

Introduction

Peterloo

The hustings remained, with a few broken and hewed flag staves erect, and a torn and gashed banner or two dropping; whilst over the whole field, were strewn caps, bonnets, hats, shawls, and shoes, and other parts of male and female dress; trampled, torn and bloody. The yeomanry had



1 To Henry Hunt, Esq. as chairman of the meeting assembled on St. Peter's Field, Manchester on the 16th of August, 1819. Anon.

dismounted, – some were easing their horses' girths, other adjusting their accoutrements; and some were wiping their sabres. Several mounds of human beings still remained where they had fallen, crushed down and smothered. Some of these were still groaning, – others with staring eyes, were gasping for breath, and others would never breathe more. All was silent save those low sounds, and the occasional snorting and pawing of steeds.¹

This was the scene described by the poet and radical, Samuel Bamford, at St Peter's Field in Manchester at 2.00pm on 16 August 1819, barely twenty minutes after Henry Hunt had stood on the hustings to address a peaceful crowd on a hot summer's day.² These twenty minutes resulted in one of the most significant events in modern British history, in which an estimated 18 people were killed and more than 650 injured by the combined efforts of the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry (MYC) and the Fifteenth Hussars.³ Samuel Bamford's harrowing eye-witness account of what he saw that day remains a powerful testimony to the sanctioned brutality of a repressive regime intent on destroying those who sought greater political freedom. The crowd was campaigning for the three pillars of the reform movement: universal male suffrage, annual elections and a secret ballot.⁴ Entitled 'Peter Loo' only five days later on 21 August in the *Manchester Observer*, this event quickly entered into the public consciousness, creating furore on all sides of the political spectrum and generating a panoply of letters, newspaper articles, cartoons and poetry.⁵

England in 1819 under the government of Lord Liverpool was, according to Robert Reid, 'the most repressive regime in modern British history' which had come 'closer in spirit to that of the early years of the Third Reich than at any other time in history'. Such a startling comparison serves to illustrate the ruthlessness of an unpopular government, supported by an even more unpopular monarchy in a time of unprecedented change. England was undergoing a seismic shift both economically and socially. A prolonged period at war, combined with the agrarian and industrial revolutions, were resulting in an anonymous, industrialised state where the demands of factory life created an urban poor: disaffected and disenfranchised. Manchester epitomised this fundamental change of life for the labouring classes, acting, as Reid outlines, 'as a template for the world in both its growth on technological foundations, and in the manifestation of the brutal social and cultural consequences which accompanied that unparalleled growth'.⁶ Its excellent transport links, damp climate and local coal mines created the ideal centre for the burgeoning cotton industry. Named 'Cottonpolis', Manchester witnessed the rapid growth of industry and people, from

a population of approximately 22,500 in 1773 to 84,000 in 1801 and 250,000 in 1841.⁷ This unprecedented increase led to the development of slums: cheap, high density housing, rapidly and carelessly built to house the urban workforce. And yet, despite this wholesale change in the town, in 1819 Manchester did not have a single MP and did not become self-governing until the mid-nineteenth century.

Granted a charter in 1301, the Moseley family held the rights from 1596 until 1846, when it was bought out by the Manchester Corporation, finally gaining city status in 1853. Governed by a Court Leet and headed by a boroughreeve to ensure parliamentary law was adhered to, church leaders and magistrates were key figures in maintaining law and order. On a visit in 1837, the reformer, Richard Cobden, noted that the inhabitants were 'living under the feudal system'.⁸ Despite this 'leisurely regime', as described by Frank O'Gorman, Stuart Hylton notes some good examples of public services, such as hospitals, the asylum and public baths, all built at the end of the eighteenth century.⁹

Accompanying the difficulties posed by a country moving swiftly from an agrarian economy to an industrial one, Britain had experienced high unemployment, economic recession and poor harvests since the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. The price of wheat was artificially high due to the imposition of the Corn Laws in 1815 and, as a consequence, people were starving. Lord Liverpool's policy in all matters was that of *laissez-faire*, all matters with the exception of political unrest, the fear of which resulted in 25,000 troops being stationed in manufacturing towns prior to the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The government's attitude to political agitation was established at the beginning of the administration. When the Luddites attacked machines in the north and midlands during 1812, seventeen of them were executed in York the following January. Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary, believed that such a draconian response would curb the violent aspirations of other would-be insurgents.¹⁰

The Pentridge Uprising of June 1817 is perhaps even more revealing about the lengths to which the Liverpool administration would go to curb what it regarded as insurrection. Fearing a resurgence of Luddite violence, retribution was fierce. This small, badly organised, embryonic rebellion of about one hundred men in a small Derbyshire village aiming to attack Nottingham was led by the former Luddite, Jeremiah Brandreth. The rebels were quickly arrested and tried. Brandreth and two of his accomplices were executed and a further twenty-three transported. Whilst the Pentridge Uprising has been largely forgotten, E.P. Thompson argues that its import lies in the fact that it was a wholly working-class attempt at insurrection, exploited by the government

as an opportunity to destroy the reform movement, using its leaders as examples and setting out a stark warning to the rest of the country: 'The Government wanted blood – not a holocaust, but enough to make an example.'¹¹

Within this climate of fear and oppression, intensified by the suspension of Habeas Corpus from February 1817 until January 1818, the radical movement was somewhat stymied. The more extreme, ultra-radical movement under the leadership of Arthur Thistlewood and 'Dr' James Watson was regarded suspiciously by middle-class reformers, who, under the leadership of the MP Sir Francis Burdett, were rather quiet during this period. The radical journalist, William Cobbett, thought it wise to travel to the United States in March 1817 where he remained safely until the end of 1819. Burdett returned to his country estate in order to avoid the authorities, leaving the stalwart Major Cartwright and the self-styled 'Champion of Liberty', Henry Hunt, to lead the radical movement.¹² Many historians often cite Hunt's arrogance and vanity as disadvantages to his aspirations for leadership, whereas John Belchem defends him, describing him as one of the true radicals of the nineteenth century.¹³ Indeed Hunt's flamboyance won him many supporters and afforded a celebrity lifestyle which he appeared to enjoy; nevertheless it must not be forgotten that he was imprisoned for two and a half years for his role at Peterloo. Unlike his fellow radicals, Cobbett and Bamford, Hunt never abandoned his quest for reform; however, the lack of unified leadership, whether middle-class or labouring-class, was instrumental in the failure of the reform movement to capitalise on the terrible events of 1819.

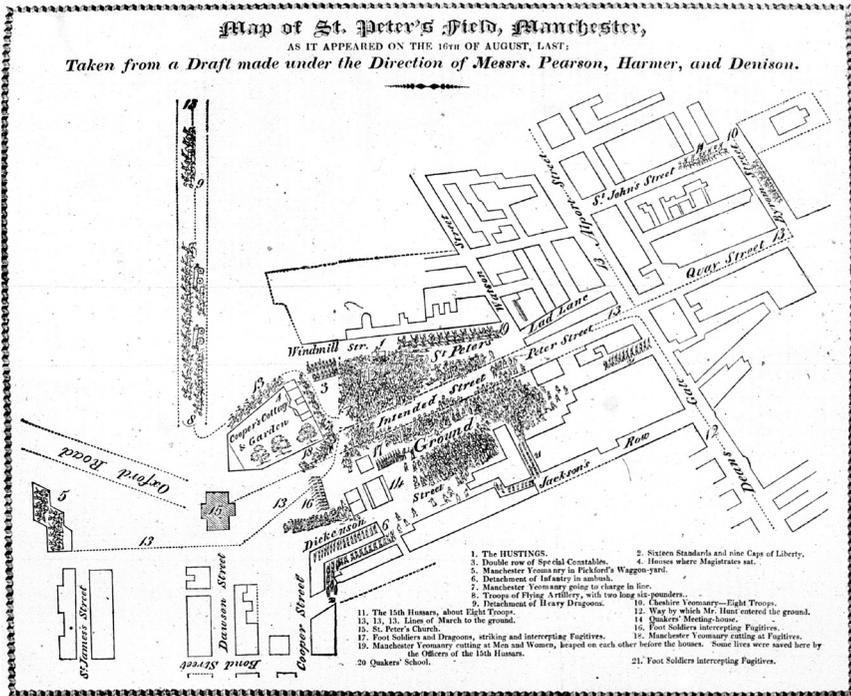
Whilst the radical movement in London lacked direction and leadership after 1815, the situation in Manchester worsened. Poor harvests and the reduction in demand for cotton had resulted in wage cuts. When their wages fell from thirty shillings to fifteen shillings a week, the spinners went on strike, but the masters refused to concede.¹⁴ The weavers' plight was even worse; their earnings were as low as four shillings and sixpence a week.¹⁵

Despite the appalling conditions for the labouring classes in Manchester and Lancashire in the aftermath of Waterloo, conditions were undoubtedly as bad in other industrial cities throughout England. The probable reason for Peterloo, the 'biggest ever demonstration ever seen in England up until then' is the strength and size of the radical movement in the north-west.¹⁶ Dating back to the early eighteenth century, both labouring-class and middle-class radicalism were closely linked with dissenting religions, whilst the loyalists, comprising traders and manufacturers, were Anglican.¹⁷ Katrina Navickas notes that, born

out of a strong regional Protestantism, Orange Lodges were established in Lancashire from 1802 with membership including magistrates and the clergy. These middle-class Protestants, together, perhaps surprisingly, with many Jacobites, formed numerous loyalist clubs, the most notable being the Church and King Club founded in the 1790s.¹⁸ At the same time, Hampden Clubs, friendly societies and patriotic unions sprang up across the region where radical leadership was more organised than the disparate movement in London. The inclusion of women is also key. Anna Clark notes that thirty-seven female reform societies were established in Stockport alone between 1794 and 1823. Spurred on by the tradition of female preachers in Lancashire and their large presence in the cotton mills, women became radicalised and played a significant role within the Manchester reform movement, resulting in Manchester becoming, according to Paul Mason, 'the most seditious part of the country'.¹⁹

Civic unrest in Manchester dates back to the mid-eighteenth century when food riots, including the 'Shude Hill fight' took place. Following four years of bad harvests, which resulted in food price increases, food riots again took place in 1812. By 1816 disaffection among working people began to spread. Under the leadership of the charismatic eighteen-year-old James Bagguley, between 40,000 and 60,000 people assembled at St Peter's Field on 10 March 1817, with the aim of marching to London to present a petition to the Prince Regent, alerting him to the awful conditions in Lancashire.²⁰ Unfortunately for the Blanketeers, as they were known, government spies had infiltrated them, and the authorities were well prepared: the Riot Act was read, the leaders arrested and the marchers attacked by the cavalry, leaving one person dead.²¹ It was a foreshadowing of events two years later.

On 16 August 1819, during the summer wakes holiday season, 'half of Manchester', around 60,000 men, women and children gathered together at St Peter's Field, 'this being the traditional home of Lancashire grievances', having marched from many outlying districts of Manchester, wearing their best clothes, singing songs and carrying banners, to hear the famous Henry 'Orator' Hunt speak on the need for reform.²² The meeting had twice been postponed whilst the leaders sought advice from lawyers in order to establish its legality. To ensure the meeting was legal, the initial aim of selecting an MP had been altered to: 'consider the propriety of adopting the most LEGAL and EFFECTUAL means of obtaining a REFORM in the Commons House of Parliament'.²³ The organisers called for order and sobriety whilst Hunt specifically told them to come 'armed with NO OTHER WEAPON but that of a self-approving conscience'.²⁴ The authorities, fearful of



2 Map of St Peter's Field.

violence, particularly following reports of drilling being practised by the marchers in the weeks prior to the meeting, ordered the presence of the hundred or so volunteer members of the MYC, 420 members of the Cheshire Yeomanry and approximately 1,000 regular troops, including the Fifteenth Hussars, many of them veterans of Waterloo.²⁵ The magistrates authorised the arrest of Hunt and the other leaders once the meeting had begun, instructing the MYC to carry out the arrests. It was after the arrests had been made that most of the violence occurred as the MYC began to cut a swathe through the crowd having found themselves hemmed in.²⁶ The Fifteenth Hussars arrived to disperse the people, pushing them back with the flat side of their sabres, resulting in more than 300 sabre wounds: 'fifteen a minute for twenty minutes'.²⁷ Many were trampled by the horses. The true scale of the injuries will never be known as many victims were too scared or too poor to seek medical help. The relatively small number of fatalities is due to luck rather than the actions of the troops. As Poole notes, 'the radicals of Lancashire planned for Victory Square, only to find themselves in Tiananmen Square.'²⁸

Manchester PUBLIC MEETING.

A REQUISITION having been presented to the Boroughreeve and Constables of Manchester, signed by above 700 Inhabitant Householders in a few hours, requesting them to call a PUBLIC MEETING "To consider the propriety of adopting the most LEGAL and EFFECTUAL means of obtaining a REFORM in the Commons House of Parliament" and they having declined to call such Meeting therefore the undersigned Requisitionists give NOTICE that a Public Meeting will be held, on the area, near St. Peter's Church, for the above mentioned purpose, on Monday the 16th instant—the Chair to be taken by H. Hunt, Esq. at 12 o'clock.

♦ ♦ Major Cartwright—Mr. Wooller—Mr. Pearson—Mr. Carlisle—Dr. Crompton—Edward Rush-ton—Mr. J. Smith—Mr. Thomas Smith—will be invited to attend this Meeting.

Manchester, 6th August, 1819.

3 Announcement of 16th August Meeting.

The blame for the 'bloodiest political event of the nineteenth century on English soil' has been attributed to a variety of people and events.²⁹ The economic conditions and unsuitable law enforcement in Manchester as outlined above were undoubtedly instrumental, as was the lack of a strong leadership within the radical movement. Sir John Byng, the supreme commander of the Northern Forces, was informed by the Manchester magistrates that his presence was not necessary. As a consequence, this absence resulted in the troops being placed under the command of the less experienced Lieutenant Colonel L'Estrange which may have contributed to the chaos and lack of military organisation. Read firmly places the blame with the Manchester magistrates, claiming that Sidmouth had expressly instructed them to avoid violence, whilst also criticising the government for their lack of supervision of the magistrates and the unseemliness of their unequivocal

support: 'That the government felt bound to support the Manchester magistrates in general terms was perhaps not surprising. What was much less defensible was the haste and gullibility with which they rushed to their defence in detail.'³⁰ Thompson's condemnation of the government is even stronger: 'If the government was unprepared for the news of Peterloo, no authorities have ever acted so vigorously to make themselves accomplices after the fact.'³¹ Undoubtedly the government was to blame, if not for the specific events of Peterloo, then for the climate of fear and culture of repression which legitimised the maiming and killing of its own citizens.

Moreover, it is the actions of the MYC that attracts the force of Thompson's opprobrium. Their drunkenness and bad horsemanship, as outlined by Marlow, cannot excuse their behaviour and Thompson is indeed correct when he declares: 'The panic was not (as has been suggested) the panic of bad horsemen hemmed in by a crowd. It was the panic of class hatred'.³² The MYC, described by Belchem as 'inebriated publicans, butchers and shopkeepers' comprised local men out with scores to settle who attacked defenceless people and pursued them as they tried to escape.³³ It is also worth noting that, according to O'Gorman, 'the magistrates and constables were almost all members of anti-reform groups, adding a political slant to their grievances'.³⁴ One of the most telling pieces of evidence to support Thompson's assertion that 'there is no term for this but class war' is Marlow's claim that the MYC were the only forces to send their sabres to be sharpened prior to 16 August. At the inquest into the death of John Lees, one of those killed at Peterloo, Daniel Kennedy testified that he sharpened sixty-three of the yeomanry's swords in July, although he claimed not to know the reason why.³⁵

The question, therefore, is why England did not witness a revolution in 1819: its people were starving, the government and monarchy were abhorred and a legitimate, peaceful march had resulted in a massacre. In the months following Peterloo, the government, unmindful of public opinion, swiftly introduced even more draconian laws known as the Six Acts, aimed at tightening the stranglehold on all forms of radical expression. Key figures such as Hunt were imprisoned due to their involvement at Peterloo and there was no effective leadership within the radical movement to capitalise on the sense of national outrage. Institutionalised by factory life and inculcated with the work ethic promulgated by dissenting religions so popular in the manufacturing towns and cities, the urban poor continued to organise and protest but failed to use their collective force to engender fundamental change. For Thompson the legacy of Peterloo is that never again was such force



4 Plaque commemorating the Peterloo Massacre, Manchester. Replacing an earlier plaque that spoke only of the 'dispersal by the military'.

used by the authorities on a peaceful crowd: 'Since the moral consensus of the nation outlawed the riding down and sabreing of an unarmed crowd, the corollary followed – that the right of the public meeting had been gained.'³⁶ Whether Peterloo was instrumental in achieving parliamentary reform in 1832 cannot be proven. Whilst the Chartists continued to champion Peterloo in the 1830s and 1840s, it was not until 1951, when a mural was commissioned in the newly rebuilt Free Trade Hall, that Manchester provided a memorial to those who had died, although the mural painted by A. Sherwood Edwards, now on an upstairs corridor in the Radisson Hotel, depicts only the aftermath of the event. Nearly 200 years after the event, there is still a campaign 'for a fitting memorial to the martyrs of democracy'.³⁷

The response

The battle to control the representation of Peterloo in the public consciousness began before the blood had dried on St Peter's Field. As the only journalist employed by a national newspaper present on that day, John Tyas' eye-witness account published in *The Times* on 19 August helped shape the public response to the massacre.³⁸ He stresses the peaceful nature of the crowd and the unwarranted violence by the Yeomanry: 'Not a brick-bat was thrown at [the Yeomanry] – not a pistol was fired at them during this period – all was quiet and orderly'. Once arrests had been made, the Yeomanry began 'cutting most indiscriminately to the right and the left.'³⁹ Eye-witness testimony such as this helped to galvanise public opinion against the government, although such a view was not shared by the anonymous writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of the same month, in which the journalist expresses 'our strongest approbation of the conduct of unprincipled individuals, whose only object, under the specious names of patriotism, is to effect a Revolution, and aggrandize themselves on the ruins of their country'.⁴⁰

Unsurprisingly, Tory periodicals such as the *Quarterly Review* and *Gentleman's Magazine* focus on the injuries sustained by the Yeomanry, rather than those inflicted by it upon the unarmed demonstrators. The *Gentleman's Magazine* dispassionately notes: 'four persons were killed', before detailing the injuries of one of the Yeomanry, a 'Mr. Hume'.⁴¹ An article in the *Quarterly* in January 1820 places the blame firmly with the protestors: '[The Yeomanry] were assailed not only with abuse, but with heavy stones and brickbats: several yeomen were felled from their horses; one was hurt mortally.'⁴² In the eyes of the Tory press and the administration it upheld, the actions of the Yeomen were justified in the protection of the state from a riotous mob. Sidmouth sent a letter of congratulations to the magistrates and military, highlighting 'the great satisfaction derived by his Royal Highness from their prompt, decisive and efficient measures for the preservation of the public peace.'⁴³ Despite the assured tone of the letter, the fear of revolution was a very real one.

The response of the radical press

Horrid Massacre at Manchester⁴⁴

Disturbances at Manchester⁴⁵

The first two radical weeklies to respond to Peterloo were *Sherwin's Weekly Political Register* on 21 August and the *Examiner* on 22 August,

thereby representing two ends of the radical continuum in response to events in Manchester, as exemplified by the headlines above. Richard Carlile's revolutionary rhetoric in the *Register* is the most extreme radical response and is undoubtedly coloured by Carlile's presence in Manchester on the fateful day. His article begins:

It is impossible to find words to express the horror which every man must feel at the proceedings of the agents of the Borough-mongers on Monday last, at Manchester. It is out of the pale of words to describe the abhorrence which every true Englishman must feel towards the abettors and the actors in that murderous scene.⁴⁶

For Carlile, the only possible response is for the people to 'arm themselves immediately, for the recovery of their rights'. The outcome of such a conflict is unknown 'but it may with safety be said, that neither this nor any other country ever remained long in such a condition without a revolution.'⁴⁷ In an open letter to Sidmouth following the editorial, Carlile continues his revolutionary discourse:

The people, not only of Manchester, but of the whole country are in duty bound and by the laws of nature imperatively called upon to provide themselves with arms and hold their public meetings with arms in their hands, to defend themselves against the attacks of similar assassins, acting in the true *Castlereagan* character.⁴⁸

For Carlile, revolution is not only one's duty but also a natural response to the unnatural actions of a despotic regime. Such seditious writing was inevitably going to court the attentions of the authorities. *Sherwin's Weekly Political Register* did not appear after 21 August and, by November, Carlile was in gaol.

Having already served a gaol sentence for libel, Leigh Hunt's editorial in the *Examiner* is more tempered than Carlile's furious invective, drawing on the collective sense of 'astonishment and indignation' expressed by newspapers, with the exception of the *Courier*, which 'dwell[ed] with shuddering sympathy on the wounds of the constables and soldiers'.⁴⁹ Having countered the misrepresentations made in the *Courier*, Hunt's rage becomes apparent:

We lament as much as any human being possibly can the effusion of human blood, and all those first causes of wilfulness and injustice which give rise to it; but the seat-selling violators of the English Constitution can see, with philosophy enough, whole oceans of blood shed for the security of their own guilty power, or the restoration of a tyrannical dynasty; and the interested hypocritical howl raised by their hirelings at the fatal consequences of a disturbance to a few individuals, excites in us nothing but anger and disgust.⁵⁰

Hunt's powerful rhetoric attacks the very foundations of a corrupt regime, in which parliamentary seats are sold and the monarchy is tyrannical. Both Hunt and Carlile argue that such brutality is a violation of the Constitution and the ancient rights of the people. The discourse of English nationalism was to become a feature of Peterloo verse and is explored in more detail in Chapter 2. However, unlike Carlile, Hunt falls short of advocating revolution, or indeed any action on the part of the people.

The headline of the 28 August issue of the *Theological and Political Comet* – 'To the Manchester Bloodhounds' – echoes the *Black Dwarf* three days earlier.⁵¹ The letter 'From the Black Dwarf in London, to the Yellow Bounce at Japan', a well-used conceit by the editor, T.J. Wooler, states that the actions of the Yeomanry, the constables and the magistrates got out of control and was not what was intended by the 'boroughmongers'. 'They have slipped the bloodhounds too soon, and the bloodhounds were more *ferocious* than *wise*.'⁵² This hunting motif is replicated in many of the ensuing poems and songs, proving an effective propaganda tool in the demonisation of both the MYC and their huntsmen – Sidmouth and Castlereagh. The direct address to the 'Manchester Bloodhounds' in the *Comet* stresses the unnatural actions of the Yeomanry through a list of rhetorical questions:

Where is to be found a law that advocates such inhuman deeds, and that authorises such blood-hound whelps as you '*to cut an innocent man to pieces,*' or to have him tried for *high treason*? And, where is there not a law which demands the blood of a murderer, in satisfaction for the blood of murdered innocence?⁵³

Such questioning highlights how judicial norms were inverted, as the killers were never brought to justice despite numerous inquests into the deaths. The writer cites the address of Sir Francis Burdett to his electors in Westminster, which was printed in the *Black Dwarf* on 25 August:

What! Kill men *unarmed! Unresisting!*, and, Gracious God! WOMEN too, *disfigured, maimed, cut down, and trampled upon* by DRAGOONS. Is this ENGLAND? THIS A CHRISTIAN LAND! A LAND OF FREEDOM!⁵⁴

Burdett's letter is a powerful example of emotive rhetoric and its inclusion in both the *Black Dwarf* and the *Comet* provides a legitimacy and gravitas to their own responses. As an MP, Burdett was part of the British establishment. His vehement address demonstrates to the readers of these radical weeklies that their sentiments are echoed in the wider political arena, giving hope that action may be taken to redress the injustices of the state.

A letter printed in a pamphlet on 7 September 1819 and signed, ‘a country gentleman’ defends the Yeomanry as ‘one of the most respectable classes in England’ and attacks Burdett as acting in a manner unworthy of his class: ‘Such aspersions might, perhaps be expected from some two-penny scribbler, some wholesale vender of sedition and blasphemy [...]; but, good Heavens! That a man of independence and liberal education should be guilty of so unfounded and barbarous a statement!’⁵⁵

The sharing of discourse and similarities in style across the radical weeklies is an indication of the collaboration between publishers and writers. In the fervent atmosphere of August and September, when the number of radical weeklies was at its height, there was an awareness that the power of response lay in its scale and breadth. Recognition of the significance of the time is demonstrated by the opening address of the first issue of the *London Alfred; or, People’s Recorder*, one of the weeklies established to respond to Peterloo. It describes ‘the epoch’ as ‘the most eventful that ever occurred in the annals of British history’.⁵⁶ Whilst such a statement may be regarded as hyperbolic, this identification of the importance of the moment is shared by the periodicals and reflected in the urgency of their style and extravagance of their rhetoric.

Radical periodicals

The 1790s and the 1810s saw the proliferation of radical periodicals, spurred on by the ideals of the French Revolution in the 1790s and by the dire circumstances of life under the Liverpool administration in the second half of the 1810s. The French Revolutionary Wars (1793–1802) and Napoleonic Wars (1803–15) fostered waves of patriotism amongst the British and, as a consequence, radicalism declined in popularity from the end of the 1790s. Following the national euphoria surrounding the final defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, the harsh reality of economic depression led to social unrest and a resurgence in radicalism until 1820, at which point most radical leaders were imprisoned and the periodicals taxed out of existence.

Newspapers and periodicals did not appear in any number until the beginning of the eighteenth century; by 1709 there were eighteen daily London newspapers, with twenty-two provincial ones by 1725. Annual sales of newspapers reached 12.6 million in 1775.⁵⁷ The first decade of the eighteenth century also saw the first periodicals or journals. Daniel Defoe, one of the leading journalists of the time, launched the thrice-weekly *A Review of the Affairs of France* in 1704 and, five years later, *Tatler* was launched by the Irish writer and later Whig MP Richard

Steele. As the name suggests, the aim of *Tatler* was to report news and gossip from the London coffee houses, rather than politics. Two years later, Steele was joined by the poet and politician, Joseph Addison, in the publication of the *Spectator*. Although short-lived, the *Spectator* became one of the most significant periodicals of the eighteenth century and its influence is undoubtedly seen in the radical weeklies of the Romantic period.⁵⁸ Published daily, the one-page paper comprises a single essay and advertisements. Addison states the aim is ‘to enliven morality with wit and to temper wit with morality [...] to bring philosophy out of the closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and coffee houses’. By the tenth issue, Addison claimed that three thousand were sold daily but that for each copy sold, at least twenty people would read it.⁵⁹ Even if Addison’s estimates are a little optimistic, he clearly saw the *Spectator*’s role as influencing the conversations of the coffee houses, rather than just reporting them.

However, just as the newspaper industry began to burgeon, the government sought to restrict its availability through taxation. The first Stamp Act of 1712 imposed a tax of a penny a sheet, thereby pricing the news beyond the means of the working man. By 1797, tax was seven pence a sheet.⁶⁰ Journals, magazines and periodicals succeeded in avoiding stamp duty by not directly reporting the news but by commenting on it.⁶¹ Letters, reports and fictional conversations enabled readers to garner the news of the day, whilst publishers kept prices low. This continued until the Six Acts of 1819 when stamp duty was extended to all publications which sold for less than sixpence and contained opinion about the news. What is abundantly clear is that the history of the press in England is paralleled by government action to control and restrict it, something that is arguably still occurring today.

Radical periodicals in the 1790s

England in the early 1790s was a hotbed of revolutionary and anti-revolutionary politics. Events in France had resulted in widespread support for the French in their removal of the corrupt class system and the absolute monarchy of the *ancien régime*. Even parts of the ruling Whig party were in favour of revolution until the advent of war in 1793 saw the public mood change and the government become ever more repressive over what it regarded as sedition. However, in the early years after the revolution, the reform movement in England capitalised on the new ideals of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* in galvanising support for parliamentary reform.

The reform movement in England emerged prior to the French Revolution. The Society for Constitutional Information (SCI) was founded in 1780 by Major John Cartwright, a moderate radical and stalwart of the reform movement until his death in the 1820s. Along with parliamentary reform, the SCI campaigned for the abolition of slavery and the repeal of the Test and Corporations Act, which banned dissenters from entering universities, the armed forces and the professions. The English intelligentsia had been dominated by dissenters since the mid-eighteenth century, including the industrialist Josiah Wedgwood and the scientist Joseph Priestley. In the ensuing decade this domination was continued by, among others, William Godwin, Richard Price, Mary Wollstonecraft and Thomas Paine.

The year 1792 brought the publication of the second part of Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* and the establishment of the London Corresponding Society (LCS) which joined the campaign for parliamentary reform but which sought to attract the labouring classes rather than the middle-class dissenters and reformers who swelled the ranks of the SCI. Key figures in the early years of the LCS were John Thelwall, Thomas Hardy and John Horne Tooke, who were to be famously tried for treason in 1794 and acquitted. The LCS was devoutly Paineite and the more moderate SCI was also moving in that direction through the efforts of Horne Tooke. Membership of the LCS was contingent upon an affirmative answer to three questions, the most significant of which asked:

Are you thoroughly persuaded that the welfare of the kingdoms require that every adult person, in possession of his reason, and not incapacitated by crimes, should have a vote for a Member of Parliament?⁶²

This demand for universal suffrage, annual parliaments and secret ballots, was to become the cornerstone of the radical reform movement and was printed on the banners carried proudly at Peterloo.

Similar societies sprang up in industrial cities, such as Manchester, Sheffield, Derby and Nottingham, as the reform movement gathered momentum. Many new political periodicals emerged in the 1790s, both moderate and radical, thereby lending their weight to the drive for reform, forming part of the cultural battle of the 1790s. Nevertheless, by the end of the decade the LCS and many of the political periodicals no longer existed. Harsh laws, war with France and the inescapable failures of the French Revolution led to the silencing of many reformers for the next twenty years.

The explosion of the radical press after 1789 was partly a response to the seismic events happening in Europe. The French Revolution had

violently and irreversibly removed politics from the hands of the few and put it into the hands of the many. Even if working men and women did not have the vote, they felt entitled to be informed about the new political ideologies that were changing the world. Radical periodicals met that demand, as well as responding to the cultural needs of the labouring classes through the inclusion of poetry and drama in their pages. Their oppositional discourse gave an identity and a nascent class-consciousness to the growing industrial workforce. Literacy levels rose during the eighteenth century with the increase in basic educational provision for the lower classes, particularly through charity and religious schools. Coupled with the rise of print culture, this empowerment of the masses caused great concern to the authorities, which feared that the dissemination of knowledge would lead to political instability. The response of the state was to tax newspapers even more harshly and outlaw meetings where it was likely that radical texts would be read aloud to those workers unable to read, spreading seditious views ever more widely. This moral panic is illustrated by the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, one of the key periodicals established in the 1790s to ride the wave of anti-French sentiment during the Revolutionary Wars:

We have long considered the establishment of newspapers in this country as a misfortune to be regretted; but since their influence has become predominant by the universality of their circulation, we regard it as a calamity most deeply to be deplored.⁶³

Despite such rhetoric and, given the relatively short lifespan of many of the radical periodicals of the 1790s, their influence on the succeeding generation of reformers is apparent.

Politics for the People (1793–95)

Two of the most significant and influential radical weeklies of the 1790s are Daniel Isaac Eaton's *Politics for the People; or, A Salmagundy for Swine* and Thomas Spence's *Pigs' Meat: Lessons for the Swinish Multitude*.⁶⁴ Both titles parody Edmund Burke's famous description of the people as the 'swinish multitude'. In his conservative, anti-Jacobin work of 1790, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Burke anticipates the disastrous consequences of the revolution 'when ancient opinions and rules of life are taken away [...] Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.'⁶⁵ The reform movement seized on this phrase time and again to satirise Burke by showing that the multitude was definitely not 'swinish'.⁶⁶ When *Politics for the*

People first appeared in September 1793 it was entitled *Hog's Wash*, a knowing comment on Burke and his anti-Jacobin ideology.

On the opening page of the first issue of *Politics for the People* is printed the following poem:

Thy magic Rod, audacious Burke,
 Could metamorphize Man to Pork,
 And quench the spark divine;
 But Eaton's Wonder-working Wand,
 By scattering Knowledge through the Land,
 Is making Men of Swine.⁶⁷

This satirical verse not only encapsulates the irreverence behind Eaton's work but also alludes to the underlying philosophy behind his periodical – the enlightenment of the common man through the dissemination of knowledge, one of the greatest fears of the government and of Burke. *Politics for the People* was its mission statement as well as its title. Like Spence, Eaton was a member of the LCS and voiced its views on parliamentary reform in the pages of his periodical. In March 1795, the two-penny *Politics for the People* was replaced by the one-penny *Philanthropist*, a smaller weekly but, for all intents and purposes, a continuation of *Politics for the People*. When the Treasonable and Seditious Practices Act and the Seditious Meetings Act, better known as the two gagging acts, came into force in 1795, Eaton went into hiding and then fled to the United States and by 1796 *Philanthropist* had ceased publication.

Pigs' Meat (1793–96)⁶⁸

Thomas Spence's intention for his new publication in 1793 reads:

To promote among the labouring part of mankind proper ideas of their situation, of their importance, and of their rights, and to convince them that their forlorn condition has not been entirely overlooked and forgotten, nor their just cause unpleaded, neither by their maker nor by the best and most enlightened of men in all ages.⁶⁹

Throughout his life, Spence saw his role as mainly that of an educator. Once a schoolmaster in his native Newcastle, he spent his life writing lectures and pamphlets, informing readers and listeners of his plans for wholesale reform. He also saw himself as a spokesman for the disenfranchised and the voiceless, reminding them, as he states above, that they are not forgotten. The emphasis on the rights of the people is not just Painite rhetoric but reference to the very heart of Spence's beliefs: the redistribution and common ownership of the land. Inspired by the works of seventeenth-century republicans, such as James Harrington

and Algernon Sidney, Spence's views linked the radicalism of the Romantic period to that of the English Revolution, a link which was made even stronger and more explicit by the radical writers of 1819.

As with *Politics for the People*, *Pigs' Meat* is a cornucopia of extracts, poems and letters. Extracts from Harrington's *Oceana* feature regularly, along with the works of John Locke, Richard Price and Jonathan Swift. Poems by Milton and Goldsmith sit alongside songs by Spence. In many of his songs he adopts the tradition of the broadside ballad of stating a known tune, such as 'Rule Britannia' and 'God Save the King' thereby encouraging a collective, communal performance.⁷⁰ This technique was used later in the *Black Dwarf* and *Medusa*.

Following his death in 1814, his followers, Thomas Evans, Arthur Thistlewood and 'Dr' James Watson, known as the Spencean Philanthropists, continued his work. Post Waterloo, the ultra-radical Spenceans were the most extreme element of the reform movement, advocating violent insurrection in order to achieve Spence's core belief of the redistribution of land; however, their involvement at Peterloo was negligible. Their influence is more evident in many of the most radical periodicals published in this era.

Radical periodicals in the 1810s

When the euphoria accompanying the British victory at Waterloo and the subsequent demise of Napoleon dissipated, the reality of post-war Britain reignited the reform movement, leading to the brief period of 1815–1819 becoming, in Thompson's words, 'the heroic age of popular radicalism.'⁷¹ The economic hardships, social unrest and government repression have been outlined above in the build up to Peterloo. As the political climate became even harsher for the labouring classes, the need for the oppressed to have a voice became ever more necessary. Inspired by the weeklies of Spence and Eaton, the new generation of publishers sought to rally the people and garner support for the re-energised reform movement. However, whereas publications such as *Pigs' Meat* were driven by ideology, topicality became the motivating force for this new generation. The implicit understanding that it was events rather than ideas that shaped people's opinions is reinforced by the number of periodicals that emerged immediately after Peterloo.

As well as the undoubted influence of Paine, Spence and Eaton on this new generation of writers, the significance of William Cobbett must not be ignored. Kevin Gilmartin maintains that 'the weekly newspaper or pamphlet was the most important print vehicle for early nineteenth-century radical argument and opinion' and credits Cobbett with begin-

ning that trend with the establishment of *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register* in 1802.⁷² Initially pro-government, by 1805 Cobbett had turned against the government and began to promote the causes of the working man:

Gentlemen, We are now all well convinced, that the real cause of the evils, with which our country is affected, is the want of reform on the Commons' House of Parliament; and, therefore, it becomes our duty to take into our serious consideration what we ourselves ought *to do* in order to assist in the producing of such reform.⁷³

As is evident above, the *Register* never emulated the radical tones of *Pigs' Meat*; moreover, at the price of just over one shilling, it was beyond the means of its intended readership. In 1816 Cobbett issued an unstamped version of the *Register*, also known as the *Two-Penny Trash*, which, at its height, sold more than 40,000 copies a week.⁷⁴ Following the suspension of Habeas Corpus in 1817, Cobbett expected to be arrested and therefore fled to the United States. As a consequence, the popularity and influence of the *Register* declined and it played no role in the radical response to Peterloo.

The *Cap of Liberty*, the *Briton*, the *Medusa*, the *White Hat* and the *Theological and Political Comet* were some of the London-based radical weeklies that proliferated in the aftermath of Peterloo. They were all short-lived, falling victim to the oppressive Six Acts, passed by a threatened government at the end of November 1819 in order to destroy any incipient rebellion. As well as the imposition of sixpence stamp duty, The Newspaper and Stamp Duties Act required printers and publishers to post a bond of £300. In effect, this repressive measure ensured the demise of the majority of the radical weeklies; a price of seven or eight pence per issue would have been beyond the means of the vast majority of the weeklies' readers; however, the legacy of these short-lived publications lies in their dynamic journalism and contribution to the radical debate. The letters, poems, songs and editorials within them mirror the tavern meetings and communal activities of the reform societies throughout the country. Today they provide us with an insight into the turbulence of the times – their irreverence, humour and energy undimmed by the intervening two centuries.

The *Cap of Liberty* (1819–20)

The *Cap of Liberty* ran for eighteen weekly issues from 8 September 1819 until 5 January 1820 and was priced at two pence. It was printed in Smithfield by Thomas Davison, a well-known ultra-radical, who also published *Medusa*, the *Theological and Political Comet*, the

Deists' Magazine and *London Alfred*.⁷⁵ The editor was James Griffin, an apprentice surgeon turned bookseller and publisher who had been involved in the London radical underworld since 1817. The content of the revolutionary *Cap of Liberty* is dominated by Peterloo and is aptly described by Paul Keen as 'the aggressive and often raucous voice of ultra-radicalism.'⁷⁶ As well as calling for reform, *Cap of Liberty* is also concerned with such issues as the position of Catholics in Ireland, printing several poems celebrating Irish rebel heroes, such as Robert Emmet and Thomas Russell.

The journal's name is taken from the symbol of revolution, also known as the *bonnet rouge*, worn by Jacobins in France during The Terror of 1793 and 1794. Described by John Belchem as a:

Roman badge of freedom. It was an ancient and revered emblem which had adorned Britannia's spear and the coinage of the realm until the 1790s when it acquired revolutionary connotations as the livery of French anarchy and Jacobin terror.⁷⁷

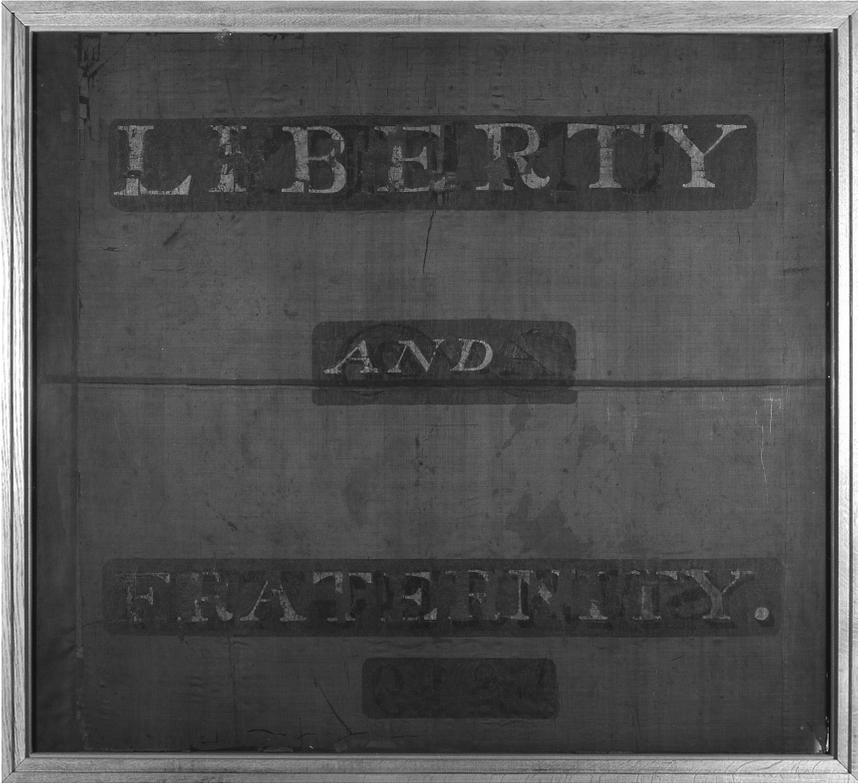
Caps appeared at the Spa Fields Uprising in 1816 and again at Peterloo where the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry regarded them as objects to be seized, along with the banners.⁷⁸

The publisher of *Cap of Liberty*, Thomas Davison, or Davidson, was a republican, a deist and a Painite, who was a member of the ultra-radical Spenceans led by Watson. This group also included Arthur Thistlewood, who was to be executed for his role in the Cato Street conspiracy; the radical preacher and son of a slave, Robert Wedderburn; and the hairdresser turned poet, E.J. Blandford. Davison was a journeyman printer who, according to McCalman, 'became one of London's leading ultra-radical publishers in 1819–20.'⁷⁹ In 1820, following the failure of all of his publishing ventures, Davison was sentenced to two-years' imprisonment and £100 fine for blasphemous libel. He spent the last years of his life in penury as a bookseller.

The *Briton* (1819)

The *Briton* is one of the shortest lived of the London radical weeklies to emerge after Peterloo and one of the most mysterious. Costing a penny, it ran for nine issues from 25 September until 20 November 1819, ceasing publication prior to the passing of the Six Acts. Printed in Aldersgate, London, nothing is known about the publisher – J. Turner. The following epigraph appears under the title on the front page of each issue:

Let us think. Let us act as the brave,
And die for REFORM if need be;



5 Peterloo banner.

He's a blockhead, a traitor, a slave,
Who will not attempt to be free.⁸⁰

The radical, or even revolutionary ideology underpinning the periodical is apparent in this verse in its call for action in the cause of reform. As well as radicalism, the *Briton* also espouses Christianity and is opposed to the 'establishment of Atheism or Deism' which is 'the avowed object of some of the Reformers', in addition to 'counteract[ing] the baneful tendency of such pernicious publications [...] [which] is not the only object which the managers of the BRITON have in view. Next to the preservation of Religion, is the preservation of the Rights of Man.'⁸¹ This combination of radicalism and Christianity is unusual in the radical press and perhaps suggests that its publisher was not part of the Spencean coterie of Davison and Shorter.

The title of the *Briton* is an example of what Anne Janowitz refers to as 'oppositional patriotism', a common eighteenth-century stance

adopted by radicals whose own brand of patriotism, such as the defence of the British Constitution and ancient Anglo-Saxon rights, was in opposition to the patriotism espoused by a German monarchy and Francophile aristocracy.⁸²

The *Medusa* (1819–20)

The *Medusa; or Penny Politician* was one of the most radical of the radical weeklies and one of the more successful. It ran for forty-six issues from 20 February 1819 until 7 January 1820 and cost one penny. Along with *Cap of Liberty* and *Theological and Political Comet*, it was published by Thomas Davison in Smithfield, although the first twelve issues were printed by W. Mason in Clerkenwell Green. Its motto – ‘Let’s die like Men, and not be sold like Slaves’ – is a clear statement of its revolutionary ideals and is taken from the 1795 play *Venice Preserv’d* by John Philip Kemble, seemingly an unlikely source of revolutionary rhetoric.⁸³ *Medusa*’s style is aptly described by Keen as containing ‘uncompromising and often belligerent dissent’.⁸⁴ It contains a great deal of poetry, including poems by the noted radical poets E.J. Blandford and Allen Davenport. The title, *Medusa*, is an obvious reference to the snake-haired monster from Greek mythology, whose direct stare would turn men to stone. Interestingly, Medusa was a gorgon, the name of another radical weekly published between 1818 and 1819.⁸⁵ Davison’s choice of title may be an allusion to the power and indestructibility of radical thought.

The *Theological and Political Comet* (1819)

The *Theological and Political Comet* is another radical weekly published by Thomas Davison. Published between 24 July and 13 November 1819, it ran for seventeen issues and cost one and a half pence. ‘And Political’ was appended to the original title of the *Theological Comet* following Peterloo, an indication of its increased focus on political issues. It was edited by Robert Shorter, who also wrote poetry under the pseudonym Sir John Falstaff, an allusion to the Shakespearean comic character from *Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The following was printed at the end of each issue:

Edited by Sir John Falstaff, editor of the first two numbers of the *Medusa*, the *London Weekly Magazine*, etc. Printed and published by R. Shorter, Strand and sold by all free-thinking booksellers, and Newsmen, who need not be fearful of vending this publication.⁸⁶

It would seem that Shorter was keen to downplay both the role played by Davison and the risks taken by booksellers in selling seditious material.

The accompanying by-line or epigraph to the periodical states: 'It is a shame to trust our souls in the hands of those we should be afraid to trust with our money: – Come, come, venture to think for yourselves.' This exhortation to its readers to think for themselves is carried into the editorial in its first issue, addressed 'To the free-thinking people of England':

Enlightened as ye are, are ye sufficiently enlightened to see through, and comprehend the meaning of a great, thick book, which is commonly called, and generally known by the name of, THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT?⁸⁷

Shorter evidently regards the bible as a tool of social repression and endeavours to enlighten his readers against its pernicious influence. Despite the use of 'theological' in its title, the *Theological and Political Comet* is militantly secular.

The White Hat (1819)

Probably the most ephemeral of the radical weeklies, it is unclear how many issues were produced. Keen notes that only one issue appeared on 19 October 1819, whereas Scrivener maintains that the weekly ran for nine issues from 19 October until 11 December 1819.⁸⁸ Costing two pence, it was printed and published in Whitechapel by C. Teulon, about whom little is known. The white hat from which its title is taken is a symbol of radical protest, worn with green ribbons and accompanied by a black crepe armband after Peterloo as 'an emblem of class conflict'.⁸⁹ The paper describes the significance of the hat:

The WHITE HAT, worn by so many steady and decided patriots battered by the bludgeons of the special constables, slashed by the sabres of the Yeomanry Cavalry [...] is become a badge too explicit to be mistaken, too honourable to be neglected, and too formidable to be despised.⁹⁰

Along with the cap of liberty, clothing was clearly a signifier of radicalism. The broadside ballad *The White Hat*, in Chapter 2, attributes the wearing of the white hat to both Henry Hunt and Oliver Cromwell, thereby providing a provenance for this radical symbol.

The Black Dwarf (1817–24)

Thomas Jonathan Wooler's *Black Dwarf* is the most successful of the radical weeklies to emerge after the Napoleonic Wars. Costing four pence and with a circulation of more than 12,000 in 1819, it sold more than double the number of copies of *The Times* and achieved national circulation.⁹¹ Following the decline of Cobbett's *Political Register* in 1817, Wooler became the most popular journalist in England and the

Black Dwarf ‘the nation’s most widely read radical journal.’⁹² Wooler’s trial in 1817 for two counts of seditious libel was a highly publicised event and he defended himself to a packed courthouse. Convicted on one of the two charges, Wooler spent a month in prison before being released following a petition to the House of Commons by Francis Burdett.

From its inception in January 1817, the *Black Dwarf* was satirical in tone and vehement in its advocacy of radical constitutionalism. Partly funded by Major Cartwright, it survived the Six Acts and continued until Cartwright’s death in 1824, after which Wooler appears to have faded out of radical politics. According to Jon Klancher it appealed to ‘northern miners and urban artisans’ who ‘tucked the *Black Dwarf* prominently in their hats for all to see’ and was one of the few radical weeklies to achieve a national readership.⁹³ Throughout its eight-year existence, the *Black Dwarf* featured topical poetry as another form of political satire, along with parodies and numerous letters from the eponymous Black Dwarf, which all contribute to the carnivalesque tone of the paper. The title may have been inspired by Walter Scott’s 1816 novel of the same name, in which, according to folklore, the black dwarf defended wild animals from hunters.⁹⁴ The motto for each issue is from Alexander Pope’s poem from 1727, ‘The First Satire of the Second Book of Horace’:

Satire’s my weapon; but I’m too discreet,
To run a-muck and tilt at all I meet:
I only wear it in a land of Hector’s,
Thieves, supercargoes, sharpers, and directors.⁹⁵

Just as Pope had written the imitations of Horace to satirise George II, Wooler’s apt choice of motto demonstrates his desire to satirise those in power.

Sherwin’s Weekly Political Register (1817–19) and the Republican (1819–26)

On 5 April 1817 the eighteen-year-old W.T. Sherwin published the two-penny *Sherwin’s Weekly Political Register*, a Painite journal which quickly gained in popularity. The title would appear to be a parody of the more moderate *Cobbett’s Weekly Political Register*. Sherwin was joined later in 1817 by Richard Carlile, more used to selling radical pamphlets and periodicals than writing them. Carlile became the publisher, a role which made him, rather than Sherwin, liable for prosecution if the *Register* published anything seditious. Carlile quickly became an important figure in radical circles and was due to speak on the hustings

at St Peter's Field on 16 August 1819 alongside Henry Hunt. Unlike Hunt, Carlile managed to avoid arrest and published his eye-witness account of events that day in the 21 August issue of *Sherwin's Weekly Political Register* under the headline 'Horrid Massacre at Manchester'. The following issue of the *Register* was its last and six days later Carlile published the first issue of the *Republican*, which was the name originally used by Sherwin. It continued until December 1826 when dwindling sales forced Carlile to cease publication. Whether the *Register* folded due to the end of Sherwin's involvement or his attempt to escape prosecution is unclear. Little is known of Sherwin after 1819 and he does not appear to have had any involvement in the *Republican*. In the first issue, Carlile states that the new publication is 'merely a continuation' of the *Register*, with its new title needing 'no explanation, nor shall its object be disguised.'⁹⁶

Despite the new periodical, Carlile was on trial in October 1819 charged with several counts of blasphemy and seditious libel for his work in the *Republican* and for publishing the works of Paine. He was found guilty and sentenced to six years in Dorchester Gaol, from where he continued to write the *Republican* which was published by his wife Jane with the help of Davison. Carlile claims that during his trial, sales of the *Republican* reached 15,000 a week. Even though Carlile is perhaps best known for publishing several pirate editions of Shelley's *Queen Mab* in the 1820s, he disliked poetry and, as a consequence, published little of it in the *Republican*.

The Examiner (1808–81)

Aptly described by Thompson as 'the weekly of the Radical intelligentsia', the *Examiner*, priced at sixpence, was aimed at a more literary, middle-class readership than the more extreme radical weeklies.⁹⁷ It was published by John Hunt and edited by his brother Leigh until 1821. It ultimately ran for 3,813 editions with circulation of around 8,000 in 1812 which declined to about 4,000 by 1818.⁹⁸ The *Examiner* is probably best known for publishing the work of some of the Romantic period's greatest writers: Byron, Shelley, Keats and Hazlitt. The *Examiner* was no stranger to controversy. Leigh Hunt was found guilty of libelling the Prince Regent in 1813 and sentenced to two-and-a-half years' imprisonment. This may explain why Hunt did not publish any of Shelley's Peterloo poems, despite Shelley sending *The Masque of Anarchy* to him in September 1819 and the sonnet 'England in 1819', three months later.⁹⁹ In fact only two poems directly concerning Peterloo were printed in *The Examiner*.

Hunt sought to distance his publication from the ultra-radical

weeklies that sprang up in the weeks and months after Peterloo. In the *Examiner* on 7 November 1819 he accuses the *Cap of Liberty* of being run by government spies, such as the notorious William Oliver who was instrumental in organising the Pentridge Uprising in 1817 in order to rout out revolutionaries:

There is a weekly publication now before us (the *Cap of Liberty*, for Oct. 20) containing language and sentiments of the most foolish and atrocious kind, – just such language and sentiments as we may reasonably suppose would be used by Oliver and C., to answer their diabolical purposes.¹⁰⁰

The *Cap of Liberty* issued an angry five-page rebuttal to Hunt's 'wanton charge' on 17 November:

The sole acknowledged foundation of this charge originates in the fact that the *Cap of Liberty* has taken a long lead of most of its contemporary publications in the cause of Reform. It has hitherto, and always will, at every hazard, pursue the path from which the *Examiner* retired in terror and dismay. The prison of which Mr Hunt was an inhabitant for two years [...] has clipped his pinions, and he since has soared upon a less aspiring wing.¹⁰¹

The accusation that Hunt's radicalism was somewhat tempered following his imprisonment has a ring of truth to it.

The *Manchester Observer*

Founded in January 1818 by the radicals John Saxton, James Wroe and John Knight, the *Manchester Observer* reached a circulation of 4,000 twelve months after its inception and was bought in many industrial towns and cities by working-class readers.¹⁰² Radical and non-conformist, the weekly paper printed news and letters, as well as poems. In March 1819, Wroe, Knight and another part-owner of the paper, Joseph Johnson, formed the Patriotic Union Society and invited Hunt to speak at a meeting in the summer of 1819. They were all present at Peterloo; Saxton, Knight and Johnson were arrested alongside Hunt, with Wroe arrested soon after for publishing a pamphlet detailing the events of the day. Wroe is also famed for coining the term 'Peter-Loo' in the *Observer*, a few days after the event. The *Observer* published the greatest number of Peterloo poems, some of which appeared in other publications a few days later. Thompson claims that the newspaper 'had a greater sense of the *news* of the [radical] movement than any competitor' with circulation figures close to those of the *Black Dwarf* by the end of 1819; however, despite its sales, the paper was beset by financial difficulties, compounded by the repeated libel prosecutions meted out against its editors.¹⁰³ In March 1821, the *Manchester*

Guardian was established and the *Observer* ceased publication shortly afterwards.

The broadside ballad¹⁰⁴

Alongside the verse published in the radical press in response to the Peterloo Massacre, numerous broadside ballads appeared on the streets of Manchester and London. Poems and songs have a longstanding tradition within English vernacular culture as a swiftly produced and widely disseminated method of information, commemoration and protest. The radical press in 1819 sought to replicate the immediacy and accessibility of the broadside as part of a wider cultural response to the events in Manchester, as well as contributing in innovative ways to the English tradition of protest poetry.

Broadside ballads have been in existence since the early sixteenth century, soon after Caxton's invention of the printing press. A broadside is a single sheet of paper, usually quarto (10" by 8"), with printing in two columns on one side, often accompanied by a woodcut at the top. They were quick to print and cheap for ballad singers and peddlers to sell at markets and fairs throughout the country. Stationers would pin them on the walls outside their shops and innkeepers would paste them on tavern walls to be enjoyed by their customers. At prices ranging from half a penny to sixpence, they were accessible to the majority of the labouring classes, for whom they were printed and to whom they were sold. Prose broadsides were also printed, often as a way of disseminating news; however, it is the broadside ballad, with its diversity of subject matter and accessibility of style, that was the cornerstone of vernacular culture from Tudor times until the mid-Victorian era, when the increase in newspapers led to its decline.

As Mark Booth notes, 'the broadside ballad is a great meeting ground for orality and literacy'.¹⁰⁵ Folk tales and ancient romances with their origins in oral culture would routinely be printed as broadsides. Tales of Robin Hood and Jack the Giant Killer were perennial favourites, together with the Elizabethan ballad of *Chevy Chase* which narrates events surrounding a conflict between the English Earl Percy of Northumberland and the Scottish Earl Douglas resulting in the Battle of Otterburn in 1388, in which both noblemen died. Towards the end of the sixty-eight stanzas, the respective kings are informed of the deaths:

The news was brought to Edinburgh,
Where Scotland's king did reign,
That brave Earl Douglas suddenly
Was with an arrow slain.

‘O, heavy news!’ King James did say,
 ‘Scotland may witness be,
 I have not any captain more
 Of such account as he!’
 Like tidings to King Henry came,
 Within as short a space,
 That Percy of Northumberland,
 Was slain in Chevy Chase.¹⁰⁶

As with so many ballads, *Chevy Chase* narrates a significant event in British history as a way of commemorating it as well as passing on the tale to future generations. The form of this ballad is one of the most common; the four-line stanzas with alternate iambic tetrameters and trimeters and an *abcb* rhyme scheme is a form frequently used by ballad writers, as is the tune.

The tunes of the ballads are often stated at the top of the broadside, reliant upon the knowledge of the reader, as musical notation would have been prohibitively expensive to print and illegible to most of the buyers of broadsides. The use of traditional tunes for new ballads was commonplace and is evident in a number of the Peterloo poems. By printing poems and songs from oral culture, the broadside would provide a degree of stability to the text, moving it from the fluidity of oral transmission to the more concrete form of print culture; however, the transmission between oral and print culture worked two ways: newly composed ballads would be assimilated into oral culture, as many people would learn them by ear as opposed to reading the text. Familiarity with the tune would facilitate this process, enabling the listener to learn a new ballad with remarkable ease.

Ballads were largely rooted in vernacular culture with ballad singers and hawkers on the very margins of society, frequently on the wrong side of the law and often arrested as vagrants. As well as disseminating news and retelling folktales, ballads were often used as a form of social protest and political propaganda. Aware of the many pro-Royalist broadsides being printed during the English Revolution, Oliver Cromwell outlawed the printing and selling of ballads in 1647. When the law was revoked during the Restoration, there was a proliferation of ballads and songs with Samuel Pepys becoming a keen collector.¹⁰⁷ Despite such notable collectors, the ballad was still regarded as a low form of culture at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In 1708 the *Dictionary Anglo-Britannicum* defined the ballad as: ‘a common song sung up and down the streets.’¹⁰⁸ Samuel Johnson’s 1755 *Dictionary of the English Language* was equally as condescending. The ballad ‘once signified a solemn and sacred song [...] but now it is

nothing but trifling verse.¹⁰⁹ By the end of the century, however, the ballad was regarded with more suspicion than disdain:

BALLAD: a kind of song, adapted to the capacity of the lower class of the people; who being mightily taken with the species of poetry, are thereby not a little influenced in the conduct of their lives. Hence we find, that seditious and designing men never fail to spread ballads among the people, with a view to gain them over to their side.¹¹⁰

This rather alarmist definition from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* suggests that by the 1790s the ballad was regarded as a potentially dangerous text that contributed towards the spread of political literacy in the years following the French Revolution. Its reference to the politicisation of ‘the lower class’ through the dissemination of the ballad by ‘seditious’ men is indicative of both the fear of the ‘mob’ and the understanding of the ballad as part of a movement against the state due to its accessibility. The inclusion of ballads in periodicals of the 1790s was partly due to the familiarity of the reader, whether middle class or labouring class, with the form: ‘the simple stanza-plus-refrain acquired a poetic responsibility which it had not previously had.’¹¹¹ The adoption of the broadside ballad by Spence and other radical poets of the 1790s highlights how the reform movement sought to utilise vernacular culture as a means of urging people to support the campaign for parliamentary reform.

The antiquarian movement

Despite this suspicion of the ballad as a weapon of subversion, during the eighteenth century it underwent a gentrification process, with the more traditional ballads becoming *de rigueur* among the middle classes. The antiquarian, Thomas Percy, is often credited with the revival of the ballad through the publication of the three-volume work, *The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765, but in fact renewed interest in the ballad and vernacular English culture can be traced back to the beginning of the eighteenth century and the pages of the *Spectator*. In two essays published in May 1711 Joseph Addison champions the ballad’s simplicity of style arguing that it ‘pleases all Kinds of Palates’, even those who ‘have formed to themselves a wrong artificial Taste upon little fanciful Authors and Writers of Epigram’.¹¹² This attack was part of a counter movement to the domination of neoclassicism at the time. The strict rules and influence of Greek and Roman culture stifled literary expression, and Addison’s argument on the merits of the ballad was a way of asserting an English cultural identity. Within these two

essays Addison encapsulates the fundamental qualities of the ballad in its appeal across time and social class as a result of its accessibility of language and closeness to nature.

Another key figure in the eighteenth-century ballad revival is Joseph Ritson, whose work, *A Select Collection of English Songs*, published in 1783, was in direct competition with Percy's *Reliques*. The rivalry between these two key figures of the ballad revival is highly significant as it embodies the political competition over the appropriation of the ballad form. Percy's aim, according to Susan Oliver, was the redemption of an 'oral ballad culture that had latterly become associated with vulgar street culture and popular protest', motivated by class politics and a 'response to urbanisation'.¹¹³ Through his inclusion of songs and poems from Shakespeare, Chaucer and Spenser, Percy was attempting to canonise vernacular poetry by giving it literary credentials; however the vernacular poetry selected by Percy was centuries old, such as *Chevy Chase* and the old Scottish ballad of *Barbara Allan*. By locating the ballad in the past, Percy hoped it would gain acceptance as a literary genre free from a political and social message. Nevertheless, this very attempt to both de-politicise and canonise the genre is in itself a political act and evidence of Percy's conservative agenda. As a consequence, Percy's efforts in reclaiming the past resulted in some fabrication in the editing process with the omission of stanzas deemed too bawdy and even the insertion of new verses written by Percy himself.

Ritson was highly critical of Percy, stating: 'Forgery and imposition of any kind, ought to be universally execrated, and never more when they are employed by persons high in rank or character, and those very circumstances are made use of to sanctify the deceit.'¹¹⁴ Ritson feared that the domination of antiquarianism by the elite would lead to a distortion of popular culture. His own most widely read work, *Robin Hood: A Collection of all the Ancient Poems, Songs and Ballads, now Extant, relative to that celebrated English Outlaw*, published in 1795, not only draws on a staple from traditional, oral culture but also demonstrates his anti-authoritarian views. Ritson's collections are more varied than Percy's and his radical sentiments are evident in his selections just as Percy's more conservative tendencies are in his. This contesting of the past was the focus of the debate between the two antiquarians and the battle over the rights to edit the ballads and appropriate the past.

Whereas Bishop Percy was very much a figure of the establishment, dedicating his book to the Countess of Northumberland and including ballads relating to the ancient family of Percy, Ritson, a conveyancer from Newcastle, was well known as a radical, friend to both William Godwin and Thomas Spence. When Ritson's *English Songs*

first appeared in 1783, it was published by Joseph Johnson with engravings by Blake. However, despite his radicalism, in 1800 Ritson was instrumental in helping Scott to collect material for his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, demonstrating perhaps that his regard for the preservation and distribution of traditional poetry outweighed his political allegiances.

Betty Bennett argues that the Napoleonic Wars were key to popularising the ballad in the late eighteenth century, more so than *Reliques*, due to the large number of ballads being published at the time, which were aimed at 'addressing and educating the populace on a vital national question.' It is interesting to note that none of the 350 poems in Bennett's collection was published by the radical press, despite the popularity of periodicals such as *Pigs' Meat* at the time.¹¹⁵ For Maureen McLane both the collaboration and competition amongst the balladeers ensured that 'eighteenth-century balladeering was thus already polemical'.¹¹⁶ Percy regarded ballads as a reinstatement of the ancient chivalric code and the celebration of English feudalism in the face of growing uncertainty at home, a sentiment shared by Scott, whereas Ritson's idea of the ballad as a radical, popular form of expression was adopted by the young Romantic poets Robert Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The inclusion of more recent ballads within Ritson's collection highlights the living nature of the genre as opposed to Percy's relics of the past. However, it is the versatility of the ballad as demonstrated by both Percy and Ritson that enabled writers as diverse as Scott and Spence to appropriate the genre and utilise it as a vehicle for their own political views.

The protest ballad

The historic union between ballad and protest dates back to Norman times, with one of the first extant ballads dated 1540 featuring the controversial figure of Thomas Cromwell as its subject matter.¹¹⁷ Murray Pittock defines the ballad as a 'major political weapon' with more than three million in circulation by the late sixteenth century.¹¹⁸ *The Poore Man Payes for All* first appeared as a broadside in 1630 with accompanying woodcuts depicting a rich nobleman and a poor labourer. It was to be sung to the tune of 'In slumbring sleepe I lay'. Following a traditional dream narrative, the narrator's imaginary world reflects the harsh reality of the times:

Me thought I saw how wealthy men
 Did grind the poore men's faces,
 And greedily did prey on them,

Not pitying their cases:
 They make them toyle and labour sore
 For wages too-too small;
 The rich men in their taverns rore,
 But poore men pay for all.¹¹⁹

This song concerns the perennial problem of the division between rich and poor in society. The proto-socialist understanding of the way in which the poor have no control over their labour and produce was to become an even stronger theme in an industrial society where a rural economy was largely replaced by an urban one. Over 150 years after *The Poore Man Pays for All* was sold on the streets, Spence returns to its theme in 'The Rights of Man for Me' to be sung to the tune of 'Maid of the Mill' and published in *Pigs' Meat* in 1795:

This world for the poor they say never was made,
 Their portion in the heav'ns be,
 And say that they envy them their happy lot,
 So certain's their felicity;
 But thank them for naught, if the heav'ns they could lett
 Few joys here the poor would e'er see,
 For *rents* they must toil and for *taxes* to boot,
 The Rights of Man then for me.¹²⁰

Spence explores the role of religion in the suppression of the poor and how the rewards of heaven are used to pacify and assure them of happiness after death. As the song continues, Spence extends his argument, encouraging the people to 'shake off all vile slavery' and follow the example of France in reclaiming the rights of freedom and democratic representation.

The influence of the broadside ballad on Spence's song is evident. The naming of a familiar tune encourages the reader to perform the song, enabling it to be transmitted both through print and oral culture. There are also examples of ballads appearing in radical weeklies and as broadsides. *Distress of the Poor* appears both as a broadside in Manchester and in *Sherwin's Weekly Political Register* in 1818. As the broadside is undated, it is unknown where it first appeared but it is clear evidence of the borrowing and movement of songs between the two media. The song was to be sung to the tune of 'Derry Down', one of the most widely used tunes and one which dates back to the sixteenth century.¹²¹ As with the two ballads considered above, *Distress of the Poor*, as its title suggests, also explores the lives of the poor:

The spinners of Manchester loudly complain
 How toilsome their labour, how trifling their gain;

The hatters, the dyers, the weavers also,
 Are starving with hunger you very well know.
 Derry Down, &c.

We fondly did hope when the wars were all o'er,
 That hunger and thirst we should never feel more,
 But woeful experience shews us the reverse,
 That the peace only served to complete our distress.¹²²

It is interesting to note that this song is rooted in both time and place; it depicts the lives of the cotton workers in Manchester in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars, where the low wages were resulting in starvation.

An adequate price for our labour we want,
 But this our proud gentry never will grant;
 So far they from striving our wrongs to redress,
 They laugh at our sufferings, and mock our distress.

Your cringing, soliciting never will do,
 Too oft it has proved unsuccessful to you;
 I could tell you a way to relieve your distress,
 But I can't bring the words in to metre my verse.¹²³

Unlike Spence, this writer refrains from employing revolutionary rhetoric but the implication is clear. Fear of prosecution may have tempered the song but the final line – 'Unite in the cause, and you're sure of the prize' – is suggestive of revolutionary action.

As well as the countless ballads that appeared in the 1790s championing reformist and even revolutionary sentiments, the ballad as a moral tale was used as a vehicle for conservative propaganda by the Evangelical Hannah More in the 1790s. Her *Cheap Repository Tracts*, published between 1795 and 1798, sold more than two million copies in a year.¹²⁴ Specifically aimed at moralising the labouring classes, and thus laying the foundations for Victorianism, they contain poems, stories and essays that are fiercely anti-Jacobin. Her social narratives show how hard work and morality are rewarded. More was consciously appropriating the culture of the chapbook which she regarded as part of a pagan tradition and one she wished to replace with moral, Christian instruction.¹²⁵ By subsidising the tracts, she was able to sell them more cheaply than the chapbooks, a marketing move that proved successful.¹²⁶

The ballad was of huge significance within the wider cultural sphere of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The appropriation of vernacular culture was a war being waged on both a class and a

political level. Percy and Ritson, among others, were contesting the representation of oral culture, with Percy wishing it to be seen as suitable for a middle-class readership, whilst Ritson strived to maintain its lower-class affiliation. Conservatives such as Hannah More and radicals such as Spence used the cheapness and popularity of the ballad and chapbook as a highly effective weapon in the propaganda war of the 1790s. In 1819 the ballad writers, journalists and poets were well aware of the power of the ballad in spreading news and galvanising support, a knowledge they exploited to the full as the following poems and songs demonstrate.

Notes

- 1 S. Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical*. 3 vols. (Manchester: Heywood, 1842), vol. 1, p. 208.
- 2 Over 300 eye-witness accounts of Peterloo survive, with Bamford's being the best known (R. Poole, 'What We Don't Know About Peterloo', in R. Poole (ed.), *Return to Peterloo. Manchester Region History Review*, 23 (2014), p. 2).
- 3 M. Bush, *The Casualties of Peterloo* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing, 2005), p. 90.
- 4 I am indebted to the work of Joyce Marlow, Robert Reid, Donald Read, R.J. White, Robert Poole, Michael Bush and E.P Thompson, among others, for their detailed accounts of Peterloo, its causes and effects.
- 5 *Manchester Observer* (21 August 1819), p. 687.
- 6 R. Reid, *The Peterloo Massacre* (London: Heinemann, 1989), pp. 199, 26, 15.
- 7 Timmins notes the inaccuracy of population statistics prior to the national census in 1801. The figure for 1801 is for both Manchester and Salford (in A. Kidd and T. Wyke (eds), *Manchester: Making the Modern City* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 30, 2). By 1802, Manchester had more than fifty cotton-spinning mills (T. Wyke, 'Rise and Decline of Cottonopolis', in *Ibid.*, pp. 69–117 at p. 72).
- 8 Michael E. Rose, 'Voices of the People', in Kidd and Wyke (eds), *Manchester*, p. 181.
- 9 Frank O'Gorman, 'Manchester Loyalism in the 1790s', in Poole, ed., *Return to Peterloo*, p. 21; S. Hylton, *A History of Manchester* (Andover: Phillimore, 2010), pp. 18, 53.
- 10 R.J. White, *Waterloo to Peterloo* (London: Heinemann, 1957), pp. 106, 125–6.
- 11 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1980), pp. 733, 723.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 683.
- 13 Reid, *The Peterloo Massacre*, p. 110; White, *Waterloo to Peterloo*, p. 146; D. Read, *Peterloo: The Massacre and its Background* (Manchester:

- Manchester University Press, 1958), p. 35; J. Belchem, *Orator Hunt: Henry Hunt and English Working-Class Radicalism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), p. 7.
- 14 J. Marlow, *The Peterloo Massacre* (London: Rapp and Whiting, 1969), pp. 66–7.
 - 15 Hylton, *A History of Manchester*, p. 85.
 - 16 M. Krantz, *'Rise Like Lions': The History and Lessons of the Peterloo Massacre of 1819* (London: Bookmark Publications, 2011), p. 1.
 - 17 C. Horner 'The Rise and Fall of Manchester's "Infernal Set of Miscreants": Radicalism in 1790s Manchester', *Manchester Region History Review*, 12 (1998), pp. 18–26.
 - 18 Reverend William Hay and Reverend Charles Ethelstone, two of the Peterloo magistrates, were Orangemen (K. Navickas, 'Lancashire Britishness: Patriotism in the Manchester Region During the Napoleonic Wars', in *Return to Peterloo*, ed. R Poole, p. 46–7).
 - 19 P. Mason, *Live Working or Die Fighting: How the Working Class Went Global* (London: Harvill Secker, 2007), p. 16; A. Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (London: Rivers Oram, 1995), pp. 159–60. See the introduction to Chapter 3 for more information.
 - 20 Hylton, *A History of Manchester*, p. 84; Marlow claims the crowd was between 10,000 and 30,000 (*The Peterloo Massacre*, p. 60).
 - 21 The marchers were named 'Blanketeers' as they intended to march wrapped in a blanket (Hylton, *A History of Manchester*, p. 84–5).
 - 22 Marlow, *The Peterloo Massacre*, p. 60. Poole has written on the significance of the wakes tradition to Peterloo: R. Poole, 'The March to Peterloo: Politics and Festivity in Late Georgian England', *Past and Present*, 192 (2006), pp. 109–53; Krantz, *'Rise Like Lions'*, p. 1. Marlow states that estimated numbers range from 30,000 to 150,000 with 60,000 as being generally accepted ('The Day', p. 4). The *Manchester Observer* of 21 August 1819 states 120,000 were present (p. 687).
 - 23 The announcement for the meeting was published in the *Manchester Observer* on 7 August 1819, p. 670.
 - 24 The announcement appeared in the *Manchester Observer* on 14 August 1819, p. 678.
 - 25 Reid, *The Peterloo Massacre*, pp. 154–7.
 - 26 According to Bush, the MYC pursued its victims with one woman, Mary Jones, being sabred a mile away from St Peter's (*The Casualties of Peterloo* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing, 2005), p. 47).
 - 27 R. Poole, 'By the Law and Sword: Peterloo Revisited', *History*, 91:302 (2006), p. 263.
 - 28 *Ibid.*, p. 276.
 - 29 Poole, 'What We Don't Know About Peterloo', p. 2.
 - 30 Read, *Peterloo*, p. 183.
 - 31 Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 750.

- 32 Marlow, *The Peterloo Massacre*, p. 98; Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 752.
- 33 Belchem, *Orator Hunt*, p. 13.
- 34 O'Gorman, 'Manchester Loyalism in the 1790s', p. 27.
- 35 *Coroner's Inquest into John Lees* (London: Hone, 1820), p. 161.
- 36 Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 780.
- 37 This is being led by the Peterloo Memorial Campaign www.peterloomassacre.org [accessed 19 November 2017]. George Cruikshank designed a memorial depicting a soldier on horseback with sabre raised and poised to attack a woman holding a baby.
- 38 Tyas was arrested alongside Henry Hunt. This account was reprinted in the *Examiner* on 22 August, entitled 'Dispersal of the Reform Meeting at Manchester by a Military Force' (608, pp. 539–43).
- 39 Tyas, 'Dispersal of the Reform Meeting', p. 2.
- 40 'Manchester Meeting', *Gentleman's Magazine & Historical Chronicle*, 89 (1819), pp. 171–4, at p. 171.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 173.
- 42 'State of Public Affairs', in *Quarterly* (January 1820), p. 502.
- 43 Quoted in P. McKeiver, *Peterloo Massacre 1819* (Manchester: Advance Press, 2009) p. 111.
- 44 *Sherwin's Weekly Political Register* 10:5 (1819), p. 237.
- 45 *Examiner* 608 (1819), p. 529.
- 46 *Sherwin's Weekly Political Register*, 10:5 (1819), p. 237.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 239. Lord Castlereagh was the Foreign Secretary, hated by many for his merciless reprisals following the failed 1798 uprising in Ireland.
- 49 *Examiner* 608 (1819), p. 529.
- 50 *Ibid.*, pp. 529, 530.
- 51 P. Keen, (ed.), *The Popular Radical Press in Britain 1817–21*. 6 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), vol. 6, p. 47.
- 52 *Black Dwarf*, 3:34 (1819), p. 551. Original emphases.
- 53 Keen, *The Popular Radical Press*, vol. 6, p. 48. Original emphases.
- 54 Following publication, Burdett was convicted for seditious libel, sentenced to three months' imprisonment in Marshalsea Prison and fined £2000 (*DNB*). Original emphases. *Black Dwarf* 3:34 (1819), p. 550.
- 55 *Hay Portfolio*, 60.
- 56 Keen, *The Popular Radical Press*, vol. 6, p. 145.
- 57 K. Williams, 'Read All About it': *A History of the British Newspaper* (London: Routledge, 2010) pp. 49, 54.
- 58 The original *Spectator* ran for 555 issues from March 1711 until December 1712. It was briefly revived in 1714, 1715 and 1753. Today's *Spectator* dates back to 1828.
- 59 The *Spectator*, 10 (1711), p. 1.
- 60 A sheet comprised four pages. Between 1712 and 1815 newspaper taxes increased by almost 800 per cent (Williams, 'Read All About it', p. 62).

- 61 J. Black, *English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 73.
- 62 Quoted in Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 19.
- 63 Quoted in Williams, 'Read All About it', p. 81.
- 64 Salmagundy is a dish containing cold meat, fish, eggs and onions (*OED*). As was common with radical weeklies, Spence and Eaton served as printers, publishers and editors.
- 65 Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 116–17.
- 66 There are numerous references to Burke's phrase in the poems in this collection.
- 67 *Politics for the People* (London: 1794), vol. 1, p. 1.
- 68 William St Clair estimates that 1,500 copies of *Pigs' Meat* were sold each week (*The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 574.)
- 69 T. Spence, *Pigs' Meat; or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude*, vol. 1 (London: 1793). n. pag.
- 70 Spence's song 'Jubilee Hymn' to the tune of 'God Save the King' was to be 'sung at the commencement of the millennium, when there shall be neither lords nor landlords; but God and Man will be all in all' (*Pig's Meat* (1793), vol. 1, pp. 42–3. Also see number 8 in Chapter 1.
- 71 Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 661.
- 72 K. Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 73.
- 73 *Cobbett's Weekly Political Register*, 30:22 (1816), p. 673. Original emphases.
- 74 M. Scrivener (ed.), *Poetry and Reform: Periodical Verse from the English Democratic Press, 1792–1824* (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1992), p. 23.
- 75 McCalman suggests that William Mason, a printer and radical, was Davison's main financier, along with George Cannon, the publisher of *The Theological Enquirer*, who supported Davison when he was jailed for publishing Cannon's works (pp. 155–60). I. McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- 76 Keen, *The Popular Radical Press*, vol. 4, p. 11.
- 77 J. Belchem, 'Manchester, Peterloo and the Radical Challenge', in *Peterloo Massacre*, MRHR, pp. 9–14, at p. 11.
- 78 J.A. Epstein, *Radical Expression: Political Language, Ritual, and Symbol in England, 1790–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 70–86.
- 79 McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, p. 133.
- 80 Keen, *The Popular Radical Press*, vol. 4, p. 297.
- 81 *Ibid.*
- 82 A. Janowitz, *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 86.

- 83 Keen, *The Popular Radical Press*, vol. 5, p. 225; J. Kemble, *Venice Preserv'd* Act 3, scene 1, l.352.
- 84 Keen, *The Popular Radical Press*, vol. 5, p. 1.
- 85 *The Gorgon* was published and printed by various men, including Richard Carlile and W.T. Sherwin. According to Gilmartin, the radical reformer, Francis Place, also had some involvement (p. 150). *The Gorgon* ran from May 1818 until April 1819 and was one of the few radical weeklies that did not publish poetry.
- 86 Keen, *The Popular Radical Press*, vol. 6, p. 14.
- 87 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 88 Keen, *The Popular Radical Press*, vol. 6, p. 251; Scrivener, *Poetry and Reform*, p. 226.
- 89 Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p. 95.
- 90 Keen, *The Popular Radical Press*, vol. 6, p. 254.
- 91 Scrivener, *Poetry and Reform*, p. 23; Gilmartin, *Print Politics*, p. 30.
- 92 Epstein, *Radical Expression*, p. 37.
- 93 J. Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), p. 102.
- 94 In 1818 John Hunt emulated Wooler by naming his short-lived periodical *The Yellow Dwarf*.
- 95 *Black Dwarf* 34:3 (1819), p. 550; *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope* (Glasgow: 1773), p. 135, ll. 69–72.
- 96 *Republican*, 1 (1819), p. 1.
- 97 Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 741.
- 98 G.D. Stout, 'Political History of Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*', *Washington University Studies*, 19 (1949), pp. 5, 37.
- 99 On 23 September 1819, Mary Shelley noted in her journal: 'S's poem goes to Hunt' (M.W. Shelley, *The Journals of Mary Shelley: 1814–1844*, eds. P.R. Feldman and D. Scott-Kilvert (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), vol. 1, p. 298). Shelley sent the sonnet to Hunt on 23 December, stating: 'I do not expect you to publish it, but you may show it to whom you please' (P.B. Shelley, *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. F.L. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), vol. 2, p. 167).
- 100 *Examiner*, 619 (1819), p. 707.
- 101 Keen, *The Popular Radical Press*, vol. 4, p. 184.
- 102 S. Harrison, *Poor Men's Guardians: A Survey of the Struggle for a Democratic Newspaper Press* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), pp. 52–3.
- 103 Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 742. Original emphasis.
- 104 Although today a ballad generally refers to a narrative poem, in the eighteenth century it signified any form of popular verse or song. It is used here in that more general sense.
- 105 M. Booth, *The Experience of Songs* (New Haven CT and London: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 113.

- 106 *The Famous History of Chevy Chase* (Lincoln, 1795), p. 23.
- 107 Palmer notes that Pepys' collection comprised 1671 ballads (R. Palmer (ed.), *A Ballad History of England from 1588 to the Present Day* (London: Batsford, 1979), p. 6).
- 108 J. Kersey, *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum: or, A General English Dictionary* (London, 1708), n. pag.
- 109 Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language* (London: 1755), vol. 1, n. pag.
- 110 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Dublin: 1790–98), vol. 2, p. 768.
- 111 B. Bennett, *British War Poetry in the Age of Romanticism: 1793–1815* (New York: Garland, 1976), p. 1.
- 112 *The Spectator*, 70 (1711), p. 1.
- 113 S. Oliver, *Scott, Byron and the Poetics of Cultural Encounter* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2005), p. 32.
- 114 J. Ritson, *A Select Collection of English Songs* (London: 1783), vol. 1, pp. x, v.
- 115 Bennett, *British War Poetry*, p. 51.
- 116 M. McLane, *Balladeering, Minstrelsy and the Making of British Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 52.
- 117 R. Palmer, *The Sound of History: Songs and Social Comment* (London: Pimlico, 1988), p. 1.
- 118 M. Pittock, *Poetry and Jacobite Politics in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 111.
- 119 Palmer, *Ballad History*, p. 16.
- 120 *Pigs' Meat* (1795), pp. 249–50.
- 121 See number 11 in Chapter 5 for more information.
- 122 Scrivener, *Poetry and Reform*, p. 212.
- 123 Central Library Collection of Ballads, vol. 2, 169.
- 124 *DNB*.
- 125 A chapbook is a small pamphlet comprising a single sheet folded into eight, twelve or more pages. It contains poems, folk tales and nursery rhymes decorated with woodcuts, as well as being almanacs and political and religious tracts. They were cheap to print and buy and were popular throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
- 126 St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, pp. 352–3.