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The Effects of the Third Reform Act and the Irish Home
Rule Debate on Edinburgh politics, 1885-6

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Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Edinburgh
2012

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or qualification.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the effects of the Third Reform Act and Irish Home Rule on the politics of late-Victorian Edinburgh focussing on the general elections of 1885 and 1886. Although the impact on British politics of both the Third Reform Act and the debate on Irish Home Rule have been the subjects of many studies, Edinburgh has hardly featured in this historiography. During this short time, Edinburgh was transformed from a Liberal dominated dual-member constituency to a city represented by four single-member MPs, one of whom was not a Liberal, thus altering the long-standing liberal political tradition of the city. Both the Third Reform Act and the debate over Irish Home Rule created separate and distinct splits in the local Liberal Party of Edinburgh. The Liberal split over Irish Home Rule has attracted some attention, but the split created by the Third Reform Act has been ignored. This thesis helps bridge a gap in nineteenth-century Scottish political history by focussing on Edinburgh; however, it also seeks to highlight the Liberal infighting that took place after the Third Reform Act, but prior to the split over Irish Home Rule.

This study draws heavily on the local press, campaign pamphlets and manuscripts of political elites to offer an analysis of the changes that took place upon passage of the Third Reform Act and introduction of the issue of Irish Home Rule. The political rhetoric that emerged during this period focussed on themes within the political tradition of the constituency, questioning the legitimacy of the local Party, and defining Liberalism. These were not unique to Edinburgh and the case study presented here is connected to wider themes within the study of late-Victorian politics.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library, London
CUL	Cambridge University Library, Cambridge
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>PD</i>	Hansard, <i>Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>Parliamentary Papers</i>
RCMS	Royal Commonwealth Society
<i>SHR</i>	<i>Scottish Historical Review</i>
UBL	University of Birmingham Library, Birmingham

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the staffs at the National Library of Scotland, British Library, Edinburgh University Library and Special Collections, Cambridge University Special Collections and University of Birmingham Special Collections. A special appreciation is warranted for the staff at the British Archives for helping me locate the sources I was looking for that had been moved to Cambridge University Special Collections.

I have valued my fellow history postgraduates at the University of Edinburgh whose camaraderie has been both helpful and enjoyable. I am most appreciative of both of my supervisors, Ewen Cameron and Gordon Pentland. I have benefited greatly from their expertise and patience as they have advised me on my research.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents and my family for their encouragement. I would especially like to thank my wife, Jamie, not only for moving over four-thousand miles away from home, but also for her support, encouragement, and friendship.

INTRODUCTION

British politics underwent a major transformation during the late-Victorian era, which revolutionised the British political system. Politics changed from an extremely limited activity that centred on local campaigns and often local concerns to embracing mass national politics by enfranchising a majority of the male population and campaigning on a national scale with celebrity politicians. At the birth of this new modern political age two events, the enactment of the Third Reform Act and the introduction of Irish Home Rule, account for great shifts in the traditional politics. These two events took place in a span of a little more than a year during which time more than two million people were added to the electorate, a large percentage of the parliamentary seats were redrawn to create modern single-member districts, two general elections were held and the Liberal party, one of the two dominant political parties at the time, split. This thesis is a case study of Edinburgh politics during that tumultuous year. The study seeks to determine the effects of the Third Reform Act and Irish Home Rule on the politics of late-Victorian Edinburgh. The two general elections that immediately followed the passage of the Third Reform Act in 1885 and 1886 provide the time frame of the study. The main issues that it is concerned with are local party politics, the caucus, and the role of local political traditions as well as questions regarding the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, and Irish Home Rule. Other historians have studied these issues, but Edinburgh has been largely left out of the discussion. Edinburgh was a stronghold for Liberal politics at the time because it, like the majority of Scotland, was dominated by Liberal politics. Additionally, Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone, one of the most famous

politicians at the time, was the MP for Midlothian, the county surrounding the burgh. Gladstone used Edinburgh to deliver many of his campaign speeches during his 'Midlothian campaign' in the 1880 election. This high-profile location enabled his speeches to be transmitted quicker and easier by the press. Gladstone used Edinburgh again in both of his 1885 and 1886 elections, but his motive changed during the 1886 election. In the 1886 election Edinburgh became more important than just a convenient location to get maximum coverage from the press. The Liberal party split over Gladstone's introduction of Irish Home Rule and he desperately needed to portray to the Liberal constituents throughout the country that he still represented the official Liberal party. Edinburgh, as the capital of Liberal Scotland, was essential for either side of the Liberal split to hold on to. Gladstone not only held speeches in Edinburgh during 1886 election, but he also personally interjected in elections within the burgh. This makes the elections in Edinburgh during this time extremely important to the overall split of the Liberal party.

Historiography

The historiography of late-Victorian Scottish politics is somewhat limited, especially when compared to its English counterpart. Nevertheless, the existing Scottish studies have had a profound impact on this thesis. The general political history of late-Victorian Scotland is covered in the works of I. G. C. Hutchison and Michael Fry.¹ Donald Savage's study of Scottish politics focussed on the issues of the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland and Irish Home Rule during the 1885 and 1886 general elections through a national perspective.² James G. Kellas produced two studies – one surveyed the issue of the disestablishment question through a national analysis, while the other covered the internal struggle of the Liberal party in Scotland focussing on the national Liberal organisations.³ The works of Catriona Burness, John F. McCaffrey and Derek W. Urwin focussed on the

¹ I. G. C. Hutchison, *A Political History of Scotland, 1832–1924: Parties, Elections and Issues* (Edinburgh, 1986); Michael Fry, *Patronage and Principle: A Political History of Modern Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1987).

² Donald Savage, 'Scottish politics, 1885–6,' *SHR*, 40 (1961), 118–35.

³ James G. Kellas, 'The Liberal party and the Scottish Church disestablishment crisis,' *EHR*, 79 (1964), 31–46; James G. Kellas, 'The Liberal party in Scotland, 1867–1895,' *SHR*, 44 (1965), 1–16.

successes of the Liberal Unionists in the west of Scotland, especially in Glasgow.⁴ Finally, Catriona Macdonald's case study of Paisley politics has made a great contribution to the understanding of the dynamics of local politics, particularly the significance of traditions.⁵

Savage's study of Scottish politics in 1885 and 1886 identified many of the major themes that dominated the period and has since influenced the debate amongst historians. He defiantly stated in his opening line, 'Two issues dominated Scottish politics in the years 1885 and 1886 – disestablishment of the Church of Scotland and home rule for Ireland'.⁶ This view remained unchallenged for years and, in a strictly national sense, is still valid. Along with the questions of disestablishment and Irish Home Rule, Savage pointed out the bitter in-fighting that took place within the Scottish Liberal Association. Most of his focus, however, was on the national organisations.⁷ Savage's most profound impact on the historiography of late-Victorian Scottish politics has been the focus on Glasgow and the west of Scotland. Savage concluded that, through the course of events during 1885 and 1886, the Liberal Unionists and Conservatives broke the Liberals' 'near monopoly' in Scotland, which continued 'for the next twenty years'.⁸ This finding has led to a preoccupation by subsequent historians on understanding how this breakthrough happened.⁹

Historians who have examined the 1885 election in Scotland have followed Savage's lead and placed their focus on the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland and the internal conflict for control of the Liberal party. The majority of these historians conclude, as Savage concluded, that disestablishment was the main question and the cause of the conflict amongst the Liberals during the

⁴ Catriona Burness, *Strange Associations: The Irish Question and the Making of Scottish Unionism, 1886–1918* (East Linton, 2003); John F. McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism in the West of Scotland,' *SHR*, 50 (1971), 47–71; Derek W. Urwin, 'The development of the Conservative party organisation in Scotland until 1912', *SHR*, 44 (1965), 89–111.

⁵ Catriona M. M. Macdonald, 'Locality, tradition and language in the evolution of Scottish Unionism: a case study, Paisley 1886–1910', in Catriona M. M. Macdonald (ed.), *Unionist Scotland 1800–1997* (Edinburgh, 1998), 52–72; Catriona M. M. Macdonald, *The Radical Thread: Political Change in Scotland. Paisley Politics, 1885–1924* (East Linton, 2000).

⁶ Savage, 'Scottish politics', 118.

⁷ Savage focuses on the meetings of both the Scottish Liberal Association and the National Liberal Federation of Scotland.

⁸ Savage, 'Scottish politics', 118.

⁹ Urwin 'The development of the Conservative party organisation', 89–111; McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 47–71; Burness *Strange Associations*; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*.

1885 election.¹⁰ Kellas cited disestablishment as the root cause of the Liberal party's dispute in Scotland, but he noted that of the twenty-seven races between rival Liberals in Scotland during the 1885 election, only thirteen were 'divided mainly on the Church question'.¹¹ However, the view that disestablishment was the cause of tensions between Liberals remained unchallenged for years. Most studies focussed on the national Liberal organisations and, as a result of this focus, concluded that the in-fighting was a result of disestablishment.¹² Two studies in particular shifted the debate by changing the focus from national institutions to local constituencies. In Burness' study of Unionists in the west of Scotland, much emphasis was placed on Glasgow. The local constituencies' struggle for control of the local party machinery is briefly discussed thus helping shape the Scottish Liberal party's struggle locally instead of only from the national viewpoint. Disestablishment was still alluded to as the main cause of the Liberal party's struggle, though she pointed to other issues as having importance as well.¹³ In her study of local Paisley politics, Macdonald challenged the dominance of the Church question by citing other issues, many of which were localised, as the root of the struggle in Paisley.¹⁴

The historiography of the 1886 election in Scotland, much like the 1885 election, has followed Savage's template and focussed on Irish Home Rule. McCaffrey's important study on Liberal Unionists in the west of Scotland helps in understanding the success of the Liberal Unionists and Conservatives in the west. McCaffrey primarily focussed on Glasgow where the strength of Liberal Unionists and Conservatives was very evident. His study is more centred on local conflict resulting in more detail of the cause of the split and opposition to Irish Home Rule. He concluded that Liberal Unionists in the west of Scotland mainly drew their support from business and professional men who were concerned about the 'break up of Imperial unity' because they depended on foreign markets.¹⁵ Besides McCaffrey's emphasis on the middle class leaving the Liberal party over opposition to Irish Home

¹⁰ Kellas, 'The Liberal party and the Scottish Church disestablishment crisis', 31–46; Kellas, 'The Liberal party in Scotland', 1–16; McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 47–71; Hutchison, *A Political History*, 154–62; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 95; Burness *Strange Associations*, 37.

¹¹ Kellas, 'The Liberal party and the Scottish Church disestablishment crisis', 36.

¹² Kellas, 'The Liberal party in Scotland', 1–16; McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 47–71; Hutchison, *A Political History*; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*.

¹³ Burness, *Strange Associations*, 37.

¹⁴ Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*.

¹⁵ McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 47–71.

Rule, he generally viewed the split, as both Savage and Kellas had, as being between Radicals, on the one hand, and Moderates and Whigs, on the other. Both Hutchison and Fry questioned this view of the Liberal party's split and pointed out many Scottish political figures who were Whigs and stayed supportive of Gladstone and the Liberal party and, conversely, many Radicals who left the Liberal party to join the Liberal Unionists.¹⁶ However, Fry concluded with the old view that it was still basically a split between left and right.¹⁷

The view of both Hutchison and Fry that the split was not a clean break between Radicals and Whigs is also shared by Burness and Macdonald.¹⁸ Their respective studies over Glasgow and Paisley shed light on these local elections. They both emphasise the importance of the candidates' fight to be viewed as representatives of liberalism by the constituents. Burness remarked that Liberal Unionists in Scotland differed from their counterparts in England because 'the Scottish political situation required the Liberal Unionists to emphasise their Liberalism'.¹⁹ Macdonald placed more importance on the issue, noting that the opposing candidates fought not only to be seen as legitimately representing Liberalism, but also to be viewed as the true Liberals in opposition to their opponents.²⁰

This case study of Edinburgh politics during the 1885 and 1886 elections follows this historiography and the themes of disestablishment, Irish Home Rule and the conflict within the Liberal party are central to this study as well. However, other Scottish studies have played a role in developing the historiography of this study on Edinburgh politics. As previously mentioned, the history of late-Victorian Scottish politics has been almost entirely focussed on the west of Scotland. This is due to the success of the Liberal Unionists and Conservatives in the west after the Liberal party split in 1886. There has been some study of Edinburgh, most notably by Hutchison whose work on Scottish politics was an attempt to 'broaden the geographical spread of evidence'.²¹ While Hutchison's study did broaden the scope of the political

¹⁶ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 162–3; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 97–8.

¹⁷ Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 107.

¹⁸ Burness, *Strange Associations* 46–8; Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, 88–90.

¹⁹ Burness, *Strange Associations*, 3.

²⁰ Macdonald, 'Locality, tradition and language', 52–72; Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, 84–91.

²¹ Hutchison, *A Political History*, v.

discussion, particularly pertaining to the Irish Home Rule debate, his coverage of Edinburgh was limited and pertained mostly to Edinburgh MPs. Similarly, Michael Dyer discussed the 1885 elections in Edinburgh in relation to the rise of independent Liberals standing during that election. He gives a very brief account of the controversy amongst the local Liberals pertaining to the standing of rival Liberal candidates.²² With the exception of the limited discussions of the city in these studies, Edinburgh, and the east of Scotland in general, have been largely left out of the historical discussion. Alistair Cooke's article on Gladstone's election for Leith is one example of a study on late-Victorian Scottish politics outside of the west of Scotland. Though its scope and purpose was limited, pertaining only to a single election in one burgh district, it contains insight into the political situation within the politics of Scottish Liberalism. Cooke presented a compelling case that explained why Gladstone chose to stand for the Leith constituency when he was unopposed in Midlothian. He discussed the split within the Liberal party and maintained that it was Gladstone's 'deep personal commitment' to Irish Home Rule that prompted him to intervene in the election. The result of the withdrawal of Gladstone's opponent in Leith sheds light on Gladstone's command and popularity within Scottish politics as well and has helped shape the understanding of his role within the Edinburgh elections discussed in this thesis.²³

Jeffery Charles Williams' thesis on Edinburgh politics and Graeme Morton's study of Unionist-nationalism have helped shape the historical understanding of mid-Victorian Edinburgh politics.²⁴ Williams' study focussed on politics while Morton's focussed on the makeup of Edinburgh's society and interest groups. Their studies reveal the struggle of advanced liberalism in Edinburgh. Advanced Liberals were able to break the Whig monopoly on the city's politics in the 1860s. These two works provide this study with historical and political background, which helps to shape the understanding of the political traditions of Edinburgh.

²² Michael Dyer, *Capable Citizens and Improvident Democrats: The Scottish Electoral System 1884–1929* (Aberdeen, 1996), 38–9.

²³ Alistair B. Cooke, 'Gladstone's election for the Leith district of burghs', *SHR*, 49 (1970), 172–94.

²⁴ Jeffrey Charles Williams, 'Edinburgh politics: 1832–1852' Thesis (Ph.D.) University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1972); Graeme Morton, *Unionist Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830–1860* (East Linton, 1999), 64–132.

This thesis not only seeks to bring late-Victorian Edinburgh into the discussion of Scottish politics, but also to contribute to the overall understanding of party politics in late-Victorian Britain and the dynamics of the Liberal party after the Third Reform Act, but prior to the split on Irish Home Rule. The work of two historians, Eugenio Biagini and Jon Lawrence, has contributed significantly to the approach taken in this thesis. Biagini's studies, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform* and *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, emphasised popular politics, Liberalism and democracy.²⁵ In both of these studies, Biagini focussed on the impacts that the ideas of liberty and democracy had on popular politics. Throughout the mid- and late-Victorian period, he viewed these ideas as the motivation behind reform within British popular politics. In *Speaking for the People*, Lawrence focussed on the dynamics of local politics and how its traditions engaged with national politics.²⁶ He challenged the 'triumph of party' in late-Victorian Britain and concluded that the local constituents often distrusted the political parties and resented the party machinery. Furthermore, he points to the importance of local traditions and found them to be very influential amongst the local populace. The work of both of these historians has led this thesis to question the relationship between Liberalism, democracy and party politics, as well as the relationship between those who sought to represent and those who were represented.

Sources

The sources used in this thesis are much the same as any found in other studies of late-Victorian political history. They comprise mainly the papers of politicians and other politically active individuals, papers of political parties and organisations, government publications, pamphlets, biographies and contemporary autobiographies, as well as newspapers. The use of political papers provides insight into the private discussions the individuals had about a particular bill, other politicians or their own chance of successfully being returned to Parliament. They allow a researcher to penetrate the surface of what was displayed to the public and

²⁵ Eugenio F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860–1880* (Cambridge, 1992); Eugenio F. Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism, 1876–1906* (Cambridge, 2007).

²⁶ Jon Lawrence, *Speaking for the People: Party, Language and Popular Politics in England, 1867–1914* (Cambridge, 1998).

reveal a more complete picture of the political environment. While these papers are valuable to researchers, the drawback of these sources, in addition to government papers, pamphlets, biographies and contemporary autobiographies, is that they point the researcher towards 'high politics' which focuses on the political elite and their perceptions and actions towards the contemporary issues. This makes it a challenge to gain an understanding of the complete political picture because the majority of society is left out of the political discourse.²⁷ The exception to this is newspapers, which contain a variety of different sources of political information including campaign speeches, political association meetings, editorials and letters to the editor. Through these sources, the voices of the constituents can be heard in addition to the voices of the politicians. Newspapers have often been criticized by historians who cite them as being biased and unreliable sources. Nevertheless, Biagini has rightly pointed out that 'it is through these reports that the rank-and-file participants demonstrations were occasionally allowed a public voice'.²⁸

Edinburgh's leading newspaper at this time was *The Scotsman*, which was also a leading newspaper in Scotland. *The Scotsman*, a Liberal, Whiggish newspaper, openly supported Gladstone's Midlothian campaign and opposed the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. The editor of *The Scotsman* during this time was Charles Cooper, who was a confidant of Lord Rosebery until 1886. During the breakup of the Liberal party in 1886 over the Irish Home Rule debate, Cooper came out against the Bill and, subsequently, *The Scotsman* became a Unionist paper.²⁹ *The Scotsman* was heavily used in this thesis in an attempt to ascertain the issues that were important to the local constituents of Edinburgh. *The Scotsman* was not used because it was a national newspaper for Scotland, but because of the high priority given to the coverage of the Edinburgh elections. Other newspapers that were based in Edinburgh were also consulted. The main function of the newspaper reports within the research for this thesis was to provide coverage of the parliamentary candidates' campaign speeches and the meetings of the local ward and district political associations. *The Scotsman*'s coverage of these events was far superior to that of the newly established *Edinburgh Evening News*. Through the

²⁷ Hutchison, *A Political History*, v.

²⁸ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 25.

²⁹ H. C. G. Matthew, 'Cooper, Charles Alfred (1829–1916)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2007), [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/53257>, accessed 5 Feb 2012].

coverage of the local political associations, one is able to assess the concerns and wants of the local constituents as they emphasized the issues that were of particular importance to them. The local associations also provide insight into the political differences amongst the local Liberal constituents through the discourse which took place regarding both the endorsement of parliamentary candidates and the support of questions and issues. The coverage of the campaign speeches also contributes to this, as it provides an idea of the concerns of both the candidates and the constituents. There was a complex relationship between the candidates and the constituents in which they had to negotiate not only what issues were of concern, but also what position should be taken on these issues. The campaign rhetoric of the candidates was supposed to convince the constituents to vote for them. There were two approaches to achieve this: first, the candidates could have tried to persuade the constituents that the issues they were concerned with were vital, or, second, they could have focussed on the questions that they believed were the most important to the constituents themselves. Likewise, as the audience at the political campaign speeches, the constituents voiced their positions on the issues through their shouts of approval or outright hostility towards the issue. Moreover, some constituents were able to directly engage with the candidates by asking specific questions. These questions often entailed where the candidates stood on a particular question. This not only provides the candidate's position or sometimes his unwillingness to take a stand on the issue, but it also reveals what issues the constituents were most concerned with. In addition to the benefit of expanding the historical discussion outside of 'high politics', the newspapers' coverage is invaluable for a local study such as this one. For example, without the coverage of the newspapers it would not have been possible to research the local Liberal associations in Edinburgh. Of the four local Liberal associations and thirteen local ward Liberal associations in Edinburgh, records for only one of the wards during the time covered in this thesis survive.

Politics in the 1880s

This case study of Edinburgh politics focuses on the mid-1880s, which was an important decade in the history of British politics. The 1880s were also a tumultuous time for the Liberal party which found itself out of favour and out of

power in the previous decade. During the 1880s there were a few changes that altered the way in which campaigns were run throughout the country and which helped the Liberals to remedy their problems. One important aspect was the development of national campaigning. With the advances of the telegraph and the abundance of local papers, speeches could be distributed around the country in a matter of days, thus opening the whole country up to individual politicians and their message. This new style of campaigning was exemplified in Gladstone's 1880 Midlothian campaign as he used to essentially campaign nationally for Liberals throughout the country. Newly established national political associations were also coming into form which served the purpose of organising the party vote and spreading its influence. In addition to these new strategies was a campaign for further enfranchisement by arguing for county franchise. These three new strategies helped the Liberals regain political power, but also had the effect of shifting parliamentary politics from a local focus to a national one. These strategies did not cause the shift in parliamentary politics, but they helped to create the environment in which the events of 1885 and 1886 unfolded. The events of these years, specifically the implementation of the Third Reform Act and Gladstone's support of Irish Home Rule, split the Liberal party and ultimately forced the constituents to choose their representative based on their stance for or against Irish Home Rule. Additionally, in the 1880s there were important debates and policy changes on the role of the Empire, laws concerning domestic politics and the relationship of Ireland to the rest of the UK. These changes and issues created a watershed in British politics transforming it into the modern era.³⁰

Political campaigning was already moving toward a defined platform before the Third Reform Act was passed. Through the invention of new technologies and the restructuring of party politics, the parties were focussing on a narrowing of issues presented in the party platform.³¹ The modes in which candidates interacted with the constituents changed with technological advances in the 1880s such as the steam engine, newspapers and the telegraph, all of which helped to spread the candidates'

³⁰ Jonathan Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (New Haven, 1993), 274–303. This analysis of the changing politics of the 1880s is heavily influenced by Parry's explanation of the changes in the Liberal party in the late-Victorian period.

³¹ Matthew Fforde, *Conservatism and Collectivism: 1886–1914* (Edinburgh, 1990), 14–7.

messages throughout the country. Gladstone was the first candidate to integrate the use of the technology during his 'Midlothian campaign' in 1879–80 through the use of whistle-stops during his travel to Edinburgh. Gladstone was able to speak to a large number of voters en route and reach an even wider audience through print. His speeches were transmitted throughout the country by the telegraph and then printed in newspapers and pamphlets thus creating a national interest in his local campaign.³² By the next election in 1885 there were numerous candidates using Gladstone's tactic to attract as much attention as they could, not only for themselves, but also for their causes.³³

Another change that came about in the 1880s was the emergence of national party associations. The associations of both the Conservatives and the Liberals became a more dominant feature in politics during the late-Victorian era and, as such, the parties' platforms became more important as well.³⁴ The goal of these national associations was to promote a cohesive coalition from the numerous local associations throughout the country. The influence that these associations had in England was quickly emulated in Scotland. Both parties established national association branches in Scotland by the mid-1880s.³⁵ The nature of the association and politics in general changed with the formation of the National Liberal Federation in 1877. The NLF established a separate national liberal association mainly comprised of Radicals, but, more importantly, it was organised in a power structure that came to be known as a caucus. The caucus was supposed to bring a new element of democracy to politics by involving more people in the nominating process and providing them with a platform to express the issues they were concerned with.³⁶ By the 1880s the caucus had taken control of many local associations throughout the United Kingdom, but some constituents began to criticise the caucus and question

³² Ewen A. Cameron, *Impaled upon a Thistle: Scotland since 1880* (Edinburgh, 2010), 56–9; T. A. Jenkins, *The Liberal Ascendancy, 1830–1886* (Basingstoke, 1994), 162; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 92.

³³ Jon Lawrence, *Electing our Masters: The Hustings in British Politics from Hogarth to Blair* (Oxford, 2009), 54–7.

³⁴ E. H. H. Greene, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Economics and Ideology of the British Conservative Party, 1880–1914* (London, 1995), 101–8; D. A. Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery: A Study in Leadership and Policy* (Oxford, 1972), 34–56; Fforde, *Conservatism and Collectivism*, 13–4.

³⁵ Burness, *Strange Associations*, 30–4; Kellas, 'The Liberal party in Scotland', 1–4.

³⁶ Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government*, 274–80; Hutchison, *A Political History*, 145–9.

whether or not it was truly democratic. The controversy surrounding the caucus and its role in Edinburgh politics are discussed in detail in this study.

Three of the principal issues of the late-Victorian period were the Empire, democracy and Irish Home Rule. Imperial affairs were an important factor in influencing election outcomes in the 1880s. At the start of the decade the role of protector of the empire was still up for grabs between the Liberals and Conservatives. Gladstone used imperial issues as a cornerstone in his 1880 Midlothian campaign when he was ushering in the new form of campaigning. He attacked the Conservatives' foreign policy as being too costly and unnecessary. Gladstone also highlighted the fact that the Conservative government had supported the Turkish Empire who had slaughtered Christians in Bulgaria, which he argued was against the role of the empire.³⁷ The Liberal government of 1880–5 under Gladstone had trouble with foreign policy as well. It suffered disasters in South Africa, Egypt and Sudan. The loss in Sudan was intensified by the death of the popular General Charles Gordon. Gordon's death caused an outcry of anguish in the country.³⁸ His death, coupled with the other foreign policy failures, upset both Conservatives and Liberals.³⁹ Despite the setback of the unsuccessful foreign policy of the Liberal Government, the Conservatives were unable to turn the Liberal misfortune into a gain in Scotland during the 1885 election.⁴⁰ Edinburgh reflected the same blasé attitude as the rest of Scotland with the subject of foreign policy rarely showing up in the campaign, which instead focussed on domestic issues.

In the first half of the 1880s there were four acts of Parliament passed that altered politics in the UK. The first act, the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act of 1883, focussed on campaign finance and regulated the amount of money a candidate could spend during the campaign. The other three Acts are the Representation of the People Act of 1884, Registration Amendment Act of 1885 and the Redistribution of the Seats Act of 1885. Together these three acts are known as the Third Reform Act and

³⁷ Greene, *The Crisis of Conservatism*, 60; Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery*, 80; Philip Magnus, *Gladstone: A Biography* (London, 1954), 261–70.

³⁸ Magnus, *Gladstone*, 322; Donald Read, *England 1868–1914: The Age of Urban Democracy* (New York, 1979), 344–5.

³⁹ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 154; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 114; Greene, *The Crisis of Conservatism*, 59–64; Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone: A Biography* (New York, 1995), 509–16.

⁴⁰ Cameron, *Impaled upon a Thistle*, 71.

are discussed in detail in chapter one of this study. The Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act of 1883 limited candidates to one election agent, forbid the payment of canvassers and restricted the number of other campaign workers. It also criminalised the payment or the exchange of gifts, such as beer, to constituents for their vote. Most importantly, it limited the overall expenditure allotted to a campaign.⁴¹ Of course, this act did not completely eradicate all corruption within British politics, but it helped curb the undesired actions. Since candidates could no longer rely on paying workers to campaign for them or bribing constituents for their vote, they had to adapt to seeking volunteers and to persuading constituents to vote for them. This new style of campaigning encouraged more people to get involved in the political process and allowed constituents to vote according to their own personal preference, not based on a financial incentive.⁴²

The Third Reform Act equalised the voting requirements, addressed some issues of restructuring the new voters and redrew the parliamentary districts. The Representation of the People Act of 1884 altered the voting requirements of the counties to match those of the cities, which had been altered in 1867 through the Second Reform Act. This greatly increased the amount of eligible voters in the UK. To aid in registering these new voters the Registration Amendment Act of 1885 was passed. In practise, it worked to disenfranchise men by placing obstacles, in the form of restrictions, in their way causing an otherwise eligible man to become ineligible. Nevertheless, there were over two million new voters franchised by the Third Reform Act. Matthew Fforde views the increase in the number of voters as the central cause to the change in national politics during the late-Victorian period. The expansion of the franchise encouraged more people to participate and to use government as the vehicle for social change.⁴³

The final act of the Third Reform Act, the Registration Amendment Act of 1885, brought the size of the parliamentary districts closer together based on population. It also introduced single-member seats to Parliament and further separated urban voters from rural voters. With this change to single-member seats,

⁴¹ Kathryn Rix, “‘The elimination of corrupt practices in British elections’?” Reassessing the impact of the 1883 Corrupt Practices Act’, *EHR* 123 (2008), 65–97.

⁴² Ian Machin, *The Rise of Democracy in Britain, 1830–1918* (Basingstoke, 2001), 93.

⁴³ Fforde, *Conservatism and Collectivism*, 11–7.

the traditional conception of the ideal MP changed. Before the introduction of the single-member seat, MPs were expected to embody a wide range of opinion due to the varying opinions from the large number of constituents he was supposed to represent. After this shift, the opinions of the constituents were more defined leading to the desire for more rigid candidates. The new single-seat parliamentary districts were also stretched to incorporate constituents who shared similar economic conditions into the same districts. According to Jonathan Parry, this alteration within British politics made it possible for party machines to take over the political process within the new districts.⁴⁴ The change also eliminated a longstanding tradition of the Whigs and Radicals running in cooperation with one another in the same burgh as they now faced one another for the same seat. This restricted the ability of local elites being able to negotiate the desired outcome of the election without a contest as well.⁴⁵ Therefore, the shift to single-member districts led to both the elimination of cooperation between the two wings of the Liberal party and the constituents' want of an MP that shared their specific political goals. This led Liberal candidates to advocate a specific platform that separated them from their Liberal rival.

In the last half of the 1880s the debate over Irish Home Rule shook up and rearranged parliamentary politics more than any other single issue during the late-Victorian era. The Irish National League was seeking more autonomy from Westminster for Ireland. The Irish Nationalists used their position as a minority party to disrupt Parliament by obstructing proceedings with unnecessary parliamentary procedures. The goal of this tactic was to become a large enough nuisance that the Liberals and Conservatives would have to address their concerns. The Irish Nationalists also hoped to influence the Liberals or Conservatives to support Irish Home Rule in return for their backing either party. During the 1885 election Charles Stewart Parnell, the leader of the Irish Nationalists, urged Irish voters in Britain to support the Conservatives over the Liberals. The weight of the Irish vote in Britain was a concern for both the Liberals and the Conservatives with the passage of the Third Reform Act as it was estimated that there were up to two million Irish living in Britain. The impact of Parnell's direction has been questioned as the Irish voters

⁴⁴ Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government*, 284–6.

⁴⁵ Lawrence, *Electing our Masters*, 65–70.

could have influenced as many as forty elections, although this number has been disputed. Regardless, it was minimal in Scotland where the Liberals enjoyed a great victory and the Irish constituents were firmly Liberal. The Liberals, under Gladstone's leadership, won a majority of eighty-six MPs, the exact number of Irish Nationalist MPs returned; therefore, Gladstone needed their support to form an outright majority Government. This enabled Parnell to play the role of 'king maker'. In order to secure the support of the Irish Nationalists and Parnell, Gladstone presented an Irish Home Rule Bill. There is evidence that Gladstone was already moving toward supporting Irish Home Rule, but, whatever his motivation, it caused a great divide amongst Liberal MPs and Liberal constituents. There were numerous reasons for various MPs to support or oppose the bill, which are discussed within this thesis. The Irish Home Rule debate not only caused the split of the Liberal party, but it also led to the creation of a new party in opposition over the bill.⁴⁶

The Liberal Unionist Party was established in 1886 after the breakup of the Liberal party over Gladstone's proposal for Irish Home Rule. Some of the members of the Liberal party who opposed Irish Home Rule could not resolve their differences. These Liberals broke away from the Liberal party and formed a new party calling themselves Liberal Unionists because they saw themselves as keeping the countries of the UK united. Owing to their members already being established politicians at the founding of the party, they had great early success. Their success can also be attributed to the election pact with the Conservatives to not run politicians for the same seat thus uniting the vote of constituents who opposed Liberals and Irish Home Rule. The united opposition against the Liberal party led to the consolidation of the Liberal Unionists and Conservatives in the Edwardian era.⁴⁷ The formation of the Liberal Unionist party caused by the breakup of the Liberal party and the impact it had on the local politics of Edinburgh are a key feature in this thesis.

The Liberal Unionists differed from Labour, the other political movement that emerged in the late-Victorian era, in that it formed from members of the Liberal

⁴⁶ Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule, 1867–1921* (Manchester, 1998), 92–106; Frederick C. Dietz, *A Political and Social History of England* (New York, 1937), 594–603; Cameron, *Impaled upon a Thistle*, 73–5.

⁴⁷ John Belchem, *Class, Party and the Political System in Britain 1867–1914* (Oxford, 1990), 32; Burness, *Strange Associations*, 213–20.

Party; therefore, it did not have the same difficulties in establishing a foothold in mainstream politics. The Labour movement had a difficult time breaking into mainstream politics, which was already dominated by Liberals and Conservatives at that time. The Labour party has strong roots in Scotland originating from this period, most notably Keir Hardie who lost the 1888 Mid-Lanark by-election and founded the Scottish Labour party.⁴⁸ By the end of the Great War, Labour had passed the Liberals and became an important political party nationally. Due to this success, there is no doubt that supporters of a working-class party were not already hard at work labouring for political success. Nevertheless, in the 1880s, especially in Edinburgh, there is little evidence of the movement having any impact on parliamentary elections. There was a desire to elect a workingman to Parliament in Edinburgh, but the Trades Representative Parliamentary Committee had organisational problems, which ended with the abandonment of this attempt.⁴⁹

Robert Q. Gray attributes the lack of a vital working-class movement in Edinburgh during the 1880s to the workers themselves:

Workers themselves [...] showed little tendency to link their experience of industrial struggle to the present inequalities of political power. Both kinds of oppression were recognized as such, and vigorously opposed, but they were never connected with any total social critique. Disillusionment with Liberalism led to political passivity, rather than to any attempt to construct an alternative.⁵⁰

However, constituents raised work-related questions such as shortening the workday or payment for workingmen who were elected to Parliament. These questions were directed toward the candidates in Edinburgh during the 1885 election, they were just very limited compared to the questions that dominated the election.⁵¹

⁴⁸ I. G. C. Hutchison, 'Glasgow working-class politics', in R. A. Cage, *The Working Class in Glasgow, 1750–1914* (Beckenham, 1987), 114–5; Olive Checkland and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland, 1832–1914* (Edinburgh, 1984), 79–81.

⁴⁹ *The Scotsman*, 25 Apr. 1885, 6; 18 May 1885, 5; A committee formed in 1885 to elect a workingman to Parliament. They were involved with the Trades Council. Joseph Hope was recommended to stand, but turned down the opportunity due to financial reasons. The committee disbanded in May due to financial and organisational problems.

⁵⁰ Robert Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh* (London, 1976), 164.

⁵¹ *The Scotsman*, 8 Oct. 1885, 6; 31 Oct. 1885, 10; 5 Nov. 1885, 7; 17 Nov. 1885, 6; 23 Nov. 1885, 5. Most of the questions regarding the shortening of the workday were for railway workers. They were also presented as a concern for both the workers and public safety due to them operating systems that the public used.

Other historians of Scottish politics cite the dominance of the Liberal party in Scotland for the minimal support of a working-class party in the 1880s. Speaking of the newly enfranchised voters of both 1868 and 1885, Cameron links their support of liberalism to Gladstone and shared values: ‘Gladstone was revered and the values of order and respectability underpinned by craft skill, literacy and sobriety brought many working men into the Liberal community in Scotland’.⁵² Fry comes to the same conclusion of Liberal dominance:

Unions could not persuade many that class interests were more important than the victory of Liberalism, especially when the horrible alternative was Conservatism. In any case the emergence of a strong opposition on the Left was for the moment made impossible by Gladstone’s triumphs in Scotland, which attached the workers more firmly to the Liberal party than at any time since 1832.⁵³

The popularity of both Gladstone and the Liberal party in Edinburgh are central themes in this study and support this view. The founding of both the Liberal Unionist and Labour parties placed pressure on the already established parties.

Coupled with all of these changes, a new method of politics emerged during the 1880s that shifted the focus of politics from one concerned with local campaigns to national campaigns. This study of Edinburgh politics showcases this change by examining the parliamentary elections of 1885 and 1886 and the by-election held between them. These elections roughly fall in the middle of the decade, but, more importantly, they were held on the brink of the new political age. The 1885 election is the first held under the new franchise and the re-drawn electorate. It represents a dramatic attempt to break from the established politics, but it still held back from a complete break. The 1886 election, with the introduction of Irish Home Rule, was able to complete this major transformation.

The study

With all of the changes taking place in the last quarter of the nineteenth century it was inevitable that there would be an impact on local politics of Edinburgh. The goal of this study is to identify and highlight these effects. While the focus of this study is on the local context of Edinburgh, it seeks to gain a broader

⁵² Cameron, *Impaled upon a Thistle*, 67.

⁵³ Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 152.

understanding of national trends throughout the UK during the 1885 and 1886 elections. Different aspects of the political climate will be assessed in this study which uses an approach similar to the one used by Lawrence in *Speaking for the People*, in that it is a study of both 'high' and 'popular' politics and focuses on the links between the two. This thesis investigates the relationship between the representatives and the represented by exploring the negotiation that took place between the constituents and the candidates. The constituents and the candidates had to negotiate and try to persuade each other on what questions and issues were the most important and what positions were to be taken on those questions and issues which sometimes led to change in position during the course of the campaign. The constituents that were involved in the local party associations would debate the questions and the issues amongst themselves and try to reach a consensus on the position the local constituents should take on them. However, the constituents also negotiated with the candidates when they invited them to stand for their constituency and when they offered a candidate the endorsement of the association. In these actions, the constituents were ultimately looking for a candidate who supported their positions. Likewise, the candidates had to negotiate their terms as well. They had to find a constituency that would support their candidature. In order to appeal to the constituents, the candidates had to be open to the positions that the constituents favoured. They also had to be mindful of the local traditions that existed in the constituency in addition to what they perceived that the constituents wanted in a candidate.

The 1880s was a decade of change for politics in the UK and, therefore, in Edinburgh. At the start of the 1880s Edinburgh was a double-member constituency. The constituents each had two votes, which they were able to cast for two separate parliamentary candidates. This voting system ensured cooperation between different ideological stances, Whigs and Radicals, within the Liberal party in most of the UK. However, in the Edinburgh constituency prior to the establishment of a local Liberal Association, there were rarely rival Liberals running for the seats. There were generally only two candidates that would come forward and both were usually aligned to the same ideological wing of the Liberal party. This was likely due to that wing of the party controlling the party's nominating process at that time. If one wing

could exercise more control over the process, they could ensure the nominated candidates were aligned with their wing of the party before they stood for the general election. With the passage of the Third Reform Act the number of MPs in Edinburgh was doubled to four and they were divided into separate single-member seats. The change to single-member seats took place in all large burghs throughout the UK and caused the cooperation between the Radicals and Whigs to end because it forced the two groups to run against one another for the same seat. This was not much of a factor in Edinburgh, as the two groups had not cooperated with one another before the change. The change to single-member seats did still affect the local politics in Edinburgh. It was decided that the local Liberal Association should be replaced with individual associations for each new district. The establishment of these new associations provided an opportunity to gain outright control over the new political machines that were to be established for each of the new parliamentary seats. Whoever controlled the caucus of the new association could control the nominating process within them. The fight for control over the associations became a central theme during the 1885 election in Edinburgh and led to the legitimacy of the local liberal associations being questioned and consequently damaged.

In Scotland the prominent issue during the 1885 election was the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. The Church question was also a major point of contention between the Whigs and Radicals and contributed to the fight between the two groups for dominance of the local parties after the Third Reform Act. In Edinburgh the questions of local licensing and free education were also major issues during the election. They too fell largely along the same ideological split as the Church question. Despite these three questions dominating the Edinburgh elections, the main rhetoric used during the campaigns by both the candidates and constituents was the candidates' qualities. This was similar to themes used in elections prior to the Third Reform Act. There were certain qualities that were valued more than others: local connection to the constituency, age of the candidate and his experience, and his identity as a liberal. Local connections were valued because it was believed that the potential MP would look out for the best interests of the city. Age and experience were valued for the prestige that the MP would bring to the city. Liberals were sought because Edinburgh, like most of Scotland, valued liberalism.

Prior to the Third Reform Act Edinburgh generally elected one local MP and one well-known MP to represent them, and both had always been Liberals.

Contrary to the main questions of the election and the fight between the Radicals and Whigs, the rhetoric of the election suggests that the qualities of the candidates were the foremost concern of the majority of the constituents during the election. Candidates were praised for their experience and for their local connection to Edinburgh or Scotland while others were diminished for their lack of experience or labelled as outsiders. However, the in-fighting for control over the local party associations that was waged between the Whigs and Radicals during the 1885 election caused the local liberal associations' legitimacy to be questioned. This loss of legitimacy led to the establishment of opposing liberal associations primarily based on their alliance to the opposing wing of the Liberal party in three of the four parliamentary districts in Edinburgh. This essentially split the Liberal party in Edinburgh before Gladstone introduced Irish Home Rule.

Due to the death of one of the newly elected MPs for Edinburgh there was a by-election held in January. The new local liberal associations were already in place during this election and were unable to come to an agreement on a candidate. However, only one Liberal candidate came forward to stand for the seat against a Conservative. The Liberals' disagreement over the candidate was largely connected to the fighting over control of the associations between the Whigs and Radicals. Despite the disagreement the Liberal candidate easily won the by-election, but his return did nothing to reunite the local party. The fragmentation of the local Liberal party in Edinburgh was interrupted in early 1886 when Gladstone introduced plans for Irish Home Rule. Gladstone's endorsement of Irish Home Rule led to a shattering of the Liberal party throughout the UK and to another general election. In the lead up to the election the liberal associations in Edinburgh were split on support of Irish Home Rule. Three of the associations favoured the measure, three opposed and one did not come to a decision. None of the associations were able to pass their resolutions on the question without opposition from within their associations. This demonstrates the strain that the Irish Home Rule debate placed on the local Liberals. The Irish question divided both camps of Liberals, the Radicals and the Whigs. Through a great effort by Gladstone and other Liberals who supported Irish Home

Rule, the majority of local Liberals were essentially reunited by the Irish question. Within a few months of the associations' initial vote on support of Irish Home Rule, only one of them adopted a candidate that opposed the Irish question.

One issue that is responsible for reuniting the majority of the Liberals in Edinburgh and securing their support for Irish Home Rule was the fight for liberalism that took place during the election. Upon the introduction of the Irish Home Rule question, three of the sitting MPs came out in opposition to the measure. Once an election was called, all of Edinburgh's sitting MPs had an opponent come forward to stand against them. All four of Edinburgh's races in 1886 were between two candidates that both professed to be Liberals, yet were divided on their support of the Irish question. This created a need for the candidates to assert that they were the true Liberals in the race. Throughout the election both the Liberal and Liberal Unionist candidates tried to present their position on the Irish question as a principle of liberalism. These arguments of support for the Irish question lead the election to become an election about liberalism. Therefore, the 1886 election, unlike the previous elections held in Edinburgh, was over one primary national issue and not about the national qualities of the candidates or local matters. This suggests that Edinburgh politics had been pushed into national politics by the Irish Home Rule question due to the debate over liberalism.

The transition to national politics did not take place based on the Irish question and debate on liberalism. Edinburgh politics was influenced by the changes placed on it and the rest of the UK during the late-Victorian period, especially in the 1880s. Through the analysis of Edinburgh's politics after the Third Reform Act, this thesis examines the transition by looking at such subjects as disestablishment, Irish Home Rule, local political traditions and the local Liberal party conflict as well as the effects brought on by such issues by exploring the negotiation which took place between the candidates and the constituents. The research of both 'high' and 'popular' politics, and the relationship between the two, allows a well-rounded conception of Edinburgh's political environment in the late-Victorian period. This broad analysis of Edinburgh's politics is placed within the historiography of late-Victorian Scottish politics in this thesis to determine the effects that these changes had on the city's politics.

CHAPTER ONE

Edinburgh and the Third Reform Act

Three Acts of Parliament, collectively known as the Third Reform Act, set into motion the political events that dominated the election cycle in 1885: the Representation of the People Act of 1884, Registration Amendment Act of 1885, and the Redistribution of the Seats Act of 1885.¹ The Representation of the People Act of 1884, the principal act, was sought to equalise the voting qualification between the urban and rural voters. Both the Registration Amendment and the Redistribution of the Seats Act supplemented the Representation of the People Act. These three Acts did not prove easy to pass. The House of Lords, controlled by the Conservatives, and the House of Commons, controlled by the Liberals, disputed the content of the Bills and the order in which the legislation should be introduced and voted on. Even after both Houses and parties came to a compromise, the Acts still had to be implemented, which became a source of even further controversy. The Act that took the most effort to enact was the Redistribution of the Seats Act. In order to apply the alterations called for by this Act, Parliament created a Boundary Commission to modify the parliamentary districts throughout the country. The modification of the parliamentary boundaries was of great interest to the local citizens in part due to the disputes that arose from the changes. This was especially true of Edinburgh, where the addition of two new MPs was accommodated by dividing the city into four parliamentary

¹ The Registration Amendment Act of 1885 consists of three separate Acts: one for England and Wales, one for Ireland, and another for Scotland.

districts, Central, East, South, and West. This was a controversial move which led to a heated debate over the best way to move forward with the changes.

Together these three Acts entirely changed the face of the electorate in the United Kingdom. This chapter will explore each of the three Acts and the steps taken to secure their passage. The implementation which followed their passage brought about some controversy. Edinburgh faced significant difficulty as it was changed from a dual-member constituency into a divided burgh with four individual districts. These districts had to be mapped out, which led to many discussions as to the best way to divide the city. Different groups came together to discuss their own plans before agreement was finally reached on how to divide the city and set the stage for the upcoming general election in 1885.

The Acts

The Representation of the People Act of 1884 (more commonly known as the Franchise Act) was the first reform act to legislate for the whole of the United Kingdom. Prior to 1884, there had been two reforms that dealt with the franchise in the United Kingdom: the first in 1832 followed by another in 1867–8. Both of the previous reforms had consisted of three separate Acts: one which addressed England and Wales, one focussed on Scotland, and another for Ireland. Upon passage of the Act in 1884 a man in Scotland was, for the first time, held to the same requirements as a man in any other part of the United Kingdom. The general purpose of the new Franchise Act was to create ‘a uniform household franchise and a uniform lodger franchise at elections’ throughout the United Kingdom meaning that any man, regardless of whether he was considered a head of household or a lodger, was allowed to register as a voter, so long as he met the qualification requirements.² This portion of the Act primarily functioned to benefit the counties by granting the same form of qualification to the counties as was already in place in the burghs.

The household franchise was given to the ‘inhabitant occupier’ of a dwelling, where ‘occupier’ was defined as either a tenant or the owner of the dwelling as long as he had resided within the parliamentary division for twelve months prior to

² 48 & 49 Vict., c. 3, ‘Representation of the People Act, 1884’.

registration.³ Registration closed six months before it became effective, essentially making the qualifying period of occupancy eighteen months. Additionally, the household was required to be rated at a yearly value of ten pounds or more and the elector had to have paid all taxes and any rates owed in order to qualify for the household franchise. A key change from the 1868 Franchise Act was that it was no longer mandatory for the householder to be rated for the relief of the poor, thus opening the vote to small, poor occupiers. Joint occupancy of a household, however, still only entitled one of the occupiers to a vote, regardless of the value of the household.⁴ This restriction was meant to prevent fictitious voters from claiming on a house that they did not inhabit. However, this also prevented sons from claiming on their fathers' houses thereby disenfranchising many middle-class and working-class young men who remained home until they established their own households, traditionally upon their marriage.⁵ The exclusion of young unmarried sons was based on the old political idea that these men could not be 'independent' and so were not fit to exercise the franchise.⁶ If a person was a tenant, however, even in a one room flat, he could still qualify given that he met all of the other requirements.⁷

The lodger franchise in the 1868 Franchise Act enabled all lodgers who rented temporarily, such as a monthly lease, the right to vote in burghs. As with the householders, the lodger was required to have resided within the same parliamentary division for the twelve-month period prior to registration. An unfurnished lodging needed to have a yearly value of at least ten pounds and the lodgers were not liable to pay any poor rates or other rates. The 1884 Franchise Act extended these same requirements to the residents in the counties, thus enabling qualifying lodgers in the counties the right to vote under the new system.⁸

There were two other types of voter qualifications in addition to the household and lodger franchises: the service franchise and the occupation franchise.

³ James Badenach Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes Affecting Parliamentary Elections in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1885), 7.

⁴ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 5–12.

⁵ Jon Lawrence, 'The dynamics of urban politics, 1867–1914', in Jon Lawrence and Miles Taylor (eds), *Party, State and Society: Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1829* (Aldershot, 1997), 88.

⁶ Keith McClelland, 'England's greatness, the working man', in Catherine Hall, Keith McClelland, and Jane Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the Reform Act of 1867* (Cambridge, 2000), 71–118. An independent man was described in this article as a man who had the means to 'maintain a dependent wife and children within the household'.

⁷ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 5–12.

⁸ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 15–7.

These groups of voters were also addressed in the 1884 Franchise Act increasing voter registration in both the burghs and counties. The service qualification was granted to any man who inhabited a dwelling provided by his employment, often as part of his wages, as long as the dwelling was not also inhabited by his employer.⁹ This included such workers as railwaymen or miners living in company houses or farm labourers living in dwellings provided by their employer. The service qualification had not been enacted previously because it was believed that the disqualification of such men did not affect many workers in the burghs. However, due to the extension of the new franchise qualifications to the counties, a vast number of labourers would have been excluded. If the service qualification had not been enacted, many potential electors in the rural areas would have been in danger of being disqualified.¹⁰ An individual who qualified for the service franchise was not liable to pay any rates; instead, their employers were responsible for paying them. On the valuation roll 'exempted' was recorded in place of the amount owed by the elector. The elector still had to meet the twelve-month residency requirement within the parliamentary district to qualify, however the potential voter did not have to stay under the same employer or even in the same abode as long as their residency was consecutive in the same parliamentary division.¹¹

The occupation qualification was given to men who utilised a tenement or land, separate from his residency, for a workplace which was valued at a yearly rate of ten pounds or more.¹² The required value in the counties prior to the 1884 Franchise Act had been fourteen pounds and above. It was reduced to match the ten pound requirement already in place in the burghs; however, the assimilation stopped at that. In both the burghs and the counties, the proprietor had to meet the twelve-month residency requirement as an owner, not a resident. In the burghs, though, the proprietor was also required to reside in or within seven miles of the city where his land or tenement was located for at least six months prior to the qualifying period. The property value required to receive the county vote was essentially the only

⁹ 48 & 49 Vict., c. 3, 'Representation of the People Act, 1884'; Dyer, *Capable Citizens*, 19. The dwelling-place could be provided by the employer as a supplement to wages.

¹⁰ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 12–3.

¹¹ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 13–4.

¹² 48 & 49 Vict., c. 3, 'Representation of the People Act, 1884'.

change made; thus, the proprietor still had to be rated for the relief of the poor in order to qualify.¹³

The Franchise Act also included provisions to attempt to restrict the amount of fictitious voting. An individual could no longer receive the occupation vote based on feu-duties or rent charge.¹⁴ In cases where more than one man owned or operated from the same land or tenement, only one would qualify as a voter. This regulation excluded two situations. The first was cases where men inherited the land or tenement and the second was men who were legitimate business partners. In these two cases, all men were entitled to a vote as long as the mean of the total rent was sufficient.¹⁵

The second major piece of legislation that preceded the 1885 election were the Registration Acts, which were implemented in order to register all of the newly entitled voters as a result of the Franchise Act. England and Wales were both addressed in one Act while Scotland and Ireland had their own separate Acts to deal with the voting registration of each of their electorates. Much of the Scottish Act was dedicated to the structure of the registration.¹⁶ The Act also made some changes to the voting qualifications in Scotland which enabled joint lodgers the right to vote in parliamentary elections. Under the amended law, joint lodgers whose yearly rent was ten pounds or higher per person when divided by all of the occupants were qualified to register as voters, regardless of how many occupied the lodging.¹⁷

The final Act in the Third Reform Act was the Redistribution of the Seats Act of 1885, which redrew the parliamentary boundaries and implemented several more regulations pertaining to voting within the new divided parliamentary divisions. Several divisions throughout the United Kingdom that contained more than one MP were divided in order to create single-member districts rather than the existing multiple member seats. Some of the regulations of the Act addressed the new situation caused by dividing some of the burghs into multiple districts. One of the problems that stemmed from the division of the burghs was that in order to qualify for the occupancy franchise, a voter had to have resided in the parliamentary burgh

¹³ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 17–21.

¹⁴ 48 & 49 Vict., c. 3, 'Representation of the People Act, 1884'.

¹⁵ 48 & 49 Vict., c. 3, 'Representation of the People Act, 1884'; Dyer, *Capable Citizens*, 20.

¹⁶ The structure of the Registration Act of 1885 is detailed in Dyer, *Capable Citizens*, 20–1.

¹⁷ 48 & 49 Vict., c. 16, 'Registration Amendment (Scotland) Act, 1885'.

for the past twelve months.¹⁸ This restriction put a great strain on the working- and middle-class electors in divided burghs. If they wanted to vote, they were limited in their movement to just a portion of the burgh. Instead, the Redistribution Act set up the divided burghs to function as one parliamentary district with regards to registration even though it was actually comprised of multiple seats.¹⁹ A voter could then move about the city with no fear of being disqualified as long as they continually met the requirements for a voting qualification. A man who claimed a vote by the occupation franchise could live in any district or within seven miles of any district of the burgh.²⁰ This protected all of the voter qualification categories except for lodgers who were left out of this new scheme. Lodgers had to stay within whatever district they were lodging for twelve months to qualify making it an extremely difficult qualification to achieve.²¹

Treating a divided burgh as a single parliamentary district for registration clearly benefited some voters, as noted above; however, it had a negative effect on others. Due to these new regulations, a man was allowed only one vote in any district regardless of how many qualifications he met. A shop owner in Newington living in St. George's, for instance, could not vote in the South district based on the occupation franchise and also vote in the West district based on the household franchise. If he qualified for more than one vote in a divided burgh and one of his qualifications was his household, he was only allowed to use his household qualification. The occupation franchise was somewhat limited in divided burghs. It could still be used if a man qualified by the occupation franchise in the burgh but did not meet the requirements for the household franchise. Additionally, if a man lived outside the burgh, but within seven miles of it, he was still able to use the occupation qualification to vote in the burgh while he could also claim a household vote as long as he met all of the requirements in the county where he lived. Divided burghs being treated as one seat for registration purposes also had adverse affects on election agents or anyone who received a monetary payment in exchange for their contribution to a candidate. The Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act of 1883 prohibited any such person from voting in an election in which they had worked for a candidate.

¹⁸ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 9–10.

¹⁹ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 10.

²⁰ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 20.

²¹ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 17.

However, the Redistribution Act expanded the restriction to apply to all districts in a divided burgh, thus applying the conditions of the Act to any person working on a campaign in any district of a divided burgh, even if they worked in a district where they were not already entitled to vote.²²

The restrictions that came from the Redistribution Act were countered by the aforementioned ability of the working- and middle-class residents of a divided burgh to move around the city without being disqualified. Oddly, none of the measures that applied to the divided burghs were extended to the divided counties, thus restricting tenants to stay in a portion of the county in order to retain their voting qualification for the entire registration period. On the other hand, this benefited owners in the counties by allowing them to have two votes if they could: one for ownership and another for their household as long as they were in a separate district.²³ The burghs were seemingly set up to benefit the working class and appease the Radicals while the laws in the counties benefited the more affluent and pacified the Whigs and Conservatives who may have been distraught over the new regulations that were passed in the burghs had they been applied also to the counties.

The passage of the Acts

The addition of eighteen new parliamentary seats, the admission of two million new voters, and all of the other reforms that comprised the Third Reform Act proved difficult to pass through Parliament.²⁴ The Government first encountered problems when it introduced the Franchise Bill in 1884. The Conservatives feared that if the Franchise Act passed on its own, the Liberals, who held the majority in Parliament, could then dictate the structure of the Redistribution Act or, worse, the Radical wing of the Liberal party might force an election in which the newly enfranchised would almost certainly vote overwhelmingly for Radical Liberals which was a concern of Whig MPs as well. This would oust the Conservative MPs from the countryside while retaining the Liberal majority in the burghs, thus, throwing off the

²² Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 44.

²³ Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 44.

²⁴ For a detailed account of the 'high politics' regarding the passage of the Third Reform Act, see Andrew Jones, *The Politics of Reform 1884* (Cambridge, 1972).

balance of power in Parliament.²⁵ For this reason, the Conservatives withheld their support of the Franchise Extension until a compromise was made and the Redistribution of the Seats Act of 1885 was introduced to the House of Commons. The hope of the Conservatives was to redistribute the seats with the proposed new electors in mind so that the Conservative party would still be favoured in parts of the country, although it has been debated amongst historians on which parts of the country.²⁶

The Conservatives' reservations about passing the Franchise Act created similar worries for the Liberals. The Liberals' concern was that if they combined both measures, those opposed to the Franchise Extension could use the redistribution proposal to stop both measures.²⁷ However, if they proposed a bill for redistribution before they secured the extension, the House of Lords could reshape the redistribution as they wished. If the Liberals opposed any of the new changes, the Lords could then kill that redistribution bill and, in the course of this action, crush any hope of the Franchise Act being passed as well.²⁸ These reservations from both parties led to a compromise and the passage of Representation of the People Act of 1884 and the Redistribution of the Seats Act of 1885.

In early July 1884 the House of Lords rejected the House of Commons' Bill for franchise extension. The Conservative leader, Lord Salisbury, hoped that this rejection would cause the Prime Minister, William Gladstone, to end the Parliament and call for an election.²⁹ Gladstone did not call for the Government to be dissolved over the Lords' veto of the Franchise Extension Bill; if he had, it might have led to difficulties in the Liberal party due to the ripples through the ranks amongst the Radicals and the Whigs. Gladstone therefore left the question to the public in hopes that they could apply enough pressure on the Lords to force them to pass the Bill.³⁰

²⁵ Mary E. J. Chadwick, 'The role of redistribution in the making of the Third Reform Act', *The Historical Journal*, 19 (1976), 667–8; M. Roberts, 'Resisting "Arithmocracy": Parliament, community, and the Third Reform Act', *Journal of British Studies* 50 (2011), 389–90.

²⁶ John F. McCaffrey, 'Political issues and developments', in W. Hamish Fraser and Irene Maver (eds), *Glasgow Volume II: 1830–1912* (Manchester, 1996), 108–9; Belchem, *Class, Party and the Political System*, 10–12; K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846–1886* (Oxford, 1998), 264–5; Jones, *The Politics of Reform*, 204–15; Roberts, 'Resisting "Arithmocracy"', 393–4.

²⁷ Chadwick, 'The role of redistribution', 668.

²⁸ Chadwick, 'The role of redistribution', 668.

²⁹ J. P. D. Dunbabin, 'Electoral reforms and their outcome in the United Kingdom, 1865–1900', in T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (eds), *Later Victorian Britain, 1867–1900* (Basingstoke, 1988), 107.

³⁰ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 299–300.

Subsequently, the Lords' veto created a great stir among many of the Liberals and disenfranchised citizens throughout the United Kingdom resulting in demonstrations to protest against the actions of the House of Lords.

There were many demonstrations throughout the country including protests in London, Birmingham, and elsewhere. The first of these events was held on 12 July in Edinburgh, demonstrating the progressive nature of the Edinburgh Liberals as well as their desire to be a force on the national stage. The group of demonstrators was made up of members of the Edinburgh Trades' Council and the Edinburgh Liberal Association as well as the surrounding communities' workingmen and Liberals. *The Times* estimated that the demonstrators numbered ten thousand with an additional fifty to sixty thousand people in attendance.³¹ The demonstrators held a procession that started at Oddfellows' Hall, continued through Princes Street, and ended in the Queen's Park. Once at the Queen's Park, the demonstrators dispersed to listen to speakers at one of four different platforms. One of the speakers was a local University of Edinburgh Professor, Henry Calderwood, who proposed a resolution:

That this meeting of representative Liberals of Scotland heartily approves of the Government measure for equalising the county franchise with that of the burghs, thanks the Liberal representatives for their united support of the bill, and gratefully acknowledges the effective vindication of the measure by the minority of the House of Lords; but this meeting strongly disapproves, as unwise and unconstitutional, the action of the majority of the Upper House in resisting legislation approved of by the great majority of the people, and formally opposed by few, and laments greatly the most vexatious restraint on legislation occasioned by the action of the House of Lords.³²

The primary goal of the demonstrators was to express their opinion in favour of the Government and the franchise extension, but the tone of the resolution went beyond that and called into question the legitimacy of the House of Lords.

A grand demonstration was on the Liberals' minds at the previous month's meeting of the Liberal Association in Edinburgh. This is illustrated in a speech by Roxburghshire MP Arthur Elliot, in which he asserted that the House of Lords would use the argument that the country had not demonstrated its desire for franchise reform. Speaking of Lord Randolph Churchill, Elliot said that Churchill 'told a meeting of Edinburgh citizens that if the country had shown its wish for reform, as it

³¹ *The Times*, 14 Jul. 1884, 6.

³² *The Scotsman*, 14 Jul. 1884, 4.

did in 1866 and 1867, by tearing down the railings of Hyde Park, he would have believed that they want this bill'. Elliot went on to inform the crowd that 'he was not there to advise them to tear down the railings of Princes' Street Gardens [...] but to support by fair argument, which was constitutional method adopted by Scotsmen and Englishmen, their views on the great question of reform'.³³ The Liberals were searching for a means to illustrate their support for the franchise extension without resorting to violence, which had manifested itself in previous protests on similar matters of franchise reform. Speaking in relation to the success of the Edinburgh demonstration, Gladstone remarked, 'Her Majesty's Government rely on the efficiency of calm reasoning, addressed to the awakened mind of the nation to the great question now at issue, to prevent the renewal hereafter of serious difficulty in the way of passing the Franchise Bill'.³⁴ The support for the Government enabled Gladstone and the Liberals to push forward with the Franchise Bill in hopes of generating a compromise with the House of Lords on the redistribution bill.

Gladstone delivered his position on the growing controversy over franchise and redistribution in a speech to the House of Commons on 17 November 1884 in which Gladstone declared, 'With respect to the Bill that has recently been before us, and with respect to the settlement of the question of representation of the people, our object—the object of the Government—is to secure the passing of the Franchise Bill'.³⁵ This remark made it clear that he was using the redistribution question to garner support for the passage of the Franchise Bill. On 22 November Gladstone, accompanied by two cabinet members, leading Radical Sir Charles Dilke and Whig leader Lord Hartington, entered into negotiations regarding the Redistribution Act with Sir Stafford Northcote, the Conservative leader in the House of Commons, and Conservative leader Lord Salisbury.³⁶

The fundamentals of redistribution were complex because the process was not a negotiation between Liberals and Conservatives; rather, it was a three-way negotiation between Whigs and Radicals (the two opposing wings of the Liberal party) and the Conservatives. Dilke led the meetings in which he played the Whigs and Conservatives against one another, siding with either one at opportune times.

³³ *The Scotsman*, 5 Jun. 1884, 6.

³⁴ *The Times*, 18 Jul. 1884, 10.

³⁵ Hansard, *PD*, 3rd series, vol. 293, c. 1821, 17 Nov. 1884.

³⁶ Roy Jenkins, *Sir Charles Dilke: A Victorian Tragedy* (London, 1958), 191.

Single-member districts were desired by both the Radicals and the Conservatives because it was thought that single-member districts would help both of them return MPs. Radicals especially desired single-member seats due to the shift towards more equalised voting constituencies, which was a Radical principle.³⁷ Hartington was troubled by the introduction of single-member districts because it brought about the end of both wings of the Liberal party running candidates together, a long-standing strength for the Whigs in urban areas.³⁸ Dilke knew that this would probably hurt the Liberal party initially, but would ultimately strengthen the Radicals' chances of increasing their numbers and taking control of the party.³⁹ The division this caused within the Liberal party will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Historians have generally viewed the Conservatives' strategy during the negotiation on redistribution as trying to further separate the rural and urban voting areas and to separate the new burgh districts by economic conditions in hopes that losses in the counties due to the increase of working-class voters could be picked up in the new high class burgh districts.⁴⁰ The expansion of the franchise in the counties also made it expensive for a candidate to run in them because it created the need for more travel in order to interact with all of the constituents thus making it difficult for the 'country-gentlemen class' who were better suited for a smaller area.⁴¹ Recently the idea has been challenged that the Conservatives were looking towards 'Villa Toryism' to win in burgh districts. Instead, it is argued that their main goal was to further separate the urban and rural voters in hopes of retaining the counties.⁴²

A Boundary Commission was created by Parliament to facilitate the redistribution process. The Commission was instructed to separate the rural and urban populations as far as possible in order to appease the Conservatives.⁴³ The Whigs' main achievement came from Gladstone's wish to keep double-member constituencies. A compromise was achieved by allowing all of the existing double-

³⁷ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 264.

³⁸ Jenkins, *Gladstone*, 498; Roberts, 'Resisting "Arithmocracy"', 400.

³⁹ David Nicholls, *The Lost Prime Minister: A Life of Sir Charles Dilke* (London, 1995), 144.

⁴⁰ McCaffrey, 'Political issues', 108–9; Belchem, *Class, Party and the Political System*, 10–12; Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 264–5.

⁴¹ Dunbabin, 'Electoral reforms', 108.

⁴² Roberts, 'Resisting "Arithmocracy"', 393–4.

⁴³ Nicholls, *The Lost Prime Minister*, 150.

member burghs that did not gain additional MPs to remain unchanged.⁴⁴ To make matters more confusing, the burghs that would increase from one MP to two MPs would still be divided. The meetings closed five days later on 26 November with a successful compromise on the makeup of redistribution. This agreement secured Salisbury's support for the Franchise Extension in the process.⁴⁵ On 1 December 1884 the Government introduced the Redistribution of Seats Act to the House of Commons and five days later the Representation of the People Act of 1884 was passed.

The Registration Amendment Acts were passed in order to implement all of the changes called for in the Representation of the People Act of 1884. In the initial drafts, all of the nations in the United Kingdom were going to be included in a single Act as was done in both the Franchise and Redistribution Acts. However, the Government decided to introduce three separate Acts instead in order to address each nation's registration processes separately. In a parliamentary debate on the Registration Act for England and Wales, Edinburgh MP Thomas Rayburn Buchanan claimed that 'they had been told that the Scottish registration would be dealt with by clauses inserted into the English Bill'.⁴⁶ Buchanan thought that the Bill needed to be postponed so the inclusion of Scotland in the English Bill could be rethought.⁴⁷ In replying to Buchanan, MP John Blair Balfour, Lord Advocate of Scotland, concluded that 'the Scottish Bill was very much simpler than any of the others, because in Scotland they had the valuation rolls, which formed the basis of their voters'.⁴⁸

It was due to this diversity that each of the nations of the United Kingdom ended up with its own Registration Act with the exception of Wales, which was again dealt with alongside England. The finished Bills demonstrated the complex differences between the nations. England's Bill was eighty pages in length, Ireland's Bill was forty-two pages, and Scotland's Bill was the least complex with only six pages of material. During the second reading of the Registration Bill for Scotland, Buchanan remarked that they owed thanks to the Lord Advocate for his presentation

⁴⁴ Jenkins, *Gladstone*, 498; Nicholls, *The Lost Prime Minister*, 151.

⁴⁵ Magnus, *Gladstone*, 318.

⁴⁶ Hansard, *PD*, 3rd series, vol. 297, c. 176, 20 Apr. 1885.

⁴⁷ Hansard, *PD*, 3rd series, vol. 297, c. 176, 20 Apr. 1885.

⁴⁸ Hansard, *PD*, 3rd series, vol. 297, c. 176, 20 Apr. 1885.

of the Bill.⁴⁹ Buchanan displayed his satisfaction with Scotland receiving its own Registration Bill without regards to the English system: ‘They had the advantage at present: of a more simple system of registration than either England or Ireland, and the bill would further simplify that system’.⁵⁰

Redistribution was more complicated than the franchise extension to implement since the Franchise Act already had a foundation to work from as it just extended the election qualifications throughout the counties. The constituencies had been left stagnant after the previous franchise increase from 1868 meaning that the electorate needed to be restructured throughout the entire country, particularly in Scotland, which had been under-represented previously based on the number of MPs per population. Scotland, as mentioned before, gained twelve additional seats, increasing from fifty-eight to seventy. Glasgow gained four seats raising its total to seven while Edinburgh and Aberdeen both doubled their number of seats to four and two, respectively. All three burghs split their seats in order to create seven divisions in Glasgow, four in Edinburgh, and two in Aberdeen. The only other multiple-seat burgh was Dundee which kept the two MPs it had prior to redistribution and remained a double-member constituency.

Result of the Acts

The existing parliamentary districts were significantly altered as a result of the passage of these three Acts. The electorate increased in the United Kingdom from three million voters to well over five million. Approximately sixty-four per cent of the male population aged twenty-one and older was eligible to vote.⁵¹ Over one-third of the adult males were left out of the electorate in addition to all of the adult females. Nevertheless, the Third Reform Act made a great stride toward equality in voting. The number of parliamentary seats increased by eighteen throughout the

⁴⁹ Hansard, *PD*, 3rd series, vol. 297, c. 602, 23 Apr. 1885.

⁵⁰ Hansard, *PD*, 3rd series, vol. 297, c. 603, 23 Apr. 1885.

⁵¹ *PP*, 1883, lxxxix (C. 3657): *Census of Scotland 1881: Report Volume II*; Cameron, *Impaled upon a Thistle*, 56; *PP*, 1886, lii (44-Sess.2): *Return for each Parliamentary Borough, Division and County in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, of Number of Voters on Register, 1885–86*. The total voting population is the total male population aged twenty and above. This makes the percentage slightly higher than it would have been due to the inclusion of twenty-year-olds who were not eligible to vote. Also, the total number of voters takes into account all eligible voters including those who qualify under the franchise qualifications in more than one division making it appear to have more voters than it actually did.

country and several existing parliamentary districts were restructured in the counties and burghs in order to more equally divide the seats based on the population within each district. In Scotland alone the number of eligible voters nearly doubled to over half a million. Additionally, Scotland received twelve of the new parliamentary seats increasing its total number of seats to seventy.⁵² The remaining six of the added parliamentary seats were all allotted to England while the number of seats in Ireland and Wales remained the same.

Table 1.1: Representation Before and After the Third Reform Act⁵³

	<i>Edinburgh</i>	<i>Scotland</i>	<i>England</i>	<i>Wales</i>	<i>Ireland</i>
Population	228,357	3,728,124	24,618,926	1,360,513	5,174,836
1884 Seats	2	58	454	30	101
Population per MP	114,178	64,278	54,215	45,350	51,236
1885 Seats	4	70	460	30	101
Population per MP	59,008	53,258	53,519	45,350	51,236

With the passage of the Third Reform Act, the four nations of the United Kingdom were brought much closer to being equally represented based on the ratio of MPs to the electorate they represented. There were three separate Redistribution Acts that dealt with different regions of the United Kingdom: one for Ireland, one for Scotland, and another for England and Wales. There is some discussion among historians which suggests that Ireland was over-represented by this measure of population and should have had its MPs reduced in the 1885 Redistribution Act.⁵⁴ Likewise, Hartington wanted Ireland's representation decreased, but Gladstone insisted that it remain the same in hopes of tightening the union.⁵⁵ The combined population per MP ratio for England and Wales is 53,019 which placed Ireland about two thousand people per MP better than England and Wales as well as Scotland. Even though Wales is often placed within England when dealing with parliamentary legislation, it should still be treated as an individual nation when discussing parliamentary representation as the MPs for Wales were representatives of Wales just

⁵² Scotland had two additional parliamentary seats which were university seats. The seats were the Universities of St. Andrews and Edinburgh as well as the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen.

⁵³ This table was derived from information given in *PP*, 1884–5, lxii (259): *Return of County and Borough Constituencies in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and Constituencies constituted by Redistribution of Seats Act, 1885*, 31 and 46.

⁵⁴ Dunbabin, 'Electoral reforms', 105–6.

⁵⁵ Roberts, 'Resisting "Arithmocracy"', 392.

as the MPs for Ireland and Scotland were representatives of their respective nations. When all of the nations are looked to in this manner, Ireland was still better represented than England and Scotland, but Wales was clearly the best-represented nation within the United Kingdom.

With the addition of twelve new parliamentary seats, Scotland as a whole saw a slight shift in the number of constituencies represented by a single MP. This brought the traditionally underrepresented nation closer to an equal footing with the rest of the nations of the United Kingdom based on population in relation to the number of MPs granted to represent that nation.⁵⁶ The large burghs in Scotland saw a dramatic shift in their representation, yet they were still underrepresented with regards to the population per MP ratio in each nation. The two additional parliamentary seats allotted to Edinburgh as a result of the Third Reform Act nearly halved the number of constituencies in Edinburgh represented by a single MP from 114,000 to 59,000 constituents per MP. Glasgow, which had a population of more than half a million, had only three MPs prior to redistribution in 1885.⁵⁷ The number of MPs in Glasgow more than doubled to seven bringing its population per MP down by almost one hundred thousand. Nevertheless, the newly enacted redistribution still left Glasgow severely underrepresented with an average of more than 72,500 people being represented by each MP.⁵⁸ By 1891 Glasgow had almost twenty per cent of Scotland's population but held only ten per cent of its MPs.⁵⁹

The Third Reform Act had many shortfalls as mentioned above, but the United Kingdom still made a great stride in modern democracy with its passage by allowing the franchise to a majority of the male population for the first time. It also brought the population per MP ratio to a more equal standing between the nations. In order to accommodate the new voters added to the electorate, the existing parliamentary boundaries had to be altered. Additionally, it was necessary to accommodate the new seats called for in the Act. In order to achieve this, Parliament

⁵⁶ Jones stated that the additional members granted to Scotland 'met Scotland's need' and that many Scottish MPs supported the Third Reform Act due to the increase of representation for Scotland in Jones, *The Politics of Reform*, 9 and 222.

⁵⁷ *PP*, 1884-5, xix (C. 4288): *Parliamentary Boundary Coms. for Scotland, 1885, Report*, 33.

⁵⁸ This number was derived from information given in *PP*, 1884-5, lxii (259): *Return of County and Borough Constituencies in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and Constituencies constituted by Redistribution of Seats Act, 1885*, 33.

⁵⁹ M. J. Daunton, 'Urban Britain', in T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (eds), *Later Victorian Britain, 1867-1900* (Basingstoke, 1988), 37.

tasked a Boundary Commission with the job of determining the boundaries of the new parliamentary divisions.

Boundary Commission

Four men were chosen to form a non-partisan Boundary Commission to determine the new parliamentary divisions. Sir John Lambert was chosen to chair the commission. He was experienced in redistribution affairs, as he had served on the 1867 Redistribution Boundary Commission. Sir Francis Sandford, the vice-chairman, was chosen mainly because he was a Conservative, owing to the fact that Lambert was a Liberal. These two men formed the core of the commission and served in the leadership roles in all three Boundary Commissions called for in 1885 to deal with each of the three regions.⁶⁰ The other two members in the Scotland Boundary Commission were John Bayly and Donald Crawford.⁶¹ The Conservatives raised some questions over the appointment of Crawford because, according to Northcote, he ‘was not only a distant relative of Dilke’s but also the lord advocate’s political secretary, and “a keen Liberal”’.⁶² Northcote added that the Conservatives had not approved of his appointment to the commission. Nevertheless, he was allowed to retain his position and there was no appointment to balance Crawford’s placement on the commission.⁶³ This criticism shows the importance placed on the redistribution of the seats, especially with regards to political affiliations. Both parties knew that boundaries drawn along political lines could drastically affect the makeup of Parliament.

The Boundary Commission was given strict instructions by Parliament on the protocol to be used in determining the new parliamentary seats called for in the Redistribution Act. The instructions were broken down between the counties and the burghs.⁶⁴ In the burghs, the Boundary Commission first needed to determine whether or not the present parliamentary boundary was still efficient. For example, if the occupiers beyond the current boundary shared in the interest of the city or part of the

⁶⁰ Chadwick, ‘The role of redistribution’, 679.

⁶¹ *PP*, 1884–5, xix (C. 4288): *Parliamentary Boundary Coms. for Scotland, 1885, Report*, 6.

⁶² Chadwick, ‘The role of redistribution’, 679, quoting Northcote to Salisbury, 8 Dec. 1884. Salisbury papers series E.

⁶³ Jenkins, *Sir Charles Dilke*, 195.

⁶⁴ Counties are not addressed in this study as the focus of the study is on the burghs. For more information on the counties, see Nicolson, *Analysis of Recent Statutes*, 5.

city's population, then the boundary needed to be redrawn to include them in the burgh. Additionally, if the municipal boundary had outgrown the parliamentary one, as was the case in Edinburgh, the commissioners needed to consider extending the parliamentary boundary to meet the municipal bounds. This was especially important if the local population wanted the two boundaries to be the same.⁶⁵ The reason for extending the boundaries was to further detach the rural and urban voters which was a particular interest to the Conservatives.⁶⁶

When the Boundary Commission found reason to alter the burghs' boundaries, they were to look for 'well established limits' to form the new boundaries. In the cases of the three burghs in Scotland that were divided into parliamentary districts, it was found that the 'established limits' were the boundaries of the local wards. This was discussed in the Boundary Commission's report on Scotland:

There was a strong desire in every burgh that informing the divisions the wards should, if possible, be preserved intact; and, while we have been unable wholly to avoid the intersection of wards, we have in order to accomplish this important object, allowed a larger disparity in the population of several of the divisions than we should otherwise have recommended.⁶⁷

In Edinburgh the disparity of the population among the divisions caused a disagreement among the local inhabitants and the members of the Boundary Commission regarding the proper arrangement of the parliamentary divisions.

Redistribution in Edinburgh

Arguments ensued amongst a variety of different factions in Edinburgh regarding the redistribution process and how it was to be carried out. There was considerable confusion as to whether or not to divide municipal wards in order to keep populations as equal as possible throughout the new parliamentary divisions or to strictly maintain the existing wards by placing them in groupings to achieve the parliamentary divisions. At least four separate schemes for the redistribution of the city's parliamentary districts were proposed by different groups: the Edinburgh Town

⁶⁵ *PP*, 1884–5, xix (C. 4288): *Parliamentary Boundary Coms. for Scotland, 1885, Report*, 3–4.

⁶⁶ Roberts, 'Resisting "Arithmocracy"', 385–6.

⁶⁷ *PP*, 1884–5, xix (C. 4288): *Parliamentary Boundary Coms. for Scotland, 1885, Report*, 5.

Council, the Boundary Commission, the municipal ward of St. Leonard's, and the Edinburgh Trades' Council.

The Town Council's proposal divided Edinburgh into four districts by using the thirteen municipal wards that were already in existence at the time. It extended the parliamentary boundary to that of the municipal one. Each of the wards was left intact and each of the groupings was made up of neighbouring wards. The Provost said that the Town Council made its proposal with the 'understanding that there should be no unnecessary alterations made, and that they should adhere as far as possible to existing arrangements'.⁶⁸ The table below shows the groupings of the wards under the Town Council's proposal along with the number of voters per ward as well as per division.

Table 1.2: Redistribution Proposal of the Town Council⁶⁹

Northwest Division		Southwest Division		Northeast Division		Southeast Division	
<i>Ward</i>	<i>Voters</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Voters</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Voters</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Voters</i>
St. Bernard's	1,521	St. George's	1,825	Calton	2,354	St. Giles	2,553
St. Stephen's	1,440	St. Cuthbert's	2,915	Broughton	1,387	George Square	3,328
St. Luke's	1,792	Newington	2,813	Canongate	2,536	St. Leonard's	2,760
St. Andrew's	1,940						
Voters:	6,693	Voters:	7,553	Voters:	6,277	Voters:	8,641
Population:	55,919	Population:	65,405	Population:	47,007	Population:	67,846

The proposal issued by the Boundary Commission used the proposal put forth by the Town Council as a base from which to work. The commission determined that the Northeast district of the Town Council's proposal was the weakest of the four districts because it had a population of just forty-seven thousand. They suggested that part of the population of the Southeast district, the largest of the four groupings, should be placed into the Northeast district making all four districts more equal in terms of population. This was achieved by splitting the St. Leonard's ward at the centre of East and West Richmond Street and placing everything north of that line into the Northeast district.⁷⁰ This change and the equalisation of the proposed parliamentary district is seen through the following table.

⁶⁸ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

⁶⁹ This table was derived from information given in *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

⁷⁰ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

Table 1.3: Redistribution Proposal of the Boundary Commission⁷¹

Northwest Division		Southwest Division		Northeast Division		Southeast Division	
Ward	Voters	Ward	Voters	Ward	Voters	Ward	Voters
St. Bernard's	1,521	St. George's	1,825	Calton	2,354	St. Giles	2,553
St. Stephen's	1,440	St. Cuthbert's	2,915	Broughton	1,387	George Square	3,328
St. Luke's	1,792	Newington	2,813	Canongate	2,536	St. Leonard's*	1,760
St. Andrew's	1,940			St. Leonard's*	1,000		
Voters:	6,693	Voters:	7,553	Voters:	7,277	Voters:	7,641
Population:	55,919	Population:	65,405	Population:	53,167	Population:	61,541

In response to the proposal of the Boundary Commission, the electors of St. Leonard's ward introduced their own scheme because they were strongly opposed to their ward being divided. The representatives of St. Leonard's believed that dividing it among parliamentary districts would weaken their standing as a ward. The proposal they put forth was similar to that of the Town Council. It utilised the thirteen wards to divide the city into four districts and the wards were all left intact in neighbouring groupings. Their four proposed districts were more evenly divided by population and voters than the divisions proposed by the Town Council. They hoped that their proposal would be adopted since it adhered to all of the Boundary Commission requirements and fixed the population problem while still keeping all of the wards intact.⁷² The alterations they made to the proposed boundaries are laid out in the table below.

Table 1.4: Redistribution Proposal of St. Leonard's Ward⁷³

1st Division		2nd Division		3rd Division		4th Division	
Ward	Voters	Ward	Voters	Ward	Voters	Ward	Voters
St. Giles	2,553	Newington	2,813	St. Leonard's	2,760	St. Bernard's	1,521
St. Andrew's	1,940	St. Cuthbert's	2,915	Canongate	2,536	Broughton	1,387
George Square	3,328	St. George's	1,825	Calton	2,354	St. Stephen's	1,440
						St. Luke's	1,792
Voters:	7,821	Voters:	7,553	Voters:	7,650	Voters:	6,140
Population:		Population:	65,405	Population:		Population:	

⁷¹ This table was derived from information given in *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

⁷² *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

⁷³ This table was derived from information given in *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

The Trades' Council's proposal disregarded the municipal wards that were already in place because the members felt that the city could not be divided evenly enough by using the existing wards. Instead, they wanted to divide the city into East and West sections with the dividing line beginning at Parliament Square. The boundary to the North was Bank Street, the Mound, Hanover Street, Pitt Street, and Inverleith Row. The South boundary was George IV Bridge, Bristo Place, Bristo Street, Buccleuch Street, and Causewayside. The East half of Edinburgh was then to be divided into North and South sections by High Street to Canongate and continuing through Holyrood Park. The West half of Edinburgh was also divided into North and South regions by a combination of the following streets: Grassmarket, Westport, Bread Street, Anthey Place and then continuing by following the Caledonian Railway. The Trades' Council, like the Town Council, also proposed the extension of the parliamentary boundaries to equal the municipal ones. This somewhat more complex proposal is charted in the following table.

Table 1.5: Redistribution Proposal of the Trades' Council⁷⁴

Northwest Division		Southwest Division		Northeast Division		Southeast Division	
<i>Ward</i>	<i>Voters</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Voters</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Voters</i>	<i>Ward</i>	<i>Voters</i>
St. George's	1,827	Newington	1,868	Broughton	1,388	St. Leonard's	2,759
St. Luke's	1,804	St. Cuthbert's	2,921	Calton	2,356	George Square	1,219
St. Bernard's	1,519	George Square	2,114	St. Stephen's	507	Newington	952
St. Stephen's	901	St. Giles	296	St. Andrew's	1,657	St. Giles	1,003
St. Andrew's	293			St. Giles	483	Canongate	1,943
St. Giles	776			Canongate	594		
Voters:	7,120	Voters:	7,199	Voters:	6,985	Voters:	7,876
Population:	n/a	Population:	n/a	Population:	n/a	Population:	n/a

Both the Conservative and Liberal associations in Edinburgh also weighed in on the redistribution of the city. The Conservatives were not opposed to either of the proposals by the Town Council or the Boundary Commission. They felt that both proposals were equally fair with regards to the political parties. They made no comment on the proposals of the Trades' Council or St. Leonard's ward. As for the desire of St. Leonard's ward to remain intact, the Conservatives understood and did not object to this position.⁷⁵ The Liberal Association felt that 'the divisions of

⁷⁴ This table was derived from information given in *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

⁷⁵ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

Edinburgh should be effected by grouping contiguous wards, and that the parliamentary boundaries of the city should be extended to the municipal limits'.⁷⁶ The Liberals supported the Town Council's proposal because it adhered to the wishes of their Association. The Liberal Association found both the Boundary Commission's and the Trades' Council's proposals to be undesirable due to the division of the wards. The Liberal Association did not comment on the St. Leonard's ward proposal, but supported its position to stay together.

The electors from St. Leonard's ward believed that if the Boundary Commission's proposal was adopted, 'it would cause much confusion and inconvenience' for the constituents within the ward.⁷⁷ Approximately one thousand electors from St. Leonard's ward would be forced to vote with electors from the Broughton, Calton, and Canongate wards while the rest of St. Leonard's would vote with George Square and St. Giles. In meetings regarding St. Leonard's ward and redistribution, one Town Councillor from St. Leonard's, Mr. Bryden, told attendees 'that if they agreed to the proposed breaking up of the ward it would ultimately develop itself into a re-arrangement of the wards in order to make the parliamentary and the municipal divisions identical' and that this 'would ultimately destroy their political influence'.⁷⁸ The main reason for the protest against the division of the ward was that the political influence of the ward, and therefore, its constituents, would be diminished.

St. Leonard's ward would have made up a third or more of the parliamentary district with either the Town Council's or the ward's own proposal. Having control of that much of the district, the ward would have been in a good position with regards to electing an MP. Being in Edinburgh, it was very likely that a Liberal would be returned; therefore, it was at the time more important, especially to the Liberals, who was nominated by the Liberal party as the candidate because they were very likely go on to be elected. The Liberal Associations were to nominate the Liberal candidates for each of their respective parliamentary divisions and were also to decide which Liberal to endorse in cases where there was more than one in the field. Under the Boundary Commission's proposal, the percentage of members

⁷⁶ *The Scotsman*, 30 Dec. 1884, 6.

⁷⁷ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

⁷⁸ *The Scotsman*, 17 Jan. 1885, 7; 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

making up the Liberal Association in St. Leonard's ward district was the same as the percentage of the ward's voters in the district: twenty-three per cent in the Central division and fourteen per cent in the East. This made it difficult for St. Leonard's to have a large enough vote to determine or elect the candidate thus seriously diminishing the political power of the ward. St. Leonard's was the fourth largest of the thirteen city wards in terms of voting, but when it was split, it became two of the smallest thus marginalising its political influence. The following chart shows the percentage that St. Leonard's ward would have made up in the district in each of the proposals and thus demonstrating their potential strength or lack thereof.

Table 1.6: St. Leonard's Ward's Electorate in Each Proposal⁷⁹

<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Town Council</i>	<i>St. Leonard's</i>	<i>Boundary Commission</i>	
			<i>Southeast</i>	<i>Northeast</i>
Division	Northeast	Southeast	Southeast	Northeast
Ward Voters	2,760	2,760	1,760	1,000
Division Voters	8,641	7,650	7,641	7,277
Per cent of Division	32	36	23	14

The President of the Trades' Council, Mr. A. G. Telfer, gave the reasons for the council's objection to all of the other proposed redistribution schemes. 'First,' he said, 'because by holding on by the municipal boundaries as at the present existing, they got extremely erratic and, controlled boundaries for the four new divisions; and, second, they could not get so equal a division of the population as the scheme of redistribution demanded'.⁸⁰ None of the other schemes took into account the possible population increases of the city in the future. Mr Telfer believed that if adopted there would have to be a future redistribution due to the inadequacy that would arise from the increase in population in the divisions. He also pointed out that the division of the wards was originally introduced in the Boundary Commission's proposal and therefore this issue should not be a deciding factor to dismiss the proposal of the Trades' Council.⁸¹

A meeting was organised by the Boundary Commission to discuss the different redistribution schemes of the burgh with the citizens of Edinburgh. General Bayly, representing the Boundary Commission, invited the parties that were present

⁷⁹ This table was derived from the proposals put forth by the three groups during a meeting covered by *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

⁸⁰ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

⁸¹ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

to commit to the proposal put forth by the Boundary Commission. Bailie Anderson did not believe that the changes made to the Town Council's proposal by the Boundary Commission were needed; however, he thought that it may jeopardise Edinburgh's claim to four members of Parliament if a proposed district was to contain less than fifty thousand people which was the required population for a burgh or group of burghs to have a MP by themselves.⁸² Bailie Turnbull countered this claim by asserting that it did not matter whether 'one division had 47,000 or 50,000, that it would not affect the city's total population'.⁸³

The Lord Provost said that the Town Council did not object to the alterations that the Boundary Commission made to its proposal. As for the Trades' Council's proposal, the Lord Provost believed that if in the future the city needed to redistribute its seats, the Town Council could look to its suggestions, but for now he felt that it was not possible to consider due to the arrangement of the wards. He went on to say that he did not understand St. Leonard's ward's complaint. Instead, he felt that it was the other wards which were entitled to complain about the scheme of the Boundary Commission as St. Leonard's ward was, under this plan, going to be able to influence two separate MPs while the other twelve wards would be represented by only one. If the splitting of the ward remained to be seen as a problem in St. Leonard's, the Lord Provost suggested that the municipal boundary could be changed to match the proposed parliamentary boundaries.⁸⁴ This was one of the concerns brought up during the St. Leonard's ward's meeting on the proposed parliamentary division. The surrogates from that ward may have interpreted it as a warning to agree to one of the other plans, even if that meant that their ward would be split.

Edinburgh was ultimately divided into four parliamentary districts by the scheme proposed by the Boundary Commission. This is a questionable choice when considering that the local factions, with the exception of the Trades' Council, were all favourable to the Town Council's proposal. Of course, there were concerns with the scheme proposed by the Town Council which led to these other proposals. One concern was that the Northeast district had a population of only forty-seven thousand. This was a reasonable concern; however, in the other burghs which were

⁸² *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

⁸³ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

⁸⁴ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7.

divided into parliamentary districts there was an example of a burgh with a population below fifty thousand in Scotland. Aberdeen had its number of MPs extended from one to two which meant that the burgh was divided into two divisions. The North district of Aberdeen had almost fifty-six thousand people while the South district had a population of just slightly above forty-nine thousand.⁸⁵ If a population of at least fifty-thousand was a major requirement for a single division in a burgh, a remedy could have been found among the six thousand extra inhabitants in the North district. This stipulation was not a factor in Glasgow, as previously discussed, because it had a population of more than five hundred thousand. Glasgow could have been entitled to three more MPs under the guidelines of a population of fifty thousand citizens per MP.⁸⁶

Additionally, as the Trades' Council indicated, one of its biggest concerns with the Boundary Commission's proposal, as well as the other proposals that were based on the boundaries of the wards, was the inequality that would arise with the future expansion of the city. As it turned out, their assumption was correct. The growth of the population was disproportionate throughout the four parliamentary districts of the city, as shown in the table below.

Table 1.7: Population Changes from 1885 to 1901⁸⁷

	1885		1901	
	Population	Votes	Population	Votes
West	55,919	6,693	55,464	8,925
South	65,405	7,553	107,206	15,267
East	53,167	7,277	73,181	11,312
Central	61,541	7,641	62,262	7,484

The inhabitants in the Central and West divisions fluctuated by less than one thousand between the enactment of the Third Reform Act in 1885 and the 1901

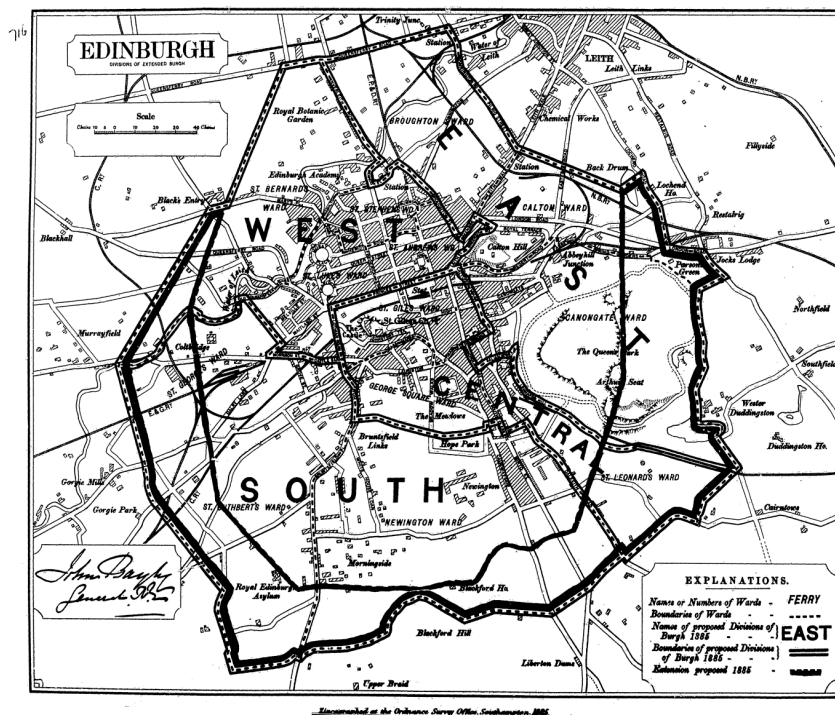
⁸⁵ *PP*, 1884–5, xix (C. 4288): *Parliamentary Boundary Coms. for Scotland, 1885, Report*, 31–2.

⁸⁶ *PP*, 1884–5, xix (C. 4288): *Parliamentary Boundary Coms. for Scotland, 1885, Report*, 39–41.

⁸⁷ The figures for 1885 were derived from information given in *The Scotsman*, 22 Jan. 1885, 7. The population figures for 1901 are found in *PP*, 1902, cxxix (Cd. 898): *Parliamentary Burghs, Districts of Burghs and Counties in Scotland, and showing the numbers of families, houses, population, &c., in 1901, with corresponding particulars in 1891 (Population (Scotland): Parliamentary Burghs (Population, &c.))* 4. The number of votes for 1901 is found in *PP*, 1901, lix (85): *Return showing, with regard to each Parliamentary Constituency in the United Kingdom, the total number, and the number in each Class of Electors on the Register now in force; also showing the Population and Inhabited Houses in each Constituency (in continuation of No. 78 of 1899) (Electors and Representation of the People: Register now in Force, Population, and Inhabited Houses, 17.*

census. However, in the East district the population grew by some twenty thousand while the South saw the most dramatic increase with over forty thousand constituents being added to the already largest district in the burgh. Of course, the population did not exactly correlate to the voters in each district. For example, in the West, the only district to see a decrease in population, had a thirty-three per cent increase in voters. The opposite is true in the Central district, which had a slight increase in population yet a two per cent decrease in the number of voters. The East and South districts saw the largest expansion with the East increasing its voters by over fifty per cent and the South more than doubled its number of voters. The outcome was, as feared by the Trades Council, four misshaped districts, in terms of both population and voters, grouped together to represent one burgh. It is unknown how far the Trades Council's proposal would have gone to correct the inequality of the districts; nevertheless, they were correct in predicting the inequality that arose from the Boundary Commission's proposal.

Figure 1.1: New Parliamentary Boundaries of Edinburgh⁸⁸



⁸⁸ *PP*, 1884-5, XIX (C. 4288): *Parliamentary Boundary Coms. for Scotland, 1885, Report*, 33. The map shows Edinburgh's four parliamentary divisions. The names of the division are changed from the proposal. Northeast and Northwest became East and West, respectively. Southwest was changed to South and Southeast became Central. The square-like intrusion from the East division into the Central is the portion of St. Leonard's that was debated over. The burgh had expanded its municipal boundary to the south east and south west as can be noted by the thick black line just inside the line marking the new divisions.

According to the Boundary Commission's report pertaining to Edinburgh, 'they have formed the divisions by a combination of the municipal wards, except that one ward only has been slightly broken owing to the necessity for more nearly equalising the population of the divisions'.⁸⁹ The proposal of St. Leonard's ward dealt with the population concerns of the Town Council's scheme, but kept all of the wards intact as the Town Council's proposal had done. The controversy of dividing municipal wards for the parliamentary districts was not confined to Edinburgh as Glasgow also had one ward divided in the redistribution.⁹⁰

The part of St. Leonard's ward in the East district's Liberal Association passed a censure, purely symbolic in nature, on General Bayly for his position in support of the division of the ward. The censure came about while they were electing members to represent them in the new Liberal Association, which would work within the East district. In the other twelve municipal wards of the city, the constituents formed new Associations to organise their vote for parliamentary purposes as well as tending to the school, municipal, and parochial boards. In St. Leonard's that could not be done due to the ward having been split. The constituents of St. Leonard's had to get both halves of the ward to come together for such local matters but meet apart for parliamentary purposes, thus placing a strain on the ward which, like the other wards, elected a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer to lead their ward, even though it was split.⁹¹ In St. Leonards' situation the leadership elected by their committees would have to share the ward's responsibility with the leadership of the other half. This could cause disagreement between the two parties and ultimately create gridlock.

Both the Liberal and Conservative parties supported the Town Council's proposal, which shows that there was no favouritism in the scheme and neither party would have been able to complain about the divisions in the future since they both supported it. The Conservatives gave their consent to the Boundary Commission's scheme, but the Liberals opposed it. In going with this scheme, the political unity that had existed under the Town Council's proposal ceased. The proposal of St.

⁸⁹ *PP*, 1884–5, xix (C. 4288): *Parliamentary Boundary Coms. for Scotland, 1885, Report*, 34.

⁹⁰ *PP*, 1884–5, xix (C. 4288): *Parliamentary Boundary Coms. for Scotland, 1885, Report*, 39–41. The Third ward of Glasgow was split between the Camlachie and St. Rollox divisions.

⁹¹ *The Scotsman*, 20 Feb. 1885, 3. The East division had been called the Northeast division in the proposal.

Leonard's ward was the best put forth with regards to the instructions given to the Boundary Commission dealing with equalising the population while keeping the wards intact. The Lord Provost ultimately chose to support the Boundary Commission's proposal. Although he later ran for Parliament as a candidate in the South district of Edinburgh in 1885, this district was the only one to be left the same in the three proposals of the Boundary Commission, Town Council, and St. Leonard's ward, hence there was no political motivation for the Lord Provost to choose one proposal over another. However, if the proposal put forth by a municipal ward was endorsed and carried through over one proposed by the Town Council, it may have diminished the Lord Provost's political influence. He made sure that did not happen by supporting the scheme drawn up from his own proposal.

The effect of the 1885 redistribution throughout United Kingdom equalised, to an extent, the constituencies' populations. The population of the largest to the smallest constituencies was modified to be a ratio of only eight to one, a massive reduction from the two hundred fifty-two to one that it had been prior to redistribution.⁹² The parliamentary divisions set forth in the Third Reform Act remained the same until the Fourth Reform Act in 1918 with only slight changes being made even then. In his biography of Dilke, David Nicholls notes that 'today's constituency pattern is recognizably based on that of 1884-5, and on no earlier arrangement. The modern single member county constituency and the modern divided borough are both creations of Dilke under Gladstone'.⁹³

The Third Reform Act enfranchised nearly two-thirds of the adult male population and put in place a cohesive voting regulation that applied equally to the whole population regardless of the nation or the location, urban or rural, of the man. These achievements of the Act, like its predecessors, were outdone by the next round of franchise reforms in 1918. However, the Third Reform Act's legacy comes from its redistribution scheme with the introduction of dividing multiple member seats to single-member seats. These single-member seats along with the newly enfranchised emboldened the Radicals led by Joseph Chamberlain to take their agenda to the

⁹² Nicholls, *The Lost Prime Minister*, 154.

⁹³ Nicholls, *The Lost Prime Minister*, 154. These slight changes made after 1918 include the following: six universities with nine seats were removed, twenty-four double-member constituencies were changed to single-member constituencies, and twenty-two new burghs were created in rural Scotland and Wales. Jenkins, *Gladstone*, 499.

country in an attempt to swing the party in their favour. The redistribution created a situation in which, for the first time, the two wings of the Liberal party had to fight amongst one another in the burghs rather than continuing the practice of running a Whig and a Radical together in the district. The opposing wings of the Liberal party now had to fight for the same seat.

CHAPTER TWO

Edinburgh Liberal Associations and the 1885 Election

Some historians have argued that late-Victorian politics were dominated by the emergence of party politics which was carried out through the caucus.¹ This issue, framed differently over time, has been one which has concerned historians from H. J. Hanham in the 1960s to more recent political historians such as Jon Lawrence. Hanham, for example, argued that ‘The caucus opened the way to the practice of modern electorates, which vote more or less automatically for the candidate of the party association, and against independents of any sort,’ while another historian, Lawrence, questions the actual ‘triumph of party’.² This chapter examines the extent of the power of party in Edinburgh and discusses the rise of the caucus and its public perception in Edinburgh politics. By 1885 the practice of the caucus was already in use in several cities in Britain and had even been used in Edinburgh since the 1880 general election. The constituents’ attitude toward the caucus was one of general acceptance up to the 1885 general election when a large portion of the constituency changed their attitude from acceptance to outright hostility. This shift in the public perception concerning the caucus and the reason this shift took place is a primary concern of this chapter. In the 1880 general election and the three by-elections held between 1880 and the 1885 general election, the caucus had legitimate power in the city. Upon the split of the burgh into four separate parliamentary districts, the power of the caucus evaporated and its legitimacy came

¹ For a detailed study of this argument, see Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 11–69.

² H. J. Hanham, *Elections and Party Management: Politics in the Time of Disraeli and Gladstone* (London, 1959), 143; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 163–93.

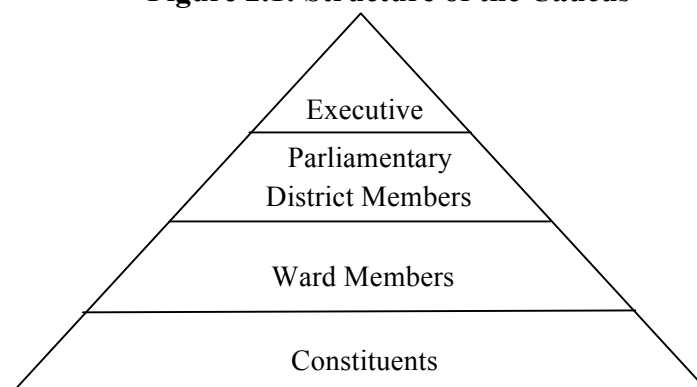
into question. With the division of the city into parliamentary districts and the subsequent creation of district-centred Liberal Associations, a power-struggle emerged between the different wings of the Liberal party. The Liberal Associations were powerful in the 1885 Edinburgh elections, but were also a source of controversy because of this division within the Liberal party.

The caucus

The caucus was introduced into British politics soon after the Second Reform Act passed in 1867. Once this Act was passed, the Liberals in Birmingham devised a plan to organise all of the Liberal voters in the constituency. There were two reasons the Liberals needed to organise their voters. First, there were many new voters brought in due to the franchise extension and it was important to get these voters registered. Second, and perhaps more crucial, the newly enacted minority clause required an active coordinated electorate to ensure complete Liberal victory in the burgh. The plan that was implemented became known as the caucus.³ A small group of Radicals within Birmingham politics led by Birmingham MP Joseph Chamberlain soon gained control of this new organisation.⁴

The caucus refers to a particular way that the local political associations set up the power structure of their organisation. There are different ways to organise a caucus, but the basic structure was built like a pyramid consisting of constituents, ward members, parliamentary district members, and the executive.

Figure 2.1: Structure of the Caucus



³ Dunbabin, 'Electoral reforms', 115.

⁴ Moisei Ostrogorski, Frederick Clarke (trans.), *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, Volume I*, (London, 1902), 163–7. Chamberlain's control is further detailed in Peter T. Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain: Entrepreneur in Politics* (New Haven, 1994).

At the base were the constituents, who were able to join the second tier and become members of their local ward association. The ward association members were entitled to vote for members from their ward to represent them at their local parliamentary association, the third tier of the pyramid. These representatives were then able to elect the executive committee of the local parliamentary associations, which tops the pyramid.

The purpose of the caucus was to unite all of the constituents of a particular party in order to focus their combined power in an attempt to secure the election of their party's candidate to Parliament. The caucus can be seen by some as a good way to achieve such a goal, however, it also has its flaws. Historian Moisei Ostrogorski points out the negatives of the caucus, mainly the abuse of power by some who used the caucus as a means of implementing their political will upon a constituency in a seemingly legitimate way, thus hindering the freedom of the voters.⁵ Others historians such as Biagini and Adelman call attention to that fact that some contemporaries saw the caucus as an 'anti-democratic institution' which 'gave power to a ruthless (and probably corrupt) faction'.⁶

After the Liberal victories of 1880, Chamberlain expressed his favourable view of the caucus:

This remarkable success is a proof that the new organization has succeeded in uniting all sections of the party, and it is a conclusive answer to the fears which some timid Liberals entertained that the system would be manipulated in the interest of a particular cohorts. It has, on the contrary, deepened and extended the interest felt in contest; it has fastened a sense of personal responsibility on the electors; and it has secured the active support, for the most part voluntary and unpaid, of thousands and tens of thousands of voters, who have been willing to work hard for the candidates in whose selection they have for the first time had an influential voice.⁷

Certainly one can agree that if a group of party members join an organisation with the primary purpose of assuring that their party's nominee be elected to Parliament, it did not matter the means to which this goal was to be achieved. Only the end results mattered, especially in a parliamentary system where the majority rules. In this situation, a caucus, even if it is being misused by someone, is a good thing so long as

⁵ Ostrogorski, *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, 161–71 and 329–70.

⁶ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 336; Paul Adelman, *Gladstone, Disraeli and Later Victorian Politics* (Essex, 1983), 30.

⁷ Hanham, *Elections and Party Management*, 143.

it returns the party's candidate. Furthermore, the caucus' pyramid structure is comparable to that of a representative government. The power lies in the people who then delegate their authority by voting for members who represent them in an organised governmental body. These members then have the ability to use the power given to them as they see fit. If the people disagree with the elected individual's actions, they have the option to vote him out at the next election.

Liberal political alliance

The 1885 general election is unique not only because it was the first election held after the reforms of the Representation of the People Act of 1884 and the Redistribution of the Seats Act of 1885, but also because it was the only election held after these new reforms and prior to the Liberal party's split over Irish Home Rule during the following year.⁸ Due to the new laws in place, the parliamentary elections of 1885 were considerably different from those held in previous years. First, Scotland gained twelve seats taking their total to seventy thus greatly increasing their representation. Second, and perhaps the biggest change for the burgh's came from dividing the multiple-member constituencies into separate single-member constituencies.⁹

The Liberal party was made up from a vast political alliance between the different groups. In 1885 Lord Rosebery discussed the nature of the Liberal party during a Midlothian campaign speech posing the question 'What is a Liberal?' He went on to describe the Liberal party as an umbrella which was wide enough to cover all Liberals.¹⁰ Members of this party identified themselves as being aligned to other political distinctions than just Liberal. There were three identifications within the Party: the Whig, which was the more conservative Liberal, the moderate who was simply referred to as such, and the Radical which was the advanced Liberal. The 1885 election saw a dramatic shift in the political alliance of the Liberals as the elections in Scotland involved several races in which Liberals ran against each other.

⁸ The Liberal party split over the introduction of Irish Home Rule in 1886. This event is detailed further in chapters five and six.

⁹ *PP*, 1884–5, lxii (259): *Return of County and Borough Constituencies in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and Constituencies constituted by Redistribution of Seats Act, 1885*; *PP*, 1884–5, xix (C. 4288): *Parliamentary Boundary Coms. for Scotland, 1885, Report*, 33.

¹⁰ *Glasgow Herald*, 30 Jun. 1885, 5.

There were twenty-one total races where Liberals ran against each other in the three elections prior to 1885 while in the 1885 general election alone there were twenty-eight such contests.¹¹ Nineteen of the double candidacies were in the burghs and nine were in the counties. The Liberals only lost two of the contests: Lanarkshire-Govan, which would have been lost regardless of its double candidature status, and Kilmarnock. Of the twenty-six Liberals that won, only ten were independent Liberals who were not backed by the association. Edinburgh had three of these making up thirty per cent of the total independent Liberal winners.¹²

The change to single-member constituencies helped to facilitate the breakdown of the cooperation between the Whigs and Radicals within the large burghs because the Liberal candidates in the new single-member constituencies were potentially running not only against Conservatives within each of these districts, but also head-on against candidates from their own party who held views different from their own. However, as Donald Savage points out, it was the great Liberal victories in Scotland prior to the Third Reform Act that enabled the Liberals to fight amongst themselves without fear of the Tories.¹³ In the large burghs, there was a need to form Liberal Associations in each of the new constituencies created by the redistribution of seats. The formation of these new associations also created a fight among the Liberals vying for control of them. In Edinburgh this fight for the Associations led to a challenge on the legitimacy of the Associations themselves.

In Scotland the large burghs of Edinburgh and Glasgow were not greatly affected by the franchise extension, but each was dramatically changed by the breakup of the large multiple-member constituencies and their conversion into several single-member constituencies.¹⁴ Before these laws were implemented, Edinburgh, like other large burghs in Scotland and throughout the United Kingdom, saw multiple candidates from within the Liberal party, including both Radicals and Whigs, run within the same parliamentary district. These candidates were not necessarily running against one another because there was more than one seat available. In large constituencies throughout the United Kingdom, two or more

¹¹ Savage, 'Scottish politics', 118.

¹² F. W. S. Craig (ed.), *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885-1918*, 2nd ed. (Dartmouth, 1989), 489-563.

¹³ Savage, 'Scottish politics', 118.

¹⁴ McCaffrey, 'Political issues', 209.

parliamentary seats were allotted to the burgh, which entitled electors in that burgh to multiple votes at election time. These votes had to be cast for separate candidates as an elector could not vote for the same candidate more than once; however, the elector could choose only to vote for one candidate and not use his other votes. This type of voting system allowed the Liberals to frequently devise a balancing act that resulted in an arrangement to run both a Radical and a Whig in these dual-member constituencies in order to benefit both wings of the Liberal party.¹⁵ In the dual-member constituency of Wolverhampton, for example, the Liberals ran both a Whig and Radical in the 1832 general election and in Glasgow the Liberals ran candidates representing diverse Liberal opinion in elections held after the enactment of the Second Reform Act.¹⁶ Hanham offers examples of similar elections in 1866 and 1867 in Birmingham and Manchester, respectively.¹⁷ Such arrangements were devised so that when an elector had a candidate in the race who shared his views, whether advanced or not, he was more inclined to vote not only for the candidate who shared his views, but also for the candidate who was the next best representative. This second choice candidate was likely to be the other Liberal in the race. Consequently, the Liberal party would receive both of the elector's votes.

However, this compromise between opposing Liberal ideologies was not practised in Edinburgh where the races usually involved two Liberals from the same wing of the party running together. Only four out of the twelve general elections held prior to the Third Reform Act involved rival Liberal candidates running against one another. It is surprising that rival Liberal candidates did not run against one another more often due to the low turnout of the Conservatives in the burgh during this time.

¹⁵ Belchem, *Class, Party and the Political System*, 10–1.

¹⁶ Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 75; McCaffrey, 'Political issues', 209; McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 48.

¹⁷ Hanham, *Elections and Party Management*, 93–4.

Table 2.1: Elections Contested by Conservatives, 1832–80¹⁸

<i>Election Year</i>	<i>Candidates' Party</i>	<i>Votes Received</i>
1832	Liberal	4,035
	Liberal	3,850
	Conservative	1,519
1835	Liberal	2,963
	Liberal	2,858
	Conservative	1,716
	Conservative	1,608
1847	Liberal	2,063
	Liberal	1,854
	Liberal	1,477
	Conservative	980
1852	Liberal	1,872
	Liberal	1,754
	Liberal	1,559
	Conservative	1,065
	Liberal	625
1874	Liberal	11,431
	Liberal	8,749
	Liberal	6,218
	Conservative	5,713
1880	Liberal	17,807
	Liberal	17,301
	Conservative	5,651

In the 1832 general election, the Conservative candidate received just over 1,500 votes compared to the near 4,000 votes received by each of the Liberal candidates. The closest a Conservative candidate came to securing a seat came in 1835 although they were still over 1,000 votes from a second place finish. With the introduction of the Second Reform Act the gap had grown wider and by the 1880 general election, the Conservative candidate only received slightly more than 5,600 votes compared to the roughly 17,500 votes for each of the two Liberals. Moreover, the Conservatives only contested half of the general elections between 1832 and 1880.¹⁹

The lack of confrontation between the rival groups of Liberals was not facilitated by a political arrangement between the Whigs and Radicals of the city as was the case in other large burghs. Instead, it was due to one wing or the other controlling the local Liberal party enabling either group to dominate the burgh

¹⁸ F. W. S. Craig (ed.), *British Parliamentary election results, 1832–1885* (London, 1977), 539–40.

¹⁹ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832–1885*, 539–40. The Conservatives did not run candidates in the general elections that took place in 1837, 1841, 1857, 1859, 1865, or 1868, nor in any of the thirteen by-elections which took place during this time period.

politics at different times. Edinburgh was a very Liberal burgh with so few Tories that there was not a viable risk of a Conservative victory even with a split among the Liberals. This made a compromise system between the Radicals and Whigs irrelevant.

The Whigs were the first of the political groups to control the nomination of the candidates in Edinburgh. Prior to the First Reform Act, Edinburgh was dominated by the influence of the Tory party and, for that reason, the voting public was satisfied with the transfer of power to the Whigs starting in 1832 and their subsequent leadership role. There were some who questioned the Whig dominance such as James Aytoun, a Radical who described himself as belonging to neither the Whig nor Tory party. He campaigned in 1832, but withdrew from the race before the election due to lack of support. It was believed that he had around 1,500 supporters which caused concern that the Liberal vote might spilt which could have led to the Tory candidate being elected to one of the seats. With this in mind and knowing that he would lose, Aytoun stood down. If he would have stayed in the race, the Liberal vote may have been split. However, it is very unlikely that the Tory would have been elected as Aytoun could only muster 480 votes in the 2 June 1834 by-election demonstrating that there was no serious opposition from the advanced Liberal section of the Party since at that time the Whig policies were enough to keep most of the advanced Liberals satisfied with the shift away from Tory control.²⁰ The Whig leadership was thus able to handpick the Liberal candidates for Parliament in a similar approach to the nominating process in Wolverhampton, mentioned above.²¹

In Edinburgh the dominance of the Whigs and their nomination of both of the Liberal candidates came to an end in the mid-1840s. According to Williams, opposition to the Whig candidate in the 1847 general election came about because of Edinburgh MP Thomas Babington Macaulay's support for a parliamentary grant to the seminary college at Maynooth and this 'common opposition to Maynooth was to be the bond which finally brought the Dissenters and the Free Churchmen together to defeat the Whigs'.²² Morton asserts this to be an important 'mobilisation of the

²⁰ Williams, 'Edinburgh politics', 54 and 74.

²¹ Williams, 'Edinburgh politics', 74; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 75.

²² Williams, 'Edinburgh politics', 235.

middle classes in civil society.’²³ The middle class used the societies to which they belonged as a platform from which to express their wishes on political issues and this in turn helped to shape their local communities. This new-found opposition was short-lived, however. During the next general election in 1852, the Disestablishers and the Free Churchmen both put up one candidate each against the two Whig candidates, but these candidates did not run together. In this election the voting Conservatives, who numbered approximately one thousand, cast their first vote for the Conservative candidate and decided to use their second vote for the Free Churchman in order to block the Radical candidate and current Lord Provost Duncan McLaren from obtaining a seat in Parliament.²⁴ This tactic proved to be successful for the Conservatives and, as a result of this defeat, the Radicals did not run another candidate again until 1865. In the 1865 election McLaren won a seat due to the Radicals’ ability to organise the ‘new’ electorate in the plebeian parts of the city.²⁵

Between 1865 and 1880, three more general elections were held. Only one of these, the 1874 election, saw multiple Liberal candidates running against one another. The Radicals, led by McLaren, were able to hold on to power during this time due to a coalition between Free Churchmen and Voluntaries. This coalition took shape in Edinburgh ahead of similar bodies in other constituencies because of the unique issue of the Annuity Tax,²⁶ the abolition of which provided an issue around which both groups could rally. This in turn enabled activists and candidates to garner support amongst members of both groups in order to fight together against the Whigs who supported the tax in some form or another.

From 1880 until the passage of the Third Reform Act in 1885, the Liberals in Edinburgh worked together due in large part to the Edinburgh United Liberal Association. It was through this organisation that the different sections of the Liberal party came together from all parts of the city.²⁷ In 1877 the East and North Scotland Liberal Association was formed. At the inaugural meeting of this Association, it was decided that the Liberals in Edinburgh should form a local Association to secure the

²³ Morton, *Unionist Nationalism*, 84.

²⁴ Morton, *Unionist Nationalism*, 101–9.

²⁵ Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy*, 156.

²⁶ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 134.

²⁷ *The Scotsman*, 21 Jul. 1879, 3.

return of Liberal candidates at elections.²⁸ The new Edinburgh United Liberal Association was in place in time for the 1880 general election. The only two Liberals to offer themselves as candidates were Duncan McLaren and James Cowan, the sitting MPs at the time; therefore, the Association did not have to act in the 1880 election. However, McLaren stepped down shortly after the 1880 election which led to a by-election in January 1881. Two Liberals ran for the open seat including McLaren's son, Lord Advocate John McLaren. The members of the Association endorsed McLaren who then went on to win the seat by more than seven thousand votes.

John McLaren almost immediately accepted an appointment as a Lord of Session thus creating the need for a second by-election in 1881. Three Liberal candidates came forward in this election: John Wilson, George Harrison, and T.R. Buchanan. All three candidates declared that they would not stand without the support of the majority of the Association. Upon the first vote Wilson received eighty-six, Harrison forty-one, and Buchanan sixty-seven votes. Since none of the candidates received the majority of the votes, Harrison, who had the lowest number of votes, was dropped and another vote was held between the remaining two candidates. In the second round of voting, Buchanan received most of the votes from Harrison's supporters and came out on top of a very close vote one hundred to ninety-five. After this vote both Wilson and Harrison withdrew from the race as promised and endorsed Buchanan who was unopposed and thus elected to the seat.²⁹

The final election in which the Edinburgh United Liberal Association was involved came the following year as Cowan, the other MP elected in the 1880 general election, stepped down leading to another by-election. In this by-election there were two men that came forward as candidates. The members of the Edinburgh United Liberal Association decided to refrain from endorsing either candidate in this race because they believed both were equally qualified and supported by the members. However, for the sake of keeping the Liberal vote intact, they retained the option of endorsing one of the candidates if someone were to come forward to

²⁸ NLS, Scottish Liberal Party & Scottish Liberal Democrats, Acc. 11765/1, Scottish Liberal Association, 3 Feb. 1877, 5.

²⁹ *The Scotsman*, 23 Aug. 1881, 3

contest the seat in the Conservatives' interest.³⁰ Even though the Association's actions were different at each election, the general opinion of the Association was positive because all Liberal opinions were involved in each of the decisions made. The acceptance of party rule brought about by the Edinburgh United Liberal Association would end with its demise upon the redistribution of the seats of the city and the need for individual Associations to represent each newly formed district.

The Liberal Associations

The Radicals and Whigs each struggled to acquire political influence over the new parliamentary districts. One way in which this could be achieved was by gaining control of the new Liberal Associations that were formed in accordance to the new parliamentary districts created as a result of the redistribution of seats in 1885. In Edinburgh the Radical wing of the Liberal party showed itself to be better organised and faster to mobilise than their Whig counterparts and thus took control of the Liberal Associations in each of the four new parliamentary districts. Whigs previously kept Radicals out of leadership positions and control of most Liberal party politics in the country by using the 'complex machinery' of the caucus, even in constituencies with a high number of working-class citizens. The Radicals perceived the new constituencies created by the Third Reform Act as an opportunity to break into Whig-dominated party politics. The Radical *Reynolds's Newspaper* supported Chamberlain's control of Birmingham politics and promoted its use as a model for the Radicals to duplicate in the rest of the United Kingdom.³¹ This strategy was put into action in Edinburgh as the Radicals tried to legitimately take over the local Liberal party in Edinburgh by adhering to the rules of the Association and using the Associations to their tactical advantage.

In late January 1885 the Edinburgh United Liberal Association advised the electors in each of the four new parliamentary districts to form their own Liberal Associations within each of their districts. The Edinburgh United Liberal Association also recommended that the new Associations should contain a membership equal to

³⁰ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1882, 3; J. Vincent and M. Stenton, *McCalmont's Parliamentary Poll Book: British Election Results, 1832-1918*, 8th ed. (Sussex, 1971), 102-3.

³¹ John Garrard, 'Parties, members and voters after 1867', in T. R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day (eds), *Later Victorian Britain, 1867-1900* (Basingstoke, 1988), 129; Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 172-7.

about two per cent of the voting population within each parliamentary district. The Edinburgh United Liberal Association itself was made up of one per cent of the voters in Edinburgh, yet the organisation reasoned that the increased percentage was needed in order to include more diversity of opinion within the four smaller Associations. In order to reach this percentage, each ward in the district was to elect a number of members equal to two per cent of the voting population from their ward. When combined with the other wards' nominees, this would form the district committee.

The Edinburgh United Liberal Association issued these guidelines to the new Associations: 'With respect to the constitution of the new committees, it is suggested that lines of the existing Liberal Association should be followed; and a strong opinion is expressed in favour of a federation of the four district committees into a central association, which should not interfere with districts in the selection of candidates, but should be available as a means of eliciting the general opinion of the city on any important question'.³² The four new district-centred Liberal Associations that formed in place of the Edinburgh United Liberal Association were to be self-contained organizations that nominated their own choice of candidate for Parliament, thus placing a smaller number of people in control of the nominating process. Before the Redistribution of Seats Act of 1885, the two Liberal candidates for the city had been nominated by the Edinburgh United Liberal Association which was made up of Liberals throughout the entire city. After the redistribution of seats and the division of the burgh into four individual seats, only one-fourth of the city was directly responsible for the nomination of one MP. Not only was there more political power in the city with the addition of two parliamentary seats, but that power became easier to obtain as a potential candidate had fewer people to persuade to support their candidacy.

The wards moved quickly to set up their own Associations and to nominate people to represent them at their respective districts' general committee meetings. The first goal for each of the new groups was to elect the members to take part in the Liberal Associations in each district. Each of the thirteen wards held meetings (fourteen ward meetings as St. Leonard's ward was split) to establish the makeup and

³² *The Scotsman*, 24 Jan. 1885, 6.

rules of the four Liberal Associations. Those present at the ward meetings had to decide what percentage of the voting population they wanted to use to make up the Association. It had been recommended by the Edinburgh United Liberal Association that they use two per cent of the district populations, but the final number was at the discretion of each individual district's Association. Ultimately, three per cent was chosen by most of the wards which was then adopted by all four Liberal Associations. The agendas at the ward meetings also included the nomination and election of officers to preside over each Association.

In the 1885 election in Edinburgh, the formation of the new Associations provided the different wings of the Liberal party in the divided burghs an opportunity to gain political capital. Taking over a local ward Association allowed for a potential takeover of the new district Associations from which those might influence the constituency and determine who would be the Liberal candidate for that district at the upcoming elections. The Radicals were the first to act upon this opportunity. The Radicals gained control over the new Associations in three of the four districts in Edinburgh: the East Edinburgh Liberal Association led by Thomas Sloan, a former Town Councillor; the South Edinburgh Liberal Association led by Henry Calderwood, a Professor at the University of Edinburgh; and the Central Edinburgh Liberal Association led by James Still, a successful builder. As a result of the lack of compromise between the two wings of the Liberal party, three of the four new constituencies were contested by multiple Liberal candidates. In both the East and South districts the race was between only two rival Liberal candidates, a Whig versus a Radical. There were four candidates in the Central district, three of which were Liberals and all of whom claimed to be advanced. The remaining candidate in that race was a Tory. The West district was the only district that could be classified as a traditional race between one Liberal and one Conservative, as it was the only race without a rival Liberal running.

The Radicals in Edinburgh used two simple, yet effective tactics to take over the Associations. First, they quickly called the ward meetings giving members short notice to ensure low attendance from the opposition. Second, they encouraged a large number of allies to attend the meetings enabling them to have a large majority. After the Edinburgh United Liberal Association suggested the formation of the four new

districts' Associations, the electors that formed the Edinburgh East Liberal Association (known first as the North-Eastern Edinburgh Liberal Association) held a meeting to determine how to structure the new Association on 27 January 1885. It was decided that the wards should elect members to represent them in the district Association as the Edinburgh United Liberal Association had recommended. The first ward meeting was held by the Broughton ward just three days later, hardly giving sufficient notice to the Liberal electors eligible to vote in the ward. At the meeting there were complaints about the short notice and there were also questions raised about the fact that the meeting had been called by the ward's secretary rather than the chairman of the ward. These complaints were dismissed by the secretary who claimed that he had given sufficient notice of the meeting and that such meetings could be called by himself or the chairman.³³ A week later, on 6 February, the Newington ward in the South district held a meeting where the officers and the committee members were elected. There was some opposition once the nominations began and the purpose of the meeting was called into question. The chairman replied that the purpose of the meeting was 'to consider the proposed opening of the Meadow Walk, & c.' implying that they could carry out the meeting however they wished and thus they continued with the nomination of the new members.³⁴

The second strategy employed by the Radicals was to gather enough supporters of their cause to attend in order to elect those who agreed with their advanced Liberal views. At the Broughton ward meeting there were seventy people in attendance who voted to nominate and elect thirty members to the Association. The Radicals only needed thirty-six people present in order to secure a majority and were therefore able to elect Radicals to represent the ward and make up a significant part of the membership of the Edinburgh East Liberal Association. They also limited who could be elected by implementing a rule which required that a potential nominee had to be present at the meeting in order to qualify for nomination. This rule was also used at a Whig-run Canongate ward meeting where, although the chairman spoke out against this action, the Radicals had sufficient numbers to constitute the majority and took control from the Whigs running the meeting and passed the resolution.³⁵ The

³³ *The Scotsman*, 31 Jan. 1885, 8.

³⁴ *The Scotsman*, 7 Feb. 1885, 8.

³⁵ *The Scotsman*, 14 Feb. 1885, 6.

same type of resolution was denied at another ward meeting on the grounds that it had not been presented at the beginning of the meeting.³⁶ The subject was also voted on in several other wards with a variety of outcomes.³⁷ The Conservatives in St. Andrews' ward did not require an individual to be at their Association meetings in order to qualify as a candidate. In one instance, William Blackwood, a local publisher, was elected as a member of the Conservative Association and at a subsequent meeting he was elected to be the Chairman of the ward's Conservative Association without being present at either meeting.³⁸ There was no protest among the Conservatives to Blackwood being elected in this manner indicating that the redistribution of the seats did not place the same strain on the Conservative party as it did on the Liberal party in Edinburgh. Although the Conservatives were not in the same position as the Liberals, they could not afford to fight amongst one another.

In St. Cuthbert's ward, the 111 people in attendance at the first meeting took the subject of electing members even further than simply allowing only those present at the meeting the right to be chosen to stand for election in the general election. After the attendees voted to place ninety members to represent the ward in the South Edinburgh Liberal Association, the newly elected members granted themselves the sole power of filling any vacancy that might arise.³⁹ The Radicals' majority was achieved by quickly calling the meeting and loading it with supporters and then the majority was insured to remain intact if any of the present members withdrew for any reason.

Another objective of the ward meetings was to decide on the rules of the Associations. Although it was a rather straightforward task, the process of rule-making became controversial throughout the 1885 parliamentary campaign. For the most part, the rules were already known, but they had to be approved by each individual Association. Professor Calderwood spoke about what the rules required at the St. Cuthbert's ward meeting during the nominating process for the general committee which was reported in *The Scotsman*:

³⁶ *The Scotsman*, 20 Feb. 1885, 3.

³⁷ *The Scotsman*, 20 Feb. 1885, 3; 6 Mar. 1885, 3.

³⁸ NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS. 30048, f. 189, William B. Glen to Blackwood, 3 Apr. 1885; NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS. 30048, f. 208, William B. Glen to Blackwood, 3 Apr. 1885.

³⁹ NLS, South Edinburgh Liberal Association, Acc. 9080/1, ff. 6–9, St. Cuthbert's Ward Committee, 4 Feb. 1885.

Their understanding while forming this Association was that, while it was reserved as a perfectly open matter for any elector in the district of Liberal politics to propose or nominate as a candidate anyone he might think suited, all of them who were to belong to this Association were held pledged to this, that when the Association, either by its combined vote or by a preliminary vote by the electors outside, decided upon one man, they were all to go together for that one man.⁴⁰

The chief purpose of the Liberal Association was to secure the return of a Liberal to Parliament. The notion put forth by Calderwood was not a new idea; it was meant to prevent a Conservative victory. In cases where more than one Liberal was in the field of candidates, it was believed that the Liberal vote would not be split if all members of the Association were pledged to the same candidate. The Radicals who were in charge of the East and South district's Liberal Associations in Edinburgh used this rule to complement their argument that Liberals should vote for the Radical candidates nominated in the districts even though there was no Conservative opponent in either race. The Central Edinburgh Liberal Association adopted the requirement that all of the members belonging to the Association be bound to the nominee.⁴¹

The Radicals' strategy of controlling the Liberal party's machinery was not limited to Associations in Edinburgh. In Glasgow, the Radicals also fought to control their local Associations and were successful in the takeover of all seven Associations.⁴² In two divisions, the Radicals quashed Whig efforts to run as Liberals.⁴³ Perhaps the Radicals biggest symbolic victory came in the middle of October when they took over a Scottish Liberal Association meeting and then refined the meeting to focus only on the questions of the local option and the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. *The Scotsman* again, as it had done when the Radicals took charge of the local Associations in Edinburgh, claimed that the meetings had been 'packed' by the Radicals, thus implying that the resolutions were not valid because of actions taken by the Radicals in order to achieve the support needed to pass them.⁴⁴ As a result of the Radicals passing a resolution in favour of

⁴⁰ *The Scotsman*, 9 Feb. 1885, 4.

⁴¹ *The Scotsman*, 18 Mar. 1885, 9.

⁴² Burness, *Strange Associations*, 36; Savage, 'Scottish politics', 120; McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 48-9.

⁴³ Savage, 'Scottish politics', 120.

⁴⁴ Savage, 'Scottish politics', 124, quoting *The Scotsman*, 19 Oct. 1885.

disestablishment by a vote of four hundred to seven at the October meeting, the President of the Scottish Liberal Association, Lord Fife, resigned in protest.⁴⁵

The passing of advanced resolutions by the Scottish Liberal Association was not an uncommon event since the East and West Liberal Associations combined in 1881 to form the United Scottish Liberal Association. This new Scottish Liberal Association held meetings in the first part of the year in either Edinburgh or Glasgow, the respective headquarters of the previous East and West Associations. Attendees of this meeting were restricted by the executive which was principally made up of Whigs. Members were, however, not restricted from attending a second meeting held in the autumn which took place in other cities throughout Scotland. At these open meetings the Radicals took the opportunity to pass resolutions which would not have normally passed without the added support from the members allied to the Radical cause who were restricted at the meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow, but were allowed to join in the open autumn meetings.⁴⁶

Attack on Party legitimacy

Once the Radicals had control of the Associations in Edinburgh and Glasgow, they used their new-found position of power to implement their true goal: determining who the Liberal candidates in the districts would be.⁴⁷ The Associations endorsement of a candidate was supposed to give the candidate a legitimate claim to stand in the district. Opponents of the endorsed candidate sometimes questioned the legitimacy of the Association that endorsed the candidate as a way to undermine his legitimacy as well. The rhetoric that was employed to question the legitimacy of the Association attacked the perception that it was a democratic institution, implying that the Association was controlled by a few men.⁴⁸ The Radicals in the Broughton ward avoided the whole subject of the Association voting between Liberal candidates in order to nominate one as the official Liberal candidate for the parliamentary district by rejecting the Whig candidate from the start. At the formation of the ward's Association, a resolution was proposed 'to enter protest against the proposal to

⁴⁵ Kellas, 'The Liberal party in Scotland', 8.

⁴⁶ Kellas, 'The Liberal party in Scotland', 4.

⁴⁷ For Glasgow, see McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 46–50.

⁴⁸ James Owen, 'Triangular contests and caucus rhetoric at the 1885 general election', *Parliamentary History*, 27 (2008), 215–35.

introduce to the constituency, as a candidate in the Liberal interest, a gentlemen whose well-known opposition to the extension of the franchise and other Liberal measures disqualifies him from representing the political sentiments of the north-eastern district of Edinburgh'.⁴⁹ This successful resolution was directed at George Joachim Goschen, who was the current MP for Ripon at that time and had voted against the extension of the franchise to the counties. Goschen was a Londoner, educated at Oxford, who had served many years in Parliament and had gained recognition for being a member of Gladstone's cabinet.⁵⁰ The Radicals wanted to block Goschen's nomination in order to find a candidate who would uphold the Radical agenda. Recently elected President Thomas Sloan informed the ward members of the meaning of Goschen's possible nomination: 'When he looked back upon the great demonstration which they had in Edinburgh in support of the Government and in favour of the Franchise Bill, and when he considered that Mr Goschen retired from the Government and could not assist them to pass that bill, he thought they would be taking a step backward if the adopted Mr Goschen as their candidate'.⁵¹ The Radical members in the Broughton ward hoped that by rejecting Goschen in their ward, it might keep him out of the East district even if they were unable to take control of the whole district Association.

The Radical members in the Broughton ward were successful in their resolution to block Goschen's candidature in the ward and they carried the same tactic they used in the ward on to the Edinburgh East Liberal Association. A resolution was put forth at the first meeting proposing 'that this Liberal Association having carefully considered Mr Goschen's candidature, is of opinion, judging from his votes and speeches, that he is not in harmony with the political sentiments of the Liberal party, and that, therefore, he is not qualified to represent the electorate of the north-eastern district of the city of Edinburgh in Parliament'.⁵² There was protest against the resolution being brought forward on the grounds that the meeting had been called to elect the committee and officers. Nevertheless, Sloan, as the newly elected President of the East Liberal Association, ruled that it was in order and the

⁴⁹ *The Scotsman*, 31 Jan. 1885, 8.

⁵⁰ Spinner, Thomas J., jun., 'Goschen, George Joachim, first Viscount Goschen (1831–1907)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2008), [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33478>, accessed 17 Jan 2008].

⁵¹ *The Scotsman*, 31 Jan. 1885, 8.

⁵² *The Scotsman*, 27 Feb. 1885, 7.

resolution passed one hundred eleven to twelve.⁵³ The Radicals took control of the other wards in the East district and thus succeeded with their agenda of denying Goschen the approval of the Association.

The Radicals at that time still did not have a candidate of their own to nominate for the parliamentary race in the East district. They only took such actions as they were adamant about Goschen not running because he was a Whig. Sloan searched for a candidate to endorse before Goschen could claim legitimacy over the district without the Association's approval due to the lack of an alternative. Sloan travelled to London to persuade a sitting MP to come to Edinburgh and stand for the city's East district and, when that failed, he invited Andrew Carnegie to run for the seat. Carnegie had previously pondered a possible run for a seat in Parliament. He wrote in a letter to a friend in 1884, 'sometimes I feel it is my mission to do so,' yet he had doubts because he believed that the true power rested with the press.⁵⁴ Carnegie had divulged in 1884 that he was a supporter of Chamberlain and thought that he would become Prime Minister. His support of Chamberlain coupled with his notoriety made him a great choice for the Radicals, but Carnegie thought himself too Radical to be elected and he ultimately declined.⁵⁵ In doing so he left both the Radicals and Edinburgh a compliment when he said, 'That I should be thought of, by the advanced wing of the Great Army of Liberalism as, perhaps, a man worthy to represent the capital of my native Land in Parliament – and the capital is Edinburgh – is indeed flattering'.⁵⁶ Finally, Benjamin Francis Conn Costelloe came forward to offer himself as a candidate in the East district. Costelloe was a Roman Catholic born in Ireland in 1855. He was educated at the Glasgow Academy, Glasgow University, and later at Balliol College before becoming a barrister in London. He had recently

⁵³ *The Scotsman*, 27 Feb. 1885, 7.

⁵⁴ Joseph Frazier Wall, *Andrew Carnegie* (Pittsburgh, 1989), 436–7, quoting Andrew Carnegie to Col. Thomas Higginson, 10 December 1884, Andrew Carnegie Papers, United States Steel Corporation, 525 William Penn Place, Pittsburgh.

⁵⁵ *The Scotsman*, 30 Mar. 1885, 4; 22 Apr. 1885, 9.

⁵⁶ Wall, *Andrew Carnegie*, 436–7, quoting Andrew Carnegie to J. H. Menzis, 5 January 1885, Letterbook, 1884–85, Andrew Carnegie Papers, United States Steel Corporation, 525 William Penn Place, Pittsburgh.

been defeated for the nomination as a candidate for the Glasgow parliamentary district of the St. Rollox Liberal Association.⁵⁷

The legitimacy of the Liberal Association was attacked in the East. Four days after the newly inaugurated Edinburgh East Liberal Association declared Goschen to be unfit to represent the constituency in Parliament, two letters surfaced in *The Scotsman* in which the writers voiced their concerns about the Association. In the first letter, a member of the Association in the East calling himself ‘An Old Liberal’ complained, ‘It is painfully evident that this self-constituted caucus of Liberal Association spread over the town will seriously interfere with the free choice of the electors’.⁵⁸ In the second letter, ‘A Hater Of Humbug’ complained of the ‘wirepullers’ and their ‘pet lambs’ who took over the Liberal Association in an underhanded way which made the Edinburgh East Liberal Association a ‘huge sham’.⁵⁹ This was accompanied by *The Scotsman* accusing the ‘so-called Liberal Association,’ including ‘Mr Sloan and his fellow-conspirators’ of crowding the meetings with “‘lambs” who held up their hands when he [Sloan] held up his hand, and who did exactly what they had been directed to do’.⁶⁰ Although their true complaint was with the structure of the Association, they directed their anger at Sloan and his “lambs”, who used the rules of the Association to their benefit.

The Liberal Association’s rejection of Goschen’s candidacy and their invitation to Costelloe to speak before the constituency created a controversy:

Beyond doubt it is desirable that as far as possible there should be Liberal Organisation. Equally beyond cavil is the theory of our Liberal Associations, that they should be representative of the great body of the electors. But it is precisely at this point that so many failures are seen. If one thing be more certain than another it is, that for the most part, the supposedly representative Liberal Associations in Scotland have not that character. [...] The Associations have no justification for seeking to make themselves the portals through which alone candidates may approach constituencies.⁶¹

The writer of this letter felt that the Associations were comprised of only a political minority of the constituencies and were ignoring the rest of the constituents. This led

⁵⁷ Costelloe ran in several parliamentary elections throughout the United Kingdom in the late 1880s including Edinburgh in 1885, Wiltshire in 1886, Chelsea in 1892 and East St. Pancras in 1895, and again in a by-election in 1899.

⁵⁸ *The Scotsman*, 2 Mar 1885, 7.

⁵⁹ *The Scotsman*, 2 Mar 1885, 7.

⁶⁰ *The Scotsman*, 22 Feb 1885, 6; 27 Feb 1885, 4.

⁶¹ *The Scotsman*, 25 Sep. 1885, 4.

him to question the authority of the current Associations and, subsequently, their right to make decisions for the constituency at large.

The Executive of the Edinburgh Southern Liberal Association deployed the voting tactic when they called a meeting in late September 1885 to choose a candidate to nominate for the district. At the meeting, a few members protested against the course of action. In their argument, they claimed that the Liberal Association was formed in order to unite the Liberals of the constituency with the aim of electing a Liberal. They believed that if a Tory came forward to contest the race in the district, the Association would then be justified in selecting a Liberal candidate. However, seeing that there were no Tories in the field, a Liberal victory was already an obvious conclusion, thus there was no need to pick one Liberal candidate over another as doing so would only cause disunion amongst the Liberals in the district. Professor Calderwood argued that it would only cause disunion if the candidate who did not receive the nomination refused to stand down meaning that the Association was not responsible for any disunion among the Liberals. The members voted on whether or not the Association should continue with the nomination of a candidate and those in favour (the Radicals) won by a vote of seventy-six to sixty-two. After the vote, almost one quarter of the men present left the meeting in protest. Professor Calderwood then nominated his former student Thomas Raleigh. Raleigh was born in Edinburgh and attended university there as well as at Oxford before becoming an English lawyer and a fellow of All Souls' College.⁶² Upon nominating Raleigh, Professor Calderwood said, 'The question they had to decide was between advanced Liberalism or moderate Liberalism'.⁶³ No other candidates were nominated meaning that Raleigh was going to be carried unanimously. However, upon hearing this, someone then nominated the Lord Provost, Sir George Harrison, who had an extensive résumé. Harrison was a long-time resident of Edinburgh who had served as Town Councillor, Treasurer, chairman of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, director of the North British Railway Company, as well as a member of several boards.⁶⁴ Harrison had offered himself as a candidate in the 1881 by-election but

⁶² *The Scotsman*, 9 Feb. 1920, 6; Sir Thomas Raleigh, *Annals of the Church in Scotland* (Oxford, 1921), xix.

⁶³ *The Scotsman*, 26 Sep 1885, 8.

⁶⁴ *The Scotsman*, 17 Nov. 1885, 6; 24 Dec. 1885, 5.

dropped out after the Liberal Association endorsed a different candidate.⁶⁵ Those remaining at the meeting voted and Raleigh was carried eighty-three to two.⁶⁶

After this meeting there are several letters printed in *The Scotsman* that questioned the actions of the Edinburgh Southern Liberal Association. The day following the Association's nomination of Raleigh, there was criticism of Professor Calderwood and the members of the Association who were favourable to Raleigh. The writer of the letter accused them of 'attempt[ing] to deprive the electors of their free choice between two candidates' and pointed out that '83 men have dictated to 8700 electors the men they are to choose as their representative. It is most probable that the electors will resent this trickery'.⁶⁷ The writer was protesting against the rules of the Associations, particularly the caucus. He refers to trickery taking place as if the members had done something underhanded when in fact their actions were allowed per the existing rules of the Association, thus making it unclear whether he was blaming the men or the Association.

A few days after the meeting, the secretaries of the Edinburgh Southern Liberal Association sent a letter to the members who were not present at the meetings to inform them of Raleigh's recommendation by the Association along with a statement of the rules regarding the recommendation of candidates: 'All members of the Association shall co-operate in the support of the candidate recommended by the General Committee'.⁶⁸ The letter closed with a place for the member to sign to acknowledge and agree to the rule which clearly demonstrates what Professor Calderwood was attempting to do when he introduced this rule to the Association in February. However, it appears that his plan backfired on him as many voters resented the actions of the Association and voiced their outrage in *The Scotsman*. One of these letters from the Association was handed to the newspaper along with a statement from the letter's recipient in which he complained about the Association's selection of a candidate on his behalf. He proceeded to make it clear that he did not intend to follow the guidelines of the Association. His frustration with the leadership of the

⁶⁵ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1882, 3.

⁶⁶ *The Scotsman*, 26 Sep. 1885, 8.

⁶⁷ *The Scotsman*, 26 Sep. 1885, 6.

⁶⁸ *The Scotsman*, 28 Sep. 1885, 6.

Association can best be summed up by his signature: ‘A Member, But Not Of The Caucus’.⁶⁹

In an attempt to undermine the authority of the Edinburgh Southern Liberal Association, *The Scotsman* published a letter in which the writer described the actions of the Association:

Working men think for themselves, and they will not be ready to think and reward those who would deprive them of the right to private judgement as it is shown at the ballot-box. If such pretensions as those by which the resolution proposed by Professor Calderwood on Friday night were admitted, then working men, and all men in the constituency, would have surrendered their votes to the majority of a Liberal Association. It has not come to that yet. The franchise, so hardly won will not be thus readily surrendered. The working men will desire to act for himself, and will vote as he pleases.⁷⁰

This is clearly an effort put forth by the Whigs to persuade workingmen that the Liberal Associations in question were dubious and were trying to take away their vote. They portrayed the Radicals in charge of the Association as men who believed that the workingmen were dumb and who expected them to follow orders from the Association.

The Liberal Association in the Central district of Edinburgh remained neutral even though three Liberal candidates had entered the race: Adam William Black, James Hall Renton, and John Wilson. Black was the son of the former Lord Provost and MP for Edinburgh also named Adam Black. He was born in Edinburgh where he later went to university before becoming a member of his father’s publishing firm. Black had been a Town Councillor in 1870 for St Giles’ ward.⁷¹ Renton was also born and educated in Edinburgh although he had lived in London for many years where he made a name for himself in business. He was a member of the London Stock Exchange and the director of the Forth Bridge Railway. Renton ran for Parliament for West Staffordshire in 1880 and then in the 1882 Edinburgh by-election, losing both elections.⁷² Wilson was a native of Edinburgh as well. He was a merchant and deputy chairman of the chamber of commerce. Wilson entered local

⁶⁹ *The Scotsman*, 28 Sep. 1885, 6.

⁷⁰ *The Scotsman*, 28 Sep. 1885, 4.

⁷¹ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 May 1898, 6; *The Scotsman*, 30 May 1898, 6.

⁷² *The Scotsman*, 19 Oct. 1882, 5; 25 Jan. 1895, 4.

politics in 1876 when he was elected to be a Town Councillor and he later became Treasurer.⁷³

On 20 October the Conservatives brought forward Major John Scott Napier, second son of the tenth Lord Napier, as a candidate for the Central district. Major Napier was a member of the Gordon Highlanders and had served in the Afghan Campaign and the Boer War.⁷⁴ His candidacy can be explained by the fact that there were three candidates in the field for the Liberal interest already; therefore, there was a good chance of the Liberal vote in the district being split three ways causing the few Tories in the district the opportunity for a victory over the Liberals. This scenario is precisely what the Liberal Associations were supposed to prevent from occurring. Perhaps the members of the Executive Committee of the Edinburgh Central Liberal Association hoped to keep their legitimacy over the district by abstaining from the nomination process after the outcry against the other two districts in Edinburgh which had tried to unite the constituency around a single Liberal candidate. The lack of action by the Association might also be explained by the fact that all of the Liberal candidates in the Central district were advanced Liberals so there was no need to weed out a Whig as the Associations in the East and South had done. Nevertheless, once a Conservative entered the race, the Association had no choice but to protect the district for the Liberal cause by nominating a candidate.

The Edinburgh Central Liberal Association acted quickly and called a meeting to nominate one of the three Liberal candidates just nine days after Napier declared he was running. At the meeting, the motion to nominate a candidate narrowly passed with a vote of seventy-seven to sixty-three. As the Association moved on to vote for the nominees, one-third of the members present left the meeting in protest. The vote then concluded with eighty votes for Renton, five votes for Black, and three votes for Wilson. It is worth noting that Renton received three votes more than the total number of votes for nominating a candidate in the first place. Also, it is odd that the members who were against Renton left in protest because if they had stayed and voted, Renton would not have received the two-thirds majority

⁷³ Michael Stenton and Stephen Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament Volume II, 1886–1918: A Biographical Dictionary of the House of Commons* (Sussex, 1978), 377.

⁷⁴ *The Scotsman*, 11 Mar. 1938, 10; 21 Oct. 1885, 8.

required for his nomination.⁷⁵ The Liberals in the South who were opposed to the caucus nominating a candidate made it clear that the Association could choose a candidate only if a Conservative entered the race.

Once the Association nominated a candidate in the Central district, there was an outcry against their action as well. The complaint, as in the other districts, was not with the machinery of the Association, but with the majority of the Association's membership who were accused of trying to take the vote away from the constituents. Wilson, one of the Liberal candidates not selected by the Edinburgh Central Liberal Association, rejected the Association's legitimacy. He declared that he would not abide by the Association's nomination and drop out of the race because 'he had not come into the field at the bidding of the Association or at his own instance. He had become a candidate on the solicitation of more than 3000 of the electors'.⁷⁶ A voter who signed a letter printed in *The Scotsman* as 'Observer' also challenged the legitimacy of the Association by asserting that the members supporting Renton somehow nominated him in an underhanded way. 'Observer' wrote, 'The Liberals of the Central Division will doubtless assert themselves, and teach these men on the polling-day that they value their political rights, and will not barter them away at the bidding of political tricksters'.⁷⁷

The general accusation against the members of the local Liberal Associations in these three districts can be summed up by a reporter for *The Scotsman*:

They thought they could by means of the machinery of Associations, coerce and gag the electors. Liberal Associations in theory are excellent; that is, when they are truly representative of all shades of Liberal opinion, and when they are honestly conducted. But the unscrupulousness of others, they represent only a faction, and yet pose as lawgivers to all Liberals.⁷⁸

This writer addressed the machinery of the Association, but he did not go so far as to suggest that it needed to be changed. He then went on to say that the Liberal Associations 'will have to be reorganised and purged... to be of any service'.⁷⁹ This writer believed that the problem lay with the select few who had taken control of the Association. While he still held on to his hope to have Liberal Associations and for

⁷⁵ *The Scotsman*, 30 Oct. 1885, 4.

⁷⁶ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1885, 8.

⁷⁷ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1885, 6.

⁷⁸ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1885, 8.

⁷⁹ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1885, 8.

those Associations to have legitimacy in the districts, he opposed the present Associations because of the personnel in control.

The only Liberal Association in Edinburgh which did not have its legitimacy attacked was the Edinburgh West Liberal Association. This was also the only district to have only one Liberal candidate stand for election. The Liberal candidate in the West was the sitting MP for the city, Thomas Rayburn Buchanan. Buchanan was born in Lanarkshire and attended university at Balliol College at Oxford. After graduating, he became a barrister in London and then entered politics in 1880 when he ran in East Lothian against Lord Elcho, Francis Wemyss-Charteris-Douglas, who had represented the constituency as an MP since 1847. Buchanan had a good showing, but ended up losing the race by less than fifty votes. The following year, upon the resignation of Edinburgh MP John McLaren, Buchanan ran unopposed in the by-election once his opponents dropped out of the race after he was endorsed by the Liberal Association.⁸⁰ Buchanan's Conservative opponent in the 1885 election was George Auldjo Jamieson. Jamieson was born in Aberdeen where he also went to university. Soon after his graduation in 1847, he moved to Edinburgh to work in an accounting firm partly owned by his uncle and, by 1885, Jamieson had become a top accountant in Scotland. He had also become the chairman of the Edinburgh West Conservative Association, the same Association which had invited him to run for a seat in Parliament.⁸¹

Buchanan was the sitting MP for Edinburgh and, as a result of the Redistribution of the Seats Act of 1885, his seat was abolished thus causing him to look for a new seat among the four new parliamentary seats. Before he could choose which constituency he wanted to stand for, Goschen announced his intention to run for the East district and Buchanan ultimately decided to stand for Edinburgh West.⁸² Buchanan knew how to set up an Association to his advantage and he had previously discussed the method of setting up an Association to favour himself with his

⁸⁰ Gordon F. Millar, 'Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn (1846–1911)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45596, accessed 17 Jan 2008]; Norbert C. Soldon, 'Douglas, Francis Wemyss-Charteris-, eighth earl of Wemyss and sixth earl of March (1818–1914)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2005), [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36833, accessed 23 Aug 2009].

⁸¹ Christopher J. Schmitz, 'Jamieson, George Auldjo (1828–1900)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2006), [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47872, accessed 23 Aug 2009].

⁸² NLS, Elliot Papers, MS. 19486, f. 170, Buchanan to Elliot, 20 Jan 1885.

colleague Arthur Elliot, an MP for Roxburghshire.⁸³ It is uncertain whether Buchanan had any influence over the Edinburgh West Liberal Association, but the executive of the Association in the district endorsed him shortly after his announcement to run.⁸⁴ The West parliamentary district presented the biggest challenge to the Liberal monopoly of the city. Perhaps Buchanan chose the West because of the large Tory population rather than despite it. Being the sitting MP, Buchanan retained a good chance of winning the seat. It is intriguing that in the toughest constituency for the Liberals, a Free Churchman who supported disestablishment was running against a Conservative who did not. Not only were there many Conservatives in the West, but there were many Whigs as well. It seems strange that a Whig favouring the Established Church did not run against Buchanan. Either the Whigs respected that Buchanan was a sitting MP or they were concerned that a split Liberal vote might produce a Tory victory.

This leads to the question of why the protest against party politics in Edinburgh took place. The protester may have felt that the party system was undemocratic or it could have simply been political ideology that fed the protest. The same events that caused a controversy among the new associations happened with the Edinburgh United Liberal Association. The members of that Association endorsed a candidate when there were no Conservatives in the race and they also took away the voting right of the constituents with an Association vote in which the losers dropped out of the race.⁸⁵ These actions by the Edinburgh United Liberal Association did not raise the questions about it being anti-democratic or regarding its legitimacy as those that were raised when the new Associations resorted to similar actions.

It is important to note that the Liberal Associations were not the only organisations to use a caucus; the Conservatives also used the caucus in the West parliamentary district of Edinburgh. The Conservative caucus was somewhat different than the caucus used by Liberals. The Conservatives, like the Liberals, divided their district Associations by using the wards. Each ward was responsible for electing members and the executive to represent the ward in the district Association.

⁸³ NLS, Elliot Papers, MS. 19486, f. 170, Buchanan to Elliot, 20 Jan 1885.

⁸⁴ *The Scotsman*, 11 Jun. 1885, 4.

⁸⁵ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1882, 3.

However, unlike the Liberals, the nomination of a Conservative candidate and even the decision to run a candidate at all was agreed upon by all of the wards' chairmen. The chairmen then presented their decision to the rest of the Association and asked them to sign a requisition to send to the potential candidate.⁸⁶ There is no evidence of any Tory outrage with this setup in Edinburgh, possibly because the Conservatives did not face the problem of a party split as the much larger Liberal party faced.

The attack on party politics and the caucus was not new in British politics and one can see why the Whigs in Edinburgh complained about the new Associations in the city. Furthermore, Biagini points out, there were many differing views among Radicals regarding the local Associations and the caucus. Extreme examples of these differing points of view range from the Radicals in Birmingham who favoured the caucus to those who opposed the caucus in other constituencies, such as Newcastle MP Joseph Cowen and North-East Bethnal Green MP George Howell. Biagini suggests that the attitudes toward the Association often correlated to the individuals' relationship with their local Association. In Birmingham, the Radicals had a great relationship with their local Association and therefore favoured Associations. Neither Cowen nor Howell received support from their local Associations leading them to criticism and an overall negative view of Associations.⁸⁷

Like Cowen and Howell, many people had 'upheld the importance of a direct relationship between politician and constituents'.⁸⁸ Some of the 'old-style' Radicals even maintained that there should be no influence on their constituency from the Party.⁸⁹ Howell's negative view of the Liberal Associations contained many complaints against the Association, particularly the machinery of the caucus.⁹⁰ Edinburgh was different in that the 'local elites' were not the ones who were resented for keeping the mass populace out of party politics.⁹¹ It was instead moderately important Radicals who faced such resentment. The machinery of the Association were not blamed for its failures, instead it was the Radicals who used the rules and

⁸⁶ NLS, Blackwood Papers, MS. 30048, f. 200, William B. Glen to Blackwood, 10 Apr. 1885.

⁸⁷ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 328–37.

⁸⁸ Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 175.

⁸⁹ Lawrence, 'The dynamics of urban politics', 93.

⁹⁰ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 336.

⁹¹ See Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 73–98 and 167–78; Lawrence, 'The dynamics of urban politics', 95–6. Lawrence describes 'local elites' having been accused of keeping the mass populace out of party politics in Victorian Britain.

the system to their tactical advantage. They were perceived as being anti-democratic by abusing the Association for their own political benefit. The Edinburgh Whigs were not alone in attacking the use of a caucus as being anti-democratic while still supporting the idea of party politics. In his article on triangular contests, James Owen addresses 'anti-caucus' rhetoric. Supporters of the Nottingham West Liberal party used 'anti-caucus' rhetoric to attack a Radical candidate during the 1885 elections and claimed that he lacked the legitimacy to stand in the constituency because he had been placed there by party machinery. While at the same time they promoted their candidate as being legitimate due to him being endorsed through a democratic process.⁹² On the use of Liberal Associations as a source of political power Kellas writes, 'The great extension of the franchise in 1884 virtually abolished the direct political influence of the Whigs in Scotland, and they tried to retrieve their position by maintaining firm control over the Scottish Liberal Association'.⁹³ Perhaps the Whigs in Edinburgh hoped that once they took the Associations under their control, they could use them to their advantage and this is why they did not advocate dramatic changes in the machinery of the Associations.

A valid argument about the caucus in late Victorian Britain is that it marginalised voters and was misused by some individuals for their political will. However, it did not strangle democracy in the constituency. In Edinburgh, even though the caucus took over local politics, the true power still rested in the voting public who demonstrated their power by electing unofficial Liberal candidates in three of the four parliamentary districts. This does not portray the failure of the national Party because the vast majority of the constituents in Edinburgh were Liberal and loyal to the Party. The divide lies in the contrasting ideologies of the Party: Whig, Radical, or somewhere in between the two. The scenario in Edinburgh seems to back up Lawrence's claim 'that local parties were often divided by bitter conflicts which, more often than not, ran along political rather than social fault-lines'.⁹⁴

The outright fight between the Whigs and Radicals in Edinburgh is in contrast to the political history of the city. This is not to say that there were not already

⁹² Owen, 'Triangular contests', 227.

⁹³ Kellas, 'The Liberal party in Scotland', 6.

⁹⁴ Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*, 164.

differences and established groups within the city or that the Whigs and Radicals had not run against each other before. The difference in 1885 was the direct fight against one another in the general election. What is the reason for this change in political behaviour of these groups in Edinburgh? Two events took place which brought this fight to the forefront of Edinburgh politics. The first of these events was the passage of the Third Reform Act, specifically the redistribution of seats, which was detailed in the previous chapter. The redistribution of seats was significant to the political change because it gave Edinburgh four individual contests within the burgh and these single-member constituencies were formed by Sir Charles Dilke in part to encourage the Radicals to fight for more representation. The second was the question of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland. The Church Question and its impact on the changing attitude of Edinburgh politics in 1885 is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

As was the case in the preceding decades, it was ecclesiastical questions that brought the Radicals together to fight the Whigs, whether it was to fight Macaulay over his support of Maynooth or to fight to abolish the annuity tax in the burgh. In 1885, it was the disestablishment question that was at the forefront of the Radicals minds. The Church Question also provided the Whigs with a good principle to stand on in defence of the National Church. Together, redistribution of the seats and the Church Question led to a standoff in the burgh against the Whigs and Radicals. Since the Radicals had taken control over the local Associations, they were able to endorse the candidates of their choice resulting in all of the official Liberal candidates in Edinburgh being advanced. Some were just moderately advanced while others were more radical, yet all four of the official candidates had this one decisive issue in common: a desire for the separation of Church and State therefore favouring the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland. Two of them did so outright while the other two pledged to support disestablishment if the question were raised in Parliament.

CHAPTER THREE

Disestablishment and Edinburgh Politics

Historians have generally claimed that the question of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland dominated all others in Scotland during the 1885 election.¹ The disestablishment question was not a new debate nor was the question of disestablishing national Churches unique to Scotland as it had been raised in the rest of the United Kingdom as well. Dissent from the Established Church in Scotland pre-dated a split within the Church in 1843 and the movement for disestablishment gradually gained support over the next two decades from some of the Church's estranged members due to unresolved issues that stemmed from this split.² In the lead-up to the 1885 election the Church question was causing a rift between the two wings of the Liberal party in Scotland. The disestablishment issue was furthered in Scotland by such events as the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869, the passage of the Patronage Act of 1874, and Gladstone's move to Midlothian in 1879–80.

The disestablishment movement came to a climax during the 1885 general election. During this election many races in which rival Liberals ran against each other developed in Scotland and many of them dealt with the disestablishment question. Gladstone attempted to stay out of the debate, but he ultimately made the

¹ Alan Simon, 'Church disestablishment as a factor in the general election of 1885', *The Historical Journal*, 18 (1975), 792–3; Savage, 'Scottish politics', 118–29; Kellas, 'The Liberal party and the Scottish Church disestablishment crisis', 36; Kellas, 'The Liberal party in Scotland', 9; McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 48–55; Hutchison, *A Political History*, 154–62; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 95.

² For an overview of the Dissenters before the split in the Church of Scotland in 1843, see S. J. Brown, *The National Churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland 1801–46* (Oxford, 2001), 40–50.

decision that it was best for the Liberal party if he stepped in. With a powerful speech, Gladstone steered the Liberal party away from Scottish disestablishment. He did not completely reject disestablishment as part of the Liberal programme; instead, he opted to postpone the debate. Overall, disestablishment was a key issue in Scotland during the general election of 1885 and the main quarrel between some of the Whigs and Radicals which led to many double candidacies during the election.³

The goal of this chapter is to understand the local impact of the Church question in the general election in Edinburgh and to determine if it was the main issue among the voters of the city. Before discussing the events of 1885, it is important to get a firm grasp of the question of disestablishment in order to better understand how the question effected the 1885 election. To understand the question of disestablishment, one has to look first to the history of the question and to its wider context in the politics of the whole United Kingdom as well as throughout Scotland before narrowing the focus to Edinburgh. It is also necessary to look to the importance of Gladstone in his role in the question, particularly in Edinburgh. The candidates' positions regarding the question of disestablishment were influenced by both national and local politics and became a major factor in the 1885 general election.

Disestablishment throughout the United Kingdom

The political movement for the disestablishment of the Established Church was not confined within the borders of Scotland alone. In each of the four nations of the United Kingdom, disestablishment of their respective Established Churches became a viable political movement during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. These movements differed in both size and success and were affected by nationalism and numerical strength of the Established Churches. The Established Churches of both England and Scotland ultimately survived the campaigns for disestablishment, but the Established Churches in Ireland and Wales were unable to withstand the individual movements against them and were disestablished during this time period. The Church of Ireland saw the first major attempt by any dissenting group to

³ Kellas, 'The Liberal party and the Scottish Church disestablishment crisis', 36. Kellas noted that the reason for rival Liberals running in thirteen of the twenty-seven races between rival Liberals in Scotland during the 1885 election was because of the debate on disestablishment.

disestablish an Established Church in the United Kingdom and its disestablishment in 1869 helped to fuel other dissenters' disestablishment movements throughout the rest of the United Kingdom. The other successful disestablishment campaign came in 1920 with the disestablishment of the Church of Wales.

Several differences arose between the various disestablishment campaigns including the idea of nationalism which varied amongst the different nations. According to Machin, 'The role of nationalism was obviously important in campaigns to disestablish churches which were seen as symbols of external domination'.⁴ The Church of Ireland was attached to the Church of England during the 1800 Act of Union and the Church in Wales had been joined to the Church of England as part of the province of Canterbury.⁵ Due to such ties to England, opposition to the Established Churches in both Ireland and Wales was seen by some as patriotic, because the Established Churches were considered central to an interpretation of English dominance over the realms. The feeling of national pride was a great advantage to the side of the disestablishers in motivating other countrymen to join their cause, despite their attitudes towards the idea of an Established Church.

On the contrary, nationalism was not a factor amongst those pushing for disestablishment in either England or Scotland. This can be attributed to the fact that in both England and Scotland the Established Churches had grown from within their own nations rather than having been forced upon them from outside of their borders as was the case in Ireland and Wales.⁶ Nationalism would have instead acted as a motivating factor for those who remained in favour of the Established Churches in both England and Scotland. The Committee of the General Assembly on Church Interests was one group that argued in support of the Church of Scotland and it suggested that the Church 'might appeal to the fact that the Establishment of the Church of Scotland is declared in the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland "to be a fundamental and essential condition of said Treaty of Union in all time

⁴ Ian Machin, 'Disestablishment and democracy, c. 1840–1930', in Eugenio F. Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Community: Liberals, Radicals and Collective Identities in the British Isles, 1865–1931* (Cambridge, 1996), 129.

⁵ Brown, *The National Churches*, 2; Machin, 'Disestablishment and democracy', 129.

⁶ Machin, 'Disestablishment and democracy', 130.

coming”⁷. Colin Kidd writes, ‘most Scots presbyterians agreed that the Union entrenched the privileges and status of the Church of Scotland free from Erastian parliamentary interference’.⁸ Not only was Presbyterianism a form of national heritage for Scotsmen, but the Church represented this uniqueness from the other nations of the United Kingdom and should therefore be protected and maintained in order to preserve the Presbyterian heritage of the nation. This same sentiment could be applicable for the Anglicans in England as an argument in favour of the continued establishment of the Church of England. In fact, Kidd describes the relationship of Scotland and England from the time of the union through to the Edwardian era as one of ‘political unionism and religious nationalism’. While the two nations are politically united, their religions remain separated and an example of their nationalism.⁹

Another important factor that played a primary role in whether or not the disestablishment campaigns were successful was ‘the relative numerical strength of churches (in terms of members and attenders)’.¹⁰ The Church of England contained just over half the churchgoers in England making it the only Established Church in the United Kingdom with a majority of the population attending its services.¹¹ Conversely, in Ireland, the number of Roman Catholics was far greater than the number of Protestants; therefore, the majority of the nation attended Catholic churches rather than the churches of the Established Church of Ireland. In Wales, only one-fourth of the population attended the national Church. In Scotland, about one-third of the people attended the Church of Scotland. The percentage of the population attending the National Churches indicates the lack of devout supporters, primarily parishioners, of the Established Churches while the remaining larger percentage of the populations was made up of potential opponents to the Established Churches.

In Scotland, the lack of a true majority of churchgoers was used as a reason to favour its disestablishment. Gladstone gave strength to this argument when he

⁷ Committee of the General Assembly on Church Interests, *Church of Scotland. To the People of Scotland* (Edinburgh, n.d.), 3, quoting Act of Security, January 16, 1707.

⁸ Colin Kidd, *Union and Unionism: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500–2000* (Cambridge, 2008), 214.

⁹ Kidd, *Union and Unionism*, 215.

¹⁰ Machin, ‘Disestablishment and democracy’, 127.

¹¹ Machin, ‘Disestablishment and democracy’, 127–8.

declared, 'As a general rule, I hardly know how a Church can be national which is a Church of the minority. [...] Nothing has been said to show upon what principle it is that an Establishment is to be maintained which is the Establishment of a minority only of the people'.¹² On the other hand, those who fought for the Church's protection used the fact that by far the majority of the churchgoers in Scotland were Presbyterian and that, of the three Presbyterian churches, the Established Church of Scotland had the most members. The Committee of the General Assembly on Church Interests defended the Church of Scotland's numerical position of churchgoers in comparison with the other churches in Scotland asserting that no one is 'repelled from the Parish church by any difference of creed, worship, or government. They simply prefer their own church.' The committee declared that 'The Parish church is open to all' which they claimed gave the people of Scotland the choice to attend the Established Church so long as it remained available to them.¹³

The disestablishment question in Scotland

The question of disestablishment in Scotland stems from a long debate on Church matters. One such point of contention occurred in 1834 when the General Assembly passed the Veto Act in an effort to create a compromise on the question of lay patronage. This Act provided to the male heads of each household in the congregation the right to veto a nominee for minister. On a few of the occasions when the Veto Act was used, the rejected nominee appealed to the civil institution of the Court of Session and won his case thus forcing his nomination on the unwilling congregation. Such cases eventually fostered a debate on whether or not an Established Church should have freedom on spiritual matters or if the State had supreme power over the religious body.

In 1843 an event known as the Disruption occurred as a result of the Court of Session's overruling of the Veto Act. The Disruption caused a split within the Church where more than one-third of the ministers broke off from the Church of Scotland and formed the Free Church of Scotland. By this time there was already a group known as the Voluntaries calling for disestablishment because they did not

¹² W. E. Gladstone, Andrew Elliot (ed.), *Mr. Gladstone's Views on the Scottish Church Question: In His Own Words* (Edinburgh, 1882), 11–2.

¹³ Committee of the General Assembly on Church Interests, *Church of Scotland*, 7.

condone the idea of an Established Church. They called for the Government to end the Established Church's endowments and to remove the Established Church from administering the schools and managing the poor relief. The goal of the Voluntaries was to see the State stripped of 'any last shreds of authority' while the newly formed Free Church of Scotland desired freedom from the Government only on spiritual matters rather than total disestablishment as the members still upheld the principle of an Established Church.¹⁴

The disestablishment issue started to gain support and developed into a viable political movement in the 1870s. The disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869 'stimulated [disestablishment supporters'] hopes of disestablishment in Scotland'.¹⁵ A more notable rise in attention for the disestablishment campaign can be attributed to an increase in exposure deriving from legislation on subjects relating to disestablishment and questions pertaining to the Church of Scotland. Hutchison attributes the increase of the disestablishment movement to the passage of the Patronage Act of 1874.¹⁶ The Patronage Act amended the appointment of ministers by taking it away from 'the Patrons' and giving the congregation or parish the right to elect their own minister in cases where their congregation or parish became vacated.¹⁷ Gladstone also saw a direct correlation between the Patronage Act and the rise of the disestablishment movement in Scotland:

[...] the Patronage Act of 1874, which gave the appointment of the Established ministers to the people of their communion, was an attempt to bid and buy back piecemeal within the walls [of] those who had been ejected wholesale. It was resented accordingly; and by means of that Act the controversy of Disestablishment, which had been almost wholly asleep beyond the Tweed, has been roused to an activity, and forced into a prominence, which may make it the leading Scottish question at the next general election.¹⁸

¹⁴ Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843–1874* (Edinburgh, 1975), 1–34; Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland 1874–1900* (Edinburgh, 1978), 81; Raleigh, *Annals of the Church in Scotland*, 307–23; Ian Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832–1868* (Oxford, 1977), 112–37.

¹⁵ Drummond and Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland*, 94. The Education Act of 1872 took matters of education out of the hands of the Church.

¹⁶ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 143.

¹⁷ *PP*, 1874, i (234): *Church patronage (Scotland)*. [H. L.] *A bill [as amended in committee] intituled an act to alter and amend the laws relating to the appointment of ministers to parishes in Scotland*, 1–2.

¹⁸ Gladstone, *Mr. Gladstone's Views on the Scottish Church Question*, 10, quoting 'Church of England Quarterly Review,' July 1876. Republished, 'Gleanings,' ii. 361, in 1879.

Whether the passage of the Patronage Act led to an increased disestablishment movement or the increase in the movement led to the passage of Patronage Act, the disestablishment debate was certainly fuelled by its passage.

The Patronage Act did not pass through Parliament without causing a debate. Principal Robert Rainy, the leader of the Free Church of Scotland, delivered a motion protesting against the Patronage Act at the General Assembly of 1874:

The Assembly declared that no Act intended to alter the law of patronage can have the effect of removing the ground of separation recorded in the Protest read before Her Majesty's Commissioner on the 18th May 1843. Such legislation leaves unreversed all those decisions of the courts of law, sustained at the time by all the branches of the legislature, according to which it was held competent for civil courts to interfere with sentences and actions of the Church belonging to its own ordinary providence and to issue orders and prohibitions in the discharge of spiritual functions of all kinds, enforcing them by pains and penalties.¹⁹

Rainy argued that although the Patronage Act attempted to fix the issue that led to the Disruption, it failed to address the real cause of the dispute which was in his opinion religious freedom from the State.

The Patronage Act also caused a dispute over the exclusion of many members of a parish in electing the minister for that parish, as only male members of the congregation were given a voice in the matter. This raised an important question: if the Church was indeed National, should the minister of the Church be raised by the whole population of the parish rather than just the congregation as was done in the other Presbyterian churches? It was argued that it was the parish as a whole that had to pay for the Church, not just the congregation thus making a good case for parish-wide voting.²⁰ After the passage of the Patronage Act, both Principal Rainy and Dr. John Cairns, the leaders of the Free Church and the United Presbyterians respectively, started a campaign to promote religious equality in Scotland which they believed could only be achieved through the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland. Ultimately, the Patronage Act did not eradicate the root of the problem that had led to the Disruption.²¹

¹⁹ Patrick Carnegie Simpson, *The Life of Principal Rainy, Vol. I* (London, 1909), 268–9.

²⁰ Simpson, *The Life of Principal Rainy*, 276.

²¹ Kellas, 'The Liberal party and the Scottish Church disestablishment crisis', 32.

Gladstone claimed that the disestablishment issue was coming to the forefront of Scottish politics after the passage of the Patronage Act and that the issue may be resolved at the next general election. This claim was furthered in 1877 by the leader of the Liberal party, Lord Hartington who said, ‘When the time comes [...] that Scotch opinion shall be fully formed on the subject, the Liberal party in England will do its best to give effect to that opinion.’²² The Liberal leaders had to pay attention and show interest in the wants of the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church of Scotland due to the sectarian split in party politics amongst the differing clergymen in Scotland. The following table shows the party affiliations of the ministers of the various Scottish Churches.

Table 3.1: Scottish Ministers’ Political Affiliations in the 1868 Election²³

<i>Church</i>	<i>Liberal</i>	<i>Tory</i>
Church of Scotland	67	1,221
Episcopalians	4	78
Free Church	637	33
United Presbyterians	407	1
Other Presbyterians	360	35
Total	1,475	1,368

The Church of Scotland nearly made up the whole of the voting ministers’ total for the Tories while the non-Established Presbyterian ministers largely voted for Liberal candidates. Drummond and Bulloch offer a possible result of this: ‘They [the non-Established Churches] could carry Scotland for the Liberals, so that their demands for the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland could not be ignored. Scottish Liberal members never formed a parliamentary pressure group like the Irish, but no Liberal Prime Minister could forget that they had the potential’.²⁴ Hence, the Liberal party had to keep in consideration the non-Established Presbyterian ministers and their parishioners.

²² Society for the Liberation of Religion from State-Patronage And Control, *The General Election: Practical Information for Candidates and Electors on the Current Ecclesiastical Questions* (London, 1885), 8.

²³ Kellas, ‘The Liberal party and the Scottish Church disestablishment crisis’, 32, quoting G. W. T. Ormond, *The Lord Advocates of Scotland*, 2nd series (London, 1914), p. 245, P. Carnegie Simpson, *Life of Principal Rainy* (London, 1909) and A. R. MacEwan, *Life and Letter of John Cairns* (London, 1898).

²⁴ Drummond and Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland*, 90.

In an attempt to keep the disestablishers content in addition to the remainder of the party in the rest of the United Kingdom, both Gladstone and Lord Hartington expressed their opinions and, as the Liberal leaders, the opinion of the Liberal party. They stressed that it was the Scottish people's choice to decide when disestablishment was to happen in Scotland and the people's opinion could be expressed through electing a majority of Scottish MPs who were in favour of disestablishment.²⁵ This rhetoric encouraged both supporters of the Established Church and those in favour of disestablishment to prepare for the coming battle at the next general election. This battle was further intensified in 1879 when Gladstone announced that he had decided to stand for the Scottish county seat in Midlothian in what became one of the most well-known parliamentary races in British history.

Midlothian and Gladstone

With all of the tension created by the disestablishment movement, Gladstone's decision to contest a Scottish seat in the 1880 general election aroused suspicion amongst Church supporters. Even before the acquisition of the faggot votes that became so prominent in the history of this race, the disestablishment question was already a source of misgivings and controversy regarding Gladstone's intentions in Scotland. The negative attitude toward Gladstone by supporters of an Established Church was described in a letter from James Begg, the first minister of the Newington Free Church in Edinburgh, to Lord Beaconsfield, the leader of the Conservatives. In this letter, Begg, who, although a Free Churchman, still supported the principle of an Established Church,²⁶ questioned Gladstone's motives for contesting Midlothian:

Mr. Gladstone can attack the Scotch Established Church--the second in the series--with most success as a representative of a Scotch constituency. To have attacked it as one of the representatives of England might have given natural offence, even to men otherwise favourable; but representing an important Scotch constituency, he acquires at once an apparent right to speak; and surrounded by Scotch Members of Parliament who are quietly pledging

²⁵ Society for the Liberation of Religion from State-Patronage And Control, *The General Election*, 8.

²⁶ John Wolffe, 'Begg, James (1808–1883)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1959, accessed 8 Jun. 2010].

themselves, doubtless by order, to vote for the abolition of the Scotch Church as soon as Mr. Gladstone gives the word of command.²⁷

Begg's theory on Gladstone's intentions in Scotland was a reasonable fear for Church defenders based on Gladstone's previous statements about the Church of Scotland and his role in the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. However, there were alternative reasons for Gladstone's move into Scottish politics.

In 1878 Gladstone chose to leave Greenwich where he had been an MP for the previous eleven years. Advancing Scottish disestablishment was not a main factor in his decision and was likely not even a consideration. Rather, Gladstone decided to leave his position in Greenwich for three primary reasons: its large size, the gains which had recently been made by the Tories, and the dual-member status of the Greenwich constituency. First, Greenwich was a large sized constituency consisting of over twenty thousand voters and the aging Gladstone worried that multiple speeches delivered to large audiences would have an adverse affect on his health. Another concern was the great expense associated with campaigning in such a large burgh.²⁸ Second, Tories had been making gains in the constituency having won the 1873 by-election and polling high against Gladstone himself in 1874. Gladstone found himself just 225 votes behind a Conservative in the polls and only 407 votes ahead of a second Conservative, thus barely holding on to his seat.²⁹ Finally, Gladstone disliked that Greenwich was a double-member constituency fearing that rival candidates would break up the Liberal vote in the constituency and lead to Tory victories, a fear that was based on the results of the by-election held in 1873 in which three Liberals ran for one seat that was handily won by a Conservative.³⁰

Although it was his ultimate choice, Midlothian was not Gladstone's only option for a new seat in Parliament. The Liberals in Leeds asked him to stand for their seat, but Gladstone did not state his intention on whether or not he would accept the nomination thus leaving it open in case he failed to obtain a seat in another constituency. The Liberals in Leeds went through with the nomination of Gladstone

²⁷ James Begg, D.D., *Scottish Public Affairs, Civil and Ecclesiastical: A Letter to the Right Hon. the Earl Of Beaconsfield; with Special Reference to the Coming General Election and the Advent of Mr Gladstone to Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1879), 27.

²⁸ David Brooks, 'Gladstone and Midlothian: the background to the first campaign', *SHR*, 64 (1985), 49.

²⁹ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832-1885*, 10.

³⁰ Brooks, 'Gladstone and Midlothian', 43.

as a candidate in their constituency despite his reluctance. He eventually chose not to take the seat in Leeds, although he was victorious in the 1880 election, because it resembled Greenwich in its size and double-member status.³¹ Gladstone instead chose to stand for the Midlothian seat in order to counter all three of the situations he disliked about his currently held seat in Greenwich. Midlothian had a small rural population of around three thousand voters as opposed to the large urban population of Greenwich and Leeds. The Liberals in the constituency were prepared to pay for all of Gladstone's expenses associated with the campaign thus eradicating his financial concerns. Most importantly, the people of Scotland voted overwhelmingly for Liberals--the Midlothian constituency was lost by only 135 votes during the previous general election in 1874--thus giving Gladstone a good chance of turning the traditionally conservative constituency in order to counter the loss of his Liberal seat to the Tories in Greenwich.³² Although Gladstone's decision to stand for Midlothian had nothing to do with the question of Scottish disestablishment, his mere presence in Scotland brought even more attention to the already heated debate.

Franchise extension and disestablishment

Supporters of disestablishment in Scotland hoped for success during the 1880 general election campaign. The Liberals gained thirteen seats in the 1880 election bringing their total to fifty-three compared to only seven Conservatives, yet no more parliamentary support for disestablishment emerged from these Liberal successes in Scotland and only four Scottish MPs were firmly committed to disestablishment.³³ In Edinburgh, the issue of disestablishment occupied only a small amount of the debate during the 1880 general election. The newly established Liberal Association in 1880 managed the disestablishment question very well and was able to maintain a united Liberal vote in the general election.

In 1880, there were three Liberals nominated to the Association and it endorsed two of them. The other candidate stood down after the Association's endorsement to ensure a united Liberal vote. The two candidates that were endorsed

³¹ Brooks, 'Gladstone and Midlothian', 44-5.

³² Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832-1885*, 354; Brooks, 'Gladstone and Midlothian', 46.

³³ Vincent and Stenton, *McCalmont's Parliamentary Poll Book*, 332B; Simon, 'Church disestablishment', 793.

by the Liberal Association were sitting MPs Duncan McLaren and James Cowan. McLaren was a Radical who favoured disestablishment and Cowan was a moderate who had just recently endorsed disestablishment which he had not done during the previous election in 1874.³⁴ Although both of the candidates that stood in the election were the sitting MPs for Edinburgh, there was some opposition to their nomination among the Liberals. During the meeting that the General Committee of the Edinburgh United Liberal Association held to nominate candidates to stand for Parliament, Cowan was attacked for his recent declaration of support for disestablishment. Those who objected to Cowan's nomination claimed that Liberal unity was put into jeopardy by Cowan's statement and opened the city to Tory representation. Although he too supported disestablishment, there were no protests to McLaren's nomination perhaps due to either his status as 'the member for Scotland' or because Cowan's reversal on the subject threw off the balance between the Whigs and Radicals; therefore, Cowan needed to be replaced by another Whig.³⁵

Both men went on to be nominated by the Association, but Cowan was repeatedly asked by constituents to clarify his position on the question. In an effort to avoid alienating any more voters, Cowan quickly took up the same position on the question as the leadership of the party and told the constituents 'that it was for Scotchmen to consider the question of disestablishment and to speak out their minds on the subject when they had time to think it over... he would be no party to precipitate or bring on the question until the judgment of the country was more ripe for it'.³⁶ The pledge to postpone the question was enough to secure his return as the question was not a real issue among most of the Liberal Churchmen. One Liberal Churchman in Edinburgh claimed that it was more important to keep the Liberal vote united than worrying about 'suburbanite questions'.³⁷ The question of disestablishment had not risen to a high enough level at that time to constitute a legitimate challenge to the Established Church; therefore, it did not have much opposition or support amongst the Edinburgh constituents during the 1880 election.

³⁴ T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People, 1830–1950* (London, 1997), 240–1; *The Scotsman*, 15 Mar. 1880, 6.

³⁵ *The Scotsman*, 15 Mar. 1880, 6; G. C. Boase, 'McLaren, Duncan (1800–1886)', rev. H. C. G. Matthew, *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), [<http://www.oxfordnd.com/view/article/17640>, accessed 9 May 2011].

³⁶ *The Scotsman*, 24 Mar. 1880, 8.

³⁷ *The Scotsman*, 15 Mar. 1880, 6.

After the failure to move the question to the forefront in 1880, the hopes of the disestablishers were renewed in 1884 with the passage of the Third Reform Act and the extension of the franchise. The United Presbyterian Synod's Committee on Disestablishment issued a pamphlet in 1885 which proclaimed, 'The Country and Government are to be congratulated on the peaceable admission of two millions of new voters to share the duties of citizenship. The course of legislation on Franchise and Redistribution has now practically brought Disestablishment to the front of questions calling for speedy settlement.'³⁸ The belief that franchise extension would help to bring about the disestablishment and disendowment of the Established Church can be understood through the historical perspective, an amplification of the demand for disestablishment, or perhaps both.

Those in favour of disestablishment could have looked to the past at the First and Second Reform Acts and found that the results of these Acts indicated a possible positive outcome for their current campaign. Machin observes that after both the 1832 and the 1867 Reform Acts, 'the voluntary cause had advanced in the twenty years or so after each of these measures'.³⁹ In the case of the latter Act, the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland was one of the leading questions put to the newly enfranchised and, with Gladstone's leadership, the Liberal party supported the question and saw it brought through, ultimately resulting in the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. Then, almost twenty years later, the newly enfranchised in Scotland had a new disestablishment question being put to them and the Liberal party was once again being led by Gladstone.

Another idea that led some to believe that the franchise extension would bring a settlement to the disestablishment question in Scotland was that it could clearly be shown that a majority of the Scottish people favoured the disestablishment. The Liberal leaders' prerequisite for taking up the question in Parliament was the support of the majority of the people. The franchise extension brought the number of voters in Scotland to over five hundred thousand, nearly twice the number of voters in the 1880 election. With this fact in hand, the Liberal leaders could not deny the

³⁸ United Presbyterian Church (Scotland) Committee on the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Established Churches of England and Scotland, *Disestablishment and the General Election* (Edinburgh, 1885), 1.

³⁹ Machin, 'Disestablishment and democracy', 139.

legitimacy of the electorate's desire on the subject should the voting show support for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland.

Disestablishment in 1885

In Edinburgh, as in the rest of Scotland, the disestablishment question occupied a significant amount of debate during the 1885 campaign. This contrast to the 1880 general election is largely due to the elevation of the question and to the division of the city into four parliamentary districts. The candidates' stances on the issue were divided along the lines of political ideology. Of the candidates in Edinburgh, both the Conservatives and the two Whigs favoured keeping the Church of Scotland an institution of the State while the remaining six Liberal candidates favoured disestablishment. The two Whig candidates, Sir George Harrison in the South district and George Goschen in the East, were both victorious over their rival Radical opponents, Thomas Raleigh and B. F. C. Costello, respectively. The other two candidates favouring continued establishment were the Conservatives, George Jamieson in the West and Major Napier in the Central district. Both lost to advanced Liberals who leaned closer to the Radical wing than to the Whigs and thus favoured disestablishment. Based on these outcomes, it remains to be seen whether or not the Liberal population of Edinburgh was split on the Church question. The breakdown of the four districts provides for two distinct types of races in the city pertaining to the question of disestablishment. As already noted, the races in both the South and East were between Whigs and Radicals while the races in the West and Central were between Liberals and Conservatives. The two scenarios both had candidates pushing the disestablishment question and they both encouraged crossover voting in which a member of one political party votes for a candidate of another. In the West and Central districts, if a Liberal Churchmen did not want to support a disestablishment candidate he had to vote for a Conservative or not vote at all. Conversely, in the South and East races Tories had to vote for a Liberal if he wished to vote at all.

The Conservatives' strategy in the districts where they were running was to push the question of disestablishment to the forefront in hopes of dividing the Liberals who were split in their support on the issue. If they were successful in garnering the support of the Liberal Churchmen coupled with the support of the

Tories, the Conservatives knew that they had a good chance of winning. Both Conservative candidates made outrageous claims in order to drive a wedge within the Liberal party. Jamieson paid his opponent, Buchanan, many compliments in regards to his character and ability to represent the people; however, Jamieson asserted that ‘Buchanan came forward unquestionably as the assailant of the national Church’. Although not a member of the Church of Scotland, Jamieson vowed to oppose any measure that came up advocating disestablishment.⁴⁰ Major Napier claimed that the only difference between himself and his Radical opponents was their stances on the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland.⁴¹ Major Napier asserted, ‘There is only one line to be drawn, and that is between religion and atheism’.⁴² His Liberal opponents were certainly not advocating atheism; they were campaigning only for a separation of Church and State.

In the West district, the vote of the Liberal Churchmen was a concern to the Liberal candidate, Buchanan, who had been an MP for Edinburgh since 1881. Although Buchanan was not a Radical, he favoured the separation of Church and State, but he did not want the disestablishment question to become a major issue in the race. However, he said that if a vote on the subject came before him in Parliament, he would vote in favour of disestablishment. Buchanan countered this by saying that he would not back any attempts to bring the question forward and he further indicated that he believed that the majority of the country was not ready for it therefore the subject would not come about. He was worried about losing votes over the disestablishment question and feared that Churchmen might abstain from voting altogether or that they might back Jamieson, his Conservative opponent, just because he favoured the continuation of the Established Church. In an attempt to prevent this from happening, Buchanan informed his potential electors, ‘In other constituencies there were candidates who were in favour of the Established Church-(cheers)-and those Liberal electors who took the other view were willing to waive their opinions on that subject in order to maintain the unity of the Liberal cause. (Cheers) He thought he might fairly appeal to Liberal Churchmen that there should be some

⁴⁰ *The Scotsman*, 22 Oct. 1885, 6.

⁴¹ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1885, 10.

⁴² *The Scotsman*, 27 Oct. 1885, 6.

reciprocity shown'.⁴³ Buchanan clearly wanted to separate the Church question from the election and instead focus the attention on other issues.

In the Central district, the race was between three Liberals and one Conservative; however, the fear that Liberal Churchmen would support the Conservative because of the disestablishment issue does not appear to have been a factor amongst the rival Liberal candidates. Two of the Liberal candidates, J. Hall Renton and John Wilson, explained the principle of their stance in favour of disestablishment while the other, Adam Black, tried to push the question forward. Renton and Wilson were both Voluntaries and believed that Church and State should be separated from one another. They both made strong claims to the constituents that disestablishment was not only for the benefit of the State, but it was also advantageous for the Church. Commenting on this, Renton said, 'It was not to them [the Church of Scotland] as Churches that he objected but to the connection between Church and State... The Church of Scotland would do more good were it freed from the trammels of the State'.⁴⁴ Wilson made a similar claim that the Christian Church was founded with the intention of individuals maintaining it rather than the State and that both civil freedom and the State suffered when a State religion was established.⁴⁵ Both Wilson and Renton wanted the Church of Scotland to keep all of the funds that rightfully belonged to the Church. Wilson took this even further with his desire for the Church of Scotland to be able to use all of the buildings and churches that they currently held, though if they wanted to use them in a different manner than their current use it would be up to the discretion of the local authorities.⁴⁶

Adam Black was the most radical of the three Liberal candidates in the Central district and he tried to elevate the disestablishment question in order to separate himself from Renton and Wilson. He criticised both Renton and Wilson because they claimed to be for religious equality, but refused to make disestablishment a test question. Black said that if they were waiting for the new Government to take a position on it, they must be content with or without disestablishment. He went on to say, '...Religion should be free and unfiltered, that all men in respect of their beliefs should be equal in the sight of the law as they were

⁴³ *The Scotsman*, 21 Oct. 1885, 8.

⁴⁴ *The Scotsman*, 20 Jun. 1885, 7.

⁴⁵ *The Scotsman*, 2 Oct. 1885, 6.

⁴⁶ *The Scotsman*, 2 Oct. 1885, 6.

before God'.⁴⁷ The Liberals in this race were not concerned with the possibility of losing the support of the Liberal Churchmen over the disestablishment issue. If they would have been worried, they could have either dropped out of the race in order to unify the disestablishment vote around one candidate or they could have at least tried to ease the Liberal Churchman's concerns about disestablishment enabling them to vote for a disestablishment candidate, as Buchanan did in the West.

In the double candidature races in the South and East, which were both between only two rival Liberals, it was the Radicals who pushed the disestablishment question. In the South, Raleigh attacked Harrison for what he deemed a lack of commitment to religious equality for his refusal to support disestablishment. He told the constituents that Harrison claimed to be a moderate Liberal but his position on the Church question was reason enough to oppose him. Raleigh further acknowledged that some people believed that by bringing up the question of disestablishment, he was causing a split within the Liberal party, but he felt that it was necessary to bring the question to a close. He believed that if the question was not dealt with, it would fester and cause greater damage to the party and that disestablishment and disendowment was the only solution that would enable the Presbyterian Churches to reunite.⁴⁸

In the East, the supporters of the Radical candidate, Costelloe, were so eager to push the question forward that they projected it onto the national stage as a result of Goschen's refusal to state his opinion on the question. Goschen notified his potential constituents that he would not pledge himself to any question before the leader of the Liberal party made his opinion on the subject clear.⁴⁹ Upon hearing Goschen's statement, Principal Rainy, Duncan McLaren, Jr., Professor Calderwood, and James Steel, among others, wrote to Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal party, to ascertain his opinion on the subject of the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Gladstone replied in a letter published in *The Scotsman*:

I am reluctant to appear as a critic upon anything that has been said by my old friend and colleague, Mr. Goschen. Leaving, however, to every reader of my address his liberty of interpretation, I may observe that since I came to Mid-Lothian in 1879 I have endeavoured constantly to leave the question of

⁴⁷ *The Scotsman*, 7 May 1885, 7.

⁴⁸ *The Scotsman*, 30 Jun. 1885, 7; 10 Oct. 1885, 9.

⁴⁹ *The Scotsman*, 12 Oct. 1885, 6.

Disestablishment in Scotland to be dealt with as a Scottish question by the Scottish public, and it is not for me, without presumption, either to force it forward or to hold it back.⁵⁰

Costelloe declared, clearly in reference to Goschen, that every representative for a Scottish seat should be required to say whether or not he was in favour of disestablishment.⁵¹ Costelloe expressed his own stance on the Established Church:

It was not by reason of their sins or shortcomings that any one objected to them. (Hear, hear.) It was because their existence was itself incompatible with the principles of a free State. (Loud cheers, and a voice, "Three cheers for the Auld Kirk," and laughter.) The creeds of all men must be equal before the State, because the men themselves were equal. The State that endeavoured to interfere was infringing the first rights of citizenship, and more than that, it was producing a state of things in which jealousy and bitterness would necessarily be engendered, and a state of things introduced which would be most disastrous to religion.⁵²

Both Harrison and Goschen took a similar position to Buchanan on the Church question.⁵³ Unlike Buchanan, they were not in favour of disestablishment, but they did want to keep the question out of the campaign as much as they could.

It is interesting to note that in the races between two Liberals, the Radicals wanted to make the Whig candidates appear to be holding the party back in hopes of gaining the support of the more moderate Liberal Churchmen. Conversely, in the other two races the Radicals wanted to appear more moderate, with the exception of Black, and it was the Conservatives that tried to push the disestablishment question hoping to make the Radicals seem too extreme. In both cases, the candidates that were pushing the question were attempting to secure the vote of the Liberal Churchmen. Both the Radicals and the Conservatives were targeting the same type of voter, but the Radicals were using it as rallying call pushing liberalism forward while the Conservatives were using it as a scare tactic.

As for the crossover voting in both of the races containing Tories, a Liberal candidate won indicating that the Tory strategy of gaining the votes of Liberal Churchmen had failed. They may have succeeded in gaining the support of some of the Liberal Churchmen, but based on the outcome of the election it is unlikely that

⁵⁰ *The Scotsman*, 12 Oct. 1885, 4.

⁵¹ *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 8.

⁵² *The Scotsman*, 25 Sep. 1885, 7.

⁵³ *The Scotsman*, 20 Oct. 1885, 6; 12 Oct. 1885, 6.

either Conservative candidate received much support from them. As a result, the city's political makeup was not affected by any crossover voting in these races.

In the contests that contained only rival Liberals, the political crossover voting would not have affected the Liberal party's numbers because a Liberal had to win, but it would alter the view of the city and mask the true feeling of the Liberal constituents. The scenario of Tories backing Whig candidates was not uncommon in Edinburgh politics. After the Conservatives lost their power in the city due to the passage of the First Reform Act in 1832, they became an important factor in determining the outcome of the election of Liberals, often supporting one candidate with the goal of defeating another instead of electing the one they voted for, as in the election of 1852 which was discussed in chapter two.⁵⁴ In the 1885 election, being the first held since the Third Reform Act and having a split Liberal vote in these two districts, it seems unusual that they willingly gave up the opportunity to run a candidate of their own.

The *North British Daily Mail*, a Radical-leaning Glasgow newspaper owned by Dr. Cameron, an MP for Glasgow who vigorously campaigned for disestablishment, claimed that both Harrison and Goschen, along with two other Whigs running in Scotland, were in an alliance with the Tories.⁵⁵ This provides a possible explanation of the lack of Tory candidates in the two districts. Of course, there were several districts in Scotland where the Conservatives chose not to run a candidate. Raleigh later wrote of his 1885 election campaign against Harrison in the South district, 'The Conservatives, who numbered about 1,500 in the Division, were to decide the result. If they had put forward a candidate I should have probably won. But they finally decided to vote for Sir George'.⁵⁶ Raleigh lost by 1,399 votes which, if his statements were true, would have made a very close election. Just two months after the race in January 1886, there was a by-election in this district in which the race was between a Liberal and a Conservative. The Conservative received 1,730 votes which is more than enough to have cost Raleigh the election if these

⁵⁴ Williams, 'Edinburgh politics', 54; Morton, *Unionist Nationalism*, 105.

⁵⁵ Ewen A. Cameron, 'Cameron, Sir Charles, first baronet (1841–1924)', *ODNB*, (Oxford, 2004), [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/58138, accessed 28 Jun. 2010]; Savage, 'Scottish politics', 120.

⁵⁶ Raleigh, *Annals of the Church in Scotland*, xx.

Conservative voters had supported Harrison's candidature during the 1885 election.⁵⁷ This is likely what happened in the race between Harrison and Raleigh which, if so, points to the majority of the Liberals in the South either supporting or not being concerned with disestablishment.

In the race between Costelloe and Goschen in the East, it is also conceivable that the Conservatives that voted supported the candidature of Goschen. However, unlike in the South, their vote did not have an impact on the outcome of the election. There were no Conservatives to stand for this district at anytime close to the 1885 election making it difficult to determine how many Conservative constituents there were, but it is extremely unlikely that they would have numbered much more than 1,500 let alone 2,400 which is the amount Goschen won by. Therefore, the outcome of the election would have likely been the same even without the support of Tories. Even though crossover voting was the main strategy of the Tories in Edinburgh it only affected one of the parliamentary races and it was one in which the victor was not even a Tory. By the end of the election campaign most of the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh altered their stance on disestablishment or at least their tone on the question. The reason for the shift among the candidates can be attributed to Gladstone.

Gladstone's speech

It is necessary to look to Gladstone's stance on the issue of disestablishment in order to understand the final role that disestablishment played in the election. Although he was vocal about disestablishment prior to his arrival in Midlothian, he chose to remain distant on the subject until relatively late in the 1885 campaign. According to Hutchison, Gladstone 'disliked the rival candidatures cropping up in Scotland, and also found the plan of disestablishment being peddled "outrageous"'.⁵⁸ Kellas points to the fact that Gladstone became aware of a poll taken in Midlothian in which sixty-four per cent of those polled were opposed to disestablishment.⁵⁹ Hamer highlights Gladstone's concerns with the English Churchmen's vote if the Scottish

⁵⁷ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885-1918*, 499.

⁵⁸ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 160, quoting Gladstone to Lord R. Grosvenor, n. d. 6, 8 Nov. 1885, W. E. Gladstone MSS., Add. MS. 44316, ff. 96, 97-8, 100-1.

⁵⁹ Kellas, 'The Liberal party and the Scottish Church disestablishment crisis', 37.

question was left in play.⁶⁰ Instead of one of these being the defining reason for Gladstone's choice to make a stand on the question, it's more likely that all of these reasons contributed to his final decision.

Another aspect that influenced Gladstone's decision on disestablishment came from Edinburgh. Gladstone was given advice by Lord Rosebery, Gladstone's close associate and adviser in Midlothian, who counselled him on the necessity of settling the question in order to maintain the unity of the party.⁶¹ Rosebery was concerned about alienating Liberal Churchmen in Scotland over what might be construed as support for disestablishment. He warned against proceeding down the current path of making disestablishment a test question in the coming election in a letter written to *The Times* in late 1885:

I do not believe that the country is ripe for it, while I suspect the main result of raising it will be to further conservative prospects in the coming elections. If the people of Scotland wish for disestablishment, nothing can prevent its becoming a test question; if the people of Scotland do not wish for it, nothing can make it one.⁶²

However, Rosebery's concerns go beyond maintaining the unity of the party. He was also concerned with the possibility of losing the votes of the Liberal Churchmen to Conservatives, much like Gladstone's concern in England.

Rosebery wrote to Gladstone on 6 November and advised him that 'Buchanan can hardly be saved without some authoritative declaration that the church question is not within the scope of the next parliament'.⁶³ In the West district the Liberal vote was not in jeopardy of being split among rival Liberals which could have, in turn, led to a Conservative victory; instead, the Liberal candidate was in danger of losing the election outright to the Conservative over the issue of disestablishment. The concern that Liberals could lose to Conservatives in a straight race due to losing the Liberal Churchmen's vote was propelled by Chamberlain's letter to a constituent in Edinburgh named Taylor Innes. In this letter Chamberlain put forth the notion that the country's opinion on the Church question was to be measured by the stance held

⁶⁰ Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery*, 109–10.

⁶¹ Robert John Akroyd, 'Lord Rosebery and Scottish nationalism 1868–1896' Thesis (Ph.D.) University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1996), 264, quoting GP, Add MS 44288, f. 265, Rosebery to Gladstone dated 6 Nov. 1885.

⁶² Akroyd, 'Lord Rosebery and Scottish nationalism', 264, quoting *The Times*, 11 Sep. 1885, p. 8.

⁶³ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44288, f. 265–8, Rosebery to Gladstone, 6 Nov 1885.

by the elected MPs. Chamberlain wrote, 'my belief, confirmed as they have been by the experience of my recent visit, are that such an expression of opinion will be obtained as will justify the leaders of the Liberal party in giving the question of disestablishment a prominent place in any future programme'.⁶⁴ With this statement, he indicated his approval of making disestablishment a test question and thus caused a stir amongst the Church Liberals, including some constituents in Edinburgh. Chamberlain's letter also aroused the concern of Gladstone who wrote to Chamberlain, 'We are in danger I think of getting into a false position'. Gladstone expressed his concern of disestablishment being turned into a test question in England if it was made one in Scotland.⁶⁵

The concern of the Church Liberals in Edinburgh was whether their vote for a candidate that supported disestablishment would be considered as support for disestablishment itself. Taylor Mackintosh, a West Edinburgh constituent, informed Rosebery that, before Chamberlain's letter, he had no problem voting for Buchannan, who supported disestablishment, because he understood that the question was to be postponed, but now he feared that his vote would be taken as a vote in support of disestablishment:

The result of course would be that a large body (I believe the majority) of Scotch Liberals would be put, altogether against their will, to choose between their party and the Church. There would be a consequent disruption of the party more or less serious, but in the end Disestablishment would probably be carried by unwilling votes, and all because at the now impending Election, I and others vote for Disestablishment Candidates and thereby misrepresent in Parliament and to the Liberal Leaders the true state of public opinion upon the question.⁶⁶

Mackintosh's letter obviously influenced Rosebery, who in turn wrote his letter to Gladstone to express his concern about the situation.

Buchanan was also concerned with the potential loss of votes over the question and believed that votes for him would be misrepresented if they were seen as a sign of support for disestablishment. His reasoning was that many candidates had pledged that they would not vote on the matter at all during the next Parliament. He himself had promised not to support any attempt to bring the question before

⁶⁴ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44126, f. 123, newspaper article from *The Times*, 28 Sept. 1885.

⁶⁵ UBL, Chamberlain Papers, JC5/34/44, Gladstone to Chamberlain, 6 Nov. 1885

⁶⁶ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44288, f. 258-62, Taylor MacKintosh to Rosebery, 27 Oct. 1885. The underlining is in the original.

Parliament, although he was clear that that he would vote for it if it was brought forward. In a letter to Gladstone, he concluded that ‘In no sense therefore could a vote on that or a similar Resolution be considered as giving a mandate to the Government in the name of the Scottish people to take up such an important question for immediate practical settlement’.⁶⁷ Buchanan was in a tough situation regarding the disestablishment question. He felt compelled to support disestablishment and he believed that the majority of the Liberals in his constituency supported the question as well, but he was very concerned that their vote alone might not be enough to overcome a combined vote of Liberal Churchmen and Conservative. For this reason, he wanted Gladstone to take a stand and make it clear that a vote for him would not be taken as a vote for disestablishment.⁶⁸

The concerns of Rosebery may have had the greatest impact upon Gladstone’s decision regarding the question because his advice was ultimately adopted by Gladstone. Rosebery clearly stated to Gladstone the goal he needed to achieve in order to calm the situation:

What is wanted, in time is this: to make every church Liberal understand that in voting for a Liberal candidate he is in no way voting or expressing an opinion on the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland.⁶⁹

It was Gladstone’s task to make the Liberal Churchman comfortable with voting for Liberal candidates like Buchanan. Gladstone wasted no time in accomplishing this and five days later chose Scotland’s capital as the place to proclaim to the country that very message delivered to him by Rosebery.

On 11 November 1885, in the Free Church Assembly Hall, Gladstone delivered his speech on the disestablishment question. Gladstone’s choice of Edinburgh as the place to make his stance on the subject heard certainly had a greater affect on both the constituents and candidates of Edinburgh than if it had been made in London. The audience was to be made up of his constituents in Midlothian, but also among the people present were at least four of the Liberal candidates for Edinburgh districts: Buchanan, Goschen, Costelloe, and Harrison.⁷⁰ Through the

⁶⁷ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44493, ff. 42–4, Buchanan to Gladstone, Nov. 5 1885.

⁶⁸ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44493, ff. 42–4, Buchanan to Gladstone, Nov. 5 1885.

⁶⁹ Akroyd, ‘Lord Rosebery and Scottish nationalism’, 264, quoting GP, Add MS 44288, f. 265, Rosebery to Gladstone dated 6 Nov. 1885.

⁷⁰ *Glasgow Herald*, 12 Nov. 1885, 3; *The Scotsman*, 13 Nov. 1885, 4.

course of his speech, Gladstone made his position on the Church question clear: he did not want the disestablishment issue to become a test question. He believed that it was in the best interest of all involved to make ‘a state of things in which every Liberal Churchman, being a voter shall feel that in voting for a Liberal candidate he is in no way voting for or giving an opinion upon the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland, though that Liberal candidate may himself be favourable to disestablishment’. Gladstone then tried to end the debate about disestablishment during the election by saying ‘absolutely that there cannot be any legislation on the Scottish Establishment in the coming Parliament’. He then goes on to give hope to the disestablishers by leaving the opportunity in the future open to the question.⁷¹

Charles Cooper, the editor of *The Scotsman*, wrote to Lord Rosebery, ‘The disestablishers are heartbroken’. Of the Churchmen, Cooper informed Rosebery, ‘One of them told me that he thought the speech a complete victory for the Church’.⁷² The success Gladstone made in lessening the concerns of the Liberal Churchmen over disestablishment was echoed by Holmes Ivory, an election agent of Gladstone, who did, however, also indicate that the speech might cause a diverse reaction among the Radicals within the Liberal party:

Mr G's speech has entirely satisfied the Church party. The moderate liberals, I mean those who wish for reunion and have not the disestablishment question in the brain are entirely satisfied. On the other hand a certain strain has been put on the non conformists in Scotland which would have been greatly lessened if Mr G had paid them some compliments such as saying that they have been the back bone of the Liberal Party and that their time would probably come if they had patience.⁷³

The overall affect of Gladstone's speech on the Liberal party and on the disestablishment question is debated by historians. Drummond and Bulloch, as well as Hutchison, view Gladstone's involvement as one of the main reasons behind the continued unity of the Liberal party during the 1885 election despite the differences between the Whigs and Radicals on the disestablishment question.⁷⁴ Kellas provides an alternate view that it was due to the strength of Liberalism that allowed for the Liberal victory despite the dispute over disestablishment which he claimed that

⁷¹ *Glasgow Herald*, 12 Nov. 1885, 3.

⁷² NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS. 10011, f. 128, Charles Cooper to Rosebery, 11 Nov. 1885.

⁷³ NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS. 10037, f. 135, Holmes Ivory to Rosebery, 11 Nov. 1885.

⁷⁴ Drummond and Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland*, 118–23; Hutchison, *A Political History*, 160–1.

‘Gladstone failed to prevent’.⁷⁵ What can be determined is that the speech was interpreted as either in favour of or against disestablishment as Gladstone took no direct side of the argument, arguing instead only that it should not be made into a test question in the 1885 election, and thus the opinions of the constituents on disestablishment should not be based on the views held by their elected MP. As a result, Gladstone’s speech enabled the prolongation of the disestablishment question and eased the tension during the 1885 campaign between the supporters of the Church and the disestablishers. One Edinburgh constituent wrote to *The Scotsman* after hearing Gladstone’s appeal that he as a Liberal Churchman was going to vote for Buchanan, but Buchanan was to understand ‘that he is supported by the votes of many Liberals who like myself are entirely opposed to his views on the church question, and that he is therefore not to say that his constituency is in favour of disestablishment’.⁷⁶ Gladstone’s speech had already affected the election in Edinburgh.

The importance the Liberals in Scotland placed on Gladstone’s opinion regarding the disestablishment question is demonstrated by the official response of the Scottish Disestablishment Association, a group that desired disestablishment more than any other in Scotland, on the day following his speech: ‘...this declaration of Mr. Gladstone’s views plainly creates a crisis in the advancing history of the question... Mr Gladstone’s refusal to lead cannot relieve us from the obligation to do justice to our own convictions’.⁷⁷ The group goes on to urge the people to vote for disestablishment candidates when possible and only those who have pledged themselves to vote for disestablishment in Parliament.⁷⁸ On the other hand, the Scottish Disestablishment Association contradicts its own statement by reaffirming their ‘admiration for Mr. Gladstone’ as well as their ‘readiness to follow him as a leader of the Liberal Party’.⁷⁹ The official response from the Scottish Disestablishment Association shows its unwillingness, if not fearfulness, of being in

⁷⁵ Kellas, ‘The Liberal party and the Scottish Church disestablishment crisis’, 37–8.

⁷⁶ *The Scotsman*, 12 Nov. 1885, 3.

⁷⁷ Executive of the Scottish Disestablishment Association, *Statement By The Executive Of The Scottish Disestablishment Association* (Edinburgh, 1885), 1.

⁷⁸ Executive of the Scottish Disestablishment Association, *Statement By The Executive Of The Scottish Disestablishment Association* (Edinburgh, 1885), 1.

⁷⁹ Executive of the Scottish Disestablishment Association, *Statement By The Executive Of The Scottish Disestablishment Association* (Edinburgh, 1885), 1.

an outright conflict with Gladstone. The group tried to gloss over the fact that Gladstone called for the disestablishment movement to be set aside without being overtly against him.

Gladstone's speech influenced several Edinburgh candidates' stances on disestablishment. Both of the Conservative candidates tried harder to make disestablishment a test question by placing doubt on the suspension of the question from the Liberal programme. Most of the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh tried to downplay the subject as Gladstone had asked them to do. This was beneficial to the two Whig candidates, Goschen and Harrison, because they were able to fight their opponents' attacks by simply pointing to the fact that Gladstone called for the question to be put aside. The exceptions to this were two of the three Radicals, Black and Raleigh, who wanted to keep the question alive.

A good example of the Whigs using of Gladstone's speech as a political means is Bailie Russell's introduction of Sir George Harrison to a crowd of constituents at a speech:

Every word that Mr. Gladstone said in his great speech the other night was just what Sir George had been saying for some time past. There might be some among them who did not think that Mr. Gladstone was a good enough Liberal for them, but for many of them, he was sure, he was quite good enough—(hear, hear)-and the candidate who was in complete accord with the ex-Premier could not be too little of a Liberal to suit the Edinburgh people.⁸⁰

Russell argued that since Harrison's view of the Church question was in line with Gladstone's, that alone should have qualified him for the constituents' vote over Raleigh who had a different view on the question.

In the West, Buchanan, who received what he wanted from Gladstone's speech, reasserted to his constituents that, while he was in favour of disestablishment, he had always stated that he would not force the question in Parliament and he noted that Gladstone asked the electors not to make disestablishment a test question, a position he had also been advocating. His opponent, Jamieson, called attention to the fact that Gladstone had said the same thing about the Irish Church in 1868, but then once 'he became Prime Minister... he moved a resolution in favour of the disestablishment of the Irish Church' which

⁸⁰ *The Scotsman*, 14 Nov. 1885, 6.

brought up a question as to whether or not Gladstone would do the same regarding the Church of Scotland.⁸¹

Raleigh insisted that Gladstone was mainly thinking of the Liberals in England when he gave his speech in Edinburgh. He said to his constituents that ‘if they believed in Disestablishment as a principle, the duty lay upon them more than ever frankly to state so, and do what they could to educate the public mind in what they believed was the solution of this question’.⁸² However, Charles Cooper wrote to Lord Rosebery that Professor Calderwood, a Radical who had convinced his former student, Raleigh, to run in Edinburgh, ‘at a meeting of Raleigh’s tonight, announced that he loyally accepted Mr Gs lectures’.⁸³ Writing on the subject in 1921, Raleigh recalled:

In 1885 a general election was expected in November, and the advocates of disestablishment had fixed their hopes on Mr. Gladstone; it was expected that he would either give the question a place in his programme, or put forward some new plan of reunion and reconstruction. But Mr. Gladstone was close on seventy-six, and in Church matters had never been in complete sympathy with his supporters in Scotland; he never quite understood how a religious nation could be so generally indifferent to what he thought most important in Church life. In his first speech to the electors of Midlothian, which was delivered in Assembly Hall of the Free Church, he played with the question of disestablishment, and said nothing of the merits. It was evident that his duty to the Liberal party would not permit him to run the risk involved in an attack on the most powerful and popular of the Presbyterian Churches.⁸⁴

Raleigh still saw the position taken by Gladstone as one for the party, and not a personal view of the question. The reasoning that Raleigh assigned to Gladstone’s actions on the questioned altered from an English concern to a Scottish one.

In the Central district, both Black and Major Napier pushed forward the question of disestablishment. Black, like Raleigh, believed that Gladstone removed disestablishment of the Church of Scotland from the Liberal programme in order to save the Liberal party from losses in England. He asserted, ‘The Church of Scotland owes some gratitude to the larger sister establishment for obliging him to do so’ indicating that he still believed that the disestablishment question was ripe and

⁸¹ *The Scotsman*, 13 Nov. 1885, 6.

⁸² *The Scotsman*, 12 Nov. 1885, 6.

⁸³ NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS. 10011, f. 128, Charles Cooper to Lord Rosebery, 11 Nov. 1885.

⁸⁴ Raleigh, *Annals of the Church in Scotland*, 327–8.

favoured in Scotland.⁸⁵ Black also expressed his opinion that Gladstone was not personally against disestablishment although he feared losing the English Liberals who were opposed to Scottish disestablishment because they feared that the Church of England would face pressure if the Church of Scotland was disestablished. Black refers to the continuation of the disestablishment fight, noting that ‘the game had not been played out; it had only been discontinued’.⁸⁶ Major Napier, addressing a crowd of electors, declared, ‘If they wished to retain the Church they would discard those candidates who had laid themselves under an obligation to vote for disestablishment’. He then told the electors that they should cast their vote for someone ‘who would support the Church through thick and thin’.⁸⁷ He still hoped to wedge the disestablishment question between himself and the Liberals.

The other two Liberals in the Central division, Renton and Wilson, made an attempt to drop the disestablishment question from the race. Renton said, ‘He had all his life been a believer... that there ought to be no connection between Church and State.’ He did not favour the abolition of either the Church of England or the Church of Scotland and believed that ‘if these Churches were disconnected from the State they would be better able to carry on their work. At the same time, he quite sympathised with Mr. Gladstone... and saw no possibility of carrying it [disestablishment] into effect’.⁸⁸ Wilson assured Liberals that he would support the Liberal party and since Gladstone came out against disestablishment he would not push it forward.⁸⁹ Both Renton and Wilson thus supported disestablishment, but for Gladstone and the Liberal party they put the question aside in support of the request by Gladstone. Although they did follow Gladstone’s call for setting aside disestablishment, neither of them supported Gladstone’s plea for local unity by abdicating the race in order to display Liberal unity in Edinburgh.

Results of the disestablishment question

The result of Gladstone’s success in marginalising the disestablishment question is vague when examining the voting results of the 1885 election in

⁸⁵ *The Scotsman*, 20 Nov. 1885, 5.

⁸⁶ *The Scotsman*, 20 Nov. 1885, 5.

⁸⁷ *The Scotsman*, 12 Nov. 1885, 6.

⁸⁸ *The Scotsman*, 14 Nov. 1885, 6.

⁸⁹ *The Scotsman*, 13 Nov. 1885, 6.

Edinburgh in relation to the candidates' final positions on the question as Churchmen, advanced, or Radicals.

Table 3.2: Candidates by Votes and Views on Disestablishment⁹⁰

<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Churchmen</i>	<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Radicals</i>
Black			770
Buchanan		3,800	
Costelloe			1,929
Goschen	4,337		
Harrison	4,273		
Jamieson	2,625		
Napier	1,606		
Raleigh			2,874
Renton		1,683	
Wilson		2,930	
Total	12,841	8,413	5,573

The combined total vote for the advanced candidates and the Radicals, who both supported disestablishment, was 13,986 which is only 1,145 votes more than the Churchmen received. This seems to suggest a city that was very divided on the subject of disestablishment. However, as previously mentioned, the outcome of the election was that the city's seats were equally divided with two pro-disestablishment Members and two pro-Church Members. The contests where the Church Liberals were victorious lacked Conservative candidates and in the races where disestablishers won there was a lack of Liberal Churchmen. Even though three of the contests had multiple Liberal candidates, none of them were lost to Conservatives which demonstrates the Liberal strength and Gladstone's success in keeping the party together in Edinburgh.

A final overview of the disestablishment question in Edinburgh during the 1885 election shows that in the races in both the Central and West districts, the Conservatives lost to Liberals who favoured disestablishment indicating one of two things: either the Conservatives' tactics of trying to gain the support of the Liberal Churchmen succeeded, but there were not many Liberal Churchmen in either of their

⁹⁰ The number of votes was taken from Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 497–500. The candidates' affiliation as Churchmen, Advanced, or Radicals was determined by the stance they took on the Church question during the 1885 election.

districts to convert, or the Liberal Churchmen who were targeted in these districts voted with their party rather than for the Church as Gladstone had hoped to achieve through his speech. If the former were true, one could assume that the Radicals, who would have greatly outnumbered the Churchmen in the district, would have voted for Black who was pushing the disestablishment issue much more than his Liberal opponents. Black, however, only accumulated 770 votes, the lowest of all of the candidates in Edinburgh and the victor with 2,930 votes was Wilson, an independent Liberal and the least vocal on the subject of disestablishment in the Central district. Therefore, it is more likely that the latter is accurate with Liberal Churchmen voting for Liberal candidates despite their stance on the Church question.

The results in the East and South counter those of the Central and West and thus demonstrate the divide in Edinburgh regarding the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. In these contests both of the Whigs favoured the preservation of the Church and were victorious over their Radical opponents who openly campaigned for disestablishment. This could indicate either that the Liberal voters in the East and South favoured the Churchmen, or that the Tories in both districts, who decided to forego running a candidate of their own, opted to support the two Whigs thus skewing the Liberal vote. The Churchmen in the West and Central districts did not have the option of voting for a Liberal candidate who opposed disestablishment making it difficult to have a clear understanding of the desires of the city's Liberal voters. The exclusion of Liberal candidates who supported the Church in these districts suggests that the question was not the main issue among the Liberals in Edinburgh. If the disestablishment issue had been at the forefront of the Liberal Churchmen's minds, it is conceivable that they would have run independent Liberals who were in favour of the preservation of the Church of Scotland or that they would have supported the Conservative candidates which would likely have resulted in their election over the pro-disestablishment Liberals. Given this, it appears that the disestablishment question was likely not the most important aspect of the election in Edinburgh. However, through the correspondence of candidates and others and the prominence generated in print media and pamphlets the Church question was an important issue during the 1885 election, and one which doubtless had an impact on voter choices.

CHAPTER FOUR

Political Traditions and Other Influences on the 1885 Election

As stated in the previous chapter, historians of the 1885 general election in Scotland have often focussed their attention on debate regarding the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland. They cite the Church question as the cause of the Liberal split and as the reason for a constituent to vote for or against a candidate.¹ More recently, however, historians have pointed to other reasons and other issues that may have affected the outcome of the election. In Catriona Burness' study of Glasgow, she points to the St. Rollox district, where the candidates had opposing views on the Church question. The winning candidate was supported by the Land League, which propelled him to the head of the poll.² On the contrary, Catriona Macdonald indicates in her study of Paisley politics that it was neither disestablishment nor any national questions that ultimately decided the race. Both candidates in this race held the same views on disestablishment, land, education, and licensing questions. Macdonald concludes that the choice of the Liberal candidate was decided upon by local politics.³ This leads to the question of whether disestablishment was the only source of political discussion in Edinburgh or whether other issues, either national or local, might have played an important part in the election. In order to answer this question, one should examine the political stances of

¹ Alan Simon, 'Church disestablishment', 792-3; Savage, 'Scottish politics', 118-29; Kellas, 'The Liberal party and the Scottish Church disestablishment crisis', 36; Kellas, 'The Liberal party in Scotland', 9; McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 48-55; Hutchison, *A Political History*, 154-62; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 95.

² Burness, *Strange Associations*, 37.

³ Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, 81-2.

the candidates on the other leading questions in Edinburgh to determine if any of the other questions commanded equal or even larger importance than the question of disestablishment.

While disestablishment was the central issue nationally in Scotland during the general election of 1885, it was also the main conflict within the Liberal party, particularly regarding the selection of Liberal candidates. The results of the 1885 election (discussed in the previous chapter) suggest that the four parliamentary districts in Edinburgh were split rather evenly on the Church question indicating that there may have been other issues that played a role in the election results in addition to disestablishment. This conclusion does not mean that the Church question should be disregarded altogether, but rather leaves room to further examine the local political campaign in its full complexity thus revealing other issues that may have affected the outcome of the election. In the post-double-member constituencies of Edinburgh, it is difficult to view the city as a whole with regard to parliamentary politics because it was actually four individual districts; however, when examining the four districts together, similar themes can be found throughout the city involving national issues, local issues, personalities and traditions. Comparing the candidates' election literature and election speeches will help to determine the issues that were important to the constituents and what the candidates thought would help secure their votes. Also, in examining the backgrounds of the candidates as well as the way they tried to appeal to the constituents, one may find other commonalities which could have played a role in the election.

Issues brought up during the election

Several questions were prominent in the Edinburgh election of 1885: disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland (discussed in detail in the previous chapter), licensing and local veto, and free education. There were certainly other issues that were discussed throughout the campaign, but these three questions have been singled out because they were frequently addressed by both the candidates and the constituents. Candidates had to endure questions about such issues

from election crowds if they wished to claim a legitimate right to represent the constituency.⁴

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Licensing</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Disestablishment</i>
Buchanan	favoured	favoured	favoured
Goschen	opposed	opposed	opposed
Harrison	opposed	favoured*	opposed
Wilson	opposed	favoured	favoured
Black	opposed	favoured	favoured
Costelloe	favoured	favoured	favoured
Jamieson	opposed	opposed	opposed
Napier	opposed	opposed	opposed
Raleigh	favoured	favoured	favoured
Renton	favoured	favoured	favoured

The table above details each of the candidates running in Edinburgh in 1885 and their various stances on important issues of the election.

Licensing reform

Reforming the way that licenses to sell alcohol were granted was an important issue during the 1885 general election in Edinburgh and the question was discussed by both candidates and constituents in each of the four new districts. The licensing question was a fairly unique issue as it was pushed by a powerful pressure group made up of a vast network of temperance organisations.⁶ During the late-Victorian period, pressure groups often dictated the policies that were taken up by Parliament by pressuring politicians to support their causes.⁷ One historian defines pressure groups as groups made up of voluntary members which 'seek to coerce others: first, the politicians from whom they extract legislation; and then the general public who are expected to obey it'.⁸ The most prominent of these pressure groups

⁴ Lawrence, *Electing our Masters* 62.

⁵ Anon., *Parliamentary Election. Digest of Proceedings in connection with the candidature of Mr John Wilson as Representative of the Central Division of the city of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1885), 9; *The Scotsman*, 7 May 1885, 7; 15 Jun. 1886, 6; 20 Jun. 1885, 7; 25 Sep. 1885, 7; 2 Oct. 1885, 6; 10 Oct. 1885, 9; 12 Oct. 1885, 6; 14 Oct. 1885, 8; 16 Oct. 1885, 6; 20 Oct. 1885, 6; 21 Oct. 1885, 8; 22 Oct. 1885, 6; 27 Oct. 1885, 6; 31 Oct. 1885, 10; 6 Nov. 1885, 6; 10 Nov. 1885, 7; 17 Nov. 1885, 6; *Reformer*, 14 Nov. 1885, 4.

⁶ Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815–1872* (London, 1971), 258.

⁷ Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 244.

⁸ Brian Harrison, *The Transformation of British Politics 1860–1895* (Oxford, 1996), 157.

dealt with such major issues as disestablishment and temperance.⁹ By the late-Victorian period, many of these temperance organisations had consolidated their goal of reform and had become one of ‘the most important section[s] of the Liberal Party’.¹⁰ The temperance organisations in Scotland became highly effective because they applied significant pressure on candidates. Instead of lobbying political parties, temperance organisations tried to push individual candidates to pledge to support their cause once in Parliament.¹¹ If the candidate refused to support the temperance cause, he sometimes faced drastic repercussions since temperance organisations asked their members to support only those parliamentary candidates who pledged to support the temperance cause and even recommended that they not vote at all if there were no candidates supportive of their views on temperance.¹²

Temperance organisations grew throughout the nineteenth century resulting in a vast voting bloc and they continued to use this bloc to put pressure on Liberal candidates. Consequently, the endorsement or lack thereof by temperance organisations swayed elections. Hutchison noted several cases in which candidates won elections after being endorsed by temperance members.¹³ Conversely, Harrison discussed instances where the temperance organisations’ refusal to back a candidate lost the candidate the election.¹⁴ Some people were concerned about the power of the temperance organisations to sway the 1880 Edinburgh election due to fears that it could cause a Liberal split.¹⁵ Did the temperance organisations ultimately play a role in the 1885 Edinburgh elections and, if so, were they able to put pressure on any of the candidates?

Before the 1880s, the temperance movement in Scotland worked with other movements throughout the United Kingdom to try to pass parliamentary temperance legislation for the whole country. While MPs from Scottish constituencies had been

⁹ Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery*, 2–3.

¹⁰ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 138; Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery*, 98, quoting Harcourt to Gladstone, 21 Jan. 1884, Gladstone MSS, B.M. Add. MS. 44199, folios 3, 174–5.

¹¹ Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 243.

¹² Daniel C. Paton, ‘Drink and the temperance movement in nineteenth century Scotland’, Thesis (Ph.D.) University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1977), 304; Norman Longmate, *The Waterdrinkers: A History of Temperance* (London, 1968), 224.

¹³ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 138. Candidates supported by the temperance movement won in the 1874 elections in Dundee, Leith, and Glasgow.

¹⁴ Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 241.

¹⁵ Hanham, *Elections and Party Management*, 168.

voting in favour of temperance legislation since 1878, their English counterparts had not, thus resulting in the failure of the legislation.¹⁶ This created resentment among the Scottish temperance members and they soon began calling for a Local Veto Bill for Scotland alone which would have allowed local communities the ability to prohibit the sale of alcohol within their local communities.¹⁷ This local option bill was brought before Parliament by Peter McLagan, a Scottish MP for Linlithgowshire, who first introduced the Bill in 1883 when the Scottish temperance members decided to turn their focus on Scotland. The Bill's aim was to place liquor traffic directly in the hands of the local populace rather than the Justices and Magistrates who were then in charge of granting licenses in the counties and burghs, respectively. McLagan's Bill would allow all residents of age, male or female, in a burgh, ward, parish, or district (defined as a village of more than three hundred inhabitants not contained in a burgh, parish, or ward), the ability to vote on three resolutions: to prohibit alcohol altogether, to reduce the current number of licenses to a specific number, or to cease granting new licenses altogether. The local populace would be required to gather ten per cent of the residents' signatures in order to bring the resolution to a vote and then two-thirds of the vote would be required to pass any of the resolutions.¹⁸

In 1883, an overwhelming majority of the Scottish MPs voted for the failed temperance legislation for the whole United Kingdom while, at the same time, a majority voted against McLagan's Local Veto Bill for Scotland.¹⁹ The failure of the Scottish local option bill strengthened the licensing debate during the 1885 election. The candidates were thus asked by constituents to explain their position on McLagan's Bill and licensing reform. Most of the Edinburgh candidates supported licensing reform in one way or another with the exception of Lord Napier who did not discuss the question of licensing, but instead focussed on the question of drinking. In his attempt to gain the support of the workingmen in the Central district, Napier acknowledged that 'he was in favour of sobriety, but felt it was a man's

¹⁶ Paton, 'Drink and the temperance movement', 317, table 9, from S.P.B.A. Annual Reports.

¹⁷ Paton, 'Drink and the temperance movement', 316.

¹⁸ *PP*, 1884-5, ii (28): *Liquor traffic (local veto) (Scotland). A bill to enable owners and occupiers in burghs, wards of burghs, parishes, and districts in Scotland to prevent the common sale of intoxicating liquors, or otherwise to have effectual control over the drink traffic, within such areas.*

¹⁹ Paton, 'Drink and the temperance movement', 318.

decision on what he was to drink'.²⁰ He went on to declare himself to be 'a supporter of the freedom of the British subjects, and he would not submit to be dictated as to what he was to drink and what he was not to drink.'²¹ The other nine candidates all wanted to avoid having the temperance members vote against them because of their stance on licensing and wanted to gain the support of temperance members whenever possible. As a result, they all indicated that they supported change to the licensing laws by reforming the current system of granting licenses. The candidates, excluding Napier, all claimed that their goal in reforming the licensing laws was to grant local residents more control over the licensing process.²²

By the time of the 1885 election, licensing had become the driving issue within the temperance movement. It was particularly important in Edinburgh because local temperance men were focussing on the local licensing problems of the city. For example, Richard Cameron, the president of the Edinburgh Total Abstinence Society, wrote a pamphlet titled 'The road to ruin' in which he was critical of the ninety public houses on the Royal Mile:²³

It has too long been the practise of licensing authorities to place the strongest temptations in localities where the resisting power was well known to be the weakest. [...] Take the High Street and Canongate of Edinburgh, and see what a formidable array of liquor shops are thickly planted all the way down from Castlehill to Holyrood. Why, they seem as if purposefully placed to tempt into their snares all who require to pass them on their way to their homes.²⁴

Cameron, like many Victorian temperance men, believed alcohol to be directly related to, if not outright the cause of social ills. As part of a solution to this problem, he supported placing the licensing in the hands of the inhabitants of the city. He acknowledged that licensing reform would be a hard fight because 'the drinking system [was] powerfully maintained and promoted by the money interest arrayed on its side' from the distillers, brewers, and publicans.²⁵ The 'money interest' was also noted by an ex-Magistrate of the city of Edinburgh, David Lewis, who commented

²⁰ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1885, 10.

²¹ *Reformer*, 14 Nov. 1885, 4.

²² George B. Wilson, *Alcohol and the Nation: A Contribution to the Study of the Liquor Problem in the United Kingdom from 1800 to 1935* (London, 1940), 118.

²³ Richard Cameron, 'Human wrecks', no. 351 in *Total Abstinence Versus Alcoholism* (Edinburgh, 1897), 3.

²⁴ Richard Cameron, 'The road to ruin', no. 321 in *Total Abstinence Versus Alcoholism* (Edinburgh, 1897), 2.

²⁵ Cameron, 'The road to ruin', 2-3.

on this in his book, *The Drink Problem and Its Solution*. Lewis wrote that the Caledonian distillery in Edinburgh alone produced more than two million gallons of whisky a year and paid twenty thousand pounds of duty a week.²⁶ Not only was the industry profiting from the trade, but the Government had a monetary interest in it as well.

In order to combat this ‘money interest’ other local temperance reformers appealed to voters to elect representatives who would fight to pass licensing reform. One such reformer, Professor Calderwood, pleaded, ‘the country requires as its representatives in Parliament men who are alive to the evils and dangers around; men of high purpose and of strong resolution; men who regard social reform as a grand end in Parliamentary service.’ According to Calderwood, ‘The power of Parliament controls the licensing system; and we must seek from Parliament the popular veto.’²⁷ Temperance supporters took up this plea and looked for candidates who supported McLagan’s Bill. Much like the fight within the Liberal party between the Radicals and Whigs in 1885, the temperance political fight in Scotland often took place in the nominating process of potential Liberal candidates.

The party’s nomination process was often seen as the most important vote because the nominated Liberal candidate would often go unchallenged or was at least strongly favoured to win the election against a Tory opponent.²⁸ According to Paton, ‘Temperance men were often active on Liberal electoral committees and in Liberal associations. They represented a radical element in the party which sought to drive it to the left by influencing the choice of candidates’.²⁹ The question of licensing was debated in all four districts of Edinburgh. The issue was most discussed in the Central district where all three of the Liberal candidates spoke of the importance of licensing. Renton said that Edinburgh had a ‘deep interest’ in the issue while Wilson remarked that it ‘was an important question, because the temperance electors of the division were large’, and Black listed licensing reform along with disestablishment as the ‘two great schemes’ of reform for the election.³⁰ These candidates were

²⁶ David Lewis, *The Drink Problem and its Solution* (London, 1881), 7 and 40.

²⁷ *Reformer*, Oct 24 1885, 5.

²⁸ Paton, ‘Drink and the temperance movement’, 310.

²⁹ Paton, ‘Drink and the temperance movement’, 310.

³⁰ *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 6; 16 Oct. 1885, 6; 7 Oct. 1885, 8.

noticeably concerned that the temperance electors in the district could decide the winner of the election.

Hamer suggests that candidates reacted to pressure groups such as the temperance movement in two ways: by either fully accepting their calls of reform or by refusing to pledge support to any cause at all.³¹ The approach of fully accepting the pressure group's call for reform was adopted only by Renton who succumbed to the pressure of the temperance movement and fully endorsed McLagan's Local Veto Bill in exchange for temperance members' endorsement even though he disagreed with the principle of teetotalism. Sweeney offers an alternative approach that candidates took with regards to pressure groups. In her local study of the temperance movement in Glasgow, she found that once the temperance supporters in the late-Victorian period began to consolidate their power in municipal elections, their challengers began to push for temperance reform, yet withheld from endorsing prohibition. This was seen as a good compromise between the present system and the alternative of prohibition.³² This approach was taken in the 1885 Edinburgh election by the two Whigs, Harrison and Goschen; the Tory, Jamieson; and Wilson, the least radical of the Central division's Liberal candidates.

The power of the temperance organisations in Edinburgh was further confirmed as they received pledges of support for McLagan's Local Veto Bill from four of the candidates. These four were the three barristers—Buchanan, Costelloe, and Raleigh—as well as Renton, the London stockbroker. Each of these men had also pledged to support disestablishment. These four all advocated the policy within the Local Veto Bill and expressed their desires for the local population to be in charge of licensing in their respective districts.³³ The three barristers – Buchanan, Costelloe, and Raleigh – each had only one opponent: Jamieson, Goschen, and Harrison, respectively. Jamieson, Goschen, and Harrison all took the middle ground between doing nothing and supporting prohibition by withholding support of McLagan's Local Veto Bill while advocating for change to the existing licensing law. They all spoke in favour of placing more authority with the Local Government

³¹ Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery*, 25–6.

³² Irene Sweeney, 'Local party politics and the temperance crusade: Glasgow, 1890–1902', *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, 27 (1992), 49.

³³ *The Scotsman*, 15 Jun. 1885, 6; 10 Nov. 1885, 7.

which was technically popularly elected.³⁴ Harrison's statement sums up the position held by all three: he was against McLagan's scheme because it would 'bring forward methods not akin to our native modes of government, and seek to do what laws can never effect'.³⁵ The 'methods' Harrison pointed to in his statement is a reference to voting. In his argument, only the people presently eligible to vote would still be able to vote for the members of the Local Government which would have continued to deny women a vote even though women made up a large portion of the temperance movement. McLagan's Bill would allow every inhabitant of age in a specific district a vote on the liquor traffic. It is likely that he was referring to prohibition as 'what laws can never effect'. None of them indicated that they supported the people having the right to choose to prohibit alcohol in their communities, only that they supported licensing reform.

Jamieson, Goschen, and Harrison must have all been concerned with the temperance vote in their respective districts. A temperance newspaper, *The Reformer*, documented Goschen's changing attitude on temperance: 'Mr. Goschen would scarcely look at us, but as the battle rages he is becoming a little more pliable'.³⁶ This indicates that he was feeling pressure to appease the temperance voters or at least that he was open to it. However, these three were also concerned with votes from the drink industry because they all pandered to temperance supporters somewhat while withholding their full support for the movement, probably hoping to receive support from the moderates who supported either the temperance movement or the drink industry.

The temperance members' choice in the Central division was understandably not Major Napier who was against any type of reform.³⁷ The remaining three candidates in the Central division—Renton, Black, and Wilson—were all Radicals and each had made claims that he should be the temperance candidate. Black, a teetotaler like some others in the Liberal party, 'believed that all other social issues – including poverty, crime and unemployment – were subordinate to temperance'.³⁸ Black was arguably the most radical of the three Central Liberal candidates and he

³⁴ *The Scotsman*, 15 Jun. 1885, 6.

³⁵ *The Scotsman*, 20 Oct. 1885, 6.

³⁶ *Reformer*, 24 Oct. 1885, 6.

³⁷ *Reformer*, 14 Nov. 1885, 4.

³⁸ Sweeney, 'Local party politics', 44.

did not support McLagan's Bill because he was not satisfied with the details in the Bill. Black said that 'he was willing to accept any improvement in the present system as long as it was on the lines of popular control, and he believed that the voice of the public opinion was ready to speak in favour of the removal of the present system that had been tried and found wanting'.³⁹ The main problem Black saw with McLagan's Local Veto Bill was that it enabled the local communities the option to prohibit alcohol which he thought went too far. He was in favour of temperance and believed alcohol to be the major cause of social ills. When he chaired the 1885 annual meeting of the Edinburgh members of the Scottish Temperance League, he told the audience of the benefits of teetotalism:

What a revival and invigoration would take place in every industry, save one; what a burst of joy would rise from the wives and little ones in the slums and dens of their large cities; how tidy and trim would the poor man's houses become, and with what an elastic step would he proceed to his work of a morning! They would meet with very few constables on the beat. (Laughter and applause.) The police officers might come under the early closing movement—(laughter)—while the prisons and the workhouses might be turned partly to industrial uses.⁴⁰

Black went on to say that they needed to keep pressuring the Government to enact favourable legislation, but more importantly, they needed to lead by example. He simply 'did not believe in the power of mere law to make men either moral or religious'.⁴¹ He was therefore against forcing prohibition upon anyone. Black's view that the drink had a powerful hold on the social condition of the urban working class was shared by other Scottish Liberals such as Samuel Chisholm, a prominent temperance politician in Glasgow in the 1890s and early 1900s. Chisholm, like Black, held the belief that if society refrained from the drink, social conditions would greatly improve.⁴²

Wilson was also against McLagan's Local Veto Bill and said specifically that his opposition was due to the prohibition portion of the scheme. Wilson spoke of his position on the licensing question at a speech in mid October:

Mr. Wilson stated that, whilst he was in favour of reforming the licensing laws, and leaving it to districts to give effect to those reforms, he was not in

³⁹ *The Scotsman*, 11 Nov. 1885, 8.

⁴⁰ *The Scotsman*, 30 Oct. 1885, 4.

⁴¹ *The Scotsman*, 27 Feb. 1885, 7.

⁴² Sweeney, 'Local party politics', 46–7.

favour of granting to two-thirds of the inhabitants of any district the power of total prohibition. It meant granting power to render a trade illegal in one district at the same time that it recognised it as legal in another district. If there were to be prohibition, it must be national prohibition. So far as legality and prohibition were concerned, all the districts of the country ought to be dealt with upon the same principles, and therefore he held that in dealing with this question they ought to do it nationally and not locally.⁴³

Wilson used the same tactic as Harrison, Goschen, and Jamieson by trying to take the middle ground hoping to appeal to all sides, yet he was attacked as a hypocrite while the other three candidates did not face similar attacks. Wilson faced such criticism because he was the only one who opposed McLagan's Bill while simultaneously favouring disestablishment. It was said that Wilson was 'willing to give the people the power to disestablish and disendow the Church, but at the same time refused to give the people the power to deal with liquor traffic'.⁴⁴ Wilson refuted this attack by restating his position that there should be more control over licensing, but that prohibition should be dealt with nationally, although he never indicated that he supported national prohibition. He could have strengthened his argument by adding that his position on temperance was the same position he held on disestablishment: he supported disestablishing the National Church on the national level, but not granting individual districts the ability to disestablish their local Church of Scotland.

Renton, as noted before, was the one candidate who fully succumbed to the pressure of the temperance members. In June 1885 Renton told Edinburgh members of the Good Templar Order that he 'approve[d] the principle of Mr M'Lagan's [sic] Bill' and that he would vote for the Bill if it was brought before Parliament.⁴⁵ By early October he was approaching the issue with a more compromising tone. When asked, he no longer said that he favoured McLagan's Local Veto Bill, only that he believed it would not be brought before Parliament. Instead, he changed his strategy to one of compromise and said that they should focus on the local boards that would be established through Local Government to handle licensing reform.⁴⁶ However, on 22 October the temperance electors in the Central division held a meeting and, in spite of Renton's recent lack of support, decided to endorse him as their candidate.

⁴³ Anon., *Parliamentary Election*, 9.

⁴⁴ *The Scotsman*, 2 Oct. 1885, 6.

⁴⁵ *The Scotsman*, 15 Jun. 1885, 6.

⁴⁶ *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 8; 16 Oct. 1885, 8.

The following day complaints appeared in *The Scotsman* aimed at Renton's nomination. The writers of the letters did not claim to be teetotallers, but they felt that Black would have been the better choice for the temperance movement. They listed two reasons: one, Black was an abstainer while Renton was a moderate drinker and two, Renton did not believe that McLagan's Local Veto Bill would be brought up in the new Parliament.⁴⁷ On 31 October Renton addressed a temperance crowd and told them that he 'did not see eye to eye with them on the point of total abstinence, but that did not weigh in the matter of a Parliamentary election. He was prepared to support their views by giving the people the legal power to restrain or abolish the liquor trade'.⁴⁸ Renton feared the loss of the temperance members' support and was therefore pressured into supporting McLagan's Local Veto Bill, despite the fact that he personally did not support prohibition.

It has been established that pressure groups in Edinburgh during the 1885 general election influenced, in some way, most of the candidates' positions concerning the licensing question. It is more difficult to ascertain the precise impact of pressure groups on the outcome of the election. The majority of the discussion in Edinburgh regarded the concept of McLagan's Bill. Three of the elected MPs were not endorsed by the temperance movement and did not support McLagan's Local Veto Bill. They did, however, play to the middle by supporting changes to the current licensing laws, and, according to *The Reformer*, the temperance vote in Edinburgh was divided, resulting in the defeat of the endorsed temperance candidates.⁴⁹ The one elected MP that supported the Bill was in a straightforward race between a Liberal and a Conservative. In the Central division's race between a Conservative and three Radicals, the most moderate Radical, who was also the least supportive of disestablishment, won the seat. Ultimately, the men elected in Edinburgh held similar views on both licensing and disestablishment which points to a possible connection between religious affiliations and temperance.

Paton points out that the Established Church of Scotland had very few teetotal ministers while both the United Presbyterians and the Free Church had a

⁴⁷ *The Scotsman*, 23 Oct. 1885, 3.

⁴⁸ *The Scotsman*, 2 Nov. 1885, 6.

⁴⁹ *Reformer*, 5 Dec. 1885, 6.

large number of ministers that were teetotallers.⁵⁰ Other historians found that teetotalism was more predominant among the nonconformists in England and Wales as well.⁵¹ Nonconformists embraced the teetotal movement early as a way to gain ‘moral superiority’ over the Established Church.⁵² Paton posed an important question: ‘Why in particular did the Free Church prove more susceptible to teetotal arguments than the Established Church?’⁵³ He believed that it was based on the location of the institution. Since the Established Church remained dominated by the landed class, it was comprised of a mainly rural base, whereas the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church grew from urban areas. This, he concluded, might have caused the ministers of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church to be influenced by their close proximity to the living conditions of the working class.⁵⁴ This is a valid point, but it is more likely that the Church of Scotland ministers would not have supported teetotalism because the majority of the teetotal supporters, including candidates, were also in favour of disestablishment and disendowment. Therefore, if the Church of Scotland ministers supported candidates that favoured teetotalism, they would have likely been supporting disestablishment as well.

Paton himself points out that temperance members were predominantly radical and trying to move the Liberal party to the left. He also notes that the temperance organisations required their members to pledge to vote only for candidates who supported temperance. Consequently, if a Church of Scotland minister was a teetotaller, he would have been expected to vote for candidates that supported disestablishment. It is a safe assumption that such a minister would have found the matters of the Church more pressing than those of teetotalism. Taking this into account, one could switch the Church of Scotland ministers with the members of their congregation and come to the same conclusion that they would have held church matters above that of drink. It appears that there is a commonality between the supporters of teetotalism and disestablishment. This correlation explains why Black received the least amount of votes even though he was the most supportive of

⁵⁰ Paton, ‘Drink and the temperance movement’, 350.

⁵¹ Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 179; Peter Mathias, ‘The brewing industry, temperance and politics’, *The Historical Journal*, 1 (1958), 111.

⁵² Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, 187–8.

⁵³ Paton, ‘Drink and the temperance movement’, 370.

⁵⁴ Paton, ‘Drink and the temperance movement’, 372.

disestablishment and disendowment in the Central division. The vast amount of voters who strongly supported disestablishment were in favour of teetotalism and therefore backed Renton over Black because of his commitment to McLagan's Local Veto Bill.

The licensing question provides a further insight into the constituents' wants and reveals the candidates' attempts to match them. It also provides a possible link to the disestablishment question through a want of decentralization as both questions sought to provide the constituents with more control over their local communities. Most importantly, for this present chapter the attention given to the licensing question during the election reveals that the Church question did not dominate the election in Edinburgh.

The issue of free education

Free education was another issue that was discussed nationally in 1885 although it did not have a large pressure group advancing the issue as the licensing issue had. Education was principally being pushed to the forefront of the national debate because of its link to the Church question. Proponents of disestablishment and disendowment argued that once the funds were set free from the Established Churches they could be applied to free education. As a result, free education was supported by Radicals who were also pushing disestablishment. Chamberlain worked to convince Gladstone to take up the education issue and make it part of the Liberal platform. He informed Gladstone that he believed most of the Scottish candidates were supportive of free education and that 'it is a subject which is daily becoming of greater importance, especially in Scotland'.⁵⁵ Gladstone replied that free education, as well as disestablishment and the reform of the House of Lords, were not 'in a state to be brought into the programme'.⁵⁶ The lack of free education in the Party platform did not stop it from becoming an important topic in Edinburgh.

The debate on free education was particularly interesting in Edinburgh because Edinburgh already had a form of free education in its seven hospitals. By the eighteenth century, Edinburgh had invested in these hospitals and had more than any

⁵⁵ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44126, f. 112-3, Chamberlain to Gladstone, 24 Oct. 1885; BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44126, f. 102, Chamberlain to Gladstone, 12 Sep. 1885.

⁵⁶ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44126, f. 104, Gladstone to Chamberlain, 14 Sept. 1885

other city outside of London, despite its small size. The most well-known of these hospitals was George Heriot's Hospital which was founded in 1659 by George Heriot who had left a substantial sum upon his death for the education of the 'poor fatherless boys' of the city.⁵⁷ By 1836, Heriot's investments were yielding such a profit that the governors were able to start twelve day schools to provide free education to the poor working class children of the city.⁵⁸ In the summer of 1885 a Government scheme was passed which turned Heriot's into a fee-paying day school. Leading up to the passage of this scheme, there were heated debates in Edinburgh because many believed that the new scheme was taking away the property of the poor who George Heriot had intended to help.⁵⁹ The movement for changes to Heriot's and other outdoor schools had been a local issue for years. McLaren had been a leading opponent of the proposed changes which reinforced his reputation as a supporter of the working class. McLaren was out of office by 1885, but he was still heavily involved in the campaign against the Bill through public speeches and writings in the press.⁶⁰ Buchanan, one of Edinburgh's two MPs at the time, led the opposition to the scheme in the House of Commons, but ultimately fell short of stopping the Bill.⁶¹

During the campaign, most of the constituents' questions on education regarded Heriot's. They wanted to know what the candidates would do if elected. The constituents were also worried about Fettes, another hospital for the poor, following Heriot's. This was one issue on which all of the candidates agreed in that they all thought that it was unfortunate that the Bill had passed. Despite their dislike of the Bill, only Costelloe wanted the Bill to be overturned saying that 'if returned to Parliament he would assist in getting one more inquiry into these endowments for the

⁵⁷ Olive Checkland, 'Education in Scotland, philanthropy and private enterprise', in Heather Holmes (ed.), *Scottish Life and Society: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology* (East Linton, 2000), 68; Alexander Law, *Education in Edinburgh in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1965), 105; Frederick W. Bedford, *History of George Heriot's Hospital with a Memoir of the Founder, and an Account of the Heriot Foundation Schools* (Edinburgh, 1872), 33 and 74–5.

⁵⁸ Checkland, 'Education in Scotland', 70; R. D. Anderson, *Education and the Scottish People 1750–1918* (Oxford, 1995), 94.

⁵⁹ Anderson, *Education and the Scottish People*, 187; R. D. Anderson, *Education and Opportunity in Victorian Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1989), 189–91; Willis Pickard, *The Member for Scotland: A Life of Duncan McLaren* (Edinburgh, 2011), 249.

⁶⁰ Pickard, *The Member for Scotland*, 249–53.

⁶¹ *The Scotsman*, 25 Jul. 1885, 7–9.

purpose of having the stolen property of the poor returned to them. (Cheers.)⁶² Raleigh only indicated that he would support it if a good measure came up against the scheme.⁶³ The remaining Liberal candidates did not like the scheme, but said that it had gone too far to be reversed.⁶⁴ Even the Conservatives, Jamieson and Napier, thought the scheme was wrong and that Heriot's needed to be returned to the 'fatherless children of the poor' as its founder had intended.⁶⁵ The candidates who addressed Fettes pledged that they would do all that they could to make sure that it remained as the founder intended.⁶⁶

In dealing with the question of free education, the candidates were divided. Both of the Conservatives and Goschen were against free education. Napier believed that free education 'was treating a freeman as if he were a beggar'.⁶⁷ Goschen argued that if free education was implemented, it would dilute the quality of education. Harrison took the middle ground on the issue, as he had done on licensing by advocating that one of the great cities should 'try the experiment' to assess how it worked before it was implemented in the whole country.⁶⁸ The other six candidates all favoured free education and most held the view that Heriot's would not matter soon because they would have free education throughout the country.⁶⁹

As with the other main questions in the 1885 election, the four elected candidates in Edinburgh were divided on the education issue as well. Both Buchanan and Wilson favoured free education, Goschen opposed it, and Harrison took a more centrist stance on the issue. The losing candidates were split along party lines. The four Liberals favoured free education while both of the Conservatives were in opposition. The candidates' positions on the education question, like the questions of disestablishment and licensing, does not reveal why a particular candidate was elected. However, it does provide insight into the importance placed on the questions and helps determine that there was not only one issue that dominated the 1885 election.

⁶² *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 8.

⁶³ *The Scotsman*, 9 Oct. 1885, 6.

⁶⁴ *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 6; 16 Oct. 1885, 6; 20 Oct. 1885, 6; 14 Nov. 1885, 6

⁶⁵ *The Scotsman*, 3 June 1885, 9; 31 Oct. 1885, 10.

⁶⁶ *The Scotsman*, 20 June 1885, 8; 16 Oct. 1885, 6; 10 Oct. 1885, 9; 20 Oct. 1885, 6; 20 Oct. 1885, 7.

⁶⁷ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1885, 10.

⁶⁸ *The Scotsman*, 10 Oct. 1885, 9; 20 Oct. 1885, 6.

⁶⁹ *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 8; 16 Oct. 1885, 6; 20 Oct. 1885, 7.

Candidates' and their backgrounds

Some historians have argued that burgh candidates had to adapt in many cases to the constituencies' political traditions in order to be successful.⁷⁰ Candidates' backgrounds and their correlation to the traditional historical identity of the constituency for which they were standing were important factors in the Victorian period, so much so that when dealing with the redistribution of seats in the Third Reform Act it was acknowledged that although equalising the constituencies based on population was desirable, it was just as important, if not more so, to maintain the historical identities of the constituencies.⁷¹ Those who argued for the latter did so because they had a local connection to the constituency they represented and wanted to maintain that connection. To determine if this notion had an effect in Edinburgh, one needs to look at the candidates' backgrounds and assess how they correlated with the political traditions of the city.

The political tradition of Edinburgh consisted of multiple aspects of the candidates' backgrounds such as Liberalism, age and experience, career, education, local connection, and religion. The political traditions of Edinburgh were used by both the candidates themselves and those who opposed them as a reason to vote for or against particular candidates. Throughout the election campaign, the candidates battled to present to the constituency a positive image of themselves that fit a traditional pattern of the old double-member constituency of Edinburgh. In some cases it was this image that was attacked. There were several complaints raised against different candidates for various reasons concerning their personal traits and experiences in an attempt to alter the image of the candidates' personal backgrounds in a negative way.

A basic overview of the main points of the candidates' backgrounds included such aspects as their career, their previous governmental experience and their age, their political ideology, as well as their local connection to the city.

⁷⁰ Lawrence, 'The dynamics of urban politics', 93.

⁷¹ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 317.

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Career</i>	<i>Experience</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Supported</i>
Buchanan	barrister/fellow	X	39	Gladstone
Goschen	businessman	X	54	Gladstone
Harrison	businessman	X	74	Gladstone
Wilson	businessman	X	50+	Gladstone
Black	publisher	X	49	
Costelloe	barrister		30	Chamberlain
Jamieson	accountant		57	Tory
Napier	Army officer		36	Tory
Raleigh	barrister/fellow		34	Chamberlain
Renton	businessman		64	Chamberlain

The above table shows the variation amongst the candidates with regards to the key aspects of their career, experience in Government, age, and where their support lay nationally. Each of these issues, in addition to local connection, were brought up during the 1885 election campaign. The following sections of this chapter seeks to determine what role if any these aspects played in the election.

The careers of the candidates

One way that the political tradition of Edinburgh was used to attack the candidates' identity was by pointing to their profession. As noted above in Table 4.2, three of the candidates were barristers, six were businessmen in one form or another, and one was an army officer. The candidates' careers were all discussed throughout the course of the campaign. Some were viewed positively, especially as the businessmen whose businesses were connected to the city as it was pointed out how many people they employed in the city. Conversely, the barristers faced the most scrutiny for their occupation.

⁷² Millar, 'Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn'; Spinner, 'Goschen, George Joachim'; *The Scotsman*, 24 Dec. 1885, 5; Committee Who Are Promoting the Requisition in Favour of Ex-Treasurer Wilson, Central Parliamentary Division of Edinburgh, *Reasons For Supporting Ex-Treasurer Wilson* (Edinburgh 1885), 1–2; *The Scotsman*, 22 Dec. 1922, 4; 30 May 1898, 6; *Glasgow Herald*, 23 Dec. 1899, 5; *Pall Mall Gazette* 22 Dec. 1899, 8; Schmitz, 'Jamieson, George Auldjo'; *The Scotsman*, 11 Mar. 1938, 10; 9 Feb. 1920, 6; Raleigh, *Annals of the Church in Scotland*, xix; *The Scotsman*, 25 Jan 1895, 4.

The three barrister candidates – Costelloe, Raleigh, and, to a lesser extent, Buchanan – were beleaguered throughout the campaign due to their employment as barristers. The dislike and mistrust of lawyers had a historical context in the politics of Edinburgh going back to the 1830s. Advocates were exempt from paying the local Annuity Tax which supplemented the local Established Churches. This rightly upset some of Edinburgh's other citizens.⁷³ Furthermore, from the First Reform Act to mid-century, the politics of the city was dominated by Whig advocates. However, the domination of party politics in Edinburgh by lawyers was not limited to the Liberal party. In his description of Conservative party organisation in the late-Victorian period, Miller writes, 'Edinburgh lawyers were neither liked nor trusted outside their own narrow circle'.⁷⁴ According to Williams, opposition to the lawyers and their power came from their adoption of candidates from outside of Edinburgh and even outside of Scotland itself: 'Many citizens began to criticize the domination by expectant lawyers and wondered if it was so natural that this "clique" should retain exclusive control'.⁷⁵ The lawyers that faced complaints in the beginning and middle of the century were local Edinburgh advocates while in 1885 the lawyers that were criticised were barristers that pursued their careers in London. The true nature of the complaints against the barristers was not solely that they were lawyers, although their career did evoke the traditional feeling of distrust that the constituency members felt toward the earlier Edinburgh advocates who fell out of political favour because they chose Englishmen, or outsiders, as the city's candidates in earlier elections. The lawyer candidates in 1885 were English barristers and were thus attacked as being outsiders trying to steal a Scottish seat. This attack for being outsiders is confirmed by the complaints publicly made against them.

The objection that the candidates were lawyers became blurred with an objection to them being outsiders. For example, at a meeting supporting the candidature of the Lord Provost, Sir George Harrison, it was said that there were 200 London barristers trying to secure a parliamentary seat in Scotland 'not because they cared about Scotland but because it would benefit them personally to have any seat in Parliament'. He went on to claim that if they were elected, they would 'put London

⁷³ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 33–4.

⁷⁴ William Miller, 'Politics in the Scottish city 1832–1982', in George Gordon (ed.) *Perspectives of the Scottish City* (Aberdeen, 1985), 184.

⁷⁵ Williams, 'Edinburgh politics', 74.

before any Scottish constituency'.⁷⁶ At a different meeting with a similar sentiment of support for Harrison, it was 'remarked that there were about 200 English lawyers waiting to get into Parliament and as many of them would get in, it was necessary that they, when they had the chance, should send local men to defend their rights'.⁷⁷ This tactic of attacking English lawyers and denouncing them as outsiders was not limited to the constituency of the South division; the Conservatives in the West deployed this tactic as well. The Chairman at a meeting held to secure the candidature of Mr Jamieson said, 'It was a strange commentary on the additional members granted to Scotland that the representatives could not be found without going to London to import the surplus stock of English barristers'.⁷⁸

The attack on the candidates for being outsiders was selective though. In a letter to *The Scotsman* from 'An Old Independent Liberal', the writer attacks all three of the barristers plus Renton, a stockbroker, for being outsiders, yet he said nothing of the lone Englishman running in Edinburgh:

The very thought of the possibility that all four might be London barristers and stockbrokers should lead thoughtful citizens to look well at the present position of matters, and to bestir themselves to prevent such a calamity overtaking the city. Local Optionists and Disestablishers, at such a crisis, are throwing consistency and everything else to the winds, that their respective shibboleths may be adopted. Just fancy Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, represented by Costelloe, Raleigh, Renton, and Buchanan. The last named, though a good Liberal, has never been associated with the city in any capacity. None of them are acquainted with its business.⁷⁹

The writer tried to justify the complaint against the lawyers by including Buchanan, but then goes on to say that he is a 'good Liberal' indicating that it is alright to vote for him even though he is a lawyer. Buchanan was the only Liberal candidate running in the West, and for that reason the writer did not want to bring opposition against him for being an outsider since his Conservative opponent, Jamieson, was a local accountant. At the same time, the writer includes Renton in the group because he is a London stockbroker, but says nothing of Goschen's employment as a London banker. The writer did reveal his true purpose by demanding that half of the city members be local men. He even writes that the two should be Harrison and Wilson

⁷⁶ *The Scotsman*, 10 Oct. 1885, 9.

⁷⁷ *The Scotsman*, 23 Nov. 1885, 9.

⁷⁸ *The Scotsman*, 22 Oct. 1885, 6.

⁷⁹ *The Scotsman*, 20 Oct 1885, 3.

leaving as the remaining MPs Buchanan, who in his words is a ‘good Liberal’, and Goschen, who is strangely absent from his letter although he was the only opponent of Costelloe.

Local connection

The concept of being opposed to a candidate based on his lack of a local connection to the constituency that they wished to represent was not unique to Edinburgh. During the Victorian period, it was to the candidates’ advantage to be able to be identified with the community and it was a definite disadvantage to be viewed as an outsider. Biagini found that being perceived as either a local or an outsider was an important factor in both the successes and failures of the early Labour candidates.⁸⁰ Having a local connection to a community could be obtained through several means including living in, having been born in, having ancestors from, owning a business or land in, or trading with the community. Any of these could qualify as a connection to the constituency and thus with the inhabitants of that constituency.

The election of local candidates was an important issue in the 1885 election in Edinburgh following the political tradition of Edinburgh. From 1841 until the by-elections after the 1880 general election, the constituents of Edinburgh had elected local men such as the senior Adam Black or Duncan McLaren who could look out for the interests of the city.⁸¹ In the first of three by-elections held between 1880 and 1885, local resident John McLaren succeeded his father as an MP for Edinburgh. Upon John McLaren's resignation, Buchanan, a Scotsman, though not from Edinburgh, was elected in 1881 briefly ending the forty year tradition. Most of the Edinburgh candidates in 1885 were aware of the importance of having a local connection to the constituency and stressed their own local connection to the constituents. If there was no local connection for the candidate to point to, he addressed the lack of such a connection and tried to make up for it in other key aspects.

⁸⁰ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 317–8 and 339–68; Derek Fraser, *Urban Politics in Victorian England: The Structure of Politics in Victorian Cities* (Leicester, 1976), 180.

⁸¹ W. G. Craig was elected in 1841, Adam Black in 1856, Charles Cowan in 1874, and Duncan McLaren in 1865.

Wilson and Harrison had no trouble in projecting their connection to the constituents. Both had recently served on the Town Council and both used this as evidence of their local connection. A group called ‘The committee who are promoting the requisition in favour of Ex-Treasurer Wilson’ put together a pamphlet in which they listed five reasons to support him of which three of these reasons addressed his local connection to Edinburgh.⁸² Another leaflet in the support of Wilson declared that ‘it was the primary duty of the division to choose the man whom they knew—to choose him from amongst themselves—and thereby make the representation true—true of themselves, and true of their political opinions’.⁸³ When Harrison was introduced to the constituency, his local connection was certainly known as he was the current Lord Provost. Still, the chairman informed the crowd of his past ten years of working for Edinburgh and said that ‘he had served the city in a way which could hardly be surpassed; he had spent a long life most honorably and usefully in promoting the best interests of Edinburgh’.⁸⁴

Some of the candidates were known in the city through other connections such as education or business. Raleigh was first introduced to the constituency by Calderwood, his former Professor, who tried to demonstrate Raleigh’s local connection by noting that he was from Edinburgh, although he had left the city for work.⁸⁵ Though he had come from Edinburgh, Raleigh still faced criticism for a lack of local connection by some constituents who felt that it was not enough:

It seems to me to be a jump from the frying-pan into the fire to take Mr Raleigh, a young English barrister, with no Parliamentary experience, after having a Q. C., with very considerable Parliamentary experience and of undoubted ability. The fact of his having been born in Edinburgh is of very little moment, as he left the city for good when a mere lad, and, on his own showing, he has paid very little or no attention to Scottish affairs since.⁸⁶

The writer attacks the image of Raleigh for being a young and inexperienced barrister who had become an outsider to his native city. Raleigh tried to counter this attack by telling his constituents that he ‘hoped they all understood that he was not a

⁸² Committee Who Are Promoting the Requisition in Favour of Ex-Treasurer Wilson, Central Parliamentary Division of Edinburgh, *Reasons For Supporting Ex-Treasurer Wilson*, 1–2.

⁸³ Anon., *Parliamentary Election*, (Edinburgh, 1885), 3.

⁸⁴ *The Scotsman*, 7 Oct. 1885, 8.

⁸⁵ *The Scotsman*, 29 Jan. 1885, 6.

⁸⁶ *The Scotsman*, 23 Mar. 1885, 3.

stranger from the south coming there of his own motive, and seeking to make this city merely a convenient stage in his own advancement'.⁸⁷

Jamieson was known for his work as one of the top accountants in the country.⁸⁸ A circular put out to promote him highlighted his local connection:

Mr Jamieson is a well-known citizen, and his conspicuous abilities and wide reputation mark him out as a gentleman well deserving the support of his fellow-citizens. His special knowledge of Scottish affairs, his firm and intelligent grasp of all questions which he handles, his power of lucid exposition, and his thorough independence of character, eminently qualify him for the honour of representing one of the divisions of the city of Edinburgh in Parliament.⁸⁹

Jamieson also attacked some candidates based on their lack of a local connection. When he first addressed the constituents he asked 'whether the representation of the urban constituencies of Scotland must henceforward be entrusted to old foggies, or to budding politicians, or to carpet-baggers'.⁹⁰ This was surely a direct attack on the barristers, one of whom was his opponent.

Black was known in Edinburgh for several reasons: his work, his term as a Council member, and for his father, the senior Adam Black, former Lord Provost. In introducing Black to the constituents before one of his speeches, the speaker told the crowd that 'Mr. Black was the only candidate who was an elector in this division, and the firm with which he was connected had for half a century or more carried on an extensive business in the ward of St. Giles, and had given employment to a very large number of working men'.⁹¹ At a different speech of Black's, someone noted that 'there could be no doubt that local men had an opportunity of knowing the wants of the city which strangers and foreigners had not. Mr Black's father was well known in Edinburgh as the representative of the city--(applause)--and Mr Black himself had served in the Town Council...'⁹² Black was a local and also had an ancestral connection to the city which he was able to invoke to constituents.

Other candidates tried to use their ancestral connection to the city to make up for their lack of a present local connection. This was attempted by both Renton and

⁸⁷ *The Scotsman*, 24 Mar. 1885, 7.

⁸⁸ Schmitz, 'Jamieson, George Auldjo'.

⁸⁹ *The Scotsman*, 13 Apr. 1885, 4.

⁹⁰ *The Scotsman*, 22 Oct. 1885, 6.

⁹¹ *The Scotsman*, 20 Nov. 1885, 5.

⁹² *The Scotsman*, 7 May 1885, 7.

Napier. A pamphlet put out by ‘the committee for promoting the election of Mr J. Hall Renton’ lists Renton’s local connections as one of the main and most important reasons to vote for him. Renton himself had left Edinburgh and moved to London where he worked as a stockbroker, a fact that was constantly pointed to by his opposition. The committee that was favourable to him listed his local claim as ‘his family's long connection with the city (his father and Grandfather having both been Merchants in Edinburgh, and Member of the Merchant Company)’.⁹³ On the other hand, Major Napier also used his family’s name as his local connection. When he was introduced to the constituency, the speaker declared that ‘for five hundred years the family had been closely associated with the city; and he believed that over the civilised world the name of Napier was well known’.⁹⁴ Renton and Napier were not alone in channelling an ancestral connection to the constituency in which they were running. Gladstone had also used the same tactic when he decided to run in Midlothian. He was born in Liverpool, but both of his parents came from Scotland. Gladstone used this local connection to his advantage when he ran in Scotland.⁹⁵

Costelloe, Buchanan, and Goschen all lacked any local connection to Edinburgh. Costelloe and Buchanan were Scotsmen, but neither was connected to the city. They did not try to use their Scottish roots as evidence of their local connection but, like Joseph Cowen in Newcastle, they still endorsed the idea that an MP should have a close relationship to the constituency he represented. Instead of using their personal identity to make a connection to the city, such as being born or carrying on business within the constituency, they used the constituency’s identity which they tried to connect it to themselves. Costelloe openly acknowledged that he was an outsider, but repeatedly proclaimed that it was more important that the constituents be represented by a Radical and not a Whig. He said, ‘Scotland and the capital of Scotland had long been associated with a robust and earnest Liberalism, and he did not think he would be far wrong in supposing that there in the cradle of Scottish history, and the centre of the working population of Edinburgh, a reasonable Radical ought to be at home’.⁹⁶ Buchanan also had no real connection to Edinburgh besides

⁹³ Committee for Promoting the Election of Mr J. Hall Renton, *To the Electors of the Central Division of Edinburgh. Mr Hall Renton’s Candidature* (Edinburgh, 1885), 1.

⁹⁴ *The Scotsman*, 31 Oct. 1885, 10.

⁹⁵ Brooks, ‘Gladstone and Midlothian’, 58.

⁹⁶ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 317; *The Scotsman*, 17 Oct. 1885, 10.

having had represented it for the four years preceding the 1885 election. He told his constituents that Scotland, especially the burghs, and Edinburgh had a tradition of the last half-century of Liberalism and that it was the constituents' 'duty' to ensure that it remains so.⁹⁷ Buchanan also told his constituents that 'if he were returned for this constituency he should consider himself as a Member for Edinburgh'; therefore, he, like Cowen, felt that he was a representative of the burgh and not of the individual constituents.⁹⁸ These two things made up for the fact that he was an outsider. Buchanan's approach worked better than Costelloe's because he projected that he cared for Edinburgh and that he would be a continuation of Edinburgh's historical identity to Liberalism seeing that he was the only Liberal running for election in that district.

While Buchanan and Costelloe attempted to make up for their lack of a local connection, Goschen, the only Englishman running in Edinburgh, did not. Like Buchanan and Costelloe, Goschen had no local connection to speak of, yet he was the only candidate to completely avoid the local connection issue. It is interesting to note that the two barristers and Renton, two of which had some form of a connection to the city, were attacked for being outsiders while Goschen was not. The reasoning for Goschen's exemption from the criticism was explained at a meeting held to secure the candidature of Harrison where Mr Elliot said 'that justice was not done to Scotland in Parliament' and would not change 'unless they took care to send citizens to attend to their interest, and not to allow their representation to get into the hands of strangers and people from a distance'.⁹⁹ Elliot then goes on to exempt Goschen from this because of his experience. Elliot also objected to 'young men who had no interest in Scotland'.¹⁰⁰ Elliot's argument is rational in that for Scotland to be governed better, it would be wiser to send men to Parliament that had a vested interest in Scotland. However, his method of weighing the candidates' interests in Scotland appears to be flawed. He believed that Goschen, a man in his mid-fifties who has never lived in Scotland, has more interest in the country than younger men who were raised, educated, and attended university in Scotland. This is not the case

⁹⁷ *The Scotsman*, 17 Oct. 1885, 10.

⁹⁸ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 317; *The Scotsman*, 21 Oct. 1885, 7.

⁹⁹ *The Scotsman*, 7 Oct. 1885, 8.

¹⁰⁰ *The Scotsman*, 7 Oct. 1885, 8.

though as he indicated it was Goschen's age and experience that nullified his lack of a local connection.

Age and experience

Discussion of candidates' age and experience took place in the campaigns of several candidates', not just regarding Goschen, as mentioned above. There was a significant amount of discussion regarding the importance of the candidates' experience in Government affairs or lack thereof. Age and experience were not just viewed as good attributes for a candidate to have in Edinburgh, but throughout Scotland where the constituencies had a tradition of having 'undue respect for age and experience, and a weakness for long pedigrees'.¹⁰¹ Electing MPs who had Government experience was a tradition in Edinburgh. Though they had not been very successful at electing experienced MPs, they did elect such experienced men as T. B. Macaulay and Samuel D. Waddy. Waddy was elected in 1882 in the third by-election between the 1880 and the 1885 general elections and he was a well-known English politician and Queens Counsel who had already sat in Parliament for Barnstaple and Sheffield.¹⁰² In the lead-up to the 1885 general election, Waddy and Buchanan held a joint meeting where the constituents asked both men their position on various issues. Buchanan took questions from the crowd first and they were satisfied with his responses. Waddy's responses, however, caused an uproar amongst the crowd. Shortly after the meeting Waddy announced that he would seek a parliamentary seat in London because it was unlikely that he would be re-elected.¹⁰³ Despite this, in 1885 some Edinburgh constituents still wanted 'to get a man of Imperial rather than local reputation as their representative' because the political image of the constituency rested to some degree upon the MP that represented it.¹⁰⁴

Age and experience in government appears to have been on the minds of the voters in 1885. Of the ten candidates, half were over the age of fifty, as were the majority of the MPs in other great cities, and half had prior experience in government whether it was local or parliamentary.¹⁰⁵ Although usually positive, experience was

¹⁰¹ Hanham, *Elections and Party Management*, 162.

¹⁰² Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832-1885* (London, 1977), 539-40.

¹⁰³ *Glasgow Herald*, 9 Jan. 1885, 8; *York Herald*, 28 Feb. 1885, 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Glasgow Herald*, 25 Jan. 1885, 4; Fraser, *Urban Politics in Victorian England*, 182-3.

¹⁰⁵ Hanham, *Elections and Party Management*, 162.

not always a good trait to have. For example, in the 1885 election in Paisley, the sitting Lord Provost was beaten mainly due to his record, while the victor, a well known local merchant, had no record to defend and thus had an advantage in this race.¹⁰⁶ In Edinburgh, however, age, and more so experience, are certainly contributing factors to the election as indicated by a comment made by a supporter introducing Harrison to the constituency who said that he did not believe ‘that the city of Edinburgh should be used as a nursery for the training of Parliamentary infants’.¹⁰⁷

Of the four elected candidates in Edinburgh, all had prior favourable government experience and three were over the age of fifty. Buchanan and Goschen were the only two candidates who had previously been elected to Parliament and both won their elections in 1885. Buchanan, the Liberal candidate in the West, although only thirty-nine had been an MP for the city of Edinburgh for four years. On the other hand, his Conservative opponent, Jamieson, was in his mid fifties and had plenty of experience in business, but lacked any experience in government. In the East district, Goschen was in his mid-fifties and had the most experience in government of all the candidates in Edinburgh having first been elected to Parliament for the city of London in 1863.¹⁰⁸ His opponent, Costelloe, was a young barrister in London with little experience, even outside of politics. The other two candidates elected in 1885, Harrison and Wilson, both had long and prestigious careers in municipal government and, as a result, were well known and respected in the burgh’s local affairs. Harrison was in his seventies and was just topping off his long career in municipal politics by finishing his term as Lord Provost of Edinburgh while his opponent, Raleigh, was similar to Costelloe as he too was a young barrister in London with no prior experience in government. Wilson, a retiree from municipal politics, had the least amount of experience among the four newly elected MPs. He had moved through the ranks of the Edinburgh Town Council and had most recently been the Treasurer. Of Wilson’s opponents, Napier was the youngest at thirty-six, Black was forty-nine years of age, and Renton was the oldest losing candidate at sixty-four. Each of these three had varying levels of experience. Napier had no

¹⁰⁶ Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, 80.

¹⁰⁷ *The Scotsman*, 7 Oct. 1885, 8.

¹⁰⁸ Spinner, ‘Goschen, George Joachim’.

political experience, but he had government experience as an Army officer. Renton had no government experience, but he had run twice for parliamentary office. Black had the most experience among all of the losing candidates in any of the four parliamentary districts in Edinburgh as he had been elected to one term as a Town Councillor for the burgh.¹⁰⁹

Traditionally, the constituency of Edinburgh elected two different types of MPs, one local and one national. The local was wanted to look out for the interests of the city while the constituents wanted the other MP to be a well-known and experienced political figure that could bring prestige to the city. Edinburgh was not alone in believing that this makeup of MPs was in the best interest of their city; some constituents in Leeds also wanted both types to represent them in the early Victorian period.¹¹⁰ There were still other political traditions of the city that were important in 1885 such as the religious backgrounds of the candidates.

Religion

Religion was a rarely discussed topic outside of the candidates' views on disestablishment. The candidates' personal beliefs were not a factor in the campaign with the lone exception of the East division where both Costelloe and Goschen dealt with this question. Late Victorian Edinburgh, especially the 1880s, is seen as somewhat open minded to Catholics compared to the rest of Scotland. In his studies of anti-Catholicism in Scotland, Gallagher pointed to the election of Canon Edward Hannan, a parish priest, as deputy chairman of the Edinburgh school board and to Charles Cooper, a Catholic, the editor of *The Scotsman*, as evidence for this view.¹¹¹ Regardless of the achievements by these two Catholics in Edinburgh, Costelloe was attacked for being a Catholic by the Protestant National Alliance in 1885. This alliance put out a pamphlet 'to the Protestant Electors' in the East division which began by appealing to the tradition of the city: 'Fellow Electors – A crisis in the history of our city has arisen in that a Roman Catholic is pressing to be elected as

¹⁰⁹ *The Scotsman*, 30 May 1898, 6.

¹¹⁰ Fraser, *Urban Politics in Victorian England*, 182.

¹¹¹ Tom Gallagher, *Edinburgh Divided: John Cormack and No Popery in the 1930s* (Edinburgh, 1987), 11; Tom Gallagher, *Glasgow: The Uneasy Peace, Religious Tension and Modern Scotland* (Manchester, 1987), 23. According to Anderson in *Education and the Scottish People*, 166–7, religious minorities could be elected because each voter had a number of votes equal to the number of members on the board and they could cast all of their votes for a single candidate.

your Representative in Parliament.’ The pamphlet then went on to claim that the Papacy was trying to regain ‘supreme authority’ over the Government and that a Catholic MP could not be loyal to a party or the country because their loyalty lay with the Pope. The pamphlet closed by pointing to the tradition of the city having only been represented by Protestants and asked the electors:

To resist to the utmost the return of such a man to Parliament as one of the representatives of the capital of Scotland, is a sacred duty binding on every true Protestant and every loyal subject. We plead with you to put the question—would it not be a perpetual disgrace for the citizens of the city of Knox, on any plea whatever, to send a Roman Catholic to Parliament as their representative?¹¹²

This plea to the historical identity of the city affected some of the constituents. At the meeting of the Edinburgh East Liberal Association which was held to nominate Costelloe, one constituent said that even though he favoured the positions held by Costelloe, ‘He, for one, would never support a Roman Catholic representative for Edinburgh.’ This position was moved as an amendment, but no one came forward to second the motion. Costelloe was thus nominated as a candidate for the East division.¹¹³

Goschen also faced attacks because of religion. He defended himself at one of his speeches saying that supporters of Costelloe had been falsely stating that he was a Jew and that he held the Jewish faith.¹¹⁴ Despite Goschen’s attempt to correct this, it appears that they were successful in spreading this falsehood. During a speech by Major Napier in which he was discussing the Egyptian War, he said it was ‘an attempt on the part of the Liberals to crush a free people in order to support a lot of money-lending Jews’ at which someone in the audience shouted ‘Goschen’.¹¹⁵ This exemplified that not only was Goschen perceived to be Jewish by some, but that common stereotypes of Jews were accepted.¹¹⁶ Since Jews, like the Irish, were often viewed as un-British, the supporters of Costelloe hoped that by creating doubt about Goschen’s religion, it would negate the issue of Costelloe’s religion and its break

¹¹² J. Moir Porteous, *To the Protestant Electors of the Eastern Division of the City of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1885), 3.

¹¹³ *The Scotsman*, 3 Oct. 1885, 7.

¹¹⁴ *The Scotsman*, 4 Nov. 1885, 8.

¹¹⁵ *The Scotsman*, 18 Nov. 1885, 8.

¹¹⁶ Colin Holmes, ‘Alexander Ratcliffe: militant Protestant and anti-Semite’, in Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lann (eds), *Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in Britain* (Manchester, 1989), 203.

from the Protestant tradition of the constituency. This would therefore mean that the religious backgrounds of the candidates would cease to be a dividing issue among the voters.¹¹⁷

Liberalism: Chamberlain vs. Gladstone

The principal political tradition in Edinburgh could be easily overlooked by historians because it is so obvious: the city's long-standing tradition of Liberalism. Since the passage of the First Reform Act, Liberals had been elected in every election and Conservative candidates had not even come close to being elected during that time.¹¹⁸ While the political tradition of Edinburgh had obviously been Liberal, by 1885 the Liberal party had become polarised. On one side were the Whigs led by Hartington and on the other were the Radicals with men like Chamberlain. Falling in the middle of these two sides politically was Gladstone who was theoretically holding the whole Party together because both groups wanted to have him on their side.¹¹⁹ In the *Edinburgh Evening News* there was an article describing the Liberal party at that time titled 'The Old Umbrella' in which the author claimed that the umbrella was wide enough to cover both Goschen and Chamberlain and that with the downpour of the general election they all needed to get under the umbrella.¹²⁰ Gladstone, as the leader of the Liberal party and in his position of holding the party together, was holding that umbrella.

Chamberlain became ambitious and had high expectations in 1885 due to the passage of the Third Reform Act. He told Gladstone that these reforms would bring about 'the greatest revolution this country has under gone'.¹²¹ To bring about this great revolution, Chamberlain had several objectives that stemmed from these new reforms. He wanted to form the debate around Radical ideas, he wanted to place himself as the outright leader of the Radical wing of the Liberal party, and he wanted the Radicals to pick up more seats than the Whigs which would put them in a

¹¹⁷ Tony Kushner, 'The paradox of prejudice: the impact of organised anti-Semitism in Britain during an anti-Nazi war', in Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lann (eds), *Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in Britain* (Manchester, 1989), 80; Gallagher, *Glasgow*, 135.

¹¹⁸ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832-1885* (London, 1977), 539-40.

¹¹⁹ Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery*, 106.

¹²⁰ *Edinburgh Evening News*, 27 Feb. 1885, 2.

¹²¹ Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain*, 179, quoting Chamberlain to Gladstone, 28 Dec. 1884, Gladstone papers, BL Add. MS 44126.

position to take control of the party once Gladstone stepped down. In order to shape the debate of the election campaign, Chamberlain presented a Radical programme which became known as the 'unauthorised programme', so called because neither Chamberlain nor his programme had authority over the Liberal party. The 'unauthorised programme' consisted of several proposed reforms, some of which became particularly important in Edinburgh during the 1885 election such as disestablishment and free education.

Chamberlain had already laid the groundwork for his programme through a series of articles released throughout the previous two years in the *Fortnightly Review*. However, once the Third Reform Act was passed he was inspired by the opportunity presented by the Act to persuade the newly enfranchised county voters to take up the Radical cause and openly campaigned for the programme beginning with three speeches he gave in January 1885.¹²² If the Radicals could gain the support of the newly enfranchised county voters, they would very likely take power of the Liberal party itself. Chamberlain determined that one of the best ways to inspire the newly enfranchised was to carry out a speaking tour in order to get the message of the 'unauthorised programme' out to the people. In the autumn, Chamberlain went on the road making a few stops in England before continuing on to Scotland. His tour cut right through the middle of Scotland with stops at Glasgow and Inverness. The speeches helped focus the national spotlight on Chamberlain by enhancing his profile and his possible future takeover of the leadership of the Liberal party, especially in Scotland.¹²³

Through his speaking tour, Chamberlain gained popularity in the country and thus managed to influence some of the candidates in Edinburgh. Costelloe, Raleigh, and Renton all embraced Chamberlain's 'unauthorised program' in speeches they gave while campaigning in Edinburgh. These three candidates not only supported Chamberlain's platform, but they overtly praised him as well. Costelloe had the closest relationship with Chamberlain of any of the candidates in Edinburgh and was believed to have been sent to East Edinburgh to challenge Goschen on Chamberlain's

¹²² Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain*, 184–5; Michael Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism: The Reconstruction of Liberal Policy in Britain 1885–94* (Brighton, 1975), 7–9; Dunbabin, 'Electoral reforms', 113.

¹²³ Ewen A. Cameron, "'A far cry to London': Joseph Chamberlain in Inverness, September 1885", *The Innes Review*, 57 (2006), 37.

wish.¹²⁴ Chamberlain was in contact with the chairman of Costelloe's election in Edinburgh, but how much involvement he had is unknown.¹²⁵ During the election Gladstone wrote to Chamberlain about his involvement in the race and told him that Liberal leaders should not meddle in the contest between two Liberals. After the election Gladstone even wrote to both Hartington and Goschen to express his joy in Goschen's victory because of the conduct of Chamberlain toward Goschen.¹²⁶

The relationship between Costelloe and Chamberlain goes beyond Costelloe running against Goschen. At a speech Costelloe delivered in Glasgow as a candidate for the St. Rollox district, Chamberlain sent a letter of apology for being absent and commented that while he did not want to 'interfere' with parliamentary divisions he was not connected to, 'he would be glad to see Mr. Costelloe elected for any division to which he might be invited by the Liberal party'.¹²⁷ Subsequently, when Slone and the rest of the Edinburgh East Liberal Association Executive needed someone to run against Goschen, they found Costelloe willing to move his unsuccessful candidacy in Glasgow to Edinburgh.

Slone and the Executive invited Costelloe to run as a candidate in Edinburgh due to his Radical views and his ties to Chamberlain. They wanted someone who was very Radical to challenge the candidacy of Goschen who was an ultra-Whig. Before his invitation to become a candidate in the East division, Costelloe was invited to speak to the constituents of the division. In that speech he pressed the issue of the next Parliament's programme, indicating that it was extremely important and that the 'programme had to some extent been prepared for it already, in the first place, by those admirable, masterly, vigorous, and high-minded statements of policy which had fallen from Mr. Chamberlain in his recent speeches'.¹²⁸ Three days later Costelloe gave a speech in Hamilton in which he declared, 'The real contest would

¹²⁴ Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, 19.

¹²⁵ BL, Dilke Papers, MSS. 43887, f. 193 Chamberlain to Dilke, 25 Oct. 1885.

¹²⁶ UBL, Chamberlain Papers, JC5/34/45, Gladstone to Chamberlain, 8 Nov. 1885; BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44126, f. 121-2, Chamberlain to Gladstone, 7 Nov. 1885; H. G. C. Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries: With Cabinet Minutes and Prime-Ministerial Correspondence, Volume XI July 1883-December 1886* (Oxford, 1990), 438, quoting Gladstone to Lord Hartington, 1 December 1885, Chatsworth MSS 340. 1839; BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44161, f. 318-9, Gladstone to Goschen, 26 Nov. 1885.

¹²⁷ *The Scotsman*, 5 Sep. 1885, 9.

¹²⁸ *The Scotsman*, 25 Sep. 1885, 7.

no longer be between Whig and Tory, but much more between Radical and Whig'.¹²⁹ He went on to say that the new changes to the electorate would result in a 'distinctively Radical shade' and that the 'Moderate Liberals' were holding back the efforts of Chamberlain.¹³⁰ With this statement, he asserted that Chamberlain was trying to lead the Party forward, but was being held back by the Whigs and Goschen was one of the most influential Whigs in the Liberal party. The combination of Costelloe's overt support of Chamberlain's policy, his willingness to fight against moderate Liberals, and Chamberlain's support of Costelloe made him a good choice for the Radicals in charge of the Edinburgh East Liberal Association. By the first of October, the Executive of the Edinburgh East Liberal Association had been in contact with Costelloe to discuss his candidacy in the district.¹³¹ In picking Costelloe to run against Goschen it perpetuated the feud between Chamberlain and Goschen and also helped to solidify the fight between the Radicals and the Whigs.

Costelloe did not shy away from the fact that he was in East Edinburgh fighting Whiggery. Instead, he openly embraced the fight. He told his constituents that voting for him was 'to declare with a voice that would be heard throughout the nation, and whose meaning could not be explained away, that the gospel of the Whigs was out of date—(cheers and hisses)—and that the day of a frank, courageous, and clear-sighted Radicalism was come'.¹³² Costelloe even went as far as saying that he was opposing Goschen, 'because he knew that the time had come when the battle of principles must be fought amongst those who still took shelter under the Liberal name, and that the constituencies should have an opportunity of saying whether the Liberalism of the new democracy should be Radical or Whig'.¹³³ Such statements reveal that Costelloe's main reason for running in the district was because he opposed Goschen and the Whigs.

Raleigh also voiced his support and admiration of Chamberlain. In one instance when speaking about the Heriot's scheme Raleigh said, 'Unless a man like Mr Chamberlain took it up, it would be almost impossible to get the House of

¹²⁹ *The Scotsman*, 28 Sep. 1885, 6.

¹³⁰ *The Scotsman*, 28 Sep. 1885, 6.

¹³¹ *The Scotsman*, 1 Oct. 1885, 4.

¹³² *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 8.

¹³³ *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 8.

Commons to reverse the mistake in regard to that fund'.¹³⁴ However, this blatantly high regard of Chamberlain's power and position in British politics was not typical in Raleigh's speeches. Raleigh's references to Chamberlain were usually in a much more reserved fashion than statements made by the other two candidates, Costelloe and Renton, in Edinburgh who also vocally supported Chamberlain. For example, Raleigh told his constituents in a speech that he believed social questions would take up a considerable amount of the next Parliament's time and 'in the recent speeches of Mr Chamberlain-(cheers)-they had abundant proof that public discussion would be concentrated for a long time to come upon the inequalities and defects of their social system'.¹³⁵ Raleigh proceeded to make it clear that he did not subscribe to all of Chamberlain's 'theories' or 'remedies'.¹³⁶ He then closed out his speech by praising the 'good Radical programme for the next Parliament' and defending Chamberlain's proposal for local government officials to have power to purchase land.¹³⁷

This back and forth on Chamberlain is put into perspective by Raleigh's own reflection on the campaign in which he says that he 'had to make himself out as a Radical' and that the temperance and home rule advocates were making him uncomfortable.¹³⁸ Raleigh admitted that he also 'did not exactly welcome Mr Chamberlain's "unauthorised programme"'.¹³⁹ With such statements, Raleigh reveals that he falsely presented himself to the constituents. He probably did so more to please his advisor, Professor Calderwood, rather than the constituents themselves. Whether he did so because he knew that Calderwood supported Chamberlain and his 'unauthorised programme' or because Calderwood advised him to do so is unclear. Raleigh more than likely felt a need to subscribe to a similar political view because he was Calderwood's former student and Calderwood was the person who opened the door to the constituency for him. In 1885 Raleigh appeared to be almost a proxy for Calderwood himself.

In several of Renton's speeches, he too invoked Chamberlain's name. Renton told one audience that he held the same views as Chamberlain on local

¹³⁴ *The Scotsman*, 10 Oct. 1885, 9.

¹³⁵ *The Scotsman*, 9 Oct. 1885, 6.

¹³⁶ *The Scotsman*, 9 Oct. 1885, 6.

¹³⁷ *The Scotsman*, 9 Oct. 1885, 6.

¹³⁸ Raleigh, *Annals of the Church in Scotland*, xx.

¹³⁹ Raleigh, *Annals of the Church in Scotland*, xx.

government.¹⁴⁰ He even prefaced his answers on issues such as the land question by stating Chamberlain's opinion and solution regarding the subject before going on to endorse the same thought and action. His support of Chamberlain can be summed up by his statement that Chamberlain was 'a man for whom he had very high regard, and whose principles in the main he might say he thoroughly adopted'.¹⁴¹ It may have been better for Renton, as well as Costelloe and Raleigh, if they had only expressed their support of Chamberlain's 'unauthorised programme' instead of their support of him as leader of the Party. For example, speaking on Gladstone's 1885 election manifesto Costelloe said:

"the family umbrella" perfectly characterised it. (Cheers.) It formulated a programme sufficiently wide to embrace the Whigs, and yet sufficiently progressive to allow scope to the pioneers of progress. When Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke were cordially accepting the manifesto Mr. Goschen was hurrying up from the opposite direction to put his foot on the line. (Laughter).¹⁴²

This statement supports the notion of Radicals fighting Whigs for a more progressive Liberal party. At the end of the speech, a resolution was passed 'that this meeting cordially approves and adopts the political programme and policy formulated by Mr. Chamberlain' not that of Gladstone 'and resolves that Mr. Costelloe is a fit and proper person to assist in carrying out the same, and to represent this division in the people's Parliament.'¹⁴³ Even though Costelloe did not explicitly endorse pushing Gladstone's policy aside in favour of Chamberlain's programme, he did not dispute the resolution passed in his favour.

Renton, on the other hand, expressed his explicit support of Chamberlain as the leader of the Liberal party. Although he did not say that Chamberlain should be the leader at that moment, he did not indicate how long he should wait to take over. In a speech to his constituents, Renton spoke about this:

He was glad to think he [Gladstone] was going once more to buckle on his armour, and that the place in which he would appear in his full strength would be Mid-Lothian. (Hear, hear and loud applause.) They must be looking around, he added, and seeing who were the public men who now occupied a prominent position in this country with reference to who would be likely to succeed Mr Gladstone. He, for one, had been carefully reading the various

¹⁴⁰ *The Scotsman*, 16 Oct. 1885, 6.

¹⁴¹ *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 8.

¹⁴² *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 8.

¹⁴³ *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 8.

speeches that had been delivered lately by prominent politicians, and he confessed that if there was one man more than another to whom he should be disposed to entrust the guidance of this country, and to look upon as the future leader of the Liberal party, it was the man he named before – Mr Chamberlain. (Loud and prolonged applause.)¹⁴⁴

With this Renton left no doubt in the minds of his constituents that he was a follower of Chamberlain.

The support of Chamberlain's 'unauthorised programme' surely energised the Radicals in the constituency while having an adverse affect upon the Whigs, but as for the voters who were undecided about the candidates, the praise of Chamberlain and his programme was probably not enough to turn them against a Whig candidate on its own. Chamberlain did not want to be seen as a complete opposite to Gladstone and believed it to be 'undesirable to have even the remains of his tremendous influence against us'.¹⁴⁵ Once the Radical candidates in Edinburgh endorsed Chamberlain as the future leader of the Liberal party and declared that, not only did they support his policy, but they did so over Gladstone's own, they lost support because the name of Gladstone was an important factor in the city, as Gray suggested in his work on Edinburgh.¹⁴⁶ The three candidates' strategies of focussing on Chamberlain and his ideas could have been considered attacks upon the traditional brand of Liberalism which was dependent on Gladstone.

There were other candidates who tried to use Gladstone to their advantage. Wilson, Harrison, and Buchanan all knew the benefit of being identified with Gladstone and displayed their connection to him to their constituents. Wilson did not have a personal connection to Gladstone, but his committee still listed that he was a 'warm and consistent supporter of Mr Gladstone' as one of the five reasons to vote for him.¹⁴⁷ Harrison was noted by his supporters as having helped get Gladstone elected to his seat in Mid-Lothian and as being 'personally known' to Gladstone.¹⁴⁸ Buchanan commented on the effect that Gladstone's appearance had on the workers

¹⁴⁴ *The Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1885, 8.

¹⁴⁵ Cameron, "A far cry to London", 37, quoting University of Birmingham Library, Joseph Chamberlain Papers, JC5/16/108, Chamberlain to Collings, 20 Sep. 1885.

¹⁴⁶ Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy*, 161, quoting *Reformer*, 26. Sept., 1868, T. C. Minutes, 22 July 1879, and J. Vincent, *The Formation of the Liberal Party* (1966), pt. II, 216–17, 233–4.

¹⁴⁷ Committee Who Are Promoting the Requisition in Favour of Ex-Treasurer Wilson, Central Parliamentary Division of Edinburgh, *Reasons For Supporting Ex-Treasurer Wilson*, 1.

¹⁴⁸ *The Scotsman*, 8 Oct. 1885, 6; 10 Oct. 1885, 9.

in 1880 and asked him to make an appearance in the West district in 1885 to help him in his race.¹⁴⁹ Goschen, whose connection to Gladstone was well known since he was a cabinet member, was also aware of Gladstone's effect on the city. He was worried about being overshadowed by Gladstone in Edinburgh. Goschen wrote to Rosebery in order to plan his visit around Gladstone's.¹⁵⁰ Gladstone's effect on some of the citizens of Edinburgh is recorded in this poem by David Drysdale:

What I felt and thought on seeing
Mr Gladstone's arrival in Edinburgh

My heart was glad when I set out,
To see the Grand Old Man,
Although my breath was very short,
My hair as white's the swan.

And when the Grand Old Man appeared,
Then every head was bared,
I felt that I was like to cry,
'Tis truth I have declared.

I never saw such hearty crowds,
Nor heard such loud huzzas,
All hats were flung into the air,
Midst thunders of applause.

I saw upon some strong men's cheeks,
The tears were trickling down,
In vain tried many stalwart men
To keep emotion down.

I stood beside some working men,
Their cries did rend the air
And when their chief was fairly past,
They breathed this earnest prayer.

¹⁴⁹ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44493, ff. 42–4, Buchanan to Gladstone, Nov. 5 1885.

¹⁵⁰ NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS. 10083, ff. 267–8, Goschen to Rosebery, 9 Sep. 1885.

“May God protect that good old man,
“And spare him to us long,
“Aye ready to defend the right,
“And to denounce the wrong.”

I then began to hurry home,
That was not very fast,
Right glad I’d seen the Brave Old Man,
Before I breathed my last.¹⁵¹

From this testament, one can see the benefit of a candidate being perceived as an ally of Gladstone’s and the drawback if a candidate was viewed as an opponent of him.

Conclusion

The attention generated by the questions of licensing and education, coupled with the local importance placed on the biographies of the candidates reveals that disestablishment, though an important aspect of the election, did not dominate the election in Edinburgh. Moreover, the idea of historical identity and tradition played a significant role in electing each of the candidates in Edinburgh during the 1885 election. For all the questions that divided the candidates – licensing, education, background, liberalism, and, the Church question – the one commonality all of the newly elected MPs shared was that they fit into the tradition of the city or how the constituents wanted the city’s tradition to be perceived. The contest in the East was simple: both candidates were outsiders, but Costelloe was seen as young and inexperienced compared to Goschen who was viewed as an experienced, high-ranking Statesman who could bring his ‘Imperial reputation’ to Edinburgh.¹⁵² The race in the South was also rather straightforward as it was a choice between the young and inexperienced Raleigh who had been branded as an outsider since he had left the city, and Harrison, a very experienced local politician. The race in the West was slightly more complicated as it was between Jamieson, a well-known local man,

¹⁵¹ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44493, f. 78, David Drysdale, 13 Nov. 1885.

¹⁵² *Glasgow Herald*, 24 Jan. 1885, 4.

and Buchanan, a young, but experienced outsider. Buchanan was in a tough race because the West was the wealthiest district in the city and therefore contained the most Tories and Whigs. He made a strong plea that he would continue to represent the whole burgh and reminded his constituents of the city's tradition of liberalism. The Central division's race was even less straightforward. Two of the candidates, Renton and Napier, did not have a viable connection to the city or any relevant experience while both Wilson and Black were locals who had some experience in government. Black had only one term as a Town Councilman and was known from his father whilst Wilson had rose through the ranks of the Town Council to become the treasurer and as a result was well known and liked.

A consequence of the Third Reform Act was the breakup of the large cities' historical identities. In the pursuit of equalising parliamentary districts, the cities were divided into single-member constituencies. This led to the new districts' development of political identities unique to that district, rather than the city as a whole. Lawrence points to several examples of this and concludes that after 1885 no one party could dominate the cities.¹⁵³ In 1885, Edinburgh as a whole was able to hold onto its historical identity despite the break-up. The divisions among some of the voters were brought to the forefront of the election due in large part to the new caucuses that were established upon the splitting up of the city. One could argue that the city was split because it elected both Radicals and Whigs, but it has been established that they were elected based on the historical political identity of Edinburgh. This was the last election in which the Liberal dominance was maintained. Moving beyond the 1885 election the city faced a new test to its historical political identity in the question of Irish Home Rule.

¹⁵³ Lawrence, in 'The dynamics of urban politics', 83, points to Unionist Birmingham and Tory Liverpool as exceptions to this.

CHAPTER FIVE

Edinburgh Liberal Associations and the 1886 Election

The year following the 1885 general election saw the introduction of new legislation pertaining to the future of Ireland. With the introduction of Irish Home Rule, a great strain was placed upon the Liberal party, both nationally and locally, which ultimately led to a split within the Party. This split, between Home Rule and Unionist Liberals, has been well documented by historians; however, the focus has traditionally been on high politics with more attention placed on national political figures and national associations. There has been little focus on how the local political figures, and especially the local Associations, reacted to the question of Irish Home Rule. Though Catriona Macdonald has explored the local reaction in Paisley and both Catriona Burness and John McCaffrey have written about the local reaction in Glasgow, the local impact in Scotland's capital city has largely been ignored with the exception of the reactions of a few of the local elite.¹ This chapter aims to understand the impact of the introduction of Irish Home Rule on the local politics and Liberal Associations of Edinburgh.

Based on the election results, the 1885 election was very favourable to the Liberal party in Scotland. The Liberals won 62 of the 72 parliamentary seats.² Be that as it may, the Liberal party suffered greatly at the hands of internal fighting which

¹ Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, 84–91; Catriona Burness, *Strange Associations*, 44–68; McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 47–71; Savage, 'Scottish politics', 131–2, Savage gives a brief overview of a few Liberal Associations movements conserving Irish Home Rule; Hutchison, *A Political History*, 160–4, Hutchison addresses the actions of Calderwood and McLaren in regards to Irish Home Rule.

² Vincent and Stenton, *McCalmont's Parliamentary Poll Book*, 273.

caused the unity of the party to be weakened. As mentioned in chapter two, there were twenty-eight double candidacies during the 1885 election on the Liberal side.³ Most of these were brought on by the shift to single-member constituencies through the reforms of the Third Reform Act which enabled Whig and Radical candidates to fight directly against one another in a constituency for the supremacy of liberalism.

In Edinburgh the local Liberal Associations were also injured due to the infighting that took place during the 1885 general election. Edinburgh gained two seats when it was divided into four individual parliamentary districts as a result of the implementation of the Third Reform Act. In order to cope with these changes, the local Liberal Association decided to also divide itself into four single associations, one for each of the four new parliamentary districts. During this process the Radical section of the local Liberals took control of each of the four newly created Liberal Associations. This resulted in all four of the Liberal Associations supporting parliamentary candidates that held similar advanced views on the leading questions in the 1885 election. The legitimacy that the endorsement of the Liberal Association was supposed to bring to the official Liberal candidate was called into question by the Liberal opposition because of this one-sided support. If any of the Associations had been controlled by Whigs or had supported a Whig in the election, it would have made it difficult for that wing of the Party to undermine the legitimacy of the Associations because the Association that they controlled might have had its legitimacy called into question as well.⁴

This feud among the local Liberals became worse with the result of the election because only one of the official Liberal candidates won his race. Consequently, in early 1886 there was another fight for control of the local Liberal Associations in Edinburgh. This fight led to the breakup of some of the local Liberal Associations, largely based on the ideological differences between the Whigs and Radicals. However, in the 1886 election the main question to cause a divide amongst the Liberals was very different than the questions of disestablishment or local licensing which were prominent questions in 1885. The Irish Home Rule question did not remain in the Whig versus Radical framework as the other questions had

³ Savage, 'Scottish politics', 118.

⁴ For a more detailed description on how the Radicals were able to take control of the Associations, see chapter two.

done because it affected members of both wings in the same way. Irish Home Rule caused a situation where Whigs and Radicals, who had just been in opposition to one another, worked together against other Whigs and Radicals with whom they may have just been allied against.

A renewed fight for legitimacy

The legitimacy of the four Edinburgh Liberal Associations was further hindered by the outcome of the 1885 election. Buchanan, who was elected for the Edinburgh West seat, was the only successful candidate endorsed by a local Liberal Association in Edinburgh. He was also the only Liberal candidate in Edinburgh that did not have an independent Liberal running against him. The other three candidates were endorsed by their local Liberal Associations and lost their races to independent Liberals. This outcome resulted in the failure of the Liberal Associations which were set up to combine the Liberal opinion of the district and then place that voting bloc of members behind one officially nominated candidate. The failure of the Liberal Associations, and in such a predominantly Liberal district, led the legitimacy of the Association to be called into question. The Liberal Associations in the Central, South, and East districts had an unofficial mandate placed on their legitimacy due to the loss of their nominated candidates to independent Liberals. Shortly after the 1885 election all three of the Liberal Associations whose endorsed candidates lost to independent Liberals had to fight to maintain their legitimacy within their districts. In both the Central and South districts, committee members of the winning independent Liberal candidates attempted to reorganise the Liberals in their respective parliamentary districts. Although both of the committees claimed that they were trying to reunite the Liberals in their districts so that there would be a cohesive liberal thought and vote in the districts, which appears to be a very noble position, their true objective was to secure the legitimacy of a parliamentary Liberal association for themselves.

Rosebery expressed his concern about the division that took place during the 1885 campaign and his desire to unite the Liberals in the local parliamentary district. At the Scottish Liberal Association's annual meeting in February the unification of

the Liberals dominated Rosebery's statement. In a letter to the Association Rosebery wrote:

Almost all our Liberal Association require complete reorganisation, if not reconstruction, together with a fair presentation of the districts and a clear definition of their duties. We have much to learn yet – and, perhaps, from some bitter experience – before we can arrive at a satisfactory solution of these difficult problems. I would urge that some small committee be appointed to consider the subject very thoroughly, and to report to a later meeting of the Association. Some of the local Associations have perhaps exceeded their proper functions, and some are not held in the proper respect, often not from their own fault, but from the abstinence of Liberals who ought to combine for the sake of the party to make these organisations as useful and as representative as possible. How far a Liberal Association can carry its functions without straining its authority is also an important point, but the main thing to mind is this: to get as large a number as possible of the Liberals of a district to elect the representatives who form the Executive Council. Unless you have a broad base to rest upon, you can neither hope for authority nor command respect.⁵

In this letter, Rosebery did not identify which Associations he was referring to, but it could certainly apply to the local Associations in Edinburgh. His description of the breakdown of the Liberals within the Associations and his concern of the loss of legitimacy mirrored that of the local Associations in Edinburgh. In fact, Rosebery cites the division within the South Edinburgh parliamentary district as a reason for reorganising the Liberal Associations in a letter to Gladstone. Rosebery writes, 'As to the "Liberal Association", that is Raleigh's committee which was well beaten at the last election. It represents nothing and nobody: it declared Harrison unfit, Harrison set them at defiance and left them at the bottom of the poll'. Mr Reekie, a member of Raleigh's committee, asserted that the Liberal Association represents the Liberal opinion of the district which Rosebery said 'is one of the many proofs that our Liberal organization wants reorganizing'.⁶

Those who sought the legitimacy of the Association as a reason for reform used the belief that in order for an Association to be viewed as legitimate it needed a broad base of support from the constituents. Legitimacy was the central aspect in the suggestion of reuniting the Liberals in Edinburgh. The loss of legitimacy in the Liberal Association of the Central division was openly expressed in mid-January

⁵ NLS, Scottish Liberal Party & Scottish Liberal Democrats, Acc 11765/2, f. 79–80, SLA Annual Meeting of the General Council of the Association, Edinburgh, 19 Feb. 1886.

⁶ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44289, f. 1–2, Rosebery to Gladstone, 2 Jan. 1886.

1886 when the committee that formed to support Wilson's candidature held a meeting to form a new Liberal Association. Before the members of the committee voted to form a new Liberal Association, Bailie Anderson spoke on the importance of Liberal unity and the legitimacy of the Association:

With regard to the unity of the Liberal party, that unless an association or committee fairly represented in its own composition of general Liberalism of the district that it professed to represent, it must want that influence and that power which should belong to a Liberal organisation. Just in proportion as it represented every plank in the Liberal platform would it become an influence and power in guiding the opinions of the people.⁷

Anderson finished his speech by offering the Liberal Association that existed in Edinburgh between 1880 and 1885 as an example of the type of association he would like to have because it had broad authority over the city's politics. While this type of an association sounds good, its establishment was not the main factor motivating the members of the committee. Anderson said that the Association needed to have a broad membership in order to be legitimate and therefore to have the political power to sway opinion in the district. However, he made no plea for the opposition to join. The members of this committee had emphasised the importance of unification and had complained about the lack of cooperation and the actions of the Central Edinburgh Liberal Association. Despite this, they then formed a new Liberal Association with no regard to the current Association or without inviting any of the members from either of Wilson's Liberal opponents' committees to join.⁸ Wilson's committee was not truly concerned about reuniting the Liberals of the district; rather, they sought the legitimacy that was gained by being the official Liberal organisation of the district.

In the South district, Harrison's committee's goal of obtaining the legitimacy that an association brings was veiled in the reunification of the Liberals better than it was in the Central district. The desire to reunite the Liberals in the South came about mainly due to the death of Sir George Harrison in late December, thus creating the need for a by-election to fill his seat in South Edinburgh. Members of Harrison's committee wasted no time finding a replacement having invited Hugh Culling

⁷ *The Scotsman*, 14 Jan. 1886, 6.

⁸ *The Scotsman*, 14 Jan. 1886, 6.

Eardley Childers to stand as a candidate even before Harrison's funeral.⁹ Childers had represented Pontefract since 1860 and had held many posts throughout his career, most recently acting as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, yet he had lost his seat in the 1885 general election. This made him a prime candidate to fill any vacancy for the Liberal party which brought him to the attention of Harrison's committee.¹⁰ Childers was not, however, the first choice of Gladstone who wrote to Rosebery on the matter: 'I am shocked and grieved of the death of Sir George Harrison. It would be an excellent thing if they [Edinburgh constituents] would take Herschel for the vacancy. I cannot understand Childers. His queer letter about Pontefract looks to me as if he did not wish to come into Parliament'.¹¹ Rosebery reassured Gladstone that Childers was the best candidate between the two because Edinburgh constituents had 'a strong prejudice against English Lawyers' and Childers had been a cabinet member.¹² Rosebery's reasoning fits in the political tradition of Edinburgh discussed in chapter four. Edinburgh constituents highly valued political prestige and they certainly distrusted lawyers.

In Childers' reply to Harrison's committee, he said that 'he heartily accepts the invitation to offer himself as a candidate, on the understanding that the majority of the electors are represented by the committee'.¹³ Childers did not want to be viewed as an outsider who came to Edinburgh at the request of only a few citizens. If he had been invited to stand at the Liberal Association's request, he would not have been concerned with conveying 'that the majority of the electors are represented' as it would have been implied that the Liberal Association was the embodiment of the Liberal electors of the division. Upon Childers' agreement to come forward as a candidate, a general meeting of Harrison's committee was called. At the meeting a resolution was proposed to endorse Childers as a candidate which propelled a small protest among some of the members present. The protest questioned the extent of the authority that the committee had. One of the protestors, J. Heddle, said, 'They [the

⁹ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44132, f. 198, Childers to Gladstone, 25 Dec 1885; *The Scotsman*, 25 Dec. 1885, 5.

¹⁰ *The Scotsman*, 30 Dec. 1885, 6; William Carr, 'Childers, Hugh Culling Eardley (1827–1896)', rev. H. C. G. Matthew, *ODNB* (Oxford, 2008), [<http://www.oxforddnd.com/view/article/5296>, accessed 17 Nov 2008].

¹¹ NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS. 10028, f. 140, Gladstone to Rosebery, 24 Dec. 1885.

¹² BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44288, f. 289–90, Rosebery to Gladstone, 26 Dec. 1885.

¹³ *The Scotsman*, 25 Dec. 1885, 5.

committee] had objected very strongly to the actions of the caucus; and they, who had received no commission from the public, and were entirely a personal committee... must exercise care in regard to the course they perused'.¹⁴ Heddle proposed that they hold a public meeting open to all Liberals in the Southern division. When that was denied, he 'pointed out that if there was any right to state the action they were now taking, it lay with the Liberal committee'.¹⁵ The chairman of the committee defended their action and responded that they were meeting as individuals. It was then pointed out that this was the same action that they took to secure the return of Harrison in 1885, and determined that if anyone disagreed with this course, they should leave the meeting. Heddle and his supporters left in protest declaring that they too supported the candidacy of Childers, but they rejected the actions of the committee. Once the protesters left, the remaining members of the committee voted unanimously to invite Childers as their candidate and to form into a new committee to promote his election. The formation of this new committee was done very casually as it was suggested and approved to keep the same officers. The new committee then sent a copy of the resolution to the Southern Liberal Association and invited them to join them in their support of Childers.¹⁶

The Executive of the Southern Liberal Association rejected the resolution for many reasons. The Executive had not been consulted on Childers' nomination as this went further than them rejecting the resolution because Childers complained to Gladstone that the Radicals 'are carrying on a controversy' about the 'supposed impropriety of the action of those who asked me to stand' indicating that it was causing him trouble outside the Association as well.¹⁷ The Executive also complained that, although the representative from Childers' committee claimed that they sought to reunite the Liberals of the district, the resolution only invited members of the Association to join in the support of Childers. The Executive claimed that by nominating Childers his committee had made an 'infraction of the rights of the electors'.¹⁸ Raleigh, who had lost to Harrison in the last election, warned Rosebery of

¹⁴ *The Scotsman*, 30 Dec. 1885, 8.

¹⁵ *The Scotsman*, 30 Dec. 1885, 8.

¹⁶ *The Scotsman*, 30 Dec. 1885, 8.

¹⁷ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44132, f. 199–200, Childers to Gladstone, 18 Jan. 1886.

¹⁸ *The Scotsman*, 30 Dec. 1885, 8.

the consequences of Harrison's committee having invited Childers so soon and without consulting anyone from his committee:

If these gentlemen had had the common courtesy to recognise our existence, I might have induced my committee to concur in the nomination, and go to reunite the party, at least for the moment. As it is, the case stands this –

Since the election, some of my last supporters (e.g. Telfer, the Chairman of the Trades Council) have been in favour of dividing the party. They wish to organise the Advanced Liberals on a basis of their own – Dr. Calderwood & I have done our best to moderate the energy of the Separatists, and to preserve the unity of the party. Our reward is, that the Whigs deliberately ignore us and rule us out of the party at the first opportunity. What my supporters will do now, I don't know. My only safe course is to refrain altogether from advising them.¹⁹

Raleigh claimed that he and Calderwood had been labouring to keep the Party together, but the latest actions of Harrison's committee would cause a greater divide between the two local wings of the Party. Raleigh advised Rosebery that there was nothing more he could do.

There were other reasons for the Executive's opposition to Childers that were not based on party rules. Duncan McLaren, Edinburgh's MP from 1865 to 1881, openly expressed his opposition to Childers at the meeting. McLaren was concerned that if Childers was elected, local concerns would be pushed aside because Edinburgh would have two of its four MPs in the cabinet. However, Scotland as a whole highly valued experience and Edinburgh had traditionally balanced its representation by having both a 'local' MP and a well known 'national' politician.²⁰ The other member of the Executive to hold political motives behind his reason was Calderwood. Childers decried Calderwood as 'a very honest straight-forward man' who was 'against everyone who had to do with Harrison's election'.²¹ This was likely due to ideological differences between himself and the members of Harrison's committee such as their stance on disestablishment and it may also explain why Calderwood was against Childers' candidature. Childers was a high ranking Whig and as such he was opposed to disestablishment. Calderwood, along with most of the members of the Executive, favoured disestablishment since this Association had

¹⁹ NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS. 10084, ff. 303–4, Raleigh to Rosebery, 28 Dec. 1885.

²⁰ Boase, 'McLaren, Duncan'; Hanham, *Elections and Party Management*, 162; *The Scotsman*, 30 Dec. 1885, 8.

²¹ BL, Campbell-Bannerman Papers, MSS. 41232, f. 172–3, Childers to Campbell-Bannerman, 4 Jan. 1886.

nominated a Radical during the 1885 election, thus leaving most of them unfavourable to Childers based on this political issue.²²

The Executive of the Southern Liberal Association was interested in reuniting the Liberals of the district, but they felt that no candidate should be nominated before they met as a united body. More than likely this too was a ploy to get rid of Childers. The Executive knew that the Association had lost its legitimacy amongst most of the constituents. The members believed that this might return some of their power or at the least get rid of Childers by causing Harrison's committee to remove their invitation to Childers due to the 'infraction of the rights of the electors' and under the guise of reuniting all the Liberal electors of the division who would have then been able to vote on which candidate to invite to stand.²³

Childers' committee rejected the conditions for a reunion called for by Executive of the Southern Liberal Association. The rejection left no hope of unifying the Liberals in the district and placed the Southern Liberal Association in an abnormal situation. The Executive called a general meeting of the Southern Liberal Association to decide what action the Association should take. At the meeting a very exhaustive motion was proposed that the Association disapprove of Childers' candidature. There were a number of reasons they opposed Childers' candidature. First, he had received a pension from the government, a move of which, as advanced Liberals, they disapproved. Second was the claim that he had accepted the offer to stand on the day of Harrison's death. It is known that Childers had already accepted the invitation to stand two days after Harrison's death, but it is unknown whether he had accepted it sooner as some claimed. However, the Executive should not have complained about this because Calderwood, a member of the Executive, wrote to Rosebery on the day of Harrison's death seeking his approval to bring Raleigh forward again as a candidate to fill the seat.²⁴ Rosebery discussed the situation with Gladstone saying, 'I thought it indecorous of Harrison's committee to ask Childers so soon. But I found out that the other side had asked candidates with equal promptitude but less success'. Finally, throughout the motion, the Executive's central complaint against Childers' candidature was that the legitimacy of the Association as the

²² Hutchison, *A Political History*, 162.

²³ *The Scotsman*, 30 Dec. 1885, 8.

²⁴ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44132, f. 198, Childers to Gladstone, 25 Dec 1885; NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS. 10084, ff. 288-9, Calderwood to Rosebery, 23 Dec. 1885.

official Liberal organisation of the division was being undermined by the actions of Harrison's committee and by Childers.²⁵

The Radicals obviously outnumbered the Whigs as they took control of the Association in 1885, but the makeup of the Association contained members who identified with both wings of the Party. The Whigs who were present at the meeting brought opposition to the motion to disapprove of Childers' candidature and defended Childers, but the main debate of the meeting focussed on who had legitimacy in the division: the Liberal Association or Harrison's committee. The seconder of the motion said that 'he thought that Mr Childers had practically defied the Association and had prevented any chance of union amongst them'. In dealing with Party politics, the Liberal Association was supposed to be the legitimate authority of the parliamentary district; therefore, Childers would have defied the Association by not coming before the Association. However, the legitimacy of the Association was already in question before Childers accepted an invitation to come forward.²⁶

After the motion against Childers was seconded, the members of the Association who were against it raised an amendment to disband the Association in protest to the motion because the Association had lost its legitimacy and, therefore, no longer represented the Liberal opinion of the district. The amendment was proposed by Ninian Elliot who said that 'whatever resolution they passed would not in the slightest affect Mr Childers' candidature'. The amendment was seconded by T. C. Jack who said 'he thought this Association, as an Association, had completely discredited itself in the eyes of the community'. The evidence he provided to prove his point was that Harrison had won the election against the Association's nominated candidate. This brought out a debate on whether Harrison had received the most Liberal votes in the election. The proposer of the amendment did not deny that Harrison had received Tory votes, his dispute was with the number of the Tory votes he received. He believed Harrison received no more than 700 Tory votes while Joseph Thomson, a supporter of the Association, claimed that Harrison received 1,600 Tory votes. Harrison had won the election by 1,400 votes; therefore, depending on the actual Tory vote, either candidate may have had the majority of the Liberal

²⁵ *The Scotsman*, 15 Jan. 1886, 6.

²⁶ *The Scotsman*, 15 Jan. 1886, 6.

vote and consequently the claim to the legitimacy of the Liberal organisation in the district. The motion was passed eighty to three with neither Elliot nor Jack voting.²⁷

The Southern Liberal Association failed to endorse any candidate and took no other action during the by-election other than passing the resolution against Childers. Gladstone's election agent, P. W. Campbell, attributed this in part to Conservative W. G. Hepburn-Scott whose entrance into the race 'practically closed the Liberal ranks'.²⁸ However, despite numerous attempts to persuade someone to stand against Childers, there were not any Liberals willing to come forward against him.²⁹ Raleigh wrote to Rosebery that 'it is of course impossible for me to place my claim in competition with him'.³⁰ The reason no one was willing to stand against Childers was surely due to his stature within the Liberal Party. This placed the members of the Association in a difficult position. They rejected Childers based on his unwillingness to acknowledge the Association's authority in the district by not having sought its approval before he decided to stand, but if they would have publicly sought a candidate of their own through the Association and failed to get them to stand, it would have furthered the damage to their claim of legitimacy.

<i>Candidates</i>	<i>Nov. 1885 general election</i>	<i>Jan. 1886 by-election</i>
Harrison	4,273	
Raleigh	2,874	
Childers		4,029
Hepburn-Scott		1,737
Total	7,147	5,766

Childers won the by-election by more than 2,500 votes. His lone opponent, Conservative Hepburn-Scott, received 1,730 votes. This vote total suggests that during the 1885 election Raleigh could have had the majority of the Liberal vote if the same amount of Tory voters that supported Hepburn-Scott had supported Harrison. This would support the Association's claim of legitimacy. However, the strength of the Tory vote in the 1886 election is questionable as some of the

²⁷ *The Scotsman*, 15 Jan. 1886, 6; Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 499.

²⁸ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44116, f. 91, Campbell to Gladstone, 11 Jan. 1886.

²⁹ BL, Campbell-Bannerman Papers, MSS. 41232, f. 158–9, Childers to Campbell-Bannerman, 31 Dec. 1885; BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44289, f. 1–2, Rosebery to Gladstone, 2 Jan. 1886; *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 Jan. 1886, 3; *The Scotsman*, 14 Jan. 1886, 4; 1 Jan. 1886, 4.

³⁰ NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS. 10084, ff. 303–4, Raleigh to Rosebery, 28 Dec. 1885.

³¹ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 499.

supporters of the Association had indicated that they intended to vote for Hepburn-Scott as a protest against Childers' candidature due to the disregard that had been shown towards the Association. More likely, the majority of them withheld their vote which would account for the large decrease in the voter turnout just two months after the general election.

Nevertheless, due to the Association members' threat of voting for Hepburn-Scott during the campaign, the members of Childers' committee could still question the Association's claim of legitimacy because the amount of cross-over voting in either the 1885 or the 1886 by-election is unknown. The Conservative vote for Hepburn-Scott was probably not skewed that much by Liberals. The last Conservative to run in the pre-Third Reform Act double-member constituency of Edinburgh, J. H. A. MacDonald, received 5,651 votes in the general election of 1880. The average of the Conservative total vote across the city in the 1880 election is slightly above 1,400 votes. The West and South districts contained the highest concentration of middle-class voters who were more inclined to vote for a Conservative. The West district had the highest number of middle-class constituents in the city and in the 1885 election, Jamison, the Conservative in the race, received 2,625 votes. By the 1886 by-election, there were also more than 3,500 voters added throughout the whole city. Therefore, it is likely that the South had a higher percentage than the mean as well and, since Harrison only won by 1,400 votes, it is very conceivable that Raleigh held the majority of the Liberal vote.³²

Even though the Association was more than likely supported by the majority of the Liberals in the district, its legitimacy was severely damaged due to the 1885 election, 1886 by-election, and the complete disregard of the Association by Childers. Consequently, the Executive of the South Liberal Association decided to dissolve the Association in early February. Unlike the Central district where a new Association was formed with no regard to the Liberal Association already set up in the district, in the South they dissolved the current Association and even voted to take on its financial obligations. With the polarisation that had taken place within the Liberal party, this seemingly sensible action was attacked by opponents of the current Association. The opponents of the Association upheld the desire to have a

³² Miller, 'Politics in the Scottish city', 187-8; Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885-1918*, 499-500; Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832-1885*, 540.

new united Liberal Association, but rejected ‘the idea of a handful of busy bodies undertaking to legislate for the 8700 electors in the Southern Division’. The main complaint was with the proposed constitution in which the members of the Association were accused of trying to divide the party by including a platform. The proposed rule that the Association would endorse candidates in all cases involving more than one Liberal candidate in the field also brought opposition to the Association by those who only wanted the Association to vote on multiple Liberal candidates if there were a Tory in the race.³³

At the opening meeting of the new Association, chairman Bailie Turnbull said ‘that it was a matter of regret that they should already have to take steps to heal divisions in the Liberal Party of Edinburgh... It was pretty plain that they were back to where they were before the United Liberal Association was formed’. Like Bailie Anderson, who opposed the Radical controlled Liberal Association in the Central district, Bailie Turnbull also pointed towards the United Liberal Association as an example for the new association to aspire to. At the meeting, speakers defended the addition of a platform as a way to avoid a division in the party at elections. They believed that if the Liberal opinion of the division was already expressed through a platform, there would be no need to divide on questions during an election.³⁴

The formation of the new South Liberal Association did not bring about the reunion of the Liberals in the divisions; rather, it actually contributed to the further polarisation of the two wings of the Liberal party. Less than two weeks after the formation of the new Liberal Association in the South, the members of Childers’ committee formed the Parliamentary Liberal committee for South Edinburgh. The members of this new committee complained that the Liberal Association was dividing the Liberals in the district. The committee they formed was their solution to this divide. The Committee had two goals that were set out in the first resolution passed by the Committee: ‘(1) to secure the continuance of the Liberal representation of the division, and (2) to promote the united expression of opinion upon questions of importance as these arise in conjunction with other Liberal organisations’. James Thom proposed this resolution and said that there was still a possibility that the Liberals could reunite. He then, as others had done, pointed to the Edinburgh United

³³ *The Scotsman*, 14 Mar. 1886, 7.

³⁴ *The Scotsman*, 9 Mar. 1886, 7.

Liberal Association as a model Association. Thom 'believed that the party [the old Southern Liberal Association] failed because they did not sufficiently recognise the right of private judgement' as they were supposed to be bound by its resolutions even if they disagreed with them.³⁵ This is made clearer by Bailie Russell who said that he had been a member in the Association and felt as if he had no voice in the Association. These men were complaining about the use of the caucus in the Association. As discussed in chapter two, there were several critics of the caucus in late-Victorian Britain who often complained that it was anti-democratic and enabled a few men to impose their political will on the whole Association.³⁶

Both Thom and Russell were playing to the anti-democratic view of the caucus when they spoke of why there needed to be an alternative to the Liberal Association. However, Russell's solution to the anti-democratic problem was to set up the power structure of the Liberal Committee in a pyramid, basically identical to that of the old and new Liberal Association. Russell said that 'it was necessary for them to have some sort of working mechanics which would enable the object of the associations to be carried out'. He believed that this committee would not put men into the position who would abuse their power. With this, he reveals that the real problem he had was not the caucus, but instead the men running it.³⁷

The Parliamentary Liberal Committee for South Edinburgh was formed because the members said they wanted to reunite the Liberal party of the district, yet they declined to join the new Association for two reasons. First, they did not believe in the proposed platform which, had they joined, they could have voted on and changed if they had the majority of voters. Second, they did not like the power structure of the old Association due to those in charge which again, had they joined, they could have voted their own members into power if they had the majority. Instead of joining in forming a new United Liberal Association, they set up their own organisation which polarised the Liberals even further. Still, despite their objection to its use in the old Association, they used the same power structure of the caucus to set up their organisation. Reuniting the Liberals and the oppression of the caucus were reasons used to validate their action because their true goal was to gain the

³⁵ *The Scotsman*, 26 Mar. 1886, 7.

³⁶ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 335–7; *The Scotsman*, 26 Mar. 1886, 7.

³⁷ *The Scotsman*, 26 Mar. 1886, 7.

legitimacy of the Liberal Association to help propel their political ideology within the district.

The new Liberal Associations in Edinburgh were not all set up under the guise of reuniting the Liberals as some were set up to attract members from one wing of the Party. In late January constituents in the East division of Edinburgh formed the Radical and Advanced Liberal Association for the East Division of Edinburgh. The membership of the Association was made up of supporters of Costelloe which is not surprising given that they were Radicals. However, it is quite curious in view of the fact that the Liberal Association that already existed in East Edinburgh had been dominated by Radicals and had supported Costelloe in the 1885 election. In the inaugural address of the Radical and Advanced Liberal Association for the East Division of Edinburgh, the speakers made no reference to the other Liberal Association or any plea for the union of the Liberals in the district. Instead, the main focus of the meeting was their opposition to Goschen. Goschen was criticised for voting against the extension of the franchise to the counties and for being a carpetbagger. The members of this Radical and Advanced Liberal Association did cover some political issues. One of the speakers, Cunninghame Graham, an extreme Radical and Liberal MP for North-West Lanarkshire from 1886 to 1892, pointed to land reform as an important Radical issue and said that it, along with the regulation of capital and labour, would be the focus of a Radical Government. Nevertheless, Goschen was clearly the target of the Association. At the close of the meeting a resolution was passed against him for ‘supporting the Conservative Party in the House of Commons on matters so deeply affecting the welfare of the agricultural labourers, and his desertion of Mr Gladstone and the Liberal Party.’ The main goal of this Association was certainly to oust Goschen.³⁸

Even though this group of Liberal electors chose to name their Association the Radical and Advanced Liberal Association, they too clearly wanted to be viewed as a legitimate outlet of the constituents’ desires. However, the Association’s authority was challenged immediately following its founding. The members of this Association sent a letter to Goschen to inform him of the resolution passed at its first

³⁸ Cedric Watts, ‘Graham, Robert Bontine Cunninghame (1852–1936)’, *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33504>, accessed 9 Oct. 2011]; *The Scotsman*, 28 Jan. 1886, 6–7.

meeting. Goschen dismissed both the resolution and the Association. Writing about the Association to James Cowan, the chairman of his election committee in 1885, Goschen declared, 'To such a body I owe no explanation'. The Radical and Advanced Liberal Association was not viewed as representing the Liberals in the district and consequently their resolution was not taken seriously by Goschen.³⁹

As discussed in the previous chapter, Irish Home Rule is widely seen as the major cause of the breakup of the Liberal party. Additionally, Hutchison points out that the Liberal party was already at odds with itself over questions like disestablishment, but he concludes that the Church Liberals were 'quite secure' in the Liberal party. Indeed, the Liberals in Edinburgh were at odds with one another so much so that three of the districts split, yet at the same time both groups of Liberals wanted to stay within the Party. This led them to set up opposing Associations in an attempt to capture the legitimacy of the district and in doing so they would be able to shape the Party towards their brand of liberalism. It is noteworthy that the only Liberals in Edinburgh that did not divide and create separate Associations were in the West district, which was the only district that had a single Liberal candidate run in the 1885 election. This further demonstrates that the disunity that stemmed from the 1885 election was the leading factor in the early 1886 split before the introduction of Irish Home Rule.⁴⁰

The reunification of the Liberals

The jockeying for authority within the individual parliamentary districts by the various Liberal Associations in Edinburgh was interrupted by Gladstone's introduction of Irish Home Rule. In early April, Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Bill was presented to the House of Commons and on 8 June 1886, after two months of debate, a vote on the Bill was held. The measure was defeated by a vote of 341 to 311. Ninety-four Liberals voted against the Bill including twenty-three from Scotland.⁴¹ Three of the MPs sitting for Edinburgh – Buchanan, Goschen and Wilson – voted against it as well, while Childers, the Home Secretary, was the lone

³⁹ *The Scotsman*, 2 Feb. 1886, 5.

⁴⁰ Hutchison, *A political history*, 154–62.

⁴¹ Ewen A. Cameron, *The Life and Times of Fraser Mackintosh Crofter MP* (Aberdeen, 2000), 164; Burness, *Strange Associations*, 45–6.

exception among Edinburgh's MPs. With this defeat, the Government dissolved and an election was called for mid-July. The defeat of the Government's Bill, coupled with the Liberals splitting their vote, placed the local Liberal Associations and their members into a situation where they had to decide whom they were going to back. For the majority of the Association members in Edinburgh it was a decision between their current MP and Gladstone. Historians have debated how the Irish question affected various Liberals. Some have described it as the 'passing of the Whigs', indicating that the majority of the Whigs left the Liberal party in favour of becoming a member of the new Liberal Unionist party. More recently others have argued that both wings of the Party had defectors, but Gladstone retained the majority of all the different types of Liberal MPs. However, some historians acknowledge that both Whigs and Radicals left the Party, but still see it as a split between left and right leaning ideologies. Edinburgh brings a different perspective to the debate given that three of its four Liberal Associations split prior to the introduction of Irish Home Rule and created two separate Associations in each of the three parliamentary districts, two of which were between Whigs and Radicals. This enables insight into how the ideological stance of the local Associations affected their attitude on Irish Home Rule.⁴²

There were two stages that the various Liberal Associations in the country underwent during this time. First, they reacted to Gladstone's initial introduction of Irish Home Rule, as in other constituencies, by indicating either their support for or opposition to the Government's Bills in April and May.⁴³ Second, after Parliament voted against the second reading of the Bill in June, the Associations began endorsing candidates for the 1886 election based principally on the candidates' stances on Irish home Rule. The Liberals of the four parliamentary districts in Edinburgh were all in a different condition when the Irish question was introduced. The West district, having just one Liberal Association, had the most in common with the rest of the country. The other three districts had two Liberal Associations or organisations in their districts. While both the Central and South districts'

⁴² Donald Southgate, *The Passing of the Whigs, 1832-1886* (London, 1962), 383-416; W. C. Lubenow, 'Irish Home Rule and the social basis of the great separation in the Liberal party in 1886', *The Historical Journal*, 28 (1985); Hutchison, *A Political History*, 162-8; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 106-9.

⁴³ Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, 84; Savage, 'Scottish politics', 131-2.

Associations were divided along the political lines of Whig and Radical, the East district had two Radical Associations. There were two interesting developments that took place among the Liberal Associations in Edinburgh during this time. First, in some cases, supporters of the Association in 1885 and early 1886 questioned the legitimacy of the Association after it voted to support Irish Home Rule. Second, even though two of the districts were split along political lines of Whig and Radical, all of the Associations were divided within themselves on the question of Irish Home Rule. A better understanding of the effects of Irish Home Rule in Edinburgh is ascertained by examining how these different districts reacted to the Irish question.

The West Liberal Association was the only Liberal Association in Edinburgh to survive the 1885 election intact. There is one key reason why it stayed together while the other Liberal Associations in Edinburgh did not: the West only had one Liberal candidate in the 1885 election while the other districts had two or more. The harmony that the West Liberal Association enjoyed came to an end upon the introduction of Irish Home Rule. In late April when Irish Home Rule was announced, the Executive came out in support of the Government's Bills. After this, Buchanan called for a meeting of all Liberals in the district to discuss his position on the question before the Executive could call an Association meeting to vote on their recommendation to support the Irish Bills. Buchanan's tactic did not prevail as he had hoped because, on a split vote, a motion passed '...regret[ting] that he cannot support the Irish legislation proposed by the Government, which, in the opinion of the meeting, afford a satisfactory basis for the settlement of the Irish Question'.⁴⁴ Buchanan went on to vote against the Irish Bills in early June.

The Executive Committee of the West Liberal Association worked quickly after the vote in an attempt to persuade their members against Buchanan. On 16 June they held a meeting and passed a motion against Buchanan due to his vote against the Government's Irish Home Rule Bill. The Executive concluded that based on Buchanan's vote, they 'cannot recommend his re-election as Member for the division'.⁴⁵ They thought they were justified in not recommending him due to the outcome of the debate that took place in the district leading up to the vote. They then called for a General Committee meeting to discuss their motion to not endorse

⁴⁴ *The Scotsman*, 22 Apr. 1886, 6; 5 May 1886, 8.

⁴⁵ *The Scotsman*, 17 Jun. 1886, 5.

Buchanan.⁴⁶ The Executive Committee's motion did not bring any criticism, but the fact that they met alone did anger some members. The motion was surely the reason for the criticism, but the Association's caucus setup was attacked just as the other three Liberal Associations had been attacked throughout the 1885 election.

William McEwen, a successful Edinburgh brewer and a constituent in the West district, said that meetings of the Executive should not take place without the full General Committee and further declared that 'nothing has been done more to prejudicially affect Associations of the kind than the very general idea amongst electors that two or three active members control the whole thing'.⁴⁷ McEwen also pointed out that the actions of the Association were being monitored by the 'papers'. This was certainly supposed to be taken as a threat by the Executive as McEwen was trying to persuade the Executive to act as he wanted or the legitimacy of the Association would be called into question.⁴⁸ The following day the Secretary for the West Liberal Association replied to McEwen's claim that the Executive was acting underhandedly. He said that the actions of the Executive were in accordance with the Constitution of the Association and that no rules of the Association had been violated. McEwen responded to this by acknowledging that no actual rules had been broken; however, he still objected to the Executive's actions because the Government had been dissolved and the Liberal party was divided on the question of Irish Home Rule. He believed that Buchanan's 'jury should not be the few who attended the meeting last night'. At this time, the legitimacy of the Association might not yet have been in question, but the setup of the Association and the idea of the caucus was certainly under scrutiny.⁴⁹

The week after the Executive passed the motion against Buchanan, there was a meeting of the General Committee to discuss the motion. The two opposing sides of the motion based their opinions on the role of the Association more than either the merits of Buchanan or the question of Irish Home Rule. Those in favour of the motion said that Buchanan voted against the Government and the Association could

⁴⁶ *The Scotsman*, 17 Jun. 1886, 5.

⁴⁷ Ian Donnachie, 'McEwan, William (1827–1913)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50416, accessed 9 Oct 2011]. McEwan was a Gladstonian MP for central Edinburgh from 1886 to 1900. His name is often abbreviated in contemporary newspapers as M'Ewan, *The Scotsman*, 17 Jun. 1886, 5.

⁴⁸ *The Scotsman*, 17 Jun. 1886, 5.

⁴⁹ *The Scotsman*, 18 Jun. 1886, 7.

not approve of his actions, while those opposed to the motion believed that the Association should stay neutral on the subject because it ‘would have the effect of driving out of it a majority of its members’. Following up on this idea, a counter-motion was introduced that ‘it was inexpedient in the circumstance to make the point of any recommendation to the constituency’. This led to a small compromise on the part of those favouring the motion to not recommend Buchanan. The Chairman of the meeting said his interpretation of the motion ‘was, not that they offered any opposition to Mr Buchanan, but simply that they did not endorse his candidature, on the ground that they disapproved of his voting against the second reading of the Irish bill of the Government, and that they were in favour of the principle of that bill’. Even with this interpretation placed on the motion, one-third of the members present voted against it.⁵⁰ The Edinburgh West Liberal Association was not alone: the West Perthshire Liberal Association also offered no opposition to their sitting MP who opposed Irish Home Rule when they had voted to support it.⁵¹ The Executive’s motion to not recommend Buchanan as the parliamentary candidate passed by the General Committee, but it was basically an empty motion. The Liberal Association was set up to organise the Liberal vote behind one candidate and in this instance the Association was sending the message that, although they did not approve of Buchanan’s actions, they were not recommending anyone to stand against him and that the members were welcome to vote for him. In this case, the Association essentially delegitimised itself by making its own opinion irrelevant.

The role of Irish Home Rule is more complicated in the other three parliamentary districts owing to the multiple associations set up in each district. The two sets of associations in the districts provide different perspectives based on the political identity of the association. It has been suggested in this chapter that the original Associations that were set up in 1885 were taken over by Radicals which, for the most part, caused the Whigs in the district to leave those Associations. After the 1885 election, in two of the districts, the South and Central, the Whigs set up rival associations in order to push their own political agenda in the district. Conversely, in the East district, some of the Radicals broke off from the already Radical-leaning association to form a new Radical named association. Due to this it can be seen how

⁵⁰ *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 8–9.

⁵¹ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 164–5.

the Irish question affected the Liberals in Edinburgh based on political identity in the Central, South, and East districts.

Central

The Edinburgh Central Liberal Association, the original Liberal Association from 1885 in the division, held a meeting on Irish Home Rule in late April. The meeting was presided over by Councillor Steel who was the President of the Association and who had considered standing in the East division in the Radical interest in 1885. Several motions were raised, ranging from an outright rejection of Irish Home Rule to expressing complete confidence in Gladstone and the Government. Toward the end of the debate it was suggested that the Association not vote on the question of Irish Home Rule and instead wait until the question was fully discussed by the leading members of the Party. On a very narrow majority this motion was passed twenty-four to twenty-three. In an interesting development during the meeting, the legitimacy of the Association was called into question by John Grant. Steel defended the Association by saying that they were ‘The Liberal Committee appointed by the Wards about a twelvemonth ago’.⁵² This, in his mind, gave the Association and the members a legitimate claim to speak for the constituents. Strangely, however, both Grant and Steel were on the same side of the Irish question making it unclear whether Grant was concerned with the Association’s ability to pass a motion in favour of the Government’s proposal, or if he and Steel set up the exchange to state the Association’s authority in the district.

The Executive of the Liberal Association of the Central Division of Edinburgh, the new Liberal Association that formed in the Central division, voted to oppose the Irish question and invited Wilson to speak before the General Committee.⁵³ At the General Committee meeting two motions were proposed. The first one thanked Gladstone for his work, but held that both Irish Bills should be postponed ‘and that a scheme providing for a large measure of local government or Home Rule, applicable to England, Scotland, and Ireland, be introduced on the basis of maintaining the legislative unity of the United Kingdom’. The second expressed ‘sympathy and support to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone and his Cabinet, and

⁵² *The Scotsman*, 24 Apr. 1886, 8.

⁵³ *The Scotsman*, 20 Apr. 1886, 5.

accept their proposals as a basis for the satisfactory settlement of the Irish question'.⁵⁴ The first measure passed by a large majority. Grant and MacPherson, who were both in favour of the Government's measures at the other Liberal Association meeting, were the leaders of the losing motion at this meeting. MacPherson made it clear that he was not a member of Wilson's committee, but Grant and the other supporters of the Irish question did not make the same claim.⁵⁵

Since those supporting the Irish question including Steel, MacPherson and Grant were unable to get either association to fully back the Government on the Irish question, they sought other outlets to push their agenda. There were clearly supporters of the Government and Irish Home Rule among both of the Liberal Associations' members in the Central district. In order to use this division and gather support for their cause Steel, MacPherson and Grant held a Home Rule meeting in the district. R. W. Duff, MP for Banffshire since 1861, was the guest speaker. Duff placed the Irish question as a Liberal versus Tory question and then told the crowd: 'The history of the Liberal party taught them that large measures of reform were not carried in a day. What would have become of the great achievements of the Liberal party if the pioneers in the path of reform had allowed themselves to be turned aside, even by that powerful force a parliamentary majority'?'⁵⁶ With this question, Duff was telling these Liberals that they were on the right side of the question, that they were the true Liberals in the division, and, therefore, that they had to continue to fight for the Liberal cause which was at that moment Irish Home Rule.

Steel, MacPherson and Grant were certainly involved in organising the Home Rule meeting. MacPherson was the chairman of the meeting and Steel accompanied him on the platform. Grant proposed a motion at the meeting in favour of Gladstone, the Government and Home Rule and this motion passed by a large majority. These three men stayed closely involved in the pro-Home Rule section of the division. MacPherson even became the chairman of the election committee for local brewer William McEwan who stood as a pro-Home Rule candidate in the division.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ *The Scotsman*, 30 Apr. 1886, 6.

⁵⁵ *The Scotsman*, 30 Apr. 1886, 6.

⁵⁶ *The Scotsman*, 19 May 1886, 9; Marc Brodie, 'Duff, Sir Robert William (1835–1895)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2004), [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8173>, accessed 09 Feb. 2011].

⁵⁷ *The Scotsman*, 19 May 1886, 9.

On 14 June the Executive of the Liberal Association of the Central Division of Edinburgh recommended Wilson, the current MP, to the General Committee as the Liberal candidate for the division. They justified their decision by saying ‘while many gentleman in the division who favoured the second reading of the Irish bills, which Mr. Wilson had opposed, had declared that this would not prevent Mr. Wilson receiving their cordial assistance in the event of a contest’.⁵⁸ This was not the case for a large part of those favourable to the Bill in the division. Eight days after the announcement by the Executive, Liberals favourable to the Irish Bills secured the candidature of McEwan to oppose Wilson. Shortly after McEwan came forward as a pro-Home Rule candidate, Wilson informed the Liberal Association of the Central Division of Edinburgh that he was retiring from Parliament because ‘he found the duties incumbent upon him as their representative too heavy’.⁵⁹ After this announcement by Wilson, a general meeting of the Liberal Association of the Central Division of Edinburgh was called. Through the course of the meeting it was decided that despite Wilson’s announcement he was still desired to be their candidate and they unanimously passed a resolution to that effect. The remaining members of the Association were successful in their quest to persuade Wilson as he announced later that evening that he would stand.⁶⁰

Despite the loss of some of its members caused by the controversy following the successful vote to support Wilson’s candidature, the Liberal Association of the Central Division of Edinburgh succeeded in being viewed as a legitimate association. Wilson certainly viewed it as being the legitimate embodiment of the Liberal desire for the district as he immediately reconsidered standing for Parliament upon their request. The other association in the district became delegitimised, but this was done by the leaders of that association themselves. After Steel and company were unable to get the association to favour the Irish Bills in April, they gave up trying to use the association to push for Home Rule in the division. Instead, they became complacent with the alternative of holding association meetings open to all Liberals favourable to Home Rule in the district. This is partly due to the fear that the majority of the association might have opposed Home Rule and partly due to the great success they

⁵⁸ *The Scotsman*, 15 Jun. 1886, 5.

⁵⁹ *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 8; 24 Jun. 1886, 6.

⁶⁰ *The Scotsman*, 26 Jun. 1886, 7; 28 Jun. 1886, 8.

had in holding the Home Rule meetings that attracted members from the other association. In both cases the associations lost members and Liberals allied themselves together based on either their support or their opposition to Irish Home Rule.

South

In the South district the rivalry amongst the Liberals was more intense compared to the Liberals in the other three districts of Edinburgh owing to the 1886 by-election. By early April when Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Bill was unveiled, the two opposing sects of Liberals in the South had already been in conflict practically since the formation of the district's first Liberal Association in 1885. At first, the new question of Irish Home Rule was no different. Both the Southern Liberal Association, the reorganisation of the old Southern Liberal Association and Raleigh's election committee, and the Parliamentary Liberal Committee for South Edinburgh, the organisation of Harrison's and then subsequently Childers' election committees, held meetings to discuss the Government's Irish Bills and determine whether or not they should their support.

The Edinburgh Southern Liberal Association was the first of the two groups to hold a meeting on the subject. There was an attempt to continue the fight between the Radicals and Whigs that had been taking place since the passage of the Third Reform Act. To start the meeting, the chairman, J. B. Gillies, convener of the Newington Ward Committee, emphasised that this association was made up of Radicals and told the crowd that the 'Advanced Liberal party to which they belonged were much more likely to give Mr Gladstone sympathy and support just now – than those who were prepared to follow him blindly, as had been said at one time, but who, now that he was not to do exactly what was expected, turned round upon him without any ceremony'.⁶¹ Gillies was attempting to set the tone of Irish Home Rule as another Radical versus Whig question in the way the disestablishment issue had been during the 1885 election. The way in which disestablishment and other questions were used to divide the Liberal party into two camps is discussed in both chapters three and four. After the implementation of the reforms called for in the

⁶¹ *The Scotsman*, 14 Apr 1886, 9.

Third Reform Act, the Radicals hoped to take control of the Liberal party and push their agenda forward. Radicals hoped to use questions such as disestablishment to unite the Radical wing of the Party against the Whigs.

There was a motion proposed to the Association by Councillor Pollard who had been elected President of the Association upon its new founding. In this motion Pollard proposed that the Association give its support to Gladstone and express that they approve of the Irish Bills. There was a stipulation applied that they trusted that the Bills would not 'affect the integrity of the Empire'.⁶² The stipulation was added in an attempt to persuade members who were concerned that the current Bill might lead to an independent Irish nation. After the motion was introduced one such member, Professor Calderwood, offered an amendment that the Association approved of Home Rule for England, Scotland and Ireland, but that they disapproved of 'independent Home Rule for any one of the three nations, and consequent exclusion of that one from joint representation in the Parliament of the United Kingdom'. There ensued a debate and the two sides tried to compromise, but were unable to do so. Upon a split vote, the motion to support the Irish Bills passed.⁶³ Hutchison provides an alternative motive for Calderwood's opposition to the Bills. He proposes that Calderwood, among other Radicals, was bitter toward Gladstone for his exclusion of disestablishment from the 1885 elections and Calderwood believed, probably correctly, that the disestablishment issue would not come about with Gladstone at the helm of the party.⁶⁴

The Parliamentary Liberal Committee for South Edinburgh held their meeting in mid-May, a month after the Southern Liberal Association came out in favour of the Government's Bills. Almost the exact opposite happened at this meeting compared to the other Association's meeting in the district. Bailie Russell introduced the findings of the committee's sub-committee which recommended that they oppose the Government's Bills mainly due to Ireland's exclusion from the Imperial Parliament. This is in line with Calderwood's objection to the Bills. Upon the conclusion of its reading, James Thom, the only dissenting member of the sub-committee, proposed an amendment in favour of the Bills. A debate then followed

⁶² *The Scotsman*, 14 Apr 1886, 9.

⁶³ *The Scotsman*, 14 Apr 1886, 9.

⁶⁴ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 163.

regarding the Bill and its intentions. At the conclusion of the debate, a vote was taken with a motion against the Bill passing by a vote of twenty-seven to eighteen.⁶⁵ Given the amount of disagreement these two groups had, it is not surprising that they disagreed on supporting the Irish question. However, it is quite interesting that there was a division on the question amongst both groups' members. This is indicative of the overall split of the Party. It was not a Whig versus Radical question; it affected both the Whig and the Radical organisations in the same way: they both split.

After the second reading of the Bills in Parliament, the question was thrown to the country and the Associations again held meetings to discuss the coming election. During these rounds of meetings the members were to decide the endorsement of a candidate in addition to their stance on the Irish question. The Southern Liberal Association had no problem passing a resolution supporting both Gladstone and Irish Home Rule. However, after that motion was passed, it was then moved that the Association should endorse the candidature of Childers in the coming election. This motion brought opposition from some of the members. Gillies, a supporter of Irish Home Rule, declared that he could not support the candidature of Childers due to his stance on disestablishment.⁶⁶ This view that Childers was too moderate for the constituency due to his stance on disestablishment was a main concern of Childers' when he first stood for the division in December 1885.⁶⁷ A motion was even proposed that the Association could not support Childers because of differences in political opinion, but that they would still support Irish Home Rule. After some discussion during which it was emphasised that the Association needed to show their support of Gladstone, it was decided that the best way for them to do that was to endorse Childers. Upon a vote Childers was endorsed by a large portion of the Association, but he was not endorsed unanimously.⁶⁸

The Parliamentary Liberal Committee for South Edinburgh had problems with endorsing Childers as well. This committee formed from Childers' election committee just months earlier; however, they had more recently voted to oppose Irish

⁶⁵ *The Scotsman*, 15 May 1886, 12; 19 May 1886, 9.

⁶⁶ *The Scotsman*, 25 Jun. 1886, 6.

⁶⁷ Edmund Spencer Eardley Childers, *Life and Correspondence of the Right Hon. Hugh C. E. Childers, 1827-1896, Vol. 2* (London, 1901), 237, quoting from letter 'To his Daughter Milly'. 117 Picadilly, December 28, 1885; Hutchison, *A Political History*, 162.

⁶⁸ *The Scotsman*, 25 Jun. 1886, 6.

Home Rule which Childers had supported. Some of the members had shifted their political opinion in favour of Irish Home Rule. The most notable of these is Bailie Russell, the president of the committee, who had introduced the motion to oppose Irish Home Rule in May. Bailie Russell raised a motion to support Childers' candidature and Irish Home Rule and was seconded by James Thom who had raised the amendment against Bailie Russell's motion in May. This was met by opposition and a motion against both the endorsement of Childers and Irish Home Rule. The motion against was brought by Lindsay Mackersy who 'appealed to the Committee to recollect that about a month ago they came to the conclusion that the two bills [Irish Home Rule and Land Purchase] of the Government with reference to Ireland ought not to pass, and, concurring in that decision, he declined now to stultify himself by voting for a member who supported those bills'.⁶⁹ This was a member of Childers' own committee saying he could not vote for him based on his stance on Irish Home Rule while the Association that denied his candidature in the by-election endorsed him in spite of the political differences because of his views on the Irish question. In the ensuing discussion after Mackersy's amendment, members favourable to Childers' candidature said that they did not approve of some issues within the Irish Bills that were before Parliament, but that they were confident in Childers and 'that in electing Mr Childers they would be sending to Parliament a man who would not take an extreme view of those measures, but would pursue a safe and a reasonable course'.⁷⁰ Childers was endorsed with seventy-three votes to thirty-six opposed.⁷¹ As a result, both of the Liberal organisations in the South ended up supporting Childers' candidature even though they had been at odds with one another since the formation of the South Liberal Association in 1885. They had split into two separate organisations in early 1886 and had voted differently on the Irish question just one month prior. With the Government falling, it seems that these groups in the South were at last coming together to support the Liberal cause.

⁶⁹ *The Scotsman*, 21 Jun 1886, 5.

⁷⁰ *The Scotsman*, 21 Jun. 1886, 5.

⁷¹ *The Scotsman*, 21 Jun. 1886, 5.

East

The strain that the Irish question placed on the local Liberal Associations is displayed perfectly by the Eastern Liberal Association which held its meeting in late May. The president of the Association was Thomas Sloan, a Radical who had strongly opposed Goschen's candidature in 1885. Sloan was against the Irish Bills and thus favoured Goschen. During the course of the meeting, two opposing resolutions were proposed. The first was for the members of the Association to express their support of the Irish Bills as well as their 'unabated confidence in Her Majesty's Government'. This resolution also condemned the actions of the district's MP, Goschen, who had come out strongly against Irish Home Rule and thus the Government. The second resolution, proposed by Sloan, disapproved of the Irish Bills on the grounds that they 'did not maintain sufficiently the principle of popular representation' and that it was unfair to levy a tax on England and Scotland for the benefit of the Irish landowners.⁷²

The resolution in favour of the Government's Bills passed with over eighty per cent in favour. Upon the vote, Sloan resigned in protest from his post as the president of the Association. Sloan was not alone in protesting the Association in this way as executive members in other Liberal Associations in Scotland also resigned when motions were passed against their member. After the resolution against Goschen, members of the Association's Executive Committee who opposed the Irish Bills suddenly questioned the Association's legitimacy. One such member 'held that the Association had lost its commission at the last election and that it did not represent the Eastern Division'. He then proposed electing new members to the Association. Councillor McLachlan, who took the chair as interim president, ruled that the current members were to hold their positions until the end of 1888, as was understood during their election. The meeting was then adjourned with cheers for Gladstone.⁷³

The Radical and Advanced Liberal Association for the East Division of Edinburgh was also divided on the Irish question, but not to the same extent as the Eastern Liberal Association. They too proposed two motions: one expressed

⁷² *The Scotsman*, 26 May 1886, 6.

⁷³ Savage, 'Scottish politics'. Liberals resigned from associations in Tradeston, Blackfriars, and Patrick; *The Scotsman*, 26 May 1886, 6.

confidence in Gladstone and approved the measures of the Irish Home Rule Bill and the other supported Irish Home Rule on Irish issues, but maintained the importance of keeping Irish members in the Imperial Parliament ‘on the principle that there can be no taxation without representation’. Although the vote was split with those favouring the current Bill losing, none of the members resigned or left the Association in protest.⁷⁴

After the Irish Home Rule Bill was defeated in Parliament, the Associations readdressed the question. In late June both the Eastern Liberal Association and the Eastern Radical and Advanced Liberal Association voted on endorsing Robert Wallace as their candidate for the coming election. Wallace was a former Minister at Greyfriars and Editor of *The Scotsman* and at the time was an English barrister. He was unanimously adopted as the candidate for the Eastern Liberal Association. McLachlan, who had been elected president after Sloan stepped down, said that ‘he would have been very much astonished if there had been any amendment’ to Wallace’s nomination.⁷⁵ It appears that all of the members opposing Irish Home Rule left the Association after the endorsement of the question in May.

The Eastern Radical and Advanced Liberal Association also voted in favour of endorsing Wallace. Although the vote of ninety-five to eight was not unanimous, there was not much opposition brought against Wallace in this Association. This is perhaps more impressive than the unanimous vote in the Eastern Liberal Association. The unanimous vote is easily explained by the fact that those who had opposed the Irish question left the Association after it endorsed Irish Home Rule in May. However, this Radical Association did not vote to endorse the Bill in late April, but voted to endorse a candidate who supported Gladstone against Goschen who had voted against the Irish bills. The members who voted against endorsing Wallace claimed to do so because they did not want members to be bound to any candidate, a familiar cry to the last election.⁷⁶ Perhaps their endorsement had more to do with the personalities and less to do with the Irish question.

⁷⁴ *The Scotsman*, 30 Apr. 1886, 7.

⁷⁵ J. C. Smith and W. Wallace (eds), *Robert Wallace: Life and Last Leaves* (London, 1903), 294–7; J. R. MacDonald, ‘Wallace, Robert (1831–1899)’, rev. H. C. G. Matthew, *ODNB* (Oxford, 2006), [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28542, accessed 7 Feb. 2008]; *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 9.

⁷⁶ *The Scotsman*, Jun. 22 1886, 6.

Conclusion

Eugenio F. Biagini questioned ‘historians who see 1886 as the “crisis” of Liberalism’. He instead asserts that ‘in focusing on Home Rule Gladstone provided his Scottish and Welsh supporters with an issue on which “old” and “new” Liberals could combine efforts’.⁷⁷ D. A. Hamer expressed a similar view of the Liberal party after the split over Irish Home Rule, writing that although a third of the party left, the remaining Liberals were ‘much more united’.⁷⁸ Even historians such as John Belchem and Michael Fry who view the Liberal split along ideological lines acknowledge the Liberal Party’s newfound unity after the Irish Home Rule split.⁷⁹ The following table shows an overview of the movements on Irish Home Rule of the seven Liberal Associations in Edinburgh between April and July 1886.

	<i>April & May</i>	<i>June & July</i>
Edinburgh Western Liberal Association	support	support
Edinburgh Central Liberal Association	no decision	no vote
Liberal Association of the Central Division of Edinburgh	oppose	oppose
Edinburgh Southern Liberal Association	support	support
The Parliamentary Liberal Committee for South Edinburgh	oppose	support
Edinburgh Eastern Davison Liberal Association	support	support
The Radical and Advanced Liberal Association for the East Division of Edinburgh	oppose	support

In Edinburgh, as noted in the above table, there was a great deal of movement on the Irish question within the Liberal Associations between Gladstone’s announcement of Irish Home Rule and the 1886 election. During the debate on the Irish question

⁷⁷ Eugenio F. Biagini, *Gladstone* (Basingstoke, 2000), 108–13.

⁷⁸ D. A. Hamer, ‘The Irish question and Liberal politics, 1886–1894’, *The Historical Journal*, 12 (1969), 511–32.

⁷⁹ Belchem, *Class, Party and the Political System in Britain*, 39–41; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 108–9.

⁸⁰ *The Scotsman*, 14 Apr 1886, 9; 20 Apr. 1886, 5; 22 Apr. 1886, 6; 24 Apr. 1886, 8; 30 Apr. 1886, 7; 5 May 1886, 8; 19 May 1886, 9; 26 May 1886, 6; 15 Jun. 1886, 5; 17 Jun. 1886, 5; 21 Jun 1886, 5; 22 Jun. 1886, 6; 23 Jun. 1886, 9; 25 Jun. 1886, 6.

between April and May before the second reading of the Bill, the Liberal Associations in Edinburgh were divided on the question with three in favour, three opposing, and one which took no action. The three in favour of Irish Home Rule were all original Associations formed in 1885 and were slanted towards a Radical ideology because they had been taken over by advanced Liberals at their formation. On the other hand, the three new associations, two of which were dominated by Whigs, were against the Bill. Despite the breakup of the original associations into the two separate associations based on their political allegiance to either the Radicals or the Whigs, none of the associations passed these motions without opposition from members within their own association. This indicates that Irish Home Rule affected both the Radicals and the Whigs in Edinburgh causing them to fight amongst themselves over the issue.

After the Bill was defeated and the Government dissolved, only one of the seven Liberal associations in Edinburgh opposed Irish Home Rule. One of the associations did not meet to vote on the issue, but the president of the association held many meetings in favour of Irish Home Rule and was joined by members of the association and defectors from the rival association in the district. Each of the other five Liberal Associations ultimately endorsed Irish Home Rule. This suggests that the Irish question did not divide the Liberals in Edinburgh along ideological lines and that, in effect, the party that was divided in early 1886 along ideological lines was reunited in June and July over the question as most of the associations endorsed Irish Home Rule once it was a question between voting Liberal or not.

CHAPTER SIX

Irish Home Rule and the 1886 Election in Edinburgh

This chapter covers the debate on Irish Home Rule and the role it played during the 1886 general election in Edinburgh. The Irish question raised many issues within the Liberal party. The proposed Bill created such a controversy that many Liberals left the party in protest, whilst others publicly displayed their disagreement with the leadership of the Party and their overt hostility towards Irish Home Rule. The study of the Liberal Party's split over Irish Home Rule has traditionally been preoccupied by the supposed departure of Whigs from the Liberal Party.¹ However, this view has been challenged by historians, as discussed in the previous chapter, who maintain that the Liberal Party's split over Irish Home Rule had an effect on both Radicals and Whigs which resulted in the majority of all Liberals staying loyal to both Gladstone and the Party.² Therefore, although the ideological stances of the Liberal MPs, and subsequently the Liberal candidates in the 1886 election, surely helped them to form their positions on Irish Home Rule, it was not the only determining factor. This leads to this chapter's primary concern of determining what the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh did use to form their positions on Irish Home Rule. The basis of Liberal candidates' support or opposition to Irish Home Rule has been discussed by many historians.³ The arguments that were particularly important

¹ Southgate, *The Passing of the Whigs*, 383–416; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 106–9.

² Lubenow, 'Irish Home Rule'; Hutchison, *A Political History*, 162–8.

³ Barker, *Gladstone and Radicalism*, 54–75; Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, 51 and 250–66; D. George Boyce, 'The State and the citizen: Unionists, Home Rule, Ulster and the British Constitution, 1886–1920', in D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds), *The Ulster Crisis, 1885–1921* (Basingstoke, 2006), 49; L. P. Curtis, Jr., *Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland 1880–*

in the Edinburgh elections were democracy, protection of the Ulster Protestant minority, and opposition to the Land Bill.

The Irish Home Rule debate created a political environment in which people questioned not only who were the true Liberals, but also what liberalism meant. This chapter analyses this conflict over liberalism in Edinburgh. A large portion of the election discourse pertained to defining which candidates were the legitimate Liberals. Catriona Macdonald describes a similar fight that took place in Paisley to determine which candidates would carry on that constituency's tradition of Radicalism.⁴ However, unlike Paisley, in Edinburgh the fight pertained more to Liberalism as a whole and the continuation of the city's tradition as a Liberal beacon. The discourse over which candidates were the true Liberals was incorporated into the candidates' positions on the Irish question. Both the candidates that favoured and opposed Irish home Rule used a rhetorical claim to the 'ownership' of Liberalism. One argument involved the concept of democracy which was a core value of Liberalism. In a democracy the constituents have the right to decide who should govern them. The debate over Irish Home Rule and democracy arose due to the question of who should make that decision. The supporters of Irish Home Rule believed that the decision lay with the people of Ireland who had shown they wanted home rule by voting for Irish Parliamentary party members, while the opponents argued that it should be the whole of the United Kingdom.

Another value of liberalism which became a factor in the discussion was the protection of individuals' independence and liberty under the law.⁵ The opponents of the Bill argued that the Protestant minority would have been subjected to unfair treatment by the Catholic majority of Ireland if the Bill had passed. The rhetoric they used in promoting this argument was anti-Irish and anti-Catholic, sentiments which were further expressed in other opposition to the Bill which was also based on fear and prejudices. They cautioned that Irish Home Rule would lead to a hostile independent Ireland, weaken the Empire, and flood Britain with Irish immigrants.

1892: A Study in Conservative Unionism (Princeton, 1963), 105; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 110; Graham D. Goodlad, 'The Liberal party and Gladstone's Land Purchase Bill of 1886', *The Historical Journal*, 32 (1989), 627-8; McCaffrey, 'The origins of Liberal Unionism', 47-71; O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, 113-7 and 122-9.

⁴ Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, 84-91.

⁵ Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, 250.

Another issue that received significant attention during the 1886 election was the Land Purchase question, which proposed the buyout of landlords to help enable the tenants to purchase land. All of the candidates in Edinburgh addressed the question and none of them favoured the measure. Although there were different reasons for their opposition to the Bill, they were all financial. The Land Purchase question was directly tied to Irish Home Rule. There was a debate on whether or not Irish Home Rule had to be accompanied by the Land Purchase Bill in order to be passed, but no one disputed that for the Land Purchase Bill to pass it had to be accompanied by Irish Home Rule. Due to the low favourability of the Land Purchase Bill, the candidates opposed to Irish Home Rule tried to use its connection to the Land Purchase Bill to gain support in opposition to Irish Home Rule. On the other hand, the candidates who favoured Irish Home Rule downplayed the importance of the Land Purchase Bill by claiming that the bill was already dead.

The last aspect of the election that is looked at is the role played by Gladstone. The name of Gladstone was used by his supporters as a rallying cry. During a speech in Edinburgh, Gladstone himself made a plea to the constituents to help him by defeating one of the candidates in opposition to Irish Home Rule. With Liberalism having been fought over by the opposing candidates during the 1886 election, being aligned with Gladstone in support of Irish Home Rule would have helped more than hurt the candidates' cause in Edinburgh. These issues of liberalism, including democracy, protection of the minority and the debate on the Land Purchase Bill, as well as Gladstone's role in the campaign became the defining points of the debate over Irish Home Rule and thus defining points of the 1886 general election in Edinburgh.

Irish Home Rule

The focus on a single issue in the 1886 general election was much different from the 1885 general election in which there were multiple issues surrounding the election. As discussed in chapter three, the main Scottish question in 1885 was the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland; however, in Edinburgh, both Local Licensing and education were also discussed throughout the election and even rivalled that of disestablishment. Also, the issue of local tradition

was relevant during the election as the candidates tried to present themselves to the constituents in a way that would continue that tradition. Conversely, the 1886 elections, both nationally and locally, revolved around one question: Irish Home Rule. The Irish Home Rule Bill proposed the establishment of a separate parliament in Dublin to deal with Irish matters although some matters were to remain under the control of the Imperial Parliament. The Irish MPs were to sit in the new Irish parliament in Dublin and were to be excluded from Westminster entirely. Ireland was to remain responsible for contributing to defence and such matters as coinage, customs and excise, defence, and foreign policy were still to be dealt with in Westminster. The critics of the Bill argued that a separate parliament in Dublin and the exclusion of Irish MPs from Westminster would lead to a permanent separation. An independent Ireland would weaken the empire and create a potential threat just off the British coast. Also, some felt that it was too costly to implement given the attachment of the Land Purchase Bill that was proposed to buy out Irish landlords. It was these complaints that led some Liberals to oppose the Bill.⁶

The introduction of Irish Home Rule placed a strain on Liberal MPs who were forced to decide whether to support the measures and the Government or vote with seceding Liberals, who for the purpose of this chapter are referred to as Liberal Unionists, and the Conservatives in opposition.⁷ Of the four Edinburgh MPs, who were all Liberal, Childers was the only one to vote for the Bills on the second reading in June 1886. Leading up to this vote, a great deal of pressure was placed on Childers to oppose the Bills. Most of the effort to convert Childers came from Charles Cooper, the editor of *The Scotsman*. Cooper had been Rosebery's confidante in Edinburgh and had supported Gladstone in his Midlothian campaigns. Nevertheless, in 1886, under his editorial leadership, *The Scotsman* became a Unionist paper. Cooper and *The Scotsman* were the first to leak Gladstone's proposed Irish Home Rule Bill on 29 March.⁸ Cooper warned Childers that he would lose his seat if he supported the

⁶ Curtis, *Coercion and Conciliation*, 102–3; O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, 107–17; Biagini, *Gladstone*, 97–109; Burness, *Strange Associations*, 44–46.

⁷ Most of the candidates in Edinburgh were not 'Liberal Unionists' as the Liberal Unionist Association was not established in the East of Scotland until November 1886 and there were not any local Liberal Unionist associations in Edinburgh at that time. They were, however, in opposition to Irish Home Rule and aligned themselves with official Liberal Unionists and, as discussed later in this chapter, used some of the same arguments to oppose the Bill as the official Liberal Unionists.

⁸ Matthew, 'Cooper, Charles Alfred'.

measure of Irish Home Rule in which the Irish were to have control over customs and excise. He even suggested that Gladstone might lose his seat in Midlothian over Irish Home Rule.⁹ Cooper tried to persuade Childers to do as Chamberlain had done and resign from the Cabinet:

The question is not whether you sh[ould] resign y[ou]r seat but whether you sh[ould] resign the Cabinet. The former course w[ould] be ruin: the latter might save Mr. G. from the suicidal course upon which he seems bent. It appears to me that those who think as I do, are bound to sacrifice their personal feeling towards Mr. G. if that be necessary in order to save him from a step which w[ould] be most injurious at once to the Liberal party & most calamitous in its consequences to the country.¹⁰

Cooper was appealing to Childers' admiration of Gladstone and trying to convince him that not only would it have been in his best political interest to stand against Irish Home Rule, but that it would have been in Gladstone's best interest as well. Cooper argued that Childers, along with the other seceding Liberals, would be saving Gladstone from ruining his legacy.

Cooper was not the only one trying to persuade Childers to resign from the Cabinet in protest at the Bills. Mr Buchan, Childers' local election agent, informed Childers of the local reaction to the Bills and what he believed would be the political consequences of supporting them:

I am not going to offer any criticism upon the proposals or to suggest to you any course of action regarding them. I feel that I have no right to do either. But what I wish to say to you & to urge most earnestly upon you is that y[ou]r constituency in my humble judgement w[ould] never return a Member to support such proposals. We are all prepared for a pretty large measure of Home Rule for Ireland, but I am sure this scheme w[ould] not receive the support of more than the merest fragment of the electors.¹¹

Buchan went on to claim that the Bill had placed people 'in a state little short of panic' and that it was 'political suicide' to bring the Bill forward. He also claimed, as

⁹ CUL: Royal Commonwealth Society Library, Childers Papers, RCMS 37/5/178, Mr. Cooper (editor) to Childers, 28 Mar. 1886 and 30 Mar. 1886. For an overview of Chamberlain's resignation see, Marsh, *Joseph Chamberlain*, 232–6.

¹⁰ CUL: Royal Commonwealth Society Library, Childers Papers, RCMS 37/5/178, Mr. Cooper (editor) to Childers, 30 Mar. 1886.

¹¹ CUL: Royal Commonwealth Society Library, Childers Papers, RCMS 37/5/179, Mr. Buchan (local agent) to Childers, 29 Mar. 1886, first letter.

Cooper had done, that the Bill would have placed Gladstone's own seat in Mid-Lothian in danger.¹² Buchan's next attempt to persuade Childers was more forward:

Unless you can succeed in getting Mr. Gladstone very considerably to modify his supposed proposals, I can see no course open to you but the resignation of y[ou]r seat in the Cabinet. Were you to make a firm stand, Mr. Gladstone might take warning. You cannot be more loyal to him than in doing that. ...You have so long been regarded as Mr. Gladstone's lieutenant, that it is only natural that you sh[ould] be looked to to save him from himself & by doing this, to rescue the liberal party from annihilation.¹³

In this letter, Buchan was clearly far from trying to stay neutral as he claimed he was in the last letter. Instead, he was trying to intimidate Childers into resigning from the Cabinet by inciting fear of the loss of his seat and possibly Gladstone's too.

Childers disliked the proposed Bill himself. His opposition was to the control of customs and excise being given to an Irish parliament. Historians and contemporaries portray Childers as having worked with Cooper to expose the proposed draft of the Bill hoping that an outcry against it would persuade Gladstone to make alterations to the Bill. Shortly after the draft of the Bill was printed in *The Scotsman*, the Bill was altered regarding customs and excise.¹⁴ In Childers' biography, his son claims that after the 'obnoxious features of the Bill were struck out' Childers had no problem supporting the Bill. However, throughout the campaign Childers expressed his dislike of the Bill to Cooper.¹⁵ Cooper and Buchan both used the same argument, telling Childers that he needed to stand against Gladstone in order to save him, which appealed to Childers' loyalty to Gladstone. Cooke and Vincent suggest that Childers had been in a senior Cabinet position only due to Gladstone. It was Childers' loyalty that kept him in support of Irish Home Rule

¹² CUL: Royal Commonwealth Society Library, Childers Papers, RCMS 37/5/179, Mr. Buchan (local agent) to Childers, 29 Mar. 1886, first letter.

¹³ CUL: Royal Commonwealth Society Library, Childers Papers, RCMS 37/5/179, Mr. Buchan (local agent) to Childers, 29 Mar. 1886, second letter.

¹⁴ Alastair B. Cooke and John Vincent, *The Governing Passion: Cabinet Government and Party Politics in Britain, 1885–86* (Brighton, 1974), 397–401; Charles Alfred Cooper, *An Editor's Retrospect. Fifty Years of Newspaper Work* (New York, 1896), 403–11. For an in-depth look at Childers' actions, see Cooke and Vincent, *The Governing Passion*, 397–401.

¹⁵ Childers, *Life and Correspondence of the Right Hon. Hugh C. E. Childers*, 249; Cooper, *An Editor's Retrospect*, 410–11. Childers informed Cooper that he was worried that the voters would not support the Bills. Also 'he was expressing his regret that Mr. Gladstone had brought forward the Home Rule Bill, or that he had made it what it was'.

despite his opposition to some parts of the proposed Bill and his belief that support of it would cost him his seat.¹⁶

After the Government's defeat in June on the second reading of the Irish Home Rule Bill, Parliament was dissolved and an election was called to be held in July. The four sitting MPs in Edinburgh all had an opponent come forward to stand against them. Robert Purvis challenged Childers in the South division. Purvis was a forty-two year old English Churchman who had stood unsuccessfully for the Abingdon division of Berkshire in 1885. He had attended university at Downing College at Cambridge and at the time of the election was a barrister at Middle Temple.¹⁷ William McEwan a local man originally from Alloa, stood against Wilson in the Central district. McEwan at age fifty-nine had no experience in politics, but was well-known in Edinburgh through his trade as a local brewer.¹⁸ There were two candidates that stood in Edinburgh in 1886 that were named Robert Wallace. The first Robert Wallace, from here on referred to as Mr Wallace, was Buchanan's opponent in the West district. Mr Wallace was a thirty-six year old Protestant from Ireland who was educated at Queen's University in Dublin and, like Buchanan and Purvis, was a barrister at Middle Temple. He had been unsuccessful in a parliamentary campaign for Wadsworth in 1885.¹⁹ The other Robert Wallace, hereafter referred to as Dr Wallace, was a fifty-five year old local who was educated at the University of St Andrews, Edinburgh University and had received a DD from the University of Glasgow. Although Dr Wallace had been called to Middle Temple in 1881 he was well-known for his past service in the community as Chair of Church History at Edinburgh University, a minister at Greyfriars and the editor of *The Scotsman*.²⁰

Even though all eight of the candidates in Edinburgh in 1886 professed to be Liberals, they were divided on the question of Irish Home Rule. Their split on support of Irish Home Rule was in contrast to the 1885 election where the Liberal candidates that stood against one another seemed to do because of their ideologies. In

¹⁶ Cooke and Vincent, *The Governing Passion*, 397; CUL: Royal Commonwealth Society Library, Childers Papers, RCMS 37/5/183, Childers to Carmichael, 3 Apr. 1886. Childers believed that he was to lose his seat in Edinburgh if the Irish were given control of customs and excise.

¹⁷ *The Times*, 30 Jun. 1886, 8.

¹⁸ Donnachie, 'McEwan, William'.

¹⁹ *The Times*, 30 Jun. 1886, 8; *The Scotsman*, 28 Jun. 1886, 1.

²⁰ MacDonald, 'Wallace, Robert'.

the 1885 election the contrast between the candidates was largely between Radicals and Whigs, even though these differences became evident because of their stances on questions such as disestablishment, local licensing and free education. During the 1886 election the candidates' ideological stances of Whig or Radical did not correlate to a particular stance on Irish Home Rule.

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Support IHR</i>	<i>Oppose IHR</i>
Buchanan		Radical
Childers	Whig	
Goschen		Whig
Wilson		Radical
Purvis		Whig
McEwan	not known	
Mr Wallace	Radical	
Dr Wallace	Radical	

As seen in the above table, there were two Whigs and two Radicals who opposed Irish Home Rule and there were at least two Radicals and one Whig who supported it. On the question of Irish Home Rule, a pre-existing Whig or Radical ideology was not a main factor when it came to whether or not the candidates in Edinburgh supported the measure.

The role of Liberalism

Irish Home Rule was certainly the main question of the 1886 election, but it served as a lightning rod for wider questions about the past, present, and future of Liberalism. The Liberal party was openly fighting amongst itself in 1886 as they had done previously in 1885, but in 1886 it led to a split in the Party. The formation of

²¹ MacDonald, 'Wallace, Robert'; Spinner, 'Goschen, George Joachim'; Carr, 'Childers, Hugh Culling Eardley'. The remaining candidates' ideologies were derived from the following: both Buchanan and Wilson should be classified as more advanced than true Radicals, but their support of disestablishment, local licensing and free education during the 1885 election, discussed in chapters three and four, places them in this category; Mr. Wallace is classified as a Radical for his support of a progressive land tax and local licensing during the 1885 election for Wadsworth in *Daily News*, 14 Aug. 1885, 3; Purvis due to his staunch stance in favour of Established Churches during the 1885 election in the Abingdon division of Berkshire in *Jackson Oxford Journal*, 26 Sep. 1885, 1; this was the first political race for McEwan, therefore, due to lack of information, it was not possible to form an opinion on him.

Liberal Unionist organisations to help the seceding Liberals organise support for their candidacies had a profound impact on the 1886 election in Scotland. In forming these organisations, Edinburgh and the East of Scotland greatly differed from Glasgow and the West. The West of Scotland Liberal Unionist Association was established in May before the 1886 election whereas the East of Scotland Liberal Unionist Association was not formed until November, several months after the July election.²² Burness concludes that in 1886 the success of the Liberal Unionist candidates in the West was due in part to the rapid establishment and organisation of the Liberal Unionist Associations.²³ The Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh were in communication with the Conservatives who, in order to strengthen the opposition to Irish Home Rule, declined to run their own candidates and instead recommended that Conservative constituents vote for the Liberal Unionist candidates.²⁴ Although, the Liberal Unionists candidates in the west still claimed to be Liberals, the fact that they had established a separate party from the Liberal party could have reinforced the idea that they had abandoned the Liberal party. The lack of an official Liberal Unionist Association gave the Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh the opportunity to still claim to be the Liberal candidates instead of galvanising the fact that they were part of a different political party.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Liberal Associations had been damaged from the 1885 election and the continuation of the dispute over legitimacy from that election. Therefore, at the start of the Home Rule crisis, the Liberal Associations were split on their support of the policy, but as the election came most of the Associations began to support Irish Home Rule and the candidates who favoured its passage. The legitimacy of their endorsement was used by the candidates to justify that they were the true Liberals in the races. The best example of this is Childers, who during the by-election earlier in the year, had viewed the Liberal Association as irrelevant. He had agreed to come forward as a Liberal candidate without even discussing it with or seeking an endorsement from the Association. However, a few months later during the 1886 general election, Childers used the Liberal Association as justification for his candidature, asking his constituents for

²² Burness, *Strange Associations*, 48.

²³ Burness, *Strange Associations*, 44–68.

²⁴ *The Scotsman*, 19 Jun. 1886, 11; 30 Jun. 1886, 8.

support and saying that the Liberal Associations ‘are fairly representative of the opinions of the great majority of the Liberal electors of South Edinburgh. And, therefore, I appear before you to-night as the accepted candidate of both divisions of the party which have hitherto acted through separate Associations; and it is on that basis that I ask you to return me again’.²⁵ Instead of disregarding the Association, Childers was using the legitimacy of the Liberal Association’s endorsement to assert that he was the true Liberal in the race and that he deserved to have their vote just as the Radical candidates had done during the 1885 general election in Edinburgh. It was quite different circumstances as Childers pointed out he had been endorsed by two separate Liberal Associations representing different wings of the Liberal Party.

The 1886 fight was not in the familiar manner of Radical versus Whig, but instead it was seemingly over a single question that ultimately required the members of the Party, both candidates and constituents, to address what it meant to be a Liberal. In the discourse of defining Liberalism in 1886 the Liberal Unionist candidates were accused of and attacked for abandoning the principles and party of Liberalism. Catriona Macdonald describes this fighting within the candidates’ campaign rhetoric in her study of Paisley politics. Parker Smith, the Liberal Unionist candidate in Paisley, was attacked for leaving the Liberal Party and was accused of being a Tory. Smith’s commitment to Liberalism was then questioned which led to the question of which candidates legitimately represented Liberalism.²⁶ Macdonald concludes:

The question of identity, the creation of new and the adaptation of old, was a critical question in the election of 1886. Liberalism had to be re-defined in opposition to its “bastard” offspring, as well as to a Conservatism, the emphasis of which had changed from Protector of the Faith to Protector of the Empire. Home Rule thus went beyond the re-alignment of policy to a re-definition of Liberal identity.²⁷

This redefinition of Liberalism was fought out both in the local election campaigns and in the national context. The fight in both Paisley and Edinburgh was over who would carry on the city’s tradition of Liberalism. Edinburgh’s tradition of Liberalism was shared by both the Radicals and Whigs. From the First Reform Act to the mid-

²⁵ *The Scotsman*, 1 Jul. 1886, 5.

²⁶ Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, 84–91.

²⁷ Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, 91.

nineteenth century, Edinburgh was dominated by Whig politics. In 1865 Duncan McLaren, a Radical, was able to break the Whigs' dominance over the city. McLaren remained an MP for Edinburgh until he retired in 1881 during which time the city was usually represented by both wings of the Liberal party.²⁸

The same attacks used in the fight over defining Liberalism in Paisley were directed towards the Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh as well. The fight in Edinburgh also had its roots in the tradition of the city. Just as local traditions were significant during the 1885 election, they played an important role in the 1886 elections. Liberalism and the defence of Liberalism became one of the main issues in Edinburgh during the election in 1886. Liberal candidates in Edinburgh used the defence of Liberalism as an attack against the Liberal Unionist candidates. There were other traditions of the city that were brought up during the election, but Liberalism was by far the most discussed and had the greatest effect on the elections in Edinburgh in an effort to assert which candidates had the legitimate claim to represent Liberalism and thus carry on the Liberal tradition of the city.

When three of the city's four MPs voted against the Government on the Irish Bills, there was a cry that the city's tradition of Liberal representation was under attack. This is evident in Dr Wallace's reason for entering the race. Wallace asserted that 'the most vital and cardinal principles of Liberalism were at stake, and so many persons were deserting from them'. He went on to comment on the current political state in Edinburgh in 1886: 'When three out of its four representatives had turned their backs upon the party to which they belonged – (cheers) – he thought that as an old citizen of Edinburgh – (hear, hear) – he was in measure bound to do his humble best in what he regarded as a good and great cause'.²⁹ As noted in chapter four, constituents in Edinburgh had a tradition of electing local men. Accordingly, Dr Wallace referred to his local connection to Edinburgh as an aside to the main cause of his entrance which he claimed to be the fight for the city's tradition of Liberalism. With this reason, he placed himself within the tradition of the city by establishing that he was standing as a Liberal to fight for the continuation of Liberal representation for Edinburgh. This election cry was used by supporters of the

²⁸ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832–1885*, 539–40; Hutchison, *A Political History*, 162–3; Boase, 'McLaren, Duncan'.

²⁹ *The Scotsman*, 17 Jun. 1886, 5–6.

candidates as well. Macpherson, Chairman of McEwen's election committee, used the same sentiment in support of McEwen's candidature when he said, 'the most Liberal Government the country had ever seen was driven from power by the members for sixteen Liberal constituencies having voted with the Tory party, and that one of those sixteen members was the member for the Central Division of Edinburgh'. Macpherson was thus arguing that the main reason to support McEwen was because he was standing up for Liberalism. Not only were members of the Liberal Party behind the defeat of a Liberal Government, but they were also representing Edinburgh which tarnished its reputation as a Liberal stronghold.³⁰

One of the main priorities of the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh was to project to the constituents that they were the true bearers of the flame of Liberalism because the Liberal Unionists had abandoned the party and aligned themselves with the Conservatives. In order to present this view to the constituents, the Liberal candidates questioned the Liberal Unionists' commitment to Liberalism and attacked them for abandoning the Party. Some of the attacks of the Liberal candidates were subtle and suggestive such as the approach that Childers took against Purvis. Childers informed his constituents that 'while regretting that he had to controvert the position taken up by one who until within the last few months belonged to the same party as himself, and who as a Liberal contested a seat at last election, he would behave towards him with perfect courtesy'. With this statement, Childers outlined Purvis' abandonment of the Liberal Party and thus marked Purvis as no longer being a Liberal.³¹ Others, such as Mr Wallace, were very clear in their intent. Mr Wallace first introduced himself to his constituents through a letter in which he stated that he was standing in the division in the Liberal interest and that he was 'in entire sympathy with the Liberal Party' thus making it clear that he was a Liberal and completely stood with the Liberal Party. After establishing this, he was able to attack Buchanan's commitment to Liberalism saying of Buchanan that 'while still wearing the cloak of the party to which he professed to belong, [he] was willing to raise his hand against that party and destroy its influence, not only in that division but throughout the country'.³² Mr Wallace hoped that by casting Buchanan as standing

³⁰ *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 8.

³¹ *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 8.

³² *The Scotsman*, 28 Jun. 1886, 1; 2 Jul. 1886, 6.

against the tide of Liberalism, the race might be shifted to one of party instead one of policy. Dr Wallace attacked Goschen's commitment to Liberalism for abandoning the Party as well. Dr Wallace stated that one of the main reasons he entered the race was that 'he did not consider, judging from Mr Goschen's published opinions or his conduct, that he was a representative of Liberal opinion, more especially of advanced Liberal opinion; he was, in fact, merely a Tory in plain clothes'. Dr Wallace also tried to present himself as the only legitimate Liberal candidate in the race by claiming that 'Mr Goschen was no longer the candidate of the Liberal party, nor the Gladstonian candidate; he was the candidate whose candidature was now viewed, not only with suspicion, but with conscientious and intense dislike, by the real Liberal party'.³³ Dr Wallace presented himself as being on the side of Liberalism and Goschen as being on the side of Conservatism. He then placed the race on a grand scale: 'Mr Goschen was certainly the ablest man among the Liberal seceders, and the contest in that division was that on which the eyes of the country would be fixed.' With this, Dr Wallace presented the race as being about much more than just Irish Home Rule. He wanted the constituents to know that this race was to be looked at, because of Goschen's stature, as an indicator of the future of Liberalism. Therefore, this race placed Edinburgh in the spotlight of the nation and consequently was representative of all of Edinburgh.³⁴

The Liberal candidates' main goal in pursuing the tactic of questioning the Liberal Unionists' commitment to Liberalism was to try to present the election as Liberal versus Conservative instead of a fight between opposing Liberals for control of the Party. Once again, Dr Wallace's comments on the election present this perfectly:

...although certain members of their Liberal party were temporarily or permanently against them, their real opponents were the Tory party, with which these seceding Liberals had allied themselves. It had been attempted to be argued that a Tory character could not be given to these seceders, because their antecedents were so manifestly Liberal. All the same, however, they had gone in the way of the Tories, and while it might not seem strange that a few Liberals had mistaking the way of Liberalism, it would be a very strange thing indeed if the mass of the Tory party had mistaken the way of Toryism.³⁵

³³ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jun. 1886, 6; 23 Jun. 1886, 9.

³⁴ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jun. 1886, 6.

³⁵ *The Scotsman*, 1 Jul. 1886, 5.

If the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh were successful and the constituents viewed the Liberal Unionists' vote against the Irish Home Rule Bills as abandonment of the Liberal party, and ultimately a vote in support of the Conservatives, the Liberal Unionist candidates would have faced a challenge in securing support among the Liberal constituents who might have been against the Irish Bills. Whether or not the tactic worked, it had an effect on the election as all four of the Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh scrambled to avoid being perceived as anti-Liberal. They each defended their commitment to Liberalism during the 1886 election campaigns.

The Liberal Unionist candidates defended themselves from this attack by denying claims that they had abandoned Liberalism and the Liberal party. Of the four Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh only Buchanan and Goschen had a sound parliamentary record. Wilson was an MP as well, but had only been elected in November and Purvis had previously stood for a seat, but failed to be returned to Parliament. Both Buchanan and Goschen stood by their parliamentary records to defend their commitment to Liberalism. Speaking to constituents, Buchanan 'said that as far as his Liberalism was concerned, and his opinion and Parliamentary conduct, he had a record against him of the past five years which was open to every one in Edinburgh'.³⁶ Goschen had a problem being viewed as somewhat anti-Liberal due to his parliamentary record, but he insisted that, other than his vote against the franchise extension, his record was a 'clean one'.³⁷ These candidates hoped that their past commitment to the Liberal Party and Liberalism would prove sufficient in persuading constituents who doubted their current commitment to Liberalism. Oddly, Wilson used his past commitment to Gladstone as an indication of his commitment to Liberalism even though it was his stance against Gladstone on the Irish Bills that brought people to question whether or not he was a committed Liberal. Wilson asked his constituents to remember that 'he had been a follower of Mr Gladstone's all his life'. He was trying to convey that it was only on this one issue that he differed from Gladstone. Wilson, who voted for the Irish Bills on the first reading, even described to the constituents the 'great anxiety' and difficulty he had voting against Gladstone

³⁶ *The Scotsman*, 1 Jul. 1886, 5.

³⁷ *The Scotsman*, 24 May 1886, 5. Goschen voted against the extension of the franchise in 1884. He believed that the counties should have introduced local government first so that the people could get acquainted with the process of government.

on the second reading.³⁸ Of all the Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh, Purvis faced the most scrutiny over his commitment to Liberalism, most likely due to being the only Liberal Unionist candidate in Edinburgh that was not a sitting MP and thus not defending his seat. He was running against Childers who was the only MP in Edinburgh who had voted for the Irish Bills. Purvis assured his constituents that he was in Edinburgh as a Liberal and ‘nobody who knew anything about him could deny or could canvass his assertion that he was a perfectly good Liberal’. Furthermore, he gave his membership in the Reform Club and Eighty Club as credentials of his Liberalism.³⁹ Still, Purvis had a difficult time conveying his commitment to Liberalism because he was an outsider coming in to defeat a sitting Liberal MP.

The Liberal Unionists’ claims that they were Liberals standing for Liberalism did not convince all of the Liberal constituents in Edinburgh as they were all heckled over their political identities during the election. Constituents at one meeting heckled Purvis when he began his response to a question with ‘as a Liberal’ which was met with shouts of ‘What?’ and laughter from the audience members.⁴⁰ The other three Liberal Unionist candidates were all accused of being Tories by constituents shouting ‘Tory’ or ‘Turncoat’ during their campaign speeches.⁴¹ This kind of public reaction not only hurt the Liberal Unionist campaign, but also their potential voters who might have been worried about facing the same sort of allegations of being anti-Liberal. In an attempt to counter the labelling of Liberal Unionists and their supporters as being anti-Liberal, the Dean of Faculty of Advocates, Mr Mackintosh, spoke at a Purvis meeting:

...Electors had only one question to ask themselves, “Is the candidate before me a unionist or a separatist?” (Cheers.) ... It was cowardice of the worst kind for a man – (cheers) – who had convictions upon this question of the hour to hesitate to act upon these convictions – (cheers) – because he was afraid of offending friends or loosening party ties, or of being called a Tory, or of being nick-named a seceder. He was not afraid of being called a seceder –

³⁸ *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9.

³⁹ *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 8.

⁴⁰ *The Scotsman*, 26 Jun. 1886, 7.

⁴¹ Buchanan was called a Tory in *The Scotsman*, 1 Jul. 1886, 5; Goschen was called a Tory in *The Scotsman*, 25 Jun. 1886, 5–6 and 28 Jun. 1886, 8; Wilson was called a Tory and Turncoat in *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9.

(cheers) – and he found himself in the company, amongst others, of Mr John Bright.⁴²

Mackintosh was trying to move the election away from party politics, as the Liberal candidates were trying to make it, and instead frame the debate solely on the Irish question. This is why John Bright, the MP for Birmingham Central and one of the leading Radicals since the 1860s, was mentioned.⁴³ Bright's main opposition to Irish Home Rule was the lack of protection of the Ulster minority and his opposition was pointed to by other seceding Liberals because his commitment to Liberalism was hard to question.⁴⁴ The Liberal Unionists and their supporters hoped that by producing someone that the constituents did not question regarding his commitment to Liberalism and who was against the Irish Bills, their own commitment to Liberalism might no longer be questioned.

The Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh tried to convince the constituents that although they were standing against Gladstone on the lone issue of Irish Home Rule, they were still Liberals and the election was not about political parties, but instead it was about the Irish question. An example of this is Goschen's claim that the 'Irish question [did] not constitute one of the questions which separates parties, and that there are as strong representatives of Liberalism, advanced Liberalism, of Radicalism, on the side of the opposition to Her Majesty's Government as there are in the ranks of their supporters'.⁴⁵ The other three Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh pointed this out to their constituents as well. The argument that there were many Liberals on both sides was used by the Liberal Unionists to defend their stance against Irish Home Rule by pointing to prominent Liberals who were also against the Irish Bills. Bright was the most often mentioned and was not only used as a prominent Liberal, but also as an indicator that Advanced Liberals were against Irish Home Rule too. Another prominent Liberal that was mentioned was Chamberlain whose Radicalism was clearly intended to gain support for the anti-Home Rule stance among the Radical constituents that could have resulted in their vote for the Liberal Unionist candidate. Hartington was brought up

⁴² *The Scotsman*, 5 Jul. 1886, 8.

⁴³ Miles Taylor, 'Bright, John (1811–1889)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2009), [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3421, accessed 26 Nov. 2011].

⁴⁴ Keith Robbins, *John Bright* (London, 1979), 255–6.

⁴⁵ *The Scotsman*, 24 Jun. 1886, 5.

by Purvis who declared his alliance to Hartington and said that he hoped he would gain control of the Government. The Liberal Unionist candidates hoped that the fact that these prominent Liberals were against Irish Home Rule would justify their own dissent from Gladstone and the Party.⁴⁶

McLaren, brother-in-law of John Bright, could be used to support the Liberal Unionists' claim of Liberal opposition to Irish Home Rule as well.⁴⁷ McLaren was seen as 'the people's champion in the city as Gladstone was in the country as a whole'.⁴⁸ McLaren resigned his position in the Edinburgh South Liberal Association in protest of its support of Irish Home Rule and said that he would 'vote for the candidate against the Irish Parliament, whatever his other political opinions might be, whether Radical, Whig, or Tory'.⁴⁹ Such a strong statement made it clear where McLaren stood on the issue, but it may have hurt the Liberal Unionist cause in Edinburgh because McLaren placed Irish Home Rule above the Liberal party instead of making support or opposition to the Irish question a non-issue based on one's commitment to Liberalism as the Liberal Unionist candidates were trying to do.

The Liberal candidates in Edinburgh presented themselves as the true Liberals in the race. To convince the constituents that they were the true Liberals, they had to provide more evidence than simply not having abandoned the Party and Gladstone. They had to defend their stance on Irish Home Rule. For them to accurately define themselves as the true Liberals, their defence of the Irish question had to be based on Liberal principles. For this, the Liberal candidates turned to a core value of liberalism: democracy.

Democracy and Irish Home Rule

Democracy was a core issue during the 1886 election. The Liberal candidates in Edinburgh not only used the concept of democracy as their explanation for supporting Irish Home Rule, but also as a testimony to why they were the true

⁴⁶ Buchanan on Bright in *The Scotsman*, 3 Jul. 1886 7; Goschen on Bright and others in *The Scotsman*, 24 May 1886, 5–6; Wilson on all three others in *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9; Purvis on Hartington in *The Scotsman*, 28 Jun. 1886, 8.

⁴⁷ Taylor, 'Bright, John'; Robbins, *John Bright*, 256.

⁴⁸ Pickard, *The Member for Scotland*, 252.

⁴⁹ Pickard, *The Member for Scotland*, 256.

Liberals in the race. In a recent book Biagini discusses the late-Victorian Liberal understanding of democracy:

Like Chartism, popular liberalism had always been, above all, about democracy, and many of its spokesmen were not the least embarrassed by the clash between parliamentary and popular sovereignty which the Home Rule agitation engendered. Indeed, the radical understanding of freedom was rooted in what Skinner calls 'neo-roman' liberty. 'Self-government' implied more than a set of elected local authorities deriving their legitimacy from Bills passed by the imperial Parliament. It also implied that the legitimacy of Parliament itself depended on popular support and if the latter were to be permanently withdrawn, the former would collapse and government degenerate into despotism. This was the case in Ireland: the Union had to be amended because the overwhelming majority of the people rejected it.⁵⁰

This concept of democracy can be applied to the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh who argued that democracy was a core value of Liberalism. Since democracy was at the core of Liberalism, they believed that supporting Irish Home Rule validated their claim as the legitimate Liberals and thus as a continuation of the city's political tradition. They took this view because the majority of the Irish people supported Home Rule and, according to democracy, the right lay with the people meaning that as Liberals they should support the people's right. This argument was heavily supported by the passage of the Third Reform Act. The franchise was expanded by the Representation of the People Act of 1884, one part of the Third Reform Act which is detailed in chapter one. Most of the increases came from granting the same voting qualification of the burghs to the counties. The new measures in the Third Reform Act resulted in the majority of the male population being eligible to vote for the first time. With the new voting qualifications in place during the 1885 election, eighty-six Irish Parliamentary Party MPs were elected and they represented eighty-five per cent of the Irish people. This enabled the Liberal candidates to argue that the majority of the population in Ireland supported Home Rule.

The Liberal candidates in Edinburgh used the franchise extension in their rhetoric in different ways. Childers expressed a view that the Irish had voted for Irish Home Rule during the 1885 election and that in the 1886 election the constituents '[had] to decide the great question whether the Irish people, who have expressed by an overwhelming majority a desire to do so, shall be allowed themselves to

⁵⁰ Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, 51.

administer according to their own way, and through their own representatives, their own local affairs'.⁵¹ Dr Wallace supported this view as well, calling the 1885 election 'proof' that the Irish people wanted Home Rule.⁵² Once it was established that the Irish electorate voted for Home Rule in the 1885 election, Dr Wallace placed their call for Home Rule into an argument within the ideology of Liberalism:

The right of self-government having once been distinctly demanded by the Irish nation as a nation, they [Great Britain] could not at any time henceforth attempt rightfully to govern them. If they said they would continue to govern them, and they would govern them, that was an unrighteous and indefensible resolution. If they were Tories he could understand such an answer. But if they were Liberals they must be well aware there could be no righteous government without the consent of the governed. (Cheers.) Whoever governed any nation against its own consent was an oppressor and tyrant.⁵³

Dr Wallace was trying to legitimise the Irish call for Home Rule. The Irish had voted for MPs who supported Irish Home Rule and Liberals believed that the right to govern lay with the people.

Mr Wallace, the candidate in the West, used the franchise extension to both attack Goschen for his vote against the extension and to connect to Irish Home Rule the principle of democracy and legitimacy to govern: 'He [Goschen] opposed the extension of the suffrage on the same ground on which he was opposing this measure [Irish Home Rule] to-day – that people of Great Britain were not to be entrusted with the management of their own concerns, but these were to be managed by men elected on an exalted political platform. Precisely the same arguments of unfitness of the working men to govern were used by him then as to-day'.⁵⁴ This idea of connecting the Third Reform Act to Irish Home Rule was also used to attack some of the leading Liberal Unionists. The Liberals pointed out that the Liberal Unionists had supported the extension of the franchise, but after the election they did not want to grant the voters of Ireland what they expressed through their votes. McEwan used this in his characterisation of both Hartington and Chamberlain:

The attitude of mind with which Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain – (hooting) – now regarded the Irish question must be entirely novel, as they

⁵¹ *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 8.

⁵² *The Scotsman*, 17 Jun. 1886, 5–6.

⁵³ *The Scotsman*, 24 Jun. 1886, 6. Dr Wallace also said, 'No Liberal could tell him that any Government which was against the will of the people could be righteous or reasonable' in *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9.

⁵⁴ *The Scotsman*, 1 Jul. 1886, 5–6.

were parties last year to the extension of the franchise in Ireland, which gave the whole people the opportunity of expressing their wishes through their representatives. The Irish people at last election demanded Home Rule, and could the British people refuse such a legitimate demand made in a constitutional manner? (Cheers.) If they did they would set at defiance the cardinal doctrine of the Liberal creed, that the wishes of a free people, when constitutionally expressed, must be given effect to. (Cheers.) He hoped the result of the election would show that although statesmen, from whom better things might have been expected, had forgotten their principles, the great democracy had remained true, and he believed it would declare, in a way not to be misunderstood, that the legitimate demands of Ireland must be conceded. (Cheers.) Lord Hartington and Mr Chamberlain did not ignore the Irish demand, but they refused to meet it.⁵⁵

McEwan used the same arguments of supporting democracy that the other Liberal candidates in Edinburgh expressed in this attack as well by declaring that the Irish voted for Home Rule and that, as Liberals, they should support democracy and the demand of the people in granting them that right.

The Liberal idea of the people's right to govern which the Liberal candidates used in the 1886 election to support the Irish demand for Home Rule, was supported by some of the constituents in the East district. In late June Goschen spoke to his constituents and questioned the rationale of the Irish demand for Home Rule: 'Because 86 members have been returned for Ireland, it is said that justice demands that we should grant what they ask'. He then asked if justice required Ireland to govern itself, why now and not five years ago to which someone in the audience shouted 'franchise'. The outburst stopped Goschen who commented, 'was it only when the people of Ireland had got the franchise? [...] Then justice depends – I want to pin this point – that justice did not appear till – a certain decision had been arrived at the Irish polling booths'.⁵⁶ The Liberal candidates' argument was not that justice depended on votes, but that justice could not be denied to a majority.

Buchanan also challenged the validity of the democracy claim. He questioned the idea that Ireland was entitled to Home Rule because it had elected eighty-five MPs that supported it saying that 'it was contrary to the principle of the Constitution as it at present existed; and that the whole representatives of the United Kingdom and the whole electors, English, Scottish, and Irish, were expected to express and deliver

⁵⁵ *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 8.

⁵⁶ *The Scotsman*, 25 Jun. 1886, 5–6.

their opinions upon the general principles of legislation, and how far they think that any legislation that might be proposed would conduce to the common weal and welfare of the United Kingdom'.⁵⁷ Buchanan argued that the foundation of their democracy encompassed the whole country and, therefore, Irish Home Rule should have been decided based on the wants of the whole country, not just Ireland. This argument does not deny the right of the people to govern, but denied that right to the individual nations that made up the United Kingdom without considering the wants of the United Kingdom as a whole.

Wilson directly challenged the Liberals' perceived idea that the majority of the Irish supported Home Rule. He argued that, although the majority of the Irish MPs were members of the Irish Parliamentary Party, overall the party only received 370,596 of the total 738,000 Irish electorate. This left 430,000 voters that did not support Irish Home Rule in Ireland. With this argument, Wilson was challenging and potentially damaging the Liberal candidates' argument that the majority of the Irish supported Home Rule which was the reason that they as Liberals said they supported the measure. However, Wilson lost credibility on his support of democracy when he criticised the constituents of Ireland:

But of the 370,000, nearly one-fourth were illiterate voters – they could neither read nor write. That left only 300,000 men who could read and write, who could believe intelligently in such matters, who recorded their votes for Mr Parnell's party. Looking at the great issues involved, he asked if they could place upon equal grounds the judgement of men who can read the bills and consider them and that of the men who could not read one of them.⁵⁸

There is some truth to this claim. Hoppen estimated that in 1880 'as few as 3.5' per cent of the Irish electorate was illiterate and the number of illiterate jumped to 'more than a fifth' with the franchise extension in 1884.⁵⁹ Wilson was not the only contemporary who had this attitude towards the newly enfranchised as it was the same taken by opponents to the extension in 1884. Goschen, arguing against the extension to the franchise in 1884, said, 'to give votes to agricultural labourers before they have the slightest experience of responsibility in local matters is a blunder'.⁶⁰ Lord Randolph Churchill, a leading Conservative at the time, characterised the Bill

⁵⁷ *The Scotsman*, 1 Jul, 1886, 5.

⁵⁸ *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9.

⁵⁹ K. Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics, and Society in Ireland 1832–1885* (Oxford, 1994), 30–1.

⁶⁰ *The Star*, 6 Mar. 1884, 4.

as enfranchising ‘...more than a million of perfectly illiterate agricultural labourers, which further is obviously so dangerous and revolutionary that even a strong Liberal like Mr Goschen recoils from it with alarm’.⁶¹ Therefore, Wilson essentially placed himself in the same category, if not further to the right of Goschen, on the issue of franchise extension which, by that time in 1886, Goschen had himself admitted that the vote against the extension was a mistake on his part.⁶²

The Liberal candidates in Edinburgh were able to shape to their benefit the primary question of the election presented to the constituents. The question of the election became much more than support or opposition to Irish Home Rule. Rather, it was which of the candidates would carry on the city’s tradition of Liberalism. The Liberals established that the Liberal Unionists had abandoned the Party by not supporting Gladstone and Irish Home Rule. They next defined their support of Irish Home Rule through democracy which was a core value of their understanding of Liberalism. Therefore, in supporting Irish Home Rule, they were claiming to be the true Liberals and their return to Parliament would have thus continued Edinburgh’s tradition of Liberalism.

Fear and Irish Home Rule

Like the Liberals, the Liberal Unionist candidates used liberalism in defending their stance on Irish Home Rule as well, but their argument ultimately relied on fear. The argument that the passage of Irish Home Rule would be unfair to the Ulster Protestant ‘Loyal minority’ became a standard position for opposition to the Bills.⁶³ George Boyce asserts that this argument was able to ‘tap into the English political tradition that emphasised the freedom of individuals under the law, and the absence of the kind of powerful state apparatus that could bear down heavily on citizens’.⁶⁴ Biagini added to the critique, concluding that ‘Ulster stood for all that British popular liberalism had always espoused, including “independence”’,

⁶¹ *The Scotsman*, 1 Nov. 1883, 6.

⁶² *The Scotsman*, 24 Jun. 1886, 5–6.

⁶³ Curtis, *Coercion and Conciliation*, 104–5. Curtis wrote that the opponents of Irish Home Rule had ‘questions of internal security and of safeguarding the loyalist minority. Boyce, ‘The State and the Citizen’, 49. On this matter Boyce wrote, ‘In 1886 and 1893 the question of justice for the Protestant minority in Ireland was part, but by no means the main part, of England’s case against Home Rule’. Goschen also used the phrase ‘Loyal minority’ to describe the Protestants in Ireland.

⁶⁴ Boyce, ‘The State and the citizen’, 49.

resourcefulness, honesty and determination'.⁶⁵ Therefore, in opposing Irish Home Rule, they believed they were protecting minorities from the majority's use of legitimate power to discriminate against them. Buchanan and Goschen both used this idea in an attempt to incite fear that the Protestant minority would be discriminated against by the Catholic majority. Buchanan conveyed that he was worried about the future treatment of 'minorities' – non Catholics – in Ireland if they were given Home Rule. He believed that the present Government 'should devise a scheme which should provide protection from injustice for all classes of the community'.⁶⁶ Goschen went further than just suggesting that the minorities might be treated poorly and predicted that the National League would discriminate against the 'Loyal minority' if Ireland was granted Home Rule. At one of his speeches to labourers, a worker in the crowd, who a reporter from *The Scotsman* described as 'apparently an Irishman', responded to Goschen's claim that Gladstone said that the Protestant minority would be protected. Goschen responded that he would not support any Bill that did not state how they were to be protected.⁶⁷ At another meeting he restated his fear for the 'minority' if 'Roman Catholics are to manage the affairs of the Protestants'. Goschen also spoke of the minority in Ulster: 'They are men of Scottish and English descent; they are Presbyterians, and they look forward with the greatest dread to the whole of the Executive powers of the country being put into the hands of those whose antecedents they know'.⁶⁸ Goschen was trying to incite a fear of Catholics and their supposed future treatment of Protestants if Home Rule was to pass. This was in the same parliamentary division where Costelloe was attacked for being Roman Catholic during the 1885 election; therefore, Goschen perhaps thought it would resonate with the constituents.

The Liberal Unionist approach of protecting minorities overlapped with bigotry and racism expressed towards the Irish Catholics. This is further demonstrated through the use of fear in their rhetoric opposing Irish Home Rule. The Liberal Unionists presented the question of Irish Home Rule to their constituents as leading to a separate and independent Ireland, thus weakening the supremacy of the Empire and flooding the job market in Britain with Irish immigrants. Buchanan used

⁶⁵ Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, 250.

⁶⁶ *The Scotsman*, 25 Jun. 1886, 6.

⁶⁷ *The Scotsman*, 28 Jun. 1886, 8; 30 Jun. 1886, 7.

⁶⁸ *The Scotsman*, 3 Jul. 1886, 6.

the complaint that Irish Home Rule would hinder the supremacy of Parliament. He believed that if a separate Parliament was created, it would take authority away from the Imperial Parliament and consequently weaken its power.⁶⁹ Buchanan may have taken this approach based on conversations with local Edinburgh politicians from his district. He spoke with three politicians including Bailie Anderson who had been the Chairman of the Western Division Liberal Association. They all addressed a desire for Ireland to be given control over its local affairs, but they were against establishing a new governmental body in Dublin separate from the Imperial Parliament.⁷⁰ It is unknown whether these local politicians addressed the concern that the supremacy would be weakened by the second Parliament in Dublin, but Buchanan's rhetoric would have resonated with their desire of opposing it.

Purvis also attempted to gain support against Irish Home Rule by inciting fear and prejudice. At a campaign speech he argued for equality, stating that he supported Home Rule for all the nations of the United Kingdom, but then he posed the question: 'Why not give Home Rule to Scotland? (Cheers, and "We are not ready for it.") The law-loving Scottish people not ready for it, and those Irish, whose historic record was for the last generation a black roll of crime—(hear, hear, cheers, and hisses)—they were ready for it!'.⁷¹ With this, Purvis characterised all Scots as obedient and all Irish as criminals. He then went on to claim that the Government would need extra defence on the West coast and an extra fleet in the Irish Sea because a self-governed Ireland would be hostile to Britain and they would have to be prepared to defend themselves against them.⁷² He was clearly stating that the Irish were criminals and could not be trusted to govern themselves hoping that the constituents would subscribe to this view and vote against giving them Irish Home Rule. Purvis was certainly not the first person in opposition to Irish Home Rule to make this argument. During the debates on the Bill in April, Lord Salisbury expressed the same reservations about the Irish in what Curtis describes as 'racist overtones'.⁷³ Prejudice towards the Irish and views that they were an inferior race were not uncommon in Victorian Britain. The Irish were often characterised as an

⁶⁹ *The Scotsman*, 25 Jun. 1886, 6.

⁷⁰ BL, Gladstone Papers, Add. 56447, ff. 12–5, Buchanan to Gladstone, 20 Jan. 1886.

⁷¹ *The Scotsman*, 28 Jun. 1886, 8.

⁷² *The Scotsman*, 28 Jun. 1886, 8.

⁷³ Curtis, *Coercion and Conciliation*, 103.

uncivilised, dangerous, ape-like race.⁷⁴ De Nie contributes this view of the Irish to their lack of Britishness commenting that ‘in British eyes, the eternal Paddy was forever a Celt, a Catholic, and a peasant’.⁷⁵ Due to this ‘otherness’, they were viewed as inferior to the British.

More than any other candidate in Edinburgh during the 1886 election, Goschen made use of the tactic of trying to scare his constituents into voting for him. He asserted that if Home Rule passed, a great number of Irish would come to England and Scotland to find work and flood the market. This was done in hope of scaring the labourers that they would have to compete with an influx of cheap labour. One worker, Mr Paterson, who countered a motion put forth in favour of Goschen, proclaimed, ‘He had got to say that Mr Goschen would not intimidate the men of Edinburgh or elsewhere by saying that Irishmen would come over and take up their position’. Upon the vote, disorder broke out and the chairman declared that the motion in favour of Goschen passed unanimously, although this was later changed to a majority. When Goschen thanked them for passing the motion there was interruption and cries of ‘nonsense’.⁷⁶ Although Edinburgh had a tradition of being anti-Catholic, the tactic did not work for Goschen on this occasion. The failure of this fear to resonate with the local workers was likely due to the low numbers of Irish immigrants to Edinburgh. This tactic of scaring the local workers due to the potential loss of employment due to the increase of Irish immigrants was valid in some areas of Scotland where the Irish were seen as cheap labour that caused stagnation of wages. This view of the Irish was particularly strong in the West of Scotland due in large part to the high percentage of Irish immigrants that settled there. In the East of Scotland, Irish and Catholics were still discriminated against, but it was on a much smaller scale than in the West.⁷⁷

The Liberal Unionists’ opposition to Irish Home Rule based on the Liberal principle of protecting minorities was lessened by the rest of their rhetoric. Instead of standing up for minorities, they appeared to be anti-Irish and anti-Catholic. However, the protection of minorities was not their only approach to defend their opposition to

⁷⁴ L. Perry Curtis, Jr., *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Devon, 1971).

⁷⁵ Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: The Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798–1882* (Madison, 2004), 5 and 267–77.

⁷⁶ *The Scotsman*, 1 Jul. 1886, 5.

⁷⁷ Burness, *Strange Associations*, 14–5; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, 106–7.

Irish Home Rule. The Liberal Unionists also opposed Irish Home Rule because of the proposed accompaniment of the Land Purchase Bill for the purpose of buying out the landlords in Ireland.

The Land Purchase Bill

Irish Home Rule was certainly the main question of the 1886 general election in Scotland, including Edinburgh, as well as throughout the rest of the United Kingdom. Although Irish Home Rule was the main question in Edinburgh, the Land Purchase Bill, which was directly tied to Irish Home Rule, occupied a large portion of the election debate. The Edinburgh constituencies were not alone in the importance they placed on the Land Purchase Bill. In his article on the Land Purchase Bill, Graham D. Goodlad agrees with older studies of the Irish question, that little regard was given to the Land Purchase Bill within Parliament after the second reading. However, Goodlad asserts that this view of the Bill alone is short-sighted and points to the significance placed on the Bill by candidates and constituents throughout the country and further indicates that it ‘was a source of heated controversy’.⁷⁸ Hutchison also writes of the importance of the Bill and suggests that opposition to Irish Home Rule for many Radicals in Scotland rested upon their opposition to the Land Purchase Bill.⁷⁹

The Land Purchase Bill was proposed to accompany Irish Home Rule to help the Irish tenants purchase small holdings which they would then be responsible to pay back over a forty-nine year period. It would also free the Irish landlords from the burden of a ‘rebellious tenantry’.⁸⁰ Biagini contends that Gladstone ‘disliked’ the Land Purchase Bill, but believed it, along with Irish Home Rule, was necessary ‘to prevent Irish secession by creating a stable social and constitutional system’.⁸¹ The reason for the Bill’s unpopularity among Liberal constituents was twofold: the amount of money to be spent and to whom the money would be given. First, the estimated cost to implement the Bill was very large – the amount was alleged to be anywhere from £50 to £150 million – and it was to be paid by the taxpayers of Great

⁷⁸ Goodlad, ‘The Liberal party’, 627–8.

⁷⁹ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 163–4.

⁸⁰ Goodlad, ‘The Liberal party’, 627–8; Biagini, *Gladstone*, 105.

⁸¹ Biagini, *Gladstone*, 105.

Britain. Second, and likely more damaging, it was to be paid to landlords who did not generate sympathy from nor were much favoured by the general public.⁸² In Edinburgh, as elsewhere, the Land Purchase Bill was used by Liberal Unionists in an attempt to siphon off Liberal voters that would otherwise have had little problem supporting Liberal candidates and Irish Home Rule. The Liberal Unionist candidates standing in Edinburgh had the perfect opportunity to oppose the Land Purchase Bill based on Liberal principles since it was supposed to generously buy out Irish landlords with taxpayer money. However, instead of forming their argument against the Land Purchase Bill in this way, they all shared the same rhetoric of claiming that the burden of the purchase of land would have unfairly been placed upon the taxpayers of Great Britain due to the Irish being unable or unwilling to repay the money. Although the Liberal candidates claimed that the Bill was already dead, the Liberal Unionist candidates created doubt that it was dead in order to exploit the unpopularity of the Bill amongst Liberal constituents. The Liberal Unionists then raised speculation on the amount that it was to cost. Finally, they questioned the ability and willingness of the Irish to repay the money.

The Liberal Unionists tried to convince the constituents that the Land Purchase Bill was not dead and that it was a necessary inclusion for there to be any settlement of the Irish question. When Buchanan told his constituents that the election was to be decided on whether or not they believed Irish Home Rule was the best settlement for the problems in Ireland, he went on to inform them that the Land Purchase Bill was an ‘inseparable part of the scheme’.⁸³ Goschen went further than just telling his constituents that the Land Purchase Bill was still part of Irish Home Rule. He tried to convince his constituents by rationalising that it would have to be part of the Government’s scheme because Gladstone had said that it was an ‘obligation of honour’ to compensate the Irish landlords:

I see no change in the situation which will justify an escape from that obligation of honour, and I confess I can quite understand many of the feelings which animate my opponents in this hall when they differ from many of my views; but I don’t think they need differ from me upon this, that when a great Minister says that there is an obligation of honour upon the people of

⁸² Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, 10.

⁸³ *The Scotsman*, 5 Jul. 1886, 8.

this country, he cannot lightly withdraw and I believe he will not lightly withdraw it.⁸⁴

Goschen's rationalisation may seem simplistic, but it would have certainly raised doubt amongst the constituents. Purvis also used statements made by Gladstone to support the claim that the Land Purchase Bill was still alive in statements to his constituents. Purvis said, 'As regarded the land question – as a great authority has told them, and he thought rightly told them – it was inseparably connected with such a measure as this, because it was a mere measure of justice, that they should not at any rate desert the law-loving and loyal of Ireland, and hand them over to the disloyal, without at any rate giving them some compensation'.⁸⁵ He took some liberty with Gladstone's statement by referring to the Irish supporters of Home Rule as 'disloyal' and those against as 'law-loving', but his message was the same as Goschen's: the Land Purchase Bill had to accompany Irish Home Rule because Gladstone said that it was a matter of honour and justice.

The opponents of the Land Purchase Bill were able to easily cast doubt on the cost of buying out the Irish Landlords due to the change in the estimate on the Government's part. Gladstone's initial estimate was more than double the revised amount of £50 million which he gave because of the public's unfavourable opinion due in large part to the high cost.⁸⁶ In order to exploit the unfavourable view of the cost, the Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh disputed Gladstone's claim that the cost would be £50 million. At the beginning of the short campaign the cost of the Land Purchase Bill was disputed even among the Liberal Unionist candidates themselves. On 22 June Purvis, acknowledging Gladstone's estimate, claimed that the amount would start at £50 million, but after the initial amount the cost was likely to increase by another £100 million making the total three times the cost predicted by the Government. Two days later Goschen also predicted that the amount would be higher than the Government estimated, but only double at £100 million. He then changed his mind on 29 June and came in line with Purvis' estimate, saying that the Bill might cost as much as £150 million.⁸⁷ The £150 million figure agreed upon by both Purvis and Goschen was almost the equivalent of doubling the entire budget of

⁸⁴ *The Scotsman*, 25 Jun. 1886, 5–6.

⁸⁵ *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 8.

⁸⁶ Goodlad, 'The Liberal party', 633; Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism*, 10.

⁸⁷ *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 8; 25 Jun. 1886, 5–6; 30 Jun. 1886, 7.

the Government.⁸⁸ The claim that the buyout would cost £150 million was not unique to the Liberal Unionists in Edinburgh. Cameron Corbett, a sitting MP in Glasgow, also made the claim in mid-June. Goodlad discusses the use of the £150 million figure throughout the country in material he deemed ‘Unionist propaganda’.⁸⁹ This made an unpopular Bill seem outrageous to the public due to the huge increase in the cost to the taxpayers.

Once the Liberal Unionist candidates had argued that not only was the Land Purchase Bill alive, but also that it would cost three times the amount the Government had claimed, they stressed the enormous burden placed on the taxpayers and created doubt that the money would be repaid by questioning the willingness and ability of the Irish to do so. Goschen aroused suspicion on the ability of the Irish being able to manage their economic affairs without the aid of the United Kingdom:

I have heard a high authority state that it is expected that Ireland will be able to save, and that she will be able to govern herself more cheaply than she has been governed. I doubt it very much, because I do not think that either the critics or the friends of Ireland have ever fastened upon her the epithet that Irishmen were extremely economical. (Laughter.) They are generous, they are open-handed, and open-hearted too – (laughter).⁹⁰

Therefore, by virtue of being Irish alone, the likelihood of them being able to repay the loan for the purchase of land and the other costs of the proposed new Government would have been too great in Goschen’s opinion.

Buchanan also attacked the Land Purchase Bill because he believed that the Irish might not be able to repay the loan. His reasoning was slightly different from Goschen’s as he placed the doubt not with the proposed Irish Government, but rather with the Irish tenants. In the proposed Bill the tenants were to repay the cost of their holding to the Irish Government through fixed instalments over forty-nine years. Buchanan warned that a decrease in the price of produce would leave the tenants unable to afford their repayments over time. Buchanan then varied greatly from the idea of the inability of the Irish to repay and warned that by placing the British taxpayers as the landlord to the Irish tenants, it would create ‘disharmony’ between them as ‘the British Government would be described by the agitators as an alien and

⁸⁸ Goodlad, ‘The Liberal party’, 633.

⁸⁹ Burness, *Strange Associations*, 57; Goodlad, ‘The Liberal party’, 633–40.

⁹⁰ *The Scotsman*, 30 Jun. 1886, 7.

foreign country'. He expressed concern that this might instigate the Irish tenants to stop the repayments since they were going to the British Government.⁹¹ Whether or not the Irish might have been unable or unwilling to repay the loan in the future, Buchanan's goal was the same: to create a concern that the constituents as British taxpayers might be left with the cost.

During one of his speeches, Purvis wrapped the whole basis of the election on this one aspect of the Land Purchase Bill. He asked 'upon what security' was the money lent to buy out the Irish landlords to rely before immediately providing an answer: 'It was on Irish security. ("Why not?") They were to judge for themselves whether Irish security was good or not'. Even though he said that the constituents were to ultimately make the decision, he certainly hoped to help them to decide. He continued by questioning the 'security' and the credibility of the Irish based on pure speculation:

If they were under the impression that the Irish tenants would pay a Saxon Government what they had refused for generations to pay to their Irish landlords, then they should make up their minds to lend the money if they thought it a very good security. But if they thought that it was no security worthy a business man's consideration, than he hoped they would make up their minds to reject the Home Rule Bill and the Government that suggested it.⁹²

Purvis bypassed the argument that the Irish may not be able to repay the money and instead predicted that they would simply refuse to do so. Wilson also bypassed the argument of the Irish being unable to pay and proposed that the Irish tenants might refuse to pay which would leave the Government with only two options: 'either to thin them out, to crush them – (a voice, "Coercion") – or take the price they would give.' Wilson went on to say, 'No good Irishman would ask the bill to pass; no Scotsman or Englishman loving Ireland would ask the bill to pass'.⁹³ Of course, both of Wilson's options were unsatisfactory, but he placed a new dimension to the fear of the Irish not repaying the loan thus leaving the British taxpayer to pay the bill by suggesting that the poor Irish tenants might be placed in danger by the Bill that was meant to help them.

⁹¹ *The Scotsman*, 1 Jul. 1886, 5; 5 Jul. 1886, 8.

⁹² *The Scotsman*, 28 Jun. 1886, 8.

⁹³ *The Scotsman*, 1 Jul. 1886 6.

The Liberal Unionist attack on Irish Home Rule by its association with the Land Purchase Bill was diminished by the position the Liberal candidates took on it. Although all four of the Liberals shared the same position on the Land Purchase Bill, surprisingly, none of them actually supported it either. Whether the Liberal Unionist candidates had successfully tapped into the general feeling on the Land Purchase Bill or had pushed the debate towards their argument, it appears that their campaign against the Bill was successful because the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh shared some of the same concerns about the Bill as the Liberal Unionists professed. The Liberal candidates supported the principle of the Bill, but not the specifics of Bill itself. The main reasons for their opposition to the Bill was its cost to taxpayers and the amount of money going to landlords, even though they disputed the £150 million amount that the Liberal Unionists claimed the Bill would ultimately cost.

Mr Wallace, the Liberal candidate in the West Division, took up the Liberal Unionist complaint about the security of the loan.⁹⁴ He did not speculate on any reason why the Irish might not be able or willing to repay the loan, but he insinuated that there needed to be a higher security to ease the fear amongst the constituents. In contrast, both Dr Wallace and Childers fought against the claim that the Bill was backed by bad security. According to them the security of the loan was good because it was not dependent upon the Irish tenants alone as it was backed by the entire revenue of the proposed Government of Ireland.⁹⁵ Childers had to be worried about the idea that it was a bad security because he was a Cabinet Minister and had recently been the Chancellor of the Exchequer. His motivation in defending the security may have been to avoid an attack for supporting the Bill, but he had discussed the matter with Gladstone in March and called for the security of Irish revenue to be implemented.⁹⁶ Despite Childers' defence of the security of the loan, he still found fault with the Land Purchase Bill. He held that the initial amount proposed was too great. Even though he rejected the figure that the Liberal Unionists had been projecting by saying that the Bill had only allowed for the use of £50 million to buy out the landlords, he went on to reject the sum of £50 to £100 million being used for the purchase saying that it was 'entirely out of the question, and I can in no

⁹⁴ *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 10.

⁹⁵ *The Scotsman*, 2 Jul. 1886 6; 3 Jul. 1886, 7; 23 Jun. 1886 8.

⁹⁶ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44132, f. 226–9, Childers to Gladstone, 18 Mar. 1886.

circumstance support it.’ In his view, even though the security of the loan would have been great, he was against the Bill because the Government’s own revised projection of £50 million was too high. Dr Wallace also disputed the Liberal Unionists’ alleged cost of the Bill and accused them of trying to incite fear amongst the constituents. Dr Wallace said, ‘the Tory Whig camp were further trying to frighten the electors about the Land Purchase Bill. They were continually telling them that if they returned Mr Gladstone to power, they would as a matter of necessity be saddled with taxation that could only be represented by £150,000,000.’⁹⁷

Both McEwan and Dr Wallace opposed the Land Purchase Bill because they felt it was too generous to the Irish landlords. McEwan believed that the Bill had been ‘framed for the ostensible purpose of conciliating the Irish land lords, and consequently the terms offered were greater than the necessity of the position seemed to require’.⁹⁸ Dr Wallace said that he would not support a Land Purchase Bill if it ‘was to be a bill for the benefiting of the Irish landlords’. Instead of attacking the amount of money being called for in the Bill as excessive on its own, McEwan and Dr Wallace took a sound liberal argument in specifically attacking the amount to buy out the landlords as excessive. This should have played well with the Liberal constituents that had an unfavourable view of the landlords. Despite stating that they were opposed to the Land Purchase Bill and pointing out faults with the Bill, all four of the Liberal candidates expressed their support of the principle of the Bill. They all proclaimed that they favoured the idea of Parliament helping the Irish tenants purchase land.⁹⁹ Dr Wallace sums up the reason why the Liberal candidates supported the principle of the Bill saying that he ‘would never look upon a Land Purchase Bill for the benefit of Irish Landlords with favour, but he could not see why they should turn a deaf ear to a request from the Irish peasantry. That was a totally different matter from a demand made by the Irish landlords’.¹⁰⁰

The Liberal candidates tried to avoid the criticism associated with the Land Purchase Bill by proclaiming that they were against it, but at the same time they still supported the principle of the Bill and, more importantly, still supported Gladstone. Their main defence was to announce that the Land Purchase Bill was dead or that the

⁹⁷ *The Scotsman*, 3 Jul. 1886, 7.

⁹⁸ *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9.

⁹⁹ *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9–10; 23 Jun. 1886, 8; 1 Jul. 1886, 5; 26 Jun. 1886, 7.

¹⁰⁰ *The Scotsman*, 26 Jun. 1886, 7; 1 Jul. 1886, 5.

Bill was not tied in any way to Irish Home Rule. Although the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh were not the first to use this tactic and may have just been following Gladstone's lead, they certainly embraced the idea. Goodlad marks Gladstone's speech in Edinburgh on 21 June as a change in the presentation of the Land Purchase Bill to the public and points to Gladstone's effort being followed by other Liberals.¹⁰¹ While this is true of many of the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh, Childers spoke out the day before Gladstone's speech. Speaking to his constituents, Childers proclaimed, 'the proposal itself is dead: the linking of that proposal to the Irish Government proposal is dead'.¹⁰² Over the next couple of weeks the rest of the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh followed Childers' and Gladstone's lead. Dr Wallace told his constituents in the East division that the Land Purchase Bill was dead and that it was no longer part of Irish Home Rule. Mr Wallace disputed the claim that the two Irish Bills were dependent upon one another. In the Central division McEwan insisted that time had run out on the proposed Land Purchase Bill.¹⁰³ The Liberal candidates in Edinburgh wanted the constituents to feel that voting for them only demonstrated a support of Irish Home Rule and not of the Land Purchase Bill. Dr Wallace demonstrated this when he said, 'It was an entire mistake to say that no one could vote for the Irish Government Bill without also voting for the Land Purchase Bill, which was no longer before the country. Its merits had no relevancy whatever with the Home Rule Bill. Mr Gladstone had thrown the Irish Land Purchase Bill overboard'.¹⁰⁴ Dr Wallace not only defended himself against the Liberal Unionists, but he also used Gladstone, the Edinburgh Liberal candidates' best weapon to do so.

Gladstone's influence

Gladstone's image as a great Liberal statesman was employed in Edinburgh by both supporters of the Liberal candidates and those candidates themselves in an attempt to gather support amongst the Liberal constituents. As discussed in chapter four, Gladstone had a great following and was well-liked and admired in Edinburgh.

¹⁰¹ Goodlad, 'The Liberal party', 631-2.

¹⁰² *The Scotsman*, 21 Jun. 1886 5.

¹⁰³ *The Scotsman*, 26 Jun. 1886, 7; 29 Jun. 1886, 9; 5 Jul. 1886.

¹⁰⁴ *The Scotsman*, 22 Jun. 1886, 6.

The way in which Liberal candidates and their supporters referred to Gladstone and used his name varied. There were two approaches taken to boost the Liberal candidates' campaign prospects. The first tactic was simple association with Gladstone; by mentioning him and a candidate together, for example, as if to say that Gladstone favours the candidate. The second tactic portrayed Gladstone as a victim of abandonment by some Liberals and that the candidate was supporting him in an attempt to right a wrong. Gladstone's influence was also used in Edinburgh by Gladstone himself. He was concerned with the representation of the whole Midlothian area which comprised of his county seat of Midlothian, the four Edinburgh constituencies and the Leith district of burghs seat. He was quite involved with the elections in Leith and Edinburgh during 1886. He used his popularity to try to influence the constituents in Edinburgh to vote for parliamentary candidates that were favourable to Irish Home Rule and thus favourable to himself. Gladstone also tried to influence parliamentary candidates to stand in Edinburgh and he even forced a candidate to withdraw from the election in Leith.¹⁰⁵

The tactic of associating Gladstone with the candidate was used by the supporters of the Liberal candidates as well as the candidates themselves. The Chairman at an election meeting for Childers relayed to the crowd that they were 'highly privileged' to have Childers as a candidate and complained that 'some Liberals' did not support 'Gladstone's Irish Bills'. In conjunction with this, he praised Gladstone for his 'inspiration' in dealing with the Irish question and told the constituents that Gladstone 'had always tried to win them over, not by force, but by justice and love'.¹⁰⁶ At a meeting of Mr Wallace's, the Chairman summarised a telegram that expressed the joy that Gladstone took in Mr Wallace's entrance to the race because it gave the constituents the opportunity to express through voting whether they supported the Government Bills.¹⁰⁷ The Chairs at these election meetings were relaying to the constituents that their candidate stood with Gladstone in supporting his scheme for Ireland or were even favoured by him.

Some of the candidates took it upon themselves to bind their candidacy to Gladstone. McEwan used Gladstone's actual image to guarantee that the constituents

¹⁰⁵ Cooke, 'Gladstone's election', 172-94.

¹⁰⁶ *The Scotsman*, 1 Jul. 1886, 5.

¹⁰⁷ *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9-10.

would relate Gladstone to him. Portraits of Gladstone were passed out to constituents along with polling cards encouraging them to vote for McEwan.¹⁰⁸ Of the four campaigns, Dr Wallace used Gladstone's influence the most, essentially wrapping his campaign around Gladstone. Dr Wallace presented himself to the constituents as being completely committed to Gladstone: 'in the present crisis of things, he was out and out, heart and soul, with Gladstone – not only with respect to the great question of the present hour, but also in respect to all the vital and essential questions of Liberalism'. Dr Wallace went even further than just associating Gladstone to himself and his candidacy when he presented Gladstone as having been abandoned by some of the Liberals. He assured the constituents that, unlike Goschen, he would stand by Gladstone and the party.¹⁰⁹

Associating oneself with Gladstone was not a new strategy in the 1886 election. Childers listed Gladstone's popularity in Edinburgh as one reason he thought he might win the 1886 by-election for the South district in Edinburgh: "Mr. Gladstone's name goes a long way at Edinburgh, and I am looked up on as his *âme damnée*".¹¹⁰ Parliamentary candidates had also used Gladstone's popularity outside of Edinburgh. Purvis was one such candidate and his opponent, Childers, used this against him. Childers accused Purvis of betraying Gladstone by trying to depreciate his reputation in the previous election in 1885: 'When he [Purvis] contested Berkshire nothing was too strong in praise of Mr Gladstone. (Cheers.) After all, however, consistency in these matters was a little out of fashion – (laughter)'.¹¹¹ Childers spoke of Purvis' betrayal of Gladstone to the constituents because during the previous election he had used Gladstone's popularity to his advantage. However, during the 1886 election he was not only trying to distance himself from Gladstone, but he was also attempting to undermine Gladstone's standing with the constituents.

This approach of presenting Gladstone as having been abandoned or attacked by the Liberal Unionists was also deployed by the other two Liberal candidates in Edinburgh. McEwan presented Gladstone as standing for Liberalism and pushing

¹⁰⁸ *The Scotsman*, 5 Jul. 1886, 6. In this editorial the author criticises the use of Gladstone's portrait by McEwan, arguing that the use of it makes it appear that Gladstone is 'issuing a command' to vote for him.

¹⁰⁹ *The Scotsman*, 17 Jun. 1886, 5–6.

¹¹⁰ Childers, *Life and Correspondence of the Right Hon. Hugh C. E. Childers*, 237, quoting from letter 'To his Daughter, Milly', December 28, 1885.

¹¹¹ *The Scotsman*, 23 Jun. 1886, 8.

further against tyranny. He praised Gladstone's 'integrity' for staying true to the Liberal principle of the people's right to govern themselves. Referring to Liberal Unionists, McEwan said, 'they knew now that if only a mere Liberal in name had been at the head of the Government, Liberal principles would have been disregarded, and the demand of the Irish people ignored'.¹¹² This was a further testament to Gladstone because he stood by Liberal principles and had been abandoned by some who called themselves Liberals for doing so.¹¹³ Mr Wallace and his supporters took the view of Gladstone having been abandoned for standing by Liberal principles as well. Mr Wallace pleaded with his constituents to support Gladstone asking:

...if they were willing that he whose whole life had been give to his country should have his last days darkened by the shadow of defeat. He believed that Scotland would give a loud and unanimous no – (cheers) – and he would ask the electors of that division to let his voice join with the voice of those who would enable their great leader to crown his last days with his greatest achievement of bringing about a reconciliation of two long-divided peoples. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)¹¹⁴

Mr Wallace was appealing to Gladstone's popularity and the idea that this could be his last election in an attempt to gain the support of the constituents based on their loyalty to Gladstone. Councillor Mackintosh, a local town councillor, in putting forth Mr Wallace's candidature said, 'now was the time, when Mr Gladstone's back was to the wall, that every true Liberal should show his sympathy with him, and genuine adhesion to his principles. (Cheers.)' Mackintosh was arguing that they should support Mr Wallace in order to show their support for Gladstone.¹¹⁵

The Liberal candidates and their supporters were not the only ones to ask for the constituents to support Gladstone by defeating the Liberal Unionists because Gladstone did so as well. This was not Gladstone's first involvement in Edinburgh politics. Since he had become the MP for Midlothian in 1880, he had taken a vested interest in Edinburgh. Gladstone gave several of his Midlothian campaign speeches in the city and was greeted as a hero by the locals at these speeches. During the 1885 election Gladstone refrained from endorsing any candidates as there were multiple Liberals running for the same seat. He did, however, impart his disapproval to other

¹¹² *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9.

¹¹³ *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9.

¹¹⁴ *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9–10.

¹¹⁵ *The Scotsman*, 29 Jun. 1886, 9–10.

Liberals who were interfering with races in Edinburgh.¹¹⁶ Gladstone's stance on the disestablishment question, and in particular his great speech in Edinburgh on the subject, had a profound impact on the constituents and candidates in Edinburgh during that election.¹¹⁷

Gladstone's interest went beyond merely giving political speeches. He was behind the restoration of Edinburgh's Mercat Cross which he even paid for himself.¹¹⁸ He petitioned the Town Council to restore the Mercat Cross in the spring of 1885. Gladstone, writing to the Town Council, said that he was pursuing the restoration 'as your historic city is the capital of Midlothian no less than of the Kingdom of Scotland, I earnestly desire, in the character of the representative of the county, to leave behind me this small but visible record of grateful acknowledgment and sincere affection, in a form closely associated with local and with national tradition'.¹¹⁹ He wanted to bring Edinburgh and Midlothian national distinction. The Mercat Cross was unveiled in late November 1885. A writer for *The Scotsman* described the events of the day and estimated that there were between 70,000 and 80,000 people present, including Gladstone who gave a speech and presented the Mercat Cross to the city as a gift. Although the restored Mercat Cross was the reason for the event, it was similar to Gladstone's other visits to the city. As the writer in *The Scotsman* described, 'Mr Gladstone himself of course was the chief attraction of the day'.¹²⁰

During the 1886 general election Gladstone's involvement in the city's politics was much greater. This can be attributed to the political situation which was much different from 1885. Unlike the 1885 election in which the rival Liberals were running against one another although they were both still under the 'umbrella' of the Liberal party, the dispute over Irish Home Rule brought open hostility to the Liberal Party from the Liberal Unionists.¹²¹ The act of party abandonment enabled Gladstone to openly intervene in the elections. One election in which Gladstone intervened in

¹¹⁶ Gladstone expressed his disapproval to Chamberlain for his involvement in the East division between Goschen and Costelloe. This was discussed further in chapter four.

¹¹⁷ For more information on Gladstone and disestablishment, see chapter three.

¹¹⁸ *The Scotsman*, 20 Jun. 1885, 6.

¹¹⁹ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44490, f. 61, Harrison to Hamilton, 17 Mar. 1885; BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44490, f. 93, Gladstone to Harrison, 21 Mar. 1885.

¹²⁰ *The Scotsman*, 24 Nov. 1885, 5.

¹²¹ The term 'Umbrella' was used by Rosebery to describe the Liberal Party in 1885.

the Edinburgh area was the Leith district of burghs which was made up of the urban areas outside of Edinburgh in Midlothian including Leith, Portobello, and Musselburgh. It appears that Gladstone was concerned with the whole Midlothian area and wanted MPs that supported him to represent all the constituencies within the area. Late in the 1886 campaign no one had come forward to stand against the sitting MP for Leith, William Jacks, which led Gladstone to agree to stand for that seat even though he was unopposed in Midlothian.¹²² According to Alistair Cooke, Gladstone's entrance into the Leith contest was 'ideological'. Gladstone wanted to insure that the constituents had the opportunity to express their desire on Irish Home Rule by being able to vote for a pro-Home Rule candidate.¹²³

Gladstone also intervened in Edinburgh when he outlined his desire for Edinburgh during his speech in the Music Hall on 21 June 1886:

There has been, gentlemen, a Liberal secession much stronger, undoubtedly, than we could have desired – (hear, hear) – in the House of Commons, but that succession represented something more than one-fourth of the Liberal party, leaving to us, who call ourselves the Liberal party – (loud cheers) – nearly three-fourths of the whole. Well, now, gentlemen, I want you to compare that state of things – not the most satisfactory in the world – with the state of things in Edinburgh. In Edinburgh there is a division into three-fourths and one-fourth, but the one-fourth is with the Liberal party, and the three-fourths are with the seceders. (Cheers and hiss.) It is a matter of interest, gentlemen, to consider – and perhaps you may say, 'You are the county member. You have nothing to do with it,' but I cannot help it. It is a matter of interest, that I cannot avoid, even to me to consider whether that state of things is to continue. ('No'.) I hope it is not impertinence, but I cannot help suspecting that the **capital of Scotland will make stout and sturdy effort in order to set right the state of things.** (Loud cheers.) Edinburgh has been accustomed – (interruption) – to lead in the van of Liberal politics – (cheers) – and has not been accustomed to find here members among the obstructers of national justice – (oh, oh) – and national welfare. (Loud cheers.)¹²⁴

This speech is a clear example of Gladstone using his position as a candidate for Midlothian to influence Edinburgh constituents. Even though Gladstone was giving a Midlothian election speech, he revealed his concern with the state of Edinburgh's MPs and appealed to the constituents of Edinburgh to support him in defending

¹²² Cooke, 'Gladstone's election', 172–81. Gladstone had stood for multiple constituencies at the same time before the 1886 election, but he had always been contested in them giving the possibility that he might lose thus justifying his standing in more than one.

¹²³ Cooke, 'Gladstone's election', 172–81.

¹²⁴ W. E. Gladstone, *Mr Gladstone on Mr Goschen* (Edinburgh, 1886). The emphasis is in the original.

Liberalism against the ‘succeeders’. Gladstone tried to influence the Edinburgh electors in two ways: he asked them to help him and he addressed the tradition of Edinburgh as being ‘the van of Liberal politics’.¹²⁵

Gladstone also used this speech to single out Goschen as the MP in Edinburgh that he most wanted removed from Parliament telling the audience, ‘It is not for me, gentlemen, to enter upon the cases of particular districts and particular contests, but there is one contest in actual progress, and one gentlemen whose great distinction requires that I should name him. That is the case of East Edinburgh, and the gentlemen whom I name is Mr Goschen’.¹²⁶ He personally attacked Goschen, citing Goschen’s role as a leader of the Liberal opposition as the reason he believed the constituents of East Edinburgh should vote him out. Gladstone pointed to Goschen’s involvement in raising funds among the wealthy to run Liberal Unionist candidates against Liberal candidates in as many races as he could: ‘I do not think it consorts with the spirit of Liberalism – (hear, hear) – to hold a great meeting for the purpose of creating a long purse in order to create Parliamentary contests – Parliamentary contests that would otherwise not exist’.¹²⁷ This helps explain Gladstone’s involvement in the Leith election as well. If he believed that the Liberal Unionists were forcing elections, he would have been justified in forcing one as well. Gladstone also questioned Goschen’s commitment to Liberalism, a tactic that all the Liberal candidates in Edinburgh used in an attempt to discredit their opponents:

Mr Goschen would be a most admirable candidate, as far as I can judge, with incomparable claims for a Tory constituency. (Cheers.) He is an undoubted Liberal in his own belief – (laughter) – in his own most sincere belief, but it is somewhat unfortunate that, being a man of the greatest talent and an undoubted Liberal, his energies for years and years past have been mainly directed towards stopping the purposes of Liberalism. (Cheers.) For years together he conscientiously opposed that extension of the franchise – (hear, hear) – which, gentlemen, as you recollect, was a matter of great difficulty to accomplish, and was very nearly costing the country the anxieties of a dissolution. All this it was hoped at the last election was over. Mr Goschen in his proceedings sincerely professed the creed of Liberalism. It was most unfortunate that when his past time had been occupied in resisting an extension of the franchise, his future time was from the very commencement

¹²⁵ Gladstone, *Mr Gladstone on Mr Goschen*.

¹²⁶ Gladstone, *Mr Gladstone on Mr Goschen*.

¹²⁷ Gladstone, *Mr Gladstone on Mr Goschen*.

to be occupied again in resisting the purpose of the great bulk of the Liberal party.¹²⁸

This speech of Gladstone's was a major attack on Goschen and had the potential to influence many constituents. The content of the speech went beyond the audience and readers of newspapers because Goschen's opposition used this attack by Gladstone to their advantage and placed a portion of the speech in a pamphlet titled 'Mr Gladstone on Mr Goschen'. This is, therefore, another example of local constituents using Gladstone and Liberalism to attack the Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh.

Besides actively campaigning against Goschen's candidature in Edinburgh, Gladstone also tried to recruit a prominent Liberal to stand against him. Gladstone tried to persuade Henry Campbell-Bannerman to leave his relatively safe seat in the Stirling burghs to run against Goschen in East Edinburgh. Campbell-Bannerman had represented Stirling Burghs since 1868 and had risen to be a high-ranking Liberal serving in Gladstone's Cabinet.¹²⁹ Campbell-Bannerman was wary of the idea and believed that Goschen's organisation in Edinburgh was too strong to overcome in such a short time.¹³⁰ He refused the move, writing Gladstone that there was no reason why a Liberal should not contest Goschen, but he believed that they should not be as prominent as himself to avoid bringing more attention to what could be a 'humiliating defeat'.¹³¹ In Gladstone's letter to Campbell-Bannerman trying to persuade him to stand against Goschen, he encompasses the Edinburgh districts within his own of Midlothian writing, 'we could make a great Midlothian affair of it'.¹³² If he viewed them as part of the same political area, this may also explain his concern with the Edinburgh and Leith districts. Besides this, Edinburgh, as the capital of Liberal Scotland was extremely important to Gladstone's legitimacy over the party. The fact that three of the four MPs had been against him, not counting the

¹²⁸ Gladstone, *Mr Gladstone on Mr Goschen*.

¹²⁹ A. J. A. Morris, 'Bannerman, Sir Henry Campbell- (1836–1908)', *ODNB* (Oxford, 2008), [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32275, accessed 26 Nov. 2011].

¹³⁰ NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS 10002, f. 40–1, Campbell-Bannerman to Rosebery, 10 Jun. 1886; NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS 10002, f. 42–3, Campbell-Bannerman to Rosebery, 12 Jun. 1886; Ewen Cameron, "'Maistly Scotch": Campbell-Bannerman and Liberal leadership', *Journal of Liberal History*, 54 (2007), 32.

¹³¹ BL, Gladstone Papers, Add. Mss, 44117, f.55, Campbell-Bannerman to Gladstone, 11 Jun. 1886; Cameron, "'Maistly Scotch'", 32.

¹³² NLS, Rosebery Papers, MS 10002, f. 40–1, Campbell-Bannerman to Rosebery, 10 Jun. 1886.

Leith burghs, was a challenge to his authority. For Gladstone to be able to claim that he and his supporters were the true voice of Liberals in Scotland, he needed to hold the capital. Regardless of his reasons, Gladstone was certainly involved and concerned with Edinburgh's elections.

The results

At first the results of the 1886 election in Edinburgh appear to be a great victory for Gladstone and the Liberal party. There was a great turnaround amongst the city's MPs regarding Irish Home Rule. After the second reading of the Irish Home Rule Bill, three of the city's MPs were opposed while only one supported the Bill. After the 1886 election that ratio flipped, with three MPs supporting Irish Home Rule and only one remaining in opposition. Moreover, Hutchison points out the significance that the sitting MPs had on determining the outcome of the race. There were twenty-five Liberals standing for their current seat and all were returned except two. The standing Liberal Unionists won thirteen of their nineteen elections. Hutchison concludes that many constituents had not decided their own stance on the Irish question and gave their sitting MP 'the benefit of the doubt'.¹³³

<i>District</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes Received</i>
Central	McEwan	Liberal	3,760
	Wilson	Liberal Unionist	2,236
East	Dr. Wallace	Liberal	3,694
	Goschen	Liberal Unionist	2,253
South	Childers	Liberal	3,778
	Purvis	Liberal Unionist	2,191
West	Buchanan	Liberal Unionist	3,083
	Mr Wallace	Liberal	2,393

As seen in the above table, Edinburgh does not fall into this trend. The constituents in Edinburgh returned two incumbent MPs and voted two out of their seats. The two incumbent MPs voted out, Goschen and Wilson, constituted one-third of the total incumbent Liberal Unionist MPs not returned in Scotland.

¹³³ Hutchison, *A Political History*, 164–5.

¹³⁴ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 497–500.

Gladstone certainly viewed the Edinburgh results as a victory, writing to Holmes Ivory after the election, ‘I need hardly tell you how cordially I rejoice that the capital of dear old Scotland has shaken off her chains & once more spoken with a voice the sound of which will ring throughout the land on behalf of justice peace & union with Ireland’.¹³⁵ Holmes Ivory also viewed this as a major victory, writing to Gladstone on the same day:

I cannot tell you with what happiness and delight I write you this morning the most satisfactory result here. Buchanan’s seat was hopeless from the first, if the Tories polled their full strength, which has been concentrated on that Division, but Mr Wallace has made a good fight & a reputation here. But what are we to say sufficiently in praise of the east Division’s Mr Wallace. The result then has surpassed our fondest expectations. McEwan’s majority is also eminently satisfactory.¹³⁶

By far the biggest upset and most satisfying election in Edinburgh for Gladstone was the defeat of Goschen. Gladstone’s election agent in Midlothian, Campbell, wrote him to give him the news, ‘You would be much gratified to find that Mr. Goschen has been pretty accurately gauged by the Scottish constituency which elected him in November’.¹³⁷ Campbell also informed Gladstone that *The Scotsman* credited his ‘personal influence’ as the cause of the election result.¹³⁸ *The Scotsman* clearly laid the outcome of the election with Gladstone with such statements as these: ‘Mr. Gladstone’s influence has carried the day in Eastern and Central Edinburgh. The Unionist cause is beaten in both those Divisions, and beaten badly’ and ‘Mr Gladstone’s visit to Edinburgh has made a great change in the opinion of the main body of the electors. It is the simple truth that, a month ago, five-sixths of the people in Edinburgh were against the Bills of the Government’.¹³⁹ Informing Gladstone that he believed that he was justified in intervening in the Edinburgh elections, Campbell said, ‘If you were convinced in your own mind of the justice & right of your cause & if you had (as they now admit) some considerable influence with the Electors of Edinburgh, you would have incurred a far greater responsibility if holding the

¹³⁵ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44498, f. 146, Gladstone to Holmes Ivory, 6 Jul. 1886, copy of a telegram.

¹³⁶ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44498, f. 147, Holmes Ivory to Gladstone, 6 Jul. 1886.

¹³⁷ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44116, f. 117, Campbell to Gladstone, 6 Jul. 1886.

¹³⁸ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44116, f. 119, Campbell to Gladstone, 7 Jul. 1886.

¹³⁹ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44116, f. 119, Campbell to Gladstone, 7 Jul. 1886, two enclosed clippings from *The Scotsman*, both dated 7 Jul. 1886

opinions you did. You had for a moment hesitated to give free & decided expression to that opinion'.¹⁴⁰

The *Edinburgh Evening News*, which was slanted more towards the advanced side of the Liberal party, also credited Gladstone's involvement in Edinburgh and Leith for the victory and viewed the election as restoring Edinburgh to the Liberal cause:

Edinburgh has responded nobly to the call of Mr Gladstone. She has cast Mr Goschen into political outer darkness, where to-day there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. She has sent Mr Wilson to keep company with his fellow-shuffler, Mr Jacks; and she would have brought Mr Buchanan's paralytic career to a like inglorious close had his opponent been earlier in the field. Next to the support given to Mr Gladstone, is the testimony of the elections to the sound Liberalism of the city. [...] By the vote of Monday, Edinburgh has been saved from misrepresentation in the forthcoming Parliament, except in the case of Mr Buchanan, who has kept his seat by a majority small enough to make him fear and tremble. With that exception, the city has decided for Mr Gladstone in tones clear and ringing – tones which will be heard above the political clamour, will be echoed over the country, and will inspire with new ardour those who, in the face of terrible odds, are fighting the battle of Democracy and progress.¹⁴¹

This view of the 1886 election is not necessarily wrong, especially for the short term. With two of the three Liberal Unionist MPs being defeated, one of them Goschen, it seems like a great victory for the Liberals. However, the biggest change to Edinburgh was that for the first time since 1832, the city was not wholly represented by Liberals. Buchanan's victory in the West broke more than fifty years of Liberal domination in the city. Lawrence suggested no political party was able to dominate a city's politics after the Third Reform Act and, despite the Liberals in Edinburgh holding on to their power in 1885, they lost their hold on the city in 1886.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44116, f. 119–20, Campbell to Gladstone, 7 Jul. 1886.

¹⁴¹ BL, Gladstone Papers, MSS. 44116, f. 121, newspaper clipping from *Edinburgh Evening News* sent from Campbell to Gladstone, 7 Jul. 1886.

¹⁴² Lawrence, 'The dynamics of urban politics', 83.

CONCLUSION

This thesis analyses the effects that the Third Reform Act and the Irish Home Rule debate had on the politics of Edinburgh. Additionally, it asks whether the constituents' primary political concern was with local or national politics. This study also uncovers one of the main issues for both the constituents and the candidates which was the concept of democracy. The Third Reform Act drastically affected the politics of Edinburgh. It was due to the breakup of the city into four single parliamentary districts that the wedge in the Liberal party was brought to the surface of the politics of the city. Although the Whigs and Radicals in Edinburgh did not operate an official compromise to run both a Whig and Radical together as most other double member burghs had done before the Third Reform Act, they maintained a relatively stable local Liberal party. With the establishment of the new parliamentary districts created by the Third Reform Act an atmosphere of aggression between the Radicals and Whigs ensued over which group would control the new local associations in these new districts. This led to the legitimacy of the new associations being questioned. The loss of legitimacy led to the breakup of the local liberal associations. This split in the local party led to the establishment of new opposing local Liberal associations in three of the districts. These associations were largely based on ideological stance of the members. However, this change on its own was not enough to alter the traditional political character of the city. It was not until the introduction of Irish Home Rule and the ensuing breakup of the national Liberal party that the city's traditional political character changed. The city that was once dominated by the Liberal party allowed another party in thus changing the political

character of Edinburgh when a Liberal Unionist was elected in the West district of the city in the 1886 election. Throughout this politically tumultuous period the Liberals were engaged in a bitter internal dispute nationally and the 1885 and 1886 elections were dominated by national questions. Moreover, Edinburgh was often on the national stage due to Gladstone standing for Midlothian and campaigning in Edinburgh. All of this required the constituents to concern themselves with national politics, therefore, their votes were pulled by both national and traditional local forces. Many of the issues discussed in this thesis relate to the concept of democracy including the Third Reform Act, the caucus and the questions of disestablishment, local licensing and Irish Home Rule. In debating these issues the constituents and the candidates used the idea of democracy to both defend and support their positions.

Effects of the Third Reform Act and the Irish Home Rule debate

Politics in Edinburgh, as in much of the rest of urban Scotland, had been dominated by the Liberal party from 1832 to the Third Reform Act. The closest a non-Liberal candidate came to being elected an MP for Edinburgh came in the 1835 election and he was still more than one thousand votes from a second place finish.¹ However, with the results of the 1886 election, the Liberals no longer maintained complete dominance of the city. Although three of Edinburgh's new parliamentary districts – the Central, East and South – elected Liberal MPs to represent them, the West district voted to change its political allegiance from the Liberal party, opting instead for a Liberal Unionist candidate. This broke from Edinburgh's political tradition and changed its political identity by establishing new identities for the four parliamentary districts set up through the reforms of the Third Reform Act. However, it should be pointed out that the Liberal Unionists were still claiming to be Liberals at this time. By November 1886 they had established a separate party organisation from the Liberals throughout the country and subsequently ran in opposition to them.² This, coupled with their diverging opinions on political questions, resulted in a distinct political identity.

¹ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1832–1885*, 539.

² Burness, *Strange Associations*, 46-50; Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 497–500.

Throughout the rest of the Victorian and Edwardian eras the four parliamentary districts were represented, for the most part, by the same political party that they elected to represent them in the 1886 election.³ This too came to an end when the electorate was once again changed by the Fourth Reform Act enacted in 1918. The Scottish electorate grew to over two million with the enfranchisement of all adult males over the age of twenty-one and most females over the age of thirty. Edinburgh also gained one additional seat raising its total to five which initiated another restructuring of its parliamentary seats.⁴ All of these changes led to another alteration of the political makeup of the city. From the 1886 election through to the enactment of the Fourth Reform Act, the West parliamentary division of Edinburgh was mainly held by the Liberal Unionists. Liberal Unionists won every general election from 1886 to December 1910 with the lone exception of an 1888 by-election which they lost.⁵ The by-election was held because Buchanan, who was elected in the 1886 general election as a Liberal Unionist, rejoined the Liberals. Buchanan believed that he had betrayed Gladstone and felt that he could no longer continue to do so.⁶ Buchanan's opponent in the by-election was Thomas Raleigh, who had stood for the South Edinburgh district as a Radical in 1885. Raleigh had been defeated by Sir George Harrison in the 1885 election, a loss which he blamed on Conservative support of Harrison. In the 1888 by-election Buchanan, running once again as a Liberal, won narrowly by forty-six votes. Liberal representation of the West district ceased again six years later when Buchanan lost to a Liberal Unionist in the 1892 general election by more than five hundred votes.⁷

The other three parliamentary districts in Edinburgh returned Liberals the majority of the time. In all of the elections held on the Third Reform Act qualification, both the Central and East districts were represented solely by Liberal MPs and the constituents in the South district elected Liberals in every election except the 1895 and 1900 elections.⁸ Both of these elections were landslide victories nationally for the Liberal Unionists and Conservatives. In Scotland the Liberal

³ See appendices 1–4 for a list of election results from 1885 through to Dec. 1910.

⁴ Cameron, *Impaled upon a Thistle*, 30–1; F. W. S. Craig (ed.), *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1918–1949*, (London, 1977), 580–84.

⁵ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 497–500.

⁶ Millar, 'Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn'; Hutchison, *A Political History*, 165.

⁷ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 497–500.

⁸ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 497–500.

Unionists' and Conservatives' combined number of MPs broke thirty for the first time in the 1895 election and in the 1900 election they returned thirty-eight MPs, four more than the Liberals.⁹ However, the Liberal Unionists in Edinburgh won each of these close elections by only around one hundred votes.¹⁰ During the 1900 election the Central district Liberals barely fought off the candidature of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who stood as a Liberal Unionist. However, even he could not break the Liberal hold on the district in an election that elsewhere was very favourable to Liberal Unionists and Conservatives.

Despite the loss of the West district, Edinburgh was still regarded as a Liberal stronghold in Scotland from 1886 until the Fourth Reform Act was implemented in 1918. This is explained in two ways: first, three of its four MPs were still Liberal; and, second, compared to Glasgow, it was a Liberal stronghold. Between the Third and Fourth Reform Acts, Liberals never represented more than fifty-seven per cent of Glasgow. In both of the late-Victorian era election victories for the Liberal Unionists and Conservatives, the Glasgow Liberals suffered heavy losses. In the 1895 election the Liberals held on to only two seats, while in the 1900 election, no Liberal was elected in Glasgow. Conversely, Edinburgh's Liberal representation never dropped below fifty per cent and it was only that low as a result of the elections in 1895 and 1900. For the remainder of the period, Edinburgh was seventy-five per cent Liberal.¹¹

Although Edinburgh Liberals managed to keep the city a Liberal stronghold after the breakup of the party over the Irish Home Rule debate in 1886, it should not be seen as a 'triumph of party'.¹² Chapter two reveals that the local parties could dictate who the nominee of the Association was, but that did not ensure that candidate a victory. Moreover, as discussed in chapter five, the breakdown of the local parties and their failure to reorganise further demonstrates the limitations of the local Liberal party in Edinburgh. However, the failure of the party does not necessarily negate the rise of a 'nationalisation' of the political debate which could

⁹ I. G. C. Hutchison, *Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke, 2001), 1–11; Burness, *Strange Associations*, 106–61.

¹⁰ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 497–500. The election in 1895 was won by 97 votes and in 1900 it was won by 111 votes.

¹¹ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 497–500; Burness, *Strange Associations*, 214.

¹² Hanham, *Elections and Party Management*; Hamer, *Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery*.

account for the reason the majority of Edinburgh constituents stayed loyal to the Liberal party.¹³ If it had been due to their interest in Irish Home Rule, it may support the importance of and the rise of national politics. Alternatively, if the reason was more localised, it may perhaps support the ‘politics of place’.¹⁴

Liberalism: national versus local

In a recent article, Luke Blaxill argued that the revisionist view that constituents in late-Victorian politics were more concerned with ‘politics of place’ than with national politics was not necessarily the case as he demonstrates through a case study of Ipswich.¹⁵ At first, this argument appears to be valid in Edinburgh as well. In the 1885 election the candidates’ local connections to Edinburgh were an important factor in their selection which was clear through their campaign rhetoric, and while there were some mention of the candidates’ local connections during the 1886 election, it was not as prevalent as it had been in 1885. The Edinburgh constituents, as discussed in chapter four, had traditionally valued experience as well as local connection in their double-member constituency prior to the Third Reform Act. The city often elected one well-known MP and one local MP such as well-known English MP and Queen’s Council Samuel D. Waddy and Scotsman Thomas Ryburn Buchanan who were elected in by-elections just prior to the Third Reform Act. Due to common choice of candidates, one could argue that the constituents were already committed to national politics; however, the reason the constituents wanted experienced, well-known men to represent them was due to the prestige and national attention that they would bring to Edinburgh, not because they cared about national politics more than local politics.

The 1886 election, however, was certainly dominated by the Irish Home Rule debate which was definitely a major issue in national politics. Two of Edinburgh’s sitting MPs, Goschen and Wilson, were defeated in the election. Wilson and the newly elected McEwen were both local to Edinburgh, so their local connections should not have been an issue in their race. Goschen, a political celebrity whose 1885

¹³ Lawrence, *Party, State and Society*, 96–7; Luke Blaxill, ‘Electioneering, the Third Reform Act, and political change in the 1880s*’, *Parliamentary History*, 30 (2011), 343–373.

¹⁴ Lawrence, *Speaking for the People*.

¹⁵ Blaxill, ‘Electioneering’, 343–373.

victory was a landslide, was defeated by a local, Dr. Wallace, by a similarly large margin. Dr. Wallace's victory was not based on his local connection, although it was pointed out as an asset of his during the election. Dr Wallace's local connection was not his main rhetoric and the issue did not even occupy much of his time. Instead, he focused on Liberalism and Goschen's perceived abandonment of Liberalism. The rhetoric of defending Liberalism was also the main theme for the other three Liberal candidates that supported Irish Home Rule in Edinburgh. This focus on party orientation could be viewed as a shift away from local politics in favour of national politics.

However, Liberalism was at the core of Edinburgh's political tradition and it was this established political tradition that was fought for during the 1886 election. Macdonald described the progressive tradition of Paisley's politics as having been coveted by and redefined by both the Liberal and Liberal Unionist candidates in the 1886 election. It was through the local constituents' perceived tradition of Liberalism that they interpreted the contemporary debate on Irish Home Rule.¹⁶ Macdonald's analysis of the local debate over Irish Home Rule is valid in Edinburgh as well. Edinburgh's tradition of Liberalism was placed at the centre of the debate. Both the Liberal and Liberal Unionist candidates in Edinburgh focussed their campaign rhetoric on Irish Home Rule around local understandings of Liberalism. The Liberal candidates that supported Irish Home Rule defined their opponents as having abandoned the Liberal party. The fact that the Liberal Unionist candidates were aligned with the Conservatives in opposition to Gladstone and Irish Home Rule, which had been introduced by a Liberal Government, and in parts of the country Liberal Unionists had established a new political party organisation, seemed to support their claim. With this in mind, it is likely that the constituents were more concerned with local politics and their desire to hold onto their political tradition of Liberalism than they were concerned with national trends. The problem for them is that Edinburgh's local politics had been drawn into this debate over liberalism by national politics such as the introduction of Irish Home Rule and the split of the Liberal party. Even though the majority of the constituents were likely fighting for

¹⁶ Macdonald, *The Radical Thread*, 84–91.

their local perception of liberalism, they were ultimately doing so on the national stage and were definitely influenced by national politicians like Gladstone.

The concept of democracy

The idea of democracy was an important aspect of late-Victorian British politics. According to Biagini, democracy was an ‘all-embracing issue for popular liberals’.¹⁷ Democracy was an important part of the political issues in late-Victorian Edinburgh politics as well. The political elite and the constituents had varying conceptions of democracy and not just between the two, but also amongst themselves. Defining what democracy entailed and how it was used by contemporaries to legitimise their argument was the source of much of the discourse which is covered in this thesis. Obviously, the Third Reform Act dealt with democracy by expanding the franchise to include a majority of the adult male population for the first time. This adjusted the voter qualification in the counties to mirror that of the burghs which greatly expanded the amount of voters in the country. The main franchise was still based on household qualification, but, when the Government adjusted the representation to the Imperial Parliament, the number of MPs was based on the overall population of the constituency, not the number of voters.¹⁸ This might have seemed logical, but it essentially defined democracy on two different aspects.

The controversy, discussed in chapter one, that arose in Edinburgh with the redistribution of seats that followed the franchise extension was based upon democracy. The constituents of St. Leonard’s ward protested against the division of their ward due to the impact this would have had on their voting power. Splitting their ward significantly diminished their voting power when compared to the other wards and thus limited their influence. This affected them in two ways. First, the number of delegates that a ward received to make up the district’s Liberal association was based on population and thus cutting their population by splitting the ward diminished their power in the association. Second, their constituents were split between two parliamentary districts thus splitting their votes between the two. The controversies that arose amongst the Liberals in the formation of the local Liberal

¹⁷ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, 16.

¹⁸ See chapter one for an overview.

associations and their endorsement of candidates is covered in both chapters two and five. The controversy of party politics and the caucus was not unique to Edinburgh. This conflict amongst Liberals was all about the concept of democracy. The Liberals that voted in the leadership of the associations viewed it as a democratic means of combining their voting power. However, the Liberals that disagreed with their political stance on issues and preference on candidates viewed the association as an undemocratic machine that tried to force its political will upon the constituents under the guise of a democratic organisation.

The structural mechanics of the parliamentary districts and the Liberal associations was not the only issue to cause a controversy regarding democracy. Democracy played an important role in the questions of disestablishment, local licensing and Irish Home Rule as well. The concept of democracy was used by both the supporters and opponents of disestablishment to support their stances. The supporters claimed that, because the majority of the population in Scotland did not attend the Church of Scotland, it should not be an established Church. They were using this as a claim that the majority did not support the Church of Scotland. The opponents used the same basic argument about the percentage of the population to oppose disestablishment. They pointed out that the majority of Churchgoers in Scotland were Presbyterian and shared the same faith as the Church of Scotland, therefore, the faith should be established. The local licensing argument was based on the idea that the local population should be able to decide whether or not they wanted to allow the sale of alcohol in their local communities. All of the candidates in Edinburgh except one claimed that they supported the locals having that right; however, there was a dispute over which locals should have that right. Some were in favour of complete democracy where all inhabitants in the local community would have a say on the issue while others were in favour of a restricted vote based on the parliamentary voting requirements. The issue of democracy and Irish Home Rule has been discussed in chapter six. This conflict was not a dispute on the people's right to choose in a democracy, but on which people in the democracy should have the right to choose. The supporters of Irish Home Rule argued that it was the Irish that had the right to say who should govern them while the opponents claimed that it should be the whole of the United Kingdom.

This thesis helps to nuance our understanding of the complexities of late-Victorian British politics. It reveals how the local constituencies of Edinburgh dealt with the changes brought about by the Third Reform Act and how the constituents responded to the conflict within the Liberal party as well as the shattering of the Liberal party which took place upon the introduction of the Irish Home Rule debate. It also sheds light on the national and local influences that the constituents' vote was pulled between and how they responded to them as well as the discourse regarding the various ideas of democracy amongst the contemporaries. All of this helps analyse the state of politics during the late-Victorian era in Edinburgh.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Edinburgh's Central District Election Results¹				
<i>Election Year</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
1885	J. Wilson	Ind. Liberal	2,930	41.9
	J. H. Renton	Liberal	1,683	24.1
	Hon. J. S. Napier	Conservative	1,606	23.0
	A. W. Black	Ind. Liberal	770	11.0
1886	W. McEwan	Liberal	3,760	62.7
	J. Wilson	Liberal Unionist	2,236	37.3
1892	W. McEwan	Liberal	3,733	63
	A. K. Connell	Liberal Unionist	1,758	29.7
	J. Wilson	SSF&SUTCLP	434	7.3
1895	W. McEwan	Liberal	Unopposed	
1900	G. M. Brown	Liberal	3,028	55.2
	Dr. A. Conan Doyle	Liberal Unionist	2,459	44.8
1906	C. E. Price	Liberal	3,935	67.9
	J. D. G. Walker	Liberal Unionist	1,857	32.1
1910 (Jan.)	C. E. Price	Liberal	3,965	66.7
	D. A. Scott	Liberal Unionist	1,980	33.3
1910 (Dec.)	C. E. Price	Liberal	3,771	65.9
	G. R. Y. Radcliffe	Conservative	1,947	34.1

¹ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 497.

Appendix 2: Edinburgh's East District Election Results²				
<i>Election Year</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
1885	Rt. Hon. G. J. Goschen	Ind. Liberal	4,337	69.2
	B. F. C. Costelloe	Liberal	1,929	30.8
1886	R. Wallace	Liberal	3,694	62.1
	Rt. Hon. G. J. Goschen	Liberal Unionist	2,253	37.9
1892	R. Wallace	Liberal	3,969	58.6
	R. W. M. Fullarton	Liberal Unionist	2,809	41.4
1895	R. Wallace	Liberal	3,499	53.4
	H. G. Younger	Liberal Unionist	3,050	46.6
1899*	G. McCrae	Liberal	4,891	62.3
	H. G. Younger	Liberal Unionist	2,961	37.7
1900	G. McCrae	Liberal	4,461	58.5
	R. Scott-Brown	Liberal Unionist	3,170	41.5
1906	G. McCrae	Liberal	6,606	73.1
	Dr. R. Dawson	Liberal Unionist	2,432	26.9
1909*	J. P. Gibson	Liberal	4,527	52.7
	P. J. Ford	Liberal Unionist	4,069	47.3
1910 (Jan.)	Sir J. P. Gibson, Bt.	Liberal	6,760	61.3
	P. J. Ford	Liberal Unionist	4,273	38.7
1910 (Dec.)	Sir J. P. Gibson, Bt.	Liberal	6,436	63.0
	R. M. Cameron	Conservative	3,782	37.0
1912*	J. M. Hogge	Liberal	5,064	55.0
	J. G. Jameson	Liberal Unionist	4,139	45.0

² Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 498. *denotes a by-election

Appendix 3: Edinburgh's South District Election Results ³

<i>Election Year</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
1885	Sir G. Harrison	Ind. Liberal	4,273	59.8
	T. Raleigh	Liberal	2,874	40.2
1886 (Jan.)*	Rt. Hon. H. C. E. Childers	Liberal	4,029	70.0
	Master of Polwarth	Conservative	1,730	30.0
1886 (Feb.)*	Rt. Hon. H. C. E. Childers	Liberal	Unopposed	
1886	Rt. Hon. H. C. E. Childers	Liberal	3,778	63.3
	R. Purvis	Liberal Unionist	2,191	36.7
1892	H. W. Paul	Liberal	4,692	52.4
	L. McIver	Liberal Unionist	4,261	47.6
1895	R. Cox	Liberal Unionist	4,802	50.5
	H. W. Paul	Liberal	4,705	49.5
1899*	A. Dewar	Liberal	5,820	53.8
	A. G. Wauchope	Conservative	4,989	46.2
1900	Sir A. N. Agnew, Bt.	Liberal Unionist	5,766	50.5
	A. Dewar	Liberal	5,655	49.5
1906	A. Dewar	Liberal	8,945	63.8
	W. C. Smith	Liberal Unionist	5,085	36.2
1909*	A. Dewar	Liberal	8,185	54.0
	H. B. Cox	Liberal Unionist	6,964	46.0
1910 (Jan.)	A. Dewar	Liberal	10,235	56.4
	H. B. Cox	Liberal Unionist	7,901	43.6
1910 (Apr.)*	C. H. Lyell	Liberal	8,694	57.7
	R. G. C. Glyn	Conservative	6,367	42.3
1910 (Dec.)	C. H. Lyell	Liberal	9,576	54.5
	C. de B. Murray	Conservative	7,986	45.5
1917*	Sir. J. E. Parrott	Liberal	Unopposed	

³ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 499. *denotes a by-election

Appendix 4: Edinburgh's West District Election Results⁴

<i>Election Year</i>	<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
1885	T. R. Buchanan	Liberal	3,800	59.1
	G. A. Jamieson	Conservative	2,625	40.9
1886	T. R. Buchanan	Liberal Unionist	3,083	56.3
	R. Wallace	Liberal	2,393	43.7
1888*	T. R. Buchanan	Liberal	3,294	50.4
	T. Raleigh	Liberal Unionist	3,248	49.6
1892	Viscount Wolmer	Liberal Unionist	3,728	53.7
	T. R. Buchanan	Liberal	3,216	46.3
1895 (May)*	L. McIver	Liberal Unionist	3,783	55.2
	Master of Elibank	Liberal	3,075	44.8
1895	L. McIver	Liberal Unionist	Unopposed	
1900	Sir L. McIver, Bt.	Liberal Unionist	4,180	61.2
	E. A. Adam	Liberal	2,645	38.8
1906	Sir L. McIver, Bt.	Liberal Unionist	3,949	52.0
	Rt. Hon. L. H. Courtney	Liberal	3,643	48.0
1909*	J. A. Clyde	Liberal Unionist	Unopposed	
1910 (Jan.)	J. A. Clyde	Liberal Unionist	4,683	52.5
	C. H. Lyell	Liberal	4,233	47.5
1910 (Dec.)	J. A. Clyde	Liberal Unionist	4,952	53.8
	Prof. J. H. Morgan	Liberal	4,252	46.2

⁴ Craig, *British Parliamentary Election Results, 1885–1918*, 500. *denotes a by-election

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