An Augustan Election. The 1710 General Election in the County of Surrey[1]

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By the summer of the year 1710 Queen Anne had ruled England for just over eight years. She had ascended the throne at a difficult time in her country's history for her accession had coincided with the resurgence of party political strife which had, largely, lain dormant throughout the reign of her brother-in-law and predecessor, King William III. The Glorious Revolution of 1688/9 which had placed the latter on the throne of England and had condemned his wife's father, the Catholic James II, to spend his remaining years in exile, had been an event engineered by both Whigs and Tories. In as much as this had been the case, the Protestant William had been spared the political troubles which had tormented King Charles II in the 1680's and which had overlapped into the reign of his brother James. In those days Low Church Whigs with their trading connections sparred with High Church Tories whose interest lay in their landed estates and whose reputations, thanks to the work of Titus Oates, were tinged with popery. The Whigs had striven to 'exclude' the Catholic James from his brother's throne while the Tories had stoutly defended the legitimate rights of the monarchy.

The reign of William III had seen an era of Court—Country politics when party distinctions were blurred and when issues involving 'principles' were temporarily lacking. This non-party hiatus came to an end as a result of three distinct political events which took place at the turn of the century. The first was the long awaited death of Charles II of Spain, the subsequent recognition by the French King Louis XIV of his grandson as King of Spain, and a French invasion of the Spanish Netherlands. The second was the death of the then Princess Anne's son, the Duke of Gloucester, and the passing of the Act of Settlement, which stated that Anne's heir was to be her protestant cousin, Sophia Electress of Hanover. The third was the impeachment of three Whig lords, namely the Earls of Halifax, Somers, and Orford, for the part they had played in signing the Second Partition Treaty. These three happenings in effect signalled the start of another bout of party political strife in the counties and boroughs of England. The non-party days of William III had seen elections fought over local questions and had seen Court supporters faced with Country opponents whose aims were to limit the numbers of the standing army, to curb the powers of placemen and the like. Elections were not being fought as party battles as they had been before the Revolution and issues were divorced from any form of ideology. However the events of 1700-1702 put the principles back into politics and ushered in a time when party was very much the order of the day.

The developments as regards the Spanish situation meant, in effect, that the signal for a general European war had been given. Europe had only enjoyed peace since 1697 but King Louis XIV's invasion of the Spanish Netherlands, ostensibly in favour of his grandson's Spanish claims, threatened both the British coast and the Dutch frontier. Once again there was to be a confrontation of the forces of William III and Louis XIV in the Low Countries. This in turn was to mean that the natural dislike of Tory Country gentlemen for involvement in a continental land war was to be contrasted with the more outward looking attitude of the Whigs. This difference in basic attitude—Tories anxious to end a war which meant ever increasing taxation, and Whigs anxious to break the power of a country which was threatening their trading and mercantile interests—was to bedevil politics throughout the reign of Anne and, naturally enough, the longer the war lasted, the greater the antipathy and distruct which was to exist between the two parties.

However, as far as immediate politics were concerned, the death of the young Duke of Gloucester and the impeachment of Lord Somers and his colleagues really broke up the old 'country' ties. The ailing prince's demise and the subsequent transference of the succession to the Protestant Electress of Hanover took the crown from the immediate family of James II. This was more than many Tories could stomach and, to the horror of country Whigs, erstwhile comrades who had joined them in opposing standing armies and the like were grumblingly inserting restrictive clauses into the Bill of Settlement on the one hand, and pressing for the impeachment of the Whig leaders on the other. Furthermore, these factious moves were being attended to when Parliament should have been giving its undivided attention to the growing threat from France. However, in the eyes of Country Tories, their old colleagues were gladly handing the crown of England to the Germans, and were also defending the actions of a man (Somers) who, without the sanction of his fellows at Westminster (albeit with the consent of the King), was signing treaties with foreign powers and acting in a most unconstitutional fashion. Points of principle were now appearing on the scene and 'party' was once more beginning to claim its adherents. [2]

The death of the King, in March 1702, and the succession of Queen Anne hastened this trend. Tories felt that once more they had a genuine Stuart monarch on the throne and felt that they were once again the party of the Crown. It was a return, in a sense, to the politics of the reign of Charles II when the Tory party defended the monarchy from the attempted inroads of the Whigs. The inevitability of the Protestant succession in the House of Hanover, which had been fixed by the Act of Settlement, was temporarily forgotten and the Tories felt that life was normal again after nearly fifteen years of unnatural political affairs. Indeed, the first election of the reign was not held until the July of 1702, but before that date the ministry had been transformed to include high Tory stalwarts, and the government was headed by the Queen's old friends the Earl of Marlborough and Lord Godolphin. Neither was an extreme Tory, but neither was of a particularly

friendly disposition towards the Junto Lords, as the five Whig leaders were known. Four of the five, namely Lords Somers, Wharton, Halifax and Orford, had played their parts in the non-party governments of William III, but they appeared to be out of place in the early Tory days of the new Queen's reign.

The Marlborough-Godolphin ministry guided and directed the affairs of the country until it was toppled in 1710. However, in order to prosecute the war successfully it was found necessary to rid the government of its Tory flavour. Hence, while Marlborough won his brilliant victories of Blenheim and Ramillies overseas, Whig moderates began to replace Tories in the ministry at home. Highlights in this process were the election of the Whig Speaker Smith in 1705, and the entry into the government of the fifth Junto lord, the Earl of Sunderland. These Whig gains were magnified greatly after the successful Whig election of 1708. Robert Harley, once a Whig 'countryman' but fast turning into a Tory figurehead, had left the ministry two months before the election, and slowly into Tory gaps came the ominous —in many eyes—figures of Junto stalwarts. In November 1708, eight months after the election, Lord Somers and the dissolute Lord Wharton entered the ministry, in November of the following year the last Tory in the government —excluding Marlborough and Godolphin themselves—the Earl of Pembroke, resigned, and in that same month the last member of the Junto, the Earl of Orford, had joined the ministry. Hence, by that date, the government was a coalition comprising the 'war Tories' and the Whigs, and the opposition was a Tory one.

The growing dissatisfaction with the Ministry which was spreading throughout the country by 1709-10 was largely bound up with the drawn out progress of the Spanish Succession War. The national desire for peace and a cessation of hostilities was intensified by the French need for peace which prompted King Louis XIV to make wide concessions to gain this aim after the Allied victory gained by Marlborough at Oudenarde in 1708. The rejection of these peace proposals coupled with the heavy losses sustained at the Battle of Malplaquet, an allied pyrrhic victory, combined to bring more opposition to bear against the Whiggish ministry. Added to this there was the chaotic handling of the Sacheverell affair, when the government attempted to impeach Dr Sacheverell, a high church minister, for preaching a defamatory sermon which attacked the Glorious Revolution and also insulted the various members of the ministry. This last fiasco lost the ministry the support of Queen Anne who had already drifted away from her old friends the Marlboroughs, disliked and distrusted the Lords of the Junto, and regarded the attack on Sacheverell as an attempt to overthrow her beloved church.

By the time of the 1710 election Church militancy, provoked by the Sacheverell scandal, had united with the desire for peace, and as a result of this alliance the Whigs were faced with formidable opposition in the country. Moreover, disaster had struck them at court. As Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, had lost her position as Queen Anne's friend and confidante, so that role had been taken over by her distant relative Abigail Masham. The

fallen minister, Robert Harley, skilfully used Mrs Masham as an agent within the palace, and within months a new palace triumvirate had replaced the old one of Anne and the Marlboroughs. The Queen, Abigail Masham and Robert Harley formed the new bloc, and the power of Harley was demonstrated when, in August 1710, the Earl of Godolphin was dismissed as the Queen's chief minister. The following month Harley became the recognised leader of the Tory opposition, and in October 1710 the country went to the polls with a hostile anti-'Whig war-mongers' and Dissenters feeling in the air.

During this period fourteen members were returned to Westminster from the Surrey constituencies at each general election. Two were Knights of the Shire, who were returned by the forty-shilling freeholders of the county, and the other twelve were returned from the boroughs of Bletchingley, Gatton, Guildford, Haslemere, Reigate and Southwark. Guildford and Southwark had corporations—the latter being one of the London wards—but in neither case were the voting rights restricted to members of that corporation. Broadly speaking the right to vote in three of the boroughs, namely Gatton, Guildford, and Southwark, depended on residence and the payment of local taxes, and in the other three, Bletchingley, Haslemere and Reigate, the voting rights were attached to the possession of certain 'ancient tenements' or burgages. The number of voters varied from election to election, but Gatton, at one end of the scale, could muster no more than about twenty voters at the best of times, whereas Southwark, at the other end, could usually produce between four and five thousand. Of the other boroughs, Reigate and Guildford could usually provide some two hundred voters, Haslemere was lucky with fifty, and Bletchingley managed between sixty and seventy.

The Whigs had illustrated their strength in Surrey when, in 1702, they had captured nine seats to the Tories' five in the first general election of the reign; and this was when Tory hopes were high with the new Stuart monarch. They increased their hold on the county over the next few years—there were elections in 1705 and 1708—and, although in 1708 they still held only nine of the fourteen seats, they were in the happy position of having captured a second all-important county seat. (They had lost, as a result of its owner's death, control of the pocket borough of Gatton but had captured another borough seat at Guildford. These results, together with the county gain, meant that Whig representation at Westminster remained the same despite the upsurge in popularity illustrated by the county result.) However, whereas in 1702 Surrey had failed to mirror national trends, this was far from being the case in 1710. The General Election confirmed at one stroke the victory of Harley, the Church party, and the Tory peace party, and the county of Surrey fell in line with the feelings of the country as a whole. The Whigs lost both county seats, and seven of the boroughs were outside their control. It was an exact reversal of the 1702 result and sweet revenge for the Tories.

The two ex-Knights of the Shire who unsuccessfully contested their old

seats in the summer of 1710 were Sir Richard Onslow, Bt., and Sir William Scawn, Kt. Sir William, who was an alderman of London, had represented the county since 1705 and before that had sat for Windsor and Grampound in Parliament. He was an influential figure in the city of London, and held important posts in both the Bank of England and the East India Company. He was knighted by William HI in 1692 and had been sheriff of Cornwall in 1704. He was immensely wealthy, as can be seen by the fact that he was able to leave his nephew, and heir, one article of £9,000 per annum, 'besides an immense estate in money', and he owned estates in five counties. However, although he had lived at Carshalton in Surrey since 1696, he had not the local stature of his colleague, Sir Richard Onslow, and he owed his county seat to his Whig steadfastness rather than to his prestige in Surrey.[3]

On the other hand Sir Richard Onslow, besides being a prominent Whig, was the head of the most influential family in the county. A force to be reckoned with in county politics since the sixteenth century the Onslows, whose seat was at Clandon Park near Guildford, had staunch Presbyterian or Low Church sympathies, and Sir Richard's grandfather had fought on the Roundhead side during the Civil War. It was this fact that told against the family during the early years of the Restoration, but Sir Richard's father, Arthur, was elected for the county in 1678 and either he or Richard himself represented Surrey for twelve out of the next thirteen Parliaments. The surprising, and hotly disputed exception, was in 1685, the first year of King James II's reign, when Whig fortunes were at their lowest. Sir Richard easily topped the county poll in 1702 when he defeated three Tories, and in 1705 and 1708, in the company of Sir William Scawen, he ensured that the Whigs retained their hold on the county. Furthermore, such was his grip on Surrey that, in 1708, his son was elected for the borough seats of Bletchingley and Haslemere and his brother and a friend of the family monopolised both the Guildford seats.

The Tories in 1710, although very conscious of their own rising fortunes, were equally aware of this immense electoral power of Sir Richard Onslow, who had the added prestige of having been elected Speaker of the House of Commons in 1708. Hence they hoped to unite him with a Tory colleague. Unfortunately, in the July of that year, Sir Richard damped those plans by refusing to stand with Sir Francis Vincent, the Tory candidate, nor at the same time was he prepared to stand again with Sir William Scawen. *Dyer's Newsletter* for 22 July stated that

> the Speaker of the House of Commons (Sir Richard Onslow) is making his interest tooth and nail in the county of Surrey but refused to stand with Sir Francis Vincent as he has been invited by the Tories or join with Sir William Scawen as desired by the Whigs but will stand on his own bottom, upon which I hear that the honourable Mr Finch, son of Lord Guernsey, will be set up and joined with Sir Francis.

Sir Francis, it is worth mentioning at this juncture, was the county's premier baronet and a staunch Tory who had represented the county in

the first Parliament of King William III's reign and who had stood unsuccessfully in both 1698 and 1708. The Finches, father and son, lived at Albury in the south of the county. Lord Guernsey, a former Solicitor General, had bought the Albury estate in 1680 but, despite the fact that he had been elected for Guildford in 1685, neither he nor his son could rival Sir Richard Onslow in local stature.[4]

This state of affairs turned out to be merely temporary for, on 1 August, the readers of *Dyer's Newsletters* were informed:

> Last week at the assizes of Kingston there was a very great appearance of the Gentlemen of Surrey, and upon Sir Richard Onslow (the Speaker) declaring he would stand for knight of the shire again, with Sir William Scawen, all the Gentlemen of the Grand Jury (which consisted of 35) declared to his face, they would oppose his election with all their interest and might, and then they unanimously pitched upon the honourable Mr Finch and Sir Francis Vincent, baronet, to represent that county. The Judges who held the assizes there declared they had never seen so numerous a Grand Jury in all their lives.

The die had now been cast and events began to move swiftly. On 2 August Lord Jersey, a Tory nobleman who owned a small estate near Westerham, Kent, which was on the eastern border of the county, wrote to Lord Dartmouth, who had replaced the Junto Earl of Sunderland as Secretary of State early in 1710:

> If Mr Finch is of my mind and thinks it worth his trouble to come into our part of the county to engage the freeholders I desire your Lordship to let him know that I must have due notice that Mr Thomas Lambert may be at liberty to meet him, who will be very servicable to him in this affair.

Finally, on 3 August, Dyer told his readers that Finch and Vincent were meeting the gentlemen of Surrey at Epsom to arrange 'in what manner to promote the election of the two ... to represent the county in Parliament'.[5]

Meanwhile powerful forces were still at work to promote the Onslow interest within Surrey. Dr Arthur Charlett, the Master of University College, Oxford, and a Chaplain to the Queen, wrote to certain Surrey clergymen:

> Having been desired by the several candidates for Surrey to write to my clergy on Her Majesty's calling a new Parliament for your assistance in the Election of Shire Knights, I cannot refuse Sir Richard Onslow the justice of saying to you that, as I have known him from our youth a man of great honour and affection to our happy constitution, so I am particularly convinced of his great service to our Established Church.

Charlett cited two instances of Onslow's services to the Church and hoped

'you will find your acknowledgements in your votes for him'. He then went on,

> I was in hopes before I left your parts to have been the happy instrument of uniting his interests with Sir Francis Vincent, for whom I have an honour in the approaching election, for the county of Surrey,

but unfortunately for the would-be peacemaker 'unhappy heats that rose unexpectedly' ruined his plans.[6]

Nevertheless it was widely supposed that Onslow's interest was far too vast to be broken. On 12 August the Tory leader William Bromley mentioned, in a letter to Arthur Charlett, that he heard 'that Sir R. O. has too much and too cultivated an interest to lose his election', but on the other hand Lady Oglethorpe, widow of the late Sir Theophilus, an ardent Jacobite whose estates lay in the south-west of the county, suspected that despite their efforts the ex-members were losing ground. 'I begin to think that the two old knights will lose it, though they exert themselves ten times more than ever', she wrote to Robert Harley, on 6 September.

> The Speaker has wrote lately a most submissive letter to a cobbler at Haslemere to beg the favour of his vote and interest in behalf of himself and his son; . . . By ill luck the cobbler had not learnt to read, not expecting such an honour; I wish I could have prevailed to have kept this letter, but he hugs it as close as his knight does him.[7]

Meanwhile as the days grew nearer to the election date the London newspapers gave instructions to the followers of the various candidates. The *Daily Courant* informed its readers that

> The Election for the Knights of the Shire for the County of Surrey will be at Gilford on Wednesday next, the 11th of the instant October. Sir Francis Vincent, Baronet and the Honourable Heneage Finch, Esq; stand Candidates for that Election; being Gentlemen of firm loyalty to Her Majesty, well affected to the Government both in Church and State, and to the Protestant Succession in the Illustrious House of Hanover.

The *Courant* was, however, scrupulously fair with its electoral dealings. The day after printing the above propaganda it informed its readers that

> your vote and interest is desired for the Right Honourable Sir Richard Onslow Bar; and Sir William Scawen Knt; being persons of known loyalty, with visible estates, and zealous for the service of their country.

Then, on the day before the election, the supporters of Scawen and Onslow were directed 'to meet at St Mary Magdalen's Courtyard in Bermondsey Street, Southwark at six of the Clock that morning; to go to Guildford in a body together'.

However, at Guildford itself the Tories were playing their last cards.

> There were given out Bills at the Election for Surrey, the Substance of 'em to this effect: To desire Votes for Sir F. Vincent and Mr Finch to represent 'em, being Gentlemen of undoubted Loyalty and Fidelity to Her Majesty and Government, steadily and heartily affected to the established Church, and the Protestant Succession in the Illustrious House of Hanover; and abhor all scandalous and unprecedented Practices; never were for a Scaffold to try, run down, and burn the Church Doctrines; nor abused the Minister with scandalous names for defending them; nor mov'd the Lords to set Rules what Doctrines should be preach'd: by those Members Advice, they knew not what Doctrine they would let in to ruin Our Church, and therefore to desire to vote and poll for these Gentlemen, who are true to the Queen and Church, against all Managers, of Oliver's Party and Principles, that once murder'd their King, and Thousands of the Nation, to reign over us.[8]

The result of the poll justified the trouble the Tories had taken in building up an interest within Surrey. Heneage Finch headed it with 2,199 votes, his colleague Sir Francis Vincent was close behind with 2,165, Sir Richard Onslow was third with 1,843, and Sir William Scawen footed the list with 1,652. The Onslow interest had failed and the Tories were triumphant. On 13 October the Duke of Marlborough was told

> There was never so prevalent a fury as the people of England show against the Whigs and for the High Church ... Sir Richard Onslow has lost it in Surrey, and I believe in Parliament they will exceed two to one,

and the following day *Dyer's Newsletter* reported 'to the great mortification of Sir Richard who thought his interest in this county was so great as not to be shaken' most of the gentry were for Vincent and Finch.[9]

In effect it would seem that Sir Richard had lost his seat through his determination to stand with his old colleague, Sir William Scawen.

> Riches and commercial connection will always have great weight; and it was this influence, added to very considerable interest among the landholders, which always ... supported the Onslow family in their various contests for county representation,

and it would seem that, in 1710, Sir Richard had neglected a vital half of his interest in adhering to Scawen and the mercantile world. On 29 July a friend told Lord Guernsey,

> I told him (Theophilus Oglethorpe of Haslemere) that I thought he had more spirit and resentment than to suffer the city of London to choose the representatives for Surrey, that Sir R. O. had manifestly

> put his whole dependence on his City friends, and despised the interest of the County Gentlemen.

Indeed, the tentative feelers put out by the Tories in that July had shown that they were prepared to see Sir Richard returned as a colleague of Sir Francis Vincent, but Onslow's decision to stand with his old colleague had driven the gentry into opposing him. The Earl of Anglesey summed up the Surrey situation at the end of the month when he said

> My Lord Guernsey's son, Mr Finch, sent a gentleman to me yesterday to desire I would beg your interest for him and Sir Francis Vincent, in ye next election of knights of ye shire for Surry; he told me that the gentlemen had met and offered Sir Richard Onslow that if he would joyn with Sir Francis he should have their assistance, and the county might be easy, but Sir Richard, after taking time to consider, having not thought fitt to give them his promise for it, they were obliged to set up two to oppose both him and Sir William Scawen.

As a local figure the gentry would have accepted Sir Richard Onslow, but as a Whig partisan in times of Tory triumph he was doomed to failure. His commercial interest and Whig support was not enough to carry him through once he had lost the landed interest he formerly commanded.[10]

It is quite possible, in view of the fact that the Sacheverell scandal played such an important part in arousing anti-Whig feeling in the country, that individual parish priests would have whipped up some considerable support for the Tory cause, yet there would have been no uniform drive from the Surrey clergy. The bulk of the county came under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Bishop of Winchester, and under him the Archdeacon of Surrey. However, although the Bishop, Sir Jonathon Trelawney, might have been likely to preach the wishes of the court as he had for a long time been a personal friend of the Queen, and his Anglicanism was 'high' rather than 'low', the same was not the case with the Archdeacon. Edmund Gibson, who had become Archdeacon in June 1710, was a Chaplain to Archbishop Tenison and an old adversary of Bishop Atterbury, one of the main leaders of the High Anglican Church in England. Moreover, that small section of the county which was not administered by Trelawney and Gibson was under the direct control of Archbishop Tenison himself—and the Archbishop was a known Whig. Hence, although the pulpit was second only to the press as an organ for spreading news, opinion and propaganda, as far as Surrey was concerned there could have been overwhelming support given by the Church as a whole to either party.

Nevertheless, although the Tories might not have received a great deal of support from the Church in 1710, the fact that the big governmental changes had taken place before the election did give them the wherewithal to carry out some useful moves in other directions. In a letter written to the Tory Secretary of State, Lord Dartmouth, probably in the Summer of 1710, Heneage Finch made certain suggestions concerning a revision of the Com-

mission of the Peace in Surrey. Justices were important county figures, and it was as well to have the right ones in office at crucial times such as General Elections.

> It would be of very great service to me if your Lordship could procure an alteration in the Commission of the Peace for this county: We have a parcel of scandalous fellows that have been put in to act as their rulers should direct, and secure an interest by the terror of their power. I beg leave to mention some of the most notorious and submit to your Lordship's better judgement.

Finch then went on to list the Justices whose heads he wished to fall. Top of the list came

> Nicholas Carew Senr. Esq. He is a madman. Nobody can act with him without being abused ... Dr Bernbruck, a professed atheist ... Reeves of Kingston. He was the other day a journey-man-baker ... Sir Henry Dutton Colt ... Coll Watkins late Governor of Gibraltar, refused to serve in Spain and sold his commission for half the value. Our sessions is next Tuesday, if this alteration could be done before that date it would be of great service to the country.[11]

In the last resort, however, we are left with a picture of a county election that had not been particularly blessed with outside influence to help sway the course of the election. Surrey had no united High Church clergy to back the Tories, and there were no Tory aristocrats to add their influence to the Tory bandwagon. Indeed, the only High Tory of note, and in fact the only aristocrat of note to be connected with Surrey, was the Lord Lieutenant of the county, the Duke of Northumberland, and the signs were that he was on active service abroad in 1710. The result of the 1710 election had been decided by the gentry within the county and not by the use of any outside agency. The national feeling against Whigs, war-mongers and dissenters, coupled with Sir Richard Onslow's political honesty, or electoral miscalculation, had given the Tory party two seats in the House of Commons.[12]

It is worth mentioning at this point the added triumph the Tories gained in defeating Sir Richard Onslow for Sir Richard, as has been stated above, had been the Speaker in the former Parliament. To see the ex-Speaker having to creep back to Westminster via the pocket borough of St Mawes in Cornwall, one of the 'cities of refuge' as the Tory William Bromley contemptuously put it, was an added delight of victory. Arthur Onslow, Sir Richard's nephew, wrote of the 'inexpressible joy of the other party, who thought that there could not be a greater mark of universal dissatisfaction to the Whig cause'. To claim the head of the man who was the county's leading magnate and also the former Speaker of the Commons was indeed an electoral triumph for the Tories in 1710.[13]

Meanwhile the Surrey boroughs had also been busy with the elections and electioneering of 1710. At Bletchingley representatives from two local

families were put up to challenge the Whig interest, again represented by George Evelyn and Thomas Onslow, the 1708 members. Evelyn was the son of the late George Evelyn of Nutfield, a local landed gentleman who had played a prominent part on the county political scene, and Onslow was the son of Sir Richard, the ex-Speaker. Since 1677 Bletchingley had been largely 'in the pocket' of Sir Robert Clayton, a noted London businessman who had been both Sheriff and Lord Mayor in the reign of Charles II. As the most important landowner in South-East Surrey—by virtue of his habit of buying up the estates of impecunious gentlemen—Clayton had been able to ensure that, more often than not, his nominees captured the two borough seats. However the knight, who was a staunch Whig, had died in 1707, although this had not prevented his young Whig colleagues, George Evelyn and Thomas Onslow, from holding the crucial seats in the 1708 election.

Their opponents in 1710 were Thomas Drake, the son of Ralph Drake who owned three houses and 236 acres of land in Bletchingley, and Richard Jewell, who represented a family which had stood by George Evelyn Senior in 1695 when, in a non-party election, 'Old Surrey' had united against the nouveaux riches. Whereas, in 1695, the Evelyns and the Jewells had united against the Claytons, in the 1710 days of party contests it is most probable that Drake and Jewell were standing as Tories to upset two solid Whigs, of whom George Evelyn Junior was one. Bletchingley, however, was still safe in the hands of the Clayton family and its adherents, and Evelyn and Onslow romped home with 53 and 45 votes. Thomas Drake polled 29 votes and Richard Jewell came last with 21. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note from the poll book that one or two of the voters still persisted in giving their voices to the two most important local figures, irrespective of their political affiliations, and so they loyally cast their votes for Evelyn and Drake.[14]

The little hamlet of Gatton provides the historian with the county's best example of a pocket borough in that the owners of the two mansions in Gatton could virtually always control the contests. An interesting account of the borough's electoral procedure at the turn of the century is to be found among the papers of Browne Willis, a contemporary Buckinghamshire antiquarian and member of Parliament.

> Abt 1704 I visited Gatton ... Mr Phipps the Parson of it told me that when the writs for members came down he read it in the church, and that on the day [of] the Election abt 10 or 12 inhabitants meet at the Pound and the Constable takes their votes ... Lord Haversham ... joining with Mr Turges nominate the Parliament men.

Browne Willis pointed out that Lord Haversham owed his electoral interest to his having 'erected a house here with some small tenements about it, purposely to claim votes'.[15]

In as much as both Lord Haversham and Thomas Turges were both of the Whig persuasion, Gatton provided two safe Whig seats at the start of Queen

Anne's reign. However, by 1710 the situation had altered. Turges had in fact died even before Browne Willis visited Gatton, and by 1710 his distant relative George Newland was well and truly settled in the estate of Lower Gatton; and Newland was a High Church Anglican and a staunch Tory. Furthermore 'honest Lord Haversham', as Sarah Duchess of Marlborough was told by the Junto Earl of Halifax, sold Upper Gatton to Paul Docminique, a trader of French extraction, in 1704. In fact, politically speaking, the 'honest lord' could have chosen far worse, as Docminique was a moderate in many ways and was mistaken for a Whig by the French author of the list of members and their party affiliations published in 1715. Moreover, Haversham himself was a spent force, from the Whig point of view. For a man who had formerly been an Exclusionist he was to make a surprising volte-face and, by 1709, he had made a name for himself as a staunch champion of the High Anglican cause; a transformation due in no small part to his association with, and later marriage to, his former High Anglican housekeeper, a Mrs Graham.[16]

Gatton was the one Surrey borough which did not have a contest in 1710 and there, as usual, the local magnates had things all their way. Paul Docminique was returned from Upper Gatton, and William Newland, the son of Sir George, represented his father's interest. Like his father, who had been knighted in 1706, he was a Tory, and his main claim to fame was that he owned a 'tawdry glass chariot' which he kindly loaned to Dr Sacheverell at the time of the latter's trial.[17]

The result of the election at the borough of Guildford where, according to Morgan Randyll, one of the contestants, there were 'several candidates', was a victory for the Whigs in the persons of Denzil Onslow, Sir Richard's brother, and Robert Wroth, a close friend of the Onslow family. Both men had represented the borough in the previous parliament and indeed Denzil Onslow occupied that family seat which had remained in Onslow hands ever since the Restoration of 1660. Morgan Randyll was a landed gentleman who owned an estate and some old royalist powder mills at Chilworth, a few miles from Guildford. He was a moderate Tory and a popular local figure and the Onslows, more often than not, appear to have been prepared to 'share' the borough with him and thus avoid the expenses of an election. However, this had not been the case in 1708 when they captured the second seat for Robert Wroth, nor was it the case in 1710 when the unsuccessful Randyll petitioned the House of Commons. He claimed that

> Mr Wroth, by notorious bribery and other unlawful practices, to procure votes and deter others from voting for the Petitioner; and Mr John Goodyear, the Mayor, polled several persons for Mr Wroth who had no right, and rejected divers that had, for the Petitioner; and he and Mr Child, the Town Clerk shewed themselves very partial against the Petitioner, denying the Petitioner a scrutiny and returning Mr Wroth without examining the poll, in wrong to the Petitioner.

The Committee of Privileges and Elections was extremely quick and most

searching when presented with the possibility that a Whig might have unfairly defeated a Tory at Guildford. On 3 February, when the petition was heard at the bar of the House, it was decided that the 'right of election was ... in the Mayor, Freemen and Freeholders, residing in the borough, paying Scot and Lot [local taxes]', and it was agreed that 'one who has served seven years apprenticeship in the town to a Freeman, is, *ipso facto*, a Freeman'. Having decided this, the Commons then scrutinised Wroth's votes, coming across such examples of 'notorious bribery' as

> Stephen Golding said that Henry Quennell sold him a bullock for £3. 15., the same price he bought it at; and that the sitting member [Wroth] gave him a groat a stone more than the market price, for a quarter of it, otherwise he would have voted for the Petitioner and Mr Onslow.

Finally it was decided that the return should be amended by 'rasing out the name of Robert Wrath Esqre., and inserting the name of Morgan Randyll Esqre'. Justice, in Tory eyes, has been done, and another Whig had tumbled.[18]

In 1708 the electors in the borough of Haslemere, which lay to the south-west of the county, on the Hampshire border, had chosen Thomas Onslow and Theophilus Oglethorpe to represent them at Westminster. The first was, of course, a known Whig, and the second was the son of that Jacobite knight whose estates lay at Westbrook, in close proximity to the borough. The father had been forced to flee abroad during the reign of William III as a result of his association with the traitor, Sir John Fenwick, and the son was to die abroad in the service of the Old Pretender. Haslemere had, in fact, played a non-party trick in a very party-conscious age by electing two powerful local figures regardless of the fact that their politics were poles apart. However, as events turned out, Onslow was also elected for Bletchingley in 1708 and, as he preferred to sit for the latter, his place at Haslemere was taken by Nicholas Carew Esq., of Beddington, a member of a family which had been powerful in Surrey since Tudor times.

Throughout Anne's reign the electors of Haslemere had shown their partiality for change when it came to general elections, and the three general elections and one by-election which had taken place before 1710 had produced a crop of seven different men. The year 1710 itself showed that change could quite easily be in the air again. The ex-members Theophilus Oglethorpe and Nicholas Carew were challenging for their old seats, Thomas Onslow had reappeared on the scene to partner Carew in the Whig interest, and a fourth contestant, in the shape of Sir John Clark of Buckingham, had also entered the lists. Clark was the son of Sir William Clark of Shabbington, Buckinghamshire, and his wife Catherine, formerly Catherine Onslow. The formidable Lady Oglethorpe, in a letter to Robert Harley, had been quite confident that her son would carry the day.

> His [Theophilus Oglethorpe's] interest in his borough is very strong. They are already playing tricks with Mr Mitchell; a nephew of the

> Speaker has promised to spend a thousand pounds; which I suppose is for Mr Onslow; but if things are rightly managed, I don't doubt but my son will carry it for himself and a friend, who I hope you'll remember, now it is in your power to assist him.

In view of the fact that Clark was later a member of the High Tory October Club it is more than likely that he was Oglethorpe's 'friend' and that his thousand pounds were certainly not spent on his cousin's behalf, but Lady Oglethorpe's assessment of the final result of the election was certainly correct. Theophilus, her son, collected 35 votes, Sir John Clark did even better with 41, Nicholas Carew only managed to scrape together 32, and Thomas Onslow was a very poor fourth with only 17. Once again Thomas Onslow had stood for both Haslemere and Bletchingley, but on this second occasion Haslemere had let him down.[19]

After the election Theophilus Oglethorpe himself wrote to Robert Harley and triumphantly announced, 'Notwithstanding bribery and all other indirect means used, I have carried it at Haslemere', but his was not the only voice complaining of 'indirect means'. As a result of this election Carew presented a petition to the House of Commons, claiming that 'Theophilus Oglethorpe Esq., by bribery and other indirect practices procured several votes ... and prevailed with William Elliot, the Bailiff, to permit several to poll for him that had no right'. Unfortunately the Tory house was in no hurry to hear Whig petitions and the claim was referred to the Committee of Privileges and Elections, whence it never returned. 'Your Haslemere men did not deal kindly by you considering how kind you was to them last election; they should have returned you once more, but I believe most corporations are alike, little gratitude in them', wrote his father-in-law to the unlucky Carew. Possibly, in 1710, Carew was not kind enough, for it is interesting to note that Sir John Clark, in that same year, donated the sum of eighty pounds to the parish of Haslemere in order to help the parish pay for the casting of new church bells. Whether this was a gesture motivated by religious reasons, or whether it was an 'indirect practice', financed by the 'thousand pounds' and which had escaped the notice of Nicholas Carew, must remain an open question![20]

During the first decade and more of the eighteenth century, the burgage borough of Reigate was split neatly into two for political purposes. On 24 April, 1697, King William III made over the manor of Reigate to the Junto Lord Somers, then Lord Chancellor of England. 'The grant was made to Joseph Jekyll Esq., in trust for his Lordship, who by this means came to have great influence for that borough'. Once the Whigs had gained such a foothold in Reigate, the market for vote-bearing tenements increased out of all proportion to their true property values as George Adney, Lord Somers's secretary, briskly bought up several of these freehold premises and transferred them to the names of supporters of Lord Somers. In 1698, his first appearance on the Reigate political scene, Somers managed to capture both borough seats but, on subsequent occasions, he was forced to share the honours, and the seats, with his Tory rival, Sir John Parsons.

The latter was a merchant and brewer who had made his fortune in the city. He had been knighted by King James II, was a former Lord Mayor of London, and had bought an estate in Reigate in 1689.[21]

In 1710 the story was one of triumph for the Parsons interest and one of defeat for Lord Somers. The Whigs, realising that the national feeling was against them, and especially against the Junto lords, determined to leave no stone unturned to hold on to their Reigate seat, and similarly the Tories made a determined effort to oust them. The names of such magnates as Sir Godfrey Kneller, the Whig painter, Sir William Scawen, and Sir George Newland, appeared on the scene and were listed as Reigate freeholders, and indeed of the 234 Freehold voters in this election only 66 actually 'abode' in Reigate. Moreover men who would have been considered as 'safe' voters and who were tenants themselves were given freeholds—presumably for the duration of the election. Hence William Keasley, a tenant of Somers's brother in law, Sir Joseph Jekyll, had as his tenant a Widow Thomas, and the Whig candidates gleaned the votes from both sources. Unfortunately the advent of celebrities and the splitting of messuages to create new freeholds—for which the borough was renowned and which almost certainly would have been a feature of the 1710 election—did not help the Whigs. Sir John Parsons collected 132 votes, his new colleague John Ward gained 124, Somers's nephew James Cocks could only manage 111 votes, and at the foot of the poll came a local man, William Jordan, with 100. It was a closely fought contest and a victory for the Tories.[22]

The new member for Reigate, John Ward, was an ex-Whig and a close associate of Sir Robert Clayton who had formerly represented Bletchingley in the early days of Queen Anne's reign. It would seem that Robert Harley had bought Ward's help for, before the passing of the South Sea Bill in the April of 1711, Harley inserted clauses which protected the trading monopoly of the East India Company and the Bank of England's monopoly of joint stock banking. Ward was a director of both the East India Company and the Bank, and so would presumably have had an inkling of these moves before he sided with Harley in 1710. Hence he would not have suffered financially through his apostasy but what is not at all obvious is the political reason why he should wish to turn his coat.

At Southwark the poll was a close one, but once again, as had been the case in every general election since 1698, the victors were the powerful Whig brewers Charles Cox and John Cholmley. Their challengers on this occasion were the moderate John Lade, who had been unsuccessful in 1702 and 1705 but who was to win a Southwark seat in 1713 when he appeared in Whiggish colours, and Sir Isaac Chard, who had been High Sheriff of Surrey in 1707 and who lived in the east of the county. The final poll was Cholmley first with 784 votes, Cox second with 765, Sir Isaac third with 641, and Lade last with 576 votes. This result also provoked a petition as Lade accused the two brewers of 'threats and other indirect practices' and also of 'dispersing scandalous papers'. However the petition suffered the same fate as that of Nicholas Carew and nothing further came of it. Possibly

the Commons saw little hope of challenging the sitting members, or even more likely Lade's party ties were not strong enough to give his petition especial prominence in a Tory house, inundated as it was with electoral petitions. Thus, for the seventh succeeding election Cox and Cholmley were returned; 'a rare thing in this borough', as the Surrey historian Owen Manning remarked.[23]

Unfortunately death was soon to split this successful combination. Late in 1711 John Cholmley died and, on 12 January, 1712, Sir George Mathews, Kt, was elected in his place. Information concerning this by-election has been supplied by the writer of *A Merry New Year's Gift, or the Captain's letter to the Colonel about the late Election in Southwark*. This delightful pamphlet was published just after the election, and told of the goings on at the Sacheverell Ale House where

> we had a wet Treat in order to disagree about which of our two candidates should be chosen Parliament-Man in the room of Mr. C————y. T'was good luck we had a sufficient number of Whigs and Tories among us, or else the Company had not been half so diverting.

The writer went on to claim that Mr Halsey, the other candidate, was 'an honest man & has a good estate too' and was also 'like an Old Queen Elizabeth Protestant'. Halsey himself had stated that 'I think one of that sort of Protestants better than ten of Sacheverell's Churchmen' and, as regards this anti-Sacheverell feeling, he was at one with the pamphleteer who wrote a satirical song aimed against that cleric. It claimed that a supporter of arbitrary power was definitely bound for heaven and sarcastically proclaimed:

> Saint Cheverell saith it will be so
> And what he doth aver,
> We all must take for Gospel-Truth,
> Like Pope he cannot err.

Later on in the song, however, he gave full bent to his bitterness and claimed:

> This Holy Man pretends to be
> Firm to our Constitution;
> Yet no Man hath done more than he
> To o'erturn the Revolution.

Religion would seem to have been the most inflammatory issue in 1711/12 because although the pamphlet stated 'since the present Parliament was chosen according to the Landed Interest, all we have to enquire is, Whether we shall chuse a Member of the Landed or Mony'd Interest', it later pointed out that these terms were not as politically meaningful as had previously been the case. Finally, the writer gave as his opinion that both Cox and

Cholmley 'were good Englishmen' and that he 'could find no fault with either', but he considered 'it might not be so honourable for our Borough to send no sort of Member but Brewers, especially now Sir G———, who is a Man of Experience and Honour, is pleas'd to offer himself to represent us'. In effect therefore, it would seem that Halsey was a Whig brewer, very much in the mould of the previous member, John Cholmley, and that Sir George Mathews, although possibly not a Whig, was certainly no supporter of the High Church interest. If he had been such a man he would hardly have received the backing of one who said of Dr Sacheverell, the High Church hero:

> To Men of tender Conscience
> He's wonderfully civil;
> For out of Christian Charity
> He gives them to the Devil.[24]

Nevertheless Mathews was sufficiently in favour with the Tory House of Commons to be returned as the result of a successful election petition for, in the first instance, the bailiff of Southwark, a Mr Martin, returned Edmund Halsey as the elected representative of the borough. Sir George presented a petition claiming that 'notwithstanding the Bribery, and other indirect practices of Mr Halsey, as also the arbitrary and illegal Proceedings of Mr Martin, the Bailiff, the Petitioner had the majority of legal votes', yet Mr Martin 'without declaring the Petitioner to have the Majority of voices, without Scrutiny duly demanded, or adjoining Time or Place, did return the said Mr Halsey in Prejudice to the Petitioner.'[25]

Doubtless anxious to rid itself of Edmund Halsey, the House of Commons moved swiftly. The petition was passed to the Committee of Privileges and Elections on 4 February, and on 7th the evidence provided by the Committee was heard. Having decided that the right of election lay in those inhabitants of the borough who paid Scot and Lot, the House went on to consider the rights and wrongs of the case. It was concluded that on 21 December, when the votes were counted, Sir George Mathews had the majority—he had polled 831 to Halsey's 815, but in response to a query by one Bartlett, the baliff promised a scrutiny. Furthermore the House decided that in view of the fact that the baliff had not stated a specific time or place for such a scrutiny, then such a scrutiny was illegal. It then went on to consider the numerous claims and counter claims of bribery and the like, and eventually came to the decision that it agreed with the findings of the committee and that Mathews rather than Halsey was the legal member. Finally the matter was brought to a close with the resolution that

> at the late election of a member to serve in the Parliament for the Borough of Southwark, Henry Martin Esquire, the Bailiff of Southwark, was guilty of arbitrary and illegal proceedings, in Breach of the Privilege of this House, and tending to the subversion of the freedom of elections

and it ordered 'that the said Henry Martin Esquire, be for the said offence, taken into the custody of the Serjeant at Arms attending this House'.[26]

A final point of interest as regards the events arising out of Sir George Mathew's election petition is that at the division regarding the legality of Edmund Halsey's election, Surrey members took a prominent part. Mr Onslow (presumably either Denzil or Thomas) was a teller for the Yeas, and Mr Newland was a teller for the Noes. The final result was a victory for the Noes by 195 votes to 94. The result would have pleased John Lade, Charles Cox's old rival who 'was for Sir George Mathews', but this Lade-Mathews alliance was of relatively short duration. Two years later John Lade, supported by Charles Cox, was fighting as a Whig and, in fact, carried the 1713 election against Sir George Mathews.[27]

The most important lesson to be learnt from the 1710 election in Surrey is that it was a struggle between rival political parties with rival political issues at stake. The landed gentry of the county were struggling to throw off the Whig yoke which was tying them to a continental war, and the Whigs themselves were fighting to prevent the Tories from allowing the Spanish crown to fall into the hands of France. It was essential for the Whig commercial interests that the Spanish Empire should go to a power which was weak at sea, and France was rapidly turning into Britain's natural maritime rival. Men such as Charles Cox, who was knighted in 1709, and Sir William Scawen were representing the country's commercial interests and were fighting the insular landed classes personified by men such as Sir Francis Vincent. The struggle was, in the main, between the self-made magnates and the county's ancient landed aristocracy, and this was the factor which made the county election especially so bitter. The county would have accepted Sir Richard Onslow as a man following the precepts of the Revolution, but was not prepared to see him put the interest of the city above those of landed Surrey.

There were of course the other controversial issues of the day which were also affecting the Surrey elections. The traders Paul Docminique and William Newland were still staunch Tories, and George Evelyn, although being opposed by the landed Tories Drake and Jewell, was himself a representative of the landed interest. The Sacheverell affair and the traditional Tory dislike of the continental war were obviously playing an important role in Surrey. Cries such as 'The Church in Danger' were excellent electioneering slogans and were, for a time, able to give the Tory party a strength which, in Surrey at least, it never really possessed. The county was too near London and the Thames, and too many of its politically important inhabitants derived their wealth from mercantile interests, for Surrey to remain in the hands of the Tories. Anti-dissenter feelings and anti-warmonger cries were to take second place when the men of Surrey realised that their more material interests were at stake.

This point is amply proved when one glances at the Division List for the French Commerce Bill of 1713. Objections to this proposed commercial treaty with France were based upon the fact that such an alliance would

harm the very beneficial trade with Portugal, and would also damage the embryonic British fine fabrics industry. Eleven Surrey members voted in this division; the absentees being Sir Francis Vincent, Denzil Onslow and Sir George Mathews. Five of these members were noted as 'members concerned with trade' and, as events turned out, nine Surrey men, including four of the traders opposed the government, and only the Jacobite Theophilus Oglethorpe and Harley's recruit from the city, John Ward, voted for it. Even such staunch Tories as Sir John Parsons, Heneage Finch, the idol of the Freeholders, and William Newland, who lent Dr Sacheverell his carriage, deserted the government when it came to a division over trade. Six Tories and three Whigs had combined to prove that, although the 'trading issue' did not save the Whigs before the 1710 election, it was not going to be an asset to the government of Robert Harley after it.[28]

NOTES

Abbreviations

Ballard MSS Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ballard MSS.

Carew Carew, T., *An Historical Account of the Rights of Election* ... (1755).

Dartmouth Papers William Salt Library, Stafford, Dartmouth Papers.

Dyer *Dyer's Newsletters*, British Museum, Portland Loan, 29/32.

H.M.C. Portland MSS Historical Manuscripts Commission, Portland MSS.

1. This article is based on the author's unpublished M.Litt. thesis, *Surrey Politics in Later Stuart England* which is housed in the library of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
2. By the second Partition Treaty of 1699 King Louis XIV of France and King William III of England arranged for the partition of Spain and her possessions which was to take effect on the death of the Spanish King, Charles II. However, the manner of the making of the treaty was, in the words of G. M. Trevelyan, 'open to grave objection from the point of view of English constitutional practice'. The King had carried out the vital negotiations without consulting his ministers, and Somers especially came under attack for his acquiescent part in the whole affair. For further details see Trevelyan, G. M., *England Under Queen Anne*, Blenheim (1932), 128 and 130.
3. Davies, P., ed., *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain 1724-1726*, (1960), I, 159.
4. Dyer.
5. Dyer; Dartmouth Papers, D. 1178, I, ii, 133.

6. Ballard MSS., 9 ff. 69-70.
7. *Ibid*; Lady Eleanor Oglethorpe to Robert Harley, 6 September 1710, (H.M.C. Portland MSS., iv, 590-1).
8. The *Daily Courant*, 4 October, 1710; The *Postboy*, 14-17 October, 1710.
9. James Graggs to the Duke of Marlborough, Churchill, W. S., *Marlborough, His Life & Times* (1936), IV, 327; Dyer; British Museum, Additional Manuscripts, 9110 f. 123.
10. *Surriensis* in the *Gentleman's Magasine* (1788), 975; Chatsworth-Finch MSS (H.G. The Duke of Devonshire); The Earl of Anglesey to Sir Thomas Hanmer, published in Bunbury, Sir H., *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas Hanmer Bt.* (1838), 125.
11. Dartmouth papers, *op. cit.*, D. 1178, v, 779.
12. The Duke of Northumberland, an illegitimate son of Charles II, was made a Lieutenant General in 1710. The *Custos Rotulorum* of the County, the Earl of Berkeley, a known Whig, would not have been likely to have been active in 1710 as he died a month after the election.
13. Ballard MSS., 38 f. 150; H.M.C. xiv Rept., Onslow MSS., 492.
14. Surrey Record Office, Clayton Papers, 60/9/25.
15. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Browne Willis Papers, 15 f. 6.
16. Blenheim MSS (H.G. The Duke of Marlborough); Worsley MSS (Lincoln Archives), Boyer, Abel, *The Political State of Great Britain* (1711), 426-7.
17. Oldmixon, J., *The History of England during the reigns of William and Mary, Anne and George I* (1735), 434.
18. Carew, I, 256-7.
19. Lady Eleanor Oglethorpe to Robert Harley, 24 September 1710, H.M.C. Portland MSS., iv, 600.
20. Theophilus Oglethorpe to Robert Harley, 8 October 1710, H.M.C. Portland MSS., iv, 610; Nicholas Hackett to Nicholas Carew, 7 October 1710, (British Museum Additional Manuscripts, 29599 f. 119); Haslemere Parish Records.
21. Anon, *The Memoirs of the Life of John Lord Somers* (1716), 41; Hooper, W., *Reigate. Its Story through the Ages*, (1945), 119-20.
22. Bryant, William, *A List and State of the Reigate Burgages 1786.* (Two Manuscript Volumes to be found in the Surrey Record Office, Kingston upon Thames.)
23. Carew, ii, 146; Manning, O., and Bray, W., *The History and Antiquities of the County of Surrey* (1808-1814), iii, 599.
24. *A Merry New Year's Gift, or the Captain's letter to the Colonel about*

the late Election in Southwark, (1712), The Minet Library, Camberwell, S. 3/81.

25. Carew, ii, 147.
26. *Ibid.*
27. The Journals of the House of Commons, (1711), 73.
28. A Collection of White and Black Lists ... (1715), British Museum, 440. 1. 22. (4).