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A practical English past: commemorating the Glorious Revolution in England, from Tom Paine to T. B. Macaulay (1792-1848)

Discussing the eighteenth century, Frank O’Gorman noted that “[t]he legacy of the Glorious Revolution may be taken to be the sacred core of British identity and British values.”¹ The Revolution was a topic of perpetual debate, both in political theory and in popular politics, as H. T. Dickinson and Kathleen Wilson have shown. Tory and radicals founded their claims on alternative interpretations of 1688 to challenge to the dominant Whig order, which was itself buttressed by “revolution principles”.² Whigs retained from the post-1689 “Revolution Settlement” the principle of parliamentary sovereignty; Tories saw Anglican hegemony as the main result of the Revolution, and radicals, like Catherine Macaulay in her *History of England from the Accession of James I to That of the Brunswick Line* (1763-1781), saw the Revolution as a missed opportunity for liberty, replacing royal despotism with ministerial corruption. While Anglicans usually celebrated the Revolution on 5 November, Dissenters tended to prefer the fourth: sermons preached on those days often proved controversial. Matters came to a head on 4 November 1789 when, on the day appointed for the celebration of the Glorious Revolution, the Dissenting clergyman Richard Price preached a sermon presenting the events in France as a Gallic version of Britain’s revolution. In his view, the forced abdication of James II justified the people’s religious liberty, their right to resist arbitrary power and “right to chuse our own governors; to cashier them for misconduct; and to frame a government for ourselves.”³ Price’s sermon, boldly defending the right to popular resistance, nay revolution, set off the controversy around the

¹ Frank O’Gorman and Michael Schaich, ‘Political Ritual in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, in *Political Rituals in Great Britain 1700-2000*, ed. by Jörg Neuheiser, Schriftenreihe Des Arbeitskreis Deutsche England-Forschung, 55 (Augsburg: Wissner-Verlag, 2006), pp. 17–36 (p. 23).

² H. T. Dickinson, H. T., ‘The Eighteenth-Century Debate on the “Glorious Revolution”’, *History*, 61.201 (1976), 28–45; Kathleen Wilson, ‘Inventing Revolution: 1688 and Eighteenth-Century Popular Politics’, *Journal of British Studies*, 28.4 (1989), 349–86.

³ Richard Price, ‘A Discourse on the Love of Our Country’, in *Political Writings*, ed. by David Oswald Thomas, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge; New York, 1991), 190.

French Revolution, Edmund Burke presenting the conservative case that the Glorious Revolution had been “a small and temporary deviation” of the line of succession, confirming rather than undermining the rule of hereditary succession.⁴ Price’s notion of 1789 as a tardy version of 1688 quickly collapsed as the French Revolution took a more violent turn, and Thomas Paine’s iconoclastic jibe at the “Bill of Wrongs and Insult” in the second part of *Rights of Man* (1792)⁵ seemed to seal an abandonment of 1688 by a new brand of republican radicals. Paine attacked the revolution of 1688 also as an inglorious business, a palace revolution ushering in a century of political and financial corruption, following a long line of “Patriot” and radical attack; but he also rejected the revolution and its constitutional outcome, the Bill of Rights, on the basis of abstract natural right, dismissing the binding value of *any* precedent.

Steve Pincus, rehearsing interpretations of the Glorious Revolution since the event, did not discuss historiography between Paine and T. B. Macaulay’s multi-volume *History of England*, published from 1848, which established the triumph of Whig history. “Thomas Paine, Pincus wrote, set the tone of future radical interpretations of 1688.”⁶ Not all radicals, however, shared Paine’s attitude. Many of them continued to stake claims on the Glorious Revolution. They did not leave the road free for a Whig, progressive but cautiously moderate, interpretation to dominate. On the contrary, this essay contends that the meaning of the Glorious Revolution was still relevant, and disputed, in the first half of the nineteenth century. The point was not only the interpretations offered of the events of 1688-1689, but even more the socio-political uses to which they were put.

The Glorious Revolution partook of the “practical past”, a category that Hayden White borrowed from Michael Oakeshott to denote the fantasies, dreams and experiences that provide guidance “for information, ideas, models, formulas, and strategies for solving all the practical problems” of life.⁷ In other words, the Glorious Revolution was not just a historiographical topic, but also an example providing ethical guidance in the world of politics. This essay explores the ideological uses which the Glorious Revolution was put to, as

⁴ Edmund Burke, ‘Reflections on the Revolution in France’, in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, ed. by Leslie George Mitchell, William Burton Todd, and Paul Langford (Oxford, 1989), VIII, 68.

⁵ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man* (Harmondsworth, 1985), 193.

⁶ Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, The Lewis Walpole Series in Eighteenth-Century Culture and History (New Haven, CT; London, 2009), 24.

⁷ Hayden White, ‘The Practical Past’, in *The Practical Past* (Evanston, IL, 2014), 9.

part of a “practical past”.⁸ But this begs a second question: whether it was still part of shared, communal memory or was becoming an object of history.⁹

The distinction drawn by the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs between history and memory is useful here. “Collective memory, Halbwachs argued, is a more informal, group-specific and orally transmitted rendition of the collective past which presupposes a continuity of consciousness between past and present, while history is a more formal, systematic and usually written record premised on a rupture between the past and the present.”¹⁰ For Halbwachs, history starts where tradition dies out and writing becomes necessary, because the group that bore the collective memory is no longer present.¹¹ The Glorious Revolution belonged to the realm of memory during the eighteenth century, fuelling many politico-theological disputes and encoding partisan and denominational identities. Did it pass into history during the first half of the nineteenth century, or did it remain a part of a living, experientially relevant memory? Of course, the Glorious Revolution and the Jacobite saga were a major source of inspiration for the Romantics. In the wake of Walter Scott, the British seventeenth century offered immense imaginative resources to historians, novelists, and artists, well into the Victorian age.¹² Celebrations of seventeenth-century events moved away from sermons and dinners into other symbolic fields: literature, historiography, the arts. Some aspects of the Glorious Revolution and its aftermath were thus brought back to life in nostalgic form. This chapter does not touch on this well-researched area, concentrating rather on politics, especially the extra-parliamentary sphere of print, pamphleteering, and sociability.

This essay starts by sketching changes in the English system of theologico-political celebrations, showing that the French Revolution disrupted established patterns and ushered in a new, more unstable celebratory pattern not centred on the cult of 1688. The next two sections review Tory and Whig interpretations of the Glorious Revolution, within this celebratory pattern and in wider culture. The last two sections discuss radical uses of the Glorious Revolution, and the “trial by jury” dinners organized on the anniversary date of the

⁸ White, ‘The Practical Past’, 3–24.

⁹ On the opposition between living memory and history as separation from the past and communal emotion: Maurice Halbwachs, *La Mémoire collective*, Bibliothèque de sociologie contemporaine (Paris, 1968).

¹⁰ Matthew Roberts, *Chartism, Commemoration and the Cult of the Radical Hero* (Abingdon, UK; New York, NY, 2019), 63–64.

¹¹ Halbwachs, *La Mémoire collective*, 67–68.

¹² Anthony S. Jarrells, *Britain’s Bloodless Revolutions: 1688 and the Romantic Reform of Literature*, Palgrave Studies in the Enlightenment, Romanticism and Cultures of Print (Houndmills, Basingstoke; New York, 2005); Tony Gheeraert, Claire Gheeraert-Graffeuille and Sylvain Ledda, eds., *La Guerre civile anglaise des romantiques* (Mont-Saint-Aignan, 2017); Roy Strong, *And When Did You Last See your Father? The Victorian Painter and British History* (London, 1978), 136–51, 163–68 on the English Civil War, the Glorious Revolution and Jacobitism.

Revolution from 1794, which show that the memory of the event was displaced in the course of the early nineteenth century.

From Glorious Revolution to French Revolution: a new celebratory regime

The French Revolution provoked the fragmentation of the old Hanoverian celebratory calendar, which hinged on the thirtieth of January, appointed for the commemoration of Charles I's execution, and the fifth of November, celebrating the Glorious Revolution (precisely the William of Orange's landing at Torbay). The Dissenters usually chose the date of 4 November to differentiate themselves from Anglicans. The French Revolution disrupted this calendar, and Richard Price's 4 November 1789 celebration of France in 1789 rather than England in 1688 was one of the last occasions the fourth of November proved controversial.

The new calendar that replaced the earlier Hanoverian cycle was characterized by its fragmentation. There was no single celebration, no day that brought everybody together. While Whigs and Tories stood apart and celebrated the birthdays of Fox on 24 January, and William Pitt the Younger on 28 May respectively, even the camp of reform was split into constituencies celebrating various occasions, like Paine's birthday or the anniversary of Burdett's Middlesex election. Many of those dinners, whether Whig, Tory, or radical, invoked the Glorious Revolution in ways sometimes unknown before 1789. However, in some areas and in some socio-political milieus, older patterns subsisted long into the nineteenth century: around the time of Peterloo in 1819, many clubs and communities in and around Manchester celebrated Royal Oak Day on 29 May (the anniversary of Charles II's accession at the Restoration).¹³

The traditional festival of 5 November stopped to be a significant focus of attention. By the end of the century, a radical interpretation had emerged among Rational Dissenters like Price and Priestley. Price's 1789 sermon "on the love of our country" and Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* centred the debate on the difference or similarity between 1688 and 1789, but Paine's *Rights of Man* promptly pushed the controversy forward, questioning the monarchy from a republican standpoint in 1791. Price had preached to the Revolution Society, a club had been instituted to celebrate the Glorious Revolution. By 1791, that club celebrated the French Revolution instead; the last recorded meeting, in 1793, was Francophile in tone.¹⁴ The Revolution Society apparently ceased its activities, because its

¹³ Robert Poole, *Peterloo: The English Uprising* (Oxford; New York, 2019), 50, 53.

¹⁴ Rémy Duthille, '1688-1789 : Au Carrefour des révolutions. Les célébrations de la Révolution anglaise de 1688 en Grande-Bretagne après 1789', in *Du Bon Usage des commémorations : histoire, mémoire et identité, XVIe-*

moderate members shrank away from it while the bolder ones flocked to the Society for Constitutional Information. The turning point was 1792, the year of Paine's second part of *Rights of Man*, and of France's transformation into a republic. On the fifth of November of that year, as Britain was in the throes of loyalist, anti-Jacobin fear, William Winterbotham preached a sermon praising the French Revolution, for which he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a hefty fine.¹⁵ Winterbotham had argued along Prician lines that the Revolution gave the British people extensive rights and he criticized the Revolution Settlement.¹⁶ While Price had escaped prosecution, Winterbotham was severely punished in the stringent context of 1792. This was the last of the long series of controversial 5 November sermons. The Winterbotham case showed that some radicals had not gone further than Price and suggested that Paine's demolition had made celebrations of the fifth of November almost irrelevant, Winterbotham being an isolated example. However, if this spelt the end of radical 5 November celebrations, the radicals still had their uses for the Glorious Revolution, as will be shown below.

The fifth of November, then, ceased to be a moment of celebration of the Glorious Revolution for radicals. The significance of that date, and the political uses of the Revolution must be analysed in conservative and Whig circles.

Conservative appropriations: from Jacobitism to the Williamite cult

The conservative appropriation of the Glorious Revolution is ironic, given that the Tories of 1689 found it difficult to accept the change of king, William's accession breaking up the rule of indefeasible succession. Their own principles of passive obedience sat uneasily with accommodation with the Williamite, and still worse, the Hanoverian regime. Yet, from the time of the French Revolution, the Tories grounded arguments for obedience and stability on the Glorious Revolution. That historical precedent was central to the loyalist movement which started in May 1792 and came to dominate public debate and stifle expressions of dissent. Loyalist pamphlets addressed to the masses taught reverence for the king and

XXIe siècle, ed. by Lauric Henneton and Bernard Cottret (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2010), pp. 107–20.

¹⁵ William Winterbotham, *The Commemoration of National Deliverances: And the Dawning Day: Two Sermons, Preached November 5th and 18th, 1792, at How's-Lane Chapel, Plymouth, by W. Winterbotham* (London: printed for Wm. Winterbotham; Cambridge, 1794). See Susan J. Mills, Winterbotham, William (1763-1829), *ODNB*.

¹⁶ Emma Vincent Macleod, 'British Radical Attitudes towards the United States of America in the 1790s: The Case of William Winterbotham', in *Liberty, Property and Popular Politics: England and Scotland, 1688-1815: Essays in Honour of H.T. Dickinson*, ed. by Gordon Pentland and Michael T Davis (Edinburgh, 2016), 150–51.

constitution founded on the 1689 settlement. This was true of both England, Wales, and Scotland: the Jacobite legacy there did not prevent loyalists from justifying their defense of the established order on reverence of the Bill of Rights, or its Scottish equivalent, the Claim of Right. A typical Scottish pamphlet, for instance, that was circulated around Dundee, claimed that the revolution of 1688 brought about “a fair balance”, that no one disputed the constitution since because it was settled.¹⁷ The pamphlet was meant to dissuade farmers and artisans from joining the Scottish Friends of the People who were planning a reformist convention. The argument typically aligned with English loyalism and appealed to “the British constitution”.

There were a few royalists who attacked the Glorious Revolution – not so much the proceedings, which were enshrined in statute book and were respectable, but the notion of “Revolution principles” and celebrations of 1688. It was John Reeves who, in 1795, addressed the boldest challenge to the mainstream Whig culture of the times. Reeves iconoclastically wrote that “most of the errors and misconceptions relative to the nature of our Government, have taken their rise from those two great events, *The Reformation* and what is called *The Revolution*.”¹⁸ Reeves, however, praised the moderation of the English Reformation and the Glorious Revolution. What he found fault with was their admirers: “Revolution principles”, he wrote, was a meaningless phrase, and those who enthused for them at “tavern meetings” were not excited by the events of 1688, but by “the idea of a *Revolution* [...] a *Revolution in the abstract*”,¹⁹ like the horrid one raging in France of course. The Revolution Clubs should instead celebrate the King and the Hanoverian Succession. But Reeves’s royalism was extreme, even by the standards of 1790s loyalism, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan attacked him in the Commons, reproaching him, *inter alia*, of maintaining in his pamphlet “That the revolution in 1688 was a fraud and a farce; and that all the people got by it was a Protestant king.”²⁰ Reeves was prosecuted for libel but acquitted.

Not only did conservatives avoid such direct onslaughts on the Glorious Revolution, they appropriated parts of Whig history. J. C. D. Clark and James J. Sack have shown that the early nineteenth-century Tory party was refashioned partly by a rejection of some historical associations of Toryism, because of the prestige of the Whig vision of the Glorious

¹⁷ *Letter from a Farmer in Angus to His Friend, a Burgher of Dundee, and One of the Delegates to the Convention of the Friends of the People* ([Edinburgh?], 1793), 5.

¹⁸ John Reeves, *Thoughts on the English Government. Addressed to the Quiet Good Sense of the People of England. In a Series of Letters. Letter the First* (London, 1795), 25.

¹⁹ Reeves, *Thoughts on the English Government*, 40.

²⁰ William Cobbett, ed., *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England: from the Norman Conquest, in 1066, to the Year 1803* (London: Published by R. Bagshaw, 1806-1820), vol.32, co.628-632, quotation p.628.

Revolution and the Protestant settlement it created: “somehow the term “Tory” had to be grafted onto a vision of the past which encompassed a generally non-Tory view of certain events of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”²¹ In 1791, Edmund Burke, before he was elevated to the Tory pantheon, presented himself as an “old Whig” in the cast of Lord Somers, as opposed to the revolutionary, Frenchified Foxite “new Whigs”.²² In the next generation, the notion was aired that present-day Tories had nothing to do with early-eighteenth-century Tories and were more like Williamite or Walpolean Whigs, who accepted the 1688 Revolution. References to “Revolution Principles” fudged party labels. In 1824, an orator praised the Tory MP for the City of London Sir William Curtis at a dinner given in his honour: “The friends of Sir W. Curtis were friends of the constitution. Their adversaries called them Tories; he denied that they were so. None of them advocated the divine right of kings, or doctrines of that nature. He said that they were the Whigs of 1688.”²³ The Tories rallying to the “constitution as established at the Revolution” and refusal of party label did not help to clarify party labels in an age in which they were in flux.

“Tory” (conservative, Pittite Whigs) laid claim to the Glorious Revolution, as their banquet speeches and symbolism made clear. Though there was no standing toast to the Glorious Revolution, the Pitt dinners did appropriate some Whig symbolism and pay homage to the event in speeches or in songs. For instance, at the 1815 Pitt Dinner at the London Tavern, a glee included 1688 in the narrative of the unfolding of the ancient constitution:

Our Henrys and our Edwards too
Fram'd once a constitution
Which Orange William did renew
By the glorious Revolution.²⁴

The Whig notion of an ancient constitution was balanced by an emphasis on kings rather than the people’s agency. That same year, the Pitt Club of Nottingham raised their glasses to “The

²¹ James J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain, c.1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1993), 70. See also J. C. D. Clark, *English Society: 1688-1832* (Cambridge, 1985), 275–76.

²² *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, in Consequence of Some Late Discussions in Parliament...* (London, 1791).

²³ “Dinner to Sir Wm. Curtis”, *Times*, 7 April 1820, p.20.

²⁴ *The Pitt Club: The Commemoration of the Anniversary of Mr. Pitt’s Birth-Day, at the City of London Tavern, on Saturday the 27th of May, 1815. Sir Robert Peel, Bart. M.P. Vice-President, in the Chair.* (London, 1815), 13.

House of Brunswick, and may they never forget the principles which placed their family on the Throne of these kingdoms”,²⁵ a toast that is very close to some drunk at Whig clubs.

Pursuing J. J. Sack’s line of thought, Katrina Navickas noted that “the ideology of Orangeism invoked the established repertoire of Whig ideals”. The birthday of King William III on 4 November was publicly commemorated by Orange societies, for instance in Bolton parish church and Assembly Rooms in 1808. This reinforces the argument of J. J. Sack and Kathleen Wilson that Pittite Toryism appropriated the symbols of the Glorious Revolution in order to legitimize itself and drag its reputation away from its disgraced Jacobite past.²⁶ The Pittite Tories celebrated William III and the Battle of the Boyne, symbols that the Whigs never took to, William being an unpopular king and Whiggism being an aristocratic, rather than a royalist, party.

Among conservative circles, the anti-Protestant legislation enshrined in the Revolution Settlement buttressed a strong anti-Catholicism, throughout the 1820s, as Britain was agitated by the issue of the repeal of the Penal Laws.²⁷ In Ireland, Williamite themes inspired by the War of the Two Kings (1689-1692), with episodes like the siege of Derry and especially the Battle of the Boyne, underpinned the identity and legitimacy of the Protestant loyalists.²⁸ Orange festivals and the Orange toast at official dinners, for instance in the city of Dublin and in Ulster, were obnoxious to Catholics.²⁹ In England and Scotland too, Orange Lodges and Brunswick Clubs appealed to working-class men, disseminating anti-Catholicism founded on the cult of William III and fidelity to the Protestant constitution as settled in 1689. The 12 July marches celebrating the victory of the Boyne in Ulster are now famous as occasions for violence and contention, but during the campaigns for Catholic emancipation, there were other marches, in Ireland and England, while “indoor celebrations, respectable and convivial and involving roast beef dinners, poetry, song and memorials” took place “in what were

²⁵ “Miscellanies”, *Anti-Jacobin Review and True Churchman’s Magazine, or, Monthly, Political and Literary Censor*, vol.49, no.209 (October 1815), p.393.

²⁶ Katrina Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire, 1798-1815*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford; New York, 2009), 124.

²⁷ George Ian Tom Machin, *The Catholic Question in English Politics, 1820 to 1830* (Oxford, 1964). The Roman Catholic Relief Act was passed in 1829.

²⁸ James Kelly, “‘The Glorious and Immortal Memory’: Commemoration and Protestant Identity in Ireland 1660-1800”, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C*, 1994, 1660–1800.

²⁹ Allan Blackstock, ‘Loyal Clubs and Societies in Ulster, 1770-1800’, in *Clubs and Societies in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, ed. by James Kelly and Martyn J. Powell (Dublin, 2010), 459–65; Shunsuke Katsuta, “‘Aggregate Meetings’ and Politics in Early Nineteenth-Century Dublin”, *Leaves*, 12 (2021) <<https://climas.u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr/numeros-parus/71-leaves-n-12-textes/504-aggregate-meetings-and-politics-in-early-nineteenth-century-dublin-shunsuke-katsuta>> [accessed 21 July 2022].

closed, private functions.”³⁰ The Glorious Revolution was invoked in Parliament to oppose any measure of Catholic emancipation. Press organs in England reported on Orange Lodges in Ireland and argued for the finality of the constitutional settlement. For the *Antijacobin Review*; *True Churchman's Magazine*; and *Protestant Advocate*, the Revolution was “conclusive and final, from a knowledge of the permanent and unchangeable nature of the catholic system, religious and political”, which was incompatible with the safety of Protestants.³¹

In a sense, the most fervent, and literal, adherents of the settlement of 1689 were those opponents of Catholic Emancipation. Here was a conservative, not to say reactionary, practical use of the Revolution. It is wrong to ascribe it totally to the Tory/conservative party: though the majority of Tories in Parliament opposed emancipation, the issue transcended party boundaries and split the Tory party itself, the pro-emancipation Canning being accused of betraying Pitt’s heritage.³² Perhaps more prevalent in England, however, than this conservative exploitation of the Glorious Revolution, was the progressive Whig version, which however never became hegemonic in the period considered.

The Whig cult of the revolution: sociability and the cultural sphere

Patrician Whigs pinned their legitimacy on the Glorious Revolution. They insisted that the British constitution was “established on the consent and affection of the People”, as the Declaration of the London Whig Club put it in 1795, in the middle of the French Revolution. The events of 1688 were glorious because they established the rights of the people, guaranteed by the benevolent Whig oligarchy.³³

The Whig focused their attacks on George III, who excluded them from power, and presented themselves as the guardians of popular rights and Revolution Principles. Whig discourse established a critical link between the corrupt present and the Glorious Revolution through constant comparison between Tory dominance and James II’s tyranny through the theme of “influence”. This was helped by the presence of the scions of the great Whig families that had engineered William of Orange’s invasion in 1688, or had fallen as martyrs of

³⁰ Kyle Hughes and Donald M. MacRaild, ‘Anti-Catholicism and Orange Loyalty in Nineteenth-Century Britain’, in *Loyalism and the Formation of the British World, 1775-1914*, ed. by Allan Blackstock and Frank O’Gorman (Woodbridge, 2014), 61–80 quotation p.70.

³¹ *The Antijacobin Review; True Churchman's Magazine; and Protestant Advocate*. 52 (March 1817), p.64. On report of activities in Ireland, see e.g. p.585-586: Meeting of the Grand Orange Lodge of the City and County of Londonderry, pledging their attachment to the constitution established at the Revolution.

³² Machin, *The Catholic Question in English Politics, 1820 to 1830*, 2.

³³ Leslie George Mitchell, *The Whig World: 1760-1837* (London, 2007), 140.

Stuart absolutism. This was the case especially of the Russells, heirs of several martyrs of liberty (especially William Russell, who was executed after the Rye House plot in 1683 and had been ever since worshipped by Whigs and Commonwealthmen). The Russells, in L. G. Mitchell's words, "laboured under the obligations imposed by history".³⁴ The great families that had called William to the throne and supported him were still prominent and embodied the continuity and longstanding struggle for freedom that characterize the Whig interpretation of history.

The Fox anniversary dinners, in London and in the provinces, enabled the performance of rituals of remembrance through toasting, singing and speechifying.³⁵ The constitutional and partisan struggles of the seventeenth century, and especially of the time of the Glorious Revolution, were the prism through which the Whigs understood their own present situation. To give just an example, at an early Fox birthday dinner in 1796, Joseph Towers, Presbyterian minister and friend of Richard Price, declared that "from the moment of passing these Bills [the two Acts known as the "Gagging Acts" or "Pitt and Grenville Acts"] there was not so much freedom in England as there was in the reign of James the Second. He was no flatterer of men of rank any more than other persons, but he was glad that the Russel of the present day was equal in patriotism to his ancestor."³⁶ Publication in the press, especially in the *Morning Chronicle*, spread those principles and established party identity. The toasts, however, were often contentious; conservatives complained in 1822 that, at a Whig dinner, the toast to "the constitution as established in 1688" preceded "the King".³⁷

There were moderate reformers among the Whigs, who voiced some criticism of the post-1689 political order. Christopher Wyvill, at the head of the Association Movement in Yorkshire was the most potent voice of this tendency in the 1790s. During the French Revolution, he continued to call for a return to the constitution as settled in 1689 but vitiated by corruption since. He did so in Yorkshire in 1795, in the thick of loyalist pressure against any reform.³⁸ His *Political Papers* contain several documents defending moderate reform on

³⁴ Mitchell, *The Whig World*, 153.

³⁵ T. E. Orme, 'Toasting Fox: The Fox Dinners in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1801–1825', *History*, 99.337 (2014), 588–606; Keisuke Masaki, 'Posthumous Cult and Memory of Charles James Fox: Whig Associations in the 1810s', *Leaves*, 12 (2021). On toasts related to the Revolution, see: Peter Brett, 'Political Dinners in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain: Platform, Meeting Place and Battleground', *History*, 81/264 (1996), 537; Orme, 'Toasting Fox', 597.

³⁶ *Morning Chronicle*, 26 January 1796.

³⁷ Brett, 'Political Dinners in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', 535.

³⁸ *The Freeholders of Yorkshire Who Are Friends to Their King and Constitution, as Settled at the Glorious Revolution, Are Hereby Informed, That an Address to His Majesty, and a Petition to the House of Commons for*

the basis on loyalty to the monarchy and the precedent of 1688. The “Declaration of the Loyalty of the Town of Sheffield” passed in December 1792 grounded its claims on the constitution as settled in 1688, presented as revered yet perfectible.³⁹ In a period when counter-revolutionary associations had multiplied loyalty declarations, Wyvill and his allies had managed to express moderate dissent while professing loyalty to the constitution of 1689. The Glorious Revolution was also invoked in resolutions against the Treasonable and Seditious Practices, one of the “Gagging Acts” (36 Geo. III, ch.7).⁴⁰ In this case, the Glorious Revolution remained a benchmark, offering the justification of a restoration of rights, rather than a forward-looking, disruptive conquest of new rights. This was reformism in the garb of constitutional conservation.

In 1801, Wyvill exhorted John Cartwright to agitate for limited, rather than universal, suffrage, because such a parliamentary reform would “complete what was perhaps unavoidably left unfinished by the Revolution in the year 1688”.⁴¹ It is of course difficult to distinguish absolutely between Whig reformers like Wyvill and a “radical” like John Cartwright, a landlord like Wyvill, who was Whig at heart but went further than him on the suffrage and electoral reform. Both Cartwright’s and Wyvill’s correspondents talked the language of the restoration of rights: on 14 February 1798, the Duke of Northumberland approved of Wyvill’s meetings of freeholders, wishing as he did “to preserve the Monarchy, and bring back the Constitution to that most enlightened and admirable system which was established at the Revolution.”⁴²

However, in the late 1790s and early 1800s, at the high tide of loyalist hysteria, defending 1688, even as a moderate restoration of rights, smelt of sedition. Those who did so incurred the accusation of condoning 1789, or even 1793. As Francis Jeffrey, a major publicist of Whig values in the *Edinburgh Review*, retrospectively lamented in 1808:

the revolution of 1688 [...] could not be mentioned with praise without giving some indirect encouragement to the revolution of 1789; and it was thought as well to say

Securing to Us Our Present Constitution, and Restoring the Blessings of Peace, Lie for Signatures at the Guildhall, in York, for This Day Only ([York], 1795).

³⁹ Christopher Wyvill, *Political Papers, Chiefly Respecting the Attempt of the County of York, and Other Considerable Districts, Commenced in 1779 and Continued During Several Subsequent Years, to Effect a Reformation of the Parliament of Great-Britain*, 6 vols (York, 1794), v, vii–viii.

⁴⁰ Wyvill, *Political Papers*, v, xlv.

⁴¹ Christopher Wyvill, *A Letter to John Cartwright, Esq.* (York, 1801), 8.

⁴² Christopher Wyvill, *Political Papers, Chiefly Respecting the Attempt of the County of York, and Other Considerable Districts, Commenced in 1779 and Continued During Several Subsequent Years, to Effect a Reformation of the Parliament of Great-Britain*, 6 vols (York, 1794), vi, 4.

nothing in favour of Hampden [...] or Sidney, for fear it might give spirits to Robespierre, Danton, or Marat. To this strict regimen the greater part of the nation submitted of their own accord: and it was forced upon the remainder by a pretty vigorous system of proceeding.⁴³

Far from rehabilitating the Glorious Revolution or making it innocuous, the French Revolution provoked a moral panic that hampered most discussion and polarized its reception: for conservatives, and many more cautious Whigs, the Glorious Revolution became a dangerous precedent.

The problem was how to salvage the Glorious Revolution without condoning the horrors of 1793 or jettisoning reform altogether. The Foxite Whigs and their liberal successors, then, who donned the mantle of the Whigs of 1688-1689, spent considerable time and energy in cultural work defending the Revolution. Both Charles James Fox and James Mackintosh penned bulky histories of the Revolution vindicating Whig ancestors.⁴⁴ Fox justified his own conduct by showing its congruence with that of the Whigs of 1688.⁴⁵ The connection between 1789 and 1789 had to be explained. As Jane Rendall noted, James Mackintosh, in his *History of the Revolution in England in 1688*, thought that “the principles of 1688, which accelerated the spread of the enlightenment throughout Europe, indirectly led to the American Revolution – and from there to the revolution in France itself”.⁴⁶ This was in essence Price’s position in his *Discourse on the Love of Our Country*. As for Macaulay, he did not simply popularize Burke’s thesis. He examined all the alternative interpretations of William’s demise at the time, including abdication, deposition, and William’s election. According to a recent interpretation, he recognized the “fundamental principle of deposing a king that had failed his functions” and endorsed abdication, while also considering the radical thesis of deposition.⁴⁷ He was closer to Paine and Price than Burke on the notion of the popular choice legitimating a king’s rule. The Whig historians of the early nineteenth century

⁴³ Francis Jeffrey Jeffrey, *Contributions to the Edinburgh Review*, 4 vols (London, 1844), II, 12. It is also quoted in Richard Gravil, ‘Helen Maria Williams: Wordsworth’s Revolutionary Anima’, *Wordsworth Circle*, 40/1 (2009), 57–58.

⁴⁴ J. R. Dinwiddy, ‘Charles James Fox as Historian’, in *Radicalism and Reform in Britain, 1780-1850* (London; Rio Grande, OH, 1992), 19–30; James Mackintosh, *History of the Revolution in England in 1688. Comprising a View of the Reign of James II. from His Accession, to the Enterprize of the Prince of Orange, by Sir James Mackintosh; and Completed, to the Settlement of the Crown, by the Editor. To Which Is Prefixed, A Notice of the Life, Writings, and Speeches of Sir James Mackintosh* (London, 1834).

⁴⁵ Dinwiddy, ‘Charles James Fox as Historian’, 20.

⁴⁶ Jane Rendall, ‘The Political Ideas and Activities of Sir James Mackintosh (1765-1832): A Study of Whiggism between 1789 and 1832’ (unpublished Ph.D., University of London, 1972), 47.

⁴⁷ Aude Attuel-Hallade, *T.B. Macaulay et la Révolution française: la pensée libérale whig en débat* (Paris, 2018), chap. 2.1 quotation p.176.

still adhered to earlier, classical, beliefs about the value of history as moral guidance. They were polemical, and Fox's posthumously published *History of the Early Part of the Reign of James II* (1808) was criticized for its party spirit.⁴⁸ The Whig historians did not produce a "historical past" as later historians would, but were still enmeshed in the debates of their times, taking sides and justifying particular men and policies.⁴⁹

Radical uses of the Glorious Revolution

For radicals, on the other hand, the proceedings of 1688 paled in comparison with the French Revolution. It is possible to document the instrumental uses of the Glorious Revolution, and especially the Bill of Rights, which provided a most "usable past" to defend various rights and liberties. However, it is less certain whether the Glorious Revolution still belonged to Halbwachs's realm of "memory"; it seems that the French Revolution precipitated it into the more abstract, colder realm of "history". In the 1790s, references to 1688 and William of Orange were still present in radical discourse. By 1848, they were virtually absent: a full-text search in a digitized copy of the *Northern Star* yields very few results about the Glorious Revolution, while the paper regularly published material about the French Revolution.⁵⁰ The phrase "Glorious Revolution" became loosened from 1688 and was applied to recent events on the continent. When the Fraternal Democrats commemorated the French revolution of February 1848, they talked of "Glorious Revolution" but they never mentioned the English precedent of 1688.⁵¹

However, though some radicals found it was a palace coup, an inglorious business or at best a missed opportunity for real change, others had their uses of the Glorious Revolution. It could justify a general right to revolution. As Edward Thompson noted, in 1817, "Henry White, the editor of the moderate *Independent Whig*, was only one among many Radical journalists who reminded readers of the precedent of the Glorious Revolution of 1688": "it is to a *Revolution*, White wrote, they will be ultimately compelled to resort, if all other legal

⁴⁸ Dinwiddy, 'Charles James Fox as Historian', 27.

⁴⁹ See Hayden White's definition of the "historical past" as "a theoretically motivated construction, existing only in the books and articles published by professional historians; it is constructed as an end in itself, possesses little or no value for understanding or explaining the present, and provides no guidelines for acting in the present or foreseeing the future." (White, 'The Practical Past', 9.)

⁵⁰ Jacob Dengate, 'Lighting the Torch of Liberty: The French Revolution and Chartist Political Culture, 1838-1852' (unpublished Ph.D., Aberystwyth University, 2017).

⁵¹ "The Fraternal Democrats of London to the True Republicans of Paris, Assembled to Commemorate the Glorious Revolution of February, 1848", *Northern Star*, 24 February 1849, p.22.

means be denied of obtaining a Redress of Grievances”.⁵² But in general, the Bill of Rights was widely known to enshrine basic rights that the government must respect, especially the right to bear arms, and the right to petition the king. The LCS, for all its pacific stance, justified the possession of arms by the Bill of Rights.⁵³ In 1817, Jeremiah Brandreth also evoked the right to bear arms during his trial following the Pentrich rising.⁵⁴

The Hanoverian dynasty owed its position to the Revolution, which implied that loyalty to the reigning house and monarchs entailed not just the right, but the *duty* of resistance to tyranny. The London Corresponding Society expounded the right of resistance to oppression in a declaration of its principles printed in 1795:

To resist oppression (when no other means are left) even with the same arms with which it is enforced, is, they are aware, not only a natural right, but a constitutional duty; and if their ancestors had not so resisted, the *House of Brunswick* never would have swayed the British Sceptre, the exiled family of the *Stuart* would have been still upon the throne, and Britain never could have boasted her GLORIOUS REVOLUTION of 1688.⁵⁵

Tellingly, “constitutional duty” coincides here with “natural right”: the two main languages of 1790s radicalism, natural right and constitutionalism, converged. The idea of an abstract foundation, like a rational social contract, was usually coupled with justifications of English liberties in national history.

The Bill of Rights was felt to guarantee popular rights and liberties. Throughout the early nineteenth century, radicals, and later, Chartists, made use of the name, quotations, and visual renditions, of the Bill of Rights, often in conjunction with the Magna Carta.⁵⁶ When Henry Hunt made his triumphal entrance into London after his acquittal in September 1819, the procession comprised a “horseman with a scroll inscribed on it, Magna Carta and Bill of Rights.”⁵⁷ The Chartists also displayed the Bill of Rights on banners, thus making use of a

⁵² E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1980), 684. Thompson quotes from *Independent Whig*, 27 July 1817.

⁵³ John Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide, 1793-1796* (Oxford; New York, 2000), 225.

⁵⁴ *Observer*, 26 October 1817.

⁵⁵ London Corresponding Society, *To the Parliament and People of Great Britain: An Explicit Declaration of the Principles and Views of the London Corresponding Society* (London, 1795), 4.

⁵⁶ Josh Gibson, ‘The Chartists and the Constitution: Revisiting British Popular Constitutionalism’, *The Journal of British Studies*, 56.1 (2017), 70–90 (p. 75). On earlier uses of the Magna Carta, see: Harry Thomas Dickinson, ‘Magna Carta in the Age of Revolution’, *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 30 (2015), 1–67.

⁵⁷ *Black Dwarf*, 15 September 1819, co.601.

wide array of media in their repertoire of expression to lay claim to the 1688 Revolution and to define its meaning as one of emancipation justifying universal (male) suffrage. The words “Magna Charta” and “Bill of Rights” appeared on Chartist banners, for instance on that of the village of Middleton displayed at the mass meeting of Kersal Moor on 24 September 1838.⁵⁸

If radicals and Chartists could lay claim to the Bill of Rights to justify popular rights, there were also many instances of doubt, and even mocking distancing. Paine’s challenge about the “Bill of Wrongs” set many radicals thinking, sometimes for many years. John Cartwright exalted the Bill of Rights as the best approximation of a British written constitution in pamphlet after pamphlet; yet at the end of his life, he got closer to Paine’s republicanism and, in *The Constitution Produced and Illustrated* (1823), he praised the Saxon constitution and criticized the Revolution Settlement as a failure to safeguard liberties. He pondered over Paine’s phrase again, and concluded that the Bill of Rights was worthless because the authorities ignored petitions and other expressions of the popular will that the document was supposed to enshrine.⁵⁹

The Glorious Revolution and its precedent for the right of resistance also found humorous and satirical expressions in radical circles for a short-lived period in the mid-1790s, in response to loyalist campaigns. Publicists like Charles Pigott linked Burke’s precious Glorious Revolution with regicide and the complete overhaul of the political régime, which were the most advanced, and controversial, positions possible after the execution of the French King in 1793. Pigott’s *Political Dictionary* refers to the Glorious Revolution in two articles entitled “Revolution”, and “Regifugium”, which immediately follows “Regicide”.⁶⁰ The Glorious Revolution also illustrates the meaning of revolution as “the sudden overturning of an arbitrary government by the People”. “The Revolution of 1688, no good and wise man can applaud. It was the despicable patch-work of a few addle-pated, Whig noblemen”⁶¹ which just replaced a tyrant with another. It fell short of the true revolution, defined as “a total alteration of the forms of governments, and a re-assumption by the People of their long lost rights; a restoration of that equality which ought always to subsist among men.”⁶² Pigott is typical of metropolitan radicals who scoffed at the Revolution as a Whig shibboleth and subscribed to the new, French, definition of revolution that includes “equality” (socio-

⁵⁸ “Chartist Banners in the Manchester Region, 1838-1843, compiled by Matthew Roberts”, at: <<https://www.matthewowenroberts.com/resources>>.

⁵⁹ John Cartwright, *The English Constitution Produced and Illustrated* (London, 1823), 166, 13–14.

⁶⁰ Charles Pigott, *A Political Dictionary: Explaining the True Meaning of Words...* (London, 1795), 113.

⁶¹ Pigott, *A Political Dictionary*, 117.

⁶² Pigott, *A Political Dictionary*, 118.

economic as well as legal). Such mocking appropriations of 1688, however, were typical of a very short moment of the French Revolution, immediately following Louis XVI's execution, in the context of loyalist exaltation of the Revolution Settlement. In later decades, such mockery disappeared because conservative uses of the Glorious Revolution were less extreme, and the radical London microcosm typical of the mid-1790s evolved.

Such instrumental, rhetorical treatment of the Glorious Revolution suggests that it was no longer (if it had ever been) an object of reverence. The French Revolution immediately questioned the relevance of celebrating the Glorious Revolution. The young Thomas Amyot, a Dissenter from Norwich who leant toward Godwinism at the time, raised the question explicitly in late 1794, a few months after Robespierre's Festival of Reason.⁶³ In the context of new revolutionary commemorative practices in France, as the French *fêtes révolutionnaires* and new republican calendar disrupted established forms, the question was whether the Fifth of November was not an antiquated festival that encouraged anti-Catholic prejudice and celebrated an ultimately disappointing constitutional settlement. Amyot and his Godwinian friends found such celebrations wanting: they may not have been representative of many English people beyond a tiny, rarefied, socio-cultural elite; but at least they discussed the matter frankly, suggesting the malaise that many more must have felt.

The trial by jury dinners: displacing 1688 and other revolutions

The fourth of November, a classic date for Dissenting expression, therefore, lost its relevance shortly after 1789. Or did it? The London radicals appropriated the fifth of November for their own purposes, celebrating the acquittals of the twelve members of the London Corresponding Society in the treason and sedition trials.⁶⁴ The date henceforth served to commemorate the radical fight for parliamentary reform. Press articles make it possible to document the "trial by jury dinners" most years from 1795 to 1854.⁶⁵ The idea of popular resistance to an arbitrary king and his minions ran through the radical narratives of both the

⁶³ William Patisson, Thomas Amyot and Henry Crabb Robinson, *Youth and Revolution in the 1790s: Letters of William Patisson, Thomas Amyot, and Henry Crabb Robinson*, ed. by Penelope J. Corfield and Chris Evans (Far Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire, 1996), 87–89.

⁶⁴ Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, John Thelwall, John Augustus Bonney, Stewart Kidd, Richard Hodgson, Thomas Holcroft, Jeremiah Joyce, Thomas Wardle, Matthew Moore, John Baxter, and John Richter. On the trials, see John Barrell and Jon Mee, eds., *Trials for Treason and Sedition, 1792-1794* (London, 2006); Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death*.

⁶⁵ The main newspapers covering those dinners are the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Telegraph*, the *Examiner*, the *London Dispatch*, the *Operative*, and the *Northern Star*.

Glorious Revolution and the LCS's fight against Pitt. This, more than the fortuitous fact that Thomas Hardy was released from gaol on 4 November 1794, justified the takeover of the date in the service of a celebration of the English 'Jacobins'. The dinners clearly built up the political, and historical, memory of the London radicals. Central to this process was the presence of the men of 1794, like Hardy and John Thelwall, who attended until their deaths (in 1832 and 1834 respectively). The presence of veterans of earlier fights was important in keeping memory alive and sustaining group identity in nineteenth-century radicalism and Chartism, as historiography has established.⁶⁶

In its early decades, the "trial by jury" dinner served as a moment of conviviality for men whose political identities were defined by support for the French Revolution. Many former members of the LCS attended, as Francis Place recollected.⁶⁷ As the LCS veterans died off, chairmen increasingly refused to toast universal suffrage; the discontinuity of homages to Cartwright and other symbols signalled a centring of the discourse. The dinner applauded the 1832 Reform Bill as a final settlement, not a step to universal suffrage. The 5 November celebration, therefore, was not displaced once, in 1795, but twice, since the Whigs took it over in the course of the 1820s.⁶⁸ Steve Poole has rightly contended that this post-war Whig takeover of a full-blooded Jacobin celebration made the "trial by jury" dinner a prime example of the "fluidity of commemorative practices".⁶⁹

Another form of displacement, a memorial shift, happened during those decades, as well. Early in the history of the dinners, the French Revolution replaced the Glorious Revolution as memorial focus; but later, by the mid-nineteenth century, the French Revolution itself had receded into history. In 1852, the chairman said the trial was "a passage of history" which "a future Macaulay" could write.⁷⁰ In the same period, books like *Sketches of Reform and Reformers*, sometimes serialized in the press,⁷¹ told the story of the 1794 trials

⁶⁶ Malcolm Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester, 2007), 33. See also the figure of the 'Old Chartist' in late-Victorian reform and socialist meetings: Antony Taylor, "'The Old Chartist': Radical Veterans on the Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Political Platform", *History*, 95/320 (2010), 458–76.

⁶⁷ Francis Place, *The Autobiography of Francis Place, 1771-1854*, ed. by Mary Thale (Cambridge, 1972), 199.

⁶⁸ Interestingly, Marc Baer gives another example of an "act of appropriation" in radical history: "the London and Westminster Working Men's Constitutional Association held their annual dinner on 19 May 1868, the same calendrical moment at which Burdett's followers had met" a generation earlier: Marc Baer, 'Political Dinners in Whig, Radical and Tory Westminster, 1780–1880', *Parliamentary History*, 24 (2005), 183–206 (p. 189).

⁶⁹ S. Poole, 'The Politics of "Protest Heritage", 1790–1850', in C. J. Griffin and B. McDonagh (eds), *Remembering Protest in Britain since 1500: Memory, Materiality and the Landscape* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), pp. 187–213 (pp. 197–200), quotation p.200.

⁷⁰ "Trial by jury. Anniversary celebration of the acquittal of Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwall", *Daily News*, 6 November 1852, p. 2.

⁷¹ Henry B Stanton, *Sketches of Reforms and Reformers of Great Britain and Ireland* (New York; London, 1849). See an extract on the trials in *Manchester Times*, 15 December 1849.

as a page of history for the new generations. To take up Halbwachs's categories, the French Revolution and the radical fight against Pitt's Terror had moved from the realm of living, oral-based, memory to that of history, with historians to consign to writing material that is past and cut off from the experiences of the present.

Over a period of sixty years, the "trial by jury" dinner illustrated how the French Revolution had replaced the Glorious Revolution as focus of interest. The dinners changed political orientation, from radical to Whig, while building up continuities and tradition at the same time. The sixty-year time-span makes clear the difference between the ebullience of the mid-1790s, with dinners steeped in radical culture and in contact with popular rituals, and, at the end of the period, orderly, mid-Victorian dinners. Attendance slumped from 700-800 in 1796 to "upwards of 100 gentlemen" in 1810, leapt up in special years like 1837, until "a few friends" decided in 1853 to terminate the dinner the next year.⁷²

The memory of the 1794 trials erased the cult of the Glorious Revolution. In 1795, the French Revolution's impact on Britain, in the form of Pitt's "Terror" and radical resistance, overshadowed the Glorious Revolution and the Gunpowder Plot. Those events, traditionally fêted on 5 November, were still present in the first years of the dinners, but they soon receded from view. In 1796, journalists wondered what the dinner exactly celebrated, because the first toast about "deliverance" could refer to William of Orange in 1688; yet the second one, "The Rights of Man", denoted both the French Declaration of 1789 and Paine's book. One song discarded the seventeenth-century associations of 5 November as "an old story":

The landing of William is now an old story,
Though it gave us great George, with a reign full of glory,
Nor sing we of Jamie, and Gunpowder Treason;
Our theme is far nobler – the triumph of reason,
When Patriots encounter'd corruption's wild fury,
By Virtue sustain'd, and the brave English Jury.⁷³

John Thelwall declared that it was highly dubious whether the revolution of 1688 deserved praise, because not long after, "a daring, corrupt, and profligate Administration" was able to overthrow all constitutional safeguards and enslave Britons. He was rehearsing the radical Whig interpretation of the Revolution as a lost occasion. By 1811, the Glorious Revolution and the foiling of the Gunpowder Plot were historical examples, not a legacy to be cherished.

⁷² *Morning Post*, 7 November 1796; BL, Add Mss 27,817, fo.97; *The London Dispatch and People's Political and Social Reformer*, 12 November 1837; *Manchester Times*, 12 November 1853.

⁷³ *Morning Post*, 7 November 1796.

In that year, the chairman noted that in 1794, a heroic jury rescued English liberties. In the same way, “a foul conspiracy” had failed under James I, and “under the yet more ignominious reign of a Second James, the people were rescued by the glorious Prince of Orange from the no less fatal conspiracy of their government.”⁷⁴ What mattered was the LCS’s stand against Pitt. There was hardly any mention of the Glorious Revolution at later dinners – or if there was, the journalists did not mention them, possibly because the references would be thought to be uninteresting or matters of routine. A few mentions, in the early Victorian period, served to belittle the Glorious Revolution. In 1840, the chairman mentioned the Gunpowder Plot and the revolution of 1688, only to present “the second centenary of the meeting of the Long Parliament”, as a better cause for celebration.⁷⁵ The Long Parliament of 1640, he went on, was ancestor of Habeas Corpus, judiciary reform, and ministerial responsibility; it employed the luminaries of the day. The rehabilitation of Cromwell and the Puritans at the time⁷⁶ served to further marginalize the Glorious Revolution.

1688 became decidedly old-fashioned. Seventeenth-century patriots, however, remained heroes for the “trial by jury” organizers. A song from 1809, for instance, placed Hardy and the other acquitted men in a British tradition of opposition to arbitrary rule, comparing them to patriotic opponents to the Stuarts, like William Russell. Beheaded as he was following the Rye House plot, he became a Whig “martyr”, and this identification of the LCS with Russell by implication equated Pitt, “the arch-fiend”, with an evil Stuart king.⁷⁷ The main references, however, remained the acquitted men of 1794. From the 1820s, the dinners paid homage to contemporary revolutions that erupted in the Iberian world and, later, across Europe. In 1825, the dinner paid homage to Bolívar and the Greek cause; a toast to Washington, Paine, and Franklin, placed Paine within a pantheon of founding fathers of the American Republic.⁷⁸ From 1848, the Whig diners discussed the Springtime of the Peoples, the 1850 dinner praising the German, Hungarian and Polish patriots.⁷⁹ There was therefore a certain cosmopolitan eclecticism in the pantheon of those Whig celebrants of the acquittals of 1794. By the 1850s, however, any tincture of Jacobinism was gone, and if the “trial by jury” dinners still appealed to “revolution”, they applauded it abroad, but consigned it to history and preferred piecemeal evolution when it came to Britain. Though the idea of “revolution” was

⁷⁴ BL, Add Mss 27,817, fo. 99.

⁷⁵ “Trial by Jury”, *Morning Chronicle*, 6 November 1840, p. 1.

⁷⁶ Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations: the English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* (London, 2002).

⁷⁷ “Song, Written by one of the Stewards for the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Acquittal of Messrs. Hardy, Tooke, Thelwall, &c.” (1809). BL, Add Mss 27,817, fo. 95.

⁷⁸ See also, in 1829: “The Memory of Washington, Paine, and Franklin, the founders of American independence.” (*Morning Chronicle*, 6 November 1829).

⁷⁹ “Trial by Jury”, *Daily News*, 6 November 1850, p. 2.

never absolutely disclaimed, it was progressively diluted into a glib narrative of the evolution, rather than revolution, of British liberties.

Conclusion

Whigs, radicals and Tories-turned-conservatives all developed rival interpretations of the Glorious Revolution long after the French Revolution seemingly made it irrelevant. The period shows that historical references and the canonical Bill of Rights adapted to various political uses. People of different political persuasions selective readings of the Glorious Revolution and its aftermath. The Tories appropriated the figure of William III, whom neither the Whigs nor the radicals liked, somewhat ironically given the Jacobite tincture of much of eighteenth-century Toryism. This essay has shown other displacements: the Tories insisted on the finality of the 1689 Revolution Settlement, to safeguard Anglican hegemony, while the Whigs, while presenting themselves as guardians of Revolution Principles, wanted to reform the constitution. Probably the most equivocal were the radicals, who dismissed the Revolution as unfinished business, as inglorious fountain or corruption or mere palace coup, and brandished clauses from the Bill of Rights (no.5 and 7, on right to bear arms and to petition, essentially) to justify popular rights.

In the eighteenth century, celebrations of the Glorious Revolution had been central flashpoints of partisan and denominational confrontation in the eighteenth century, because the actors felt they were still living out the conflicts of 1688-1689. The decline of celebrations of the Glorious Revolution, and the demise of the date of 4-5 November suggests a passage from memory to history. If this interpretation is correct, then the “long eighteenth century” started to fade in the early 1790s. It is not easy, however, to infer the state of people’s *mentalités* from such evidence, and it is certainly wrong to suggest a precise date as a tipping point from memory to history.

The success of Thomas Babington Macaulay’s *History of England* could be explained by both the lingering relevance of 1688, and the need for a new form of narrative history adapted to post-Romantic times: celebration of the Revolution moved from the rowdy 5 November bonfires to the more sedate, yet far from passionless, domain of history. That Macaulay’s popular success should come after the efforts of earlier Whigs, Fox and Mackintosh, to write the definitive history of the Revolution for the record of posterity, also suggests that the Whigs did not attain the historiographical and cultural hegemony from the

1800s to the 1840s. The influence of such efforts beyond the world of Whiggism, among radicals in particular, remained to be proved. For early-nineteenth-century radicals, the fifth of November meant Guy Fawkes and bonfires. John Belchem argued that, in 1839, the Chartists planned a rising in Monmouthshire on a fifth of November to take advantage of “the traditional saturnalia”⁸⁰ (and not the revolution of 1688, then). However, the protracted references to William III, the Boyne and the Protestant Constitution among opponents of Catholic Emancipation would rather confirm J. C. D. Clark’s influential interpretation, whereby that memories of the conflicts of the 1690s were not erased by the 1790s, and that until Catholic Emancipation and the First Reform Bill. This suggests that the transition from “memory” to “history”, so appealing theoretically, is difficult to apply. There must have been different temporalities in the transition: the heritage of the Williamite, Protestant, aristocratic, settlement took different times to ‘cool’ in different political constituencies.

⁸⁰ John Belchem, *Popular Radicalism in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Social History in Perspective (Basingstoke, Hampshire, 1996), 78.