

**THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF GLOUCESTER:
ITS COMPOSITION, STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS
DURING THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY**

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Abstract

Gloucester's municipal corporation evolved through a succession of medieval royal charters culminating in Richard III's charter of 1483. Thereafter, the corporation emerged as the governing body of Gloucester and played a substantial but restricted role in the local government of the city until its abolition in 1974. Its responsibilities were distinctly limited during the first half of the nineteenth century and focused on property management, charity administration and trade regulation. These activities were administered or controlled by the common council, which represented the ruling body of Gloucester's corporation.

The structure of Gloucester's corporation was subjected to its first significant reform by the imposition of the Municipal Corporations Act in 1835. The objectives of this Act were to address perceived failings and abuses in existing corporations in England and Wales and to allow for the creation of new ones in certain areas of growing urbanisation. The Act was based on the findings of the commissioners for municipal reform. Among other objectives the Act sought to allow greater access to municipal office, enforce financial propriety and accountability on corporation expenditure and allow for more effective provision of public amenities. It also sought to restore popular confidence in law and order by ending the role of corporation aldermen in the local magistracy and by making provision for borough police forces.

Therefore, the 1835 Act forms the pivot on which this study is balanced. The reform of the corporations has been alternatively praised as a revolution in local government and dismissed as a mere postscript to the parliamentary reform Act of 1832. The unreformed corporations were greatly vilified by their contemporaries and have received comparatively little attention from historians and this neglect has extended to the newly elected councils after 1835.

Local historiography pertaining to the impact of reform on Gloucester's corporation is noticeably absent. A number of local studies do reveal that the corporation was particularly influential in the political, social and economic life of the city during the nineteenth century, but while these works have specified some of the problems that existed, such as the political inviolability of the self-electing corporation and its political partisanship, the individual focus of each study has precluded a more detailed analysis of the internal management and structure of Gloucester's corporation or the impact municipal reform had on it.

Informed by general historiography and specific local studies this thesis uses the records of Gloucester's corporation along with other primary sources to examine its composition, structure and functions. The thesis focuses on the corporation's internal management prior to the introduction of the Municipal Corporations Act, the extent and relevance of the changes imposed by the reforms of 1835 and the effects of the Act upon the corporation until the expansion of its powers as a board of health from 1849. In doing so this thesis emphasises the themes of continuity and change and attempts to provide the impetus for a broader examination of the numerous elements of local government in Gloucester during a period of great social, economic and political change.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed.....Date.....

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Abbreviations

- B.G.A.S. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.
- B.I.H.R. *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.*
- E.H.R. *English Historical Review.*
- G.B.R. Gloucester Borough Records in Gloucestershire Record Office.
- G.C. Gloucestershire Collection at Gloucester Local Studies Library (to be amalgamated with the G.R.O. January 2006).
- G.J. *Gloucester Journal.* Weekly publication from 1722.
- G.R.O. Gloucestershire Record Office.
- J.R.L.S. *The Journal of Regional and Local Studies.*
- P.R.O. Formerly the Public Record Office at Kew, West London, now the National Archives.
- T.B.G.A.S. *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.*
- V.C.H. *Glos. IV.* Herbert, N. (ed.) *The Victoria County History of Gloucestershire: Volume IV, The City of Gloucester* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- V.C.H. *Glos. II.* Page, W. (ed) *The Victoria County History of Gloucestershire: Volume II, The County of Gloucester* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1907, reprinted Folkstone: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1972)
- 1833 *Requisition.* *A Requisition to the Mayor of Gloucester* (Gloucester: Jew and Wingate, 1833).
- 1st *Report.* *The First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Municipal Corporations of England and Wales.* H.C. 1835 (116) XXIII.
- 14th *Report.* *14th Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire Concerning Charities.* H.C. 1826, XI.

CHAPTER ONE

Municipal Government: Reform, Debates and Approaches

1. Local Government and the Municipal Corporations

On 9 September 1835 the Municipal Corporations Act passed into law under Lord Melbourne's Whig government.¹ The Act replaced the essentially private constitutions of 178 municipal corporations with new public institutions in the form of elected town councils and made provision for new ones to be created in areas of growing urbanisation.² The Act represented the first significant reform of English borough administration by public general Act.³ It sought to render corporations more representative of their local communities, more accountable for corporation expenditure and less influential in the local judiciary, in an attempt to rationalise local government.⁴

That local government was in need of rationalisation was clear to many contemporaries and is not disputed by historians, for no single organised system was conceived of or implemented. Rather, town government developed in a gradual, piecemeal and localised manner.⁵ However, in the incorporated boroughs the municipal corporations often represented the upper-tier of local administration within a confusing network of local practices governed by royal charters and parliamentary statutes.⁶ Thus evolved a unique and decentralised form of local government⁷ which,

¹ Statute: 5 & 6 William IV, c.76.

² Snell, The Lord. 'The Town Council' in Laski, H., Jennings, W., and Robson, W. *A Century of Municipal Progress: 1835-1935* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1935) pp.55-6.

³ Keith-Lucas, B. *The Unreformed Local Government System* (London: Croom Helm, 1980) p.149.

⁴ Finlayson, G. 'The Municipal Corporation Commission and Report 1833-35', *B.I.H.R.*, Vol.XXXVI, 1963. pp.36-52.

⁵ Smellie K. *A History of Local Government* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1946) p.9.

⁶ Webb, S. and Webb, B. *The Development of English Local Government 1689-1835: Being Chapters V and VI of English Local Government* (originally Longmans, 1922; London: OUP, 1963) p.5.

⁷ Redlich, J. and Hirst, F. *The History of Local Government in England* (London: Macmillan, 2nd edn, 1970) p.13.

by the early nineteenth century, formed ‘a remarkable patchwork whose infinite variety no contemporary could fully comprehend’.⁸

In 1759 Sir William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England* attempted to describe the common law of England,⁹ and offer a ‘legal explanation of the British constitution’.¹⁰ Blackstone was reluctant to become embroiled in the *minutiae* of municipal government, but did articulate the legal position of corporate bodies which, once erected, acquired many powers. These included perpetual succession and the ability to sue or be sued, to purchase and hold land or property for their own benefit, to create by-laws and to make private statutes ‘for the better government of the corporation’.¹¹ Thus, the corporations only represented a nominal form of local government as their constitutions were based on self-interest and not the public good. Nevertheless, they often occupied a central role in the civic and administrative identity of their host communities from medieval times and beyond 1835 until their eventual abolition in 1974.¹² The precise number of unreformed corporations is difficult to determine as many had fallen into decay, but between 250 and 350 municipal boroughs with acknowledged corporate status existed in England and Wales prior to reform.¹³

The specific timing of the 1835 Act has been attributed to political expediency, but its impetus arose from the broader imperatives created by industrialisation.¹⁴ An

⁸ Fraser, D. *Power and Authority in the Victorian City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979) p.1.

⁹ Morrison, W. (ed.) *Blackstone’s Commentaries on the Laws of England: Volume I* (London: Cavendish, 2001) p.v.

¹⁰ Keith-Lucas, B. ‘Introduction’ in Redlich, and Hirst. *History of Local Government* . p.x.

¹¹ Morrison. *Blackstone’s Commentaries*. pp.366-7.

¹² West, J. *Town Records* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1983) pp.169-70; Loughlin, M. *The Constitutional Status of Local Government* (Commission for Local Democracy Research Report, No.3, July 1994).

¹³ Figures vary to the exact number depending on the criteria used. West. *Town Records*. p.166; Faraday, W. *The English and Welsh Boroughs* (London: Thames Bank, 1951) pp.1-5.

¹⁴ Salmon, P. *Electoral Reform at Work: Local Politics and National Parties 1832-1841* (Suffolk: Boydell, 2002) pp.210-37; Finlayson, G. *England in the Eighteen Thirties: Decade of Reform* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969) p.1; Evans, E. *The Forging of the Modern State: Early Industrial Britain 1783-1870* (London: Longman, 1983) p.101.

increasingly populous and urbanised society presented new challenges to the complicated and heterogeneous elements of local government whose foundations were built on ancient practices and rights and whose apparatus was being rendered increasingly incapable of meeting the new demands put upon it.¹⁵ Acute problems of poverty, overcrowding and crime were being further exacerbated by the hardships created by the end of the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁶ Subsequently, popular unrest, a resurgence of radicalism, the emergence of Benthamite Utilitarianism and an increasingly articulate, but politically excluded middle class, all contributed to render many elements of England's *ancien régime* vulnerable to reform.¹⁷ By the 1830s, demands for change were well rehearsed in Westminster, particularly by constitutional radicals and parliamentary Whigs.¹⁸ The Great Reform Act of 1832, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 and the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 were all Whig reforms.¹⁹ Each was resisted in varying degrees by conservative opponents both within and outside parliament, particularly the ultra-Tories and the aristocracy, but their successful introduction has led the 1830s to be labelled 'the decade of reform'.²⁰

The impetus for municipal reform arose from a widely held view of corporations' self-serving and ineffective nature. Contemporaries dismissed municipal corporations as corrupt oligarchies, ill-equipped to cater to the needs of growing urban communities and preoccupied with exploiting their role in parliamentary election

¹⁵ Clark, P. (ed.) *County Towns in Pre-Industrial England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1981) p.2.

¹⁶ Keith-Lucas. *Unreformed Government*. p.79; Sawyer, J. *The Story of Gloucestershire* (Cheltenham: Norman Sawyer and Co, 2nd edn, 1908) p.253; Sweet, R. *The English Town, 1680-1840* (Harlow: Pearson, 1999) p.147.

¹⁷ For an account of reform in general see Finlayson. *Decade of Reform*. On municipal reform in particular see Finlayson, G. 'The Politics of Municipal Reform, 1835', *E.H.R.* Vol.81, No.321, 1966. pp.673-92.

¹⁸ Quinault, R. 'The French Revolution of 1830 and Parliamentary Reform', *History*, Vol.79, No.257, 1994. pp.377-93; Prochaska, F. *The Republic of Britain, 1760-2000* (London: Penguin, 2000) pp.33-5.

¹⁹ Statutes: 2 William IV, c.45; 4 & 5 William IV, c.76; 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76.

²⁰ Finlayson. *Decade of Reform*.

contests.²¹ The corporation reform issue gained increasing currency following the reform crisis of 1831-2 and subsequent introduction of the Great Reform Act. The crisis sharpened long held dissatisfaction of the corporations' power to manipulate the local electorate.²² Reform of the parliamentary electorate had centred on the unrepresentative nature of the elective franchise. It exposed municipal corporations in particular to criticism, as many exerted considerable influence over the election of M.P.s often through their control of admissions to the borough freedom in those places where the freedom was an essential prerequisite for voting.²³ In 1833 Lord Althorp (Whig) stated that criticism of the corporations was so widespread and persistent that parliament must consider a remedy.²⁴ 'The most active spring of election bribery and villainy everywhere is known to be the corporation system...the fact is that Parliamentary Reform, if it were not to include corporation reform likewise, would have been literally a dead letter'.²⁵

However, the majority of corporations were firmly in the hands of Tory supporters and Whig demands for reform were treated by some as little more than a cynical attempt to place them under the control of Whigs. Reform was motivated by considerations of political advantage, but there was also a broad consensus that the corporations were ill-equipped to respond to change and needed overhauling.²⁶

²¹ Finlayson. *Decade of Reform*. pp.23-5.

²² Phillips, J. *The Great Reform Bill in the Boroughs: English Electoral Behaviour 1818-1841* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) pp.42-4; Finlayson. 'Politics of Reform'. pp.674-5.

²³ Sweet. *The English Town*. pp.155-6.

²⁴ Hansard. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd ser., xv, col.646, cited in Finlayson. 'Commission and Report'. p.38.

²⁵ *The Times*. 25 June 1833, cited in Finlayson. 'Commission and Report'. pp37-8.

²⁶ Salmon. *Electoral Reform*. p.211.

2. Historiography

In 1838 the prominent radical reformer Richard Cobden claimed that the Municipal Corporations Act was ‘the most democratic measure upon our statute book’.²⁷ Such judgment was not confined to contemporaries. A century later W. Ivor Jennings laid claim to its revolutionary importance as ‘a definite confiscation of private property rights and their dedication to public use under control of a democratically governed authority’.²⁸ Cobden and Jennings’s uncompromising claims are tempered by alternative perspectives and Derek Fraser viewed municipal reform as a mere change in personnel that left corporation structures largely unchanged.²⁹ Nevertheless, the importance of municipal reform is still clearly articulated. Joseph Redlich and Francis Hirst claimed that the changes introduced by reform were of equal importance to those brought about by the 1832 Reform Act and 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, but their conclusion was based on the 1835 Act’s radical not revolutionary nature.³⁰ Notwithstanding these alternative views, municipal reform was, and still is, viewed as an important measure.

Nevertheless, municipal government remains curiously under-represented in the history of nineteenth century England. ‘There is no good general history of English municipalities’ Charles Gross concluded in 1897 and over a century later the same verdict might be reached.³¹ The reasons for this neglect are obscure, but a traditional focus on Westminster, Whitehall and the Cabinet have combined with the great difficulty of making sense of the complicated elements of local government to leave

²⁷ *Manchester Guardian*, 10 Feb 1838, cited in Fraser, D. (ed.) *Municipal Reform and the Industrial City* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982) p.3.

²⁸ Jennings, W. ‘The Municipal Revolution’ in Laski *et al.* *Municipal Progress*. p.55.

²⁹ Fraser. *Municipal Reform*. p.2.

³⁰ Redlich and Hirst. *History of Local Government*. p.129.

³¹ Gross, C. *A Bibliography of British Municipal History Including Guilds and Parliamentary Representation* (London: Leicester University Press, 2nd edn, 1966) p.15.

the subject relatively marginalized.³² Central government clearly represents a legitimate focus of enquiry, but during the early nineteenth century England's government was still primarily conducted at the local level.³³ The quality of provincial people's lives often rested heavily on the quality of their local government and their concerns were more of the parish than parliament.³⁴

The history of the corporations during the nineteenth century is largely confined to broader substantive studies of English local government, such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb's extensive enquiries and the work of Redlich and Hirst. Yet substantive studies of the municipal corporations are noticeably absent. More specialised studies such as Fraser's *Municipal Reform and the Industrial City* do attempt to address the imbalance, but much of the history of the corporations has been obscured by other competing issues.³⁵ The challenges presented to local autonomy by the emergence of the centralising policies of Jeremy Bentham and Edwin Chadwick, and issues of parliamentary representation, have often reduced the analysis of the corporations to their role as electoral colleges thereby concealing or ignoring a detailed exposition of how they functioned and the issues they concerned themselves with.

Enquiries that have extended to the localities have often been preoccupied with the social and economic status of local parliamentary representatives elected to the House of Commons.³⁶ Such studies sought to establish or challenge notions of the rise to political power of the commercial and mercantile middling orders, at the expense of the traditionally dominant landed aristocracy and gentry. These enquiries frequently

³² Kingdom, J. *Local Government and Politics in Britain* (London: Philip Allan, 1991) p.1; Chester, N. *The English Administrative System 1780-1870* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981) p.52; Pearce, R. and Stearn, R. *Government and Reform: Britain 1815-1918* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2nd edn, 2000) p.86.

³³ Fraser. *Power and Authority*. p.1; Pearce, R. 'Political History' *in* Butler, L. and Gorst, A. *Modern British History* (London: Tauris, 1997) p.154.

³⁴ Laski *et al.* *Municipal Progress*. p.11; Kingdom. *Government and Politics*. p.21.

³⁵ Fraser. *Municipal Reform*. pp.9-10.

³⁶ Gash, N. *Politics in the Age of Peel: A Study in the Technique of Parliamentary Representation, 1830-50* (London: Longmans, 2nd edn, 1977).

centred on the causes and consequences of parliamentary reform and on the analysis of voting behaviour, patronage and the consequent composition of the House of Commons.³⁷ Consequently, the themes of venality, corruption and patronage were emphasised and expounded in a succession of histories written from the late eighteenth century on.³⁸ Cumulatively, they effectively established a dominant orthodoxy which failed to scrutinise the day-to-day management of corporations and their involvement in civic life.³⁹ Consequently, corporations were dismissed as little more than electoral colleges, highly partisan at best and ‘chartered hogsties’ at worst.⁴⁰

Yet, the last two decades have been marked by a significant growth in urban and provincial studies, which have presented alternative perspectives. Rosemary Sweet has noted that urban based studies in particular are transforming understandings of the social and political realities of English local government, which have hitherto been neglected.⁴¹ Furthermore, a number of studies focusing on the practice of politics at the local level have presented a challenge to a prevailing orthodoxy, which sought to dismiss municipal corporations as an aspect of ‘Old Corruption’.⁴² Most notable in this respect are the studies by John Phillips and Frank O’Gorman.⁴³ Their enquiries, despite much criticism of their methodologies, continue to stimulate detailed enquiries

³⁷ Jaggard, E. *Cornwall Politics in the Age of Reform: 1790-1885* (Rochester: Boydell, 1999) pp.1-5.

³⁸ Oldfield, T. *An Entire and Complete History, Political and Personal of the Boroughs of Great Britain* (London, 1792); Grego, J. *History of Parliamentary Elections and Electioneering in the Old Days* (London, 1892); Porritt, E. and Porritt, A. *The Unreformed House of Commons: Parliamentary Representation before 1832* (Cambridge, 1903); Namier, L. *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (Macmillan, 1929).

³⁹ Sparkes, A. ‘To What Extent Were the Demands for Parliamentary Reform During the 1831-1832 Reform Crisis, Reflected in Gloucester’ (Dissertation: University of Gloucestershire, 2002) p.18.

⁴⁰ *The Times*. 25 June 1833, cited in Keith-Lucas, B. *The English Local Government Franchise: A Short History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952) p.47.

⁴¹ Sweet. *The English Town*. pp.2-6.

⁴² Ashton, R. ‘Radicalism and Chartism in Gloucestershire 1832-1847 (Ph.D., Thesis: Birmingham University, 1980) p.x.

⁴³ Phillips, J. *The Great Reform Bill in the Boroughs: English Electoral Behaviour 1818-1841* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992); O’Gorman, F. *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electorate of Hanoverian England, 1734-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

into aspects of municipal government. Philip Salmon's exposition of borough and county politics in the 1830s and 1840s is heavily influenced by Phillips and as the most recent substantive study of English local government to emerge addresses the comparative marginalisation of the subject. Yet Salmon's attention is directed towards the impact of parliamentary reform in 1832 and its influence on political imperatives to reform the corporations. Thus, once again, attention has been diverted away from a closer analysis of corporation structures and activities.

Despite the limited constitutions of the unreformed corporations, many were active within their host communities. Gloucester's corporation was in this category. Much has been written about the city of Gloucester's past. Thomas Fosbrooke's *History of the City* in 1819, George Counsel's *History and Description of the City* in 1829 and the *Victoria County History of Gloucester* are just a few examples.⁴⁴ Fosbrooke claimed that his studies were aimed at addressing deficiencies in Gloucester's history.⁴⁵ Yet almost 140 years later H.P.R. Finberg made much the same point and claimed that much remained to be done '(i)n the lively account of Gloucestershire historiography'.⁴⁶ While Finberg's comments were not specifically directed at Gloucester's corporation, his observations remain pertinent to this enquiry. Despite a number of works addressing aspects of Gloucester's local government, much has been left unsaid about its corporation. Esther Moir's 1969 study of the county's magistrates in the late eighteenth century makes reference to the city, but is essentially

⁴⁴ Fosbrooke, T. *An Original History of the City of Gloucester* (London, 1819); Counsel, G. *The History and Description of the City of Gloucester* (Gloucester: J.Bulgin, 1829); Herbert, N. (ed.) *The Victoria County History of Gloucestershire: Volume IV, The City of Gloucester* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁴⁵ Moir, E. 'The Historians of Gloucestershire: Retrospect and Prospect', in Finberg, H. (ed.) *Gloucestershire Studies* (Leicester: The University Press) p.282-3; Counsel. *History and Description*. p.ix.

⁴⁶ Finberg. *Gloucestershire Studies*. p.v.

concerned with the county administration.⁴⁷ Gordon Goodman's 1966 exposition of electioneering in Gloucester between 1789 and 1831 does expose the city's corporation to more scrutiny, but the focus is on parliamentary representation.⁴⁸ Peter Clark's 1984 analysis of the corporation's aldermen and councilmen is highly informative, but stops short of the period being studied here.⁴⁹ In 1989 Evelyn Christmas completed a M.Litt thesis focused on the growth of Gloucester between 1820 and 1851 and her study is a notable exception as it devotes a chapter to Gloucester's corporation before and after reform.⁵⁰ While Christmas developed a detailed analysis of the corporation's occupational composition and exposed aspects of its public responsibilities, it was done within the context of expounding the changes and growth of the city and therefore necessarily avoided a more detailed examination of the corporation's structure and internal management. The *V.C.H.* stands alone in its account of Gloucester's municipal government from medieval times until the late twentieth century. Yet while this publication does expose the internal structure and management of Gloucester's corporation to scrutiny, the brevity with which it deals with these aspects and the impact of the Municipal Corporations Act on them is determined by the nature of the study.⁵¹

While the lack of local historiography on Gloucester's corporation is indicative of a broader trend, the different studies which do touch on various aspects of the city's corporation provide an essential starting point for providing a more detailed account of the composition, structure and functions of Gloucester's municipal corporation.

⁴⁷ Moir, E. *Local Government in Gloucestershire, 1775-1800: A Study of the Justices of the Peace* (B.G.A.S: Records Section Volume VII, 1969).

⁴⁸ Goodman, G. 'Pre-Reform Elections in Gloucester City, 1789-1831', *T.B.G.A.S. for 1965*, Vol. 84, 1966. pp.141-60.

⁴⁹ Clark, P. 'The Civic Leaders of Gloucester 1580-1800' in Clark, P. (ed.) *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns* (London: Hutchinson, 1984) pp.311-59.

⁵⁰ Christmas, E. 'The Growth of Gloucester 1820-1851: Tradition and Innovation in a County Town' (PhD., Thesis: University of Leicester, 1989) pp.228-52.

⁵¹ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.146-7, 191-6.

3. Methodology

This thesis focuses on the impact of the Municipal Corporations Act on Gloucester's corporation by examining it before and after reform. In addition to the introductory chapter the study is divided into three distinct sections. Chapter Two examines the corporation's composition, structure and functions prior to municipal reform. Chapter Three explores the extent and relevance of the changes imposed on the corporation by the Act. Chapter Four examines the reformed corporation, focusing on similar aspects to those addressed in Chapter Two. Finally, a concluding chapter acknowledges the limitations of this study, draws on the evidence from the pre and post-reform periods to emphasise the themes of continuity and change and discusses the effects of municipal reform on the corporation's membership, organisation and responsibilities.

Despite Blackstone's brief description of the powers and constitutions of the unreformed corporations, he stated that he had no intention of entering 'into any minute disquisition...of particular corporations' as these were strictly private municipal rights and varied from corporation to corporation.⁵² In contrast, this study takes the opposite approach and deliberately concerns itself with the *minutiae* of Gloucester's corporation, in an attempt to expand the limited historiography relating to the subject. In doing so, its parameters are restricted geographically, chronologically and thematically.

Gloucester did not exist in isolation from the county of Gloucestershire, the region or the country. As a borough, city and county in its own right Gloucester was 'a purely artificial unit'.⁵³ Those who inhabited the city, or were active in its affairs, did not exist in a hermetically sealed environment, isolated from any influence from

⁵² Morrison. *Blackstone's Commentaries*. p.257.

⁵³ Finberg, H. *The Making of the English Landscape: The Gloucestershire Landscape* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975) p.21.

outside their community.⁵⁴ Yet, in terms of its local government Gloucester can be viewed as a distinct entity. The corporation was effectively the city's governing body and while it did not exercise exclusive authority over the city, its charters effectively established it as the upper-tier of local government, which would otherwise have been exercised by the county.⁵⁵ Also, the period is not representative of any clear-cut or significant events which could justify it being treated in isolation, but like other studies of particular corporations, the parameters represent a manageable time frame.⁵⁶ Thus, the two decades immediately preceding and succeeding the imposition of the 1835 Act can be examined for evidence of continuity and of change. Therefore, this research is directed towards the internal management of the corporation, rather than a broader perspective, which could determine the relationship between the corporation and its host community.⁵⁷ Reference is made to the city and its inhabitants, but in a manner that attempts to extrapolate and expose the way in which the corporation organised, structured and managed itself and its affairs.

The impetus for this local study came from the academic discipline of English local history, established by W.G. Hoskins and Finberg in the 1950s.⁵⁸ However, the clearly articulated, but continually evolving, methodologies relevant to local history extend beyond the scope of the relatively narrow parameters imposed here.⁵⁹ Therefore, this study has turned to the treatment of municipal government by the

⁵⁴ Lord, E. 'The Boundaries of Local History: A Discussion Paper', *J.R.L.S.* 1991, pp.75-81.

⁵⁵ Moir. *Justices of the Peace*. pp.109-10.

⁵⁶ Finlayson. *Decade of Reform*. p.1; Bush, G. *Bristol and its Municipal Government 1820-1851* (Bristol Records Society Publication: Volume XXIX, 1976) p.vii.

⁵⁷ For example Chapter VIII 'The Corporation: The Resilience of Tradition' in Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester' pp.228-52.

⁵⁸ Phythian-Adams, C. *English Local History: The Leicester Approach, A Departmental Bibliography and History 1948-1998* (Leicester: University of Leicester, 1999) pp.1-7.

⁵⁹ Crosby, A. 'The Amateur Historian and The Local Historian: Some Thoughts after Fifty Years', *The Local Historian*. Vol.32, No.3, August 2002. pp.146-55; Hudson, P. 'Regional and Local History: Globalisation, Postmodernism and the Future', *J.R.L.S.* Vol.20, No.1, Summer 1990. pp.5-24.

V.C.H.; a series of publications founded in 1899 and continuing today.⁶⁰ Within the *V.C.H.* series a number of corporations have been examined as major themes within a broad chronological history of certain cities, such as Oxford. Christopher Day subjects the pre and post-reform corporations of Oxford to scrutiny within the context of the city's local government.⁶¹ However, while aspects of Gloucester's local government are mentioned in this research, attention is directed to the corporation's internal management. In order to achieve this the study focuses on the records of Gloucester's corporation, the majority of which are found in the Gloucestershire Record Office and to a lesser extent in Roland Austin's Gloucestershire Collection.⁶²

⁶⁰ Smith, C. 'Continuity and Change: The Future of the Victoria History of the Counties of England', *The Local Historian*. Vol.32, No.2, May 2002. pp.84-9.

⁶¹ Day, C. *Modern Oxford: A History of the City from 1771* (Oxford: Oxfordshire County Library, 1983. Being an abstract from the *V.C.H. of Oxfordshire Vol. IV*) pp.224-32.

⁶² 'A Handlist of the Contents of the Gloucestershire Record Office' (Gloucestershire County Council: 4th edn, 1998); Austin, R. *Catalogue of the Gloucester Collection: Books Pamphlets and Documents in the Gloucester Public Library Relating to the County Cities Towns and Villages of Gloucestershire* (Gloucester: Henry Osbourne, 1928).

CHAPTER TWO

Gloucester's Municipal Corporation before 1836

1. The Evolution of Gloucester's Municipal Corporation before 1800

In 1165 Henry II granted the first charter of liberties to Gloucester's wealthier merchants and tradesmen, entitling them to farm the royal revenues of the town in place of the royal reeve.⁶³ King John's charter of 1200 significantly advanced the town's progress towards a coherent form of self-government, founded on the burgess community and centred on the role of the bailiffs. It was granted to the burgesses of Gloucester's merchant guild who jealously controlled admission to the freedom of the borough, which was gained by patrimony, purchase or apprenticeship.⁶⁴ The freedom represented an essential qualification for many important privileges and, from 1295, included the election of Gloucester's two M.P.s.⁶⁵ The charter gave the burgesses the right to elect two bailiffs who presided over the hundred court, the primary institution in governing the town.⁶⁶

In September 1483 Richard III granted to Gloucester by Letters Patent a charter of incorporation which bestowed important political, economic and civic privileges on the burgess community.⁶⁷ The charter represented the town's achievement of full municipal stature, bestowing it with the status of a county in its own right.⁶⁸ Gloucester's status was further enhanced by the 'almost unprecedented concession' of having incorporated within its jurisdiction the hundreds of Dudstone and King's

⁶³ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.28-31.

⁶⁴ Jurica, J. (ed.) *A Calendar of the Registers of the Freemen of the City of Gloucester 1641-1838* (B.G.A.S: Gloucestershire Records Series Volume 4, 1991) p.xi.

⁶⁵ Williams, W. *The Parliamentary History of the County of Gloucester* (Hereford: Jakeman and Carver, 1898) p.177.

⁶⁶ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.33-4.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.54-7.

⁶⁸ Waters. *King Richard's Gloucester: Life in a Medieval Town* (London: Gloucester Reprints, 1983) p.69; Herbert, N. (Translator) 'Charter of Richard III to Gloucester, by Letters Patent 2 September 1483' in Herbert, N., Griffiths, R., Reynolds, S., and Clark, P. (eds.) *The 1483 Gloucester Charter in History* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1983) p.11.

Barton, which were known as the inshire.⁶⁹ Gloucester gained a corporate identity, embodied in the mayor and elected burgesses, with the authority to manage the town's affairs on behalf of the burgess community. The charter specified the provision of a mayor, twelve aldermen, two sheriffs and a coroner. The aldermen held office for life and acted as magistrates for the newly created county. One alderman was annually elected as mayor by his peers and twelve prominent burgesses, thereby becoming '(t)he leading citizen' of the borough.⁷⁰

Following the charter the hundred court was displaced as the principal organ of the town's government by a common council.⁷¹ By 1484 the council, headed by the mayor, consisted of the aldermanic bench and twenty-two common councilmen drawn from the burgess community. The full council consisted of forty members, including the two sheriffs and four stewards. Power became concentrated in the council and effectively excluded the wider burgess community as new councilmen, also elected for life, were voted onto the corporation by the full council. Gloucester's governing body quickly emerged as a closed oligarchy with a narrow political and religious composition. In common with many other municipal corporations, such as Bristol and Leicester, Gloucester's municipal government was theoretically in the hands of its corporation and embraced all those holding burgess or freeman status in the town, but in practice any form of active decision making was restricted to the common council.⁷²

During the sixteenth century admission to the freedom passed from the wider control of the freeman body into the hands of the much more exclusive common

⁶⁹ Clark, P. 'A Poisoned Chalice? The 1483 Charter, The City and the County 1483-1662' in Herbert *et al.* *1483 Charter*. p.53.

⁷⁰ Waters. *King Richard's Gloucester*. p.65.

⁷¹ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. p.55.

⁷² Bush. *Bristol*. p.vii, pp.17-8; Greaves, R. *The Corporation of Leicester 1689-1836* (Leicester: LUP, 2nd edn, 1970) pp.5-6.

council and by the seventeenth century the methods for admission were extended to include admission by gift, thus empowering the corporation to create honorary freemen.⁷³ This proved to be a useful but controversial tool in parliamentary elections as the borough's freemen held the franchise.⁷⁴ Admission also gave the corporation a modest but regular source of revenue. However, a much more substantial source of income came from rents from the corporation's property. The corporation also acted as a trustee of bequests willed to Gloucester, managed common land, levied taxes and promulgated ordinances to regulate the welfare of the town's community.⁷⁵ By the time Gloucester became a city in 1541 its growing population made the borough's administration an increasingly complex and demanding affair. The increased importance of the offices of steward (or chamberlain), town clerk and recorder reflected the corporation's growing burden of responsibilities.

Prior to the English Civil Wars Gloucester's support for the Parliamentary cause combined with its emergence as a puritan stronghold.⁷⁶ Once Bristol fell to Charles I in 1643 Gloucester's leaders prepared 'for an obstinate resistance'.⁷⁷ The subsequent and unsuccessful royalist siege saw much destruction in the city, but the political repercussions had a more notable and long-term impact on Gloucester's government. Much of the city's defending wall was destroyed by Charles II but more significantly the inshire was returned to the county and the corporation was subjected to a purge, which began under the provisions of the Corporations Act of 1661.⁷⁸ Thirty-five corporation members were expelled and replaced by county gentry with royalist

⁷³ Jurica. *Calendar*. p.xiii-xiv.

⁷⁴ Goodman. 'Pre-Reform Elections'. p.86.

⁷⁵ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.351-63.

⁷⁶ Whiting, J. *Gloucester Besieged: The Story of a Roundhead City, 1640-1660* (Gloucester: Gloucester and Cheltenham Branch of the Historical Association, 1975)

⁷⁷ Clarke, J. *The Architectural History of Gloucester from the Earliest Period to the Eighteenth Century* (Gloucester: T.R. Davies, 1840) p.93.

⁷⁸ Statute: 13 Charles II, c.1.

sympathies.⁷⁹ Gloucester's charter of 1483 was surrendered to the king and exchanged for others in 1665 and 1672.⁸⁰ The 1672 charter confirmed Gloucester's loss of the inshire and consolidated the county gentry's access to municipal office, but otherwise the corporation retained many of its liberties and privileges.

There followed a period of political instability within the corporation but during the early eighteenth century it emerged as a Whig dominated body.⁸¹ By this time the numerous responsibilities imposed on Gloucester's civic leaders by the Crown compounded the growing complexity of governing the city.⁸² Consequently, local Acts of Parliament were fashioned by the corporation to create statutory bodies and improvement commissioners to supplement corporation and private initiatives for the provision or improvement of public amenities. These bodies, such as Gloucester's poor-relief corporation established in 1727, often consisted of members of the corporation, the parish vestries, the cathedral clergy and influential citizens.⁸³ Tensions often emerged as a result, with the vestries in particular, resisting corporation initiatives. Other corporation activities were less prone to outside involvement, such as its management of the city's markets which became increasingly important as a source of revenue. Yet even here, the corporation relied on outside support, with the building of two new markets being funded by shareholders of a tontine arrangement in 1786.⁸⁴

As Gloucester entered the nineteenth century its corporation was by no means democratic, but the concentration of local authority into the hands of a relatively small group ensured manageability and stability. Gloucester's incorporation in 1483

⁷⁹ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.113.

⁸⁰ Webb, J. *The Charter Granted by King Charles the Second to the City of Gloucester, 1672* (Gloucester: A. and D.M. Walker, 1834) p.v.

⁸¹ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.113-5.

⁸² Webbs. *Development.* pp.3-5: See below, Map 1.

⁸³ Gloucester Poor-Relief Act, 13 George I, c.19 cited in *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.147-9.

⁸⁴ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.260.

established a form of government, which persisted, largely unaltered, until the introduction of the Municipal Corporation Act in 1835.

2. Occupations: Gloucester and its Corporation

By the late eighteenth century Gloucester had long been established as a local and regional hub for trade.⁸⁵ A decline of the city's manufacturing industries began to accelerate at the turn of the century, but was compensated by an enhancement of its natural market position.⁸⁶ Local improvements, notably the Gloucester and Berkeley canal, were initiated by private investors and the corporation which saw Gloucester emerge into the nineteenth century as a much improved city.⁸⁷ However, after 1815 the post-war instability in levels of employment, foreign trade, custom and excise revenue, food prices and rent revenues were felt nationally and locally.⁸⁸ These factors compounded problems of urbanisation and industrialisation and in Gloucester were manifested in a growing population, overcrowding and disease. While fine new buildings graced parts of the city, squalid and insanitary conditions flourished near the river Severn where many of the poor were housed.⁸⁹

The number of people employed in Gloucester's pin making industry plummeted by over 75% between 1802 and 1833, but the city simultaneously benefited from numerous improvements in transport facilities which bolstered its position as a regional market, distributive hub and service centre.⁹⁰ The development of a canal between Berkeley and Gloucester, initiated under an Act of Parliament in 1793, was

⁸⁵ Fullbrook-Leggatt, L. *Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Gloucester* (Gloucester: Jennings, 1952) pp.49-61; Finberg, H. 'The Genesis of the Gloucestershire Towns' *in* Finberg. *Gloucestershire Studies*. pp.53-6: See below, Map 2.

⁸⁶ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.139, 164-5.

⁸⁷ *The Gloucester New Guide; Containing an Account of Everything Worthy of Observation, Respecting The City* (Gloucester: Robert Raikes, 1802) p.1; Clark. 'Civic Leaders'. p.336.

⁸⁸ More, C. *The Industrial Age* (London: Longman, 1989) p.63.

⁸⁹ Christmas, E. 'The Administration of the Poor Law in Some Gloucestershire Unions, 1815-1847' (M.Litt., Thesis: University of Bristol, 1973) p.9.

⁹⁰ Page, W. (ed.) *The Victoria County History of Gloucestershire: Volume II, The County of Gloucester* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1907, reprinted Folkestone: Dawson's of Pall Mall, 1972) p.207.

given new life in 1811 with the opening of a tram-road which established a link between Gloucester's quay, the new canal basin and Cheltenham.⁹¹ The opening of the canal in 1827 meant imported goods from overseas could avoid the treacherous waters of the Severn above Berkeley, thus establishing a direct link between the Bristol Channel and the West Midlands, with Gloucester at its hub.⁹²

New turnpike roads, such as that connecting Gloucester to Stroud in 1818, also stimulated Gloucester's economy.⁹³ Between 1802 and 1822 the city's coach offices grew from two to five, providing thirty-seven services between London, Bristol, Birmingham, Coventry and South Wales. Carrier services passing through Gloucester proliferated, connecting it to numerous local and regional markets.⁹⁴ The improved road system also enhanced Gloucester's market economy, handling agricultural produce and livestock from a hinterland including twenty-four market towns. Consequently, a new cattle market was opened in the city in 1823 as good communications bolstered Gloucester's status as a regional banking centre and stimulated a flurry of building activities.⁹⁵

The Occupational Status of Gloucester's Inhabitants

Between 1801 and 1831, the population living within the 317 acres of the city's boundary grew by 54% from 7,709 to 11,933.⁹⁶ Although the corporation's authority did not extend beyond the borough boundaries, there were a number of parishes straddling the city and the county. Excluding the cathedral precinct, which was exempt from corporation authority, Gloucester was served by ten parishes. Not all

⁹¹ Bick, D. *The Gloucester and Cheltenham Tramroad and the Leckhampton Quarry Lines* (Oxford: Oakwood Press, 2nd edn, 1987) p.14.

⁹² Wakelin, A. 'Pre-Industrial Trade on the River Severn: A Computer-Aided Study of the Gloucester Port Books, c.1640-1770' (D.Phil., Thesis: Wolverhampton Polytechnic, 1991) pp.258-9. Cf. *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.135-6.

⁹³ Stroud and Gloucester Road Act, 58 George III, c.1.

⁹⁴ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. pp.21-3.

⁹⁵ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.138-40.

⁹⁶ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. pp.69-70; *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.171.

had churches, but all played some role in the city's civil government, often as units for rating, poor relief and the provision of the watch and the ward officers.⁹⁷ St. Mary de Grace, Holy Trinity, St. Mary de Crypt and St. Aldate occupied the city's centre and St. John, St. Nicholas and St. Owen were located within the city boundary, surrounding the central parishes. St. Michael, St. Catherine and St. Mary de Lode extended beyond the boundary in a complex pattern of parish boundaries in outlying hamlets such as Barton Street and Longford.⁹⁸ If account is taken of those living within the city's suburbs and in city parishes extending beyond the boundary, 13,747 people inhabited an area of 5,950 acres by 1831.⁹⁹ Many were active participants in trading and routine daily life within the city and thus contributed to the demands placed on the municipal corporation and other bodies in the maintenance and administration of the city.

Table 2.1
Occupational Status of Males Registering Baptisms
Between 1813–30 in Gloucester Parishes.¹⁰⁰

Occupational categories	City centre parishes	City parishes within boundary	City parishes beyond boundary	Total
Gentry	6	7	9	22
Professions	48	66	75	189
Business	23	25	24	72
Retail	92	123	68	283
Crafts	268	541	433	1,242
Transport	43	162	42	247
Labouring	81	267	180	528
Domestic service	20	16	29	65
Miscellaneous	8	16	38	62
Totals per parish	589	1,223	898	2,710

Table 2.1 provides data of male residents who registered baptisms in the city's parishes between 1813 and 1830. The largest categories of employment were in

⁹⁷ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. p.147, p.275; Counsel. *City of Gloucester*. pp.137-60.

⁹⁸ *Gloucestershire Population Tables 1801-1901* Table B. p.1 of 2., Table S. pp.2-3 of 5 in *V.C.H. Vol.II*; Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. p.73; See below, Map 3.

⁹⁹ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. p.70.

¹⁰⁰ Statistics based on G.R.O. P154/3 IN 1/3-5 and adapted from a table provided by Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. p.77. The Parishes of St. Michael, St. Catherine and St. Mary de Lode extended beyond the city boundary, but have been included as extrapolating the data is not practical.

descending order crafts, labouring and retail, followed by transport, professions, business, domestic, miscellaneous and then gentry.¹⁰¹ Almost 46% of the sample group were craft workers. This category includes numerous occupations such as building, metal, wood, printing and clothing trades, and represents the overwhelmingly largest group. Labourers, the next largest category accounted for only 19% and retailers, the smallest of the top three categories, 10%.

The gentry, professions and business categories are believed to have been dominant in the corporation membership at the close of the eighteenth century, but in Table 2.1 they are among the five smallest categories.¹⁰² The gentry only represent 0.8%, professionals 6.9% and business 2.6% of men and collectively account for only 283 (10.4%) men. However, the data provided by the baptismal registers only equates to 31% of the 8,556 people living within city parishes in 1811 and offers only a tentative representation of Gloucester's occupational structure.¹⁰³ Much of the population is missing, including women, casual workers, children and the elderly. Nevertheless, an analysis of 2,654 employed adult males living in Gloucester parishes in 1831 broadly supports the occupational data presented in Table 2.1: manufacturing, retail and handicrafts (62%), unskilled labourers (27%) and capitalists, bankers and professionals (10%).¹⁰⁴ The methods of classifying early nineteenth century occupations are notoriously complicated and often ignore the role of wage earning women entirely.¹⁰⁵ The numerous competing criteria have prevented the establishment of any prevailing orthodoxy and consequently the method used in Table

¹⁰¹ The miscellaneous category is dominated by agricultural workers.

¹⁰² Peter Clark identifies the gentry, professions and distributive trades as dominant in the late eighteenth century, but provides no statistics for this period. Clark. 'Civic Leaders'. p.329.

¹⁰³ Population estimates from the 1811 census for Gloucester vary between 8,280 and 8,556. *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.124; Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. p.70.

¹⁰⁴ Based on 1831 Census, cited in *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.141.

¹⁰⁵ Clark, A. 'The New Poor Law and the Breadwinner Wage: Contrasting Assumptions', *The Journal of Social History.* Vol.34, No.2, 2000. pp.261-82.

2.1 takes little account of economic stratification and none of women. The gentry and professional categories exclude employees, artisans and journeymen, but each is present alongside business owners and employers within the retail, craft and transport categories. Therefore, a simplistic reliance on occupational categories disguises economic and social stratification, but does allow a comparative analysis to be made between the population and its civic leaders.

The Occupational Status of Gloucester's Corporation

Table 2.2 consists of three lists of the aldermen and councilmen recorded at the beginning of each municipal year in 1815, 1825 and 1835.¹⁰⁶ Having identified and classified most members' occupations using the same criteria as Table 2.1 an analysis of the corporation's occupational structure can be made.¹⁰⁷ The problem of occupational categories disguising status has been addressed in Table 2.2 by the inclusion of an owner/proprietor business category. The value of this approach is made evident by the example of councilman John Harvey Ollney. Although Ollney is described merely as a woolstapler, he was able to buy the leasehold of Morin's Mill in Gloucester in 1785 and on his death in 1836 left £8,000 to the corporation for establishing an almshouse.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Samuel Jones (alderman 1819), listed simply as a brushmaker, owned one of five Gloucester brushmaking firms in the 1820s and was prominent in city life until his death in 1836.¹⁰⁹ Ollney and Jones's economic status sets them apart from many others in the same trades in Gloucester. Therefore, the owner/proprietor category includes all aldermen and councilmen who were employers or business owners in the business, craft and retail categories.

¹⁰⁶ G.B.R. B3/13, f.177v; B3/14, ff.38v, 273v; See below, Appendices 2-4.

¹⁰⁷ Where some doubt about occupation exists, or where no evidence has been found, occupations have been classified as 'unknown'.

¹⁰⁸ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.356, 408.

¹⁰⁹ *Pigot's London and Provincial Directory 1822-3*, p.57: copy in G.C. JQ 20.10GS; *Pigot and Co.'s National Commercial Directory 1830*, p.8: copy in G.C. 10565.

Table 2.2
Occupational Categories of Corporation Members: 1815-35.¹¹⁰

Occupational Category	Members' occupations	1815	1825	1835	Total 1815-35
Business	Mercer	0	0	1	1
	Pinmaker	3	0	0	3
	Postmaster	0	0	1	1
	Printer	1	3	2	6
	Timber Merchant	0	1	1	2
	Wine Merchant	2	1	1	4
	Woolstapler	1	1	1	3
Crafts	Brushmaker	1	2	1	4
	Currier	0	1	1	2
	Ropemaker	0	0	1	1
Independent	Gentleman	1	1	2	4
	Landowner	4	5	4	13
Professions	Attorney	4	3	3	10
	Banker	2	2	2	6
	Barrister	0	1	1	2
	Land Surveyor	2	2	1	5
	Physician	1	0	0	1
	Solicitor	1	3	5	9
	Surgeon	3	4	4	11
Retail	Druggist	1	0	1	2
	Grocer	1	1	0	2
	Landlord	1	0	1	2
Unknown		6	5	5	16
Total each year		35	36	39	
Owner/ Proprietor		10	10	12	32

Table 2.2 shows that the occupational categories were in descending size professional (40%), business (18%), independent (15%), crafts (6%) and retail (5%).¹¹¹ The data do not include every council member between 1815 and 1830, but membership was very consistent, with changes in personnel being limited to death and resignations. Between 1810 and 1830 only thirty-eight new members were admitted to the corporation.¹¹² Given this stability it is unlikely that a more comprehensive list would produce significant variations in the proportions of various occupation categories. The occupations of over 14% of corporation members could not be positively identified, which in such a small sample group represents a

¹¹⁰ G.B.R. B3/13, f.177v; B3/14, f.38v; B3/14, f.273v; See below, Appendices 2-4.

¹¹¹ All percentages used for the corporation data are rounded up or down to the nearest whole figure due to the small numbers involved in the sample group.

¹¹² G.B.R. C3/1, ff.1v-45v.

significant proportion. Nevertheless, even if all the unknown occupations belonged to the smallest category, crafts would still only represent 22%, leaving the professional category almost twice the size of the crafts. The dominance of the professions over business and crafts in Table 2.2 represents a reversal of their position in the Table 2.1. Another notable distinction between Gloucester's population and the corporation is the size of the business category. In the baptismal data (Table 2.1), business represents only 2.6% whereas in the corporation data it represents 18% (Table 2.2). The independent category is also much more visible in the corporation data (15%) than in the baptismal data (0.8%), where it represents the smallest category. Furthermore, if the corporation's professional category (40%) is compared with its owner/proprietor category (29%), then the dominance of the former is significant (Table 2.2).

From Tables 2.1 and 2.2 the imbalance between the dominant occupations of Gloucester's working population and of the corporation is clearly articulated. The craft category is dominant in Gloucester's baptismal data, while the corporation data is dominated by the professional category. In occupational terms, Gloucester's corporation was not representative of its host community. Common categories are present in both sample groups, but most corporators were employers or owners rather than artisans or journeymen who are likely to have dominated the baptismal data.

3. The Common Council and its Members

Access to Gloucester's Common Council

During the early nineteenth century the common council consisted of twelve aldermen and between eighteen and twenty-eight common councilmen.¹¹³ Councilmen were chosen from the city's freemen and elected for life by the full council. Aldermen

¹¹³ Paragraph based on G.B.R. B3/13, ff.154r-77v; B3/14, ff.16r-38v, 249v-73v; Bingham, P. and Jardine, D. *Report on the Corporation of Gloucester, 1833*, p.62: copy in G.C. JF6.1; See below, Appendix 7.

were chosen from the senior councilmen and elected for life by the aldermanic bench. In the early nineteenth century the mayor (who was also the clerk of the markets), the coroner and the chamberlain were all drawn from the aldermen and elected annually by the full council. Between twenty-three and twenty-seven councilmen held office at any one time during this period and the treasurer and town clerk were drawn from their ranks.¹¹⁴ The treasurer was elected by the full council ‘during pleasure’ and the town clerk for life.¹¹⁵ The two sheriffs also acted as the eldest and youngest bailiffs and were elected annually from the councilmen according to seniority. The honorary offices of high steward and recorder were both elected for life by the full council. The high steward was either an alderman or a councilman, while the recorder was a non-council member. The council appointed a number of minor offices to support it, including four serjeants-at-mace, four porters, a beadle and two bellmen, most of whom held office during pleasure. In addition a sword-bearer was elected for life and was employed in a ceremonial capacity only.

During the mayoral year 1815-6, 104 new freemen were created by the corporation but only two, Edward Webb (landowner) and Samuel Commeline (attorney), were admitted to the council.¹¹⁶ In September 1804 David Walker (printer) was admitted by gift and co-opted to the council on the same day. This was not unusual and of the forty-five freemen admitted to the council between 1810 and 1833, at least seven were co-opted either simultaneously or within days of receiving the freedom. William Morgan Meyler (surgeon), John Baron (physician) and Samuel Commeline all became freemen by gift and quickly joined the ranks of the council, Commeline joining on the same day in 1816. Many new councilmen gained the freedom by gift;

¹¹⁴ See below, Appendices 2-4.

¹¹⁵ Bingham and Jardine. *Report 1833*. pp.59-61.

¹¹⁶ Paragraph based on Jurica. *Calendar*. pp.192-213; G.B.R. C3/1, ff.5v-26v; B3/12, f.384v; B3/13, f.114; See below, Appendices 5-6.

John Phillpotts (barrister), Edward Webb, John Baron, David Mowbray Walker (printer) and Alexander Walker (printer) were all admitted in this way. Most possessed overt Whig, liberal or reforming proclivities as co-option frequently rested on political lines.¹¹⁷ The Whig corporation promoted some of its members for Gloucester's parliamentary seats, particularly from 1816 onwards, and actively supported the issue of parliamentary reform between 1780 and 1832.¹¹⁸

There was no legal compulsion to take up civic office and doing so was time consuming, often unsalaried and frequently onerous.¹¹⁹ Those who did needed to be well situated economically before undertaking civic duties, as once on the council, members were committed to a variety of demanding posts. Those wishing to avoid the office of sheriff, a demanding prerequisite for entry to the aldermanic bench, were required to pay a £50 fine and any member failing to attend council meetings could be fined £1 1s; failure to pay resulted in expulsion.¹²⁰ Despite the demands of office, benefits of social status and notions of civic duty ensured that there was no shortage of personnel in the corporation.¹²¹

Family ties were a pervasive factor in recruitment and several families were represented by more than one member.¹²² Three generations of the Wilton family served successive terms as treasurer and between 1815 and 1835 the family firm of solicitors had at least six members in office, with five serving at the same time.¹²³ The Walker family (owners of the *Gloucester Journal* from 1802) had three members on

¹¹⁷ Goodman. 'Pre-Reform Elections'. pp.148-9; Austin, R. *Bicentenary: Gloucester Journal: 9th April, 1722-8th April 1922* (Gloucester: Chance and Bland, 1922) p.53.

¹¹⁸ Christmas. 'Poor Laws'. p.9; Moir, E. 'The Gloucestershire Association for Parliamentary Reform, 1780', *T.B.G.A.S.* p.181.

¹¹⁹ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. p.229.

¹²⁰ G.B.R. B3/12, f.130r; Hyett, F. *Gloucester in National History* (Gloucester: John Bellows, 1924) p.190.

¹²¹ See Eastwood's discussion of 'Urban Improvement and Civic Virtue' in Eastwood, D. *Government and Community in the English Provinces, 1700-1870* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997) pp.64-72.

¹²² G.B.R. B3/13, f.177v; B3/14, f.38v, 273v;

¹²³ See below, Appendices 2-4.

the council between 1817 and 1829, all serving as mayor. Edward Webb was married to Jane Mary Catherine, daughter of Sir John Wright Guise and sister to Sir Berkeley William Guise; both Guises were prominent landowners and active Whigs. Councilman Thomas Bullock Washbourne (druggist), whose family was well represented on the corporation, was married to the widow Elizabeth Buchanan, daughter of councilman Arthur Hammond Jenkins (solicitor).¹²⁴ Membership of the corporation thus offered distinct advantages with members being able to foster business relationships and political ambitions, both within the council and the local community.¹²⁵

The Structure of the Common Council

Meetings of the full council represented the mainstay of the corporation's structure. The councilmen, aldermen and mayor met on a monthly basis, with the town clerk, recorder and high steward usually in attendance.¹²⁶ The meetings dealt with routine business such as commissioning surveys of corporation property, granting leases and voting on admissions to the freedom. Reports from various standing and *ad hoc* committees were regularly received and acted upon and a variety of issues was addressed as they came to the civic leaders' attention.

In 1780 a standing committee had been created to enquire into all matters relating to the corporation.¹²⁷ This committee of enquiry established new rules for accounting procedure, leasing of property and the conduct of treasurers, chamberlains and town clerks. It was open to any council member who wished to attend, but had to consist of at least five people, including the mayor and one other alderman. It thus provided

¹²⁴ Peach, R. *The Washbourne Family: Notes and Records, Historic and Social of the Ancient Family Washbourne of Washbourne, Winchenford* (Gloucester: John Bellows, 1896) p.53; Thorne, R.G. (ed.) *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1790-1820 Vol.V. Members Q-Y* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1986) p.62.

¹²⁵ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. pp.229-33; Clark. 'Civic Leaders'. pp.318, 332-3, 336.

¹²⁶ G.B.R. B3/13, ff.158v-239v.

¹²⁷ Following based on G.B.R. B4/1/1; B4/1/2; B4/1/3; B4/1/4.

junior members of the council with access to an influential organ of corporation management and counterbalanced, to a degree, the exclusivity of the aldermanic bench. Meeting on the last Tuesday of each month, the committee quickly established itself as an important element of corporation management and it was required to make its findings known to the full council.¹²⁸

Occasionally, gaps appear in the corporation minutes and in one eight-month period in 1817, the council met only four times.¹²⁹ This unusual laxity interrupted the otherwise fairly ordered routine of the municipal year, which revolved around the annual election of officers. Nominations and elections took place shortly before Michaelmas (29 September) and the mayoral year began in the following week, thus running from October to September.¹³⁰

Continuity of personnel was a notable feature of the unreformed corporation. Only two men acted as town clerk between 1813 and 1835. Both were lawyers, as had been the case for over 300 years.¹³¹ Robert Pleydell Wilton being replaced at his death in 1827 by his nephew, Henry Hooper Wilton. The latter had been treasurer from 1822, having taken over that role from his father, Henry Wilton, another lawyer. Lord Somers (Earl Somers 1821) served as the recorder throughout the period studied here.¹³² Other peers to grace the council's ranks included Charles Howard, duke of Norfolk, his nephew Lord Henry Howard and His Royal Highness William Frederick, duke of Gloucester; all served as high steward to the corporation. Some mayors served more than once, although rarely consecutive terms; the duke of Norfolk died during his fourth term in 1815. Unusually, four mayors held office during that

¹²⁸ G.B.R. B4/1/1-4.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, B3/13, ff.204r-206v.

¹³⁰ Cheney, C. (ed.) *Handbook of Dates for Students of Local History* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978) pp.6, 40.

¹³¹ G.B.R. B3/14, f.61v.

¹³² Somers's resignation is discussed below in Chapter Three.

year.¹³³ Thereafter the office changed hands annually, the only exception being in 1822 when Henry Wilton died in office.¹³⁴

A strict order of seniority was imposed on councilmen; they were listed in order of precedence in the corporation minutes.¹³⁵ Occasionally, aldermen would resign their position on the bench, but remain as councilmen. John Cooke (attorney) resigned from the bench in 1829 after fifteen years service and was relegated to the most junior councilman. The demands placed on aldermen, compounded by their simultaneous role as magistrates, sometimes forced members to choose between their civic duties and the earning of a living. In 1824 alderman John Phillpotts resigned ‘in consequence of his Professional Engagements’ and returned to being a councilman.¹³⁶

The Corporation and the City

The involvement of the aldermanic bench in the city’s magistracy forged a close link between the two bodies, even though the latter’s duties were separate from those of the corporation. Gloucester’s magistrates consisted of the mayor, aldermen and recorder, along with the bishop, dean and two prebendaries from the cathedral.¹³⁷ They were engaged in a variety of judicial and administrative duties and were assisted by the clerk of the peace, who was also the town clerk. The magistrates’ administrative duties included the licensing and regulation of alehouses and the superintending of the parish overseers of the poor, surveyors of the highways and the petty constables.¹³⁸ Their judicial roles included judging minor crimes and local felonies and controlling vagrancy and local fairs. These matters were dealt with in the

¹³³ G.B.R B3/13, f.181v.

¹³⁴ See below, Appendix 1.

¹³⁵ See below, Appendix 7.

¹³⁶ G.B.R. B3/13, f.348v

¹³⁷ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.150.

¹³⁸ Paragraph based on G.B.R. G3/SM 3, 22 April 1796; G3/SM 5, 6 Oct 1809; G3/SM 10, 30 Oct 1829.

city's petty or quarter sessions, with more serious capital offences being referred to the assizes.

In 1815 the committee of enquiry noted that the regulation of Gloucester's police rested with 'the Magistrates and not immediately within the Province of the Corporation'.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, the corporation's four serjeants-at-mace acted as constables, with one being appointed as high constable. The city had been praised for its lack of crime and effective policing in 1802,¹⁴⁰ but in 1820 mayor John Phillpotts expressed distress at an apparent increase in crime.¹⁴¹ Attempts to establish a night watch had only met with partial success, but after 1821 the corporation's constables were assisted by twelve ward constables, who were provided by the city parishes and paid for out of the parish rates.¹⁴² Their inefficiency and reluctance to serve was compensated, to a limited degree, by two street-keepers from 1831. However, public order was rarely a problem in Gloucester, although a notable exception was the Westgate bridge riot of 1827. The disturbance was prompted by the failure of the corporation and others, who were empowered as commissioners to levy tolls on the bridge, to reduce or abandon the tolls, once the cost of a new bridge had been recouped.¹⁴³ The failure stimulated violent protests from a wide cross-section of the city's inhabitants and within a year the tolls had been abandoned. The corporation was quick to acquiesce to popular opinion, mindful of the social prestige attached to municipal office.

Civic dignity and social prestige were important to the corporation. It frequently took the lead in civic celebrations and events. Unusual celebrations included

¹³⁹ G.B.R. B4/1/2, f.158r.

¹⁴⁰ *Gloucester New Guide*. pp.16-7.

¹⁴¹ *G.J.* 17 Jan 1820.

¹⁴² G.B.R G3/SM 5, 6 Oct 1809; G3/SM 7, 11 Jan 1820; *G.J.* 17 Jan 1820; Gloucester Market and Improvement Act, 1&2 George IV, c.22.

¹⁴³ Westgate Bridge Act, 46 George III, c.45; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.151, 243.

illuminating the Tolsey to celebrate Bonaparte's abdication and exile to Elba in 1814. Perennial events included hosting numerous dinners which marked the high points in the civic year.¹⁴⁴ These occasions represented an important feature of popular political culture during the period.¹⁴⁵ In 1815 the corporation decided that its finances were sufficiently healthy to 'warrant the survival in a limited degree' of the mayor's nomination dinner.¹⁴⁶ This annual feast had experienced a hiatus from 1798 to enable the council to make a donation of £500 towards the war effort against France.¹⁴⁷ Peace allowed its resumption and the mayor was permitted four guests, the aldermen three each, the recorder three, both sheriffs two each and the councilmen and the town clerk one each. This equated to ninety-nine people in 1815 and rose to 108 in 1820 with an increase in councilmen. Such use of corporation funds was not unusual either in Gloucester or in other municipal boroughs and the civic dinners were an effective tool in reinforcing the public dignity of the Gloucester's corporation.¹⁴⁸ One guest at a feast in 1829 recalled the 'state of excitement and anticipation' which preceded the arrival of the corporation and the mayor's noble presence and commanding style.¹⁴⁹

Occasionally, public perceptions of Gloucester's municipal leaders were undermined. In 1815 the bankruptcy of the mayor, Sir James Jelf (banker), precipitated a rapid succession of replacements and prompted one observer to denounce the corporation as little more than 'good order's foes'.¹⁵⁰ Other observers made public complaints about inadequate city facilities such as bad footpaths and

¹⁴⁴ *G.J.* 11 April 1814.

¹⁴⁵ Brett, P. 'Political Dinners in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain: Platform, Meeting Place and Battleground', *History The Journal of the Historical Association*. Vol.81, No.264, October 1996. pp.527-8.

¹⁴⁶ G.B.R. B3/13, f.170v.

¹⁴⁷ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. p.146.

¹⁴⁸ Bush. *Bristol*. p.45.

¹⁴⁹ Uncited source in Stratford, J. *Gloucestershire Biographical Notes* (Gloucester: The Journal Office, 1887) p.174.

¹⁵⁰ *G.J.* 12 June 1815. Following based on G.B.R. G3/SM 5, 19 Nov 1811; G3/SM 10, 10 Sept 1829, 30 Oct 1829; *G.J.* 2 June 1820, 2 Jan 1830, 1 June 1833.

poor scavenging.¹⁵¹ However, corporation attempts to improve the conditions of the city were sometimes frustrated by the belligerent attitude of the parish vestries, who often opposed any proposals which would result in an increase in rates. The provision of poor relief fell mainly to the vestries under the supervision of the city's magistrates and with little involvement by the corporation. Under the Act of 1727 Gloucester's poor relief was vested in a separate corporation including the mayor, five aldermen, the bishop of Gloucester and thirty-one elected representatives from Gloucester's parishes and the hamlet of Kingsholm.¹⁵² Parochial resistance to higher rates frustrated the poor relief corporation's attempts to establish a permanent city workhouse until 1764. Funded by the city's parishes, the workhouse supported over 200 impoverished inmates by 1803 while giving out-door relief to almost 600 of Gloucester's poor. By 1807 the cost to ratepayers was 'nine pence in the pound' based on the rateable value of their property.¹⁵³ During the early nineteenth century the city's parish rates for poor relief remained relatively stable, but between 1827 and 1834 they grew by almost 85% to £4,617 collectively.¹⁵⁴ This growth partially reflected the decline of Gloucester's pinmaking and woolstapling industries. Inhabitants found guilty of claiming relief under false pretences or of being vagabonds were harshly dealt with by the magistrates, while the municipal corporation took *ad hoc* measures to alleviate suffering, such as the provision of coal to persons suffering hardship and distress. From 1835 poor relief was the responsibility of an elected board of guardians and the limited role of members of the municipal in poor relief was all but severed.¹⁵⁵ Despite the problems there is little evidence of any prolonged or widespread feeling in Gloucester against the municipal

¹⁵¹ *G.J.* 1 June 1833. *Passim*.

¹⁵² See above, p.16.

¹⁵³ G.R.O. P154/11, VE2/1. 25 June 1807.

¹⁵⁴ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.147-9.

¹⁵⁵ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. pp.236-7; Christmas. 'Poor Laws'. pp.127-48.

corporation, other than perennial attacks from the political opponents of the corporation.

The Whig corporation's use of the freedom of the city as a political tool in parliamentary elections drew complaints from city and county Tories alike. Gloucester was a large freemen borough in the eighteenth century and the corporation was accused of exercising its 'Arbitrary Power with notorious Partiality' to create large numbers of freemen in order to carry elections in its favour.¹⁵⁶ This practice was still being used to great effect in the early nineteenth century. Between 1800 and 1835, annual admissions to the freedom normally varied between twenty and fifty entrants, but jumped significantly in election years.¹⁵⁷ During June and July 1805, 322 freemen were created, with 111 being admitted in just two days. Shortly afterwards the pro-Whig, Robert Morris, won the election for the parliamentary seat that had become vacant by the death of the prominent anti-corporation M.P. John Pitt. Another by-election in 1816 was preceded by the creation of 298 freemen and resulted in the defeat of the Tory candidate Robert Bransby Cooper by the corporation's candidate, councilman Edward Webb. Shortly before the general election of 1830, 351 freemen were created in less than two months and Cooper was defeated again, this time by the corporation's pro-reform coalition of Webb and councilman John Phillpotts. Party tensions in Gloucester can be overstated, despite the presence of the pro-Tory and 'bitterly anti-corporation' True Blue Club and the constitutional Whig Club.¹⁵⁸ Local politics often revolved around the personal ambitions of prosperous

¹⁵⁶ Cannon, J. 'The Parliamentary Representation of the City of Gloucester (1727-1790)', *T.B.G.A.S. for 1959*, Vol. 78, 1960. p.138.

¹⁵⁷ Following based on Jurica. *Calendar*. pp.192-202, 213-25, 242-53; Goodman. 'Pre-Reform Elections'. pp.148-9; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.146, 152-4. See below, Appendix 5.

¹⁵⁸ Goodman. 'Pre-Reform Elections'. pp.147-9

city inhabitants and prominent county families as they attempted to extend their influence in Gloucester.¹⁵⁹

The exclusivity of Gloucester's corporation meant few could gain access to the city's governing body. Those who did succeed had to conform to a rigid hierarchy and fulfil a variety of roles, particularly if they wished to progress within the ranks of the common council. The council was, in effect, the corporation and while it had a coherent structure and well ordered routine, its role in the local government of Gloucester was distinctly limited.

4. The Corporation's Management of Charities

In 1779 alderman Gabriel Harris, the corporation's treasurer and rent-gatherer, was censured for failing to produce the corporation's accounts for over twenty years.¹⁶⁰ The episode forced a mood of introspection among the council and the following year the committee of enquiry was established.¹⁶¹ The committee's frequent and often detailed reports shed light on the corporation's activities. By the 1820s the committee was also styled the committee of estates and took responsibility for surveying corporation property.¹⁶² Increasingly, the council accepted the committee's recommendations and an organ which had emerged as a result Harris's failings became prevalent in city government.

The responsibilities of Gloucester's corporation were distinctly limited, the most demanding being property management and charity administration.¹⁶³ The corporation owned a substantial amount of property in its own right, but it also held a significant amount in trust under the terms of a variety of bequests and charities left to its care. In 1780, shortly after the failings of alderman Harris came to light, the council

¹⁵⁹ *G.J.* 31 July 1830.

¹⁶⁰ *G.B.R.* B4/1/1, p.1.

¹⁶¹ See above, pp.26-7.

¹⁶² *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.144-5.

¹⁶³ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. p.238.

instructed future treasurers to keep separate cash-books and ledgers for the city's property and that of the charities.¹⁶⁴ It is not known if this was a direct response to the Harris incident, but the instruction represented a further tightening of corporation procedures and self-regulation, similar to that presented by the establishment of the committee of enquiry. That such action did not happen much earlier is surprising, as the management of both corporation and charity property was a complex task. Nevertheless, a report in 1825 went some considerable way to clarifying the situation. Commissioners, working under H.P. Brougham (Lord Brougham 1830) and examining the management of the numerous charities in England and Wales, visited Gloucester.¹⁶⁵ With the full co-operation of Gloucester's council, the commissioners conducted a comprehensive examination of all of the corporation's charitable concerns.¹⁶⁶

Thirty-one charities 'vested in and Under the management of the Corporation' were identified by Brougham's commission.¹⁶⁷ Twenty-five of them were relatively minor and consisted mainly of loan and apprentice charities, although some were neglected or misplaced.¹⁶⁸ In addition, under George Townshend's will of 1682, the mayor and six senior aldermen of Gloucester were empowered to elect one of eight scholars to attend Pembroke College, Oxford.¹⁶⁹ Most demanding of the corporation's attention was the administration of six substantial charitable institutions, four of them almshouses and two schools. These consisted of the almshouses St. Bartholomew, St.

¹⁶⁴ G.B.R F6/3/2, 1797-1811.

¹⁶⁵ *The Reports of the Commissioners (Commonly Known as Lord Brougham's Commission), Appointed in Pursuance of Various Acts of Parliament, To Enquire Concerning Charities in England and Wales, Relating to the County of Gloucester 1819-1837* (London: P.S.King, 1890).

¹⁶⁶ G.B.R. B4/1/3, ff.36v-41v.

¹⁶⁷ *14th Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire Concerning Charities. H.C.* (1826), xi in *The Reports of the Commissioners*. pp.5-54; See below, Appendix 8.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.6-41.

¹⁶⁹ Spelt Townsend in the *V.C.H.* G.B.R. B3/16, p.338; *V.C.H. Glos. II.* pp.354-5.

Margaret, St. Mary Magdalen and St. Kyneburgh and Sir Thomas Rich's school and the Crypt school.

St. Bartholomew's, St. Margaret's and St. Mary Magdalen's were medieval almshouses, of which only St. Bartholomew's was situated within the city. It stood between Westgate bridge and Foreign bridge. The other two were located just east of the city in London Road.¹⁷⁰ All three had fallen under the control of the mayor and burgesses of Gloucester by the late sixteenth century and were placed under a system of joint management by a statute of 1636. It specified the appointment of eight officers to govern the almshouses consisting of a president, a treasurer, two surveyors, two almoners and two scrutineers, and thus effectively established a committee of management which continued to operate until 1835.¹⁷¹ During the early nineteenth century the members of this committee were elected annually at the beginning of each mayoral year and normally consisted of three aldermen and five councilmen.¹⁷² The post of treasurer was distinct from the corporation's treasurer and was usually an alderman. However, the role appears to have been merely honorary as the corporation's treasurer was responsible for the separate accounts and rent rolls of the almshouses and made and received payments accordingly.¹⁷³ In addition, the corporation's chamberlain acted as the inspector of all charities under corporation management.¹⁷⁴

The fourth almshouse, St. Kyneburgh (also known as Kimbrose), was founded in 1559 and was situated in Southgate Street. It was transferred to the corporation from a body of trustees by 1603.¹⁷⁵ Unlike the other three almshouses, St. Kyneburgh was

¹⁷⁰ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.351-4.

¹⁷¹ See below, Appendix 9.

¹⁷² G.B.R. B3/13, ff.154-5; B3/14, ff.16r, 249v.

¹⁷³ G.R.O. D3269/5/6-1 to 8, 1827/8-1834/5; See below, Appendices 9 and 10.

¹⁷⁴ *14th Report.* p.28.

¹⁷⁵ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.354.

administered by the common council as were the other minor charities. Consequently, their revenues formed part of the corporation's annual budget, with the exception of two charities (Jane Punter's donation and William Holliday's gift), the accounts of which were kept separately after 1824.¹⁷⁶

The four almshouses were financed from their landed endowments. Rents and renewal fines for leases represented their most substantial sources of income. The corporation had 'either by the direction of the Founders of the charities, or by immemorial custom' granted leases for terms of twenty-one, thirty-one or forty-one years, the latter two generally being subject to renewal every ten or fourteen years respectively.¹⁷⁷ Between 1827-8 and 1834-5 the four almshouses' combined income averaged £2,096 a year, of which approximately £1,235 was raised through rents and renewal fines.¹⁷⁸ St. Bartholomew's had the most substantial income and averaged approximately £1,466 a year, of which about £918 came from rents and fines.

Collectively, the four almshouses provided places for approximately ninety-two residents at any time during the early nineteenth century (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3
Almshouse Residents in Any One Year
Between 1805-33.¹⁷⁹

Institution	Men	Women	Men and Women	Total per Institution
St. Bartholomew	23	36		59
St. Margaret	8	0		8
St. Mary Magdalen	10	9		19
St. Kyneburgh			6	6
Total				92

Under the statute of 1636, precedence was given to Gloucester's freemen and their wives regarding admittance to the three ancient almshouses. The original terms of St.

¹⁷⁶ G.B.R. F4/15, p.629; G.R.O. D3269/22; D3269/20.

¹⁷⁷ G.R.O. D3269/33, p.348.

¹⁷⁸ D3269/5/6-1 to 8.

¹⁷⁹ *14th Report*. pp.6-15; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.351-5.

Kyneburgh's trust deed were less restrictive, specifying that the six of Gloucester's poor to be admitted should include a burgess of the city. The use of the term 'burgess' was the cause of some dispute between Gloucester freemen and the charity's trustees. The freemen believed that the term referred to freemen and not more widely to any inhabitant of the borough.¹⁸⁰ The matter was not resolved until 1853, when the less restrictive interpretation was accepted.¹⁸¹ Nevertheless, the four hospitals represented a much sought after privilege for the less affluent. Controlled by the corporation, this privilege was a useful source of influence over those wishing to benefit from the charities.

Sir Thomas Rich's school (also known as the Bluecoat hospital) was founded in 1666 upon the will of its namesake, a baronet from Sunning in Berkshire and native of Gloucester. The institution harboured twenty boys and provided them with 'diet, lodging, washing, clothes and other necessaries'.¹⁸² From its foundation it was managed by the full council until 1804, when the corporation established a standing committee to manage its affairs. This committee was subject to annual election and fluctuated between four and ten members, including the corporation's surveyor and chamberlain. However, its effectiveness was called into question following a detailed investigation of the charity's accounts in 1815 by the committee of enquiry. The committee presented its findings to the full council for its 'serious attention'.¹⁸³ It concluded that following Rich's bequest the corporation had managed the charity 'in perfect conformity' with his wishes, and having purchased estates to raise rental income, it had received £300 *per annum* as Sir Thomas had anticipated. Nevertheless, the corporation had found it necessary to supplement the charity's funds in order to

¹⁸⁰ Stephans, W. and Taylor, H. *The Freemen of Gloucester: Extracted from the Gloucester Journal, May 23 1891*. G.C. B5.14. pp.1-5.

¹⁸¹ G.R.O. D3269/34, p.355: See below p.94.

¹⁸² *14th Report*. p.28.

¹⁸³ G.B.R. B3/13, ff.162r, 162v.

fulfil the benevolent purposes of the will. In 1766 it had raised £2,700, of which £700 came from the sale of the school's stock, to purchase estates which were added to the endowment of the school.¹⁸⁴ The committee, under the mistaken impression that the £700 had come from the corporation's own funds, concluded that, as the school was in such a strong financial situation, it should reimburse the corporation with the sum of £2,380.¹⁸⁵ It further recommended that the corporation's rent-gatherer should receive £160 a year. Under that arrangement Sir Thomas Rich's school would provide £105, St. Bartholomew's £45 and the corporation's revenues, or city fund, only £15, as the committee concluded that it was 'perfectly reasonable that the City Fund should be saved as much as possible from the Expenses of the Receiver'.¹⁸⁶

In 1822 Sir Thomas Rich's total annual income amounted to over £1,152 and its robust financial situation prompted surplus funds to be diverted to assist other charities, whose finances were not so secure. However, in 1825 Brougham's commissioners prompted the committee of enquiry to inform the corporation that the practice was wrong because 'each fund whether rich or poor ought to bear its own share of those burthens (*sic*) which are unavoidably incurred'.¹⁸⁷ It was therefore recommended that the rent-gatherer's annual income should be provided by the old system of 2.5% of all revenues received, a practice that would have saved Sir Thomas Rich's over £651 between 1815 and 1824.¹⁸⁸ This judgement was apposite, for despite assurances that the deficit would be repaid, the fortunes of the school declined so much that between 1827 and 1829 its annual expenditure exceeded its income by an average of almost £277.¹⁸⁹ The decision to revert to the old method of paying the rent-

¹⁸⁴ G.B.R. B3/11, ff.276v-77v.

¹⁸⁵ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*, pp.336.

¹⁸⁶ G.B.R. B3/13, f.163v

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, B4/1/3, f.38v.

¹⁸⁸ *14th Report*, p.28.

¹⁸⁹ G.B.R. B4/1/4, f.63v.

gatherer helped to reduce the charity's outgoings, but in 1831 the committee of enquiry reduced the master and matron's salaries and imposed a limit of £50 *per annum* on repairs to the charity's buildings, which had risen to almost £106.¹⁹⁰

Sir Thomas Rich's was not the only charitable institution run by the corporation to experience difficulties. Despite a weekly pay increase to the nineteen residents of St. Mary Magdalen's Hospital from 1s.6d. to 2s. in 1805, it was decided in 1824 'to reduce (the) pay of all persons hereafter elected' to just 1s.¹⁹¹ This reduction in payments accompanied a decline in the charity's finances from *circa* 1822. The corporation spent £105 on repairs to the building in 1823 and attempted in 1824 to recoup the costs in part by ordering the master of St. Mary's to charge for the burial of local residents in its chapel and churchyard, the fees to be passed immediately to the rent-gatherer. Nevertheless, the hospital was reduced to an impoverished and ruinous state by 1833.

The Crypt grammar school, situated next to St. Mary de Crypt church, was founded under the will of John Cooke, which was proven in 1528. In 1539 Cooke's widow Joan, purchased land at Podsmead from the Crown and the following year passed the estate to the care of Gloucester's corporation for the endowment of the Crypt school, St. Bartholomew's almshouse and other minor payments.¹⁹² The grammar school was functioning from at least 1550 and the corporation leased the Podsmead land in accordance with Joan Cooke's restrictive trust for thirty-one year terms at fixed rates and fines, applying the rents and proceeds in accordance with her wishes until 1812.¹⁹³ By 1812 however, the value of the school's endowment had grown considerably and the corporation began to apply the surplus, to the value *circa* £180 a

¹⁹⁰ G.B.R. B4/1/4, f.64v.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, B3/14, f.1v; Remainder of paragraph based on *ibid*, f.2; *14th Report*. p.17; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.353-4.

¹⁹² *V.C.H. Glos. II*. p.344; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.301, 352, 423-4.

¹⁹³ G.B.R. K2/4

year, to the city revenues.¹⁹⁴ In 1815 the interest of the leases was purchased by Samuel Jones who sub-let them until his death in 1844.¹⁹⁵

The conclusions of the Brougham commission's investigations of Gloucester were particularly well received by the town's civic leaders, who deemed them as 'highly satisfactory to every Member of the Corporation'.¹⁹⁶ Notwithstanding the positive nature of the commissioners' report and the corporation's delight at its findings, efforts continued to be made to improve and tighten the management of some charitable institutions of Gloucester. In 1829 a proposal for the revision of the rules governing the management of the more substantial charities was put before the full council for consideration. The details were comprehensive, exceeding twelve pages in the corporation minutes.¹⁹⁷ Sanctioned by the bishop of Gloucester, the new rules for the government of the three ancient almshouses were enacted by the full council in 1830, although they differed little from those of 1636.¹⁹⁸

5. The Finances of Gloucester's Corporation

In 1738 the treasurer took over responsibility for the corporation's revenues from the chamberlain,¹⁹⁹ his duties included rent collecting and accounting.²⁰⁰ The financial year ended at Michaelmas and the treasurer normally presented the accounts to the corporation in the following July. The accounts consisted of a detailed list of all receipts and disbursements followed by the city's rent roll. Accounts were audited annually by the committee of enquiry before presentation to the full council for its approval. This process afforded a degree of scrutiny and some assurance against individual abuses, but the system was still vulnerable to criticism as all involved were

¹⁹⁴ G.R.O. D3270/19677, p.375.

¹⁹⁵ G.B.R. B3/17, pp.30-1.

¹⁹⁶ B4/1/3, f.37r.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, B3/14, ff.130r-35v.

¹⁹⁸ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*, p.351.

¹⁹⁹ G.B.R. B3/9, ff.426-7.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, F4/14; F4/15; F4/16.

corporation members. The issue was addressed by a short-lived innovation in March 1809, when it was decided that the treasurer's office was 'incompatible with that of being a member of the corporation'.²⁰¹ Subsequently, no council member was allowed to hold the post, but for reasons unknown the decision was revoked in 1815 and thus was removed one possible objective voice from the proceedings. Thereafter, the accounts were consistently approved by the committee and the council, suggesting either a very efficient treasurer or a lack of critical probing by those auditing the accounts.

During the last two decades before reform Gloucester's corporation struggled to balance its accounts and did so only by borrowing heavily, although this was an unusual rather than routine practice. In 1826 the corporation borrowed £8,000 from three individuals, including £5,000 from the treasurer, Henry Hooper Wilton.²⁰² Some of the money was used to offset expenses incurred in the development of the new cattle market which included £2,750 paid for land. A further £2,576 was borrowed in 1834, in pursuit of a Chancery case. However, revenues were normally derived from rents paid for corporation property, renewal fines on the leases, seal fees, fines for admission to the common council and charges for admission to the freedom. The overwhelming majority came from rents, as renewal and freemen fines normally represented less than 6% and 3% of total income respectively, while seal fees (6s.) and council admission fines (£3) were even less. In the financial year 1815-6 seven leases were renewed with fines ranging between £5 and £182 and totalling £264 16s. 4d. In 1832-3 renewal fines totalled £340.

Charges levied on new freemen varied depending on their method of entry. The majority were admitted by patrimony and apprenticeship (except during parliamentary

²⁰¹ G.B.R. B3/13, f.72r.

²⁰² *Ibid.* F4/16, p.70; Following based on F4/15, pp.259, 325, 340; F4/16, pp.70, 259, 423; F5/160, 27 Aug 1835; C3/1, ff.11-45.

election years) and paid 8s. 6d. each, plus £3 stamp duty, £1 officers' fees and 2s. 8d. bucket money.²⁰³ The last charge was to provide fire-fighting buckets in the city and applied to all new freemen. In 1815 twenty-three freemen were admitted by patrimony and apprenticeship, producing a combined income of £117 17s. 8d. for the corporation. The price of admission by fine (or purchase) was £40 between 1813 and 1831; thereafter it was reduced to £20, but bucket money almost doubled. In 1832 seven freemen admitted by fine raised £142 2s. 8d. in fees. Becoming a freeman by gift required no formal payment, but two guineas were traditionally paid on such occasions.

Revenues were used to pay for a variety of major and minor expenses.²⁰⁴ Annual payments were made to the members of the corporation's market tontine and grew steadily from £147 in 1816 to £192 in 1832. Interest paid to charity funds held in trust by the corporation averaged £80 a year, but grew to £268 by 1833. A variety of payments, styled as 'Gifts and Rewards' averaged £70 a year and included money for the beadle's shoes, lamprey pies and the payment of minor officers for attending corporation dinners. Taxes paid by the corporation averaged £157 annually, consisting of payments to the King's receiver and certain small reimbursements of exonerated or redeemed property and land tax. Annual interest payments on corporation loans totalled £440 on five debts by 1833. In addition, the corporation incurred annual interest charges of approximately £10 on its overdraft with the County of Gloucester Bank.

Wages and salaries paid to the corporation's minor and principal officers represented a significant annual expense. The mayor received over £177 a year, while the two sheriffs received between £80 and £100 each. The town clerk's salary grew

²⁰³ Jurica. *Calendar*. pp.xiii-xiv.

²⁰⁴ Following based on G.B.R F4/14, p.302; F4/15, pp.326-42; F4/16, pp.33-428.

slightly from £18 13s. 8d. in 1815 to £22 in 1835, the chamberlain received £50 a year, the four sergeants at mace collectively received £100 annually, as did the four porters. The day and night bellmen each received £15 a year and the beadle £21. The sword bearer's salary grew significantly from £10 in 1815 to £70 in 1835. After 1825 the treasurer received 2.5% of revenues collected annually which equated to at least £103 for the rest of the period.²⁰⁵ Additional expenses included payments to the deputy town clerk (*circa* £19 annually) and wine given to the constables in lieu of pay. The combined wages and salaries paid by the corporation averaged a minimum of £700 a year (excluding the treasurer, whose precise income before 1825 is unclear) and represented over 15% of corporation expenditure.

The most significant drain on corporation revenues came from a diverse range of expenses styled 'General Payments'.²⁰⁶ Major expenditure was made throughout the period on repairs to corporation property and various building projects. Minor expenses included the provision of coals for the Tolsey, routine costs such as surveys and the maintenance of the city's fire engine and unusual payments included the presentation of the freedom to the duke of Wellington in 1815. General payments grew from £1,527 in 1815-6 to £3,312 in 1822-3, mainly due to the building of the new cattle market. However, they continued to increase and peaked at £4,754 in 1825-6. Over the whole period they represented over 45% of total corporation expenditure.²⁰⁷

Between the financial years 1815-6 and 1834-5 corporation income totalled £110,098, averaging almost £5,505 a year.²⁰⁸ Disbursements (or expenses) during the

²⁰⁵ Based on 2.5% of £4,128, this being the minimum total income of the corporation after 1824-5. See below, Appendix 11.

²⁰⁶ G.B.R. F4/15, p.575 and *passim*.

²⁰⁷ See below, Appendix 11.

²⁰⁸ These figures include the £8,000 borrowed by the corporation in 1826. See above, p.41.

same period totalled £109,872, averaging almost £5,494.²⁰⁹ The annual balance barely averaged £11 and fell into a deficit of £1,546 in 1823, £2,393 in 1824 and £5,228 in 1825, although much of this debt related to building the new market.²¹⁰ The sum of unpaid rents, which averaged £573 a year, was included within the corporation's annual disbursements, thus distorting its actual expenditure, but even if outstanding rent is subtracted from the disbursements, income only exceeded expenditure by an average of £584 annually.

At Michaelmas 1816 over 92% of the corporation's income came from the rent roll.²¹¹ This was exceptionally high, but rent roll revenues still exceeded 75% of all income on another seven occasions before 1835 and averaged over 62% of total income between 1815-6 and 1834-5. The sum of rent revenues was categorised as 'City Rents, Uses Land and Wood's Gift' and represented corporation property from twelve rental divisions in the rent roll.²¹² Wood's gift represented an annuity of £10 13s. 4d. for Gloucester's corporation to fund a monthly sermon in a Worcestershire parish and has not been included in the calculations here regarding the corporation's income.²¹³ Most of the rent roll revenues came from property in the city, and only a small proportion came from places outside its boundaries, such as Wotton, Longford, Upton St. Leonards, and Sandhurst. Surplus money from the endowment of the Crypt school was diverted to the city's revenues from 1812.²¹⁴

Corporation practice in granting and renewing leases followed a consistent policy throughout the early nineteenth century and was only called into question a month

²⁰⁹ See below, Appendix 11.

²¹⁰ G.B.R F4/14, pp.283-92.

²¹¹ See below, Appendix 11. *Cf.* Appendix 12.

²¹² G.B.R. F4/14, p.3. *Passim*; See below, Appendix 13.

²¹³ Under the terms of the will of the Reverend John Wood, proven 11 March 1639-40: P.R.O. PROB 11/182, ff.301-3.

²¹⁴ See above, pp.39-40.

before the Municipal Corporations Act was passed.²¹⁵ Responsibility for the rent roll's management rested in the hands of the committee of enquiry, which granted leases, let tolls and decided on levels of rent.²¹⁶ It was not uncommon to let property to corporation members; William Henry Hyett (landowner) was granted a forty-one year lease on property in the city in 1814.²¹⁷ While such actions were reported to the full council, this was only done after the event and appears to have been a mere formality. Generally, buildings and land were leased for fixed rents while tolls and equipment were leased for rack-rents. The former included houses, shops, warehouses, yards and industrial and farm buildings. The latter included market and wheelage tolls, machinery, wayleaves and occasionally buildings. Wayleaves granted rights of way across corporation property such as a 'Door in the City Wall' let for £2 2s. in 1814.²¹⁸

Certain leases were granted for twenty-one year terms under a corporation covenant that bound it to perpetually renew them 'at a fine certain', but only at the end of the full term.²¹⁹ Other leases were granted for forty-one years and became perpetually renewable every fourteen years, usually in accordance with ancient custom. The property contained in both of these classes of lease was referred to as 'uses land' and the leases realised their value by an annual rent based on their current freehold value, with only nominal renewal fines. Other leases were granted for thirty-one and forty-one years, but were renewed only at the corporation's discretion. When it did so, the shorter leases were renewed every ten years and the longer leases every fourteen years, both at one and a half or one and a quarter of the property's current annual capital value. These leases realised the property's value through the annual rent and

²¹⁵ See below, p.68.

²¹⁶ B4/1/3; B4/1/4. *Passim*.

²¹⁷ B3/13, f.157v.

²¹⁸ F4/14, pp.266-7.

²¹⁹ *G.J.* 1 Aug 1835.

the renewal fine. They were often granted only if the lessees undertook a covenant to build on or make improvements to the land or property leased. The full contribution to the city revenues of lease renewal fines (6%), which were recorded in the main accounts and not the rent roll, is disguised here by the relatively short period studied, as even the most frequent renewals only took place every ten years. An examination of the accounts over a significantly longer period would be required to determine their precise role in generating revenue. Nevertheless, a substantial amount of the corporation's income was generated from annual rents.²²⁰

Between 1815-6 and 1834-5, income from the rent roll totalled £69,347 and represented almost 63% of the corporation's total revenues.²²¹ The rent roll included lessees' payments of exonerated or redeemed land tax, some of which the corporation continued to levy and keep for itself. Not all land tax was treated thus and annual payments were made to the King's receiver throughout the early nineteenth century. Lessees' tax payments due to the Treasury averaged £150 a year but were not included in the rent roll's overall balance of income. The rent roll rose by over 28% from £2,966 in 1815-6 to £3,805 in 1834-5. This rise is not explained by the corporation's acquisition of additional property and land, as such purchases were offset by occasional sales. In the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century some rentals only increased by 5% and after 1815 remained stagnant.²²² Other rents grew and had some impact on increased rent roll revenues which grew almost annually. Identifying specific examples of this trend is complicated by the diverse treatment of rents. The rent of an inn, described as the Duke at the Quay, was subjected to a substantial increase, from £5 10s. 10d. in 1807 to £70 by 1830. Other rents increased

²²⁰ See below, Appendices 11 and 12.

²²¹ See below, Appendix 11. *Cf.* Appendix 12. Paragraph based on G.B.R. F4/14, pp.314, 317, 574; F4/15, pp.266-7, 322, 325; F4/16, pp.50, 235, 238; F5/160, unpaginated.

²²² See Appendix 13.

more modestly or remained almost stagnant. A house on Foreign bridge remained virtually unchanged for long periods, while rents on properties subject to modest incremental increases tended to rise by between 30% and 40% over several decades. The Boothall inn increased by 36%, from £110 in 1800 to £150 by 1830.

The most substantial factor in the growth of rent roll revenues came from increases associated with the corporation's tolls.²²³ At Michaelmas 1815 a total of £845 was raised from Gloucester's produce markets in Eastgate and Southgate Streets, from 'wheelage' levied on wagons and horses bringing goods into the city and from a newly installed weighing machine in Upper Quay Lane. Thereafter toll receipts increased substantially and by Michaelmas 1831 they totalled £1,308. Market tolls were bolstered by £300 a year from the new cattle market after 1823, while wheelage provided a modest increase from £105 to £120. Other contributing factors included a second weighing machine installed by the corporation near Foreign bridge in 1825 and a crane provided at the quay in 1828 in addition to one installed there in 1812. Thus, within sixteen years toll receipts grew by almost 55% and in 1831 they represented over 33% of the total rent roll income.

Throughout the period the total due from the rent roll was never collected in full.²²⁴ This is partially explained by difficulties experienced in collecting rents and tolls from the markets.²²⁵ Yet it still suggests a degree of laxity on the part of the treasurer and the corporation which is at odds with their struggle to balance the accounts and the recourse to borrowing. At Michaelmas 1801 £893 (over 60%) of the £1,466 due from the rent roll remained outstanding. This deficit was off-set by the recovery of £693 of the previous year's rent arrears and by a further £220 of 'Old Arrears of Rent', but the

²²³ G.B.R. F4/14, p.317; F4/15, pp.266-7; F4/16, pp.234-5.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, F4/14, pp.295-557; F4/15, pp.9-176.

²²⁵ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.143-4.

problem was a perennial one.²²⁶ Between 1815-6 and 1834-5 the amount due from the rent roll and from arrears of rent totalled £81,539, but only £70,060 was recovered during the same period, leaving a deficit of £11,479.²²⁷ These arrears varied from £1,988 in 1816 to £152 in 1825, but averaged over £573 a year during the period. Nevertheless, the issue was taken seriously and measures were taken to rectify the situation, with the committee of enquiry periodically serving notice on defaulting tenants to pay their arrears or quit the property.²²⁸ Revenues due from the annual rent roll increased steadily throughout the period, but after 1820 outstanding arrears began a steady decline, until they stood at only £181 in 1835.

The overall growth of Gloucester's rent roll revenues in the early nineteenth century is explained by a combination of modest increases in the number of corporation rentals, variable but significant increases in rent and substantial increases in tolls. A prudent and responsible approach to the management of Gloucester's rent roll is tempered by the perennial issue of rent arrears. Nevertheless, without the income generated by municipal property, the corporation would have been in severe financial difficulty during the early nineteenth century. The importance of the rent roll revenues goes some way to explaining the level of expenditure made under 'general payments', much of which went on various building projects and repairs. Yet, despite the problem of debt the corporation's financial management was marked by a distinct improvement following the changes made in the late eighteenth century.

²²⁶ G.B.R. F4/14, p.283-331.

²²⁷ See below, Appendix 12.

²²⁸ G.B.R. B4/1/4, f.16v.

CHAPTER THREE **Gloucester and Municipal Reform**

1. Support for Municipal Reform in Gloucester

In Gloucester the parliamentary reform crisis was vigorously debated and brought into sharp focus the corporation's overwhelming influence in parliamentary election contests.²²⁹ While the Whig dominated corporation had actively supported parliamentary reform, this did not quell all criticism, especially from local Tories.²³⁰ The corporation exerted considerable authority over the borough fund, the city's markets, the municipal charities and the freedom, but its ability to respond to change could be distinctly limited. Its involvement was shaped or limited by the presence of non-corporation members within statutory bodies, the city magistracy and the parish vestries.²³¹ City improvements were distinctly limited by financial constraints as no precedent existed for imposing rates for general purposes and so the corporation looked to local Acts and private investment to meet local needs.²³² Furthermore, when the corporation did take action, the ratepayers, vestrymen and improvement commissioners could become uncooperative, deliberately obstructive or generally reluctant to act if measures involved notable expense or great inconvenience. In 1815 the residents of St. Mary de Crypt parish had refused to pay any rate demanded of them for local repairs that had not 'been first allowed or ordered to be so done by the Inhabitants'.²³³ By the 1830s similar resistance to the imposition of expense on ratepayers was continuing to manifest itself.²³⁴ Yet the need to respond to the changes and problems emerging from growing urbanisation and an increased population was becoming increasingly apparent to the citizens of Gloucester.

²²⁹ Goodman. 'Pre-Reform Elections'. pp.156-7; *G.J.* 12 March 1831.

²³⁰ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.152-4.

²³¹ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. pp.238-40.

²³² *Ibid.*, p.239.

²³³ G.R.O. P154/11 VE 2/1, 6 July 1815.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 30 Aug 1832, 18 April 1833.

In December 1831 fear pervaded the city as outbreaks of cholera in Gloucestershire spread.²³⁵ The city's voluntary board of health reported that Gloucester was in dire need of a complete sewerage system, the lack of which was producing conditions 'too revolting to describe'.²³⁶ In March 1832 many of the city's shops closed as a mark of respect for those suffering, but within four months over a third of Gloucester's 366 diagnosed cases of cholera died.²³⁷ In April 1833 the city observed a nationally appointed day of thanksgiving as the epidemic passed and shortly after the board of health announced that £1,052 had been spent in responding to the outbreak in Gloucester, the cost to be met by a rate. Yet even after the threat receded, improvements were slow and limited. In October, the corporation instructed the newly elected parish surveyors to address the disgraceful state of the streets. Once again, action was in response to a problem and also came from bodies other than the corporation. A benevolent society, for preventing pauperism and improving the condition of the poor, was formed shortly after the cholera epidemic subsided, while the subscribers to a cholera fund, established during the epidemic, were still meeting three years later. By 1835, satisfaction was being expressed with notable improvements to some areas of Gloucester, but the core problem had not been addressed. The issue, nurtured by numerous factors, including poor housing, overcrowding, poverty, inadequate water supply and non-existent sewerage, was not confined to Gloucester.²³⁸ Nor was it at the heart of populist calls for reform, but it laid bare the limitations of an organ of local government being rendered increasingly incapable of meeting the needs of nineteenth century towns and cities. In

²³⁵ Paragraph based on *G.J.* 17 Dec 1831, 3 Nov 1832, 20 April 1833, 18 May 1833, 26 Oct 1833, 4 Jan 1834, 31 Jan 1835.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 26 Nov 1831.

²³⁷ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. p.60.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.56-7.

Gloucester's case, it seems apposite that the epidemic preceded the arrival of the commissioners for municipal reform by less than a year.²³⁹

However, calls for reform centred not on municipal corporations' ability to act effectively as agents for improvement and change in their host communities, but on their self-electing and closed constitutions and abuse of their privileges. In Gloucester these complaints were manifested in a petition to the mayor, dated 21 May 1833.²⁴⁰ Representing local freemen and enfranchised residents of the city, the petition called on mayor Edward Bower (currier) to convene a meeting at the shire hall 'for the purpose of considering the expediency of presenting a Petition to Parliament, praying an alteration in the constitution of such Corporate Bodies as are Self-Elected'. The requisition focused on the issue of self election and, along with the impressive list of 333 names attached to it, represents unequivocal evidence of a groundswell of opinion in favour of reforming Gloucester's corporation. The freemen (those entitled to practice their trade within the borough limits) and the electors (those entitled to vote for the parliamentary representation of the city) were expressing their dissatisfaction with the current constitution of closed corporations. However, what is not clear is whether this dissatisfaction was prompted by particular grievances with Gloucester's corporation or was stimulated by wider national debates, as the issue had received much attention in the national and local press.

Bower saw no need for a meeting as the issue was already a subject of enquiry in parliament, but nevertheless he eventually acquiesced to the petitioners' request.²⁴¹ Figuring prominently at the meeting, which was held at the Shire Hall in May 1833,

²³⁹ The commissioners formally began their enquiries in Gloucester at the Tolsey on 20 September 1833. *G.J.* 14 Sept 1833.

²⁴⁰ *A Requisition to the Mayor of Gloucester* (Gloucester: Jew and Wingate, 1833): copy in G.C. NZ12.2 (L).

²⁴¹ *G.J.* 1 June 1833.

were William Cother (surgeon) and James Francillon (local property owner).²⁴² Members of the corporation also attended, including alderman John William Wilton (surgeon), although none has been identified among the signatories of the petition. The event was reported in the *Gloucester Journal* two days later.²⁴³ After the preliminaries of the meeting, Cother sought to assure his audience ‘that there was no incorrectness in meeting to discuss the propriety of throwing open corporations’ and continued by asking why ‘men who had lived 20, 30 or 40 years virtuous and worthy citizens, should be excluded from municipal honours and distinctions?’ The complaint was a familiar one in Gloucester, but was equally relevant to many corporations where political factions dominated these closed bodies. Those holding Tory principles controlled the majority of corporations at the time, and much of the broader stimulus for reform arose from parliamentary Whigs, radicals and Benthamites.²⁴⁴ Yet Gloucester was an exception to the rule and the dominance of Whigs in the corporation had long been a point of grievance for local Tories.²⁴⁵ Cother brought the prevalence of local party rancour to the fore once more. He claimed that the corporation put party interest above the best interests of the city and continued that ‘(t)here was a better thing than party – welfare of our country’.²⁴⁶ He was expressing popular criticisms of the unreformed corporations, but his interests were also of a distinctly local and even personal nature. While organised constituency parties did not evolve fully for another three decades, Gloucester had an active and lively political life.²⁴⁷ In 1814, local Tory interests organised themselves with the

²⁴² *V.C.H. Glos. IV*, pp.174-5; G.B.R. B3/15, f.2.

²⁴³ *G.J.* 1 June 1833.

²⁴⁴ Finlayson. ‘Commission and Report’. pp.36-7.

²⁴⁵ Goodman. ‘Pre-Reform Elections’. p.144.

²⁴⁶ *G.J.* 1 June 1833.

²⁴⁷ Madgewick, P. *A New Introduction to British Politics* (Cheltenham: Stanley Thomas, 1994) p.227.

formation of the True Blue Club, but not all support for reform in Gloucester was formed along the same lines.²⁴⁸

When Francillon attempted to address the meeting, Cother and his supporters vocally opposed him. Nevertheless, the former was in agreement with the latter regarding reform in general, but saw the issue as one which should not be used as a platform for airing local grievances. ‘They were assembled...to discuss the general good of their country, and the most effectual mode of applying a remedy to the evils blended with the present system, not to discuss local interests or the conduct of any particular corporation’. Francillon denounced Cother’s criticism of the corporation as it was merely complying with its charter, but agreed that ‘there could be no set of men fit to be entrusted’ with the power of self-election.²⁴⁹

Francillon’s pragmatic defence of the unreformed system did not seek to excuse the abuses, but rather explain them and it went some way to explaining why the corporation was not held to account more specifically on its inability to offer the city a more proactive and responsive form of local government. The antiquated and traditional nature of the unreformed constitutions of municipal corporations combined with common human failings, serves to reinforce the perception that popular resentment rested on their closed nature and not on progressive notions of local government.

2. The Commissioners for Municipal Reform and Gloucester

The Whig government realised that an extensive enquiry into the state of the municipal corporations was an indispensable pre-requisite to establishing a cogent framework for their reform. In July 1833 a royal commission was appointed to the

²⁴⁸ Goodman ‘Pre-Reform Elections’. p.147.

²⁴⁹ *G.J.* 1 June 1833.

task.²⁵⁰ The chief commissioner was John Blackburne (M.P. Huddersfield) and its secretary was Joseph Parkes, a Birmingham solicitor with strong radical proclivities. England and Wales were divided into nine circuits, each circuit having two commissioners. London's corporation was subject to special arrangements due to its unique nature.²⁵¹ The commissioners were all armed with a list of questions to put before public courts of enquiry in each town or city. The almost overwhelming task was completed in less than two years and the final report was presented to the House of Commons in March 1835 and made public the following month.

The Municipal Corporations' Commission of Enquiry

Despite widespread complaints about the state of municipal corporations, attitudes towards the means of addressing the problems polarised from the outset. Many Whigs, radicals, nonconformists and Benthamites broadly supported the notion of statutory reform.²⁵² Many Tories, Anglicans and aristocrats resisted change and viewed municipal reform as a dangerous extension of the democratic precedent set by the Great Reform Act. Lord Lyndhurst (Tory) claimed that, should the corporations fall to reform, then the Church and hereditary peerage would soon follow.²⁵³ Opponents to reform perceived it as an attempt to destroy the self-perpetuating Tory havens in order to benefit and strengthen the Whig party.²⁵⁴ In such a climate it was not surprising that the commission was controversial and criticism of it was vitriolic and sustained. The commission was packed with radicals, many of them personal friends of Parkes and of the twenty commissioners chosen to assist Blackburn and

²⁵⁰ Finlayson. 'Commission and Report'. pp.38-41; Finlayson. 'Politics of Municipal Reform'. p.675.

²⁵¹ Parliamentary Paper, H.C., 1837 (239) xxv, cited in Collinge, J. *Office Holders in Modern Britain: Volume IX Officials of Royal Commissions of Inquiry 1815-1870* (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1984) p.20.

²⁵² Salmon. *Electoral Reform at Work*. pp.210-1; Phillips. *The Great Reform Bill*. pp.295-6.

²⁵³ Finlayson. *Decade of Reform*. p.27.

²⁵⁴ Hansard. *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd Ser., xxix. pp.1382-3, cited in Finlayson. 'Politics of Municipal Reform'. p.677.

Parkes, only John Drinkwater and Sir Francis Palgrave were non-radicals. It is of note that Palgrave was one of only three commissioners who refused to sign the completed report.²⁵⁵ Lyndhurst complained bitterly that the commissioners were tainted by political partisanship and the *Quarterly Review* denounced the commission as monstrous.²⁵⁶

The Commissions' General Report

Despite the criticisms levelled at the commission, its survey of the corporations was comprehensive and meticulous and resulted in a powerful and lucid report. The substantive report consisted of the commission's general judgement of the unreformed corporations, to which were attached the reports of individual corporations.

The general report's main criticisms of the corporations were numerous, but the points may be summarised as follows.²⁵⁷ Municipal authority rested in the hands of councils even where the corporation included a large number of the inhabitant freemen and thereby excluded the majority of the local population from any active role in municipal government. Members were usually self-elected for life, which ensured the ascendancy of one political party and normally extended to the exclusion of Catholics and dissenters, despite the repeal of the Test and Corporations Act. Self-interest permeated admissions to the freedom and extended to the administration of charities, corporation revenues and property management. Party spirit tainted magistrates and police constables who were at times notoriously inefficient. Corporators were frequently commissioners under local Acts, but rarely took an active role in the duties entailed and were often politically opposed to the other non-corporation commissioners. The general mismanagement of corporation funds

²⁵⁵ Collinge. *Officials of Royal Commissions*. p.20.

²⁵⁶ Finlayson. 'Commission and Report'. p.46.

²⁵⁷ This paragraph represents a summary of the more salient criticisms of corporations made in the general report by the commissioners. *The First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Municipal Corporations of England and Wales*. H.C., 1835 (116) XXIII. pp.1-798.

included civic feasts and the payment of unimportant offices instead of being applied to the good of the community. Few corporations were willing to acknowledge their roles as mere trustees of municipal property and consequently saw no obligation to use surplus funds to the public advantage. Local inhabitants were frequently ill-informed about the extent of authority their civic leaders rightly had over them, or the nature of local bye-laws, which were often created or repealed without their knowledge, as many close corporations conducted their affairs in strict secrecy.

The report dismissed the majority of corporations as little more than political engines, offering little benefit and much harm to the towns and cities after which they were named. The report's conclusions were unequivocal:

(T)here prevails amongst the inhabitants of a great majority of the incorporated towns a general, and, in our opinion, a just dissatisfaction with their Municipal Institutions; a distrust of the self-elected Municipal Councils, whose powers are subject to no popular control, and whose acts and proceedings being secret, are unchecked by the influence of public opinion.²⁵⁸

In addition the report concluded that even in those corporations where the civic leaders acted with the utmost propriety, the very nature of their constitutions rendered them incapable of responding to the needs of the rapidly changing social, economic and political conditions.²⁵⁹

Gloucester's Municipal Corporation and the Reform Issue

In Gloucester, the reform debate emulated national concerns, but civic rhetoric was more muted than it had been on the issue of parliamentary reform in 1832.²⁶⁰ Publicly, the corporation was supportive of municipal reform; privately, little is known of what individual members thought about the issue. When the mayor and town clerk gave evidence on Gloucester's corporation to a House of Commons'

²⁵⁸ *1st Report*. p.49.

²⁵⁹ Finlayson. 'Commission and Report'. p.43.

²⁶⁰ Phillpotts, J. *To the Independent Freemen of Gloucester* (Gloucester: Jew and Wingate, 1831): copy in G.C. NF10.16(14); *Election Squib*: copy in G.C. NF10.16 (17a).

committee of enquiry in March 1833 the matter was reported in the local press, but little was made of the issue otherwise.²⁶¹ In November 1834 William IV dismissed Lord Melbourne's reforming Whig ministry and invited Sir Robert Peel (Tory), an ardent opponent of parliamentary reform, to form the next government. This once more placed reform at the centre of public debate.²⁶² The following month Gloucester's mayor, William Morgan Meyler, led a forthright address to the king expressing the corporation's concern.

(W)e have received with great alarm the change of your Majestys (*sic*) late confidential advisors for others who both in and out of Parliament have uniformly offered the most determined opposition to every measure of Reform – and whose recorded declarations have even gone the length of stating that our establishments are not susceptible of any improvement.²⁶³

Gloucester's aldermen and councilmen were not reticent in their support and resolved to have the address published in the local press without delay. The following day Meyler convened a large and boisterous public meeting of freemen, householders and inhabitants. Feelings were running high and councilman Charles Parker (attorney) declared that '(m)inisters who are generally supported by the people have been suddenly dismissed...an administration has been proposed, composed of those who have been the inveterate enemies of all reforms – the enemies of the will of the people'.²⁶⁴ Parker was cheered loudly, but William Cother, advocate of Gloucester's municipal reform petition, attempted to defend the Tory cause, dismissing Parker's 'overheated imagination', and proudly proclaiming his own Tory principles, but he was met with jeering, groans and hisses. The meeting ended with agreement to petition the king and anger that a ministry committed to corporation reform was to be replaced by an anti-reforming ministry.

²⁶¹ G.B.R. B4/16, p.394.

²⁶² Evans. *The Modern State*. p.246.

²⁶³ G.B.R. B3/14, f.232.

²⁶⁴ *G.J.* 6 Dec 1834.

The degree to which corporation support was due to its composition or to strong local feeling is unclear. Most corporations were dominated by Tories and reform offered a potential end to their dominance, but the opposite was true in Gloucester. Nevertheless, some saw the issue as one of principle which extended beyond personal interest. Alderman John William Wilton had attended the public meeting held by the pro-reform petitioners in May 1833.²⁶⁵ Wilton declared his support for reform, but took issue with Cother's politically partisan motives for demanding change. Wilton claimed that, regardless of the consequences, municipal reform 'should upon general grounds, have his hearty support' and he continued 'these opinions were those he had always entertained' and he claimed one shared by all liberal minded people.²⁶⁶

Wilton was only one of Gloucester's thirty-nine civic leaders at that time, but even if his principled lack of fear was not entirely shared by his peers, their concerns may have been tempered by a belief in the general popularity of Gloucester's corporation. Yet, given recent events, such as the reform crisis and cholera epidemic, and more perennial problems, such as sustained criticism from local Tories and belligerence from the parish vestries, this self-assurance seems unlikely. A more significant factor in the corporation's attitude to reform may have been the vocal local support for the issue expressed at the petition meeting, thus convincing the corporation pragmatically to support an issue that seemed increasingly likely to become statute law.

The Commissioners' Report on Gloucester's Municipal Corporation

The corporation's public support for reform matched the manner in which it cooperated with the commissioners. Peregrine Bingham and David Jardine opened their enquiry in the Tolsey on Friday 20 September 1833.²⁶⁷ They were charged with investigating twenty-seven corporations, including Cirencester, Tewkesbury and

²⁶⁵ See above pp.51-3.

²⁶⁶ *G.J.* 1 June 1833.

²⁶⁷ G.B.R. B3/14, f.231; F4/16, f.394.

Oxford, and were authorised to summon all the officers of the corporation and ‘any other persons they may judge necessary’.²⁶⁸ It is indicative of the pressure the commissioners were under that they had only begun their investigation of Tewkesbury two days before starting in Gloucester. Representations from the city to the commissioners were made by mayor Edward Bower, alderman William Henry Hyett (M.P. Stroud), and councilman Arthur Hammond Jenkins (solicitor). Equipped with suitable *gravitas*, they were accompanied by other corporation members and various inhabitants who wished to attend. The entire proceedings were conducted in an open and public manner and the civic leaders ‘were complimented in very flattering terms by the commissioners for their level of cooperation and assistance’.²⁶⁹ Nevertheless, ‘parties opposed to the corporation’ were also able to give evidence.²⁷⁰

The commissioners made no reference to issues of public health in Gloucester, which is in stark contrast to a second report made after reform.²⁷¹ While the framers of the 1833 commission had significant concerns with issues of public health in the municipalities, no mention was made of local drainage, sewerage, water supply, housing conditions, refuse management and levels of mortality and morbidity in the city’s population, but focused directly on the constitution and primary functions of Gloucester’s corporation. The evidence taken formed the substance of Bingham and Jardine’s report.²⁷² Much of the content of the report was purely descriptive, including details of salaried, honorary and inferior officers, and the city’s freedom, revenues, expenditure, rents and leases.

²⁶⁸ *G.J.* 21 Sept 1833.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ Bingham, P. and Jardine, D. *Report on the Corporation of Gloucester, 1833*. G.C. JF6.1. p.62.

²⁷¹ *Appendix to Second Report of Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts*: copy in G.C. JF6.1.

²⁷² Bingham and Jardine. *Report 1833*. pp.58-68.

However, Bingham and Jardine did pass comment on a number of issues, especially complaints levelled at the corporation. They made no direct reference to the alienation of the inhabitants from the municipal body which would figure so prominently in the general report, but the commissioners were informed that self-election and the creation of honorary freemen had long enabled the corporation to be politically exclusive and to influence parliamentary elections in its favour. The issue was a well rehearsed one, but the commissioners dismissed its occurrence in the city as unproven and, even if true, the result of ‘the personal interest of individuals’ in the council, rather than the abuse of authority by the corporate body as a whole.²⁷³ Such a conclusion seems obtuse at best, given the level of prolonged controversy surrounding the issue in Gloucester.²⁷⁴ While the political value of creating freemen had been removed in 1832, the issue of self-election and political exclusion from civic office remained. Yet Bingham and Jardine minimised this complaint and pointed out that the presence of several dissenters in the corporation demonstrated that exclusion on grounds of personal opinion was not a significant problem. Such apparent myopia is at odds with contemporary views of the commission’s anti-corporation agenda and with local anti-corporation rhetoric and differed sharply from the general report’s perspective.

Nevertheless, Bingham and Jardine did identify a number of failings in Gloucester. While they effectively dismissed complaints that Gloucester’s magistrates were also tainted by the ills of self-election and political exclusivity, the commissioners noted imperfections created by having a separate county and city magistracy as issues of jurisdiction meant offenders could escape city justice by simply crossing the municipal boundary. The preoccupation with relatively minor complaints is at odds

²⁷³ Bingham and Jardine. *Report 1833*. p.62.

²⁷⁴ Cannon. ‘Parliamentary Representation of Gloucester’. p.138; Goodman. ‘Pre-Reform Elections’. p.144.

with the considerable concerns articulated in the general report, particularly the perception that municipal magistrates' objective judicial integrity was compromised and undermined by political partisanship. This lack of critical probing by Bingham and Jardine extended to the various municipal officers and servants. Their methods of appointment, duties, and salaries were listed in detail, but no other comment was recorded. Of greater concern to Bingham and Jardine was the state of the city's police, which they judged as ineffective. Yet, responsibility for the failings was not levelled directly at the corporation constables but at the twelve ward officers, who were dismissed as unenthusiastic and inefficient. Furthermore, the inadequacy of the local Act 'for the regulation of the town' was blamed for the unsatisfactory state of the police.²⁷⁵ The same cause was blamed for the poor state of paving in the city, but no mention of the corporation was attached to the criticism. The brief manner in which these matters were presented in the report was in noticeable contrast to the attention given to city improvements made by the corporation which focused on its building of the cattle market, improvements to Spa Road and repairs to St. Mary Magdalen's hospital.

The corporation's financial activities were dealt with at length. Again much of the detail was descriptive, but where comment was passed it was favourable. The practice of leasing corporation property to its own members was deemed minimal, impartial and, given that much of the city was corporation property, practically unavoidable. The commissioners' report contained the corporation's income and expenditure over a twelve-year period. The years ending Michaelmas 1821 to 1823 and 1829 to 1832 were included, while the years ending 1824 to 1828 were omitted. The commissioner's selective use of the accounts revealed an average annual income

²⁷⁵ Bingham and Jardine. *Report 1833*. p.62.

of £31,461 while expenditure was only £30,006. The report thus showed income exceeding expenditure by an average of £207 a year.²⁷⁶ If all years between Michaelmas 1821 and 1832 are included, expenditure exceeded income by an average £152 each year.²⁷⁷ The commissioners had access to all of the treasurer's accounts, but their selective use of figures only distorts the treasurer's full figures marginally. It is of note that of the five financial years ignored by the commissioners, three were when the corporation had the most substantial annual shortfall since 1814.²⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the commissioners went on to discuss corporation expenditure during the years ignored by their table and much was made of the considerable expense incurred in improving the city, particularly with regard to its markets.

Public interest in Gloucester was aroused by the enquiry and the town clerk reported that the corporation had attended the commissioners' enquiry 'and afforded every information and assistance' in its power.²⁷⁹ Notwithstanding the various complaints brought to the commissioners' attention, they concluded that despite the issue of self-election 'the practical evils arising from the system are less developed in the city of Gloucester than in many other instances of close corporations'.²⁸⁰ The *Gloucester Journal*, which had deliberately restrained itself from all but the most perfunctory reporting of events during the enquiry, published a full account of the report.²⁸¹ The commissioners judged Gloucester's corporation as an active, well-ordered and responsible municipal body, whose deficiencies were due to the limitations of its antiquated constitution and not to self-interest or corruption. The overall impression

²⁷⁶ Bingham and Jardine. *Report 1833*. p.67.

²⁷⁷ See below, Appendix 11.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ G.B.R. B3/14, f.23; F4/16, f.394.

²⁸⁰ Bingham and Jardine. *Report 1833*. p.62.

²⁸¹ *G.J.* 2 May 1835.

given by the report was very favourable and bears little resemblance to the general report's judgement of municipal corporations.

3. The Municipal Corporations Act and Gloucester

The Municipal Corporations Bill

On the 5 June 1835 a bill for municipal reform was introduced into parliament by Lord John Russell, at that time, leader of the House of Commons. Drafted by Parkes, among others,²⁸² the bill was based on the commission's condemnation of the corporations and applied to 183 of those municipal bodies investigated.²⁸³ Radicals, Whigs, Tories and ultra-Tories all took a keen interest in the bill's progress.²⁸⁴ Melbourne's government claimed to seek an amelioration of the worst defects of corporations by a number of proposals which Parkes jubilantly summarised as 'a thorough purge of the existing Corporators'.²⁸⁵

The bill, in its initial form, proposed to reinstate the original purpose of the majority of existing corporations; councils were to act as the representative bodies of the local community, elected by and for its municipal inhabitants to whom they would be answerable.²⁸⁶ The councillors of each corporation were to be elected by the inhabitant ratepayers for three-year terms, with one third required to retire annually. There were to be no aldermanic benches or life membership. Thus, the municipal franchise was more democratic than the parliamentary franchise of 1832 which was limited to the £10 household qualification and certain freemen's rights.²⁸⁷ The qualifications for municipal office were to be the same as for the municipal franchise.

²⁸² Joseph Parkes, J.E. Drinkwater and John Campbell have all been credited with drafting the bill: Keith-Lucas. *Local Government Franchise*. p.52.

²⁸³ Bush. *Bristol*. p.104.

²⁸⁴ Finlayson. *Decade of Reform*. pp.26-9.

²⁸⁵ Letter from Joseph Parkes to Lord Durham 1 June 1835, cited in Finlayson. 'Politics of Reform'. pp.678-9.

²⁸⁶ Redlich and Hirst. *History of Local Government*. p.129.

²⁸⁷ Phillips. *Great Reform Bill*. p.2; Keith-Lucas. *Local Government Franchise*. pp.60-1.

Towns were to be divided into electoral wards where populations exceeded 12,000.²⁸⁸ The magistrates were to be separated from the corporate body and to be chosen by the Crown, along with a barrister as the recorder. Councils were obliged to appoint a town clerk and a treasurer, but all other officers and servants were to be chosen at their discretion. Corporations wishing to raise loans or sell municipal property were to gain approval from the Treasury. The main functions of the councils were to be limited to the administration of municipal finances, granting licences to sell alcohol, enacting bye-laws for governing their communities and the obligatory establishment of a watch committee, under which a borough police force would replace any existing police.²⁸⁹ All methods of acquiring the freedom were to be abolished, although the rights of existing freemen would only lapse on death.²⁹⁰ This aspect of the bill aroused particular concern among Tory peers in general and Lord Lyndhurst in particular, as it effectively abolished the parliamentary freeman franchise and gave the bill its distinctly partisan character.²⁹¹

Parkes's delight with the proposals was quickly replaced by despair as a series of objections, particularly in the Lords, threatened to destroy the bill's reforming principles entirely.²⁹² Despite Brougham's defence of the bill in the upper chamber, wrecking amendments introduced by Lyndhurst represented bitter resistance to a bill perceived as nothing but 'a party job, intended to...destroy the Conservative party in the country, in order that their opponents might...recover their political influence'.²⁹³ Objections rested on concern over the amount of electoral influence councils would

²⁸⁸ Redlich and Hirst. *History of Local Government in England*. p.130.

²⁸⁹ Young, G. and Handcock, W. *English Historical Documents Vol.XII(I) 1833-1874* (London: Eyre and Spottiswood, 1956). p.610.

²⁹⁰ Finlayson. 'Politics of Municipal Reform'. p.679.

²⁹¹ Salmon. *Electoral Reform at Work*. p.216.

²⁹² Finlayson. *Decade of Reform*. pp.26-7.

²⁹³ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd ser., xxix. p.1401, cited in Finlayson. 'Politics of Reform'. p.677.

have at their disposal as a result of having the distribution of charities and liquor licences vested in them. Of greater concern however, was the attempt to abolish the parliamentary freeman franchise. Opponents in the Commons denounced it as irrelevant to municipal reform and Peel, who was more inclined to accept municipal reform than he had been to accept parliamentary reform, angrily condemned it as a blatantly anti-Tory measure.

However, acrimonious polemics were tempered by political pragmatism as the urgent need for municipal reform was acknowledged across the political spectrum and party rancour gave way to compromise.²⁹⁴ Peel's anger subsided and he and Russell led the way, both eager to avoid more conflict between the Commons and Lords.²⁹⁵ Peel distanced himself from the staunchest opponents, restrained Lyndhurst's criticisms and achieved broad Tory support in the Commons.²⁹⁶ Meanwhile, Russell conceded ground on a number of issues and a series of changes was made to the bill that was broadly acceptable to both the government and opposition.²⁹⁷ '(T)he struggle may be considered to have terminated satisfactorily, (but)...there has been very little room for triumph on either side'.²⁹⁸ Final modifications to the bill were made and agreed in both houses by the 7 September 1835.

The Municipal Corporations Act

William IV prorogued parliament on 10 September 1835, announcing that the important measure was 'calculated to allay discontent, to promote peace and union and to procure for those communities the advantages of responsible government'.²⁹⁹

Thus, the corporations' bill passed into law.

²⁹⁴ Salmon. *Electoral Reform*. p.211.

²⁹⁵ Keith-Lucas. *Local Government Franchise*. p.52.

²⁹⁶ Finlayson. *Decade of Reform*. p.28.

²⁹⁷ Young and Handcock. *Historical Documents. VolXII(I)*. p.610.

²⁹⁸ *G.J.* 12 Sept 1835.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

The Municipal Corporations Act applied to 178 of the 183 corporations specified in the original bill and represented numerous changes to the objectives proposed by the original bill only three months earlier.³⁰⁰ Most notable of these included the removal of the clause for the granting of licences, leaving their administration in the hands of the magistrates. The parliamentary freeman franchise was effectively preserved by abolishing only the creation of freemen through gift or purchase, but exclusive trading rights were ended as ‘every Person in any Borough may keep any Shop...and use every lawful Trade, Occupation, Mystery, and Handicraft, for Hire Gain, Sale or otherwise’.³⁰¹ Property qualifications were imposed on prospective councillors and varied according to the size of the municipal borough.³⁰² Electoral wards were required for all municipalities with over 6,000 inhabitants and a class of aldermen was admitted to the new councils, elected by the councillors, either from among themselves or from those qualified to be councillors.³⁰³ Elected for six-year terms, the aldermen were to constitute one-third of the council membership. The Act replaced all charters, privileges and rights not consistent with its provisions.³⁰⁴ It transferred municipal finances from the old corporations to the new councils and allowed all dispossessed corporation officials to claim compensation for losing their office as a result of the Act.³⁰⁵ It also made provisions for altering parliamentary and municipal boundaries in some boroughs.³⁰⁶

Despite the numerous changes imposed on the original bill many proposals survived the passage through parliament, offering a potential restoration of popular confidence

³⁰⁰ Keith-Lucas claims the corporations bill dealt with 184 boroughs, while Finlayson claims 183. Nevertheless, both acknowledge that the Act applied to 178 boroughs, listed in Schedules A and B to the Act. Finlayson. *Decade of Reform*. p26; Keith-Lucas. *Local Government Franchise*. p.52.

³⁰¹ 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, s.14.

³⁰² Discussed in more detail below pp.83-4.

³⁰³ 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, s. 25.

³⁰⁴ Redlich and Hirst. *History of Local Government*. p.131.

³⁰⁵ Finlayson. ‘Politics of Reform’. p.686.

³⁰⁶ 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, schedule. A, s.1 and 2. See below, Map 4: Dawson, R.K. *Gloucester c.1837*: copy in G.C. 65.5(1)

in municipal corporations. Re-establishing the connection between borough inhabitant and corporation was achieved, to a limited degree, by the terms imposed on the municipal franchise. If adult males could meet the various requirements specified by the Act, they could have a direct role in the election of the majority of their representative council and be deemed a 'Member of the Body Corporate' of their municipal borough.³⁰⁷ While the property qualifications effectively excluded the majority of working-class inhabitants from municipal office,³⁰⁸ entry to a borough's governing body no longer rested in the hands of its existing members. Opportunities for civic patronage were reduced by the restrictions placed on the borough freedom, the new system of managing municipal charities, the auditing of accounts and public scrutiny of council proceedings. Confidence in the provision of law, order and justice was offered by the obligatory establishment of borough watch committees and police forces and by the separation of the local magistracy from the corporation. Yet in all other respects the Act was permissive not prescriptive. It empowered councils to impose borough rates, make bye-laws for good government and take over the duties of the trustees of any local improvement Acts, but only if they so wished.

The Coming of Reform in Gloucester

Prior to 1 January 1836, when the Act eventually came into force, considerable uncertainty was expressed in Gloucester regarding the exact implications of reform. In June 1835 the town clerk, Henry Hooper Wilton, was instructed to go to Westminster in order to clarify a number of issues, including the privileges of Gloucester's freemen, corporation debts and 'such other matters arising out of the Municipal Corporation Bill'.³⁰⁹ On his return, it was resolved that the common council form a standing committee to meet daily until further notice to monitor events

³⁰⁷ 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, s. 9.

³⁰⁸ Keith-Lucas. *Local Government Franchise*. p.58.

³⁰⁹ G.B.R. B3/14, f.264 r.

pertaining to municipal reform. Shortly after, a meeting of the corporation lessees was held at the Bell Hotel in Gloucester. Concern was expressed about the impact reform would have on the terms and conditions of their leases and a petition to that effect was made to the House of Lords.³¹⁰ Preparations for the first municipal elections were confused by a two-month delay in implementing the Act, which had originally been planned for November, but was then delayed until Christmas Day 1835.

The parish overseers were instructed to compile burgess lists for submission to the town clerk by 7 November and details of 900 potential voters were published in the local press, but it was clear this figure would change.³¹¹ The lists were displayed at the town hall for one week and any objections or omissions registered. Such changes were publicly displayed for eight days, after which they were scrutinised by revising barristers appointed to hear claims for and objections to inclusion on the list. Amendments were made during early December and as the first municipal poll approached debate raged over entitlement. Less than two weeks before the election thirty-eight individuals were removed, while another thirty new claims were allowed. Most of these rested on issues of residence and rating, but accusations that the practice was merely ‘the expression of angry party feeling’ led to dire warnings of the penalties for undue influence, bribery or corruption. ‘(A)ny person attempting to influence the vote of another...is liable to a penalty of 50*l.* with costs of suit, is disqualified from ever after voting at any Municipal or Parliamentary election in any part of the kingdom, and is declared to be situated as if he were naturally *dead*’.³¹² A strong warning, but one that failed to subdue entirely attempts to influence votes and before the first election considerable acrimony persisted.

³¹⁰ *G.J.* 1 Aug 1835.

³¹¹ Paragraph based on *G.J.* 12 Sept 1835, 14 Nov 1835, 5 Dec 1835, 19 Dec 1835.

³¹² 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, s. 54.

Less than a month before the bill passed into law the corporation upheld its traditional practice of nominating the next mayor and other annually elected posts before Michaelmas, because members were unsure when the bill would pass into law.³¹³ Yet, such elections were unnecessary and the current officers remained in place until the new Act came into force.³¹⁴ There was one exception as in late September Earl Somers resigned his position as recorder because he lacked the qualification of being a barrister to continue in the post. However, his resignation was pre-emptive and the Secretary of State saw no reason why Somers should not continue in office until the corporation was abolished.³¹⁵ It is not known whether Somers was persuaded to reverse his decision, but the episode, coming so close to reform, is indicative of the uncertain state of affairs.

Shortly after members gathered together for a meeting of the common council in Gloucester. The gathering was unique in one respect; it was the last time that the self-electing representatives of the city's governing body would formally convene under a constitution which began in 1483 and had existed virtually unaltered since 1672.³¹⁶ The corporation, aware that its rights and privileges were effectively reformed, tended to the formalities of leaving office. Thanks were given to William Morgan Meyler for discharging his duties as mayor and to others for the sustained 'undeviating correctness and integrity' with which they had performed their duties.³¹⁷ This was the last recorded entry in the minute books of Gloucester's unreformed corporation.

³¹³ G.B.R. B3/14, f.267.

³¹⁴ 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, s.38; *G.J.* 10 Oct 1835.

³¹⁵ G.B.R. B3/14, f.278-79.

³¹⁶ Webb, J. *The Charter Granted by King Charles the Second to the City of Gloucester*, (Gloucester: A and D.M. Walker, 1834): copy in G.C. 7218.

³¹⁷ G.B.R. B3/14, f.281.

4. Gloucester's First Elected Council

William Morgan Meyler's final duty as the last mayor of Gloucester's unreformed corporation was to preside over the election of the city's new councillors and then declare and publish the names of the successful candidates, for which he was later paid £39 13s. from the borough fund.³¹⁸

Eighteen councilmen were chosen by Gloucester's municipal electorate and six aldermen were selected by the councilmen as directed by the statute. Under the Act, mayors were drawn from the ranks of the councilmen and aldermen.³¹⁹ The city was divided into three electoral wards (west, east and south) and six councillors were elected from each, they in turn elected two aldermen for each ward.³²⁰ Thus, Gloucester's new governing body was much smaller than its predecessor which, in 1835, had consisted of twelve aldermen and twenty-seven common councilmen.³²¹ The eighteen new councillors collectively received 2,786 votes cast by 892 electors.³²² This plural voting was possible because the Act allowed each elector to 'vote for any number of persons *not exceeding the number of Councillors to be chosen for each Ward*'.³²³ Only nine out of the thirty-nine retiring councilmen and aldermen stood as candidates. Meyler was included in this number, but was defeated along with five others.³²⁴ Only three members of the unreformed corporation were elected to the new council: former councilmen John Dowling (landlord) and James Taylor (ropemaker) and former alderman David Mowbray Walker.³²⁵ Only five Whigs were elected as councillors, compared to thirteen Tories, representing an end to

³¹⁸ G.B.R. B3/15, 26 Dec 1835, 1 Jan 1836.

³¹⁹ 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, s. 9; *G.J.* 26 Dec 1835.

³²⁰ 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, schedule. A, section. 1.

³²¹ See below, Appendix.4. *Cf.* Appendix 14.

³²² G.B.R. B3/15. 26 Dec 1835.

³²³ *G.J.* 19 Dec 1835; 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, s. 32.

³²⁴ G.B.R. B3/14, f.277v; *G.J.* 2 Jan 1835, cited in *V.C.H. Glos .IV.* pp.191-2.

³²⁵ *Ibid*, B3/15, 26 Dec 1835; See below, Appendix 14.

the Whig domination of Gloucester's civic government.³²⁶ Significantly, William Cother, the self-proclaimed and outspoken defender of the Tory cause, was elected, along with another seven signatories of the 1833 petition.³²⁷ Those seven included John Burrup (attorney), Richard Butt (soapboiler), William Hicks (builder), James Buchanan (gentleman), John Andrews (grocer) and John Hanman (grocer).³²⁸ It is not known how many of these former petitioners were actually Tory, for the issue drew support from Tories such as Cother and Whigs such as John William Wilton, but their presence on the new council suggests that support for reform in Gloucester was prompted, to some degree, by the opportunity to expel the dominant Whigs.

All eighteen councillors elected Gloucester's aldermen on New Year's Eve 1835.³²⁹ Eight nominations were made for the six places and, in accordance with the new law, prospective aldermen were drawn from those holding the same qualifications for office as councillors.³³⁰ Party politics quickly became apparent as all nominees were unanimously elected, except those put forward by Walker. He nominated Meyler for the east ward, but the motion was defeated. Walker then nominated Meyler for the south ward, but was again defeated. The Tory councillors increased their political advantage by dominating the aldermanic bench which included George Counsel (surgeon), an outspoken supporter of Cother.³³¹ The following day, Counsel proposed Cother as the first mayor of Gloucester's reformed corporation. Seconded by Hicks and with little more than symbolic resistance from Walker,³³² Cother was duly elected. Having made the required declarations, the council was complete, instantly

³²⁶ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*, pp.191-2.

³²⁷ See above, pp.52-3.

³²⁸ G.B.R. B3/15, 26 Dec 1835; *1833 Requisition*.

³²⁹ *Ibid*, 31 Dec 1835.

³³⁰ 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, s. 25.

³³¹ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*, pp.191-2.

³³² G.B.R. B3/15, 1 Jan 1836.

conferring upon its members ‘all the powers, privileges, duties and responsibilities which they enjoy or are liable to...as successors of the old body’.³³³

Thereafter, the council wasted no time in proceeding to the compulsory election of a town clerk and treasurer. Former councilman Henry Hooper Wilton was unanimously re-elected as town clerk, but was replaced as treasurer by William Mathews. Non-council members now held both roles, always occupied by members of the common council before 1836.³³⁴ Using its discretionary powers, the council resolved to retain most of the offices and servants used before reform.³³⁵ In addition to the mayor, town clerk and treasurer, the council chose a sheriff, coroner, chamberlain, steward and recorder, all to be elected by the full council ‘excepting the recorder, who is appointed by the Crown’.³³⁶ None of these offices was filled by councillors or aldermen and therefore they held no voting rights in council. The minor offices consisted of a sword bearer, an under-sheriff, four sergeants at mace, four porters, a day bellman and a beadle. The office of night bellman was discontinued, but otherwise it was resolved that those persons holding office before reform should continue in their posts, conditional on the understanding that the council could abolish any office, alter its duties and adjust pay as thought necessary.³³⁷ Settling the levels of payment for the principal and minor offices of the reformed corporation began on 21 January 1836 and two days later the local press provided a comparison of old and new salaries to its readers.³³⁸

The council’s choice of the honorary office of high steward was also the cause of disagreement, with Walker once again being out-voted by his peers. In April 1836

³³³ *G.J.* 26 Dec 1835.

³³⁴ Except for the treasurership between 1809 and 1815: G.B.R. B3/13, f.72r. See above p.40-1.

³³⁵ G.B.R. B3/15, 1 Jan 1836.

³³⁶ *Hunt and Co.’s Directory and Topography for the Cities of Gloucester and Bristol* (London: B.W. Gardiner, 1849) p.8: copy in G.C. B343/11933GS.

³³⁷ G.B.R. B3/15. 1 Dec 1835

³³⁸ *G.J.* 23 Jan 1836.

Henry Somerset, duke of Beaufort, was proposed as Gloucester's high steward. Walker protested, claiming that 'this body has no power to remove the present Noble High Steward from his office', but John Burrup disagreed arguing that the former steward's office had effectively 'ceased upon the Municipal Corporations Act coming into operation'.³³⁹ A familiar pattern was beginning to emerge as Walker was defeated and the duke of Beaufort was elected to the honorary office.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ G.B.R. B3/15, 11 April 1836.

³⁴⁰ See below, pp.86-9.

CHAPTER FOUR
The Reformed Corporation of Gloucester from 1836

1. Gloucester and its Economy, circa 1836–56.

After 1835 Gloucester remained an important local and regional market hub and enjoyed an increase in trade which was stimulated by improved transport links with the region.

The borough's markets, fairs and plethora of craft, retail, business and professional services were bolstered by commercial activity generated by the Gloucester and Berkeley canal which continued to play a central role in the city's economy. By 1851 a twenty-nine acre area accommodated the docks along with many wharves, boatyards and warehouses.³⁴¹ Throughout the 1840s and 1850s the docks still played a significant role in the city's economic fortunes. Initially, they benefited from new railway developments, which began in 1840 with the opening of a line between Gloucester and Birmingham.³⁴² The coming of the railways occupied much of the corporation's time. A railway committee was established in 1846 to protect corporation interests and monitor the activities of companies such as the Great Western Railway Union and the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway, which sought to use land in Gloucester for their projects.³⁴³ By the mid 1850s various lines had established Gloucester as a rail junction, linking it with Cheltenham, Stroud, Standish, Swindon, Bristol, Birmingham, Hereford, London and South Wales. The last link was made possible by a swing bridge across the Severn designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel.³⁴⁴ However, Gloucester's port (established 1580) began to

³⁴¹ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester' . p.44; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. p.172.

³⁴² *Hunt and Co.1849* p.6; G.B.R. B3/15, 21 March 1839; L25/1613, f.115v; *G.J.* 7 Nov 1840.

³⁴³ G.B.R. B3/17, p.134.

³⁴⁴ In 1835 Brunel presented plans of a proposed rail development by the G.W.R. to connect Cheltenham, Gloucester, Cirencester and Swindon: *G.J.* 10 Oct 1835.

experience competition from the rapidly developing railways and by 1857 the canal had suffered a 34% decline in traffic during a period of only five years.³⁴⁵

During the 1850s navigational improvements of the Severn north of the city, began to combine with the railway links, to establish a local economy dominated by a diverse range of manufacturing and engineering businesses, some old, others new to the city. Long established businesses were experiencing mixed fortunes. Pin manufacturing continued its decline, while shipbuilding thrived. They were joined by newer employers, with Thomas Webb's manufacture of agricultural machinery beginning in 1838 and two ironworks opening in 1851. Larger businesses included the Gloucester Wagon Company founded in 1860 and, most famously, Moreland's matchmaking industry established in 1867. The presence and success of such companies began to compensate for a decline in Gloucester's port trade in the late nineteenth century.³⁴⁶

Other changes were effected by transport developments. The railways presented an irresistible challenge to the once thriving coaching services passing through Gloucester. Between the late 1820s and late 1840s services through the city dropped from approximately 100 a day to seventy-one a week. Nevertheless, roads continued to play a significant role in the city's economy and the busy carrier services of the pre-reform period ran at least twenty-six services either to, from or through Gloucester. While most operated on Gloucester's market days, at least three passed through the city daily.³⁴⁷ The evolution of trade, businesses and services was accompanied by a sustained growth of the city's population and the development of

³⁴⁵ Based on tonnage in 1852 at 634,520 tons and in 1857 at 418,470 tons. *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.177; Stimpson, M. *The History of Gloucester Docks and its Associated Canals and Railways* (The West London Industrial Archaeological Society, 1980) p.7; Wakelin, A. 'Pre-Industrial Trade on the River Severn: A Computer-Aided Study of the Gloucester Port Books, c.1640-1770' (Wolverhampton Polytechnic: D.Phil., Thesis, 1991) pp.35-6.

³⁴⁶ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.171-81.

³⁴⁷ *Hunt and Co.1849.* pp.78-9.

its environment. Continually improving modes of transport stimulated trade, created employment, attracted migrants and encouraged a vibrant building trade in the city, most notably represented by William Wingate's firm, which not only provided many jobs, but also did much to improve the city's buildings.³⁴⁸

Demand grew for more alehouses, shops and professional services, but amid this dynamic environment significant hardship and poverty persisted, continuing to place its own pressures on the parish officers and the civic leaders in council. The worst privations brought on by the Napoleonic Wars were past, 'borne out by the general prosperity of the country', but older problems persisted and even accelerated with growing urbanisation.³⁴⁹ Pavements, thoroughfares, sewage management and water supplies all needed to be improved.³⁵⁰ Filth in the streets, sickness in the homes and disorder in the alehouses were all present to some degree in Gloucester.³⁵¹ Borough rates to raise money, regulations to enforce public responsibilities and officers to enforce day-to-day order were all issues which touched on the council's business.³⁵² Expectations of the reformed council were high. On the day of the first municipal poll the *Gloucester Journal* celebrated the passing of 'the old Corporations (which) were doomed to be swept away' due to their many flaws and anticipated the dawn of a new era of 'good and quiet government'.³⁵³ All of Gloucester's councillors and aldermen owned property or paid rates in the borough. Many lived and worked there too; some were employers and thus had close connections with the city's varied

³⁴⁸ The role played by migrants in Gloucester's economy in the mid-nineteenth century was significant. See Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. pp.21-36.

³⁴⁹ *G.J.* 12 Sept 1835.

³⁵⁰ Discussion of a bill for improving sewerage, drainage and paving in towns and cities in G.B.R. B3/17. p.125.

³⁵¹ *Second Report on the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts*. 1845, XVIII. p.602, cited in Christmas. 'Poor Law'. p.9.

³⁵² See 'By-Laws for the Good Rule and Government of Gloucester' recorded in council minutes and promulgated in local press: G.B.R. B3/16. p.250.

³⁵³ *G.J.* 26 Dec 1835.

economic life and the local population. They could see first hand the problems and possibilities facing the city.

5. Occupations: Gloucester and its Reformed Corporation

Between 1831 and 1851 the population of Gloucester's municipal borough increased from 11,933 to 17,572, a rise of over 47%.³⁵⁴ This rapid growth was more than double the rate between 1811 and 1831³⁵⁵ and, in addition to Gloucester's developing economy, is partially explained by the extension of the municipal boundary in 1835 to that of the city's parliamentary boundary.³⁵⁶ The extension was appreciable if not large, but did bring part of Barton Street and the Spa area into the borough. Despite the rapid increase of people living within the boundary, growth was largely located in suburbs under the administration of the county. In 1851 some 25,531 people lived within an area of 5,950 acres including the city and its suburbs.³⁵⁷

Of the 17,572 people living within the municipal boundary in 1851, only 8,547 have been identified as being employed, 33.6% of those being women. The occupations of 5,521 people have been positively identified from the 1851 census.³⁵⁸ It is not clear what proportion of Gloucester's population was non-working or unemployed. However, in 1846 approximately 1,285 people received out-door relief in one week from Gloucester's poor-law union and 579 aged and infirm were given relief in one quarter, although both these figures include rural parishes outside the city and its suburbs.³⁵⁹ While the employment figures take no account of those working in Gloucester but living elsewhere, it is clear that the city's new civic leaders were facing similar challenges to those faced by the unreformed corporation: a growing

³⁵⁴ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.171.

³⁵⁵ See above. p.18.

³⁵⁶ See below, Map 4.

³⁵⁷ Census of Great Britain 1851, I, Population Tables I and II, cited in Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. p.70; *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.170.

³⁵⁸ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.172.

³⁵⁹ P.R.O. MH 12/4075, 17 Oct 1846, cited in Appendices 16-17 of Christmas. 'Poor Law'.

urban population (many of which had no permanent work), poverty, overcrowding, keeping order and providing civic amenities. Following reform these leaders were, to some degree, more answerable to the city's population. Over the next two decades the municipal electorate grew steadily to 1,069 in 1837, 1,158 in 1843 and 1,366 in 1851, an increase of over 65%.³⁶⁰ The municipal franchise was a profound departure from the traditional practice of the self-electing, closed-corporation of the pre-reform era, but the number of electors represented less than 8% of the resident population by the 1850s, despite the steady increase in their numbers after 1835. The electors equated to 15.9% of Gloucester's employed residents, but there were many more participants in the daily life of the city. While the census statistics render many participants in Gloucester's economy invisible, they do offer some insight into the dominant occupations of Gloucester's inhabitants.

The Occupational Status of Gloucester's Employed Population

Drawing on data from the 1851 census and focusing on the same ten parishes used in Chapter Two, a sample group of 4,156 residents living under the authority of the reformed council has been constructed (Table 4.1). Despite the extension of the municipal boundary in 1835, only those parishes used in Table 2.1 are included in Table 4.1 to provide continuity in comparing the population's occupational status both before and after reform. However, it must be noted that Table 2.1 draws on limited parish data over a twenty year period, while Table 4.1 uses much more comprehensive census data gathered on one specific day.

³⁶⁰ Keith-Lucas. *Local Government Franchise*. p.148; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. p.191.

Table 4.1
Occupational Status of Employed and Independent Males in 1851 in Parishes Within the 1835
Municipal Boundary.³⁶¹

Occupational categories	City centre parishes	City parishes within boundary	City parishes beyond boundary	Total
Gentry	16	15	15	46
Professions	115	139	84	338
Business	53	106	41	200
Retail	230	387	132	749
Crafts	286	851	344	1,481
Transport	102	285	81	468
Labouring	52	325	240	617
Domestic service	49	44	23	116
Miscellaneous	14	90	37	141
Totals per parish	917	2,242	997	4,156

Table 4.1 reveals that the largest of the nine categories is crafts representing 35.6% of the sample group. The craft category includes building and clothing trades and a separate source has identified 1,039 people employed in clothing trades such as milliners, tailors and shoemakers.³⁶² Unlike Table 4.1 these figures include women, but it is clear that the clothing trades played a significant part in constituting the craft category. Only 18% of men are recorded as working in retail and this category comes a poor second to crafts. It includes a diverse range of distributive trades such as grocers, drapers, butchers and bakers. The third largest category consists of 14.8% of men engaged in labouring occupations. There is little difference between the largest occupational categories before and after reform, with the crafts dominating by a substantial margin in both periods. By 1851 retail had become the second largest occupational category, whereas between 1813 and 1830 that position had been occupied by labouring. This reflects a general growth in traders operating from fixed premises nationally during the nineteenth century;³⁶³ a pattern which was also evident

³⁶¹ Based on 1851 Census. Data adapted from Table 3.5 in Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester' . p.77.

³⁶² *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.172.

³⁶³ Benson, J., Alexander, A., Hodson, D., Jones, J. and Shaw, G. 'Sources for the Study of Urban Retailing, 1800-1950, With Particular Reference to Wolverhampton', *The Local Historian*. Vol. 29, No.3, 1999. p.167.

in Gloucester.³⁶⁴ The transport category had grown from 9.1% (Table 2.1) to 11.2% by 1851 (Table 4.1), putting it just below labouring which had dropped from 19.4% to 14.8%. In Table 2.1 the gentry, professions and business categories collectively account for 10.4% of all occupations, but by 1851 each had increased slightly and business had almost doubled to 4.6%. Collectively they represent 14% of occupations in 1851. Nevertheless, the three categories which are dominant in the pre-reform council (Table 2.2), remain in the minority in the post-reform population data. Many of the changes between the pre and post-reform data of Gloucester's inhabitants reflect the development of the local economy, but the shift in proportions is relatively small and crafts continued to dominate.

The Occupational Status of the Reformed Council

Table 4.2 uses lists of the aldermen and councillors for three separate municipal years beginning in 1836, 1846 and 1856.³⁶⁵ The results can be compared with the pre-reform data of the corporation (Table 2.2) to identify any significant changes in composition and with the 1851 population data (Table 4.1) to ascertain whether any increased occupational representation occurred following reform. Only data concerning the aldermen and councillors is used to provide continuity with the pre-reform data. Using the same criteria to classify occupations as in Chapter Two, the twenty-eight different job titles identified in the sample group have been classified under six occupational categories. A seventh category is dedicated to those members whose occupations could not be positively identified and an eighth for the owner/proprietor category (Table 4.2). The details for 1836 are complete, as all councillors elected in December 1835 had their occupations recorded in the council

³⁶⁴ Sparkes, A. 'Nineteenth Century Clock and Watchmakers in Southgate Street Gloucester: A Preliminary Enquiry', *Gloucestershire History*. No.16, 2002. p.3.

³⁶⁵ 1836 figures from January to November, as the council had no legal status until the mayor took office on 1 Jan 1836. 1846 and 1856 figures from November to November: G.B.R. B3/15. 26 Dec 1835; B3/17. p.129; B3/18. p.107. See below, Appendices 14-16.

minutes. While this was not the case with the aldermen, who were chosen by the councillors five days later,³⁶⁶ their occupations were identified from a variety of sources, including local trade directories and various council records.³⁶⁷

Table 4.2
Occupational Status of Gloucester's Reformed Council, 1836–56.³⁶⁸

Occupational category	Members' occupations	1836	1846	1856	Total 1836–56
Business	Printer	1	1	1	3
	Nursery Owner	0	1	0	1
	Wine Merchant	0	1	2	3
	Merchant	0	1	0	1
	Soap Boiler	1	0	0	1
	Timber Merchant	0	1	3	4
	Businessman	0	0	2	2
Craft	Tailor	1	0	0	1
	Currier	0	0	1	1
	Cabinet Maker	1	0	0	1
	Rope Maker	1	0	1	2
	Builder	1	0	0	1
Independent	Gentleman	3	4	3	10
Professional	Clergyman	1	0	0	1
	Surgeon	2	0	2	4
	Physician (MD)	1	0	0	1
	Veterinary Surgeon	0	1	0	1
	Attorney	4	2	0	6
	Commissioned Officer	0	0	1	1
	Solicitor	1	2	0	3
Retail	Inn Holder	1	1	0	2
	Grocer	2	1	2	5
	Shop Keeper	1	0	0	1
	Draper	0	2	1	3
	Commercial Traveller	0	0	1	1
	Wine Maker	2	0	0	2
	Druggist	0	0	1	1
Transport	Wharfinger	0	1	0	1
Unknown		0	5	3	8
Total each year		24	24	24	
Owner/ Proprietor		12	9	14	35

It is of note however, that the aldermen, who represent one third of the sample group, were not chosen by the electorate, but by the newly elected councillors. Yet trying to separate the data of the two would serve little purpose considering the small numbers

³⁶⁶ G.B.R. B3/15. 26 Dec 1835 and 31 Dec 1835.

³⁶⁷ See below, Appendices 14–16.

³⁶⁸ G.B.R. B3/15. 26 Dec 1835; B3/17. p.129; B3/18. p.107.

involved. The data for 1846 and 1856 were compiled from a combination of the freeman rolls, trade directories and council minutes. As a result the occupational data for 1846 and 1856 is less comprehensive and overall 11% of members' occupations remains obscure. The size of the reformed council was significantly smaller than the unreformed corporation, the latter averaging thirty-six members in office at any one time between 1815 and 1835. Between 1836 and 1856 the figure was consistently twenty-four.³⁶⁹ Thus, the number of unknown occupations and the smaller sample size limit the conclusions drawn from any analysis of the data.

Table 4.2 shows a much more even distribution of occupational categories within the council compared to the unreformed corporation. In 1836, 1846 and 1856, the professions continued to lead, but with a significantly reduced majority that dropped from 40% to 23% (Table 2.2 and 4.2).³⁷⁰ The remaining categories in descending order of size are; business (21%), retail (21%), independent (14%) and craft (8%).³⁷¹ While the business category increased by 3% from the unreformed period, the retail category increased dramatically by 16%. However, in 1836 the second largest category in the new council was craft, which is the dominant category of both the pre and post reform population data. Craft constitutes over 16% of the 1836 council and represents a significant jump from the 8% of 1835. While it is possible that this change was a direct result of the new municipal franchise, it must be acknowledged that the craft percentages for 1835 and 1836 represent only three and four people respectively. Furthermore, only a minority of Gloucester's population was given the municipal franchise by the 1835 Act. To assume that the increased presence of the craft occupations in 1836, or the overall growth of the retail category, was as a direct

³⁶⁹ Table 2.2. *Cf* Table 4.2.

³⁷⁰ As with the unreformed corporation's data in Chapter 2, the percentages given for the reformed council have been rounded to the nearest whole figure.

³⁷¹ The presence of one person in the transport category for 1846 is too small to warrant discussion here.

result of the electorate voting for men with similar occupational backgrounds is highly speculative. Detailed analysis of only those who voted would be required to address this issue, while the numbers involved in the sample group used here are too small to draw any meaningful conclusions.

Although the professional category remained the largest after reform, the unequivocal dominance of the professional man was ended, and the rise of the retailer was pronounced. If the professions are compared with the amalgamated business category (49%), then the distinction is even more pronounced. Even if all the eight unknown occupations were professionals, the category would still only represent 35% of the reformed council.

6. The Reformed Council and its Members

Access to Gloucester's Council

Following municipal reform access to Gloucester's corporation no longer rested in the hands of the city's civic leaders and the freedom of the city ceased to represent the qualification for corporation membership. Under the terms of the Municipal Corporations Act, eligibility to municipal office was the same as that for the new municipal franchise, with additional qualifications for aldermen and councillors. The municipal franchise was misleadingly referred to as the household franchise. It applied to men who occupied any rateable property in the borough (except tenements), paid their rates, lived within seven miles of the borough boundary and had been doing so for at least three years.³⁷² In addition prospective aldermen and councilmen had to possess land or property worth between £500 in smaller boroughs and £1,000 in larger ones. Alternatively, they needed to occupy a property rated at £15 or £30 depending on the size of the borough, based on population. Gloucester

³⁷² There was no value specified on the amount of rates paid. Keith-Lucas. *Local Government Franchise*. pp.55-6, 148. Cf. *G.J.* 5 Dec 1835.

had a comparatively large number of parliamentary voters (1,674) and municipal voters (1,069) but with only three electoral wards, was classed as a small borough by the Act.³⁷³ Nevertheless, the qualifications for civic office ensured that Gloucester's aldermen and councillors were comparatively well situated and represented the more prosperous members of the local community.

One notable difference in the composition of the council after 1835 was its turnover of membership. Unlike the unreformed corporation, where change in personnel was normally limited to death or resignation, the post-reform council was obliged to surrender one third of its councillors each November, that being the end of each municipal year. Although the Act did not expressly declare it, the six required to leave office in 1836 were those who received the lowest number of votes in each municipal division, thus ensuring 'that one-third of the Councillors of each ward' stood down rather than the lowest third of the whole council.³⁷⁴ At Gloucester's first municipal election John Dowling and James Buchanan had only received 193 and seventy votes respectively, therefore forcing them to resign their seats on the west ward at the end of the municipal year. The poll for Buchanan was the lowest received in the first election. John Andrews and James Taylor had both obtained 132 votes and therefore left the east ward. William Washbourne (wine merchant) had gained 116 votes, while Charles Griffith (gentleman) received only 112 and both were required to relinquish their seats for the south ward.³⁷⁵ However, each councillor was allowed to stand for re-election and although it was common for the same councilmen to be re-elected, this was not always the case. In November 1836 only Buchanan and Taylor

³⁷³ Figures compiled from burgess lists and parliamentary returns for 1837 by Keith-Lucas. *Local Government Franchise*. p.8.

³⁷⁴ *G.J.* 26 Dec 1835.

³⁷⁵ *G.B.R.* B3/15, 26 Dec 1835.

were returned to office.³⁷⁶ In following years the 1835 poll was again used to decide the next six to leave office.³⁷⁷

Gloucester had six aldermen at any one time, for a term of six years each.³⁷⁸ So that all six did not leave office at the same time, departures and subsequent elections for half their number were held triennially. As all of Gloucester's aldermen were newly elected in 1835, half had to leave office after only three years service and in 1838 Charles Church (ropemaker), John Chadborn (attorney) and Hardwick Shute (M.D.) all ended their terms of office. After 1836 it was common practice for the councilmen to elect new aldermen by ballot.

The terms of office imposed on the reformed council represented a potential turnover of 114 councillors if none was re-elected, in addition to eighteen aldermen, during the first twenty years after reform. This represented a potential 132 new people on the council in addition to resignations and deaths during that period. Resignations were not common but did occur occasionally. In 1837 alderman Charles Church, who had been due to leave office in 1838, tendered his resignation due to 'circumstances of a painful and distressing nature' and was replaced by Dr Edwin Maddy, who beat William Hicks by thirteen votes to five.³⁷⁹ In practice turnover was less pronounced as both councilmen and aldermen were regularly re-elected. Two former councilmen of the first reformed council, James Taylor and John Dowling, both became aldermen in 1841 further limiting the addition of new people and in November 1847 both were re-elected until 1853.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ G.B.R B3/15, 9 Nov 1836.

³⁷⁷ *G.J.* 26 Dec 1835.

³⁷⁸ Paragraph based on G.B.R. B3/15. 31 Dec 1835; B3/17. p.210.

³⁷⁹ B3/15. 23 Jan 1837.

³⁸⁰ B3/17. p.210.

The Structure of the Reformed Council

Meetings of the full council continued to represent the mainstay of the corporation after 1835, but there was a much more formal structure to the proceedings. Such gatherings were divided into three distinct categories: quarterly, adjourned quarterly and special meetings.³⁸¹ Quarterly meetings were used for general business, the first being held each November, with no notice required. In order for resolutions made in council to be legitimate, a minimum of one third of all councillors had to be present and a majority vote achieved in favour of the particular decision. In cases where votes for and against were tied, the mayor had an additional casting vote. This became particularly useful when difficult issues could not be resolved by compromise. In 1838 David Mowbray Walker's numerous attempts to move the council to the election of aldermen was repeatedly objected to by William Cother and eventually the mayor was forced to make the deciding vote. The resistance to any suggestions by Walker was a noticeable feature of the council in 1836 and 1837, representing a manifestation of Tory domination of the council. In the mayor's absence an alderman was required to preside over the meeting, but it is unclear whether he too had a casting vote. Adjourned quarterly meetings were the norm, with the date being set at the end of the quarterly meeting.

The November quarterly meeting was used for the election of the annually held posts. These included the mayor, treasurer, chamberlain, town clerk and sheriff. The mayor and sheriff's offices were normally filled by a different person each year, although Edwin Maddy served two consecutive terms as mayor from 1837, as did William Washbourne from 1852.³⁸² It was not unusual for mayoral elections to be contested, frequently along party lines, but the other offices provided a distinct

³⁸¹ Following based on G.B.R. B3/15, undated 'Council Meeting Instructions' inside front cover and minutes for 11 Jan. and 9 Nov 1835 and 9 Nov 1838; B3/17, pp.137, 383, 390; B3/18, p.18.

³⁸² See below, Appendix 17.

continuity in personnel. Between 1836 and 1856 only two people served as treasurer, two as chamberlain and two as town clerk and their routine annual election was normally just a formality.

Any additional meetings required three days notice and the mayor had the power to call these ‘as often as he thinks proper’.³⁸³ Usually referred to as special meetings, the business they were called to address was explicitly stated in the minutes. In the case of a mayor refusing to call a meeting, the councillors were empowered to call a meeting independently, as long as a minimum of five members agreed, signed a requisition and gave three days notice. These conditions were explicitly stated and demonstrate a limited democratisation of the council. A further indication of this new trend was the rejection by councilmen of a proposal for alderman to wear distinctive gowns for civic ceremonies and days of public distinction. The aldermen no longer enjoyed the status the office held before reform. No longer *ex-officio* justices, there was little to distinguish them from the councilmen. Once an essential prerequisite for the mayoralty, aldermen owed their position to the elective councilmen and had few separate duties, other than presiding over elections in the three wards.

Theoretically, the reformed corporation was expected to be much more open regarding its proceedings and business agenda, offering a greater degree of accountability. Any burgess was entitled to inspect the council minutes ‘at reasonable times on payment of a shilling’.³⁸⁴ It is not known how well this privilege was exercised, but in the new spirit of openness it was resolved to provide an authenticated report of the proceedings of each meeting to the local press. However, there were distinct limits to this spirit of accountability and the notion of a more open forum was resisted by certain factions of the council, at least during its first year of operation. In

³⁸³ G.B.R. B3/15, ‘Council Meeting Instructions’.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

January 1836, councillors Walker and Taylor moved to have a reporter admitted to the proceedings, but the motion was defeated.³⁸⁵ By itself this incident seems insignificant, but it came to represent a persistent issue, one which was raised (usually by Walker) at virtually every council meeting in 1836 and one which was dismissed with equal regularity.³⁸⁶ That he was a leading figure in the city and county's leading newspaper goes some considerable way to explaining Walker's interest. Yet he was also a Whig of the old corporation and defeats were not restricted to this one issue. On numerous occasions, motions he proposed or seconded were regularly defeated.

The frustration of Walker's ambitions reflected the internal politics of the reformed council and the election of mayors, in particular, rested on political lines. Maddy's first election as mayor was unsuccessfully opposed by Meyler, who was defeated by twelve votes to five, and his second term was opposed by Walker who was defeated by twelve votes to eleven. However, in November 1839 Walker was elected mayor and his victory marked the newly gained control of the council by Whig and Liberal supporters, with Walker as their principal leader.³⁸⁷ It represented Walker's first of three terms as mayor of the reformed corporation and marked the end of the Tories domination of the council. Nevertheless, party politics continued and corruption sometimes accompanied municipal elections, with 'the distribution of large quantities of beer' being used to influence voters in 1853.³⁸⁸ By 1854 Tory supporters were once more in control of the council, although their dominance was short lived and control changed hands once again by the late 1850s.³⁸⁹ The fluid political composition of the

³⁸⁵ *G.J.* 23 Jan 1835.

³⁸⁶ *G.B.R.* B3/15. *Passim*.

³⁸⁷ *The Reign of King David of Gloucester*. (Gloucester's Independent Club Room Committee: 8/11/1853): copy in G.C. SR24.1; *G.J.* 5 Nov 1853; B3/16, p.2.

³⁸⁸ *G.J.* 5 Nov 1853, cited in *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.196.

³⁸⁹ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.196.

reformed council was a marked departure from the political homogeneity of the pre-reform period.

The Corporation and the City

Another departure from Gloucester's unreformed corporation occurred more gradually. The reformed corporation assumed powers to improve the city's sanitation, sewerage and streets in 1849 when it began acting as a local board of health.³⁹⁰ A distinction between the corporation and its duties as a board of health was maintained by keeping the committees and finances of each body separate. However, little was achieved before the mid 1850s when an underground sewerage system, discharging into the Severn, was built by the board. Thereafter, improvements to Gloucester's domestic water supply, drainage and street repairs began to take effect in the late 1850s and early 1860s, but they extend beyond the period being studied here.

Another significant departure from the old common council was the new council's responsibility for policing the borough. The Municipal Corporations Act compelled each corporation to form a watch committee and provide for full-time, uniformed police forces.³⁹¹ While the Act stipulated that such a committee should be convened as soon as possible the council resolved first to form a committee of enquiry 'to examine into the present state of the police and watch'.³⁹² This was indicative of the new council's preference to use standing and *ad hoc* bodies wherever possible and it quickly established a plethora of committees to deal with a variety of issues. In January 1836 alone, eight committees were established. In 1836 a watch committee consisting of the mayor, one alderman and eight councilmen was created to form and manage the new force. The annually elected committee fluctuated in size but had the

³⁹⁰ V.C.H. *Glos. IV*. pp.195-6, 262-8.

³⁹¹ Prest, J. *Liberty and Locality: Parliament, Permissive Legislation, and Ratepayers' Democracies in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) pp.17-8.

³⁹² G.B.R. B3/15, 1 Jan 1836.

authority to act with a minimum of three members. Gloucester's police were provided with uniform, boots and weekly pay. They consisted of a superintendent, three sergeants and twelve constables. The superintendent also acted as chief constable and sergeant at mace for the corporation. One of the sergeants lived with his wife in the station house at the city's lock-up or bridewell in Southgate Street, next to the Kimbrose almshouse.³⁹³ Assisted by minor corporation officers who were sworn in as constables, the police took over the role of the pre-reform parish officers.³⁹⁴ Duties included maintaining the city gaol and escorting prisoners.³⁹⁵ These activities interspersed ineffective attempts to suppress lawlessness in certain areas of the city and led the corporation to press the parish vestries for special constables 'to assist in the maintenance of public order'.³⁹⁶ In 1857 the *Gloucester Journal* dismissed the city's police as 'rotten from beginning to end'.³⁹⁷ Two years later practical considerations and financial incentives prompted the council to amalgamate the city's police with the Gloucestershire force which had been founded in 1839.³⁹⁸ Gloucester's force was expensive and its short, inauspicious and somewhat ineffective history was marked by a lack of enthusiasm from the council, which reflected suspicion held in the county and the country about the necessity and expense of replacing the old system of parish constables.³⁹⁹

While the corporation's role in local policing was enhanced by municipal reform, its close connection with the city magistrates was radically altered. In April 1836 the council was informed that Lord Russell would allow six magistrates for the borough,

³⁹³ Plan of Gloucester City Prison and Bridewell, 1844: G.B.R. 1576; *ibid*, B3/15, 21 Jan 1836.

³⁹⁴ G.B.R. G3/SM 8; G3/SM 9.

³⁹⁵ G.B.R. L25/1617, p.237.

³⁹⁶ G.R.O. P154/14 VE 2/3, 4 May 1848.

³⁹⁷ *G.J.* 31 Jan 1857, cited in *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.192.

³⁹⁸ Thirty-two police officers were to be stationed in Gloucester, twelve of them being paid by the county.

³⁹⁹ Example: Petition Against Police Force G.R.O. Q/AP/8/1; Howard, P., Smith, B., and Wratten, N. *Crime and Punishment in Gloucestershire 1700-1880* (Gloucestershire County Council) p.viii.

based on its population.⁴⁰⁰ The city had yet to receive a formal response to a petition for its own court of quarter sessions, but a list of twenty potential candidates had been made by the council during January.⁴⁰¹ Mayor William Cother and alderman Benjamin Claxson (cleryman) were the only two council members on the list, but four ex-members of the 1835 corporation were listed, including William Morgan Meyler. However, concerns were raised over the propriety of such action, in the light of the Municipal Corporations Act, and the matter was postponed. In March the council compiled a second and much shorter list of just eight people. This list again included the mayor and alderman Claxson, but also alderman Shute and councillor Walker. Four non-council members were on the list, including Meyler as the only former member of the unreformed corporation besides Walker. The latter attempted to have Edward Bower (mayor 1832-3) included but he was defeated. The revised list was presented to the Secretary of State who accepted the first six names as magistrates. Consequently, the new bench of magistrates was evenly split between council and non-council members, with only two of its members being from the old corporation. Despite the formal sanction from the Crown, the new council played a central role in the initial selection of Gloucester's magistrates although its aldermen ceased to dominate the magistracy.

The extent to which the separation of the magistracy from the aldermen affected the corporation's affairs extends beyond the scope of this enquiry, but it was an important feature of the Municipal Corporations Act. In structural terms however, reform had a limited impact on Gloucester's municipal administration. It still conducted its business through the regular meetings of a council. The elevated status of the aldermanic bench ended and the methods of electing the various municipal offices

⁴⁰⁰ G.B.R. B3/15, 11 April 1836.

⁴⁰¹ *G.J.* 23 Jan 1835, 22 Feb 1835.

changed, but the particular roles and responsibilities of most of Gloucester's civic leaders remained relatively unaltered after 1836, apart from charity administration.

7. Charity Management after Municipal Reform

Following municipal reform the majority of charities that had been under the management of Gloucester's corporation passed into the care of the newly formed and independent municipal charity trustees.⁴⁰² The new trustees took responsibility for at least twenty-two charities including the four almshouses of St. Bartholomew, St. Margaret, St. Mary Magdalen and St. Kyneburgh (Kimbrose) and Sir Thomas Rich's school. The Crypt school, with its substantial endowments, and some minor loan and apprentice charities did not immediately pass out of the corporation's hands.⁴⁰³ Under the Municipal Corporations Act, members of the council continued to act as trustees of the Townshend scholarships to Pembroke College, Oxford.⁴⁰⁴ The mayor, five aldermen and a councilman were annually elected by the council to act as trustees, a practice that continued into the next century.⁴⁰⁵ In 1836 the former councilman John Harvey Ollney died and left £8,000 to the corporation for the foundation of an almshouse to accommodate eighteen poor people, but the project was quashed by the court of Chancery *circa* 1848.⁴⁰⁶ The circumstances surrounding the failure of Ollney's almshouse are unclear, but following reform the corporation's involvement in administering charities became negligible as the bulk of management passed to the independent trustees.

⁴⁰² *14th Report*. pp.6-9; See below, Appendix 8.

⁴⁰³ G.R.O. D3269/33, p.265.

⁴⁰⁴ 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, s. 73.

⁴⁰⁵ *V.C.H. Glos. II*. pp.354-5.

⁴⁰⁶ G.B.R. B3/16, p.449.

Twenty-one trustees were appointed by the Lord Chancellor and they first met in October 1836.⁴⁰⁷ Among them were mayor Cother, two aldermen and nine councillors, including David Mowbray Walker. Of the remaining nine trustees, five had also been members of the old corporation in 1835, including Samuel Jones (mayor 1820-1) and Alexander Walker (mayor 1831-2).⁴⁰⁸ It is unclear how many of the trustees had attempted and failed to secure membership at the first election to the reformed council, but the composition of the trustees transcended the local political partisanship manifested in the reformed council.⁴⁰⁹ Links between the past and the present were further consolidated when Samuel Jones was elected as the first annual president of the trustees. At this point Jones was still sub-letting the leases of the Crypt school endowments in Podsmead which remained under the management of the corporation. Another ex-aldermen, Elisha Farmer Sadler (surveyor), had served as the surveyor and superintendent of the charities for the unreformed corporation as well as acting as its chamberlain.⁴¹⁰ Following reform he continued in all three posts, simultaneously serving the council and the trustees, despite not being elected to the reformed council. The town clerk, Henry Hooper Wilton, served as clerk and treasurer of the charities. Trustees continued in office until they resigned, were removed or died and the original trustees all continued in office until 1842 when five vacancies became available. Two were created by the deaths of Alexander Walker and Richard Butt, and the other three by the removal of trustees who ceased to qualify for office, as they no longer lived in Gloucester. Five replacements were appointed by the Lord High Chancellor, on receipt of supporting references and affidavits

⁴⁰⁷ Paragraph based on G.R.O. D3269/33. pp.1-2, 8, 50-72; G.B.R. B3/14, ff.12.v, 71.r, 249v, 273v, 281; B3/15, 21 Jan 1836; B3/16, pp.338, 362; B3/17, p.148; G.B.R. L6/11/6, 5 March 1842.

⁴⁰⁸ Samuel Jones, not to be confused with his son Samuel Jones the younger, also a trustee and ex-member of the unreformed corporation in 1835. See below, Appendices 1 and 4.

⁴⁰⁹ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.191-2, 196.

⁴¹⁰ See below, Appendix 10.

testifying to their suitability, and included one serving member of the corporation, councillor John Burrup. Despite periodic replacements, serving councillors continued to act as trustees, the most consistent being David Mowbray Walker, James Taylor, John Dowling and Burrup. The latter also acted as a Townshend trustee until he resigned from the corporation in 1844, although he continued as a charity trustee until *circa* 1855.

Despite the close connections between the charity trustees and the council, the former quickly set about establishing themselves as an independent and effective body. In October 1836 a committee of twelve was established to investigate the condition of the charities, present a detailed report and provide a return of all persons elected to the four almshouses and Sir Thomas Rich's school during the previous twenty years.⁴¹¹ By November it was made clear that the charities were to be managed in strict accordance with the proper rules which had been established prior to reform. It was resolved that vacancies in St. Bartholomew's almshouse were to be advertised by public notice and shortly after, a formal election process would take place. Benjamin Jennings stood against Samuel Bonnewell and Christopher Mayall for a single vacancy in St. Bartholomew's, but Jennings's application was contested by the trustees William Hicks and Thomas Davies (attorney), both serving members of the Tory dominated council.⁴¹² They argued that Jennings's status as a widower excluded him from admittance to the almshouse under rule 21 of its regulations. Their authoritarian attitude was tempered by a challenge from the more liberal minded David Mowbray Walker, who was simultaneously making his presence felt at meetings of the municipal council. Walker pointed out that 'the spirit of the 21st rule is to elect the most needy in the case of a vacancy', but his protest was unsuccessful

⁴¹¹ G.R.O. D3269/33. pp.2-4.

⁴¹² G.B.R. B3/15, 26 Dec 1835.

and Bonnewell was elected.⁴¹³ By the late 1850s the trustees were still rigorously exercising their authority and in 1853 they dismissed complaints made by some of Gloucester's freemen regarding admissions to the Kimbrose almshouse.⁴¹⁴

The trustees were quick to guard against accusations of self-interest and measures to this effect included a resolution in October 1836 preventing any trustee from benefiting directly from his position. It stated that no tender 'for serving the charities with any article of trade, be admitted from any person being a member of the trustees'.⁴¹⁵ The new trustees wasted little time before attending to their responsibilities. The regular election of apprentice boys to Sir Thomas Rich's school, the appointment of nurses and masters to the almshouses and the payment of bills for medicine, building repairs and maintenance were punctuated by numerous proceedings against disobedient, impudent and sometimes drunken almsmen and women and occasionally staff.⁴¹⁶ Despite the rules new vacancies attracted considerable interest and in January 1856 forty-two people applied for three vacated rooms, one in each of the largest almshouses. A month later a vacancy in St. Bartholomew's attracted forty-one applicants and in the following July twenty-eight applicants sought a room in St. Margaret's.⁴¹⁷

The management of the charities' endowments included protecting the rights of some tenants and enforcing the responsibilities of others. The interests of two lessees were defended when the trustees moved to prevent trespasses on the land the two rented from St. Bartholomew's. Alternatively, a tenant of Sir Thomas Rich's charity estate was ordered 'to immediately restore the fence' he had removed; it acted as a

⁴¹³ G.R.O. D3268/33, p.4.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid*, D3269/34, p.355.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid*, D3269/33, p.4.

⁴¹⁶ G.R.O. D3270/19677, p.421.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid*, D3269/34, pp.446-62.

boundary to the land.⁴¹⁸ The trustees had latitude in the routine administration of the charities, but they were significantly restricted in the management of more important aspects by certain ambiguities arising from the Municipal Corporations Act. Considerable doubt existed about the trustees' legal right to grant leases of, and impose renewal fines for, charitable land and property in their care, because the legal estates had not been specifically vested in them or 'been transferred to them either by the statute, or by the authority of the Lord Chancellor'.⁴¹⁹ Consequently, the trustees delayed imposing renewal fines or granting leases during the first five years after reform and each resolution affecting the tenants of charity property was qualified by a caveat: 'the Trustees will give their consent so far as they lawfully can'.⁴²⁰

In 1840 the trustees petitioned parliament to resolve the situation, but a year later the matter was still not resolved and many leases were due for renewal. The situation was made more urgent because the charity funds were in a depleted state due to the non-receipt of renewal fines which constituted a major source of income for the almshouses.⁴²¹ In 1841, the Attorney General informed Gloucester's trustees that they did not have the legal estate vested in them as it still rested with the corporation. He suggested that a bill of equity be enacted to compel the corporation to grant leases according to the trustees' directions, or an agreement be made between corporation and trustees to cooperate in granting leases in the best interest of the charities. Such agreement was quickly made between the two bodies and the trustees began drawing up a schedule of leases due or overdue for renewal. This was a considerable undertaking and took over two years to complete. Eventually the schedule detailed some fifty-five leases, of which forty-seven concerned property belonging to St.

⁴¹⁸ G.R.O. D3269/33, p.8.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.348.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid*, p.57.

⁴²¹ G.R.O. D3269/5/6-8.

Bartholomew's and to St. Margaret's.⁴²² It was approved by the trustees and ratified by the corporation in 1843 and finally dispelled the uncertainty and financial restrictions which had beset the trustees since 1836. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the trustees managed the accounts and rent rolls of the charities in their care with propriety throughout the period. Only occasionally did expenditure exceed income; in 1844-5 St. Bartholomew's expenditure exceeded its income by £83.⁴²³

The spirit of cooperation between the trustees and the corporation was not a persistent theme. In 1844 the trustees started proceedings in Chancery in order to force the corporation to relinquish the Crypt school and its property. The case was protracted and indicative of the corporation's increasingly obstructive attitude towards the trustees.⁴²⁴ Following reform, Gloucester's corporation continued to augment the city revenues with the proceeds of the Crypt school endowment.⁴²⁵ Yet, in 1844 the trustees requested the corporation to deliver all documents relating to Gloucester's charities into the hands of the trustees for inspection.⁴²⁶ Some members of the council objected to the request, but the majority resolved to comply. Three months later the trustees moved to take over the management of the estates, rents and profits belonging to the Crypt school and demanded the payment of £5,140, the proceeds accumulated from 1836.⁴²⁷ The corporation refused and the dispute was not resolved until 1857, when the school and its endowments were finally transferred to the trustees. In all, the corporation paid £11,925 to the trustees in final settlement of the municipal charities which included the £2,380 transferred from Sir Thomas Rich's school to the

⁴²² G.R.O. D3269/33, pp.205-304.

⁴²³ *Ibid*, D3269/5/6-19.

⁴²⁴ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester' . p.249.

⁴²⁵ G.B.R. L25/1646, p.8; L25/1654, p.14.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*, B3/16, p.357.

⁴²⁷ G.R.O. D3269/34, pp.2-3. *Cf.* G.B.R. B3/16, p.401.

borough fund by the corporation in 1815.⁴²⁸ The problem of how to discharge this expense was resolved by the sale of corporation property.⁴²⁹

5. The Finances of Gloucester's Reformed Corporation

The methods of financial record keeping under the reformed corporation differ from those under the unreformed corporation and only some of the city rent rolls survive.⁴³⁰

The absence of some material prevents easy comparisons between the pre and post-reform periods and also frustrates a comprehensive analysis of the city's finances in the years immediately after 1836.

Financial demands on the reformed corporation were limited, consisting primarily of the payment of officials, property management, the provision of a police force and the maintenance of the city gaol and lock-up.⁴³¹ Superficially, financial management changed little after reform. The treasurer retained accounting responsibility for expenditure and income, including the city's rent roll, but he was no longer a corporation member and was subject to annual election by the full council. The post was held by William Matthews, who continued to be re-elected until his death in 1851, when Nathaniel Hartland replaced him.⁴³² In January 1836 it was proposed that the treasurer give a bond of £2,000 with two sureties of £1,000 each.⁴³³ This was seen as excessive by the majority of the council and the bond was halved. This still represented a substantial commitment and remained a condition of office at least until 1851. The bond had the advantage of protecting the corporation from potential negligence and its value became evident in 1851, when inconsistencies were found in

⁴²⁸ G.B.R. B3/13, f.162r; B3/16, p.403.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*, B3/17, 6 Oct 1854.

⁴³⁰ Accounts of the Treasurer of the Borough Fund from 1836 to 1856 in G.B.R. L25/1610-8; the city rent rolls from 1845 to 1849 and from 1851 to 1855 in *ibid*, L25/1646-9; L25/1651-4; and printed Abstracts of the Treasurer's Accounts 1836 to 1841 in G.C. NX12.3 (1-6).

⁴³¹ *V.C.H.Glos. IV*, p.192.

⁴³² G.B.R. L25/1617, 10 Nov 1851.

⁴³³ *Ibid*, B3/15, 21 Jan 1836.

the accounts shortly before Matthews' death.⁴³⁴ The treasurer's death complicated the situation and it was not until 1853 that all the errors were identified. In total, £678 18s. 7d. was owed by the late treasurer and the council was able to secure the money from the executors of Matthews's estate.⁴³⁵

The corporation's finances were subject to annual, independent audits to ensure that funds were being applied in accordance with the Municipal Corporations Act.⁴³⁶ Two auditors, elected by the council, normally scrutinised the accounts which were cross checked by a councilman or alderman. In 1837 two claims for expenses totalling £229 12s. were disallowed.⁴³⁷ In 1838 the auditors noted that the corporation was incurring costs on the borough fund's account with the County of Gloucester Bank 'for interest and commission on borrowings' and instructed the council to address the situation.⁴³⁸ The same year, the council resolved that 'all accounts against the Corporation' should be delivered bi-annually, to allow closer monitoring of expenses.⁴³⁹ The auditing procedure continued to be refined and *circa* 1856 two independent revising assessors and six ward assessors drawn from the ratepayers were elected alongside the auditors. Added to the progressively thorough auditing procedures was the publication of printed abstracts for public scrutiny.⁴⁴⁰

After reform Gloucester's financial year began in March and the accounts were produced bi-annually. Most matters pertaining to financial management passed from the old committee of enquiry to two new committees, of finance and of estates, although general property management remained under the supervision of the chamberlain. Both committees were quickly combined as one, presided over by the

⁴³⁴ L25/1616, pp.137-8; L25/1650; *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.193.

⁴³⁵ G.B.R. B3/17, p.378; L25/1652, p.47.

⁴³⁶ 5 & 6 Wm. IV, c. 76, s. 92.

⁴³⁷ G.B.R. L25/1612, ff.83v-4v.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid*, ff.106v-107r; B3/15, 23 Jan 1837.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid*, B3/15, 16 July 1838.

⁴⁴⁰ Abstracts of the Treasurer's Accounts. NX12.3 (1-6).

mayor with at least eight council members.⁴⁴¹ The committee took on a central role dealing with numerous matters, including assessing the corporation's financial status, recommending the sale of corporation property, reviewing the city's markets and specifying repairs and improvements needed. From 1846 the chamberlain was required to attend all meetings of the finance committee.⁴⁴²

In 1836 the need to supplement traditional sources of corporation income became evident. The problem was compounded by considerable debts inherited from the old corporation and the council was quick to take advantage of its newly created power to impose a borough rate. In January 1836 the overseers of the parishes and hamlets with land inside the borough were ordered to make a return of a 'full and fair annual value of all rateable property' and subsequently a borough rate of £700 was imposed.⁴⁴³ St. Michael's parish alone provided £84 5s. based on a rate of 'one shilling in the pound'.⁴⁴⁴ By 1838 the rate had grown to over £1,100 (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3
Returns of Parish and Hamlet Surveyors 1838.⁴⁴⁵

<u>Parish or Hamlet</u>	Value	Rate (£:s:d)
St. Mary de Lode and College Precinct	£3,382	£59:14:8
Holy Trinity	£3,872	£68:7:9
St. Nicholas	£9,200	£162:9:10
St. Catherine	£3,375	£59:12:2
North Hamlet	-----	-----
St. John the Baptist	£11,051	£195:3:8
St. Aldate	£2,160	£38:3
St. Michael	£7,585	£133:19:2
Barton St. Michael Hamlet	£1,124	£19:17
Barton St. Michael	£303	£5:7
St. Mary de Crypt	£6,279	£110:18:8
St. Owen	£3,560	£62:16:1
St. Mary de Grace	£2,205	£38:19:11
Hamlet of Littleworth	£2,407	£42:10:3
South Hamlet	£5,777	£102:0:8
Total	£62,280	£1,104

⁴⁴¹ G.B.R. B4/1/5, f.12r.

⁴⁴² *Ibid*, B3/17, p.126.

⁴⁴³ G.B.R. B3/15, 21 Jan 1836.

⁴⁴⁴ G.R.O. P154/14 VE2/3, 11 Feb 1836.

⁴⁴⁵ Figures rounded down to nearest penny. G.B.R. B3/15, 21 April 1838.

The rate was based on approximately 1.7% of the annual value of all rateable property in each parish or hamlet. The parishes of St. John, St. Nicholas and St. Michael were the most populous parishes and produced the most income for the corporation, collectively providing over 44% of the total borough rate (Table 4.3). By 1854 the borough fund was still insufficient to meet all expenses and the rate climbed to £1,229 17s.⁴⁴⁶

The council enforced numerous financial restraints from reform onwards. Early in 1836 the tradition of providing lamprey pies to the assize judges was ended.⁴⁴⁷ While most payments to the minor corporation officers remained unchanged after reform, the sword bearer was a controversial exception. In 1837 Charles Weaver was dismissed from the post for refusing to accept a reduction in salary from £70 to £47. Weaver quoted the Municipal Corporations Act to make an unsuccessful claim for £523 compensation. Jabez Wingate was elected in Weaver's place in November 1837 but John Brown Brown (*sic*) took over the role later the same year, only to be replaced by Samuel Watts in 1839. Watts had no salary until 1852, when he received £5 annually, as did his successor in 1855.⁴⁴⁸

The mayor, town clerk, chamberlain, treasurer and recorder were awarded a combined annual income of £683 6s. 8d. in 1836.⁴⁴⁹ The mayor's allowance was £250, but was reduced to £180 by 1839. The chamberlain's pay remained at £50 throughout the period, but the £500 proposed for the town clerk was settled at £133 6s. 8d. in 1837. The recorder's salary was proposed at £200, but was settled at £100 and remained unchanged until at least 1856. The treasurer's £150 salary was cut three times in seventeen years down to £40. When Wilton lost the treasurer's post

⁴⁴⁶ G.B.R. B3/18, pp.96-8.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid*, B3/15, 15 March 1836.

⁴⁴⁸ G.B.R. B3/17, p.383; B3/18, p.18.

⁴⁴⁹ Following based on *ibid*, B3/15-18, especially B3/15 minutes 25 May 1836 and 9 June 1836 and 7 April 1837; B3/16, p.75.

following reform, he also lost that of the clerk to the justices of the peace and this prompted him to submit a claim for compensation of £1,400 and £1,895 respectively. Both claims were ‘wholly disallowed’ by a committee of enquiry. Shortly after, the Secretary of State granted a separate quarter sessions for Gloucester and a week later Wilton was re-appointed clerk of the peace. Wilton’s other claim, as former treasurer, still stood and the council was ordered by the Treasury to pay him an annuity of £84 18s. 11d. for life. In 1836 a codicil supposedly belonging to the will of the late alderman James (Jemmy) Wood came to the council’s attention. A committee was promptly formed to claim £200,000 from the executors of the late banker’s estate. Wood’s codicil committee pursued the claim through Chancery, but in 1840 the case was dismissed and passed to the House of Lords. In 1844 the corporation rejected a subsequent settlement offer of £25,000 by the Lords.⁴⁵⁰ It was not until 1847 that the Lords finally dismissed the case, by which time the council had incurred costs of £8,000. These expenses completely undermined the attempted savings made by the reformed council, such as the 26% overall reduction in salaries during the two decades after reform.

A significant proportion of the corporation’s expenditure went on law and order.⁴⁵¹ The police were paid weekly by the treasurer on the instructions of the watch committee, with the approval of the council. Superintendent John Marsh, paid £1 7s. from 1836, acted as chief constable and sergeant at mace for the corporation. Marsh was also paid £5 a year for care of the city fire engine, although the bulk of fire-fighting responsibilities was fulfilled by insurance companies.⁴⁵² The three sergeants were paid £1 1s. with one receiving an extra 6s. weekly for care of the bridewell and beadle’s duties. The twelve constables each received 15s. Excluding Marsh’s fire

⁴⁵⁰ G.B.R. B3/17, p.133; *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.193.

⁴⁵¹ Following based on G.B.R. B3/15; L25/1617, pp.231-37; *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* pp.192, 268.

⁴⁵² *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.268.

engine payment, police pay totalled £13 16s. a week in 1836 and in total, Gloucester's police force cost the corporation £851 during its first year. Weekly pay changed little during the next twenty-three years, rising to £15 13s. in 1854, but the combined costs of policing the city far outweighed the benefits in the corporation's view. Other expenses included maintaining the city gaol and escorting prisoners. Some expenses were reimbursed by the Paymaster General on a bi-annual basis and in March 1854 almost £124 was paid to the borough fund for prisoners' bedding, food, fuel and clothes. However, the corporation bore much of the financial burden and a month later made over twenty payments for expenses, including repairs and improvements to the city's gaol. These levels of expenditure continued until the 1859 amalgamation of the city's police with the Gloucestershire force.

By February 1837 the borough fund was in deficit by just over £1,856. This more than doubled the following year and by February 1839 had almost tripled.

Table 4.4
Gloucester Corporation's Income and Expenditure, 1836–56: Annual Figures.⁴⁵³

From	Income	Expend	Balance
1836-37	£5,232	£7,088	-£1,856
1837-38	£5,787	£10,383	-£4,596
1838-39	£5,651	£11,114	-£5,463
1839-40	£7,925	£11,389	-£3,464
1840-41	£7,256	£9,134	-£1,878
1841-42	£6,555	£11,398	-£4,843
1842-43	£7,748	£9,960	-£2,212
1843-44	£5,669	£7,549	-£1,880
1844-45	£6,421	£8,602	-£2,181
1845-46	£7,758	£9,642	-£1,884
1846-47	£6,649	£6,135	£514
1847-48	£7,014	£9,083	-£2,069
1848-49	£7,839	£9,628	-£1,789
1849-50	£6,062	£6,996	-£934
1850-51	£6,574	£5,420	£1,154
1851-52	£6,296	£3,609	£2,687
1852-53	£10,183	£5,330	£4,853
1853-54	£12,800	£6,095	£6,705
1854-55	£13,638	£9,119	£4,519
1855-56	£10,974	£11,284	-£310
Total	£154,031	£168,958	-£14,927

⁴⁵³ G.B.R L25/1612-18; see below, Appendix 18.

Thereafter, the deficit began to reduce, but it was not until 1851 that the city fund was in credit for more than one financial year consecutively (Table 4.4). Interest and commission paid by the treasurer to the County of Gloucester Bank was a persistent expense throughout the period, despite the auditors warning in 1837. Between 1837 and 1851 bank charges totalled £738 12s. 9d., although they peaked in 1838 at £131 2s. 8d. and gradually diminished until they were only £3 19s. 6d. in 1851.⁴⁵⁴ Expenditure followed similar patterns to the pre-reform period. Routine charges on the borough fund included the payment of tradesmen's bills, building and some street maintenance, property insurance and tontine interest charges.⁴⁵⁵

Between 1836-7 and 1855-6 income totalled £154,031, averaging just over £7,701 a year (Table 4.4). This represents a 51% increase of income compared with 1815-6 to 1834-5, excluding the £8,000 borrowed in 1826.⁴⁵⁶ Likewise, post-reform expenditure amounted to £168,958 (Table 4.4), an increase of over 53% on the pre-reform period. The regular imposition of the borough rate accounts for the some of the increased income, but other contributing factors included increased tolls and the *ad hoc* sale of property. Early in 1836 the council resolved to alienate land for the erection of a church in the hamlet of Barton St. Michael.⁴⁵⁷ To this end a memorial was submitted to the Treasury for permission to proceed, but shortly afterwards the Treasury requested a full statement of all the corporation's income, debts and 'probable future annual Expenditure'.⁴⁵⁸ Consequently, the corporation acknowledged that it owed 'a very considerable amount of debt' and instructed the committee of finance and estates

⁴⁵⁴ G.B.R. L25/1612, ff.131v-132r; L25/1613, f.29r; L25/1617, p.11.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, L25/1615, f.17; *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.192.

⁴⁵⁶ In 1826 the corporation borrowed £8,000 specifically to supplement its income. If this amount is included in the calculations, corporation income totalled £110,098 and averaged over £5,504 between 1815/16 and 1834/35; See above pp.43-4 and also below, Appendices 11 and 18.

⁴⁵⁷ G.B.R. B3/15, 11/4/1836.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, B4/1/5, ff.19r-20v.

to prepare a printed report for the Treasury and offer the report for sale locally.⁴⁵⁹ Subsequently, the Treasury sanctioned the erection of the church, but stipulated, presumably because of the corporation's financial situation, that the land should not be granted for 'a merely nominal payment' but be sold for a sum based on a fair valuation.⁴⁶⁰ The church was eventually built and dedicated to St. James in 1841.⁴⁶¹

Thereafter, numerous properties were sold in order to generate income, with £5,665 raised in November 1837 alone. Despite the sales, funds raised still failed to discharge all the city's debts. Thereafter, it was noted that there was considerable corporation property that yielded 'but a trifling income' of £467 15s. a year, which included warehouses at the quay.⁴⁶² The riverside quay had declined as the main area of water-borne trade in the 1830s as the docks, at the head of the Gloucester and Berkeley canal, grew and permission was hurriedly sought from the Treasury to sell the assets. Within two months £11,425 was raised, but this still left a deficit of £3,755 in the borough fund. Nevertheless, corporation property sales were directed more by pragmatism than panic. In 1838 the council's railway committee reported an offer of £2,000 from the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway Company for land known as Friars Ground and the Rope Walk.⁴⁶³ The council insisted on £2,400 and held firm against a series of bids from the rail company, which eventually conceded the asking price.⁴⁶⁴

The scale and regularity with which the corporation sold assets to realise capital reflected the newly imposed economic regulation of municipal finances. The nominal growth in the number of individual rentals before reform did not continue after 1836

⁴⁵⁹ G.B.R. B3/15, 25 May 1836; Abstracts of the Treasurer's Accounts. NX12.3 (1-6).

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 9 June 1836.

⁴⁶¹ *G.J.* 24 April 1841.

⁴⁶² G.B.R. B3/15, 27 April 1838.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, B3/17, p.134.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, L25/1613, f.115v.

and dropped from 192 in 1831 to 152 in 1847, a decline of almost 20%.⁴⁶⁵ From the records available, it appears that the annual income from the rent roll, excluding property tax and including tolls and renewal fines, averaged £4,162 a year.⁴⁶⁶ This equates to 54% of the average annual income for the corporation, only 3% more than before reform. Nevertheless, the sale of property did slow the growth of rental income, even if it did not arrest or reduce it.

Following reform the corporation continued letting the market and wheelage tolls and machinery.⁴⁶⁷ The most prominent lessee was William Lett. At various times between 1836 and 1853 he was responsible for gathering the tolls of the produce and cattle markets, as well as those of the weighing machines and wheelage. As was the case before reform, the tolls continued to represent a significant source of income for the corporation. By 1837 toll receipts totalled £1,183 and by 1852 they had increased to £1,597. In 1855 the council ordered a reduction of £63 in tolls for the produce markets, although no explanation for this change was given.⁴⁶⁸ Lessees' payments to the corporation were often in arrears by varying amounts and in 1852 arrears exceeded £177. Between 1836-7 and 1852-3 toll receipts had grown by over one third and by 1852-3 represented approximately 35% of the total rent income.

The early 1850s were marked by the eradication of the borough fund's perennial deficit and its balance improved dramatically between 1850-1 and 1854-5 (Table 4.4). The corporation then committed to a major enterprise with the rebuilding of Eastgate market, which was completed in 1856.⁴⁶⁹ During this time it undertook another expensive venture. Between March 1855 and August 1856 instalments totalling

⁴⁶⁵ Figures based on land and property only and exclude tolls and wayleaves: G.B.R. L25/1647, accounts for 1846-47. Cf. below, Appendix 13.

⁴⁶⁶ Based on extant figures for 1836-37 to 1837-38, 1845-46 to 1848-49 and 1851-52 to 1854-55. Abstracts of the Treasurer's Accounts. NX12.3 (2); G.B.R. L25/1647; L25/1652.

⁴⁶⁷ Abstracts of the Treasurer's Accounts. NX12.3 (2); L25/1647, pp.2-5; L25/1652, pp.45-6.

⁴⁶⁸ G.B.R. L25/1657, p22.

⁴⁶⁹ *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.260.

£5,700 were paid for the reconstruction of Southgate market, which opened as a corn exchange in 1857.⁴⁷⁰ This expenditure was marked by the first return to a deficit in the borough fund since 1849-50 (Table 4.4).

⁴⁷⁰ G.B.R. L25/16/18, pp.27-144.

CHAPTER FIVE
Conclusion: Change and Continuity

1. The Limitations of the Study and Avenues for Further Enquiry

This study has sought to address a comparatively neglected aspect of Gloucester's history by exposing its municipal corporation to scrutiny over four decades spanning the introduction of municipal reform in 1835. In doing so it is hoped that it goes some way to filling the gap in Gloucestershire's historiography indicated by Finberg.⁴⁷¹ Attention has been focused on the corporation's internal management and organisation and in doing so aspects of the council's involvement in the city's local government have been touched on. However, the emphasis has been on the corporation and the relevance and impact of municipal reform to its composition, structure and functions. This approach has been stimulated by the reluctance of Blackstone, and others, to engage in the detail of corporation history and by historiography that has sought to dismiss the unreformed corporations as notoriously corrupt and ineffective and by studies which have effectively relegated them to little more than electoral colleges within broader narratives.

Much has been left unsaid about the research upon which this study is founded. The presence of successful individuals such as J.H. Ollney and D.M. Walker and of politically and socially influential groups such as the Howard and Wilton families deserves further enquiry. The presence of some spanned the unreformed and reformed councils and offers the potential for research into the exercise of power in the corporation and the use of civic office among informal networks within a dynamic and rapidly growing community. Clark's *Civic Leaders* has shown that family ties and common business interests were prevalent among Gloucester's corporators during the late eighteenth century and extended into the local community promoting urban

⁴⁷¹ Finberg. *Gloucestershire Studies*. p.v.

investment and civic improvement.⁴⁷² Research might also help to further reveal the relationship between the common council and the aldermanic bench. Tensions were known to exist prior to reform, but little can be gleaned from the formal corporation records in this respect. The treatment of the aldermen's role as city magistrates has also been brief. Moir warns that any local government history that ignores the role of the magistrates will produce a distorted caricature.⁴⁷³ Clearly, Gloucester's magistrates formed an essential part of the city's local government, both before and after reform, but their activities were distinct from those of the corporation, at least in terms of its formal structure and routine management and have therefore been dealt with in a cursory manner here. Likewise, the policing of the city has been treated with brevity, particularly before reform when the corporation's involvement was minimal. Yet expanding on this aspect of city government could be useful in further exploring the problematic relationship between the corporation and the parish vestries. The latter's importance is articulated by Christmas and the *V.C.H.* and the vestries' reluctance to shoulder increased rates restricted corporation attempts to improve civic amenities, such as pre-reform policing.⁴⁷⁴

Many of the aspects which have been touched on, but passed over here, have been addressed in other studies where attention has not been concerned directly with the internal affairs of Gloucester's corporation. Their value in providing a more holistic evaluation of Gloucester's local government and the corporation's role within it are self evident, but attention here has remained primarily on the corporation.

⁴⁷² Clark. 'Civic Leaders'. pp.300-1, 336-7.

⁴⁷³ Moir. *Justices of the Peace*. p.xiii

⁴⁷⁴ Christmas. 'Poor Law'. pp.149-57; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.149-50.

2. Continuity and Change in Gloucester's Corporation, 1815–56

The self-electing and politically exclusive common council of Gloucester's unreformed corporation organised its affairs in a well documented and orderly fashion. It was, however, reformed by an Act designed to eradicate numerous abuses and inadequacies perceived to exist in the majority of municipal bodies before 1835.

Prior to reform Gloucester's civic leaders were not representative of their host community, with professional men and business owners dominating the corporation (Table 2.2). While they represented the more advantaged elements of society, this was not unusual and seems to have caused little public antipathy in Gloucester. Christmas offers some explanation for this lack of protest as many of the city's prominent inhabitants served in the parishes, on improvement commissions and as poor-law guardians, roles which offered an alternative medium for an expression of civic ambition.⁴⁷⁵ Nevertheless, municipal reform attempted to make corporations more representative of their local communities and while the choice of Gloucester's new councillors was influenced by party rancour, the reformed council was more representative than its predecessor, with a marked increase in retailers and craftsmen at the expense of the professional occupations (Table 4.2). Removing the choice of admission to the corporation from the hands of sitting members and placing it in the hands of Gloucester's resident ratepayers did have a notable impact on the council's occupational composition, but claims to the new municipal electorate's unprecedented democratic nature seem overstated. Cobden may have compared the qualifications for the municipal and parliamentary franchises to judge the 1835 Act as revolutionary, but a century later Jennings reiterated the radical's sentiment.⁴⁷⁶ Yet, it must be noted that Gloucester's 892 municipal voters in 1836 represented less than 7% of

⁴⁷⁵ Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester', pp.228-9.

⁴⁷⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, 10 Feb 1838; Jennings. 'The Municipal Revolution'. p.55.

Gloucester's population and while the new municipal electorate represented an innovation it was hardly revolutionary.⁴⁷⁷

The responsibilities of Gloucester's corporation were limited prior to reform and many of the varied needs of the rapidly growing community were met by the parish vestries, private investors and improvement commissions.⁴⁷⁸ This is not to dismiss the corporation as ineffectual or uninterested, for it periodically invested significantly in civic enterprises.⁴⁷⁹ However, following reform little changed in this respect until after the corporation assumed the powers of a local board of health in 1849. The permissive nature of the 1835 Act failed to enhance the corporation's role in Gloucester's local government, at least in the short term, other than establishing a city police force.⁴⁸⁰ In terms of the reformed corporation's structure, its offices and the routine business it dealt with, there remained remarkable continuity with its predecessor. Council meetings did become more formalised with explicit instructions regarding routine management and the conduct of meetings, and a heavy reliance on the use of standing and *ad hoc* committees became a distinguishing feature of the new council. Yet virtually all the pre-reform corporation offices survived, although the town clerk and treasurer's posts were no longer filled by council members and were subject to annual election.⁴⁸¹ However, the terms and conditions of office placed on aldermen and councillors produced a marked increase in turnover of members and a much more fluid political composition. The *V.C.H.* describes the immediate impact of reform as a 'wholesale change in personnel', but the Tory success of 1836 was short lived.⁴⁸² In 1835 Parkes had predicted a thorough purge of the corporations and

⁴⁷⁷ G.B.R. B3/15, 26 Dec 1835, 1 Jan 1836.

⁴⁷⁸ *V.C.H. Glos. IV*, p.142. Cf. Christmas. 'Growth of Gloucester'. p.238.

⁴⁷⁹ G.B.R. F4/15, p.259.

⁴⁸⁰ B3/15, 1 Jan 1836; Prest. *Liberty and Locality*. pp.17-8.

⁴⁸¹ *G.J.* 23 Jan 1836.

⁴⁸² *V.C.H. Glos. IV*, p.192.

in Gloucester this was true in the immediate aftermath of reform.⁴⁸³ However, some distinguished representatives of the old corporation survived the purge and the return of a Whig dominated council quickly manifested itself with the election of David Mowbray Walker as mayor in 1839.⁴⁸⁴ In the two decades following reform a dynamic political dichotomy emerged which was entirely absent from the latter decades of the unreformed corporation's existence.

Before 1836 the corporation managed the charities in its care by two methods; the full council took responsibility for the majority, while a much smaller group within the corporation handled the joint management of the three ancient almshouses. The emergence of a separate committee to handle the affairs of Sir Thomas Rich's school in 1804 demonstrates an attempt to impose some order over a complicated aspect of council responsibility.⁴⁸⁵ That the committee of enquiry found examples of confusion or ignorance pertaining to the original objectives of the charities seems hardly surprising, given the numerous demands put on corporation members. Occasional problems did occur prior to reform, such as abandoning the traditional method of paying the rent-gatherer, the misguided diversion of funds from Sir Thomas Rich's hospital and the general neglect of the minor charities.⁴⁸⁶ Yet, criticism over occasional abuses and the decline in fortunes of some institutions are tempered by the corporation's attempts to maintain, improve or expand the physical assets of some charities and to monitor, adjust or improve the administration of the more substantial ones.

The Municipal Corporations Act sought to remove the management of municipal charities from the corporations and place it in the hands of new independent bodies of

⁴⁸³ Letter from Joseph Parkes to Lord Durham 1 June 1835, cited in Finlayson. 'Politics of Reform'. pp.678-9.

⁴⁸⁴ G.B.R. B3/16, p.2.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid*, B3/13, f.158r.

⁴⁸⁶ *14th Report*. p.28.

municipal charity trustees. In Gloucester this caused confusion over the legal status of both corporation and trustees.⁴⁸⁷ While the municipal charity trustees consisted of a number of pre and post-reform corporators, the new body quickly established itself as an independent, reputable and effective body whose primary interests centred on the proper management of its charges. The corporation had retained control of the Crypt school endowments after 1835 and continued to apply surplus revenue to the borough funds. The subsequent legal dispute between the two bodies was protracted and eventually the corporation was required to make substantial reparations to the trustees.⁴⁸⁸ In view of this, and the occasional mismanagement of charities prior to reform, the Act's objective to remove municipal charity management from corporation hands appears to have been a beneficial one in Gloucester's case. The aims of municipal reform prevailed and ultimately the corporation's long involvement in the management of Gloucester's charities was ended.

Municipal reform attempted to make corporations more financially accountable and transparent, but this had little significant impact on the procedures of Gloucester's corporation, although it did affect its levels of income and expenditure. Control of the borough's income, expenditure and rent roll remained in the hands of the corporation, which continued to appoint a treasurer. The tightening of auditing procedures and increased exposure to external scrutiny merely enhanced and formalised a self-enforced sense of financial propriety that had been developing since the late eighteenth century.⁴⁸⁹ The responsibility for complex financial matters passed from the old committee of enquiry to the new committee of finance and estates, which made enquiries and offered recommendations to the council.

⁴⁸⁷ G.B.R. D3269/33, p.348.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid*, B3/16, p.403.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid*, B4/1/1.

Prior to reform the borough fund was regularly in deficit and this persisted after 1835. Income continued to be drawn from similar sources as before reform, with the bulk coming from the rent roll. Old debts, new investments, some additional responsibilities and a series of legal disputes combined to undermine the reformed corporation's financial position, but the issue was not bad management, but insufficient income to offset expenditure. Although income increased by over 51% between 1836 and 1856, expenditure grew by over 54% (Table 4.4). The sale of significant amounts of corporation property went some way to reducing the borough fund's perennial deficit, but this method of raising capital was hardly an innovation and had been used by the unreformed corporation. That the regular levying of the borough rate was not used to greater effect suggests caution at incurring the antipathy of the parish vestries and ratepayers, but rates nevertheless proved to be an indispensable method of improving income.⁴⁹⁰ Relatively minor restrictions imposed by the council such as reductions in pay were not particularly effective, but they did demonstrate either a keen sense of civic responsibility or an awareness of their accountability to the new electorate. Whichever factor prevailed, the reformed council did not restrict itself to improving the balance of the borough fund and towards the end of the period began to actively participate in improving municipal amenities. However, the corporation's attitude to the expense of the city police, its rejection of claims by officers of the unreformed corporation for compensation and its pursuit of Wood's codicil suggest a preoccupation with securing its financial position rather than broader considerations of the local community.

Municipal reform ended the corporation's political exclusivity and its role as trustees to many of Gloucester's charities, but the 1835 Act did little to enhance the

⁴⁹⁰ G.B.R. B3/15, 27 April 1838; L25/1647.

corporation's role in Gloucester's local government. Nevertheless, for the first time Gloucester's inhabitants had a limited role in directly electing some of their civic leaders. Municipal reform altered the composition of the reformed council's membership, formalised some of its procedures, significantly affected its role in municipal charity management and exposed its financial affairs to non-council scrutiny.

3. Municipal Reform and Gloucester's Corporation

Local complaints levelled at Gloucester's unreformed corporation were politically motivated and focused on the civic leaders' control of the freedom of the city and subsequent creation of honorary freemen during parliamentary election contests.⁴⁹¹ This is unsurprising if, as Sweet has argued, contemporary radical propaganda sought to use the corporations, particularly in parliamentary boroughs, as scapegoats for the new challenges of an increasingly industrialised and urbanised society.⁴⁹² Nevertheless, in Gloucester the parliamentary reform crisis had brought the issue of the corporation's electoral role into much sharper focus and, while the beginning of the 1830s also saw serious problems of public health, the city took a narrower view in justifying demands for municipal reform.⁴⁹³ Rapid urban growth, subsequent problems of poor health and inadequate public utilities may have caused considerable concern for governors and governed alike, but these issues seem to have played little part in demands for reform in the city.

Whether the 1833 petitioners were representative of Gloucester's wider population is unclear, but what is certain is that they were a minority, less than 3% of the city's population, moved to act on the issue of reform.⁴⁹⁴ Their concerns were clearly heard

⁴⁹¹ Bingham and Jardine. *Report 1833*. p.62.

⁴⁹² Sweet. *The English Town*. pp.141-3.

⁴⁹³ *1833 Requisition; G.J.* 1 June 1833.

⁴⁹⁴ *V.C.H.Vol. Glos. IV*. p.154.

by their civic leaders. Not only did the mayor concede to the petitioners' request for a public meeting, but members of the corporation also attended and expressed unequivocal support for reform. Whether the corporation's public support of the issue was prompted by a genuine desire to see the corporations reformed is unknown, but some members may have taken the view that a positive attitude to the issue could stand them in good stead with a new local electorate. If so they were mistaken.⁴⁹⁵ Yet given the corporation's positive support for parliamentary reform in 1832, despite reform's potential to undermine significantly its traditional source of influence and patronage, a less cynical perspective may be warranted. Such debate cannot be resolved without documentary evidence, and from surviving records it is clear that the corporation pursued a pro-reform policy prior to 1835.⁴⁹⁶

The corporation commissioners judged Gloucester favourably in 1833 and the overall impression that emerges from Bingham and Jardine's report is very different from the main report's conclusions on corporations in general.⁴⁹⁷ Considering the accusations levelled at the commission, Bingham and Jardine demonstrated a favourable bias possibly influenced by the corporation's political composition, especially given the cursory manner in which some complaints were dismissed. However, the commissioners were acting under considerable pressure and given the rapidity with which they dealt with Tewkesbury's corporation it is clear that they were not in a position to delve too deeply into all aspects of corporate activity.⁴⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Gloucester's corporation cannot be dismissed as one of the corrupt, ineffective and self-seeking political engines so strongly condemned by the general report. Yet, its ancient constitution left the corporation ill equipped to deal with the

⁴⁹⁵ G.B.R. B3/15, 26 Dec 1835.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid*, B3/14, f.232; *G.J.* 21 Sept 1833, 6 Dec 1834.

⁴⁹⁷ Bingham and Jardine. *Report 1833*. p.62; *1st Report*. p.49.

⁴⁹⁸ *G.J.* 21 Sept 1833.

new social problems of the nineteenth century and vulnerable to political and popular criticism because of its closed and politically inviolate constitution. Nevertheless, few of Lord Althorp's criticisms of the unreformed corporations in 1833 applied to Gloucester to any great extent.⁴⁹⁹ The Municipal Corporations Act was borne of political compromise and offered limited innovations; it focused on altering access to governing councils with limited internal structural changes and few compulsory changes in function. Apart from rendering Gloucester's new civic leaders more accountable to their host community, the Act appears to have offered little to affect directly the corporation's role in local government, at least in the short term.

Claims to the Act's excellence have rested on its organisational value, its longevity and its stimulation of an unprecedented expansion of local government activities.⁵⁰⁰ Whether this was the case in Gloucester cannot be judged here, because of the study's limited focus and the relatively short period studied. Yet the judgement does seem at odds with the Act's limited objectives. What is clear, in Gloucester's case, is that during the two decades after reform the Act did little to address 'the newer problems of urban government' presented by industrialisation and urbanisation.⁵⁰¹ Fraser's view, that municipal reform procured a change in personnel but left corporation structures largely intact, is apposite in Gloucester's case.⁵⁰²

Nevertheless, by focusing on the internal management of Gloucester's municipal corporation during the early nineteenth century a number of features have been scrutinised and demonstrate that the limitations and inadequacies of Gloucester's unreformed corporation were largely dictated by its founding charters and the

⁴⁹⁹ *The Times*. 25 June 1833.

⁵⁰⁰ The 1835 Act was superseded by the Municipal Corporations Act 1882, but this Act largely consolidated the 1835 Act with subsequent legislation, making few important changes. Redlich and Hirst. *History of Local Government*. p.133.

⁵⁰¹ Young and Handcock. *Historical Documents*. p.610.

⁵⁰² Fraser. *Municipal Reform*. p.2.

unprecedented changes of the early nineteenth century, rather than by corruption, self-interest or a total disregard for its host community. Municipal elections, the establishment of a borough police force and the introduction of a new body of municipal charity trustees were innovations. The use of the borough rate, a heavy reliance on standing and *ad hoc* committees and more formalised methods for financial management and council meetings were distinguishing features of the new council, but in terms of its internal management municipal reform introduced few radical changes to Gloucester's municipal corporation.

Appendices

1. Mayors of Gloucester: 1814–35
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18. Gloucester Corporation's Income and Expenditure: 1836–56

Appendix 1.
Mayors of Gloucester: 1814–35¹

Term	Name	Elected	Additional information
1814/15	Sir James Jelf	Oct 1814	Resigned 5/6/15.
1815	Daniel Willey	July 1815	Previously mayor 1807/08.
1815	Charles, Duke of Norfolk	Oct 1815	Died in Office. Previously mayor 1809/10.
1815/16	Richard Naylor	Dec 1815	Previously mayor 1806/07.
1816/17	Thomas Washbourn	Sept 1816	
1817/18	David Walker	Oct 1817	Proprietor <i>Gloucester Journal</i> from 1802.
1818/19	Ralph Fletcher	Oct 1818	Previously mayor 1828/29.
1819/20	John Phillpotts	Oct 1819	M.P. (Whig/Independent) 1830-31, 1832-34, 1837-47.
1820/21	Samuel Jones	Oct 1820	
1821/22	Henry Wilton	Oct 1821	Died during office.
1822	David Arthur Saunders	Feb 1822	Previously mayor 1808/09.
1822/23	William Price	Sept 1822	
1823/24	Sir Berkeley William Guise	Oct 1823	Previously mayor 1810/11.
1824/25	John Cooke	Oct 1824	
1825/26	Thomas Commeline	Oct 1825	Previously mayor 1811/12.
1826/27	Shadrach Charleton	Oct 1826	
1827/28	John Pleydell Wilton	Oct 1827	Previously mayor 1812/13.
1828/29	Ralph Fletcher	Oct 1828	Previously mayor 1818/19.
1829/30	William Henry Hyett	Oct 1829	
1830/31	David Mowbray Walker	Oct 1830	Son of David Walker.
1831/32	Alexander Walker	Oct 1831	Son of David Walker.
1832/33	Edward Bower	Oct 1832	
1833/34	John William Wilton	Sept 1833	
1834/35	William Morgan Meyler	Oct 1834	

¹ Based on G.B.R. B3/13, ff.30v-364r; B314, ff.17v-267r.

Appendix 2.
Occupational Status of Gloucester Corporation's Members: 1815¹

Name	Occupation ²
Cm. Baron, John	Physician
Cm. Charleton, Shadrach	Grocer
Am. Commeline, Thomas	Gentleman
Cm. Cooke, John	Attorney
Cm. Donovan, Richard	Unknown
Cm. Evans, Charles	Attorney
Cm. Fendall, John	Unknown
Cm. Fletcher, Ralph	Surgeon
Am. Guise, Sir Berkeley William	Landowner
Am. Howard, Charles (Duke of Norfolk)	Landowner
Cm. Howard, Lord Henry	Landowner
Am. Jeffries, John	Pinmaker
Am. Jelf, Sir James	Banker
Cm. Jones, Samuel	Brushmaker
Am. Naylor, Richard	Surgeon
Cm. Ollney, John Harvey	Woolstapler
Cm. Phillpotts, John (senior)	Inn keeper
Cm. Probyn, Thomas	Unknown
Am. Ricketts, Samuel	Attorney
Cm. Sadler, Elisha Farmer	Land surveyor
Am. Saunders, David Arthur	Wine merchant
Cm. Saunders, Abraham	Wine merchant
Cm. Selwyn, William	Unknown
Cm. Washbourne, John	Unclear ³
Cm. Washbourne, Thomas	Druggist/later banker
Cm. Walker, David	Printer/proprietor of <i>G.J.</i>
Cm. Weaver, Charles	Pinmaker
Am. Weaver, Edward	Pinmaker
Am. Willey, Daniel	Landowner
Cm. Wilton, Henry	Attorney
Am. Wilton, John Pleydell	Surgeon
Cm. Wilton, Robert Pleydell	Solicitor
Cm. Wood, James	Banker/mercator
Am. Woodcock, Samuel	Post office surveyor
Cm. Youde, Edward	Unknown

¹ Based on G.B.R. B3/13, f.177v; C3/1, ff.7v-9v; *Pigot's London and Provincial Directory 1822-3*, pp.49-69; Clark, *Civic Leaders*, p.331.; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*, pp.135-45, pp.380-1; Johnson, J. *The Gloucestershire Gentry* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1989) p.162.; Jurica, *Calendar*, pp.137-206; Peach, *The Washbourne Family*, p.57.; Stratford, J. *Gloucestershire Biographical Notes* (Gloucester: Gloucester Journal, 1887) p.175.

² Where individuals are identified as having two or more occupations, their main one or the one they were engaged in 1815 is used. For example: Charles Evans was also a banker and a landowner. *V.C.H.* pp.140-1.

³ See Appendix 3 for details.

Appendix 3.
Occupational Status of Gloucester Corporation's Members: 1825¹

Name	Occupation
Cm. Berkeley, Maurice F.F.	Landowner
Cm. Bower, Edward	Currier
Am. Charleton, Shadrach	Grocer
Cm. Commeline, Samuel	Attorney
Am. Commeline, Thomas	Gentleman
Cm. Cooke, John	Attorney
Cm. Fendall, John	Unknown
Am. Fletcher, Ralph	Surgeon
Am. Guise, Sir Berkeley William	Landowner
Cm. Guise, John Wright	Landowner
Cm. Hyett, William Henry	Landowner
Cm. Jones, John	Brushmaker
Am. Jones, Samuel	Brushmaker
Cm. Meyler, William Morgan	Surgeon
Cm. Mutlow, William	Unclear ²
Cm. Ollney, John Harvey	Woolstapler
Cm. Parker, Charles	Attorney
Cm. Phillpotts, John (the younger)	Barrister
Am. Price, William	Timber merchant
Cm. Russell, Thomas	Banker
Cm. Sadler, Elisha Farmer	Land surveyor
Am. Saunders, David Arthur	Wine merchant
Cm. Smith, Thomas	Unclear ³
Cm. Washbourne, John	Unclear
Cm. Walker, Alexander	Printer
Am. Walker, David	Printer/proprietor of <i>G.J.</i>
Cm. Walker, David Mowbray	Printer
Cm. Webb, Edward	Landowner
Cm. Wilton, Henry Hooper	Solicitor
Am. Wilton, John Pleydell	Surgeon
Cm. Wilton, John William	Surgeon
Cm. Wilton Robert	Solicitor
Cm. Wilton, Robert Pleydell	Solicitor (and Banker after 1820)
Am. Wood, James	Banker/mercier
Am. Woodcock, Samuel	Post office surveyor
Cm. Youde, Edward	Unknown

¹ Based on G.B.R. B3/14, f.38v; C3/1, ff.7v-23v; *Pigot and Co.'s National Commercial Directory 1830*. pp.1-15; Goodman. 'Pre-Reform Elections'. p.154; *V.C.H. Glos.IV*. pp.153, 205-6, 380-1, 391, 408; Jurica. *Calendar*. pp.137, 166, 184-5, 202, 206; Thorne. *Parliament Vol.V*. p.498.

² Mutlow's occupation was not recorded on entry to the corporation, but an organist called William Mutlow was admitted to the freedom of the city in 1789. C3/1, f.23v.

³ Thomas Smith (attorney) and John Washbourne (auctioneer) were identified in trade directories, but no cross reference could be found to positively identify them as the same two councilmen in 1825. *Pigots 1830*. pp.12-3.

Appendix 4.
Occupational Status of Gloucester Corporation's Members: 1835¹

Name	Occupation
Cm. Berkeley, Maurice F.F. (Hon)	Landowner
Am. Bower, Edward	Currier
Cm. Brown, William	Unknown
Cm. Commeline, Samuel	Attorney
Cm. Cooke, Philip Boulter	Attorney/gentleman
Cm. Dowling, James Henry	Solicitor
Cm. Dowling, John	Landlord
Am. Fletcher, Ralph	Surgeon
Cm. Guise, Sir John Wright	Landowner
Cm. Hutchinson, Matthew	Mercer
Cm. Jenkins, Arthur Hammond	Solicitor
Cm. Jones, Anthony Gilbert	Solicitor
Am. Jones, Samuel	Brushmaker
Cm. Jones, Samuel junior	Unclear
Cm. Mason, Roynon	Gentleman
Am. Meyler, William Morgan	Surgeon
Cm. Olney, John Harvey	Woolstapler
Cm. Parker, Charles	Attorney
Cm. Phillipotts, John (the younger)	Barrister
Am. Price, William	Timber merchant
Cm. Prosser, Charles	Unknown
Am. Russell, Thomas	Banker
Am. Sadler, Elisha Farmer	Land surveyor
Cm. Skey, William Russell	Gentleman
Cm. Smith, Thomas	Unclear
Cm. Tasker, Charles James	Wine merchant
Cm. Taylor, James	Rope/sackmaker
Cm. Washbourne, Thomas Bullock	Druggist
Am. Walker, Alexander	Printer ²
Am. Walker, David Mowbray	Printer
Cm. Walters, James Woodbridge	Landowner
Cm. Webb, Edward	Landowner
Cm. Wilton, Henry Hooper	Solicitor
Am. Wilton, John Pleydell	Surgeon
Am. Wilton, John William	Surgeon
Cm. Wilton Robert	Solicitor
Am. Wood, James	Banker/mercator
Cm. Woodcock, Frederick	Postmaster
Cm. Youde, Edward	Unknown

¹ Based on G.B.R. B3/14, ff.251r, 273v; C3/1, ff.8v-45v; *Pigot's Directory 1830*. pp.2-14; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.144-5, 153, 192, 196, 213-4, 356, 380-1, 391, 408, 414-9; *Jurica. Calendar*. pp.184, 206, 238-9, 240-5; Thorne. *Parliament Vol.V*. p.498.

² Alexander Walker became senior partner of the *G.J* from his father David's death in 1831 until his own death in 1838. Thereafter, David Mowbray Walker became sole proprietor of the *G.J*. from 1838 until 1871. Austin. R. *Bicentenary: Gloucester Journal: 9th April 1722 – 8th April 1922* (Gloucester: Chance and Bland, 1922) pp.55-7.

Appendix 5.
Admissions to the Freedom of the City of Gloucester:
1800–35¹

Mayoral year	Numbers of freemen admitted	Additional information
1800/01	26	
1801/02	80	Lord Nelson, by gift.
1802/03	35	
1803/04	21	
1804/05	353	322 were admitted between July and August 1805.
1805/06	22	Edward Webb, by gift MP (Whig)1830-31, 1831-32.
1806/07	8	
1807/08	28	
1808/09	27	
1809/10	32	
1810/11	15	
1811/12	44	William Cother, by gift.
1812/13	50	
1813/14	28	
1814/15	50	
1815/16	104	Duke of Wellington, by gift after dinning with the corporation.
1816/17	355	298 were admitted between Sept. and Oct. 1816.
1817/18	176	
1818/19	54	
1819/20	71	
1820/21	56	
1821/22	29	Until January 1822, when Henry Wilton died in office.
1822/23	31	
1823/24	21	
1824/25	34	
1825/26	55	
1826/27	45	
1827/28	28	
1828/29	13	
1829/30	365	Of which 351 were admitted between July and August 1830.
1830/31	38	
1831/32	32	
1832/33	31	
1833/34	21	
1834/35	52	

¹ Based on: Jurica. *Calendar*. pp.188-259; B3/13, ff.190-6.

Appendix 6.
Admissions to the Corporation of Gloucester: 1810–33¹

Admission	Name	Cost	Additional information in C3/1
5 Oct. 1810	Shadrach Charlton	£2	
20 Nov. 1810	John Fendall		'of Matson House'.
15 Feb. 1811	John Phillpotts		Keeper of the Bell Inn, Gloucester.
30 Sep. 1811	Richard Donovan		'of Tibberton Court'.
2 July 1812	John Barron		'Doctor of Physic'.
	Samuel Jones		
9 Sep. 1813	John Cook		Attorney.
9 Feb. 1814	Elisha Farmer Sadler		Land surveyor.
11 Feb. 1814	Edward Goude		
17 Sep. 1814	The Rt. Hon. John Somers. Lord.		
3 March 1815	Henry Wilton		
	John Washbourne		
15 Nov. 1815	Edward Webb "of Norton".	£3	
30 May 1816	Samuel Commeline		
4 Nov. 1816	William Price		
	Thomas Smith		
8 Nov. 1816	William Henry Hyett		
18 Nov. 1816	Henry Hooper Wilton		
25 Nov. 1816	Alexander Walker		
10 Feb. 1817	John Jones		Brushmaker.
25 Nov. 1817	David Mowbray Walker		
13 July 1818	John William Wilton		Surgeon.
28 July 1818	William Mutlow		
16 Oct. 1818	John Wright Guise		'of Churcham'.
21 June 1819	Frederick Woodcock		'of Wotton'.
14 Jan. 1820	William Morgan Meyler		
	Edward Bower		
20 July 1820	Maurice F.F. Berkeley		
23 Aug. 1821	James Whalley		Mercer.
27 Sep. 1821	Charles Parker		Attorney.
17 May 1822	John Phillpotts ²		'the younger'.
	Thomas Russell		
16 June 1823	Robert Wilton		
14 Aug. 1826	Arthur Hammond Jenkins		
26 March 1827	Benjamin Sadler		
30 March 1827	Thomas Bullock Washbourn		Druggist.
1 Oct. 1827	Frederick Woodcock		
8 Aug. 1828	Philip Boulter Cooke		Attorney.
	William Russell		
19 March 1830	Samuel Jones		"the younger".
6 Jan. 1832	James Henry Dowling		
22 Feb. 1833	Roynon Mason		
	James Taylor		Rope maker.
	Matthew Hutchinson		
	Charles James Tasker		Wine maker.

¹ Based on G.B.R. C3/1, ff.1v-45v.

² Eldest son of John Phillpotts landlord of the Bell inn, Gloucester. *V.C.H. Glos. IV. p.155.*

Appendix 7.
The Common Council: Rank Order of Seniority
1815–34¹

Rank	7/9/1815	21/12/1820	3/11/1828	10/9/1834
1	Robert Pleydell Wilton	Robert Pleydell Wilton (same) ²	Elisha Farmer Sadler (up 7)	Sir John Wright Guise (up 25)
2	Thomas Washbourne	Shadrach Charleton (up 5)	Alexander Walker (up 12)	Charles Parker (up 10)
3	David Walker	John Cooke (up 11)	William Henry Hyett (up 4)	John Phillpotts (younger)
4	Charles Weaver	Henry Wilton (up 13)	William Mutlow (up 14)	Edward Webb (up 5)
5	James Wood	William Price	John William Wilton (up 14)	Robert Wilton (up 10)
6	Thomas Probyn	Thomas Smith	Edward Bower (up 17)	Thomas Smith (up 10)
7	Shadrach Charleton	William Henry Hyett	William Morgan Meyler (up 17)	Arthur Hammond Jenkins
8	Ralph Fletcher	Elisha Farmer Sadler (up 7)	Maurice F.F. Berkeley (up 17)	Thomas Bullock Washbourn (up 10)
9	John Phillpotts (senior)	Edward Webb	John Henry Ollney (up 17)	Frederick Woodcock (up 10)
10	Henry Howard	John Washbourne (up 8)	Edward Youde (down 17)	Philip Boulter Cooke (up 10)
11	Richard Donovan	Abraham Saunders (up 10)	Thomas Russell	William Russell Skey (up 10)
12	John Baron	Samuel Commeline	Charles Parker	Samuel Commeline (up 11)
13	Samuel Jones	John Fendall (up 9)	John Phillpotts (younger)	John Jones (up 11)
14	John Cooke	Alexander Walker	Edward Webb (down 5)	Samuel Jones, Junior
15	Elisha Farmer Sadler	Henry Hooper Wilton	Robert Wilton	Maurice F.F. Berkeley (down 7)
16	Edward Youde	John Jones	Thomas Smith (down 10)	John Henry Ollney (down 7)
17	Henry Wilton	David Mowbray Walker	Arthur Hammond Jenkins	Edward Youde (down 7)
18	John Washbourne	William Mutlow	Thomas Bullock Washbourn	Henry Hooper Wilton (up 7)
19	John Henry Ollney	John William Wilton	Frederick Woodcock (up 3)	James Henry Dowling
20	Charles Evans	Lord Henry Howard	Philip Boulter Cooke	Roynon Mason
21	Abraham Saunders	John Wright Guise	William Russell Skey	James Taylor
22	John Fendall	Frederick Woodcock	John Washbourne (down 12)	Matthew Hutchinson
23	William Selwyn	Edward Bower	Samuel Commeline (down 11)	Charles James Tasker
24	.....	William Morgan Meyler	John Jones (down 8)	John Dowling
25	.....	Maurice F.F. Berkeley	Henry Hooper Wilton (down 10)	
26	.....	John Henry Ollney (down 7)	John Wright Guise (down 5)	
27	.....	Edward Youde (down 11)	.....	.....

¹ Based on G.B.R. B3/13 f.173r; B3/13 f.299r; B3/14, f.104r; B3/14, f.244r.

² Brackets containing 'same', 'up' or 'down' indicate the individual's position in relation to the preceding column.

Appendix 8.
Gloucester's Municipal Charity Management: 1815–56¹

Charities, gifts and annuities managed by the unreformed corporation, between 1815 and 1835 ²
St. Bartholemew's almshouse
St. Margaret's almshouse
St. Mary Magdealen's almshouse
Kyneburgh's almshouse
Sir Thomas Rich's school
The Crypt Grammer school
Thomas Gloucester's gift
Sir Thomas White's charity
Joan Goldston's charity
John Heydon's charity
Gregory Wiltshir's charity
Thomas Machen's charity
William Drinwater
Mrs Sarah Brown
William Holliday
John Wood's gift
Leonard Tarne
Henry Ellis
John Powell
Thomas Singleton
John Langley
Giles Cox
Jasper Clutterbuck
Sarah Wright
Thomas Poulton
John Wyman
An annuity to St. Mary de Crypt's parish out of the Tolsey
Morris's Gift
Gifts to the minister of St. Michael's parish, payable by the corporation
Jane Punter
William Bond

¹ Based on *14th Report*. pp.5-41; G.B.R. B3/13, ff.154r-55v; B3/15, 21/1/1836; B3/16, pp. 338-62; B3/17, p.148; B4/1/3, ff.36v-41v; D3269/33, pp.1-72, 265.

² Entries in **bold** text indicate those charities known to have passed into the control of the municipal charity trustees between 1836 and 1842.

Appendix 9.
Gloucester Almshouse Management:
St. Bartholemew, St. Margaret, St. Mary Magdalen, 1814–35¹

Office	Mayoral Year 1814/15	Mayoral Year 1824/25	Mayoral Year 1834/35
President	Am. Edward Weaver	Am. Samuel Jones	Am. David Mowbray Walker
Treasurer	Am. John Jeffries	Am. Sir Berkeley William Guise	Am. Edward Bower
Surveyors	Am. David Arthur Saunders	Am. Thomas Smith	Am. Thomas Russell
	Am. Sir Berkeley William Guise	Cm. Samuel Commeline	Cm. Robert Wilton
Almoners	Cm. Charles Evans	Cm. Edward Bower	Cm. Arthur Hammond Jenkins
	Cm. David Walker	Cm. William Henry Hyett	Cm. Roynon Mason
Scrutineers	Cm. James Wood	Cm. John Phillpotts Junior	Cm. James Taylor
	Cm. Ralph Fletcher	Cm. Robert Wilton	Cm. Charles James Tasker

¹ Based on G.B.R. B3/13, ff.154-5; B3/14, f.16r- v; B3/14, f.249v.

Appendix 10.
Office Holders of Gloucester's Corporation:
1814-35¹

Office	Mayoral Year 1814/15	Mayoral Year 1824/25	Mayoral Year 1834/35
Mayor	Am. James Jelf	Am. John Cooke	Am. William Morgan Meyler
Coroner	Am. John Jeffries	Am. John Pleydell Wilton	Am. John William Wilton
Eldest Bailiff and Sheriff	Cm. Charles Weaver	Cm. David Mowbray Walker	Cm. Frederick Woodcock
Youngest Bailiff and Sheriff	Cm. John Phillpotts	Cm. William Mutlow	Cm. James Henry Dowling
Chamberlain	Am. Thomas Commeline	Am. Thomas Commeline	Am. Elisha Farmer Sadler
Treasurer	Cm. Henry Wilton	Cm. Henry Hooper Wilton	Cm. Henry Hooper Wilton
Town Clerk	Cm. Robert Pleydell Wilton	Cm. Robert Pleydell Wilton	Cm. Henry Hooper Wilton
High Steward	Charles, Duke of Norfolk	Lord Howard ²	Lord Howard
Recorder	Lord Somers	Earl Somers	Earl Somers

¹ Based on G.B.R. B3/13, ff.154-5; B3/14, f.16r -v; B3/14, f.249v.

² Lord Henry Howard-Molyneux took over the role of high steward from his uncle, the duke of Norfolk. *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.153.

Appendix 11.
Gloucester Corporation's Income and Expenditure:
1815-35¹

Account Year²	Income	Expenses	Balance
1815/16	£3,222	£3,221	£1
1816/17	£4,194	£3,378	£816
1817/18	£5,332	£5,422	-£90
1818/19	£3,749	£3,306	£443
1819/20	£4,129	£4,558	-£429
1820/21	£4,031	£3,930	£101
1821/22	£4,168	£4,237	-£69
1822/23	£5,376	£5,115	£261
1823/24	£4,460	£6,006	-£1,546
1824/25	£8,302	£10,695 ³	-£2,393
1825/26	£4,128	£9,356	-£5,228
1826/27	£12,294 ⁴	£11,124	£1,170
1827/28	£5,724	£5,070	£654
1828/29	£4,841	£4,072	£769
1829/30	£5,694	£4,180	£1,514
1830/31	£5,961	£4,788	£1,173
1831/32	£5,152	£3,684	£1,468
1832/33	£6,239	£5,877	£362
1833/34	£4,773	£3,955	£818
1834/35	£8,329	£7,898	£431
Total	£110,098	£109,872	£226
Average	£5,504	£5,493	£11

¹ Based on G.B.R. F4/14, pp.283-573; F4/15, pp.2-677; F4/16, pp.1-448; F5/160. Unpaginated.

² All figures rounded down to the nearest pound.

³ Included £2,750 paid for land for the new market: G.B.R. F4/15, p.259.

⁴ Included £8,000 borrowed Benjamin Peyton Sadler (£2,000), Henry Hooper Wilton (£5,000) and Susannah Woodcock, (£1,000): G.B.R. F4/16, p.70.

Appendix 12.
Gloucester Corporation's Rent Roll Income
1815-35¹

Account Year	Rent due for current year	Previous arrears of rent Due	Total rent due	Total rent received	Outstanding rent due at end of account year
1815/16	2966	1621	4587	2599	1988
1816/17	2942	1969	4911	3457	1454
1817/18	3075	1098	4155	3400	755
1818/19	3085	737	3822	2807	1015
1819/20	3085	930	4015	3282	733
1820/21	3260	720	3980	3550	430
1821/22	3150	365	3515	3291	224
1822/23	3128	212	3340	2999	341
1823/24	3128	286	3414	3064	350
1824/25	3441	328	3769	3617	152
1825/26	3667	124	3791	3377	414
1826/27	3758	408	4166	3556	610
1827/28	3709	602	4311	3777	534
1828/29	3757	530	4287	4111	176
1829/30	3912	176	4088	3642	446
1830/31	3930	447	4377	3893	484
1831/32	3895	484	4379	3643	736
1832/33	3855	732	4587	4349	238
1833/34	3799	223	4022	3804	218
1834/35	3805	218	4023	3842	181
Totals	69,347	12,210	81,539	70,060	11,479
Averages	3,467	610	4,076	3,503	573

¹ Based on G.B.R. F4/15 pp.322-655; F4/16, pp.21-422; F5/160. Unpaginated.

Appendix 13.
Number of Rental Properties in Gloucester City's Rent Roll
Between 1800 and 1831¹

RENTAL DIVISION	1800-1801	1806-1807	1814-1815	1830-1831
West Ward	41	39	58	55
North Ward	15	15	9	9
South Ward	15	14	23	43
Longsmith Street ²	6	7	#	#
Travel Lane	5	6	6	8
East Ward	9	9	10	8
Mary Bone Park	10	10	10	10
Joan Cooke's Land	13	13	12	8
Barton Farm Land	27	31	27	31
Out County Rents	30	22	20	18
Uses Land	12	13	13	
Badgeworth			5	2
Totals	183	179	193	192

¹ Based on G.B.R. F4/14; F4/15; F4/16. The figures are based on land and property only and exclude items such as tolls of market and wayleaves.

² After 1814 Longsmith Street was listed under South Ward.

Appendix 14.
Occupational Status of Gloucester Corporation's Members: 1836¹

Name	Rank	Occupation	Address
West Ward			
George Worrall Counsel	Am.	Solicitor	
Charles Church	Am.	Rope & Sackmaker	
William Hicks	Clr.	Builder	Westgate St.
John Burrup	Clr.	Attorney	Palace Yard
Richard Butt	Clr.	Soap Boiler	Westgate St.
William Cother	Clr.	Surgeon	Longsmith St.
John Dowling	Clr.	Innholder	Westgate St.
James Buchanan	Clr.	Gentleman ²	Berkeley St.
East Ward			
Benjamin Claxson	Am.	Clergyman	
John Chadborn	Am.	Attorney	Barton St.
Thomas Stanley	Clr.	Cabinet maker	Northgate St.
John Aubrey Whitcombe	Clr.	Attorney	Hare Lane
Richard Johnson	Clr.	Wine maker	Barton St.
Chares Clutterbuck	Clr.	Surgeon	Eastgate St.
John Andrews	Clr.	Grocer	Northgate St.
James Taylor	Clr.	Gentleman ³	Worcester St.
South Ward			
Joseph Ford	Am.	Shopkeeper	Westgate St/ Llanthony Rd
Hardwick Shute	Am.	M.D.	
John Hanman	Clr.	Grocer	Southgate St.
Edward Pedlingham	Clr.	Tailor	Southgate St.
Thomas Davis	Clr.	Attorney	Bell Lane
David Mowbray Walker	Clr.	Printer	Westgate St.
William Washbourne	Clr.	Wine maker ⁴	Southgate St.
Charles Griffith	Clr.	Gentleman	Brunswick Square

¹ Based on G.B.R. B3/15, 26/12/1835, 31/12/1835; *Bryant's Directory for the City of Gloucester for 1841* (Gloucester: Lewis Bryant, 1841) pp.1-134.

² Also an edge-tool maker: *V.C.H. Glos. IV.* p.140.

³ Also a rope and sackmaker: *Ibid.*

⁴ William Washbourne and Richard Johnson both listed as wine makers as opposed to wine merchants.

Appendix 15.
Occupational Status of Gloucester Corporation's Members: 1846¹

Name	Occupation
Aldermen	
Nathaniel Washbourne	Draper
John Wodley Hughes	Gentleman
David Mowbray Walker	Printer
Arthur Hammond Jenkins	Solicitor
James Taylor	Gentleman ²
John Dowling	Innholder
West Ward	
John Burrup	Attorney
John Lovegrove	Attorney
Charles Cooke	Unknown
Thomas Pearce	Unknown
Charles Smallridge	Unknown
Edward Washbourne	Gentleman
East Ward	
John Frederick Coules	Gentleman
George Smith	Unknown
Thomas Mann	Wine merchant
George Samuel Wintle	Unknown
John Andrews	Grocer
James Cheslin Wheeler	Businessman (garden-nursery owner)
South Ward	
John Purrier Kimberley	Merchant
Samuel Dudfield	Veterinary surgeon
Charles Washbourne	Timber merchant
Edward Leader Kendall	Wharfinger
John Barrell	Draper
George Peter Wilkes	Solicitor

¹ Based on G.B.R.B3/17. p.129; *Pigot and Co.'s Directory of Gloucestershire 1842*; *Hunt and Co.,s City of Gloucester and Cheltenham Directory and Court Guide 1847*. pp.64-144; *Jurica. Calendar*. pp.242-3, 254; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.230-1.

² Also a rope and sackmaker: *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. p.140.

Appendix 16.
Occupational Status of Gloucester Corporation's Members: 1856¹

Name	Occupation
Aldermen	
Henry Kear Whithorn	Wine merchant
Alfred Joshua Wood	Surgeon
Richard Helps	Businessman
James Taylor	Gentleman ²
John Wodley Hughes	Gentleman
James Peat Heane	Surgeon
West Ward	
John Henry Cliffe	Printer
Edmund Page	Unknown
George Curtis	Unknown
Charles William Castree	Unknown
Charles Frederick Innell	Commercial traveller
James Brimmell	Rope maker
East Ward	
Richard Jew Smith	Currier
William Nicks	Timber merchant
John Andrews	Grocer
John Hanman	Grocer
William Henry Hughes	Draper
William Stafford	Druggist
South Ward	
Charles Wasbourne	Timber merchant
Ephraim Lloyd	Wine merchant
Richard Hodges Carter	Gentleman
Charles Walker	Timber merchant
Lt. John Bradley R.N.	Commissioned officer
William Eassie	Businessman (joinery owner)

¹ Based on G.B.R. B3/18. pp.105-7; *Hunt and Co.'s Directory and Topography for the Cities of Gloucester and Bristol* (London: E. Hunt, 1849) pp.20-81; *Kelly's Post Office Directory of Gloucestershire, with Bath and Bristol 1856*; *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. pp.177, 224, 231; *Jurica. Calendar*. p.231.

² Also a rope and sackmaker: *V.C.H. Glos. IV*. p.140.

Appendix 17.
Mayors of Gloucester: 1836–56¹

Term²	Name	Elected	Additional information
1836	William Cother	Jan 1836	
1836/37	Hardwick Shute	Nov 1836	Unanimously elected
1837/38	Edwin Maddy	Nov 1837	Opposed by William Morgan Meyler.
1838/39	Edwin Maddy	Nov 1838	Opposed by David Mowbray Walker.
1839/40	David Mowbray Walker	Nov 1839	Opposed by James Taylor.
1840/41	Richard Hodges Carter	Nov 1840	
1841/42	William Morgan Meyler	Nov 1841	Mayor 1834/35.
1842/43	James Taylor	Nov 1842	
1843/44	Arthur Hammond Jenkins	Nov 1843	Elected in absence on 9/11/1843.
1844/45	John Dowling	Nov 1844	Alderman Jenkins (former mayor) also one of retiring aldermen.
1845/46	John Wodley Hughes	Nov 1845	Opposed by John Burrup.
1846/47	Nathaniel Washbourne	Nov 1846	John Burrup was proposed, but withdrew on opposition from David Mowbray Walker.
1847/48	David Mowbray Walker	Nov 1847	Third unsuccessful attempt by John Burrup.
1848/49	John Burrup	Nov 1848	Unopposed.
1849/50	Charles Smallbridge	Nov 1849	Opposed by John Andrews.
1850/51	Edward Leader Kenall	Nov 1850	Opposed by Edward Washbourne.
1851/52	Charles Clutterbuck	Nov 1851	Opposed by Edward Washbourne.
1852/53	William Washbourne	Nov 1852	Elected in absence.
1853/54	William Washbourne	Nov 1853	Re-elected unopposed. Died in office.
1854	David Mowbray Walker	Aug 1854	Elected for remainder of the year.
1854/55	Richard Hodges Carter	Nov 1854	Unopposed.
1855/56	John Henry Cliffe	Nov 1855	Unopposed.

¹ Based on G.B.R. B3/15; B3/16, pp.2-434; B3/17, pp.34-212.

² First mayoral election held on 1/1/1836. Thereafter mayors elected on 9 November each year except when date fell on a Sunday. Example: Nathaniel Washbourne was elected on Monday 10 November 1846. B3/17, p.131.

Appendix 18.
Gloucester Corporation's Income and Expenditure: 1836-56¹

From	To	Income ²	Expenses	Balance	Interest ³
	21 Jan 1836 ⁴			£214	...
1 Jan 1836	3 Mar 1836	£348	£300	£48	...
Mar 1836	Aug 1836	£2743	£2645	£98	...
Sept 1836	Feb 1837	£2489	£4443	- £1954	...
Mar 1837	Aug 1837	£2925	£5023	- £2098	...
Sept 1837	Feb 1838	£2862	£5360	- £2498	£58
Mar 1838	Aug 1838	£3260	£5329	- £2069	£67
Sept 1838	Feb 1839	£2391	£5785	- £3394	£63
Mar 1839	Aug 1839	£4193	£5944	- £1751	£72
Sept 1839	Feb 1840	£3732	£5445	- £1713	£33
Mar 1840	Aug 1840	£4207	£5170	- £963	£40
Sept 1840	Feb 1841	£3049	£3964	- £915	£18
Mar 1841	Aug 1841	£2989	£5178	- £2189	£23
Sept 1841	Feb 1842	£3566	£6220	- £2654	£46
Mar 1842	Aug 1842	£4449	£5810	- £1361	£50
Sept 1842	Feb 1843	£3299	£4150	- £851	£22
Mar 1843	Aug 1843	£2783	£3064	- £281	£13
Sept 1843	Feb 1844	£2886	£4485	- £1599	£23
Mar 1844	Aug 1844	£3484	£4277	- £793	£22
Sep 1844	Feb 1845	£2937	£4325	- £1388	£13
Mar 1845	Aug 1845	£4542	£5364	- £822	£41
Sept 1845	Feb 1846	£3216	£4278	- £1062	£11
Mar 1846	Aug 1846	£3955	£3274	£681	£9
Sept 1846	Feb 1847	£2694	£2861	- £167	£0
Mar 1847	Aug 1837	£3999	£4909	- £910	£6
Sept 1847	Feb 1848	£3015	£4174	- £1159	£25
Mar 1848	Aug 1848	£3950	£4687	- £737	£20
Sept 1848	Feb 1849	£3889	£4941	- £1052	£16
Mar 1849	Aug 1849	£3790	£3879	- £89	£21
Sept 1849	Feb 1850	£2272	£3117	- £845	£8
Mar 1850	Aug 1850	£3370	£2895	£475	£10
Sept 1850	June 1851	£3204	£2525	£679	£0
June 1851	Aug 1851	£819	£660	£159	£3
Sept 1851	Feb 1852	£5477	£2949	£2528	...
Mar 1852	Aug 1852	£4800	£2807	£1993	...
Sept 1852	Feb 1853	£5383	£2523	£2860	...
Mar 1853	Aug 1853	£5470	£2685	£2785	...
Sept 1853	Feb 1854	£7330	£3410	£3920	...
Mar 1854	Aug 1854	£6576	£2501	£4075	...
Sept 1854	Feb 1855	£7062	£6618	£444	...
Mar 1855	Aug 1855	£5635	£5638	- £3	...
Sept 1855	Feb 1856	£5339	£5646	- £307	...

¹ All figures are rounded down to nearest pound. Based on G.B.R. L25/1612, pp.1-131; L25/1613, pp.28-151; L25/1615, pp.13-352; L25/1616, pp.49-137; L25/1617, pp.12-303; L25/1618, pp.32-162.

² Income includes rent roll revenues.

³ Interest and charges on overdraft with the County of Gloucester Bank.

⁴ Balance carried forward from Henry Hooper Wilton, the late treasurer of Gloucester's unreformed corporation.

Maps

1. Map 1: Engraving of Gloucester 1712.

Kip, T. (engraver) 'Map of Gloucester in the Late 17th Century' in Whiting, J. *Gloucester Besieged: The Story of a Roundhead City 1640-1660* (The City Museum Gloucester and Gloucester and Cheltenham Branch of the Historical Association, 1975) No page number.

2. Map 2: Map of Gloucestershire.

'Map of Gloucestershire c. 1949' in Hare, K. *Gloucestershire* (London: Robert Hale, 1949) No page number.

3. Map 3: Gloucester Parishes within the Municipal Boundary in the 18th Century.

'Map of Gloucester Parishes in the 18th Century' in Lobel, M., and Tann, J. (eds.) *Historic Towns: Maps and Plans of Towns and Cities in the British Isles, with Historical Commentaries from Earliest Times to 1800, Vol.I* (London: Lovell Jones, 1969) p.21.

4. Map 4: Gloucester Boundaries, c.1837.

Dawson, R. *Gloucester from the Ordinance Survey, c.1837.*

Map 1

Map 2

Map 3

Map 4

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- D3269/20 William Holliday's Charity Cashbook, 1825-82.
- D3269/22 Jane Punter's Charity Cashbook, 1825-82.
- D3269/23 Sir Thomas White's Charity Accounts, 1829-82.
- D3269/33 Gloucester Municipal Charity Trustees' Minute Books, 1836-44.
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- D3269/44 St. Kyneburgh's Hospital Ledger.
- D3269/61 St. Bartholomew's Hospital Ledger, 1798-1830.
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- D3269/75 St. Mary Magdalen's Hospital Ledger, 1797-1861.
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 P154/7 IN 1/2 St. Catherine, 1813-74.
 P154/9 IN 1/7 St. John the Baptist, 1813-38.
 P154/11 IN 1/5 St Mary de Crypt. 1813-43.
 P154/14 IN 1/5 St. Michael, 1813-41.
 P154/15 IN 1/5 St. Nicholas, 1813-32.

P154/4 VE 2/2 Holy Trinity, 1834-88.
 P154/7 VE 2/1 St. Catherine, 1837-1908.
 P154/11 VE 1/2 St. Mary de Crypt, 1807-36.
 P154/12 VE 2/1 St. Mary de Lode, 1806-50.
 P154/12 VE 2/3 St. Mary de Lode, 1836-80.
 P154/14 VE 2/1 St. Michael, 1749-1803.
 P154/14 VE 2/2 St. Michael, 1803-33.
 P154/14 VE 2/3 St. Michael, 1834-82.

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