DERBY AND DERBYSHIRE ELECTIONS — 1852-1865

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This is the concluding part of an article on Derby and Derbyshire politics in the 19th century, the earlier sections of which appeared in vols. LXXXIX (1969), XCIV (1974) and XCV (1975).

The borough 1852-1853: election and the Great Bribery Case

The 1852 General Election in Derby was the liveliest since the time of the Reform Bill. A combination of very hot weather, angry agitation for a further extension of the franchise, a conservative attempt to split the liberal supporters by introducing a moderate reformer and dissension within the liveral ranks as a consequence, produced an explosive situation which flashed into violence on several occasions. There was pandemonium when it was announced that the conservative candidate had beaten the radical and for two or three days the town was in an uproar. Contributing to this was the accusation by the liberals of bribery on the part of the conservatives and the catching red-handed of an agent handing out money which, the liberals alleged, came from the Carlton Club and involved a tory minister. A petition was prepared, the hearing of which at the end of the year, held the interest of the national press, and resulted in the resignation of the minister. The resignation of the Derby Ministry immediately after this over the Budget smoothed over the case but the London and provincial press clamoured for its reopening and in March 1853 the petition was heard again and ended in the change of representative for Derby, the defeated radical taking the place of the conservative who had been successful at the poll.

The liberal candidates for the 1852 election were the sitting members, Michael Thomas Bass and Lawrence Heyworth. Heyworth's name, however, was not put forward until Edward Strutt, unseated in 1874 with Leveson-Gower, had publicly announced that in spite of the requisition of a large number of people, he had decided not to stand for fear of splitting the liberal ranks. During the course of the election it became clear that a number of liberal supporters would have preferred Strutt to Heyworth and did, in fact, split their votes between Bass and the conservative candidate. The liberal group was far from organised, as the elections of 1857, 1859 and 1865 were to show.

The conservatives brought forward Thomas Horsfall, chairman of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, a former Mayor of the city, and a relative of a Derby family who, along with the Carlton Club were responsible for his introduction. It was an odd coincidence that both Heyworth and Horsfall should be from Liverpool. The switch of the conservatives from Protection to an acceptance of the new Corn Laws was seen in Horsfall's election address. Much of his programme was of a moderate reform nature. The liberals made every effort to make plain the tory tactics. The Derby & Chesterfield Reporter carried an editorial on these tactics, analysing the subterfuges which the conservatives were reduced to faced with the hopelessness of winning a seat in Derby. They could either support an ultra-radical, as in 1848 when many voted for M'Grath, or, as now, put forward a moderate reformer.[1] And Alderman Moss, a staunch liberal, referred in a speech to the tory cunning of-

> instead of bringing two cocks to fight, they had brought one in the guise of a very moderate reformer, in the hope that the whigs might be seduced from the allegiance of the reform cause, and help to get in the principles of Toryism by destroying the unanimity of the Reformers.[2]

The issue of the election, therefore, turned on the degree of reform the two sides

favoured. The liberals made play with Horsfall's equation of democracy with despotism. He had said in a speech-

> A great struggle is at hand. A struggle not between Whig and Tory, Liberal and Conservative, but whether the principles of the British Constitution. . . or the principles of Democracy which invariably led to Despotism, shall have their way.[3]

Bass promptly accused him of being afraid of democracy and Heyworth taunted him with frightening the people with democracy. Heyworth made the interesting historical parallel that Horsfall's attitude was as silly as Louis Napoleon's frightening the French people with socialism and then being elected by the majority to protect them from socialism. The two liberal candidates were being a bit disingenuous. Neither accepted the full implications of the radical programme and said one thing in meetings of the electors and another in meetings of the non-electors. Bass could say that he was not afraid of democracy but that he did not want to be governed exclusively by a democracy although he desired the people to enjoy a fair share in the conduct of their own affairs.[4] But at a meeting called by the non-electors, a meeting at which the enthusiastic demand for manhood suffrage was made, both he and Heyworth skirted this issue and concentrated upon Horsfall's opposition to democracy. Heyworth's chartist principles seem to have deserted him and the two whigs, like the tory, equated democracy with mob rules. This they cleverly concealed. The election was attended by much violence. Horsfall, whilst addressing a meeting in the Mechanics Institute, had to flee for his life, or at least his limbs. Fighting broke out and Horsfall hurried away. He resumed his speech from the balcony of the Royal Hotel, a more commanding and safer situation. Henry Francis Gisborne, a local surgeon, President of the Derby cricket club, and a recent convert to conservatism, was also attacked. At a cricket club dinner he had criticised Heyworth and in some way the news leaked out. He had also issued handbills referring to unruly meetings which prevented Horsfall from being given a fair hearing, and unwisely called, his townsmen 'the lowest rabble' and 'ruffians' in the handbills. Passing a meeting addressed by Heyworth, he was recognised by the crowd and promptly chased. He escaped by dashing into a shop, climbing a wall, and emerging through a shop in another street.

The noisest nomination day for many years took place on July 7th. The heat was intense in the stuffy Guildhall and speeches took six hours. The battle was carried on verbally if not physically. Bass accused Horsfall of posing as a reformer, of being really a clear conservative, to which Horsfall replied that eight years previously he had been invited to stand for Derby but his views proved too liberal for the tories. He tried to clinch his argument by announcing that if Strutt had stood, he would not.[5] This, indeed, was a strong card. The gathering was tending to get out of order. Speeches were being booed and hissed when calm was restored from a curious quarter. A Mrs. Tracey got up and said she was from America and had come to study how working men conducted themselves. She told the meeting about the franchise in North America and gave her views that the spread of education would fit the working classes for the exercise of the franchise. She also thought the women should have the franchise.[6] This pouring of oil from across the waters smoothed the stormy meeting, and it dispersed to vote the following day.

Ugly scenes followed the declaration of the poll which revealed that the conservative candidate had beaten the radical candidate by seven votes.

M. T. Bass	1252
T. B. Horsfall	1025
F. Heyworth	1018[7]

As might be expected, most plumpers were cast for Horsfall, but there were 236 split votes for Bass and Horsfall. Violence broke out again and shopkeepers who had voted for Horsfall were threatened with boycotting. Bass accused the conservatives of bribery and announced that a man had been caught red-handed on the day of the poll giving out money for conservative votes. On the day after the polling there took place the first

stage of a case that was to achieve national interest.

On July 9th the magistrates bench led by the Mayor heard the story of the apprehending of two men at the County Tavern, one who was distributing money and the other who was acting as sentinel. Alderman John Moss, a solicitor and chairman of Bass and Heyworth's committee, addressed the Bench. He said that he had received information that a system of bribery was being practised on behalf of Horsfall and that he had sent Sargent Fearn in plain clothes to the County Tavern where he had discovered in a backroom a man with a bag of gold and the apparatus necessary for bribing the electors and at the doior a sentinel who admitted people only on the utterance of the password, 'All's right, Radford has sent me'. The man with the gold was Thomas Morgan, a bricklayer from Shrewsbury, who had said that he had been asked to come to Derby as a poll clerk and had no idea that he was expected to bribe people. He had been provided with money in a darkened room and told how to give it to people. The sentinel was a local man who had been approached by someone who asked him if he had been in the army and had acted as a sentry. On saying that he had he was given a dinner and 3s 6d and then instructed to guard a room in the County Tavern. It was decided by the Bench that there was a case for a trial. The sentry man was allowed to go but Morgan was remanded and bail refused.[8]

Further evidence was heard on July 15th and July 22nd. Examples were given of how men were approached in the hay fields and offered £2 for their vote. They were given tickets and told to go to the backroom of the County Tavern where they entered backwards and received two sovereigns from a person they could not see because of their position. Evidence was then given that a letter had been found in Morgan's pocked addressed to John Frail, Clerk of the Course at Shrewsbury, which read-

> A good and safe man, with judgement and quickness, is wanted immediately at Derby. I suppose that you cannot leave your own place; if not, send someone whom you can trust in your place. Let him go to Derby on receiving this, and find the County Tavern, in the centre of the town, send his card to Cox Bros. and Co. lead works, as coming from Chester; that will be enough.
>
> W.B. (Monday)[9]

Alderman Moss then produced a sensation. A private detective gave evidence that the handwriting of the letter was that of Major William Beresford, the Secretary-at-War, and a member of the Carlton Club. His proof was that he had been the secretary of the Reading and Reigate Railway Company when Beresford was the chairman and that he had plenty of opportunity to familiarise himself with Beresford's handwriting. The use of private detectives horrified the Derby Mercury. They termed it 'a despicable practice of espionage' and put the whole case down to the vanity of Alderman Moss.[10] The local newspapers devoted much space to the case. The Reporter quoted a speech by Sir James Graham at Carlisle. He referred amusingly to a friend of his in the House who said, on hearing that Graham was to contest Carlisle, beware of Frail of Shrewsbury. This was in 1847. He and his supporters watched for Frail, but no Frail turned up.

There was much else to puzzle the inhabitants of Derby and the whole story did not come out until the liberals presented their petition on November 20th when it was heard in a full House of Commons. Sir Andrew Cockburn, a recent Attorney-General, introduced the petition. The mysterious figures were linked together and the case coherently presented. The story was that the conservatives were determined to win a seat in the borough. To this end, the Cox brothers, who were conservatives in the town, and who had presented the petition that had unseated Strutt and Gower in 1848, approached Major Beresford at the Carlton Club for help. There had been contact before in 1848 when Beresford had refused money to help to prepare that petition beyond a personal contribution of £100 and the recommendation to send a Mr. Frail of Shrewsbury who was skilled in the matter of preparing elections. It was decided in 1852 that Thomas Horsfall of Liverpool, a relative of one of the Cox brothers by marriage, be invited to stand and the services of Frail, or a recommendation of his, sought. Frail had not been able to come to Derby himself, there being a contested election in

Shrewsbury at the same time as the one in Derby, and had sent Thomas Morgan, a friend of his, instead. Morgan, though a bricklayer, had also been used by Frail as a valuer of property in cases where it was expedient to raise or lower the value in order to qualify or not qualify for the £10 household vote. The method of bribery at Derby was as had been described at the local enquiry. It was added that Morgan had been promised £100 for the job and that £262 in gold and £40 in notes were found on him. The whole of the story had been revealed by a wealthy Derby butcher, Mr. Radford, known locally as 'the king of the butchers' to a local solicitor called Flewker. Flewker had prepared the 1848 petition, which had cost him between £700 and £800, and that though he had been successful, his friends had subsequently scorned him and failed adequately to reimburse him. It was Flewker who revealed the plot to Alderman Moss.[11]

Continuing the case, Sir Andrew Cockburn, admitted that some might think the source of information tainted. He accepted it because he thought the accusation sufficiently proved. Suggestions had been made, he went on, that the letter from Beresford, the authenticity of which was not denied, referred to a previous election. He could not accept this suggestion. The 1848 letter of Beresford's offering the services of Frail to Derby made it clear that at tl.at time Frail was a stranger to Derby. Therefore the present letter could not refer to an election prior to 1847. Did it then, refer to 1848? No, he argued, as there was evidence that Frail was in Derby in that year. He was seen and talked to by Flewker. It was the time of the races and Frail was dressed in a jockey's cap and a white great coat. Disguise, Flewker called it. The letter must refer to the present election, concluded Cockburn.[12]

The House decided that grounds for an enquiry existed and that a committee of five be appointed to make it. The case attracted considerable attention and the *Times* commented at length upon it. They referred to Frail as one with a list of running horses in one pocket and saleable boroughs in the other'.[13] The tone of the *Times* was one of chaffing: the only sin for Major Beresford was that of being found out. *The Glove* and the *Daily News* took sterner views.[14]

The petition was heard on 6th, 7th, 8th, 11th and 15th December. The witnesses were heard again and there was some sharp cross examination. The defence was that the sole purpose of sending a man to Derby was to purify the election: to detect bribery and prevent kidnapping, as both the Cox brothers and Beresford put it.[15] George Cox, the attorney and wine merchant, was very angry with counsel's questions and was hard put to explain why, if the purpose was to prevent kidnapping, only one man was sent for. The Committee issued their findings on 16th December. They were satisfied that an organised system of bribery had existed but that there was insufficient evidence to show that it was known to the Right Honourable Member, the Secretary-at-War, though the equivocal expressions of the letter he sent to Frail ought to have suggested to him the improper uses to which the letter might be put. Major Beresford was censured for his utter recklessness.[16] Beresford handed his resignation almost immediately to Lord Derby.

There was considerable comment in the national press and the Times observed sarcastically that Frail was indeed a great man who could thus throw over the Secretary-at-War. The defeat of the Derby Ministry on December 18th over the Budget, and their resignation, seemed as though it would smooth over the case. The press were unwilling to let it drop and in the March of the following year another committee was appointed to enquire into the petition by Bass and also the cross petition by which the conservatives, or a section of them, had lodged. Yet again, witnesses went to Westminster, old witnesses and new ones, and stories of bribery were told and retold. The Committee resolved that Horsfall had not been duly elected and declared Heyworth to be the sitting member. Fourteen people were listed as having received bribes, the cross petition against Bass was dismissed as frivolous. The liberal press were satisfied.[17]

The litigation illustrated the problems of the *Times* in the matters of elections and was significant for the particular time. The conservatives had made great efforts in 1852

to win seats and Derby was an example of their exertions. The problems and cost of petitioning were well-seen in both 1848 and 1852. The *Times* had written of Flewker's efforts in 1848 to unseat Strutt and Leveson-Gower that like King Pyrrhus he might exclaim 'one more such victory and I am ruined'.[18] And the widespread use of bribery, inevitable in the absence of organised political parties soliciting for votes on the basis of principles and issues, was popular, quite naturally, with those who were bribed and was a factor in the retardation of the growth of organised political parties. The reaction of the individual and the public, and its necessary influence on the attitude to political parties, is well seen inthe evidence given during one of the stages of the 1852-3 bribery case:

> I was hoping that something would drop into my hand (laughter); I felt something and slipped it into my pocket, saying 'thank the Lord for that' (roars of laughter), I thought that, perhaps, he had some little respect for me (renewed laughter). . . you know I can drink a good sup in the course of the day (roars of laughter)[19]

Much was at stake in elections and it was not surprising that strenuous efforts of every kind were made to return the candidates. The Derby bribery case might never have started had Flewker accepted from a stranger an offer which was made soon after the case blew open, an offer of £1,000 and a ticket to Bologne.[20]

A Contested By-election in the North, July 1952

In contrast to the exciting events in the borough from 1847 to 1853, the county was quiet. There had been no contest in the northern division since 1837 when William Evans joined George Henry Cavendish who had been a member from 1834. Edward Mundy and C. R. Colvile had represented the southern division since 1841 without being challenged. There were signs that all was not well with the conservative members. The first hint of Colvile's defection from the conservatives occurred in 1852. The two members had separate committee rooms for this election and the editor of the *Reporter* suggested that the time had arrived for the South Derbyshire liberals to contest the area.[21] They were not able to do so until 1857. The changing nature of Colvile's convictions was matched by the fluid liberalism of C. H. Cavendish. One of his speeches during the 1852 election canvassing was remarkably equivocal. He expressed his general satisfaction with Russell's Government and also said that he would support Disraeli's Government if the revision of land taxes was necessary as he proposed.[22] Generally the period 1847 to 1853 passed without scares or sensations in the county and perhaps the nearest approach to rowydism was in 1847 at Bakewell when a procession went round on nomination day with placards bearing the words 'Don't vote — no dinner'[23] The tranquility of the north was disturbed in the summer of 1853 by a contested by-election.

The contest was a personal and local issue in origin but had party implications. it was caused by William Evans resigning and bringing his son forward to take his place without warning the county. This was a procedure which was perilous in the nineteenth century when even with a representation that had become largely hereditary, care had to be taken not to emphasise the claim too strongly.[24] The Cavendishes might do this for one seat in Derbyshire because of their pre-eminent position, but what was extended to them was not extended to the Evans, and particularly not for the second seat, which was in the nineteenth century customarily left by the predominent interest in a county to the rest of the county. The action of Evans prompted a group to bring forward another candidate, also a liberal. He was William Thornhill of Stanton Hall, a very near neighbour of the Cavendishes. His proposer, a surgeon from Eyam, made it perfectly clear why Thornhill had been nominated. The way in which Evans had retired, not a month's notice and the sudden presentation of his son, was an insult to the electors. As he made this speech on nomination day a voice cried out, 'it is the hereditary system'.[25] Letters were written to the *Mercury* with similar sentiments. A farmer wrote: 'Let us prove to Mr. Evans that we are not to be handed over from one person to another without our consent'.[26]

The situation presented the Cavendishes with a problem. Should they support a

friend and a neighbour or a colleague of seventeen years standing?[27] The duke decided to be neutral and gave orders that there was to be no interference by his agents or by anyone connected with him. This clear decision was not carried into effect apparently. Some believed that the duke wished them to vote for Evans and others thought that he desired their vote for Thornhill. Evans himself was perhaps responsible for the former misunderstanding: he freely used G. H. Cavendish's name in his election address. The latter misunderstanding is a mystery unless one credits the conservatives with a big bluff that worked well. An undated fragment among the papers of G. H. Cavendish places Sir Joseph Paxton, the gardener who rose to be the personal friend of the duke, designed the great exhibition of 1851 and who was knighted in the same year,[28] as the source of the rumour, although Paxton denied it.

> The neighbourhood is now subsiding after the Elections — but it has been a very queer business and I am afraid some of the liberal party are very much disgusted and declare that though the Duke himself had given orders that there should be no interference on the part of his agents or anybody connected with him yet that many of his large tenants have left no stone unturned to influence votes in favour of Thornhill — and I am told that they fully believe that Paxton gave the tenants the hint — however he told me the other day that the only one of the Duke's he had spoken to was Jepson — that he and they had been very much disgusted at Evans' address and his using my name — and Jepson asked him if the Duke's tenants were all expected to vote for Evans and he said 'certainly not, they are to do as they please' and then Jepson said — he would be d----d if he would not vote for anybody sooner than Evans — and I fancy this was the feeling among a good many of the farmers — not that I am afraid it will be found that Thornhill has been mainly returned by the Duke's tenants and the Tories...[29]

The overtones of political parties are heard in the last sentence. The *Reporter* alleged that the group that was behind Thronhill's nomination was largely tory. Having failed to persuade two well-known conservatives to come forward, Arkwright and Chandos-Pole, they turned to Thornhill as a liberal whose views were not so liberal as those that Evans' son was likely to hold.

They further gave out that the duke sanctioned and promoted this opposition to Evans. The *Reporter* did not, of course, accept the latter avowal but the general story of the source of Thornhill's support may very well be true.[30] They also stated that the poll book showed that Thornhill attracted a large number of tory votes.[31]

The story, as it affected the relations of Evans and Thornhill, came out during the speeches on nomination day, July 16th. Evans revealed that he had written to Thornhill informing him of his intention to resign and propose his son in his place. He did this without warning on the advice of others that an announcement might give an opportunity for an opposition candidate to appear. Thornhill had replied to Evans that he had no wish to stand, and so Evans had acted. It was not a case of collusion with anyone for the benefit of his son. When, however, Thornhill had changed his mind and decided to stand, and Evans had been approached to withdraw the nomination of his son, Evans felt he could not do so because there was no conservative candidate in the field and because he had already made an extensive canvass and received so many promises of support for his son.[32] Thornhill's defence of his attitude was that although he admitted writing to Evans saying that he had no desire to stand, he had warned him of the possible consequences of his action. In fact he had gone to London to warn him of the feeling in the country which would be created by the nomination of his son.[33] When he was pressed to stand on the grounds that he would less divide the liberal party in north Derbyshire than Evans' son, and because of the abrupt announcement of the son's nomination, he informed Evans of his decision, but Evans would not withdraw. Unhappily there was no escape from a contest.[34]

The poll, taken on July 22nd, was small, the suddenness of the contest and the many farmers at work in the field contributing to this.

W. P. Thornhill	1680
T. W. Evans	1195

Thornhill gained his victory without a canvass.[35]

George Henry Cavendish was thankful that it was all over. Two days after the contest he wrote to the duke:-

> . . . how thankful I am that from the very first you told me to take care what I said to Evans and not to consult you — for a pretty mess it is altogether — and if all I read in the Derby Reporter is true I think that the less that is said the better and I mean to keep mouth and ears closed as far as possible on all matters connected with the Election. . .[36]

His anxiety to forget the election is understandable. The choice before the Cavendishes had been either to support the son of a long-standing colleague who would probably have the support of a number of the north Derbyshire liberals, or a candidate for whom they had a personal preference,[37] but who most probably would have a large tory backing. The problem was complicated by the nature of Evans' nomination. They could not easily support him in the face of the outcry, especially since the method smacked so much of Cavendish custom. But neither could they support Thornhill because of his tory support. Their decision to be neutral, therefore, seemed to be the sensible course. Unhappily for them, both sides used their name, so bringing upon them grumbles from those who disliked the method of nominating Evans, and from those who disliked Thornhill's tory support. And Thornhill's victory left a section of the liberal party disgruntled because many of the duke's tenants had voted for him. In aiming to offend none, the Cavendishes had upset many, and through no fault of their own. Well mighty George Henry Cavendish feel discomforted and try to avoid contact with either candidate. On July 25th, he wrote to the duke:

> After I had written to you yesterday William Thornhill came here. . . but as I felt myself placed in a very delicate position between a friend and a neighbour and a colleague of 17 years standing. . . I shirked upstairs.[38]

When he heard that Thornhill had come to ask advice on how to take his seat in the House, he rode off after him and found Thornhill and his wife breakfasting. He joined them. In the conversation afterwards he told them how he must keep his mouth shut about the election. The conversation continued with observed delicacy and due flattery. Thornhill remarked how strong the feeling was for the Cavendish family in the county and how

> they were always ready for one of your family but would not have anybody else's son handed down to them. . .[39]

The Borough Elections of 1857, 1859 and 1865: Liberal Confusion

The 1857, 1859 and 1865 general elections in Derby had one feature in common: there was considerable confusion among the liberal groups. In 1857 and 1859 the squabbles were more interesting than the whig-tory conflict and in 1865 the division let in a tory whose victory was the first that party had won in the borough since 1775, and that victory had been the result of a petition. The last straight success had been in 1713. The disarray in the liberal ranks was seen in the profusion of candidates. In 1857 there were for a time five in the field, although only two went to the poll; in 1859 and in 1865 three went to the poll. A solitary conservative appeared on each of the three occasions. The period showed the continued absence of any local well-organised liberal party; competing groups were still producing their own candidates.

The sitting members were Bass and Heyworth, and when the election addresses for the 1857 election appeared in the second week in March, Heyworth's was not amongst them. Bass was joined by Samuel Beale, Alderman John Moss and W. Melbourne James. Beale and Moss indicated that they were aspiring to fill Heyworth's place who, they said, intended to resign.[40] Beale was Deputy Chairman of the Midland Railway and was not a local man. Moss was, of course, a well-known local figure and a friend of Heyworth, on whose behalf he had presented the successful 1852 petition. James was a Chancery barrister and connected to the Strutts by marriage: he had married the first Lord Belper's sister-in-law. He used his family connection as a justification for standing. He too, referred to the vacancy cause by Heyworth's expectant resignation.[41]

The programmes put forward by these men differed only in their phrasing; all were pro-Palmerston and for a further extension in the franchise and for voting by ballot. Yet there were differences of emphasis in their speeches. James, who may be presumed to have had the support of the Strutts, and Beale the railway influence, were moderate in their liberalism, whilst Bass seemed to be conscious of having to appeal to the radical element in the borough, although not a radical himself. His rival in this sense was Moss. Moss had said that he would not stand if Heyworth did and had in fact intended to wait for a liberal meeting, but the publication of James' name as a candidate had forced his hand.[42] But none of the liberal candidates, except perhaps Bass, sufficiently appealed to his radical element and at a meeting held in the Temperance Hall the ultra-liberals as the *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* referred to them, expressed the angry conviction that the whigs had pushed Heyworth out. The Rev. W. Griffith spoke strongly against Palmerston on the grounds that he had done nothing for reform and equally in favour of Heyworth who, he said, was not to be bought by the Government. Such men as he

> would never be found in the lobby voting against the interests of the masses, just because they had been invited to dine with the Premier, or because they had received an invitation to a Royal ball.[43]

A decision was taken to ask Heyworth to reconsider his resignation. The allegations of under-hand dealings were directed against Moss who hastened into print to defend himself. Three days after the meeting of March 17th, there appeared in the *Reporter* a letter from Moss who said that Heyworth some time ago had intimated that he might resign as he was reluctant to undergo the turmoils of an election. Even so, Moss had not put forward his name until the action of others in putting forward theirs, forced him to on the grounds of protecting the independence of the borough. It was true, he admitted, that he had written to Heyworth saying that his votes against Palmerston might prevent him from being returned to Derby again. He now offered to withdraw his name if Heyworth would stand.[44] Four days later Heyworth arrived, and so one liberal candidate withdrew but only for another to take his place.

In the election of 1848 and 1852 Heyworth had been regarded locally as a moral-force chartist; in this election such words never appeared. He pleased the radical element in the town in his speeches by his sharp attack on Palmerston. On his first appearance, after having cleared up the Moss muddle and reaffirmed that Moss was his friend, he launched into an attack on Palmerston's opposition to the Locke-King motion to give the county franchise to the £10 householder and on Palmerston's China policy. He proudly proclaimed that he had voted against Lord Palmerston. If these votes had displeased the non-radical section of the whigs, other votes of his had caused concern to the nonconformists in the town. They disliked his voting for Sunday opening of the British Museum. Heyworth justified this on the grounds that Sunday was the only day on which the people could go to 'the people's house'; gentlemen could go any day.[45] The meeting decided to support Heyworth's candidature.

Bass, who as usual, hoped for part of the radical vote had to tackle the question of temperance. His method was to be facetious. He always encouraged temperance and even total abstinence for men who had insufficient control of themselves, a remark which naturally caused laughter. He had even produced a very harmless and mild brew as another contribution to this problem. Turning to the serious situation of having so many liberals in the field, he said he was ready to go elsewhere. This may have been playing to the gallery although two years later when the circumstances were similar, Bass found the situation more than trying, as he indicated in a letter to Augustus Henry Vernon. Even if the cries with which this apparently magnaminous offer were greeted flattering to Bass, they did nothing to resolve the conflict. He was regaled with shouts of 'Bass and Moss, Bass and Beale, Bass and Heyworth'[46]

Beale and James seemed to be having a private fight. James accused Beale of being a railway nominee and raked over the cinders of an old grievance:

> It is not for the good of the county, nor for the good of Derby that there should be more

> railway interest in Parliament. . . and above all else, I say this, Derby ought not to be a nomination borough. . . and this, if Derby is to be handed over to a Deputy Chairman of the Midland Railway because of the Railway influence which can be brought to bear in support of him, then Derby is reduced once more to the position of a nomination borough, which it formerly was under the Duke of Devonshire's predecessors.[47]

The general manager of the railway was present, Mr Allport, who had a vote for the county, and he denied that there was any influence and announced that the directors particularly wished every man to vote precisely as his conscience dictated. The Board did not know Beale was to stand, nor had he canvassed with Beale. James replied that Allport had gone about with Beale. Allport answered that he had introduced Beale, a stranger to Derby, to a few people. 'Of course' somebody laconically added.[48] Beale himself refuted the accusations and said that his income from non-railway resources was ten-times that from his railway shares, and, in any case, the railway was very important to Derby.[48]

Polling day was fixed for Saturday March 28th and by Thursday March 26th there was no apparent solution to the problem of three liberals and a radical competing for two seats, for as yet, there was no conservative candidate in the field. the liberal newspaper, the *Reporter*, had taken the line that Bass should be regarded as a certainty and that the electors should decide on the relative strengths of the other candidates and support the strongest. They said they could not dictate to the electors, nor could Bass whose position was one of the utmost delicacy.[50]

Behind the scenes, Bass was attempting to sort out the situation. He arranged for an independent artitrator to examine the situation and he decided in favour of Beale. James accepted this and retired from the contest thought not without misgiving. In a letter which he prepared for publication in the Reporter he pointed out that his decision was taken even though at the time his canvass was far ahead of Beale's.[51] In 1859 when the process was repeated, he refused to accept the decision after being thus encouraged by his supporters.

On the day before nomination day the conservatives produced their candidate. William Forbes Mackenzie had been a member for Peebleshire from 1837 to 1852 and for Liverpool from 1852. He had held government office, first as a Lord of the Treasury in 1845 and 1846 and then as one of the joint secretaries of the Treasury under Derby's Administration. There were thus still four candidates in the field but on nomination day, March 27th, Heyworth was not there, though he was nominated and seconded. There is no evidence to explain his absence. The day was uneventful and the poll on the following day was surprisingly small.

Bass	882
Beale	844
Mackenzie	429[52]

Less than half of the 2,448 registered electors voted. The disappearance of Heyworth, whose conduct throughout the election had been a bit queer, taking hardly any steps, for example, to canvass, and the liberal squabbles, too, had perhaps contributed to the small poll.

Unfortunately for the Derby liberals, another contest followed before their disunited ranks could be gathered together. It was not surprising, therefore, that the election which took place only two years earlier, saw a repetition of the problem of too many candidates. Insofar as points of policy were discussed during the canvassing, they were the reactions to the reform bill introduced by the Derby-Disraeli minority government. the local radical group strongly opposed it. Meetings were called and alarm expressed at the bill, one of the clauses of which deprived the forty-shilling freeholder of his county vote if his qualifications came from a freehold held within the limits of a Parliamentary borough. The dissenter parson, the Rev. W. Griffiths, poked fun at the £60 savings clause and at the *Times* which had said that a labourer could save his sum and so qualify for a vote by the exercise of a moderate degree of self-denial and economy. This would mean, Griffiths said, that the man either had a vote and no wife, or a wife and no vote.[53]

The three liberal candidates all agreed in their opposition to the bill in their election advertisements and then turned to the local problem. Bass first broached the problem publicly in a speech at the Town Hall on April 8th. With circumspection equal to that which he had shown outwardly in 1857, he refused to side with either Beale or James. Also, as in 1857, he had suggested an independent arbiter. The friends of James had left it to Bass to choose. Curiously Bass chose Lord Belper. James wisely refused because of his connection by marriage. Whereupon Bass proposed to Biggs, member for Leicester.[54] A meeting was arranged at the Midland Hotel between James and Beale and their friends, and Biggs wrote a report: his view was that Beale's commercial connections gave him priority over James' relationship with Lord Belper. At first, James was inclined to accept the decision, but under pressure from his supporters he turned strongly against the whole idea of arbitration. In a speech on April 11th in the Town Hall, he announced that he had changed his mind about accepting the ruling of the arbitration because his friends had convinced him that once again he had been 'sold'. In an eloquent sppech, which contrasted sharply with the pedestrian railway-backed Beale, he affirmed his intention of standing for the independence of Derby and his refusal to be excluded as a consequence of a compact. To the charge he was disturbing and disorganising the liberal party he replied:

> I know the obligation to party, and am willing to sacrifice as much for that as any man. But here are some obligations a man cannot sacrifice. I cannot sacrifice my pledged work of honour to appear on these hustings and appeal to the votes of the people of Derby.[55]

Another argument had been used against James by Beale's group and that was the accusation that James was a lawyer and was looking merely for professional advancement and that therefore he dare not offend a Whig Government by risking a seat; he would thus retire from the contest. The effect, on the contrary, replied James, was to make his back look stiffer.[56]

The town was in a turmoil and Bass felt very much out of it. On April 10th he wrote to Augustus Henry Vernon, the son of George John, the fifth Lord Vernon,

> Thank you very much for speaking so kindly of my election; matters are still very much awry: the Town is divided into Beelites and Jamesites and are so absorbed in that dispute that they nearly forget there is another member to choose. I am greatly grieved at this state of things and could I have anticipated it would not have stood again.[57]

Some wit showed mock concern for Bass in an electoral squib;

> (Scene): Market Place at Derby. Time midnight
>
> MP or not MP that is the question
> Whether 'tis nobler, at the Poll to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take up arms against a sea of troubles
> And, by retiring, end them?
>
> And friends, give gentle hints about the Lib'ral cause
> Being dangered by three Richmonds in the field,
> 'They fear', say they, 'lest in the 'unnatural strife,
> A Tory should get in — they'd sooner have old Nick',
> I do believe they would — and be more fitly represented.
>
> O faithless friends, your base ingratitude
> Is bitterer than my beer! But stay —
> I'll not despair — There's Duty B-b and other few,
> Who love me truly — so at least they vow;
> And if they stand me fast, (but who can say?)
> Then, spite of James and Beale, Michael shall win the day![58]

One liberal group, with which Harry Adams, the editor of the *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* was associated, wanted Bass to win the day for south Derbyshire, as a solution to the problem. George Henry Cavendish wrote to the Duke of Devonshire about this

on April 11 th, passing on to his brother information he had received from Sir Joseph Paxton:

> He heard from Adams in reply today that they were in a great mess at Derby and that they wanted Bass to stand for south Derbyshire but that he had declined, but that they were going to try him again.[59]

Bass would not move and three liberals went to the poll.

They were joined by a conservative candidate, Henry Raikes, who had contested the borough in the general election of 1847. Edward Strutt and Frederick Leveson-Gower had won this election, but were unseated on a charge of bribery and corruption, and a fresh election was necessary. Raikes, in his speeches, referred to the episode, reminding his audience that he had not then claimed his seat as Heyworth had claimed Horsfall's when the latter was similarly unseated in 1852. He did not remind his hearers that there were probably special reasons for his behaviour which were tactical rather than altruistic.

The poll was held on Saturday 30th April and was satisfactory to the liberals, at least in that they gained the two seats, It was not satisfactory in the dangerous disorganisation there had been shown to exist in the liberal groups.

M. T. Bass	1260
Samuel Beale	903
William Melbourne James	735
Henry Raikes	648

Total polled 2080[60]
No. on register 2505.

In the general election of 1865, the conservatives in the borough of Derby repeated their 1852 tactics. The topic of parliamentary reform was very much in the air again, due partly to the conversion of Gladstone to a belief in it and to the impact of the American Civil War, and the conservatives chose the opportunity to bring forward a moderate reformer. The plan had succeeded in 1852 and a conservative had taken the second seat, only to be turned out as a result of the bribery petition. Now, aided by the continuing disunion in the liberal ranks, the plan succeeded and they had their first success since 1775 when Daniel Parker Coke was returned as the result of a petition and their first outright success since 1713 when Nathaniel Curzon and Edward Mundy were returned. The successful candidate in 1865 was William Thomas Cox, member of a well-known family and a merchant and banker, twice Mayor of Derby and High Sheriff of the county. He was also a member of the family concerned in the 1852 borough bribery case.

The sitting liberal members, Bass and Beale, presented themselves again and the liberal newspaper, the *Reporter*, did its best to join the two candidates together and forestal any breaches. Unlike the previous elections, the paper tackled the question of railway influence and Beale, and without denying that on occasions criticism of such influence was just, supported Beale on the grounds that the railway was of considerable importance to Derby.[61] The problem that faced the Bass and Beale group, and that puzzled them, was the presence of a third liberal candidate, a Samuel Plimsoll from Sheffield. His appearance caused great annoyance to the *Reporter* and the borough was placarded with three kinds of handbills which asked: 'Who was Plimsoll? Who brought him to Derby? What were his political principles?'[62] At a meeting on July 4th, Plimsoll gave answers to the three questions. He said he had begun work at the age of fifteen in a lawyer's office and then turned to trade in which, after once going bankrupt, he had made a success in the Yorkshire to London coal trade. His answer as to who had invited him was graciously irrelevant:

> . . . if himself, they would not be so ungenerous as to want him to inculpate himself. Suppose someone else — they would not have him be so ungenerous as to incriminate anyone whose fault consisted in too great a regard for him.[63]

His political principles, however were unequivocal. He was for free trade, extension of the franchise, the ballot, Mr. Gladstone, and for various practical reforms such as the provision of footwarmers for 2nd and 3rd class passengers in winter and for ham and tongue buns in railway refreshment rooms. The supporters of Bass siezed on these views and pointed out that they in no way differed from the general principles of Bass and Beale, and asked why Plimsoll should stand. The reply made to these questions at various meetings was that men had a right to choose their own candidate and were not tied to Bass and Beale.

Whilst the liberal Reporter seemed genuinely puzzled over Plimsoll, the conservative Mercury stated that there was dissatisfaction in the borough with Bass and Beale and that a candidate of more advanced views was required. Plimsoll had been invited to fill this role.[64] This is quite possible for Plimsoll's views were more advanced than those of Bass and Bass had come in for criticism over his support of the night poacher's bill. Soot and stale fish had been thrown at him during one of his meetings. There were disturbances at other meetings addressed by Bass and he hinted more than once that those responsible were Plimsoll's supporters.

The conservatives' tactics were clear. Delighted at the continuing disunion of the borough liberals and the dislike of the moderate liberal supporters for Plimsoll's radical support, they concentrated on the return of Cox and Bass. The editor of the *Mercury* wrote that they were ready to accept Bass on account of his popularity. The policy paid and on Wednesday July 12th, Cox headed the poll.

W. T. Cox	1096
M. T. Bass	1063
S. Plimsoll	692
S. Beale	606

The liberals were very annoyed. The editor of the Reporter roundly declared that Plimsoll had split the liberal vote. To soften the blow of Cox's triumph, he declared that if Cox meant what he said, he was a liberal.[66]

Three years later Plimsoll was returned, along with Bass, and the two sat together until 1880 when Plimsoll accepted the Chiltern Hundreds. Plimsoll was not easily forgiven. When he spoke at the Railway Works during his 1868 election, he was asked why he came to turn out Bass in 1865. The question caused an uproar and the chairman affected not to hear the inquiry. The question was pressed and Plimsoll's reply was that he came because he was invited to and because he had heard there was dissatisfaction with the members. He did not come to turn out anybody and if he contested the election it was that he would have been regarded as shirking his duty had he not done so. His final remark was that if he did come to turn out Bass, he had not turned him out. This caused more uproar and the meeting was sobered by the chairman who told them that they had not come to reap up old greavances.[67] Thus narrowly did the Derby liberals avert further disunion.

The three elections had shown the consequences that came from Derby's increasing reputation as a safe liberal seat. Yet the radicals were not satisfied with the local candidates. Bass was popular but he was no radical, though he was clever enough to disguise the absence of radicalism in his speeches. No other local man of standing could be found, so the radicals sought their second candidate outside the borough, as they often had to in other constituencies. The aristocratic and middle class liberals disliked candiates with radical backing and naturally looked for moderate men less dependent on such support. Hence part of the confusion. There remained the disorganised ingredients in the general liberal brew in which Bass was having great difficulty in remaining on the top.

The election of 1857, 1859, 1865 in the south: Liberal recovery

In 1857 the liberals of South Derbyshire contested the division for the first time since their defeat in 1841. They captured both seats and repeated their success in 1859 and 1865, save for the loss of one seat in 1859 to the conservative candidate by one vote. The

reasons for the recovery were not so much the rallying cry of reform, certainly not in 1857, though it was important in 1859 and 1865, but the securing of suitable candidates, a task that had defeated them since 1841. Thomas William Evans, whose father had failed to foster him on to the northern division of the county in the by-election of 1853, came to the south and represented them from 1857 until 1885, with one break from 1868 to 1874. The other liberal candidate was a consequence of political apostasy. C. R. Colvile, who had represented the division without being challenged since 1841, but whose independent attitude and possible defection from the conservatives had been hinted at in 1852, changed sides and carried the second seat in 1857 and in 1865. Although he did not become a radical, he was certainly more than a moderate whig. His politics appealed to the urban areas of the county rather than the rural areas, and his open collision with the local liberal landowners over his insistence on being a candidate of the people and not of the local landowners imparted to those politics a radical tinge. The quarrel also illustrated the difficulties that an individual candidate with a popular programme could present to a group who, through organising the registration of voters and the collection of subscriptions for fighting elections, were striving to build up a local party organisation. In 1859, Colvile's unexpected resignation only four weeks before the election, almost certainly cost the liberals the seat. Edward Keppel Coke, second son of the first Earl of Leicester, writing to Augustus Henry Vernon six years later about who should be the candidates for the 1865 election, reminded him of Colvile's action in 1859.

> I can't forget that by his independent conduct in sending in his resignation unbeknown to us lost us the seat. . . [68]

It was at this election that Augustus Henry Vernon, son of the fifth Baron Vernon, taking Colvile's place, was defeated by one vote by William Mundy. Before it was decided that Vernon should take Colvile's place, it had been suggested that a member of the Cavendish family be invited. The suggestion produced an interesting reaction among South Derbyshire liberals. It was reminiscent of a situation that had concerned some of them in 1832. The duke turned down the idea.

In the northern division of the country, the three elections were uncontested, bringing the number of uncontested elections since 1832 to seven out of ten. There was talk in 1859 of Thornhill's retiring due to ill health and this occasioned a letter from George Henry Cavendish to his brother William, who, in the previous year, had become the seventh Duke of Devonshire, in which he enunciated the principles of Cavendish local politics since the first Reform Bill:

> Frank Barber called on me just before I came away and said everybody must anticipate a vacancy next time and asked me whether I knew your sentiments about it. I told him that we had not spoken on the subject: but that my impression was that in the event of a vacancy you would take the same line as the late Duke, that having one of your family already in, you would leave it the to the N.D. liberals to choose their own man; but when they had done so, you would support him against a conservative, should one be started.[68]

In the same letter, George Henry Cavenish raised the hypothetical question of what their policy should be if the more radical elements in the county, around the mines and quarries of Rutland's family. Then it would be:

> a nice question to decide how far your influences should be exerted; as in the late Duke of Rutland's time and under his old agents a most friendly support was given to the Cavendish family even when party politics ran much higher than they do now.[70]

George Henry Cavendish makes no reference in the letter, as well he might have, to twenty years previously when the Duke of Rutland made such a request and reminded the sixth duke of the family compact, and how he (Cavendish) had advised his brother that the local liberal group was too strong for the Cavendishes to enter in to a family compact much as on personal grounds they would like to do so.

There were rumours from time to time that some of the electors wanted a candidate

with more advanced views. In 1857 an unsigned advertisement appeared in the *Derby & Chesterfield Reporter* requesting that those electors who favoured the ballot and extension of the franchise, and who thought that the manufacturing and commercial interests of the division were inadequately represented, should reserve their pledges in case a candidate of more advanced views should be brought forward.[71] In 1865 a business man, with mining and manufacturing interests in North Derbyshire came forward to take Thornhill's place, and was returned unopposed with the by then customary George Henry Cavendish. He was the second choice, for Sir Joseph Paxton had been decided upon, but he had refused.

The 1857 election in South Derbyshire was quiet and uneventful. The period of party confusion after the repeal of the corn laws continued and moved the editor of the *Derby and Chesterfield Reporter* to write of the approaching county election.

> in the present dislocated state of parties, it is scarcely possible to schedule any candidate among the supporters of any defined section of opinion. The old landmarks that divided political men have been washed away; and scarcely two people would now agree exactly on the precise meaning of the terms 'Whig, Tory, or Radical'.

The political distinction of the four candidates contesting South Derbyshire were certainly blurred. Thomas William Evans' programme consisted of high sounding principles and of no detail and could have been taken for conservatism; C. R. Colvile extended Peel's definition of conservatism and was regarded as an independent liberal, whilst calling himself a liberal conservative; Samuel William Clowes and Lord Stanhope at least offered themselves in the conservative interest.

In the absence of precise issues, local connections would have counted considerably, but in this respect also, all four candidates claimed similar allegiances. Evans and Colvile lived locally, and though Clowes was a Lancashire family, his mother was the daughter of the Rev. Robert Shuttleworth Holden of Aston Hall, Derbyshire, whilst Stanhope was descended from James Stanhope, who was raised to the peerage in 1717 and took the titles of Baron Stanhope of Elvaston, Derbyshire and Viscount Stanhope of Mahon.

Polling took place quietly on April 2nd and resulted in a substantial victory for Evans and Colvile.

Charles Robert Colvile	3350	
Thomas William Evans	3922	
Samuel William Clowes	2105	
Lord Stanhope	1972	[72]

Despite the lack of excitement in the 1857 elections, the liberals captured all six seats for the first time since 1832. The Derbyshire Mercury attributed it to Palmerston and took comfort from the thought that Palmerston was no true liberal as he has opposed Locke-King's £10 county franchise scheme and had disagreed with the ballot. The person most pleased was Colvile who regarded his return as a triumph of individual effort, a success gained without support of a powerful party to back him, as the other three candidates had.[73] It was a just boast for the Reporter had not warmly supported him and the poll book shows that Evans had an unusually high number of plumpers. This success was to cause much trouble to the South Derbyshire liberals.

The first trouble arising from Colvile's independent position was his unexpected and sudden resignation only four weeks before the 1859 election was to take place. A period of complicated personal negotiations followed during which it was discussed whether it would be wise to have a member of the Cavendish family representing the south as well as George Henry Cavendish for the north. But before this, Michael Thomas Bass, tried hard to persuade George Augustus Henry Vernon to take Colvile's place. Vernon was taken by surprise as he had met Colvile very recently and he had not said anything to Vernon about resigning.[74] Vernon's reaction was as careful as his father's had been in 1835: he wanted the invitation to come from a meeting of the local liberal group. Bass

pressed his suggestion, but Vernon would not yield his position.[75]

The first meeting of the group took place on Monday April 11th, and Vernon was invited to attend. He was asked to contest the division in place of Colvile, but refused, apparently, because of money matters.[76] Bass was prepared with another idea. He produced a telegram from Sir Joseph recommending that Lord Frederick Cavendish, the younger brother of Lord George, be put up. Bass strongly supported the suggestion.[78] Nearly all the meeting was against the proposal. Edward Keppel Coke, who was present, reported to Lord George Henry Cavendish that there was

> a strong feeling that it would not be desirable for any one of your family to start having got one seat for the north.[78]

Bass also, though still in favour of the idea, admitted to Vernon that the

> constituency are. . . offended and declare that they will not be 'squired' out of the seat.[79]

Conditions were different from 1832, and even at that time a policy of having members of the Cavendish family in both divisions of the county, had to be introduced cautiously. The notion of bringing Lord Frederick forward did not originate with the family but was the work of Paxton. He told Lord George that he had decided upon the plan 'on his own hook'. Lord George informed the duke of the proposal and recommended that this was a thing which must come entirely from the constituency.[80] He added a significant postscript:

> Charles Howard said with a warning voice the other day — 'Don't ride Derbyshire too hard'

A second meeting of the subscribers to the county registration was held two days later, on Wednesday April 13th. The proposal was again discussed. As at the first meeting, only Bass and one or two others were in favour of it. Spencer Compton Cavendish, Marquis of Hartington, wrote to the duke, his father, about the reactions of the leading liberals at this meeting:

> Evans and Vernon were certainly decidedly against it, and I believe Lord Waterpark not less so. Strutt was not warm in favour of it and I believe at last we have his opinion against it.[81]

Other names were considered but no agreement was reached.

At a third meeting, held on Friday April 15th, the idea that Lord Frederick Cavendish should stand was still considered. A few more were in favour of it, presumably because it was difficult to find a suitable candidate. A consideration of the possible consequences finally decided the meeting against it. Spencer Compton Cavendish informed his father on the 16th of the reasons for the decision:

> E. Coke as I supposed he explained to you is himself of the opinion that Freddy *could* be carried, but the opinion at the meeting yesterday was divided. There is no doubt that they *wd* now all like Freddy to stand, but as it was a question of telling you which were the chances in your favour and what would be the effect of his standing on your position in the county, they *cd* not take the responsibility of asking you to start him. George has had a letter from W. Barker. Thornhill though the mischief of Freddy's standing would be so great that he rode over to Chatsworth to tell you, but you were gone. Nesfield who let out all the tory secrets, had said it would produce a very bad feeling, and wd be the one thing to unite the tories.[82]

The duke has already decided and had declined to allow Lord Frederick's candidature. Lord George wrote to his brother approving the decision:

> . . . though he would probably have got in. . . it would have been an ugly fight and a damaging affair for the liberal party and would have compromised your interests.[83]

The episode had been started by Sir Joseph Paxton who had been motivated purely by his affection for the Cavendish family.[84] This would not have been readily appreciated by the electorate and the Cavendishes were well aware of the possible consequences. The story showed that whilst the Duke of Devonshire's influence in the northern division was expected and permitted, even by the conservatives, any attempt to extend

that influence to the south, particularly for one of his own family, would meet with strong opposition from both parties. The extent to which it would have rallied the conservatives is an indication of the part still played by personal and local issues in elections. On April 10th it was announced that Vernon would stand, and the negotiations ended.

The book was not closed, however, for on the following day, Lord Waterpark publicly introduced Vernon, boldly referred to the events of the previous week and sought to scotch any rumours that were flying about concerning the Cavendish influence, as had been his custom when electioneering twenty-five years previously. Before Vernon had accepted the nomination he said, other names were suggested and

> without mincing matters, Lord Frederick Cavendish was one of them. That gentleman was not put forward at the request of the Duke of Devonshire, whose farthest thought is to attempt to dictate to the constituency of the county, and who would repudiate any idea of interfering with the free choice of the county[85]

Vernon, in his speech, made it plain that he had been invited by the subscribers to the Liberal Registration Society. His sentiments were liberal but he refused to be tied down to particular measures or leaders. Bass and Waterpark supported him, asking that he should not be pinned down to specific measures as he was very young. It was a curious reason, for Vernon was thirty, and an unwise one, for the opposition was quick to seize this mollycoddling and dubbed Waterpark his 'wet nurse'.

To oppose Vernon and T. W. Evans, the conservatives brought forward William Mundy of Markeaton Hall, Derby. This was the main line of the Mundys, the family having split in the seventeenth century and acquired Shipley Hall, Ilkeston, by marriage. It was a lively and rowdy election. The 'blue lambs' from Nottingham appeared and made attempts to disrupt meetings. All three candidates canvassed hard and many speeches. Vernon wrote to many of his aquaintances soliciting their support. Some promised to remind their tenants how to vote. Others would not. An interesting example of a formal direction to an agent is seen in Lord Anglesey's letter to Lord Vernon of April 27th:

> In answer to your letter of the 21st, which has been forwarded to me, I beg to say, that I have instructed my Agents, to make known to my Tenantry that I hope to see the liberal candidates returned at the approaching election and that I shall be glad to find their views agree with mine.[86]

Tension mounted and polling day was saved from complete rowdyism only by rain. The declaration of the poll caused more scenes. When the following results were announced there was pandemonium:

Thomas William Evans	3536	
William Mundy	3185	
Hon. Augustus Henry Vernon	3184	[87]

There were cries of 'scruting' and the newspapers report that the voice of Bass was heard bellowing over the hubbub demanding a recount. The disorder led the Sheriff to warn the gathering in the County Hall that they would be turned out unless they quietened and this was misinterpreted by the police who rushed the crowd. The blue lambs were there and what was modestly described as a 'scuffle' ensued.[88]

After the declaration, the liberals held a meeting and decided that their defeat was due to their late start in the field and their inferior organisation. They determined to form a committee to meet every Friday to attend to registration and also to appoint canvassing committees.[89] Sympathisers to Vernon on his defeat agreed that these were the causes of the defeat and some made the usual allegations. Samuel Robinson wrote of

> Squires taking their tenants and other tradesmen to the Polling Booths to see them do their bidding — Clergymen boasting of inducing voters to get out of the way and break their promises. . .[90]

The liberal newspaper taunted Mundy with his one vote victory. 'Henceforth let the family escutcheon of Mr Mundy bear the ever-memorable motto — 'Alone I did it!' The poll-book shows that of the three candidates only Mundy voted. The jibe was just.

In the eighteenth century declarations by a candidate that he stood for the 'independence' of the country and the rights of its freeholders usually meant that there was a conflict between a country-gentleman and his supporters and some large aristocratic influence.[91] In 1865 the conflict between the 'independent' candidate and the committee of the liberal registration society was of a different sort. Charles Robert Colvile of Lullington Hall, near Burton-on-Trent, in the extreme south western tip of the county, was a country gentleman. His politics, since his switch from conservatism, had become left of moderate liberalism, and sufficiently so to attract support from the electorate in Derby who also had county votes. His challenge to the self-styled local liberal party, was a challenge to a group of people, similarly situated to himself. The party tried to resist the challenge because both of Colvile's politics and of his refusal at first to become a paying member of the party and to fight jointly with their candidate. The party split over the issue and a section accepted Colvile who took the second liberal seat.

Colvile made the first approach to the party early in February 1865. Hobson, the editor of the *Derbyshire Advertiser*, met Edward Coke and put the proposition that if Vernon was not standing Colvile would, provided that he was helped financially above an expense of £500 and that he stood as an independent candidate.[92] Coke passed on the information to Augustus Henry Vernon, with the hope that Vernon would stand. Vernon would not stand and Coke considered the possibility of standing himself if the party would agree to it. He made the interesting admission that Colvile had a better claim than he as an independent candidate but no claim at all as a party candidate.[93] Doubtless he had in mind Colvile's popularity in the borough. On February 24th, Coke met Colvile and Hobson, and though Colvile repudiated having sanctioned Hobson to make an approach on his behalf, once having said this, he conducted the meeting as though the repudiation had never been made. He repeated his attitude, adding that Bass was behind him, and, with somewhat pompous magnanimity, that he might associate himself with the party at the last minute 'for the public good'.[94]

Coke and Vernon kept the Colvile approach to themselves, and it was not until three weeks later that they informed Drury-Lowe of Locko Park, Spondon, Derby, the chairman of the Liberal Registration Committee, and even then only in very general terms.[95] Drury-Lowe would have nothing to do with the idea. A meeting of the committee was arranged for Friday April 7th. Vernon, who was anxious that a second liberal candidate be brought forward to join Evans, and who was not averse to Colvile's politics, tried to induce Colvile to change his mind about standing separately.[96] Colvile would have nothing to do with the idea:

> I presume the Liberal Registration Society does not consist of more than one or two hundred members but there are over 7,000 electors on the register and if I determine to offer myself for South Derbyshire I shall appeal to the constituency at large and not as the nominee of any committee or society and I shall stand to win or lose single handed and alone.[97]

The reason for this attitude was that his success in 1857 was gained despite the fact that he had not the support of the great whig landlords as a body.[98] Colvile had correctly observed this from the poll book. A number of the landowners around Derby, and all the members of the Strutt family had 'plumped' for Evans.

The meeting on April 7th was unanimous in rejecting Colvile's proposals, which were presented through Vernon, but divided over whether to run two candidates. Vernon, in favour of fighting, proposed Coke as the second candidate, but the meeting, under Lord Belper's influence, decided against two candidates.[99] He preferred to share the representation with the conservatives, in the absence of a popular cry. This worried some members who felt that the conservatives, realising Colvile's strength in the borough and in the villages with manufacturing and quarrying works, might support him and thus oust Evans. A second meeting, held later in the month, failed to resolve

the problem. There were some who were discontented at Lord Belper's inactivity. Coke wrote:

> My Dear Aug,
>
> After finishing my letter to you in Derby I met Dr Peach and Barber and find we are not the only two who were disgusted with the Belper thraldom, they both said it was evidently a matter of £. s. d. He, the Dr., said he was greatly grieved at Lord B's decision, but evidently dare not speak out or kick having been so long under the Strutt rule.[100]

Coke had, in between the meetings, tried to undermine Colvile's resolve to stand. First, he suggested to Vernon that Bass be informed of the doubtful support for Colvile so that his money would not support a man who would split the party.[101] Vernon put this tactfully to Bass.[102] After the second meeting, Coke tried again. He gave Colvile a list of probable supporters, non-supporters, and doubtfuls, an estimate which disturbed Colvile considerably.[103] He also sought the aid of the Duke of Devonshire and the Marquis of Hartington. Hartington said:

> he should write and urge him not to do the party more harm than good.[104]

The negotiations burst into publicity in June when a group of Melbourne electors presented a requisition to Colvile to represent them. It was openly aimed against the nomination by a few men:

> We also submit that the time has or ought to have passed when a few individuals of whatever party they may be, can be permitted to dictate th course of the independent electors of the division.[105]

Colvile replied to the requisition sharply and satirically, criticising the party top men, and lamenting his lack of support from 'the upper Ten Thousand of the Liberal Party'. He accused the two parties of preferring a pact between Evans and Mundy to himself. The *Derby Mercury*, seeing the signs of a compromise election receding, angrily attacked the unwarrantable assumption of a knot of radicals in forcing the liberal candidate into a contest.[107] The liberal *Reporter* put the issue candidly and warned the party:

> It depends on the whig landlords whether the whig party is to be shattered or not in view of the general support for Colvile.[108]

A compromise would break the party, was its view. Certainly support for Colvile was rapidly increasing. Similar deputations to the one from Melbourne were received from Derby, Belper, Swadlincote and other places. An attempt to heal the widening breach came from Colvile's side. Thomas Clarke, the chairman of the Derby deputation wrote to Vernon, asking for the party's help in return for Colvile's support of Evans:

> It appears that there is a want of unanimity amongst the leaders of the liberal party respecting Mr Colvile, and we find that it is most desirable to secure the support of the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Belper, Sir Henry Every, Mr Drury-Lowe, Mr Broadhurst and yourself, I have been requested to write a similar letter to these noblemen and gentlemen with a view to bringing about a good understanding.[109]

Vernon replied on the 28th, regretting that he could not agree to Clarke's request and adding that the reasons would be appearing in a letter he had just addressed to the two liberal newspapers. The letters appeared in the *Advertiser* and in the *Reporter* on the same date. Vernon took exception to Colvile's Melbourne speech:

> I entirely dispute the correctness of your assertion that the action of the whig magnates (which term I interpret to mean the liberal Registration Association) has been in the smallest degree dictatorial.

He went on to justify the association as necessary for estimating chances of success and selecting the most-likely-to-be-supported candidate. If it were true that the whig magnates did not support him it was for several reasons. He had retired in 1859 without

letting them know; he did not subscribe to the expenses of the registration; his pecuniary contributions were neglible; his politics were unpalatable; he had made vague threats that he had it in his power to return Mundy. Colvile's reply, printed in the same issues, was surprisingly conciliatory. Disagreements could have been avoided 'if the liberal party at large had been invited to participate in your councils'.

The contest opened with Evans and Colvile occupying separate committee rooms. The *Mercury*, disappointed in having a contest, sought satisfaction in the hope that 'the Derbyshire liberals are at war again', no doubt hoping that the troubles in the borough would be repeated in the county. But they were not. The election was unexpectedly quiet. Extra police were drafted in but were unnecessary. Colvile and Evans, who seem to have got on better than the disputes might have led one to expect, canvassed together and supported one another. Reform was a topic of the election but all three candidates were vague about it and Colvile's support and the enthusiasm that he occasioned seemed to come more from his challenge to the liberal leaders than from any radicalism in his politics. His view on democracy was that of any liberal:

> I want to put our electoral system on a firmer and surer basis. I am not in favour of allowing the democratic element to outweigh all the other elements. I would give justice to all. Class must be represented and balanced-our consitiution in a system of counterpoise.[111]

Nomination day passed off quietly. The Reporter believed the presence of ladies restrained the men and referred to their growing power. Already it was necessary for the candidate to say a kind work to the 'housewife, fondle the baby and say all kinds of civil things to the partially grown-up daughter'. Modern electoral techniques were clearly developing!

The result was no run-away victory for the liberals

Thomas William Evans	3891	
Charles Robert Colvile	3650	
William Mundy	3619	[112]

On this occasion, Mundy did not vote for himself.

The result did not smooth out all the liberal ruffles. Colvile offered to subscribe to the Registration Society but his words seemed barbed. He wrote to Vernon, offering, along with his subscription, his advice, if he thought it of any value, and general help save in respect of the:

> other functions which your association exercises with which it would of course be unbecoming in me to interfere, I mean those matters which have reference to the selection of candidates.[113]

Vernon was glad that Colvile had subscribed but felt that he might have paid tribute publicly to the undoubted help that the association gave in securing his election,[114] to which Colvile replied that he thought it was prudent to examine the poll book before he did so.[115] If he did examine it, he would not have paid the tribute, for the book reveals that those liberal landowners who cast plumpers for Evans in 1857 did the same in 1865. The last recorded ripple was in October when Colvile refused to share in the payment of the illegal expenses that had been incurred during the election.[116]

REFERENCES

1 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 18 June 1852.
2 *Ibid.*, 25 June 1852.
3 Derby Mercury, 16 June 1852.
4 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 25 June 1852.
5 *Ibid.*, 9 July 1852.
6 Derby Mercury, 14 July 1852.
7 Derby Central Library (D.C.L.), Poll book, 1852.
8 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 16/23 July 1852.
9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*, 13 August 1852.
11 *Ibid.*, 3 December 1852.
12 *Ibid.*
13 Quoted by the Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 3 December 1852.
14 *Ibid.*
15 D.C.L., House of Commons Select Committee, Minutes of evidence, 16 December 1852, 96.
16 *Ibid.*, 1-2.
17 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 11 March 1853.
18 Quoted by Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 3 December 1852.
19 Derby Mercury, 15 March 1853.
20 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 11 March 1853.
21 *Ibid.*, 18 June 1852.
22 *Ibid.*, 9 July 1852.
23 *Ibid.*, 6 August 1847.
24 Sir Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III,* i, 130.
25 Derby Mercury, 16 July 1853.
26 *Ibid.*
27 Chatsworth MSS., 84.46.
29 *D.N.B.*, 44, 103-4.
29 Chatsworth MSS, 84.72A.
30 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 15 July 1853.
31 There is no poll book for this by-election in the Derby Central Library Collection nor among the papers at Chatsworth, Kedleston or Sudbury.
32 Derby Mercury, 16 July 1853.
33 D.C.L., election handbill.
34 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 22 July 1853.
35 Derby Mercury, 26 July 1853.
36 Chatsworth MSS., 84.45.
37 In the 25 July letter to the duke, G. H. Cavendish relates the conversation he had with Thornhill on the previous day and states that he said to Thornhill that he thought he was the proper man to be member. It may have been polite flattery, but in view of the close neighbourliness of the two families, it is probably genuine.
38 Chatsworth MSS., 84.46.
39 *Ibid.*
40 Derby Mercury, 18 March 1857.
41 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 13 March 1857.
42 *Ibid.*
43 *Ibid.*
44 *Ibid.*
45 Derby Mercury, 25 March 1857.
46 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 13 March 1857.
47 *Ibid.*, 27 March 1857.
48 *Ibid.*
49 *Ibid.*
50 *Ibid.*
51 D.C.L., Bass letters.
52 Derby Mercury, 28 March 1857. There is no poll book for this election among the Derby Central Library Collection. The result is in the poll book for 1859 and agrees with the Mercury.
53 *Ibid.*, 23 March 1859.
54 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 15 April 1859.
55 *Ibid.*
56 *Ibid.*
57 Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
58 D.C.L., Broadsheet Collection.
59 Chatsworth MSS., 84.81.
60 D.C.L., poll book.
61 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 9 June 1865.
62 *Ibid*
62 *Ibid.*, 7 July 1865.
63 *Ibid.*
64 Derby Mercury, 5 July 1865.
65 D.C.L., poll book.

66 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 14 July 1865.
67 Derby Mercury, 14 October 1868.
68 Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
69 Chatsworth MSS., 84.84. The letter is dated 9 February but with no year. The form suggests that it is written to one to whom these problems are new and the year therefore is most probably 1859. The month is of no help.
70 *Ibid.*
71 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 20 March 1857.
72 D.C.L., poll book.
73 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 27 March 1857.
74 Vernon to Bass (undated, but 8 April 1859, from internal evidence), Vernon MSS, Sudbury House.
75 Vernon MSS., Sudbury House. A series of letters between Vernon and Bass from 8 April to 10 April tell this story.
76 Edward Coke to G. H. Cavendish, Chatsworth MSS., 361.0. (The letter is undated but can be dated to 11 April from internal evidence).
77 *Ibid.*
78 Edward Coke to G. H. Cavendish, Chatsworth MSS., 361.1. (Also undated but from internal evidence can be dated as 12 April).
79 Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
80 11 April 1859. Chatsworth MSS., 84.81.
81 13 April 1859. Chatsworth MSS., 340.135.
82 Chatsworth MSS., 340.137.
83 16 April 1859. Chatsworth MSS., 84.83.
84 *Ibid.*
85 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 22 April 1859.
86 Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
87 D.C.L., poll book.
88 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 13 May 1859.
89 *Ibid.*
90 Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
91 Namier, *op. cit.*, i, 88.
92 Coke to Vernon, 18 February 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
93 Coke to Vernon, 20 February 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
94 Coke to Vernon, 25 February 1865, Vernon MSS, Sudbury House.
95 Coke to Vernon, 14 March 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
96 Vernon to Colvile, 4 April 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
97 Colvile to Vernon, 6 April 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
98 *Ibid.*
99 Vernon to Bass, 14 April 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
100 Coke to Vernon (undated but clearly referring to these negotiations), Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
101 Coke to Vernon, 12 April 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
102 Vernon to Bass, 14 April 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.

103 The list (contained in Coke's last letter of 29 April to Vernon) was:

Will support Colvile	Wont	Doubtful
Ld. Belper — last moment	Drury Lowe	Wright
Ed. Coke	Peach	Johnson
Vernon	A. Strutt	
Waterpark	Jessop	
Duke	Peach	
	Curzon	
	Broadhurst	

Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.

104 Coke to Vernon, 10 May 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
105 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 16 June 1865.
106 *Ibid.*
107 *Ibid.*, 21 June 1865.
108 *Ibid.*, 23 June 1865.

109 24 June 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
110 Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
111 Derby and Chesterfield Reporter, 28 July 1865.
112 D.C.L., Poll book.
113 26 July 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
114 Vernon to Colvile, 27 July 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
115 29 July 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.
116 Colvile to Vernon, 11 October 1865, Vernon MSS., Sudbury House.