

Chartism and Liberalism

Tim Hughes analyses the relationship between Chartism and the radical Liberal politics of the 1860s and 1870s through a case study of politics in Northampton.

Northampton and the de

The Six Points OF THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER.

1. A VOTE for every man twenty-one years of age, of sound mind, and not undergoing punishment for crime.
2. THE BALLOT.—To protect the elector in the exercise of his vote.
3. NO PROPERTY QUALIFICATION for Members of Parliament —thus enabling the constituencies to return the man of their choice, be he rich or poor.
4. PAYMENT OF MEMBERS, thus enabling an honest tradesman, working man, or other person, to serve a constituency, when taken from his business to attend to the interests of the country.
5. EQUAL CONSTITUENCIES, securing the same amount of representation for the same number of electors, instead of allowing small constituencies to swamp the votes of large ones.
6. ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS, thus presenting the most effectual check to bribery and intimidation, since though a constituency might be bought once in seven years (even with the ballot), no purse could buy a constituency (under a system of universal suffrage) in each ensuing twelvemonth; and since members, when elected for a year only, would not be able to defy and betray their constituents as now.

The original People's Charter from 1838

THIS ARTICLE EXAMINES the nature of the relationship between Chartism and the Radical Liberal politics of the 1860s and 1870s. It argues that a democratic tradition remained as a dynamic political force

rather than leaving an inert or subdued Chartist legacy. This tradition, being a catalyst to the coalescing of parliamentary and subsequently popular Liberalism around Gladstonian Liberalism, remained separate and distinctive; for

democratic radical tradition

while Gladstonian Liberalism was progressive it was not democratic.

Northampton was a town with a strong Radical tradition and one where the different factions within Radicalism came into conflict. Northampton also offers a certain clarity, lacking in some contexts, when examining the Chartist tradition, in that they did not renounce their Chartist pasts, as some have argued happened nationally, but took pride in them.¹ The debate around continuity or discontinuity often focuses around class, however the argument here will focus on individual activists and ideology.² It will be argued that to look for ‘dissonance and dissent on the part of the former Chartists’ underestimates the ideological differences within Radicalism. There is less a ‘transition into Liberalism’, as some have argued, than an accommodation between different concepts of Radicalism around broad policy aims that in themselves cannot define Radicalism.³ An example of this that will be considered later is attitudes to extending the franchise which, taken as a broad aim, can hide fundamental differences of principle that distinguish the democratic Radical tradition.

Studies of Radical Northampton tend to focus on Charles Bradlaugh, MP for Northampton 1880–1891, and have argued that Bradlaugh, in his failed election campaigns of 1868 and 1874, gave ‘the first impetus to Radicalism in Northampton’; and it is not hard to understand why he was credited with this role.⁴ He was a highly charismatic figure who received a great deal of national attention even prior to the parliamentary controversies over his swearing of the oath in parliament in the 1880s that cemented his role in parliamentary history. However, I believe his value to historians studying the nature of Radicalism in the 1860s and 1870s lies not in his beliefs but in his acting as a prism separating out the different strands of Radicalism that already existed within Northampton liberalism. A figure who, because of the reaction to his atheism and secularist beliefs, allows us to examine a Radicalism separate

from Radical Nonconformity to which it has become at times too closely associated. The focus will shift from Bradlaugh to individuals who specifically demonstrate the continuity of the Chartist tradition in order to rectify this.

While this article is not meant as a study of Chartism, it may be helpful to remind readers of the Chartist objectives which were set out in their Six Points. Chartists demanded universal male suffrage for those aged over 21, with some also advocating votes for women. They advocated equal electoral areas or constituencies; annual elections, which was thought would counter corruption; abolishing property requirements for MPs, which along with payment of MPs would encourage working-class candidates; and the secret ballot, or the ballot, which again would counter corruption and be less intimidating for working men who thought differently to their employers. A working-class movement, it presented three major petitions to parliament, the last in 1848.

Northampton had a Chartist tradition; it even provided the first historian of Chartism.⁵ Key Chartists become prominent figures in the development of the Liberal Party in the town and this on the surface supports a narrative of continuity between Chartism and Liberalism. It also pre-empted the divisions over religion that emerged in Northampton among those that would describe themselves as Radicals in the 1870s. The Chartists in Northampton diverged over religion in 1848 when the Northampton organisation fractured with Nonconformists supporting the Liberation Movement.⁶ The Liberation Movement had as its focus the ending of Church rates and ultimately the disestablishment of the Anglican Church. An element of the Nonconformist tradition therefore also developed in Northampton out of Chartism while continuing to remain within the broader Radical dialogue.

Nonconformity was not, however, the dominant strand within the Chartist narrative in Northampton politics. One figure in particular was seen as the standard bearer of Chartism

This article argues that a democratic tradition remained as a dynamic political force rather than leaving an inert or subdued Chartist legacy. This tradition, being a catalyst to the coalescing of parliamentary and subsequently popular Liberalism around Gladstonian Liberalism, remained separate and distinctive; for while Gladstonian Liberalism was progressive it was not democratic.

Northampton and the democratic radical tradition

within Northampton and that was Joseph Gurney. He had stood as a Chartist candidate in municipal elections in 1849, 1850 and 1855; he was also a founding member of the Northampton Secularist Society in 1854. He would eventually become the first Radical mayor of Northampton. He should be viewed as representing the pragmatic side of Chartism, one willing to proceed gradually seeking compromise and accommodation within the Liberal movement. He represents a continuity in the transition from Chartist to Radical Liberal candidates in his being able to write how,

I may state that I proposed Mr Bradlaugh; I was also the first to introduce the name of Mr Gilpin to the electors of Northampton; at two previous elections I proposed Mr JT Lockhart; and at a still earlier date I was one of the committee which brought Dr Epps forward.⁷

[Dr Epps and J. T. Lockhart were Chartist candidates; Gilpin and Bradlaugh were Radical Liberals.]

Gurney's obituary would describe him as:

... a stronger Chartist than the Chartists, a greater Radical than the Radicals, a more advanced Socialist than the Socialists. Not the Socialists of to-day, but Socialists of Robert Owen's stamp, who believed in volunteer Socialism, and not the clockwork regulation of every individual of the State.⁸

However, it must be noted that while Gurney's Chartist credentials were never challenged and, indeed, they were continually referenced both by himself and others throughout his career, he did not vote for the Chartist candidate, Dr M'Douall, in 1841. Gurney voted for the Whig, Vernon Smith, alongside the Radical Raikes Currie.⁹ He is also absent from the coverage of Chartist meetings in the *Northampton Mercury*. Gurney traced his political career to 1830 and the agitation leading to the Great Reform Act of 1832, when he had 'wanted a wider extension of the suffrage and the ballot.'¹⁰ By 1833, he had become the Northampton Secretary for the Society for the Abolition of the Taxes on Knowledge. He was therefore politically active throughout the time of the Chartist agitation in Northampton. To see Gurney as the torch-bearer of the Chartism in Northampton was therefore to say that he represented a political tradition separate from the politics of personalities, which seemed to dominate the latter Chartist period nationally. His failure to vote

[Joseph Gurney] should be viewed as representing the pragmatic side of Chartism, one willing to proceed gradually seeking compromise and accommodation within the Liberal movement. He represents a continuity in the transition from Chartist to Radical Liberal candidates ...

for Dr M'Douall may be because Dr M'Douall was associated with the more aggressive, physical-force Chartism; or it may be the way Dr M'Douall aligned himself in the election with the Conservatives which caused many Chartists to throw 'themselves into the arms of the Whigs, in sheer disgust'.¹¹ It would be tempting to trace his Chartist radicalisation to a court case involving bailiffs employed by the vicar of All Saints in August, 1849 to collect the vicar's rate from Mrs Gurney. Certainly two of the other Chartist candidates from the November 1849 municipal election were involved in this incident and its timing would be convenient, but it probably only signifies that the Chartists in 1849 represented a relatively tight group who found themselves in conflict with the established church.¹² While a Chartist tradition continued it should be seen as representing a legacy of ideas, the democratic tradition, taken up by Gurney and others in the twilight of Chartism as a movement.

Another key figure within the Radical democratic tradition was John Bates who was an important catalyst within Northampton Liberalism. In his obituary he was described as, 'an advanced Radical ... not connected with any of the existing political organisations'. This is a little disingenuous as he regularly attended ward meetings of Liberal electors and sought to stand as a Radical candidate in municipal elections with official Liberal backing. A news-agent, whose 'outspoken utterances on political topics on many occasions gained for him a numerous following of supporters, and his written comments on town matters, which he frequently exhibited in his window, led to his attaining considerable notoriety.'¹³ During his career he had stood as a Chartist candidate alongside Gurney in 1850 and later became an active member of the Board of Guardians, the Improvement Commission and the School Board, with Radical support. He stood on two occasions as an independent Radical in 1860 and 1862 when divisions emerged between the Radicals and official Liberalism. He was also a key figure in the introduction and promotion of Bradlaugh as a Liberal candidate for Northampton. The West Ward passed a motion to 'express its sense of the loss which the cause of Radicalism has sustained' on his death.¹⁴

In 1852, Northampton elected the Whig, Robert Vernon Smith and the Radical, Raikes Currie to parliament. In this respect Northampton followed the classical pattern of a Whig standing with a Radical that seemed typical of parliamentary Liberalism, with the cornerstone of its power based around the two-member

urban constituency. In the election of 1852, Chartism was still a distinct political entity. John Ingram Lockhart stood as the Chartist candidate in the general election receiving 106 votes, while Gurney, as a Chartist candidate in the municipal elections of 1855, received 69 votes. Even considering the restricted electorate these are not large votes. It is not however the purpose of this article to examine the breadth of support for the democratic Radical tradition but to examine its development and distinctive ideology.

There is evidence of an early attempt at convergence in mid-1850s Northampton between the radicalism of Chartism and the middle-class radicalism of Northampton's Radical MP, Raikes Currie. In 1855, on joining Lord Palmerston's cabinet, Vernon Smith, Northampton's Whig MP, had to stand for re-election. The Conservatives decided not to force a contest, but the Chartists put forward Lockhart as a candidate. This was not an unusual tactic from the Chartists, who would put forward a candidate at the hustings and then often withdraw them from the contest. This had the effect of giving a voice to non-voters, whom they wished to enfranchise, as well as making a point regarding their broader support. The manner in which local Chartists conducted the proceedings in 1855 and created the New Reform Association suggest that they sought something more than this, an alliance or convergence with the middle-class Radicals.

The New Reform Association was described as being formed 'by the Chartist body of the town'. With Joseph Gurney in the chair, it met in October 1855, for what the *Mercury* patronisingly described as a *soirée*.¹⁵ It is unclear how established the association was. There is evidence of a meeting on the question of the Ballot earlier in the year but there is no mention of the society then.¹⁶ The Chartist roots of the organisation were however made explicit. The meeting drew to a close with Bates stating,

... that terms had been offered by the Chartist body to the Whigs, to the effect that one member of the Association and two candidates of the same principles should be put up at the coming municipal elections, and supported by the Whigs, who, in return, were to receive the support of the Chartist body. The Whigs, however, had refused these terms, and war to the knife was, therefore, to be declared against them.

The meeting's outward purpose was to promote the secret ballot. It is however clear that

the meeting was designed as an attempt to bring together the middle-class Radicals and the Chartists in an electoral alignment. Gurney thought he had negotiated the presence of the local Radical MP, Raikes Currie (MP for Northampton 1837–57). He had been invited but did not attend as he felt it inappropriate to attend a meeting where Lockhart was present. John Ingram Lockhart had been the Chartist candidate for Northampton in 1852, standing as an alternative to Vernon Smith. Raikes Currie's son did attend, warning them that, 'They who advocated disunion, were playing the game of the Tories who, whatever they might say, were the sworn enemies of all progress and popular privilege. They openly avowed that they looked for success through disunion among the Liberals.' He appears to have recognised the New Reform Association as a Radical organisation and talked of unity rather than convergence or assimilation. Gurney did not manage to spring the trap and bring together the middle-class Radicals and the Chartists, but his approach was not totally rejected.

At the meeting Mr Whitehurst from the Ballot Society advocated the secret ballot as a means towards reform and a vehicle for electing more Radical Liberals like Layard, Roebuck and Cobden. He pointed out that Vernon Smith, who had been the MP for Northampton since 1831, had voted against the ballot: one of '10 Whig members, 13 members of the Government, and 236 Tories.' Lockhart spoke as a prospective candidate, outlining a Radical platform and criticised Vernon Smith for not voting for 'a single thing they desired him to vote for.' This suggested that there was an acceptance of Liberalism as a vehicle for change and that the problem was factional.¹⁷

In the municipal elections of November 1855, Joseph Gurney stood as a 'representative of Democracy and Popular Rights' and the Northampton Reform Association, to 'test public opinion' and challenge 'the leaders of the Whig Party'. Unlike in 1849 and 1850, he stood alone and not as one of a slate of Chartist candidates. The Liberal candidates stood as 'true Liberals, Friends of Economy, and Advocates of the Poor Man's Rights to the Franchise'. There might seem little ground between them. Gurney, however, advocated a programme of local meetings for the people to voice their opinions on political matters as well as petitions to parliament by the municipal council. These would become commonplace later but represented something aspirational at this point. Following the election, a further leaflet

In the municipal elections of November 1855, Joseph Gurney stood as a 'representative of Democracy and Popular Rights' and the Northampton Reform Association, to 'test public opinion' and challenge 'the leaders of the Whig Party'.

Northampton and the democratic radical tradition



from Gurney addressed his voters, emphasising the scale of corruption in the election, and called out for the ballot ‘which we believe to be the only safeguard against such vile practices.’ This would be Gurney’s mantra for the next fifteen years.¹⁸

The failure to realign the borough politics of Northampton in 1855 seemed to move Gurney towards compromise. In 1856, after a disputed election, Gurney was elected to the Improvements Commission, which managed many of the practical affairs of the town.¹⁹ Soon afterwards, in 1858, Gurney was elected to the West Ward as a Liberal. For D’Arcy, who produced the most comprehensive study of Northampton in this period, this move came about through the sharing of common ground over franchise reform and the need for the secret ballot.²⁰ He too referenced the two meetings above. However, suffrage and the ballot did not define Radicalism but only set out headings under which Radicals and liberals could come together. There remained a fundamental difference between those Radicals who held to democratic ideas and saw the limitations of these issues as concessions and those who saw franchise reform as involving necessary concessions to progress without any underlining principle. Gurney’s move into municipal Liberalism was pragmatic, but he maintained his Chartist identity and principles. While Radicalism may be ‘characterised by a broad emphasis on pragmatism’ it does not define its beliefs, and there remained clear ideological divisions.²¹

The *Mercury*, approaching the municipal elections of 1858, noted,

The bundle of sticks loosened, and the scattered material served to warm the Conservative hearth. However, there seems no fear of a repetition of this sort of thing ... We do not remember any Ward meetings where there was such unanimity.²²

The ‘bundle of sticks’ was not simply a metaphor for Liberal diversity. While its exact nature was somewhat secretive, it appears to have been a closed meeting of key Liberal supporters. A year later, in response to being goaded in the Conservative Northampton Herald for being a Whig organisation, a member did offer an explanation in a letter to the *Mercury*:

It is a brotherhood of men who meet to exchange ideas... It is composed of men of all grades ... not the least part of which is formed from the working classes ... [it]

Northampton
Liberals and Radicals
– from top:
Joseph Gurney
Charles Gilpin
Raikes Currie

Northampton
Liberals and Radicals
– from top:

Charles Bradlaugh
Anthony Henley (3rd
Baron Henley)
William Shoosmith

includes in membership about two hundred liberal men of Northampton.²³

It appears to have been the manifestation of official Liberalism in Northampton and Gurney became a member, presumably in his role as a Liberal councillor, and addressed their annual dinner in December 1858.²⁴ In this sense, at the very least, Chartism seems to have infiltrated official Liberalism.

In the national context, by 1860 Gladstone had emerged as a figurehead for progressive Liberalism. For the Northampton MPs, he managed to encompass both the moderate Radicalism of Gilpin and the ‘Radical’ Whiggism of Lord Henley. Gilpin had built his Radical credentials, not least with Gurney, on a commitment that he would report back annually to his constituency. Here is the concession that Chartist pragmatism required. It was this which in December 1860, brought the ‘Bundle of Sticks’ and United Liberal Association together, to hear reports from their MPs. The theme of the evening was unity. Core policies of franchise reform, the ballot and opposition to church rates offered a solid platform on which to stand, but the evening also presented a coherent sense of history: a Whig history. The chairman welcomed, ‘those descendants of the old Puritans’ before him, ‘disloyal only once, and that was to a tyrant.’ The moderate Liberal councillor, J. M. Vernon ‘mentioning Cromwell, for whom he hoped a place would soon be found in Westminster Abbey.’ This is not a Republican iconography for, while Cromwell killed a king, he also fought for the rights of parliament. The Whig narrative continues on to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 where parliament and the Whigs assert themselves again in the name of parliament. It was a more Radical councillor, William Shoosmith who gave the toast, ‘The People – the only source of legitimate power’, after confessing that he would not do away with the monarchy if he were able, just in case there was any confusion. All of this was carried out in front of pictures of Earl Spencer and Lord Palmerston.

Of the MPs, it was Gilpin, the Radical member, who made the first speech. He went through the Liberal government’s record. Gladstone’s repeal of the paper duty was central to this call for unity.

I now come to one subject, which might very well be called one of our demerits; I allude to our failure to carry the abolition of the paper duty through the House of Lords. (Hear, hear.) I allude to the



unjustifiable act of the House of Lords – ('hear, hear,' and cheers) – the 'gigantic innovation,' as Mr Gladstone called it, the constitutional outrage, as I believe it to be, of assuming to themselves a power to which, as an irresistible body, they have no right, and a power which I hope they will yet be told they shall not retain – (hear, hear, and cheers) – the power of taxing or the retaining of taxes by their own free will upon the people of England.²⁵

Here was fertile ground for Lord Henley, the Whig, to develop. Lord Henley initially conceded that he was against the cost of raising income tax to abolish paper duties, voting for it reluctantly. Retrenchment (the cutting of government expenditure) was a core principle across the Liberal spectrum, even if paper duties had a greater significance to a Radical audience who sought a cheaper regional press. However Whig identity was based around a suspicion of the centralisation of monarchical power. He spelled it out to his audience: 'I consider that the Lord's refusal to join in the abolition of a tax – a money bill – is equally contrary to the constitution, as for the Queen to put her veto upon a Bill of any sort.' Although the meeting appears unaware of Palmerston's opposition to the ending of paper duties, the narrative brings Whigs and Radicals together.

Henley then addressed the Radicals in his audience:

I do not think we can look to Mr Bright for advancing the position of the Liberal party in the House of Commons at present. Whether it is that in his zeal and eagerness for Liberal measures he has asked rather too much – I think probably that is the case; in the speeches that he has made he has rather frightened the great body of moderate men, and driven them away from his support.²⁶

This might not be what some Radicals would want to hear, but in Gladstone he has a new champion to offer. Lord Henley continued, 'Well, then, to whom are we to look? Why there is but one name to which we can really look, and . . . I need hardly tell you that the name of that gentleman is Mr Gladstone. (Loud cheers.)' For Lord Henley it was one of 'the most unified meetings I have ever seen in Northampton.'

During his speech, the Radical Gilpin confirmed his authenticity by publicly sharing a joke in an aside with the totemic Gurney regarding church rates. At the end of the

meeting Gurney spoke and, according to the *Mercury*, 'touched upon the ballot, extension of the suffrage, coast defences, and other topics, stating his differences from preceding speakers, and justifying his grounds of objections.'²⁷ This isn't developed by the *Mercury*. It would be fascinating to know what those differences were. What is clear, though, is that Gurney's Radicalism remains distinct.

Gladstone emerges here less as the champion of Radicalism and more as a unity figure who played to the Radical audience but fitted into the Whig narrative much more easily than alternatives like Bright.²⁸ This is not to argue that Gladstone was a Whig or even, in the longer term, a figure who would protect Whig values. Russell, however, may well have believed he was at the time and this would explain his willingness to see Gladstone succeed him, as well as his later sense of betrayal. We are also yet to see the emergence of Gladstone's close courting of the Radical *Telegraph*.²⁹ We do however see Gladstone being utilised in this way, certainly in Northampton. Lord Henley can safely play the Radical orator:

You must be unanimous, and all work together. You must petition, you must make speeches, you must do everything in your power that there is not that apathy which our enemies cast in our teeth. It is because of that apathy that so little has been done during the past session.³⁰

Without this, for Lord Henley and most of the Commons there was no call for or need to concede reform. When that call does come, Henley proves less accepting.

In contrast with Lord Henley, Gilpin was the national face of Northampton Radicalism and remained credible across the Radical spectrum. He was able to anchor this around the emergent 'people's William' of the early 1860s. Gilpin's Radicalism was however more guarded than he made it appear. When the Northampton branch of the Reform League campaigned for manhood suffrage and planned a Great Reform Demonstration in Northampton, Gilpin wrote to the demonstration committee to make clear that he advocated a more modest proposal: household and lodger franchise alongside the secret ballot. He did however attend the demonstration, unlike Henley. Indeed, he noted, 'The Whigs won't have it if they can help it; but the people will have it, and we will get it.'³¹ Gilpin's reluctance to embrace the calls for manhood suffrage defined his Radicalism as different from the democratic Chartist tradition. His

Gladstone emerges here less as the champion of Radicalism and more as a unity figure who played to the Radical audience but fitted into the Whig narrative much more easily than alternatives like Bright.

resorting to anti-Whig rhetoric demonstrated the point of reference they held in common: the rhetorical other. This must appear a little forced coming from a Radical sitting in tandem with a Whig and one who would stand by Lord Henley when other Radicals, like Bradlaugh, came forward as alternatives.

As the reform question developed a clear momentum, MPs such as Gilpin were able to satisfy more Radical elements by appealing to public perceptions of Gladstone. For example, Gilpin was able to address a public meeting of Liberal supporters at the Corn Exchange, in August 1864, by declaring:

I sat by Mr Gladstone whilst he was making that speech, and I can say this, that whatever else it meant, it meant this, that he knew there were hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands of intelligent working men who had not the suffrage, and who ought to have it. (Loud cheers)³²

In retrospect this seems remarkably cautious in terms of numbers. This is significant as the franchise reform was still an area around which Radicals sought to unite. It also existed as one of the fault lines within the Liberal Party. It has been argued that ‘demands for the extension of the franchise were one of the most outstanding continuities in the main stream’, which is clearly the case. However, to argue that ‘Radicalism in general was democratic in its commitment to government for the people and with their consent’ holds true only for the middle-class Radicals.³³ Gurney, as part of the democratic Radical tradition, sought a greater role *by* the people and with their *participation*.

As the chosen leaders of the Radical cause, Gladstone and Bright did not share the aspirations of manhood suffrage, certainly as a short-term objective. For Radicals like Gurney and those that emerged out of the more democratic Chartist tradition, however, it did hold importance. Gilpin can get an easy cheer from the United Liberal Association by referencing ‘the future leader of the Liberal host, I mean Mr Gladstone—(cheers)’; his credibility drew on perceptions of Gladstone and his commitment being defined through his commitment to the man. He repeats this in a municipal context by mentioning ‘my friend Mr. Gurney’.³⁴

Leaning on Gladstone, Gilpin could argue:

The utterances which Mr Gladstone has given, and which he has never withdrawn, and which I trust he never will withdraw,

with reference to the extension of the franchise to the working population of the country, must and will stamp him as the people’s man, as the people’s leader. (Cheers)³⁵

Indeed, it would; but Gilpin must have been aware of the ambiguities surrounding Gladstone’s speech, even if his audience was not.

The speech which Gilpin was referring to was made in the Commons earlier in May. Gladstone was replying for the government to a bill introduced by Baines, a Radical MP, for a modest extension to the franchise. Gilpin was referring to a particular passage in the speech when Gladstone appears to advocate universal suffrage:

And I venture to say that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness or of political danger is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution.³⁶

The passage infuriated Palmerston, who as prime minister had asked him not to commit the government ‘to any particular amount of Borough Franchise’.³⁷ No doubt Palmerston had considered himself very clever with this attempt to finesse Gladstone as there had been a growing expectation that Gladstone might be moving towards a more Radical position. However, in the subsequent correspondence between them, Gladstone would deny the common interpretation of the speech, ‘I am at a loss to know how as you read my speech you can ascribe this opinion to me.’³⁸

The immediate reaction in the *Northampton Mercury* was mixed; while describing the event as ‘a memorable day in our political history’, which marked Gladstone out as a ‘future Reform leader’, it was cautious in its reporting. It quoted Gladstone as saying:

I give my cordial concurrence to the proposition that there ought to be, not a wholesale, but a sensible and considerable addition to that portion of the working classes, at present almost infinitesimal – which is in the possession of the franchise.³⁹

This is something even Palmerston would have found acceptable. The reporting of the speech included the ‘pale of the constitution’ quotation which would give such encouragement to those seeking manhood suffrage, but the paper clearly sided with a moderate interpretation of Gladstone’s meaning.

As the chosen leaders of the Radical cause, Gladstone and Bright did not share the aspirations of manhood suffrage, certainly as a short-term objective. For Radicals like Gurney and those that emerged out of the more democratic Chartist tradition, however, it did hold importance.

Northampton and the democratic radical tradition

They quote Mr Whiteside, replying for the Conservatives, that ‘The motion was nothing more than a vehicle for uttering speeches for election purposes.’⁴⁰ But they fail to report a key passage spoken by Mr Whiteside, who had been quick to pick up on the meaning of Gladstone’s words, saying, ‘I thought the words so remarkable that I wrote them down – “Every man who is not subject to any personal incapacity ought to have the franchise.” And although the right hon. Gentleman immediately afterwards went on to explain – his talent for copious explanation I take to be even more remarkable than his power of luminous exposition – these were the very words he used.’⁴¹

The *Mercury* gave greater attention to the subsequent publishing of the speech as a pamphlet. It quoted at length from the preface which clarified that:

... political danger might arise from their admission; as for example, through the disturbance of the equilibrium of the constituent body, or through virtual monopoly of power in a single class.

It was therefore far from advocating universal male suffrage or a democratic principle. It still adhered to the principles regarding the representation of interests and a balance between classes which characterised the mid-nineteenth-century parliamentary system. It concluded:

If I regret the manner in which my declaration has been interpreted, it is chiefly because of its tendency to produce in other quarters an exaggerated estimate, likely, when brought down to the dimensions of fact, to cause disappointment.⁴²

Gilpin was therefore being somewhat disingenuous in his interpretation of Gladstone even if he was in many respects a true advocate of Gladstone’s position. Matthew has described the leading Radicals in parliament at this time as ‘more interested in policy than in party, and this accorded with Gladstone’s own view’.⁴³ This may be true of those brought to Liberalism through their Radicalism but not for those whose Radicalism was an expedient vehicle for Liberal unity. Gladstone must be seen as more motivated by the growing dynamic of party and his emerging place with in it.

On the franchise the *Mercury* reported that:

Those who are least enthusiastic in favour of change ought to rate highest the disadvantages of leaving the question which

With the death of Palmerston in 1865, the expectation was that a measure of reform extending the franchise would be passed. In 1866, on a platform alongside Gilpin, were representatives from across the spectrum of Northampton Liberalism but also representatives of the London Reform League, an organisation promoting a working-class campaign for an extension to the franchise; their number included Charles Bradlaugh.

Mr Gladstone would solve with calmness and good sense, to be agitated by every demagogue.⁴⁴

Gladstone stood where Whig and Radicals generally could coalesce, a position made possible by his ambiguity and the willingness of those like Gilpin and Lord Henley to adopt the clothing of Radical aspirations.

Gilpin’s purpose in his address and tactics generally was to bring together the Radicals of Northampton under his borrowed umbrella. But at this stage the embryonic alliance of Gladstonian Liberalism sought to commit the Radicals to the Liberal cause but also to keep vague any explanation of their ideas beyond the banner slogans. Gilpin specifically brings into his speech a commitment to the secret ballot, which Gladstone did not at this point support – ‘We have an extension of the franchise to secure; we have protection to the voter to secure ...’ – but which had become the subject to which Gurney’s loyalty was tied.⁴⁵ Later Gladstone would buy Bright’s ministerial commitment with the same coinage.

Among the repeated cheers at every mention of Gladstone and Bright, a more democratic Radical voice was beginning to assert itself. With the death of Palmerston in 1865, the expectation was that a measure of reform extending the franchise would be passed. In 1866, on a platform alongside Gilpin, were representatives from across the spectrum of Northampton Liberalism but also representatives of the London Reform League, an organisation promoting a working-class campaign for an extension to the franchise; their number included Charles Bradlaugh. He was part of a more confident national assertion of a voice found at a more local level which wished to assert a more inclusive and democratic Radicalism; not one that so much represented a class as wished to see a class represented.

Bradlaugh’s secularism was not irrelevant to his emergence as a parliamentary candidate in Northampton. The first mention of Charles Bradlow (sic) in the *Northampton Mercury* appears at the end of a report, in January 1859, on the visit of Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, who had become a lecturer defending Christian values. Cooper dismisses Bradlaugh as ‘a raw young man with plenty of assurance’ when invited to meet him.⁴⁶ When the *Mercury* reports Bradlaugh’s visit to the town in March, he was dismissed as Charles Bradloe [sic] come ‘to disseminate the shallow utterances of atheism.’⁴⁷ At this point Gurney and Bates were prominent members of

the Northampton Secularist Society but they 'devoted their energies primarily to Radicalism rather than secularism'.⁴⁸ It was not secularism which brought forth Bradlaugh as a candidate for Northampton but the issue of the franchise and the workings of the Reform League.

When coming to Northampton to endorse Bradlaugh on behalf of the London Reform League, on 4th August 1868, their representative conceded that:

He knew there were many people who opposed Mr Bradlaugh on account of his views on many subjects, but they were not sending him up on religious subjects ... They were sending him up to represent the interests of the working classes of the country. He would have preferred a working man to represent them, but Mr Bradlaugh was as near a working man as they could get to represent them.⁴⁹

Given such a lukewarm endorsement, it is not surprising that Bradlaugh recognised a need to justify his candidature. He did so as one who could represent the working man, and this became the common theme in a series of speeches.⁵⁰ In Grafton Street, one of the poorest areas in the Radical West Ward, he addressed a large meeting. Here he declared that 'having been born poor himself, and mixed with working people all through his life, and having gained a position of confidence with working men throughout England, and all through his life advocated reform, believed he had a right to come and put before them his past life as a reason why he should seek to represent them.' Going on to add that he knew 'what it was to eat one meal, and not know where he was to get the means to procure the next'.⁵¹

He addressed working men's issues in relation to the vote, education and tax but did not ignore allegations he was a 'heretic'. He would go to parliament to advocate not 'theological opinions, but political views and social liberty – not to have churches built, but to advocate religious liberty' and, with an eye to the Nonconformists, 'not to be compelled to pay for the support of a church to which he did not belong.' It was a strong performance laced with humour but one designed to appeal most strongly to the Chartist tradition in the town. It also explicitly targeted Lord Henley. Interestingly he promised 'independent support to Mr Gladstone' and, while the paper describes him as 'eulogising' Gladstone, he is keen to be seen as his own man.⁵²

In a series of four lectures in August of that year, it is interesting to see who Bradlaugh was

'He knew there were many people who opposed Mr Bradlaugh on account of his views on many subjects, but they were not sending him up on religious subjects ... They were sending him up to represent the interests of the working classes of the country. He would have preferred a working man to represent them, but Mr Bradlaugh was as near a working man as they could get to represent them.'

name checking from amongst the parliamentary Radicals.⁵³ Other than Gladstone, John Bright and James Stansfeld are mentioned in all four speeches; J. S. Mill twice; and Forster and Milner Gibson once each. There may of course have been others, as we are dependent on the newspaper reports, but two of interest are Bright and Stansfeld. Bright proved problematic. He was often referenced as a byword for Radicalism which both Gilpin and Henley were prone to do. Like Gladstone, he was more nuanced than was appreciated by working-class Radicals at the time. He did not favour manhood suffrage and, while a champion of the ballot, his loyalty to Radical Liberalism would prove brittle when it came to Irish home rule in the 1880s. Of greater interest was his wishing to associate himself with James Stansfeld, MP for Halifax from 1859 to 1895. He was a figure who had sympathised with the Chartists and had spoken frequently at the meetings of the Northern Reform Union, which can be seen as the precursor of the Reform League. Stansfeld had first been elected for Halifax in 1859 alongside Sir Charles Wood. He would later be compared to Bradlaugh: 'he received similar treatment to that accorded to Mr Bradlaugh at Northampton, – being called an infidel, an atheist, and one who did not believe in the Bible.' This from the Chartist, Benjamin Wilson.⁵⁴

This became clear when a copy of a letter to Bright was published from a Northampton voter, who was seeking to draw out Bright's opinion of Bradlaugh's candidacy. Bright's reply was published alongside it:

Dear Sir, – I cannot interfere in your election matters, but I can answer the question you put to me. I do not believe you can improve the representation of your Borough by changing your members. I think Lord Henley and Mr Gilpin worthy of your confidence and support.⁵⁵

Bradlaugh made light of the intervention, publicly reading out a subsequent correspondence between the two, concluding, 'they had a constituency much more Radical than Lord Henley. Mr Bright did not know that.'⁵⁶ The *Mercury* and no doubt his opponents generally made much of Bright's cool response. As with Gladstone, the Radical hinterland misunderstood its Radical standard bearers.

The election of 1868 in Northampton brought out these tensions within Liberalism. The working-class Radical, Chartist tradition which cohabited with official Liberalism sought to impose itself within what self-identified as

Northampton and the democratic radical tradition

a Radical town. With a greater franchise there was expected to emerge a more Radical voice representing to a greater extent the working man. This is not to see this as a majority view within Northampton Liberalism; it wasn't. The two Liberal challengers to the Gilpin/Henley ticket were very much outlier figures. There was a dearth of key local Liberals supporting their campaigns. For Bradlaugh one of the key figures was Bates, someone very much on the edge of Liberalism having stood as an independent in municipal elections, who chaired most of his meetings. Gurney did propose Bradlaugh but did not seem to have played a major role, being closely associated with Gilpin.

The agenda of Henley and Gilpin, who issued a joint address, was classical Gladstonian – retrenchment, peace and reform, with a nod to the ballot and Ireland. There was nothing there for Radicals to object to. Bradlaugh was aware of this and made explicit in his own propaganda and speeches that he was not standing in opposition to Gilpin, stating, 'I fight the fight I commenced, 'Charles Bradlaugh against Lord Henley'. Henley 'is respectably mediocre, and might well do for a county member to represent his class, but he is not the sort of man to represent a Radical borough; he is a party man, and goes with his party (the Whigs)'.⁵⁷ When accused of sowing disunity, Bradlaugh issued a leaflet challenging both Henley and the *Mercury*: it 'is the so-called respectable Whigs who have divided the borough Liberals, if divisions there be'.⁵⁸ Bradlaugh noticeably here adopted a class rhetoric in relation to the Whigs.

Another independent Radical candidate seeking Liberal support stood in the election, further showing the factional nature of Liberalism. Dr Lees, while dismissed by some of his opponents as simply a prohibitionist representing the United Kingdom Alliance, stood on a broad Radical platform. In favour of retrenchment, the ballot and further extensions of the franchise into the counties, he was clearly Radical but not unusual. However, he went further in calling for triennial parliaments and land tax reform to encourage retrenchment among the wealthy, placing him closer to the democratic Radicalism of the Chartist tradition. Indeed, he had been elected as a Chartist town councillor for Leeds in 1850. Towards Gilpin he was supportive but with more ambiguity than Bradlaugh: 'The liberal Middle-Classes have already one sound Representative – why should they want two?' His rhetoric of class antagonism unusually offered an explicit criticism of both Whig and middle-class Liberals. Gladstone could receive, 'loyal but independent support' from Dr Lees.⁵⁹

It might appear that a fraternal conflict was taking place interested in labels rather than policies. A conflict between an assortment of Radicals and the Whigs. There is something in this. We have seen already how Gilpin was willing to resort to an anti-Whig rhetoric. There is also evidence that he was sympathetic to Bradlaugh's candidature and 'regarded Bradlaugh as his political heir'.⁶⁰ He contributed £10 after the election of 1874 towards Bradlaugh's costs, a figure that may have a broader resonance given the controversy over J. S. Mill's contribution of the same sum to Bradlaugh before the election of 1868. His daughter also quoted a statement by Alderman P. P. Perry, from 1876, that Gilpin was in favour of an 'arrangement with Mr Bradlaugh'.⁶¹ Perry had himself been a municipal Chartist candidate in 1850 and had been one of the Chartists whose energies drifted to the Liberation Society after 1848. He was therefore, not surprisingly, a reluctant supporter of Bradlaugh, supporting both Whig candidates, Henley and Fowler, in the election and then the by-election of 1874.⁶²

It has been argued that the divisions in Northampton 'were not based on fundamental differences of principle, but on personalities and a desire of Radicals for a real share of power in municipal and parliamentary powers'.⁶³ This power struggle was genuine, but its foundations predate Bradlaugh's interest in the constituency. He was emblematic rather than the cause of the conflict, which transcends personalities. The Radicalism that Bradlaugh, if not Dr Lees, espoused was looking not to nudge the political discourse in the manner of a Lockhart but to seek a parliamentary representation of their ideas. While they both looked to reference the popular national exponents of a broader popular Radicalism, which may be seen to complement the Radicalism of Gilpin or even of Gladstone, they clearly took that Radical vision further and both men actually temper their support for Gladstone. However, this was not a Radicalism that was offering anything fundamentally new but was looking back to traditions linked to its Chartist roots. An assertion of a democratic Radicalism as had already been seen in Gurney's conditional relationship with Gilpin.

Lord Henley's individual address of 19 October was understandably defensive; he was the target of this new Radical confidence. The passing of the Second Reform Act left those that seemed to have opposed change facing in part an electorate they had seemed to reject. He stressed misconceptions built around 'the protest which I made against the violence used

'Henley' is respectably mediocre, and might well do for a county member to represent his class, but he is not the sort of man to represent a Radical borough; he is a party man, and goes with his party (the Whigs).'

in Hyde Park and an accidental misconception as to the working of the Rating Clauses in the Reform Bill'. He too pledged himself to the working man. Significantly he addressed his appeal not just to the electors but to the 'Non-electors' of Northampton. He clung to the slogan of increasing the franchise, one of the key slogans which allowed the Liberals to blur their differences.⁶⁴

It is very easy at this point to become distracted by the parliamentary fight that ensued. Bradlaugh increasingly became the headline story, with deep divisions emerging over his controversial views in regard to religion. But for those that supported Bradlaugh, he was not there to promote secularism. Typical of this view was the Rev. J. K. Applebee who made clear:

I have no sympathy whatever for Mr Bradlaugh's theological opinions; but at the same time I rejoice to think that on most social and political questions I am entirely at one with Mr Bradlaugh.⁶⁵

For those that supported Bradlaugh, he was not there to promote secularism. Typical of this view was the Rev. J. K. Applebee who made clear: 'I have no sympathy whatever for Mr Bradlaugh's theological opinions; but at the same time I rejoice to think that on most social and political questions I am entirely at one with Mr Bradlaugh.'

What is clear is the factious nature of organised Liberalism between 1868 and the next election in 1874. This development was characterised by increased organisation and electoral success for the Radicals. A Radical Association was created in the West Ward in September 1868, the West Ward being the most working-class area and also the ward in which Bates was active and Gurney a councillor. In 1869, a Radical candidate was returned in both the East and West Wards alongside a United Liberal Association candidate. The United Liberal Association would be too easily dismissed as Whig or sidestepped as Liberal. At this point the Radicals were part of the Liberal dynamic and were clearly recognised as Liberal to the extent that comments within the *Mercury* and the post municipal election meetings focus on the level of unity or disunity between the two. The United Liberal Association would be more accurately described as the representation of the Liberal elite, the outward manifestation of official Liberalism.

What the now mainly anonymous ward Radicals in Northampton represented was an attempt to democratise the politics with public meetings leading to the presentation of petitions in parliament. They sought to broaden the relevance and extend the transparency of politics with an emphasis on the importance of ward meetings in selecting municipal candidates. It was this vision of politics which characterised the Radical movement in Northampton. It was what the Chartist tradition

brought, and it was not primarily a politics of class. This tradition continued to assert its independence of official Liberalism in 1871 with Radical candidates standing against candidates of the United Liberal Association, in the East Ward. 1872 saw the foundation of the Northampton Radical Society to promote debate and the Radical District Secretaries Association to extend organisation. The Radical interest developed alongside but outside of the United Liberal Association, which was clearly not representing a united Liberal Party. The ability of the Radicals to split the Liberal vote necessitated compromise. 1873 saw the agreement that the ULA would contest the East Ward and the Radicals would contest the West Ward; in 1874 ULA and Radical candidates ran in tandem in West and East Wards. In 1875, two more Radicals were elected and Gurney become the first Radical mayor of Northampton, something he would repeat in 1879. A Radical progress which was driven from below. It was not until 1880 that a Northampton Liberal and Radical Association was set up and the Radical Association dissolved.

It does not diminish the significance of national politics to recognise how Radicals were committed to a democratic vision and saw the need to be inclusive at the municipal level. Rather it exposes the arena in which the Chartist, democratic Radical tradition, was most virulent. It was, ideologically as much as by necessity, a politics nurtured from below. It makes Bradlaugh's calls for public ballots and votes at meetings a principled rather than a strategic stance. It explains how Gurney's commitment to Gilpin had in large part been based on Gilpin making himself accountable, to the extent of reporting back to his constituency and the presentation of petitions in parliament. It also makes ideological the commitment to debate national issues at local level and to pass motions from the town council to Westminster. The *Mercury* found it necessary to address this:

We demur altogether to Mr Gurney's argument that when we elect a Town Councillor we elect him as the representative of our opinions on Imperial questions ... That, however, is not the use, but the abuse, of our franchise. To the Town Council belong the Fountain question: to Parliament the question whether women shall or shall not possess the franchise.⁶⁶

The debates around the Ballot Act stimulated this very debate. A lecture attended by a large number of women was arranged and a petition

Both represented the legacy of the Chartist tradition, a democratic Radicalism, which sought to create a more inclusive and transparent politics. Gurney constructed the bridge for this transition from Chartism towards Liberalism, Bates the reminder that it remained essentially separate. Together they represent the dilemma of the Radical. Either to seek a voice and influence from within (the choice taken by Gurney) or to hold to principles and independence (the position taken with pride by Bates).

followed advocating women's suffrage. It was seconded by Gurney and sent to Gilpin for presentation to parliament, with Henley being requested to support it.⁶⁷ Votes for women followed the logic of the democratic Radical and it is interesting to see how quickly the democratic Radicals are willing to move on from the ballot rather than seeing it as an end point. Gurney had wanted 'to know on what grounds they would refuse the suffrage to a woman who paid the rent and taxes of her home' in 1866.⁶⁸ The neutralisation of local democracy was not a new idea from the *Mercury* or from official Liberalism. The *Mercury* had said much the same in 1869, when it described the work of the council as 'wholly unpolitical'.⁶⁹

To conclude, the Radical tradition in Northampton needed no impetus from Bradlaugh. Its traditions were deep rooted and the democratic Radical tradition evolving out of Chartism provided the dynamism. This democratic tradition has been shown above to be distinct from the more moderate or middle-class Radicalism enveloped within the United Liberal Association and the politics of Northampton's Radical MPs, first Raikes then Gilpin. The middle-class tradition recognised the need for change but was more fearful of the forces this might unleash. Cautious and gradualist, it nevertheless saw a need to incorporate democratic Radicals such as Gurney. This middle-class, officially sponsored Radicalism would define itself as both practical and popular – and ironically this form of Radicalism did have greater popular electoral appeal – while noting the continuing limitations of the franchise. Looking to politicians like Bright and then Gladstone, the Radical voters were often conservative in outlook to the extent that they were primarily deferential in their voting habits. Holding to Radical policies and slogans they voted for the official Liberal Party candidates rather than Chartist or independent Radical candidates when presented with a choice both at parliamentary and borough elections; but the democratic Radical remained embedded within the political culture.

Gladstone was crucial in maintaining the illusion of a Radical cohesion and moderation around broad policy aims, an illusion that could not be maintained by middle-class Radicals like Bright who were increasingly overtaken by events. This illusion made an ideological struggle appear, even to historians, to be a struggle over power rather than principles at municipal level.⁷⁰ Taken up by Radical MPs like Gilpin, Gladstone created a mask allowing them to maintain their Radical credibility. But it should

not be forgotten that to begin with Gladstone was also taken up by Whigs, like Lord Henley, as an acceptable compromise with Radicalism. The 'Whigs' Gladstone' was as authentic and significant a vector for Liberalism in the 1860s as the 'people's William', a role he was given to play even before gaining this accolade from the *Telegraph*. There may be a 'merger of popular Radicalism and Gladstonian Liberalism', but the democratic, Chartist tradition remained ideologically distinct and relevant.⁷¹

Popular Radicalism is sometimes used to encompass the non-parliamentary Radical, but this is to miss the nature and diversity of this Radicalism. In Northampton, the Radical societies were the instruments of a democratic ideology which was more than the expression of a municipal identity because it represented an ideological struggle within the municipality. A Chartist democratic tradition continued and offered evidence of continuity within the broader Radical discourse. It assimilated itself into the official Liberal dynamic without losing its identity and as such can also be seen as representing an antagonism within Liberalism. The question as to whether that antagonism was eventually resolved depends on whether the Chartist tradition should be seen as inherently Liberal in the case of Northampton or whether it evolved into the ILP in the 1880s and should be seen as involving a period of interaction with, rather than transition into, Liberalism.⁷²

Bradlaugh courted Northampton as a seat to satisfy his parliamentary ambitions. There is no real evidence that he took the lead in local politics during the 1870s and the ascendancy of Radicalism in Northampton. He was no Cowen or Chamberlain who defined and dominated the Radicalism of Newcastle and Birmingham. He achieved a national profile, but what characterised Northampton Radicalism was the absence of a local charismatic figure. Gurney and Bates are the two champions of this account. Both represented the legacy of the Chartist tradition, a democratic Radicalism, which sought to create a more inclusive and transparent politics. Gurney constructed the bridge for this transition from Chartism towards Liberalism, Bates the reminder that it remained essentially separate. Together they represent the dilemma of the Radical. Either to seek a voice and influence from within (the choice taken by Gurney) or to hold to principles and independence (the position taken with pride by Bates). On the day that Gurney's death was announced to the Northampton Radical Association, J. M. Robertson delivered a lecture entitled 'Radicalism and Socialism', in which

he stated that the ‘Liberal party ... was the party of present possibilities.’⁷³

Tim Hughes has been a teacher of history for thirty years and is currently researching the Radical traditions of Northampton during the nineteenth century.

- 1 This is different to that found elsewhere by Matthew Roberts who cites work done by Robert Hall. See ‘Out of Chartism, into Liberalism?’, *Journal of Liberal History*, 67 (Summer 2010), p. 11.
- 2 For a pro-continuity argument see E. F. Biagini and A. Reid, ‘Currents of Radicalism, 1850–1914’, in E. F. Biagini and A. Reid (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism: Organised Labour and Party Politics, 1850–1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 1–19. For a discontinuity historian see Neville Kirk, *Change, Continuity and Class: Labour in British Society 1850–1920* (Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 94.
- 3 Anthony Taylor, ‘The Glamour of Independence: By-elections and Radicalism during the Liberal Meridian, 1869–83’, in T. G. Otte and Paul Readman (eds.), *By-elections in British Politics 1832–1914* (The Boydell Press, 2013), p. 103.
- 4 Fergus D’Arcy, ‘Charles Bradlaugh and the World of Popular Radicalism 1833–1891’, doctoral thesis (Hull, 1978), p. 387. Argument put most succinctly on p. 9.
- 5 R. G. Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement 1837–1854* (2nd edn. 1894; Merlin Press, 1969).
- 6 John Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), p. 305 n. 95.
- 7 Gurney in letter to the *Northampton Mercury*, 10 June 1871, p. 3.
- 8 *Northampton Mercury*, 15 Dec. 1893, p. 7.
- 9 *Northampton Mercury*, 30 Oct. 1841, p. 4 gives a copy of the poll.
- 10 *Northampton Mercury*, 24 Mar. 1888, p. 6.
- 11 Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement*, p. 194.
- 12 *Northampton Mercury*, 11 Aug. 1849, p. 2.
- 13 *Northampton Mercury*, 25 Aug. 1883, p. 6.
- 14 *Northampton Mercury*, 8 Sep. 1883, p. 6.
- 15 *Northampton Mercury*, 27 Oct. 1855, p. 4.
- 16 *Northampton Mercury*, 19 May 1855, p. 3.
- 17 *Northampton Mercury*, 27 Oct. 1855, p. 4.
- 18 References from political leaflets, Box 5, Political Ephemera 1850–64, NCL
- 19 See Derek Fraser, *Urban Politics in Victorian England* (Leicester University Press, 1976), Chapter 4 on the Improvement Commissions.
- 20 D’Arcy, ‘Charles Bradlaugh’, p. 313.
- 21 Biagini and Reid, ‘Currents of Radicalism’, p. 6.
- 22 *Northampton Mercury*, 16 Oct. 1858, p. 2.
- 23 Letter from ONE OF ‘THE BUNDLE’, *Northampton Mercury*, 4 June 1859, p. 3.
- 24 *Northampton Mercury*, 18 Dec. 1858, p. 2.
- 25 *Northampton Mercury*, 15 Dec. 1860, p. 5.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 171–3.
- 30 *Northampton Mercury*, 15 Dec 1860, p. 5.
- 31 *Northampton Mercury*, 27 Oct. 1866, p. 6.
- 32 *Northampton Mercury*, 6 Aug. 1864, p. 7.
- 33 Biagini and Reid, ‘Currents of Radicalism’, p. 6.
- 34 *Northampton Mercury*, 6 Aug. 1864, p. 7.
- 35 *Northampton Mercury*, 29 Oct. 1864, p. 5.
- 36 Borough Franchise Bill, Second Reading; Hansard, Parl. Debs. (series 3) vol. 175, col. 324 (11 May 1864).
- 37 Palmerston to Gladstone, 11 May 1864; in Philip Guedalla (ed.), *Gladstone and Palmerston* (Victor Gollancz, 1928), p. 279.
- 38 Gladstone to Palmerston, 13 May 1864; *ibid.*, p. 282.
- 39 *Northampton Mercury*, 14 May 1864, p. 5.
- 40 *Northampton Mercury*, 14 May 1864, p. 3.
- 41 Borough Franchise Bill, Second Reading.
- 42 *Northampton Mercury*, 4 June 1864, p. 2.
- 43 H. G. C. Matthew, *Gladstone 1809–1874* (Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 138.
- 44 *Northampton Mercury*, 28 May 1864, p. 5.
- 45 *Northampton Mercury*, 29 Oct. 1864, p. 5.
- 46 It is implied that Bradlaugh is in Northampton on Monday, 31 January. *Northampton Mercury*, 29 Jan. 1859, p. 3.
- 47 *Northampton Mercury*, 26 Mar. 1859, p. 3.
- 48 Edward Royle, *Radicals, Secularists and Republicans* (Manchester University Press, 1980), p. 54.
- 49 *Northampton Mercury*, 8 Aug. 1868, p. 7.
- 50 Speeches delivered on 12 Aug. at St James End and the balcony of the Victoria Hotel, on the Market Square. *Northampton Mercury*, 15 Aug. 1868, pp. 5 and 6.
- 51 Speech delivered on 19 Aug.; *Northampton Mercury*, 22 Aug. 1868, p. 8.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 To the three speeches already referenced, I have included a fourth delivered on 25 Aug. reported in *Northampton Mercury*, 29 Aug. 1868, p. 6.
- 54 Benjamin Wilson, *The Struggles of an Old Chartist* (Halifax 1887); from David Vincent (ed.), *Testaments of Radicalism* (Europa, 1977), pp. 229–30.
- 55 Letter published in the *Northampton Mercury*, 19 Sep. 1868, p. 5.
- 56 *Northampton Mercury*, 3 Oct. 1868, p. 6.
- 57 ‘Men and Women of Northampton’, leaflet, Box 6, Political Ephemera 1868, NCL.
- 58 ‘Who has divided the Liberal Party Mr Bradlaugh or Lord Henley?’ Box 6, Political Ephemera 1868, NCL.
- 59 ‘To the Electors of the Borough of Northampton’, Frederick Richard Lees, 28 Sep. 1868, Box 6, Political Ephemera 1868, NCL.
- 60 E. Royle, ‘Charles Bradlaugh, Free-thought and Northampton’; *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, Vol. 6 No.3 (1980), p. 147. Cites the *National Reformer* and a letter from C. Gilpin to C. Bradlaugh, 4 Aug. 1874. Bradlaugh Collection no. 389.
- 61 Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, *Charles Bradlaugh*, vol. 1 (T. Fisher Unwin, 1902), p. 396 n.
- 62 Obituary, *Northampton Mercury*, 5 Sep. 1890.
- 63 Fergus D’Arcy, ‘Charles Bradlaugh and the World of Popular Radicalism 1833–1891’, doctoral thesis (Hull 1978).
- 64 ‘To the Electors & Non-electors of the Borough of Northampton’, Box 6, Political Ephemera 1868, NCL.
- 65 Lecture on 25 Aug. reported in *Northampton Mercury*, 29 Aug. 1868, p. 6.
- 66 *Northampton Mercury*, 6 May 1871, p. 5.
- 67 *Northampton Mercury*, 4 Nov. 1871, p. 8.
- 68 *Northampton Mercury*, 14 July 1866, p. 6.
- 69 *Northampton Mercury*, 30 Oct. 1869, p. 5.
- 70 D’Arcy, ‘Charles Bradlaugh’, p. 333.
- 71 Neville Kirk, *Change, continuity and class: Labour in British Society 1850–1920* (Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 94.
- 72 See Matthew Kidd, ‘Popular Continuity in Urban England, 1867–1918: the case studies of Bristol and Northampton’, PhD thesis (Nottingham, November 2015). http://www.academia.edu/34663279/Popular_Political_Continuity_in_Urban_England_1867-1918_The_Case_Studies_of_Bristol_and_Northampton (last accessed January 2019).
- 73 *Northampton Mercury*, 15 Dec. 1893, p. 6.