup> Balfour insisted that following the passage of the 1911 Parliament Act, Britain had become a less than 'democratic' country where a 'single chamber' Parliament relied on the 'dictates' of Irish National leader John Redmond, whom he claimed distorted the entire political process in pursuit of Irish Home Rule.<sup>258</sup> Holmes countered by claiming that, in terms of the Irish Question, 'it ill behoved those who belonged to a country sanctified by the heroism of Wallace and Bruce to sneer at the legitimate aspirations of the Irish nation.'<sup>259</sup> He introduced himself to the Govan electors as 'a Radical, and that meant a lot. (Laughter.) It meant a land-reformer - (applause) - it meant a temperance reformer - (applause) - and in Scotland it meant Home Rule for Scotland (applause).'<sup>260</sup> When the results were declared, Turner Holmes had won by just under a thousand votes (7,508 against 6,522 for Balfour).<sup>261</sup> This, the last pre-war election in Govan, suggested that the Liberal and Unionist parties remained in close competition, and that the local Labour party remained happy to tacitly support Liberal candidates, whether as the lesser of two evils, or in recognition of a tacit progressive alliance in lieu of an expanded franchise that could offer socialism a more realistic prospect of electoral success.

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<sup>256</sup> *The Times*, 25 April 1955 (obituary). His daughter, Margaret Eadie Wedgwood Benn was the mother of Tony Benn MP. See R.T. Stearn, 'Benn, Margaret Eadie Wedgwood, Viscountess Stansgate (1897–1991),'; *ODNB*, OUP <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50714>, accessed 1/4/10.

<sup>257</sup> *GH*, 8 December 1911.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 December 1911

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 25 December 1911.

## Conclusion

Contrary to the expectations of most press commentators, the parliamentary constituencies into which Govan and Partick were formed in 1885 were not straightforwardly Liberal strongholds. Nor, overall, were they especially radical. To be sure, the 1886 Liberal split over Home Rule seriously disrupted the party politics of the period covered in this chapter, making it impossible to know how parliamentary politics in both divisions might have progressed had Gladstone not taken up the banner of Home Rule and had Chamberlain and others not so strenuously opposed it. It was evident, even before the 1886 controversies, that the Govan and Partick Liberals were not especially united or integrated.

However, the 1885 victory of Conservative candidate William Pearce at Govan, occurring before the schism occurred, serves to suggest that, even had the Liberals remained relatively united against the Conservatives, their dominance of local politics was highly questionable. Pearce's attempt to pose as a 'Labour' candidate, for all its insincerity derided by opponents and editorials at the time, captured sufficient working class support to take the seat. The 1886 Liberal division brought with it a division in the local political elite, after which it was not easy to predict which side local worthies might gravitate towards. For instance, the conversion of former radical councillor and bailie David Turnbull Colquhoun to Liberal Unionism was at least counterintuitive.

Yet, great as the 1886 disruption was, it drew relatively stable and coherent battle lines for national and local politics up to the onset of the first war. This is not to suggest that Home Rule was the only issue of electoral controversy from 1886 until 1910, but it did appear to be the central dividing line in party politics and in local campaigns throughout all the elections above, with the possible exceptions of those of 1900 and 1906; but even then the issue was debated. Still, beneath this apparently stable surface, the ILP's membership numbers and organisational powers were growing, supported at a national level by the new Labour Party and the Scottish Workers' Representation Committee.<sup>262</sup> In Partick, Labour appeared to be the dog that did not bark, while in Govan, it performed creditably as a third party alternative to the Liberals and the Conservative-Unionist alliance. The post war expansion of the electorate to near democratic levels (contrasting with the pre-1918 'selectorate' based on property qualifications) would provide a fairer test of the new party and its ability to win the support of voters in Govan and Partick. As is seen in chapter eight, these developments posed new challenges for a Liberal party that could no longer

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<sup>262</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, p. 57.

automatically rely upon working class support, nor upon increasingly hollow claims of radicalism.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> The Govan experience, if not that of Partick, echoes Matthew Roberts' recent reflection that by 1918, Labour had succeeded in 'cracking' the two-party system (if such ever existed) and the party had 'now become a serious contender for political power'. Roberts, *Political Movements*, p. 144. Despite its Anglo-centric title, this book also considers the Scottish experience.

## **Chapter 8**

‘We are not competing with the socialists’:

Parliamentary Politics and Liberal Decline, c.1918-1924

The War has made some of the old social and political problems here at home more acute, and it has brought into existence new problems which did not confront us in days gone by, or did not confront us except as somewhat dim figures in a remote future. Many of these problems cannot be solved by the old formulae; and the power of Liberalism and of the Liberal party to deal with them will be the true test of the flexibility and vitality of our Liberal creed.

Herbert Henry Asquith, address on ‘Liberalism after the War’ to electors at the Paisley by-election, 28 January 1920<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

The decline of Partick and Govan as self-governing communities, culminating in their annexation by Glasgow, is best understood in the context of the emerging socialist challenge to Liberalism and its ethos of local self-government, as has been discussed in the previous two chapters. In chapter seven, it was noted that the Liberal Party, even by 1910, struggled to recover from the Home Rule divisions of the 1880s, and found it difficult to define itself in contrast to the emerging ideological challenge of socialism, which was increasingly adopting the language of progressive radicalism.

This chapter takes the analysis of the Partick and Govan parliamentary constituencies into the 1910s and 1920s, highlighting the worsening tensions within Liberal ranks regarding radicalism, classical liberalism and moderate socialism as they played out in both communities during general election campaigns. After the first war, the Liberal party was riven not just by the mutual loathing of Lloyd George, Asquith and their respective followers, but by a more fundamental ideological quandary. With politics becoming increasingly polarised between left and right, the Liberals were torn between countervailing impulses in their own ambiguous ideological traditions.<sup>2</sup> The rise of Labour presented the problem of how to compete with socialism without compromising the Liberal tradition of progressive radicalism. On the right, the 1912 fusion of Liberal Unionism with the Conservative party suggested an alternative for those who saw anti-socialism as the priority in Scotland. William Diack, an Aberdonian trade unionist and frequent contributor to the progressive, pro-Home Rule *Scottish Review*, summarised the Liberals’ dilemma

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<sup>1</sup> H.H. Asquith, *Speeches by the Earl of Oxford and Asquith*, K.G. (London: Hutchinson, 1927), pp. 247-8.

<sup>2</sup> C. Cook, *The Age of Alignment: Electoral Politics in Britain, 1922-1929* (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 224-8.

insightfully, proposing a solution based on the radical 1892 Newcastle Programme, discussed in the previous chapter:

[T]here might be a future for Liberalism as the friend and ally of Labour. With vigorous and enlightened leadership, with a genuine programme of social reform and land reform, with bold advocacy of the people of Scotland to manage their own affairs, their own land, and their own mines – with such a programme, it might have been possible, in alliance with Labour and Nationalism, to have swept Scotland from John O' Groat's House to the Tweed. For such a rejuvenated Liberalism there would probably be a legitimate place – but Liberalism as expounded by Mr. Asquith at Paisley, is a moribund and superfluous creed. It is Liberalism in the grip of the dead hand, and the verdict of Scotland on such a party, and such a policy, will assuredly be: "because you are neither cold nor hot, but luke-warm, I will spue [sic] thee out of my mouth."<sup>3</sup>

Competition for the radical inheritance would determine the future of left-of-centre politics for Scotland, if not Britain.<sup>4</sup> In the Scottish context, historian Catriona MacDonald has elaborated a 'radical thread' with many strands, which could never be fully grasped by any one political party.<sup>5</sup> Considering politics in Paisley, a textile town to the south-west of Glasgow, MacDonald identified a thread so complex and ambiguous that it could be traced in the rhetoric of Liberal Unionist politicians like former Partick MP James Parker Smith (who had unsuccessfully contested Paisley, a major thread-making town, in 1886).<sup>6</sup> The radical legacy was inherently contradictory, and thus malleable by rival political parties, particularly where voters had difficulty distinguishing between party programmes. Paisley Liberals had by the mid-1920s betrayed their heritage as a party of reform and radicalism, conceding this to Labour, whose 'socialism' resembled the radical programme. Developments in Partick and Govan conformed broadly to the pattern identified by MacDonald, but by no means exactly, as will be seen.

Liberal decline owed more to the progressive wing of the Liberal party's inability to realise its aspirations than to fundamental ideological differences with Labour, particularly in Scotland. William Knox draws attention to the ways in which the Great

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<sup>3</sup> W. Diack, 'The Moral of Paisley'; *Scottish Review*, 43:97 (1920), pp. 46-7.

<sup>4</sup> W.H. Fraser, *Scottish Popular Politics: From Radicalism to Labour*, (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2000), p. 158.

<sup>5</sup> MacDonald, *Radical Thread*, pp. 55, 87-90 and 280-282. See also her 'Locality, tradition and language in the evolution of Scottish Unionism: a case study, Paisley 1886-1910' in *Unionist Scotland*, pp. 52-72 at pp. 66-68.

<sup>6</sup> MacDonald, *Radical Thread*, p. 290.

War had sown the seeds of Liberal decline, not least of all by forcing Labour to disassociate itself from Marxists such as John MacLean, and to adopt gradualism over revolution and direct action in the quest for parliamentary socialism.<sup>7</sup> This study examines how two local Liberal parties ceded this ground to Labour, which learned to appropriate radical issues and rhetoric in the pursuit of electoral success, as can be seen in the analysis of contemporary rhetoric.

Why consider Partick and Govan in this context? It is sometimes argued that Glasgow dominates historiography of this period, at the expense of other interesting cities and regions.<sup>8</sup> Studies of other areas should be encouraged, but would not undermine Glasgow's importance. After all, the city's population was roughly one-fifth of the Scottish total by 1921.<sup>9</sup> As has already been seen throughout this thesis, Partick and Govan themselves assert credible claims to attention, due to their history as autonomous industrialised communities, developing, at least in administrative terms, 'quite separately' from the city before annexation in 1912.<sup>10</sup> Inhabitants retained a sense of pride in their old burghs as late as the 1950s.<sup>11</sup> Partick was the most resilient among Liberal seats in Glasgow, falling only in 1923.<sup>12</sup> In 1922 it was the only seat in west Scotland, and one of just a few in Britain, to be contested by both wings of the Liberal party, unhindered by Labour or Unionist opponents.<sup>13</sup> Afterwards, Glasgow waited sixty years to return a Liberal-inclined candidate, in the form of the Social Democratic party's Roy Jenkins at the 1982 Hillhead by-election.<sup>14</sup> Given these characteristics, Partick is a distinctive case for

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<sup>7</sup> W.W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1999), p. 232.

<sup>8</sup> MacDonald, *Radical Thread*, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> The 1921 Census put the city's population at 1,034,174  
<<http://www.glasgowguide.co.uk/info-facts1.html>> accessed 21/8/10.

<sup>10</sup> A. Matheson, *Glasgow's Other River: Exploring the Kelvin*, (Ayr, 2000), p. 194.

<sup>11</sup> J. Cunnison and J.B.S. Gilfillan (eds.), *The City of Glasgow, The Third Statistical Account of Scotland*, (Glasgow, 1958), p. 437.

<sup>12</sup> Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results 1885-1918*, p. 550; *British Parliamentary Election Results 1918-1949*, (Glasgow: PRP, 1977), p. 594.

<sup>13</sup> *Scotsman*, 2 November 1922; Michael Dyer, *Capable Citizens and Improvident Democrats: The Scottish Electoral System, 1884-1929*, (Aberdeen: SCP, 1996), p. 128.

<sup>14</sup> R. Douglas, *Liberals: the History of the Liberal and Liberal Democrat Parties* (London: Hambledon, 2005), 289. For discussion of Jenkins' attitude to Liberalism circa 1982, see

analysis and, considering its population, a useful but far from typical indicator of broader electoral trends. If Partick was distinctive among Glasgow and Scottish constituencies for the longevity of its Liberal representation, Govan could not present a starker contrast. It was the second Glasgow constituency to elect a Labour MP, and did so continuously until 1950 when it briefly returned to Unionism. Thereafter its Westminster representation was dominated by Labour, aside from the 1973 and 1988 by-election victories for the Scottish National Party's husband-and-wife team, Margo MacDonald and Jim Sillars, respectively.<sup>15</sup> The analysis in this chapter considers the rhetoric and results in both constituencies in this turbulent period in electoral politics.

How were the constituencies affected by the new electoral boundaries? Partick East, the poorest ward of the former burgh, was subsumed into the Hillhead parliamentary division in 1917. This, combined with the removal of the northern Maryhill district (also a former burgh) meant that the new Partick parliamentary division was composed of the Whiteinch and Partick West wards, making it Glasgow's least populous constituency, with an electorate of 58,000.<sup>16</sup> The vast, working class Whiteinch ward contained the neighbourhoods of Knightswood, Temple and Scotstoun. The average population of a Glasgow seat was 70,000, lending justice to the charge that the constituency was over-represented, especially given that Glasgow's most populous Gorbals division had 90,000 electors.<sup>17</sup> The socialist weekly, *Forward*, whilst admitting the difficulties faced by the Boundary Commissioners, found many of their decisions 'objectionable'.<sup>18</sup> The *Glasgow Herald*, hardly the most radical publication in the city, noted that 'this is hardly one vote, one value'.<sup>19</sup> The new boundaries increased the electoral influence of electoral minorities in the new seat, especially in close contests.

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I. Crewe and A. King, *SDP: The Birth, Life and Death of the Social Democratic Party* (Oxford, 1997 [1995]), 62, and Marquand, *Progressive Dilemma*, pp. 191-3.

<sup>15</sup> Fraser, *Scottish Popular Politics*, p. 166; J. Mitchell, 'Scotland in the Union, 1945-95'; Devine, T.M. and Finlay, R.J., *Scotland in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1996), pp. 85-101 at p. 96.

<sup>16</sup> *GH*, 5 and 6 October 1917.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 21 June 1917.

<sup>18</sup> *Forward*, 19 October 1917.

<sup>19</sup> *GH*, 21 June 1917.

Partick's and Govan's parliamentary loyalties before 1906 left a complex legacy for the inter-war years. At its heart lay the creation of the modern Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, resulting from a merger of the Liberal Unionist and Conservative party machinery during the 1912 Home Rule 'crisis'. Until 1925, the term 'Unionist' was commonly used to denote candidates with Conservative and Unionist beliefs, but this concealed profound ideological divisions.<sup>20</sup> The term 'Unionist' will be used here to identify such candidates before 1925, although some of the sources quoted use the term 'Conservative' interchangeably. As was seen in chapter seven of this thesis, Liberal Unionist MPs represented Partick from 1886 until 1906. The rhetoric of parliamentarians Alexander Craig Sellar (who represented Partick from 1885 to 1890) and James Parker Smith (from 1890 to 1906) highlighted their subordination of 'Liberal' values to maintenance of the territorial and constitutional integrity of the United Kingdom. This approach made it relatively straightforward for Liberal Unionist and later Unionist candidates to secure the votes of Partick's peculiarly influential Orange Order.<sup>21</sup> As has been seen, an early indication of this body's political influence lay in Parker Smith's public apology for earlier 'unguarded' remarks about the order during his first Partick campaign in 1890, indicating his perception that their votes were vital.<sup>22</sup> Parker Smith's unexpected 1906 defeat by Liberal Robert Balfour was termed a 'political re-lapse' by a Unionist Party official, but if this were so, the recovery was not swift.<sup>23</sup> In each pre-war election aside from 1885, voters faced a clear choice between Liberal and Unionist candidates. Balfour's knife-edge victories in both 1910 elections (by 3 and then 1.6 per cent, compared to 8.6 per cent in 1906) defied widely held expectations that Partick would return to Unionism.<sup>24</sup> With no parliamentary contests from 1910 until 1918, party support in the constituency cannot be measured for that period. Yet the narrowness of Balfour's pre-war victories showed that the Liberals' continued hold on the new Partick seat could not be assumed.

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<sup>20</sup> A.J. Davies, *We, The Nation: The Conservative Party and the Pursuit of Power* (London: Abacus, 1995), p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Scotsman*, 31 January 1890 and 26 November 1929.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 31 January 1890.

<sup>23</sup> National Library of Scotland [NLS], Edinburgh, Archives of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Association [SCUA], Miscellaneous Files of Sir Lewis Shedden [SF] relating to constituencies of the City of Glasgow (1939), Acc. 10424/12 (iii), p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Stothers, *Xmas & New Year Annual*, p. 166.

The focus in this part of the thesis is on parliamentary elections, yet for context, it is useful to consider Partick's and Govan's municipal elections in the decades immediately following on from the amalgamation of both burghs in 1912. As Irene Maver emphasises, the involvement in Glasgow's municipal politics of the anti-socialist 'Moderate' alliance of Unionists, Liberals and various 'non-political' interest groups make direct comparisons between council and parliamentary election results in this period 'fraught with difficulty'.<sup>25</sup> Despite such obstacles, Iain McLean and James Smyth have made innovative use of municipal data in their respective studies of the rise of Labour.<sup>26</sup> Such analysis lies beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is noteworthy that the Moderates were so successful in Partick between 1920 and 1929 that no Labour councillor was elected for any Partick ward before 1929.<sup>27</sup> This contrasts with the ILP's breakthrough capture of 45 Glasgow council seats in 1920.<sup>28</sup> Govan's post-annexation municipal elections contrasted markedly with those in her former sibling burgh. In 1912, former Govan Town Councillor John Sharp Taylor, standing in the ILP interest, topped the poll in the city's new Fairfield Ward.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Govan's last Provost David Pollok McKechnie and two of his colleagues were elected uncontested for the Ibrox ward.<sup>30</sup> 1914 saw Peter C. Cairns of the National Union of Ship Stewards win the Plantation ward, and by 1920, these wards alongside Govan Central and Ibrox saw Labour candidates top the poll.<sup>31</sup> In 1920, Mary Barbour, who had been instrumental in the Rent Strike Campaign, was elected one of the Fairfield representatives.<sup>32</sup> Another telling indication of the former burghs' increasingly contrasting political complexions was that Govan's former provosts David Pollok McKechnie and

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<sup>25</sup> Maver, *Glasgow*, p. 235.

<sup>26</sup> See I. McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, (Edinburgh [1983], 2000) and Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, *passim*.

<sup>27</sup> The post-1912 municipal analysis for Partick is abstracted from M.G. Pugh, 'Liberal Decline: the Case of Partick, 1918-1924', (unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Glasgow University, 2004), pp. 33-42.

<sup>28</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p. 235.

<sup>29</sup> *GH*, 6 November 1912.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 November 1914 and 5 November 1919.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 November 1920.

James Kirkwood lost their seats on Glasgow Town Council in 1919, whilst their Partick counterpart Thomas Stark Brown retained his seat into the 1920s.<sup>33</sup>

Smyth justifiably questions the notion of common cause between Labour and Liberalism in the interwar period, arguing that the choice facing voters was increasingly a polarised one between Unionists and Liberals on the right, and Labour on the left.<sup>34</sup> The following analysis emphasises that, in the early inter-war period, these developing ideological boundaries were somewhat more indistinct, even as they tended to coalesce overall as the decade continued. Brief consideration of the career of one of Partick's longest-serving post-annexation councillors highlights the dangers of simplifying partisan affiliation in this period. John Izett topped the ward poll in Partick West in 1920, and in 1923 he defeated his Labour opponent, Adam Storey McKinlay, by a margin of 2,000 votes.<sup>35</sup> Izett, a draper by trade and a former radical Liberal Young Scot, had represented Partick on the council since 1912. Despite frequently claiming to hold Liberalism as his 'sheet-anchor', he commanded respect from socialist candidates in his own ward; his early municipal career saw him regularly vote with Labour in the City Chambers.<sup>36</sup> When he was finally defeated by Labour candidate Andrew Hood in 1929, he moved towards Unionism, despite standing unsuccessfully as Labour's parliamentary candidate for Hillhead, as recently as 1918. Hood later served as Lord Provost of Glasgow.<sup>37</sup> At the 1920 municipal elections, Izett, standing as a Moderate, was keen to distinguish between 'decent' and 'revolutionary' Labour candidates.<sup>38</sup> (Andrew Hood had once been editor of the *Partick Gazette*, run by the ILP supporting Pilot Press, which was instrumental in publicising rent strikes.)<sup>39</sup> Izett's departure from the municipal chamber marked Labour's first municipal victory in Partick. *Forward* wryly observed that Izett had accumulated

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 5 November 1919 and 3 November 1920.

<sup>34</sup> Smyth, 'Resisting Labour', pp. 375-401.

<sup>35</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, pp. 35 and 39.

<sup>36</sup> *Bailie*, 6 December 1922; *PG*, 25 February. 1922.

<sup>37</sup> *Forward*, 9 November 1929.

<sup>38</sup> *Evening Times* [hereafter *ET*], 28 October 1920; J. Hannan, *The Life of John Wheatley*, (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1988), p. 81.

<sup>39</sup> H. McShane and J. Smith, *Harry McShane: No Mean Fighter* (London: Pluto, 1978), p. 75.

‘some record’.<sup>40</sup> Early in his political career, another local newspaper was reluctant to distinguish between radicalism and socialism, as it made clear in a rider to its election coverage: ‘the term “socialist” is not [...] used to signify a member of the socialist Labour Party, but simply as a definition of their principles, as shadowed in their speeches’.<sup>41</sup>

### **1918: Pyrrhic Victory in Partick and a Breakthrough in Govan**

In 1918, the Liberals suffered catastrophe in Glasgow: only three Coalition Liberals, including Balfour, and no Asquithians, were returned.<sup>42</sup> Across Scotland, the first-past-the-post electoral system hid the scale of growth in Labour’s support since 1910.<sup>43</sup> In 1910, Labour’s average constituency vote was 4,926, but in 1918 this had increased by 28 per cent to 6,813.<sup>44</sup> Since December 1910, there had been two changes of administration and one change of premier, with no popular mandate.<sup>45</sup> Recent reforms had achieved universal male suffrage and enfranchised women aged 30 and over, but these new voters had still to be balloted.<sup>46</sup> A newly legitimised Parliament and administration were thus required to transition the British state, society and economy from war to stable peace.<sup>47</sup> The Coalition campaign was marked, predictably, by jingoism and xenophobia. This, combined with outdated electoral registers that did not reflect the newly-enlarged franchise, made conditions particularly adverse for the left.<sup>48</sup> As Asquith pointed out, it was most unlikely that many soldiers were able to exercise their democratic rights,

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<sup>40</sup> *Forward*, 9 November 1929.

<sup>41</sup> *PMP*, 8 November 1912.

<sup>42</sup> Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow*, p. 91.

<sup>43</sup> I.G.C. Hutchison, *A Political History of Scotland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1986), p. 277.

<sup>44</sup> Harvie, *No Gods...*, p. 30; F.W.S. Craig, *British Electoral Facts, 1832-1980* (Sussex: PRP, 1977), p. 99.

<sup>45</sup> M. Kinnear, *The British Voter, An Atlas and Survey Since 1885*, (London: Batsford 1981), p. 38.

<sup>46</sup> T.C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (London: HarperCollins 1997 [1986]), p. 270.

<sup>47</sup> M. Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics, 1887-1945*, (Oxford: OUP, 2002 [1982]), p.

<sup>48</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p. 5.

regardless of reassurances from the government or counterfactual speculation about the potential impact of their votes on the national outcome.<sup>49</sup>

What were the yardsticks by which the Coalition, and Lloyd George in particular, asked to be judged in the new Parliament?<sup>50</sup> The Kaiser aside, there were promises of land reform and homes and jobs ‘fit for heroes’. There were also commitments to modernise British agriculture, whilst generally improving employment conditions, education and curbing the drink trade. Temperance resonated in Partick as an old radical cause, yet many radicals and socialists disagreed on prohibition.<sup>51</sup> Lloyd George refused to campaign in Glasgow after being heckled there in 1915, but at Wolverhampton, blending radical idealism with patriotic fervour, he notoriously declared that postwar-Britain must be ‘a fit country for heroes to live in’.<sup>52</sup>

Meantime, in East Fife, Lloyd George’s rival, Asquith, faced defeat by Major Sir Alexander Sprott, a local Unionist candidate standing without the blessing of his own party’s hierarchy, or the endorsement of the Coalition’s ‘coupon’.<sup>53</sup> Ball acknowledges local perceptions that the former Prime Minister’s downfall was retribution for neglecting constituency affairs, but emphasises that it also reflected his failures in conducting the war, if not the popular pre-war social reforms. Other factors included his vacillation and inertia as Leader of the Opposition after 1916, the enmity of new women voters whose enfranchisement he had vehemently opposed, and a rhetorical style that left working-class men cold. At United Kingdom level, political historian Martin Pugh notes that the willingness of many former Liberal activists to campaign for Labour in 1918 did not augur well for their divided party’s prospects.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *ET*, 11 and 13 December 1918; *Daily Record* [hereafter *DR*], 30 December 1918.

<sup>50</sup> Manifestoes for all general elections in this chapter are in F.W.S. Craig, *British General Election Manifestoes 1900-1974*, (London, 1975), *passim*.

<sup>51</sup> Fraser, *Scottish Popular Politics*, p. x.

<sup>52</sup> *Scotsman*, 25 November 1918.

<sup>53</sup> S.R. Ball, ‘Asquith’s decline and the general election of 1918’, *SHR*, 61, (1982), pp. 41-61, *passim*.

<sup>54</sup> Pugh, *Modern British Politics*, p. 164.

On its surface, the 1918 election in Partick was a choice between Liberal Coalitionist Balfour, the incumbent Liberal MP since 1906, and William Mackie, his Labour challenger with pedigree as a local official of the Boilermakers' trade union.<sup>55</sup> One local newspaper noted that this union wielded 'considerable influence' in the wider trades union movement.<sup>56</sup> The result was overwhelming victory for Balfour, but its causes were more complex than they appeared.<sup>57</sup> Partick's shipbuilding industry was vital to the war effort, with many 'reserved' occupations attached. This helps to explain a turnout (61%) well above the Scottish and Glaswegian averages.<sup>58</sup> Balfour's defeat of Labour was aided by a campaign skilfully combining the anti-German cadences of the Coalition campaign with sensitivity towards local concerns. He also deftly emphasised divisions within Labour over its National Executive's decision to withdraw from the Coalition government in 1917.<sup>59</sup> He affirmed the need to punish the Kaiser, while emphasising that pensions for the dependants of lost merchant seamen should be paid by Germany.<sup>60</sup> He favoured land reform, short of 'nationalisation'.<sup>61</sup> Shrewdly, he undermined his Labour opponent by supporting continued rent restriction in peace-time.<sup>62</sup> This, alongside his free trade stance, played well in Partick, where residents had famously and successfully engaged in rent strikes in 1915, following attempts by landlords to exploit wartime conditions to raise rents extortionately, taking no account of tenants' ability to pay.<sup>63</sup> As Smyth has highlighted,

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<sup>55</sup> *ET*, 1 December 1918; *DR*, 16 December 1918.

<sup>56</sup> *PG*, 11 February 1922. This ceased publication in early 1923.

<sup>57</sup> Parliamentary results in this chapter are taken from Craig, *Parliamentary Results, 1918-1945*, p. 590 (Govan) and p. 594 (Partick). For full figures, see appendix 3.

<sup>58</sup> See D. Butler and J. Freeman, *British Political Facts, 1900-1960*, (London, 1963), 122; Dyer, *Capable Citizens*, p. 130; A. McKinlay, "'Doubtful wisdom and uncertain promise": strategy, ideology and organisation' in A. McKinlay and R.J. Morris (eds.), *The ILP on Clydeside, 1893-1932: from Foundation to Disintegration* (Manchester: MUP, 1991), p. 32.

<sup>59</sup> *Scotsman*, 11 December 1918.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, 4 December 1918; *GH*, 3 December 1918.

<sup>61</sup> *Scotsman*, 6 December 1918.

<sup>62</sup> *GH*, 30 November 1918; *ET*, 28 November 1918.

<sup>63</sup> J. Melling, *Rent Strikes: People's Struggle for Housing in West Scotland, 1890-1916* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1983), p. 82; Hutchison, *Political History*, 281; Dollan Scrapbooks, Volume 1, Mitchell Library, Glasgow, *passim*, *ET*, 3 December 1918.

these rent strikes ‘may well have been the most successful example of direct action ever undertaken by the Scottish working-class’.<sup>64</sup> Contemporary photographs show patriotic war-time rhetoric subverted in placards borne by the strikers’ children; for instance, ‘Our Husbands, Sons and Brothers are fighting the Prussians of Germany. We are fighting the Prussians of Partick.’<sup>65</sup> The rents issue, perhaps uniquely for Partick, transcended sectarian divisions, but working class militancy did not guarantee votes for Labour.<sup>66</sup>

To appreciate the reasons for this, it is necessary to consider sectarian conflict in Partick, particularly the critical role of the Orange Order which remained influential.<sup>67</sup> This Orange presence confounds otherwise convincing abstractions about voting behaviour. For instance, it casts doubt on the extent to which Joan Smith’s ‘liberal commonsense’ theory of voter allegiance, developed in her case studies of Glasgow and Liverpool, can be borne out in the district, although the notion still assists general understanding of the shift in working-class allegiance from Liberalism to Labour.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, Knox emphasises that Orangeism should not be seen as congruent with mainstream protestant opinion: from 1922 onwards, Labour could rely for votes on a working class that had largely ‘laid aside’ religious divisions.<sup>69</sup> Over the Clyde, as will soon be seen, Govan in 1918 narrowly elected Neil Maclean as its first Labour MP, despite what would appear to be a stronger number of Orange electors than resided in Partick.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Smyth, ‘Rents, Peace, Votes...’ p. 174.

<sup>65</sup> T. Royle, *The Flowers of the Forest: Scotland and the First World War* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006), plate between pp. 176-7.

<sup>66</sup> I.G.C. Hutchison, ‘The impact of the First World War on Scottish politics’ in C.M.M. MacDonald and E.W. McFarland (eds.), *Scotland and the Great War*, (Tuckwell, East Linton, 1999), pp. 36-59 at pp. 48-9.

<sup>67</sup> The pre-1910 presence of the Order is discussed in chapter seven of this thesis, pp 235-7.

<sup>68</sup> J. Smith, ‘Labour tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool’, *History Workshop Journal*, 17, (1984), pp. 32-56.

<sup>69</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, pp. 235.

<sup>70</sup> Knox, ‘Maclean, Neil Malcolm’; W.W. Knox (ed.), *Scottish Labour Leaders, 1918-1939: a Biographical Dictionary*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1984), p. 192.

James Maxton went on to win in Bridgeton, with a comparable Orange presence, in 1922.<sup>71</sup> Calum Campbell argued that McLean's 1918 victory in Govan, and Labour's grip on the seat thereafter, had been made possible by the assiduous and sophisticated efforts of Labour to bridge local sectarian divisions.<sup>72</sup> The success of Catholic socialist Matthew Coyle in securing election to Govan Town Council, discussed in chapter five, was symbolic of such politico-religious bridge-building.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, despite polling strongly in Govan's parliamentary contests since 1906, Labour had to wait twelve more years to capture the seat, which further highlights the difficulties faced by socialists in Partick.

Partick's Orange Order and its associated bodies enjoyed unique political influence, compared to constituencies elsewhere in Glasgow. The communist organiser Harry McShane claimed that he and his comrades were 'attacked' by Orangemen in Partick in 1921.<sup>74</sup> Yet the order's political character was far subtler than this extreme and uncharacteristic behaviour might suggest. Graham Walker contends that the notion of a uniformly anti-socialist 'Orange vote' across Scotland is flawed, and that the Order's overall significance was social and cultural rather than political.<sup>75</sup> Still, he notes that anti-Labour voting by Partick Orange-men and women was 'clearly a decisive factor' in the success of Unionist parliamentary candidates for the division in 1923, 1931 and 1935.<sup>76</sup>

After the war, Labour consolidated its strong links with the Irish Catholic community. Interestingly, the Irish League gave its endorsement to Mackie's candidacy in Partick, as well as Izett's in Hillhead.<sup>77</sup> In policy terms, the Roman Catholic hierarchy sought distinctive Catholic schooling within the state sector, as would be realised in the

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<sup>71</sup> Knox, 'Maxton, James'; *Labour Leaders*, pp. 204-5 and Knox, *James Maxton*, (Manchester: MUP, 1987), p. 39. See also Gordon Brown, *Maxton*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1986), p. 120.

<sup>72</sup> See Campbell, 'Clydeside working class', *passim*.

<sup>73</sup> See p. 285 and biographical appendix.

<sup>74</sup> McShane and Smith, *No Mean Fighter*, p. 117.

<sup>75</sup> See G. Walker, 'The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars', *International Review of Social History*, 37, (1992), pp. 177-206.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 188. See also Marshall, *Billy Boys*, p. 41.

<sup>77</sup> *DR*, 7 December 1918.

1918 Education Act, coupled with support for Irish autonomy - both anathema to the Orange leadership.<sup>78</sup> The General Secretary of Scotland's Orange Lodges issued a circular urging members and their wives to support the Coalition over Labour. On 7 December 1918, Balfour attracted Catholic vitriol, when *Forward's* 'Catholic Socialist Notes' issued a reminder to Partick's Catholic voters that he had voted against John Redmond's 1912 Home Rule Bill, and deserved electoral punishment.<sup>79</sup> The same column, a week later, delivered an unambiguous endorsement for Labour: 'Irishmen, Irishwomen, the fate of your CHILDREN is in your hands. Vote solidly for LABOUR on Saturday!'<sup>80</sup>

In the event, the Orange vote in Partick enhanced Balfour's majority in 1918 – the Coalition Liberals winning 70.1 per cent of the poll against Labour's 29.9 – a 40.2% majority. As a Liberal Coalitionist, Balfour had explicit support from the Partick Unionist Association.<sup>81</sup> Balfour won more votes in Partick than Churchill had in Dundee.<sup>82</sup> Yet his 1918 success was mixed. There is no way to quantify the 'Liberal' and 'Unionist' elements of the Coalition vote in Partick, but if these were notionally assumed to be roughly equal, there had been a drop in Liberal support, considering that in the previous three elections the party had won Partick with over 50 per cent of the poll. The party's decline in the district had begun.

Would Govan's Liberals fare any better than their Partick counterparts? As with Partick, their constituency underwent a substantial revision of its boundaries for 1918. Most of the former burgh was encompassed within the new Govan division of Glasgow, excepting small portions of the Ibrox and Plantation districts. The former police burgh of Govanhill was now excluded.<sup>83</sup> At the outset of the campaign, the *Govan Press* editorialised that it was likely to be fought on 'short, sharp lines' as voters were asked to

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<sup>78</sup> *Glasgow Observer and Catholic Herald*, 19 August 1918; Marshall, *Billy Boys*, Chapter 19; Hannan, *Wheatley*, p. 81.

<sup>79</sup> *Forward*, 7 December 1918.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 14 December 1918.

<sup>81</sup> *Scotsman*, 28 November 1918; NLS/SCUA/ SF Acc. 10424/12 (iii), Annual Report of Partick Division, 22 January 1919.

<sup>82</sup> Walker, 'Dundee's Disenchantment', p. 87.

<sup>83</sup> *GP*, 15 November 1918.

choose the best policy for the future of their nation and its empire.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps with more than a sideways glance to the local political scene, it further declared that any voters or candidates who set party before patriotism should be regarded as traitors, ‘who should be execrated [by] all honest men and women.’

Since the 1911 by-election, Govan had been represented by Liberal Daniel Turner Holmes, yet in the interim much had changed in constituency and national politics. Holmes’ reputation as a supporter of former Prime Minister Asquith caused uncertainty as to whether he would secure endorsement as a Coalition Liberal candidate. His endorsement of Asquith in the Maurice division, regarded by Lloyd George and his supporters as the acid test of Coalition loyalty, meant that Holmes could not automatically rely on the support of local Liberals.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, many were prepared to work with the Unionists to offer a united front against him. Equally, Holmes’ less than hardline approach to the ‘Clyde Labour Troubles’ – especially the Fairfield dispute – did not endear him to Unionists.<sup>86</sup> There was a prolonged stand-off between Govan Liberal Association, which was quick to confirm Holmes as its candidate, and the local Unionist Association, as to which should make the first move in requesting or offering support for the incumbent MP. For their part, the Govan Unionists faced pressure from their London leaders to oppose Holmes; yet they faced difficulty finding a willing and viable local candidate to enter the fray. One name mooted was that of journalist J. Lovat Fraser, but his candidacy was thought likely to cost the support of the British Workers’ League or National Democratic Labour Party (NDLP) faction which would otherwise have lent their support to a Coalition Unionist candidate.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, Fraser lacked a Govan connection, leaving him

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> This was the May 1918 debate over whether Lloyd George had lied about troop numbers on the Western Front. 98 Liberal MPs voted against Lloyd George and 71 for, effectively formalising the Asquith – Lloyd George split which had existed since the latter became war Premier in 1916. See Pugh, *Modern British Politics*, p. 155.

<sup>86</sup> *GP*, 15 November 1918. The dispute derived from the 1915 Munitions of War Act, which forbade workers to leave their employment without their employers’ consent.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 8 November 1918. This rather confusingly-named organisation was founded as the Socialist National Defence Committee in 1915, but was re-named the British Workers’ National League the following year. In May 1918 it again metamorphosed into the British Democratic and Labour Party, but in 1921 it reverted to the British Workers’ League. In 1925 it changed to become the Empire Citizens’ League, with the journal *Empire Citizen*. In all its incarnations the party bitterly opposed pacifist elements within the Labour Party. It ceased contesting elections and acted only as a pressure group from 1921 until its apparent disbandment about 1927. For an exhaustive chronicle of its parliamentary

vulnerable to carpet-bagging accusations. A number of unnamed local worthies had been approached but declined to stand. One who was named but chose not to stand was the last Govan Provost, David Pollok McKechnie, who was understood to have Conservative sympathies and a 'strong body of public support'.<sup>88</sup> Eventually, former Govan resident Alexander McClure was persuaded to stand in the Coalition Unionist interest days before nominations closed.<sup>89</sup> Described as a 'born political fighter', McClure was a Conservative lawyer and sometime magistrate in Govan. He was later an unsuccessful candidate for Glasgow Town Council's Kinning Park Ward in 1919. McClure's nomination took place despite assurances from Holmes (given in *absentia* due to the death of his mother) that he would support Lloyd George and that he would accept the 'principle' of Coalition.<sup>90</sup>

This Liberal and Unionist disarray; with the accompanying prospect of a triangular contest splitting the 'Coalition' vote; offered the Labour Party an unprecedented opportunity to capture Govan's parliamentary representation. The party wasted no time in nominating Neil Malcolm Maclean as its candidate. The *Govan Press* suggested that: 'for a constituency of the immense importance of Govan, it is questionable if [Maclean] has the breadth of view or the mental equipment fitting him for the onerous post' of MP.<sup>91</sup> Such condescension belied Maclean's considerable political experience as an organiser, board-member and propagandist for the SCWS and the ILP, preceded by a variety of menial jobs in Glasgow and Edinburgh workshops culminating in an apprenticeship at the Singer Sewing Machine Company's Clydebank factory.<sup>92</sup> Maclean was, aged only 17, a founder member of the ILP's Partick branch, which had formed from a merger of the Partick branch of the SLP, in which he had also been active.<sup>93</sup> He had in 1908 been expelled from the SLP for his involvement in a 'right to work' demonstration, although he

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candidates at the 1918 General Election and by-elections in 1919 and 1920, see F.W.S. Craig, *Minor Parties at British Parliamentary Elections, 1885-1974*, (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 53-4.

<sup>88</sup> *GP*, 22 November 1918.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 29 November 1918.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 22 November 1918.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*, 15 November 1918.

<sup>92</sup> Knox, 'Maclean', pp. 192-4.

<sup>93</sup> *GP*, 15 November 1918 and 3 November 1922; Knox, Maclean, p. 192.

did not break entirely with Marxism.<sup>94</sup> He had famously served as an assistant economics tutor for firebrand John Maclean's Marxist education classes, and both men remained on good terms despite their political differences.<sup>95</sup> Throughout the First World War, Maclean adhered to the Glasgow ILP's anti-war protest group and participated in the labour struggles known to posterity as 'Red Clydeside'.<sup>96</sup> This new Labour candidate's industrial experience, coupled with his campaigning abilities, seemed to unsettle the *Govan Press* editors, who viewed his familiarity with 'shipyard and factory affairs' as an 'unknown quantity' in the electoral calculus.<sup>97</sup> Somewhat disingenuously, given the position with the electoral registers, the same column suggested that it would be 'more than interesting' to solicit feedback on Maclean's anti-war stance from 'a representative number of Govan lads' serving abroad.

Despite its dismissal of Maclean's credentials as a candidate, the paper conceded that Labour was strongly placed to win the seat. Maclean had secured the backing of the United Irish League, an Irish nationalist political party with significant influence over Irish Roman Catholic voters.<sup>98</sup> He had also won the approval of two highly influential local men: James Anthony, the penultimate Govan provost; a sort of local radical Liberal talisman whose name was frequently linked to a potential parliamentary candidacy; and the Reverend James Barr, a well-known campaigner for socialism and Home Rule.<sup>99</sup> Barr, who had campaigned for radical Liberal ideals since the 1892 General Election, had been minister for the United Free Church of Scotland's St. Mary's parish in Govan since 1907.<sup>100</sup> By 1920, he had joined the Labour party, which he regarded as a more effective vehicle for securing radical ideals, and in 1924, he was elected an MP for Motherwell in his new party's interest. He gained a reputation of opposition to anti-Irish prejudice which was untypical of Protestant ministers of this period. Indeed, his 1924 Motherwell victory

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<sup>94</sup> Knox, Maclean, p. 192.

<sup>95</sup> *GP*, 7 December 1923.

<sup>96</sup> Knox, Maclean, p. 192.

<sup>97</sup> *GP*, 15 November 1918.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 22 November 1918; 13 December 1918.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, 29 November 1918.

<sup>100</sup> J.J. Smyth, 'Barr, James (1862-1949)'; *ODNB*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/40286>>, (accessed 20/8/2010).

was against the sitting ‘Orange and Protestant’ MP. Both Barr and former Provost Anthony had been influential supporters of Daniel Turner Holmes in his successful 1911 by-election campaign; their defection to Maclean’s fold was thought by ‘Dreadnought’, a *Govan Press* political commentator who frequently deviated from his newspaper’s editorial stance, to indicate that their shift in allegiance was a ‘sign of the times’ and that Labour had ‘the chance of its life’ in Govan.<sup>101</sup> The *Govan Press*’s description of the ideal Coalition candidate who would be able to save the seat from Labour could be read as a mirror-image of Maclean himself – almost certainly in tacit recognition of his strengths as a candidate. Of course, it was really the archetypal paternalistic candidate of earlier decades who was being hankered for.

[It] seems singularly unfortunate that some amicable arrangement cannot be arrived at for a United Front being presented by the Division at the forthcoming election. Had one of the nominees of the Coalition seen his way clear to come forward he might have made perhaps the best candidate of all, and one who could have received the support of all parties as a man if not with Govan connections, certainly with important Clyde connections, a big standing in the country, and in the community, and an unusual knowledge and understanding of the conditions under which the workers are at present living. Is it too late to appeal for a determined effort at unity? Try. It is surely worthwhile to make the attempt.<sup>102</sup>

In one of his last appearances of the 1918 campaign, Maclean summarised Labour’s appeal to recently-discharged soldiers who deserved and wanted ‘a part in the country they had fought for.’ ‘No attempt had been made during the [four and a half] years of war to give them a part of that country’ but Lloyd George would find that this’ was going to be a burning question in every working class constituency’.<sup>103</sup> He continued that: ‘if the Liberals and the Unionists could not govern the people better than they had for the past 25 years, wasn’t it time they gave the people the chance to govern themselves?’ Maclean also had the support of Mary Barbour. Barbour had been instrumental in the rent strike campaign which led to the passing of the landmark 1915 Rent Restriction Act. Maclean had almost certainly been influenced by her when he campaigned promising to secure a ‘rent refund’, but it was later observed that he failed to keep this promise.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *GP*, 29 November 1918; 13 December 1918.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 15 November 1918.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*, 6 December 1918.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 16 November 1923.

Maclean's beleaguered Liberal rival Holmes, speaking at Elder Park, announced late in the campaign his support for service pensions for ex servicemen, so that they would not fall into poverty.<sup>105</sup> Although it is probably unfair to suggest this announcement was born of desperation, it did provide tacit acknowledgement by the sitting MP that his Labour opponent was setting the terms of the debate. He endured 'lively heckling' from local women at various campaign appearances for attempting to share some of the credit for their securing the franchise; this was almost certainly due to his association with Asquith who infamously opposed such reform. Some of his policies were not far removed from the old Newcastle Programme: especially taxation of land values and Home Rule for Ireland. His central assertion was that the United Kingdom needed evolution not revolution.

Meantime, Coalition Unionist Candidate McClure's brief campaign culminated in a series of appearances where he explained his late conversion to supporting Lloyd George, of whom no one had been a greater critic than himself during the premier's 'unregenerate days'.<sup>106</sup> Much of his rhetoric concerned the activities of German socialists after the Armistice and the abdication of the Kaiser, and there was a sense in which he hoped his audience to associate German socialists with their Govan counterparts, although this was never explicitly stated. For instance, he argued that the Spartacist revolt in Germany was a means of evading war guilt and reparations payments: he would not be 'hoodwinked' now by Germans 'claiming to be socialists' when all Germans, 'were in this war up to the neck.'<sup>107</sup> He declared: '[T]here were no red flags in Germany when they thought they were winning.' Such remarks were met with heckling, which the *Govan Press* claimed verged on 'pandemonium'. More substantively, he argued that only a Coalition government with its own mandate could resolve the Irish question. Here again, there was the sense that the Unionists, like their Liberal opponent, were rehearsing pre-war arguments when political and social realities had moved on. Almost petulantly, McClure argued that Ulster should remain part of the United Kingdom but Ireland should not

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 6 December 1918.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. The *Spartakusbund* (Spartacist League) formed around Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht after they left the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) in 1914. For more information, see E.D. Weitz, "'Rosa Luxemburg Belongs to Us!'" German Communism and the Luxemburg Legacy.' *Central European History*, 27 (1994), pp. 27-64.

receive ‘one penny’ from London, nor did it deserve to return 80 members to the Westminster Parliament.

Filling his column during the more-than-a-week-long lull between voting and the declaration of results, the Oracle-like ‘Dreadnought’ noted that the elections had ‘passed off quietly’ despite the sound and fury of the campaign: ‘I have seen more stir at a Sabbath school soirée’.<sup>108</sup> He attributed the lack of excitement to a sense among voters that the return of the Coalition government at Westminster was a foregone conclusion, but aside from this, he was ‘almost certain that Mr Maclean is the man for Govan.’ When the reckoning came, Holmes had lost his deposit and Maclean had secured the seat by less than 1,000 votes.<sup>109</sup> Maclean’s 47.8 per cent of the poll, if combined counterfactually with Holmes’ 8.4 indicated that Govan now had a clear local ‘progressive majority’ against the Conservatives. The victorious Labour member, the first to be elected for any post-war Glasgow division, was heralded by the ILP Pipe Band. In addition, it was difficult to contest ‘Dreadnought’s view that Liberalism in Govan had been overtaken by ‘disaster’.<sup>110</sup> Maclean’s victory was especially significant, given historian Ronald Johnston’s useful observation that all five of Govan’s previous MPs – whether Liberal, Liberal Unionist or Conservative, had been employers: changed days indeed.<sup>111</sup> The next general election campaign would test Labour’s tenacity in Govan, and Liberalism’s resilience in Partick.

### **1922: A ‘Family Feud’ in Partick; No Change for Govan**

The 1922 general election occurred after a Parliament during which Labour’s popularity grew as domestic concerns replaced those of war. Housing issues particularly shortages and rent controls, had enabled Labour to demonstrate a broad class appeal across sectarian and sectional boundaries. This, combined with the achievement of Dominion Status by the Irish Free State in 1921, and the return of servicemen effectively disenfranchised by their absence in 1918, left Scottish Labour poised for a breakthrough in electoral support, and parliamentary representation. William Walker explains that these developments resolved longstanding conflict between working-class consciousness and pursuit of specifically Irish

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<sup>108</sup> *GP*, 13 December 1918.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, 3 January 1919.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, 31 January 1919.

<sup>111</sup> Johnston, *Clydeside Capital*, p. 114.

ideals; Irish Catholics were free to vote Labour.<sup>112</sup> Termination of the governing alliance between Lloyd George's National Liberals and Andrew Bonar Law's Unionists in October triggered a snap general election, won by the Unionists. Asquith was temporarily reinvigorated after returning to Westminster in 1920.<sup>113</sup> Churchill lost Dundee through a combination of popular revulsion over the War, the withdrawal of Catholic votes and doubt by voters over the distinction between Coalition Liberalism and Unionism, given the close cooperation between them.<sup>114</sup>

Partick's Liberals remained factionalised, mirroring the division nationally. Across the United Kingdom, with both factions' popular vote counted together, Liberalism had only just slipped behind Labour (with 29.1 per cent compared to 29.5 for Labour).<sup>115</sup> In Scotland, the combined wings of Liberalism garnered 39 per cent of the vote, compared to 26 per cent for Labour and 25 per cent for the Unionists. Liberalism remained, according to Michael Fry, Scotland's 'biggest political movement'.<sup>116</sup> Yet Labour's support was growing, and in 1922, it won ten of fifteen Glasgow seats. To some extent this was misleading: Hutchison points out that Labour's vote-share had stagnated since 1918, and had 'strict proportionality' pertained, it would have gained fewer seats.<sup>117</sup> Belying Glasgow's 'Red' notoriety, many Labour figures in Glasgow also downplayed their socialism. James Maxton, for one, hardly used the word, emphasising instead his involvement in the community and education: issues attractive to radicals. In 1922 he was elected MP for Bridgeton at the expense of the radical Liberal incumbent, Alexander MacCallum Scott, who stood for Partick in 1923.

In 1922 Partick's electorate faced a choice between two Liberals, in a contest keenly observed by Labour and the Unionists, each party favouring a different side. The *Herald* observed that, although recent municipal contests in the Partick West and

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<sup>112</sup> Walker, 'Dundee's Disenchantment', p. 93. See also McKinlay, "'Doubtful wisdom...'", p. 132.

<sup>113</sup> R. Jenkins, *Asquith*, (London: Collins, 1964), p. 489.

<sup>114</sup> Walker, 'Dundee's Disenchantment', *passim*.

<sup>115</sup> Pugh, *Modern British Politics*, p. 200.

<sup>116</sup> M. Fry, *Patronage and Principle – A Political History of Modern Scotland* (Aberdeen: AUP, 1987), p. 142.

<sup>117</sup> Hutchison, *Political History*, pp. 281-2.

Whiteinch wards had seen anti-socialism ‘flourish down Partick way’, there was no basis for predicting results of a parliamentary contest where:

the Gladiators are both Moderates [i.e. anti-socialists] – with Labour standing aloof, mere spectators, albeit keenly interested ones, in the tussle. This is a contest between Liberals, with Conservatives disposed to encourage one side and Labour the other, and the immediate political friends, the electors of Liberal persuasion, not knowing where they are... The disciples [of Asquith and Lloyd George] are fighting each other tooth and nail; they couldn’t be more bellicose if they had pitted against them a Lenin or Mussolini.<sup>118</sup>

This would therefore be ‘a distinctive sort of contest’. The Unionists endorsed National Liberal Sir John Collie nearly a year before polling. Sir Daniel Macaulay Stevenson, adopted by the newly-formed Partick and District Radical Association, was ‘no unfriend of Labour’, tacitly supported by the ILP. Formed in early 1922, the Radical Association was a group of Liberals who withdrew from Partick Liberal Association in protest at its decision to support Lloyd George in the looming general election campaign.<sup>119</sup> The decision to style itself ‘radical’, not ‘liberal’ was deliberately intended to entice moderate labour voters. In the thick of the campaign, the National Liberal candidate, John Collie, acknowledged the overlap between radicalism and socialism playing out in Partick, as the left-leaning *Partick Gazette* reported. ‘He would have no part with that spurious Liberalism which sought an understanding with Labour.’<sup>120</sup> The growth in ILP membership in Partick between 1917 and 1920 was rivalled only in Govan.<sup>121</sup> Partick’s ILP had more than 100 female members in 1920, around a fifth of the total branch membership and by far the highest proportion of female members in Glasgow’s branches.<sup>122</sup> This gave rent control higher salience in Partick during this election. Yet, due to financial difficulties, the ILP did not field a candidate there in 1922, instead concentrating its resources in Hillhead; a decision facilitated by the presence of a radical on the Partick ballot papers.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> *GH* 9 November 1922.

<sup>119</sup> *PG*, 11 March 1922.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 3 June 1922.

<sup>121</sup> McKinlay, “‘Doubtful wisdom...’”, p. 138.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>123</sup> *PG*, 28 October 1922.

What were the candidates' backgrounds? Stevenson, born in 1851, had impeccable radical credentials, having served on Glasgow Town Council from 1892, and as its Lord Provost from 1911 to 1914.<sup>124</sup> His municipal career was renowned for modernisation and progressive reform, including the controversial introduction in 1898 of Sunday opening for the City's museums and art galleries, and the inauguration of a free branch library system in 1899, as well as a municipal telephone service in 1900. As City Treasurer he had streamlined an unwieldy municipal bureaucracy, consolidating the municipal debt. His creation as baronet in 1914 was in recognition of his contribution to public life. Before entering politics, Stevenson established a very profitable coal and ship-broking business in Leith, with branches throughout the United Kingdom. A lifelong philanthropist, he donated over £400,000 to good causes, especially those promoting international understanding, education and culture. As Lord Provost at the outset of war, despite his radical anti-militarism, he fronted the army recruitment drive in Glasgow, and afterwards led efforts to supply coal to France and Italy, for which both countries honoured him. As the *Gazette* noted, this candidate was 'not of the standard Liberal pattern'.<sup>125</sup>

Collie, his opponent, was an Aberdonian physician who had risen to become a consultant surgeon and adviser to the Ministry of Pensions.<sup>126</sup> There he was keen to prevent 'abuse' of industrial injury compensation. He also served as a director of institutions for the care of soldiers suffering nerve damage, and as an administrator of Paddington Burgh Council. If Stevenson embodied radical liberalism blending with socialism, then Collie epitomised *laissez-faire* liberalism blending with conservatism. Affinity with right-wing ideology is clear in the titles of his popular medico-legal treatises: *Malingering* and *The Psychology of the Fraudulent Mind*. Fervently anti-socialist, he supported the combination of 'moderate' elements to prevent Labour gaining office. Collie's policy proclamations largely reflected those in Unionist Premier Bonar Law's manifesto. For affirming the refusal of the Unionist government to oppose future

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<sup>124</sup> I. Maver, 'Sir Daniel Macaulay Stevenson', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [ODNB], Oxford, 2004, [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/36286>, accessed 22/11/06].

<sup>125</sup> *PG*, 10 June 1922.

<sup>126</sup> *Bailie*, 29 October 1922; *Scotsman*, 14 December 1932 and 4 April 1935 (obituary); *GH*, 25 and 28 October 1922.

legislation undermining a recent House of Lords ruling against recent Scottish rent increases, he was heckled at a meeting in Whiteinch.<sup>127</sup>

Stevenson, contrastingly, was critical of the Lords' ruling, for its potentially perverse consequences, but vehemently defended the principle of statutory rent restriction.<sup>128</sup> His amity with Asquith was demonstrated when he secured the former premier's support at a public meeting in Whiteinch; this was Asquith's only campaign appearance in Scotland outside Paisley, which he defended for the first time.<sup>129</sup> Asquith spoke to overflow audiences at Whiteinch Hall and the local cinema. Paying tribute to Stevenson's record of public service, he claimed that electing him to the House of Commons would hasten a 'new era of clean and sincere politics'.<sup>130</sup> As campaigning ended, Stevenson was smeared for his German connections. His brother-in-law, Robert Heidmann, had been *Bürgermeister* of Hamburg and Stevenson was a keen advocate of trade with Germany.<sup>131</sup> The allegations were as follows:

There was a story going round the constituency, one of the meanest stories one could conceive, that he (Sir Daniel) had made a lot of money by trading with the enemy during the war and that he had only escaped punishment by paying a large sum to the government. That was an infamous lie – a frigid and calculated lie. If any of them heard it, he asked them to give the name of the man who said it and that man would be held up to the scorn of the country in the Law Courts.<sup>132</sup>

The effect of these slurs was unclear, but the *Herald* predicted a 'close finish'.<sup>133</sup> Collie stood as a *de facto* Unionist candidate in a constituency that, as has already been shown, had a 'historical bias in favour of Unionism', particularly where its Orange contingent was concerned. The Orange and Protestant Political Party had briefly considered fielding a candidate at Partick, before instead advising its supporters across

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<sup>127</sup> *Scotsman*, 4 and 9 November 1922. See also Hutchison, *Political History*, 284.

<sup>128</sup> *Scotsman*, 9 November 1922.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid*; *GH*, 25 and 28 October 1922

<sup>130</sup> *Scotsman*, 9 November 1922.

<sup>131</sup> See Maver, 'Stevenson', for more details.

<sup>132</sup> *GH*, 1 November 1922.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid*, 13 November 1922.

Scotland to vote Unionist or National Liberal, as appropriate, in order to defeat socialism.<sup>134</sup> As the *Herald* elaborated:

[T]he Unionist organisation in the division is exerting all the pressure it can command to ensure that [the Orange contingent] does vote. Sir John is also receiving the support of a strong organisation of National Liberals. The adherents of Mr Lloyd George were successful in this constituency in bringing the old Liberal Association of the division to the side of the ex-premier, and there are men of considerable weight locally in that camp.<sup>135</sup>

Still, Stevenson's advantages of local name-recognition, and Labour and radical support made it difficult to write him off. The result was anything but close, representing a Unionist victory by proxy, meaning defeat for radical policies that had secured the sympathies of both Labour supporters and more progressive Liberals. Neither Stevenson's closeness to Labour, nor the rents issue, had helped his campaign. What was the position in Govan at this election? There, the Liberal divisions, although less overt than in Partick, played their part in undermining the challenge to Labour.

When Parliament was dissolved, incumbent Govan Labour MP Neil Maclean was swiftly re-nominated by his local party at a meeting from which hundreds of supporters had to be turned away for lack of room.<sup>136</sup> His opponent was Helen Fraser, daughter of the late Glasgow councillor Innes Fraser.<sup>137</sup> She was a 'National Liberal standing with the full support of the Unionist Association' with the additional backing of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Women's Suffrage Society (GWSS).<sup>138</sup> As historian Annmarie Hughes has highlighted, Fraser's decision to stand against McLean; the only man to sign a 1921 GWSS memorial demanding equal terms for male and female suffrage; was a curious one. The Liberal candidate's election address rather eccentrically criticised Maclean and the ILP for

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<sup>134</sup> *PG*, 25 February 1922; Marshall, *Billy Boys*, p. 119.

<sup>135</sup> *GH*, 13 November 1922

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 25 October 1922.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 3 November 1922.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*. See also A. Hughes, 'Fragmented Feminists? The Influence of Class and Political Identity in Relations between the Glasgow and West of Scotland Suffrage Society and the Independent Labour Party in the West of Scotland, c. 1919-1932', *WHR*, 14:1 2005, pp. 7-32 at p. 12.

their ‘appropriation’ of ‘feminist ideals and policies’, like its policy supporting widows’ pensions.<sup>139</sup>

In addition to the Unionists, Fraser’s campaign also had the support of other ‘Moderates’ (the euphemism for anti-socialism was borrowed from the local government arena), such as former Govan bailie and vice president of the GUA John Hinshelwood Marr, who presided at her adoption meeting.<sup>140</sup> When Marr’s introduction included the standard ‘Moderate’ formula that the alternative to his candidate was an ‘extremist’, a heckler yelled ‘God Help You’. Fraser herself characterised the Govan electors’ choice as follows. Labour had been set up to represent sectional interests and was thus doomed to fail as it was not possible to ‘cut through the people in this way’. She claimed that representing sectional interests was as absurd as to ‘suggest that you have a women’s party because women had their own interests and points of view, but no woman was so foolish as to suggest such a thing.’ This seemed to jar somewhat with Fraser’s earlier remarks implying that feminism was for women only, but she also spoke about wider issues.

She emphasised the need to maintain international peace but regretted the government’s moves in the direction of disarmament, which she thought irresponsible if done on a unilateral basis. She supported the League of Nations, whose membership she wished to see expand; an intensification of trade between Commonwealth countries and increased British exports generally to reduce unemployment; subsidies for domestic industry; public works; improved pensions and national insurance. She opposed the notion of a capital levy and wished to further the interests of ex-servicemen. As an elected member of the executive of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, she wanted an equal franchise for both sexes, widows’ pensions, and good quality housing to be available at economic rents.

Overall, Fraser summarised her position as one of being ‘strongly opposed to socialism. I believe neither in reaction nor in revolution but in sound and sane progressive policies.’ For all that this read as a classic Liberal formula, Fraser’s status as a Liberal candidate was disputed by the Govan Liberal Association, whose president, former Govan Provost John Anthony, explained that his organisation had not been consulted by the

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<sup>139</sup> Hughes, ‘Fragmented Feminists’, p. 12.

<sup>140</sup> *GP*, 27 October 1922.

Unionists to seek agreement on who should stand against Maclean.<sup>141</sup> He further asserted that there was no such thing as the Govan ‘Coalition’ or ‘National’ Liberal Association, ‘therefore let it be clearly understood Miss Fraser is the nominee of the Unionist party alone’. ‘Walking through Govan of late it is simply sickening to see on the hoardings bills intimating Miss Fraser’s meetings, and on the top in bold letters – “Coalition Association”’. He continued that there were no Liberals on the platform at Fraser’s campaign appearances except for Bailie Munro whose status as a genuine Liberal was now ‘doubtful’. Munro was later described as a ‘socialist of the socialists’.<sup>142</sup> It was clear that the real objection to Fraser’s candidacy from the local Liberal camp was the denial of the coupon to former Govan Liberal MP Holmes in 1918. Anthony blamed Lloyd George personally for Holmes’ and the local Liberals’ 1918 humiliation, but in a rather cutting-off-nose-to-spite-face way, he drew a sort of solace from the consequences of earlier Liberal schisms; in doing so, he tacitly acknowledged that Govan Liberalism was ‘dead’.<sup>143</sup>

We Liberals of Govan will never forget and possibly may never forgive [Lloyd George’s] issuing of the coupon at last general election, which, in many instances, dealt political death to those Liberals who dared to stand by the Liberal party, that party he so basely destroyed. The defeat of Mr Holmes has been attributed solely to that coupon. [...] Remember what became of the Liberal Unionists. At first they were Liberals in everything but Home Rule for Ireland. They never came back to the Liberal fold. They became the bitterest Tories [*sic*] of all. I prophecy something akin to that will happen to Lloyd George’s followers.

As ‘Dreadnought’ observed, there was ‘much ambiguity’ over the stance of Govan’s Liberals.<sup>144</sup> Fraser tersely responded in a letter to the editor of the Govan Press that her candidacy was endorsed by the National Liberal Association. While Anthony did not directly attack Fraser’s personal character, he did encourage any Govan electors who disagreed with her to ‘have their revenge on polling day’, presumably by voting for Maclean since there was no GLA-approved candidate in the field.<sup>145</sup> Perhaps this was tacit acknowledgement that Labour and the ILP, if not Maclean himself, had policies compatible with radical Liberalism. Otherwise, it appeared that ‘revenge’ for past wrongs was all that remained for Govan Liberals. Both Anthony and Neil Maclean had urged ‘fair

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 3 November 1922.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 24 October 1924.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 3 November 1922.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

play' in the electoral battle, but despite this there was frequent rowdyism at Fraser's meetings from electors who evidently did not support her, which was reported as 'the most shameful treatment that a candidate has ever received in Govan' whereas Maclean's meetings invariably passed 'unmarred by untoward incident'.<sup>146</sup>

The *Govan Press* denounced such heckling as 'terrorism': 'it is evident that an attempt is being made by a section of the community to impose upon those who do not think with them, by terrorism. Terrorism is not an argument, it is a crime and a criminal offence and will be dealt with accordingly.'<sup>147</sup> Although it was implied that the 'terrorists' and 'hooligans' were Maclean supporters, it was not suggested that he himself approved of their actions; indeed their behaviour was distinguished from that of 'respectable Labour men'. Govan's election posters were remarkably pithy, with Maclean adapting the former burgh's motto *Nihil Sine Labore* (nothing without work) into *Nihil Sine Labour*.<sup>148</sup> Another Labour poster read 'Vote Labour and dish the factors', to which the Fraser camp retorted 'Vote Fraser and dish the Reds'. A further Fraser poster read 'Glasgow woman as our MP', but this was premature, since Maclean secured re-election comfortably, this time by a 24.6 per cent margin over Fraser. If the National Liberals could indeed be regarded as Conservatives by proxy, this was further evidence of Govan's progressive radical majority.

### **1923: 'The Riddle of the Triangle'**

The 1923 General Election in Partick rivalled 1922 for unpredictability. Labour soon formed its first minority government, with Liberal support in the Commons. In Scotland, the Liberal performance in terms of votes and seats began to fall decisively behind that of Labour (19 per cent of the vote and 22 seats, compared with 24 per cent and 34 seats for Labour).<sup>149</sup> Given the trade depression that was being acutely experienced in Partick, the *Daily Record* observed that there was 'only one issue': free trade versus Protectionism.<sup>150</sup> If this was so, the outcome was far from easy to predict. The *Herald* dubbed the three-

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, 10 November 1922.

<sup>149</sup> Dyer, *Capable Citizens*, p. 142.

<sup>150</sup> *PG*, 21 January 1923; *DR*, 20 November 1923.

cornered Partick contest ‘the riddle of the triangle’, reflecting the confusion of both the local campaign and national politics:<sup>151</sup>

No constituency in the city presents a greater riddle in anticipating results than that of Partick. The division is for the first time being contested by the three political parties. Each of these has a very considerable following in the district, but how they stand in relative strength is a secret which defies divination. The representation has lain hitherto with the Liberals... But in both [previous contests], the Liberals who were associated with the Coalition were indebted to Unionist support for a large proportion of their majority. How will the Liberal party fare now with that large body of auxiliary support not only withdrawn but transferred to a rival?

This was a good question. All three parties fielded strong candidates in Partick. The Liberals, so recently reconciled after their ‘family feud’ the previous year, nominated Alexander MacCallum Scott.<sup>152</sup> The apparent Liberal harmony in Partick reflected *rapprochement* in the national party, even if this was not fully implemented in many other local constituencies. In counties Inverness, Argyll and Ross and Cromarty, some local organisations affiliated to the National Liberal Federation did not recognise newly-elected Liberal MPs.<sup>153</sup>

Who were the candidates? Scott, a radical Liberal with a chequered career, was born in 1874 at Boathouse, Blantyre. At Glasgow University he was active in student journalism and politics.<sup>154</sup> After graduating, he headed to London, where he sat on Lewisham Borough Council and acted as Secretary both for the League of Liberals Against Aggression and Militarism and the New Reform Club. Before entering Parliament, he combined Bar studies with prolific journalism and foreign travel. Elected for Glasgow’s Bridgeton constituency in 1910, he was a leading member of the Radical Group of MPs, campaigning for Scottish Home Rule and trade union interests.<sup>155</sup> His radicalism did not,

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<sup>151</sup> *GH*, 6 December. 1923.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 23 November 1923.

<sup>153</sup> NLS, Scottish Liberal Party Papers, Report for Executive Committee of the Scottish Liberal Association, 19 December 1923. Acc.11765-10.

<sup>154</sup> University of Glasgow Library [UGL], MacCallum Scott Collection [MSC], Special Collections [SC], – MS GEN 1465/97, MacCallum Scott’s Address to the Electors of Partick, 1923; C. Hazlehurst, ‘Alexander MacCallum Scott’, *ODNB*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/72181>>, accessed 22/11/06.

<sup>155</sup> Hutchison, ‘First World War’, p. 37.

however, encompass women's suffrage.<sup>156</sup> He had received much derision for claiming to stand for 'fair play for women' at Bridgeton the previous year.<sup>157</sup> This would have cost him many votes in 1923. In Parliament, he had befriended Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, whom he served as a junior minister.<sup>158</sup> Unusually for a Liberal, Scott 'could educate many of the Marxians on their Marx'.<sup>159</sup> At the start of the 1923 campaign, the *Herald* acknowledged the consistency of Scott's political principles, which even 'zealous radicals' admired.

The Unionist champion was Sir Allan Smith, a charismatic and distinguished businessman, who remained a free trader in defiance of his party leadership. Since November 1919 he was Unionist MP for Croydon, but had not been invited to stand there again, due to his free trade views.<sup>160</sup> The Labour and Co-operative candidate was Andrew Young, a retired teacher and headmaster, past president of the Educational Institute of Scotland and Edinburgh Corporation councillor, as well as long-serving Chairman of the Scottish Convalescent Homes Association.<sup>161</sup> He characterised his approach to politics as 'practical idealism', not incompatible with his Liberal rival's formula: 'progress with security'.<sup>162</sup> Young's campaign focused on the problem of unemployment: he argued that co-operative methods used in munitions manufacturing in war-time should be resumed in peace-time to avoid 'industrial waste'.<sup>163</sup> He advocated a capital levy on industry, proceeds of which would be reinvested in joint stock companies, and argued that removal of food taxes would stimulate demand and therefore production and profits. He also supported imposition of taxes on land values and normalisation of relations with Russia.

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<sup>156</sup> Hazlehurst, 'MacCallum Scott', p. 2.

<sup>157</sup> *DR*, 10 November 1922.

<sup>158</sup> *Scotsman*, 28 August 1928.

<sup>159</sup> *GH*, 23 November 1923.

<sup>160</sup> Address of Sir Allan M. Smith to the Electors of Partick, 1923, UGL/SC/MS MS GEN 1465/96; *DR*, 2 November, 1923.

<sup>161</sup> M. Stenton and S. Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament*, Volume 3, 1919-1945, (Brighton, 1979), p. 395.

<sup>162</sup> UGL/SC/MS MS GEN 1465/97, Andrew Young's Address to the Electors of Partick and MacCallum Scott's Address to the Electors of Partick, 1923. See also Hutchison, *Political History*, p. 281.

<sup>163</sup> *GH*, 4 and 5 December 1923.

Smith opposed Home Rule and advocated foreign investment in Britain through credit schemes. He favoured reducing working hours to bring Britain into line with continental nations now working 56.5 hours per week. Scott goaded him for treating Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin as an enemy, attacking his party's own central policy with more vitriol than other candidates. Protectionism was designed to bolster the United Kingdom economy, but would worsen the predicament of shipyard workers in Partick. Smith explained the situation, and his own stance in opposition to his party's flagship policy, as follows:

The real issue at the moment is the manner in which the grave problem of unemployment may be immediately and successfully dealt with[...]

Protection, if decided upon, cannot afford immediate relief, and, on the other hand, will cause an increase in the cost of living.<sup>164</sup>

Scott emphasised the agreement of the candidates on the issue: 'We are all free traders in Partick, where we build ships. Yes, we have no protectionists!'<sup>165</sup> Ex-premier Lloyd George mocked Smith's characterisation of Baldwin's policy as one of 'diabolical intent', at an address in support of Liberal candidates, delivered at Glasgow's St. Andrew's Hall.<sup>166</sup> In his own appeal, Scott proposed a foreign policy in pursuit of economic stability and global peace, the extension of unemployment insurance, public works, taxation of land values, pensions reform and temperance. Implying that he, not Young, was the *real* Labour candidate, he acknowledged few policy distinctions between Labour and Liberals: Liberals intended to implement these policies, while Labour was under the influence of 'ulterior' ILP plans to defeat capitalism. Scott attacked Smith for 'splitting the anti-socialist vote', declaring: 'party spirit has never taken a more curious form'.<sup>167</sup> This contradicted Scott's private diary reflections that Labour had merely stolen the old radical programme with no real intention to implement socialism, which was simply their 'banner in the background'.<sup>168</sup> He observed, with uncanny prescience, that:

Opposition to socialism can never be a rallying call for Liberals. The only party who can be built on a mere negation is the Tory party. The more anti-socialism

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<sup>164</sup> UGL/SC/MS GEN 1465/97, Smith's 1923 address.

<sup>165</sup> UGL/SC/MS GEN 1465/97, Scott's 1923 address.

<sup>166</sup> *GH*, 24 November 1923.

<sup>167</sup> UGL/SC/MS GEN 1465/97 Scott's 1923 address.

<sup>168</sup> UGL/SC/MS GEN 1465/13-15 Scott's Political Diary, 2 August 1923.

becomes the dominant issue, the more the Tory party is strengthened. It is not as opponents of socialism that the Liberals must take the field, but as competitors with Socialism in opposing Toryism.

And we are not competing with the socialists. We have no alternative policy for remedying the thousand acute grievances of the people. The socialists are, so far as the average elector can judge, the only people who champion the popular cause today.<sup>169</sup>

Scott's diaries also lamented the Liberals' weak and complacent national organisation, especially their shrinking and ageing base of support in Partick.<sup>170</sup> This, he contrasted with the vibrant and effective campaigning techniques used by the increasingly popular ILP. His election address contained a plaintive request for campaign volunteers, headed 'HELP!'<sup>171</sup> Such desperation was not evident in his rivals' literature. He wrote:

I am not sanguine about the election result in Partick. The Liberal party as a party seems almost extinct there. There is absolutely no organisation. There are a number of good old-fashioned Liberal survivals of a past generation – approaching superannuation – but there are no young recruits. A corps of workers had to be improvised, a very scratch [unclear] team. [...]

The dead hand of the past is upon it. It might almost be called an anachronism. It is an atrophied organ.

Even if I won[,] it would be a very difficult seat to hold.<sup>172</sup>

Two days later, his mood and interpretation of his prospects had improved. In the event, Scott had been 'far out' in his estimation of success: he came third, with 22.9 per cent of the poll against Labour's 44 and the Conservatives' 33.1.<sup>173</sup> The collapse in Liberal support was undeniable. Labour secured Partick and confirmed its position as the heir to radical sympathies. Scott reflected that the new voting generation knew only socialism, having 'never known' such policies under the guise of Liberalism.<sup>174</sup> This was an observation even more applicable for Govan, which had now experienced five years of Labour representation.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid, original emphasis.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid and November 1923, *passim*. See also Hutchison, *Political History*, 296.

<sup>171</sup> UGL/SC/MS GEN 1465/97, Scott's 1923 address.

<sup>172</sup> UGL/SC/MS GEN 1465/13-15, Scott's Political Diary, 2 August 1923.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 6 December 1923.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 7 December 1923.

In 1923 Maclean again stood for re-election, hoping to increase his majority yet further. Shortly before Parliament was dissolved, his 14 year old son died in hospital – probably of tuberculosis.<sup>175</sup> Despite this bereavement he had still found time to campaign successfully for Labour’s council candidates in Govan. There was speculation that Winston Churchill might stand against Labour in the constituency, but nothing came of this.<sup>176</sup> ‘Dreadnought’ speculated that former provost and local Liberal leader John Anthony would again ‘sit on the fence’ rather than contest Govan himself.<sup>177</sup> Anthony was known to have been approached by Sir Donald Maclean, a leading Liberal figure who had served as Leader of the Opposition during Asquith’s absence from the House of Commons, and asked to stand.<sup>178</sup> Former Govan Liberal MP Daniel Turner Holmes was not interested in standing for his old seat, and although Helen Fraser was considered to have fought a creditable campaign the previous year, she stood instead for the Hamilton constituency.

Eventually, the GLA nominated John Anthony’s *protégé* Harry Anderson Watt, a ‘lifelong Govanite’, educated at Bellahouston Academy and Glasgow University, from which he had graduated M.A.<sup>179</sup> He was a noted athlete and footballer but had also distinguished himself as a member of the first Govan Parliamentary Debating Association, which met at the Baptist Church on Copeland Road. This gave him a reputation as a gifted speaker and debater who would make a formidable opponent to Maclean. Watt batted aside accusations that he had in the past considered standing as a Labour candidate; indeed he had previously stood as an Asquithian Liberal in Argyllshire.<sup>180</sup> He was skilled in dealing humorously with hecklers – for instance - when one wag suggested Govan Police be allowed to go barefoot in summer, he agreed, to much laughter.<sup>181</sup> Yet, despite being up against their ‘doughtiest’ opponent in Govan to date, Labour remained ‘quietly confident’ of the outcome, not least because of their superior local organisation, which remained in

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<sup>175</sup> *GP*, 9 November 1923.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid*, 16 and 30 November 1923. Former Govan Coalition Unionist candidate Alex McClure was now standing for Lanarkshire North West.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, 16 November 1923.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid*, 23 November 1923.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, 30 November 1923.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

high gear after the recent municipal contests. Watt, a free-trader, insisted he would fight for 'straight Liberal principles' and combat the 'fallacies of socialism'.<sup>182</sup> At a time when foremen were turning men desperately seeking work away from yard gates and sometimes treating them disrespectfully, Watt insisted that socialism would not help the situation.<sup>183</sup> He also assiduously 'courted' female voters, although presumably not literally. *Govan Press* commentators again expressed concern regarding 'hooliganism and horseplay' at political meetings, and it was feared neither candidate would receive a proper hearing at the hustings.<sup>184</sup> Nonetheless, Watt's involvement in the campaign meant that Govan Liberals had 'not been so happy since the glad old days of 1910-11'. A 'fair' and 'rare' fight seemed in prospect. Despite giving Labour the 'run of their life' and a 'whirlwind finish' to his campaign, Watt was unable to prevent Maclean, who took 'no risks' with his constituency, from retaining it.<sup>185</sup> Govan was now considered by the *Govan Press* to be a safe Labour seat.<sup>186</sup> That Maclean secured 66.3 per cent of the vote to Watt's 33.7 bore this out, and Labour's overall majority in Govan had risen to 32.6 per cent – up 8 points from 1922. Nevertheless, the actual increase in votes was less than 700 on the previous year, meaning that the percentage figures need caveating.

#### 1924: 'Changed days'

Despite overlap between Labour and Liberal policies, Partick's Liberals still acquiesced in a 'pact' to step aside, allowing Unionists a free run at Labour in the 1924 General Election.<sup>187</sup> This galled Scott, who wrote to all socialist candidates in seats where Liberals had stepped aside in favour of a Unionist. He declared that most Liberal voters would prefer to see Labour in power than its 'reactionary' rivals, and that Asquith was sacrificing his party and the country for self-serving reasons. He drafted a letter to Asquith making

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 23 November 1923.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 7 December 1923.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 23 November 1923.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, 7 December 1923.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 14 December 1923.

<sup>187</sup> *GH*, 24 October 1924.

these points.<sup>188</sup> The anti-socialist pact of 1924 was the last straw for Scott's fidelity to the Liberal party, which he soon abandoned for Labour. He was selected as prospective Labour candidate for East Aberdeenshire, but died in 1928, a year before polling. It became apocryphal that Scott's conversion to 'socialism' resulted from the charisma and persuasive force of James Maxton, who defeated him at Bridgeton in 1922, but this scarcely credits Scott's formidable intellect, debating talents or deeply-held radical beliefs.<sup>189</sup> He gave the following account of his final break with Liberalism, indicating that he was not alone in his dilemma:

I have been reluctant to break with the Liberal party because I felt I had some small share of responsibility to the members [and] it was not fair to run away and leave them in the lurch at the first hint of adversity. The action of the leaders, however, in the recent election... finally determines me... I was invited to stand for Partick at this election, with Conservative support, but refused and gave my support to the ex-Labour member [Young].

I am not yet sure what course I shall take, for there are several other Liberals who feel the same as I do and I would like to get a number to act together.<sup>190</sup>

In 1924, no Liberal stood for Partick. A Unionist, Major Sir George Humphrey Broun-Lindsay, eventually picked up the anti-socialist gauntlet. Originally from Ayrshire, he served in the British Expeditionary Force during the Great War, before joining the Staff.<sup>191</sup> He benefited from a strengthened and extensively re-organised local Unionist Association, eager to reclaim a seat it had last held in 1906.<sup>192</sup> He attributed his victory (with a majority over Labour of 15.6 per cent) to the desire of 'moderate opinion' to reject communism and socialism, and secure 'stable government'.<sup>193</sup> This embodied unfair

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<sup>188</sup> UGL/SC/MS/ MS GEN 1465/15, Scott's Political Diary 18 October 1924; Hutchison, *Political History*, p. 280.

<sup>189</sup> This interpretation originates in the hagiographic G. McAllister, *James Maxton: Portrait of a Rebel*, (London, 1935), p. 80. It continued in Brown, *Maxton*, p. 191; Knox, *Labour Leaders*, p. 204 and Knox, *Maxton*, p. 28.

<sup>190</sup> UGL/SC/MS/ MS GEN 1465/423, Letter from Scott to Frederick Pethick Lawrence, 16 November 1924.

<sup>191</sup> NLS/SCUA/SF Acc. 10424, Annual Report of Partick Unionist Association, 26 January 1925; *The Times*, 24 June 1964 (obituary).

<sup>192</sup> NLS/SCUA/SF Acc. 10424, Annual Report of Partick Unionist Association, 26 January 1925.

<sup>193</sup> *Scotsman*, 31 October 1924.

conceptions both of Andrew Young's political stance and the policies of the first Labour Government. Results in Partick demonstrated the latent popularity of Conservatism there; the Labour triumph of the previous year appeared aberrant.

Similarly in Govan, local Liberals increasingly found themselves forced to choose between accepting that the torch of radicalism had passed to Labour, or to align themselves with the Unionists and reaction. This reflected the pronounced ideological polarisation highlighted by Smyth, which was discussed earlier in the present chapter. This time, Maclean faced a challenge from Unionist candidate Harry Stanley, while the Liberals stood aside. John Anthony declared that he would be supporting Stanley, and advised other local Liberals to do likewise.<sup>194</sup> Maclean's third re-election campaign in as many years opened with a packed meeting attended by 2300 supporters at Govan Town Hall.<sup>195</sup> The speaker's platform was a veritable roll call of Labour 'big guns', including David Kirkwood, now MP for Dumbarton Burghs, in addition to Town Councillors Docherty, McPherson, Barbour, Kerr and even Parish Councillor (and former Govan bailie) Alexander Storrie. To cheers, the meeting's chairman noted Maclean's success in winning and retaining Govan for Labour. On this basis the incumbent MP had earned the right to remain the party's 'champion'.<sup>196</sup>

The first speaker, David Kirkwood, warned Labour activists against complacency, stating that only 'cocksureness' could defeat Maclean now.<sup>197</sup> When this remark drew mirth from the floor, he insisted that they had to work for their MP's re-election as they had never done before. He elaborated darkly that there were 'influences at work in Govan in underground passages that were supposed to be closed never to be traversed again but are now open'.<sup>198</sup> This comment was almost certainly a reference to the Orange Order. Then he sought to demonstrate that Labour's appeal was not only to the working classes, but that middle class voters such as shopkeepers depended on the re-election of a Labour government 'for their very life'. When Maclean finally took to the stage, he made his by now habitual call for a 'good clean fight', insisting that his opponent deserved a fair

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<sup>194</sup> *GP*, 17 October 1924.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

hearing. He asked the Glasgow press, especially the *Glasgow Herald*, to refrain from its usual references to ‘Govan rowdies’, noting that it was interesting that reporters could always make out what candidates were saying, regardless of heckling. Towards the end of the campaign the *Govan Press* editorialised on the ‘political hooligan’, alleging that Labour candidates were never the target of such an individual.<sup>199</sup> Harry Stanley was frequently the butt of ‘ironical cheers’, albeit in the context of misrepresenting Labour’s policies.<sup>200</sup> On one occasion the socialist anthem *The Red Flag* was whistled during a Stanley campaign meeting held in the Pearce Institute. Dreadnought, however, claimed that in contrast to previous Govan elections, this one was marked by ‘practically no rowdiness’.<sup>201</sup> Maclean defended the record of Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald’s minority Labour administration, insisting he was ‘not ashamed of anything they had done’ during their almost-one-year in office.<sup>202</sup>

Closing his campaign, Stanley, whose posters proclaimed him ‘The Working Man’s Unionist’ summarised his appeal in a manner designed to draw the votes of Liberals and perhaps even some socialists (he desired an ‘international brotherhood of man’).<sup>203</sup> His attempt to reach Labour electors was personified by the support of ex-Bailie Munro, a late and apparently unexplained convert to the Unionist cause. Stanley stood, the *Govan Press* reported,

for the eradication of socialism and for the upholding of principles which had built up the Liberal party. “I believe that socialism, morally, ethically and materially would alter the people of Great Britain and would also destroy the British Empire. I believe in an international brotherhood of man with the people who are prepared to be brothers and sisters.”<sup>204</sup>

After a long silence on their position in this campaign, one week before polling the GLA executive and members, under Anthony’s presidency, issued a statement that not only did they support the Unionist candidate, but that they were ‘definitely opposed to socialism

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 31 October 1924.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 17 October 1924.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 24 October 1924.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid, 17 October 1924.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid, 31 October 1924.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, 24 October 1924.

and the whole policy that support of the Labour candidate implies.’<sup>205</sup> Anthony was himself ‘most enthusiastic’ in his efforts to stop Maclean being re-elected. It was noted that Partick’s Liberals were also backing their ‘Tory’ candidate, Broun-Lindsay, at this election. Unionist leader Stanley Baldwin telegraphed a message of support for candidate Stanley, stating that his election would help to ensure ‘stability and ordered progress’. Former Lord Chancellor Lord Birkenhead wrote to the Govan electors in an attempt to remind them of the ‘Red Letter’ scare. This was ‘no ordinary election’ for the voters had to choose between ‘Britain for the Britons’ and ‘Britain for the Bolsheviks’.<sup>206</sup> Given that Maclean had prominently disassociated himself from doctrinaire Marxism and regarded historical materialism as a ‘key to the capitalist labyrinth’, not a ‘bible’, such smears strained credibility.<sup>207</sup> After a record turnout, attributed to the polls staying open till 9pm, it was confirmed that Maclean had retained his Westminster seat. While in percentage terms, Maclean’s majority had been reduced to a still considerable 26.4, it is interesting to note that in this election and the two preceding it, Labour’s actual majority never fell below 6,105. ‘Dreadnought’ offered a percipient eulogy for Govan Liberalism, which seemed to have lost not only its ability to win elections but its last semblance of ideological coherence.<sup>208</sup>

For good or ill the Liberal party as far as Govan is concerned is dead. Why not dispose of the halls in White Street? Who would ever have believed that they would see such staunch radicals as Govan’s trudge to the polling booth and make their cross for a hard and dry Tory! Changed days. It is enough to make many of the old Govan radicals of the eighties and nineties turn in their graves. Yet we say we are advancing. I fail to see it.

## Conclusion

What does the experience of these two constituencies reveal about Liberal decline? The analysis of these parliamentary campaigns discloses a clear and remarkably swift diminution in Liberal support in Partick between 1918 and 1924, while the collapse in Govan’s Liberal vote in 1918 was impossible to deny. Maclean’s successive victories clearly owed much to his organisational and rhetorical skills, allied to the support of the

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 2 November 1923.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid, 31 October 1924.

party's formidable local election machine which had been cultivating Govan for decades, with greater vigour and success after 1912. Leaving aside his initial narrow win on a split-vote plurality in 1918, Maclean's continued success at subsequent elections, continuing well beyond the period covered in this thesis testifies to his ability to win support in the face of both Liberal and Unionist opponents in what were termed 'straight' electoral fights. Yet it must also be acknowledged that there was perennial tension in Govan between the Liberals and the Unionists, and among the Liberals themselves, which had their roots not just in the Lloyd George – Asquith split but in unresolved grievances from the 1880s, as the recriminations of former Provost Anthony illustrate. There is also a *prima facie* case that Maclean's radical brand of socialism, stopping short of Marxism, resonated with his working class constituents in a way that Liberal and Unionist candidates in Govan could only envy.

It is reasonable to infer that the 1912 abolition of the burgh of Govan and its paternalistic ethos helped weaken the bonds of 'public liability paternalism' tying workers to the Liberals and Unionists. Nevertheless, there remains the sense that the decline of this paternalism and that of the burghs themselves was something of a chicken-and-egg process, given the evidence of disaffection with the burgh elites from as early as the 1870s, considered elsewhere in this thesis. As chapters five and six highlighted, the intensification of working class ratepayers' grievances with the burgh leadership was pivotal to the failure of appeals to local self-government and the attractions of municipal socialism. In this context, it appeared that the concerns of Govan and Partick residents had become increasingly similar to those of their city counterparts, now fellow citizens of Greater Glasgow. It was significant that both former burghs' parliamentary candidates from 1918 on still felt the need to situate national issues in the context of local life in Partick and Govan, not just Glasgow in general. Note, for instance, MacCallum Scott's pithy rhetorical connection of free trade with the shipbuilding industry in Partick in 1923. Govan's former MPs William Pearce and Robert Duncan would have recognised this trope, as would Partick's own erstwhile parliamentarians James Parker Smith and Robert Balfour. Chapter seven demonstrated that the strength of Liberalism in Partick and Govan, parliamentary constituencies which the local press had assumed to be strongholds of Liberalism shading into radicalism, could never be taken as read. By electing Neil Maclean its MP ahead of the other 'Red Clydesiders' in 1918, Govan could even claim to be in *advance* of political developments elsewhere in the city, notwithstanding William Pearce's posturing of 1885. The foundations of his success were laid in the early 1910s by local Labour politicians, like Councillor Matthew Coyle, who were able to convince Irish

Catholic voters that they need not fear socialism. Partick was less willing to embrace Labour, in large part due to the support the Orange Order was able to mobilise for Unionism. Yet even in the 1880s, Partick's Liberal MPs were heavily-reliant on Unionist support. In this context, it is surprising that Partick elected a Labour MP at all, especially as early as 1923, however brief his tenure.

Of course, radicalism in Govan and Partick, as elsewhere, did not automatically equate to support for Labour, and this was reflected in the Liberal party's regular paroxysms of uncertainty over whether to support or oppose the new party. At least the Govan Liberals were spared the prolonged agonies of their Partick counterparts. As has been seen, the reasons for Liberal decline in the Partick case are more complex than those obtaining in Govan, owing as much to sectarianism as to wider issues of ideology and policy. Orange voters had a significant, even decisive, impact on the outcome of the 1918 and 1922 elections, bolstering Liberals who were effectively Unionist proxies. In 1923, Orange voters' abstention, over Sir Allan Smith's opposition to protectionism, allowed Andrew Young to become Partick's first Labour MP. Looking back, the predictable outcome of the 1918 poll concealed a shifting balance of power between local Liberals and Unionists, the effects of which would become increasingly clear in 1923, and undeniable with the Unionists' 1924 victory. The 1922 campaign starkly highlighted the dilemma of liberalism, torn between the classical, *laissez-faire* approach offered by the victorious Sir John Collie, and the more progressive, Labour-friendly approach offered by the defeated Sir Daniel Macaulay Stevenson. That the local Unionists backed Collie, while Labour tacitly supported Stevenson, highlights the ideological confusion of this period.

This was also illuminated in the divergence between the public statements and private reflections of Alexander MacCallum Scott, Liberal candidate in 1923. He became increasingly convinced that the Labour programme was radical Liberalism by another name. Scott's emphatic defeat, with his party relegated to third place in the local poll for the first time, marks the point where radical sympathies in Partick were overwhelmingly transferred to Labour. The Partick and Govan Liberals reunited too late, compromising too much to pass the test identified by Asquith in 1920. In 1924, the Liberals effectively cut their losses in Partick, and Govan, by standing aside in favour of Unionist candidates. Labour had gradually reeled in most of what MacDonald termed the radical thread, leaving the Liberals clinging to a few tattered and indistinct strands. Yet it is illuminating to note that Labour only won the seat on a split vote plurality in 1923, and again in 1929, whereas, before jumping on the Coalition bandwagon in 1918, the Liberal Sir Robert Balfour had

from 1906 till December 1910 won with over half of votes polled.<sup>209</sup> In 1929, Partick was contested by a Liberal: Councillor John S. Taylor, endorsed by Sir Daniel Macaulay Stevenson - who remained closer to Labour than the Unionists.<sup>210</sup> Perhaps by design, his ten per cent of the poll sapped essential support from Broun-Lindsay, who lost to Adam Storey McKinlay, a Labour candidate familiar to local voters from earlier municipal contests.<sup>211</sup> McKinlay then faced defeat by the Conservative Charles Glen MacAndrew, in the straight contest of 1931. These results again highlight the complex, often contradictory legacy of radicalism and Liberal Unionism in Partick politics.

Partick and Govan were only two constituencies among many at a turbulent time, where parties, candidates and a new near-democratic electorate endured almost annual general elections. The influence of the Orange Order makes it impossible to abstract conclusions about Partick to the wider Scottish, not to mention British experience. Yet these idiosyncrasies highlight a broader point. Liberal decline in particular and political change in general can only be understood if local politics are considered on their own terms, the better to appreciate that 'national' agendas are built on the basis of local preoccupations. Fluidity between radicalism and moderate socialism was an important factor, but the 'radical threads' of Partick and Govan were woven to uniquely local patterns. Whilst there is little that can be generalised about the constituencies' political development in this period, the detailed examination of their electoral discourse presented here offers a useful basis of comparison for researchers both of other localities or the 'national' picture.

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<sup>209</sup> Craig, *Parliamentary Results, 1918-1949*, p. 566; *Parliamentary Results, 1885-1918*, p. 568.

<sup>210</sup> *Scotsman*, 17 April 1929. This John S. Taylor should not be confused with his deceased Govan namesake, discussed in chapter 6, pp. 209-10.

<sup>211</sup> Craig, *Parliamentary Results, 1918-1949*, p. 594.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Conclusion**

History is a great study. There is nothing better for broadening the mind and enabling one to form a sound judgement upon problems of people, but it should begin at the beginning by a study of local history.

Old Govan Club, 1934.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis has contributed substantial new qualitative evidence to a number of aspects of the political historiography of urban Scotland. Most importantly, it has retrieved the political development of two important ‘suburban’ communities from the condescension of being considered mere footnotes in the history of Glasgow, or simply parochial curiosities of only antiquarian interest, almost a century on from annexation. While in many respects the Partick and Govan experience paralleled wider Glasgow, Scottish and United Kingdom developments, it deserves to be analysed in its own right as well as in comparative context. The thesis contributes firmly to the wider historiography on urbanisation, the rise and fall of Liberalism, the rise of Labour and the resilience of Unionism and Conservatism. It has also added further qualitative data to the reconsideration of the political significance of Irish migration, as quantified for the burghs in chapter one, and the role of Irish migrants in the Labour movement. The long-term development of Partick and Govan from the 1850s to 1920s also resonates with perennial debates about the optimum size, scale and responsiveness of local government.

The first section of this thesis considered municipal politics. The erection of Partick and Govan into police burghs in the mid-nineteenth century was, on the face of it, merely a result of the application of rational, permissive legislation, allowing both communities to begin to grapple with the darker consequences of swift industrialisation, urbanisation and exponential population growth. Yet the creation of the burghs occurred against a more complex ideological backdrop and cannot be ascribed solely to self-protection, as antiquarian histories of both communities would claim. To fully appreciate the arrival of the burghs, it is necessary to consider the importance of the Liberal ethos of local self-government, which, whatever its own merits, could provide a useful cloak for the self-perpetuation and insularity of the local industrial elites. These last considerations go a long way towards explaining the burghs’ determination, first expressed in 1868, to remain separate from Glasgow. Notwithstanding the Govan and Partick commissioners’ attempts both then and later to claim civic legitimacy and status equal to that of the city, which may

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<sup>1</sup> A. McCallum, ‘Value of the Study of Local History’, *OGCT*, Part 4, Volume 5, 1933-4, pp. 92-5 at p. 94.

have been in good faith, there was evidence that the real threat from annexation was the prospect that the commissioners would no longer be big fish in a comparatively small pond, whose homes and businesses could benefit from watching, lighting, drainage and sanitation on the cheap. In fairness, however, there was more to the burghs' civic life than crude social control.

Partick was Scotland's pioneering 'populous place' police burgh in 1852, and its qualified success in tackling the challenges that had led to its creation, later neatly encapsulated by Govanites as dirt, darkness, disturbance and disease, made it an example for other communities to follow. The burgh's appointment of an MOH, before this became a legal requirement, was a move as enlightened as the commissioners' reluctance to make proper provision for a temporary cholera hospital was short-sighted. The network of sewers laid in the burghs' early years was undoubtedly an improvement on the reeking ditches of pre-burgh days, albeit the rather penny-pinching approach to sewer construction in the 1850s and afterwards meant that the burgh was not fully drained before annexation to the city in 1912. The burgh also demonstrated a progressive approach to building and housing in an era before the mid-twentieth century hey-day of town planning, with arguably better results, albeit that Partick had not resolved the scourge of slum-dwellings by the time of its annexation. The reluctance of the early Partick commissioners to consider differential rating, a stance also emulated in Govan, had far reaching implications for the funding of civic amenities, and ultimately, the disenchantment of working-class ratepayers with the existence of the burghs as separate civic entities. A more immediate consequence was the inadequate size of the local police force *vis-à-vis* Glasgow.

From 1865 down to 1885, the burgh leaders, especially Govan's, developed a grander, not to say more pretentious, vision of their role both within their respective communities, and in relation to established Scottish municipalities. The ethos of local self-government was now fore-grounded as the rallying cry for civic independence, whilst there were accompanying attempts to anchor the recently-created police burgh entities in the ancient histories, reaching back to at least the seventh century AD, of the communities from which their names were taken.<sup>2</sup> Almost simultaneously, the Fenian panics of the late 1860s and mid-1870s afforded the burghs, again especially Govan, a chance to highlight the commanding presence of the local police and the ostensibly more masculine virtues of the independent burghs in comparison to Glasgow. These dramas offered a foretaste of

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<sup>2</sup> For background to the earliest recorded mention of Govan as a place, see Dalglish and Driscoll, *et al*, *Historic Govan*, p. 12.

later sectarian tensions in communities with high levels of Irish migration. This transitional period in both communities' history also produced the first written, albeit fragmentary evidence, of internal (i.e. ratepayers') criticism of burgh administration, especially of the inequitable manner in which its financial costs were born by those least able to pay. These were straws in the wind for developments in municipal politics from 1885 up to annexation.

From 1885 on, the extensive survival of local newspapers offered a much more nuanced and rounded picture of local politics than is available for the previous period. For both communities, there is compelling evidence that their municipal representatives now held fundamentally different visions of the nature, purpose and scope of urban municipal government. An important reaction to this was embodied in attempts to consolidate a sense of separate identity from Glasgow through the introduction of high-profile civic and philanthropic initiatives and institutions, such as grand public parks, the Govan Police Pipe Band, police and civic sports days, public libraries and swimming pools. Yet these failed to mask the problems resulting from both communities' deep structural inequalities: a truth which radical Liberal and moderate socialist councillors were increasingly adept at highlighting. The controversy over whether the burghs ought to be annexed by Glasgow continued, and although the intensity of the debate waxed and waned, it never ceased. Indeed, many leading local politicians, such as Govan's Provost Neil McLean (1889-1892), who were neither radical nor socialist, were on record as favouring annexation, whilst others, such as Govan's Bailie John MacLeish, declared themselves agnostic on the issue. All this rather belied Govan's officially unwavering refusal to countenance annexation, whilst Partick, by 1890, was willing to discuss terms with the city, subject to the implementation of a scheme of federation or divisional management.

The burghs often contradicted themselves in their arguments for continued relative autonomy, perhaps ultimately tripping themselves up. For instance, Govan's lofty anti-annexation rhetoric was undermined by its own annexation of the Linthouse territory in 1901. Linthouse's inhabitants, who had been less than whole-hearted in their rock-and-a-hard-place 'decision' to amalgamate with Govan in pursuit of basic urban amenities, were swiftly disillusioned with their new regime, which offered a standard of administration little better than the benign neglect the mushroom suburb had suffered under the County of Lanark. The Linthouse annexation was an 'own goal' in one other respect. The district's major employer was the SCWS, an organisation whose own ethos and culture could hardly offer a greater contrast to the burgh's. The SCWS proved something of a hothouse for

Labour candidates, able to proselytise for municipal socialism and, consequently, Govan's amalgamation with Glasgow. By 1911, it was clear Partick's insistence on joining Glasgow *only* under guarantees of civic federalism was really an attempt to exploit the city coffers, whilst maintaining social control of local tenants and employees under a veil of subsidiarity.

Section two of this thesis considered parliamentary election campaigns in Govan and Partick from their recognition as Divisions of Lanarkshire in their own right in 1885, through their reconfiguration as Glasgow Divisions in 1918 and into the mid-1920s. In 1885, there was wide press speculation that both new divisions would be safe Liberal seats; events proved otherwise. Govan was won by a Unionist, albeit under a 'Labour' flag of convenience, whilst Partick's first Liberal MP swiftly became a Liberal Unionist. The 1886 Home Rule split exacerbated, but did not create existing tensions in the Partick and Govan Liberal ranks. From then until at least 1911, Home Rule became the central dividing line in local politics, reflecting wider Scottish and United Kingdom developments. Yet there were tentative auguries of Govan's post-war political representation, embodied in the 1906 performance of Labour's John Hill, who despite finishing third to the Conservative Robert Duncan, had garnered a very respectable 29 per cent of the vote. Partick was altogether more resistant to the rise of Labour, as was shown by the party's failure to even field a parliamentary candidate there before the war. The political differences between the former burghs grew still more evident after the war, with Labour's takeover of every municipal ward in Govan contrasting starkly with its failure to win *any* seats in Partick, where the burgh's last provost remained a Glasgow Town Councillor. These political divergences between the burghs also reflected Govan's more proletarian character than Partick, as is highlighted with census statistics in chapter one.

At the parliamentary level, Govan seemed to embrace Labour, at first tentatively, when Neil Maclean narrowly won a three-cornered contest by a slim plurality, in 1918, but then firmly, as his subsequent absolute majorities in every election down to 1945 demonstrated.<sup>3</sup> Partick, by contrast, barely shook hands with Labour – electing Andrew Young and Alan Storey McKinlay (in 1923 and 1929, respectively), only when the local Liberals failed to throw their weight behind the Unionist candidates. Still, in both communities, the weakening of local industrial paternalism and the abolition of the burghs themselves, and accompanying disappearance of what this study has termed local 'public

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<sup>3</sup> Craig, *Parliamentary Results*, p. 566.

liability paternalism' as embodied in these institutions, played a major part in opening the door to Labour. Partick and Govan were both emphatically no longer company towns, although the former's character had changed less than the latter's.

On that note, it should not be forgotten that the title of this study mentions autonomy, annexation *and* assimilation. The first two themes were more-or-less explicitly part of the analysis in chapters two to six. However, assimilation has been considered in a rather more subtle way. In the foregoing chapters it has been persistently emphasised that Partick's and Govan's municipal and parliamentary politics were never hermetically sealed from developments in Glasgow and elsewhere, irrespective of the hopes of both communities' more insular leaders. Indeed, it was often the staunchest defenders of police burgh autonomy, like Govan's Provost Thomas Reid (1869-72), who had the firmest connections to the city establishment. Likewise, a major factor in the burghs' downfall was residents' everyday knowledge of Glasgow's municipal affairs, especially its superior civic amenities and fairer rates. This arose not least through work and family connections outside the burghs, as well as through readership of city newspapers.

To this extent, annexation was the consequence, not the cause, of assimilation. The real surprise emerging from the evidence presented in this thesis was that the burghs survived independently quite as long as they did. The most convincing answer to the conundrum was the resilience and flexibility of the ethos of local self-government. This, until the 1890s, was able to accommodate socialist interpretations of the role of municipal government. Only in the early twentieth-century was this mentality really eclipsed by the combined forces of national efficiency and large-scale municipal socialism. Whilst this thesis would not agree that all historical studies should be focused on the local state, this one has made a detailed, significant and substantial contribution to two hitherto under-analysed districts of Glasgow, as well as to the wider historiography on political change. It therefore remains to sum up the study's central findings and their key contributions to such historiography.

Returning to Morton's arguments about the significance for nineteenth-century Scottish politics of the Liberal promotion of 'local self-government', it is clear that these have formed a very useful starting-point and theoretical framework against which political life in Partick and Govan could be examined, subject to certain caveats. First, it was noted that the General Police Acts under which both burghs were constituted, among several other Scottish communities in the late-nineteenth century detailed in the tables at the end of chapter two, cannot be read unambiguously as an invitation to the empowerment of local

people. This permissive legislation was also a way for the central (Westminster) state to make a virtue of abandoning its responsibilities to ensure uniform standards of public administration throughout Scotland. Likewise, Morton's position that local self-government afforded 'the people' an opportunity to take charge of local affairs needs to be qualified to the extent that 'the people' were synonymous with the male middle classes.

Such ambivalence at the heart of Victorian ideals of local self-government, reflecting tensions at the heart of its Liberal parent ideology, became the source of real political conflict in the burghs of Govan and Partick throughout their quasi-independent existence, as is seen in chapters three to six. None of this is to imply that Morton was incorrect in his affirmation of the importance of local self-government to understanding Scottish politics for the period of this study; these are differences of emphasis and degree rather than premise. Indeed, this thesis makes much use of the rise and fall of local self-government as the broad backcloth against which the finer details of political change were painted. The evidence of this thesis, especially chapters three to six, strongly suggests that the eclipse of local self-government by 'municipal socialism' on the grand scale and informed by Fabian adaptations of 'national efficiency' was by no means inevitable, if the experience of Govan and Partick was anything to go by.

The longer view of the rise and fall of local self-government, as embodied in the Police Burghs studied here, suggests that it was undermined more by the hypocrisy and self-interest of the Burghs' 'establishment' forces than by intrinsic philosophical flaws. Even some Labour activists, who had campaigned long and hard, ultimately successfully, for the burghs to be annexed, acknowledged that more efficient and equitable municipal administration by Glasgow was secured at the cost of a loss of comparatively intimate *local* administration. This was more than rose-tinted spectacles and, as chapter six also shows, Scotland remains in 2010 internationally idiosyncratic in the sheer impersonal scale of its local authorities. It seems unfortunate, to this author, that plans for Greater Glasgow to develop on quasi-federal lines were shelved then apparently forgotten after 1914 brought more urgent national preoccupations. Morton persuasively argued that local self-government created an environment where incipient Scottish nationalism was sublimated as *civic* nationalism. Former Govan Provost (1886-9) George Ferguson's 1895 comparison of the General Police Acts to Home Rule, insofar as they allowed the creation of quasi-autonomous local states, remains telling. It is therefore, again in this author's view, disappointing that the resurrection of an *actual* Scottish Parliament in devolved form has not been marked by a corresponding new disposition of 'double-devolution', or even

entrenchment of powers, in the context of local government. Even allowing for the 2008-onwards world financial crisis, this seems to mark a missed opportunity to reconnect politics with ‘the people’, now, as distinct from before 1918, long-since democratically enfranchised.

Yet this is not the place to get bogged down in counterfactuals. As was seen in the foregoing chapters, Partick and Govan developed as separate municipal jurisdictions from the city during the heyday of local self-government. They were amalgamated to the city of Glasgow in 1912 when nationally, local self-government had lost credibility against the onslaught of a revived ‘municipal socialism’ informed by ‘national efficiency’. Locally, the tensions at the heart of late Victorian Liberalism saw the burghs face increasing internal discord over just who and which interests the burghs represented. This thesis has shown that these divisions – especially in Govan – proved an early testing-ground for Labour’s efforts to overcome sectarian divisions and working-class conservatism and deference in its attempts to win municipal and parliamentary power, which achieved fulfilment only after the war. By contrast, it has been seen that markedly-less-proletarian Partick’s municipal and parliamentary experiences highlighted the scale of the difficulties faced by Labour in overcoming these same problems - even after the war. Given the involvement of the former burghs’ citizens in the ‘Red Clydeside’ industrial disputes and housing struggles, the thesis helps to ground the debate on the nature and causes of such ruptures in a longer-term understanding of the burghs’ traditions of anti-landlordism and scepticism (at least from radical Liberal and Labour activists) about the benign nature of local capitalism – at least since the 1880s.

The limitations of this study do not undermine its contributions to the discipline. It is, however, acknowledged that its focus on municipal and parliamentary politics is overwhelmingly, and needed to be, qualitative in approach. The electoral focus means the war years are discussed only briefly, given the abeyance of parliamentary and municipal contests from 1911 to 1918. The analysis is consistently political rather than social or economic, and there arguably remains space for such studies to be conducted for these former burghs. Given the usefulness of local studies for contributing to the national and regional mosaics of historical understanding, it is perhaps time for Glasgow’s other, albeit less individually populous and significant, police burghs to find their academic historian. The key contribution of this particular study was substantively to recover the blurred, almost invisible, political history of two populous Clydeside communities which, when disaggregated from Glasgow, were among Scotland’s foremost urban communities in the

period studied. As has been discussed at length and in detail, their experiences revealed much about the dynamics and discourse of political change.

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ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 1-1 (c. 1852-1866)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 1-2 (c. 1866-1875)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 1-3 (c. 1875-1880)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 1-4 (c. 1880-1886)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 1-5 (c. 1886-1890)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 1-6 (c. 1890-1893)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 1-7 (c. 1893-1898)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 1-8 (c. 1898-1902)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 2-1 (c. 1902-1907)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 2-2 (c. 1907-1911)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Par 2-3 (c. 1911-1912)

Minute Books of the Burgh of Govan, 1864-1912, Glasgow City Archives

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 1-1(Govan Feuars' Committee Minute Book, c. 1854-64)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-1 (c. 1864-1869)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-2 (c. 1869-1874)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-3 (c. 1874-1877)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-4 (c. 1877-1879)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-5 (c. 1879-1885)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-6 (c. 1885-1889)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-7 (c. 1889-1893)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-8 (c. 1893-1899)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-9 (c. 1899-1904)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-10 (c. 1904-1909)

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov 2-11 (c. 1909-1912)

Local Government Papers Relating to Boundary Commissions etc.

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov-35-12-1 - Cases and statements of Govan, Partick and other Suburban Burghs to Glasgow, 1887. [This volume collates several documents relating to the 1887 negotiations, which are each listed in their own right below, but share the same location reference.]

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov-35-12-1 - Case for the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Town Council of The City and Royal Burgh of Glasgow, [hereafter Case for Glasgow], (Edinburgh, Neill and Company), 1887.

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov-35-12-1 - Case for the Magistrates and Commissioners of the Burgh of Partick In Regard to the Proposal to Extend the Municipal Boundaries of Glasgow, (Glasgow: K. & R. Davidson, 1887).

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov-35-12-1 - General Case for the Magistrates and Commissioners of Police of the Burghs of Partick, Maryhill, Hillhead, Crosshill, Kinning Park, Govanhill and Pollokshields [hereafter Case for the Burghs, 1887] in opposition to the proposal to extend the municipal boundaries of Glasgow, (Glasgow: Aird and Coghill, 1887).

ML/GCA/AB/H-Gov-35-12-1 - Statement of the Provost, Magistrates and Commissioners of Police of the Burgh of Govan [to the 1887 Boundary Commissioners], (Govan: John Cossar, 1887).

ML/GCA/H-Gov-35-37 - Glasgow Boundaries Bill: Minutes of Evidence,

ML/GCA/AB1/143 - Petition of Govan Magistrates and Commissioners to the House of Lords against the Glasgow Boundaries Bill (1891).

ML/GCA/AB/1/143 - Letters from Glasgow Town Clerk Marwick to Partick Town Clerk Donaldson, 11 and 18 November 1890, at pp. 506 and 30, respectively.

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Address of Sir Allan M. Smith to the Electors of Partick, 1923, UGL/SC/MSC MS GEN 1465/96; *DR*, 2 November, 1923.

UGL/SC/MSC MS GEN 1465/97, Andrew Young's Address to the Electors of Partick and MacCallum Scott's Address to the Electors of Partick, 1923.

UGL/SC/MSC MS GEN 1465/97, Smith's 1923 address.

UGL/SC/MSC MS GEN 1465/97, Scott's 1923 address.

UGL/SC/MSC MS GEN 1465/13-15 Scott's Political Diary, 2 August 1923.

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UGL/SC/MSC MS GEN 1465/423, Letter from Scott to Frederick Pethick Lawrence, 16 November 1924.

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*Daily Record*

*The Daily Telegraph*

*Fairplay [‘Clydeside Cameos’]*

*Forward*

*Freeman’s Journal and Commercial Daily Advertiser [Dublin]*

*Glasgow Evening News*

*Glasgow Herald*

*Glasgow Morning Journal*

*Glasgow Observer and Catholic Herald*

*Govan Chronicle [extant 1876-8]*

*Govan Press [extant 1885-1985]*

*North British Daily Mail*

*Partick Advertiser [extant 1875-6]*

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## **Appendix 1: Legal Glossary**

**Note:** *The below terms and concepts are referred to at various points in the thesis proper. In most cases a full elaboration would detract from the flow in relevant chapters. References, from miscellaneous sources, are given in the relevant chapter footnotes.*

### **Amalgamation**

A relatively neutral phrase referring to the incorporation of territory into a burgh, often entailing the abolition of a formerly independent (q.v.) burgh. See also annexation and unification (both q.v.), which are used interchangeably in this thesis, except in quotations.

### **Annexation**

The legal acquisition by one burgh of the territory of another. In Govan and Partick, this phrase proved controversial given divisions in both communities about the official burgh policy of resisting unification (q.v.) with Glasgow.

### **Annual (Statutory) Meeting**

The formal meeting after the annual election of commissioners (q.v.) or councillors (q.v.). This typically entailed the re-appointment of burgh officials, the selection of magistrates, and the taking of oaths by newly-elected magistrates and commissioners or councillors.

### **Autonomy**

In the context of local government, this was always a relative concept; especially in Police Burghs, whose scope for action was circumscribed by Statute (q.v.) and the oversight of the County (q.v.). See also independence (q.v.).

### **Assessment**

Rating (q.v.) or local taxation, levied on properties above a certain valuable (initially £10).

### **Bailie**

Scots term for a magistrate. This term was often used by magistrates in Police Burghs, who were not legally entitled to use it until 1900.

### **Board of Supervision**

The body responsible for administering medical provision under the Poor Law in Scotland (from 1845-95), and based in Edinburgh. From 1895 until the creation of the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948, its powers were transferred to the Local Government Board for Scotland.

### **Boundary Commission**

A body appointed by Parliament to consider the most appropriate parliamentary and municipal boundaries for a given locality.

### **Burgh**

Generic Scots word for a municipality, used until the 1970s, and equivalent to the English 'Borough'. All Burghs in Scotland were abolished in 1975 under the terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Since 1996, under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994, local government has been conducted by 32 unitary authorities.

### **Burgh of Barony**

Scottish community whose municipal status derived from a local landowner having legal title to property from the Crown. Abolished under Burgh Police (Scotland) Act 1892.

**Burgh of Regality**

Scottish community whose municipal status derived from the patronage of a leading nobleman. Enjoyed wider civil and criminal law powers than Burghs of Barony (q.v.). Abolished under Burgh Police (Scotland) Act 1892.

**Burgh Surveyor**

architect employed by a burgh to oversee and advise on planning applications and infrastructure development, not least sewers and roads.

**Chief Magistrate**

the legal style for the civic heads of police burghs. This was typically used interchangeably with the term provost (q.v.), albeit this was not legally permissible before 1900. See also Bailie (q.v.).

**Commissioner**

See Police Commissioner (q.v.).

**Commissioners of Supply**

administrative officers of the County (q.v.).

**Committees of the Whole Board**

Unlike sectional committees (q.v.), these standing committees discussed various aspects of burgh administration with all commissioners (q.v.) or councillors (q.v.) eligible to attend.

**Common Good**

Land held by established burghs (q.v.) on behalf of the community. This could be used as security for improvement schemes. Police Burghs (q.v.) had no Common Good, thus restricting their access to such credit.

**Convener**

Committee chairman.

**Councillor**

Burgh representative elected by ratepayers meeting the property qualification. See also Police Commissioners (q.v.).

**County**

Administrative unit governed by the Sheriff and, nominally, the Justices of the Peace. Govan and Partick belonged to the County of Lanark.

**Dean of Guild**

Chair or Convener of the Dean of Guild Court (q.v.). In Glasgow, the Dean of Guild headed the Merchants' House with ex-officio membership of the Town Council.

**Dean of Guild Court**

Scottish municipal building and planning committee. The term, associated at first with established burghs, came to be used in Police Burghs in the late-19th century.

**Differential Rating**

A form of rating (assessment – q.v.) whereby some account was taken of the ratepayer's means to pay.

**Divisional Management**

A scheme of municipal federalism mooted for Glasgow Town Council as it expanded during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was never implemented.

**Established burghs**

An informal phrase used in this thesis to differentiate Police Burghs (q.v.) from Royal Burghs, Burghs of Barony and Burghs of Regality (all q.v.).

**Feuar**

The owner of a plot of land or property in Scotland (roughly equivalent to a free-holder in England).

**General Board of Health**

A body created under the Public Health Act 1848 (11 & 12 Vict. c.63). Its writ did not run in Scotland. See also the Board of Supervision (q.v.).

**General Police Acts**

Permissive legislation allowing Scottish communities to gain municipal status, and empowering established burghs (q.v.) to secure policing and public health powers. The statutes relevant to the creation of the burghs of Partick and Govan were, respectively, the Police of Towns (Scotland) Act, 1850 (13 & 14 Vict. cap.33) and the General Police (Scotland) Act 1862 (26 Vict. cap. 101) – also known as the ‘Lindsay Act’.

**General Police legislation**

See General Police Acts (q.v.).

**Independence**

In this thesis, this term usually arises in the context of Govan and Partick having a separate jurisdiction from Glasgow. See also autonomy (q.v.).

**Inspector of Nuisances**

Burgh official responsible for environmental health. Originally combined with the office of Superintendent of Police (q.v.)

**Inspector of the Poor**

The official responsible for the administration of the Poor Law (q.v.) at parish level. The inspector was not accountable to the burgh.

**Justices of the Peace (JPs)**

A legal officer of the county. Their role was largely ceremonial in the early 19th century.

**Lord Advocate**

Chief Law officer for Scotland. Before 1832, the role was far more politically influential than it is when this thesis is being compiled.

**Magistrate**

A judge in the police courts. See also Bailie (q.v.)

**Medical Officer of Health (MOH)**

Chief Medical Officer at the municipal level, with a special responsibility for public health.

**Parish**

Administrative unit corresponding to a Church of Scotland Parish. Govan and Partick fell within the Parish of Govan. See Parochial (q.v.).

**Parliamentary Committee or Parliamentary Bill and Law Committee**

Standing committee established to scrutinise legal and parliamentary developments which could affect burgh affairs. Their main preoccupation in the case of Partick and Govan was to prevent steps leading to amalgamation (q.v.) - with Glasgow.

**Parochial**

When capitalised, this word refers to the administrative responsibilities of Govan Parish - see Parish (q.v.).

**Parochial Boards**

The body responsible for local administration of the Poor Law (q.v.).

**Parliamentary Burgh**

Many Royal Burghs and Burghs of Barony and Regality were required to have an elected town council by Act of Parliament between 1832-3.

**Police Burghs**

Civic entities created under the General Police Acts (q.v.) passed between 1833 and 1892. Distinction with established burghs (q.v.) ended with the Burgh Police (Scotland) Act 1892.

**Police Commissioners**

In Police Burghs these were the equivalent of councillors in established burghs. In this thesis, the terms commissioner (q.v.) and police commissioner are used interchangeably.

**Police Statutes**

See General Police Acts (q.v.).

**Police Surgeon**

In Police Burghs this role was combined with that of the Medical Officer of Health (q.v.).

**Poll**

Before the Ballot Act 1872, ratepayers could request the Sheriff to conduct a poll of ratepayers in the event of a disputed municipal election.

**Poor Law**

The Poor Law (Scotland) Act established a system of poor relief involving the Board of Supervision (q.v.), Parochial Boards (q.v.) and Inspectors of the Poor in each Parish (q.v.).

**‘Populous place’**

A community of substantial population entitled to apply to adopt the relevant provisions of the General Police Acts (q.v.).

**Procurator Fiscal**

Chief Prosecutor in a Police Burgh. This role was originally combined with that of Superintendent of Police (q.v.).

**Provost**

The civic head or chief magistrate (q.v.) of a burgh.

***Quoad Sacra***

Church of Scotland parishes administratively but not spiritually subordinate to the parent parish (i.e. Govan in the case of Govan and Partick). For instance, births, deaths and marriages would have been registered at Govan Parish.

**Rating**

See assessment (q.v.).

**Retiring**

Term commonly used to refer to a commissioner (q.v.) or councillor (q.v.) nearing the end of their fixed (3 year) term in office.

**Rotation**

See retiring (q.v.). Retiring commissioners (q.v.) and councillors (q.v.) 'went out by rotation' in contemporary parlance.

**Royal Burgh**

Scottish burgh (q.v.) either founded under or later recognised through the granting of a royal charter. See also Police Burghs, Burghs of Barony and Burghs of Regality (all q.v.).

**School Board**

Elected Parochial body responsible for school education from 1870 to 1918.

**Sectional Committees**

Specialised standing committees to oversee particular areas of burgh administration - e.g. Watching and lighting.

**Sheriff**

Legal official with overall responsibility for administering a County (q.v.).

**Sheriff-substitute**

Legal official responsible to the Sheriff and able to carry out powers delegated by the former (q.v.).

**Standing Orders**

The rules and procedures under which burgh business was conducted.

**Subsidiarity**

The notion in political theory that governmental power should be exercised at the most local level consistent with efficient administration.

**Superintendent of Police**

Chief police officer for a police burgh.

**Surveyor**

Short form for Burgh Surveyor (q.v.)

**Town Clerk**

Chief administrative officer and legal advisor in a burgh.

**Traditional burghs**

An informal phrase used in this thesis to differentiate Police Burghs (q.v.) from Royal Burghs, Burghs of Barony and Burghs of Regality (all q.v.). It is used alternately with established burghs (q.v.)

**Treasurer**

Chief financial officer in a burgh.

**Unification**

See amalgamation and annexation (q.v.).

**Ward**

Territorial subdivision of a burgh for electoral and rating purposes.

**Ward committee**

An elected body of ratepayers in each ward intended to provide a forum for consultation on municipal matters. Could nominate commissioners (q.v.) or councillors (q.v.) ahead of annual elections.

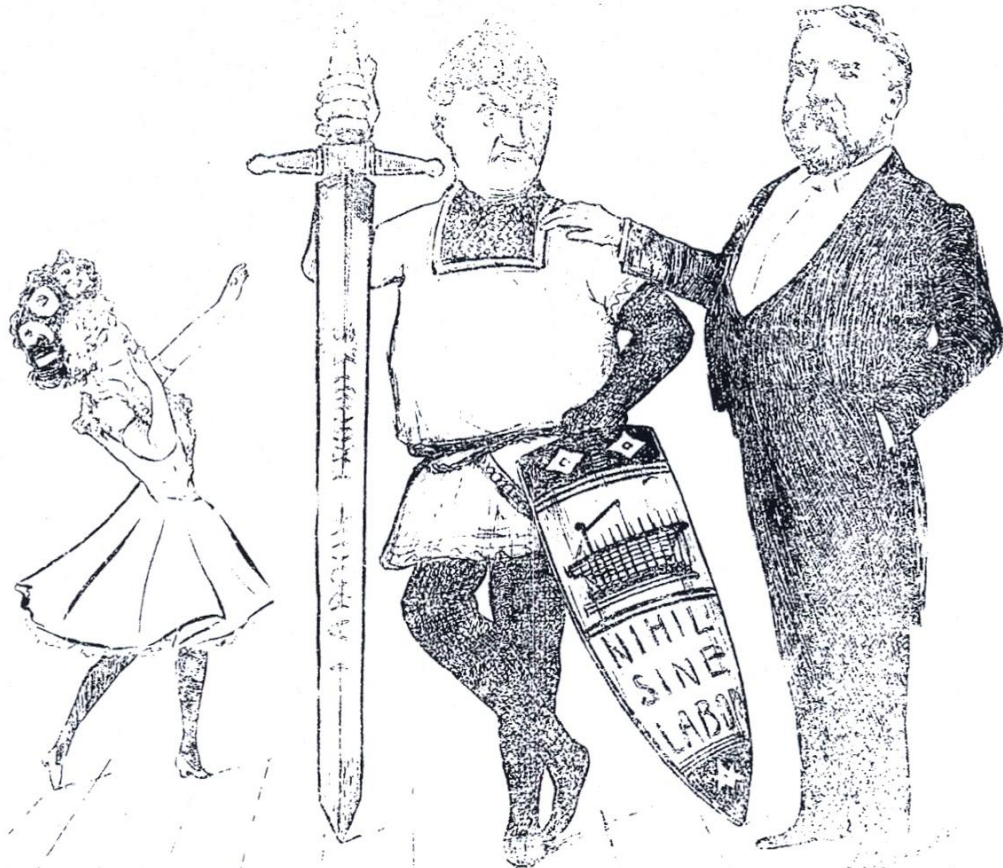
**Writer**

Scots word equivalent to solicitor.

## Appendix 2: Selected *Govan Press* Cartoons

A:

### THE BARON, THE PROVOST, AND THE GIRL.



THE BARON—A' a-! (groans).

PROVOST McKECHNIE—How, now my Lord Baron, what aileth thee? What knoweth at thy vitals? What hidden grief doth rend thy noble breast?

THE BARON—Alas! my Lord Provost, methinks the outlook for the coming year in this fair estate of mine be drear. There's naught but trouble looms ahead. Our stocks be empty, and the spirit of the times seems swallowed up in seas of strife 'twixt man and man.

THE PROVOST (slapping him on the shoulder)—Cheer up, my Lord, for hath not every cloud its edge of silver? The year's but young; let foot it bravely. Methinks that Govan may look forward to a brighter New Year; that work will brisker be; that naught but grand prosperity shall greet us in the coming months. But (looking aside) here cometh 1908 herself. Ah! Baron, look upon that maiden and tell me, is she not a fair creation. Hope, blessed hope, riseth within me when I gaze upon her. Come, Baron, come, and looking on those features fair, I tell thee that in 1908 our Burgh will rejoice!

MISS 1908—a charming little creature enters, and trills this lullaby:

I greet thee, merry gentlemen,  
I'll see what I can do  
To make the good old Burgh  
This year rejoice, as you,

My dear, delightful Provost,  
Hath said—Be this my pledge—  
“The coming year to Govan  
Shall bear a silver edge.”

This cartoon and poem from the *Govan Press*, 3 January 1908 projects a benignly paternalistic view of the relation between the burgh's municipal leaders, employers and labour, with the 'Noble Knight of Labour' being reassured by Provost McKechnie regarding the economic outlook in 1908.

B:

## THE UNEMPLOYED PROBLEM.



### ONE PHASE.

BRANNIGAN—Been down to the Municipal Buildin's, Pat?

PAT—Shure an' I was.

BRANNIGAN—Got iny wurrk?

PAT—Wurrk! Divil the wurrk!

BRANNIGAN—Phat way's that?

PAT—It's thim obnoxshious quistions.

BRANNIGAN—Obnoxshious quistions! Phat sort of quistions be thim?

PAT—Shure Oi don't know an' I don't care; but Mister Kenyin says their obnoxshious, an' no silf-respectin' man would ansir thim.

BRANNIGAN—Phat does obnoxshious mane, Pat?

PAT—Obnoxshious! It just manes obnoxshious!

BRANNIGAN—There's no use of moi goin' over thim, Pat, for be my sowl I wouldn't put moi name to none of thir obnoxshious quistions, be lad!

Both depart, slightly overcome with the obnoxiousity of the question, and return to their starving wives and children.

And such, my masters, be glorious independence!

This *Govan Press Cartoon* of 7 February 1908 appears to suggest that Irish labourers lacked intelligence and were easily-manipulated by trade unionists.

C:

## THE PIPE OF PEACE.

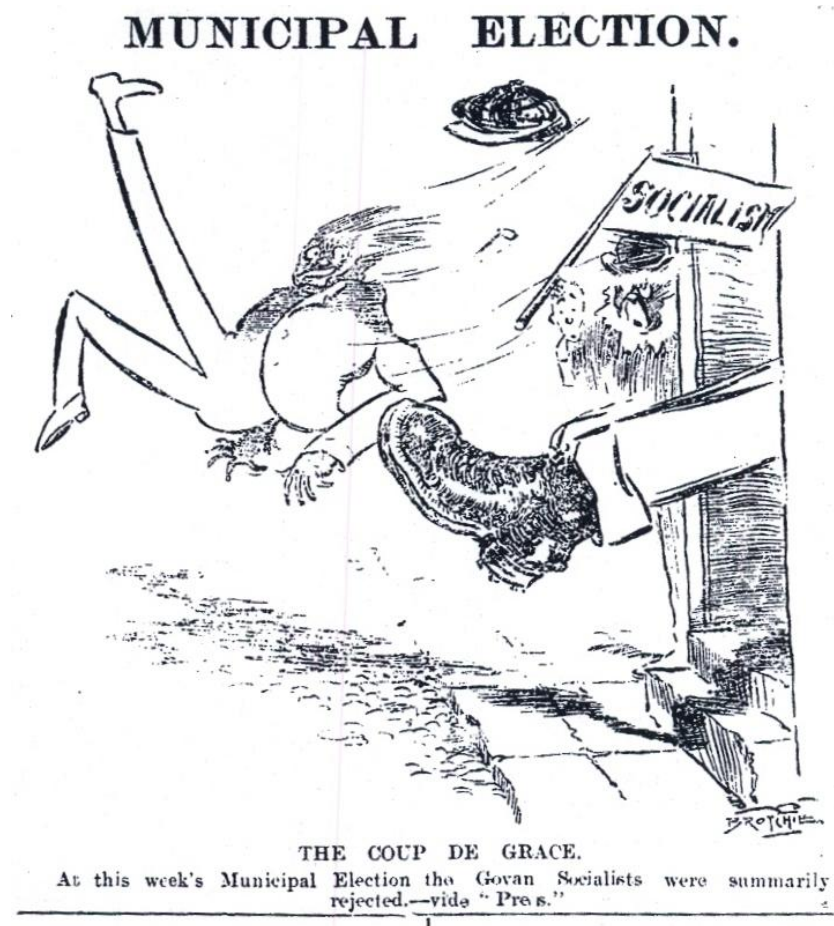


Our hope—that employer and employed will now settle down and smoke the calumet of peace.

For Peace, thou art a blessed thing, Beloved from pole to pole, Stay, stay with us, and lock-outs ban, And strikes—they're sair to thole!	May masters and the men agree To smoke the pipe of peace; For, 'pon my word! the men who won't Related be—to geece!
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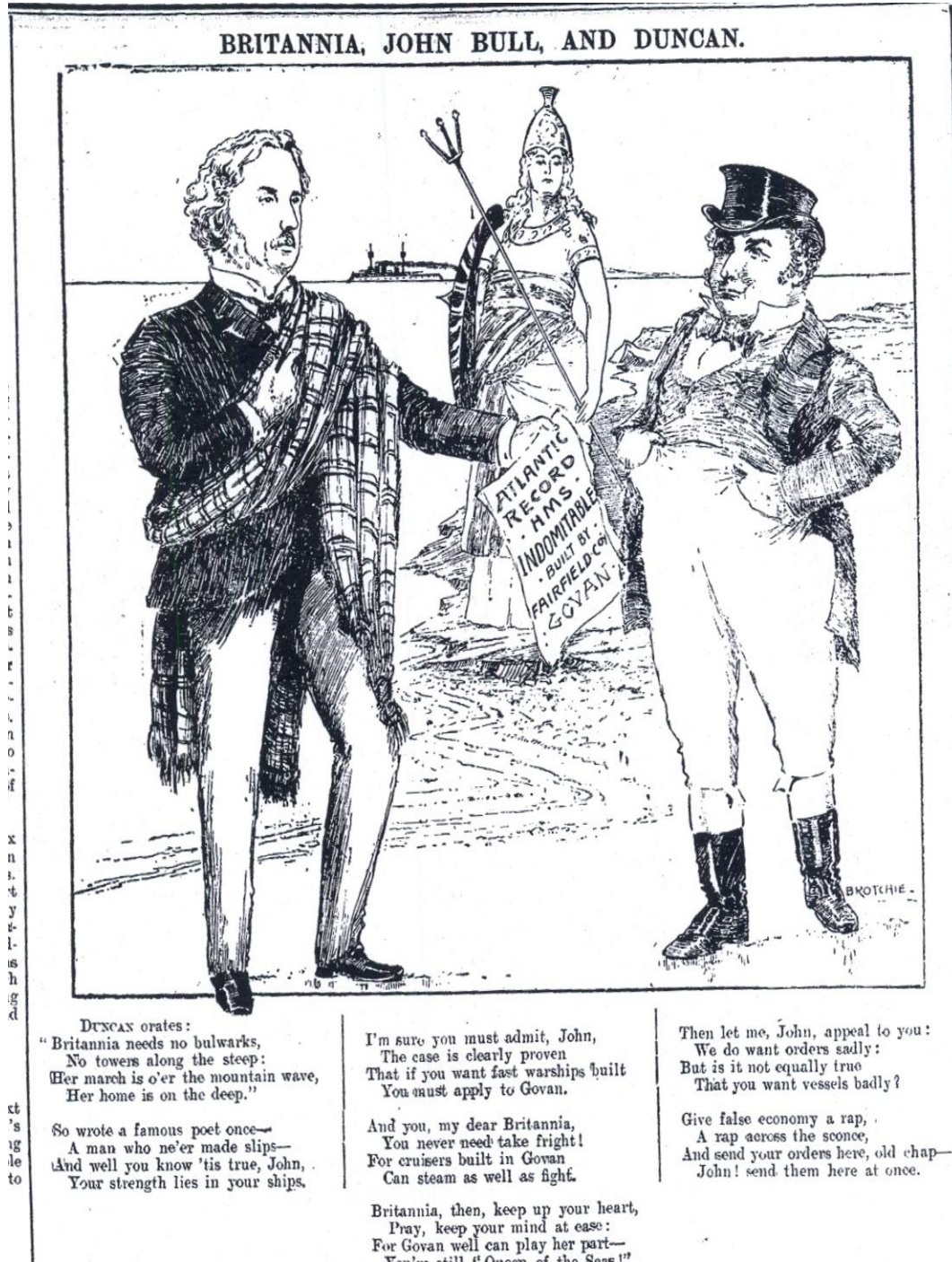
This Brotchie cartoon of 29 May 1908, whilst encouraging both employers and employees to abandon industrial conflict, emphasises the reliance of the latter upon the former, as indicated by the bundle of 'orders' in the yard-owner's pocket.

D:



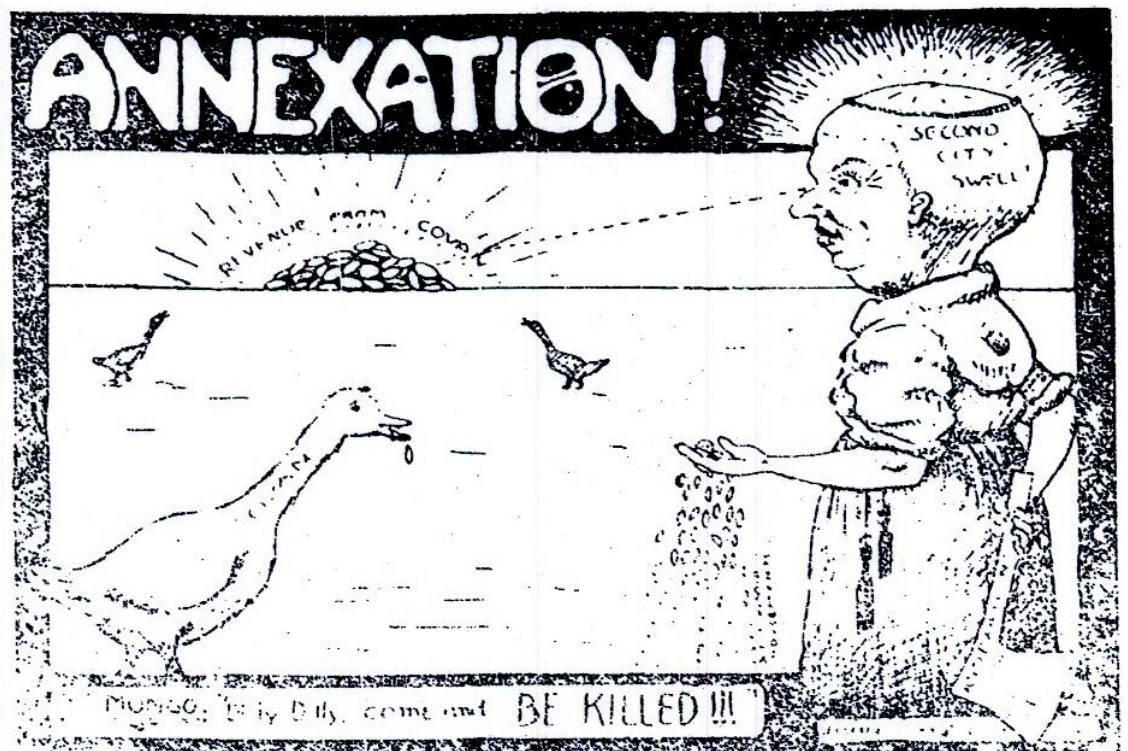
*Govan Press*, 6 November 1908: socialist candidates failed in their attempts to win seats on Govan's 1st, 3rd and 7th wards.

E:



This *Govan Press* cartoon of 7 August 1908 portrays the local MP as a firm advocate that Admiralty orders be placed locally. The locally-built *HMS Indomitable*, as Duncan's sheet of paper suggests, had recently almost matched the record set by the Clydebank-built *HMS Lusitania* for an Atlantic crossing.

F:



This, rather alarmist, *Govan Press* cartoon of 3 November 1911 typified the paper's editorial stance on the burgh's annexation to the city. 'Saint Mungo's benign appearance belies that he is concealing an axe, with which he will slaughter the 'Golden Goose' of Govan and steal its 'eggs' ('revenue from Govan'). His head is afflicted by 'Second City [of the Empire] Swell'. The caption reads: 'Mungo: Dilly Dilly, come and BE KILLED!!!'

### Appendix 3: Parliamentary Election Results, 1885-1924

(Source: FWS Craig as detailed in chapters 7 and 8, at footnotes 29 and 58.)

#### Govan Division of Lanark

Election	Electors	Turnout	Candidate	Party	Votes	%
<b>1885</b>	8,998	80.1	W. Pearce	Con	3,677	51.0
			J.B. Burleigh	Lib/Lab	3,522	48.8
			D.G. Hoey	Ind Lib	11	0.2
			Winning Margin		155	2.2
<b>1886</b>	8,998	75.4	W. Pearce	Con	3,574	52.7
			T.A. Dickson	Lib	3,212	47.3
			W/M		362	5.4
<b>1889</b> (by-election)	9,240	84.1	J. Wilson	Lib	4,420	56.9
			Sir J. Pender	LU	3,349	43.1
			W/M		1,071	13.8
<b>1892</b>	11,151	77.6	J. Wilson	Lib	4,829	55.8
			N. Spens	Con	3,829	44.2
			W/M		1,000	11.6
<b>1895</b>	11,416	76.6	J. Wilson	Lib	4,290	49.0
			G. Ferguson	LU	4,029	46.1
			A. Haddow	ILP	430	4.9
			W/M		261	2.9
<b>1900</b>	14,807	76.5	R.H. Craig	Lib	5,744	50.7
			R. Duncan	Con	5,580	49.3
			W/M		164	1.4

<u>Election</u>	<u>Electors</u>	<u>Turnout</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>1906</b>	17,538	82.9	R. Duncan	Con	5,224	35.9
			H.S. Murray	Lib	5,096	35.1
			J. Hill	Lab	4,212	29.0
	W/M				128	0.8
<b>1910 (J)</b>	17,994	84.6	W. Hunter	Lib	6,556	43.0
			R. Duncan	Con	5,127	33.7
			J.T. Brownlie	Lab	3,545	23.3
	W/M				1,429	9.3
<b>1910</b>						
<b>(April by election)</b>			W. Hunter	Lib	Unopposed	
<b>1910 (D)</b>	18,504	79.9	W. Hunter	Lib	8,409	56.9
			G. Balfour	Con	6,369	43.1
	W/M				2,040	13.8
<b>1911</b>	18,395	76.3	D.T. Holmes	Lib	7,508	53.5
<b>(by-election)</b>			G. Balfour	Con	6,522	46.5
	W/M				986	7.0

**Govan Division of Glasgow**

<b>1918</b>	31,652	63.2	N. Maclean	Lab	9,577	47.8
			A. McClure	Co Con	8,762	43.8
			D.T. Holmes	Lib	1,678	8.4
	W/M				815	4.0
<b>1922</b>	30,539	81.1	N. MacLean	Lab	9,577	62.3
			H. Fraser	Nat Lib	9,336	37.7
	W/M				6,105	24.6
<b>1923</b>	30,790	68.5	N. MacLean	Lab	13,987	66.3
			H.A.Watt	Lib	7,095	33.7
	W/M				6,892	32.6
<b>1924</b>	31,497	76.0	N. MacLean	Lab	15,132	63.2
			H. Stanley	Con	8,815	36.8
	W/M				6,317	26.4

**Partick Division of Lanark**

<u>Election</u>	<u>Electors</u>	<u>Turnout</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>1885</b>	8,945	80.3	A. Craig Sellar	Liberal	3,726	51.9
			Rt. Hon Lord Henry Gordon			
			Lennox	Con	3,385	47.1
			J. Murdoch	SLRL	74	1.0
	W/M				341	4.8
<b>1886</b>	8,945	74.8	A. Craig Sellar	LU	3,745	56.0
			R.A. Maclean	L	2,944	44.0
	W.M.				801	12.0

Election	Electors	Turnout	Candidate	Party	Votes	%
<b>1890</b>						
<b>(by election)</b>	9,429	85.7	J.P. Smith	LU	4,148	51.4
			Sir C. Tennant Bt.	Lib	3,929	48.6
	W/M				219	2.8
<b>1892</b>	11,453	81.1	J.P. Smith	LU	5,005	53.9
			E.P. Tennant	Lib	4,278	46.1
	W/M				727	7.8
<b>1895</b>	13,152	75.2	J.P. Smith	LU	5,551	56.1
			W.L. MacKenzie	Lib	4,344	43.9
	W/M				1,207	12.2
<b>1900</b>	15,921	73.3	J.P. Smith	LU	6,950	59.6
			R. Lambie	Lib	4,717	40.4
	W/M				2,233	19.2
<b>1906</b>	21,411	81.4	R. Balfour	Lib	9,477	54.3
			Rt. Hon J.P. Smith	LU	7,960	45.7
	W/M				1,517	8.6
<b>1910 (Jan)</b>	23,300	84.2	R. Balfour	Lib	10,093	51.5
			A.W. Maconochie	LU	9,522	48.5
	W/M				571	3.0

<u>Election</u>	<u>Electors</u>	<u>Turnout</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>1910 (Dec)</b>	24,617	84.2	R. Balfour	Lib	10,535	50.8
			A.W. Maconochie	LU	10,190	49.2
	W/M				345	1.6

### **Partick Division of Glasgow**

<u>Election</u>	<u>Electors</u>	<u>Turnout</u>	<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>1918</b>	28,376	61.1	Sir R.			
			Balfour, Bt.	Co Lib	12,156	70.1
			W. Mackie	Lab	5,173	29.9
	W/M				6,983	40.2
<b>1922</b>	27,048	66.7	Sir R.J. Collie	Nat Lib	11,754	65.2
			Sir D.M. Stevenson, Bt.			
				Lib	6,282	34.8
	W/M				5,472	30.4
<b>1923</b>	26,806	71.1	A. Young	Lab / Co-op		
					8,397	44.0
			Sir A.M. Smith	Con	6,315	33.1
			A.M. Scott	Lib	4,358	22.9
	W/M				2,082	10.9
<b>1924</b>	27,660	82.4	G.H.M.			
			Broun-Lindsay	Con	13,167	57.8
			A.Young	Lab / Co-op		
					9,612	42.2
	W/M				3,555	15.6

## **Appendix 4: Brief Biographies of Selected Partick and Govan Commissioners, Councillors, Bailies and Provosts**

### Note to Readers

It was felt that the following municipal personalities, who are mentioned in the main body, were worth a little more elaboration. Unless otherwise indicated, sources are those footnoted in the main text: usually the Burgh minute books, the *Govan Press* and other local newspapers. Time constraints and paucity of material prevented the compilation of a full group biography. The below data is utilised in the main body of the thesis, but brief summaries of the information on selected individuals is included in this biographical appendix. These profiles, taken together, constitute an attempt at compiling a tentative collective biography of the local municipal leaders.<sup>1389</sup> The approach followed is one of 'group biography', in that the aim was to provide some tentative basis for comparison of the personal characteristics of the men elected to municipal office in both burghs. In the parliamentary chapters also, attention is paid to the contemporary and historical reputations of candidates and MPs, albeit, given the higher profile of parliamentary candidates, it was not felt necessary to collate their biographies in an appendix.

### Brief Biographies

**Anthony, John** Chairman of Govan Liberal and Radical Association, lifelong temperance campaigner, chairman of the Govan YMCA temperance association and a Free Churchman. First elected to the board in 1893 as a member of the 'temperance party'. His staunchness on the drinks question belied a capacity to build alliances with Labour council colleagues, such as Matthew Coyle (q.v.). In 1894, he declared himself 'pro-annexation', but rose to become Govan's provost (in 1904, aged in his mid-forties). He was on the board of Rangers Football Club. After Govan amalgamated with Glasgow, Anthony remained a fervent campaigner for Liberal parliamentary candidates, including Daniel Turner Holmes. He firmly opposed National Liberals, such as Helen Fraser.

**Buchanan, Joseph T.** Born in Govan and educated at Govan Academy, Saltcoats Academy, Ayrshire and subsequently at Allan Glen's School (endowed for the education of future tradesmen) in Glasgow. He completed an engineering apprenticeship at Ross & Duncan's Whitefield Works, Govan and stayed with the firm until his appointment as Superintendent Engineer of the Gem Line of steamships. He was elected a Govan Town Councillor in 1902 and convened the Halls committee, taking over the same role for the burgh's Electricity Committee in 1908. He was an enthusiastic and open Freemason. (Additional Source, *Stothers' Annual*, p. 254.)

**Colquhoun, David Turnbull** A radical Liberal lawyer, who defeated house-factor and long-serving commissioner Alexander Colquhoun Shanks (apparently no relation) to represent Partick's 2nd ward in 1876. Colquhoun swiftly established himself as a dissenting, working-class friendly voice on the board, campaigning for free public libraries and greater efficiency and transparency in the use of ratepayers' money. In particular, he exposed the burgh's use of a special sewer rate to, essentially, dupe poorer ratepayers into paying for sewers the costs of which should have been borne by the burgh's omission to implement a change in the law dating back to 1866. Colquhoun appealed to the Sheriff to have the rate rescinded, against the wishes of the majority of the board, and this, going by the *Govan Chronicle* letters page, consolidated a reputation for probity as distinct from most of his colleagues on the board. He served on the Streets and Sewers, Hall and

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<sup>1389</sup> For an overview of the state of the art in the use of biography in history, see B. Caine, *Biography and History*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), especially pp. 47-61.

Library, Buildings (Dean of Guild Court) and Parliamentary Bills Committees, and was one of the burgh's representatives on the board of the Western Infirmary. He was elected a bailie in 1883, having been returned unopposed for his ward in 1879 and 1882. He also became convener of the re-configured Streets and Roads Committee in 1883, and sat on the Public Parks Committee. Although he was again elected unopposed in 1885, he stood down as a bailie. He resigned from the board in 1886. In the wake of the Home Rule split, Colquhoun became a Liberal Unionist and a prominent campaigner for the new party's Govan and Partick parliamentary candidates of the late 1880s and 1890s, especially Alexander Craig Sellar and James Parker Smith, whose campaigns he managed.

Despite his reputation for honesty, Colquhoun's legal and political career ended in spectacular scandal, which was perhaps Glasgow's answer to the 2008 Bernie Madoff affair in terms of its impact on the public mood. Colquhoun was co-partner, with his older brother James, a Glasgow Town Councillor, from 1896 to 1899, in the law firm of J and DT Colquhoun. In 1899, James Colquhoun had to resign as Glasgow's Treasurer, after he was charged with embezzling £50,000 from clients of the family firm, including the United Free Church and the Good Templars – both redoubtable bastions of Victorian Liberalism. He pleaded guilty at the Sheriff Court, and was sentenced by the High Court in Edinburgh to serve five years in Peterhead Penitentiary. He died in Streatham, London in 1912. David Turnbull Colquhoun himself was charged with embezzling a total of £10,000 from various clients, among these the Burgh of Partick itself, the Clyde Trustees and the Glasgow and Southwestern Railway Company. He was acquitted, albeit the High Court jury noted his 'gross negligence' as a partner in the firm, after he disingenuously claimed that he was so intimidated by his brother's financial acumen and overbearing manner, he never dared question why the books did not balance. When James Colquhoun was sentenced in a manner perceived as unduly lenient, one commentator compared the atmosphere in Glasgow and Edinburgh to the 1736 Porteous Riots. In January 1901, one Glasgow man was sentenced to eight months imprisonment for throwing his sons into the canal, following losses sustained in the Colquhoun case. Colquhoun's wife was suspected of going into hiding with £1,200 of share certificates shortly after her husband's arrest. Her location and David Turnbull Colquhoun's place of death have not been traced. (Additional sources: *Freeman's Journal*, 9 December 1899; Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 876; *The Times*, 9 October 1899, *Scotsman and GH*, various issues, 1899-1901.)

**Conley, James** ILP councillor elected uncontested for Partick in 1899, re-elected in 1902. Served as a bailie from 1902-5. He was a Boilermakers' trade union delegate and, as far as can be ascertained, the burgh's first Labour representative.

**Conlon, John** A former Glasgow policeman who had established a sound reputation for temperance and administrative economy after changing careers, moving to Govan and rising to become head timekeeper at the Fairfield works. He distinguished himself on the 1st Ward Committee. The onetime Chief Templar of a local lodge and Lanarkshire JP scandalised political colleagues and ratepayers alike when it emerged that, immediately following his 1897 resignation from the Board and his membership of the Good Templars, he had applied for a public house licence in Shettleston, outside the burgh. He was seen as a *protégé* of Sir William Pearce, but, also, with his 1st ward colleague Andrew Williamson (q.v.), as one of the first working class representatives in the municipal chamber, albeit he was not associated with the party-political Labour movement.

**Coyle, Matthew** Born at Arvada, County Cavan, Ireland, 1852. A Roman Catholic socialist, blacksmith and poet. Under the pseudonym 'The Smiddy Muse', he had contributed to the *Govan Press* and various other local publications. He was also a

Boilermakers' trade union leader, and football club president. Coyle's brief municipal career remains significant. Despite his Irish Catholic background, his football and temperance connections - including the presidencies of Govan Hibernians and Dean Park - made him an unexpected ally of Provost John Anthony (q.v.). Indeed, it was Coyle who heralded Anthony as 'Govan's Grand Young Man' when he assumed the civic chair in 1904. Coyle had held office on the burgh's 3rd ward committee, and it was this ward he represented from 1904 until his death in 1906.

**Dickson, Will** A radical Liberal who served on both Partick (1887-1893) and Govan (1901-1906) Town Councils. His literary and charitable efforts had more impact than his municipal career in either burgh. Born in 1848 at Mile-End in the east end of Glasgow, Dickson was a successful grocer who had been drawn to the cause of temperance through involvement in the United Presbyterian Church. He served as a Sunday school superintendent in Skelmorlie, Ayrshire, before coming to live in Partick's peripheral Whiteinch neighbourhood and, eventually to Linthouse shortly before that neighbourhood's 1901 annexation to Govan. Under the pseudonym 'Amateur Vagrant', Dickson had written eyewitness accounts of poverty in Glasgow and its suburbs, which were published in the *North British Daily Mail*. His preoccupation with what he regarded as the 'lapsed masses' was virtually lifelong, and he started a 'Bare Foot Fund' for the poor which gradually began to specialise in supporting tuberculosis victims, until it collapsed from a lack of donations in 1907. Dickson also held the distinction of being captain of Scotland's first organised ambulance corps, which was associated with Tod and Stephens' Linthouse shipyard. In both Linthouse and Whiteinch, Dickson lived in peripheral neighbourhoods where he battled to restrict alcohol consumption. In this, he was much more successful in Linthouse, where his membership of Lanark County's Landward Committee, which managed the neighbourhood's affairs before it joined the burgh of Govan, and his membership of the Licensing Vigilance Committee, were instrumental both in securing amalgamation with the burgh of Govan, and preventing the establishment of licensed premises near his new home. He died in 1908.

**Ferguson, John 1875-8** Born at Greenock, Renfrewshire 1833. He served as an apprentice carpenter at John Scott & Company, shipbuilders before working as a shipwright at several Clyde yards. Around 1842, he was appointed superintendent at Alexander Hall's shipyard, Aberdeen. In 1845, aged just 22, he secured appointment as General Manager of Smith & Rodger's yard in Govan. About 1850, he moved to Barclay & Curle, Whiteinch, Partick, where he was instrumental in the firm's move to iron shipbuilding and rose to the rank of managing partner. A Liberal teetotaler, he was a member of the United Presbyterian Church but his philanthropy was not confined to the activities of that denomination. He was a close personal friend of Sir Andrew Maclean (q.v.), who eventually succeeded him as Provost. In that role, he presided over the construction and opening of the Partick bridge across the Kelvin. As convenor of the Parks Committee, he was instrumental in the development of Victoria Park and he paid for its flagpole and bandstand from personal funds, although he did not live to see the park opened. Commissioner for 3rd ward 1869-87, bailie 1872-5. Died 11/6/1887. (Additional sources: *Bailie*, 14 May 1884; Gifford, *Men of the Clyde*, p. 161.)

**Gilchrist, Archibald** Born 1/8/1822, Port Dundas, Glasgow. Died 8/1/1900. The son of an Innkeeper (the Old Basin Inn), he was apprenticed at a young age to his uncle, a founder and millwright. He later worked for Tod & Macgregor, engineers and shipbuilders as a draughtsman, rising to become manager of the engineering shop. He was invited to become a partner at Barclay and Curle in Whiteinch. He quickly became a leading Glasgow business figure. A staunch Conservative, he was a founder member of Sandyford established church. He had homes in Glasgow's affluent Sandyford neighbourhood and,

from 1875, Dunoon Castle House in Argyllshire. Estate: £81,556. (Sources: *The Bailie*, ; Maver, *Municipal Glasgow*, p. 896.)

**Hinshelwood, John** Born in Edinburgh to the manager of William Trotter's Cabinet-making Works, Edinburgh. (N.B. Trotter served as Lord Provost of Edinburgh 1825-7.) After serving his apprenticeship as a cabinet-maker, Hinshelwood moved to Glasgow to take over the Parcel Delivery Co., which when he acquired it had only one horse and a carriage. Under his stewardship, it expanded into Globe Parcel Express, with branches worldwide. Hinshelwood sold the business in the mid-1850s before moving to Govan. There, he set up the omnibus company of Hinshelwood and Abercrombie, which grew into a major provider of suburban transport around Glasgow, distinctive for its bright yellow buses. This concern eventually merged with the Vale of Clyde Tramway Company. Hinshelwood had also been a contractor for the mail service to Inverary, Argyllshire, via Loch Lomond. On moving to Govan, he acquired the lands of Ibrox and was one of the first to advocate the adoption of the General Police Act in the 1850s. He was involved in the movement for a public hall in the new burgh during the 1860s and 70s. He made a substantial donation to the Abraham Hill's Trust School, enabling it to commission new premises. Attended Govan (Old) Parish Church weekly. Hinshelwood was elected one of the new burgh's first commissioners in 1864, providing temporary office and meeting accommodation for his new colleagues. He served as bailie from the late 1860s until his death while chairing the burgh's Police Court in November 1874. He was acting chief magistrate during the 1867 Fenian 'panics'.

**Hoy, Richard Hubbard** Born above the family shop in Partick of Archibald Hoy & Sons, Italian Warehousemen 8/2/1856. He was educated at Glasgow Academy and trained initially as an analytical chemist, however he took over a share in managing the family business upon the death of his father. After his 1905 election to Partick Town Council, he served as convener of the Watching and Lighting committee and sat on those overseeing the Western Infirmary, Parks, Electricity, Finance and Parliamentary Bills. Had the burgh not been annexed in 1912, he was widely expected to become provost. (Additional source: *Stothers' Annual*, p. 168.)

**Inglis, Anthony** Born at Partick, 22/9/1813, to a local farmer who then set up a carrier's business, he served as an apprentice blacksmith before, in 1846, starting an engineering firm at Anderston with his brother John. By 1861, the firm had diversified and expanded into shipbuilding. Their first launch in 1863 involved cutting across a roadway to reach the river Kelvin. This road and associated stepping stones and bridge was of long usage by Partick residents carrying on their connections with Govan, and Inglis became embroiled in disputes which eventually saw him resign from the council in 1877. He served as a Bailie from 1875-7. In this role, he was first to convict and impose fines for the offence of swearing on the public streets. In 1832, he had become involved in the running of Anderston Savings Bank, eventually serving as its treasurer and president. A Liberal in politics, he was a member of the Anderston Weavers' Society and was elected a Deacon of the Incorporation of Hammermen in 1858, before serving as Deacon Convenor of the Trades House from 1861-63 and a Clyde Trustee from 1872-5. Died at Glasgow, 10/1/1884; estate £152,779. (Additional sources: Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 909; Gifford, *Men of the Clyde*, pp. 125-6.)

**Jenkins, Duncan** A protégé of Sir William Pearce, who had employed him as a personal coach-driver and stable superintendent at Fairfield shipyard. The Pearce connection proved something of an advantage when Jenkins set up his own coach-hiring firm at Govan Cross, and it quickly became the leading such firm in the burgh. In 1886, he accepted the nomination of Govan's 1st Ward Committee,

securing election to the board on an 'economy' platform. In the late 1880s, Jenkins' was a radical voice on the board, speaking against the landlord interest and in favour of differential rating, alongside Andrew Williamson (q.v.). He also questioned the burgh's preference for ceremony over substance, with particular reference to the purchase of horses and uniforms for the burgh's mounted police. Jenkins alleged that these 'kilties and horsemen' served no purpose other than to impress at the annual inspection of the burgh police. In the early 1890s, however, Jenkins became something of a reactionary against demands for transparency and accountability in burgh affairs. He died in 1894.

**Kemp, John** Socialist elected to represent Govan's 4th ward from 1904 until annexation. He had been supported by the Scottish Traders' Defence Association, a pressure group associated with the drinks trade. His speeches advocated 'municipal socialism' on the grand scale. He worked as a glazier and was a member of the Govan Four-in-Hand club, as well as an enthusiastic freemason. He was appointed bailie in 1907.

**Kennedy, Hugh** Born in 1824 at Netherton, Dumbartonshire. After an apprenticeship as a joiner and cartwright in Govan, he soon founded the family firm of Hugh Kennedy & Sons, builders and railway contractors. This rapidly established itself as one of Scotland's leading railway contractors, while Kennedy personally emerged as one of the largest owners of rented accommodation in the burgh and throughout Glasgow. His early career benefited from close personal links with Provost David Tod (q.v.), who acted as financial guarantor of his work for the Clyde Navigation Trust. By 1872, Kennedy was purchasing development land in Partickhill from Tod's trustees, although his property speculation predated this by decades. He built mainly three or four storey tenements containing houses of three rooms and a kitchen, which were rented to tenants ranging from highly-skilled artisans to white collar workers and the professional classes. Although he only retained few of the homes he built, these were sufficient to make him one of Glasgow's largest owners of rental property, bequeathing his sons an annual rental income of £8,000 and instructing his trustees to retain and even expand this source of income. He joined Partick's burgh board in the late 1850s, and was elected a bailie in 1860 and provost in 1878. As a magistrate, he had overseen the burgh's Dean of Guild Court, which approved all planned building in the Burgh, notwithstanding a clear conflict of interest by present-day standards. As Provost, he was responsible for efforts to repel annexation to Glasgow while seeking unsuccessfully to expand the burgh's jurisdiction into Kelvinside. In November 1854, Kennedy married Agnes Hunter, daughter of Moses Hunter one of the burgh's first commissioners. With Agnes he had three sons, including William Kennedy (q.v.), who eventually succeeded him as provost. After his provostship, he joined Glasgow Town Council in the role of Deacon Convenor, representing the Incorporation of Wrights. In religion, he was an active member and deacon of Partick High Free Church. Probably a Conservative in politics. Died 31/10/1895; estate £21, 640. (Additional sources: Maver, *Municipal Administration*, p. 912; Morgan, 'Hugh Kennedy', pp. 141-143.

**Kennedy, William**, Partick Provost from 1902-1905 Son of former Provost Hugh Kennedy. He had served as a bailie from 1898-1902. A Conservative in politics.

**Kirkwood, James** A wealthy, Ayrshire-born, stockbroker and popular local figure, first elected for the 3rd ward in 1884 and consistently elected thereafter, usually unopposed. Even before he became Govan's actual provost in 1892, he was known locally as the 'Provost of Bellahouston', due to his prominent role in that neighbourhood's social and sporting life: presiding over the local lawn tennis and bowling clubs. His tenure as

Govan's Provost, which ended in 1901, was noted for the skill and diplomacy with which he was able to manage competing interests on the burgh board. His skills as a *racounteur* and amateur dramatist were frequently in demand, but he had a more serious side: in addition to his own private philanthropy, he served as chair of the William Pearce Memorial Fund, trustee, elder and treasurer of Bellahouston Parish Church. A Unionist in politics, he was also a Freemason, Shepherd and Gardener.

**Logan, Thomas** Although born somewhere in Glasgow, probably around 1860, Logan's family moved to Partick about 1880. After studying at Glasgow University, he trained as an accountant and established his own firm. During the 1880s, he became secretary of Partick Conservative Association, which he did much to revitalise. In November 1893, he narrowly defeated James Miller (q.v.) to represent the burgh's 2nd ward. After successfully defending his seat in 1896, he was subsequently returned uncontested at all elections until he stood down as provost in 1911. He served as a bailie before assuming the latter role in 1908. Unmarried, his sister acted as his quasi-official hostess at civic events. (Additional Source: *Stothers' Annual*, p. 166.)

**Maclean, Andrew** Born, 24/2/1828, to a weaver, he started work aged 11 and at 13 was appointed assistant clerk with a firm in Lochwinnoch, Ayrshire. In 1845, aged 17, he joined Barclay & Curle shipbuilders as a junior clerk. In 1855, the firm relocated to Whiteinch and became involved in iron shipbuilding. As he gained a reputation for financial acumen, Maclean worked his way up to the rank of partner in 1857, co-owner in 1880 (with John Ferguson q.v. and Archibald Gilchrist, q.v.) and by the time of his death, he was its chairman. He was a staunch Liberal and teetotaler, the latter stance determined by boyhood experiences with drunken neighbours in Lochwinnoch. He served on Partick's burgh board from 1878-1891. As a bailie (1881-3) he convened the watching and lighting and finance committees. He was knighted for Queen Victoria's 1887 Golden Jubilee. Died, 14/11/1900.

**MacLeish, John** Self-described 'Independent' representative of Govan's 4th ward from late-1880s to 1894, who nevertheless was identified with the Liberal interest. He rhetorically linked local self-government to Home Rule, and was a bailie from 1893-4. On the council, he was a supporter of James Kirkwood's (q.v.) failed attempt to become provost in 1889.

**Marr, John Hinshelwood** Govan commissioner from mid 1880s, who became provost in 1901. Mocked by opponents for alleged illiteracy and drunkenness, he was praised by others for his financial acumen on behalf of the burgh and advocacy of progressive policies. Marr was also associated with publicans by anti-drinks campaigners, but was able frequently to win re-election despite challenges from temperance and Labour candidates. Despite his background as a house factor, his avowed support for differential rating (which was never implemented) won him support from Labour councillors like Matthew Coyle (q.v.). The *Govan Press* cartoons often portrayed Marr as a friend of Govan's working-classes. It has not been established if he was related to John Hinshelwood (q.v.).

**McKechnie, David Pollok** Born Port Glasgow, Renfrewshire about 1860 but moved to Govan in 1864. Worked briefly for the future Fairfield Shipping Company before going into business with his father, John McKechnie, a sawmiller and timber merchant. (John McKechnie served as a Govan burgh commissioner during the 1870s.) David took over the family business in 1890 and in 1894 it was sold to J. Potter & Co. Ltd., Dublin and Glasgow. McKechnie was a keen bowler, who presided over Glasgow Bowling Association and Govan Bowling Club. He served as president of Govan Parish Young

Men's Literary Association and was a Liberal Unionist. Elected to Govan Town Council in 1901 for the 4th ward, he was returned three times unopposed, and was soon elected a Bailie and the Burgh's first Honorary Treasurer. He was elected Provost in 1907 and re-elected in 1910. He was the Burgh's last Provost and after annexation he served on Glasgow Town Council from 1912 until he was defeated by a Labour candidate in 1919. He also served as a Lanarkshire JP. (Additional source: *Stothers' Annual*, p. 254.)

**McLean, Neil** Elected a commissioner for Govan's 4th ward on a pro-annexation platform, McLean's election as Provost was narrow and controversial. He had been expected to support Bailie James Kirkwood's election to that position, but at the last moment, allowed himself to be used as a compromise candidate by his erstwhile opponent, Bailie John Marr. A Free Church Elder, he conducted gospel meetings every Saturday and was a staunch teetotaler. A self-styled 'Captain', McLean was alleged by the *Bailie*, never to have risen higher than the rank of master mariner. (Additional source: *Bailie*, 27 November 1889.)

**Miller, James** Elected as an openly Liberal councillor for Partick's 1st ward against former Provost John White (q.v.). In 1893, he contested the burgh's 2nd ward, but lost to future Provost Thomas Logan, a Conservative. Miller's victory against White marked the arrival of openly partisan politics in Partick, and was seen as the beginning of a campaign by local Liberals to regain control following the 1886 Home Rule split.

**Miller, John** Born at Uddingston, Lanarkshire and came to Govan aged 7. He was educated at Hutchesons' Grammar School, Glasgow and served an apprenticeship as a timber cutter at Leary & Lorimer, Timber Merchants before spending several years working in that trade in Ireland. He took over the family firm of Mowat & Miller, timber merchants, Govan, upon his father's death in 1891. After being elected a Govan Town Councillor in 1907, he sub-convened the Cleansing and Electricity Committees. He was a life-member of the Scottish Arboricultural Society. (*Stothers' Annual*, p. 255.)

**Munro, William** ILP councillor for Govan's 1st ward from 1905 until 1911. His election was controversial both because his defeated opponent, Andrew Williamson (q.v.), was regarded as sympathetic to the Labour cause, and because of alleged dirty tricks against the former by Munro's canvassers. Munro became a bailie in 1907 and was re-elected to the council in 1908, retiring as a councillor and magistrate in 1911.

**O'Donnell, James S.** Born c. 1876, O'Donnell was elected to represent Govan's 3rd ward as a Labour candidate in 1906. He worked as a draftsman at Beardmore's Dalmuir. Prior to his election, he had been involved with the Catholic Saint Vincent de Paul Society, the UIL, the Donegal Reunion Committee, and the local dramatic club. He was also a keen bowler. He had acted as treasurer of the 4th ward committee. He appears to have succeeded Matthew Coyle (q.v.) as the Town Hall's only Catholic socialist. Elected on a platform of opposition to sectional committees. He was also a cousin of a Dublin Alderman who shared the same surname.

**Reid, Thomas** Born 1831 in Govan, then a village outside Glasgow. He joined his father and brother James in the family firm of Alexander Reid and Sons, Turkey-red dyers, after his accountancy apprenticeship. In 1879, the firm moved to Burnbrae, near Milngavie, Dunbartonshire, and Reid took residence at Kilmardinny estate to be near the new works. The waters of the Clyde had become too polluted by shipbuilding to be used for dyeing purposes. Among Reid's many business interests was his chairmanship of Nobel's Explosives Co., Ltd. and the London and Glasgow Engineering and Iron Shipbuilding Co. He was elected a Commissioner for Govan after its 1864 formation into a burgh. He was elected Provost in 1869, and was instrumental in coordinating the resistance of Govan,

Partick and the other suburban burghs to annexation by Glasgow. Despite his anti-annexationist stance, he served Deacon Convenor on Glasgow Town Council after his Provostship, representing the Incorporation of Dyers. Died 5/7/1900; estate £205,498. (Additional sources: Maver, *Municipal Administration*, pp. 953-4; Morgan, 'Reid, Thomas', pp. 395-8; *Fairplay*, 25 April 1884; *Bailie*, 19 October 1881.)

**Tod, David** Born at Scone, Perthshire, 17 May 1875. After serving his apprenticeship as a millwright in Perthshire, he served as engineer, chief engineer and later foreman on *Rob Roy*, the first seagoing steamer. While working with shipwright (?) David Napier at his Camlachie marine engineering works, he met John McGregor. In 1833 both men founded an engineering workshop in Glasgow's Anderston district, which bordered Partick to the east. The firm rapidly expanded with the increasing demand for iron shipbuilding and ultimately moved to Meadowside, Partick in 1843. Tod was unanimously elected Chief Magistrate of the Burgh of Partick from its formation in 1852 until 1857. Died 1859. (Additional source: Gifford, *Men of the Clyde*, p. 279.)

**White John** [junior] Born, Partick, c. 1849 to long-serving provost, councillor and bailie John White senior (q.v.). Educated at Partick and Glasgow Academy then Glasgow University. He worked in the family business at Scotstoun Mills. In his youth, he was a member of the Partick Volunteer Company. In 1907 he was appointed a JP. He was elected to represent Partick's 2nd ward in 1891, became a bailie in 1902 and provost from 1905 until 1908. As provost and convener of the Watching and Lighting Committee, he oversaw the construction and opening of the new Fire Station. Politically Conservative. (Additional source: *Stothers' Annual*, p. 167; *Baillie*, 19 June 1907)

**White, John** [senior] Born, Tradeston, Glasgow, c.1822. In 1843, on his father's death, he took over the family firm of Scotstoun Grain Mills, eventually appointing his sons (including John White q.v.) as partners. He was one of Partick's first burgh commissioners, a bailie from 1855-7 and its second provost (1857-60). Served on the burgh board from 1852-1890, when he was defeated by James Miller (Q.V.). A staunch Unionist, he lost his seat on the council in 1890 to a Liberal. He convened the burgh's watching and lighting committee for 30 years and was in 1875 appointed a Justice of the Peace. A keen outdoor sportsman, he was President of the 10th Curling Province. Although implacably opposed to Home Rule, he was proud of his Scottish heritage, taking an active part in the campaign for a Wallace monument at Abbey Craig. He was first President of the Partick Centenary Burns Banquet, eventually being appointed President for Life of Partick Burns Club. He was honoured by the presentation of an official portrait in 1891. Died in 1891. (Additional source: *Bailie*, 18 November 1891.)

**Wightman, Robert Anderson** Fervent annexationist who represented Govan's 1st ward in from the late 1880s to 1893, before standing for the 6th ward, which he held until his resignation in 1909, by which time he had risen to the rank of bailie (1900-09) and had, in addition to various other roles held on behalf of the burgh, convened the Electricity Committee. Throughout the 1890s, he publicly bemoaned the 'parochialism' and inefficiency of small-scale burgh administration.

**Williamson, Andrew** Elected to replace William Pearce on Govan's 1st ward in 1881, Williamson, although not a nominee of the party-political Labour movement, was regarded as the burgh's first working-class councillor. He served until 1905, when he was defeated by the ILP's William Munro (q.v.), following an alleged smear-campaign by the former's supporters. Munro was regarded as one of Govan's more enlightened councillors, and advocated a more open approach to municipal government, alongside policies broadly akin to 'municipal socialism'. He served as a bailie from 1885-87.

**Wilson, James** Born near Edinburgh, he grew up in Paisley, Renfrewshire. As a young man, he spent fourteen years in the West Indies as a merchant for his firm of Taylor and Wilson. In the mid 1860s, he returned to Scotland, settling in Govan. He was soon elected to the burgh's police board and, in 1869, was elected a bailie. He was elected Provost in 1872 and served almost three full terms in office. He also served on Govan Parochial Board, securing election as its chairman in 1869 and again in 1874. In addition to his *ex-officio* representation of the burgh on various public bodies during his tenure as Provost, he was a director of the National Bible Society of Scotland and a Lanarkshire JP. He had a second home in Trinidad, and his Govan villa was named after this Caribbean island. A member of Hope Street Baptist Church, he was not sectarian in his philanthropy. (Additional source: *Bailie*, 8 September 1875.)

**Wood, Alexander** Born at Glasgow, in 1849, to Alexander Wood senior, onetime bailie of the former Burgh of Gorbals before its annexation to Glasgow, he was educated at Partick Academy and Glasgow University. As senior partner in the family firm (established 1730) Alex. Wood & Sons, weighing machines manufacturers, he inherited the family home at Partickhill. Elected to the Partick burgh board in 1888, he was appointed a bailie in 1897 and served as provost from 1899 to 1902. He also served as a Lanarkshire JP. A Conservative, he served as Honorary President of the Partick Conservative Association and President of the party's Central Council in Partick, as well as holding membership of the Glasgow Conservative Club and going on to chair the Hillhead Unionist Association. He had been instrumental in securing the success of James Parker Smith and Robert Horne at successive parliamentary contests in Partick and Hillhead, respectively. He was a governor of Anderson College (now Strathclyde University). A staunch Presbyterian, he was elder and trustee of St Mary's Parish Church, Partick. He was also a member of the Incorporation of Hammermen, the Merchants' House and the Chamber of Commerce. During the First War, he chaired an advisory committee on recruitment. For this, he was knighted in 1922. (Additional Sources: *The Bailie*, 22 November 1922; *Glasgow Contemporaries*, p. 207.)

## **Appendix 5: Location Maps**