

A VICTORIAN ELECTION - WARWICK 1868



BY DAVID PATERSON

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NO. 12.
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David Paterson.

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In 1868 a man committed to advanced Liberal principles and the enfranchisement of all adult males in the country tried to win a parliamentary seat in a small market town borough. This borough was still partly in the grip of a landed aristocratic family which had been associated with the area for many centuries. William Randal Cremer, the candidate concerned, had no previous connection with Warwick and conducted a last minute campaign on behalf of the radical political organisation, the Reform League, against well established members. He stood on an industrial platform in an agricultural borough and possessed only limited means with which to meet election expenses. He knew that he was facing a compact organised by the supporters of the two other candidates in the election. However, his financial and tactical position committed him to say nothing against one of his fellow candidates who (even if indirectly) had acted against him. It is hardly surprising that Cremer failed to get elected, but why had he stood? Was there some mysterious radicalism lurking in Warwick that would have justified his candidature?

I. WARWICK IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

On looking at the state of Warwick in the middle of the nineteenth century to try and find an answer to this question, we discover an almost stagnant town with rather traditional small-time political activity. It was only in the mid 1860s that Liberal developments, both national and local, gave a

sharper focus to Warwick politics than they had hitherto possessed; but even then they hardly justified a candidate of an ultra-radical stamp. The political role that Warwick was able to play in the nineteenth century reflected both its strengths and weaknesses from past eras. Its original charter of incorporation dated from 1545¹; members of parliament sat for the town as early as the thirteenth century and from 1298 two candidates were regularly elected². Thus, although by the mid-nineteenth century its population was relatively small and static and its industrial importance almost non-existent, it still sent two members to parliament. This privilege was maintained, even after the Parliamentary Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867, when many small boroughs either lost their representation or were limited to one member when there had previously been two. By 1868, however, the town's political influence was almost entirely confined to local matters. Warwick retained a limited significance as an administrative and legal centre, stemming from its position as a centrally situated county town. Apart from this, however, its function was primarily to act as a market for a substantial agricultural area. It had been overtaken in manufacturing importance by Birmingham and in population by Leamington.

Warwick Castle and its earls still exerted a great influence over the town socially as well as geographically. Even in 1868 the Brooke family were by far the largest property owners in the town. In addition to the Castle and its environs, they possessed a considerable number of houses in the

High Street, West Street (almost forty), St. Nicholas Church Street, Smith Street and Emscote Road. Nearer to the Castle they owned all forty one dwellings in Mill Street and about half the properties in Castle Street. Bridge End almost amounted to a private estate, where the presence of the earl's stone quarry resulted in only one of the sixty six houses having no connection with him. In the surrounding countryside much land was in his personal possession at Myton, Heathcote and by the Canal Wharf. The Warwick Arms Hotel and St. Nicholas Vicarage (he was the patron for St. Nicholas Parish) were two more important acquisitions³. Not surprisingly, therefore, a good deal of the available work in the town stemmed from the earl's dominating position in the employment of skilled labourers and agricultural workers. When Henry Richard, the third earl, died in 1853 this was regarded as an event of major significance in the town and his tenantry all marched in solemn procession at his funeral service⁴. His son, George Guy, 4th Earl of Warwick had become, like a number of his predecessors, an M.P. for the South Warwickshire County seat in 1845. In his first election address he promised an "independent support for Lord Derby" who was emerging at that time as the leader of the Protectionist Tories⁵. However, on taking up his title in 1853 he ceased to play an active political role. There were a few signs that some of the influences of the family on the borough were declining as the century progressed. The third earl, for example, had been forced to relinquish his post as Recorder of Warwick after 1835 because of the new regulations

requiring the job to be held by a barrister of at least five years standing⁶. He had also witnessed a considerable amount of hostility and challenge to the traditional political influence of the Castle interest. On purely local matters, though, the family's opinions still carried great weight, especially when their own interests might be adversely affected. Thus, in 1866, the new proposals for the disposal of sewage in the town were delayed after the earl had objected to pipes crossing his land. Only after he was paid £500 compensation did the scheme continue⁷.

The growth of a manufacturing and commercial interest not controlled by the earl was a feature of the early nineteenth century. In fact the middle class had constituted an increasing proportion of the Borough ever since its re-building in the aftermath of the great fire of 1694. They began to make a significant social and political impact after about 1790. Three cotton spinning and weaving factories were introduced before the turn of the century⁸, the first signs of minor developments in the manufacturing field. By 1815 there was an iron foundry, a corn mill and lace and hat manufacturers⁹. More telling, however, was the growth of commerce acting as a focus for a fairly prosperous agricultural area. Traditionally, tradesmen had relied for their business on the requirements of the Castle and the local gentry, but there was now evidence of an increasing number of small shopkeepers. They were entering the town to take advantage of increased business potential. This change was aptly summarised by the

local historian, Rev. W. Field, writing in 1815 - "For many ages after the Norman Conquest the whole trade of Warwick was limited to the single object of supplying the wants of the inhabitants in the immediate vicinity" but now "the number of shops in the last 20 years has greatly multiplied"¹⁰. The construction of both the Warwick and Birmingham Canal (1793) and the Warwick and Napton Canal (1800) undoubtedly helped the development of the town¹¹.

Increasing middle class presence was revealed in the variety of entertainments to be found in Warwick. Traditional business and customary aristocratic entertainments existed cheek-by-jowl with new societies and organisations used by the middle and working classes. The old established fairs and markets continued throughout the century¹². Racing in April and September, a great social occasion in the town, had been going on since 1711¹³. However, there was evidence of new pastimes; clubs and societies were being formed to raise social and intellectual standards such as the Warwickshire Natural History and Archaeological Society (1836), the Horticultural Society of 1839¹⁴ and the Mechanics Institute established in 1829¹⁵.

The town's first library was founded in 1792¹⁶ and a new Free Library opened in 1866¹⁷. At the Corn Exchange, winter sessions of fortnightly concerts were common by the 1860s and eminent personalities were frequently in attendance¹⁸; The Warwick and Leamington Philharmonic Society had led an active existence since 1826¹⁹. The young men connected

with business establishments within the town founded the Terpsichorean Society in 1853²⁰ and the Cricket Club began in 1840²¹.

II. LIMITED GROWTH OF WARWICK

However, the growth of the town was limited and not sustained. Between 1811 and 1821 it grew relatively rapidly from 6,497 to 8,233²², but then much more slowly, and in the 1850s it became becalmed at just under 11,000²³. This slow growth is emphasised by examining the contemporary development of nearby Leamington, whose population had exceeded Warwick by 1841, when it was 12,000²⁴. By 1861 it was over 17,000²⁵. Admittedly there was the artificial stimulation of a briefly fashionable spa town, but this factor in Leamington's growth had reached its peak by 1841 and Warwick's growth is also modest when compared to other local towns such as Rugby²⁶. It seems that Birmingham and Coventry were more likely to attract manufacturing and business developments. Birmingham had a great diversity of occupations and a large skilled labour force while Coventry, barely 10 miles from Warwick, employed many in the watchmaking, silk and other trades. Some workers almost certainly left Warwick for these apparently more propitious climes. Moreover, there would have been little movement of population into the town. In the early years of the century there appears to have been some Irish immigration, settling in Friars Street, Monk Street and Bowling Green Street, for example; but this was not a development which appears to have been sustained²⁷.

One major nineteenth century cause of urban expansion and development applied but insignificantly to Warwick - the coming of the railway. The idea was first mooted quite early, in 1842, when the third earl suggested St. Nicholas meadow as a possible site for a station²⁸. There were also attempts to link the town with Rugby and Hampton-in-Arden²⁹, but nothing transpired from these early gestures. In 1847, three hundred people did sign a petition to the earl requesting a railway, but the Council adopted a neutral pose with a minority steadfastly resisting the proposal³⁰. At the end of the year they finally acquiesced to the town being on a branch line of the Birmingham and Oxford Junction railway³¹. Businessmen complained about this sluggish development. Communications with Gloucester, Rugby and Leicester were poor and many now referred to Warwick near Leamington instead of vice versa. Without the railway, it was argued, Warwick would be reduced to the rank of a "mere village" a remark showing signs of desperation not uncommon amongst manufacturers and tradesmen in the town. There were feelings of bitterness manifested when parliament terminated the Leamington line at St. John's station so that no fast trains ran through Warwick. The concern of the earls for a railway, shown in 1842, appears to have been fleeting; in fact they showed a paucity of interest in matters non-agricultural. This would hardly endear them to many of the businessmen trying to encourage Warwick to become something more than a market town dominated by its rural surroundings. This may well help to explain some of

the political reaction against the influence of the Castle in the 1860s.

In terms of employment, also, the railway did not act as the stimulus for the town that it might have done. In 1865 the directors of the Great Western Railway Company considered selecting Warwick as the new site for their carriage works which was to be removed from Paddington³³. However, despite the fact that the first choice for re-siting (Oxford) fell through and notwithstanding numerous deputations from the worthies of Warwick (including two M.P.s and their Council members) the directors were seemingly unconvinced by the case put to them. The works remained at Paddington for the time being³⁴. However, the meetings concerned with the affair shed a little light on the nature of Warwick in the early 1860s. A leader in the 'Warwick Advertiser' put the case for Warwick on the grounds of its superior soil, its central position, its proximity to iron and coal districts, its "unusual salubrity", and its abundance of labour³⁵. At a public meeting at the beginning of 1866 Alderman Dale asserted that the mortality rate for the town compared favourably with any other in the country, that there was sufficient house accommodation and no lack of workers. Perhaps he spoke for a general feeling amongst Warwick inhabitants when he remarked that trade was not as flourishing as they would like it to be, and that there was a need for an important manufacturing trade to come to the area.³⁶

While it is true that some of the above evidence on Warwick's suitability for industrial development does not emanate from disinterested sources, it suggests that some possible reasons for lack of growth - such as unavailability of labour and buildings - are unlikely to have applied. On one occasion, however, it does seem that expansion was suggested at an unpropitious moment. In 1860 there was discussion about the possibility of starting a cotton manufactory in the town. For this, however, £100,000 would have been required, and nothing came of the various schemes that were mooted. It was unfortunate that in the following year the American Civil War began. This resulted in a blockade of supplies of raw cotton to Great Britain for nearly four years and probably explains why nothing more was heard of this particular venture³⁷.

As a result of all this the main employment for the town's working men, apart from agricultural labouring in the rural surrounds, was limited to two areas. In the Saltisford region, the north-west of the borough, there were a brewery, hat works and candle works. To the east at Emscote there was a little industrial activity with a gelatine works, timber, slate and coal yards and a limeworks; but this did not make Warwick anything other than an agricultural town. In 1867, of 5,400 acres in the borough all but thirty were for agricultural purposes³⁸. The skilled artisan was present, but he was not organised. One of the parliamentary candidates in 1868, George Repton, could say not long before his electoral campaign, "I am not aware

that there are any trade unions in this part of the country"³⁹. Lack of industrial development possibly contributed to the almost moribund condition of the local corporation in the middle years of the century. This quiescence belied the expectations following the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. Under this Act, old corporations, like Warwick, had been completely reformed and the new local government was elected on a ratepayer franchise which generally prevented its domination by a traditional aristocratic clique like the Castle interest. Its initial effects in Warwick were dramatic. The earl's henchmen and like-minded town Tories received a drubbing from the new Liberal interests who occupied fifteen out of eighteen seats in 1836⁴⁰. However, the triumph proved ephemeral. The Tories had regained political control in one of the two wards as early as 1837⁴¹ and by the 1850s the local elections excited little interest. As the 'Advertiser' remarked when discussing the 1859 elections they were "comparatively untainted by the corrupt and illegal practices of former years when beer and grog were relied upon by either party as powerful auxiliaries"⁴². Much of the wrangling that did take place centred on public health and in the 1850s there was much discussion about the £30,000 debt incurred with regard to changes in the water supply and whether it was the fault of Liberal or Tory Councillors⁴³. But these altercations were over by 1860 when only 250 out of 726 burgesses bothered to vote⁴⁴ and in 1863 all the town councillors were returned unopposed in a year of very little local political activity⁴⁵. Only after this was there a revival of interest.

Other potential social problems failed to excite even the degree of controversy that public health had engendered. Problems of poor relief were generally those of inclement weather and poor harvests rather than industrial depression and the vagaries of the trade cycle. In the bad winter weather of January 1861, 200 gallons of soup and 400 loaves were distributed on just one Saturday⁴⁶.

With this rather sluggish development it is perhaps not surprising that financial and social power lay in largely traditional hands. With regard to the possession of land in 1868 there were, apart from the earl, two other influential landowners, Henry Christopher Wise of Woodloes, and Lord Charles Bertie Percy of Guy's Cliffe. Wise owned considerable amounts of land in the town and the waterworks in the Butts, while Percy had possession of the lime kilns in Wharf Street⁴⁷. Their property ownership, however, did not place them on a par with the earl for general influence within the town and, in particular, their political inclinations were not such as to consider opposing the Castle interest⁴⁸.

Apart from these landed gentlemen the main owners of premises were Liberal minded businessmen. John Mott Taylor of Coten End was a retired draper in 1868⁴⁹ with considerable property in the Saltisford⁵⁰. Thomas Heath and his son Richard were both solicitors who resided on land at Myton but also possessed holdings in houses in a number of streets in the town. Two other fairly active Liberals were Henry Elvins, an auctioneer, and R.D.Vaughton, a retired army captain. As political

influences against the Castle interest, however, they were all comparatively lightweight. The Heaths jointly owned some of the town's lime kilns, along with Richard Greaves, but none of them were major employers of labour⁵¹.

The commercial centre of the town, Jury Street and the High Street, with the roads that led off them, was inhabited largely by the shopkeeping and trading fraternity as well as legal and banking interests. The latter was dominated by the Greenway family, three of whom G.C., T. and C.D. had joint ownership of the bank in the High Street with William Smith. Their close connection with the Castle had been apparent throughout the century. Their financial influence extended to Leamington where a branch of their bank opened in 1863⁵².

Social power lay in largely traditional hands and the old established charities remained important. As well as Lord Leicester's hospital for "twelve impotent men" there was Sir Thomas White's charity to assist young tradesmen to set up in business⁵³. Both Henry VIII's charity and Oken's charity, whose money was devoted to numerous parochial purposes, owned considerable amounts of land and other property⁵⁴. Altogether there were about 50 local charities⁵⁵, although not all inhabitants approved of the way they spent their money. In 1861 Thomas Heath suggested that at least £1,000 more of their money ought to be spent on educational provision⁵⁶. The charities maintained their independence; in the case of Henry VIII's the profits from the estate were vested in the Corporation in 1835, but the

Council could not ascertain from the trustees the precise size of their income. In 1847 after a long legal wrangle it was established that the trustees could not be on the Council⁵⁷. The prevailing political influence within the charities was Tory: the prominent local Tory Kelynge Greenway, for instance, was "a trustee of many charities in the town"⁵⁸.

In the generally rural and sometimes Tory atmosphere of the town the Established Church maintained its customary role. Topics with a religious flavour took up numerous columns of the local newspapers, and correspondents frequently gave vent to suspicions about 'popish' tendencies and excessive ritualism. This was a concern typical of many low Church mid-Victorians reacting against the Anglo-Catholic Oxford Movement within the Church of England especially after the defection to Rome of two of its leading members, Newman and Manning, in the 1840s. This meant that distrust of innovation was considerable. For instance, concern was expressed that alterations to St. Nicholas Church might have made it easier to introduce ritualistic practices⁵⁹. At Emscote the Rev. T. B. Dickens had introduced worship "in the Catholic tradition"⁶⁰ and there was some fear lest either St. Mary's or St. Nicholas moved in the same direction. Anti-catholic feeling was also not uncommon after the opening of the Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary Immaculate in 1860⁶¹. At the beginning of 1868 the 'Advertiser' argued that the Fenians in Warwick gaol should be moved to London for their trial since Warwick had recently been "rather conspicuous for

religious heat and disturbances connected with Irishmen"⁶². Nonetheless, there had been some growth of Nonconformity and this was particularly noticeable in the 1860s. Not only did the Baptists acquire new and larger premises in 1866⁶³ but during this decade three Nonconformist ministers Burdett (Baptist), Allen (Independent) and Lake (Unitarian) became active in Liberal party affairs⁶⁴.

Educational changes were also fairly slow at manifesting themselves before the 1860s. Infant schools had developed in two parishes, St. Nicholas in 1834 and St. Mary and St. Paul's in 1849⁶⁵, but more senior pupils were catered for mainly by the old Grammar School in the Butts, the School of Industry of 1790 and the Henry VIII Charity School of 1813⁶⁶. Yet although a Schools Enquiry had recommended a place of learning for expanding Emscote in 1847, it was not built until 1861⁶⁷. This heralded new developments and in 1864 there was a local educational inquiry with an Inspector of Charity Commissioners visiting the town. Mercantile and trading pursuits, argued the local committee, required something more for its learning than the standard classical education, presumably more apposite for gentlemen of a higher social standing⁶⁸. The point was emphasised in July 1868 at a meeting of "a large number of the most influential inhabitants" when the educational question in the town was discussed⁶⁹. Moreover, speakers not only referred to the need to cater for the middle and upper classes but also to make some provision for the ordinary working people of the borough - a sentiment increasingly held throughout

the country and finding national expression in the Board Schools set up by the Education Act of 1870. In Warwick, then, there had been only limited progress up to 1870 in providing schools for working people, though voluntary efforts by religious societies in the next few years meant that there was no immediate introduction of the Board Schools⁷⁰.

Although some signs of social change can therefore be detected in Warwick in the 1860s, the overall picture of the town at this time is of a place which, though not in the slough of despond, had not developed as an urban or industrial centre as progress at the beginning of the century might have suggested. It retained a certain standing as a county town, though even its traditional functions as a legal centre had slightly lessened. From 1859 civil cases could be held at Birmingham instead of Warwick⁷¹. So, the impression of a market borough dominated by the agriculture of the local region would not be entirely inappropriate. The earls still retained property wealth and influence in the area and there were no major rival interests that appeared likely to shift their social dominance in this part of Warwickshire. On the whole, their political position seemed fairly entrenched as well but this was severely challenged in the 1860s.

III. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS BEFORE 1868

The position had in fact been attacked before this. The 3rd earl's brother, Sir Charles Greville, lost his seat in the 1831 election when the voters

favoured two candidates advocating the passage of the proposed Parliamentary Reform Bill⁷², subsequently passed as the Great Reform Act of 1832. While the seat was regained for Sir Charles the following year he was unseated on petition when it was shown that bribery and intimidation had taken place on a vast scale⁷³, and for a time the earl had to be content to have control of one of the Warwick seats, the other going to a local Liberal, woolstapler William Collins between 1837 and 1852⁷⁴.

However, the family influence seemed as strong as ever when two Tories, George Repton and Edward Greaves, were elected in 1852⁷⁵ - an election not particularly notable nationally for Tory successes, since it failed to provide Lord Derby's Tory Administration with a sufficient majority to form a long-lasting government. Repton was an outsider who had previously represented the notoriously corrupt borough of St. Albans⁷⁶ and was clearly the Castle candidate. When the Liberal, Arthur Peel, successfully challenged this Tory monopoly in 1865⁷⁷ it was the local man, Greaves, and not Repton that he managed to oust. Undoubtedly the 4th earl was still exercising considerable political muscle.

Aside from the influence of the earl there was a distinct strand of indigenous Toryism in Warwick. Henry Wise was active in the party's affairs⁷⁸ but, on the whole, it was the professional world of bankers and lawyers which sustained Warwick Toryism most effectively. The Greenways were also prominent in the party's affairs - Kelynge Greenway

was Mayor in 1858 and 1860⁷⁹, and his brother George became town clerk in 1858⁸⁰. The political arrangements on behalf of the Tories were rather informal and ad hoc with the result that they were somewhat taken aback at the Liberal challenge at the general election of 1865.

Their surprise was particularly great because of the torpid nature of Warwick Liberalism earlier in the century. It is true that they had at one time been strong: in the 1830s they were determined to challenge the earl's electoral influence and corruption in the town but the unity over parliamentary reform in 1830-32 proved only temporary. Later on many seemed prepared to compromise and revert to the idea of candidates representing general interests rather than advocating specific measures. While the third Earl of Warwick was as staunch a Protectionist as he was an anti-reformer, economic issues did not have the same uniting effect on Warwick Liberals as political ones. For instance in 1847 the Liberals found themselves in the embarrassing position of having to support the Castle Tory, Sir Charles Douglas, who had become a Peelite Free Trader and had supported the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846⁸¹. In contrast, Bolton King⁸², who was successfully elected three times in the early 1830s on a reform ticket, contemplated standing in 1847 in the Protectionist interest⁸³.

In fact the Liberal party in Warwick lacked the obvious Tory focus of the Castle. The dislike of the influence that emanated from that place proved a

useful rallying cry, but positive policies were much slower to develop - the Liberalism was generally moderate and coloured by local circumstance. Within the town there were some clear differences in the social nature of party support. Nonconformist clergy often gave their allegiance in terms of votes but, in the first part of the century, only rarely in active debate. It was not until the Reform crisis of 1866 that they apparently played a major role with Burdett (Baptist) urging all "intelligent men" to join the Reform League and Allen (Independent) speaking in favour of a "large extension" of the franchise⁸⁴.

The small manufacturers and craftsmen of the town were active in support of Liberal candidates without, of course, the personal or financial influence of some of the leading Tories. Although William Collins emerged as a prominent figure in the 1830s, there seems little evidence that many other Liberals of this social standing could devote the time and money to political affairs that Collins did. Even he was rather vague in some of his political pronouncements. In 1847 he urged support for "political, religious and commercial freedom"⁸⁵ but did not elaborate. He was still referred to as a person "born and bred"⁸⁶ among the local people. The return of men like him showed the independence of at least part of the borough from the Castle interest. Yet once Parliamentary Reform had been obtained the mere presence of one non-Castle candidate had become the end, rather than the means to new policies. Warwick, in part at least, seems to bear out Professor John Vincent's

assertion about Liberal politics and policies in the mid-19th Century: that the middle classes enjoyed electioneering methods for their own sake rather than for any concrete results that might have been obtained. "The real issue was not the parliamentary representation of the Borough but the relative position of the electors within the town"⁸⁷.

In fact, between the political excitement of the mid 1830s and 1860s, Liberal party support seems to have been generally confined to a few people from the professional classes. Thomas Heath made a speech about the non-representation of Liberal electors in 1852⁸⁸, and his son Richard was a regular attender at the Borough Registration Court in the 1850s and early 1860s⁸⁹, but there were few others who maintained an active interest in this period.

One constant Liberal voice was that of the newspaper, the 'Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser' founded in 1806⁹⁰. It advocated the necessity of a secret ballot for elections in order to break down the influence of the Castle⁹¹. While it held strong feelings on that particular issue - a cause frequently advocated by many Liberals and Radicals - it generally evinced a moderate Liberalism. In 1841 it argued in favour of splitting the seat between one Tory (Douglas) and one Liberal (Collins) and hoped for no more contenders though many "gourmandisers and guzzlers" would doubtless have wished for a contest⁹². The desire for quiet in the borough resulted in a contentment with political compromise. The expense,

drunkenness, bribery and corruption, not uncommon in mid-Victorian elections, would thus be avoided. When the paper did advocate reforms such as an extension of the franchise it was cautious in its statements. This extension, for instance, should not be a "rash" one⁹³. It was prepared for tradition, family and "reverence for rank" to "have their weight"⁹⁴. This seems to have been the general view of most Warwick Liberals.

Nor was the Liberal feeling in Warwick properly organised in the middle of the century. In many boroughs registration associations had begun soon after the 1832 Reform Act which first required the qualified voter to ensure that his name was entered on an official register of electors before he was technically entitled to vote. In his book, 'Politics in the Age of Cobden', the historian John Prest has argued that this was an extremely important part of elections in the 1830s and 1840s⁹⁵, but it apparently passed Warwick by. The election of Collins at four successive polls shows both the extent of Liberal feeling and the importance of a local candidate; but throughout his period as M.P. Collins had no permanent Liberal organisation in the town to support him. Only after the defeat of 1857 when, humiliatingly, Repton and Greaves were returned unopposed⁹⁶, did some action on this front take place and a Warwick Liberal Registration Association was formed⁹⁷. It had little impact at first and could not prevent another unopposed run for the Tories in 1859⁹⁸, but by 1863 it claimed to be in a "favourable position" in the event of a dissolution and subsequent contest⁹⁹. This,

however, gave little indication of the changes that were to appear in 1865.

The revival which so astonished local Tories was relatively sudden. In the early 1860s the party differences on a national level were somewhat blurred, with Lord Palmerston as Prime Minister leading an administration which received support from a wide political spectrum ranging between cautious Whigs and out and out Radicals, and even Repton and Greaves had given him some support¹⁰⁰. It had been difficult for Liberals in Warwick to find a firm base from which to attack the sitting Tory members. In the brief election campaign of 1859, Repton's address referred to the lack of difference between Whig and Conservative¹⁰¹ and even the 'Warwick Advertiser' did not display its usual hostility. It alluded to Repton and Greaves as examples of "a favourable specimen of an ameliorated Tory", their speeches having "little to censure" and "much to approve"¹⁰².

They were, however, to play a different tune in 1865. What had become apparent by this time was the desire for an M.P. of moderate Liberal inclination but relatively independent of pressures from any party or group. The candidate found, Arthur Peel (youngest son of Sir Robert), seemed to fit the bill admirably. His support of the abolition of the compulsory payment of Church Rates and support for Gladstone "in a forward direction"¹⁰³ on parliamentary reform met with approval from Warwick electors. They were certainly in the minds of those like F.W. Scott of the Priory

who was arguing in the middle of June 1865 that the electors required a new type of representation¹⁰⁴. But Peel's liberalism was also moderate; his support for Russell's cautious Reform Bill of 1866 - a £7 rating franchise in the Boroughs¹⁰⁵ - was in preference to more radical schemes of near manhood suffrage. It earned the support of the 'Advertiser', the major spokesman for moderate Liberalism in Warwick. Reform, it argued in 1865, was desirable, but there should not be a slide into manhood suffrage. "Imperfectly trained" men should not be added to the electorate¹⁰⁶. Another factor which made Peel particularly welcome was that, once he was elected, his general interest in the affairs of the town was soon manifested. Many M.P.s at this time took little or no interest in their constituency and might only visit it rarely, but Peel was often to be seen in the borough, even at humble musical evenings, and this was much appreciated. When it was announced, in 1867, that he was to meet his constituents at the Corn Exchange to discuss business, the relevant notice in the 'Warwick Advertiser' was headed, "An example to Mr. Repton"¹⁰⁷. A man who sought representation of local interests was to be preferred to tried party men who devoted too much time to national affairs.

Despite the apparent resurgence of Liberal confidence- Peel duly ousted Greaves in the 1865 election¹⁰⁸ - few felt sufficiently optimistic to advance two candidates for this double member seat. To modern eyes it may seem strange that so many who were active in mid-Victorian politics felt

their party could best be served by fielding just one candidate when two seats were available. After all, the incongruity implicit in the situation where one member's vote was cancelled out by another's had long been recognised, not least in Warwick. It was aptly summarised by an anonymous letter to the 'Warwick Advertiser' in 1831 - "You have latterly returned one independent member who votes for the interest of the people, and one who votes for oppression and misrule"¹⁰⁹. Although the people of Warwick appear to have taken this argument to heart at the time, they soon reverted to equal representation. To assume that the criticism levelled at them in the letter was appropriate would perhaps be to misinterpret much of mid-Victorian political life. It would be to think in terms of voters electing M.P.s who would support or oppose specific measures - and whilst this was so in the exceptional case of Reform in 1831/2 it was less true later when representation of general interests again became the predominant theme. Representation of Castle interests might be valid - but it could only justify one M.P. - the town should have theirs and his views should be independent of, and preferably a little different from, the representative of the earls.

In this mode of thinking, the electors of Warwick reflected a view held throughout the country. The politics of opinion, the idea that a person's vote was the means to express his individual viewpoint was a role that struggled for recognition in the middle of the century - especially between 1846 and 1865 when the two party system was blurred, and

controversial domestic issues somewhat thin on the ground. Perhaps a more significant factor in determining voting behaviour was the politics of interest - what an M.P. could do for their town - what he could do for their social or occupational class. The reception that Peel received in the mid 1860s suggested that these factors were uppermost in supporting him rather than the particular measures he said he would support in Parliament. Merely to elect him was to assert their independence of the earl - it did not need two M.P.s to do this. Moreover, the third major factor in voting, the politics of money, should not be ignored. The earl could still exercise financial pressure on voters¹¹⁰ and one vote for Peel and one vote for the Castle Tory might be a satisfactory compromise between an undue assertion of independence on the one hand and using the privilege of a vote for merely pecuniary purposes on the other. Also this kind of cross-voting could be justified on a more mundane and practical level. It was argued, for instance, that the "modest demand" for only one vote might be more appealing to those newly enfranchised. Whilst a second man might avoid the problem of split votes, he could "compel the coalition of the candidates thus confronted", so that, in a close contest, one candidate might be preferable¹¹¹. These factors, commonly argued in the mid-Victorian political world, would particularly apply to Warwick. To run two Liberals opposing the Castle might result in further scandal and possible disenfranchisement of the borough, or the equally undesirable state of utter financial exhaustion.

IV. THE FIRST STAGES OF ELECTIONEERING

In 1868, therefore, far from seeking to increase their representation with a second candidate many Warwick Liberals, having apparently re-established their right to one of the Warwick seats, were thinking rather of an electoral compact with the Tories. What is surprising about this rather cautious approach is that the whole electoral scene had been transformed by the 1867 Reform Act and the franchise was now the comparatively wide one of household suffrage in the boroughs, which might well favour the Liberals. With the Warwick electorate increasing from 770 to 1,740¹¹², it would certainly reduce the influence of the earl.

Initially, it was fairly clear why no second Liberal was considered for Warwick in 1868: it was thought for some time that, owing to constituency reorganisation following the 1867 Act, Warwick would be amalgamated with Leamington. A boundary Commission had recommended this move since Leamington, with 23,500 people had no separate representation but was merely part of the South Warwickshire constituency. Warwick, with only 10,500 population returned two M.P.s. Only in May 1868 was there even an inkling that there might be an election, after all, for just Warwick Borough¹¹³. The recommendation for amalgamation was reversed by a decision of a Select Committee of the House of Commons. The anomaly of two M.P.s for Warwick and none for Leamington was recognised. However, the Select Committee asserted that towns which were distinct or only slightly connected should not be

joined. Whilst favouring extensions of boundaries they were opposed to the grouping of towns¹¹⁴. In the case of Warwick and Leamington a mere continuous line of houses hardly constituted the joining up of these towns¹¹⁵.

Once it was clear that Leamington would have no part in the Warwick contest, there were other signs that no strong second Liberal candidate would be forthcoming. For the question of a potential compact to be understood in the context of Warwick, the position in the South Warwickshire seat has also to be examined. In this constituency it was proposed to mount a strong Liberal challenge to the sitting Tories. On the 6th June the 'Leamington Chronicle' reported that there might after all be two Tories standing for the Borough, as if the matter had been in some doubt¹¹⁶. A week later the situation was still uncertain. On the 13th June the 'Advertiser' reported that Tories Sir Charles Mordaunt and H.C. Wise might retire as sitting members for the County and a double compact would be achieved by the young Liberal, Lord Hyde, and Edward Greaves being returned for the County, leaving Peel and Repton likewise unopposed for the Borough¹¹⁷. The County part of the arrangement fell through and there ensued a close contest won by the Tories¹¹⁸, who had perhaps correctly decided that they could win the seat outright. However, in the Borough there was little electioneering in the summer months of 1868¹¹⁹ and soon after the campaign began in earnest in October, Repton suddenly withdrew from the contest¹²⁰. This apparently left the remaining Tory

Greaves and the Liberal Peel with a clear run. It seems that even with the newly expanded electorate, the old view that advised great caution about bringing forward two candidates rather than one still prevailed amongst the majority of Warwick Liberals. At a meeting of over 600 of them on 15th October, the Tory offer not to replace Repton if the Liberals likewise refrained from offering a second candidate was duly accepted¹²¹. This acceptance of a compact arrangement was rare in the post 1867 Reform era. H.J Hanham has pointed out that in general "the age of compacts was over"¹²² after the Act. While there were a few other places where they continued to exist, Warwick was almost unique in that it saw the virtual re-establishment of a compact that had not been fully implemented since 1847, when the Tory Sir Charles Douglas and the Liberal John Collins had nominal opposition from only one Independent who secured just 30 votes¹²³.

The only crumb of comfort for the Liberals was that Repton, rather than the previously defeated Greaves, was the candidate to withdraw. The Liberal 'Advertiser' seized upon this fact to assert that the Castle influence in Warwick politics was finished, and that Conservatism was probably a declining force in the town¹²⁴. Certainly the candidates had announced their intention to stand before the exact nature of the new (and seemingly Liberal) electorate was known. But the only major effect of the Reform Act seems to have been to make it more likely that Repton, more directly associated with the Castle interest than Greaves,

would have to withdraw. The household suffrage of the Act created a large number of voters who would be independent of pressure from the earl. This, though, was still a compact, albeit in a slightly different form. Repton's withdrawal from the contest did not necessarily signify the end of the earl's attempts to influence Warwick elections. Repton returned to be re-elected in both 1874 and 1880, and in 1868 Greaves was generally looked upon as the Castle/Tory representative. It seems likely, moreover, that Greaves was determined to regain the seat he had lost in 1865, even at the expense of Repton! When the latter withdrew he was heard to remark "I have not been beaten by my foes, but by my friends", pointing at Greaves¹²⁵. From the eventual result it seems reasonable to surmise that Greaves had obtained a good number of promises from those who were still prepared to split their two votes politically and cast one for him and one for Peel¹²⁶ - caution would prevail over conviction.

Not all Warwick Liberals were prepared to be as politically timid as this. Their efforts in the months preceding the election suggest that they felt compromises of this kind should not exist now that there was a larger and more independent electorate. What the more radical amongst them do not appear to have suspected was that a Whig/Tory alliance was quite possible, if the two sides felt that thereby they were keeping a seemingly dangerous Radical out of parliament.

Some Radical opinion in Warwick itself believed the terms of the 1867 Reform Act had given them a

chance of capturing both seats and of putting forward a candidate more advanced politically than Peel. A good example was John Spence, a range manufacturer from Emscote, who had played a key role in the Liberal revival of 1865 when Peel was elected¹²⁷. At this stage he had been "not quite sure" whether the Liberals could return two candidates, but was in a much more confident mood in 1868. In a speech at Leamington before the withdrawal of Repton, he predicted that Toryism might be blotted out of Warwick altogether¹²⁸. The same line was taken by the Radical paper the 'Leamington Chronicle', which optimistically pointed out that almost all the additions to the electorate in Warwick were working men and that they now comprised two-thirds more than any other class¹²⁹. With the doubling of the town's electorate, investigations were made in the summer of 1868 into the large number of additions to the voting register. This seemed to confirm the 'Chronicle's' viewpoint about the Liberal inclination of the newly enfranchised working men since it was now predicted that Peel might lead the poll by as much as 200 votes¹³⁰. With a local branch of the National Reform League now active in Warwick, it would have been a surprise if they had not thought in terms of a more Radical candidate. Whether they would have been able to find a suitable candidate who might also be acceptable to the majority of Warwick Liberals was another question. The cleavage between moderate and radical Liberals in Warwick is vital to the understanding of the election result in Warwick in 1868. The Radicals never had the same

strength and influence that the moderates possessed.

Indeed, a short examination of working class participation in political affairs in the Borough shows that it had existed for some time, but had rarely been influential since 1832. It was not comparable with larger more industrialised places like Birmingham and Coventry where rather more of them were enfranchised. Warwick was typical of many of the smaller boroughs and more rural county seats where the middle class and aristocracy, especially the latter, not only dominated the electorate but most of the political activity. Chartism had its supporters in the town in the 1830s and 40s, though their organisation seems to have been stronger in Leamington¹³¹. The best known Warwick Chartist was in fact a most unusual figure since he was an Anglican clergyman and Vicar of St. Nicholas, Warwick, from 1811-45, Rev. Arthur Savage Wade. He was hardly seen in the borough after 1831¹³² when his already Radical views became Chartist. Most of his parishioners found his position as a Church of England clergyman and his political opinions quite anomalous¹³³.

In short, radical and working class feelings before the mid 1860s were most strongly manifested away from Warwick. The Warwick Political Society, temporarily active in 1831 and 1832, needed to be strengthened by Political Union members from nearby Coventry, and it seems to have been a short term organisation. The unseating of the earl's

brother in 1831, the achievement of the Reform Bill in 1832, the Liberal successes in the new Corporation after 1835 and the subsequent election of a local and independent Liberal M.P. bequeathed no strong, confident, permanent Liberal Association of any kind, let alone one in which working men could be involved. The unity of the Liberal camp had been an essentially negative one - the reduction if not removal of the Castle interest in the political affairs of the Borough. There was little in the way of principle or organisation to keep it together once this seemed to have been achieved. Apart from the desire for the secret ballot at elections there was no burning political issue on which they felt they could all unite.

The first limited signs that working men might become involved in the political life of the borough had come with the foundation of the Liberal Registration Association in 1857. At one stage a Mr. Walton was anxious to point out that non-electors were desirable as members of the organisation¹³⁴. However, it was not until 1865, when parliamentary reform was again developing as a national issue with the speeches of Bright and Gladstone, that their role became really significant. Later in the year the death of Palmerston also helped. Spence, in his early attempts at a political re-organisation of the borough, felt it desirable to have an association for both electors and non-electors, especially bearing in mind the possibilities of an increase in the franchise¹³⁵. Over 150 attended the first such meeting on June 24th, 1865, at which the political influence of

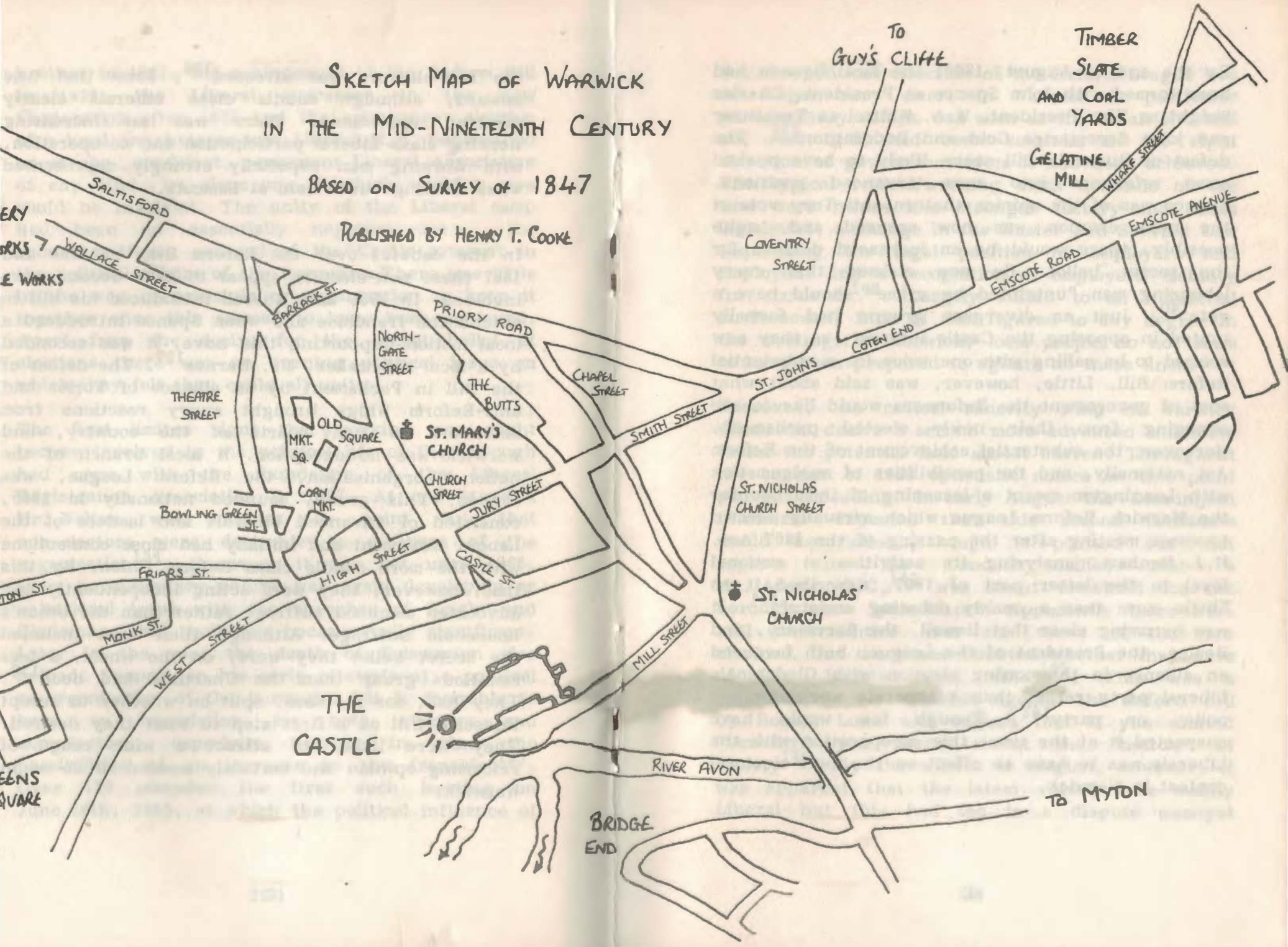
the non-electors was stressed¹³⁶. From that time onward, although middle class Liberals clearly directed operations, there was an increasing working class Liberal participation and co-operation, with working men especially strongly represented when meetings were held at Emscote.

In the debates over the Reform Bills of 1866 and 1867 these non-electors appear to have become more involved. In 1866 Earl Russell introduced his bill to extend the franchise and when Spence introduced a local motion supporting this move, it was seconded by a local shoemaker, Mr. Barnes¹³⁷. The defeat of the Bill in Parliament by an alliance of Tories and anti-Reform Whigs brought angry reactions from reformers in many parts of the country, and Warwick was no exception. A local branch of the national organisation, the Reform League, was formed. This group, founded nationally in 1865, consisted of advanced Liberals and leaders of the Labour movement and initially had close connections with the more middle class Reform Union. By this time, however, they were acting independently and advocated manhood suffrage rather than the Union's household suffrage. Although their aims included the secret ballot they were, on the whole, a less ambitious group than the Chartists had been¹³⁸. They had, for instance, split on whether to accept Russell's Bill as a first step to what they desired. They were likely to attract a wide range of reforming opinion and certainly seemed to do so in Warwick.

SKETCH MAP OF WARWICK
IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

BASED ON SURVEY OF 1847

PUBLISHED BY HENRY T. COOKE



by the end of August, 1866, the local Branch had been formed with John Spence as President, Charles Weight as Vice President, W.A. Whittel as Treasurer and joint Secretaries Gold and Boddington¹³⁹. The defeat of Russell's Bill seems likely to have pushed some reformers into more advanced positions. Spence was of the opinion that an anti-Tory vote at the next election was now assured and, quite possibly, there would be an increased demand for the secret ballot. He now claimed that every labouring man "untainted by crime" should have a vote¹⁴⁰. Just as divergent groups had formally united in opposing the Castle interest, so they now seemed to be calling with one voice for a substantial Reform Bill. Little, however, was said about what sort of government the Reformers would like to see emerging from their newly elected parliament. Moreover, the substantial achievement of the Reform Act nationally, and the possibilities of amalgamation with Leamington meant a lessening of influence for the Warwick Reform League which virtually seemed to cease meeting after the passing of the 1867 Act. H.J. Hanham, analysing its activities at national level in the latter part of 1867, described it as "little more than a weekly debating society"¹⁴¹. It was becoming clear that Howell, the Secretary, and Beales, the President of the League, both favoured an alliance in the coming election with Gladstone's Liberal party rather than a separate working class policy or party¹⁴². Though few would have suspected it at the time, this co-operation with the Liberals was to have an effect on the next electoral contest in Warwick.

So, the political direction of the Reform League was no longer very clear. In Warwick in particular parliamentary reform was seen as the be all and end all, and little had been said as to the right direction of government after it had been achieved. The typical radical/working class demands of the time were issues like stronger factory and mines legislation, a change in the Master and Servant Law (equalising the legal position of employers and employed) and a recognition of employers' liability for accidents¹⁴³. Largely suited to an industrial environment, little of this figured to any degree in the meetings at Warwick; local people do not seem to have been prepared to agitate on these lines.

Moreover, the radical minority wing in Warwick which did desire a second more advanced candidate found the potential field almost barren. Throughout the summer of 1868 optimistic noises on this point proved misleading. In early August the 'Leamington Chronicle' expected that this second candidate would materialise, though it pointed out that reports in the London dailies that a Mr. Adams, Q.C.¹⁴⁴ was about to stand for the borough were "premature". Apparently there were still uncertainties over the views of the new electors, but the paper doubted whether they were of "Mr. Lowe's venal class"¹⁴⁵. This was a reference to the speeches against the Reform Bill by Robert Lowe who argued that if you wanted "venality" you found it at the "bottom" of society¹⁴⁶. By the middle of August, however, it was apparent that the latest voters were mainly Liberal but this had led to a dispute amongst

Warwick Liberals over the desirability of a second candidate. A letter¹⁴⁷ to the 'Chronicle' on 15th August argued that it was "quite possible" to return two good and substantial Liberals. However, it also mentioned the problem of "organisation" and complained that working men had still received the cold shoulder". The 'Chronicle' itself still appeared to think that "a second Liberal candidate is shortly to be announced", a "thorough-going Liberal" appealing "on his own individual merits"¹⁴⁸ but this unknown person failed to appear.

So when Repton withdrew from the contest in October, the second candidate had still not materialised and time was running short. However, the fact that so many Liberals were now prepared to do a deal with the Tories and ensure the unopposed election of Peel and Greaves, seems to have stimulated some of the Reform Leaguers in Warwick to another effort to find a suitable candidate. On the very same day that Repton went, a Working Man's Association was formed, and it was reported that a Mr. Mason Jones (or some other local gentleman) was willing to stand¹⁴⁹. Yet again, nothing came of this candidature and in their desperation it was natural that local Reform League leader, Robert Gold, and his supporters, should renew their attempts to obtain a candidate provided by the National Reform League in London. Whilst they assumed this would guarantee a genuinely Radical figure, the National body was, by now, electorally attached to the Liberal Party in such a way that a genuinely independent candidate was unlikely to be forthcoming.

V. THE APPEARANCE OF CREMER

The idea of Reform League support for advanced Liberals generally, can be traced back into the previous year. For tactical reasons, Warwick was a constituency in which they might well take an interest at the next election. In the summer of 1867 the Reform League's Council had noted the importance of preparing for the next general election, using the various branches to help elect members of "advanced Liberal principles"¹⁵⁰ and, preferably, "working men proportionate to the other interests and classes at present represented in Parliament"¹⁵¹.

The Reform League were, however, tied to the Liberal purse strings. Financially, independent action was difficult if not impossible, and help came from benevolent Liberals such as Samuel Morley. With his aid, and the assistance of others, a Special Fund of £1,900 was established. This was to be used in 85 boroughs where, although a total of 104 Tories had been returned, there had been close contests¹⁵². At this stage, the decision did not mean that Warwick was necessarily a suitable place for a working class candidate. It merely signified the likelihood of a close contest with the realistic aim of depriving the Tories of a seat. Hales and Brighty¹⁵³, two members of the Reform League, came to Warwick at the beginning of September, 1868. They were instructed to chronicle the changes in the electorate and the registration since the Reform Act, the centres of power and influence in the borough, the major issues on which they would

be concentrating their attention and the political complexion of the candidates, with a summary of the major problems confronting the Liberals. There would be no interference where two well established Liberals stood. This would presumably apply, even if the opinions of both were an anathema to the Reform Leaguers - as for instance in the case of two cautious Whigs¹⁵⁴.

The Warwick report was hardly one of the most optimistic. It had earlier been noted by the League that Warwick was one of 67 boroughs where the Tory majority was under 100. Hales and Brighty reported that the Reform League as such had ceased meeting and had coalesced with the moderate section, and that the only Liberal organisation of note was therefore the Registration Association. There were no trade societies and Tory influences of the earl, the Bank and the Charity Trustees were very strong. The party in the borough did not seem prepared for a second candidate and much work needed to be done for "an advanced Liberal of good position". Whilst Hales and Brighty were more optimistic about the allegiances of the new voters, Warwick was probably a low priority on the list of constituencies where a seat might be gained¹⁵⁵. Those boroughs where the Reform League organisation was still strong, where Tory influence had shown greater signs of weakening and where a man of working class background might have been accepted - criteria likely to be characteristic of more industrial seats - would all be more immediately attractive.

In fact, the first contacts between local Reform Leaguers and the national organisation seem to have been in the late summer of 1868, before any hint that Repton would withdraw from the contest. Robert Gold may well have been in correspondence with Reform League Secretary, George Howell, since Howell wrote to him on 4th September suggesting E. Lyelph Stanley as a suitable candidate for Warwick, a "fine Liberal, good speaker, and of good family"¹⁵⁶. There seems to have been no thought at this stage that Cremer should consider standing for the Borough. It was well into October, a few weeks before the election, when he decided to stand.

Cremer's background was hardly typical of previous Warwick parliamentary candidates. Born in 1828 in Fareham, Hampshire, he had first worked in a shipyard at the age of nine and educated himself¹⁵⁷. He became active in the Trade Union world joining the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners in 1852¹⁵⁸. As a member of the London Trades Council he interested himself in working-class political issues and became Secretary of the International Workingmen's Association¹⁵⁹, having close links with Karl Marx¹⁶⁰. Now he was very active in the Reform League, but while he was an able, industrious man he was often touchy and short tempered: perhaps not ideal for the delicate task he was trying to undertake in Warwick. The hierarchy of the Liberal party seem to have regarded him as one of the most important members of the League. The irony is that, had he asked, Cremer might possibly have been given a more

promising constituency than Warwick. The Liberal Chief Whip, Glyn, who was in regular communication with Cremer, later expressed his regret that Cremer had stood for Warwick, feeling that he had left it too late. Regretting that he had not endeavoured to push Reform Leaguers forward, Glyn claimed to Gladstone that Cremer and Howell had never previously expressed a wish to become candidates¹⁶¹.

It may be that Cremer was excessively optimistic about the Warwick result. In the run-up to the election over-confident statements were made by the Reform Leaguers concerning their own candidates (such as the President, Edmond Beales)¹⁶² none of whom was elected. Apart from Cremer, only Howell at Aylesbury, and two others, were genuine working class candidates, who got as far as the poll¹⁶³. Three more were forced to withdraw before the day of the election¹⁶⁴. Despite Glyn's assertions, it seemed that this kind of Radical figure would not be allowed to stand when there was actually a chance of victory.

Cremer's hopes may have stemmed from the less pessimistic parts of the Warwick report of Hales and Brighty. They had pointed out that the "great majority" of the new voters were Liberal, "even Radical" and recalled that in 1865 the Liberal, Peel, had beaten the second Tory, Greaves, by 18 votes despite the Tory influences of Bank and Castle. Now, with a wider electorate, the working men of the Borough were desirous of a second candidate who would strengthen Peel's position by preventing

split votes. Cremer, with his energy, would hardly have to worry about their caution that a man advanced in years would not do since any candidate would have to "work the Borough well"¹⁶⁵.

Despite all this, however, one wonders whether Cremer really believed at any stage of the campaign that he had a concrete chance of success. Cremer's biographer, Evans, knew that Warwick was not "congenial ground" and described it as having "an evil reputation as one of the most corrupt constituencies in England"¹⁶⁶. Cremer may possibly have disliked the large unorganised popular constituencies of the bigger urban and industrial areas, but there seems little concrete evidence for this. In any case, would he really have found Warwick all that much more attractive?

The decision that Cremer should stand seems likely to have been taken in late October. On the 20th of that month George Howell was writing to John Hales who was, at the time, stationed in Warwick. He informed him that Cremer desired to visit Warwick, and he was to inform Robert Gold of the same. In a letter dated the same day to Gold himself, Howell revealed his hatred of "disgraceful"¹⁶⁷ compacts which apparently prompted his own initiative in Aylesbury at the same time. This correspondence seems to have been written the same day as the 'Chronicle' reported that "discontented electors" had complained to the Reform League about the continued absence of a second Liberal. The following day one Robert Crawford of Woodstock appeared claiming he had been sent by the Reform

league¹⁶⁸, although there is no evidence of this, and offering to stand. Crawford was a Parliamentary Solicitor, the son of James Crawford, Scottish Liberal. He was connected with educational and charitable institutions in London and was a member of the Reform Club. He had always been an advanced Liberal¹⁶⁹. He apparently withdrew almost immediately when he found that his assistance to free the Borough from "Tory domination"¹⁷⁰ was not likely to be demanded.

Cremer's candidacy, therefore, may well have been to make at least a gesture against a compact which would neutralise voting on major issues. Howell, however, can hardly have hoped for Cremer's success. After the rejection of Crawford it was clear that a Reform Leaguer would not receive local support. Howell was also aware of the fatal split in the Warwick Liberal camp about whether to support a separate Liberal candidate. In his letter to Gold, he hoped that the latter would act with Spence "as that is our only chance"¹⁷¹, but this hope of co-operation was not fulfilled. Howell felt very strongly at this time that "we must fight against his Whig exclusiveness"¹⁷², and so an unlikely candidate stood for an unlikely Borough.

Cremer's actual campaign began with a rather disorganised meeting on 29th October, only three weeks from polling day. At the time, when the proceedings were due to begin, there were only 50 people present although 200 eventually arrived. Great difficulty was found obtaining a Chairman - one failed to appear, another refused the offer and

a third was found to have left the meeting! Eventually, Mottershead, Cremer's colleague and Reform Leaguer, was forced to undertake the task. The meeting agreed that Cremer should stand even if he only gained a handful of votes, which is what many were anticipating at this juncture¹⁷³.

Making up for lost time, Cremer gave six talks in ten days and a fair idea of their contents can be gleaned from his election address (see appendix). The timing of this hardly suggested a very organised campaign since most of the speeches had been delivered before the address appeared! Standing as a candidate in the "Liberal and Industrial" interest he was nevertheless obliged to make reference to the Irish Church Question, the chief national election issue. He supported the Gladstonian Liberal line that in a land where 90% of the population adhered to the Roman Catholic Church the establishment and endowment of an Anglican Church in the country could hardly be morally justified. Cremer called the Anglican Church in Ireland "a political institution in a religious garb". Politically he was prepared to give Gladstone his "loyal support" and described himself as an "advanced Liberal". His general political programme was reminiscent of the old Chartists: - universal male suffrage, secret ballot, shorter parliaments and representatives "apportioned to population". On education he suggested a national compulsory and secular system. On Trade Union matters Cremer had not placed the emphasis that he would probably have liked to have done; many of the issues would not relate directly to the Warwick electorate. As it

was, he argued that it was crucial for working men to have direct representation in parliament since there was likely to be legislation affecting them on housing, combination rights, the Master and Servant Laws and protection of savings for organised bodies. His interest in international affairs, an issue that dominated his later life, was reflected in his proposal for International Boards of Arbitration¹⁷⁴.

In the rush of activity between Thursday 29th October and Saturday 7th November, Cremer tended to speak in those areas of the Borough from where he was likely to draw his greatest support. In particular this meant Emscote, where four of his seven major meetings were held. Perhaps the most successful of these was his second meeting on Friday 30th October at the Portobello Tavern, a public house which provided him with committee rooms. Here he met with a "warm reception" and a "unanimous resolution"¹⁷⁵. With a more working class audience in this part of town Cremer could explore some of his favourite issues a little further. He launched into an attack on the iniquities of the Master and Servant Law, concentrating on the fact that it was a civil offence for an employer to break his contract, but a criminal one for the employee to do the same. Arguing that the working classes only asked for "bare and equal justice", he spent much time asserting that working men would not sell their principles at any price, despite past accusations against some of his working colleagues. He also gave a small clue as to why he stood in Warwick. Even if he failed, he said he could have at least

hastened the period of working class representation¹⁷⁶. The experience of an attempt in a hopeless constituency might produce a rather better offer the next time round.

Despite the good reception at this meeting, however, it was already clear that many Liberals were not going to support Cremer. He alluded to this in his third meeting on Tuesday 3rd November, again at Emscote at the Dolphin Inn. He claimed he had made progress and now boasted of a seventy strong committee¹⁷⁷, but was also forced to argue that he could not possibly injure Peel's candidacy, suggesting that some voters were considering holding back¹⁷⁸. By the time of his fourth meeting on Wednesday 4th November some hostility was evident at his gatherings. On this occasion the proceedings were described as being of a "rather noisy character"¹⁷⁹. The following night's meeting at the Dolphin (the third on consecutive days) heard a complaint from one of Cremer's supporters. R.C. Worley claimed he had been pelted with rotten eggs the night before. Not infrequently, therefore, there seemed more evidence of support for Cremer from outside the Borough than inside it. At this latter meeting Cremer's friend, colleague and future hagiographer, Howard Evans, came to speak for him¹⁸⁰. At his last major meeting on Thursday, 12th November, at the Corn Exchange, the Reform League Chairman Edmond Beales also spoke for Cremer, describing him as "one of my most faithful, able and undaunted supporters"¹⁸¹. Well known figures in Reform Circles such as Fawcett, J.S. Mill and Thomas Hughes also sent messages of

support¹⁸². All this was of little avail. Although Cremer picked up some support in his brief but intensive campaign there was never really a chance of his election. In the event he polled a little over 200 votes, only just a quarter of the other two candidates. The result of the Poll was Peel 873, Greaves 863, Cremer 260¹⁸³.

VI. THE FAILURE OF CREMER

A major factor in explaining Cremer's failure to do any better stems from the unusual circumstances surrounding his candidature. He was an unwelcome intruder into the local Liberal party ranks, where the majority remained loyal to the alliterative slogan "Plump for Peel" - a plumper being a voter who cast only one of his two votes. Few prominent Warwick Liberals were prepared to support Cremer, and this was catastrophic for his chances. The initial decision of Warwick Liberals to make a compact with the Tories seems to have been the major factor here. Although there was, as we have seen, limited opposition to the compact this merely produced a complicated split in the local Liberal party. Some insisted on opposing Cremer, and others, while sympathising with him, felt obliged to stand by the local party decision not to "invite" a second candidate. A third group, however, felt they could in all conscience vote for Cremer since he had not been "invited" but simply "arrived"! These developments caused the debates on the subject in the second half of October to be heated, and not without rancour. Alfred Field, a prominent Liberal, accused John Spence of shirking his duty

by not chairing a meeting of Cremer's. Spence, despite his Radical past refused to support a second Liberal and this angered Field. The latter even claimed that Spence had tried to put off Cremer by writing to the Reform League to say that a candidate had already been found for Warwick, and that this was "an abominable lie"!¹⁸⁴ This division was fatal for Cremer's cause. If he was to mount anything like a serious challenge he needed the Warwick Liberals united behind him, and one can instance some detrimental effects on his campaign. For example, there was the case of a handbill publication containing an extract from F. Wilson's address at Leamington advocating Cremer's return. Later, however, Wilson complained in a statement to Warwick electors that the paragraph had been extracted without his permission and, more significantly, without his knowledge of Warwick's "internal election arrangements"¹⁸⁵. There was at least a delay in Cremer gaining a reasonable degree of support. On 5th November the Chairman of one of his election meetings complained that none of the Warwick Clergy were prepared to support him, which showed, he asserted, their apathy towards working class advancement¹⁸⁶. However, by 13th November, the Rev.G.J. Allen, (Independent) was indicating his willingness to cast votes for both Peel and Cremer, using the verbal distinction outlined above¹⁸⁷. By this time, however, it was clear that Cremer's efforts were doomed to failure. A conspiracy of silence seems to have descended over the Peel camp about the electoral compact and they were scarcely more forthcoming about Cremer's

suitability as a contender for a seat. Under pressure from supporters of Cremer to agree to a joint Liberal platform, Peel merely remarked he had "nothing to say against him" but that the contest was too doubtful to join with another candidate¹⁸⁸.

Strangely, in view of the circumstances, Cremer was scrupulously careful to say nothing against Peel, and even complimented him. In one of Cremer's early speeches he described Peel as a "thorough good Liberal"¹⁸⁹. In his speech on the hustings he remarked that Peel had "well redeemed" the promises he had made during the 1865 campaign, and that he had "little to complain of" in the Liberal Party¹⁹⁰. Two points could be made about this last remark. It could be viewed as very tactful in the circumstances since Cremer had been the victim of a tactical arrangement that had given him little chance of success. Tact, however, was not a quality which Cremer generally possessed in abundance. Moreover, in 1874 Cremer stood at Warwick again, independent of any Liberal Party connections. On this occasion his attack on Peel and his party was not only based on his disillusionment with their policies between the two elections. In part, at least, it was a complaint about his treatment in 1868¹⁹¹. Had there been a reason other than cool restraint why Cremer was so careful not to raise his misgivings in 1868 itself?

The financial ties with the Liberal Party hierarchy gave rise to some difficulties in his campaign. Using money from the Special Fund of Samuel Morley's meant that only Tories could be opposed¹⁹².

Criticisms of Liberals, especially loyal Gladstonians such as Peel, were out of the question; Cremer would have to fight on his own account. In any event he could hardly hope to match the other candidates financially. £150 from the Special Fund¹⁹³ looked paltry beside the £467 of a Greaves or the £312 of a Peel¹⁹⁴ - and neither of these gentlemen could be said to be running their campaign on full throttle. On at least one occasion Cremer's financial vulnerability was exposed. Called upon to find £100 for poll expenses at short notice he then found only £35 was demanded¹⁹⁵. It seemed that some quarters had hoped he would fail to find the £100 and so withdraw from the contest¹⁹⁶. If George Howell is to be believed, Cremer could not have had recourse to his own funds. Howell claimed they were both out of pocket at the end of the campaign¹⁹⁷, and he and Cremer requested an extra £200 from Samuel Morley for their services in the early part of 1869¹⁹⁸.

However, the financial discrepancy between Cremer and the other candidates was not as great as, say, the case of Howell himself. Even when allowances have been made for the still more rural nature of Aylesbury Borough, Howell found himself proportionally in a still poorer position, spending £400 to the other two candidates £4,000¹⁹⁹. The screw that was put on Peel so tightly in 1865 does not seem to have been turned so much on Cremer; perhaps there was no need. There was no formal Tory organisation in the borough. At the start of 1868 arrangements had been made for the establishment of a Conservative Association in

Warwick of which Henry Wise was to be President²⁰⁰. Nothing more was heard of this, however, and in May it was reported that a Conservative Working Men's Association had failed to get off the ground²⁰¹.

Open bribery and violence were also only relatively minor factors operating against Cremer. In the course of his campaign Cremer referred to the fact that he had been told about bribing employers in the town and he urged the workpeople to stand fast²⁰². However, no specific complaint was made. Spence claimed he had heard of a Leamington builder who had threatened Warwick Liberals if they were to vote for Peel²⁰³ (and presumably Cremer) but this vague accusation likewise remained unsubstantiated. On one occasion in the earlier part of the campaign Repton and Greaves seem to have been followed by a noisy crowd to the Warwick Arms, but this seems to have been little more than good natured horse-play with Greaves called "The Barford Bull"²⁰⁴. Most of the excitement was confined to the day of the Poll and even a good proportion of this was after the result was declared when Cremer's speech was interrupted by shouting and fighting²⁰⁵.

Cremer had certainly faced an active campaign by the Tory, Greaves. In the part of his campaign that coincided with Cremer's he set out to be uncontroversial and even seemed to take a marginally softer line on the Irish-Church question than hitherto. He also argued that education and the franchise should be made "co-extensive"²⁰⁶. On

the whole, however, Greaves' campaign seemed merely efficient. One of the few direct complaints against his methods was a story, reported by the 'Leamington Chronicle', that employees at a gelatine factory had been "favoured with a lecture on the Irish Church by a political clergyman from Manchester, after which they were told they might vote as they liked!"²⁰⁷.

With Cremer's obvious weakness and Greaves' enthusiasm for the cause, the incentive for direct intervention from the Castle was small. All that emerges is that of the streets in the town where the earl owned substantial property, all save two (which favoured Peel) showed solid plumping for Greaves²⁰⁸.

It seems that the strange circumstances in which Cremer chose to contest the election produced the main factors against him. It seems likely that he only decided to stand for Parliament at the last moment. He and Howell were the obvious candidates to fight seats if the Reform League was to put forward its own candidates²⁰⁹, but the evidence suggests that their attempts to get elected had not been planned in the long term. Only when money became relatively freely available from the Special Fund was it conceivable that working men might be brought forward as candidates. The candidacy would hardly have been possible without Liberal acquiescence. Still, whatever Cremer's chances of success they were assuredly smaller when the compact was arranged. It could be argued that the compact holds the key to the situation. Cremer's

candidacy was a gesture against electoral arrangements that the Reform League found so unpalatable. Paradoxically, Cremer had chosen to contest the election after news of the compact, the very point at which his return had become virtually impossible! The Reform Leaguers had realised that, despite 1867, much of the old influence remained in electoral affairs, and they were determined to fight it. This old influence was still strong in Warwick, despite the changes in its social and political circumstances in the 1860s. Indeed, the Castle candidate, Repton, was to recover from his defeat in 1868 and returned as a successful candidate in 1874 - an election when Cremer, now denouncing Peel as vigorously as the other candidates, did even worse than before²¹⁰. Traditional political influence had now survived a secret ballot²¹¹, as well as a Second Reform Act, and was to continue for a good few years yet.

FOOTNOTES

1. Thomas Kemp - 'A History of Warwick and its People' (Warwick 1906) P.18
2. Victoria County History of Warwickshire, Vol.8 (Oxford 1969) ed. W.B. Stephens (V.C.H.) P.478
3. St. Mary Warwick Rate Book - half year ending 29th September 1868. Warwick County Record Office (W.C.R.O.) DR126/431-684.
St. Nicholas Warwick Rate Book - half year ending 29th September 1868.
W.C.R.O. DR115/148/9.
4. 'Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser' (W.A.) 20th August 1853.
5. Ibid 16th August 1845.
6. Countess of Warwick - 'Warwick Castle and its Earls' (Volume 2) 1903 P.795
7. W.A. 14th July 1866.
8. V.C.H. P.508
9. W. Field - 'A History of Warwick' (Warwick 1815) P.75
10. Ibid P.76
11. V.C.H. P.417
12. J. Richardson - 'The Local Historian's Encyclopedia' (1974) P.269
Richardson records a market and fair still in existence in 1888 and also (P.242) refers to the original charter for a fair at "Warrewick" being first granted in 1289/90.
13. Field op. cit. P.49
14. V.C.H. P.520
15. W.A. 21st March 1829.
16. Field P.83

17. W.A. 8th October 1866.
18. Ibid 13th November 1866.
19. V.C.H. P.513
20. W.A. 26th February 1853.
21. Ibid 2nd June 1855 which records that the cricket club had already been in existence 15 years.
22. Extract from the Censuses of 1801-41 relating to Warwickshire P.84
23. Ibid (1861) P.480
24. Ibid (1801-41) P.84
25. Ibid (1861) P.480
26. Ibid (1801-41) PP.180-182,(1861) PP.478-480
27. Census Returns for Warwick 1871 W.C.R.O. M1 336 21. See also Field op. cit. P.76
28. V.C.H. P.518
29. W.A. 15th January 1842.
30. V.C.H. P.513
31. Ibid P.518
32. W.A. 24th April 1847. See in particular the views of Mr.Satchell and Mr.Reading.
33. Ibid 1st July 1865.
34. Ibid 10th March 1866.
35. Ibid 24th February 1866.
36. Ibid 3rd June 1866.
37. Ibid 27th October 1860.
38. W.A. 20th October 1867.
39. Ibid 2nd November 1867.
40. Ibid 2nd January 1836.
41. Warwick Parliamentary Elections - Handbills, Broadsheets, etc.1797-1833
W.C.R.O. 1097/330 1st November 1837.
42. W.A. 29th October 1859.

43. See for instance Ibid 29th October 1848 for the origins of the debt.
44. Ibid 3rd November 1860.
45. Ibid 7th November 1863.
46. Ibid 12th January 1861.
47. Rate books op. cit. 1868.
48. See below P.16 and footnote 78.
49. Occupations are derived from the 1871 Warwick census.
50. Rate books 1868.
51. Ibid.
52. R.B. Pugh (ed.) 'V.C.H. of Warwickshire' Vol.6, P.157. The bank obviously exerted a considerable financial influence since, when it collapsed in 1887, a good deal of chaos was caused in Warwick and Leamington (see also V.C.H. Vol.8,P.519). G.C.Greenway was sentenced to five year's penal servitude and K.Greenway to one year's hard labour for financial irregularities in connection with the bank's failure.
53. 'Slater's Directory of Warwickshire' (1851) P.174. The revenue of the Lord Leicester's Charity was £3,000 a year, and that of Henry VIII's £2,000.
54. St. Mary and St. Nicholas Rate books 1868 op. cit.
55. 'White's Directory of Warwickshire' (1850) PP. 467-79
56. W.A. 27th April 1861.
57. V.C.H. P.515
58. Ibid P.544
59. W.A. 12th October 1867 - though it was emphasised that there was no chance of them

being intiated while Rev. John Jameson, Vicar of St. Nicholas, continued as the incumbent.

60. V.C.H. P.435
61. Ibid P.436
62. W.A. 11th January 1868.
63. W.A. 17th March 1866 and 14th April 1866.
64. See for instance W.A. 4th September 1859 and 14th February 1863.
65. V.C.H. P.518
66. G.R. James - 'Education in Warwick in the 19th Century'. Leeds M.Ed. Thesis 1971 (copy in W.C.R.O.) P.11
67. V.C.H. P.513 and P.518
68. W.A. 4th July 1864.
69. Ibid 11th July 1868.
70. G.R. James. op. cit. PP 121-125
71. V.C.H. P.448
72. The two candidates were John Tomes and Edward Bolton King. Handbills, Broadsheets, etc. op. cit. W.C.R.O. CR/1097/330.
73. Minutes of Evidence before Select Committee on Warwick Borough Election Petition (1833).
74. Charles Dod (ed. H.J. Hanham) 'Electoral Facts 1832-53. Impartially Stated' (1972) P.326
75. W.A. 10th July 1852.
76. Ibid 24th April 1852.
77. Poll Book for the Burgesses of the Borough of Warwick 1865 (copy in W.C.R.O.).
78. See his election as M.P. for South Warwickshire W.A. 22nd July 1865.
79. W.A. 23rd November 1858 and 7th April 1860.
80. Ibid 14th August 1858.

81. Sir Charles Douglas, M.P. for Warwick 1837-1852. He was re-elected by a large majority in 1847 despite his Free Trade stance.
82. Edward Bolton King - a landowner from Umberslade. M.P. for Warwick 1831-37.
83. W.A. 19th June, 24th July and 31st July 1842 - He abandoned the notion of standing after a preliminary canvass.
84. W.A. 15th September 1866.
85. Handbills, etc. 16th June 1847.
86. W.A. 31st July 1847.
87. J.R. Vincent - 'The Formation of the British Liberal Party 1857-68' (1972) P.15
88. W.A. 3rd and 10th July 1852.
89. See for instance W.A. 10th October 1857.
90. P. Styles - 'The Corporation of Warwick 1660-1835' (Birmingham 1938) P.111
91. See for instance W.A. 27th September 1837.
92. Ibid 19th June 1841.
93. Ibid 26th November 1858.
94. Ibid 1st January 1859.
95. J. Prest - 'Politics in the Age of Cobden' (1977).
96. A list of Members of Parliament for Warwick compiled by Alderman T. Kemp and Rev. A.B. Beaven (1912) W.C.R.O. 1097.
97. W.A. 25th April 1857.
98. Kemp and Beaven op. cit.
99. W.A. 1st August 1862.
100. Ibid 28th March 1857, where Repton stated that he was prepared to give Lord Palmerston some support if he were returned to power.
101. Ibid 16th April 1859.
102. Ibid 7th May 1859.

103. Ibid 17th June 1865.
104. Ibid 20th May 1865.
105. Ibid 17th March 1866.
106. Ibid 20th May 1865.
107. Ibid 21st September 1867.
108. Result of Poll:- Repton 342, Peel 315, Greaves 297. Poll Book of the Burgesses of the Borough of Warwick 1865.
109. W.A. 26th March 1831.
110. This influence of the earl in 1865 was referred to three years later by Hales and Brighty of the Reform League who mentioned the closeness of the contest in 1865 with the comment that on the earl's side "the screw was very strong".
111. Charles Dod op. cit.
112. W.A. 13th June 1868.
113. Ibid 18th May 1868.
114. Ibid 13th June 1868.
115. 'Leamington Chronicle' 2nd March 1868.
116. Ibid 6th June 1868.
117. W.A. 13th June 1868.
118. The result in South Warwickshire was Wise 2,581 (Con.) Hardy 2,498 (Con.) Hamilton 2,465 (Lib.) Hyde 2,453 (Lib.) F.W.S. Craig - 'British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832-85' (1977).
119. See for instance the comment in the W.A. of 22nd August.
120. W.A. 17th October 1868.
121. Ibid.
122. H.J. Hanham - 'Elections and Party Management' (1959) P.57

123. Charles Dod. op. cit. P.326
124. W.A. 17th October 1868.
125. 'Leamington Chronicle' 17th October 1868.
126. 187 voters split for Peel and Greaves in 1868 out of a total of 1570. Poll Book of the Burgesses of the Borough Of Warwick 1868.
127. W.A. 20th May 1865.
128. 'Leamington Courier' 25th July 1868.
129. 'Leamington Chronicle' 15th August 1868.
130. Ibid 17th October 1868.
131. T.H. Lloyd "Chartism in Warwick and Leamington" in 'Warwickshire History', Summer 1978 PP.1-14
132. T.H. Lloyd - "Dr. Wade and the Working Class", 'Midland History' Vol.3, No.2, Autumn 1973 P.61
133. Ibid P.70. In 1836 his curate in charge at St. Nicholas wrote to the Bishop of Worcester explaining that his flock did not want him to return!
134. W.A. 25th April 1857.
135. Ibid 20th May 1865.
136. Ibid 17th June 1865.
137. Ibid 7th April 1866.
138. R. Harrison - 'Before the Socialists' (1965) P.80
139. W.A. 8th September 1866.
140. Ibid 15th September 1866.
141. H.J. Hanham op. cit. P.330
142. See ideas in Harrison op. cit. PP.133-43, and Hanham op. cit. P.331
143. Based on ideas in G.D.H. Cole, 'British Working Class Politics' (1941) P.32
144. There is no mention of any Liberal candidate of that name standing anywhere in 1868 in F.W.S. Craig op. cit.

145. 'Leamington Chronicle' 8th August 1868.
 146. Quoted in Asa Briggs - 'The Age of Improvement' (1959) P.499
 147. The letter was signed F.S.G. and is of uncertain origin. R.S.G. could have suggested Robert Gold.
 148. 'Leamington Chronicle' 15th August 1868.
 149. Ibid 10th October 1868.
 150. Minutes of the Reform League Council - Howell Collection (H.C.) - 12th July 1867.
 151. Miscellaneous Papers of the Reform League (H.C.) - 18; Resolutions, Amendments, Motions, 4th December 1867.
 152. Reform League - Executive Committee Minutes 21st July 1868 (H.C.)
 153. Thomas Brighty - Had experience on public platforms as a Temperance speaker, see F.M. Leventhal - 'Respectable Radical' (1971) P.104. John Hales was a member of the International Working Men's Association. See G.D.H. Cole op. cit. P.60
 154. Minutes of Executive Committee of the Reform League, 6th June 1868 (H.C.). See also Harrison op. cit. P.153
 155. Warwick Election Reports (Hales and Brighty) (H.C.)
 156. Correspondence of Howell (H.C.) Vol.4, 4th September 1868.
 157. H. Evans - 'Sir Randal Cremer - His Life and Work' (1909) P.19
 158. S. Higenbootham - 'Our Society's History' - (Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers) Manchester (1939) P.87

159. H. Evans op. cit. P.31. The International was originally a combination of English trade unionists and continental reformers.
 160. H.J. Collins and J. Abramsky - 'Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement' (1965) P.34
 161. Glyn to Gladstone 13th November 1868 - Gladstone Papers Add. MSS.4434-7, F.107
 162. Beales finished fourth at Tower Hamlets, behind two Liberals and a Conservative.
 163. G.D.H. Cole op. cit. P.45
 164. A.W. Humphrey - 'A History of Labour Representation' (1912) PP.23-4
 165. Hales and Brighty Report op. cit.
 166. Evans op. cit. P.49
 167. Howell Correspondence op. cit. 20th October 1868. The first part of this letter reads "I think compacts disgraceful, where one candidate's votes will completely neutralise the other's".
 168. 'Leamington Chronicle' 24th October 1868.
 169. Ibid 7th November 1868.
 170. W.A. 14th November 1868. Crawford eventually stood for Shrewsbury in the election, gaining 685 votes to Clement's (Liberal) 1840, and Figgins' (Conservative) 1751 - see F.W.S. Craig op. cit. P.277. Perhaps he was also trying to block a Tory/Liberal compact here.
 171. Howell correspondence 20th October 1868. Howell said "I do not recollect visiting Mr. Spence for a long time" so they were apparently acquainted.
 172. Ibid 22nd October 1868 - in a letter to Mr. John Smith of Buckingham with regard to the Aylesbury election.
 173. W.A. 31st October 1868.

174. 1868 Election Address of W.R. Cremer for the Borough of Warwick - issued from the Adelphi Club, London, 7th November 1868. W.C.R.O. 1227. See Appendix.
175. W.A. 31st October 1868.
176. 'Leamington Chronicle' 7th November 1868.
177. W.A. 7th November 1868.
178. 'Leamington Chronicle' 7th November 1868.
179. W.A. 7th November 1868.
180. 'Leamington Chronicle' 7th November 1868.
181. Ibid 14th November 1868.
182. W.A. 7th November and 14th November 1868.
183. Poll Book of the Burgesses of the Borough of Warwick 1868.
184. W.A. 7th November 1868.
185. Ibid 21st November 1868.
186. Ibid 7th November 1868.
187. Ibid 14th November 1868.
188. Ibid.
189. 'Leamington Chronicle' 7th November 1868.
190. W.A. 21st November 1868.
191. Cremer was even less successful in 1874 - see below.
192. Howell - Correspondence - letter to S.Morley 19th December 1868. Howell assured Morley that fighting Tories was the sole criterion for using the money.
193. For Cremer's figure see Cash Book of the Reform League, 24th October 1868 (H.C.).
194. Evans op. cit. P.52
195. W.A. 14th November 1868.
196. This probably accounts for a lump sum payment of £100 to Cremer - Cash Book 6th November 1868.
197. Howell - 'Autobiography' Chap.7, P.32 (H.C.)

198. R. Harrison - "Practical, Capable Men" - 'The New Reasoner' (1958) No.6, P.112
199. Leventhal op. cit. P.122
200. W.A. 12th January 1868.
201. 'Leamington Chronicle' 9th May 1868.
202. W.A. 14th November 1868.
203. 'Leamington Chronicle' 17th November 1868.
204. Ibid.
205. W.A. 21st November 1868.
206. W.A. 29th November 1868. Instead of opposing Disestablishment of the Irish Church tooth and nail he now referred to it as a "Ministerial question".
207. 'Leamington Chronicle' 29th August 1868. A gelatine manufacturer, foreman, engineer and all seven labourers plumped solidly for Greaves!
208. Poll Book of the Burgesses of the Borough of Warwick 1868.
209. Harrison - 'Before the Socialists' op. cit. P.182
210. The result of the Poll in 1874 was:- Repton (Con.) 836, Peel (Lib.) 783, Godson (Con.) 740, Cremer 180.
211. The Secret Ballot Act was passed in 1872.

APPENDIX

Cremer's Election Address.

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE BOROUGH OF WARWICK

Gentlemen, -

Some few days ago I addressed a Public Meeting of your Body, in the Public Hall, on the "Duties of the Working Men at the ensuing General Election". At the close of my Address, a resolution was proposed, seconded, and, with the exception of three dissentients, agreed to by the Meeting, urging me to stand as a Candidate in the Liberal and Industrial interest. That invitation has been subsequently ratified by four other large Public Meetings.

The last of the Middle Class Parliaments is on the eve of expiring, and a Parliament, resting on a broader suffrage than has hitherto existed, is shortly to be elected by the People. In many of the Constituencies the Working Men will have a large preponderance of political power, thereby affording them an opportunity of returning whom they please. Such is the case in your Borough, and it is to this, your extended constituency, that I mainly address myself.

To MR. GLADSTONE, as the Leader of the Liberal Party, I shall be prepared to give a loyal support; to him I believe the newly-enfranchised

are deeply indebted. He it was who made the passing of the Reform Bill possible by making vital and national, that which tricky Statesmen had so long used for party purposes. There are Politicians in and out of Parliament who refuse their allegiance to Mr. GLADSTONE ostensibly because he is wanting in that tact and delicate manipulation of parties, which they say is so desirable in the Leader of the House of Commons. They had become so accustomed to shuffling evasion and a jaunty indifference to great principles, that Mr. GLADSTONE'S earnestness and deep sincerity are things they cannot understand. To have quickened the National conscience, - kindled new hopes, - awakened a living faith in Public Men, - imported truth and conscience into Statesmanship, is to them more than a blunder, it is a crime.

In Politics, I am an advanced Liberal, and as such I am prepared to Vote for the repeal of the Rating Clauses of the Reform Act. Believing that the Rental qualification for Lodger Voters is too high, and the term of Residence required of them too long, I shall be prepared to Vote for the reduction of the one, and the shortening of the other.

I wish to see removed every obstacle in the way of Registration for the Franchise, so that it shall be as easy for people to obtain their Votes, as it is to be registered for rating purposes.

The duration of Parliaments I consider ought to be shortened, so that Electors should have

frequent opportunities of giving effect to their views, as I feel assured that Representatives, who had oftener to present themselves for re-election, would soon devise some plan for diminishing the lavish and corrupt expenditure which now takes place at Elections, and which practically prevents all but rich men from entering Parliament.

I am strongly in favor of Free Voting, which so long as the Masses of the People are dependent for their employment and subsistence on a comparatively independent class, can only be secured by the use of the Ballot Box. I have seen its beneficial results in our Organisations, and firmly believe that its use would put an end to bribery, corruption, intimidation, and the "screw".

I am in favor of Representation being apportioned to Population, and believe that until the Reforms above indicated are carried out, that the Representation of the People will never rest on a solid or lasting basis.

The Irish Church I regard as a political institution in a Religious garb, which has been used for the purpose of keeping the Irish People in a state of subjection to an absentee Aristocracy, who have "reaped where they have not sown", and "gathered where they have not strawed". I should, therefore, cordially support its disestablishment and disendowment, as a step towards complete Religious Equality.

The want of Education brooks no further delay; the power of obtaining it gratuitously ought to be placed within easy reach of every child, and the heads of families made responsible for neglecting to use the means so provided. We shall then be justified in enforcing the same precautions for preventing the spread of Moral pestilence as we now use to stay contagious physical diseases. This great want can only be supplied by a system of National, Secular and Compulsory instruction. As to the means by which this is to be achieved, I believe that our richly endowed Charities would if their revenues were properly administered - be found capable of sustaining such a scheme of National Education. To this end I should gladly support a Commission of Enquiry into the present appropriation of the Charities of the Country, the aggregate wealth of which is now estimated at many Millions.

Pauperism is a National Evil, and no locality is particularly responsible for that terrible excrescence on our Modern civilization. I believe that the inequalities of Rating should be removed, and as the Nation is responsible for the existence of the Evil, so the Nation should bear the burden. I am, therefore, in favor of a National equalization of Poor's Rates, and a more humane treatment of those who are too often the victims of a system of fierce and inhuman competition. When the weak fall in the race of life, the strong best show their strength by kindly treatment of the fallen. I advocate the employment of all able-bodied poor, in reclaiming and cultivating of our waste lands, so as

to preserve their self respect; they would thus be enabled to support themselves, and benefit the Nation at large by bringing more land under cultivation, and supply the People with more, and consequently, cheaper food.

Regarding all Monopolies as injurious to the general community, I shall be glad to support such alterations in our Land Laws as shall render them more conducive to the interests of the People.

I should Vote for the abolition of that remnant of the Feudal ages, the Game Laws, the maintenance of which fills the County Gaols, and swells our County Rates.

The substitution of direct for indirect Taxation would be the best method of securing a permanent reduction of our reckless and extravagant National expenditure, as when every man knew what he paid to the State, every man would enforce rigid economy. It would also stimulate the industry of the country, by abolishing Duties, Customs and Excise.

"Peace on Earth and good will amongst Men" has for eighteen hundred years been Preached to the People, I shall be glad to work for its practical realization, and to that end shall support the establishment of International Boards of Arbitration to settle disputes amongst Nations, so as to lead to a general disarmament of standing forces, and the establishment of an era of Peace.

The necessity for Working Men having a direct representation in the House of Commons, is evidenced by the fact that questions of the first importance to them are discussed and decided there without the Workman's side ever being heard, except from Capitalists or Employers, who however humane and well disposed they may be, their judgments must inevitably be contracted or warped by the requirements of their social position.

There are many questions of particular interest to the Working Classes which in the New Parliament must come up for settlement; such as Improved Homes for the People, the Laws of Landlord and Tenant, Masters and Servants, Combination and Conspiracy, the establishment of Courts of Conciliation and Arbitration, and protection for the savings of Organized Bodies. To all these I shall be prepared to give my serious attention, with a view to their just and satisfactory settlement.

The record of the Working Classes is a series of slow but progressive stages. As Slavery was succeeded by Serfdom, so that also in its turn gave way to our present form of Hired labor; but even this comparatively advanced stage I do not recognise as final. Hired labor, like slave and serf labor, I regard as but an inferior and transitory form destined to disappear before Associated or Co-operative labor. To remove every obstacle that now impedes Industrial progress and development, and to help labor in its efforts to advance another stage would be my constant endeavour.

Throughout the contest, I shall keep in view the fact that it is not one of Men but principles. My political opponent is no doubt an estimable Member of Society, but I do not believe his Political opinions are shared by the majority of your Body.

To you, then, Men of Warwick, I appeal. To chose between a Conservative Gentleman and a Liberal Working Man. The Polling Day will decide whether you by your own act will virtually disenfranchise yourselves by returning Members of opposite convictions, and whether you are so wedded to past traditions as to believe that Rich Men are alone qualified to represent the People, or that you have sufficient confidence in one of your own order, to entrust your political and social destinies in his hands.

Should I be elected for your Borough I shall never forget that the power which I possess comes from the People, belongs to the People, and must be used in their behalf. Electors of Warwick, the issue rests with you.

I remain, respectfully, yours,

WILLIAM R. CREMER.

Adelphi Club, London, Nov.7th, 1868.