

## THE QUAKER PRESENCE IN HERTFORD IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

**O**n September 23rd 1831 eight citizens of Hertford, three of whom were Quakers, filed information in the Court of Chancery against the town's Corporation.<sup>1</sup> Four years later, however, the relators, as those who had brought the charges were called, agreed to withdraw the case.<sup>2</sup> By that time the Corporation had incurred legal charges of £875.8s., which they were unable to pay, so they sold some of the property in dispute to meet the costs.<sup>3</sup> The case had, in true Chancery fashion, generated over 1000 pages of documents.

The lawsuit concerned three areas of meadow land (Kingsmead, Great Hartham and Little Hartham), together with land and buildings in Butcherley (now Bircherley) Green, and the waste (that is, land not originally built on) of the old manor of Hertford. All the property had been granted to Hertford Corporation in 1627 by trustees holding the land for King Charles I and the price was £100 – all parties to the 1831 lawsuit agreed on this. The Chancery case hinged on whether *all* the property, or only Kingsmead, had been bought for the benefit of the poor of the town.<sup>4</sup> The profit from the commons accrued through fees for grazing animals – householders who were entitled to the right were allowed to graze three cows, at one shilling per cow per year – and through the sale of the hay, in the years when pasturing was not allowed. Rights to Kingsmead and Hartham, but not Butcherley Green, had been the subject of earlier legal disputes in the seventeenth century, and in 1705.<sup>5</sup>

This copiously-documented lawsuit has many aspects, but will be considered here only as it concerns the Quaker informants. It took its origin in a public meeting at Hertford Town Hall on May 19th 1831. It was usual to ask the mayor to call a public meeting, but on this occasion he was by-passed – handbills were distributed inviting the townspeople to attend, and fortunately at least one has survived.<sup>6</sup> From this we learn that the sponsors of the meeting intended, as they cryptically put it, “to recover property which rightly belongs to the poor”. It seems that there was a good response – the Corporation in its evidence stated later that “many, including poor tenants of the Corporation”, were present.

Twelve men had put their names to the notice announcing the meeting. They were: Thomas Gripper, who had originally been a coal merchant and tanner, but had come to have many other business interests; William Manser, a brewer; Richard Shillitoe, a surgeon; Henry Squire, a miller; Richard Michaux Muggeridge, editor of a local newspaper, the "Hertfordshire Mercury"; John J. and Joseph Gripper, respectively eldest son and brother of Thomas Gripper, whose business associates they were; George Rew, described as "gentleman", i.e. of independent means; William Pollard and Samuel Sedgwick, both drapers; James Field, watchmaker and jeweller; and Joseph May, a chemist. Five of the signatories were Quakers (Manser, Shillitoe, Squire, Pollard and May). Thomas Gripper had been born a Quaker, and his family had been Quakers for three generations, but he himself had left the Society of Friends and joined the Church of England.<sup>7</sup> Seven of the twelve signatories were past or future mayors of Hertford.

At the Town Hall meeting a committee of eight, which called itself "The Committee for the Poor",<sup>8</sup> was set up, to commence proceedings in Chancery, and a subscription was opened. Thomas Gripper, Field and Shillitoe could not be members of the committee, as they were among the trustees for administering that part of the property acquired in 1627 whose profits had, at least since 1708, been used to help the poor, and they would therefore be defendants in the Chancery Court action.<sup>9</sup> (According to Turnor,<sup>10</sup> writing in the year before the lawsuit was started, it was the custom that four trustees should be Anglicans, four Quakers, and four Dissenters – an extraordinary arrangement, and one would like to know when it began). Sedgwick and May also were not on the "Committee for the Poor", perhaps because of business commitments.<sup>11</sup> Thomas Gripper, however, who had been mayor of the town in 1829–30, became the solicitor for the Committee,<sup>12</sup> though the case for the prosecution was actually brought by the Attorney-General himself. The remaining signatories were joined by Thomas Chambers, a retired linen-draper of the town,<sup>14</sup> and these eight were the relators. Chancery has jurisdiction in cases concerning trusts; presumably this is why the suit was brought in that court.

The very day after the public meeting, a letter signed by Lewis Turnor, who was a solicitor as well as the historian of Hertford, was delivered by John Gripper in person to the Town Clerk, Philip Longmore, requiring the Corporation to produce the records of the Poor's Estate, as the relators called Kingsmead, Hartham, and the rest.<sup>14</sup> The Town Clerk gave Gripper short shrift,<sup>15</sup> and the Corporation, who later complained that they had not received due notice of the public meeting (though Longmore had attended it),<sup>16</sup> denied that they were

obliged to produce the relevant documents to anyone except the Court of Chancery. They admitted that they had received large sums on account of the 1627 grant of land, but declared that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to produce the accounts, because of the time that had elapsed, and because of the way the books had been kept! In the defence document prepared for the case, the Corporation admitted that they had, with the knowledge of the trustees of the Poor's Estate, converted to their own use – one hopes they meant the use of the town generally – the profits from the land acquired in 1627, but they denied that any of the property except Kingsmead had been bought for the benefit of the poor of Hertford.<sup>17</sup>

The £100 which the land had cost was argued about at length, the relators contending that it had been paid “by or on behalf of the said poor of the town”, while the Corporation's view was that the Principal Burgesses in 1627 had paid it out of their own pockets. Four years after the case had begun, in 1835, when the relators agreed to its withdrawal, judgement had still not been given.<sup>18</sup>

One is bound to ask, who was the prime mover in bringing the charges against the Corporation, why was the suit brought, and why was it called off? Though William Manser's name comes first in nearly all the documents connected with the case, there can be little doubt that the initiative came from Thomas Gripper. Soon after he became mayor in November 1829 he, with the Town Clerk Philip Longmore in attendance, had perused the documents connected with the charities of the town to investigate how they were managed.<sup>19</sup> A Tory election Broadsheet of 1832,<sup>20</sup> a riposte to one from the Whig candidate Thomas Duncombe, sheds light on where the responsibility lay, and is worth quoting at some length. “Duncombe tells the poor of Hertford”, it asserts, “that their rights have been usurped for centuries by the Corporation. The present members of the Corporation believe strongly that this is not the case. However, if the property in question does belong to the poor, it is quite right they should have it. That will shortly be decided. BUT, what must the poor think of Duncombe's friend, Gripper? Did not Gripper say, at the Town Meeting, that he had known for three or four years, that the property did belong to the poor? Was not Gripper Mayor the year before the Meeting took place? Was not Gripper, when he was Mayor, the first who suggested to the Corporation the propriety of selling part of that property, situate in the Folly?<sup>21</sup> Knowing at the same time, according to his own account, that it belonged to the poor. Did not Gripper himself, at the same time, want to buy that property at less than half its value? And did not the Corporation refuse to let him have it at his own price? Did not Gripper

sign with his own hand the conveyance of that property? Did he not receive the money for it and did he not spend £100 of that very money upon his mayoral dinner? Oh! ye Immaculate Liberals!”

It is no surprise to find Thomas Gripper referred to in this way as the key figure in the Chancery case. He was more important in business circles in Hertford than any other of the tradesmen involved, and a newspaper obituary<sup>22</sup> describes him as “the leader and adviser” of the Whig party in the town. It also declares that he stood almost single-handed as “the advocate of the oppressed”, and refers to his “more than ordinary degree of moral courage” – the latter he would certainly need to challenge the well-entrenched Tory Corporation. He had taken the lead in the town in securing the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828,<sup>23</sup> and one would expect him to be the spokesman for the relators, for one of them referred soon after Gripper’s death to his “natural eloquence, which always came from the heart”.<sup>24</sup>

More pertinent questions were forthcoming from a Tory pamphleteer in 1835,<sup>25</sup> when the Whigs were putting forward a number of candidates for election to the new, reformed Corporation. “What is your intentions [*sic*] respecting the Grass Money [as the profit from Kingsmead was and is known] which you have deprived the poor of Brickendon of for years, and for one year withheld it from all the poor of the town?... What have you done respecting the property you undertook to recover for the poor – and what is done with the money subscribed in 1831, towards that object?” In fact, probably because such criticisms were in the air at the time, the relators had already approached the Corporation, to enquire about the possibility of a compromise, with the result that the two parties to the dispute met, recognised that the passing of the Municipal Reform Act made the Chancery case unnecessary (since an *elected* Corporation could be trusted to administer the town lands fairly), and the law-case was called off.<sup>26</sup>

Ten years afterwards, those who had brought the case came under the criticism at a meeting of Hertford Corporation.<sup>27</sup> Thomas Gripper had long been dead, but William Pollard rose to present a warm defence of himself and the other plaintiffs. They had been convinced, he said, that the former Corporation held property which belonged to the poor, and so steps had been taken to recover it. He added tartly that those who brought the case had paid all the expenses on their side out of their own pockets, and if the Corporation members had done the same, the town property disposed of in order to pay the legal costs of the suit would still be in the possession of the municipal authority. As it was, he continued, the Corporation had sold the houses, and Mr. Longmore now had them. (Philip Longmore had been Town Clerk since 1829, and it was largely

his legal expenses the Corporation had had to meet. In view of the huge number of documents the case produced, one feels his charges were not excessive.) None contradicted Pollard's account of the sale of the property, but Longmore's riposte was to make what amounts to a charge of mischief-making against those who had brought the Chancery case. The Corporation had been put to the expense of £1,200 or £1,400,<sup>28</sup> he declared, and if the relators really believed that the property belonged to the poor, why did they abandon the case? They abandoned it when the Municipal Corporations Act was passed, and each party paid their own expenses, he added. He did not point out that the mayor and Corporation did not pay the money out of their own pockets, but then we do not know how much the relators had raised by public subscription. It is on record that the Committee for the Poor paid £196.17.2, by the hand of Thomas Gripper, to the trustees of the Poor's Estate (i.e. Kingsmead, Hartham and the rest), as legal costs of the suit.<sup>29</sup> Since the Attorney-General was the prosecutor, no doubt William Manser and the other relators would be liable for lower costs than the Corporation had to meet.

Longmore continued his attack by pointing out that if the property had not been sold by the Corporation, £100 – he presumably meant per year – would have been available towards reducing the rates. Pollard was quick to vindicate the withdrawal of the suit by the relators. “We were sent for by the Corporation, and requested to discontinue the action; if we had gone on fighting, the town would have had to pay all the expenses, and no good would have resulted to anyone”. Councillor Lawrence, a Tory – Pollard was a Whig – rose to answer him. The property had been given 220 years ago, and the poor had no claim on it – he meant after the passing of so much time. The new Municipal Corporations Act, he pointed out, took the property from individual members of the Corporation, and gave it to the town. This was, as we know, the major reason why Manser, Pollard and the rest had dropped the law-suit.

Why did the dispute surface in 1831, when it had lain dormant since 1708? One's first reaction is to interpret it as an election ploy. In May 1831, when Manser and the others called the public meeting to discuss the town lands, election fever was raging – the Whig Parliamentary Reform Bill had been rejected in a Commons Committee, and a new General Election was to be held in June. Manser, Pollard and Squire were, as we shall see, actively involved in the election campaign, and so was Muggeridge, the editor of the “Hertfordshire Mercury”, who was another relator.<sup>30</sup> Thomas Duncombe, the Whig candidate, standing for the fifth time for the Hertford seat, more than once showed himself a

supporter of the case against the Corporation. Accused of not contributing to Hertford charities, he retorted in one of his broadsheets, "Who has subscribed £50 towards establishing the Poor Rights? Which question will soon be before the Lord Chancellor, it is the Corporation's plea for longer time that delays it".<sup>31</sup> Another handbill also defends Duncombe's generosity, and declares, "It is absurd enough to hear those talk of 'neglecting your charities', who have usurped your rights for centuries; which, however, the Lord Chancellor will doubtless, shortly, make them return to your hands".<sup>32</sup> But the terms of neither broadsheet give the impression that Duncombe had initiated the Chancery case, and a more serious objection to considering it an election tactic is that the Tories never made this accusation. The verbal battles between the candidates at this time were not generally fought with gentlemanly decorum, and the Tories would surely have made electoral capital out of the Chancery case if they had thought the taunt would carry conviction.

Duncombe's two references to the Lord Chancellor, however, suggest another possibility – did Manser and the rest think that there was now more chance of receiving justice because the great Lord Brougham sat upon the Woolsack? Brougham had instituted an enquiry in 1818 into charity abuses, and he had spoken with eloquent sympathy of the sufferings of farm labourers.<sup>33</sup> He had many contacts too with Quakers over slavery and other matters.<sup>34</sup>

Yet another factor which has to be considered is that the Corporation had leased or sold during the ten or twelve years before 1831 a good deal of the land in dispute in the law-case<sup>35</sup> – did this give rise to adverse comment in the town? Much of the Butcherley Green property was let by auction to the Marquis of Salisbury in 1828 on a 21 years lease, and he paid £500 for cottages and buildings in that area. He also leased for 99 years ground at the Folly on which cottages had been built. Thomas Gripper himself had leased Little Hartham in 1825, but this was grazing land – no inhabitants (i.e. voters) lived on it. Political feeling was running high in the 1820s, and it is difficult not to conclude that Salisbury was aiming at influencing elections. Why else would he buy run-down, slum property in Butcherley Green?

It may well be too that discontent with the Corporation's policy towards Kingsmead, Hartham and the rest, which goes back as far as 1631, was still simmering beneath the surface in the 1820s. It is true that the Corporation asserted they had received no requests from the poor for the profits from Hartham, Butcherley Green and the waste – they said virtuously that they had had search made in the records for this.<sup>36</sup> But Joseph Elmes, giving evidence in the Chancery case, admitted that

he had heard disputes about customary rights on Hartham and Kingsmead, “at drinking parties at election times”, though he never paid attention to them. Mr. Elmes had not reached the advanced age of 82 without knowing how to keep his head down. It would not be surprising, however, if in the heady atmosphere of the 1831 and 1832 Reform Bills, with their popular demands for justice and freedom, and citizens’ rights, a 200-year-old grievance found a voice again.

Another possible reason for the 1831 appeal to Chancery is the simple one that Pollard gave – the relators were concerned at the condition of the poor, and anxious to relieve them.<sup>37</sup> A cynic might be sceptical about this motive. The relators were solid citizens all – the Grippers were particularly solid<sup>38</sup> – and one might expect that they would neither know nor care about, the sufferings of the labouring classes. But William Pollard at least genuinely sympathised with the poor, and believed there was talent among them.<sup>39</sup> Hertford was a small town of some 5,000,<sup>40</sup> and perhaps it was not as easy as we might think today for West Street and Castle Street to insulate itself from Bircherley Green. Certainly three anonymous Quaker ladies had founded what proved to be a successful school for servant-girls-to-be in 1797.<sup>41</sup>

In fairness to the relators, Manser and the rest, we must consider briefly whether the Corporation *should* have used for the benefit of the poor all the profits accruing from the 1627 grant of royal land. Unfortunately the Corporation Minutes for 1832–5 are missing – not that the Minutes of the previous few years are models of businesslike reporting. (Hertford Quakers could have shown the Town Clerk how to keep better ones.) The relators’ case rested mainly on extracts from the Town Records, as they were not allowed to see the deeds, and their interpretation of the records was that the mayor and burgesses had bought the commons “for the benefit of the said poor of the town”. The burgesses in 1627 had actually brought along poor inhabitants of the town in person to testify to the valuable contribution Kingsmead and Hartham made to their incomes.<sup>42</sup> The mayor and burgesses had pleaded at that time that those commons were “the greatest means of relief that the poorer sort of people had”,<sup>43</sup> in order to persuade King Charles’s trustees to part with the property. In 1831 the Corporation admitted that the poor had a claim to Kingsmead – a local Commission in 1631, and another commission in 1708 had so decided – but they denied the poor’s claim to Hartham, Butcherley Green and the waste.<sup>44</sup> There is an interesting summary of the town’s accounts for 1829,<sup>45</sup> which is fairly explicit on the town’s revenue, but vague on how the town spent its money, though the treasurer did disallow one item of expenditure, £2.16.3, spent on three dozen pairs of nutcrackers, bought for the

mayor's feast! The Corporation did not deny the allegation that their predecessors' motive in buying the commons had been to benefit the poor – Thomas Gripper had presumably scrutinised the records to good effect – and since it was by no means uncommon for eighteenth and early nineteenth century town councillors to misappropriate funds intended for charitable uses, one must conclude that the Grippers and their collaborators had right on their side.

On the other hand, when the known principles of English law are taken into account, the naïveté of the relators is striking. When the Corporation was selling some of the property in dispute in 1836,<sup>46</sup> to pay the legal costs, some people questioned the Corporation's legal title to the land, and Counsel's opinion was sought. His view was that the possession of the property for upwards of two centuries conferred by itself a *prima facie* unimpeachable title. A presumption of a trust for the poor would have been banned by the lengthened acquiescence of the poor in the adverse possession by the Corporation.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps realisation of the weakness of their case was a factor in the decision of the relators to withdraw it in 1835.

The lawsuit caused later mayors financial loss. From 1812 to 1827 the mayor's salary was £150 a year, to cover the cost of the six dinners he was supposed to give. In 1827 it was reduced to £105 a year, though it was said that he had to find £100 more out of his own pocket. But as a result of the "extraordinary expenses" of the Chancery case, in 1832 and later the mayor had no salary. The case brought by the Grippers and their Quaker friends certainly made an impact on Hertford, and echoes lingered on throughout most of the century.<sup>48</sup>

Some at least of those who brought the Chancery case had been political associates for several years. In 1823 a striking figure, Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, made his first appearance on the Hertford scene, as parliamentary candidate at a by-election. An unlikely Radical if ever there was one. Duncombe was the son of a wealthy Yorkshire landowner, was well-known at Crockford's gambling club and at horse-races, as a result of which, if his enemies are to be believed, he was deeply in debt. He did not deny allegations that he was living with Mme. Vestris, a talented actress but a married woman, who, in her capacity as manager of the Olympic theatre in London, made a significant contribution to the history of the drama. Duncombe gave the Olympic financial support. He was a friend of Lord Durham, "Radical Jack", and well-acquainted with Lord Brougham. He was also handsome, possessed of a telling command of words, and dressed very stylishly.<sup>49</sup> He had the temerity in 1823 to put himself forward as candidate for the parliamentary seat vacated by Viscount Cranborne,

who had just succeeded to a peerage on the death of his father, the Marquis of Salisbury.<sup>50</sup> What prompted Duncombe's rash action – he frankly admitted that he had expected to be defeated, and he was – and more important, who put up the money for him, is not known. One would have expected that he was Earl Cowper's candidate (the earl's eldest son was only 17), but Tory broadsheets of the 1830s<sup>51</sup> assert with conviction that he faced opposition from Panshanger. Whatever the main source of his encouragement and his funds, among his supporters were the Grippers and the Quaker, William Pollard.<sup>52</sup>

In 1826 a general election took place. Duncombe, encouraged by the welcome he had received three years before, came forward again as candidate, and there can be no doubt that this time he received considerable Quaker backing. He was one of three candidates for the two seats; the others were Thomas Byron of Bayfordbury, the successful by-election candidate, and William Lamb, the future Lord Melbourne. Byron was the Salisbury family's nominee, but otherwise an undistinguished figure. Lamb had been M.P. for the county, and was stepping down by looking for a borough seat, but his father was very ill, and Lamb knew that he would soon inherit a peerage. He was the Cowper candidate – his sister, to whom he was much attached, was the earl's wife, and he was often at Panshanger. A jolly ballad<sup>53</sup> told the town where the Quakers stood;

“My name's Simon Flourish,  
A Quaker I am,  
In spirit a Lion! so I cant be a Lamb;  
It's true I cant sing like the bucks of the Town.  
But I now and then chaunt out a stave of my own:  
In Duncombe's praise  
My voice I'll raise,  
May no Golden Promise our Friends bewitch –  
If the Blind lead the Blind, they'll both fall in the ditch”.

The “Golden Promises” took the form of “vote-money”, 10 shillings to a voter for giving one of his two votes, £1 if he promised also not to use the other.<sup>54</sup> Four more verses tell out the Quaker's loyalty to Duncombe. This poetic effusion is one of several indications that Quaker support counted for something at Hertford elections.

A Tory broadsheet<sup>55</sup> tells us who were believed by the Hatfield House campaign organisers to be members of Duncombe's committee. “Tom and Jerry Gripe” were two, and we recognise the Grippers, father and son – a Tom and Jerry shop was a low beer-house, and the Grippers were, among other things, wine and spirit merchants.<sup>56</sup> “Joseph Polehead, rag merchant” is easily identified as Joseph Pollard, the

draper, “Tom Venom, Radical and demagogue”, is clearly Thomas Duncombe himself,<sup>57</sup> while “Tommy Driveller, Clerk and Sniveller”, is probably Stephen Austin, the printer.<sup>58</sup> Pollard’s son William was also involved in the election campaign. A good deal of printer’s ink was spilt during the run-up to the election on the alleged victimisation of Henry Raw, a grocer in Back Street, who declared, no doubt truly, that he had lost the contract for supplying groceries to the town gaol because he would not withhold his vote from Duncombe. Mayor John Moses Carter, a staunch Tory and supporter of Lord Salisbury, who often crossed swords with Gripper, sent for Raw, whom, if the grocer’s affidavit is to be believed, he had warned not to vote for Duncombe. Raw appeared before the mayor – but he took William Manser and William Pollard with him.<sup>59</sup>

Duncombe’s campaign committee must have been efficient – against all the odds, he won the election,<sup>60</sup> though there are allegations that from 1826 onwards any shopkeeper who had voted for Duncombe lost all his Tory customers.<sup>61</sup> All England, of course, was in a fever of excitement during the 1830–32 elections, and Hertford was no exception. Both at Simon Staughton’s, the Tory printer’s, and at Stephen Austin’s, his Whig counterpart’s, literary knives were sharpened, with Quakers among Staughton’s targets. At the 1830 election Duncombe’s two rivals were Lord Ingestre, a relation of the Marquis of Salisbury, and Henry Lytton Bulwer. Bulwer, who had been a late candidate in the 1826 election, was alleged to be, and probably was, the candidate of the Cowper family at Panshanger. He was afterwards to be a favourite of Lord Palmerston’s, and had a political and diplomatic career of some distinction. Ingestre of course was a Tory – the marquis was totally opposed to parliamentary reform – and Bulwer stood as an Independent (very much an “in-word” at the time), but in association with Ingestre. The Whigs suspected a Tory plot, that Lord Salisbury had instructed his supporters to use both their votes, instead of as usual “plumping”, i.e. using only one, and to give one vote to Ingestre and the other to Bulwer. If some of Duncombe’s supporters also voted for Bulwer, Duncombe would be defeated. On the very day before the poll was about to begin, however, Bulwer heard he had been returned for the pocket borough of Wilton (by all its 16 voters!) and he withdrew from the Hertford contest.<sup>62</sup> One broadsheet<sup>63</sup> accused Bulwer of concealing the plot, and also his decision to withdraw from the election, from even “his most respected friends”, among whom William Manser is named, so it looks as if Manser had gone over to Bulwer. Had Manser been alienated by Duncombe’s reputation as a gambler and adulterer, or, more likely, did the old connection between Hertford Quakers and the Panshanger

family, which went back to the seventeenth century, count with some Friends?

But Manser was still a firm supporter of parliamentary reform, and so were a number of other Quakers. He, together with William Pollard, Joseph May, Henry Squire, Joseph Pollard, Richard Shillitoe, James Cole, a Quaker schoolmaster, and Thomas Gopsill, a Quaker maltster, all signed three petitions to the mayor in the 1820–32 period, demonstrating their support for the Reform Bill. Their names, however, are an insignificant proportion of the total – the third petition for example had 178 signatures.<sup>64</sup>

In the heat of the 1830 election another merry squib from the Whig side and printed by Stephen Austin coolly advised Ingestre to abandon his “fruitless attempt” to win the Hertford seat. Its interest here lies in the fact that it purported to be written by a Quaker, “Prim”, out of a friendly concern that the town should be spared the uproar and drunkenness of a contested election! Quaker phraseology is clumsily used – Prim “feels a call” upon him to address Ingestre, has had “movings of the Spirit”, and ends by referring to himself as “In all respects but politics and warfare [Ingestre was an army officer] Thy Friend, Prim”. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century Obadiah Prim was the nickname for a sanctimonious Quaker, after a character in a popular play,<sup>65</sup> and we shall see it used more than once for William Pollard, but it is difficult to divine the purpose of this lampoon, which pokes sly fun at the Quakers, though it comes from the Whig camp. It looks as though it is just a reflection of high spirits and confidence on the part of some of Duncombe’s supporters.

Nevertheless, it stung the Tories to reply that very same day, in a well-informed broadsheet<sup>67</sup> which also purported to be written by a Quaker. This writer knew well the organisation of the Society of Friends; he reminds “Friend Prim” that Yearly Meeting would be taking place in the following month, and warns him that his conduct, and that of P--d, S--e, and B--n<sup>68</sup> (obviously Pollard and Squire, and possibly Brown), might be censured by the Elders, and might lead to disownment (expulsion) from the Society of Friends. This was no idle threat. Influential Friends, and perhaps a majority of members in the Society, disapproved of Quakers who were active in politics. Yearly Meeting, the annual gathering whose pronouncements carry much weight with Quakers, had declared in 1818,<sup>69</sup> just before a general election, “We wish to caution all our members against entering into political parties”. Joseph Metford had been removed from the list of Ministers of his Meeting at Bath because of articles he had written on Roman Catholic emancipation and other political subjects, and he had

been deeply hurt by this affront.<sup>70</sup> It took considerable courage in the first three or four decades of the nineteenth century for Quakers to be prominent in national or town politics. The bribery, corruption and disorder at parliamentary elections was an important factor in Friends' distaste for politics. The Hertford Quakers were not quite unique however. Samuel Tuke paid part of William Wilberforce's expenses at the Yorkshire election in 1806, and persuaded fellow-Quakers to act as agents for the Anti-Slavery hero; Joseph Sturge of Birmingham was in 1831, like the Pollards, helping Whig candidates, and Edward Smith in Sheffield was chairing Whig election meetings. Smith's protégé would have no paid canvassers, no banners, no music, and no meetings at public houses. Unsurprisingly, he lost.<sup>71</sup>

Another transparent forgery<sup>72</sup> appeared during the 1832 election campaign, in which its readers were urged by "A Quaker" to vote for the Tory candidates, Lords Ingestre and Mahon. This time Staughton did not stop to re-phrase the appeal in Quaker language – there is no use of "thee and thou", and no reference to the "Spirit". It is hard to believe that it would deceive the most innocent of voters, but it is a Tory production, and presumably whoever wrote it thought that Quaker advice carried some weight. Another Tory lampoon<sup>73</sup> holds Duncombe's fellow-candidate in the Whig interest, John Slingsby, up to ridicule, but ends with a gibe at two Quakers. "We cant keep him [Spooney, i.e. Duncombe] from swearing, but the Quakers are liberal fellows and say, it is allowed at elections. P-d and M-y [Pollard and May] enjoy it". It is interesting that Slingsby, "Handsome Jack", another man-about-town, was Lord Brougham's step-son.<sup>74</sup>

At this 1832 election the Tories were too strong for Duncombe and Slingsby, and they were defeated. Before the Great Reform Bill took effect, Hertford was, according to Professor Gash, "one of the two most notorious pocket boroughs in the country, where power seemed most perverted, and arbitrary".<sup>75</sup> But the bribery, intimidation and violence at the 1832 election was so blatant that, as is well-known, Parliament set up a Committee of Enquiry, and this resulted in the suspension of the two successful Tory candidates, Ingestre and Mahon. A petition from the aggrieved candidates, in which William Pollard played an important part, had led Parliament to appoint the Committee, and when its members came to Hertford to investigate the election malpractices, Pollard was summoned to give evidence. Pollard's speech has a style of its own, and a few extracts from the printed report<sup>76</sup> will illustrate this. He had gone to a magistrate on the day of the worst election disorder, to obtain action to quell the rioting; he was treated as a hostile witness by Counsel for Ingestre and Mahon.

It was alleged that the Tories had brought gipsies into the town to intimidate voters, and Pollard was asked, "Will you venture to swear that there were ten gipsies?" He replied, "I will not swear" – as a Quaker, he could not take an oath, of course. Asked then to *affirm* that at least ten gipsies were in the town, he did so. Asked if he had not been constantly at the White Hart (just across the road from his shop), getting up the petition to unseat the Tory lords, he answered, "I have no wish to hide anything". "You may have been asked," pursued Counsel, "Were you in Mr. Duncombe's committee?" I did not know he had a committee". Pollard retorted, "I was a friend of his and attended". "Did you meet Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Spalding at Gripper's?" was another question, to which Pollard replied, "I may have done so".

Pollard had seen mud thrown at Ingestre and Mahon's electoral procession, and was rather maliciously asked, "You are a peaceable man, of course, as you affirm [i.e. rather than swear]; did you enjoy what was going on, the mud and the pelting?" Said Pollard, "I do not know that that is a fair question, but if I chose to answer it I should say that I do not like things of that sort". Asked if he knew if Duncombe's friends were prevented from canvassing, he replied, "Yes, I do know that; I was with Mr. Spalding on the Old Cross, and we wished to go on canvassing, but there was a great number come out from Dack's [Dack was the Tory election agent, with headquarters in an inn] and it was considered unsafe to proceed; there were two or three knocked down at the time". At one point Pollard had rushed out from his shop to save a wounded man, and the victim had told Pollard that he worked in Lord Salisbury's garden. Asked if the man had got party colours – Tory colours were blue with pink bows, the Whigs had orange and purple – Pollard's response was, "I will not say", probably because he knew the gardener would lose his job if the marquis found out that he was sporting Whig colours. Of course Pollard knew of the blue vouchers which had been given to voters who promised to vote Tory – 26 of them had been redeemed at his own shop – but he also knew the list of electors well enough to know that some of these customers of his were voters. Incidentally, one broadsheet which reproaches Duncombe for persuading voters to break their promise to vote Tory, seems to refer to Quakers – "What say you", it asks ironically, "FRIENDS AND RELIGIOUS BRETHREN, of this paragon of morality and religion?".<sup>7</sup>

Though as a result of the Parliamentary Committee's report, the two Tory members were unseated, no by-election followed, and party political feelings remained dormant until the 1835 General Election was announced. The Tories unblushingly put forward once more the two

discredited candidates of 1832, Ingestre and Mahon, and were not pleased when Salisbury's control of the two Hertford seats was challenged by another contender. This was William Cowper, second son of Earl Cowper of Panshanger, and now old enough to stand for parliament. An extraordinary diatribe in a local paper<sup>78</sup> blamed none other than the Quakers for Cowper's appearance on the political scene. The relevant passages are worth quoting almost in full.

"We stated, last week, that it was reported that the Honourable William Cowper had consented... to allow his name to be put in nomination as a candidate for the representation of the Borough of Hertford... It is true that a Requisition [invitation to stand – it was customary for a candidate modestly to announce that he was coming forward because he had been pressed to do so by respected electors] was got up by some half-dozen busy-bodies, chiefly Quakers, who wished to put the town in commotion, and we understand that it was signed by about 120 persons altogether".

A veritable onslaught on the whole Society of Friends follows.

"We stated that the requisition was got up chiefly by the Quakers, and many were induced to sign it from the Jesuitical representations of these canting politicians. Under the cloak of modesty and humility, no sectarians have done more to undermine the foundations of true religion and of the institutions of the country than the Quakers have of late years. By means of cant and hypocrisy, they have concealed their proceedings from the eyes of the community at large, and have been left to creep on "like snakes in the grass", until they have poisoned the minds of those who were not aware of their insidious approach. But their cant and professions will no longer serve them".

The attack has a fine seventeenth-century flavour about it; even the association of Quakers with the Jesuits has survived the centuries. The Ware-based Whig newspaper which reprints the attack, from what it contemptuously calls "The Marquis of Salisbury's own Journal," *The County Press*, countered the allegations by attributing Cowper's candidature to Baron Dimsdale, and to "some of the most influential gentlemen of the town", to whom, it says, "may the Electors be thankful, for having rescued the borough from the thraldom which threatened it under a Conservative dominion".

Another Tory squib of the very same date<sup>79</sup> was aimed at the Quaker Whigs, and their allies, the Dimsdales, and again their identities are very thinly disguised. Baron Dimsdale appears as Noodle, with a caucus of Shilly-shally the bone-setter (obviously Dr. Richard Shillitoe), Henry Squirrel the bone-grinder (Henry Squire, the miller), Poleyard the slop-seller<sup>80</sup> (William Pollard), and Mayflower, who can be none other than Joseph May, the chemist. Shilly-shally makes a speech in Quaker

phraseology, and Noodle replies, "I respect your garb very much; it is the same my poor father wore when he was apprenticed to Mr. Sugarloaf, the Grocer"<sup>1</sup>... that Garb of Humility"<sup>2</sup> and your known cunning will make persons believe your deeds are disinterested". Quaker dress was often referred to sarcastically as "the garb"; for men at this time it meant a collarless coat, sober colours and a broad-brim hat, and though not strikingly different from normal styles, it was distinctive enough to mark out Quakers. Another skit at this time<sup>3</sup> refers to Noodle-noodle, and Obadiah Prim. Shillitoe is the unmistakable target in yet another lampoon,<sup>4</sup> which satirises the leading Hertford Whigs as circus animals; one, the viper, has had his teeth cleverly extracted by "the skilful hand of a surgeon who attends the menagerie gratis – Dr. Shy-letto".

A newspaper account<sup>5</sup> of an election meeting in support of William Cowper shows us Joseph Gripper in the chair, with Baron Dimsdale on the platform, and it is interesting that on nomination day it was William Manser who proposed Cowper as the candidate; Thomas Neatby Hagger, an ex-Quaker, seconded him. The Whigs had referred to Lord Ingestre as the nominee of Lord Salisbury, to which Ingestre's proposer, his brother, made a spirited retort – Ingestre was not the nominee of Mr. Gripper, Sam Cousins or Baron Dimsdale, but of John Moses Carter and other town councillors whom he named; to be *their* nominee was an honour. Mahon, later to play an important part in English public life, and who often made shrewd points in his speeches, mentioned in passing that at the previous election Hagger's own vote had gone to Mahon. This is not surprising – not all Quakers, or ex-Quakers, voted the same way. People changed their minds too, as Baron Dimsdale frankly admitted he had done on the Great Reform Bill, and as a merry Tory squib accused two unnamed Quakers of doing in 1830.<sup>6</sup> It runs, "Lost, on Saturday last, the 24th inst., between Butchery Green and the Salisbury Arms, the consciences of two Quakers. They have since been seen roving about, having lost all sense of those fine feelings of peace, harmony and goodwill towards mankind which marks the character of that sect. Whoever will restore them to their friends so as to secure the public against their violence, shall next winter be rewarded with two bushels of the most ordinary flour the baker has". Bushels of flour – donated by the Whig millers, Hagger, Squire and others? – were distributed to the poor during the 1832 election campaign, and no doubt during the earlier ones too.

"The Panshanger circus" was strong enough to ensure that one of the two Tory candidates, Lord Ingestre, was defeated at both the 1835 and 1839 elections for the borough. It behoved Lord Salisbury and Earl

Cowper to stop incurring the enormous costs of contested elections, and from 1841 onwards for more than a decade, Hertford was represented in parliament by one Tory and one Whig, in a gentleman's agreement which saved both sides money. The "Good Old Days", however, were nostalgically remembered in 1849 by a Hertfordian with a penchant for rhyme.<sup>87</sup>

"Then, Hertford, I[n]gestr]e and M[aho]n sought  
To gain thy honours, and to gain them bought;  
The Golden guineas many bullies found  
To man Rat's Castle and the war cry sound.  
O these were noble times and sad the day  
Which saw these vanish in a mist away".

The days of vote-money, refreshment tickets, shop-vouchers and assorted hats, which all survived the Great Reform Bill, had gone.

Duncombe disappeared from the Hertford political scene after his 1832 defeat – he found another parliamentary seat – though his name was still greeted with cheers at Whig political meetings. He has had a bad press from historians, but was to play a significant part later in the nation's affairs. Perhaps one would not expect to find Hertford Quakers supporting so whole-heartedly a candidate with such a life-style as Duncombe's. His 1826 manifesto provides some clues.<sup>88</sup> In it he declares his support for Free Trade and the Repeal of the Corn Laws, the latter a very popular cause with Quakers generally,<sup>89</sup> though oddly enough Hertford Quakers seem to have shown no enthusiasm for it. He would recognise the South American republics, he said, would support parliamentary reform and religious toleration, and would advocate the entire abolition of the Slave Trade. Quakers had campaigned for the abolition of slavery before Clarkson and Wilberforce took up the cause, and this was the objective which drew many Quakers, reluctantly, into politics.<sup>90</sup> "Religious toleration" is a vague term, but Quakers would read into it the end of tithes and church rates. To obtain such benefits they might be prepared to overlook Duncombe's private life, which in any case was not unusual among men of his class at the time. That his advocacy of religious toleration was sincere is borne out by his consistent opposition to church rates during the years he sat in parliament. His 1832 manifesto seems not to have survived, but we have that of John Spalding,<sup>91</sup> who was running in tandem with him, and which no doubt would be very similar. Spalding put first the abolition of slavery, by that time a band-wagon on which many were climbing, and followed this by the prohibition of flogging in the Forces, and "the reform of church abuses". Vague aspirations for improving the lot of the

poor, reducing taxation, that perennial appeal to the voter, and for extending religious and civil liberty were included. Translated into their practical terms, such a programme would appeal to Friends.

Though the lively if often scurrilous broadsheets which had accompanied parliamentary elections ceased to appear after 1835, Pollard still continued to come under attack in print. He was elected a member of the Corporation in 1837, sat on several committees, and took an active part in discussion. In 1849 the *Hertfordshire Mercury* found one council session interesting enough to re-print its report as a broadsheet.<sup>92</sup> Pollard had just topped the poll, and he began the proceedings by thanking not only his opponents, who had, he said, shown him great courtesy. He promised to support any measure which was for the good of the town, regardless of the political party, or the person, who proposed it. But the session seems to have been monopolised at that point by an elderly Tory, Councillor Kimpton. He made a glancing reference to the Grippers, who had, he said, robbed the town of estates which were sold to pay legal expenses – clearly the Chancery case still rankled in some people's minds. Kimpton reserved most of his venom, however, for Pollard, whom he attacked for being mean to the poor of Hertford. Why had Pollard given £30 for Irish relief,<sup>93</sup> instead of helping the poor of Hertford? "I never heard of his clothing the poor", said Kimpton, for whom charity clearly began and ended at home. Pollard, no doubt remembering the broadsheet describing his father as a slop-seller, retorted ironically, "I thought that *was* my business". Kimpton went on to recount garrulously how his friend, Rayment, a grocer, had sent Pollard a bottle of oil for his "stiff neck", though it is surprising that this kind of school-boy joke would be indulged in by a respectable shop-keeper. Kimpton reproached Pollard for not helping the poor during the terrible cholera epidemic earlier that year, and when Pollard appealed to him to allow others to speak the old man snapped, "I thank you, Mr. Oily-neck Quaker". Pollard responded quietly, "I think such remarks do not redound to the credit of any man", and Kimpton subsided. One can only speculate why the "*Mercury*", which had Whig sympathies at this time, reprinted this exchange.

A few years later, probably in the middle fifties, there was some difficulty in choosing a mayor for the town – Benjamin Young, a prosperous brewer, credited with social ambitions, had first agreed to stand by had then withdrawn. Some people obviously thought that it was Pollard who had the power to make the choice, and two broadsheets offered him advice in far from polished rhymed couplets. After referring to the mayoral robes and the town regalia as something

Pollard, a strict Quaker, would find distasteful, the author<sup>94</sup> goes on,

“Now dont Billy act like a dog in the manger,  
 You know all the lot are nothing but shams,  
 And you might swallow the scruples as well as the drams,  
 So lay the whole lot on the shelf,  
 And take off your broad-rim<sup>95</sup> and go in yourself  
 You can attest a recruit or sign a church-rate,<sup>96</sup>  
 For punishing prigs you'd be dubb'd an Esquire,  
 And if you'll break the ice, we would have Henry Squire”.<sup>97</sup>

The rhymester mentions “your friend Gripper”, and “your friend Stephen Austin of sanitary reknown”,<sup>98</sup> and tells Pollard that if he wants Dicker Miller to become mayor some of the good things of life, including wine, dinners and tobacco, will have to be forthcoming! The owner of Dicker Mill at this time was Edward Manser, whose father William Manser had died in 1855. Edward Manser was still at this time an active and responsible Quaker, but it sounds as though he was known to have some un-Quakerly tastes!

The other pamphleteer<sup>99</sup> also believed that Pollard would in fact choose the mayor, though he thought the two Grippers, John and Joseph, would also be influential.

“... It's Old Obadiah they say pulls the wire,  
 All thought Billy Pollard clear-sighted and keen,  
 Would never have tried B. Young, Esq., How Green...<sup>100</sup>  
 But there were two or three others who sighed for the place,  
 Twas as clear (if not as red) as the nose in his face;  
 There's Alderman Squire who's at least a foot higher...<sup>101</sup>  
 John tried for St. Stephen, but Billy pushed Ben.  
 Said Billy you know our friend Stephen is not just the thing,  
 (So he screw'd up his shoulder and screw'd up his eye,  
 You know how he looks when he tried to look sly),  
 And says he, give me the man with the tin,<sup>102</sup>  
 As Billy's whole mind is governed by tin,  
 Why not the Grocer in Fore Street<sup>103</sup> put in?”

In 1861 the Tories were chagrined by the success of four Liberals, including Pollard, at the council elections, and an unknown scribe voiced Tory disgust in 17 verses of doggerel which understandably never saw the light of day in print.<sup>104</sup>

And yet about the Corn Exchange  
 The ancient dirge they sing,  
 And at the Virgin<sup>105</sup> on the top  
 Their words of anger fling!!

The four victorious Liberals are pilloried –

“Then the Whig party four have sent  
To fight these valiant foes –  
Rayment and Palmer who are they?  
And Francis? Goodness knows!<sup>106</sup>

And Pollard too the Quaker proud  
Is urging on the throng  
With Sammy Cousins backing him  
With language rather strong.

And now behold this mighty man  
Appearing from “The Wash”  
It ought to keep his conscience clear  
But echo answers “Bosh”.

Pollard – !!! – Let’s pause – to see from where  
Was this illustrious name.  
Some say ’tis ‘pig’s wash’ but I think  
From other sources came.

For “Greasy Poll” from Poll and lard  
The derivation’s sweet  
The latter part you’d better buy  
At Rayment’s in Fore Street.”

It is only fair to say that no other Hertford rhymester sank as low as this, as far as is known.

In the following year an audacious squib directed its fire not only at Pollard, but at Edward Manser and Henry Squire, whose identities are clear. So is their membership of the Society of Friends – the heading is “A Friendly Dialogue”,<sup>107</sup> and some Quaker terms, including the use of “thee” instead of “you”, are rather clumsily dragged in. The characters are Obadiah Wash, a retired Ragman (Pollard had retired the year before, and instead of living in the rooms behind his shop in the market-place, had moved to a house in the Wash<sup>108</sup> in Hertford), Jeremiah Dicker (the Miller Edward Manser), and Squire Long, a retired oilman (easily identified as the tall Henry Squire), who had been a previous owner of Dicker Mill. Obadiah brings news that all three are to be honoured; he and Squire are to be county magistrates, and Manser is to be mayor, which meant that for his mayoral year and the following one he too would be a “beak”, or J.P. Jerry swears (a modest ‘damn’ and ‘devil’ only), and is rebuked by Obadiah, but brags that they will “make people tremble”, and that “they shall all be Quakers”. Squire counsels Jerry to be meek, and in an obscure passage Obadiah tells Jerry to remember who took him out of the mill to make him “ruler” (i.e. mayor)<sup>109</sup> – it is not clear whether some local “big-wig”, perhaps Lord Townshend of Balls Park is meant, or the Almighty himself, though in

the context the latter identification is unlikely. Jerry suggests Obadiah himself should become mayor – “How about going to church and wearing the mayoral gown?”, to which Obadiah succinctly replies, “Drat the church, and drat the gown”. According to the obituary notice of Pollard,<sup>110</sup> he was often asked to be mayor, but rejected the offer, because he would not take the oath that was necessary, and he refused to become a magistrate for the same reason. In fact the situation for Quakers was more complicated than that. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 allowed an affirmation instead of an oath, but the terms of the affirmation were not acceptable to Friends, and when amended in 1837, the mayor was still required to promise not to disturb the Anglican clergy in any right or privilege they enjoyed.<sup>111</sup> Since Friends objected to paying tithes or church rates, Yearly Meeting in 1838 advised Quakers to refuse municipal office.<sup>112</sup> Joseph Rowntree at York and Joseph Sturge in Birmingham both became aldermen, but refused the mayoralty,<sup>113</sup> and probably Pollard was taking the same line. No doubt the anonymous pamphleteer was right, however, in thinking that Pollard found the pomp and ceremony of the mayoralty distasteful. He did though eventually take his seat on the Bench.<sup>114</sup>

Sometime in the 1860s the Corporation’s Watch Committee, of which Pollard was a member, decided to take steps to restrict Sunday trading, a move not universally popular in Hertford. Quakers hold that all the days God gives are holy, and they are therefore not Sabbatarians, but there are other reasons for opposing Sunday trading, and Pollard, if one broadsheet<sup>115</sup> is to be believed, supported the Watch Committee’s decision. Under the headline, “A Rare Opportunity for a Busy-Body – Wanted, some Spies for the Watch Committee”,<sup>116</sup> the scribe sarcastically suggests, “The Quaker would do. Only he is obliged to attend Meeting on a Sunday, but he will do his part, he will stand at the window from seven until he goes to Meeting. Set a -- to catch a -- applies in the Quaker case, as he used to open his shop on a Sunday to serve poor people with clothes, but now having made enough money to retire, has turned religious(?) and charitably says, ‘Verily hath I got as much as I wanted, and hath no wish that others should profit by my experience’”. When many people were working a six-day week – the 1851 Saturday half-holiday Act applied only to factory workers – the opening of a shop on Sunday might well have been welcomed by the poor of the town. No supporting evidence has been found of any such practice by Pollard, but it is not inherently impossible. He was very aware of the needs of the poor; his name appears for instance on a list of those who petitioned the mayor to call a meeting on a bill to improve conditions for children in the cotton factories.<sup>117</sup>

It is obvious that for Pollard to be credited with such influence at a mayoral election, his party, the Whig/Liberals,<sup>118</sup> must have been in power on Hertford's borough council, and in fact from November 1856 to November 1863 the 15 councillors were nearly all from that party.<sup>119</sup> From November 1863 the council was more divided politically, and Liberal representation continued to decline, so much so that at the November election in 1874 only one Liberal was returned. Even worse was to come for the Liberals – from 1878 to 1884 every single Hertford councillor was a Tory.<sup>120</sup> In 1884, however, the Liberals achieved a striking victory at the council elections; in this some Quakers, and one ex-Quaker, played an important part.

Of the five Quaker signatories to the poster which had touched off the 1831 case, four, Manser, Pollard, Shillitoe and Squire were dead by this time,<sup>121</sup> and Joseph May had emigrated in 1839 to Australia, to spread the Christian faith there.<sup>122</sup> William Manser's eldest son Edward (Dicker Miller), had stepped into his father's shoes as a valued and conscientious Friend, who during the '50s and '60s had represented Hertford Friends at Quarterly Meetings, and had shouldered financial responsibilities for them.<sup>123</sup> In the later '60s, however, he was no longer seen at Quaker Meetings for Worship, and when Friends were sent to visit him, he explained that he and his wife were attending Anglican services. Nevertheless, he said, they "retained so much attachment to Friends that they did not intend voluntarily to relinquish their membership in the Society". At the present time there are Quakers who are also members of the Church of England, but this did not happen in the nineteenth century, and the Mansers' membership of the Society of Friends was discontinued.<sup>124</sup> (It appears to be the only example in Hertford's Quaker records of disownment solely for non-attendance at Meetings for Worship.) In the nineteenth century, however, as now, there was a "Quaker fringe", people who were loosely attached to the Society, and in Victorian times these were often ex-Quakers,<sup>125</sup> so Manser may well have retained his Quaker contacts, particularly since many of his relations still belonged to the Society.

The mantle of William Pollard had fallen on the Graveson family. On the retirement of William Pollard, Samuel Watson Ward Graveson, once Pollard's apprentice, had become part-owner of the draper shop, and all three of his sons became pillars of Hertford's Quaker Meeting. In 1884 his son William was secretary of the local Liberal party,<sup>126</sup> and the chairman was Edward Manser.

It was at a Liberal party meeting in October 1884, that the bold decision was taken to challenge the Tory party's control of Hertford Council, and to put forward Liberal candidates for all four seats. From

1875 to 1884 not a single Liberal had been nominated, so low had the local party's confidence sunk. Edward Manser declared at the meeting that Hertford had been governed for sixteen or seventeen years by a Tory caucus, and he referred scathingly to the Tory use of money and free beer. The *Mercury* reporter's own comment was that the Conservative Working Men's Association had had the government of the town in its hands for many years, with most undesirable results.<sup>127</sup> One would like to know who was behind this belated Liberal renaissance – belated in two ways, for October was late to start campaigning for a November election. Had Manser inspired it, or young William Graveson, then 22 years old? A Tory poster<sup>128</sup> put forward another explanation. "Remember that this sudden movement of the Radical Party" – clearly the Tories did not welcome the Liberal revival – "had its origin in the recent spasmodic attempts from Balls Park,<sup>129</sup> from which the people of Hertford are now shut out; and do not let this Municipal Election be a pretext for opposition to Hertford's great friend, Baron Dimsdale,<sup>130</sup> at the next General Election". This author evidently suspected that Lord Townshend of Balls Park was involved in the new Liberal offensive. The Liberals' poster appeal was a simple one – "Burgesses of Hertford, the Conservative Party has had full control for many years. Give the Liberals a chance!"<sup>131</sup> The voters responded well – all four Liberal candidates were returned with thumping majorities. Among the four was Isaac Robinson.<sup>132</sup>

Robinson was a birthright Quaker, who had come to Hertford as a boy of 14 to be an apprentice to William Pollard, and when Pollard retired he and Samuel Watson Ward Graveson became joint owners of the drapery shop. By 1884 Robinson was well-known in the town. He was a staunch supporter of many "good causes" – treasurer of the Town Mission, which used the same premises as the Ragged School, and of the Temperance Club,<sup>133</sup> chairman of the British (that is Nonconformist) School in Cowbridge, treasurer of the Grass Money charity,<sup>134</sup> which distributed the profits from Kingsmead. For several years he was one of the two elected assessors for the town,<sup>135</sup> who had the task of scrutinising disputed claims to the right to vote. After five years as a town councillor he was nominated mayor by another Liberal, A.P. McMullen, who said that Hertford needed "men who dared to do right, whatever may come or go". Even the other William Pollard the Tory printer, supported his nomination, and Robinson was elected.<sup>136</sup> In some way, however, he lost support in the town while he was mayor, and at the end of his office, in 1890, he lost his seat on the council. He was returned again in 1893, but he had never enjoyed robust health, and he did not complete his three-year term as councillor, dying in 1895.<sup>137</sup>

Not only Robinson, but a number of the other Hertford Quakers made a useful contribution to the civic life of the town. William Manser, Pollard and Squire were all managers of the Hertford Savings Bank, which necessitated attendance on Wednesdays, the day on which the bank was open, on a rota basis. Pollard was its chairman for a period.<sup>138</sup> Manser was an auditor of the town's finances for ten years, and carried out the same duty for the Hertford Infirmary. He was also a Poor Law Guardian, an office held by many Quakers in other parts of the country, but not by Pollard or Squire – did they feel, like Joseph Metford of Bath,<sup>139</sup> that the Guardians were “guardians of the estates of the rich?” Pollard, however, was chairman of the Town Mission, the Ragged School, and the British School in Cowbridge. He, Squire and Shillitoe all held office in the Hertford Literary and Scientific Institution. This list is not exhaustive, and takes no account of their financial contributions to local charities, such as the Coal Fund, the Browncoat School and the Lying-in Institution.<sup>140</sup>

So far nothing has been said of the Quaker women. There is in fact very little information about them. The more affluent contributed to local charities,<sup>141</sup> those who took part in the Friends' Women's Meeting distributed help to the Quaker poor, and they made enquiries about Quaker marriages. But these were Quaker domestic concerns, and for the most part the women Mansers, Pollards and Squires were, as so often, “invisible women”. They were evidently thought to conform to a type: in his evidence to the Commons Committee set up to suggest how elections at Hertford could be freed from the bribery and corruption which had marked the 1832 contest, Sam Cousins stated that there were a great many houses in the new borough [roughly speaking West Street and the adjacent area] occupied by “such people as Quaker ladies”.<sup>142</sup> Unfortunately he does not elucidate this statement. There was little scope for women in public life at this time, but one “Quaker lady” in West Street did hold a responsible position in a Hertford charity for a time, and as far as is known was the only woman to do so. Sarah Matilda Jenkins was treasurer of the Ragged School,<sup>143</sup> probably for five years or so. Of course, only a small sum was involved, and she was the daughter of a stockbroker!<sup>144</sup>

Whatever impact the Hertford Victorian Quakers made on their town was not due to numbers; even at the beginning of the century they were a small minority of the local population, and by its end they were a mere handful. On a list of members drawn up in 1800 128 names are recorded;<sup>145</sup> Hertford's population then would be about four and a half thousand. By 1870, when William Pollard made the list,<sup>146</sup> he counted 57 members of the Society in or near Hertford, and by 1875 there were

only 29.<sup>147</sup> Quaker numbers declined catastrophically in the first half of the nineteenth century all over England, and Hertford was no exception.

But though the size of the Friends' Meeting declined, it was given unstinting service by some of its members, and undoubtedly it was this which enabled Quakerism in Hertford to survive. Among those who gave generously of their time and energy to Quaker affairs were men whom we have seen undertaking civic and Party duties also. William Manser was Clerk of the Monthly Meeting and much involved with Meeting House property. William Pollard was a later Clerk of Monthly Meeting, drew up lists of members, had the care of legal papers, and measured gravestones – when Quakers at last allowed these in 1850. He often represented Friends at the May Yearly Meeting in London. Henry Squire collected subscriptions, was a trustee of Quaker charities, and frequently represented Hertford Quakers at the Quarterly Meeting. Isaac Robinson represented Friends on other bodies, had also been Clerk of Monthly Meeting, and at the time of his death was Clerk of the Quarterly Meeting.<sup>148</sup> This list is not a comprehensive one, and, considering their business and political responsibilities, these weighty Friends must have led very busy lives.

If the *Hertfordshire Mercury* (which of course was Whig/Liberal) is to be believed, the leading “political Quakers” were also likeable people. Space does not allow of long quotations from their obituaries, but perhaps a few lines may be permitted. William Manser was described as “courteous, amiable, just, truthful and generous”, and “an affectionate friend”.<sup>149</sup> Pollard was “a man of large-hearted benevolence”, “firm, but not discourteous”, and in a tribute in verse from an unknown hand, “The friend of the friendless, the friend of the poor”.<sup>150</sup> Henry Squire was “one of the most respected inhabitants of the town” – and, incidentally, a good cricketer! He and Pollard were close friends.<sup>151</sup> One must mention here also Dr. Richard Shillitoe, to whom the *Mercury* devoted several column inches, giving a delightful portrait of this genial man, who walked miles to the villages to see his patients, because he believed in exercise, working devotedly night and day during the cholera epidemic of 1849, and who was, even in his declining years, “the blythest man in town”.<sup>152</sup> Isaac Robinson is described as a of a quiet and unassuming manner, but painstaking and earnest in all he did. Like many Quakers of his period, he was very interested in Nature, and made much use of his microscope. Flowers from his garden<sup>153</sup> were laid on his coffin. He had distinguished Quaker friends, and one of these spoke movingly at Robinson's funeral of the love and grief which he felt.<sup>154</sup>

It is well known that Nonconformists were the backbone of the Liberal Party in the nineteenth century – to paraphrase a familiar saying the Nonconformist churches were the Liberal Party at prayer. It would be interesting to know how many Dissenters, other than Quakers, were involved in politics in Hertford. One or two, James Field and Charles Maslin, have already been mentioned. But the other Nonconformists certainly did not attract the number of squibs and lampoons that the Quakers did. It is surprising to find that Friends in Hertford had such a high profile – a number of people connected with the local Press were aware of Quaker beliefs, and some even knew how the society of Friends was organised. The *Mercury* had an interesting passage in 1845.<sup>155</sup> It was at the time of the Corn Laws crisis, and a Conservative candidate at the county election was reported as finding it “as difficult to answer searching questions about Corn, as it would be to convince a sturdy Quaker that the best securities for freedom of conscience were Church Rates and the 39 Articles”. The paper clearly assumed that its readers would know what the Quaker stance was.

By the end of the century the Society of Friends was, as a body, encouraging its members to take part in public life, and it was common for Quakers to be councillors, mayors and J.P.s. At the beginning of the century it was a different story – when Joseph Pease, in Quaker dress, sat as M.P. for Darlington in 1832–3, he had faced opposition from both his family and his Quaker Meeting.<sup>156</sup> One researcher concluded that in the first half of the nineteenth century, “great courage and initiative were required to break the bounds of non-involvement set by the official organs of the Society of Friends”.<sup>157</sup> Incidentally, when Friends *were* elected to parliament or to municipal office, there was a tendency for them to reject rigid party discipline, and this was true of both William Pollard and Isaac Robinson.<sup>158</sup>

Although there were individual Quakers in other towns who were deeply involved in politics, Hertford was one of the very few places where one can see a group of Friends acting together in such matters. At Birmingham also, where there was a bitter struggle in the 1830s to obtain an elected council for the city, instead of the antiquated vestry, a number of Quakers were active.<sup>159</sup> But at Norwich only the Gurneys and one or two other Quakers took part in politics, though three broadsheets attacking individual Friends there have survived.<sup>160</sup> It is surprising that Hertford, such a comparatively small town, should have produced such a committed group of local politicians, including three Quaker mayors.

Were other Quaker Whigs as radical as the Hertford ones, who gave Thomas Duncombe his first political opportunity? One of the Norwich

Quakers was certainly lampooned as a radical.<sup>161</sup>

“But a Quaker sure with politics  
It doesn't beseem to meddle,  
With brawling radicals to mix,  
With Whigs' unmeaning twaddle”.

But “radical” is an elastic term, always used in a derogatory sense, but with no precise meaning. The Tories certainly taunted Duncombe as a radical in the 1820s, but there is no evidence that he was supporting manhood suffrage – as already noted here, people's opinions change. In general, however, the radicals and Quakers had much common ground, as Martineau pointed out<sup>162</sup> – they shared an objection to the privileges of the Established Church, including religious tests for holding civic office or attending universities, both Quakers and radicals advocated education, and education free from Anglican control, and both groups opposed capital punishment. They had a common objection to what we now call Defence expenditure, which radicals criticised for providing sinecures for the aristocracy, and Friends because of their objection to war. All in all, it is not surprising that Hertford's Quakers supported Duncombe.

Local newspaper sources, together with the town's voluminous official records, provide an insight into the lives of Hertford's Victorian Quakers, but we should have missed much of the spice of political controversy in the town if Councillors Gilbertson, Hudson and others had not so diligently collected hundreds of contemporary broadsheets. We have photographs too<sup>163</sup> of some of the Friends mentioned here, though it looks as though others held to the traditional Quaker view that Friends should not allow portraits to be made of themselves. Little or no account has been given here of the Quaker contribution to the religious life of the town – not that this is unimportant, but routine attention to business matters is rarely interesting, and in the case of what in other churches would be called “sermons” there is simply no information available. It should be noted that though the Squire and Gripper families were Quakers early in the eighteenth century, most of the Quakers mentioned here, the Pollards, Mansers and Robinsons for instance, had come into the area of Hertford in the 1790s or later. There is no mention of the old seventeenth-century names, Stouts, Rudds or Fairmans, unless one counts the Dimsdales here. Quaker children, like other children, were often apprenticed to masters far away from their family (with all the heartache that entails), and this probably accounts for the inflow and outflow of names.

The decline in Quaker numbers was accounted for by several factors,

among them the “disownment” – a very wounding process – for financial failure, at a time when such failures were common, and often not the fault of the business man himself. Rich Quakers too found their exclusion from local power frustrating, and resented the restrictions imposed by the Society of Friends, in the name of simplicity – novels, pictures, theatres and secular music were all discouraged among Quakers.

It should be noted that it was no new thing for Hertford Quakers to involve themselves in politics. All the indications are that their predecessors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also did not disdain political activity. This is certainly true of the Stouts and some of their contemporaries – one modern history of Parliament goes so far as to describe Henry Stout as Earl Cowper’s election agent in the 1690s and Thomas Gripper’s father worked hard for the Whig candidate in 1780. And the Pollards, Mansers, Henry Squire and their colleagues were not unworthy successors of their radical seventeenth-century forbears; by their support for parliamentary reform and other much-needed changes in the country’s policy, and by resisting the Marquis of Salisbury’s attempts to impose his influence on the borough, they too deserve recognition for their contribution to civic and religious freedom.

*Violet A. Rowe*

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Hertford Corporation Records (henceforward *HC.*) 45/1 p.1. Hertfordshire CRO.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 33/433.
- <sup>3</sup> *Hertfordshire Mercury* (henceforward *HM.*) 8 Nov. 1845.
- <sup>4</sup> Two large volumes in the Corporation’s records, vols.44 and 45, are devoted to the case. Probably the simplest account of the issues is *HC.45/1*.
- <sup>5</sup> L. Turnor, *History of Hertford* (1830), 352–355.
- <sup>6</sup> “To the Inhabitants of the Borough of Hertford”, 16–5–1831. Old Election Papers (henceforward *EL.*) at Hertford Museum.
- <sup>7</sup> Gripper’s obituary, *Hertford and Ware Patriot*, nos.LVI and LVII, Sept. 1834.
- <sup>8</sup> Its name is given in the Town Clerk’s accounts. *HC.54/21*.
- <sup>9</sup> *HC.33/419*.
- <sup>10</sup> Turnor, *op.cit.* 355.
- <sup>11</sup> Sedgwick had two shops, one in Hertford and one in Ware. Pigot, *Commercial Directory for 1826–7* (henceforward *Pigot*) 566, 585. May, whose chemist’s shop was almost next door to Pollard’s premises, would have needed a competent assistant to leave in charge in his absence. He had business worries in the later 1830s.

- <sup>12</sup> *Pigot, 1834*, gives Turnor and Gripper as Attorneys in Fore Street; if this is Thomas Gripper, he had diversified his interests even more.
- <sup>13</sup> *Pigot, 1822 and 1826*. He is described as “a much-respected inhabitant of Hertford” in the obituary of his brilliant son, Sir Thomas, later a Whig M.P. for the town. HM.2-1-1872.
- <sup>14</sup> HC.45/1 f.50.
- <sup>15</sup> His bill for 6s.8d. for “attending Gripper junior upon his serving us with a notice... and declining to take any notice of the application and advising thereon” is in HC.54/21.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> HC.45/1 f.48.
- <sup>18</sup> HC.33/419.
- <sup>19</sup> HC.54/5.
- <sup>20</sup> “Electors of Hertford!” Subscribed, “A Rod for the Fool’s Back”. n.d.
- <sup>21</sup> An area of housing by the river Lea, and still known by that name. It was sometimes referred to as “Rat’s Castle”.
- <sup>22</sup> *Hertford and Ware Patriot, op.cit.*
- <sup>23</sup> HM.16-2-1828.
- <sup>24</sup> *The Reformer*. 23-12-1834. The speaker was George Rew, at an election meeting in support of William Cowper. Joseph Gripper was in the chair. *EL*
- <sup>25</sup> “Questions to the Proposed LIBERAL TOWN COUNCIL”. 22-12-1835. *EL*
- <sup>26</sup> HC.21/886, 890. Quoted in A. Baker and W.D. Fenning, *History of Hertford Corporation*, typescript, Hertford Museum.
- <sup>27</sup> HM. 8-11-1845.
- <sup>28</sup> The discrepancy between this figure and that given to the Treasury by the Corporation when it wished to sell some of the property (see f.n.1), is considerable. Perhaps there were incidental, non-legal fees, or perhaps Longmore’s memory had betrayed him.
- <sup>29</sup> Rent Roll of the Trustees of the Poor, 1834, Hertford Museum. The money was paid in two instalments.
- <sup>30</sup> In a broadsheet of 22 April 1831 Mugeridge promised the electors that Duncombe be joined by another Reform candidate, and his is the only name on the handbill. *EL*
- <sup>31</sup> “A Reply to the Falsehoods of an Elector”. *EL* 8 Dec. 1832.
- <sup>32</sup> “Electors of Hertford, do not be deceived...” *EL* n.d. but clearly 1832.
- <sup>33</sup> *DNB*. Art. *sub.* Brougham.
- <sup>34</sup> Anon., *Life of William Allen* (1846), 1, 179.
- <sup>35</sup> There is a clear schedule of property sold in HC.33/475-9.
- <sup>36</sup> HC.45/1 p.48.
- <sup>37</sup> See f.n. 27.
- <sup>38</sup> Coal merchants and maltsters in 1826, by the early '30s they were also tanners and wine and spirit merchants. *Pigot, 1827 and 1831*.
- <sup>39</sup> See the article by the author, “William Pollard and the Hertford Ragged School”, *Hertfordshire’s Past*, no.19, 1985.
- <sup>40</sup> In 1831 the population was 5,247, of whom 700 were electors. McCalmont, *Parliamentary Poll Book... 1832-1918*, 139.
- <sup>41</sup> Turnor, *op.cit.*, 347.
- <sup>42</sup> HC.45/1 p.8.
- <sup>43</sup> HC.33/421.
- <sup>44</sup> HC.45/1 p.35. In 1708 the Corporation were ordered to repay over £2,000 wrongfully detained from the poor over the years.
- <sup>45</sup> HC.33/346.
- <sup>46</sup> The property sold is set out in HC.53/450, 454, 457, 467-8. It was, briefly, the Butchery market, 14 cottages in Bircherley Green, the land and house at the Town Mill, other land in Butcherley Green, and a number of quit-rents.
- <sup>47</sup> HC.33/510-511. Unfortunately for the poor, they were not mentioned in the 1627 charter, though it is clear some did appear in person to testify.
- <sup>48</sup> HC.54/186.
- <sup>49</sup> T. Duncombe, *Life and Correspondence of Thomas Slingsby Duncombe* (1868), *passim*; broadsheets in Hertford Museum, mentioned below; information about Mme. Vestris from Mr. Derek Forbes.
- <sup>50</sup> The by-election was rushed. The marquis died on 13 June, and Byron was elected on the 27th.

- <sup>51</sup> "To the Poor Cottagers of Hertford", 26-4-1831, *EL*, has, "Who returned Mr. Duncombe to Parliament, against the powerful influence of Panshanger, etc. which was used at his first election?". "Thomas Slingsby Duncombe, gifted with prophecy..." n.d. *EL* denies that the 1826 election was between Duncombe and Hatfield House, and states that Duncombe was then opposed by Panshanger, though Earl Cowper's steward in 1831 (to which year this handbill obviously belongs), had been canvassing for Duncombe.
- <sup>52</sup> "Twenty Guineas Reward", 28-1-1826, *EL*, instructs anyone who has evidence about an assault on Duncombe's election agent, to apply to Gripper. Pollard, who always weighed his words, stated in his evidence to the parliamentary commission of 1833 (see below) that he had supported Duncombe at *all* his elections. *P.P.* ix, 1833, 143.
- <sup>53</sup> "A New Song" broadsheet, in "Election Posters, 1825", Local Studies Collection, Hertfordshire County Library.
- <sup>54</sup> F.A. Taunton, "Hertfordshire Politics, from 1826 to 1832", Birmingham University B.A. dissertation, 1957, 51. The author of this excellent short account was not aware of the Quaker involvement.
- <sup>55</sup> "One Thousand Guineas Reward", 1-2-1826. *EL*.
- <sup>56</sup> They are also described as "Diamond merchants" in this squib - the Grippers were alleged to give coal, *alias* black diamonds, as bribes to voters.
- <sup>57</sup> He is also referred to as "Last-seller", a description I am unable to elucidate.
- <sup>58</sup> The other committee members are: "Charles Cantwell" and "James Fleece", "Chaplains to the Committee, and Keepers of the consciences of all Gamblers and Fornicators", "Frank Snarle" and "Jacob Cunning". Cantwell must be Charles Maslin the Independent Minister in Hertford, who with Thomas Gripper later this very year founded the Constitutional Club in Hertford (Taunton, *op.cit.* 39). Fleece is James Field, watchmaker and jeweller, whom we have met before signing the invitation to the Town Hall meeting which led to the Chancery case. He was a Dissenter too. Snarle is Frank Searle, a tallow-chandler, and Cunning is Jacob Canning, tailor and draper. These two had shops in the market-place, near Pollard's and both had nominated Duncombe at the 1823 election. (T. Gripper's obituary, *op. cit.*). The nicknames given to the Quakers and their collaborators were usually either variants of their own surnames, or were the names of characters in plays - Charles Cantwell, like Obadiah Prim and Jerry Sneak (see below), is an example of the latter.
- <sup>59</sup> "Hertford Election! Affidavit versus Assertion". 27-1-1826, and four following pamphlets. *EL*.
- <sup>60</sup> Lamb, who disliked the rough and tumble of an election, and knew he would shortly have a seat in the Upper House, withdrew. This would have left the field to Byron and Duncombe, but Henry Lytton Bulwer came forward. It was now early May, however, late to start canvassing for a mid-June election, and though he made a good showing, he was defeated.
- <sup>61</sup> "The County Press and the Hertford Election". 12-1-1835. *EL*.
- <sup>62</sup> He feared defeat. See his explanation, "To the Independent Electors of the Borough of Hertford". 9-8-1830. *EL*.
- <sup>63</sup> "To the Independent Electors..." 3-8-1830. *EL*.
- <sup>64</sup> "To the Worshipful the mayor of Hertford..." n.d. *EL*.
- <sup>65</sup> "Friend Ingestre..." 3-8-1830. *EL*.
- <sup>66</sup> Susan Centlivre's "A Bold Stroke for a Wife", 1718. I have to thank Mr. Derek Forbes for information and references on this.
- <sup>67</sup> "Friend Prim". "27th of the 4th month 1831" - note the Quaker dating. *EL*.
- <sup>68</sup> I cannot identify "B--n" with any certainty. There was a Quaker family of Browns, who were farmers, at Amwell Bury (Q 97, 119B, 121/1, HCRO), and Susannah Lucas, one of the Quaker ladies of West Street, mentions her cousins the Browns in her will at Somerset House.
- <sup>69</sup> *Yearly Meeting epistle*, 1818.
- <sup>70</sup> *Journal of Friends' Historical Society*, vol.45 (1928).
- <sup>71</sup> "Quakerism and Public Service chiefly between 1832 and 1867", E. Martineau, Oxford B.Litt. thesis, 1938, 41, 43, 44. For J.J. Gurney's involvement in Norwich politics, 1818-37, see D.E. Swift *Joseph John Gurney* (1862), *passim*.
- <sup>72</sup> "Brave Men of Hertford, vote for Ingestre and Mahon" ... n.d. *EL*.
- <sup>73</sup> "Letter from Slingsby", n.d. *EL*.
- <sup>74</sup> T. Duncombe, *op.cit.* 1, 103; Burke's *Landed Gentry*, *art., sub.* Slingsby. Note the neat play on the double meaning of "swearing".
- <sup>75</sup> *Aristocracy and People* (1979), 206.
- <sup>76</sup> *P.P.* ix, 1833 (449), 143 *et seq.*

- <sup>77</sup> "T.S.D. and his friends at their dirty work again". 5-12-1832. *EL*
- <sup>78</sup> Reprinted in the Whig *Radical Reformer*, no.69. Dec. 1834. Mr. A.G. Davies kindly called this publication to my notice.
- <sup>79</sup> "The Reformer..." 4-12-1834. *EL*
- <sup>80</sup> Slops were "workmen's loose outer clothes; ready-made or cheap clothing". (Concise Oxford Dictionary).
- <sup>81</sup> The third baron Dimsdale was the fourth son of the famous doctor; he would not have expected to inherit the title and the property, and probably apprenticed his son, as the gentry often did. If the son was apprenticed to a Quaker, he would have been expected to attend Quaker Meetings for Worship, and as usual under the apprenticeship system, the master would provide the boy's clothes - i.e. Quaker dress.
- <sup>82</sup> The writer calls the committee the "Garb of Humility Committee".
- <sup>83</sup> "Benjamin Crow". n.d. *EL* Prim must be William Pollard, and Jerry Sneak, who also figures in the broadsheet, may be either R.M. Muggeridge, whose paper, the "Mercury", had ceased to be published in 1833, or its printer, Stephen Austin. I have been unable to identify Sawney Gossip, though I suspect he was Sam Cousins, who was out and about in the town a lot.
- <sup>84</sup> "Under the Special protection of the Mayor and Corporation". n.d. *EL* The Great Baboon, caught in the Park of Panshanger, is probably Earl Cowper himself, the Howling Hyaena is no doubt the candidate, William Cowper, and the Largest Ass in the World, Simple Sam, is Sam Cousins. But who were the Viper, and Toad-in-the-Hole?
- <sup>85</sup> *The Reformer*, 23-12-1834.
- <sup>86</sup> 27-7-1830. (No title). *EL* There were always Quakers who were poor, though this is often forgotten, but there were two or three £10 householders in the Butchery Green area, according to Sam Cousins. But most, according to the same source, were £3 or £5 householders living in "those huts", as Cousins contemptuously described them, called the Bee-hive and Rabbit Warren". Many Hertfordians will remember the public house, the "Warren House", recently demolished, in Bircherley Green. Cousins says the flour was distributed to the poor by the Grippers, among others, regardless of whether the recipients were Duncombe supporters or not. *Report of the Select Committee... 27 June, P.P. 1833 (152) ix.*
- <sup>87</sup> "Peter Picklestaff", *Hertford and the Hertfordians* (1849). Hertford Museum.
- <sup>88</sup> "To the Independent Electors..." 12-5-1826. "Election Posters, 1825", in Local Studies Collection, Herts. County Library.
- <sup>89</sup> Martineau, *op.cit.* 156 *seq.*
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid* 237.
- <sup>91</sup> "To the Electors of the Borough of Hertford". 20-8-1832. *EL*
- <sup>92</sup> "Election of town councillors, 1849". *EL* Council elections took place in November.
- <sup>93</sup> Pollard was one of 43 signatories to an appeal to the mayor for a public meeting to be held, to discuss assistance to the Irish suffering from the 1845 potato famine. Richard Shillitoe, and Joseph Sterry, a wealthy Quaker living in that Quaker enclave, West Street, also signed. HC.34/197.
- <sup>94</sup> "Advice Gratis". n.d. *EL*
- <sup>95</sup> Strict Quakers would not wear a "cocked" hat, i.e. one with up-turned, or pinched, brim. Alderman William Graveson in the 1930s remembered Pollard's "tall figure and plain dress". (News-cutting at Hertford Museum).
- <sup>96</sup> A reference to Quaker pacifism and the Society's opposition to tithes and church rates.
- <sup>97</sup> Squire was elected mayor in Nov. 1858.
- <sup>98</sup> Austin, like Pollard, supported the adoption of the Health of Towns Act in Hertford. *HM*. 13-7-1850. Pollard had at first opposed it.
- <sup>99</sup> "Benjamin's Return". n.d. *EL*
- <sup>100</sup> Young had bought an estate at Howe Green allegedly to further his entering aristocratic circles in Hertfordshire.
- <sup>101</sup> Squire was a tall man, as his photograph (at Hertford Castle) shows.
- <sup>102</sup> "Tin" - slang for money. An interesting reference - Pollard died a very wealthy man.
- <sup>103</sup> James Gilbertson.
- <sup>104</sup> "Lay of Ancient Hertford by a Burgess". n.d. MS at Hertford Museum.
- <sup>105</sup> Ceres, who met an untimely death in World War II through enemy action. (*Ex inf.* Mr. A.G. Davies).
- <sup>106</sup> In fact they were all local tradesmen - grocer, maltster and nursery-man, respectively.
- <sup>107</sup> *EL*

- <sup>108</sup> Poll Books, 1857, 1859. Hertford Museum. The shop has been known since 1895 as "Graveson's".
- <sup>109</sup> Edward Manser became mayor in Nov. 1862.
- <sup>110</sup> *HM.* 4-2-1871.
- <sup>111</sup> J. Davies, *Digest of Legislative Enactments relating to the Society of Friends* (1849), 53.
- <sup>112</sup> E. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (1970), 194.
- <sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.
- <sup>114</sup> *Hertfordshire Almanac*, 1863, 867.
- <sup>115</sup> "A Rare Opportunity for a Busy-Body" . n.d. *EL*
- <sup>116</sup> n.d. *EL*
- <sup>117</sup> *EL* 28-2-1833. The 41 other signatories included Manser, Shillitoe, James Cole, and some Tories.
- <sup>118</sup> Peelite Tories and some Whigs joined to form the Liberal Party in 1859.
- <sup>119</sup> *Hertfordshire Almanac*, 1857-63, *passim*. Mr. A.G. Davies very kindly analysed the lists of councillors for me.
- <sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* 1864-84.
- <sup>121</sup> "Hertfordshire People", no.25, Summer 1985, 10, *seq.*
- <sup>122</sup> W.N. Oats, *A Question of Survival* (1985), 58, 214-5 (with photograph of May). May took his family of 14 persons with him, and they brought to Mount Barker "the language, manners and principles, and to some extent the dress, of the early Friends". They maintained contact with Hertford Friends for some years. Q 124/1-13, Herts. CRO.
- <sup>123</sup> Q 94, *passim*. Herts CRO.
- <sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-6-1870; 20-10-1870.
- <sup>125</sup> Isichei, *op.cit.*, 202.
- <sup>126</sup> *HM.* 18-10-1884.
- <sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* Did Disraeli's great programme of social reforms, 1874-80, owe something to the existence of these working men's associations?
- <sup>128</sup> "To the Burgesses of Hertford". n.d. but clearly 1884.
- <sup>129</sup> It sounds as though Balls Park's grounds had recently been closed to the public.
- <sup>130</sup> The fourth Baron Dimsdale had changed his party allegiance to support the Whig Great Reform Bill of the early 1830s, but the sixth baron was a Conservative.
- <sup>131</sup> "Hertford Municipal Election. A great Meeting..." n.d. *EL*
- <sup>132</sup> *HM.* 8-11-1884.
- <sup>133</sup> Town Missions made valiant efforts to wean working people from their addiction to drink - they went into the homes of the poor, and saw the effects.
- <sup>134</sup> *HM.* 18-5-1895. Obituary of Isaac Robinson. As late as 1886 there is a reference at a local Liberal party meeting to the Conservatives' not wanting the poor to have the Grass Money - a memory of the 1831 case. *HM.* 30-10-1886.
- <sup>135</sup> *Herts. Almanac*, 1871-77.
- <sup>136</sup> *HM.* 16-11-1889.
- <sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* 18-5-1895.
- <sup>138</sup> Joseph Hooper Squire, a brother of Henry Squire, a member of Ware Friends' Meeting, and James Cole, also undertook the Wednesday duty. But James Cole was later "disowned" by Friends for bankruptcy and dishonesty.
- <sup>139</sup> Martineau, *op.cit.*, 89.
- <sup>140</sup> The above activities can be followed in *HM. passim*, and *Herts. Almanac, passim*.
- <sup>141</sup> Balance sheets and appeals of these charities, *EL*
- <sup>142</sup> "The Evidence of Sam Cousins". 10 June 1833. *EL*. A Tory reprint of part of P.P. 1833 (591), ix, i.
- <sup>143</sup> *Herts. Almanac*, 1867, 1871. The *Almanac* does not consistently list the officers of local organisations.
- <sup>144</sup> She had come back from Philadelphia to live near her sister and her maternal grandparents, the Botts, Quakers, who were farmers at Amwell Place, near Hertford Heath. Q 119B, Herts. CRO.
- <sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>146</sup> Q 120 (inside cover).
- <sup>147</sup> Q 94. 16-12-1875.
- <sup>148</sup> Hertford and Hitchin Monthly Meeting Minutes, Q 93 and 94, *passim*. Herts. CRO.
- <sup>149</sup> *HM.* 24-9-1853.
- <sup>150</sup> *Ibid.* 28-1-1871.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.* 18-9-1875.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* 15-11-1851.

<sup>153</sup> At "Benninghoe", Bengoe, now Holy Trinity Rectory.

<sup>154</sup> This was Theodore Harris; Prof. Rendel Harris was also there. *HM.* 18-5-1895; 25-5-1895.

<sup>155</sup> *HM.* 6-12-1845.

<sup>156</sup> *Isichei, op.cit.* 100.

<sup>157</sup> *Martineau, op.cit.* 39.

<sup>158</sup> *HM.* 31-10-1868; 16-11-1889.

<sup>159</sup> *Martineau, op.cit.* 104.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.* 136 *seq.*

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.* 139.

<sup>162</sup> *Martineau, op.cit.* 53.

<sup>163</sup> At Hertford Castle and Hertford Museum.

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